

Racial diversity prevalent at Salem College, president says

BY TODD LUCK
THE CHRONICLE

Salem College President Dr. Lorraine Sterritt touted the virtues of her women's college at the American Association of University Women luncheon at Five Points restaurant on Saturday, Jan. 24.

Sterritt gave a long list of the virtues of Salem College, like how 48 percent of traditional undergraduates are non-white students.

"I think the word is out there that we are academically serious and very nurturing, and we have really attracted people of a highly diverse population in every sense of the word and we have many first generation college students," she said.

Sterritt became the 20th president of the 242 year-old women's college last July. Previously she was dean for administration at Harvard University and has held many other positions at Harvard, Stanford University and the University of Pennsylvania.

She spoke to the Winston branch of AAUW, a group of college-educated women who promote equity for women through education, advocacy, philanthropy and research.

Sterritt said half of the traditional students are first in their families to go to college. Sterritt, a native of Ireland who attended Stanford University, could identify with that. The product of a truck driver father and stay-at-home mother, she, too, was the first in her family to go to college.

Along with the college, Salem also has its academy for grades 9-12. A quarter of its students come from overseas, representing nine different countries, such as Bhutan. She said 100 percent of the academy graduates are accepted into college.

Sterritt said enrollment is up 12 percent at both the academy and college, but that also



Photos by Todd Luck



Dr. Lorraine Sterritt speaks at a AAUW gathering Saturday.

Left: AAUW Co-President Dr. Vanessa Duren-Winfield with Sterritt.

comes with the problem of where to put students.

Ground was broken on a dorm in December, which is "being built faster than the speed of light," because it has to be ready for the fall semester.

There's currently a \$60 million campaign that includes new and renovated science buildings. But Sterritt swore that despite its growth, Salem will always have small class sizes.

"We have room for growth, and I tell people we're not trying to become a large liberal arts college, we're just trying to become a slightly larger small liberal arts college," she said.

Her audience couldn't have been more receptive to talk about educationally

empowering women. The local AAUW champions the cause in a number of ways. The latest is a Start Smart Workshop, funded by a AAUW grant, at Winston-Salem State University in March to teach female seniors how to negotiate for fair pay in the workplace. The group is also planning to mentor and give free books to students at Ashley Elementary.

"It's about opening new doors to women," said AAUW Co-President Judythe Atkinson.

AAUW Co-President Dr. Vanessa Duren-Winfield knows about that firsthand. She was working as a research assistant when she got a grant that covered tuition and expenses for graduate school. She said she's been a "drum

NAACP

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unanswered.

Patterson said that he spoke with his office and that he was told that they would contact the branch's secretary about procedures.

"Another election will be administered," said Patterson. "We don't know if it will be done by the state or nationals."

A date and time has not been set for the elections.

Patterson initially called for the election to be delayed in November so the state could oversee it, stating that the oversight would take care of any concerns of ballot tampering or rigging.

The Jan. 10 election led to Isaac "Ike" Howard being elected president. Other winners were Doris Herrell, first vice president; Harry James Jr., third vice president; Stephen Hairston, assistant treasurer; and Jim Shaw and Linda Sutton, who won executive board seats. The second vice president position is empty. Neither the secretary nor treasurer positions were challenged.



Barr

According to the bylaws of the agency, complaints submitted are investigated and delivered within 30 days. If the complaint is found to be without merit, the installation of the new officers will be allowed. If it is deemed legitimate, a hearing on the matter will be held and the pre-election executive committee will remain in power until a revote is done or some other remedy recommended after the hearing is implemented.

Rev. Dr. Marcus Barr, executive director of the Winston-Salem NAACP branch, said that there were quite a few members that signed the complaint and that the branch is waiting on a response. He also said that he, along with many other members, are ready to move past the incident so they can continue working in the community.

"We have so many goals and programs in place that we would like to implement for the children and the elderly in the city," he said. "This puts a serious strain on what we are trying to accomplish."

The branch is currently preparing to participate in the NAACP Historic Thousands on Jones Street March in Raleigh. For more information visit www.hkonj.com.

Barr said that he is disappointed that it has come to the point of involving someone from the organizations' national office.

"This is about what's right. We have worked hard over the last couple of years so we can move ahead, making programs work and function for the community," he said. "We are for the people by the people."

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