ABSTRACT

OLAUSEN, KURT ROBERT. Protests Without Tear Gas: Portrayals of Campus Activism in the Print Media 1996-2004. (Under the direction of John Levin.)

This study examines how student activists were portrayed by the campus daily newspaper during the time period 1996-2004. Duke University in Durham, North Carolina is the subject of this qualitative case study, which uses the dramaturgical theory of sociologist Erving Goffman as its framework. The issues taken on by student activists at Duke during this time period include the anti-sweatshop movement, race relations on campus, identity issues of African Americans, Asian Americans, women and political conservatives, and the Sudanese civil war. The Chronicle, Duke’s daily campus newspaper, portrays the student activists in a number of roles that are categorized as campus/education roles, political roles, and social roles. The campus/education roles have been identified as educator, campus leader, object of ridicule and satire (as viewed by their fellow students), partner in university governance, and change agent or catalyst. The political roles are concerned citizen (both on campus and in the larger community), policy maker (for campus policy as well as local/national/international policy), representative/diplomat/spokesperson, idealist (someone who acts beyond or above politics), political agent, person with power and consumer advocate. The social roles identified by the study are moral conscience or compass, moral bully, social critic, champion of the underdog, social support network, and symbol maker. It is recognized that multiple roles can be played simultaneously. The study places the issues and roles of the period 1996-2004 into the history of student activism in American higher education.
PROTESTS WITHOUT TEAR GAS: PORTRAYALS OF CAMPUS ACTIVISM IN THE PRINT MEDIA 1996-2004

by

KURT ROBERT OLAUSEN

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APPROVED BY:

John Levin
Chair of Advisory Committee

Audrey Jaeger

Marvin Titus

Colleen Grochowski
Biography

Born in 1969 in Providence, Rhode Island, Kurt graduated from Classical High School in 1986. From there he went on to earn a Bachelor of Arts degree from Dickinson College in Carlisle, Pennsylvania in 1990 with majors in both German and Italian Studies. He spent the year 1988-89 studying abroad in Urbino, Italy and at the Universities of Mannheim and Bremen in Germany. After two years of working in international business in Washington, D.C., Kurt entered the University of Virginia in Charlottesville in 1992, earning a Master of Education degree in Counselor Education with a specialization in Student Affairs Practice in Higher Education in 1994. From 1994 to 1996 he worked in the Office of International Education at James Madison University in Harrisonburg, Virginia. In 1996 Kurt became Assistant Director in the Office of Study Abroad at Duke University in Durham, North Carolina. He held this position until 2006. He entered the doctoral program in Higher Education Administration at North Carolina State University in Raleigh in the fall of 1999.

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Chapter 1 – Introduction

Background

Cottle (1973) believes that when the bright minds of university students learn of the hypocrisy and immorality extant on their campuses, in their communities, and in their country, that change and trouble follow. The trouble comes in the form of student dissent and activism, which have existed almost as long as American colleges themselves (Astin, Astin, Bayer, & Bisconti, 1975; Cartwright, 1995; Eagan 2004). Throughout the history of higher education in the United States, students have taken stands on issues ranging from the “food in the college dormitory to the war in Vietnam, from censorship of a campus speaker or publication to support for a Socialist politician” (Altbach, 1974, pp. 2-3). Some issues are specific to a single institution, but many have grown to encompass the whole nation. National issues have included slavery (Cowley, 1966), the presence of the military on campus in the form of ROTC programs (Rudy, 1996), US involvement in World War II, the “ban the bomb” campaign (Brax, 1981; Eagan, 1981), civil rights, U.S. involvement in Southeast Asia, women’s rights, the divestment campaign to end apartheid in South Africa (Jackson, 1989; Altbach & Cohen, 1990), the anti-sweatshop movement (Featherstone, 2002), and the war in Iraq.

Student activism has been called “a single force in that it represents a general movement to expand the role of students in the affairs of higher education” (Vaccaro & Covert, 1969, p. vii). Students who get involved with political and social issues on their campus are those who want to take an active part in shaping their world, to make “vigorous attempts to change the structure of our society” (Halleck, 1968, p. 126). By changing the structure of society, student activists seek to broaden freedoms, “either their own or those of persons or groups whose cause they espouse” (Snow, 1969, p. 86).

The term “student activism” refers to organization and action taken by students on behalf of themselves or others. The actions of these students are taken against the
university administration, or other power, such as a corporate entity or the U.S. government. Through their actions student activists seek social or political change that will improve either their own lives or the lives of others associated with a particular group.

The first recorded student protest took place at Harvard College in 1766; at issue was the quality of butter served in the college’s dining rooms (Cartwright, 1995). Since then student activists have used a growing variety of tactics to bring about change. Colonial students protested the British monarchy by wearing “home-spun” clothes rather than fabric brought from Britain to the colonies (Rudy, 1996). During the Civil War, students at northern institutions such as Oberlin College and the University of Michigan were influential in the fight to end slavery by establishing stops on the Underground Railroad. In the 1930s, student activists organized strikes against the threat of war, and in the 1960s they took over buildings in protest of an actual war. Students in the 21st century have a full range of technology at hand, and they use the internet as a means of giving voice to their messages and email lists to coordinate with peers at other universities across the country. While some tactics have changed, the issues often remain the same: human rights, war and peace, the environment, and student voice or “power” within the university.

University administrators, who hold most of the power over an institution’s daily life, admit that student activism is disruptive (Lawson, 1971), but they do recognize that input is needed from students in the day-to-day running of the university (Bloustein, 1968), and many of these administrators may like to live dangerously (Riesman, 1968). Cowley (1966) predicted that student criticism, specifically in the area of educational practices, will be increasingly recognized as a valuable resource. Although student activists may be a minority of the total student population at a university, administrators
are obligated to listen to them (Eddy, 1969), as the active core of student activists contains many students whose aptitudes, interests, values, and origins suggest a strong orientation to intellectual and academic life (Flacks, 1970). It can be said, therefore, that even though student activists are disruptive to university administrators’ work they play a necessary role within the American university.

[T]he crucial need is for more student activists, not less. The more students who participate in the life of their university, the more that institution is meeting its vital responsibility of training them in the art of enlightened action as well as in enlightened thought. (Lawson, 1971, p. 286)

In an era when it is not uncommon for senior administrators on many campuses to be former student activists (Pulley, 2000), their observations of contemporary student activism are often solicited and quoted by the news media. The media play an important role both on and off campus in student activist movements having made student activism increasingly visible to the public at large (Eagan, 2004). Gitlin (1980), who is a former student activist himself, states that social movements have “organized, campaigned, and formed their social identities on a floodlit social terrain” (p. 1) since radio broadcasting began early in the 20th century. Whether the actions of the students are reported on the news pages, addressed in editorials or letters to the editor, or incited through a paid advertisement, they are considered newsworthy and have been since the 1960s, an era that is linked with protest and student activism, especially in the minds of the media and higher education faculty and administrators (Cartwright, 1995).

Students of the 1990s were almost as active in demonstrations and protests as were their 1960s counterparts (Levine, 1999), but this was all but invisible on the national front. Because activism of the 1990s focused on local rather than national issues, the national media have been less captivated by the sit-ins, where students’ tactics have
been more conciliatory and non-ideological than the violent protests of the 1960s
(Levine, 1999). Where the national media have not deemed student activism worthy of
coverage, local media have taken on the task. Newspapers in the community where a
university is located do pay attention to what students are doing on campus. Likewise
campus newspapers, where reporting and editing are generally done by students, are
heavily invested in daily events on campus. It is the role of such newspapers that have a
more limited geographic area of coverage to provide coverage of local events to the
residents of that area.

...[to] provide basic and informal informations [sic.] about the micro community.
They stand for the purpose of disseminating those useful informations [sic.] to the
local masses that are not covered by the national news media for its own reasons.
(Sharma, 1992, p. 5)

From the media, mainly those who manufacture American popular culture
(Heineman, 2001), students of the 1990s and 2000s have an understanding of the legacy
of the 1960s that shapes many of the cultural norms they associate with campus protest
and demonstration (Rhoads, 1998b). Will students of the 1990s and early 2000s be able
to turn this understanding into actions that will earn them status in the collective memory
of the United States? Will later generations refer to the “legacy of the 1990s?” In the
words of Rhoads (1998b, p. 58) these questions are “...what will be remembered of
campus life from the 1990s? What is to be written about the defining concerns of the
contemporary generation of activists?” The activists of this generation ask themselves
“...how do we uphold the legacy of our fathers yet speak with our own voice?” (Samad,
Purpose

This study gives a partial answer to these questions in its examination of what has already been written, by newspaper reporters in public reports, whose words form a record of the actions of contemporary student activists. According to Gottschalk (1950) newspaper reports and dispatches are the most reliable type of public report because of the short time-lapse between the event and the recording of it.

Problem

Reports of student activism in the national media—such as the *The New York Times*, *Time* magazine, and national television network news—have always tended to focus on the loudest, most outrageous, sensational, most militant actions (Wenberg, 1969; Gitlin, 1980; Chalmers, 1996; Heineman, 2001). Through this coverage the media have been accused of encouraging campus disorder through exaggeration (Hook, 1969) and of misinterpreting of what they have seen (Sparzo, 1968), usually through a focus on the personality of a single individual who then becomes a symbol of the entire movement (Rojecki, 1999). Because of this focus, the national media do not give an accurate picture of student activism as seen by those living on the campus and experiencing the action on a day-to-day, or hour-to-hour, basis. Local media are in a better position for this kind of detailed reporting. On a university campus the student-run campus newspaper provides this kind of detailed local reporting. A study of student activism using the campus newspaper as the primary data source will present a coherent picture of this period of activism from the student point of view. Such a study has not been undertaken for any period of student activism.
Research Questions

Through a qualitative case study of the campus newspaper at one institution—Duke University in Durham, North Carolina—this investigation addresses the following research questions:

1. How are student activists and their actions during the period 1996-2004 portrayed by the campus newspaper?
2. What meanings of the student activists’ actions in the period 1996-2004 can be gleaned from reports in the campus newspaper?

Design of the Study

The research questions listed above are addressed through a case study within the interpretivist tradition, which is concerned primarily with the search for patterns of meaning within a social reality constructed by actors within a natural context (Gephart, 1999). Analysis of the data was guided by dramaturgy, a theory that comes under the rubric of “everyday life sociology” (Adler, Adler, & Fontana, 1987). By addressing the research questions within the framework of dramaturgy or “dramatism” (Burke, 1969), this study provides an examination of student activists through their actions and interactions as presented in the campus print media, specifically the daily campus newspaper. This examination goes beyond the descriptions given by the media to extract the meanings given to the actions of student activists and their interactions with others. Dramaturgy, or the dramaturgical theory, asserts that peoples’ activities, their selections, their accomplishments, and their communications in social interaction with others establish meaning for the participants (Brissett & Edgley, 1990).

Theoretical Framework: Dramaturgical Theory

According to a story in the Christian Science Monitor, at Berkeley (of course at Berkeley) a while back, Students for Justice in Palestine took over Sather Gate, a
major campus entrance. Dressed as Israeli soldiers with cardboard guns, the group let students pass freely through one entrance of the gate marked JEWS ONLY. On the other side, marked PALESTINIANS, the group demanded papers and asked where they were going. How’s that for theater? (Serwer, 2002, ¶4)

Becker (1972) says that “man [sic.] is a social creator as well as a social creature” (p. 122). The basic unit of humans’ socialization is that of “role” (Goffman, 1969) which refers to a pattern that can be regarded as the consistent behavior of a single type of actor (Turner, 1962). Dramaturgy uses the concept of role as a way of accounting for people’s connections to one another and to the organizations and structures with which they are identified (Brissett & Edgley, 1990), such as a university or a social movement.

Dramaturgy (or dramaturgical theory, or dramatism) has been categorized as “sociology of everyday life” (Adler, et. al., 1987, pp. 217-218). Sociologists who work within this framework do so by using three main tenets:

1. Contextuality: the study of interactions within the natural context of the everyday social world, with the view that such interactions are the foundation of all understanding of society;

2. Model of the Actor: the study of interaction and communication in an inward direction, toward consciousness, in order to derive a model of the actor based on people’s everyday life, attitudes and behavior;

3. Social Structure: the study of interaction in an outward direction, employing a view of social structure and social order that derives from interaction and is also characterized by a reciprocal relation to it.

Erving Goffman, considered the founder of the subfield of dramaturgy within everyday life sociology (Adler, et. al. 1987) put forth in his work on face-to-face interaction “a set of features...which together form a framework that can be applied to any concrete social
establishment...” (Goffman, 1959, p. xi). A social establishment (or institution) is a building, plant, or any place surrounded by fixed barriers to perception in which activity of a particular kind regularly goes on (Goffman, 1957, 1959). Face-to-face interaction is defined by Goffman (1959) as the reciprocal influence of individuals upon one another’s actions when in one another’s physical presence. Adler, Adler, and Fontana (1987) indicate that the naturally occurring interaction between people is the foundation of all understanding of society. Interaction between human beings generally takes place within the “concrete social establishment,” also referred to as a social group, or social entity, made up of individual members (Goffman, 1961). It is the patterned social relations among individuals and groups within the social entity that make up its structure (Blau, 1964).

Social institutions, along with personal identity, relations of power, and class structure are regarded as “‘expressions’ or communicative mediations in the ‘grammar’ of social life” (Corcoran, 1990, p. 52). Every instance of social interaction within one of these expressions can be called a performance (Hare & Blumberg, 1988). A performance is also defined as all activity of a given participant on a given occasion which serves to influence, in any way, any of the other participants (Goffman, 1959). It is through performances and interactions that institutions are able to sustain their continuity across space and time (Giddens, 1988). Performances manifest themselves in the public acts of individuals, in the interactions in which human beings encounter each other’s minds, and it is the quality and character of these interactions that have come to constitute the consequential reality of everyday life (Brissett & Edgley, 1990).

According to Goffman (1959), performances consist of three parties: performers, audience, and others. Hare and Blumberg (1988) have broken down these three categories further, dividing performers into protagonists and auxiliary players.
(antagonist, supporting role, member of the chorus) and stating that the audience can be either present or absent. There are five key terms of dramatism which involve all of the performers and when put together make up the performance itself: act, scene, agent, agency, and purpose (Burke, 1969). The act is what takes place, whether in thought or deed. The scene is the background against which the act takes place, also known as the situation. The agent is a person, or a kind of person, who performs the act, through either a set of means or an instrument, known as the agency. Finally, every act has a purpose.

Interaction between individuals or groups can be unfocused, occurring solely by the virtue of people being in each other’s presence, or focused, occurring when people effectively agree to sustain, for a time, a single focus of cognitive and visual attention (Goffman, 1961). The performances that take place within these interactions are either put on by an individual, or by a performance team, which is a set of individual performers who cooperate in the staging of a single performance (Goffman, 1959). Within this team one person often directs or controls the progress of the dramatic action—the “plot”—suggesting a detailed scenario with definitions of roles to be followed and stages that must be passed through in order to meet a predetermined goal (Hare, 1985).

Within Anglo-American society these performances are usually given in a bounded region, including boundaries of time (Goffman, 1959); each performance has a set beginning and end point.

This study considers demonstrators and those in attendance at activist events as playing the various roles of protagonist, auxiliary player, audience member, and director. Events, such as demonstrations or sit-ins, will be treated as performances as described above. Treating activism as theater for this purpose is simply a reversal of the belief that theater itself has been a vehicle for political and social dissent since ancient times (Unger & Unger, 1988). Examining the drama of student activism through the media follows this
logically, as Davis (1990) believes that the media have developed strategies for
dramatizing objective “hard news” stories which are otherwise boring. “These
strategies generally involve imposing a dramatic scenario on an ambiguous event or
exaggerating one that may be implicit in an occurrence” (Davis, 1990, p. 169). Student
activists have shown a tendency for adding the same type of dramatic flair to their
messages, as this example shows:

With a penchant for getting arrested, NYU [New York University]
activists were among the nation’s most theatrical anti-war opponents. In
October, eight students rushed the stage of MTV’s [Music Television] Total
Request Live, flashing their “No War in Iraq” T-shirts before being hauled off
This incident also illustrates Hirsch’s (1990) view on activist tactics: the more highly
visible and dramatic they are, as well as disruptive of normal institutional routine, the
more powerfully they will be viewed.

Significance of the study

The significance of this study lies in its use of local, student media, a source that
has not been utilized to the fullest extent possible in the past. This provides higher
education historians a source that is richer in describing a single campus than regional or
national media used in the past. This study is also significant in looking at a period of
student activism that has not yet been examined to the same extent and with the same
depth that previous periods have, particularly the 1960s. Because this period has not yet
been studied in depth it has been theorized that it may not be as important as previous
periods of student activism.
One might...conclude that because of the perceptions of the 1960s, or even misperceptions, contemporary activism may be significant and yet be all but ignored because it pales in comparison to its predecessor. (Rhoads, 1998b, p. 35)

It is the assertion of this study that contemporary activism is significant and needs to be studied in its own right, using the public words of those who witnessed the actions as they were taking place.

Of most significance in the period under study is the student anti-sweatshop movement. Duke University is significant as the case chosen for the study because of the role played by its student activists in this movement. Students Against Sweatshops at Duke was the first student group in this movement to hold a sit-in in a campus administrative building, ushering in a wave of such protests in the late 1990s. The period of student activism that began with the anti-sweatshop movement is the latest chapter in the history of American student activism. This history is laid out chronologically in Chapter 2 of this study, a review of the historical literature that is significant in its own right for students and scholars of the history of higher education.

Summary

Student activism has existed at American colleges and universities since the founding of the first colonial colleges. Throughout this history students have challenged the status quo of the college or university, of the government, and of the world. All of their attempts to make changes have been reported by the media—local, national, and international—to the students’ peers. Newspapers and other forms of print media have been most influential in this reporting.

Reporting on student activism by the national print media has focused on the sensational, the flamboyant, the most colorful and dramatic displays. This reporting has not given the public an accurate view of campus activism. Campus activists as a group
are a minority of the student body on most campuses, and those who appear in the media because of their unusual appearance or actions are a minority of the activist minority. The focus of local media is on a smaller area than that of the national media, and the focus of a campus newspaper is on events at the university itself. Because of this focus the reporting of a campus newspaper will be more detailed on a daily basis and will provide a more thorough description of activism on a single campus than a national publication will.

This study examines student activism during the period 1996-2004 through the portrayals of activists and their actions in the campus print media. One institution—Duke University in Durham, North Carolina—is the subject of the study. Using dramaturgical theory this study analyzes how student activist movements were portrayed by the campus newspaper, the roles played by student activists at Duke during this time and the meanings that can be drawn from these portrayals.

The remainder of the study will be reported as follows. Chapter 2 reviews the literature of student activism, focusing on the United States in the 20th century. Chapter 3 describes in more detail the design of the study and the qualitative methods to be used. Chapter 4 is a chronological presentation of the issues that concerned student activists during the time period under study and how those issues were presented in the campus newspaper. Chapters 5-7 analyze the three categories of roles taken on by student activists in this period, and Chapter 8 summarizes the study and discusses implications for future research on this topic.
Chapter 2 - Literature Review

Introduction

It is not possible to know “the truth” about student activism, as each person is limited to one part of the whole that they have experienced (Foster, 1970). Student activists have been portrayed through a variety of voices and in a variety of forms. Some are autobiographical and were written while the actions were occurring, the words of one student (Kunen, 1969) or of many (Martinez, 2002). Others are autobiographical but written from a distance of time, with the authority that comes from age, experience and education (Freeman, 2004; Gitlin, 1980). Others have sought to find meaning in the actions of those involved in campus activism. The studies that seek meaning describe characteristics of the actors (Freeman & Brubaker, 1971; Meier & Orzen, 1971), their institutions (Bigelow & Kennedy, 1974; Freeman & Brubaker, 1971; Hoge, 1971; Hoge & Ankney, 1982; Lawson, 1971; Meier and Orzen, 1971; Mock, 1971; Wynkoop, 2002), or even the characteristics of an entire generation of Americans (Feuer, 1969; Loeb, 1994).

Regardless of the focus, each study features a glimpse of the dramatic interaction that takes place between students and university administrators, between students and the United States government, between students and corporate America, between students and students, and between students and “ordinary” citizens. This chapter will present a brief review of the history of student activism in the United States as presented in the literature, focusing on the interplay between students and others, especially in its most dramatic forms. Following the history, a review of the variety of studies of student activism to date will be presented. The final section will examine how media have played a role (where they have) in describing and dramatizing the actions of campus activists.
Student activists and campus interactions: a drama in 8 acts

Act 1: Early interactions

The first recorded American student protest took place at Harvard College, in 1766, when students expressed disdain for the quality of butter being served in the college’s dining rooms (Cartwright, 1995). Beginning with this dispute between students and the staff providing their meals, student activism during colonial times tended to focus on issues local to the campus, rather than national concerns (Rudy, 1996). Gradually students’ views expanded beyond their individual colleges and communities as anti-British sentiment was espoused across the colonies at many campuses in the period leading up to the Revolution. Throughout the 1760s students led boycotts of British products, including denouncing the Stamp Act as part of the 1765 commencement ceremonies at Harvard, Princeton, and Yale (Rudy, 1996).

In the 1800s students once again turned inward, engaging with their own institutions on the issue of in loco parentis, and the removal of unpopular presidents (Cartwright 1995). During the mid-1830s an armed student militia was formed to resist the “tyrannical” faculty at the University of Virginia (Johnston, 1998). The most notable exception to this inward-looking trend was the view of students towards the institution of slavery. In response to the issue of slavery students formed abolitionist groups at institutions such as Amherst, Oberlin, and Dartmouth Colleges, and Miami University of Ohio. At the University of Michigan students were actively involved in assisting runaway slaves (Cartwright, 1995).

With slavery as the exception, almost all other protests of the late 1800s were directed against the “shortcomings of the institutions” (Lipset, 1971, p. 138), the issues of discipline, curriculum content, the administration’s power, due process, and student self-government. Students were not the only group on campus at this time who were asserting themselves. The late 1800s was also a period of faculty revolt against the seemingly absolute power held by the college president during this time period. These
rebellious interactions directed against the power of the institution, continued into the new century as students at the University of Nevada organized a protest march into town in defiance of a quarantine imposed on the campus because of a smallpox scare (Johnston, 1998). In contrast with earlier organizations, such as the Virginia student militia, the Nevada march is viewed as more thoughtful, more considered, and less violent in nature (Johnston, 1998).

**Act 2: Enter the “adult” political organizations**

At the start of the twentieth century the face of activism on campus began to change, as the issues that aroused the spirit of activism on campus began to come not only from within the colleges themselves, but also from outside the campus walls. The year 1905 marked the first “invasion” of the college campus by an outside sociopolitical group (Cowley, 1966) with the formation of the Intercollegiate Socialist Society (ISS) in New York. Now adults, and specifically non-students, were becoming active on college campuses. Among the founders of ISS were Upton Sinclair, Clarence Darrow, and Jack London, who was the group’s first president. In the years that followed, socialists took on many causes at American institutions of higher education. In 1908 the Harvard Socialist Club decided that one of its main tasks would be improving the working conditions of Harvard’s cleaning workers and cafeteria staff (Lipset, 1971). Likewise, in 1914, with the US entry into World War I, socialists and other campus peace groups led a considerable amount of anti-war activity. ISS membership peaked in 1915 (Johnston, 1998) with more than 50 chapters on campuses across the country. The relationships between adult political organizations and student activists thus became part of the history of student activism for the remainder of the 20th century.

The mid-1920s brought a period of pacifist reaction against World War I (Feuer, 1969). Of significance was the founding of the National Student Federation of America (NSFA), the first liberally-oriented national student organization (Altbach, 1974) which allowed students from various institutions to interact with each other around the issues
they deemed important. The NSFA chose to focus on U.S. relations around the world, closely monitoring the League of Nations, the World Court, and other organizations with agendas related to U.S. foreign policy. *The New Student*, published from 1922-1929 by the National Student Forum, another organization of the time, focused on war and peace, and served as a means for student interaction on a national level. This was the first time an organ of communication was developed to tie students from many campuses together around similar agendas.

Before 1929 most left-wing student activity was represented by the League for Industrial Democracy (LID), which had emerged out of the Intercollegiate Socialist Society in 1921. By 1932, LID formed a separate student wing, the Student League for Industrial Democracy, or SLID. SLID became the “parent” of almost all leftist student groups in the 1930s, and was an immediate predecessor of Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), which would emerge thirty years later in another period of student activism (Eagan, 1981). The student movement continued to rally in the 1930s with the emergence of Soviet Russia abroad, and the Depression at home. Issues taken up by students during this time included: peace and war; the underprivileged status of unions; child labor; and the “sorry state of Negro civil rights” (Cowley, 1966, p. 110). Through these issues students inserted themselves into the daily life of the nation and the world.

In 1931, a communist-oriented faction within LID broke away to form the National Student League (NSL). Initially the NSL was composed only of students from Hunter, City, and Brooklyn Colleges in New York. The organization endorsed issues such as student rights and economic palliatives, while opposing discrimination and war (Johnston, 1998). It was the NSL that organized what has been called the most publicized and dramatic instance of student protest to that point in time (Brax, 1981). On March 23, 1932, eighty students from Columbia University, City College, Harvard University, Smith College, the Universities of Cincinnati and Tennessee, departed by bus from New York to go to Harlan County, Kentucky. The goal of this trip was to offer aid to striking
coal miners, and to bring national attention to their plight. The students were forced back at the state line after a standoff with a mob of Kentucky citizens and law enforcement. This incident dramatizes one of the two left-wing influences on the student movement: the militancy of the labor movement (Eagan, 1981). The bus trip to Kentucky illustrated a continuation of relations between American socialist organizations and student groups which had begun earlier in the century, and represents a relationship that would be made manifest through the 20th century and into the 21st.

Esler (1971) writes of the 1930s as a period in which students seeking campus-level reforms moved off campus in support of striking workers (as was seen in the Harlan, Kentucky incident as well as the influence of the communist party on students) as well as in support of new directions in America’s foreign policy. The issue of an impending war, in which the U.S. might take part, divided students as well as faculty. On some campuses faculty and administrators assisted students with arrangements for peace rallies, by acting as supporting cast members, while others attempted to ban the rallies altogether (Rudy, 1996) playing the role of antagonists. Initially, the focus of the peace activists was to make ROTC courses on campus optional rather than compulsory (Brax, 1981). The first student protest on this issue was at City College of New York in 1925. The first major student conference (the Student Congress Against War) took place in December of 1932, on the eve of the year that took the movement to the national arena in the United States—1933.

Act 3: Engaging the world...peacefully

On February 9, 1933, at the University of Oxford, England, the students of the Oxford Union voted 275 to 153 to uphold the resolution that “this House will in no circumstances fight for King and Country in any war” (Eagan, 1981; Feuer, 1969). One month later, in March of 1933, Brown University became the first American institution to enforce the Oxford Pledge, rephrased with “the United States government” in place of “King and Country.” In December of 1933 the student movement became official
according to Brax (1981), with the establishment of the National Conference on Students and Politics, a framework through which young people could become permanently involved in dealing with the nation’s domestic and foreign problems. In the same month Secretary of Agriculture Henry A. Wallace had made a public statement deploring the absence of any youth movement in the U.S. comparable to those in other countries (Wechsler, 1963/1935). The National Conference appeared to arise in contradiction to his statement and also seemed to answer the question posed by Harper’s in 1931: “Why don’t your young men care?” (quoted in Eagan, 1981). Over the next three years—1934-36—the Annual Strike against War would become the movement’s largest focal point.

The term “strike” chosen for these activities was symbolic of the relationship that had formed between the labor movement and the students of that time. Marxists viewed student activism as auxiliary power for the working class (Eagan, 1981). Feuer (1969) writes that the word “strike” was retained because it “smacked of warfare, generational warfare against the ‘system.’” Brax (1981) states that the term was chosen because it represented the most intensive form of protest.

The annual strikes against the war were scheduled to take place on a given day and given hour at every college and university across the country. The first was on April 13, 1934, when demonstrations “burst out on campuses across the eastern seaboard” (Eagan, 1981). The strike’s official slogan that year was “Schools not Battleships, Abolition of the ROTC, and Fight against Imperialist War” (Brax, 1981). This was to be the largest student demonstration to date focused on a single issue, and included institutions such as Smith, Vassar, Yale, Williams, Syracuse, Wellesley, City College, New York University, Hunter, Brooklyn College, and Columbia. At institutions where no strike occurred, other forms of activity were scheduled for students to express like-minded concerns.

In August of 1934, the American Youth Congress was formed and became the first manifestation of the popular front in the youth movement. They sponsored the
Annual Strike against War in 1935, which took place on April 12, 1935 and involved as many as 175,000 students (Eagan, 1981) who walked out of their classes at an appointed time. The second Annual Strike is significant because it was the first truly national student protest, with some form of participation occurring on the campuses of at least 150 institutions in all sections of the country including the South, where the entrance of new actors onto the activist stage, such as Duke University and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, was considered a breakthrough.

After the 1935 strike, the American Student Union (ASU) formed. The ASU was to be a broad, non-partisan group linking the communist-minded National Student League and the socialist-minded SLID, although Feuer (1969) maintains that it became the student arm of the Communist Party in the United States. The ASU was formed in Columbus, Ohio, at a convention attended by 450 delegates from 200 schools. It grew to be proportionately the largest and most influential such organization in student history, with a reported peak membership of 20,000 (Eagan, 1981). With the ASU as one of its main organizers, the Annual Strike Against War on April 22, 1936, was the largest to date. Student leaders claimed that 500,000 participated, although it is thought that 350,000 is a more realistic number (Brax, 1981).

The ASU convention of 1936 was the first act in the drama that would become the unraveling of the student anti-war movement where interactions between student activists became antagonistic. Delegates divided between those who wanted to retain the Oxford Pledge as the centerpiece of the movement and those who thought that the group should focus more on issues of collective security for the United States. Students who identified more strongly with the Communist Party favored the support of collective security, especially with the rise of fascism in Europe. According to Feuer (1969) the American student movement concluded that only the communists would really fight the Nazis.
When the Spanish Civil War broke out in 1937, “Remember Spain” became the slogan of the Annual Strike that year (Brax, 1981). The Spanish Civil War provided the most dedicated student activists with a rare occasion for self-sacrifice and ultimate identification (Feuer, 1969). American students became the second largest group of Americans to fight in Spain with 400 volunteers (Feuer, 1969). Demonstrations in both the spring and fall of that year were characterized by battles for control, as collective security advocates fought with pacifists and Socialists. In this process the movement lost the support of the middle-of-the-road students on many campuses (Eagan, 1981). The Annual Strike of 1937 was the last unified national anti-war demonstration of this period. In 1938 the focus of the strike turned toward anti-fascist solidarity.

By 1941 the student movement of the 1930s had fizzled, ushering in a quiet decade on the front of campus activism. However, in 1943 the United States Student Assembly (USSA) was founded, though the group was marred by infighting from its inception and was never to be a serious activist force (Johnston, 1998). The U.S. entry into World War II was felt to be just and anti-war sentiment, along with student activism faded.

A new level of interaction among groups of student activists arose in 1946 with the world conference of the International Union of Students (IUS) in Prague. The delegation from the U.S. that attended the conference returned feeling that it was time for a new student organization. The following summer those delegates held the constitutional convention of the National Student Association.

Interlude: the “silent generation”

Observers of campus life in the 1950s complained of students’ lack of involvement with the political and moral issues of the day (Farris, 1969). The reigning mood in the nation during this time was skepticism—people were skeptical of “ideologies,” skeptical of blueprints for the future, skeptical of humanity itself (Glazer, 1970). The efforts of Senator McCarthy to root out communism in the United States were
shown in the media, along with a general hysteria his movement inflamed, crushing what
was left of American radicalism (Eagan, 1981). Students in this period strongly
supported President Eisenhower. He became a father figure to them, a man of action,
character, and judgment (Feuer, 1969). This “silent generation” was part of a decade of

Two events in the 1950s did, however, foreshadow relationships that would grow
and flourish between student activists and other activist groups during the 1960s. On
December 1, 1955 Rosa Parks, a black woman in Montgomery, Alabama, refused to give
up her seat on the bus for a white man. She was promptly arrested for refusing to “know
her place” (Gitlin, 1987). The second event, in 1957, was the founding of the Southern
Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), which would rise to great prominence as a
civil rights organization under the leadership of its president, Martin Luther King, Jr.
(Flowers, 1998).

Act 4: Encounters with diversity: civil rights

As the 1950s closed, students began to assert themselves again. At Cornell
University in 1958 a student riot erupted over the right of students to have mixed parties
(men and women) without chaperones (Friedland & Edwards, 1970). During that same
year, the National Student Association went public with its views opposing nuclear
testing. Reading the temperature of the times they also founded a project to train students
in the South to prepare their campuses and communities for desegregation.

On February 1, 1960, 4 black students, in Greensboro, North Carolina, sat down
at a “whites only” lunch counter and asked for coffee, a dramatic opening to the student
civil rights movement. This direct action in opposition to segregation set off a wave of
sit-ins unprecedented in the history of the American student movement (Feuer, 1969).
The initial sit-in by students from North Carolina Agricultural and Technical University
sparked similar demonstrations at 15 other southern colleges (Flowers, 1998). The New
Left of the 1960s, which had been lying in wait for a cause, took center stage around the
issue of civil rights, an issue with clear moral sides of right and wrong. Students of the New Left were attracted to the tactics of direct action that categorized the civil rights movement: the Montgomery, Alabama, bus strike and the sit-downs in the South. The civil rights movement also brought a brief unity of the Old and New Left (Eagan, 1981). The Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), which was made up of former activists of the 1930s and early 1940s, interacted with and contributed to the education and activism of young civil rights workers in the 1960s.

The year 1960 also saw the founding of two new student organizations that would be major actors throughout the rest of the decade. In April, the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) was founded as a student organization distinct from the adult civil rights organizations, and in June, Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) emerged from the remnants of SLID. SDS adapted the idea of direct action from the civil rights movement in their Port Huron Statement of 1962 (Feuer, 1969). The members of SDS believed in “participatory democracy,” a method by which concerned activists could intervene directly in political processes and affect their outcomes, face-to-face with government leaders, without the intervention of an electorate and the machinery of representative democracy.

Student involvement in the civil rights movement culminated in the summer of 1964, the Mississippi Freedom Summer, when student activists traveled to Mississippi to ensure the fair and safe registration of black voters in that state. From his involvement in the Mississippi Freedom Summer, Mario Savio, a student at the University of California, Berkeley, was drawn to take a leading role in the Free Speech Movement (FSM) that would soon take center stage on that campus.

The FSM was stirred to action when the Berkeley administration announced on September 16, 1964 that off-campus political groups could no longer make use of a previously “open” area on campus to hand out literature, collect money, and solicit membership. Students viewed this move by the administration as directed primarily
against civil rights groups (Astin et. al., 1975). To protest this new regulation, student activists used methods learned from the civil rights movement—civil disobedience. Eight students were suspended because of their activities; Mario Savio was one of them.

*Act 5: Engaging the world (again)...peacefully?*

If the issue of civil rights gave new life to student activism in the 1960s, it was the issue of war and peace that brought the largest number of students to the movement and to activism in general (Eagan, 1981). On November 1, 1961, 50,000 women demonstrated at sites across the United States against the testing of nuclear bombs and backed the cause of disarmament. Calling themselves the Women Strike for Peace movement, these women were the harbingers of the more profound women’s movement to come (Gitlin, 1987). At the beginning of 1965 student interest turned away from civil rights toward the war in Vietnam. The problem of civil rights had not solved itself, but, as Feuer (1969, p. 414) writes, “the issue no longer offered as good an emotional opportunity for conducting a generational struggle.”

The Vietnam war was a substantial issue, especially for young men who were being drafted to serve in a foreign setting where the objectives of the war were not clear to them (Levitt, 1984). From 1965-1967 demonstrators protested the war through traditional nondisruptive tactics, including teach-ins (which originated at the University of Michigan in 1965), the circulation of petitions, and mass demonstrations (Astin et. al., 1975). Beginning in 1967, the issue expanded from the war specifically to include the selective service system, and university involvement in the war through defense and military contracts—such as the Institute for Defense Analysis (IDA), a consortium of higher education institutions carrying out war-related research. Traditional protest tactics gave way to more dramatic illegal and obstructive actions: interference with military-industrial recruiting on campus and the public burning of draft cards by students and others. A February 1967 sit-in against the CIA at Columbia University, led by the Progressive Labor Party, helped ready students for direct action tactics to come (Rudd,
1969). Fueling more fire was the revelation that the NSA had been funded by the CIA for the previous 15 years. Student activism was ready to take action at a new, more dramatic, and violent level.

_Act 6: Deadly interactions_

On February 8, 1968 the first of three events took place in which students would be shot and killed. Delano Middleton, Henry Smith, and Samuel Hammond, Jr. were protesting racial exclusion at a white-owned bowling alley in Orangeburg, South Carolina, when they were shot and killed by South Carolina highway patrolmen (Hine, 1996). In April of that year students at Columbia University took over campus buildings in the wake of the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr. Violence on campus was on the rise.

Columbia University planned to build a new gymnasium in the Morningside Heights neighborhood, adjoining campus. The building would be used both by Columbia students and the black community that lived in Morningside Heights. The plan for this gymnasium, along with opposition to Columbia’s involvement in the IDA, led 300 students to occupy Hamilton Hall, the building for undergraduate instruction, on April 23, 1968. They barricaded the door, and held the dean of students hostage. The following day, after a break between the Negro Black Power movement and the white leftists, the white students left Hamilton Hall and seized the office of university president Grayson Kirk and the surrounding rooms in Low Memorial Library. The buildings would be held by students in a stand-off with administrators and police for a week. As a result of the student uprising Columbia severed its ties with IDA in June 1968, and in February 1969 administrators announced that the new gymnasium would not be built.

Violence continued into the following year. During the spring of 1969 sizable demonstrations occurred at 300 colleges and universities amounting to one-third of American students. Demonstrations were marked by strikes or building takeovers at one-quarter of the institutions, disruption of classes and administration at one-quarter, and
bombs, arson, or trashing of property at one-fifth of the institutions (Gitlin, 1987). A Gallup poll in March (quoted in DeConde, 1971) claimed that campus disorder had replaced the Vietnam War as the primary concern of most Americans.

Ethnic and racial issues continued to be in the spotlight when student activists clashed with their institutions. Black students at Cornell reacted to a burning cross thrown on the porch of the black women’s co-operative house by taking over the student union. For the first time in a building takeover student activists armed themselves for protection (Friedland & Edwards, 1970). While the black students were in the student union, SDS organized a teach-in which drew between 8,000 and 10,000 participants, taking over Barton Hall, the largest building on Cornell’s campus (Friedland & Edwards, 1970).

Students for a Democratic Society began to show signs of breaking apart later in 1969, as the women in the organization fought for a place on the stage equal to that of the men leading the organization. Their objective was to adopt a resolution at the SDS national convention in Chicago declaring sexism a problem faced by all women and that the battle against male supremacism “doesn’t stand apart from the fight against capitalism in our society, but rather is an integral part of that fight” (Tischler, 1998, p. 195). Due to the rise of many factions within the organization, not just the rising voices of the women, this would be the final national convention that SDS would hold.

As the 1960s became the 1970s the war in Vietnam continued, as did the protests and the violence on American campuses. In February 1970 the “United Black Population” of the University of Michigan presented a list of demands to the administration. The issues included: recruitment of black students, support services for black students, financial aid, a black studies department, and the creation of a Black Student Center (Black Student Demands, 1970). When asked in an April interview what should be done about campus militants, then-governor Ronald Reagan replied “If it takes a bloodbath, let’s get it over with. No more appeasement” (quoted in Gitlin, 1987, p.
That sentiment, although not known at the time, became a harbinger of action that would be staged in the near future.

On April 30, 1970, President Nixon announced the entry of US troops into Cambodia, triggering the most massive and violent wave of student protest in North American history (Nissen, 1970). On Friday, May 1, Kent State University in Ohio held an orderly antiwar rally, followed by a weekend of restlessness, “trashing,” and property destruction, climaxed by complete incineration of the ROTC building on Saturday May 2 (Astin et. al., 1975). The mayor proclaimed a state of civil emergency. The governor of Ohio backed that position, and called the National Guard to the campus of Kent State. On Monday, May 4, shortly after noon, an altercation between the National Guard and the mob of students ended with shots fired, and four students dead. For the second time student protesters were killed by law enforcement officers. The third occurrence would take place just ten days later, on May 14, 1970 in Jackson, Mississippi. Two students were killed and nine wounded when police fired shotguns into a women’s dormitory at Jackson State College. Although the events at Jackson State were the last in which students were shot by law enforcement officers during this era, more deaths related to student activism would follow.

During the summer of 1970 a bomb exploded in a building at the University of Wisconsin-Madison that housed the Army Mathematics Research Center. Among the wreckage of offices, labs, and computers, four people were injured and one was killed, a graduate student working in the building at the time of the explosion. This would be the last violent act of the student movement, and the mood on campuses during the next two academic years—1970-71 and 1971-72—was described by Kingman Brewster as one of “eerie tranquility” (Astin et. al., 1975).

Act 7: Encounters with diversity 2: identity politics

For most of the 1960s students had been fighting to have their voices heard, both on the national front and on campus. During the 1968-69 academic year the focus turned
towards the curriculum. Nearly 90% of the student population thought that they should be involved, along with faculty and administrators, in setting the curriculum on their campuses (Bayer, Astin, & Boruch, 1970). At Tuskegee Institute students staged a seizure of power. They demanded educational reform and a total restructuring of the institution in the interests of the black community (Milnes & Frazier, 1969). On December 12, 1968 Yale became the first major university to offer a degree in Afro-American studies. After 1968 black studies became the most dynamic model for university reform (Reuben, 1998).

The 1970s saw a continuation of what would come to be called “identity politics” while the violence of the anti-war protests was winding down (Rhoads, 1998a). Taking their cue from the “black power” movement, other groups took up their own cries for “women’s power” and “Latino power.” In 1972, the gay community at Pennsylvania State University took steps to seek recognition as an important actor on the university stage. A student group, called the Homophiles of Penn State (HOPS), filed a law suit against the university alleging violation of their first and fourteenth amendment rights, after the university denied them official organizational status (Rhoads, 1998b).

Feminists were also active during the early part of the 1970s, disrupting proceedings at the 1973 West Coast Women’s Studies Conference by accusing the conference organizers of separating women’s studies as an academic discipline from the radical feminist movement (Reuben, 1998). This stimulated the on-going debate between the need to be politically focused versus the need for enlightened academics.

On the topic of multiculturalism, Rhoads (1998a, 1998b) reports extensively on how students of the 1990s have addressed this issue. Chicano students at UCLA, with assistance from the local community, fought for the establishment of an academic department of Chicano Studies. At Mills College, an all-women’s institution, a successful fight was waged against a plan for co-education. Native American students at Michigan State University fought to retain tuition benefits, while gay students at Penn State worked
towards equal treatment and African-American students at Rutgers protested against a university president viewed as racist. Such activities represent the left-wing of student movements. On the opposite side are the students at the University of Florida who demanded the creation of White Student unions, and the Students Reinforcing Adherence in General Heterosexual Tradition (STRAIGHT) at Penn State, who emerged as a major barrier to gay liberation at that institution (Rhoads, 1998b).

As the curtain closed on the 1970s and re-opened on the 1980s, colleges and universities began to be regarded as the last significant bastion of liberalism by a rising group of neoconservatives (Weir, 1995). This statement was more indicative of the tenor of the faculty than of the students, but it is important to note this opinion, coming as it did during the decade of the Ronald Reagan and George H. W. Bush presidencies. According to Gitlin (1980)

> The radical project for the eighties is to regather the elements of cultural revolt, to form of them a coherent political opposition, and to overcome the centrifugal tendencies of the seventies: tendencies which represented the playing out of the incomplete and self-contradictory revolts of the sixties. (p. 292)

In other words, it was time for activists to emerge from the backstage of their self-absorption and once again oppose the “powers that be,” although in a more civilized fashion than had been done in the late 1960s.

### Act 8: Apartheid, the environment, and sweatshops

By far the issue that would have the most significance during the 1980s on campuses across the country was the call for universities to divest their money from corporations doing business in South Africa. The immorality of the apartheid government in South Africa grew as a concern for students from the 1960s until the early 1990s, but it was in the mid-1980s that the movement had its greatest success and impact (Soule, 1997). The divestment movement peaked on campus in 1985-86, the “year of the shanties” (Soule, 1997). The shanty was a makeshift structure built to appear like the
houses of the underclass people in South Africa. Shanties disrupted the otherwise tidy landscape of the campus and were meant to bring attention to the viciousness of apartheid and the oppressive living conditions of South Africa’s black population. Shanties were constructed at Cornell and Dartmouth Universities. At Dartmouth the shanties were later burned to the ground by a group calling themselves “The Committee to Beautify the Green” (Soule, 1997).

The environment was another issue that rose to prominence in the 1980s. This was not a new issue—the first Earth Day had been held on April 22, 1970—but one that attracted a new generation of students. In 1989 the first national student environmental conference, called “Threshold,” attracted over 2,000 students to the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (Rhoads, 1998b). Environmentalism as a concern of students would last beyond the 1980s, into the 1990s and beyond, even showing up in students’ academic work, as a “shadow curriculum” (Mansfield, 1998), as students used their course assignments to promote an activist agenda by proposing plans to improve the environmental friendliness of their universities.

Hirsch (1993) notes that in the 1990s students became more activist and more generous with their time, participating in volunteer activities in greater numbers than students in the 1970s and 1980s. Students in the 1990s were also more willing to protest (Levine & Cureton, 1998) than in recent years. Levine and Cureton report that in 1969 28% of undergraduates had participated in a demonstration. In 1976 that number had dropped to 19%, but by 1993, it had risen to 25%, close to the 1969 high. The two principle issues over which students of the early 1990s protested were multiculturalism and the rising costs of college.

These issues lead into the more recent past of student activism beginning in the mid-1990s: the anti-sweatshop movement and what has followed. The media called the campus anti-sweatshop movement of the late 1990s the largest wave of student activism since students rallied for divestment in South Africa in the mid-1980s (Appelbaum &
Dreier, 1999; Cleeland, 1999; Greenhouse, 1999). The issue came to the public’s attention in August of 1995, when a factory in El Monte, California, where 71 Thai immigrants were being held in servitude, was raided. In 1996, television personality Kathie Lee Gifford acknowledged that the line of clothing bearing her name, sold by Wal-Mart, was made by children in Honduran sweatshops. Robert Reich, former Secretary of Labor, had been trying to bring this issue to the forefront, but had been unsuccessful prior to these events (Appelbaum & Dreier, 1999). As Bullert (2000, p. 405) reported even though there had been studies, surveys, and organizing for seven years prior, it “took a celebrity and a fired Nike worker to put a human face on the sweatshop issue and escalate the conflict in the mainstream American media.”

The issue hit American campuses in the fall of 1997, when the group Students Against Sweatshops was formed at Duke University in Durham, North Carolina, by Tico Almeida, a student who had participated that summer in an internship program organized by the AFL-CIO. During that summer Almeida had worked with the United Needle and Textile Workers Union (UNITE), and was asked by organizer Ginny Coughlin to research the connections between sweatshops and collegiate apparel (Featherstone, 2002). Upon his return to North Carolina for the fall semester, Almeida was able to gather a group of like-minded students to raise awareness on campus of the use of sweatshop labor in the manufacture of the sweatshirts worn by most of the students at Duke.

The Duke University Students Against Sweatshops campaigned for a code of conduct that would require manufacturers of Duke apparel to maintain safe, independently monitored workplaces, where workers were free to organize (Featherstone, 2002). By getting the university administration to agree to sponsor such a code the students earned a victory that placed Duke in the number one position on the 1998 list of the top 10 activist schools published by *Mother Jones* magazine (Wieczorek, 1998).
The anti-sweatshop movement ushered in and expanded a new round of student activism nationwide, as students took up additional causes in support of labor on their campuses, including the unionization of janitors (Malcolm, 1999) and the payment of a “living wage” to such employees (Hoover, 2001). These labor issues spread in 2001 to a movement to urge divestment from Myanmar (Burma), where American companies were accused of supporting an oppressive military regime (Kellogg, 2001). Additionally, in 2001, students responded when 1960s radical-turned-conservative David Horowitz utilized the media by taking out an advertisement in a number of campus newspapers entitled “Ten Reasons Why Reparations for Slavery is a Bad Idea—and Racist Too” (Brownstein, 2001; Horowitz, 2001b). Horowitz approached 47 college newspapers with the ad; 19 rejected it, 7 printed it without apologies, 3 printed it and later apologized, the remaining 17 did not respond to him (Kumar, 2001c). At Duke University, one of the institutions where the advertisement was printed, minority student groups led a protest against the campus newspaper, The Chronicle, and planned a list of demands for university administrators (Kumar, 2001b). On April 4, 2001, senior administrators responded to the student protesters with a full page statement in The Chronicle (Keohane, Lange, Snyderman, & Trask, 2001) which addressed issues of a free press, student rights, and a commitment to diversity.

As the United States prepared for war in Iraq in 2003, activists began their demonstrations for peace and protests against military involvement. Students held war-related events on their campuses (Lin, 2003a) and lent their voices to events in the wider community (Rohrs, 2003d). On March 5, students at more than 400 institutions participated in a “Books Not Bombs” protest (Featherstone, 2003). Similar rallies took place on March 20, the first day of the war (Lin, 2003c). Protests continued during the spring, and included a rally at the US Capitol in Washington, D.C., at which students trained in civil disobedience techniques participated and were arrested for their beliefs (Young, 2003).
Student activism has been, still is, and most likely will continue to be, an important part of both the culture of higher education as well as the culture of the United States. Ohles (1968, p. 101) says “the roots of conflict in the university are ancient and honorable,” and DeGroot (1998, p. 4) states that “When history repeats itself, it does so in stereo and living colour.” In 1971 Esler wrote “They will be back—and they will make a difference” (p. 304), a statement which is as accurate in 2007 as it was in 1971.

Historical perspectives of student activism

Historical examinations of student activism, as seen in the preceding sections, have focused on topics in different ways, from the general to the specific. Rudy (1996) looks at activism on American campuses from their colonial beginnings through the 1960s only as it relates to times of crisis and war. Relying greatly on other works of history, Rudy’s book surveys activism at US institutions of higher education in the periods before and after the American Revolution, the Civil War, both World Wars, and Vietnam. Other issues are mentioned, but the focus on this book is singular and descriptive. Altbach (1974) provides a similar overview of multiple periods of student activism. Rather than focus on a single issue however, Altbach has used written records of student organizations and relates the history through the founding, changes, and dissolution of such organizations. Altbach’s history is skewed towards the history of left-wing liberal and radical groups, as he found these groups have left more adequate records and documents than their peers on the conservative right. In this aspect Altbach is like many scholars who have written the history of student activism in the United States, especially that of the 1960s: they focus on the Left to the exclusion of all else (Andrew III, 1997). In his history of Young Americans for Freedom, Andrew (1997) disproves Altbach’s notion that groups on the right have not left adequate records by giving a thorough history of the most influential right-wing student and youth organization of the twentieth century.
Some works examine particular historical periods, going into greater detail about shorter lengths of time than Rudy and Altbach do in their surveys. Both Brax (1981) and Eagan (1981) chose the decade of the 1930s as their focus. Brax, in the shorter of these two works, has written mainly about the anti-war movement, with scant details about the backstage politics of the annual Strikes Against War, which took place between 1933 and 1937. Eagan gives a much more detailed description of the involvement of the communist and socialist parties and the politics that played a part in the development of student activism during the 1930s. The national political groups were not only involved with the rise of student activist organization in the 1930s, but were also instrumental in the eventual disintegration of the movement and the national student organizations. Billingsley (1999) has also chosen a specific time as a focus, as well as a specific part of the country. While not a work specifically focused on the campus activists themselves, his book looks at how the state legislature of North Carolina took steps to attempt a preemptive strike against political and social activism taking hold on the campuses of the University of North Carolina, specifically the flagship campus in Chapel Hill, which was viewed as a “tax-supported institution...neglecting to impart conservative values and traditional social views” (Billinglsey, 1999, p. 19).

Most relevant to this study are those works that use the words of the student activists themselves. These works include autobiographical works as well as collections of student writings. Todd Gitlin has written an autobiographical history (1987) as has Jo Freeman (2004). Both former student activists, who have since the 1960s earned Ph.D.s and entered the academic world, use historical sources, intertwined with personal remembrances. Gitlin’s is a study of one organization, Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), from its genesis to its disintegration. Freeman’s is a history of one institution, the University of California, Berkeley, where she was a student and was educated as a student activist. Gitlin and Freeman have written with a hindsight that comes years after such a period of time, a hindsight that is affected by their further education and years
within the ivory tower. In contrast to their works Kunen (1969) has left to future
generations a day-by-day account of the movement at Columbia University during the
late 1960s. His version of that period’s history is personal and informal, written from the
point of view of an undergraduate caught up in the emotion of the moment. There is no
scholarly analysis or interpretation in Kunen’s work. Martinez (2002) has also provided a
look at the actual words and feelings of student activists by collecting letters written by
participants of the 1964 Freedom Summer in Mississippi. These students had come to
various parts of Mississippi in 1964 in order to register the black residents to vote.
Through the collection of these letters, written at the time, Martinez has given to
posterity a more varied view of student activism and its meanings than has Kunen in
what is, at times, little more than a one-man manifesto. Like Kunen’s book, Martinez has
provided the words of witnesses and participants, but no analysis or interpretation of
those words. In a similar vein Berger, Boudin, and Farrow (2005) have collected the
writings of modern-day activists. Their *Letters from Young Activists* is not all written by
students, but the writers who are not students are contemporaries of the student activists
of the late 1990s and early 2000s. Set up in three sections, this volume addresses its
letters to past generations of activists, to the current movements, and to future activists,
recognizing the on-going relationship between students/youth and activism in the United
States as well as the activists’ own views of the roles they play.

In a work examining one of the most recent trends in student activism,
Featherstone (2002) writes about the anti-sweatshop movement from its origins in 1996-
1997 up to the end of 2001. Featherstone reports on the 2001 conference of United
Students Against Sweatshops (USAS), the theme of which was “solidarity.” Featherstone
states that the organization (USAS) “has shown that it is possible for consumers to work
effectively, not on behalf of workers, but in solidarity with their struggles” (Featherstone,
2002, p. 84). While this work does a balanced job of reporting the history from the
viewpoints of a variety of students, labor leaders, and others, it is a report. Featherstone
is a journalist, and as such does her job well in presenting the facts to the reader, in an organized and understandable manner. This is not, however, a work of scholarly analysis and interpretation.

Part history and part developmental study of those involved is the longitudinal study by Whalen and Flacks (1989) on students involved in violent disruptions in the Isla Vista neighborhood, bordering the University of California, Santa Barbara, during 1970. This study provides a history of what happened during the riots in April and May of that year, then compares students involved in the protests with those not involved, both at the time of the protests and ten years later. Those involved in the Isla Vista riots saw themselves as participating in a revolution and believed it was their responsibility to be revolutionaries. These same individuals were then found to be shocked by the prevalence of the New Right and the neoconservative politics that emerged in the 1980s. They viewed the students of that period as relatively conservative and apathetic. This study is a good example of an in-depth look at one campus and its surrounding community, the issues involved in a certain time period, and the students who took part on all sides of the issues. In examining these behaviors and conditions, Whalen and Flacks have given scholars of student activism a model to follow. Their study, and its findings, lead into the next category of student activism literature, which describes the characteristics of the students who take part in campus activist movements.

Studies ascribing characteristics and meaning

Antecedents of student activism

Studies suggest four motivators for student activism: political (including issues of war and peace); campus life; ethical/moral (including civil and human rights); and the environment. In the literature surveyed for this study politics played the most prominent part though, in many cases, the lines between motivating factors were not completely clear. In all student movements the immorality of the university administration is stressed by the activists, emphasizing a sense of moral superiority of youth over the older
generation and their ability to effect social transformation (Flacks, 1970). Whether this sense came about because of the influence of Dr. Spock (Ellsworth & Burns, 1970), a castration complex (Trent, 1970), or is a manifestation of the Oedipus complex (Feuer, 1969) is not agreed upon.

Throughout the twentieth century students have been concerned with the political situation in the United States and the world (Altbach & Cohen, 1990; Vellela, 1988; Soule, 1987). In Eagan’s (1981) historical account of student activism in the 1930s, the influence of both the Communist and Socialist parties on the student organizations of the day is a recurring theme of the period. Anti-war groups in the 1930s were formed in response to “what appeared to be the world’s rush towards war” (Brax, 1981, p. 28). The “incessant, overt pressure” (Wechsler, 1971, p. 287) of war was another political factor of this first major period of student activism in the twentieth century (Brax, 1981). War would again become a hot political issue in the 1960s. Whether there is mention of the war in Vietnam specifically (Ellsworth & Burns, 1970; Laqueur, 1973), or of a non-specific dread or machine (Cottle, 1973; Vellela, 1988), war—and more importantly, its antithesis, peace (Altbach & Kelly, 1973)—is an issue of ongoing importance for American college and university students. Students driven by political ideals have taken democracy seriously, using grassroots protest against what they see as glaring injustices in the world (Flacks, 1970).

By wanting to transform a society that is impersonal and crass into a qualitatively sustaining and satisfying community (Langton, 1970), student protesters frequently champion participatory democracy (Glazer, 1971). This was particularly true for black students active in the civil rights movement. These were students who became active because they no longer wanted to adjust their lives to a system that did not give them equal status (Walker, 1963). Padgett’s (1968) “new breed” of student activists viewed themselves as being swallowed up by big government, big business, big unions, big debts, and big educational institutions. In the 1990s, students shared this feeling,
believing that they were part of a “generation that was raised on images of politics and government gone sour: Vietnam, Watergate, the $500 billion S&L scandal, and Iran-Contra” (Nelson & Cowan, 1994, p. xv).

Closer to home than Vietnam, Watergate, or Iran for most students is life on the campus of their college or university, the second largest factor contributing to activism. In the 1960s, the ideal of participatory democracy included student participation in the day-to-day operations of the university (Gottschalk, 1987). Students of that time asserted that this was not only a desire, but a right (Bloustein, 1968). Students experienced frustration in this period of transition in their lives from dependence to independence (Lipset, 1973), and by what they saw as arbitrary administrative decisions being made, as well as the moral stance of *in loco parentis* as practiced on most campuses (Ellsworth & Burns, 1970; Altbach & Kelly, 1973). Laqueur (1973) calls this period the crisis of the university. Students saw themselves as trapped in the university by outside forces, whether it was the government (to avoid the draft) or their parents (Brewster, 1970). There was a general dissatisfaction with college and the education they received (Fox, 1970). Complaints included institutional size (too big), the absence of faculty academic counseling or contact, the lack or restriction of academic and political freedom (Ellsworth & Burns, 1970; Lipset, 1973), and unreasonable or ill-planned course loads (Ellsworth & Burns, 1970; Altbach & Kelly, 1973). Adding to this was the financial burden most students experienced at paying ever-increasing tuition, additional fees, high rents to live on or near campus, and exorbitant book prices (Ellsworth & Burns, 1970; Altbach & Kelly, 1973). These feelings of anger and dissatisfaction were not only focused on the institution, but expanded to include an overall general feeling of ethical outrage (Keniston, 1971). In the 1930s, Brax (1981) says the movement to liberalize student attitudes towards morality, sex, and manners contributed to campus unrest, perhaps showing a conservative attitude on the part of some students.
Student activism did not remain on campus, or focus only on issues of campus life or government action. Altbach and Cohen (1990) found that campus activism is often sparked by issues with a clear moral content, such as racism, race relations, civil rights, and women’s issues (Vellela, 1988; Lipset, 1973; Altbach & Kelly, 1973), even taking on poverty in Appalachia, or starvation in America, Biafra, and India (Cottle, 1973), divestment from South Africa, and working conditions in sweatshops (Featherstone, 2002).

The smallest factor discussed in the literature is the environment. Included under this heading is concern with the natural world (Ellsworth & Burns, 1970), which has made its way into students’ independent studies and class projects as a “shadow curriculum” (Mansfield, 1998), in which students utilize their academic work to put forth their activist ideas and principles. Also included is the topic of legalizing narcotics (Ellsworth & Burns, 1970).

Throughout the twentieth century many of the student movements have encompassed all four categories, bringing disparate groups together, and blurring boundaries between issues such as women’s rights, immigrant rights, environmental concerns, and human rights (Appelbaum & Dreier, 1999). This is especially true of the period under study here. The anti-sweatshop movement supported women’s rights, as most workers are women. One facet of the sweatshop issue that focused specifically on the oppression of women was the fact that many of the women working in sweatshops were being forced by their employers to take birth control so that they would not become pregnant and require time off or medical attention (Appelbaum & Dreier, 1999).

**Characteristics of student activists**

A majority of the literature on student activism reviewed here was published in the wake of the widespread campus movements of the 1960s. This is also true of related analytical work. Although this research seems dated when it is reviewed more than 30 years later, it offers a consistent picture of the student activists of the 1960s, which
remains relevant in looking at the profiles of current student bodies at the same and similar institutions.

Meier and Orzen (1971) cite a number of studies—Westby and Braungart (1966), Lubell (1969), Glazer (1969), Kahn and Bowers (1970), Block, et. al. (1969), Flacks (1967), and Peterson (1968)—which suggest that student activists tend to come from high social status backgrounds, have highly educated and politically liberal parents, are religiously liberal or non-religious, have intellectual or academic rather than vocational orientations to higher education, and are concentrated in the humanities or social sciences departments of their institutions. A study done at Ohio Wesleyan University (Freeman & Brubaker, 1971) compared student demonstrators to nondemonstrators using the Personal Orientation Inventory, an instrument designed to measure an individual’s level of positive health or self-actualization. It found that student demonstrators scored significantly higher than nondemonstrators on scales of time competence, being inner directed, self-actualizing value, existentiality, spontaneity, self-regard, self-acceptance, acceptance of aggression, and capacity for intimate contact. According to the authors, these results mean that student demonstrators are more self-actualized and display more of the personality characteristics which higher education purports to foster. The literature reports further that, student activists tend to display above average academic performance (Fox, 1970), have superior ability (Blau & Slaughter, 1971), tend to be among the better students in terms of academic measurements (Altbach & Kelly, 1973), and during the divestment movement of the 1980s, protesters seemed “more studious...then their predecessors” (Altbach & Cohen, 1990). A 1965 study of potential activists (entering freshmen) at three campuses of the University of California system (Davis, Los Angeles, and Santa Barbara) (Mock, 1971) showed these students to be more likely than their peers to prefer an educational situation where they set their own tasks, are engaged in independent reading, writing, and research, prefer classes that are seminars or group discussions, and want more informal access to staff. They also placed more importance
on the process of gaining self-insight, on their own literary or artistic work, research they would undertake, and less importance on parties and athletics.

From the studies cited here, it can be seen that students who are, or who become, campus activists are highly intelligent, can be categorized as self-starters, and operate on a higher level of self-actualization than the majority of their peers on campus. It should also be noted that studies looking at the nature of student activists’ personalities have been almost exclusively undertaken by quantitative researchers.

_Institutions that attract student activists_

What type of institution enrolls the students who become activists or demonstrators? Researchers have found that protests are most likely to occur in institutions that enroll relatively high percentages of students with high ability (Astin & Bayer, 1971). Hodgkinson (1970, cited in Blau & Slaughter, 1971) found that a greater number of demonstrations took place at universities granting Ph.D.s than at undergraduate colleges. Blau and Slaughter themselves state that activists seriously interested in politics are undoubtedly more attracted to large rather than to small institutions, inasmuch as many small colleges are less cosmopolitan and further removed from the mainstream of intellectual and political life. Altbach and Kelly (1973) also state that campus political consciousness is more prevalent at larger, more prestigious universities, and Altbach (1981) says that this was true even of the nascent student movement in the earliest decades of the twentieth century. Geographically all of these authors seem to agree that student activism has been more prevalent at institutions in the North and the West, than at those in the South. Articles and studies have been written about student activists and activism at Fisk University (Lawson, 1971), the University of California (Berkeley, Davis, Los Angeles, and Santa Barbara) (Mock, 1971), the University of New Mexico (Meier and Orzen, 1971), Ohio Wesleyan University (Freeman & Brubaker, 1971), Dartmouth College and the University of Michigan (Hoge,
1971; Hoge & Ankney, 1982), Kent State University (Bigelow & Kennedy, 1974), and alumni activism at Harvard University (Hartman, 1987).

Activism does not cease when diplomas are conferred. Harvard’s alumni became involved in activist issues in 1986 (Hartman, 1987), when a group calling itself Alumni Against Apartheid ran a slate of three candidates for the University’s Board of Overseers. This board possesses formal approval powers over major initiatives of the Harvard Corporation which is made up of the President, the Treasurer, and five “fellows” who serve on the body for life. The group had a “well-organized campaign on the volatile issue of divestiture” and “the university administration electioneered against the petition candidates in a clumsy way” (Hartman, 1987, p. 59).

A study about the attitudes of Kent State University students toward their institution had been started two weeks prior to the National Guard shootings of May 4, 1970 (Bigelow & Kennedy, 1974), for programming purposes. After May 4, 1970, the post-test was sent to students’ homes, now with the purpose of examining the effects of this event. These researchers found that, among the students in the study, the concept of “Kent State University” was seen as more socially desirable following the tragedy, and it was believed that groups related to the University had achieved widespread prominence. At Ohio Wesleyan University in 1970, reactions to student demonstrations “ranged from those who saw the event as an ‘orgy of filthy hippies’ to those who viewed it as a sign of student involvement and commitment to that which they believed to be right” (Freeman & Brubaker, 1971, p. 462).

Mock’s study of potential activists (1971) looked at entering students at three campuses of the University of California system (Davis, Los Angeles, Santa Barbara) in relation to a fourth (Berkeley), on the issue of the Free Speech Movement (FSM). In the study, Mock found that students who identified themselves as pro-FSM exceeded those students who were neutral or anti-FSM in the areas of sympathy for, and potential participation in, activism. The issues covered included the promotion of faculty on the
basis of teaching, opposition to loyalty oaths, and greater student involvement in setting university policy. At Berkeley, 92% of the freshmen in 1965 were found to be sympathetic towards movements concerned with promoting greater student involvement in setting university policy, and 35% reported that they would actively participate (Mock, 1971).

Recurring themes in student activism

In the above overview of the interactions and drama that make up the history of student activism in the United States, recurring themes are evident. From the 1765 denunciations of the Stamp Act, to the 2003 attempt at divestment from Israel, students are paying attention to their government and the administrators of their universities, and they are speaking out, as is their right in a democracy (although in 1765 they were a bit premature). Students want to play a part in the life of their college or university. Although student participation in decision-making was established early on in the history of American higher education (DeConde, 1971), it disappeared with the rise of the university and the professionalization of the faculty. Students, however, have not been, and will not be, content to sit back and let others direct all of their actions. In 1766 the issue was butter in the dining halls, in the 1830s it was a “tyrannical” faculty, in the 1890s came a cry for “student power,” which would be revived in the 1920s, 1930s, 1960s, 1980s, and 1990s. Whether the issue was the curriculum, the institution’s money, or the sweatshirts emblazoned with the university name and logo, students wanted their voices heard, and believed that it was their right to be heard.

Civil and human rights appears as a second recurring theme that is constant throughout this history. Abolitionist groups during the Civil War were the first manifestations of this concern. Over the course of the twentieth century this concern has ranged from the civil rights of Blacks (and other minority groups) in the United States, to the rights of black South Africans to govern themselves, and the rights of workers in Asia and Central America to organize themselves into labor unions. Activist tactics in
achieving these ends changed over time, from the peaceful non-violent sit-ins of Martin Luther King, Jr. to the militant, weapons-toting actions of the Black Panthers; from the shantytowns of the anti-apartheid groups to the peaceful sit-ins of the anti-sweatshop activists. Whatever the tactic, the goals of these actions were always the same: to achieve a voice for those who were not being heard. Those not being heard includes workers on the campus itself, custodial staff and cafeteria workers, who have been supported by concerned student groups from 1908 until 2001 (at Harvard University in both of those years).

War, peace, and the interaction of the United States on the global stage is a third recurring theme for campus activists. Although war and peace have only become major issues for American students since the beginning of the twentieth century, they are issues that have consistently been in the collective consciousness of the country since the U.S. entered World War I. Students have been on both sides of the issue, in support of, or in protest against, U.S. involvement in war. In some cases, sentiment switched as the tenor of war changed, such as in World War II when students protested any U.S. involvement until there was a direct attack upon American property in Pearl Harbor. When that occurred there was a direct American interest and protest subsided.

Altbach and Laufer (1972) state that since the 1920s civil rights and liberties, as well as war and disarmament, have been central to each phase of the student movement. They also state that the most important source of student disaffection is related to major contemporary social and political issues. Student activism, unrest, and protest, is part of the college and university culture in the U.S. In 1970 Bengston wrote that the assault on the established structure that occurred in the 1960s was no more characteristic, nor revolutionary than at other times and in other places in the modern era. In fact, Van Dyke (1998) writes, it was not the 1960s that were unusual, but the 1940s and 1950s, in that there was a lack of dissent and protest from American campuses.
Three of the most active periods on college campuses—the 1930s, 1960s, and mid-1990s—have been years in which America was emerging from the conservatism of a previous decade to embrace new, more liberal, agendas as set forth by Presidents Franklin Roosevelt, John Kennedy, and William Clinton. Whereas the periods of the 1920s, 1950s, 1970s and 1980s were periods that saw increases in wealth and materialism in American society, the result was backlash by American students who felt that their core values of neighborliness and liberty for all were overlooked. The generational nature of this cycle has been noted as significant (Bengston, 1970; Feuer, 1969) and lies in the core of student activism.

The role of media

It has been stated that the news media seek out and emphasize the most dramatic elements of a story. Print media, such as news magazines, emphasize stories that lend themselves to dramatic narrative, often illustrated with photos that stress the dramatic action (Gans, 1979). In this respect, the print media on a university campus are not much different from the print media in society at large. Just as a large metropolitan daily newspaper such as the New York Times devotes a large percentage of space to news of national and international interest (Applegate, 1971), and is read in virtually every region of the United States, a campus newspaper, especially on a large campus is the common denominator among students in various schools on various parts of campus (Freeman, 2004).

Studies of the relationship between activism (student or otherwise) and the media to date have focused on national movements and national media. Rojecki (1999) studied the antinuclear movement in the United States during the presidencies of Dwight D. Eisenhower, John F. Kennedy and Ronald Reagan. The data for Rojecki’s study came from the pages of The New York Times and Time magazine as well as from CBS Television News (in the later period only). While not a study of campus activism, or of students, this study utilizes news media as “the link among dissident movements,
citizens, and governments” (Rojecki, 1999, p. 2). In this study, campus media, specifically the daily newspaper will be viewed as the link among student activists, other students and faculty, and the administration.

A study that did focus on student activists and the media is Gitlin’s (1980) *The Whole World is Watching*. This study looks at how media—*The New York Times* and CBS News—contributed to (the book’s subtitle) “the making and unmaking of the New Left” (Gitlin, 1980). According to Gitlin, as SDS came to be more and more in the spotlight of the news media, members began playing to the cameras and reporters, eventually causing them to lose sight of why they got involved in the movement in the first place. He says that “…the media were far from mirrors passively reflecting facts found in the real world....The media reflection was more the active, patterned remaking performed by mirrors in a fun house” (Gitlin, 1980, p. 29).

Only one other study of student activism in relation to the media was found for citation here. Applegate’s 1971 dissertation entitled *A content analysis of student activism: The New York Times for the twelve-month period, July 1, 1969 - June 30, 1970*. This is a quantitative analysis of reports of student activism published during the time period of the title. In this study Applegate tallies the number of times various institutions are mentioned, categorizes the types of administrative reactions, as well as the issues involved. That no studies of student activism utilizing campus newspapers have been conducted within the qualitative tradition underlines the need for the study at hand.

The books by Rojecki and Gitlin were sources of inspiration for this study, and as such are taken as “jumping-off” points. This study does not seek to replicate either of them in any way. Neither Rojecki nor Gitlin looked at campus media, which have been cited as promoters of student activism, since ideology can be developed and promulgated in the pages of the student newspaper (Heath, 1970). The goal here is to bring the type of examination done in these two studies to the microcosm of a university campus. Gitlin (1980) lists the following routine norms of journalism, which apply to all media in all
locations: cover the event, not the condition; the conflict, not the consensus; the fact that advances the story, not the one that explains it. Events, conflicts, and facts that advance are to be found in the pages of The Chronicle, as will be seen in this study, just as often as they are in the papers of major cities and on national television newscasts. Because the media do not explore conditions, consensus, or explanations, it is the role of studies such as Rojecki’s, Gitlin’s, and this one, to take on those tasks.

Summary

As can be seen, there have been multiple studies undertaken on multiple topics about student activism in the United States up until the most recent period. The period that this study will cover, 1996-2004, is already part of the history of American higher education. Therefore, the facts, as presented in the media, are available and well-known. What has not yet been done is scholarly analysis of this period. This study intends to rectify that situation and add to the above literature in a meaningful way as a piece of qualitative research. The next chapter details how the study will be conducted.
Chapter 3 - Methodology and Methods

Introduction to the Study

This interpretivist case study examines the ways in which campus print media portray student activism. The interpretivist paradigm is set in an intersubjective world consisting of actors, their social construction of reality, and their search for meaning in a natural context (Gephart, 1999). In this case study the university campus is the natural context. Students, faculty and administrators are the actors, and the reality of the campus is viewed as it was presented on the pages of the institution’s daily newspaper. Activism on a university campus is an example of a contemporary phenomenon within a real-life context, the study of which lies within the boundaries of a case study as defined by Yin (1994).

Qualitative Research

This study utilizes methods of qualitative research, specifically discourse analysis within the frame of a case study. Denzin and Lincoln (2000) give the following as an initial definition of qualitative research: “a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. It consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible” (p. 3). Bogdan and Biklen (1998) list five characteristics that qualitative research contains: it is naturalistic; the data are descriptive; there is a concern with process; it is inductive; and “meaning” is of essential concern. Marshall and Rossman (1999) say that “qualitative researchers are intrigued with the complexity of social interactions as expressed in daily life and with the meanings the participants themselves attribute to these actions” (p. 2). Stake (1995) concurs, saying “qualitative researchers have pressed for understanding the complex interrelationships among all that exists” (p. 37).

This study is situated in the naturalistic, actual setting of student activism—a university campus, where the researcher was part of the campus during the time period under study. The researcher believes, as Johnson (1975) states, that “[i]t is only participation in society which allows one to make sense of the activities routinely
encountered in daily living” (p. 82). In this setting, the researcher has studied the portrayals of student activists on the campus in the pages of the campus newspaper. The words of the newspaper during the period 1996-2004 give form to both the student activists themselves, and to the meanings they make for themselves on their campus and in the world beyond through their actions. Smith (1993) says “interpretation of meaning is the central focus of social and educational inquiry” (p. 184). The data used have been obtained from campus print media reports about activist groups and performances on the campus of Duke University in Durham, North Carolina.

Site Selection

Duke University was selected for this study because it fit the following criteria: a four-year institution of higher education in the United States that had witnessed periods of campus activism in the twentieth century, including the first student sit-in of the anti-sweatshop movement of the late 1990s; and one that was accessible to the researcher. Duke is a private research university, enrolling some 6,000 undergraduate students and an approximately equal number of graduate and professional students. The student body is similar to that of other institutions that have experienced periods of uprising in the past, predominantly of upper middle-class status, and white. In addition, because Duke is nationally known, happenings on its campus are considered newsworthy beyond the campus, making it an example of Yin’s (1994) “exceptional case,” an extraordinary case study that captures attention.

As the researcher, I was also an employee of Duke, and a witness to student behaviors during the period of the late 1990s. I attended and observed events as a member of the Duke community. In choosing to use my employing institution as the study site, I heeded the advice of Foster (1970): “Clearly there are risks involved in any attempt at describing events at an institution other than one’s own...scholarly accounts of other campuses are rare” (pp. 29-30).
This study will not be anonymous, as many studies of this type generally are, primarily because of the use of print media as the primary data source. All names and incidents printed in the campus newspaper are already a matter of public record. I agree with the sentiment that anonymity in social science research is “a convention whose time has passed” (Wolfe, 2003, p. B13): it is better to be noticed, even if critically, than ignored; a qualitative case study (n=1) can be verified only against other observations made of the same research locale; changing names encourages a lack of realism; and, although protecting the names of individuals is valid because of privacy rights, institutions have no such rights because of their public responsibilities. Even a private university such as Duke has public responsibilities and plays a role on the public stage.

Theoretical Frame

The theoretical framework for this study is that of dramaturgy, a theory within the realm of everyday life sociology. Dramaturgy focuses upon the interactions or performances between individuals and groups within the boundaries of a social establishment or institution, such as interactions between students and administrators on a university campus. In each interaction, participants take on the role of performer (protagonist or auxiliary player), audience (present or absent), or director (who may also be one of the performers). Further details of these aspects need to be looked at, beginning with the group or institution within which the performances and interactions take place.

There are some general organizational properties of social groups and establishments that Goffman (1961) lays out: regulations for entering and leaving the group; having the capacity for collective action; a division of labor; having a socialization function; and a latent and manifest social function in the environing society. In this study, the concrete social establishment is the university. A specific type of concrete social establishment is the “total institution” (Goffman, 1957), an establishment which breaks down the barriers between places of sleep, work, and play, a category within which universities fall (Casey, 1969). The following characteristics of a total
institution are particularly apropos to a university (Goffman, 1957): It is populated by “inmates,” who have restricted contact with the world outside the walls and “staff” who operate on an eight hour day and are socially integrated into the outside world; the institution is a “social hybrid” (p. 48), being part residential community and part formal organization; there is an “institutional lingo” (p. 55), through which those in the group of “inmates” express the events that are crucial in their world; and,

Every total institution...seems to develop...a set of institutionalized practices through which staff and inmates come together closely enough so that each may have an image of the other that is somewhat favorable...(p. 74).

In this paper Goffman was speaking particularly about mental asylums, hence the terms “inmates” and “staff.” The traits of a social institution are not, however, exclusive to the asylum, but are found within other institutions as well, including institutions of higher education (if one considers “students” and “faculty/staff” in place of “inmates” and “staff”), especially those with residential campuses. Goffman was, in fact, concerned with exploring the possibility of there being definable parameters of interaction that were common to a great variety of settings (Drew & Wootton, 1988).

Within the boundaries of the institution individuals and groups participate in performances, activities of a given participant on a given occasion which serve to influence any other participants (Goffman, 1959). All participants in a performance have taken on a role. Goffman (1961) calls a role the activity the incumbent would engage in were he [sic.] to act solely based upon the normative demands upon someone in his position. Role, then, seems to be an ideal situation for Goffman, as he contrasts it with role performance, which is the actual conduct of a particular individual while on duty in his [sic.] position. Role performance is what is actually seen in interactions. Within the performance the role of others, the relevant audiences, is also considered. Each individual, or team, is not limited to one role throughout their lives. Each participant in a performance learns a set of related roles, shifting from audience member to auxiliary
performer, to protagonist as the situation demands (Hare, 1985), and each role may be occupied by more than one participant simultaneously (in the case of speakers, this implies a chorus) (Levinson, 1988). In this study the activists primarily take on the role of protagonist or auxiliary player. The institution, or administration, is primarily cast in the role of audience. There will be times, however, when these roles will switch, as when the activists seek a response from their audience and must themselves take on the audience role in order to listen to that response.

When considering activist organizations and movements as theater Hare (1985) states that

...the organizing ideas [surrounding the interactions or performances] are more complicated [than in normal day-to-day interaction], as in a “plot,” where phases of the activity over time are outlined with an indication of the major roles to be played and the nature of the group’s objective for interaction in an organization, such as a factory or university, the central idea takes the form of a “script” in which specific tasks are described and the details of roles are given. (p. 8)

Hare and Blumberg (1988) believe that the use of theatrical concepts as metaphors for social interaction is most useful when a person’s (or group’s) actions are primarily intended to transmit an image to some onlooker. In these situations, where performers and audience can perceive each other mutually, a kind of interdependency of action will arise (Kendon, 1988) through the transmission of these images. The actors are intentionally and manipulatively role-playing for the purpose of managing others’ impressions of them (Adler, Adler, & Fontana, 1987), impressions that are in the self-interest of the actors to convey (Goffman, 1959). For activists, the conveyed impressions, or frames, that are produced “draw on existing popular constructions of social justice, democracy, or other discursive formulations that will have resonance...” (Naples, 2003, p. 105). The following section discusses the idea of “discourse” and discourse analysis in more detail.
Discourse Analysis

Burr (2003) states that the term “discourse” is used primarily in two senses: (1) to refer to a systematic, coherent set of images, metaphors, or symbols that construct an object in a particular way; and (2) to refer to the actual spoken interchanges between people. She states that discourse is not only spoken, but also written text, used to produce a particular version of events. Altheide (1996) defines discourse as a kind of framing, including and excluding certain points of view. This framing is part of the speakers’ (or writers’) cultural construction of reality and must be understood as relating to and defining this reality (Duranti, 1985). In this view, discourse is the means through which social life is played out (Sarangi & Coulthard, 2000). As Kasher (1985) states, “A single instance of natural language use involves, first and foremost, a human action, done on purpose, with words and sentences, within an appropriate context” (p. 238). Gee (1999) makes a distinction between “little d” discourse, which is language-in-use, and “big D” discourse, defined as “language-in-use melded integrally with non-language ‘stuff’ to enact specific identities and activities” (p. 7). Within these definitions language serves two primary functions: to scaffold the performance of social activities; and to scaffold human affiliation within cultures, social groups, and institutions (Gee, 1999).

With a foundation in language and communication, discourse analysis has been defined in the following ways. Burr (2003) states that discourse analysis is “the analysis of a piece of text in order to reveal either the discourses operating within it or the linguistic and rhetorical devices that are used in its construction” (p. 202). Willig (1999) calls discourse analysis “the process by which strategies of meaning construction are made visible [italics in original]” (p. 160). According to this definition, discourse analysis is concerned with the ways in which language constructs objects and experiences, including subjectivity and a sense of self (Willig, 1999). Discourse analysis is also concerned with the relationship between form and function (Robinson, 1985), as well as that between language and power (Burr, 2003). Discourse analysis has the
following goals: to illuminate and gain evidence for the theory of the domain, a theory that helps to explain how and why language works the way it does when put into action; and to contribute, in the context of understanding and intervention, to important issues and problems in an “applied” area (that is, education) (Gee, 1999). It focuses on the thread of language and related semiotic systems used in the situation network (Gee, 1999).

Historically, verbal and non-verbal communication has been studied quantitatively by researchers using content analysis (Berelson, 1952). As a form of quantitative analysis, content analysis is used to verify or confirm hypothesized relationships, rather than discover new or emergent patterns (Altheide, 1996) and concern is centered upon events for which the content is only or largely a convenient indicator, rather than on the content itself (Berelson, 1952). Discourse analysis, as a form of qualitative analysis, is related to what Berelson (1952) calls “qualitative content analysis,” which he describes as relatively less concerned with the content per se than with the content as a “reflection” of “deeper” phenomena (p. 123). Altheide (1996) calls this form of analysis “ethnographic content analysis,” and states that its use is oriented to documenting and understanding communication of meaning, as well as verifying theoretical relationships. As van Dijk (1985a) views this, instead of manifest units that are the concern of quantitative content analysis, discourse analysis approaches the underlying meanings of processes of “signification.”

This study will use the content, or discourse, published in the print media as a means of describing and understanding the roles played by student activists and their relationships with their audiences both on and off campus. The relationships, and the meaning given to them, are the deeper phenomena sought in this study, along with the ways in which the campus print media communicate those phenomena. Because there are too many different institutions of higher education and far too many newspapers in the
United States to undertake analysis of the entire population, it is necessary to narrow the scope of media from which the discourse will be drawn.

**Data Collection Methods**

The data for this study came from documents in the form of articles, editorials and letters to the editor published in *The Chronicle*, Duke University’s daily campus newspaper. According to Altheide (1996) “documents are studied to understand culture—or the process and the array of objects, symbols, and meanings that make up social reality shared by members of a society” (p. 2). Denzin and Lincoln (1994) call written texts and cultural artifacts “mute evidence,” where important meanings about the past can be found. Hodder (1994) states that text “unlike the spoken word, endures physically and thus can be separated across space and time from its author, producer, or user” (p. 393). Hodder goes on to categorize texts into diametric pairs which are useful for this study. Text can be written from first-hand experience or from secondary sources, solicited or unsolicited, edited or unedited, and anonymous or signed. Stake (1995) believes that documents best serve as records of activity that the researcher could not observe directly. Blau (1964) states that written communication can be preserved through time in its exact form. Because of this, he believes that written texts make possible transmissions of cultural heritage and accumulated knowledge to succeeding generations more fully and accurately than oral communication. In this study, because I was not able to observe many of the incidents directly, I have chosen to analyze representations of the incidents as presented by the campus newspaper.

Analysis focused on articles, editorials, and letters (hereafter referred to collectively as “articles”) taken from *The Chronicle*, Duke University’s daily newspaper. Gottschalk (1950) writes that newspaper reports and dispatches are the most reliable type of public report (those documents reaching a wide audience), as the time-lapse between events and the recording of them is short.
The publication of mass media is “a general social process...the creation and cultivation of knowingly shared ways of selecting and viewing events and aspects of life” (Gerbner, 1985, p. 15). It is important to remember that this “knowingly shared way” is based in a situational and behavioral context (George, 1959). Because Duke’s newspaper is published daily, Monday through Friday, during the academic year, and the campus, at least in this study, is considered a micro community, useful information is disseminated to the local masses, almost immediately. Along with news articles, the letters and editorials that are printed daily keep issues in the eyes of the readers for as long as those issues are deemed important by the social establishment. Using the institutional newspaper follows Goffman’s belief (1957) that within an institution the newspaper, or “house organ” (p. 75) is the medium through which some of the most universal forms of institutional ceremony take place. These reports are, however, based in the situational context of a single campus.

Using the above range of articles from The Chronicle adheres to George’s (1985) belief that a study’s sample should be large enough to permit development of stable patterns and assessment of the significance of differences in the distributions of characteristics. The articles gathered for this study were published over the course of 8 full academic years (1996-2004), along with two additional semesters (spring of 1996 and fall of 2004). George also believes that the units of analysis should correspond to units of production as much as possible. In this study both the units of analysis and the units of production are articles in the print media.

Limitations

The print media should not be taken as the single version of events, as journalists “normally and regularly...select certain versions of reality over others” (Gitlin, 1980, p. 4). Gottschalk (1950) writes that the record need not be actually what happened, but should be as close to what actually happened as can be learned from a critical examination of the best available sources. The articles analyzed were written as
eyewitness accounts or as responses to those accounts by participants (letters to the editor), thus making them as reliable and credible as possible. As Sharma (1992) states, perhaps optimistically, “Truth and objectivity are the two main essentialities of a newspaper” (p. 6). Access to these texts is, as Hodder (1994) states, “easy and low cost, because the information provided may differ from and may not be available in spoken form, and because texts endure and thus give historical insight” (p. 393).

The authors of the articles analyzed for this study have all presented versions of “truth” to their readers. The specific representations from these sources are “set in play along particular circuits which open up for readers different kinds of possibilities for their alignment with and response to the texts” (Hartley & Montgomery, 1985, p. 238). As the researcher, I am but one reader responding to these texts through the analysis that will take place in this study. My situatedness must be kept in mind, for each text may have its own independent existence, “its meaning and significance for the research act will depend on the researcher’s focus” (Altheide, 1996, p. 2). The analysis performed will come from the context and situatedness of one person, the researcher.

This study is limited in that it examines what took place at one institution through what was reported in the campus media. The choice of Duke University as the case for this study illustrates Yin’s concept of the use of an “exceptional case” (1994). Duke University is nationally known, and therefore captures the public’s attention in a way that a smaller, lesser-recognized institution could not. Because of the use of a single campus, generalization of the results of this study may not be possible, although the connection of this case to the history of student activism in the United States—on local, national, and global levels—does make it more likely to have application to other institutions and other studies.

Analytical Framework

In the analysis of the data, the print media has been treated as the “script,” the “stage,” or as an “actor,” depending on the type of article. For news stories, the author
Porportals of Student Activism in Print Media

Will take the role of playwright, scripting what will be seen by the audience. “From the media point of view, news consists of events which can be recognized and interpreted as drama...” (Gitlin, 1980, p. 146). On the editorial and letters pages, the newspaper itself is considered the stage, where opinion and letter writers will stage their monologues and soliloquies, which at times will be dialogues with other writers and even dialogues with the performances written about by the news reporters. When staff editorials are cited, *The Chronicle* is considered to be speaking as one of the actors in the drama, as these pieces serve as the voice of the newspaper, unattributed to any single individual reporter or editor. The goal of the analysis is to show that the articles reflect social activity, and that the categories used are useful ways to capture the “dramaturgical character” of the action (Altheide, 1996).

Bentele (1985) provides four steps in the systematic content analysis of media (primarily film and television, but easily adaptable to print): a) observation of materials; b) development of a more or less comprehensive category scheme; c) coding of the materials on the basis of a number of intermediate procedures; d) evaluation of the coded data, analysis and interpretation. For analysis of print media specifically, Berelson (1952) gives the following list of prominence devices to be used in analysis: space, location, page placement, size of headline type, type face, use of color, and use of illustrations. This list may or may not be as useful in 2006 as it was in 1952 as the use of the internet for delivering news has rendered many of these terms meaningless. Because most articles for this study were retrieved from on-line archives, I was not able to examine these devices for every article.

**Data Analysis**

Analysis of the data was performed simultaneously with collection, which enabled the study to be focused and shaped as it proceeded (Glesne, 1999) and continuously interpreted “on first sighting and again and again” (Stake, 1994, p. 242). Through this method, it became clear from the developing description where more data
were needed to fill in the details. The use of this preliminary analysis allowed later data
collection to focus on those missing pieces. Preliminary analysis also provided the
opportunity to re-read the texts with emerging ideas and themes firmly in mind (Bogdan

As data were collected, analysis followed the six phases outlined by Marshall and
Rossman (1999): (a) organizing the data; (b) generating categories, themes, and patterns;
(c) coding the data; (d) testing the emergent understandings; (e) searching for alternative
explanations; and (f) writing the report. In organizing the articles—documents were
ordered (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998): they were filed chronologically, in order to be read as
a story, and each was also categorized according to the issue it discussed (labor, identity,
world politics, etc.). All items were read, and reread, to build familiarity with all pieces
of data. This sense of familiarity aided in the second phase—generating categories,
themes, and patterns.

In the generating categories phase pieces of text from the data were identified as
having similarities. These similarities, which can be called buckets or baskets (Marshall
& Rossman, 1999), are repositories into which other pieces of text can be placed, leading
to the categories becoming themes and patterns. These themes were critical for the
development of codes for the data, a crucial step in data analysis (Bogdan and Biklen,
1998). Through coding, the data were “sorted and defined and defined and sorted”
(Glesne, 1999, p. 135). Once I had determined that all of the possible sorting and
defining had been completed, the next two phases (testing emergent understandings and
searching for alternative explanations) were put into play.

During these two phases, according to Marshall and Rossman (1999), the
researcher’s challenging of ideas and themes takes place as the data are explored for
negative instances (testing emergent understandings) and searched for explanations other
than those that have been established (searching for alternative explanations). This
challenging of the data and searching for negative cases serves to improve the
trustworthiness of the research (Glesne, 1999). Overall trustworthiness of the study will be judged according to LeCompte and Preissle’s (1993) five standards.

**Methodology/Trustworthiness**

This study was designed as a case study utilizing discourse analysis rooted in a tradition of qualitative research, what Altheide (1996) calls “ethnographic content analysis.” In the tradition of qualitative research, the researcher can be called a *bricoleur* (Denzin, 1994), someone who fashions meaning and interpretation out of the ongoing experience of someone or some group. In this study the relationships between student activists and other groups on campus, particularly the administration, have been studied. The trustworthiness of this study can be judged according to the five standards laid out by LeCompte and Preissle (1993): (1) fairness, the balanced representation of the multiple realities in a situation; (2) ontological authenticity, a fresh “more sophisticated” understanding of something; (3) educative authenticity, a new appreciation of those understandings; (4) catalytic understanding, courses of action are supported by the inquiry; and (5) tactical authenticity, potential benefits of the inquiry to all concerned.

**The Role of the Researcher**

In acknowledging and accepting membership in the community under study, I kept in mind Bogdan and Biklen’s advice (1998): “who you are to the various subjects and what that means to them is important to try to figure out when negotiating fieldwork relations as well as for interpreting the data you gather” (p. 84). During the time period of this study I was employed by Duke University (the research site) as Assistant Director of the Office of Study Abroad. In this role I had contact with students, faculty, and other administrators. My student contact involved advising on study abroad options, and with most students this did not create the same kind of relationship as would develop with an instructor in the course of a semester (or longer). Because of this, no *quid pro quo* situation existed, removing the threat of conflict of interest. Glesne (1999) states a view
on this issue: “as a researcher, ever conscious of your verbal and nonverbal behavior, you are more than usually attuned to your behavior and its impact” (p. 41).

It is also relevant to the study to disclose my political stance. I hold many liberal views, and thus tend to sympathize more with the left-leaning activists than the right. As an undergraduate in the late 1980s I participated in sit-ins to end apartheid, “Take Back the Night” marches to promote awareness of violence against women, environmental events, and AIDS awareness education. As a professional at Duke, I was a member of Students, Administrators, and Faculty for Equality on Campus (SAFE), a program which provides safe areas for gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered students to discuss issues of concern. In recognizing my subjectivities, and acknowledging them, I followed the advice of Glesne (1999): “Watch for when they [subjectivities] creep into your consciousness, be alert for how they take over the questions you ask, and write about them, continuing to look for them as your research progresses” (pp. 106-107).

**Timeline of the Dissertation Research and Reporting**

- **May 2003**  
  Coursework in program completed
- **August 2003**  
  Written exams (comprehensives) completed
- **December 2003**  
  First version of dissertation proposal submitted (oral exams)
- **March 2004**  
  Second version of proposal submitted
- **March 2005**  
  Third version of proposal submitted to new committee
- **April 2005**  
  Advancement to candidacy
- **April-October 2005**  
  Collect data
- **October 2005-**  
  Collect data
- **October 2006**  
  Collect data
- **November 2006**  
  Draft of complete dissertation to Committee Chair
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Chapter 4 – Setting the Scene: Student activism at Duke
as reported by The Chronicle in the period 1996-2004

Introduction

This chapter presents the issues that inspired student activism on the campus of Duke University during the period 1996-2004. The issues during this time period on Duke’s campus are related to the issues presented in the literature as cited in Chapter 2. I have chosen to present this material chronologically, according to when the first article within each category appeared. Presentation of the articles in this manner should give the reader a good idea of the events that took place on Duke’s campus during this time, as well as the nature of the general reporting in The Chronicle. This chapter is intended to set the stage on which the debates of the period were played out, showing the reader the scenery and general plot structure. Chapters 5-7 present an analysis of the players—the student activists—and the three categories of roles in which they presented themselves according to the reporters of The Chronicle.

Articles selected

In order to assemble all of the various articles published in The Chronicle during the period 1996-2004, I undertook a search of certain keywords using the online archives of the newspaper (http://www.chronicle.duke.edu, http://www.dukechronicle.org). The initial searches used the following keywords: “activist” or “activism,” “protest” or “protester,” “sweatshops,” “students against sweatshops,” and “mt. olive” (because some labor activism during this time focused specifically on the Mt. Olive Pickle Company). The articles retrieved in the initial searches were then followed up with additional keyword searches, drawn from recurring words or phrases that appeared in the first group: “gothic queers,” “David Horowitz,” and “effortless perfection.” In order to determine which articles were relevant to this study, I sorted the articles according to the
following series of questions, based on the decision modeling technique described by Miles and Huberman (1994): Was the article found in one of the keyword searches?; Is the article about activism, or written by an activist?; Does the article describe student involvement in activism, or was it written by a student activist (as opposed to articles reporting on visits of “professional” activists to campus)?; Is the article about Duke students involvement in activism, or about the influence of Duke student activism?

These questions were designed to eliminate articles describing “professional” activism, or speeches by activists, past or present, on campus, as those articles seldom described events or action on campus led by students. They also eliminated any articles reporting on student activism on other campuses if there was no reference to similar events at Duke. Because of the use of keyword searches, it is possible that not every relevant article published during the time period under study was retrieved. What was retrieved, however, is representative of articles published in *The Chronicle* during these years.

In total, 443 individual articles were included in this study, ranging in date from November 11, 1994 through February 25, 2005. Further information about the articles can be found in the Appendix.

The articles have been placed in four broad categories: general student activism, which includes those articles that cover multiple movements or topics as well as historical reports about student activism at Duke; identity/cultural issues, which include gender, general (or multiple) identity issues, sexual orientation, African-American, Asian-American, conservative, Muslim, and Latino issues; labor and human rights issues, which include general activism supporting labor, the students against sweatshops movement, the Mt. Olive pickle boycott, and the outsourcing of linen services to Angelica; and world issues, which include U.S. politics, protests against the World Trade Organization (WTO), the war in Iraq, the Israel/Palestine debate, and issues of human rights in Sudan and Tibet. Many of the issues in this period share aspects of more than
of these categories, and all decisions on the placement of issues within categories were mine alone as the researcher.

**General student activism**

*General observations throughout the period of study*

Although this study examines a time period that begins in 1996, a commentary from 1994 helps to set the stage. The headline of this column is “Speak Out poses question: ‘Is student activism dead?’” (David, 1994). Indeed, at the time this column was published, the writer surmised that the answer to that question was a resounding “maybe.” David cites student groups as using “quieter, more diverse activist approaches” (¶14), a view which is illustrated throughout the period of the late 1990s and the turn of the millennium. In articles that address student activism in a general sense, this is not the only time we see this question posed.

A column in 1998 asks “Where have all the activists gone?” (Stroup, 1998a), stating that students seem less willing to commit themselves to the role of activists, that the issues are fewer and less tangible, and that the means to achieve change are no longer dominated by active protests as was the case in the 1960s and 1970s. In 1998 Duke was awarded a number one ranking by *Mother Jones* magazine in that publication’s annual list of the top activist colleges and universities in the United States based on Duke’s national prominence in the anti-sweatshop movement. An editorial in *The Chronicle* was titled with the question “We’re number one?” (1998), and a related article led off by saying that even the student activists themselves doubted the validity of that ranking (Sostek, 1998a). Some students doubted the doubters, and with strong beliefs that Duke did have an activist population wrote letters saying that Duke “is a place where students have held sit-ins over sweatshops and where people believe so strongly in something that they are willing to print up thousands of flyers speaking out against abortion, only to have them removed by another group that felt just as strongly” (Fearnnow, 1999, ¶1). It
was even suggested that the activists on campus were the same people, whether they espoused liberal or conservative causes: “let’s call them preservatives…Having found a group to which they feel they ‘belong,’ they simply spin progressive or conservative rhetoric, in part to prove to the other members of their group just how progressive or conservative they are” (Schaefer, 2003a, ¶ 2-3).

A feature article in 2003 questioned activism on Duke’s campus again. Five years after being ranked as the number one activist university in the country, the article asked “how active are students on this campus now?” (Nicholson, 2003, ¶ 6). Student activists on both ends of the political spectrum were interviewed for this article, as were faculty with a range of political beliefs. The conclusion reached was that there were not a large number of activist students, but a small community trying to educate their peers on a campus that is seen as not encouraging to student activism. Even if activism is not encouraged, columnist Lucas Schaefer writes that “We know how to protest” (2003b, ¶ 2).

You see those anti-war protesters blocking the traffic circle last year? That was a protest all right. But, unfortunately, it wasn’t exactly a communication coup. “We’re doing it to spread awareness about the war,” the protesters told us. But did it accomplish anything? Well, it made the protesters look dogmatic, and it alienated a few people with the intensity of its rhetoric who otherwise might have agreed with the anti-war cause. (¶ 2)

Manning (2003a) attempted further analysis by providing her answers to the question of why more students at Duke were not politically active. She outlined three reasons: political groups on campus are inaccessible because they narrowly define and marginalize the rest of the campus community; political groups think that the average students recognize the meanings behind their actions (which, Manning says, they do not always); and there are few or no options between the “arch-conservative” and the “neo-
radical” groups (Manning, 2003a, ¶ 9). Another column listed the recounting of a student activist group meeting among the “nerdiest conversations” (Napoli, 2004b, ¶ 5) that one overhears on the Duke University campus buses.

The final question regarding student activism at Duke raised during this period came in October of 2004, and was not asking about activism, but its antithesis, apathy (Gillum, 2004a). Gillum examined student apathy with regards to published articles in The Chronicle as well as some higher education literature, much of which has also been cited in this study. His conclusion: apathy is overrated as a campus problem; activism has evolved since the 1960s and it has not disappeared, but may have even increased.

**Historical perspectives of past activism at Duke (April 1998 – September 2004)**

Duke University has asked where its contemporary activists were, but there is no question about the role on campus of student activists of the past. Activists existed at various points in Duke’s past, and continue to be remembered by reporters at The Chronicle. Readers of the campus newspaper often find stories of past student activism, especially on anniversaries of significant student protests. In 1998 an article from 1968 was reprinted, which reported on the Silent Vigil, held on Duke’s main quadrangle in response to the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr. (Applebone, 1998). According to this analysis, April 5, 1968 marks the beginning of the “activism of modern universities” (¶ 7) at Duke. The vigil of April 1968 marked a turning point in the relations of black and white students to each other and to the university. Douglas Knight, president of Duke from 1963 to 1969, reflected that during his tenure “Duke was uncomfortable with the issues of black citizens in this country and their role in the University” (Gerst, 2003, ¶ 4). On February 13, 1969, 67 black students took over the Allen Building, Duke's main administrative building which houses the offices of the president and provost. This is an event that continues to live on in the institutional memory of Duke and will be touched upon further in the discussion of African-American student issues below.
While not a student issue *per se*, the Bassett Affair of 1903 would have a positive effect on university life and would grant student activists many of the freedoms they have enjoyed on campus over the past 40 years. John Spencer Bassett was a white professor at Trinity College (forerunner of Duke University), head of the honor society, and in 1901, founder of *The South Atlantic Quarterly*, a journal focusing on current events. In the October 1903 issue of the journal, Bassett praised Booker T. Washington, referring to him as the “‘greatest man, save General Lee’ born in the last 100 years in the South” (Almas, 2003, ¶3). This was an extremely controversial statement in North Carolina at that time, and the reaction was an outcry from families, clergy, and political figures calling for Bassett’s removal from the college. Bassett resigned, but his resignation was rejected by the president and the board of trustees, in support of academic freedom. The Bassett Affair is viewed as a significant point in the history of Duke where the atmosphere and culture of the institution could have developed quite differently had the university relented to the outside political and religious pressure. Rather than becoming an insular institution, closed to new ideas, Duke chose to become an institution that supports the exchange of ideas, no matter how controversial they are both on and off campus.

Since the Bassett Affair, Duke has stood by the principle of academic freedom, inviting Socialist Party presidential candidate Norman Thomas to speak on campus for the affair’s 27th anniversary, and supporting the debate team in 1954-55 when that group was set to tackle the question of whether the United States should recognize Communist China in international relations (Sullivan, 2004a). This historical support of the free exchange of ideas carried Duke through the 1960s and 1970s, and was drawn upon during the period under study when radical activist and convicted felon Laura Whitehorn was invited to speak on campus in 2003, and again in 2004 when Duke permitted a pro-
Palestinian conference to be held on campus. The conference of the Palestinian Solidarity Movement will be discussed in this chapter in the category of World Issues.

War was an issue that has riled American students, and students at Duke were no different than their peers elsewhere. As The Chronicle celebrated its 100th birthday in 2004-05, articles were printed highlighting various events in the history of the paper. One of these events took place on October 15, 1969 when the front page of the paper was a full-page black and white photograph of a protest taken the night before (Almas, 2004a). This look back at that vigil, as well as other anti-war activism during the fall of 1969, declared that “Activism was alive and well at Duke. And this newspaper, now celebrating its 100th year, was a part of it” (¶3). An overview of the effects of wartime on Duke (Stamell, 2004) began by discussing activism in 2002 in protest of the war in Iraq, then discussed both World Wars, Korea, Vietnam, and the 1991 Gulf War. A professor of political science is quoted as saying “I’ve seen very little activity now that’s [Iraq] war-related…the election is sort of sucking the air out of the war protests” (¶3). A professor of literature viewed the absence of a draft as a contributing factor in the lack of anti-war activism. He was quoted as saying “…it’s self-interest that gets people riled up and until there is a draft, people in the middle class and upper-middle class are not going to feel the impact of this war” (¶14). The movement against the war in Iraq will be presented here as it was reported in the pages of The Chronicle; it was brief, but did carry on the historical tradition of American students protesting the involvement of their country in war.

Identity/Cultural issues

Gender issues (February 1995 – May 2004)

Gender issues have existed for women on campus since the 1969 SDS convention when the issue of sexism in society was introduced to the student activist stage (Tischler, 1998). Although most of the issues that were seen at Duke during the period under study
revolved around women, it will be seen that men played a role as well and sought to make their voices heard as important actors in the gender movement. In fact, organizers of such events as the Take Back the Night march altered many of the traditional signs and slogans used during the march so that all men would not be addressed as enemies (Bring back the men, 1995). When it comes to gender issues and activism, the period of 1996-2004 can be prefaced with the following statement that was part of an article published in *The Chronicle* in February 1995 entitled “Women to the forefront: Take action in everyday life” (Haider, 1995): “Activism does not come in packages, neatly wrapped and easily accessible…Feminist activism is ultimately about securing a fundamental change in individual and social attitudes and actions…” (¶3-4). Over time this view of feminism did not change at Duke. In 2004 a student wrote that feminism “is about giving voice and power to all women” (Mitchell, 2004, ¶6) as well as “women supporting, advocating, and edifying other women” (¶8).

The gender issues addressed during the period 1996-2004 include women’s health (body image and psychology); abortion; domestic violence; and women’s leadership. Body image is first referenced in an article about a guest speaker on campus, Luoluo Hong, a Wellness Education Coordinator at Louisiana State University-Baton Rouge. Her remarks about women’s health suggested that students are less willing to speak out and play the role of activist (Brown, 1996), a trend she called “disturbing” (¶15). During the spring of 2002 relations between women and food became the topic of a house course (the equivalent of a 1 semester hour course, developed and taught by undergraduate students for their peers). The course was called “Sweet Temptations: Women, Sex and Food” and students enrolled in the course took on the task of writing to the Kellogg’s company to protest a series of advertisements that pictured women with pastries as body parts, such as doughnuts around their waists (Porter, 2002). In bringing activism to the
classroom the student instructor of this course, Amanda Miller, stated that discussing these issues in an academic context made students more comfortable with the issues.

It was not only the media outside of Duke but also part of the university itself that became a target for feminist activists during this time. In 2004 the Duke University Health System (DUHS) circulated a flyer to employees offering a 10% discount on cosmetic surgery procedures. The advertisement featuring a “toned woman with bee-stung lips wearing an all-white outfit” (Rohrs, 2004a, ¶3) was meant to promote the Duke Aesthetic Center but instead promoted anger among many women at Duke. An organization of female employees and graduate students, the Women’s Colloquium, began collecting signatures for an electronic petition. Many women at Duke viewed the advertisement as particularly inappropriate as it was published during Women’s History Month, and came at a time when the university was dealing with the Women’s Initiative, a report that declared the university to be a high-pressure environment for women and that undergraduates especially expressed the feeling that physical perfection was demanded of them at Duke (Rohrs, 2004a).

Abortion is a heated issue in any context, and a university campus is no exception. Closely related to women’s health and the issues already discussed, the issue of abortion also relates to the topic of U.S. Politics in the World Issues category. What is striking about the issue of abortion in the pages of The Chronicle is that no feature articles, commentaries, or editorials were returned in any of the keyword searches performed. What we can see of the abortion debate at Duke University during the time of this study is that the issue of abortion was discussed and debated mainly in letters to the editor. The first letter, of October 30, 1997 (Morales & Moody, 1997), actually addresses concern that this issue should hold greater prominence in the minds of the campus community, and that issues such as gay rights receive more attention from student reporters than student groups supporting the pro-life side of the abortion debate.
A great deal has been written in *The Chronicle* recently about censorship and the Gothic Queers. We have witnessed another instance of censorship that will probably not receive nearly as much coverage, but of which we feel the University community should be made aware. (¶ 1)

The student writers, members of Duke Students for Life, referred to a series of pro-life posters that their group had placed on several bulletin boards around campus as part of the National Young Woman’s Day of Action and which had been removed, allegedly by their pro-choice rivals. These activists were driven to serve as reporters of their own actions and alleged retaliations against those actions. This is an issue that also lies within the larger debate concerning the existence of liberal bias within American higher education.

*The News & Observer*, a local newspaper serving the neighboring city of Raleigh, North Carolina did publish a story about the posters in their student press section. An article which prompted a letter to *The Chronicle* from a local citizen who urged tolerance on both sides of the debate (Morris, 1998). On the same day a student letter in response to the murder of an abortion provider in New York was published (Hess, 1998). Hess’ letter calls the murder a “hideous act of anti-choice violence,” (¶ 1) “domestic terrorism,” (¶ 3) and states that all such acts are “monstrosities” (¶ 5). There was to be no consensus on the abortion issue on this date. In fact, when it comes to the issue of abortion student activists argue that “no solutions will be crafted until all parties present their positions with integrity” (Johnson, Reitz, & Franklin, 2001, ¶ 7). This statement came in a letter protesting the use of a quotation by suffragist Susan B. Anthony in a pro-life advertisement.

Domestic abuse, sexual abuse, and violence against women all encompass another large issue that student activists took on during this time period. Vigils were held to remember women and children who were abuse victims (Levy, 1998), a “scream-in”
protest was held to make the issue audible (Hauptman, 2004b), and once again a student-led house course inspired activism on the part of participants (Levy, 1998b). Student organizations dedicated to this issue emerged; one group was the Peer Violence Outreach Team (PiVOT). Their goal at the time (after recruiting a suitable number of members) was to train members to counsel victims of domestic abuse on campus. The membership of PiVOT was primarily women, but a group of men joined the cause in the following year. A letter to the editor (Chinnadurai, 1999) informed the campus that the group Men Acting for Change (MAC) had been revived on campus after an absence of a number of years. Student leaders of MAC described the organization as “a group of responsible and concerned men...[seeking to raise] awareness of rape and violence on campus and addressing men about those issues” (Chinnadurai, 1999, ¶3). The following semester, the group was profiled by *The Chronicle* (Fickel, 1999) when two of its leaders organized a house course on the topic of masculinity and gender roles. According to this article the leaders hoped to use the house course as a launching point for programming on campus aimed at fraternities and other living groups. They anticipated, in the long run, having men’s studies courses as a corollary to women’s studies.

Women’s leadership has been mentioned in connection to previous topics, specifically in the empowering words of Nadya Haider (1995) and Luoluo Hong (Brown, 1996), but in more recent years the issue came to the forefront in its own right. As with many of the movements and gender issue groups that played a role in Duke’s student activism during this time period, the issue of women’s leadership at Duke arose from an academic setting, a course called “Women as Leaders” taught in the department of Public Policy Studies. Inspired by this course, a group of students formed the Feminist Majority Leadership Alliance, a campus branch of the Feminist Majority Foundation, which coincidentally was founded by a 1961 graduate of the Duke University Women’s College. Academic treatment of gender issues also led to a panel discussion called
“Women and Activism” which was organized by a student (Levine, 2003a) to explore “where...women find their inspirations and what contemporary social issues are at the forefront of women's activism” (University briefs, 2003, ¶6).

Perhaps the most prominent gender issue during this time period appeared on the stage in September of 2003 with the report of the Women’s Initiative Steering Committee, who had examined quantitative and qualitative data on students, faculty, employees, alumnae and trustees during a yearlong study (Yee, 2003b). The issues in the report that affected undergraduate life included rape, both by strangers and acquaintances, and a phenomenon called “effortless perfection,” a term that became the most-quoted phrase from the report. The term came from one of the students interviewed for the report in her description of the social environment at Duke, where women are expected to achieve “perfection that entails being smart, accomplished, fit, beautiful and popular, all without visible effort—and an academic environment in which they often must balance intellectual ability with femininity” (Yee, 2003b, ¶8).

“Effortless perfection” became not only the most prominent gender issue on campus, but the most prominent issue overall at this time. The Chronicle called for leadership and mentorship programs to help undergraduate women with these issues (Staff editorial: Women’s initiative a positive step, 2003), although for some the issues were not a surprise, and they did not believe the phrase to be an accurate description of their experiences (Valerio, 2003a). Those who wrote the report planned meetings and retreats to discuss the issues, recognizing that no cultural shift could take place on campus without student support and initiative (Almas, 2003). It was an anonymous column in The Chronicle, however, that initiated active campus discussion.

On October 24, 2003 The Chronicle broke with its normal policy of not publishing anonymous letters or columns when the editors received “Effortless Perfection?” a column seemingly written by an undergraduate woman struggling with the
challenges of life at Duke. She reported symptoms of an eating disorder and bouts of depression (Anonymous, 2003). This column created a stir on campus. “Bad Things happen on our campus [capitalized in the original], not to mention the world, and no one freakin’ cares” (Valerio, 2003b, ¶7) wrote one columnist. *The Chronicle* challenged everyone on campus, not just students to “pay attention to the students with whom you interact on a daily basis” (Staff editorial: Opening dialogue, 2003, ¶7). Letters and columns continued to address both the subject of “effortless perfection” while trying to reach out to the anonymous writer and others similar to her. “As Duke women living in a community that has not yet come to this realization [that perfection is boring], we must start the change within ourselves” (O’Brien, 2003, ¶8) wrote one student, and another openly admitted a personal identification with the anonymous columnist.

Someone had finally accurately expressed the vague and ineffable pressures on women at Duke. And what scared me the most was that two years ago, I would not have identified with the experiences of the writer. I would have cast her off as an extreme case. But now, I understood her. I saw her in so many girls on campus, and I saw her in me. I was shocked. (Tieu, 2003, ¶5)

Members of a student group called ESTEEM (Educating Students to Eliminate Eating Misconceptions) added their voices to those offering help. They identified the presence of depression, “debilitating depression—her obvious pain and despair…” (Anderson & Chen, 2003, ¶2) as a large contributing factor to the phenomenon of effortless perfection and encouraged students with similar feelings to seek assistance.

Forums took place on the Duke campus, organized by those involved with the Women’s Initiative report (Hauptman, 2003) and by the campus Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) (Wyler, 2003a). These forums began to examine the campus culture and its effect on both women and men on campus. Students began to write in *The Chronicle* about aspects of campus life and their relationship to “effortless
perfection.” Fraternities and sororities on campus were critiqued for their role in Duke’s social culture (Scoville, 2003).

Who would have thought that a bunch of guys living together and throwing parties to “meet” “smart, accomplished, fit, beautiful and popular” girls would create a debilitating culture of ridiculous expectations? Or better yet, who would have imagined that a bunch of girls parading around for a week in their most glamorous accessories to “find their sisters” might unconsciously reinforce these very same expectations? (¶ 2)

A senior student columnist stated that he had “become so used to the fact that so many things about Duke feel wrong so much of the time” (Stevenson, 2003, ¶ 3) and that “We have to entertain the possibility that the author of ‘Effortless Perfection?’—starving herself, at war with her body, dreaming of death—might have a better grip on reality than all of the rest of us” (¶ 11), a statement that seemed a challenge to readers of The Chronicle to examine themselves simultaneously with efforts to help their friends.

“Comfort day” was a proposed monthly event designed by students to draw attention to issues discussed in the Women’s Initiative report (Levine, 2003b). The three students who developed this idea envisioned it as a campus-wide event on the 20th of each month. As with other activist initiatives during this time period, “comfort day” was born out of a class project, and was meant to be “a day to focus on you. There is no dress code, there are no expectations and there is no correct way to think” (Carmichael and two others, 2003, ¶ 1). Some, however, saw the idea as “enact[ing] some sort of slovenly fascism” (Boyd, 2003, ¶ 2), saying that “For me, every day is Comfort Day” (¶ 3). In response another letter writer urged Boyd to try the mindset of the “perfect disease” (Kloeblen, 2003) for a day.

I will let you choose your mantra for the day: I suck. I am fat. I am ugly.
Everyone hates me. I am stupid. I have no friends. I am lazy. No one cares.
Perhaps a combination might be most effective: I wish I could shrink myself into a tiny ball so no one would notice how ugly/stupid/fat/unpopular/lazy I am. (¶6)

Effortless perfection continued to be a topic of interest for the campus media. A feature story on the topic was published in *TowerView*, a glossy magazine published monthly by *The Chronicle* (Wyler, 2003b). Commentary writers stated that “It is the student body as a whole that perpetuates the idea of perfection” (Bosland, 2004, ¶15), and student groups attached the issue to mental health issues on campus, urging their peers to use the resources of the university to help themselves (Strauss, Leinster, & Wright, 2004). A former model, Laura Krauss Calenberg, appeared on campus to give a speech on how the pressure to maintain a perfect body image affected her life and career (Xiao, 2004) saying that an emphasis on physical beauty and external validation was not healthy or acceptable (Smolow, 2004). Behind the scenes of these public events, other issues from the Women’s Initiative report were addressed by the university administration, including the development of curricular and co-curricular activities to promote leadership skills in undergraduate women, the hiring of female faculty and improvements to the childcare system at Duke (Levine, 2004).

Although these examples present frequent reporting by *The Chronicle* on women’s issues, there were students who believed that the newspaper did not always present women’s issues or women themselves on campus from an objective perspective, writing in a letter to the editor that according to the editorial pages one could conclude that “all Duke women are transfixed on their social lives and have no more worldly concerns than dating, parties and appearances” (Fisher & Rodriguez, 2004, ¶4). A group gathered on campus one evening to discuss how *The Chronicle* reported on women’s issues, raising the issue that women “are often depicted as either one extreme or another—either the sorority girl or the bra-burning feminist—without any happy medium” (Webber, 2004, ¶2).
As the 2004 spring semester ended, the phrase “effortless perfection” appeared to have reached the end of its life. Reporters stated that since the anonymous column (2003) “the campus has been buzzing with its new favorite—or not so favorite—catch phrase” (Bajpai, 2004, ¶1). A student was quoted at the conclusion of this article, saying “‘we need a new catch phrase that is hopeful and complex’” (¶21). A letter to the editor agreed. “All right. I’ve had enough” (White, 2004, ¶1) it began, using the paragraphs that followed to explain why those women who subscribed to “effortless perfection” and those who fit “The Chronicle stereotype” (¶3) are not in the majority of the female population on campus.

Most of us are just normal kids who own neither pearls nor stilettos. We don’t hang out with “the right crowd” at the clubs and we don’t grind on table tops. We are not drop-dead gorgeous, and we don’t get A’s on everything we do. Some of us could find our entire wardrobes on The Chronicle’s spring fashion “don’t” list, and during sorority rush we were playing soccer, designing web pages, studying with friends over pizza or just catching up on sleep. (¶4)

During the rest of the calendar year of 2004 the phrase “effortless perfection” only appeared in three additional articles, and in those articles neither the issue nor the Women’s Initiative was the focus. Two commentaries used the phrase as a starting point to discuss other issues affecting women: appearance (Dolgert, 2004a) and eating disorders (Dolgert, 2004b). The third, and final appearance of the phrase was in a TowerView feature about the history of beauty pageants at Duke, a history that was described as having “slipped away, [as] a more powerful undercurrent began enforcing the rules of beauty and giving way to that slippery slope, a mudpile at the bottom oozing with ‘effortless perfection’” (Almas, 2004b, ¶8). It remains to be seen how these issues will be viewed on the stage of history, but articles published in the latter months of the
period under study indicate to readers that there is more to the story than they are seeing in the pages of the newspaper.

*General identity issues (December 1995 – February 2004)*

Articles appearing in *The Chronicle* did not always focus on issues of a single cultural or identity group. During the period under study a number of articles appeared that focused on culture and identity as larger issues, encompassing multiple student groups, or organizations such as Spectrum, “an umbrella organization for the University’s cultural concerns...[which was] one of the most well-known and well-respected activist groups in existence” (Taking a step back, 1995, ¶2). While the waning of this group’s influence was lamented, there were still times that issues brought multiple identity groups together to address problems with race relations on campus (Speak out on...what?, 1998). Letter writers added their voices on issues such as affirmative action, stating “Greater than the knowledge learned in the classroom is the ability to interact with those outside of your comfort zone” (Stewart & Matthews, 1998, ¶5). The tone of articles is not always one of support, as student leaders of cultural groups are referred to as “the usual suspects” (Tinari, 2001, ¶1) and that if one wants to be part of the multicultural campus that is Duke University “you had better first acknowledge your own position in the matrix of oppression” (¶3).

Calls for better education about identity issues came from the pages of *The Chronicle* from letter writers such as conservative activist David Horowitz (2001) who stated “That people who have suffered discrimination should themselves launch a campaign of intolerance is a sad commentary on the education they have received (or failed to receive)...” (¶4). Columnists wrote that “Only through a serious and concerted effort at self-evaluation, only through listening—really listening—to the subordinated voices in our culture can we hope to create any sort of effective change” (Weller, 2002, ¶22). It seems, according to these writers, that the issues of identity and culture were not
being addressed, a belief that continued to be stated by others with statements about student leaders and university administrators “whose sweeping policies are grounded in nothing more than conjectures, assertions, hypotheses and theories…this is the primary reason why there is rarely any progress when it comes to issues that need attention” (Djuranaovic, 2002, ¶ 3).

Diversity and sensitivity to others were issues that continued to be debated in The Chronicle during this time period. Conservative columnist Bill English commented on an announcement that Duke had been called the most diverse among America’s universities (English, 2002b). His reaction to this announcement:

No one has really stepped back and asked, “Has all this made us a better school?” or “Why have our national rankings declined in the last few years?”, likely because it would reveal the unpleasant fact that diversity isn’t the solution to all problems. (¶ 4)

Students on the planning committee for a project entitled “Beyond the Comfort Zone: Race, Sex and God,” which was designed to stimulate discussion on campus about identity issues and racial diversity on campus, responded to English with agreement, but added “there is much to gain from learning about differences in identity” (Csikesz & Ferris, 2002, ¶ 3). English was challenged by another letter writer (Garland, 2002 October 10) to “get up from behind his computer” (¶ 3) and “take the opportunity to ‘diversify opinion’” (¶ 6).

The Chronicle itself also became an object against which proponents of diversity and sensitivity directed their criticism. After publishing “a highly inflammatory and tasteless statement” (Nefouse, 2004, ¶ 6) a law student who wrote a column for the newspaper made the statement “…I do not want a stupid or racist person writing or editing for my daily newspaper” (¶ 7) and stated that he did not believe that “sensitivity training” was the answer to such attitudes. Columnists also wrote about identity as an
issue beyond race, gender, sexual orientation, and political belief. In his February 25, 2004 column, Rob Goodman wrote about searching the archives of The Chronicle for generalizations about Duke students. He stated that he found 208 printed during the 2003-04 academic year, which, he believes, “suggests that the editorial page is pretty central to our collective identity, or at least wants to be…” (Goodman, 2005, ¶3).

Another columnist used an entire column to defend the stereotypes of the Duke campus (Hadziosmanov, 2004) supporting Goodman’s claim that “Our identity may be based in the facts, but it's also highly selective. The way it turns out on the editorial page is, on some level, our choice” (Goodman, 2005, ¶10). These stereotypes, chosen by students, are changeable writes Hadziosmanov: “I wouldn’t be writing for a paper if I didn’t think that individuals were capable of changing things around” (¶8).

*Sexual orientation issues (February 1997 – March 2004)*

During the late 1990s and into the first years of the new century, the homosexual community at Duke spent much of its time defining and redefining both itself and its role within the larger campus community, a task which reportedly had been continual from the group’s founding in 1973 (Kozlov, 1997c). In 1997 the Duke Gay, Bisexual and Lesbian Association (DGBLA) met to consider a shift in its overall mission from a political organization to one “with a stronger focus on the social needs of its members” (Kozlov, 1997c, ¶1). This redefining was seen in two name changes for the group. At the start of the 1997-98 academic year DGBLA became Gothic Queers (Parkins, 1997d), and in September of 2002 Gothic Queers became the Alliance of Queer Undergraduates at Duke (AQUADuke) (Ng, 2002). Although the organization’s name changed the issues faced by the group did not.

On the road that links the East and West campuses of Duke University is an overpass. The walls under this overpass, known as the East Campus bridge, are continually painted and repainted by student groups who have a message or
advertisement to bring to the attention of their peers. The bridge was regarded as a free speech zone by the student body because of its use as a public bulletin board. There was no official recognition by university administration that this was the case, however. The public self-affirmation of homosexual students through the painting of the bridge as part of National Coming Out Week at Duke became an issue of free speech and censorship more than once during the time period under study. During Coming Out Week in October of 1997 the university’s department of Facilities Management painted over a number of slogans that members of Gothic Queers had painted on the bridge. This was done “in part, to delete offensive words and phrases that had been painted on or near the work by the gay community” (Gordon, 1997a, ¶6). The students who had painted the bridge were outraged, both by the actions of the Facilities Management staff and by the fact that past slogans painted by other student groups that contained profanity had been allowed to remain. In a letter to The Chronicle the leaders of the student group called the incident “a flagrant dismissal of our basic civil rights” (Foster, Hong, and four others, 1997, ¶5).

The alleged censorship led to a series of events. First, a protest was held on October 15, 1997 to express dissatisfaction and disenchantment with a letter of apology from Duke President Nannerl Keohane (Gordon, 1997b). Second, Gothic Queers met with Campus Community Development, a division of Student Affairs, to discuss the development of a speech policy for the East Campus bridge (Moulton, 1997). Third, the group met with the Director of Facilities Management “to iron out discrepancies between their versions of events” (Moulton, 1997, Nov 5, ¶3). Two days after this report was published, a letter of apology from the Director of Facilities Management appeared in The Chronicle (Black, 1997). All of these events and meetings led to the creation of an official policy by the Duke Student Government that established the bridge as a free speech zone (Moulton, 1998). A committee of students would oversee any complaints about the content painted on the bridge. The establishment of a policy would not end controversy over bridge
painting. In 1999 during Gothic Queers’ Absolutely Fabulous Queer Family Love Week, when the group once again painted the bridge, anti-gay slogans were painted over the bright pink that Gothic Queers had selected to draw attention to their events (Stroup, 1999o). This event did not draw the attention from The Chronicle that the 1997 event drew. The report of the incident was the only mention of Gothic Queers and the bridge during this week, and there is no mention of any involvement by Duke Student Government in the issue. One columnist mentions it in passing two months after the fact (Margolis, 1999a) in his musings on the difficulties of being liberal, “loathing the condemnation but respecting the perpetrator’s right to be heard” (¶ 5).

A larger issue that faced homosexual identity groups and activists at Duke was visibility on campus. Painting the bridge was one aspect of the visibility of Duke’s homosexual community, but the issue was much larger, if we are to judge by articles and letters in The Chronicle, including one by an alumnus who identifies the “true prize—equality of access and equal protection for gays and lesbians at the university” (Smarr, 1997, ¶1). The bridge painting incident served to bring wider visibility to Gothic Queers on campus. After the controversy over the bridge the group was called “one of this year’s most outspoken student organizations” (Stroup, 1998d, ¶1) by The Chronicle, and “a part of mainstream Duke life” (¶2) according to a student quoted by the newspaper. Homosexuality was a visible issue at Duke, and visibility for members of Gothic Queers rose in the spring of 1999 when the Terry Sanford Institute of Public Policy at Duke hosted the Southeastern Conference for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender College Groups. The conference emphasized the need to create a climate comfortable for people to express their homosexuality openly with programming geared towards student activists (Levy, 1999).

Visibility was also obtained through various other events and testimonials during this time period. Groups other than Gothic Queers such as Duke Allies were working to
eliminate hate. Duke Allies was a group of primarily heterosexual students who were committed to improving the campus social climate by making the university more “gay-friendly” (Bradley, 2002a, ¶ 6). They worked with other student groups to bring Judy Shepard to campus to speak. Judy Shepard’s son Matthew was a University of Wyoming student murdered in 1998 because of his homosexuality.

When it occurred in 1998, the murder of Matthew Shepard was viewed as an event that could be an inspiration for activism against anti-gay hate crimes (Death by Intolerance, 1998). The murder took place during Duke’s fall break, a time when the majority of the student body was away from campus. Upon the students’ return a vigil was held in front of the Duke University Chapel. Called “Symbols of Grief” the vigil was meant not only as a time to mourn Shepard, but also as a time to recognize other members of the homosexual community who had been targets of bigotry and violence (Stroup, 1998c).

One of the largest issues that was raised during this time was that of allowing same-sex unions to be performed in the Duke Chapel. This issue was supported by Duke Student Government and opposed by the Duke Conservative Union (DCU) (Kumar, 2000b). The DCU took on the issue as one of politicizing the Chapel, as well as viewing it as “the equivalent of granting religious approval to such ceremonies” (Kumar, 2000b, ¶ 14). Students who supported the issue wrote in opposition to the DCU and current university policy, saying that “bigotry is alive and well at Duke University” (Weller, 2000b, ¶ 1), and refuting the religious arguments of the conservative group by arguing about rights and freedoms for all members of the Duke community.

The religious freedom that every citizen has doesn’t give anyone the right to infringe on the rights of others. A group of students doesn’t have the right to deny those who hold different religious or moral beliefs access to University
resources on the grounds that they simply disagree with their practices. (Johnson, 2000, ¶ 3)

By the end of the fall semester of 2000 President Keohane and Dean of the Chapel Will Willimon decided to allow the unions to take place in the Chapel, based on the advice of a committee formed to explore the issue (Kumar, 2000c). Conservative and religious student groups were outraged, while liberal and gay rights groups celebrated. One further commentary on the issue appeared during the period under study in 2004 when the U.S. government undertook discussion of same-sex marriage. While this commentary supporting the rights of “individuals to pursue happiness under the law” (Napoli, 2004a, ¶ 17) was not specific to the Duke community, it is a further example of student activism on this subject in the pages of *The Chronicle* in support of the homosexual community.

This led into the issue of the support of gay rights by both the gay community as well as their heterosexual allies. Students who were not gay themselves wanted to be certain that the campus community knew that they were in support of rights for all, criticizing coverage by *The Chronicle* by writing that “assuming that all of the protesters [at an event]...were gay belies a certain prejudice that often goes unquestioned in our society...people who protest for gay rights are assumed to be gay” (Rae, 1998, ¶ 2). Support for gays by the gay community was even questioned by gay students, particularly those who may be struggling with other identity issues such as Christianity. Leaders of Gothic Queers addressed that issue in response to an anonymous column in *The Chronicle*, saying that the group exists to support all members of the gay community regardless of religious beliefs: “we are not here to judge other people, be they LGBTQ [Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer] or not, nor do we expect to have judgment passed upon us” (Quirk, Barrera, & five others, 2002, ¶ 2). This sentiment was not shared by all, as another student wrote that “in my experience those groups do nothing to reach out to gay students involved in activities that aren’t stereotypically gay” (Schaefer,
2003c, ¶7), to which a member of AQUADuke responded that because members of the gay community are not readily identifiable by physical characteristics the group must take the approach of “education, visibility and time” (Barrera, 2003, ¶3) for outreach, and that change within those forms of outreach (that is making them less stereotypical) “will only be achieved through the introduction of new ideas and opinions” (¶3). The role of the gay community and its various student support groups was the subject of a feature article in The Chronicle’s magazine Towerview in an article entitled “Gay at Duke.” The article discussed numerous issues that are part of the experience of gay students at Duke, including social life, race, and attitudes (Rohrs, 2003a). At the conclusion of the article a student was quoted as saying “right now the attitude towards homosexuals...is based more upon tolerance rather than acceptance or understanding or embracing” (¶ 63). This view underlay much of the activism at Duke for homosexuals during the period under study.

Coming Out Week which was addressed within the discussion of free speech and the Duke East Campus Bridge is the most visible display of the academic year of Duke’s gay community and their supporters. In 2002 several of the goals of Coming Out Week were to attract more acceptance on campus, to promote unity among homosexuals on campus and increase student awareness, and to give courage to students who are not yet “out” (Ng, 2002). Not everyone on campus was fully in support of Duke’s homosexual community or their goals for Coming Out Week. One of The Chronicle’s more conservative columnists took on the issue of not supporting gay and lesbian groups, writing that he thought “gays are very scary” (English, 2002a, ¶1). Further into his column the underlying reasons for his feelings appear, reasons that are political, financial, and conservative in nature.
No other minority group on campus has been able to shakedown the university for such mass quantities of undeserved funds nor used them in such an obscenely political manner. (¶5)

...the agenda of activist campus homosexuals aims at nothing less than bullying the student body into fully consenting to extraordinarily unconventional sexual mores. (¶6)

This column sparked a response from the chair of Coming Out Week which stated that she did not want to force her views of homosexuality on anyone else, but that she would continue to fight for the rights and acceptance of queers within society.

As long as gays and lesbians are discriminated against in housing and employment, excluded from history books and as long as standing up for our rights is considered over stepping [sic.] our boundaries, LGBT issues will be political in nature. (Rosario, 2002a, ¶8)

*American-Asian issues (November 1997 – August 2004)*

The first mention of African-American issues during the period under study came in November 1997. It was during this month that the Black Student Alliance (BSA) held a protest and sit-in in the Allen Building. This protest presented the administration with thirteen (13) demands, eleven (11) of which were identical to demands presented to the administration in 1969 when a group of black students took over the Allen Building (Don’t forget, 1997). During this same week, a brown doll was found hanging by a noose in a prominent place on campus wearing a sign that read “Duke hasn’t changed” (Kozlov, 1997a). Later that week two black male students turned themselves in to campus police. Claiming responsibility for the mock lynching, they stated that it was to make a political statement, not to perpetrate a hate crime (Kozlov, 1997b).

February 1999 witnessed the 30th anniversary of the 1969 black student sit-in. During that month it was stated that “Duke of 1999 is certainly a different world...[but]
the campus remains divided and the climate often tense” (Moulton, 1999, ¶3-4). The 1969 sit-in was seen at this time as an uplifting remembrance for black students at Duke (Sostek, 1999).

Along with the historical issues African-American students faced some contemporary issues, one of which involved an annual social rite of passage for the Duke student community. At the conclusion of every academic year large numbers of Duke students would converge on Myrtle Beach, South Carolina for a week of parties and socializing between final exams and graduation. In 2000 the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) declared a tourism boycott of the state of South Carolina in protest of the Confederate flag flying over the state capital. For many groups at Duke this began a debate of whether or not to support the boycott by not participating in the annual ritual of traveling to Myrtle Beach. In January 2000 the issue was raised on campus by the Duke Student Government (DSG) in a resolution stating that DSG supported the NAACP boycott and recommended alternative vacation spots for students (Levy, 2000). Debate within DSG went on between those who believed that the group had an obligation to take a stand on this issue and those who believed that it was not up to a group of student legislators to become involved. The Chronicle stated support for the boycott in an editorial: “This May, Duke students can use their economic clout to make a difference” (Common-sense voting, 2000, ¶11). The debate quickly spread outside of DSG to the campus community at large. Faculty members wrote letters asking if students had the courage of past student activists (Gronke, 2000), and a forum was convened by student groups with faculty and staff facilitators. This was done to bring those on both sides of the issue together for a discussion of whom the boycott would hurt and whom it would help (Singhal, 2000). When it came time to leave campus for the beach few student groups supported the boycott; some who chose not to support the boycott called it a travesty (English, 2003a). Duke was not the only campus where this
was the general reaction, according to the Myrtle Beach Chamber of Commerce as quoted in an article in *The Chronicle* (Kumar, 2000d).

The most publicized and discussed issue to face the African-American community at Duke during this time period came in March of 2001. On March 19 *The Chronicle* published a full-page advertisement written and submitted by David Horowitz and the Center for the Study of Popular Culture (Pessin, 2001b). The title of the advertisement was “Ten Reasons Why Reparations for Slavery is a Bad Idea—and Racist Too” (Horowitz, 2001b). The advertisement fueled the birth of the Duke Student Movement (DSM), a group composed mainly of black students who protested not only against the publishing of the advertisement in the campus newspaper but also against what they perceived as a larger issue of black student issues at Duke (Kumar, 2001b).

The editorial and letters pages of *The Chronicle* became the stage on which the dialogue of reparations, free speech, political correctness, and the proper way to combat that which offends us was played out. Letters came from undergraduates (Oles, 2001; Lipsky, 2001; Miller, 2001; Epstein; Smith, C., 2001; Yousef, Vyas, et. al., 2001; Mehta, 2001; Ramaswami & Tompkins, 2001; Haubenreich, 2001; Simpson, 2001), graduate and professional students (Rubio, 2001; Rogers, 2001; Saunders, 2001; Blakely, 2001; Robolin, 2001; Vorobiov, 2001; Tran & Tran, 2001), faculty and staff (Christie, 2001; Staddon, 2001; Lewis-Tuffin, 2001; Hough 2001; Storey, 2001), alumni (Erwin, 2001), and a variety of non-students from across the country (Smith, D., 2001; Hairston, 2001; Campbell, 2001). These letters both praised and berated *The Chronicle* and its editors, the students of Duke who spoke out—as well as those who did not—and academe in general.

It would take over a month for the furor of this issue to recede, but Horowitz had not completely exited the stage of Duke University student activism. His first re-appearance after the anti-reparations advertisement came in November 2001, when he lectured at nearby University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (UNC-CH). This
particular speech was sponsored by the College Republicans at UNC-CH and the topic was Horowitz’s views of anti-American sentiment espoused by members of the faculty at UNC-CH at a series of three campus teach-ins (Bradley, 2001c). While members of the UNC-CH Black Student Movement chose to protest Horowitz’s presence by staging a silent walk-out during the speech, members of Duke’s Black Student Alliance who attended chose to remain seated in the audience. Then president of the student group, Troy Clair was quoted as saying “‘It’s not about Horowitz, … It’s about not allowing people to come in and divide a community…’” (Bradley, 2001c, ¶14).

In 2002 the anti-reparations advertisement controversy once again appeared in the pages of The Chronicle. On the anniversary of the original publication of the advertisement, a columnist for the newspaper wrote about his pride in The Chronicle and its role in publishing the advertisement as upholding the spirit of free speech (Blank, 2002). This column and the sentiments of its author prompted critics of the newspaper’s role in the anti-reparations advertisement to write letters to the editor. These letters spoke of “journalistic racism” (Hazirjian, 2002, ¶3), stated a belief that the newspaper’s decision to run the advertisement was an act of “white supremacy” (Rubio, 2002, ¶4), criticized those who protested the advertisement by saying that they did “nothing but complain and brand him a racist” (Strickland, 2002, ¶3), when “the best strategy would be to publish an ad that shows the other side of the debate” (¶2), and used the opportunity to express the view that “The ad functioned to shed a little bit of much-needed light on the atmosphere of race relations and the atmosphere at Duke” (Rosario, 2002b, ¶2).

Since 2002 African-American issues have not been written about by The Chronicle staff or student letter-writers as much as during the spring of 2001. Articles have focused more on events, such as the holiday celebrating Martin Luther King, Jr. (Ng, 2003; Hauptman, 2004a), a campus day celebrating Reginaldo Howard, the first
black to be elected president of a student government organization at Duke (Darby, 2004a), or the annual Black Student Alliance Invitational weekend, an event co-sponsored by the BSA and the Office of Undergraduate Admissions for newly-admitted African-American students (Annan & Curtis, 2004).

Reginaldo Howard was killed in a car crash in 1976 before he could take his elected office on campus and a scholarship in his name provides full tuition awards annually to five freshmen of African heritage “who exhibit excellence in academics, service and leadership” (Darby, 2004a ¶2). Howard, along with Martin Luther King, Jr., was an influential figure for African-American students at Duke and student activists in general, as were the four students from North Carolina Agricultural & Technical University who sat-in at a “whites only” lunch counter in 1960 in Greensboro. These four men were commemorated and held up as examples for current university students to take the lead in effecting change in the world (Newman, B., 2004a). In 2002 a lock-in was held in the Allen Building to commemorate the 1969 takeover by black students (Garinger, 2002a), further celebrating that event’s history and influence on African-American student activism at Duke University.

Conservatives affirming their identity (October 2000 – October 2004)

Most conservative student activism of past eras would be placed into the category of U.S. Politics, under the heading World Issues, established here. However, many of the articles from The Chronicle that appeared within the period under study were written by conservative students affirming their identity as conservatives in a milieu they perceived as liberal and, therefore, antagonistic to them. For this reason discussion of conservative student activism has been placed here as an issue of personal and group identity. In an editorial entitled “Reviewing the Review” (1999) a conservative publication—The Duke Review—is described as “speak[ing] for a range of opinions held by a large portion of students and citizens underrepresented by the media” (¶1). The editorial also states that
the *Review* “manages to stir up controversy and emotions that most publications never inspire” (¶5). This appeared to be a complimentary statement about the *Review* from a publication that perhaps does not inspire emotion. *The Chronicle* editorial writers did not say where their newspaper is positioned on the stage of campus controversy and emotion.

Conservative student activists at Duke were outspoken about their left-wing counterparts, calling their actions “arrogant” and “uninformed” (Zimmerman, 2000a, ¶2). While the liberal student activists supported same-sex unions in the Duke University Chapel, conservatives stood up for the rights of religious students, faculty, and staff opposed to the unions, for whom the Chapel is a place for expressing their identity. Members of the Duke Conservative Union (DCU) saw themselves as misunderstood (English, 2003b), and were viewed by others as “a heartless student group bent on oppressing the masses and promoting their self-interests” (Ogorzalek, 2003, ¶2) and as hypocritical (Cotlear, 2004).

Conservative students did not bend under such criticism, but continued to speak up for their beliefs, which included opinions on issues such as “dialogue” on the university’s campus (Zimmerman, 2002a), a concept that “prefers cover-ups and intimidation to free discussion” (¶6). According to conservative students “The liberals’ decades-long dominance of American universities has been maintained…through harassment and intimidation of opponents” (¶14), an accusation to which the following response was written: “The liberal idea of expansive, inclusive knowledge and multi-layered education is conducive to the academic environment. Be it nurture or nature, academia inherently attracts liberals” (Barna, 2002, ¶7). Writing about the concept of “insensitivity” Zimmerman (2002b) says that “the word insensitive—like its pernicious partner racist—has become a knee-jerk reaction for many leftists” (¶7). David Horowitz and his anti-reparations advertisement become illustrations of Zimmerman’s view of liberals and sensitivity as he criticized his peers who protested the advertisement by
saying that “Apparently these students had been promised upon admission that their four years at Duke would be a liberal love-in, where their self-confidence could be artificially boosted at the expense of truth” (¶6). Horowitz himself reinforced this view in April 2002 when he appeared on Duke’s campus for a speaking engagement that further criticized the current state of American higher education.

He told the audience that the protests, as well as the general indignation the ad received on campuses nationwide, reflected a larger movement by leftists to suppress conservative opinions at America’s academic institutions. (Bradley, 2002c, ¶3).

Conservative activists and their liberal critics continued to debate on the pages of *The Chronicle* over a number of issues. The “radical left” was accused of no longer being interesting, or of even existing (English, 2003c). Conservatives were accused of “whining and refusing to take responsibility for themselves” (Resnick, 2003, ¶1) because of the view that “A bad grade on a paper couldn’t possibly be the result of deficiencies in the paper. Rather, the brave conservative is being oppressed by his fascist liberal professor” (¶3). The Duke Conservative Union published a full-page advertisement in *The Chronicle* claiming that the university lacked intellectual diversity. Their proof of this: the political affiliations of faculty members. According to the advertisement, of the faculty members and deans in a survey of eight humanities departments, 142 were registered Democrats, 28 were unaffiliated and 8 were registered Republicans (Yee, 2004a). These numbers showed, according to the DCU, that faculty in many humanities departments are skewed to the left. A faculty member responded in a letter that for conservatives to receive justice on a university campus “the Democratic Controllers of the universities [should] immediately define Republicans as biologically inferior and force large numbers of them to work on campus without salary or benefits” (Armaleo, 2004, ¶2). Another faculty member stated appreciation for the Duke Conservative
Union’s call for diversity, asking “Where are the Greens, Labour, the Christian Democrats, the Socialists, the Communists, the Workers Party, the Black Panthers, Puerto Rican independistas, etc…?” (Nelson, 2004, ¶3). The DCU responded to these comments, specifically those of Nelson, writing that she “is not relying on logic, analysis or argumentation to further her position. Instead, she is intentionally smearing a group of students simply because she does not like their politics” (Carleton, 2004c, ¶15).

These allegations and incidents of name-calling on the pages of The Chronicle became part of the campus discussion of David Horowitz’s Academic Bill of Rights, which was written to protect the academic freedom of students and faculty from ideological bias in the classroom (Yee, 2004b). The Duke chapter of Students for Academic Freedom, a nonpartisan organization supporting the Bill of Rights discovered that administrators were aware of many accounts of political bias in the classroom at the university, but had done nothing in response to those accounts (Yee, 2004b). Jeff Raileanu, president of the Duke Conservative Union, supported the perceived need for the Academic Bill of Rights in an interview saying “that being afraid in class stems from being afraid about their grades” (Sullivan, 2004b, ¶14); “‘We’re certainly not an oppressed group on campus or anything like that,’ Raileanu boasts, and then, on the inside, ‘but we are a minority, and sometimes it can be difficult to get your message across’” (¶15).

Whatever their image on campus, conservative student groups continued to promote their own version of activism. In 2004 the Duke College Republicans created an award in the name of U.S. Representative Walter Jones, a North Carolina Republican who speaks out against what he sees as the infringement of academic and religious freedoms within collegiate and religious institutions (Raymond, 2004). According to the College Republicans, as quoted by Raymond (2004), the Walter B. Jones Campus Defender Award will be presented each fall to the “politician, protester, or activist who
best exemplifies [Jones’] legacy” (¶10). Conservatism continues to forge its own identity within the multicultural campus of Duke University.

*Asian-American studies in the curriculum (April 2002)*

Asian-American identity issues were not prominent in the pages of *The Chronicle* during this period, but one important development was the movement to create a department of Asian-American Studies at Duke. This issue arose from students enrolled in an Asian-American literature class during the spring 2002 semester. Similar to the movements that created African-American Studies departments at American universities during the late 1960s and early 1970s, the students who wrote this proposal argued that “universities have historically ignored minorities’ — and in particular Asians’ — effect on American culture in their core departments” (Herriott, 2002a, ¶9). The proposal’s authors laid out a timeline for the university, presented it to top administrators within Trinity College of Arts & Sciences, and held a teach-in to publicize their proposal to the Duke community. Students who supported establishing the department were reportedly willing to protest and even take over the Allen Building in order to convince the administration to agree to their request (Herriott, 2002a). The staff of *The Chronicle* wrote in support of the establishment of more courses that examined Asian-America, while at the same time calling the student-written proposal “a bit quixotic” (Study Asian America, 2002, ¶3). This movement was a success, as the students accomplished their goal, and did so in a short period of time. On April 29 the Dean of the Faculty of Arts & Sciences announced the creation of an Asian and Asian-American studies research center (Herriott, 2002b). Administrators admitted at this time that a rally and teach-in held by students clearly illustrated the interest and commitment there was to this subject (Herriott, 2002b).
Muslim women speak out (February 2003)

Although most activism having any connection with Islam was generally political in nature and will be discussed in the World Issues section of this chapter, there were two letters in 2003 by self-proclaimed Muslim activists in response to a column about women and Islam that attempted to bring this issue onto the campus stage for discussion. What was raised in these letters is a gender issue, but because it is specific to a certain cultural/religious group, it is discussed here rather than in the section on Gender Issues. Through these letters, two Muslim women used their voices to “recapture their spirituality from extremists on both sides” (Fadel, 2003, ¶2). They intended to use these voices “to do something about a world full of injustices” (Karim, 2003, ¶3). Are these women a minor voice on the Duke University campus? If articles in The Chronicle are used as an indication of presence on campus, then yes these women are a small minority. Their letters, however, illustrate the overlapping of activist issues during this time period. Their voices speak to identities of gender, culture, and religion within the contexts of world politics, social justice, and the campus community.

Latino issues (October 2003)

Latino students were not an outspoken group on Duke's campus during the years under study, but in 2003 this group did have a moment in the spotlight. A party called “Viva Mexico” sponsored by the Sigma Chi fraternity included “drunken Mexicans, expired green cards, [and] a 'Border control station'” (Goodman, 2003b, ¶2). Goodman went on to state “it's as if this party was drawn up by German engineers with the specific purpose of maximizing the number of people pissed off” (¶2). If that was the intent, it appeared to be a success. This event enraged the campus' Latino community and was seen as a “catalyst for greater systemic change...at Duke” (Castillo, 2003, ¶1). This systemic change would include, according to a pamphlet published by the protesters, recruitment, retention, and support for Latino undergraduates, faculty and administrators,
the establishment of a Latino studies undergraduate and graduate program, full development and financial/institutional support for residential and academic programs that educate all students, and reform of the adjudication systems so that the principles of the Duke Community Standard can be enforced effectively in order to establish academic and residential environments free of intimidation. The demands were rejected by the Duke administration, which prompted a response of surprise from a conservative columnist.

Those familiar with the political ideologies of [President Nan] Keohane, [Provost Peter] Lange, [Vice President for Student Affairs Larry] Moneta, and [Dean of the Faculty William] Chafe know that they each make Howard Dean look like a middle-of-the-roader. It was therefore surprising that they were so unaccommodating to the “Demanders.” (Carleton, 2003, ¶4)

One theory posited by Carleton is that “there exists a hierarchy of minorities on campus” (¶15), a theory that did not bring any responses to the pages of the newspaper. This issue did not remain on the campus stage, at least not in the pages of The Chronicle, but it was one more cultural player seen during this period, and a player using many of the same activist approaches as others.

**Labor and human rights issues**

*General activism supporting labor (April 1995 – November 2004)*

Before the sweatshop issue exploded on college and university campuses students were already interested, and engaged, in issues surrounding labor. For Duke students, this involved protesting a local franchise of Kentucky Fried Chicken (KFC) over the company’s discrimination of gay and lesbian employees (Arnold, 1995). This protest sets the stage for much of what was to come in 1996 and beyond. This protest was also attended by members of the conservative Duke Review who “questioned whether or not the picketers knew exactly what they were protesting” (¶3), and showed traits of the left
versus right discourse that characterized student activism seen at Duke during the period examined by this study.

Students not only supported the rights of fast food restaurant workers (or of gay and lesbian workers) but also identified multiple groups of workers over time whom they thought needed assistance in raising their voices. Nurses at Duke University hospital were supported by Students Against Sweatshops (SAS) in 2000 (Lyons, 2000) in a rally scheduled to coincide with the joint meeting of the World Trade Organization and the International Monetary Fund (more on protests against these organizations is discussed below under the category World Issues). Laborers in general were supported by Duke alumni in a protest against the university’s policy of not canceling classes on federal holidays such as Labor Day (Rotberg, 2004c). The “most recent call for justice, respect and community” (Kirschenfeld, 2004, ¶12) was made in support of Duke University bus drivers who are “harassed by supervisors, pushed to make runs in unreasonable times and encouraged to use vacation days as sick leave” (¶2). Whether on campus or off, in the United States or in another country, Duke student activists took a stand in support of workers’ rights and working conditions.

*The anti-sweatshop movement (January 1996 – October 2004)*

*Introduction*

The largest and likely most significant student movement during this period was the anti-sweatshop movement. Issues surrounding the manufacture of collegiate apparel span almost the entire time period under study, and the group Students Against Sweatshops played a role in many protests and demonstrations on and off campus. As was noted in Chapter 2, a raid in El Monte, California brought the issue of sweatshop labor to the American public. This raid took place on August 2, 1995 and was cited by *The Chronicle* four months later in an editorial that urged letters of protest and boycotts to force U.S. corporations to be more socially responsible in the manufacture of their
goods (Malhotra, 1996). If *The Chronicle* is to be relied upon as an indicator of campus interest in a topic, then January of 1996 was perhaps too early for Duke students to be aware enough of the sweatshop issue to rise to action. The first phase of what became the anti-sweatshop movement at Duke did not come until the fall semester of 1997.

Nike, Inc. was the symbol of corporate America in the anti-sweatshop battle. At Duke, Nike was visible in its sponsorship of the men’s basketball team and its prolific coach Mike Krzyzewski. Nike was also one of the main manufacturers of the sweatshirts, t-shirts and hats worn by students on a daily basis. At the same time, wrote Jessica Salsbury (1997), “Nike has single-handedly lowered human rights standards in global sweatshops for the sole purpose of maximizing profits” (¶6). This statement challenged the Duke community to reassess their purchases and introduced the issue of sweatshops early in the academic year, and well before the beginning of basketball season. Within a few days of this article the leadership of Students Against Sweatshops (SAS) presented their case in an editorial in *The Chronicle* (Almeida & Au, 1997). They are not identified as SAS at this time, but as “Trinity juniors” Tico Almeida and Benjamin Au, the players who took leading roles in the first phases of the anti-sweatshop movement.

This early October editorial presented several key concepts and phrases that became important to the anti-sweatshop discourse. These included the call for a “code of conduct” (Almeida & Au, 1997, ¶5), by which companies that manufacture Duke apparel should operate; provisions within the code for “full disclosure” (¶6), requiring corporations (such as Nike) to prepare reports for Duke on the locations of and working conditions within their overseas factories; and the requirement that corporations pay their employees a “living wage” (¶7), a significant feature of which would be that “mothers would no longer need their children to work for supplementary income” (¶7). Three days after this piece was published the group was officially introduced to Duke (Parkins,
The licensing code of conduct became the first major issue for SAS. Members of the group worked to educate their fellow students, the faculty, and administration while working with the administration on the drafting of a code. Readers of *The Chronicle* that fall learned about SAS, sweatshop labor, and the role their university played in the global economy. Editorials criticized the student group and posed questions for the student body to ponder: “...the hours, conditions and pay [in sweatshops] cited are heinous by American standards, but how do they compare to other jobs in the area?” (Crack of the whip, 1997). Four letters appeared in response to this editorial, saying that *The Chronicle* “distorts the organization’s [SAS] goal, promotes social apathy, and proposes an ineffective solution to the problem of sweatshop labor [raising the prices of apparel and donating the increased profits to a charity to work with poor laborers]” (Fanelli, 1997, ¶ 1). Letters called the attitude of the editorial “flip in its denunciation of the University’s efforts to change the University Stores’ licensing policy” (Gelber, 1997, ¶ 1), explained that SAS “has chosen not to launch individual consumer boycotts, but [is] try[ing] to use the buying power of a major institution to force positive change” (Spataro, 1997, ¶ 1), and summed up the reasons why SAS became involved in the fight against sweatshop labor with the foundation and mission of education at Duke University.

One of the ideals entrenched in the religious and secular traditions on which the University is founded is the concept of doing what is right simply because it is the right thing to do, regardless of whether it will have drastic effects on world policy. (Pimlott, 1997, ¶ 4)

Duke was not creating their code in a vacuum. Students and administrators were working within the framework of the Collegiate Licensing Corporation (CLC), an umbrella organization that worked with many universities to assist with licensing issues.
of names, logos, and mascots. When Duke renewed its contract with CLC a clause was added which indicated that the university was adamantly opposed to any behavior that would appear to constitute abuse of workers or unfair labor policies.

The University and CLC are opposed to any actions by licensees that would constitute unfair labor practices or labor abuse. Accordingly, CLC will use its best efforts to ensure that licensees adhere to proper labor practices and provide safe working conditions, and refrain from hiring persons under such conditions that the association with the University would compromise the integrity and dignity of the University. (Parkins, 1997b, ¶8)

Duke’s participation in the anti-sweatshop movement brought national players to campus as part of a conference entitled “Global Production, Regional Responses and Local Jobs: Challenges and Opportunities in the North American Apparel Industry” (Parkins, 1997c). Participants in the conference included apparel industry representatives, union leaders, students, and faculty. A few days later Robert Reich, United States Secretary of Labor in the Clinton administration, met with SAS leaders, faculty and administrators to assist in the creation of the university’s code of conduct (Woo, 1997).

The hard work undertaken during the fall of 1997 paid off for SAS members and their allies in the administration when a code of conduct went into effect in March of 1998 (Lam, 1998). The code included a list of conditions that the university believed to be necessary for the apparel factories to meet in order to continue to do business with Duke:

- minimum age requirements for employment, set wages and benefits, provision of a healthy and safe working environment, prohibition of harassment or abuse,
- prohibition of forced labor, recognition of employees’ rights to collective bargaining and a commitment to participate in compliance monitoring programs.

(¶5)
Duke’s SAS group had helped the university to become a leader in supporting overseas labor. The first phase of the group’s work appeared to be completed.

The anti-sweatshop movement beyond campus

Duke University had a completed code of conduct and the anti-sweatshop movement was about to become a national phenomenon. During the summer of 1998 a student conference took place, attended by 50 students from 28 institutions, and the national group United Students Against Sweatshops was born (Korein, 1998a). Student activists now had a national peer group for the sweatshop issue, but they were clear that “education and activism on individual campuses is just as important” (¶19). On Duke’s campus the new academic year (1998-99) began for SAS with the primary aim of “clarifying two issues in the University’s Code of Conduct…total disclosure of factory locations involved in producing Duke merchandise and a provision ensuring workers a living wage” (Sostek, 1998b).

Duke SAS leader, Tico Almeida, had visited garment factories in Honduras during the summer of 1998, and based on that visit, the new goals for the group were formulated.

Corporations are determined to keep their lists of factories from the public for the same reason they didn’t want me to talk to workers in Honduras. Anything that makes it more likely that the American public finds out about another Kathie Lee [Gifford] scandal would force corporations to take more responsibility for their labor conditions. So they continue to insist that their factory locations and the labor conditions within them remain hidden from the public. Unfortunately, the University is willing to let them do that (Almeida, 1998a, ¶7).

Another student who had visited a sweatshop in Nicaragua echoed Almeida’s sentiment in a letter to The Chronicle.
…University administration argues that the level of disclosure outlined in our code is adequate for monitoring because it is more extensive than in any other code. We shouldn’t, however, justify flaws in our code by pointing to even larger flaws in every other code (Harris, 1998, ¶ 2).

After having outlined their reasons for demanding full disclosure of factory locations, the group put forth their arguments for wage increases. Tico Almeida once again writes about Managua, Nicaragua.

I also met the children of the women who make our clothing…I joined a six-year-old as he dug through the garbage dump of a garment factory in order to find scraps of cloth to use for fire. His family couldn’t afford kerosene with his mother’s wages (Almeida, 1998b, ¶ 3).

[W]e…want the University to enforce the principle it has written and ensure that workers can actually meet their “basic needs”—however little that may actually be (¶ 4).

Armed with the arguments that lives of families and children were at stake, members of SAS became traveling actors in an attempt to educate consumers beyond their campus peers. The first stops were local: two Wal-Mart locations in Durham, North Carolina. Student activists took part in a national campaign to challenge the retail chain publicly to end sweatshop labor, as part of the National Labor Committee’s “National Day of Conscience” (Korein, 1998b). A student participant stated her case for full disclosure during these demonstrations saying that the “argument that full disclosure would release competitive information is just an excuse to cover up widespread human rights violations” (Korein, 1998b, ¶ 9). Although student activists viewed the demonstration as successful, another student was quoted as saying “We still have a long way to go to raise awareness about what corporations are trying to hide from consumers…I could tell this by the snarling old ladies” (¶ 12). The next stop was
Washington, DC, where both students and faculty participated in a conference at the National Museum of American History sponsored by the U.S. Department of Labor. Entitled “No Sweat University: Labor Standards and Codes of Conduct,” the conference attempted to harness student activism to examine labor conditions in the collegiate trademark industry (Sostek, 1998c). The high profile topic of the conference, as reported by *The Chronicle*, was full disclosure and independent monitoring of the factory locations once they were disclosed. Later in 1999 SAS members would return to Washington to testify before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee as part of its hearings on the International Labor Organization's Convention on the Worst Forms of Child Labor (Stroup, 1999m).

Later that fall a new player entered the scene. The Apparel Industry Partnership (AIP), a coalition initiated by the White House in 1996, released a draft outline of a code of conduct for world-wide sweatshop practices in the apparel industry. Duke was a member of the AIP, as well as a member of the CLC, with whom a code of conduct had already been worked out (Milligan, 1998). Unions, human rights groups, and religious groups rejected the AIP code, “‘A code that promotes secrecy among large, multinational corporations and how they treat their workers can not be effective,’ said SAS member…Snehal Patel. ‘It is no surprise that human rights, religious and labor organizations have a deep moral problem with this new code’” (Milligan, 1998, ¶10). *The Chronicle* editorialized on this situation: “The CLC code will certainly be stronger than the AIP’s…but by all indications it will not be as strong as activists have hoped” (Signed in sweat, 1998, ¶3), “No code at all is better than a seriously-flawed code” (¶11).

Discussion of and protest against the flawed code (flawed because it did not disclose the locations of overseas garment factories fully) took up activists’ time for the remainder of the fall semester. Leaders of other student activist groups wrote to *The
Chronicle in support of SAS. They called the proposed code of conduct “inhumane” (Ferenczi & Harbison, 1998) and stated that they were “disturbed that the University is planning to adopt a code of conduct that prevents students from having access to the addresses of their apparel licensees’ factories” (Kumar & Mandel, 1998, ¶ 2). The Duke Student Government unanimously approved a resolution in favor of full disclosure of factory locations (Rubin, 1998), and SAS stated that “they hope President Nan Keohane and other administrators will refuse to sign the code and campaign publicly against the ‘watered-down’ provisions” (Stroup, 1998c, ¶ 8).

SAS then went into action, marching from the campus student center to the Allen Building with a goal of “raising public awareness” (Sostek, 1998d, ¶ 1). Their march had the unintended effect of eliciting a statement from President Keohane, who said that Duke’s signing of the CLC code was more for political reasons than anything else. She admitted that there were flaws, but thought that the problems could be better addressed from within the organization. Perhaps it is not a surprise that Keohane became the object of criticism for The Chronicle after taking this stance publicly (Weber, 1998; Cracking the code, 1998). In spite of skepticism on the part of SAS that “schools could approve the weak code now and then work to strengthen it later” (Stroup, 1998f, ¶ 8), Keohane resolutely stood by her decision to work within the framework that the CLC had established.

Spring semester 1999 began with Keohane once again stating support for the code, although this support was qualified as “reluctant” (Stroup, 1999a). It appeared that no other university was seeking to push for a tougher code, and Duke as an institution—in the embodiment of its upper administration—did not seem to be confident enough to tackle the issue alone. Simultaneously a report appeared about a potential merging between the two competing codes of conduct (AIP and CLC) (Stroup, 1999b). The AIP would work through a non-profit organization called the Fair Labor Association (FLA),
composed of representatives from industry and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). By having a factory monitoring system already in place the CLC saved time and money at this point in the process. The SAS reaction to this turn of events was objection to the number of apparel companies that were members of the FLA: “the Fair Labor Association’s current composition is too industry-based to be impartial” (¶12). Letter writers agreed with the appraisal of the code and its monitoring provisions (Ogden & Cole, 1999).

The debate between SAS and the Duke administration reached a dramatic climax at the end of January 1999 when 80 protesters entered the Allen Building and “took up residence” (Stroup, 1999c, ¶3). Twenty-one students spent the night in the building, under the watchful eyes of administrators and with certain rules laid out for them. The end result of the sit-in was a written commitment from the university to obtain the full list of factory addresses from companies that produce Duke-licensed goods, and to do this within one year (Stroup, 1999d). The 31-hour sit-in made Duke SAS a leader among university student groups in the anti-sweatshop movement.

Through press releases and personal contacts at universities across the country, news of the compromise spread like wildfire. Accounts of the protest ran in area papers and in *The New York Times*. (Stroup, 1999e, ¶2)

Similar protests obtained similar results at other universities across the country. Inspired by events at Duke, students at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and Georgetown University held protests of their own to demand that their institutions support full disclosure of factory locations and a living wage for workers (Stroup, 1999f; Georgetown, Wisconsin activists protest CLC code, 1999; Stroup, 1999g).

Duke joined the FLA in March of 1999, despite the weak monitoring provisions, and despite opposition from student activists. The next debate between administrators and SAS concerned the university’s membership in this organization. Student activists
began to voice their desire to be represented on the FLA (Stroup, 1999h) and administrators gave vocal support to that idea. Another new member of the FLA that spring was Nike, the very corporation that had been the symbol for all corporate sweatshops (Stroup, 1999h). Students were “leery” (¶15) and called Nike’s involvement in FLA “…an instance of the fox guarding the chicken coop…Are we to expect workers’ rights to be protected by the very corporations that are exploiting them?” (¶16). The spring semester ended with President Keohane writing to over seventy other college and university presidents to encourage solidarity and diligence on sweatshop issues, asking them to support the FLA (Stroup, 1999i). There was no response from SAS in this article: students had dispersed from campus for their summer break.

Disclosure and monitoring

As the new academic year started Duke announced that it would be joining a pilot project that would give universities real-world experience in monitoring apparel factories. Students once again displayed skepticism and distrust as the monitoring would take place at factories selected by those companies who had volunteered to be inspected (Stroup, 1999j). This was only one issue that was noted in The Chronicle during the early weeks of the semester regarding the anti-sweatshop movement. SAS commemorated Labor Day with a giant t-shirt shaped cutout that urged students to “Remember Who Made Your Clothes—Celebrate Labor” (Wilson, 1999, ¶1). Two fired sweatshop workers from El Salvador spoke at Duke as part of a speaking tour of six American universities along with National Labor Committee executive director Charles Kernaghan who praised student activists as “leading the strongest labor rights and human rights movement in the United States” (Pessin, 1999c, ¶3).

The next move in the anti-sweatshop drama was made by Nike. The athletic wear company disclosed the locations of 42 factories in 11 countries, factories which were directly responsible for making apparel for Duke, Georgetown, the Universities of
Arizona, Michigan, and North Carolina-Chapel Hill (Stroup, 1999k). Disclosure was done in the form of a full-page advertisement in the campus newspaper of each of the five universities. SAS members and *The Chronicle* initially praised Nike's action (*Nike just does it*, 1999), but stated that this was merely the first step. Within a few days, however, criticism of the company began to appear in letters to the editor. Sarcastic gratitude was expressed by a writer who stated “I don't remember feeling so cared for since Philip Morris unveiled its web site, where we found out that cigarettes are bad for you after all” (Faris, 1999, ¶3). Another writer revealed his personal experience with Nike factories in Mexico, “...I, a college student working on a shoestring budget, was able to find several violations that Nike's high-priced monitors missed” (Pugatch, 1999, ¶2), and three members of SAS described the company's actions with the overly dramatic metaphor: “The cloak of secrecy is cracked, but the new openness is accompanied by the usual empty promises of swift reform” (Hummel, Maharg, et. al., 1999, ¶1). It would be almost five months before more was published about Nike, and at that time a report appeared describing a report prepared for Nike by 16 independent student monitors who had visited factories in North America, Asia, and Latin America (Pessin, 2000a).

Corporate America seemed to be responding to the student anti-sweatshop movement, albeit not as quickly as the students may have wanted. The university administration was not working as quickly as student activists wanted. Students received information about the locations of apparel factories, but viewed the information as incomplete.

Instead of receiving full disclosure, students were given a partial list of factories that fell far below the required standards for disclosure designated by Duke. This blatant disregard for established deadlines and standards has left us feeling mocked (Jewett, Patel, et. al., 2000, ¶2).
The promise elicited by the sit-in of the prior year—to obtain a full list of factories manufacturing Duke apparel—had not yet been fulfilled, after a full year and two deadlines (Stroup, 2000a). SAS thus did what student activists generally do in situations such as this, they planned and held a rally outside the Allen Building which, according to reports, “drew more reporters than protesters” (Stroup, 2000b, ¶ 1). In spite of this, “the rally continued, but without an administrative antagonist, the speeches lost their edge and the protest soon wound down” (¶ 11). Support for SAS on campus continued to come from those who found the cause worthy (Weller, 2000a), but the group was also drawing criticism. SAS was said to have a “drastically lowered profile” (Activism gone awry, 2000, ¶ 1). They were told to “come down off your high horse...” (Zimmerman, 2000b, ¶ 15) because “the 1960s are over and your voice is not really important” (¶ 1).

Although SAS members believed that the administration had not fulfilled its promise, the university did take action against 28 companies. Ties between these 28 companies and Duke were severed because the companies had not disclosed complete information about their factories (Levy, 2000). SAS members were enthusiastic about this action from the university, but believed that much more work needed to be done, beginning with convincing the administration to cancel its membership in the Fair Labor Association.

Another victory in the effort for disclosure of factory locations and conditions came within a month of Duke canceling these contracts. In April Nike released a 52-page report written by 16 independent student monitors, a move that disclosed information on employee working conditions in the company’s overseas factories (Pessin, 2001a). The release of this report, coupled with the fact that student activists had been allowed to conduct the visits, was seen as a positive step. The report, however, did not provide a positive view of the company’s operations. Students who were part of the monitoring visits found that although Nike’s code of conduct outlining workers’ rights was posted,
the workers were unfamiliar with it. The code’s concepts were difficult to translate into Spanish or were described in terms too sophisticated for the workers to understand. Asian workers were never told about their option to use legally mandated vacation time. In Nicaragua several workers reported to the students that they had been beaten and one reported that she had been poisoned by the air conditions in the factory (Pessin, 2000a).

In early 2001 student activists wrote to top university officials, as well as Men’s Basketball coach Mike Krzyzewski, with regards to a labor dispute at a Nike factory in Puebla, Mexico. The dispute began when at least five workers at the factory were fired after complaining about low wages and rotten food in the cafeteria (Kumar, 2001a). The Fair Labor Association was brought in to mediate between factory managers and the 850 striking workers. SAS leaders stated their belief that the situation would have been more in control if Duke were part of the Workers Rights Consortium rather than the Fair Labor Association.

The Fair Labor Association became a target not only for the student activists but also for some faculty activists. Members of a group of economists and lawyers specializing in international trade policy and economic law, the Academic Consortium on International Trade (ACIT), signed a letter that criticized universities for not deliberating sufficiently before deciding to join anti-sweatshop organizations such as FLA and for being swayed by the actions of undergraduate students (Kumar, 2000a). Letter writers stated that “Social responsibility should not be defined in a way which is paternalistic and self-serving…These kids don’t even realize it because they’ve all been trained by UNITE and such groups in the summer” (¶8). By August of 2001 the FLA had begun to operate as a full-time monitoring organization, even though activists, along with some university officials, continued to be dubious about the organization’s effectiveness, saying that “You’ve got a situation where the fox is guarding the chicken coop and you’ve got to question the effectiveness” (Ingram, 2001a, ¶5). Later that fall Duke joined the Workers
Rights Consortium (WRC), stating that since their inception the two monitoring organizations (WRC and FLA) had become less competitive and more complimentary (Ingram, 2001c).

At the same time that Duke announced that it had joined the WRC, the university also announced that it would not renew its contract with New Era Cap Company due to allegations of unsafe working conditions in the corporation’s Derby, N.Y. factory (Move to help workers, 2001). Along with the University of Wisconsin at Madison, Duke was in a minority of universities in the decision not to renew this contract (Ingram, 2001d). Many universities that did renew their contracts with New Era at this time cited a need for more information. Credit for the decision not to renew the contract goes to the student activists of SAS who “put in endless hours behind the scenes to make this happen” (Brim, 2001, ¶3).

This was not the end of the story of Duke University’s relationship with New Era Cap Company. In June 2002 the company and the Communications Workers of America reached a tentative four-year contract agreement, which ended an 11-month strike (Yee, 2002b). According to The Chronicle’s report, the company hoped that word of the new contract would enable them to reestablish ties with universities, such as Duke, that had let licensing contracts expire in protest over the company’s unresponsiveness to labor concerns. Just before the start of the fall semester, Duke renewed its contract with New Era (Yee, 2002a), a decision that was praised by editorial writers at The Chronicle (Anti-sweatshop success, 2002).

The anti-sweatshop movement had, by this time, become part of the institutional culture at Duke. Academic departments and centers along with student groups sponsored panel discussions on the topic of sweatshop labor (University Briefs, 2002). Discussing the positive and negative aspects of sweatshops, the roles of consumers, governments, businesses, and workers, this panel continued to keep the issue alive on campus.
In June 2003 the Fair Labor Association (FLA) released its first public report, revealing findings from independent audits of seven major apparel companies (Yee, 2003a). Administrators at Duke who had been instrumental in the university’s involvement in the FLA’s development were pleased with the results. Then-President Nan Keohane wrote “‘We are glad that the effort Duke helped launch has been successful in monitoring companies and bringing information back to interested consumers’” (¶4). It was this approach by Keohane that led a columnist for The Chronicle to declare that she “remains committed to the voices of students who approach her” (Scoville, 2004b, ¶9). In October 2004 university administrators reaffirmed the institution’s commitment to fair labor in the wake of news that the Multi-fiber Agreement (MFA) would expire at the beginning of the following year (Crowley, 2004b). The MFA is a multilateral treaty that establishes export quotas for all textile-producing nations, without its framework in place many manufacturers would have incentives to move their operations to countries that were previously exporting at their quota, where lower standards for workers’ rights are enforced. Student activists within SAS were not only concerned with the rights of workers in other countries. They also focused their attention on workers within North Carolina, in one particular case, migrant cucumber pickers for the Mount Olive Pickle Company.

**The Mt. Olive pickle boycott (October 1999 – September 2004)**

Pickles took the stage in 1999 as a group of students, affiliated with the North Carolina Student Rural Health Coalition, worked to bring the plight of rural farm workers to the attention of the Duke community (Margolis, 1999b). According to an article about the fledgling movement “The labor practices of the Mt. Olive Pickle Company disregard equity, safety and the law” (¶4). Students who had been supporting the rights of sweatshop workers in Asia and Central America now had a cause closer to home to support. Students involved in the movement wrote that they were “asking that
Mt. Olive advocate collective-bargaining agreements between migrant labor and cucumber growers” (Weller & Kulkarni, 1999). The issue was debated on campus both on the letters page of *The Chronicle* (Simms, 1999) and with a personal presentation by the president of the Mt. Olive Pickle Company (Young, 1999). The issue then did not receive any news coverage on campus until the following March, when a single paragraph from “staff reports” announced a banquet to celebrate the one-year anniversary of the Mt. Olive boycott (Cost estimates for Triangle regional rail nearly double, 2000). In 2002 *The Chronicle* reported that it had been five years since a Mt. Olive pickle had been served at a campus eatery and five months since the company’s pickles had been sold in on-campus stores (Smith, J., 2002). The boycott continued, and Duke SAS was involved, along with the Duke Progressive Alliance. The university administration supported the boycott effort. Duke president Nan Keohane wrote to the student activists that the boycott would continue until Mt. Olive “takes more responsibility for labor practices on its supplier farms” (Ingram, 2002). Apparently the administration believed that this was achieved later that year and lifted the university’s boycott of the pickle company in August of 2002 (Yee, 2002a).

Student activists were not in agreement with the decision and continued to write editorials denouncing the decision (Kerrissey, 2002) and to stage protests to voice their views of the situation (Nimocks, 2003). Administrators responded, citing “hundreds of hours doing research” (Burness, 2002, ¶3), and reaffirmed their commitment to “working with Duke Students Against Sweatshops and others to achieve our common goals” (¶13).

On September 16, 2004 the Duke community read the following opening paragraph in an article about the Mt. Olive boycott:
After five years of pickets and protests that entangled Duke in many ways, the boycott of the North Carolina-based Mt. Olive Pickle Company will officially end today (Rohrs, 2004b, ¶ 1).

Although the article went on to quotation a student member of SAS as saying “‘…Duke didn’t play any role at all in the final resolution of the boycott’” (¶ 20), the issue was important enough to the university to warrant not just the article on September 16 but also a second article on September 17 (Crowley, 2004a) reporting on the signing of the agreements between Mt. Olive Pickle, the North Carolina Growers Association, and the Farm Labor Organizing Committee. The agreements provide for the improvement of conditions for farmworkers, the restructuring of product pricing, and union recognition.

Angelica: The outsourcing of laundry (April – October 2004)

In 2004 the Duke University Health System (DUHS) decided to sell its laundry facility to Angelica Corporation, a national laundry and textile services provider. Allegedly Angelica’s new workers would be paid on average $1.00 per hour less than their Duke predecessors, and the company was found to be in violation of the Durham County living wage ordinance (Newman, B., 2004b). The outsourcing decision spurred new activist efforts by Students Against Sweatshops, with the assistance of the United Needle and Textile Workers Union (UNITE) (Hauptman, 2004c). After presenting reports to the administration of both DUHS and the University, SAS took their protest to the campus at large, staging a protest in front of the Duke Chapel (Hauptman, 2004d). This issue, which did not achieve closure before the end of the period under study, brought together the university and the town community, as Durham County rescinded its contract with Angelica based on issues of unionization and workers’ rights (Ke, 2004).
World issues

U.S. politics (October 1997 – November 2004)

For student activists at Duke, interaction with the world began at home, in the United States, and on campus. Military recruitment, voting and elections, economic policies, and civil liberties were among the issues with which student activists became engaged according to The Chronicle, beginning with a report of a demonstration against a U.S. Army recruiter at Duke’s law school (Colwell, 1997). At issue was the military’s policy of “don’t ask, don’t tell” regarding the sexual orientation of members of the military. Protesters objected to Army recruitment at Duke, believing that the university’s anti-discrimination policy was violated by the presence of the recruiter.

Elections and voting were covered beginning in 2002 when it was reported that a coalition of campus political groups was sponsoring a voter-registration drive (Berry, 2002). Student organizations from across the political spectrum collaborated on voter registration in an effort to quell voter apathy among students. A group of professors took up this cause two years later. Calling themselves DRAGnet (Duke Radical Action Group), these faculty members spent a day on campus dressed like drag queens in order to emphasize political awareness and activism on campus (Kazdin, 2004). Apathy towards U.S. politics was not as widespread as this article would have readers believe. An event called “Blue Devils for Dole,” which was held to raise money for the Senate campaign of Elizabeth Dole, drew the attention of those students on campus who were not apathetic. A letter writer responding to any criticism (none was published in The Chronicle) of this event stated that “no one in North Carolina familiar enough with this University...would be fooled into believing the leftist hangovers from the 1960s who run this school would endorse a Republican...” (Boyd, 2002, ¶ 1).

As political attention moved from the mid-term elections of 2002 to the presidential race of 2004, students took stands not only for or against candidates and
parties but also for the integrity of the democratic process itself. Computer scientists at both Johns Hopkins and Rice Universities undertook an audit of voting machine software manufactured by Diebold, Inc. and discovered a lack of adequate security in the software (Collins, 2003). A graduate student at Duke, Justin Moore, joined the movement to make this lack of security public by publishing internal memoranda from Diebold on a website hosted by Duke University. Under the threat of possible legal action Moore stood by his actions saying that “‘This is non-commercial political speech, which traditionally gets very, very high protection under the First Amendment.’” (Collins, 2003, ¶ 16).

The 2004 presidential election drew commentary from the politically aware students. Prior to the election one student wrote “All we have to do in November is repeat the last election plus one state. ...to prove Bush’s ‘Meet the Press’ vision of victory wrong...” (Valerio, 2004, ¶ 9). Alongside the commentary on the President in the newspaper was commentary on t-shirts, designed by students who opposed George W. Bush’s re-election. The shirts were printed on the front with the phrase “bush? not fine by me,” and on the back with a list of numerical statistics that added up to a total sum of 2004 (Rose, 2004). The slogan on the front of the shirt had its origin in another t-shirt campaign at Duke, in which t-shirts with the phrase “gay? fine by me” were distributed to students to promote acceptance of alternative lifestyles on campus. Post-election, the campus conservatives brought their commentary to the pages of The Chronicle, criticizing the organization of anti-Bush rallies scheduled for Inauguration Day (Carleton, 2004b).

The Chronicle published anti-Bush commentaries along with those of the Bush supporters. Those columns that were not directly related to the election took aim at philosophies and policies of the U.S. government by attempting to influence the decision-making of the student body. Emily LaDue was a columnist for The Chronicle who took on the issues that were larger than the campus, as is seen in the title of her bi-weekly
column “Beyond the Ivory Tower,” (LaDue, 2003c). She urged students (and by association all Americans) to “reform global crises with our daily decisions” (LaDue, 2003b, ¶ 1), and expressed outrage that “The rights of human beings—in Iraq, Miami, Afghanistan, Colombia, etc.—are being disregarded if they get in the way of a corporate and administrative agenda…” (LaDue, 2003c, ¶ 3).

Reporters covering news issues for the paper also found events and groups promoting an anti-Bush message for their section of The Chronicle. A group of protesters stood outside of a hotel where Attorney General John Ashcroft was speaking in support of the Patriot Act I and II. This group of approximately 450, that included graduate students and “an entire contingent of freshmen from Gilbert-Addoms dormitory” (Lin, 2003f, ¶ 11), demonstrated against the provisions in the Acts that they believed encroached upon and restrained civil liberties (Lin, 2003f). The following year, as the national act banning assault weapons expired, readers of The Chronicle learned about a new campus group, People Against Assault Weapons (PAAW) (Eaglin, 2004). This group, similar to others that have been discussed here, had its origin within the academic life of its student members, the Humanitarian Challenges FOCUS program.


The World Trade Organization (WTO) was a specific target for student activists during the period under study. In 1999 the WTO met in Seattle, Washington, where the delegates were exposed to as many as 50,000 protesters who believed in the WTO’s mission of expanding trade, but only with the creation of an enforceable international trading system that respects democracy, workers’ rights and the environment (Patel, S., 1999). Activists from Duke who took part in the protests in Seattle believed the WTO to be an institution that “places trade above justice and corporate profit above workers’ rights” (Patel, S., 1999, ¶ 8). A columnist for The Chronicle called these protesters “neoprotectionists” (Newman, C. 1999, ¶ 4) because their primary concern with the issue
of free trade was not the security of American jobs, but was instead the rights of individual countries to set their own standards on acceptable trade. Those who participated in the protest were not deterred by this criticism. One of the student demonstrators told *The Chronicle* that he was convinced that the demonstrations were successful because the WTO canceled the convention’s opening ceremonies and because “the average American is now more aware of the WTO” (Stroup, 1999n, ¶4). On behalf of a campus environmental group a student wrote a letter to the editor which struck back at the “neoprotectionist” label, describing the secrecy utilized by the WTO in their proceedings (Zdeb, 1999).

Similar to the WTO, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank were institutions against which students protested in this period. These protests in 2000 and 2002 did not receive the same quantity of coverage as the Seattle WTO protests, nor did they ignite debate on the pages of *The Chronicle*. The issues for protesters were summed up as contentions that the policies of the IMF and World Bank have hurt the developing nations that actually should be helped by the two institutions (Pessin, 2000b). Critics of the protests stated that the activists’ cause was “less than clear” (D.C. Protests ineffective, 2002, ¶3) and that they did not support their claims nor offer solutions to the problems cited. There was no response by any activist students or groups to this editorial, and any mention of protests against these international institutions disappeared after this point.

*The war in Iraq (September 2002 – February 2004)*

The first mention of student protest against U.S. plans for military action against Iraq was a letter to the editor questioning why there had not yet been any student activism related to this issue (Weldon, 2002). The writer observed that “This seems to be the first time in the past century in which students are not united and/or vocal in the face of unjust military assertion of force” (¶ 1). Within a few days a rally took place on
Porrayals of student activism in print media

Campus in opposition to war in Iraq. There was no indication that this rally was spurred by the letter-writer’s comments, and The Chronicle did not report on the rally. Mention of the rally came in another letter to the editor, commenting that “More than a few freshmen turned out for their first display of campus activism today” (Moore, 2002, ¶1) and also challenging the protesters to “come up with something better” (¶4) than war. Other comments on this first protest included suggestions to protesters on ways the writer thought protesters could be more successful in promoting their message (Warlick, 2002): “Traditional white posters are drab. Use more eye-catching devices, like lingerie models...” (¶2), “Abandon standard Duke attire. Your clothing should be as dirty and ripped as possible...Dried mud is a plus” (¶4), and “Don’t smile. No one will take your complaints seriously” (¶9). Within days of this first campus protest students opposed to the war joined like-minded individuals in Washington, D.C. for a nonviolent protest (Card, 2002). A graduate student who organized the Duke delegation characterized the protesters as “everything from Christian pacifists, to people who oppose American imperialism, to those who believe the war is principally about elite economic interests” (¶3).

As the possibility of war drew closer student activists became more visible. In early February 2003 members of a group calling themselves Students Against the War in Iraq pitched tents on the Quadrangle in front of the Duke Chapel—one of the most prominent places at the university—to form what they called called Peaceville (Lin, 2003a). The gathering of tents was modeled after a similar protest at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, but also stood in contrast to another group of Duke students sleeping in tents in order to secure tickets to Duke men’s basketball games: “I don’t want to say that camping out for basketball tickets is frivolous, but I will say that it is much more important to me that I show my support for peace in the

Students Against the War in Iraq became a visible presence on campus with Peaceville and with their organization of a campus-wide walkout held the day after war with Iraq was declared. The group circulated petitions to gather support for the idea of the walkout, and collected signatures from 400 students and staff members who pledged their intent to walk out of classes and work with the initiation of a war by the U.S. government (Lin, 2003b). Three days later the walkout and rally took place, with an estimated attendance of 400 protesters against the war and a small group (no exact figure was cited) that gathered to show support of the U.S. military action (Lin, 2003c). After the rally campus protesters marched through Duke’s campus and into the surrounding community of downtown Durham where they joined other local activists at Brightleaf Square, a central shopping and dining location close to campus (Lin, 2003d).

Activism protesting the war in Iraq inspired a number of letters to the editor in the weeks following the start of the war and the walkout. There was support for citizens’ right to protest, with a call for “students involved [to] make...better use of their time” (DeTura, 2003, ¶3). The intellectual climate of the university drew debates on “moral relativism” on the letters page of *The Chronicle*, comparing Saddam Hussein’s Iraq to Adolf Hitler’s Germany (Ericksen, 2003a), and criticism of anti-war activists’ use of statistics to educate their peers with regard to the legitimacy of the United States action in Iraq (Ericksen, 2003b). Students who opposed the war even criticized each others’ tactics, calling the blocking of a campus bus by anti-war protesters rude and selfish and informing readers that “there is a difference between a liberal moderate who considers this war unjust and a radical leftist who considers this war unjust” (Hanna, 2003, ¶3). The radical leftists described by Hanna remained visible with their so-called “petty
antics” (Vetter, 2003, ¶3) and were urged to “present a more serious, intellectual front instead of pursuing theatrical tactics that provoke attention” (¶3).

Columnists began to use their allotted space in the newspaper to comment on the war and the debates and discussions surrounding it, and urged students to debate and discuss more. The pages of The Chronicle could be an outlet for that debate according to one columnist, who called the paper “the primary outlet for campus dialogue” (Bush, 2003, ¶9). It appears that this outlet was not utilized to the fullest extent possible. The next column to discuss Iraq appeared in October 2003; its author stated that “If I wasn’t in a political science class this semester, I wouldn’t have heard a word about Iraq anywhere at Duke...” (Ross, 2003, ¶2). According to this columnist, both pro- and anti-war activists had fallen silent because “Once the major fighting stopped, they couldn’t capitalize on people’s passions...” (¶4). It is at this point that Iraq seemed to fade from the consciousness of Duke undergraduates. One more article that appeared during the period under study reports on a demonstration to protest the involvement of the Research Triangle Institute (RTI) in the rebuilding of Iraq (Hasvold, 2004). RTI is a research organization that works in a number of fields including health, education and training, advanced technology and economic and social development. The institute was founded in 1958 by Duke University, the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and North Carolina State University. Students participated in this demonstration along with other members of the local community.

The Israel/Palestine issue (January 2003 – October 2004)

Discussions of Israel and Palestine were discussions of identity as well as world politics. Many of those who spoke out for the political rights of either side often did so because of personal identification with the area and its culture. Nevertheless, it was politics that drove a majority of the activist activities having to do with Israel and Palestine. The first example from this period was the divest from Israel movement, in
which activists urged Duke to remove all invested money from companies with military ties to Israel, because these companies “feed Israel’s continued contravention of international law and human rights” (al-Bulushi, 2003, ¶ 3). According to the student group DukeDivest, Israel had violated “several U.N. Resolutions and portions of the Geneva Convention” (Lin, 2003e, ¶ 2). The group held a teach-in and discussion to bring their viewpoints to the rest of the university.

In 2004 the Palestine Solidarity Movement (PSM) held its annual conference at Duke. The group was a controversial actor on the stage of Middle East politics, and public perceptions, taken from the group’s website as well as news reports of past conferences, were that the group admired suicide bombing, and that at the 2002 conference participants chanted “Chrad al-yahud,” “Annihilate the Jews” (Solomon, 2004). That this conference was allowed time and facilities at Duke for their conference reiterated the university’s commitment to academic freedom. Jewish groups on campus banded together for discussions, rather than protests: “‘We do not want to be seen as opposing freedom of speech or exercising some kind of power over the university administration’” (Rohrs, 2004c, ¶ 10). A headline in The Chronicle called this response “graceful” (Staff Reports, 2004), and applauded the Joint Israel Initiative for using the conference as an “opportunity for education rather than as an opportunity for protest” (¶ 3). The Joint Israel Initiative was a coalition of three major Jewish organizations at Duke: The Freeman Center for Jewish Life, the student board of the Freeman Center, and Duke Friends of Israel. The group’s focus was pro-Israeli, not anti-Palestinian.

Further reports on meetings and discussions leading up to the PSM conference continued to emphasize the principle of academic freedom as expressed by Duke University President Richard Brodhead. Brodhead also reaffirmed the position on divestment from Israel as stated by his predecessor, Nannerl Keohane (Rohrs & Rotberg, 2004). Divestment was called a “last resort to be used only when a substantial
community consensus existed” (¶5). The issue of divestment from companies with ties to the Israeli military was to be a primary aim of the PSM conference. It was the topic of one of the three conference panels, announced with the speakers in late September (Rohrs, 2004i). The two other panels would discuss the historical background of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and the garnering of support for the Palestinian cause.

Criticism of the university administration and condemnation of PSM members and organizers continued as the conference approached. A member of the Duke Conservative Union (DCU) expressed his opinion that President Brodhead should not have allowed the conference to take place at Duke and that the views of conference participants “will be of the most hateful and offensive nature possible” (Carleton, 2004a, ¶2). These reactions were not restricted to the on-campus community. In the surrounding community, the cities of Durham and Chapel Hill, the president of the Durham-Chapel Hill Jewish Federation voiced his opinion that the views of the conference were objectionable (Rohrs, 2004d). Beyond the local community, two Jewish schools in Atlanta, Georgia announced that they would sever ties with Duke’s Talent Identification Program, a summer program which allowed middle school students to take the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) and attend camp at the university (Rohrs, 2004d).

National criticism and opposition to the conference grew. An online petition that encouraged President Brodhead to reject the conference had over 82,000 signatures on October 7, 2004, eight days before the conference (Rohrs, 2004e). The conference was not canceled, and the university continued preparations for security and communications issues (Rohrs, 2004e) as groups opposed to the conference for counter-activities to the official PSM meetings (Rohrs, 2004f).

Individual student activists focused on the use of dialogue to communicate their viewpoints to their audience. Two days before the PSM conference was to start, students from both sides of the issue—pro-Israeli and pro-Palestinian—initiated discussions with
each other and with passersby in front of the Duke Chapel (Rohrs, 2004f). Part of the
discussion centered on Bus Number 19, a bus that was the target of a suicide bomber in
Jerusalem. The bus had been brought to the Duke campus as a physical illustration of the
Israeli-Palestinian conflict. In response to the bus’ presence a student had posted signs in
the vicinity with messages such as “Zionism=ethnic cleansing” (¶4). Although the bus
and the signs represent opposite ends of the issue, *The Chronicle* reported that “The
majority of discussion...focused on the similarities of violence that Palestinians and
Israelis both face and the way information about the conflict is disseminated in the
United States” (¶15).

On the eve of the conference, the DCU sponsored a speech on campus by pro-
Israeli activist Daniel Pipes, who advocated ending the Palestinian-Israeli conflict by
cutting off support to the Palestinian cause (Rohrs, 2004g). Although his presentation
was not promoted as a direct counter-event to the PSM conference, he did mention it
briefly, saying that “the University was ‘abdicating its responsibility’ to students by
allowing it” (¶7). The conference, at that point, was expected to draw 400 participants,
and as many as 300 protesters, with 100 security officers to keep order and 50 to 60
faculty members and administrators to serve as a first line of defense for situations where
police intervention would not be necessary (Rohrs, 2004h).

The conference was without incident, according to *The Chronicle’s* presentation
of campus news. The next mention of PSM was on October 26, 2004, in an opinion
column titled “Weekend security for nothing” (Scoville, 2004a). The writer expresses
disappointment with the “lackluster protests” (¶1) surrounding the event, stating that
“Considering the security measures in place and the money spent to protect participants
and passers-by alike, I expected a lot more fun” (¶1). His opinion of the security
measures, and the apparent lack of need for it on campus is summed up in the following
paragraph.
All of this imposition [of extra security regulations] for typical Duke activism—a 10-minute walk across West Campus with signs, although this time we got “outsiders” to come to Duke and protest (and participate) on our behalf so that we could sit at home to play video games and drink at Parizades [a local restaurant], just like every other weekend. (¶9)

Sudan and Tibet: Rights in foreign lands (January 2003 – November 2004)

The African country of Sudan attracted the attention of student activists when they learned about the civil war taking place there and the human rights violations that accompanied the war (Rohrs, 2003c). Inspired by a Political Science course entitled Ethics and International Relations, student activists began a campaign urging the university to divest money from corporations with financial ties to the Sudanese civil war. In January of 2003, 200 students attended a speech by former Sudanese slave Francis Bok (Rohrs, 2003c). The issue then seemed to move outside of reporting by The Chronicle, as nothing further appeared until an opinion column was published in September 2004 (Kennedy, 2004). Using the newspaper as a forum to inspire action from his fellow students, Kennedy explained the genocide taking place in Sudan and discussed reasons why he believed the United States, along with the United Nations, should involve themselves in stopping it. Kennedy saw this as a moral issue, and repeated phrases such as “moral legitimacy” (¶3, 4, 5), “moral necessity” (¶4), and “moral arguments” (¶7) in his argument for world intervention. The same day this column was published a vigil for Sudan was held in front of the Duke Chapel; there was no article about this event in The Chronicle.

In a further attempt to raise awareness on campus a group of students erected a mock refugee village on the Main West Quadrangle of Duke’s campus (Rotberg, 2004d). The village was built to represent the violence in Sudan that had displaced 1.8 million native Sudanese, and was part of a national movement to raise awareness of the events
taking place in Sudan. During the same week another vigil was held, this time as part of a series of vigils taking place at other universities such as Harvard, Georgetown, University of Pennsylvania, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and Emory (Newman, L., 2004). The vigil was sponsored by the student group Justice, a Duke organization advocating for international human rights. Participants in the vigil were encouraged to sign letters to their respective congressmen and to make financial contributions to the cause.

Sudan was not the only country on the minds of student activists during this time period. Students for a Free Tibet was an active, nationwide student movement, “big in New York, big in L.A., and here in Durham, the Duke chapter of...Students for a Free Tibet (SFT) is working hard” (Gianino, 2003, ¶ 1). Even though this article begins by informing readers about how “big” this movement is, only this single article, that advertised a film series about Tibet sponsored by the student group appeared in the searches of The Chronicle archives performed for this study. It is unclear if these student activists were less active than others or if it was the judgment of campus reporters that their actions and activities were merely not interesting enough to make the pages of the daily newspaper.

Summary

This chapter has demonstrated the ways in which Duke University’s campus newspaper, The Chronicle, reported on the issues student activists confronted during the time period 1996-2004. It has been shown that the campus of Duke, as well as the pages of its daily newspaper, served as a stage on which all members of the community—activists, their supporters and their opponents—could speak and act on a number of issues seen as important to their lives. The issues, which were concerned with the three
broad categories of labor and human rights, identity/culture, and the world, allowed student activists to take on a number of roles on the campus stage. With this description of the set and scenery, the following three chapters will analyze the roles of the student activists as *The Chronicle* described them to the campus.
Chapter 5 – The players: presentation of student activists

in The Chronicle 1996-2004, introduction and campus/education roles

Introduction

Chapter 4 recounted the actions of student activists as these actions were presented on the stage of Duke University’s campus during the period 1996-2004. This chapter and the two that follow take a closer look at the players concerned with the issues and those taking part in the actions. Through these actions student activists as a group take on numerous roles both on and off campus. For this analysis “role” will be viewed according to Goffman’s definition (1961), as the activity the incumbent would engage in were he to act solely in terms of the normative demands upon someone in his position, in other words each role described here is examined apart from the surrounding context in which many roles overlap. Further to this definition, the analysis examines what Goffman calls “role performance,” which is the actual conduct of an individual while on duty in his position, that is, what the player actually does within the boundaries of a role. The final component is that of “role others,” or the relevant audiences to whom the actors play.

Student activists at Duke are the main protagonists, but there are others who play major roles in the drama of this time period. There are three major non-student players relevant to this study. First is the campus of Duke University itself, in its role as an “activist campus” or a “campus with activists.” Second are the past activists whose influence continues to be felt in the present, called here “Ghosts of Activism Past.” The third and final non-student player is The Chronicle. The campus newspaper is the player that draws the others together and provides narration to those not directly involved in the drama of student activism. In this role The Chronicle is analogous to a Greek chorus.
Activism on campus compared to an “activist campus”

There is a distinction between activism on campus and an identity as an “activist campus.” Duke University is not viewed as an “activist campus” by members of its community, although it is a university that hosts and supports periods of student activism. Administrators who lived through the turbulent period of campus activism in the 1960s do not view the university as an activist campus. In a 2003 interview, former Duke president Douglas Knight, who was in office during the 1960s, spoke of the lack of a strong activist culture as an advantage during his tenure at Duke, because “radical and violent politics remained largely absent...” (Gerst, 2003, ¶8). In a reprint of a 1968 article, originally published at a time when activism was on the rise at Duke after the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr., the university was called “hypersensitive about its national image” (Appleborne, 1998, ¶18) and that “for Duke to become the Berkeley of the South is the last thing the trustees or administrators want” (¶18). The reference is to the University of California, Berkeley, which at that time was one of the most activist campuses in the United States.

It was surprising then to the Duke community when, in 1998, Mother Jones magazine ranked the university at the top of its annual list of the top ten activist campuses in the United States (Wieczorek, 1998). “‘One does not think of Duke as being a particularly activist place’” (Sostek, 1998a, ¶3) was a quotation from then Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences and faculty member of the Department of History William Chafe, an historian whose research has focused on the history of the civil rights movement of the 1960s. The editorial staff of The Chronicle agreed with Chafe. In an editorial entitled “We’re Number One?” (1998) the paper criticized the methodology of the ranking and stated a view that it was based on a single successful event by a single student group, that was not representative of the entire campus.
Because it was based on a single successful movement—namely Students Against Sweatshops—rather than a generalized sense of a school’s political activity, the rankings should have been called “The Top Ten Activist Events on College Campuses.” (¶4) So we have one great activist group, but nothing resembling an activist campus. (¶6)

Although Duke overall was not viewed, and did not view itself, as an activist campus, there were students who believed the university to have played a role in their becoming active: “It is a journey to become an activist. I didn’t come to Duke to become an activist...Duke made me an activist” (Kumar, 1999, ¶12). We see that the university campus has a role in the lives of student activists. The campus itself, however, was only one of the non-student actors influencing student activism at Duke.

Ghosts of activism past: Comparisons to the 1960s

Student activists of the late 1990s and early years of the 21st century were one generation removed from their most famous, or infamous, counterparts of the 1960s and early 1970s. A stereotypical image of student activism has arisen from that era, probably in no small part due to the fact that the students of the 1960s—the baby boomers—have become a significant portion of the American population, including the population of faculty and administrators on many university campuses. Because of this image, reinforced in popular culture, contemporary student activists participate in their movements alongside the Ghosts of Activism Past, and are compared to them in a variety of contexts.

One attitude towards these ghosts can be called an exorcism of them. By simply dismissing the activism of the past, Duke’s student activists sought to portray themselves as a new image of what student activism could and should be, and that image was not that of their parents’ generation: “…the myth of ‘60s activism didn’t live long for me: Protests of my father’s time were violent, faddish, and futile” (Bloom, 2003, ¶1). Other
writers took a different tact at exorcism, by pointing out how contemporary students were involved, focusing on the positive aspects of their activities rather than the negative aspects of the past.

Some make sweeping cultural pronouncements about how kids today are more concerned with iPods and I-banking than campaigning for their local state representative. Others, however suggest that the level of 1960s political activism continues to exist, but student involvement now manifests itself in community service, religion and minority activism. (Gillum, 2004a, ¶7)

Humor was another method used to face the ghosts of the past. If the popular stereotype of student activists could be made into the butt of a joke, then perhaps it could be shown that student activists of the previous generation were not the ideal that they were often made out to be.

When my parents were in college, the students were revolting. Not just in the sense that several of them didn’t shower very often or were afflicted with the undergraduate curse of nauseating self-righteousness. I mean they were rioting in the streets and burning things. (Harris, 2003, ¶1)

Some members of the Duke community seemed more than willing to exorcise the ghosts. A professor who had been involved in negotiations during the 1969 Allen Building takeover reflected on how difficult it was to work with those student activists.

“In the ‘60s, the students were really angry, and it was very hard to have a reasonable conversation with them, there was so much hostility,” [James B. Duke Professor of Economics Crauford] Goodwin says. (Nicholson, 2003, ¶11)

The implication here is, that in the 1990s and beyond, anger is no longer a prevalent part of the student activists’ personalities.

The ghosts of activism past were not always a haunting presence. In some contexts they were viewed as guiding spirits, keeping watch over the legacy of activism.
they left behind upon graduation from Duke. This was especially true for African-American student activists and the ghosts of those who took part in the famous 1969 takeover of the Allen Building.

Tensions came to a broil Feb. 13, 1969, when 67 black students took over the Allen Building and issued a set of demands to the administration, including the creation of a department of Afro-American studies, the right to establish a dormitory exclusively for black students and proportional representation of black students within the student body. (Gerst, 2003, ¶5)

It was this group of student activists who were remembered by African American students at a 1997 sit-in in the Allen Building, the 2001 protests over the publication of David Horowitz’s anti-reparations advertisement in *The Chronicle*, and in the lock-ins in the Allen Building in 2002 and 2003. Although the ghosts of these activists may not have haunted the students, their legacy has haunted Duke’s administration.

*The role of The Chronicle*

“Activism was alive and well at Duke [on October 15, 1969]. And this newspaper, now celebrating its 100th year, was a part of it” (Almas, 2004a, ¶3). This quotation appeared in a feature article celebrating *The Chronicle’s* 100 years of reporting the news and events of Duke University. The newspaper staff viewed their daily creation as an integral part of life at Duke, and an analysis of activist roles at the university would be incomplete without an examination of how reporters and columnists view the role their words play in the life of the institution.

*The Chronicle* is an independent daily newspaper, not affiliated with Duke University. Readers learned this as part of the newspaper’s celebration of 100 years of publication: “…the Duke community’s daily source of news is the product of Duke Student Publishing Company, a $1.3 million non-profit, incorporated firm…”
(McGowan, 2004, ¶1). As such, the newspaper is not the official sanctioned voice of Duke; its job is to report actions and events as its reporters witness them.

“The Chronicle does not represent Duke University. The Chronicle covers Duke University.” [the newspaper’s role according to then-editor Greg Pessin] (kumar, 2001b, ¶15)

The daily newspaper’s role was described as “one of the few remaining open forms of academic discussion and freedom at Duke” (McGowan, 2004, ¶17), the “primary outlet for campus dialogue” (Bush, 2003, ¶9), and “a forum for an informed and diverse public discourse on issues that affect all of us” (DuBuisson, 2001, ¶4). The office space where daily publication took place “has served as a place where ideas flow freely about politics, journalistic ethics and a host of other topics” (Carlitz, 2004, ¶5).

The editorial page of The Chronicle was of particular importance, as it “serves as an outlet and a forum for debate to the larger Duke community” (Fisher, 2004, ¶1). It is on the editorial page that writers comment on life at Duke, and even sum up all of those comments to come to a conclusion about the role of the editorial page in the life of the student body.

You know what I just did? I just went into The Chronicle archives and read, in two sittings, every single column printed this year. No joke. It took me six hours. I was hunting for generalizations—I wanted to tabulate every blanket statement made about Duke students this year. I found a grand total of 208, which means that generalizations come at a rate of little more than one every column. And that kind of frequency suggests that the editorial page is pretty central to our collective identity, or at least wants to be—it’s where Dukies tell Dukies who they are. (Goodman, 2005, ¶1, 3)
The Chronicle’s editorial page did not always portray the collective identity that some members of the Duke community expected. The portrayal of women in editorials was criticized as sweeping generalizations that concentrated on the superficial.

If we knew nothing more about Duke than the editorial page of The Chronicle, we might be led to believe that all Duke women are transfixed on their social lives and have no more worldly concerns than dating, parties and appearances. (Fisher, 2004, ¶ 4)

A concern to which Goodman has a response: “The way it turns out on the editorial page is, on some level, our choice” (2005, ¶ 10).

Editorials and commentary did address more serious issues on campus than dating, parties and appearances, and The Chronicle could play a role in bringing those issues to the attention of the Duke community. This was the case with the publication of the anonymous column “Effortless Perfection?” (2003), which was accompanied by a note from the editor calling for everyone on campus to examine their lives and look around them at the lives of others.

Editor’s Note: The Chronicle holds a strict policy against running columns or letters to the editor submitted and/or intended to be run anonymously. However, we believe the column above is an extraordinary case, and we run it in this space so that those who may recognize this person may help her, and those who know people like her may help them as well. The issues the author raises affect nearly everyone at Duke, directly or indirectly, and we hope this column provokes thought, discussion and, perhaps most importantly, action. (Anonymous, 2003, ¶ 15)

The anonymous column and the editor’s note did have an effect on readers of and writers for the newspaper, and once again The Chronicle took center stage in the discussion of events on campus and the conditions of students’ lives.
Since the publication of “Effortless Perfection?,” something of a call to arms has arisen, mostly in staff editorials, challenging us—students, professors, everyone—to confront that very question [What the hell is really going on at this place?].

(Stevenson, 2003, ¶5)

There were critics of the role *The Chronicle* played in the life of campus. These critics believed that the newspaper’s role was overemphasized as the stage and as one of the lead actors in discussions of issues on campus. Attempts were made to point out that other venues existed on campus for discussions and action to be presented, and that *The Chronicle* was not an infallible source of information.

Too often, legitimate discussions that should take place face-to-face in the Great Hall, in the Bryan Center, in (gasp!) the classroom, are instead fought pseudo-anonymously as battles on the pages of *The Chronicle*. (Schaefer, 2003b, ¶8)

“Just because it’s not in the paper doesn’t mean it’s not happening” (Speak out on… what?, 1998, ¶1) stated one editorial, urging the community to open themselves to other sources of information on campus. It was not the role of *The Chronicle*, stated one of its past editors, to judge what is “right” and what is “wrong” for its readers to see in print every day.

“It is not a newspaper’s job to determine what the public should not be exposed to… or to determine what sort of negative events an article… may generate.” [editor Ann Heimberger] wrote in an “editor’s column” before the [1991 Holocaust denial] advertisement appeared in print. (McGowan, 2004, ¶11)

It is the job of the newspaper and its staff to observe actions on campus and to report those to the community. Each writer, however, writes his or her own script to follow as they accept the role of reporter.

Journalists are inculcated to believe in our godlike objectivity, to see every conflict as a battle of opposing yet valid interests. Our perspective is often
described as a lens, something we focus on the facts that we consider most relevant, motivating and entertaining to our readers. (Blank, 2002, ¶ 3)

Those scripts and the interpretations of the role of reporter at Duke were fluid and as 2001 Chronicle editor Greg Pessin stated of the newspaper “‘Each year, a new editor is elected. Each year, new staff members come on board and others leave’” (Kumar, 2001d, ¶ 16), adding to the complexity of defining a role for the newspaper on campus.

Even with an ever-changing cast, as the daily newspaper reporting on Duke University The Chronicle did have a clear overall role in the life of the university. The editor of The Cavalier Daily, the daily newspaper at the University of Virginia supported this belief in the role of print media by saying “‘Newspapers are supposed to serve their local communities and act in their best interests’” (Kumar, 2001c, ¶ 7). A letter to the editor echoed that belief, pointing out to reporters and editors a position that its writer believed had been forgotten: “The paper, like it or not, is composed of and represents the Duke community” (Habenreich, 2001, ¶ 9). According to a professional journalist, in interpreting and playing its role on campus The Chronicle must realize that it is not an offstage observer, but a player in the events it covers.

[Pulitzer-prize winning columnist William] Raspberry, Knight professor of the practice of communications and journalism [at Duke], emphasized that The Chronicle does not operate in a vacuum and must at some point address the broader interests of the Duke community. (Kumar, 2001b, ¶ 10)

Roles played by student activists

The roles that student activists play, according to data from The Chronicle, can be placed into three categories: campus/education roles; political roles; and social roles. Each of these categories encompasses a number of roles, many of them overlapping. Campus/education roles will be examined in the remainder of this chapter. Political roles will be discussed in Chapter 6, and social roles in Chapter 7.
Campus/education roles

Campus/education roles are those roles that student activists play either within the boundaries of the university campus or in educational situations. Within this category the roles of educator, campus leader, object of ridicule and satire (as viewed by their fellow students), partner in university governance, and change agent or catalyst have been identified from the words published in *The Chronicle*.

Educators

A major role played by student activists during this period was that of Educator. Students viewed education of others as one of their major goals, missions and responsibilities as activists, and believed that the ignorance of their peers was something to be eradicated through their efforts.

...Trinity sophomore and protest participant Snehal Patel said he is convinced the demonstrators were successful, both because they managed to cancel the convention’s opening ceremonies and because the average American is now more aware of the WTO [World Trade Organization]. “People who never heard of the WTO, and who would never have heard of the WTO, they now know what it does and that many people are opposed to it,” he said, adding that activists now have the responsibility of continuing to educate the newly politicized public. (Stroup, 1999m, ¶4-5)

I believe that a major step of this process will involve changing the sensitivity and awareness of Duke men to the perfect disease. I recently had a conversation with a guy friend of mine who does not really understand “the big deal about eating disorders.” He argued that “some girls don’t get hungry and really like to only eat salads and healthy food.” This is the perfect example of the ignorance and lack of sensitivity that we need to abolish. (Kloeblen, 2003, ¶10-11)
A common way that student activists expressed themselves as educators was through a desire to “raise awareness” about specific issues through their words and actions (Haider, 1995; Benson, 1997; Levy, 1998; Chinnadurai, 1999; Wilson, 1999; Lin, 2003a; Karim, 2003; Darby, 2004b): “Some protest is meant to heighten awareness of a problem that (by definition) the audience doesn’t already know” (Benson, 1997, ¶ 15).

The education delivered by student activists does not always come from what might be considered “traditional” methods of activism. Examples at Duke University during this time period show that student activists were as engaged in formal educational activities as they are in demonstrations and protests. “Formal” in this context describes educational efforts that took place in a classroom setting (at present or as a future goal), as well as actions that had their origins in a classroom project or assignment, as well as events that were co-sponsored by an academic or administrative department of the university. Classes and professors inspired the creation of new student activist groups and spurred movements covering a variety of topics from the civil war in Sudan to gender issues.

…interest in this topic stems from…Associate Professor of Political Science Peter Feaver’s fall seminar, Ethics and International Relations. Part of the course was a service-learning project educating the campus about human rights abuse in Sudan and encouraging divestment. (Rohrs, 2003c, ¶ 5)

…organized by senior Emily Steiger,…out of a project from her women’s leadership class to improve something that is meaningful to her. (Levine 2003a, ¶ 2) The panelists will explore what makes an “activist,” where these women find their inspirations and what contemporary social issues are at the forefront of women’s activism… (University briefs, 2003, ¶ 6)

The [Feminist Majority Leadership Alliance] at Duke aims to utilize research and action to educate women in the community regarding pressing feminist issues,
bringing the principles established in 1987 by [Feminist Majority Foundation] founder, Eleanor Small, [Duke] Women’s College ’61, to life on campus. …

Duke’s newly launched branch of the FMF originated as a project for a “Women as Leaders” class taught by Visiting Lecturer in Public Policy Studies Betsy Alden, who asked students to realize an activist project on campus that would successfully integrate principles from the classroom. (Gregory, 2002, ¶3, 5)

Some of the formal education methods utilized by student activists involved teaching in a classroom setting. This occurred through the organization of “house courses,” short courses on a variety of topics for which students earn the equivalent of 1 semester hour of academic credit. These courses served as the fuel that started activist groups, or were utilized by activist groups as a means of raising awareness of an issue among their peers.

…a group of six students inspired by a house course taught last semester have revived the Peer Violence Outreach Team [PiVOT] to raise student awareness of domestic violence at the University. (Levy, 1998, ¶1)

…Men Acting for Change [MAC] has reemerged as a student group addressing men’s issues on campus and in society. … reorganized by Trinity seniors Sathya Chinnadurai and Dan Huber… Huber and Chinnadurai’s largest undertaking this semester has been teaching a house course on masculinity and gender roles that discusses the origins of patriarchy and men’s relationships with other men as well as with women. (Fickel, 1999, ¶3)

Even though a number of classes existed at Duke that nourished and inspired the activist spirit, there were students who sought more. Some students wanted classes addressing activism itself, and some wanted classes addressing topics on which activists believed the Duke community needed to be educated. In both cases, it can be seen that student activists during this time viewed the relationship between their activism and their
formal education as an important one, whether they were expecting classes or actively proposing that the university provide them.

As a rising senior, I’ve heard of many classes on social activism. Coming back to our comparably safe campus, awash in music and smiling faces during alumni weekend, I wished Duke supplied classes on the means for true peaceful protest and how practically to cultivate the active patience Mahatma Ghandi, Martin Luther King, Jr. and Thich Nhat Hahn were able to muster. (Fliss, 2002, ¶5)

“Our goal for next semester is to have programming for all of the fraternities and living groups and to increase dialogue on campus,” [Sathya] Chinnadurai said. “In the long run, we’d like to have men’s studies courses, kind of as a corollary to women’s studies.” (Fickel, 1999, ¶13)

As promised at a teach-in on Monday night, students submitted a proposal to key University administrators Wednesday asking them to establish an Asian American studies department. The proposal, authored by junior Christina Hsu and senior Tony Kwon, argues that such a department would enhance Duke’s intellectual atmosphere and provide valuable insight into issues of race and ethnicity in America. (Herriott, 2002a, ¶1-2)

There were classes on topics important to activists already in existence, as has been shown here. Instructors of these classes used The Chronicle as ways of bringing attention to other classes addressing important gender, cultural and political issues.

I teach and write about Muslim women of color as a way of raising awareness about race and gender inequalities in the U.S. and abroad. …I encourage students to take a course on Islamic civilization to learn that Muslim societies are as much influenced by the ideals of their faith as they are by sexist cultural traditions and by political ambitions that have nothing to do with Islam. (Karim, 2003, ¶1, 3)
Classrooms were not the only formal educational setting at Duke University, nor were faculty the only formal educators, as shown in the examples above. Panel discussions, organized by a cooperative effort among academic departments, campus-based research institutes and student organizations were another formal method activists used to educate their audience.

“Sweatshops or Sweet Deals?,” a panel discussion sponsored by the Program on Values and Ethics in the Marketplace, Political Science Department, Duke Progressive Alliance and the Kenan Institute for Ethics… (University briefs, 2002, ¶ 5)

Religious life staff on campus were involved in assisting activists to spread their messages. The Freeman Center for Jewish Life took an active role in working with student activists when the Palestine Solidarity Movement was scheduled to come to Duke. The Center “encouraged students to use the conference to explain the Israeli-Palestinian conflict rather than protest the meetings” (Rohrs, 2004c, ¶ 10). More than just offering encouragement, the Freeman Center’s staff joined with student activist groups to form the Joint Israel Initiative. The Initiative was formed in order to offer education supplemental to that offered by the Palestine Solidarity Movement in an effort to present multiple views of the issue.

The coalition aims to expose the campus community to views about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict that Israel-identified groups fear might not get enough emphasis at the PSM conference. (Rohrs, 2004c, ¶ 6).

Formal education was also undertaken off campus, as student activist organizations brought their messages to classrooms in the local community.

…several student groups have adopted quieter, more diverse activist approaches. FeM, a group concerned with women’s issues, is planning a program with a
Durham elementary school in which members would talk with fifth grade girls to help these children set goals in their lives. (David, 1994, ¶ 14)

These students, along with the others described above, exemplified what some student activists saw as their image in the 1990s.

“I think activism too often invokes an image of radicalism,” [Ben] Au said. “The tactics that we’ve noticed are really changing. The new activism in the ‘90s is advocacy, talking calmly to the people involved.” (Sostek, 1998a, ¶ 17)

Conservative student activist Bill English agreed with that sentiment in an interview discussing the approach of the Duke Conservative Union (DCU) to educating the campus about their issues.

“Shouting people down is really just power, whereas actually engaging them in a conversation is more productive.” The DCU tries to foster that conversation through Chronicle columns or open letters to the community, its speakers program and its conservative magazine, New Sense. (Nicholson, 2003, ¶ 38-39)

Publishers of conservative magazines were not the only campus journalists interested in activist education. The Chronicle, which is the “mainstream” campus newspaper for the Duke University community, was involved with activist education, most notably in the weeks following its publication of the David Horowitz anti-reparations advertisement, when then-editor Greg Pessin wrote in a column “The Chronicle believes that in a community dedicated to academic discourse, as many opinions as possible should have the opportunity to be heard” (Pessin, 2001b, ¶ 13). Other columnists for the newspaper agreed with the decision, for the reason that the protests and demonstrations that the advertisement spawned were opportunities for educational enrichment of the campus.

…I am utterly convinced that if I were the editor of The Chronicle, I would run that ad, and gladly. I would run it because of my obligation to provide a forum for
opinions and discourse from even the most extreme ends of the political spectrum. More than that, though, I would run it in order to inspire discourse, to spur Duke students to stand up and speak out. The energy and political liveliness that has seized our campus in the past week is exhilarating and has the potential to be very productive for our growth and progress as a community. (DuBuisson, 2001, ¶3-4)

Letters to the editor in response to the advertisement used the opportunity to chide the protesters, to dispute Horowitz’s words, and to challenge the educational use of the advertisement. For those who disagreed with what the advertisement stated, “should not you advance your own arguments in response so as to convince people that your position is the wiser of the two?” (Rogers, 2001, ¶3) wrote one of The Chronicle’s readers. Another letter attempted to do so by dismissing the facts in Horowitz’s ad as “blatantly erroneous historical content… Northern politicians did not enter into the Civil War to free the slaves; they were reacting to a fear of Southern expansion and separatism” (Lipsky, 2001, ¶2), and called the advertisement a “poor didactic tool” (¶4).

Words published in The Chronicle that led to protest, demonstration or discussion further promoted the educational agenda of student activists. The newspaper kept the campus informed about activism and activist groups on campus, by both reporting on their actions and advertising upcoming events. This was accompanied by both news reporting—such as reporting on the protests against the publication of the anti-reparations advertisement—and also by letters to the editor where student activists are able to express their views, report on their activities, and invite others to participate in campus events on issues such as women’s issues.

Protests over The Chronicle’s decision to run an advertisement opposing slavery reparations continued over the weekend with a rally and plans for further action today. The University will host a panel discussion tonight addressing the issue. (Kumar, 2001d, ¶1)
We’d like to leave you with some questions to ponder: Stilettos and pearls… what’s the difference? Are you afraid to call yourself feminist? What does it mean to be a liberated woman at Duke? There is a discussion of these issues tonight at 8 p.m. in the Women’s Center entitled, “Feminism in The Chronicle: what does it mean to be a female student at Duke?” (Fisher, 2004, ¶6)

In both of these cases the issue at hand was addressed by a discussion, emphasizing the role of student activists as educators rather than agitators. This role was taken on voluntarily by student activists who saw education as a mission and responsibility. Although the data show that this role was overwhelmingly accepted and embraced, there was at least one instance in which that role was questioned by The Chronicle in an editorial stating that the traditional activity of protest may be more effective than attempts to educate.

Forums and discussions tend to preach to the proverbial choir and don’t address the everyday lives of everyday people in the same way that policy changes and broad-based protest can. (Taking a step back, 1995, ¶5)

Nevertheless, education of the Duke community by its student activists was prominent throughout the period 1996-2004, and to further their endeavor, student activists took on the role of campus leader.

*Campus leaders*

Student activists serve as leaders on their campus. They lead their own activist organizations; they lead their non-activist student peers; and they lead the rest of the campus community. Their leadership has influenced institutions to become leaders within the larger community of American higher education, as was seen at Duke during this time period. The role of campus leader has a strong relationship to the role of change agent (which is discussed below), since these leaders are spearheading efforts to affect
change on their campus. Such change can have far-reaching effects, helping the student activists to become stronger leaders.

Examples of student activist leadership at Duke was seen in such diverse issues as labor rights for migrant workers who are employed by the Mt. Olive Pickle Company and race relations on campus.

...Duke became a key player in the pickle controversy. [Director of Duke Stores Jim Wilkerson] points to Duke’s involvement as an example of the power undergraduates can exert on campus. (Rohrs, 2003b, ¶10)

Sarah Dodds, Trinity ‘95 and co-founder of Prism House, then Spectrum House, attributes part of her successful student movement to confront race relations to the fact that direction came from students... (Levy, 2000, ¶14)

Campus activists are recognized as student leaders who achieve far-reaching results their power and direction on a variety of issues.

This year saw Students Against Sweatshops successfully agitate for a University licensing code of conduct and the Black Student Alliance orchestrate a highly effective study-in to increase administrators’ awareness of black students’ interests. Furthermore, protests from Desegregate Duke and like-minded campus groups steered the thought process of the Upperclass Residential Planning Group. Activism on the part of Gothic Queers and the concerned students following the whitewashing of the East Campus bridge led to the creation of a formalized bridge-painting policy. (Stroup, 1998a, ¶3)

As campus leaders these activists “steered,” “orchestrated,” and “agitated” people and events on campus. These verbs used in reporting suggest images of students standing at the forefront of a number of movements at Duke and carrying them through to completion.
The most visible example of student activists as campus leaders during this time period was the group Students Against Sweatshops. Formed in 1997 this organization was visible at Duke throughout the period under study involved in a variety of labor-related issues. The group and its individual members displayed all of the forms of leadership cited above as they spoke and acted out to convey their message to the rest of the campus and beyond: “members of SAS...promoted the organization’s newest goal—to create solidarity with other labor issues on campus” (Wilson, 1999, ¶4). The group was able to lead then-University President Nannerl Keohane on the issue of the strength of the code of conduct that was to be instituted for companies manufacturing Duke apparel.

Keohane acknowledged the code’s shortcomings and agreed to investigate the possibility of pushing for a stronger agreement. Leaders from Students Against Sweatshops asked her to put those statements in writing, and in a statement released late last week, she did just that. (Stroup, 1998f, ¶2)

Such a response from the president of the university solidified the leadership of Students Against Sweatshops on Duke’s campus, at least on the issue of workers’ rights. The group continued to lead “to pressure the University to adopt a stronger code” (Milligan, 1998, ¶11) because they believed “it is still important for SAS to hold events that challenge the administration and hold officials publicly accountable” (Stroup, 2000b, ¶23).

Through their actions on campus the student group established Duke University as an institutional leader for other universities in the fight against the use of sweatshop labor. It was reported that a tactic of SAS was to “try to use the buying power of a major institution to force positive change” (Spataro, 1997, ¶1). The group was identified as having “drawn nationwide attention to the University” (Carmichael, 1998, ¶9) and a founder of the group was quoted as saying “‘The real power of groups like ours is that
we might be able to convince other institutions to also take a strong stand against
sweatshop labor’” (Lam, 1998, ¶15). Members of SAS were eager to show that they and
their university were leaders, “Instead of waiting for other groups to define the term
[living wage], the University should take the initiative, members said” (Sostek, 1998b, ¶
16). When SAS presented information to university administrators, Keohane “called
students’ allegations ‘verifiable information that workers are laboring under precarious
working conditions’” (Ingram, 2002, ¶16). Duke SAS led anti-sweatshop student
activists across the United States by having the first administration building sit-in to
protest this issue. That sit-in, and the resulting agreement between the students and the
administration on the code of conduct, established the leadership of the students and, by
association, the university.

Trinity senior Tico Almeida, a founding member of the University’s SAS, said he
hopes other schools will use the Duke agreement as a model for compromise
between activists and administrators. (Stroup, 1999e, ¶11)

Student activists were campus leaders in other contexts as well, many of them
having to do with identity and cultural issues. A letter to the editor published shortly after
the appearance of David Horowitz’s anti-reparations advertisement called for “a great
deal of self examination from all sides” (Ramaswami, 2001, ¶4). This call was taken up
by the Black Student Alliance (BSA), whose leaders sought to meet with senior
administrators to discuss the demands of the Duke Student Movement (DSM): “annual
reports, an improved African and African-American Studies program and more diverse
faculty and staff…some of the issues that have plagued this campus” (Rosario, 2002b, ¶
2).

…one of BSA’s main goals for the year will be holding the University
accountable for the promises made to the Duke Student Movement in the spring
of last year. [BSA President Troy] Clair said that, although he has yet to meet with
President Nan Keohane, he plans to talk to a variety of senior administrators about the cultural climate on campus. (Bradley, 2001b, ¶ 7)

BSA was a prominent organization in events on campus, but during this time also sought ways to broaden its leadership on the Duke campus. The group’s leaders saw their organization as a training ground for students who would then become leaders in other campus organizations.

“It’s an organization that I think everyone knows about, but people aren’t really aware of what the organization does,” [BSA President Pascale Thomas] said. “But it can serve as kind of a channel for BSA members to get into other programs and organizations on campus. This year we’re going to promote our membership—and black students in general—to go out for these organizations and gain leadership positions.” (Rotberg, 2004a, ¶ 17)

The Women’s Initiative report, released in 2003, was a catalyst for women at Duke to become active and take on leadership roles. Duke’s undergraduate women were given credit by the report’s authors for their leadership behavior within the classroom, but were charged with doing more outside of the academic realm if they believed that issues or problems existed.

Donna Lisker, director of the Women’s Center and the steering committee member who headed up investigations into undergraduate women’s issues, noted students’ agency in improving the campus climate for women. “We heard very little about inequities in the classroom, which was great news, but we did hear a huge amount about the social environment,” Lisker said. “Some of these things are only going to change if undergraduates want to change them because there’s only so much the administration can do on things like the dating culture.” (Yee, 2003b, ¶ 14-15)
Students heard and heeded the call to lead the effort for change. Student activist leaders wrote letters, planned events, and sought their own solutions to the issues they saw facing Duke’s undergraduate women.

…from new student groups to columns to plays, students are also finding solutions for themselves. Seniors Mary Adkins and Tamara Giwa, for example, decided to put together a collection of monologues to address the issues they saw facing women at Duke. “The play is called ‘All of the Above,’ which isn’t a very sexy title, but I do think it captures the diversity and complexity of womanhood at Duke that ‘effortless perfection’ misses,” Adkins, who become interested in women’s issues after she discussed her own eating disorder in a column in The Chronicle, wrote in an e-mail. (Bajpai, 2004, ¶14-15)

With this project students placed their activism on a literal stage, not the figurative stage of Duke’s campus or the pages of The Chronicle. The students involved in these projects did not view them as one-time events. They took their role as campus leaders seriously enough to want the events they conceived to live beyond their time at the university. Such was the case with “Comfort Day,” a planned monthly event that would allow people to dress as they wanted and discuss what they chose without the worry of how they appeared to others, a concept that was in direct opposition to the concept of a beautiful physical appearance that was part of the myth of “effortless perfection.”

[Senior Julie] Kalishman said the group [who created “Comfort Day”] is currently looking for a student group to assume control of the project when they graduate next semester. However she noted that they will be tracking the project’s sustainability. (Levine, 2003b, ¶ 14)

Student activists who played the role of campus leader wanted to have influence over their peers. They wanted to not only “play” campus leaders, but also to “be” campus
leaders. Leaders, in the minds of these activists, were recognized by their peers as having goals, and as advocates for ways of acting and reacting.

The [Reginaldo Howard] scholars are currently working to transform their role on campus. … “We want people to know who we are, and we want to discuss student issues and what it means to be student leaders.” (Darby, 2004a, ¶ 3)

…some [students] stressed the need for directed action rather than blanket protests. “For each protest and action, we need to have a specific goal,” said Trinity sophomore DeeAnn Kuo, outreach chair for Gothic Queers. (Stroup, 1998g, ¶ 7-8)

If the Jewish and pro-Israeli groups had advocated protests instead of academic forums [during the Palestine Solidarity Movement conference on campus], few students would have gained understanding and the potential for the weekend’s events to escalate into violence would be much higher. (Response to PSM graceful, 2004, ¶ 9)

Student activists as campus leaders were not without their detractors, however, and not all of their peers were willing to be led by activist groups. In the specific case of sweatshop labor, SAS had demonstrated the ability to influence decision-making on campus and to inspire their activist peers at other institutions. There were some students at Duke who did not support the movement nor did they view those involved in the movement as campus leaders. In fact, there were members of the campus community who openly ridiculed the students who were leaders in the efforts to improve labor conditions for apparel workers.

Amazingly, the arrogance of SAS does not stop there, for it actually believes that it has the power to have an effect. ... They truly believe that two dozen disorganized undergraduates can cripple a company like Nike, mostly because they assume they represent the student body. (Zimmerman, 2000b, ¶ 11).
Regardless of this opposing viewpoint, the role of campus leader is an important one for student activists, although in playing the role of leader on campus they did become objects of ridicule and satire for many of their peers.

*Objects of ridicule and satire*

Student activists seek to draw attention to themselves. Generally, the attention they seek is from university administrators or other “opponents” in an attempt to deliver their message. Oftentimes, however, the attention they receive is from their peers who do not hold the same thoughts and beliefs, and who may think—and state—that what the student activists are doing is “annoying” “whiny” or “silly.” It is through this attention that student activists—unwittingly and unwillingly—play the role of Object of Ridicule or Satire. During the period under study student activists were ridiculed by members of the Duke community in opinion columns, letters to the editor, and staff editorials in *The Chronicle*. In other columns they were satirized, with their actions, causes, and personalities used as comedic subjects. Whether ridiculed or satirized, student activists drew the attention of the campus, to the point that mention of them became commonplace in the campus newspaper during this period.

The ridicule and satire was often presented in a general sense, meant to include all student activists regardless of issue. This general ridicule generally presented student activists as people on campus with little else to occupy their time, and as offensive and annoying whiners with little to say that really mattered to the student body as a whole.

“A lot of times at this university…those who are “active” are too much so. The climate here is grossly oversensitive.” (Fontecchio, 1998, ¶5)

“People who are activists who are trying to get people to see things in a different light are seen as whiners, people who lack legitimate concerns.” [junior Anji Malhotra] said. (David, 1994, ¶19)
Our stay on this odd planet is far too short to squander reading shrill rants about globalization by students too young to rent a car. (Gillum, 2004c, ¶ 1)

Activism in general was also approached through comedy, with columnists creating fictitious student organizations as illustrations of how activist issues appeared to those not directly involved in them. These columns placed student activism in the context of other activities on campus, such as student politics, student government elections, and students’ daily bus rides between Duke’s two campuses.

…my parents were also in an Angry Group. Their society called itself the Aardvark Liberation Front, and its members were angry about Angry Groups. Really. The ALF had all the trappings of a “real” movement, including a newspaper, mascot (take a wild guess) and a political wing, the Apathetic Party. For years, the Apathetic Party even held a majority in the Student Senate. After all, 60 percent of the students did not vote, and every non-vote was…exactly. (Harris, 2003, ¶ 3)

Overheard bus conversations have the potential to be even more annoying. For some reason, the nerdiest conversations are always the loudest, longest, most involved, and taking place right next to you. They always include elements from the following topics: tenting, organic chemistry class, upcoming test dates, a recounting of what took place at the last “SAFLA—Students Against Fragrant Lemur Abuse” meeting, or are spoken in a foreign language. (Napoli, 2004b, ¶ 5)

Student activism was, therefore, a part of the normal life of Duke University, given a status equivalent of that held by tenting (camping out for men’s basketball games) and academics.

Within the world of student activism columnists observed elements of a general activist culture. In order for student activists to achieve their goals with greater success, the following letter writer presents a list of tips drawn from this general culture. The
The purpose of these tips was to ensure that the activists (and readers of *The Chronicle*) remembered all of the victims, evils and injustices in the world.

Topics to be covered by every protest: Sweatshops and Nike, U.S. police power, abortion, whales, spotted owls, third-world farmers and Starbucks, race inequality, the Catholic Church, Republicans, Palestine, SUV’s [Sport Utility Vehicles], the School of the Americas and the rainforest. (Warlick, 2002, ¶8)

This list of protest topics includes many of the individual issues of student activist organizations, which were also targeted by the satirists and ridiculers.

Students Against Sweatshops was the most visible activist group on Duke’s campus during this time period. It is therefore no surprise that SAS became the target for many writers in *The Chronicle*. Writers presented the opinions that students involved in SAS were annoying, arrogant, and were not “real” student activists. These writers implied that the group was not as powerful as its members thought, and did not have as large a following among other students as members believed—a view that is contradicted by the success of SAS, as well as by the fact that SAS was clearly visible and vocal enough on campus to inspire many negative feelings among their critics.

...SAS has worked diligently over the last three years to be as annoying as possible to everyone on campus. In their crusade against the premises of the most basic economics course, SAS has held many rallies that have entertained tens of students at a time. (Lee, 2001, ¶7)

Few Duke students have the unique combination of the extreme arrogance and shocking ignorance necessary to try to impose their will on workers halfway around the world. (Zimmerman, 2000b, ¶8)

Now that the student government is advising the Chapel on matters of theology, maybe Students Against Sweatshops can start teaching economics courses. The result is the same—arrogant, uninformed policy suggestions from a group more
concerned about promoting their agenda than helping “the oppressed.”

(Zimmerman, 2000a, ¶ 2)

The best example of wasting energy on a meaningless issue is Students Against Sweatshops. That is an issue that has no real bearing on the average students day-to-day life. It makes no difference who sews our clothes, as long as they end up in our closets. (Nigro, 2000, ¶ 5)

The Duke Student Movement, organized to protest The Chronicle’s publication of David Horowitz’s anti-reparations advertisement was another group of student activists that became an object of the campus’ ridicule. These protesters were viewed by some members of the Duke community as overly sensitive and taking part in useless actions, “adopt[ing] the whiny tactic of attacking the messenger and demanding useless apologies while saying essentially nothing productive of their own” (Rogers, 2001, ¶ 1). If opinions presented in The Chronicle are believed, these activists did not attract others to their cause. Their protests over being offended were in turn offending those who disagreed with them.

One wonders if it has occurred to the protesters that many people on this campus find their behavior offensive and threatening. (Christie, 2001, ¶ 2)

I cannot believe students who level the most awful epithets at opposing basketball players can’t handle an ad in a newspaper. We are talking about students who toss panties and CDs on the stadium floor to humiliate, degrade and insult others, but students who cannot take words they don’t like, words they find “offensive.”

(Peterson, 2001, ¶ 2)

The old adage “sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never hurt me” did not apply to members of the Duke Student Movement, as one columnist indicated a year after the publication of the advertisement.
protesters of David Horowitz last spring screamed that an advertisement that had hurt their feelings should not be printed—how could mature adults honestly be expected to deal with a disagreeing point of view? Apparently these students had been promised upon admission that their four years at Duke would be a liberal love-in, where their self-confidence could be artificially boosted at the expense of truth. Having ideals challenged, being forced to defend them—such revolutionary ideas apparently should have no place here. (Zimmerman, 2002b, ¶ 6)

In criticizing the protesters, this writer equated liberalism with falsehood, and that those who want to live free from anything offensive are living a lie—a “liberal love-in,” according to this conservative columnist.

Words of ridicule and satire were used repeatedly during this time period by both campus conservatives and campus liberals (or “progressives”) against each other. Periodically a specific issue was argued by the two sides, but at other times, writers were merely using the newspaper to create or perpetuate the archetypes of the campus “conservative” or “progressive.”

What’s white, wears a collared shirt with khaki’s [sic.] and seeks to offend? Give up? It’s a Duke Conservative Union member. (Ogorzalek, 2003, ¶ 1)

[DCU member Madison Kitchens said] “you normally think of protesting being done from the left, and I think that’s certainly the case. But as far as protesting on campus about campus policies, I think progressive protesters protesting at Duke is tantamount to Communist protesters in Castro’s Cuba. To me, that’s what is seems like: What are you protesting? They agree with you.” (Sullivan, 2004b, ¶ 20)

Specific issues arose that led each side to voice its outrage at the other. Liberal bias in academe became a rallying point for campus conservatives in 2003, and their
championing of this cause led campus progressives to point out the conservatives’ inconsistencies in behavior to the campus in a rather sarcastic manner.

Normally, conservatives love to talk about personal accountability. The poor, criminals, the unemployed and other disadvantaged groups in society have no one to blame for their problems but themselves. Not so for the Duke conservative. A bad grade on a paper couldn’t possibly be the result of deficiencies in the paper. Rather, the brave conservative is being oppressed by his fascist liberal professor. (Resnick, 2003, ¶3)

During the time of Elizabeth Dole’s senate campaign a fundraiser was held called “Blue Devils for Dole.” Liberal students expressed offense at the title, saying that it implied support for Dole by the entire university community. Conservatives struck back at their liberal critics, stating that the general public was more intelligent than progressive students believed.

Trust me when I tell you that no one in North Carolina familiar enough with this University to be aware of this fundraiser would be fooled into believing the leftist hangovers from the 1960s who run this school would endorse a Republican, even if she was one of its most successful alumnae. (Boyd, 2002, ¶1)

The ongoing battle of words and ideas between the two sides was not unnoticed by writers for The Chronicle, nor was it left without comment. Ridicule was implied, but with an implied belief that it should be reinforced with counter-arguments to refute the position of the protesters: “When liberals protest for workers’ rights (i.e. the pickle boycott), they are laughed at by conservatives, who make no attempt to lay out their arguments diplomatically” (Kumar, 2002, ¶9). Although conservatives and progressives believed themselves to be radically different from each other, those not affiliated with either group saw little to no difference in their attitudes and actions: “The most vocal
self-declared ‘progressives’ and ‘conservatives’ at Duke are actually the same people, and no one is saying anything about it” (Schaefer, 2003a, ¶1).

By so narrowly defining and marginalizing the rest of the Duke community, these [political] groups write off potential recruits instead of reaching out to them. They make themselves largely inaccessible by forming their own elitist groups of conservatives and liberals, to whom most students are neither conservative nor liberal enough to belong. (Manning, 2003a, ¶4)

One group of columnists for The Chronicle existed in a category of its own. These are the writers of a column called “Monday, Monday.” It was published, as its title suggests, every Monday, and each semester a new columnist was chosen to be the anonymous satiric commentator on life at Duke University. The actual identity of the writer was hidden until the end of the semester, and the pseudonyms were written in all capital letters: STONE COLD, PATSY & THE PUPPETMASTER, RED SONJA, TGIF, ARTFUL DODGER. Over time these columnists offered their views on student activism at Duke, from the general to the specific, to the very specific. On the general topic of activism, commentary informed readers that any and every topic of life as a student could become an issue for activists.

Dearest friends, I’d like to take some time out this week to give a great big, sloppy kiss to Duke activism. I must say that during these three most incredible years of my human existence I have typically watched from the sidelines… But now friends, the veritable steamroller of activist sentiment at this school has all but flattened that disgusting, Peter-Pan-like apathy within me, and has propelled me like a burning, squealing, smoking hot rod to pose a question that I feel is only a smidgen more cosmically relevant than those that normally lunge forth from our sacred Duke esophagi: Should I or should I not get a scrotum ring? (Coyle, 1995, ¶1)
What do socially rejected college students do with their free time? They join pointless activism groups! Activism is hip. Protesting is in. Fight the system! Kill whitey! (STONE COLD, 1999, ¶ 1)

These columnists did not shy away from specific issues taken on by student activists over the years. They observed the activities and commented on them, in their own ways. Duke’s relationship with apparel companies was a topic for a holiday column, with a nod of support for Students Against Sweatshops.

It is the giving season after all, and we’re sure everyone’s families are anxiously looking forward to another heaping pile of Guatemalan-sweatshop-approved, officially-licensed Duke merchandise. There’s so much to choose from! (ARCHIE & JUGHEAD, 1998, ¶ 7)

Both sides of the Mt. Olive Pickle Company boycott were viewed as fair targets for the humor column, although with a slight sympathetic bent towards the “poor guy” who was the embodiment of the boycott’s target.

Did you see the letter by the president of the Mt. Olive Pickle Company? I felt so bad for the poor guy. How pathetic would it be to be the owner of a pickle company and have to defend yourself against a bunch of freak college students? That this guy is even in the pickle industry is punishment in itself. (STONE COLD, 1999, ¶ 4)

The Duke Student Movement and their protests against The Chronicle were mentioned in a slightly more serious way, but individual students on opposing sides of the issue were portrayed as being involved more for personal than philosophical reasons.

…the real masters of irony last week were the students of the Duke Student Movement. As if led by the Pied Piper himself (who, tired of leading away mere children, has now moved on to leading away people’s common sense) moved through campus last week with signs, screaming “D-U-K-E, You Will Never
Silence Me!” … It is these students themselves who are, in an almost fascist style trying to mandate the bounds of free exchange. It seems like the DSM had a good gripe to begin with, but is now either simply creating issues, or focusing on issues that, though valid, have nothing to do with The Chronicle. … Stay tuned for this week’s edition as Alex Epstein [Duke Conservative Union] accuses Denis Antoine [Black Student Alliance] of having cooties, and the DSM makes further claims that, though perhaps true, having NOTHING to do with David Horowitz or The Chronicle. (ARTFUL DODGER, 2001b, ¶3-5)

Conservative students’ involvement in the anti-reparations protests was a further target for the ARTFUL DODGER, who presented an interaction between two of Duke’s “arch conservatives” in the form of a play, literally presenting activism as a drama.

We move now to the bedroom of Berin Szoka, on the day of the alumni lounge protest. He is sleeping in his bed, beneath a blanket with “Reagan ’04” knitted into the fabric. There is someone sleeping in the bed next to Szoka. Above his headboard is an honorary membership to the John Birch society, and as he wakes, crumpled copies of the National Review fall from the bed. The bed is on the right side of the room, and as light pours on to the stage, it becomes apparent that Szoka is sleeping next to Duke’s only other arch conservative, Alex Epstein.

Epstein: Dammit. I slept through my 8 a.m. meeting for Students Against California Redwoods. That means I will be late for the organizational board meeting of Students Against Public Education. This really throws off my schedule. I hope that I can make it to the awards luncheon of Duke Margaret Thatcher Club at 1:30. (ARTFUL DODGER, 2001a, ¶6-7)

Issues beyond campus that occupied the time and minds of student activists also occupied the time and minds of The Chronicle’s comedic observers of campus life. Methods and tactics of activism that were visible to the Duke community found their way into these
commentaries. In one public display of activism feminist activists hung up a clothesline with t-shirts, on which students could write messages of hope, as a way to raise campus awareness about domestic abuse. A traditional gender role was found in this action and pointed out to readers of the newspaper.

What I find interesting is their form of protest: hanging T-shirts on a clothesline. For all their talk about gender roles, they are still just a bunch of girls doing laundry. (STONE COLD, 1999, ¶2)

When student activists erected a mock Sudanese refugee camp in front of the Duke Chapel in an effort to educate the campus about the effects of the civil war in that country, the tactic was hailed as a way to welcome international students to Duke. Because this is part of a humor column, I interpret this as a form of “black humor:” a way of supporting the activists by using words that will shock readers.

SIR ELTON wants to thank the organizers of the Sudanese refugee camp movement for having such compassion and consideration. Sometimes you people really know how to make an international student feel right at home. With the tents, and the general atmosphere of hopelessness, they could not have captured SIR ELTON’s homeland better. Add a neglecting father and an inspiring, crippled mother with an adept tongue for aphorisms, and you’ve got SIR ELTON going to Main West Quad for Thanksgiving in a few days. (SIR ELTON BRAND, 2004, ¶1)

Even when there were no visible activities on campus these humor columnists saw a need to comment on issues of importance in the world. This commentary could be a completely humorous view of an issue such as gay marriage, or a view that, while part of a humor column, could be read as a new way of thinking about a serious world issue, such as the conflict between Israelis and Palestinians in the Middle East that clearly presents the subjectivity inherent in some world issues.
THE PATSY on Gay Marriages. I’m all for’em, because I figure either way, I’m better off. Either there’s two more guys I don’t gotta compete with, or two hot chicks just got married. So long as I don’t have to attend the wedding and put real faces to the nubile young lesbian couple dancing in my imagination, I say we let the Chapel keep churning them out.

THE PUPPETMASTER on the Middle East. After exhaustively reading recent letters to the editor regarding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, I have found the simple right and wrong of the issue to be undeniably clear. The people of one side are the misunderstood, downtrodden victims of history, while the people of the other are blood-thirsty, rabidly fundamentalist Huns whose motives cannot be understood or sympathized with. But being neither Jewish nor Muslim, I seem to have forgotten which is which. (PATSY & THE PUPPETMASTER, 2002, ¶ 6-7)

Finally, The Chronicle itself was not immune from the barbs of these columnists. The newspaper was seen as a target for student activists equivalent to the injustice of labor conditions around the world. This was two years before David Horowitz submitted his famous advertisement, and the newspaper did become such a focus.

Join me, STONE COLD, as I lead my revolution against The Chronicle. There is more suffering resulting from bad reporting at Duke than endured by all the pickle farmers and battered women in the free world. (STONE COLD, 1999, ¶ 11)

As objects of ridicule and satire student activists received more coverage in the pages of the campus newspaper than if they had merely been subjects of daily news and feature stories. In a world where some believe the saying that “there is no such thing as bad publicity,” student activists cast in this role kept them and their issues on the stage of the Duke campus where the entire audience of the Duke community could see them and
react. It also served to solidify their position within the Duke community and allowed them to pursue other roles on campus, such as partners in university governance.

Partners in university governance

Student activists are engaged members of the university community; they care about the political and social positions taken by their institution; and they continually seek ways to influence those positions. They do this by playing the role of Partners in University Governance, working with faculty, staff, and administrators in leading the institution. At Duke participation by students in the operation of the university is an essential piece of the institution’s mission, which uses words such as “participation” and “citizenship” to describe Duke’s mission in educating its students.

Included within the second paragraph of the Duke Mission Statement is the dedication to the “development [of undergraduates] as adults committed to high ethical standards and full participation as leaders in their communities…and to promote a sincere spirit of tolerance, a sense of the obligations and rewards of citizenship and a commitment to learning, freedom and truth.” (Kumar, 1998, ¶1)

During the period under study student activists brought the spirit of this participation to center stage where administrators acknowledged its importance and accepted students as partners in the operations of the university.

…student activism has made its mark on Duke, especially in interacting with the administration. Now, students are sitting on many important administrative committees and even on the Board of Trustees—an opportunity not available to them until 1972. (Nicholson, 2003, ¶46)

For students in the 1990s this participation on committees is activism of a different type than what they have read and heard about taking place prior to 1972. In the period under study it was an accepted fact that activism takes place within the administrative structure of the university.
“Activism has taken a different spin as students now tend to work with or within [italics added] the administration rather than protesting,” [Black Student Alliance Tobie] Wilder said. “Active protest is still a useful tool, but there is also the need for follow-up and constant pressure within the University administration.” (Stroup, 1998a, ¶13)

Administrators accepted and embraced student activists as partners in governance, and used The Chronicle as a stage for both praising what students have done and encouraging them to work harder on the issues that matter to them and to the community as a whole.

[Director of Duke Stores Jim] Wilkerson—who worked with SAS in developing Duke’s code last year—said he is open to student opinion on the CLC [Collegiate Licensing Corporation] plan. “I think student involvement is essential and that is why we have encouraged it,” … (Korein, 1998a, ¶17)

Administrators have stressed that rather than them dictating change, students must instead be the motivated force. [Women’s Center director Donna] Lisker recognized how administrators could not force a cultural shift on undergraduates without their support or involvement. “It has to be a student initiative or it’s not going to work,” she said. (Almas, 2003, ¶11-12)

This praise extended to a guest commentary written by Duke’s vice-president for public relations who stated his support for the partnership between administrators and student activists: “The Duke administration remains committed to working with Students Against Sweatshops and others to achieve our common goals” (Burness, 2002, ¶ 13).

For their part students were grateful for the acceptance they received from administrators, returning the praise that they had been given.
“The administration has been very responsive to our suggestions, and I am certain that this collaborative effort has produced a better code than we otherwise would have seen,” [SAS member Tico Almeida] said. (Lam, 1998, ¶21)

As she approached the end of her tenure as president of Duke, Nannerl Keohane was singled out by one columnist for the active partnership she had held with students on issues of race and workers’ rights, and her general support of issues supported by student activists.

…[President] Nan [Keohane] has emboldened the presence of minorities on campus with increased outreach to minority students and faculty. She has ensured that all full-time employees receive a living wage, and she has spoken out on issues of social justice, vis-à-vis sweatshops and labor unions. She responded promptly to “the demands” last semester and remains committed to the voices of students who approach her. (Scoville, 2004b, ¶9)

The partnership between student activists and the administration on the issue of sweatshops was called “congenial” (Sostek, 1998b, ¶19) and one of “mutual respect and cooperation” (Stroup, 1999d, ¶13). This characterization showed other student activists that they could bring their issues to the table to be heard.

The students who proposed a new academic program in Asian American Studies sought to be partners on the academic stage of Duke’s governance, a partnership that was encouraged by editors of The Chronicle.

Their work culminated last week in a teach-in and the submission of a proposal to the administration. These students have astutely noticed something missing from education at the University, and administrators should heed their arguments.

(Study Asian America, 2002, ¶1)

Student activists’ role in academics extended to the Academic Bill of Rights, and the desire by students with conservative beliefs not to have their voices silenced. Students
involved with this issue sought to use the formal means of Duke Student Government to bring the entire student body into the partnership before the administration.

[Students for Academic Freedom president Stephen] Miller, who said he saw the issue as relatively uncontroversial, said he hoped to introduce the Academic Bill of Rights to DSG. “It’s hard to say what the effect would be, but students have to join together,” he said. “It may be a symbolic gesture, but it’s a necessary gesture. And if DSG decides to adopt it, then hopefully President Keohane will get the message and be willing to take action.” (Yee, 2004b, ¶18-19)

Overall student activists saw themselves as comfortably embraced by the university as partners in governance, but there were times when protest erupted and The Chronicle saw a need to remind students that this partnership existed and was a way for them to be involved in creating change.

Protesting students should realize that there are many institutionalized ways to get involved in meeting these goals [of the Black Student Alliance and the Duke Student Movement] and students should get involved. From joining the Duke chapter of the NAACP to applying for a position on the President’s Council on Black Affairs, no students should feel that their voice is going unheard. (Editorial: Cultural climate, 2001, ¶6)

A partnership between students and university administrators is, of course, not perfect, but can affect changes on campus and beyond. The next role to be examined is one that is specifically related to this activist goal: change agent.

Change agents or catalysts

Student activists are agents of change for their campus, for their community, and for the world. In the words of one student it is this role that most defines student activists: “An activist is someone who looks at the way things are and not only sees serious problems but works in a significant way to change them.” (Nicholson, 2003, ¶5).
Another student, in a comment on her arrival at Duke as a first-year university student expressed positive feelings about the student groups at Duke and their efforts to affect change.

I was pleasantly surprised to find many student groups, working on a variety of issues from rural health to the environment to workers’ rights, made up of individuals dedicated to making change on and off campus. (Brim, 2001, ¶1)

Student groups that achieve success in the role of change agents earned the respect of their peers, or at least of the campus media. According to The Chronicle the efforts of Spectrum, an umbrella organization for cultural concerns at Duke, “to affect important change on campus quickly made it one of the most well-known and well-respected activist groups in existence” (Taking a step back, 1995, ¶2).

In the period under study other student groups sought change through their efforts over a variety of concerns. David Horowitz’s anti-reparations advertisement brought protesters to The Chronicle, seeking changes in the newspaper’s business practices, as well as changes in the racial and cultural life of Duke University: “Black Student Alliance President Denis Antoine said protesters plan to make their presence felt until certain demands are met” (Kumar, 2001b, ¶2). Anti-sweatshop activists sought change in the way the university interacted with apparel companies and in the way those companies conducted business: “…public disclosure would allow SAS [Students Against Sweatshops] to play an active role in contacting NGOs [Non-Governmental Organizations] and making sure that licensee’s factories are effectively monitored” (Fanelli, et. al., 1998, ¶4). In protesting the World Trade Organization meeting in 1999 student activists joined with other would-be change agents to affect change in economic relations on a global scale. Victory was claimed in this case, as the talks among delegates broke down when protesters would not be quieted.
The talks may have been an international failure, but for the Duke protesters, the demise of the talks and the solidarity demonstrated by the various activist groups represents an undeniable victory. “There were different opinions on different tactics…, but in general, it was really inspirational to be in the presence of so many people,” [Jonathan] Harris said, “people who think that we need to take responsibility now for the future.” (Stroup, 1999n, ¶25)

For these students seeking change was “inspirational” as quoted above. It was a quality that Duke student activists admired in their peers, and a quality that others—administrators—admired in them. When a young woman was run down and killed by an Israeli bulldozer during a demonstration for peace in the Middle East, she became a symbol for those who wish to affect change through their activism.

When an Israeli bulldozer killed Rachel Corrie, a young peace activist, where were the statements from Jewish organizations? This young woman was trying to defend Palestinian lives by risking her own. Such actions are beyond political: They are acts of courage that have the potential to transform this conflict. (Newman, 2003, ¶6)

When a new president arrived at Duke in 2004, he expressed his admiration for the concern of student activists as well.

In his inauguration speech, President Richard Brodhead told us why he came to Duke: “I was lured here by the spectacle of a school that has established itself in the top rank of research universities and professional schools but that habitually connects the pursuit of knowledge with the search for social good.” (Newman, 2004b, ¶1)

“Habitually” said Brodhead in his description of the search for social good, a search led by the university’s student activists. “Students Can Inspire Change” was the title of a column written by a student activist (Brim, 2001), and the way that change occurs takes
many forms, once student activists take up the role of change agent: “We must be aware of issues in our world today and the potential we hold to shape that world” (Brim, 2001, §7).

This chapter has examined the first category of roles—campus/education—played by student activists as presented in the pages of the campus newspaper. These roles allow students to serve their peers and campus community in a variety of ways in their quest for change. In the next chapter the political roles of student activists will be examined, as the stage for activism expands beyond the campus of their university.
Chapter 6 – The players: presentation of student activists in The Chronicle 1996-2004, political roles

Introduction

Because activism is political in nature student activists take on a number of political roles as they interact with other groups on campus and the world at large. Political roles played by student activists include concerned citizen (both on campus and in the larger community), policy maker (for campus policy as well as local/national/international policy), representative/diplomat/spokesperson, idealist (someone who acts beyond or above politics), political agent, person with power and consumer advocate.

Concerned citizens (both on and off campus)

Student activists are portrayed as citizens, “people who are doing education, people who are protesting, people who are organizing their own communities” (Nicholson, 2003, ¶3). They are not only citizens of their university but also citizens of the community beyond campus. Collectively, as citizens, they form “Duke University” which, as a unit, is portrayed as a citizen of the world beyond the boundaries of the campus.

The role of concerned citizen raised a variety of opinions within the pages of The Chronicle. Some writers extolled the virtues of activism and the issues with which student activists concerned themselves: “…America gives you the right to protest in exchange for certain social responsibilities as a citizen” (DeTura, 2003, ¶1); “Duke students have protested against a lot of things while I’ve been an undergraduate: sweatshops, sexual violence, racial inequality and an unfree Tibet” (Margolis, 1999b, ¶1). Others, however, were critical of what they saw. These writers cited a lack of activism—“Bad things happen on our campus, not to mention the world, and no one freakin’ cares” (Valerio, 2003b, ¶7)—or a response to the “bad things” that was less than ideal: “I
see a somewhat interesting issue of politics brewing. I am greatly saddened, though, at our community’s inability to respond to this in anything beyond the visceral level” (Mehta, 2001, ¶1). There were suggestions as to what students could do to move beyond that visceral level. “Instead of just complaining about the economy, politicians and foreign policies, we should try to reform global crises with our daily decisions” (LaDue, 2003b, ¶1) wrote one columnist, speaking in general terms. When it came to specific issues, such as the David Horowitz anti-reparations advertisement, “The solution to this problem is not a protest or a sit-in. Please, write a cogent and articulate response to this advertisement” (Mehta, 2001, ¶4). Likewise, gender issues were opened up to a broader range of participants, as organization leaders allowed all concerned individuals to join.

Organizers of the Take Back the Night march have finally stopped assuming that the night belongs only to women. The organizers of the annual anti-sexual violence march are making efforts to include men; signs, slogans and chants are being altered so that men are not addressed as enemies. Men are being encouraged to take part in an important community issue that is often relegated to the dungeons of “women’s issue” classification. (Bring back the men, 1995, ¶2)

Such inclusive activism extended to the Duke Student Government (DSG) and the question of whether or not that organization should concern itself with events and issues beyond the campus. There are some who believed that “DSG should, at times, voice opinions about non-Duke issues” (Levy, 2000b, ¶8). This belief was expanded upon through the use of the phrase “scope of students’ lives” in an editorial by The Chronicle (Common-sense voting, 2000)

…the student government should see its role bounded by the scope of students’ lives rather than the walls around campus. The South Carolina boycott and anti-sweatshop activism, for example, are germane to student life and must be tackled by the sanctioned voice of the student body. (¶9)
This view of citizenship was important as student activists began to extend their role beyond the stage of the campus into the surrounding community and beyond.

As citizens first and foremost of the campus community student activists acknowledged the responsibility they have to express their concerns, “If we truly are concerned, we must make concrete change in both philosophy and action at home...especially when home is Duke and when we are students” (Kirschenfeld, 2004, ¶11). They realized that any action they took based on those concerns was best utilized initially at the micro level of interaction with others: “Before we can provide any kind of service to any outside community, we need to serve our own communities and human interactions” (LaDue, 2003a, ¶1).

What was seen in The Chronicle was that the “communities and human interactions” that LaDue cited included the various cultural and identity groups on campus, their interactions with each other and with the university as a whole. An alleged verbal attack on an Asian student prompted that identity group and its supporters to gather publicly “on the Bryan Center walkway...in the hopes of furthering the race discussion begun earlier this month” (Stroup, 1998b, ¶1). Asian students were not alone in this attempt to further awareness. In addition to this public gathering there was a “five-hour meeting with 75 representatives from numerous campus cultural organizations to discuss race relations on campus” (Stroup, 1998g, ¶10).

African-Americans at Duke also sought to serve their own communities and interactions as concerned citizens. This was a group that did not always consider itself as a part of Duke University: they made their first goal the establishment of their place in the community before addressing the nature of interactions with others.

Some may argue that...black students and faculty should try to “integrate” themselves into the University community rather than push their own agenda. But how can they be expected to integrate themselves until they have first established
a comfortable foothold in the University’s social and academic institutions? Black
students and faculty at Howard University don’t need to integrate; the situation
here is not so simple. (Don’t forget, 1997, ¶ 7)
The situation may not have been simple, but that did not stop student activists from
expressing their concerns about their role as equal citizens with other groups.
…you will also see us unite in front of the Chapel on Main West Campus to
protest discriminatory policies. Black students have a strong presence on this
campus, and despite the presence of prospective students, parents or
administrators, black students have never ceased being black or hesitated to stand
by the legacy left by those who have come before us. (Washington, Canady, &
Thomas, 2004, ¶ 1)
Just as Asian students drew support from other cultural communities on campus when an
incident affected one of their members, other groups voiced support for Duke’s African-
American community in the wake of the David Horowitz anti-reparations advertisement.
As representatives of the LGBT [Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender] community
at Duke, we understand what it feels like to have falsehoods about one’s
community publicly stated and accepted without question. We understand what it
is like to feel that one’s place in the Duke community is tenuous, to feel that the
institution is not really behind you despite what the institutional leadership says.
This incident [Horowitz advertisement] highlights the ways that Duke needs to
embrace its guiding principle of diversity and empower the racial minority
community as a try and important part of the Duke community. … We offer our
sincere support to the racial minorities on this campus—your presence at Duke
enriches our lives and we are glad you are here. (Lewis-Tuffin, 2001, ¶ 2-3)
The belief in an inclusive community, expressed by the phrase above, “we are
glad you are here,” led some students, as concerned campus citizens, to take action by
founding a group related to race relations on campus. The Center for Race Relations was founded by two students, Amy Lazarus and Philip Kurian (she is white; he is black). According to the description of the group in *The Chronicle*, “The group sponsors and organizes dialogues among different student organizations on campus…” (Corey, 2004, ¶ 59). The article went on to call The Center for Race Relations “the newest and perhaps most promising voice in helping to forge a greater sense of understanding on campus, one identity at a time” (¶ 59). This organization illustrated that different identity groups on Duke’s campus could share their concerns about interactions within the community, and that individual racial groups were not left on their own as was previously thought by individual members of those groups. This view was, however, not held by members of identity groups and was criticized by leaders of those organizations.

Dagwami Woubshet, Trinity senior and president of Spectrum Organization, took issue with the notion that white students did not need to be involved in addressing discrimination on campus. “You walk to the [Cambridge Inn] and you see 27 ‘white benches,’ and then you see one with black or Asian students and you think, ‘Why are those students always segregating themselves?’ as if whiteness is neutral.” (Stroup, 1998b, ¶ 8)

This student used the term “neutral” as the opposite of the role of “concerned citizen,” at least where racial issues on campus are concerned.

Once students began to play the role of concerned citizen on campus, they looked beyond that small stage to the community beyond, including the nation and the world. The first step beyond campus was into the local community of Durham, North Carolina, surrounding the university. When student activists took this first step, they made an impact on the community, and it was an impact with positive repercussions for those individuals, “One of the most wonderful things about University students’ initiatives against sweatshops was that we stepped off campus and into our own community, into
Durham” (Fehr, 1998, ¶5). This interaction with the local community affected not only the student activists but also local citizens, many of whom were activists themselves, and led to change within the community “[Jobs With Justice leader Theresa] El-Amin related her experience with Duke students on the anti-sweatshop movement, which resulted in the city of Durham passing an ordinance against companies that use sweatshops” (Rosenthal, 2003, ¶14). Through their connection to the local community students were able to celebrate victories in a different venue than the campus, against opponents with power more far-reaching than that of campus administrators. “The withdrawal from the EMS laundry service contract at a meeting of the [Durham] Board of County Commissioners...was greeted with loud applause by more than a dozen Angelica workers, union representatives and Duke students in attendance” (Ke, 2004, ¶2). Involvement in the local community as a concerned citizen went beyond the local community, as student activists protested the Research Triangle Institute, a Durham-based organization, and its involvement in the rebuilding of Iraq (Hasvold, 2004). This demonstration allowed students to “flex their political muscles” (¶1) and illustrated student activists’ views of themselves as citizens of more than just their campus.

From the local community students moved into the larger venues of national and international citizenship. The issues in these settings were not immediate to their everyday lives, but student activists believed that their small role role in the affairs of the world was important. The role of world citizen often began on campus (“...I myself am not going to initiate action on the Free Tibet movement, but it could become a campus issue if enough students are concerned” (Patel, A., 2002, ¶10); “international, national and state issues can become campus concerns if enough students are affected” (¶9).) Such issues did find their way onto campus, and student activists and their allies realized that they could become involved and challenge the wrongdoings they perceived.
Concern was connected to students’ academic pursuits, whether current or desired. A student group called People Against Assault Weapons (PAAW) arose from a seminar on Humanitarian Challenges and was organized to support continuation of the Assault Weapons Ban when the United States Congress was debating its renewal.

The students said they were unaware of the issue until just a week before the expiration date [of the Ban] and they wanted to spread the word to other Duke students. Members of PAAW coordinated events around campus that allowed interested students to put their handprints in paint to support the ban’s continuation. (Eaglin, 2004, ¶13)

Other students sought the creation of new academic programs, such as Asian American Studies as a discipline that “recognizes, bridges and integrates the vast economic and social disparities within local, national and international communities” (Oh, Basu, & Hsu, 2002, ¶4). In both of these examples students expressed their concern through academics for issues that went beyond the campus community. Academic activism was, however, not the only avenue student activists utilized as citizens concerned about national and international issues.

Duke student activists expressed concern and took action on national issues both while on campus and while traveling off campus for specific events. On campus events such as a walk-out against the war were staged. For this event, students walked out of class (or wherever they happened to be) at a specified time on the day that the United States declared war against Iraq.

“The basic idea is that this is not just an ordinary day if war is declared, and this is a signal that we are not just going to go about our business and let the Bush administration go about doing what it wants to do without our voices being heard. It’s worth taking the time out to reflect on what’s going on and to commit
ourselves to this bigger cause,” said event organizer Shlomi Sher, a student at the Fuqua School of Business. (Lin, 2003b March 18, ¶5)

National issues were protested locally, such as during Attorney General John Ashcroft’s visit to Durham when a protest ensued outside of his hotel. Protesters included “an entire contingent of freshmen from Gilbert-Addoms dormitory” (Lin, 2003f, ¶12). Issues were also protested in the pages of The Chronicle. The approach of the United States towards globalization was a topic both for environmental activists and human rights activists.

The environmental movement fought against NAFTA [North American Free Trade Agreement] in the early [19]90s, roundly opposed the WTO’s [World Trade Organization] creation five years ago, and was instrumental in the defeat of “fast track” trade negotiating authority last year. And as our success in Seattle indicates, we’re not going anywhere soon. (Zdeb, 1999, ¶5)

There is war going on at home and abroad. The rights of human beings—in Iraq, Miami, Afghanistan, Colombia, etc.—are being disregarded if they get in the way of a corporate and administrative agenda—in this case, the FTAA [Free Trade Area of the Americas]. When 10,000 human beings from around the world gather to protest an agreement that is being negotiated by 34 people and will affect them directly, shouldn’t the logical response be to question that agreement? Instead, $8 billion is spent to repress the protests and falsely portray them as creating nothing except mayhem. (LaDue, 2003c, ¶3).

International issues aroused similar concern from student activists. The most notable during this period included divestment from Israel and the civil war and slavery in Sudan. Concern for these issues was expressed with a petition on a website created by the group DukeDivest “www.dukedivest.org, [that] demands that Israel rescind its violations of several U.N. resolutions and portions of the Geneva Convention…” (Lin, 2003e, ¶2), and a vigil on the Duke Chapel Quadrangle for the victims of the Sudan civil
war, attended by a Sudanese refugee: “[Mohamed Adam Yahya, with the Massaleit Community in Exile] agreed that students’ ‘concern to do something to help Darfur is very appreciated’” (Newman, L., 2004, ¶10).

All of these expressions of concern from student activists became part of their history, the lore that is passed from one generation of students to another that encourages them to act as citizens of the world who choose to act upon their concern and “think about things more important than the trivialities of daily life” (Appleborne, 1998, ¶24). Such concern led student activists to further involvement in the issues, oftentimes more formal involvement, as they took on the role of policy maker.

*Policy makers (both on and off campus)*

To affect change student activists became policy makers, either on their own or in concert with other policy makers. This role overlaps with the campus/education role of partner in university governance, since that work included setting policies for the campus community. The role of policy maker was welcomed on Duke’s campus. Former Duke President Nan Keohane “emphasized the need for student involvement” (Sostek, 1998c October 7, ¶12) *The Chronicle* reported, and student activists fought for involvement whenever they identified the need. Writers in *The Chronicle* urged students to work towards gaining this role, with an emphasis on combining their efforts if individuals could not be effective on their own.

How effective will your letter of protest be? It will not be as effective as systemic change or collective action that brings national attention to these issues and forces image conscious corporations to change their labor practices. But your letter will have an impact; a lot of grass-roots organizations have laid the groundwork for smaller, individual action to be effective. And if these issues really concern you, educate yourself on the garment industry and labor policies, and get involved on a more national level with strategically planned boycotts. (Malhotra, 1996, ¶9)
The most important policy decision that involved student activists during the 1996-2004 period was that of the anti-sweatshop code of conduct. This document was meant to set a wide range of policies for how the university was to conduct business and how corporations that contracted with the university would be expected to act. The first code of conduct with which Duke was involved was proposed by the Collegiate Licensing Corporation (CLC), an umbrella organization that worked with many large universities to market and distribute their logos and images. Students Against Sweatshops viewed the CLC code as weak and attempted to insert themselves into the process for making this policy. They assumed that their inclusion would improve the code both for Duke as well as for other universities: “SAS is asking the University not to sign the code, predicting that other universities would follow in the University’s lead, and a stronger code will result” (Sostek, 1998d, ¶5). Student activists wrote to The Chronicle and urged the university to take a stand with regards to the labor rights issues that a code of conduct would address. With these words, activists saw the university as playing the role of policy maker on a larger, national stage.

Major colleges and universities are among the organizations with the leverage to bring the full gravity of these labor issues and human rights abuses to the attention of both the larger public and the individual corporations. (Almeida & Au, 1997, ¶4)

It took a traditional activist method, the sit-in, for the SAS activists finally to obtain a seat at the policy-making table—“20 students spending a night in the Allen Building to get administrators’ attention” (Nike just does it, 1999, ¶7)—a result that activists perceived as not only a victory for them, but also as a victory for the university, for the CLC, and for the workers in the apparel factories. Student involvement in the code of conduct development at Duke led the way for student activists at other universities to seek the same role as policy maker on their campuses, thereby continuing
to strengthen the final policy which would oversee the eradication of sweatshop labor in the production of collegiate apparel.

“The agreement from the Duke sit-in raised the bar for other universities to follow, and the agreement from the [University of] Wisconsin sit-in has just raised the bar again,” said Trinity senior Tico Almeida, a founding member of Students Against Sweatshops. (Stroup, 1999g, ¶5)

Involvement in the drafting of the CLC code of conduct led to an expectation that student activists would continue to play the role of policy maker, which was an ongoing battle between SAS and the administration. Members of SAS spoke out when university administrators began discussion with the Fair Labor Association (FLA), an independent monitoring organization for overseas factories, and their involvement in inspecting factories manufacturing Duke apparel.

“If students are not given formal representation in the FLA process, many of the flaws may not be addressed, as was witnessed with the CLC code last January,” said Sara Jewett, a Trinity junior and SAS member. (Stroup, 1999h, ¶13)

As the university had further dealings with corporations and their treatment of workers, student involvement, or lack thereof, became a major concern for the campus community. When allegations of mistreatment of workers initiated Duke’s boycott of the Mt. Olive Pickle Company, and the non-renewal of a contract with New Era Cap Company, students placed themselves center stage to urge the university to force improvements by both companies. When new agreements and contracts were negotiated and signed by Duke representatives, however, students were not involved in the process, an exclusion that was noted by *The Chronicle*.

[President] Keohane and other administrators should have contacted concerned students before reaching any agreement. One of the reasons the apparel model worked so well is that students were consulted at every level. Students have
shown a strong commitment to working through the complexities of improving workers’ rights, and their input likely would have resulted in a better agreement. Moreover, the administration is dampening the intellectual engagement of students by excluding them from the conversation. (Anti-sweatshop success, 2002, ¶ 4)

With this editorial it can be concluded that the role of policy maker for student activists had been accepted by the campus as a whole, and had become an expectation for all who observed activism on Duke’s campus. Because they played a role in shaping policy, it was only natural for student activists to interact with outsiders to the campus in discussions of those policies and other relevant topics. To do so they took on the role of representative (of their group or the university), diplomat, or spokesperson.

*Representatives/diplomats/spokespeople*

Individual student activists at Duke were extensions of their groups, beliefs, and institution. As such they took on the role of diplomat, representative, or spokesperson for a particular movement or issue or for their institution as a whole. In this role students interacted with corporations and their representatives, the United States government and its representatives, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), labor experts, and their activist peers on other campuses. As diplomats, representatives and spokespeople Duke student activists of this time period used tactics that were non-confrontational in their dealings with these outside entities. “Today’s student activists are much more open to discussion” (Nicholson, 2003, ¶ 18) was the view of a Duke professor who had witnessed earlier periods of activism that were more confrontational than the activists of the period under discussion here. The use of words such as “dialogue” and “meeting” and phrases such as “working with” in descriptions of student activism in *The Chronicle* presented a picture of activists that differed from that derived from phrases such as “protesting against.”
The main corporate adversary for student activists, and Students Against Sweatshops especially, was Nike. The Portland, Oregon based athletic apparel manufacturer was accused of utilizing sweatshop labor around the world, and for the anti-sweatshop activists the corporation was among the worst human rights abusers. However, the students did not take an adversarial approach when dealing with representatives of the company.

“At Duke, we’ve tried to keep an open dialogue with Nike,” [Tico] Almeida said. “When executives were on campus to film the [Krzyzewskiville] commercial, several of us had a long meeting with them, and we talked about things like public disclosure and credible monitoring. We even took them out for beers at the Hideaway afterwards.” (Stroup, 1999i, ¶24)

The students needed to keep relations cordial with corporations in order to be allowed to visit overseas factories, although when doing so diplomacy was expressed through false reasons for the visit.

In the summer of 1996, I visited a sweatshop in Nicaragua with a multicultural delegation of students from the Southeast. In order to gain entrance, we had to tell the management that we were a business group interested in touring an “efficient garment manufacturing facility.” (Harris, 1998, ¶1)

Presenting themselves as a business group—a role within a role—did make the activists’ diplomacy operate much more smoothly than when they presented themselves in their actual roles.

We arrived in Honduras with warm welcomes from human rights, religious and women’s groups, but the media attention we received was less than friendly… calling for the deportation of our delegation. (Almeida, 1998a, ¶3)
Students’ diplomatic skills were also needed when students interviewed workers during visits to apparel factories. In taking on another role, that of factory inspector, SAS activists were able to talk with workers in factories designated as “sweatshops.”

During her trip to a non-Nike plant in Nicaragua, Students Against Sweatshops coordinator Sara Jewett, a Trinity senior, found more serious violations. At this factory, conditions appeared largely safe, but she spoke with several workers who said they had been beaten and one who said she was poisoned by air conditions. (Pessin, 2000a, ¶7)

Within the U.S. student activists liaised with government officials and other experts in the field of labor policy and economics. By conferring with such individuals the students acknowledged that they could not act on their own and that expert assistance was actively sought.

[SAS leader Tico] Almeida said he wants SAS to meet with Robert Reich, former U.S. Secretary of Labor under President Bill Clinton, to discuss the University’s licensing conduct code when he comes to speak at the University… Reich’s visit provides SAS with the opportunity to discuss their plans with a renowned expert on labor policy… (Parkins, 1997b, ¶15)

Although assistance and advice from experts was sought, several economists criticized the drafting of codes of conduct by explaining that “sweatshop decisions are often reached without informed debate” (Kumar, 2000a, ¶4). Student leaders of SAS defended themselves, emphasized their role as representatives, yet stated that they were not the only representatives involved.

[SAS organizers] literally spent thousands of hours working on the code of conduct, working with economists across the country, working with organizers, all sorts of different scholars and people working in the field… (¶4)
Experts consulted by student activists, or by the institution at the urging of student activists, included non-governmental organizations (NGOs) such as the International Labor Rights Fund Project, “a group formed in 1986 to monitor practices such as forced or child labor” (Stroup, 1999k, ¶15).

The final aspect of student activists’ diplomatic and representative role involved their peers at other institutions. After their first year of activism on Duke’s campus, leaders of the SAS group met at a summit with other SAS groups in order to organize a national organization. Through this meeting of student activist representatives, United Students Against Sweatshops (USAS) was formed in 1998 (Korein, 1998a). This aspect of the role of representative or diplomat was also demonstrated by Duke’s campus Jewish groups during the Palestine Solidarity Movement (PSM) conference on campus. In this case students represented a variety of groups on campus, with the eyes of their peers, teachers and administrators on them along with the media and other outside groups.

With as many as 1,000 people expected to descend on Duke during the October weekend, campus Jewish groups want to keep the students who object to PSM constructively occupied. “We want to give students an opportunity to engage with each other in dialogue and not be participating in protests,” said junior Adam Yoffie, president of Duke Friends of Israel. “We don’t want to create chaos and tension between the two groups.” (Rohrs, 2004c, ¶13)

Student activists were recognized as diplomats, representatives and spokespersons in a positive manner by their peers. A student member of Students Against Sweatshops who was not on campus at the time that the group was most active viewed the work done by her predecessors as inspirational.

“In a way, the students working on the workers’ behalf inspired the workers to continue in their struggle at a point when they thought they had already utilized
all of their powers as laborers,” [SAS member Alison] Brim wrote. (Yee, 2002b, ¶ 16)

Other student activists involved in a gender-issue organization dedicated to improving relationships between men and women were likewise praised by a campus health educator for the skills they had developed in gender interactions.

Besides being beneficial for the campus [Student Health education specialist Ray] Rodriguez believes the group has even more benefits for its members. …

“They’re going to take those skills from campus to the workplace, which is very competitive, often in the negative sense. They will be able to change that in a positive way.” (Fickel, 1999, ¶ 20)

Whether they represented themselves or another group, these diplomats and spokespeople were able to present themselves and their message in a manner that accomplished their mission with respect and courtesy. In the next role to be examined activists strove to move beyond respect and courtesy to achieve ideals that they believed should exist within their communities.

**Idealists (acting “above” politics and personalities)**

In the role of idealist, student activists are placed themselves “above” the politics or personalities of their opponents. Student activists took on this role because they believed in their causes and wanted to rise above the “sides” of the issue in order to resolve the injustices they viewed around them. This role conflicts with the role of political agent—discussed in the next section—although student activists were able to take on each individual role as the situation demanded. Idealism within the definition of activism was characterized in the words of one student as democracy, efficiency, and passion (Nicholson, 2003), where democracy is more of a philosophical concept than a political one. “We, as University students and future leaders, are supposed to be activists” (Nichols, 1997, ¶ 1) wrote one student in a letter to the editor. Another wrote “I admire
most individuals who try to change things about the world that are wrong or unfair, especially if whatever the problem is doesn’t effect that person” (Fontecchio, 1998, ¶4).

In the role of idealists student activists looked beyond individual lives, both their own as well as those of others, and took on that which they believed was “wrong and unfair” in the world: “If there had been a protest to support women’s rights, employee relations or any other worthy cause, I would have joined in” (Kumar 2002, ¶3).

For Duke student activists idealism signified working together with individuals and groups on all sides of an issue. Whether that issue concerned racial or gender issues on campus, or relations between Israelis and Palestinians, student activists sought to move beyond differences to cooperate towards a solution.

“To say that self-segregation exists is to place the burden of integration on the shoulders of minorities along,” said [Jacques] Colon, a junior. “For integration to truly occur there needs to be a common understanding and respect of one another.” (Darby, 2004a, ¶10)

“We need to work together instead of pulling each other down,” [senior and Women’s Center program organizer Anna] Fisher said. “There is a divisive way to produce discourse and a constructive way.” (Webber, 2004, ¶18)

“We don’t want people protesting because it doesn’t lead to meaningful dialogue, and it creates an atmosphere where violence is more likely,” said senior Rachel Solomon, student president of the Freeman Center for Jewish Life. (Rohrs, 2004d, ¶14)

Cooperation, respect and meaningful dialogue were all ideal methods of solving the problems that student activists perceived both on campus and in the world.

Student activists as idealists sought to show the Duke community that their concerns were important, more important than those of their peers. They also sought to show the community that their approach to an issue was more mature, more educated and
“above” the individual politics and personalities of their opponents. This attitude and approach represented a “better than” aspect within the idealist role, an aspect that was not always positive, as student activists’ words were seen as insults of those groups towards whom the activists are comparing themselves.

“I don’t want to say that camping out for basketball is frivolous, but I will say that it is much more important to me that I show my support for peace in the world rather than just for men’s basketball,” [junior Dave] Allen said. (Lin, 2003a, ¶10)

While this example indicates one student’s view of a general aspect of Duke campus culture (camping out, or “tenting” for men’s basketball games) in relation to his activism, other examples name individual students and faculty members as illustrations of behavior that student activists would not exhibit, or chose not to exhibit in response to those individuals.

[Anthropology professor] Diane Nelson is certainly no conservative. … Politically, she and the DCU [Duke Conservative Union] agree on very little. But this is not a political disagreement. Nelson is not relying on logic, analysis or argumentation to further her position. Instead, she is intentionally smearing a group of students simply because she does not like their politics. For that, she should be ashamed. (Carleton, 2004c, ¶15)

While [Bill] English spat out faulty arguments leading to inaccurate conclusions, we will leave our personal grudges and political affiliations aside. (Csikesz, 2002, ¶1)

Idealists do not “smear,” nor do they “spit out” their arguments. “Personal grudges” play no part in how they approach the issues, and those who invoke grudges “should be ashamed.”

The view of self as “better than” others in their idealism suggests that at times student activists did not act. By not acting in certain circumstances either they gave their
opponents the opportunity to make a statement or they did not give their opponents the opportunity for a fight. Idealism for student activists also meant that not to act was the most appropriate action to take in order to prove a point.

Many groups active in last year’s protests [against *The Chronicle* for publishing David Horowitz’s advertisement], including the Black Student Alliance and the Duke Student Movement, said they do not want to legitimize Horowitz by giving him any more public attention and plan little to no formal response to his visit. (Bradley, 2002b, ¶3)

Members of Duke’s Black Student Alliance were also present at [David Horowitz’s speech at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill]. Senior Troy Clair, the group’s president, chose to stay seated throughout the speech [while UNC’s Black Student Movement staged a walkout]. “It’s not about Horowitz,” Clair said. “It’s about not allowing people to come in and divide a community to do that.” (Bradley, 2001c, ¶13-14)

Trinity sophomore Jessica Rosen and fellow SFC [Students For Choice] members agreed that the action [removing pro-life flyers from campus walls] was wrong. “Although I am strongly pro-choice, and wanted to rip every last flyer off the wall the instant I saw them, I am also a proponent of the freedom of speech,” she said. “[Instead of tearing them down], we should let those posters serve as motivation and as reason for us to continue supporting a woman’s right to choose,” said Rosen. “We should use our anger at this event in a productive manner.” (Pessin, 1998, ¶12-13)

There were principles in the minds of student activists as idealists that were larger than the issues. As shown above, freedom of speech was one principle. As noted earlier democracy was another. One student activist told *The Chronicle* that democracy was the reason for activism: “‘…I wouldn’t be doing this if I didn’t think…this was at the heart
of our democracy.”” (Collins, 2003, ¶6). Democracy as a principle was not a new ideal for student activists in this period, although some activists viewed proponents of democracy in earlier eras as not entirely fully supportive of the principle in their organizations and actions.

Oh yes and if you call your group Students for a Democratic Society, you’d better be prepared for days when democracy means that people you don’t like get elected. (Harris, 2003, ¶6)

The idealists’ view of democracy was not political. In fact, student activists as idealists publicly spoke of their disdain for “normal” politics as they viewed it: “If the great circle of political thought and action is where the far left and the far right meet—they are both totalitarian” (Erwin, 2001, ¶2). Even the president of the university was seen as representing politics and not student activists’ idealism.

Other SAS [Students Against Sweatshops] members criticized [Duke President Nan] Keohane for being overly responsive to political concerns. “She’s a political scientist by training so she’s attuned to the political situation,” said Trinity senior Warren Ogden. “We’re looking at what’s best in the long term.” (Sostek, 1998d, ¶ 15-16)

The “long term” in the anti-sweatshop movement referred to the rights of workers: health, safety, living wages, the right to unionize. These ideals appeared not only in the anti-sweatshop movement but also in other economic and political issues, such as the World Trade Organization, and war both past and present. The value of the lives of innocent people was important to student activists, as was the protection of those they viewed as victims (as described more extensively as the role of champion of the underdog). The World Trade Organization was described as lacking “a true commitment to addressing labor abuses worldwide…. something which a convention addressing a topic as narrow as the worst forms of child abuse simply cannot salvage” (Stroup,
Activists who protested the WTO’s policies were called “neoprotectionists — their primary concern with free trade is not the security of American jobs, but instead on the right of individual countries to set their own standards on acceptable trade” (Newman, C., 1999, ¶4). Individual rights and freedom in this example was equated with economic freedom from an international organization dominated by national powers that did not care for either the rights of less powerful sovereign nations or of individual workers.

The issue of war spurred student activists to the role of idealist as they spoke out in support of the populations they saw as innocent victims of all aspects of war. These victims included poor men drafted to fight in Vietnam in an earlier era, the children of Iraq, and citizens of Sudan abused and murdered by their government.

…a draft that sent mostly poor men to fight while the sons of the ruling class hid in the National Guard (or college) was fundamentally wrong. (Harris, 2003, ¶6)

Emily Antoon, a freshman, felt obligated to attend the protest [against war with Iraq] on behalf of children in Iraq and other Middle Eastern nations with whom she has been communicating for the past year. “We need to realize the consequences a war would have on the civilian population of the country. Removing Saddam [Hussein] will destroy hundreds of thousands of lives in the process.” (Card, 2002, ¶7-8)

When a government purposefully murders more than 50,000 of its own citizens, does a government really retain the right to rule and govern? Forceful action in the form of military intervention must be taken in Sudan, and it must be taken now. Time is always of the essence when a day means the lives of thousands of innocent people in a place the size of France. (Kennedy, 2004, ¶7)

These demonstrations pointed to the ideals of peace and justice, ideals which student activists believed should hold true on campus as well as off, and ideals which were
sometimes lost on the general public as they received information from *The Chronicle*, as one letter writer pointed out.

The caption under the front-page picture in Tuesday’s *Chronicle* read, “Senior Jessie Rosario speaks at a protest about Sigma Chi’s recent ‘Viva Mexico’ party Monday on the Chapel steps.” However, the demonstration was not against the events of Sigma Chi’s Party [*sic.*]. It was “a demonstration for peace and justice: the fight to end ignorance and racism.” We were standing upon the Chapel steps in order to get the message out to the Duke Community, that yes events happened that were bigoted, but that it has become a mere catalyst for greater systemic change we want at Duke. (Castillo, 2003, ¶1)

Student activists urged all members of the community to act as idealists. Idealism for all Duke community members, in the minds of student activists, needed to go beyond the catalysts of an issue, and beyond what individuals did or saw on their own.

If things are rotten in the Gothic Wonderland, students and faculty should not need a catalyst to move them into action—they should raise their voices every day, simply because things are rotten, even if the rot isn’t readily visible. (McClarnon, 2001, ¶7)

Let us stand for something greater than what our pockets can support and our minds can conceive, not just concerning sweatshops, but concerning every facet of life here at the University and beyond where we have a chance to honor the ideals upon which this university was built. (Weber, 1998, ¶10)

Idealism is a lofty goal, and for all of the idealistic rhetoric that student activists spoke and wrote, according to *The Chronicle*, they could not divorce themselves completely from the politics of the issues.
**Political agents**

Although student activists in playing the role of idealist, as described above, viewed themselves as “above” politics and its pettiness, they did play a political role, often within the boundaries of the same issues in which they intended to play idealists. The political nature of student activists has been described in the previous chapter through the words and actions of campus conservatives and their efforts to legitimize themselves as an identity group on Duke’s campus, a political identity group, different from other identity groups based on race, culture or gender. Because many of the issues that attracted the attention of student activists were related to local, national, and world politics whether directly or indirectly, it was only natural for the role of political agent to be seen in *The Chronicle’s* descriptions of student activism during this period of time.

Perhaps the most obvious way in which student activists took on the role of political agent was through involvement in an election campaign. The period 1996-2004 encompassed three national (presidential) elections, but most student activism related to electoral politics did not emerge until the third, in 2004. By 2004 the student activists who opposed the actions of George W. Bush as President of the United States had found their political voices and began to use them. One visible means they used to deliver their message was a t-shirt. Based on a design that homosexual activists had used on Duke’s campus, which read “gay? fine by me,” the t-shirt that appeared in opposition to President Bush read “bush? not fine by me.”

On the back, the T-shirt displays a list of numerical statistics that add up to 2004, which sophomores Ben Abram and Vijay Brihmadesam said explain why President George W. Bush should not be reelected. Abram and Brihmadesam designed the shirts in an effort to encourage Duke students who oppose Bush’s reelection to voice their opinions. (Rose, 2004, ¶2-3)
Other political agents on campus did not believe the message printed on the shirts was the best way to express political beliefs. The negativity of the words and numbers displayed on the t-shirt were seen by supporters of Bush as a shallow expression of political belief. Students who supported the President’s re-election believed that those playing the role of political agent should have done so in a more positive manner.

“People should be a little more pro-‘their candidate,’ and show why people should vote for their candidate instead of why they should vote against the other candidate,” said junior Russ Ferguson, president of Duke Students for Bush. “We’ve got to say we’re voting for this candidate because we believe in these issues, and not because we think this T-shirt is funny.” (Rose, 2004, ¶10)

The anti-Bush activists, however, kept up their version of the role of political agent, speaking against the President rather than in favor of another candidate.

All we have to do in November is repeat the last election plus one state. It can happen. It’s just another paltry sum of electoral votes to prove Bush’s…vision of victory wrong—just another empty statement to the people of America. (Valerio, 2004, ¶9)

Even after the election, the anti-Bush activists remained involved political agents, and once again sought to use an article of clothing as their method of protest. Taking a cue from the song and video “Mosh” by rap star Eminem, activists planned a march in Washington, D.C. to protest for change on the day of President Bush’s second inauguration.

Project Mosh is an event students at Duke and other schools are currently planning for January. It is inspired by the video for the Eminem song “Mosh,” which shows a large group of individuals dressed in all-black hooded sweatshirts marching to D.C. in protest of Bush. According to the Project Mosh website, “If you haven’t seen the new Eminem video, ‘Mosh,’ you should check it out… we
have decided to ‘mosh’ (march) on college campuses and possibly the D.C. Mall on the day of Bush’s second inauguration (Jan. 20, 2005). We want everyone in a black hoodie making their protest for change. (Carleton, 2004b, ¶ 5)

The role of political agent was not always in opposition to a political issue or event; there were activists who worked to promote their politics. The war in Iraq was one issue for which students acted as political agents in favor of the government’s actions. Activists spoke up against the war, alerting political leaders that the military actions were done “not in our name” (Lin, 2003c, ¶ 23). There were also groups of students who, for their own political and moral reasons, supported U.S. efforts, in their role of political agents.

…a small group of students gathered to show their support of the U.S. military action. “The humanitarian issues [in Iraq] are so great that something needs to be done, and I think it’s noble that the U.S. is willing to step to the forefront,” said freshman Karen Nelson. “No one’s for war. I’m just not for Saddam Hussein.” (Lin, 2003c, ¶ 8)

Whichever side of the war issue student activists supported, the fact that student activists were acting as political agents was heartening to observers of Duke’s activist culture.

More than a few freshmen turned out for their first display of campus activism today, the rally to oppose war on Iraq. The existence of the “movement” is heartening; the student body is aware of international happenings and are willing to voice their opinions in an attempt to effect change and national policy. (Moore, 2002, ¶ 1)

Students were trying to effect change on a number of issues. Students who supported a continuation of the assault weapons ban gathered to send postcard petitions to North Carolina Senator, and Duke alumna, Elizabeth Dole, who had pledged as a candidate to make a difference in gun violence.
The postcards aimed to remind Dole of her history with Duke and urged her to support the continuation of the ban. “I would support a much stronger version of the ban,” said [freshman Megan] Moskop, “although the renewal of the ban would be better than nothing.” (Eaglin, 2004, ¶16)

The boycott of South Carolina because of the flying of the Confederate flag over the state capitol was another issue where students believed that they could be part of the change process as political agents: “‘We absolutely have a role to play,’ one student said. ‘Though the situation is happening outside of our state borders, it doesn’t matter’” (Singhal, 2000, ¶7).

It also did not matter to students when the injustice occurred on the other side of the world from activists’ campus, such as the civil war in Sudan. At a vigil for victims of that country’s violence, students’ political involvement “took the form of signing letters to students’ respective congressmen and making financial contributions” (Newman, L., 2004, ¶13). This issue took on political meaning for student activists beyond the internal fighting in Sudan; the role of the United States as a political agent was raised, as students related multiple international issues in their activism.

Military intervention in Sudan IS [emphasis in original] in the national interest—it will refurbish our tarnished moral legitimacy after Iraq. However, the U.S. must intervene with 100 percent U.N. [United Nations] approval; otherwise, the existence of enormous Sudanese oil reserves will mire humanitarian intentions in the swamp of U.S. self-aggrandizement. (Kennedy, 2004, ¶3)

Student activists were even asked to be part of the political process of the United States in an official capacity, making the role of political agent more meaningful to their actions. Members of Students Against Sweatshops testified before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in Washington, D.C.. The Chronicle called the group’s participation
in this process “an indication that the student-led anti-sweatshop movement may be gaining some national political clout” (Stroup, 1999m, ¶1)

Casey Harrell, Trinity senior and spokesperson for the delegation, testified before the committee as part of its hearings on the International Labor Organization’s Convention on the Worst Forms of Child Labor. …the group was exceedingly careful to make a good impression and earn some respect as a political force. “…we worked very hard to make sure our testimony did not smack of ‘[this is] just an idealistic 21-year-old college student.’” (¶2, 9)

Student activists knew their role as political agents well enough to play it to different audiences. The audiences included the campus community, the local community surrounding campus, and a national audience. In all cases, the savvy political agent knew the best way to gain the audience’s attention and respect, and knew how to use their power, for student activists did play the role of people with power.

*People with power*

In playing many of the roles discussed here student activists expressed and showed their power. Their power was expressed as individual power, as group power, and as institutional power. As one student wrote “Because we are part of an institution, we have that much more power” (Brim, 2001, ¶7). That power was expressed by students and observers in relation to all of the issues that involved student activists on campus.

Race and gender were issues on which student activists expressed their power, whether race relations on campus extending to racism in general, or a corporation’s portrayal of women in its marketing campaigns. In both of these cases students used the power of their discussions, their intelligence, and their involvement as activists to right the wrongs that they perceived.
[sophomore Brandon] Hudson said the Reginaldo Howard Scholars hoped the issues discussed...would become launching points for student activism. “We have the ability as students to make change,” he said. “We want students to realize they are empowered. To combat racism and other race issues, we need to come together to create change.” (Darby, 2004a, ¶14-15)

“Duke is a resource with a lot of potential,” [house course instructor Amanda] Miller said. “We are educated, so we can write persuasive letters. We are politically involved and we’re a market for this company.” (Porter, 2002, ¶9)

Students’ awareness of their power came not only through the discussions and house courses referenced above, but through the outcomes of their activism, such as the compromise reached between SAS and Duke’s administration over the wording of the university’s code of conduct. The realization of student power came at the end of the sit-in in the Allen Building, where members of the group achieved a major victory that would have repercussions far beyond Duke’s campus.

“I think that was the moment I realized that we had just written a new page in history that is going to affect people in countries we may never visit,” said protest organizer Sara Jewett, a Trinity junior. (Stroup, 1999c, ¶21)

The role and image of women on campus was an issue for student activists during the period under study. Student activists as people with power emerged from a discussion that took place on the topic of women in The Chronicle. The main impetus for this discussion was the impression that in the pages of the campus newspaper Duke’s women were portrayed either as stereotypical sorority members, who drank heavily and danced on tables, or as stereotypical feminists who sought to take over all power from men. Students who took place in this discussion concluded that there was a continuum between these two stereotypes, and that Duke’s women did have power and exerted it, but perhaps
did not seek recognition of that power in *The Chronicle*. It was enough for these women to know that their power was effective off-stage; they did not seek the spotlight.

“Women back [the campaign boycotting] Mt. Olive Pickle’s and [join] Students Against Sweatshops—men go to DSG [Duke Student Government], which does less, but looks better on a resume,” said Meghan Valerio, a senior and columnist for *The Chronicle*. “Women don’t parade themselves around [the way men do]. They do powerful things, but work in their own way.” Senior Liz Tabone noted that women often act for change in ways that have a smaller, but more direct impact on society, and that such efforts should not be ignored. (Webber, 2004, ¶ 7-8)

As people with power, student activists continued to work towards finding the most effective ways to use that power, publicly or privately, in large or small ways, with direct or indirect impacts. In the role of consumer advocate, they were able to exert their economic power.

*Consumer advocates*

As consumer advocates, student activists encouraged their peers and the rest of the campus community to purchase (or not purchase) certain products, items made by certain types of corporations or industries, and patronize (or not patronize) the corporations themselves. Through these actions and boycotts the activists encouraged others to follow their example and become educated consumers. Because of these characteristics, this role overlaps with the roles of educator and campus leader.

Student activists acknowledged that they cannot change corporations or industries by their actions alone, but recognized that their role as consumer advocates was a start to a process or a piece of a whole movement: “…[the] University is but one buyer… Someone needs to lead the way…” (Crack of the whip, 1997, ¶ 4); “… ‘one buyer cannot change the habits of every producer,’ it would seem that even a symbolic gesture is
preferable to no gesture at all.” (Gelber, 1997, ¶1). This second quotation illustrates an overlap between the roles of consumer advocate and symbol maker (discussed in the following chapter), with the student activist/advocate serving as a symbol for all student consumers.

Student activists’ role as consumer advocate was a way for student activists to raise awareness or to educate others about their causes and beliefs. While protesting Wal-Mart’s use of sweatshop labor, students “said they were pleased with the results of the protest, but they added that continued efforts to inform the public about inhumane labor practices are needed” (Korein, 1998b, ¶11). Students concerned about cereal maker Kellogg’s portrayal of women’s bodies in an advertisement for Nutri-Grain cereal bars signed petitions and wrote letters, declaring a boycott of the bars: they viewed their actions as a positive effort, “even if Kellogg’s does not pull the ad, increased campus awareness of the unhealthy portrayal of women’s bodies in advertising has been a success” (Porter, 2002, ¶12).

Student activists as consumer advocates sought to take their efforts beyond the campus of Duke, to other stages where the university had a presence. These stages ranged from the neighboring state of South Carolina, where the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) had organized a national boycott of the state’s tourist industry because of the Confederate flag flying over the state capitol. The Chronicle called this boycott a “critical turning point in the continuing struggle for racial equality in the South” (Common-sense voting, 2000, ¶11) and urged students to “use their economic clout to make a difference” (¶11). Students who supported the boycott believed that a “unified boycott of Myrtle [Beach] will send a very serious message for hotel owners, bar owners, trip planners…” (Levy, 2000b, ¶24).

The consumer advocates went beyond urging individual Duke students to use their economic power. They argued that the university should use its economic power to
promote international change in Israel and Sudan. Taking their cue from the successful movement to end apartheid in South Africa in the mid-1980s where “Students, faculty and administration realized…that by divesting from corporations doing work in that country the actions we take here could make a difference half a world away” (Almeida & Au, 1997, ¶8), student activists began to advocate for divestment of funds from companies that conduct business with the Israeli military and in Sudan. “A boycott of military companies doing business with Israel is essential for peace” (Newman, B., 2003, ¶ 5) wrote one columnist as a plea for Duke to divest funds from companies that engaged in business with the Israeli military. The Palestinian Solidarity Movement also went on the record to say that “the group views divestment, or the selling of stocks, as a powerful nonviolent strategy to end the violence between Israeli and Palestinian people” (Rohrs & Rotberg, 2004, ¶ 4). Students had seen that such efforts could be successful with the anti-sweatshop movement, which had begun with students and grew to involve the entire institution with satisfactory results.

…the student anti-sweatshop movement of 1998-99 started with student passion and eventually drove officials to meet demands, this time by breaking off contracts with companies that used sweatshop labor to make Duke apparel. (Levy, 2000a, ¶ 17)

President Nan Keohane said she was pleased with the publication of the report by the FLA [Fair Labor Association, a sweatshop monitoring organization], which the University had played a large role in developing. “We are glad that the effort Duke helped launch has been successful in monitoring companies and bringing information back to interested consumers,” she wrote in an email. (Yee, 2003a, ¶ 3-4)

Because student activists had seen success in the anti-sweatshop movement, which reached beyond the campus to affect multinational companies, they believed that
the same type of power could be brought to bear on other international situations. Issues of civil war and slavery in Sudan became causes for student activists, and divestment became the method supported by members of the movement for bringing about an end to the conflict.

John Solomon, a senior involved in promoting the concept of University divestment policy [said]… “We’re trying to put this issue of Sudan into a bigger framework,” … “We’re trying to use money and being a shareholder to influence social change.” (Rohrs, 2003c, ¶4)

“We feel that divestment is the best way to alleviate the slavery issue.” Solomon said. (¶20)

Although the role of consumer advocate was not always embraced by all members of the Duke community—administrators did not support students’ calls for divestment in the Israel-Palestine situation—it is a role that met with some success (the anti-sweatshop movement and the Mt. Olive Pickle boycott) and seems to be a role that student activists were comfortable taking on during this time period.

Summary

Student activists during the period 1996-2004 took on a number of political roles as they carried on their fight for change. In these roles activists entered the political stage of the campus, of the community, and of the nation. With some success they even took their role to the stage of international politics. The next chapter will examine the third, and final, category of roles played by student activists: social roles.

Introduction

This chapter will examine the roles played by student activists that are characterized as social, because they are based on interactions between the activists and others. These interactions, as have been seen, can be educational or political in nature, but often activists seek to affect change on a more personal, emotional level. The social roles identified in this study include: moral conscience or compass, moral bully, social critic, champion of the underdog, social support network, and symbol maker. All of these roles illustrate how student activists seek change through each individual’s outlook on an issue.

Moral conscience or compass

Student activists see themselves as part of a moral fight. They act with the self-assurance that what they believe is right and that those against whom they fight—university administrators, corporate America, or the United States government—are wrong and in need of guidance. “The path of moral persuasion is always better than an appeal to the force of government” (Haugh, 1999, ¶ 1) wrote one student activist in a description of the importance of this role for those who play it. In the role of moral conscience, or moral compass, student activists strive to remind those in power of what is “right” and through those reminders, done through the multiple methods of activists, to “guide” those in power to a decision congruent with the activists’ morals and emotions: “Students are outraged, shouting, crying, giving their days and nights to try and hammer their message home to the Duke community” (DuBuisson, 2001, ¶ 3).

Through the offering of his time, energies, and social reputation, the activist demonstrates a truer belief in his convictions, activating opinion beyond mental exercise and increasing the value of his belief. (Hong, 2000, ¶ 4)
Those who play the role of moral conscience successfully are able to activate opinion across the campus community, and convince others to share their beliefs, thereby increasing the value of those beliefs as they become inherent in the community rather than simply in an individual. This scenario did take place at Duke, although the examples of those who were able to stand by their beliefs and convictions, to work with other community members, while not losing their initial moral stance and direction, are few according to writers in *The Chronicle*. They are not all students.

…in my time here, I have witnessed only three people—senior Jordan Bazinsky on same-sex unions, Tico Almeida, Trinity ’99, on sweatshops, and Provost Peter Lange on Curriculum 2000 and the long-range plan—take substantive, principled action from start to finish, dodging bullets and standing ground while incorporating suggestion and pushing on. (Pessin, 2001a, ¶17)

Tico Almeida and other members of Students Against Sweatshops served as Duke’s moral conscience on labor issues, specifically the treatment and rights of workers locally and around the world, with connections to the university. Student activists in the anti-sweatshop movement played the role of moral conscience in order to convince university administrators to adopt a code of conduct for apparel companies with whom Duke contracted by appealing to their economic as well as moral sensibilities: “…if every university in the country had a code of conduct, there would be billions of dollars of clothing being produced in a socially responsible manner” (Spataro, 1997, ¶3). Student activists combined the role of educator with moral conscience to give the university community a full picture on which to ponder the anti-sweatshop movement’s position.

Forget the marketing strategies for a moment, and let’s consider the fact that the shoes must come from somewhere. Let’s try East Asia, where Nike has single-
handedly lowered human rights standards in global sweatshops for the sole purpose of maximizing profits. (Salsbury, 1997, ¶6)

In the minds of those who played the moral conscience the status quo of world labor was reprehensible, and it was their responsibility to present the immorality of this situation to others. Once the code of conduct was created and adopted, the moral conscience worked on improvements to the code. They expressed disappointment in what was created, and worked to create a sense of guilt in those with the power to make the code better: “‘It is disappointing that we could not have a stronger code now, so that the lives of workers could be bettered now rather than later.’” [Trinity senior Ben Au] (Stroup, 1999d, ¶10).

In other words, “yes, that’s a good start, but wouldn’t you feel better if we could just help these workers a bit more?” SAS was not the only student organization on campus which sought to sway the moral stance of the administration. Other student organizations, such as the campus chapter of Amnesty International, joined SAS and declared that problems with the code of conduct were not only issues of workers’ rights but also issues of human rights everywhere.

Amnesty International campaigns worldwide to promote adherence to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The Duke chapter is very concerned that the University plans to adopt an anti-sweatshop code that allows its apparel licensees’ factories to operate under conditions that violate many of the basic human rights put forth in that document. (Ferenczi, 1998, ¶ 1)

Student activists put forward the argument that the code of conduct they viewed as “flawed” was contrary to Duke’s mission. In an appeal to administrators—those who uphold the university’s mission and the education of its students—student activists sought to reach their opponents’ moral core.

Creating a code of conduct that shares the list of factory addresses with students will empower us to engage in our role as global citizens, much as the missions of
the University and LEAPS [a service-learning program] proscribe. To do otherwise, would create a divide between students and our larger communities, in effect, suppressing the moral education of undergraduates. (Kumar, 1998, ¶4)

The anti-sweatshop activists at times became personal, moral consciences of Duke that targeted individual members of the Duke community, rather than a general group (such as “the administration”). In using this tactic they chose men’s basketball coach Mike Krzyzewski, who, they believed, had the power to make a difference in a workers’ strike at a Nike factory, both because of his influence with the company and his status within the university.

In response to a labor dispute at a factory in southern Mexico this week, Students Against Sweatshops yesterday sent a letter to top University officials and men’s basketball coach Mike Krzyzewski demanding that they take action on behalf of the workers. (Kumar, 2001a, ¶1)

In this letter students appealed to administrators and the coach to fight for workers’ rights to work, to strike, and to unionize.

…SAS is calling for the University to pressure Nike to meet four specific demands: that all workers illegally fired be reinstated; that the factory stop firing workers who were previously on strike; that the charges against the six workers who led the protest be dropped; and that the KWC [Kukdong Workers’ Coalition] be recognized as the workers’ representative organization. (¶7)

Student activists did not always attack the moral position of the administration. There was praise occasionally to let those in charge know that the moral consciences on campus approved of their actions and decisions: “‘It’s important for Duke to stand up for not allowing discrimination on the job. In the past, Duke has been setting a good example…’” (Wyler, 2004, ¶14).
Discrimination was an issue that the moral consciences of Duke University seemed to encounter on all fronts, including on campus. With issues of race and gender discrimination in the headlines throughout this time period, student activists called upon all members of the Duke community to take the stage and become their own moral consciences through self-examination.

It is time to address our culture and look for causes, not simply “solutions.” The Duke community, and all of us that comprise it, must look inward. We need to take a hard, honest look at ourselves—as well as our institutions and customs—and be open about what we see. (Weller, 2002, ¶19)

The advertisement against slavery reparations, submitted to *The Chronicle* by conservative activist David Horowitz, spurred the moral consciences to speak out on the issue of race relations on campus. With regards to this particular incident the moral consciences worked on all sides, beginning with those who protested against *The Chronicle*. Their intent was to provoke in the editors feelings of guilt for publishing the advertisement.

Several protesters agreed that their intense feelings stem mostly from a general feeling that the University does not adequately support its minority students, and that race relations at Duke remain tense. (Kumar, 2001e, ¶11)

They spoke of Horowitz himself in an attempt to engage readers to examine their views of other races

Horowitz entirely overlooks the point of reparations. …the more immediate motivation for a reparation is less about reimbursement than it is about admission of guilt. To award reparations as a country is to formally apologize and admit that there was an indelible and egregious offense committed by us as a nation. …the payment of reparations to African Americans is not an issue of white versus black. (Smith, D., 2001, ¶2-3)
They berated the defenders of the advertisement’s publication, who believed that both Horowitz and *The Chronicle* had exerted their rights to free speech and opinion.

“I’m appalled that someone would take the time to write this [a resolution defending *The Chronicle*’s decision to print the anti-reparations advertisement],” said Black Student Alliance President Denis Antoine, a senior. “I don’t care about Mr. Horowitz. This isn’t about Mr. Horowitz. It’s about someone who came in and attacked my community.” (Kumar, 2001f, ¶10)

Discrimination was a concern with regards to gender as well as race. Whether the issue was violence against women or a perceived misuse of feminist symbols, student activists appealed to the alleged guilty parties—known and unknown—through an appeal as the moral conscience of their peers.

Rape happens here, and it doesn’t just happen in bathrooms on East Campus or on the jogging trail. It happens in dorm rooms. It happens at parties. It happens between people who know and trust each other. It happens to all of us. And we are all to blame. (Weller, 2002, ¶6)

Susan B. Anthony, in partnership with Elizabeth Cady Stanton, worked tirelessly for women’s suffrage as well as various legal reforms. Abortion was not included in their agenda. This manipulation of Anthony’s symbol purposefully misleads readers of *The Chronicle*. Such a blatant misuse of a source would be a violation of the academic standards set forth in our honor code. (Johnson, Reitz, & Franklin, 2001, ¶6)

The feminist moral conscience of Duke viewed discrimination against women as encompassing a wide range of moral crimes. In a protest that was aimed purely at the moral position of its opponents, activists spoke up in the pages of *The Chronicle* against a cosmetic surgery advertisement they thought objectified women by creating a stereotypical image of how women should look.
Protest organizers said they want to generate greater sensitivity from Duke’s public relations officers about the effect advertisements can have on gender issues, but they are demanding no concrete action. (Rohrs, 2004a, ¶18)

Advertisements for cosmetic surgery were positioned on one end of the spectrum of moral crimes against women; on the other end was murder of women around the world in the name of religion. Although the writer who played the role of moral conscience in this letter could not influence the murderers directly, she could influence the moral position and thoughts of the Duke community, with the intent to bring more people to her cause.

Based on the Quranic verses and prophetic traditions, I believe that those who murder in the name of “honor” are not standing up for morality, rather they are acting on the basis of purely misogynistic motives to dominate women. (Fadel, 2003, ¶1)

In a different situation, the moral conscience role was turned back upon women who attempted to help their peers who exhibited symptoms of an eating disorder. In this scene, the “victims” took on the role of moral conscience in retaliation against the well-meaning actions of those who reached out to provide assistance.

Last year… a small scandal developed on the floor of my dorm when three girls began picking food out of the trash to eat in the middle of the night. It was an incongruous image—three attractive and wealthy Duke girls sifting through the hallway trashcan after denying themselves proper food all-day [sic.] long.

Disgusted by the frequent sight of the girls surrounding the trash cans all semester, a few girls posted a sign in response that read, “Please refrain from eating out of the trash.” The next day, as if to declare that they picked through the trash to prevent waste, the three blondes posted a picture of an emaciated African
child and a definitive statistic on the terrible problem of starvation. (Tieu, 2003, ¶ 9-10)

Student activists as moral consciences were compelled to bring issues from beyond the campus walls to the attention of their peers. On the issue of university funds invested with companies working with Israel, students called for “an ethical investment committee to ensure moral standards in all the University’s investment practices” (Lin, 2003e, ¶ 7). Actions to raise awareness among the campus community about the plight of victims and refugees of the Sudanese civil war were designed to make students think in a more emotional manner about the issue. Student activists erected a mock refugee village in order to illustrate how refugees were forced to live because of the fighting in their country, “…organizer Ben Abram… ‘We’re hoping this village will provide an emotional reference point’” (Rotberg, 2004d, ¶ 3). In addition to the village, at a vigil held on campus for the victims, student activists read aloud the actual words of the Sudanese victims. In a combination of the roles of moral conscience and champion of the underdog, emotional voice was given to the voiceless.

Student-read accounts provided emotional descriptions of the horrors victims have been experiencing. “If our men go out, they die, if we go out, we are raped—that is our choice,” one account read. In another, a woman described asking her enemy if she could put her baby down while he raped her. (Newman, L., 2004, ¶ 6)

Student activists were not silent when it came to their own country. The war against Iraq brought out the moral voices of student activists against the U. S. government. Members of the Duke community were urged to take a stand in opposition to the government’s actions and not to accept the situation as presented, but rather to express their own beliefs about the morality of military action against Iraq.
“All of us must realize and gather our strength and together oppose the monster in the White House,” [junior C. K. Swett] said. “To accept defeat is to forget the victories before us.” Swett continued emotionally yelling into the crowd to stand against this war. “I urge you to summon your guts and strength and resist this war with courage and determination,” he shouted. (Lin, 2003c, ¶15-16)

If our generation cannot make moral judgments under any circumstances, where does that leave us? Whatever your position on the current war, I implore you not to submit to moral relativism. (Ericksen, 2003a, ¶2)

Whether with spoken words, written words, images, or actions, the role of moral conscience was central to student activism during this period, as the issues were deemed moral for the actors. Some actors took on the role with more intensity, going from moral conscience to moral bully.

*Moral Bullies*

Student activists at times moved beyond the role of conscience or compass in their moral fight. By using their own words and actions in a more forceful manner, purposefully or not, they took on the role of moral bully and attempted to force their moral views on others. Student activists who played the role of moral bully did so to gain attention and attract others to their cause, as this writer explains: “Only the loudest voices, the ones most likely to provoke change on campus or in the world, attracted the support of huge groups of students” (Levy, 2000a, ¶8). It is the use of the verb “provoke” in this sentence that implies a sense of bullying to the reader. Other descriptions of student activists used phrases such as “affect change” or “seek change;” to “provoke change” implies a greater force of words or actions used by the student activists. The loudest voices on campus were few in number, even if they sought to convert all members of the Duke community to their causes.
As the hackneyed expression goes, universities offer great opportunities for discourse and the free flow of ideas, but a militant minority hides behind this well-meaning doctrine of openness to impose its viewpoint on everyone else. (Bush, 2003, ¶3)

Within some activist movements it was a minority of a minority that acted in a militant manner, and played the role of moral bully. This was the case within the anti-war movement at Duke. These militant, or radical, war protesters chose to block traffic on the traffic circle situated on the main entrance road to the campus to raise awareness on campus about the war with Iraq. It was an event that made an impression on some students, including a columnist for The Chronicle who included it in his column the semester after it had taken place, when students had been off campus for the summer months.

We know how to protest. You see those anti-war protesters blocking the traffic circle last year? That was a protest allright [sic.]. But, unfortunately, it wasn’t exactly a communications coup. “We’re doing it to spread awareness about the war,” the protesters told us. But did it accomplish anything? Well, it made the protesters look dogmatic, and it alienated a few people with the intensity of its rhetoric who otherwise might have agreed with the anti-war cause. (Schaefer, 2003b, ¶ 2)

The protesters in the traffic circle incident were chastised by their peers, and were identified by other anti-war protesters as not representative of all members of the movement. In this event the smaller minority bullied the larger minority of student activists as well as the student body as a whole.

Unfortunately, the protesters who impeded me and many others from going to class on April 10 abandoned genuine outlets for dialogue and chose not to respect
the capacity of individuals in the Duke community to take differing views. (Bush, 2003, ¶ 7)

Please allow me to explain to you…who the people are who so rudely and selfishly stage these protests to ruin the schedules of innocent students, faculty and visitors… I am certain that the people leading these radical forms of protest do not represent the ideas of the entire Peace at Duke organization, but rather a splinter group called Civil Disobedience. These people who forcibly push their ideas on others neither represent the anti-war movement on campus, nor do they make up a majority of those affiliated with Peace at Duke. (Hanna, 2003, ¶ 1-2)

The traffic circle was not the only location at which anti-war protesters used their moral bullying to disrupt business as usual on campus. Two individual members of the anti-war movement went to a Duke Student Government (DSG) meeting, and in an attempt to play the educator role presented themselves to those in attendance as anything but educators.

When the anti-war movement went to DSG to protest the war and “educate” the legislators it was reported that they “included statistics on the deaths caused by U.S. sanctions on Iraq. … The anti-war movement on campus has repeatedly blamed the U.S. for those deaths, but have they presented a scrap of evidence proving direct U.S. responsibility? The answer is no. (Ericksen, 2003b, ¶ 2)

If we do not take them [anti-war protests] seriously, it is due to the petty antics of the likes of Yousuf Al-Bulushi and Jessica Rutter, foolishly storming a recent Duke Student Government meeting and blocking access to Chapel Drive Thursday afternoon. Perhaps if the antiwar movement would present a more serious, intellectual front instead of pursuing theatrical tactics that provoke attention, but no intellectual discourse, it would be taken more seriously. (Vetter, 2003, ¶ 3)
The loud, bullying, theatrical voices of the anti-war movement did not gain a large student following, and the movement went silent, according to *The Chronicle*, as did the loud voices supporting the war, who, it appears, were not active enough to have been mentioned in the newspaper until they had disappeared.

…neither of the two voices that were being heard loudest on campus about the war—the extreme anti-war “no blood for oil” crowd, and the radically pro-war “we’ll invade anyone we damn well please” crowd—have nothing useful to offer right now. Once the major fighting stopped, they couldn’t capitalize on people’s passions, and everyone realized that their arguments were based more on emotion than reason. (Ross, 2003, ¶4)

This writer connected emotion to the moral bullying of activists. Emotion played a part in other issues at Duke during this time period, specifically the David Horowitz anti-reparations advertisement.

The main emotion raised by Horowitz’s advertisement was offense, if reports and letters in *The Chronicle* are believed. Offended students and their supporters demanded an apology, and the newspaper was cast as the enemy, an enemy without a moral sense with which to make the “right” decisions: “The protesters demanded an apology from *The Chronicle*” (Epstein, 2001 March 26, ¶1).


Those who disagreed with the protesters’ views of *The Chronicle* offered some moral bullying of their own and told protesters that emotion should not be the basis of their actions on this issue: “…feeling is not an argument, and the protesters’ offense at Horowitz’s ad does not change the validity of anything he wrote” (Epstein, 2001, ¶1). Protesters received the same treatment from Horowitz himself, who accused them of
moral bullying towards university administrators following the publication of the advertisement and the related protests.

Horowitz… accused the Black Student Alliance and DSM [Duke Student Movement] of exploiting Duke’s administration by accusing them of racism and demanding financial donations for cultural groups. (Bradley, 2002c, ¶8)

With the assistance of David Horowitz and his website, Duke’s conservative student activists came to view themselves as moral standard-bearers of the campus community. Conservative moral bullies targeted the liberal American universities and the rights and obligations thereof. Diversity and multiculturalism were topics viewed by conservative students as representative of the moral wrongs of American higher education. Students weighed in on what they saw as the legal versus moral rights of Duke as a private institution with regards to diversity and multiculturalism.

…[there is an] apparent disconnect between the standard view of conservatism and the stances taken by conservatives at Duke regards the sanctity of private institutions. Augusta [Golf Club] has the right to exclude women, the Boy Scouts have the right to exclude homosexuals, but, apparently, Duke University does not have the right to dedicate itself to diversity and multiculturalism. Duke freshman Steve Miller addresses this argument in an article posted on conservative windbag and race-baiter David Horowitz’s website frontpagemag.com. Miller argues that while Duke should feel no legal obligation to be politically diverse, it does have a moral obligation. Miller views the “indoctrination” of America’s youth by liberal leaning universities as a “moral outrage.” (Resnick, 2003, ¶7)

One way in which conservatives saw this “indoctrination” functioning was through the use of student funds to pay for speakers to come to campus. One invited speaker who raised the moral hackles of conservative student activists was Laura Whitehorn, a convicted terrorist who served time in prison for a bombing at the United States capitol.
Whitehorn was invited to campus to speak about women’s issues, but conservatives believed that as a convicted terrorist she should not be welcome on campus, regardless of the topic of her speech.

…the DCU [Duke Conservative Union] would never invite David Duke to speak on tax policy, no matter how sound his tax views might be. The reason is obvious: As an unrepentant former KKK [Ku Klux Klan] member, David Duke is a moral monster and anathema to everything for which genuine conservatives stand. … Those who champion free speech can consistently say, “While Laura Whitehorn has a legal right to speak, those who are sponsoring her thereby appear to hold a perverse set of values of which any decent human being should be ashamed and, as such, should be called to account for their true priorities.” (English, 2003b, ¶8, 10)

The above examples used conservative student activists’ own words to illustrate their playing of the role of moral bully. Descriptions of these moral bullies used language just as strong to describe the emotions these bullies inspire in others.

The letters “DCU” inspire angst, ire, aggression, pain and even hatred amongst many Duke students, who imagine a heartless student group bent on oppressing the masses and promoting their self-interests. (Ogorzalek, 2003, ¶2)

The final example of student activists in the role of moral bullies is the group Students Against Sweatshops (SAS). Although this group primarily worked as a moral conscience or compass on campus, there were times they expressed themselves in language strong enough to warrant the term “bully.” For SAS the issues of a code of conduct that outlined the treatment of apparel company workers by their corporations, and the composition of the organizations charged with inspection of factories to ensure that the code was followed, were issues of high moral importance. SAS members’
criticism of the ways in which Duke administrators took on these issues used strong images to push their moral views.

Trinity senior Benjamin Au, co-founder of Students Against Sweatshops, criticized the University for its “watered-down” new code of conduct regarding sweatshops. “The University is willing to make a compromise on an otherwise moral issue; we’re willing to allow blood, sweat and tears on the clothes we wear that represent our school.” (Kumar, 1999, ¶10)

Tico Almeida, a Trinity senior and founding member of Students Against Sweatshops, added that the Fair Labor Association’s current composition is too industry-based to be impartial. Even if that balance changes, he said, “Duke should make full public disclosure a condition for joining any code or monitoring system.” (Stroup, 1999b, ¶12)

This moral bullying of SAS extended to attempts to affect not only the university but also the apparel corporations. Whether it was a company that made Duke apparel, or a local laundry service, students used their moral power to demand more accountability from companies and more rights for individual workers: “We must hold these corporations accountable for the promises they made and the deals they signed” (Weller, 2000a, ¶14).

Although the University by policy does not pressure companies to unionize, members of SAS and UNITE HERE hope to use the recent fines to galvanize the University into action against Angelica. (Wyler, 2004, ¶4)

Here the moral and legal once again are mentioned together. “Promises made” is the moral equivalent of “deals signed” and “recent fines” (a legal measure) are viewed as a catalyst for action, moral action presumably but possibly legal as well. Those who supported workers’ rights reserved some of their most extreme bullying for those who criticized them, as this letter to the editor (in response to another letter) shows. A lack of
action on an issue was viewed as immoral by those who worked to educate their community.

Michael Simms’ letter in the Oct. 22 edition of The Chronicle is a typical example of an uninformed argument that seems so common among opponents of consumer activism. In defense of indifference and inaction, Simms seeks to educate us silly bleeding-hearts in the fundamental laws of economics. (Weller & Kulkarni, 1999, ¶ 1)

Moral bullying did not end at the edge of campus, nor did the morality it attempted to instill disappear upon graduation from Duke. Students playing this role worked to change the morals of their peers on campus in the hopes of changing the future once they graduated from Duke. By changing morals, student activists sought to change behavior and pursue actions that they believed would make the world a better place.

By being at Duke, our chances of becoming part of America’s elite have already skyrocketed. Many of us will make enough money to support at least five families. Instead of just promising our children financial stability, we should promise them a nation that values peace, equal opportunity and environmental respect over exorbitant wealth. Instead of continuing to live as we have been, treating everyone and everything as if we have the right to its use, we should step back and realize that our mind-frames need to be adjusted. (LaDue, 2003b, ¶ 8-9)

Because the moral expectations of student activists were not always met by the community around them, they took on a role that in many ways encompasses the other roles: social critic.

Social critics

The role of social critic is perhaps the role that student activists play most often, or play with the greatest satisfaction. Their criticism filled The Chronicle throughout the period under study; their targets were their peers, their professors, the university in
general, national political and social issues, and corporate America. According to one commentator, the role of social critic is a natural one for university students, not just those who become activists. This writer pointed out to the Duke community the four years that a student spends on a college campus is a unique time for each individual.

It is also…one of the few times, if not the only time in many peoples’—especially those of typical Duke students—lives when they are faced with controversial issues and problems in society. (Nichols, 1997, ¶1)

The role of social critic is one that student activists of previous generations have also played. One of the most notable examples is that of the four young men who staged the first student sit-in of the Civil Rights Movement in Greensboro, North Carolina. They serve as models for contemporary student activists. Their criticism of their peers led to an active manifestation of their criticism of segregation in society.

Like countless groups of other youths before them (and undoubtedly generations to follow), the 17-year-old men had criticized others of inaction, only to realize that they were no better themselves. (Newman, B., 2004a, ¶2)

Social criticism, as it was portrayed, encompassed large issues and entities, such as “multiculturalism,” “the media,” “sororities” or “corporate America.” Student activists saw evil and injustice within these larger issues and entities, using generalizations in their criticism. Generalization appeared to be the natural procedure for social criticism, according to a writer for The Chronicle, who researched columns published by the newspaper that commented on “Duke students” as a single entity.

…generalizations fall quite neatly into categories: about a quarter of those I recorded had to do with Effortless Perfection; over half were criticisms of how we socialize; most of the rest were blanket statements on greeks [social fraternities and sororities]. …you could say that social commentary is the art of intelligent generalizations. (Goodman, 2005, ¶ 5-6)
The data in this section show that Goodman was correct in his assessment of social criticism as published in *The Chronicle*. When campus issues were criticized social life was mentioned more often than academic life, and the issues of social life were related more often to women than to men.

Social life for women at Duke was full of generalizations, both within the sorority system and outside of it. Women viewed the events of their social lives and directed their blame and criticism of its shortcomings towards the entity “Duke” without looking for the power within themselves to change the stereotypes. The social critic pointed out these behaviors to the community and more than simply articulate the problem offered assistance for action.

Duke women get pigeonholed in a self-perpetuating stereotype, and that not all women define themselves by their looks, or in the eyes of others. But, those who don’t get a bitchy or cold or slutty or strange label from the mainstream. (Valerio, 2003b, ¶9)

Freshman Shadee Malaklou, also a columnist for *The Chronicle*, held firm to her notion that women need to be emancipated from the norms of Duke society. “Women at Duke have problems with being individuals and independent on their own,” she said. “My main agenda is to create a discourse; self-promotion is not my goal. I may seem tactless, flamboyant and without self-control, but I want people to take things into consideration.” (Webber, 2004, ¶11-12)

Numerous issues related to social life for women at Duke were summed up in the phrase “effortless perfection,” a phrase that emanated from the Women’s Initiative Report. It was hypothesized that this idea arose from a “powerful undercurrent” (Almas, 2004b, ¶8), which began flowing during Duke’s first years as a co-educational institution. At that time there were annual beauty pageants on campus. Times have changed, says the hypothesis, but Duke continues to hold beauty pageants of a different kind.
Though the campus no longer gives birth each Thanksgiving Eve to overdecorated dances, and though newly minted President Richard Brodhead will never have to coronate a “sweet and lovely” young woman, the Duke community holds its own internalized beauty pageants in library bathrooms and 9 a.m. lectures. (Almas, 2004b, ¶8)

“Effortless perfection” and its causes were topics for Duke’s social critics. As evident in the above quotation some viewed the drive in women as coming from within, that each woman made her own internalized decision to work towards obtaining perfection, or not.

“Any pressure to be perfect comes from within,” says sophomore Reginaldo Howard scholar Marvin Wickware. “Parents, friends, the advertising and entertainment industries may promote certain ideals, but it is the individual’s domain to accept or deny these ideals as being valid. No one, no matter how important they are to you, can make you think something…” (Wyler, 2003b, ¶43)

Other critics disagreed; they believed that students were conditioned to strive for perfection by the experiences of their daily lives at Duke.

Aileen Shue, executive president of the Asian Students Association, posits that Duke students are “conditioned to be high achievers” where “effortless perfection” is a tangible expectation. Varsity diver, sorority member and senior Jeanne Dewitt agrees: “I don’t think that it is completely inherent in the personality types that go to Duke… But I also think that there is something peculiar about the Duke atmosphere that drives people a little too far.” (Wyler, 2003b, ¶31)

There was criticism of the attention given to the issue of “effortless perfection” since it was not a driving force for all women on campus.
All right. I’ve had enough. I’ve put up with it for a while, I’ve whined to my friends, and now I’m writing the letter I thought I wouldn’t need to write. I’m tired of being weird because I’m normal, the Women’s Initiative telling me I should be unhappy here, that campus culture is not accepting, that I want “effortless perfection”… (White, 2004, ¶ 1)

Others who did not personally strive for “effortless perfection” nonetheless saw it as an issue that affected their friends and acquaintances. This was especially the case for student leaders within Duke’s system of sororities. Women who served on the Panhellenic Council, overseer of all campus sorority activities, saw a distinct connection between their membership and the drive to be perfect.

As a leader in the largest women’s organization on campus, [senior Anna] Burkhead felt that effortless perfection was nonetheless an important issue among sorority girls. “Women who are in sororities tend to be more concerned than the average woman with all things social,” Burkhead explained. “So, the concept of effortless perfection is one that applies to women who are concerned with image. Connecting the two is probably a fair thing to do.” (Bajpai, 2004, ¶ 9-10)

Several social critics did not believe that an official university report was needed to conclude what was as self-evident as the relationship between sororities and the drive for perfection.

In the executive summary of the [Women’s Initiative] report, a short but fascinating finding is glossed over: “Fraternities and sororities play a prominent role in enforcing social norms.” … Who would have thought that a bunch of guys living together and throwing parties to “meet” “smart, accomplished, fit, beautiful and popular” girls would create a debilitating culture of ridiculous expectations? Or better yet, who would have imagined that a bunch of girls parading around for a week in their most glamorous accessories to “find their sisters” might
unconsciously reinforce those very same expectations? Way to go, Women’s Initiative! (Scoville, 2003, ¶1-2)

Race relations on campus was another target for campus social critics. From a variety of articles, columns and letters to the editor published during the period of this study there is a suggestion that an underlying tension exists between white and black students at Duke.

African American students believed that they play a role on campus, that of a thriving united community, for the benefit of the university. This role is most prominent during a weekend called the Black Student Alliance Initiative (BSAI), when African American applicants to Duke are invited to campus to participate in a weekend of special events planned for them. For the social critics of race relations at Duke, this staged event does not present a realistic image for the applicants.

Organizing events such as BSAI that attract black people to visible places on campus while prospective students look on creates an illusion that there is a substantial black presence on this campus. In truth, black bodies are attracted to these rehearsals of black unity precisely because such unity is lacking. For one weekend, black students have the opportunity to perform “real blackness,” with all its implications of struggle, hyper-masculinity, homophobia, and lack of privilege. (Annan, Curtis, & Al-Bulushi, 2004, ¶3)

On the other side of campus race relations are white students who see groups such as BSA and their events as a university-sanctioned form of racism against them. These social critics say that the organizers of such groups and events combat racism with racism in a different form.

As a white student, I am frustrated by the reverse-racism that is allowed and accepted on campus. If I were to push for an all-white living groups, I would be labeled a racist. And if I were to try and form the Caucasian-equivalent of the
Black Student Alliance, I would probably be offered a pointed hood to lead the meetings. (Schreck, 1997, ¶ 3)

*The Chronicle* was seen as part of the problem of campus race relations, in that the publication provided an outlet for the loudest voices on campus to air their views and opinions. If any progress was to be made on this issue, it would not be made through letters and commentaries in the newspaper.

When the editorial pages of the campus newspaper are filled with sometimes- illogical and often-inflammatory rhetoric, it indicates a breakdown in campus relations. When people with radical opinions are unable to engage in dialogue, and the silent, reasonable majority refuses to speak up, we cannot move toward progress. (Kumar, 2002, ¶ 14)

The issue of race relations and *The Chronicle* climaxed with the 2001 publication of David Horowitz’s anti-reparations advertisement. That an outsider to Duke brought the issue of race relations on campus to center stage of campus life was a source of frustration for some student activists, who believed that action should be taken on a daily basis to battle the issue on campus.

Why does it take a racist advertisement by David Horowitz to rile black students to action when we encounter similar views daily in the classroom? Why does a black professor have to be denied tenure or dismissed before black professors will begin to verbalize their own issues with Duke’s racial atmosphere? Will we have to revert to slavery, the denial of human and civil rights, beatings in the streets or the incessant use of the word “nigger” to resurrect black radicalism? (Lackey, 2002, ¶ 8)

The advertisement, along with a lack of previous action to improve race relations on campus, was a disappointment for some students, who had held positive and optimistic views of the university: “‘The underlying issue was that at this University, the
PORTRAYALS OF STUDENT ACTIVISM IN PRINT MEDIA

environment...is not really a place for black students. I really thought Duke was making strides,’ said student Shalena Broaster” (kumar, 2001b, ¶ 16). Although students criticized The Chronicle and the university, they also saw the wider scope of the problem and encouraged more critical examination of race relations among their peers: “This instance should lead us to question why there is an atmosphere that might allow such an offensive statement, not only on campus, but all over America” (Haubenreich, 2001, ¶ 6).

Race relations was not the only area in which the university became an object of social critics’ words. The student body was criticized for having the “wrong” priorities: “If columns about basketball stir more outrage than labor abuses and racial inequity, then what is wrong with us?” (Margolis, 2000, ¶ 9). Those students who were stirred by issues of abuse, specifically in an instance of sexual assault on campus, criticized the administration’s handling of reporting the incident to the Duke community: “Many students...expressed anger that there was a four-day lapse between Friday night when the first assault occurred and Tuesday afternoon when the administration sent a mass e-mail to the Duke community reporting the assaults” (Darby, 2004b, ¶ 8). Social critics were not only interested in how the university related to students but also with how it related to employees. Over the period of time under study, different groups of employees were mistreated, according to student critics. One of those groups consisted of the drivers of Duke’s campus buses, who were not allowed to have beverages on the bus with them.

...Duke Transit policy states that they must leave the bus [in] order to have a drink, no matter the weather or their health condition. You get off that bus to find your University isn’t the shining beacon of progressive thought you figured or hoped it was capable of being. (Kirschenfeld, 2004, ¶ 1)

The students most critical of the university, its policies, and its administrators were the conservative student activists. Conservative students viewed the university as an institution overrun by liberals who did not educate the student body to the extent that the
conservatives believed the students should be educated; “…the administration is interested in producing a spectacle, not in any real intellectual battles” (English, 2002b, ¶ 6) wrote one columnist. The problem, as these students believed, lay at the feet of high-level administrators, such as the president, provost, vice-president for student affairs, and the dean of the faculty, all of whom were seen as promoting and encouraging their own left-wing agenda on campus.


These university leaders were stifling serious intellectual debate on campus, and were not allowing a diversity of opinions to be expressed in campus interactions.

Apparently, administrators assume that students can’t handle serious debate. Thus, diversity now means debate has to be confined to one tiny segment of the liberal side. Students can debate between left and further left, and nothing else. (Zimmerman, 2001, ¶ 13)

For conservative students the restriction of free debate was not the only problem with the liberals in charge of their education. In addition to silencing opposing viewpoints, the liberals were simply not interesting.

Conservative is what you call people who want to protect their own money or privilege, and liberal names truly free thinking individuals, even if sometimes misguided. Thus liberal education means being educated by liberals. However, we should reject this formulation not only because it is wrong, but also because the left has become boring. (English, 2003c, ¶ 6)

Criticism of the university and its administrators extended beyond the daily academic life of students to the relationship between Duke and corporate America, and thus to criticism of corporate America itself. Activists saw themselves excluded from
Duke’s discussions with Mt. Olive Pickle Company over a resolution to the university’s boycott of the company and the improvement of conditions for workers. Student activists had been the driving force for the university’s initial involvement in the boycott and were critical that administrators isolated them from discussions of the final resolution.

Unlike the March decision to join the boycott, which involved all members of the Duke community, the company and the workers, last week’s decision followed closed-door talks between [President Nan] Keohane and Mt. Olive. These business meetings, conveniently held during summer break, excluded both student and worker voices. (Kerrissey, 2002, ¶2)

This was not the first time that student activists had criticized administrators for ignoring student and worker voices. Administrators were accused of similar tactics when dealing with an on-campus labor issue involving campus bus drivers.

“Duke administrators have shown time and time again that they are not above spending massive amounts of money to subvert the efforts of conscientious students and employees,” said Erica Maharg, a sophomore and representative for Students Against Sweatshops. “This was proven when Duke hired a high-priced, union-busting firm in an attempt to squelch the bus drivers’ union campaign a few years ago.” (Lyons, 2000, ¶3)

Corporate America appeared unable to do anything “right” in the eyes of these social critics. Companies were criticized for their treatment of workers, with workplace conditions compared to jails.

“[Wal-Mart] can easily afford to pay workers decent wages,” said Kathy Barcus, an engineering freshman. “The conditions in American factories are worse than American prisons.” (Korein, 1998b, ¶4)

Even when corporations began to respond to the demands of student activists they were criticized. In response to protests by SAS Nike disclosed the locations of some of its
overseas apparel factories, a move that was intended to promote more dialogue and cooperation between the sportswear company and student activists. For the social critics, this move was incomplete, and it was not yet time to end the protests and demonstrations against the company.

Don’t be fooled—Nike’s disclosure of factory locations is “unprecedented,” but their disclosure is not complete, nor is it their first attempt to appease the public’s conscience. The cloak of secrecy is cracked, but the new openness is accompanied only by the usual empty promises of swift reform. Again, the public is on the verge of being lulled into complacency by these promises. (Hummel, & two others, 1999, ¶1)

Corporate America was not the only off campus target for the social criticism of student activists. As discussed in other sections, national and international politics were issues of concern, and activists did not abandon any opportunity to have their critiques in print. Individual states’ actions to reverse policies such as affirmative action were attacked by activists who believed that the policy promoted justice for all. Student activists spoke out on such issues even when the state was California, on the other side of the country from Duke University.

Affirmative action is under attack by California’s Proposition 209, deceptively labeled the California Civil Rights Initiative. Opponents to affirmative action would like you to think of its banishment as a movement toward justice for civil rights. In framing it as a policy that takes positions away from “deserving candidates,” or reverse discrimination, they have successfully publicized the “negative” aspects with the intention of glossing over the very conditions that created a need for the policy in the first place. Despite possible flaws in affirmative action as it is implemented today, a need to correct historic vestiges
and the present-day effects of discrimination still permeate our society. (Stewart, 1998, ¶ 2)

Activists also saw injustice to individuals and groups in the actions of the President of the United States, his administration, and his political party. One affected group, called the “moral minority” consisted of those citizens who supported then-candidate George W. Bush believing that he would be the champion of their moral, Christian values. Not so, say the social critics on campus: this was merely politics as usual and similar political injustices have affected certain groups within society in the past.

It is also quite clear from the direction of the agenda—not the rhetoric—that this White House is doing the same thing to the moral minority that Democrats have learned to do to blacks and gays—taken their votes and then tried to push their sub-platforms only in private discussions. (Barna, 2002, ¶ 14)

The final target of social criticism by student activists during this time period was the media. This included The Chronicle. With the publication of David Horowitz’s anti-reparations advertisement, the campus newspaper became the largest target for critics—a representation of poor business practice, classism (giving greater voice to those with the resources to pay for it), and racism.

Anyone unfortunate enough to fumble upon the second-to-last page of the March 19 issue of The Chronicle was in for a shocking and disconcerting glimpse of what an apparently inappropriate advertising policy can produce. (Smith, D., 2001, ¶ 1)

By allowing Horowitz to place full-size advertisements, The Chronicle sends the message that any person with enough money can buy their own editorial space, columns, articles and press coverage. (Yousef, Vyas, & eight others, 2001, ¶ 4)

In choosing to run Horowitz’s advertisement without any accompanying editorial explaining the basis for its decision or any stories placing his anti-reparations
campaign in historical context, *The Chronicle* implicated itself in a historical legacy of journalistic racism. (Hazirjian, 2002, ¶ 3)

The newspaper was criticized in a more general sense as not representing the “real” issues—those that lay at the heart of student activists’ movements. At the same time, this criticism took a jibe at the student body, as critics questioned whether or not the student body as a whole cared about, or even had awareness of, these issues.

However, if students are aware, *The Chronicle* doesn’t seem to represent what students are thinking about. Or maybe it does represent what we’re thinking about. Many of us know about what kind of wood can or can’t be thrown into bonfires [lit in celebration of men’s basketball victories] (Feb. 26) and that Mean Gene’s [a restaurant] is leaving the Bryan [Student] Center (Mar. 5). These are the issues students are aware of, because in *The Chronicle*, this is what qualifies as “front page news.” (Brownfield & Holt, 1999, ¶ 2)

When there were “real” issues on campus, however, the media continued to be a target for criticism. After the release of the Women’s Initiative report, off-campus media quickly picked up the story of its results, but not all of the results, and not in an informative and useful manner.

In discussing the implications of what “effortless perfection” means, junior university scholar Jessica Ward conveys frustration over how local and national media sensationalized the Women’s Initiative results, emphasizing “effortless perfection” over other similarly important issues. “One major concern I have about the Women’s Initiative [is] how it was publicized,” she says. Ward points out that while there were a number of key issues elucidated in the report about graduate students, faculty, staff and employees, “what the media picked up on was the comments about undergraduate women.” (Wyler, 2003b, ¶ 12)
Whether it is a sensationalized phrase or a dramatic visual image, the national media did not always serve student activists in promoting their message. This was the case for the television media in 1999 during the demonstrations in Seattle, Washington protesting the meeting of the World Trade Organization.

“Television is based on visual images, and I guess police shooting rubber bullets at protesters and protesters breaking windows was much more visual than a mere 50,000 people downtown who decide to do a peaceful sit-down,” said Trinity sophomore Jonathan Harris, who...attended the protests. (Stroup, 1999n, ¶ 11)

By publishing these statements critical of the national media for only giving voice to a minority of the issues or activists, The Chronicle let its readers hear the voice of the activist majority. Although, as seen, it was questionable if the readers were any more interested in the bigger picture than patrons of national print and television reports.

_Skeptics_

Because student activists questioned and challenged campus administrators, corporate entities and the U.S. government, it should come as no surprise that they often played the role of skeptic when it came to the outcomes of their actions. Skeptics were wary when they won a victory over their opponents, and questioned if they made a difference, or if the outcome was that which they had demanded. Students Against Sweatshops was a good example of activists playing this role, when the issue was disclosure of the overseas locations of apparel factories. The students wanted the locations disclosed in order to facilitate the monitoring of work conditions in those locations by independent organizations. After students appeared to win the argument in favor of disclosure, companies did disclose factory locations, to an extent.

SAS leaders are also skeptical that all the companies are being totally honest with Duke. “Small licensees might list 90 to 100 factories, while Champion or Russell
might list 10,” [SAS member Snehal] Patel said, speaking hypothetically. “So it’s pretty clear they aren’t disclosing everything.” (Stroup, 2000a, ¶11)

Student activists’ skepticism arose from their distrust of the apparel companies to do the “right” thing. Instead they saw that the companies disclosed the minimum amount of information possible, and that the factory locations disclosed were not the ones believed to be the worst offenders.

…Sara Jewett, an organizer for Duke’s Students Against Sweatshops, said she was concerned because the companies are volunteering and choosing which of their factories can be monitored. (Stroup, 1999k, ¶9)

On campus student activists displayed similar levels of skepticism towards the university administration. In relation to issues such as the creation of a new academic program at the behest of students (Asian American Studies) and the status and role of women at Duke, activists did not expect victory, nor did they accept apparent victories for their cause. The students who proposed the Asian American Studies program wanted and hoped for a positive response from university administrators, but when asked about the status of the proposal the students’ response did not exhibit full confidence in administrators’ academic views of the university.

[Christina] Hsu said she expected a response April 24. “We’ll see if the administration is really committed to improving the University academically,” she said. (Herriott, 2002a, ¶8)

Skeptics witnessed administrators’ use of words without supporting actions, and when faced with data from administrators, such as the Women’s Initiative report, had no expectations that the “right” outcomes would be discussed.

I originally read the Women’s Initiative report with a wary eye, expecting the usual rhetoric and empty recommendations. (Valerio, 2003a, ¶2)
Wariness and concern were emotions displayed by student activists in the role of Skeptic, while maintaining the underlying hope that they could continue sway their opponents to their side of the issue.

Student activists were also skeptics of themselves and how others viewed them. In 1998 *Mother Jones* magazine ranked Duke number one in their annual poll of activist campuses. This was a ranking that surprised many members of the Duke community, not the least of whom were the activists themselves.

*Mother Jones* magazine may have recently named the University the top activist school in the nation, but administrators, campus leaders and even the activists themselves doubt the ranking’s validity. (Sostek, 1998a, ¶1)

Editors at *The Chronicle* expressed their skepticism about the ranking as well, and listed the issues they saw as driving activism on campus, which were not issues of national or international importance, in an editorial entitled “We’re number one?”

Does the University deserve such a distinction? Yes—if activism can be measured by enthusiasm for beer on points, bonfires, Chinese food, convenient parking spaces, shuttles to the mall, less-crowded weight rooms and opposition to voicemail. If, however, you define activism as widespread student involvement in political issues, the University has a long way to go. (We’re number one?, 1998, ¶3)

*Champions of the underdog*

In the role of champion of the underdog, student activists spoke and acted on behalf of not only themselves but also of other groups. These other groups were populations or communities that were viewed as not having enough power in society to speak for themselves, or a population existing outside of what was considered “mainstream society.” As their champions student activists worked to bring the concerns and issues of these groups to the attention of the “mainstream society” where the
concerns and issues could be addressed and changes and improvements could be made. These voiceless communities may be on campus or off, and the issues may involve gender, race, class, or political affiliation. Student activists who played the role of champion of the underdog listened to these groups and shared what they learned with the rest of the Duke community and the world beyond.

Only through a serious and concerted effort at self-evaluation, only through listening—really listening—to the subordinated voices in our culture can we hope to create any sort of effective change. So far, that has not happened. Women who write to *The Chronicle* saying that the sexual assault on East Campus is indicative of a much deeper problem are chided by men who say, in effect, “Things aren’t so bad.” Blacks who “complain” of racism are told by whites that racism is on the decline, “Things are getting better” or “Blacks are racist too.” (Weller, 2002, ¶22)

Through statements such as this, student activists openly challenged both their peers and the rest of the university to become champions themselves, and not only for their peers but also for university employees, an effort which is appreciated and supported by that segment of the Duke community: “‘A lot of the segments of the staff have no voice on campus,’ said Paula Cook, assistant to the chair of the English department. ‘Students can help give that voice’” (Garinger, 2002a, ¶10).

Student activists involved in gender issues, whether they call themselves feminists or not, used the voice of this role often, and, when necessary, loudly, according to accounts in *The Chronicle*. In an editorial entitled “Defining Feminism” (Mitchell, 2004) readers learned that a large piece of the activism in which these students engaged involved serving as a voice for silent women, at home and around the world.

Feminism is about giving voice and power to all women, especially to those who are not permitted to whisper or stand. … Feminism cries for the 25 percent of U.S. women who are domestically abused, and it bleeds for the 100 million
African girls who are the victims of female genital mutilation. It demands that we fight against the killing of Chinese girls and the kidnapping of young women in India. (¶6-7)

Feminism, and therefore feminist activism, advocated “voice and power.” The voice of feminist activism expressed itself through “cries” and “demands.” It was also a voice that read and quoted religious texts when the need arose, in order to give voice to those whose voices were silenced by abuse and oppression, by family or by spiritual and political leaders.

As the sounds of a Tracy Chapman CD competed with music emanating from the Hideaway 24 people stood in a circle on the Bryan Center walkway, reading case studies of women and children who have been victims of domestic violence and holding candles in a vigil to remember survivors. (Levy, 1998, ¶1)

…the reason why I feel confident in standing against those who misuse Islam to oppress women is because I apply the Quranic verse: “O you who believe! Stand out firmly for justice, as witnesses to God, even as against yourselves, or your parents, or your kin, and whether it be (against) rich or poor: For God can best protect both. Follow not the lusts (of you hearts), lest you swerve, and if you distort (justice) or decline to do justice, verily God is well-acquainted with all that you do” (4:135). (Fadel, 2003, ¶2)

Occasionally the voice of feminist activism was required to scream in order to champion the voiceless. A screaming voice, that represented the voices of women who had been sexually assaulted, made those who heard it take notice and was meant to encourage the voiceless to join in the scream, or at the very least to use their voices.

“These are the screams of women who are being sexually assaulted,” [student organizer Adrianna] Colaianni shouted to the crowd, tears streaming down her face. “These are the screams of anger at the pervasiveness of rape and violence
towards women at Duke. These are screams you do not hear often enough.”

Bearing white arm bands and waving signs, the protesters screamed for five minutes as passers-by stopped to stare and curious students peered out classroom windows. (Darby, 2004b, ¶3)

The role of champion of the underdog did not involve just speaking and acting on behalf of the voiceless and powerless. For some student activists, such as those who created “Comfort Day,” this role involved empowering women to find their own voices, so they would be able to act and speak on behalf of themselves rather than just react to others.

The problem of effortless perfection occurs when a person focuses on another’s expectations instead of his or her own. We have chosen the motto “Me First” to emphasize that students need to shift their focus away from external expectations and toward their own internal motivations. (Carmichael & two others, 2003, ¶2)

Another group on campus championed during this time period was the campus political conservatives. “There certainly is discrimination against Republican faculty on campuses across America” (Armaleo, 2004, ¶1) stated one letter to the editor, decrying the powerlessness of those on the political right in U.S. higher education. Because of this lack of voice, wrote the conservatives’ champions, they were victims of harassment and intimidation at the hands of the liberals whose control of American institutions of higher education negatively affected the education that students were receiving.

The liberals’ decades-long dominance of American universities has been maintained not through passionate intellectual debates but through harassment and intimidation of opponents. While these tactics may often take the form of subtle, institutionalized pressure, they are no less powerful. The result is a disservice to every student, no matter what his or her political affiliations. (Zimmerman, 2002a, ¶14)
This “subtle, institutionalized pressure” caused conservatives on campus to keep silent in fear of the power they believe their professors to have over them.

Jeff Raileanu seems a little on edge himself. Sure, the [Duke Conservative Union] president is humble and not a rabble-rouser on the surface by any means, but his slight voice echoes what some of his peers have mentioned in passing—that being afraid in class stems from being afraid about their grades. For all the freedom many say they exploit and power they exert on campus as the new-wave Woodstockers, the armies of the right feel oppressed and withstand much less when they’re just so, like, freaked out. “We’re certainly not an oppressed group on campus or anything like that,” Raileanu boasts, and then, on the inside, “but we’re a minority, and sometimes it can be difficult to get your message across.” (Sullivan, 2004b, ¶15)

For this minority group, supporters existed, along with methods with which to communicate their message. Publications such as The Duke Review, while not identified outright as a conservative publication but as an ideological one, existed “since…1989… to speak for a range of opinions held by a large portion of students and citizens underrepresented by the media” (Reviewing the review, 1999, ¶1). The Duke Conservative Union (DCU) also advocated on behalf of its members, who individually expressed fear, as the quotation above suggests. As an organization the DCU sought a political balance on campus, rather than the overwhelming left-leaning ideology that they saw as the status quo. As evidence of this ideology the organization paid for a full-page advertisement in The Chronicle and revealed the voter registration records of faculty and deans within a number of Duke’s humanities departments.

[DCU executive director Madison] Kitchens noted that the DCU had not intended to advocate an absolute balance between Republicans and Democrats in the faculty. Rather, he said, the group wants to be sure that both sides of political
argument are given heed in classes that deal with political matters. (Yee, 2004a, ¶ 13)

This issue was not limited to Duke during this time, but became a national issue supported by David Horowitz who advocated a student academic bill of rights to be adopted by universities across the country. This led to the creation of the student organization Students for Academic Freedom, which would monitor the political statements made by faculty members in their classes. The group also investigated current policies on campus related to freedom of speech and related rights. What they found at Duke appeared to confirm the need to champion the underdogs of the political right within the student body.

“We need a specific, clear, unquestioning policy that protects students’ rights in the classroom and prevents professors from abusing their power,” [Students for Academic Freedom president Stephen] Miller said. “I’ve reviewed our policies, and by and large they respect the rights of professors but not of students.” (Yess, 2004, ¶ 5)

David Horowitz’s involvement with the cause of Academic Freedom on campus followed his earlier appearance on the stage of Duke’s campus with his advertisement against reparations for slavery—which also an issue of freedom of speech. Although the demonstrations against this advertisement generally focused on racial issues, as well as championing and giving voice to African-Americans, there were those who spoke out against Horowitz and The Chronicle for socioeconomic reasons, championing those who did not have the financial resources to do what Horowitz had done—spend close to $800 for a full-page advertisement to publicize his views and beliefs. In this instance, the underdogs were members of underprivileged groups, presumably not limited to African-Americans, who were voiceless and powerless due to their lack of economic ability to be heard. “The Chronicle should not accept financial support from any association or
individual who may inhibit the voice of underprivileged groups” (Miller, 2001, ¶ 2) wrote one student activist in a letter to the editor. Others stated: “The people with money and power can afford to pay for such offensive ads; and the people who cannot afford to rebut their ads with ads of their own are left by the wayside, voiceless” (Yousef, Vyas, & eight others, 2001, ¶ 4).

The world’s laborers were one “underprivileged” and “voiceless” population that was of concern to student activists during this time period. These laborers worked both on the Duke campus and in the surrounding community of Durham, and included employees of the company Angelica, to which Duke University Medical System was to outsource linen services.

The outsourcing move, finalized last month, prompted Students Against Sweatshops—with the support of representatives from the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees—to lobby the administration with their concerns about the [Angelica] corporation’s alleged history of hazardous labor conditions and union-busting tactics. (Hauptman, 2004c, ¶ 2)

...said senior Allison Brim, a member of Duke’s Student Employee Relations Committee. “I hope that the workers and the rest of the community will use this motion to put pressure on Duke. Durham County doesn’t condone treating workers badly, and neither should Duke.” (Ke, 2004, ¶ 9)

Through their support of these workers, student activists advocated the unionization of employees within the corporation as a major issue: “‘Duke students don’t organize unions,’...[student Jessica] Rutter said. ‘Students of course will be in solidarity with that union drive’” (Hauptman, 2004d, ¶ 13). The phrase “of course” here indicates that these students would not think of turning away from a cause such as the rights of workers.

Whether the workers were cleaning linens in the city of Durham or picking cucumbers in other parts of the state of North Carolina, student activists willingly gave
voice to the injustice they saw in these workers’ lives and sought to bring all other members of the university community to their way of thinking.

A group of students, affiliated with the North Carolina Student Rural Health Coalition, want the University to stop selling and serving Mt. Olive pickles and for everyone at the University community [sic.] to support the boycott. ... The labor practices of the Mt. Olive Pickle Company disregard equity, safety and the law (Margolis, 1999b, ¶3-4).

Student activists protested the treatment of Mt. Olive pickle workers; they “argued that the company’s workers needed more say in labor agreements” (Nimocks, 2003, ¶1). The emphasis in this area of protest for the student champions was “that workers are given a voice with which to make their own changes” (Nimocks, 2003, ¶13). Until the workers obtained that voice, these students would put themselves in the role of the workers’ voices and endeavor to force the Mt. Olive Pickle Company to give rights to the cucumber pickers who provided the raw materials for the company’s products.

We are asking that Mt. Olive advocate collective-bargaining agreements between migrant workers and cucumber growers. This is a way to help ensure that the welfare of laborers is protected against the abuses of private capital (Weller & Kulkarni, 1999, ¶3).

Along with speaking for workers, student activists spoke out for the rights of identity groups, such as Latinos. With this particular cultural group there was overlap between championing workers and members of a particular cultural minority. Because many of the migrant workers in North Carolina were Latinos, the voices of the labor rights activists who belonged to Students Against Sweatshops were joined by the voices of a campus Latino organization, who were also lending their voices to speak for their culture in general.
Mi Gente, the Latino student organization, recently called on the University to renew a United Farm Workers boycott of grapes picked by migrant workers. The group also asked campus greeks [fraternity and sorority members] to cancel a “South of the Border” party because they said it perpetuated negative stereotypes of Latinos (David, 1994, ¶13).

Identity and workers also came together in discussions on campus to boycott the annual student travel to Myrtle Beach, South Carolina because of the state’s flying of a Confederate flag. To many people the flag represented racial oppression of African slaves, but the tourism boycott went beyond race and culture to the workers of South Carolina.

“I think that the boycott could be damaging to the people we are trying to help in South Carolina,” said Trinity senior Robert Shibley. “We must recognize that a boycott isn’t going to affect the people who are going to go to the governments and fight. The people who it is going to affect are the housekeepers, maids and others who could lose their jobs because of the boycott.” (Singhal, 2000, ¶9)

This was an activist’s conundrum: support the boycott because of the racist issue and hurt, rather than help, many of the underdogs that one activists seek to champion.

In connecting labor and identity student activists began to champion individuals, along with groups, and not just in one state but worldwide. They asked their peers to think about each laborer and the relationship between the lives of laborers and students: “every time we buy something, we should recognize our role in this chain and think about who sewed our buttons, and what their life is like. And we should do something” (Malhotra, 1996, ¶7). The underdogs had faces and their student champions sought to join the faces with the voices in their fight against injustice: “These injustices [sweatshop labor conditions] fall heavily on the backs of women and children in developing countries” (Almeida & Au, 1997, ¶1).
In order to be authentic champions of the underdog, the student activists needed to identify an enemy. This enemy was corporate America. This enemy took many forms. One was Mount Olive Pickle Company which operated in relatively close proximity to Duke University. Others were multi-national corporations such as Nike and KFC (Kentucky Fried Chicken). These corporations were enemies of the underdog (and by extension the student activists) in their own right, as well as symbols of all corporate wrong-doing everywhere in the world: “the Nike head office...haven’t acknowledged the violations of environment and safety laws—the violation of laws for workers to organize independently” (Kumar, 2001a, ¶ 3).

Many of the protesters said they were not only protesting KFC but workplace discrimination in general. “I definitely think it’s a problem,” said Trinity freshman Jessica Foster. “[Sexual preference] shouldn’t be something that is brought into the workplace because it just isn’t an issue in the workplace” (Arnold, 1995, ¶ 20).

In the situation above a local franchise of a multinational corporation was picketed in protest of the treatment of a homosexual employee at another local franchise in another state. This protest was used to bring all of the larger issues of labor, identity, and rights back to the local stage.

Protests against the policies of corporate America were not just locally focused, however. Nike’s empire was much larger than the apparel produced for Duke University; its human connection stretched across the globe to Asia, and that human factor connected to the United States in a manner to which student activists could relate.

How much weaker the domestic Nike demonstration would be were we to lose a sense of human connection to the workers in Indonesia. How much more ready we would be to roll back the most profound advances of the Civil Rights
Movement were we to forfeit our sense of human connection to American racism. (Dunkley, 2001, ¶ 7)

Activists’ focus on the alleged evils of corporate America extended to U.S. involvement in the World Trade Organization (WTO), the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank along with the means and philosophies used by those bodies to create international economic policy.

…we must demand the broadening of the WTO’s focus from the mere liberalization of trade to the creation of a just world trade system. Without such a change in priorities, it will remain an institution that places trade above justice and corporate profit above workers’ rights. (Patel, S., 1999, ¶ 8)

Protest against these bodies went beyond the rights of workers around the world to the state of the nations in which those workers lived. Protesters spoke for the populations of the world’s less powerful nations; they “contended that the IMF’s and World Bank’s policies have hurt the developing countries they are designed to help” (Pessin, 2000b, ¶ 2).

Concern for the underdogs of the world led student activists to take up the causes of economic and political oppression through their travels to other countries in the name of justice as well as through their sponsorship of events on campus that brought views of those countries to Duke. Traveling to apparel factories in South America gave students the opportunity to serve as “watchdogs” (Levy, 2000c, ¶ 13) and to “interview workers on their own time, learn about their working conditions and bring that information back to the United States” (Almeida, 1998a, ¶ 5). On campus students exhibited support and respect for the oppressed people of Tibet through the viewing of a film.

“Tibetans are unusual in the arena of oppressed peoples,” says [president of Students for a Free Tibet Jeff] Dennler, … “Led by the Dalai Lama, they met oppression with compassion.” (Gianino, 2003, ¶ 8)
Through a candlelight vigil student activists demonstrated “shock, anger and concern regarding the conflict in Sudan” (Newman, L., 2004, ¶1) and by sponsoring a visit to and speech on campus by a former Sudanese slave connected the political and the economic once again.

The students…explained that the University has $560,000 indirectly invested in PetroChina, an oil company that, through its drilling in Sudan, financially supports the ongoing Sudanese civil war and, therefore, students say, slavery. As part of an effort to address slavery, the organizers are calling for both individual students and the University to examine what their invested money is supporting and, if necessary, divest from certain corporations. (Rohrs, 2003c, ¶3)

Divestment was an issue not only for student activists concerned with Sudan, but also for those concerned with Israel and the Middle East. A student leader who took part in efforts to convince the university to divest from Israel summed up activists’ beliefs succinctly when he wrote “No Duke money should help fund the death, destruction and suffering of stateless people” (Al-Bulushi, 2003, ¶10).

This lending of voice to labor and minority groups within the United States and abroad was not a unique phenomenon within contemporary Duke University student activist culture. A student vigil for black rights in the wake of the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr., in April 1968, supported members of the local campus community as well as the ideal of civil rights in general.

If the reaction of Duke’s black students is mostly favorable to the vigil, the attitude of the workers is wholly favorable. Oliver Harvey and James McNeill were lavish in their praise of the students. The black workers were the most directly affected by the vigil, for it was they who were on strike and faced loss of pay. The vigil has given them a new sense of dignity... (Appleborne, 1998, ¶16).
The role of champion of the underdog also accompanied a humorous view of the underdog groups and their goals, such as reflected in a column speaking out against the Republican party’s efforts to ban homosexual marriage: “Why deny homosexual couples the joys of prenups [prenuptual agreements] and divorce lawyers, aging spouses and contracted fidelity?” (Valerio, 2004, ¶5). Nor is the role of champion one that student activists envisioned themselves abandoning after graduation. While her classmates pursued careers in banking, law, and medicine, one student activist stated her desire to continue as an activist: “‘I’d like to be working with community members to identify goals and clarify strategies to improve their quality of life...I want to know people have been positively impacted by my life and that I haven’t let my fear...limit my options’” (Stanford, 1999, ¶6, 22).

**Social support network**

Through certain actions student activists played the role of social support network for a particular part of the campus community, with other activists on campus, or as part of a larger activist community that extended beyond one university. On campus student activists showed themselves to be a support network for women, particularly in the wake of the Women’s Initiative report as the phrase “effortless perfection” became a standard part of the campus vocabulary as well as the title of an anonymous column in *The Chronicle* that detailed one student’s experiences with eating disorders and depression—two of the symptoms of the drive for “effortless perfection.” Individuals and student groups wrote to *The Chronicle* and offered themselves as a social support network to any undergraduate woman who needed it. The support was inspirational, as well as practical, informal as well as formal.

It pains me more than I can say to know that there is not just one anonymous writer, but hundreds of college women here at Duke who engage every day in the quiet hell that is an eating disorder. It is about as dark and hopeless a place as
anyone can imagine. But, I want to say that no matter where you are, I guarantee that there is a happier, more fulfilling life waiting for you on the other side. (O’Brien, 2003, ¶ 2)

As health peer educators working to combat societal “ideals” of beauty and Duke’s ideal of “effortless perfection,” we, the ESTEEM [Educating Students to Eliminate Eating Misconceptions] peer educators, were of course troubled and concerned by the anonymous editorial that appeared Oct. 17. We all hope that the young woman is making her first steps towards getting help, and we encourage her to reach out to the various resources on campus, including our group of student volunteers. (Anderson, 2003, ¶ 1)

Campus administrators praised the peer support network illustrated by these kinds of letters and stepped up to become part of the campus support network themselves.

…[Counseling and Psychological Services director James] Clack said, alluding to the anonymous column. “We’ve had seven phone calls by students calling to say that they know the identity of the anonymous author and all seven people they identified were different. This at least showed that there are a number of people here at Duke dealing with the same issues of achieving perfection.” (Wyler, 2003a, ¶ 5)

*The Chronicle* editors took it upon themselves to write in support of the development of a larger support network, both by students and campus officials. This issue demanded a variety of actions, and the role of social support network was a perfect fit.

Students: if upon reading the column, you thought that either yourself or someone you know could have written it, it is essential to understand that making that realization is the first crucial step and then talking about it is the next. Friday’s column was one student’s way to identify and then talk about her problems. Sometime today or tomorrow, find a friend who you care or may be concerned
about or who you think cares and may be concerned about you and simply talk with him or her about a possible eating disorder, a bout with depression or anything else, small or large, on your mind. And like your professors, don’t take “I’m fine” or “I’m just really stressed right now because of midterms/the job search/this weekend’s semiformal/fill in the blank” as a good enough excuse.

(Staff editorial: Opening dialogue, 2003, ¶9)

Female students will not benefit from another “fish bowl” discussion about eating disorders, for example. What is needed is leadership and mentorship programs that give young women the tools and support needed to face these dilemmas. As stated in the report, the Office of Student Affairs should take a primary role in shaping future policies, and be a driving force for continued research in this area.

(Staff editorial: Women’s initiative a positive step, 2003, ¶3)

This support network was not only visible to students on campus but also a determining factor for prospective students to decide to attend Duke. Pascale Thomas, president of the Black Student Alliance in 2004, recounted to The Chronicle that it was the student activists protesting the David Horowitz anti-reparations advertisement that showed her the power of activism as a social support network and encouraged her to attend Duke and become involved.

“I got to come in when the black students gathered together to protest The Chronicle’s publication of the David Horowitz ad,” she said referring to a controversial advertisement published in 2001, that argued against slavery reparations. “I had always gone to predominantly white private schools, and I really was looking for a black community within a larger community. I saw them unite and I said, “This is the place I could really have that.”” (Rotberg, 2004a, ¶10)
Student activists at Duke were a social support network for each other. “[A] small community of people that I really respect…” (Nicholson, 2003, ¶ 32) one active student was quoted as saying, but perhaps a grander interpretation of the role was that of social support network for their peers at other institutions. For members of Students Against Sweatshops this role was adopted with ease. During the 1999 sit-in, the first to be held by students in the United States over this issue, leaders reached out from within the occupied administrative offices to their peers nationwide.

Not long after a working phone was located, it began to ring off the hook. Pacing back and forth, [SAS co-founder Tico] Almeida spent much of the evening discussing plans for supporting demonstrations at other schools and describing the scene to the media and various human rights organizations. (Stroup, 1999c, ¶ 12)

When student activists at other universities began to hold their own sit-ins, Duke SAS members showed their support, even as they continued to hold rallies on campus in support of further improvements in factory conditions and a more transparent relationship between the university and apparel companies.

Trinity sophomore Snehal Patel, an SAS member, helped lead the rally, but was engaged in another form of protest: a 48-hour hunger strike to show his support for the student sit-in at the University of Pennsylvania. “I could really use some water,” he said. (Stroup, 2000b, ¶ 25)

Even when it came to rankings by national media student activists were supportive of their peers. In 1998 Mother Jones magazine had ranked Duke number one on its top ten list of activist colleges and universities, based on SAS’s activities. The following year, The Chronicle reported that Duke had “slipped” in the rankings, an indication of some form of failure. SAS members did not see the new rankings as negative for them, but rather viewed themselves as part of the national social support network for all campus anti-sweatshop organizations.
Sara Jewett, an organizer of SAS, said she did not mind that her group was left off the list. “It’s not surprising to me, because Duke opened the way for other universities to go farther than we have,” said the Trinity senior. “In all honesty, the student movement is so linked, we all play into each other.” (Pessin, 1999a, ¶ 8)

Symbol makers

Much of what student activists did was symbolic. They were voices for others; they represented justice in the face of injustice; and they stood against their opponents as “the good guys.” In these ways they played the role of Symbol Maker, and used words, actions, clothing, and objects as symbols for the wrongs they wanted to see righted in the world. Once introduced into the community such symbols usually were able to stand on their own, but there were cases when the symbol makers underestimated the power of their creation and the symbol did not spread its intended message.

Words as symbols can be single words (feminist, dialogue); they can be phrases (effortless perfection); they can be strung together to make a story; or they can just be a voiced feeling such as a scream. Student activists at Duke used, or suggested the use of, all of these. Single words were not new to student activism during the period under study, and some words, such as “feminist” created an image that was not new to this time period. Some activists, however, did not view the traditional image as the symbol of “feminist” with which they wanted to be associated. Therefore, they took the word and redefined it, associated it with a different type of symbolism that they hoped would appeal more broadly and bring more supporters to their cause.

“Unfortunately,” [sophomore Jill Hopman] continued, “I think that the word ‘feminist’ does have a negative connotation. I think so many girls are feminists and they either aren’t aware of it or are afraid to say it. We are going to change that. We are not bra-burning, man-hating women. We just want to do great things
for women at Duke University. And if we do come across opposition, we will deal
with it accordingly.” (Gregory, 2002, ¶ 14)

With this description, activists attempted to change the symbol associated with the word
“feminist” from “a bra-burning, man-hating woman” to “someone who does great things
for women.” Words have indeed changed over time, as have their uses. To some student
activists these changes in the use of words created a symbol that became prevalent, and
action was required against its use as a symbol.

This is the story of a word. It is a word for which we can thank the Greeks,
although they would surely be shocked if they saw how it was being misused
today. Indeed, this word has been so badly raped and abused lately that feminists
everywhere should be running to its aid. They should be demanding a dialogue
about the abuses of language. And there it is: dialogue. (Zimmerman, 2002a, ¶ 1-
2)

Words as symbols had their own life, as if they were characters in the drama of student
activism. “Dialogue” was viewed as such a word, as was the two-word phrase “effortless
perfection,” which became the symbol of those aspects of Duke life that contributed to
the university’s alleged unhealthy atmosphere for undergraduate women. Although this
phrase became associated with the Women’s Initiative report as a whole, not just the
section on undergraduates that it actually represented, it was seen as a symbol that
evoked discussion—or dialogue—on campus.

Women’s Center Director Donna Lisker, another integral member of the Women’s
Initiative also said the phrase has taken on a life of its own and has overshadowed
other findings of the Women’s Initiative. She is convinced, however, that the
problems needed to be brought out in the open and the anonymous column
prompted the overwhelming response from Duke students. “Had that [column]
Lisker said. (Bajpai, 2004, ¶ 4-5)

According to critics, words could also be put together to create a story that would become a symbol of the student activist who told the story. This was especially the case when the issue pertained to cultural groups or multiculturalism. There was an identified style in which these words needed to be woven to create a powerful symbol, and that style is related specifically to Duke University.

… you must, absolutely must, come up with a story. And if you can word it in the style of a Duke Press-rejected ethnic studies manuscript, or with the timid urgency of the Lit[erature] Program grad student whose UWC [University Writing Course] course taught you to think this way in the first place, all the better. (Tinari, 2001, ¶ 4)

From time to time the symbol makers used their voices to create symbols without the use of words, but merely with sound. This was the case when activists organized a “scream-in” protest, to speak out (or scream out) against sexual violence towards women. The vocalization of a scream became the symbol in this protest.

Freshman Alessandra Colaianni spearheaded today’s “scream-in” protest, scheduled to take place on the Chapel steps at 2:15 p.m., in the hopes of spurring community members to action before memory of the recent assaults fades away. “The idea behind the scream-in is to make this problem on campus audible as well as visible—[it’s] symbolic of the screams you don’t hear of women who are sexually assaulted on campus,” Colaianni said. (Hauptman, 2004b, ¶ 2-3)

Occasionally the words chosen did not create the symbol desired by the symbol makers. The creation of a symbol could backfire if the creator did not examine the full context of the words chosen. A Pro-Life/Anti-Abortion organization at Duke created an advertisement in protest of supporters of a woman’s right to choose that used the words
of Susan B. Anthony, the activist who was instrumental in obtaining voting rights for American women. In a letter to the editor the makers of this symbol were rebuked for their misuse of the words chosen in support of their position.

The ad tried to discredit feminist pro-choice positions by citing the historic women’s suffragist Susan B. Anthony. Alongside a profile of Anthony, the ad read: “Another Anti-Choice Fanatic: ‘Sweeter even than to have had the joy of caring for children of my own has it been to me to help bring about a better state of things for mothers generally, so their unborn little ones could not be willed away from them.’—Susan B. Anthony.” …Representing Anthony’s activism and writing in this manner is inaccurate and ahistorical. According to Ann Gordon, historian at Rutgers University and editor of Papers of [Elizabeth Cady] Stanton and Anthony, the phrase “willed away from them” is a precise reference to changing the legal guardianship rights of mothers. (Johnson, Reitz, & Franklin, 2001, ¶2, 4)

When words failed to convey a message, or when they were not enough to make a point, student activists used actions as symbols. Activists were called upon to use their actions to symbolize the change they intended to affect in the world, and their personal actions were an integral part of their activism, no matter what the issue at hand.

Feminist activism is ultimately about securing a fundamental change in individual and social attitudes and actions—this can only be accomplished when individuals who claim to be activists exemplify, through their personal actions, the kinds of changes they publicly speak and write about. (Haider, 1995, ¶4)

These calls to action indicated that each action in and of itself was a symbol, and that such symbols historically had inspired others to initiate their own actions. The students who staged the sit-in that inspired student participation in the Civil Rights Movement
were themselves symbols of this inspiration, through their simple, local actions in Greensboro, North Carolina.

So stage sit-ins demanding the rights of workers in Mexico, in China, at Duke. Get on national television at the Duke [men’s basketball] game. Protest the war. I know we have a slim chance of sparking any great social movements. But then again, the Greensboro Four could not have known their one courageous action would inspire us to try. (Newman, B., 2004a, ¶13)

It was this belief that led Students Against Sweatshops to stage a sit-in in the university’s administrative offices (including that of the president) in order to spark changes in a code of conduct they saw as unfair to the workers it was intended to protect. This action was called “a 31-hour sit-in that would set the standard for anti-sweatshop activism on college campuses” (Stroup, 2000a February 15, ¶1). This sit-in and the resulting compromise on language in the code that was reached between students and administrators did indeed become a symbol, as *The Chronicle* reported in an article about a similar sit-in at the University of Wisconsin: “Eric Brakken,…president of Wisconsin’s student governing body, agreed that the Duke compromise has had nationwide effects” (Stroup, 1999f, ¶11).

Numerous actions were not necessarily intended as symbols at the moment of their staging. The young men in Greensboro in 1960 and Duke Students Against Sweatshops in 1999 were only taking action based on their beliefs, but their actions became symbols for others. Other actions were purposeful symbols of past activism, but with an eye on the present and the future with intention to inspire further change. At Duke a “lock-in” in the Allen Building was held to commemorate the 1969 building takeover by African American students. By commemorating this action, the students involved in planning the lock-in made it a symbol for the building of a Duke community with more equality among members.
More than 33 years after black students staged a takeover of the Allen Building to protest inequality on campus, student leaders are holding a lock-in in the same space tonight in hopes of fostering and promoting a more cohesive Duke community. Event organizers said the purpose of the lock-in is to increase student, faculty, staff and administration interaction, while reminding participants of the progress made by past campus leaders. (Garinger, 2002b, ¶1-2)

Participants in student activism became symbols, such as the Greensboro Four. Participants in other events also became symbols for student activism. In most cases these individuals were symbolic of the victims of whatever injustice a particular group of students sought to right. Students who participated in the university’s annual Black Student Alliance Invitational (BSAI) became symbols of a Duke that they said did not really exist. The BSAI was a weekend of events to which African American applicants to Duke are invited. They visited the campus and were exposed to what life would be like for them if they chose to attend the university, a life that students on campus stated was staged for this particular audience.

Every year, Duke and BSA collaborate to orchestrate a performance of blackness in order to entice prospective students into believing that our campus is a nurturing environment for black students. (Annan, Curtis, & Al-Bulushi, 2004, ¶1)

This performance forced a symbolic role upon its players that they may not have been comfortable playing. Although they were willing participants in such events, they recognized their use as symbols for a specific purpose.

Many students also expressed concern over the pressure they feel to “act black”—become the stereotypes other students perceive them to be or fulfill the roles fellow black students ascribe to them. (Darby, 2004a, ¶12)
Conservative students found a similar symbol in a student who experienced harassment in class by a professor who espoused his own liberal beliefs while making anti-Republican comments. The conservative activists quickly adopted this student’s victimization as a cause worthy of their time.

In [Matt] Bettis, the conservative clan has a poster boy: an almost absolutely harmless senior from Chapel Hill, gym bag strapped over one shoulder, dirty blonde mane hanging over eyebrows and the façade of an innocent, indoctrinated Duke dude who had emerged from his electrical engineering major and come out doing his “duty” in reporting academic assault. (Sullivan, 2004b, ¶7)

This description created a mental picture for readers of a more tangible symbol, a tactic that was also used with the visit of two former sweatshop workers who came to campus to talk about their experiences in being fired from their jobs because of their attempts to form a union.

Sara Jewett, an organizer of Students Against Sweatshops, said having the workers at Duke will help attach faces to the sweatshop issue. “I think it’s probably the most compelling argument we’ve seen on campus to have full public disclosure,” the Trinity senior said. (Pessin, 1999c, ¶5)

The use of costumes and props was not overlooked by participants in the drama of student activism. The use of clothes and objects as symbols in the actions of student activists was commonplace throughout the period under study. Of course the entire student anti-sweatshop movement pertained to clothing, and Duke University sweatshirts and hats were symbols of the oppression of low-wage workers in the developing world. Yet students found methods of using those clothing items as symbols without their presence.

…Noam Shazeer, Trinity ’98 and a first-year graduate student in computer science, attended the protest naked except for a box around his waist. “I didn’t
think it was appropriate to wear anything that might be made in a sweatshop,” he said. (Sostek, 1998d, § 20)

Lack of clothing was an effective means of drawing attention to a cause, but most student activists chose a different approach by wearing specific colors or types of clothing as a symbol of their protest. This was the method used by members of the Duke Student Movement who donned their costumes and staged their action in a visible venue during a prominent event that would attract media coverage as well as a broad audience.

The [anti-reparations] advertisement has sparked controversy nationwide. The response at Duke has taken the form of large protests. Last night, students wearing all black held a vigil in front of Cameron Indoor Stadium during the McDonald’s All-America basketball game. (kumar, 2001f, § 11)

When clothing was used as a symbol activists did not always need a national audience. Occasionally their on-campus peers were sufficient, as the campus of Duke University itself was viewed as a symbol for society at large.

The students also hope to make participants in “comfort day” more comfortable by encouraging them to dress as they please, and not conform to societal expectations. (Levine, 2003b, § 16)

Clothing as symbol did not necessarily mean an entire outfit for activists; an accessory could suffice if there were enough participants for the symbol to become widespread. Ribbons of various colors have become symbolic for supporters of a number of causes—yellow to symbolize the homecoming of soldiers, red for AIDS activists, pink for breast cancer awareness—and student group at Duke was responsible for bringing the white ribbon to campus to promote awareness of sexual violence.

…Men Acting for Change also co-sponsored last month’s Violence Prevention Week and the corresponding white ribbon campaign. The statewide initiative, which was organized by North Carolina’s Coalition Against Sexual Assault and
encouraged people to wear white ribbons to promote violence awareness, also urged men to sign a card pledging not to commit or condone violence against women. An estimated 120 Duke men signed the pledge. (Fickel, 1999, ¶ 6)

Men Acting for Change used costumes and props (clothing and objects) in tandem in this example. This combination was an effective way for student activists to attract attention, and even to support more than one cause at the same time, as an alumnus of North Carolina State University demonstrated in a protest against a rally staged by the Ku Klux Klan that addressed racial issues and hunger.

Matt Joyner, a 22-year old former student of North Carolina State University, came to the protest as a member of both Food not Bombs and Klowns Against Klan Action, or KAKA. Dressed in a rainbow wig, red foam nose and brightly-colored, mismatched clothing, Joyner distributed racial unity sandwiches to bring attention to the problem of hunger in the Triangle area while protesting white supremacist rhetoric. “It’s white and wheat bread together,” Joyner explained. (Rotberg, 2004b, ¶ 9)

Props, or objects, were also used alone as symbols by student activists. Objects that were symbols for student activists included posters, buildings or structures, and a doll. The latter was not successful in conveying its intended message. Posters were objects that student activists used to ensure that their message was widespread on campus and did not require them personally to be active in their cause at all times. Duke Students for Life, an organization on the pro-life side of the abortion debate used baby footprints, with an accompanying explanation, on a set of posters to create a symbol that they believed would have great impact.

At 7:00 p.m. on the Bryan Center walkway, members of the pro-life organization began posting 1,000 flyers depicting four sets of baby footprints each. The pink and blue sheets of footprints “memorialized the 4,000 babies killed by abortion
each day in America,” explained engineering junior Kevin LeBlanc, founder and co-president of the organization. He attributed the number to a recent Planned Parenthood study. (Pessin, 1998, ¶ 2)

The symbolism of the posters was apparently powerful, as this description of them appeared in an article that described the removal of the posters, allegedly by students on the pro-choice side of the abortion debate. Buildings and structures became symbols for activists both by erecting them and by their non-existence. The student activists who sought to promote awareness of the Sudanese civil war built a mock refugee village in a central location on Duke’s campus. This symbol was chosen by students “because of its visual impact” (Rotberg, 2004d, ¶ 12). A building, or lack thereof, also became a symbol for cultural identity groups at Duke. These groups, whether alone or in conjunction with one another, sought their own space from university administrators. To them, this space, preferably an entire building to call their own, became a symbol of their status (or lack thereof) at Duke.

Cultural politics, in its current incarnation, is keen on a building. No one dares admit how much, if any, of this sudden push for a center is inspired by the fact that the Jews got theirs first. (Tinari, 2001, ¶ 9)

Finally, the use of objects as symbols was subject to misinterpretation by the general public. On November 13, 1997 a dark-skinned doll was found hung by a noose from a tree close to the building housing the campus eateries. The entire Duke community read this mock lynching as a hate crime against African American students, when actually it was staged by two African American students as a symbol of the racism and treatment of their community that they saw both on campus and in society at large.

Although the University has declined to release the names of the individuals, John Burness, senior vice president for public affairs, said the individuals said that they staged the mock lynching to make a political statement—not to create a scene that
many University administrators and employees perceived as a hate crime.

(Kozlov, 1997b, ¶ 2)

Student activists as symbol makers experienced a mixture of successes and failures with their symbols, with successes outnumbering the failures. Whatever is used as a symbol, activists cannot always rely on the symbol to speak for itself, and thus activists are needed to explain the cause and meaning behind the symbol.

Summary

Student activists play a number of various, and often overlapping, roles on campus in their quest for change. I have shown in these three chapters how those roles were reported to the campus community through the university’s daily newspaper, The Chronicle. The common goal in all of these roles is the improvement of life for all individuals who are affected by a particular issue. The roles, as has been shown, move effortlessly from one issue to another, and are equally useful whether students act to end racial discrimination, the injustice of sweatshops, or eating disorders on campus. These roles may or may not be specific to Duke University, and they may or may not be specific to this time period (1996-2004). That issue will be discussed further in the following and final chapter.
Chapter 8 – Conclusions and Implications for Future Research and Practice

Introduction

Duke University has experienced student activism throughout the 20th century beginning with student participation in the second Annual Strike Against War on April 12, 1935 (Eagan, 1981). The activist tradition on campus continued into the beginning of the 21st century with issues such as human rights and personal identity taking center stage. This study has illustrated how student activism at Duke University in the final years of the 1990s and early 2000s was portrayed in the words of writers for the campus daily newspaper, The Chronicle. In this concluding chapter those portrayals are placed in the larger context of the history of student activism in the United States.

Chapter 2 introduced four motivating factors for student activism as gleaned from the literature: political, campus life, ethical/moral, and the environment. Chapter 4 presented the issues that attracted the attention of student activists at Duke during the period under study: general activism, identity/culture, labor and human rights, and world issues. Three categories of roles played by student activists within the framework of these issues were discussed in Chapters 5-7: campus/education, political, and social. This chapter examines how the most recent student activist issues and roles intersect with the four motivating factors in the drama of student activism on American campuses. In the generational cycle of student activist tradition that has been noted within American higher education (Bengson, 1970; Eagan, 2004; Feuer, 1969; Gitlin, 2003; Levine, 1999), the period 1996-2004 is a continuation of that history.

Through the use of discourse analysis within the boundaries of a case study with a theoretical base in dramaturgy, I have shown how the use of language within the pages of the campus newspaper portrayed student activism in the period 1996-2004. Student activism in this study was examined as a drama, taking place on the stage of a university campus or within the pages of that campus’ newspaper. Of particular interest was the
concept of role in the day-to-day interactions between student activists and others: their peers, their professors, university administrators, the local community, the nation, and the world.

Burr’s (2003) definition of “discourse” framed the examination of the set of images, metaphors, and symbols that together constructed what was known as “student activism” at Duke University. Kasher’s (1985) view of language and its intentionality with regards to human actions and Willig’s (1999) definition of discourse analysis, a concern with the ways in which language constructs objects and experiences, further strengthened the use of this method of analysis for this topic.

Placing the period 1996-2004 into the history of student activism in the United States

This study has looked at student activism during the period 1996-2004 as a discreet time period. This time period is, however, the latest act in the ongoing drama of American student activism as the frequent allusions to past movements have indicated. The following sections describe how the activism of this time, as illustrated by the case of Duke University and the roles played by its student activists, fits into the overall history of student activism in the United States. The presentation of the drama of student activism at Duke and of the roles played by the students involved as presented by the campus daily newspaper, *The Chronicle*, are connected to this history but are only one piece of the research of student activism in this time period yet to be done.

Issues

When placed into the ongoing drama of student activism in the United States, the period examined in this study fits neatly into the historical timeline as the most current act. The issues are similar to those of past eras which created a general feeling of ethical outrage (Keniston, 1971): the treatment of workers, war, and race relations. Movements surrounding these issues build on the success of past student movements, a success that student activists of this period readily acknowledge.
You have played crucial, if often uncelebrated, roles in our lives and in expanding the possibilities for building broad-based transformative social movements.

(Dixon, 2005, p. 49)

This influence of the past includes both the personal influences of student activism (that have led to the role of moral compass), as well as the public ones, that come to most students in the form of popular culture.

This legacy [of my parents] includes a wide range of principled life choices, a profound commitment to humanity and equality, and an emphasis on reflection and self-criticism. (Boudin, 2005, p. 5)

...the struggle [of the 1960s] has been commodified, sold back to us as clothing, music, drugs, and film. (Dohrn, 2005, p. xxx)

In placing the issues that concern student activists into this time period, we see how the roles discussed in this study are not new ones in the ongoing drama.

Human rights as an issue for student activists began with the anti-slavery student organizations of the 1800s (Cartwright, 1995), led to the rights of workers at Harvard University in the early 1900s (Lipset, 1971), Kentucky coal miners in 1932 (Brax, 1981), civil rights in the 1930, 1950s and 1960s (Cowley, 1966), and the anti-apartheid movement of the 1980s (Soule, 1997). Human rights continued as a theme for student activists in the 1990s with the anti-sweatshop movement, as well as the concern of student groups for the plights of people in Tibet and the Sudan. A specific issue of interest for student activists over time within the general category of human rights has been the rights of workers. This issue was seen from the early years of the 20th century, at Harvard in 1908, with the entrance of labor organizations to the stage of student activism in the 1920s, up to the most recent issue of sweatshops as students’ participation in internships with labor unions played a role in the development of that movement (Featherstone, 2002). Throughout the history of higher education in the United States,
student activists have played the roles of champion of the underdog in fighting for justice for those without a voice (including workers), as the published words of activists of this time period show.

They [activists] expose the pieties and the dogmas of the powerful, stand on the side of the marginalized, silenced, and powerless. (Dohrn, 2005, xvi)

I don’t need to be their voice—they have their own. But sometimes we need people to help us find that voice. That’s what I do. I help people build their voice so they can make sure no one takes advantage of them. (Turenne, 2005, 25)

The role of champion of the underdog was also prominent on the civil rights stage alongside the role of moral compass, which in the most recent era of student activism at Duke is a role drawn from the mission and traditions of the university itself (Pimlott, 1997). The overlap of these roles is best personified in this study by members of the anti-sweatshop movement, who championed the voiceless workers of the apparel industry because they were being treated in an immoral manner. Historically other student activists have played the role of moral compass as well. For students of the New Left of the 1960s the civil rights movement was the plotline that allowed them to play moral compass for the nation. Student activists played this role both off campus, during the Mississippi Freedom Summer of 1964, and on campus during the Free Speech Movement at the University of California at Berkeley where that institution’s policy of barring campus space to off-campus political groups was seen as a direct attack against the civil rights movement (Astin et. al., 1975). Both of these historical examples illustrate the overlap between moral compass and champion of the underdog as student activists sought to use their voices to speak for the unregistered voters of Mississippi and the political groups of Berkeley, California.

War and peace have concerned student activists throughout the history of higher education as well. At times general student support favored war, such as the American
Civil War and World War II after the 1941 attack on Pearl Harbor. At other times students overwhelmingly protested the country’s military involvement, as evidenced by the “Oxford Oath” preceding the United States’ entry into World War I (Eagan 1981; Feuer, 1969), the protests against the war in Vietnam which grew ever more violent as the war went on, and in most recent years students’ objection to American intervention in Iraq in the wake of the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, dramatized in the 2003 walkout at Duke on the day that war was declared and the “Books not Bombs” protest on 400 campuses (Featherstone, 2003) which echoed the annual strikes of the mid-1930s (Eagan, 1981). Times of war also gave students another opportunity to take on the role of champion of the underdog by taking part in the fight to help the voiceless. The Spanish Civil War was a time which gave student activists the opportunity for self-sacrifice and ultimate identification (Feuer, 1969) as student activists left the U.S. for active participation in that struggle.

Issues of identity have also played their part in the history of student activism, at least in the 20th century. The Black Power movement of the 1960s spawned academic programs and departments in Black Studies, Afro-American Studies, and African American Studies (Milnes & Frazier, 1969; Black Student Demands, 1970). Inspired by this movement, other minority groups agitated for their own place in society and academe, taking on the roles of both policy maker and partner in university governance. The Women’s Movement created the discipline of Women’s Studies; homosexual students took the stage to speak for their rights, as did Latino students. At Duke Asian American students played their part in this legacy of identity movements by proposing the creation of an academic program in Asian American Studies. This role as partner in university governance, on the academic front, is consistent with the historic statistic cited that approximately 90% of students believed they should have a part in determining the curriculum of their university (Bayer, Astin, & Boruch 1970). The role also reflects
current trends in undergraduate education that seek to “integrate what students already know, value and do into curricular and cocurricular programs” (Evenback & Hamilton, 2006, p. 17) and to engage them “in a coherent program intentionally designed and optimally scaffolded for their needs” (p. 18). Students, it is argued, must be in control of their education and personally motivated for it to be effective (St. Clair, 1999). The involvement of students themselves in the design and scaffolding of such a program is a way of ensuring that those students’ academic needs are met.

Identity issues were also political in nature, as evidenced by the debate within the women’s movement between those who believed in the need to be politically focused (play the role of political agent) in contrast to those who believed the movement needed to concentrate on enlightened academics (play the role of educator) (Reuben, 1998). These roles are seen in this study in feminist activists’ assuming the role of educator by teaching Duke’s house courses to educate their peers (Porter, 2002) as well as involvement in political topics such as abortion. The role of educator is seen as part of the core of activism in the published words of another activist during this time.

We educate people about what’s going on in the community because we believe that when people have knowledge, it’s one step closer to change. (Turenne, 2005, p. 27)

Change in the community through education represents an overlap of the student activists’ roles as political agent and educator and the power that is inherent in those roles. This overlap in roles is illustrated by the words of Father Theodore Hesburgh, who led the University of Notre Dame for 35 years: “Anyone who refuses to speak out off campus does not deserve to be listened to on campus” (Merrow, 2005). In order to play one of these roles with success, activists must also play the other.

Duke’s homosexual community also had a history of playing the political agent role, but made a shift to the role of social support network in 1997 (Kozlov, 1997c). The
Israel-Palestine debate exhibited characteristics of politics as well as identity, and students involved in this issue also played the role of symbol maker, in actions such as bringing a bombed-out bus to the campus of Duke (Rohrs, 2004f). While playing all of these other roles students also maintained their idealism, with the hope that people of all identities would be able to obtain a sense of their rights and dignity as human beings as a result of activist struggles. In these struggles, identity and place were used as a symbol for what activists believed should be taking place on the world stage.

I know it is not just about Palestine. Rather, Palestine is about everything; it is about so much more than Arabs and Jews, and until we can make this an international struggle about human rights, human dignity, and freedom from racism and military rule, then we are not doing enough. (Khalidi, 2005, p. 12)

Similar types of symbol making were used in movements against apartheid in South Africa (Soule, 1997) and in protest of the civil war in Sudan (Rotberg, 2004d) with shanties and shacks used as symbols of injustice in those countries and in turn those countries used as symbols for change in other locations.

Identity was particularly political in nature when conservative students began to act as an identity group that suffered because of their beliefs or behaviors. This political identity movement had its beginning in the 1980s as universities became the symbols of the “evils” of liberalism by conservatives in the United States (Weir, 1995). Political identity has, of course, been a significant factor in earlier eras of student activism in the United States, particularly in the 1930s when both Communists and Socialists battled for supremacy on American campuses (Eagan, 1981).

Identity was a moral issue for some student activists as well. During the period of debate over allowing homosexual marriages to be performed in the Duke University Chapel, gay students and conservative students clashed over the morality of the issue (Kumar 2000b). While members of the two identity groups played the role of moral bully
with each other, other student activists continued to play the role of idealist by pointing out that religious freedom applies to all citizens, not just those whose behaviors meet the approval of specific groups or individuals (Johnson, 2000).

Interactions of student activists who play roles with their environment

Student activism in the United States has taken place as movements that work both within the system and against the system. The “system” can be the university and its administration, the political and governmental structure of a city, state, or country, or a set of religious, moral or ethical standards. The roles of partner in university governance, political agent and idealist are integral to these interactions. It is, indeed, the combining and overlapping of these roles that activists rely on, refusing to be typecast: “We challenge reductionist one-dimensional images of what an activist is, does, or looks like” (Berger, Boudin, & Farrow, 2005, p. xxx).

As partners in university governance student activists have taken on the issue of *in loco parentis* (Cartwright, 1995), along with the campus issues of discipline, curriculum content, administrative power, due process and student self-government (Lipset, 1971), and the right to have mixed (male and female) parties without chaperones (Friedland & Edwards, 1970). Active involvement in the decision-making process that affected their lives was seen as part of the ideal of participatory democracy as described by student activists in the 1960s (Gottschalk, 1987). Student activists are also the moral compass for campus in these interactions, as they have historically seen themselves as morally superior to the administration (Flacks, 1970). Student activists at Duke during the period 1996-2004 were no different from their predecessors in their concern for such issues. The specific issues at Duke, as has been shown, were the integration of Asian American Studies into the undergraduate curriculum, the power of the administration to fight the proliferation of sweatshops and other abusive labor practices, and the ensuring
of harmonious relations among groups of all identities (ethnic, racial, gender, sexual orientation) on campus.

The role of political agent as presented here is not new to student activism: grassroots protest has been a tradition on college and university campuses for students who take democracy seriously (Flacks, 1970), and recent surveys of students show that in 2003 one-third (33.9%) of entering freshmen surveyed believed that “keeping up to date with political affairs” was a very important life goal (Engle, 2003). In 2004 that statistic rose to 34.3%, showing a rise for the fourth year in a row (HERI, 2004), and in 2005 the number rose again, to 36.4% (HERI, 2005). In addition in 2005 it was reported that 63% of the freshmen surveyed believed that “dissent is a critical component of the political process” and 49.7% of respondents reported that they had participated in an organized demonstration while in high school, the highest reported percentage in the history of the Cooperative Institutional Research Program’s survey of incoming U.S. freshmen.

Political groups off campus have been influential players in the drama of student activism in the United States since 1905 when the Intercollegiate Socialist Society was formed (Cowley, 1966). This led to a wave of socialism on college and university campuses. At the end of the twentieth century conservative organizations made similar attempts to place their actors and plots at center stage on campus. Student activists and organizations of all political beliefs saw this involvement as their duty.

As U.S. activists, we must recognize that along with our privilege comes a responsibility to confront our government and to hold our elected officials accountable. (Colon-Berezin, 2005, p. 154)

Organizations with political agendas in this later period are more inward-looking than their predecessors. Students for Academic Freedom, the group seeking to pass the Academic Bill of Rights, focuses on individual campuses and the atmosphere on each of them. This is in contrast to organizations such as the National Student Federation of
America, founded in the mid-1920s with the outward-looking focus on U.S. relations around the world.

As was shown to be the case at Duke during the period 1996-2004, the role of political agent is often accompanied by the role of idealist. During the 1930s this role emerged in the formation of the American Student Union (ASU), a group intended to be non-partisan bringing together the already-existing communist and socialist student organizations (Feuer, 1969). During the 1960s this role was played by members of Students for a Democratic Society, whose ideal of “participatory democracy” would bypass the political parties and allow individual citizens to influence the democratic process in the United States directly. Although politics, and the actions of the communist and socialist political agents, would destroy the ASU in the end, there were clearly some student activists who sought to rise above the dramatic interaction of differing political opinions to achieve a more idealistic identity for themselves. Idealism continues to be important for activists in the period of this study, but it is a different form of idealism than was demonstrated in prior eras. This was the case at Duke, as has been shown, and Duke students’ contemporaries share the same view of politics and idealism, but it is not that of the Communists and Socialists of earlier years.

The tendency today is to reject our parents’ obsession with political parties, in favor of social movements. As an embryonic new New Left that is building on 1998, as well as 1968, we’ve replaced the quest for power with the quest for democracy; the dictatorship of the proletariat is not our rallying cry. (Gindin, 2005, p. 149)

In a nod to the role of champion of the underdog these idealists have not become activists for personal gain, but rather to achieve the ideals of democracy and justice.
Actions taken within student activists’ roles

The actions taken by students in the period 1996-2004 were not new to that period. Student activists have used similar methods throughout the history of higher education in the U.S. to convey their messages to their audiences. Consumer boycotts were first used by students in colonial times (1760s) as a way of demonstrating the colonies’ independence from Britain (Rudy, 1996). Students in that time period played the role of symbol maker with the use of clothing, in much the same way as modern student activists. By wearing only clothing made from “home-spun” materials, students in colonial times demonstrated that they did not need apparel manufactured in Britain. In the same manner, students in the late 1990s boycotted clothing made in sweatshop conditions, demonstrating similar independence from what was viewed as an unjust system. While playing the role of symbol maker, student activists were also playing the role of consumer advocate in selecting to purchase clothing made in specific places or of specific materials. Similarly students who supported the NAACP boycott of South Carolina in 2000 because of the flying of the Confederate Flag played the role of consumer advocate, choosing not to spend their money on hotels and restaurants in that state.

The sit-in, often synonymous with the takeover of a campus building, has emerged as a preferred method of student activists (Zagier, 1999a) since its use by Students for a Democratic Society and other groups in the 1960s. We have seen the sit-in in its most violent form at Columbia University in 1968 and Cornell University in 1969. The impact of the 1969 sit-in/building takeover by black students at Duke in 1969 was referred to throughout the period of this study as representative of the “Ghosts of Activism Past.” It was an event in Duke’s activist history that was both emulated and memorialized in 1997 (Don’t forget, 1997), 1999 (Sostek, 1999), 2001 (Kumar, 2001d), and 2002 (Garinger, 2002a, 2002b). At Duke during the period of the study the sit-in was
used most effectively by Students Against Sweatshops in their 31-hour sit-in of the Allen Building in 1999.

Other actions or methods used by student activists have a shorter history, but are no less effective as dramatic symbols and scenery for the accompanying message. Such an action is the construction of a shack or shanty intended to symbolize the plight of an oppressed group through its discarded, scrap building materials. The shantytown as a protest appeared on the stage of student activism at Dartmouth College in the 1980s, and quickly spread to campuses around the United States (Soule, 1997). Taking the success of this method as a cue, Duke student activists in 2004 built their mock Sudanese refugee village to show their audience the squalor in which people were forced to live. Through the use of this method, student activists once again played the role of symbol maker.

Conclusions about the period 1996-2004

It has been shown that student activism at Duke University during the period 1996-2004 was not an activity taken on by a majority of the campus population. According to The Chronicle, the student activist community was small and used quiet approaches (David, 1994; Nicholson 2003). Furthermore, as was seen in the case of the anti-war activists, there were even minorities within the minority who used their own methods to promote their agenda and achieve their goals.

Duke was a university that arrived later than others on the stage of student activism in the 1960s, beginning with a vigil for Martin Luther King, Jr. on April 5, 1968 (Applebone, 1998). Students for a Democratic Society at the University of Michigan emerged in 1960, and the Free Speech Movement at the University of California, Berkeley took place in 1964. Although students were accused of apathy, a subject that was studied in depth by one Chronicle reporter (Gillum, 2004a), activism since the 1960s has not exited the stage of Duke University’s campus.
Much of the activism at Duke had its origins in students’ classroom and academic pursuits. Through their courses students examined women’s body image, men’s involvement in gender issues, the Sudanese civil war, and the study of Asian-American culture. By taking these issues out of the classroom and onto the public stage of the campus, student activists showed active engagement in their education, and continued the trend of the “shadow curriculum” as described by Mansfield (1998).

Suggestions for future research on this period

This study was limited in that it only examined one institution, and at that institution used the single lens of the campus newspaper. Despite these limitations the study is important for scholars interested in student activism in the United States. As stated in the introduction, campus reporting of student activism has not been examined in a scholarly manner previously. College and university newspapers are an untapped source for researchers as national media have been for years: they are thriving, are often indistinguishable from professional broadsheets, and are read by an estimated 95% of students on campus (Summers, 2005). The availability of archived articles on the world wide web makes campus newspapers a relatively easy source of data as well, giving researchers access to any individual campus from any geographic location, thus allowing historians to use campus reporting as a source for future writing rather than relying solely on national media sources. The use of campus media for the writing of history has far-reaching implications for authors of articles, books and textbooks. As history is set up traditionally to be written from the national media, the use of local and campus media will provide a forum for voices that would otherwise remain silent.

Further research on this topic should include a more in-depth study of Duke, including interviews with the players referenced in news articles and the writers of editorials and letters. Such a study would determine the accuracy of how student activism was related to the campus from the point of view of the activists themselves. Did the
reporting of *The Chronicle* accurately represent what the activists were attempting to accomplish? This is a question that can only be answered by the activists themselves.

The roles played by the student activists as presented here are also specific to Duke University at this time, although the quotations included in this chapter from *Letters from Young Activists* (Berger et. al., 2005) show that numerous roles played at Duke appeared on other stages as well. Through study of other institutions during this period, a more general view of student activism during this period could be obtained.

Were the issues that arose at Duke similar to those at other institutions? It is known that the anti-sweatshop movement did exist nationwide on a number of campuses (*The Chronicle* specifically mentions Georgetown University and the Universities of Michigan and Wisconsin-Madison), and it is known that David Horowitz submitted his anti-reparations advertisement to a number of different university newspapers. Did other campuses engage in similar actions in protest of these events as the students at Duke did? *The Chronicle* reported that at Brown University student activists destroyed an entire run of that campus’ newspaper. Research could also use a comparative approach, using Duke and other institutions. The comparison of Duke with the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill is one avenue, as the institutions are geographically close, are both research universities, and there is evidence of similar student activism during this time period as well as in the past. Such an examination would compare a private university to a public one. Is student activism at public universities different from that at private universities? Do student activist actors cast themselves in the same roles at other universities? These are questions for future researchers to examine in the ongoing drama of student activism in the United States.

Just as today’s young activists have the history of the 1960s/1970s, the struggles we engage in today will serve as the backdrop for those of future activists.

(Berger, et. al., 2005, p. 175)
Implications for practice

Alongside the recommendations for future research on this topic, this study provides several implications for practice within higher education. Student activism and its history should be included in courses in both undergraduate and graduate curricula. Undergraduates need to be aware of this part of their history and understand how the outcomes of past student movements have affected their lives as students. Graduate students who study higher education also need to be aware of this aspect of university life. They may be the future administrators called upon to negotiate and work with student activists. By knowing how their predecessors handled a variety of student protests they will be in a position to make the effective decisions in similar situations. This will also assist those who are already in administrative roles, especially when they find themselves facing student activists and their limited role in university governance for the first time. The student life staff can also benefit from knowledge of student activists, their history, and their roles. As the university staff members most responsible for co-curricular programming, student life staff can work to direct student activists towards educational programming and other constructive activities that will provide for their optimal development.
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Appendix: Data on articles from *The Chronicle* used in this study

The data for this study were drawn from 443 individual articles, editorials, and letters to the editor (collectively referred to as “articles”) published in the Duke University campus newspaper, *The Chronicle*. The study encompasses the years 1996-2004, but a small number of relevant articles appearing outside of that time frame were included as “prologue” and “epilogue” pieces. The following tables and accompanying text show how the 443 articles were distributed in relation to the activist issues, as examined in Chapter 4, the types of articles (news, features, opinion pieces, letters to the editor), and by academic year beginning with 1994-95 and concluding with 2004-05.

*Articles by issue*

All articles gathered for this study were placed into categories according to the issue addressed in them. The following table (Table 1) shows the number of articles that related to each individual activist issue on Duke’s campus. According to these numbers the top two issues addressed by student activists during the period 1996-2003 were the sweatshops producing university-licensed apparel (95 articles) and issues related to African-American identity (71 issues).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>General Activism</th>
<th>50</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Historical Activism</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African-American</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian American</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confederate Flag</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conservative</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Five types of articles were identified from the pages of *The Chronicle* (see Table 2): editorials, features, letters to the editor, news and opinion columns. Editorials were published on the editorials and letters pages of the newspaper and were attributed to the “staff” of *The Chronicle*, thus serving as the voice of the newspaper itself. Features, often coming from *TowerView*, a glossy magazine published monthly by *The Chronicle*, were articles that looked at Duke’s history or culture, or expanded on a current campus issue through reporting of greater depth and breadth than a daily news story would convey. Letters to the editor were submitted by readers of the newspaper both on and off campus, whether student, faculty, staff, alumnus, or community member. News articles were the daily ‘factual’ stories about current events on campus; while the opinion columns (or
commentaries) were articles that reviewed those current issues from more subjective, often humorous, viewpoints.

Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Editorial (&quot;Staff&quot;)</th>
<th>31</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Feature/TowerView</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Letters to the editor</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>News</td>
<td>179</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Op-ed/Commentary</td>
<td>116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>443</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Artsicles by academic year

The rise and fall of student activism at Duke University can be viewed by the number of articles that report on or address activism (Table 3) during the time period under study. Duke’s year begins on July 1 and ends on June 30, and articles were categorized according to this calendar (although during the months of and July *The Chronicle* is only published twice).

Table 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academic Year</th>
<th>Articles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1994-1995</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995-1996</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996-1997</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>1997-1998</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998-1999</td>
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<tr>
<td>1999-2000</td>
<td>43</td>
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<tr>
<td>2000-2001</td>
<td>58</td>
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<tr>
<td>2001-2002</td>
<td>42</td>
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<tr>
<td>2002-2003</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003-2004</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004-2005</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>443</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
If the numbers of articles are broken down further and examined on a monthly basis, three periods stand out as especially active periods on Duke’s campus. During March and April of 2001 there were, respectively, 19 and 25 published articles relating to student activism. This was the time period during which the David Horowitz anti-reparations advertisement was published, and April 2001 is the only month during the period of this study when the number of published articles in *The Chronicle* exceeded 20. In October and November of 2003 *The Chronicle* published 18 and 10 articles respectively related to activist issues. This was the period during which the Women’s Initiative report was released, and the phrase “effortless perfection” became a commonly-used phrase on campus. The third and final period was September and October of 2004 when there were 16 articles in each month. These articles report on campus views and opinions of the Palestine Solidarity Movement conference, which was held on Duke’s campus during the fall 2004 semester.

*Summary*

According to these numbers Duke student activists during the period 1996-2004 were most concerned with issues related to labor (sweatshops) and identity. Identity related to African-Americans (the anti-reparations advertisement) and women (“effortless perfection”). The Palestine Solidarity Movement, in this study, was categorized as a world issue, and related to politics. There are, however, also identity issues closely related to the politics of the Middle East, especially for Israelis and Palestinians.

*List of organizations mentioned in The Chronicle*

Academic Consortium on International Trade – economists & lawyers
Active Minds – group concerned with mental health issues
American Civil Liberties Union
Amnesty International (Duke chapter)
Apparel Industry Partnership
AQUADuke (Alliance of Queer Undergraduates at Duke) – also Gothic Queers; DGLBA
Black Student Alliance (BSA)
College Republicans
Collegiate Licensing Corporation (CLC)
Duke Administration (“The University”)  
Duke Conservative Union
Duke Democrats
DukeDivest – organization promoting divestment from Israel
Duke Friends of Israel
Duke Gay Bisexual Lesbian Association (DGBLA) – also Gothic Queers; AQUADuke
Duke Progressive Alliance
Duke Student Government
Duke Student Movement
Duke Students Against Sweatshops (SAS)
Durham Residents
ESTEEM – Educating Students to Eliminate Eating Misconceptions; peer education group
Fair Labor Association (FLA)
Farm Labor Organizing Committee (FLOC)
Friends of the Earth
Gothic Queers – also DGLBA; AQUADuke
Government Officials
Greek Impact – minority and spiritual resource aimed at students in fraternities and sororities
Hamagshimim – University Zionist Movement
Hiwar – Palestinian student group
Human Rights Monitors
International Solidarity Movement – recruits American students to work as human shields for Palestinian terrorist organizations
Jobs with Justice
Joint Israel Initiative – Jewish student groups coalition with Freeman Center for Jewish Life staff; created solely to deal with Palestine Solidarity Movement conference
Justice – Duke human rights advocacy group
LEAPS – service-learning organization
Men Acting for Change
Mi Gente (Latino student organization)
NAACP (National Association for the Advancement of Colored People - Duke chapter)
North Carolina Growers Association
North Carolina Student Rural Health Coalition
Peace at Duke – anti-war group (splinter group: Civil Disobedience)
People Against Assault Weapons (PAAW)
SAS Groups at other universities
Spectrum Organization (umbrella group for cultural concerns at Duke)
Student Employee Relations Committee
Students Against the War in Iraq
Students for a Free Tibet (Duke chapter)
Students for Mt. Olive Responsibility
Students in Defeat of AIDS (SIDA)
Students of the Caribbean Association
Students to Unite Duke

*The Chronicle*

Tikkun – progressive Jewish organization, works for recognition of Israel and supports push for a Palestinian state & end to Israeli settlements
Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees (UNITE) – also UNITE HERE!
United Students Against Sweatshops (USAS)
Vote for America
Workers’ Rights Consortium (WRC)