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Handicapped Student Claims Raw Deal

By Frank Cox
Carolina Journal Staff Writer

A UNCC handicapped student feels he is getting a raw deal from the Residence Life Office since he is being denied housing in the campus apartments designed for the handicapped.

However, the Residence Life Office says they are only following the rules.

William Brady has been confined to a wheelchair after sustaining severe injuries in a motorcycle accident last fall. He was a student at N.C. State at the time of the accident but was forced to withdraw after spending almost four months in the hospital following the accident. After release from the hospital, Brady decided to continue going to school and picked UNCC because of family in Charlotte and UNCC's accessibility to the handicapped.

After being accepted to the University in late January, Brady applied for on-campus housing. He obtained housing in the Phase II Apartments for summer school but because of the lack of available space he could not get a confirmation for the fall semester. His name was placed on the waiting list at the time he applied to the university and he is currently hoping that something will come open before the fall semester begins.

The main thing bothering Brady is that there are apartments equipped for the handicapped that have been filled with non-handicapped students. While he is aware that he was late in applying for housing he says that at the time returning students were applying for he was still in the hospital and had no idea that he would be able to return to school. Brady also feels that if the taxpayers money has been spent to provide housing for the handicapped then handicapped students should get first priority in assignments to these facilities. He also cites the fact that there are many more handicapped apartments on campus than handicapped students who wish to live on campus, but he is still being denied housing.

When asked about the problem Chuck Colby, assistant director of Residence Life explained that UNCC complies with all federal and state regulations concerning the handicapped. Colby cited Article 504 of the

HEW act of federal legislation that states that all schools must adapt for handicapped students, ramps for wheelchairs, bathrooms equipped for the handicapped, wide doors, elevators, etc. They must also provide equal housing for the handicapped at the same price as housing for the non-handicapped.

He explained how UNCC is very lucky in that we did not have to renovate buildings and were able to incorporate these modifications as the apartments were being built.

He said laws concerning the handicapped are constantly changing in order to make life easier for the physically impaired. Their purpose is to provide the handicapped with an equal chance for equally accessible housing and opportunities for educa-

tion—equal but not preferential. In the case of housing for the handicapped at UNCC, handicapped students are given the same opportunity for on campus housing space as are all students. Everyone gets equal treatment.

Housing at UNCC is handled on a priority basis with returning students who have lived on campus the year before having first priority; freshmen entering for the first time having second priority; everyone else, including transfers and students who have been living off-campus, being last priority.

Colby explained that housing at UNCC is an auxiliary enterprise meaning it is independent of the university financial structure and must operate on the money it brings

in, not on tax dollars. In order to survive it must at least break even. To do this it must follow good business practices one of which is to show no preferential treatment of customers.

According to Colby everyone is equal in the eyes of UNCC Residence Life. If you have not followed the correct procedures or are on the waiting list nothing will help you get in.

He said calls from UNC system President William Friday and even the Governor trying to obtain housing for a student had been politely refused.

Colby said that to give housing to a student after the assignment had already been made, would mean displacing another student. That, according to Colby, would be reverse discrimination.

Legislature:

Debate Team, Yes; WFAE, No

By Rick Monroe
Carolina Journal Editor

The Student Legislature passed two resolutions in their July 10 meeting, one calling for the funding of WFAE, the campus radio station, to end, and the other allocating funds to the Debate Team.

During the debate on the resolution favoring the end of student funding of WFAE, several legislators said the radio station served no useful purpose to the students and they objected to students funding a public radio station.

WFAE Station Manager Bo Pittman, defending the station, said students are a large part of the public served by the station. "I'm disturbed that you segregate yourself from the public," Pittman said.

He also noted the station would serve as an important communications link between the University and the two-thirds students who

live off-campus. He said 40 to 60 students would benefit directly from the station through the training they will receive working there.

Chair of Student Legislature, Joel Gilland, refuted Pittman's claim saying in the past students had gained experience in broadcasting as head of departments within the station—positions Gilland said would be filled by full-time professionals when WFAE goes on the air as a 100,000 watt station.

Following the vote, Pittman expressed regret concerning the debate the legislature based its decision on. "I'm really saddened that there was so much misinformation," he said.

The other motion, allocating \$1,820 to the Debate Team passed with little opposition.

Nursing Representative Linda Russell said the debate team would be an "important asset to the

University." She also noted that if the team was not funded by the legislature this year, it would not get off the ground.

Vaughn Winborne, a commuter representative, said that because the team had not gone through the regular chartering process required of all other clubs receiving funds, the team was a "favored child."

A team representative said if the team was a club, and not an academic team, their prestige among other teams would be lowered.

The motion carried 15 for, four against, with two abstaining.

During his report, Student Body President Ron Olsen reported that a new system of distributing tickets was being considered by the Athletic Department. According to Athletic Director Clyde Walker, students will only have to present their student IDs at the Coliseum to be admitted. Courtside

seating would then be available to students on a first-come, first-serve basis.

"Our number-one objective is to do what the students want to do and what's best for them," Walker said in a later interview. He explained the proposal was designed so students could attend the basketball games with little trouble.

Olsen, who jokingly calls the new system the "riot method," said the athletic department wasn't interested in input from the students. "I felt the decision had already been made and my input was not being considered," Olsen said of a meeting with Walker and other athletic department officials.

That, according to Walker, was not the case. "If (the new distribution system) is not better in the students' opinion, then we'll look at their recommendations," he said.

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