

The Daily Tar Heel

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For the Record

In Friday's article, "Write-ins excluded from SBP vote," a source incorrectly identified himself as Todd Smarrella, a sophomore from Raleigh. Smarrella did not express the views attributed to him. The DTH regrets the error.

IN DEPTH

Affirmative Action suffers setbacks

Editor's note: This is the first in a five-part series examining the issues facing Black America in the 1990s.

By ERIC LUSK
Staff Writer

African Americans have made tremendous advances since the freedom rides and lunch counter sit-ins of the 1950s and 1960s, but recent setbacks in civil rights reforms have left many blacks discouraged.

Many observers point to Supreme Court decisions failing to bolster Affirmative Action programs, the lack of respect for black history and the disturbingly small number of black scholars in education as signs of the stagnation of the civil rights movement.

"Blacks are doing all the things they need to do to pay off, except we're not getting the returns," Kerry Haynie, a UNC graduate student in political science, said.

Affirmative Action, a government equal opportunity employment program that began in 1965, has come under fire in recent Supreme Court cases and is widely misunderstood, Audrey Johnson, a UNC associate professor in the school of social work, said.

"The executive order for Affirmative Action means equal access and an effort to find people of color," she said. "It's not just hiring unqualified blacks."

A majority of people fail to see what Affirmative Action truly stands for, Haynie said.

"The way it is presented is groups getting favorable treatment... or people getting something they're not qualified for. It is not a lowering of standards."

Recent Supreme Court decisions have eroded Affirmative Action and

Analysis

made arguing discrimination cases more difficult, Patrick Bruer, a UNC assistant professor of political science, said.

One decision failed to endorse Affirmative Action programs by forcing defendants to prove a strong discrimination problem before winning cases, Bruer said.

Another decision, dealing with private-sector discrimination, sent minority groups a mixed message, he said. It upheld the ban on private-sector discrimination in contracting and employment, but failed to protect minority groups once on the job.

"The message they (the Supreme Court) are sending is that it's going to be somewhat more difficult to implement Affirmative Action plans... but it is in no grave danger of being overturned," Bruer said.

In North Carolina, a new law approved by the U.S. Justice Department last week will allow a candidate to win a primary election with only 40 percent of the vote, which should help blacks and other minorities get on the ballot in this state, Bruer said.

Not every civil rights dilemma is political. A lack of respect for black history and past issues dealing with race upset and discourage some blacks, Haynie said. The importance of history is emphasized throughout one's schooling, but is avoided when slavery issues or racial problems come up.

"All through school, and even at UNC, there is not any treatment of the civil rights movement, only a few pages in a textbook," Haynie said. "When there is no treatment, people don't

understand the history. People tend to forget this."

Bruer said he tries to emphasize the civil rights movement, affirmative action and black history in his political science classes.

"I've got a number of minority students in my classes. We really need some minority voices on the faculty," he said.

The UNC political science department does not offer any specialized courses in black history. The African and Afro-American studies curriculum offers 12 classes this semester dealing with various subjects such as the black experience, the civil rights movement and black leaders. About 1,000 students are presently enrolled in Afro-American studies classes.

UNC faces another struggle with the lack of black faculty. Only 13 black faculty members were hired in the past four years at UNC, according to the faculty employment review prepared by the UNC Affirmative Action office.

As of November, only 20 of 713 tenured faculty were black and only seven of 153 professors on the tenure track were black. Out of 132 fixed-term faculty, only four were black.

The problem lies in the lack of black applicants, Bruer said. Prominent blacks, for various reasons, are choosing not to go into the teaching profession, but are moving into other positions.

"Every department is going after the same small set of applicants. It's difficult to make much progress," he said.

Involving minority undergraduate students in research projects with professors could stimulate an interest in academic life, Bruer said.

Forms of segregation have reappeared in public schools and colleges, Caroline Coleman, southern voter education director for the N.C. NAACP, said.

"Look at school cafeterias. There is more segregation than ever," she said. Coleman said black students often receive harsher punishments than white students who commit similar offenses at school, and the number of suspensions from school are higher for blacks.

The number of black staff members in public schools has declined in the past 30 years. In 1960, North Carolina had 58 black principals, but now there are only 21. By the year 2000 it is predicted that only 2 percent of teachers in North Carolina will be black, Coleman said.

Solutions to some of the problems facing black America may hinge on heightening awareness and communication on issues such as blacks in education and racial discrimination.

"We need to be honest and open, particularly in the social arena. There needs to be some restructuring of social programs," Haynie said.

Coleman said institutions such as colleges need to focus on realizing differences between blacks and whites and must commit to understanding the African-American student.

UNC is a good place to begin implementing some changes, Haynie said.

"Our campus is a microcosm of society," he said. "Blacks are prominent in athletics here, but there is not as much emphasis on blacks in the classroom. This issue hasn't yet been raised in the scholarship arena."

"It takes some leadership here from people on campus."

Campus Calendar

MONDAY 3 p.m.: The Study Abroad Office is looking for students with experience in the French language and interests in Political Science and Economics. Meet

with the Associate Director of Internships in Franco-phone Europe in the Study Abroad Office in 12 Caldwell Hall if you are interested.

The Department of Radio, Television and Motion Pictures sponsor a 1990 Wesley H. Wallace Seminar in Media Ethics, "Media Property Rights/Community Rights: The Conflict of Ethical Cultures," with Dr. Herbert Schiller, Professor of Communications at the University of California, San Diego, in 1-A Swain Hall.

3:45 p.m.: Career Planning and Placement Services will hold Internships 101: Basics of internships and experiential learning workshop in 209 Hanes.

4 p.m.: UNC Microtheory presents Robert Townsend of Chicago in Gardner Hall until 5:30 p.m. Call 966-2385 for more details.

6 p.m.: The Presbyterian Campus Ministry will have a graduate dinner at the Presbyterian Center on 110 Henderson St.

6:30 p.m.: SEAC's Wildlife Conservation Committee meets (every Monday) in room 204 of the Campus Y. The aims are to increase awareness of

critical wildlife issues and raise funds to support conservation of specific animals. The current project is to raise money to help protect the rhino in Africa. All welcome!

The Black Cultural Center presents a Black Music Workshop, "A Brief History of Jazz and Blues Music," facilitated by George Smith from Chicago Jazz Fraternity and Julio Finn, author of *The Bluesman and Voices of Negritude*. Toy Lounge of Dey Hall until 8 p.m.

7 p.m.: Amnesty International Group 84 will have a video presentation and discussion of human rights and abuses in Peru in 205 Union.

7:30 p.m.: Youth United will meet in the Black Cultural Center. If interested in a teen partner program, please attend. For more info, please call 962-2333.

CGLA, to begin Lesbian and Gay Awareness Week, will sponsor a forum on safer sex practices entitled "Reducing Our Risks," led by Keith Floyd and Jerry Salak of the Triangle AIDS Service Project, in 117 Hanes Art Center.

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The Department of Psychiatry at UNC-Chapel Hill invites you to participate in a drug study that can provide outpatient treatment. Men and women with clinical depression can receive without expense a diagnostic interview, physical exams, EKG's, clinical lab tests, and possibly free anti-depressant medication. Study ends soon. Call now and get the help you need. For more information contact Nancy McAlister at 962-8023.

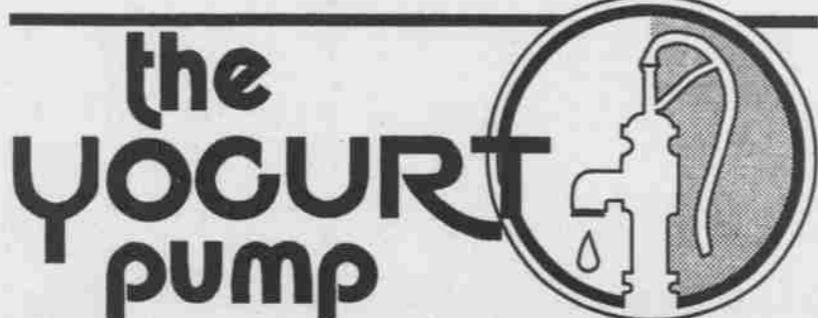
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