

STATE, LOCAL AND INTERNATIONAL

Dr. Hess Presents Status of Girls in NC

Hannah Thornton, staff writer

The Status of Girls in North Carolina is a report that has swept North Carolina and the progress of women by storm. The report analyzes how girls in North Carolina are faring in seven areas: demographics, poverty and economic security, education, media, physical health, mental health, sexual health, and leadership and civic engagement. Data was utilized from over ten sources at the national and local level. The analysis looks at girls primarily and then delves into factors of age, grade, race, and ethnicity. Dr. Allen, Meredith College president, and Dr. Hess, assistant professor of sociology, are the two main writers of the report. Dr. Hess came to be involved after Dr. Allen approached to faculty seeking interest in the project. The group realized that no one was taking a look at girls as a whole across North Carolina.

Dr. Hess writes that the importance of this report for the Meredith campus lies in the work and empowerment Meredith students can give to closing the knowledge gaps of data and solutions for the many problems that this report brings up and was unable to mention.

Junior Bailey Dunn has been involved from the start. She was a research assistant, along with Heather Losee, for much of the statistics that would be in the report. Bailey even assisted with writing two of the sections: "Substance and Alcohol Abuse" and "Media and Technology Use by Girls in NC."

The report was presented at the NC Women's Roundtable on Monday, March 11th, 2013 in Greensboro. The Women's Roundtable was created by the North Carolina Council for Women, who created the report on the Status of Women in NC. Upon realization that both reports, one for women and one for girls, were to be published at the same time, a discussion on the status of both women and girls was created, hopefully to have much media coverage.

Bailey Dunn described the Round-

table as "honestly a breath taking experience. I don't think I have ever been in a room that was full of so many powerful women in my life." Women from every race, profession, and background attended the conference to discuss the status of females in North Carolina and how they can make better futures for the coming generations of women in our state.

The overall findings of the report and the Roundtable are best reported in Dr. Hess' words, "Overall, there are reasons to feel great about how girls are doing—for example, girls are holding their own in terms of educational achievements; rates of teen pregnancy are declining; and rates of participation in high school sports are increasing for high school females. However, the major cause of concern is the level

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of inequality among girls by race/ethnicity in the state." The significance of the report lies in that, as Bailey Dunn illustrates, the facts are here and there is no longer any excuse for ignoring the facts.

College women like the students of Meredith College are needed desperately to step into the shoes of the women who have come before us and paved the way for us to stand up and fight for girls in North Carolina, the USA, and across the globe.

For more information and links to reports and other websites, please go to Meredith.edu/status-ncgirls.

Sequester Leads to Student Worries

Monique Kreisman, staff writer

Sequester is a set of automatic spending cuts that went into effect on March 1st. It was established in the Budget Control Act of 2011 and it was set to begin in January; however, with tax cuts expiring at the same time, Congress delayed sequestration until March. About half of the cuts will come from the defense budget and half will come from domestic spending. The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) in the executive branch has been given the responsibility of cutting over \$1 trillion from the federal budget over the next ten years.

While the 3% cut in federal spending will not be noticed by most of the population, there are several changes that will directly affect college students. The Federal Work-Study (FWS) program will be cut by \$49 million and The Federal Supplemental Education Opportunity Grant (FSEOG) will be cut by \$37 million for the 2013-2014

ditional fees. A \$6 fee is tacked to a Stafford loan, and fees for Direct Subsidized and Direct Unsubsidized loans will be raised from 1% to approximately 1.05%. Fees for Direct PLUS loans for parents will be raised from 4% to approximately 4.20%. It may not seem significant, but it will amount to a savings of \$82 million.

Students are worried that the Pell Grant, a federal aid program that does not require repayment, may be cut; however, they need not fret until at least the 2014-2015 school year. The Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985 protect the Pell Grant through 2014. The rapidly growing \$36.1 billion program gave aid to 9.4 million students in 2011, which was a 52% increase from 2008. When the grant is eligible for cuts, it could mean that low-income students lose \$500-\$1000 a year in aid.



Boehner, Pelosi, Obama photo via www.motherjones.com

school year. This means that about 33,000 students could lose their federal work-study jobs, but as of now, the exact numbers are unknown. Some schools, like Syracuse University in New York, have announced that they will use endowments to maintain the current level of aid given to students. Others must decide to either lower the amount of aid given to each student or offer aid to fewer students.

Some federal loans now have ad-

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