

Editorials & Opinion Page

Student leaders oppose changes

In the year 1990, imagine Bennett with a new image with white females and men living on campus. It would be just another A&T or UNC-G. If it were up to newly elected president of the trustees, Robert Chiles Sr., then it would be a reality, one that many Belles feel is the wrong road to follow.

Bennett College has been one of the many places encountering economic as well as social problems because it continues to hold onto its strong traditions. Chiles feels that it is time for Bennett to create a new image. As he stated in the Aug. 17 issue of The Greensboro News and Record, "Small colleges such as Bennett have to mount a high-profile marketing campaign if they're going to survive in this day and age."

Chiles feels that Bennett should attract more white women as well as black males.

Many of the upperclassmen are stunned that someone from the outside wants to change the all black female tradition. These Belles have experienced the tradition and are proud to be a part of the college as it is.

Miss Bennett, Penny Hill from Winston-Salem, is against Chiles' proposal.

"I was shocked when I read the article. The purpose of Bennett is to educate black women and the tradition should remain. Besides, I don't believe the alumnae will let such a change take place," says Hill.

Other student leaders feel the same way.

"Bennett should not change with the times *per se*; we should stick together to maintain our uniqueness as an all black women's institution," says Bennett Scholars' President Laurrie Murphy.

Tradition continues to play the major role in most Belles' minds when they talk about Bennett. Junior Josefa Bethea, an accounting major from Raleigh, has a strong opinion about tradition. "I come from a long line of Belles, my mother, grandmother, great-grandmother . . . So it has become a tradition in my family to be able to experience Bennett's tradition as everyone else in my family. Therefore, we should not change," says Bethea.

SGA President Evelyn Fulmore says she came here to receive the education offered particularly for black women. Fulmore also feels strongly about Bennett remaining strictly a women's college. "It's not bad to recruit white females, but the status from all women to co-ed should not be . . . Besides, there's no room to occupy co-ed students even though we could if Bennett utilized the land it owns," says Fulmore.

Chiles sees Bennett as a small world trying to compete with the big world. "If little Bennett College is to survive in a world where big is best, it must find ways to grow and methods of advertising itself," he says.

Past SGA president Karen R. Taylor sees Bennett as able to compete with larger institutions.

"Bennett is alive and functioning well," says Taylor, "and I don't feel that co-education and white women would make a difference to Bennett's survival. It is up to us and the alumnae." Taylor adds that Bennett has helped Belles to grow "spiritually, educationally and socially as black women." "We have learned more about ourselves and our culture as black women," says Taylor.

One Belle was upset when Chiles stated that "Bennett has relied on its strong academic reputation among blacks for too long, doing little to promote itself to the rest of the world."

Sophomore Janice Smith, a political science major from Indianapolis, says, "The black society is forgetting who they are. Black people need an identity and Bennett College represents identity to the black community. Many blacks depend on whites too much and they feel that they can't get ahead if they don't include the white community. Black women need a place like Bennett to further prepare themselves as double minorities to become the successful black women of the future." Taylor said, "Can't blacks have anything of their own?"

Apparently, the main issue is the economic and social problem that Bennett is faced with. No one answer can solve these problems, but Belles did offer solutions. Taylor and Bethea agree that more publicity through public programs would attract more students.

Taylor does feel, however, that Chiles has taken the first step toward giving Bennett that publicity. "The college seldom shows up in the press. Outside its alumnae organization, it does little active student recruitment," says Chiles. In agreement, Fulmore says that the solution to the economic situation would be "to increase tuition, to recruit more and expand the campus with more academic buildings."

Smith says that "Bennett needs to take an overall look at its financial situation now and budget, taking out unnecessary things." Hill, on the other hand, finds the solution in a different area. "Bennett needs to attract more top-quality black women," says Hill. (Dee Evans)

Former SGA president: what she learned

A column
by Karen R. Taylor
I view my year as Student Government Association president as a worthwhile and rewarding experience. I was excited to be in office, and I was even more excited to leave because I knew the position as president would be in good hands.

Upon graduating from high school, I decided to attend college as a way to broaden my intellectual abilities and as a foundation upon which to build my career expectations. At Bennett I have been challenged by various experiences. My experience as SGA president has involved personal growth and change. I have realized the importance of being self-sufficient, aggressive and strong.

The year went well, but at times I felt as though I was not going to make it through.

I was constantly under pressure. I was always on the go. I never had time to myself. All of my spare time was spent praying for strength and brighter tomorrows; studying in hopes of not flunking Mr. G's or Dr. T's class; and doing things constructively such as watching "All My Children." My social life during this time was at an all-time low.

Although I changed the course of Bennett's history by being elected to the position as a junior, I did not boast. Instead, I viewed this as a challenge to my mature growth. It has offered tremendous opportunities for my total development educationally, spiritually and mentally. As a result, I have become a highly motivated individual, and this has helped me to motivate others to achieve as well.

Yes, I cried many times and I am not ashamed to admit this. This was the only way I could deal with the pressures. My patience was dared many times. I had to be humble at all times.

I can truly say that my fellow Bennett sisters gave me the utmost respect. No one ever looked down on me for being a junior. Sure, they had negative criticism, but we all are entitled to our own opinions. The only issue I could not relate to was the fact that no one could distinguish me, the person with feeling, from me, the SGA president fulfilling a position.

I faced many obstacles along the way. The failures I encountered were taken in stride and later used as stepping-stones to overcome the problems that I encounter today. My motto was: Going Gets Tough Everyday. My

thought for today was: Try not to think about it! Don't let it get you down. There were many internal problems. The cabinet as a whole was not together. There were sorority conflicts and personality clashes. But I respect the cabinet for its endurance. I could remember times when I just wanted to reach out and touch our advisor to remind her that we should be respectful of each other's decisions. I admire her, though, for her stability. I do not hold a grudge.

My term has been a learning experience that has taught me the true meaning of humanity and respect for others. Then there were those who talked idly about insignificant gossip; however, this did not hinder my performance because there were also faculty and staff members who were very supportive in

giving advice, suggestions and words of encouragement. The most open-minded and objective person I ever had to deal with was President Isaac H. Miller Jr. I enjoyed working with this man. There were, nonetheless, times when he made decisions that I strongly disagreed with. But his actions gave me an insight into the rewards and problems in administration. I have learned to listen effectively and view many things carefully and objectively.

After evaluating my experiences with the people of Bennett College, I have grown to appreciate Bennett as well as the faculty, staff and students for providing me with the nurturing needed to help me organize my tenure here at Bennett College. I express to you my sincere appreciation for your support and cooperation.

Letters: reporter asks for stronger cooperation; new home economics club is established

To the Editor,

As a student at Bennett College and a reporter for the Bennett Banner, I believe there is a large problem in our administration.

In trying to find out information for certain news stories and having to interview certain members of the administration, I have learned some of the administrators do not think that our news stories for the Banner are very

important.

One of the main problems is communication. Several times, administrators have failed to inform me of their inability to keep an appointment for an interview. In other instances, administrators have repeatedly failed to return my calls after I have left my name and number with their secretaries.

It is understandable that the

administrators have busy schedules and deadlines to meet, but as reporters we also have deadlines to meet and without the cooperation of the administrator we cannot meet our deadlines for the paper.

All I am asking is that in the future we could have an understanding for all of us to work together so everyone can make his deadline.

Reporters are people, too, and we have our jobs to do.

Sincerely,
Shonna Lutten

To the Editor:

A group of 12 home economists has organized the Gittens/Ward Home Economics Club for the explicit purpose of assisting the Bennett College home economics department to strengthen and expand the role of home economics at the college.

In recognition of the pioneering spirit of Evelyn Gittens and Lillian Ward, the first home economics graduates from Bennett College in the year 1931, the club will bear their name. Evelyn Gittens, a native of Nevis, British West Indies, and Lillian Ward, born in Leaksville (now Eden),

N.C., received high school diplomas from Bennett High School and immediately enrolled in the new degree program in home economics at Bennett College. They became the first two graduates to receive the B.S. degree and teacher's certificate in home economics in 1931 from Bennett College.

Miss Gittens taught home economics for 30 years at Mather Academy, a Methodist-affiliated high school in Camden, S.C., and was active in church and community work there until 1975. She died in 1978 in Brooklyn, N.Y.

Miss Ward taught home economics at Douglas High School in Leaksville and was active in the Girl Scout program until her death in 1971.

The membership of the Gittens/Ward Home Economics Club is composed of Bennett College home economics graduates and friends of home economics. Meetings are held the fourth Sunday of every month, except June and July, at 3 p.m. in the Bennett College home management residence, 718 Gorrell Street. Membership information may be received from Mrs. Roberta C. Judd, president or Dr. Lovie K. Booker,

chairperson of the Bennett College home economics department.

Dr. Lovie K. Booker

Policies changed

"I" grades: The time has been shortened for converting an incomplete. Beginning in the spring semester, 1986, a student must remove the "I" within the first five weeks of the semester following the semester during which the student received the "I."

Honors eligibility: To make the honors list, a student must carry a 12-credit hour load in the semester preceding her selection as an honors list student. In addition, the student cannot make a grade below "C" and be named to the honors list. An "I," "DP," "DF," or "WF" will disqualify a student from the honors list.

Physical education: one two-hour course is required as part of the four-hour p.e. block to be implemented in August, 1986.

The Bennett Banner

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Send letters to the editor to Box 2. All mail must be signed by hand.