

THE DECREE

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NORTH CAROLINA WESLEYAN COLLEGE, ROCKY MOUNT, NORTH CAROLINA 27804

Grads Make Transition to Wesleyan Employee

By Joyce Collins
Decree Editor

Navigating the job market is a frightening and inevitable reality of college graduation. It can seem like an endless cycle of resumes, phone calls, emails and interviews. However, for many Wesleyan graduates this process was not as difficult. Several alumni made the decision to start their careers at the very same institution that trained and prepared them for the real world, which is a decision that seems beneficial for both administration and alumni/staff.

According to the Director of Human Resources Darell Whitley, there are about 10 staff members who graduated from Wesleyan. Being alumni of the school does not give someone a hiring advantage over someone else who went to a different institution. Whitley said the college has the responsibility of hiring the most qualified people, and if there is a Wesleyan graduate who meets the requirements for the position that they are applying for, then they will be considered for the job. "The college does not actively seek out graduates, but we are pleased when they show an interest in our employment opportunities," he said.

Being qualified for a job entails having work experience. One alumna gained familiarity with her position through her minimum wage work-study job.

Associate Director of Financial Aid Crystal Johnson, a 2005 graduate with a degree in business administration and a minor in computer information systems, has been employed by the college since January of 2005. As a student, Johnson pursued a work-study job that would possibly allow her employment after graduating. She attributed her success in being appointed the position as a financial aid counselor to her dedication and commitment to her job. "I initially started working in financial aid as a work-study student during my undergrad years in college," she said. "With hard work and determination, I am now the associate director of Financial Aid."

One might wonder why an alumna would choose to pursue a career at the same institution that she attended.

Whitley said there could be a variety of reasons why someone would choose to work at Wesleyan. In particular, he said, "I think alumni are interested in working here because it's familiar to them, they must have enjoyed their experiences as a student, they like the environment and the people who work at the college, or they have a vested interest in their alma mater and think they can give something back as an employee."

Samantha McAuliffe, now the secretary to the President and the Board of Trustees, was simply seeking employment upon graduating in 2005 with an English degree and a minor in justice studies. "There was a position open, I needed a job and it made sense," said McAuliffe, who previously worked in Institutional Research.

Joshua Cain, director of Alumni Relations and Annual Fund, graduated in the spring of 2008, with a BS in justice studies and a minor in history. He chose to work for his alma mater because of the impact the institution has had on his life. "I proposed to my wife in the small college common area between Braswell and the Dunn Center," he said. "I had the opportunity to have my wedding at the Dunn Center. Wesleyan has become an important part of my life and my memories, and I was thrilled at the opportunity to be part of such a life-changing environment and give back to a college that gave so much to me."

As students, some alumni working

in the NCWC administration pictured themselves being employed by Wesleyan, while some alumni considered their career at Wesleyan to be over after graduation.

Cain said he did not see himself coming back to work at NCWC, but he was never opposed to the idea. "I think that as a student in a certain field of study, you begin to see yourself working within that field, but when the time comes to transition from a student to a working member of society, a lot of different options need to be considered," he said.

Director of Residence Life Davon Davis (2001, psychology) thought it was a good opportunity to work at the school he attended. "I thought about working in student affairs," said Davis. He became interested in that department after interning under Dr. Tyrone Bledsoe, who also worked in student affairs back when Davis was a student. "He was really proactive," Davis said. "He founded Student African American Brotherhood (SAAB), because there were very few African American organizations on campus."

As a student, young people are usually exposed to only one side of things and may not see what goes on with administration behind closed doors. With that said, alumni working as staff have seen both perspectives, which may have influenced their viewpoint on the college.

Cain said his outlook as a student was not drastically different from what it is now as a staff member. "As a student, I recognized the importance of having a complete perspective on something before making any kind of judgment," he said. "My outlook on Wesleyan now is primarily focused on accomplishing the mission of the college as a whole. I know that in order for the college to be successful as an institution, everyone—staff, faculty, students and administration—has to work together."

As with Cain, Johnson's perceptions have not changed. "My outlook on the college is still the same as when I was a student," she said. "NCWC is a small intriguing institution with many goals and a promising future."

Davis' view on the staff, faculty, and adjunct members has been altered. "My perspective has changed. Most administrators do have the best interest for students in mind," he said.

Because Wesleyan is forever changing and improving, it is safe to say that these alumni-turned-administrators have witnessed some changes being made right before their eyes.

Students Account Representative Krystal Mitchell (2007, psychology) noted the physical changes NCWC was undergoing when she was a student. "The Gateway Technology building was not complete and the library was not being renovated," she said.

Johnson said many things have changed since her enrollment at NCWC, listing "the expansion of the library, more academic programs being offered, the removal of the Grille from the Hartness Center, a football team and many new faces around campus."

Cain said he has noticed a few changes since his first semester at NCWC. "First, there are a greater number of international students attending NCWC than were here when I first came to the college," he said. "Second, the library has certainly changed and is continuing to take shape even today."

Davis has seen a change in student attitudes. "The students I went to school with were proactive about making changes on campus," he said. "The students now are more passive, and make complaints but are not active at making changes."

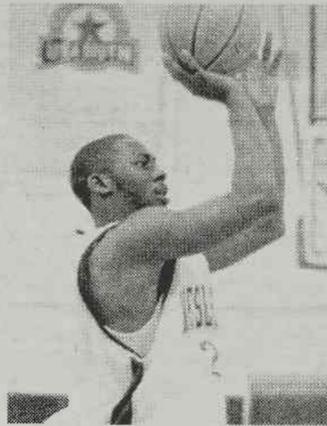
Davis went on to provide an example of how proactive students were when he attended Wesleyan.

"When the Student African American Brotherhood chapter was established at Wesleyan in 1997," he said, "there was a feeling among black females that an organization similar in scope to SAAB would be beneficial. Though the presence of such an organization wasn't really necessary, given the academic success of the black females on campus, the fact that they spoke out about it brought the Sisters of Distinction into existence."

Like Davis, McAuliffe feels that students complain more without coming up with possible solutions to whatever concerns they may have. "It seems (and did when I was a student) that students find multiple opportunities to complain about the activities and services available to them," she said, "but very few students make the necessary investment in the college to change these things."

McAuliffe then shared some examples. "For instance, students complain that there isn't anything to do on campus but don't regularly check their campus e-mail for updates on events and campus happenings," she said. "Or, they decide too quickly

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BISHOOPS
In USA South action, Christopher Newport earned a sweep, beating the Wesleyan women's team, 75-61, and then defeating the men's team, 77-69, before a fired-up Everett Gym crowd on February 11. A week earlier, in a key road victory, the men's team defeated Shenandoah in overtime, as Jarmel Arrington (pictured) scored 33. For more sports, turn to page three. SI photo.

Hat Policy Overturned

By Decree Staff

By a unanimous vote, Wesleyan's Student Government Association has moved to suspend for the remainder of the school year the controversial ban on student hats and other headgear in the main classroom building, the cafeteria and other places on campus.

The move permits students to wear headgear in all buildings on campus, except for the Dunn Center. Professors may set their own rules within individual classrooms, according to Dean of Student Robert Perkins.

"I think that the suspension might improve student attitudes on campus," SGA President Jacob Strickland said, "and I know that it will make jobs easier for some administration and staff who were tired of trying to enforce the rule. Personally, I'm for anything that will reduce friction between administration and students, and make both parties a little bit happier."

Strickland said that SGA will decide at the end of the school year whether to make the move permanent, reinstate the ban, or make modifications.

He noted that GSA representative Teresa Hurley raised the idea of overturning the ban at the January 22 meeting.

"Most were in favor of immediate suspension," Strickland said in an email message, "but some were hesitant because they were worried about some types of headgear possibly provoking student conflict (i.e. bandannas that stood for gang colors). We decided to push the issue to our next meeting to give everyone time to think about it and to try and get other student feedback about it."

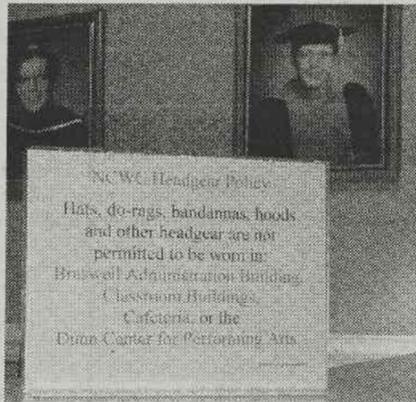
Deliberations continued at the meeting on February 5, when SGA approved the temporary change by a 14-0 vote.

"I'm happy about it," said Michael Fernandez, noting that there have been times when he's needed or wanted to wear a hat. "Sometimes you might feel sick or you want to wear a hat for a specific outfit."

Jessica Smith was pleased with SGA's action. "It's about time they got rid of that rule," she said. "There had been no way to enforce it, so its mere existence undermined the authority of the college. I've always thought that what I wear is my business. I don't care, or even notice anymore, when students show up to class in their pajamas. Why should they care if I wear a hat?"

Jessica Ellis favors getting rid of the ban. "They should do away with it because people are grown and should be able to make the own decisions," she said.

Anthony Tyus was pleased with the move, calling it a freedom issue. "That's great that students can wear hats now around campus," he said, adding that he's glad that the ban is still in effect at the Dunn Center. "If a student is visiting the Dunn Center, he or she should not wear a hat with negative paraphernalia or images. I understand the hip-hop or sporty artistic look students like to portray, but it is not needed in a professional environment."



Some faculty expressed their approval of the decision as well.

"We are well rid of this frivolous vestige of in loco parentis," said Dr. Jonathan Sarris, associate professor of history.

Emeritus Professor Ken Finney, an outspoken opponent of the policy, is delighted with the change. For years prior to his retirement in 2008, he mounted his own campaign to protest the policy. "Hats off to the SGA for its implementation of the Sombrero Liberation Alliance's call for rescinding the frivolous and ignoble 'headgear' policy and issuing a tardy rebuke of the tyranny of surplus repression," Dr. Finney quipped. "They go in the SLA's hall of fame: alongside the rejection of Louis XIV's attempt to legislate the wardrobe of the people of France in the 1600s and the citizens of Madrid in rejecting Charles III's attempt to outlaw cloaks in the 1700s."

Senior Julianne Cyr had a different take on the change. "I believe hats should be worn in the cafeteria because it's a relaxed environment and not a restaurant," she said. "But I don't believe hats should be worn in the classroom; this facilitates student sleeping and cheating by hiding faces and allowing storage for papers and mirrors."

NCWC Student Attends Inauguration

Nastasia Burnette
Decree Staff Writer

NCWC junior Nicole Latrece Williams was one of the millions to attend Barack Obama's inauguration on January 20th.

Williams spent the entire inauguration week in Washington, D.C., with a group of students hosted by the National Young Leaders Conference (NYLC), a private organization designed to enrich the opportunities of promising students and prepare them for a lifetime of leadership.

"I am very thankful to be able to tell the younger generation that I was actually there" to see an event that "they'll be reading about in their history books," Williams said. "At this time I want to thank God for giving me all of my intelligence so that I could even be selected to attend such events. Throughout all the cold and chaos, this was a once in a lifetime opportunity and it was worth it."

Williams described the crowd at the inauguration ceremony as enormous. "Sometime you had to jump up just to see to your right, left or in front of you." She said that the attendees, young and old alike, were undeterred by the harsh cold. "They did chants and cheers such as, 'Give me an O... Give me a B... Give me an A... Give me an M... Give me an A... What does that spell? OBAMA!'" Williams reported that she saw many who were selling Obama memorabilia. "It was crazy the amount of hustling that individuals were doing just to sell any kind of merchandise you can think of, for the sake of Obama."

She estimates that she got within "maybe 12 feet" of the president. She said she was impressed with the unity displayed during the week's events. It was nice, she said, to see "the young generation, of all races coming together and being of one accord, having the same mind, all proud of our first African-American president!"

Before the actual inauguration, Williams attended a number of other festivities, including seminars led by former Vice President Al Gore and former Secretary of State Colin Powell. For Williams, one highlight was the inaugural concert, featuring Beyonce, Usher, Stevie Wonder, and others. "Just seeing Obama having a good time, clapping and singing, while others were performing for him was just like a dream come true," Williams said.

Williams stayed at the Hilton on Connecticut Avenue, about ten miles from the mall and White House. She noted that the Hilton was the site of numerous events, including several

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Nicole Williams photo by C. Thomas