

EDITORIALS

PRODUCING RESULTS

The creation of an ombudsman position is a particularly worthy idea to come out of the Chancellor's Task Force for a Better Workplace.

University administrators are doing well to follow through on implementation of the ombudsman office.

Chancellor Moeser's Task Force for a Better Workplace made the creation of an intermediary party its top priority in recommendations released earlier this year.

University officials have taken concrete steps to fill this gap by forming a search committee headed by Frayda Bluestein, a professor in the School of Government.

Bluestein said in The Daily Tar Heel on July 1 that the committee has considered more than 200 applications — a field that has been narrowed to 13 — and is in the process of scheduling interviews with the applicants.

The need for this office became evident last November when Gillian Gentry, a UNC housekeeper, was transferred after reporting her pregnancy.

Her move was problematic on several levels. Gentry told The Daily Tar Heel that she felt the action was taken in response to her condition.

She was quoted in the DTH on Nov. 25 as saying "I felt like I was being moved to retaliate ... and to make me lose my pregnancy and my job."

But even without regard for those accusations,

Gentry's concerns should have been listened to — management problems are understandable, but it's hard to buy that no other housekeepers could have been moved to take the harder assignment.

Bill Burston, director of housekeeping services, told the DTH that he isn't allowed to discuss specific personnel but he noted that it's part of the job for workers to live with transfers.

"We have buildings of different sizes," Burston said. "We share the workload."

The impartial ombudsman's office is a good step to ensuring that faculty and staff have an effective outlet in these situations to voice reasonable concerns without drawing the ire of their managers.

The ombudsman's office is slated to hold one full-time and one part-time post.

Bluestein told the DTH that the part-time hire will be selected from the tenured faculty and that the other would be chosen from outside of UNC.

Selection committee member and Faculty Chairwoman Judith Wegner told the DTH that the selection might come to a close by early September.

"The committee is working hard and is looking forward to a really good outcome," she said.

It's good to hear that the creation of the office is going well — officials should keep up the good work.

TAKE ANOTHER LOOK

Parents shouldn't panic, but educators should seriously investigate a report of wide-scale staff misconduct toward children at public schools.

A report to Congress by a Hofstra University professor indicated that 4.5 million students experience some sort of misconduct by school employees — almost 10 percent of students from kindergarten to grade 12.

The study has been brought into question by educators who point to the wide definition of misconduct that the report uses, ranging from physical, verbal or visual behavior, to sexually related jokes or pictures of sex, to fondling of breasts and forced sex.

Michael Pons, spokesman for the 2.7 million-member union National Education Association, has been widely reported as saying that "Lumping harassment together with serious sexual misconduct does more harm than good by creating unjustified alarm and undermining confidence in public schools. Statistically, public schools remain one of the safest places for children to be."

There's merit to that argument — the variety of abuses does seem too eclectic for direct policy use, but 10 percent is simply an eye-popping number that deserves further investigation.

Robert Shoop, professor of education law with expertise in sexual exploitation in schools, told The Washington Post that the one-in-10 estimate of affected children is not high.

Shoop told the Post that because of historical problems with underreporting, these types of incidents are probably even greater.

"Children need to be very clearly educated about inappropriate behaviors, and teachers do, too, so when children see the earliest signs of this behavior, they have someone to tell," Shoop said. "But often, parents say, 'Mind your teacher.' So it's very unlikely that this 10-year-old kid is going to rip the teacher's hands off and say, 'Back off!'"

North Carolina educators should make their own effort to find whether these numbers reflect reality here.

But responses to the study shouldn't be panicked yet. Shoop's assertion that public schools are still a safe place for children should be heeded since most of the 4.5 million offenses are probably of the lesser variety.

Policymakers should also be wary of groups that might use the report to attack public education in its funding or in the content of its teaching.

The problem should be examined for what it is — a question of how often the rules are broken and how that problem should be fixed.

Further investigation should bring validation to most educators — but it's a good idea to know for sure.

PLAYING WITH TERROR

Sen. Fern Shubert's TV ad for governor is a painfully bad example of how images from the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks should not be used.

State Sen. Fern Shubert's, R-Union, bid for governor has been struggling for traction. In a crowded field dominated by perennial candidate Richard Vinroot and activist-darling Bill Cobey, Shubert has had a hard time raising money and a harder time connecting with voters. Last week, she finally got a bit of media attention, but unfortunately, it was for all the wrong reasons.

Shubert is a dedicated public official and she has spent a good part of her legislative career focused on one concern in particular — fighting the threats she sees from illegal immigration. In the past few months, it is an issue she has continued to raise as she campaigns across the state.

Shubert launched her first television ad last week and finally came into the public eye. It is too bad that in doing so, Shubert violated any reasonable standard of decency that voters might have hoped for in this campaign.

Shubert's commercial centers on footage of the two airliners smashing into the towers of the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001. As the images play across the screen, Peter Gadziel, a representative of the group 9/11 Families for a Secure America, reads the words, "Days after 9/11, (Gov.) Mike Easley signed a law that made it easier for terrorists, illegals, drunk drivers and everyone except law-abiding citizens to get driver's licenses."

More than blatantly exploiting the emotions wrapped up in the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks, Shubert's ad is certainly misleading — and for many, it is dishonest outright.

No reasonable person would suggest that Easley's policies led to that day's tragedy. Not one terrorist responsible for the attack used a North Carolina driver's license to gain admittance to a flight school or to purchase a plain ticket.

Indeed it is important to note that most of the terrorists were legal U.S. residents, who earned admission into the country with valid student visas.

And months prior to Shubert's ad, Easley followed recommendations made by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security by ordering the N.C. Department of Motor Vehicles to make it harder for illegal immigrants to receive a driver's license.

North Carolinians are smarter than Shubert's ad, and because she only spent \$25,000 on this particular media buy, the commercial will escape the attention of most Tar Heel voters anyway. But that doesn't change the fact that Shubert was wrong to make a cheap political ad that exploits Sept. 11 in the hopes of scoring cheap political points.

EDITORS' 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 two board members, the editorial page editor and the DTH editor. The 2004 summer DTH editor decided not to vote on the board and not to write board editorials.

READERS' FORUM

Orange county commissioner clarifies issue positions

TO THE EDITOR:

There seems to be some confusion concerning my position on the possible merger of the two county school districts. To clarify my position on the major points:

1) Funding. Everyone agrees that there is inequity in funding. I think we should wait for the Education Excellence Workgroup report to determine the best ways to handle these funding inequities.

2) Rural Buffer. The rural buffer won't be threatened by choices we make regarding the schools. Our land use planning policies ensure that the buffer will stay intact and that development will remain strictly controlled. In addition, the Schools Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance links development to school capacity.

3) Busing. Right now, some parents are upset concerning erroneous speculation about massive busing as a result of choices regarding the school systems. The fact is, there is no scenario where there would be such busing.

Without a vision of how best to right the funding problems, it is simply too soon to decide our future course. The Education Excellence report will assist us in making a rational and informed evaluation that will

provide equal opportunity for all students.

If we agree that each child in Orange County is entitled to the best education that we, as a community, can provide, then I believe that we can maintain a common focus. Forcing each other to fight about merger or no merger is a distraction that does a disservice to our children.

As a commissioner now, and if I am re-elected, I will maintain my focus. I encourage all citizens to do the same. Let's consider what is best for our children and move in that direction.

Margaret W. Brown
Orange County Commissioner

Federal money should be used more fairly, effectively

TO THE EDITOR:

The headline "Money Better Used" for The Daily Tar Heel editorial about the complicated issue of internet filters misses a more fundamental question.

Why is the Chapel Hill library, serving the most voracious readers in the state and among the most well-heeled, even the recipient of \$5000 from federal taxpayers? Surely there are more effective and fairer uses for those funds among the many federal obligations.

Why it is even possible that lowering taxes by \$5000 would enable local residents to help the library without the inconvenience of the Federal requirements?

Lewis Margolis
Associate Professor
Dept. of Maternal & Child Health

CORRECTION

■ A July 1 Board Editorial incorrectly stated that UNC-system President-Emeritus William C. Friday served North Carolina for a half-decade. Friday started his career at UNC Chapel Hill in 1948 as assistant dean of students, making his service to the state more than a half-century. The Daily Tar Heel regrets the error.

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 form to: editdesk@unc.edu.

ON THE DAY'S NEWS

"Mothers all want their sons to grow up to be president but they don't want them to become politicians in the process."

JOHN FITZGERALD KENNEDY, 35TH PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

EDITORIAL CARTOON



COMMENTARY

Krzyzewski's choice to stay at Duke true to college 'ball

Forty million dollars. The chance to coach Kobe Bryant. More importantly — \$40 MILLION DOLLARS!!

I know this topic has been blown up all over the news, but I still think it is pretty interesting.

Mike Krzyzewski turned down a 5-year, \$40 million contract with the L.A. Lakers last weekend. He really is a phenomenal coach, and for the past 24 years he has had an extraordinary career at Duke University.

Having the chance to coach for one of the top NBA programs in the country, however, would be the opportunity of a lifetime.

I even heard through the grapevine that Bryant gave Krzyzewski a personal phone call urging him to come to L.A.

Would having one of the most conceited athletes in the country on the phone line offer him some sort of incentive to leave? I guess we will never know.

When I heard that Krzyzewski chose to stay at Duke, I could not decide if that was a good or bad idea.

The money was never an issue for Krzyzewski, so I guess that factor can be ruled out.

However, the possible opportunity to coach one of the top athletes in the world could have posed some sort of temptation to leave.

Well, this wasn't my decision to make and ultimately no one really cares about my opinion. Through all of this, I still decided to put my two cents into the matter.

I think Krzyzewski made the right decision. It was a hard one to make, and I think he is moving in the right direction. Let me tell you why.

All of my life I have been an avid Carolina basketball fan. Matter-of-fact, I am in love with college basketball — period. The intensity of the game and the heart of the players is so strong that it can be quite overwhelming at times.

I would hate to see that passion slowly fade away.

Not to say that Krzyzewski holds all the weight in the NCAA, but his decision does set a prece-



ADA WILSON
THRU THE WIRE

dent.

It urges top coaches to come and stay within the realm of college basketball.

We have to admit that the games has changed during the past 10 years. Top players have chosen to enter the draft and skip college. Signage haunts stadiums and gyms all over the country. And the overall atmosphere has turned into a business venture for universities.

Some of these changes are not completely horrible. Now our players have an opportunity to get more exposure and truly show off their innate talents.

However, the potential for a major metamorphosis to engulf every genre of college sports does indeed exist.

Krzyzewski's decision was a strong will to uphold the legacy of the game.

Imagine a world without the Carolina-Duke rivalry. Of course it would still be around if he left. But I want him to be around when Carolina beats up on Duke in 2005. It is more fun that way.

During the past 32 seasons, Carolina has won more than 800 games with a winning percentage of .801 according to www.tarheelblue.com.

Statistics like this make the game more fun — and there are plenty more where that one came from.

Bottom line — not too many people care how many times L.A. beat Orlando. Or which team in the league holds the most wins. The fast-paced nature of the entertainment industry does not allow for the accumulation of a hard core, team-oriented fan base.

The nature of college basketball allows coaches, players and fans to have a connection. Who

would want to pass that up? No matter how much I dislike Krzyzewski and the entire Duke program, I have to respect a man who will stand up for his team, the ACC and the entire nature of college basketball.

Maybe these weren't his intentions at all, my speculations could be completely off.

No one will ever know Krzyzewski's true and honest reasons for not leaving Duke.

Perhaps he feared the transition from college to the NBA would be too drastic. Statistically, most collegiate coaches do not perform well in the NBA. Of course, Larry Brown would be the ultimate exception.

It could be that he just loves the legacy he built at Duke and now is the time for him to shine.

Or maybe he would not be able to live his life knowing that the legacy of Duke will always come in second place in relationship to Carolina. Our history is just too powerful to overcome, and perhaps Krzyzewski's goal is to outdo the Carolina basketball program.

If this is the case, he might as well retire now.

But in all fairness, the decision was strong and powerful. A fire has been lit under college basketball.

Hopefully this precedent will continue to define collegiate sports as a whole.

I guess my opinion on this matter is extremely irrelevant right about now.

The commentary has been pouring out of news media all over the country. Sorry to bore you with another unimportant point of view.

But I think that it is critical to focus on the importance of the game.

I mean really, it is only July and this whole situation has gotten me excited about the upcoming season.

It is time to get fired up for another season of Carolina basketball. Go Tar Heels!

Contact Ada Wilson
at adaw@email.unc.edu

The Daily Tar Heel

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State & National: Alex Granados, Whitney Isenhour and Mark Puente.
University: Jennifer Kawka, Fred Lameck, Caroline Korogay and Matt Stoddard.
Editorial Production: Stacy Wynn, manager.
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