

# The Banner

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## NEWS BRIEFS

### Book grants successful, more available

Twenty-one working students have received scholarships from a fund established by Dr. Herbert S. Johnson so far this year, but nine more are available, said Carolyn McElrath, director of financial aid.

"I think it's been one of the best immediate access programs we've ever had," McElrath said of the fund that was started by Johnson to aid students who work at least 15 hours a week.

Students can apply for a grant of up to \$100 to buy class texts at the campus bookstore through the financial aid office. Johnson, a retired surgeon and former student at UNCA, began the scholarship program as a way to ease the hardships of working students and create an incentive for them to continue their studies.

### Valentine's Day is National Condom Day

The American Social Health Association will sponsor a National Condom Day on Feb. 14 to remind couples to "love responsibly" and protect their sexual health. The organization wants to remind people that the most effective means of preventing sexually transmitted diseases is a male latex condom.

ASHA also commissioned a poll of Florida voters and found that 66 percent of respondents favored age-appropriate condom and sex education in the schools. Only 14 percent of Floridians learned about sexually transmitted diseases from family members first, but 36 percent reported first learning about STDs from the media. Additionally, two-thirds of the respondents said the media should help educate the public about STDs and safe sexual practices.

For information, call ASHA's National STD Hotline at 800-227-8922.

### Continuing ed classes begin

UNCA will offer 17 classes to the public in its continuing education program this spring, many starting this week. Debt-free living, journaling with photographs, financial management for women, fitness, herbal medicine, and an Asheville history class are offered. Call 251-6538 or e-mail fcooper@unca.edu.

### UNCA student on service tour in India

Karine Bouis, a senior sociology major, left for Calcutta, India earlier this month as a participant in The International Partnership for Service-Learning. Bouis, a native of Penn., will spend the spring semester living with an Indian host family, studying, and volunteering with the organization. Bouis was selected because of her academic record and previous involvement in volunteer activities.

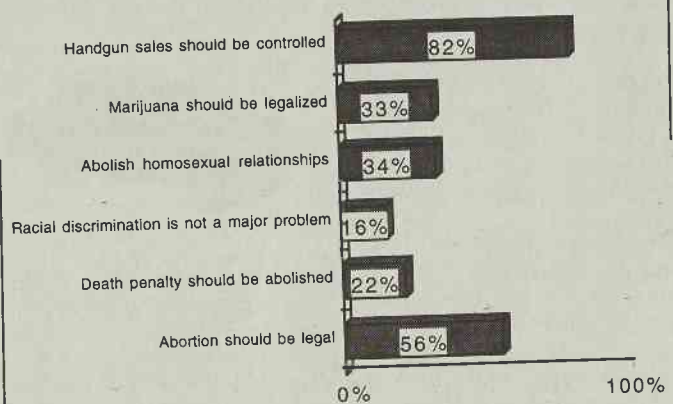
### Correction

In the Jan. 23 edition, *The Banner* misidentified a student, Amy Burnett, as Amy Jackson in a photograph on the front page. *The Banner* regrets the error.

## University freshmen surveyed

### What freshmen think

In an annual survey of California freshmen conducted by the UCLA Higher Education Research Institute, the following percentages reflect the number of students who agreed with the statements:



By Chansé Simpson  
Staff Writer

If UNCA freshmen are like others across the country, then they probably have little interest in politics, find themselves fairly evenly divided on issues of abortion and affirmative action, and admit to attending a religious service in the last year, but do not consider themselves to be born-again Christians.

These are some of the recently-published findings from a nationwide study of college freshmen by UCLA's Higher Education Research Institute, published in the Jan. 17 *Chronicle of Higher Education*. The survey involved 251,232 first-time students at various colleges and universities across the nation.

UNCA students did not participate in the research, said Archer Gravelly, director of institutional research, but said first-time students at UNCA have responded

to similar questionnaires each fall since 1986.

"We do our own new-students survey," Gravelly said earlier this week, adding that many schools do this kind of research to seek out information about demographics and socio-economic profiles. "Every college needs to understand its student population, and these kinds of surveys give us good background information."

The California-based study, designed to provide a statistical profile of the 1.5 million freshmen who entered college in 1996, offers insight into how the collegiate version of the Class of 2000 feels about the world today. For example, survey results indicated that more than 70 percent think the government should create a national health care plan and do more about pollution. Trusting the federal government, the survey indicated, does not appear to rank very high among freshmen beliefs.

"The government supports big

corporations because that's where the money comes from," freshman drama major Amanda Small said. "But personally, I don't think they spend enough money controlling pollution or bringing about positive changes," said Small.

Interest in politics is down, the report showed, and cynicism is up. Less than 30 percent of respondents said political awareness is important, down 10 percent since 1992, the College Press Service (CPS) reported recently.

UNCA freshman Michael Morgan said elected officials in Washington, D.C. have lost credibility.

"Look at Clinton, campaigning on lowering taxes," Morgan said. "But all he did when he got to Washington was raise them. I just don't even pay attention anymore."

According to UNCA's Institutional Research fact book, 455 freshmen entered the university

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## Homecoming scheduled

By Stephanie Hunter  
Staff Writer

UNCA's Homecoming celebration, scheduled for the week of Feb. 3 through Feb. 9, will consist of over 20 different events, according to the student coordinator of the event.

"Over the past several years, Homecoming took place on the weekend. This year, the Homecoming Planning Committee and I felt the celebration would attract more student interest if there were a variety of activities planned for the entire week," said Todd Hagans, student coordinator of Homecoming.

In addition, having the events during the week and not just on the weekend gives more people a chance to get involved in this celebration, said Alice Pruette, a senior music major.

"It's good to have a reason for

the whole campus to come together," said Lauren LesCallett, a junior biology major.

On the other hand, when asked about the extended celebration, Deborah Roberts, a sophomore political science major said, "I'm not really sure how well it's going to go over, but it's definitely worth a try."

Because of the low student morale, more publicity and more events may help get more people involved, said Roberts.

"Since Mardi Gras in New Orleans is just around the corner, the committee and I felt a Mardi Gras theme was most appropriate for our celebration. The theme of Homecoming '97 is 'The Mardi Party,'" said Hagans.

"I think they did a good job of picking a theme for this year, especially for those of us who actually can't attend Mardi Gras," said Bridgett Sneed, a junior music major.

"Homecoming weekend (Feb. 7-9) officially kicks off on Friday afternoon, Feb. 7, at 4:30 p.m. with the Mardi Gras Parade, which will be held on University Heights. The Homecoming parade was very popular here at UNCA during the 1970's and the committee and I thought that it was time for us to bring a parade back to the celebration. Currently, we have over 40 entries," said Hagans.

Kristina Abernathy, a 1993 UNCA graduate and a meteorologist from "The Weather Channel" will lead the Homecoming parade as Grand Marshall, said Hagans.

The Homecoming Planning Committee urges those students, faculty, staff, and alumni who have children to bring them to the parade, said Hagans.

Many other events highlight this week.

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### Martin Luther King Jr. commemorated



PHOTO BY DEL DeLORM

Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs James Pitts spoke at a march honoring the civil rights leader on Jan. 23.

## Biotechnology grant awarded to UNCA

By Catharine Sutherland  
Staff Writer

The North Carolina Biotechnology Center announced a grant in the amount of \$17,625 to UNCA's biology department in its Jan. 16 newsletter, declaring UNCA one of seven universities to receive an award.

The grant money, awarded through the center's Education Enhancement Grants Program, will pay for equipment necessary to update experiments in cell biology and parasitology classes next year, said Diane Melroy, assistant professor of biology.

Melroy, who applied for the grant last Aug. in a 24-page proposal entitled "Incorporating Immunochimistry into Biology Laboratory Experiences," considers the new equipment essential to providing a competitive scientific education.

"Currently, UNCA students who are interested in pursuing a biotechnology-based career or going to graduate school in a field dependant on biotechnology suffer in comparison with similar students at larger institutions," said Melroy, naming a lack of funds as the reason for the disadvantage.

"We don't have as much equipment as we need in labs, which is a little disappointing," said Laura Branden, a sophomore biology major currently enrolled in cell biology, her third laboratory class at UNCA.

Senior Kathryn Emino, also a biology major, agreed.

"I definitely think some improvements could be made," she said. "I think it would be beneficial to be exposed to more recent technology and equipment that would be comparable to what people would be using in a job."

Today, preparation for a job in the biology world means studying biotechnology, a collection of new scientific techniques that use living cells and their molecules to make products or solve problems. The biotechnology industry currently employs 16,000 North Carolinians, a number expected to jump to 100,000 in the next 20 years, according to the North Carolina Biotechnology Center.

The center aims to help build a trained work force to support the state's growing biotechnology industry through its grant program.

The award given to Melroy will serve its purpose, enabling her to purchase expensive equipment such as a minigel apparatus, a micro centrifuge, and a Polaroid

gel documentation system. She will use the new equipment to teach students immunochemical techniques important to the study of biotechnology.

"Immunochimical techniques offer powerful mechanisms for identifying, quantifying, and isolating biological molecules," said Melroy, who studied the techniques in-depth during her postdoctoral research at the U.S. Department of Agriculture and deemed them vital to much of the research and clinical work carried out by professional biologists today.

"Our students need to know the power of these techniques and must be introduced to their methodology before going on to careers in biology or to graduate school," she said.

However, in order to ensure a meaningful experience for each student, Melroy not only needs specialized equipment, but enough of it to go around.

"Although we currently have one of each item, it does not give the students a satisfactory hands-on experience to watch gels being made, loaded, and run by an instructor or by one of their classmates," said Melroy.

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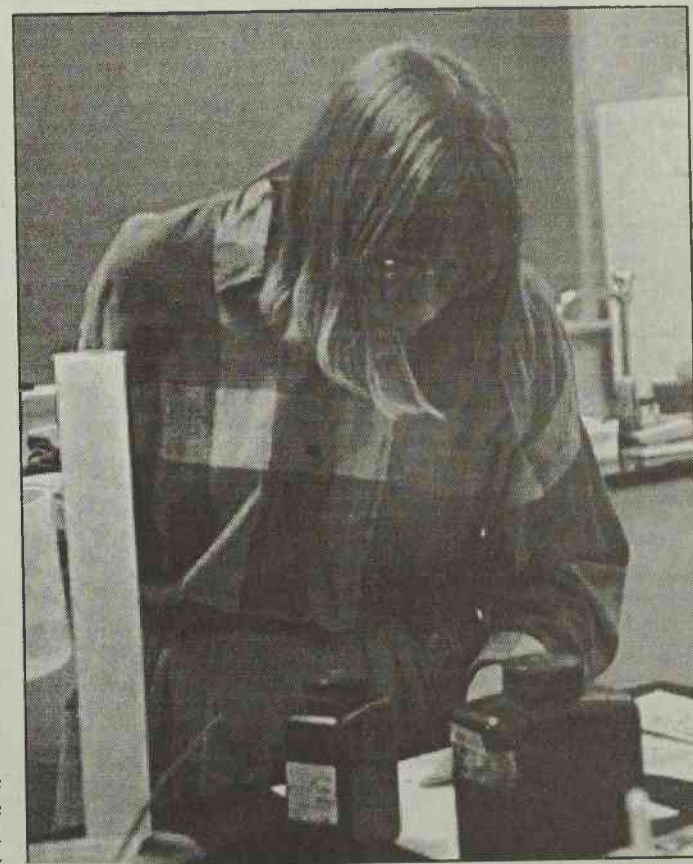


PHOTO BY BONNER BUTLER

Diane Melroy, assistant professor of biology, applied for and received the \$17,625 grant last August.