BACKGROUND

University had gotten a reputation for hiring employees without doing back-ground checks. "In looking at the surrounding area, at academic and nonacademic sources of employment, we found we were the largest group that didn't do (background checks) at all," he said. "Everybody out there knows we don't check, so people out there with something to hide know where to come."

And one student says if this policy had been instituted sooner, she might have been spared a traumatic ordeal.

The student, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said she was raped at gun-

point in her Chapel Hill apartment Jan. 9. Dwayne Russell Edwards, an Dwayne Russell Edwards, an employee of Tar Heel Temps who had held three jobs at the University, was arrested and charged with seven felony counts in conjunction with the student's assault in January, as well as 33 felonies related to one rape and one sexual assault in Carrboro in December.

Before being hired at UNC, Edwards served five months in an Illinois jail for burglary and forgery. He was arrested in Cumberland County for breaking and entering and felony larceny last year.

At UNC, Edwards held a clerical position at Student Health Service, where he had access to students' tele-phone numbers and addresses on the SHS database after students provided a PID number as part of appointment scheduling procedures.

"He raped me at gunpoint, and he was employed by the University," the student said. "If they had done a simple background check, they would have found the charges against him."

The issue of background checks has come up again at UNC recently – two Carolina Dining Services employees were arrested on felony charges. One employee was arrested when it was discovered that there were outstanding warrants for his arrest in New Jersey, while the other was arrested for bringing a gun to Lenoir Dining Hall.

Although the employee who brought the gun to Lenoir had no previous arrest record, the student said background checks could help minimize the risks students might face when interacting with employees. "We are in a day and age where, it's sad to say, we need to do a criminal background check on every one we hire," the student said. "For someone to show up at work at Lenoir with a gun is just insane. It should never happen — it makes me wonder how many more there are."

From Page 1

She said any additional aid might be directed primarily to the out-of-state stu-dents who already qualify for need-based aid. "It shouldn't take a large amount of money," Ort said. "About 18 percent of each class are out-of-state students. Of all those, only about a third are eligible for need-based financial aid."

Ort said the financial aid office will try to notify students about their options and increased awards.

Other financial aid officers noted that legislators have allotted money for need-based aid, which could also be used to help offset the retroactive increase for in-state students.

Steven Brooks, executive director of the N.C. State Education Assistance Authority, which oversees scholarship programs for North Carolinians, said state legislators set aside about \$8.9 million for needy N.C. students. "There's some extra money for need-based assistance, hopefully enough for returning students," Brooks said. "(The increase is) a large percentage. But it's not a huge increase in dollars (for in-state students)."

> The State & National Editor can be reached at stntdesk@unc.edu.

Bob Joyce, a professor at the Institute **MOESER** of Government, said employers have two options when conducting background checks. Joyce said an employer can physically go to the courthouse for each county and obtain records, or the

employer can pay a private agency to compile records and run applicants through their database.

if an employer does his or her own checks. But employers who hire a private

agency are subject to the restrictions of the Fair Credit Reporting Act, which specifies that companies ask an appli-cant's permission before running a check

nd informing the applicant of the results. Maynard said background checks vill perform a valuable service for the

University. He said when UNC began

running limited checks two years ago, a

large number of the applicants checked came back with criminal records.

in effect, the first year, we were getting back 20 to 40 percent of our applicants who said they had no criminal convic-tion but did," he said. "It's not so much

about identifying people with criminal convictions, because we ask that on the

application. It's more trying to find out

where people have been truthful or not."

The anonymous student said back

ground checks are the least the University

can do for students. "This has affected my

life so much that I feel like students should know we're not safe," she said.

"We always ask questions about how can

the University compete – we talk about faculty salaries, technology, expansion

plans and how it will affect the students. But how are we going to be a better uni-

versity if we don't protect our students?"

The University Editor can be reached

at udesk@unc.edu.

"When we first put the limited policy

He said there are no legal constraints

and faculty. And one issue that impacts all students is a recent 9 percent across-the-board tuition increase. "The one thing we hope more than anything in student government is that (Moeser) will make a strong statement on the legisla-

ture's decision to increase tuition –
hopefully against it," said Rudy
Kleysteuber, student body vice president.
Kleysteuber also said he hopes
Moeser will address UNC's efforts to support lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans-gender students. Another issue involving minority students is the On the Wake of the Emancipation Campaign. OWEC presented its demands, which included disclosing the racist acts of some whose names are on campus buildings and recruitment and retention of minority idents, to UNC officials last April.

"I'm really hoping (Moeser) will talk about his feelings on the demands presented by the O-campaign and the strides it's made during the summer," said Kristi Booker, president of the Black Student Movement. "We really haven't heard much from him on that.

But Kleysteuber said the State of the University address deals more with the image the chancellor wishes to project. "I expect him to talk about a lot of things we don't really care about," he said. "Like the \$1 billion campaign, which is not an immediate pressing student concern."

Estroff also acknowledged the importance of Moeser's address. "I'm not sure the faculty morale is really high right now," she said. "I'm looking for some hot rhetoric and some inspiration."

> The University Editor can be reached at udesk@unc.edu.

Alcohol Abuse Worries Parents

By Lucas Fenske

Assistant State & National Editor

Students flock to Franklin Street every weekend, lining up outside bars and seeing how many pitchers of beer they can drink before last call – much to

the concern of some parents.

An American Medical Association survey found that 95 percent of college students' parents consider binge drinking

a serious threat to their children's health.

Binge drinking is often defined as four drinks in an hour for women or five for men. According to the study, about 44 percent of college students nationwide admitted to binge drinking.

The survey also found that 85 percent

of people consider easy access to alcohol in college towns as a significant contributing factor to underage and binge drinking. Dr. J. Edward Hill, AMA chairman-

elect, stated in a press release that it was time for medical and college officials to take binge drinking more seriously.

"We can no longer treat binge drinking as a rite of passage," he stated in the release. "It's a major health threat not

only to binge drinkers but also to the people around them."

Sennai Habtes, a UNC junior from the U.S. Virgin Islands, said he does not think there is a serious binge drinking problem on campus but added that he has seen people drinking between the control of t has seen people drinking heavily on Franklin Street.

"A lot of people here drink a lot for no other reason than to drink," Habtes said, pointing out that people in the Virgin

Islands tend to drink more for social reasons than people in the United States.

He also said that bars closing at a set time contributes to excessive drinking

"That encourages people to drink as much as they can until closing time," Habtes said, adding that bars in the Virgin Islands remain open until cus-

tomers are gone.
UNC officials also said binge drink-

ing was not a major campus problem.

Dean Blackburn, coordinator of Substance Abuse Counseling, pointed to the "2 Out of 3 Survey" conducted in

The study found that two out of every

Saturday nights.

"UNC has had a tradition of a perception of being a party school," Blackburn said. "The key word is perception."

He added that heavy drinking can lead to several problems, including van-dalism, physical or sexual violence,

gression and littering. Blackburn added that most students living in residence halls complained about noise and vomit – problems partly caused by excessive drinking.

He said he was pleased that so many parents are concerned about their children's drinking habits.

Blackburn said students who were concerned about their drinking habits could talk to counselors at the Center for Healthy Student Behaviors. "They'll help assess your drinking habits," Blackburn said. "There's not an agenda to get you to stop drinking. They just help you get where you want to be."

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Do you suffer from Colds?

Chapel Hill Internal Medicine is conducting a research study for people who have NOT had any cold symptoms within the last two weeks. If you are 18 to 74 years old, you may be able to participate in a research study to evaluate an investigational oral antiviral medication for a cold. We are studying this investigational drug to see if it helps prevent you from developing a cold, but this is not guaranteed. If you would like more information, call between 8:30am and 5pm: 919-942-5123, voicemail option 9, or after 5pm: 919-929-4666 ext. 116, or email: chimstudy@nc.rr.com.

Health Profession School Fair

September 18, 2001, 10 AM - 3 PM **Carmichael Auditorium**

The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill is holding a Health Profession School Fair. This is an excellent opportunity for students to obtain admissions information on fields of study such as medicine, dentistry, public health, nursing, and allied health programs. We have invited schools from all over the country to attend, including Boston University, Cornell University, Duke University, East Carolina University, Johns Hopkins University, the University of Michigan and UNC-CH to name a few. These institutions will have representatives available to answer questions and distribute information. Anyon interested in pursuing a graduate or professional degree in these areas of study is invited to attend. Please contact Professor Jean DeSaix for more information, idesaix@email.unc.edu

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The Daily Tar Heel

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Volunteering

The Daily Tar Heel

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