

# OPINION

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

## Computer consulting service not justified

When the university recently announced that it has collaborated with IBM to form a computer consulting service called the International Center for Computer Enhanced Learning, the administration demonstrated once again that its burning desire for money and fame is its No. 1 priority. They're calling this new service ICCEL. That's pronounced "I-sell." As in, "I sell out."

ICCEL already has a web page. As well as a snazzy logo. The web page tells us that ICCEL will "assist educational institutions worldwide to effectively implement the use of educational technologies."

That's great, but the big question is, why?

What business does a university have affiliating itself with a huge worldwide corporation? Well, that's just it: business.

The administration seems to think that because we've had ThinkPads for the vast time span of a year and a half, the university is at the

pinch of technology and "has an obligation" to spread its vast knowledge worldwide.

Why don't we try to fix our own problems before we presume to believe that we can be the shining example and guide for others?

While we're at it, wouldn't it be a great idea to fix the non-technological problems within our educational program before we even begin to complicate things by dragging computer consulting into the picture?

After all, we just lost a graduate program. It's funny how the administration can't come up with enough money to salvage the anthropology

department's graduate program but it can produce the cash when someone says the word computer.

The university is supposed to be a liberal arts institution. But its liberal arts are being shoved aside to make room for laptops and Internet hookups.

Not that computer technology is a bad thing. It's not even a bad thing for education. In fact, it's a great educational tool that has already begun to revolutionize the way the world learns.

And the university should take advantage of that technology and encourage its students to do so as well.

But not at the expense of its fundamental commitment to giving its students a liberal arts education.

The university began to compromise its focus with the Plan for the Class of 2000. It seems as though ThinkPads are all the administration thinks about. And now with the formation of this consulting service, it's becoming entrenched even deeper into the world of business

rather than the world of education. How is ICCEL going to benefit students at this university? Students should still ask how ICCEL benefits them since university energy and effort are being poured into it, energy and effort which could instead be used to improve and in some cases (like the anthropology situation) repair what we already have.

The next pertinent question turns to IBM's motives. Why would it want this consulting service at this university? We've been armed with ThinkPads for less than two years. They're not even integrated into upper-level courses yet. Does that a bastion of classroom implementation of technological knowledge make?

No one can claim that the implementation of the ThinkPads has been without flaws. Some flaws have yet to be fixed, like the failure of Lotus Notes.

So why us? Is this some sort of reward for the university's pushing IBM products on thousands of college students? Compensation for publicity and sales? Or maybe it's just a

way for IBM to make this university its laboratory and our students its lab rats. It seems like that's what we've become. Whatever IBM says, the university eats up. ThinkPads? Great! Lotus Mail? Install it!

While IBM's motives will likely remain one of those mysteries of life, the university's motives seem clear.

The spread of technology, the advancement of worldwide education, it all sounds great, but it seems obvious that what's really going on here is a financial and publicity stunt.

The administration has been vying for years to get the university to climb higher and higher on the U.S. News and World Report rankings. It thought that the infamous Plan for the Class of 2000 would get us there on its own merit.

But the administration has just gotten a little impatient. If it can't get there by, heaven forbid, the merit of its high academic quality and standards, it will just keep implementing gimmicks like ISELL, oops, sorry, ICCEL, to get the nation to pay attention to us. To recognize our name.

One good thing resulting from this endeavor is that David Brown has been appointed as a head of ICCEL, which now means he can no longer serve as provost.

Brown has been disliked by many in his tenure here and was a major force behind the Plan for the Class of 2000 and its tuition hikes. Let's hope that someone with more concern for the students takes his place. And let's also hope that the process for selecting the new provost is fair and takes the opinion of faculty and students into consideration.



## Tough luck, nonbusiness majors

### Career Services shoves other majors aside.

What does one do after college? First, we must determine why we are here.

The service of the liberal arts tradition is to help in determining who you are, as much as it is to prepare you for what you might do. This is a tremen-

ate plans. The question again arises: is this university becoming a vocational school?

No. And accordingly, there should be no reason for Career Services to disregard or marginalize those students who do not follow along the business track.

Consider this: at the beginning of each year, every senior is required to attend a mandatory meeting in which Career Services explains itself and distributes its registration packets. Does this meeting accommodate everybody?

Why then do those condescending signs appear across campus in their familiar print? "Learn how to be a professional do-gooder," for that is all people who are interested in non-profit organizations are.

"Come find out what you can do with your history major," the meager half-hour of simplistic options presented is all the redemption one could ever hope to receive from such a crime as majoring in history.

"What you can do with an English major," roughly translated, is "Jump out of a window."

Where are the signs belittling other majors? "Think you've got a job after this? Don't Account on it!" You'll never see "Wanna be a Suit?" or "How 'bout a Beamer?" or "Calculating Survival: Lifelong strategies to cope with your analytical finance major."

Of course, there are the lackluster professional and graduate school fairs. Seven graduate schools line one wall, including the renowned Southern University of Central Kansas State, but they are dwarfed by 48 law and medical schools. As anyone who attended well knows, the climactic Job Fair is nauseatingly unmentionable.

There are so many other options, but

they are scoffed at and ignored by the office.

The unserved student, upon entering Career Services, asks questions and is presented with platitudes. A book is provided for English majors titled, *What Color is My Parachute?* with the unwritten subtitle, "Now that I have chosen this major and am falling to my death, how can I survive as a human being?" The disparity is offensive.

A couple of correspondences have been here reproduced in hopes they may further elucidate this problem. They are as follows:

*Student:* Dear Career Services, I have recently invented a mechanical perpetual motion machine, written an internationally recognized treatise on the dilapidation of genetic diversity in Western Hemispheric plants, volunteered my way around the Pacific rim and started the first botany major at Wake Forest. Now I am looking to the future. Can you help?

*CS:* Your choice of careers boasts many options, but we suggest planning an interview immediately. Andersen Consulting is looking for an office decorator, and you may find your flower expertise very useful.

*Student:* Dear CS, I've got to apologize for missing yesterday's mock advice session, but when I was leaving Calloway, I fell into a 40-foot construction ditch. If it hadn't been for my padded resume, I might have broken something. Can we reschedule?

*CS:* Your five-year career plan will suffer, so we'll have to drop you. You may have amnesia after the accident (why didn't you deploy your red parachute?) so we ask that you retake your personality test (please dress appropriately).

Paul Fyfe

STUDENT COLUMNIST

dously broad and volatile study, and so there is a wide curriculum to address it.

However, tradition is changing. Required technology has left some disciplines out, for certain courses are immediately receptive to ThinkPads and the Internet, while others thrive in the non-digital tradition.

Business is booming in the American economy, perhaps the reason one out of every six Wake Forest graduates in 1997 left with a degree from the Wayne Calloway School of Business and Accountancy. Any trip to the Office of Career Services will reflect this, for there is an overwhelming emphasis on the business career.

But for obvious and honorable reasons, traditions are not so transient, nor are the interests of the 83 percent non-Calloway students unimportant.

However, curiously misinformed by Career Services, these students are largely left to fend for themselves in finding information about their gradu-

ation plans.

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## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Parents of Alex Gedicks thank the university

We want to thank all the many wonderful people in the university community who were so kind to us during our recent stay on campus, and to Alex while he as a student there. From the beginning we felt good about Alex's going to Wake Forest for college, and our visits there during the semester confirmed that this was the perfect place for him.

We are also deeply grateful to those students and faculty with whom we spoke about Alex while we were there. It lightened our burden to know that he had touched so many lives, and that so many people in turn cared about him. That he was able to make so many friends so quickly says a great deal about the open and caring atmosphere of the university.

Alex's body now rests peacefully in a cemetery near our home, in full view of Mount Timpanogos, which he always claimed was "his" mountain. His lively spirit is serving his mission in Paradise. We look forward to the day when we will see him again.

Wake Forest is truly a place with a soul. We know you will all continue to

keep it that way by your constant giving and sharing — not only with one another, but also with guests like us. Please know that Wake Forest University will always have a special place in our hearts.

Fred and Nicea Gedicks  
Orem, Utah

### SBAC members did a great job, despite critics

I wanted to thank senior Ryan Marsh and the other members of the Student Budget Advisory Committee for their work in developing the 1998-99 budget. This year's SBAC was an extremely "user-friendly" group. Before my organization was required to submit its budget, I was contacted by a member of SBAC and was offered assistance in developing our budget. Then on Nov. 6, the day the preliminary budget came out, I was again contacted by a member of SBAC and told my group's allocation. I was also offered the opportunity to discuss with a member of the committee what was cut from our budget and why.

It saddens me to think that some members of the university community

would suggest that the members of SBAC discriminated against religious and minority groups with their budget proposal.

Of course, as with every other organizational president, I wanted my group to have allocated to it our entire requested budget. I understand, however, that SBAC received requests that exceeded the amount available by about \$125,000, and therefore some tough decisions had to be made. As the president of a religious organization, I would like the members of SBAC to know that their assistance, availability and hard work was greatly appreciated.

Matt Silversten  
President, Wake Forest Catholic Community

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.

## OLD GOLD AND BLACK

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MIKE LUCKOVICH AT AREA CONSTITUTION

