

# 5-Year Struggle at N.C.

## *But the student union space for the African-American*

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Staff Writer

"It is easier to do what you want in your own house than it is in somebody else's house," said M. Iyailu Moses, director of the North Carolina State African-American Cultural Center, which is housed in its student union.

Some at UNC-Chapel Hill, including Chancellor Paul Hardin, have said UNC's Sonja Haynes Stone Black Cultural Center should be similarly expanded within its present location in the Student Union.

Moses said there were problems with the location of N.C. State's center.

"Go for a free-standing center," she advised UNC students. "It is difficult to achieve your goals when the people over you have a different

agenda. There are too many cross-purposes."

Moses has served as the interim director since January 1991, but has only been the director for three months.

The idea of an African-American Cultural Center at N.C. State is attributed to A.M. Witherspoon, the assistant provost and also the coordinator of African-American Affairs. Witherspoon, students, administrators, and friends began their initial agitation in 1987. Students submitted a list of demands to Bruce Poulton, the chancellor at the time.

The demands included the cultural center, academic credit for African-American courses and the improvement of the graduation rate of African Americans.

N.C. State students, recognizing they were a long way from achieving

those demands, began marching and holding press conferences. They threatened a sit-in.

Greg Washington, a graduate student currently working on his doctorate in mechanical programming, remembers all the problems he and others seeking a center encountered. He advised UNC students to "continuously apply pressure."

"I recommend writing C.D. Spangler, and voting more African Americans into more leadership positions," he said. "If you put African Americans into these prominent offices, every time (administrators) turn around they see a black face pushing the same demands."

Protests began in 1987 and the N.C. State center was completed five years later. The center, housed in the Student Union Annex, is



Kelly Greene/Black Ink

Moses served as interim director of N.C. State's African-American Cultural Center for a year. She was named director three months ago.



This picture of black leaders adorns a wall on the second floor of the center. The center was completed this year.

15,000 square feet covering three floors in the corner of the building.

"Students wanted to be able to access the cultural center from one door without having to go through the rest of the building," explained Washington.

Students sat down with the architects and discussed and devised the plans for the center. They wanted a library, a multi-purpose room, an art gallery, a conference room, a reception area and small offices to be located in the building.

Organizations such as Dance Visions, the graduate student organizations, fraternities and sororities regularly use these offices.

Moses said that although students worked with the architects, they did not receive "exactly what

they wanted." For example, the gallery has walls made of sheet rock, which is inconsistent with the

**"Go for a free-standing center, achieve your goals when you have a different agenda."**

**M. Iyailu Moses, director of the African-American Cultural Center, housed in their student union.**

use of a gallery. "You cannot hammer nails into sheet rock," said Moses. The lighting is also wrong. Floodlights