

Board Editorials

Take a Step Back

The N.C. General Assembly should leave the business of managing the UNC system to the university administrators and stop micromanaging growth.

North Carolina's economic performance in the past year has left the state with massive budget issues. With a budget yet to be finalized by the Senate, big decisions must be made. Yet our state congressmen are using poor judgment by trying to micromanage the UNC system.

While departments are faced with tough decisions, the N.C. legislature is making some of them for them. The legislature is pushing for the UNC-system Board of Governors to develop new education programs at various system colleges.

Senate and House proposals mandate the creation of two engineering programs at Western Carolina and Appalachian State universities and a new engineering school at East Carolina University. It also stipulates that a full pharmacy school be developed at Elizabeth City State University.

While the merit of their request is not questioned, their timing is. UNC-Chapel Hill already has planned for a 5 percent budget cut. Increased academic expansion in the UNC system only would further reduce the University's ability to subsidize departments adequately enough to retain gifted tenured professors and attract other rising talent in the field.

The legislature's poor decisions have not stopped there. UNC-CH Chancellor James Moeser scheduled the closure of the Horace Williams Airport, citing that it is expensive to maintain.

All operations, including the medical air operation of the University's Area Health Education Centers program, could be moved to Raleigh-Durham International Airport. The legislature, with the support of area businesses, provided in each of its budget proposals that UNC-CH shall continue

operating the Horace Williams Airport for Medical Air Inc. operations, the Area Health Education Cooperative and as a public access airport.

On the surface, it seems a reasonable request to have the airport remain open for medical air support purposes.

However, the University maintains that all medical services would be adequately served by RDU.

Instead, businessmen have been pushing for Horace Williams to remain open simply so they can avoid longer commutes than the 30-minute drive to Chapel Hill from Raleigh.

It's a tough decision between rich businessmen's luxury or University employees' jobs.

University administrators are trying to make the right choice. The legislature should let them do it.

The fact remains that there will be budget cuts. Faculty will lose their jobs, and tuition probably will rise.

UNC-CH itself has been trying to trim a lot of fat, careful not to cut too deeply into vital aspects of programs.

It takes careful examination and discussion before making cuts that decide the fate of some teachers' careers.

The University, UNC system and legislature should do all they can to preserve them.

Innovative partnerships between universities could benefit in the creation of adequate departments at Elizabeth City State, Western Carolina, Appalachian and ECU with the bonus of being more cost-effective than building new programs.

With little fat left and much still to be cut, the House and Senate should avoid legislative micromanagement and leave the painful decisions up to the universities that know their situations best.

The Daily Tar Heel

Established 1893 • 109 Years of Editorial Freedom
www.dailytarheel.com

KIM MINUGH
EDITOR
Office Hours Noon-2 Friday

ALEX KAPLUN
MANAGING EDITOR

LIZZIE BREYER
PROJECTS EDITOR

Lucas Fenske
EDITORIAL PAGE EDITOR
Kelly Lusk
SPORTS EDITOR
Terri Ruper
COPY EDITOR
Adam Shupe
ONLINE EDITOR

Daniel Thigpen
UNIVERSITY EDITOR
Aaron Fitt
SPORTSATURDAY EDITOR
Kimberly Craven
PHOTO EDITOR
Sarah Sanders
WRITING COACH

Jon Dougherty
CITY EDITOR
Addie Sluder
FEATURES EDITOR
Beth Buchholz & Tiffany Pease
DESIGN EDITORS
Michael Flynn
OMBUDSMAN

Elyse Ashburn
STATE & NATIONAL EDITOR
Nick Parker
ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT EDITOR
Cobi Edelson
GRAPHICS EDITOR

If you have any concerns or comments about our coverage, please contact Ombudsman Michael Flynn at mlflynn@email.unc.edu or by phone at 843-5794.



Plugging Budget Holes

Legislators should focus on fiscal responsibility and not use short-term fixes to balance this year's budget shortfall.

It seems that members of the N.C. General Assembly are putting creativity and partisan politics over sensibility and objectivity in finding solutions to the state's budget shortfall.

The state House and Senate plans rely on \$650 million and \$820 million, respectively, in one-time revenue sources to pay for ongoing state expenses. The money comes via transfers from state reserves, debt refinancing and temporary tax increases.

A clever solution, but with one catch: The money will only be available for one year, leaving future lawmakers to recover the funds.

Republicans argue that the use of one-time money to pay for on-going costs creates a "rickety" budget, while Democrats counter by saying that in the tight fiscal crunch desperate times call for desperate measures.

The potential consequences of the use of one-time funds became clear earlier this week.

On Monday, the state lost its AAA credit rating with Moody's Investors Service in response to the state's fiscal woes and the dependence on one-time revenue in budget plans. The lower rating will make it more difficult for the state to attract future investors and complicates efforts to close a long-term debt of \$3.5 billion.

But the biggest impact of the use of nonrecurring funds could be a reduced quality of state services.

The House plan cuts \$512,693 in from the state Department of Correction to reappoint four outgoing special Superior Court judges a year earlier than scheduled. While department salaries aren't included in the cuts, the plan could hurt other operating costs.

Meanwhile, the Senate budget takes \$205 million from the Highway Trust Fund and seizes \$100

million in unspent Hurricane Floyd relief money, two revenue sources repeatedly targeted by lawmakers in past efforts to balance the budget.

But perhaps the greatest brouhaha in the budget comes over plans to fund More at Four, Gov. Mike Easley's education initiative for at-risk preschoolers. The Senate did not include money for the pre-K program in its budget. But, through some political wrangling, the House allocated \$70 million to fund the program.

After Republicans on the Appropriations Committee cut \$28 million from More at Four to restore planned cuts to health-care programs for the elderly, Democrats requested a revote because some party members were absent during the earlier vote. Then, on a 42-40 party-line vote, money was restored to the program.

The move comes only weeks after Easley blasted GOP leadership for playing "political games" during budget talks. But it appears that in the revote charade, complete with Easley staff members forbidding lawmakers from leaving the More at Four vote, it was the Democrats who were playing games.

The crusade to expand More at Four funds is a shallow effort by Democrats to show party unity heading into the fall elections and is an overall embarrassment to the political process.

This year's budget talks should have focused on finding practical solutions to overcome a mounting multimillion shortfall. Instead, lawmakers have turned the process into a game of tug-of-war, moving money from one state agency to another without showing much concern for the potential consequences.

In the end, the only losers will be the millions of North Carolinians who depend on state services.

Students, Remember Past Frolics, But Don't Forget Your Economics

Welcome to college. This week, as you enter the halls of academia and lean back on ivy-covered walls pondering the big questions, reading the great books and planning the future of your life, you will also engage yourself in student life — an age-old tradition of debauchery, vandalism and excess.

Over the next year, we will embarrass our parents. Some of us might even be expelled. However, we shouldn't delude ourselves into believing that we're in any way original. We're just the newest addition to a centuries-old parade of scoundrels and miscreants who, in their spare time, also called themselves students.

In his history of Western civilization, "From Dawn to Decadence," Jacques Barzun writes that medieval undergraduates were "practitioners of anarchy" for whom "towns were fair game for mugging and murder with impunity." More recently, students who had engaged in drunken rioting at the University of Virginia almost brought that university's 82-year-old founder — Thomas Jefferson — to tears during their trial by the university's Board of Visitors.

The students of our own University haven't let themselves be outdone by their rivals in Charlottesville. Phillips Russell asserts that the first students at

Chapel Hill "owned more pistols than books." William Snider writes that by the 1830s two competing social clubs — the Ugly Club and the Boring Club — dominated campus life. Their mission? To make their members familiar "with all the paths of vice in the college for fun and frolic."

Without forgetting or neglecting this distinguished heritage, it's still necessary for us, as students, to realize how unique our place in society is. Despite our nation's obsession with work and productivity, we still manage to carve out four

years of introspection and self-improvement for our most promising young adults. What an incredible gift! While many of us are working our way through college, many of us are also on the dole — receiving free tuition, room and board and alcohol from our parents. Not only are we scoundrels, we're mooching scoundrels.

Not everyone is so lucky. President Bush has recently threatened to veto a bill that would allow welfare recipients to attend community college while receiving government aid. Without support from the government to pay their family's bills while they attend classes, education is an impossible dream for single mothers who missed their first chance at post-secondary training. Bush's attack hardly seems fair, especially considering he spent

his college years boozing it up while mooching off of his parents. While it's fine for the rich to depend on their parents during their college years, it's apparently unacceptable for the poor to depend on the federal government during theirs.

There's nothing wrong with following in the footsteps of our forebears — and George W. Bush — by having fun during our college years. If not now, when? I guarantee you binge drinking isn't as cool at 45. But at the same time, it's absolutely necessary to realize how privileged we are by these four years of relative freedom.

This year, when you're being thrown out of a window at a party, think about what you'd like to change if you got to serve in the U.S. Senate. While you're wrestling your brother to the floor at Top of the Hill on the night of your 21st birthday, think about new ways you could raise money for a worthy cause. While you're rioting on Franklin Street after we beat Duke this year, figure out if you'd rather learn Mandarin or Swahili.

As Baudelaire says, "Get drunk!" But don't limit yourself to blue cups and vodka shots; also get drunk on literature, volunteering and writing witty, urbane columns for The Daily Tar Heel. If you overspecialize in either, you won't have gotten all you can out of this wonderful place.

Not-so-witty, not-so-urbane columnist Jim Doggett can be reached at jdoggett@email.unc.edu.



JIM DOGGETT
REACH EXCEEDS GRASP

EDITOR'S NOTE: The above editorials are the opinions of solely The Daily Tar Heel Editorial Board, which were reached after open debate. The board consists of eight board members, the assistant editorial page editor, the editorial page editor and the DTH editor. The 2002-03 DTH editor decided not to vote on the board and not to write board editorials.

READERS' FORUM

Best Way to Learn About Islam Is to Read The Complete Quran

TO THE EDITOR:

Many people are against Carolina having their new students read the Quran; yet if this is really for scholarly purposes then why use an abridged edition, especially when so many of the passages being discussed in the media are missing?

Students will read the book and still not know the full information — how could that be the basis for a scholarly work?

Is that the way Carolina approaches scholarship?

Where is the thinking by their board, or could it be just as corrupt as many of the corporate boards? Maybe they need people with some understanding of ethics on the board.

Although they may just be out for publicity, since the only bad PR is no PR! And they hopefully knew that this requirement would certainly produce this uproar, or did they?

What if the book that was chosen was the New Testament?

Would the administration defend that decision? Where would academic freedom be then? Would students defend that decision?

Would the ACLU have defended that decision too?

I think not, but then again I am not one of the scholars turned out by the University of Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Joseph John Rothengast
Raleigh

UNC Officials Should Offer Different Books For Reading Programs

TO THE EDITOR:

Dear Chancellor Moeser, it is clear to me that the University is using "Approaching the Qur'an: The Early Revelations" to indoctrinate new students. If the summer reading program was actually intended to introduce college-level discourse among these young people and their professors, you and your committee would have included more than one choice.

If quality education is the intent of the University, then I challenge you to inspire all of Carolina's students to learn the truth for themselves and reject the force-feeding of the narrow viewpoint offered by Mr. Sells. It would be a good idea to augment the summer reading program with a semester break reading program for the winter months and include Franklin Graham's

recent publication or "Unveiling Islam," which describes Quran passages that allow terrorists to justify killing all non-Muslims.

You stated that it took great courage to choose Mr. Sells' book. But it will take even more courage to do what is right for all Carolina students, the alumni and the taxpayers of North Carolina. We will be watching.

Cynthia Downs
Class of 1980

U.S. Must Change Israel Policy Before Turmoil in Middle East Can End

TO THE EDITOR:

Michael McKnight seems to think that the anti-American attitudes in the Middle East emerged after the World Trade Center bombings.

These sentiments have existed for a very long time, and while the actions of terrorists cannot be condoned, many people (including non-Muslims) in many parts of the world understand the frustration felt by Muslims.

McKnight seems to believe that the leaders of Islamic countries are responsible for "curb[ing] the tide of anti-American sentiment that has swept these nations." Perhaps the U.S. should also be involved in

ending this, starting with a change in foreign policy that stops the support of the terrorist state of Israel?

As for the Quran debate, I too disagree with it being required reading, but for different reasons than most people. There should be a separation between religion and the state and, although UNC has its heart in the right place, I would object to being required to read any religious works, including the Bible.

Kirsty Carter
Senior
International Studies and French

Sells Neglects the Violent History of Islam, Serves Saudi Propaganda

TO THE EDITOR:

Michael Sells' expurgated Quran book selections give UNC students a false picture of Islam as a religion of peace. The book is not "provocative," it is a Saudi propaganda piece.

A specific Islamic sect is responsible for the Sept. 11 attack on America, the Wahhabis. All the suicide bombers were Wahhabis.

Students should know this much Islamic history: Around 1800 A.D., Wahhab

preached jihad against infidels, which included all other Muslim religions, and was exiled as a heretic. He converted a minor tribesman, the ancestor of today's Saudi princes, to his new doctrine: The mass murder of civilians became a passport to Islamic heaven. The pilots in the Sept. 11 attack treasured these Wahhabi passports, and they are preserved physical documents.

Using terrorism as a religious weapon, the Wahhabis took over what is now Saudi Arabia. Wahhab then launched an audacious attack against Turkey — then the most powerful country in the Middle East.

The Wahhabi attack on America which murdered 3,000 Americans therefore followed the Wahhabi tradition. However, this is the only major Islamic sect where the murder of civilians is meritorious.

We can learn how to win the war on terrorism from Islamic history. After repeated defeats, the Turkish sultan called on his best general, the Egyptian Mohammed Ali. The Egyptian knew how to deal with the Wahhabi: He slaughtered them as easily as they had slaughtered unarmed civilians. The Saudi princes fled back to their tents in the desert and were minor players for two centuries. What we need is a Pentagon general who will do the job over again.

Irwin D. Bross
Amherst, N.Y.

The Daily Tar Heel welcomes reader comments. 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. Faculty and staff should include their title, department 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.