

The Blue Banner

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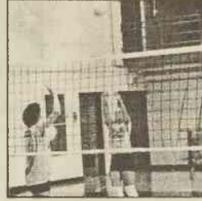
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500 freshmen in 2000 class

Sachie Godwin
Staff Writer

Some students are concerned that, with the largest freshmen class in UNCA history, the school may not be able to maintain the atmosphere that attracts so many students while trying to increase enrollment and diversity.

"The school is growing too fast, and it's taking away from the quality of our education," said Cicily Moore, a junior environmental studies major. "It's a good school, and I know a lot of people want to be here. I can't blame them for that. I just hope (the school) makes the right decisions. I don't want them to expand the campus anymore."

UNCA has been named a "best buy" among American colleges for the seventh year in a row by the Fiske Guide to Colleges. The Guide says UNCA offers "rigorous aca-

demics, small classes and a beautiful setting."

"UNCA offers remarkable educational opportunities at a relatively modest cost," according to the Fiske Guide.

The first-year student class has increased over the past five years. In 1995 there were 397 students; 455 in 1996; 473 in 1997; 480 in 1998; 460 in 1999 and 501 in 2000, as of Aug. 21, according to the Office of Institutional Research.

"I came for the curriculum. It has a good reputation," said Dexter Kelly, an undeclared freshman from South Mecklenburg High School in Charlotte. "Teachers seem to really care about the students."

Most freshmen came to UNCA for the small classes and campus, as well as the individual attention from professors. Other reasons cited by



PHOTO BY WALTER FYLER

Amy Quesinberry, Porscha Yount, Amanda Bowman.

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Diversification aim of position

Justin Wolf
Staff Writer

UNCA has increased its multicultural awareness this year by adding a new staff position that focuses directly on diversity. Brenda Greene, the first special assistant to the chancellor for diversity and multicultural affairs, has been asked to address several of these issues in her first year on campus.

"I see my role as not only being responsible for ethnic populations, but for international students, disabled, (the) gay and lesbian population, and non-traditional students and faculty," said Greene. "My door is open to all areas of diversity."

Greene received a liberal arts education from Spellman College, and received her master's degree at Xavier University, another liberal arts institution. Her background, along with several other factors, attracted her to the UNCA cam-

pus.

"The first thing I noticed on this campus was the positive attitude of the students and how friendly they were to me, even if they didn't know me," said Greene. "The main selling point, however, was the chancellor's message, and what he is trying to get across to the students and to the community."

Some students, along with Greene, feel that diversity is present at UNCA, but can be improved.

"Coming from a small town, I was inexperienced in dealing and communicating with a diverse number of people. UNCA opened my eyes to new cultures and the way in which they interact," said Phillip Moore, a 1998 graduate and alumnus of UNCA. "But

diversity can still be increased tremendously."

"For a liberal arts university, there is still a lack of cultural exposure."

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Athletic director hired



PHOTO BY JUSTIN MECKES

Joni Comstock, athletic director, was hired by UNCA in June.

Annie Crandall
Staff Writer

Joni Comstock, former senior associate athletic director at Purdue University, recently became the athletic director at UNCA and plans to develop a program that would create student traditions.

"Overall, we would like to do our part to connect with the students at UNCA and develop some traditions that they take pride in," said Comstock. "There are

wonderful athletic things happening here at UNCA, as well as academics."

One of Comstock's goals is to increase awareness about UNCA athletics for students and the community.

"We would like to develop a program that has even greater interest on campus, and in the community, and one that the students and community are proud of," said Comstock. "One of the primary goals is to get the word out."

"I am very pleased to be joining UNCA and the Asheville community," said Comstock. "I am

looking forward to having the opportunity to work with a strong staff and talented student athletes."

The search for a new athletic director began when Tom Hunnicutt, former athletic director, retired on April 15, 2000.

"We have hired one of the top athletic administrators in the country to lead our athletic department to another level, and build on the fine job that Hunnicutt did while he was here," said Mullen in a UNCA press release.

"Hunnicutt has left the athletic department poised for even greater success, and I am honored to be following him," said Comstock.

Mike Gore, associate director of athletics, said that it is too early to tell how the players interact with the new director.

"She has only been here for five weeks, and she was hired over the summer, but I think she has done a great job meeting as many people as possible. Comstock brings wonderfully fresh ideas," said Gore.

With more than 20 years experience, Comstock was chosen from a pool of community leaders, campus leaders and alumni, and went through what she said was a very extensive search process.

Gore said that a 17-person committee was selected to choose the new director.

"Comstock was at the top of the list throughout the whole process. She really improved the entire athletic department at Purdue," said Gore.

"We feel fortunate to have her here. It's always a little tough to make the transition, but she has done it more smoothly than I've ever seen it done before," said Gore.

Phil Murphy, a search commit-

tee member and local businessman, said he is pleased with the selection.

"We had four strong candidates in here to interview, but Comstock clearly stood out as the best of the four," said Murphy. "There is no question that she'll do a great job for UNCA."

Comstock is a 1979 graduate of Eastern Illinois University with a degree in physical education and health promotion. She earned her master's degree from Illinois State in educational administration in 1981.

She received her doctorate in 1987 from the University of Illinois, in administration of higher education.

Comstock had been at Purdue since 1989. She was an assistant athletic director, where she directed seven women's athletic programs from 1989-1993. She was then promoted to an associate athletic director, and directed 13 programs and staffs.

In 1997, Comstock was promoted to senior associate athletic director, where she took on an increase of personnel plus the administration of the sports medicine program.

One of the things she said she is most proud of is the victory of the women's basketball team over Duke University (62-45) and capturing the national championship title for Purdue. Comstock had hired the women's team coach, Carolyn Peck.

"We were able to raise academic performance, athletic performance and the fundraising support to the athletic department," said Comstock.

She served on the NCAA women's basketball selection committee, and on the NCAA Certification Steering Committee in 1997-98.

Highsmith undergoes facelift

\$12.5 million still needed to complete construction

Kay Alton
Staff Writer

Highsmith Center's new repairs and renovation completed this spring and summer only meet the immediate, emergency needs, due to a lack of state funding, according to a representative of Highsmith Center.

"The Chancellor and his vice chancellor group provided \$100,000" to replace a deteriorated and leaking roof, ceiling tiles and flooring in the public areas of the building, said Sharyn McDonald Groh, director of the Highsmith Center and student activities.

The funds for the remaining renovations and addition to Highsmith will be decided by N.C. voters in a bond referendum on Nov. 7.

The \$3.1 billion bond package includes necessary funding for all public university campuses, with \$50 million going to UNCA for projects and renovations. Out of the \$50 million, \$9.4 million will go towards the estimated \$12.5 million Highsmith project, according to a UNCA Board of Trustees press release.

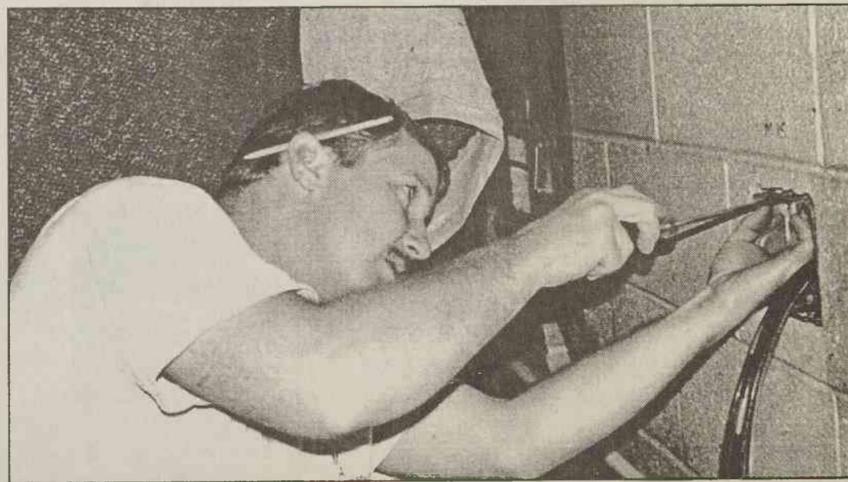


PHOTO BY JUSTIN MECKES

A construction worker focuses on his work as part of the continuing Highsmith Center renovations.

"If that money comes, if the bond issue passes, (and) UNCA, along with all the other (universities), gets the money they've asked for, then the major part of the renovation will start—probably within two years," said McDonald Groh.

"UNCA students can most help by going to vote and calling family members and friends who live in N.C. and asking them to vote 'yes' for the bond referendum during the presidential election, Nov. 7," said McDonald Groh.

If the referendum fails, student fees will have to be increased just to maintain the present building in good repair, according to McDonald Groh.

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