

ALUTA CONTINUA (The struggle continues...)

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Ink Staff Writer

As the struggle for a free-standing Black Cultural Center wages on, another battle will be brewing in the press — the fight between myth and truth. Before another move is made, or another word is spoken, let us differentiate between the two. "Aluta Continua" is a column devoted to delivering the history and facts of the struggle for a free-standing Black Cultural Center. Its mission is to stop misinformation and untruth before they have time to spread. The following are answers to commonly asked questions and popular myths concerning the Sonja Haynes Stone Black Cultural Center.

Myth

Student fees would fund a free-standing black cultural center.

Fact

A free-standing Black Cultural Center would not be funded by UNC students or by the University. Its funding would come from various outside sources. Since January of 1991, the BCC's Facilities and Space committee chaired by Trisha Merchant has been cultivating strategies to target leaders in the entertainment, sports and philanthropic arenas.

How long has the struggle for a Free-standing Black Cultural Center been going on?

•April 1984 — Vice Chancellor Boulton helped create a Black Cultural Center Planning Committee.

•April 19, 1984 — The first planning meeting took place in the Carolina Union.

•September 1989 — Members proposed a center that would encompass 23,000 square feet housing a library, a meeting room, lounge, music room, gallery, dance studio, and office space.

•July 1, 1988 — The Black Cultural Center was established as a department within the Division of Student Affairs and an *interim* space was made available in the Student Union. At that time, Kenny Perry along with other concerned supporters, refused to allow the room to be called "The Black Cultural Center." They wanted it made clear that this space, which formerly served as a snack bar, was a step towards a center, not the center itself. For that reason, the room has been denoted as "The Black Cultural Center Office."

Why is a Black Cultural Center needed at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill?

As early as 1969, African-American students expressed a need

for a refuge from the "tolerant" but less-than-accepting racial climate of UNC. As the racial climate has shifted from one of overt to covert racism, the job of the BCC has broadened. The Black Cultural Center is not a place for African Americans to "get away" from European Americans. It is a place that welcomes all students, regardless of their ethnic background, to become educated and enriched by the diversity and complexity of African American Culture and History.

Though most European Americans at this University come in direct contact with African American students on a daily basis, most know little or nothing of our cultural background and orientation. Therefore, the existence of a free-standing Black Cultural Center equipped with its own library and cultural programs would be equally, if not more beneficial, to the European-American majority as to the African-American minority in terms of eradicating cultural illiteracy.

Why should we have a black cultural center instead of a multicultural center?

The question is not "should" we have a black cultural center — the Sonja Haynes Stone Black Cultural Center already exists. The

individuals involved with the coalition for a free-standing BCC are seeking space on the main campus of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill to build a structure that would allow the goals of the Black Cultural Center to more adequately be met — period.

The creation of the Black Cultural Center was partially a reaction to a need that was expressed by the professors in the African American Studies Curriculum. Before its birth, the professors of this department found themselves dealing with not only academic concerns, but also various needs specific to African American students. One of their original visions was that the center could provide for some of those needs. It was not until the late 80's that the multicultural movement immersed.

The shift toward multicultural centers was more of a reaction to the emergence of Black Cultural Centers on college campuses than it was a gesture of good will or the promotion of cultural awareness. As far as the Sonja Haynes Stone Black Cultural Center is concerned, there is no issue of a multicultural center vs. a black cultural center. The idea of a multicultural center is a completely different subject and deserves to be discussed in its own context. The issue at hand is where and when a free-standing Black

Cultural Center will be built.

Myth

A free-standing Black Cultural Center would segregate campus.

Fact

One building cannot possibly segregate the campus more than ignorance already has. This statement insinuates that only African-American students would be benefited by the existence of a free-standing Black Cultural Center.

Additional segregation results from the establishment of an African American cultural and historical storehouse designed to educate the masses, the blame would most definitely lie with various individual's dogmatic ignorance and not with a building.

*Historical information taken from resources available in the Sonja Haynes Stone Black Cultural Center and from the Director of the center, Margo Crawford.

The *Black Ink* will be holding its first interest meeting on Wednesday, September 2nd in Upendo Lounge directly following the BSM meeting. Anyone interested in joining the staff is welcome to attend. No prior writing experience is needed.

The Beginner's Guide to UNC Politics

Did you know that of the four Executive officers in student government, three of them are Moreheads and all four are Greek with the top two officers in the same fraternity?

Did you know that in the Judicial Branch of Government, both the Attorney General and the Honor Court Chair are both Moreheads and both Greeks? Did you know that in the Legislative branch of government, the Speaker of the House is a Greek and a Morehead? Did you know that the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court is a Greek and a Morehead? Did you know that of all of the top positions in student

government that have been mentioned, only two are Black? What's up with this?

Where is the diversity in student government? How does the average student make a breakthrough into government? Does one have to be a Greek or a Morehead, or possibly be friends with a Greek or a Morehead? These are the types of questions that we will be answering in our yearlong report on the activities of student government. We plan to do investigative reporting and keep you informed about YOUR government. You have the right to know where YOUR student fees are going, how they are

being spent and who is spending them. This column will be an unbiased, no holds barred critique of the political cliques on campus. Stay tuned throughout the year for the answers you want and for information guiding you into an active role in student government.

Peace Y'all,
Stormie Forte and Mark Fleming

The Yackety Yack, Carolina's award-winning yearbook, is looking for a few good people. Anyone with an interest in writing, photography, graphic design, or who just wants to have some fun should come to the organizational meeting on Tues. Sept. 1 at 7 p.m. in Suite 106 of the Union.