

Blacks in Diaspora Series Increases Understanding

By Marva Hinton
STAFF WRITER

The Blacks in the Diaspora Lecture Series continues to be one of the most popular programs presented by the Sonja Haynes Stone Black Cultural Center.

The series is the BCC's oldest program component. A different topic focusing on multiculturalism and diversity is presented bi-weekly.

Ellington Graves, the BCC program coordinator, said the series helped audiences better understand black culture.

"The series is a way to help people understand some of the experiences black people go through," Graves said. "It's kind of difficult to understand where black culture comes from when you don't understand those experiences."

Tyson King-Meadows, a graduate student in political science and the host of the "Around the Circle" discussion series, said he learned a lot from the lecture series.

"I think it's important because it gives students and faculty an opportunity to see other's work," he said.

King-Meadows said the fact that the series featured scholars from different disciplines appealed to him. "The problem with scholarship [in general] is that's it's too limited," he said.

Graves said most speakers were volunteers from local universities. However, he said a nationally known speaker was chosen to kick off the series.

This year Associate Professor of Afro-American Studies Ernest Allen, Jr. delivered the kick-off lecture.

Allen, spoke on the topic, "Look to the East: Asian Influences on African American Thought and Action."

He discussed the historical relationship between Japan and the Nation of Islam.

The lecture series culminated in a student academic conference March 30.

The annual conference allows students to present honor's theses, masters theses and doctoral dissertations for presentation. The conference is open to all majors, areas of concentration and professional programs. All work must be based on the broad theme, "Blacks in the Diaspora."

Graves said the purpose of the conference was similar to the purpose of the lecture series.

"We want to give students an opportunity to present their work and ideas," he said. "It's an important step in the research process."

Graves said the conference allowed participants to get feedback on their work.

"We have thematic sessions where students present their work," Graves said. "Then they answer questions and get suggestions on ways to improve."

King-Meadows presented a paper on Ivan Van Sertima's, "They Came Before Columbus," at the conference last year. He said presenting at the conference was helpful.

"It was an opportunity to get suggestions on ways to improve my work," he said.

Last year over 200 students participated in the conference.

BCC Director Gerald Horne hosted this year's conference. University faculty and students facilitated individual sessions.

series schedule

April 17

Dr. Glenn Hinson
*Voices of Soul: Folk
Artistry in North
Carolina*
Sonja H. Stone Black
Cultural Center
1:00 p.m.

April 24

Blacks DLS
Howard Straker
*Community
Organizing
Strategies of the Black
Panther Party*
Sonja H. Stone Black
Cultural Center
1:00 p.m.

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Revolution...

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control and influence over the very forces that were argued oppressed us, emancipation alludes because of silenced and marginalized knowledge of the past. Thus, African-American city council members, university heads, entertainment networks, national and local civil rights organizations are devoid of emancipatory value because a practical linkage between theory and praxis is missing.

True emancipatory -revolutionary praxis, an exercise of an art, science, or skill, suggests many things. First, it calls for a transformation of scholar/student to

scholar-activist. This entails reconceptualizing the role of education. As such, texts and assignments should be viewed as intellectual (i.e. discursive) weapons (i.e. tools) that must be mastered before combat (i.e., the struggle for intellectual, social, political, and economic equality).

Second, knowledge obtained should be applied to everyday existence. For example, economics, sociology, psychology, political science, and history majors could use their growing expertise to suggest ways of changing African-American capitalism into developmentalism, raising funds for the Black Cultural Center, helping dysfunctional relationships, and increasing electoral participation. This aids in an understanding of the

historical relationships between the powerful and the powerless.

Third, such praxis may call for challenging scholars, athletes, politicians, faculty members, fellow students, and organizations to define their intentions. This suggests more than a philosophical discussion on community service, but rather a discussion on communitarianism.

Finally, remember that proponents of armed conflict between the races probably have forgotten the fundamentals of percentages and mathematics. African-Americans must focus energies toward preventing both the physical and intellectual genocide happening across this country everyday. If practice makes perfect—then praxis!!!