

# OPINION

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

## Student body must vote on judicial reform

On March 24, students will be asked to vote on a Student Government referendum that would change major elements of the function and composition of the judicial branch under the SG constitution.

The need for judicial reform has been a major issue at the university for years. At the heart of the criticism of the current system is its two-bodied structure consisting of the Honor Council and the Judicial Board. In 1996, the Judicial Council created a subcommittee to help reorganize the system. For the past several months, SG and the Judicial Council have worked together to generate a proposal that would ultimately create a new judicial system.

SG voted March 17 in favor of its final set of proposals for the new system. This referendum goes before the student body March 24, and if two-thirds of voting students vote to accept the referendum, the SG constitution will be changed under this amendment.

But the referendum is only binding to SG, not to the Judicial Council. The Judicial Council is the body that actually has the power to change the system.

Currently there is no direct procedure for an SG referendum to translate into administrative policy. SG referendums are advisory or for constitutional changes only.

So whether students vote for the referendum or not, the Judicial Council may choose to act independently of the SG constitution. If students vote no on the referendum, the Judicial Council may implement their own judicial reform proposals anyway.

Judicial Council members say they will take student vote into account if the vote receives high turnout. Therefore, it is imperative that students vote on this referendum. Students on this campus are constantly slapped with the label of apathy. They need to show the administration that they do indeed care about the major university policy issues that affect our lives.

Not only do we want student voice heard on this issue, but we also want the administration to consult the student body on future issues. If students make a poor showing for the referendum vote, not only will the Judicial Council disregard the results, but the administration will think that students do not care about the issues that affect them and will not bother to consult the student body in future decisions.

High voter turnout will also create a kind of test for the administration. If a large number of students, or even a majority of students, show up to vote, will the administration really listen? Will it really reject these judicial reform proposals if students vote no?

If the Judicial Council essentially tells the students that their opinions do not count, then students will not bother to become involved in issues anymore. Which is pretty much the pattern the

administration has established in the past. The administration likes to blame students for being apathetic, but its actions often encourage apathy.

So should students vote for or against the referendum? The proposal has both pros and cons, and it is important that students educate themselves in order to make an informed decision. SG has outlined the major advantages of the proposed system, and while there are indeed many positive aspects, students should also be aware of the disadvantages of the referendum.

The mere fact that judicial reform is being discussed and dealt with is important. And the major structural change that would make one Honor and Ethics Council to replace the two bodies of Honor Council and Judicial Board is the most positive aspect of the proposal, mainly because it creates greater clarity and consistency within the system.

But the major con of the proposal is the inclusion of faculty and administrators as voting members of the HEC. Our current judicial system has prided itself on being one of the only student-run judicial systems in the country. It should remain so.

It has been argued that issues of honor affect the entire university community and therefore faculty and administrators, as members of that community, should be involved. But it is students whose fates the HEC will be deciding, so it is students who should be making the decisions.

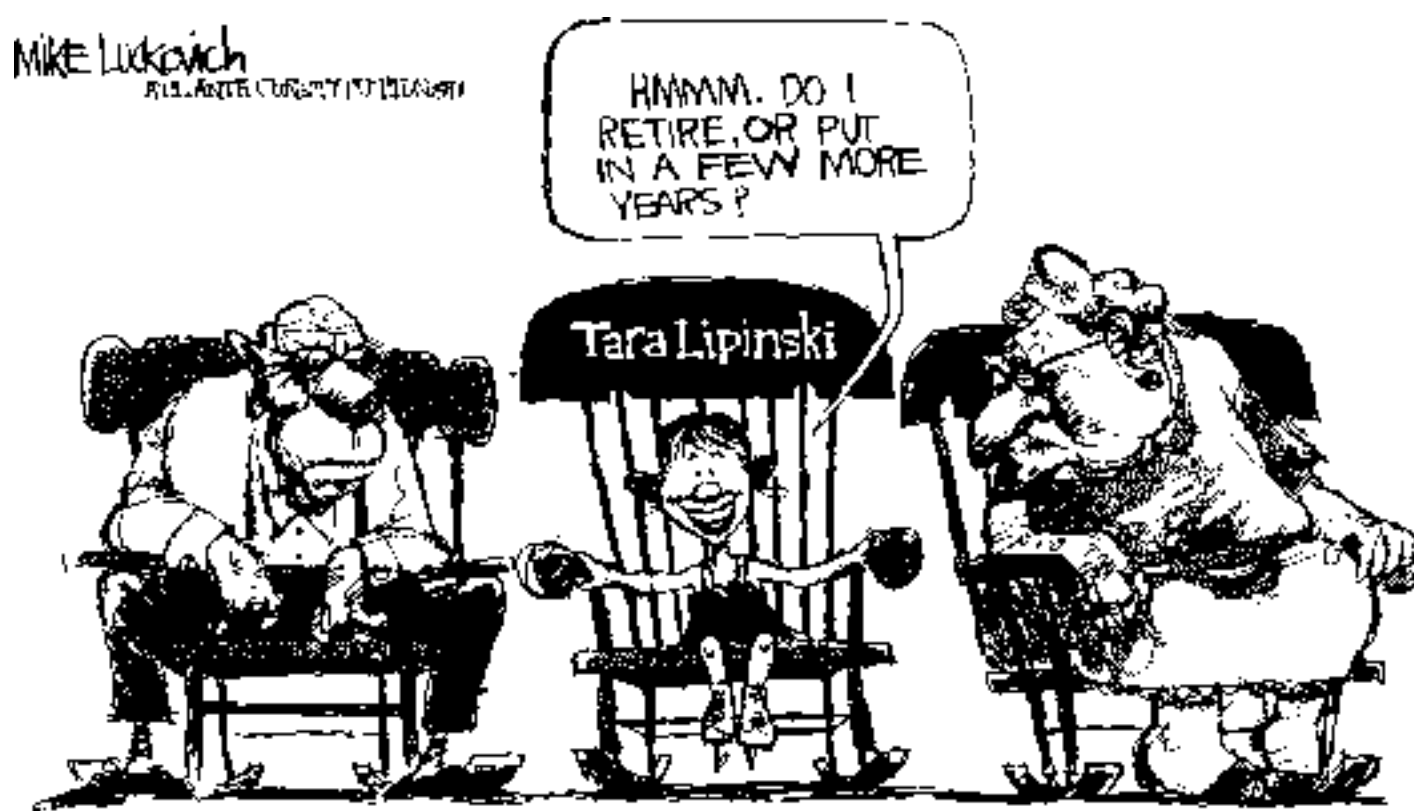
Faculty and administrators would be valuable consultants and sources of guidance and could be included as nonvoting on the HEC — but not as voting members. Authority figures included in bodies such as the HEC tend to dominate and overpower the discussions and decisions of students, merely by their nature as academic and administrative superiors in the university community. Their presence as voting members would be a detriment to the system.

The only positive side to faculty and administrators serving as voting members of the HEC is to add legal validity to the system. Lawyers of expelled students are likely to dismiss the decisions made by a bunch of college students. The presence of faculty and administrators have probably been included to make the system look more authoritative.

Students should also keep in mind that they are only voting on the "function" and "composition" of the new judicial system, not on any of the statutes behind them — the details of the system. In voting for the referendum, students are giving SG the power to create the statutes behind the structure.

If students have concerns about those details or about anything else about the referendum, they should try to become informed through the various programs SG has set up between now and the vote, including WAKE TV's March 23 *Voice of the Deacons*. They can also call the SG office at Ext. 5293.

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## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Braswell not as bad as sports editor thinks

In the March 5 issue, junior Scott Payne, the sports editor, composed his own awards equivalent to the All-Atlantic Coast Conference awards in his column "Who cares about All-ACC anyway?" I am writing in regards to his All-Disappointment team.

I find it very rude and inconsiderate that he included senior Jerry Braswell in this category. Sure, Braswell did not have the awesome season that every senior hopes for, but by no means does he qualify as a disappointment.

Scott Payne, I can tell that you have never been a part of a varsity college athletics team, because you have no respect for the amount time and energy it takes to be an athlete and a student at this university.

Braswell has devoted four long years to the men's basketball program, and all you have to say is that he qualifies to be a part of the All-Disappointment team? Wrong. You have no idea what goes on every day in practice, in the locker room and in his life. It must have been rough for Braswell to adjust to his new role on the team as a back-up guard, but he did it, didn't he?

Scott Payne, even though you may be the sports editor, it is not your place to judge Braswell or any other athlete at this school. I think it is very out of line that you chose to share your flagrant opinion in our school newspaper. Why? The *Old Gold and Black* is our school newspaper — its purpose is to inform students of what is going on around the campus and to promote school pride (that is probably why it is titled *Old Gold and Black*).

Please, Scott Payne, if you have any more rude opinions about Jerry Braswell or any other athlete, please keep them to yourself; they don't belong in print. My mother always told me, "If you don't have anything nice to say, then don't say it at all."

Jessica Hood  
Freshman

### Shorty's has good workers too — like me

In response to junior Jen Schwegel's poetic letter to the editor in the Feb. 19 issue of the *Old Gold and Black* cleverly titled "Mocha nightmares characterize Shorty's," I would like to offer an alternative perspective of the quality of service found at this on-campus hot spot.

Being someone who is oftentimes described with words like "dedicated," "graceful," "charismatic," "helpful" and "intuitive," I believe that I am able to recognize these similar qualities in the employees at Shorty's.

One employee in particular comes to mind as best personifying these qualities: senior Tim Rogers. Whenever Tim works, the coffee always seems to be just a few degrees hotter, the muffins a few days fresher, the mocha noticeably richer and the day just a little bit sunnier.

Unlike Miss Schwegel's gross misrepresentation of a forgetful Shorty's employee, Tim always remembers to top off his mochas with pre-shaken whipped cream. And if you don't want whipped cream, no problem. You won't be treated any differently.

Having had the privilege of watching Tim work these last two semesters, I can honestly say that I now have a new and deeper understanding of the words commitment, dedication and honor.

In closing, allow me to say that I recognize the deep-seated hatred that Jen harbors from that whole whipped cream incident. That never should have happened — I understand your strong feelings of resentment. However, please do not give up on Shorty's, for I am sure that the employees of Shorty's have not given up on you. As Tim Rogers once said: "If there is any way in which I can possibly help you, please don't hesitate to ask. Have a great day!"

Tim Rogers  
Senior

criticism and controversy. Many administrative efforts have attempted to solve the various problems of the system but have rarely included the advice of a large group of students.

This time, students, administrators and faculty have collaborated to find the best solution that is both practical and appealing to all members of the university community.

Student leaders, including current student judicial representatives, have spent many hours with administrators and faculty members developing a judicial system reform proposal.

The March 24 referendum serves as the key to implementing this new system. A reformed judicial system will raise confidence in the decisions made within hearings and will also serve to increase the amount of ownership that members of the community take in the system.

Improved consciousness of honor will strengthen the honor code as a whole, which is the ultimate objective of reform measures.

Participating in the referendum effort by making their voices heard on key issues is also a great opportunity for students to demonstrate their interest in governing themselves.

We can show that we care enough about our university to seek out the best solutions for the university community.

On March 17 the SG legislature voted in favor of the proposed changes to the system.

It is our hope that you will take the same initiative to support the proposed judicial system.

We strongly encourage you to vote yes on the March 24 referendum. Please take this opportunity to make your voice heard.

Further information may be obtained via our web page at <http://www.students.wfu.edu/sg>, or contact us at Ext. 5293.

Scott Plumridge  
Senior  
Student Government president

### SG urges students to vote for referendum

On March 24, we, the students of this university, will have a rare opportunity to make a meaningful difference in the way things are done on campus.

For over a decade, the campus judicial system has been the source of much

### Our letters policy

We welcome letters. Send yours via e-mail to [letters@ogb.wfu.edu](mailto: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.

## OLD GOLD AND BLACK

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