

News

Diversity forum addresses faculty involvement

By Johanna Luks
Staff Writer

enrollment and minority students, according to West. These initiatives include an increase in advertising and hiring minority admissions representatives in Charlotte and at UNCA.

"The most difficult part of establishing diversity on campus is establishing that first generation of students," said Ben Blackwood, a sophomore literature major. "Once you can do that, it builds upon itself and turns into a cycle." More minority students have applied to UNCA this year than in previous years, according to West. There were 37 applications from minorities for fall 2000, an increase of 14 from the previous year.

"We feel like we're on the right track generating the types of applications we need," said West.

The goal of the enrollment office is to bring a wider pool of students to UNCA, according to West.

"Western North Carolina, in and of itself, doesn't really have very many minorities. So when you're trying to construct a minority base on campus, what you're basically trying to do is create an island in the middle of homogeneity," said Blackwood.

"There's really not any diversity in either realm" of faculty and student population, said Blackwood.

In addition to attracting a

more racially-diverse student body, there needs to be diversity within the faculty, according to Burchard.

"I think that our students of color don't see many (role) models that make it look possible to them that they can be (educators)," said Burchard.

UNCA faculty has already started diversifying their curricula by showing the value of diversity in the classes that they're teaching, according to Burchard.

"We show the value of diversity, how important it is to value the thinking and the experiences of those who are different from oneself," said Burchard.

One of the things that may explain the small number of minority students enrolled at UNCA is the lack of scholarships for minority students, according to West.

"We do not have a race-based scholarship here," said West. "In 1997, UNC-system President Molly Broad said there couldn't be any race-based scholarships in the UNC system."

Diversity is not limited to minorities, according to West and Burchard.

"I think we need to increase diversity in all kinds of ways. For instance, there is some population of gay and lesbian students here and some population of gay and lesbian fac-



PHOTO BY WALTER FYLER

Philip West, assistant vice chancellor for enrollment services, conducted a forum that focused on faculty involvement and diversification.

ulty," said Burchard.

"Increasing diversity means those that are gay and lesbian can feel more comfortable and open," said Burchard.

"We not only have to embrace diversity, we have to embrace different kinds," said Burchard.

In order to become a more

diverse campus, UNCA staff, faculty, administrators and students need to sit down and think about their own prejudices, according to Burchard.

"If we don't think about it we're going to continue to act on prejudices that most of us didn't even think that we had," said Burchard.

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