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Not Just Black & White

The UNC system is trying to woo more minorities to diversify. But the integration process does not end at the admissions office.

This week, the 16-campus UNC system decided to take a different approach to campus diversity.

After falling short of racial desegregation goals established 20 years ago, a new approach is being taken that will focus not only on black and white, but also on the growing Hispanic population as well as rural and low-income families.

It's a laudable move. The plan allows each of the 16 campuses to develop their own plans for achieving what it deems a "critical mass of minority students."

UNC-Chapel Hill should lead the way in defining this new policy by setting and meeting specific goals. These should include making the student body a more accurate reflection of the ethnic, geographic and class variations of the state.

But the key is not just getting them on campus. Integration of all the different groups is vital. There still exists a lot of self-segregation on campus. This must be eliminated.

Since 1981, the focus of UNC's policy has been primarily in the black/white realm. And while UNC has done a good job in getting blacks on campus (blacks currently comprise 9.7 percent of UNC's enrollment), others have been left out.

From 1981 to 2000, the percentage of the

state's Hispanic high school graduates who attended UNC schools dropped from 43 percent to 26 percent - while the overall Hispanic population of the state surged. This is a key concern that must be dealt with.

In addition to higher Hispanic enrollment, UNC must lead the way in reaching out to low-income and poor families across the state. It is typically in low-income families that high-school students dismiss college as an option. UNC needs to aggressively target these families, providing information about financial aid availability.

Also, North Carolina's rural population overwhelmingly approved the higher education bond in November. It would be a shame for this segment of the state not to benefit from the fruits of higher education that the bond provided. They should also be an active ingredient of the University's plan to diversify.

For UNC to lead the way in this new diversity plan, administrators and officials must begin to realize that diversity is a word that means more than black and white.

For our University, it means having a population that reflects - and integrates - the make-up of the state, which includes people from all races, and geographic locations, and all socioeconomic sectors. Only then will it truly be the University of the People.

Growing Pains

UNC's plan for the Horace Williams tract has met with resistance. But the mixed-use plan for the park is a smart growth option.

Close to 1,000 acres of University-owned land sits docile on the edge of Airport Road. The land continues to lie undeveloped because the proper usage of this property - the Horace Williams tract - is still being debated by consultants, UNC administrators and the community.

A plan to transform the wooded tract into a park, comprising almost 9 million square feet of company space, offices, research labs, homes, shops and civic buildings has been proposed as a part of UNC's Master Plan.

The mixed-use park is a positive move for the University and the community, showing a dedication to smart growth for the future of Chapel Hill.

It will open up 25,000 job opportunities, along with residential areas for 3,000 of its employees. It will be a place where people can work and live, raising the quality of life for people of the state through scientific research that could lead to medical breakthroughs.

Residents voice concern about the growth problems affecting the town's infrastructure and transportation, housing and school capacity relating to the development of the park.

But Chapel Hill is no stranger to growth - just look at Meadowmont and Southern Village, as well as expansion of UNC

Hospitals and increased student enrollment. The fact is, the town is growing.

Stop fretting about it and look toward ways to accommodate the changes.

Employee transportation concerns are partly solved by the park's on-site residences, which eliminates some workers commuting.

School issues also can be solved with a school bond. Residents should support one to help prevent school overcrowding problems and prepare for future growth.

So while developers for the Horace Williams tract should proceed with caution, residents also should realize that this is a positive addition to Chapel Hill and the state. And while it's true that the development will cause a further strain on the town's infrastructure and schools, it's the best way to deal with inevitable growth.

The town also needs to realize that the University has been the major player in the town's economic and professional development. The University employs many area residents who give back to the town's economy and community.

The addition of this park should be seen as a positive element of Chapel Hill's future growth, rather than a disaster waiting to happen, as many residents see it.



One Taller Than the Rest of Us

I grew up watching Thurmond. We all watched him because he was the best among us. Spotlight followed him. He was one of those people with a strange gift, an uncanny way about him made people smile.

Plus he was the most intelligent, most athletic among us and most popular because we cared about smarts and sports.

We cared about other things - good looks, humor, fashionableness - he had it all. He was a tall black boy, robust, a grin wide as a melon slit open a summer day - a melon you feast on, we all feasted on.

Eight years we came every day to the same Catholic school.

I never knew Thurmond well. I was a quiet boy, like most boys, unsure of myself, and he was an institution, even then, among us.

We graduated to Lane Tech, the biggest public high school in Chicago.

Thurmond made the speech.

It was about hope and the future, the kind of stuff you'll always hear at a graduation speech.

Thurmond was known.

I used to hear people talk about him. They spoke not only of the crazy things he said and did, but more of the outrageousness of his manner.

He was almost, if you can believe it, feminine, even though he was the biggest and the strongest boy. Sometimes the way he moved his hands when he spoke and the way he held the "s" on his words - he acted so gay it was perfect, like an act.

None of us thought he was gay, we just thought he acted like a gay would act.

And we liked it.

By our second year at Lane, Thurmond was the most popular kid in our class.

He was elected president of the student body. The boys looked up to him because he

was athletic and the girls liked him because he was fashionable and he could relate to them. Anybody needing advice on a girl went to Thurmond. He always seemed to know. Nobody thought he was gay. We pretended Thurmond was normal because we couldn't believe a person so gifted was queer.

Sure, we'd heard about DaVinci and Warhol and even Tchaikovsky - but we didn't know any of them.

It was Thurmond we knew - at least we thought we did.

Homecoming, Prom - the prettiest girls went with Thurmond.

Seventeen pictures in the school yearbook - sports action photos, student government hearings, posing in the hall, dancing on the stage at the "Mr. Lane Tech" competition - all Thurmond.

He was an icon, we thought, and even if he were gay he was one of those "safe" gay guys who didn't tell it.

We all liked that about him.

Then toward the end of our third year at Lane came the bombshell: Thurmond got drunk one night and slept with a guy. I didn't see him around that week, and all I heard was people whispering, "Did you hear? Is it true?"

Eventually Thurmond admitted to the thing.

He gave up his student body presidency and a lot more - he admitted he was gay.

Everything he was, all he'd ever been was pulled out from under him.

We forgot pretty fast how we used to look up to Thurmond, how he'd been so many things to us - none, I guess, were really him.

It was sad, but predictable, how his friends

let him go. I heard them say they "couldn't deal with a fake."

But we were all real.

In the halls we stood aside to let him pass. Nobody would touch him.

He quit running track, and over the summer before our last year at Lane he got fat.

All he did those days, we heard, was smoke dope and drink straight liquor.

Fashion was out.

He wore jeans and a T-shirt every day and sometimes went unwashed.

He was fading, it was plain to see.

We all knew how it would end, but none of us said anything.

Who among us is but a spectator to the unfolding drama of other people's lives?

What are other people but characters we make in our minds?

None of us wanted to know Thurmond, and when he ceased to be what we'd made of him, he ceased to be at all.

We used to think Thurmond was taller than all of us.

But later we found he was only standing straight, and when he bent down like the rest of us he was no different.

He was a little black man, an ugly man with whiskers and pimples.

So he left us, and then it was over.

No one knew where he went, or if he'd even left us at all, because no one looked for him.

The next year we all went off to college.

We said he'd have failed that way anyhow, even if he'd been straight, because he was too poor for college.

It was something we mostly said to ourselves, at night, that time right before bed when we were all alone.

It was reassuring.

Paul Tharp is a first-year law student. Reach him at ptharp@email.unc.edu.

Not Your Ordinary Ann Landers

Ahhh - introductions. You either love them or you hate them.

If you hate them, you dread that pause in between your bumbling approach and their scathing, "Who are you and why are you on my cloud?"

I, on the other hand, am of the second kind: I appreciate meeting people and learning their names so when I see them around campus, I can call them by name and make my friends think I'm popular.

So to begin my blindingly brilliant, somewhat lengthy introduction: my name is Adam Shupe, and I'm going to be premiering F1, an advice column on the DTH Online's Community section.

I'm a freshman this year, majoring in indecision and minoring in procrastination.

I hail originally from California, but I've lived in North Carolina long enough for my education not to cost a fortune. And I'm happy to have the DTH's first online-only column.

I'm sure you all have seen your basic advice column before. You know, where lonely housewives, overworked employees and hormone-crazed teenagers all send in their worst problems when horsepower actually meant how many horses pulled your carriage.

Sure she's been through a lot, but how does she know what it's like for us? Who better to advise a bunch of college students than a college student?



ADAM SHUPE F1

I'm offering real advice, free of charge. So even if you do nothing that I tell you to, at least you can have someone listen to your problems without charging you \$100 per hour to sit on my couch. Unless you want to, that is.

And, of course, on any college campus, I expect to receive all those essential questions like "How do I get a date with a basketball player?" or "Where can I get a fake ID?" or "Dude, where's my car?"

Realize that I'm not going to be able to tell you exactly what to do, like that Bahamian lady with the Tarot cards and the fake accent.

But I promise I won't leave you high and dry, with some cryptic response like, "You need to find your inner self and match it with your chi, with a dash of yin and yang."

And don't worry about not getting an answer.

I will respond to each request for advice you send. Even the "Dude, where's my car?" one. In

fact, those questions will most likely be the most fun to answer, so don't be surprised if your "How do I get a date with Brendan Haywood?" question shows up on the column.

But of course I value your privacy, and if you don't want your question posted on the site, just say so.

Or we can change the names to protect the innocent or guilty, whichever in Hinton James and Jilted in Joyner.

Now you might ask, "How is a freshman with no major going to advise me when he hasn't had much experience here in Blue Heaven?"

Well, that's a good question.

Like many of you, I have yet to figure out what I want to get out of my time here.

But I do know I want to make the best of it. And I'm going to make it my mission to help you all do the same.

I may not have much experience living the college life, but I'm learning, just as you all are. And if you need an ear to bend on this long, hard road of ours, then mine will be there.

Granted, it will be a few clicks away, but what a small price to pay.

Adam Shupe is a freshman from Edenton. Send tales of woe, heartache and confusion to him at adam-shupe@excite.com. His column, F1, will continue exclusively online at www.dailytarheel.com/community.

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