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UNC's gender gap begins to narrow

Myriad factors lead to disparity and its reversal

BY SARAH RABIL
STAFF WRITER

When more women than men graduated with awards and honors from Stanford University in 1901, the university's leaders barred females from certain courses and reduced overall female enrollment.

Stanford alumni later set an enrollment ratio of three men to one woman, which was not revoked until 1933, according to Barbara Miller Solomon's book "In the Company of Educated Women."

"When institutions admitted women for the first time in higher education, there was a concern that women would be better students," said Bob Ackerman, associate profes-

sor of higher education at the University of Nevada-Las Vegas. "And at Stanford, in fact, they were."

For the past several decades, women have dominated undergraduate populations nationwide, including at UNC. But the last decade has seen a narrowing of UNC's gender gap.

The historic dominance of men at UNC ended when women surpassed them in 1975. Male students have been a minority at UNC ever since, and in 1996, UNC's male enrollment hit a record low of 39.8 percent.

But male students account for 41.5 percent of this year's 3,589 freshmen, indicating that overall male enrollment is up from 41.2 percent of total undergraduates last year. Data on

the gender distribution of this year's undergraduates has not yet been released.

"People have an impression that it's more imbalanced than it is," said Stephen Farmer, director of UNC admissions, adding that UNC's admissions process is gender-blind.

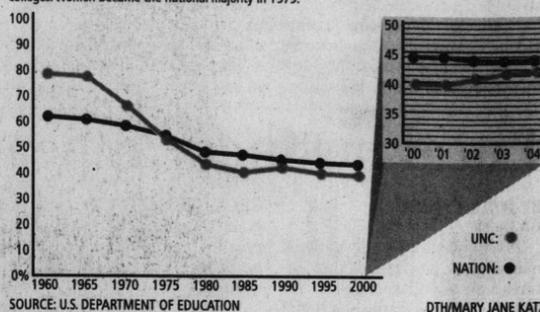
Although female applicants have outnumbered their male counterparts nearly 3-to-2 in recent years, in 2003 the University accepted male and female applicants at nearly identical rates — 36.3 percent and 36.9 percent, respectively.

UNC still has less than its share of men when compared to other colleges and universities. In 2000, 44 percent of students in higher education were men, while just 40 percent of Tar Heels were male.

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The Gender Gap

This is the percentage of male undergraduates at UNC versus the percentage at all universities and colleges. Women became the national majority in 1979.



SOURCE: U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

DTH/MARY JANE KATZ

QUIET REFLECTION



DTH/JUSTIN SMITH

The Smith family (right) follows as Rabbi Sharon Mars leads a reform Rosh Hashana service Wednesday night in Gerrard Hall. Rosh Hashana, the

beginning of the Jewish new year, is the start of a 10-day period of personal and communal soul searching that ends with the celebration of Yom Kippur Sept. 24 and 25.

Panel starts look at diversity

BY CLAIRE DORRIER
STAFF WRITER

Diversity at UNC will be under a microscope during the coming year as officials assess how issues on campus measure up to those at other leading public universities in the nation.

Chancellor James Moeser has charged the Chancellor's Task Force on Diversity with assessing the current state of diver-

sity at UNC — not because the University is falling behind, but because "good enough is not good enough."

The task force will create a list of core values and, ultimately, research the state of diversity at the different schools within the University. Officials said they hope the results will rank where UNC stands in regard to diversity.

"We haven't systematically addressed diversity, and we want to talk about this in a community way," said Archie Ervin, chairman of the new task force and director of minority affairs. "It will be a checkup of what is in place already."

Moeser, along with six other University officials, attended a diversity conference last February at the University of

Texas-Austin that inspired them to assess where improvements can be made at UNC.

Ervin said the University's academic plan will be used as a guideline to determine how well UNC is following its goals. The plan states that the University should strive to increase diversity and to create a climate that

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State schools aim to register 5,000 voters

Actions are part of national campaign

BY KAVITA PILLAI
ASSISTANT STATE & NATIONAL EDITOR

A new national voter registration campaign has plans to register 5,000 young people in the state before the November elections and will use the UNC system to achieve its goals.

The New Voters Project has the support of the UNC-system Board of Governors and Association of Student Governments and will conduct voter drives at all 16 campuses until Oct. 8, the last day to register.

The group also plans to continue working past that deadline, with door-to-door campaigning and media events, to make sure students show up at the polls.

"It's important to students in the UNC system to make sure that they are registered, they are voting and they are getting their voices heard," said Breanna Peterson, state director of the New Voters Project.

"We need to make sure students realize that registering to vote is not the end of their responsibility."

In 2000, only 36 percent of the nation's voters aged 18 to 24 voted in the national election. The drive, which is sponsored in part by N.C. Public Interest Research Group, is trying to reverse the downward trend of college voter turnout.

"It's critically important and probably something that should be done on an ongoing basis, not

just on the eve of an election," said Brad Wilson, BOG chairman.

The North Carolina project began less than a month ago and has a relatively short time frame within which to reach its goals, Peterson said.

The campaign also plans to work with professors at universities statewide to make civic responsibility a bigger issue in the classroom.

"We're working with professors so that (voting) is mentioned in classrooms and there's a forum for discussion," Peterson said.

ASG President Amanda Devore said in a statement released today that students can't afford to ignore this election.

"The issues facing students in the University make it imperative for them to exercise their right to vote," she stated in the release.

The nationwide project plans to register 265,000 voters and currently has registered more than 220,000. In addition to state public interest research groups, the project is supported by The Pew Charitable Trusts and is led by a bipartisan committee that includes former President Gerald Ford and former Vice President Walter Mondale.

It touts itself as the "largest grassroots youth voter registration and mobilization campaign in history."

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

Soccer league looks to regain footing

WUSA eyes return to public spotlight

BY BRIAN MACPHERSON
SENIOR WRITER

U.S. National Team captain Julie Foudy hung up the phone in frustration and gathered her teammates together in the team's Charlottesville, Va., practice facility.

The date was Sept. 15, 2003, and the opening game of the Women's World Cup loomed less than a week away. But Foudy had no choice but to break the news none of her teammates wanted to hear.

The Women's United Soccer Association had decided to suspend operations immediately to re-evaluate its business structure and to put a halt to mounting financial losses.

"We left the room all quiet," said Catherine Reddick, a former North Carolina star who likely would have been the league's top draft pick had the 2004 season taken place. "It didn't come as a shock, but I

just think we were all optimistic about the situation. We never thought that it would happen."

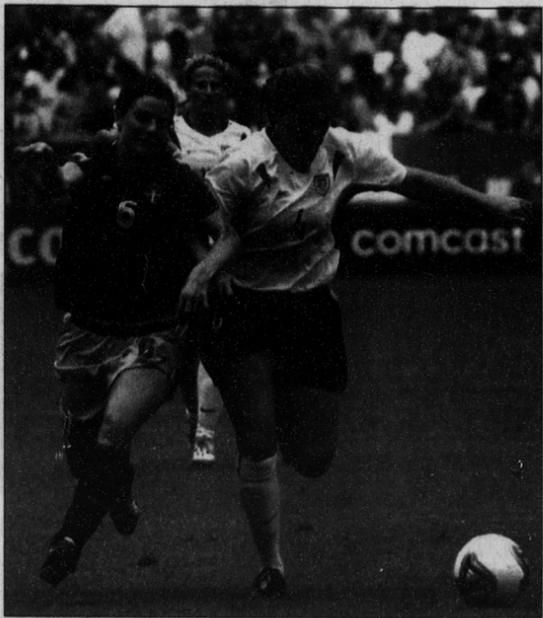
But the WUSA had hemorrhaged money at an alarming pace during its first three years of operation, and the deficit spending couldn't be sustained through another season.

One year later, the league remains on hiatus, and players and investors continue to gather support for another attempt at establishing a professional women's soccer league in the United States.

Officials have taken a two-pronged approach in their efforts to resurrect the WUSA — cultivating the enthusiasm for women's soccer that originally spawned the league and creating a model for a sustainable business structure.

The most prominent American players — especially those who won gold in Athens in August — have taken on the task of ensuring that fans don't lose the enthusiasm they

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DTH FILE PHOTO/ASHLEY PITT

UNC alumna Catherine Reddick (4) likely would have been the WUSA's No. 1 draft pick — but the league folded after facing financial losses.

Report: N.C. schools lack true accessibility

BY MARK PUENTE
STAFF WRITER

A national report card released Wednesday on higher education gave North Carolina a D-, and failing marks to 36 states, in their ability to provide affordable education to college students.

The National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education's biennial study dropped the country's affordability grade to an F from its previous grade of D in 2002.

Only California, Utah and Minnesota earned higher than a D in the affordability category.

The report card, titled "Measuring Up 2004," graded states on four other categories as well: preparation, participation, completion and benefits.

North Carolina received a B in preparation, a C+ in participation, a B in completion and a C in benefits.

"It's the most comprehensive report of its kind," said Mark Musick, president of the Southern Regional Education Board, an

"There are some messages in the report for state leaders to pay attention to."

MARK MUSICK, EDUCATION EXPERT

educational think tank.

"There are some messages in the report for state leaders to pay attention to."

Yet Musick said he is skeptical of the weight placed on individual grades that have pluses and minuses, adding that the grading system is not precise or fine-tuned enough to make clear distinctions.

"If a state had all Ds and Fs, there is a message there," Musick said. "But if a state had B-minuses and C-pluses, it is too close to call."

North Carolina's affordability grade baffled some officials at

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