

HANDGUNS ON CAMPUS?

NO: *This isn't the Wild West, the solution to violence isn't more violence*

By Alicia Bayat
Voice Staff Writer

Intentions are irrelevant. What matters is how the guns are used.

In 2009 a study in the American Journal of Public Health indicated that the United States is leader per capita in gun deaths among industrialized nations and that people in possession of a gun are 4.5 times more likely to be shot in an assault.

FBI crime reports show that 70 percent of all murders are committed with guns. In North Carolina alone, in 2009, there were 480 murders of which 335 of those were committed with a firearm (shotguns, rifles and handguns.) Most, 243 were committed with a handgun.

Although self defense is often the intention of people who buy and carry guns, there are complicated legal ramifications that make the difference between self defense and murder. The use of a gun in self defense isn't as simple as pulling the trigger. According to the FBI, only one percent of all murders in which firearms are involved are considered to be justifiable homicide.

Although Americans do have a constitutional right to carry fire arms, there are limits as to where a gun may be carried. For example, court houses and other public buildings are off limits. And the legal entitlement to self defense is clear. However, there are non-lethal alternatives to guns -- pepper spray, tasers, and learning self-defense. Most campuses also have a trained campus police presence.

Killing isn't easy. Even in self defense the average person is not emotionally and psychology prepared to pull that trigger and take a human life.

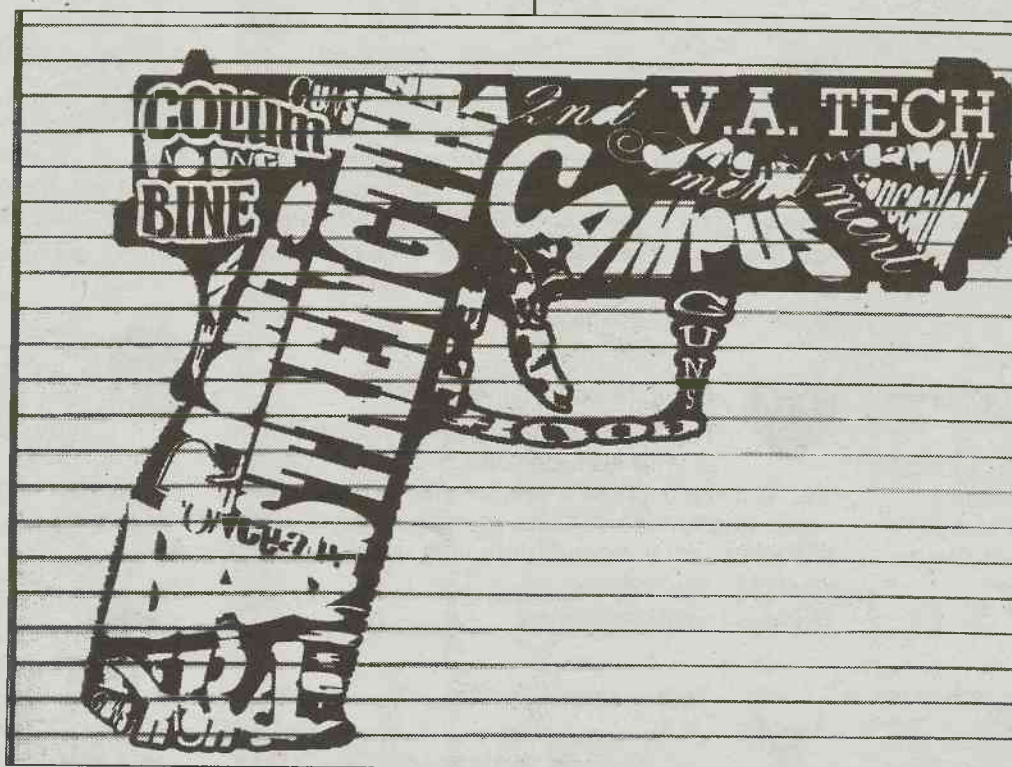
In 2009, a lone soldier opened fire on a room full of people at Fort Hood in Texas, one of the largest army bases in the world with a population of about 33,000, the majority of who are well-trained soldiers. The presence of armed individuals did not deter Major Nidal Malik Hasan from walking onto a heavily armed military base and killing and wounding 43 fellow soldiers and civilians. It took trained soldiers on a heavily fortified base more than 15 minutes to subdue Major Hasan and end the killing. The damage is irreparable for all those involved. Major Hasan was a mental health professional dealing with the effects of PTSD (Post traumatic Stress Disorder).

A 2005 FBI crime statistics report indicates murders in the United States

jumped 4.8 percent in 2004

The high emotional volatility on college campuses would be a ripe breeding ground for trouble. Students have been known to riot over lost football games. In 2001 in Chapel Hill, North Carolina students filled the streets, set fires and over turned cars after a Victory against Duke. Whether alcohol induced or just a rush of school spirit adding fire arms to the mix is a recipe for disaster.

The typical argument for pro gun advocates is that students, staff or faculty may be able to stop gunmen, if they are able to



Voice illustration by Jovian Turnbull

carry a gun on campus.

What kind of defense could an untested, inexperienced, armed person be against someone willing to die? How well would an untrained, panicked individual handle such a high stress situation? How fast would someone be able to react?

North Carolina gives permits to ALL qualified applicants. According to the U.S. Department of Justice, Right to Carry laws only require "minimal restrictive" criteria to carry concealed weapons.

A barrage of gun fire between individuals will not bring civility to an otherwise uncivilized situation. This is not the Wild West.

see **NOGUNS**, page 16

YES: *Don't sacrifice the safety of commuters for lack of resources*

By L'Asia Brown
Voice Editor in Chief

By North Carolina state law, no persons shall possess a firearm on any campus of the 17 constituent institutions of the University of North Carolina system. That means, in retrospect, no commuters who hold concealed weapon permits, no students who hold active restraining orders against harmful persons, no military members with active security clearances, nobody can bring their firearm on campus whether it's in their backpack or

68 percent of students enrolled at FSU are commuters, not to mention the staff, faculty and administration. Of that group, many have no choice but to take evening courses to coincide with their full-time jobs, families and other adult duties. At some point in time, commuters, staff, and faculty must leave the campus and return to their residences. Unfortunately, the environment off campus is usually of a higher threat level than FSU and the surrounding community. Commuters and respective employees of universities should not be forced to sacrifice their personal safety outside of the campus due to police shortages, system inefficiencies, or under-trained officers.

No resident student should be allowed to possess a firearm in any given situation. If the campus police department follows state regulations and ensures their training, equipment, and emergency management systems are up to par, there is absolutely no reason for a resident student to feel threatened. Commuter students don't have the luxury of retiring to a bed located within the confines of police that cater to them.

For example, if a commuting single mother, who lived in a low-income area in Spring Lake was released from an evening course at 8:50 p.m., she'd arrive home between 9:05 and 9:15 p.m., during hours of darkness. Let's say she had to pick up her child from a babysitter, now she arrives home between 9:30 and 10 p.m., with her child, during hours of darkness in a dangerous, crime-ridden neighborhood. She is licensed to have a concealed firearm for the protection of herself and her child, but because she cannot have a weapon at FSU, she must leave her handgun at home. Now, when she arrives home from her night class, she is left vulnerable to the seasoned criminals of Spring Lake, a city whose own police force has fallen victim to corruption before, and is still struggling to function with integrity.

I guarantee you this situation is much more prevalent at FSU, then students becoming deranged and deciding to shoot up their fellow students, faculty, and staff for whatever reason.

What do you tell these single mothers and fathers, students who live in crime-ridden neighborhoods, or people who just want to feel safe off campus? Because you can't tell them to call campus police, and the Fayetteville police are not going

their vehicle, including Fayetteville State University.

With recent campus shootings in Michigan and California community colleges, the University of Texas, and FSU, the law is understandable, but not necessarily justifiable. Instead of patronizing entire student bodies with laws that have potential to expose large populations of students to additional harm, campuses should implement detailed measures that would allow licensed, qualified students to bring registered weapons on campus, in their vehicles, for their own personal safety.

Campus police are present to ensure maximum safety and minimal worry for students who must travel throughout the campus during dark hours, but more than

see **YESGUNS**, page 16