

More speak out for WSSU as early voting site

BY TODD LUCK
THE CHRONICLE

The Forsyth County Board of Elections (BOE) heard more pleas for early voting at Winston-Salem State University during its Friday, July 1, meeting.

The board still did not debate an early voting site at Anderson Center on the campus of Winston-Salem State University (WSSU), which BOE Member Fleming El-Amin described as "the elephant in the room."

However, attendees had no problem weighing in on the topic, with most of the public comment period being devoted to those speaking in favor of the site, which was used from 2000-2012.

Anderson was among the sites suggested by Michael Pisapia, an assistant professor of political science at Wake Forest University, because it was well-used, familiar and easily accessible.

Even though it was summer break, five WSSU students showed up in support of early voting returning to their campus.

"The students of WSSU are active voters who are being denied their right to vote by accessibility," said Mona Zahir, WSSU Student Government Association president.

Students read off an online petition that, as of last week, garnered nearly 1,000 signatures in favor of the site. Many comments were about the difficulty WSSU students have getting to the polls, especially since freshmen aren't allowed to park on campus.

Linda Garrou, a former lawmaker who served for 14 years in the N.C. Senate, said catering to young voters is part of helping attract and keep young people in Winston-Salem.

"We want to do everything we can to be sure that they feel welcome here, that they feel an opportunity here, and certainly by putting off their right to vote, it's harmful," said Garrou.

BOE Chair Ken Raymond responded to the comments, saying he felt terms like "voter suppression" were being used



Photo by Todd Luck

Michael Lewis was one of several Winston-Salem State University students who asked for early voting to return to WSSU during the Forsyth County Board of Elections meeting on Friday, July 1.

"carelessly and recklessly." He said the BOE is trying its best to make voting accessible to all.

"No one is trying to stop anyone from voting," said Raymond.

Anderson Center is once again not on the early voting site lists for the two Republican board members: Raymond and Stuart Russell. It is on the list for El-Amin, the sole Democrat, who said he'll appeal to the N.C. State Board of Education again if it's not included.

The board made slow progress on other early voting sites. Industries for the Blind's (IFB) Chris Flynt spoke in support of early voting at IFB.

"We have about 350 blind and visually impaired employees at the facility in Winston, and that makes it a lot easier for the ones in Forsyth County to vote," said Flynt.

BOE Director Tim Tsujii said that he found the space and layout of the room IFB is offering to be good for early voting, but had some concerns about possible overflow parking. If approved, this would be IFB's first time as an early voting site. The site was on two out of three board member's early voting site plans.

The board also discussed alternatives to South Fork Recreation Center, having conceded that the two craft shows and numerous other activities that go on there during the week of early voting provided too much of a conflict. The BOE is hoping to use Calvary Baptist Church as an alternate site.

The next BOE meeting is Friday, July 15, at 4 p.m. The BOE's deadline for submitting early voting sites to the state is July 29.



Zahir



Garrou

UNCSCA alumnus wins Tony for 'Hamilton' work

SPECIAL TO THE
CHRONICLE

University of North Carolina School of the Arts (UNCSCA) alumnus Paul Tazewell has won a Tony Award.

Tazewell, a 1986 graduate of UNCSCA's School of Design and Production (D&P), won for best costume design of a musical for the groundbreaking 'Hamilton,' which won 11 awards of a record 16 nominations.

'The Humans,' directed by UNCSCA alumnus Joe

Mantello, a 1984 graduate of the School of Drama, won four awards including best play. Mantello was nominated for best director for 'The Humans,' which garnered six nominations.

Mantello is also director of 'Blackbird,' which was nominated for three awards, including best revival of a play.

Howell Binkley, a Winston-Salem native and frequent UNCSCA guest artist, won for best lighting design of a musical for 'Hamilton.' And behind the scenes, UNCSCA alumnus

Charles Osborne, a 2012 graduate of the School of Drama, is special assistant to Jeffrey Seller, producer of 'Hamilton.'

UNCSCA alumni have connections to other nominated productions, including:

'American Psycho,' which received two nominations, features Winston-Salem native Dave Thomas Brown (Drama B.F.A. '10, high school '06) in the cast; 'King Charles III,' which received five nominations, features cast member Lucas Hall (Drama '03)

and former Drama faculty member Ben Furey as dialect coach; 'School of Rock,' which received four nominations, had Peyton Becker (D&P '13) as a production assistant in 2015; and 'Tuck Everlasting,' which received one nomination, featured Terrence Mann (Drama '78) in the cast.

The Tony Awards were presented Sunday night, June 12, and broadcast on CBS.



UNCSCA photo

UNCSCA alumnus Paul Tazewell visits UNCSCA in December 2013.