

Opinions

The Banner

Editorial

Time bomb

Speakeasy

Take heart, ye of little faith, for the end is near. For graduating seniors, the long road out of UNCA has just one formality left before school is over - graduation itself.

For some, the graduation ceremony is symbolic of all they have accomplished during their time at UNCA. For others, it is just a ceremony, presented more for their family's enjoyment than for their own.

While there has been some groaning about attendance at graduation being mandatory for all those graduating in May, as well as the amount of the commencement fee, those who will make up the class of 1999 still look forward to May 22 for whatever reasons.

And the answer to the million-dollar question of who will speak at this illustrious event? None other than our own Chancellor Patsy Reed. Since she's retiring after this semester, the administration thought it might be nice to have Reed leave some parting words of wisdom for the graduating seniors.

Reed probably has much advice to give those who are preparing to enter the world beyond UNCA, especially since she is also about to embark on the same journey. Would it not be more beneficial, though, to have a speaker who had lived away from the confines of a campus community?

A speaker from the outside world would have a better understanding of what exactly is going on there. This is not to say that Reed is oblivious to what it takes to succeed (her track record speaks to the contrary), her experiences have been in dealing with issues that face universities.

An outside speaker would probably have different views to share on the world that faces graduating seniors, and could offer a perspective of one who's experienced have not been based on university politics.

Of course, the chances of Reed being ousted for another speaker now are slim to none. We hope that Reed's speech will be one that inspires those waiting to receive their diplomas, challenging them to do their best in their chosen fields. To these people, we wish you the best of luck in all your endeavors.

Recycled promises

When it comes to the question of whether or not the UNC-system should purchase recycled paper products, the environment finds itself battling the bottom line for importance. The UNC-system is having to choose between what is consistent with ideologies espoused on campuses and what is "economically practicable."

Given the system's history, it is no big surprise that it has thus far picked the bottom line, not the principle. Its members do not argue that buying virgin paper is preferable for any reason other than it is simply cheaper.

Could some of the change left over from our student fees, which incidentally increase yearly, be spared to invest in preserving our forests? Maybe it's not economically practicable, but it seems this practicability test is a favorite with the UNC-system. It can be a valid test until it is taken to an extreme.

We learn these values about preserving our forests, have active environmental groups and programs on our campuses, but the heart of our institution is preaching something quite different. Do the right thing, the noble thing, but above all else, do the cheap thing.

The "if it's cheap" clause seems to be the most influential governing rule in the system, ranking far above the "if it's right" principle. We see it sticking its ugly head up in moving housekeepers to third shift, cutting adjuncts, and delaying needed building projects.

Yes, we are appreciative of the funding we do get and the money the state has appropriated towards things like technology. But although it's not flashy new technology and it's not the cheapest option, buying recycled paper should be a priority for the UNC-system, especially since it places importance on recycling. Let's not justify hypocrisy with the dollar.

For the last time

If UNCA were a high school prom, the underpaid DJ would be getting ready to play the last song of the night so that all the lovebirds could grope each other under the dollar store disco ball. We polled *The Banner* editorial board to see what their request would be.

Erin King: "My Heart Will Go On" (Celine Dion)
 Amelia Morrison: "Achy Breaky Heart" (Billy Ray Cyrus)
 Samantha Hartmann: "Edelweiss" (The Von Trapp Family)
 Diana Abbott: "U Can't Touch This" (M.C. Hammer)
 Andrew Pearson: "...Baby, One More Time" (Britney Spears)
 Travis Barker: "The Humpty Dance" (Digital Underground)
 Ben Weigand and Matt Hunt: "My Endless Love" (Lionel Richie and Diana Ross)
 Susan Johnson: "Everything I Do, I Do It For You" (Bryan Adams)
 Susan Crockett: "Can I Get A..." (Jay-Z)
 Mark West: "The Old Rugged Cross" (The Banner Gospel Choir)

Murderers or freedom fighters?



Liam Bryan
columnist

Our children are killing each other. Moses Lake, Pearl, Lake Paducah, Jonesboro, Springfield, and now Littleton. Why? Violent video games? Bad parenting? Manson songs? Movies glorifying criminals? No. Almost all of the blame falls solely upon the killers themselves. Almost all.

There is one single continuity between all of these killings. One so obvious and yet so frightening that most people are not willing to recognize it. It is the fact that every single one of these horrendous acts occurred in public schools.

Why public schools? What is so different in public schools that has driven our young people to shoot their fellows? Well, stay with me here, because I say that these murderers believe that they were liberators of freedom. Yes, freedom.

When you walk through the doors of a public school as a student, you lose half your rights as an American citizen, and at least three innate human rights. These students-turned-vigilantes were confused, yes, but I believe that they thought that they were fighting against this blatant disregard for humanity.

In public schools, you lose your freedom of speech. You cannot speak with your own voice, you

must speak with the voice of what underpaid teachers tell you to, they themselves having lost their own spark of independent speech long ago. You cannot write that paper on Machiavelli because he is too controversial. You cannot perform your dance solo because it is too suggestive. You cannot choose to wear that black trench coat which is the only article your dead father left you because a school administrator made a hasty decision.

You lose your freedom of belief. It does not matter that your deity created the world in 4004 B.C.E., because there will be a test on the Precambrian period Monday. You cannot choose to keep your head covered because there is a dress code. You cannot choose to not fight your classmates because there is dodgeball in gym class.

You lose the right to protect yourself and your property. I hate guns as much as the liberals do, but I believe that people have the right to protect themselves by any means they deem necessary, as long as it does not violate any other person's natural rights. When you stop that kid from taking your backpack, you get in trouble for fighting. When you tell the teacher that kid stole your backpack, he beats you

up after school. When that other kid pulls a knife on you in the locker room, all you can do is whatever he says because you are not allowed to have a weapon to protect yourself.

Those are the innate human rights that you lose the moment you walk through school doors as a student: speech; religion; and protection. But you also lose rights guaranteed to you by our government.

Freedom of press. Ha! The school paper prints what the school faculty tells it to print. That decision was challenged up to the state courts and it still held. This means there is no way to get information to every student. There is no way to reach the masses.

Do you have the right to congregate in public schools? Of course not. You try to make a statement by gathering a group of your peers and the faculty throw you in detention for a week. It does not matter how peaceful your protest is, nor does it matter how correct your argument is. Unless it is a pep rally or an anti-drug school rally, there is no way on earth that you can group together with your peers to make an organized protest. Essentially, this is a form of control. To keep the "lesser citizens" in line, you cannot let them come together. It worked before the Civil War in the Confederacy, and it now works in public schools.

There is no such thing as a trial by a jury of peers in public schools. Why? It would take too long. Students would defend each other based on likes and dislikes. Those are the reasons of the administration?! It does not take long to get seven students together and ask them, "Did Bobby hit Sue?" And the idea that students would defend each other against the faculty speaks volumes. If they feel the need to defend each other, that means that they feel they have a common enemy. They feel

that it is us vs. them. How can we expect our students to get along with each other when they do not even trust their own administration to be fair to them?

The judicial part of our crime and punishment system is the most powerful, and the students that it affects are the people that have no say in it.

There is a reason why this happens in public schools, but not in colleges. It has nothing to do with maturity. It has nothing to do with later classes. It has nothing to do with gym class. It does have something to do with the fact that high school students lose all these rights.

The main reason is that we make a choice as to which college, if any, we go to. We choose to give up our rights in exchange for a useful education (or a theater degree, whichever works for you). Our children are required by law to give up their innate rights for 10 years of their lives.

Ageism is the last great prejudice in our society. I speak from experience. Racial, gender, societal, religious, and cultural discrimination are dying out quickly. Age discrimination is not going to go away because people honestly believe that it is necessary. Our citizens get old, and we stick them in retirement homes. Our citizens may be intelligent, but they are so young that they do not benefit from freedom of speech.

The reason our children are becoming murderers is because we require them, all of them, to relinquish their natural human rights in return for nothing.

These killers were simply people who valued their own freedom and fought back the only way that people would listen. If you were in high school again, would you value your rights that much?

'Goodbyes are supposed to be corny'



Christian Nimsch
columnist

Now that I have pretended for the last couple of weeks (months) to graduate, I am actually pretty close to finishing this seemingly endless chapter. With only four days to go, everything seems to be bearable.

Well...almost everything. It might take a concerted effort to survive the final days, but the fact that those are the "real" final days helps to lift the spirits. Finishing up here in Asheville, it feels that it is time to pay tribute to the school, the town and the people.

Someone once told me that "Asheville does this to you." There are probably not too many folks around here who have not something to say about what Asheville can do to you.

And, yes, there is more to Asheville than allergies and a bunch of weird people. No offense, I myself have been classified as having a "general disorder" (for lack of a better word).

For one, there is UNCA. Many of us students get a rush out of harassing our alma mater (for the lucky ones among us).

Among the brightest targets is the humanities program. Uh, yeah, it was/still is of great relief to un-

load emotional distress with a few nice words about this beloved program.

Nevertheless, those 16 credits of fun-loaded knowledge have some good sides to them. Who can deny having at least gotten some new ways of thinking about the world and ourselves out of them? After all, we are a liberal arts university (a concept I still have not fully understood yet).

Other targets of our opinionated critics are the majors we have to declare, at least every now and then. Having just given my wisdom during the senior interview in economics, I have to agree that here, too, are problems. However, those problems are usu-

ally closely related to the size of the school. At least for myself, I'd rather not take a class that was closed due to a lack of student interest, than to share the classroom with several hundred students.

The small student population makes it a little tricky sometimes to get away with skipping classes and other things we do, but it also allows for close interactions with the faculty. Having been here in Asheville, it will be quite a change to move on to a school where the professor might know your name only from a test you flunked.

Having come here from a different culture and with limited language skills, it was partially the help of the faculty that allowed me to become comfortable and to make it through the first couple of semesters.

We might not always realize it, but the support most of us get from the staff and faculty goes beyond what is expected. This makes UNCA unique and must not be allowed to weaken.

Needless to say, getting a degree from here does come along with, if not a notion of pride, at least a feeling of accomplishment and some certainty of getting the job we might want.

Of course, there are several negative issues I could address concerning UNCA. This, however, I want to leave to others (I am way too

happy about graduating to let my mood drop over that). I hope that future generations of students do recognize the weaknesses and change at least some of them for the better.

What about Asheville? Well, coming from the proximity of Berlin, the new capital of Germany, it was a somewhat difficult adjustment to the so-called "small" town life. This attitude prevented me from enjoying many of the things Asheville has to offer. It took me a good while to discover what Asheville has to offer. To be honest, I have lived here for the past three years, and I am still surprised every now and then by things I had not seen before or just closed my eyes to.

I do not try to imply that Asheville has everything metropolitan areas have to offer, but one can find things here that would not be expected in just any small town.

So what is it that Asheville does to you? For me, it has been a home for the past three years. It has also been the place where I got to grow up a little (some might argue that). After all, it has been my experience during the first year that made me stay.

The plan was to come here for one year and then retreat to Germany. The friends I made, the education I anticipated receiving, the people and Asheville made me change my mind. Without the help of all of my friends, some of whom have become family, I would probably not have stayed. Without the help and support of my family I could not have stayed. Thank you all!

This almost sounds a little corny, but as a friend told me, "Goodbyes are always a little corny." I already know that I will leave happy, but not happily.

Getting a degree from here does come along with, if not a notion of pride, at least a feeling of accomplishment and some certainty of getting the job we might want.