

Students confess love, desires on UNCA's new crush page

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A new Facebook page titled "UNCA Crushes" exploded in popularity as more than 750 confessions appeared on the page since its creation at the beginning of February.

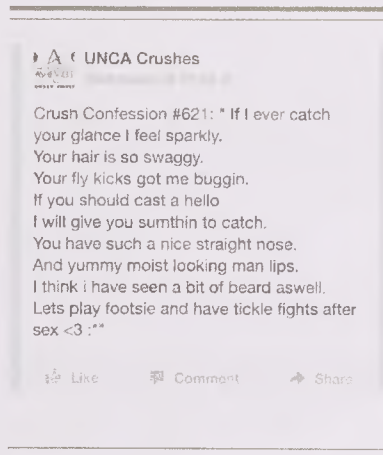
"I didn't expect this page to become so popular in such a short time," said **Amaal Dass**, the creator of the page and a junior music technology student. "Within a few days of launching the page everyone on campus was talking about it."

Powered by an anonymous submission box, the page serves as a forum for students to publicize their love, lust or appreciation for their classmates. At press time, the page garnered a following of more than 830 members, roughly a quarter of UNC Asheville's student population.

Dass said he kept his association with the page a secret for as long as he could.

"When I first heard people talking about the page, I played along as someone who is a casual observer," Dass said. "But now I'm being told that a lot of other people know now that I created it, so it's not really a secret any longer."

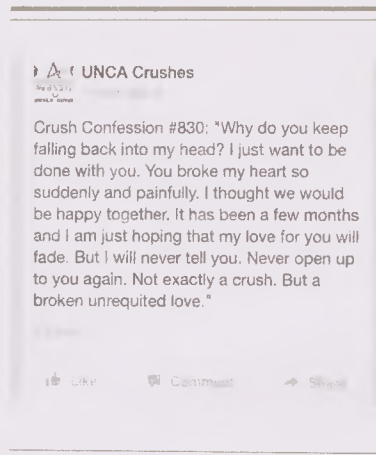
According to Dass, he only posts the positive confessions. When he updates the page, he said he determines whether a post is hateful or just sexual.



"Hateful ones are saying that the person that it's directed to is a bad person or something to that effect," Dass said. "While a dirty one is still affirming in some way – even if it's only sexually."

Alex Berry, a senior biology student and Facebook personality behind the wildly popular page "Bulldog Nationalism," said the whole business of "UNCA Crushes" struck him as odd but effective.

"I think it's a pretty solid idea for a page given the almost innate tendency to want to be in-the-know about the romances of others," Berry said. "This just combines the efficiency and anonymity of the Internet with the lustful whims of emerging adults."



Berry said he remains undecided about the page's impact on the social health of the university.

"There's a lot to say for the confidence it can build in some people for sure," Berry said. "To me it just seems like it dehumanizes a lot about emotional exchange. I feel like it's a weirdly specific missed connections for anti-social people."

Rachel Foster, a sophomore psychology student, said she sees benefits for the page, despite her lack of any social anxiety.

"It's a way to get their feelings out there if they're too scared to confront their crush," Foster said. "I usually just tell people in person."

The practice of linking the recipient to the post about them may be good for some crushers, according to Foster. Often, the crush will post a response to their message.

"For some people, it's a good way to gauge how their crush would react," Foster said. "Seeing their reaction could indicate if they're OK with being approached."

Alex Acree, a senior at UNCA, said his confessions did not appear, despite repeated submissions.

"I was trying to post love confessions about Justin Morris and they didn't post any of them," said Acree, a music technology student.

Acree said he does not understand why some confessions make the page while others do not.

"I've seen some posts that are way more graphic than the ones I submitted, yet it was my posts that weren't included," he said.

According to Berry, "UNCA Crushes" isn't going anywhere, despite some problems people have with it.

"It's going to go on, because it fills a certain need for this 'on the verge of gossip' interaction with the student body," Berry said. "It can draw people together, so I suppose, if it's used in a polite manner, it's fine by me."

According to Dass, the website will continue for as long people continue to submit crushes.

"I find it rewarding," Dass said.

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