

Analyzing the quality of U.S. education

By **CEDRIC RICKS**
Staff Writer

Participants in a panel discussion expressed different views Wednesday about the quality of higher education in America.

The panelists debated Alan Bloom's book, *The Closing of the American Mind*, which contends that the quality of higher education in America has suffered because universities and colleges have shifted emphasis from study of the liberal arts.

The discussion was part of the Carolina Symposium.

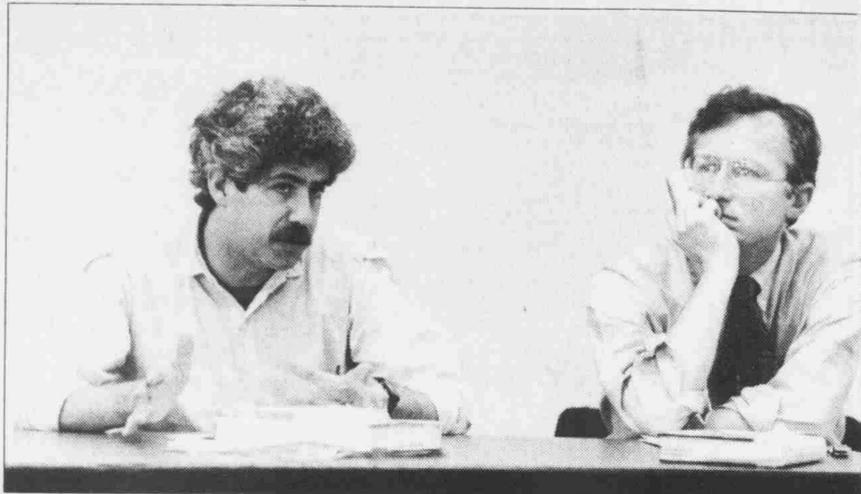
Panelists included David Dill, associate professor of education; Bryan Hassel, former student body president; George Kennedy, chairman of the Faculty Council; Earl Richards, assistant professor of comparative literature; Mary Scholl, former president of the Campus Y; and James Thompson, associate professor of English.

Warren Nord, director of the Humanities Program, moderated the discussion.

The panel debated Bloom's statement that liberal arts programs at universities are suffering because they no longer focus on great works of Western literature.

Bloom writes that the shift in emphasis from teaching classical novels of thought to teaching concepts of tolerance results in closing the minds of American students, Scholl said.

"My first impression of Bloom's book was, 'Why did he write this book?'" Scholl said. "It seemed like



James Thompson (left) and David Dill participate in discussion about the quality of higher education

Symposium 1988

a writer's fearful reaction to change in society," she said.

Teaching concepts of tolerance in universities has resulted in diverse opinions about right and wrong, and Bloom concludes that society can no longer agree on the world's universal truths, Dill said.

"We are an incredibly pluralistic society," Dill said. "I think that is

what Bloom is afraid of."

Hassel said it is hard to distinguish between good books and truly great books. Western literature, like Plato's works, are limited because they only show the perspective of white males, he said.

Works of literature cannot definitively be categorized as great books, because the classification is a recent invention, Richards said.

"We cannot deceive ourselves into thinking that all great books are somewhere immediately and

universally recognizable as such," he said.

Only people familiar with classic literature can define what books are truly great, Nord said.

"Until you have read good books, you are not qualified to judge what are the great books," he said.

A liberal arts education, developed at Harvard, was originally intended to train ministers to lead society, and the common source of truth was the Bible, Dill said.

Cigarette industry unaffected by bans, tobacco lobbyists say

By **TAMMY BLACKARD**
Staff Writer

Despite recent government and airline bans on smoking, Washington lobbyists for the tobacco industry insist the market is not turning downward. But a tobacco export promoter says that farmers have gotten a bad deal.

"There has been no decrease in profits in the tobacco industry," said Walker Merryman, vice president of the Tobacco Institute, a lobbying organization for the tobacco industry. "It's one of the most profitable industries in the world. I don't see a major trend toward banning smoking in the workplace or on airlines."

The federal government banned smoking on all domestic flights under two hours long, effective April 23. Northwest Airlines also announced recently a ban on smoking on all flights. Those decisions should not affect the tobacco industry, Merryman said. In fact, he said, the industry has had an increasing market potential.

"Tobacco companies announced about six to eight months ago that they will not be purchasing as much tobacco from foreign markets, and that should help our industry," Merryman said. "American tobacco exports are up by 60 percent in the last 12 months — the industry is expanding."

But the president of an export

promotion company financed nationally by farmers said that while the market may be expanding for the tobacco industry, the same is not true for farmers.

"Cigarette and leaf tobacco exports are going up, yes, but farmers have been getting the squeeze," said Kirk Wayne, president of Tobacco Associates, Inc., in Washington, D.C. "The industry has been doing well, but there is a tremendous amount of competition worldwide. Countries like Zimbabwe and Brazil use cheap peasant labor and can produce their product at half the price it costs American farmers."

The American tobacco companies' decision to import less tobacco may help the American farmer, but the decision will decrease the amount of imported tobacco and increase the competition in foreign markets, he said. Sixty-five percent of American tobacco is exported.

"If the general trends continue, any future growth opportunity will come from overseas markets," Wayne said. "I don't see any potential growth in America at all."

"Hundreds and hundreds of farmers have gone out of business in the last two or three years; there just isn't any profit here anymore. It's going to be tough to make profits again. It will take some very different techniques to compete with foreign markets," he said.

Magazine criticizes state waste regulations, calls for changes

By **ERIC GRIBBIN**
Staff Writer

The Hardison Amendments, three state laws prohibiting environmental regulations from exceeding federal rules, should be repealed, according to a recent study by the N.C. Center for Public Policy Research.

The amendments, named for their sponsor, lieutenant governor candidate Harold Hardison, prevent the state from enacting adequate water, air and toxic waste regulations, said Jack Betts, editor of Insight magazine, in which the study was

published.

"For example, there is a federal standard in effect regarding ozone. The Hardison Amendments prevent the state from having a tougher law. A study conducted at N.C. State University has shown that ozone is damaging corn and tobacco, but the state can do nothing about it. All we can have is the federal standards," Betts said.

The Legislature adopted the amendments to keep businesses from working with both federal and state rules.

"This seemed wise at the time, since federal regulations were stringent. But these regulations have relaxed under the Reagan administration, and two years ago we decided to do a study of the N.C. environment," Betts said. "We went into the study asking ourselves if the Hardison Amendments had kept the state from properly regulating the environment."

In some cases, the amendments have led to lower state standards, resulting in environmental damage, Betts said.

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are necessary and should be set up to help as many people as possible.

Wallace said he hopes the scholarships would go to "outstanding overachievers" who contribute their time and effort to extracurricular activities and academics.

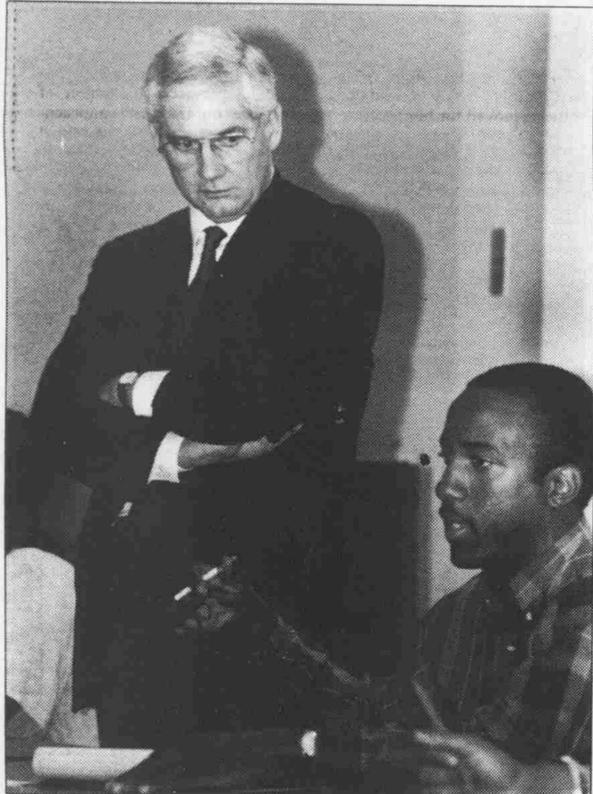
A shortage of black faculty is a common problem shared by other universities, Eubanks said. UNC is competing with other universities for the same faculty, and the University does not offer competitive salaries and benefits.

"You're up against the Michigans, the Harvards and Dukes" in attracting black faculty, Eubanks said.

UNC also has to compete with industry to attract blacks to faculty positions, Eubanks said. Blacks are making the biggest gains in industry, and this success is steering them away from academics, he said.

BSM members said hiring black professors and instructors from other universities as visiting faculty could improve the University's image and help solve the problem of the black faculty shortage at UNC. Black faculty could serve as role models for all students on campus, regardless of race, students said.

The BSM should band together with other campus organizations to make a bid for constitutional funding, Wallace said.



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Kenneth Perry (right) fields questions for BOT Chair Robert Eubanks

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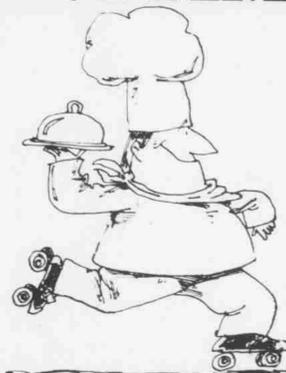
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