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Reforming 'vague' curricula

Over the last couple of decades, curricula at colleges around the nation have become more diverse and less defined than ever before. The general trend toward individualization in society has held sway on the campus, leaving the student free to develop any curriculum or non-curriculum he might choose. This trend has led to a college experience of great flexibility and rather nebulous achievement.

As U.S. Commissioner of Education Ernest L. Boyer said recently in the *Washington Post*, "The safest thing one can say about a college diploma today is not that it signifies some commonly accepted educational achievement, but rather that its holder has been around the campus for about four years. Beyond that everything is uncertain."

The reason for the uncertain value of today's sheepskin, Boyer says, is that "on the vast majority of campuses, required courses have been dropped, and the ones which remain reveal a staggering incoherence of purpose, often expressed as 'distribution requirements.'"

Watered-down distribution requirements have been a source of concern here at Carolina. New Arts and Sciences Dean Sam Williamson has set as one of his priorities the reform of General College requirements.

Boyer's answer to the problem of lack of educational direction is just the opposite. He feels certain "core courses" should be required. Boyer is vague about the courses themselves, but he says, "I do propose a core curriculum that looks at the heritage we share, reflects fundamental common experiences of the present and then focuses on those alternatives for the future that in a thousand separate and unsuspected ways are being shaped today."

Obviously, in either case — the narrowing of requirement-filling courses or the establishing of a core curriculum — the nearly insurmountable problem is deciding what courses are most important. Scholars from professional schools, humanities and science departments no doubt will find it quite difficult to agree on the "must" courses for undergraduates.

The answer may be to get the student involved in the act of developing a curriculum. The student should be aware of the suppositions and assumptions that shape his career and his outlook. He should be knowledgeable about differing educational philosophies and understand the limitations as well as the advantages of any path he may take.

In order to accomplish this goal, the single course at the core of any university curriculum should be one in educational philosophy in general or a course in the philosophy of the student's chosen discipline (as some departments have already). Another necessity in a valuable structured curriculum is a strong advising system. Without some voice of experience, the student is likely to figure out what he should do only after it is too late. Carolina is notoriously unsuccessful in its advising process.

Ironically, the most important element of a structured, meaningful curriculum is choice. The student must know why he takes a certain path just as he must voluntarily take that path if it is to be valuable to him. The best way to offer choice and structure at the same time is to develop a "track" or "program" system. Educators can easily develop a number of coherent programs that will be consistent with differing educational philosophies. The student, who will be given the various rationales for the "tracks," will then choose one. If he is not attracted to any, he and his adviser should have the option of either fine-tuning a particular program or developing an original but coherent one. Such an approach would provide the coherence and flexibility that are cherished by professor and student alike.

letters to the editor

Hunger, humanity's greatest foe, can be conquered

To the editor:
Hunger is a child with shriveled limbs and a swollen body. It is the underdevelopment of a brain or a person gone blind for lack of necessary vitamins, proteins and carbohydrates.

Never before have so many people suffered so much from hunger. At least 10 million persons and possibly twice that number died in 1975 as a direct result of receiving too little food. Today, 500 million men, women and children bear severe and often irreversible effects of malnutrition. Over one-half of the human race exists in conditions of chronic poverty that keep them underfed and uncertain about their next meal.

Hunger is the human family's most devastating foe, but it is also one of the most conquerable. But try for a moment to imagine people who work all day in the fields and still cannot earn enough to feed themselves and their families. Imagine people in countries that use the best land to produce export crops. Imagine people in countries where landlords own dozens of villages and decide what will be grown. Imagine you are them. Share for a day their burden of hunger by fasting. Experience an empty stomach for a while. At least you know you can always get food. They don't.

So please, on Nov. 17, join thousands of Americans who are doing something about world hunger. They are joining the Fast for World Harvest as sponsored by OXFAM. We ask that you give that day's food money to any one of our collection booths that will be on campus. We will send it to OXFAM. Your support will be greatly appreciated.

Chip Self
Hunger Action Committee

Don't reject Christianity

To the editor:
Edwards' cartoon in the Nov. 9 *Tar Heel* depicts a disturbing tendency among most people that I've noticed. It is the tendency to judge truth by listening to people and building mental stereotypes. A much better way is to look at history and examine certain data for yourself. As a student in the sciences, I found this the only satisfying approach. I would like to share my thought with the readers.

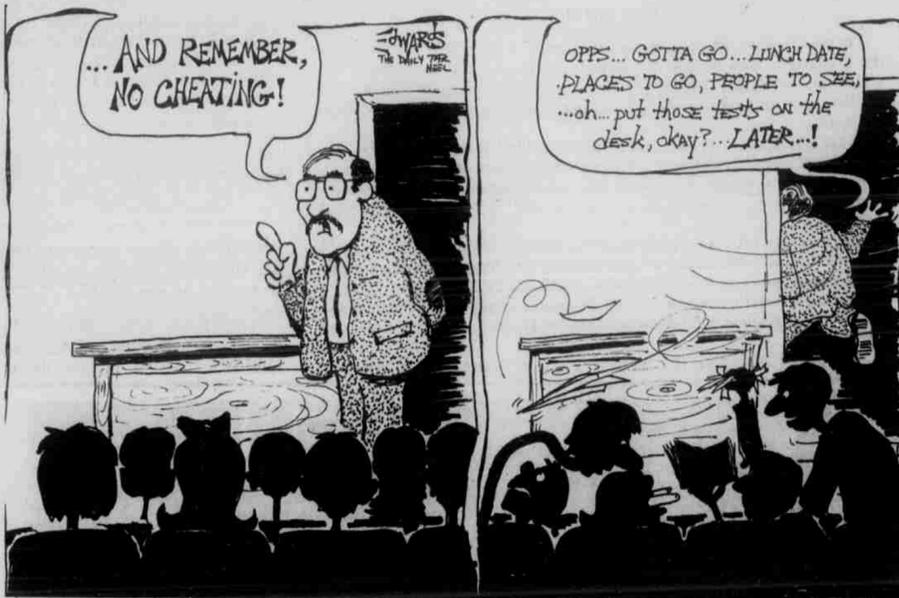
I certainly regarded Jesus as the front-running candidate for the possessor of truth because of His moral teachings. I focused on history and this man who called himself *God* and claimed to forgive sins. No other man had ever made such outrageous claims.

As a preliminary, I found that I could trust the New Testament more than any other ancient document. It passes the three standard historiographical tests for reliability with flying colors.

I rejected the popular notion that Jesus was just a great moral teacher. A "great moral teacher" does not call himself "God" unless he is deceiving himself as a lunatic, deceiving others as a liar or is exactly who he says he is. These are the only three choices, because Jesus most assuredly claimed to be *God*. It is why He was crucified.

Yet His lifestyle was that of neither a liar nor a deceiver. The impact He had on history is, moreover, what one would expect if He were who He said He was.

To anyone who is tired of evangelists and prophets of doom, I humbly suggest the



rational approach I used: open-mindedly examine history. Treat the New Testament documents as the dependable sources their manuscript authority indicates they are. Discover for yourself that the circumstances surrounding the Resurrection cannot be explained away, nor can its impact on first-century Christians, especially Paul, the Jewish intellectual who was transformed from a Christian-hater to a Christian missionary.

Don't reject Christianity until you have examined the evidence for its validity, regardless of what some liberal religion professor has told you. (Science, incidentally, has not proved that miracles are impossible. Science can only make absolute statements about observable, repeatable events — not about past events like the Resurrection.) Also, don't judge Christ by examining the behavior of His followers. Many professed Christians are spiritually immature or insincere, so focus on the Resurrection of Jesus as a rational starting point.

Since I discovered the intellectual defensibility of a spiritual commitment and asked Jesus into my life, my bad attitudes towards other people have changed, my heavy drinking problem is gone, and I have a satisfied mind. Christ promised the "abundant life" to those who accept Him. He has kept His promise to me. I invite anyone to come by C645 Kenan. I'll show you much more evidence (that I don't have room for here) about the man who said He was *God* and proved it.

Mike Gibson

Thanks for support

To the editor:
I would like to thank the many people who worked in my campaign this past month, especially the many students and the active support of the UNC Young Democrats

Club. This helped me greatly in winning the student areas of town. I hope that anyone who has a complaint or suggestion about town government will feel free to call me or any other member of the Board of Aldermen.

Gerry Cohen
301 Estes Dr.

Apologies extended

To the editor:
We, the participants in the screaming event which took place on Friday, Nov. 4 at 12:15 a.m. at Manly dorm ("Crying wolf," Letters, Nov. 9) apologize for the disturbance and misunderstanding which occurred with Aycock dorm. We had no intentions of disturbing or possibly injuring anyone and will try in all honest efforts to not offend the dorms of the Lower Quad in the future.

Scott Hadley
Chris Froman
111 Manly Dorm

A reminder

To the editor:
Now is the time to congratulate the majority of far-seeing students living in Alexander dorm. These students voted to spend approximately \$6,000 to take four living spaces (imagine that when there are still people living three to a room) to make a lounge for studying and informal gatherings (assuming these are not mutually exclusive). This issue has been definitely decided, so there is no cause to bitch.

But there were two promises made. The first one was that only one additional upperclassman would be closed out of the dorm. This has been broken. We have now been informed that there will most likely be three, possibly only two, displaced.

The second promise was that Alexander would not now be moved into the high rent Class II classification. This seems to be a dubious promise. The lounge alone might not reclassify Alexander, but any more "improvements" would definitely move the dorm in that direction.

We publicly remind Housing of its promise, and we expect it to stick to it.

Signed by eight residents of Alexander

Polite and helpful

To the editor:
It has been over 11 years since I was first admitted to this University as a student, and before I leave I would like to pay tribute to a part of the University I feel is taken for granted by many: the campus cops. In my time here I have had contact with them in many capacities: being let in or out of locked buildings, casual conversation, arrest and as a roommate. It has always been the case that they have been polite and helpful in every way, and over such a long period that is a hard record to maintain.

R. W. Hutchinson

Jazz weekend

To the editor:
I would like to thank whoever was involved in bringing Weather Report, Flora Purim and Gary Burton to Chapel Hill this coming weekend. I am just amazed that I'm going to get to see all three groups in concert here — all in one weekend! I think it would be amazing if three such groups as these would perform in New York City in the same weekend, let alone to think that such a feat will occur in Chapel Hill. Progressive jazz finally might be here to stay, and I'm heavily into it!

Jeffrey Gaynor
graduate student

Off-year elections — Carter sports .500 batting average for 1977 season

Despite traditionally light voter turnout, the off-year elections this week produced surprises among the multitude of mayoral and gubernatorial races across the nation.

Democratic Gov. Brendan Byrne of New Jersey, who once trailed in the polls by 20 points, won a second term with unexpected ease Tuesday night. His victory represented an astounding comeback for a governor who took the blame for forcing New Jersey's first statewide income tax.

Though Virginia was once one of the more solid Democratic states, voters this week placed a Republican in the governor's mansion for the third time since 1969 when they picked John Dalton over Henry Howell. It was Howell's third bid to become governor of Virginia. Howell had held a healthy lead over Dalton early in the campaign and had the support of President Carter but lost the edge as election day neared. The gubernatorial results gave Carter a .500 batting average for the 1977 political season. He had campaigned for Byrne and Howell, but it appeared both elections turned on local issues, and the Carter factor was negligible.

In the biggest of 38 big-city mayoral elections, Rep. Edward Koch, a Democrat, won as expected in a field of four to become the new mayor of New York City. Coleman Young, Detroit's first black mayor, won a second term easily, while Cleveland made Democrat Dennis Kucinich, 31, the nation's youngest big-city mayor. Over in Raleigh, Isabella Cannon, 73, became one of the oldest mayors when she defeated incumbent Jyles Coggins.

There weren't many surprises in the major referendum issues in North Carolina. All five constitutional amendments, including the hotly debated gubernatorial succession issue, plus two bond issues, met the approval of Tar Heel voters.

In a televised election-night address to the nation, President Carter tried to arouse public support for his embattled energy-conservation proposals. Carter stressed the impact overconsumption may have on the nation's economy and world leadership position.

It was Carter's first nationwide address devoted exclusively to energy problems since he introduced his energy proposals to Congress last April. And he scolded Americans for the poor job of conservation they have done. "This summer we used more oil and gasoline than ever before in our history," he said. "More of our oil is coming from foreign countries. Just since April our oil imports have cost us \$23 billion — about \$350 worth of foreign oil for the typical American family."

His speech represented his efforts to take a major personal hand in lobbying for passage of the House-

approved energy bills that closely reflect his own tax-based conservation proposals. The Senate has scrapped many of his key positions and also voted to remove federal price controls from natural gas despite his veto threats.

Democratic members of the House-Senate conference committee on energy declared after the speech that it probably changed few Congressional minds. Sen. Howard Metzenbaum, D-Ohio, who led an unsuccessful pro-administration filibuster in the Senate during its energy debate, said, "I don't believe the speech will have an impact on the bill now being drafted as a House-Senate compromise." All the Democrats, however, praised Carter for his effort to draw attention to the issue.

The Soviet Union celebrated its 60th birthday Monday with a nationally televised military parade

THE WEEK

By ED RANKIN AND LOU BILLONIS

through Red Square, fireworks and a gala reception for foreign dignitaries at the Soviet embassy in Washington.

The Bolshevik Party, led by Lenin, overthrew the regime of Tsar Nicholas II on Nov. 7, 1917, marking the beginning of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

The traditional parade through Moscow's Red Square displayed the most military strength exhibited by the Russians in recent years. Hundreds of military vehicles made their way through the square, including the never-before-seen T-72 battle tank, a new development which features an automatic loader and laser rangefinding devices. The T-72's equipment reduces the required crew from four to three persons.

In Washington, Soviet Ambassador Anatoly Dobrynin hosted a feast which included caviar, Kamchatka crab legs, salmon mousse and Russian and provincial specialties of rolled meats and pastries. Twelve bars served vodka, red and white Russian wines and even American bourbon.

A surprise during the celebration was an unexpectedly warm message of congratulations from the People's Republic of China.

"We have consistently held that the differences of principle between China and the Soviet Union should not hinder the two countries from maintaining and developing normal state relations," the Chinese said,

according to the New China News Agency.

Guy Lombardo, the Canadian bandleader whose renditions of "Auld Lang Syne" became standard fare for New Year's Eve television viewers, died Saturday of a lung ailment complicated by heart and kidney failure. He was 75 years old.

Born in London, Ontario, Lombardo began his music career in the early 1920s with brothers Carmen and Lebert.

He came to the United States in 1923 and a few years later began to mold his smooth style of dance music, which one Chicago critic called "the sweetest music this side of heaven."

Mrs. J. Robert Maher, a Lombardo fan from California visiting relatives on Long Island, was at the bandleader's funeral in Garden City, N.Y. She summed up the feelings of millions of Guy Lombardo fans.

"Who can replace his music for persons of our age?" Mrs. Maher asked. "He'll never be replaced."

Legionnaires disease is back in the news. Dr. William Foege, director of the national Center for Disease Control, told a Senate health subcommittee Wednesday that the mysterious disease may take a toll of 2,000 to 6,000 American lives annually. The organism that causes it, he said, could be only one of many microbial killers yet to be unmasked by medical science.

The disease was named after a Philadelphia American Legion convention outbreak in July 1976 that claimed 29 lives. There have been more than 350 confirmed cases and 75 deaths in at least 24 states.

"Our best guess at this time is that between one-half percent and one and one-half percent of the unexplained pneumonias may be caused by this organism," Foege said. Foege estimated that there were 3 million cases of pneumonia annually caused by bacterial and viral infections, and the Legionnaires disease bacterium may be responsible for 15,000 to 45,000 cases and 2,000 to 6,000 deaths.

Although Foege said scientists have not discovered where the organism lives or exactly how it is transmitted, he indicated several times that soil excavations and air conditioning systems were likely suspects.

Who says alligators don't have feelings? Florida Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission officials,



that's who. Albert the Alligator was taken from a small pond at a trailer park in Pinellas County two months ago as friendly residents jeered wildlife officers and was trucked to Busch Gardens where he died this week. One of the owners of the park, where Albert lived in the fenced pond, collected 210 signatures on a petition protesting "the arrest and imprisonment of Albert the Alligator."

The 12-foot, 8-inch long alligator weighed 1,000 pounds. His shipment away from his home of 21 years came after he wandered outside the fence that had been trampled by people trying to snap pictures of him. Left behind was Alberta, his 8-foot mate who was

tending a nest of eggs. She has since abandoned the nest.

Sentimentalists say Albert died of a broken heart. Wildlife officials disagree. One official boasted that he had been "working with reptiles for years and I've never seen any of them that had any feelings." Alberta was unavailable for comment.

Ed Rankin, a senior history major from Concord, N.C., and Lou Billonis, a junior economics and English major from Fitchburg, Mass., are associate editors for *The Daily Tar Heel*.