

# THE DECREE

since 1960 "of, by, and for the Wesleyan community."

October 4, 2013

NORTH CAROLINA WESLEYAN COLLEGE, ROCKY MOUNT, NORTH CAROLINA 27804

## Campus Green, Other Improvements Impress NCWC Community

By Katie Beeman  
Decree Staff Writer

Wesleyan students have been flocking to the new Southern Bank Green.

Over the summer, the college underwent three renovations that cost around \$3.5 million. These include adding the green space, improving the Hartness Center, and renovating Edgcombe Resident Hall.

The three projects were completed on time and on budget, according to President James Gray. "The reason behind all of the new renovations is to enhance the current student experience and compete with other colleges," he said.

The Southern Bank Green was added in place of the parking lot in

back of Braswell. The project cost \$250,000 with \$100,000 donated by Southern Bank. The new red-brick-and-concrete area includes four picnic-style tables with umbrellas, five round tables with umbrellas, nine chairs, six benches, seven lounge chairs, and two trash cans with recycling. Five plant holders feature red Begonias and white impatiens, and trees have been planted around the space. At night the area is illuminated by antique light posts.

One student, Gene Vincent, loves the new space. "On a scale of 1 to 10, it's a 30," he said. "Everybody uses it. We didn't have anything like this before." Senior Jennifer Fowler had a

similar feeling. "It's a chance to have our own fellowship," she said. "I've been waiting for something like this."

Though the consensus seems positive, there has been some criticism. Senior Irakli Marutyan likes the green space but wishes that it had been put somewhere else, with more shade. "I'm glad that something

on to say that the college renovated Edgcombe specifically to appeal to potential female students.

The residence hall received a full renovation. "The building was completely gutted," said Edwards.

According to Edwards, Edgcombe now has a new heating and air system;

system. Edgcombe is now more energy efficient, according to Edwards.

"Overall, Edgcombe is beautiful," said resident adviser Nikki Liette.

The sophomore added that the residence hall has completely changed in look and quality. And the students have changed along with the new dorm. "I've noticed that students are treating the new building with much more respect, and trying to keep it cleaner and in nicer condition," she said.

Residents did report a few negative aspects. The closets are smaller and some students still do not have cable, according to Liette.

Freshman Neryzza Calo said that the new dorm is similar to the ones at colleges she considered in her home state of Alabama. "The only thing that I don't like is that the beds were really awkward to rearrange and not very comfortable," she said.

Edwards stated that the college will next undertake a similar renovation project at Nash residence hall. This will include re-doing the first floor, which was renovated several years ago.

"If we perform an extensive renovation of Nash similar to what was done to Edgcombe," Edwards said, "then we'll have to replace all of the plumbing and electrical and data wiring, and install a fire sprinkler system, etc. That will affect the 1st floor cosmetic upgrade that was done previously. It will result in repairs and finishes to the first floor that will need to be touched again."

The college will continue with its ambitious program until every building is updated, officials said, with most work occurring during the summer.

Along with donations, the college is funding its renovation projects with money obtained in a loan from PNC Bank, according to Edwards.

## Increases Seen in Traditional Enrollment, International Focus

By Jonathan Winchester  
Decree Staff Writer

Returning North Carolina Wesleyan students will see 283 new faces this fall.

With a haul of 223 freshmen and 60 transfers, new-student enrollment increased by 6.4 percent compared to last year. There are now 652 traditional students attending NCWC, resulting in a 2.2 percent increase overall.

Provost Michael Brown is optimistic about the continued growth of Wesleyan's student population, and would like the traditional program to reach 1,000 students by expanding steadily each year. "We offer a lot of good things for their educational experience," said Dr. Brown. "We need to continue to renovate, to bring things up to where students would like them to be."

One factor that may be affecting enrollment at NCWC, or any college or university, is the uncertainty surrounding the economy. Logic would suggest that financial hardships deter educational pursuits, but Dr. Brown disagreed and added, "The economy causes stress for families and students, but seeking higher education leads to better careers and job skills that employers are looking for."

The total number of residential students is 476, occupying 82.9 percent of the 578-student capacity and leaving 98 total beds available. Residence halls Boddie and Centura, as well as Wesleyan Village, are all at maximum capacity. According to Jessie Langley, associate dean of students, the two female-designated floors in the Nash building have 25 vacant beds, while the newly renovated Edgcombe building has 44. Comparable statistics from

previous years were not available.

This year's class enters with virtually the same academic scores as last year's. The average SAT combined math and verbal score is up nearly 20 points at 869, but the average GPA dropped from 2.94 last year to 2.92 this year.

North Carolina Wesleyan's newest students have a similar gender breakdown as the 2012 additions, as the male/female ratio has hovered around 2:1 for the past two years. According to senior Hazel Boomer, the gender ratio is not particularly problematic. "I don't know, maybe we could advertise more towards women," said Boomer. "It doesn't really bother me, but the guys don't seem to like it."

Directly affecting the male/female totals is the number of student-athletes. Although exact numbers were not available in late September, Dr. Brown estimated that one-half to two-thirds of the new enrollees are involved in athletics and those figures were typical of the past few years.

Transfer and Campus Visit Coordinator Felicia Lynch was pleased with the 60 transfers, but expressed the need for more focus in that department. When asked if transfer students are underrepresented compared to their peers, Lynch responded, "That's what we're trying to change. We've also been trying to get a transfer page on the website." Lynch would like a more aggressive approach in the transfer program. "Transfers are a goldmine," said Lynch. "We need to tap that resource."

In addition to the modest gains in enrollment, the international program continues to flourish. The freshman class boasts 26 international students from all over the world. The new students represent Central and South America (11), Africa (4), Europe (6), and Asia (5). Wesleyan's international program now features 53 international students hailing from 26 nations over 5 continents.

After spending the past year traveling in Europe and teaching English in Slovakia, former NCWC Director of Music Gene Heavner has returned to serve as director of International Student Services. It is his responsibility to help internationals feel at home in a different culture by assisting with language difficulties, as well as basic tasks like banking and shopping. "This freshman class is very outgoing, energetic, and serious about studies," said Heavner. "They're open and flexible when facing difficulties and changes."

While athletics have been a driving force in international recruitment, there is an increase in non-athlete enrollment. Heavner attributes this to word-of-mouth, suggesting "Students go home and tell others about their experience at Wesleyan, and then get others to come." He would also like to see the program double, if not triple, in the future. "I like having a mix and enjoy the viewpoints of the international students. It's a positive experience for the school, students, and community."



Jennifer Fowler relaxes at Wesleyan's new campus green while enjoying a sunny September day.

K. Beeman Photo

is happening," he said. Sophomore Kyrie Ozmere added that taking away the parking lot behind Braswell has decreased the number of library parking spaces.

President Gray said that there is a plan to add more furniture as it is needed. The Rocky Mount Garden Club has adopted the green space and will be planting flowers.

The Hartness Center received a facelift this summer with renovations that cost \$190,000, with \$80,000 of the total coming from donations. In the center there are now four refurbished pool tables, a new ping pong table, a ping pong ball dispenser, new light fixtures, fresh paint (a bright blue and orange), new floors (carpet and laminate), and new windows, according to Hartness Center Student Manager Phillip Wester.

There is a separate cyber lounge within the existing building for watching TV, playing video games, and working on group projects. According to Vice President of Finance & Administration Jason Edwards, the cyber lounge has a new heating and air system as well.

Wester approves of the new renovations, but had a few suggestions. "I love all of it, but there should be a second TV in the cyber lounge and a new foosball table because the one we have is missing a lot of its parts, which makes playing it difficult. But all in all, it's an awesome improvement from what it was last year."

Sophomore Tommy Nakamura agreed. "It's a lot nicer and the grill is a lot nicer," he said, adding that he likes the separate zone for watching TV.

Edwards explained that there is a plan to continue renovating the Hartness Center. Phase two will include expanding the grill area and adding new cooking equipment. There will eventually be a desktop computer and a few laptops for rental in the Hartness Center, according to Edwards. And there is a plan to create a separate study or television area, said President Gray.

The Edgcombe Residence Hall was renovated at a cost of \$3 million, with Sodexo's construction company handling the renovations. "They were given a tight deadline, May 6 to August 6, and they delivered," said President Gray.

Noting the skewed male-to-female ratio on campus, the president went

new wiring, cable and plumbing; as well as new floors (vinyl in the rooms, tile in the bathrooms, and carpet in the hall), new paint, doors, and furniture. The building is more handicapped accessible and has a new sprinkler

## Advice Offered for Freshmen

By Amanda Gauthier  
Decree Staff Writer

With the beginning of a new year, Wesleyan welcomes the arrival of a new freshman class. Some have come from far and wide while others find themselves close to home. Being a college freshman can be exciting, but it can also be stressful or even frightening and intimidating.

Upperclassmen, staff and faculty have offered advice for helping freshmen to navigate the transition to college. Many stressed the importance of regular class attendance. "Go to class!" stated Alex Kane, adding that poor attendance can hurt a student's grade and even result in withdrawal from the course. This could delay a student's graduation by an extra semester or two.

Matthew Richardson said that his freshman mistake was sleeping in, instead of going to some of his morning classes. He said that attending all classes makes a huge difference in a student's performance. In some cases, if you miss one class day, you can end up off track and it can be hard to get back into gear.

It's critical that students attend class, but it's just as important that they become engaged in the learning process, in and outside of the classroom. Dr. Lee Templeton, assistant professor of English, pointed out that "how much effort you

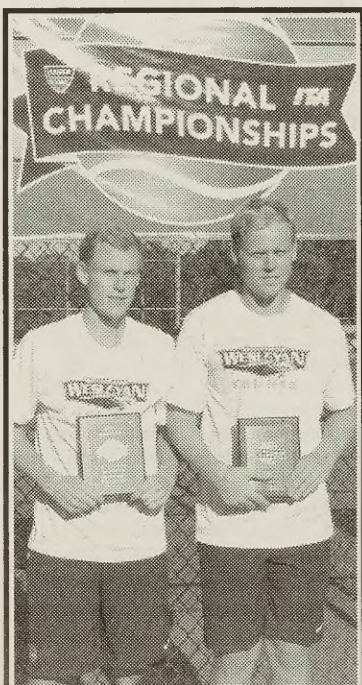
put into your classes is how much you get back." He added, "Take ownership of your education. You're not here to get a piece of paper; you're here to get an education."

For freshmen, another key is "management." Richardson said that students need to learn to manage money and advised freshmen to find a work study job to help with their finances. He added that it's important to get an early start in searching for the right job, noting the limited number of appealing positions on campus.

Along with the ability to budget their money, freshmen must develop strong time-management skills, upperclassmen said. It helps students to balance work and fun and keeps them from getting too stressed out and behind in classes. Anastassia Battle is one who stressed the importance of good time management, explaining that it allow students to enjoy fun activities and social opportunities, while still reaching their academic goals.

As a college student, one begins to plan for the rest of his or her life, and upperclassmen underscored that academics should become number one on your to-do list. Kayla Nall suggested that freshmen figure out their major as soon as possible and then use all the available resources, such as the career services office. Noting that she

see ADVICE pg 4



Robert Kjellberg, left, and Johan Ljungdahl captured the regional doubles title in a recent tourney in Tennessee. See story page 3.

SI Photo



Drew Thompson, son of Athletic Director John Thompson, and Evie Hunter pass through the "Freshman Tunnel" at the opening of the fall semester. Photo by S. Best