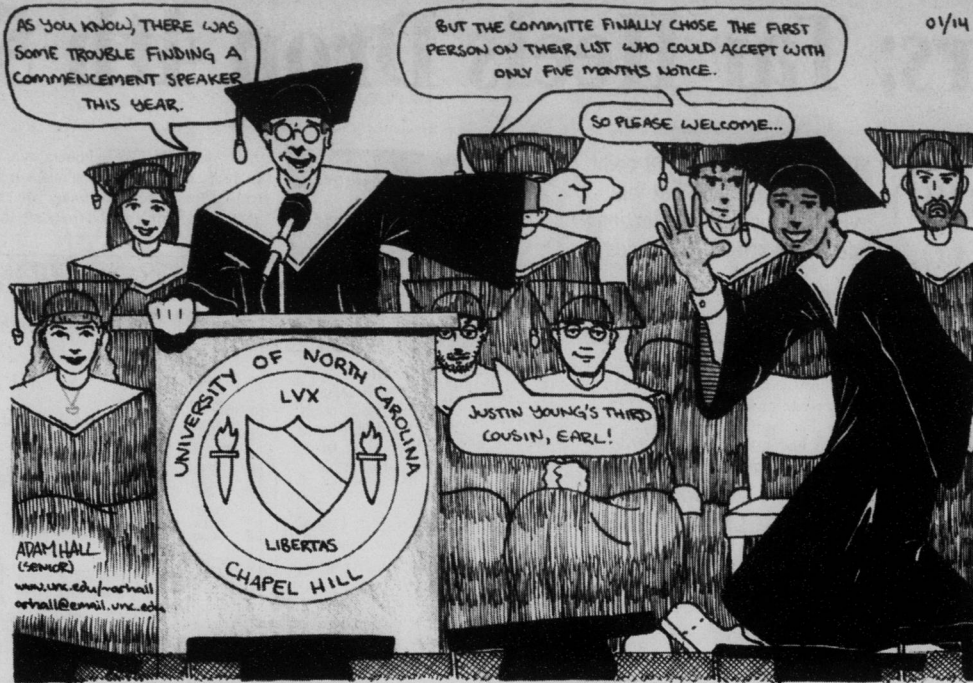


Opinion



Today's Youth Lack True Zeal For Athletics

The demise of pure athletics is upon us. Gone are the good ol' days of playing tackle football with neighborhood kids in your front yard, and what has arrived is not pretty.

It's not just kids' sports, but from the little tots all the way to college and the pros, athletics aren't what they used to be.

First, the commercialization of athletics in both amateur and professional sports has crept up on us and squeezed the very purity out of the game.

Not a single sporting event passes without sponsorship from beer or car companies or one of those annoying 10-10-phone services.

Moreover, from the Galleryfurniture.com Bowl to Budweiser commercials, from individual shoe and apparel sponsorships to — perhaps the most upsetting — the new Fleet Center (aka the former beloved Boston Gardens), it seems that no part of athletics is untouched by corporations.

One might argue that commercialization of sports has not crossed the line because, for the most part, it's regulated. For example, professional football, basketball, hockey and baseball athletes are prohibited from endorsing alcohol products while they are participating in their respective leagues. Perhaps it is the leagues' altruism and obvious concern for the welfare of their youthful fans that they mandate such a rule. Riiiiiiight.

I guess that fans, especially the younger fans, are supposed to assume that because athletes do not endorse alcohol that they do not consume it. After all, we never see them breaking open champagne bottles after big victories (they don't actually drink any of that alcohol) or hear from the media that they've been arrested for DUIs.

And athletes like Bill Russell and John Elway surely pick up beer habits after they retire, just as the Original Coors' commercials tell us.

The distressing thing is that not all sports have regulations on alcohol endorsements. I was watching a U.S. Women's National Team soccer game Monday night, and two of the team's (and the WUSA's) premier players were in an advertisement for Bud Light at every break in the game. Isn't it ironic that WUSA fans are screaming 8-year-old girls and not middle-aged men?

Second, money rules in athletics. Fans don't support a sport purely because it's exciting or entertaining but rather they jump on the bandwagon because that's where the money, and therefore the popularity lies (perhaps this explains fans still coming out for UNC men's basketball games this season).

Administrators allow notions of fairness to fly out the window as they promote sports that put the most dough in their pockets. And they give perks to the athletes that make the money. So college athletes actually do get reimbursed for their services, whether it's a scholarship, a Cadillac sport utility vehicle or free parking at Kenan Stadium.

Thirdly, I hate to sound like my grandmother, but kids these days are ruining athletics at its roots. Instead of nightly competitive neighborhood games of kickball, kids are now too fat from couch-potato syndrome. They also have no athletic ability except for their great thumb reaction time from video games but consider themselves athletes because they can sport head-to-toe Nike gear.

Even when kids get involved in competitive athletic events, they cheat and break the basic rules. Just look at the case of last year's Little League World Championship.

Lastly, parents are guilty of ruining the purity in sport just as much as any other group. Almost weekly we read about a violent parent attacking a referee or an opposing parent at a pee-wee basketball game merely because of a bad call or a hard foul.

It drives me crazy to see parents insisting on using athletics practice and games as a form of babysitting. If a kid has no interest in playing, don't stick him out there to relive your glory days or get him off your hands for a few minutes because ultimately it ruins the sport for everyone else. Plus, his fellow classmates are going to end up ruining his elementary days tormenting him in the ever-equalizing game of dodge ball because of his lack of skill.

Clearly, the purity of athletics has declined in recent years. Not just sponsorship, but participants and parents also tarnish any pure aspects that remain in sport. And the last straw is on its way. Don't call me Miss Cleo, but I can predict this: Nike is taking over the world.

Johanna Costa is sick of minivans and SUVs driven by proud soccer moms and sporting one of those yuppie magnet soccer balls on their trunks. E-mail her with other complaints at costa@email.unc.edu.



JOHANNA COSTA
FLANK VIEW

Board Editorials

Striking a Balance

Administrators must maintain the socioeconomic diversity of the student body and a commitment to the state

The University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill is and always will be a university of the people. It has and continues to thrive on its diverse makeup of students and individuals from various socioeconomic backgrounds. The university also thrives on its willingness to provide in-state residents with affordable tuition and those who in need with financial aid. At the same time, UNC also has a reputation to uphold as one of the premier public universities in the United States.

With an expected increase in tuition not far away, it is important for UNC to continue attracting applicants who are from low-income backgrounds.

Data presented at the Task Force on Tuition's meeting last week found that in the past five years there has been a 5.5 percent decrease in the number of low-income applicants to UNC. What's more striking is that there has been a 13.3 percent drop in the number of applicants from low-income high schools throughout the state.

It is imperative that UNC officials dealing with the tuition increase strike a balance between protecting the financial needs of low-income applicants and maintaining a national reputation as one of the most prominent and affordable public universities. This of course will not be easy, but it can be accomplished with recognizing low-income applicants' needs and acting on them.

If the University wants to raise tuition, then it needs to promote financial aid, especially to low-income applicants who might think they can't afford UNC.

UNC simply needs to communicate that there is financial aid available to low-income applicants and explain how it can be accessed. If this happens, low-income applicants might be more confident in their ability to obtain the finances necessary to attend UNC.

That confidence will encourage more low-income high school students to send apply to UNC.

On the flip side, UNC faculty and officials keep emphasizing the importance of UNC's reputation among national public universities.

Whether one likes it or not, rankings do matter, and University administrators are fully aware that UNC must continue to improve its rank to maintain its spot as a first-rate school.

The problem occurs when being considered the best becomes the highest priority. UNC's highest obligation is to serve the state as a first-rate institution of higher education — a national reputation is important but should take a backseat to the University's commitment to the state of North Carolina. It can't be ignored that tuition increases might have affected the drop in low-income applicants.

This possibility has to be considered in regards to the pending proposal to raise tuition. If it isn't, the Board of Trustees would be defying one of the cornerstones upon which UNC was founded.

Licensing Accountability

The Chapel Hill Town Council needs to act quickly on a rental licensing plan to help student renters

For too many UNC students living in off-campus housing, it would be easier to find Dick Cheney than to get in touch with their landlord.

In a regular business meeting held Tuesday night, the Chapel Hill Town Council reviewed a proposed rental licensing plan. If passed, the proposal would require local property owners to buy a rental license for each housing unit and complete a form with contact information that would be included in a database for public record.

Implementing a program like this has been a topic of discussion for years.

With a growing student body and people actively looking for housing, the Town Council should act quickly in passing this program.

Taking this initiative would help alleviate landlord negligence toward basic student needs in off-campus housing.

It is often extremely difficult to get back-

ground information on a landlord other than through word-of-mouth.

Plus, when searching for apartments or houses it can be hard even to even find out who the actual landlord is. Problems with an apartment or house, which inevitably occur, become impossible to deal with without proper landlord contact information. A mandatory rental license would place a demand for landlord accountability that any resident — student or not — should expect.

It would also place a greater sense of urgency on landlords to keep their property up to par, meaning inspections would be conducted more often.

Furthermore, by making information about landlords public, renters would have a better sense of a landlord's history.

Understanding the landlord in advance could help prevent situations where people find out too late that landlords are inaccessible or unwilling to keep their half of

the bargain.

It would be unfortunate if charges for rental licenses winds up increasing the already inflated rents for off-campus housing. The burden of this increase should not fall on student renters, or any renter for that matter.

Being inexperienced tenants, it's easy for students to be taken advantage of or ignored by landlords.

This isn't to say that students are trying to have their cake and eat it too.

It should be understood that the standards that the program requires should be enforced anyway.

When someone lives in a house or apartment where roaches march around like they own the place, there should be no problem contacting the landlord for the problem to be taken care of.

It is landlords' responsibility to take care of the problems of the residents living on their properties.

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READERS' FORUM

Senior Says Give Up Search, UNC Professor Serves as Fine Choice

TO THE EDITOR:

I would first like to applaud Professor Chuck Stone's letter in which he demonstrated the wit and intelligence that he is known for.

Chuck Stone is one of the most beloved professors on this campus, and he embodies the spirit that I associate with UNC.

Robert Cummings believes he has received a "slap in the face" because of the lack of a big-name Commencement speaker.

Well, Cummings has in fact delivered a "slap in the face" to Chuck Stone and the thousands of students who admire him.

I may be partial to Chuck Stone because I am a journalism major and enrolled in his course in the fall of 1999. His censorship course is one of the most interesting and best courses I have taken during my 3 1/2 years at UNC. Even today Chuck Stone will say hello when I see him on campus because he invests time and effort into teaching his students.

I recommend Chuck Stone to serve as our Commencement speaker. I have rarely had a professor who had such passion for

life and for his students. Chuck Stone has lived a life that many of us cannot even fathom, and his insight may be the best conclusion to our careers at UNC.

Chuck Stone has received a number of honorary degrees and many Excellence in Teaching Awards that all add to his outstanding qualifications. Let's just end this unproductive search for a Commencement speaker and choose a professor like Chuck Stone, Doris Betts or Gerald Unks.

David Mataranglo
Senior
Journalism and Mass Communication

Officials, Stop Nickel-And-Diming Students With Tuition Increases

TO THE EDITOR:

Few agree with all of Machiavelli's assertions; however, UNC could learn from at least one of them. "The Prince" suggests that a governing force inflict "evils" at once and not over a period of time.

How beautifully this could be applied to tuition increases! Last semester we paid (about) \$50 extra (\$500 out of state) in a retroactive tuition increase. Now a \$400 hike is being called for, and the next order

of business is discussing more increases!

You can hit someone and get away with it, but if you slap him everyday he will likely retaliate. Our patience and pockets are running out.

Solution? Give us time to accept these changes.

Don't show up unannounced and announce that the price has gone up on sold goods. Come to us and explain your request. We understand the need for competitive faculty salaries. Give us a plan to contemplate and prepare for, but don't nickel-and-dime us to death (and it's very generous to call \$400 a dime) and then propose a plan. We begin to wonder if you can be sated because if you can't, why should we bother?

Granted, I don't know the ins and outs of the University's financial position.

What I do know is that when dealing with a mass like the student body, feeling can often eclipse fact. Consideration should always be given to the recipient of a demand, even if the demand is reasonable.

Otherwise UNC runs the risk of demeaning the students' financial contributions and thereby demeaning the students.

I bring this up because this generally wonderful University is in danger of making its students feel very unappreciated.

Remember that it would not be the same without us, the students.

David Hillman
Sophomore
Mathematical Science

Seniors Suggest UNC Alumnus Dan Cortese As Key Note Speaker

TO THE EDITOR:

It is still painfully obvious that our senior class has yet to find an acceptable Commencement speaker.

Throughout the year and during the recent frantic search for a suitable speaker one name has been noticeably missing. The man I am speaking of is an innovator in his field, a shining success in an extremely competitive industry, and of course, a UNC alumnus.

The man I am referring to is Dan Cortese.

Early in his career he achieved fame as an MTV veejay. Next, Cortese moved into the limelight on MTV's innovative "MTV Sports," pioneering extreme sports and the ubiquitous "do-rag."

Lately, Dan has remained busy, appearing in numerous made-for-TV movies

including Lifetime's "The Lottery" and TBS's "The Triangle," not to mention his Emmy-caliber work on "Veronica's Closet."

I encourage UNC's senior representatives to consider Mr. Cortese as our keynote speaker, as he doubtlessly would appeal to all interests. Few have done so much to culturally mark the last decade of the previous century.

We would be privileged to hear his insightful commentary upon the state of today's society as we end our Carolina experience.

Justin Greene
Senior
English
Tim Logan
Senior
History

Editor's Note

Want to submit a letter to the editor for the Reader's Forum? E-mail letters to editdesk@unc.edu, or go online to dailytarheel.com to post your comments.

Interested in contributing to a Viewpoints page as a guest columnist? Let us know!

Viewpoints runs every Monday featuring four guest columns from students and the University community. E-mail Kate Hartig, the editorial page editor, at khartig@email.unc.edu with your ideas.



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