

Obama's loan plan will benefit students

By David Milton
 STAFF WRITER
 DEMILTON@UNCA.EDU

President Obama's plan to replace private lending with direct government lending for college students and create more funding for Pell grants will benefit students and schools, according to a financial aid official at UNC Asheville.

"Our institution, up until last year, was a primarily direct-loan school. Our students borrowed directly from the government," said Beth Bartlett, associate director of financial aid. "They didn't have to worry about the banks."

Last year UNCA began allowing students to take out loans from banks of their choice because of a mandate from general administration, Bartlett said.

"We have some students that took advantage of that," Bartlett said. "At the same time we had some students that had checks that were late coming in because of the troubles that banks were having."

Some of these students received emergency loans to continue their education, while their banks' loan checks were missing, Bartlett said.

Obama's plan to replace subsidized loans from private banks with direct government loans will save \$94 billion over the next 10 years, according to data from the Congressional Budget Office, according to the CBO.

The plan will also make Pell grants classify as mandatory spending, according to the CBO. The plan will increase mandatory spending by \$293 billion between 2010 to 2019, according to the budget.

"A Pell grant is based on what they think your family can contribute," Bartlett said. "Your expected family contribution actually becomes how they determine how much Pell grant money you're eligible for."

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Doc Watson receives honorary degree

By Michelle Peck
 STAFF WRITER
 MWPECK@UNCA.EDU

As graduation approaches, seven-time Grammy award winner and UNC Asheville's newest honorary degree recipient, Arthel "Doc" Watson, spikes interest and debate in students.

Senior psychology student, Lindsay Diehl, 21, said she is excited to participate in commencement with all her family there, but has concern about honorary degrees.

"I think it's weird that Doc Watson would get an honorary degree," Diehl said. "I know this is a liberal arts school and we appreciate artists like him, but is his contribution the same as working your butt off for four years?"

Chancellor Anne Ponder will confer an honorary doctoral degree on the bluegrass musician at the spring commencement ceremony.

He got the nickname "Doc" during a live radio broadcast when the announcer said the name Arthel was odd, and he needed an easy nickname.

A fan in the crowd shouted "Call him Doc!" presumably in reference to the Sherlock Holmes sidekick Doctor Watson, according to his three-CD biographical recording, *Legacy*.

"I do admire Doc Watson. It is important to have someone at commencement to look up to and give you more drive to fulfill your goals outside of school," Diehl said.

An eye infection caused Watson to lose his vision before his first birthday. He attended North Carolina's school for the visually impaired, The Governor Morehead School, in Raleigh. Watson was later awarded the Grammy Lifetime Achievement Award.

"I am surprised Doc Watson is attending, but I think it is a wonderful opportunity," said accounting major Christina Fesciane, 26.

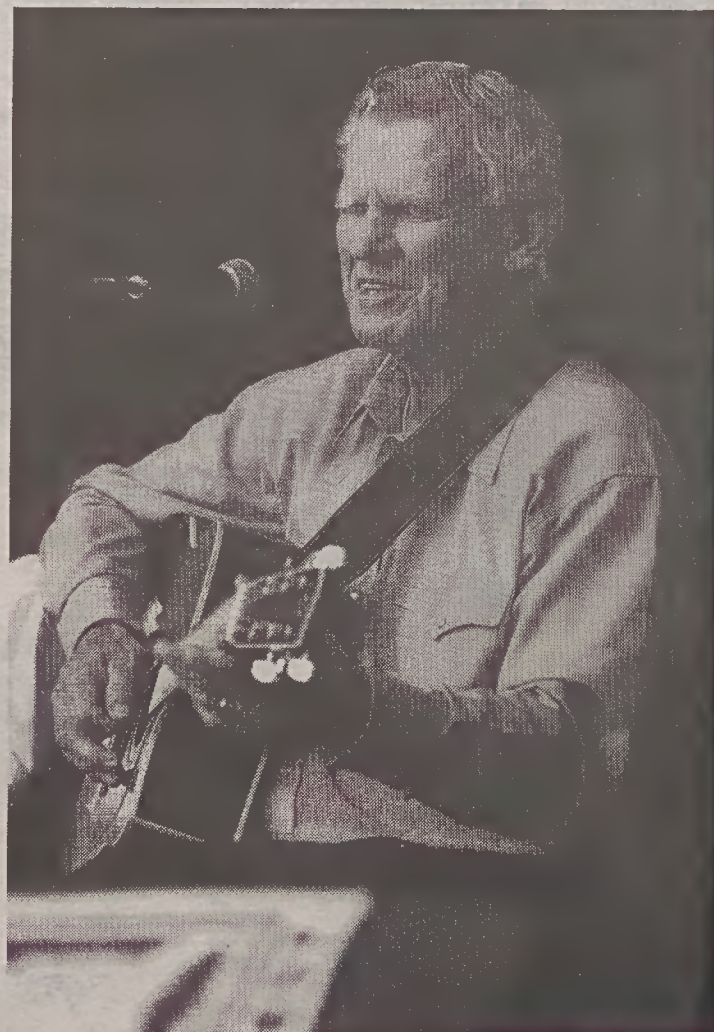
Fesciane said Watson deserves an honorary degree, but she also shares Diehl's reservations about it.

"It can be confusing that an artist receives a degree when you have been busting your hump for one," Fesciane said. "It will all depend on the message of his speech."

People must fulfill three categories before receiving honorary degrees, according to the Board of Trustees: recognition of scholarly or intellectual achievement and contribution to the world of arts, letters, science, drama, or music, for example; recognition of contribution to the civic, political, economics or cultural leadership of the Asheville community and/or specific interests in the development of UNCA; recognition of a speaker at a major university event such as commencement, or special convocation.

"He is an accomplished musician in the midst of a liberal arts community," Fesciane said.

The university welcomes nominations of persons to receive



Courtesy UNC Asheville

Bluegrass legend Doc Watson will be presented an honorary doctoral degree at spring commencement.

honorary degrees from all persons interested in the welfare and stature of the UNCA: faculty, trustees, students and others.

The chancellor reviews the names of persons nominated or suggested and submits them to the Board of Trustees.

Health and wellness major April Bradshaw, 34, said she did not know until now Watson would be at commencement and is excited to see him there.

"He is a major pioneer in bluegrass music and should be honored for it," Bradshaw said.

The speaker is Dr. Les Purce, president of The Evergreen State College, who will receive an honorary degree, as well. Purce will give the commencement address to some 385 graduates.

UNCA granted the last three honorary degrees to Johnnetta B. Cole, a renowned educator and humanitarian; Ernest Gaines, a professor of English and writer-in-residence at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette; and Donald Sultan, a successful New York artist.