

# Opinion



## Maybe You'll Vote, Probably Not Though

Today is Election Day. Incidentally, it is also a day to feel proud to be an American, because you can participate in what arguably can be considered as the rawest form of democracy. And that's something Americans should be proud of — democracy, that is. America advocates it, fights for it, even pays for it.



EUGENE KIM  
OUTCLASSED AT  
BAGGAGE CLAIM

So why does no one care? Last year, only one-third of the undergraduate population here at UNC decided to cast a vote in the student elections. While last year's turnout showed marked improvement compared to previous years, we Tar Heels have yet to surpass even the pitiful voter turnout that the rest of America, the world's ferocious democracy defender, suffers from.

The cause of anemic voter turnout for student elections is further complicated by the sheer lack of effort it takes to vote. With voting available online, students can vote in about the time it takes a skilled ninja to swallow a live gopher. Admittedly, we are not skilled ninjas, nor do we swallow small furry rodents whole, but we can still take 30 seconds out of our day to cast our vote in the name of the Declaration of Independence, the U.S. Constitution and a real passionate hope that tuition isn't on the up and up like a stoned Superman.

In the end, we will more than likely not take that 30 seconds out of our day to participate in the most holiest of rites of the civil religion known as democracy. Some will deem voting "not worth their time" while they puff mindlessly on their cigarettes (lights, and mighty tasty!), cruising on their crash course to more life-threatening ailments than you can shake a cancer stick at. Others will claim that they are "too busy" to vote, probably because it would conflict with catching up on the latest misadventures of those six loveable 20-somethings in the white-upper-middle-income-earning-only city of New York.

But what is the real cause for the lower turnout than Mormons to a strip club? Shame. Pure, unadulterated, 100 percent disgrace and humiliation. Oddly enough, this would also be the reason why no one seems to care about this year's Winter Olympics in Mormonville. At least, it's the reason why I couldn't care less.

The opening ceremonies for the Olympics are usually uninspiring at best. Last Friday however, not only were the ceremonies not exciting at all, but they were a shock and an embarrassment, so much so that I felt unabashedly ashamed for America. And I'm not even American.

The organizers for the opening ceremonies managed to belittle Native Americans and immigrants, gloss over glaringly large issues in U.S. history and put on such an unsightly spectacle that the rest of the world thought it was witnessing a "Best of Hee-Haw" compilation. Who was inspired to watch the rest of the Winter Olympics after that disgrace, partially on ice?

Definitely not me. So how does this relate to today's student elections? While there's been no equivalent egregious blunder to Friday's opening ceremonies made by the candidates, UNC students and potential voters feel ashamed nonetheless. This is because, at least where the election of student body president is concerned, the very platforms offered by the candidates are more abstract than a painting done by Kandinsky whilst all hopped up on a handful of angel dust.

What students want is concrete plans for action — they want to know that student body president candidates have actual ideas regarding important issues, as opposed to lame and vague notions about garnering student input.

What person who steps foot on our Piedmont-bricked campus doesn't already know that keeping tuition low and affordable is a student concern? Or that lack of parking is a perennial issue? And that the security of fraternity and sorority houses during school breaks and holidays is at the top of every person's list of "things I have to worry about once pledging is over"?

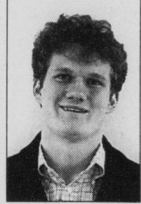
Not that you should not vote — but you probably won't. The field of student body president candidates is no Olympic opening ceremonies, but we're uninspired and ashamed nonetheless. Why vote for any of the candidates when you're just as well off voting for Jeff Danford, a good American who can mouth the words "more student input"?

Eugene Kim, despite his shame and his F-1 visa status in the United States, will probably take 30 seconds out of his day today and vote online at [studentcentral.unc.edu](http://studentcentral.unc.edu). You can let him know your feelings about student elections by e-mailing him at [chintook@email.unc.edu](mailto:chintook@email.unc.edu).

### Board Editorials

## Vote McKinney for SBP

Will McKinney offers a realistic and practical plan to address the issues that will affect students most



The 2002-03 UNC student body president will be facing one of the most difficult and pivotal years for the University.

Just in this past year, students have felt their voices silenced, they have seen tuition raised, and they have watched as officials threatened to take their parking away. UNC needs a student body president who will help students adjust to the reality of a changing University.

When The Daily Tar Heel editorial board decided among the five candidates for student body president, we thought about the position at its most basic level. Which candidate is tackling the issues that affect the most students? More importantly, who has the best means to attack the issues that are going to be the most critical next year? That candidate is Will McKinney.

McKinney not only has a realistic and practical plan to face tuition, he has a vision for student government accessibility based on technology and a plan to make women and minority issues a priority.

The reality is that tuition is on the rise. North Carolina is facing a state budget shortfall of as high as \$900 million, and it will be no surprise if some of the money to cover that shortfall will come from student's pockets.

Students need to realize that protesting will not make tuition increases go away. What is important now is devising a long-term plan for tuition and making the N.C. General Assembly aware of students' needs and opinions in a forceful, organized and informed way. McKinney has that plan.

In his tuition petition, which has been signed by 1,300 students, he outlines four principles that directly address the impact of tuition increases. One, making sure financial aid needs are met; two, a tuition guarantee wherein tuition costs are placed on a predictable schedule; three, demanding that the General Assembly increase higher education funding; and four, expanding programs to ensure that low-income N.C. students are aware that they can still afford to attend the University.

McKinney is also focused on student government accountability and accessibility. He said in his interview with the editorial board that uniting the student voice can only be accomplished with a responsible student gov-

ernment. And he is right. Rather than student polls, the McKinney administration will bring student government to students by being available in the Pit and holding Cabinet meetings around campus.

Furthermore, his vision for online, "paperless" student government will make accessibility to Suite C even stronger. To do this, he wants to move student government's site to an independent server, which will make room for forums and interactive databases. He is also planning to put application processes like hardship parking and staff positions online. He is also looking at ways to reduce book prices and buy books online when registering for classes. These are among many other ways the McKinney administration wants to use technology to make students' lives easier.

It is also critical that the student body president addresses minority, women, and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender issues. McKinney has promised to create a permanent women's affairs Cabinet position and work with departments and schools — particularly Kenan-Flagler Business School — to explore ways to improve minority recruitment and retention.

Moreover, McKinney has demonstrated that he can be a student body president who can successfully represent students on issues that affect them most. In his interview with the editorial board, he proved that he knows the University, the state and the students. More importantly, he knows his own limitations. All of this makes Will McKinney the smart choice for student body president.

#### Why Not One of the Other Candidates?

It was not easy to choose from the slate of qualified candidates in this year's student body president race. Each offered something different and showed a passion for this University and its students.

Jen Daum is a candidate of professional and charismatic demeanor, but her platform goals are somewhat misdirected and reactionary. Part of her platform deals with graduate students and securing a living wage for University staff. While she said in her interview that she felt that this was not out of the student body president realm, there are clearly other issues that the student body president should focus on next year. Her platform

centers on administrative accountability and amplifying student voice by gauging student opinion through biweekly polls. In essence, she would rely on students to come to student government, which has proven to be ineffective. Daum's emphasis on student input to the Board of Trustees and public service should not be ignored, though.

It is true that Fred Hashagen has had success in rallying student voice and reversing student apathy. But rallying students for campus issues is different than engaging students around social issues. Fred's platform is too ambitious and expensive for the tight times of UNC. But his platform goal to raise student fees between 8 cents and 25 cents to provide HIV medication to rape and sexual assault victims through Student Health Service should be taken seriously and seen to fruition.

Bennett Mason's intentions are all in the right place, but he focuses too much on environmental issues and not enough on others. But Mason's emphasis on security and self-defense are not without substance. His vision of student unity is admirable, but he doesn't have the tangible means to achieve that goal.

Brad Overcash, also a passionate candidate for student body president, was clearly enthusiastic about his goals but is running on a platform that doesn't aim high enough and is also slightly misdirected. His idea for a campus calendar and student summit are good but don't pertain to the most pressing issues. However, Overcash's attention to Student Congress reform and Honor Court issues should not go unnoticed. Correy Campbell, Nathan Katzin and Charlie Trakas were not interviewed because write-in candidates are ineligible for the DTH endorsement.

#### DTH Endorsement Recap

Vote Joanna Jordan for Residence Hall Association president, Kris Willett for Carolina Athletic Association president, Chessa Huff and Kim Washington for senior class president and vice president, Branson Page for Graduate and Professional Student Federation president and Will McKinney for student body president.

Assistant Editorial Page Editor Mark Slagle did not cast a vote in the student body president endorsement because of a conflict of interest. Daniele Eubanks, editorial board member, was not present during the student body president endorsement process.

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### READERS' FORUM

#### Join Discussion About Peace and War Tonight At Wesley Foundation

TO THE EDITOR:

Since Sept. 11 and the World Trade Center bombing, the ideas of "violence" and "peace" have been on our minds more than ever. In fact, we've probably said these words more often in the past few months than we have in our whole lives. But how does it all fit together? What does violence have to do with peace? These questions have been on our minds the past few months at the Wesley Foundation, UNC's United Methodist campus ministry. So now we're calling on the entire campus. No matter your faith, background, politics or opinion, we'd like to invite you to a discussion titled "Does Violence Promote Peace?" We will discuss our justifications for war and for violent acts in religion and throughout history. Perhaps by bringing our different opinions to the same table, we can find a way to reconcile this issue and a way to better understand each other.

The discussion will be held at 8 p.m. today in the first-floor lounge of Hinton James. Come out. Maybe we will solve the world's great issues. And if not, at least you'll meet some new people and get to

enjoy some yummy cookies.

**Sara Pugh**  
Junior  
English

**Jonathan Coleman**  
Junior

Journalism and Mass Communication

#### Resident Thanks Store For Upholding Values, Setting a Good Example

TO THE EDITOR:

We'd like to thank Durham Wal-Mart for making the right decision for the community and removing Philip Morris' Marlboro Man advertisements from its store. The Marlboro Man has made Marlboro the No. 1 cigarette among American teens and the world's leading cigarette brand. We applaud Wal-Mart's commitment to children's health and its refusal to contribute to the growing global tobacco epidemic. Philip Morris, the world's largest and most profitable tobacco corporation, has been using the Marlboro Man image to addict kids to tobacco since 1954. This image was actually designed to capture the youth market's fancy, according to Jack Landry, its creator. Retailers who display these ads are realizing the devastating effects

the ads are having on kids and are taking action. We're pleased to see that Wal-Mart values its relationship with the community.

**Levin Brown**  
Chapel Hill

#### The Solution to Housing Problems Is to Look Into Making Best Use of Space

TO THE EDITOR:

Chapel Hill has one solution for its problem with affordable housing: density. Even with the creation of an ordinance that prescribes developers to commit a certain percentage of their developments to affordable homes, this will not curb the tide of developers purchasing more affordable homes in established neighborhoods to rent to students. The placement of affordable housing in the more suburban developments will further tax the infrastructure of the city as well as promoting other problems associated with sprawl, such as traffic. Rather, Chapel Hill should encourage the construction of denser housing options closer to downtown for both students and young professors, University and municipal workers. Denser developments close to downtown that include both townhouses and mid-rise apartments will

meet the demands of the student renters without further jeopardizing established neighborhoods while providing essential workers the choice of living closer to their workplace. Chapel Hill already claims to be urban; let's see if it's ready to be a little more urban.

**Jeff Bunda**  
Senior  
Psychology

#### Motorists Need More Information About How To Address Crosswalks

TO THE EDITOR:

I question the advisability of a pedestrian crosswalk that is not marked with a traffic light. I realize that on several occasions, by stopping my car to let a pedestrian pass in a crosswalk, I have actually created a situation that posed a genuine risk to the pedestrian's life. Case in point was last night at 6:30 p.m. in front of the Jade Palace Restaurant on Main Street in Carrboro. There are three lanes of traffic — two westbound and one eastbound. On coming up to the crosswalk, there were two pedestrians waiting for traffic to stop — one on each side of the street by the Jade Palace and by the Bank of America. I stopped. The car heading east in the opposite

lane also stopped. The pedestrians began to cross — when out of the blue, a car came barreling through the crosswalk in the second westbound center lane. Both pedestrians very narrowly missed getting hit. This same "pedestrian set-up" has happened on several occasions: I stop to let a pedestrian pass in front, and the driver in the adjacent lane does not stop. My stopping in fact invites the pedestrian onto the street. My position in the lane in relation to the pedestrian can act as a block for the pedestrian to see the oncoming car, and I realize, my car may also block the driver from seeing the pedestrian. Crosswalks without a traffic signal create extremely hazardous situations. (And actually, while we are on this topic of conversation, many of the crosswalks with traffic lights have such a short green-go for pedestrians that the elderly and families with strollers, dogs and several knee-high children are severely challenged to cross between the green and red lights.) If we choose to continue using crosswalks without traffic lights, then the rules need to be more widely publicized and enforced. I have sent a copy of this letter to the Carrboro chief of police and would appreciate a clarifying statement concerning the expectations for a driver at a non-traffic-lighted pedestrian crosswalk.

**Laura Shmania**  
Chapel Hill



The Daily Tar Heel welcomes reader comments and criticism. Letters to the editor should be no longer than 300 words and must be typed, double-spaced, dated and signed by no more than two people. Students should include their year, major and phone number. The DTH reserves the right to edit letters for space, clarity and vulgarity. Publication is not guaranteed. Bring letters to the DTH office at Suite 104, Carolina Union, mail them to P.O. Box 3257, Chapel Hill, NC 27515 or e-mail forum to: [editdesk@unc.edu](mailto:editdesk@unc.edu).