

# NEWS

Section Editor: Emma Alexander  
nalexand@unca.edu



The Blue Banner  
Fall 2015 Editorial  
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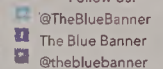


Photo by Roan Farb - Asst. Opinion Editor

The Ashe-Hole occupies the northeast ground-level corner of the Ridges parking deck.

## Ashe-Hole controversy calls smokers' rights into question

**TIMBI SHEPHERD**

Editor-In-Chief

jshephe3@unca.edu

The future of the Ashe-Hole remains unknown.

A news article in last week's issue of *The Blue Banner* featured the perspectives of students anticipating the administration's removal of the popular smoking area in the Ridges parking deck.

The article sparked controversy in the UNC Asheville community. Students used social media platforms like Yik Yak to share their reactions to

the piece. Some commented on the quality of the reporting, while others took a stance on smokers' rights.

But, according to Student Affairs and the Student Government Association, the issue of the Ashe-Hole is presently a moot point, because officials say speculations about its removal are unfounded.

Bill Haggard, vice chancellor for Student Affairs, said a student brought the article to his attention on Wednesday.

"I just really couldn't figure it out," Haggard said, "because it

went on and on about the outrage over closing the smoking area, and there was never a plan to do so."

Administrative focus is on cleaning up the Ashe-Hole and increasing police patrols to cut down on illegal activity such as underage drinking, drug use and vandalism, Haggard said.

According to the campus crime log, there have been several reports of illegal drug use or possession and one report of civil disobedience in the Ridges parking deck since the start of the school year.

In addition to these concerns, Haggard said it is important to consider the detrimental health effects of smoking. He said it is a personal choice to smoke, but a choice that can have a negative impact on others through secondhand smoke.

"I think it's inconsistent with our health and wellness values," Haggard said.

UNCA goes as far as state law allows in its efforts to curb smoking on campus, he said. The school even provides a smoking cessation program to

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Have a news tip?  
Send to jshephe3@unca.edu

*The Blue Banner* is UNC Asheville's student newspaper. We publish each Wednesday except during summer sessions, finals week and holiday breaks. Our office is located in Karpen Hall 019.

*The Blue Banner* is a designated forum for free speech and welcomes letters to the editor, considering them on basis of interest, space and timeliness. Letters and articles should be emailed to the editor-in-chief or the appropriate section editor.

Letters should include the writer's name, year in school, and major or other relationship to UNCA. Include a telephone number to aid in verification. All articles are subject to editing.