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Blue Banner Editorials

Clearing up misconceptions

Lately, several rumors have been floating around about various quotes found in *The Blue Banner* and how they came to be. Several quotes may appear misconstrued or so rightfully outrageous that they seem as though they cannot be true, but we at *The Blue Banner* have a strict policy on interviews.

Our interview policy says that all interviews must be recorded on tape, and no article will be published without submission of the interview tape.

In doing so, we eliminate the possibility for misquotes. If what one says on tape is inaudible or not easily understood, *The Banner* will not use that quote in the story.

We require all our writers to tape interviews in case quote individuals later come to us and claim he or she did not say that. In such a case, we can easily access this tape recording and play it back to him or her, and prove what he or she said really was what was on tape.

We at *The Banner* want to clear up any rumors that we "make up quotes" or "misquote" anyone, ever. If anyone would like to dispute our claim, we will be more than happy to playback a disputed quote.

Based on the First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States, we reserve the right to publish any quote we deem necessary to a story, and assertions that *The Blue Banner*, in any way, falsifies or makes up quotes is false. The staff and editors are in a training process to prepare for a career in journalism, and based on our own code of ethics, we will never misquote or falsify a quote. Ever.

UNCA needs The Blue Banner

Much has been said about the UNCA *Blue Banner* and its staff over the course of the entire 2001-02 school year. Students, alumni, faculty and staff alike have all voiced their displeasure with some of the hair-raising articles, editorials and opinion columns written by its staff members.

They range from topics such as diversity on campus (where is it?), cheerleading (its still not a sport!), the Arts 310 and Humanities programs (do we really need them?), Homecoming (it's lame!), SGA (what do they actually do?) and its elections (they're pointless), and let's not forget about the notorious Shaun Cashman opinion column written last spring.

Many have felt insulted by these various things that have appeared in *The Blue Banner*. However, as badly as you may hate some of the things we print, you subconsciously need and want us to print them.

It's true, just think about it. If we did publish a newspaper that covered nothing but the flowers and trees and the birds and bees, nobody would give a rat's ass about *The Blue Banner*. No one would ever bother picking it up off the rack. That's why we have to publish what we do.

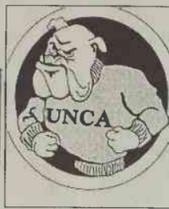
If you don't believe this, all you have to do is look at the letters to the editor page and see how many responses we get from YOU the readers. We would not be getting that feedback if we published "happy, feel good articles."

Our stance is justifiable by the evidence that in America, people love controversy. This should be no surprise. After all, this country was built and founded on controversy and run by controversial figures. So why should this same love and hunger for controversy be immune to a college campus?

We, the staff at *The Blue Banner*, also know about past threats to strip *The Blue Banner* of its funding so other organizations can create a UNCA newspaper full of "happy articles." But we hope that will never happen because we are the people year-in and year-out that everybody loves to hate. And if you get rid of us, then there will be no one left to constantly argue with and hate.

So while we admit to helping reaffirm your beliefs that UNCA can't live with *The Blue Banner* by publishing what we do every week, this editorial serves as a strong reminder that UNCA can't live without us either.

Campus mission, minority statistics misrepresented



The Office of Admissions
 Guest Columnist

As members of the Office of Admissions, we are, in large part, considered "responsible" for each year's incoming freshman class.

As such, we were surprised, disheartened and truly angered by the recent headline, "Minority statistics do not reflect campus mission," by Elizabeth Moe.

Rarely has such a clear lack of journalistic integrity seared the front page of *The Blue Banner*. Constructive criticism is one thing, complete misrepresentation of facts is yet another.

A complete retraction of last week's story is certainly in order, as is an apology for the disservice done to the university. Let us explain.

Moe began her article claiming, "Statistics show a decrease in cultural diversity at UNCA from 1995 until 2002."

In fact, the exact opposite is true, according to the same source cited last week. Cultural diversity at UNCA has increased from 8.3 percent in 1995 to 9.4 percent in 2001. In addition, UNCA does not rank as poorly amongst our peers as it seemed.

This is only the beginning of an article so completely devoid of honest statistics and information as to be considered disgraceful.

UNCA's mission states: "Small by choice, the university brings together faculty and students of diverse cultural and geographical backgrounds to interact closely in a supportive community of learning."

This is not "black" and "white." It is far more encompassing: in-state and out-of-state; U.S. citizen, resident alien, and international; rural and urban; African-American, Asian American, Hispanic, Native American, Indian, mixed race, white, and others; southern Appalachia and coastal Carolina; heterosexual, gay, lesbian, bi-sexual, and transgendered; Jewish, Catholic, Baptist, Buddhist, United Methodist, pagan; socioeconomic - we think you get the picture.

We will not argue that the atmosphere on campus is not conducive to keeping black students through graduation.

A lack of consensus regarding diversity on campus is at the root of the problems.

Until the entire campus takes the mission stated above to heart, we will continue to go nowhere.

Recruiting only black students will not help us satisfy our mission, nor will it help satisfy the "Commitment to Equal Opportunity" we are supposed to support.

This commitment states "UNCA is open to people of all races and actively seeks to promote continued racial integration by recruiting and enrolling a diverse student body. As a liberal arts institution, it is important that we create a learning community that reflects the diversity and multiculturalism of our changing world."

Even if you only consider race as a factor of cultural diversity, the true facts indicate UNCA has increased diversity.

Somanna Muthana was correct when he said, "I'm actually very surprised about that (alleged decrease in minority numbers). I thought there had been a slight increase since I got here."

To indicate to the students, faculty, and staff that the situation is otherwise only further intensifies the challenge of the Office of Admissions and the university as a whole to bring in a diverse class.

Reference is made throughout the article to recruitment efforts, or lack of, by the Admissions Office. Surprisingly, neither Moe nor any *Banner* staff member contacted our office to find out exactly what goes on in the world of recruitment.

They would have learned that the Admissions Office has done far more minority recruitment this year than ever before.

They would have discovered we scheduled four separate receptions for individual minority groups:

African-American, Asian American, Latin American, and Native American - specifically Cherokee.

They would have learned members of our office staff and students spend many late nights each semester calling prospective and accepted minority students and their families to encourage them to apply, deposit and enroll.

They would have also learned the amount of time and energy devoted to visiting every college fair and nearly every individual high school within North Carolina (not to mention the out-of-state efforts and outreach programs such as Asheville To Asheville, Camp College and others).

We believe this would satisfy Matt Witbrodt's expectation to "go out there, you get your name out, and at least try to recruit people." Believe us, we do.

They would have also discovered that the Office of Admissions is truly committed to the Mission and Commitment to Equal Opportunity as outlined above.

Perhaps many on campus ought to expand their concept of diversity from "black" and "white" to the broader definition the university officially embraces.

We will not argue the campus is not entirely welcoming to minority students. *The Blue Banner's* article makes it only too clear.

If administration officials, faculty, staff and students are as clearly misinformed about the true facts as this article implies, how can we be welcoming?

If this campus as a whole does not proactively create a positive environment and supply positive mentor relationships between minority faculty/staff and students, how can we expect to keep students here through graduation, not to mention encouraging organizations and activities to address their interests?

The university must look internally at its concepts and definition of diversity and truly commit itself before we can be expected to bring in a class that represents our mission.

Office of Admissions Staff: Rebecca Barraclough - Class of '96; Fran Barrett; Jonathan Byers - Class of '98; Judy Carver; Rita Martin - Class of '00; India McHale - Class of '00; Leigh McBride - Class of '71.

Enough of coverage of the Enron scandal



Craig Lovelace
 Columnist

I'm sick and tired of hearing about Enron - almost as much as I am with hearing the name used as a verb (are you listening, Tom Daschle?).

The gist of the matter is, Whitewater accounting practices came back to bite the company's butt, and company investment values got creamed.

Next thing we know, Congress is having hearings and making speeches, which is their answer to everything. As long as they get their television time, they're happy. The spookiest part of this whole thing is that the more astute observers seem to be gushing over the amount of effort being put into this dog and pony show.

First off, the accusations of corruption flying every which way are funny. Attorney General John Ashcroft rescued himself from any

investigation because of contributions to a failed campaign, and immediately became a target for opportunists of the "kick the man when he's down, he's easier to reach that way" school of politics. Of course, the squeaky wheels in this case, most notably Joe Lieberman, have also taken comparable sums more recently. Self-righteousness means never having to say you're sorry.

Now for the truly terrifying part - people, both in real life and on TV (there's a difference), have actually encouraged the investigation hearings. Ignoring the massive political gain that comes out of appearing on TV in any form, congressional hearings are about as effective in their fact-finding mission as generic brand condoms are for birth control.

With no rules of evidence or abil-

ity to execute judgment, the hearings are merely an attempt to cater to public opinion. If any change comes out of this, it'll be a change from inside, much like with entertainment content. After all, three months of organized crime hearings only determined that we have organized crime - not exactly a shattering revelation.

We also have the media going into another human-interest frenzy. All I hear are those poor employees who lost their life savings. Folks, if you invest, be prepared to lose it. In the market, there is no sure thing, and the gambler's golden rule applies: don't front more than you can afford to lose.

The only thing this has done for me is convince me that psychosis is more common than we thought.

Nobody seems to remember Cliff Baxter, the Enron executive who apparently took the home suicide course.

Nobody knew where he'd been shot, when he'd been shot, or where the gun was, but they knew it was a suicide immediately. After all, the medical examiner knew it before having viewed the body. It's more important we remember the funny

picture of Kenneth Lay with a Santa Clause costume on - now that's news.

The major beneficiary of this farce seems to be the Democratic Party leadership, who've gotten a new mindless phrase - corruption! Admittedly, Fritz Hollings and John McCain claim to have invented the concept, but it's seen more use in the Donkey camp lately than a copy of "Mein Kampf" at a David Duke support rally.

Instead of a reelection slogan for a few choice hypocrites, now it fits into the plan - where they throw accusations against the wall to see what sticks. Despite a total lack of evidence, the Bush administration is being crucified - a sacrifice on the altar of partisanship.

This cavalcade of confusion has now resulted in the passage of Shays-Meehan, the so-called "Campaign Finance Reform" bill. In reality, this will be remembered as the Incumbent Protection Act.

It espouses to end soft money, lever out the influence of special interests and make you taller and better looking. Just kidding - there's no provisions to get rid of special interests.

In reality, this bill will only make it more difficult for challengers to get their message out.

Groups with a vested interest in election issues will be gagged for two to three months before an election, and your constitutional rights to free speech are being trampled by the white horses of these Lone Rangers.

If the bill is so urgent and the crisis so dire that our House reps had to call a floor vote at 3 a.m., why doesn't it take effect before the midterm elections? That disturbs me, as does having to depend on a slightly manic-depressive Supreme Court to protect my rights.

The reason we have three branches of government is so two can do the mudhole stomp on the third for doing something so monumentally stupid in the first place.

This bill has gotten support only so everyone in Congress can claim they tried to clean up politics. Unfortunately, the only way to do this is to eliminate the weak link - the people.

I can't wait for my next trip to Washington. It'll be nice to go the Capitol and have Erich von Stroheim tell me to wipe my feet.

"The Chaos Game and Fractal Images," a lecture by Dr. Robert L. Devaney of Boston University. TODAY, April 4, 7p.m. Humanities Lecture Hall.

Dinner Time

BA Exhibition of Functional Ceramics by Margaret Goodson

April 12-24, 2002

Opening Reception Friday April 12 6:30-8:30p.m.

2nd Floor Gallery Owen Hall