



Karpen damage worries students

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Students concerned about approximately 24 large cracks connecting windows and walls in Karpen Hall stairwells have no need to worry, according to university officials.

"This is something we're aware of," said Associate Vice Chancellor Stephen Baxley. "We've monitored

this off and on during the last 14 years, and in some cases, we've noticed a little bit of change, but nothing alarming."

Several students expressed concern about the damage, despite Baxley's reassurance.

"You'd think this would be structurally unsound," junior student Baily Griffith said as she stopped to look at a crack twisting up the wall of a second-story Karpen

Hall stairwell. "Especially since it runs floor to ceiling."

Griffith said she chooses to walk through the stairwell every day because elevators make her uneasy, but the cracks also worry her.

"Maybe I will start taking the elevators," Griffith said.

Junior computer science student Brian Moretz said he noticed the cracks last semester and wondered where they came from, though he

is not concerned about his safety.

"It definitely detracts from the looks of the building," Moretz said.

The problems with Karpen Hall date back to its construction in 1991, according to Baxley and David Todd, director of facilities management.

"We're getting what's called differential settlement," Baxley said.

Baxley, who has a back-

ground in civil engineering, said he thought the construction company did not compact the soil under the building correctly and the cracks may be attributed to a poor foundation. Construction of Karpen Hall finished before Baxley began his position at UNC Asheville.

Baxley said uncompacted soil under a building settles into the ground at different rates.

Griffith, standing in the

north stairwell in Karpen Hall, followed a nearly six-foot crack up the wall. The crack starts at a window, working its way to the ceiling with a small, white device showing ruler-markings in its path.

"That says to me: 'Danger! Must fix immediately,' she said.

This device monitors the cracks' growth over time.

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News in brief

Petraeus hands over duties

On Tuesday, General Petraeus, who oversaw the "surge" of more than 30,000 U.S. troops in Iraq, handed jurisdiction to his former deputy, General Ray Odierno.

Petraeus spent 20 months as the first commander of the Multi-National Security Transition Command-Iraq, a position created to mentor Iraq's growing Army.

Obama, McCain on economy

Recent political smearing for both Democrats and Republicans is taking a backseat to the nation's increasing financial crisis, according to an article from the Associated Press.

With the economy facing historic upheavals in U.S. financial markets, each presidential candidate is grappling for perfect responses to economic fears.

Biden in Charlotte

Democratic vice presidential candidate Sen. Joe Biden made the first visit to North Carolina by any of the major candidates since the conventions.

His speech at Charlotte's Phillip O. Berry Academy addressed Republican John McCain's statement assuring the economy is "fundamentally strong."

Asheville gas prices

Gas prices set record highs in Asheville on Sunday, with many stations unable to even provide the expensive fuel.

Gov. Mike Easley declared a state of "abnormal market distribution" and allowed the attorney general to enforce North Carolina's anti-gouging law, in response to consumer complaints of alleged gas gouging by stations in the city.

Smithfield controversy erupts

Coalition of groups raises awareness about meat plant conditions

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Six UNC Asheville student organizations united last week to form Students for Conscious Consumption, a coalition aimed at fighting what it says are abusive working conditions at a North Carolina hog slaughter and processing plant.

UNCA once purchased meat from the Tar Heel, N.C. Smithfield Foods packing plant, the largest pork processing plant in the world, before switching to an alternative source.

"We have been trying to communicate with the UNCA dining services to address the Smithfield issue," said junior student Andi Mariategui, who represents Amnesty International in the coalition. "We know that UNCA is a very moral institution, so we can use our buying power to help fight the issues at Smithfield."

UNCA no longer purchases meat from the plant, said Danny Dawkins, senior director of dining services.

"Only one item was ever purchased for the UNCA dining hall from the Tar Heel plant," Dawkins said. "We have since found a different vendor from whom we now purchase our pork."

The plant employs about 5,000 employees who slaughter and process approximately 32,000 hogs every day.

"On average, two injuries occur there every day," said Hope Marasco, a community organizer with the Smithfield Justice Campaign.

Smithfield provides on-site health care at the Tar Heel plant, because there is a lack of affordable health care alternatives in the area, the company states.

"The company only pays the medical bills if the employees go to see the Smithfield doctor. Afterwards, they are sent right back to work. That way, no mention of an injury appears on the (Occupational Safety and Health Administration's) records."

OSHA periodically investigates whether companies comply with their regulations, but there is little to draw their attention to the Smithfield plant without noticeable records of absences, Marasco said.

The Smithfield Justice



SUSAN TERRY - STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Junior interdisciplinary student Andi Mariategui, cofounder of Students for Conscious Consumption, speaks last week at an inaugural lunch meeting in Highsmith University Union.

"We know UNCA is a very moral institution, so we can use our buying power to help fight the issues at Smithfield."

ANDI MARIATEGUI

Junior interdisciplinary student

Campaign is a statewide organization formed this year to improve conditions at the plant.

The consortium of student organizations who joined to form Students for Conscious Consumption consists of Amnesty

International, Hispanic Outreach for Learning and Awareness, Students for a Democratic Society, College Democrats, the American Civil Liberties Union and Active Students for a Healthy Environment.

The coalition hosted sev-

eral on-campus events last week to inform UNCA students about alleged labor law violations at the plant.

At a panel discussion in Highsmith University Union on Sept. 11, Smithfield workers, labor union organizers and members of the Justice at Smithfield Campaign offered details about the working conditions and what other people can do to help the cause.

The campaign alleges plant workers face inhumane working conditions, and management quickly

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Students raise privacy concerns

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UNC Asheville does not sell student information but provides it to certain organizations and individuals on a case-by-case basis, according to university officials.

"We do not sell directory information but if there are persons that request it, we require the request to be in writing and to state specifically what pieces of directory information they want," said registrar Debbie Race.

UNCA releases names, addresses and phone numbers because the information is considered directory information — public, much like phone book entries, according to Race.

"The release of mailing addresses is technically not considered an invasion of privacy," she said. "If (students) don't want the mail, they can just trash it."

Officials release the information for a variety of reasons. If an organization wishes to send scholarship information to all environmental studies students, for example, they can request names and addresses.

Other types of directory information include: date and place of birth, entrance status, classification, major field of study, participation in officially recognized activities and sports, weight and height of members of athletic teams, dates of attendance, degrees and awards received (including Dean's List, Chancellor's List and scholarships) and the most recent educational agency or institution a student previously attended.

Several students expressed concern that the university would make their personal information available.

The school has no right to give out information without our permission," said J.P. Dozier, junior math student. "They need to make it clearer they're going to release our information. I never knew

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