

OPINION

This column represents the views of the Old Gold and Black Editorial Board.

ThinkPad exchange will come with costs

From the time the administration first announced three years ago its idea for the Plan for the Class of 2000, large percentages of the student body and faculty opposed the idea, largely because of the \$3,000 tuition increase. Many thought that, among other objections, that the tuition increase would make the university more exclusive, less accessible to many prospective students.

But the tuition hikes have turned out to be only part of the financial burden of the implementation of the ThinkPads. Members of the class of 2000 are preparing to relinquish their old, outdated ThinkPads for the new, updated ones with which they will complete their college careers here.

But with this exchange comes many costs and questions, issues that many may have overlooked when they were first handed their little black wonder-boxes. Students are financially responsible for any loss or damage to their ThinkPads or its parts.

Now it's certainly fair to charge students for losing cables or disk drives or, heaven forbid, the whole ThinkPad itself, but charging for damage seems somewhat unfair. Most students are inevitably going to damage their laptops in some way, and one look at the Information Systems web page and it becomes clear that many students are going to have to fork out big bucks for the repair of their computers.

The university should do a study to determine the average realistic amount that student end up paying for the upkeep of their computers over their four years at the university, so that incoming students will not think that

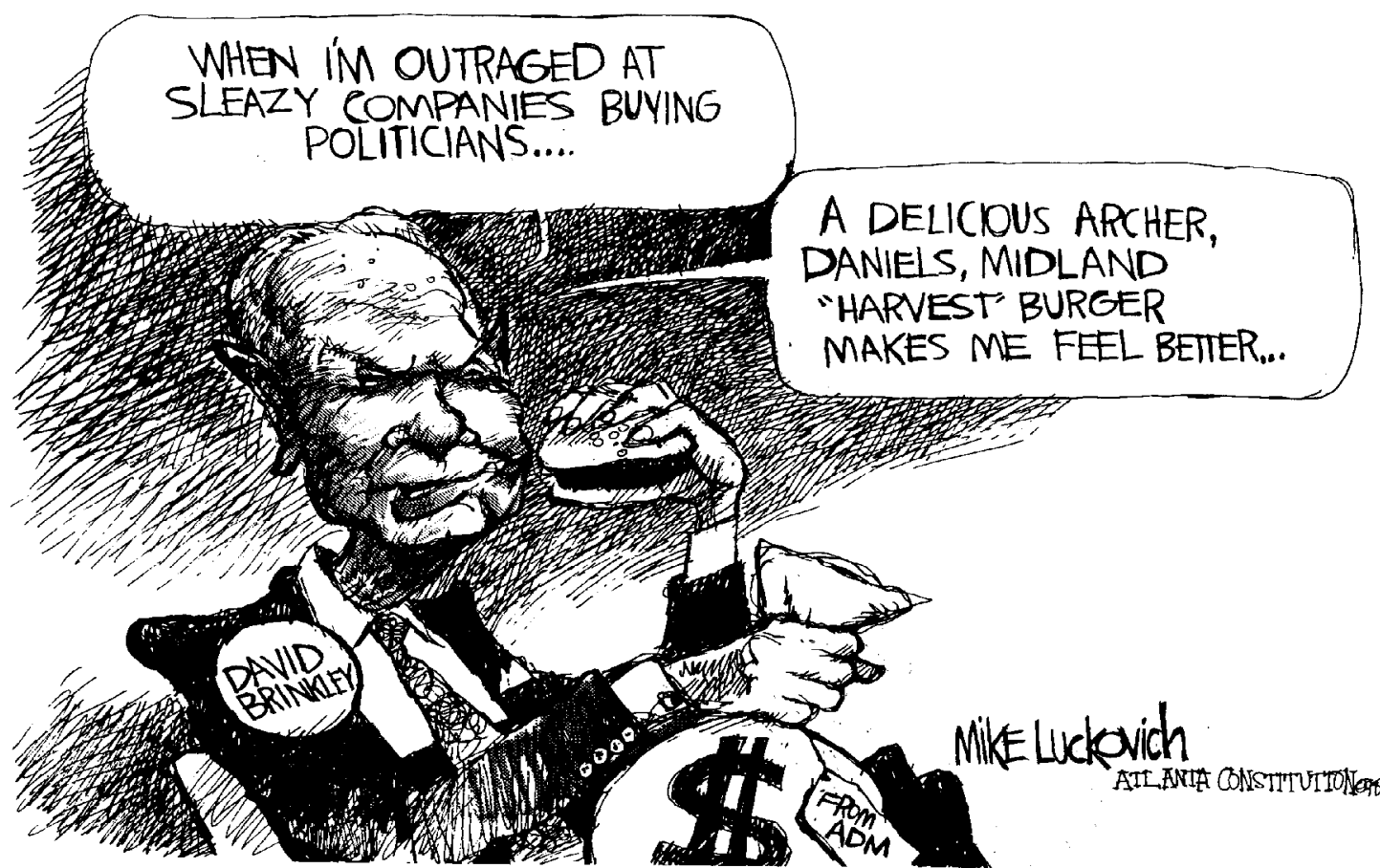
their ThinkPad expenses end with their tuition checks.

The Information Systems web page, with its "frequently asked questions" section regarding ThinkPad exchange (rather amusing in its terse, somewhat elusive answers), brings up another interesting point about the conversion. The question, "Can I buy my current IBM ThinkPad?" is answered by, "No. The ThinkPad will be used for other purposes."

Well, these "other purposes" include selling them at a reduced price to the Winston-Salem/Forsyth County school district. That's a fine idea, and it's great that the university is enriching the community by helping local public school students. But the university should consider letting the class of 1999 have a chance to buy those computers before offering them to the school district.

The class of 1999 will be the only class at the university next year without ThinkPads. And with new programs being implemented next year, like on-line registration, next year's senior class will be at a distinct disadvantage.

The Winston-Salem schools will be able to get their ThinkPads after the class of 1999 graduates anyway, so why not let our students have a first chance at purchasing them for their last year at the university? It seems only appropriate that the university would give its own students the benefit from the excess ThinkPads for just one year before extending them to the outside community. The gap between the classes would be narrowed, and the university would show that it is in fact not technologically neglecting any class prior to 2000.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Obnoxious fans do not equal basketball victory

In his Jan. 15 letter "University basketball fans are indeed pitiful," freshman Dave Whalen invited me to attend a Duke University basketball game in Durham and admire the ambiance of Cameron Indoor Stadium. Because I am afraid Mr. Whalen missed the point of my Dec. 4 letter, I feel compelled to write and politely decline this kind invitation.

I was disturbed by Whalen's comments for a number of reasons. First, his argument that students here need to better support their school is less than persuasive when coming from someone who would seemingly prefer to attend Duke. His obvious admiration of the many runner-up banners hanging at Cameron (where Wake Forest has won for five straight seasons) and coach Mike Krzyzewski (who has guided his squads to a 2-9 record in their last 11 meetings with the Deacs) is for him to reconcile, though. If you wanted to attend Duke, perhaps you should have enrolled there.

Next, Whalen fails to recognize the distinction between Duke's on-court performance and the students' behavior at the games, which was the subject of my initial concerns regarding the Freakin' Deacons. The Cameron Craziest are as responsible for Duke's two national championships (each of which was won outside of Durham) as I am for this university's string of seven straight National Collegiate Athletic Association appearances (which began my freshman year and has continued each year I have been enrolled here).

"Why don't we want to be like Duke?" he asks. Because we should be above such antics. Obstructing fans' view of an exhibition game against an Australian team at Lawrence Joel Veterans Memorial Coliseum with a sign that reads, "You sleep with sheep"

is in my mind no better than throwing objects at opponents during player introductions — one of the "countless game rituals" popular at Cameron in the 1980s. I would like to think that students at this university are better than that, but all too many confuse the concepts of cheering and taunting.

In the end, I would encourage Whalen, the Freakin' Deacons and others concerned about the fan participation at Joel Coliseum to try this technique when next in the building: stop worrying about what the other ticketholders are doing and start watching the game. If you like what you see on the court, cheer for it with all of your might. You may eventually grow so knowledgeable about basketball and full of Deacon pride that you will never again feel dependent on a teenager wearing body paint and screaming obscenities to tell you when to yell.

K. Carter Cook '94
Graduate Student

Guards should stand up for student security

Driving onto campus this week at around 2 a.m., I almost had an accident while laughing hysterically at the guard in the gatehouse at the Reynolda Road entrance. My laughing fit was all due to the use of "The Stick." Now, I understand that tending to the gatehouses must be a physically demanding job and must require brute strength and stamina, but is it really necessary to use "The Stick?"

Let me clarify. You can test this out yourself. Drive onto campus through the "registered student" lane at either gatehouse late at night. Watch carefully as the seated officer will most probably raise a long wooden dowel and reach with great strain for the gate switch. If he or she is successful, the gate opens and you drive through. No problem, right?

Wrong! Why is this attendant even there? I know he can't possibly see my decal from his comfy chair in front of the heater or bug zapper or whatever. Yet he still opens the gate upon sight of a white rectangle in the lower left hand corner of my windshield. No doubt a blank white piece of paper taped to the glass would do the same thing.

I feel really safe here guarded by armed officers who are too lazy or too tired or too apathetic to stand up out of their chairs to open the gate for students when they come onto campus at night. It is their job to make sure the right people come onto campus and to monitor traffic through their specific gate. That's what they get paid for and that's why the university put up the money to build the gatehouses.

I have noticed that the guards are much more attentive from 10 p.m. until the steady influx of students from off campus subsides. But as soon as there is a lull in the stream of cars, out comes "The Stick."

I always like waving to the guards as they let me onto campus, whether they are sitting or standing, and it is nice to see them wave back. If you can wave your heavy arm, you can stand up. Please, officers, stand up from your seat to open the gates. I know it is a pain to do so, but checking decals is necessary to keeping the campus safe. And doing so makes the first people you see when you enter the campus look a little more respectable than they do now.

Drew Markham
Junior

Our letters policy

We welcome letters. Send yours via e-mail to letters@ogb.wfu.edu, by campus mail to P.O. Box 7569, Winston-Salem, N.C. 27109, or deliver it to Benson 518. We reserve the right to edit all letters for length and clarity.

Polo Hall occupancy raises some questions

The loud, annoying, aesthetically-displeasing construction on north campus has been going on for a long time, but this fall Polo Residence Hall will finally be ready for occupation.

The new residence hall, with its two-story individual apartment-style layout and single bedrooms, is sure to be the most popular residence hall on campus when room selection time rolls around.

But there's just one problem. The trustees who approved the funding for the construction of Polo specified that the residence hall must be an independent one. So to ensure that too many Greek students will not try to choose Polo as their residence, the Polo housing committee decided to give independent students extra points on their housing

priority numbers. This way, independent students will have first pick at housing and will thus theoretically fill Polo with at least 51 percent independents.

But is this system fair? Giving independent students points for not being Greek? Perhaps the trustees wanted to create a sense of community among independent students, but what this system actually does is create segregation, isolation of independents and resentment by Greeks.

Perhaps a separate, application-style housing system just for Polo would work, as it has for Huffman House.

If independent community is what the trustees are after, maybe a house council similar to that at Huffman should be created to coordinate programming that students want.

OLD GOLD AND BLACK

THE STUDENT NEWSPAPER OF WAKE FOREST UNIVERSITY SINCE 1916

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The *Old Gold and Black* is published each Thursday during the school year, except during examinations, summer and holiday periods, by Piedmont Publishing Co. of Winston-Salem, N.C. Questions or comments should be sent via e-mail to comments@ogb.wfu.edu or via mail to P.O. Box 7569, Winston-Salem, N.C. 27109. © 1998 WFU Publications Board. All rights reserved. If you wish to submit a guest editorial, contact the editorials editor at Ext. 5280 at least two weeks in advance of the issue in which you would like it to appear.

'Fan' peppers Spice Girls with advice

Their faltering career prompts a helpful letter.

An open letter of sympathy to the Spice Girls:
Dear Scary, Sexy, Sporty, Baby and Posh,

I am so sorry to hear that your new album, *Spiceworld* has been labeled a "flop" by the music industry. Although it only debuted on the charts at a

Christen Balady
STUDENT COLUMNIST

disappointing No. 8, I, as well as the rest of the world, had hoped that Christmas shopping and hype over the new movie *Spiceworld* would boost sales. Sadly, neither of these marketing ploys has helped. I feel horrible about your failure, since I am your biggest fan, and perhaps I can offer an explanation as for why your work isn't living up to what your fans expected, and why your spice may need some more salt.

Maybe your group needs more unity. The term "group" may be stretching the truth, since you five didn't really meet and form a band, you were hand-picked

out of 400 girls to represent the five most attractive female stereotypes: the baby, the wild one, the ginger redhead, the upper-class girl and the athlete. Rumors abound about how you fight among yourselves, and canning your manager Simon Fuller, the man responsible for manufacturing your success, probably wasn't the wisest of choices. Of course, if you five think you can coast through the pop industry on platforms and a prayer, more girl power to you.

Maybe your fans aren't as Spice-crazy because they've discovered that you have no musical talent. The music and lyrics for your songs are written for you, your outfits are selected and your moves are choreographed. All you have to do is sing, and you can't even do that well. Don't try to hide it, Sexy Spice, we all know you were forced to take singing lessons. I cringe at the idea of you five in a movie. Although your characters shouldn't be a stretch for you, since you're playing yourselves, you've shown America from previews alone that your acting skills are severely lacking. You girls do prove one thing to your fans: puppets sure can dance.

Another thing that takes away from your artistic integrity is your blatant hypocrisy. You cry "Girl Power" as your credo, yet you do absolutely

nothing for the feminist movement. Your videos are nothing but an attempt to squeeze all five of you into as many different short-cut, bust-baring and outright ridiculous outfits as possible. You haven't proven to anyone that you are smart, and we've already covered your talent, or lack of it. Face it, your rise to the top can be accredited to a creative producer and your bodies. You have proven to little girls all over the world that they too can become famous if they shake their cans in skimpy sequined and feathered outfits, all the while screaming "Equal rights!" I'm sure your mothers are so proud.

You know, I've really gotten to the bottom of it all. Do you want to know why people hate you? You are annoying. You have no poise. You can't sit still during an interview, let alone wait your turn to speak. You do stupid things, like grabbing Prince Charles' "bum" two weeks after Diana's death. You whine about the hard life that comes with stardom. Your 15 minutes is up. It's time you packed your bags, went back to England and left America without flat songs, fake attitudes and bad hair.

Don't take any of this personally. I'm just trying to help.

Your number one fan,
Christen Balady