

# THE DECREE

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NORTH CAROLINA WESLEYAN COLLEGE, ROCKY MOUNT, NORTH CAROLINA 27804

## Tuition To Rise 2.8 Percent, 900 Students Projected for Fall 2015

By Decree Staff

NC Wesleyan will hike tuition and other costs by 2.8 percent for most students in 2015-16, as it plans for a second-consecutive jump in enrollment.

Next year tuition will rise from \$27,250 to \$28,000, according to Jason Edwards, the college's Vice President of Finance. Under a previous agreement, tuition will remain at \$26,482 for students who enrolled in fall 2013 or spring 2014.

Some freshmen were unhappy about the tuition increase.

"It's already hard for students and their families to pay tuition," said Jonathan Alston. "Why raise prices? I think the school will lose students due to the crazy increase."

David Chang, a freshman from Australia, was less bothered by the tuition increase, but said he felt that the college should enhance the residence halls and, in particular, the offerings in the cafeteria. He called the current meal plan "expensive" for "low quality" food. "If we have to pay an additional \$150, I'll have very high expectations for next year," he said.

James Parrish echoed Chang on the quality of the food. "I have a problem with the increase in the meal plan. It's an outrage," said Parrish, who suggested that the college add a fast-food outlet on campus to give students more choices.

Aneshia Felton said the meal plan "is pretty good," but that the menu lacks variety. She said she's been most disappointed in the residence halls. While calling her room too small, the Edgcombe Hall resident reported that it's often difficult to regulate temperature levels. "So no one ever wants to stay in their rooms," she said.

Edwards reported that the yearly cost for a double-room in a residence hall will increase from \$4,281 to \$4,400, while a standard meal plan will rise from \$4,651 to \$4,800. The student activity fee will remain at \$150, he said, adding that it's unclear whether the college will raise the cost of student insurance, now set at \$1,313 per year. "Student insurance is a pass-through expense driven by quotes received from a third-party provider," Edwards explained, "and we don't receive quotes until spring."

Last fall the college decided to increase tuition, room and board by 2.9 percent, a rate that was about .3 percent less than that of other independent colleges and universities around North Carolina, said Edwards. It's too early, he noted, to compare Wesleyan's 2015-16 price tag to that of its competitor schools.

This is the second year in a row that the college has set its tuition in the fall. In the past, it often waited until the February trustees meeting, an approach that hampered recruitment efforts, Edwards said. "Last year we pushed for approval during the October board meeting," he explained. "Our admissions team is on the road beginning in October and we wanted them to have all the pertinent information to share with potential students, rather than having to speak generally about tuition and fees."

Edwards said that the new approach is in line with practices at other successful colleges. "We want to take advantage of every opportunity that's available to us," he said, "so we can compete for proactive students who are ready to commit."

Besides setting the tuition, the board approved a balanced 2014-15 operating budget of \$26.5 million, an increase of about \$4 million over the last fiscal year, when the college ran a deficit of about \$673,000. Edwards said that the deficit was about \$77,000 more than anticipated due in part to higher costs associated with the college's books-in-tuition program, which just concluded its third year.

According to the Edwards, the current budget makes provisions for the college's new Heritage Scholarship program, which covers tuition, room, and board for students with exemplary academic credentials. Forty students were granted the scholarship in 2014-15.

Scholarship funding comes from a combination of sources, Edwards said. "We have a few trustees who have agreed to cover the room and board for some of the Heritage Scholars," he said. "We require that the Heritage Scholars complete a FAFSA, so we can capture federal aid available for each student, and the remaining funding is absorbed by the college."

Among other items in the budget, Edwards highlighted a 3-percent pay raise for all staff and faculty, more funding for student activities and intramurals, and additional money for marketing and recruitment initiatives.

He pointed out that the college must now absorb a North Carolina sales tax on cafeteria meal plans, under a mandate approved by the legislature in July. Edwards noted that, unlike other colleges, Wesleyan elected not to pass on the cost to students this fall and spring.

The budget includes a number of enhancements to campus facilities and services. The college is:

- Leasing the Rocky Mount Inn—located three miles south of campus on North Wesleyan Boulevard—as a residence for about 70 students and providing transportation services to campus. Edwards reported that the total expense to rent the Inn has been offset by student room payments, but that the college has, so far, borne the cost of the shuttle service, which is expected to total \$55,000 for the academic year. "But there is still availability in the Rocky Mount Inn and if we fill the vacant rooms," he said, "we'll break even on the shuttle service as well."

- Thinning out trees in wooded areas of campus. Edwards stressed that the college intends to use the income generated through sale of the harvested wood to pay for cutting down and trimming trees. "It's a break-even situation," he said, adding that the objective is to improve "lighting, security and beautification."

- Installing cameras in every residence hall and partnering with Rocky Mount police to strengthen security. The police now make regular, nightly rounds on campus.

- Purchasing 10 new tables and 40 chairs in the cafeteria.

- Laying sod and mulch in parking lot islands as part of campus beautification efforts.

- Converting to LED lighting in parking lots, gymnasiums and tennis courts.

- Replacing the original boiler in the Everett/Taylor building.

- Adding a baseball clubhouse and a building for the football team to store equipment and hold meetings.

After its enrollment rose to 793 day students in 2014, the college has set a goal of 900 students for next fall and 1,000 students for the following year. President Dewey Clark is excited about a second straight jump in en-

rollment. "We change more lives. The higher enrollment will allow us to provide more activities and programs," the president said, adding "We can better leverage our assets, and our economic model will work better."

The college is forecasting 400 new students in 2015, with 340 freshmen.

The growing enrollment will require changes in residence life. While renewing its arrangement at the Rocky Mount Inn next year, the college has decided to build a new residence hall in a vacant area next to Centura Hall. Already approved by the college's Board of Trustees, plans call for a facility with 40 single rooms. The college intends to finish construction of the residence hall by August 2015 at an estimated cost of \$1.5 to \$2 million, President Clark said.

Edwards said that money for the new residence hall is not included in the current budget. "It would be part of our capital budget and will be covered by bank financing," he explained.

Even with the new residence hall, President Clark noted, the college will still need to explore additional housing options. One may involve contracting with Wesleyan Villas, the townhouse complex located just north of campus.

Due to the higher projected enrollment, and growth in the ASPIRE adult-degree program, the college will hire new faculty as well. For 2014, Wesleyan established a new tenure-track position in psychology and hired a full-time visiting instructor in criminal justice. Provost Michael Brown has said that next year, along with replacement hires, the college hopes to bring in new tenure-track faculty for the criminal justice, exercise science, marketing, political science, and religious studies departments. Dr. Brown added that the college will hire full-time visiting instructors in biology, English and math, as well as a new full-time librarian.

The college won't know until next summer the total number of adjunct—or part-time—faculty it will need to employ, said the provost, who noted that, this semester, there are 41 adjuncts teaching 73 classes and labs.

He said that the current classroom space should be adequate to accommodate 900 students next year. "We've analyzed our classroom scheduling and believe that we can handle an additional 100 new students next year with our current classroom configuration," he said.

## Unhappy at First, Many NCWC Students Now Enjoy Life at the Inn

Reported by KeCharna White  
Senior Staff Writer

High enrollment this fall forced NC Wesleyan to house dozens of students at a nearby motel, a move that initially frustrated many of the upper-class males who were transferred there.

Seventy-two students live at the Rocky Mount Inn, a motel located on North Wesleyan Boulevard, about three miles south of campus.

Jacques Alston, a senior, voiced his initial frustration, saying he was "mad as hell!" Several other students agreed with Alston, expressing their anger on learning of the change in early August, when it was time for football training camp.

SGA President Isaiah Morrow reported that some students, at first, complained about strong cigarette smoke odors in their rooms, an issue that was addressed through vigorous cleaning. He said that other students had packed as if they would be living in the residence halls, bringing TVs and refrigerators, items already furnished by the motel.

Among other minor grievances, Davontae Williams, a junior, noted that breakfast is not provided at the motel. Senior D'ante Nichols said "there isn't a lot of space to

put your clothes" and expressed concern about driving back and forth to campus and "wasting gas."

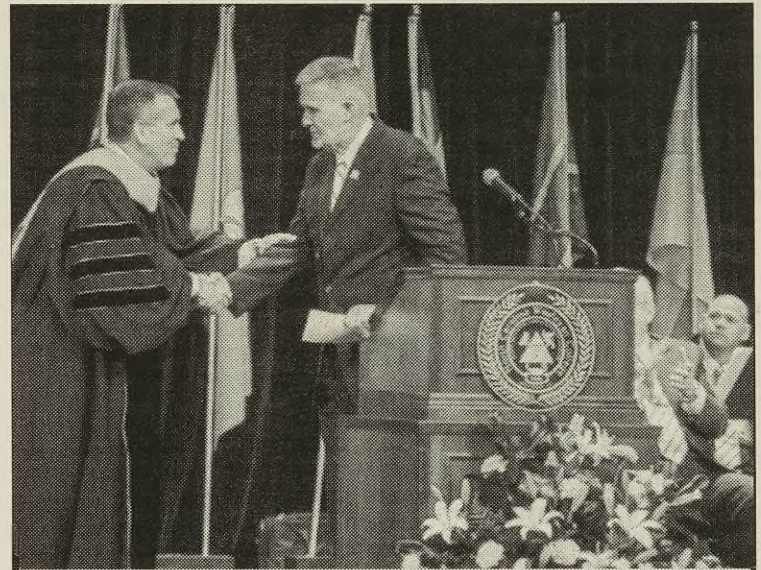
Other students pointed out the earlier wake-up time required to travel to school. The college has contracted with a shuttle service to transport students to campus every hour in a van that seats 12.

Despite early frustrations, in recent interviews residents described the overall experience as positive.

Alston said there is more space and "it's quieter," while Williams said "the beds, most definitely" are a positive aspect of life at the motel.

To provide support and supervision, the college staffs the motel with one student resident advisor and three members of the coaching staff, two from football and one from baseball, who each live there. As is done on campus, the Rocky Mount police make regular rounds at the motel.

Jessie Langley, Associate Dean of Students for Campus Life, said that the college learned in mid-May that there might be a space issue on campus, after the Admissions office alerted Student Affairs about a larger-than-expected incoming class. "In the past, many prospective students would submit their deposit, but then not show up for fall classes," Langley said.



President Clark with General Hugh Shelton after the former NCWC trustee introduced Dr. Clark at October inauguration ceremonies.

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## Faculty Members Crack Down on Cell Phone Use

Michael Taylor  
Decree Staff Writer

Last semester, Dr. Jonathan Sarris introduced a guest speaker, and then sat in a desk alongside students in his African-American history class. The speaker, Howard N. Lee, a Wesleyan Trustee, was the first African-American elected mayor of a predominantly white city in the South since Reconstruction and a former North Carolina state senator. Midway through Lee's lecture, his voice was drowned out by the familiar T-Mobile ring tone. It rang several times before the student realized it was her cell phone. After the phone was shut off, the other students quit staring at the source of the sound, and the speaker regrouped his thoughts and continued.

Because of incidents like this, a no-cell-phone policy permeates the classrooms of Wesleyan. A majority of the instructors implement this policy in their classes in order to keep the students focused on the subject matter. Dr. Marjon Ames embraces a no-cell phone policy in her classes. "I don't want to see them out during class," the history professor said. "They should be off and put away during the duration of the class meeting." Adjunct Professor Danelle

Cauley shares this policy. She stated that her students "may not use cell phones in class."

The dominant reason for the no-cell phone policy is to avoid distractions during class.

"When students are in class, they need to be completely present in the moment and engaging with other people in class," Cauley said. Dr. Ames echoed that cell phones "are distracting, both to the student and to everyone else in the room." Ames also pointed out that using a cell phone during class is impolite. "It's disrespectful to be engaged in anything phone related during class," she commented.

Many professors will allow school-related work on cell phones if it is approved by them first. Cauley, who teaches acting and directs plays, has many students put their script lines in their phones. She stated she is fine with using cell phones for class-related purposes "as long as students use it as an electronic device and not as a phone." Cauley stressed, "I will let the student know when it's appropriate to do that." In order to verify that a student is using her phone for approved reasons she said, "I come around and look."

Some professors make few or no exceptions in their policy. Dr. Lee Templeton gives some options to students who feel they need their phone for class purposes. "There are other methods," the English professor said. He recommends taking notes by hand or looking words up in the dictionary. Dr. Fred Sanborn is also firm with his policy. "The only exceptions I've made are for international students who need to use their phones to translate words," he said. "I find it hard to believe anyone could take effective notes on a phone."

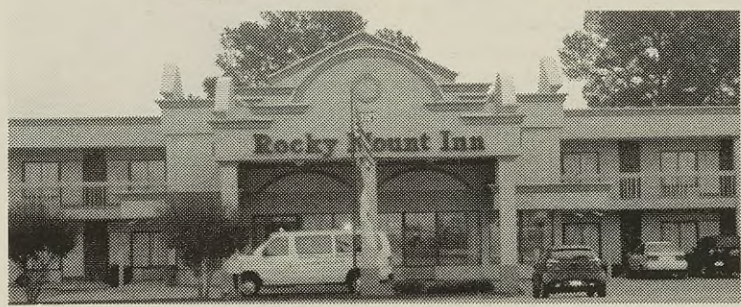
Dr. Ames also feels that it should be the instructor's decision whether to allow students to use cell phones during class, even for school-related reasons. She avoids problems with cell phones by having a no tolerance policy. "Anything that is done on a phone during class could be done after the meeting has ended without distraction or offense," she said. "In my class, we can look up any questions after class and use it as a jumping-off point for further discussion."

Not all instructors put the same weight on the no-cell phone policy and some have no policy at all. Senior Katherine Crickmore noted that some professors are stricter on cell phones than others. "In one class the teacher may say 'stay off your phones'. In another class, a teacher may say 'if I see it, you're kicked out of class and you make an 'F' for the day,'" she said.

Student Michael Whitten related that in his chemistry lab, cell phones are permitted because students use them as a calculator. However, in his chemistry lecture class, there is a "three strikes and you're out of class" policy. Whitten also said that one professor's policy is even more stringent. "If she catches you with it, you're absent from class," the junior said.

Dr. Templeton has a stringent punishment for students using their phones in class. "If I see your phone or if it appears that you're looking at it, I will deduct five points from your final grade," he stated, emphasizing the

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G. Wallace photo