

## Student Loans: Second part in student debt series

By Shelley Eller  
Staff Writer

The financial aid office granted 4 million dollars in student loans during the 1995-96 academic year, according to the office of financial aid at UNCA.

"We've already exceeded that amount for this school year. Student loans go through quicker now because of the Direct Loan program."

"Before the program, we were at the lenders mercy. We have more control now. We can now approve a check for a student in less than 48 hours. The business office then prepares the check. In less than a week, a student can have a check in hand," said Carolyn McElrath, director of financial aid.

For some students, however, obtaining a loan can be long process. "It was really hard for me to get my loan," said Becky Simpkins, a senior majoring in Spanish.

"When I got married, I went through a lot of verifications that slowed down the process. I applied for my loan in September and got it two days after fall semester was over."

Another student also waited a long time to obtain her loan.

"It was a very lengthy process for me," said Amy Campbell, a senior psychology major. "I applied in April and finally got an answer in December, after the time when I really needed it."

According to McElrath, students need to get financial aid forms in as soon as possible to minimize problems in obtaining loans.

"Funds go to the eligible person who has applied first," said McElrath.

There are numerous types of loans students can apply for, according to McElrath. These include the Stafford loan, which turns down no student regardless of income.

"I really didn't have any trouble getting my loan," said Alphonso Donaldson, a sophomore literature major. "I got the Stafford loan I needed without any problems."

The Stafford loan is categorized as subsidized or unsubsidized. The government pays interest on subsidized loans as long as the student is working toward an undergraduate degree or is attending graduate school.

It also allows a six month grace period after graduation before the student has to begin paying the interest and principle back.

Unsubsidized loans are for students with a larger source of income. The government does not pay interest on these loans.

McElrath said that interest on an unsubsidized loan begins accruing the day the student obtains the loan.

"The interest continues to accumulate throughout the student's college career," said McElrath.

"In this situation, the student has two options. They may either choose to pay the interest while they're in school to keep costs down or allow the interest to be capitalized or added to the principle of the loan."

"This increases the amount the student has to pay," said McElrath.

Other loans available include the Perkins loan. The loan is based on

need and allows students to borrow up to \$3,000 dollars a year.

A student in graduate school may borrow up to \$5,000 dollars with the loan. There is a nine month grace period after the student is no longer enrolled in college to begin making payments.

"It really wasn't that hard for me to get the loan I needed," said Carolina McCready, a junior majoring in environmental studies. "The biggest problem was all of the paperwork involved."

Another type of loan available is the PLUS loan. This loan is made out directly to the parents of a student. The government pays no interest on this loan. It is, instead, added onto the payment after the parent receives the second disbursement.

"I got a \$2,500 loan that helps me with my room and board and other expenses," said Sheri Carlon, a junior psychology major.

"It was a long process for me to get the loan because my dad lives out-of-state. I got it two days after fall semester started. This was a problem because I had to make sure my school schedule was still intact," said Carlon.

There are several payment plans available. "We have very flexible payment plans," said McElrath. They're optional for students.

The standard repayment plan allows students to pay \$50 per month for ten years, depending on the amount borrowed. There is also the extended repayment plan in which the student has 12 to 30 years to repay the loan.

"Also available is the income contingent repayment plan," said

McElrath.

"This plan is based on the students income. The amount of the payments adjust to the rise or fall of the income. Students can also get deferments in payment for a variety of reasons such as transferring to another school, attending graduate school or becoming ill."

"Since transferring from Purdue University, I now have to fill out a waiver form every semester because of the loan I took out there," said Shiley Brisini, a junior sociology major.

McElrath was concerned that students are sometimes contacted by scholarship services which charge them money to help find financial resources.

"The financial aid office discourages students from using the services," said McElrath. "We encourage them to save money by using the financial resources available at Ramsey library."

The financial aid office is currently holding sessions about financial aid for interested students. The next session will be held on March 3 between 12:15 p.m. and 1:30 p.m. These sessions allow students to become more aware of the financial resources available to them.

"The financial aid office will be conducting a Senior Salute during March 19 and March 20," said McElrath.

"This is a program designed to keep students aware of what they owe in loans. The program also presents ways for students to protect their credit and pay for graduate school. Ways to consolidate loans will be discussed as well."

## Aids

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HIV tests at UNCA cost \$20; however, an additional fee may be required, said Pyeritz. If the test results cannot be determined from a test or a test shows positive results, then the laboratory will conduct a second test in order to confirm the results. An additional fee accompanies the second test, said Pyeritz. "We get our test results back in three to five working days."

Once the test results come back to the UNCA Health Services office, they become confidential results. Confidential means that a name is associated with the test results. "The test results do go on a student's chart, but it is strictly confidential," said Pyeritz.

"Our confidentiality policy here at UNCA Health Services states that nothing can ever be released off a chart without a student's written permission. The only way a chart can ever be attained without a student's permission is if the chart has been subpoenaed for court," said Pyeritz.

The initial blood test leaves the office without a name or any other type of association to the student. Then, when the test results come back, they become a confidential part of a student's chart. "Five years after the last semester in which a student is ever seen here, the charts are shredded and burned," said Pyeritz.

The Buncombe County Health Department also offers HIV testing. These tests are done anonymously also, but there is no charge; however, it takes a minimum of two full weeks to get the test results back.

## THE BANNER

### WEEKEND WEATHER

Temperatures will be unseasonably warm as it rains on Friday and stays cloudy all weekend before dropping to the freezing point Sunday night.



#### FOR ASHEVILLE

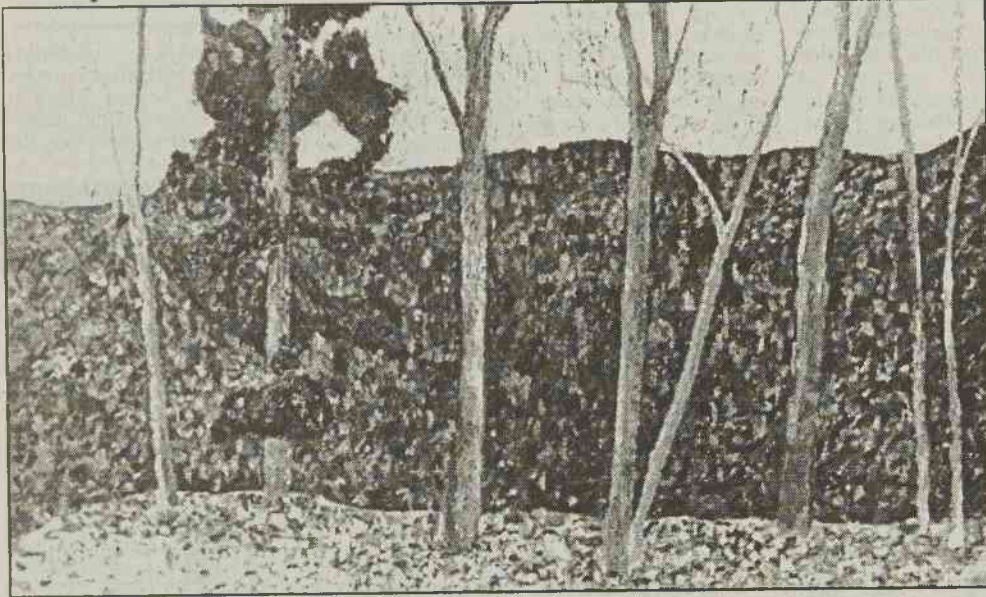
Fri. 61/41 rain  
Sat. 62/43 cloudy  
Sun. 57/32 partly cloudy

#### TRAVEL FORECAST

**ATLANTA**  
Fri. 68/48 cloudy  
Sat. 69/50 cloudy  
Sun. 64/43 partly cloudy  
**CHARLOTTE**  
Fri. 67/47 rain  
Sat. 68/47 cloudy  
Sun. 65/36 partly cloudy  
**GREENSBORO**  
Fri. 63/45 rain  
Sat. 65/43 cloudy  
Sun. 62/32 partly cloudy  
**KNOXVILLE**  
Fri. 58/43 cloudy  
Sat. 58/32 partly cloudy  
Sun. 57/32 partly cloudy  
**RALEIGH**  
Fri. 68/48 rain  
Sat. 67/46 cloudy  
Sun. 64/35 partly cloudy

For more information, call the UNCA Weatherline at 251-6435 or check out Atmospheric Science's homepage at [www.atms.unca.edu](http://www.atms.unca.edu). UNCA's snow line is 258-4846. Courtesy of the National Weather Service.

## Student landscape exhibit



An exhibit of UNCA student Rhett Thompson's landscape oil paintings will open Feb. 28 in Owen Hall's 2nd Floor Gallery and will continue through March 11. Thompson's paintings, all untitled, are styled in the impressionistic tradition.

### Marriott Specials for March 2nd to the 8th

**DINING HALL**

**Tuesday:** Hamburger BAR for Lunch

**Wednesday:** Blue Plate Special for LUNCH and PREMIUM Dinner

**Thursday:** Pizza Inn for Lunch

**DANTES**

TUESDAY: Salmon Pattie Sandwich, Chips, & Soda \$3.99

WEDNESDAY: Chicken & Cheese Quesadilla, Chips, & Drink \$3.99

FRIDAY: BBQ Sandwich, Chips, & Soda \$3.99

**CAFE RAMSEY**

TUESDAY: Salmon Pattie Sandwich, Chips, & Soda \$3.99

THURSDAY: Dagwood, Chips, & Soda \$3.99

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