

# Liberal arts or lousy degree?



Visual Arts student Charles Tipton sculpts in the Rosenthal Art building. Photo by Anna Rhodes.

by Brooke Vann

Governor Pat McCrory (R) is finding little support for the comments he made within the last few weeks that the basic funding formula for higher education should be based on how well universities do in placing students in the world of work.

McCrory told a national audience on conservative radio host Bill Bennett's "Morning in America" show that "I think some of the educational elite have taken over our education where we are offering courses that have no chance of getting people jobs...". McCrory specifically targeted liberal arts classes such as gender studies that do not teach technical skills required to obtain jobs in the workforce. McCrory suggested that that funding for public universities in North Carolina be tied directly to the ability of their graduates to obtain jobs.

Junior April Love was incensed by McCrory's comments given his opposition to former NC Governor Bev Purdue's commitment to education, I sort of saw this coming. To say that a liberal arts education is obsolete or a waste of taxpayers' money is like saying it is a waste for students in middle or high school to take music or art when studies show how much it improves grades and test scores."

Carole Weatherford is a professor of adolescent literature in the FSU English department and she

understands that McCrory's comments are in line with a school of thinking that criticizes the liberal arts and sometimes views degree seekers and holders as the "elite". However, Ms. Weatherford suggested that liberal arts are a worthy educational pursuit.

"Liberal education courses absolutely have the ability to prepare students for jobs."

Weatherford has had several publications, including books of poetry, nonfiction, and children's literature. She currently teaches a brand new class offered at FSU called "Hip Hop: Poetry, Politics and Pop Culture." (ENGL 370-D1) that studies both rap and the cultural movement that emerged from the spoken word art form.

April Love is one of the students taking the Hip Hop class this semester. Weatherford and Love implied that it takes a well-rounded curriculum to produce a well-rounded education.

Gov. McCrory is obviously in a position to affect change in the General Assembly. However it is not clear yet whether he will support legislation to cut funding or rid the system of some programs, but this issue is surely one to pay attention to in the coming years as UNC system President Tom Ross tries to take the universities in another direction.