

# Opinions

The Banner

## Editorial

### Big waves

#### Wannabe

We are reminded again of our lack of diversity, despite our attempts to institutionalize our appreciation and appeal to minority groups.

So far, it just ain't workin'. In fact, the situation has gotten worse in terms of numbers of minority students attending UNCA in the face of humanities curriculum changes to become more inclusive of other cultures. Perhaps academically we are more diverse than your average Joe university, but our student body falls short of representing our own population in terms of race stratification.

"We sell ourselves on diversity, but we are not even representative of the greater population," said Rita Martin, a student assistant to our new coordinator of multi-cultural student programs.

How bold to proclaim our liberal arts banner as accepting and being appealing to diverse cultures when they don't even want to come here. The numbers are going down folks, and international students aren't picking our "diverse" atmosphere as their institution of choice.

Are we fake in our advertising? Perhaps it just feels good to pretend we are a politically correct, socially saint-like, fully accepting group of people. But fear not the truth; and lets expose our lack of racial and cultural diversity (unless you still believe in the Mason-Dixon line cultural divide).

A little institutional introspection might enlighten our beloved liberal arts university, and we can admit who we are, and work from there, without believing any lies about our own diversity.

### Plans for pocket change

Perhaps it is appropriate that former chancellor Patsy Reed's name now adorns a section of campus in front of our cafeteria. Like the offerings from the otherwise friendly folks at the Marriott, our ex-chancellor's short reign here at UNCA was so devoid of substance that it was best taken in indigestible bite-size portions.

However, pointing out every broken promise Patsy left for someone to sweep up doesn't make the shortcomings from her administration disappear. Take the proposed renovations to the Highsmith University Center for example.

There seems to be a considerable amount of support for the \$13 million refurbished Mecca student center where everyone on campus will inevitably make a pilgrimage to with baited breath. Only, the pockets of UNCA are about \$10 million short, and the manager isn't going to let us do dishes to work off the fee.

Despite this, the \$3.5 million that has been recently allotted to the project can do a great deal to alleviate inadequacies the building currently has. It would be nice to just know the place has a sturdy roof so guests to our school won't see the embarrassment on our faces from having tarps hanging from the ceiling of our bookstore.

Yes, a great number of students would embrace the reality of more dining choices and other amenities that students at other schools have at their disposal, but until we have the funding to proceed with such lofty ambitions, they're best kept at just that: lofty ambitions.

It would be more absurd to keep delaying the basic repairs that need to be done to the building before all the wishes pinned on it make its already fragile roof cave in.

### Surfin' UNCA

Each year, you can tell the students who have purchased textbooks from the bookstore in previous semesters. Wallets and checkbooks in hand, the inevitability of leaving the store minus a couple hundred dollars is a nightmare they know all too well.

However, it appears that, much to the chagrin of the bookstore, more than a few UNCA students are pointing and clicking their way around, finding their textbooks at much more modest prices online.

If online shopping has one tragic flaw, it's the impersonal nature inherent to the in-store shopping process. And in this case there is no comparison if customer service is an important aspect of your book-purchasing experience. Only at our bookstore can you flip through the pages of a text you'll need for humanities class minutes later.

If you can't fool the kids forever, then you must become your competition. Therefore, the bookstore has joined with online partner eFollet.com to make it easier for UNCA students to purchase the textbooks on their shelves. If this partnership has been formed for the betterment of the students then it deserves applause, but if it is simply intended to discourage students from finding the best deal, it deserves an equal amount of contempt.

So far, the benefits of this merger, according to manager Mike Small, seem to be a greater access to used textbooks and the Web site's book list feature, which allows students to find what text they need by simply clicking on the courses they're taking.

According to Small, should a student order from an online service other than eFollet.com, UNCA wouldn't have any part of it. That just might be the best motivation yet to start surfing.

## Inspiration for the newbies



Liam Bryan  
columnist

Ah, home again, home again. Nothing like learning to get my blood flowing. Yes, my fair readers, I am back again to give you the benefit of conservative opinions and raucous satire. But, for my first column this year, I shall extend a hand of welcome and salutations to all the new little freshmen out there. This column is for all those people standing around, wondering who they are supposed to pay for this paper.

First off, congratulations for choosing Asheville, hope you have fun, pray you get financial aid, may the flex of a thousand came's infest your armpits. The usual. But, I simply must congratulate you for surviving public high school. All you wimps that took the easy way out with private schools or home schooling made the right choice.

I have been through the horrors of public schools, and can tell you it was no easy feat. But college life is different (duh). So, to help all of you acclimate to this wonderful new environment, I have come up with a list of helpful hints gleaned from various friends, professors and my own experience.

Rule A: Forget your age. No, this is not because the march of time has

already taken its toll on your youthful visage, but because it really does not matter here. In high school, you were stuck in your class, whether it be freshman or senior.

Freshmen cannot play varsity. Freshmen cannot be in student government. Freshmen cannot hold office in clubs. Freshmen cannot take calculus. Forget that thinking here.

This is my sophomore year. Last year, I was only asked once as to what my grade level was. Why? Because it does not matter! Who cares if you are 18 or 80? This is finally a place where you are judged by your abilities, not by the last true discrimination in America (I am talking about ageism, people!). I know people 30 years old that are at our sophomore level, and 21 year olds that are finishing this semester. Forget your age, friend. It does not matter here.

Rule 2: Do what you want. No, I am not discussing the merits of debauchery for lust and carnal desires (that is for next time), but activities you enjoy. Enjoy singing, your age, friend. It does not matter here.

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dancing? Join the Dance Club. Music? Biology? Math? Literature? Those things people play where they get paid a lot of money to throw balls around? We have organizations for all these and more.

And, if you do not find anything you like, make your own club. Last semester, we did not have a dance club or a dance minor. A year or two ago, we did not have the multimedia major. But, thanks to the support of students like you, we now have these things.

Remember high school? Remember the clubs? The French club was at war with the Latin club. The dancers locked horns with the singers.

The actors fought each other. The band geeks would take on everyone. The jocks-well, let us leave the pro-tos out of this.

My point is you can be in as many things as you want. You can do what you like. You have freedom not only to be yourself but to explore your interests like never before, which leads me to my next rule.

Rule III: We like you, until you use us reason otherwise. Oh, this is an important one. The moment you goad through the doors of your high school for the very first time, you were assaulted.

Whether it be your clothes, shoes, book covers, backpack, headband, bathrobe, birthmark, chewing gum, friends, enemies, vehicle, parents' reputation, or transmission of your second car's Buick, people would find a way to batter you. If you survived at all, you had to develop that killer's instinct yourself.

You grew accustomed to hating people the moment you saw them. You understood the wisdom of so-what killing someone before they could kill you.

Here, on the hallowed ground of

higher learning we are your friends. (Can you tell I bought a thesaurus this summer?) Until your own actions and opinions tell us otherwise, we shall like you. So drop your armor! Lay down your weapon! We are at peace with you. Yes, there will be jerks here. Yes, you might find yourself embroiled in a battle of sarcasm and wit with someone who speaks that ignominious phrase, "I don't see your name on it!" But, as a whole, give them the benefit of the doubt.

Rule D: Get involved. I never thought I would utter those words. How do you become cool in high school?

Be apathetic, be cynical and be jaded. How do you become popular? Here do! Make friends. Meet people. You do not have to vote for SGA elections or anything, but at least make your presence known in your favorite department. Sports? Music? You have your favorite clubs. Have fun!

Rule V: Be nice to your roommate. No one else can make your life a more veritable hell than a snubbed or sleep-deprived roommate, so give them room. Do not tell them that you think their curfew should be 11 p.m. Do not sleep naked with the window open. Do not glue all of their furniture to the ceiling.

Rule 6: Enjoy your time here. This is probably the most fun you will ever get a chance to experience. So experience it! Go to clubs, meet people, fall in love, fall out of love, learn civnetics, and just live life.

Did you have a terrible time in high school? Were you disgusted with the way it was run? Did you detest the 50-hour weekend? So did I. But this is not high school. So, to all you newbies out there, I wish you fair weather on your next five years of life and learning.

## Seek truth below the surface



Eric Jacobson  
columnist

OK, that does it. My computer screen remains blank because my subconscious feels the monitor looks good in white, my chair is developing a permanent impression of my hind-side so deep that I'm being sucked in, and my fingers are so numb that I've started gluing sewing needles pointy-side up to the keys of the keyboard so that I can figure out where my fingers are when I'm typing. I can't figure out a way to change the broad approach this column is taking, so I'm just going to let it fly the way it is.

I've read *The Banner* since I started attending UNCA several years ago, and I think most of the columns that are printed are under-researched, and it's often the same stuff everyone already knew. If you're anything like me, you've thought that the quad is a waste of good parking space, the food in the cafeteria would, if it could, grow its own legs and walk out because it's so bad, the price of books in the bookstore is so high that it gets hard to breathe when the bill starts breaking into six-digit figures.

You've probably learned all of those pearls of wisdom on your own, and when you pick up an issue of *The Banner*, what you read is some redundant, reiterative, "haven't I read this column before," mass of babble written by

someone who thinks they deserve a Nobel Peace Prize because they just discovered a huge problem pressing UNCA students that no one knew about before they discovered it.

Thank you, columnists, for pointing out to me that parking is really bad. I didn't realize this when I spent two and a half hours driving my car around the campus this morning, only to eventually find out that the best legal parking space for me to use is the driveway in front of my house.

News flash: UNCA is making tens of thousands of dollars each year in parking fines. Why in the name of UNCA would any institution change this policy? If we want better parking, we need to stop parking illegally because our lazy asses couldn't use the extra 50 feet of concrete to get from the lot to our class. The only way that the administration is going to start taking our pleas seriously is if it's less profitable to suffer our complaints than it is to build more parking spaces.

Or better yet, did you know that the cost of books is really expensive in the bookstore? Instead of quality, researched article that enlightens us with the fact that the reason books' prices are really high isn't the fault of the bookstore, rather

the fact that our teachers want us to learn something by picking books that aren't mainstream, the columnist just sits down and starts whining about his own bookstore bill was so much.

News flash: books that are printed in small numbers have to make up the cost of the printing process by raising the cover price of the book. Our professors feel that some of the mainstream, regularly-printed textbooks are too elementary for our amazingly intellectual minds, so they pick books that are filled with more useful information but aren't printed in large quantities. Therefore, we get a better education, but we have to pay for it. If you don't like it, Asheville-Buncombe Technical Community College is right down the road, be my guest.

The food in the cafeteria sucks. No, really. If you stand by the entrance-of-the-evening and stay really quiet, I swear you will hear it breathing. I swear you will hear a columnist telling us this. News flash: you can use the same logic applied to figure out the high cost of books when talking about the meal plan. UNCA has maybe 1500 students living in residences of thousands of dollars each year in parking fines. Why in the name of UNCA would any institution change this policy? If we want better parking, we need to stop parking illegally because our lazy asses couldn't use the extra 50 feet of concrete to get from the lot to our class. The only way that the administration is going to start taking our pleas seriously is if it's less profitable to suffer our complaints than it is to build more parking spaces.

Arizona State University, the school I'm not proud to say I attended before transferring here, had nearly 5000 students living on campus. Multiplying the number of students by the cost of the minimum meal plan, and the reason why the food sucks at UNCA but is so good elsewhere becomes apparent; there simply aren't a large enough pool of money to make gourmet food for 1500 students when you've only got the money that comes from 1500 students.

This also explains why every student dining on campus is required to buy a meal plan. If the food is this terrible when everyone is paying for it, I don't want to see the kind of evolutionary process that would occur on the primordial gloop we'd

have for dinner if some people decided to fend for themselves rather than buy a meal plan.

Finally, it's time to discuss the astounding revelation that UNCA's administration doesn't seem to care about what the students think. Actually, this problem will hopefully fix itself. Recently, UNCA had a change in chancellors. Patsy "I'm just an uncol" Mullen's pension plan is "invested" Reed finally left last summer when her husband patented a refillable patch for transdermal delivery (made huge leaps and bounds in medical science). Her view of UNCA students can be best expressed by the huge entourage of various and sundry administration members that she kept around her at all times to prevent the possible contact with students.

News flash: UNCA, the only liberal arts institution in the UNC-system, finally has a chancellor who may actually reflect those same ideals. Chancellor Mullen signed an agreement with the students on this summer, and has also been seen...gasp...talking with students and helping out with jobs and situations where other chancellors wouldn't be seen to go. I'll keep you posted on where this one goes.

What we need is a student body who does what it is supposed to do: improve our education and every college; get educated about everything it comes in contact with.

The best weapons we have against any problems we encounter in our education or on campus are our education and our experience. Education we can derive from our professors and classes at UNCA. Experience we can gather from utilizing that very education we receive to make a stand against problems we observe in our daily lives and trying to change things for the better. I hope our time invested at UNCA will impart on us the wisdom to see the real problems within the depths rather than being tempted to simply skirt the issue's surface.