

# Students Speak on Racism and the American Dream

By Chandra McLean  
Staff Writer

It was a normal Wednesday morning for Marchell Adams who went through her routine of attending her 11:00 a.m. Poli 41 class. Yet on this particular morning, Poli 41 took a slightly different turn from the normal routine. Adams entered the room where her Poli 41 class was assembling and situated herself at her desk. She didn't have any idea of the heated topics that would soon need her intense brain power and massive foreknowledge to be extinguished.

As the class came into session, a discussion in reference to the Birmingham, Alabama superintendent who was not allowed reinstatement began. (A black school superintendent in Alabama was denied reinstatement on what many people considered racist terms after his faithful service for 25 years to the public school system.)

In regard to this news topic, a white male student was quoted as saying, "Racism is not alive as much today. When something negative happens, they [blacks] always use racism a scape-goat when something doesn't happen in their favor."

Another white student in strong agreement added, "Racism is used by blacks as a crutch or as an easy way out."

Yet another student said that the racism issue has gotten so out of hand that even high schools have to allow two homecoming queens to win, one black and one white.

Unable to restrain herself any longer, Marchell Adams spoke out. "My school was predominantly white, and consisted of 2100 students," Adams said. "I was the first black homecoming queen ever. They didn't have a black-white-winner system at my school. To win, I had to have just as many or more white votes as black votes," she said.

Regardless of Adams' input, the debate raged onward. A teacher's assistant was quoted as saying that blacks put themselves at a disadvantage when they attend traditionally black colleges because they aren't exposed to other cultures. With great opposition to this remark, Adams retorted that that simply was not true because there are just as many black faculty members as there are white ones at black colleges, not mentioning the fact that blacks at these schools are also exposed to the cultures of other teaching members.

This classroom is only a small scenario compared to the overall picture of racism in today's society. What many whites fail to realize is that racism is very much alive in America. Stereotypes about racism have overloaded the minds of whites, and as a result, has blurred their vision when it comes to seeing racism for what it really is.

Gerard Morrison, a student at North Carolina A&T and vice-president of the sophomore class, was asked if he believed in the stereotype of racism historically applying to the South rather than the North. Morrison replied, "No, I don't believe this at all. Having had the opportunity to live in both environments, I completely agree with Malcom X's quote, 'The South is everything south of Canada.'"

Regardless of anyone's personal opinion, racism can be compared to a growing fungus that finds a dark, secretive place to cultivate until its emergence can no longer be stifled. Racism has taken this same form at UNC. Black students must learn to combat racism in its many forms. These forms consist of rejection, being overlooked in predominantly white classrooms, having to work twice as hard as a white student in order to be noticed, having to deal with demotion instead of promotion, and (the all-time favorite) having to deal with racial slurs strip away every positive aspect that is a part of African-American culture. Malcom X was not wrong in his statement of the facts that whites have always tried to make blacks hate the texture of our skin, our enlarged noses, our dark skin, and our complete existence. If that is not demeaning, I would like for someone to explain to me what is.

Janene Shubrick, a freshman criminal justice major from Jacksonville, is a prime example of the deprivation stemming from the prejudice on our campus. "I was trying to find my North Campus dorm on the first day of school. My parents pulled over and asked a white female biker for directions. First, she acted as if she didn't want to answer, and then she asked my parents if they were sure they were at the right school. When my parents questioned her about this comment, the biker asked if my parents were trying to find N.C. A&T! I felt too shocked to really feel anything," she said. "But after analyzing the situation, I felt raped, as if something was taken away from me. It was

like when you achieve a goal and someone says something petty and small, and it [the goal] doesn't feel as big as it really is."

Yet not all white students agree with those who were present on that turbulent Wednesday morning in Poli 41. Two white students commented on the subject in class. Kimberly Efford, a sophomore dental hygienist major from Charlotte, commented, "I believe that racism is alive on every college campus simply because it's everywhere. It is wrong for someone to say that it doesn't exist." Cynthia Yates, a sophomore from Jefferson, added, "Racism exists in a subtle form on our campus. I have never actually seen anybody have to deal with it, but I know it's here."

Often black students that attend predominantly white universities are asked why they won't simply attend a black university and not deal with these problems. Unfortunately, many black students feel that transferring to an all black school or counterattacking with violence is the answer to the problem of prejudice that is so widespread on college campuses. What these students fail to realize is that the way to combat this one-sided problem system is not through evacuation or violence, but through brain power and determination. Until blacks become fully competitive in the classroom and give 200% to every 100% given by whites, the barriers of bigotry on our campus will not even begin to subdue itself. Marchell Adams is an example of one who has broken these barriers. Being crowned homecoming queen from a predominantly white high school proves that success is very possible for blacks if we strive hard enough for it.

I have grown tired of my black voice going unheard and unnoticed in this oblivious, white society. This inattentiveness is not an unavoidable illness, for it can be cured as soon as more white students begin to open their eyes to what is going on around them. Also, it is not just the students who need to change their ways, but there are many faculty members who can be held accountable for not being open minded. Therefore, until we are heard and treated the same as "other" students, we should all strive harder and give our all to every aspect of what we do. Through these endeavors, we are all capable of achieving the American dream

## BSM Plans Annual Discovery Program

By Erika F. Campbell  
Layout Editor

The Black Student Movement will hold its week long Discovery program March 26 through March 30. The Special Projects Committee of the BSM has planned a week filled with discussions, forums and speakers.

James Tanner, co-chairman of the Special Projects Committee, said that although Discovery is traditionally held in February, Black History Month, the committee decided not to have Discovery in February on purpose. "We feel that Black History isn't something that should just be done in one month. We should celebrate Black History all year long" said Tanner.

Discovery program plans to include several forums and discussion on a myriad of topics dealing with the African-American experience. Of topics planned there are discussions dealing with the media's portrayal of Blacks and African-American reparations. Although all of the facilitators and speakers have not been confirmed, the committee is attempting to get a wide range of people to participate in this program. Possibilities include faculty members such as Miriam Thomas, WTVD newscaster, John Hope Franklin, Historian and Duke professor, and Lerone Bennett, the editor of Ebony magazine.

Although Tanner is optimistic about the plans being made for discovery, he is apprehensive about the participation. "It is going to be a very exciting event...but it will be even more exciting if the participation is high." said Tanner

Most of the programs will be held in the Union. For more information stop by the Black Student Movement, Suite A of the Union.

# Discovery

- March 26.....Religious Misconceptions Surrounding African-American Heritage
- March 27.....Reparations for African-Americans
- March 28.....The Media's Portrayal of African-American
- March 29.....Blacks on White Campuses
- March 30.....Lerone Bennett or Mable Thomas