

Board Editorials

# Funding the Future

The proposal to build new cancer and biotechnology centers would benefit the state by creating jobs and by promoting medical research.

It's not every day when you can get two things for the price of one.

But it could happen if the N.C. General Assembly gives final approval to an economic incentives package that, among other things, calls for the creation of a new cancer treatment center and a biopharmaceutical research center.

Senate leaders laid out plans for the creation of a new \$130 million, 272,000-square-foot cancer center at UNC Hospitals last week.

The plan also devoted \$45 million toward the construction of a new biopharmaceutical and bioprocess manufacturing training center at N.C. State University. The new centers would be funded using monies from the national tobacco settlement.

But the House Finance Committee stripped the centers from the bill Monday, saying that they might not have time to fully discuss the provisions before the session ends. Removal was a poor decision and diminishes the potential merits of the bill.

As a whole, the incentives package offers a good way for the state to boost its flagging economy through the creation of new jobs. The bill, which originally cleared the House on Aug. 26, is designed to entice out-of-state companies to set up shop in North Carolina in exchange for receiving a portion of the new employees' income taxes.

But the benefits of the new cancer and biopharmaceutical centers are twofold. Not only could these facilities bring up to 100,000 new jobs to the state during the next decade as officials have predicted, but the research performed at the centers could also improve the health and well-being of all North Carolinians.

Jeffrey Houpt, dean of the UNC-CH School of Medicine, said last week that the current location

of the N.C. Clinical Cancer Center in the Gravelly Building is no longer suitable for the ongoing treatment needs of patients.

Plus, the treatment center would help support the biotechnology center at N.C. State by testing the products developed at the facility, Amy Fulk, spokeswoman for Senate President Pro Tem Marc Basnight, told The Daily Tar Heel last week.

Under the Senate plan, the N.C. State biopharmaceutical training center also would oversee satellite training facilities at various community colleges throughout the state. Only seven of the state's 58 community colleges have curriculums designed to provide training for the biotechnology industry, while several more have programs that train in specific areas needed by biotech employers.

Enlisting the participation of community colleges to provide training for workers is crucial, particularly in areas of the state that in the past have been heavily dependent on tobacco and farming.

Without the new centers, the economic incentives package offers little to ensure that state residents can receive the skills training required should new companies move to the state.

If N.C. leaders hope to gradually phase out the state's traditional agriculture-based economy in favor of other industries, then they must lead the charge creating new jobs while also ensuring that state workers have the skills needed to perform these jobs.

Creating the new cancer and biopharmaceutical centers, which would incorporate the state's community college system, is a good start and one that should be reconsidered by the General Assembly.

The potential merits of these two centers should not be pushed aside just because House members are anxious to adjourn the session and go home.

# Equal Opportunity Pay

Having faculty pay more for their parking passes just because they can afford it makes it harder for them to utilize their practical and well-deserved perk.

As the Advisory Committee on Transportation works to develop a five-year transportation development plan, there are some potholes to avoid.

While tackling parking issues, ACT faces a multitude of options concerning who and how much to charge for the limited supply of on-campus parking spots. One issue surfacing is the concept of a sliding-scale pricing system for the different types of employees here at UNC.

ACT members had a brief discussion at their Sept. 25 meeting of tying the cost of parking to salary, generally meaning that faculty would pay more and employees would pay less. Members agreed to discuss the issue more in-depth at a later meeting.

Because faculty members, proponents of sliding-scale parking argue, are paid a higher salary on average, they should be required to pay a higher fee for a spot to balance the funding generated by parking.

ACT should not adopt this policy. Despite disparity in income, parking should not be treated as a luxurious treat for faculty but rather as a practical benefit to teaching here.

Although staff might have more of a barrier to affording parking spots, there exists a fare-free transit service in Chapel Hill that is more than a viable alternative to having a campus parking spot. For staff members who live too far from campus, there are still a set number of spots set aside for staff.

If affordability remains an issue, there are a number of off-campus parking places that are located near bus stops. Staff members still would be able to arrive at work at a reduced cost.

Parking is yet another resource that is granted to UNC faculty. To raise the cost of parking only restricts the ability of the University to give perks to faculty.

Raising their parking fee is somewhat of a ridicu-

lous notion. It acts as a penalty for working at UNC.

A large number of faculty live far enough from the University where driving to campus is the only realistic solution to getting to work. Imagine if every workplace demanded a high parking fee for the right to work at its office. While UNC's staff provides a large service, don't forget that education is the University's primary function.

The transportation administration should focus on using parking to provide benefits for faculty and give perks to the service industry. Although perhaps a harsh notion, it must inevitably take precedence in a competitive area such as parking.

Faculty must not feel as if they are being punished for needing a parking spot on campus by paying higher prices. Parking should still be offered to staff but on the same basis as faculty, not at a different price. Because of the existence of many public transportation resources available to staff, they should not feel excluded from campus life.

ACT will be holding forums at four places today to facilitate discussion on parking issues. University students, faculty and employees should attend one of the forums and share their concerns and ideas about campus transportation.

- 10 a.m.-noon at the Kenan Field House in the Rams Room
- 2 p.m.-4 p.m. in Wilson Library's Assembly Room
- 7:30 p.m.-9:30 p.m. in 1505 Student Union
- 11 p.m.-12:30 a.m. in the fourth-floor Clinic Auditorium (4008 Old Clinic Building)

Speaking out at the forum before ACT develops a proposal is the best way to avoid bumps in the road.

**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.

# DTH Editorial Page's Role Is to Share Opinions With Readers

Campus gray-hairs will recall the "Weekend Update" greeting from the early years of "Saturday Night Live": "I'm Chevy Chase and you're not."

Some readers are feeling a similar sense of self-righteousness from The Daily Tar Heel's editorial board — without the comic relief.

Who are the people behind the paper's editorial board, and what gives them the right to sound off each weekday? They are the 10 people who applied for or agreed to take the job.

Editorial Page Editor Lucas Fenske reports that he had six seats to fill on this fall's board but only received three applications. Fenske selected those individuals and recruited the remaining three members from the 40-person pool of would-be columnists. Convincing potential column writers to join the board is customary, says Fenske, as those slots draw dozens of applicants each semester.

The board meets on Sundays, Tuesdays and Thursdays, and every member usually writes one editorial each week. Topics are typically drawn from articles in the DTH and The (Raleigh) News & Observer, and Fenske says he tried to seek diversity of

background and opinion for the board.

An editor's note reveals that DTH Editor Kim Minugh, who last spring chose Fenske as the board's leader, opted not to vote or write editorials during her tenure. The note, which was added this year to reinforce the board's independence, also states: "The above editorials are the opinions of solely The Daily Tar Heel Editorial Board, which were reached after open debate."

Open to members but not interested students.

Participants at the initial Association of Student Leaders meeting in September wanted to know how to inform the DTH about the activities of their student groups.

Unlike the news editors, who encouraged group leaders to forward information to their desks and even stop by the newsroom, the editorial board was not interested in receiving unsolicited communication, notwithstanding any group's desire to offer a competing point of view.

Assistant Editorial Page Editor Jon Harris told the group that the board conducts its own research and that the opinions of the board are just that — like them

or not. Disgruntled readers can and do submit letters or columns challenging its viewpoints. But is the board's aloofness an appropriate reflection of editorial independence or a misguided exercise in secrecy?

According to Ferrel Guillory, director of the Program on Southern Politics, Media and Public Life, the DTH's approach is consistent with the conduct of other editorial boards. Guillory, who spent almost 25 years at The News & Observer, including a decade as editor of its editorial page, says his group had no public profile. "We didn't see it as our role," he says. "We were commenting on the news, not making it."

Guillory says corporate and community leaders occasionally requested or were invited by the board to present their views, but "It was not part of our job to convene a group to hash out something."

Fenske says he also prefers his group to have a low profile to showcase the ideas presented — not the personalities.

Like many commercial papers, the DTH board interviews candidates for local political office and does the same for students seeking prominent campuswide posts. This fall it plans to invite officials involved in the Honor Code revisions as part of its consideration of that topic.

But unlike the N&O, The New York

Times and other notable papers, the DTH publishes the names of its edit board members in the paper's staff box. Such identification allows readers to conduct their own inquiries into a board's makeup.

Fenske also refrains from censoring contributing columnists or cartoonists, despite regular requests from readers. One student objected to the handling of Tiffanie Drayton's Sept. 13 piece on feminism, which also remarked upon the responsibility of whites to end racism. The reader called that notion over-broad and said an editor should have objected to the line "and had it taken out or rewritten."

The student hoped that similar "mistakes" could be avoided in the future. Cultivating campus discussion on important topics is Fenske's role, however, not constricting the columnists' ability to convey their views. And this year's editorial columnists have addressed a noteworthy range of issues. Last spring's group mistakenly thought many readers were interested in their dating and relationship travails.

Cartoons often prove to be the editorial page's most engaging, provocative or offensive contents, depending, of course, on the reader's point of view.

A campus dean objected to Fenske's inclusion of Doug Marlette's Sept. 23 draw-

ing depicting Janet Reno as the new Miss North Carolina, claiming Reno's hand gesture mocked her Parkinson's condition.

The writer called the cartoon "a personal, mean-spirited, scurrilous, base attack on a person who did not deserve it" and wondered whether Marlette's rumored friendship with Reno's victorious opponent in last month's Florida gubernatorial primary motivated the cartoon.

Marlette, a UNC alumnus who taught two University courses last spring, responded that the drawing reflected his customary rendering of a pageant crowd wave and that the Parkinson's connection never occurred to him. Calling himself a friend and admirer of Reno, Marlette said that he had met her opponent but that his many personal contacts were irrelevant to his cartoons. "Stay tuned," he concluded. "I'm an equal opportunity offender."

Whatever one's view of the DTH editorial board and the contents of the opinion page, like many campus groups — and unlike commercial newspapers — it seeks new members each semester. Maybe in December Fenske won't be forced to find new colleagues from the columnist pile.

Reach DTH Ombudsman Michael Flynn at mflynn@email.unc.edu.

# 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

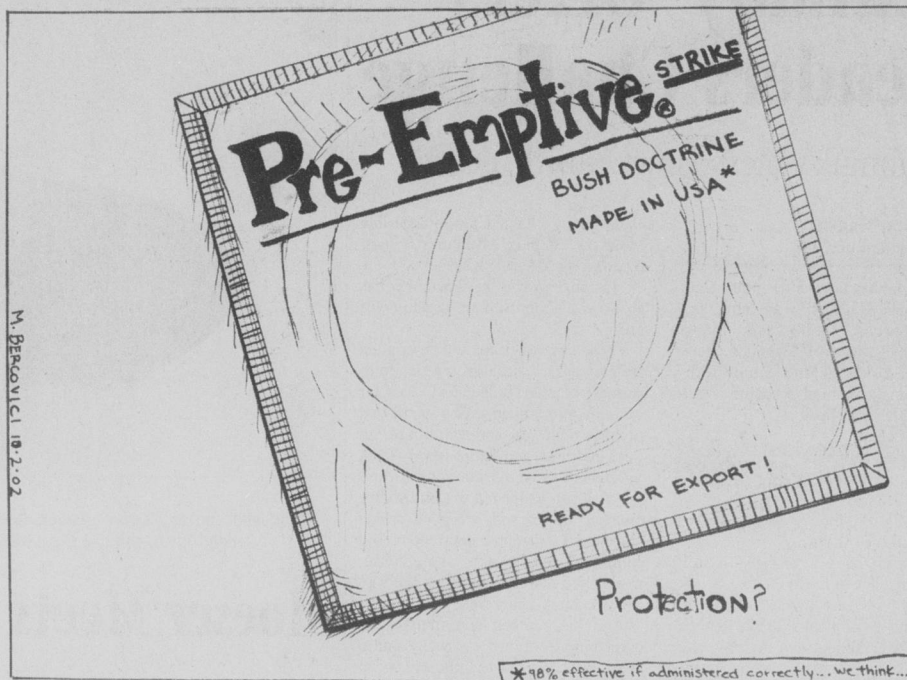
Lucas Fenske  
EDITORIAL PAGE EDITOR  
Kelly Lusk  
SPORTS EDITOR  
Terri Rupar  
COPY EDITOR  
Adam Shupe  
ONLINE EDITOR

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 mflynn@email.unc.edu or by phone at 843-5794.



# Young N.C. Volunteers Needed To Help Out the State's Children

This past Saturday, while most guests to our campus were swarming into Kenan Stadium, I met a woman from Elon who was here for a different reason. Her 6-year-old granddaughter had undergone heart surgery this past week but was at the moment smiling, sitting at a table surrounded by six UNC students who were helping her with a crafts project.



JIM DOGGETT  
REACH EXCEEDS GRASP

What had brought us all together was a social for patients at the Children's Hospital organized by one of the best-managed, most-effective student organizations on campus: the Dance Marathon.

Over the past four years, the marathon has raised more than \$330,000 to help families with children being treated at the UNC Children's Hospital. A sick child can put families under incredible emotional and financial stress. Huge medical bills need to be paid at the same time breadwinners are forced to take time off from work to be with their children.

Money raised by the marathon goes to relieving this stress by paying families' non-medical bills and by purchasing additional things to make their lives easier. For example, Dance Marathon money has gone to everything from keeping a family's home from being repossessed to fulfilling a patient's wish of receiving a cotton candy machine for Christmas.

UNC's marathon is only the manifestation of a much larger trend rippling across the nation. Since 1973, when the first dance marathon was organized at Penn State, the number of college dance marathons raising money for children's charities has exploded. I was able to find more than 50 of them online in less than 10 minutes.

However, the success of the marathon phenomenon is indicative of a more significant national trend. Young people have become increasingly willing to devote their time to private charities but less willing to work for political solutions to the problems that their charities address.

While it's wonderful that 577 college students last February were willing to stand on their feet for 24 hours to raise money for the kids, it's disappointing that it's not as easy to rally that many students to fight for the kids' interests in the political arena.

Money raised by our Dance Marathon is so dearly needed for a reason: The state of child welfare in North Carolina is deplorable. The most recent data from the Census Bureau shows that roughly one in five children in North Carolina live beneath the federal poverty line.

Gregory Malhoit, former director of the N.C. Center for Justice and Community Development, wrote in 1998 that one in eight N.C. children experience

extended periods of hunger, which makes them more susceptible to illness.

The Child Welfare League of America reports that 14 percent of children in North Carolina have no health insurance. Parents of children without insurance normally are unable to afford preventative care and put off seeking health care until absolutely necessary, only giving their children's illnesses time to worsen.

To use a metaphor that's become trite, organizations like the Dance Marathon treat the symptoms of these problems but not their causes.

This isn't to say that the marathon doesn't play an incredibly important and helpful role. No government program could ever replace the warmth of Dance Marathon volunteers who spent time with patients like the little girl from Elon I met this Saturday. Nor could the government ever be flexible enough to provide something like a cotton candy machine to make one individual kid happy.

But the marathon will never be able to impact the number of sick children who need help or the reasons why having a sick child can bankrupt a family. Only our government can impact these problems.

Although the Dance Marathon does a fantastic job, its volunteers should realize that the marathon isn't the only thing they can do "for the kids."

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



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.