

THIS IS YOUR COLLEGE ON GUNS



Photo illustration by Dustin Stuart - Photography Editor

A recent California school shooting raises concerns by Students for Conceal Carry, who want colleges to lift weapon bans for self defense reasons.

Shooting raises questions about student self-defense

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A recent school shooting in California raised concerns about student safety and gun rights on college campuses nationwide.

"Gun-free zones are defense-free zones. Since our colleges can't guarantee our safety, it's time for them to allow us a fighting chance and decriminalize self-defense," said **David Burnett, director of public relations for Students for Conceal Carry**, in a press release.

The shooting occurred April 2 at Oikos University, a small Christian college in Oakland, Calif. Six students were killed, and one was wounded. On the same day, Students for Conceal Carry began a nationwide pro-

test where students wore empty holsters to illustrate their defenselessness.

"It's a scary situation for sure," said **Sean Smith, former Appalachian State student, Asheville resident and UNC Asheville applicant**. "Schools are thought of as safe places, but time and again things like this seem to happen."

UNCA's policy does not allow students to carry weapons.

"No weapons on campus period," said **UNCA Police Shift Sergeant Jeff Ramsey**. "That's university policy."

Students who have a conceal carry permit from North Carolina cannot carry a handgun anywhere on university property, Ramsey said.

"It's definitely a good thing," Ramsey said "Individual places can limit where weapons are

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Sean Smith
Asheville resident

carried, even if you take the class."

Students for Conceal Carry formed in the wake of the 2007 shooting at Virginia Tech.

"It's a big issue," Ramsey said. "It's not a simple issue, and won't be decided overnight."

Students for Conceal Carry make many arguments for the allowance of weapons on campus. Among these arguments

are people who take a conceal carry class are trained as well as they should be because most will not face situations like those of a police officer.

"People who take the class receive some training in handling and firing their weapon," Ramsey said. "But it's best if there are no weapons allowed and public safety officers are the only ones with a weapon."

Students like Smith, who has

been a student on several different campuses, tend to agree with this policy.

"People who get a conceal carry permit aren't made to go through the rigorous training and background checks like a police officer," Smith said. "I know several people who own guns, and I'm not sure I'd feel as safe if I knew they were armed in class. There's just no need for guns in the classroom."

A bill before the House of Representatives, if passed, would allow those who have a conceal carry permit to carry a gun in any public building without strict rules and metal detectors to make sure no weapons are inside. University buildings do not have these systems

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