

BOARD EDITORIALS

WORTH THE BATTLE

Now that University officials are defendants in a lawsuit concerning civil liberties, they should stand their ground throughout the conflict.

The Alliance Defense Fund, in announcing its lawsuit against UNC, brought a fight to the heart of campus Wednesday from which our University cannot afford to back down.

The ADF contends that the University acted illegally in revoking official recognition for Alpha Iota Omega, a Christian fraternity that refused to abide by a nondiscrimination clause.

The suit came after weeks of heavy media attention sparked by a letter of complaint by the Philadelphia-based Foundation for Individual Rights in Education. The letter defended AIO's actions, arguing that by refusing to recognize the group, the University suppressed the fraternity's First Amendment rights.

Although the lawsuit potentially could last years and might cost the University a considerable amount of resources and manpower, UNC should stand its ground without conceding its stance.

The nondiscrimination policy is a reasonable and necessary requirement for student organizations at a public university.

These groups receive access to facilities and equipment funded by fees that all the students pay — it's

only sensible that all students should have equal opportunity to participate in them.

Campus Ministers' Association, a group of Jewish and Christian leaders, joined the ranks of University supporters on Monday by releasing a statement backing UNC's nondiscrimination policy.

Representatives from eight religious student organizations — from the Baptist Student Union to UNC Hillel to the Newman Catholic Student Center Parish — agree that student organizations do not have the right to discriminate.

"Not accidentally, none of our groups have within their by-laws exclusive clauses that require a particular religious affiliation for membership," the statement reads.

"We encourage the University to continue to protect the right of all students to participate in organizations of their choosing."

To waver on this issue would be for the University to undermine its role in facilitating the free exchange of knowledge. The walls of the University should shield its students from outside pressures. They should never be allowed to divide students along the lines of faith.

TWO LITTLE WORDS

Lawmakers should rethink their decision to modify a land usage bill so that local governments don't have excessive power over development.

From an outsider's perspective, it seems innocuous enough: state lawmakers added the words "and land" to a bill that was introduced last year and will go into effect Oct. 1.

But the addition, which legislators meant to clear up municipal planning across the state, will create plenty of new roadblocks for the University and other N.C. agencies. The alteration will give the Chapel Hill Town Council and other local governments the ability to review most land disturbances and not just building developments.

The relationship between UNC planners and town officials is tense enough as is. The University wants to move Carolina North negotiations forward, but the town is stalling talks and is waiting to hear what UNC intends to do with the Horace Williams Airport.

If Chapel Hill and other municipalities are allowed to keep this new power over land usage, it could seriously impede the University's long-term efforts to build Carolina North and to complete other unforeseeable projects.

Bruce Runberg, associate vice chancellor for planning and construction, said the development of a

parking lot on Cameron Avenue is the only project currently underway that could be affected by the change.

But the University undoubtedly will come up with future plans that will fall under the discretion of the town. If the current text of the legislation is allowed to remain, UNC will have to pay significant amounts of money to push these plans through.

Council members might appreciate the extra control over development that the change will afford them. But they actually will be enjoying what amounts to excessive power — any of the University's attempts to expand or modify itself will be at the town's mercy.

State legislators should reconsider the addition to the bill's language. At least in the context of UNC and Chapel Hill, they have opened a brand new can of worms that should be closed as soon as possible.

Chancellor James Moeser estimated that the law might be changed in a year. He and other UNC administrators had better hope that such a speculation turns out to be correct. Otherwise, their ties to the town of Chapel Hill likely will sour.

OPENING DISCUSSION

Duke University administrators are encouraging healthy debate at the school by letting a pro-Palestinian conference meet on campus.

In a campus setting, ideas, opinions and sentiments that lead to lively debate are precious commodities. Recently, officials at Duke University affirmed the value of such debate on their campus.

Facing a considerable amount of protest, they chose to go ahead and allow the Fourth National Student Conference of the Palestine Solidarity Movement to meet Oct. 15-17. By making this decision, Duke officials reinforced a level of academic freedom and tolerance of discussion that should exist at Duke, UNC and any other college or university.

The Middle East conflict is an issue that has drawn ideological lines between people for decades. Addressing the subject so directly — as in the context of a pro-Palestinian conference on a major university campus — is a risky endeavor, as thousands of petitioners opposing the event have made clear.

But it's worth the risk to shed light on such a divisive issue. If anyone comes away from the conference with an understanding of Middle Eastern issues that transcends mere polemics or a reactionary taking of sides, the event can be considered a success. Duke's officials

have allowed for that type of learning to take place.

Also, Duke's Freeman Center for Jewish Life should be commended for its decision not to oppose the event. Pro-Israeli interests obviously don't run parallel to any call for Palestinian solidarity, but the center wisely is seeing the arrival of the conference as a chance to open the debate floodgates.

The executive director of the center said a forum to discuss other sides of the Middle East issue is in the works. If it coincides with the pro-Palestinian event, it will help to create an even greater flow of ideas and opinions at Duke.

Overall, this is an instance of leaders choosing to embrace controversy in the hope of making progress through education.

Duke administrators could have taken the easy way out and bent to pressure. They could have refused to house the conference, disappointing its coordinators while pacifying the thousands of people who signed a petition calling for officials to ban the event.

They didn't. As a result, Duke can continue to lay claim to being the top-level station of ideas that it is.

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 five board members, the editorial page associate editor, the editorial page editor and the DTH editor. The 2004-05 DTH editor decided not to vote on the board and not to write board editorials.

Debate highlights University's importance to me

Growing up in Chapel Hill, I always believed that the really important news happened "out there."

My father and grandfather both came out of Manhattan, so I was no stranger to the big city. I felt comfortable enough being raised in this sleepy Southern town, which just happens to have a bustling public university as a tenant. But I was sure that the most notable trends were created in the presence of skyscrapers and gridlock traffic, not glasses of sweet tea and dogwoods.

As the day on which I would choose a college came closer and closer, most of my choices could be defined as "North" and "expensive." Putting UNC on the list was almost an afterthought.

My parents probably were secretly delighted, because my becoming a Tar Heel would have put considerably less strain on their wallets than my other options. But despite the facts that both of them are Tar Heel alumni and that they spoke glowingly of their time on this campus, I rarely considered the possibility of following in their footsteps.

Instead of paying closer attention to what soon will become my alma mater, I kept my nose in my high school textbooks and dreamed about life after college.



ELLIOTT DUBE
EDITORIAL PAGE EDITOR

I was set on leaving the Old Well, the Pit and the Bell Tower behind.

In my mind, UNC was like the girl next door. It was always close by, nice to visit and fun to be around, but it didn't catch my eye in that special, wonderful way.

I was mindful of the University, became a diehard fan of its basketball program and enjoyed walking past its landmarks.

Nevertheless, throughout most of my teenage years, the place didn't really come close to winning me over entirely.

But something changed along the way. I ended up attending college here, and I've fallen in love with this campus in a way that I hadn't ever before.

I don't have as great a command of University history as some of my peers — but I'm still trying to attain it. I haven't been thinking about what I'm going to do after graduation as much as I've thought about what goes on at UNC in the here and now.

And in the three-plus years I've been at Carolina alone, an awful lot has happened.

Planning for Carolina North has been set in motion. The Carolina Covenant is now a reality. Carolina First, one of the most impressive university-based fund-raising campaigns in the country, has been going strong.

Of course, not all of the developments have been good. Recently revised tuition guidelines, which have added to the financial burden on the backs of out-of-state students, quickly spring to mind.

But as the saying goes, to err is human. And although — not counting its students, faculty and staff — this campus is a giant conglomeration of brick, stone, wood and glass on the surface, it seems like more of a living, breathing force with each passing day.

In many instances, UNC leaders take a step forward. Sometimes, they take a step back. And occasionally, they incur people's anger with their choices.

Although recent controversies have created tension and conflict on campus, they have compelled members of the University community to think more for themselves. And I'll always support such an outcome.

Take the summer reading con-

ON THE DAY'S NEWS

"We must convince by reason, not prescribe by tradition."

ST. CYPRIAN, BISHOP AND ORATOR

EDITORIAL CARTOON

By Fitz Holladay, wfholldad@email.unc.edu



COMMENTARY

Renaming road might have meaning after much debate

Close your eyes for a moment and imagine: the citizens of the world — folks of all races, genders, and religious backgrounds — joining hands and singing songs of peace, love and charity.

This could only occur in a beautiful land, a happy place. Somewhere with spacious skies and majestic purple mountains towering over plains with fruit and waves of amber grain. Somewhere with unicorns, cotton candy and bread that's not low-carb. Judging by the recent hubbub, somewhere like Airport Road.

Surely, one might wonder, why would such a noble four-lane strip of asphalt bear so bland and shamefully practical a title? What an embarrassment to our creativity. How belittling to the microcosm of world peace that exists on this vital channel into Chapel Hill.

Sadly, I have not seen any such singing while driving along I-40's exit 266 these days. Instead, the scene is one of bitter controversy — a city divided between those who want Airport Road simply to remain Airport Road and those who wish to change its name to something more idealistic, dignified and politically correct. And who better than Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. to represent the latter sentiment?

Airport Road has borne its name for decades, as critics of the movement are quick to point out. Why change it now?

Indeed, this argument makes sense. Businesses and residences would have to change their addresses and update telephone directories, stationery, business cards, Internet-based files and other reference data. The cost to taxpayers could be quite high to do something that is not nec-



MEG AUSTIN
STREETWISE

essary for the community and might even stir up some problems among citizens.

Furthermore, what good does renaming really do? People will always remember the original name. Many will even slip up and call it by its old moniker.

Case in point: KFC now markets itself as "Kitchen Fresh Chicken." Yet, despite its efforts to appear both down-home and diet-friendly, it will forever remain "Kentucky Fried" in the eyes of the American public.

Finally, why Airport Road? Other than the fact that it's a large thoroughfare, what symbolic meaning does it have? Was Martin Luther King's dream for us to jump in our cars and drive more?

If we insist on renaming something, why not focus on a school or a bench — or heck, why not Rosemary Street? It would be simpler, less costly and more symbolic.

Rosemary Street connects one of the most affluent, historically white areas in Chapel Hill with the mostly black, low-income neighborhood of Northside, where Dr. King himself once held a rally during the civil rights era.

Wouldn't the impact be much more profound if the pearl-necklaced gals of the Panhellenic Council sororities stated their residency as Martin Luther King Drive rather than if deliveries to the Beer Cave at Run-In-Jim's were made to 800 Martin Luther

King Blvd. rather than to 800 Airport Road?

And what would it mean for Chapel Hill's economy if the Budweiser truck became confused by the new address and never made it to that chilly little emporium of ales that momentarily unites young and old, black and white, Bush fanatics and Kerry-lovers in perfect harmony? I shudder at the thought.

But the debate has gone on for so long now and has become so heated that renaming Airport Road actually might stand for more than Chapel Hill broadcasting mere lip service to our nation's most prominent civil rights leader.

Instead, it would signify a real commitment to racial cooperation and tolerance. It would be a fresh start and a precedent for generations yet to come. It would be a living testament that Chapel Hill is committed to the attitude that cost and inconvenience are nothing compared to the struggle and sacrifice of Dr. King and thousands of others who devoted their lives to equality and justice for all.

Old-time Chapel Hillians might later say to their grandchildren, "I remember when this was called Airport Road and all the citizens came together to support and respect each other, marking this camaraderie with the name 'Martin Luther King Boulevard.'"

It doesn't matter if no one ever utters these words. The comment would be redundant. The history will always be there for those who seek it out and pass it along.

It is now up to Chapel Hill to rededicate itself to the future.

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University would be scrutinized to much less of an extent.

But the controversy will translate into UNC continuing to look inward and to seek ways to improve itself. It will highlight the University's importance to its students, its employees, its state and the world of higher education.

New York or Washington or Los Angeles or Chicago — or who knows where — can wait. Right now, what's happening on this campus is exciting enough for me.

It's because UNC and its leaders are so often a part of such a vibrant dialogue that the University has won my heart. This girl next door will be a part of my life forever.

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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 2409, Carolina Union, mail them to P.O. Box 3257, Chapel Hill, NC 27515 or e-mail them to editdesk@unc.edu.