



# VIEWPOINTS

**ONLINE POLL**  
Do you believe that racism exists at Five Points bars and clubs? Let us know at [www.dailygamecock.com](http://www.dailygamecock.com).  
Results posted Friday.

## THE GAMECOCK

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### IN OUR OPINION

## How The Gamecock selects best candidates

The Viewpoints page might look different today than what you're used to, but it's no less interesting and perhaps more important to read than usual.

As the only news organization in the state that covers USC on a daily basis, it is our responsibility to inform our audience about everything that occurs on campus. Since no other paper or television station pays such close attention to USC life, we are in the unique position to

**We hope you will use our endorsements to make an educated decision.**

inform students about what goes on in Student Government and how they can participate in the process, as relatively few students have daily contact with the organization.

This weekend, The Gamecock editorial board sat down and talking with each SG candidate for about a half-hour.

We asked them questions regarding everything from parking to safety to the newspaper readership program, as well as specifics about their platforms and leadership experience. Once the interviews were completed, we debated who we thought was the strongest candidate for each position, with each member of the board giving positive and negative points for each candidate. However, final votes for all candidates were unanimous.

The Gamecock's editorial board has endorsed candidates for SG's executive offices for the past several years. These endorsements are not predictions of who will win the elections that run today and Tuesday, nor are they to be construed as directions on whom to vote for.

Our desire is to communicate to all students that in the opinion of The Gamecock, these candidates would do the best job of serving the interest of all students during the next year in SG. We hope you will read our endorsements and use them to make an educated decision based on the issues discussed during this campaign.

Regardless of how you feel about whom we picked, you still have the responsibility to go out and vote on VIP today and Tuesday. Don't let someone else make decisions for you.

### IT'S YOUR RIGHT

Exercise your right to voice your opinion. Create message boards at [www.dailygamecock.com](http://www.dailygamecock.com) or send letters to the editor to [gamecockopinions@gwm.sc.edu](mailto: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](mailto:gamecockopinions@gwm.sc.edu).

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## Realistic goals promise positive change

### ■ Safety, Five Points Shuttle and health center among priorities

A field of nine candidates vying for the top position in Student Government this year made The Gamecock's decision of who to endorse especially difficult. While The Gamecock was unable to speak with two of the candidates, our interviews with the other seven and analysis of the debates and candidate platforms lead us to endorse Steven Byrd for the SG presidency. Byrd exemplifies the selfless leadership and commitment to the concerns of underrepresented groups in SG that is necessary for a university like Carolina that is seeking to raise its national standing.

As an SG senator, member of Zachery Scott's executive cabinet, RHA senator, and active member of SHARE and BGLSA, Byrd has cultivated the experience to ably assume the SG helm. His platform includes many ideas that were not articulated by other



**STEVEN BYRD**

RECEIVES OUR ENDORSEMENT FOR PRESIDENT

attend USC.

SG is at its most effective when what it does has tangible impacts in students' everyday lives, and toward this end Byrd has proposed working with the city of Columbia and area businesses to provide trolleys and shuttles for students moving from campus to popular areas like Five Points and the Vista.

He rightly understands that an

under-funded Thomson Health Center with insufficient facilities is a danger to student wellbeing, and will lobby the administration to expand the funding for such services. Since USC students have few on-campus options for studying late at night, Byrd promises to push for Thomas Cooper Library's main floor to be open 24 hours.

Less visible changes that Byrd proposes are changes in CJSC and the student academic code to guide students through the appeals process, and to create a single standard for plagiarism that crosses college lines within the university.

While safety is an item within his platform, Byrd knows that the best solutions are using existing funding to install cameras in the garages and coordinating with Columbia to stretch the limited resources of SG and USC to protect students on a large urban campus.

Student Government would be in capable hands with a committed leader like Byrd, whose understated style belies his enormous skills and potential.

## Holt's progressive thinking wins out

### ■ Plans for enhancing the use of Blackboard were key to selection

Our choice of Ryan Holt for SG vice president was an easy one considering his experience in the organization and ambitious — but achievable — platform.

Holt rightly points out that his experience as an SG senator will aid his transition to vice president, as part of the job is presiding over student senate. The only danger is that in maintaining this line of ascent of executive office-holders from within SG's rank, the organization runs the risk of becoming wrapped up in the process and losing touch with the interests of the average student. The pragmatism Holt exhibits in regard to what he can achieve through the office of vice president is enough to outweigh these concerns.

Concern for student privacy, by proposing to eliminate the use of Social Security numbers on the



**RYAN HOLT**

RECEIVES OUR ENDORSEMENT FOR VICE PRESIDENT

Blackboard as a means of communication with Student Government as important.

Using existing resources such as Blackboard to enhance the communication between SG senators and the student body is a common-sense use of existing capacity, and the perfect way to undercut the apathy with which most students view the workings

of SG. Although few students stop to consider the effect that takeaway boxes and Styrofoam cups from dining services have on the environment, Holt's concern for the effect that Sodexo's choices have on a larger level underline his progressive-thinking. A reexamination of the readership program, to ensure that papers are targeted to where they are most used — or an elimination of unpopular papers — is another good, easy-to-implement idea that can have a major impact on an expensive budget item.

However, not all of the ideas that Holt is proposing are necessary or a good use of university resources. His desire to increase the membership of SG's athletics committee, and to push the athletic department for more shuttles to away football games, are largely symbolic gestures intended to impact the ever-nebulous concept of student pride. Despite these reservations, Holt is the best choice to lead SG's senate in passing effective, pointed legislation as vice president.

### IN YOUR OPINION

#### Candidate crosses line in SG campaign tactic

The other day, I was hurrying to meet someone. I was already late, so I became understandably angered when a Student Government candidate who wanted my vote stopped me. I normally would have brushed this jerk off and kept moving, but he did something that really pissed me off. He put his arm around me.

Gee whiz, pal. I had no idea we were such good friends. After all, why else would you feel you have the right to invade my personal space like that?

Well, other than being a tactless idiot that just wants my vote, that is. If I were so inclined to actually care

about the SG elections, you would have lost my vote. After all, we have so many grope-happy perverts in power on the state and federal level, so we don't need those kinds of people in our student government, either. Still, I wish you all the luck in your race for a position that holds barely any real power and has no worth outside a line on your resume or job application.

**JUDSON RAGSDALE**  
Third-year media arts student

#### It's not that difficult to get on reality TV

Out of curiosity, I attended the reality TV casting call at the Russell

House Thursday night after reading about it in The Gamecock. I was surprised to see so many students excited about the idea of being the next reality TV star. What they might not have realized was that with the number and variety of shows out there, that isn't such a difficult goal. Furthermore, they don't necessarily need to wait hours in line at a casting at the Russell House on a Thursday night when there are so many other things to do. Instead, the thing to do is fill out an online application for any of the reality shows, and make an audition tape from home at your own convenience.

**T.J. LYERLY**  
USC alumnus

## Experience makes for competent leadership

### ■ USC needs someone who is personable and effective for the job

Other than once a year during Student Government elections, the position of treasurer is one that does not usually garner much press, but is vitally

important to the daily functioning of both SG and the majority of student organizations. While being SG president requires personal charisma along with institutional knowledge, the qualities that make a good treasurer center more on experience and competence in handling the sizable budget that SG disburses every year.

Treasurer candidate Tommy Preston has both outside contacts and internal experience that uniquely qualify him to serve USC students the next year. Although Preston's stature outside the USC community certainly speaks to his leadership ability, it matters very little in terms of his capability to affect change in a system that is fairly inflexible. However, Preston shows that he is both personable and professional in his role as an SG senator, and after serving on Freshman Council last year. Instead of becoming self-absorbed by his position, Preston served as an advocate for the students, pushing for increased transparency in Student Government and hate-crime legislation. If Preston is guilty of anything, it is climbing the ladder of power within SG, but regardless of his personal reasons for seeking office, he has shown that he is worthy of the USC students' trust.

Involved in the effort to lobby the S.C. General Assembly for increased funding for higher education, Preston is simultaneously realistic in that he understands that these efforts are unlikely to bring about dramatic tuition changes. Many of the other candidates we interviewed did not exhibit a grasp of the trend in higher education toward reduced reliance on government to provide a consistent level of funding to public institutions. Still, he understands that a presence in the State House can protect against dramatic cuts.

His focus on the better use of student activity fees through more pressure on professors to use Blackboard, which is paid for in part by students, shows financial conservatism that is an admirable departure from recent SG administrations. Furthermore, Preston advocates making any future increases in the student activity fee, like the \$2 per semester bump this year to fund the readership program, only an option after a student referendum. One of his better ideas to avoid the end of the popular readership program that provides free papers to students is to make it an "above the line" expenditure whose funding is guaranteed in the yearly budget.



**TOMMY PRESTON**

RECEIVES OUR ENDORSEMENT FOR TREASURER

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#### 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](mailto:gamecockopinions@gwm.sc.edu). Letters will be edited. Anonymous letters will not be published. Call the newsroom at 777-7726 for more information.

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#### THE TECHNICIAN N.C. STATE UNIVERSITY

President Bush does have a point: Social Security is an old system that needs to evolve to meet the demands of the Baby Boomers and the generation entering the workforce right now. But, just like he misled the country about weapons of mass destruction, Bush has launched a massive campaign of misinformation to support his idea that Social Security needs to be privatized. Contrary to what he says, however, Social Security is not in a crisis.

#### DAILY MISSISSIPPIAN UNIVERSITY OF MISSISSIPPI

According to a report, while the prices of text books has been steadily increasing over the past few years, students that are the main consumers of these textbooks are still as poor as ever. There are many solutions to this problem. For starters, the practice of making a textbook expensive by putting in glossy pictures and extensive information about a particular subject should stop. Publishers should also ensure that the disks that come with some books are of good use to students.