

Students protest changes to academic calendar

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Nearly 100 students gathered last week on the steps of Ramsey Library on what could be their final reading day at UNC Asheville.

Representatives from several student organizations, including HOLA, SDS and STLA, spoke on behalf of the Coalition for Education Rights, kicking off the protest and rallying for transparency, accountability of the administration and student participation in administrative decisions affecting the student body.

A noteworthy chant of "this is what democracy looks like" reverberated throughout the quad as students marched behind banners to Phillips Hall. Students lined the hallways, carrying materials for a peaceful "study-in" up to two hours after the protest.

During the two hours, provost Jane Fernandez [sic] invited students to an open meeting where they voiced concerns about transparency of the administration.

Two weeks prior to the protest, administrators decided to remove reading days and move-in days from the upcoming academic calendar due to budgeting cutbacks. Graduating seniors would consequently be forced to take exams on the normal schedule, rather than early.

Present members of the Student Government Association confirmed this information was found by chance and not by notification, a decision in which they felt the student body deserved a voice.

Fernandez [sic] apologized for the occurrence and assured students that a committee be formed in the 2009 Fall semester, including students and faculty, to make decisions about discrepancies in the calendar. The purpose of the committee is to solidify the transparency agreement between students, faculty and administration to more effectively problem solve.

Also, in an attempt to promote a more cohesive student-faculty-administration relationship, students will be allowed to sit in on faculty senate meetings, and faculty will sit in on student government meetings. Both administrators and students agreed this compromise will create a mutual, necessary awareness of each group's concerns and discussions.

A meeting was held by the Coalition for Education Rights later that night in Highsmith Union to recap the goals met during the meeting with the provost. Though the main issue focuses around transparency of the administration, students involved in the CER wish to re-establish a reading day for students.

For the 2009-10 academic year, there will not be a reading day.

However, students recognize how helpful this day is and suggested ideas working around the cancellation. Final plans will be made at a later meeting.

For more information about the Coalition for Education Rights, please contact the Google Group, coalition-for-education-rights@googlegroups.com or Doug Michel at dwmichel@gmail.com.

<http://www.thebluebanner.net/2.2683/students-protest-changes-to-academic-calendar-1.243451#5>

(Note: The article was removed from the Blue Banner's website.)

<http://web.archive.org/web/20090522014810/http://www.thebluebanner.net/home/generalinformation>

SEE ALSO:

<http://www.fightbacknews.org/2009/05/unca-coalition-for-education-rights-stages-study-in.htm>

<http://uncasds.wordpress.com/2009/05/04/education-rights-demonstration>

<http://sites.google.com/a/unca.edu/sds>

<http://www.newsds.org/chapters/univ-north-carolina-asheville>

<http://web.archive.org/web/20091216021515/http://www.thebluebanner.net/unca-lacks-diversity-must-make-changes-1.949369>