

COLUMN



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Think outside of the Triangle

On Monday afternoon, President Obama addressed employees of Cree Inc. as part of his visit bent on boosting the fledgling economic recovery.

Now that candidate Obama is President Obama, winning my vote and others like mine will require more than just a reiteration of 2008 tactics.

Needless to say, North Carolina is a key swing state in 2012. While the motives behind Obama's visit might be obvious, visits with an emphasis on the economy will be vital to his success in our state. N.C. is facing the 10th highest unemployment rate in the country. North Carolinians are suffering, despite the president's constant reassurances that the economy will get better. As a rising senior, I'd like to see some "hope" for employment for a graduate in political science who has no desire to work in technology, the focus of Obama's jobs initiative.

The belief in "hope and change" worked for Obama in 2008, but the economy has created the need for more concrete results in 2012. If Democrats hope to keep N.C. blue, Obama must show that he can bring real economic growth home to voters.

While the meeting on Monday looked great, Obama should focus not only on the state's successes, but also those who might feel left behind.

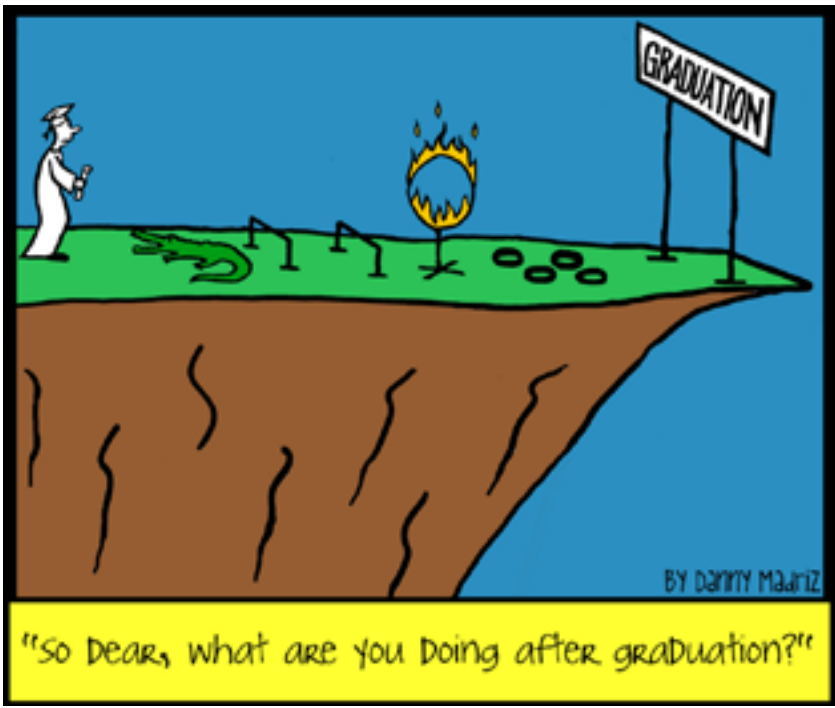
Perhaps the president's best route is to ease off on the platitudes, recognize reality and take the political risk to visit with those who are not doing so well. With the recent influx of Democratic-leaning voters to the Research Triangle Park area, Obama has the Park locked up. Visiting unemployed textile factory workers who missed the boat on retraining will do more to win liberal voters, as well as independents than talking with those spared by the recession.

While Obama courts the rest of North Carolina, he cannot afford to take those who have stood with him since the beginning for granted. This means the Obamaholics who inhabit the University. While I was a gung-ho Obama supporter three years ago, I have grown a bit jaded. I am still a Democrat, but I crave real solutions to the problems students face — tuition hikes and crowded classrooms. Just because college students are Obama's bread and butter does not mean he can forget us.

Incumbency has its advantages and disadvantages. While the "lack-of-experience" claim won't stick this time around, his record gives substance to what he has always been best at: speeches. And a good speech won't spark magic like it did last time. In 2008, I was a freshman with no immediate concern about the job market. But now, I'm playing for keeps.

So far, Obama has been polling more favorably than any potential GOP candidate in the Old North State. Choosing Charlotte as the site of the 2012 convention is a good first step toward keeping this lead. But to secure the state and my vote, Obama needs to put aside the manual and take unusual steps if he hopes to win in these unusual times.

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



COLUMN

We aren't the problem

UNC students should get housing preference near campus

The Chapel Hill Town Council is poised to pass a temporary moratorium on development in two neighborhoods near campus.

The ban is supposed to buy the planning board time to develop a strategy to protect the historically low-income and black Northside and Pine Knolls communities from further gentrification. The goal is noble, but the proposed moratorium is based on incorrect assumptions and would hurt those it seeks to protect.

Chapel Hill must first admit students are not the problem.

Students, in fact, have more in common with the Sustaining OurSelves Coalition, which petitioned for the freeze in March, than either group seems to realize. Families hate noise and college students hate noise complaints. And no one likes increased traffic or watching his or her rent go up.

The town needs to actively engage students rather than avoid them. The proposal is open to public debate Monday, June 20, at 7 p.m., and the council is expected to enact the ban a week later. Railroadng into law a regulation that affects students over summer break is a categorically bad start.

Chapel Hill must next admit developers aren't the problem.



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The council members need to take a long, sobering gaze at the nation of dying downtowns and four years of housing market declines that surround it. Maybe then, the council will recognize how extravagant and arrogant it would be to gamble its economic growth on a social engineering experiment.

The moratorium will fail to curb housing prices because it falsely assumes location means nothing in real estate. In other words, that students only want to live in Northside and Pine Knolls because developers built high-occupancy houses there.

But that's exactly backward. College students in a college town expect to live within walking distance of their campus. Many parents are willing and able and agree to bankroll the Carolina experience for their children, no matter the price.

That well-moneyed student demand for downtown housing bred gentrification, not developers. Developers simply listened to the market, and the council has to recognize it can't legislate away the principles of economics.

Against the best of intentions, the moratorium would raise rent and home prices by freezing development but not sales. Because it caps the space available, the price of existing homes would increase. And investors would know the ban expires Jan. 31, 2012, so they could snatch up homes now and remodel them later.

Until fewer students want to live in these communities, the gentrification will never end.

Chapel Hill must finally admit that's the problem.

It may be unfair and it's certainly challenging, but it's the way our world works.

The town also needs to support areas that already have mixed gentrification. It should expand programs like the Good Neighbor Initiative, which connects students already in these neighborhoods to the local community.

Gentrification is urgent. It hits people's homes and tears apart communities.

Chapel Hill deserves a swift fix based not just on pity but reality.

EDITORIAL

BOGged down

UNC should be able to raise tuition without BOG roadblocks.

Members of the UNC-system Board of Governors convened last week to discuss the state legislature's proposal of a \$407 million reduction in funding for the UNC system.

But the BOG is overstepping its boundaries by discouraging any possibility of a supplemental tuition increase in order to mitigate a decrease in state funding.

North Carolina's established commitment to higher education has been almost certainly undercut by the proposed budget that is poised to become law. Tuition hikes are the next logical step for larger universities to fill the void caused by the cuts.

Board Chairwoman Hannah Gage has publicly stated that the Board of Governors is unwilling to consider the possibility of supplemental tuition increases at state schools because it could encourage the legislature to make deeper reductions in

education spending.

The message that the BOG ought to be sending is one of cooperation during tough economic times.

Tuition hikes are anything but ideal, but desperate times call for desperate measures.

Jay Schalin of the John W. Pope Center for Higher Education Policy, based in North Carolina, has advised the system to analyze each campus individually when determining supplemental tuition increases. Indeed, some schools could be better-suited for tuition increases than others.

UNC, for instance, is currently ranked in the bottom quartile for tuition rates among peer institutions, which include the University of Michigan, the University of Virginia and the University of Texas.

Although it is a difficult pill to swallow, UNC would be a very viable candidate for tuition increases in our state.

Pinpointing the schools where tuition increases are viable is the strategy that the BOG needs to be taking, rather than simply wagging

its fingers at the proposed Republican budget.

It is of the utmost importance for our state to place a premium on higher education because it indicates a commitment to investing in our children and our future.

Tuition is not and should not be the primary source of funding for higher education in our state. But tuition hikes at certain state schools that can afford it will not change this ideology.

In the years to come, a higher percentage of the burden to attend school will befall the students and families who use them, rather than the already beleaguered taxpayers.

While our legislators need to recognize the premium that has historically been placed on higher education, the BOG needs to open itself up to the possibility of supplemental tuition increases and recognize the dire financial straits that our state faces.

The BOG is right to fight for everyday students to ensure that the UNC system remains the ultimate meritocracy, but not at the expense of financial solvency.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

"We didn't get where we are here in the Triangle by being overly dependent on government. But neither did we get here by demonizing government."

U.S. Rep. David Price, D-N.C., at Cree Inc. on Monday

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

GOP budget irresponsible and reckless

TO THE EDITOR

The DTH would be hard-pressed to find a worse defender of the state GOP's efforts to dismantle public education in our state than Nate Harrison.

Mr. Harrison's column from June 9 displays a disheartening deficit of knowledge and understanding concerning state politics and basic economic concepts.

While a simple letter to the editor does not provide nearly enough space to respond to each individual fallacy and delusion, a response of some sort is certainly necessary. Mr. Harrison's letter echoes the same tired GOP talking points about the Laffer Curve and austerity, only in a less articulate and convincing manner.

Someone should inform Mr. Harrison that Governor Perdue's veto is not merely symbolic, as there is a significant chance that the Democratic caucus in the state House could sustain a veto.

Budgeting is not in fact a zero-sum game. Investing now in education reaps multiplied benefits for years to come.

Mr. Harrison claims that this budget should be passed for the sake of future generations, but he forgets that these are precisely the people that this budget hurts the most.

Nathan Westmoreland
President
UNC Young Democrats

Students represented at Chapel Hill Town Council

TO THE EDITOR

I am pleased to report that, at Monday's Chapel Hill Town Council meeting, the Council members voted to have a UNC student sit on the Town of Chapel Hill's Transportation Board.

This is a significant step forward in a long-term collaboration with the town. The executive branch of student government is excited to continue working with the town on this and many other issues that affect UNC students on a daily basis. Transportation around campus and the Town of Chapel Hill is an incredibly important issue for all of us. Now, having a student representative means that our voice will be heard! Check out www.unc.edu/studgov for more information.

Mary Cooper
Student Body President

SPEAK OUT

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- Please type: Handwritten letters will not be accepted.
 - Sign and date: No more than two people should sign letters.
 - 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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Weekly QuickHits

NBA Finals

The King is dead! LeBron's South Beach talents couldn't overtake the team-oriented Mavericks. As for the MJ comparison? Scottie is eating his words and LeBron's got a long summer ahead of him.

GOP debate

Election season 2012 kicked off with a bang Monday night in New Hampshire. Michele Bachmann announced her candidacy, Mitt defended Romneycare and Herman Cain apparently distrusts Muslims.

Weiner-Gate

This is like one of those car crashes that you can't turn away from. First we find out his wife is pregnant, next we get to see semi-nude photos of the stud congressman taken in the House gym! #Jack3d

Men's baseball

The Tar Heels beat back the Stanford Cardinal as well as a thunderstorm to advance to the College World Series in Omaha next week. This marks the first CWS appearance for the Heels since...2009.