

MAKING CONNECTIONS



Seniors Etiti Akhame-Ayeni, Wilma Mallya and Khadija Niang (left to right) cofounded Campus Africa Network, which aims to unite African groups at UNC. DTH/ANI GARRIGO

Campus Africa Network connects organizations with Africa

By Mia Madduri
Staff Writer

Started last semester, Campus Africa Network is a student-led initiative that hopes to help UNC broaden its horizon. Although Campus Africa Network isn't a part of the Campus Y, the group received grant money from the Campus Y to start a new initiative that will help bring the other groups realted to Africa together. "We felt that there was disconnection between student organizations that are Africa related," said Etiti Ayeni, co-director and outreach coordinator of Campus Africa Network. "A lot of these are smaller initiatives so they are much more isolated and detached." "We felt we needed to address that issue to try to bring them all together to talk about the work that people do on the continent, current affairs." Ayeni noticed that events which hosted speakers from Africa had high attendance from

graduate students and professors rather than undergraduate students. Wilma Mallya, co-director of the group, said increasing awareness was one of her goals. "We want to create something that can inclusively come together, exchange ideas and highlight work that's being done so people can have a clear understanding of Africa," she said. Many of the members of Campus Africa Network are also international students and are making connections with people in Africa — for example, their co-founder is currently interning in Senegal. "This truly is about making connections," Ayeni said. Not only will this initiative help the general campus, it will also provide a support group for international students. "It was hard for me to adjust during my first year because I had to adjust to the rigorous academic environment, the people and the weather," said junior Moradesola Bola-

Oyeledun. "The key to adjusting is finding a great support system and a good solid group of friends, especially international students you can relate to," he said. Bola-Oyeledun said this initiative will help because there are not many African students who are actually international students here. The Campus Africa Network is planning on hosting events this upcoming March and April, as well as partner with groups such as Project Heel, World Micro-Market and GlobeMed. The organizers of the group also plan to bring a faculty member to talk about their work in Africa and make it interactive for students. Ayeni wants students to think critically about the work that is happening in Africa. "We teach people through educating," said Ayeni. "We want to make this a lasting presence on campus."

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Alumna named ambassador

Cassandra Butts will serve as the U.S. ambassador to the Bahamas.

By Sharon Nunn
Staff Writer

UNC alumna Cassandra Butts is headed to the Bahamas, but not for a vacation — she was nominated by President Barack Obama Friday as the new U.S. ambassador to the nation. In her new position, Butts will handle a variety of diplomatic topics, including political, economic, military and cultural issues. She currently serves as the president-appointed senior adviser to the CEO of Millennium Challenge Corporation, an independent U.S. foreign aid agency that aims to end international poverty. In 1987, Butts received a bachelor's degree in political science from UNC. She went on to get a law degree from Harvard Law School. She now serves as a member of the UNC Board of Visitors, which is a group of alumni who volunteer and assist the Board of Trustees and the chancellor in areas like government relations, funding and public relations.

Butts serves on the student recruitment and state relations committee. Her term ends in 2017, but she doesn't have to be present in Chapel Hill to fulfill her duties. "If she shows the same commitment that she shows in serving the students, I couldn't see her continuing to do anything but excellent things in the Bahamas," said Michael Zollicoffer, Board of Visitors chairman. UNC junior Jordan Archer, who grew up in the Bahamas, said the politics and economics of the country are similar to those in the United States, though the Caribbean island chain is a prime location for international drug trafficking due to its close proximity to the U.S. "As far as issues went, drug smuggling is the biggest issue. Because of its location in relation to Miami, it makes for a good 'harbor' for



Cassandra Butts was named U.S. ambassador to the Bahamas by President Obama. She graduated from UNC in 1987.

smuggling drugs from one country to the next," Archer said. "Our American embassy is doing a great job there, and I don't think there are any big issues pressing them at this time." Butts previously worked as the deputy White House counsel to Obama and general counsel to the Obama-Biden Transition Project. Prior to that, she served as senior vice president for domestic policy at the Center for American Progress. When Obama appointed Butts to her current position at the Millennium Challenge Corporation in 2009, he referred to her as a dear friend and trusted colleague. "She goes above and beyond in what she does. She has this desire to give back, and that's hard to put a price on," Zollicoffer said. "It's second to none." Zollicoffer said Butts' hard work shows in what she has accomplished, and Archer said he knows she will do an excellent job for his country. "We're everywhere," Archer said. "It's great to know that a Tar Heel will be there."

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Food trucks park on South Campus

Bowles Drive Parking Lot houses food trucks on weekend nights.

By Aaron Cranford
Staff Writer

South Campus students now have another late-night food option on the weekends. Food trucks are parked in Bowles Drive Parking Lot every Thursday through Saturday night. Justin Maness, a Baguettaboutit food truck employee, said their truck goes to a lot of campuses, but he said Chapel Hill is their first late-night opportunity. "We are doing this on Duke's campus and N.C. State's campus and even at breweries like Fullsteam and Double Barley — we are all over," he said. Randy Young, spokesman for the UNC Department of Public Safety, said Carolina Dining Services worked this out in order to serve the students' late night appetites. "They contacted us to identify an area that had parking, a spot that did not have enforced parking, one that had a large population and had good visibility." Ryan Moore, food service direc-

tor for Carolina Dining Services, said in an email if the food trucks have more customers, students will likely see more. "For now no more than three food trucks are able to schedule a particular night to start. This is to mostly protect the trucks from losing interest due to cold weather and low turnout," he said. Renard Edwards, a Baguettaboutit employee, said they did not leave on the first night until about 1:30 a.m., but the foot traffic could have been better. "For people to not know that we were coming — for us to just show up — the word got out pretty decent," he said. "It wasn't an overwhelmingly great night, but it was pretty decent night out here for people to not know about it before." Maness said the turnout was underwhelming, but he said he is expecting more people to come when it is warmer. "People don't want to come out here in this weather when it is this cold, but I think once it starts to be warm, around March or April time, we will get a lot more people coming out here," he said. Giselle Montgomery and Devon Williams, juniors at UNC, said having the food trucks will be great as long as they are cheap.



Baguettaboutit will serve food from the Bowles Drive Parking Lot. DTH FILE/BRIAN FANNEY

"I think it is good because we need as many food options as we can support," Montgomery said. "Especially with lower cost," Williams said. "A lot of the options, especially on Franklin Street, aren't as cost-effective." The trucks will not be in the Bowles lot during basketball games, but Edwards said they will hopefully be there for a few football games.

Maness said he expects more people to come out when it warms up and people spread the word about the food trucks being there. "When word comes through and people start spreading the word that there are food trucks there from (10 p.m.) to (2 a.m.), then people will get stoked about it."

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Congress repeals bill for research funding

There is a push to give social sciences more research funds.

By Mia Madduri
Staff Writer

For Congressional members, politics is their lifestyle — but until recently, many were in support of limiting collegiate research of the subject. In January, the U.S. Congress repealed past restrictions on National Science Foundation funding for political science research for the 2014 fiscal year. In 2013, Congress restricted National Science Foundation research funding to only projects that promoted national security or economic interests — a contentious restriction that compelled some representatives from UNC to lobby in Capitol Hill. Political science professor Frank Baumgartner said many politicians are skeptical of their role as research subjects. "A lot of politicians don't like to be a part of studies. There's a lot of hostility toward the economics and political science," Baumgartner said. "Political leaders think that political scientists have some kind of angle." He said some politicians don't see the value of research that is more liberal arts-based. Baumgartner said it's not uncommon for Congress to be hostile to the study of political science, and there is more of a focus on scientific, technological, engineering and mathematical research. Sen. Tom Coburn, R-Okla., proposed a bill four years ago trying to eliminate political science funding from the National Science Foundation, which was \$10 million, and redistribute \$7 million to the National Cancer Institute, Baumgartner said. Congress did not pass this bill, but accepted his modified version of restricting funding to only political science research that dealt with national security or U.S. economic interest. "It was ironic because Coburn used some data in a previous report political scientists had written," Baumgartner said. "He was using political science research for his fiscal conservatism." Professor Jason Roberts said even after the restriction was lifted, the federal government might continue to impinge upon the scope of social science research. "I do think federal social science research remains under scrutiny," Roberts said. "The discretionary part of the federal budget has been cut significantly and this increases the competition for scarce dollars." Roberts said some members of Congress hold a limited view of political science research and don't advocate funding. "There are also some elected officials who do not think that social science research should be funded by the federal government." Most political scientists are relieved the bill was not signed, he said. "I was pleased to see the restrictions on what NSF could fund or review, and most of us in the profession believe that a rigorous peer review process produces better research," Roberts said. The foundation will return to its own criteria for political science proposals. "In accordance with the provisions of ... legislation, current proposals to the political science program will be evaluated in terms of NSF's two merit review criteria, intellectual merit and broader impacts, in the same manner as all other proposals submitted to NSF," said Debbie Wing, a spokeswoman for the National Science Foundation.. Even though the restrictions have been repealed and the National Science Foundation can continue funding political science projects based on their criteria, some political scientists worry Congress will continue to try to restrict funding. "In the years to come we can expect more of this kind of thing," Baumgartner said. "America leads the world in this type of research and when Congress steps in it's counter-productive."

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