

COLUMN



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Take time to enjoy the here and now

Do you know that feeling — the one you get when you're desperate to get onto the last P2P of the night along with 30 other semi-intoxicated teenagers? You know you'll just have to push and leave others behind if you want that last seat. So you do it. Everyone does at one point or another.

Well, here in Singapore, there is a "Singlish" term for this feeling. It's called "kiasu," or "the fear of losing." Widely used by Singaporeans, kiasu is their explanation of why Singaporeans are always driven to be number one. It is why people will crowd the entrance to the MRT, the Singaporean subway, to try to get on before those who are alighting are even given the chance to get off. It is why people will stand in line for hours queuing to get a Hello Kitty toy that everyone else seems to have. Kiasu to me seems to be more of an urge to win, rather than the fear of losing, mainly because it is a commonly-accepted misconception in Singapore as well as the United States that if you are not first, you're last.

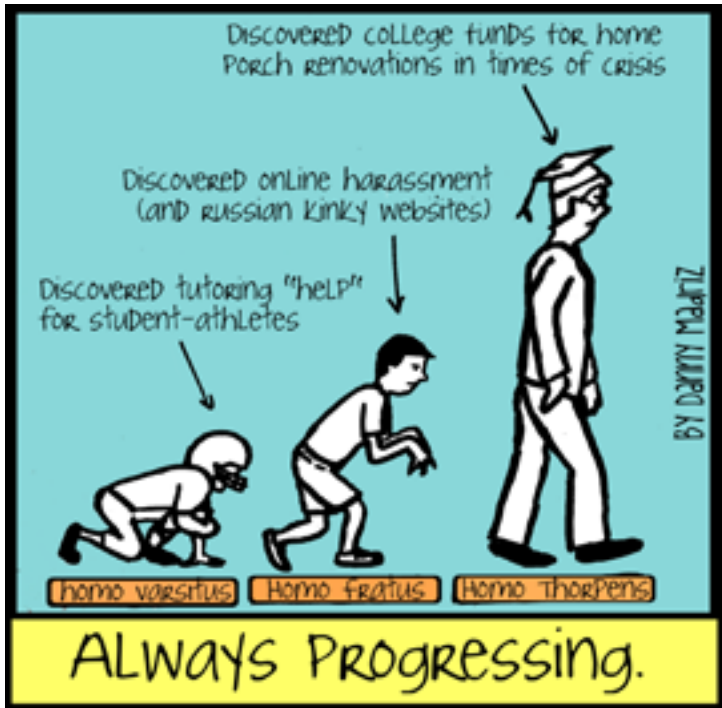
This is by no means true. Yet we all believe it. We worry about the future instead of savoring the present. While raving about kiasu on the Internet, I actually came upon a video of a man who shook his car back and forth at the gas station to get more gas in. Which, by the way, makes no sense because you pay for gas by the liter, not by the tank.

Talking to my Singaporean history professor here, our class was told that the Singaporean people are actually known for waiting in line for free products. Does this sound familiar? There is a reason why on Black Friday shops only let in a certain number of people at a time.

Singapore is very different from the United States in many respects. There is greenery incorporated into the most modern of architecture. There are no napkins anywhere. At all. But in the mentality that to make a name for yourself you need to be the best, Singaporeans seem exactly like Americans. We claw our professors' brains out for those five extra-credit points. We push and shove to get onto a bus, even though there might be another one just 15 minutes away. We generally try to ensure that we are above our peers in anything and everything: grades, income and even brand-name sunglasses and purses.

Tomorrow when you wake up, do not worry about the first thing you have to do. Instead take a deep breath, stretch for a couple of minutes, and think about the first thing that you want to do. Forget about that genius in your chemistry class who always sets the curve. Constant worrying is not going to stop him from studying or cause you to study any better. I know that this is all very easy to say and that our societies are built in such a way as to reward those who practice kiasu, but, nevertheless, try and relax. It will feel better. And then you can go ahead and hit the ground running to fulfill whatever your next goal is.

EDITORIAL CARTOON By Daniela Madriz, madriz@email.unc.edu



VIEWPOINTS

THE ISSUE: The state budget awaits Gov. Perdue's signature or veto. Two editorial board members face off on the merits of the budget and what it means to the UNC system.



Nate Harrison
Junior peace, war and defense major from Durham

Republican budget critical to NC's fiscal future

As a potential veto of the proposed state budget looms over Democratic Gov. Bev Perdue's Raleigh office, one unanswered question persists: why bother, Bev?

If she decides to veto, it will almost certainly have no practical impact on the bill's fate. Republicans and their allies hold veto-proof majorities in both houses of the state legislature.

Perdue has repeatedly reiterated that she will not support a budget that sends the state's public education system backwards. So when Republican leaders announced that all funding for K-12 teachers and teachers' assistants would be restored, an assumption that the controversy had largely been neutralized wouldn't have seemed unreasonable.

But the revisions proved to be insufficient to decisively change the governor's mind, and the threat of a veto still looms, even though it is merely symbolic.

It's time for a reality check. It's true that education is the single most important function that modern government serves in the everyday lives of its constituents. But among the seas of American idealism, leaders should not lose sight of one immutable fact: budgeting is a zero-sum game. When one program is funded, an equivalent amount is drawn out of the state's coffers.

So when those same coffers run dry, legislators are faced with three options for making up the difference: run up debt, increase taxes or trim spending.

The first two options have been thoroughly exhausted. In the words of N.C. House Speaker Thom Tillis, "Countless budgets were churned out under the philosophy of increased government spending and increased taxes. Democrat leaders clung rigidly to this mantra in the hope that it would succeed. It has failed."

Spending has been allowed to snowball for decades under the misguided notion that since education is a vital and treasured function of the state, it should be allowed to transcend many of the normal constraints and expectations associated with government-funded programs.

It's time for government to do the right thing. By making the right decisions now as opposed to charging the effects of their stubbornness on the bank accounts of future generations, lawmakers on both sides of the aisle have taken an important step toward ensuring a stable and solvent fiscal future for the state, while continuing North Carolina's proud educational tradition for years to come.

All that's needed to provide this monumental measure with the kind of bipartisan support it deserves is a sign-off from the governor. Snowball, meet microwave.



Buddy Amis
Senior English and economics major from Tampa, Fla.

NC education deserves better than GOP budget

In government, there is only one thing worse than indiscriminate spending: indiscriminate cutting.

The Republican-controlled legislature has routinely sought to close budget gaps with deep cuts in university-level education funding and welfare. But they neglect to realize the lasting externalities of these cuts. If Gov. Bev Perdue does not veto the Republican-backed budget, she will concede to not only a political defeat, but also any lasting hope of a bright future for the students of North Carolina.

This state has always placed a premium on education and it shows. The University depends on funding from the state, and the state depends on the University to produce the best young professionals this nation has to offer.

The excessive education cuts already placed on the University have hurt its ability to obtain and retain high-caliber faculty. The University routinely counters offers by private institutions headhunting faculty. This year, UNC lost 46 faculty to failed retention efforts and another 13 due to a lack of funds. If this continues, the University will lose prestige, exceptional faculty and students.

The legislature's attempt to dismember the University system stems from a GOP-led effort. Republicans met in closed-door meetings and N.C. House Speaker Thom Tillis advocated individual attacks on Democratic representatives rather than party-wide stabs to maintain a veto-overriding majority. His party needs five Democratic votes to push the bill without compromising. This bullying tactic affords the Republicans a majority.

Republicans have also used their majority to bully Perdue over federal unemployment benefits. She recently issued an executive order restoring unemployment benefits to 47,000 workers whose benefits were unexpectedly cut off. These federally-backed benefits do not even use state funds, but Republicans used them as a bargaining chip for a 13 percent cut to Perdue's proposed budget.

The GOP is abusing its position as the majority party to steamroll opposition to their budget plans. Rep. Jim Davis, R-Cherokee, contends that an education is useless in a broken state but what good is a state without education?

Perdue needs to keep her promise and not abandon our education system.

Though an override is possible, vetoing the bill will send a message to the legislature and to the people of North Carolina.

This veto alone cannot prevent the bill from becoming law. Contact your representative and let your voice be heard.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

"It is a religious issue. It almost doesn't matter what else is available or how good the price is. By golly, they want a Mac and they're going to pay whatever premium is associated with that."

Larry Conrad, UNC's chief information officer, on demand for Apple laptops

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Budget cuts shouldn't target childcare

TO THE EDITOR

Among the cuts the Orange County manager recently recommended for the 2012 budget is the elimination of all funding for Child Care Services Association (CCSA) consumer education and referral services. In the previous budget, the county cut funding for this vital public service by 50 percent to \$18,000. Now, a parent looking for childcare or with questions about their childcare provider will have recourse only to online information and no referral counselor.

Services provided by referral counselors are invaluable to the working parent or the parent pursuing their education. Counselors offer rapid responses to personalized questions about childcare needs. Websites are informative, but when one is making choices impacting the lives of newborns and toddlers it is important to be able to speak directly with a knowledgeable human being.

If you want to live in a county that proactively protects its youngest citizens by providing their parent(s) or guardian(s) with valuable information, please take time to ask Orange County commissioners to continue funding CCSA referral service. The CCSA as a single point of contact for all childcare resources increases governmental efficiency for a comparatively limited amount of taxpayer dollars.

Michael Joseph Mulvey
Graduate Student
History

Transparency a crucial part of honor system

TO THE EDITOR:

In response to Mark Laichena's column "Honor system lacks clarity," I feel that Mr. Laichena may not have adequately reviewed the honor system's website (honor.unc.edu) nor did he notice the week-long Honor System Integrity Week that is held in the Pit annually during the Spring semester.

As a member of the undergraduate attorney general staff, as well as the Committee on Student Conduct, I have firsthand experience with our efforts to make the Honor Code and the Instrument of Student Judicial Governance available and clear for our student body, faculty, and administrators.

The Instrument is organized

SPEAK OUT

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- Students: Include your year, major and phone number.
- Faculty/staff: Include your department and phone number.
- Edit: The DTH edits for space, clarity, accuracy and vulgarity. Limit letters to 250 words.

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The Daily Tar Heel

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Weekly QuickHits

Notice of inquiry

The NCAA investigation took another step toward completion this week as the official notice of inquiry came in. We knew this was coming and finally we can see a light at the end of the tunnel.

Men's baseball

The Tar Heels beat James Madison and Maine in the first round of tournament and will play Stanford in the Super Regionals on Friday at Boshamer Stadium at 3 p.m. Come support the team!

Weiner-Gate

Rep. Anthony Weiner, D-N.Y., admitted to lying about sending inappropriate pictures to women over Twitter. The pictures are hard to look at. Like a train wreck that you can't turn away from.

Sarah Palin

Palin fumbled a question on Paul Revere's role in American history, then said it was a 'gotcha question.' The question: "What have you seen so far today and what are you going to take away from your visit?" Gotcha.