

**MINORITIES**

FROM PAGE 3

was born of a particular need, and when the times and needs changed, so did the organizations.

**Advancing Student Needs**

One of the oldest organizations on campus, the Black Student Movement was founded in 1967 as an advocacy group for black students at the University, said Harold Wallace, special assistant for minority affairs and a faculty advisor for the BSM since 1973.

"Prior to the founding of the Black Student Movement, we had a local chapter of the NAACP. It spoke to some of the students' needs, but it was more tied to the agenda of the national and state NAACP."

"Black students felt they needed an organization that spoke specifically to the need of students here on campus, so in addition to the NAACP chapter, they founded the Black Student Movement."

Wallace said the BSM's goals had changed little in the nearly 30 years that

have passed since its founding.

"It's probably gotten a little more sophisticated and articulated in its goals, objectives and agendas for each year, but essentially it is still the organization that is an advocate for black students."

BSM co-president Chandra Taylor said the organization was second only to the Carolina Athletic Association in undergraduate membership. The BSM currently has more than 400 student members, Taylor said. "The goal (of the BSM) is always to promote black culture on campus and to foster unity among black students."

Black students had already established a strong and vocal presence on campus by the time other minorities arrived at UNC in significant numbers.

In 1974, Carolina Indian Circle formed as a support group for Native American students, Circle President Linwood Watson said. Since then, the Circle has come to serve a three-prong purpose. "Our main aim is to help the Native-American students here adjust to campus life in a majority non-Indian world and to help recruit Native American students to that end."

He said the Circle, which has a membership of more than 30 students, also worked to secure the hiring and retention of Native American faculty and staff and to enhance knowledge of the Circle. "Indian culture is alive and well, and we seek to let people know that," Watson said.

**Into the '80s**

It was not until nearly 10 years after the formation of the Circle that the torrent began. During the mid-1980s, at least four groups formed in rapid succession, including SANGAM, the Asian Students Association, the Korean Students Association and the Carolina Hispanic Association.

According to statistics from the Office of Institutional Research, the minority population at the University was increasing steadily during these years, with the greatest growth among the Asian and Pacific Islander population.

With this influx of students came a desire for social interaction. So perhaps it is no surprise that most of the groups formed during the 1980s began as social organizations. Since then, however, they have changed to focus more on raising cultural awareness and doing community service.

Since its founding in 1987, SANGAM, which changed its name from the South Asian Students Association to the South Asian Awareness Organization last year, has expanded beyond Indian students to include descendants of Pakistan, Nepal, Bangladesh, Bhutan and Sri Lanka. Once an organization consisting of just a dozen friends, SANGAM is now a 150-member organization with 7 elected officers and a 19-member executive board.

"I think a lot of the focus for students who are coming to Carolina as freshman is to find the Indian or South Asian social scene, and they immediately turn to SANGAM," President Neelam Patel said.

Although it was originally founded as a social organization, SANGAM has expanded to include cultural and service activities.

"As a cultural awareness group, we perform many dances for other groups' events," Patel said. "We have gone into elementary schools to explain what it means to be South Asian."

Patel said about 30 to 45 members of SANGAM also regularly volunteer at the Burn Center at UNC Hospitals.



The Pit, the University's town square, is sometimes cited as an example of a place where students segregate themselves.

**'Asian Students Know How to Have Fun'**

Albert Hwang, president of the ASA, said that group was formed seven years ago primarily as a social organization.

"Their only goal was to get together. They wanted to meet people," Hwang said. "They wanted to have parties, they wanted to throw dances and let people come and meet Asian students and realize, 'Wow, Asian students know how to have fun, too.'" But Hwang said ASA's focus began to shift from social activities to cultural issues about four years ago.

"While the social part is good and works to an extent, if you really want to be respected or really want to be noticed as a minority group, you have to start taking stands on certain issues," Hwang said. "(ASA) shifted its focus towards more of an activist role, protesting certain injustices and starting certain initiatives."

For the past three years, ASA has sponsored a major cultural event each semester — "Journey into Asia" in the fall and Asian-American Heritage Week in February. The group also operates the Asian-American Resource Center, which provides peer counseling for students.

Unlike SANGAM and ASA, CHiSPA began as a cultural awareness group with the social aspects coming later, CHiSPA president Jessica Rios said.

Rios said CHiSPA's growth in recent years had been phenomenal. In the six years since the group's founding, membership has expanded from 10 members to 40 members, Rios said.

**Together or Apart?**

Despite their formation as separate campus organizations, minority groups have come together to participate in a number of activities in recent years.

"You've had that natural development of dialogue promoting understanding among the various minority groups on campus," Wallace said. "(The BSM) worked with a number of groups and organizations on the campus, not just to advance their agenda, but to advance an overall agenda of the University to improve race relations and make progress on diversifying the faculty, staff and student body."

Hwang said ASA and the BSM started an annual joint meeting last year, and he said the two organizations would hold a picnic together later this spring.

"I think on campus there's the general air that minority groups have really real-

ized that we have common goals, and it's time to start working together," Hwang said.

KASA President Jung Wook Lee said although KASA was primarily formed to make the University community more aware of Korean culture and to meet the needs of Korean students, interaction with other minority organizations was also an important part of KASA's goals.

In addition to working with other minority organizations, ethnic groups frequently collaborate on special projects with predominantly white organizations.

Wallace said the BSM frequently worked with student government and the Campus Y. A Concert 4 Unity on Thursday will feature performances by the Clef Hangers, Opeyo! Dancers, BSM Gospel Choir, SANGAM dancers, Loreleis, Harmonyx, CHiSPA, Carolina Indian Circle and the Vietnamese Students' Association.

Watson said the Carolina Indian Circle also collaborated with University administrators on curriculum development, specifically within the American studies and music departments.

Wallace said he was pleased with the level of interaction that had developed among minority groups. "On some campuses, you do not have the same degree of interaction, dialogue and alliances that you have with the Black Student Movement."

Despite the alliances that have formed between minority organizations, the University does not have a coalition to formally unite the various groups.

"One thing that the UNC campus lacks is a minority students coalition," Patel said. "I found that at the University of Pennsylvania and at Duke they have different groups that serve as a panel for minority groups to communicate."

Efforts are underway to form such an organization. Under the guidance of the BSM and ASA, minority student organizations are trying to form a Presidents' Council, which would hold a regular joint meeting of the heads of all minority groups.

The groups are not the only factor influencing the direction of diversity. The ways in which people of different races interact is also shaped by a myriad of programs, from policies that attempt to diversify the residence halls to classes like UNITAS, which deals with cultural differences.

In the end, however, the issue of whether the groups promote diversity or wrap students in a cocoon that protects them from dealing with it remains. But for now, at least one University leader is leaning toward the first answer.

"As we learn about who we are and we come together, we can share with others," Boulton said. "That's pluralism, and that, to me, is diversity."

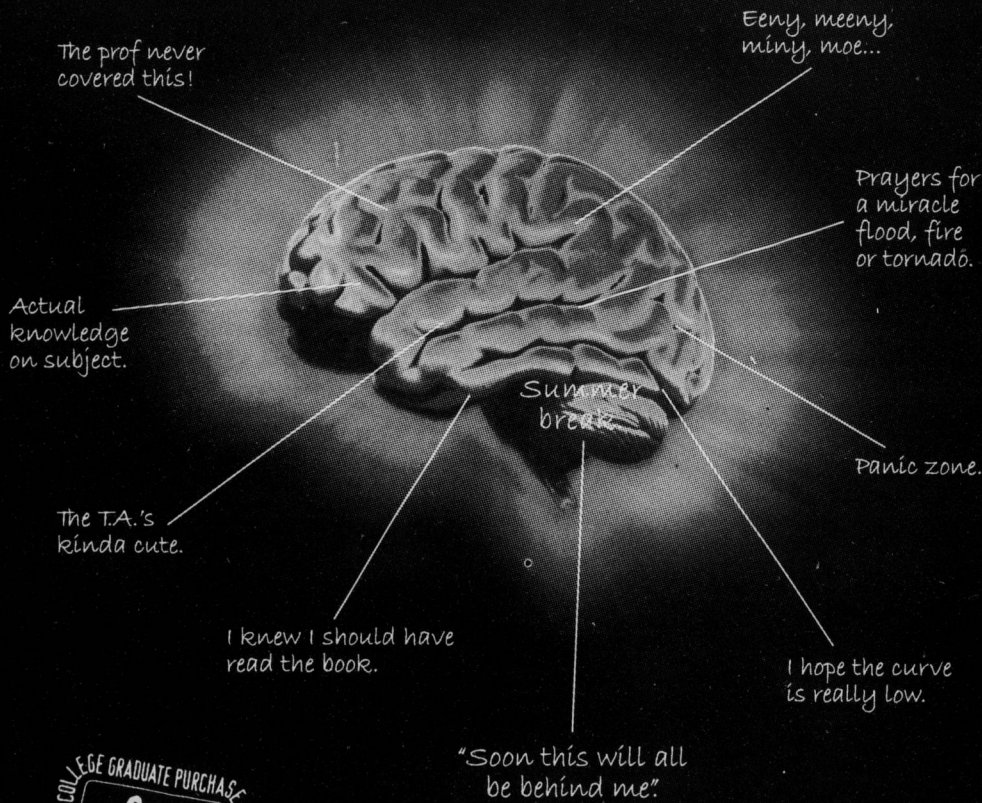
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