

THE DECREE

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NORTH CAROLINA WESLEYAN COLLEGE, ROCKY MOUNT, NORTH CAROLINA 27804

Morrow Wins SGA Election, Olsowski To Remain VP

By Katie Beeman
Decree Staff Writer

Isaiah Morrow was elected as the 2014-2015 SGA president in late March, beating the former vice president in a close race.

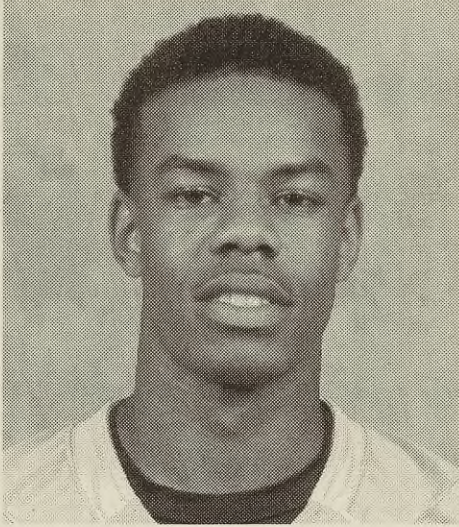
Morrow got 121 votes to Sarah Olsowski's 104 in one of the highest turnouts in recent years, according to SGA advisor Adia Cuthbertson.

A junior, Morrow is a member of the football team as well as a resident advisor.

"When I first found out I had won," he said, "I was excited for what was to come and thankful for the opportunity that I've been given."

As president, Morrow said one of his main objectives is to strengthen the college's relationship with the city of Rocky Mount. He plans to create a personal and business relationship with city council members.

Another goal is to improve security. "I want to get it to the point where all students feel safe on campus," said Morrow. Among his other plans, Morrow intends to improve the relationship between students and the new president, help enhance the food service offerings, raise SGA's profile on campus "to give students more of a voice," improve student entertainment programs, and revive school spirit by having students participate in more campus activities.



SGA President Isaiah Morrow

SI photo

Freshman Neryezza Calo has been impressed by Morrow, calling him very personable. Prior to the election, she said, "He sat down and talked with me. He was handing out petitions to the students and seeing him do that showed me that he really cared about what students wanted."

Olsowski stated that she felt it was a good election. "Over 200 students voted by

who was SGA vice president as a sophomore. "She put on an excellent campaign," he said, adding, "I feel for Sarah."

Jacob Wilson, a freshman, ran unopposed as a candidate for vice president, but resigned his position after the election. Contacted by The Decree, Wilson declined to provide a reason for his resignation.

About a week later, Morrow then appointed Olsowski the new vice president. "She's very intelligent and full of ideas," Morrow said. "She's a very qualified person for the position, and I look forward to working closely with her during this upcoming school year."

Olsowski stated that as vice president she will remain a strong advocate for the students. Besides working to improve food services and housing, she said she will continue to push for a recycling program on campus.

The election began on Monday, March 24, and continued until Thursday, with the winners announced on Friday. Students were given the option of voting by email or paper ballot in the school cafeteria, but the online process was discontinued on Monday following technical glitches.

Within hours, an email was sent to alert students of the problem. All online votes were discarded and all students were urged to vote by paper ballot.

Both candidates were disappointed by the problems. "I was a little upset about the technical difficulties that did occur during the voting," said Morrow. "I was glad that it happened within the first hour or two, when there weren't as many students who had already voted."

Olsowski said she was let down by the online polls. "I felt like it hurt me because I think I reached a lot of ASPIRE students," she said.

Katherine Crickmore, a commuter student in the day program, wishes that the online voting had worked. "I have

classes through lunch and I don't live on campus, so I'm not here during dinner." Crickmore stated that the online voting would have been convenient for commuter students.

The election came a week after a candidate debate. Gathering on the night of March 19 in Minges Auditorium, the two presidential hopefuls took part in a question-and-answer



SGA Vice President Sarah Olsowski

SI photo

session, with about 50 students in attendance.

Asked to identify the biggest problem on campus, Olsowski mentioned the food services, while Morrow pointed to campus security. "As an RA, I deal with lots of problems, and security still doesn't respond quickly enough," he said, noting that he wants to see the college add more lighting as well as a second courtesy police officer on the north side of campus.

"Incoming students need to feel safe," said Morrow. "This is something that affects their decision about coming here."

At the forum, students asked about Wesleyan's drinking policy. Many would

like to see the college permit drinking for students 21 and older, but the two candidates agreed that the college should remain a dry campus, pointing to its history as a Methodist-affiliated school.

Junior Dillon Becker felt that the debate was won by Olsowski. "She seemed to know the issues more and she was confident in her responses. Isaiah seemed more nervous," said Becker.

The 2014-2015 SGA executive board will consist of Morrow, Olsowski, treasurer Deontae Swain, and secretary Kelly Cranick. Swain, last year's treasurer, and Cranick ran unopposed.

NCWC Faculty Votes 'No Confidence' In Board of Trustees

By Jonathan Winchester
& Decree Staff

North Carolina Wesleyan faculty voted "no confidence" in the college's Board of Trustees, due to concerns that range from the process used to select the incoming president, to the board's treatment of the student government president at a February board meeting.

Taken at a special faculty meeting on April 23, the vote was 25 in favor and 11 opposed. Of the 49 full-time faculty members, 13 were not present at the time of the vote.

In his response, Will Lassiter, the new board chairman, focused on the selection of Wesleyan alum and former board chair Dewey Clark as the successor to James Gray.

While stating the board "appreciates the difference of opinion with faculty council" and that an "academic environment should encourage diversity of thought and ideas," he said the board disagrees with the faculty's views on Clark's selection. He argued that a search committee was formed to include board members, faculty, staff, student body and community. "Once the process began, a strong candidate emerged and he was recommended by the search committee to the full board of trustees," Lassiter said. "The board discussed the unusual process and in the end determined that Dr. Dewey Clark, a graduate of NCWC and at that time chairman of the board, was in fact a very strong candidate."

Referring to the board's statement, Dr. George Whitwell, chair of faculty council, pointed out that the disagreement is not just with the faculty council, but the faculty as a whole.

In a statement released after the no-confidence vote, the faculty said that the college had gone against "traditional hiring processes" and failed to conduct a national search for the next president. Such a search would have allowed Wesleyan to consider women and minorities, among other qualified candidates, the statement said. Many faculty members have asserted that Clark, a former executive at Rocky Mount-based MBM Corporation, lacks the proper background and credentials to be a college president.

The faculty statement said that the process used to appoint Clark as the next president "was not professional, collegial, or in the best interests of the college." Faculty members expressed concern that the selection process and other moves made by the college may invite increased scrutiny, and perhaps sanctions, from its accreditation body, SACS.

Besides the presidential search, faculty members have criticized the board's treatment of SGA President Chelsea Laurens. Appearing at the February board meeting, Laurens presented a petition signed by 251 students. SGA was seeking a role for the student body in the selection of the new dean of students, after Dr. Randy Williams announced, in January, that he would leave the college following the school year for a position at Elon University.

Laurens faced sharp criticism from individual board members while giving her presentation, prompting the faculty to rise to her defense. "Instead of acting in the best interests of the college," the faculty statement said, board members "berated and threatened the students' elected representative when she tried to present the petition."

Contacted by The Decree last week, Lassiter addressed the board's response to the SGA petition.

In an email, he called it "unfortunate" if board member comments were "perceived by Chelsea as hurtful."

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President Jim Gray Says Farewell after Five Years

By Katherine Crickmore
Senior Staff Writer

President James Gray stated that his time as Wesleyan's president had been rewarding, but also the "most challenging I've ever had."

Retiring after five years at the helm, the president stated that the very definition of the job presented trials, as there are so many needs and much of the work must be juggled with other responsibilities.

When he accepted the job as Wesleyan's president, Gray said that he was aware there would be challenges. "I knew that there were challenges with fundraising, enrollment and other issues," Gray said. "But I like challenges."

In fact, Gray revealed that he left his job as associate dean for external affairs at UNC's Kenna-Flagler Business School for just such a challenge—leading an institution like Wesleyan towards a better place. Gray stressed that the situation at Wesleyan five years ago was not "dire," but something definitely had to be done to lead the school in a more profitable direction.

Despite the frustrations of the job, Gray said his work has been highly rewarding, particularly the relationships that were built with the traditional students. "I'll miss the students the most," he said. He also mentioned that his wife, Beth Gray, or "Mama Prez," enjoyed that aspect of the job as well. "This is the first job that we've shared," President Gray said. "She's been involved with everything."

Dean Randy Williams acknowledged that Gray had a special relationship with the students of Wesleyan. "Since his arrival, President Gray has been accessible to everyone, always willing to give of his time to hear the many people vying for his attention," Dr. Williams said. "He is a 'students' President,' meaning that he took advantage of every opportunity to engage with students. Whether in the Blue & Gold Cafeteria, in the student sections at athletic events, or in the hallway of Braswell, President Gray made it a priority to listen to the students. I admire that quality, and so do the students."

Zach Seitter, a senior, wished President Gray well in his future endeavors and senior Danyelle Rube said she will miss his presence on campus. "We'll miss him as a figurehead," she said. "As an athlete, I'll miss him. He supported a lot of our games."

Gray admitted that there have been struggles over the years. The president stated that the hardest part of his job has been trying to increase traditional student enrollment by "a double-digit percentage" every year. With the help of staff and administrators, Gray said he

paper ballot, which is excellent," she said. Morrow praised his opponent, an honors student and member of the soccer team,

has stopped a previous decline of enrollment. He noted that the college, in fact, has seen an enrollment increase in recent years, including a 16-percent rise two years ago, and a 6-percent hike last year.

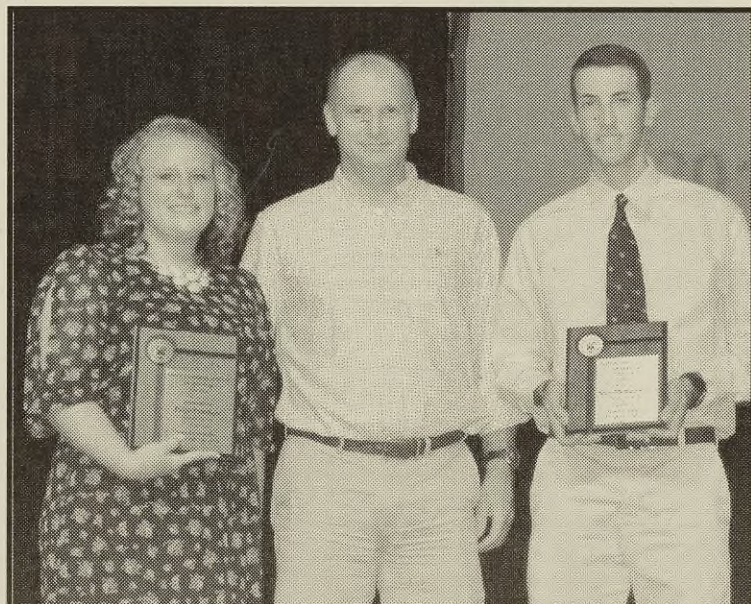
Gray said that the trouble with enrollment is that there has been a decrease in interest among high school graduates who want to go to traditional four-year colleges. "There are so many options available now," Gray explained. "There's community college, online classes, and courses like our ASPIRE program."

Gray said that every school like Wesleyan has experienced problems with enrollment in recent years, and others have not been as fortunate as Wesleyan. "Hopefully," he said, "this year will be another good year, with enrollment continuing to go up."

Increased enrollment was just one of several accomplishments Gray cited with pride. He said that others include:

- the establishment of the Eastern North Carolina Center for Business and Entrepreneurship, which is set to break ground in August
- a better relationship with the Student Government Association
- an increased graduation rate from 18 percent in 2009 to 33 percent this past year
- closer ties with the city of Rocky Mount
- campus improvements that included the renovation of Nash and Edgecombe

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Paige Pritchett (softball) and Allen-Michael Wilson (golf) were named Wesleyan Student-Athletes of the Year for 2013-14. The two seniors are seen here with Professor Carl Lewis, the faculty NCAA rep. SI photo

Men's Tennis Team Wins Sixth Title, as NCWC Women Rebuild

By Decree Sports Staff

The men's tennis team won its sixth straight USA-South Conference title, beating rival Methodist University, 6-3, at the Slick Family Foundation Tennis Center on April 13.

The tournament victory capped a perfect run in the conference as the Bishops posted a 9-0 record, with eight shutouts. The only close regular season match was a 5-4 win at Methodist on March 11. The Bishops fared far worse against non-conference opponents, winning only 3 of 11 matches.

In the conference title match, the Bishops took a 2-1 lead in doubles play, with the duos of Elias Kerem/Eduardo Ugalde and Philipp Vylegzhani/Ben Tolhurst earning 8-2 and 8-4 victories at the #2 and #3 seeds. Methodist avoided the sweep with a 7-5 tiebreak win at #1.

In singles action, 2nd-seeded Kerem and 6th-seeded Vylegzhani sandwiched straight-set victories around a Monarch win

at #5 to give Wesleyan a 4-2 lead, while an MU victory at #1 made the score 4-3.

Needing just one point to secure the title, the match would come down to Peter Hviid and Ugalde's three-setters at the #3 and #4 seeds.

After dropping their opening sets, both players battled back for wins in the second, Ugalde's coming by a 6-4 tally and Hviid's by a 7-5 score. Ugalde then raced to a 3-0 lead in the third set and held serve the rest of the way to clinch the match. Hviid went on to earn a 7-5 win in his final set to secure the 6-3 team victory, Wesleyan's 55th straight over USA South opponents dating back to the 2009 season.

First-year Coach Andres Amores was interviewed after the conference finals about the men's prospects in NCAAs and the rebuilding of the women's team, which finished 3-9 on the year. The women were often forced to forfeit two or more sets at each match, because Wesleyan fielded only four or five of the required six team members.

Q. The men's team sailed through the conference again—though Methodist gave you two tough matches. What will it take for the Bishops to advance far into the NCAA tournament?

A. It will depend mostly on two things: how prepared we are, and how mentally tough we can stay during play. We've come a long way during our season, and we've played very tough teams, but those matches have made us realize what it takes to perform at that level, and how to handle tough matches. I think the preparation is there, so all we have to do is go out there and play tough, and realize that we have nothing to lose against those teams that have high national rankings.

In the NCAA tournament, and in any tournament, the key is being efficient and aggressive in doubles. Being up 3-0 in doubles, or even 2-1, can be a big momentum changer for our players, which will give them more confidence throughout their singles matches. We've proven success against other strong doubles teams in the nation, so I'm confident that we'll go out there and play aggressive doubles, and if we

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