

Wake students express optimism, reservations in aftermath of incident

By L.A.A. WILLIAMS
Chronicle Staff Writer

A white Wake Forest University student says he is sorry for what he did, but that he will appeal disciplinary action taken against him for his role in a confrontation three weeks ago between a white fraternity and black students.

Meanwhile, a black student who also was involved in the incident said Tuesday that he is both hopeful and disturbed at how the university has responded to the incident.

Charles E. Leftwich Jr., a black student who pleaded guilty last Thursday before a campus disciplinary board to a charge of destruction of property, said he is satisfied with the student reaction, but not the university's.

"I'm satisfied with the progress the students have made, but the university is still dragging its feet," Leftwich said. "No one in the higher administration of the university has done anything. All they have done is try us."

"I have not received a letter, a phone call or anything. It seems they could call all of us in and say, 'How can we stop this from happening again?'"

Leftwich and Sheldon Ecklund, the white student, were required to appear before the board after a March 24 Kappa Sigma fraternity party that spurred a confrontation between black students and fraternity members. The black students attended the party because it allegedly involved a show that is offensive to blacks.

Black students also said the party followed a pattern of racially insensitive fraternity activities that were not being addressed by the school's administration.

Ecklund, a fraternity member, was charged with public exposure and public slander for shouting racial slurs, and attempting to urinate on a crowd of black females from a second-story window. Leftwich hurled a chair through the window to protest Ecklund's actions.

Ecklund, who said Tuesday he had been drinking on the night of the incident, would not say how he pleaded in the hearing or what punishment he received. When asked if he had been suspended, he would not comment, but he did say he will appeal the panel's decision.

Ecklund's appeal will be heard by the Student Judicial Board, an elected body of 12 students. No date has been set for the appeal.

Ecklund said he is optimistic that the matters will be resolved.

"Hopefully things will work out," he said. "I have apologized to some, but not formally. I want to wait until it's all over."

The university's Case Referral Panel, the lowest body handling on-campus grievances, heard the cases last Thursday. The panel consists of a student, a faculty member and a school administrator.

Leftwich said he expects to know his sentence from the panel by the first of next week.

While the panel was deliberating on Thursday, Leftwich said he and Ecklund and

some of the fraternity members talked over what happened. He said the outcome was positive.

"I think we learned to respect each other," Leftwich said. "Sheldon apologized for what happened, and we shook hands. I believe he was sincerely sorry for what he did. We left that meeting as students, not as blacks and whites, but as students."

One meeting between members of fraternities and black students has been held to discuss the problems between them, and another has been scheduled this week. Both sides say the meetings have been productive.

"It's just unfortunate that it took student initiative and not administration initiative to settle this," Leftwich said.

Some black students, however, feel the incident has been blown out of proportion. Several of the witnesses to the incident have refused comment, saying that too much negative publicity has already been focused on what started out as a small incident. Leftwich disagrees.

"I don't feel that way at all," Please see page A14

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A&T fraternity member accused of beating pledges

By The Associated Press

GREENSBORO -- Warrants have been drawn up against a Greensboro man after a fraternity hazing at North Carolina A&T State University in which seven pledges were hit on the head with a two-by-four and another's beard was set on fire.

Steven Jones, 20, turned himself in and was released on a \$5,000 bond, Greensboro police said.

Jones was charged with five misdemeanor counts of assault with a deadly weapon; two felony counts of assault with a deadly weapon, inflicting serious injury; two misdemeanor counts of hazing and one misdemeanor count of simple assault and battery.

The eight students were pledging Omega Psi Phi and were injured during "Hell Week," traditionally the last and most difficult week of the fraternity pledge period. All but one of the students were assaulted March 27.

The fraternity was suspended two years ago for "similar" hazing activities, fraternity officials said recently.

Omega Psi Phi was suspended in 1984 for "something similar to what we have now," said Leon Bavridge, district representative for the fraternity's national chapter. Bavridge said he could not recall specifics of the hazing.

The president of the fraternity's local graduate chapter, John Patterson, said he also was unable to remember what happened.

"I think two or three of the boys took some pledges off campus and did some things," Patterson said. He said the fraternity members "insisted the boys do something," but Patterson could not elaborate.

Bavridge, who supervises 86 chapters in North Carolina and South Carolina, said the 1984 hazing incident was not nearly as serious as those being investigated now.

"In my almost 30 years as a member of this fraternity, I have never seen anything this bad,"

Bavridge said.

In the latest incident, according to arrest warrants, Jeffrey Henderson had his beard set on fire, resulting in scarring; Lawrence Robinson was hit on the front of his head; Arnold Mazyck was hit on the head, arms and shoulders with a two-by-four; Clemente McWilliams was hit on the right side of the head with a two-by-four, resulting in a blood clot; Patrick Curry was hit on the head, resulting in a large wound that could not be closed with stitches; Derwin Patterson was hit on the head, arms, shoulders and legs; Leroy Sharpe was struck on the front of the head with a two-by-four; Alexander Dawson was hit on the left side of the head and needed seven stitches.

Ronald Buck, vice chancellor for student affairs, said the university has been conducting an investigation of the hazing incident since officials first learned of the assaults March 28. He said Jones appeared to be the only one involved in the assaults.

"We do not tolerate any form of mental or physical hazing on this campus," Buck said. The hazing "violated both state and university law," he said.

A tribunal comprised of both students and faculty will conduct a hearing when the school's investigation is complete to determine if any sanctions will be made against students or the fraternity.

Buck said the assaults occurred off campus, "maybe at one of the student's residences." There are no fraternity or sorority houses at A&T.

Buck said that this was the only incident of hazing he could recall in his 18 months as vice chancellor at A&T. Buck said university officials will check to see if hazing has occurred at other fraternities.

"When something like this happens, you have to take a look to see whether it's an isolated incident or more widespread," he said. "We don't want anything like this to happen on our campus again."

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