

**HEALTH PILOT**

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the only option offered to all 91,678 state employees — was an obstacle in recruiting and retaining faculty.

The system's plan was designed to provide university employees lower health care costs and a greater range of coverage options.

But Melton said lawmakers should be wary of treating a specific group of state employees differently from all the others.

"I think there was concern about removing any employees from the state health plan pool," she said. "Any time you reduce the size of a pool, you're going to reduce negotiating power."

University officials said progress on the system's initiative will depend on the provisions of any new state plan, which will require final approval by a legislative committee, and on how quickly it can be implemented.

With the next session of the legislature scheduled to begin in May, any changes to the state plan will have to wait until then.

"It depends on what the design looks like," said Kitty McCollum, UNC-system associate vice president for human resources.

"We're interested in trying to improve the state's plan, and that's why we're so pleased to see that they are moving forward."

Contact the State & National Editor at [stntdesk@unc.edu](mailto:stntdesk@unc.edu).

**TOWN COUNCIL**

FROM PAGE 3

He's emphasized that he would be a careful candidate, willing to listen to what his constituents, including students, want.

Tanya Riemer, is hoping to advocate for the Latino population. She works at Bank of America as a loan officer and is a fall 1997 political science graduate of UNC.

She has worked extensively to try to include the local Latino community in the financial system, working heavily with Carrboro Alderman John Herrera.

She said that many of the Latinos with whom she works in Chapel Hill work locally but cannot afford to live in town because of high housing prices.

"We need to improve," she said. "We need to have more representation. We will, but we are a very new community."

Jason Baker is a junior political science major who has been heavily involved with the Young Democrats. He emphasized the need for the Town Council to include a younger member to represent the student population.

"Chapel Hill has a population of 50,000, give or take, and about 16,000 of those are students," he said. "And I think it's a little silly right now that not one person on the council is under 35."

He said he expected a significant student turnout, noting that both previously successful student candidates, Gerry Cohen in 1973 and Mark Chilton in 1991, ran in years immediately following contentious elections that spurred student voter registration. He hopes that last year's contentious presidential contest will generate a similar spillover effect.

Walker Rutherford, who graduated last year from UNC with a degree in business, has emphasized a common-sense perspective more than his youth.

As a registered Republican — the only in the field — running for a seat on a council devoid of GOP members, he has also said that he hopes voters will look at his ideas rather than his registration, especially since the election is nonpartisan.

"I just hope people get to know me for who I am and what I stand for and then make an informed decision of whether or not to vote for me," he said.

Will Raymond has placed significant emphasis on technology issues and his experience on the town's Technology Committee.

He proposes, if elected, to lobby for the town to begin providing high-speed Internet access as a public utility the same as water or natural gas, thereby helping to bridge the "digital divide" between individuals with and without access to the information super-



**Mark Kleinschmidt**, an incumbent, has made headlines for his stance on gay marriage.



**Ed Harrison**, an incumbent, is known for his attention to detail on environmental policy.



**Jason Baker**, a UNC senior, headed up the Young Democrats voter drive last November.



**Walker Rutherford**, a recent graduate, hopes to become the first Republican on the council.



**Bill Thorpe**, who has served multiple terms on the council, hopes to continue race relations discussion.



**Tanya Riemer**, a Hispanic-American, hopes to add a new perspective to the council.



**Laurin Easthom**, a member of the transportation board, is wary of too much campus growth.



**Robin Cutson**, an outspoken critic of the council in past years, hopes to improve fiscal decisionmaking.



**Will Raymond**, a member of the technology committee, is wary of excessive town spending.

highway.

His proposal goes far beyond the scope of what most candidates have suggested. Some have mentioned providing wireless on Franklin Street, but Raymond feels that would offer more convenient Internet access only to those who already have it, whereas broadband as a utility would reach out to under-served areas.

Laurin Easthom emphasized a history of activism with town boards and neighborhood groups.

She hopes to be on a council that shapes the planning for Carolina North, a massive University development project on the Horace Williams Tract near Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard that has been called one of the definitive issues for this year's campaign.

"I think that I also represent a lot of people that share the same views as me and would like to see their voices represented on council," she said.

Meanwhile, Robin Cutson, another candidate, has a platform

of fiscal modesty, condemning the current council's management of town monies.

"They do not have a firm grasp on sound, responsible, fiscal development," she said.

She has said that the town is being badly developed in a way that does not support commercial businesses.

"You can call it collateral damage; it's still over-development."

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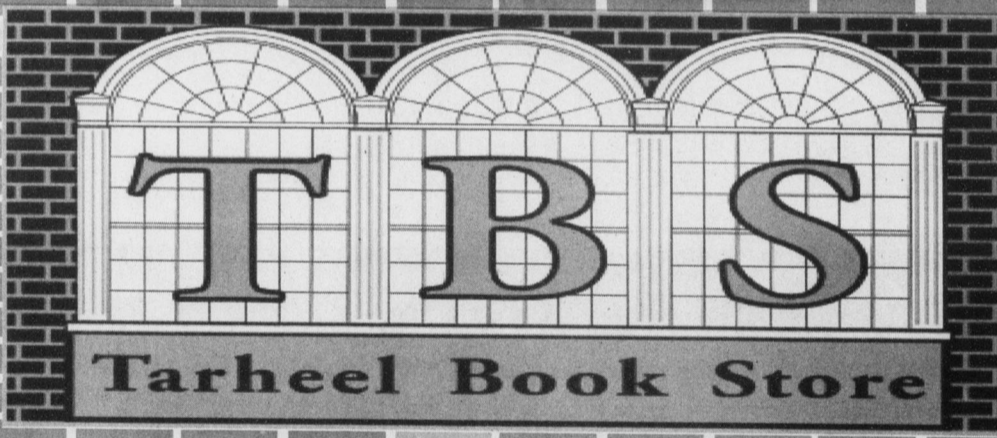
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