



SHANNA ARNEY - STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Clayton Crowhurst, freshman student, shovels trash during the Dumpster Dive at Student Government Association's semi-annual Greenfest. Students separated trash to be recycled out on the Quad to promote better recycling habits on campus. SGA members said Greenfest is one of their most successful programs that continues to increase in popularity year after year as students become more environmentally aware. The event ran all week, encouraging students to participate in rummage sales and the like.

SGA's Greenfest encourages a week-long campaign for environmental awareness

By Madison Hayes
Copy Editor

As part of a local effort to take action on the global issue, Student Government Association's semi-annual Greenfest brought environmental awareness and action to campus last week.

"It's helpful to expose undergraduate students to environmental issues because we're in this melting pot of ideas," said Jonathan Barnes, junior environmental studies student and executive for sustainability affairs for SGA.

With its conception in 1991, Greenfest helps to increase environmental awareness on campus, according to Barnes.

When it first began, it was a Saturday cook-out event on the Quad, and students and faculty and staff would come out and do campus greening activities," Barnes said. "It grew into a week of events over the past decade, and since then, we have started collaborating with other student organizations, incorporating educational events, discussions, documentaries and the like."

Greenfest creates a medium through which students and the university community are able to communicate global environmentalism on a local level, according to Dave Malutich, senior environmental studies student and co-chair of ASHE.

"We are the ones that need to be pushing this issue," Malutich said. "Greenfest creates a week out of every semester that brings people's focus to these issues, and gets people out and involved on campus."

By taking part in environmental activism on a small level, college students can be one of the most influential groups on environmental awareness, according to Malutich.

"On a small level, just looking at the resources a university uses, energy, paper and recyclable materials, is a step in the right direction," Malutich said.

Students are becoming more aware of their environmental



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Joe Wilkerson, junior environmental and economics student, helps separate trash during Greenfest's Dumpster Dive where students work to encourage a more environmentally-friendly campus with recycling.

impact and are looking for ways to become more environmentally active, according to Barnes.

"Increasingly, students are concerned about the environment, and they're seeing that our actions have a direct impact on the environment with things like climate change," Barnes said.

Although Greenfest is primarily aimed at environmental issues, the incorporation of other student organizations brings other issues to light, according to Barnes.

"We try to get other organizations to co-sponsor Greenfest, not only to get other students involved but to bring in other issues," Barnes said. "Environmental issues are so broad they include things like social justice and human rights."

ASHE's Strive Not to Drive campaign, which was held in collaboration with Greenfest, was another

way to promote the importance of college students' environmental awareness, according to Malutich.

"Strive Not to Drive was really successful," Malutich said. "The chancellor rode her bike to school, there were a lot of people using the bus, and there were a lot of kids getting their bikes tuned-up on the Quad."

Greenfest helps to alleviate the idea that SGA is solely political in its efforts, according to Barnes.

"Greenfest has always been an SGA event," Barnes said. "It's one of the things SGA does that's not overtly political. It's a consistent event that we do, and sometimes we don't get recognized for it. It's nice to have a diversity of events and causes that SGA can work on so we're not stuck in this political turmoil."

Rumors of smoke-free campus fueled by administrative decision

By Aaron Dahlstrom
Staff Writer

Health concerns prompted UNC Asheville administration to remove tobacco products from Rocky's convenience store, sparking rumors the campus could completely ban smoking in the near future.

"As I came on board and started observing different areas that report to me, I looked over the convenience store as one of the areas that report to me and saw that we were selling cigarettes, which I felt was not in correct congruence with our health and wellness philosophy throughout campus," said Pat Hunt, vice chancellor of finance and operations at UNC Asheville.

Cigarettes will be removed from Rocky's convenience store June 30.

"That was the end of a fiscal year, and it seemed the proper time to sequence the closeout of an inventory," Hunt said.

The new administration felt it was unethical to sell cigarettes to students, said Bill Haggard, vice chancellor for student affairs.

"It has been a longtime value at this campus to focus on health and wellness. We really felt ethically we should not make money off students in a way that adversely affected their health," he said.

Legal issues influenced the decision as well, according to Hunt.

"Since some of our students are below 18, I was worrying about the underage effect and making sure that we properly carded," he said.

Hunt initiated the motion to remove cigarettes from the convenience store. Both Haggard and Chancellor Anne Ponder supported her decision, she said.

Currently there are no plans for banning cigarettes completely

from campus, but the possibility remains, according to Hunt.

"What is next right this minute is that we have no additional plans to make this a smoke-free campus," she said. "We have seen that it has been considered at some of our sister campuses and across the nation, but we have not entered into any discussions about it yet."

Haggard said he sees pros and cons of switching to a smoke-free campus.

"I have mixed feelings about it. I know a lot of people are nonsmokers, and I know a lot of people are smokers. I just wonder how realistic it is to do that," he said.

Administration receives some requests for smoke-free residence halls but hesitates making that decision because they need time informing student smokers, Haggard said.

"You are balancing people's right to a choice as opposed to what is certainly a healthier environment, and that is where I have difficulty," Hunt said. "Those implications of a smoke-free campus require a lot of strong conversation."

Numerous benefits exist for going smoke-free, according to Haggard.

"It is a healthier campus for everyone because you eliminate the secondhand smoke situation. It is also a cleaner campus because you eliminate cigarette butts. It is amazing how much time and energy is spent picking those up," he said.

Drawbacks exist as well, according to Hunt.

"There is a stress level for people who no longer have the ability to smoke. Without some balance of sensation products available to them, particularly faculty and staff who are here for quite a bit of hours, as well as students,

quite frankly, where would they go to smoke when they are expected to be on campus? What do you give them for an alternative?" she said.

Student smokers disagree with a nonsmoking campus.

"It makes me want to punch somebody. There are designated places where people can go smoke, and nonsmokers can choose not to go there," said Delaney Brown, freshman student.

Students who do not smoke should not be exposed to second-hand smoke, according to Charity Franklin, freshman.

"I don't know about making the entire campus smoke-free. Those wanting to smoke deserve that right," she said. "However, those who do not like cigarette smoke or who are allergic to it should not have to walk through it constantly on their way to classes. Maybe instead of having a completely non-smoking campus, we could have a smoking in designated area campus."

Haggard said he understands quitting would not be easy.

"There would need to be some time to allow people to adjust. Those who suffer from nicotine addiction would need some time to go through a sensation program," he said. "We would have to consider offering some type of sensation program for members of the university in preparation for going smoke-free because some people don't have the freedom to leave campus. If there were a quick change, it would cause initial stress among some folks."

The campus community's feelings remain a key factor in such a decision, according to Haggard.

"It would be a mistake to enter into this arbitrarily," he said. "We would need to consult with folks before we did that."

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