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ASG is fighting textbook prices

At the beginning of every semester, I walk into my student bookstore hoping to find that book prices have gone down. And every time I walk out disappointed as they seem to only have increased.

Semester after semester we as students experience the same thing as we put aside huge sums of our own money for textbooks.

We look to our administrators, our faculty and our bookstores to find a solution to this problem but in the end we only receive modest recommendations tailored to ruffle the least number of feathers. This ends Friday.

This is the time for real solutions, the time to find answers to these egregious costs, the time to posit a tangible remedy that can create tangible results.

But how can we take others seriously when they suggest that students at UNC-Chapel Hill paid \$177 on average for textbooks last spring when we know that textbooks for Chem 101 alone cost more than \$200?

How can we take others seriously when students continue to lose money because book orders are turned in late, eliminating opportunities to acquire textbooks from used-book markets?

This is the time for real solutions. And we have one.

On Friday the UNC Association of Student Governments, an assembly of students from every school in the UNC system, will present the first unified student textbook proposal to the UNC Board of Governors. And I have to tell you, I'm excited.

I'm excited because this new proposal is innovative in nature. The central concept is a partial rental system — a system that would allow students to rent introductory course textbooks at a far lower cost than they can today.

The impetus behind this proposal is the success experienced by schools using full rental systems. The average student at Appalachian State University — with a full rental system — pays \$209 per year for textbooks. The average student at ECU — with a purchase system similar to UNC-CH — pays between \$700 and \$950 per year after buybacks.

So why not a full rental system? For one, the initial capital investment is massive. Faculties also criticize it since they have to use the same book for two or three years, which they say infringes on their academic freedom.

And we agree, these are very good arguments against a full rental system.

A partial rental system, however, minimizes or erases these arguments altogether. Since the program will include only introductory classes, the capital investment is astronomically smaller; nowhere near the \$50 million that some opponents claim a full rental system would cost.

Furthermore, since the material is introductory in nature and involves only a handful of classes, the academic freedom of our professors is hardly in jeopardy.

Now we don't pretend to have all of the answers but we have done our homework. We have spent countless hours researching a myriad of potential answers to the textbook problem. Still, we know there could be a better way. And we would welcome one.

But until someone else steps up to the plate, we're going to continue to push this proposal. So join us in our efforts to lower the textbook costs.

The fight is just beginning. Please join myself, ASG and your fellow students at the Board of Governors meeting in Greensboro on Feb. 9 as we come together to prove our discontent.

Our solution is at www.uncasg.org. Feel free to ask me any questions you might have at president@uncasg.org.

We rarely have the opportunity to do anything to create change, to find a solution. We do now.

Don't let it go to waste.

EDITORIAL CARTOON By Jonathan Shrader and Seann Vicente, seannjon317@hotmail.com



Picking your pockets

BOT votes Thursday on tuition increases — be there

Thursday, be ready to get up early and be heard.

The Board of Trustees will be meeting at 8 a.m. to vote on tuition increases for next year at the Carolina Inn in the East and West Chancellor's Ballrooms.

In case you missed James Allred's letter to the editor Tuesday or our editorial on Friday, here's a recap.

This fall Allred was able to push a plan that called for a \$500 out-of-state and graduate student tuition increase and a \$250 in-state increase proposed by the tuition task force made up of students and faculty. The plan formerly had the backing of Chancellor James Moeser.

It's been a while since the administration teamed up with the students to present a tuition solution. Unfortunately the BOT has rejected that plan and is pursuing its own plan to raise tuition by more than \$1,200 for out-of-state students.

The \$250 in-state increase is around the 6.5 percent limit set by UNC-system President Erskine Bowles. 6.5 is the maxi-

mum increase, not the benchmark. Hopefully tuition won't increase by that much every year, as even that amount can be a serious burden on poor and even middle class students.

The University has financial needs, such as for salary increases that help with faculty retention, and a small tuition increase might be needed to meet those needs. The fact that the tuition and fees task force's proposal is backed by the student body president makes it all the more palatable.

A \$1,200 increase in out-of-state tuition is a large amount, and the current plan by the BOT calls for more hikes by upwards of \$1,000 every year for the next four years. Moeser introduced his plan for four-year fixed tuition that would increase for each new class to help with predictability, but it doesn't look like it's going to fly.

Out-of-state students didn't expect these drastic increases when they agreed to come to UNC. Just because UNC remains Kiplinger's best-value University, doesn't mean that

the BOT can raise tuition to just below the cost of our peer institutions and expect out-of-state students to be grateful.

The BOT needs to raise tuition only as much as necessary to meet the financial needs of the school, not to meet the 75th percentile of cost for peer institutions.

Out-of-state students should go to the BOT meeting and present their case Thursday morning. And because tuition hikes affect everyone, in-state students should be there to fight this bad precedent as well.

We know it's early, but if one-tenth the students who got up at the crack of dawn in years past to get basketball tickets showed up tomorrow, the BOT would think twice about raising tuition so much. We'll just be impressed if everyone who claims they are going to the meeting on Allred's Facebook.com event "Fight Huge Tuition Hikes" shows up.

If you absolutely can't make it, send an e-mail. The trustees' e-mail addresses are on page 7. Make your voice heard.

More than words

Objectives that should top the town's 2007 to do list

Talk might be cheap to cliché enthusiasts, but it is valuable beyond measure to those deciding Chapel Hill's goals for the upcoming year.

The Chapel Hill Town Council and town department members met Saturday for their annual retreat to prioritize the two group's objectives for 2007.

Unfortunately, the groups didn't get much done in the way of processing the 51 objectives on the docket, instead tabling the issue until the council's Feb. 7 budget meeting.

The council members adjourned, having discussed the objectives, but not having made any decisions, in order to further mull over the suggestions.

While the council members take a month ponder the importance of "Dark Sky" versus carbon reduction, there are a few items we'd like to see top their list.

The 51-objective list shows

an admirable effort on the part of town leaders to address many of the major issues confronting Chapel Hill's residents. On the list, police patrol officers, police investigators and reverse 911 will ensure the safety of residents.

But one item that didn't make it to the top 51, the search for a new police chief to replace Chapel Hill's police Chief Gregg Jarvie, who will be retiring in April, should have topped the law-and-order list.

As always, Carolina North, UNC's proposed satellite campus in northern Chapel Hill, remains an important issue for the town. The Town Council looked over the Leadership Advisory Committee's proposal to create a zone for Carolina North's construction. Discussions about the future campus always are sensitive, as the University and the town have high stakes in its development.

But the collaboration bodes well for the future, and we hope that town-gown relations continue to be a positive endeavor for both parties.

Carbon reduction was a favorite topic at the meeting, and rightfully so. The Town Council pledged last year to reduce carbon pollution in the area by joining the Community Carbon Reduction Project, a collaboration with UNC's Carolina Environmental Program. Hopefully 2007 will see tangible changes on this front. With 2006 being the warmest year on record, reducing carbon emissions is a noble effort in the quest to reduce our local contributions to global warming.

Not to mention the perennial issues of wireless Internet on Franklin Street and downtown development.

The council and the town departments certainly have their work cut out for them.

Looking for a hero

Anderson, Whitfield wise to step up for GPSF

"Better late than never" is the phrase that best describes this year's race for Graduate and Professional Student Federation president.

Lauren Anderson, the current GPSF president, and Doug Whitfield have stepped up to the plate, entering the race. While it's great that Anderson and Whitfield have decided to run, it's too bad interest in running for GPSF president is so low.

Anderson and Whitfield announced their candidacy after missing a mandatory candidate meeting last Tuesday but noting that no one else was seeking the post. This apparent lack of interest from UNC's graduate students sets a bad precedent.

Graduate issues such as

tuition hikes, a greater graduate student voice on campus, basketball tickets for spouses and other concerns have been voiced in large part through GPSF. Yet, as the 2007 election season began, no one showed up to lead this group.

We're glad that Anderson and Whitfield have stepped up to the task because graduate students cannot expect to gain attention without leadership.

GPSF has done good things. Programs such as University Research Day, developed by former GPSF president Jen Bushman, have made real steps toward promoting graduate students interests and have produced results.

GPSF provides a forum for graduate students, one that can

lobby on their behalf.

Facing such issues as rising tuition and ticket distribution, GPSF is a powerful voice.

With more than 8,000 graduate students enrolled as of last fall, GPSF is the representative for nearly 30 percent of UNC students. It would be a shame to see this large slice of Tar Heels lose their positive momentum towards greater visibility and progress simply because no one was willing to step up and lead.

Thankfully, Anderson and Whitfield saved GPSF from a leaderless fate. However, the fact remains that more students should be happy to step up and promote the issues that are important to the graduate and professional students.

QUOTE OF THE DAY:

"A book lets you get out and gives you something else to do besides cleaning the hamster cage."

SAM ABERNATHY, GLENWOOD ELEMENTARY 4TH GRADER

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Due to space constraints, letters are sometimes cut. Read the full-length versions or post your own response to a letter, editorial or story online. VISIT www.dailytarheel.com/feedback

Fayetteville State provides a safe campus for students

TO THE EDITOR:

The faculty, staff and students read with interest The Daily Tar Heel article titled "Tensions come to head at ASG meeting."

In that article, Fayetteville State University Student Government Association President Keisha Robinson and fellow SGA presidents were angered over concerns that they were not being taken seriously about an alleged sexual assault at FSU.

It is important for your readers and others to know that the alleged sexual assault did not occur on the FSU campus as reported during the ASG meeting. FSU has always been and always will be committed to providing a safe environment to its students, faculty and staff.

Parents who entrust their children to us can rest assured the University will do everything in its power to ensure they learn and live in a safe and orderly environment. We would be neglecting our duties if we failed to do so.

*Jeffery M. Womble
Director of Public Relations
Fayetteville State University*

Edit board right to criticize requiring oaths on Bible

TO THE EDITOR:

I was pleased to read in the Jan. 22 edition of the DTH that the editorial board still stands up for civil liberties. It is absurd, given this country's Constitution, that people in North Carolina's courts have the Bible as their only option (other than nothing) when swearing an oath in court.

I have nothing against the Bible, but the editorial board was right to point out that the Bible is not exactly an all-inclusive text.

Depending on the poll one cites, somewhere around 75 percent or 85 percent of Americans identify themselves as Christians. That means that at least 30 million people in the U.S. see the Bible not as "the Holy Scriptures" but as an interesting compilation of myths.

The argument against allowing any "religious text" for an oath is clear, so I applaud the board's conclusion that the oath should be sworn either on the U.S. Constitution or on nothing. It's a clear solution, and, more importantly, it's in keeping with the text that people will be swearing on.

*Scott Spillman
Former Member
Editorial Board*

'Rent' tickets should go to those who waited in line

TO THE EDITOR:

I am outraged to find out that today student tickets are available for "Rent." I stood in line for hours last semester the day student "Rent" tickets went on sale.

I was told they were out of student tickets and thus after hours of waiting, I bought my tickets at regular price (thus not the best seats either because now money and price was a factor).

This is completely inappropriate, and unless there is another explanation, shows complete unfairness and lying on the part of Carolina Performing Arts.

At the least, the student tickets that are available should be sold at regular price, and by using credit card or other records, they should refund me and the three students in front of me, and however many students behind me for the number of tickets they have and sell us our tickets back at that student price.

This new announcement creates huge distrust in their organization, which is very unfortunate because in the past I always supported the arts at UNC. I was applauded just a few weeks ago along with the other small number of students who listened to Susan Graham at the same time as UNC basketball game.

I now feel there is no relationship between their organization and students. They just give us the reduced tickets because someone else compelled them to, not because they care.

Can they please explain to me and other upset students why we were told there were no more tickets to be sold at a student price, but now there are?

*Robin Graham
Senior
Sociology*

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 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.

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 seven board members, the associate opinion editor, the opinion editor and the editor. The 2006-07 editor decided not to vote on the board.

The Daily Tar Heel

*Established 1893,
113 years
of editorial freedom*

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