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A center to educate, not separate

"The Sonja Haynes Stone Center for the Study of Black Culture."

That's what the sign above the doors to UNC's newest addition to its main academic quad should read, and that's what UNC's students and administrators should aim for in their deliberations about the future of the black cultural center.

Nobody can disagree with the fact that the BCC — currently located in a cramped corner of the Student Union — needs better and larger facilities.

African Americans, who always have been persecuted and culturally oppressed in America, make up the largest minority in the state and at UNC. The atmosphere on campus for blacks is intimidating as predominating forces serve to drown out calls for students to learn more about black culture.

A new building is needed to serve as a learning base for students and others throughout the state to study African-American culture. This university — THE University of North Carolina — has the opportunity to lead the academic community in creating a model for the region and the nation.

Throughout the debate about the future of a cultural center, one fact remains clear: Chancellor Paul Hardin and the students agree that UNC must expand its BCC. With that common ground in mind, it seems clear that both sides could agree on a center that would educate and tolerate but would not separate.

A new building — an academic building — could do those things while helping to create an open atmosphere for black students at the region's premier institution of higher learning.

After all the hostility, the politics and the inept answers to pressing questions, it's time the students demanding action on the BCC issue and Hardin see a concrete proposal on why UNC and the state of North Carolina both need a center for the study of black culture. Constant discussion about the same issues and the same ideas over and over again — much like the arguments presented in the guest column appearing today by Student Body President John Moody — has made this campus thirst for innovative solutions.

It's time to answer the questions and to put a proposal forward for discussion.

The concept: A cultural study center

The center for the study of black culture should be an academic building, complete with an auditorium and a stage (for classes, lectures and performances), classrooms, a museum area and a library. This building would serve not only the University community, but also as a center of African-American culture for the state and the entire region.

Much like the Institute of Government serves as the center for the study of state government, the BCC should act as a magnet for exhibitions, lectures and performances about African-American culture.

But more important than that, the center should serve as an academic mecca for students and faculty studying black culture. Its library — which should be funded and operated by the University's library system — should house required readings for African and Afro-American studies courses in addition to books about black issues in history, sociology, political science, public health and religious studies courses. It will provide the perfect environment for interdisciplinary studies about African-American issues by students of all races and cultures. The building also should serve as a cultural center for the campus, as the library and lounge facilities will be available daily for use by students, staff and faculty.

The site

Because the building would be academic in nature, it must stand alone at the heart of campus, much like Davie Hall stands alone for the study of psychology and Wilson Library stands alone for special collections.

Students have supported placing the building on the empty space between Dey Hall, Wilson and Kenan Labs, where there is little more than mud,

sidewalks and several trees.

Granted, it's important to maintain the beauty of this campus by refraining from the destruction of trees. But in this case, the benefits far outweigh the costs. The chancellor has expressed concern about placing more "footprints" on campus, and, once again, his fears of destroying the environment are valid. We only wish such concerns would be addressed when decisions are made about parking decks and athletic facilities.

In the case of the BCC, however, the state of intolerance on this campus is indeed an environmental issue. And a new building dedicated to the study of the black experience would benefit UNC's environment more than the small number of trees currently residing at the cultural center's future site.

Funding

The argument that funding is not available holds no water. The money's there: The Michael Jordan Foundation has pledged it. Hardin would be foolish to turn down any donation, and we're sure he'll accept the Jordan money.

After construction, though, the University should be responsible for upkeep and operations within the building. That's why it should control the building and take charge of its daily operations as an academic and cultural center.

The separatism question

Hardin's concern about whether a stand-alone building would cause separatism is both sincere and valid. But he must realize that an academic cultural center would not separate the student body. Rather, it would serve to bring people together by enriching their experiences at UNC and by educating them about a culture's influences on society.

With the inclusion of classrooms and an extensive library of books about the black experience, the center would attract students of all backgrounds whom Hardin fears would stay away from the BCC.

In addition, the University would have the responsibility to ensure that the building stays open and available for everyone. It can do this by sponsoring lectures, performances and discussions. Student groups of all kinds should have access to the center's facilities for meetings and programs.

The present BCC is indeed open to all students, but its small size impairs campuswide visibility. The glass-enclosed room near Union Station serves more as a display that students look at than as a cultural center in which real progress can occur. An entire building on the main quad would allow the BCC to better reach out to the public and could be a common gathering place for many students, faculty and staff.

The University already suffers from rampant segregation. A new building would not perpetuate that, but would help legitimize African-American culture on campus and would help end the separation by educating a broad base of students about the necessity of tolerance and openness.

Members of the campus community should remember and learn from past mistakes (segregation), but should not let their fears obstruct the next step of creating a center on campus with a foundation built with respect, understanding and education.

Time for a solution

While nobody should expect Hardin to respond to ultimatums and blatantly unfair charges of racism, it's clear that he does have a responsibility to resolve this crisis.

A new academic building — a Sonja Haynes Stone Center for the Study of Black Culture — would enhance the campus experience for all students while helping in the battle against the injustices that historically have separated this campus along racial lines. (That's why a new building was promised to the students 15 years ago.)

Until such a center is created at UNC, Hardin's fears of de facto segregation and racism will continue to be the norm at the South's premier university.



SBP: Free-standing BCC won't help relations

John Moody

Guest Columnist

As the debate over a free-standing black cultural center has degenerated into a shouting match, the real issue has been buried under a lot of exciting but ultimately misleading rhetoric. Many people seem to be answering the question, "If we were building a university from scratch, would we include a free-standing black cultural center?"

Since it is pretty unlikely that we'll ever get to build our own university, I'm going to shelve that question for now and instead answer the one actually facing us: "Given the campus's current state of development, how can we responsibly and effectively help student groups crammed into inadequate facilities?" It's a tough question, but an examination of current plans and proposals makes one thing clear: A free-standing BCC is not the answer.

Consider the plot of land between Wilson Library and Kenan Labs, where the Black Awareness Council held its groundbreaking ceremony this past summer. The site is in many ways ideal. It would, for example, maintain the proximity to the center of student activity the BCC currently enjoys. Like many free-standing BCC advocates, I am wary of any effort to banish the BCC to a forgotten corner of campus. Unfortunately, if we insist on a free-standing BCC rather

than a larger complex capable of nurturing many student groups, we will be guilty of grossly underusing a precious resource: well-situated land. The Johnson, Johnson & Roy Land Use Plan, which was accepted by the Board of Trustees in 1988 as a guide to the physical development of our campus, proposes a 110,000-square-foot building for the land west of Wilson Library. Those advocating a free-standing BCC, which would include a library, reception gallery, media room, multipurpose room, music/dance studio, 14-16 offices and support/service space, have suggested that a 23,000-square-foot building would be adequate. Even after adding in other possible features — like offices for a new African-American studies department — it is difficult to see how the total could come close to 110,000 square feet. To underuse so severely the last piece of undeveloped land in the heart of campus is to suggest to all the other divisions of the University who struggle with substandard facilities that they do not matter. I'm certainly not prepared to do this, and I don't think most students are either. I

am prepared to try to do something about the hostility and mistrust that pervade the current debate on the BCC. We seem to have slipped into a cycle of accusations and name calling that is both dangerous and counterproductive. By refusing to accept that those we disagree with are acting in good faith to improve race relations, we are condemning ourselves to failure. Supporters of a free-standing BCC must abandon the notion that Chancellor Paul Hardin is a racist bent on oppressing the African-American community. Similarly, opponents of a free-standing building must accept the premise that the BCC needs greatly expanded facilities. Otherwise, we risk turning the BCC into a symbol of racial hatred.

Rebuilding trust will require a little give and take and a lot of open-mindedness on all sides. I am calling on other campus leaders to look beyond narrow disagreements and at least reopen a constructive dialogue on student needs. (I mean that literally, too. As soon as I finish writing this, I am going to pick up the telephone.) Although I know what "non-negotiable" means, I hope they will help me.

Student Body President John Moody is a senior chemistry major from Greensboro.

READERS' FORUM

Campus needs more call boxes, better lighting

Editor's note: A copy of this letter signed by approximately 90 students and faculty members was sent to Chancellor Paul Hardin.

To the editor:
We, the undersigned, are concerned about the increasing number of violent attacks on campus, particularly against women. While some measures have been taken to improve campus security, including increased shuttle service, we think further measures should be taken to deter violent crimes. We recommend that you implement the following measures:

- 1. Increase the number of security service foot patrols on campus, especially after dark.
- 2. Place emergency call boxes in the following locations (There may be a need for ones at additional sites, as well.):
 - the parking lot facing Dey Hall
 - in front of Manning Hall
 - the parking lot between Bynum Hall and Steele Building
 - in front of Steele Building
 - beside the Old Well
 - along Manning Drive near the hospital
 - in front of Hill Hall
 - in front of Pettigrew Hall
 - between Smith and Person Halls
 - in the parking lot between Ackland and Evergreen House
 - the parking lot between Caldwell Hall and Bynum Hall
 - behind the School of Public Health
 - the area in front of the Newman Center, Wesley Foundation and Hillel
- 3. Improve the lighting between Manning, Murphey and Saunders halls.
- 4. Make readily available to students a map indicating the location of call boxes.

Thank you for giving your attention to this matter. We would appreciate a response from you concerning these suggestions.

CHERYL BLOCK
Graduate
Romance languages

LAURIE COSGRIFF
Graduate
Classics

Women's soccer coach to host Pit chat Thursday

To the editor:
The Carolina Athletic Association has announced the second event in the "Chat with the Coach" program. I feel privileged to have been selected as the coach for this event.

At noon Thursday, just two days before the Carolina Classic, our women's soccer team will have four nationally

ranked teams, I will talk in the Pit. I'll talk about his weekend's tourney, and then I will turn the floor over to you, the students. I hope that you will have a number of questions concerning the 1992 women's soccer team.

For further information, please contact either Tracy Kirincich or Stefan Shepherd at the CAA office, 962-4300. I hope to answer your questions on Thursday, and please come out to Fetzer Field this weekend to support your Tar Heels.

ANSON DORRANCE
Head Coach, Women's Soccer

University safety services aren't working effectively

To the editor:
I am a freshman here at UNC, and until recently, have had nothing to complain about.

Last week (Sept. 3), a friend of mine came to my Mid-Campus dorm to study. When she was ready to leave for her North Campus dorm, it was about 10 p.m., so she decided to call SAFE Escort. There was no answer.

She then tried the point-to-point shuttle number, but it was busy. When we finally got through, we were told that we would receive a call in 5 minutes telling us when the driver would arrive.

The call came 45 minutes later, after my roommate and I had walked her home. That performance was repeated Thursday. SAFE Escort's line only rang, and point-to-point was busy.

With all the security measures in place here, one would think that SAFE Escort and point-to-point, two programs that UNC has promoted greatly, would be in working order.

My roommate and I (women) should not have had to walk my friend home. Those lines should have been answered. If the University is not going to deliver on its promises of safe passage, then it should not make such promises.

Such behavior is absolutely uncalled for, and could put someone in danger.

ROKIATU E. RAHIM
Freshman
Biology

Media misunderstands, misrepresents India

To the editor:
This letter was inspired by a fairly innocent news item that appeared in the DTH Sept. 8. The item was titled "India seeks weapons and close ties with Moscow."

The article was a routine AP release about the visit by the Defense Minister of India Mr. Sharad Pawar to Moscow. What intrigued me was how the news item suddenly crept up on me as I

flipped to page 2.

There it was with the title in bold letters. India, which is seldom on any newspaper except when a Sikh militant holds up a bus and guns down 25 people or when hundreds die in yet another natural calamity, is suddenly news when the defense minister makes a friendly visit to neighboring Russia.

This was, however, only half the inspiration, for I also ran into a quotation from the popular American Vice President Dan Quayle. He said, "Now that New Delhi is no longer a client of Moscow, we can do business with them."

This to me is surprising, because India has never been averse to doing business with the United States.

On the other hand, India has been put on the trade black list for purely political reasons, one of them being it refuses to sign the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

This is in contrast to China, which in the face of gross human rights violations has been awarded the Most Favored Nation status.

In the 12 years since Ronald Reagan assumed office, the U.S. administration has pursued a policy that is clearly meant to destabilize the Indian sub-continent.

The justification for selling combat-trained F-16s to Pakistan in the early 1980s was the Soviet presence in Afghanistan.

This was considered very curious by many Asia-watchers because many thought that the only use the weapons would find in the hands of then martial law administrator Gen. Zia-ul-Haq would be for launching a preemptive strike against India.

This was in addition to the clandestine development of a nuclear weapons program (commonly called the Islamic Bomb) by the Pakistani government. Mr. Reagan chose to ignore all that.

Now, in conditions such as that, the only big brother India could look up to in the world of imperialist bullies was the Soviet Union, if only to deter any ambitious military generals in Pakistan.

The American policy makers have never liked nor bothered to recognize India's desire to be non-aligned.

In the 12 years since the Republican Party has taken over the reins in the White House, not a single U.S. president has visited India.

This in spite of the fact that India is the largest democracy in the world. To further worsen the situation, the American news media have only contributed to this misconception of India being in a "Soviet Bloc."

India has always pursued peaceful relations with all countries, with the only understanding that no one country will impose its interests over another.

LAKSHMAN RAMAMURTHY
Graduate
Biology

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