

Where Are the Boys?

Contributed by Ashley Griffin -- Black College Wire
Monday, 02 May 2011

At NCCU and other campuses, gender imbalance reshapes the dating game

Looking around the N.C. Central University, you sometimes might think you're at a women's college.

For every male student at NCCU there are about two female students. And the gender imbalance is not just here on the verdant green. It's a national phenomenon. According to the U.S. Department of Education, by 2015 the average college graduating class will be 60 percent female.

Gender ratios are not as imbalanced at N.C. A&T, which has 52 percent women enrolled, or UNC-Chapel Hill, which has 58 percent women enrolled.

Winston-Salem State University tops the list for gender imbalance where women's enrollment is at 71 percent.

This gender imbalance has led to significant changes in the so-called dating game. Changes that are sometimes referred to as "hooking up."

What many women would consider the ideal scenario — a prolonged period of dating, followed by a committed relationship — plays out less and less on today's college campuses.

"There are more females to choose from," said history senior Hakim Muhammad.

"I can turn down a dozen females and still know there are dozens more to pick from. Females don't have that luxury. They have a small pool of men to choose from, and this has put pressure on them."

Some female students say they feel they have to compromise their values to attract males.

"You start to look past his flaws," said Skyler McClellan. "Sometimes you feel he will leave you for another girl. You start to feel insecure and have a low self-esteem."

According to criminal justice senior Danielle Herring, male students seem to want to move too fast to becoming sexual.

"The typical courtship is a guy meets a girl, ask a few questions. Then the guy will ask, can he come chill? "If the girl is naïve, she will take it further sexually. And then the guys leaves the girl alone because he already got the milk.

"So he doesn't want to buy the cow. People don't realize the emotional and psychological damage sleeping around does," she said.

Oddly, in a Campus Echo survey of 104 NCCU students, only 36 students answered yes to the question "do you believe that guys have the upper hand in dating today?"

But in the survey, 81 percent of the women described dating life on campus as either weak or non-existent.

The gender imbalance is relatively new to college campuses. Over the last 30 years, the gender imbalance has significantly affected the college dating scene.

According to the U.S. Department of Education, in the late 1980s there were more men than women attending U.S. colleges.

As high school graduation rates for men have declined, while increasing for women, the percentage of men who continue their education after high school has declined.

The problem is even more severe for minorities. According to the Kaiser Family Foundation, just 7.5 percent of African-American men were enrolled in college. This compares to 17 percent for white males.

"We see more inequality in the African-American male group. High incarceration rates, trouble in K-12, we don't expect to see them in college," said sociology instructor Michelle Laws.

"The options for black women are very restricted, when options are restricted people will look outside the norm," she said.

Ashley Griffin is editor-in-chief of The Campus Echo, the North Carolina Central University student newspaper, which

originally published this article.

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