

BOARD EDITORIALS

NO BREATHING ROOM

A fee increase that would allow for more scholarships is intriguing, but officials need more time to explore the possibility before deciding.

Both the Student Fee Audit Committee and the Chancellor's Committee on Student Fees made the right choice in deciding not to support a last-minute suggestion to raise the athletic fee by \$150.

The proposal comes too late — and it wouldn't make for an appropriate use of student fee money if implemented.

Seventy-five percent of the University's logo sales currently go toward academic scholarships, while the rest is allocated to athletics. Under the \$150 student athletics fee increase proposal, drawn up by Judith Wegner, chairwoman of the faculty, all logo sales money would be redirected to scholarships.

The almost \$900,000 shifted from athletics to academics theoretically would yield 50 new merit-based scholarships for in-state students and 15 such awards for nonresidents. The fee increase money would fill the resulting gap in athletic funding.

But now isn't the time to spring such a significant price change on the Board of Trustees and, for that matter, the entire student body. The BOT is meeting this week, and to rush out a proposal without giving involved parties enough time to examine the plan closely and to explore possible alternatives would be imprudent.

Regardless of the suggestion's worth, it's too bad this proposal came so late in the game.

The UNC-system Board of Governors appears likely to shy away from campus-based tuition increases in March. During a hike-free year, such a fee increase promises to be less of a burden to students.

But there hasn't been time for the proper amount of consideration.

Wegner's reasoning for the proposal evolved from the results of last year's tuition price elasticity study, which demonstrated that merit-based scholarships help to keep the best students interested.

There's no question that more merit aid would contribute to the health and welfare of UNC. Colleges

and universities across the nation offer these awards to the best and brightest students in an effort to reduce the amount of financial burden for promising prospects and to make them feel especially wanted.

UNC obviously could use more merit aid money, as tuition has risen and endowments such as the John Motley Morehead Foundation have weakened.

But it wouldn't be right to use a student fee increase in this manner. Ideally, these fees are supposed to go toward goals, areas and initiatives that benefit all students — not just a small percentage of them.

Merit-based scholarships certainly help to improve the academic quality of a college or university's student body, but it's elementary that scholarship money only goes to some students.

Why should graduate students, then, have to pay fee money that will go to incoming undergraduate students?

Granted, one could argue that campus athletics also would get a big boost, as extra money would go toward scholarships, supplies, health, facility and operational costs and Olympic sport coaches' salaries.

But the average student wouldn't be able to buy into these changes. And the main purpose of this \$150 fee increase would be to create a limited number of academic scholarships. Simply put, money for merit aid shouldn't be coming out of student fees.

It's an intriguing concept, and one that those in charge of recommending and making fee changes should take up for consideration next year.

Wegner made the right call in throwing the idea out there for officials to explore, although one wishes that she might have thought of it and suggested it sooner.

But the two committees made an even better call in withholding any support for an athletic fee increase. This fee needs to be used for things that every student who pays it can enjoy, gain from or appreciate — and as much as more merit-based scholarships would increase UNC's draw as a college option, such awards would be reserved for a lucky few.

ONE PLACE FOR ALL

Students on this campus should belong to a single voting precinct — and that's why legislators must work extra hard to make it a reality.

Every time a student who lives in Craige Residence Hall visits a friend in Morrison, he or she is moving from one voting precinct to another. If students from those two residence halls are thinking about getting in line to vote together in Chapel Hill, they'd better change their plans.

UNC-Chapel Hill's campus is divided into six different voting precincts, only one of which has an on-campus polling site.

It's an absurd setup that generates unnecessary confusion for a large population of eligible voters.

Student government officials deserve plenty of praise for their work as they lobby state legislators to consolidate those precincts. It's a necessary measure to accommodate students.

District reform is a vital step toward improving student participation, especially when it comes to municipal elections. Although campus residents generally are aware of state and national elections, it's difficult to attract students' interest during years when local government officials are the only ones who have to run for office.

Students living on campus have an important stake in that effort — but the nature of their residence makes getting to the polls a difficult task for them, as most of them don't have cars. Some students also have been discouraged from voting because they thought they could vote at Morehead Planetarium on Election Day: It's possible to vote at the facility during early voting, but not on the actual day.

Student leaders seem to have done their best to improve voter participation in the six-precinct setting. Former Student Body President Matt Tepper's administration registered 2,300 voters before the 2003 municipal elections. But that effort failed to get students out to the polls, as only 329 people aged 18 to 22 voted in that year's municipal elections.

Transportation problems and confusion stemming from the division of precincts are at least partially to blame for poor showing. Many students simply didn't know where to go, and they might have gotten flawed answers from their friends.

The precinct divisions discourage students from participating in local politics, and that's a problem worth fixing. The state legislature should look out for students who have an interest in voting but wouldn't have the time between classes to drive or catch a bus to the polls.

Individual students might not have a long-term stake in local politics, but student interests will continue to resonate. For example, students will always be affected by a duplex apartment ban as much as established residents — even if the students living in each unit change from year to year.

Furthermore, students who register to vote in Chapel Hill meet all of the qualifications of other voters in this district. They are U.S. citizens, and by Election Day, they will have been living in their districts for at least 30 days.

Students shouldn't face a barrier to exercising their rights as voters.

In working to consolidate the campus' voting districts, student government officials should take the opportunity to maintain a positive, cooperative relationship with members of the UNC system's Association of Student Governments.

There's a common goal to be achieved. Student officials should put aside issues that have caused friction between their organizations to do something constructive.

Student Body President Matt Calabria has a lot going for him, and consolidating the campus precincts is one of his most important endeavors.

Let's just hope he can put it all together.

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

A Libertarian government isn't a proven improvement

TO THE EDITOR:

If Philip Hensley would like to start a conversation about the "best" form of government, more power to him. But he's going to have to do better than "Government doesn't work." Most mail is, in fact, delivered on time and intact. Saying that our schools are failing to educate our children well is belied by the fact that applications to Carolina increase each year and that more students than ever before meet entrance criteria. And both the N.C. and U.S. governments have kept their promise to me of a stable retirement pension and Social Security to the letter.

It's true that our government is often cumbersome, but this is a large, complex country. If Libertarians don't think that government works as it is now, it isn't at all clear how their form would work better.

Any social contract involving millions of diverse people is bound to infringe upon someone's idea of personal liberty. Libertarians' notion of personal liberty governed by personal responsibility is quite attractive, but it hinges on the rational behavior of people. Mr. Hensley is a history major, according to The Daily Tar Heel. I wonder how many examples of consistently rational behavior he can cite in the history of nations.

Stupid policies on the part of elected officials don't in and of themselves condemn government but ought to remind us all that we

ought to be more careful and conscientious when we vote. There's no guarantee that Libertarians are any more inclined to be so than Republicans or Democrats.

We could all benefit from a continuing conversation on the merits of different forms of government, but Libertarians have to do more than just chant "government is bad" as if it's some sort of mantra.

Charles A. Murphy
Clinical professor
Department of Anesthesiology

Nonresidents need not bear a disproportionate burden

TO THE EDITOR:

N.C. natives are about to receive another free ride at the expense of each and every out-of-state student. After reading in Monday's paper that the UNC-system Board of Governors has great intentions of removing the request to increase in-state tuition, I am convinced that out-of-state students are taken for granted.

As an out-of-state student, I would never be comfortable with another student profiting from my pocket alone. I became even more outraged after learning of the true need and beneficial spending plans UNC-Chapel Hill has after the expected tuition increase.

I realized the need for the tuition increase after I attended the tuition forum hosted by student government. The University will have funds to accomplish a number of

things. A few of the spending plans are listed as follows: keep professors at the school, hire more professors, increase teaching assistant salaries and decrease the student-faculty ratio. These are all goals that UNC-CH needs to maintain.

Needless to say, these are all changes that the entire student body will benefit from. If all of the students benefit from such changes, then why are the out-of-state students chosen to carry the burden of supporting these changes financially? The idea that the BOG might actually believe that this move is the righteous answer to the problems at this University is simply absurd. This solution allows N.C. natives another handout courtesy of out-of-state students.

It is quite obvious that the only fair solution is that in-state students' tuition should be modified in the same manner as that for out-of-state students. Yet no matter how obvious the solution, a biased route will be taken in favor of N.C. natives.

Juanita Tolliver
Sophomore
Journalism

Despite opposition, campus should renew energy fee

TO THE EDITOR:

I commend the executive branch of student government for its effort in supporting the green energy referendum on the Feb. 8 ballot.

I also want to pat the backs of my

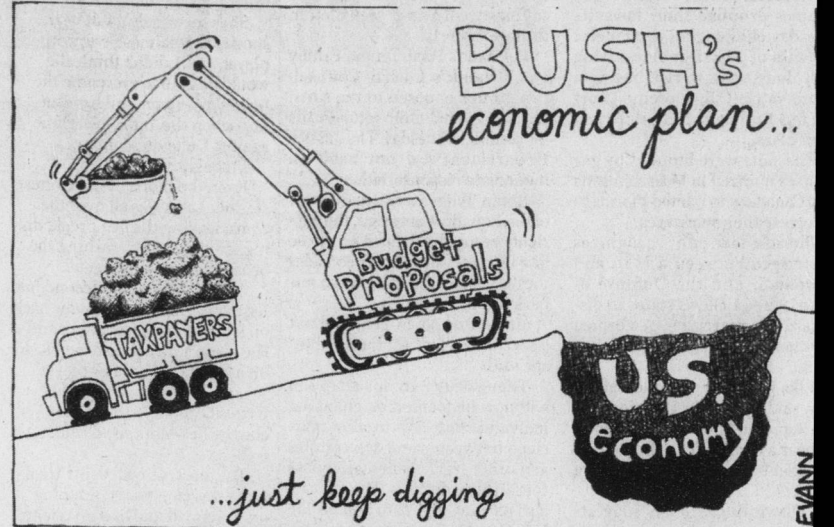
ON THE DAY'S NEWS

"Patience is not passive; on the contrary, it is active; it is concentrated strength."

EDWARD G. BULWER-LYTON, ENGLISH POLITICIAN AND POET

EDITORIAL CARTOON

By Evann Strathern, evann@email.unc.edu



COMMENTARY

The student body president hopefuls must earn my vote

If Seke Ballard, Leigha Blackwell, Seth Dearmin and Tom Jensen think that it will be easy to secure my vote for student body president, they must have bumped their heads. They have a tremendous amount of work to do if they want me to consider logging into Student Central for them Feb. 8.

Don't get me wrong — I like the candidates. I've worked with each of them in student government and campaigns, and I know that they're very nice. Plus, I empathize with what they are going through. They are sacrificing their academic and personal lives to run for office, and they are putting themselves on the line for what they believe. They're great people, and I admire them because I would rather have my wisdom teeth pulled than run for student office.

But I am a choosy voter, and I expect nothing but the best from my elected officials. My vote will go to the person who proves himself or herself best in furthering the University's proud tradition of student self-governance. I want a student body president with fresh ideas and an extraordinary vision for Carolina.

Now, I'm sure that many readers will think that I'm setting the bar a little too high. After all, most people do not expect young adults to have the ingenuity or planning skills to change a University. Heck, most college administrators don't — but that means nothing to me. My expectations are indeed high, mostly because I know past student body presidents who have met and exceeded them.

Paul Dickson, student body president in 1966 and one of my personal heroes, was one such leader. Dickson was at the helm of student government during the speaker ban controversy, in which



DERWIN DUBOSE
FROM THE DIRT ROAD

the N.C. General Assembly banned communists from speaking at the state's public universities.

Instead of accepting the blatant attack on academic freedom, Dickson did what a true student body president should — he led. He organized a 1,200-student protest on McCorkle Place, and he and other student leaders filed suit against Chancellor J. Carlyle Sitterson and the University. Because of his efforts, a federal court overturned the law in 1968. Since then, students have been free to invite whomever they please to speak on campus.

The candidates can even look at the University's most recent history to find an example of remarkable achievement for the student body president. This summer, Matt Calabria, our current chief executive, actively fought to renovate the historic Campus Y building. Now, generations of Tar Heels will enjoy having new student-centered offices, meeting rooms and a snack bar on North Campus — and a campus institution will continue with renewed vigor.

Dickson and Calabria have my respect and admiration, now and forever. They used the office of student body president to leave indelible marks on the campus, and I will not accept anything less from the winner of this year's election.

I want to vote for a candidate who has the capability to do something revolutionary and effective for the student body, and I will not

entertain mediocrity. The stakes are too high for us to allow candidates to push easy things such as moving a bike pump as major campus innovations.

To get my vote, one must show me concrete, attainable plans to provide exemplary representation as a member of UNC's Board of Trustees, to keep my tuition as low as possible and to improve student life. But sadly, the candidate Web sites have not shown this.

In my research, I found few original ideas. One platform merely supports things that have happened or are already in progress on campus. Another seems to be a poor attempt at pandering to certain organizations for endorsements. One candidate has promised bold programs in town relations, but the platform demonstrates a complete misunderstanding of the student body president's role in local government. Then there's a candidate with few, if any, stances and substantive reform efforts.

Leigha, Seke, Seth and Tom have a lot to do in the next two weeks. They better start working to convince the student body that they offer more than broad, regurgitated and impracticable platitudes — and until they do, they need not attempt to interrupt my life with campaign propaganda.

But I will be hard at work as well. I'll be following The Daily Tar Heel's coverage like a hawk, looking for what each of them would offer as student body president, and I pray that I won't be the only student who does. Hopefully, one of them will live up to my expectations for the leader of this student body. If not, I'll just have to write Paul Dickson on the ballot.

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