

Editorials

Academic Excellence

One of the last official acts of UNC President William Friday before his recent retirement was to recommend to the university's Board of Governors to continue the policy of requiring high school athletes who enter the university system to have a "C" academic average if they plan to be college athletes.

On the surface, this policy action recommendation does not appear to be nothing more than business as usual. However, an understanding of the motive behind Mr. Friday's action reveals it to be an act of courage. In fact, to say that Friday's action was courageous is an understatement because the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Division I schools will not, for the most part, require a "C" academic average and a minimum 700 SAT score until August, 1988. In the 29 months prior to that date, a 1.8 or "D" average and a 660 SAT score will be adequate for freshman varsity sports. It should be known also that a student needs only to score 260 on the SAT because they are given 400 points for just placing their name on the test sheet.

Basically, President Friday was expressing a point of common sense. That is, a student who can maintain no better than a "D" average in high school can hardly be expected to make 700 on the SAT, study college-level courses and participate in collegiate freshman sports and be successful in all three. We fully agree with Bill Friday's viewpoint on this important issue. Sad to say that while Friday suggested that other Atlantic Coast Conference (ACC) schools support the "C" average idea, it appears that most will follow the NCAA lead and delay for the maximum 29 months the higher academic standard of a "C" average

and a 700 SAT Score.

It's sad to say, too, that the majority of the predominantly black Division I colleges and universities not only want to delay accepting the higher academic standard but are considering court action to prevent the higher standard requirement from being implemented.

This is tragic. It means that many colleges and universities have their priorities in the wrong order with athletics, including the exploitation of athletes and earning megabucks, having priority over higher academic standards -- the only true purpose of higher education.

A college-university education is the first order of business, athletics and everything else is or should be secondary consideration. To do less is to corrupt and abuse the pursuit of excellence in education which has always and needs to be one of the four corners of a democratic society.

Considering that black youth have historically received less than quality education, it is particularly difficult to understand how predominantly black colleges and universities can support anything short of the highest standard of educational excellence.

The argument they offer that many black youth will be denied an education by the higher standards is an untruth and an insult to the intelligence of black youth. We believe, and have enough faith in our nation's black youth, to feel sure that within just a few years most black high school graduating athletes will have a "C" average or better and a 700 SAT score. These youth need to be challenged to meet this higher academic standard if we truly believe that "a mind is a terrible thing to waste."

Arms Race Insanity

In last Sunday's Charlotte Observer, there is an article by President Reagan's national security advisory Robert C. McFarlane entitled, "Defense Spending Shouldn't Be Cut." Among Mr. McFarlane's arguments to maintain and even increase in the defense budget are: (1) those who criticize mismanagement and waste by the Defense Department represent "an attack on the restoration of our (national) strength; (2) ... Congress - it should drop the pretense that it understands how to manage defense programs" and give the Defense Department a blank check to spend whatever it wants to; and (3) if we "delink" defense spending from the Soviet threat our hope of negotiating arms control reductions will decline.

Mr. McFarlane uses these and other arguments to support the idea that national defense must be a first priority. We could agree with this viewpoint if it did not border on insanity. First, to suggest that people who oppose waste in the Defense Department want to weaken our national defense is outright stupidity. In fact the mind-set and mentality for this kind of thinking arises from the Reagan administration's effort to

cut drastically social programs because of a few isolated incidents of welfare fraud.

Secondly, to suggest that Congress should abandon its responsibility to the American people on defense spending management and let a group of hawk-eyed military career people and the Reagan administration decide what our defense needs are is to accept one characteristic of a dictatorship where in too many countries now military leaders rule by force of arms.

Thirdly, McFarlane's "delink" defense spending concept means that we should be guided in our arms build-up by what the Russians do. By doing so, we won't need to worry about a Russian nuclear attack because we will simply destroy ourselves from within by bankruptcy and a declining standard of living. In fact, it is the insane effort of other nations to get in the USA-Russian arms development that is keeping many of them from achieving even a minimum, decent standard of living. Along side of the McFarlane article are some race facts. One of these says the number of nations ruled by military governments has grown from 22 in 1960 to 77 today with over one billion people now living under military rule.

Miller Says:

Dr. King's Legacy: The Brotherhood Of Mankind

By Sherman N. Miller
Special To The Post

I came to appreciate the impact which Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. had on other American ethnic groups at a breakfast in his honor, sponsored by Beth Emeth Congregation of Wilmington, DE. At the worship service that preceded the breakfast, I sensed that the reading of Dr. King's famous speech, "I Have A Dream," ignited a yearning for the good old days of black and Jewish brotherhood.

Whilst I was waiting for my meal to be served I decided to ask people why they attended this breakfast. Carol Casner gave her reason as to why Jews should attend the Martin Luther breakfasts.

"I think he did something for anybody who cares...I think he gave hope."

Joseph Bernofsky, who prepared the breakfast, felt Dr. King's mission was in accord with Jewish teachings.

"We, as Jews, are in favor of liberal expression of the people and Martin Luther King was for the rights of his people. I know when Martin Luther King was campaign-



Sherman

ing, marching, and parading there were a lot of Jewish people who also joined him in his crusade. At that time, I was in Akron, OH. I remember one of our Rabbis going down South and participating in some of his parades."

When the special guests began their addresses it was clear that Dr. King's birthday celebration had afforded an opportunity for black and Jewish Americans to try to bridge their chasm. Stephanie Gurwitz, Community Relations Associate for the Baltimore Jewish Council, validated the existence of a chasm, stating that she felt it is widening.

"Twenty years ago anti-Semitism in the black community was significantly lower than anti-Semitism in the white community and



Quality Of Education Is Improving

By Sabrina Johnson
Special To The Post

The quality of education in America seems to be improving again - it is manifesting itself in higher test scores across the United States. High school students are doing better on college aptitude tests as a result of a new emphasis on basic education.

A recent report shows scholastic aptitude test (SAT) and American College Test (ACT) scores are up in 35 states by an average of nine percent since 1981 - the most dramatic increase in some 20 years.

The State of South Carolina showed the most substantial increase in SAT scores since 1982, up 25 points to 815 out of 1,600. The State of Utah showed the most substantial increase in ACT scores, up 0.5 percent to 18.9 out of a perfect 36.

Other dramatic increases in SAT scores: Washington, D.C., up 23; Maryland, up 21; Delaware, up 21; Virginia, Hawaii, New Jersey and Oregon, up 20.

Top ACT increases: Kentucky, Alabama, up 0.4;



Sabrina

North Dakota, Illinois, up 0.3.

Varying school superintendents in the increasing states attribute the results to the renewed emphasis on reading, writing and mathematics claiming that this is the best foundation which is needed to achieve in any academic area. Tightened graduation requirements is also part of this increase. High school graduates are strongly encouraged to partake in more math and science courses as part of their studies toward a high school diploma. In addition, there are also more SAT and

ACT prep courses and practice tests available to students. Finally, students themselves are beginning to take a more serious attitude about school work. They are grasping a greater sense of what it will take to have the career they want and seem to be willing to work for it.

South Carolina attributes its success in the overall push for better education, highlighted by the 1984 Education Improvement Act - a package of standards and reforms funded by a penny of the state's five-cents sales tax. Also two state projects targeted at improving SAT scores-performance are coming to the surface.

The SAT-Math Project, developed in 1984 and tested last year, is making its way statewide by using special tests to identify students' weaknesses and strengths, and practice books to give students experience in answering SAT-type questions. A similar SAT-Verbal Project will also be tested this year and takes on many of the same structures as the SAT-Math Project.

Since the movement toward improving education, the average score of students in South Carolina has risen from 780 to 815 (out of 1,600) - twice the national average of 16 points. North Carolina seems to be suffering somewhat in test scores but somehow manages to remain in the mainstream. SAT scores in North Carolina in 1982 were an average of 827, 1983 found a slight increase is six points to 833. The state's ranking is 21 by the U.S. Department of Education whereas South Carolina is ranked 22 in the nation. The State of New Hampshire remains number one in SAT scores in 1982 as well as 1983 with the average score of 939 points.

Not only are overall test scores improving but the dropout rate is going down, according to Education Secretary William Bennett.

While the news is encouraging there is still a substantial amount of territory to cover. The nation's dropout rate fell one percent between 1982 and 1983. Test scores are up in 35 states and the dropout rate dropped to 40. Bennett views this as being tangible evidence that the improve education movement and restored discipline is working.

Minnesota has the country's lowest dropout rate - only 10.7 percent of ninth graders do not graduate.

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