

Board Editorials

All for One, One for All

Student Congress representatives should approve a proposal to create a "super-district" for off-campus students and also boost the group's image on campus.

Bigger might sometimes be better, but that doesn't make it the best solution.

The Student Congress Rules and Judiciary Committee is slated to examine today a proposal for merging congressional districts for off-campus students into a single "super-district."

Blair Sweeney, Student Congress Rules and Judiciary Committee chairman, said Monday he was drawing up a proposal that would exclude Granville Towers and Greek houses from the proposed "super-district."

Representatives should sign off on the proposal as long as the final congressional uberdistrict does not diminish the overall voice of off-campus students by decreasing the number of seats available for them.

Speaker Tony Larson, who aired the idea of creating a single off-campus district, said Monday he supports Sweeney's proposal.

The plan has the worthwhile goal of making it easier for off-campus residents to identify not only their district but also to increase the number of students actively participating in Congress — eliminating part of the annual problem of filling vacant seats.

The proposal, however, is a mere stopgap measure to solve the larger problem facing Student Congress — the group's lack of importance in the eyes of all too many students.

This problem might be eased by altering how

off-campus students are elected.

But the ultimate cause rests on the perception of students that Congress is largely irrelevant to their day-to-day lives — apart from the allocation of student activity fees to campus groups.

Congress members can start by taking a more public role in representing student interests before town officials and University officials.

Rather than rely on Student Body President Jen Daum to take the lead in defending student interests, Congress members should seize the spotlight by organizing their own protests, coordinating with others as necessary to provide the strongest possible response.

Representatives can start by organizing a student e-mail campaign to members of the Chapel Hill Town Council opposing proposed changes to the development ordinance that effectively single out students. They should also push for a strong presence at the next council meeting.

Representatives also should examine their whole basis for distributing seats to bring students into closer contact with their representative. Rather than allot seats based on housing, Congress members should explore alternatives, such as allotting a certain number of seats to each class or opening up the election outright and invite all interested students to run for an at-large seat.

Bigger is a fine start, but it's not a good ending.

Questionable Leadership

Gov. Mike Easley must rebuild his poor relationship with state legislators if he is to have any hope of successfully passing his campaign platform.

Gov. Mike Easley sorely needs lessons in how the legislative branch works.

The first-term governor is well-versed in the workings of the administrative aspects of government from his tenure as attorney general and as a district attorney. But Easley, who lacks legislative experience, has demonstrated confusion and borderline incompetence when it comes to working with the N.C. General Assembly.

Easley must begin to improve his relationship with N.C. legislators immediately. Otherwise, the governor runs the risk of losing what little clout he has in the Legislative Building and of completing his term as little more than a spoiled brat threatening to veto key bills unless he gets his way.

Easley has had a multitude of difficulties when it comes to working with legislators in his first year and a half in office, even though both legislative houses are controlled by his own Democratic Party.

Granted, most of the tension between the governor and legislators comes from trying to find new revenue and desperately trying to find acceptable cuts to balance the state's budget.

But rather than work with the legislators to reach an acceptable budget compromise, Easley largely has left the legislature spinning its wheels only to become involved publicly in the last few days with heavy-handed demands.

After the governor released his own budget proposal earlier this year, which included revenue from a nonexistent lottery to fund educational programs such as smaller classes, he effectively disappeared from the public spotlight for the summer.

The governor, rather than wage an active public campaign, left the business of passing a budget largely to legislative leaders and behind-the-scenes advocacy from himself and his lobbyists. This was a major mistake, endangering his legislative agenda.

Easley should have made more of an effort to reach out to the rank-and-file members of the state legislature, particularly in the N.C. House, where Democrats have a tenuous four-seat advantage over their counterparts on the other side of the aisle.

House Speaker Jim Black, D-Mecklenburg, is not a strong-arm legislative leader and continues his past inability to weld the Democrats in the House into a single voting bloc for key issues.

Easley only ended his summer vacation and hit center stage last week when it appeared that the final budget would pass without some of his central campaign planks — a state lottery, decreased class size for K-3 and funding for More at Four, a program to educate at-risk 4-year-olds.

Easley began the second phase of his half-hearted and too-late campaign for the lottery mere days before the N.C. House prepared to vote. The governor's dreams of a lottery-induced cash windfall were dashed after a decisive 69-50 vote in the House opposing a lottery referendum. The unsuccessful lottery vote largely was motivated by the governor's unwillingness earlier this year to offer legislators political concessions for supporting a lottery referendum.

Easley should have learned as a prosecutor that compromising in the form of deal-making is sometimes a necessary evil.

The bitterness between the state's executive and the legislative branches hit such heights last week that legislators were prepared to axe Easley's education initiatives outright. Only a last-minute threat from the governor to veto the entire budget led to Easley's pet programs receiving limited funding in the budget.

Easley's determination to remain lily-white in the gray world of political reality made it harder to push his legislative agenda this year. And the governor's own attitude shows that the turmoil isn't likely to end after legislators return home this year.

Easley, angry at attempts to ax his pet programs, showed his pettiness and inability to compromise by withdrawing an invitation for legislative leaders to discuss the state budget with him at the Executive Mansion. After the lottery vote, Easley said lottery opponents would pay the price at the November polls — burning Easley's political bridges and cementing the divide between the branches.

Easley has two years remaining to right his errors. Let's hope the governor learns from his past mistakes.

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

Tuition Panel Explores Ways to Keep Campus Open for Residents

TO THE EDITOR:

The average North Carolinian earns \$20,092 a year. For one in-state student to attend UNC-Chapel Hill, estimated costs are \$11,668. The math is simple — if not for financial aid, Carolina is already inaccessible to the average North Carolinian. For this reason, commitment to financial aid will continue to be at the top of the Tuition Task Force's priority list. The University must be accessible to all North Carolinians who wish to attend, regardless of economics.

The question is clear — how can UNC-CH continue to compete with peer institutions and be accessible to all of North Carolina's taxpayers while operating under the constraints of the legislature and the fiscal issues facing the state?

The unfortunate reality is that tuition is going to increase. Our charge, as students serving on the Tuition Task Force, is to decide how slowly tuition will rise and where the resources generated will be placed. In addition to competing with other public institutions, Carolina competes with the best private schools in the nation, whose endowments provide extremely comprehensive aid programs.

We are acutely aware of the impact our costs have had on the families and students affected by sudden and unplanned increases in the price of education. This University is founded on the principle of service to the state — and we believe that tuition-generated revenue must be spent toward that ideal.

Last year, the campus-based increase was divided into the following categories: 40 percent for need-based financial aid, 30 percent to fund faculty salary increases, 24 percent to fund new faculty positions and 6 percent to increase graduate assistant stipends. We will be re-evaluating those proportions as the task force starts to make concrete decisions regarding the next five years. We will discuss whether or not it is the University's duty to fund new faculty positions or if we expect the legislature to fund baseline salaries for our tuition dollars to supplement.

The issue of graduate student stipends is another matter of great interest to the task force. We are dedicated to devoting more resources to recruit and retain the best graduate students from around the country. Working in tandem with the task force to review teaching and research assistant stipends, we will explore alternative funding sources to compete with our peer institutions.

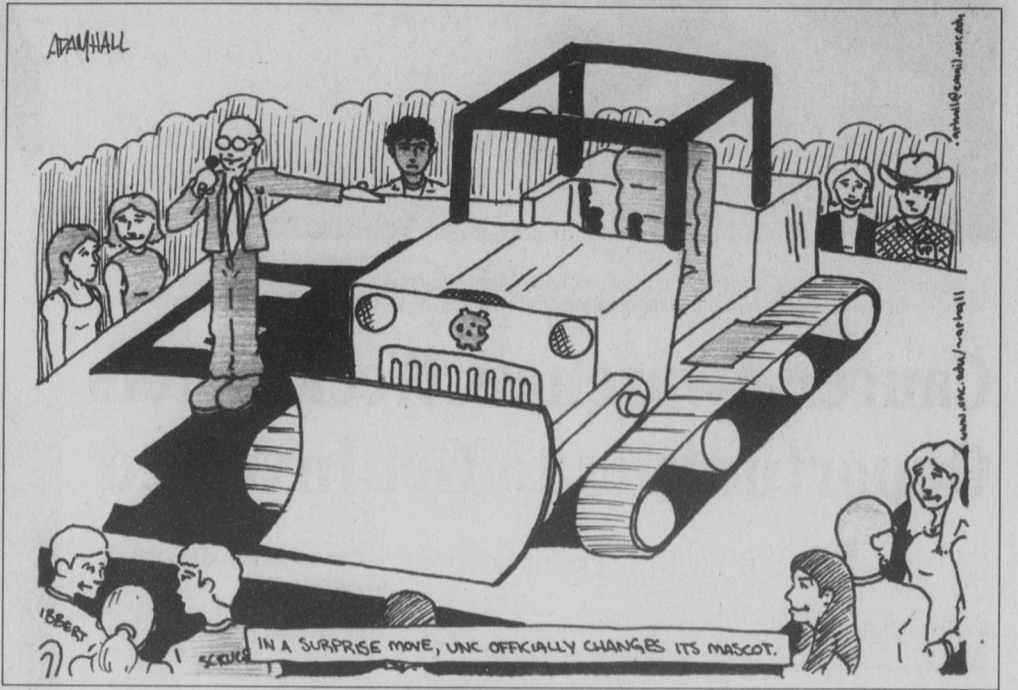
It is important to remember that it is more expensive to hire new faculty mem-

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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.



Democrat Ads Mislead About Dole's Social Security Plans

Less than two weeks after winning his party's primary election, Democratic U.S. Senate candidate Erskine Bowles has already managed to break a campaign promise.

Last February, Bowles denounced the negative nature of political campaigns and vowed not to engage in political mudslinging.

But on Thursday, the N.C. Democratic Party shamefully released the first negative attack ad of the race on behalf of Bowles, who sits on the party's executive committee.

Television stations statewide pulled the 30-second ad the very same day after it was revealed that the ad mischaracterized Republican U.S. Senate candidate Elizabeth Dole's position on the issue of Social Security.

The ad erroneously alleged that Dole wants to "gamble" Social Security in the stock market and included a picture of Dole along with a Charlotte Observer banner, the words, "Gamble Social Security in Stock Market," and the date Sept. 1. To the casual observer it would appear that Dole must have said such a thing or that the Observer must have run an editorial stating this on Sept. 1.

The Observer, however, never ran an article or editorial stating anything of the sort. The paper's editor, Jennie Buckner, called the Democrats' bluff and described

the ad as "misleading."

The ad was revised but had to be pulled for a second time after it still left viewers with the perception that the Observer characterized Dole's Social Security plan as a "gamble." Other parts of the ad are also meant to mislead voters. Another portion suggests Dole plans to change the level of benefits for current Social Security recipients.

In reality, Dole has no plans to change the benefit levels for current Social Security recipients. Dole's plan is rather simple and straightforward. She simply favors allowing younger workers

the option of investing a portion of their Social Security in the stock market to earn a higher return on their retirement savings. It seems odd that anyone would oppose this proposition because under Dole's plan, no one is forced to invest in the stock market — they simply have the option. Voters should feel insulted that Bowles and the Democrats do not feel that they are not competent enough to make good choices about how best to save for retirement.

The ad and the Democrats' position on the issue are especially ironic given the fact that former President Clinton touted a proposal that is almost identical to Dole's proposition in 1999, not long after Bowles left his post as White House chief of staff.

"The best way to keep Social Security a

rock-solid guarantee is not to make drastic cuts in benefits, not to raise payroll tax rates, not to drain resources from Social Security in the name of saving it," Clinton said in his 1999 State of the Union address. "Instead, I propose that we make the historic decision to invest the surplus (in the private sector) to save Social Security."

The negative ad and Bowles' apparent flip-flop on the Social Security issue are just two examples of the hypocrisy that has characterized the Bowles campaign.

Dole sent a letter Sept. 10 to Bowles proposing that the two candidates forgo the usual 30-second television ads and instead fund a series of televised debates. Unfortunately, Bowles rejected Dole's offer and instead chose to run a series of slimy and deceptive ads like the one that premiered Thursday in an effort to mislead N.C. voters.

Bowles' rejection of Dole's proposal is highly hypocritical given that his campaign and the state Democrat Party were accusing Dole of trying to avoid substantive debate on this issue less than two weeks ago. Now Bowles is the one who is trying to evade meaningful public discourse.

But it is still early in the race. Bowles has time to accept Dole's offer and give voters what they deserve: substantive discussion on this issue instead of false and misleading mudslinging.

E-mail Michael McKnight at mmcknight@email.unc.edu.



MICHAEL MCKNIGHT
RIGHT OF WAY

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.

senting the student body to the best of our abilities and to listening to all interested parties. But we need this issue to be a campuswide dialogue, not something that only the task force itself discusses. The task force is meeting at 3:30 p.m. in 120 Vance Hall.

This week, you have the opportunity to attend a Board of Trustees meeting at 8 a.m. Thursday in the Carolina Inn and see how the University's administrative bodies operate. We encourage you to seize the opportunity and to begin voicing your views and concerns right now, while all subjects are under review.

Figures cited are from the Web site for the Census Bureau (<http://www.census.gov>) and the UNC-CH admissions Web site (<http://www.admissions.unc.edu>).

Jen Daum
Tuition Task Force Co-chairwoman
Rebekah Burford
Tuition Task Force member

The length rule was waived.

CAA Offers Application For Homecoming King, Queen to UNC Seniors

TO THE EDITOR:
It's time to crown a new Homecoming

king and queen! Applications are now available in the Carolina Athletic Association's office in Suite 3508 of the Student Union.

Applicants must be full-time students of senior standing with a minimum cumulative GPA of 2.8. The nominee must be sponsored by a campus organization of which they may or may not be a member.

All applicants will move on to a round of interviews in which various members of the campus and local community will serve as interviewers. Candidates are required to design a service project benefiting the campus or Chapel Hill/Carrboro community.

Applicants are also required to submit a resume, transcript and one letter of recommendation from a faculty or staff member with the completed application. There is fee for applying; however, all money collected goes to support the winners' planned service project. All applications are due back to the CAA office by Oct. 4 at 5 p.m.

We encourage all interested senior students to apply and wish them the best of luck in the process!

Laura Kiernan
Junior
School of Journalism and Mass Communication
Allison Maiuri
Senior
Psychology