

news

Intercultural Dorm May Get Off Ground

by Majorie Roach
Staff Writer

When Winfred Cross moved into 514 Craige dormitory last semester, he knew he'd have to adjust to a new roommate. What he didn't know was he would have to adjust to a new culture as well.

Cross' roommate is from Ghana.

"It has been a very good experience rooming with Kofi (his roommate)," Cross, a graduate student at the University, said. "He has made me change my unrealistic perceptions of Africa. I had based them on what I'd seen in the media. Every now and then I ask him about his culture or he corrects me on the pronunciation of his African name."

Unitas is a new intercultural dormitory project designed to promote living arrangements similar to Cross' and Kofis.

Our target date for implementing the project is Fall 1986," according to Robert Tichener, chairman of the University Relations Committee, which is handling the project.

Still in its planning stages, the project is designed to create a culturally mixed atmosphere for 100 student volunteers.

"The stress is on difference in international backgrounds," Tichener said. "We want two roommates to be as remote as possible in culture."

"Students would also receive academic credit for participating as well, he said. Plans are being made to set up a class for cultural exploration as an academic tie in with the project.

According to Wayne Kuncel, director of University Housing, the Housing Department is very supportive of the idea, although no dormitory on campus has been set aside for the program yet.

In 1966, Kuncel was the advisor to foreign students at the University of Nebraska. To ease the transition of foreign students to American college life, the University of Nebraska created the International House.

By populating one half of a dormitory floor with foreign students and one half with American students, "we encouraged each student to accept another student of a different culture."

Due to the tremendous influx of Asians and Mexicans into the nation International programs are not new to the West Coast. Unitas was created from this concept.

In an effort to gauge support for the project, 6,700 surveys were sent to 29 dorms on campus. One hundred and fifty students responded.

In the survey, students were asked to respond to the statement. "There is a lack of cultural tolerance on the UNC campus." At least 36 percent of the student respondents

answered that they strongly agreed or agreed with the statement while 38 percent said they strongly disagreed or disagreed with the statement. Twenty seven percent answered that they did not know.

Of the students responding to the survey, 41 percent lived on North Campus, 59 percent lived on South Campus. Of these respondents, 29 percent were male and 65 percent were females. Six percent didn't say what sex they were.

The ethnic group breakdown is: 26 percent Black, 66 percent white, two percent Indian, two percent European and three percent other.

However, the Status of Minorities and Disadvantaged Students Committee and the Faculty Council failed at previous efforts similar to the project. Pilot project was designed last semester to voluntarily integrate a North Campus dormitory floor with a half Black-half white make-up.

It was an attempt, according to former Student Body President Paul Parker, to "encourage interaction between Blacks and whites and provide a mechanism for people who want to live together.

"It would also allow more Blacks to live on North Campus."

Parker said there was a racial problem on campus since there were whites on North Campus who did not have to interact with Blacks at

all.

In addition, the project would have increased racial awareness as people saw Blacks and whites living together and getting along, Parker said.

The Pilot Project was opposed by Black campus leaders. Criticized for being artificial, many Blacks said the only way it might have worked was if the campus racial were closer to 50/50. Blacks are approximately eight percent of the student population.

Charles Campbell, a senior industrial relations major.

"It would be like one chocolate chip in vanilla ice cream."

Some students also feared that the Pilot Project would lead to the random assignment of students to rooms by computer.

Nevertheless, Unitas has met with a better reception than the Pilot Project. The University Relations Committee was instrumental in shifting Unitas' focus to a broader spectrum of people.

"The Pilot Project was a sincere effort but misguided because of the lack of Black on this campus," Tichener said.

Although University Relations Committee members agreed that Unitas was not a solution to racism, it was a step toward alleviating cultural intolerance.

Cross, who is already experiencing intercultural living, said the exposure to another culture had been a valuable learning experience. He added Unitas might erase era misguided notions about different cultures.

America Supports Apartheid - Student Panelists

by John Hinton
Staff Writer

The United States is supporting Apartheid policies of the white South African government by allowing American companies to operate there, four University graduate students said at a Discovery seminar on Feb. 23.

"The Reagan administration has supported the South African system of Apartheid," said Julius E. Nyangoro, a graduate student from Tanzania. "We have given aid and comfort to a regime that has inhumanely treated a vast majority of its population."

The panel members were Jimmy Ellis, who is Black, a native of Capetown, South Africa and a graduate student in the sociology department, Doug Berger, who is white, a second year law student, and Dale McKinley, who is white, a native of Zimbabwe (formerly Rhodesia) and a graduate student in the international studies department.

About 300 U.S. companies have plants or offices in South Africa, Berger said. Berger began a student movement at the University in 1982 to persuade the UNC-CH Board of Trustees to divest American companies operating in South Africa.

UNC has investments in approximately 15 U.S. companies in South Africa, Berger said. "IBM sells computers to South Africa so it can implement its pass system; Blacks must have a ID card generated by these computers to travel in South Africa."

General Motors has plants, which could be turned into military bases in case of a Black

uprising, Berger said. North Carolina National Bank has three offices there also.

"NCNB wants to be the best bank in the neighborhood, but in what neighborhood?" Berger asked.

"Many northern universities have withdrawn their money from South Africa," Berger said. "UNC is seeking to be the first southern university to withdraw its money from investments there. We can build jobs in North Carolina and the United States for both Blacks and whites instead of exploiting Blacks in South Africa."

Under Apartheid, Blacks are also forced to live in wastelands called homelands or national states which are much like American Indian reservations, Ellis said.

"Most of these territories are parts of the country which can't support industry nor the people who live there," Ellis said. "Seventy percent of the population is on 13 percent of the land."

Black men who work in the cities must live away from their families and can only see their loved ones for three weeks out of the year, he said. "These people's lives are completely governed by the state."

Apartheid also mandates separate shopping centers, schools, housing and recreation centers for the races. Interracial marriage and miscegenation is prohibited by law.

Ellis said the colored and Indian recently created by law was ineffective because their elective members' policies are often overruled by their white counterparts.

The panelists also criticized the Sullivan Principles and Constructive Engagement, two measures developed by white South Africans

and Americans to deal with Apartheid.

The Sullivan Principles, which call for equal pay and housing for Blacks and whites, are being used as an excuse for continued American investment in South Africa, McKinley said.

"Ronald Reagan has said American investments are helping the South African Blacks," McKinley said. "But American companies only employ 1 percent of the Blacks in South Africa."

McKinley said the Sullivan principles were a cosmetic reform. "They are not an answer to anything. The Sullivan principles are a moot

point."

Constructive engagement consists of quiet American negotiations with the South African government about Apartheid, Nyangoro said. "Constructive Engagement is a policy failure because it illustrates the fact the U.S. government has a vested interest in not overthrowing the South African regime."

Blacks are not about to mount a massive uprising, Ellis said. "There will be isolated guerilla warfare."

"The United States is making it possible that South Africa can deal with any sort of Black uprising," McKinley said.

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²kink vi: to form a kink - vt.: to make a kink in.

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