

# Campus Activism

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The primary goal of partisan groups is to effect some type of change. To achieve this goal, the group needs public approval. Through the years, groups have used different methods in winning over public support. During the '60s, students demonstrated in front of South Building. Today, literature tables are the primary way campus groups communicate their opinions.

"No one wants to use the term 'propaganda,'" says Robert Cox, a professor in the department of speech communication. Cox teaches a course titled "Rhetoric of Contemporary Social Movements."

"The information is selected by a group with particular interests. The critical consumer ought to remember this and shop around before deciding on an issue.

"Those groups that are most effective are sensitive to the needs of their audience," Cox says. "They need to think about to whom they are speaking and how their audience views the world. The CWP (Communist Workers' Party) is probably least sensitive to its audience, whereas, pro-life (anti-abortion) groups have done a very significant job studying the needs of people and have been very effective rhetorically."

The groups Cox referred to are just two of the organizations that have become more vocal and visible during the past two years. Cox believes political activism has increased on campus recently, and he cites the strong student appeal of independent presidential candidate John Anderson as an example of renewed political interest.

## From the '60s confrontations to the coalitions of the '80s, groups use varying methods to get their messages across

"Students have recovered the idealism and identity that was lost through the Vietnam War and Watergate," Cox says.

The phrase "student political activism" often invokes images of demonstrations led by long-haired radicals from the 1960s. Campus activism today, however, is different from that witnessed in the late '60s and early '70s at UNC. The issues, and the activists, have changed.

**P**OLITICAL science Professor Lewis Lipsitz says campus political activism is greater now than it was four or five years ago. But campus participation now is not as widespread as it was in the late '60s and early '70s, says Lipsitz, who helped

organize anti-war protests as a professor at UNC during the Vietnam War era.

"It was a very different atmosphere then. Issues had a sense of immediacy, and understandably so. Students on this campus were being drafted.

"They (students) were being placed in a position where they had to make some very important decisions," Lipsitz says. "Life-and-death situations were being confronted every day."

Students lost faith in the American political system during the Vietnam War era. Voting seemed an ineffective way of voicing one's opinion, and soon students were staging demonstrations and protests to show their disapproval of the war.

Many campus protests and demonstrations took place at Carolina between 1967 and 1970. The Dec. 11, 1968, issue of *The Daily Tar Heel* had three stories about separate protests the day before. One was an anti-war protest, another was a demonstration by black students and the third was a picket by cafeteria workers.

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Today, persuasion tactics are different. Because demonstrations have negative connotations, many groups have ruled out the use of marches, pickets and sit-ins. Pressure groups now are working through the political and judicial systems rather than trying to attack the "establishment." Lobbying of public officials has emerged as a popular and often successful strategy for many groups.

When the Chapel Hill Anti-Nuclear Group Effort was formed two years ago, organizers included in the group's bylaws a provision barring marches and pickets.

"We did not want people in the community to see us as a radical group," says Ray Klimas, a board member for CHANGE. "I personally think grassroots tactics are better than a publicity-grabbing thing."

Newsletters, literature tables, letters to public officials, personal communication with friends and the use of speakers and film series for the community are CHANGE's primary methods of getting its message to the public.

CHANGE contributed money to a lobby effort to convince state legislators of the need for a solar-energy tax credit.

**O**RGANIZERS for the newly-formed group Carolina Students for Freedom, an organization opposed to ERA, said they did



Art by Greg Calibey