

# Chapel Hill fire inspires fire prevention seminar

By FRANK WILSON  
CONTRIBUTING REPORTER

The fire at the Phi Gamma Delta fraternity house at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill this past May which left five students dead has caused the university to emphasize the education students about fire prevention and safety awareness. The educational tool is a fire safety video that all residential students are required to attend.

Dave Brown, the manager of safety and environmental affairs, said that the Chapel Hill fire definitely got students' attention.

"Certainly the Chapel Hill situation has caused us to redouble our efforts. I would not say that our previous efforts were inadequate, but... there is more student interest since Chapel Hill," Brown said.

During the month of September, campus resident advisers put on a fire safety program for residents of campus housing. Most students were shown a video produced by the University of Georgia's public safety department, "How Fast it Burns." The video, starring student actors, was set in a residence hall and showed a student's room burning.

The video concerned a fictional group of students who had a birthday cake in their room. One of the candles on the cake mistakenly fell into a trash can when left unat-

tended. It then started a fire which destroyed the dorm. The fire department did not come in time because the fire alarm had been vandalized.

Using a simulated dorm room, the video also showed how a room burns. Cameras inside the room captured exactly what happens as a fire spreads. Students also received a brochure on fire safety.

"Fire safety is one of the top problems we have," said Connie Carson, the director of residence life and housing. She said the purpose of the program was to heighten awareness of fire safety issues.

"We want students to have awareness and sensitivity to what can happen... people and students live in those buildings and don't think about those kinds of things," she said.

Carson said the video was chosen because "it is one of the only ones done in a residence hall setting."

Regina Lawson, the chief of Campus Police, said the police were pleased with the video because it emphasized the importance of evacuation when a fire occurs.

Lawson was concerned about student attitudes toward fire safety.

"I think students see concrete walls, tile floors and brick buildings, and they think it can't burn... when in reality, many, many fires are started by forgotten cigarettes and extension cords," Lawson said.

## Climate

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encounter more difficulties in discovering how their institution works, getting involved in activities that matter to their education (e.g., leadership roles), and how to manage the educational process," the report stated.

Both Ken Zick, the vice president for student life and instructional resources and Barbee Myers-Oakes, the director of minority affairs, objected to Kuh's use of the term "cultural capital" and cited it as problematic in the report.

In a previous section of the assessment, Kuh defines cultural capital as "a wide range of linguistic and cultural competencies (e.g., speech patterns, modes of thinking and behaviors, qualities of style) that individuals inherit from their families."

"I don't have any idea what he means by that term," Oakes said. She also said she objects to how this conclusion was reached by Kuh, as he seems to assume that most minority students come to the university from a lower socioeconomic background and therefore arrive with less cultural

capital.

Zick said that although he was not surprised by most of Kuh's other findings, this issues deserve much consideration by both students and the administration.

"I think we have to ask the question, 'Why is it that the minority students do not report benefiting from their experiences as much as majority students?'" Zick said. "It's definitely something that deserves some special attention."

Zick said though the administration has made special efforts to amend the situation, including the completion of two race relations studies, they still have a long way to go in the area of interactions between majority and minority students. "There has been progress, and there have also been setbacks," Zick said.

"People should be cautious as to how they interpret the results of this report," Oakes said. Oakes agreed that there are race relations problems

at the university, but said she felt some of the conclusions Kuh arrived at were generic and unsubstantiated.

"I'm concerned the way the report was written could serve to perpetuate the stereotypes people already had about minority students," Oakes said. "He should have qualified his statements more."

Oakes said she believes there is not as much of a disparity between majority and minority student satisfaction as Kuh suggested. She added, however, that she is glad to see the university continue to strive to promote a culturally diverse environment at the university.

Zick said the dearth of interactions between students of different ethnicities can only be amended by efforts on all sides. "It must be a partnership," Zick said. "Part of a liberal education is moving out of our comfort zones and really taking advantage of everything this environment can offer for learning outside of the classroom."



Zick



Oakes



LeeAnn Hodges

### Time Out

Juniors Margaret Taylor and Marin Shaughnessy relax in Tribble Hall in the midst of a hectic day.

## SG

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involve a "tinkering approach" in which small changes would be made within the framework of the original honor system, a "cultural change" in which the attitude towards the system would be altered, or a "fundamental overhaul" in which the entire system would be reformed.

As the subcommittee works it will remain in direct contact with the Judicial Committee and will publish a release every few weeks detailing its accomplishments.

The Judicial Committee has already begun relaying suggestions to the subcommittee.

One of the suggestions raised by a committee member was for the addition of a student bill of rights which would be added to the SG constitution. One of the rights would force resident advisers or

others charging students with an offense to inform students of the penalties at the time the charge is filed.

In the past students have complained that they never knew what punishment they could be facing until several weeks after the incident occurred.

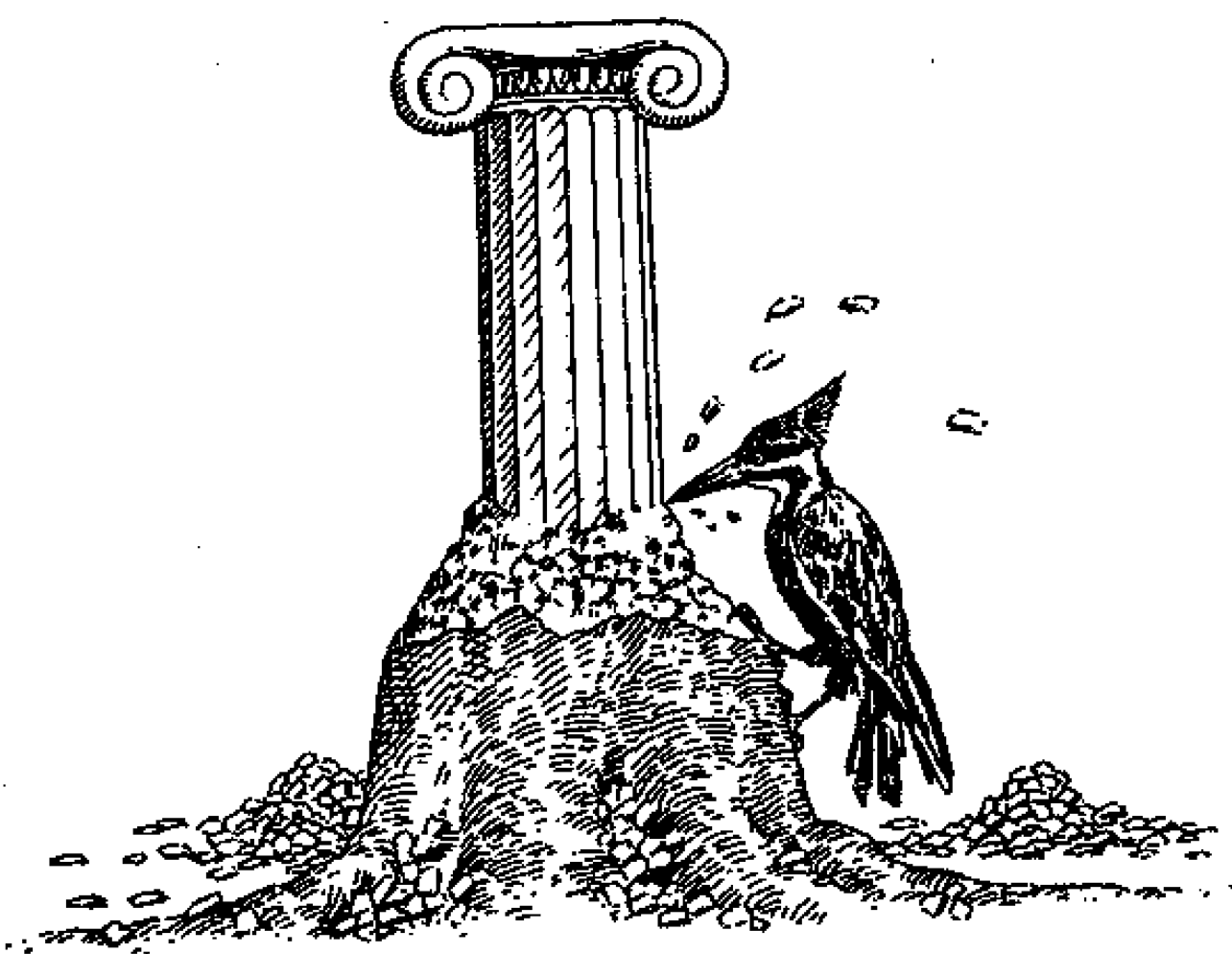
The Student Relations Committee also met on Tuesday to discuss ways in which their committee can respond to the recently published Kuh report.

The report, written by George Kuh, a professor of higher education at Indiana University, discusses the climate of undergraduate learning at the university and states that students "devote satisfactory, but not extraordinarily high amounts of time to their studies."

Junior Lily Bekele, the co-chairwoman of the Student Relations Committee, said that her group is tentatively planning an open forum for students to discuss the report.

Bekele also said that the committee plans to use a different format for forums this year so that they are not just open discussion and that action plans are actually developed.

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