

Massage therapy focus of USC researcher's 1st study

BY GINA CARUSO
THE GAMECOCK

Massage therapy, which has become increasingly popular as a complementary therapy and adjunct to medicine, is gaining attention at USC.

Dr. Patricia Sharpe, an associate professor and public health researcher in the USC Prevention Research Center is preparing to explore whether massage has health benefits for older adults.

Made possible by a grant from the American Massage Therapy Association Foundation, the study will focus specifically on the effects massage has on the senior citizens flexibility and range of motion. The individual's perception of stress and general well-being will also be considered.

Sharpe, who has three weeks until becoming a licensed massage therapist, believes it is necessary to evaluate the effects of massage as a complementary and alternative therapy.

"Massage therapy may promote the body's release of natural biochemicals,"

she said. "Conditions that involve chance muscle tension and decreased circulation may also benefit."

Sharpe also noted the assistance of massage in pain management for a variety of conditions. And while massage therapists are not licensed to treat illness, they might be helpful for sports injury rehabilitation, posture problems, repetitive strain injuries and even to promote the development of premature babies.

The study in preparation process is the first conducted by Sharpe.

"The research focus has been on promoting the wellness and independence of older adults," she said. "The human touch aspect may be important as well."

The one-year project will take place on the USC campus, with each participant being involved in a six-week session. The Capital Senior Center in Columbia will assist in recruiting participants, who will receive massages two times a week for four weeks from licensed massage therapists. According to Sharpe, health assessments will take place initially and then

upon completion of a four-week period of massages.

"We hope to find out through the study if senior citizens benefit greater from massage than others," Sharpe said.

She also emphasized the importance of communication between an individual's massage therapist and doctor, especially among older people with health conditions.

Once licensed, Sharpe will practice clinical/therapeutic massage, one of the three types practiced by licensed therapists. Other types include relaxation massage and sports massage.

According to Sharpe, relaxation massage is most prevalent in spas and salons, and sports massage is that which is practiced on professional athletes. She noted that licensed therapists who have passed the national certification exam perform all the practices.

The university desk can be reached at gamecockdesk@hotmail.com.

SG commissioner says bill will pass despite reservations

BY BRANDON LARRABEE
THE GAMECOCK

Student Government Elections Commissioner Angie Alpert has said she expects a revision of SG election's codes to pass at this Wednesday's senate meeting, despite a meeting last week in which senators offered a slew of amendments and despite one senator's specific reservations about a long-standing code.

The comments came in an interview following a whirlwind week in which the bill was brought before senate, amended several times and faced the possibility of being amended several more times.

"I think they will pass," Alpert said of the codes. "This coming Wednesday is definitely the test."

Sen. Michael Kozlerek, whom Alpert met with Friday, has voiced reservations about a part of the codes that weren't changed: a ban on person-to-person distribution of materials on any day other than the two designated election days.

Kozlerek, who has also voiced problems with other codes, said the meeting with Alpert had led to some changes in the codes about some of the problems he had with the proposed revisions. But he said the distribution ban would probably have to be addressed with an amendment at Wednesday's meeting.

"I do believe that's going to be one that's going to require some debate," Kozlerek said Tuesday.

However, some of those involved in the drafting of the codes disagree with any attempt to change the distribution regulation, which was a part of the codes before the proposed revision.

Damien Washington, a former commissioner who helped draft the new codes, said Kozlerek's amendment would "cause total havoc."

"That's like opening up an entire Pandora's Box," Washington said.

He added that the commission had not even thought about changing the distribution code when drafting the revisions. "That is not one of the ones we questioned," Washington said.

Among the codes Alpert said have been changed for the final bill was a provision dealing with the candidate's campaign staff. The original draft of the codes set a minimum of five members for the campaign staff.

That provision now says a campaign staff includes anyone whose "actions are of a type that would allow a reasonable person to conclude" they were working for the campaign.

That code sprung from a controversy that evolved last year over the definition of a campaign staff. Presidential candidate Katie Taylor and her campaign manager were the only ones listed on her campaign staff. However, Taylor's boyfriend at the time sent a mass e-mail - in violation of a ban on mass solicitation - to engineering students. Taylor denied

knowledge of her boyfriend's actions.

Alpert didn't specifically refer to the Taylor affair when speaking about the change in the campaign staff code.

"One [problem] was being able to hold candidates responsible for their staff or for people that they know that might not be on their campaign staff," Alpert said.

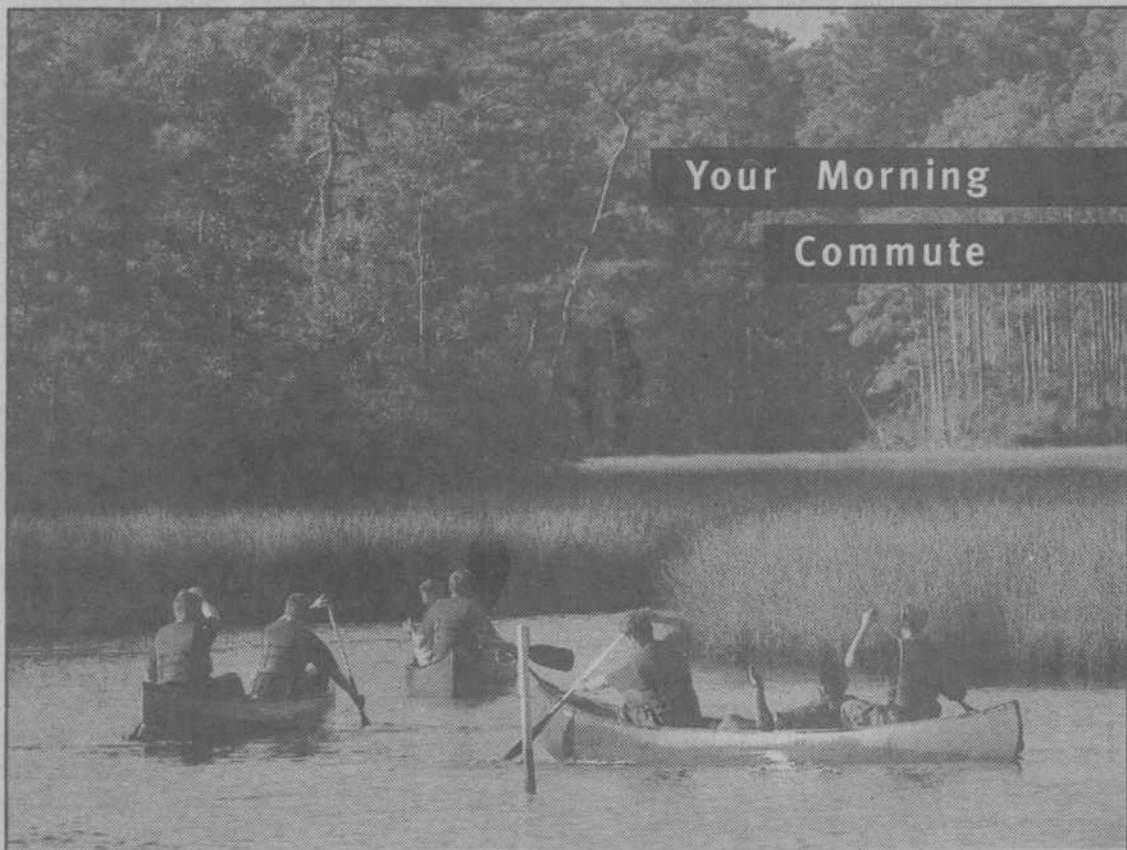
Washington was more blunt. "That's what brought it up in my mind," he said. "Honestly, I don't see how you could ever think of running a campaign with just two people and still go to class and still pass."

Changes in the code are nothing new, according to former Elections Commissioner Emily Lemaster, who held the position last year. She said changes last year had been made to accommodate online voting, and the commission the year before that had also proposed changes.

Lemaster said that with three different groups with an interest in the codes - senate, the elections commission and candidates - she didn't know that anyone would ever call the codes perfect.

"I don't think that anyone will ever agree that there's a perfect product," she said.

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