

The Daily Tar Heel

90th year of editorial freedom

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In the minority

Some students will graduate from UNC without ever having a course with a black or female professor. And if a current trend is any indication, the longer a student stays here, the chances become slimmer and slimmer.

Blacks comprise 2.7 percent of the University faculty for the 1982 fall semester, according to a report issued by Chancellor Christopher C. Fordham. The percentage of women faculty is 19.2 percent. Even more discouraging than the low percentages is the fact that both figures represent a decline.

The University's progress in recruiting minority students must not overshadow its poor performance in hiring minority faculty. Those dwindling numbers represent a step backward. For a university that prides itself on being one of the best in the South, its record on black and female faculty presence is stunningly unimpressive.

Has UNC become complacent? Certainly, there are several barriers to attracting more minority faculty members to Chapel Hill and keeping them here. Historically, the South has not been a land of opportunity for blacks or women. Chapel Hill does not have a substantial middle class black population; most black professors choose to live in Durham. Poor economic times have been complicated by Gov. Jim Hunt's salary freeze for state employees.

It is also difficult to win the numbers game. Although 1,100 blacks earned Ph.D.s in 1980, 55 percent of those were in the field of education, while not a single black was granted a doctoral degree in computer science. The problem is compounded by the fact that UNC is competing with the rest of the nation for a scarce resource, a piece of that valuable pool of qualified applicants.

Gillian Cell, UNC's Affirmative Action officer, said one goal was to start building that pool at an earlier stage by identifying talented black students and ensuring that they are advised about the possibility of an academic career. She also is encouraging departments to contact graduate programs around the country to track down promising Ph.D. candidates. Cell also is seeking an evaluation of a new "Vitabank" service set up by several universities as a reservoir of information about black scholars.

But UNC's hiring process does not always have a good reputation among those scholars.

"Is the University sincere? After the consent decree was handed down and the numbers of minority faculty actually decreased, people got the impression we really don't care," said English professor J. Lee Greene, a member of the Black Faculty/Staff Caucus.

In addition to emphasizing the quality of applicants recruited, UNC also should look to the quality of those doing the recruiting. If departmental search committees are dominated by white males, chances are greater that those hired will also be white males.

When visiting black applicants leave UNC with an unfavorable impression, the news spreads to other prospective professors. When female applicants discover they may become the only woman in a department, they seek a more progressive alternative at other universities. The vicious circle must be broken in both cases. Having black or female professors on search committees when possible would add needed diversity to the selection process.

Subtler forms of sexism and racism may have crept into the system. A high turnover rate among new black and female faculty may reflect how uncomfortable they feel after arriving at UNC.

There are only 44 blacks and 267 women in tenure-track positions at UNC. Furthermore, the Chancellor's report shows that minority presence is decreasing. Stagnation is one thing, but regression is quite another. Diversity is an important element at any university. Most students here can count on one hand the number of times they have not been taught by a white male. Because of that, they leave UNC with a part of their education incomplete.

BSM renewal

For the Black Student Movement, this has been a difficult semester. The BSM constantly has had to battle a never-ending series of internal problems that has made it difficult for the organization to function effectively or gain the respect of black students that it desperately needs. It's time for the group — and especially its Central Committee and upper hierarchy — to take a cold, objective look at itself and re-evaluate what it should be doing for the University's black community.

The problems of the BSM primarily have been internal, not external as some of the group's members have claimed. This fall, the BSM had a series of organizational problems that didn't seem to end: two drives to impeach BSM chairperson Wende Watson; the resignation of Central Committee executives because of academic and administrative problems; the freezing of BSM funds because of Treasury Law violations; and other problems involving personnel disputes and the general operation of the BSM.

That is not to say the BSM has not had accomplishments. The main purpose of the BSM, according to acting chairperson William Bland, is to preserve the cultural presence of blacks on campus. In that the group has been successful.

The BSM has been less successful, however, in its non-cultural activities. The group has participated in activities like Pre-Orientation and the recruitment of black students to UNC, but there appears to be much more the organization can do to serve the needs of blacks.

That, however, is up to the BSM to decide. The BSM must now ask itself what its goals should be in non-cultural activities. No one is questioning the BSM's right to exist; there is clearly a need for the organization. But to achieve more for the black community, the organization must have a more clearly stated purpose.

The first action to take would be for the BSM Central Committee members to make an active effort to communicate with their constituents. Too often the Central Committee has operated in a secret, clandestine fashion that has alienated general body members and limited the interaction between the Central Committee and other BSM members.

It's also important for the group's leaders not to overreact and become defensive at criticism of their actions. Constructive criticism, from both within and outside the BSM, is an attempt to improve the organization; brandishing those critical of current politics as anti-BSM or racist can only serve as a destructive force.

It is clear that the BSM cannot effectively serve the University if it continues to be mired in the often petty problems of its hierarchy. The group's reputation has been damaged in the University community and with blacks themselves. Of the 1,700 black students at UNC, only about 300 are BSM members; that figure is down from about 500 members one year ago.

That damage certainly is not irreparable. On Jan. 25, the BSM will have the opportunity to vote for a new leader or retain current chairperson Watson. Meanwhile, BSM members should re-evaluate what they think the organization should strive to do. With good leadership and a new, fresh commitment to serving the black community, the BSM can put the problems of this semester behind it and build a stronger, more effective organization.

Chancellor Christopher C. Fordham

By KERRY DEROGHI

In January 1981, Janice Murphy, a freshman from Atlanta, read in *The Daily Tar Heel* that the chancellor had been ill over Christmas. Murphy was not sure what the chancellor did or who he was. She only remembered hearing through fall orientation that he was important and a "good guy."

Murphy decided to write the chancellor and wish him well. Within two weeks he had replied, thanking her for the card. He said he hoped to meet her soon.

Since then, Murphy has dropped by the chancellor's office twice a semester to leave a note or just say hello.

Each time, he responds two weeks later with a letter.

In describing the chancellor, those who know Christopher C. Fordham III always mentioned what they call a remarkable sense for the other person. His concern is as much for the freshman struggling through an introductory chemistry course as it is for a chancellor at another major university. His job is demanding and powerful and he continues to view it with a combination of humility and exhilaration.

"The University is so big and so complicated and so important that you have to kind of hope and wonder if you're able to do it," Fordham said recently. "Nobody can really 'run it.' I have no desire to run the lives of students and faculty members. I do the best I can to create an environment and help them have the tools for which they can develop themselves. That's what the University is all about."

Every day Fordham meets with the administration, lawmakers and UNC alumni. He lobbies in Chapel Hill, Raleigh and Washington, D.C., for the University. Yet, on most Sunday afternoons, he can be found next to the Old Well ready to greet anyone who passes by. Much of his spare time is allotted to answering letters, cards and gifts.

At the helm of a major southern university, Fordham characterizes the traditional southern gentleman. He is skilled in making polite conversation; a visitor to his office is always greeted with a warm smile and a handshake. He directs the conversation away from himself. The visitor leaves with the impression that the chancellor has taken an interest in him. Fordham will remember the name. And he always says "thank you" for dropping by.

But beneath the polished manners and the impeccable style, Fordham is determined. He speaks with clarity and forcefulness about issues facing the University and himself. He knows what course the University should take.

Fordham is like the town around which his life has been anchored, a community characterized with an easygoing style, but underneath, housing some of the brightest minds and most driving ambitions in the country.

Christopher Columbus Fordham III was born in Greensboro on Nov. 28, 1926, and caught his first taste of Carolina fever soon after. With a father who now owns a drugstore and who graduated from UNC, cheering for the teams in blue and white just followed naturally. On special occasions he and his older brother, Henry, would be able to cheer for the football team with the rest of the crowd in Kenan stadium.

"It took on a great deal of glamour and inspiration on a young person's part when he'd visit this campus," Fordham said. "I was just fairly typical in this regard; I thought there was nothing like it."

'WALTER'

Concern for stranger outweighs studying for tests and writing papers

By MIKE DESISTI

Not much could be better than a couple of eggs over easy, a few strips of bacon, a hot, buttered biscuit and a plate full of grits from the Waffle Shop on a Sunday morning, especially with a week's worth of work to do in the afternoon ahead. But a confrontation with a not-too-pleasant reality can have quite a souring effect on any stomachful. Take it from someone who knows firsthand.

I was walking back from Franklin Street after such a breakfast a couple of days ago, trying to figure out what would be better, or worse for that matter: spending the last day of Thanksgiving recess sleeping over in the stacks at Wilson Library, or bored in one of the booths in the Undergrad. Such was my perilous predicament. I had yet to make a decision when along came Walter, shuffling down the brick path on North Campus, past Silent Sam and on toward town.

Walter and I hadn't met, at least not until he asked me if he was going the right way to get to the "Chapel Hill Hospital." He was a tall, young, black man, with an afro that looked more like a wiry mushroom cap than a head of hair. Walter had on a pair of mustard-colored Converse high-tops. With his jeans making it only halfway down his legs to just below the knee, I could trace the laces to the very last eyelids.

I told him I wasn't sure if there was a Chapel Hill Hospital. I kind of wished there were, though, so I could get this character on his way. Walter wasn't your typical UNC student. Walter just wasn't typical. He looked as if he were going to fall asleep standing up, and I found myself hoping for a moment that he would, so I could run. He didn't look hurt, but he didn't appear to be all that well, either. I asked him what was wrong, and he told me.

Walter said he was all messed up on drugs. And then he asked me for a joint. He needed to straighten up, he added, justifying his request. I didn't argue with that, but told him I didn't smoke — anything. Then I pointed him in the direction of N.C. Memorial Hospital, figuring if birds could fly South without a map, Walter could do it on foot.

Later Fordham applied to only one University. He received a certificate in medicine here before setting off for Harvard medical school. He then returned to North Carolina Memorial Hospital to complete his residency before starting a Greensboro practice. After becoming a faculty member at the University in 1958, Fordham began moving up the University ladder. He left UNC to be dean of the school of medicine at the Medical College of Georgia in Augusta. Two years later, he returned to UNC as dean of the medical school. He later served as vice chancellor for health affairs. And in 1977, he was offered a position in the Department of Health, Education and Welfare by former president Jimmy Carter, but he turned it down.

Today Fordham, 56, still shakes his head as if in disbelief of all that has happened. In his offices in South building, he works under the watchful eyes of former chancellors whose portraits decorate the walls. Large book cases filled with annual reports of University finances and policy have replaced his medical textbooks and



Chancellor Fordham (I) with UNC basketball's Smith and Worthy ... the chancellor grew up with UNC and now runs the school

journals. *The New York Times Guide to Colleges* is displayed on the coffee table.

He and his wife, Barbara, live in a spacious brick home on Country Club Drive. The house, owned by the University, is just a short distance from the couple's first home in Chapel Hill — a rented room and bath.

In those days, Mrs. Fordham would spend hours quizzing her husband on medical terminology. Now she is busy serving as the first lady of the University.

The Fordhams seem to understand the role they play at the University. Fordham says the people attending alumni meetings or other functions are there to meet the chancellor, not Christopher C. Fordham.

"I'm absolutely aware of the fact that the University does not depend on me, and the things I've got to give it are my limited talents and what energy and ideas I have and my integrity," Fordham said. "Those are the things I will give. And I think I can give them without becoming overly-imbued with a sense of self-importance."

Two years ago, the chancellor's career with the University was seriously threatened. A week before Christmas, he had returned to Chapel Hill angry and upset from meetings with federal government officials in Washington. The scheduled meetings had been delayed, meaning an extra trip after Christmas. Early the next morning, Fordham slipped while getting out of bed and fell unconscious to the

floor.

The chancellor was diagnosed as having suffered a mild stroke. He was hospitalized two days later when he began his recovery program. Each day for the next month, the chancellor was put through the rigorous physical and occupation therapy. He had to learn to walk again.

The chancellor returned home in January. One month later he made his first public appearance at the Morehead Planetarium where he spoke at a benefit. And in March he returned to work part time.

Fordham now sees a doctor once every six months. The traces of his stroke have disappeared except for a limp in his left leg. At times, he has trouble moving his left arm.

"Of course it shook me up considerably," Fordham said. "It changed the whole course of my life."

"I really have gotten back in control of my life which is the most important thing. That's what you lose in the hospital; you lose control of your own destiny."

factory," Fordham said. "I think (the programs) have paid off in the sense there's been obvious achievement by minority students and minority faculty. We now have an alumni group of black graduates and they're very impressive and very energetic."

"So much has been achieved, but so much more has to be achieved that I'm not satisfied with anything."

In answer to criticism that the University places too much emphasis on research, neglecting the importance of classroom performance, Fordham sides with the need for quality research.

"We're talking about reaching for the stars intellectually, and that requires exciting and creative minds," Fordham said. "So in that sense if you want to go to a four-year college, where there's no large scholarly library, where there's no scholarly faculty but where you're spoon-fed courses, this is not the college to come to. This is a college where professors are researchers and where they are at the frontier of knowledge in their field."

"Students who come here should be the kind that want that."

Though tackling these tough issues everyday, Fordham has always tried to leave time for students. In a given day he will meet with student leaders in the morning to discuss University policy and chat with those dropping by in the afternoon. One day a group of third graders lost their way to the Morehead Planetarium and ended up in the chancellor's lobby. Fordham opened his door, walked out and spoke to them for several minutes. Two weeks ago, he spoke to a class of sixth graders at an area elementary school in honor of American Education Week.

It's during the summer months and holidays that Fordham can relax with family and friends. He counts his family life as a large reason for his success. He remembers his own childhood when Friday nights were reserved for the whole family to sit down and play cards or go to a movie.

In between his duty as chancellor and his own family, Fordham still finds time to golf with a close friend, head basketball coach Dean Smith. The two had met 25 years ago and started playing golf together a few years later. Smith describes Fordham as a leader who has given his life in service to the University and to the medical profession. "We never dreamed he'd be back (after the stroke) hitting the ball so far, so well," Smith said. "I think it shows a great deal of dedication on his part."

Smith added that the golf should be the relaxing part of the chancellor's schedule. "But he's such a competitor, he doesn't even relax out there," Smith said, laughing.

And even in practice, I'd feel like I needed to be ready, to be at the cutting edge."

As chancellor, being on the cutting edge meant being ready to face issues inherent in any large institution today. Fordham said he believes the largest problem now facing the University is the economy.

He cites problems such as an inadequate food service and housing shortage. But he is particularly disappointed with recruitment of black faculty members. Two weeks ago, a report presented to the Faculty Council showed that the number of black faculty members had decreased for the second year in a row. On Monday, about 40 students marched across campus in protest of the low numbers.

Fordham blames the numbers on the difficulty of retaining black faculty in a southern university environment. He believes the recruitment practices now in use have helped in some ways. "We've gotten some excellent students and some excellent

faculty."

"I think I will."

Kerry DeRochi is a senior journalism and English major from Greensboro.

But I really felt bad doing that, so I called him back. I asked him, rather foolishly, if he needed help. I guess I just needed to hear him come out and say it for himself. And he did, so I decided to walk him to the hospital. The N.C. Memorial Hospital.

I asked Walter what kind of drugs he was taking. He told me pills. He was an entertainer, you see, and he said the people in the entertainment business had made him take these pills to help him perform. I asked him what kind of an entertainer he was. Walter said he was an all-around entertainer; he could sing, dance, and act — You name it.

I shook Walter's hand, wished him luck, and left to my world of worry; I had papers and tests to grieve over. But then I had to stop and wonder. Who really had the problem—me or him?

When I asked where he was from, Walter told me, "no place, really." Walter had no job; they were too hard to find. He had dropped out of high school, mostly because he devoted too much time to his "exercises" — those type of things entertainers do to improve their performing abilities.

I wasn't sure just what to make of this guy Walter, but I did know he needed help. And so did he. I took him to emergency admissions at N.C. Memorial, ignoring the gaping eyes and giggles as I walked down the hospital halls with my new acquaintance.

The receptionist recognized Walter immediately. He told her the same thing he had told me. He was messed up on drugs, and needed help. When the woman asked him where he lived, he told her. Nowhere. She asked where his mother lived. He told her she was dead. She asked about his father. He told her his father lived in Morrisville, but he didn't know the address or the phone number.

The receptionist then told him to have a seat in a little room directly across from the desk, and said she'd get a doctor to have a look at him. Walter took a pack of cigarettes from his coat pocket, thanked her, and went into the room and had a smoke.

I approached the receptionist to see what was going to happen to Walter. She explained that Walter had been to N.C. Memorial before, on his own will, and had been admitted to a local mental hospital, but had apparently been released. And the way I took it, the same thing was about to happen all over again. Walter was harmless, she said, he just had some problems.

This was rather obvious to me. What I wanted to know was why no one took the time to stop and think about what those problems really were. Sure, he was doing drugs, but why? Only because he had nothing better to

do, and he probably never would with people taking his social deviance for granted and just dismissing him as a misfit — all with smile.

I shook Walter's hand, wished him luck, and left to my world of worry; I had papers and tests to grieve over. But then I had to stop and wonder. Who really had the problem — me or him? All academics aside, I had walked away. Sure, I took him to the hospital. But now I was turning my back on a boy who simply needed someone to talk to, someone to listen, and someone to care. Walter just needed a friend.

But I had already helped my old lady across the street for the day. I went back to the Undergrad library, to learn. And I did, only not about the Parliamentary election system in West Germany or catharsis of the liver. I learned a little bit about life, and about myself — the hard way.

Mike DeSisti, a sophomore English and Journalism major from Greece, N.Y., is assistant sports editor of *The Daily Tar Heel*.