

'Project' gives students a taste of UNC life

Encourages minorities to seek degrees

BY BECCA MOORE
SUMMER EDITOR

If you noticed a mass of high school students on campus last week and thought that it seemed a bit early for C-TOPS to be kicking off, you were right.

The students were participating in a different kind of orientation program — Project Uplift. Open to high school juniors but focuses on minorities, Project Uplift motivates students to pursue higher education.

The all-expense-paid program lasts two days and is packed with educational and cultural events that help to introduce students to academics and social life on a college campus.

Project Uplift was started in 1968 as a grass-roots effort by two students that felt the University wasn't targeting minority recruitment, said Terri Houston, the director of recruitment and support services for the Office of Minority Affairs.

Houston said students who are in the top 25 percent of their class are nominated by their high school

guidance counselors to participate in the program. 1,200 have registered to come to UNC for one of four sessions, which is up from about 1,000 last summer. "It's been a very successful program, and we're pleased with the response," she said.

Project Uplift is a unique opportunity for high school students that thrives on the participation of dedicated UNC students.

Ada Wilson, a UNC senior and Project Uplift coordinator, said she runs the sessions with the help of a staff of 50 to 55 student volunteers.

"The strong undergraduate-student influence says a lot about Carolina," Houston said.

Speaking on last weekend's session, Wilson said the students learned vital information about financial aid, academics and campus life.

"They got a taste of Carolina, and that lets them know that they should pursue college as an option," she said.

"It's a group of students eager to learn and find out more about college — the academic classes, espe-

cially. It gets them closer to reaching their academic goals and lets them know they have what it takes."

Nathan Alexander, a UNC junior, said this summer will be his second with Project Uplift. As the Social Committee chair, he said since the students spend the majority of the day involved with academic programs, it's the goal of the committee to help them relax in the evening.

"We show the participants a good time — an experience beyond just the academic."

Alexander said the sessions include a staff talent show on Thursday night, followed by a party on Friday that includes an Apollo-style performance show for students that are willing to showcase their talents.

The goal of the program is to show high school students that they can pursue a college education even if they've felt in the past that it wasn't an option.

"We don't want them to just say, 'Carolina is the best, go to Carolina,'" Alexander said. "We just want them to go to college."

Contact the University Editor at udesk@unc.edu.



UNC sophomore Kevin Fletcher (left), a Project Uplift student leader, talks with high school junior Nick Thomas about campus life during a tour on Friday. The program is designed to help students pursue higher education.

Summer series heating up

Weekly festival to launch June 15

BY BRIANNA BISHOP
CITY EDITOR

Locals looking for ways to pass the time during the dog days of summer soon will have a place to go for music and entertainment every Wednesday.

Beginning June 15, the Chapel Hill Downtown Economic Development Corporation will host the Summer Concert and Movie Festival every week at McCorkle Place.

Movies will be shown June 15 and 29 and July 13 and 27. Concerts will be hosted June 22, July 3 and 20 and August 3.

A final concert will be held August 13 at Hargraves Center.

The corporation hired a local planner, Mary & Parrish Events, to organize the programs.

Co-founder Mary Lindsley said her firm decided to plan the event because it agreed with the vision of the corporation.

"We like the mission of the organization, and we like the celebration of the community getting together," Lindsley said.

With an estimated budget of about \$24,000, the company has started to tentatively plan each night.

"The Incredibles," "Bend it Like Beckham," "Spirited Away" and "Hitch" are four possible movie selections.

Several local bands currently

are being contracted for availability and fees: Liquid Pleasure, Lo-K-Shun, Armand and Bluesology and The Old Ceremony. Liquid Pleasure will likely perform at the final concert in August.

Lindsley said the firm tried to find bands that have a draw in Chapel Hill. Contracts for the bands will be completed once the budget is finalized.

To raise the necessary budget, the corporation currently is looking for sponsors.

So far, more than \$6,700 has been raised, and according to a report from the planners, if all interested groups commit, the corporation will have raised more than \$14,000.

"We need sponsors from wherever we can get them," said Tom Tucker, a corporation member and chairman of the Summer Events Advisory Committee.

Unlike previous years, which have been hosted by the Downtown Commission, both the concerts and movies will be shown at McCorkle Place.

During past summers, movies have been shown on top of the Wallace parking deck, located on Rosemary Street.

Lindsley said showing the movies at McCorkle Place rather than the parking deck would provide a better atmosphere for families.

The location will allow groups to bring picnics and will provide a nice space to enjoy the summer evenings, she said.

Lindsley said every Wednesday

"We like the mission of the organization, and ... the celebration of the community getting together."

MARY LINDSLEY, LOCAL PLANNER

evening show will be suited for children and families.

"It is family oriented for sure," she said.

Tucker said the shows will have something for everyone, and he hopes the evenings will attract everyone from families to students to merchants. "We want to get everyone involved."

The advisory committee petitioned the Chapel Hill Town Council to change an ordinance so that beer and wine could be sold at the series.

After the council approved the change last month, the committee has decided to move plans forward without alcohol sales.

Tucker said there were too many logistics to be worked out in a short amount of time, but the committee will possibly consider allowing alcohol consumption during future summer concert series.

Contact the City Editor at citydesk@unc.edu.

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House to debate capital punishment moratorium

BY WHITNEY ISENHOWER
STAFF WRITER

Those on North Carolina's death row could gain a new breath of life they've been hoping for.

A House committee gave a favorable report to a bill proposing to suspend all N.C. executions for two years with a vote of 8-6 Tuesday.

The bill would halt executions so the state's death penalty system can be studied.

Committee members argued the pros and cons of the moratorium before it could be put up for a vote in the House. To move forward during this session, the bill must have passed the House by the crossover deadline today.

Rep. Joe Hackney, D-Orange, one of the bill's primary sponsors and chairman of the committee, said legislators should be concerned about saving lives.

"If our system has produced innocent people getting convicted and some of them are on death row, the question is, 'What are we going to do about it?'" he said. "The answer as legislators shouldn't be, 'Nothing.'"

Proponents of the bill also said it could help straighten out a broken N.C. death penalty system.

"The system is not fair," said Rep. Verla Insko, D-Orange, a bill sponsor. "One of the greatest American ideals is that everybody be created equal under the law. We're not doing that."

But some of the bill's opponents say they do not see the benefits of a new study.

"There are studies all the time," said Rep. J. Russell Capps, R-Wake. "We don't need a moratorium."

Though moratorium legislation

"I don't want to see anybody sitting on death row as I was. It's really disgusting because with death, it's final."

ALAN GELL, ACQUITTED DEATH ROW INMATE

has come up before in the N.C. Senate — it approved a moratorium in 2003 — the House has never passed the measure.

Sen. Ellie Kinnaird, D-Orange, said passage in the House could give the moratorium and accompanying study the push it needs.

"Without the authority of the General Assembly, we're never going to convince people there's a problem," she said.

Though organizations such as the N.C. Fair Trial Initiative and N.C. Coalition for a Moratorium often conduct such studies, Insko said a time limit could push legislators to conduct a more finalized, cohesive study.

"If we had a moratorium, everybody would be pushing to get a lot done in those two years," she said.

Issues such as racial disparities in death penalty sentences and the conviction of innocent North Carolinians have spurred the moratorium movement.

"We would've had two people dead this year who didn't commit the crimes," Kinnaird said.

Darryl Hunt and Alan Gell, were released from their sentences in February 2004. Hunt was convicted of the 1984 rape and killing of Deborah Sykes, but a DNA test helped prove his innocence.

Gell was awarded a new trial after a judge said the N.C. Attorney

General's office had withheld evidence from the 1995 trial for the murder of Allen Ray Jenkins. Gell attended the committee meeting Tuesday to push for its passage.

"I don't want to see anybody sitting on death row as I was," he said afterward. "It's really disgusting because with death, it's final."

Despite supporters' claims to the contrary, some bill opponents maintain that a moratorium is a veiled attempt to abolish the death penalty.

Rep. Debbie Clary, R-Cleveland, questioned why the bill's supporters didn't simply conduct a study while trying to pass the legislation.

"Why in the name of God have you not been studying instead of lobbying?" she asked.

"I think the approach here spells out the ultimate goal, and that is to abolish the death penalty."

But bill proponents said they want to fix a flawed system, and saving the lives of innocent people should be the main concern.

Rep. W. Pete Cunningham, D-Mecklenburg, said opponents don't have their priorities in order.

"If we're first in flight, that's alright, but when it comes to human beings we're not really that concerned."

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

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