

Obama publicly discusses U.S. racial divide

By Tim May
STAFF WRITER

On March 18, Barack Obama delivered one of the most powerful and rewarding speeches of any historical presidential candidate in recent memory. Obama put his best foot forward by directly confronting the United States' racist history that lives in the fabric of our society today.

Sure, this may not seem like a radical move at first glance. As college students and faculty, we have the potential privilege of discussing and theorizing issues of race to our hearts content. However, a good portion of the rest of the country doesn't have this opportunity. Therefore, it's an important problem to be discussed on a national level.

Racism is a topic that most political candidates try to subtly ignore. So, as one of those presidential candidates, Obama's decision to bite the bullet and lead a speech devoted to issues of race should be viewed as a profound and radical move.

The most important argument of Obama's speech dealt with the actual constructions of race. While

many people may experience racism on an individual level, the foundation of racism is institutionalized and structural.

The thought of fighting racism seems to be an improbable act, which on some level, it is. The word racism carries a bundle of historical and personal implications that can't be unwoven merely through conversation. To negate the prominent force of racism in our society is to be incredibly ignorant.

Obama did exactly the opposite: he discussed his experience of being raised by a black man and a white woman, and the ethical issues of abandoning his pastor, who believes that the United States can never transcend their racist past.

Obama rejected this claim as static and unproductive. Instead, Obama honestly and publicly addressed and embraced realistic fears, confusions, and prejudices of whites and the harsh realities of many black communities across the country.

By exposing these truths, Obama called for our country to move beyond our racial history to address problems that citizens of the United States are experiencing in the pres-

ent day. Despite our country's disturbing racial past, there are also problems occurring today that involve multiple identities.

For example, the tragedies of the war in Iraq cross racial boundaries with its ever-increasing death toll. In addition, our funding of the war has had a detrimental economic effect on the middle and lower classes of our society.

When dealing with these troubling issues, it's essential that our society doesn't collapse under our

discussing these historical and present issues, it's important to understand that an effort to combat racism can't end at the podium.

As a society, we must understand the institutional implications of racism that are alive in our own public policies. Racism plays a role in the creation of bad schools, the high unemployment rate, our miserable health care system, and our presence in Iraq.

Discussion and theorizing are

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feet. To help prevent this, Obama exposed our country's racial divide and how, if we begin to move beyond it, we will form "a more perfect union."

The United States will undoubtedly be polarized by Obama's speech, which is problematic given the issues he discusses. Although Obama took a brave and admi-

important, but if we want actively change the presence of racism in our society, there needs to be a transformation of the rules that govern our country. With his speech, Obama began to point to some these problems. Hopefully, his promises for change will be acknowledged by the public and cemented in public office.

Staff Editorial

Voting is a right and a duty; register and vote!

April 11 is the last day to register to vote in North Carolina if you want to participate in the May 6th primary. Every four years, we have the honor of participating in the selection of the highest executive, the most powerful person in the United States, and by some measures, the world.

Voting is always important, it's your chance to make your voice heard. The vote is a right, not a privilege, and now more than ever it's a duty.

The last eight years have seen our nation ruled by incompetence at best, and bloody-minded antipathy at worst. In between, we have seen our economy implode and our soldiers bloodied and scattered throughout the Middle East. We have seen everything from gross exaggeration to bald-faced lies. Our politics have become clotted with blood and misplaced religious fervor. In short, we have seen the consequence of an apathetic electorate- the crazy and the brutal end up voting, while the reasonable go to work.

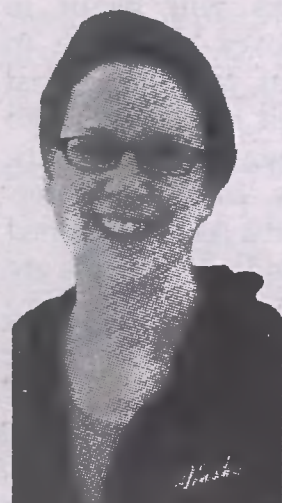
This year is our chance to step up and admit that we care. We may be ashamed of what our country has done, but it's still our country, and we have to take care of it.

April 11 is the chance for all of us, North Carolinian and out-of-state alike, to participate. With the Democratic nomination still in the air, North Carolina's primary is more crucial than usual, and if our generation comes and votes in primaries we will send a strong message that we are involved, that we care about the future, that we who are of age to die in a war would like to pick the old people who can send us there.

Half of us have never voted before. Few have been of age long enough to vote in even one other presidential election. None of the traditional students were able to vote in 2000, when all of this began. It's an honor, as I've said, to be a part of this election, of this democracy, and to waste your chance is an insult.

This year, we face an open field. Vote in the primary, Democrat or Republican. Become involved. Become active. History may remember this election and judge our generation for the choice we make.

CCE-Traditional rift may be a myth



Today's Lesson

with
Paula Wilder

tenth of percent away from being a 100% positive report.

Most of the comments that I received went something like this, "CCE Students? I think they are great." "What's the big deal? I don't really think about it." "I don't care who comes to school here."

Here are some of the more specific comments from Traditional Students (and even one Early College student that I thought was a Traditional Student):

"I am a Business Major and so I take a lot of night classes with CCE Students. When you share the classroom with CCE Students, you get real world experience, not just teaching from the professor. They give us good advice from their own experiences." Janell Henry, junior.

"They are a student and I don't see them as any different. They don't cut up in class because they are there because they want to be there. They bring something positive to the campus." Megan Chery, Early College junior.

"They add more experience to the learning. I was a Psychology Major and saw that the CCE Students bring a view that we don't have because they have experienced the real world. CCE Students are more practical and more focused." Jada Drew '07.

"I am an English Major and I have found that the CCE Students have a harder time keeping it in the theoretical realm. They want to apply everything to everyday life rather than keeping it in theory." Anastasia Smith, senior.

"I think CCE Students are great. I had

a class with one lady who is 40 and old enough to be my mom and it was pretty fun. They work just as hard as we do and I think it is pretty amazing that they have come back. I respect them and they deserve to be here as much as me, and hopefully I'll be on the stage with them in four years." Reggie Pettiford, first-year.

"I have a lot of classes with them and a couple of them have even had to bring their kids into class. They didn't disrupt the class. I have even made friends with some of the CCE Students and I like the older perspective. Just because the label exists for financial reasons, the category isn't necessary. Both groups tend to generalize about each other, but there is diversity within each." Katherine Rossini, senior.

"I know a single mom who wasn't 23 yet and wanted to qualify for the CCE Student rate, because she was supporting herself and her baby, but because she was a Traditional Freshman she didn't qualify. I think the classification should be based on circumstance rather than age." Bailey Arnold, junior.

I know there are some underlying negative opinions out there, but I guess those people made sure they avoided me or maybe their negative vibes kept me from stopping and asking them any questions. I couldn't include all the names of the men and women who stopped and gave me their opinion, but thanks for chatting. It was fun listening to you share your experiences.

If you have an opinion you'd like to share, e-mail them to guilfordian@guilford.edu.

The Adult Students used to be isolated on an asphalt campus in downtown Greensboro. That is history and now, we who are over the magical age of 23, walk the brick sidewalks, sit under the shade trees, enjoy the lake, the meadow, and share the classroom with those of you under the age of 23.

Since I arrived at Guilford, I have heard that Traditional Students don't like CCE Students sharing "their" campus, but personally, I've never gotten that vibe. It seemed to me that this "Great Divide" might be an "urban legend."

I decided to go out and talk to a lot of Traditional Students around campus about how they feel about CCE Students sharing the campus.

Not one of the people I talked to had any hate or "go home" comments and 99.9% of what you said was all positive. I had a couple of observations about the differences between Traditional and CCE Students that I might stipulate as negative, hence the