

The Daily Tar Heel

97th year of editorial freedom

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UNC needs minors

Program would enhance education

Recent discussions on allowing UNC students to minor in an academic discipline different from their major field of study have highlighted an idea long overdue. Students who are unable to double major or who take a variety of courses outside their major deserve an avenue through which their academic interests can be rewarded. The academic affairs committee of student government first proposed the idea to the Faculty Council last fall, and Gillian Cell, dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, recently requested that all departments research the feasibility of a minor program. Academic departments should strongly consider the importance of the program and implement it whenever possible.

The question of immediate feasibility is the only hindrance to the program's implementation, because many departments believe the strains already present on their faculty will only be augmented by an academic minor. While this is true in some cases, the minor program would be completely optional to the departments, and many department chairmen favor further discussion of the idea. Those departments that agree among themselves about the possibility of implementing the program may optimistically do so by the fall of 1990; as students, we greatly anticipate this.

The larger, more popular departments on campus would definitely experience a difference in student demand for courses, but the demand which department officials

board opinion

anticipate may be exaggerated. A minor curriculum, to be decided by individual departments, will consist only of four or five courses. Students minoring in the subject would therefore not spend nearly as much time within the department as majors or people attempting a double major. Also, many UNC students will probably not choose to minor in a subject, because the formality of a minor is more for personal satisfaction than anything else. An academic minor, like a double-major, would not appear on a diploma but simply reward students with the desire to pursue another field of study.

Departments that lack the faculty needed to support such a program will indeed have problems. In light of recent problems relating to faculty pay and retention, the University certainly does not have the resources to increase faculty. This, in fact, would be too much to ask for in order to make the program work. For now, burdened departments should discuss the idea and look toward the future when the program could work. Those departments that believe an academic minor program could work with little or no problems should work toward that goal immediately.

The program still needs refining, but placing the decision in the hands of the departments and faculty—those who know their work best—is the most important step. Students should discuss the idea with department chairmen and faculty to inform them of the need which does exist. In whatever form, an academic minor program would enhance the overall quality of the liberal arts education available at UNC.

A lousy war plan

Don't use drug dealers for effect

If the government were as committed to the drug war as it claims, Washington field agents of the Drug Enforcement Agency wouldn't have set up a drug sale to get a prop for George Bush. The bag of crack Bush held up during his nationally televised Sept. 5 speech outlining his drug-war plan was seized in Lafayette Park across from the White House as Bush claimed, but the deal only went down after DEA agents manipulated a teenage dealer into going to the park. The deal appears to be the first undercover crack buy in Lafayette Park, government officials said.

A federal grand jury last week indicted Keith Jackson, 18, on five counts of distributing crack. The senior was a "student in good standing" at a high school in northeast Washington that had been honored as a drug-free school at a White House ceremony in June. Jackson had been the target of a three-month long undercover investigation and had sold crack to undercover agents three times before the deal across the street from the White House. DEA officials said they had held off on arresting Jackson in hopes he would sell a larger amount of cocaine so he could be charged with a more serious offense. As it stands, Jackson could face up anywhere from 10 years to life in prison with no possibility of parole, under new federal sentencing regulations.

Certainly Jackson deserves as much punishment as the court deems necessary, but, to quote a Washington lawyer, "the (drug) situ-

ation is bad enough without creating a false situation." And Kevin Zeese, a Washington defense lawyer who specializes in drug cases, told The Washington Post that the DEA's efforts to maneuver Jackson may allow his attorney to argue he was a victim of "outrageous government conduct."

In a taped conversation with undercover DEA agents, Jackson said, "Where the [expletive] is the White House? Oh, you mean where Reagan lives?" William McMullan, assistant special agent in charge of the DEA's Washington field office, admitted that Jackson had to be manipulated to get him to the White House. "It wasn't easy," McMullan said. It's also not easy to believe that they admit to this, to bringing crack to a park where it previously was not sold, without a trace of embarrassment.

Granted, the deal probably would have gone down in some park, but that's not the point. The fact that Jackson could possibly get off on a lighter sentence because of the DEA maneuvering calls into question the seriousness of Bush's attack on drugs, and the fact that he could have seen Bush with the crack on television and realized he'd been set up, highlights the administration's willingness to compromise its public position. And it's shameful that the government allowed this compromise for the sake of obtaining the perfect, sensational visual aid for Bush's speech. — **Tammy Blackard**

It's hard to believe they would bring crack to a park where it was not sold previously.



Student Congress: Time for change

Jeff Beall clearly has too much time on his hands.

Beall, a member of Student Congress, has just been a whirlwind of activity. He's introduced a resolution supporting a woman's right to an abortion and a referendum to change instances of "he" to "he or she" in the Student Code. He's sought a second referendum on the Student Recreation Center. And he's called for a recall election of DTH editor Sharon Kepschull.

This last bit of mischief has the DTH editorial board members a little stumped: although they would love to slam Beall's plan all across the edit page, they don't want to unfairly abuse their power. Thus, they've decided not to address the recall campaign; and they're even leary of criticizing Student Congress in general.

Happily, I'm not an editor. When I told Kepschull the topic of my column this week, she was a little apprehensive. But there was never any doubt I would be allowed to write what I pleased because—contrary to Beall's claims—the DTH does not suppress opinions of any kind.

So what about this Jeff Beall guy? Where did he come from? Sadly, Jeff Beall is not a fluke. He's a product of the black sheep of student government: Student Congress.

Let's take a look at Student Congress. There are 18 districts, although few students really know—or care—which district they live in. Some districts have one "representative," others have two. But of course, congress members aren't really representative of anyone because few people ever vote. It's not uncommon for members to win elections without ever declaring a candidacy, simply by telling a dozen friends to write them in. A look at voting statistics clearly reveals that Student Congress has received a resounding campus-wide vote of "no-confidence."

Once in office, Student Congress members have three main duties: to serve as a check on the power of the student body president; establish laws governing campus elections; and set and administer student fees.

As far as these first two duties go, congress probably does OK—although in the three years I've been watching, I've never seen



Matt Bivens
 Rat Salad

congress have to "check" the power of a student body president. And it seems to me that the Elections Board, an executive branch organ, does more to regulate elections than congress.

But administering student fees is a whole new can of worms. Every year come budget time, congress members start feeling their oats. Student groups that apply for a piece of the student fees pie have to come meekly to budget hearings where they are often treated like beggars. Representatives of groups applying for money are not allowed to speak unless spoken to, and some congress members take this opportunity to chastise group representatives. That's what happened two years ago, when STV members were forced to sit in furious silence while a representative with a mischievous twinkle in his eyes introduced a proposal to defund STV (while other representatives tittered), then eventually explained that he didn't support his own resolution—he just wanted an opportunity to express his concerns with STV.

In all fairness, many congress members work diligently and with little recognition to see that student fees go where they're needed. There are intelligent, dedicated people in Student Congress; no doubt these people are embarrassed by some of their organization's doings.

Having raised the issue of the budget process, I prefer not to pursue it here. Instead let's move onto other areas—such as the recently-passed abortion rights resolution.

I know we're all resting easier now that congress is protecting our constitutional rights. But aside from that, what business does congress have talking about abortion? Or any other political matter? I vote in Student Congress elections because I want a voice—however small—in how campus

matters are run. I don't vote for these candidates based on their political views; nor do candidates state political views as part of their platforms. I don't want someone chosen by a graduate student lounge write-in campaign claiming to speak for me about the homeless, or abortion, or nuclear war or any other non-campus issue. If congress members itch so badly for politics and debate, they should look to campus political groups, Di-Phi or the N.C. Student Legislature.

Congress has become an embarrassment, and it clearly needs serious reform. While other student government groups—CAA, RHA, the executive branch, the honor court system—make serious strides in gaining administrative respect, congress members play silly games: striving to have each other recalled, passing meaningless (the official term is "non-binding") resolutions and so forth. Again, there are congress members who provide genuine service to the University; but the politics of Student Congress overshadow their good work.

My gut reaction is to say we should ditch Student Congress entirely. In its place we could establish a body charged solely with administering student fees. The Elections Board would continue to monitor elections and could handle any recall election requests for the student body president. Failing that, we should at least change the election process. While the district system is a nice imitation of the American federal system, students probably don't understand it. Or maybe they understand it too well and realize how little their vote matters. In any case, they don't vote. Let's make candidates for congress run in campus-wide elections where everyone can vote for every candidate. Maybe then we'll arrive at something closer to a representative government.

Until then, however, Student Congress needs to get its act together. And congress members, please—find something constructive for Jeff Beall to do. He's one of your members, and his behavior reflects on all of you, no matter how hard you work to distance yourselves from him.

Matt Bivens is a senior political science major from Olney, Md.

'Education president' needs to act

Lisa Blighton
 Guest Writer

During the 1988 presidential campaign, George Bush labeled himself the "education president," which doesn't say much of anything but does sound good. I must admit that I did not vote for Mr. Bush, but hope springs eternal, and I have been patiently awaiting innovative educational reforms from a man who promised nothing less. After his much-vaunted education summit with the nation's governors, I am still waiting. Mr. Bush's efforts to focus attention on education are a commendable first step, but attention and cheerleader rhetoric are not enough. Vague proposals from two days of meetings are too little, too late. Perhaps the specific goals due to be released in February 1990 will be a bit more impressive, but how much longer must the education system exist in limbo? And while it is all fine and good that the president and the governors want to reform education, what qualifications do they have to decide what must be done?

There seems to be a prevailing notion that teachers are people who get picked from the gutter, dusted off and thrown into the classroom. A more civilized notion suggests that stupid, harder college students who cannot survive the tougher majors meander about campus, winding up at schools of education, where they learn to make bulletin boards and give homework. My personal favorite is the notion that an education major gives women something to do while obtaining their Mrs. degrees. I do not know to which notion our nation's leaders ascribe, but they seldom ask the people who know the most about education what should be done. Who better knows the problems of education and the solutions to these problems than teachers? They are trained professionals. They are in the schools every day, working with the children, the parents, the communities, and yet no one really bothers to ask them what they think. Mr. Bush was invited to attend the National Education Association's annual conference in Washington, D.C., this year to hear what 8,000 delegates representing 2 million educators across the country had to say about the profession to

which they have dedicated their lives. His secretaries politely refused for the president. He had very courageously set out to make the world safe for democracy by fishing in Maine.

If true reform is to be achieved in this nation, it must be done with the input of professional educators. No one president, no one governor, can single handedly remedy the country's educational ills because the vast majority of them have no training in education. They have no experience in the public school classroom. They simply do not know where to begin, no matter how much they try to convince us otherwise.

Assuming that professionals are consulted and proposals are implemented, where will the money for this implementation be found? (Do not kid yourselves. It will cost money.) The federal government is quite fond of telling everyone that there is enough money there; it needs only to be distributed correctly. When was the last time the Pentagon heard such a line? The military never has to grovel for every single penny they receive as education has. How can anyone in good conscience tell a child that we have enough money to build weapons for their destruction but not enough to buy microscopes for science classrooms or computers for the school? Why should we spend billions more on more weapons so we can destroy the earth 20 times over instead of 19? How tragic that we fail to realize that all the weapons in the world will not save a nation whose students cannot find it on a map.

It is a moral disgrace that a country willing to pay \$600 for nuts and bolts for fighter planes cannot feed, clothe and shelter its own children. Children who come to school tired, hungry and poor seldom have the luxury of learning. Children who suffer emotional, physical or sexual abuse cannot concentrate

on the Pythagorean theorem. Schools need the resources and personnel to deal with these problems. It is going to take money to help these powerless children go beyond the survival stage and enable them to learn. Everyone deserves a chance to learn, and it is not being given to those who need it the most. Children cannot be expected to grow up and contribute to a society's well-being if that society cannot contribute to theirs.

Of course, throwing money at a problem will not automatically solve it. A solution takes thought, communication and commitment, as well as the proper funding. Who can disagree with that? Yet at the opposite end of the spectrum are parents who consistently leave their children with others to raise so they can work to buy a second home, a brand new BMW, an expensive seasonal wardrobe. Maybe those parents buy the best care they can find. Maybe they buy their kids not only the essentials, but also nice clothes, toys, cars and vacations. But the truly best care cannot be bought. It must be given by both parents equally. An excess of money is no substitute for parental attention, time and love. To those affluent, jet-setting parents, stop trying to buy your kids off. What they really need is you.

Education reform will take more than fun, new, cost-free programs brought to you by your state and federal government. It is going to take money, and it is going to take some fundamental changes in the way this society values its children and their teachers. Talk about education is nice, but talk is cheap. Rah, rah rhetoric may focus attention on the problem, but it won't change attitudes. Education reform is not going to be accomplished in two days' worth of meetings. The process of education reform will be as long and complex and difficult as the process of education, itself. We cannot afford to waste any more time or effort on empty political gestures or pleasant-sounding platitudes. The task is too important.

Lisa Blighton is a senior education major from Belton, S.C.

The Daily Tar Heel

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