

FOCUS - 1 of 2 DOCUMENTS

The Atlanta Journal and Constitution

January 7, 2001, Sunday, Home Edition

UGA DESEGREGATION ANNIVERSARY: School's integration efforts still lag, some say

BYLINE: Rebecca McCarthy, James Salzer, Staff

SOURCE: AJC

SECTION: Metro News; Pg. 4B

LENGTH: 1596 words

Athens --- The University of Georgia has come a long way since Hamilton Holmes and Charlayne Hunter-Gault enrolled in 1961 as the school's first African-American undergraduates. But as the university commemorates the 40th anniversary of its desegregation on Tuesday, many on campus and across Georgia believe the state's flagship institution still has a long way to go.

"Desegregation is clearly an ongoing process," said Maurice Daniels, a black faculty member in UGA's School of Social Work. "In a state that's 30 percent African-American, the major university has a black student population only of about 6 percent. We have to improve those numbers to continue the legacy that others established."

UGA President Michael Adams has pledged to make the university more diverse and representative of the state, even while UGA is appealing charges in federal court that its undergraduate admissions policies reflect reverse discrimination.

The legal challenge has seen the end of scholarships in which race is the qualifying factor, including the Holmes-Hunter Scholarship for African- American students. It also has, at least temporarily, stopped the use of race as a factor in a small percentage of admissions.

Adams said UGA is making "every effort" under the law to improve those numbers. "The issue isn't the population in the state, the issue is the number of young African-Americans taking the requisite courses in a college prep curriculum to succeed in an area like this," he said. "Institutions functionally selective as we are are still bearing the lack of preparedness. It has to change, but it's going to take some time."

Figures from the Chronicle of Higher Education show that UGA's 1997 black enrollment, while less than those at the University of South Carolina (15.6), Mississippi State (15.1) and Ole Miss (11.7), wasn't out of line with its peer research institutions. A Georgia Board of Regents benchmarking report last year, which compared UGA to similar schools nationally, came to the same conclusion.

But because many of those schools were in states with much smaller black populations, like Iowa, University System Chancellor Stephen Portch said a more accurate comparison might be the University of North Carolina, whose 9.7 percent black enrollment makes it "more diverse than Georgia."

Portch argues UGA must become more aggressive in recruiting African- American students.

UGA DESEGREGATION ANNIVERSARY: School's integration efforts still lag, some say The Atlanta Journal and Constitution January 7, 2001, Sunday,

Of the black students graduating from Georgia's public high schools in 2000, fewer than 300 scored 1200 or better on the SAT, the average score of those accepted to UGA, officials said. Portch believes the answer lies in increasing the number of black students in middle and high school who take college prep courses.

Not everyone is impressed with UGA's progress over the past 40 years. "They have a horrible record, horrible," said Rep. Tyrone Brooks (D-Atlanta), longtime president of the Georgia Association of Black Elected Officials. "They have a good program for recruiting athletes, but their student efforts must be as good or better than their recruitment of athletes."

But Brooks' legislative colleague, House Majority Leader Larry Walker (D-Perry), who was a UGA sophomore when Holmes and Hunter-Gault arrived, called the changes since 1961 "extraordinary."

"People who say we haven't made progress don't live in the real world," Walker said.

Portch's assessment is mixed. "It's remarkable, but it's inadequate."

A quarter century ago, black students made up less than 15 percent of the University System of Georgia's enrollment. Now it's 22 percent. While the percentage of African-Americans at Georgia State and Georgia Southern universities has exceeded the systemwide percentage, UGA and Georgia Tech have remained well below that figure.

Georgia Tech's minority recruitment programs have been heavily lauded by state officials over the past few years, but both schools say they have stiff competition.

"The minority student who applies to Georgia Tech, if we accept them, they're going to be accepted at any school in the nation," said Barbara Hall, the school's associate vice president for enrollment services. "If they get accepted to a private institution, they're going to get way more money in financial aid if they need it," she said. "The number we lose to MIT and Carnegie Mellon is unbelievable."

While UGA is not as specialized as Tech, the school's undergraduate admissions director, Nancy McDuff, said her campus has similar problems. "If you're an African-American high school student with a 1200 on the SAT and a 3.5 GPA, you can go just about anywhere in the country," she said. "We can offer about 6 percent of our freshman class scholarships, compared with 25 to 30 percent who receive money at other schools."

To persuade more black students to consider applying to UGA, the admissions office has increased its recruiters from 10 to 15, McDuff said.

"We're doing more this year than we've ever done in building the applicant pool and increasing the yield," Adams said. "The governor and the chancellor have agreed to host events in the spring to increase the yield."

Last fall, the staff contacted 40,000 people, 25 percent of whom were African-American, and logged 600 visits with guidance counselors, parents, interested students and other groups, primarily in Georgia. UGA recruiters sent about 75 undergraduates --- about a third of whom were minority students --- to talk to potential applicants about their experiences on campus.

One statistic McDuff said she would like to improve is the number of African-American students who, after being accepted into UGA as freshmen, decide to enroll. Of African-American high school seniors accepted for the class of 2000, 41.7 percent enrolled, a figure similar to those in the three previous years.

Two years ago, a UGA survey of black students who chose not to come showed that their decision was, in most cases, based on academic programs, majors or courses, McDuff said. A student's "comfort level" wasn't the deciding factor, she said.

To make UGA more attractive, UGA has established Georgia Incentive Scholarships, McDuff said, which will be

UGA DESEGREGATION ANNIVERSARY: School's integration efforts still lag, some say The Atlanta Journal and Constitution January 7, 2001, Sunday,

targeted for the nine high schools in the state --- some of which will likely be majority black --- with the lowest percentage of students interested in attending Georgia. Beginning this fall, the top two students from these nine high schools, who qualify for admission into UGA, will each receive a \$ 5,000 renewable scholarship.

To further increase exposure for the university, the admissions office is working with the state's many 4-H Clubs to form "college clubs," which will promote the value of a college education, tell students how to apply and help parents complete forms.

Georgia Tech has several programs to recruit minority students.

In addition to targeting those with high SAT scores, Tech officials also go into middle and high schools to promote interest in math and science, hold workshops to help students and parents understand the application process and bring students and teachers onto campus. Once applicants are accepted, Tech students call to tell them what the school's like. Georgia Southern has benefited in the past decade from being upgraded to a regional university, which brought more and better academic programs, which in turn has attracted top students.

One area of progress at UGA has been in the hiring of African-Americans as faculty members in tenure-track positions, said Thomas Dyer, vice president for instruction. Beginning in 1986, when Henry King Stanford was interim president of UGA, the university began actively seeking black applicants to fill vacant and newly created jobs.

"I think that an active and engaged core of black faculty can help us in recruiting more black students," said Adams.

A federal survey of the nation's top 125 research institutions showed that, in fall 1999, UGA ranked fifth in the number of black faculty who were tenured or in tenure-track positions, and who were American citizens. Howard University was first, with 464, followed by Michigan with 110, Ohio State with 91, the University of Maryland with 90 and Georgia and Michigan State with 81.

This number means that 5.3 percent of all tenured and tenure-track faculty at UGA were black in fall 1999. Systemwide, only 8.9 percent of the faculty members at Georgia's 34 colleges and universities in 1998 were African- American.

But Renita Ward, a UGA graduate finishing a master's degree in journalism there, thinks UGA's commitment is the most important change needed.

"One problem is that UGA was forced to desegregate 40 years ago, it didn't do so voluntarily, and those wounds have never really healed," she said. " Before we talk about programs and recruiting, we've got to have a real commitment to diversity from the administration."

UGA officials hope to soon hire an associate provost for institutional diversity, a new position to deal with a broad range of issues relating to diversity.

Dyer, who's in charge of the search committee, said the candidate pool will narrow to five finalists this month.

Daniels was one of several black faculty members who called for such a position to be established years ago.

But the group envisioned the job being on a higher administrative level, " with more authority, so they could be more effective and could be at the table when policies are planned and developed," Daniels said. "I'm not so confident the position as it is now will be so effective, but I'm willing to wait and see."

LOAD-DATE: January 7, 2001

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

GRAPHIC: Graphic

UGA DESEGREGATION ANNIVERSARY: School's integration efforts still lag, some say The Atlanta Journal and Constitution January 7, 2001, Sunday,

BLACK ENROLLMENT AT STATE COLLEGES

In the past 25 years, the percentage of black enrollment at the University of Georgia, the state's largest public university, has remained relatively steady, while black enrollment at other state universities has grown.

Chart indicates black enrollment at University of Georgia, Georgia State, Georgia Tech and Georgia Southern from 1975 through 2000.

Sources: University System of Georgia / CHUCK BLEVINS / Staff

Copyright 2001 The Atlanta Constitution