

# THE BLUE BANNER

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## New child care center to open next fall

Lana Coffey  
News Reporter

UNCA will open a new children's learning center at the beginning of next semester, intended to primarily serve students attending UNCA.

"We're getting quite a package, more than child care," said Maggie Smith, director of child and family services. "Hopefully, (the facility) makes a difference, not only to the UNCA community, but (also) to the Asheville and Buncombe community."

There will be approximately 35-50 spaces to fill, and the priority will go to UNCA students, then to the faculty and staff. The addition of this center may help retention rates among students with children, according to Smith.

"It's crucial for non-traditional aged students to even attend school," said Smith. "It's not a luxury. It's a necessity."

A modular unit will be built and delivered to UNCA, according to Smith. The unit will be placed on Vivian Avenue next to the old Pegasus Press building, which used to be a grammar school.

The Pegasus building will contain offices, storage space, a family resource area and a staff area. The modular unit will be devoted to the children, and will consist of an infant room, a toddler room and a pre-school room.

One student said it would be helpful if she could take her niece to the center while she was attending classes.

"It's hard to get good child care too, and it's not just that," said



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Students, faculty and staff will have access to a new children's learning center next fall at UNCA. The center is intended to take some of the burden off of students with families.

Victoria Hyland, a freshman French major, who, along with the help of her mother, takes care of her niece. "It's expensive, and the facilities aren't that great," said Hyland.

Hyland said she believes more mothers would attend school when childcare is offered.

"There would probably be more moms if they could have child care," she said.

The exact costs of sending children to the center will be determined this summer, according to Smith. The average cost of childcare in Buncombe County is approximately \$150/week for infants, \$125

for toddlers and \$100 for pre-school children.

The center will also offer half-time rates.

"Half-time is really going to be affordable, but what we really need is to focus a lot of energy on creating a subsidy, create opportunities for fundraising, and scholarships for these kids," said Smith.

In the future, financial aid and grants may be offered to low-income students who need a day care center in order for them to attend school, according to Smith.

College for Seniors and the Key Center for Service Learning may

play a role in the center, according to Smith.

"We're not looking for them to just to wipe off tables and change diapers," said Smith. "What we're going to do is sit down with each person who is interested in volunteering at the center and find out what strengths, (passions and hobbies they have) and create that link," said Smith.

The volunteers will be able to bring their own hobbies and activities into the center and teach the children, according to Smith.

"We knew that we did not just want to provide daycare for kids,"

said Smith. "We just didn't want to provide baby-sitting services for kids. We wanted to include the families. We wanted it to be intergenerational, and we wanted it to ...be the highest quality child care we could find."

The childcare center is something that UNCA has been looking into for a long time. When Chancellor James Mullen came to the university, he set up a committee to look into the idea, according to Smith.

Most of the other schools in the UNC system already have child day care centers for students, according to Smith.

UNCA formed a partnership with the Orelena Hawks Puckett Institute, an institute nationally known for early childhood family research. "We've created an organization that will have impact on the child care community of Buncombe County and possibly regionally," said Smith.

UNCA, along with Puckett, created The Center for Excellence in Early Childhood Education (CEECE), which is a forum designed to provide exemplary early childhood practices for children aged six months to five years, according to Smith.

The center will be funded in part by a \$50,000 grant from Smart Start of Buncombe County, according to Smith. Puckett will also help to fund part of the new child care program.

Smith and the child care committee set up a survey for all parents interested in the day care center. To access this survey, students can go to [www.unca.edu/childcare/survey](http://www.unca.edu/childcare/survey). There will also be an informational meeting May 2 at 12:30 in the Laurel Forum.

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by Art vonLehn

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## Chancellor Mullen selected a new VCAA for UNCA

Whitney Setser  
News Reporter

Chancellor James Mullen announced his choice for UNCA's new Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs (VCAA) April 18.

"I am extremely pleased to announce that, pending approval by our Board of Trustees and the UNC Board of Governors, Mark Padilla has agreed to join UNCA as our new VCAA," said Chancellor Mullen, in an email.

The Board of Trustees must approve Mullen's decision, and pending their approval, Padilla will begin work July 1, according to Brown.

"The Board of Trustees looks for a proven academic leader who is, first and foremost, committed to the liberal arts and to the important issues (UNCA) faces," said Mullen. If the university and its leadership are functioning in a healthy way with the Board of Trustees, it is doubtful that the board would not approve a candidate chosen by the chief executive of the university, according to Brown.

"The only thing I can think of would be if new and damaging information were to emerge in the time between when the chancellor makes the decision and when the board meets to approve it," said Brown, in an email. "If a candidate is arrested for robbing a liquor store or something, that would do it."

Padilla said he is confident about his future at UNCA and working with Mullen.

"I, indeed, expect to work well with Dr. Mullen," said Padilla. "I am comfortable with his vision for UNCA, and I appreciate his style of engagement. I expect to learn from him in ways that will be professionally gratifying."

Padilla is the interim dean of the College of Arts and Sciences at Bucknell University in Lewisburg, Pennsylvania.

"(Padilla) is an accomplished teacher, scholar and administrator who shares our values and fundamental commitment to liberal learning," said Chancellor Mullen.

"He will be a superb academic leader of our university."

Padilla, who earned his doctorate in comparative literature from Princeton, served as a professor of classics, chair of the classics department and associate dean of faculty for Bucknell University. Padilla also founded Bucknell's program of comparative humanities, according to the Bucknell University Web site.



COURTESY OF BUCKNELL UNIVERSITY

## Mullen named new special assistant for diversity affairs

Elizabeth Moe  
News Reporter

Dwight Mullen will begin acting as the special assistant to the chancellor for diversity affairs July 1. Brenda Greene previously held this position, but suddenly resigned in February due to family problems.

"Although things may not look very bright now, I am optimistic about the future of diversity at UNCA," said Afaf Omer, assistant professor of sociology, who currently acts as the special assistant to the chancellor for diversity affairs. "The difficulties we seem to be going through right now are just growing pains."

Cultural diversity has been a top priority for Chancellor James Mullen since his inception into the university in 1999.

"If UNCA is going to become as great a university as it can be, it needs to become a more diverse campus environment in every way — a place where we respect and celebrate the individuality of each member of our community of learning," said Mullen. "We need to continue to focus on this issue with a passion and a sustained level of commitment."

The special assistant to the chancellor acts as a facilitator for diversity issues on campus by overseeing the diversity project and communicating with the offices that have an interest in increasing and protecting diversity at UNCA.

"The purpose of this position is to serve as an umbrella for all diversity initiatives on campus," said Jonathan Byers, assistant director of admissions. "This person would help to bridge the gap and improve communication between minority recruitment and multicultural student affairs, since the offices are in different buildings on campus."

UNCA has struggled with recruiting diverse students for many years. African-American students have proved particularly difficult to recruit for a number of reasons.

"Some of (our) black students graduate, leave bitter, angry and don't want to come back to UNCA," said Byers. "Why is this? We have to ask ourselves the question, 'Is UNCA a campus that provides a positive environment for all black students?'"

Many African American students are looking for programs of academic study we do not offer here. A large number of black prospective students already in the Asheville area want to leave, and some stu-



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Head of the Political Science department Dwight Mullen.

dents currently enrolled here are unhappy, according to Byers.

"Diversity, or the lack of it, is a long-standing problem at UNCA," said Omer. "When Chancellor Mullen took charge, he has made it his first priority, and he is very sincere in his efforts. We are, how-

ever, working against the tide, and it is not an easy task to reverse such a historical course. We are keenly aware and disturbed by the low number of minority students admitted."

Budget cuts make it difficult for UNCA to offer competitive finan-

cial aid packages, and many eastern and Piedmont black students still have a negative stereotype of the mountains, according to Byers.

"Like everyone else on campus, we are extremely frustrated with the low numbers of African American applications and acceptances for this year," said Byers.

"We are trying to find those African American students that are looking for what UNCA has to offer, but this is not easy."

The admissions office, Chancellor Mullen and multicultural student affairs have been working hard and continue to work to improve diversity at UNCA.

Through minority targeting projects, like visitation programs, summer enrichment programs and programs where students of color call and speak with prospective students, UNCA has been making efforts to reach minority groups, according to Byers.

"Two years ago, the chancellor's diversity task force, under the leadership of Dwight Mullen, made a number of recommendations," said Byers. "The minority affairs commission, that I was chairing at the time, has presented to the faculty senate a proposal of its role to carry out the recommendations."

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