

Experts: Bush must look to domestic drug traffic

Issue addressed in federal report

BY SCOTT SIMONTON
STAFF WRITER

President Bush vowed to fight North Korea's involvement in drug distribution last week, but experts say the administration needs to focus on the increase in domestic drug manufacturing.

President Bush addressed North Korea's involvement with methamphetamine and heroin trafficking to East Asian countries in a U.S. government report released last week.

He also cited 22 other countries, including Afghanistan and China, as drug trafficking and manufacturing hubs.

While there is proof of North Korea's involvement in the distribution of drugs, there is no evidence that the country has produced them within its borders.

With this instability surrounding Bush's claims, experts say, his focus should shift to his home turf's war against drugs.

In the United States, finding those manufacturing the drugs seems to be the primary concern,

said Darrell Rogers, national director of Students for Sensible Drug Policy.

"In the U.S., methamphetamine is primarily not imported but produced within the borders, like marijuana," he said. "Heroin is growing in accessibility while its potency is rising and price is dropping."

U.S. policy for drug use and trafficking is based on law enforcement, treatment, interdiction and prevention. Rogers estimated that law enforcement intercepts 10 percent of incoming drugs and inspects 2 percent of incoming cargo.

Rogers said that experts are aware of these facts but that they seem to look past them.

"Even with completely sealed borders, the in-home production of these drugs would increase and the climate required for them to succeed and reach the consumers would evolve," said William McColl, director of national affairs for the Drug Policy Alliance.

Rogers added that "trying to stop the supply of a product where demand exists is futile — people will find a way to satisfy their demand."

Even if there were a complete focus on domestic drug traffic, the problem could not be eliminated

completely, he said.

Rogers said law enforcement tries to balance investigating the importation of drugs and internal drug production.

He said this fact justifies Bush's foreign focus because he can institute the same level of prevention in the foreign areas mentioned in his report without compromising the level of domestic support.

There also is the notion that drug trafficking in the United States is an underground market that is extremely difficult to monitor, said Martin Iguchi, director of the Drug Policy Research Center at the RAND Institute.

Iguchi said the nature of the drug market keeps law enforcement at a distance from illegal activity and forces officials to find alternate solutions to end the war on drugs.

McColl said that the country's drug war cannot be fought on the front lines and that it should start from the bottom up.

"I believe it would be more beneficial to focus on education and rehabilitation rather than our limited ability to enforce drug laws."

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

AP classes seeing increases

BY DAN PIERGALLINI
STAFF WRITER

Record numbers of students are cutting college costs by placing out of courses with exam credit, a trend experts say likely will continue as tuition rises and admission to four-year institutions becomes more competitive.

The Advanced Placement Program saw an 11 percent increase in participation last year, said Jennifer Topiel, associate director of public affairs for the College Board, which runs the AP Program. The College-Level Examination Program also witnessed a 20 percent increase in the number of students taking their test, said CLEP Director Ariel Foster.

Almost 1 million students took 1.7 million exams last year to try to receive credit for college courses, according to the College Board Web site.

North Carolina saw a participation increase of 15 percent in the AP Program, according to the Web site. The number of N.C. students taking the CLEP rose 18 percent,

Foster said.

"Students and their parents are becoming savvy consumers when it comes to paying tuition," said Paul Hassen, a spokesman for the American Council on Education. "Demonstrating that they can do high-level college work is certainly a part of it too."

UNC awards credit for both AP and CLEP exams. Students must make a 3 or higher on AP exams in most subject areas.

Foster said the rising cost of education and the struggling economy are key reasons more students are taking the exams.

The AP Program exists in 60 percent of high schools across the nation. Students take a yearlong course in one of 31 subjects and an exam at the end of the year.

Depending on the student's score, which ranges from 1 to 5, and the respective university's policy, credit is awarded for the exam.

The CLEP exam is conducted outside of high schools and covers 34 subject areas. Many who take the exam are adults hoping to

return to college, Foster said.

"People who take the exam want to go back to college but need to find creative ways to finance their education," he said. "The cost of the exam is really a bargain compared to the cost of tuition."

The College Board not only has seen an increase in the number of students taking pre-college exams, they also have succeeded in attracting more minorities to the program.

Topiel said 15 to 20 percent more minority students took the tests during the 2002-03 academic year. The board has made a concerted effort to attract more Hispanics and blacks to the program by working in minority communities and historically black colleges and universities.

The AP program also is encouraging high schools to hire minorities to teach AP courses, Topiel said.

"If the teacher is like them, minorities will be more likely to take an AP course."

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

More graduates seeking comforts of home

BY INDIA AUTRY
STAFF WRITER

In the words of Thomas Wolfe, "you can't go home again."

If you're UNC senior Nick Wagner, you don't want to.

The current resident of an apartment on East Franklin Street said he can't even imagine moving back in with his parents after graduation.

Wagner, who hails from Marietta, Ga., is most concerned about preserving his autonomy.

"Even though my parents are very liberal about the things I'm allowed to do when I'm at home, I certainly wouldn't have the degree of freedom I have living on my own," he said.

Wagner hopes to begin medical school next year. If he's not accepted, Wagner said, he plans to work a temporary job for a year or so and live in an apartment.

But Wagner is in the minority, as a growing number of graduates are heading home after they walk across the stage.

According to the 2000 U.S. Census, 57 percent of males ages 18 to 24 and 43 percent of females lived at home with one or both of their parents.

"We haven't seen young adults living with their parents in these numbers since the 1930s," said Frances Goldscheider, a professor of sociology at Brown University.

UNC senior Jack Vang, now housed in Stacy Residence Hall, said living with his family is his ideal.

While awaiting acceptance to medical school, he plans to work and live with his family in Taylorsville.

If Vang's job after professional school takes him away from his hometown, his family will follow him, so they can all live together.

"It's a cultural thing," said Vang, the son of Hmong parents. "I'm

trying to keep my tradition alive."

But moving back home after college graduation isn't restricted by cultural ideals.

The rising marriage age is one phenomenon Goldscheider credited for the increasing number of young adults living with their parents.

Glen Elder, a UNC professor of sociology and a faculty member at the Carolina Population Center, said marriage — which pushes people outside of their parents' homes and forces them to form their own families — is being postponed more and more often, especially among the college-educated population.

The trend applies mostly to men, who, in Goldscheider's opinion, are less likely to live alone because they are not conditioned by society to be domestically independent.

And because they generally are expected to be the providers for the households they eventually form, they marry even later than women.

The other major cause of the phenomenon is financial, Goldscheider said. The restructured economy has become much more volatile and less hospitable to vulnerable people.

"Last hired, first fired: this saying applies to minorities and young adults," she said.

As a result there are fewer jobs available to college graduates, especially those who have majored in general studies such as the liberal arts and social sciences, said Matt Montoya, a graduate student in UNC's Department of Psychology.

Anna Kate Lewis, a 2003 UNC graduate, can attest to that.

Lewis, who graduated with a bachelor's degree in Spanish and political science, sent her cover letter and résumé to approximately 150 employers.

"I only heard back from two of them, even though most of the positions, I felt overqualified for," Lewis said.

Goldscheider said it's not just low earnings but high expenses that thwart college graduates. The relative cost of housing is higher than it's been since the Great Depression, she said.

The cost and length of education also are increasing, leaving students with larger debts to repay after graduation, said Lisa Pearce, a professor in the UNC Department of Sociology.

Living at home after graduation might give young people needed time to find their financial footing, Pearce explained.

Tracy Handwerk, a 1998 UNC graduate, said she has moved back to her New Jersey home because living there allows her to save money while she establishes herself in her career.

"I just think it's hard for young people to try to make it both ways — financially and professionally," Handwerk said.

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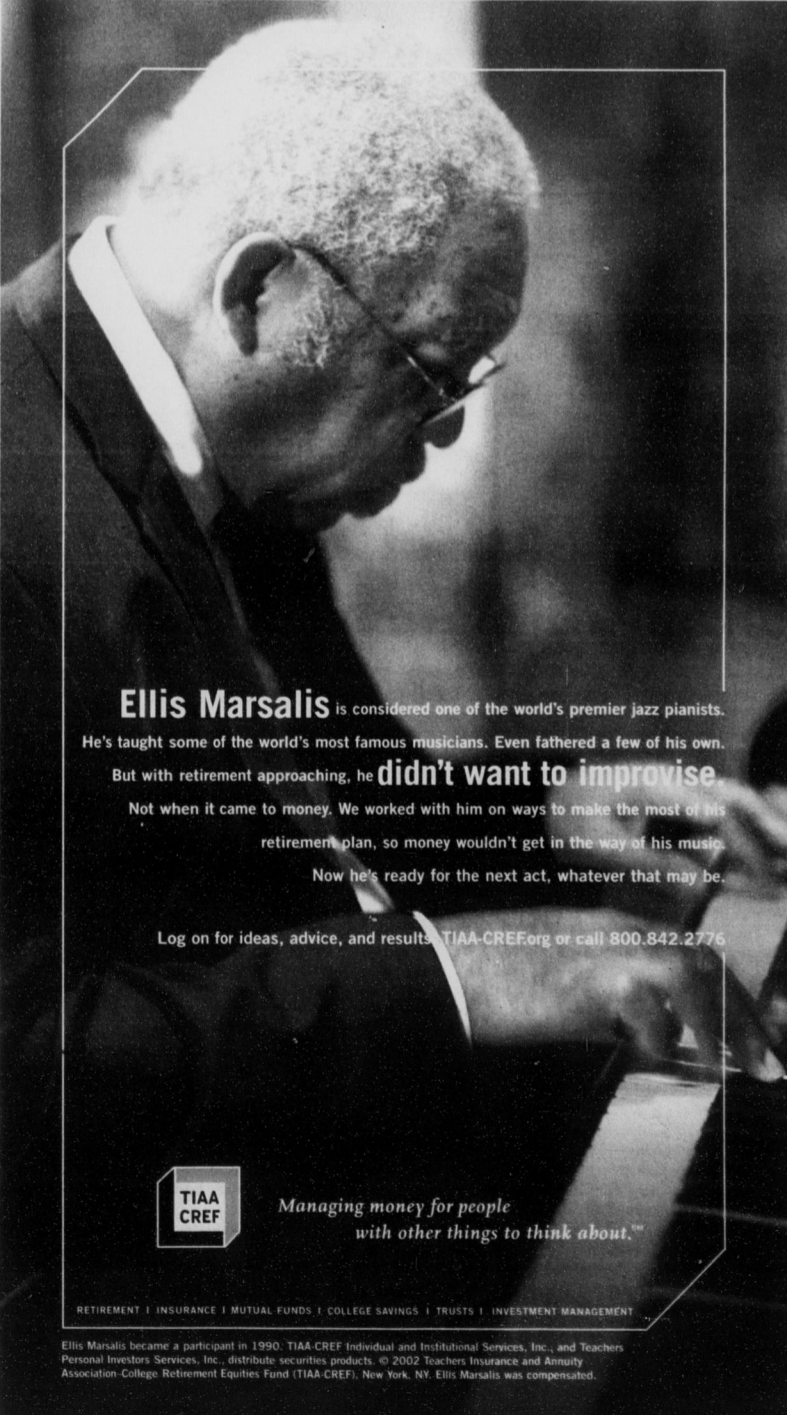
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