

Homecoming queen holds 'spring fling'

BY ERIKA MEYERS
STAFF WRITER

Campus groups and volunteers came together Wednesday night to make sure the area's senior citizens got the attention they need.

Forty senior citizens from centers in Carrboro and Chapel Hill attended the Senior Spring Fling in the Union Cabaret.

Homecoming Queen Theresa Avery put the program together as her service project, with the help of the Carolina Athletic Association.

Avery said she got the idea for the Senior Spring Fling from a program she organized in high school.

"When I was in high school, I was president of student government and we did a similar thing at Thanksgiving," Avery said. "I wanted to do something with the elderly, because people do programs for children all the time."

The UNC Jazz Band opened the show with several numbers, followed by Avery's welcome address and CAA President Seth Nore's recognition of special guests.

Avery summed up the events of the program in her welcoming address.

"There's going to be some dancing, some singing and some people dancing with you," Avery said. "If you're ready to party, we'll party with you."

Acts included vocal performances from the UNC Gospel Choir and a dance by the Opeyo! Dancers.

Angelique Smith, otherwise known as Ms. Black South Carolina, captured the audience with a ventriloquist act. Smith and her co-star, Gracie, brought a smile to audience members' faces.

Avery sang "The Wind Beneath Your Wings" as an a cappella vocal solo.

Rashonda Steadman, a freshman from Greensboro who helped with the program, said she thought it was a good idea. "We don't give senior citizens as much help and respect as they deserve."

Jackie Carter, a freshman from Warrenton who also helped Avery, said, "It was really neat to see the seniors get out there and dance and have fun."

Avery said a lot of planning and hard work went into the program. "All the food was donated by campus organizations and businesses in the area."



Angelique Smith, Ms. Black South Carolina, performs a ventriloquist act with her puppet, Gracie, at the Senior Spring Fling on Wednesday evening.

Student involvement needed to plan welcome-back bash

BY CHERRIECE WRIGHT
STAFF WRITER

The Fall Fest planning committee wants to throw you a party.

The committee is planning a big welcome back bash for students on Aug. 17.

They only have one problem — they need individual students and student groups to get involved.

Imagine walking down South Street in front of the Union on the first day of your college career, or maybe one of the last, and seeing a huge party going on, a big mosh pit kind of Mardi Gras right there.

When you look to your right, you see booths representing every student group you can imagine.

"There (will be) an opportunity to either meet people with those organizations or find out about things they may not know," said Shannon Okerblom, a junior from Hampton, Va., and an Orientation Leader Coordinator.

To your left are signs about a volleyball or basketball tournament that you can get in on. You can play video games, bowl, swim or play pool, and you get to do it all night long with about 5,000 of your soon-to-be closest friends.

There are live bands playing loud

music and then somebody utters the magic phrase, "Hey man, there's free food and drinks over there."

There are tons of free prizes calling your name and all you have to do to win them is get a couple people to sign a card saying you had fun at this place or that place. Then, just stick your card in a box.

"It's a great opportunity for students and faculty to meet; plus, it's a great way to start the year," said Ashley Queen, a junior from Welcome and an Orientation Leader Coordinator.

The Fall Fest planning committee got the idea for a festival at a workshop members attended last year. "It was a carnival-type workshop that we went to and saw what they had and came up with our own ideas," Queen said.

Now imagine another boring, warm day in Chapel Hill. Of course there is a party somewhere, but you are not invited and you do not know anyone who is going. You end up stuck in your room trying desperately not to look bored.

The Fall Fest planning Committee is in need of students to help organize the event. The committee meets again on March 26 at 3 p.m. For more information, call Shannon Okerblom at 933-1222.

Colleges don't buy need for selling essays on Web

BY DAVID COENEN
STAFF WRITER

High school students can now surf the Internet to better college-application essays, but admissions directors warn against plagiarism.

Helen Lee, managing editor of IvyEssays, said the new business, a web page that advertises college entrance compositions for \$10 to \$60, would give students the tools needed to become better writers.

"Reading examples and models (of essays) can teach students good writing skills," Lee said.

"We're hoping to level the admissions playing field," Lee said. She said many students lacked the resources to improve their writing skills, and IvyEssays fulfilled that need.

However, admissions officers across the country worry that applicants might plagiarize IvyEssays' compositions or use them as outlines for their essays.

"Obviously, since they are quoting full essays, there are opportunities to plagiarize," said Parke Muth, dean of undergraduate admissions at the University of Virginia. "Frankly, people who try to find the perfect essay instead

of learning how to write well are missing the boat."

UNC Director of Admissions James Callahan said there was nothing wrong with students using the essay service to get ideas.

"What's bad is if someone just plagiarizes the thing," Callahan said.

UNC doesn't require essays for undergraduate admissions, though applicants have the option of writing a personal statement, he said.

Albert Lucero, admissions counselor at the University of California at Berkeley, said no essays on the market could help applicants write Berkeley's essay.

"I think in terms of our essays, ours are more biographical in nature," Lucero said. He said Berkeley looked for more personal responses.

"It's not worth the money," Lucero said of IvyEssays' service.

Bill Starling, director of undergraduate admissions and financial aid at Wake Forest University, agreed that the essay service was not worth the money.

"A fair number of people got more money than they got sense," he said. "If you're taking AP English and are a good writer, just answer the question."

Sara Skelton, director of admissions at Pepperdine University, said students who outlined compositions from IvyEssays would be at a disadvantage.

"We do find similar essays — we skim them."



40 college groups oppose U.S. News ranking system

Students across the country are asking administrators to write letters of protest or refuse to fill out requested evaluations.

BY TONY MECIA
STAFF WRITER

While the UNC administration contemplates ways to move up in the U.S. News & World Report rankings, more than 40 student governments have formally expressed disapproval of the ranking system used by the magazine.

A senior at Stanford University founded the Forget U.S. News Coalition last fall. "Students should think about the issue of whether a magazine can say, 'This is the best university in the country, this is the second-best, this is the third-best,'" said Nick Thompson.

Student associations at Stanford, the University of Michigan, the University of Pennsylvania and dozens of other campuses passed resolutions calling on their administrations to help change the way U.S. News ranks colleges.

The resolutions typically call on the university's president to write letters of protest to U.S. News or to refuse to complete U.S. News surveys, which account for 25 percent of rankings.

Stanford University President Gerhard Casper wrote such a letter to U.S. News Editor James Fallows last September. Casper wrote: "I am extremely skeptical that the quality of a university ... can be measured statistically. However, even if it can, the producers of the U.S. News rankings remain far from discovering the method."

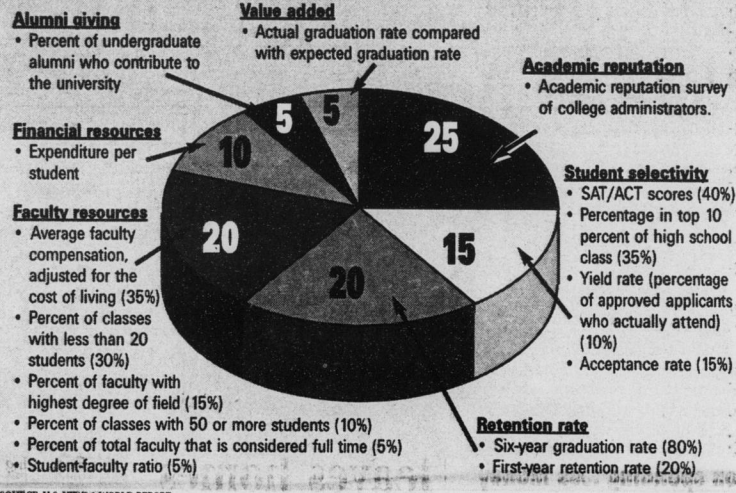
J.J. Thompson, U.S. News associate editor, said her magazine would continue to rank universities.

UNC Student Body President Aaron Nelson said he was unaware of the movement to change the rankings.

"It doesn't seem that they take into account the quality of teaching and the success of graduates," he said. "That ought to be weighted more strongly."

How U.S. News & World Report does it

Seventy-five percent of a college's U.S. News ranking comes from statistics which carry different percentage weights, such as undergraduate class size and SAT scores, while 25 percent is determined by a survey of administrators.



U.S. NEWS

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ways to ascend in the rankings, administrators began exploring options. Executive Vice Chancellor Elson Floyd floated five specific recommendations to the chancellor and Provost Richard Richardson, according to an administration memorandum.

Aware of how U.S. News calculates its rankings, Floyd suggested:

- Increasing full professor salaries by \$4.2 million
- Increasing merit scholarships by \$2 million
- Increasing graduate fellowships by \$2 million
- Allocating \$4 million for tracking and monitoring to increase retention rates
- Allocating \$12 million for financial aid

Floyd said these figures were just preliminary and used only for discussion. "It was more of an exercise than anything else just to find out what the numbers might look like and how we might move up in the rankings," he said.

Floyd tailored his recommendations to U.S. News' ranking system.

Richardson asked Elliot Hirshman, a professor of psychology, to evaluate Floyd's recommendations. Hirshman gave the proposals mixed reviews.

For instance, increasing faculty salaries by \$4.2 million "is very likely to increase our ranking," Hirshman wrote in a Dec. 13 memorandum.

"Overall faculty salaries are an important determinant of the faculty resources factor ... and raising full professors' salaries would directly increase this measure," he wrote.

But in regard to increasing merit scholarships by \$2 million, Hirshman stated, "There is substantial

risk that this allocation would not increase our ranking, and further study is necessary."

But Hirshman added that more merit scholarships would not improve the ranking because the 18 percent cap on out-of-state students limits the highly competitive applicants who can be accepted.

UNC is already affordable compared to other schools, so a discount would not change many of the top students' choices, he stated.

Hirshman wrote that the other proposals — increasing funding for graduate fellowships, financial aid and tracking to increase retention rates — would have little effect on the ranking.

Hirshman and Richardson said the proposals were a "wish list" to promote discussion. "It's silly to think of this analysis as policy," Hirshman said.

Richardson said funding would not be dictated by an outside organization. "I, for one, am not chasing mindlessly U.S. News & World Report."

Past administrators have criticized the rankings. In September 1995, then-Associate Provost Marilyn Yarbrough said: "I think that taking these numbers and making any judgments about quality is simplistic."

U.S. News Associate Editor J.J. Thompson, who earned a master's in journalism from the University in 1995, said she had not heard of universities altering programs to curry favor with her magazine.

"It troubles us to hear if that's happening — schools shaping their policies by U.S. News rankings," she said.

Richardson said the ranking system had inherent problems. "It's a flawed measure, and we will be flawed as an institution if we put too much emphasis on it."

Graham Brink contributed to this story.

Campus Calendar

Thursday

2 p.m.-3:30 p.m. — The Center for Teaching and Learning will conduct a workshop for teaching assistants on "Acknowledging Diversity in the Classroom" in the Toy Lounge of Dey Hall. Call 966-1289 to register.

4 p.m. — The Department of Physics and Astronomy will present a TUNL seminar titled "Standard Models Studies from Muon Decay" featuring Robert Tribble of Texas A&M, in Room 05 of the Physics building at Duke University.

For the Record

The March 5 article, "Police chief challenges charges of racism at aldermen meeting," and the March 3 article, "Town officials react to professor's comments on alleged discrimination," should have stated that five black men were held at gunpoint by Carrboro police on Feb. 26 at Highland Hills Apartments after a woman phoned police because she suspected the men were breaking into a car.

The Daily Tar Heel regrets the error.

ROBBERY

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she said. "We're still investigating that possibility."

Cousins said several other robberies in the Chapel Hill area were still being investigated, and that several of the incidents looked as if they also might be connected.

She said the robberies at Foxcroft and Finley Forest Apartments were very similar. "They occurred at the same time of day, and the descriptions matched," she said. "Some of (the robberies) do seem to appear very similar."

Hutchison said the Chapel Hill and Carrboro Police were working together to solve the cases.

"Cousins said although several robberies have occurred in the past couple of weeks, it was too early to tell if they represented a trend.

Hutchison also said there was not enough information to tell if the robberies were a trend, and that assaultive behavior often comes out of nowhere. "Everyone, police and regular citizens, need to be on guard and know what's going on," she said. "Sometimes even that's not enough."

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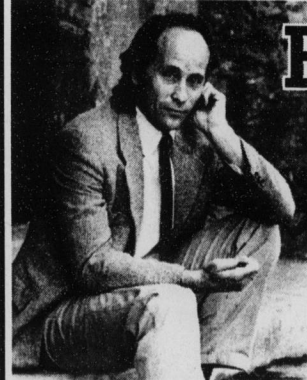
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