

Subtle racism from kindergarten to workplace still exists in 1991

By Matthew Hoyt
Staff Writer

Since the end of the civil rights movement in the late 1960s, racism has taken on a new guise.

Ku Klux Klan rallies, racial slurs and defaced posters still abound, but most of today's prejudice is subtle, even unseen, by many not looking for it. Institutionalized racism is the racist practices, policies and customs on all levels of society, from the business world to elementary schools, said Zenobia Hatcher-Wilson, director of the Campus Y.

"People in the '90s know better than to practice racism in obvious ways. Now it is more subtle and unconscious," said Laura Anderson, minister of information for the Black Student Movement.

Hatcher-Wilson said that while institutionalized racism was found in almost all areas of society, it was most common on the scholastic and professional levels, where minority leaders were few and far between.

"The heads of most schools and businesses represent the majority," she said.

Anderson agreed. "People who make the decisions in these areas are still mostly white males," she said.

Institutionalized racism in the public school system usually takes form in the curriculum and school activities that are geared toward whites and leave little room for minority involvement, Hatcher-Wilson said.

"There is a lack of attention in the classroom given to contributions by minority groups, and there are few opportunities for people to participate equally in extracurricular activities."

Anderson said the biggest problem

in the lower schools was tracking, the practice where minorities were intentionally steered toward certain classes because teachers assumed they could not handle the upper-level courses required for a higher education.

"Counselors tell blacks to go to vocational schools. They are not told about the college route," she said.

The same problems appear on the university level. Anderson said the curriculum at UNC ignored many important contributions by African-Americans in history and literature.

"You have to pick a specific course here to learn about African-American contributions," she said.

Rosalind Fuse-Hall, associate dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, said the absence of black contributors hurt minority students.

"Professors are not showing them any role models," she said.

Many blacks agreed that problems also existed in the University's admissions process and financial aid.

"Many applicants (for financial aid) fall in a gray area. They can pay for college on paper, but not practically," Fuse-Hall said.

Anderson said she would like to see a change in present policy. "I would love to see financial aid expanded."

Fuse-Hall also said that admissions, specifically SATs, were unfavorable toward minority applicants.

"SATs are unduly biased," she said.

John Pope, a member of the Board of Trustees who recently called for a change in UNC's admissions process by basing an applicant's candidacy solely on his or her SAT scores, said he thought the standardized test was completely fair.

"There is no proof that SATs are racist at all. SAT scores are about the only objective means we have to look at applicants," Pope said.

The problems of institutionalized racism on the professional level also seem to center around the assumption by some employers that minorities are not as capable as whites, according to many blacks.

"It is accepted practice that blacks are put in a position in which they can't move up," Hatcher-Wilson said.

Fuse-Hall said blacks could see opportunities for advancement but were unable to reach them.

"The glass ceiling is the reality of the business world for blacks," she said.

Hatcher-Wilson said blacks were also frequently given "pink collar" jobs, positions created by employers that have little purpose and easily could be cut if necessary.

Marcia Harris, director of University Career Planning and Placement Services, said the best way for minorities to stay away from pink collar jobs was by seeking a more technical education.

"They need to choose technical majors and try to go into more strictly technical positions that can't be easily deleted," she said.

Harris said minorities were at a disadvantage when entering the career field because of their lack of connections.

"Minorities usually don't have as many contacts through family and friends as whites," she said.

A number of groups on campus have tried to combat institutionalized racism on the university level, but most shy from outright protest.

"Protests and rallies become ineffective when they happen once a week. We would lose our credibility with the students on campus and end up being like lawyers chasing ambulances," Anderson said.

Instead, BSM fights racism through a program of cultural awareness, exposing



Asians want more awareness, understanding of their culture

By Colleen Rodite
Staff Writer

Asian students are all science or math majors. True or false?

Many Asian students gravitate toward these subjects because they feel insecure with the English language and secure with the job market in those fields, said Eric Henry, faculty adviser for the Asian Students Association.

"Technology has a universal language. Asians feel more secure with science and math because everything is equal," Henry said. "But, even though this stereotype may exist, I have found that most second- and third-generation Asian students are not bothered by racism and really don't think about it."

Sunil Malkani, president of SANGAM, an Asian-Indian association, said the majority of Asian-Indians did tend to major in science or math.

"However, we are becoming more diversified," he said. "There is a growing and upcoming trend to enter different fields of study. More Asians are majoring in other things such as pre-law."

Malkani said he had never experienced prejudice personally. He said most prejudice occurred against non-English speaking Asian-Indians.

"I think that some Asian-Indians that come directly from India do feel some prejudice," he said. "A lot of it is because they just don't understand English very well. SANGAM's goal is to help to stop these negative feelings by promoting Asian-Indian awareness."

Kaisong Fu, a third-year public health student from China and a member of the Friendship Association of Chinese Students, said most people expected Asians to excel in science and math and to be hardworking.

"But now things are progressing differently," Fu said. "With more and more Asians coming to the campuses, people are recognizing that we are just normal students with personalities and emotions just like others."

Fu said prejudice came from a misunderstanding of different cultures.

"There is still a boundary between us and others because of the different backgrounds that exist."

It will take time and education for society to culturally accept Asians, Fu said. "The community is becoming multi-cultural now, and the new generation should be prepared."

"Education systems should help students learn how to relate to racial relationships. UNC needs to educate students more so that they will be able to adjust to other cultures better," he said.

Eugene Lao, former president of the Asian Students Association, said he was aware of prejudice more when a group of Asians congregated together. "This usually brings about a lot of stares."

Lao also said UNC did not actively see Asians as a minority because there were not many minority programs that included them. The University does not cater to Asian needs, he said.

"This is why we have created the Asian Students Association," Lao said.

"When we see the University overlooking Asians, we tackle the problem. However, Asians are a quiet minority and we don't search every nook and cranny for unfair situations. We try to promote Asian awareness and to change things as they develop. When this is completed, racial problems will correct themselves."

In response to a trend to favor white students in the admissions process in some west coast universities, Malkani said, "The entire program is silly. The best-qualified students should be admitted whatever their race may be. This program is going to hurt Asian students."

This practice allows more white students to be admitted in place of the abundance of qualified Asians.

Fu said this tendency developed out of a fear of other cultures. "Much of this type of discrimination occurs because others see Asians as a threat."

Clarrissa Del Mundo, a freshman at Duke University, said she had not felt any prejudice against her because of being Asian.

"Prejudice is not that bad at Duke," Del Mundo said. "Even though there are a lot of Asian students here, the different races are not afraid to mix with other cultures."

A pre-law major, Del Mundo said people were surprised when they discovered she was not a pre-med major.

Another misconception is that, because of this hardworking, science-major stereotype put on many Asians, employers are more likely to hire Asians.

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Sunil Malkani
President of SANGAM

Henry said Asians were not concerned with this stereotype when applying for jobs, but in many cases, the stereotype was true.

"Many Asians are truly organized and persistent," Henry said. "This is what creates success in society."

There is also a concern that some Asians have a disadvantage in the workplace because they do not have the same connections that white people have.

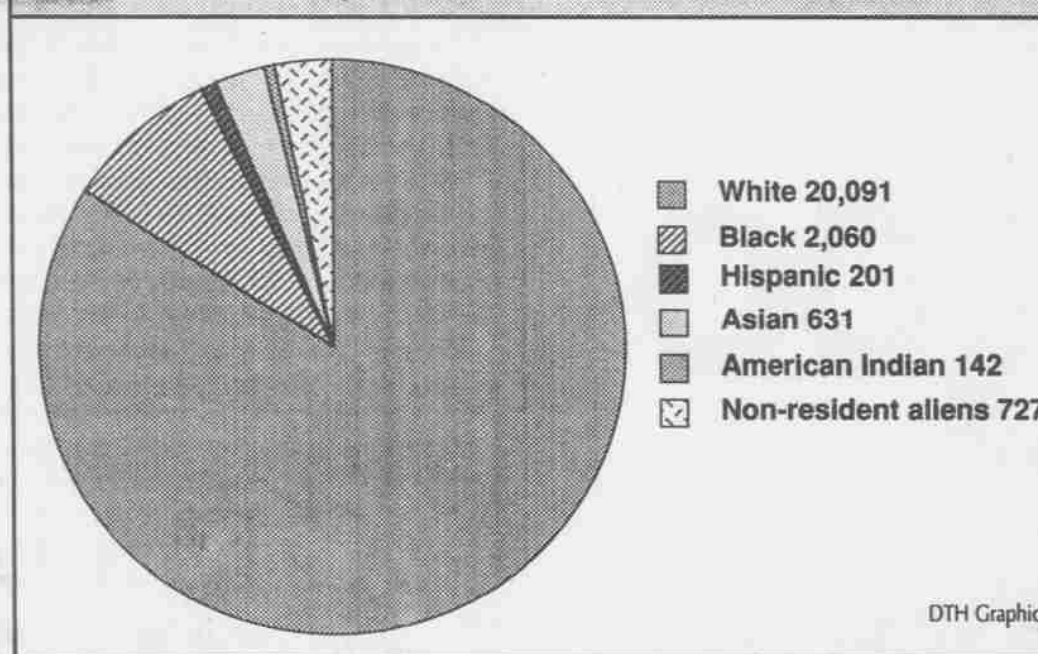
Marsha Harris, director of Career Planning and Placement at UNC, said she had not seen any advantage or disadvantage for Asians in the job market. "I have not heard of one single case where an Asian has reported that he or she has felt discriminated against."

Fu said there was some discrimination present in the job market and that because Asians were a minority, they must work harder at their careers.

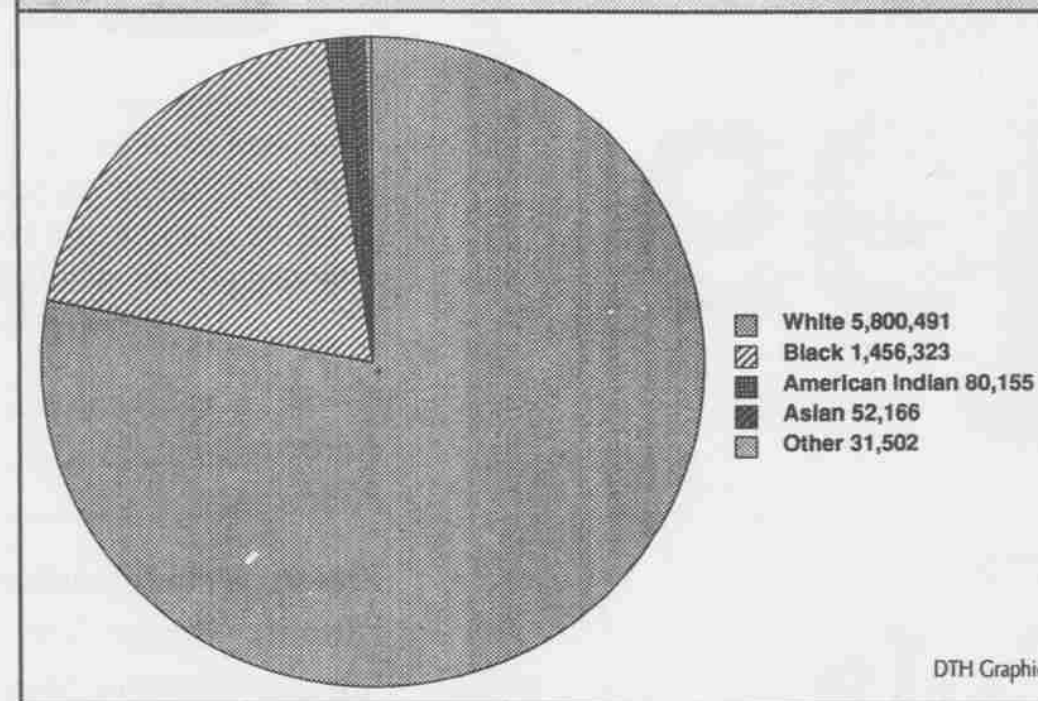
"If Asians want to have an equal position with white people," Fu said, "then we have to work harder and with more effort than average."

Sunil said he believed hiring practices were equal. "If you're good enough, someone will hire you."

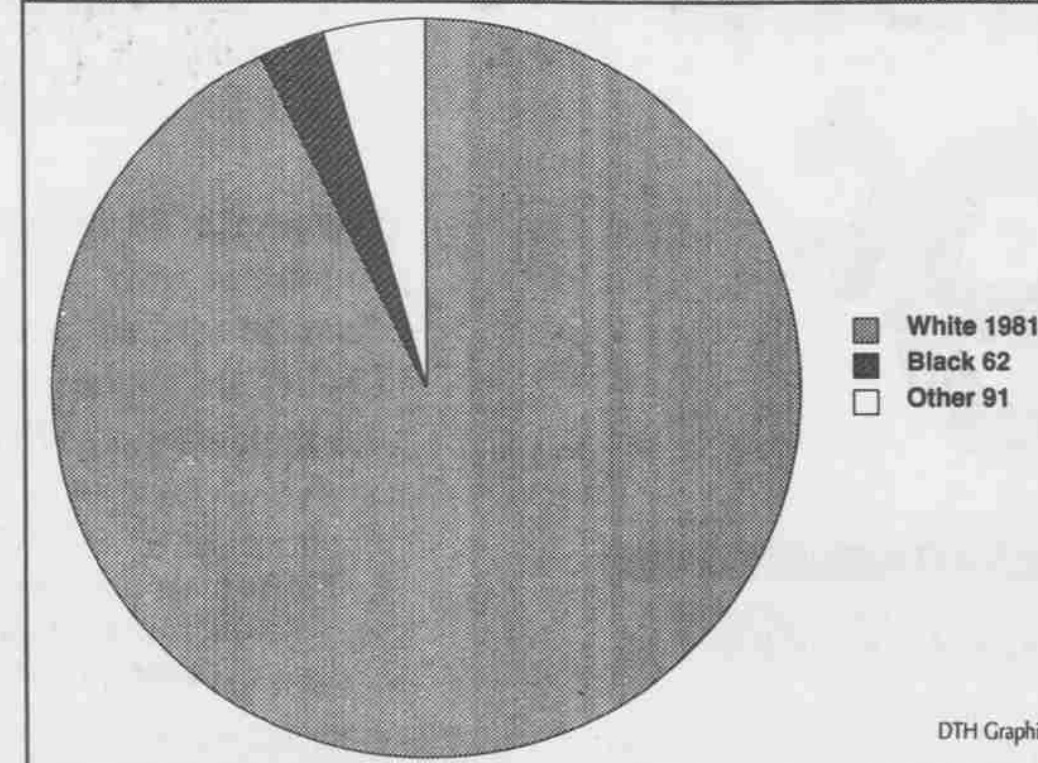
UNC-CH student population by racial breakdown



North Carolina population by racial breakdown



UNC's total full-time faculty by race



students to African-American culture through programs such as the gospel choir and The Black Ink, the newspaper sponsored by the BSM.

UNITAS, a program started four years ago to ease racial tensions, seeks to make students aware of minority cultures by putting them in the same

environment. Students from different ethnic and racial backgrounds live together in Carmichael Residence Hall, sharing each other's experiences.

Eric Houck, a UNITAS leader, said he did not consider UNITAS to be a group of radicals. "We are not activists, just people seeking a human approach

to combat racism."

While institutionalized racism is a threat, many people feel optimistic about the present quality of race relations.

"Things have gotten much better since the '50s. In fact, comparatively, things are wonderful today," Anderson said.

Low exposure creates cultural misconceptions of Hispanic community

By Eric Bolash
Staff Writer

Hispanic students and faculty are unquestionably minorities at UNC.

Of the 23,000 students at the University, 201 are Hispanic, and among the 2,134 full-time faculty at the University, 27 Hispanics hold positions.

But do they experience the same discrimination as other minorities on campus, such as African Americans or Native Americans?

Seemingly not.

"I have felt very welcomed here," said Maria Elena Valenzuela, a visiting professor from Chile. "Instead of racism I have felt interest from students and faculty to know more about Latin America."

Valenzuela said she had not seen examples of racism in her short visit as a sociology instructor at UNC.

"I've seen a lot of interest from people to know the real facts about Latin America because there are a lot of stereotypes or myths about Latin-American people," she said.

Alicia Rivero-Potter, adviser to the UNC Hispanic Society and professor of Portuguese and Spanish, said, "I haven't myself experienced racism on campus. And I have not been told by Hispanic students whether or not they have experienced any discrimination."

Rivero-Potter could only think of a couple of places where Hispanics were at a disadvantage. "Obviously there is a small number of minority faculty, and I would prefer to have a more representative minority here on campus," she said. "However, I know the University is trying to work on this."

She also said, "There is discrimination in the real world. He or she (Hispanic graduates) might have that working against them when they graduate, and that's just being realistic; it's not that that will necessarily be the case."

Senior Yadira Hurley proves that this is not always the case. She has a scholarship with the DuPont company which she said she got because she was a minority.

Hurley is a student from Mexico and has been in the United States for four years. One reason she said she had not felt discriminated against was because she had blonde hair and no real Spanish accent.

"I really don't feel any racism because people don't know I'm Hispanic," she said. "I find it funny that people say, 'You're from Mexico and you have blonde hair?'"

Hurley said aside from the fact that she belonged to the Hispanic organiza-

tion CHISPA (Carolina Hispanic Association), life for her as a Hispanic on campus was no different from other students.

She also said the other Hispanic students in CHISPA had not told her they were bothered by discrimination either.

Hurley said CHISPA concentrated on creating public cultural awareness of Hispanics since they will be the biggest minority by the year 2000. They try to deal with some of the stereotypes that Hurley spoke of, such as the fact that Hispanics are just black-haired, dark-skinned people. She said there are Hispanic students in CHISPA that are black or have blonde hair and blue eyes.

Rivero-Potter said she had also seen a lot of misconceptions about Hispanics in general.

"I teach a civilization course, and I have to debunk a lot of stereotypes that people have about Latin America," she said. "I think very often it's a case of students not having been exposed to various groups of people. I would say that culturally the exposure one has in this area (Chapel Hill) to different groups is limited, and this can foster stereotypical perceptions."

Rivero-Potter said once students were exposed to other cultures and world views they were usually receptive to them.

Concerning these stereotypes, Rivero-Potter said, "If one thinks of the political situation in Latin America, students think all the governments are unstable and revolutionary."

She said countries like Costa Rica and Mexico were examples of Hispanic countries that were democratic and not revolutionary. And she said there were countries that did have unstable governments, and students needed to learn why these governments are unstable.

Valenzuela agreed saying, "There is an image which is not always reality. Latin America is not all the same. You have different realities among the countries such as social, political and economic realities."

Rivero-Potter had some suggestions on how to eliminate these misconceptions.

"On campus, I think students need to take courses that teach non-Western perspectives if they have not had the possibility to travel. Ideally that should begin earlier than college so that multi-cultural exposure should be part of the general education of students."

She also said requiring students to study a foreign language at UNC was a good thing, but that it should be required at an earlier level, such as in grade school.