

TA Meal Canceled Due to Poor Planning

By JOELLE RUBEN
Staff Writer

An annual barbecue held in appreciation of teaching assistants will not be held this year because of poor planning efforts by student government.

The annual TA Appreciation Barbecue, first held in 1998, gives graduate students and the University community the chance to gather and unwind over food and festivities in Polk Place.

But Branson Page, president of the Graduate and Professional Student Federation, sent a message to the GPSF listserv Monday after hearing from former Student Body President Justin Young that the event would not take place.

The e-mail included a message from Young that stated, "I apologize to those

TAs that will be disappointed by this, but this in no way reflects a lack of appreciation for our TAs but a problem of poor planning. Sorry."

Page said he was surprised to hear the event was canceled. He said that when he ran for his position, he thought the GPSF organized the barbecue. But after learning that undergraduate student body officers were in charge of planning and funding, Page said he assumed things were taken care of.

He added that GPSF had set aside funds to offer financial support. "I'm certain we would've done what we could to help them out."

Page said he has received several e-mails from disappointed TAs over the GPSF listserv. One of these replies was sent by Thomas Pegelow, a 5th-year graduate student and teaching assistant in the history department.

Pegelow, who is a vegetarian, said he has enjoyed attending the barbecue the past few years for the social element rather than the free food.

But he said he most appreciated the event as an end-of-the-year thank you

from the students he helped in the classroom.

"TAs certainly tend to get the short end of the stick in many ways," Pegelow said. "The barbecue, at least on a symbolic level, shows appreciation from our students. It's a nice thing for them to do."

Although Pegelow said most teaching assistants do not care that the event was canceled, there is concern for what he called "the continuing trend for TAs to be stuck in the background."

"The real issue is not the barbecue,"

Pegelow said.

"The real issue is how the administration treats us, why we aren't considered real workers so we can get benefits and a living wage."

Learning from this year's cancellation, Page said he will work with Student Body President Jen Daum to help reinstate the TA barbecue in 2003.

"I'll assure you that we make sure it happens next year."

The University Editor can be reached at udesk@unc.edu.

Developments in the War on Terrorism

No Case Against Man Who Knew Hijackers

■ The government's jailing of material witnesses for a grand jury investigation of the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks is unconstitutional, a federal judge ruled Tuesday in throwing out a perjury case against a Jordanian college student.



U.S. Troops Kill al-Qaida Suspects

■ Fire fights between U.S.-led special forces and suspected al-Qaida terrorists left up to four of the suspects dead, a U.S. general said Tuesday, detailing attacks in an eastern region where allied leaders say pockets of al-Qaida fighters are holed up.

Islamic Charity, Director Charged With Perjury

■ An Islamic charity, Benevolence International Foundation, and its director were charged with perjury Tuesday and accused of supporting terrorists, including a man who allegedly tried to acquire nuclear weapons for Osama bin Laden.

Local Governments Consider Budget Cutbacks

By JENNIFER JOHNSON
Staff Writer

Faces of Chapel Hill, Carrboro, Hillsborough and Orange County officials were grim as each delegation presented its budget for the coming year at Monday night's Assembly of Governments meeting.

Local officials trying to pound out a budget put frustration aside and worked on ways to minimize budget cutbacks, including increasing taxes and delaying county contributions to capital projects and affordable housing initiatives.

Orange County Manager John Link presented the county's budget proposal and gave the prediction that during the 2002-03 fiscal year, Orange County will have to deal with a \$750,000 increase in the cost of Medicaid, a \$1.5 million increase in education spending and a \$1.2 million increase to retain employees.

County property taxes could increase by 4.5 cents because of a growing tax

base. The amount of funds the county has available for appropriation has fallen by \$1,141,596. Sales tax revenue is unknown because officials cannot predict the rate of economic recovery in the coming year.

Orange County Commissioner Alice Gordon said the county planned its budget around receiving state reimbursements and without them, taxes could go up another 3 cents.

"But we're not trying to raise taxes," Gordon said. "Taxes will only increase if we don't get the reimbursements."

If the county does not get the \$3.1 million in reimbursements, officials plan to withhold payments to the county's affordable housing initiative.

But even if payments are withheld, the affordable housing program would still have \$1.3 million set aside for projects next year. The county would simply not make its usual yearly contribution to the fund.

The county's municipalities also are expecting to raise taxes to deal with budget problems.

Carrboro is predicting a 7-cent tax increase, Chapel Hill is predicting a 6.6-cent tax increase and Hillsborough is predicting a 6-cent increase. The towns, unlike the county, did not incorporate state reimbursements into their budgets.

The state withheld \$1.4 million in reimbursements from Chapel Hill this year and \$300,000 from Carrboro.

Officials at the meeting Monday night also had their fingers crossed that the state would not yank a promised city-town utility franchise and beer-wine taxes from municipalities as it did last year.

But Rep. Verla Insko, D-Orange, warned of possible cuts in the N.C. Department of Health and Human Services that could cut home and community care block grants by \$1.5 million and would have a direct impact on the elderly, who depend on in-home services.

Other potential cuts are in areas of mental health and enforcement of child support payments, Insko said.

Carrboro Alderman Jacquelyn Gist criticized the state for considering the cuts, when municipalities are being forced to raise taxes. "(The state) is avoiding the political consequences of raising taxes and putting it on us," Gist said. "It's a very politically cynical move."

The City Editor can be reached at citydesk@unc.edu.

For the Record

In the April 29 article "Officials Urge Faculty to Fight Cuts," it was incorrectly reported that a 4 percent to 5 percent state budget cut would cost UNC-Chapel Hill \$120 million to \$240 million. A 4 percent to 5 percent cut to UNC-CH would cost the University \$20 million to \$25 million.

The Daily Tar Heel regrets the error.

The Daily Tar Heel

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