

BOARD EDITORIALS

DEARMIN IDLES ON

Student Body President Seth Dearmin needs to get his act together — sitting quietly in the corner just isn't going to cut it for students.

This editorial board asked Student Body President Seth Dearmin to reach into his bag of tricks and pull out something — anything — that could give us more confidence in his ability to lead.

So it was with great anticipation that we looked forward to the first meetings of this year's advisory task force on tuition. Dearmin sits at the helm of that group, and his work will be crucial if the group is to give a reasonable tuition recommendation to the Board of Trustees.

While Dearmin should be expounding on his platform, which called for a locked-in tuition plan similar to those in place at Illinois' state schools, he remains mum. During task force meetings, he has been passive and quiet. And outside the meetings, he says little about the issue — except that he still has a lot to learn.

Dearmin told The Daily Tar Heel that he is, "researching former task forces and gauging what areas on campus most need tuition revenue."

One would think that after five months in office, a student leader would know about past task forces and the campus' tuition needs.

But it's especially odd to hear those words from Dearmin. If he didn't learn most of the ins and outs of tuition over the summer, what on earth was he spending his time doing?

It's unacceptable for Dearmin to sit back and let others do all the talking — especially on a topic, such as tuition, that's near and dear to all his constituents' hearts.

Let's make no mistake about it: There is a huge difference between Dearmin's inactivity and the more useful practice of getting cozy with UNC's top brass. Last year's student body president, Matt Calabria, got a lot of grief for what many perceived as his cronyism — but the difference is that Calabria merely refused to antagonize trustees, while Dearmin doesn't seem to be antagonizing — or supporting — anybody.

It's high time that Dearmin learned the lessons of his political granddaddy.

The Tuition Task Force meets at 8:30 a.m. Wednesday in 212 Peabody Hall. It's not the best time for students, but if you can make it stop by, introduce yourself and let Dearmin know you want a leader who will stand up for you.

BUILDING FUTURES

The growing Carolina Covenant program will make a lasting impact by serving both UNC and the larger community simultaneously.

In its second year, the ground-breaking Carolina Covenant initiative has been able to expand the number of students it provides financial aid to and is continuing a mentoring program. Such success should be applauded. Last year 225 students were enrolled under the covenant and now 340 freshmen will have the opportunity to attend the flagship university of North Carolina and graduate free of debt.

This is a wonderful chance for our fellow Tar Heels to raise from the lowest economic tiers to the top.

The Carolina Covenant is a program that helps incoming students who live in households making incomes up to 200 percent of the federal poverty line. In exchange for working 10-12 hours a week at a work-study job, these students will graduate with an undergraduate degree from our prestigious institution debt free.

This is a long overdue leg up for our neighbors who live in poverty. It is a well-deserved break for the 132 covenant students who will be the first in their families to attend college. By allowing those less fortunate — but still top-notch — academics to attend, the University can further fulfill its mission to serve the state.

The Carolina Covenant also provides a mentoring program for these new students. Those who want to will be assigned in groups of 15 to a mentor who will help them make the transition from high school so that covenant beneficiaries can fully enjoy the college experience without falling behind.

Given that students from lower-income backgrounds tend not to have had a lot of college prep courses, a mentoring program is a good way to help these students make the most of their stay at Carolina.

This is a great program, one that testifies to Carolina being the "University of the People." We have a lot to brag about here at UNC, like the men's basketball team and our outstanding academics — but the thing to be the most proud of is our service to the state of North Carolina.

At the forefront of that service is the Carolina Covenant. Helping those who have the knowledge but not the means to come here and have a shot at the highly-touted American Dream is something that should make us all swell with pride.

It should also encourage us to expand aid to all those who are worthy for the benefit of North Carolina.

LET FREEDOM RING

The courts need to find a middle ground when it comes to the Pledge of Allegiance — otherwise the rights it stands for could be violated.

As some of you may be aware, a U.S. District Court ruled last week that reciting the Pledge of Allegiance in public schools is unconstitutional. While understandable, that decision may be carrying concerns of freedom of religion and speech too far.

The words "under God" have been a point of contention about the Pledge ever since a 2002 U.S. Court of Appeals precedent that came down against the inclusion of the phrase.

It is important not to encroach on students' rights not to be coerced to accept or affirm religious beliefs that they do not share. In this vein, the California District Judge was right.

But at the same time, the judge has effectively decreed that the entire school district where the plaintiffs' children attend school may not recite the Pledge at all.

The Pledge is seen by many as an important tool in bolstering patriotism and instilling a sense of civic responsibility. By allowing children to see that they are part of something bigger than themselves, some parents hope that their children will grow up to be responsible adults that will try to contribute to their local and national communities — something that

schools should do more of anyway. Producing better citizens can only be seen as an admirable goal.

That being said, forcing children to swear loyalty to an idea they don't believe in is wrong — just as wrong as preventing them from affirming their commitment to this great nation of ours.

In fact, having a class say the Pledge on a daily basis probably doesn't hurt anyone. But, such as with evolution and sex education, if parents do not want their children to participate, they can withhold them from that particular activity. Just send little Johnny or Susy along with a note for their teacher and they can choose not to partake in reciting the Pledge or can even recite an alternate oath — such as one omitting "under God" — of the parent's choosing.

The whole dilemma is how not to infringe on someone else's rights. No child should be forced to recite the Pledge against their will, but there should be at least equal protection for those that do want to pledge their loyalty to the ideals the United States are founded upon. Hopefully a solution can be reached by the courts that will allow all students to recite — or not recite — the Pledge as they would wish.

EDITOR'S NOTE: The above editorials are the opinions solely of The Daily Tar Heel Editorial Board and were reached after open debate. The board consists of four board members, the associate opinion editor, the opinion editor and the DTH editor. The 2005-06 DTH editor decided not to vote on the board and not to write board editorials.

READERS' FORUM

Correction:

In her Thursday column "History paints a bleak picture for our future tuition battles," Emma Burgin incorrectly stated the 1997 in-state and out-of-state tuition rates. The correct figures are 1,386 dollars and 9,918 dollars, respectively.

Bandes' stereotypes will threaten others' freedoms

TO THE EDITOR:

Regardless of the merits of her argument, Jillian Bandes was tactless in her efforts to display an important and emotional point to her readers in the column, "It's sad, but racial profiling is necessary for our safety."

Ms. Bandes displayed an absurd level of insensitivity and a complete absence of good judgement. The author's reference to having Arab-Americans "sexed up" was a disrespectful attempt at humor.

Arab-Americans have been treated like second-class citizens and many times unfairly persecuted for the heinous crimes of a few. As African Americans who ourselves have been subject to profiling, even here at Carolina, we understand the stigma these practices place on people. We know the inner turmoil, pain and anguish that Arab-Americans must

feel, knowing that their every move is being scrutinized for no reason other than the color of their skin or the ethnic implication of their name.

Yes, terrorism is a serious problem in our world. Yes, terrorism threatens the very existence of our society and the freedoms we hold dear. Ms. Bandes' recent comments should remind us all that racism and ignorance pose an even greater threat to those freedoms.

Brandon Hodges
President
Black Student Movement

Julius West III
Vice President
Black Student Movement

Alumni are doing their part to help hurricane evacuees

TO THE EDITOR:

In response to the Sept. 14 article, "Athletics alone to coordinate football game donation drive," the General Alumni Association would like to share the many ways that alumni are involved in hurricane-relief efforts.

Using alumni records, the GAA contacted alumni in the affected states to offer concern and support. Several of the reports published by the UNC Center for Public Service

originated in communications between alumni and the GAA. As it turns out, some alumni living in the affected areas are initiating relief themselves.

The GAA is working with Carolina clubs nationwide to determine how best to assist the affected communities, including the nearly 3,000 alumni who live in states that were hit.

Our Orange/Durham and Wake County Carolina clubs are supporting six families from St. Bernard Parish, La., now living in someone's driveway in Baton Rouge. Triangle-area alumni have made significant donations of clothing, toiletries and money to assist 21 displaced individuals. For more information on this effort, visit alumni.unc.edu/orangedurham.

Many Carolina clubs also are raising funds for the American Red Cross, collecting donations of clothing and food for those in need, encouraging blood donations in their communities and planning rebuilding and clean-up efforts once the Gulf coast areas are again inhabitable.

Visit the Carolina Center for Public Service Web site, <http://www.unc.edu/cps/katrina.html>, to learn more.

Doug Dibbert
President
GAA

Nonresidents are not given enough credit by columnist

TO THE EDITOR:

I have a problem with the negative attitude taken towards nonresident students by Emma Burgin in her last column — as if the 18 percent of us who are here somehow leech resources that would otherwise go to in-state students.

Not only do we fully pay for our education, but we also increase the value of everyone's degree. If anything, the out-of-state cap should be increased so as to further bolster the school's reputation. That would have the added benefit of increasing tuition revenue — thus slowing down the pace of future tuition hikes.

In-state students benefit from meeting people of wider backgrounds, and having a broader diversity of thought in their recitation sections and lecture halls.

I was born in Winston-Salem, and I was bred a Tar Heel. Someday I'll be a Tar Heel dead. But right now, I feel like a Tar Heel bleed.

Stop treating out-of-state students like the cash cows we've come to feel like when tuition rises \$1,000 every spring.

Nathan Barber
Junior
Business

FROM THE DAY'S NEWS

"We the People of the United States ... do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America."

PREAMBLE TO THE CONSTITUTION OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

EDITORIAL CARTOON

By Philip Mcfee, pip@email.unc.edu



COMMENTARY

Debate — not a shouting match — is needed at UNC

My girlfriend urged me not to write about the Jillian Bandes issue, as she says everyone is tired of reading about it. I agree. I also absolutely hate it when the newspaper becomes the story. I did not care for it when I was a reader, and I do not care for it now that I have a column.

But the trajectory this case has taken is indicative of a bigger problem that has recently emerged here at UNC — the sad-denying direction campus political discourse has taken. Frivolous side-stories all too quickly turn into ill-informed partisan dog fights — and for that reason alone it necessitates examination.

The political polarization of America today is quite evident, with talking heads on both sides spewing propaganda that can only be called vaguely truthful. So it would not surprise me if we were talking about the nature of discussion on Air America or Fox News, but I am extremely disheartened that we delve into such asinine mudslinging at this university — which at its core is supposed to be a forum for learned discussion.

In this case, racial profiling and the balance of civil liberties and national security is an extremely timely issue, with practical arguments on both sides. These are issues we should be tackling, with the decorum necessitated by scholarly analysis. These are the issues that institutions of higher thought are founded in order to remedy. However the familiar cacophony of name-calling and misinformation we have ended up with is anything but constructive.

Before exploring the larger causes let's get this straight — Jillian Bandes was let go because she committed what was deemed to be journalistic misconduct. Yes, she did espouse what some have deemed — including her — to be an overtly conservative



MATT LILES
HERE'S TO DOWN HOME

viewpoint. And yes there was an overwhelmingly negative reader response to the paper. But had the DTH powers-that-be wanted to quash Bandes' conservative opinion, there were a number of easier ways to go about it, such as not publishing it in the first place. In this case, as with others, it is a mistake to confuse correlation with causation.

Many of the responses to Ms. Bandes' column I heard were quick to label her as racist, ignorant or even worse. But just as Bandes' presentation of the issue was irresponsible, so are the reactions that were overtly defamatory. These terms are not ones to be thrown around lightly — and serve only to heighten tensions — and do not explain away a misguided position.

It is this kind of escalation that allows those outsiders who feed off controversy to take over the direction of our discussions, and lead us into the arena of partisan hackjobs. This instance in particular is an example of how something small can begin to spiral out of control — due in part to the interference of right-wing scholar Ann Coulter.

So after a problem reaches this kind of prominence, news stations, action groups and elected officials are called to line up on their predetermined sides. Now they will drive the discussion based on generalizations and perceptions more often than facts — with the objective of scoring political points, not finding answers.

I posit that the rash actions

and reactions that cause these spats stem from a similar frustration held by both sides of the aisle at UNC. Liberals on campus mistakenly feel like they are an island of reason surrounded by a state that votes Republican in a country where the government is controlled by Republicans. And conservatives also wrongly victimize themselves as members of a minority opinion who are actively oppressed at a university that is portrayed as a bastion of liberalism. The truth is probably somewhere in the middle, and that is why we should be talking.

Just like last year's AIO mess was about refusing to adhere to university policy and the "Approaching the Qur'an" hubbub in 2003 was really about asking students to read a book, this current snowballing is about a columnist unethically misleading her sources.

The point I am trying to get across is that we need to find a way to have a dialogue on issues on this campus without them developing into shouting matches where half-truths and outside influences steer us into misunderstanding. Everyone involved should just take a deep breath and step back for a moment before they start the next round of knee-jerk reactions.

But maybe you disagree. Maybe you think I am a liberal hack. Maybe you think it is productive that some of our own elected officials characterize UNC as an ideologically predatory place. That would be your opinion, which I would gladly debate with you as long as we can get back to discussions characterized by tact and reason. That is the right way for this university to carry on a tradition of scholarly argument.

At least, that's what I think.

Contact Matt Liles,
a first-year law student,
at limat@email.unc.edu.

Speak Out

We welcome letters to the editor and aim to publish as many as possible. In writing, please follow these simple guidelines: Keep letters under 300 words. Type them. Date them. Sign them; make sure they're signed by no more than two people. If you're a student, include your year, major and phone number. Faculty and staff: Give us your department and phone number. The DTH edits for space, clarity, accuracy and vulgarity. Bring letters to our office at Suite 2409 in the Student Union, e-mail them to editdesk@unc.edu, or send them to P.O. Box 3257, Chapel Hill, N.C., 27515. All letters also will appear in our blogs section.

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