

*One of largest centers of its kind*

# Center studies population trends

by Merton Vance  
Staff Writer

Tucked away in modest offices in University Square, the Carolina Population Center is one of the largest institutes of its kind in the world.

Through its programs, the center coordinates and compiles information about population-related problems around the world. Such problems include overpopulation, birth control, environmental resource development, energy planning and food production.

Universities, public and private agencies, businesses and private citizens throughout the South, the United States and 20 other nations have used the center's resources.

"We work across school and departmental lines to achieve goals that require talents of more than one school or department," Winfield Best, director of the center's Communication and Planning Office, said.

Organized in 1966, the center gives cohesion and support to population studies by 35 UNC schools and departments and 150 faculty members. It also collaborates with other colleges and universities in conducting population research.

The population center is funded by federal and state grants and donations from foundations and businesses.

In addition to compiling research information, the center also administers programs in foreign countries. It is currently overseeing two such projects in Africa.

One of the projects, the African Health Training Institutions Project, collaborates with medical and health schools in more than 40 African nations to improve family health and provide family planning information.

Regional seminars are held to allow Africans to consult experts on health matters and family planning, and educational publications on family health are distributed under the project.

The U.S. Agency for International Development (AID) finances the project, Best said.

The other African project, jointly administered by UNC and the University of Ghana, gives technical and financial aid to graduate students studying population problems.

In conjunction with the UNC department of health administration, the center helps population researchers in other countries administer family planning programs.

Best said the center has also supervised projects in Latin America, Asia and the Middle East.

In addition to its international programs, the center does much of its work in North Carolina, Best said.

Its N.C. Services Office aids graduate students and faculty members engaged in population research and trains teachers to educate mentally retarded persons in sexuality and family planning topics.

The State Services Office has also developed a family planning program for rural areas of North Carolina. Organized under a federal grant in 1970, the program

extends family planning information to areas where hospitals and clinics are not well developed.

Another North Carolina service, the Intercampus Program, pools the expertise of faculty members in population study from schools all across the state, Best said.

The center also maintains a Technical Information Service, a computerized data base that is the largest of its kind in the world.

As a result of its multi-disciplinary programs, the center is the largest center anywhere for the training of graduate students and professionals in population and family planning. Best said, adding, "There is no other facility like this for mobilizing the resources of a major University."