

# Campus considers free-speech wall



PHOTOS BY KATIE MURRAY - STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

City government officials allowed artists to paint murals under a downtown bridge to help stem the recent spread of graffiti in Asheville. UNC Asheville Student Government Association hopes similar art and graffiti will cover the proposed free speech wall. Proponents of the wall wish to see it in a centralized location near Highsmith.

Despite concerns raised after a recent incident at N.C. State, SGA moves ahead with plan for new public forum

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A free speech graffiti wall might adorn the UNC Asheville campus soon, despite recent controversy over such a forum at North Carolina State University.

"We're banking on the good will of UNCA students to typically want to live in a good, coexisting environment," said Courtney Galatioto, chair of the Student Government Association Aesthetics Committee. "I don't really see that being a problem, but it's a good reason to sort of pause and go into this with a level head, to sort of see what can be done."

The Aesthetics committee, in conjunction with campus officials, is drawing up a proposal concerning how much the wall might cost and where it would be located.

The committee wants the wall to be near Highsmith Student Union and considers an existing wall between Highsmith and Mills Hall the ideal location, because it's centrally located and already exists.

Galatioto, sophomore classics and history student, referred to a group of students at N.C. State who wrote racial slurs and threats toward Barack Obama on the university's free speech wall.

The graffiti sparked controversy, because it contained death threats. The Secret Service investigated the case and determined the writings posed no danger to the president-elect. The issue still fuels de-



PHOTOS BY KATIE MURRAY - STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

The murals located on either side of the I-26 overpass on Lexington Avenue were painted by a collection of local artists.

bate, with organizations like the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People urging the university to expel the students.

"How do you censor a free speech wall?" Austin Mack, a freshman SGA senator, asked. "We don't want anybody to be in control of it. We don't want it to be (SGA's) wall."

Mack said if SGA or another organization took control of the wall, whatever they decided to remove would be censorship.

"What happens at places

"We will probably wait to submit a final proposal at the beginning of next semester to let stuff at N.C. State blow over."

COURTNEY GALATIOTO  
 Student Government Association

like Greensboro and Duke is that if people didn't like something, they'd spray paint

over it. There are not, until recently, usually threats and extremely offensive things,"

Galatioto said.

Being able to both write anything you want on the wall and have the student body - not an organization - cover it up and replace it with something else makes it a free speech forum, Mack said. Nonetheless, the recent events at N.C. State gave SGA a reason to pause and think about possible outcomes of such a public expression forum.

"Technically, they said it

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## Vandals strike school buildings

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Large scratch marks decorate a pane of glass looking into room 104 in Highsmith Student Union, one of many acts of vandalism that have occurred around campus since the start of the semester.

"A lot of the vandalism that has been reported has been vulgar words, different people's nicknames like T.R.I.D.E., and then you had the M.O.M.S. and some were just pictures," Detective Sergeant B.J. Bayne said.

Bayne heads the vandalism investigation. According to police reports numerous acts of tagging are showing up.

Glass in Highsmith Student Union, Governors Hall and Founders Hall, as well as a mirror in Highsmith need to be replaced due to the damage sustained from someone carving into the glass.

"Housekeeping has looked for different ways to fix the glass without replacing it since there are kits you can buy to fill in the scratches," Bayne said.

"Apparently it won't work on big surface areas so once you add up the glass in the dorms and Highsmith along with the mirrors in the bathroom in Highsmith, it's gotten pretty expensive."

Current estimates for fix-

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## Television viewing affects media bias

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Republicans and heavy television viewers likely perceive unfavorable bias in the news, according to research conducted by mass communication students at UNC Asheville last October.

"It was very interesting to see the responses of television viewers in relation to their political beliefs," said Susan Terry, 26, senior mass communication student. "I was surprised at the results."

Students conducted the 2008 Western North Carolina Poll in the first two weeks of October on behalf of the Asheville Center for Social Research, an on-campus organization. From an on-campus phone bank,

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### News

New development raises community hopes, concerns.



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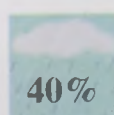
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Student starts experimental music project



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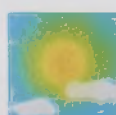
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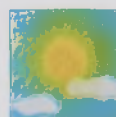
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