

# The Pine Needle

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## Admissions office refuses art piece

By Wade Allen  
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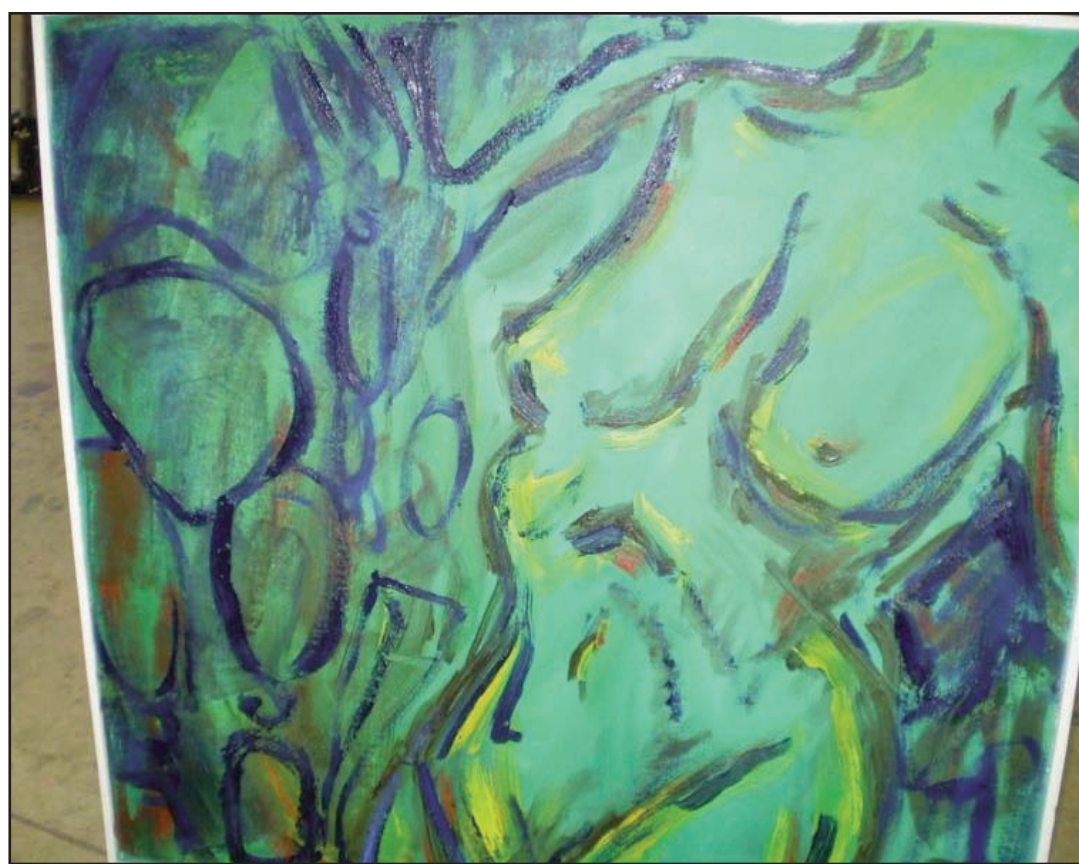
When senior art major Meriel Smith began her semester, she had no idea that her work painting figures would result in a controversy over whether or not creative art should be displayed in the Office of Admissions in Lumbee Hall.

According to Smith, Visiting Professor and Artist in Residence James Biederman informed her in early February that the Office of Admissions desired to have some student art hung in their lobby.

Smith jumped at the chance to have a piece of her artwork shown in the office and chose a piece that, at first glance, appears abstract. When the art was delivered to the admissions office, Director Lela Clark chose not to hang Smith's piece and it was returned to Biederman.

"They [admissions staff] told my professor 'no,'" Smith said. "I wasn't expecting to see it turned down. When I got it back, I was kind of shocked – more baffled."

According to Smith,



This nude art figure piece created by senior art major Meriel Smith was chosen to hang in the office of admissions but was rejected by Admissions Director Lela Clark. Because of the wide variety of people entering the admissions office, Clark said that some could find the piece offensive.

the oil on canvas piece depicts a nude female figure and measures 11x15 inches. The colors she focused on are green and blue, with some yellow and red.

"I use many different colors in my paintings," Smith said.

Clark said that when she first saw the piece, she wasn't even sure of what she was looking at.

"It was a piece that could make someone feel uncomfortable," Clark said. "When I first saw it, I didn't know what it was or which way it went."

Clark said that the admissions office did want to display some stu-

dent art, but that it should be the office's decision as to what art should hang in the lobby.

"It doesn't even have arms," Smith said, describing the piece that was refused. "This is the 21st Century. I figured it would be more accepted than it was – I found it more silly than anything."

Clark said that art exhibitions are fine for displaying nude art because patrons that visit know what they are seeing and choose to view it.

"That's great. That's an appropriate place for that," Clark said.

She went on to say that displaying nude art is

not necessarily appropriate for a business office that greets dozens of prospective students each day, accompanied by their parents and younger siblings.

"Sometimes their [prospective students] little brothers and sisters come with them," Clark said. "I don't want to offend anyone."

Chair of the Art Department, Dr. Richard Gay, said that their department and professors push for their students to use free expression.

"Freedom of expression is an important democratic right, and we certainly promote it in the

department. Our students are encouraged to create art resonant with their personal aesthetics and cultural values," Dr. Gay said.

Dr. Gay said that once students express themselves freely, it is impossible to control or predict how other people may react to the art.

"It's disappointing but not unexpected. I wholeheartedly oppose censorship in a gallery or museum setting. The A.D. Gallery sponsored a successful juried exhibition on the nude just last year. The nude is one of the oldest forms of expression," Dr. Gay said. "However, I wouldn't want someone working in or visiting an office on campus to feel uncomfortable because a nude was displayed there. It is regrettable that the work was rejected. It is hardly an overt nude; we've seen more flesh on the cover of mainstream magazines at the supermarket."

Dr. Gay was made aware of the decision to not display the art by the art faculty and the Office of Admissions. However, he has not yet spoken with Smith about the incident.

"I would like the rights of both parties respected," Dr. Gay said.

According to Smith, her nude painting will be on display in the A.D. Gallery at an art show on April 24, along with the work of five other seniors.

## Students oppose tuition increase

By Chantel Moore  
Staff Writer

Students at UNCP and all campuses in the UNC system petitioned in January against an 8 percent tuition and fee increase for 2010-2011. The goal was 21,500 signatures, and more than 22,000 students signed the petition.

February 2009, Senate Bill 202 was passed, asking for an 8 percent tuition increase per student. At the time, there was no specific idea of whether the money would be going to the state budget or to the universities.

In a later revision of the bill, it was proposed that the money would go to the state budget.

This legislative method for mandating tuition increases is different from the Board of Governor's method.

In October, the council of student body presidents talked to the Board of Governors. Student governments from each university wrote a resolution about the tuition increase.

For UNCP students, if the increase takes effect, each student's tuition and fees would be raised by \$164.80.

"I'm hoping it won't pass. I don't think Pembroke can do it alone. If all schools band together, I definitely think we'll be able to stop it," said junior Kathryn Monroe.

On Feb. 26 to 27, student governments from all 17 schools in the UNC system attended an ASG (Association of Student Governments) conference that took place on the campuses of NC A&T State University and UNC Greensboro.

All of the petitions that were issued earlier in January were turned in. More than an estimated 22,000 students signed petitions against the proposed tuition increase.

For UNCP, 1050 signatures were turned in meaning that 18 percent of the student body participated.

"This is by the students, for the students. I am proud of the UNCP student body for supporting this petition and allowing the SGA and the ASG to represent them in this cause," said SGA President Arjay Quizon.

"In terms of my own reaction, I was surprised—having over 22,000 signatures is about as many students as four UNC Pembroke. I didn't think we'd get that far, and I appreciate the work done by the campus SGAs to make it happen," said ASG President Greg Doucette. He said they would continue lobbying efforts.

## Secrecy in chancellor search continues through finalists

By Wade Allen  
Editor

The campus was surprised to learn at the Faculty Senate meeting March 3 that the finalists in the search for a new UNCP chancellor reportedly were to be brought to campus over spring break when most faculty and students would be away.

Although it was known the search committee had decided that the early stages of the search would be closed, there was a campus expectation that the finalists would want to meet students, faculty and staff and that those constituencies would have an opportunity to do so before the search committee submitted their choices to UNC President Erskine Bowles for his decision.

This semester, the chancellor search website has not kept the campus community abreast of the search. The FAQ link on the site still says "coming soon." A press release posted on Nov. 25, 2009, by Community and University Relations states, "The committee and UNC General Administration hope to have a decision on a new

chancellor by April 2010."

*The Pine Needle* Around the Campus Editor Kayla Pearson found it difficult to get a statement for the newspaper's January and February issues from search committee contact Joshua Malcolm. However, prior to the March issue he did respond that what is on the website is all the information that can be released since it was decided early in the process that the committee would conduct a closed search.

The site offers minutes from 2009 meetings and articles from *The Robesonian*, the most recent dated only January 2010, and *The Fayetteville Observer*, the most recent from September 2009. *The Robesonian* article said, "As the search proceeds, the committee will begin narrowing the field. The board of trustees will also decide if the search will be closed or open in the interview stage."

On March 7, Faculty Senate Chair Dr. Anthony Curtis sent an e-mail to Dr. Freda Porter, chair of the UNCP Board of

Trustees and of the Chancellor Search Committee, with copies to President Bowles, leadership of the Board of Governors, and the faculty, asking for the campus community to have an opportunity to meet the finalists.

"We recognize the need for applicants in the earlier stages of the search to enjoy privacy up through the semi-finalist level," Dr. Curtis said in his e-mail. "However, there is no apparent need for secrecy at the finalist level. In fact, a finalist unwilling to meet the University community publicly plants the seed of an idea that she or he might have priorities that do not mesh well with the UNCP community and its vision of the future."

"Operating this search in total secrecy all the way to hiring is likely to start off the person selected on a difficult footing with the community and present that person with an unwanted challenge to overcome," he said.

"Since we all are committed to selecting the best possible candidate, I would ask that you make everyone in the University community

aware of who the finalists are and grant an opportunity to see and hear them and ask questions of them," Dr. Curtis wrote.

"I have had no response from Dr. Porter," Dr. Curtis told *The Pine Needle* at press time.

On March 9, president of the UNCP chapter of the American Association of University Professors (AAUP), Dr. John Labadie, also sent an e-mail to Dr. Porter saying, "Clearly the UNCP community, as a whole, needs to be directly involved in an open review of the finalists for Chancellor at this fine institution."

Although the University of North Carolina System has conducted its recent chancellor searches in secret, senior faculty who have taught at other institutions around the country said it is highly unusual and not in the long-term best interests of the candidate or the University.

A faculty member was heard to comment that it's easier to get hired as chancellor at UNCP than as a faculty member since faculty are expected to do public teaching demonstrations and to meet with the campus community.

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