



Staff photo--Jonna McGrath

## Fashion fever

A fashion show featuring styles from Asheville's better known boutiques took place in the Highsmith Center yesterday. Models exhibited apparel from the past, present and future.

## University can reapply in 1988

# Honor society rejects chapter at UNCA

By Julie Tilka  
Staff Writer

The qualifications committee of Phi Beta Kappa, considered the most prestigious honor society in the nation, informed administrators this semester that it had rejected UNCA's 1985 application for a campus chapter earlier this year.

The committee also clarified its reasoning for the rejection.

The assessment has helped the administration to pinpoint problem areas in our curriculum, said Dr. Jeff Rackham, vice chancellor of academic affairs.

Many faculty members were disappointed that the application was turned down, he said, but a great deal of good came out of it in terms of suggestions.

"We could have made a good case if we'd had the letter in advance--if we had known the sort of things they may object to. We were sort of proceeding in the dark," said Dr. Philip Walker, history professor and one of the faculty members who submitted an application to Phi Beta Kappa.

Walker stressed the importance of receiving a chapter of the honor society. "If a college is given a chapter it is a tremendous asset. It is recognition of that institution as a teacher of the liberal arts," he said.

Phi Beta Kappa, the oldest of the honor societies, was founded in 1776 at the College of William and Mary in Virginia. Presently, there are 234 chapters in the United States.

The society grants charters to the Phi Beta Kappa fraternity members on a school's faculty rather than to the institution. Thus, the UNCA fraternity members submitted the application.

Walker said the two major reasons for denial of a Phi Beta Kappa charter are 1) what the committee considers a school's move away from a liberal arts emphasis; and 2) UNCA test scores, primarily on the SAT, are comparatively lower than those of students at schools which have chapters.

The letter offering these reasons, written by the society's secretary, Kenneth Greene, said that the qualifications committee found that nearly half the total degrees received by UNCA graduates are in three vocationally-oriented areas:

business and management, communications, and computer science.

However, Rackham said that he had always considered liberal arts at the core of the university's curriculum and that this was balanced with equally important career-oriented programs.

"Our intention is to create a complementary balance. There is no reason why they are in conflict," he said.

The youth of the university is one possible reason for the fraternity's decision, because many of the programs have not had sufficient time to develop and prove themselves, added Rackham. Walker said the committee may have misinterpreted some information in the application.

For example, transfer students' SATs do not figure in the application process. Traditionally, only the scores of entering freshman make up campus average, he said.

About 70 percent of the graduating students at UNCA are transfer students, and their SAT scores are generally very high, according to Rackham.

The newly-formed undergraduate research fellowships require an SAT score of 1200, which "puts us in competition with all major schools for the best students," he said.

These scholarships will fund four years of tuition, fees and books as well as three summers of internships or study opportunities for accepted applicants. Also, the local honors program, which was just recently formed, will be a strong point for UNCA when it applies again, Rackham said.

Lynch feels confident that within a decade UNCA will gain Phi Beta Kappa status.

He said he would like to work again on the next application which would stress "the enormous strength of the humanities program and the high caliber of UNCA students that really cannot be documented by SAT scores."

Since the qualifications committee considers applications every three years, UNCA can reapply for a charter in 1988.

If the committee is impressed with the application, it will visit the campus for an inspection.

It is the policy of the committee to select an applying institution for intensive study only if the institution is ready for immediate consideration.

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