



SAM PERKINS
THAT'S WHAT HE SAID

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Take the race card out of the deck

Affirmative action has done some great things, especially in turbulent times of transition. However, not all programs are meant to last. As the New Deal programs dissolved (with the aid of court decisions) when the U.S. emerged from the Great Depression, the time has come when affirmative action's needs wane (again, with court support). Especially at UNC, the time has come to show, without a system, that we are colorblind.

The definition and standard of diversity have vastly changed during the past few decades. Of course you can find people who are racist, but race in today's society has become no more of an impeding factor than any other physical characteristic.

UNIVERSITY COLUMNIST

So why would our admissions and hiring offices continue to worry about not having adequate representation of minority races in the state? How does race inherently hold them back today? Maybe they often don't have the same opportunities as whites, who are more often better off financially. That's the key word though — often. What about nonminority families in poverty? Of course they'll be given consideration, too, but not as much because of their race?

There's actually one facet in which the tables have really turned.

Princeton University researchers analyzed the advantages that college applicants received based on various criteria, including race. Their research on the subject concluded that affirmative action primarily benefits minorities already in similar socioeconomic and academic standings as whites — not those minorities truly disadvantaged in the present or by preceding years of injustice.

They quantified that analysis with an SAT factor, concluding that blacks receive an equivalence of 230 extra SAT points just for their race. Recruited athletes receive 200 points, Latinos 185 points and legacies 160 points. Here's the kicker: Asians are actually docked 50 points equivalence. Were there no "race" box to fill in on applications, how could one be discriminated against? Is it really OK to hold back Asians? Is that like thinning out the number of an overpopulated species or something?

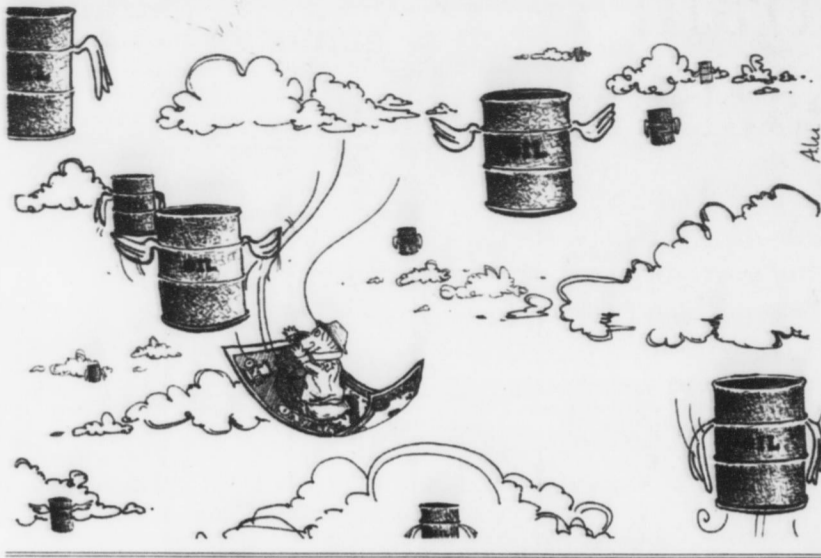
The problem is that we still operate not on facts but on sentiment. A June 2003 Gallup poll asked, "If two equally qualified students, one white and one black, applied to a major U.S. college or university, who do you think would have the better chance of being accepted to the college: the white student, the black student ... or would they have the same chance?" Of blacks, 67 percent said the white student would be accepted, and only 5 percent said so for the black student. This is despite a system already in place that, in many cases mathematically, guarantees the black student would be accepted.

So what would happen if we just pulled the rug out from under affirmative action? Ten years after removing its affirmative action system, the University of California system is seeing the same racial makeups as it had when affirmative action was in place. Asians have increased in proportion, indicating that they were being discriminated against. Washington, Florida and Texas have seen similar results, with their racial compositions having rebounded to pre-affirmative action numbers.

I've been able to meet, befriend and talk with so many people from every reach of the globe at UNC, and that has been the true diversity experience. Keeping a steady influx of international students bolsters diverse thought and a diverse collegiate experience.

Some places might still need affirmative action, but an institution such as this one certainly does not. Of course, race is a touchy subject, but make sure you go out and retrieve some primary data for yourself. Go seek the polls and studies. If you let someone else stock your own marketplace of ideas, you'll be working against yourself in the pursuit of true diversity.

EDITORIAL CARTOON By Alex Lee, lobin@email.unc.edu



You got SERVED

Bipartisan group helps students rock the vote

Fortunately for UNC students and the democratic way, a new group has stepped up to fill the void left by the now-defunct VoteCarolina.

We're glad to see that students have taken the initiative to do what VoteCarolina, a group seeking to register and mobilize voters, abandoned last semester.

Project SERV, Students Engaging in Registering Voters, is a bipartisan effort involving both UNC's Young Democrats and College Republicans. The group made a very vocal effort to register voters and educate students on how, where and when they can vote.

The group has been petitioning classrooms and hanging around the Union and the

Pit, including at the Chelsea Clinton address Monday.

When asked last semester why the group wasn't working to mobilize voters in the local elections, VoteCarolina chairwoman Katie Baker told The Daily Tar Heel she was taking a semester off and would be unable to mobilize the group.

Just giving up is not acceptable. Props to the Young Democrats and College Republicans for looking beyond their party indoctrination efforts and joining forces to increase young voter participation.

And since North Carolina's primary actually might matter this election, the effort is even more appreciated.

What would really float our civic-minded boat would be

if Project SERV continued to mobilize voters even beyond the presidential elections.

While we understand that national politics are generally perceived as sexier than their local counterparts, we hope that Project SERV will find town and state politics worthy enough of their mobilization efforts.

In fact, local and state elections generally have more of a direct impact on people's lives than the national ones do. (Can anyone say, "Franklin Street development"?)

So thanks SERV, for doing your civic duty. And students, if you haven't done so already, be sure to register to vote by the April 11 deadline. You can learn more about registering to vote at www.sboe.state.nc.us.

Poorly developed

New development bad for Glen Lennox and town

Developers have big plans in store for the Glen Lennox subdivision.

The subdivision, located near UNC's campus, has traditionally been a source of affordable housing for residents. The owner of the subdivision, Grubb Properties, wants to add commercial retail and a nine-story hotel to the property.

We're certainly not opposed to development in the area and neither are the Glen Lennox residents. But the plan in its current form will do more harm than good to the subdivision.

Luckily the residents aren't going down without a fight.

The Glen Lennox Neighbors group is trying to acquire a conservation district status from the Chapel Hill Town Council, which would institute height limits on buildings in the subdivision while keeping the housing affordable.

The council would be wise to grant the subdivision that status and force Grubb Properties to come up with a more acceptable proposal.

Surely the most offensive

part of this proposal is the plan to build a nine-story hotel, which would almost certainly spell an end to Glen Lennox's affordable housing.

Combined with the proposed commercial retail space for the subdivision, the hotel will cause housing prices to increase dramatically. Approving the construction of the hotel would stand in stark contrast to the town's stated mission of increasing affordable housing.

Plus, the end result would be less than scenic. A nine-story hotel would tower over the Chapel Hill skyline and ruin it. We rather like having the Bell Tower as the prominent feature when looking out over the town.

More importantly, though, allowing the construction of the hotel would show that the town's true priorities lie in building new developments outside the downtown and not the actual revitalization of downtown.

Franklin Street is the center of the town, and with so many empty storefronts, it can appear as though Chapel Hill is a ghost

town. The town needs to focus more on filling these storefronts and making downtown an attractive place to do business than building high-rise hotels.

Furthermore, there would be significant environmental costs from the hotel's construction. It's hard to build a high-rise building without creating some environmental damage, especially considering that the hotel's proposed location is on top of a large area of green space.

Building on top of green space would create environmental problems like flooding in the future. If the town prides itself on being environmentally friendly and trying to preserve green space, letting the hotel be built would be a strange shift in character.

To be clear, we're not saying that this land shouldn't be developed or that we are against development in general.

We recognize Grubb Properties' right to build on its property, but the developer needs to go back to the drawing board and come up with a better plan.

Elections get plundered

ECU should hold new elections following fraud

Election rigging. Top secret voting updates. Political intrigue. Actually we're not talking about the Democratic National Convention but our dear UNC-system comrades at East Carolina University.

Greg Doucette, N.C. State University student senate president, recently called out a number of ECU student government officials for election fraud in a letter he sent to ECU Monday.

We're all for free and fair elections, and luckily the ECU Student Congress seems to be, too. It issued a joint resolution Monday night that would void the election results and establish a new election committee.

Doucette said the ECU student body vice president and the other candidates on his ticket were the only ones to receive real-time vote totals during the election.

Clearly this is problematic. If a candidate knows what

the current vote count is, he knows if he needs to step his campaign efforts up. It gives an unfair advantage to one side over another.

Given that the information received could easily have influenced the outcome of the election, holding new ones is the right decision. Winning by cheating isn't really winning at all.

The resolution to hold new elections passed the ECU congress with more than a two-thirds majority, enough to override any potential presidential veto.

Unfortunately, as glad as we are that ECU might hold new elections, the way in which the body passed the resolution probably just worsened the problem.

Instead of holding a systematic investigation, congress passed its resolution in closed session. During this session, no

members of the election committee were allowed to enter evidence or testimony.

Like Gov. Mike Easley and the N.C. government, the answer to ECU's problem is a little sunshine.

Its swift and confidential "investigation" and response comes off more shady than just, not much better than the election fraud that led to the problem in the first place.

An open public response with published results is the only act that is going to restore legitimacy to the ECU election system.

Plus, the ECU congress should have given the accused a chance to defend themselves before rendering its judgment.

Though the outcome seems to have turned out well so far, we all know two wrongs don't often make a right. Hopefully both sides learned from their mistakes.

QUOTE OF THE DAY:

"If I was ever going to play Kansas again, this is the only way that I would want it to happen."

ROY WILLIAMS, COACH

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Feel strongly about something that has been printed? Post your own response to a letter, editorial or story online. VISIT www.dailytarheel.com/feedback

Don't forget about UNC fans who hail from North

TO THE EDITOR:

As a Tar Heel alum braving life in the tundra of Portland, Maine, I have a few observations that might surprise you about March Madness.

To the remote and uninitiated, we are (shudder) Duke. I freely confess that I keep a Chik-fil-A "Go Tar Heels" sign in my cubicle at work, year-round. It never drew comments until March Madness, when not less than six different people have thrown me the "Project Runway" eye roll and dismissed Carolina as "smug." Smug, I shrieked? We are not smug. Duke is smug. You want smug? Call Coach K.

Several of my co-workers might actually believe that Tyler Hansbrough is my boyfriend. There's a picture of Tyler allmost smiling (yes, it took 17 lifetimes to find even that) affixed to one of my cube walls. My less sports-centric northern co-workers have been asking about it.

"Who's that little cupcake?" is typical of the questions, to which I very seriously reply, "That's my boyfriend, Tyler Hansbrough." Responses fall into categories ranging from the "He looks a little young, you perv" to the "Nice guns — you go, cougar." If there's any payoff to living here beyond survival after a 100-inches-of-snow winter, it's the ability to get away with conversations like that.

So off we go to the Final Four. My small but intrepid alumni club will be hanging on every second at our least-appalling local sports bar. Show me some love, my Heels.

Meredith Finn
Class of 1989

The elderly should have to pass another driving test

TO THE EDITOR:

Settle down, Grams. Before you reach for your AARP card to contact your local lobbyist or cancel your afternoon bridge game, I urge you to hear me out. While I agree with you that 16-year-old whipper-snappers are just as dangerous as any member of your Thursday night Matlock club, I suggest that you take a good look at yourself before you get behind the wheel.

There are laws to protect us from people too young and/or stupid to get behind the wheel of a car. Believe me — I remember being 16 years old and witnessing girls chain smoke Parliament Lights while rapidly text messaging their BFF's about how to properly go about locating a six-pack of Mike's Hard Lemonade. Frightening.

The government and overbearing parents protect us from them. There is no one protecting us from you. I find it just as frightening to witness a barely functional 70-year-old woman get behind the wheel.

When American citizens turn 65, they (should) get a free VIP card making them eligible for one all-expense paid trip to the local DMV. Passing the test would allow the elderly to terrorize the roads for another five years. I trust your ability to purchase a Life Alert. I don't trust you behind the wheel.

Winston Kirby
Business
Sophomore

SPEAK OUT

WRITING GUIDELINES:

- Please type: Handwritten letters will not be accepted.
- Sign and date: No more than two people should sign letters.
- Students: Include your year, major and phone number.
- Faculty/staff: Include your department and phone number.
- Edit: The DTH edits for space, clarity, accuracy and vulgarity. Limit letters to 250 words.

SUBMISSION:

- Drop-off: at our office at Suite 2409 in the Student Union.
- E-mail: toedit@unc.edu
- Send to: P.O. Box 3257, Chapel Hill, N.C., 27515.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Columns, cartoons and letters do not necessarily reflect the opinions of The Daily Tar Heel or its staff. Editorials are the opinions solely of The Daily Tar Heel editorial board. The board consists of nine board members, the associate opinion editor, the opinion editor and the editor. The 2007-08 editor decided not to vote on the board.

Kvetching board

kvetch:

v.1 (Yiddish) to complain

Davis Library doesn't have pencil sharpeners. Dang.

Having Chelsea Clinton visit our school was awesome, but standing in a cramped area with hundreds of people for two hours was not. Of all the rooms on campus, that was the best you could find?

Dude, I was about to print your 30-page PowerPoint on the logarithmic depletion of sea algae in the Indian Ocean, but you password-protected it in the print queue. Smart thinking.

To the person whining about yellow toilet water: Read the signs. It's yellow because it's filtered rain water ... and why are you flushing eight times during a drought, anyway?

To the person complaining about the Global Education Center's toilets: The water is still yellow because it is environmentally conscious rainwater. Why don't YOU get it together?

To anyone who happens to flush the toilet eight times in the new FedEx Global Education Center and wondered why it stayed yellow: FYI, it's recycled rainwater. Idiot.

To last week's kvetcher: The water in the GEC is "amber" because it is collected on the roof. Thanks for wasting obscene amounts of water during a drought.

I love how the University continues to take money out of my pocket for crazy expensive "green" projects, yet I walk by a UNC delivery truck and see it running without anyone in the cab.

Am I the only person who finds laying out in the cemetery slightly morbid?

To the girl who walked into the middle of traffic on Columbia this morning, causing a pile-up, \$2,000 worth of damage and a broken finger: Thanks so much for stopping to apologize for crossing illegally and to make sure everyone was OK. Oh wait, you didn't.

"The human body can go three days without drinking water. How about you? Conserve Water." Because starving ourselves of water to the point of complete dehydration is a brilliant idea!

DTH, "This Day in History" should be changed to "This Day in 1958." No one cares about a bridge competition in Graham Memorial 50 years ago.

Can the kvetching board start helping students solve their problems? I've been complaining about my suitemates' self-centered behavior for months, and it still hasn't done a thing!

Send your one-to-two sentence entries to editdesk@unc.edu, subject line 'kvetch.'

The Daily Tar Heel

Established 1893,
115 years
of editorial freedom

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