

# UNC attitudes survey

*Students of 70s seek security, fear uncertain future*

By GREG PORTER  
Staff Writer

When Dow Chemical Co. recruiters came to the UNC campus in March of 1968, twelve students protesting the company's manufacture of napalm blockaded the door of a Gardner Hall interview room. The students, among them a mother with an infant strapped to her back, were arrested and convicted on misdemeanor charges.

Today, in an era when a protest is a novelty rather than a common occurrence, recruiters from Dow and a host of other companies are greeted by dozens of neatly-clad students seeking to make the best impression and get a job.

Students aren't as vocal today as they were 10 years ago. And the mysterious silence of the campuses has prompted

"Instead of bonding together into even larger unions," Murphy says, "Contemporary students have disintegrated into self-sufficient units. They are proudly alone, a generation of existentialists, arrogant in their integrity. They are not massed in the streets but neither are they mobbing the library. Their laid back insouciance is sincere."

Both Dahrendorf and Murphy express two of the more prevalent conceptions of the modern student. But there is more to the student mind than a preoccupation with job security and an arrogant unconcern about the world at large.

A recent survey of UNC undergraduates, along with the comments of experienced faculty and staff, give a more detailed, complete picture of student attitudes today.

"It's (the survey's) a pretty accurate picture of student opinion as it existed in the spring of 1977," said Dr. John

Sixteen per cent of the student body said they had cohabitated out of wedlock. The survey defined cohabitation as spending at least four nights a week with a member of the opposite sex for a minimum of six weeks.

Of those who cohabitated, 31.3 per cent said they did not plan to marry, while 34.3 per cent of the cohabitators had marriage plans.

"As students increasingly accept sexual behavior, contraception, living together, they increasingly accept abortion as an unfortunate but viable alternative" to unplanned births, said Sharon Meginnis, a counselor in the Student Health Service.

But eighty per cent of all students surveyed, and overwhelming figure according to Dr. Reed, oppose "the end to marriage in its present form." Most students apparently do not consider cohabitation a substitute for marriage.

Students seemed significantly divided on the issue of gay rights. The survey found 48.5 per cent in favor of "equal rights for lesbians under the law," while 30.8 per cent opposed it.

In April the Southeastern Gay Conference, held in Chapel Hill for the second year in a row, was marked by several incidents of harrassment and heckling directed at conference attendees. The conference and the incidents raised a controversy among students as to the place of gays on campus and the open-mindedness of the Chapel Hill student body.

Dr. J. Carlyle Sitterson, a history professor and University chancellor during the late 60's, said many students tolerate the gay life style but are as yet unwilling to sanction it.

"Students are still strong (as they were in the 60's) on the rights of individuals to deviate from the socially approved norm, to have their own lives," Sitterson said. "But I'm not so sure that would extend fully to the next stage that would require society to fully embrace all those (deviations)."

"One stage is a toleration, the other an active recognition." Although students do not whole-heartedly support gay rights, a larger number, 57.1 per cent, favor the Equal Rights Amendments.

Despite the fact that 57.4 per cent of students said they also approve of the efforts of women's rights groups, only 3.2 per cent of students are involved in women's rights groups.

Campus activism has reached a low level, Dr. Sitterson explained, because today's student is "more skeptical about

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*'Today's student is more skeptical about their capacity to solve issues quickly than the students of the sixties were.'*

Former Chancellor J. C. Sitterson

interesting speculation on the character—or lack of character—of the modern student.

"Students today reflect the plight of many groups in our society, clinging to what they have got rather than groping for something new," wrote Ralph Dahrendorf, director of the London School of Economics in a recent *Times of London* article.

Dahrendorf said a tight job market, "fear of an uncertain future," has forced students to demand a "defense of the status quo, of existing privileges." The students of the 70's no longer seek their "place in the sun" as the students of the 60's did, Dahrendorf says.


Kent Murphy, an Atlanta student internship director and a self-proclaimed child of the 60's, has a different view of the modern student.

Reed, a UNC sociology professor who directed the campus-wide mail survey.

Eighty percent of the 600 undergraduate students polled responded to the survey. Reed said the response rate was "amazingly high" and the results are accurate within a margin of plus or minus five percentage points.

Reed's survey shows that most students at the University have abandoned traditional sexual roles and mores, but still cling to the established institution of marriage, stand at odds on the gay rights issue and display little activism in behalf of the ideas they espouse.


The survey, which measured attitudes concerning sexual issues, feminism and religion, showed that 61.2 per cent of students at UNC are in favor of "abortion on demand" while 24.4 per cent oppose it.



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