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EXCLUSIVE Q&A WITH CHRISTOPHER WHITE

President speaks

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For the past three weeks, Gardner-Webb President Christopher White has been muzzled.

The president was told by the board of trustees not to speak to the media or students while investigators from the NCAA and lawyers from Atlanta, Ga. were investigating the school.

But now the investigations are over (results from the NCAA investigation could still take months), and White is speaking.

"There were legal issues involved, and the trustees mandated that I not speak to media and groups," White said. "I really care about the students and being muzzled is a retching experience."

White has been president of GW for 16 and a half years. Prior to that, he was a religion professor, dean of academics and provost at Elon College (now University). White said he is proud of his years at GW and hopes to retire here.

White is married to Linda and they have two sons. One is a lawyer in Charlotte, and according to White, has never worked with Ed Hallman, the investigative lawyer from Atlanta, Ga. Their other son is an executive with Royal Bank of Canada. Both are graduates of GW.

Mrs. White is a former public education teacher. She volunteers her time at the university as an interior decorator.

White said he has two main principles when it comes to his

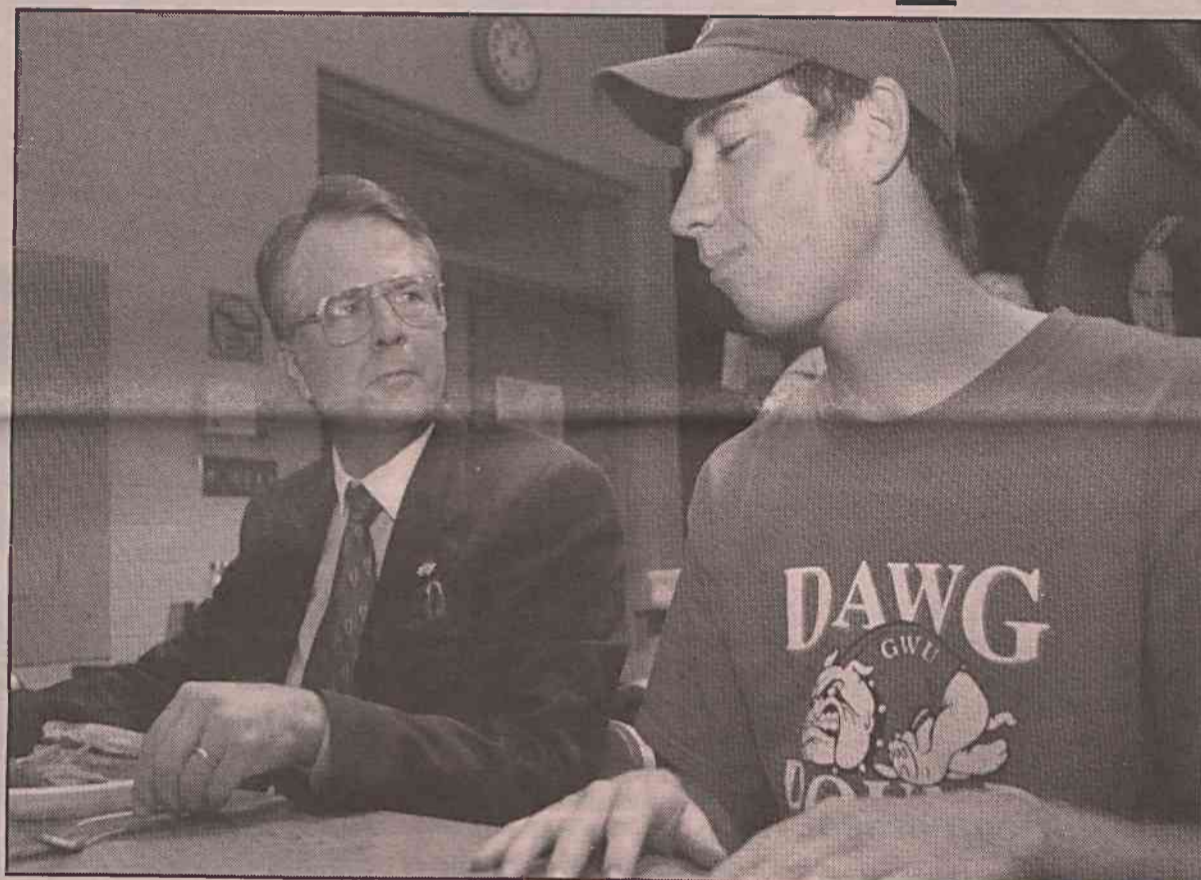


Photo by Scott Holstein

University President Christopher White chats with Matthew Marlowe, sophomore, during lunch on Monday.

job as president – 1. Uphold the integrity of the school and 2. Uphold student rights.

"Sometimes students aren't treated fairly," White said. "I just can't stand that. Perhaps that is a weakness and a strength."

When are you going to talk to students?

White: Starting right this minute. I think I have a dinner to go to tomorrow night (Tuesday). I don't anticipate talking to major groups. I want small groups, maybe in the cafeteria.

What do you have to say to the students?

I've thought about it. I don't know. I think it is important for students to realize not

only did I not do the things I've been accused of, but I'm not capable of doing those things.

How do you feel about the board's decision?

I did not meet with the board. I was ready to come to the meeting if asked. It's not my privy to discuss anything with the board. I had the privy to look at the book. I support the board's decision. They were given the evidence and made a wise decision. I respect the board's authority and integrity.

How did you feel when The Shelby Star came out with their article?

Other than appalled at, I wondered what the issue was. As executive of university, I

deal with a multitude of decisions on a daily bases that come from all directions. So often, the information to make the decision is unclear and debatable. It's difficult to be perfect.

How do you feel about the no-confidence vote?

I don't think feelings would be appropriate to express. I was appalled at the matter in which the whole thing was approached. I was appalled with the way things were done. Other than that I have nothing to say about my feelings.

How did you find out about the board's decision?

Two members of the board came to my house and gave me a copy of the book. [The book

is an approximate 100-page report from the Attorneys of Decker, Hallman, Barber & Briggs of Atlanta, Ga.]

How did you get your statement to the media so fast? [White's statement reached the media during the press conference within 20 minutes.]

I had all kinds of time to think, wonder and hope. I knew what the truth was – hoping it would come. I spent a lot of time thinking and writing.

What are your feelings toward Blackburn and Williams?

I think each member of the group of integrity did what they considered to be in the best interest of the school. I refuse to have ill will to those. I am not in the judging business. I have no emotion. I was prepared to accept whatever judgment there was.

How do you plan to rebuild the school after this situation?

I think it will be an important task. The trustees have spoken. We – all of us – can move on to be the best university it can be. We have an outstanding student body and faculty. I have no doubt this school will get over this difficult time. It is clear we've learned something needs to be done. I say we as in the community. We've had a disregard to rights of privacy.

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