

New technology improves classroom experience

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UNC Asheville is undergoing technological advances including SMART boards and wireless Internet expansion this school year, something staff and students said they are very eager about.

"I am quite excited about the technology expansion on campus," said **junior and teaching fellow Sabine Moses**. "I am thoroughly impressed."

UNCA Chief of Information Jim Kuhlman said the school added a new addition to some classrooms this summer.

"Over the summer, we put the first SMART boards in," Kuhlman said. "Rooms in Karpen Hall are beginning to have SMART boards."

The professors enjoy the advanced classrooms with SMART boards and document cameras, said **associate professor of education Nancy Ruppert**.

"On the SMART board we focus on teaching the students how to use the equipment," Ruppert said. "It is what our student teachers are going to be using when they get in the classrooms, so we need to teach them how to use it."

Ruppert said student feedback has been positive.

"The students are very excited about it," she said. "They are a little nervous about it, but it is going to be able to help them."

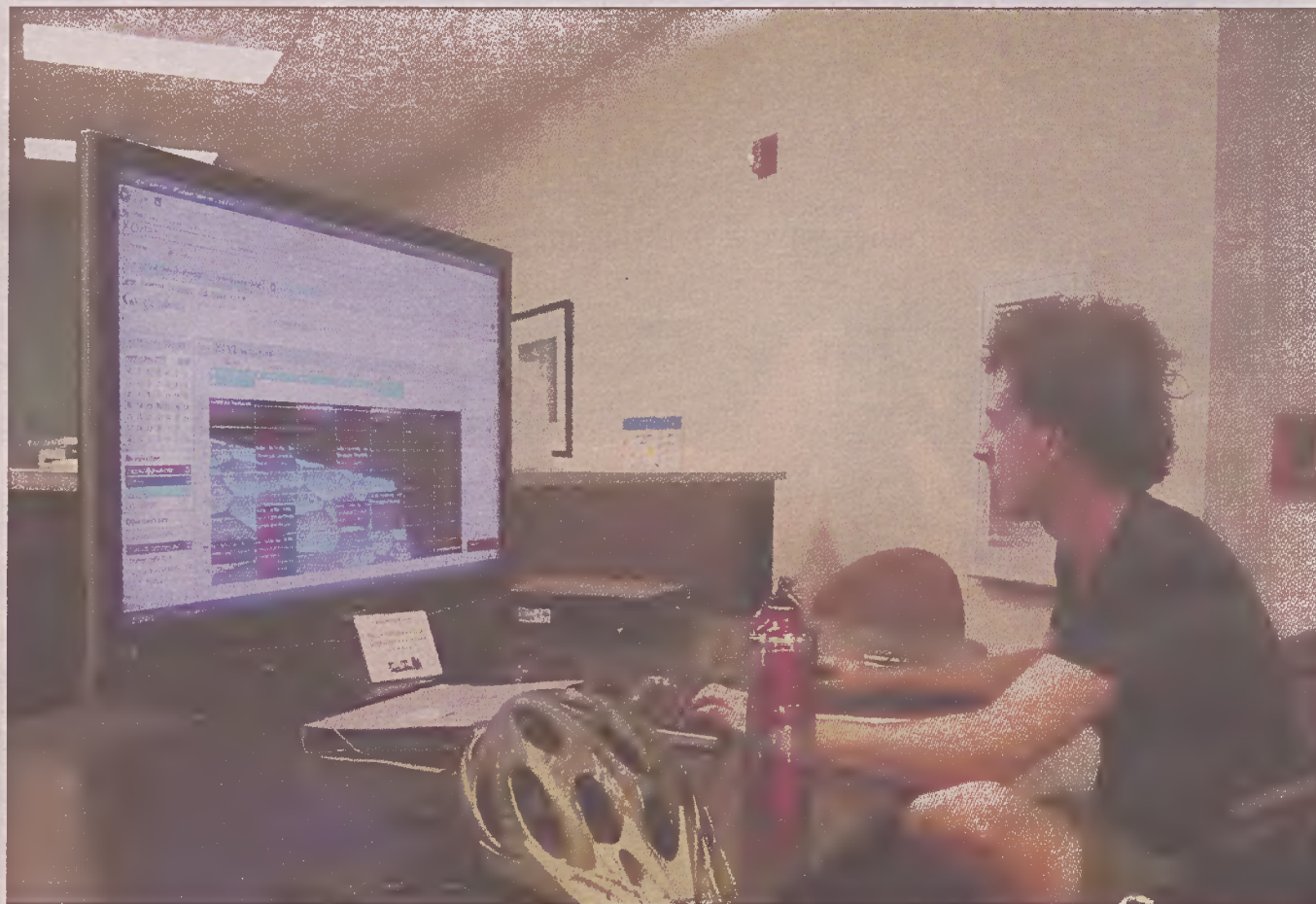
According to Kuhlman, the cost makes it difficult to spread the SMART technology to buildings.

"Obviously, as you put more and more into each room, the cost goes up," Kuhlman said. "A basic room is about a little over \$8,000. If we put the SMART board and the camera stand in, it is about \$11,500."

Kuhlman said the school's main hesitation of additional technology is the amount instructors who will use it.

Not all of the teachers are prepared for the technology yet, according to Moses.

"It is hard to use the technology," Moses said. "If my professor knew how to use a SMART board, and he used it properly, then I would under-



Dustin Stuart/staff photographer

UNC Asheville student Johnathan Gach, 24, works on a computer in Ramsey Library. Jim Kuhlman, UNCA chief of information, said SMART boards have been added to several classrooms.

stand it. Then it would be a lot easier for me to incorporate that in my teaching when I get older."

Kuhlman said the spread of wireless Internet is the next big step he is working to make.

"Last year, the students just about tripled or quadrupled the budget we were asking for with the idea that that money go to expanding the wireless," he said. "I consider that an obligation."

Students said expansion of the wireless Internet would be helpful on many levels.

"It would be quite convenient for class," Moses said. "You could bring a computer and be able to look up your syllabus with your professor, for example. That would also help to lead to a more paper-free and greener campus,

I think."

The wireless will be installed in the main academic buildings by January and expansion will continue into the spring, according to Kuhlman.

"During the spring we should be able to finish most of the other academic buildings on campus," he said.

Kuhlman said student technology services have also been added to campus this year to the left of the reference desk in Ramsey Library.

"This fall we've opened up student technology services," he said. "We have student workers who have been trained. It's a free walk-in that is there to help students who may be having problems with their software."

Michael Milano, student and STS technician, said the process for the service is simple.

"Someone brings in the computer and we tell them to fill out the form explaining the problem," he said. "We decide if we can fix it. If we can, we do, and if we can't, we'll call them and let them know. Usually, things are given back in about a day."

Milano said they are not only there to fix the problem, but to also offer preventative help.

"When people come back to get the computers we try to give them some tips and educate them so they don't repeat the problem," he said.

Kuhlman said a major part of looking at what to do next comes from student feedback.

"I would love to hear from students any time," he said. "We want to make what we are investing in really match what students want."