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Asheville bike police put students to the test by riding slow on a bike.

PHOTOS BY AIDEN STEWART

UNCA students pedal for bike safety

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Traffic cones were scattered in a maze-like shape on the grass of the quad to make an obstacle course for bikes last Tuesday afternoon during the annual Bulldog Bike Bonanza. Under the heat of the sun, people attempted to maneuver the course on mountain bikes with difficulty. Though the course was only a simulation, it helps to highlight the rough conditions people bike that directly impact their daily level.

Bike safety involves knowing safe and accessible bike paths on and around campus. Anna DaSilva, a senior applied math student, said she could easily bike to campus when she lived closer.

“As a previous cyclist on campus, I used to ride my bike to campus often when I lived really close to campus and I found it to be convenient, but now that I live in West Asheville there really isn’t a convenient and accessible quick way to get here,” DaSilva said. “Unfortunately, now



Second Gear is a consignment shop based in West Asheville specializing in second hand outdoor gear and accessories.

I have to drive. There is a bike route that takes 30 minutes. It takes too long, versus my 3 minute bike ride that I used to have. With a 20 pound backpack on it’s dangerous.”

Bike routes from West Asheville to North Asheville do not seem to be safe and fast for bikers. The unsafe biking conditions mean some people have to drive instead of bike, which is not a sustainable way

of transportation. Jenna Ventrella, a sophomore health and wellness student, said the negative attitude drivers have toward bikers can lower the number of bikers and their level of safety as well.

“I think people are very intolerant of bikers because they’re slow. If I were a biker, I would be scared to bike on some of the roads around here because they’re very narrow

and drivers are impatient. I don’t see too many bikers on campus. I see a few, but I figured it would be more popular,” Ventrella said.

Improving the bike route conditions around UNCA and the surrounding community could possibly increase the number of people who bike and promote sustainable energy. DaSilva’s voice carried a tone of worry when she talked about biking in West Asheville.

“Living in West Asheville, it is a little bit more cyclist friendly, but the roads even then the cyclist ride on don’t have designated bike lanes and people ride really fast,” DaSilva said.

Some roads in West Asheville lack bike lanes, but having bike lanes does not guarantee biker safety. Ventrella and DaSilva stayed underneath the SEC tent to avoid the heat and both talked about the ways biking conditions are troublesome in Asheville.

“So to do it everyday, to me, just

CONTINUED ON PAGE 18