

# OPINION

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

## UNC laptop plan raises serious questions

The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill recently announced its adoption of the Carolina Computing Initiative, its answer to our Plan for the Class of 2000.

Starting with the class entering UNC in 2000, all students must purchase a university-approved laptop, the brand of which has not been chosen yet. Sounds eerily familiar, huh? Familiar down to the lack of student input into the consideration of the new program.

So it appears that UNC is following in the footsteps of our university. But should a large public university model its programs after a small private university, especially if that small private university is as money-hungry as this one?

After all, many people choose to attend state schools largely because of their affordability.

By requiring its students to buy laptops, UNC is becoming more financially exclusive, cutting off lower socioeconomic classes of students from being able to get a college education. The Plan for the Class of 2000 has abetted the same undesirable exclusiveness at this university, but that a public university is now trying to do the same is a dangerous trend.

Public universities are supposed to provide as affordable an education as possible so that as many people as possible can receive a college education. If other public schools across the country also start looking toward our school as a city on a hill, implementing expensive laptop requirements, soon only the wealthy will be able to afford an education. Our country will take two steps back in education.

UNC says it has a new enrichment fund to provide more financial aid for students who cannot afford laptops, but with the current trend of most financial aid packages turning into loans rather than grants, eventually even this extra financial help may not be much help.

It would be comforting to think that students are at least greatly benefitting from the great upsurge of technology into the college education, so that the

large increasing costs would at least be worth it. But have the ThinkPads at this university really revolutionized the education students have received here? Perhaps a study weighing the actual benefits to students here against the costs should be conducted by schools considering implementing laptop requirements similar to ours.

But at least UNC's adoption of CCI makes our school look good, right? Now when anyone complains about the forced ThinkPads, the administration can point to UNC and say, "Look, someone thought it was a good idea." UNC can even consult our International Center for Computer Enhanced Learning, and won't that make Provost David Brown really happy?

Money, publicity — CCI will be better for us than it will be for UNC.

Let's hope that ICCEL tells UNC not to use Lotus Notes for its mail server. Speaking of servers, the sheer volume of e-mail and internet use with all 15,000 students logging into cyberspace will likely cause the server to crash frequently, not to mention the headaches for all those professors who get thousands of e-mail messages a day from their students.

Talk about administrative nightmares — wiring, software distribution and training and maintenance for all 15,000 computers will be difficult to manage to say the least.

UNC did make one wise decision. Unlike this university, which charged its students \$3,000 to rent a computer for four years and then own an already-obsolete, two-year-old laptop, UNC is having its students purchase their own computers and offering them four ways to do it: Bring their own, buy them from the school, get a four-year loan to buy one, or receive more grant assistance.

On the one hand, this is more financially accommodating for students, but on the other hand, UNC is creating more headaches for itself.

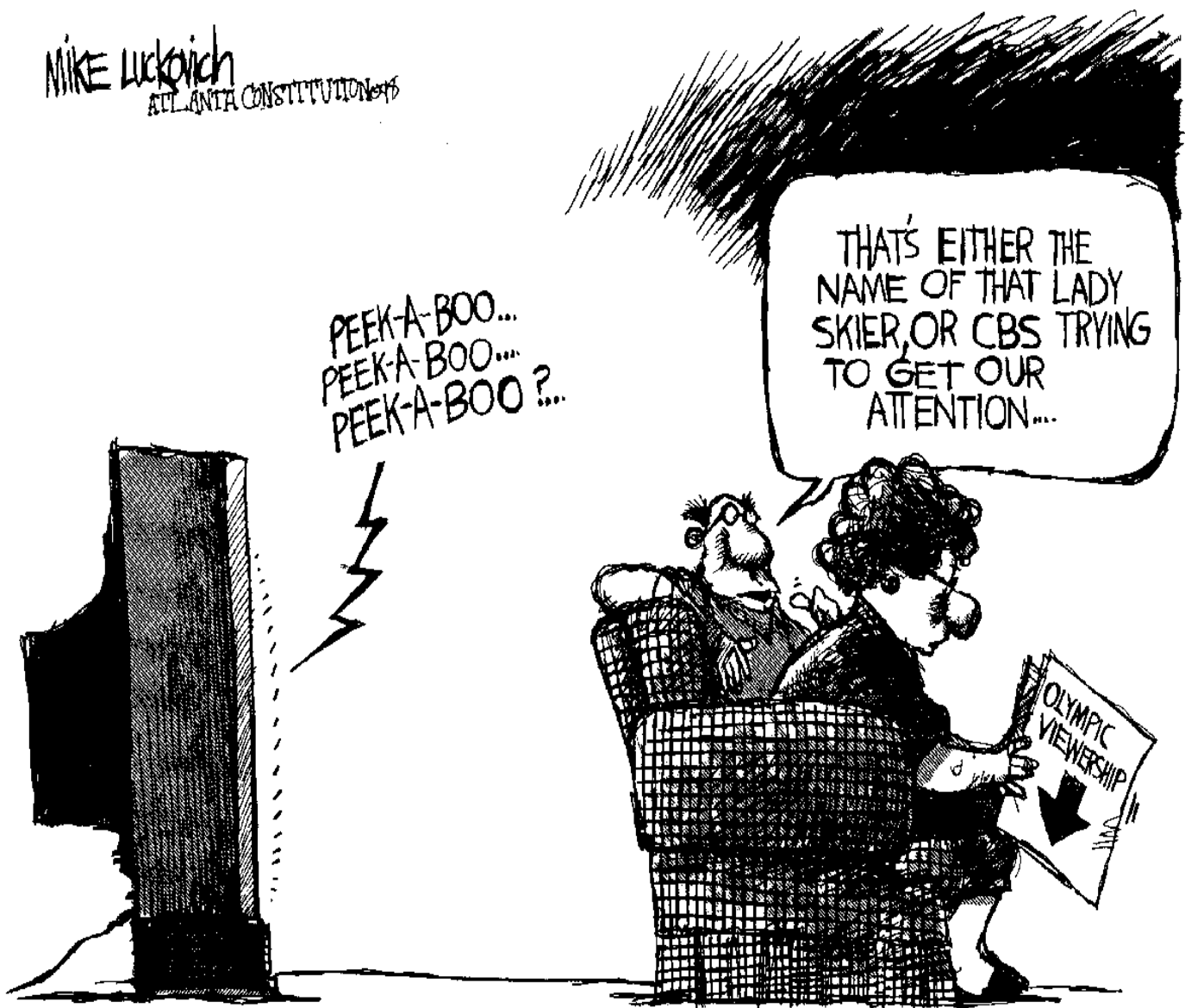
With all those options for all those thousands of students, administrative logistics are going to get crazy.

Let's just hope that the laptop requirement trend stops with UNC.

who are just looking to cop out of their divisionals.

But there are probably more than six students on campus who are qualified and motivated enough to work under an open curriculum. If students were more informed, and informed earlier, more qualified students could benefit from this unique opportunity.

MIKE LUCKOVICH  
ATLANTA CONSTITUTION



## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Former employee questions service

After reading senior Joe Parkhill's column in the Jan. 22 issue of the *OG&B*, "Whatever happened to service with a smile?" regarding employee attitude, I question, as a former university employee, whatever happened to the "Quality Control Program" initiated by John Anderson, the vice president of finance and administration, in which all employees were required to participate?

During that time, many of us who had worked many years for the university were well aware of how to conduct ourselves and perform our duties by going the second mile when necessary. In previous years, negative and rude behavior would never have been tolerated.

It is most disappointing to realize and accept that this university is not as it once was. It doesn't take a genius to know this — is *Pro Humanitate* no longer practiced, a cherished motto? In order to stop offering benefits to permanent employees, it has become a habit for several years to replace caring, dedicated, knowledgeable and efficient people with part-time temporary employees. Many of these full-time people were forced, one way or another, into retirement. It is my belief that this thinking will cause the downfall of the work world; we already see it every day — the impact on efficiency, courtesy and ambition.

Last, but not least, *no one* should be subjected to rude treatment by anyone — certainly not a student who is asking

for advice and requesting legitimate information by employee, teacher, or executive; students are the reason for the university's existence.

It is important that we get our priorities in order before it is too late.

**Louise E. Yates**  
Former Facilities Management Records Administrator

### Mocha nightmares characterize Shorty's

I finally found the answer to the age old question of why no one hangs out in Shorty's. The staff, both student and non-student employees, are horrendous. On many previous occasions I've gone in there to enjoy a cup of java to find myself being completely ignored so that the staff can catch up on the latest gossip. But today's trip to Shorty's was the icing on the cake.

After I was so kindly greeted with no eye contact and an abrupt "Help you?", the server attempted to make my mocha with "no whipped cream, please," while her attention was focused on her conversation at the other end of the bar. As she pulled out the whipped-cream can and started to pile it on, two friends and myself screamed "No whipped cream," to no avail.

Disgusted by the fact that I was upset because I actually wanted the drink the way I ordered it, she hastily threw the cup into the trash and started to brew a new shot of espresso.

Now, this is where it gets tricky — because somehow our magical server

managed to make me a second drink without the espresso.

I actually was watching the brewer, waiting for my espresso to brew, when she picked up the empty shot glass and magically poured the invisible brew into my cup.

I didn't question her at first because I thought I must be mistaken, because what kind of idiot would serve a mocha without the espresso?

After I reminded her again that it was a mocha, she added the chocolate and served me my brew.

I was excited and overjoyed at the prospect of getting my drink in under fifteen minutes. I took a sip of my tall mocha with *no whipped cream*, to find that she actually had left out the coffee! She *did*, however, manage to put her two cents into the conversation at the other end of the bar.

So the moral of the story is, when you ask for coffee, make sure you mention the fact that you want coffee in the drink, or you may just be surprised!

**Jen Schwegel**  
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.

## Open curriculum needs more publicity

The open curriculum has been an option in the academic program of the university for a long time, but recently application frequency has declined to about six per semester.

The process for the open curriculum is a good one — the long and involved application weeds out those students

## OLD GOLD AND BLACK

THE STUDENT NEWSPAPER OF WAKE FOREST UNIVERSITY SINCE 1916

**Danielle Deaver**  
Editor in Chief

**Charles Starks**  
Managing Editor

**Brad Gilmore**  
Business Manager

**News:** Jenny Blackford and Theresa Felder, editors; Heather Seely, assistant editor; Anne Bramley and Gentle Hernandez, copy editors; Reagan Humber and Carolyn Lay, production assistants; Brendon Browne, WorldWide editor.

**Editorials:** Jennifer Gough, editor; Poppy Durant, assistant editor; Melissa Shields, copy editor.

**Arts and Entertainment:** Sam Newlands and Erin Korey, editors; Elizabeth Hoyle, assistant editor; Katie Venit, copy editor.

**Sports:** Paul Gaeta, acting editor; Taylor Brown, production assistant; Sean Blue, copy editor.

**Perspectives:** Kate Cosgrove and Sarah Kutner, editors.

**Electronic Edition:** Julie Davis and David Marshburn, editors; Brent Blum, production assistant.

**Graphics:** Brian Schiller, editor.

**Assistant Business Manager:** Scott Bayzle.

**Advertising:** Kristin Hemric and Victoria Pham, advertising production.

**Circulation Manager:** Zach Everson.

**Photography:** Noel Fox, editor; Carlton Ward, Kim Robinson and Dave Friswold, photographers.

**Adviser:** Wayne King.

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.

