

# Student Leaders Need a Voice in Campus Election

As a former director of information and technology during the 2001-02 Justin Young administration and a campaign worker on both Young's and Will McKinney's election campaigns, the issue supposedly resolved in the Daum-Larson Campaign Finance Reform Act of 2002 regarding student government leaders and their role in campaigns was the source of heated debate during the 2002 spring elections.

Unfortunately, the short-sightedness of innumerable individuals has led to a mistaken belief that student leaders showing support for future candidates presents a conflict of interest,

**RUSS JONES**

**GUEST COLUMNIST**

or, as an Oct. 31 editorial noted the "exercise of undue influence over a campaign by lobbying for the next generation of leaders." I petition the authors of the Daum-Larson legislation to present the unethical behavior that spawns naturally via the free speech of student government elected and appointed officials. I can only see three possible categorical conflicts of interest, all of which are unfounded. I will focus on the executive branch.

The possible conflicts of interest are as follows: Individuals will abuse positions of power in favor of particular candidates, intra-Cabinet conflicts will develop among directors who support opposing candidates, and, finally, endorsements from individuals will be construed as an endorsement from the entire student government.

No individual in student government, aside from those specifically within the Board of Elections, maintains powers that could be used to manipulate the outcome of a general election. There is no secret room where campus politicians orchestrate our day-to-day lives. In fact, the only power elected and appointed student officials have is the added credibility of their endorsements because they fill prominent positions.

Why would we want to hear the credible opinions of an experienced student body vice president when we can just rely on those expressed by basketball players in letters to the editor?

It can be noted that student government officials have access to resources such as copiers, office space, phones and computers that could be used on behalf of a campaign. There is, though, a fundamental difference between excluding student government leaders from using office resources in an student body president campaign and excluding their involvement altogether.

Secondly, if officers and Cabinet members are so childish that they cannot reconcile their differences in order to successfully complete their appointed duties, they should be fired because of their immaturity, not simply because they wish to express their opinions.

If we cannot trust our leaders to push aside differences regarding student body elections, how can we expect them to push aside differences of much greater significance?

Finally, I doubt that if Student Body President Jen Daum were to support an individual in the 2003 student body president race that we would assume that all of student government endorses that same individual. In fact, by discouraging student leaders from speaking out, the few who do choose to step down from office are seen as the successors, the establishment candidates.

When an unnamed candidate in the 2002 elections stepped out of office and began exclaiming that he was "the only candidate who had served in Justin's Cabinet," it seemed as if it were a subtle endorsement. Because members of student government were under a de-facto gag order regarding campaigns, no one was able to question this self-endorsement. The proposed legislation protects this tacit endorsement, rather than prevent it.

Ultimately, it comes to this: The most qualified individuals to endorse and advise a candidate for student body president are those currently in office.

God forbid that the director of information and technology write an op-ed in the DTH on why one candidate has a superior technology policy. God forbid that the treasurer endorse the candidate with the most financially sound platform. God forbid that, next spring, the student body president identifies the candidate with the specific leadership characteristics needed to succeed.

We need the opinions of both successful and unsuccessful leaders to help us make our choices; we entrust them to make decisions about our guilt and innocence, our student fees, our tuition and our daily lives. But apparently it is not safe to trust their advice or opinions.

Every year, Suite C wannabes, campus politicians and legitimately concerned students run campaigns. We have grounds to question the motives of all of these supporters but no tools or information to test whether their advice is reliable or their experience trustworthy. Current student government leaders, on the other hand, can be held against the light of their successes and failures, allowing us to make accurate decisions based upon their opinions.

Finally, to codify the silence of student government leaders in elections is to cripple any form of long-term, executive-enacted solutions. There is a reason why good ideas like the Carolina Lobby Corps and the Student Empowerment Endowment have difficulty lasting more than a year.

Requiring student leaders to remain unaffiliated in an election cycle proposes a catch 22. The most dedicated individuals must choose between continuing to work on a project while risking its existence following the next election or abandoning the project for at least three months to work on behalf of a candidate who will continue the project in the future.

For example, the information and technology department did not exist during the 2000-01 Brad Matthews administration. The Young administration decided to add this to position to Cabinet, but there was little assurance that the Infotech Department would be a priority following the elections should a prominent former member of the Matthews administration be elected.

As director of information and technology at the time, I had to choose between ditching important projects to ensure that they would be continued in the next administration or continuing these important projects but risk their continuance.

I had to make the decision to step out of the directorship. Luckily I had a highly qualified replacement in Tommy Mann and strong vice chairman in Warren Watts. Regardless, it meant that I, like many other individuals who stepped out, had to leave important projects to ensure that they survived the election.

Every college deals with a four-year turnover. We can't expect our leaders to have more than three years' experience, but this legislation enforces a one-year turnover. It endangers the quality of our leadership and restricts free speech.

We don't elect students to be objective; we elect them to be subjective. We trust their experience, their opinions and their advice as long as they are successful, and we ask them to act upon it. This legislation does not enforce objectivity; though, it merely asks that subjectivity be concealed.

Let the student body president tell us who has what it takes. Let the treasurer tell us who is unreasonable. Let the attorney general tell us who is trustworthy. Let them speak.

Russ Jones is a junior political science and African-American studies major. Reach him at [rjones@email.unc.edu](mailto:rjones@email.unc.edu).

## IN SEARCH OF THE NEW 'DUMBLEDORE'...



M. BERCOVICI 2002

## ELECTION FORUM

### Dole Tried to Ax Local Chapters of the Red Cross During Time as President

TO THE EDITOR:

With the election drawing near, I cannot keep silent about one of the candidates for U.S. senator - Elizabeth Dole.

Mrs. Dole touts her experience as head of the American Red Cross as an example of her leadership ability. The truth is that during her tenure at the helm, the Red Cross suffered greatly.

In the mid to late 1990s I served as chairman of the Red Cross board in a small S.C. county. One of Mrs. Dole's unwritten goals was to eliminate such small "inefficient" chapters.

To that end, her administration steadily increased each chapter's annual payments to the national organization while decreasing the amount that came from national to the local chapters for emergency and disaster assistance.

This squeeze was successful in causing hundreds of small chapters to go out of business - leaving many areas of our country without a local Red Cross presence.

Mrs. Dole greatly added to the national Red Cross bureaucracy by making it a practice to hire persons who had contributed to her husband's presidential campaign.

One such political hiree did tremendous damage to the blood services unit in Columbia, S.C.

This man's background was in machinery sales.

He had no experience with Red Cross, in blood services, in any medical area or any service industry.

His résumé did, however, include a substantial donation to the "Dole for President" people.

Within six months of his arrival, the blood services unit had lost nearly 50 percent of its experienced nursing staff because of his cost-cutting changes.

The frequency and quality of blood drives became so poor that many S.C. chapters turned to Charlotte instead.

We do not need Elizabeth Dole's old-style cronyism in the Senate.

Send her back to Kansas with her husband, not to Washington.

Rev. Ricki A. Mason  
Easley, S.C.

### Bowles Might Appeal to Religion, but His Platform Tells Very Different Story

TO THE EDITOR:

U.S. Senate Democratic candidate Erskine Bowles asked African-American clergy for

their support while campaigning in Fayetteville on Tuesday.

Quoting the Bible and using religious language Bowles said, "The Good Book says, 'Let justice run down like water and righteousness like a mighty stream.' ... If you send me to the U.S. Senate, I will work my heart out for you and your families and your parishioners."

"Say 'Amen,'" cried out a pastor and the large crowd responded, "Amen!"

But black clergy should not be deceived. Erskine Bowles twists the Holy Scriptures to his own designs, which is the worst form of politics.

What is just about opposing a ban on partial-birth abortion?

Where's the righteousness in supporting taxpayer funding of abortions?

Where's the justice in opposing parental notification for abortions on minors?

Mr. Bowles' positions on pro-life issues alone demonstrate that he has a perverted notion of righteousness and justice.

More than 13 million African-American babies have been aborted in the Roe v. Wade era, and abortion rates among blacks dramatically exceed all other racial and ethnic groups.

If the current trend continues, by the year 2015, along with other matters affecting African-Americans - like heart disease, diabetes and black-on-black crime - there will be more people dying in the black community than are being born.

What's righteous about that? Where's the justice in that?

Black clergy ought not to be saying, "Amen."

Instead they should be saying "Oh me!"

Rev. Mark H. Creech  
Executive Director  
Christian Action League of North Carolina  
Inc.

### Dole Would Favor Political Cronies Rather Than the People of North Carolina

TO THE EDITOR:

It is my opinion that Ms. Dole would make a better postal matron than a U.S. senator.

Ms. Dole was the director of the Red Cross.

Things have gone wrong at the Red Cross. It is a fine organization, however, sometimes mistakes are made.

The mistakes must be laid at the feet of Elizabeth Dole.

The problems at the Red Cross, in my opinion, were brought about by the inaction and inability to effectively lead which characterize Ms. Dole's style.

In a study tens of millions of dollars went

to a "scientist" who collects the results of a five-question quiz and matches that information with blood type information to determine - among other things - the rate of the spread of AIDS.

The Red Cross fails to routinely ask the questions, and the questions provide no meaningful data.

The National Institutes of Health is in charge of handing out the money to the Red Cross chapters that do this, but the questions themselves are under the control of the Food and Drug Administration.

A private researcher is being enriched. In my opinion, falsified information is being used to make decisions about disease and medical benefits for hospitals and possibly to extrapolate figures considering AIDS infection rates.

Elizabeth Dole and her cronies are going to use North Carolina. There will be no advantage given to the people of North Carolina.

A vote for Elizabeth Dole is a vote for failure.

Alfred Brock  
Canton, Mich.

### Gordon's Strong Beliefs in Cooperation, Education Make Her a Good Official

TO THE EDITOR:

Please vote to re-elect Orange County Commissioner Alice Gordon on Nov. 5.

Alice Gordon has served as Orange County commissioner since 1990.

She has always been a strong supporter of both the Chapel Hill-Carrboro school system and the Orange County school system.

She recognized the need for additional high school capacity in Chapel Hill well ahead of the rest of the elected officials, indeed the community.

She has consistently advocated for the needs of students, teachers and staff.

Commissioner Gordon was also the first elected official to bring the idea of the Schools Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance up for discussion and approval by the various governing bodies.

Alice is the founding member and chairwoman of the Schools and Land Use Councils, a countywide group of elected officials.

Alice proposed the formation of this group of representatives from the three towns, two school boards and the county commissioners to coordinate long-range planning for school facilities.

Previously there was no one group that had this responsibility, even though each of these elected boards had a key role related to school planning. She has led this group in crafting a schools adequate public facilities ordinance that should eliminate future over-

crowding.

Commissioner Gordon is now co-chairwoman of the committee to plan for schools and parks at the Eubanks Road site.

Alice has worked hard to educate the community about the need to pass our bond referendums for school maintenance and construction, as well as parks, senior centers and affordable housing.

Commissioner Gordon listens to all of Orange County constituents and works tirelessly to represent them.

Please join me in re-electing Alice Gordon on Nov. 5.

Judy Margolis  
Chapel Hill

### Commissioner Gordon Outlines Goals, Platform Before Tuesday's Election

TO THE EDITOR:

This letter is written to encourage you to vote in the Orange County commissioners race on Nov. 5 and to let you know a little more about me and my priorities.

I also want to thank the students who hosted an afternoon in the Pit for candidates to talk to members of the University community.

I was delighted to participate. I have served as a commissioner since 1990 (chairwoman in 1999) and was previously a research psychologist here at the University (doctorate in psychology).

My top priorities are (1) environmental protection (clean air and water, protect land for natural resource and farmland protection, and parks); (2) wise land use (promote regional public transit, protect communities, promote recycling and other sustainable growth policies); (3) excellent schools for all children; (4) caring, financially responsible, inclusive county government.

My experience includes chairwoman of the Schools and Land Use Council; founding member of the Commission for the Environment; former chairwoman of the Regional Transportation Advisory Committee; treasurer of the Triangle Transit Authority Board of Trustees.

I was endorsed during the primary election campaign by the Sierra Club, The Independent, The Chapel Hill News and C.A.T.S. (a school group).

If you are interested in more information, please visit my Web site, <http://www.alicegordon.com>.

I would appreciate your vote on Nov. 5.

Alice Gordon  
Orange County Commissioner

The length rule on the above letters was waived.

# Applications for Spring Columnist Are Now Available

Have you ever started a conversation with a friend by saying, "If I only had a column in The Daily Tar Heel, then I could tell everyone on campus how to ..."

Are you the type of person who likes to stand up in the middle of class and scream out how you feel about a particular issue?

Are you always trying to give advice to other people, even when they clearly don't want to listen to your opinion?

If you answered "yes" to one or more of the above questions, then you should apply

to become a DTH columnist.

Applications for spring semester columns are now available in the DTH office at Suite 104 in the Student Union and are due by 5 p.m. Nov. 26.

The columnists hired for the position will be posted in the DTH office and printed in the Dec. 5 issue.

The application process is twofold. In the first phase, applicants need to submit three 700-word sample columns on topics of their choice and at least three summaries of columns they would write about in the future.

The columns should be original material and must be suitable to print in the paper.

The columns are examined primarily for writing ability, but the topic you choose to write about also is considered.

Your particular viewpoint does not factor into the hiring decision.

Preference will be given to applicants who will spend the semester writing issue-based columns that are relevant to the student body.

These issues can be ongoing campus debates such as parking or tuition, or they can be national events examined from a unique perspective.

In the second phases, the top 10 appli-

cants from the applications will be invited to interview for the position during the week after Thanksgiving Break.

Applicants will have to discuss such topics as why the DTH's 39,000 readers would find their column interesting and what they hope to gain through the semester.

Applications also are available for the DTH Editorial Board and for anyone interested in joining the paper's cartoonist staff.

If you have any additional questions, e-mail Editorial Page Editor Lucas Fenske, a senior history major, at [fenske@email.unc.edu](mailto:fenske@email.unc.edu). You can also call him at 962-0750.

**LUCAS FENSKE**

**EDITORIAL PAGE EDITOR**