

## News

## Alumni and parents speak out about recent GW news

Emily Killian  
Pilot copy editor

Alumni and parents have not been silent about the recent situation with the honor code violation.

The office of Alumni and Parent Relations has fielded phone calls and emails from a total of approximately 200 parents and alumni, and completed a plan for disseminating information and the results of the lawyer investigation and subsequent trustees' vote to graduates.

The opinions have varied greatly, said Steve Varley, assistant vice president for alumni and parent relations, although he said that he had not heard a lot of moderate responses.

For Varley, his responses have stayed to one end of the spectrum or the other, and there have been relatively few people who have been in between the two ends, because he feels that extremists tend to speak up more than moderates.

"Many parents and alumni trust the board of trustees," said Varley. "The attitude is for Gardner-Webb, not for Dr. White or the faculty. They [parents and alumni] want to wait and see what the investigators conclude."

Varley feels like more recent graduates have opinions similar to those of current students, while older graduates tend to withhold judgment.

During a regularly sched-

uled Family Weekend meeting on Sept. 14 with approximately 50 parents, Varley felt they "want the faculty to get back to teaching, instead of debating the fate of Dr. White."

Parents also cited examples of when their children were given special exceptions to academic rules, such as waiving the rule regarding prerequisites, said Varley. Also present at the meeting were Donnie Clary, Drew Van Horn and the president of the parents' board.

The Office of Alumni and Parent Relations has two yearly meetings of advisory boards composed of parents and alumni. The results of the advisory board discussions are shared with the members of the board of trustees.

"They [the advisory boards] are not governing boards," said Varley. "They only give feedback."

These same advisory boards are chosen based on references from other members on the boards, and are directly related to community and church involvement, as well as to involvement with Gardner-Webb, said Varley, although recently all parents of freshmen have been invited to be on the parents' advisory board.

However, the Office of Alumni and Parent Relations is not planning to present any information regarding the boards to the trustees before their meeting, said Varley. The advisory boards have opted not to have a special meeting

called, and will instead meet sometime after the trustees' meeting.

Several graduates, includ-

***"Basically the alumni are saying that they are saddened and shocked. They think that White has lost his moral authority and don't think that he can lead."***

— Andy Polk

ing Matt and Michelle Norman, as well as former SGA president Andy Polk, have started compiling email responses to the recent events concerning the investigation on campus. Other alumni have written letters to the editors of the Shelby Star and the Charlotte Observer. Polk has spoken to approximately 85 to 100 alumni.

Both the Norman's and Polk's responses have varied somewhat from those Varley has received.

"Basically alumni are saying that they are saddened and shocked. They think that White has lost his moral authority and don't think that he can lead," said Polk. "They think it's time for new direc-

tion, and are upset because of the division on campus and because of the conflicts of interest present in the Board of Trustees."

Alumni Matt and Michelle Norman of Cary, N.C. have been in contact with other alumni since the NCAA investigation began on Sept. 17.

Michelle Norman, who served as an admissions counselor for Gardner-Webb from 1996 to 1999, said every alumnus she has been in contact with has sided with the faculty and with Gil Blackburn, vice president and dean of academic affairs, who has stood up vocally for his beliefs regarding the honor code.

The Normans, along with several other alumni, have written a letter to Tommy Hardin, chair of the Board of Trustees, about their feelings towards the allegations against White and the general unrest on campus.

"Based upon the accounts we have reviewed in the press as well as information we have received directly from those on the front line of this issue, it appears that the conduct of Dr. White goes beyond an honest mistake and should not be tolerated by the University or the board of trustees," said Norman in the letter, which was published in the Shelby Star on Sept. 25.

"While the University has built more buildings, built a lake, increased its student body

size, and moved to NCAA Division I, many of us have been concerned that there has been an insufficient focus on academics and the devotion toward Christian values."

Norman feels that salvaging the moral integrity of the school is a must.

"We are not an academic powerhouse. Neither are we an athletic powerhouse. All we have is our integrity. If we compromise that, we compromise everything," said Michelle Norman.

She also said that more alumni are supporting the letter, but they did not sign because of business or personal reasons.

Alumnus Charles Philbeck, of Shelby, believes that Dr. White has done a lot of good for the university; however, he has doubts about the board's investigation.

"I think they [NCAA] will come to their own conclusions and they will have final say as far as athletics are concerned," said Philbeck "I worry about the trustee investigation being biased because they supported White before they hired investigators."

Although worried about the situation, Philbeck has hope for GWU.

"I'm still proud of Gardner-Webb University. It will always have a special place in my heart," said Philbeck. "The school has a bright future ahead of it."

## Students come out to support football team at pep rally

Emily Killian  
Pilot copy editor

Students did the wave.

Cheerleaders performed.

Coaches roused the crowd.

This was definitely not your usual Friday the 13th.

Everything that happened during the pep rally was done to encourage the almost 250 students present to support the Runnin' Bulldogs football team for

their second home game against East Tennessee State University on Sept. 14.

Both athletes and non-athletes alike attended the rally, held on Sept. 13 in Bost Gymnasium.

Many teams, including football and baseball, were told about the rally during practice. Flyers were posted inside the DCC to spread the word to non-athletes.

Students present were

urged to "support each other" by coaches, who addressed the students, and who seemed excited about the rally.

"The most important thing you can do is pray," said Brian Fetzer, head track/field and cross country coach, who led students in a prayer for wisdom, understanding, forgiveness and for the ability to make right decisions, in light of the current situation on campus.



The Gardner-Webb cheerleaders perform for students at the Sept. 13 pep rally.

Photo by Scott Holstein