

BOARD EDITORIALS

NEW RULES NEEDED

Student Congress members should take action to guarantee that their progress thus far isn't undermined by disrespect and endless debate.

It stings to see people of promise failing to meet their potential. It can happen in the classroom. It can happen in the workplace. It can happen to students working for this newspaper. Right now, it's happening to Student Congress.

The body is dealing with complaints that unchecked debate is causing meetings to go on for too long, with claims that such debate is being used to achieve partisan ends and with concerns about decorum — or a lack thereof.

But imposing strict time limits on members' speech isn't the way to go. Congress' leaders should take the initiative in debate and step in when productive discussion has come to an end.

It's clear that there's a problem that must be addressed. One member already has resigned. Former representative Julie Lamberth stated in a Thursday e-mail to the Congress listserv that while the "recent bickering and ill will" in meetings wasn't the primary reason for her decision, it was a "contributing factor."

This is just one example of Congress members growing increasingly frustrated with what has been going on during their meetings. Clearly, something needs to be done, without impeding the body's ability to address fully important issues that come before it.

Formal, timed debates are basically performances in which participants are judged partly on how well they can encapsulate their arguments and respond to their opponents' points.

Because Congress uses debate to reach decisions with real implications for real people, such discussion obviously can't be governed by the same rules as a formal debate. An alternative method of cutting the amount of time wasted is necessary.

Extended debate can be fruitful. But Congress has been witnessing a lot of rehashing and reaffirming of points through repetition. In the context of this campus and its student body, allowing for such redundancy hinders Congress' productivity.

There are two sides to the scenario. On one hand are major concerns regarding the efficiency of Congress and the tendency of members to become involved in overly long, heated exchanges. On the other are worries that placing restrictions on debate could lead to unfavorable views being silenced.

The latter point is valid. But there has been no talk of allowing for any statements of opinion to be eliminated from the body's discussions. Debate limitations would compel members to say what they mean in a quicker and clearer fashion — they wouldn't necessarily stifle unpopular viewpoints.

On Thursday, Speaker Charlie Anderson sent Congress members an e-mail in which he emphasized the need for mutual respect and urged them to maintain focus. It was a strong message that acknowledged the problems and brought up both active and potential solutions.

Unfortunately, Anderson counted on the possibility of his introducing debate restrictions to ensure that the body's sessions run more smoothly, stating that "it would be inappropriate as the mediator of debate to be one that limits it as well."

Anderson's stance is understandable — but ultimately, the power of the student government body over which he presides might depend on whether or not he is willing to act. If no rule changes are proposed, or if proposals fail to pass, the speaker should step in.

Congress is at a crossroads. The body has been doing some very important work, but increased tension and squabbling between members is threatening to derail its efforts.

Without a culture of mutual respect between members, their ability to discuss legislation and issues important to the student body will be diminished. Without a system designed to streamline debate, Congress members will only be able to proceed at a snail's pace.

As representatives of the student body, they owe it to their constituents to get a move on.

ONE STOP TOO MUCH

University officials should look to do away with mandatory advising appointments once students can better gauge their graduation needs.

University officials are looking to complete changes to the "Analysis of Academic Progress" system on Student Central by fall 2006. UNC students can look forward to a smoother and easier experience at that time.

Beyond solving any problems that students might have with the current system of viewing remaining graduation requirements and finding out what classes they need to take, there are things University administrators can do to make the registration process more student-friendly.

Too many students have to deal with a "server busy" message and wait anxiously to sign up for classes after registration opens. Officials should look into increasing server capacity for registration services.

But there is a possible change that would make the process easier for students without requiring a significant investment of resources.

Some departments at the University require students to meet with an adviser before they can obtain their new personal identification numbers.

If they don't meet with their advisers before their respective registration dates, students in those departments don't receive the PINs that they need to access the University's online registration system.

But many students don't necessarily need that meeting. Students have shown that they are capable adults who are here to get a university education.

Forcing them to schedule meetings with advisers sends them the message that department and University officials don't have the faith in them to make wise decisions about their own academic progress.

It's not too difficult for students to keep up with their graduation requirements, which University officials make clear enough for every incoming class.

Students have to fulfill perspectives in the general college and the College of Arts and Sciences.

They must get reasonable grades in the courses for their major and complete other department-specific objectives. Of course, most of them have to pass a swim test — and students are flagged automatically for certain violations.

For the most part, students at the University are adapting to a number of new responsibilities. They are expected to find the best ways to manage their time. They are expected to abide by an Honor Code that details both acceptable and unacceptable behavior in the academic setting.

When the work flow decreases, they are expected to conduct themselves responsibly enough while spending their nights on the town or having fun on campus.

It isn't too much to expect that, except in the most special cases, students would be able to manage their schedules on their own.

Most of the resources they need are already at their disposal. They can go online and visit departmental Web sites to determine the requirements for their respective majors. Course catalogs are readily available for students to see what kinds of classes will be available the following semester.

This is not to underestimate the importance of the University's advising services — they are vital to students' academic progress. But mandatory appointments, which can be potential stumbling blocks for students who can easily figure out what courses they need to take and when, aren't absolutely necessary.

A revamped, user-friendly degree audit function would help officials to make a major change to the registration process — eliminating mandatory advising sessions before students sign up for new classes.

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 six 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.

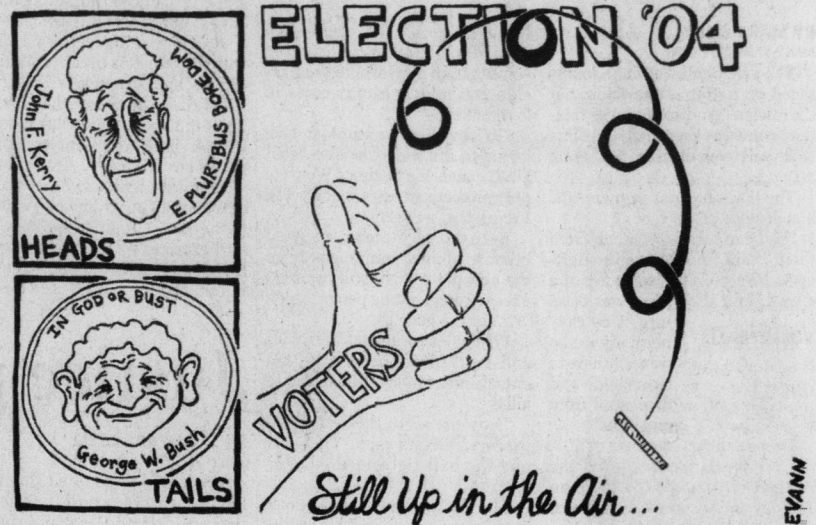
ON THE DAY'S NEWS

"Advice is like snow — the softer it falls, the longer it dwells upon, and the deeper it sinks into the mind."

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE, ENGLISH POET

EDITORIAL CARTOON

By Evann Strathern, evann@email.unc.edu



COMMENTARY

Two amazing football victories shall remain with me forever

Years from now, when I've graduated and moved away to find my place in the world, I will find my way back home on some September Saturday, and this is what I will remember: four years of college book-ended by the two biggest wins in UNC football history.

Four years, too many losses to remember, two wins I will never forget.

Two wins against two of the top teams in the country — ACC outsiders brought into the conference to add heft to our collective football schedule. The first was Florida State, a Goliath that had remained unbeaten by better UNC teams than the one that took the field in 2001. The second was Miami, a Tartuffe — a pretender given more credence than it deserved, but a team more talented than our own, all the same.

I'll remember Ronald Curry and Chad Scott — two seniors who came up with big plays when it counted.

Curry was asked to be a star in his first game as a Tar Heel — when UNC's starting quarterback went down — just months after his high school graduation. For three seasons, he carried the weight of the Tar Heel nation's expectations. From time to time, he slipped, got hit, got hurt.

Not a month after he guided his team to victory against Florida State, UNC fans would berate him from the stands. But through injury and insult, Curry took the field with a quiet confidence. Despite all that, when the pocket broke down and he tucked the ball away to head down field, we would hold our breaths — because we knew that Ronald Curry was always a step away from magic.

Chad Scott grew up in Florida, and he was recruited to play foot-



MATT COMPTON
POTENTIAL CROSSWORD SPACE ... WASTED

ball by the University of Miami. But they didn't want him to be a tailback. So he went to another Southeastern Conference school — the University of Kentucky — and became the leading rusher in Lexington until coach Hal Mumme was fired. After that, Scott wanted out.

He transferred to UNC, but he still had to wait for his chance. With Ronnie McGill and Jacques Lewis out, Scott wasn't even expected to start Saturday. But start he did. And just like on the field, once Scott finds an opening, he runs with it. On Saturday, his first play of the game was a 16-yard run — right into the hearts of Carolina fans everywhere.

I'll remember that our fans still have no idea how to cheer at a football game. We're a big school with a beautiful stadium and a legitimate team. But when it's third and long with our boys driving, and our quarterback is trying to change the play, what do you hear? Hark the sound of Tar Heel voices — raising such a ruckus that, nine times out of ten, an audible is almost inaudible in Kenan Stadium.

You'd never hear that cacophony of sound whenever Raymond Felton lines up at the charity stripe in the Smith Center — but game after game on the gridiron, that same sour note gets played by our fans.

And with less than a minute left in the fourth quarter, with

our freshman kicker lining up to attempt the first game-winning play of his life, our fans are already scaling the walls that surround the field. Had that moment of dimwitted overexuberance disrupted play on the field, it could have cost us the game.

And once on the field, the over-excited masses almost let their exuberance get the best of them again.

Jason Brown, the ACC offensive lineman of the week, had to yell at fans to make them stop pounding on his injured shoulder. Connor Barth — the man with the golden leg — had to put his helmet back on to protect his head from the cheerful slaps of the Tar Heel faithful. Our fans almost did more harm to our not-so-healthy team than the vaunted Miami defense.

But somehow in the space between the two wins, we learned how to bring down a goal post.

In 2001, it took students a good 40 minutes of lusty bouncing to bring down the post in the west end zone. On Saturday, both goal posts were down in less than five minutes. Come to think of it, I don't know whether our offense — seemingly unstoppable that day — was able to score against Miami that quickly.

And for that, our fans deserve as much applause as our team. They can be forgiven for not quite knowing what to do with themselves during the game.

As soon as the game was over, I ran onto the field to shake the hand of every player I could find. Whenever I did, I had just one thing to say: "Thank you."

Something tells me that if ever I run into these men again, I'll say the exact same thing.

Contact Matt Compton at mattcomp@gmail.com.

The Daily Tar Heel

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READERS' FORUM

University's short-changing of minority Homecoming Court smacks of racism

TO THE EDITOR:

Even though the Homecoming game was "unbelievable," the announcement of the Homecoming Court and halftime "show" were disappointing.

The crowning of Homecoming King and Queen is a big event during the Homecoming football game that has always been held during halftime.

This year was different because, for some odd reason, the University decided to hold the crowning during the pre-game festivities.

It's an outrage, especially because instead of displaying our Homecoming Court during halftime, we paid for some lame Elvis impersonator who wasn't even entertaining. I cannot even call that performance a halftime show, because the band did not march and we weren't even able to see "Elvis" on the field.

I'm not trying to play the race card here, but is it coincidental that this happened during a year when six out of seven candidates were from underrepresented minority backgrounds? In fact, all of the Homecoming Queen candidates were minorities.

Instead of giving them their proper recognition, the University gave them a quick ceremony before the game while thousands of University students, alumni and fans were still making their way into the stadium. This is a slap in the face not only to minorities but to all the students who worked arduously in each of these campaigns — for despite their effort, the University disrespected them all because of race.

Do you honestly think that if the Homecoming Court had been predominantly white or highlighted the child of prominent, wealthy alumni, that the crowning would have taken place before the game?

Jarrod Jenkins
Junior
Political science

DTH coverage of presidential, Senate contests strongly indicates liberal bias

TO THE EDITOR:

In the past few weeks, I have come to notice The Daily Tar Heel's partisan approach to this election. In the recurring section on the ups and downs of a presidential campaign, I was hoping to one day see an article featuring George W. Bush. To my disappointment, each article featured Kerry and Edwards and made no mention of Bush or Cheney.

Pictures of Kerry and Edwards were repeatedly featured on the front page, giving them an unequal amount of face time. In order to be objective journalists, the DTH's staff should give equal space to both Democratic and Republican candidates.

Another example of this partisanship was in the DTH's coverage of the race between Richard Burr and Erskine Bowles. The particular article I saw featured sections stating why people should vote for Bowles and why they shouldn't vote for Burr, which gives an obvious bias toward Bowles.

Tuesday's paper featured a section where the DTH Editorial Board endorsed, to everyone's surprise, only Democratic candidates. Instances such as these serve only to further my opinion of the liberal bias of the DTH to lessen its objective credibility and accountability to the journalistic ideal.

Trevor Maxson
Junior
Religious studies

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.

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