

NORTH CAROLINA CENTRAL UNIVERSITY

STYLE offers lifeline

Project to help to HIV positive students

By KRISTIANA BENNETT
ECHO STAFF WRITER

HIV positive students will soon have a lifeline in Project STYLE, a program that creatively confronts the issues of AIDS testing, treatment and support for HIV positive students.

STYLE — an acronym for Strength Through Youth Livin' Empowered — will be launched on N.C. Central University in February.

Guy Jenkins, outreach worker and counselor for STYLE emphasized that an HIV positive person can't be spotted in a crowd.

"I'm 24 years old and have been diagnosed for seven years, and I don't look like what TV portrays as an HIV positive person," said Jenkins.

In 2005, North Carolina researchers discovered that out of every 84 newly infected male college students 73 were African-American.

"The concern is that this is our best and brightest within the minority population who are coming down with a lifelong and potentially lethal dis-

ease," said Dr. Peter Leone, HIV medical director at the N.C. State Health Department, in USA Today.

According to David Jolly, co-investigator for STYLE, it is imperative for students to learn their HIV status to ensure that they have "the opportunity to lead long, healthy lives and prevent the spread of AIDS."

STYLE is a health-initiative program created for African-American men 18-30 years old.

It provides referrals to treatment centers, support groups for HIV positive students, one-on-one counseling, and an outlet for non-HIV positive students who would like to learn more about the disease or who just need to talk to someone.

STYLE is funded by a five year grant from The Health Resources and Services Administration to the UNC School of Medicine.

The school chose NCCU to be the headquarters for historically black universities in North Carolina because it is the largest HBCU in the Triangle and

has been very proactive in dealing with AIDS.

This is the first university-based program of its kind in the country, but Shaw University, St. Augustine's College and other HBCUs will be following NCCU's lead.

STYLE, unlike traditional community-oriented HIV outreach programs, will provide a personal and informal atmosphere geared toward students.

"I want students to realize that STYLE is fun and approachable," said Jenkins.

STYLE also works closely with The Men's Health Initiative, a project operating out of NCCU's Department of Health Education, which focuses strictly on prevention.

"These two projects provide a comprehensive approach to HIV among African-American men," said Jolly.

With AIDS running rampant in the African-American student community, STYLE is an important step in combating the disease.

For more information on STYLE contact Guy Jenkins at 530-7927.



Maxine Hong Kingston talks with faculty and students in the Farrison-Newton Communication Building during her Jan. 11 visit.

KHARI JACKSON / Echo Staff Photographer

LOANS

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December that cuts funding from student loans, medicaid, federal child-support enforcement funds and pension insurance just to name a few.

The bill has passed both the House of Representatives and the Senate, but because of some minor modifications made in the Senate, it will return to the House for final passage at the end of January.

Vice president Cheney broke the tie vote over the bill in the Senate. In all, 44 Democrats, five Republicans and one Independent voted against the bill.

The student loan cuts come at a time when tax cuts are favored by the Republican dominated Congress. The House recently passed \$110 billion in tax cuts, while \$106 billion more might be cut over the next five years.

"This is the most unwelcome change — and insult — to higher education ever made," said Terry Wall, office manager of the University of North Carolina Association of Student Governments.

"We want the bill to be an investment [in] our education. It's important when this money needs to go to our future, and it's going elsewhere — war and corporate tax breaks," Wall

said.

According to Wall, the problem is especially severe because, with so few grants available, students are forced to turn to loans.

"So many students are in need of assistance," she said. "I know it will discourage students that are graduating over the next couple of years."

Sharon Oliver, N.C. Central University's Scholarships and Student Aid director said she understands resources are limited and Congress has to spread the money around, but education should be a priority.

"I don't ever support any cuts in education," she said. "This is how we change America: We make sure students are educated."

Oliver added that this new bill will impact lenders — and eventually students — if interest rates and fees become higher.

"Over 90 percent of students at N.C. Central University are on some type of financial aid," Oliver said.

According to Finaid.org, an online student guide to financial aid, 65 percent of undergraduate students borrow money to finance their education.

The average federal student loan debt for graduating students is \$19,202, but over 25 percent of undergraduates borrow over \$25,000.

The bill would increase Stafford loans rates from 4.7 to 6.8 percent, and it would increase PLUS loan rates from 6.1 to 8.5 percent.

For example, a student borrowing \$20,000 at 4.7 percent would pay back \$25,080 over 10 years, but at a rate of 6.8 percent that same student would end up paying back \$27,600 — \$2,520 more.

Psychology senior Candice Harding is taking action now. Harding, who plans to attend graduate school, is consolidating her loans now before the rates increase.

"It's frustrating," Harding said. "Even if I get a job, I will end up spending most of my money paying off my loans. I will have other things to pay for — like a house."

Harding also said that it's sad that Congress doesn't support the students in America, but will spend billions of dollars in countries that don't even like America.

"It's terrible [that Congress is] taking away from college," she said.

Kingston speaks her peace

National author preaches non-violence

By LARISHA STONE
ECHO STAFF WRITER

Author and peace activist Maxine Hong Kingston looked out at the crowd and quietly asked "Is it possible to make peace — change the world with the right words?"

The audience filling N.C. Central University's B.N. Duke Auditorium had no answer, but Kingston scanned their faces quietly, as if hoping someone might be able to answer this very important question.

"The only weapons we have are our voices and our words," said Kingston.

Kingston spoke as part of the Jan. 11, NCCU Martin Luther King Celebration.

Her message of peace and non-violence mirrored the social concerns of Martin Luther King, Jr.

Kingston said she wants to help students find their own voices, then use their own words to create peace in the world.

She told the audience about the ancient, mytholog-

ical "Three Books of Peace," which, according to Chinese legend, are said to have been filled with tactics to end wars.

But she said that while books like Sun Tzu's "Art of War" have been preserved, the "Three Books of Peace" had been lost and all but forgotten.

In 1989, during the first Gulf War Kingston decided she would create a fourth book of peace.

The manuscript burned in a house fire, so she began what would later be published "The Fifth Book of Peace," getting input from veterans and peace activists.

Kingston looked on the fire philosophically: "What is the relationship between destruction and creation?"

She decided that "in a time of destruction, create something."

A student asked Kingston what could be done to break the silence and speak out against the present War on Terrorism.

Kingston replied, "Speak.

Keep speaking up — keep writing."

Kingston's visit was spearheaded by Kuldip Kuwahara, a professor in the Department of English and Mass Communication. Kuwahara had support for the visit from a Faculty Seed Grant, the Women's Studies Program at Duke University, and NCCU's Lyceum Committee.

Kuwahara said that Kingston's visit connected well with the legacy of Martin Luther King, Jr.'s "Maxine comes to us as a peace activist and writer in a time of war," said Kuwahara.

Law student Tin Nguyen was impressed with Kingston's presentation. "The revolution starts with those of us who wish to see things get better," said Nguyen.

Kingston got her bachelor's degree from the University of California at Berkeley in 1962. In 1997 she was awarded the National Humanities Medal from President Bill Clinton.

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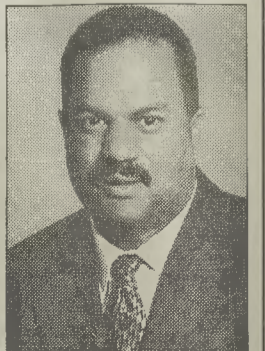
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