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Exchange

of kids that go to A&T are from the Piedmont, they're from Greensboro, or they're from Durham or they're from Raleigh, that general area," Foote-Hudson said. "Their cultural experiences will vary, being that they're African-American, going to a dominantly African American school, versus going to a white, liberal arts school - the background of students here versus the background of students there."



Evan Foote-Hudson



Ian Hayes - Staff photographer

White students made up 87 percent of UNCA's 2008-09 enrollment. The exchange program with NC A&T aims to increase diversity of UNCA's predominately white campus.

UNC Asheville's 2008-09 enrollment consisted of less than 3 percent black students, only a 1-percent increase since 2005, the second lowest minority percentage in the 17-school UNC system following UNC School of the Arts in Winston-Salem.

White students made up less than 4 percent of N.C. A&T's enrollment.

"What's going to come out of this is not only will it be a great experience for the A&T students that come here and the UNCA students that are here and will interact with those students, but it will also be a great opportunity for UNCA students to go to A&T to interact in that situation," Bucher said.

The Diversity Action Council and the SGA Executives are trying to find ways to make sure that students feel welcome at both schools, Foote-Hudson said.

"We're going to set up video chats for the exchange students to communicate with each other so they can talk about their experiences," he said. "We'll also be setting up workshops for students and faculty to know about how the program will work."

Even though the application process has not started, there are a lot of people showing interest in the program, Foote-Hudson said.

"I think there's a lot of opportunity here to make it really successful, but it depends on how much the community gets behind it," said Student Body President Cortland Mercer.

This year's freshman class only had 16 African American students, which is why connecting with A&T is great way to help

raise that number, he said.

"We did not specifically say that we wanted to go and set up a program with A&T. This came as a result of a conversation that Dr. Calvin Kelly had with an administrator at A&T a little over a year ago and was just kind of an idea that came up, 'Wow, wouldn't this be great. Let's try this,' so that was the extent of the brainstorming that lead to it," Bucher said.

Exchanging UNCA's liberal arts education with N.C. A&T's science-based curriculum should be interesting, Foote-Hudson said.

"You're talking about basically an engineering and agriculture school. Everything is very science-based and so that's what their curriculum is based around. It will be a bit of a challenge to work out what credits transfer, but those students who might have an interest in more of an engineering route may have some real opportunities in exchange with

A&T beyond just the cultural aspect of it," Bucher said.

The intent of this program is for educational purposes, and not necessarily focused on increasing permanent racial diversity, Foote-Hudson said.

"But there was no agenda in terms of what school we wanted to have this program with, it just kind of happened upon us because we had a relationship with somebody there," Bucher said.

Mercer said he believes the program will be well planned out and beneficial to both schools.

"There's nothing like this currently in place anywhere in the system," Mercer said. "This is pretty ground breaking as far as what the system's doing, and this is going to be a pilot semester, so there's a lot of stuff that's got to be worked out."

N.C. A&T has participated in a rural-urban faculty and student exchange program with Western Carolina University since spring of 2002.

WCU's 2008-09 enrollment consisted of six percent black students and three percent black faculty members, according to WCU officials.

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*-Executive of Multicultural Affairs,
Evan Foote-Hudson*

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