

# The man with the plan: Please help us help you

New editor in chief hopeful for new era of journalism

The Daily Illini is about you. It's about me. It's about the campus we share, the world we live in, and the information we need and want. The Daily Illini is your guide to life beyond the classroom and the dorm, your insider with the administration and your best source for the news that matters, however you want to receive it. As editor in chief, I intend to lead this news organization with its long tradition of accomplished, independent and informative journalism further into the age of information.

No longer will The Daily Illini be just a series of daily productions. Instead, we will continue to travel further out of our comfort zone as we expand. DailyIllini.com will continue to evolve by offering an ever-changing view of our campus as events unfold, rather than after they're over.

Our On-Air coverage on WPGU 107.1 FM will continue to grow as well. With news, sports and entertainment being broadcast and posted during what is practically a 24-hour news cycle, our predecessors have laid the groundwork to provide coverage for a campus that never sleeps.

We will, however, continue to improve our overall image on campus, striving to become more than just the college paper.

As I write this, the staff is currently scrambling to assemble my first edition. This process has been laced with technical issues beyond our control. Apparently this is the curse of the new editor — an issue consumed by production



**JOE LAMBERSON**  
Incoming editor-in-chief

problems, and a disheartening cloud looming over the staff after a long, helpless night. With any other group, I would be worried about the quality of the publication and the sanity of the staff, but these people are in rare form as they use slow workarounds to do their jobs.

This staff has never stopped. And whether its covering the Chief's retirement with half a staff on a late Thursday night or trudging through a blizzard just to get into work despite the urge to build snowmen, you should know that they never intend to.

I am proud to follow Se Young Lee into this post, and excited for the stories to come. I know that we will continue to develop and to learn as all those before us did.

My only hope is that you, the reader, will level with us from time to time, as you always have.

Let us know if you love or hate a columnist or a cartoon. Comment on a story online. Write a Letter to the Editor for publication. The media has for

too long been a one-sided conversation, and my first priority as editor is to change that. Free flow of ideas, openness to insight and an entertainment of conversation are what I believe allow for a truly effective press.

The press and the people must forge a relationship on this campus that moves beyond the normal give and take and into an era of understanding. I'm not going to lie — mistakes will be made along the way.

Former Daily Illini editor in chief Jack Mabley has stated openly that he is proud to know that, during his tenure, The Daily Illini never ran a correction or apology. I find that, while quite a record, this is not a feat that I would ask my staff to strive for.

I want to hear mutual, constructive conversation in both the newsroom and the classroom. I want to foster a relationship where we can make simple mistakes and be called on them, and also be complimented and encourage conversation when we do something well.

In essence, this new editor is asking for a little effort from everyone. You as an audience should get involved. We as a company will do our best, and I fully hope that, somehow, I can contribute to both.

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EDITORIAL CARTOON BRIAN MCGOVERN THE DAILY ILLINI



# Governor's gross receipts tax proposal taxes you

With spring break behind us, it seems that graduation is only a stone's throw away. I see my friends getting graduation packets in the mail and I'm already receiving those pesky "attention graduate" credit card offers. But if you're graduating this year, don't be overly excited about entering the real world. Our governor is out to make sure that nobody has it too easy in the Illinois job market.

In his standard "press release" style of governing, Rod Blagojevich has announced his plan for generating state revenue. The gross receipts tax plan he proposes would tax businesses with gross receipts over one million dollars. He has touted the program as forcing big corporations to pay their fair share while sticking to his campaign pledge of not raising sales or personal income taxes.

However, the governor is naïve to think that gross receipts of one million dollars constitutes big business and is even more naïve in thinking that this will hurt large corporations. The only true victims of this tax are job-seeking graduates and all Illinois consumers.

In today's business environment, it has become increasingly easy to gross one million dollars in sales. I attended a press conference hosted by the Champaign Chamber of Commerce in response to the Governor's tax proposal. I listened as local businesses owners of what I think of as small, Champaign-Urbana businesses revealed gross receipts figures. I learned that it is pretty easy for a business on campus



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to gross over a million dollars in sales. But this doesn't necessarily mean millions of dollars in revenue. In certain industries, such as retail, the contribution margins of stores are minuscule.

It is very easy to sell a million dollars worth of merchandise and have only a small amount remaining to pay employees, rent, utilities and the owner's share. By the Governor's definition though, these business are huge and must pay for their size.

However, the only one paying is you. If you think that businesses are going to sit and take the hit from this tax you're sadly mistaken. Other states that have gross receipts tax even report the revenue earned from the tax on a per capita basis. New Mexico admits on its State Taxation and Revenue website that "in almost every case the person engaged in business passes the tax to the consumer." We can expect to see an increase in consumer prices equivalent to the percentage placed on gross receipts.

The tax only

hurts the person or business on the bottom rung of the ladder. Large firms grossing millions will pass the tax off to small business purchasing their products. These smaller businesses will be forced to pass the tax on to consumers. If you have a way of passing that tax on to someone else, expect a Nobel Prize in Economics.

Furthermore, some small businesses cannot pass the increased tax off. Those working in industries that produce standard products will see their customers ordering from out of state.

Also present at the press conference were representatives of the local and state Farm Bureau. It will be easy for chemical and seed providers to pass off the tax to farmers, but good luck telling the Chicago Board of Trade that Illinois corn and soybeans deserve higher prices because farmers must be compensated for the tax which has been passed down to them.

What will small businesses do to combat the tax burden they now bear? Most will pass what they can off.

If consumer demand decreases as prices of goods go up, businesses will be forced to lay off workers. This will hurt students looking for part-time work and graduates entering the workforce. If businesses still can't withstand the burden, they will simply move out of state.

Many state and local issues never penetrate the proverbial bubble that surrounds campus. But our position as consumers and future employees makes us especially vulnerable to the Governor's tax scheme.

Please contact your state legislators (lists can be found at [www.ilga.gov](http://www.ilga.gov)) and provide your unique input as a student and future employee.

## QUOTES OF THE DAY

**"You and your smarmy pundits — and the smarmy pundits you have in your pocket — can take your war and shove it. Let's unite not only in stopping this war, but in holding this administration accountable."**

-OSCAR-WINNING ACTOR SEAN PENN at a town hall meeting held in Oakland, Calif., over the weekend.

**"Do not vote for us because you feel some sympathy or compassion for us. That would be an enormous mistake, the vote for the presidency is far too important for any of those things to influence it."**

-DEMOCRATIC PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE JOHN EDWARDS in an interview on "60 Minutes" Sunday night. Edwards' wife Elizabeth announced last week that the breast cancer she was first diagnosed with in 2004 had returned and was incurable but treatable.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Black Chorus, Project 500 founders need recognition

The University of Illinois at Urbana recently commemorated Dr. Ollie Watts Davis' 25 years conducting the Black Chorus. That's great! What is not great is, how the Black Chorus history has been marginalized by University of Illinois administrators.

In 1968, UIUC Chancellor Jack Peltason unilaterally created the Special Education Opportunity initiative or "Project 500," shortly after the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s death.

Project 500's aim was directed at ameliorating social problems by way of education. Actually, Project 500 was the second UIUC Affirmative Action recruitment effort, and has no equal in the United States — 583 minority students recruited in approximately 90 days, thanks to the effort of former students like Chicago's Bill Savage and Dan Dixon.

Of these 583 Project 500 students, four — Carol Pearson, Vickie Bastic, Roy Haynes and former BSA President Albert Moore — understood the role recreation could play as a retention tool.

Partnering with UIUC staff

members Robert Ray (School of Music) and Dan Perrino (Student Activities), the Black Chorus held its debut concert in Florida Avenue resident hall on May 26, 1969.

For the 40th anniversary of Project 500, UIUC administrators should organize an all-generation Black Chorus reunion (No one is talking about celebrating Project 500's birthday) and appropriately recognize my classmates — the founders of the Black Chorus.

**TERRY TOWNSEND**  
Network of alumni, retirees and parents

# Teach For America: Why it is so difficult to say no

Roughly two weeks ago, I was informed that I had made it to the final stage of the application process for Teach For America. For those of you who have somehow managed to avoid the monstrous jaws of this organization's campus outreach campaign, Teach For America (TFA) is a national corps of high-achieving recent college graduates who dedicate two years to teaching in our country's lowest-income communities.

A noble concept, I thought to myself when approached by TFA's senior recruitment director earlier this semester, but it just wasn't for me. It's not as if I was drowning in alternative job offers with my hotly anticipated liberal arts degree. But plunging headlong into a two-year commitment that promised to be depressing, frustrating, and, depending on the grade level to which I would be assigned, terrifying as well? Pass the cyanide tablets.



**JON MONTEITH**  
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But the recruitment director asked for just 15 minutes of my time at Moonstruck, and admitting that I didn't really know the whole story on TFA, I agreed to meet with him. I tried to be up front. Since I have always felt the urge to dry heave upon hearing the popular libertarian argument that everyone has a fair shot at succeeding in life regardless of socioeconomic circumstances, I find working to counteract the undeniable funding disparities in America's public school system to be a very important cause. TFA did seem like a great outlet in that regard.

That being said, I was worried

that I might not be able to leave my TFA duty with my sanity intact. Additionally, I was not an education major, nor did I possess even the mildest interest in teaching as a long-term career. As an aspiring politico hoping to dive into the D.C. scene after graduation, TFA seemed irrelevant to my professional pursuits, and I could not ignore that.

Wrong, wrong, wrong. I was informed that most members are not education majors and that while many alumni do go on to serve as teachers and administrators, Teach For America has assembled a cadre of leaders with ties to a variety of professional sectors — not just education, but government and policy, business, journalism, medicine, the sciences, and the arts.

TFA alumni also receive considerable benefits, including an online job bank, mentorship from career coaches, and partnerships with over 100 gradu-

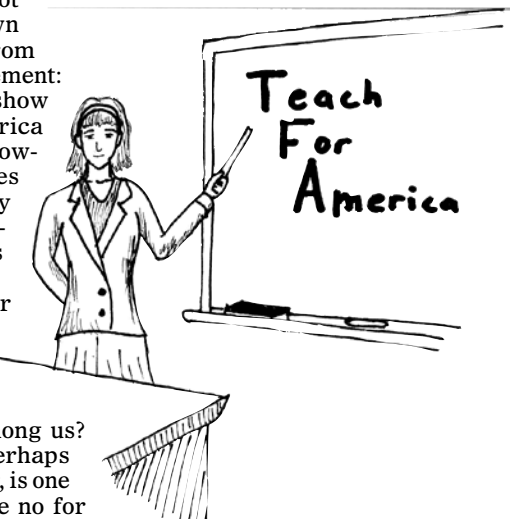
ate schools — including top-tier public policy schools and the law schools of Harvard, Stanford, Yale, Berkeley, Columbia, and Georgetown — which offer both TFA alumni and current corps members perks like two-year deferrals, waived application fees, and specially created financial awards or fellowships.

Furthermore, many alumni now serve as advisers to prominent public officials — Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton, Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, and Tennessee Governor Phil Bredesen, to name a few — drawing upon their firsthand experience in our nation's neediest schools to influence critical decisions pertaining to public education policy.

My notions had been shattered. Upon learning that Teach For America was far from being the two-year professional hiatus that I had imagined, my concerns about the day-to-day class-

room stress were not enough on their own to pull me away from such a critical movement: the movement to show the people of America that students in low-income communities can and consistently do excel when given the opportunities they deserve.

And what better people to lead this fight than the most driven and success-bound student leaders among us? Our generation, perhaps more than any other, is one that refuses to take no for an answer. If we can channel that determination and tenacity into righting the wrongs of America's public education system, there is no doubt in my mind that we will get our way. And in doing so, we are making



an important promise to our nation's neediest children: where you're born and how much money your parents make does not have to stop you from getting the education that you deserve.