

THE DECREE

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NORTH CAROLINA WESLEYAN COLLEGE, ROCKY MOUNT, NORTH CAROLINA 27804

Veteran Fund-Raiser to Lead Wesleyan as Sixth President

Reported by Jarad Brown, Nastasia Burnette, & Joyce Collins
Decree Staff Writers

The Wesleyan community hopes that the college's new president will be an effective fund-raiser and inject a sense of pride in the college.

James A. Gray III, an administrator at UNC Chapel Hill with a long resume in the fields of public relations and fund-raising, has been named the sixth president in Wesleyan's history after a national search. His appointment becomes effective on June 1, when he will succeed Interim President Stanley Caine.

Gray impressed the Wesleyan student who served on the search committee, SGA President Jacob Strickland.

About Gray's appointment, Strickland said, "My first reaction was relief, frankly, because this search had been long and exhausting." In an email interview, he added: "My first real response was that he would be a good fit here. During his interviews he seemed to genuinely care about the area and the school's success. He seems very personable and welcome to all types of discussion. He seems to really care about NCWC and its connection to Rocky Mount and Eastern North Carolina as a whole."

In assessing the president's strengths, Strickland pointed to his strong management skills and fundraising background. To benefit the student body, Strickland would like the new president to focus on three immediate goals: recruitment, retention, and fund-raising. "Recruitment to bring in more high-quality students; retention to keep those students; fundraising to make sure that the students get the best experience they can here," said Strickland, a member of the college's honors program.

Freshman Justin Waters agreed that emphasis should be placed on recruitment. "Hopefully," he said, "this president will spark the interest of students to come

for reasons other than athletics."

While most other students are not as familiar with the new president, they expressed definite opinions on what his primary objectives should be—raising money, improving morale on campus, and listening to student concerns.

Many students and staff stressed the need to increase the college's revenue, in order to hold the line on tuition—expected to increase four percent next year—and enhance programs.

That was the opinion of freshman Jakob Pernov. "I think (he) would need to come in and focus on the fiscal needs of the college right away," he said. "The college needs money, not only to maintain itself, but also to expand and incorporate new ideas."

Adam Davidson, a junior, expressed a similar view. "Our school seems to be in a large deficit, and I'm assuming that's why we're seeing yet another increase in tuition," he said. "So I think really the only thing that even needs to be on our new president's mind is NCWC's financial situation. I've heard that his strength is fundraising so he needs to use his strengths and whatever contacts he has and bring funds to our campus."

Said freshman Jessica Stansbury: "The school can't rely on simply upping tuition every time they need money, or times seem tough. The president absolutely has to fix our financial problem. If that means fund raising or asking alumni, I'm not sure, but the school needs money."

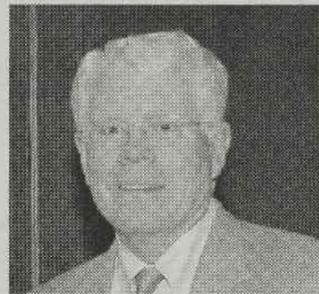
Waters cited the need "to bring more cash into the school" to help upgrade and modernize the campus.

Freshman Raishael Tanner, concerned about "skyrocketing tuition," hopes that Gray will benefit Wesleyan by "straightening out (the college's) ridiculous budgeting."

Sophomore Malaiha Mussa said that improved finances would allow "more activities and programs to be developed for the students."

Junior Zo Washington added, "I can't wait to see what's in store; this man may make some changes for the better, helping to create social as well as physical change to our campus."

A veteran college staff member shared the view that Gray's business background will help him address the college's fund-raising needs. Rachel Dix, manager of the college store with almost 30 years of experience at Wesleyan, said the college should be encouraged by Gray's appointment.



James Gray III

"Mr. Gray is very qualified for the job," she said. "You know we're all dealing with 'Change' or 'Change is Good,' so why shouldn't Wesleyan be part of this new way. I think he brings a business perspective to the president's position that we haven't seen since Dr. Garner was here at Wesleyan. The college is a business and we have to address issues in that manner if we're going to forge into the future and make our mark on eastern North Carolina."

Said Karen Moss, assistant to the vice president of Enrollment Management: "I think he will be good for the endowment and finances."

Dr. Kim Martin, associate professor of psychology and chair of Faculty Council, served on the search committee with Strickland. She noted that Gray was selected after the committee received and reviewed more than 100 applications in a process that spanned almost a year.

"When I think about what qualities set Mr. Gray apart, I would say that, at first, it was his fundraising experience," Dr. Martin said. "He had been part of a number of highly successful campaigns. The search committee had several vital characteristics in mind as we considered prospects, and the skills and will to raise money was one of those priorities. In the end, what made Mr. Gray the candidate of choice, I think, was his enthusiasm for being Wesleyan's next president and his tenacity, which was matched by many among the Wesleyan community who strongly felt that he was the best person for the job."

Several other faculty members were asked for their reaction to Gray's appointment. All declined to comment for the record.

Fund-raising was not the only issue on the minds of the Wesleyan community. Seniors William Boyd and Richard Tibbs would like to see the president address the lack of pride around campus.

"School pride has to be one of the main things the new guy works on," said Tibbs. "Wesleyan needs to become a place students are proud to say they attend."

Boyd echoed Tibbs. The new president, he said, "needs to understand the sociology of school pride, which has not been accomplished in the past, but may with Gray."

Washington and Boyd both said they would like to see a president who will listen to student concerns. "I really hope that this new president helps out the school and respects and considers the student body's opinion," Washington said.

Said Mussa: "I hope that he gets involved with the students and the community."

Junior Georgettae Fields-Turrentine shared that view. "This president should try mingling with students to become better acquainted," she said. "That could help him to perform better at his position."

Gray brings to Wesleyan more than a decade of experience in higher education administration and fundraising, as well as a career in international business, communications, and public relations that spans more than 20 years.

Most recently, Gray served the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill as Associate Dean for External Affairs of the Kenan-Flagler Business School. Before that, he was Associate Dean for Marketing and Communications at Duke University's Fuqua School of Business.

Prior to returning to his home state, Gray served for eight years in top management positions in New York. He was President of U.S. Operations for London-based Citigate Communications. He has been President of Public Relations for Brouillard Communications in New York, the corporate division of J. Walter Thompson, and President of Manning, Selvage & Lee/U.S., the ninth largest public relations agency in the world.

A University of North Carolina-Chapel

Hill graduate and Morehead-Cain Scholar. Gray launched his career in communications in his native Winston-Salem before spending 20 years in communications and public relations management positions in Atlanta.

Wesleyan's trustees selected Gray after an extensive search led by a Wesleyan search committee, with assistance from RPA Inc., a national search firm. The search generated more than 130 candidates from 32 states and two foreign countries.

Vel Johnson, vice chairman of Wesleyan's Board of Trustees and chairman of the search committee, said she's delighted with the choice of Gray. "He has proven leadership and fundraising skills and has already generated enormous energy and enthusiasm among those who have met him," Johnson said. "Jim's wife Beth is a former educator and by all accounts a marvelous hostess with her own culinary business, and we are confident she will also be a significant positive addition to the college and the Rocky Mount community. We are excited to open this new chapter in Wesleyan's story. Jim Gray has an excitement about North Carolina Wesleyan College which we believe will be contagious."

Gray has served on the board of directors of a number of community-improvement organizations in Atlanta, New York, and North Carolina. He has been active as a member of The United Methodist Church, and he is a member of University Methodist Church in Chapel Hill and Duke Chapel in Durham.

Gray succeeds Dr. Caine, who has served Wesleyan since last summer, following the departure of Dr. Ian Newbould.

Noting that Gray will be the college's third president in three years, Tanner said, "I hope that Gray is committed and maintains his passion long enough to actually make changes for our school."

(NC Wesleyan PR contributed a significant portion to this report.)

Urgent!: Students Should Submit FAFSA ASAP

The Financial Aid Office has urged students to complete and submit their FAFSA forms in a timely fashion to ensure they receive the maximum amount of financial aid available to them.

To guide students through the sometimes daunting process of filling out their FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid), the college sponsored a recent on-campus help session.

Joyce Collins, a Decree editor and staffer at the Financial Aid office, provided the following information about the process:

Q. What was the purpose of holding the FAFSA help session?

A. The main goal was to encourage students to complete their FAFSAs in a timely fashion in preparation for the 2009-2010 school year. Students need to complete their FAFSAs as soon as possible because this is the first step in them getting awarded; most students will not receive their award letter if it has not been completed. By doing their FAFSAs early, they will have more time to correct any errors that may have occurred in their forms. Also, by having the sessions, students are able to ask questions about anything they are having trouble with as well as receive one-on-one assistance.

Q. What is the deadline for submitting FAFSA forms?

A. Although there is no exact deadline for completing the document, students are strongly encouraged to complete it at their

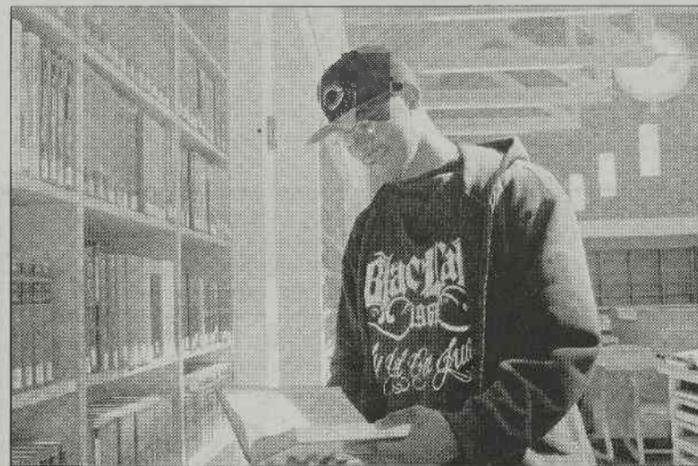
earliest convenience, so that they may have a better shot at receiving more funds. Once students have done this, then the Financial Aid Office can contact them with additional documents they may need to finalize the process of them being awarded; therefore, the Financial Aid Office can only do their part after students have done theirs.

Q. Why is it particularly important this year for students to submit their forms in a timely fashion?

A. It is crucial that students submit their FAFSAs promptly because funds will be very limited. The awards given to students are on a first come, first serve basis; for example, last year after August 3rd, any qualifying students who had not turned in all their needed documents did not receive work-study.

Q. What are some common misperceptions that students (and parents) have when it comes to FAFSA and financial aid in general?

A. Sometimes I think that students and parents feel they can wait until the last minute to complete the FAFSA and that it will not affect the award package the student receives. This is false. Another misconception is that the student will receive the same award package each year, which is also false. There are many factors that go into awarding financial aid to students, such as: classification, residency, grade point average, family income, and whether or not the student application is missing any documents.



Jarmel Arrington looks at reference materials at recently opened library addition. Library photos by J Mann, and G Wallace

Dr. Stubblefield Promoted to Dean

By Jessica Autumnne Smith
Decree Senior Editor

After two years as the Vice President of Academic Affairs and Dean of the College, Dr. John Thornell is leaving Wesleyan to take a position at the University of North Alabama. His decision to leave presented a unique challenge for the college. Who would become the new dean?

Dr. Jay Stubblefield, an associate professor of English and associate dean of the college, was suggested for the position. According to an announcement from Interim President Stanley Caine, "The decision to appoint Dr. Stubblefield was made after he received strong endorsements from members of the faculty, staff and trustees, who enthusiastically recommended him for this new role."

There were several reasons for this recommendation, one of the most important being Dr. Stubblefield's involvement with the upcoming SACS review. SACS, the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, regularly



Dr. Jay Stubblefield photo by L. Whitley

reviews institutions every ten years for accreditation purposes.

In reaction to the promotion Dr. Stubblefield said in a recent interview that he was "greatly humbled and grateful for the opportunity" and that he "looks forward to meeting the unique challenges of the administrative position while capitalizing on opportunities to improve the college."

As the dean, Dr. Stubblefield would be responsible for collaborating with faculty to maintain the integrity of academic programs. His experiences as associate dean and an associate English professor have given Dr. Stubblefield the advantage of understanding both the viewpoints of faculty and the administration. He is confident he will be able to meet the challenges of the position and take advantage of opportunities to improve the college.

Dr. Stubblefield's goals include completing the SACS reaffirmation efforts, working with faculty to identify opportunities for academic programs, strengthening the adult degree program, and continuing to move toward a more student-centered institution.

As associate dean Dr. Stubblefield has always taught one course each semester. Traditionally, the dean at NCWC has not taught classes. Dr. Stubblefield said he would miss teaching. "However there are other opportunities for student interaction,

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