

# Not Quite Colorblind On Campus

Just as many thought Americans were shifting toward a sense of national, colorblind unity, recent incidents at Auburn University show just how far we still have to go.



APRIL BETHEA  
STATE & NATIONAL COLUMNIST

On Monday, Auburn officials temporarily suspended student chapters of Beta Theta Pi and Delta Sigma Phi, two predominantly white fraternities, after the discovery of controversial images of several of the groups' members on the

Web site <http://www.partypics.com>. The photos, which were taken at two Halloween parties sponsored by the fraternities, showed white students from the fraternities in blackface and wearing Ku Klux Klan robes.

In one photo, a student was shown wearing blackface with a noose around his neck while another, cloaked in a Klansman robe, stood by.

In another photo, students were shown in blackface and wearing shirts bearing the Greek letters of Omega Psi Phi, a traditionally black fraternity.

Omega Psi Phi members were notified of the offensive photos last weekend and copied the images onto their university-sponsored Web site before they could be taken off the Web.

Fraternity members then showed the photos to Auburn administrators, who suspended the fraternities pending a full investigation into whether the photos might have violated Auburn's anti-harassment and discrimination policies.

Monday night, Delta Sigma Phi expelled two members and suspended four others in connection with the photos. As of Wednesday, Beta Theta Pi had not taken any disciplinary actions against any of its members.

The decisions to punish those students involved with the Halloween incidents is commendable and definitely appropriate.

Still, one must question what would have provoked the students to think that their costumes and behavior were appropriate.

As Auburn vice president of student affairs, Wes Williams, told the Montgomery Advertiser, "Thirty-seven years after the passage of the Civil Rights Act, there is no acceptable explanation for the appearance of students in Ku Klux Klan robes or blackface."

But the harsh reality is, similar incidents have occurred numerous times during the past decade at various universities across the country.

In 1991, two Kappa Delta sorority pledges at the University of Alabama-Tuscaloosa sparked national controversy after it was discovered that the students wore Afro wigs and blackface during a sorority-sponsored theme party called "Who Rides the Bus?"

And just last year, the Kappa Alpha Order fraternity at Emory University came under fire after a student discovered a photo in the 1998-99 edition of the university's yearbook, allegedly containing a Kappa Alpha member in blackface at a Halloween party.

A group of Emory students called for the removal of Kappa Alpha's charter on the campus for the photo. But the fraternity was eventually found not responsible for the photo's appearance in the yearbook in late 2000.

Although all of the above incidents occurred at predominately white campuses in the South, that does not mean these are the only places where discrimination can occur and that black students are the only ones targeted.

Discrimination can affect anyone in all parts of the nation. So everyone must work together to overcome it.

Each of these incidents should serve as a wake-up call that more needs to be done to make our nation more open and comfortable for everyone.

Cultural diversity courses, such as those offered at UNC and other college campuses, are a good first step in fostering communication and understanding among all groups of people.

But the strongest weapon in the fight racial discrimination and hatred must come from within. People must be willing to declare that they will not tolerate any acts of hatred and complete ignorance of other cultures.

Anyone affected by discrimination, whether it is the Auburn incidents or the unfair treatment of some Muslim citizens after the terrorist attacks, should stand up and challenge anyone who finds such offensive actions to be acceptable behavior.

Complacency will not bring about change.

Columnist April Bethea can be reached at [adbethea@email.unc.edu](mailto:adbethea@email.unc.edu).

# BOG Committee Approves Disaster Institute

By JULIA LAMM  
Staff Writer

At a Board of Governors planning meeting Thursday, UNC-system officials approved two initiatives intended to extend the reach of the university beyond the 16 campuses.

The committee approved a proposal for an Institute of Disaster Studies and endorsed the adoption of a new UNC-system strategic initiative that makes internationalization of the system a pri-

ority. The proposals will now head to the full BOG for approval today.

The institute would study all aspects of disasters and seek to alleviate the devastation of natural and technological disasters through communication.

The proposal approved Thursday would not establish the institute but rather establish a committee to plan it.

Although the institute received committee approval, some BOG members were hesitant about the idea.

BOG member Ray Farris raised con-

cern about the need for the institute.

"The same services could be provided using the faculty at one of our institutions," Farris said.

He pointed out that the Institute of Disaster Studies might be more effective if it is placed under the control of an individual institution. "Why would the Office of the President be more capable of coordinating this than one of our institutions?" Farris asked.

The president's office might not have permanent control over the institute,

said Russ Lea, UNC-system vice president for research of academic affairs.

"This won't be housed in the Office of the President. ... It will be located and administered at a campus," Lea said, adding that several institutions have shown interest in housing the institute.

The Office of the President will oversee the program while it is in the planning stages so the institute doesn't get buried among other activities, Lea said.

He said this institute is similar to some already established in North Carolina,

naming the Highway and Research Center and the Highlands Biological Research Center — both of which UNC-Chapel Hill co-hosts with two other system schools — as other examples.

The idea for the institute first emerged years ago, but specific planning is just now beginning, Lea said.

BOG member John Davis said there also is national interest in the institute.

"I think it will attract a lot of attention

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World War II veteran Dan Murphy salutes the flags at the Annual Veteran's Day Ceremony. The ceremony was held in Polk Place on Thursday afternoon.

# Campus Service Pays Tribute To Veterans of 20th Century

Servicemen and ROTC cadets met in Polk Place on Thursday to hear speakers as four helicopters flew in "missing man" formation overhead.

By RACHEL CLARKE  
Staff Writer

Hundreds of servicemen and servicewomen stood at attention on Polk Place for an hour Thursday afternoon as a part of a ceremony paying tribute to the veterans of every war of the 20th century.

The ceremony, held annually on Veterans Day, was held early this year because the holiday falls on Sunday, said Lt. Col. Bruce Anderson, an assistant professor of military science. To honor the veterans, several speakers commended them, a wreath was dedicated to them and four Apache helicopters buzzed over Polk Place in a "missing-man" formation.

"Today we pause to thank those who have gone before," said Master of Ceremonies Julia Bryan, an Army cadet and a senior biology major.

Bryan spoke standing next to 11 chairs on the steps of South Building. Eight of the chairs were filled with veterans, each representing a war or conflict since World War II. One of the remaining empty chairs was draped with black cloth to represent those missing in action, she said.

A second empty chair represented the veterans of World War I because "we have no local veterans remaining from this war," Bryan said. The third was supposed to be filled by a soldier representing the peacekeeping mission in Yugoslavia, but he was called back to active duty — which is a perfect representation of life in the military, Bryan said.

About 200 ROTC cadets were present in three

distinct blocks — the Army in green, the Air Force in blue and the Navy in black.

UNC Director of Athletics Dick Baddour, a retired colonel, spoke to the crowd about his 31 years of Army National Guard experience. "I'm not often referred to as a colonel on this campus," he said.

But Baddour said his time in the service played a huge role in his life — the experience taught him leadership, loyalty and focus, qualities he's found useful in his civilian life. "As Chancellor (James) Moeser and I went out to find the new football coach, there were a lot of things going on around us, but our mission had to be to find the new football coach," he said, saying he was able to focus on that mission because of his military career.

The ceremony also honored eight survivors of the USS Growler, a World War II submarine that sunk on Nov. 8, 1944, after its crew earned two Navy Crosses and the Congressional Medal of Honor for sinking enemy ships in the Pacific.

Michael Jones, who enrolled at UNC in 2000, also won \$250 and the Veterans Academic Achievement Award for earning a 4.0 grade point average, the highest in all three divisions of the UNC ROTC. The award is given annually to a student veteran who attended college using the Montgomery GI Bill. Jones was a senior airman at Seymour Johnson Air Force Base in Goldsboro before he came to UNC.

The ceremony concluded with corps of cadets marching out of Polk Place while the band played taps and the veterans stood to salute the students.

"We as a university play an important educational role through our ROTC programs," said Chancellor James Moeser. "I salute the students, the staff and the faculty associated with those programs."

The University Editor can be reached at [udesk@unc.edu](mailto:udesk@unc.edu).

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JAMES MOESER  
UNC Chancellor

# New Constitutional Society Hosts Kick-Off Event

By JOE MONACO  
Staff Writer

The American Constitution Society For Law and Policy hosted a kick-off event Thursday evening for the society's new UNC and Duke University law school chapters.

Titled "Taking Back the Constitution," the program, which took place at the UNC School of Social Work, featured speeches from a number of prominent attorneys, including the society's founder, Peter Rubin, counsel to former Vice

President Al Gore in the two Florida election cases heard by the Supreme Court.

Other speakers included Walter Dellinger, former acting U.S. solicitor general; Theresa Wynn Roseborough, a former attorney with the Department of Justice; and Lisa Brown, Gore's former chief counsel.

"There's been incredible excitement about, thirst for, desire for, an organization like this," said Rubin, ACS founder and a professor at Georgetown University Law Center. "And we're very excited about what's happening tonight."

The ACS, formed in 1999, is a national organization of law students, law professors, lawyers, judges and others that seeks to revitalize and transform legal debate from law school classrooms to federal courtrooms, Rubin said.

The organization works through local chapters of law students, faculty and attorneys to promote its values. "We have over 40 (student) chapters nationwide so far, and there are over 40 more that are in the planning stages," Rubin said.

Rubin spoke positively about his organization's two newest chapters, say-

ing he has high expectations for both. "I hope that the Duke and UNC chapters will be bulwarks of the American Constitution Society," he said. "It's certainly true that North Carolina has a great, great, great and nationally important progressive tradition, and we hope that they would be really leading lights."

"It's great that they're working together — usually they're just eyeing each other suspiciously across a basketball court."

Ashley Huffstetter, president of the new UNC chapter, said she understands the importance of getting the chapter up

and running.

"We were all excited by the kick-off event that happened at Georgetown this summer, and we had decided that we really wanted to build a very strong foundation (at UNC)," she said. "I think the most important thing is that people know what we are, what we do."

Rubin said an important goal of ACS is to foster debate about differing ideologies. But he and the other speakers also used the event to promote the lib-

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# Booker Embraces Solidarity, Heritage

By EMILY FLEMING  
Staff Writer

Set apart from most UNC students, senior Kristi Booker wore a black armband Monday in support of the University's first recognized Black Solidarity Day.

Booker, president of the Black Student Movement, is aiming to establish Black Solidarity Day as an official University holiday.

But her mission extends beyond one day. Booker wants UNC to be a comfort zone for black students.

And November is BSM Month, a time when Booker says this can occur.

Attending high school in Charlotte with only six black students, Booker was not as active in the black community as she would have liked.

The sense of black student solidarity at UNC encouraged her to get involved.

As a freshman, Booker joined Ebony Readers/ONYX Theater, a BSM subgroup that explores black culture through performance literature.

"It was comforting to find an organization that gave black students an outlet to come together," she said.

Over the next three years, Booker increased her role at the BSM, includ-

ing a stint as executive assistant.

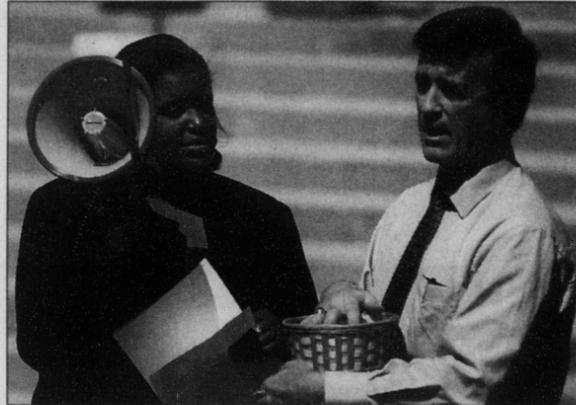
Booker, a Spanish and communications major, took the final step by running for BSM president. "I want to set the foundation for future accomplishments for the BSM," she said.

As president, she coordinates 15 BSM committees and five subgroups, aiming to educate people about issues facing black students.

"I want to help empower students and show them that one person really can make a difference," she said.

Under Booker's leadership, the BSM has secured a pledge of \$10,000 from the Office of the Provost for a

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Kristi Booker stands on the steps of South Building with Provost Robert Shelton on April 2 after a march against institutional racism.

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Need more information?  
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