

BOARD EDITORIALS

TOO MUCH, TOO FAST

The Board of Trustees should not rush a nonresident tuition decision that has been criticized roundly by faculty members and students.

It cannot be denied that the ends of a hefty tuition increase — an increase in faculty salaries in order to help retention — are important. But the means to that end cannot be justified. Chancellor James Moeser, when arguing for a tuition increase in front of the UNC Faculty Council on Friday, asked faculty members to "keep (their) eyes on the ends and not just the means" of the hike. Increasing faculty salaries and ensuring that other universities will not lure UNC professors away should remain a top priority. Students and faculty members alike have emphasized the importance of this goal. But the means should not be overlooked. It says a great deal that members of the Faculty Council, despite the urgency of the need to bolster their own pay, unanimously expressed their opposition to the planned tuition hike. The current proposed increase would raise out-of-state tuition by \$1,500 and in-state tuition by \$300 next year, while establishing the goal of matching nonresident prices to the 75th percentile of UNC's system peers, amounting to a \$3,600 tuition increase over several years. The plan also calls for the devotion of almost \$1 million in tuition revenue to the Educational Foundation, which pays athletic scholarships, and the John Motley Morehead Foundation. Both are important to UNC, but the fact remains: Both are private, and neither should be maintained by tuition money. This misappropriation of students' money was one of the primary concerns expressed by the council in their unanimous decision. Put simply, there is no excuse for officials to dig into students' pockets to bail out two private entities, despite hard financial times. UNC trustees should heed the unanimous opposition from the council as well as the vehement cries of protest from the student body. The University has a long history of student governance and involvement in the policy-making process.

In dismissing the suggestions of the UNC Tuition Task Force and ignoring the collective voice of faculty and students, the BOT tramples that tradition. Such abandonment of tradition is an affront to the ideals historically valued within the University. The speed with which the tuition plans have been approached by the trustees is downright scary. While Moeser told the council that University officials should be "careful and judicious in (their) approach," the BOT embodied any qualities but those two. Reckless abandon and closed-minded stubbornness, instead, have been the mainstays of the trustees' deliberations. With such a fundamental shift in philosophy on the horizon, University trustees should be far more cautious. A philosophy that characterizes nonresidents as a market force, rather than a vital part of the student body, is not one with which the University should flirt. But if trustees insist that UNC take that path, they should do so more slowly. Taking a year to study implications of an increase won't devastate the University. UNC also should avoid trying to match the price of an education to the price tags at public universities in other states. Basing the price of a UNC diploma on similar institutions is problematic because so many variables play into a state university's tuition rates. Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger, for example, has dealt with the California deficit by upping tuition and fees at the state's schools. UNC students shouldn't have to watch the news nervously, fearing that every tuition hike across the map will be answered by UNC officials trying to keep up with the curve. Furthermore, administrators have worked hard to establish UNC as a leader in higher education. In its move to abolish early-decision applications and in the creation of the Carolina Covenant, Moeser has characterized UNC as a leader repeatedly. The University will fail as a leader if it follows system peers for the sake of competition in the marketplace of higher education.

GOOD PREFERENCE

UNC should review its policy of setting aside spots for out-of-state legacy applicants but should not abolish its legacy preference entirely.

Texas A&M University recently called attention to a hot topic in higher education when it eliminated an admissions preference for legacies: prospective students related to one or more graduates of the college to which they are applying. When such a significant change in practice comes about at one of the nation's notable institutes of higher education, one question usually pops up on the local level: Would this work at UNC? The answer is no. Consideration of legacy status is an important and consistent piece of UNC's admissions puzzle. Texas A&M's decision to abolish its legacy preference falls in line with that university's drive to eliminate admissions policies that are not based solely on the achievements of applicants. Robert Gates, the university's president, said in a statement that a preferential policy for legacies is "an obvious inconsistency in an admissions strategy based on individual merit." The legacy question has been on the mind of North Carolina's homegrown presidential candidate, Democratic U.S. Sen. John Edwards. He asserts in his platform that U.S. colleges and universities should rid the admissions process of legacy preferences. Edwards' campaign Web site states that such preferences "stack the deck" against students who are the first college attendees in their respective families. Earlier this month, Edwards told college students in New Hampshire that legacy preferences offer an admissions advantage to privileged students who don't need it, according to The Associated Press. That's a big assumption to make, especially when taking account of UNC's nonresident applicant pool. There's no guarantee that a sufficient number of nonresident legacies would find their way into each freshman class without that extra wind being thrown at their backs during the admissions process. Completely eliminating legacy preference at UNC

would be inconsistent, considering the University's other admissions practices, which include the analysis of race, socio-economic status and "unusual circumstances," according to the Web site for the Office of Undergraduate Admissions. The Web site states that the legacy factor plays a more significant role for out-of-state students than it does for North Carolinians. "(Nonresident legacies) will have a slight competitive edge over students from out of state who are not children of alumni." Nixing the legacy factor effectively would ignore the fact that a greater sense of community is achieved on campus with the presence of students who got some idea of the UNC experience from Tar Heel parents. But freeing admissions officers simply to consider legacy in their decision-making is one thing. Reserving a specific number of spots or admissions points for children of alumni is more dubious. Before Texas A&M officials made their decision, being a child of at least one of the university's graduates collected four admissions points out of a possible 100 for an applicant. UNC admissions officers use another system. Legacy consideration in many cases is almost negligible for in-state applicants, but about 80 out-of-state spots in each incoming class are reserved for legacy applicants. Jerry Lucido, director of undergraduate admissions, said 400 to 500 applicants compete for those spots each year. Setting aside spots for a certain type of applicant is questionable, especially when such a practice isn't based on individual merit. The Office of Undergraduate Admissions should be able to consider out-of-state legacy applicants more strongly than nonlegacies. But having a set system or formula in place before academic achievements even become an issue is not in line with UNC's other admissions policies.

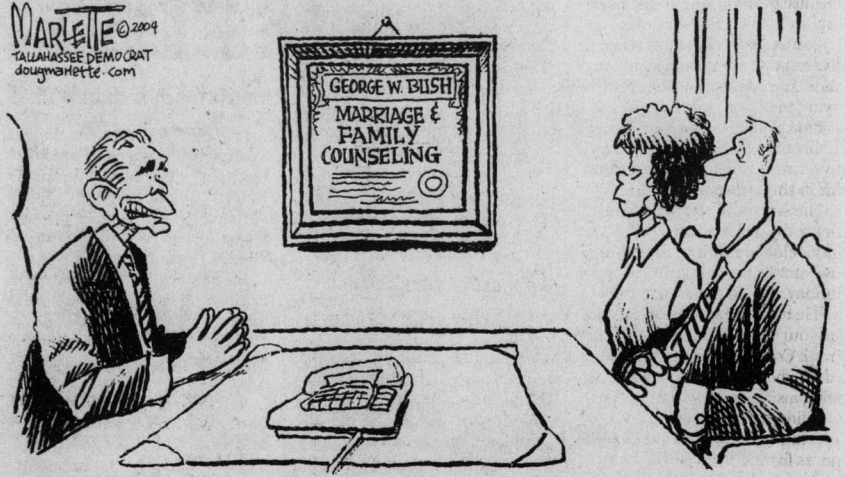
EDITOR'S NOTE: The above editorials are the opinions of solely The Daily Tar Heel Editorial Board, and were reached after open debate. The board consists of seven board members, the editorial page associate editor, the editorial page editor and the DTH editor. The 2003-04 DTH editor decided not to vote on the board and not to write board editorials.

ON THE DAY'S NEWS

"How poor are they who have not patience! What wound did ever heal but by degrees?"

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE, PLAYWRIGHT

EDITORIAL CARTOON



"REMEMBER - WOMEN ARE FROM VENUS, AND I'M GOING TO MARS!"

COMMENTARY

Failure to escape one's roots can be anything but failure

Take it from a senior. You're not the hero you think you are. Things aren't what they seem. There is no welcoming party eagerly waiting your return to your little Podunk suburb. I recently watched Tim Burton's masterpiece "Big Fish" and was delighted to see that Burton's main character Ed Bloom addresses the hometown ego. Sometimes it's easy to see your hometown as an inspiration. Ed's hometown looks to him for inspiration. He is the town's No. 1 export, and in one scene the townspeople chant his name in adoration. Ed possesses a wild imagination, but not an uncommon one at least to a 12-year-old boy. Every person thinks that someday he's going to put his little burg on the map. That old wives are going to make up stories about your exploits in the big, bad world. That you're going to be given a key to the city. That super hot Sally Johnson is going to regret not doing the chicken dance with you in third grade because now you're the world's best chicken dancer. That she had an opportunity to catch your world famous chicken dancing in its embryonic stages. That everyone who enters your town is going to be greeted with a sign that reads, "Welcome to Mediocrville, Home of Billy Ball — who was basically the best at everything that there ever was." True, true. Tough guy Robby Musclebrain was going to work at Taco Bell. Chunky Chucky was going to end up logging for spare change. Vanity Valerie was going to end



BILLY BALL FOR KIDS WHO CAN'T READ GOOD

I'm taking "Community Journalism" this semester. Surprisingly, I find that it's not likely that I'll be writing for The New York Times or Rolling Stone anytime soon. In fact, I'll probably end up at something similar to my hometown paper begging for a story. Here's the good news: That you've nothing to be ashamed of, and that your high-school graduate father has nothing to be ashamed of either. That heroism doesn't come in prepackaged childhood standards. That your town doesn't have to know that you're a hero for you to be a hero. That you can't be a hero like everyone else, unless everyone else is a hero. That a simple person can seem complicated to complicated people if those people don't understand simplicity. That you don't have to live in an action-packed city to have things going on. The reality is that you only have to impress yourself and that you're the toughest critic of them all. At some point you have to be comfortable with your roots, or you will never be proud of what you've grown into. One of the lessons to be taken from "Big Fish" is that you'll never grow into a big fish yourself unless you get out of your little home pond. That's ridiculously true. But it's also true that you'll never even have had a chance to be a big fish without that little home pond. Contact Billy Ball at wball@email.unc.edu.

The Daily Tar Heel

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SACC fosters communication

Every day, students open The Daily Tar Heel and see evidence of UNC officials and students cooperating to make Carolina a better place. This interaction is essential to help the administration understand students' positions on issues that affect us all. Student government is primarily responsible for this, but there are students on a multitude of committees and task forces who are charged with the same mission. One such committee is the Student Advisory Committee to the Chancellor. SACC has 12 members, and we are external appointees of student government. We're a mix of graduate and undergraduate students, in-state and out-of-state, from a variety of majors and extracurricular activities. Our job is to serve as a conduit for student opinion. We are responsible for finding out what our "constituents" think and care about and for letting the chancellor know. We also try to take the chancellor's questions to students and ask what they think of his performance. Keeping this channel of communication open is our mission. This year, SACC members have revisited this mission. We decided to pursue a tangible project that helps all students, not just those involved in student politics. Our idea was to attempt to create some kind of direct contact between the general student body and Chancellor Moeser. Since we cannot fit 14,000 people into South Building, we did the next best thing. We asked the DTH Editorial Page staff if they'd be amenable to having Moeser write a column each month in which he'd respond to students' concerns. We all agreed this was a great idea. To do this properly, we knew we needed to solicit student opinion in a meaningful way, so Moeser would have something substantial to discuss in a public forum. To that end, the second Tuesday of each month, students will find SACC members in the Pit. We'll solicit your input and have Post-it Notes for you to write on and a big picture of the chancellor's head for you to stick your question to. Then, we will go through your responses and pick out the big issue of the month. We already have great responses from the two times we've been out there so far. A lot of students raised the question of raising the out-of-state cap. Others asked about employee salaries and benefits and the right to unionize. We even had someone ask whether Chancellor Moeser wore boxers or briefs.

KATIE MELVILLE
 MEMBER, STUDENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE TO THE CHANCELLOR

Contact Katie Melville, a member of the Student Advisory Committee to the Chancellor, at ktmelv@email.unc.edu.

TO SUBMIT A LETTER: 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 them to editdesk@unc.edu.

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