

The Daily Tar Heel

Established 1893,  
118 years  
of editorial freedom

SARAH FRIER  
EDITOR, 962-4086  
FRIER@EMAIL.UNC.EDU

CAMERON PARKER  
OPINION EDITOR  
CDP@UNC.EDU

PAT RYAN  
ASSOCIATE OPINION EDITOR  
PCRYAN@EMAIL.UNC.EDU

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ROBERT FLEMING  
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TAYLOR HAULSEE



**PERRY TSAI**  
SEXUAL HEALTH COLUMNIST  
Second year medical student from New Orleans, LA.  
E-MAIL: PERRY TSAI@GMAIL.COM

You may need to rethink that DTR

Oh, the DTR, or “define-the-relationship”: A watershed moment for many couples. Some take it on immediately after starting to date; some let it float nebulously for months.

Are we casual or serious? Friends or more than friends? Monogamous or not? Establishing these rules is crucial to assessing and reducing one’s risk of STI transmission, and according to a recent study, we aren’t always on the same page.

In the upcoming issue of the Journal of Sex Research, Jocelyn Warren and her colleagues at Oregon State University looked at interviews from 434 heterosexual couples about monogamy. That is, the agreement to not get sexually involved with anyone else besides the partner. These couples each consisted of a female 18-25 years old and a male over 18.

Just over half of the couples reported that they had discussed and chosen to be monogamous.

But a third of the couples gave different answers on whether they had even discussed monogamy, and 40 percent of those disagreed on whether they had decided to be monogamous.

If a couple did decide to be monogamous, did each member of the couple keep that promise? Fifty-five percent disagreed on whether the male had kept it, and 50 percent disagreed on whether the female had.

Interestingly, the couples who were married were not significantly more likely to have made an explicit monogamy agreement, but couples with children were less than half as likely to have done so.

These findings confirm previous studies in 2004 and 2006 showing that many couples have not discussed monogamy or, at least, do not agree if they had.

What are some possible reasons? Some couples might be hesitant to bring up monogamy as part of a larger communication about sex and sexual health; others might be avoiding the discussion in order to avoid defining the relationship on that front. One person might be assuming monogamy based on time or relationship status; another might have interpreted a conversation differently.

Not only can these discordant assumptions damage trust and create conflicts down the line, they also can affect the couple’s sexual health risks.

Prior research shows that condom usage is more likely in new or casual relationships, but it tends to decline over time as a relationship gets more serious. This can be expected since condom usage might be considered a lack of trust or lack of love between the partners.

However, if a couple is not monogamous or not clear about when they stop using condoms, either of them could be at a higher risk for STI transmission.

If you are considering sex without condoms with your partner, consider having a direct talk about monogamy as well, even if it seems silly or embarrassing. Even though you may find that monogamy is not right for you or your partner, it is still an effective method of reducing your STI risk, and at least you talked about it.

Just ask them, “Can we DTR before we’re DTF? I read it in the DTH.”

THURSDAY:

Hinson Neville returns in two weeks. Tomorrow, the editorial board announces it’s runoff endorsement.

EDITORIAL CARTOON By Sally Fry, frys@unc.edu



The Interview

Dean of Students Jonathan Sauls is heavy on vision, light on details — but his work is ahead of him.

The Interview is an opinion page feature of extended interviews with people who affect our community, written by members of the editorial board. Today, Cameron Parker writes about Dean of Students Jonathan Sauls.

Speaking with Jonathan Sauls, the new dean of students, his calm and considered demeanor emanates capability — even if you have no idea what he’s going to do.

On one level, Sauls understands the big picture: He wants to help students academically and personally. That’s the job of a dean of students.

On another level, there are specific policy areas he’s slated to address — the biggest of which is to find a new way forward with the Greek community.

And yet Sauls is almost dogmatic in his stated aversion to “one-size-fits-all” policies, which would be all-too-easy to implement top-down. In fact, he repudiates them altogether.

So Sauls has given himself quite the challenge — one he is hard-pressed to deliver on nearly a year-and-a-half since the Greek community was shaken by the death of Delta Kappa Epsilon president Courtland Smith and damning cocaine busts.

Meanwhile, Sauls is settling in to what he says has been a smooth transition — pointing to the benefits of coming in with a network and familiarity characteristic of internal picks.

Outside candidates can bring valuable fresh perspectives. Yet Sauls seems to compensate by being genuinely open to discourse in order to move forward.

“It is really about listening early on,” he said, adding, “I’m not a big fan of the status quo. I am a big believer in the concept that either you move for-

ward or fall behind.”

It’s all Greek

Yet with respect to Greek life, it doesn’t feel like a trajectory at all — forward or behind. It feels more like limbo.

Sauls’ response is that, to be fair, the Board of Trustees didn’t issue its recommendations for Greek life until this past November.

“You can’t just make that happen overnight,” Sauls said.

It’s true that there’s been some progress. Laying the groundwork for a performance-based recruiting system was a start.

But it’s almost March now.

Sauls claims the process is now nearly over. And when it’s done, he thinks the Greek reform will address the different needs of community groups.

“You can’t just say that all Greek students are alike,” he said. In other words: no one-size-fits-all. It’s a recurring theme.

Sauls points to a grade point average requirement for chapters. A bad grade in a smaller chapter unfairly penalizes them.

“The policy could be uniform if everything was uniform.” But it isn’t.

And that’s what demands time — leaving doubt about Sauls’ claim that a finish is close.

A collaborative effort

Sauls’ office regularly deals with students who are facing hardship. He is also in charge of reforming a huge part of campus.

In spite of this, his demeanor is incredibly cheery.

“There’s been a lot of positives happening,” he said with regard

to the Greek community.

Of course, there have been negatives, too. A UNC student was caught in a significant drug bust in Wilmington in the fall.

But Sauls’ mind-set seems to be capitalizing on the good is the way to break free of the status quo. And like he said: move forward or fall behind.

This positive regard extends to the Greeks as a whole. He rejects the cynical view of Greek life as being dominated by sex and drugs, saying he thinks it’s unfair to stereotype any campus community.

The defense feels ironic: The Greeks are hardly seen as a traditional victim of stereotypes. But it is correct nonetheless.

Just as he rejects blanket policies that cannot account for diverse needs, he rejects blanket statements that cannot address diverse characteristics.

Sauls also seems to consider students to be partners in this progress.

“I hope to challenge them; I hope they challenge me. But there will be a true reciprocity,” he said.

The University is an ongoing project, and Sauls seems hell-bent on constant progress in that project. But every step forward needs to be well-chosen.

However it will not necessarily be a smooth process. He suggests disruption is a positive aspect of development.

“To come here and feel comfortable is to not enjoy a liberal arts education,” he says.

As for Sauls’ demeanor, it’s anything but uncomfortable. He gives the impression of a man who firmly knows his mandate.

His rhetoric about progress and rejecting the status quo is refreshing. But it only goes so far. The time is now to see the sentiment bear fruit.

“I’m not a big fan of the status quo. I am a big believer in this concept that either you move forward or fall behind.”

JONATHAN SAULS

Quick Hits

For the kids

436,709. 51 performers. 600 banners. Nine puppies. Just a few months until we hear fundraisers rallying us each day for the kids. And did anyone see if Ian Lee and Mary Cooper danced together? For the kids.

Tyler Zeller’s smarts

Zeller was named first-team Academic All-America, the first Tar Heel to do so since Eric Montross in 1994. Maybe there’s an intellectual connection between obscenely tall UNC centers. Hopefully Zeller can lead us to another title, too.

Write-ins

While SBP candidates may not have run the nicest campaigns, at least our student body had a sense of humor. Some write-ins of note: Brooklyn’s horse, “hosseni mubarak (i hear he needs a new job),” Nash Keune.

Summer reading

“Eating Animals”: It’s about the origin of our food. Yeah, we get it — animal cruelty, caged birds, inhumane practices. But there must be more pressing concerns for N.C.’s future leaders than the decision between meat and tofu.

Duke #1

While it always hurts to see those snobs down the road No. 1 in anything, it’s going to be great when we beat the top-ranked team in the nation in the Dean Dome next week. Sweet revenge.

Felton and Lawson

Two of UNC’s greatest point guards will join forces in Denver. The Knicks just traded Raymond Felton and others for Carmelo Anthony, bringing Ty Lawson and Felton together. NBA teams beware: Two star Tar Heel point guards are a force.

QUOTE OF THE DAY:

“There will be music, cupcakes, and we will be ringing the town bell 100 times. So I apologize in advance to anyone going to sleep early that night.”

JACQUIE GIST, ALDERMAN, ON CARRBORO’S CENTENNIAL

FEATURED ONLINE READER COMMENT:

“Students don’t like your project, get over it!”

OUTSIDE OBSERVER, ON THE POTENTIAL FOR A RENEWED PUSH FOR UCOMMONS

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Rejection at ballot shows Union should revise plans

TO THE EDITOR:

This letter responds to yesterday’s (Feb. 22) article: “Union renovation vote failure may not kill project.” Union leaders are quoted saying graduate and professional students were vocal; the other 40 percent of UNC needs more contacting.

Well, the Graduate/Professional Student Body Senate, which is composed of students from each graduate/professional school at UNC, is grateful to have heard a presentation in the Fall of 2010 on the proposed UCommons renovation and fee increase. We raised questions about graduate student involvement in developing the plan, the proposed elimination of the computer lab, the problem with increasing yet another fee for something unessential during a time when tuition will likely vault yearly, and the issue that the proposal would require 30 years to repay.

Should the failure of the Union proposal result in Union leaders pivoting from student group to student group to find new votes for next year? Or should the failure create a cause to change the plan to something we all can reach consensus on? Should the Union proposal create discord between undergraduate and graduate/professional students?

Or is this an opportunity to bring us all in this together for a change? I’m of the opinion that this failure is an opportunity for real change in the plan and campus culture.

Union leaders have a unique opportunity to bring together both undergraduates and graduate students to pursue collaboration and innovative ideas in a major way.

Melvin McDermott III  
Vice President of External Affairs  
GPSF

DTH should provide more UNC baseball coverage

TO THE EDITOR:

Does someone on the sports desk want to tell me why there was not a single word uttered about our No. 24 baseball team’s performance this past weekend in the paper? Not only did they start the season with a 3-0 performance in the USC tournament, they also beat then-No. 8 Cal State Fullerton on the road to start the season off with a 4-0 record.

This year should be an interesting one for the Diamond Heels with not one for-sure starter on the mound, which is a different situation than in previous years. But with the likes of Chris Munnely and Patrick Johnson ready to go on the rubber backed up by numerous other strong arms, it should be a good year for the Tar Heels pitching crew. See how easy that was?

This seems to be the case year in and year out for the DTH. A sport that is considered by the majority to be the primary spring sport has received little coverage from you throughout my four years here. These away games are much more important to report about because we do not have a chance to see them ourselves, unlike the first three-game home series of the season, which I will attend this weekend. Show a little

pride for our highly skilled baseball team.

Alex Rhodes  
Senior  
Exercise and Sports Science  
Major

Support UNC Habitat for Humanity fundraisers

TO THE EDITOR:

This year, as part of the UNC Build a Block project, the Carolina Library Community is raising \$35,000 and contributing 2,000 hours of labor to help build a Habitat for Humanity house. This is a project led by students who have taken on the initiative to build 10 Habitat for Humanity houses for University and UNC Hospital employee families during this 2010-11 school year.

When Habitat for Humanity of Orange County collected applications for their new housing site, 85 percent of the applicants turned out to be UNC employees. The people qualifying for Habitat housing have jobs but still cannot afford adequate housing. They are hardworking members of the Carolina community, and I believe that they are more than deserving of homes of their own.

You can support the Carolina Library Community in its fundraising efforts as well! The Carolina Library Community’s next fundraiser will be a bingo night on Thursday, Feb. 24, from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. in Century Hall at the Carrboro Century Center. All ages are welcome. Bingo cards will cost \$1, and we will be selling drinks for \$1 and snacks for \$0.50.

Come have some fun, win prizes from local businesses, and please help build a house.

Alani Nichols  
Vice President  
ISSUE

Stop arguing over our use of the English language

TO THE EDITOR:

I am writing in response to the letters from Serena Witzke and Ted Gellar-Goad on Feb. 22 (“Negative reaction to letter a cause for much concern”). These authors seem to make an illogical claim when suggesting that Spanish is a better alternative to English because it has grammatical gender. On the contrary, when the plural is used if only one male is in a room full of women then the masculine form is used. This seems much worse than how gender is treated in English.

Furthermore, I feel that too many people are wasting time arguing over trivial words within the English language. If it’s that big of an issue to you, why don’t you suggest appropriate alternatives instead of simply crying foul about our biased language? Seriously folks, why don’t we discuss the gender pay gap or gender stereotypes that exist within certain lines of employment instead of wasting so much time arguing over whether to use “freshman” or “first-year.” Such an overwhelmingly politically correct culture has everyone so focused on the small, petty issues that we sometimes fail to recognize the meaningful problems that exist within our society.

Drew Martin  
Senior  
Business Administration

SPEAK OUT

WRITING GUIDELINES:

- 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.

SUBMISSION:

- Drop-off: at our office at 151 E. Rosemary Street.
- E-mail: opinion@dailytarheel.com
- Send: to P.O. Box 3257, Chapel Hill, N.C., 27515.

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