



By Jeff Gruber

Sara Isaacson

Sara Isaacson entered UNC on August 18, 2006 with one objective in mind.

“My goal in life has always been to be an Army doctor,” says Isaacson. “Not just a doctor, an Army doctor.”

Isaacson arrived as a cadet in UNC’s ROTC program with the intention of serving her country after graduation. However, Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell (DADT), a federal policy that prevents out gay, lesbian and bisexual soldiers from actively serving in the military, obstructed Sara’s dream of serving her country.

“It started in late November of 2009, when I came out to myself as a lesbian,” she explains.

Knowingly lying about her identity prevented Sara from upholding the Army’s honor code, leaving her with one option: to come out. After revealing her sexual orientation to her commander, Isaacson was disenrolled from the ROTC program.

Initially, Sara was reluctant to bring any attention to her situation.

“I didn’t want to go public. I just wanted to go on with my life. I wanted to return to a state of normal.”

Approximately four months after her disenrollment, Isaacson lobbied with advocates from UNC, Duke, and NC State in Washington, DC. At this time, a friend writing for the Daily Tar Heel approached Sara for an interview.

“I felt removed enough from what happened earlier to do an interview. I thought that the worse was over and thought that it would feel better to tell my story.”

Sara’s article headlined the Daily TarHeel on April 23, 2010. A few days later, a journalist from the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel (Sara’s hometown paper) called for an interview. These articles, and one particular interview, brought Isaacson’s story national attention.