

Obama support dwindles among youth voters

Fewer young voters expected to volunteer on campaign, participate

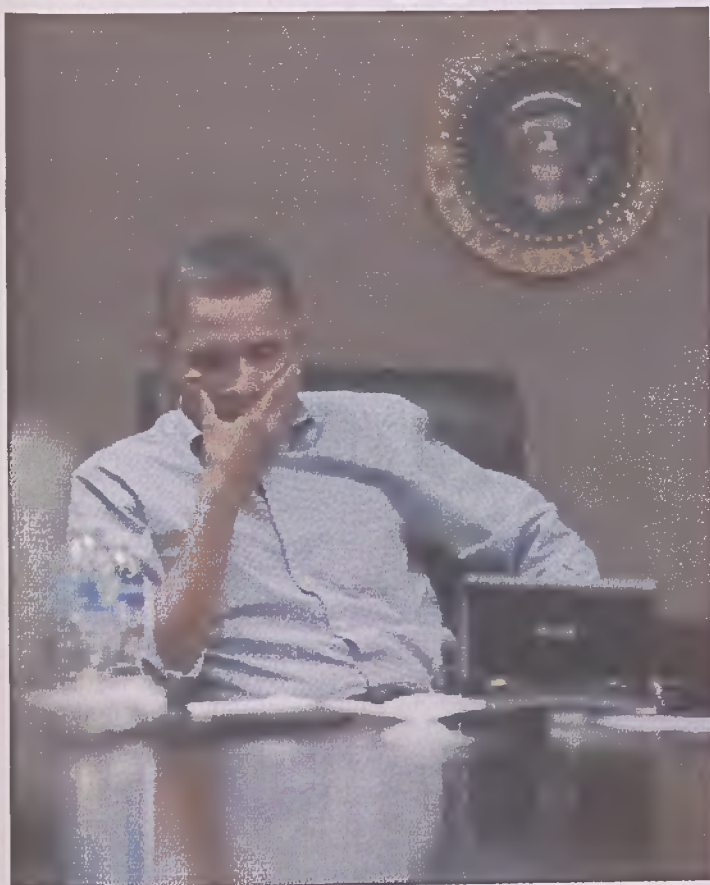


Photo courtesy of White House

Support for Obama among voters ages 18-29 appears to have weakened since 2008, according to recent election polls. Fewer young voters also plan to volunteer for the Obama campaign in the 2012 presidential election, according to polls.

Sidney Setzer

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President Obama's support for the 2012 election year may be declining, especially when it comes to younger voters, but UNC Asheville students say they feel differently.

In 2008, 64 percent of young voters, ages 18-29, said they would vote in the presidential election, according to a Harvard University Institute of Politics survey on young Americans' attitudes toward politics. This year, only 51 percent said the same.

Many young volunteers supported the Obama campaign in the 2008 election; however 75 percent of young people said they would not be likely to volunteer for the Obama campaign this year.

Hannah Montgomery is a senior political science student and the vice president of College Democrats at UNCA.

"I voted in the 2008 election. It was a really exciting time, because I was a first semester freshman and politics had always been important to me, but that year I felt like I could really make a change and help the campaign," Montgomery said. "I have noticed a little less enthusiasm for the presidential election this year than I saw in 2008, but I personally am not any less excited."

Montgomery said she volunteered multiple hours for the Obama campaign in 2008, but because there were so many volunteers, she ended up doing even more for North Carolina Sen. Kay Hagan.

"College Democrats made it possible for me to make a ton of phone calls for the campaigns, canvass neighborhoods and go to candidate meet and greets," said Montgomery. "After Kay Hagan won the election, she personally called me to thank me for all my hard work. That

was a really amazing moment for me and really solidified my choice of political science as my major, because it made me realize how much of an impact I could have even as an 18-year-old college freshman."

However, the excitement surrounding the 2008 presidential election was much different than the one approaching, Montgomery said.

"When Obama was running the first time, the financial crisis and recession was just beginning, and people, especially young people, weren't really sure how it was going to affect them. After four years though, everyone has been affected in some way by the state of the economy, which always makes people less trusting of their government," Montgomery said.

Roth Doyle, a senior environmental science student at UNCA, said he had similar

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Broadway purchase presents new ideas for cleanup, gardening

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UNC Asheville's purchase of property along Broadway Street brings a chance for students to get their hands dirty in a community cleanup along Reeds Creek Greenway on March 31.

The cleanup, organized by the UNCA Facilities Management department, will place fresh greenery along the road and creek bed, according to UNCA Landscape Director Melissa Acker.

"What we are trying to accomplish is to plant along the road," Acker said, "Providing a buffer for the neighborhood, and working along the creek to remove invasive (plants)."

Volunteers will plant 68 trees on the property, plant hundreds

of evergreens, spread mulch and brush cut non-native plants from the creekside.

Acker said she hopes for at least a hundred volunteers from UNCA students and faculty and members of the Montford and the surrounding communities. Additionally, UNCA's Student Government Association will participate in celebration of the last day of Greenfest.

"We are hoping to get students involved in the planting of native species," Acker said. "But that will be a long-term project."

The 525 Broadway location, purchased through the UNCA Foundation and as a gift from TD Bank, provides the UNCA campus with an additional 8.9 acres. The land was previously cleared of trees and shrubbery to make room for the proposed

\$25 million children's health museum, Health Adventure.

"The clearing was very traumatic for the neighbors," Acker said. "It was traumatic to see all the green space disappear."

Acker said the new evergreens will allow some cover for the Montford neighborhood and the property itself.

"It's an innovative approach to bring the community together," said local gardener and volunteer, Nick Merrill. "I'd love to get my hands dirty."

UNCA has no plans for immediate development of the property according to **Director of Design and Construction Don Gordon.**

"The opportunity to purchase presented itself," Gordon said. "UNCA does not often get the

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UNCA construction projects and land purchases

- Fall 2005 - UNCA begins construction on Rhodes Hall renovations, including geothermal energy sources.
- Spring/Summer 2011 - Construction begins on a new residence hall by Governor's Hall and the Ridges Parking Deck, and on Governor's Village renovations.
- Fall 2011 - The NC Center for Health and Wellness opens its 100,000-square-foot facility.
- Fall 2011 - Campus officials present a plan to buy the \$5 million MAHEC health center at 118 W.T. Weaver Blvd.
- Spring 2012 - UNCA purchases the 525 Broadway St. location, originally planned to house the Health Adventure children's museum.