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Discouragement, a UNC reality

by Joy Thompson
Staff Writer

George, a UNC student sits alone at his desk with his head in his hands. "I'm miserable here," he despairs. "I want to go home." Although George is an imaginary student, he is going through a very real stage that most UNC students have or will have experienced — discouragement and disillusionment.

"I got really discouraged at the beginning of my freshman semester," sophomore Christi Seal admits. "I flunked my first math test and I got a C on my physics test and I needed those courses for my major."

Sophomore Stephanie Jackson was most discouraged by the impersonality of UNC. "My high school offered family like environment, but now I don't know anybody any more," Jackson said. "Though you're in the crowd, you're still lonely."

Academic problems and school impersonality are only two of the reasons UNC students, especially

freshmen, become discouraged. "I think the toughest part of college (for freshmen) is first semester because there are so many things to get used to," Vice Chancellor and Dean of Student Affairs Donald A. Boulton said. UNC is a big change from most high schools. Here it is much larger, the academic competition is much stiffer and greater responsibilities such as taking care of meals, paying bills, etc.) are placed on the student. "All these things hit you in your face in your first five or six weeks of school," Boulton said. These are the major factors that cause student discouragement.

Serious discouragement causes some students to withdraw from school. Timothy R. Stanford of the Department of Institutional Research describes the freshman's first experience at UNC as a "culture shock". In reference to the "1978 Non-Returning Students Survey" Stanford said, "The biggest group that we, the university lose each year are freshmen. Sophomores usually leave because they have problems with their major or the

school they want to enter. Juniors and seniors usually leave because they want a break," he said. Personal problems, such as, family deaths and changes in financial status, and in some cases university problems, such as, teachers, curriculum also discourage students and cause them to withdraw.

According to 1978 survey, black students withdraw for the same reasons white students do; however, more black students are forced to leave because of academic ineligibility than white students.

"Being a minority will not make you discouraged," Boulton said, "It is what you do with being a minority."

Dean Renwick said, "The reason why black students (are forced to) withdraw ... is not because they are stupid or dumb, it is because they don't make academics their first priority." Too much time spent with sororities, fraternities, and activities with the Black Student Movement can hurt the black student academically, he said.

"You are coming to college to get a college degree," Renwick said.

"What else besides academics can be your first priority?"

Renwick and Boulton emphasize the importance of seeking help whenever a student is discouraged.

"If you are down, lonely, and depressed, don't continue to talk to yourself," Boulton said. "Go out and keep looking until you find some one to listen to you. You don't get any answers from yourself."

Students should not be ashamed to talk to professors, attend tutorial sessions, consult grade advisors, resident advisors and other counselors. All students experience some form of discouragement at least once during their college stay. Many times students become discouraged when they don't eat right or get enough rest especially during exam time, so staying healthy can also prevent or lessen the degree of discouragement.

Student discouragement is normal and students can make the most of their educational experience at UNC enjoy it if they really make the effort to get the help they need when they become discouraged. ■

Help available to students for academic adjustment

by
Denise Moultrie

Adjusting to the academic system at UNC is difficult for most freshmen — particularly the black freshmen. Many of whom have never ventured into situations requiring them to be independent. The demands of academics, the pressure to develop a social life, and the unwillingness or inability to set priorities make it difficult for them to survive academically at UNC.

However, if a student truly desires to survive, help is available. Dean Joyce Clayton, Assistant Dean of the General College, says that there are aids for students in academic trouble. She says that the "Academic Monitoring System is designed to detect very early the students who are having academic trouble." In this program, each professor with freshmen students, completes a form "identifying students with below "C" work." This process takes place after the 6-week Drop-Add period.

Another program offered is the Tutorial Program held in Eringhaus Dorm, Hinton-James Dorm, Peabody and Morrison Dorm. At these sessions, minority advisors help black "freshmen in academic adjustment here at Carolina." Dean Clayton also points out the fact that the Minority advisors not only tutor, but they also counsel students.

Grandison F. Wells, a minority advisor/tutor says, "I feel that I can help incoming minority freshmen to

adjust to the academic life at Carolina. I can also share with them the experiences that I had as a freshman. I feel that advice from another student helps more than it would from a staff or faculty member. Advice from one's peers is better."

Dean Clayton also gives her opinion of the Reading Program offered in Phillips Annex. She says that "the Reading Program can be helpful to any and everyone. I see no reason why anyone would not want to read better."

Other programs which may be helpful to minority students are "the writing labs offered through the English Department, the tutorial programs offered by the departments of Math and Chemistry and any other study labs and sessions offered independently by other departments. The habit of talking to one's instructors is also helpful," said Clayton.

Clayton points out that "none of these programs are mandatory, but they are available to those who want to participate. However, many students we know, who are in need of this type of aid, do not participate."

"We feel that we have good workable programs and we must let students know that it is acceptable to take advantage of these programs if they need to. While we do not feel that students take advantage of these programs, we think that the lack of participation is because they let insecurity stand in the way," Clayton said. ■



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