

OLD GOLD AND BLACK

The Student Newspaper of Wake Forest University
Founded in 1916

EDITORIALS

University cheats student groups

Soon we will have a laptop in every lap and a network in the woodwork, but perhaps only pennies in the piggy bank.

The Plan for the Class of 2000, to which Professor Dilip Kondepudi's catchphrase refers, will create budget constraints which prioritize funding away from student organizations.

Every year at about this time, we write about how the Student Budget Advisory Committee failed in its duty to fairly and equally distribute from its big pot of cash.

Though SBAC's priorities in funding are far from unbiased, the larger problem is a university that is not committed to adequately funding its student organizations.

The picture in the recent past has been one of an inflationary budgeting process — more and more organizations are chasing fewer and fewer dollars.

And the situation seems only to get worse. In spite of the fact that tuition and the endowment seem to grow at an astronomical rate the growth of student organizations' budgets has not kept pace.

In the past five years, tuition has increased 54 percent, while the amount of money allocated by the SBAC has only increased 45 percent.

It's bad enough that organization funding has lagged, but to add insult to injury, these insuffi-

cient funds have been meted out to an ever growing number of groups.

Senior Graham Goodrich, the head of the committee and Student Government treasurer, said that this year fully 20 percent of the outlays went to organizations two years old or younger.

In 1982 the SBAC funded 17 groups. This year they funded 37.

You may ask what the big deal is. So a few petty student groups have to share limited resources.

The problem is that if the university really hopes to attain national status then it ought to have student organizations of national caliber. High quality organizations are only possible through adequate funding.

The perfect example of this dilemma is the story of WAKE Radio. The station has tried for years to get the funding to support a broadcast FM station and has been denied.

Most colleges with our stature have a real student-run radio station.

Now with next year's SBAC allocations, the station will have no room to grow. It will be left with a broken on-air phone and 1960s-vintage broadcasting (closed-circuit cable) equipment.

And your very own college newspaper will more than likely be unable to print color as it has this year, only having enough money to print in black and white.

Computer piracy shows ineptitude

If the administration is bored without the thrill of implementing programs that require tuition raises and conferences with IBM, there is a new computer problem they can deal with — how to avoid piracy acts in the future.

The recent allegations that the college bookstore illegally sold copies of Microsoft Office are yet another sign that the university is unprepared for the influx of computers that will be on campus next year. At the very least, they will have to concentrate on better educating the bookstore employees.

How much does the administration know about licensing practices? John Anderson, the vice president for finance and administration, made the deal with Microsoft, in which the university agreed to buy copies of Microsoft Office for use in university-owned computers. These copies are intended for institutional use only, and are much cheaper than the ones bought for private use. Since

the university claims the students will own the ThinkPads, handing them copies of software intended for academic institutional use may be illegal.

Will students be informed about the legal consequences of actions associated with their new toys? It seems there should be some education in the future about the legal rights and issues surrounding software. There are moral issues associated with the computers as well. Since there will be no practical way for professors to check the entire Internet for a paper mysteriously similar to those they will be receiving, we assume they will rely on the honor code to prevent students from indulging in this form of plagiarism. Will that be enough?

If students do not learn about the legal issues surrounding their little machines, they may end up sharing a jail cell with some people currently occupying space in Reynolda Hall.

Problems abound, so let's get to work

Herbert was a high school sophomore we heartless juniors clandestinely called "Waaa-Waaa." Perhaps this was a bit mean-spirited and even cold-hearted, but not inaccurate.

Nearly every week he would complain to us about some trivial matter. Worse yet, every day he would whine, wearing thin our patience and nerves.

Finally, one day the most bold member of our little clique turned to Waaa-Waaa and irritably blurted the seven words the rest of us had been too polite to say, "Stop complaining and do something about it." Abruptly, Waaa-Waaa stopped his daily visits.

Years later those seven words, continue to motivate my perseverance to foment change. Yet lately when listening to discussions of campus issues, the old cynicism from my high school days creeps into my thought. Complaints regarding residence halls, food service dissatisfactions, a dating vacuum, lack of diversity, tests, grade inflation, administration, professors, fellow students — all reflect the areas in which students recognize discord in their lives. But what is actually being done to improve the situation?

While the very nature of this article ironically begs the question I present (I am complaining

Laura Wilson

Student Columnist

about students' complaints), one way of addressing the issue lies with bringing about its recognition. While groups like Student Government strive to address student concerns, the very nature of their administration is limited to collective student support. Without a consensus, these organizations can do little more than present opinions. What is necessary is individual student action.

Life's most prominent examples of successful action derive from individual motivation to "stop complaining and do something."

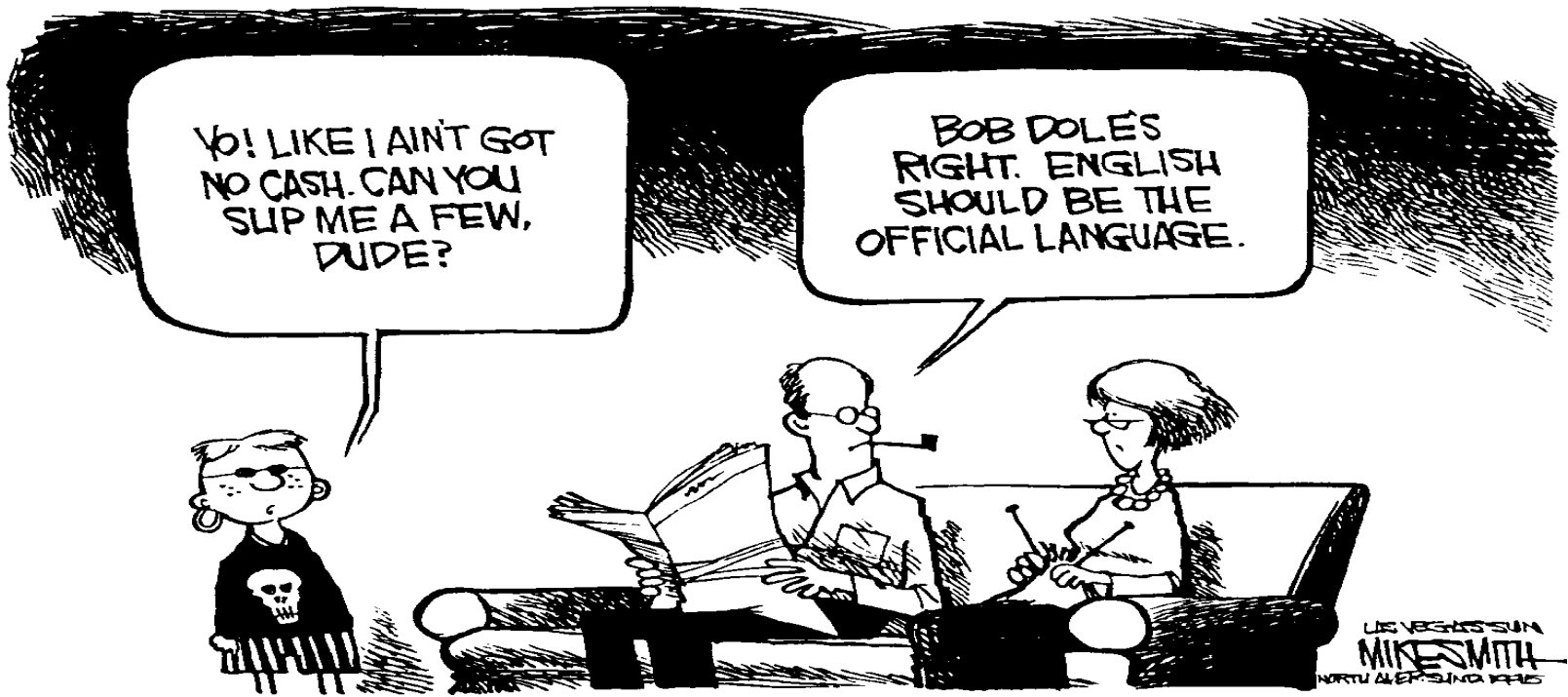
The respected Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. decided he was not going to stand for discordant unequal treatment of human beings based on race, so he did something. Gandhi, assured that human beings of different religious beliefs could live side by side in respectful peace, partook in individual hunger strikes until violence subsided. Virginia Woolf, defying the societal silence of homosexuality and lesbianism, dared discussion of the issues through her literary works.

At Wake Forest we find equally strident examples. Sophomore Al-Husein Madhany, believ-

ing that student knowledge of the religion of Islam lacks depth, started the Islam Awareness Organization, actively including anyone with a desire to learn about new cultures into this group. Joy Goodwin, '95, cultivating the buried academic environment at the university, re-founded the Philomathesian Society.

Senior Graham Goodrich, the SG treasurer, realizing the problems derived from lack of respect for our honor code, has initiated the first steps to revamp it. Junior Jim Wright, seeing the lack of a Latin American Studies minor, has been a major force propelling its formation. In accord with student interest, he set up a subsequent Spanish film series which shows movies every other Tuesday night throughout the semester.

In their individual ways, these students stopped complaining and did something. While categorizing an individual as a "Waaa-Waaa" may be immature and judgmental at best, it checks whether the reason for our complaining is to truly motivate change or merely for the sake of collective pessimism. If, as individuals, we each attempted to change the parts of the university we dislike, imagine the awesome environment it would be for all. Hence, just like all else in life, change starts with you. Risk. Apply. Write letters. Be heard. Don't whine. Do something.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Grades accurate

Surprise, surprise! Our lovely Reynolda campus continues to be painted with not-so-lovely cement. I refer, of course, to the present remodeling of the small patch of grass between the Benson University Center and Davis House.

I suggest, however, that the new landscaping endeavor, while possibly seen by campus horticulturists as the latest installment of the Wake Forest French Garden, hints at the administration's deeply seeded urge to control and the infinite ends to which our university's powers that be will go in order to keep the student population within the boundaries that they prefer.

Ever notice how the moment a stretch of grass is beaten down by students opting for an expeditious path that the trodden path is covered with cement?

Certainly this refusal to allow students to choose their own destination is symbolic of our new dean's refusal to allow us to choose our own destiny and our university's extensive web of controls on students.

This system of controls certainly spans far beyond the current grading controversy. (I will not even discuss the stranglehold applied by parking tickets, housing agreements or divisional requirements.) I have difficulty confirming Dean Paul Escott's concern by dignifying it with the term "inflation," but it is interesting to note that in our new dean's first campus-wide "memo," he went straight for the throats of those with whom he should be most concerned — his students.

I recognize that Escott could refute this dissenting opinion (as he does all dissenting opinions, it seems) with the statement that, in the long run, he is ensuring the students' best interests. Escott overlooks, however, the fact that students aren't concerned with the long run. They are concerned with the next grade report and their grade point average.

Escott must also realize that the statistics he uses to confirm grade inflation reflect many intangible factors. He uses the statistic that nearly 70 percent of the soon-to-graduate class of 1996 will do so with honors. Rather than congratulating this class on a job well done, he calls for professors to reexamine the grading standards of the university.

He says that rising SAT scores of entering classes do not exactly correlate with the rising GPAs. Does he consider that entering students' high school GPAs are rising as well? Does he consider that students are more

active, organized, driven and competitive than they were only five years ago? Can he calculate a student body's collective will to succeed? Does he realize that the average Wake Forest student has long since left the small regional market and now competes with Ivy Leaguers for positions at the nation's best firms and spots at the best graduate schools?

Perhaps most importantly, does he recognize the fact that over 20 percent of the students who began their post-secondary education in the class of 1996 are no longer here? Might I suggest that those who ran away had lower or even failing GPAs and that those who transferred in to take their places had considerably higher GPAs? Considering the university's history of grade deflation, it is a safe assumption that these factors are affecting the average.

I am of the opinion that as our new dean, Escott made a rookie mistake. He did not realize that he was playing with the one kind of fire that students will protect with a complete sense of self-righteousness and with a free conscience.

I do not think he realized that some professors do not like to be told how to do their jobs. He must realize that it is the caliber of student with which he is dealing, not the academic bar over which that student is trying to leap, that is of importance. Driven students will obtain the goal regardless of the height at which it is set.

A biology professor recently told his class, "For years I have been raising my grading standard, but students here continuously reach the higher goal." If Escott agrees with the "Lilly Report," then he certainly did not reflect it with his decree that grading standards should be even higher.

The obvious repercussion of this is students' logging more library hours. Strengthening our campus's intellectual atmosphere will only be achieved by freeing students' minds and time so they can pursue lofty endeavors outside of the classroom, not by shackling them to the stacks.

Despite these consequences, some professors have begun to flee the 10-point grading scale like the plague. Great. Students will continue to do well; they just won't have as much fun doing it. Do not be surprised, Escott, if in future generations of students, more and more abandon these magnolia-clad cement walkways because they do not enjoy it or they cannot hack it.

Then the powers that be will watch GPAs soar because of transfers to Chapel Hill, and the percentage of students loyal to and in love with the university will fall.

If Escott still feels that reform is in

order, then I suggest dropping the honors system altogether or raising the minimum to a 3.2 cumulative rather than a 3.0. I must warn, however, that doing the former would mimic the Ivies, and doing the latter would mirror the behemoth state schools that we so loathe.

The university must maintain its own identity and stop this ridiculous envy of Duke and the Ivy League.

In order to do so, I propose that the administration maintain its present standards, drop the practically communist system of controls on students and truly open its collective mind (however small it may seem at times) to progressive education.

Administrators, treat your students as the adults that they are and with the respect that they deserve. The road to an intellectual atmosphere is a two-way street that will not be paved with the Plan for the Class of 2000's information superhighway. I propose that my fellow students utilize the power available to them to express their concerns.

Students, use your student judicial system, call members of the Student Government, knock on President Thomas K. Hearn Jr.'s door and knock on Escott's door, but do not be silent. Students, faculty and administration must communicate honestly about their individual goals if the school is to achieve the greatness of which it is worthy.

Geoffrey S. Connor

Get out and learn!

I am writing this reaction to Ralph Wood's article in *The Philomathesian* entitled, "In Defense of the Ivory Tower." Wood argues in his article that "liberal arts are the exercises of the mind."

While I agree with this point, he goes on to suggest something that makes my stomach churn. He claims, "The university seeks to fathom the meaning and the manifestation of these first things (meaning wisdom) in the three great spheres of existence: in nature and humanity and God. To know these universal realities is to be informed by them, to be corrected by them, indeed, to be conformed by them."

Wood claims further on that this realization of the world is gone about through the use of books and ideas; in reality, the recycling of ideas. This is an oxymoron.

Books, I will agree, are wonderful keys that unlock doors to the unknown world. However, they are only the keys. One cannot hope to really know, "nature and humanity and God"

without sticking himself out in the real world.

I profess we must touch metaphysically and physically humans, nature and God. We cannot seal ourselves up in the "Ivory Tower" because if we do, then we lose contact with the truth, the real existence of Life. All we have then are the ideas of those before us. The uniqueness dies. We are then the prisoners of books. As satisfying as books are, they are, indeed, no substitution for blood, sweat and tears.

It is the ideology of men and women like Wood that allows for things like gates to be erected around the university. Sadly, this way of thinking is akin to most of the students of the university today.

When the students host an event such as Project Pumpkin, why is it that the children come to us? Why not spread the joy to needy families and their children in their environments? Think again of those classes you are in where nobody speaks when the professor asks a probing question. It is not just the fault of the professor. It is the fault of both for keeping the answers in books.

Books, as I said before, are wonderful tools. They give us answers but they also give us questions, and these can be harmful or beneficial. When beneficial, these questions allow us to go outside of the university and seek answers in real life.

They remain harmful, however, if the only place we can go is to the book itself, or to the professor, to recycled ideas and repeated solutions. The best class I have ever had is Religion 166: The history of Christianity in the United States, taught by Terry Matthews. In this class the students have the option to go to seven denominational churches and experience for themselves the way other people interpret "nature and humanity and God."

The result is utterly fantastic. Students debate, question, discuss and unleash their ideas left and right. There is energy. There is real liberal education. There is love of learning.

I beg you students, faculty and Dr. Wood, do not wrap yourselves in only books. Get out! Live! Experience the necessities of life in the natural world. Take a step, in hand, toward the Ivory Tower and raise a strong voice for Life and Education!

Douglas Crets

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