



NATHAN NYANJOM
A DIFFERENT ANGLE

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Make the most of yesterday's tomorrow

I almost didn't come to UNC. After all the on-court effort Michael Jordan went through to convince me to come to his alma mater, making my AOL screen name "tarheelflava" in sixth grade and touring the school my sophomore year of high school, I received a letter from the University's Admissions Board in February of 2004 regretting to inform me that I'd been wait-listed.

Fate-listed more accurately. After using Taco Bell as comfort food for a week, I realized that not going to UNC wouldn't be too bad.

The University of Maryland was dying to have me, and I quickly got excited about going to an in-state school where I could room with my best friends, be a 20-minute ride away from First Nyanjom Bank & Laundromat and generally have a greater knowledge of my surroundings.

Hundreds of Terrapins are better than a lone Tar Heel, right? But then something special happened. After sending in a last-ditch additional packet containing letters from almost every teacher at Atholton High School, I got an e-mail in June, congratulating me on my acceptance into the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

The only decision I was left with was how to cut up a now-defunct red student ID card. My freshman year was amazing — our basketball team won it all. Rugby provided me with a network of friends I will have forever, and I learned that UNC not only offered the likes of Intro to Jazz, but allowed me to take it for academic credit.

The next three years of college had a tough act to follow. My grades didn't. There have been too many people, professors and P2P drivers to list and thank for helping me get through college, but I will take four words of my last column to salute Professor Corey Johnson and Rick Baker.

The first because I need a "C" in his anatomy class to receive a diploma-sized package in July. The second because he is a guy from New Jersey, and those kids need all the lovin' they can get.

To the countless readers of mine still in high school, try out for any and every varsity sports team — people will not know how long you spent on the bench when you're here at UNC, only the fact that you played ball for some high school on the other side of the state and that your hoodie looks pretty cool.

Regardless of our age, we all need to make the most of each and every day. Academic responsibilities are paramount, but it's important that we take time to experience as many experiences as possible. While each of us knew Keith Shawn Smith, Jason Ray and Eve Carson to different degrees, the proximity of their lives to ours here at Chapel Hill echoes how fragile life truly is.

Listen to Nobel Prize winner Oliver Smithies and all senior citizens talk: Their wise words will resonate with your later self. More importantly, do things that you love now and have yet to personally experience.

I certainly am no saint: Despite my impending graduation, I have no idea of what I am doing this fall or this summer — let alone for dinner tonight.

I was simply a guy blessed with the opportunity to have his face posted on the back of The Daily Tar Heel every Wednesday, as long as I produced 650 words on a topic that was interesting.

I tried to make the most of my 15 minutes of fame, and I hope that any and all of you who tuned in — especially you, Rachel McAdams — appreciated what I had to say.

I saw a bumper sticker yesterday which read, "Today is the tomorrow you worried about yesterday — how did it turn out?"

I'll let you know after I take Professor Johnson's final.

EDITORIAL CARTOON By Nate Beejer, The Washington Examiner



A new hope?

ASG must overcome divisions and refocus itself

Another year has come and gone, and once again the Association of Student Governments has wasted it.

We're looking to the newly elected ASG president, Greg Doucette, to change that trend.

As an organization perpetually plagued by racial, social and other -ial divides, what the ASG really needs is to refocus itself on its mission as the voice of the 17 UNC-system campuses.

It's a battle royale

Unfortunately Doucette is already off to a rocky start.

He won the vote 22-21 on a tiebreaker by the chairman of the meeting after a delegate who had originally voted for Doucette had been deemed ineligible.

Doucette also has some worried that he is taking on too much responsibility by serving as N.C. State's Student Senate president at the same time.

This is ignoring the problems he would have were the student body president to step down at any point, which would leave Doucette serving on both the Board of Governors and the N.C. State Board of Trustees, which is not allowed.

But at least this is nothing like last year's election, when ASG delegates chose Cole Jones, who was charged with assault at the time and eventually convicted, to lead the organization until he later resigned in October.

The group's leadership problems kept it from getting anything done until he resigned,

as Jones was effectively barred from his seat on the BOG.

The ASG needs someone in the presidency who knows how to arbitrate, and we hope that Doucette is up to the challenge. Disunity is a perennial problem that tends to keep the ASG from getting anything productive done.

In fact, we can think of one major accomplishment — just one — in the past two years that can be credited to the ASG, the textbook resolution of March 2007 that was eventually adopted almost in its entirety by the BOG.

It's an example — and one we have cited repeatedly — that shows that when it's not bickering over Robert's Rules of Order or having entire delegations stage walkouts, the ASG actually can do things that benefit students.

Not breaking the bank

It's not like the group is lacking in resources. It rakes in \$1 from every UNC-system student, totaling about \$190,000 in student fees last year.

But unfortunately, because of stringent spending restrictions imposed by the General Administration, the ASG has run enormous budget surpluses and has about \$80,000 in reserves that it can't invest and can't give back to students, so it just sits and rots.

In January system officials announced they would be screening all ASG spending,

not because the delegates are spendthrifts but because their spending generally lacks focus. We never saw, however, precisely how that oversight was to materialize.

Doucette needs to get creative and work with system officials to find something the ASG can spend its money on besides boosting its own officers' salaries and travel expenses.

Refocus and move forward

In theory, having the ASG around to represent the unified voice of the UNC system is a good idea; lately it's just been an embarrassment.

System officials met with the ASG back in September to try and straighten some of this out, and that might have had something to do with Jones' resignation a few weeks later. It seems to have done nothing for the group's long-term predicament, however.

The ASG's lack of focus is the core problem underlying its infighting and its inability to spend money usefully. If it could get that worked out, the rest of the pieces should fall into place.

The ASG has the potential to be a strong advocate for students and speak a collective voice for the university system.

With all the issues facing the system, from tuition to textbooks to campus safety, there is a vital need for that voice to be heard.

We know the group can get things done. Doucette, let's see it happen.

Following the money trail

Study shows areas N.C. higher education could improve

North Carolina has long prided itself on its strong financial commitment to higher education.

However, as a recent study demonstrates, the state is hardly harvesting the fruits of this substantial investment either in the realm of education or in the marketplace.

The study, which focuses on both private and public universities of North Carolina, reveals a number of areas in which the needs and development of N.C. public universities seem to have trumped those of the students and residents, an intolerable mix-up that state public university administrators would do well to fix.

While we don't necessarily agree with every point the study makes, it raises several important issues for higher education in the state that need to be examined in detail.

Show us the money

North Carolina has outspent most other states in terms of subsidizing higher education since 1970. In 2005 higher education expenditures constituted 6.7 percent of the N.C. budget; nationally, that figure was only 4.3 percent.

From an economic standpoint, the state would certainly like to see a clear benefit to balance out the excessive cost of subsidization.

One of the goals is to reach into as many ethnic and socio-economic groups as possible to provide them with the oppor-

tunity of education.

However, as the study painfully points out, a mere 25.6 percent of the N.C. adult population has earned a college degree. Additionally, only 18.6 percent of high school freshmen go on to earn a college degree within a decade.

The low percentage of adults with a college degree indicates that the state higher education system is not reaching out to all classes and portions of the population as intended.

Alternately, it could also mean that secondary education programs in the state have not been successfully preparing students for the rigors of college, a point confirmed by North Carolina's dreadfully low 50 percent college graduation rate.

The cost of subsidization

The state subsidizes a large portion of higher education in order to inform and prepare its populace for successful jobs and futures in the state.

However, data indicates that higher subsidization of state universities is negatively correlated with economic growth, an ugly factor that certainly calls for the attention of administrators.

Because of vastly bloated administrative and faculty salaries and perhaps an over-emphasis on research, only about 30 percent of university expenditures go toward actual instruction, possibly devaluing the experience of a college education in North Carolina.

The researchers cited a study

in which UNC seniors showed only a 4.4 point increase over freshman on a test of civic literacy including American history, political thought and the market economy.

Meanwhile, our devilish rivals in Durham actually saw a decrease in scores on the test from freshman to senior years, possibly demonstrating the negative neurological effects of four years of camping out painted head to toe in blue for basketball tickets in Krzyzewskiville.

A stream of solutions

It's clear that North Carolina isn't quite getting the return it should be getting from its substantial investment in higher education.

We're not advocating that less money be put into education, but surely the money that is being put there could be used more efficiently.

For instance, putting more money toward instruction — in both high schools and colleges — would help with some of those ugly statistics.

The study's authors suggest providing incentive for the use of expensive university facilities during breaks. It also encourages universities to increase teacher loads and reward students for timely completion of degrees.

We urge the powers that be to read the study and start making the higher education beast a bit less gargantuan and a bit more efficient so students and citizens alike reap the benefits of its work.

QUOTE OF THE DAY:

"Any landing you walk away from is a good one."

LEIGH BEADLE, CHAPEL HILL AVIATOR WHO WITNESSED PLANE LANDING MISHAP AT HORACE WILLIAMS AIRPORT

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

DSP would do more harm than good for workers

TO THE EDITOR:

The sit-in at South Building did not have poor timing, just illogical backing. Students who support the Designated Suppliers Program are advocating policy that would ultimately damage the lifestyles of the "sweatshop" workers whose cause they champion.

Maybe Chancellor (James) Moeser realizes that joining the DSP along with the 42 other universities will effectively remove enough profits from these companies that they will resort to layoffs or worsened conditions for their employees to make up the difference.

Unfortunately, these companies are concerned with money and will do whatever they deem necessary to continue to make it.

Having said that, the truth of the matter is these workers are being paid what their labor is worth. In a capitalist system, different firms will compete for labor by increasing wages and bettering working conditions. At the same time, workers are demanding higher wages. Eventually, firms will reach a wage that no other firm will exceed and that is accepted by workers; this is what the labor is worth.

If firms have to sacrifice profits, they will choose to hire less, pay less or let working conditions deteriorate.

But if you care so much, use your "sit-in time" to work a job, and you can donate your hard-earned money to help out these so-called "exploited workers."

Kevin M. Wise
Junior
Political Science

Gun control laws inhibit citizens' right to defense

TO THE EDITOR:

I have gotten used to The Daily Tar Heel's juvenile posturing on the matter of gun control, but the letter published in the April 18 edition ("Sweeping gun control, draconian jail time needed") is absolutely appalling.

The author may wish to live in a police state where people are jailed for exercising their civil rights, but I hope I shall never live to see it come to pass in the USA. There are thousands of laws pertaining to guns on the books now. Criminals, by definition, do not obey the law! Why should they care if some new "draconian" legislation threatens to put them in jail for possessing a gun when they are contemplating murder, robbery or rape?

The only people penalized by gun control are honest people who are thereby denied their Constitutional (and natural) right to self defense. Look at what has happened in Britain and Australia since they enacted sweeping gun control and confiscation. Violent crime is way up because criminals know no one can resist them.

The consequences in America of sweeping gun control would be horrific. What it really comes down to is we cannot legislate evil acts out of existence. We can allow ourselves to resist them. It is the duty of honest citizens to resist crime, just as it is our duty to resist the sort of tyranny proposed.

Paul Thompson
Class of 1980

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: to editdesk@unc.edu
- Send: to P.O. Box 3257, Chapel Hill, N.C., 27515.

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Columnist targeted wrong issue underlying violence

TO THE EDITOR:

I found Tuesday's "Judge men by actions not societal stereotypes" column very disheartening. The guest columnists from Monday (Allison Harrison and Megan Rolfe, "Examining our role in violence prevention") never argued against new safety measures. They were trying to bring about awareness to the depths of the problems of violence.

I also find it interesting that (Tuesday columnist) Charles Dahan states, "claims about promoting a gender-neutral discourse ... work to mask the problem of evil." If 95 percent of all violent crimes in the U.S. are committed by men, Dahan must be arguing that men are inherently evil since they overwhelmingly commit these crimes.

The feminist perspective is much more positive toward men. They claim that the socialization of males and the masculine ideals society imposes on men are what enable these crimes no matter how few men actually commit them.

Further, I think "basing safety policy upon discursive theory" is exactly what we need since thoughts are what change societies before policies catch up.

Elyse Keefe
Junior
Political Science

Coverage should reflect community demographics

TO THE EDITOR:

Saturday was the Carolina Hispanic Association's Noche Latina, our annual event to share Hispanic culture in an evening of food, family and fun. Chispa is among the largest cultural organizations on campus and represents Latinos as well as those that care about Latino issues/culture on a campus that increasingly includes this demographic.

We at Chispa find that events like Noche Latina create the opportunity to share our efforts and initiatives with the greater University community. Noche Latina is about the representation of a cultural group and the promotion of diversity and unity, but it goes much deeper than that.

We were upset, however, that there was no (English) coverage on the event before or after and that it never made the in-print calendar. As our community on campus grows, we are a little confused as to why our appearances in the DTH have dwindled to occasional mentions by La Colina. The decision to omit this event and others like it is irresponsible and only hurts the wider readership.

In a state with a rapidly growing Latino population, it is important to include proportional representation in media and adapt to the social realities. We hope that as the Chispa and Latino population grow, our presence in campus media will grow proportionately.

Pedro L. Carreño
Departing President
Chispa

Ronald Batres
Incoming President
Chispa

The Daily Tar Heel

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of editorial freedom

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