

Opinions

The Banner

Editorial

Running to stand still

For a final word on UNCA's plan for growth in the immediate future, we challenge the administration's logic as they continue to say that their plans are not drastically changing the complexion of this school, when in reality, their plans will most certainly force changes of a great degree on our student community.

To make our point, we begin with the words of Director of Institutional Research Archer Gravely: "3,500 is as big as we want to get." Gravely's statement surely means that the administration has an informal cap of 3,500 students being as big as UNCA desires to be. We couldn't agree more.

UNCA is currently constructing West Ridge, a dormitory that will house an additional 150 students, with more dormitory construction planned for the future as part of the much-bally-hooed masterplan for growth. We assume that if these residence halls are built, the school will recruit students who desire to live on campus to fill them. They aren't building them for scenery.

If this recruitment for on-campus students is done within the informal 3,500 student cap, then these students will inevitably replace many non-traditional commuter students who currently make up a large number of the student population. As we said last week, this replacement of one group of students for another would be a travesty, since UNCA currently offers a unique educational opportunity for people in the community who want to go back to finish their educations to better themselves and, consequently, better the community as a whole.

If this recruitment for on-campus students continues, the cap is eliminated, and non-traditional commuters are not forced out, then we are left with a much larger university than we have at the moment. The administration will then face a higher student-teacher ratio and will have the choice of rectifying the problem by either enlarging the faculty or losing one of the main qualities that makes UNCA so appealing in the first place—student-teacher interaction.

Finally, much has been made of the term "FTE" (full-time equivalents) and the use of FTEs in planning future growth. The administration may very well be trying to run an efficient institution by current UNC system mandates, but why are they basing their plans for long-term growth on a system that the UNC system is abandoning next year?

The more questions they answer, the more questions they create.

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The Banner is the student newspaper of the University of North Carolina at Asheville. We publish each Thursday except during summer sessions, final exam weeks and holiday breaks. Our offices are located in Carmichael Hall, Room 208-A.

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Unsigned editorials reflect the opinion of a majority of The Banner editorial board. Letters, columns, cartoons and reviews represent only the opinions of their respective authors.

The Banner welcomes submissions of letters and articles for publication. All submissions are subject to editing for clarity, content and length and are considered on the basis of interest, space, taste, and timeliness.

Letters should be typed, double-spaced, and should not exceed 300 words. Letters for publication should also contain the author's signature, classification, major or other relationship with UNCA. The deadline for letters is noon on Tuesday. If you have a submission, you can send it to The Banner, 208A Carmichael Hall, One University Heights, Asheville NC 28804.

The deadline for display ads and the FYI calendar is on Monday at noon. The deadline for classified ads is at noon on Tuesday.

A return to simplicity holds answers



Gary Gray
columnist

People always ask the same question: "What do you do?" What do I do? Well, you know where this is leading. They want to know how much money you make. They don't want you to actually say what it is you do, because then they'd hear something like:

"Well, I check the apples as they go down the conveyor belt. If I see a bad one, I throw it into the bucket marked 'Bad Apples.' This usually lasts for about eight hours. Then, I..."

See, you're telling someone what you do at work. But is that really what you do?

HERE LIES JOHN DOE. He checked apples. It's what he did.

No. People want to know how much you make so they can align themselves socially according to your status, or lack thereof. Adults seem uneasy about the way they interact. Many times it's as if they're being forced to interact because of their particular, and more than likely imagined, social role.

Bill meets Bob:

"Bill, this is Bob. He's new in the area—moved here from Seattle."

"Hey Bob. Nice to meet you. I'm Bill Data. So what do you do?"

"Director of marketing for Mega-Tech."

"Say, we'll have to get together at the club and shoot a round of golf."

Bill meets Fred:

"Bill, this is Fred. He's new in the area—moved here from... where did you say you were from, Fred?"

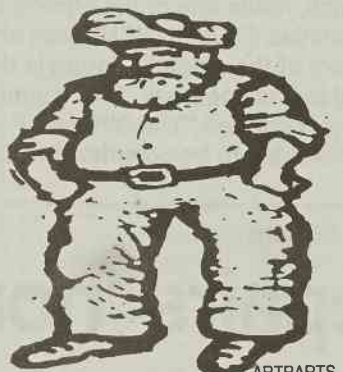
"Sulfur Gulch."

"Sulfur Gulch?"

"Yeah, Sulfur Gulch, New Mexico. It's only 30 miles from Jackrabbit Springs. So we weren't really all that far from the city."

"Hey Fred. Nice to meet you. I'm Bill Data. So, what do you do?"

"Well, Bill, I moved here in hopes of betterin' myself. I've been lookin' at the want ads, and it looks like there's lots of openin's down at the sanitation plant, so ya might say I got kinda' lucky. Yeeeah, the fu-



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ture looks purty bright, but I try not to let it go to my head."

"So, you're in—garbage?"

"Kinda', I guess. Funny thing is, Bill, I never even dreamed of becomin' a Sanitation Engineer—at least not without some kinda' formal education or somethin'. You know, we're a lot alike, you 'n' me. Wanna get together for a beer or somethin'?"

"I'd really love to Fred, but, oh, would you look at the time."

"Aren't ya gonna gimmie yer number or nuthin? Say, what do you really do anyway?"

I'm going to prepare myself for the next time someone throws that "What do you do" bit at me. Especially when it's obvious they only want to hear about finances or what it is you have that makes it worthwhile for them to know you.

"What do you do?"

"I perform autopsies on space aliens."

"What do you do?"

"Assassin. You?"

"What do you do?"

"Very well, thank you."

People will act in cruel ways if they believe their social role requires it. That's why I appreciate the social life of young children so much. When adults come upon one another for the first time, they are wary of each other. They don't trust. They are consumed with protecting their ego, their pride, their property, their comfort. It's as if the concept of discovery has been lost.

Children at "Anypark, USA" have the right idea. A child will spot a group of children playing on the monkey bars and be drawn to them like a sleepwalker guided by a silent radar system. The child turns and walks directly towards the others as if he/she is responding to a dog whistle which no adult can hear. Eyes wide and curious, he/she moves closer to the others, who stop and look at him/her like basketball play-

ers interrupted by a stranger wandering onto the court in the middle of their private game.

It's amazing, but children don't care. What do they know about barriers? And so, the child stares at them while stepping a little closer and a little closer, with nothing but a facial expression that invites communication, or perhaps forces it. Nonetheless, curiosity controls the situation.

Children are not conditioned to think in terms of separate but equal social etiquette, or proper ethical conduct. They just want in on the game, just want in on life. They don't care if you're the son or daughter of a doctor, teacher, manager, police officer, or CEO. And even if barriers do exist for these children, they are so minute that they can be torn down in a millisecond by a simple "I got monkeybars at the school" or "My brother gots sho like that."

Bingo! That's all it takes. Let the games begin! Kids will look at one other straight in the eye out of curiosity and curiosity alone. They're not looking for a business advantage or a valuable contact who can do them favors. They're just setting you up. They don't want to sell you on the idea that you need them. They just want to play. In that word, play. Adults don't really play as much as they should. A lot of adults attend cocktail parties, hit the golf course, but this is not real play, this is agenda—as if there were a requirement, something expected of a person, a representation of play. There are too many assumptions and no spontaneity just amazes me when I see children interact. It defies social convention. When I grow up, I want to be a kid. And believe me, I want to be constantly striving to achieve that goal.

Outcome, not process, the key to learning



Alec Bradford
columnist

This morning I walked out onto my porch and sat down to listen to the news. The air was crisp and a slight breeze whispered from the top of Mt. Mitchell and down onto my shoulders. Somehow, I was not comforted. A chill of eerie reminiscence rang through the trees.

Five years ago, I began my college experience at The Colorado College. It was a time of great anticipation and excitement. My goals were lofty, my family supportive. The world seemed to be opening in every direction. I knew exactly what I wanted and how to get it. This formula was not conducive, however, to my success. I thought I knew everything. There was no reason to question my purpose for college.

Somehow, amidst the hustle, I got lost. I very nearly finished school there, and would have were it not for some personal transgressions. What was once so promising quickly blew up in my face in a sort of sublime penance. In March of 1996, I quit school and floated about the States for a year. Arizona, New York, and then to Tennessee. The time away had been good for me.

Separation allowed the much needed distance so essential in the effort to gain perspective. I decided school was inevitable. So, last March, I made a break. I came to Mt. Mitchell, got a job, and applied for school. I submitted the applica-

tion with a sort of glaze in my eyes. What the hell was I doing this for?

Certainly, it was an odd decision. It was as though I believed the time to return would never come. For a period of time, I had allowed my ego to convince me that I could learn no more. What could they possibly tell me at these institutions of so-called "higher" learning? Perhaps this reflected a little animosity towards my past.

Accepted at UNCA, I began classes and found myself wandering about campus looking at people and asking questions. "Why are you here? Is it money you want?" No. I somehow doubt that. "To better yourself?" Interesting, but I think it's been done. So many ideals at the beginning, I find that only the bare essentials remain.

I came to find the answers. Now all I want to know is which questions I need to ask.

I am excited when I meet someone who is just underway in this experiment. The eyes are bright. The game awaits. This is not to say that my game is over. It's just that I keep playing the wrong one.

Sometimes college seems to be a place I could stay forever. As a student, you gain an air of respectability simply by being there. Requirements generally revolve around reading a book and then reporting your thoughts on the subject. The stresses of the outside

world have a hard time penetrating the walls of academia.

Even with a job and life outside of school, there is a comfort that lies in going to class, at least for the first half of the semester. Somewhere, usually after the first semester or the first year, the novelty wears away. Focus is blurred and many students wonder what exactly it is that the institution has to offer.

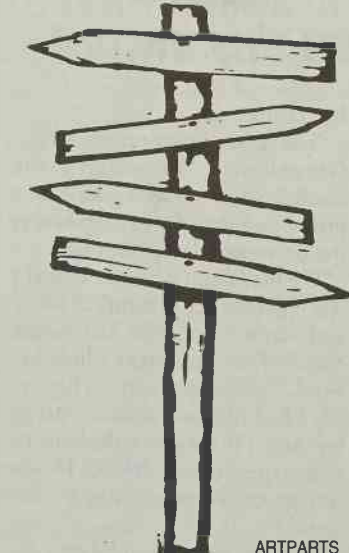
I remember friends of mine, about the same age as myself, in New York. Some had graduated from high school and others had not.

argument was not incredibly persuasive until I decided to look up some of my friends whom I should have graduated with. Almost every time the voice on the other end of the line would sound angry or frustrated. "Yeah, I've taken up some college. I think I'm going to grad school. Not that I want to, I just can't find a job. I might have to move home for a while. It's ridiculous!"

The outlook simply cannot be that bad for everyone, but a good deal was made. Today, with so much money being thrown around and so many different ways to measure your life a successful one (at least by American standards), college is longer a ticket to a fulfilling life. The responsibility has shifted from the institutions to the individual that embody them. There is no guarantee that a degree will provide any security, financial or otherwise in the world today.

The virtues of school no longer lie in the outcome, rather, in the process itself. I am a strong believer in the liberal arts education, particularly the emphasis on reading and writing. The goal, now more than ever, is to know how to think clearly. While I sometimes lose focus and flounder, I believe that school teaches me, more than anything else, how to live in spite of my misgivings. The education I receive may not bring me fame and fortune but, instead, the ability to live successfully without those things.

The morning news was over and I hadn't heard a word. I gathered my things and headed for the Parkway. Such a beautiful drive. Fall is just starting to show its face. In this season of transition, I must learn to change with it...again. After all, I can't be as old as I feel or as young as I look.



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