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Sept. 15,  
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## The Blue

# BANNER

"Variety is the soul of pleasure."  
--Aphra Behn

WEATHER: Partly cloudy for  
the weekend; chance of showers  
late Sunday. High temps in  
upper 70s. Lows in the low 50s.

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## HIGH-SPEED COMPUTER ERA IS COMING; WILL UNCA BE READY?

Greg Deal  
Staff Writer

Cuts in legislation will prevent UNCA from being connected to the North Carolina Information Highway (NCIH) this year. UNCA was planning to be included in a proposal to put all North Carolina universities on the NCIH.

"The legislation had a very ambitious plan for hooking people up," said Kern Parker, director of computing at UNCA. "The legislation was pared back drastically." Instead of putting all campuses on the information highway, only five or six were chosen, said Parker.

NCIH is a multimedia system that uses fiber-optic telephone lines to transfer data, videoconferencing, and other information at high rates of speed from one point to another. "This is something that the [Jim] Hunt administration has been pushing very hard," said Parker. "It is specific and very real." UNCA is not being put on NCIH because the university already has a similar system, according to Parker.

"We are already on a network called NCREN

(North Carolina Research and Education Network)," he said. "It gives us the capabilities that the information highway will give us." He said that UNCA already has the capacity to do high-speed data transfer and two-way, high-speed video.

"Because we can do [the transfer] with the older network called NCREN, they didn't put us on the network called NCIH," said Parker. The only difference between NCREN and NCIH is that NCREN uses microwave data transfer as opposed to fiber-optic transfer, according to Parker.

"We lost no capabilities when we were not picked for the NCIH," said Parker. "Initially, we are as well off as any of the campuses that were selected to go on the NCIH." He said that UNCA eventually wants to be on the NCIH because of the future potential.

"The long-term potential is with the NCIH," he said. "What you can do with the microwave tower is limited, but the phone company fiber has enormous capacity for lots and lots of information."

Parker said that at the present time UNCA does not need to move mega bites of information to desktop computers, but eventually it will. "Not this year, next year, or maybe not in three years, but someday we're going to need to have enormous bandwidth," he said.

He said he feels that it is just a matter of time before UNCA will be connected to the NCIH. In the meantime, he said it is important for people on



Kern Parker, director of university computing

Photo by Randy Marrs

campus to prepare for its arrival. "We need to build on this campus a fiber-optic network," said Parker. "We're really trying very hard to do that."

He said that it is important for UNCA to be up-to-date with its communication backbone when the high-speed era arrives. "It's not going to do us any good to have [data] coming in really fast and in great quantities if we can't distribute it around campus at the same speed," he said.

Even with NCREN, there is not enough communication backbone to deliver data the way it could be delivered, according to Parker.

He said that when UNCA does get the NCIH, the replacement of slow, copper lines with fiber-optic lines would be imperative to moving data around campus quickly and effectively.

One thing that Parker worries about is the cost the university will endure because of the NCIH. He said that the cost of UNCA's other computer networks is nominal because it is based on a flat rate.

It could be expensive if the traffic-based, or long distance rates, go into effect with the use of the NCIH, he said.

"We're keeping a close eye on how we're going to be charged," said Parker. "We're lobbying very hard to make sure we don't get priced out of this great information source."

## Parking In "Greener Pastures"



Students continued to park in grassy areas this week. Sixty-three cars were parked in the grass on University Heights this past Monday, according to Jeff VanSlyke, director of public safety. "At that same time, there were over 70 spaces available in Lot C and at the old tennis court lot," he said. "I encourage students to look a little harder for [legal] spaces."

Photo by Rob Jordan

## Library's \$4 Million Facelift Begins With A Smash

Teri Smith  
News Editor

Construction will begin within the month on the original portion of Ramsey Library that was abandoned in 1990 for asbestos removal and remodeling.

Library administrators will offer students, faculty and staff the opportunity to help begin construction with a "smash" on Sept. 21 at 3:15 p.m., according to Malcolm Blowers, university librarian.

"New buildings are launched with a spade and a turn of the soil," said Blowers. "A blow of the hammer seems a more fitting beginning for a demolition and renovation project."

Those who attend the event will see Chancellor Patsy B. Reed, who will sport a hard hat, and smash sheetrock walls with a 3-foot steel sledgehammer, according to Blowers.

Blowers plans to paint bullseyes on the walls to be demolished with appropriate target labels, such as "loss of parking spaces," "cost over-runs," and "schedule delays."

For those students who have always

dreamed of defacing the library, Blowers said he has planned a graffiti painting contest for university student organizations.

"I've identified environmentally-friendly, water-based cans of spray paint. We'll give each group a couple of cans of paint, and the students will do their artwork or graffiti in their display area," said Blowers. "And it's a contest. We'll have some sort of prize for the winning group."

Blowers said 11 student groups have already expressed an interest in participating in the graffiti contest.

"Lots of people have the urge to deface the library, and this is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity," he said. "It will also be a chance for every library user to talk loud and throw peanut shells on the floor of the library."

The section of Ramsey Library that soon will be remodeled was constructed in the early 1960s. The asbestos removal project cost \$2 million and the reconstruction project will cost \$4 million.

"We thought a project of this magnitude should have a fitting beginning," said Blowers. "And we wanted a lot of student involvement."

"We've lost a generation of students. A freshman class came and graduated since that building was in use," he said. "Many of our students have never seen the inside of this part of the library, and there seems to be a curiosity about the now gutted, asbestos-free shell."

Blowers said that the construction will cause some inconveniences, and he hopes that students who come to the event next week will be able to visualize what the university will gain when the project is completed.

"Architectural drawings of the project will be available, and we plan mark out areas on the floor to indicate the future locations of library services," he said.

Immediately after next week's festivities, students will begin to see the construction of a fence on the quad.

"The fence is really going to cut across pedestrian traffic, it's going to encroach on the quadrangle, it's going to go way down beyond the steps," said Blowers. "It's going to be noisy in the library at times, and it may be dusty."

Blowers said they hope to conduct the construction that will cause the most inconvenience during times when students are not on campus, such as during fall and Christmas breaks.

## NEW ENROLLMENT STATISTICS REFLECT AN INCREASE IN DIVERSITY

Dan Clifton  
Staff Writer

The enrollment of African-American freshmen rose 50 percent this term at the University of North Carolina at Asheville. This semester's number of 24 new African-American students shows improvement over last year's number of 12.

"We doubled our African-American freshman enrollment, and other racial minorities also increased," said Caroline Miller, vice chancellor for student enrollment at UNCA. "Some of our efforts for diversity have finally paid off."

With the African-American student population still hovering around six percent within the overall student population, Archer Gravely, director of institutional research at UNCA, puts some blame on the demographics of the region.

"There are not many black, college-going, high school seniors in Western North Carolina," said Gravely. "Also, this area doesn't have the overall black population like the Piedmont area."

Both Gravely and Miller agree that more students need to get involved in the recruiting process.

Students can also participate in programs that provide outreach to racially diverse populations.

"But it takes time, it doesn't happen overnight," said Miller. "We just have to keep working at making improvements."

As for the other racial minorities composing the freshman class, there were eight Asians, two American Indian/Alaskans, and five Hispanics.

"It is important for diversity for the education of the students to be prepared in dealing with other

cultures and backgrounds, said Miller. "So, when they have to go into the work world, they will be able to deal with all kinds of people."

Not included in these numbers are the number of international students. This year's freshman class

**"Some of our efforts for diversity have finally paid off." -- Caroline Miller, vice chancellor for student enrollment**

is made up of 11 new international students, while there are 38 overall. The freshmen represent Japan, Canada, Cyprus, Czechoslovakia, Ecuador, the Netherlands, Spain, England, and Tunisia.

This semester there are 395 new students enrolled as freshmen. That number is down from last year's 397.

Their average mean score on the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) was also down at 1046, compared to last year's 1054. While 56 percent of the students were in the top five of their high school class, according to institutional research.

"The numbers are consistent to last year's, although there is a slight decline," said Gravely. "The quality is still there. These are serious and capable students."

The preliminary research for the demographics of the freshman class, show that 49 percent of the students are from the Western North Carolina area. This number is significantly lower than the mark of 80 percent hit a few years ago.

Please see "Diversity," page 10