

OPINION

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

EBooks should enhance, not replace stacks

The Z. Smith Reynolds Library administrative staff will implement a \$300,000 database next year, through which students can access certain books in their rooms. They can check the books out for two hours at a time and read them on their ThinkPads. Next year all 30,000 books on this database will be new books, each purchased for slightly more than the print version of the book, that students would probably not have access to otherwise.

Students can enter keywords into the database and can search the books for these keywords. That way, when doing research projects, they can easily find the information they're looking for without having to read the entire book. Since students can access the books for only two hours at a time, there wouldn't be a problem with overdue or missing books. The concept is similar to the Lexis-Nexis database.

The library has invested in this database not only to assist students in papers, but also because the library building itself is running out of room in the stacks for books.

However, not all the ideas for increasing technology are necessary. One, involving things called eBooks, is not finalized yet, and that's a good thing. It should never be finalized.

The idea behind eBooks, or electronic books, is that eventually

students would no longer have to carry backpacks. All their textbooks could be accessed on the eBook, a book-sized computer that can hold up to 4,000 pages of text. Every student would have one.

Like the database, students could enter keywords to search for passages, and then they could read just those passages. Students could highlight passages and write notes in the margins using a stylus.

Yes, students could receive the same content in the eBooks as in textbooks, but the process is not the same. Reading texts on computer screens takes longer, comprehension is harder and it's much worse on the eyes. Textbooks should be read in their entirety, or at least as much as is assigned.

With eBooks, students may simply search for the specific information to use in papers or projects and neglect reading the complete book. Books themselves are still important, and they are lost with the full implementation of eBooks. We need to learn how to discern the important information from the unimportant information while in college so that after graduation, when we don't have the eBooks to do that for us, we won't be at a loss.

The eBooks are not conducive to our education. Sometimes, it's not simply about learning; it's about how we learned it.

Capital Campaign has its priorities straight

The goals for the 1999-2006 Capital Campaign have been announced by the office of University Advancement. Congratulations to all those who decided what is going to be included in the campaign because the objectives are right on the money.

Although there will be a couple of funds set up for small construction projects, the focus of the campaign will be to raise money for the new faculty endowment and for scholarships, specifically for middle- and lower-class students.

The campaign planners hope to decrease the amount of financial aid in the form of loans and increase aid in the form of grants. Hopefully, this will make students of lower and middle classes more willing and able to attend this university. Socioeconomic diversity in the student body is not at the levels it should be, and any effort that attempts to draw students who do not come from wealthy families should be encouraged.

The money accumulated in the

faculty endowment will go toward increasing faculty salaries. Unrestricted gifts not designated for a specific project will be directed toward this endowment, as will the money donated to have buildings, such as Polo Residence Hall, North Residence Hall and the Information Systems building, named after someone.

The priorities of this Capital Campaign are firmly in place. The university needs more money for students and faculty more than it needs more buildings. Those who can afford to donate should do so. These are not superfluous goals. This university has been hurt because salaries and scholarships are not at the levels they should be, and rectifying the situation will directly help the students.

Since donors can earmark their money for a specific project, they can add to a fund that they feel is truly important. Hopefully those funds will be the ones that students need the most.

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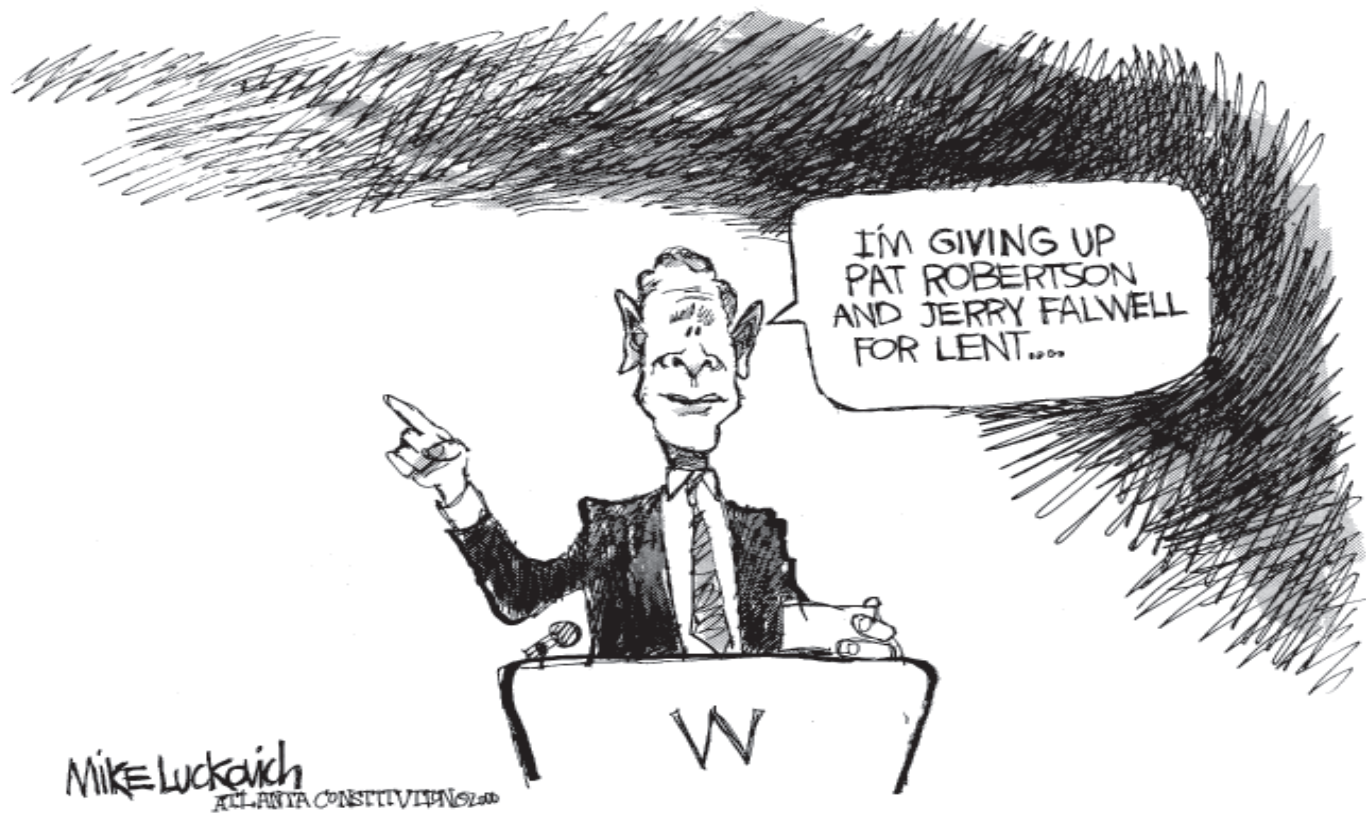
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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Complaints against faculty improperly heard

The recent controversy surrounding former graduate student Mike Louca and his accusations concerning the psychology department highlights a number of important issues, not the least of which is the university's process for filing complaints.

Anyone who has ever filed a complaint against an employee can tell you that the process is not an easy one. Nor is it quick, pleasant or student-friendly.

I know this for a fact because this time last year I was involved in a similar situation involving an employee of Residence Life and Housing who, coincidentally, is no longer at the university. I followed the procedure as outlined in the student guide and expected the matter to be dealt with in a timely and orderly fashion. In my case, this never happened.

I was very dismayed by the way in which my complaint was handled. Part of my displeasure was a result of how the formal process proceeded: at no time was I ever given the chance to talk to anyone neutral to the situation (e.g., someone who was not connected with RLH or someone who did not personally work with the employee) nor was I allowed to actually accuse the person I brought the complaint against either in writing or face-to-face in the presence of the dean or the head of RLH.

(Why this is the case is anyone's guess. I know for a fact that anyone who has filed similar complaints against a fellow student has the option of confronting the person he/she accuses in the presence of the judicial council yet, for some reason this is not the case when it is student-employee.)

Furthermore, I felt that several of the people in the process took the accusations that I made personally; that is that my dissatisfaction of the employee in question was somehow directed towards them and the services that they provide to the university community.

If the university is as committed as it claims to be on these matters, then it seriously needs to re-evaluate the current system and introduce to it a level of neutrality that it currently does not possess.

Students need to be aware of their options, and they should have someone that they can turn to in order to make sure that the matter is being

taken care of and not languishing away under a stack of papers.

Until these measures are implemented, students are not going to receive the treatment that they rightfully deserve.

Kimberly Lo
Class of '99

Psychology department supports professor

The faculty and staff of the department of psychology wish to express our strong and unequivocal support for Christy Buchanan, who has been the target of a malicious harassment campaign by a former graduate student. This campaign has exacted a heavy toll on Dr. Buchanan, her family and her students over the past several months. Not only do faculty, staff, and students alike know Buchanan to be of the highest character, but a comprehensive formal investigation by the Equal Employment Opportunity office of the university revealed no basis whatsoever for the student's complaint. Even so, Buchanan and other members of the university community continue to be harassed. We affirmed our steadfast support for Buchanan and deplore the manner in which she was treated.

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Columnist took words out of original context

As a Texan I've often heard the taunt, "Let's you and them fight," or, at least fuss.

No thanks. Roger Sharpe's guest column, Feb. 10, quotes, out of context, ideas from an article I wrote in 1968.

I've learned a few things since then and changed my mind about many things.

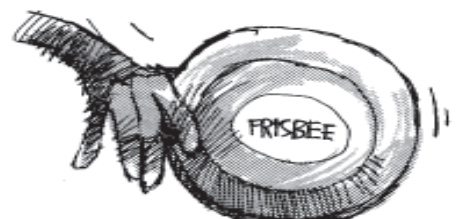
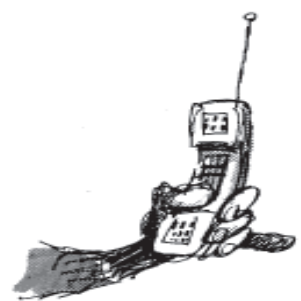
I'm not ashamed of what I wrote then, considering what little I knew, but I utterly reject Sharpe's characterization of my views.

James M. Dunn
Visiting Professor of Christianity and Public Policy

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