

Voters approve Campus deals with election's aftermath

BY LIZ STANLEY
STAFF WRITER

The third time proved to be the charm for Amendment One when it was approved by voters in Tuesday's election.

Amendment One allows local governments to issue self-financing bonds for infrastructure projects such as street improvements in special development districts without voter approval.

Before the election, North Carolina was one of two states that had not approved such legislation.

Aaron Nelson, executive director of the Chapel Hill-Carrboro Chamber of Commerce, said he is excited the state finally voted for the measure. "In Chapel Hill, it will be our responsibility to take advantage of this opportunity," he said.

The chamber, along with 351 other groups, endorsed Amendment One, Nelson said.

Dianne Reid, Orange County economic development director, also supported the amendment.

While working in Pennsylvania and New Jersey, Reid said she saw how the bonds can work effectively, especially in downtown projects.

Although Chapel Hill Town Council member Mark Kleinschmidt opposed the amendment, he said that if used correctly, the bonds could play an effective role in economic development.

"There are other means of borrowing money without the voters' approval, but their use is restricted to only extraordinary needs like, for example, the new town operations center," he said.

Kleinschmidt said he is particularly concerned about the government's ability to borrow money

without voter approval.

"I have strong reservations about the bonds because it's hard to ensure that they will be used appropriately," he said. "The community is taking a risk if they choose to use them."

But the bonds would finance public improvements such as water and sewer lines and pay for themselves through tax revenue generated by the projects they fund.

Both Nelson and Reid said citizens should not be concerned with the government's ability to use the bonds without their approval. Before the bonds are distributed, the Local Government Commission in the State Treasurer's office must approve their use.

"North Carolina has created extra safeguards like the Local Government Commission to ensure ... that the debts will be repaid," Reid said.

North Carolina is the only state that gives the state final authority to approve bonds. In the last 50 years, no local bond approved by the Commission has defaulted.

Like Kleinschmidt, Michael Joyce, a Cary Town Council member, initially opposed the amendment but is now focusing on how he can help the system work and prevent the state from abusing it.

Both he and Kleinschmidt said people should expect an increase in their taxes in order to fund this new bonding system.

But Nelson said the tax rate should remain the same. "We are pledging future taxes to pay off the debt that we are creating now."

Contact the City Editor at citydesk@unc.edu.

BY KATHRYN BALES,
RACHEL BROCK
AND SHARI FELD
STAFF WRITERS

Polarized emotions ranging from disappointment to excitement abounded across campus the day after polls closed for the 2004 election.

Early in the day, as the outcomes of key swing states loomed in the balance, some students, faculty and staff said they were annoyed by the uncertainty.

Others said voting officials should take as much time as necessary to ensure a valid result.

"I don't want to find out in one night," sophomore Tim Reilly said. "They need to count all the votes, no matter how long it takes."

Many had full confidence that the nation will unite behind President George W. Bush, but others said they are not so certain. Only one thing is for sure — many in the University community said America must come together during this pressing time

for the nation.

"I think that Republicans and Democrats at UNC and across the country have a real challenge of bringing the country together," said Daniel Gitterman, professor of public policy.

Wednesday afternoon, after networks called the race for Bush, students gathered in the Student Union to watch Sen. John Kerry's concession speech. Many expressed the view that he made the right decision to concede and was successful in promoting unity.

"I have a lot more respect for him," said sophomore Will Brisley, a Bush supporter. "He could have dragged this thing out for a few months like Gore did, but that's not what this country needs. We need to be unified, not divided."

Brisley added that he is pleased there is no more waiting.

"I'm glad it's over now (with) the way Kerry conceded and conceded graciously," he said. "He restored legitimacy to the system that we

lost in 2000."

Initial reactions to Kerry's concession varied across the University. Some were surprised, others angered and still others glad to see an end to a close race.

"There are mixed emotions, just depending on who you were voting for," said Tommy Griffin, chairman of the Employee Forum.

After so many discrepancies in the 2000 election, many people said they assumed that they would not know the results immediately.

"I had no expectation that we would know any time this week," junior Greg Abbott said. "The fact that we know now came as a complete surprise."

Many people said they were pleased by the ease with which the election proceeded.

"With anything this large in scale, there's going to be a few errors made," sophomore Shannon Minter said. "But it seems things went a lot better this time."

But some expressed concerns.

Howard Machtinger, director of the Carolina Teaching Fellows program, said he is not convinced of the validity of the election.

"There's still question about whether everyone was allowed to vote," he said.

Machtinger said that even though Kerry conceded, he believes that there should be further investigation of the election's results.

Randall Styers, professor of religious studies, said that although he was disappointed by Kerry's defeat, voters made a clear choice about the image America will portray to other countries.

Though the focus on campus has been aimed toward the presidency, many stated that local and state offices also are important.

"Who sits in the governor's seat and who sits in the legislature will affect us all down the road," Griffin said.

Contact the University Editor at udesk@unc.edu.

N.C. Dems seize control of state legislature

BY NATALIE HAMMEL
STAFF WRITER

North Carolinians made a clear distinction Tuesday between national and state politics when voters increased the Democratic Party's control of the state's General Assembly.

The most recent reports show that Democrats in the N.C. Senate expanded their majority by one to three seats, giving them 28 to 30 of the available 50 seats in the chamber.

Official results in a pair of close races will be known in a few days.

In the 120-seat House, which was previously tilted in favor of the Republican Party by two seats, Democrats now hold a six-seat majority, 63 to 57.

The results could help Senate President Pro Tem Marc Basnight, a Dare County Democrat, achieve more of his goals. It also could

move the House, which operated last session under a historic power-sharing arrangement, toward one-party control.

"Marc Basnight is often called the strongest politician in Raleigh because he has such control over the Senate," said Thad Beyle, a political science professor at UNC.

Ferrel Guillory, director of UNC's Program on Southern Politics, Media and Public Life, said now that Basnight is the leader of a somewhat stronger collection of Democrats, the question becomes how he uses that strength.

Amy Fulk, spokeswoman for Basnight, said the senator's goals will remain the same in the next session. "We'll just keep working on the same priorities," she said.

"(The election) gives us another two years to work on improving our business climate, strengthening higher education, improving pub-

lic schools and working on other efforts that will benefit our state."

While Basnight has been in clear control of the Senate for six terms now, the leadership in the House has not always been stable.

"The most interesting part of this is what's going on in the state House," Beyle said.

Previously, the House was led by co-speakers: Jim Black, D-Mecklenburg, and Richard Morgan, R-Moore.

But now it is unclear whether the coalition will continue.

"That's something that's going to be worked out, and it's going to be worked out quietly between Mr. Black and Mr. Morgan," Beyle said. "And that's going to be the fun to watch."

Beyle said he wouldn't be sur-

prised if the House continued to have a coalition, adding that it would be better for the chamber because it has led to an effective system of passing legislation.

The General Assembly normally focuses its attention on issues such as health care and education, something Guillory said Democrats are better at doing.

He said the state legislature will continue to focus on legislation with a pragmatic focus, following the leadership of newly re-elected Gov. Mike Easley.

"Legislators will be working off of his agenda," he said. "Whether he wins every battle or not, who knows."

Contact the State & National Editor at stntdesk@unc.edu.



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CORRECTIONS

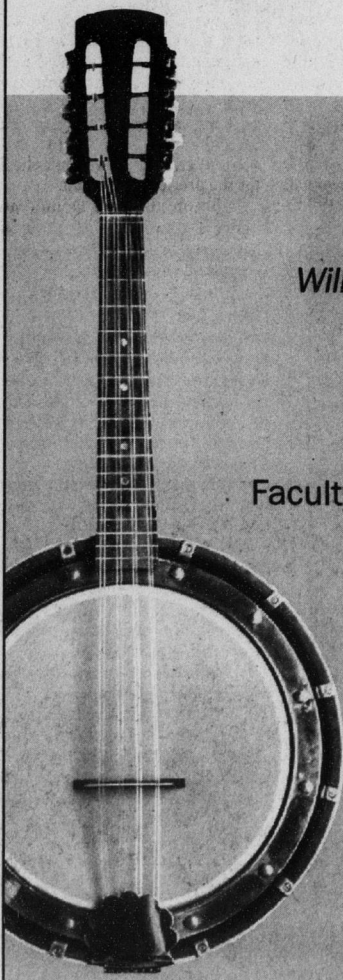
■ Due to a reporting error, the Nov. 3 article "Burr snags Senate seat" states that Elizabeth Dole won her Senate seat in 2000. She actually won it in 2002.

To report corrections, contact Managing Editor Chris Coletta at cchetto@unc.edu.

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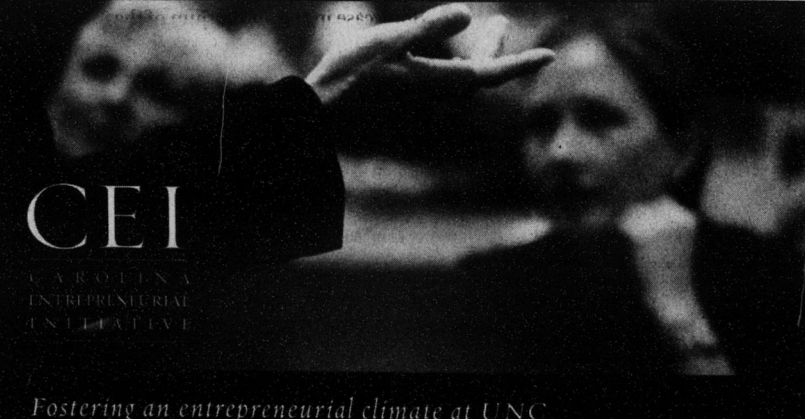
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John Stewart Professor of Economics jfstewar@email.unc.edu	Buck Goldstein University Entrepreneur in Residence buck_goldstein@unc.edu
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