

OPINION

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

Tuition increases are becoming too much

In a move very characteristic of this university, the board of trustees recently set tuition for the 1998-99 school year, raising it by 5.1 percent for freshmen, sophomores and juniors and by 5.2 percent for seniors. Room rates for next year also went up.

Current freshmen and sophomores will pay \$20,450 next year, a \$1,000 increase from this year. Current juniors will pay \$17,150 as seniors, an \$850 increase.

Sure, inflation dictates that college tuition is going to increase every year, but the cost of an education at this university is getting too high, especially with the massive Plan for the Class of 2000 tuition hike.

Next year's increase is even larger than last year's \$800 for juniors and seniors and \$950 for underclassmen, though the percentage increases are the same.

How can the trustees justify this large tuition increase in light of the substantial \$137 million increase (as of June 1997) of the university's endowment, a rise of 28 percent?

At the time that the endowment increase was announced, Louis Morrell, the vice president of investments and the treasurer, said that the new endowment, which now amounts to a total of \$614.7 million, is among the 5- or 6-percent largest of universities across the country.

He also said that one of the primary uses of the endowment would be to "take pressure off tuition." Perhaps the trustees forgot about this when they voted to increase tuition. \$614.7 million is pretty easy to forget about, after all.

Using the endowment instead of setting tuition higher and higher every year would also better ensure the stability of the *Money* magazine and the *U.S. News and World Report* rankings that the upper echelons of the university are always so fired up about. The university is currently in the top 100 best buys in *Money*, and if it's going to stay there, tuition cannot keep increasing like this. If the university wants to stay ranked as a good buy, it needs to remain a good buy.

The university slipped three spaces

from last year in the *U.S. News and World Report* rankings. Those three spaces edges us out of the prestigious top 25. Could it be because of the increasing cost?

Students entering this university will now pay more than twice what they did in 1990, when full-time tuition was \$9,700. The university does have more to offer now, but where will the tuition increases end?

The trustees just keep making the university more and more economically exclusive. Diversity is heralded, yet the trustees keep trying to shut out all but J. Crew-donned rich kids driving BMWs.

During the college search, students and their parents do not just look at the academic programs and campus life of the schools — they also look at the price tags. And the new tuition increase oversteps that \$20,000 cap that many people set when considering which college to attend. Middle and lower socioeconomic classes of students simply will not, in most cases, be able to attend the university anymore.

Is that really desirable for our small, already homogeneous university community, a college community that has (or should have, anyway) as one of its primary goals promoting knowledge about the world? Knowledge about the whole world, not just about the ski lodges and beach houses across America.

Besides tuition, campus room rates have also increased. Rates are up by \$120 for both single and double rooms. Many students will probably start turning to off-campus locations for residency. If the university wants to retain its residential community, it needs to make housing more affordable. Especially since current residence halls are not exactly in the lap of luxury anyway.

So where is all this money going anyway? Let's hope the trustees will ease up on the funding for things like big blowout parties for retiring professors and for the trustees themselves, mansions for certain university presidents and trips abroad for administrators, and allow for more scholarships and financial aid packages to help offset the burden of increasing tuition and room costs.

Technical difficulties caused OG&B errors

Because of printing difficulties at the Piedmont Publishing Company, which prints the *Old Gold and Black*, the newspaper was delivered a day late last week.

The same production problems caused significant errors to appear on the front page of the Feb. 5 issue of the *OG&B*.

Errors also appeared in other sections.

The two stories that appeared in incomplete formats on the front page of the Feb. 5 edition, "Need for day care explored," by Danielle Deaver, and "Budgets delayed by new programs," by Heather Seely, have been reprinted on page A2 of this week's issue.

We apologize for these errors.

OLD GOLD AND BLACK

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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.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Bookstore should not sell illegal devices

I am writing to recount my latest saga in dealing with the world O' Wake Forest University. I don't know how many of you devoted readers have been saddled with the same problem, but to you fellow sufferers, let's share a knowing glance and chalk a win up for Residence Life and Housing.

I had just returned from a lovely Christmas break and was anxiously anticipating my return to the university community. I had barely stepped into my room when a very official-looking document was thrust in my face. Was I being sued? Lynched? Fined? Ah yes, I was being fined. Fifty American dollars. Hot diggity, this is my favorite part. The "contraband device" was in my possession for several reasons.

I live in a single room in Johnson Residence Hall. My room is approximately the size of a child's watchband, and was apparently laid out by a team of morons. You see, there is one cable hookup in my room. Why is this a problem? Because it is located above the tiny built-in and nicely-finished shelf that my television *has* to be placed on; otherwise it would either have to be stored in my refrigerator or remain in my lap at all times.

The other problem is that the closest electrical outlet is about 15 feet away. I went to the fine University Bookstore to see what I could do to remedy the problem. They did not have cable cords long enough to allow my TV to be placed anywhere but the windowsill, so they offered me an extension cord, their eyes glistening with mischief, knowing that they would get a cut from the fine money. This is not even a regular extension cord — it's one of those high-tech Starship Enterprise things with a surge protector, several outlets and a built-in Cuisinart.

The basis for my cry for help seems to be rooted in my curiosity about why the bookstore is allowed to sell these illegal devices. And why wasn't I warned previously by my hall director and given a chance to remove it? I had no earthly idea I was breaking some unspoken code of conduct with my cord. I think I should have received a warning before they slapped me with this fine. Fifty bucks is a lot of money for the first offense. I am tempted to make a list of what I could do with that \$50 (eating is the first thing that leaps to mind), but I will spare you any further ruminations about this cruel fate I have been burdened with, this albatross that hangs from my neck. Do you know how much laundry I could do for that? Heck, that would have bought one of my books. Or another seven extension cords.

Jelisa Castrodale
Freshman

Office of International Studies does not help

I felt it was necessary to respond to the Feb. 5 editorial by Richard Sears, the director of International Studies, titled "Tuition payment for study abroad is justified" due to my overwhelming disappointment and frustration with the International Studies Office.

My initial surprise was Sears' response in general. In my visits to that office, the absolute minimum number of visits necessary, I never once met Mr. Sears nor viewed his enthusiasm for studying abroad.

I must say that this makes me question how much he is aware of and involved in the actions of his office towards students who are interested in studying abroad. I had a wonderful experience this past semester in Spain and recommend going abroad to all, but I can not recommend, and actually must warn students, about the Office of International Studies.

In all my experiences with Judith Shannon, the assistant to the director of International Studies, and that office, I cannot justify asking students for Wake Forest tuition when seeking outside programs. Shannon was quoted saying in the Jan. 29 *OG&B* article, "Overseas tuition might increase," that she helps us with our airfare, visas, passports and even packing. Who, may I ask, do you help? Not one of the at least 20 students that I questioned were helped with any of these things. They were barely even helped in locating a program.

I myself had to go and purchase *Peterson's Study Abroad* from Barnes and Noble before I found a program that satisfied the requests I asked of Shannon. Proactive services does not mean sitting behind your desk and pulling one folder out per country. It means seeking out these programs and also making an effort on your side to remain in contact with the student. This is in your job description and should not be the sole responsibility of the interested student. They sought your office for help.

It absolutely frightens me to hear Sears say that he believes their office will have to scale back on the services it offers if the tuition is not increased. Please — I don't believe you can scale back any further. If you do, then your office couldn't possibly be used by any students interested in going abroad. Also, please explain to me how you have sought to expand participation in study abroad programs. I only became aware of your office after I was already interested in going abroad, because I had to attend an introductory meeting to even receive help from your office. Judith Shannon made us well aware of that and not much else.

I will applaud you for making sure students receive their financial aid and scholarships towards their abroad programs and the creation of new Wake

Forest programs. However, once a student like myself is abroad, the only contact I had from the office was the mailing of *OG&B* issues, which were appreciated. All credit and class help was given by the Office of the Registrar, particularly by Steven Benton, the assistant registrar, a very helpful man.

Upon return to Wake Forest, no effort of contact was made by International Studies about help with classes. I wasn't even aware that that help was offered. I really feel all the intended efforts of the office were included in Sears' article, but few of these services actually exist. Please. You say you have sought to expand participation in these programs, but you have not sought to explain the services of the office.

The Office of International Studies revolves around a lot of politics. The little help I received led me to seek the signatures from a variety of departments to secure Shannon's signature on the bottom line. This was completely done on my own. The one time I sought her help, besides for her signature, was to find out which of the programs I had found in my book were of a particular accreditation that I needed for our business school. I actually called the other day for a phone number of my program and was told I could come to the office to find it. Thank you very much for your overwhelming help.

One last point I must address from Sears' article is the amount of money he estimated the department would gain from instituting Wake Forest tuition for non-Wake Forest programs. I made the estimate of averaging non-Wake Forest programs at \$6,000 in tuition per program. If 330 students went abroad last year, then Wake Forest would earn \$1,229,250, the difference of the Wake Forest semester tuition of \$9,725 and the non-Wake Forest study abroad tuition of \$6,000 for all 330 students. That difference, which would go towards International Studies, is a far cry from the measly \$30,000-\$40,000 profit that Sears estimated.

In conclusion, I apologize for my extreme negativity, but I can not allow this unjustified robbery of Wake Forest students from the experience of going abroad. The loss of a possible semester abroad would leave something missing from one's college career.

Jennifer Steinberg
Junior

For more letters, see next page.

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.

