

The Banner

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Changes to UNCA's general ed a possibility

By Mike Bryant
Staff Writer

UNCA officials have initiated a review and evaluation of the 16-year-old general education requirements for students.

"The university has started the process for a full evaluation of the general education or core curriculum required for an undergraduate degree from UNCA," said Tom Cochran, associate vice chancellor of academic affairs. "The last completion of a similar review of general education courses at UNCA occurred in 1983."

A committee of university administrators and faculty members will complete the evaluation over the next two or three years, according to Cochran.

"The review committee will be comprised of both administrators and faculty," said Cochran. "A completed study may take as much as three years. There needs to be a great deal of input and discussion in this process."

UNCA students are currently required to complete approximately 58 credit hours of general education at the present, according to Cochran.

The present core curriculum requirements are in the areas of English, arts, foreign language, health and fitness, humanities, library research, mathematics, natural science, and social science," said Cochran. "These areas of course study must continue to embody and define the mission of UNCA to offer an undergraduate liberal arts education of the highest quality to its students."

The review of the core curriculum is not the only program assessment that is taking place at the university, according to Cochran.

"The faculty members in each of the approximately 28 departments of the university evaluate their courses and programs about every 10 years," said Cochran. "Generally, there are three departments simultaneously conducting these evaluations during each school year."

These reviews are conducted with input and dialogue from all interested parties, according to Cochran.

"Faculty and administrators are sensitive to the opinions and suggestions of students in their evaluations," said Cochran. "We encourage conversation among all the parties involved in the academic setting to better and more effectively accomplish the mission of our university."

Student reaction to a evaluation of the general education requirements centered mostly on one specific area.

"I would really like to see a reduction in the number of hours in the area of humanities," said David Dickson, a senior psychology major. "If half of that requirement could be used as electives or something else, I believe students would have an opportunity to take some courses that

might be more beneficial to them. I realize that UNCA prides itself on being a fine liberal arts school, but 16 hours of humanities is just a bit excessive as a requirement in general education."

"The general education requirements at UNCA are pretty much the same as at other schools, except maybe for the humanities," said Erin Donath, a post-graduate elementary education major.

"The only comments that I hear from UNCA students about course requirements seem to be about the number of classes in humanities that they have to take," Donath said.

This would be a great opportunity for the university to incorporate some needed changes in general education, according to Dickson.

"Now would be the time to carefully look at the general education requirements of the other schools in the UNC system," said Dickson. "I think it would help to compare our core curriculum requirements with those of the other institutions in North Carolina. I believe some course changes in this area would be well received by a majority of students at UNCA."

One of the obvious dilemmas in changing general education requirements is maintaining the unique mission of the university, according to Cochran.

According to the UNCA admissions handbook for 1998-99, "In its 30 years as UNCA, the university has maintained a distinctive position within the 16-member UNC system in its primary mission: to offer an undergraduate liberal arts education of superior quality for serious and able students."

The mission of UNCA is not only recognized within North Carolina, but nationally as well, according to the admissions handbook. "The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching classifies UNCA as a Liberal Arts I University, one of 162 American higher education institutions so noted for excellence and highly qualified students," according to the admissions handbook.

"The University of North Carolina system has designated UNCA as its undergraduate liberal arts university, the only North Carolina public university assigned this role. The 1998 Fiske Guide to Colleges says, 'The University of North Carolina at Asheville is a strong public liberal arts university that offers rigorous academics, small classes and a beautiful setting all at an incredibly low price.'"

The university should not be afraid of change in any area that would embrace its mission in the academic community, according to Cochran.

"At the very heart of the liberal arts education is the attempt to inform students of the vast diversity which exists within the world they live," said Cochran. "Any changes that might be made from the university's review should strengthen, not weaken, this undertaking."

Alternative snowman



PHOTO BY SCOT WARING

The snow Tuesday provided some UNCA students with a new means of artistic expression. The university cancelled classes Tuesday due to inclement weather.

Concerns about campus diversity addressed

By Emma Jones
Staff Writer

Open forums at UNCA are exploring the issue of maintaining campus diversity, a mission that many UNCA students believe the university has fallen behind.

"I think the administration needs to take an active role in listening to what the minority students on this campus say," said Shanta Robinson, a junior sociology major.

"We are trying to channel this toward

what we are going to do and how we are going to do it," said Pitts at last Friday's meeting in the Laurel Forum. "This issue doesn't get answered in some definitive way in a meeting," said James Pitts, vice chancellor of academic affairs.

The open forums on diversity arose from a diversity conference attended last November by a group of students, staff, and faculty. Main focuses of the conference included suggestions for faculty diversification and curricular modification.

"I thought the part of the conference that was most beneficial to UNCA was the administration's discussions on how to diversify faculty," said Robinson. "If you

want to have minority students, you need to have minority faculty for those students to talk to."

"My solution would be to have professors who are open to people's opinions," said Marquis McGee, a senior psychology major, at the forum. "Hire diverse faculty and staff who teach in their area of expertise."

As a supplement to faculty diversification, curricular modification is a more quickly attained goal and is being thoroughly discussed in all sectors of the university, according to Eric Jovachini, vice chancellor of

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Recent donations keep fundraising on track

By Meghan Cummings
Staff Writer

UNCA's fundraising campaign is making strong steps toward reaching its goal of \$8 million in five years.

"We are on track for an \$8 million campaign," said Alex Comfort, assistant vice chancellor of development.

The campaign is designed to generate much-needed financial resources for scholarships, technological advances in classrooms, and to support faculty initiatives, according to a brochure produced by the campaign coordinators.

"We have wonderful people at UNCA and wonderful opportunities," said Linda Nelms, associate professor of management and accounting who also works for the fundraising campaign. "Some of those opportunities suffer from a

lack of resources. All of us feel that problem at different times as we work to develop a learning community."

Despite the fact that the school is funded by the state, UNCA relies on the money created by fundraising, according to Comfort.

"Everybody thinks the state pays for everything, but they don't," said Comfort. "The state provides around 47 percent or 48 percent of our budget, that's all. We've got to find it in other areas."

The capital campaign has had many recent successes, and is about one-third of the way toward its goal, according to Comfort.

"These gifts that have come in recently are very strong," said Comfort. "They're right on line with what we expected to get."

Some of the largest recent gifts include \$100,000 to be given over four years from NationsBank to build a multimedia classroom in Owen Hall, and \$80,000 from the Eaton Corporation to construct a

new lab for engineering, physics, chemistry, and other sciences, according to Comfort.

"The Eaton gift is the second largest gift given this year by the Eaton Foundation in Cleveland, Ohio," said Comfort.

A recent gift of \$50,000 given by the Independent Insurance Agents of North Carolina, a professional trade organization, has gone specifically toward increasing the money available for scholarships, according to a news release from

UNCA's public information office.

Another significant scholarship donation of \$200,000 will be used to create an endowed scholarship for students from Polk County, according to Comfort.

Increasing the amount of money available for scholarships is important in moving the school toward higher academic standards by helping students who have to hold a

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