

OPINION

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

Another tuition hike difficult for families

The board of trustees has again voted to raise tuition, pushing the price for the next academic year up over \$1,600 with the 7 percent hike. As many families are undoubtedly left scrounging for the extra cash, we wonder just how necessary such a substantial increase actually is. Financially, the university seems to be on an upswing.

True, the endowment took a hit this past fiscal year when it lost \$80 million, but that figure is in fact a welcome improvement over the previous year's \$157 million tumble.

What is more, the university enjoyed its second best fundraising effort of all time last year, and this year's capital campaign has already proven tremendously successful. Enough money poured in during the early stages of the campaign that its initial goal of \$450 million has currently been raised to \$600 million, and despite the faltering economy, the university's fundraising consultant remains quite optimistic about the chances of meeting this increased projection.

Although funds generated from the capital campaign do not go directly into the tuition-fed operating budget, interest from these gifts does. Perhaps the university should look increasingly towards gifts, and not tuition increases, as a way to supplement the university's operating budget.

One problem raised by this latest increase is that of reconciling such a sizeable tuition hike with the university's goal of attracting more people from an array of socioeconomic backgrounds.

It is becoming harder for families of all financial circumstances to put their children through college, and many families cannot justify sending their child to a private institution with an ever-increasing price tag that sits just down the road from several well-respected and cheaper public universities.

The university has consistently been run as an efficient business that maintains good relations with those who foot the bill. But with continual tuition hikes, these relations will deteriorate, and they might go elsewhere.

The trustees maintain that they make it a priority to match tuition increases with increased financial aid, but this does not necessarily solve the problem. Simply getting a glimpse of an enormous tuition rate on paper is enough to scare away many potential applicants to the university who know that they can spend less elsewhere.

Moreover, 'financial aid' does not translate into 'free,' and students must weigh the benefits of a Wake Forest

education against the hassles of work-study programs and post-graduate debts.

Excessive tuition increases affect currently enrolled students, as well. Particularly in a weakened economy, many families plan long-term budgets around the costs of their child's education, and unaccounted-for changes can be difficult to handle.

The university expects students and their families to take news of tuition hikes in stride and with understanding, but then provides few means by which these parties can evaluate how their dollars are being spent.

If more information about the university's budget were made public, then families could point to various budgetary items, decide whether or not the amount of funds allocated to each was in accordance with the best interests of the school and the student, and come away with either peace of mind or justification for their outrage.

The ability to assess the university's spending on a more categorical basis seems especially important when we consider the fact that many items in the budget do not seem to be increasing at the same rate as tuition. Faculty salary has been a particularly prevalent example of this in the past several years.

Tuition increased by 5 percent for this academic year and will increase 7 percent next year. Faculty salaries, however, increased less than 3 percent while faculty health insurance costs increased 24 percent.

As faculty salary directly correlates to the quality of education that the university is able to offer, perhaps some tangible proof that tuition revenues are in fact going towards this cause would help to justify weighty increases.

A priority of the capital campaign is to honor "the promise," endowing professorships and increased student financial aid. However, recent tuition increases appear to run counter to these goals, making it more expensive for many students to attend and devoting less of the increase to faculty salaries.

If one of the university's priorities is to keep tuition low, it does not show. Although the school's overall rating climbed one spot in the annual *U.S. News & World Report* rankings of top national universities this year, it also fell one ranking in the magazine's list of "Great Schools at Great Prices."

In order to continue to gain ground in a competitive marketplace of universities, we must think long and hard before asking families to dish out cash to cover such tuition increases without providing any assurance as to where exactly that money is going.

Support in N.C. swells for Dole

Bowles' student supporters seem absent on the campaign trail.

It is now just a few days before the midterm elections take place on Nov. 5, and tension is high across the state of North Carolina and the entire country. With places

Albert Rattacasa

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COLUMNIST

such as Missouri and New Jersey being highlighted as crucial states for Republicans, many are looking to see where the youth support is. Which candidates are high school and college students promoting?

I can tell you proudly firsthand, at least in North Carolina, our students stand behind a great woman named Elizabeth Dole.

The campus College Republicans, as well as College Democrats across the state, have been working passionately for Dole since her official kickoff last February, and some even earlier than that.

Mrs. Dole has statewide support from almost every college campus, and her Students For Dole, Women For Dole and Democrats For Dole have been sweeping this state with such fervor, it should make Erskine Bowles rather nervous behind those beady little eyes.

Many students see determination and tenacity behind Dole's warm Southern smile and gracious, warm voice. They see a woman who has worked ardently for the American people under five American presidents and who served honorably as American Red Cross president. They see a woman who rises above the petty slanderous ads and taunting by her opponent, and a woman who wants to work her hardest for North Carolinians. I see in her a great American.

Dole has a career beginning at Duke University and moving onto, among other things, a law degree from Harvard. She broke barriers in her youth and continued to do so all the way to the White House, serving such honorable men as Ronald Reagan and the elder George Bush. After

Recently, the Students For Dole have been rallying support for Mrs. Dole, whether it be at the phone banks, walking precincts, or simply attending her events and cheering from the crowd. Many of us even attended the second debate, and one thing remains clear: we cannot find the Students For Bowles. Now, we know College Democrats exist, and I am sure they are siding with Mr. Bowles, but where are they on the campaign trail?

circling the globe with the American Red Cross, she was finally able to settle down and return to Salisbury, where Mary Hanford, Dole's charming 101-year-old mother, still resides. She could have stopped there. She, of course, did not and is about to break another barrier by becoming the first female Senator of this great state. Elizabeth Dole not only acknowledges the American dream and the Constitutional right for the pursuit of happiness, but she works incessantly to secure such wonderful American freedoms for all of us. After one job, she washes up, rolls up her sleeves, and looks eagerly for the next task to be tackled.

Dole has developed a concise, detailed plan for North Carolina, should she be elected next Tuesday. Her opponent has only created huge loans for his campaign to fund sleazy campaign ads, since his recent fundraising efforts have not been successful. Dole wants to help Social Security via partial voluntary privatization; Erskine wants to do nothing, a move that will cost Americans \$8 trillion.

He uses scare tactics to steal support from senior citizens and minority voters; Dole uses her Dole Plan and Salisbury values to earn votes from her fellow North Carolinians.

Erskine supports tax increases and slashing of military spending, as he did when he was a co-conspirator with the Clinton administration; Dole wants Americans to have more of their hard-earned money and has signed a no tax pledge, and she wants our service men and women to actually be paid appropriately for the courageous jobs

they do. If you don't believe what I am writing, read the Dole plan on her Web site. Then, search high and low for Erskine's plan. Good luck finding it. Though we all heard Erskine make reference to things he supports and dislikes in two Senatorial debates, he has never produced a single, solid agenda for how he will successfully attain anything more than trashing Elizabeth Dole's character and compassion.

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Now, we know College Democrats exist, and I am sure they are siding with Mr. Bowles, but where are they on the campaign trail? We see Erskine's drab signs in a few intersections and several residential yards, but where are the students? Where are the rallies?

I would be hiding, too, if my candidate were remotely like Erskine Bowles, a man whose own scandals are too numerous to include in a 900-word column.

Just search the Internet and you will be bombarded with articles detailing this man's dismal past. This type of behavior is becoming part of the Democratic platform, where one's candidacy cannot be supported unless he or she has some scandalous history and criminal behavior (i.e., Bill Clinton and Senator Robert Torricelli).

We are the future of the United States, and many will be following what we do on Nov. 5. I can assure you, liberals will be hiding behind their puppets in the mainstream media while the Republicans will continue grassroots politicking. I hope all those registered to vote will utilize this precious right.

I also encourage all to support Dole on Election Day as students across this state have been doing for a year now. We see in her many fine Senatorial qualities, and we want her in the U.S. Senate. The people will speak Tuesday, and hopefully, the future of North Carolinians and control of the U.S. Congress will be in the hands of the charming candidate from Salisbury and the Republican Party.

Albert Rattacasa is a sophomore.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Students should be proud of education

As an alumnus of Wake Forest, I was appalled to read Josh Harman's letter to editor ("High tuition should supply more biscuit for your buck," Oct. 24). It seems as though Mr. Harman believes he is owed a top-quality dining experience in return for his tuition. I believe it is time for Mr. Harman to get a healthy dose of reality.

The purpose of your tuition dollars is to provide you with a top-quality education from a small, private university. Your money contributes toward top-notch facilities and professors that rival those of any other university in the nation. You accepted this burden when you accepted the offer to attend this university. Don't get me wrong; I do sympathize with parents and students over the high cost of a Wake Forest education. However, I think that concerns over how your tuition dollars affect educational quality and student life should outweigh concerns over the availability of English muffins from Benson. If that is the greatest of your worries, Mr. Harman, then you have it made.

The bottom line here is that Wake Forest does not exist to make sure your every desire is filled. It is not Club Med and it is not a four-star restaurant. Since I have graduated, I have seen the addition of an outstanding new athletic center, a new class building and the beginning of the addition to Calloway. Dorms have been renovated, classrooms have been wired and a divinity school has graduated its first class, all while the university maintains small class sizes and a generally outstanding educational environment. Kudos to the administration for initiating and overseeing these enhancements. It is

a profound example of how tuition dollars, endowments and alumni contributions should be used.

To Mr. Harmon, I suggest you spend less time worrying about English muffins and more time focusing on your education and your college experience as a whole. When you graduate and get a job that pays a good salary with excellent benefits and doesn't involve mops or spatulas, do a favor for me. Take a little bit of that first paycheck and go get yourself the biggest, fattest English muffin this world has ever seen, and while you're eating it, think about how you got there. Think about how the tuition dollars you spent paid off by providing you with an education that allowed you the opportunity to get where you are and the ability to afford to buy that gourmet English muffin. Until then, however, you would be wise to focus your concerns on matters other than the dining hall.

Brent Starling
Class of 1999

Golf cart damages seem rather extravagant

I was recently checking out the oh-so-humorous "Police Beat" section, and I was completely taken off guard by one of the incidents. "Homecoming havoc" (Oct. 17). It reads, detailing an enchanting story of two men, a golf cart, and an innocent post that just happened to be broadsided.

Now, I'm not a mechanic by any means, but I've seen this golf cart in the aftermath of that tragic Oct. 12 day, and the damages cannot be anywhere near the estimated \$2,000. This entire occurrence makes me question any sort of "estimated damages" the university places on similar

dollars? Please, I'm begging you, take my 1978 Ford Pinto and put it out of its misery on the Mag Quad. I could use that money to buy some Crackerjacks at Sundry. Two thousand dollars. I've had friends replace entire body parts for less than that.

All of this, as stunning as it sounds, isn't even the worst part. They let one of the guys go! That's right; the university said, "you destroyed one of our vehicles, silly man, now let me escort you off the premises. Have a nice evening." I'm lying of course; they did give the man a trespassing warning. Apparently they're issuing out our "get out of jail free" cards next week in Benson.

Now granted, this man was an alumnus, so I enjoy the message they're sending out here: don't have fun or do anything bad while you're here, but when you graduate, you can remodel the campus any way you'd like. I've got dibs on Benson, so back off. I'm wondering where the hypocrisy ends on this campus (apparently with the alum going free and one of the students getting it where it hurts - in the community service department), but you're probably just wondering when this letter will end. So, I'll leave you with that, but I'll be the one dreaming of homecoming weekend in 2005.

John Harman
Junior

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. No anonymous letters will be printed.

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