

NORTH CAROLINA CENTRAL UNIVERSITY

ISMI seeks student involvement

By BENNIE RUSSELL, JR.
ECHO STAFF WRITER

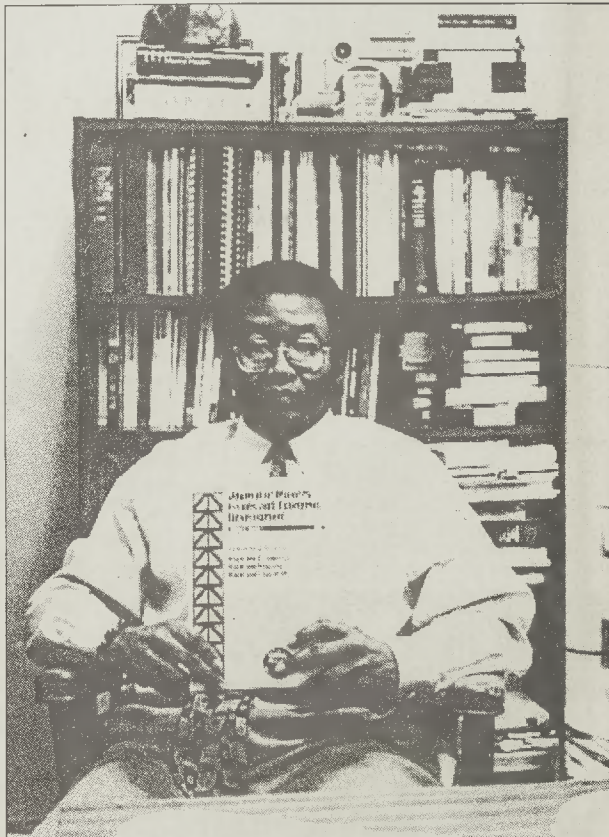
Tomas Earl Midgette is a man on a mission—a mission to support a richer understanding of minority issues.

Midgette is the director of N.C. Central University's Institute for Study of Minority Issues, which was founded as The Center for the Study of Desegregation by former NCCU Chancellor Dr. Albert N. Whiting in 1969. ISMI's mission is to promote faculty, students and institutional research related to minorities, particularly African Americans in the New South.

Midgette encourages students to come by his office and ask questions about the institute. His office is filled with books on the history of African-American culture, such as Mychal Wynn's "Empowering African American Males to Succeed," bell hooks' "Teaching to Transgress," and Henry Lewis Gates Jr. and Cornell West's "The Future of the Race." Midgette says that reading is the key to success.

Midgette, an NCCU graduate, spent much of his adult life in the midwest. He earned his master's degree at the University of Oklahoma, and his doctorate at Michigan State University. His dissertation examined multi-cultural counseling and African-American youth. He came back to work for NCCU in 1996 as an associate professor. He teaches in the graduate program in counseling in the School of Education. Midgette took over the ISMI program in 1998.

Midgette says he is enthusiastic about the future of the ISMI. He says he wants the institute to become an internal part of the life of the University,



BENNIE RUSSELL, JR./Staff Photographer

Tomas Earl Midgette, director of the Institute of Minority Affairs, sits in his office, which is filled with books on African American history.

and for it to help students and faculty engage in what he calls the "life of mind." According to Midgette, he also wants NCCU to get to a point where students and staff can sit down and discuss ideas together.

"The purpose of the institute is to engage students in aca-

ademic discourse," Midgette says. "In order for students to do this they must read

"I see students listening to the music as if they are having a good time on campus, and in small groups. I want students to be this enthusiastic [in their] academic [lives].

"I do not oppose students having their music, I just want to elevate the conversation to the academic life."

The institute is involved in a number of activities. They develop research proposals for faculty research grants, serve as a clearing house for demographic materials and other working papers, articles and curriculum guides related to minority issues.

They assist students with research opportunities and support forums to discuss minority issues. They help identify successful community development approaches for urban neighborhoods. The institute also archives articles and materials that touch on minority issues—race, education, health, HBCUs, hate crimes, housing discrimination, and more.

They hold weekly roundtable discussions with students, alumni and faculty. At one recent forum, Fulbright professor Benjamin Offei-Nyoko "Bon" gave a slide show about Ghana.

In addition, the institute publishes the ISMI newsletter and the Journal of Minority Issues and Economic Development. Sample articles include "Real Story of Black Progress," "The Federal Reserve Bank of Boston Study on Mortgage Lending Revisited," and "What Matters Most for Teacher Educators."

Midgette is the only full-time staff member working for ISMI. He has six part-time staff members and a graduate student helping him with clerical work and exploring funding opportunities.

The ISMI is located in room 10 of the William Jones Building. Midgette can be reached at 560-6433.

Forum

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percent.

The clearance rate counts the number of criminal cases solved.

Durham has the lowest clearance rate in the state.

NCCU alumnus Joe Williams focused on the safety of the students, calling for policemen walking on Fayetteville Street.

"I would like to see all of my eagle brothers and sisters be able to walk down Fayetteville Street, not being afraid of being attack," said Williams.

Williams is an at-large candidate for city council.

Tennyson also stressed the revitalization of Durham's downtown area.

"We need to get more economic activity in the areas that surround downtown," said Tennyson. He stated that public safety needs to be increased in the areas around downtown, before trying to revitalize the area.

"Those neighborhoods adjacent to downtown are critical to bringing downtown back to the level of vitality that it use to have, and going beyond that."

McKissick also stressed downtown development stating that the urban area has suffered 40 years of neglect. McKissick feels that more business should

harbored downtown and that job skills should be provided for the residents in the urban sector.

Other city council candidates include Patrick Byker, who called for a unified city and county government. Byker feels that a unified government would make Durham a stronger force with state and federal issues.

Tamra Edwards, Dan Hill, Michael Shiflett, and NCCU alumnus Thomas Stith will challenge for Byker and Williams for city council in November.

Angela Langley and Jim Conner will battle for the ward two position. Conner is seeking his first political office. His main concerns deals with traffic and city growth.

Ward four matches Lewis Cheeks against NCCU alumnus Tyrone Cox. Cox currently sits on the Durham city council. He supports economic opportunity for all, managing rapid growth and reducing crime by eliminating its root causes. Cox also helped in providing the shuttle service for NCCU.

Cheeks wants to enforce more city ordinances and improve traffic. He also stresses better race relations.

The candidates will know whether their ideas helped gain new voters when the polls open on Nov. 2.

Frye

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He described the way he obtained a property ownership title for a client by searching for the owner's gravestone. He then used a phone book to track down the next of kin in order to confirm the death—all in order to clear a title.

"Clerks have a thankless job," he joked referring to the process of working on judicial opinions with them.

According to Frye, there are complex interactions between justices and clerks. Therefore, he works with people he can trust and count on.

Apart from being a judge he said, the chief justice is the primary administrator of North Carolina's court system. As an administrator he oversees the operations of the entire system and has numerous obligations.

"I've accomplished many goals because I respect others...I have respect and respect carries weight," Frye told the responsive audience.

He also stated he wants NCCU to become engaged with his commission on professionalism. One focus of the commission is to improve the professionalism of North Carolina's law students.

Frye urged NCCU's future lawyers to "know what you know and know what you don't know ... work hard and do it right."

Cabinet

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more scholarship money to attract talented and academically motivated students. Some strategies proposed for this program were:

- Giving recruiters power to offer scholarships

- Requiring students to complete scholarship applications

- Providing students with a scholarship list and making sure they contact the Scholarship Office

- Drafting an early decision policy stating that applicants who meet all admissions requirements and enroll by Dec. 1, 1999 will be eligible for early decision consideration.

- Using the early decision program as a tool to enroll 50 high school graduates with SAT scores of 1150 and above.

All applications must be received by Dec. 1, 1999 and decisions will be mailed out by Jan. 1. Early decision recipients will be issued a book voucher of an undisclosed amount of money and the first 50 students admitted will be allowed to set up residence in either of the new residents halls.

Accepted students must send a non-refundable deposit to the university by Jan. 24.

Other business discussed was the residential housing repairs update, scholarship report, swimming pool budget, Hurricane Floyd budget revision, higher education regulations, and the assessment of open house.

PROGRAM SEEKS TO HELP INCOMING STUDENTS, AND, HOPEFULLY, KEEP THEM

Head start given to freshmen

By KENDALL JENKINS
ECHO STAFF WRITER

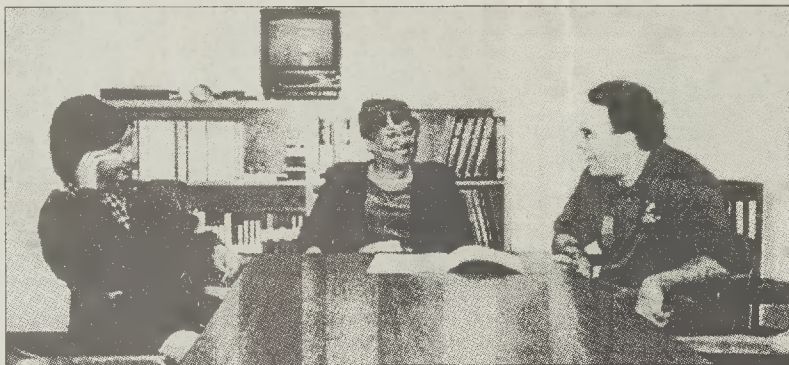
Enrollment at N.C. Central University has fallen about 200 students short of the target and many students, finding it hard to successfully adapt to college life at NCCU, are seeking other opportunities. This trend of low enrollment and retention is a problem that administrators, alumni and students alike would like to solve soon.

The Division of Student Affairs is working on a solution to combat one major problem: retention. The general feeling is that if students are to remain after their freshman year, they have to be given initiative to do so.

In 1997, the Office of Student Learning was created to provide initiatives and programs for freshmen students. Through extensive research and studies on and off campus, Peggy Watson Alexander, dean of student learning, spearheaded the Freshmen First Program.

"The purpose of the Freshmen First Program is to retain freshmen students and keep their academics in good standing," said Emma Mosby, Living-Learning Coordinator.

"Far too many times, freshmen won't return as continuing students after they've finished their freshman year with low



KENDALL JENKINS/Staff Photographer

Senior Tiffany Copper, left, listens along with Personal Counselor/Student Advocate Vera Turner to Freshmen First partner Paul Goldblatt at a recent meeting.

grades," Mosby said. "With the assistance of faculty, staff, and students, we want to help get these students off to a good start."

Last year, the Freshmen First pilot project worked with 128 students and produced an increase in retention and improved faculty involvement in residence halls, according to the Division of Student Affairs.

This year, the Freshmen First Program has been extended to include 500 students, freshmen from Eagleson and Chidley Living-Learning Centers.

One program, the Mentor Program, integrates faculty, staff, administrators and upper-class students to help freshmen students in academic difficulty.

Freshmen First has three counselors, or student advocates. Each of these counselors works hands-on with students in outreach centers that have been established in the Eagleson and Chidley Residence Halls.

Counselors and advocates are available to listen to students' concerns and provide information. Sometimes, students are referred to the Comprehensive Academic Support Center, mental health counselors, or other supportive resources.

Freshman First sponsors and conducts workshops and strategy sessions geared toward academic success, social adjustment, and overall sound mental health. Topics include "If She Says No, It Really Means No," "Mr. Roger's Neighborhood: Gay and Lesbian Issues," "Faculty Expectations: My Professor is Driving Me Crazy," and "Sexually Transmitted Diseases."

"I see Freshmen First as a great way for me to network with other students and take full advantage of the opportunities and resources that the school has to offer," said Rocky Mount freshman Kendrick Dickens.

Chemical waste results in canceled classes

FROM STAFF REPORTS

A leak in a hazardous waste drum caused an evacuation of the Hubbard Chemistry Building Oct. 21.

The leak occurred at 7:30 a.m., causing classes to be canceled until the next day. No one was hurt in the incident, which took nearly four hours to clean up.

The lab, where the leak occurred, is used to hold waste from the entire campus. The toxic chemicals found were Benzene and chlorinated solvents which are combustible, but have a low explosive level, according to Richard Cravener, director of health and safety.

The university has built a hazardous waste

storage building in addition to the new Biomedical Biotechnology Research Institute.

The recent leak is the latest in a series of problems plaguing the chemistry building, which is old and needs repairs. Teachers must perform less hazardous experiments, because exhaust hoods, that pull away chemicals, do not work. Bunsen burners do not work, because the gas was cut off two years ago, after an unrepaired gas leak.

"That it happened in this building, that is a facilities issue," Wendell Wilkerson, chairman of the chemistry department, told The News & Observer. "Had the new facility been in operation, we wouldn't be here."



BRUCE DEPYSSLER/Staff Photographer

The Hubbard Chemistry Building, site of a recent hazardous chemical waste leak.

IN BRIEF

Research and intern opportunities at federal agencies

The Oak Ridge Institute for Science and Education, an arm of the Dept. of Energy, has hands-on research and paid tuition opportunities in a number of national laboratories across the country. These are available to students and faculty.

ORISE oversees about 100 internship, fellowship, scholarship, and research participation programs for numerous federal agencies. Students and faculty can work in the Dept. of Energy, the Dept. of Defense, the Environmental Protection Agency, and others.

The programs run for about eight to ten weeks during the summer and there are also semester, academic year, and year round opportunities. Stipends and travel allowances are included in most of the

research programs.

To learn more on these excellent opportunities, you can visit the ORISE Educational Opportunities Web page at <http://www.ori.gov/orise/educ.htm>

This web site details eligibility requirements, disciplines, locations, deadlines, benefits, and contact numbers.

—Campus Echo staff

Vanderbilt's Onaivi to speak at BBRI

Research professor, Emmanuel Onaivi, will be giving a seminar at the Julius L. Chambers Biomedical/Biotechnology Research Institute.

The talk, "Cannabinoid Receptor Genetics and Behavior," is at 10:45 a.m. on Tuesday, Nov. 2.

—Campus Echo staff