

Students unite to combat racism, media coverage

By Regina LaRocque

Asst. News Editor

Student leaders representing a wide range of organizations on campus met last Tuesday to plan a united response to the “common issue” of racism against any ethnic group.

“Our goal is to get people active,” said Lyra O’Connor, president of the International Students Association (ISA), which coordinated the meeting. The newly-formed coalition calls itself “No Time to Hate,” a phrase taken from signs waved during the recent sit-in at the Dobbs University Center (DUC).

The students are representing their pro-active movement with the color green and the shape of the triangle. “The triangle represents unity. Each side needs the other to support it,” said Tika Bhutwala of the ISA.

Members of more than 20 organizations, such as CHOICES, Hillel, the Student Government Association and Mortar Board, are manning booths in front of the DUC and Cox Hall until Friday. Passing students are asked to pledge to personally implement 14 methods of combatting racism, including reading a book by an author of a different cultural background and correcting people who make racist jokes. In addition, students signing the agreement will be given a green armband to wear tomorrow as a sign of solidarity.

Junior Elisabeth Fowlie has taken individual action in response to recent events on campus, especially the “negative, sensational media.” Prompted by a debate in her History of Apartheid class, Fowlie drafted an open letter to the Atlanta media, challenging them to uphold their “moral and social responsibility to their readers and viewers to present additional, constructive programs rather than exclusively negative reports.”

Fowlie stood up during Tuesday’s ISA meeting to request the support of student organizations in her campaign to encourage the Atlanta media to “present a special or series concerning all forms of racism.”

Dean Rebecca Gurholt, director of Student Activities, commented, “It means a lot coming from students to take a stand like that. I’ll be curious to see how it takes shape.”

Fowlie mailed her statement and the list of 28 sponsoring student organizations to the Atlanta media on Saturday. In her cover letter, Fowlie reemphasized her disdain for the sensational treatment of recent events at Emory and her hope that the media would “strive to attack prejudice at its root causes.”

The Atlanta Journal-Constitution, the Gwinnett Daily News, and five television stations were sent copies of the statement.

“The media needs to clarify things instead of just going for the big story,” said Fowlie in an interview on Wednesday.

SARI leads march at track meet

By Paul Kaplan

Staff Writer

Approximately 40 supporters of Students Against Racial Inequality (SARI) marched Sunday to rally behind Sabrina Collins, the freshman victimized in the recent racial incidents in Longstreet Hall.

On Sunday afternoon, the group met in front of the Dobbs University Center, where members of SARI’s core committee explained the purpose of the march to those assembled and asked them to make anti-racism signs. The committee members then led the group to the Woodruff P.E. Center track, the site of this weekend’s University Athletic Association’s (UAA) Outdoor Track and Field Championships.

There they received permission from a UAA official to use the meet’s public address system, and, as the group walked silently before the applauding spectators, sophomore Katie Sapadin read the group’s brief statement.

“We are not here to disrupt anything,” she read in part, “but only to ask that you show your support for a fellow student with one minute of silence.” After a moment of silence, Sapadin thanked the meet participants, and the SARI group departed.

Core committee member Elijah Gardner explained that the group’s march was held to “raise a general awareness” of Collins’ plight.

Commenting on SARI's decision to go to the meet, Sapadin, who does not sit on the committee, added, "I think it was just a public Emory event" that gave the group access to a large group of people.

Plans for the march were first made public at an open SARI meeting on Friday, at which core committee members apologized to the approximately 50 people present for excluding non-African-Americans from last week's planning meeting at the Black Student Alliance house.

Core committee member Lisa Green read a letter of apology which she said would soon be distributed to the entire student body.

A SARI documentation committee, they said, is currently researching past incidents of harassment on campus. SARI leaders also established a "phone chain" at Friday's meeting to announce future actions.