

## Anonymous \$1.5 million donation funds scholarships

By Kendall Brooks

STAFF WRITER  
KSBROOKS@UNCA.EDU

Despite economic turmoil, UNC Asheville received a \$1.5 million anonymous donation earlier this year that allowed more students to attend school, according to campus officials.

"This was a super surprise blessing. It sort of fell out of the sky because it was anonymous. We don't even know who it came from," said Pat McClellan, assistant to the provost of academic administration. "So we now have a million dollars that we can award scholarships with and give to some of the new freshmen."

The university's financial success relies on donations and grants, which allow administration to develop and benefit the campus, said William Massey, director of alumni and development.

"We get grants and donations for both capital and non-capital funds, allowing us to make buildings, invest and many other things," Massey said.

According to the annual financial report in 2008, UNCA received 8 percent of its revenue from donations and grants.

"Generally the university receives donations like this at least once a year, including three of them last year," Massey said.

The university receives many anonymous donations, but one for this amount is unusual, according to Massey.

"There are people who, for whatever reason, are willing to make a donation and let us know who they are, but don't want us to tell everyone who they are," he said. "There are some who are just devoted to the cause of UNCA but don't want the recognition. But this gift was anonymous to the institution as well."

Massey said he spoke with Homeland Security and a valued trust company to verify the validity and legality of the donation.

"I had to find out how comfortable the trust firm was with the money. And I had to contact homeland security, to make sure they weren't aware of any transfers of

money that were ill-gotten," he said. "So then we had to become comfortable with the gift ourselves, and we couldn't ask too many questions."

The donor required that \$1 million of the donation be used for financial aid and the rest for general use of the campus, Massey said.

The donor also requested the donation be used as often as possible to help women and minorities, according to McClellan.

"Some of the money is being used for annual needs instead of an endowment, and \$600,000 is going into endowments," she said. "The part that's not for scholarships is being used for various campus needs. Part of it is going to finish out the science building."

The state contributes generously. But there are tight stipulations and demands on those funds, so the university always needs donations, according to Massey.

"Though the state contribution will always be generous, we can realistically expect those numbers to go down. So we could jack up tuition, but the general assembly requires we, in as much as possible, provide education free of charge," he said. "So the development office attempts to get people to donate money, especially alumni."

McClellan said the donation excited faculty because it allowed them more funds for students and helped to benefit many scholarships.

Dean of Admissions Pat Mitchell said their use of the donation this semester was based on the time they received the money and on the stipulations of the donor.

"There are clear guidelines with the donor, so the scholarship was used for incoming freshmen and merit-based scholarships," Mitchell said.

The university has many need-based scholarships that benefit students who require financial assistance, and sometimes are particular to majors and other details, according to McClellan.

"This donation has no need-based component. It is strictly merit-based, though it can be given to a person with need, of



Taliaferro Pollock - Staff Photographer

Public funds were not used for the construction of the Pisgah House, which will be the chancellor's residence and a reception hall, according to university officials.

---

*"All UNC schools must provide a chancellor's residence, and public funds cannot be used."*

*-Director of Alumnae and Development  
William Massey*

---

course," she said.

North Carolina raised the minimum for need-based scholarships and did a good job contributing to those in need, according to McClellan.

The university uses donation money

around campus frequently, including for the Pisgah House, Zeis Hall and the Health and Wellness Center, Massey said.

"The Pisgah House is being built on private funds, and it's so much more than just the chancellor's residence," he said. "All UNC schools must provide a chancellor's residence, and public funds cannot be used."

Student money does not contribute to the Pisgah House or any other building, and none of the regular donations were affected by the need for a chancellor's residence, according to Massey.

The university actively finds ways to raise money, attempting to relieve the stress on tuition and allow for growth, Massey said.

"There are multiple ways we raise money. Sometimes we get donations that are a one-time deal and sometimes they are planned, or annual," he said. "We can invest much of this money, and right now we are in the top 10 percent of the nation as far as investment revenue, even doing better than Harvard."