

Should USC retire former basketball player B.J. McKie's number?
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Results published on Fridays.



VIEWPOINTS

"Falling ice, you know, it's not going to kill you. That limb, that's gonna kill you."

KEVIN CURTIS
ARBORIST ON THE DANGER POSED TO STUDENTS FROM TREE BRANCHES THAT FALL FROM FREEZING CONDITIONS

In Our Opinion

16-hour limit unacceptable

If the university is serious about its academic reputation, it will set the full-time student threshold at 18 credit hours.

Under budget constraints and decreasing support from the state, the decision to set a limit is understandable, and much better than a per-credit-hour fee system.

Students cannot hold the university responsible, if they sign up for extra classes and don't drop them by the add/drop day, incurring the extra fee.

But the new fee system USC enacted this semester which charges extra for each credit hour over 16, is a poor response to the problem of overloading. While designed to prevent students from holding classes for others and to ensure that the university is properly compensated for the classes students take, the bracket system hurts students in many majors.

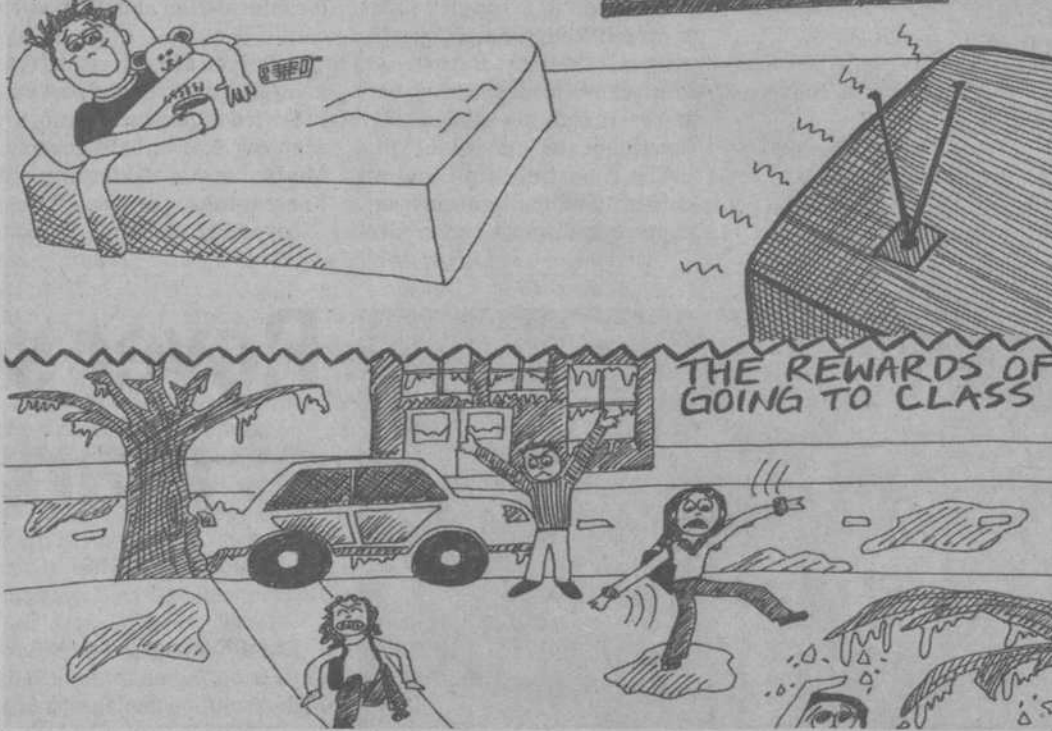
Students whose majors require them to take more than 16 hours per semester to graduate in four years unduly bear the burden of this change. The most intensive academic programs on campus should not be penalized because their course of study requires more time in class.

The current policy also runs counter to the stated aim of a university in fostering an academic environment where students are encouraged to explore their options in various fields of study. Students who decide to change their majors later in their career would face a stiff monetary penalty via the 16-hour threshold.

Out-of-state students are severely impacted, as the fee for course loads above 16 hours is significantly higher when compared with the additional fee in-state students face.

USC cannot put short-term financial interests above the academic success of its students. The full-time-student threshold must be changed to 18 credit hours if the university wishes to both draw quality students and keep its current ones.

THE CONSEQUENCES OF BEING LAZY



CARTOON BY MARK PINCKNEY WATERS/THE GAMECOCK

Edwards can beat George W. Bush

Now, after his early strong showings, Edwards is more than ever the best choice for Democrats this year, especially for S.C. Democrats who vote in South Carolina's first-in-the-South Democratic primary on Feb. 3.

Even before you consider the issues, you have to ask whether the candidate's electable. Edwards is the only candidate that can not only match President Bush on Iraq, terrorism, the economy, education and health care, but can also beat Bush in the South. Every Democrat that has been elected president has won at least four Southern states, and Edwards can do exactly that. He beat an incumbent Republican for his U.S. Senate seat in 1998. Former Gen. Wesley Clark, the only other Southerner in the race, hasn't especially shown an ability to keep his campaign on track after falling badly in New Hampshire. Sen. John Kerry of Massachusetts and former Gov. Howard Dean of Vermont could easily be painted with the "Northeastern liberal" brush by the Republicans and become a redux of other failed Democratic presidential campaigns, forfeiting the South and the election.

Also, Edwards is a man who knows of the possibilities of America and what can happen when you work hard. As the son of a textile mill worker, he grew up in a working-class family and knows how important a good education is to advancing in America.

Edwards is campaigning on a plan that states that there are two Americas, one for the rich and one for everyone else. This dichotomy, especially in education, cannot be more obvious here in South Carolina. In the Palmetto State, we have majority white and wealthy suburban school districts with new textbooks, nice facilities and ample technological resources.

On the other end are low-income majority black rural areas with fewer advanced placement classes and older textbooks, deteriorating facilities and obsolete computers. This disparity was chronicled in The State several years ago and is still a problem now. Edwards has a plan to deal with the chasm between the haves and have-nots.

Initially, he intends to fix and fully fund the No Child Left Behind program, offer scholarships for teachers who will agree to teach in troubled schools and give low-income but otherwise qualified students a chance with the College for Everyone program.

College for Everyone works by offering one year of free tuition to any public college or university in return for being academically qualified and working 10 hours a week in a business or community service organization.

Edwards proposes the College for Everyone program and suggests higher Pell grants because he knows what a college degree means. He went from a working class family in Robbins, N.C., to helping provide a comfortable living for his family because he got the opportunity to be the first in his family to go to college, and he wants to give that opportunity to every American.

John Edwards is a man who can deliver on education, win in the South, beat Bush in November and deliver on the issues that matter the most to South Carolinians and the rest of the nation.



WES WOLFE
Fourth-year public relations student

Don't just eat cute animals

So I realized the other day that for the past several months, no one has written a rant on why you shouldn't eat meat. It's always been a recursive theme in the Viewpoints section; usually written by someone with a strong moral conviction to rid the world of animal suffering and improve the health of the general student populace.



CURTIS CHOW
Third-year political science student

Being slightly disconcerted by the absence of this leitmotif of article writing, I've decided to take the burden upon myself to write it.

Well, I've never been the animal rights expert, so I decided to do some research. As I perused the Web for resources, I found one common theme: Slaughterhouses are concentration camps for animals. As I read on and viewed the pictures, I became more and more disgusted.

I knew the Nazis were bad news, but I never knew they would mass package and eat

their victims. Upon conducting further research, I found that they didn't and the concentration camp analogy was just another means to shamelessly exploit a historical instance of the suffering of mankind to invoke irrational pathos for an unrelated cause.

Well, at this point I got tired of researching and decided to just write the article and fill in what I don't know with stuff I made up.

I ran into a dilemma insofar as producing a convincing expository article on why you shouldn't eat animals — animals' taste :- (for lack of a better term). It's a scientifically-proven fact that I like eating animals much more than vegetables or meat substitutes.

Scouring my brain, I could only come up with one compelling reason for you not to eat meat. If everyone stops eating meat then the demand for it will drop, thereby decreasing prices. This means I can eat more animals for less money. I trust you will all do the right thing and stop eating meat immediately.

If you are going to eat meat anyway, I implore you to at least be an equal opportunity animal eater. It's common knowledge

that cute animals (i.e. mutton, duck, and veal) taste better than ugly ones.

However in this day and age, we need to be more conscientious about who and what we eat. Ugly animals have just as much right to be eaten as cute ones. Being overtly biased toward cute and cuddly creatures for consumption could lead to self-esteem issues for ugly animals.

I'm not going to try to convince you not to eat animals. Members of the "Anti-meat Gestapo" always cite outrageous statistics on grain consumption to produced meat ratios. So what? Animal feed is not typically human consumption grade grain. In any case, it still doesn't negate the fact that animals are delicious.

I personally didn't spend the past 7 million years evolving my way to the top of the food chain to just eat vegetables. Evolving is hard work, and when steak and lamb chops get off their lazy butts and get around to developing opposable thumbs and TV, maybe we'll talk then.

But until they do, watch out cows, deer, chicken, sheep and orangutans—you're all still on the menu.

SOUND OFF
Create message boards at www.dailygamecock.com or send letters to the editor to gamecockopinions@gwm.sc.edu

Gamecock Corrections

If you see an error in today's paper, we want to know. E-mail us at gamecockopinions@gwm.sc.edu.

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In Your Opinion

Culbertson's views devoid of research

This letter is to Graham Culbertson and many others sharing his opinion.

I must readily agree that in the "contemporary" or "modern" Christian movement, a certain amount of healthy cynicism may be well founded.

I cannot in any way condone the blind acceptance of some arbitrary religious dogma for the sole purpose of status elevation.

This grotesque imitation of Christianity is highly prevalent, especially within the

"Bible Belt" where an affiliation to some form of Protestantism defines the status quo.

Any religious participant who seeks glamour from a mild association with a particular denomination has traded the contents of his soul for fleeting popularity, thereby rendering himself a shell of a person.

To be sure, anyone so presumptuous as to seek the benefits without pledging to the commitment is indeed a hollow person, completely void of all merit.

I'm afraid that Mr. Culbertson falls into this broadly defined, aforementioned category.

He seeks to dazzle you with qualitative information on campus ministries when in fact he fails to ascertain the truth in the matter.

These two-sentence descriptions of each campus ministry prove Culbertson's libelous nature, as he readily admits to not having gone to any of these organizations.

To quote Montaigne, "I wish everyone would write about what he knows."

If nothing else, this response is a plea to end irresponsible journalism as well as hippie ignorance.

BEN COCHRAN
THIRD-YEAR REAL ESTATE STUDENT

The Gamecock is now online five days a week.

USC news, sports and opinions are all just a click away.

Monday through Friday
www.dailygamecock.com

Winners and Sinners

MOTHER NATURE Gives us a day and a half off while looking like 'When Trees Attack II.'
DICK CHENEY Comes out of hidden bunker to make up with continental Europe.
P-DIDDY Makes up for rap career by running in NYC marathon, appearing in play 'A Raisin in the Sun.'

Remember to fill out the Best of USC Survey.

Drop boxes located around campus, or e-mail your choices to gamecockpr@gwm.sc.edu.

Entries due by noon on Friday, March 5.

Results will be published Wednesday, March 24.

Submission Policy

Letters to the editor should be less than 300 words and include name, phone number, professional title or year and major, if a student. E-mail letters to gamecockopinions@gwm.sc.edu. Letters will be edited for space, possible libel and style. Anonymous letters will not be published. Call the newsroom at 777-7726 for more information.

USC ADMINISTRATION Only USC students, state workers had to brave the elements on Tuesday.
IRAQ WAR CIA now says it never had evidence of weapons programs.
FEDERAL DEFICIT Last we checked, the president and majority party were both Republican, right?