

The Daily Tar Heel

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Ombudsman: James Benton. Phone 962-0245; Office hours: Mon., Wed.-Fri.: 1-3p.m.; Sun., Tue.: 4-6 p.m.

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IN DEPTH

Affirmative action's aim unclear

By ERIK ROGERS
Staff Writer

Analysis

If affirmative action is a race against time to make improvements in society, some people believe the progress is coming at a tortoise's pace. But unlike the fairy tale, they are not sure if "slow but steady" will get anyone across the finish line.

Robert Cannon, UNC's affirmative action officer, said affirmative action had not fully accomplished what it was meant to do: ensure that a black person has the same opportunity to get a job as a white person.

Cannon said the job outlook for blacks had not significantly improved because basic attitudes haven't changed.

"When a black person applies for a job, he is viewed based on skin color and not on his experiences or his credentials," Cannon said. "Sometimes an employer may hire a white instead of a black simply because it may be better for business. The employer considers which person the customers will be more comfortable with, and in many cases the employer decides that it is the white applicant."

"In some cases there is the matter of racism. I know of cases where the black applicant has had better credentials than the white, but the employer did not hire the black due to prejudice."

But others believe that blacks, within the local community in particular, have not helped themselves by their attitudes and actions about work. Linda Avery has an employer's view as a black assistant manager at Hardee's.

"Many of the blacks in this town

don't seem to care about having a job," she said. "I've noticed the black people in this town seem to be satisfied with going to the shelter for the homeless and the Community Kitchen for free food."

"Some of the black men will come here to get some coffee and just sit around to talk. They could be working, but apparently they may not feel that it is important. And they are so unclear in appearance. I know if they came to me for a job, I would not hire them."

Avery said it bothered her to see black people come into her place of work with a filthy appearance because it reflects poorly on her race.

"I try to tell those guys to get their act together and get a job. I even offer some of them a job, but they won't take advantage of the opportunity. Even if they do fill out the resume, their writing is so messy most of the times that you don't want to hire them, since they could not take the time to fill out a resume properly."

Meanwhile, there is constant debate on the worth of affirmative action — whether it is "for better or for worse" for blacks and whites. It is almost impossible to have a constructive debate on the merits of policy, however, because definitions of "affirmative action" differ greatly from person to person.

Many whites do not understand the purpose of affirmative action, Cannon said. "Affirmative action is not meant as a way for whites to pay the blacks back for what happened many years ago. I'm insulted that anyone would even think this because it makes me think society may feel blacks can't provide for themselves."

Affirmative action is necessary not simply because of the historical oppression of black people, but because black people are denied the same opportunities as whites, said Eddie Cotton, a black resident of Carrboro.

"The white man does not owe me anything except a chance. I don't look at affirmative action as a way of the white man paying me back for what happened in the past between our ancestors because that is in the past."

Shay Alderman, a white freshman from Aberdeen, said affirmative action was not fair to blacks or whites. Alderman said she knew of some cases where a black student was admitted to the University instead of a white student because the University tries to maintain a minimum number of minority students.

"I have some white friends who had brilliant scores on their SATs and had good grades in high school, but they did not get accepted. In the meantime, I personally know of some black students who did not have nearly as high of scores on their SATs or high school

grades and they got in. Something is wrong somewhere. This is not fair."

But Cotton said affirmative action was necessary because racism still exists.

"Affirmative action is fair because many black men will not be able to get a job without it. Most of the businesses are owned by whites, and unless you put a white man in a forceful situation to hire a black man, he won't do it."

Cannon stressed that education is an important factor in changing the attitudes of society about blacks in the workplace. He said blacks themselves will have to become more educated about opportunities and requirements.

"A black should not say he is being discriminated against if he has not even met the minimum requirements for the job. In these times we are living in, a post-secondary education is vital in the job market."

Blacks have earned the respect of whites, Cannon said, and now is the time to change the attitude that blacks are not qualified to enter the professional world.

"Black people have worked like hell to get things accomplished for themselves," Cannon said. "They have even fought in wars and died for their country and democracy. Now society needs to extend that democracy to the blacks and be fair to them whenever they apply for jobs."

Campus Calendar

TUESDAY
3:30 p.m.: The UNC Program in Social Theory and the Institute for Research in Social Science present "W.E.B. DuBois: The Political Uses of Alienation," with Thomas Holt of the University of Chicago in 569 Hamilton. For more info call 962-0446.

University Career Planning and Placement Services will hold Internships 101: Basics of internships and experiential learning workshop in 209 Hanes.

4 p.m.: UCPSP will hold a Career Panel on Non-Profit Organizations in 210 Hanes.

Orientation Office invites all O.C. applicants and interested students to attend an interest session for STOW in the Spencer lobby.

Nurses Christian Fellowship will have a chapter meeting in 104 Carrington on nurse-doctor relationships. All welcome! Refreshments served.

Project Literacy will have a general meeting for all old and new members in the Y. We will discuss events for Literary Awareness '90! Please attend!

5 p.m.: Carolina Athletic Association announces that the Student Recreation Center Board of Directors will meet with the building architect in 106 Fetzer. Open to all interested students, faculty and staff.

6:30 p.m.: The N.C. Association of Educators Student Program presents a "Principal Panel" in 220 Peabody. Principals from elementary schools, junior high schools and high schools will discuss educating youth as well as talk about what they look for when hiring teachers. All are welcome!

7 p.m.: Orientation Office invites all O.C. applicants and interested students to attend an interest session in Ehringhaus Green Room, Hinton James 1st floor lounge or Cobb-Henderson-Joyner/Olde Campus — Cobb Morehead Cellar.

The Carolina Comic Book Club will celebrate its seventh birthday at Pizza Hut on Franklin Street, and you're invited!

7:30 p.m.: Duke-UNC Graduate Student Colloquium in Latin American Studies meets in Toy Lounge, Dey Hall. All graduate students with interest in Latin America are invited to attend this kickoff event.

Fellowship of Christian Athletes will have a Women's Bible Study at Chapel of the Cross until 8:30 p.m. Men's Bible Study will be from 8 p.m. - 9 p.m. at Mrs. D's House beside Little Fraternity Court.

IRSS presents a Great Decisions Lecture, "Vietnam, Cambodia and the United States: Return Engagement," with Stephen Solarz (D-NY) in 100 Hamilton. Call 962-0491.

8 p.m.: The UNC Young Democrats will host Laura Davis of People for the American Way in 211 Union. She will speak about political apathy among young people. All interested people are welcome.

8:30 p.m.: UNC Scuba Club will meet in 213 Union. For more info call 968-6990.

For the Record

In the "Student Congress Budget Allocations" chart in the Daily Tar Heel on Feb. 26, three figures were cited incorrectly. The Student Part-Time Employment Service received \$4,563 from Student Congress, and the Executive Branch asked for \$25,730 and received \$23,672.

Lunch Daily
11:30-5:00

FRANKLIN STREET BAR / GRILL

Tuesday Dinner Specials: 5-9
Spaghetti w/Italian Sausage \$5.95
Stir Fry Chicken \$4.95

Deli Sandwiches • Homemade Soups
Large Assortment of Salads

149 1/2 E. Franklin St.

Bike to Campus

Your Own Apartment. Now You Can Afford It.

Mon.-Fri. 9-6 Sat. 10-5

CHAPEL SPORTSWEAR HILL

EVERYTHING

1 1/2 OFF!

2 DAYS ONLY!

TUES. 27th, 9:30 am-8 pm • WED. 28th, 9:30 am-6pm

133 E. FRANKLIN ST. 929-0060

ALL UNC SPORTSWEAR

- Reverse Knit 12 oz. Crews \$13.99
- T-Shirts \$3.75
- Sweats \$7.99
- Shorts \$3.50
- Youth & Infant/Toddler Sizes \$2.50

MEN'S & WOMEN'S CASUAL WEAR

- Rugby's \$12.50
- Sweaters \$9.99
- Pants \$13.50
- Jumpers \$12.50
- Shorts \$8.99
- Tanks \$3.99