

Help For Freshman Transition

by Sondra Artis
Staff Writer

For a first year student, an attempt to make a smooth transition from high school to a major university, such as the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, can become a tedious, as well as a mildly traumatic experience. The university has a program which is designed to help freshmen become oriented and acclimated to their new surroundings.

During this period of orientation, freshmen gain familiarity with the system of University management, academic and otherwise. The events prior to orientation, known as Pre Orientation, are also designed to help minority freshmen adjust to a university atmosphere. Not only to a university setting were these minorities, specifically Blacks and American Indians, being prepared, but for a predominantly white university atmosphere and setting.

The purpose of Pre-O, according to Program Coordinator for University Affairs, L. Shavette Satterwhite, is to be "a support system for minorities." Satterwhite also sees part of the effectiveness of the program as the first year minority student being able to relate situations to counselors.

On Campus Coordinator for the Black Student Movement, Laquetta Robinson stresses that the day and a half of Pre-O is in no way designed to duplicate the following week of Orientation. However, Robinson says, "It plays an extremely important part in orienting minority freshmen into the UNC lifestyle."

Both Satterwhite and Robinson view the program as successful and effective, but believe that it could be improved if not looked upon as a crutch for the handicap and if given more positive publicity and more support by the students.

Hayden B. Renwick, Associate

Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, believes that the effectiveness of the program reveals itself when parents of Blacks and American Indians, as well as the students themselves give positive feedback. Renwick, who is one of the primary speakers during Pre-O, offers minority students a different approach for success. It is his intention to inform students that a four year tenure no longer exists. Renwick also attempts to instill within the students a desire to "graduate successfully, not just graduate."

Like Renwick, President of the BSM, Sherrod Banks has a message for first year students. As Carolina is traditionally referred to as "the southern part of heaven" it is accepted by the BSM president that where there is a heaven, there is also a hell. "You shouldn't preach about one, unless you preach about the other," said Banks.

The point Banks was most eager to make to the freshmen is that assimilation is not a must to succeed. Maintaining one's heritage, in addition to obtaining success can be achieved. "Don't get lost" urges Sherrod Banks.

The true measure of the effectiveness of Pre Orientation must be determined by its recipients, the minority freshmen. Annette Richmond, of Burlington, has already assessed the situation and concluded that for her Pre-O was a big success. "I would have been lost if I hadn't come to Pre-O," said Richmond.

Many who did not attend Pre Orientation, like Lisa Hinton, of Virginia Beach, Va., see those who did attend as having had an advantage. Hinton cites the familiarity with upperclassmen, the campus and other minority freshmen as being that advantage. □

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FALL SEMESTER CALENDAR

- First Day of Classes Monday, August 27
- Holiday, Labor Day Monday, September 3
- Last Day to Drop a Course for Credit
on Student's Financial Account Monday, September 10
- Fall Recess Begins Friday, October 12, 5:00 p.m.
- Instruction Resumes Wednesday, October 17, 8:00 a.m.
- Last Day to Withdraw for Credit
on Student's Financial Account Friday, October 26
- Thanksgiving Recess Begins Wednesday, November 21, 1:00 p.m.
- Instruction Resumes Monday, November 26, 8:00 a.m.
- Last Day of Classes Friday, December 7
- Final Examinations Tuesday-Thursday, December 11-20