

OPINION

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

School of Medicine's research admirable

Researchers at the university's School of Medicine, in collaboration with Advanced Cell Technology of Worcester, Mass. have discovered a method of creating specialized cells – like heart and brain cells – from monkey stem cells.

The groundbreaking discovery marks the first time scientists have created stem cells (cells that have the potential to develop into any cell in the body) from a primate while using an unfertilized egg. This development catapults the university to the forefront of technological research and draws deserved acclaim to the School of Medicine.

By joining with ACT – which has a reputation as a leader in embryonic and cloning – the university has established itself as a leader in contemporary medicine. More importantly, though, the medical school is taking steps toward potentially resolving the controversy associated with stem cell research.

Because unfertilized monkey embryos will be used instead of human embryos, researchers could potentially sidestep some of the most controversial moral and ethical considerations surrounding stem cell research.

The advancement comes at a critical point for medical research nationwide – particularly in the stem cell debate. President George W. Bush's decision last year to eliminate federal funding

for research that specifically destroyed human embryos put the spotlight on genetic studies.

University researchers can work with the monkey cells, among other cells, through a process called parthenogenesis. This leads to the creation of stem cells without generating embryos that normally require an egg from the mother and a sperm from the father; thus, embryonic development is initiated directly from an unfertilized egg.

As a result of this research, stem cells may eventually be used to replace damaged cells that lead to Parkinson's disease and diabetes – though researchers caution that human clinical studies will require years more of research and development.

While Kathleen Grant, a professor of physiology and pharmacology at the Medical School, said she and her medical colleagues didn't intend to influence the national debate on stem cell research, their success inadvertently earned them nationwide recognition.

The School of Medicine researchers deserve every bit of this recognition for what could someday be realized as truly groundbreaking work.

It is only the latest advancement in a series of projects that has put the school at the forefront of one of the most important fields of research science will see in the coming years.

African American history recognized

Just as the month of February recognizes contributions made by the African-American community, so too the "Groundbreakers" series commemorates the contributions of African Americans to the university as a whole.

The first African American highlighted weekly in the month-long series is Dolly McPherson, a professor emeriti of English.

McPherson, along with Herman Eure, a professor and chair of biology, became the first African American professors at this institution.

Though the university still strives to diversify the student body, the recognition of strides already made will serve to educate a population that can seem too homogenous at times.

In 2001, 27 years after joining the university faculty, McPherson concluded her tenure here, but she continues to teach an autobiography seminar for two more spring terms.

McPherson saw a number of changes during her tenure, including such academic additions as the institution of a women's studies department.

While McPherson said the university and the nation have gained valuable ground with the evolution of contemporary ideas, she said there are still areas of prejudice that must be addressed.

Though she doesn't anticipate a world completely devoid of prejudice and non-acceptance, she believes it is every citizen's duty to attempt to reverse the paralyzing effects of racism – as it should be to all campus members.

The university community owes much to the diversity of the faculty and its students. A liberal arts education would be incomplete without a variety of classes and instructors.

This month the "Groundbreakers" series will strive to highlight those African Americans who helped introduce diversity to our campus and daily lives and to inspire future progress.

In search of a perfect world

In a straight society, gay clubs provide a haven for gays in love.

When the Charlotte-based gay youth organization Time Out Youth bought several billboards to advertise their organization, the *Charlotte Observer* carried a quote from a local man who said that for gay youth "to flaunt their

Nathan Gunter

STUDENT COLUMNIST

behavior like that is just wrong." One of my friends was depicted on those billboards as one of the four very normal-looking kids under a slogan which read "We are your gay youth."

My boyfriend and I stood in the stairwell of my apartment building talking one night, and, moved by my love for him, I kissed him. It would have been a great kiss, except for two students walking by on the sidewalk. I had heard and seen them coming, but I figured if I flaunted my behavior just enough, I could recruit at least one of them and *finally* get that toaster oven.

As we kissed, I heard the girl start to say in an increasingly loud tone, "Kissing, kissing, *KISSING!*" Her tone was one of sheer terror and indignation. I had to laugh. You see, we frequently kiss in public. We go to a restaurant on every monthiversary, and we eat out every chance we get.

And it's always so funny because there will be straight couples in line in front of us, and they'll be holding hands or kissing, and they'll get this fantastic romantic table in the corner with the low light and few disturbances. We'll stand at the hostess stand, holding hands, kissing, or saying 'I love you' and we'll get a booth right in the middle of the colicky baby section of the restaurant. And that in addition to the indignant looks we've been getting all night.

But we do have good luck in

For two men to hold hands, all of a sudden we're flaunting our behavior and it's *wrong*. Love Richard. I want the world to know that just as much as my best friend wants the world to know he loves his girlfriend. But we don't live in a perfect world.

restaurants. Waitresses always tell us that we look cute and that we are great together. It's always flattering, but I would love just once for someone to recognize that we're a couple and we want to be just as schmoozy and romantic as the straight couples in the restaurant are being, that we'd love a dimly-lit table and complimentary wine.

So this past New Year's Eve we went to a gay club. We were standing there, drinks in hand, and I was looking around. On the dance floor were several pairs of leather daddy-bear cowboys dancing away, next to some very normal-looking fraternity-type boys and a couple drag queens. And a whole cadre of people who fell somewhere in the middle of that spectrum of what we might call normal-to-weird.

I reflected on how trashy the whole scene was. And I don't mean that in a bad way. What I mean is, this club was one of a select few places in my city where this collection of people could party and celebrate and not feel somehow self-conscious.

It was a place we could flaunt our behavior all we wanted and not worry that there were eyes everywhere watching and judging.

So I kissed my boyfriend. And I looked into his eyes and said, "It's so refreshing to be at a place where I can kiss you and not worry about what kind of a statement it's making or if everyone is having their traditional ideas of sexism, love and gender-challenged."

And I looked at the dancing gay cowboys and thought to myself, "Right now, this club is a perfect world."

Of course it's not. But when I said it I was thinking of how Jesus was all about the people that society had downtrodden. He was all about the trash, about the street urchins and ragamuffins of this world. And in so many ways, the gay community is that in our world. I see straight couples everywhere holding hands, kissing in public, registering for weddings.

I don't flaunt my behavior. I just live my life. No one is shocked when they see a man and a woman walking down a street holding hands, even if those two people are dressed in Renaissance style clothing.

But for two men to hold hands, all of a sudden we're flaunting our behavior and it's *wrong*.

I love Richard. I want the world to know that just as much as my best friend wants the world to know he loves his girlfriend. But we don't live in a perfect world.

That's why that club was so refreshing. It was a place where the trash of the world came together to celebrate. It was a place where no one there was trying to posture and make themselves look more presentable or normal than they really felt. It was a place where, right or wrong, for better or for worse, people were being honest with themselves and with the world. And if we weren't welcome in some other place where the dress was nicer and people would be shocked by me kissing another man at the stroke of midnight, so be it. I'm not sure that's the kind of place I'd want to be, anyway.

And I think I know where Jesus would be that night.

The Kingdom belongs to the broken, the poor in spirit, the mourning, the trash, the ragamuffins, the outcasts, because the Kingdom of God is all about "the trash" learning how infinitely and unconditionally loved they are.

And when the Kingdom of God comes to the gay community, really comes without condition or judgment but with the open arms of love and guidance, we'll be that much closer to a perfect world.

Salaries should be increased

The University Chapter of AAUP shows that low teacher salaries persist.

Each year since 1988, the Wake Forest Chapter of the AAUP (American Association of University Professors) has prepared a report on faculty compensation at Wake Forest, based on data derived from academia.

The 2001 report, issued in December,

Carol Browne

GUEST COLUMNIST

shows that university salaries continue to lag far behind salaries at comparable national universities and colleges. While the university is proud of our ranking by *U.S. News and World Report* as 28th among national universities, we should be considerably less proud of the fact that we are ranked only 43rd out of the top 48 in salary, and 45th out of 48 in terms of total compensation (salary plus benefits). When compared to national colleges as opposed to universities, Wake Forest salaries rank 34th out 40.

Since President Thomas K. Hearn Jr. took office, the administration has repeatedly promised to improve faculty salaries. Most recently, the 1995 Plan for the Class of 2000 set as a goal raising faculty salaries to a level above the average of joint-admission institutions in all ranks in two to five years, and to the top third of the joint institutions within a decade.

While virtually all of the goals in the Plan have been met, this one has not. University salaries are below the mean of the joint-admission institutions at three out of the four ranks, and total compensation is below the mean at all ranks.

Wake Forest cannot claim poverty as the reason for the failure of faculty salaries to keep pace with the university's rise to national prominence. We are well-endowed for an institution of our size. We have invested an extraordinary amount of money since the institution of the Plan for the Class of 2000 in technology, and in the last decade, in improving physical facilities. Physical facilities and an innovative technology program are valuable recruiting tools and contribute

There are few other universities where undergraduates are exposed to such a combination of high quality research, out-of-classroom learning and close interactions with faculty. But in terms of allocation of resources by the university, the faculty seems to be neither recognized nor valued.

in some measure to our climb to prominence.

But it would be foolish to deny the role of the faculty in the university's recent successes. What sets Wake Forest apart from other nationally ranked universities is the faculty's willingness to actively engage in research while maintaining a commitment to excellence in teaching. There are few other universities where undergraduates are exposed to such a combination of high quality research, out-of-classroom learning and close interactions with faculty. But in terms of allocation of resources by the university, the faculty seems to be neither recognized nor valued.

Wake Forest has increased its tuition dramatically in recent years. Over the last decade, college and graduate school tuition has increased 104 percent. The administration often cites the need to raise faculty salaries as the reason for tuition increases.

Indeed, in the Dec. 6, 2001 *Old Gold and Black* John Anderson, the vice president of finance and administration, is quoted as saying "The (tuition increase) is not caused by our endowment, which only contributes 10 percent of our budget.... It has more to do with our expense increases, mostly salary." Yet while expected tuition revenue for the college and graduate school has risen 122 percent from \$45 million (1991) to \$100 million (2000), the expenditure on respective faculty salaries has not increased proportionally.

Expenditures for college faculty rose by 96 percent and for professional faculty only 83 percent over the course of the decade. In other words, only 20 percent of additional tuition revenue has been passed on to college faculty. And some of this increased expenditure is due to increased numbers of faculty, rather than increases in salary.

While Wake Forest does not appear

to place a high value on faculty, administrative compensation seems to receive greater respect. According to the *Chronicle of Higher Education* (Nov. 1, 2001) Hearn's benefits package is the highest of any active college or university president in the country, and his total compensation (not including "allowances") places him in the top 15. This is particularly startling considering that Reynolda Campus faculty benefits are ranked 44th out of 48 national universities, and dead last out of the 40 top colleges in the country!

The administration has announced that faculty and staff salaries on the Reynolda Campus will have an across-the-board increase of 0.65 percent for next year, and the total salary pool will increase only 2.5 percent.

At the same time, we have been warned that we face a dramatic increase in health insurance costs as we move to a new insurance carrier. Thus, many faculty and staff will suffer a real decrease in take home salary next year as inflation (1.9 percent for 2001) and increased health care costs overtake salary increases.

The administration blames the recession for this austerity move. However, the amount of income from the endowment that goes towards the university's annual operating fund is based upon a three-year average. Thus the amount of money coming into the operating fund from the endowment is projected to increase next year, despite the overall decrease in the value of the endowment.

Perhaps the administration is hoping that even greater austerity moves at other institutions will enable Wake Forest to make gains in the comparative ranking of faculty salaries without actually increasing salaries. This is unlikely. Universities that value their faculty will continue to reward high quality faculty for good work, and find alternative ways to trim expenses.

While the administration talks of moving ahead with plans for a \$19 million parking garage and building a road from the new fire station to campus, and while rumors swirl about the latest technology coming down the road to keep us at the forefront of academic computing, no one seems to be concerned that Wake Forest faculty salaries are not equitable as compared to other institutions and that our benefits are truly shameful. What will it take for faculty compensation to become a priority of this administration?

OLD GOLD AND BLACK

THE STUDENT NEWSPAPER OF WAKE FOREST UNIVERSITY SINCE 1916

Jay Cridlin
Editor in Chief

Maribeth Wechsler
Business Manager

Will Wingfield
Managing Editor

News: Phil Glynn and Susannah Rosenblatt, editors; Tom Clark, assistant editor.

Editorials: Kathryn Spangler, editor; Tiffany Needham, assistant editor.

Sports: Mike Scott, editor; Matt Gallagher, assistant editor.

Arts & Entertainment: Lisa Hoppenjans and Elizabeth Turnbull, editors; Taylor Kenamer, assistant editor; Ethan Dougherty and Dayton Vielguth, production assistants.

Perspectives: Elizabeth Bland, editor.

Online Edition: Brad Abrahams, editor.

Graphics: Tamara Dunn, editor.

Business Staff: Will Giraud and Megan Lambert, assistant business managers; David Byars, production manager.

Circulation Manager: Steve Burns.

Photography: Elizabeth Schneider and Billie Zito, editors; Denise Conner, Danielle Fisher, Ann Guley, Amanda Jones, Max Langfitt, David Risner, Stephen Tatum, 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 Web Works Inc. of High Point, 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. © 2002 WFU Publications Board. All rights reserved.

The views expressed in all editorials and advertisements contained within this publication do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the *Old Gold and Black*.

If you wish to submit a guest editorial, call the editorials editor at Ext. 5280 at least two weeks in advance of the issue in which you would like it to appear.