

POVERTY

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even tops North Carolina's statewide poverty level of 12.3 percent.

Chris Moran, executive director of Orange County's Inter-Faith Council, said the census numbers aren't surprising because Orange County has been identified as the third worst county in the state for its disparity of wealth between the rich and poor.

Dianne Reid, director of the county's Economic Development Commission, said it's hard to determine why the county's rates are higher than those in neighboring areas. "Without doing further research, I can't say anything for sure about the difference," she said. "The next step is to wait for the county to break down the numbers."

Although UNC students who live on campus are not included in the statistics, those who live off-campus could have contributed to the rate's increase because most students' incomes place them below the threshold.

Andrew Dobelstein, UNC professor of social work, said that the poverty rate is higher than it should be considering the county's economy and that this is indicative of a greater problem.

And the effects of this problem are most visible in the lives of Orange County's residents.

When Gattis, 32, first moved, she stayed at a shelter and lived in a hotel for three months before moving to a trailer off Airport Road in Chapel Hill.

After working at a series of short-term jobs at places such as Taco Bell, Miami Subs, Lenoir Dining Hall and UNC Hospitals, Gattis went on welfare in February.

"I hate welfare," she said. "The only reason why I went on it was because I want to go to school."

Gattis wants to participate in a 12-week program to become a certified nursing assistant. But first she has to find a place to volunteer so the state will cover the cost of her class.

"I just want to have a reliable job where I can come home at a decent hour and cook for my children," she said. "If I can get into this CNA program, I know I'll have a future, because I love helping people — and that's steady work."

But until then, Gattis is reliant on government aid — which only provides her with \$272 per month — and food stamps to sustain her and her children.

"Orange County is expensive," she said. "Housing, groceries — it's all high-priced around here."

Moran emphasized that with the downturn in the economy, U.S. House of Representatives budget cuts passed March 21 will slash aid for lower income family services in the state by at least \$4.6 billion dur-

ing the next decade.

"Our folks are having to constantly make the decision between whether to pay for their rent, utilities, medicine and gas or whether to buy food for their families," he said.

Even though there has been a steady increase in unemployment in the county, Laurie Charest, UNC associate vice chancellor for human resources, said the University has continued to hire and has laid off only a small number of employees.

"The University's layoffs have come as a result of ending of contracts and grants, state budget cuts and reorganizations," she said. "The majority of the area layoffs and hiring freezes have occurred in the private sector."

But Dobelstein said the area's poverty issues should be a top concern for the University because it employs many people whose incomes fall below the poverty level.

Although UNC has enormous concern for providing sufficient incomes for its employees, Charest said, these matters are out of the University's control.

"Salary schedules for state employees are set by the Office of State Personnel," Charest said. "The University does not have the authority to change these."

But Charest said UNC officials repeatedly have suggested the need for location-based pay to reflect the costs of living in particular markets.

Local poverty experts are aware of the increasing problem in Orange County, and they say change is not completely out of students' control.

Moran said that community members should recognize that although individuals can't do much about the war and the economy, they can do something to support nonprofit agencies.

Kathleen Mullan Harris, a UNC professor of sociology who teaches a class on poverty and policy, said it's easy to make an impact.

By volunteering at after-school programs and at child-care services, she said, students can work with local children and even help immigrants tackle language barriers.

"There's not much that anyone can do to affect the poor's income — only the government can do that — but there's a lot students can do to help alleviate living conditions and aid area families," Harris said.

And for the almost 17,000 Orange County residents living in poverty, all aid is helpful.

No matter what financial struggles she incurs by living here, Gattis said, her children are her first priority.

"I just want my kids to get a good education and I want to work a steady job," she said. "I have the same goals all mothers have."

Contact the Features Editor at features@unc.edu.

ANDERSON

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He was the first local resident killed in the war on Iraq.

At home in Durham, friends and family never will be able to hear Anderson's first-hand accounts of the war. Instead, they search for the details of Anderson's final weeks in the letters that slowly make their way home from the Middle East, sometimes delayed by a month.

Charlene Stroud, Anderson's mother, recalled one of his first letters. He'd spent more than 30 days aboard a ship bound for Iraq. "He said he couldn't wait to set foot on land," Stroud remembered.

Once in Iraq, Anderson wrote home again. "He said it was hot, real dusty, and he couldn't tell us where he was," Stroud said. "It was before the bombing started — he was just waiting."

Several weeks ago, Anderson's grandmother, Dora Roberson, read one of his letters to the congregation at Mt. Calvary United Church of Christ in Durham.

"He told the church how much he missed them — he wanted them to remember him in their prayers," recalled Kendra O'Neal, who grew up with Anderson in the church.

O'Neal, a sixth-grade teacher at Carrington Middle School in

Durham, was moved deeply by his letter and quickly began a letter-writing campaign with her class so Anderson would know how much his community appreciated him.

"Brian loved children," O'Neal said. "He was a magnet for them." Linn Wrenn, Anderson's high school football coach, remembered Anderson's fun-loving demeanor and his desire to be helpful and involved in whatever he could.

"He was always volunteering himself," Wrenn said. "He had a great attitude, and he always had a grin on his face."

During his senior year of high school, Anderson came to Wrenn for advice about joining the Marines. "He felt like it would be a good opportunity for a career," Wrenn said. "And he knew if he decided he didn't want it to be a career, at least he would have the opportunity to go to school."

When Anderson told his family about his intention to join the Marines, his mother quickly asked, "Why do you want to do this?"

Stroud remembers her son's answer; he was sure of himself. "Mama, this is what I want to do."

Six years later, Stroud said she still hasn't adjusted to his decision.

Contact the City Editor at citydesk@unc.edu.

ACTION

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Office of Admissions is build a class that all students benefit from and feel comfortable in," he said. "We want to build a diverse class."

He also said diversity creates a better learning environment. "I absolutely agree that an educational community with diversity is a more robust and vital learning community."

Another problem with creating well-integrated campuses is self-segregation. This implies that different races segregate themselves, possibly compromising the role and significance of the "critical mass."

But Lucido said that self-segregation is not a serious problem and

that it is natural for college students to want to be around people with similar backgrounds.

"I think it's a natural thing for people to want to spend time with individuals who have similar experiences than you do," he said.

Peterson also said she does not see self-segregation as a problem. She said it is a university's job to create a student body in which people have the opportunity to interact with different people.

If students want to continue to expand their base of friends, she said, that is up to them. "It's kind of like going to a college with the best art museum in the country and never walking inside it."

Contact the State & National Editor at stntdesk@unc.edu.

WEAPONS

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on warheads.

"Finding weapons would help the U.S. case, but at the same time, it wouldn't matter because we're already engaged in war."

But Charles Pena, director of defense policy studies at the Cato Institute, a nonprofit public policy research foundation, said the United States needs to find weapons to justify the war.

"Given that the president did cite (Iraqi President Saddam) Hussein's ability to have mass weapons of destruction as major criteria to go to war, they should be

able to come up with something," he said. "If not, they would have some explaining to do."

"It would be a big embarrassment for them if they come up empty-handed."

But finding weapons in Iraq might not change the opinion of many people, said Mark Burgess, a research analyst from the Center of Defense Information.

"Even if Saddam is found standing with a receipt for anthrax, people will still say that Iraq doesn't have mass weapons of destruction," Burgess said. "Some people will be swayed, but some will never be swayed."

And whether or not weapons

are found, the United States still will be seen negatively, said Ivan Eland, director of the Center on Peace & Liberty at the Independent Institute. "Places are more leery of the U.S., and the war has promoted a lot of anti-Americanism," Eland said.

Burgess said one reason weapons have not been found yet might be where most of them are thought to be held: Baghdad.

"A lot of the places will be in Baghdad, and we haven't had a chance to search there yet," Burgess said. "A full search will be possible only when (Iraq) is secured, and that will take some time."

Pena said the United States' main focus might be finding Hussein rather than the weapons. "The first and foremost thing is achieving military victory; that will include getting Hussein," he said. "Even if no weapons are found, they would still claim victory because they liberated the Iraqi people."

Still, he said, he thinks finding the weapons would help the U.S. position a great deal.

"For a large number of people, that would be a way to justify war," Pena said. "People might just feel OK about it."

Contact the State & National Editor at stntdesk@unc.edu.

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Interviews are conducted at RTI satellite offices in Greensboro, Raleigh, and Durham.

For more information call Amanda toll-free at 1-866-800-9176 or visit our website: <https://nsduhweb.rti.org/clinval/website.htm>

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He will be signing copies of his book following the event at 5:30pm.

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