

# The Daily Tar Heel

98th year of editorial freedom

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## Grievous policy

Excluding lawyers would hurt UNC staff

### board opinion

If the proposed revisions to the University's grievance policy follow trends accepted by the State Personnel Commission, UNC employees will have a lot to grieve about.

Since last November, an eight-person committee has written, discussed, reviewed and rewritten a grievance policy for employees covered by the State Personnel Act (SPA). The new policy would exclude lawyers from participating in all but the last step of the procedure, which is handled outside the University. This proposal, if passed next month by the commission, could leave employees without the means to resolve their grievances successfully.

Employees need legal counsel to help them understand regulations, fill out difficult forms and offer advice. They need guidance beyond the University's Human Resources Counseling Service, which could end up counseling both an employee and his or her supervisor, thus putting the counselors in an adversarial position.

The proposed policy would leave SPA employees without the right of representation enjoyed by UNC faculty and staff members who are exempt from the State Personnel Act. "Generally, the Republican administration takes everything out on the back of the civil servant," said Daniel Pollitt, Kenan law professor. "Hopefully, it will change, but we have a class system."

Administrators say lawyers make minor internal problems into adversarial conflicts which take longer to solve, cost money and increase friction between employees and supervisors. But approving a process in which staff members feel inadequately protected will hardly increase morale and cooperation. Burnele Powell, law school professor and president of the UNC Chapter of the American Association of Univer-

sity Professors, put it well: "There is no reason to get rid of lawyers just because you want to move toward more conciliatory procedures. We need to keep listening to each other and trying to find some ways in which we're giving each other what we all want and need."

Drake Maynard, employee relations specialist at the Office of State Personnel, told The Chapel Hill Newspaper that the exclusion of lawyers in grievance procedures was a trend among universities and other state agencies. The state's largest agency, the Department of Human Resources, with 18,000 employees, has been lawyer-free in grievance hearings for three years. Thus, the State Personnel Commission may accept the University's revised policy, despite employees' repeated requests that legal representation be allowed throughout the entire procedure.

If the trend is toward exclusion of lawyers, then what the trend is and what the trend ought to be are two different things. The drafting committee could encourage internal communication and a less formal procedure without excluding lawyers; they can encourage employees to resolve their grievances creatively, but should not restrict their access to legal representation.

Staff members have voiced their concerns in meetings throughout the drafting process. This dialogue should continue until committee members and UNC employees are standing on middle ground. Barring an informed outsider, a lawyer, who can offer insight into the grievance process is regressive. It would only give employees — the people for whom the policy is supposed to be designed — a second-class status.

The editorial board consists of Crystal Bernstein, Lynette Blair, Jessica Lanning, Elizabeth Murray, H. Brock Page and Kelly Thompson.

## A slap on the wrist

NCAA fails to enforce integrity

Last week, the National Collegiate Athletic Association "punished" the Illinois basketball program for recruiting violations by banning the team from postseason play in 1991, placing them on three years' probation and allowing only two scholarships each in 1991 and 1992.

Sending the players cookies could be considered harsher treatment.

After investigating Illinois, the NCAA dropped charges that the program offered money to two players, but there were plenty of violations left: improper use of complimentary tickets, preferential treatment for loans to players by a car dealership and illegal loans to two players by a coach.

Another factor in the investigation was the history of the Illinois athletic program; the football team has been found guilty of wrongdoing twice since 1984. With these past violations, the NCAA could have given the basketball team the death penalty —

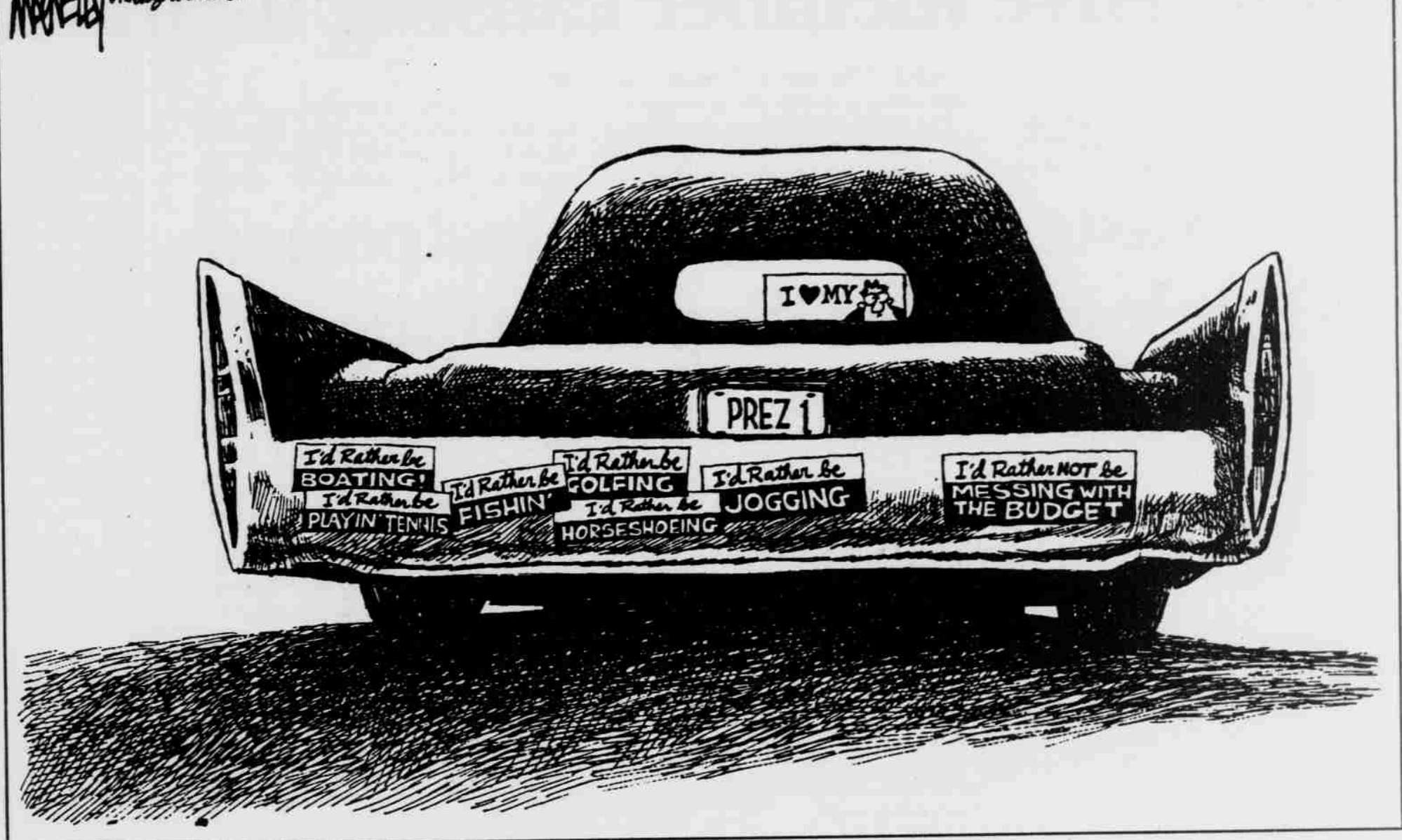
barring it completely from competition — but chose not to.

With this punishment, the issue will be forgotten as soon as probation ends. As for 1991, head basketball coach Lou Henson said the team would probably be more inspired than ever before.

And this is not the first time the NCAA has wimped out. For 13 years, it fought in court with Jerry Tarkanian, head basketball coach at the University of Nevada-Las Vegas. The NCAA tried without success to oust Tarkanian from his position for committing recruiting violations. Instead, the mighty NCAA flexed its muscles and banned UNLV from postseason play in 1991, one year after the Runnin' Rebels had captured the national championship.

The NCAA must make its punishments harsh enough to keep violations from happening. Until then, crime in college athletics really does pay. — H. Brock Page

MANEY Chicago Tribune



## Annoying monotone voice pays off in a big way

Question of the week: "If Secret is pH balanced for women, are women more acidic or basic than men?"

Confused Ehrlinghaus freshman I'm firmly convinced that the American press is overlooking a great American success story. Forget the Middle East and Russia. I know who we should really be interviewing. I want to talk to the woman who does computerized voices.

Think a moment. Most of you have called Caroline by now. Doesn't she sound familiar? Isn't that electronic monotone the exact same one you heard when your parents lost their minds a few years ago and bought a talking car? And if you bank at Wachovia and call that 1-800 number to find out your balance, isn't that also the same voice? I think I'm onto something here.

One of my hallmates agrees with me. He has a theory that there is a woman in Topeka, Kansas, who has made millions by being the electronic voice of the United States. She won't admit it, however, because she knows that the general population has had it up to their microchips with her voice and would love to strangle her with a phone cord and run her over with a talking car.

But I think we should interview her first. I'll bet she's got a great story to tell. She probably grew up on a small farm in Kansas, tending to the animals in the mornings and going to school during the day. Her classmates wanted to grow up to be farmers like their parents, but this girl had a dream. She wanted to be famous.

She was an only child. No one enjoyed talking to her once it became evident that she had a bizarre speech problem. She...talked...like...this. When her teacher would ask her what one plus two equalled, the child would respond, "The answer to the question 'What is one plus two' is...zero...zero...three." When the teacher moved on to another problem, the little girl would say, "Thank...you...for...calling...on...me. Good-bye."

No one really knew what to make of her. Her parents tried in vain to coach her to speak normally. Day after day, she dreamed of over-

### Jenn Layton

#### I Just Work Here

coming the social stigma and becoming rich and famous. Then her mother found out about the upcoming pageant.

It was the Kansas Annual Miss Annoying Pageant. The monotone-voiced girl won. There was really no contest; halfway through the competition, the other hopefuls couldn't stand her voice anymore and ran screaming out of the barn.

It was a dream come true for the young girl, who took the money and went to New York City, where she'd heard that someone had invented computerized voices and needed a speech model. She got the job. Now the woman from a poor family in a small Kansas town is filthy rich. Only in America.

This Caroline gig came along at just the right time for this woman. Previous electronic voice products were really going downhill. I mentioned talking cars. How many of them do you see now? People couldn't stand listening to their car constantly telling them, "Fuel is low. Door is ajar. Lights are on. Oil is low. Your fly is open. Shoelaces are untied." After several miles of listening to this built-in nag, most people pulled over and took a sledgehammer to their cars. This was a boon to the American car repair shops, but no one wanted the electronic voices repaired.

In a way, I'm kind of disappointed that those cars are no longer around. Wouldn't they be fun to tamper with? Imagine someone you don't like driving his talking car down the road after you've rearranged the circuits in the electronic voice box. He's driving along, gloating about the fact that he's made your life miserable for another whole day. Suddenly, his car pipes up: "Fasten your seat belt. Ten seconds to impact. Obstacle approaching. Five seconds to impact. Stand by."

"AIEEEEEEEEE!" Screams the person you don't like.

Naturally, nothing would happen. But the shock alone would make him take a few days off, and you'd be free of him for a while.

Anyway, the children's toy jobs have also fallen through for this Kansas woman. She used to be the voice for those little talking toys where you'd point a little person's finger to a picture of a cow, pull the string and hear the voice say, "This is a cow. The cow goes, 'mooooooo.'" Now, in the age of Nintendo and three zillion dollar stereo systems, those toys aren't selling very well. If they want to make a comeback, maybe they should jazz the toys up a bit. Have a picture of a rock'n'roll band for the little person to point to and say, "This is Led Zepplin. Led Zepplin goes, 'Been a long time since I rock'n'rolled, yeah!' You get the idea."

I've been thinking about what's going to happen to the electronic voice woman if Caroline also falls through. What if the student body starts to yearn for the old days of Wollen Gym and boycotts the phone system? Not that the woman would have to work. She's already very wealthy. But she would probably get bored without working.

No problem. Put her to work on making alarm clocks. It's easy to sleep through an ordinary buzzer and miss an exam. But what if your clock had an electronic voice and no snooze button? Imagine your alarm going off at 6:30 a.m.: "It...is...six...thirty. You...have...a...class. Your...exam...begins...in...zero...zero...two...hours. Get...out...of...bed...please." I guarantee most students would jump right out of bed and get dressed. Anything to make the clock shut up.

She'll always find ways to make herself useful. And someday she'll emerge and announce that she's been the voice woman all along, and reporters all over the world will be killing themselves trying to get the scoop.

But remember, you read it here, first. In my column.

Jenn Layton is a senior E...N...G...L major from Ontario, Canada. Her Pulitzer Prize may be sent to her in care of the Ehrlinghaus Desk.

## READERS' FORUM

### Different generations collide constructively

To the editors:

Last month, at a local nursing home, a collision occurred — a collision of three generations. However, nothing was shattered and no one was hurt. The collision took the form of a Halloween Party where children from the Montessori Day School, students from the Campus Y and residents at Hihaven Convalescent Center (East Franklin) sang, ate, played games, talked, enjoyed entertainment and, in general, had fun!

How could such an intergenerational party occur? The answer is simple — all involved dismissed their stereotypes of each other, choosing instead to share similarities and to learn from differences, realizing that ultimately, we are all young. We are all grown. We are all old. We are all aging creatures.

In fact, the characteristics we associate with a specific age, especially the elderly, are often unfair and usually trivial. A local social worker says, "Sure there are some old people who can no longer walk, but that doesn't mean they can't laugh just as hard as you or me at a good joke." Another resident social worker reminds us that, "These people are not finished. They still have a lot to give. They want to give. Every day that I work with the elderly I learn something about myself. They have something special to offer and they need to know there are people who will listen."

Listening. Being able to listen to the elderly not only requires conquering stereotypes, but also, fear. Fear of wrinkles. Fear of physical impairments; and fear of nursing homes. One member of the Campus Y's Youth for Elderly Service committee says, "When I first went to Hihaven, I was really nervous. All I could think about

were the horror stories I had heard about nursing homes. I expected everyone to be moaning and for the place to smell bad. After being there, I was amazed at how dedicated the staff was and how spirited many of the residents were. Sure, there was some moaning, but no more than you'd hear in a dorm before exams."

It is time we all visit a nursing home because it could help change our attitudes about the aged in America. It is time we forget our fears and remember that we are human. Last month a collision occurred, a collision that broke only stereotypes and proved that a change is possible, that we can share, that we can listen.

CINDY CHEATHAM  
Senior History

DANIEL PEDDLE  
Junior Anthropology/RTVMP

Laurie Culp  
Junior Psychology

### Liberals not afraid to stand up for beliefs

Editors' note: It is normal editorial policy to confirm letters before printing them. However, the letter 'Liberals continue to whine after election' printed on Nov. 9 mistakenly ran without being confirmed.

To the editors: After reading Marshall L. Spangler's last liberal bashing letter to the editor, "Liberals continue to whine after election" on Nov. 9, I was shocked that anyone could be so ignorant as to the tactics employed by Helms to win this election and other elections in the past. Helms refused to debate, aired misleading commercials accusing Gantt of supporting racial quotas, and sent out postcards to

minority neighborhoods across the state warning them of the penalties of lying about residency and age.

However, this is not my biggest disagreement with Spangler. It infuriates me that he bashes liberals incessantly and talks about the fact that liberals whine when he does not even use his real name when writing a letter. Let me tell you, Spangler, I know who you are and will not hesitate to tell others if you do not reveal your true identity. Liberals are not afraid to put their name behind their beliefs, and if you really believed in what you write, you would not be using a pen name. Of course, if I was an ultra-conservative like you who makes Jesse Helms seem like Ted Kennedy, I would be reluctant to put my name on my letters as well.

One more thing I think you should know, Spangler, liberals do not "whine." We merely don't give up on our beliefs just because an election doesn't go our way. It is not whining to stand up for your beliefs, it's called democracy. Of course, Marshall L. Spangler would not know that since he doesn't exist.

BRIAN T. BEASLEY  
Administration of criminal justice Freshman

### Anti-apartheid group slighted by committee

To the editors: I want to commend the Human Rights Week Committee for getting Winnie Mandela as the keynote speaker of the week. However, I also want to express my disappointment with the committee for their failure to invite the Action Against Apartheid group to the reception following Winnie Mandela's speech. I realize that the anti-apartheid group is not as large or as vocal as it once was, but it is still an active organization. I fail to see the committee's reasoning for excluding this group

that was instrumental in getting the University to divest much (not necessarily all) of its money from companies with South African associations. The anti-apartheid group was the impetus for educating this campus about the injustices that were daily perpetrated in South Africa. This is a group that has done many things to help the struggle for freedom in South Africa. It seems logical that it is this group that Mrs. Mandela would most like to meet, those who have joined the struggle of her people.

I do not know who the Human Rights Week Committee did invite to the reception for Mrs. Mandela, but I do know that they mistakenly overlooked a group that would have made a most worthy addition to the reception.

If anyone reading this gets to meet Mrs. Mandela, please tell her that the group Action Against Apartheid wishes all the best to her and her people. Tell her, Amanda! Power to the people!

CHERYL BROOKS  
Senior International Studies

### Letters policy

The Daily Tar Heel welcomes reader comments and criticisms. We attempt to print as many letters to the editors as space permits. When writing letters, please follow these guidelines:

- If you want your letter published, please sign and date it. No more than two signatures please.
- All letters must be typed and double-spaced.
- Please include such vital statistics as your year in school, major, phone number and hometown.
- The DTH reserves the right to edit letters for space, clarity and vulgarity. Remember, brevity is the soul of wit.
- Place letters in the box marked "Letters to the Editor" outside the DTH office in the Student Union annex.

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