

## The Blue Banner's View

# Black history should be blended throughout curriculum

In 1925, son of a former slave, Carter G. Woodson, proposed and established Black History Month to commemorate and celebrate Americans of African descent. Woodson, an African-American journalist and author, founded the Association for the Study of African American Life and History.

On Feb. 12, 1926, the first Black History Month celebration occurred.

Now public schools and universities across the United States hold events, lectures and programs to educate students about a part of history that, without February, students may never learn of in the first place. Students should not be at fault for their lack of knowledge. The school's curriculum and those who put the curriculum together are at fault.

By not integrating black history in the school curriculum when you have an increasingly multicultural America, students may think this month is the only month that black history and culture are important.

At UNC Asheville, the campus remains predominately white. According to university statistics, African-American students made up 2.7 percent of the student body last year. Only 13.8 percent of UNCA's almost 4,000 students claim a race other than white. The three races with the lowest percentages consist of Hispanics at about 4 percent, African-Americans at 2 percent and American Indians at roughly 0.3 percent.

When Woodson first proposed Black History Month, he saw the month as an opportunity for those who did not know much about black history to have an opportunity to learn more about it. But outside of

## Upcoming History Months:

March - Women's History Month  
May - Asian/Pacific American Heritage Month

February, can most students remember *Brown v. Board of Education* or *Plessy v. Ferguson*?

Could a student tell a teacher about the importance of the relationship between Frederick Douglass and Abraham Lincoln was?

Can you encompass all black history, celebrations, tragedies and triumphs by only having black history in one month? Or is school curriculum stuck in a time where minorities are only relevant during specific months of the year?

According to the U.S. Census Bureau in 2011, blacks, either alone or mixed with one or more races, made up 43.9 million of the population out of 315.3 million. The projected black population for July 1, 2060, stands at 77.4 million out of 420.3 million. Meaning by 2060, blacks will make up 18.4 percent of the nation's total population.

African-Americans 25 years and older with a high school diploma or higher make up 82.5 percent of their population. Those 25 years and older who hold a bachelor's degree or higher make up 18.4 percent of their population. Only 1.6 million African-Americans 25 and older hold an advanced degree. However,

3.1 million African-Americans enrolled in college in 2011, a 74 percent increase since 2001.

There are some names students rarely hear about unless taught about black history month. These names should be taught throughout the year. Some of those who pioneered the education path for African-Americans consist of: Kelly Miller, the country's first African-American graduate student in mathematics; Fanny Jackson Coppin, the country's first African-American principal and Dorothy Lavinia Brown, who became the first African-American female surgeon in the South in 1954.

These are rarely names a student can recall from learning about black history month.

For many, black history remains only understood if one is taking a specific course or majoring within a certain department. In order to make black history tangible outside of just one month, the focus must become blended with topics and discussions that encompass more than just the black race.

Every month should focus on a blend of all minority history with school curriculum to give a broad approach.

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*The Blue Banner* is a designated forum for free speech and welcomes letters to the editor, considering them on basis of interest, space and timeliness. Letters and articles should be emailed to the editor-in-chief or the appropriate section editor.

Letters should include the writer's name, year in school, and major or other relationship to UNCA. Include a telephone number to aid in verification. All articles are subject to editing.