



# The Blue Banner

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## Economic turmoil causes concern

Jason Howell  
STAFF WRITER  
JHOWELL@UNCA.EDU

As stock markets around the world plunged over the past two weeks and 60 percent of respondents to a CNN poll said Tuesday another economic depression is likely, UNC Asheville students are among millions watching the economy with a fearful eye.

"I'm not an economist," junior student CeCe Hue said. "I don't understand all of this."

The 21-year-old philosophy major discussed what everyone is talking about lately: the economy. She acknowledged she's not alone in her confusion.

The Dow Jones Industrial Average suffered its largest point drop in history last Monday, falling 778 points. The largest bank failure in American history took place the week before, with the collapse of Washington Mutual.

The economy shed 160,000 jobs in September, the worst month in five years. Almost 800,000 jobs vanished since January.

"I think I have a general grasp of the problem," Hue said. "But I'm not as educated as I could be."

Hue said she has a lot of questions, the kinds of questions Robert Tatum, assistant professor of the economics department hears recently.

"I've had a lot of people

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## Group fights the death penalty

Annika Reinert  
STAFF WRITER  
ANNIKA.REINERT@GMAIL.COM

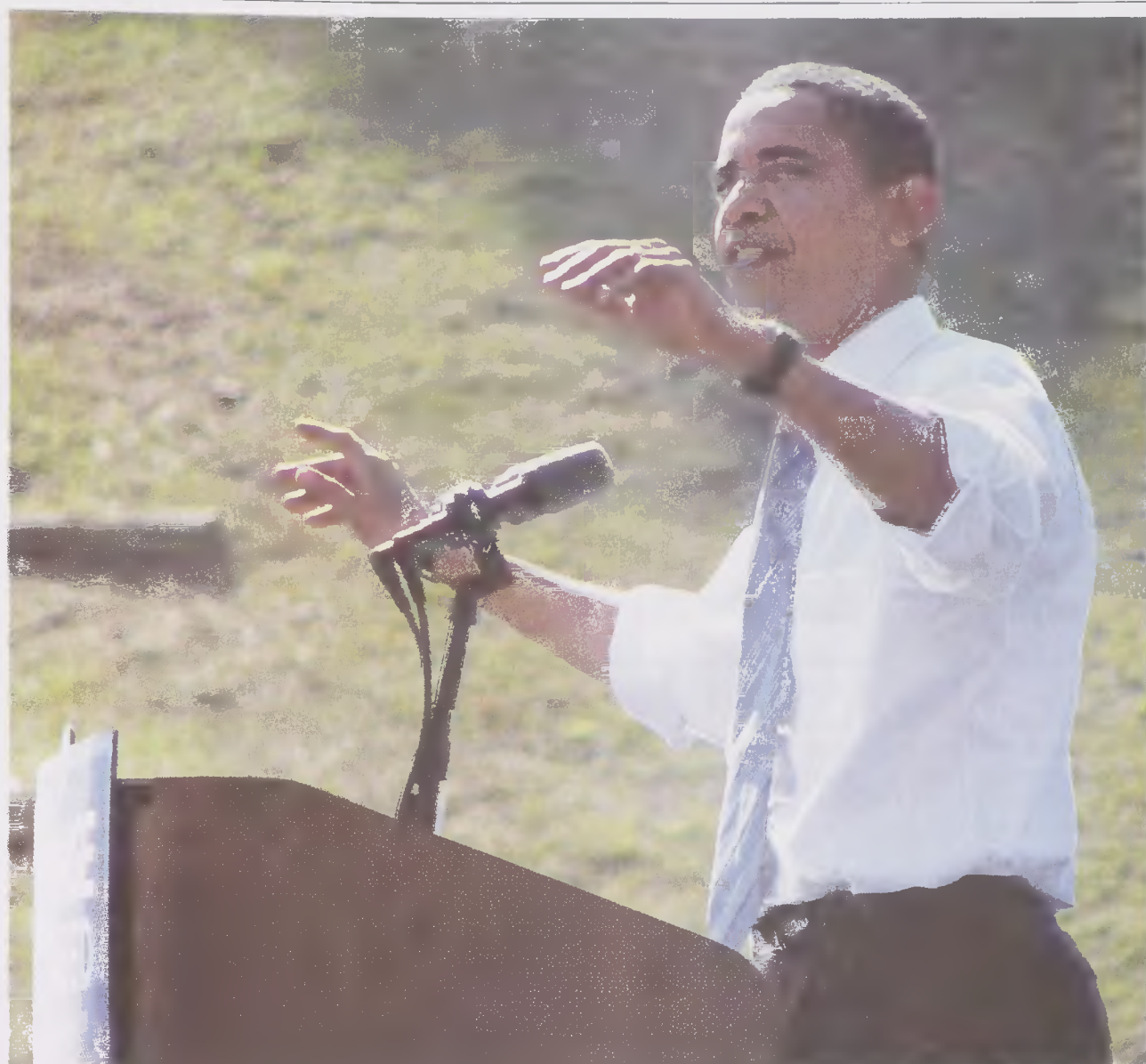
Troy Davis received a stay of execution on Sept. 30, less than two hours before his scheduled execution.

A jury convicted him in 1991 on charges of murder for the killing of Mark Allen MacPhail, a police officer from Savannah, Georgia. Davis maintains his innocence in the face of execution.

Together with UNC Asheville's chapter of Amnesty International, students joined in the appeal for clemency.

"UNCA students have written about 300 letters to the Georgia Board of Pardons and Paroles, they

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PHOTOS BY JONATHAN WALCZAK - NEWS EDITOR

## 'We can win North Carolina'

Obama speaks to 28,000 people in Asheville less than a month before election

Jonathan Walczak  
NEWS EDITOR  
JMWALCZA@UNCA.EDU

Sen. Barack Obama spoke Sunday at Asheville High School to an estimated crowd of 28,000 people, a day after telling *The Blue Banner* he thinks he can win North Carolina and young voters may decide the election.

"It's going to be a hard-fought contest. Western North Carolina is traditionally more Republican, but I think that people are looking at the catastrophic situation on Wall Street and how it's spilling onto Main Street," Obama said when questioned by the Banner on a conference call for student journalists.

Sunday's rally was Obama's first stop in WNC. Previously, the farthest west he traveled was to Hickory before the May Democratic primary.

Polls show Obama in a dead heat with Sen. John McCain in North Carolina. The latest poll of likely voters, completed by Elon University and released on Oct. 1, shows Obama with a .1 percent lead over McCain for the state's 15 electoral votes.

"Young voters are going to make the difference, not just in North Carolina, but all across the country. If young voters turn out at levels that they can turn out, then it could end up being the decisive voting block in this election," Obama said in response to the Banner's question.

Sophomore student Jamie Carpenter agreed.

"I think it will be important. I think so many more

young people will vote this year. They seem more excited," Carpenter said.

Supporters began lining up for the rally at 11 p.m. Saturday night, hoping to secure a good spot near the stage. By 5:30 a.m., about 40 people were in line, many lying on the ground in sleeping bags to escape cold temperatures.

Asheville resident Amy Kelso, 43, brought her two young sons to the rally. Kelso said she contacted Obama's civic campaign the day after he gave a critically-acclaimed speech at the 2004 Democratic National Convention and told them Obama "better be the next president. (He's) our only hope."

"It's important to me for (my sons) to see a candidate that is as amazing as Obama and who is going to change their lives and make their lives better," Kelso said.

Officials opened the gates around 11:30 a.m. and supporters continued to file through a row of metal detectors and into the stadium as Obama began to speak.

"The only thing I don't like is that I have to drive by this golf course. It looks really nice, and my staff won't let me play, so I'm going to have to come back to Asheville," he joked at the beginning of a speech that focused primarily on health care and the economy.

With temperatures having warmed and the sun beating down on the crowd, a campaign worker handed out water to crowd members standing in the front row. Police estimated about 22,000 people crammed into the sta-



Obama, above, speaks on the economy. Below, Obama shakes hands with supporters who began lining up Saturday night.

dium, with 6,000 stuck outside as Obama spoke.

While waiting for Obama to appear before the speech, many in the crowd mistakenly began clapping and cheering when a black Secret Service agent who resembled Obama at a distance stepped out from behind two blue curtains set up to ensure the candidate's pre-speech privacy.

Obama shook hands with supporters and paused momentarily as he approached the stage to lift up a baby handed to him by a crowd member.

Following the speech, Obama again shook hands with supporters in the front row. Secret Service agents formed a protective bubble around the candidate as crowd members shoved toward him and crushed against each other trying to shake Obama's hand.

Obama stayed in Asheville after the rally and prepared for Tuesday's presidential debate at the Grove Park Inn. On Monday, he stopped by 12 Bones Smokehouse in West Asheville to pick up

lunch.

Mayor Terry Bellamy and state Sen. Kay Hagan, who is competing with Sen. Elizabeth Dole for Dole's senate seat, met with Obama before the event.

Obama campaigned with running mate Sen. Joe Biden in Greensboro a week before coming to Asheville. He has visited North Carolina more than 30 times since kicking off his presidential campaign in early 2007.

Michelle Obama spoke at UNCA before the May primary. Neither McCain nor running mate Sarah Palin campaigned in WNC, although Palin spoke Tuesday at a rally at East Carolina University.

"On Nov. 4, you and I are going to turn the page, not on talking about the economy. We're going to turn the page on the disastrous economic policies of George W. Bush and John McCain," Obama said.

Online editor Jason Herring contributed to this report.

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## UNCA loses \$1 million in funding

Cassidy Culbertson  
STAFF WRITER  
CJULBER@UNCA.EDU

Significant state-mandated spending cuts slashed nearly \$1 million from UNC Asheville's budget this year

Chancellor Anne Ponder met with the Student Government Association on Oct. 1 to explain the budget changes.

"We are managing this with as much kindness and compassion as possible," Ponder said. "We are managing this responsibly during pretty turbulent times."

During the meeting, Ponder emphasized the university's commitment to maintaining a stable environment for faculty, staff and students.

Officials said they intend to protect employee benefits, student employment and financial aid potentially affected by the cuts.

Ponder mentioned previous budget cuts, like those during the 2001-2002 school year.

"We know how to deal with this. We're practiced in doing a lot with a little," she said.

Slashing the budget further would likely result in the largest budget cut the university has ever endured, according to Ponder.

### Current Impact

The budget is \$52 million. Of that, \$42 million pays salaries and employee benefits, leaving just \$9.7 million for non-personnel expenses. The remaining budget supports the university's four divisions, Financial Aid and Campus Operations, Alumni and Development, Academic Affairs and Student Affairs.

The Athletics Department operates as a separate entity, and is not funded the same way as the four divisions, according to Merianne Epstein, UNCA director of public information.

"We are trying to do this so the impact on students would be very minimal," John Pierce, Vice Chancellor for Finance & Campus Operations said.

About \$1.3 million of the remaining budget funds scholarships and financial aid, which Ponder said the university will maintain.

About \$5.3 million dollars of the operating budget goes to every supply imaginable, from computers to vacuum cleaner bags.

Cutting \$1.3 million of that isn't possible, Ponder

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