

Duke Bar Makes Last Call University Employee Files Grievance Against UNC

BY EMILY CANADAY
Staff Writer

JUNE 28 (DURHAM) - The old stools sit idly behind the wooden bar that for 27 years served swarms of Duke University students.

The Hideaway, named by Playboy magazine as one of the best college bars in America, is now only a shadow of its former self, as declining revenues forced its doors shut last spring.

Graduate students in Duke's Business School began the bar in 1974 as a business experiment and it quickly became a favorite among students. Each year students bought shares in the bar, leased space from the university and then sold their stock to the next generation of eager undergraduates.

But the administration felt the bar

had become too popular when the number of student-owners rose to 66 in 1998.

"We thought this was too many people involved with the overall management, and no one seemed to take responsibility for the day-to-day operations," said Sue Wasiolek, Duke assistant vice president for student affairs. "We loaned the business \$650,000 to buy out the owners with the arrangement that the number would be reduced to a maximum of 10 owners who would then repay the university."

Last year the students combined to pay \$57,214 for their shares and \$1,030 per month for rent.

A campaign targeting underage drinking reduced profits and the bar was only able to regain 60 percent of what students put in at the beginning of the year.

The owners met with the administration on several occasions in an attempt to stretch out the repayment of the debt, but the university refused to compromise.

"I don't think the university should be viewed as an entity that is going to bail out student business ventures that don't work," Wasiolek said.

When the lease ran out on May 31, the owners decided not to recruit a new crop of students.

Former owner Scott Eichel blames the financial crisis on the 1998 restructuring.

"Under my reign, investors were making a 25-percent annual return," he said.

"Once you put the school in charge of anything concerning fun, they're going to mess it up."

Wasiolek said he doubts the bar's disappearance will have an effect on the social life of the campus. "From what they've indicated, their business has been so minimal that one wonders if there's going to be any impact," she said.

Duke senior Ilana Simon said she disagreed. "Once again, drinking will be forced off campus, and the issue of drinking and driving cannot be ignored," Simon said. "Without safe rides to pick students up at off-campus parties, more students will be intoxicated behind the wheel. The university should consider that a tremendous impact."

Unless new owners appear before the fall semester, the bar's fate will forever be sealed - administrators are already focusing on other undisclosed uses for the Hideaway's West Union space.

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A judge has recommended a decision in favor of a UNC employee who accused the University of discrimination.

BY GEOFF WESSEL
University Editor

JUNE 28 - A recent judicial recommendation might mean trouble for UNC in a pending sex- and age-discrimination grievance against the University.

Computer systems administrator Bobbie Sanders, the employee bringing the grievance, contends that the University unfairly denied her a promotion because of her age and sex.

The case was heard in the Chatham County Office of Administrative Hearings on June 21, where Judge Sammie Chess Jr. issued a recommended decision in Sanders' favor.

"I'm very pleased," Sanders said. She said she hopes to win the grievance when it goes before the State Personnel Commission in August, which

would force the University to grant her the promotion retroactively, including back pay.

Civil rights attorney Alan McSurely, who is representing Sanders in the case, said he expects to be successful when the case goes before the full commission.

"Nine times out of ten they will just adopt the (recommended decision) without making any changes," McSurely said. "The ball's in the University's court."

"The judge has found that they discriminated against her," McSurely said, "and they need to put her in that position that she was denied."

McSurely said he thought Sanders' case was only part of a wider problem at the University.

"I think the 'good old boy' system is alive and well at UNC," he said. "The only protection the workers have is when they go outside the University and get an independent judge to review the facts."

But UNC officials said the University does not discriminate against its employees based on age or sex.

"Of course we have a policy of not discriminating," said University Counsel

Susan Ehringhaus.

"It's printed everywhere - it's on the Web page; it's on employees handbooks."

Ehringhaus said she could not comment on the specific case, but McSurely said it is possible for UNC to appeal the decision if the commission rules against them.

But Sanders' immediate supervisor, Peter Schledorn, a witness at the hearing, said he thought the grievance was legitimate.

"She felt that she was the best qualified person for the position," Schledorn said. "When the judge looked at all the evidence, he agreed."

McSurely said he thinks UNC still has a lot of room for improvement in non-discriminatory hiring practices, a need he said Sanders' case reflects.

"This university is better than that," he said. "Last week's hearing result is a great victory for Ms. Sanders and a great victory for all the employees at the University."

Geoff Wessel can be reached at vroom@email.unc.edu.



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