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## SGA to unite schools Pledge routine may change

BY GRACE KIM

Students from member schools of the National Consortium for Specialized Secondary Schools of Mathematics, Science and Technology will meet on campus Feb. 14-18 for the National Consortium Student Leadership Group Conference.

The NCSSSMST is a national organization of more than 90 schools dedicated to emphasizing math, science and technology in their curriculum, and the conference's main goal is to create the Association of Consortium Student Leadership Groups, a new alliance whose primary purpose is to improve communication among its members through their respective SGAs.

"Through this organization, I want to create a forum for dialogue between the student leaders of the residential high schools of the NCSSSMST to discuss ways that we can be more effective within the context of our schools," SGA President Michael Jones said.

Sixteen students from Illinois, South Carolina, Maine and Missouri will shadow NCSSM host students for five days, beginning Feb. 14.

"[They're coming to] compare and contrast," said junior Caleb Horton, co-chair of SGA's Consortium Committee. "We'll look at our governments and constitutions and recommend changes."

Kevin Cromwell, director of student services, is optimistic about the opportunity to build long-term relationships between schools.

"The intention is to share from each institution but to also set up a structure that will allow for dialogue among schools each year," he said.

SGA might find such connections particularly meaningful because of its differences from leadership groups of neighboring high schools.

"There's such a difference between regular student governments and student governments of schools like ours," said senior Katherine Demby, the Consortium Committee's other co-chair.

Before the work begins, visitors will catch a glimpse into the life of an NCSSM student.

"The students will be shadowing classes, going on a tour of [UNC-Chapel Hill] and participating in NCSSM social life," Demby said.

According to Jones, the conference will lead to gains for all involved.

He said, "I think the primary purpose of the organization—to enhance communication between our campuses—will benefit students in schools like NCSSM all across the country."

BY MARY KOHLMANN

Due to poor attendance at daily Pledge of Allegiance recitations, a focus group of students and administrators met on Jan. 29 to discuss changes in its implementation.

"Dr. [Joan] Barber and the other administrators were worried about how the Pledge was being administered now," said junior Roger Que, who was one of four students involved. "They're worried that if someone comes to the school and sees it, they'll feel that we're just working around it instead of trying to accommodate it."

Possible negative attention from the media was a concern addressed in the meeting.

"They mentioned that we'd been getting a lot of good press lately, but if, say, a reporter for a Durham newspaper had come in during the daily recitation, they might have been surprised to see one student participating out of a population of 630," said junior Zach Alexander, also present at the meeting.

Discussion focused on ways to integrate the Pledge more thoroughly into student life without placing undue pressure to participate on individuals. The first step was an analysis of the current policy, which mandates daily recitations in Bryan Lobby and by the flagpole.

"I was kind of disappointed that most people seemed to not be coming, not because they didn't want to say it, but just out of apathy," senior Quint Reid said.

This lack of response made planning for the future somewhat difficult.

"The administration seemed to be a little disillusioned with the student body in that most of the students didn't voice objections, but didn't show up to recite [the Pledge]," Alexander said.

Que mentioned that the sheer pace of life kept some students from going out of their way to recite daily.

"I think for a lot of students,

something like [the Pledge] is important. But it's out of the way, it's time taken out of the day," Que said.

The implementation of a schoolwide recitation faces challenges due to the very nature of NCSSM.

"At a lot of other schools, they have a wired intercom system, which we don't," Que said.

"There were plans for

outside of the classroom, if we wanted to continue doing it like we do now—perhaps changing the time or location. The Bryan Lobby is not really a central location. There was something about during lunchtime in the PFM."

The most widely lauded plan involved the use of the school's internet radio station to broadcast the Pledge to all classrooms via laptops at a yet-to-be-determined point in the day.

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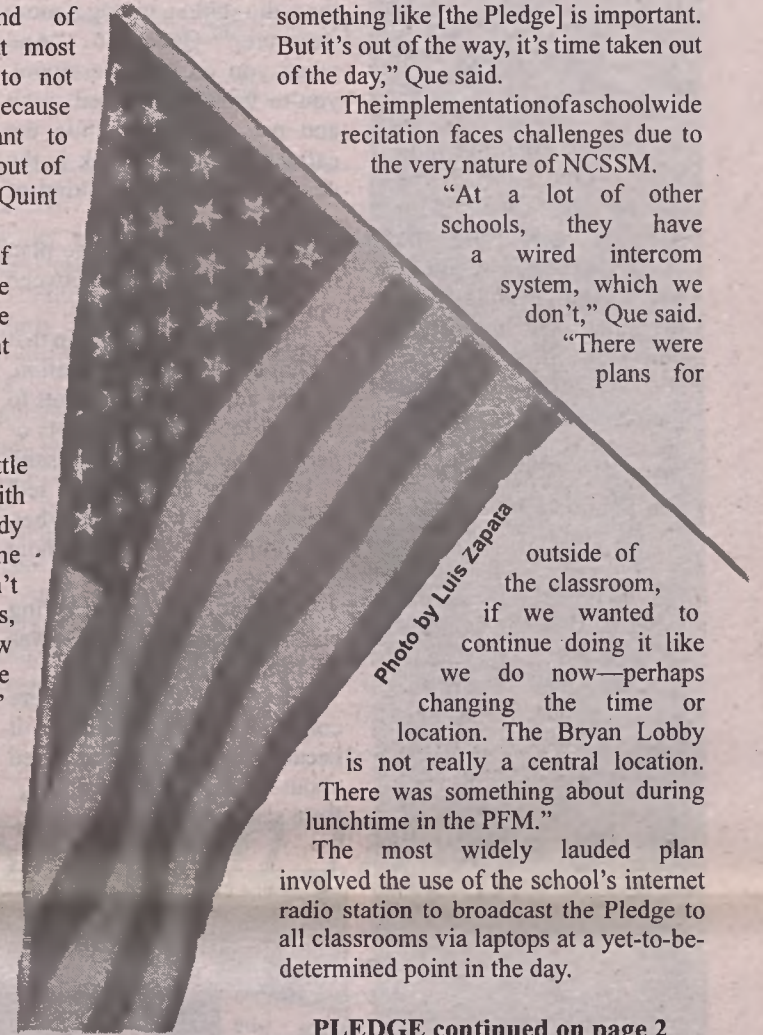


Photo by Luis Zapata



Photo by Luis Zapata

Hill House lies in rest as its residents enjoy a two-hour snow delay on Jan. 25. The rare inch of snowfall was gone by midafternoon, but students took advantage of the morning to enjoy snowball fights and other winter fun.

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