

BOARD EDITORIALS

A NEW ZERO EFFECT

It won't affect campus-based hikes, but by recommending a 0 percent systemwide tuition increase, Molly Broad has sent a strong message.

In a proposed budget going before the UNC-system Board of Governors, system President Molly Broad has recommended that there be a systemwide 0 percent tuition increase.

The suggestion not to implement a systemwide increase is the best proposal for BOG members to go with. The potential to apply downward pressure on legislators' tuition policy outweighs any gains to be made by trying to outguess them.

The proposal might, at least, lead to low tuition increases and, at best, encourage legislators to hold tuition for the next year. Either will be helpful to public university students throughout the state.

Broad was sent two proposals by a divided Tuition Task Force — either forgo a systemwide increase or raise tuition systemwide by 2.2 percent. The latter proposal should be enough of a "guideline" for legislators should they need one later.

But if campaign statements mean anything, a 0 percent increase proposed by the BOG will have Governor Mike Easley's support.

Though Broad's recommendation might help

put the kibosh on any systemwide increases, there's still pressure at the individual campuses for raises in tuition. Administrators at N.C. State University have already made plans to renew a previous request for a \$300 in-state tuition increase.

Such a keen sentiment for increases could find itself at UNC-Chapel Hill, especially in light of the recent Board of Trustees price sensitivity report indicating that tuition could be drastically raised without much consequence. The report's findings seem questionable, and the BOT would be wise to be wary of tuition increases at UNC-CH based on just that research — even research-supported increases risk alienating applicants.

Broad has made a great start to the debate over tuition increases. Recommending a 0 percent increase sends a clear message: There does not need to be a major tuition increase, if one is needed at all.

This is the kind of message and downward pressure on tuition that the BOG, BOT and the General Assembly should be hearing right now. Hopefully they will make the right call for the students of the UNC-system and follow Broad's lead.

SMART SAFETY STEP

The UNC-system Safety Task Force did the necessary thing to suggest that admissions officials check applicants' backgrounds in some cases.

The UNC-system Safety Task Force did well to include a recommendation for background checks in a report to be submitted to UNC-system President Molly Broad.

There's little doubt that something had to be done after the murders of two UNC-Wilmington students this year — the suspects in both of those cases lied about their criminal histories.

It would be an impossible investment of resources for admissions officials to try to investigate criminal records for all applicants to UNC-system schools, but an ongoing effort to flag indicators of potential violence is in order.

Some of the suggestions to identify trouble — triggers such as a lapse between high school graduation and submission of the college application — seem like reasonable justification for admissions officials to double-check the applicant's criminal history.

Having the UNC system go to the Department of Public Instruction, the community college system and private schools to provide it with in-state student suspension and expulsion records also seem to be reasonable measures.

Although it's impossible to know how many real threats a flagging system will be able to catch, it's certainly better than having a system in which applicants can be confident that lies will go undetected.

Leslie Winner, UNC-system vice president and general counsel, told The (Raleigh) News & Observer that action of some sort is necessary.

"It's sort of a needle in a haystack we're looking for," she said, "but it's a pretty sharp needle."

It's unfortunate that admissions officials are forced to take on what are effectively law enforcement duties, but as events this year have shown, the need is there.

Guidelines for admissions officials to screen for potential sources of harm should continue to be examined and adapted as ideas come up.

It's an important matter — it's good to see that proactive efforts are being made to protect students.

It's unfortunate that it took the lives of two students to provoke the changes, but the need is clear and these recommendations chart a course of action that serves well within the constraints on the University system. We can only hope that more intrusive measures won't be necessary in the future.

LESSONS UNLEARNED

The fact that some state races went undecided well past Election Day is a sure indication that there still are big improvements to be made.

One would think that after chaos erupted from the 2000 election officials would have made voting procedures easier and more efficient before contests reached their climax last week.

But that has turned out not to be entirely the case, and some North Carolinian candidates and constituents alike are continuing to feel the consequences.

It's too bad that they are having to wait so long before any final result comes along, and it seems as if more could have been done to avoid such uncertainty.

According to The Associated Press, the races for two Council of State offices are close enough to be subject to a recount.

Candidates and officials have fallen into even deeper confusion because of a voting machine-related breakdown. In Carteret County, an electronic touchscreen system's storage capacity was exceeded, and about 4,500 early ballots were lost permanently.

The races for state commissioner of agriculture and superintendent of public instruction are still in contention. In the former contest, Steve Troxler, a Republican, is leading incumbent Britt Cobb.

GOP candidate Bill Fletcher trails Democrat June Atkinson in the latter race. These candidates and incumbents have worked too hard to have to wait so long for a final word.

Four years after thousands of ballots in Florida gave the entire nation headaches, a person reasonably could have assumed that election officials would have worked out the kinks of newer voting machines prior to one of the most significant elections in recent decades.

Just like candidates, these machines should have been vetted months before voters came into play. In Carteret County, at least, that didn't happen.

Provisional ballots, in addition to machine troubles, are to blame for the uncertainty. These votes also are holding up any official announcement of results.

To state that more foresight will be necessary in the future would be to state the obvious. But regardless, the idea needs to be taken even more seriously.

When races are this close in the future, the only major concern of candidates should be the simple difference in the number of votes cast for each.

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.

READERS' FORUM

Team checks conditions of labor at Honduran factories

TO THE EDITOR:

Tuesday's editorial, "Deeper questions," asks whether the University can find another apparel supplier without any human rights violations to its name.

In fact, there exists an organization designed to do just this: the Equipo de Monitoreo Independiente de Honduras (Honduran Independent Monitoring Team).

EMIH works with current and former garment workers in Honduras to monitor labor conditions at the factories and to track violations. They have warned about conditions at the Gildan plant in El Progreso for years.

EMIH has developed trust and credibility with workers, and their audits are more reliable than those corporate auditors who come in from abroad, make a few pre-scheduled visits to a factory, talk to a few workers handpicked by management and leave.

I spent the summer of 2001 in El Progreso, Honduras, talking to women garment factory workers as part of a research project. I visited the homes of dozens of Gildan workers who told me about the company's practices of harassment and intimidation.

Some women were fired for participating in workplace health and safety training run by a Jesuit organization.

Now the company has closed the factory without paying them back wages and has left its former employees with nothing.

By contracting with suppliers who demand that their subcontractors respect workers' rights, the University promotes a business model of responsible labor practices.

Even if this does cost a few extra cents per T-shirt, it is a worthwhile investment.

It is high time that the University's business practices be brought into line with the values professed in its classrooms.

Simon Moshenberg Graduate student Journalism

Contrary to article, Tar Heel goalkeeping is a strength

TO THE EDITOR:

On Nov. 8, an article about the ACC women's soccer championship stated, "And when the game reached penalty kicks, the Tar Heels' most glaring weakness — goalkeeping — was exposed."

I find this comment inaccurate and unfair.

First of all, Aly Winget's goal-against average is 0.59 goals per game, or less than a goal per game. This average is among the best in the country and has resulted in eight shutouts this season. Opponents have scored more than two goals only twice this season.

It should also be noted that Aly is the Heels' all-time save leader and did not allow a single goal in the NCAA tournament last year.

Second of all, penalty kicks are not necessarily the best time to judge a goalie's skill. Many shots are simply impossible to save.

Nevertheless, Aly made an amazing diving save to her left to force sudden death.

In addition, it is unjust to assign all blame for a goal to the goalie; the entire team is responsible for playing defense.

This team has so few weaknesses that no single area can be singled out, and the word "glaring" is especially harsh.

I am confident that our goalkeeping and defense will come up big for us in the NCAA tournament and lead us to another title.

Billy Scott Sophomore Political science

Paper isn't covering campus group events adequately

TO THE EDITOR:

Overall, the Campus Y has received good press this fall, and we are extremely thankful for that. We appreciate Joseph Schwartz's article about the structural changes that we have implemented this year.

However, the article would have been more appropriate in April when they actually went into effect.

ON THE DAY'S NEWS

"Nothing happens until something moves."

SIR JOHN DENHAM, ENGLISH POET

EDITORIAL CARTOON



By Fitz Holladay, wfhollad@email.unc.edu

COMMENTARY

Like doily hunting, democracy demands constant attention

My older sister and I used to collect doilies. You know — those paper lace cut-outs you can buy at Wal-Mart in packages of 100 for \$0.99. We competed fiercely over who could amass the most, yanking them out from under coffee cups or hotel room water glasses and any other place we could get our hands on them.

My moment of glory came at a particular Chinese restaurant where the busboy cleared away my sister's moo shu shrimp before she had a chance to claim her doily. Score 1-0, me. I basked in the proudest moment of my half-decade of life thus far.

Democracy is a lot like doily-collecting. You stay aware. You stay informed. You plan your move, and then you make it. You rejoice or bemoan the outcome that seems either to validate or repudiate your personal will.

Or you shirk your obligations and lazily rely on someone else to do the work, just as I then counted on the busboy to seal my victory rather than exercising my own sticky little fingers.

At that Chinese restaurant, I, like many an enfranchised American, became either complacent with the status quo or smugly bloated by the prospect of triumph.

My sister began to whimper, "I want my doily back," and my father handed her his. I could have easily broken the deadlock. Had I not been so young, so naive, I would have seized the greasy paper off the egg roll dish right in front of my face.

But alas, my sister snagged that doily and the one from my mother's vegetable platter before I could scream those infamous little sister words: "No fair!"

All's fair in democracy and



MEG AUSTIN STREETWISE

doily collecting, provided you follow the simple rules:

1. Do your part, be it voting or making it your business to hoard every doily within a 10-mile radius.

2. Don't discount the goals of other people: You will never succeed in democracy or doily collecting if you believe that you exist in a vacuum.

3. Remember that it is a full-time job. Democracy and doily-collecting aren't affairs that occur once every four years or each time you visit a quasi-nice restaurant. You have got to keep at it round the clock.

Do these, and you are free to gloat or gripe to your heart's content, as you are making a difference. Fail to comply, and you are stuck with one loser doily and a pile of fortune cookie innards that you can't even read yet.

It appeared as though at least the democracy trend was starting to catch on this year. Many voter registration drives turned out to be strong and noble endeavors. One-stop early voting sites made voting much more convenient for those with busy schedules. According to the Orange County Board of Elections, the county boasted about a 68 percent voter turnout.

But our democratic duty did not end Nov. 2. Regardless of personal feelings about the outcome, there is still a lot of work to be done right here in Chapel Hill. And it is our responsibility

to make our voices heard in the community.

It is as easy as reading the paper. Or participating in discussions on the county Web forum, <http://www.orangepolitics.org>. Or going to the monthly meetings of the Horace Williams Citizens Committee to weigh in with your opinions about Carolina North proposals and other sustainable development matters.

You could attend the Orange County Roundtable Discussion on Homelessness on Nov. 18 to address the issue. Or you could join the local chapter of Student Poverty Reduction OUtreach, founded by students Josh Glasser and James Jolley and devoted to organizing efforts to aid the local low-income community.

Such opportunities, like doilies, are everywhere: It is up to every individual to grab them.

Otherwise, laziness and indifference will come back to haunt you when you least expect it.

Take it from me. Thirteen years after the Chinese restaurant incident, I was dining with my friends before our senior prom.

My date — a somewhat awkward fellow imported for the occasion per my all-girl school's BYOB (Bring Your Own Boy) mandate — was telling bad stories as he shoveled forkfuls of lemon tart off his doily-adorned plate and into his mouth.

I had been doing my best to ignore him, but I perked right up when he interrupted himself to remark, "Hey, this dessert tastes like paper."

So pay attention and get active. Or else one of these days, your date is going to eat your doily.

Contact Meg Austin at margarea@email.unc.edu.

CORRECTION

In Wednesday's Readers' Forum, the letter headlines "Ceremony today will honor past, present service people" and "Book discussion will be held today at women's center" were both incorrect. Instead of taking place Wednesday, the two events will take place today. 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 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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