

Perspectives

Student Government Association

By Adrian Valdivia

As the university moves ahead into the new millennium, it should have the flexibility to provide the educational and social basis to support all its students. As the role of this university is to provide a liberal arts education, then among other things, the university should provide its students with an education that prepares them to interact, not just in North Carolina, but in the world at large. A key element of this type of

education would be courses that teach the student not just about the beliefs and values of one particular group, but about many ethnic groups, so that the students are relatively at ease, whether they are in Moscow, Russia or Moscow, Idaho; in Paris, France, or Paris, Kentucky; in Lima, Peru, or Lima, Ohio; in Cairo, Egypt or Cairo, Illinois; in Canton, China or Canton, Mississippi. More importantly, such an education is important for

them to thrive in New York, Washington, Miami, San Antonio, or virtually any other American city which has a significant population of immigrants or their children.

This means that the university needs to teach about the general beliefs, values, thoughts and ideas of various parts of the world, not just of one section.

The university, in order to carry out its mission, needs to educate the students about the various major cultures in the world so that its students can not just survive, but can thrive in the United States and the rest of the world, in whatever cultural setting.

The university needs to provide its students knowledge about diversity.

History, as we learn it in the United States, has not been overly kind to non-European. We learn virtually nothing about the great civiliza-

tions of Egypt or China that were thriving when the Greeks were just entering the Bronze Age.

According to history as we learn it, the only people to have really done anything are those of European descent. And in areas where the Europeans encountered people of other groups or cultures, we are taught that the Europeans discovered these other people. That is to say that these other people were nothing nor had anything until their encounter with the Europeans. How egotistical!

In terms of philosophy, we hold persons such as Hegel and Kant as virtual gods, persons who put forth articles that glorified things European and demeaned things non-European.

This creates stereotypes and assumptions about other cultures. The university student needs to be exposed to a broad

range of thoughts that go beyond Kant's and Hegel's.

The student should know about the similarities between Judaism, Christianity and Islam.

The student should be aware of why persons outside of the United States also consider themselves Americans and yet, citizens of their own countries.

The student should know about the contributions of other civilizations. How aware are you of the Native American protest? Do you know how other conflicts like the Pakistan vs. India conflict directly or indirectly affect the United States of America?

Indeed, students need to be acquainted with the world at large. They not only need knowledge and training about the diversity of humanity, but about diversity in our natural sciences.

The best place for them to

receive this knowledge and training is in a liberal arts institution, an institution that not only has the task of imparting knowledge, but also the task of getting students to think critically so that they can go into the world capable of dealing with a variety of people and issues.

It is in our mission statement.

We are told that by the middle of the next century, white people will be in the minority in the United States (They already are in the world at large).

If they and all others in this country are to have the people skills to deal with the society as a whole, they need to learn about other groups, their value and the issues facing them.

It is not just one particular group that needs the training. As a student of color (from the underrepresented population), I believe that all groups

(including ethnicity, sexual preference, religious background, etc.) need the training so that we can all play, work and live together. So no matter our heritage, we come together as equals with pride in ourselves, knowledge of others, and the desire to have this country as a place where people are truly equal in mind, body and spirit.

A professor once told me that in order to tolerate other cultures we should "celebrate our differences not condemn them." I totally agree with him. For us to be the best we possibly can be when we pass through the portals to leave these hallowed halls of education, we should have had imparted to us, as a part of our education, knowledge about our diverse world, not just about one part of it.

Adrian Valdivia is the executive to the president of SGA.

Letters to the Editor

Provoking

Dear Editor,
I am writing to compliment *The Banner* and Shaun Cashman for his Nov. 18 opinion article "Spirit of Affirmative Action." As usual, Cashman probably offended some people.
Worthwhile opinions do. What I like about Cashman is that he offends the right people. Offending the minority is an easy thing. By consistently taking the unpopular side of an issue, Cashman gives us more than Stein and Rothman ever did.
It comes as no surprise that a public liberal arts college fights so-

cial problems the way it does. Angry voices are always the loudest ones but rarely the most logical ones. And here, very few voices differ from the loudest. What we need is an equal and alternative voice to counter. Change needs a free discourse. Without it, change is never necessarily for the better. When unpopular ideas are bullied into silence, discourse is impossible. I have noticed Cashman does not let himself be bullied. I hope that when he graduates, *The Banner* will seek an equally antagonistic columnist to take his place.
Thad Eckard
Senior, philosophy and multimedia arts and science

Applause to UNCA athletes

Dear Editor,
I am not sure the university community knows of the unselfish activities some of our student athletes perform.
Twice since I became ill last summer groups of athletes have come to my house and cheerfully taken care of work in my yard that I needed done and couldn't do, at least not safely.
I want to recognize them publicly: Nick McDevitt, John Risinger and Ben Ezell of the men's basketball team (accompanying by Eddie

Biedenbach, the coach); Aaron Rembert and Jason Ronai of the baseball team; Kelly Ratterman, women's soccer; Colin Barnes, men's soccer; Linwood Jaycocks, volleyball; and Stephanie Shuba, tennis.
Most of them are members of the Student Athletic Advisory Committee.
None are my students or, as far as I know, majors in my department.
They didn't have to help me out, but they did, and I thank them for it.
Merritt Moseley
Professor of literature

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Appalled

Dear Editor,
In doing research for our health and sexuality class, we were appalled at the numbers of incidences of rape that happened as a result of war.
Even more appalling was the amount of people indicted for rape during war that still remains unpunished.
Since World War II, over one million women have been raped in wars across the globe, yet only a small percentage of perpetrators

have been sentenced as criminals of war for ordering or committing rape.
By issuing indictments for rape, the international community sends a strong message demonstrating its views of violence against women in time of war. However, very few of those indicted actually have, so far, faced justice.
There is no doubt that rape is a crime, and since it is punishable in the United States, there is no reason why soldiers who commit rape out of boredom or frustration during war should not also receive the same punishment.

We respectfully request that you use your influence to press for more assertive action and awareness in this inhumane treatment of women in time of war.
Concerned Students at UNCA
The last days
Dear Editor,
I am writing this letter in response to my team.
This is my final year with the squad, and I just want to tell the team how I feel about them.

Well, I love you guys. You have been rough, we toughed it out together, side by side. So thanks for the ride guys, but my stop is here, and I have to get off. To the rest of you who get to keep on riding, make the most of it.
Marc Villegas
Senior, environmental science

Letters to the editor may be submitted to *The Banner* at One University Heights, 208A Carmichael Hall, Asheville, NC 28804, e-mailed to banner@unca.edu, or submitted via The Banner Online. Letters should be typed, single-spaced, and limited to 300 words or less. Submissions may be edited for space and content. Letters to the editor must be signed and include the author's classification and major or other relationship to UNCA.

Extracurricular Activism



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Letters should be typed, single-spaced, and should not exceed 300 words. Letters for publication should also contain the author's signature, classification, major or other relationship with UNCA. The deadline for letters is noon on Tuesday. If you have a submission, you can send it to *The Banner*, 208A Carmichael Hall, One University Heights, Asheville NC 28804.
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