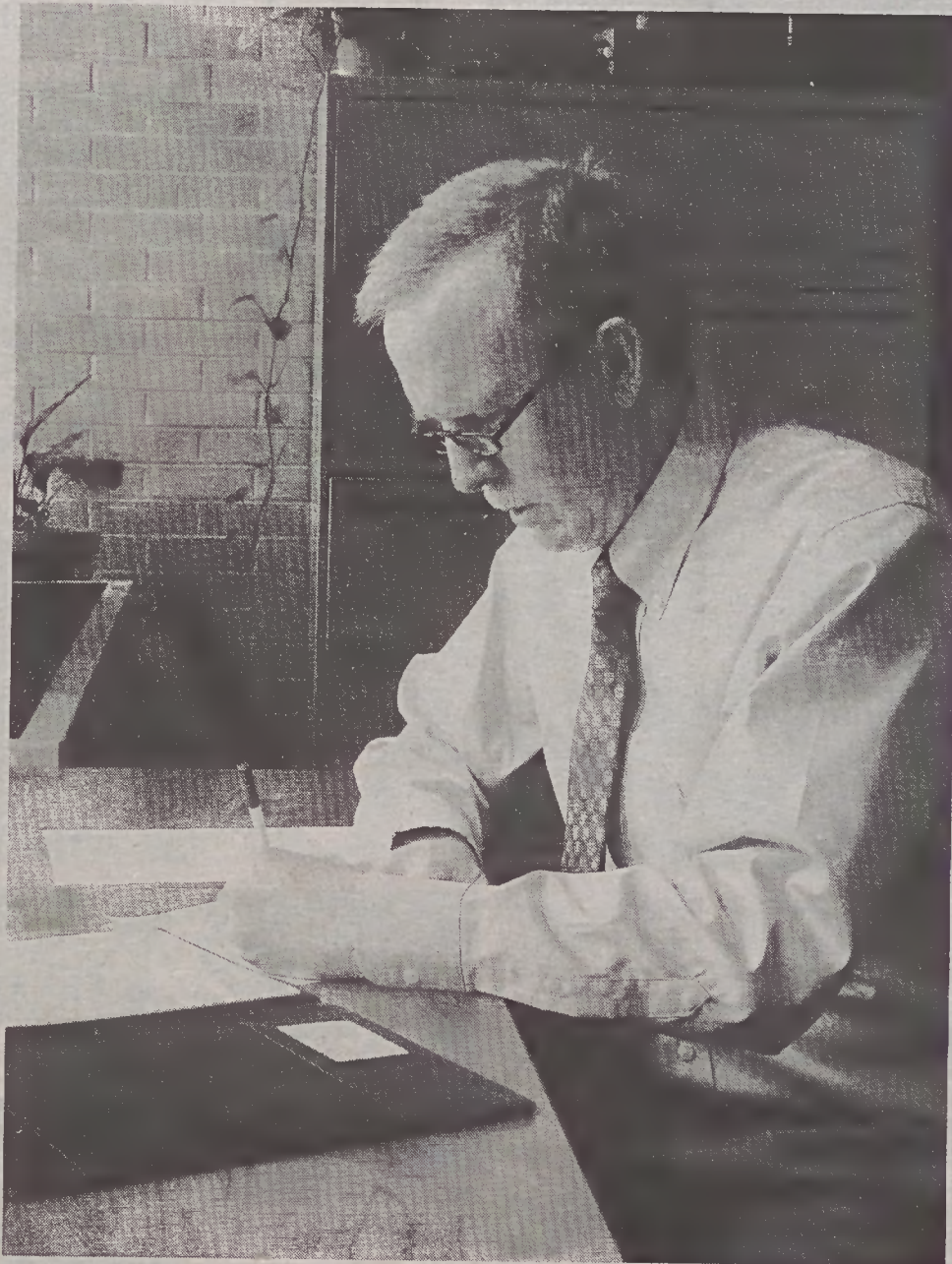


# COPLAC finds home at UNCA

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Susan Terry - Staff Photographer

**Bill Spellman begins his position as COPLAC's executive director in March.**

Students share Spellman's enthusiasm on the potential benefits of COPLAC at UNCA.

"I would love to be a part of an exchange program with other campuses," business student John Savard said. "UNCA's liberal arts requirements can be demanding, but at the same time, it is good for us to have a more rounded education than other schools. I think by COPLAC being here it will give students a better understanding of liberal arts."

UNCA Junior Maureen McManus agrees with Savard and plans to learn more about COPLAC and its benefits.

"I love that UNCA is a liberal arts

school," McManus said. "I like dabbling in everything rather than being intensely focused on one thing. Also, I love the interaction rather than just doing research all the time."

According to students, COPLAC's plan to increase their involvement on and away from UNCA is hopeful.

"I can use COPLAC to my advantage," McManus said. "If these institutions are championing the cause of liberal arts education, I think it will help me out in the long run, even after I get out of school."

Students said they are proud having a UNCA native as a national representative.

UNC Asheville now hosts the national headquarters for the Council of Public Liberal Arts Colleges. A national search committee named UNCA history professor and director of the Masters of Liberal Arts Program Bill Spellman COPLAC's first full-time executive director.

"UNC Asheville is a founding member of COPLAC, and hosting this national organization will bring new attention to our undergraduate liberal arts mission," Spellman said. "UNC Asheville will advance its reputation as an important voice in the national conversation about the value of liberal arts education in the 21st century."

Spellman assumes his duties March 1. He will be responsible for programming, external representation and communications for COPLAC.

"As director, I will be focusing on developing new learning opportunities for students and faculty at the 25 COPLAC institutions," Spellman said. "These may include study away student exchanges, theme-based summer courses, short-term faculty exchanges and possible undergraduate research conferences."

Spellman started teaching at UNCA in 1988, serving as UNCA's campus representative to COPLAC since 2001.

"For me the public liberal arts option represents access and opportunity, the democratization of the liberal arts experience," Spellman said. "Students should be able to attend public universities that emphasize close student-faculty interaction, small class size, interdisciplinary study, service learning and undergraduate research. The liberal arts college experience should not be limited to the private sector."

Spellman holds a doctorate in history from Syracuse University.

He received awards including UNCA's Distinguished Teacher Award and the Ruth and Leon Feldman Professorship for scholarship and service.

"I am hopeful that students will be able to take advantage of semester and year-long exchanges at member campuses," Spellman said. "We also plan to develop a COPLAC electronic undergraduate research journal and perhaps sponsor regional undergraduate research conferences."

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