

BOARD EDITORIALS

LEAVE NEWS ALONE

Gov. Easley's proposal to implement a circulation tax on newspapers would disrupt the flow of information and hurt smaller publications.

Gov. Mike Easley's proposal to streamline taxes on phone bills, liquor and cable television — to conform to a national standard — is a good idea. His planned increases on movie tickets and live entertainment are acceptable, given North Carolina's budget shortfalls. And taxing candy would make life only slightly less sweet.

But disrupting the free flow of information for North Carolina's residents is an abhorrent idea that the General Assembly should reject.

Easley's proposal to institute a newspaper "circulation" tax would undermine years of progress made by legislators to reduce the tax burden on newspapers.

That dedication came through when the General Assembly passed a 2002 measure to exempt newspapers sold on news racks from sales taxes. In 2004, legislators also passed a law that is scheduled to exempt free newspapers from sales tax on ink.

Information and ideas are public goods — and newspapers are often the only way to deliver that information. Newspapers help people to become aware of activity in their neighborhoods. And inform-

ing residents about what's happening on their street benefits communities beyond any subscriber base.

Unfortunately, it's the small, community-based newspapers that will be most affected by any new tax that gets passed.

Of the 200 members of the N.C. Press Association, 150 of them publish three times a week or less. Of the 49 papers that publish daily, 41 of them have circulations of less than 35,000.

A new "circulation" tax from the state would hit these papers the hardest in already tough times.

Alternative news sources, such as the Internet, simply won't replace the coverage readers will miss in the event that a local newspaper should go under.

The First Amendment addresses questions of speech and the press because these constructs are at the very center of a free and vibrant society. N.C. legislators have made protecting that coverage a priority because they recognize its importance.

New taxes on newspapers should be rejected. And they certainly shouldn't be lumped in with a tax hike for cigarettes, movie tickets and candy.

STAYING ON COURSE

University administrators should continue to support and strengthen C-START, which fosters student teaching and learning, in the future.

Student Body President Matt Calabria's tenure will come to a close in a few weeks, but support for the programs backed by his administration shouldn't die down with the transition to new officials.

Seth Dearmin's administration should continue to support the Carolina Students Taking Academic Responsibility through Teaching program. Calabria made C-START a platform plank when he was approached by participants.

Although C-START lacks the sex appeal of a music downloading service or a fresh produce market, it's a high-quality program that should continue to receive attention after Calabria leaves office.

C-START allows a select group of seniors to develop a course on a topic of their choosing. After creating a curriculum in the fall semester, those students become the instructors for 10 to 15 undergraduates in the spring. The student-teachers get three credit hours, and those who take the class receive one hour of pass/fail credit.

C-START allows students to gain experience teaching and learning — and underclassmen taking the class get a unique opportunity to interact with

seniors who might have sage advice to give.

C-START creates an environment not limited to academic enrichment and intellectual stimulation. It brings students together in a setting where they can learn from each other.

C-START isn't the first of its kind, since many of our peer institutions have similar programs, but those programs are much better funded and publicized. University administrators should seriously explore making funding for C-START permanent.

While they have tentatively agreed to allocate \$3,000 dollars for C-START next year, this project deserves more security.

Calabria deserves credit for pushing for C-START. It's a solid program that needed an advocate — and he certainly came through on that. Dearmin, the student body president-elect, should take the torch by pushing the administration on funding C-START and expanding it to its full potential.

Maintaining C-START is an important priority for adding to the quality of education on campus.

One can only hope that administrators will give it weight when they allocate their resources.

FAULTY CONCESSION

The University shouldn't have blinked first by proposing to exempt Alpha Iota Omega from its campus group nondiscrimination policy.

And so, the wait continues. Will the University be able to continue using its fair nondiscrimination policy for campus organizations — or will it be forced to allow groups to exclude students seeking membership on the basis of their religious beliefs?

Alpha Iota Omega Christian fraternity stuck to its guns. The group didn't budge during the two weeks that U.S. District Court Judge Frank Bullock Jr. gave the two sides to agree to a solution.

But unfortunately, the University did.

It's disconcerting that UNC stepped away from solid principle toward a spirit of compromise. Although the University made no move to amend its nondiscrimination policy, its proposal would have granted AIO both official recognition as a campus group and the use of limited restrictions on membership.

Under UNC's plan, AIO could require that members support its work, comply with a statement of faith and abide by its tenets and conduct standards.

It's fine for groups to ensure that their leaders subscribe to certain beliefs, because it helps guaran-

tee that organizations are guided appropriately and according to their respective goals and missions. But to extend similar restrictions to general membership would do a major disservice to students who wouldn't have access to certain groups yet still would pay fee money to support many of them.

With all due respect to the members of AIO, colleges and universities across the nation could suffer if the fraternity gets its way in court. By standing their ground, they might end up compromising the law's equal protection of students everywhere.

UNC's attempt to reach some kind of settlement is somewhat noble, but this is neither the time nor the situation to merit noble actions. Instead, the University should have held fast to its principles.

Now it's up to Bullock. He can choose to do the right thing by allowing UNC to look out for its entire student body by keeping the nondiscrimination policy as is. On the other hand, he can decide unwisely to force students out into the cold by giving AIO full power to select its members.

If he goes with the latter, the University should take the case to the next level.

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 seven 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

Western cultures proposal does reflect faculty input

TO THE EDITOR:

I am writing to respond to Tuesday's open letter to University administrators concerning our application to the Pope Foundation to fund a proposal called "Studies in Western Cultures."

Our faculty can legitimately raise questions regarding the influence of donors on academic programs. It is also understandable that faculty would be especially sensitive about our proposal to the John William Pope Foundation; we are aware that the Foundation has also funded the John William Pope Center for Higher Education Policy, an organization that has publicly criticized members of our faculty.

For these reasons, I have openly repeated my firm support of academic freedom and made it clear that funders will not be allowed to control or direct the content of our academic programs.

I believe that proposal development for academic programs should be conducted with faculty input and high regard for academic standards. There have been no attempts at secrecy in either the development of the proposal or the revisions made to the proposal as part of the funding application process. Thus, claims that the proposal has been developed in a clandestine manner to promote a particular political agenda are demonstrably false.

In fact, this proposal has received more public discussion than is typical for a funding application to a private foundation: 1) The proposal for the minor was developed by a faculty committee, including one of the authors of the open letter; 2) The minor was discussed at a College faculty meeting in the fall that was open to all faculty, students and the news media; 3) Copies of the proposed minor were released to all College faculty and anyone who requested it, including the news media; 4) The proposal was discussed again at two public meetings of the Faculty Council, in January and February. By contrast, a new minor in entrepreneurship, also created by funding from a private foundation, has received little or no attention from faculty not directly involved in it.

Our initial pre-proposal discussion with the Pope Foundation included a range of initiatives, from a minor or certificate in Western cultures to expanded opportunities for existing undergraduate initiatives such as our nationally ranked first-year seminars and undergraduate research program. A faculty committee developed the new proposed minor in Western cultures, and its recommendations remain in the proposal now under review by the Pope Foundation. The new courses for the minor would be developed by our faculty.

After receiving the faculty committee proposal, the Pope

Foundation indicated interest in supporting other components of the pre-proposal, including first-year seminars, undergraduate research fellowships and honors classes, as well as scholarships for study abroad, fellowships for faculty and support for visiting lecturers. As a result of that interest, we expanded our initial proposal for the academic minor to include support for these existing initiatives as well. If funded, this would mean additional support for our most popular undergraduate initiatives, which have been high priorities for the College and the University for several years. These initiatives also are consistent with the experiential education requirements of the new general education curriculum that will affect incoming students in 2006.

If the proposal is funded, any curriculum development associated with new initiatives will be developed by our faculty and subject to required faculty and administrative reviews.

"Studies in Western Cultures" is an excellent proposal that reflects substantive input from our faculty. It would support the academic priorities of the College and the University while enhancing our undergraduate curriculum.

Bernadette Gray-Little
Dean
College of Arts and Sciences

The length rule was waived.

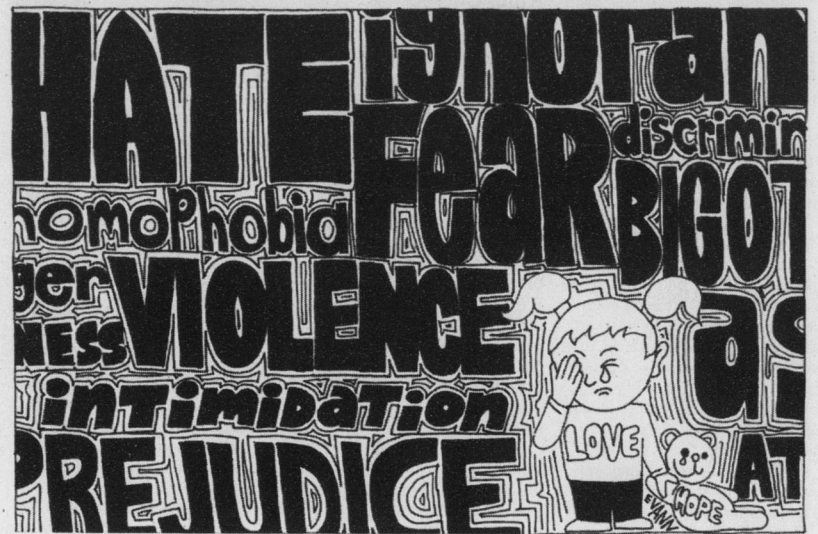
ON THE DAY'S NEWS

"In these times we fight for ideas, and newspapers are our fortresses."

HEINRICH HEINE, GERMAN POET

EDITORIAL CARTOON

By Evann Strathern, evann@email.unc.edu



COMMENTARY

The rhetoric of conservatism on campus has gone too far

Blogs about campus political life used to make me cringe like a horrible car accident would. I didn't understand why student government officials, former columnists for The Daily Tar Heel and other pundits of school politics flocked to the Internet to convey their ideas publicly. I thought the bloggers were taking themselves too seriously and needed to find another hobby.

When I became a columnist, though, I soon realized that serious dialogue about campus life is conducted through these online journals. People debate the biggest issues facing UNC on these blogs, a few of which I began to skim each day.

But for the first time since I started reading, I wish I'd never started. On Monday, I found a LiveJournal entry that was perhaps the most disturbing thing I've read in a while.

The writer, whom I'll call Pat for the sake of anonymity and to calm my fear of litigation, is one of the defenders of conservative rights at UNC. Almost daily, Pat posts thoughts about the campus culture, maintaining that conservatives are persecuted on campus and lack the resources they need to feel fully integrated here.

I must say that I agree with a few of the things this blogger writes. We have a long way to go before the campus community is truly inclusive of unpopular conservative opinions.

In a class last year, my classmate was publicly belittled by others for expressing his reservations about affirmative action. I have been yelled at for expressing my respect for President Bush on campus, even though I am a registered Democrat and didn't vote for him.

Though we have some work to do, the rhetoric used by some



DERWIN DUBOSE
FROM THE DIRT ROAD

to argue on behalf of campus conservatives needs to be turned down a few notches. In the name of pushing for inclusion, these students are alienating droves and lumping themselves with people with whom they surely don't want to be allied: hatemongers.

This week, Pat wrote passionately against the Tuesday speak-out held to combat hate crimes on campus and in Chapel Hill. Members of the campus community rallied after a student was brutally assaulted by thugs on Franklin Street because of his perceived sexual orientation.

The incident was despicable, and the rally was an appropriate way for the community to express that we won't tolerate it.

But Pat criticized the rally, stating that it was "hypocritical crap." His journal condemned campus liberals for sympathizing with the victim by way of the vigil but not previously sympathizing with the student who was singled out by Elyse Crystall last year.

It implied that lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer students are "favored minorities" who receive extra resources while conservative students "are forced to deal with crap."

I'm sorry, but this is probably the most insane thing I have read since skimming "The Turner Diaries," the book that inspired Timothy McVeigh. Being opposed to homosexuality is one thing, but blasting people for empathizing

with a hate-crime victim is downright wrong. A bloody assault on the main street of town is far worse than a professor sending an e-mail to a class about a student, and there is no way a sane person can argue otherwise.

Pat's other posts include comments telling immigrants to speak English or to go home, mocking men who "sound gay" and calling a white guy who listens to rap music a "wigger."

Now, I know that Pat has First Amendment rights upon which I would never try to impede, but I must issue words of caution to each student activist on this campus.

Don't follow extremists like Pat, whether you are liberal or conservative. We can't allow them to hijack our worthy causes and send them into an abyss of hate and strife.

Don't believe that they represent the views of the specific political camps here at UNC. There are plenty of conservatives who think that Pat is an idiot, and it would be closed-minded of liberals to lump them together.

And for God's sake, don't vote for them when they run for student office. Don't sit back while constructive dialogue on intellectual pluralism is reduced to a war between minorities, gays and hipsters versus right-wing nut jobs.

Until we tell Pat and his cronies to shove it, I guarantee that we'll never solve the issue of academic freedom. The campus can never become unified if we don't have sensible people leading the debate.

It's like my mom taught me — you attract more flies with honey than vinegar.

Contact Derwin Dubose
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improvements make Georgia schools more attractive to top instructors. A stronger workforce and a higher-quality university system create a healthier Georgia.

If the state does cut back on HOPE's \$300 book allowance and student fees as Hensley fears it will, Georgia residents will still attend college virtually for free. So while the system cannot solve every problem for Georgia residents, Hensley's estimation that the system is a failure is clearly unjustified and simply untrue.

If there are problems in the system, they need to be tweaked; the system does not need to be scrapped.

North Carolina could learn a lot from Georgia's priority of education accessibility.

Nicholas Alexzovich
Junior
Business

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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