

Relationship among Africans and Blacks needs improving

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Staff Writer

"I see an obvious problem in the relationship between Black students and African students here at UNC," revealed Nnamdi Iknagu in a candid interview.

Nnamdi is the president of the African counterpart to the BSM,

*We all belong to
one family.*

the African Fellows Resident in the Chapel Hill Area (AFRICA). According to Nnamdi, a senior zoology major from Nigeria, the purpose of the organization is to facilitate the adjustment of the African student to his new environment. In addition, the group provides a cultural and educational background to the public about Africa.

When asked how he has been treated by Blacks, Nnamdi replied that, although he hates to make a comparison, "generally speaking, white students are more receptive to Africans." However, he did concede that there are a few individual Blacks who are friendly and accessible.

"I think, 'oh, here is one of my brothers,' when I see a Black student, but then they treat me cold," says Nnamdi. Before coming to America Nnamdi believed whites to be more prejudiced. Now he frankly admits that he is concerned about the interaction (or lack of) between Blacks and Africans on campus because "we all belong to one family."

Nevertheless stereotypes do exist — often creating a barrier between the two groups. After becoming better acquainted with some Black students Nnamdi says he learned that they thought African students were "snobbish." On the other hand Nnamdi's impression of the Blacks at Carolina is that they are "elite".

Interestingly enough, Nnamdi has found from mingling with Black Chapel Hill and Carrboro residents that the townspeople are more "open-minded and liberal." He attributes this to the elite status of Black students at a prestigious university like UNC as opposed to the down-to-earth quality of Black townspeople. Since his stay in Chapel Hill one of Nnamdi's most rewarding experiences has been serving as godfather to the baby daughter of a Black family in Chapel Hill.



Staff photo by James Parker

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Realizing that the two groups should be closer together is the first step to improving the situation Nnamdi believes. This year AFRICA plans to work more closely in conjunction with the BSM. Last year as secretary-treasurer of the group, Nnamdi met with the

Central Committee of the BSM, then under the leadership of former Chairperson Jackie Lucas. He expressed surprise over their enthusiastic reception. When Byron Horton was elected chairperson last spring Nnamdi met with him to discuss common areas of interest.

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