



PHOTO BY HOLLY GOSWICK

The usual homecoming dance was replaced with Highsmith After Dark, which lasted from 10 p.m. to 1 a.m.

## Highsmith ushers in new tradition to replace annual homecoming dance

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In the past, following the homecoming game, there was a homecoming dance. This year, Fred Tugas, the associate director of the Highsmith Student Union, and Christina Jaeger, the associate director of Highsmith Operations, decided to do things differently.

This year's Homecoming and Family Weekend concluded on Sunday, with the Highsmith After Dark event located throughout the Highsmith Student Union.

"This event is actually replacing the Homecoming dance. We are hoping it will draw a larger crowd of students. We also hope it will be more appealing and engaging," Jaeger said.

Tugas and Jaeger both said there

was a lot of time spent planning over the summer in finding vendors and finalizing various details.

"I don't usually attend many events on campus, but once I heard that there was ThinkFast Trivia, I figured that I would go. It is my senior year after all," Logan Ponder, a junior political science major said.

On their social media platforms, Highsmith Student Union released a promotional video to inform UNCA of what to get excited for. The celebration spanned all three floors of Highsmith Student Union allowing students and family members to participate in all the different activities and socialize with others.

The first level of Highsmith Student Union featured a caricature artist, balloon animals, a midnight bingo game and ThinkFast Trivia with a \$500 cash prize. During the

ThinkFast Trivia, there were about 15 teams with five team members in each group. Teams were asked a series of questions for the chance to earn points.

"The most stressful thing was coming up with the best bingo prize packages for the winner," Tugas said.

There were four separate games with four different prizes for midnight bingo. The first winner won a \$25 dining voucher. The second a bookstore package, the third a \$150 grocery store package, the final game winner won an Amazon Echo.

The second floor had psychic readings and a dry-eraseable photo board. Each student who made the photo board was able to email up to four or five pictures that they wanted.

## UNCA aims to provide education to inmates

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For nine years, Scott Walters made his weekly drive to Avery-Mitchell Correctional Institution, a mid-security prison tucked away on the outskirts of the sleepy mountain town of Spruce Pine.

Barbed wire-topped fences and ominous-looking watch towers stood forebodingly as he made his way toward the prison each week. But behind the armed guards and the cold prison walls, Walters saw something different: a classroom.

"When you go into your class the first time, you're pretty nervous," Walters said. "After the first night, I was like, 'This is the best thing ever.'"

Walters, professor of drama at UNC Asheville since 1998, now leads a group of motivated UNCA professors and administrators who intend to reinstate a program which would provide college-level courses to inmates across western North Carolina. Walters said the program aims to supply inmates with skills and education which may produce a better chance of finding work after serving time.

"We make it very difficult for anyone who has been an inmate to come out and return to any kind of life at all," Walters said. "We are trying to create at least a handful of people who are not going to bounce back into prison again."

Education among state prison populations lags behind national standards. According to a 2014 RAND report, only 14 percent of state prison inmates had at

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