

Black Women United: Who are they?

By Mona McClarity

Black Women United was established in the Fall of 1986 to unite and address the issue of Black women on campus. The idea for such a support group was initiated by Dean Donella Croslon of the Office of the Student Counseling. Dean Croslon expressed her idea to Valerie Leach, now co-chairperson. Valerie, along with others, established an officially recognized organization to serve important concerns of the Black female. BWU now has two co-chairs and a steering committee.

Over the years BWU has been stereotyped as a group of females who have nothing better to do with their spare time or angry Black feminists. Actually, BWU responds to important needs of Black women. According to their charter, they foster a harmonious relationship among Black females; mirror the beauty, intelligence and pride of Black women; assist in recruitment efforts and support of the retention of Black women on campus; acknowledge and preserve historical contributions; and promote achievement and help fulfill the future aspirations of Black women at UNC.

General body meetings are held once a month on Sunday. Each meeting addresses a pertinent problem of Blacks on campus. There are discussions of how Black females are portrayed in selected films, upcoming campus events, successful Black women in society and occasionally a guest speaker (a prominent Black woman in the community). In addition BWU sponsors and aids in campus-wide and community events. Last year they held an AIDS in the Community workshop, Male/Female Relationship Forum (co-sponsored with Alpha Phi Alpha), and a Mother/Daughter Banquet during Discovery Week in February. This year

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What would you say to those students that believe it is their right to interview with the CIA, if they so choose?

"We have maintained this position all along: if an individual wants to interview with the CIA, no one is going to stop them. The CIA can fly them to Langley, Virginia, or they can get in touch with the CIA if they are so adamant. We believe that it should not happen here. We haven't intentionally tried to block the CIA from recruiting, but we've tried to expose the CIA for what it is. We aren't trying to violate anybody's rights by trying to get the CIA off; we believe that the freedom of the students is being compromised by allowing the CIA to come to this campus. I don't believe that anyone should have the right to interview with a criminal organizations on this public property. These people can get jobs with the CIA, just not here."

they plan to extend the Mother/Daughter Banquet into a weekend affair. The main events will be held on a Saturday with local entertainment, a seminar especially designed for mothers of freshman females and a "Just for You Black Women" total makeover. The banquet will end the ceremony on Sunday.

Black Women United is not affiliated with the BSM. Funds are provided strictly through fund-raisers and membership dues. Membership is open to all persons on campus, both faculty and students. All interested persons, especially Black women, are encouraged to join. "Black women have to realize that we are the largest part of the Black population at UNC and could have a lot to say about events taking place on this campus," Valerie Leach says. She believes "Black women have always been put on the bottom level and now we are the majority on campus; we need to fight for a new position in society and help other Black women to aspire."

The BWU has been attracting interest from other deans and campus organizations. Leach admits this year they have gotten off to a slow start but they do want people to know who they are and get involved. The majority of their members are graduating seniors, therefore they are recruiting members who share a common goal. "Black women need a support network and a great appreciation of the history of famous Black women," Leach says. "Black women must have role models, accomplish unity within themselves and realize what they have done, can do, and will do."

Anyone interested in becoming a member should contact Valerie Leach (933-8281) or Teresa McCoy (933-3513), co-chairs.

On October 27, 1988, the Black Cultural Center received a contribution of \$15,000 from the Department of Athletics.

"The department welcomes this opportunity to demonstrate its support for this program which is designed to educate about and promote Black culture on the UNC campus and in the community. The center as well as athletics share a goal of improved racial understanding," said John Swofford, Director of Athletics.

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THE BLACK INK is a bi-weekly publication by the students of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. **THE BLACK INK** is the official newspaper of the Black Student Movement. Its purpose is to link and unify the black student community through awareness and information.

Comments and editorials written in **THE BLACK INK** reflect the views of the writers and are not necessarily shared by **THE BLACK INK**.

THE BLACK INK office is located in 108D of the Carolina Union. The mailing address is Box 42, Carolina Union, Chapel Hill, NC 27514.

The telephone number is (919) 962-4336. Office hours: 9-2 Tues., Thurs., and Fri. 11-1.