

Opinions

The Banner Editorial

No foolin'

The latest sentiment

It will soon be time to bid farewell to Patsy and welcome the new guy, James Mullen, our future chancellor.

At 41 years old, he's definitely young blood for the campus. So when times get tough, retirement won't be an option. Looks like the administration made sure they would get their money's worth out of this lucky fellow.

None of that retirement biz is gonna lead our new man down a road of temptation and distraction. He will remain focused and committed to the challenges and trials ahead, we hope.

The average duration for a chancellor to serve is 5-10 years. Perhaps Mullen will aim for the longer side of that average before our chancellor turnover rate starts bringing the national average down.

He's young, kind of like a freshman in the job. He may be lacking the experience that the old pros have, but perhaps he is not as jaded as some of the, well, traditional-aged chancellors. He's "really energetic," according to Hoyt Phillips, a senior economics major who met with several of the chancellor candidates.

Energy and stamina are the two greatest assets any new chancellor could possess coming into this project. Energy to generate the needed enthusiasm to make fundraising a successful venture, and stamina to see it all the way through instead of dropping the ball like the current chancellor has.

Perhaps the kindest thing we could do would be to warn him of all that lies ahead. Well, all that we know about, anyway. There is more action in this little liberal arts university than any incoming chancellor could likely imagine — action, that is, in terms of fundraising ventures, answering to money shortages, and courting the donors.

Our advice: to prepare for a heavy load, because this certainly isn't the cushy job you could aim for. Except for the pay. That always helps to motivate.

Keep the money comin'

Just a few more weeks to go and those seniors among us will be singing hallelujah to the heavens as they finish their college careers (for now, anyway). Once those final grades come in, there will be no more hurdles to jump through. The academic journey will be complete.

Or not. After seniors have paid for a college education at this fine (read public liberal arts) institution, the university is not ready for that money to stop coming in just yet. Before any senior can receive their diploma, they must first pay a \$50 commencement fee. Not only that, but those graduating in May must participate in graduation ceremonies unless they can demonstrate a valid reason to be exempt. If a senior cannot find a good reason other than they just don't want to sit through the ceremony, they must then shell out another \$25 to the bookstore for a cap and gown.

James Pitts, vice chancellor of academic affairs, says, "We feel it is extremely important to have all the graduating seniors present for this special day in the life of the university community." We all know the real reason for the mandatory walk for May graduates is that the university is afraid no one will walk if given the option not to.

While many graduating seniors may see the graduation ceremony as just another reason to drink, it is still a sort of rite of passage. But there's no reason for the passage to cost so much. Establishing a rental policy for caps and gowns like the one suggested by Jason Cooper, a senior atmospheric sciences major, would go a long way to relieving the financial pressure put on graduates.

Since UNCA is a small school, it is understandable that graduation ceremony attendance is mandatory. If seniors have to go, then it is only fitting that it should be a special and memorable time. The question is just what will the day be remembered for: the ceremony or the cost?

Shelter me

Community service class requirements that many students moan about, like in Humanities 414, may be well worth our time. ABCCM shelter gets most of its student volunteers through class requirements rather than personal motivation, according to the director.

Despite the burden these minor time obligations may place on student schedules, the director's admission of this fact clearly supports the community service requirements of some classes.

It is both disheartening and encouraging. What a disappointment that, in order to get volunteers, students must be motivated by requirements rather than compassion or feelings of obligation to give to the community. Instead, we endure an attendance-policy-like approach to giving our time and services, something that is supposed to be given at will, not by force.

We are surprised that, although the word volunteer implies by choice, in order to get volunteers, it is not by choice, but by policy. The time has come to change our personal policy and make helping others our personal agenda.

Goodbye college, hello reality



Christian Nimsch
columnist

Whatever happened to "seniorities"? Professors' demands seem to be mounting and pre-graduation stress is building.

The past couple of weeks have brought me to the point where I finally had to scream, "I am out of here!" ...Wait, not yet.

There are still three weeks to go until, at least for some of us, the college experience will find a sudden conclusion (hopefully) in attending the last class and probably taking the last exam. I am pretty sure that most of us are leaving with a smile rather than tears.

After all, we will be certified to be part of the educated class. With the natural flow of things, most seniors will get to walk the walk under careful supervision of their families, friends, and professors. Some of the latter will probably show up to make sure that we are really leaving and do not dare to come back next semester.

We are well prepared! A couple of years of class attendance (most of the time at least) have not only brought forth some useful skills, but have also shaped our beliefs and

perceptions.

Now we are ready to be productive members of society. Even better, the ones that were lucky enough to have been allowed to attend the humanities program got a taste of what society is all about.

After all, we need to know what we are getting into. Right?

It goes something like this: we live in a materialistic, capitalistic, white supremacist, paternalistic society. For the pleasure of some, let's also add homophobic for the sake of completeness.

Furthermore, we are all going to be unhappy since the world is overpopulated (Do not dare to have children!), polluted and amoral. Morals? What morals? Who's morals?

Since we are educated, now we get to change the world. We will tell everyone to take a hike (while we get to go off-roading in our new Sports Utility Vehicles we got for graduation) and show them how to do everything better.

We are freshly educated and certified. We know what the media should not broadcast, what the

public should not consume, and what the economy should not produce. After all, who needs a V10 engine in their truck?

We can do all that because the "uneducated majority" of society does not know anything anyway. Who is better to tell them than we, the young and educated?

Sorry, but this is not the world I got to know. Nobody can claim that things are perfect.

Nevertheless, just because everything is not perfect it does not preclude that some things are actually pretty good the way they are, and many things might not be as bad as we think.

Don't we have at least some reason to be, if not happy, at least somewhat satisfied about how things turned out, rather than raving about the brutishness of life?

Criticism is the driving force for progress and development, but there is more to life than criticism. It took me a while to figure that out myself. It almost seems that sometimes we can change things simply by changing ourselves, rather than trying consistently to change others.

"Do not do this and do not do that" has never really provided to much motivation to do the so called "right thing" in the past. As we figure things out for ourselves, we can change.

Of course, it is the purpose of college to get educated about problems of society, but is it the purpose of education to draw an overly bleak picture of the world?

I am not trying to insinuate that underdevelopment, racism, gender inequalities, human rights abuses, and other inherent problems are not as bad as they are often perceived to

be.

The extent of the urgency to solve those problems must not be underestimated. Nevertheless, sometimes it also helps to just look back and acknowledge that things have already changed and progress has been made.

To see that things have actually been achieved in the past can be of great motivation to make things happen not only in the future but right now.

Despite all of that being said, sometimes our perception of things might be wrong. As a matter of fact, all too often we base our judgment on nothing more than ideology. In that case we better hope that the ideology we chose is one we are comfortable with for times to come.

What does reality mean to us? How we learn to perceive our environment shapes our actions.

Should we not spend some time on learning to objectively evaluate our standards rather than taking on the served morals, ethics, and standards of the system we study under? This does not mean to reject, but to carefully examine.

Sometimes the obvious might not be as obvious and the truth not all that hidden. It might be uncomfortable at times to dare to think for yourself.

Mistakes are easily made and, yes, one has to take responsibility. However, it is those very same mistakes that make us realize the conflicts within ourselves and society.

So why are many of us leaving with a smile rather than tears?

Well, maybe we not only have been prepared to make money, we are also equipped to figure out why we do what we do. Dare to differ!

Forest act deserves our concern



Candice Carr
columnist

This is the time of year when we really wonder what the government is doing with our hard-earned cash given to them in the name of taxes. April 14, a bill was reintroduced to Congress that would make a lot better use of our tax dollars, were it to get passed: the National Forest Protection and Restoration Act (NFPPRA).

Right now, about \$800 million is allotted to the U.S. Forest Service every year.

Two-thirds of that money is spent on their timber sale program that always loses money.

They have never returned a cent to the treasury. They end up getting less money from corporations who come to log our national forests than it costs the Forest Service to ship the equipment and plan the sale.

They sell the trees for dirt cheap and leave behind a wasteland. Is

this something we should be funding?

In Western North Carolina this should be a huge concern. Our wealth of publicly owned land is perhaps the most concentrated in the nation (Pisgah, Nantahala, the Smokies, etc.), with its majestic mountain views.

The steeper the slope, the more difficult, expensive, and damaging it is to log.

Guess who foots the bill for the destruction and for the restoration, if there is any. Yes, that's us. When referring to our national forests as wealth, I mean it literally.

The strong economy of this area is directly related to its scenic beauty. Even the U.S. Forest Service knows how much more lucrative recreation and tourism are to national forests than their money-losing timber sale program, but

they don't put that kind of money into the restoration of natural beauty.

It's hard to put a dollar sign on streams and rivers free of sediment, forested hillsides and hollow trees for owls and bears, but the closest thing to it is a look at the tourist and recreation markets, which depend on a healthy environment.

They supposedly swear by a policy of "management for multiple uses," but those uses are incompatible. It's hard to birdwatch or happily hike through clearcuts, so they close logging roads, cutting off the public from our own land.

It is impossible to balance the interests of the current lopsided system because the cash-stuffed corporate pockets sitting in the timber extraction side of the scale are far too heavy.

Certainly, reform is needed for the U.S. Forest Service to be able to function for the benefit rather than the detriment of forests and communities, but that could be a long, messy battle.

The first and simpler step can be taken by Congress to protect our national heritage, the wild places of our country that retain tranquility and balance in a country mad about synthetic substitutes for sanity.

The NFPPRA calls for a redirection of funds from the timber sale program to retrain workers to care for forests instead of obliterating them. The act would still return money to the treasury after providing a yearly salary to forest workers.

When NFPPRA is passed, ending the commercial logging of the American people's public land, it will not even significantly affect the timber market, since only 3.9 percent of the timber we use comes from national forests.

When Congress set aside tracts of land to preserve America's natural beauty and protect wildlife in 1891, they strictly prohibited extractive activities and cattle grazing. It was a rider tacked onto a later appropriations bill that opened our national treasures to corporate exploitation.

These wildlife habitats are far more vital today, with a growing endangered species list, a scary threatened species list, and an absolutely terrifying waiting list for these lists.

It takes years to do the paperwork for species on the brink of extinction, and the only way to protect them is to give them somewhere safe to live, free of chainsaws and trucks.

If you think that Congress should take this opportunity to protect animals of all kinds, including humans, drinking water sources, and of course, trees, please tell them that! In a short letter, let your state's representatives know that you want them to support the NFPPRA.

If you are from WNC, write to Senator John Edwards, who is not yet on the list if those senators and representatives who support the bill, but he could be with our encouragement.

The Banner is hiring all positions for the fall 1999 semester. If you are interested in writing, taking photos, etc., come by Carmichael 208A and pick up an application. Applications are due no later than May 8.