

# County Shines in U.S. Census

By WALTER HERZ  
Staff Writer

Two months into the 2000 U.S. Census, Orange County has surpassed the national average for census responses and distinguished itself among other N.C. counties.

County officials announced Wednesday that the county had received a response rate of 66 percent, equal to its 1990 response and higher than the national average by one percentage point.

Orange County's response was seventh out of North Carolina's 100 counties. Camden County came in first.

Daniel Newman, co-chairman of the Orange County Complete Count Committee, said it was still too soon to know how the county would be affected by the census results, financially and otherwise.

"It's a relative thing," he said. "Orange County's population will have to be compared with other counties' populations. A lot of this is done on a per capita basis, so until numbers are decided nationwide, we won't know anything for sure."

Chapel Hill responded with a rate of 67 percent and Carrboro with a rate of

64 percent.

Newman said the high census results were at least partly because of a county-sponsored interest campaign.

"In September, we started a county-wide effort with the Complete Count Committee," he said. "We worked with subcommittees in different areas, such as education, religion, business, job recruitment and support."

Newman said another factor to keep in mind regarding the response rate was the education level in Orange County.

"For the most part, we're a pretty conscientious county," he said. "We have a considerable elderly population, and they tend to be more civic-minded."

However, Newman said several problem areas existed.

"In a lot of places we faced more uncertainty as far as knowing what kind of response we would get," he said. "The two hardest communities to get are minorities and college students."

To reach minorities, Newman said his committee used bilingual materials to personalize census information.

"We had a subcommittee for special populations, and we worked mainly with Asians and Hispanics," he said.

"We wrote a short letter about the goals of the census and translated into three

languages: Spanish, Chinese and Vietnamese. We distributed that in the different communities."

Efforts to inform college students brought Newman's committee to the UNC campus.

"We tried to do some things around the University," he said. "We worked with the Black Student Movement and had ads and stories in The Daily Tar Heel. We also worked with the Department of Career Services to encourage students to become enumerators."

Carrboro Planning Director Roy Williford said the high census results would make his job a lot easier.

"It obviously helps us in terms of planning for the future," he said.

"The higher the count, the better we can find the needs of different sectors of the population with different income levels."

Joyce Brown, a Chapel Hill Town Council member, said she was pleased with the amount of census responses.

"I'm very glad," she said. "I wish it could be closer to 100 percent, but this is great."

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## TRANSIT

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the fare-free program for the students," she said. "(Council members) are even willing to subsidize it a little."

Student Body President Brad Matthews said he felt the summit was productive.

"It seems like both towns are committed to change (the transit system)," he said. "While fare-free does not look like a possibility for this budget year, I definitely think it's going to happen."

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## VINROOT

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would also contribute to his effectiveness as governor. Robert Griffen, managing partner of Robinson, Bradshaw and Hinson, Vinroot's law firm, said Vinroot's concern for others made him a successful lawyer and would make him an effective governor.

Neeley said Vinroot would bring integrity to the office. "Richard is going to be honest with you. You might not like what he has to say, but he'll be honest with you."

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## INNOVATIONS

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ops from that."

She said this sense of community created an atmosphere where students asked questions and exchanged ideas more freely.

"In making the class a free forum of discussion, students are exposed to more ideas, which results in the students learning more," Lefebvre said.

To engage his class in group discussion, Journalism and Mass Communication Professor Chuck Stone prefers to enhance his students' learning experience through in-class technology.

"I bring audiovisual aids, like videos and records such as Johnny Mathis, to give the students something easy to grasp and consequently easier to learn."

Stone said he felt that one of the most important elements in connecting with his students was not to bore them. "It's my 11th commandment," he said.

Aside from outside aids and class field trips, an instructor's teaching style alone can wield significant influence in cultivating teacher-student ties.

Keeping class fresh and interesting is something philosophy Professor Geoff Sayre-McCord feels is imperative in creating a link with his students.

"I don't just lecture from the front of the class. I walk around and ask questions at random. I really try to hold the students responsible for the course content but I try not to put them on the spot," he said.

Sayre-McCord believes strongly in

taking notes on each of his lectures in order to treat each class as distinct and individual, even if they are different sections of the same course.

"I take notes about what happened after each lecture to better prepare for the next one," he said.

Taking notes also serves as a tool for self-assessment and improvement, he said.

Sayre-McCord's efforts seem to be making an impact on his students.

Aaron Nelson, a 1997 UNC graduate and coordinator of local relations in the department of University Relations, remembers Sayre-McCord as an extremely enthusiastic professor.

"He couldn't have been more excited about what he was teaching," he said. "It was a class that if you didn't go, you really felt like you missed something special."

Nelson, who took Sayre-McCord's Philosophy 22 course his junior year, noted that he was one of the professors UNC could truly be proud of.

But, with research comprising the brunt of professors' work, teaching a class and attempting to maintain a relationship with students can prove to be a precarious balance.

For these faculty members, time spent in the classroom demands a more intensive approach to teaching that allows them to establish the desired interaction in the allotted time.

But altering one's approach to teaching is no easy task for some. It often entails a teacher deviating from the conventional lecture and note-taking style.

Those faculty members seeking more

creative means of fostering ties with their students inside the classroom can find assistance at the University's Center for Teaching and Learning, a resource UNC professors can turn to as a means of elevating their teaching styles.

"I feel the vast majority of teachers here want to continue to progress and hone their skills," said CTL Director of Faculty Development Ed Neal.

"The teacher-student relationship is vital to the learning process, but it can be detrimental to that relationship if the teacher's methods don't work," he said.

Advising student clubs and organizations is another avenue faculty pursue as a means to bridge the student-faculty gap. "The faculty's involvement really serves two major purposes," said Jon Curtis, associate director of student activities.

"First, it is helpful to student organizations and sports clubs to have someone with a rudimentary knowledge of the University. Second, it represents an excellent opportunity to make bridges between the students and faculty involved."

Student organizations present teachers with the two-fold benefit of providing a link between themselves and their students and involving themselves with a group that interests them.

Debashis Aikat, a professor in the School of Journalism and Mass Communication, has worked with the Fifth Estate, a student-operated online newspaper, since its inception in 1996.

The belief that students do some of their most important learning outside of the classroom is one Aikat said he sub-

scribed to wholeheartedly.

"I believe teaching students shouldn't end in the classroom," he said. "If you want to do a good job in the classroom, you need to be in touch with students outside of the classroom."

In dealing with students both inside and outside the classroom, Aikat views himself as playing somewhat of a dual role.

"In class I am a formal professor, but out of class I try to be a friend that is available to talk to," he said. "My work doesn't end when I'm done teaching three hours of class. That is too easy."

UNC's sports clubs provide faculty with another outlet to cultivate student-professor relationships.

This leap from the classroom to the coach's bench is a transition some faculty members relish.

"I really look forward to every game and practice," said exercise and sports science Professor John Silva, who coaches the club volleyball team.

Those involved with club sports take away more from their experience than just a win-loss record, Silva said. "You see the kids develop organizational and leadership skills aside from just excelling at the game," he said. "There is a reward in seeing these kids develop."

Stone said there was one fact that belied the teaching process and all efforts to improve it.

"When students and teachers know each other on a first name basis both parties benefit immensely," Stone said.

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## PROFESSORS

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ergy between research and teaching and not bothered by the long hours.

"There is a job of management to be done, and you're here because you love it. If you can't stand the heat, get out of the kitchen," Williamson said.

But political science Professor Joel Schwartz said this heat can be considerable, as the tension between research and teaching had worsened over time.

"Competing for being the number one public research university in the nation has made teaching the most devalued activity on this campus," said Schwartz.

Although some professors noted that UNC should be praised for placing importance on teaching, as most research universities have lessened their classroom focus, other professors spoke out against the University's system of allocating resources as a reward system for national rankings.

The University controls the departments' purse strings and allocates resources. In this process, the University heavily weighs the department's national rankings, which are largely determined by research.

Consequently, research plays a major role in departmental decisions to award tenure and promotions.

Recent policy in the political science department stipulates that the chairman has the power to substantially increase the course load of tenured faculty who do not maintain a productive research program leading to publication.

"Rankings seem to be more important than the educational experiences of students," said Schwartz, who also noted that faculty who are seriously deficient in the teaching mission of the University, but publish frequently, are still given the accoutrements of their position.

Williamson noted that the position of departmental chairman, which usually comes with bonuses such as extra grant money for research and assistants to help with research, isn't usually awarded to professors who dedicate their time solely to teaching.

"The chairs are vastly given to researchers and writers, not to teachers. There is a general faith that if you research and write well, you're going to teach well," he said.

Today, the stress is even heavier than a decade ago for substantial research in the crucial evaluation process of being awarded tenure, a status granted after a trial period to a professor that gives protection from summary dismissal.

In the tenure process, according to the Board of Trustees, Policies and Regulations - Governing Academic Tenure, teaching is analyzed equally with research.

Palm said it was not likely a professor would be given tenure in the Arts and Sciences if he or she were not adept at both teaching and research.

"In a research university, you cannot be an excellent teacher unless you're an excellent researcher," Palm said.

"We value the originality of the research, which can be brought into their original teaching. The two are really one."

Political science Professor Susan

Bickford, who was awarded tenure in the fall, said that during the school year she sometimes placed her research aside in favor of the immediate needs of her students, but made time for research, knowing it would ultimately determine her future at the University.

"It's clear that good teaching does not get you tenure. There's real support for good teaching, but it better not be at the expense of my research," Bickford said.

Williamson said, however, that the oft-repeated phrase in academia, "publish or perish" was not entirely accurate.

"It's publish well or perish," he said. But one professor who did publish well will be leaving UNC due to a tenure decision which calls into question the amount of research necessary for a future at UNC.

Political science Professor Barbara Hicks attributes not receiving tenure in the fall of 1998 to an emphasis placed on not just research, but research that will result in speedy and frequent publication.

A UNC faculty member since 1991 and author of the runner-up for the Polish Studies Association's award for best book published in 1996-1997, Hicks said she still did not agree with the decision, which was a close vote between tenured faculty in her department.

Although Hicks admits she focused her efforts heavily toward teaching, she said she valued research, a fact evident with her five nationally competitive research grants. "I, too, feel that research and teaching complement one another. At the same time, we cannot ignore the fact that there are only a certain number of hours in the week," she said.

Still, the political science department wanted even more frequent publications from Hicks. "At some point you have to decide how many hours to spend writing comments on students' papers and how many to spend working on your own research. And, it is a trade-off."

Hicks and Reznick both argued that the particular strengths and weaknesses of faculty members should even out to a healthy balance for the University community. "Some people get their kicks standing in front of a classroom. Others get their kicks within administrative work. Fortunately, it seems to distribute out nicely," Reznick said.

If professors can get past the "tenure clock," - the phrase many faculty use for the six-year timeline that is most crucial to getting tenure - that argument may continue to prove true.

Anthropology Professor Judith Farquhar said professors still could manage the juggling act, before and after tenure. "There are real researchers at UNC. They do good research that's not hard to get published. It's difficult to find time, but we don't think of this as a job that we have to suffer for," she said.

Still, there are not many jobs in which an individual has to do substantial moonlighting as a researcher and writer to keep her day job of teaching.

Hicks noted the reason why faculty members are heard but not often seen around campus - they are busy trying to fulfill all their roles at the University.

They're trying to keep their day jobs.

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