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# Access Denied, Part II

Registration problems left some juniors high and dry Saturday.  
The system should be streamlined - and registration redone.

It happened again. Problems cropped up last Saturday as juniors attempted to register for their spring semester classes. The Student Central Web site temporarily crashed - and some students received the wrong PIN from the Office of the University Registrar. It's time for added changes to the way the University handles registration - and reparations to juniors issued the wrong PIN. The headaches came just a week after seniors faced similar difficulties with their registration process. Afterwards, the Registrar and Administrative Information Services (AIS) promised that they had isolated the computer problems and assured juniors that they had nothing to worry about. They were wrong. The University Registrar has done an admirable job making the registration process easier over the last few years, moving from Caroline telephonic registration to Web registration. But the process could be streamlined even more. Eliminate the PIN. When students register, they are forced to give their UNC-issued Personal Identification Number (PID) and their Personal Access Code (PAC) before entering Student Central. That's enough to establish their identity. There's absolutely no need for another password. In reality, most UNC students only visit their adviser to obtain their PIN. But there's still a way to corral students into Steele

Building without the headaches of the PIN. Academic departments could place a stop on students in the program to prevent them from registering without visiting their adviser. Once the student makes the perfunctory visit, the adviser can take the stop off in the office. That eliminates the chance of errors in the issuance of the PIN - making the process even more foolproof. But for some juniors, the damage has already been done. They jumped through the right hoops to get their PIN and had a schedule of classes planned out. They logged on Student Central at noon and waited for the network to come back online. When it did, they were greeted with the error message, in red, that their PIN was incorrect. Calling the Office of the University Registrar to get a new PIN proved frustrating. Phone lines were tied up with other juniors issued the wrong PIN. The result - some juniors ended up registering late for classes that they needed. And many of them had already filled up. The solution - wipe the slate clean. Give all juniors an equal chance at classes by tossing out Saturday's registration and holding a new one. Juniors: Call Associate University Registrar Donna Redmon at 962-8289 and let her know how you feel. Sophomores: Call and confirm your PIN. It could save you from a long ordeal this weekend.



# Looking to Bridge the Racial Gap

Most of those who place themselves in the public spotlight manage eventually to say or do something that they regret. I am not an exception. About seven weeks ago, I found myself with 200 words of blank space at the end of my column. As my deadline approached, I used that space to comment on the unbalanced racial situation in one of my history classes. Specifically, I was concerned about the lack of black students in my Civil War class, which has about 100 students but only one black student. My intent in mentioning my class was to point out the growing trend in America towards racial self-division, and to offer a few conjectures as to the possible sources of the problem. Increasingly in recent years, blacks and whites have moved in subtle ways to isolate themselves from each other. In the college classroom, this tendency now threatens to create a system of de facto segregation, as many black students choose classes that emphasize black history while most white students select "traditional" courses. More importantly, the growth of racial self-division in recent years has made it more difficult for black and white Americans to trust and understand each other. This lack of trust inhibits our ability to live and breathe together as one people - an American people - even as we cherish the diversity of heritage that makes America unique. Because I am extremely concerned that racial self-division will have dire consequences in coming years, I was hopeful that my comments would prompt readers to think seriously about the issue. Unfortunately, the way in which I made my remarks might have accomplished the opposite of what I intended. Some of my comments were insensitively worded and vaguely argued, and I found myself surprised and saddened that many black students at UNC had been hurt and offended by them. Specifically, many readers were bothered by my reference to African-American Studies 40 as a "lightweight" course - they felt that I was suggesting that black history is somehow inherently less challenging than traditional history classes. This was not my intent. For



CRAIG WARNER  
HARSH LIGHT

the record, I believe strongly that the history of African-Americans is an integral and important part of American history, and that the accomplishments of blacks are worthy of study in their own right. I also believe that such study should not be confined to a specific department of African studies. My concern with African American Studies 40 and similar classes is that they can serve as an excuse to trivialize the history of African-Americans, and to separate it from the larger study of our common American history and culture. The reasoning is: "We'll just teach the basic white stuff here in American History, since black history is covered in AFAM 40." This reasoning creates a system in which only a small minority of (mostly black) students learn about black history - and in which academia fails to prompt meaningful dialogue between blacks and whites. Such division can only foster increased misunderstanding and decreased trust. During the past seven weeks, I have been repeatedly informed that African American Studies 40 is a serious study of black history in America. I have no reason to doubt that this is the case, and I sincerely apologize to those who felt maligned by my earlier column. The numerical and ideological division that I believe African American Studies 40 helps to breed is my true concern, and has been from the beginning. "E Pluribus Unum" is a vital American creed: "out of many, one." America is based on the belief that different peoples can come together, give assent to our fundamental ideals (equality, freedom, inalienable rights) and become fully American - even while maintaining their individual cultural identities. The continuing division between black and

white Americans threatens this ideal because it creates a gap of understanding that prompts members of both races to view each other with suspicion. Such distrust means that each ethnic group hesitates to embrace commonly held American ideals as the center of a shared political and cultural life. Thus, a distinctly American unity across racial boundaries becomes impossible. The understanding gap wreaks havoc in a number of ways. For example: Today, American whites have essentially declared racism a vanquished legacy of the past. They acknowledge that some individuals are still racists, but insist that racism is more a case of "how we were" than of "how we are." Accordingly, many whites regard black complaints of continued racism as mere excuses and complaints and are offended and frightened both by expressions of black outrage and by government efforts to give black Americans preference in education and hiring. Simultaneously, black Americans insist that white racism in America remains a powerful and destructive force. Citing taxi-cab pass-overs and "driving while black" arrests, many black Americans believe that the evidence of overwhelming racism in America is so obvious that those who deny it are in fact themselves guilty of racism. So who is right? The answer is that neither black nor white Americans are "seeing things" - both have an understandable grasp of the situation in America. (I'll look at racism next week.) But because of the gap in understanding, both blacks and whites distrust each other. The result is misdirected antagonism and missed opportunities. Thanks to my readers, I have no doubt that African American Studies 40 is a difficult and valuable class. But the academic separation of black and white students (even done voluntarily) cannot possibly help to bridge the gap of understanding between blacks and whites in America. Maybe now we can think together about what will. Craig Warner is out of space. Write him at cwarn@email.unc.edu.

# Education for All

A court ruling mandating pre-kindergarten programs for at-risk children ensures all students an equal shot at a good education.

The North Carolina Constitution's promise to provide equal educational opportunities to all of its children has just been taken one step closer toward realization. Last week, Wake County Judge Howard Manning Jr. ruled that North Carolina's obligation to equal educational opportunity does not begin at kindergarten, but whenever the children's needs are not being met. Manning's decision could impact up to 40,000 of the state's children who are not currently enrolled in preschool programs and could not be unless the state made it financially feasible for them to do so - which is exactly what Manning's decision has mandated. Children who would qualify for the program are those deemed "at-risk", usually determined by whether the child qualifies for free or reduced lunch - a full 40 percent of North Carolina's school children. There is no magic age where the state's obligation to its children automatically kicks in. And Manning was right to recognize the significance of pre-kindergarten programs on the emotional and intellectual development of the children who participate in them - particularly those who might not be getting that early help at home. The program will no doubt be costly - the Charlotte-Mecklenburg school system spends about \$5,600 per pupil in a similar

program. But providing every child in North Carolina with the same educational foundation is a significant enough policy to warrant those extra dollars for the much-needed extra help. In a state that prides itself on public education, it's a shame this matter had to be decided in the courts and not in the legislature. But now that the decision has been made, it is of utmost importance that the state follow through with gusto, providing all of its children the best education possible. This means following Manning's guidelines on educational policies that are proven to work, like smaller classroom sizes and one-on-one time with individual tutors. But it also means understanding the fundamental principle that all of North Carolina's children must be given the same opportunities to succeed, be they in Hoke County or the city of Cary. And if it means spending \$5,600 per child to do it, then the decision is just as easy as if it cost nothing. Quality public education for all of North Carolina's children should be a given. Let's hope the state doesn't find itself in court again, fighting something it should have done a long time ago. Public education in North Carolina is not a privilege reserved for the only wealthy, but a right for all residents - even those under the age of 5.

# READERS' FORUM

## Senior Class President Stands Behind Aquarium, Asks for Student Support

TO THE EDITOR:  
This letter is written in response to Ashley Stephenson's column entitled "Fish Tank Idea Moronic on Many Levels" that ran in the Oct. 23 edition of The Daily Tar Heel. As we say in the aquarium business, her article just doesn't hold water. Ms. Stephenson begins her critique of the aquarium with the profound statement that she doesn't "like fish;" or "eating them," "smelling them" or "swimming in places where they live." After careful study, I am pleased to inform Ms. Stephenson that the installation of the aquarium will require her to do none of these things. In all seriousness though, Ms. Stephenson's column, while a bit crude, did raise important questions about the gift that should be addressed. While final plans and specifics are still being worked out, I can assure you that students will not be able to jump into

## PURSUE Program Helps the University Achieve Diversity

TO THE EDITOR:  
I want to thank The Daily Tar Heel for commending the PURSUE program ("Granting Opportunity," Oct. 27) for its role in creating opportunities for minorities in graduate programs. I cannot emphasize enough the need for programs such as this. As a recent graduate of this University and as a Native American, I am keenly aware of how under-represented minorities are in higher education, at both undergraduate and graduate levels. I often found myself being not only the sole Native American in my classes, but also the only minority. As a school that is committed to the state of North Carolina and its people, UNC should be more diversified at all levels. This includes not only the graduate level but also the undergraduate, staff and faculty levels as well. In order to create a "stronger ethnic community in graduate programs," as the

## A Vote for Ralph Nader Could Hand Election To George W. Bush

editorial stated, we must first increase ethnic visibility in the undergraduate community. This involves aggressive recruitment by the University and the minority students themselves. It is not only a desire but an urgent necessity that UNC become a better representation of the people that it serves. And it is opportunity (which PURSUE is graciously creating) that is key to helping achieve diversity at UNC. If no opportunity is offered, then it is difficult to enrich this school, this state and its people with the unique and vitally important perspectives offered by minority students.  
Jake Brayboy  
Research Technician  
Pathology

## The Environment: Can anyone doubt that Gore would deal with such matters as oil drilling in pristine Alaska preserves differently than Gov. Bush, whose sorry environmental record in Texas speaks for itself?

It is crystal clear that the precious right of choice for women would be staunchly protected by Gore, but subject to invasion in a Bush administration. On the all-important matter of Supreme Court appointments, Gore may be counted on to appoint justices of a moderate to liberal kind, while Bush has spoken admiringly of Antonin Scalia and Clarence Thomas, the most conservative members of the court. Admirable though Nader's views on some matters may be, one must take seriously the consequences of a vote for Nader which could throw the election to Bush.  
Samuel H. Baron  
Professor Emeritus of History

Jason Cowley  
President  
UNC Class of 2001



The Daily Tar Heel welcomes reader comments and criticism. Letters to the editor should be no longer than 300 words and must be typed, double-spaced, dated and signed by no more than two people. Students should include their year, major and phone number. Faculty and staff should include their title, department and phone number. The DTH reserves the right to edit letters for space, clarity and vulgarity. Publication is not guaranteed. Bring letters to the DTH office at Suite 104, Carolina Union or e-mail forum to: editdesk@unc.edu.