

Is selection for research programs unfair?

By: STEVEN PHILIPS

The annual junior scramble for research opportunities has come: students wait anxiously outside teachers' offices, hoping to be one of the few lucky students to be accepted. NCSSM offers four research classes in the fields of physics, biology, computational science, and chemistry.

These research classes showcase NCSSM's brightest, and most innovative students. These students enter many prestigious competitions, such as Siemens, Intel, and Conrad, often emerging as winners.

Although research classes give students great opportunities, the application process is very rigorous. Students have to come with goals and ideas for the time they plan to spend in the class. On top of this, interviews are a required part of the admission process.

Junior Cole Simons said, "I was interested in RPhys, but I didn't think that I had a sufficient amount of time to

complete the application."

Some students struggled to come up with an idea for a research project in such a short period of time. Because many students had no previous interview experience, they were left at a disadvantage to those who had.

Many students who are

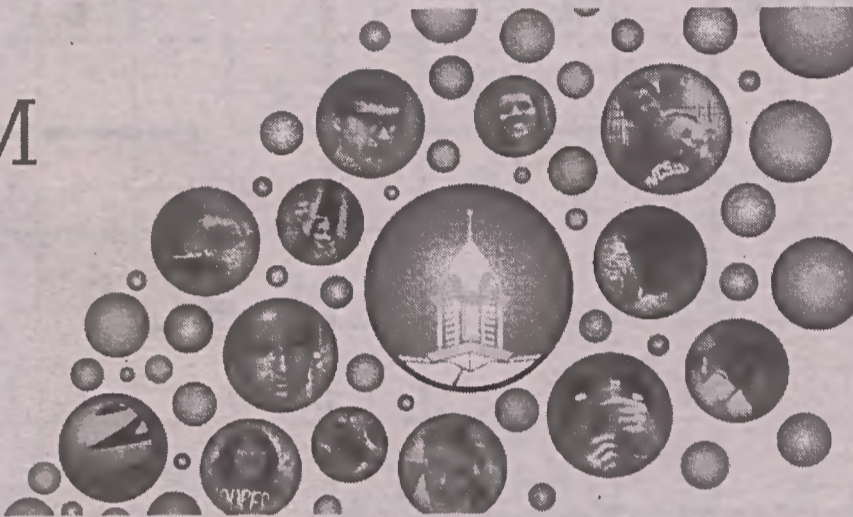
do? First of all, juniors need more time to put together an application that reflects their ideas and goals. More students would have the time to apply, and the quality of the applications would be significantly better.

Publicity of the research classes should begin on

which students travel to UNC, Duke, NC Central, or RTP and conduct research with a university professor.

Also, students can sign up for a Research Experience class in the field of their choice. In these classes, students formulate a research question, learn standard laboratory

NCSSM
Exponential
Possibilities



Courtesy of NCSSM

accepted into research classes have either had previous research experience, or knew about research classes before coming to NCSSM.

Interested students without a research background, often don't even apply, and are rarely selected.

So what should NCSSM

Welcome Day so students can have the opportunity to begin their research experience the summer before their junior year at NCSSM.

For current juniors who weren't accepted into research classes, opportunities are still available. Juniors can apply for Mentorship, in

techniques, and conduct experiments to find the answer to their question.

If you end up conducting research, make sure it's in a topic that you are truly passionate about. It could end up being one of the most memorable parts of your two years at NCSSM.

Students share thoughts on NCSSM admissions

By: OLIVIA TRUAX

Admission to NCSSM is competitive, last year about 30% of applicants were admitted to the residential program, but the number of applicants and the relative admissions rates vary by congressional districts. This fact is both known, and the subject of much speculation by NCSSM students.

"The 4th, the 8th and the 12th [congressional districts]

Laskowitz, a junior, says, "When I say I'm from Durham, it doesn't seem like people automatically think about how it may have been harder for me to get accepted. I think everyone here realizes that the only important thing is how we all got in, fair and square. I don't believe that people look too far beyond that in terms of analyzing merit or intelligence."

are smarter than the rest of us," argues Hannah Sheffield. "A lot of times people come from high schools that just didn't have good enough academics. We are all really smart, but [the people from the competitive districts] just tend to me more prepared."

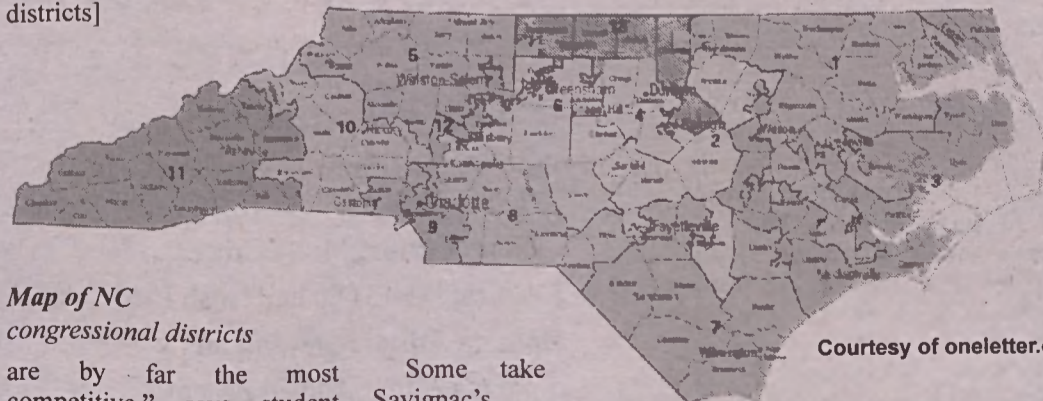
"If the admissions office just let in the top applicants, NCSSM would be almost all people from CD's 4, 8, and 12," Sheffield continues.

from the Piedmont, Triad, and Triangle areas," says Director of Admissions Letita Mason. "The legislature passed a mandate to base admission and enrollment on congressional district to ensure that NCSSM would serve the constituents of each district."

NCSSM was created to give a world class education to the top students from all corners of the state - to take the best students out of a sometime underperforming school system and allow them to learn from each other and fabulous teachers.

"I don't think that NCSSM would be following its mission if it only admitted the most technically qualified students," says Wynter Wolff, "A student from Enloe or Meyer's Park doesn't really need the opportunities and education NCSSM provides to be prepared for college in the way that a student from, say, Weldon County does."

Student opinions on the subject of admission to NCSSM and the relative levels of competition in each district vary greatly, and without any hard data on the subject it is unlikely that the speculation will cease.



Map of NC congressional districts

Courtesy of oneletter.org

are by far the most competitive," says student ambassador Nicole Savignac. "Those are the districts where all the kids from the Triangle, Raleigh, and Charlotte are applying from, so I think that a lot of people agree that it's a lot harder to get in from those places."

But, not everyone agrees with this assessment. Michael

Some take Savignac's opinion a step further. "People from Raleigh, Charlotte, and the triangle are pretty much the smartest people in the school," says one senior.

"People from the more competitive districts tend to be academically ready to take the advanced classes which I think perpetuates the idea that they

"They're the ones who've done independent research before and came from really rigorous high schools. If NCSSM really wanted the top students in the state that's who they would enroll."

"At one point in our institutional history NCSSM predominantly enrolled students

Miniterm planning begins

By: WYNTER WOLFF

The end of second trimester is a landmark at NCSSM that everyone looks forward to. For the juniors, it marks the end of the hardest trimester of their attendance here, and seniors can begin counting the days until graduation. But that's not all that February brings: it also holds one of the most fun experiences NCSSM can offer: Miniterm.

Miniterm occurs at the period between trimester break and the beginning of 3rd trimester. During these eight days, NCSSM students have two options. They can either participate in one of the specialized 8-day courses that are planned and taught by faculty, or they can participate in a project of their own design, sponsored by a teacher or advisor. Anyone pursuing an independent project must submit their proposal by Friday, Nov. 18.

The purpose of this unique program is to allow students to explore a subject interesting to them outside of the classroom setting, and engage them in opportunities not usually offered in a standard class curriculum.

NCSSM Miniterms can be held on campus, or as far away as Athens, Greece. Offerings can range from the extremely academic, such as "Societal Implications of Modern Physics", to more laid back options, such as "Broadway Dance."

Those who choose a Miniterm that takes place on campus will attend classes from about 4-6 hours a day, sometimes supplemented with field trips and guest lecturers. Maryanna Parker participated in "Animal Behavior", a course that studied antagonistic tendencies and mating behaviors of different animals.

"I loved my Miniterm a lot. We got to go off campus to the zoo and the Museum of Life and Science, where we saw how knowledge of animal behavior was used in real world application."

In addition to the courses taking place on campus, there are many Miniterms that include travelling to other countries. Among these are trips to Greece, France, Costa Rica, Italy, and Honduras. While these are much more expensive than the courses offered on campus, they allow for a much more enriching and rounded experience.

"I stayed on campus last year for Miniterm, but this year I'm going to Belize. Now instead of learning about marine life in a classroom, I get to actually go snorkeling and see it in person," says senior Rebekah Wells.