

It's Time for Students to Speak Loudly on Tuition

Tuition is on the rise, and we all need to listen up and speak out. The character of a Carolina education is on the line.

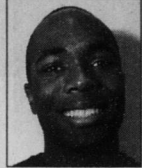
This Thursday, the UNC Board of Trustees will vote on a recommendation to increase tuition by \$400 for next year. But that's just the tip of the iceberg. The Office of the Provost has identified a list of goals that it wants to fund with tuition increases. Those goals are more than lofty: they're out-of-this-world.

That's why the administration doesn't plan to stop with this \$400. In fact, they've projected to try to meet their goals by increasing tuition by \$400 a year for the next five years. And even with that much new money — \$2,000 in new tuition funds — they still won't be able to meet their goals. That should make you suspicious: how much will tuition really increase over the next

five years?

There's more that's wrong with this picture. The recommendation being considered by the BOT was created without enough time for adequate involvement from students, faculty and staff. We still have an opportunity to weigh in — that's why you should vote in our opinion poll today on Student Central. But the recommendation itself was formulated over a period of 12 days and three meetings, one of which was canceled due to snow. On this rushed timeline, our campus community had no time for thoughtful scrutiny or thorough review.

A coalition of students has come together to fight for more student involvement in those decisions that



JUSTIN YOUNG
POINT OF VIEW

affect us most. The Coalition for Responsible Tuition Decisions has been meeting to discuss how it will ensure that the voice of the students is heard and respected. On Thursday, the BOT will be presented with this group's perspective on the latest tuition proposal and some principles that need to be adopted by the University. We will demand that the

University practice these policies when making future decisions that affect students and all the constituents of this campus.

The decisions on tuition will make a very influential impact not only here in Chapel Hill, but for other campuses in the UNC system as well. Additionally, the way in which these proposals are being considered doesn't appropriately

evaluate the impact that this will have on future students who may want to attend Carolina.

Promises of financial aid can only do so much, and coupled with every tuition increase is the threat of limiting access to education for many students across the state. In fact, the number of applicants from the poorest counties of North Carolina has already dropped nearly 9 percent since 1996, and the number of applicants from the poorest high schools in the state has decreased almost 17 percent. If tuition continues to increase rapidly, we can expect a further decline in the number of applicants from lower-income areas, making Chapel Hill an exclusive institution only for the rich.

Higher education in the state of North Carolina must continue to be affordable and accessible to all people of the state.

Decisions about your tuition are happening without your input, and we have to change that. Here's what you can do to change that: vote on the proposal that will be presented to the BOT by logging onto Student Central and casting a ballot today. You can also find out more at <http://www.unc.edu/studentgovt/executive> and click on the link to tuition.

In order to stimulate more dialogue on the issue and continue to raise awareness, the Graduate and Professional Student Federation will be hosting a tuition forum at 6 p.m. today in the main auditorium of the School of Social Work. All students are invited to comment and hear panelists discuss tuition and how it affects us all.

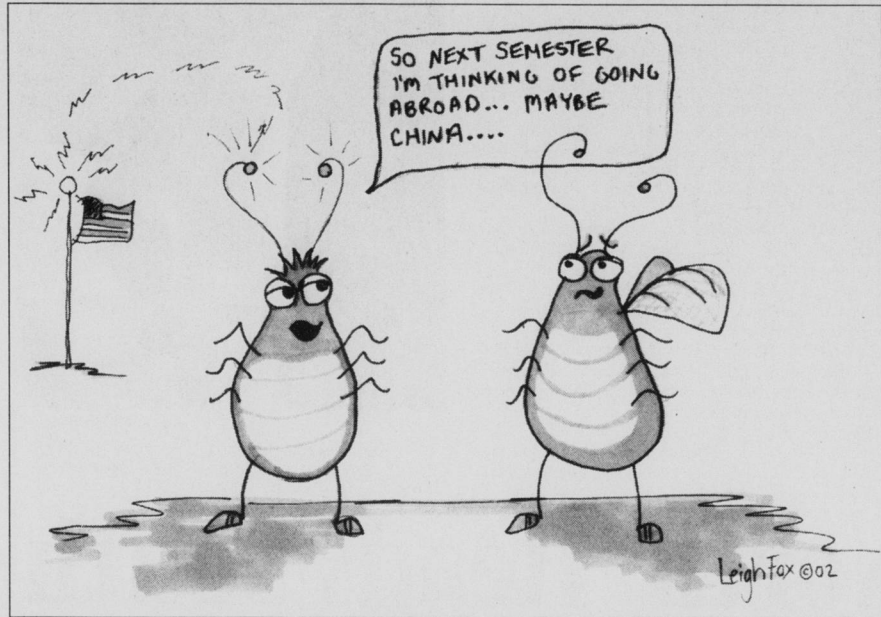
Finally, you have an opportunity to let your voice be heard as students gather at 9:30 a.m. Thursday around the Old Well to express our concerns

about tuition and also to call on the University administration to establish a system that will involve the students in those financial decisions that affect us the most.

Two years ago students were very vocal, and they succeeded in lowering the tuition increase. This time shouldn't be any different. We need students to speak out! The BOT needs to know that we care about our tuition — shutting us out is unacceptable!

The cost of a quality education at Carolina is always on the rise. But as long as we keep raising tuition without asking the hard questions, the state legislature will keep cutting our funding. It's time we learned our lesson: students should be the last place we look for funds, not the first.

Justin Young can be reached at jjyoung@email.unc.edu.



Help Maintain Student Governance

Since 1793, students at UNC have taken great pride in one of their most basic tenets: that of student self-governance. Though a constant source of pride for over 200 years, time has eroded enthusiasm for one of our most cherished principles. Two centuries after its inception, there are few students who actively take an interest in student government.

Such apathy is evident during our annual February elections. Around 3,000 students out of a total of about 24,000 even bother to vote. For most students, it is a struggle just to remember who our student body president is. So is it any surprise that the legislative branch of student government is also a recipient of poor voter turnout? For that matter, how many of you are aware that student government actually has a legislative branch?

For those who are unaware that UNC student government has a legislative branch (also known as Student Congress) or for those who are not clear of what Congress does, hopefully this will prove informative. Maybe, just maybe, this will encourage some of you to run for a seat in Congress.

Student Congress is a unicameral body that takes on the legislative duties of student government. Congress comprises 37 elected students who represent the student body as a whole. Of the 37 representatives, 12 are graduate students from the various graduate schools. The other 25 are undergraduates from both on-campus and off-campus.

Student Congress is under the direction of the speaker of Student

Congress. Other leadership positions within congress are the speaker pro tem, the Finance Committee chairman, the Rules and Judiciary Committee

MARK TOWNSEND
GUEST COLUMNIST

chairman, the Student Affairs Committee chairman and the Ethics Committee chairman. During the first Congress meeting of the year, the leadership is selected from among those who were elected to Congress in the February elections.

Under the guidance of the leadership, Student Congress carries out its responsibilities. The responsibilities of Congress are three-fold. Our primary duty is to act as the purse strings of student government. Every year, undergraduate and graduate students alike pay what are known as "Student Activity Fees." Congress allocates those fees amongst the numerous student groups on campus. That equates to over a quarter of a million dollars per year. Representatives in Congress decide which groups will receive money and how much money to allocate to each individual group. That's quite a hefty responsibility, especially for such an overlooked group.

Another responsibility of Congress involves amending the Student Code. The Student Code is a compilation of rules by which student government operates. It encompasses the executive, legislative and judicial branches and even the Carolina Athletic Association. Congress has the power to add to, delete from and codify the Student Code.

So if you are unhappy with student government and would like to institute change, the perfect way to do so is via

Student Congress.

Lastly, Congress is responsible for passing non-binding resolutions. Resolutions state the opinion of Congress and can range from a wide variety of topics; the topics can cover anything as unimportant as "Carolina football is great," to something as serious as "UNC is opposed to tuition hikes."

Congress meets every Tuesday, either in committee meetings or in full Congress. Normally, committee meetings average about an 1 1/2 hours in length, and full Congress meetings average about 2 1/2 hours in length. Combined with the regular Tuesday meetings, representatives are required to spend one, perhaps two, full weekends in February so that Congress can balance the budget for the upcoming school year. Officers in Congress put in more hours than other representatives. Other than that, the work required is what you put into it.

If you are interested in running for a congressional seat, you must attend the candidates' meeting. The candidates' meeting will take place Tuesday at 7 p.m. in 100 Hamilton Hall. Hopefully, this has perked your interest and encouraged you to look into running for a congressional seat. At the very least, you now know that UNC does indeed have a legislative branch, and that they are actively seeking your participation. If you have any questions, feel free to e-mail Elections Board Chairwoman Emily Margolis or myself.

Mark Townsend is speaker of Student Congress. Reach him at townsend@email.unc.edu.

Tuition Increase Proposal Needs More Graduate Voice

Neither *lux* nor *libertas* has been evident in the administration's effort to raise tuition. Indeed, from a student perspective, it's hard to resist the urge to characterize this "campus-based" initiative as something akin to a corporate directive.

MARC DAVID
GUEST COLUMNIST

The chancellor's hastily convened Task Force on Tuition scheduled most of its meetings during final exams, Winter Break and the busy start-up to the current session. Provost Robert Shelton did not waver from a single-minded focus on faculty salaries as the justification for the raise, despite the request from Faculty Chairwoman Sue Estroff to avoid framing the need exclusively in these terms. For her part, Estroff underscored how this approach undermines faculty-student relations and mentioned that the previous tuition increase has resulted in salary increases of as little as \$600 a year for many faculty, hardly the amount needed to close the nearly \$8,000 gap between Carolina salaries and the peer average.

Student representatives to the task force waited in vain for the proceedings to expand in two directions. First, they expected a discussion of a comprehensive solution to the problem of salaries — namely, what sources of revenue other than tuition raises can address this problem, so that it doesn't become a perennial scapegoat that justifies perpetual tuition inflation? Second, more importantly, they wanted a debate of factors other than faculty salaries that might contribute to "excellence in (the) undergraduate experience" at UNC. On both counts, the task force has, so far, largely failed them. For graduate students and employees, this process is especially frustrating. In particular, the administration's strict equation between faculty salary levels and quality undergraduate education overlooks the crucial role of graduate teaching fellows and assistants in the fulfillment of the University's teaching mission. A survey conducted last fall by UE150a, the graduate employee union, indicates that half of all undergraduate courses at UNC are taught by graduate employees and almost two-thirds of all contact hours between teaching staff and students — labs, recitations and office hours, in addition to lectures — are covered by graduates. By definition, then, the quality of undergraduate education also depends on an outstanding and adequately-remunerated graduate and professional corps. Why is this not a given, part of the common sense that forms the starting point of a discussion like this?

Not surprisingly, levels of graduate compensation at UNC also lag well behind the average at peer universities. A recent survey by the Chronicle of Higher Education suggests that though some departments offer stipends that are competitive,

others trail the average by as much as 30 percent. There are similar gaps in tuition and fee waivers, health care coverage and childcare support. To be fair, the final proposal put forward by Shelton did earmark 5 percent of the increase for graduate employees. But the revenues created will only raise TA stipends in a couple of departments up to the peer average, or provide all TAs with an increase of a few hundred dollars. For a five-year plan that is supposed to represent a more definitive solution to this problem, the proposal offers far too little to warrant our support.

The more important issue that the task force's failure raises for graduate employees is that of representation, or rather the lack of it. While graduate and professional students are invited to participate in a number of advisory committees within the University, they have no voice in any forum where ultimate decision-making power lies. For a group that plays such an important role in one of the University's principle missions, this is clearly problematic. In this case, graduates and professionals have been asked to participate in a process where their concerns have been marginalized, where they have no vote in the final decision (there's no graduate representative on the UNC Board of Trustees) and where the proposal's effect on their ability to fulfill professional commitments is potentially quite significant. For many of us, this combination of low input and high impact is unacceptable. In the pursuit of academic excellence, and perhaps even more than faculty salaries, what should rise at UNC is a stronger commitment to inclusivity and participation in administration and governance. With respect to the tuition debate, this would mean a more systemic presence of students in settings where the University's administrative and financial agenda is shaped. Without this, UNC's tired Enlightenment virtues of light and liberty, regularly invoked at Commencements and installations, will not redeem their meaning in the context where they should signify the most — within the University itself.

Marc David is graduate student in anthropology, and a member of UE150a. He can be reached at mdavid@email.unc.edu.

Israel Is Ready to Make Efforts Toward Peaceful Concessions

John Cox's guest column on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict ("First-Hand Glimpse of Israeli-Palestinian Conflict") grossly misrepresents the root of conflict. If we wanted to play the game of who has suffered the worst atrocities, Israel could mention a large slew of catastrophes it has suffered.

MELISSA ANDERSON
GUEST COLUMNIST

But the blame game is not worth playing because it is not constructive.

It is true that more Palestinians than Israelis have been killed in the past year. However, this is mainly because fewer Israelis are personally involved in violent confrontations. Also, Israel has outstanding intelligence, and its policy of targeted interceptions has stopped numerous deadly attacks from occurring and prevented immeasurable Israeli casualties.

The Israel Defense Forces intercept countless Palestinian militants at checkpoints attempting to enter Israel with bombs to murder civilians.

As long as Palestinian Authority Chairman Yasser Arafat disregards signed agreements calling for the dismantling of terrorist organizations operating in areas under Palestinian sovereignty, Mr. Cox, roadblocks are a necessity. Their aim is not collective punishment of the Palestinian people — it's to maintain the security of Israeli citizens.

The killing of civilians is never the aim, and if an innocent Palestinian is caught in the crossfire, the Israeli military conducts frequent investigations to discover any mistakes by its soldiers. Israeli casualties are not "accidentally" killed. They are deliberately targeted and murdered. I do not recall Hamas, an Islamic fundamentalist organization whose aim is to destroy Israel, ever conducting an internal investigation

concerning its suicide bombers.

Israelis genuinely look forward to a time when teenagers can go to a disco without worrying about being the victim of a suicide bomb attack, when

Palestinians are not subjected to checkpoints, when the Palestinian economy and social structure is stable and

prosperous, when the state of Palestine lives peacefully beside Israel.

But eradicating the status quo can only be brought about at the negotiating table, not through violence.

Coexistence can only occur through mutual trust, and the Israelis do not trust Yasser Arafat. And why should they?

He has never cracked down on suspected terrorists. Even when militants are arrested by Palestinian authorities, they are frequently allowed to go free a few days later.

Most recently, trust in Arafat was further eroded when a 10 million to 15 million dollar smuggled shipment of 50 tons of weapons was intercepted by Israel. Intelligence reports that these shipments were ordered by Arafat and headed from Iran to the Palestinian Authority. Why does the Palestinian Authority divert so much money toward weapons when it could use the funds to alleviate the suffering of its people?

When Mr. Cox argues that the source of turmoil is ethnic cleansing of Palestinians in 1948, he demonstrates a strongly deficient knowledge of Israeli history. The 1947 UN Partition Plan, which called for a homeland for both the Jews and the Palestinians, was rejected by the Arab world.

Instead, a war to destroy the existence of Israel was launched. Arab leaders told the Palestinians to flee their homes with the idea that after a

swift elimination of Israel, the people could resettle. I am not claiming Israel was an angel. It is true some Palestinians were forced from their homes. However, one must remember that this was a time of war, and Israel's very existence was being threatened.

But the fact remains that if there were no war initiated by Arab countries, there would have been no refugee problem. Also, a fact that is often overlooked is that a similar number of Jews living in Arab countries were forced to leave their homes between 1948 and 1951.

However, they were absorbed into Israel and made full citizens. By contrast, the Palestinian refugees were deliberately kept in horrible conditions to gain international support and later serve as pawns in the negotiation process.

Occupation is claimed to be the root of the conflict. However, this is an occupation that Israel never desired and that Israel is committed to ending through peaceful negotiations. Terrorism is obstructing dialogue and the only factor preventing an end to conflict.

If a real peace is on the horizon, Israel is committed to making huge concessions. Israel's willingness to make difficult concessions resulted in a peace accord with Egypt in 1978 and could have resulted in a peace accord with the Palestinians in July 2000 at Camp David.

I think the Palestinians both need and deserve a state of their own. I regret the fact that such inept leadership has left them without one.

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Editorial Production: Stacy Wynn, manager.

Printing: Triangle Web.

Distribution: Triangle Circulation Services.

Office: Suite 104 Carolina Union
Campus Mail Address: CH 5210 Box 49, Carolina Union
U.S. Mail Address: P.O. Box 3257, Chapel Hill, NC 27515-3257

ISSN #10709436

The editorials are approved by the majority of the editorial board, which is composed of the editor, editorial page editor, assistant editorial page editor and eight editorial writers.

The Daily Tar Heel is published by the DTH Publishing Corp., a non-profit North Carolina corporation, Monday-Friday, according to the University calendar.

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