



# The Pilot



GARDNER-WEBB COLLEGE

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## Gardner-Webb University?

By Dawn E. Camp

Editor

GW President Chris White met Thursday, January 16, with faculty and staff. The topic: whether or not Gardner-Webb will become a university.

White opened his remarks by saying that the meeting was not a place for making decisions. Indeed, that decision rests with the Board of Trustees and the Baptist State Convention. Instead, he said, the meeting was to start a series of exchange of ideas and opinion concerning the issue.

White said the potential change comes at a time when many colleges are changing to university status. "We are in a changing age," he said. "We are experiencing a period of name inflation!"

Why the recent trend of changes? Because of the growing number of community colleges and technical schools calling themselves colleges, he said.

"People get confused as to what's a college and what's not," he said. He added that one way of distinguishing Gardner-Webb as a four-year institution is assuming the university title.

He also sees the change as a way of focusing on the future. "We are a stable institution, but we are stable at a lean level of resources. This (change) will give us the opportunity to do things that we cannot now do."

In the question-and-answer section of the meeting, White furthered this idea. (Q: Will this change involve more than just a name?) "What we are doing in that process is making a commitment to what we want to be. If changing the name is all we're going to do, why bother?"

Faculty members also posed questions about whether the concept of a university is consistent with the Gardner-Webb "People Who Care" image. White said, "We need to be very careful that we don't change that personal touch that makes us special. Everything we've said comes from a desire to become better."

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--President Chris White

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In a later interview, White talked of how this change is directed toward the future. "Some of the decisions we're making are decisions for years to come...That's where I would like for us to dream." He added that the college needs an ideal dream of what we can become and a plan for how to get there.

In relation to students, White said, "If this institution prospers, the value of your degree prospers. If this institution falters, the value of your degree is defaced."

Prior to the forum, Audrey Sloan, director of student activities, indicated that she sees possible benefits should the change occur. "It would put us in a status, and it would broaden our horizons," she said. "We have a strong faculty, graduate program, nursing school, athletic department and a strong foundation." She feels that the university status would help the college

strengthen and grow in those areas and more.

Dr. Jack Partain, vice chair of the faculty, describes faculty response as mixed. "Faculty opinions range widely on the subject. Those who lean toward the name change seem to be persuaded by the hope that this will bring about big time changes in academic programs.

"Those not convinced about the name change know that the name 'college' denotes a distinctive kind of liberal arts education, a kind of education Gardner-Webb College and many other colleges across the nation are doing very well. If we pour our energies into further enhancing our academic stature, Gardner-Webb can stand out among these colleges. Our future is about what we are, not just about what our image is.

"Personally, I have not yet heard any argument for such a change that seems to hold much water."

Like faculty, early student reactions indicate a variety of concerns. Freshman nursing major Virginia Ward is outspoken about her ideas on the subject. "There are no benefits to GWC becoming a university except that it sounds better! It is not big enough to be a university, and even if we do get more people, the residence halls do not have the capacity to accommodate them."

When Stacy Stanley hears the word "university," she doesn't picture Gardner-Webb. "There are bigger schools than Gardner-Webb that are still colleges. I grew up around Georgia Tech and the University

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## The Russian Republics: After the Separation

By Dawn E. Camp

Editor

Members of GWC Social Science department and administrative staff recently had the opportunity to glance inside the remains of the fallen Soviet Union.

On January 15, a delegation of men from Perm State University in Russia, travelling from the University of Georgia (Athens) to Washington, D.C., stopped at GWC for a luncheon. Following the meal, Dr. Alexander Strokanov, Associate Director of the Federation of Children's Organizations, spoke to the group about the current situation in the former Soviet republics.

Dr. Gil Blackburn commented on Strokanov's temperament during the talk. "I was struck by the combination of joking about how bad their present situation is and a deep-seated anxiety for their future. They seemed not sure how they were going to get out of this economic mess their country is in



or indeed what country they were citizens of."

Strokanov spoke of this confusion as he described as developing from the separation of the republics. "I think that I'm a Soviet, but now I must rethink because I'm a Russian."

Strokanov was amazed with the speed at which the change has come. "In 1985, we

only spoke about reform," he said. "Now, we are beginning reform."

He added that democracy will not appear in the region overnight. "I think this is not democracy government. This is demo-communist. It is 50 percent communist, 50 percent democracy. We now have democratura, a mixture of democracy and dictatorship."

Blackburn explains. "These people are trying to establish a democracy with officials who were in power under communism. They can't shed those attitudes overnight. Dr. Strokanov is still suspicious of leaders who say they became democrats overnight."

Despite the uncertain days that lie ahead, Strokanov remains optimistic about the fate of his country. "I hope in democracy; I hope in a market economy; I hope in my people;

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