

Student Party And University Party Give Campus Nation's Oldest, Strongest Political Party System

EDITOR'S NOTE: During his first week at Carolina, every freshman will almost certainly encounter some form of literature from one or both of the University's student political parties—the Student Party and the University Party, usually referred to as the SP and the UP. In order to help new students better understand the function of student political parties on campus, UP chairman David Kiel and SP chairman Bob Wilson, have prepared the following information on the campus party system.)



BOB WILSON
SP Chairman



DAVID KIEL
UP Chairman

With the founding of the University Party in 1933 and the rise of the Student Party three years later, the Carolina campus witnessed the beginning of what was to become the oldest and strongest student political party system in the nation. Since then the two political parties have dominated the campus political scene.

In the beginning, the only basic difference separating the two political parties was that the University Party drew its strength primarily from the fraternities and the Student Party had its strongest basis of support in the dormitories. With some modification, this situation has existed down to the present day, although each party has made major inroads into the traditional territory of the other.

World War II had a tremendous effect on the party system. The end of the war saw a large influx of veterans into the University. Because most of them lived in dormitories, they naturally gravitated to the Student Party, bringing with them the activist's conviction that every problem has its solution.

The dormitories' need of Student Government action to solve many of their problems and the fraternities' basic conservative orientation tended to reinforce the tendency toward an ideological divergence between the two parties.

SP MORE ACTIVIST-ORIENTED
Consequently, the Student Party has, generally speaking, been more activist-oriented

and outspoken on such issues as academic freedom, civil rights, dormitory improvements, and judicial reform.

SP Student Government administrations have generally tended to be more militant in their relations with the University administration. As a result, SP administrations have often seen bitter confrontations develop between the University administration and Student Government over such issues as the student judiciary and student autonomy.

Over the years the University Party has adopted a position of, as one person termed it, "progressive conservatism."

Both parties are broad-based and each has its liberal and conservative wings. Each party actively seeks new members from every area of the cam-

pus and of every political persuasion.

National politics doesn't seem to play an important role in the individual's choice of one of the parties, and both parties have Democrats and Republicans alike in leadership positions.

UP REPRESENTATIVELY COMPOSED
The University Party is organized on a representative system much as are the two national parties, with each residence unit having a certain number of delegates in the convention based on the number of UP members living in the residence.

The UP is the larger of the two parties due partly to the practice of most fraternities and sororities actively encouraging all their members to become party members and par-

ty to a vigorous campus-wide membership campaign conducted by the party in recent years.

In the past, party meetings have been infrequent and party policy has been generally left up to an Executive Committee elected by the party membership.

Membership in the Student Party is on an individual basis with each member having one vote in convention and party meetings. Meetings are held about once every three weeks. Party policy is largely determined by the party members in open meeting with the party leadership exercising considerable influence.

SMOKE AND STRATEGY
In both parties, the necessity and secrecy dictates that campaign strategy be determined in the traditional smoke-filled room among a small group of party leaders and campaign workers.

These inner groups are by no means as elitist as one might imagine. It is not at all unusual for an incoming freshman who shows promise as a party leader, candidate, or campaign worker to be accepted almost immediately into the innermost leadership circle of either party.

Competition between the two parties can be bitter, especially during elections. Nevertheless, both parties are sincerely interested in advancing the wel-

fare of the student body and the University, and though their approaches may be different, this mutuality of goals makes for a friendly, if heated, opposition.

The parties nominate candidates for all elective positions established by Student Government statute, with the exception of the judiciary which is made non-partisan by law. Each party is about equally effective in putting its candidates into office.

THE BATTLEGROUND
The main battlefield of the parties between elections is the Student Legislature. Although dominated in recent years by the Student Party, this year the 30-man body is split exactly even between the two parties with a UP Vice President sitting in the chair.

SP and UP legislators meet in their respective party caucuses before each session of the body to discuss pending legislation and the strategy and position they will take. Though party conflict rarely erupts on the floor, when it does the atmosphere can be electric as each side of the aisle votes in opposition to the other side to the last man.

WHY HAVE PARTIES
There are those who scorn the political parties and speak of "petty partisan politics." Others concede that the parties are a necessary evil. But to persons who have worked

in Student Government, the parties are a necessary good.

Without them the conflict of issues and programs would almost disappear from campus political campaigns and elections would be relegated to little more than glorified popularity contests.

It is the parties which the students hold responsible for the actions of their elected officials who rarely seek reelection to the same office.

And it is the parties that provide continuity to a governmental system that each year sees a new generation of students arrive to receive the mantle of campus citizenship left by the student generation which has gone before.

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