

Thursday, February 22, 2007

Racism still present in our society

Ironically, affirmative action leads to a declaration of racist ideals in society

Bryan Ray
Opinions Editor

We are all familiar with the traditional history and forms of racism. Name calling, discrimination and a lack of political representation. What is more insidious is the new racism, a form of preferential treatment that maintains a sense of patronage and benevolence on the part of white progressive's for the benefit of minorities.

In the name of diversity, many initiatives were instituted to gain minority participation in business and college education.

These measures are met with controversy, both sides self interested in either maintaining the status quo and thus power or gaining more financial and educational benefits.

The belief that minorities deserve special treatment because of the color of their skin, gender or religion is as racist as using racial epithets. It promulgates the belief that the white race is superior, if for the simple fact that white students and workers do not need help in gaining access to schools or jobs, while minorities do need such aforementioned

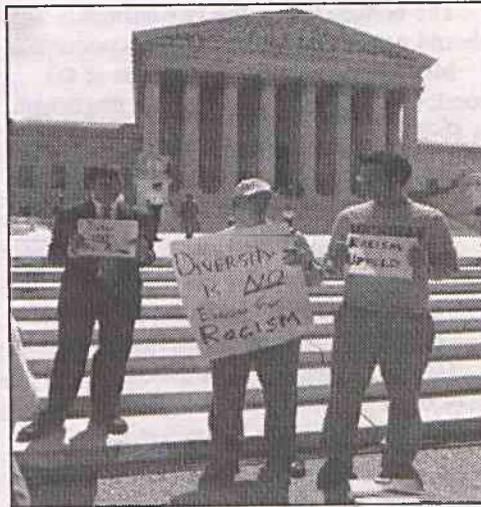
assistance.

Fostering diversity is repeatedly emphasized in business classes in the Love School of Business. However, this brings up a quandary; isn't hiring someone simply because of the color of their skin as great a disservice to the individual as it is to not hire them because of the same criteria?

According to the Feb. 20 edition of the Daily Tar Heel, Brendan Brown reports that the Boston University branch of the College Republicans has offered a "whites only scholarship." This act was protested by the NAACP as "racism, hatred and bigotry rearing its ugly head."

Why must this act of protest be immediately dismissed as racism? Are we to assume that simply because one of the requirements for the scholarship is that a student must be white, that it is immediately racist? Are we to make the same assumption with minority scholarships, which require that students be of a particular race? Is this not racism as well?

Perhaps it is because white males are not allowed to talk about discrimination in any dissenting way. Any discussion that criticizes



Courtesy of MCT Campus

Students protest affirmative action at court. affirmative action immediately leads to the detractor being called a racist, even when the detractor is black.

During the Harlem Renaissance of the 1920's George S. Schuyler, a black journalist, warned of the danger of being accepted simply for the color of ones skin. He believed

that using a modifier of being a black artist allowed racists to dismiss one's work as simply good for black art.

Schuyler felt that being defined by ones race led to a discrediting of one's works and achievements as either outright flukes or dismissed in the context of one's ethnic background. Countee Cullen, a Harlem Renaissance poet was quoted, "I want to be remembered as a great artist, not a great black artist."

He was criticized by his contemporaries, such as Langston Hughes for such sentiment.

Does this new phenomenon of advancing people based solely upon their race strike anyone else as fundamentally racist? Shouldn't candidates be chosen regardless of race, but for their abilities, not an arbitrary trait of their biology that no one has control over? We should judge potential students and employee's based on their abilities and character, not upon their region of ethnic origin or color of their skin.

Contact Bryan Ray at
pendulum@elon.edu or 278-7247

The confederate flag continues to create controversy

Brett Sciuletti
Columnist

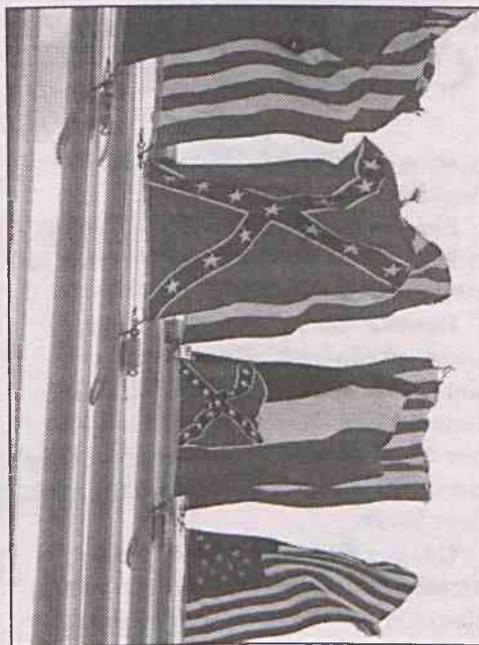
The red, white and blue banner still adorns the doors of many Americans; it refuses to die as a symbol of a past filled with ignorance and aggression.

The Confederate flag, not the United States one, represents everything modern Americans and the generations preceding them fought to eliminate: racism, slavery and a divided nation. While many will argue that these influences have diminished dramatically in the past few decades, they still prevail in the minds and hearts of some Americans who consider people of various ethnicities, backgrounds and religions of lesser descent.

In the South particularly, there are scores of people determined to prove the Confederate flag is a symbol of Southern heritage and greatness.

Even though many Southerners truly equate the flag to those meanings, they fail to realize the connotations of racism and hatred sewn into the flag.

Elon houses large numbers of both Northern and Southern students. While the school embodies a united front against intolerance and prejudice, Elon also serves



Graphic courtesy of MCT Campus

The Confederate flag still flies atop several capitols

as a hotspot for cultural conflict because of its incorporation of students from various regions into one institution.

Modern times separate Elon from the origins of conflict linked to the Confederate flag. Two periods of the flag's dominance, the Civil War and the Civil

Rights Movement, highlighted its occurrence as a trigger for slavery and segregation.

The brutality and cruelty associated with these eras cannot be forgotten merely because the flag represents Southern heritage to an assortment of people.

The Confederate flag should be kept only in museums and historical sites as a reminder of past mistakes. Southern heritage alone cannot disregard the blood spilled over this flag and what it meant to our ancestors.

In the year 2000, the South Carolina state government finally passed legislation to remove the Confederate flag from its prominent position atop the statehouse.

Political victories have made ground in stripping the flag of its importance, but human interest must be the backbone that supports these struggles to fight what the flag exemplifies.

This nation, unified for a century and a half, can no longer afford to wave this outdated banner.

Southern heritage will not die with the flag, rather it will continue stronger than ever without the impeding forces of segregation and hatred tied to it. The wounds of

racism can only heal if the knife of prejudice is removed.

Elon, in its unique position as both a Northern-Southern influenced school, should be a place for discussion and a forum enabling students to debate the role of the flag and whether it truly has a place in modern society.

Does this mean that Americans shouldn't have the right to wave the Confederate flag? No. The U.S. Constitution guarantees the right to practice one's own beliefs.

The difference between what is legal and what is ethically right, however, is another battle.

We forge our paths together as American everyday. To be divided by one flag will prevent us from honoring another, the one that represents this country and the freedom bound to carry it into the future.

Northerner or Southerner, past or future, we must remember what this country thrives on, not what it lingers over. We have one heritage, our American heritage, and one flag, our American Flag.

Contact Brett Sciuletti at
pendulum@elon.edu or 278-7247