

Board Editorials

Logging Off

As budget constraints force the closing of some campus computer labs, University officials must make student interests and needs their top consideration.

It appears that the computer lab in Ehringhaus Residence Hall is the latest casualty in ongoing efforts to trim the University's budget.

Officials from the Residence Hall Association, student government and Academic Technology & Networks decided last spring to close the Ehringhaus lab as one of several cost-cutting measures for campus computer labs.

Other labs, including unstaffed labs on South Campus and the Cobb Residence Hall lab, will remain under watch this semester to judge their demand. These labs might be the next on the chopping block.

Although the Carolina Computing Initiative might have reduced the need for computer labs on campus, many students still look to the facilities because of their quiet atmosphere and the availability of free printing.

While closing underutilized computer labs undoubtedly will help the University free up funds needed for other campus programs, it is imperative that officials propose alternatives to labs to meet students' continuing computer needs.

First, leaders should encourage students hoping to find some quiet space to do homework or access the Internet outside of their room to use study lounges in residence halls, which are already wired for Internet use. To meet students' printing needs, officials could examine the feasibility of adding a printing station to halls to enable students to print papers without having to wait in long lines or trek all the way to another building.

Officials also should encourage the use of other computer labs remaining open throughout campus, including labs in Davis and the Undergraduate libraries and the new 24-hour lab

in the recently opened Student Union addition.

But officials must ensure that students have safe means of getting back and forth to these labs.

Student government leaders could examine the feasibility of expanding the Safe Ride program, including adding a reverse Point-To-Point route to cut back on the time students must wait for a shuttle and discourage students from walking alone on campus at night. Officials also could consider extending the hours of the SAFE Escort program, which shuttles students back and forth from the Undergrad.

To avoid closing labs all together, officials also could look at other ways to trim costs at the facilities, including decreasing the hours that the labs are open.

Another move, though one that should be approached cautiously, would be for Student Congress to propose an increase in student fees to go toward maintenance fees for the computer labs. A 50 cent or \$1 increase could raise thousands of dollars to help defer printing and/or staffing costs.

But if all else fails and more computer labs must shut down, officials should first consider closing labs located in residence halls on North Campus, which are in short walking distance from campus libraries.

Leaders, however, must again take additional steps to protect the safety of students walking in the area, including improving lighting near these residence halls and increasing the number of safety officers patrolling campus walkways at night.

While no one disagrees that the University will have to cut back on some services to combat the tough budget situation, officials should be sure that students' safety and their ability to do course work aren't compromised.

Close the Hangar

Given the state's budget situation, the University and the state have a vested interest in closing the Horace Williams Airport to free up badly needed funding.

After several months and votes, the N.C. General Assembly finally gritted out a state budget.

Legislators have talked about cutting agencies to the bare bones, but the legislative-approved budget still has some fat in the form of the Horace Williams Airport.

In response to the budget situation, Chancellor James Moeser said in May that he wanted to close the airport to save the University key funding for other services such as classes.

But area businessmen and pilot organizations, unhappy with the University's decision, took their case to the General Assembly and asked legislators to force the University to keep the airport open for at least five more years.

And special interests won out even in the face of a \$2 billion budget shortfall.

This decision to keep the airport open was not only unfair for the University but also ill-advised in this time of economic downturn.

The airport costs about \$250,000 per year to operate.

But officials are going to have to pay an additional \$2 million to update safety and security improvements.

All in all, the minimum cost for keeping the airport open until 2005 will be close to \$3 million — money that could be used to offer additional classes at the University.

Some economic officials predict that the state will have budget deficits for the next four years.

Mandating that UNC maintain the airport places a heavy financial strain on the campus at the worst time.

It forces the University to develop an excess pro-

ject during a time when departments are being cut and faculty will see no raises.

Expendable services such as an airport must be cut during hard economic times, not maintained.

The airport is used for private business, UNC officials and the Area Health Education Centers program, which sends UNC faculty around the state to help coordinate health-care programs.

After Moeser announced plans for the closure of the airport, opponents seized on the AHEC program as an excuse to keep the airport open.

But AHEC officials said basing their program out of Raleigh/Durham International Airport would be sufficient to carry out their services.

Phasing out the airport also eliminates safety concerns voiced by surrounding residents because of past airplane accidents.

Both necessary programs such as AHEC and convenient services such as easy access to air travel can be adequately performed by RDU.

With a finalized budget cutting deeply into an expanding education system, luxuries such as Horace Williams Airport must be cut if it is at the University's discretion.

Funding that will go toward the airport would make more of a significant impact on the University community if spent on services that have been cut, such as positions in departments such as the Department of Computer Science and residence hall computer labs.

Lawmakers in Raleigh made the wrong call by micromanaging UNC's decision to phase out the airport.

In a tight fiscal year, legislators made themselves look irresponsible by mandating that the airport remain open.

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

UNC Officials Should Develop Plan Balancing Kindness With Safety

TO THE EDITOR:

I am writing in regards to the armed robbery that occurred in Avery Residence Hall on Thursday night, as well as the University's response to students' habit of "tailgating" into residence halls.

The University discourages anyone from letting others into the residence halls who they do not know directly and has posted "citations" in halls reminding students to keep their doors locked and reporting anything suspicious.

However, the point was made in Karey Wutkowski's column Monday that many students choose to ignore the "no tailgating" policy over being polite.

I wholeheartedly agree that safety is of the utmost importance on campus, but ignoring our fellow dorm members and slamming the door behind us is not conducive to a positive University experience.

No one wants to be rude, and before the robbery the University did not seem to bring any importance to the issue.

Perhaps some system could be devised in which students could easily identify dorm members — such as who their resident assistant is or some other fact that

could help students entering dorms be polite as well as safe.

At the present very few people actually obey the "no tailgating" policy because it is just plain rude to the people that actually live in the residence halls.

No one wants to become suspicious of every person walking in, and this policy could potentially lead to profiling as well.

If the University wants to help enforce this policy, they should come up with a plan that keeps everyone from feeling like everyone else is out to get them.

We can be friendly and be safe at the same time.

Katie Schwing
Freshman
College of Arts and Sciences

Government Has Clear Objective in Campaign To Get Rid of Saddam

TO THE EDITOR:

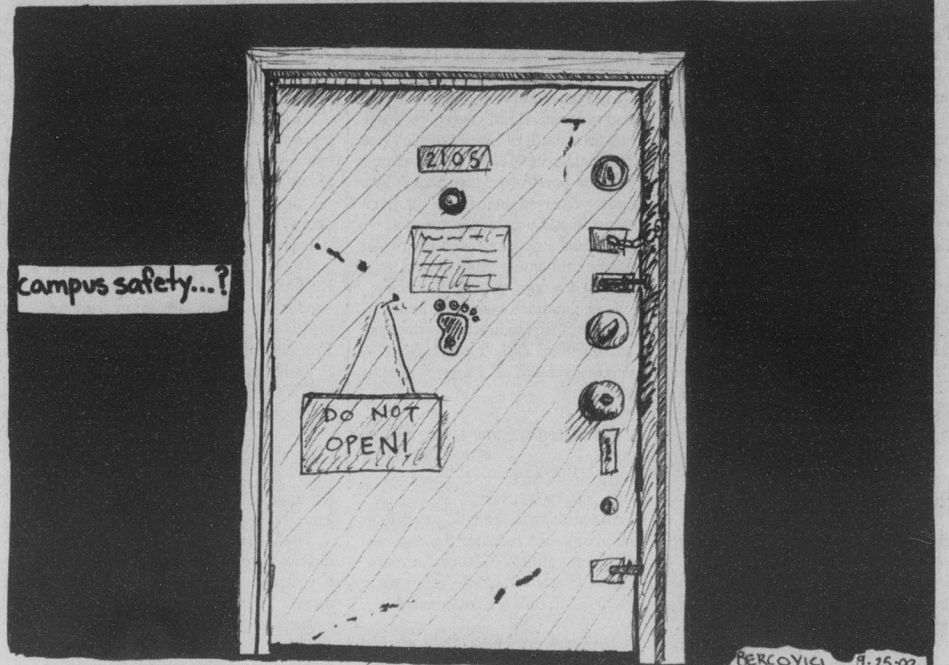
I am writing in response to Jonathan Brome's completely inappropriate criticism of McKnight's Sept. 17 (column).

First off, it strikes me as amazing Brome would make fun of McKnight using history to support his views. Since when did that become a red light for UNC admis-

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Streets at Southpoint, Franklin Street Contrast Planning Styles

And there it was, tucked under a newly planted tree. I had been hearing the chorus of Al Green's "Take Me to the River," but I hadn't been able to figure out from where it was coming. But there it was — a fake plastic rock with a little speaker in it.

I looked up. On the brick wall in front of me, I saw a fake 1920s-style advertisement for a fake company. The ad had been painted about eight months ago to look like it had been painted eight decades ago. As I walked past the fake rock — which had now shifted to playing soft rock — a giant fake smokestack came into view. Spelled out along its spine was one word: SOUTHPOINT.

This is what greeted me a week ago when I made my second visit to Main Street, the focal point of Durham's newest mall, the Streets at Southpoint. If you haven't visited it, Main Street is on the exterior of the mall and is intended to resemble a bustling city street lined with stores. Its fake smokestack and advertisements are intended to evoke Durham's past.

The problem is that the only thing it evokes is the artificiality of Southpoint's present.

Southpoint, like every mall, epitomizes the urban sprawl of America. Its more than 150 stores have been placed close to I-40 but little else.

What's unique about Southpoint, however, is that it borrows its style from that which it helped to destroy — the downtown retail districts that used to be at the heart of every American town and city.

It's a mall with an identity crisis. The disconnect between what Southpoint is and what it tries to be can be particularly jarring for someone who regularly visits Franklin Street.

Unlike most places in America, our town has been able to maintain and enrich its historic downtown because UNC students need to shop within walking distance of their residence halls.

Main Street fails to capture the ambience of places like Franklin Street for a couple reasons.

First, Franklin Street has historical depth. While some of its stores and buildings have proved ephemeral, the street itself hasn't. Its relative constancy has a grounding effect — students move on; Franklin Street remains.

While Southpoint goes to pains to make itself look like an old street next to a converted tobacco warehouse, its self-conscious oldness only highlights how new it is. And its newness only highlights its transience; the place could easily someday go the way of its recently closed competitor, South Square Mall.

Second, Franklin Street's charm is linked to our common public ownership of it, something entirely missing at Southpoint. We don't just shop on Franklin Street; we live there. The steeple of University United Methodist Church — so starkly and beautifully lit at night — is juxtaposed with the window displays of its next-door neighbor, Schoolkids Records. While eating a pita at Hector's, you can look out the window and watch protests at the post office.

Part of writer James Howard Kunstler's critique of malls is that they are sequestered from the rest of our communities. Southpoint is no exception. There are no streets at Southpoint, just a giant sea of asphalt for parking that functions like a moat. Instead of running into beggars, you see statues of ducks dressed in marching band uniforms. They test your tolerance for bad taste, but not necessarily your social conscience.

The decision to import the esthetic of places like Franklin Street into malls demonstrates a pent-up nostalgia for the way we used to live. Unfortunately, developers seem to only have a superficial understanding of what makes places like Franklin Street really special.

Even if they can't build new Franklin Streets, surely we can at least ask them to avoid the fake plastic singing rocks.

Jim Doggett can be reached at jdoggett@email.unc.edu.



JIM DOGGETT
REACH EXCEEDS GRASP

his people for years.

Brome is a better example of people who act like Iraq in another world. They close their eyes and ears to the terrible acts Saddam commits regularly.

Phillip Sprehe
Junior
Political Science

Columnist Should Stop Blaming Others, Offer Constructive Criticism

TO THE EDITOR:

Every Friday I read the Daily Tar Heel for a recap of the week's events and a little laugh.

Last year, there was a lighter side to the DTH with columns that discussed serious issues, such as minority rights, without much negativity.

This year it's a different story — Tiffanie Drayton's column becomes increasingly pessimistic each week, leaving nothing positive to be said.

While I understand the need to air certain issues and support freedom of speech and freedom of the press, I do not think these things need to be done in such a dark way.

Even her staff picture darkens the mood

of her articles with furrowed brows and a harsh expression.

Drayton's recent article concerning hip-hop music displayed this negativity with generalized claims aimed at majority groups. I realize this is a column, but to stereotype white people as rich men who wear Abercrombie and Fitch and perpetuate the rise of bad music is a bit much to tolerate.

Have you ever noticed that if you accuse and complain constantly, people stop listening to what you have to say? Take the Pit Preacher, for example — we all hear him, but nobody pays attention.

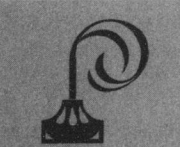
You will get people to take note of your messages when they offer a more constructive form of criticism that does not place all the blame on one particular group.

The messages are there, and they are good, but sifting through the garbage to get to them becomes too much work.

It seems as though majority groups aren't the only ones who need to make an effort to stop bigotry.

If minorities can't learn to let go of their prejudices, how can they expect things to change?

Amanda Fox
Sophomore
Elementary Education



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