

THE DECREE

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NORTH CAROLINA WESLEYAN COLLEGE, ROCKY MOUNT, NORTH CAROLINA 27804

NC Wesleyan to Maintain Cost Of Tuition, Overhaul Edgecombe

By Emily Bower
Senior Staff Writer

North Carolina Wesleyan will not raise the price of tuition in 2013-14 for current students and it will commence major renovations on one of its residence halls, the administration has announced.

"Tuition will not go up for current students," said President James Gray. New students will see an increase in tuition by three percent, the president said, adding that he expects a three-percent hike in room and board for all students.

According to the college's webpage, the 2012-2013 tuition is \$25,710 for traditional day students. Other current costs include \$4,038 for a double room in a residence hall, \$4,388 for a meal plan, \$450 for insurance, and \$50 for an activity fee. Tuition covers the cost of student books.

Freshman Pedro Leão from Belo Horizonte, Brazil expressed appreciation. "It will help international students because it's tough for us to afford tuition," he said. "It helps other students afford another semester or another year and helps us continue our education."

President Gray hopes the decision will help families. "Most other schools will increase their tuition as usual," he said, "but we're trying to respond to the needs of our students and their families."

Sophomore Logan Waters can relate. "I have some scholarships, but I still have to pay some out of pocket," he said. Tuition had been rising each year for Waters and other students. "It'll definitely help the students who pay on their own," he said. "I also think this will help our retention rate."

Enrollment is tied to tuition and budget maintenance. "Non-traditional ways of achieving education are becoming more common," President Gray said. "The traditional program will grow, but at a slower rate than the adult program." Out of the 30 private colleges in the state, only nine saw an increase in fall enrollment, Wesleyan being one, the president noted. The traditional student population rose by 16 percent in the fall, but went down by the same number prior to the spring semester. Wesleyan had budgeted for 45 new students this spring semester. Only 35 arrived when classes began in January, prompting the college to trim its budget.

Profile: SSC's Erma Hedgepeth, 'Passionate about Students'

Erma Hedgepeth, an academic advisor in the Student Success Center, was named winner of the Distinguished Staff Award at the fall Founders' Day ceremony.

Now in her 20th year at NC Wesleyan, the Zebulon native was promoted to her current position prior to the current academic year.

Dean of Students Randy Williams praised Hedgepeth, who is a 2010 graduate of the college's ASPIRE program and the mother of a Wesleyan alum, her son Jarrett. "Erma is passionate about NCWC students, and she shows her support in academics, athletics, and student life," Dean Williams said. "Having nearly 20 years of institutional affiliation, she exhibits school pride daily. In that time, she has built meaningful relationships with faculty and staff while learning the nuances of the academic program."

The Decree staff conducted a recent interview with Hedgepeth, who reflected on her time at the college.

Q. Where did you work prior to NCWC?

A. Prior to Wesleyan, I worked for a computer manufacturer, Memorex Telex Computer Products in Raleigh. I was initially hired as a printed circuit board assembler; I used a blueprint to insert components onto the boards. I was later promoted to the purchasing department as a purchasing expeditor; in that job, I contacted vendors to track orders. This was over a span of 12 years. This company went through a hostile buy-out and I was eventually laid

off. Afterwards, I worked for two years as a reservation agent for Sheraton.

Q. What prompted you to seek a job in education?

A. My mother-in-law was my babysitter at the time, and she passed away. I had always worked in the Raleigh area, but since my support system was no longer available, I had to make a decision to relocate to be closer to my young children. I wasn't necessarily seeking a job in education, I was seeking a job and it just happened to be in education. But I do believe it was part of a bigger plan, since my desire had always been to get a college degree.

Q. What was your first job at Wesleyan?

A. I was hired in June 1993 as a receptionist/secretary for the Student Support Center (now called the Student Success Center). I was responsible for handling general office duties—directing calls, filing, making appointments for the SSC staff. After about two years, I was promoted to the position of administrative assistant. In this role I coordinated the referral program, kept track of the office budget, and prepared first-year student folders by calculating their math and English placements prior to them being assigned to the first-year advisors.

Q. What did you most enjoy about your former position at NCWC?

A. I liked all aspects of my job, but I loved the interactions that I had with students on a daily basis.

slipped a little bit as far as a priority," said Gray. Costs are estimated at \$10 million; no donor has come forward to lead the project. The facility would provide a home to NCWC's football team and could host events in soccer, lacrosse, and track and field. "A sports facility can change the culture on campus, and it's an important part of student morale that we're trying to build," said Gray.

In another move, President Gray has announced that Budd Security began serving the campus February 18, replacing the previous service provider, Securitas. Funding came from a \$100,000 outlay that the board of trustees approved within the last year.

Based in Winston-Salem, Budd Security will be "much more professional—from the car to the uniforms to the training," stated Gray.

Besides funding the new security provider and a new position—direct of campus security—the trustees' grant will pay for an increased presence by Rocky Mount police officers and other safety-related projects, according to Dean of Students Randy Williams. Earlier in the year, the college added outdoor lighting around campus and video cameras in campus buildings as part of an effort to enhance safety.

The Edgecombe project will be a "truly top-to-bottom" overhaul, Gray said, noting that it will involve new flooring and ceiling and renovated walls, as well as improvements to plumbing and electrical work. New furniture will be added. The project will be similar to work already undertaken on the first floor of Nash Hall, the president said.

Strength of Heart monies will fund the renovations and more. NCWC trustee Don Stallings, the owner of Eagle Transport Corp., and an anonymous donor have given \$2.5 million for the construction of an academic center for entrepreneurship. This building will serve as a place to educate students who want to own their own business. And it will provide networking opportunities. "We believe this center will help our students and our region economically," said Gray.

The college has discussed plans for a multi-sport stadium, but the project "has

slipped a little bit as far as a priority," said Gray. Costs are estimated at \$10 million; no donor has come forward to lead the project. The facility would provide a home to NCWC's football team and could host events in soccer, lacrosse, and track and field. "A sports facility can change the culture on campus, and it's an important part of student morale that we're trying to build," said Gray.

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Play 'Woman from the Town' Performed for Black History Month

By Katherine Crickmore
Decree Staff Writer

"Woman from the Town" was performed by the Wesleyan Players on February 25, 26 and 28 in the Powers Recital Hall and featured a question-answer session with the playwright, North Carolina resident Samm-Art Williams, after the Tuesday night performance.

"It's a relationship play," Roger Drake, the director of the show, explained. "Each character has a speech in which they share their perspective, their values, and their individuality. It really showcases their character."

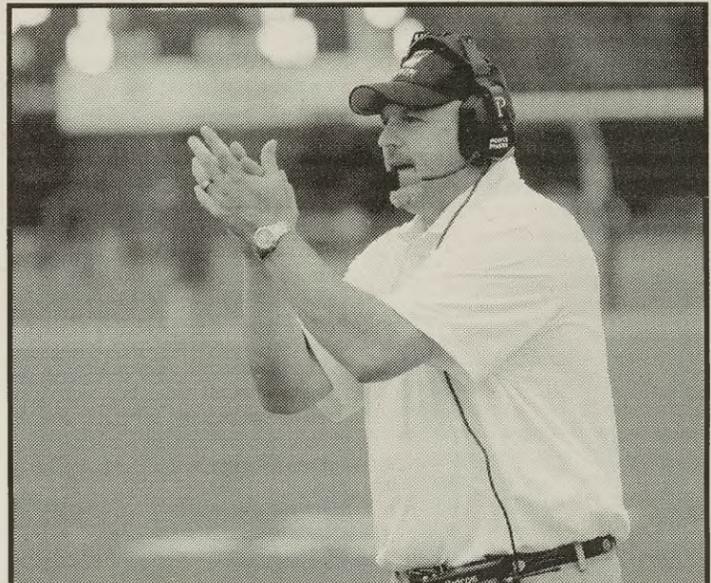
The two-act show was featured as the customary spring semester piece that celebrated Black History Month.

"The set, costumes and cast are so realistic," said sophomore Chavonne Jones, one of the actors. "You'll be sucked into the story."

Published in 1986 by Samuel French, Inc., the play was first performed at the Inner City Cultural Center in Los Angeles in 1989.

The drama is set in a small rural town in Mason's Bridge, North Carolina and follows the exploits of Lila Wilson as she returns to her childhood home after a 27-year absence. Lila arrives in a time of crisis, as the population of the town is dwindling and houses are being foreclosed. Over four days, it becomes obvious to Lila's family and neighbors that the now-wealthy woman is behind the sudden bad luck.

It is revealed that Lila, run out of town



Jeff Filkovski has been named the third head football coach in NCWC history. An AP "Little All-American" as quarterback of Allegheny College's 1990 national championship team, Filkovski has been head coach for the past five seasons at Marietta College (Ohio), where his teams were a combined 10-40. Prior to Marietta, he served in assistant coaching positions at Heidelberg University (Ohio), Holy Cross, and the University of Cincinnati, along with a one-year stint as offensive coordinator of the Cologne Centurions in NFL Europe. Filkovski replaces Mark Henninger, who left earlier in the year to accept the head coaching position at Marian University, in his native state of Indiana. Henninger compiled a 26-25 record in five years at the helm of the Bishops. He was named USA South Coach of the Year in 2009, when he guided NCWC to an 8-3 overall record, a conference title and a berth in the Division III playoffs. SI Photo

as a teenager for getting pregnant out of wedlock, has returned as a real-estate tycoon with the express purpose of getting revenge on the townspeople who treated her badly. However, at the end of the play, Lila realizes that the ones who persecuted her the most have since died and devotes herself to the revitalization of Mason's Bridge.

The cast is fairly small, featuring five women and one man. Lila Wilson, a 44-year-old black woman, is the titular character. Lila's family members include her daughter, Rita Chaney, 27, who had grown up in New York; her older sister Laura, 48, who had remained on the farm and is immensely bitter; and Laura's son Buddy, 28, revealed later to be partnered with Lila. Laura Wilson's close friends and neighbors, Sissy, 48, and Hazel, 58, are two members of the town that Lila targets personally. Lila's deceased mother, Edna, and father, Robert, appear in flashbacks and are usually portrayed by the actors playing Buddy and Sissy.

The Wesleyan production featured a mixed cast of students and members of the community. In addition to being costume director, Jones portrayed Lila Wilson, with Tammy Robinson as Laura, Leia Batchelor as Rita, sophomore Delon Wicks as Buddy and Robert, Shalanda Hines as Sissy and Edna, and junior Katherine Crickmore as Hazel. Crickmore also served as stage manager.

"I love Sissy," Hines laughed as she discussed her character. "She's my alter ego. She's hilarious!"



L-R Leia Batchelor, Tammy Robinson, Chavonne Jones, and Delon Wicks in "Woman from the Town."

Photo by R. Drake

Robinson, who works in the Advancement Office at Wesleyan and has also appeared in other Wesleyan productions, said that the show was challenging. "The hardest part was definitely the monologues. They were so long," she said. "But it gave me an opportunity to play a character I'd never played before. I had to get comfortable getting into character, and become comfortable with the profanity."

Auditions for "Woman from the Town" were held January 15th and rehearsals began January 23rd. In the four and a half weeks since rehearsals began, four of the six members had to be replaced, as the original participants dropped out for various reasons. However, the unfortunate circumstances did nothing to deter the cast from becoming close, a common occurrence in most shows.

"I love my cast members," Wicks said. The sentiment was reiterated by Batchelor, who went on to praise the play itself.

"I love working on the show," Batchelor gushed. "It's very different from most shows. It's exciting, it's suspenseful, it's just awesome. In all the other shows I've done, they've related to modern, everyday life. In this show, it relates back to an earlier time period."

Drake, head of the entertainment department at Wesleyan, constructed the set, in addition to directing the piece. "Woman from the Town" is set on the Wilson Farm, with specific scenes occurring in the yard, on the front porch, in the kitchen and in the parlor.

The playwright took questions from the audience and discussed everything from playwriting to his work on television shows like "Mike Hammer" and "The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air." He also gave advice to anyone hoping to make it in the entertainment business. There was a small reception afterwards in the Carlton Board Room, where Williams signed "Woman from the Town" posters and stood for pictures with the cast.

Earlier that day, the playwright sat down with several students and discussed many of the same things. He said that if a student wanted to get into show-business, she should first go somewhere where she was comfortable. "Stay away from negative influences," Williams said. "Don't get discouraged. Don't let old folks like me tell you what you can or can't do. You're young; you can do anything. I'm scared of you and other folks should be too."

Williams advised that no one should to anything out of greed or for money, two of his "five-letter words" he frequently mentioned. "Instead," he said. "Follow your heart. That's a better five letter word."

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