

HBCUs help curb smoking

Receive grant for grassroots efforts

BY NIRAV VORA
STAFF WRITER

Three of North Carolina's historically black universities are ready to step up their fights against smoking. The On the Ground Smoking Cessation and Prevention Project will aid the trio of schools in their efforts to curb smoking on campuses, examine the effects of tobacco advertising and raise awareness of the problem in the community. North Carolina Central University, North Carolina Agricultural & Technical State University and Bennett College received a \$1 million, two-year grant from the American Legacy Foundation, an anti-tobacco group formed in the settlement of a 1999 lawsuit against the industry. Students will study the advertis-

ing techniques of the tobacco industry in local communities and inform the public about their findings. They also will use the research to try to reduce smoking on their campuses and to develop a radio program that will emphasize the health risks of tobacco to middle and high school students. "We have a track record of three years that grassroots programs do work, and they are culturally sensitive and empower these communities from within," said Helen Letlow, the foundations' director of priority populations. She added that black children have a lower than average smoking rate in their high school careers and that one of the program's goals is to strengthen that trend. To work toward that end, students in the program at N.C. Central will go into their community and mentor 50 middle school students, said Sharon Saunders, spokeswoman for the university. In addition, students will be

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LELIA VICKERS, SCHOOL OF EDUCATION DEAN, N.C. A&T

trained to mentor peers who are struggling with smoking and encourage them to take part in the program's prevention efforts. Those involved said the programs are expected to be effective because they will be tailored to communities and will involve local leaders. Students will go into churches, schools and other public places to inform community members of their findings. In a press release, the foundation, which sponsors the "Truth" series of anti-smoking ads, states that black consumers are targeted specifically by tobacco marketing and that they suffer more from tobacco-related disease than other groups. Lelia Vickers, dean of the School

of Education at N.C. A&T, said this fact is one of the reasons the program features a grassroots effort to inform the community about tobacco advertising and its negative effects. "What we believe is that once the students go through the neighborhoods and identify what the negative ads are and identify how the ads are aimed at them, it will give them a knowledge base about this," she said. "That kind of work has a way of transforming your thinking. A commercial or cartoon show, that doesn't do it." Contact the State & National Editor at stntdesk@unc.edu.

School interaction focus of new panel

BY AMY THOMSON
STAFF WRITER

A new joint committee was formed Wednesday by the UNC system and the N.C. Community College System to work on ways to improve interaction between the two. The committee's co-chairman, Peter Hans of the UNC-system Board of Governors, said the committee came out of an agreement between two- and four-year colleges already in place that deals with credit transfers. Committee member Estelle "Bunny" Sanders said she has a particular interest in seeing the two institutions work together. "Their two missions are so intimately intertwined," she said. The committee will investigate ways of making transfers between two- and four-year colleges easier for students, potentially easing statewide employee shortages in certain professions. In particular, the state is interested in graduating more nurses

and teachers. The state government has called for 10,000 more teachers to be trained and retained next year. Both Hans and Sanders said they will be going into the first meeting without preconceived notions as to what issues the committee will take on, but Hans said he is interested in finding ways to help the state produce more teachers and nurses. Stuart Fountain, a member of the State Board of Community Colleges who also will lead the committee, suggested the universalization of requirements for entry into professional programs throughout the UNC system. He has not spoken to any of the other board members about this idea yet but said it will be addressed when they begin meeting. The group's first meeting will take place at the end of the month. Contact the State & National Editor at stntdesk@unc.edu.

Chaplain's case not in spotlight

Some say charges were fueled by race

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Capt. James Yee, a Muslim chaplain in the Army, spent 76 days in a prison cell while authorities tried to build a capital espionage case against him. Now he is free, the most serious allegations have been replaced by lesser ones such as adultery and possession of pornography, and the military justice system itself is on trial. Yee is due to appear Wednesday in front of a military judge in Fort Benning, Ga., for his preliminary hearing. Originally scheduled for Dec. 2, the hearing now has been postponed four times — a total of 78 days — so that the Army can review classified documents in the case.

Both sides say it's possible his preliminary hearing could be delayed again. Prosecutors aren't saying much publicly about this case, but it's apparent that they are no longer pursuing charges of spying, which could carry the death penalty upon conviction. Initial reports said Yee was a target of an espionage probe at the U.S. military base in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, where he ministered to people suspected to be terrorists. "Is this guy Jack the Ripper or is he not?" asked Gary Solis, a former Marine Corps judge advocate who is now a professor of adjunct law at Georgetown University. "You have to appreciate that at the outset they thought they were onto something very serious, but

they don't seem to be able to accept the evidence that in fact this was just a garden-variety screw-up." The only formal charges against Yee are mishandling classified material, failing to obey an order, making a false official statement, adultery and conduct unbecoming an officer, for allegedly downloading pornography on his government laptop. The last two were added since his release from the brig. If court-martialed and convicted on all charges, Yee could face as many as 13 years in prison. But some familiar with the military justice system insist that those charges alone hardly ever spark this sort of examination, much less 76 days of pretrial confinement, most of which was spent in solitude. Solis blames prosecutorial "ineptitude" for the Yee case getting blown out of proportion and said the charges probably still haven't been dropped because of a continuing hope to "make gold out of mud." John Fugh, a retired judge advocate general, said he fears it was

more, citing Yee's combination of being both Muslim and of Chinese descent. "If he were a white American, say a chaplain of some other denomination, I don't think this would have happened," Fugh said. "Any time you do something like this, you're bound to have some damage done to the integrity of the military justice system." Prisoners are sent to pretrial confinement because they're perceived as dangerous or as a flight risk, regardless of the charges, said Lt. Col. Bill Costello at the U.S. Southern Command in Miami, which is responsible for the Guantanamo prison. Costello hinted that the flight-risk fears might have been a factor. Yee was arrested Sept. 10 as he arrived at a Jacksonville, Fla., naval base, carrying what authorities believed were classified documents. It's not clear now whether they actually were. The government hasn't signaled any likelihood that it might drop the case, but Yee's attorney, Eugene Fidell, remains hopeful.

Commission to speed election improvements

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON, D.C. — States can expect by mid-May to get a long-awaited \$2.3 billion in federal help to buy new voting booth equipment, the head of an electoral reform commission promised Monday. Millions of voters will be using the much maligned punch cards in this fall's presidential balloting. Many of the improvements aren't expected to be in place before 2006. Members of the new Election Assistance Commission assured state officials at a conference Monday that they will expedite the distribution of \$2.3 billion in federal funds for election improvements. DeForest B. Soaries, the commission's chairman, said the various state plans for using the money will soon be published in the Federal Register with funds to be disbursed 45 days after that. Paul DeGregorio, a commission member, said that while changes at polling places are being seen in the primaries, other improvements "will be pushed off until 2006 because of (states) not getting the money" sooner and delays in getting the commission in place. In response to the problems in Florida during the 2000 presidential election, Congress in 2002 authorized \$3.86 billion over three years to help states modernize

their election systems and created the commission to disburse the funds and establish voluntary standards for states on how elections should be conducted. Only about \$650 million has been disbursed. An additional \$2.3 billion has been appropriated by Congress, but was set aside pending creation of the four-member commission. R. Doug Lewis, executive director of the Election Center, which represents election officials, said the delay in federal assistance has put states "at least a year and a half behind" in making all the election reforms the 2002 law envisioned. The law calls for helping states upgrade election equipment and make other improvements. But it leaves it up to the states to decide what technologies they use. The money can be used for better training of election workers, establishing voter registration databases and other election reform measures to assure more orderly and fair voting. This fall, six of every 10 voters will use electronically enhanced voting systems, according to a recent study by Election Data Services, a political consulting firm. Nearly a third of all voters will turn in paper ballots and more than 18 percent will continue to vote on the type of punch cards that were at the center of the brouhaha in Florida in the 2000 presidential election.

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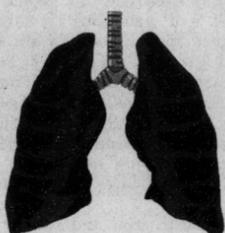
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Choose the next DTH Editor

The Daily Tar Heel is seeking students to serve on the panel that will choose the editor of the DTH for the 2004-2005 school year.

Applications for the seven at-large positions on the DTH Editor Selection Board are available at the DTH Office and the Carolina Union info desk kiosk.

Applicants must be available for an orientation meeting from 5-6pm Thursday, March 18 and from approximately 8:30am-4pm Saturday, March 20 to conduct interviews and make the selection.

All students may apply for at-large positions except current DTH news staff members. If you have any questions about the process, please contact Elyse Ashburn (962-4086, eamshburn@email.unc.edu) or Chrissy Beck (962-0175, cmbeck@email.unc.edu).

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