

Opinions

The Banner

Editorial

One minute warning

Tell us a lie

With all the hoopla over increasing diversity awareness on campus, one would think that more than a handful of students would have turned up to listen to a national speaker on Native American civil rights.

Sure, everyone will rush out to the Pow Wow demonstration on Nov. 30 to see what Native American culture was like, excitedly expecting to see the same stereotypes of feathers and tomahawks that Bruce Two Eagles condemned in his lecture. But our narrow liberal arts idea of "learning about other cultures" shouldn't be limited to cross-cultural entertainment.

When it comes down to a serious discussion of issues facing the late 20th century population of Native Americans, who's interested in their plight? Apparently, not many of the students who, for so long, have championed diversity as a top priority. "We want the programs we offer to be reflective of the environment we're in," said Octavia Wright, coordinator of multicultural student programs. Kudos—a job well done. Now it's up to the student body to support the environment we've encouraged.

If only a minuscule number of students are going to participate in diversity education, why should the administration bother trying to bring more to campus?

So take note: just as we are winning for the powers that be to implement more culturally diverse activities, they are watching to see how important (or unimportant, as the case may be) our existing programs really are to us.

Maybe we need to stop looking so much toward the administration to facilitate diversity on a university level, and start looking to the student body to support the diversity we do have on campus.

Seconds

Funding cuts are on UNCA's fiscal plate again, but, with a sigh of relief, our administration can absolve itself from responsibility for the approaching monetary drought.

Rather than mismanagement of finances, lack of donor money, or poor planning on the part of UNCA, this chapter in the history of money shortages can be traced back to hurricanes and flooding in Eastern North Carolina.

North Carolina is apparently trying to minimize the damage at East Carolina University and other state agencies by cutting funds 1 percent across the board.

Unlike the usual, we're short of money scenario, UNCA is in a position to brace for the cuts because the administration has taken the "conservative line" in spending, according to Tom Cochran, dean of faculty.

Perhaps the administration has developed foresight from past experiences with funding hurdles: adjunct shortages, dilapidated Highsmith, lack of childcare, scholarship funds, and the Greenway project.

After being burnt a few times, the university is half-prepared for the funding crunch, ironically, the least predictable cut. The recent approved funding increase for our "labor-intensive," liberal arts education (however true that may be), also will help minimize the unanticipated monetary cut.

The first statewide cut in what may become a series of cuts has been issued to all state agencies.

We hope that in all their wisdom, the legislators will continue to spread future cuts to all agencies and expenditures (like campaign financing, for example) and won't make education carry an unnecessary burden for the natural disaster that has crippled a portion of North Carolina.

Aftertaste

While funding for a facelift to the Highsmith Center continues to plod along, the building will receive, at least, some minor cosmetic surgery with the addition of a new fast-food restaurant. Starting in January, students eager to escape the clutches of Sodexo-Mariotti will have a new alternative: Chick-Fil-A. And while this move is a welcome change for many, it will only further emphasize the dire condition the rest of Highsmith's facilities are in.

Students munching on chicken sandwiches will munch, nonetheless, with the reality that just next door a tarp must be strung across the ceiling to protect textbooks from moisture.

What the advent of this new dining option for students does signify, though, is that if students voice a need for something, sometimes their demands are heeded.

So we're holding our collective breaths that the rampant idealism surrounding the center's funding from day one will turn into action soon.

Eating good food means nothing if walking out the door means numerous reminders of why the Highsmith Center's shortcomings leave a bad taste in our mouths.

Essence of religion is seeking



David Marshall

columnist

Christianity and academia, joined at the hip until the late middle ages, parted ways and have since endured an uneasy coexistence.

For well over half a millennium now, in what may be the greatest and most enduring war, these two siblings have fought each other, kicking and clawing for the most coveted trophy of all: truth.

And now, good news. This war has found a battlefield at the campus of UNCA. The Veritas Forum may have come and gone, but the war of words and conflicting ideas may have just begun. So pick a side, put on your best armor, choose and draw your weapons: the battle lines have been drawn.

Or you can simply sit with me on the bleachers and watch the fun. But do come, for here is where the learning begins. And you will learn much, like the fact that your professors truly feel passion—that they are courageous and strong and willing to fight nobly for their beliefs.

Observe the rules of engagement (like in all wars, not everyone will): Keep an open mind and remain sensitive to all the issues; never believe you can change a strongly committed person's views to the contrary; never believe that your views are superior (this is the hard-

est rule—everyone believes their views are superior, otherwise, why have them?).

Above all, come away with something new, something learned. I carry an agenda. Let's be honest, many of us carry our agendas like chips on our shoulders. Push the right button and the nicest person becomes livid. Even Jesus got mad, like when he chased the merchants from the temple.

Well, I'm not mad, but perhaps a bit perplexed and frustrated. Why do Christians like myself feel compelled to defend our religion in humanistic terms? Christianity is our tradition, our belief. We should not be merchants peddling Christianity in the marketplace of ideas.

Thomas Aquinas seemed to agree with me on this point. During his St. Augustine, Aquinas, Abelard, and Anselm each in their own way, mini-revolutionized the Christian tradition by criticism, and that's just counting late medievalists whose last names start with "A."

I am equally puzzled by the academy who's off and pushing out the Christian "absolute truth" position. How can we debate placidly and objectively in the classroom about the most hideous injustices, but become unhinged when the absolutist

viewpoint is proclaimed. Ok, I, too, bristle at the Christian culture's unabashed need to declare not only its knowledge of the truth, but a monopoly on it as well. I wish we had a better sense of humility.

But I ask again, why are academics threatened by Christian provincialism? Auto-da-fé is out of fashion and probably illegal in most states. Besides, the constitution remains intact.

If some Christians have overreacted, on the other hand, it might be completely understandable. Academia's intimidated promise through its liberal arts has always been to produce the complete person. Yet, spirituality is not a hallmark of the public university. Christians have sensed the deceit.

Furthermore, the modern university purports to be a place to struggle with Kuhn's work on the free exchange of ideas. The ideal does not match reality. Academic communities are confined by paradigms and methodology. These are the dogmas and doctrine of the university. Any paradigm and how they control prevailing notions of truth understands the machinations that make ideas either acceptable or unacceptable.

We must never forget that the paradigm known as Social Darwinism was once considered a legitimate and accurate reflection of truth by academicians.

I leave you to your assignment. Learn something from the polemics of this debate. A friend told me two things in quick succession the other day that simply bowled me over by its wisdom.

He said that the essence of religion is seeking. Faith, he added, is not knowing final answers, but acting as if you did.

Big Brother watching UNCA



Eric Winters

columnist

do with Public Safety?

Better yet, what interpretation could they possibly hold in reference to students at UNCA?

Well, before these questions can be found on your campus any given night, before any fraternity party, or during any gathering of persons who may be drinking alcohol and, God forbid, playing music.

Did you know that while shuttles were being loaded for a recent party, you were being videotaped?

Sure, from the roof of Karpen Hall you were being monitored by Big Brother himself. Have you, like numerous other students, had your cup full of a beverage, yes even non-alcoholic ones, smelled, confiscated, or even slipped in order to assess the content of alcohol?

Or, how many of you stress-relieving, weekend-warrior college students have been instructed by an officer of UNCA Public Safety to submit to a breathalyzer test following a visit by the officer to a room where there was music and the smell of alcohol?

Believe it or not, instead of a simple write-up for loud music, you could be hauled to jail. Or if you are of age and drinking, then you run the risk of having the guests in your room subjected to a breathalyzer test.

In no way is this an attempt to let students know how to get away with drinking. This is a simple reminder of students' rights and an attempt at a compromise with public safety.

It is also not an attempt to bash public safety. Consider the following: public safety cannot force anyone that is not in or on a motor vehicle to submit to a breath test to monitor alcohol consumption.

They must ask the alleged binge drinker if they would like to submit to a test, and if that person refuses, no action, whatsoever, can be taken. Forget student conduct; without proof there can be no charges filed.

For those of you who are skeptical, be so for now. This statement came straight from the farmhouse by one of our own officers.

I'm sure all of you also know that an officer cannot enter your room due to loud music without a search warrant. All an officer can do is tell you to turn down the volume, and perhaps hush your guests.

The university has attempted to bypass a law and subject students to their student conduct system by claiming that the reprimands are not punishments, but attempts at compromise.

Student conduct can force a student to attend alcohol assessment classes without solid proof that they were drinking and against the objection of the student. How is that a compromise?

In an extreme situation, students could drink in their rooms every night, keeping the door shut when an officer arrives, and hiding all alcohol off of plain view if the officer peeks inside.

Public safety could take all dorm doors off of the hinges to better monitor the activity of students, effectively carrying out prohibitionist policies while pleasing the public and administration.

Obviously, there must be a compromise. Students cannot and should not be subject to constitutional violations, but they also should not be allowed to drink themselves into oblivion.

Public safety must abide by the rules. They must also not assume that where there is smoke there is fire; students in dorms could be dancing, yelling, clapping their hands, and drinking communion grape juice at a Bible study for all they know.

On the other hand, students must abide by the rules of responsibility and not drink to a sickening level.

Veritas

Dear Editor,

The purpose of Veritas is to provide a perspective on the religious and philosophical beliefs of our side. The people see to respond to the perspective that states are all them being.

I do not believe any leverage make arguments or God-given that states can under no moved from is removed.

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Fair warning

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