

faculty opinions

## Should UNC-A remain a strictly liberal arts institution?

Questions often arise about the purpose of UNC-A. How is this university different from the other fifteen state universities in North Carolina? Well, UNC-A, first of all, is a strictly liberal arts university. UNC-A's other unique feature is suppose to be its experimental approach to education. My purpose here is to gather opinions from faculty members' impressions as to the future of liberal arts at UNC-A.

Mr. Frank Coyle in the Math Department says that, "liberal arts is whatever the faculty at a particular time says it is. The Humanities and Science Divisions see liberal arts as an academic discipline while the social sciences probably think of liberal arts as an insight into value systems."

Mr. Coyle feels that the best way to judge how good the liberal arts here is would require one to look at the people who have finished here to see if they are leading a productive life.

Is our liberal arts program too broad? Mr. Coyle replied, "Our liberal arts is too broad in a certain sense. We're not doing enough things in a great way."

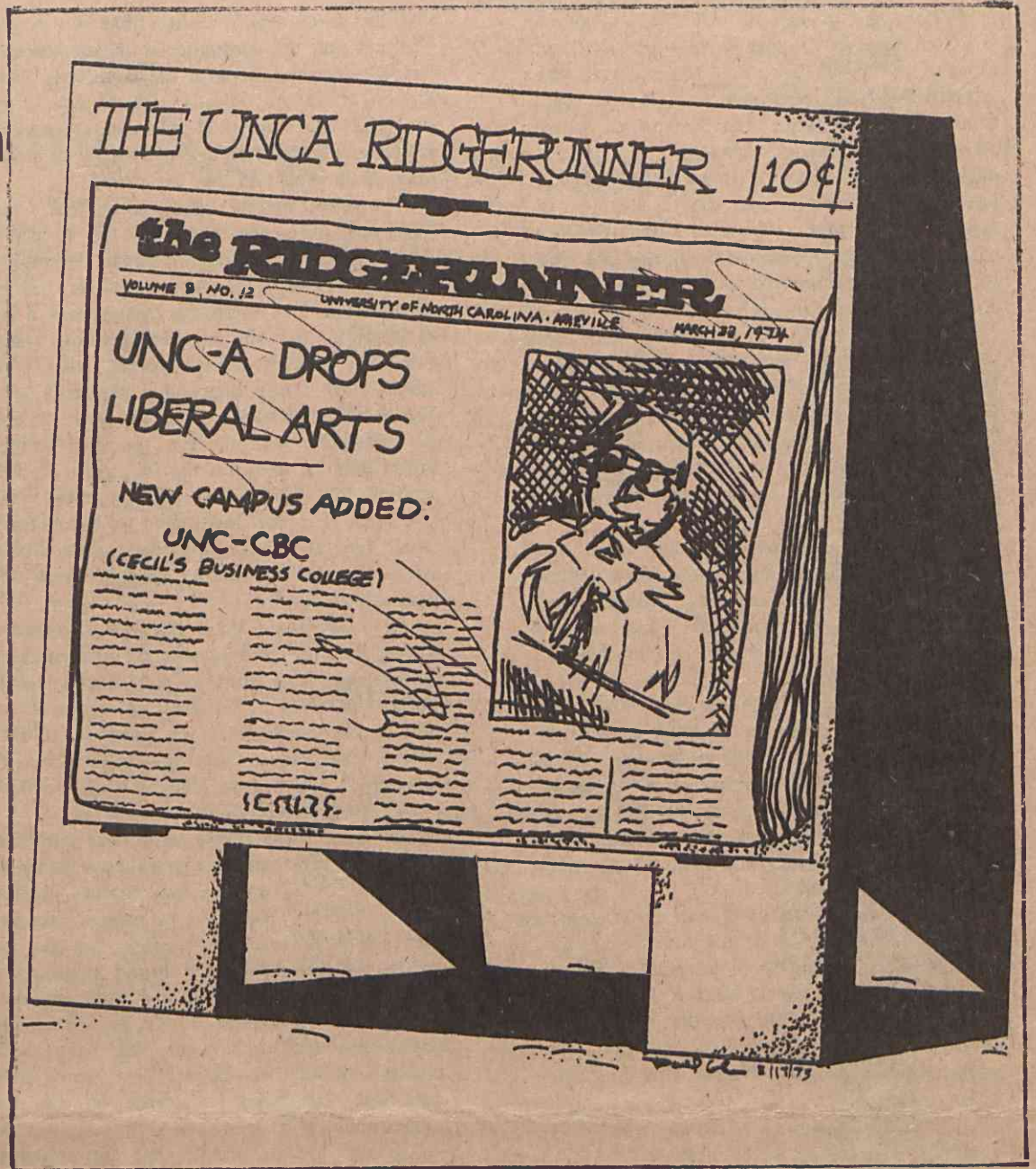
Coyle felt that liberal arts should prepare one to be competent in many areas.

Mr. Arnold Wengrow of the Drama Department agreed with Mr. Coyle on the purpose of liberal arts education. Mr. Wengrow is in favor of liberal arts education. Wengrow feels, however, that, "a liberal arts education is not the only kind of education for everybody." He favored career education for those who are not inclined to liberal arts.

Wengrow also stated that all schools should not have to offer both types of education.

Dr. Lloyd Remington of the Chemistry Department does not feel that liberal arts education and a vocational education are that far apart. "People who consider these two areas as poles apart probably think that vocational education culminates in earning a grubby type of living while a liberal arts education is suppose to be more intellectual. You can also earn a grubby living with a liberal arts education but then you are suppose to be refreshed by the intellectual pastimes that such an education provides."

Remington felt that UNC-A's curriculum could feasibly be broadened. "You can broaden the curriculum without cheapening the present curriculum."



While cheapening is possible, it is not necessary."

Chairman of the Physics Department, Dr. Jim Vinson, defines liberal arts as a study in broad areas. "This school's ambition to be an undergraduate institution with broadened curriculum is a good idea. We are going to have to get into new areas. New approaches are needed for the old liberal arts areas."

Vinson further stated that, "liberal arts teaches a person to become an independent learner. This enables one to transmit humanistic values." Vinson concluded by stating, "UNC-A should be able to change its occupational modes and prepare students for society in a way that they now cannot."

Mr. Mike Gillum of the Literature Department believes in liberal arts as a style of education. "Liberal arts education aims at opening people up. I do believe in a fundamental liberal arts orientation and we have a pretty good liberal arts orientation."

Gillum, however, is sensitive to the students' needs of education to prepare them for careers. "Liberal arts usually prepares one for graduate study and professional training. Since jobs are so difficult to find, I think we should work towards creating programs in the liberal arts style that would make securing jobs possible immediately. It's possible to have sterile mechanical programs but not necessary. We are moving into this direction now with the Urban Studies and Management Programs that are being proposed."

Dr. Walter Boland of the Sociology Department feels that, "UNC-A is closed in by the classical definition of liberal arts. UNC-A should become more occupationally relevant."

Boland feels strongly that "We should orient ourselves to the students that we have. We should develop programs to their interests and needs. While we should encourage other students to come to UNC-A, we should not try to place our curriculum out of reach to the students that we have now. Presently we are an elitist institution."

Dr. Mechthild Cranston, Chairman of the Foreign Language Department, has no particular quarrels with the present set up of liberal arts. "But," states Cranston, "I don't know where it's going."

"Liberal arts is too undefined. We do not have a good definition of liberal arts. If the curriculum is changed from its present direction, then UNC-A's definition of liberal arts will have to be redefined. I'm not saying that our definition cannot be redefined however."

Dr. Bill Bruce, a psychology

professor at UNC-A, feels that "the university should relate to the needs of the community in which it exists."

Bruce would like to see more community placement of students in connection with course work in research and theory.

"Liberal arts should basically involve having students think about their experiences and then having them contemplate the way that they think."

"I see broadening the curriculum as a means of initiating the development of more creative, innovative programs."

UNC-A will undergo curriculum changes. It's inevitable. The community will demand these changes and the university will have to comply. These changes could cause alterations of our present style to provide an education that will make students more acceptable as employees and as thinkers. Hopefully, these changes will make UNC-A actually live up to its wish to be experimental and thus truly innovative while maintaining the quality and liberal arts viewpoint that UNC-A presently has.



Nikki Giovanni, noted Black poet, will highlight four days of festivities that will focus on the Black Experience.

The four days, March 19-23, will consist of exhibitions of Black dance, drama, literature, politics, philosophy, art and music. Miss Black UNC-A will be coronated as part of the festivities.

The Black Experience is sponsored by the Black Students Association in co-operation with the SGA and the Special Programs Committee.

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the RIDGERUNNER takes a look at UNC-A's future.

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