

# The Blue Banner

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## UNCA plans \$3.2 million arts center

Downtown building to connect UNCA with community through performance and visual art



PHOTO BY SARAH LACY

The vacant JCPenney building on Battery Park Avenue downtown has been slated as the future home of an arts center that will bring UNCA and the Asheville community together.

Emma Jones  
Editor-in-Chief

The UNCA administration plans to purchase a three-story building downtown for an arts center that would serve as a performance and display hub for the fine arts programs on campus, according to the chair of the art department.

"This could truly change the dynamics of the university," said Tucker Cooke, chair of the art department and a participant in the planning of the new center.

The facility is a needed addition to the university and the community, according to Hague Williams, a senior art and multi-media arts and sciences major.

"I think it is a fantastic idea, and a perfect way to integrate the university into the community," said Williams.

In response to years of gallery shortages, cramped programs and outdated facilities, UNCA administration has taken action to secure the vacant JCPenney building for the center, according to Cooke.

"Students cannot graduate because the gallery space is

filled up for the next two years," said Williams. "We have art students doing fantastic work, but they're dealing with all kind of terrible elements."

The building, located on Battery Park Avenue, has been purchased for \$1.2 million by an "angel" donor, a person whose identity the university does not know, to give the university time to campaign for the needed money. UNCA will purchase the building from the angel donor as soon as the money has been raised. In the meantime, the building will be leased to the university for

planning. "Once we purchase the building, we will still need to do major renovations. I think it is going to be at least a year before you see programs active in the building," said Beverly Modlin, the vice chancellor of university relations.

In addition to the \$1.2 million needed for the purchase, the 54,000-square-foot building will require around \$2 million to renovate, according to Cooke. All of the money will have to come from private donations.

"We will be approaching businesses and people interested in the arts to make contributions," said Cooke.

The fundraising is being handled by the UNCA Foundation, a group of community businesses and individuals whose focus is to raise money for UNCA. Using the Foundation for the hub of the arts center campaign will allow the university to bypass the state processes involved with the acquisition of a campus-related property, according to Modlin.

Despite the fact that there have been recent fundraising campaigns for the university, the planning committee does not foresee any problems with raising the extra money for the arts center, according to Chancellor Jim Mullen.

"There is a desire in (Asheville) for the university to reach out and be in the community," said Mullen.

In a recent meeting, it was decided that the arts center drive would be a separate campaign from the university's ongoing one, according to Modlin. Cooke said he thinks that a project-specific approach to raising the needed funds will be more efficient and have better results.

"There are people who would not give to a general campaign, but who, if you name a specific cause, get so excited that they say, 'This is a great thing, and I want to be involved,'" said Cooke.

Collecting the cash payments for donors' pledges will be a crucial part of the next year for the Foundation, according to Modlin.

"When you are doing a fundraiser, you chart your progress by pledges," said Modlin. "You cannot buy a building on pledges, so we need to be working very carefully with our donors to try to accelerate their pledge payments."

The departments included in the use of the new space are art, dance, drama, creative writing, multi-media arts and sciences, music and any other discipline that could use a forum for creative expression, according to Cooke.

"We want to create a coming together of all these ingredients in a kind of symbiotic relationship," said Cooke.

Though one of the main

thrusters of the center will be creating performance and gallery space, another focus will be providing workspaces in the form of studios, dark-rooms and practice areas that will be accessible for public viewing, further incorporating the community into the center, according to Cooke.

"There will be studios you

can actually look into, see classes and watch the progress of a painting from its first conception to the finished project," said Cooke.

The main floor display windows that face Battery Park Avenue will most likely be

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PHOTO BY SARAH LACY

Scott Walter, chair and assistant professor of drama and John Kundert-Gibbs, director and assistant professor of multi-media art and sciences, and Rob Bowen, associate professor of drama, take in the view from the roof of the JCPenney building.

## WebMail will succeed Pine

Justin Wolf  
Staff Writer

WebMail, a new e-mail service, will take the place of Pine, an e-mail program that some students said was outdated and inaccessible at times.

"WebMail gives good e-mail functionality to our student population, and it gives them the ability to access their accounts easily from wherever they are," said Kern Parker, director of the computer center. "A lot of students use a combination of accounts to do their school e-mail and recreational e-mail, but WebMail can eliminate this hassle by being their sole account."

However, many students are already using alternate e-mail programs, because Pine was limited in its functionality, and do not plan to begin using WebMail.

"I have not checked my Bulldog account in over a year because it was so frustrating to use," said Randy Davis, a senior sociology major. "I might think about changing back now, but I am pretty set in my ways with my Microsoft e-mail."

"I did not use my Bulldog account

on Pine at all. It was useless most of the time, because I could not even access it from outside of campus," said Craig Lewis, an alumnus. "Eventually I just got a Hotmail account and used that for all of my e-mail. It is good to know that UNCA finally changed."

While many returning students may not take the time to switch over to the new program, the computer center did give out WebMail accounts to all incoming freshmen and sent a campus-wide message to students telling them of the new program.

"We introduced it totally to the new freshman class and we have had great adoption," said Parker. "We are trying to move into an environment where the Bulldog account is your official e-mail for university communications and much more."

While the Pine program will not be phased out, because some students prefer to use it, the new system will offer students many new possibilities, according to Parker.

"Current e-mail software, such as WebMail, use a Web interface and

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## Students object to new program

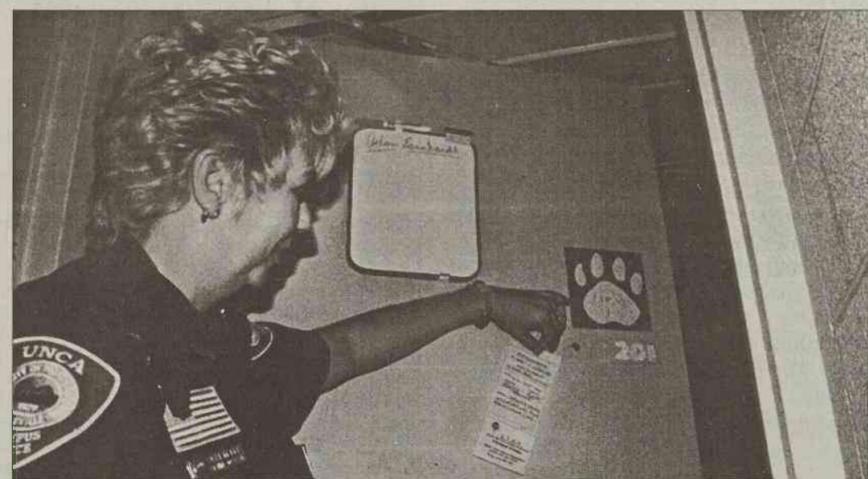


PHOTO BY JUSTIN MECKES

Vicki Harris, public safety victim/witness officer, puts a theft awareness pamphlet on an open door.

Sachie Godwin  
Staff Writer

Several students object to public safety's new Safety Tips & On-Campus Prevention (STOP) flyer program, which was started to address the recent thefts on campus.

"They are invading our privacy," said Jennifer Dintsch, an undeclared sophomore. "I just do not think they have the right to go into our

rooms, even if it is a public safety (officer). This is the wrong way to do it."

Vicki Harris, public safety victim/witness officer, began the STOP campaign the last week of August. Officers put the STOP flyers in dorm rooms and offices that they find unlocked or with the door standing open.

"We slip one under the door or leave one in the room or the office, just to let them know it would have been very easy for someone to come by and pick something up if they

wanted to," said Jerry Adams, public safety investigator.

While the program is a good idea, its effectiveness is questionable, according to Dintsch.

"The flyers are a good way to make people aware," said Dintsch. But, "they should not be going into rooms. People are not going to lock their doors unless they want to."

Tracy Burkhardt, a sophomore accounting major, said, "I understand her concern, but I do not see why it is a big deal to them. If something is stolen, it is our responsibility, our

fault."

Both Harris and Adams said that these are crimes of opportunity.

"People do not have to look very hard. The students make it easy for someone that is going to (steal) to do it and get away with it," said Harris.

There have been 10 thefts since the beginning of school, according to Adams.

"Theft is a problem this semester, and it is very easy for someone to take something when the door has been left unlocked," said Adams. "A lot of these larcenies could have been prevented."

According to the annual security report, thefts have increased at UNCA from five in 1997 to 56 in 1998. The statistics for last year will be available when the new report comes out at the end of this month.

"It has been a problem here at this university in the past few years," said Adams. "I have seen a steady increase of larceny reports."

The recent thefts have occurred at various times in the evening and in the middle of the day.

"We have not changed the way we patrol, but as a department, we are more aware of the increase in thefts," said Adams. "In some instances there was not a whole lot we could have done any different."

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