

Race still a campus issue

A new study shows how little has changed on campus.

By the end of April, the Student Government Executive Advisory Committee on Race Relations, chaired by senior Charles Goodman, will release a must-read document: "Update on the Status of Race Relations at

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That improvement must start with each student's attitude and sensitivity toward those of different backgrounds." Need I say more? It is understandable that the university cannot fix all problems at once, but after 15 years, student opinions still show that the atmosphere on campus is "highly exclusive socially segregated, and the cultural dynamic is largely intolerant to minority student affairs," according to the new report.

Wake Forest University." This report is a compilation of comments on the actual climate of race relations at Wake Forest read identically in these 10-page documents that are 15 years apart.

The student section of the new report stated, "US News negatively rates Wake Forest University along the criteria of 'diversity' ... 'it is apparent that the neglect of the university to create an atmosphere that welcomes diversity is already impinging on the university's ability to attract top students.'"

The student body section of the 1986 report said, "Before more minority students can be attracted to Wake Forest, the opportunities and lifestyle available to those students must be improved. That improvement must start with each student's attitude and sensitivity toward those of different backgrounds." Need I say more?

It is understandable that the university cannot fix all problems at once, but after 15 years, student opinions still show that the atmosphere on campus is "highly exclusive, socially segregated, and the cultural dynamic is largely intolerant to minority student affairs," according to the new report.

Personally, I would not have wanted to attend Wake Forest in 1986, but that's understandable because times have changed, and tolerance and attitudes have changed in response. What do you think a minority student will say 15 years from now when they read this current report on race relations?

Interesting faculty survey results have been included in the report also; my favorite fact is that 41 percent of faculty regards the recognition of diversity of the world as being "somewhat important" or "not important."

Did you catch that? The report cites this as a "definite problem." Perhaps it's one of the reasons why the climate at Wake remains a little uncomfortable for those who are diverse. I think that it is crucial for the not only the administration and faculty, but for students, to listen to this report, blow it up poster-size, whatever it takes to show a greater desire to make improvements to the atmosphere.

The major difference between these two documents is that the 1986 version made strong suggestions of what the university should do to improve this situation, like establishing a predominately black sorority on campus, and allowing athletes to live on main campus freshman year and choose their housing for their remainder years at Wake. These are only two of the excellent suggestions made in the report that the university obviously responded to.

The new report does not make such demands; however, it does have a recommendation section after each description of areas that need to be improved.

One example is the recommendation that there should be more integration into the greater Winston-Salem community allowing students to "be displaced from their comfort zones and perceive a world of imbalance where they may become aware of the lifestyles of the less affluent, or ethnically diverse people."

The fact that there are not concrete demands makes it more difficult to see immediate results, but hopefully everyone can start making changes from within that permeate through the campus.

Goodman, said, "I just want people to get an awareness and start some dialogue about [race relations]."

He called for administrators "to know that race relations needs to be addressed on all levels."

The committee has also completed a survey of nearly 1000 students about race relations on campus.

University not as conservative as one thinks

Contrary to popular belief, this university can be perceived as liberal.

This week, there are several issues on the table, for lack of a better image, in front of me as I sit down to write this column. One issue is that of the reemergence of conservative campus organizations. I remember reading an article from the *Old Gold and Black* from last week covering the campus lecture sponsored by the Conservative Voice on the controversy

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surrounding the conviction 10 years ago of Mumia Abu-Jamal for killing a police officer in Philadelphia. The details of the talk are unimportant in the grand scheme of campus life, and the comments of members of the Progressive Action Network showed that there are people on both sides of the argument on campus, making it one more in a series of issues upon which the campus community can disagree. What makes me happy is not so much the specific case of Mumia Abu-Jamal, but the fact that a conservative campus organization had the ability to have a forum and had the attention of the more liberal members of the campus community enough for some of them to attend.

I know when I speak to people from out of state, and especially out of the region from which this university gathers a lot of its students, I get a lot of stereotypes of the school and the student body. Things are said like, "Wake Forest is too conservative for me," or "there are too many Republicans in the student body for me." I want to laugh at them most of the time because my perception is exactly the opposite.

For the most part, the members of the campus community are very liberal if they speak out at all, and the (relative) few students who are conservative in any sense, be it religious, social or fiscal, are marginalized. They are told by the totally unbalanced ratio of liberal to conservative thinkers, lecturers and speakers that come on campus that they don't deserve the same consideration as the liberal students. When the campus gets a high profile conservative, such as Barbara Bush, who is going to address the graduating seniors, there is open discussion in the editorials in the *Old Gold and Black* if the campus is becoming too conservative.

Ask yourself this, you people who think that the university is too straight-laced and conservative for you: what would happen if the university were truly a socially conservative institution? For one thing, I can guarantee that alcohol would be so strictly regulated that, while now most Greek organizations need to worry about getting put on probation late in the year, they would then need to worry about getting removed from campus permanently for underage drinking at the parties, for those members and guests who are of legal

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age being drunk all the time and for the seeming degradation of hearing that accompanies the increase in alcohol intake. Apparently instead of passing out wristbands to indicate who is of legal age to drink, they should pass out hearing aids so it isn't necessary that the music played on the Quad be heard on South Campus.

For another, if this institution were truly socially conservative, there would be no coed dorms and visitation after a certain hour in dorm rooms of members of the opposite sex would be prohibited. I remember reading something about the policies of an institution in Kansas. I will outline them for you, and, trust me, they speak for themselves as to how this campus is not becoming too conservative.

Calvary Bible College in Kansas City has a strict dress code, a curfew, lights out at a specific time every night, a requirement to make your bed every day, a rule not to attend movies during the school year, requirements to attend church once during the week and twice on Sunday and a prohibition on holding the hands of members of the opposite sex unless there is ice on the ground. Violations of these policies result in green slips, and five green slips accumulated over any period, be it a week or four years, results in a student being "campused" for the weekend. Being campused means being prohibited from leaving campus except to go to work and church.

Needless to say, these regulations make the fact that the university asked Barbara Bush to speak at commencement and the fact that the Conservative Voice held a forum expressing their viewpoint on the calls for a retrial of a convicted criminal trivial. I believe that the perception of prospective students to be dead wrong. If anything, I would call this campus decidedly liberal and would not change much, if anything, about that. I think that there is much to be gained by having a campus that leans to the left politically and socially, not the least of which is the opportunity to debate with almost every student and professor that I meet.

I went to another lecture on campus as part of the ethics and honor series on homosexuality and its place within the Christian faith. While my beliefs run along with Tony Campolo's, the fact that the Campolos were even invited to campus shows that this campus is one that is able to do what Tony said was the most important part of any disagreement between two people, and that is entertain the possibility that you might be wrong. On a truly liberal campus, which I believe the university is striving to be all the time, opposing viewpoints are welcomed as a way of testing and measuring the beliefs that you hold. If the campus can keep this in mind when something happens that runs contrary to what you as a liberal or as a conservative think should be happening, remember this: you could be totally wrong on that issue, and you should be testing your beliefs on this issue until the day you die in order to make that belief stronger. The old aphorism holds true: if we, as a campus and as individuals, stand for nothing, we will fall for anything.

President Bush inept at creating good foreign policy

The U.S.-China standoff is the latest in many foreign policy blunders.

In the arena of foreign policy, President Bush has had few successes. Despite being advised by a collection of leading conservative foreign policy experts from the Cold War era, the second Bush administration has only managed to stumble from one snafu to another. In

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just three months our president has managed to upset our European allies, threaten chances for NATO expansion in Eastern Europe, and endanger global environmental agreements. Today, the administration experienced a rare success, the end of its standoff with the People's Republic of China and the return of twenty-four U.S. Navy and Air Force personnel. The situation with China was initially run by the playbook established during our cold war with the Soviet Union. At the start, both the U.S. and the PRC refused to accept responsibility for the mid-air collision and blamed one another for causing the crash that occurred between a U.S. EP-3E ARIES II reconnaissance plane and a Chinese F-8 fighter. Two weeks ago, three American destroyers were

diverted to the South China Sea for a short time in order to remind the Chinese of our military strength. And both Presidents, George W. Bush and Jiang Zemin of the PRC, made the required public statements intended to show that they were quite serious about the matter. It is because Bush's first instinct when faced with an international crisis was to adopt a hawkish position that there is cause for concern about how he will perform in future situations. His administration showed that it was not able to differentiate between the enemy of the past and the potential partner of the future. China is not the USSR; it presents neither an ideological threat nor a military threat to the United States. Therefore our approach to the PRC must be different from our approach to the USSR. Currently, the Chinese are experiencing seismic shifts in their society, as they move from an agricultural economy to an industrialized one. Modern luxuries Americans take for granted, such as cable television and the Internet, are bringing a wealth of information about the world outside China's borders to its people. In order to support the modernizing reforms taking place in China, the United States must attempt to maintain positive relations with the government there. For those members of the Chinese government aware of the need to maintain healthy relations between America and China, such as Jiang, the stakes in this most recent encounter were quite high. Jiang was placed into the uncomfortable position of having to risk most of the goodwill with the United States that he has spent

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much of his administration developing in order to appear strong in Beijing. There, the Chinese president must walk a fine line between the moderate and conservative factions of the Communist Party if he intends to maintain his position as chairman of the powerful Central Military Commission, which oversees the People's Liberation Army, after completing his term as party chairman next year, and as president the year afterwards. Unlike his predecessors Mao Zedong and Deng Xiaoping, Jiang does not enjoy dictatorial power over the people or over the Communist Party organization. Therefore he must pay attention to his various constituencies if he expects to remain a key figure within the Chinese government. Additional concerns come from the National People's Congress, which will be meeting soon, because they fear that the United States will sell submarines, destroyers equipped with the Aegis radar system, and the Patriot anti-missile system to Taiwan at the end of April. If the United States were to complete such a transaction it would nullify China's missile advantage and could strengthen the Taiwanese pro-independence movement. To the Chinese public, such an arms deal would be one more example of how the

United States is attempting to reign in a growing China. The Chinese public has yet to recover from the accidental bombing of the PRC embassy in Yugoslavia by an American aircraft during the NATO air campaign in Serbia two years ago. Now that they have lost a plane and a pilot to a U.S. reconnaissance plane listening in on their military communications, anti-American sentiment is running high again. Apparently, President Bush did not fully grasp the complexity of the domestic situation facing President Jiang at the start of the situation. Instead of initiating personal contact with his Chinese counterpart in an attempt to broker a quiet resolution to this standoff, Bush refused to utilize the hot line between Washington, D.C. and Beijing installed by former President Bill Clinton. Our president was of the mind that if he were to speak directly with Jiang, such a conversation would elevate the situation to the level of an international crisis. It is unlikely that the president's foreign policy advisory committee of Cheney, Rice, Powell, and Rumsfeld discouraged him from calling Jiang. Most likely, they were afraid of the response from conservative Republicans to any settlement with China that included compromises on issues they see as nonnegotiable. These include the contentious subjects of arm sales to Taiwan, future reconnaissance flights in the South China Sea and U.S. attempts to support the appointment of a U.N. commissioner for human rights to investigate claims of abuses in China. President Bush cannot afford to lose the support of hawkish conservatives this early in his administration, especially

when future international conflicts are extremely likely and the Senate is split in half. George W. Bush is caught in a Cold War mentality that places a premium on independent action over collective negotiation. The president could have utilized the Beijing hotline and secured the return of our servicemen and women within days. Instead it took him several days to understand that the only successful end to the conflict was going to come by working with Jiang, treating him as the potential ally he is in the effort to improve U.S.-Chinese relations. Instead the president jumped at the chance to appear tough, putting to rest concerns about his astounding lack of foreign policy experience and awareness, and landed in the fire of something less than an international crisis.

The Cold War brain trust running Bush's White House played that old game of chicken, praying for China to blink first because this administration has shown that did not understand the value and importance of compromise.

If the second Bush administration is unwilling to work with its allies on international environmental agreement and economic development programs, we shouldn't expect it to negotiate effectively with non-allied nations.

Both Presidents Bush and Jiang were faced with a situation in which neither one could afford to be seen as having compromised too much, too early. Unfortunately, until both men stopped fighting for prestige, 24 American servicemen and women were held in military housing on the island of Hainan, unsure of when, or how, they would be returning home.