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UNCC And Minority Enrollment

By Les Bowen

As a part of the 16-member UNC system, UNCC has a stake in the outcome of the current dispute between UNC and HEW over desegregation guidelines.

Exactly how that controversy will affect UNCC remains to be seen, but both Chancellor D.W. Colvard and Associate Director of Admissions James A. Scott agree that UNCC is in a different position from the state's other predominantly white public institutions with regard to minority enrollment, due to a number of factors.

The biggest minority enrollment is greater proportionally than any of the other "white" schools in the system, though some larger schools actually have more minority students.

The reasons for UNCC's higher ratio have to do with the school's location in an

urban area; its close relationship with CPCC and other community colleges; a continuing effort to recruit minority students headed by Scott, who is black; and something a bit more elusive having to do with lack of a tradition of segregation at UNCC.

Addressing the last point, Colvard said, "We started in a way that's different than the beginning of any other college. N.C. State was primarily a white, man's college oriented toward math and the sciences. Chapel Hill was a white, man's college oriented toward the arts. Fayetteville State was a black teachers college. UNCC came after all that, without any built-in bias toward sex or race from the beginning. If we have bias, it is of the people and not of the system."

Colvard foresaw problems in reaching the goals HEW asks for.

"We're committed to trying to protect and develop the black colleges, and HEW seems to be committed to that. On the other hand, they're saying you've got to drastically increase the number of black students in predominantly white schools. Also, they said it wasn't a quota, it was a goal. It's hard to understand what the difference is."

The Chancellor was optimistic, however, that some sort of compromise could be reached. "HEW is saying 'do the best you can; we're going to look at your record of performance.'"

Scott saw the matter differently, "Personally, I feel it's something that has to be done. In the early 70's there seemed to be a concerted effort on the part of predominantly white schools to increase minority enrollment. That was the time of

the most activism on college campuses. Today, there seems to be an atmosphere of 'letting things ride.'

"UNCC is a lot closer to meeting those goals than a lot of other universities in the system are," he continued, "but that's tempered by the size of the university. Our eight percent encompasses fewer students than some of the others."

Colvard said UNCC made "a conscious effort to recruit minority students from the very beginning. At first we had a very small program, and we still don't have a very big program, but it's a good one."

Scott in charge of minority recruiting since he came here seven years ago, said, "We've had the commitment ever since I've been here, but you run into problems with money for recruitment."

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Fourth Ward: The Sociology Of Redevelopment

By Brad Rich

Last week, the Carolina Journal presented the first in a series of articles dealing with the restoration of the old Fourth Ward neighborhood in downtown Charlotte. In the first article, architecture student Ron Wilson looked at the architectural aspects of the project and determined that the redevelopment of Fourth Ward was, indeed, an architectural statement.

This week, UNCC Dean of Students Dennis Rash, a Fourth Ward homeowner and a prime figure in the entire Fourth Ward project, was interviewed in an attempt to discover some of the key sociological aspects of revitalization efforts.

One of the major questions in this, and any redevelopment, is whether or not the residents of the neighborhood are forced out of their homes into inadequate housing. Rash said, "A lot of rehabilitations of old neighborhoods across the country may have had that problem. However, that has not been the case in Fourth Ward...the area was almost 50 percent vacant lots, and of the houses still standing, about 50 percent were vacant. Ours had been vacant for about two and a half years before we moved in."

Rash said that whenever possible, the young, professional people who have moved into the neighborhood have asked the old owner of the house (most were rented) to locate adequate housing for the old residents as a term of the sale. In one case, Rash said the person who moved into the house paid moving expenses for the residents who were moving out, and helped them find a new house.

Rash admitted, though, that in several instances residents were displaced in a manner that seemed less than ideal. "In almost all of these cases, though," he said, "there was an absentee landlord and we really didn't have much control over what went on."

One attempt made to relocate residents, Rash mentioned, was when NCNB loaned money to MOTION, a black-owned corporation, and persuaded them to renovate an old apartment building on 8th Street between Poplar and Graham streets and turn it into low cost housing. "I think this is an important step symbolically," Rash said, "though maybe not numerically. It does say, I think, that we want not to displace people."

Another key to the success or failure of the Fourth Ward experiment, probably the most important question, is how well the upper-middle class professional residents and the lower class and elderly residents on fixed incomes get along together. Rash said so far there is not any real socialization between the groups, but that they have "had some of those moments of socializing...maybe I'd stop for a while after working on the house all day on a Saturday and one of the neighborhood residents from across the street would come over...and I'd buy a sixpack of beer and we'd sit down and drink beer together."

"I did have one run in with a woman, though," Rash said, "...and one of the men I'd had beer with came over and said something like, 'Don't let her bother you, she's just a crazy woman.' That made me feel kind of good, like some of the residents were glad to have us there."

"And there is a little grocery store in the neighborhood where we do a lot of shopping, and frankly, they have the best steaks in the city of Charlotte."

"I don't think there will ever be a lot of social interaction, you know, like low income residents coming over to eat dinner with us...I mean you have to have some things in common," Rash said, "but I think there is a healthy respect, a spirit of tolerance. I mean, we kind of look after one another to make sure there aren't any ripoffs. When you live this close together,



As new businesses and families move into Fourth Ward, questions arise concerning the fate of those who have lived there since before rebuilding.

(Photo by Frank Alexander)

with houses literally only 40 feet apart, you keep your eyes out."

One interesting and encouraging fact is that the children in the neighborhood have begun to associate with each other to some degree. "A few of the kids know each other because they go to the same school...we go to Irwin Avenue, and it's almost a neighborhood school...I wish I thought everybody was completely devoid of prejudice, but that's just not the case. I have had to encourage my older child to play with some of the lower income kids, but my younger boy plays with anybody."

"But I don't want to misrepresent it to you. It's not a natural play relationship yet, where they come home from school and immediately go out to play with some of the black kids. It's more like if they're out

playing basketball or something some of the neighborhood kids just stop by and start to play. I don't know why it hasn't become natural yet, but it is clear that there is some relationship there."

The issue of security also has been important in the Fourth Ward project. Two weeks ago, a Carolina Journal photographer taking pictures in the neighborhood noticed one house that was fenced in. Rash said, "Oh yeah, that's a black family that's been in the neighborhood a long time before we moved in. They had had some problems with security before...they've lived there about 10 years, I guess, and that's really a fine house they live in. They have made some money, and before we kind of turned things around they had

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