

The Banner

Volume 29 Issue 12

April 29, 1999

Day classes canceled for day of learning

By Mike Bryant
Staff Writer

The Learning as Liberation conference held Wednesday at UNCA featured many programs for students and faculty, but students questioned the conference's timing.

"This was not a good time to hold this event," said Candice Heald, a senior literature major. "There is always a lot of work for stu-

dents to complete near the end of a semester. In addition, exams are just around the corner. It would have made a lot more sense to schedule this type of event at the beginning of the semester.

The Learning as Liberation conference was held on April 28. A committee of faculty members created the event's inaugural celebration for the purpose of exploring and celebrating teaching excellence on the UNCA campus, ac-

ording to a committee spokesperson.

"A number of faculty members wanted to have a campus event that would highlight and promote innovations in curriculum and instruction at UNCA," said Charles Bennett, a professor of physics. "Hopefully, it will be the first of many such annual celebrations involving both faculty and students."

"Since the university cancelled classes, I used the time to finish some assignments,"

Heald said. "I did not really have any interest in the celebration. I used the day as an opportunity to prepare for the remaining two weeks of the semester."

Some students expressed support for the event, but many were puzzled with the date chosen by faculty and administrators.

"I think the event is a pretty good idea," said Michelle Hicks, a junior fine arts major. "But I have a number of papers due in the next couple

of days, and I just cannot be as involved as I would have liked. I hope the university holds the event again next year, but I would like to see it scheduled earlier in the semester."

"I was not aware of the event until just a few days ago," said Gerald Kidd, a graduate student. "I think it would have helped if the university had promoted the event more aggressively. Also, student participation would have increased if it had not occurred so late in the term."

The university's decision to cancel classes for the event was endorsed by both students and committee members.

"The committee members felt very strongly in urging university administrators to cancel classes for the celebration," Bennett said. "It would have been a logistical nightmare to schedule the day's events around classes. Plus, the committee and other faculty members wanted to encourage student participation. A remaining, but unattrac-

tive alternative, was a week-end scheduling of the event."

"I am glad the university cancelled classes," said Hicks. "It gave me a chance to work on some class papers, and participate in the celebration."

"It is nice to have a day off from classes," Kidd said. "Unfortunately, the missed class time and work is going to have to be crammed into the remaining few days of the term

See LEARN page 10

Participation low in recent SGA elections

By Dru Martin
Staff Writer

Only 17 percent of the student body turned out for the Student Government Association (SGA) elections this year.

Although this is a small percentage, it is an improvement from last year's turn out of only 13 percent, according to SGA.

"People just don't care sometimes," said Kenya Smith, a junior management major. "I think we need a newsletter for commuters to provide them with more information. If a student isn't interested in politics, then they probably won't like SGA because it is political by nature."

The commuters are a large concern, according to Wiley Cash, a junior creative writing major and SGA president.

"I think the on-campus students turned out more than the commuters by far," said Cash. "I think the minorities turned out the most because they're the ones who realize issues and explore more than your average student. I think the best way to get in touch with commuters is by talking to them and taking the issues to heart."

"As far as low voter turn out goes, I think there's just a lack of interest," said Avery Smart, a senior Spanish and political science major and SGA senior senator. "It's very hard to get people to vote."

"There are a lot of things that need to change for commuters, like all-night computer labs," said Cash. "The library should also be open later. We need to work on things that we can change."

"I think Wiley will do fine," said Smith. "He'll take the tasks at hand,

and do the best he can with them."

"Personally, I think Wiley's campaign was kind of a waste of paper," said Dan Ryan, a senior environmental studies major. "I kind of doubt that he'll be able to do anything about the parking for commuters."

"I support Wiley and what he's doing," said Christina Rinas, an undeclared freshman. "However, from my own personal experiences, I've found that people say they can make big changes but it doesn't always happen."

The lack of information doesn't just apply to the commuters, according to Adam Chacon, an undeclared freshman.

"I didn't vote because I didn't find out when the election was until the day after it took place," said Chacon. "I didn't know who was running. I'd suggest the campaigning should be stronger. I don't know how they could do that, but it needs to be more informative."

"There were only two places to vote, as far as I know," said Smart. "There was one in Highsmith (University Center) and one in Karpen (Hall). Those are the only two buildings. SGA really needs to pull people in. I think the people in charge of the polls should send more SGA members out to heighten the awareness of the situation at hand."

"I didn't see the voting dates anywhere," said Rinas. "Someone put a flyer on my door that had the candidates viewpoints, but I didn't see when to vote."

Many of the commuters aren't affected by SGA, according to Ryan. "I never voted because I feel like it doesn't influence me," said Ryan.

See ELECTIONS page 10

Forging ahead

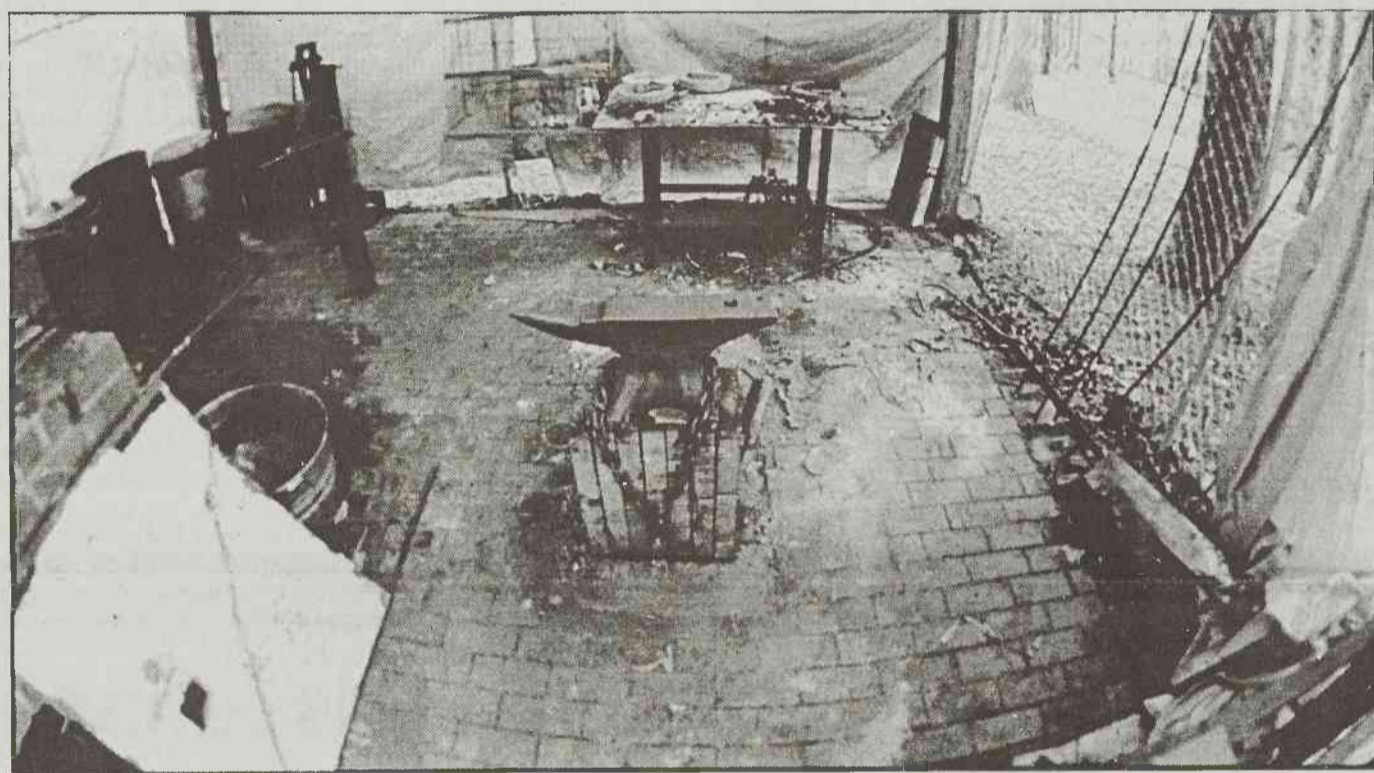


PHOTO BY VICTOR GIARRUSO

Some of the activities for the Learning as Liberation day took students and faculty out of the conventional classroom and into the outdoors, such as the iron pour presentation by the art department.

Gay and Lesbian Conference held

By Krystel Lucas
Staff Writer

The second annual Gay and Lesbian Studies Conference, "Forging Change/Crafting Identity," will be held April 30-May 2, on the UNCA campus, according to the news release.

The conference will feature guest speakers and scholarly presentations, and is sponsored by academic affairs, humanities and the women's studies program.

"The main purpose of this conference is to get people thinking," said Ashley Fleetwood, a sophomore political science major and member of UNCA Out, an on-campus

support group for gay, lesbian and bisexual students. "It is a good place to learn about the gay and lesbian culture. You don't have to be gay, lesbian, or bisexual to be a part of it."

The conference offers the opportunity for faculty, students, and community members to gather with scholars and students from across the nation to investigate the latest scholarship in gay and lesbian culture, according to the news release.

"People in an academic discipline want to get together and talk about the kinds of research they are doing," said Melissa Burchard, assistant professor of philosophy and conference organizer. "We want to get feedback from peers in the professional academic arena in the same

way we would do for a conference on any other subject matter."

Members of the gay community on the UNCA campus are concerned about the vandalism of signs that designate safe spaces for homosexual students and faculty, according to Burchard.

"One of things that has been really disturbing this year is that signs on our doors that say this is a safe space for gays, lesbians and bisexuals have been defaced, not just once, but repeatedly," said Burchard. "That is a disturbing thing to have happen on a liberal arts campus, and it constitutes in some ways a threat."

"Safe space signs are a project that UNCA Out did for coming out day," said Fleetwood.

"The idea behind it was for

students and professors to put them up on their doors to let gays, lesbians and bisexuals know that this is a place where they will not be ridiculed for who they are and what they are," Fleetwood said.

"I've known several students in the dorms who have had their signs ripped down, torn up, or had yucky stuff written on them," said Fleetwood.

The people responsible need to think real long and hard about what it is within that causes them to be so disturbed by someone having a sign that says it's okay. This is a safe space," Fleetwood said.

See CONFERENCE page 9

Student group prohibited from painting letters on road

By Emma Jones
Staff Writer

A lack of written documents specifying which organizations are allowed to paint their letters on the road to Founders Hall led to conflict between the administration and Brothers Unified and Achieving (BUA), according to members of BUA. (Eric) Iovacchini (vice chancellor of student affairs) said we couldn't paint be-

cause we are not a fraternal organization and there was no guarantee that we'd be here," said Marquis McGee, a senior psychology major and member of BUA. "There was not a written agreement that we couldn't put our letters down. It was just oral power."

"Iovacchini was trying to enforce a law that doesn't exist," said John Gaither, a senior political science major and BUA member. "The university had no legal standing in the matter."

Although not written, a general understanding existed among the administration that only Greek organizations were

allowed to paint their letters on the road, according to Iovacchini.

"We felt at the time that it made the most sense to restrict the painting to groups that would last longer than one generation of students," said Iovacchini. "This made it primarily Greek, since we hold their charters. Also, for a long period of time they were the only groups that expressed any interest in putting their letters out there."

The unwritten restriction came into being in the early 1990s when the city of Asheville asked that organizational letters be removed from University Heights Road, one of the only city-owned roads on cam-

pus, according to Iovacchini. A new place for organizations to display their letters had to be found.

"We decided on the service road to Highsmith (University Center) and Founders (Hall)," said Iovacchini. "It is a student residential area. At that point in time, we probably had four or five signs on the University Heights Road. We decided with the move to restrict painting to groups that are going to be ongoing and have some sort of permanent relationship with the university."

"Any fraternity can get kicked off this

campus for doing something stupid, so that doesn't mean they're going to last," said Cortes Cuthbertson, a sophomore political science major and BUA member.

According to BUA, the confusion arose from miscommunication between the student development office, the student affairs office, and BUA. The painting was approved through Student Development in December of 1998.

"We had to get campus security to sign

See BUA page 9