

COLUMN



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The war on women rages on

Last year, a provision banning Planned Parenthood by name in North Carolina's budget was overturned by a court order. But this year, N.C. House Republicans have suggested a new measure to eliminate state funding for the program.

The new measure prohibits contracts between the Department of Health and Human Services and family planning services outside of local health departments — in other words, Planned Parenthood.

With the renewed debate, last year's provision and an abortion law mandating an ultrasound before the procedure, many claim Republicans are waging a “war on women.” Democrats in the House have filed bills to reverse last year's budget provision and revoke the ultrasound law.

As a college-age female, I'm familiar with the services Planned Parenthood offers. But I wanted to brush up on the specifics of Planned Parenthood programs to make sure that I'm on the right side of the war on women.

Although I've never gone to Planned Parenthood, many of my close friends have. One friend, a senior here at UNC, told me she went there to buy the generic form of Plan B, an oral emergency contraceptive.

“It is a lot cheaper there,” she told me. “I'm in college. I don't have a job. I couldn't afford the name-brand stuff.”

Another UNC student added that the Chapel Hill Health Center was the place she felt most comfortable buying emergency contraceptives.

“Planned Parenthood is here to help with things like getting emergency contraceptives. I knew I wouldn't be judged there. I felt like I would be labeled a slut if I just went to a pharmacy.”

Planned Parenthood is a valuable resource for women like me — women looking for an inexpensive and safe place to express concerns about their reproductive health.

I understand the conservative qualms over abortion. But that's not enough to prevent funding. Planned Parenthood is much more than abortion. Surely the General Assembly isn't against offering low-cost birth control and emergency contraception to women who may not be able to afford it — like college students on a budget.

Do these representatives have a problem with inexpensive health screenings? Planned Parenthood health centers provide gynecological exams, along with testing and treatment for sexually transmitted diseases. In May, the Planned Parenthood in Fayetteville offered low-cost breast exams and PAP screenings in response to local support for their programs.

Perhaps if our state supported Planned Parenthood, we could benefit from more programs like this.

Surely, our state politicians responsible for crafting the budget — individuals who claim they are not engaged in a “war on women” — do not want to prevent funding of local peer education programs such as Planned Parenthood of Central North Carolina, which provides information and training about reproductive health.

Apparently, the N.C. General Assembly holds these problems against Planned Parenthood. And all of these services and programs empower individual women to make informed decisions about their health and sexuality.

I was born and raised here in North Carolina. I've always been proud to say it's one of the more progressive southern states.

I want to proudly claim that my home state is pro-woman, pro-reproductive rights and pro-health. But measures like the ones currently being debated in the legislature make me hesitate.

EDITORIAL CARTOON By Drew Sheneman, The Star-Ledger



EDITORIAL

Reforming the research

Summer Undergraduate Research Fellowships should be reformed.

As a top research university, UNC should offer a top-notch summer undergraduate research program. And while the Summer Undergraduate Research Fellowship has a reputation of being educational, it falls short in comparison to other universities' programs.

While the SURF program has experienced many success stories, it seems that there's a lot of opportunity for students to get confused during the process.

One student says he's barely heard from his mentor about his research project — and he's supposed to leave the country in a few weeks to start his research.

Another student says she receives very little instruction in the lab each day and doesn't feel secure in her project.

This comes from very little structured direction. Some SURF students are largely left on their own with their project. And some may not know exactly what they're doing.

UNC should consider organizing the SURF program in a similar way to the Research

Experiences for Undergraduates — or REU — programs, like the one for animal behavior at Indiana University.

The SURF program admirably allows students enrolled at the University to find their own mentor, create and conduct their own research project. Students can attend training at the Writing Center at the end of January to learn how to write a research proposal, work on developing their own plan and then submit an application in mid-February.

If selected, they receive a \$3,000 stipend to conduct their research during the summer. SURF projects are largely science-related, but fellowships are also offered to students in humanities, arts or social science departments.

It should be noted that UNC also has a REU program called the Summer Undergraduate Research Experience, but it's only offered for biological sciences.

In contrast, the REU program at Indiana University is very structured. Each student applies to work under a particular mentor, who gives them a specific project to work on. Upon arrival this year, students received an itinerary,

which laid out a schedule of events to attend.

While REU programs like the ones at Duke University and Indiana University do limit creativity — students are typically given projects to work on rather than creating their own — they do receive more instruction, which may help them learn more about the research process.

What's more, since the mentors create the project and carefully oversee the students who work with them, it seems there's a better chance the projects will yield useful results.

REU programs are funded by the National Science Foundation, while SURF is funded through the University, outside contributors and donors. While the process to become a federally-funded REU program might be too involved, SURF could at least look into structuring itself to resemble such a program.

SURF should maintain some of its key components — such as offering a program specifically to UNC students and allowing students to have some say in their projects. But if it hopes to produce better results more consistently, it needs more structure.

COLUMN SERIES: HEAVY ISSUES

Finding equilibrium

Think about what your body can do, not what it looks like.

This column is part of a summer series that will focus on college-aged men and women's perceptions of beauty and body image issues.

As a fitness instructor, I am constantly barraged with questions that associate fitness with “thinness,” by people who fail to recognize that the two are by no means connected.

I learned this lesson the hard way — the kind of way that leaves you in serious bodily pain for a solid week and your brain shattered from shock and disbelief.

Two years ago, while working as a fitness instructor at a YMCA in Asheville, N.C., I heard tales of a legendary instructor who could both destroy and rebuild you in 30 minutes with her nearly impossible workouts.

I got to her next class early in anticipation and scanned the room for a woman that could embody such physical prowess.

As class started, a woman with unkempt hair and glasses emerged from the group, defied my every expectation and changed my life. She was no Jillian Michaels. In fact, she wasn't a Michelle Obama or even a Jennifer Hudson. But she put me through the wringer in the



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most uplifting way I have ever had the pleasure to endure and is now one of my closest friends.

While she's the first to admit that numbers would suggest she's unhealthy, numbers are not everything. Bodies are built to perform.

Fitness isn't about what your body looks like. It's about what it can do. Those thunder thighs — they're what power you through stadiums, across soccer fields and studios and propel you in jumps.

Your strong shoulders and arms might be the result of intense dedication to swimming, yoga or dance.

This is not limited at all to athletics. The areas of the body women complain about most are also the most important for healthy motherhood. Appreciate

your body for what it is capable of and treat it with respect.

Our obsession with numbers on the scale has overshadowed the importance of leading a healthy lifestyle. Rather than making it your goal to lose 10 pounds, challenge yourself to finish a 5k, swim a mile, try a new fitness class or get out and walk. Talk with a nutritionist at the UNC Wellness Center and see what foods fit with your tastes and your needs.

Truly healthy and sustainable lifestyles, in which we are both properly nourished and active, allow our bodies to find their natural “happy place.” Key word: sustainable. Health is about reaching equilibrium.

More importantly, while physical health is important, it's only half the battle. I was plagued by over-exercise disorder for years. At my lowest point, numbers would tell you that I was as physically fit as they come. But I was trapped in mental anxiety and distress that prevented me from truly living. I abused my body because I refused to accept what it was built for. I now know how to use it to do what I love.

My butt is big because I can take you in squats. Someday, I'll be that legendary instructor — frizzy hair, glasses, booty and all.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

“This is a bigger problem than African-American Studies and a bigger problem than UNC.”

Sam Pride, on lax academic standards at Division 1 universities with competitive athletic programs

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Retreating from the shoreline isn't the answer

TO THE EDITOR:

If you missed Orrin Pilkey's latest dog and pony show to sell his new book on sea level rise, you avoided a colossal waste of time.

What was billed by the N.C. Coastal Federation as a primer on climate change degenerated into little more than a screed against those who disagree with him.

At one point, Pilkey characterized Durham as an oasis of intellectuals surrounded by an “anti-intellectual” movement.

The last time such hubris was on display, Galileo was threatened with excommunication for suggesting the earth was not the center of the universe.

With a degree from Florida State, Pilkey has parlayed himself into a self-proclaimed expert in geology, coastal engineering, beach erosion, climate control and meteorology.

As one of the first to hijack the environmental movement to further a social agenda, his mission in life is to validate his radical science; his mantra is to retreat from the shoreline.

Gov. Bev Perdue, Duke University, the N.C. Coastal Federation and the Coastal Area Management Act have exalted him to an academic pinnacle without equal.

For this achievement, Duke is eternally grateful not only for the prestige but also for the millions in successful grants.

There is nothing prophetic in his outrageous apocalyptic tactics, yet no one holds him accountable.

Extinction of piping plover, coquina, mold crabs, ghost crabs, sea turtles, seafood estuaries have been used for 30 years to further retreat from the shoreline, while the species not only survive, they thrive!

His tactics are a blueprint for environmental fringe groups like the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Nicholas School for the Environment.

In the firm belief you can fool some people all of the time, Pilkey sells Pilkey like Procter and Gamble sell soap suds. Unlike Pilkey, however, soap suds do have socially redeeming value.

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Joe Exum
Executive Director Emeritus
Bogue Banks
Environmental Stewardship Corporation

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- 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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Euro Cup 2012

The games have begun, the matches have been great and we can't wait to see more. Pick a team and cheer them on — Euro Cup 2012 is the perfect way to warm up for the Olympics in July.

Gumby's closing

So we won't be getting our beloved Pokey Sticks at 4 a.m. in the morning anymore. But let's face it, the pizza was really bad. And if we're about to get a Mellow Mushroom in town, life will be okay.

Carrie Underwood

Country singer Carrie Underwood defied stereotypes and came out for marriage equality this past week. Here's hoping more people in the country music business do the same.