

Gardner-Webb University  
**The Pilot**

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### Letter to the editor

As plans are being made for the upcoming Year of the Scholar, it has come to my attention that not only are we, as a campus, lacking in unity, but we are also unprepared to meet the challenge that next year's proposal offers. I think I speak for a majority of the student body when I say the following: No common bonds outside the classroom exist between students and faculty. Mealtimes are the perfect example. Everyday as students and faculty pour into the cafeteria (the most common ground for meeting people), the students choose their place of interaction while the faculty detour into their "special dining room." It is very intimidating to try to speak on a personal level to a professor who finds it necessary to chat only with members of his intellectual equal. How are students supposed to learn from professors' examples if they do not have a chance to hear them share their ideas?

I would like to offer a challenge to the professors: If you are really interested in getting to know your students and you really believe in the Gardner-Webb motto, "People Who Care," then come out of your comfort zone and spend your mealtimes with us, the student body. One day a week would make a major difference on campus. As one of my peers stated, it is not the same thing to eat in the regular dining room at a table with those same colleagues. The challenge is to go out on your own, find one of your students, and sit down and talk to them in normal conversation. Find out interesting facts about their background or their hobbies; share with them a funny incident from your childhood.

In doing so, I am confident that student-faculty relations will not only improve, but enthusiasm for the Year of the Scholar campaign will improve also. It would be so encouraging, both socially and scholastically, to know that my professors went through the same problems when they were in college that I am going through, yet have survived. I am sure should you faculty members take this challenge, your efforts will not go un-rewarded. In fact, I am almost one-hundred percent positive that somewhere down the road, a student will remember your words and take them to heart.

Sincerely,  
Amy Tarlton

## Dean Blackburn receives honor

by Sunny Benton  
staff writer

Dr. Gil Blackburn, GWU vice-president and dean of academic affairs, was recently selected as one of 15 educators nationwide who have been awarded the Fulbright Commission scholarship by the United States Congress. It is considered to be the most prestigious award an American scholar can receive. (Whereas the Rhodes Scholarship is given to recent graduates, the Fulbright scholarship is given to seasoned scholars.)

Blackburn, who is the first person from GWU to receive the honor, applied for the scholarship as a college/university administrator, writing a lengthy proposal on how his selection as a Fulbright recipient would increase Gardner-Webb's international contacts.

Begun in 1961 and funded by Congress, the honor allows for research abroad and exchanges between scholars from different countries. Blackburn

will spend April 13 through May 4 in Germany, where he will travel from Bonn to Eastern and Western Germany and finally to Berlin. After visiting the country's universities, he will spend time with German Parliament members and highest-ranking cabinet officials for German education.

"Well, I'm very pleased I was selected. There are some 3,000 colleges and universities in the U.S. I guess I should feel fortunate to be one of the 15 who were chosen," Blackburn confessed.

Blackburn will address civic clubs, promote exchange of information and scholars between countries, and help the Gardner-Webb community to understand the cultural and professional differences between the German and American societies, upon his return.

"I taught German history for 20 years prior to joining the administration, but I was always too poor to visit the place," he says. "Now I can go and have somebody else pay for it."

### From the editor

a response by: Michael Owens

Upon reading Amy Tarlton's letter to the editor, I felt that a response was necessary. First, I would like to question the notion of "unity." How might this term be defined? Does it suggest that the students of GWU are one big Brady bunch? All too often, "unity" is described or at least referred to in idealistic terms. While we may not be one big happy family, we could experience some form of unity as common goals, such as the Year of the Scholar, are established.

The statement regarding the lack of "common bonds" between students and faculty should be addressed. Again, I believe we are combatting idealistic notions. Frankly, there needs to be a professional distance maintained between faculty and their students. This does not mean that they need not be personable in their interaction with students, but we should not expect professors to be our "bosom buddies."

As for where faculty eat, I would suggest that they, like us, choose where they eat. Whether it be in the cafeteria, in the special dining room, or in the bathroom, it is their choice. Frankly, I like to eat with my friends, and I imagine that they feel the same. Faculty members have little time to spend with their colleagues, and if they choose differently, so be it.

There have been times however, when I have observed faculty members eating in the cafeteria. Needless to say, they were not barraged with students trying to get a chance to eat with them.

It should also be noted that there are numerous faculty members who are actively involved directly

with students through a variety of clubs, organizations, departmental activities, and committees.

We need to keep in mind that as students, we cannot consider faculty members our "equals," and the realization of that fact will help maintain a true learning environment.

### GWU receives funds

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"Since the time those plans were begun, the funds accumulated faster than [they] were utilized," said Dr. Smith. Therefore, a pool of monies earmarked for theological education was formed and grew to a significant size. We recognized this situation and felt that a gift given now would have a tremendous impact on GWU's effort to provide more scholarship assistance through its divinity endowment."

The gift will be added to the permanent endowment of the School of Divinity and scholarships awarded from the interest earned from N.C. Baptist churches who are enrolled in the School of Divinity.

"It is evident that the scope of theological education is changing," Dr. Smith said. "More and more we are seeing a regional approach taken toward educating our future Christian leaders. This is where our divinity school and their students are deserving of our resources."

GWU President Dr. Chris White said of the gift, "While I am deeply appreciative of this gift, I am even more thrilled with the wisdom and foresight the Convention has shown to specially contribute the funds to our endowment effort. It is a genuine belief of mine that scholarship assistance is the greatest need of Baptist colleges and universities in this state.

If you would like to submit an editorial for publication in *The Pilot*, mail your typed story to Nikol McKinney (Box 5480) and remember the following guidelines: *The Pilot's* policy for letters to the Editor requires that all letters be signed by the author(s). Names may be withheld only with consent of the Editorial Board. *The Pilot* also reserves the right not to publish articles which are defamatory in nature, and reserves the right to edit letters for brevity and clarity. Views expressed in editorials are not necessarily those of *The Pilot*.