

# Strictly *business*

By Carmen Scott

If you are familiar with the latest controversy concerning the Black Student Movement, you probably know it has to do with its gospel choir. However, you probably do not know all the facts. Though the choir is still a subgroup of the Black Student Movement, the BSM Gospel Choir is no more; its members are now collectively known as the UNC Gospel Choir. Once the amendment is noted in the BSM constitution, the name change will be official. "This was a business decision," says Courtney Moore, co-director of the Gospel Choir. However, many BSM members are taking the decision as a slap in the face.

During a BSM meeting last semester, members of the Gospel Choir voted unanimously to appeal to its fellow BSM members for a name change. Why the name change? Some may be speculating on the answer to that question, but choir members confirm there is really only one answer, marketability. They felt that acquiring a name that directly recognized the university would in turn help to win them more recognition. Kristian Herring, co-director of the choir, said that

although the name change has been anticipated for many years, it has just recently been spurned by a desire to boost sales of their soon-to-be released CD. "UNC is simply marketable," Herring said. "The name of the university carries prestige, and we wanted to piggyback off of it." Following in the footsteps of the successful gospel group, Take Six, a name that replaced their original, the Oakwood College Quartet. Marketability is the Gospel Choir's number one priority.

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Another grievance Herring said he had with the name, BSM Gospel Choir, was its tendency to dissuade non-black members from joining the choir. In addition, the fact that "there are a million of other universities who carry the name of BSM," Herring said he

wanted his group to stand out.

To quote one BSM member, "There needs to be reasons other than marketability to go against a historical name like that of the BSM." Many members agree, arguing that it was the BSM who first offered sponsorship to the Gospel Choir in 1972 after the university refused them. Though they do much of their own fundraising, the Gospel Choir continues to receive funds as a subgroup of the BSM. Still, the Gospel Choir has been the only subgroup to carry the name of the BSM in their title, which astute choir members continue to point out.

Black Student Movement members continue to point out that some gospel choir members who came to the meeting to vote on the name change were attending their first and probably only meeting. BSM President, Tamara Bailey concurs, but explains, "It's still your meeting," even if it is your only one, that is how democracy works."

When asked if there were ulterior motives related to holding the vote during the most poorly attended meeting of the semester,