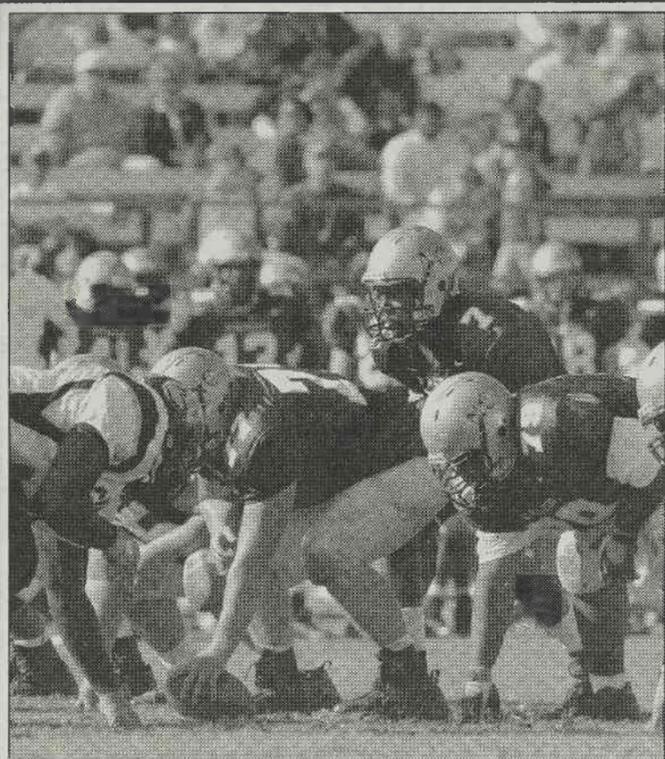


# THE DECREE

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

September 14, 2007

NORTH CAROLINA WESLEYAN COLLEGE, ROCKY MOUNT, NORTH CAROLINA 27804



Senior QB Cedric Townsend leads the offense as the Bishops set their sights on a conference championship after 2006's breakthrough season. Selected as the pre-season favorite, the Bishops will begin USA South action at Methodist on Sept. 22 and a week later will host Maryville in their Homecoming game.

## NC Wesleyan Welcomes Five Faculty Members

By Decree Staff

The student body is not the only group on campus to see a rise in its international contingent.

The new faculty includes two natives of Africa.

Four new tenure-track professors have joined the Wesleyan community: Steve Bahnman, reference and electronic resources librarian; Festus Cole, assistant professor of history; Cameron Mathews, assistant professor of political science; and Mulugeta Markos, assistant professor of mathematics.

Wendy Achilles, associate professor of accounting, has returned to NCWC after two years at East Carolina University. In her previous stint, she taught at Wesleyan for six years. By rejoining the faculty, she gives the college two full-time faculty in a popular major and strengthens the business division as a whole.

"It's nice to be back," she said, noting that she likes the small classes at Wesleyan and that she missed the college's faculty, her business colleagues in particular.

A native of Elm City, Dr. Achilles earned undergraduate and masters degrees from ECU and a Ph.D. from Virginia Commonwealth University in 2006. Her specialty is taxation. When she's not in the Wesleyan classroom, she often volunteers at her children's school in Wilson. Dr. Achilles said that in recent months she and her husband, Aaron, have been kept busy with construction of a new home in Nashville. She has four children: Walston, 10; Cam, 8; Nick, 6; and Hannah, 2. When time permits, Dr. Achilles likes to exercise.

Bahnman came to NCWC from the University of North Carolina School of Information and Library Science in Chapel Hill after he finished his M.S. in library science while working in reference and instruction at Duke and North Carolina State. His background is in religion and theology, with a masters of theological studies and a

B.A. from Emory University.

At Wesleyan, Bahnman manages print and online subscriptions to periodicals and databases, provides reference and instructional support to students and faculty, and serves as faculty liaison in a variety of academic disciplines. He said he is excited about having a hand in many facets of library operations and services, "an opportunity for work diversity that is harder to find at larger universities."

Outside of work, Bahnman is an avid and accomplished card player and "self-styled trivia expert," whose life's ambition is to be on Jeopardy. When not pursuing this ambition, he enjoys the Detroit Tigers, Duke basketball, his XBOX 360, fast food, Harry Potter, political poll results, and "most of all, the company of his wife, Sarah Stanley."

Dr. Cole, a native of Freetown, Sierra Leone, is a specialist in African history. "My research interests are varied and are of an interdisciplinary nature," he said. His interests range from the history of the Levantines in Africa, to the nature of colonial health and medicine and the demographic impact of disease, to the agricultural history of peasant societies in Africa.

In recent years, Dr. Cole has taught at the State University of New York at Fredonia; The Ohio State University; and two schools at the University of London, the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAC) and Birkbeck College. Earlier in his career, he taught history, English and religious education at a secondary school in Freetown. Dr. Cole holds a doctorate from the SOAC program, having completed a dissertation, titled "World War One and Sierra Leone," that he researched while in London.

"A firm believer in the concept of small and manageable class sizes," Dr. Cole said that he was "attracted to the range of possibilities open to me at Wesleyan, where I believe I can implement my pedagogical skills, gained during my studies in education."

see PROFESSORS on pg 4

## Gender Imbalance Continues With Wesleyan's Class of 2011 Incoming Student GPAs on the Rise

Continuing a recent trend, a high gender imbalance marks this year's incoming class, while SAT scores remained about the same and the college increased its total number of international students.

According to Gary Sherman, vice president of Enrollment Management, the first-year class consists of 301 total students on the main campus—253 true freshmen and 48 transfers.

Sherman's office reported that the male-female ratio is 64 to 36 percent in favor of males. Last year's figures were 60 percent male and 40 percent female.

The NCWC male-female ratio is in stark contrast with enrollment trends across America. In the past two years, national publications have reported that females represent 56 to 58 percent of undergraduate enrollment.

Students, faculty and staff have observed that the disparity between males and females has produced a remarkable dynamic on campus and in the classroom. When told of the 64-36 ratio, freshmen interviewed for this story reacted with nonchalance and humor.

Jessica Willis said that the situation is not an issue for her.

"I don't think it really affects us," she said, although she acknowledged that she's attended "female-dominated" schools in the past.

Nick Lancise has noticed the effect that the imbalance has had on the campus atmosphere.

"The testosterone is very high around here," he said.

Taylor Huffman saw one positive aspect to the situation. "It allows you to focus more on education and studies, than studies of the female body," he said.

The upperclassmen interviewed expressed concerns about the issue, with many blaming the presence of the Wesleyan football program, which began in 2004.

"I feel as though males are more attracted to Wesleyan because of the sports teams, in particular the football team," said Sureka Barnes, a senior. "Females tend to come to Wesleyan for an education. The school caters to the football team. It has become the biggest sports team on campus and is a major factor in why the male to female ratio is higher."

Junior Alecia Butler agreed: "There are more sports that attract more males than females; Wesleyan needs to add more organizations and teams to appeal to females and balance out the male dominated campus."

Said senior Jason Scott: "There sure are a lot of ugly people in this neighborhood. I don't think it's as diverse as it should be since football."

And senior Kevin Parker said: "It's kind of unfair, but you've got like 400 on the football team, so it's not really balanced."

According to the new statistics, although the number of freshmen football players has declined in each of the four years—from 177 in 2004 to 102 in 2005 and 84 last year—this year's 70 recruits still represent almost a quarter of the entering class.

Wesleyan attracts many students to plays sports—170, or 56 percent in this year's class—and boasts seven women's teams and six men's teams. But football is by far the sport with the largest roster, as is true at most colleges and universities nationwide.

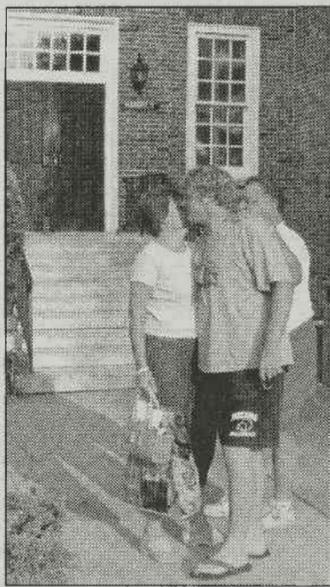
Recognizing the demographics at Wesleyan, new Dean of Students Robert Perkins has taken steps to improve campus life. For one, he has hired a staff member who oversees the intramural program on a full-time basis.

"I wanted that done full time, because we have a lot of men in athletics," Dr. Perkins explained. "Not that women don't play sports; we want them involved too. It (athletics) supports leadership, community, teamwork."

Sherman's office reported that during the past five years one of the most positive developments is the rise in average freshmen SAT scores in the verbal and math sections, from a total of 857 in 2001 to 935 this year. This year's average is one point lower than last year's total. Nationwide the verbal (502) and math (515) scores totaled 1017, The New York Times reported in an August 28 article, placing Wesleyan 82 points below the national average.

According to Sherman, average high school GPAs have continued to rise for incoming NCWC students—from 2.79 in 2003 to 2.95 in 2006, to this year's figure of 3.0.

In recruitment, he said, Wesleyan has begun to focus on student GPAs, more so than SAT scores. "Our research shows that, for us, GPA is a better predictor of student success," Sherman explained, adding that this is especially true with first-generation college students. About 75 percent of Wesleyan students are the first in their family to attend college.



New NCWC students say goodbye to family during move-in day. The first-year students include 253 true freshmen and 48 transfer students.



According to Dr. Fred Grissom, director of the Honors Program, this year's class includes 17 honors students, compared to 14 last year.

Noting that Wesleyan has tightened its standards, Sherman said that the college accepted 62.5 percent (781) of the 1249 applications it received for 2007-08. That compares with a 70.4 acceptance rate last year.

Total applications were up 148 over last year, an increase that Sherman attributed in part to the UNC study.

"There was tremendous interest in the region" with the possibility that Wesleyan might become part of the UNC system, he said. "And our story was told in many places. The publicity was helpful in raising awareness of the college."

Sherman reported that the number of black students decreased from 164 to 132 while the number of whites decreased by one, to 108. The first-year class includes 13 Hispanic students, an increase of three; as well as five Native Americans (four last year); and seven Asians (five). Three students consider themselves "multi-cultural," 19 did not report their race, and three checked "other."

Wesleyan has expanded its recruitment overseas, this year welcoming nine new international students from countries that include Barbados, England, the Gambia, Germany (two students), Iceland, Ireland, the Netherlands, and Sierra Leone.

"We added the opportunity for international students to receive assistance from the college for academic performance and a new international student scholarship in 2005," Sherman said. "The additions have been helpful in placing the cost of Wesleyan within the reach of more international candidates. The men's soccer program has really used this opportunity to attract international students, and student/athletes account for many of the new enrollments."

Sherman added that the college is pursuing additional recruitment opportunities with schools abroad. As an example, he cited an initiative to attract students from Finland through an agreement with high schools and junior colleges in the Helsinki area.

Native North Carolinians make up 65 percent of the new students. Campus-wide, the figure stands at 69 percent for the traditional day program.

(Staff writers Joyce Collins, Kelleigh Jackson and Sean Riccio contributed reporting for this article.)