

*News
Argus
Staff
wishes
everyone a

Merry
Christmas,

Happy New
Year!*



WSSU works to improve grad rates

BY LORI McELRATH
STAFF WRITER

Winston-Salem State University has a four year graduation rate of 9.2 percent.

Of the 16 constituent institutions of the University of North Carolina, W.S.S.U. has the second lowest four-year graduation rate, with Fayetteville State University in last place with 5.7 percent.

When searching for reasons in the decline of W.S.S.U.'s four year graduation rate, several factors must be examined.

W.S.S.U.'s low retention rate is one primary factor. A study of retention rates since 1977 shows that W.S.S.U. has consistently fallen below the average among all constituent institutions. Dr. Alex Johnson, vice chancellor for academic affairs, explained that W.S.S.U.'s retention rate is 70 percent. Dr. Johnson cited personal problems, financial difficulties, the unavailability of a desired major program, and poor academic performance as reasons for the withdrawal of students from the university.

Another factor that contributes to the poor four-year graduation rate is the low number of semester hours that students take. "We want to make sure that students take 62 earned semester hours by the end of their sophomore year," explained Dr.

Johnson. On the average, students who graduate in four years usually earn 62 semester hours by the end of their sophomore year. Students who graduate in five and six years typically earn 56 and 47 semester hours by the end of their sophomore year. Also, four-year graduates tend to complete an average of six credit hours per summer session. Dr. Johnson strongly encourages freshmen and sophomores to attend summer school.

"The Winston-Salem community provides many work opportunities, which I think is wonderful," said Dr. Johnson. "Unfortunately, however, these opportunities can detract students from their No. 1 aim, and that is to get a college education." Students incur extra expenses such as rent, car payments, clothes, dating, etc.. In order to continuously satisfy their money needs, working becomes the number one priority; not getting an education.

Approximately 80 percent of the students at W.S.S.U. hold part-time jobs. Those employed often elect to take a reduced class load or to attend part-time.

Winston-Salem State University has a plan of action to help reverse those trends.

The principal goal is to increase the four year graduation rate from the current 9.2 percent to 20 percent by 1995. The university will continue to provide academic advising. However, the university



Photo by Chuck Hanes
Dr. Alex Johnson is confident that WSSU will reach its 1995 goal.

will also monitor students closely, in hopes of at least 25 percent of each incoming freshman class obtaining 62 credit hours by the end of the sophomore year. In addition, the university will work to ensure that 50 percent of full-time students enroll in courses equaling 16-18 hours per semester.

Along with establishing a Freshmen Studies Program, the university will increase course work offerings and provide flexible substitutions.

Professor's book to be released in '91

It is generally agreed that teaching is not only a part of learning, but an opportunity for enrichment. To be an effective teacher, one must be knowledgeable about one's subject matter, and seek ways of gaining more experiences designed to enhance the teaching and learning process. At a time when colleges and universities have become more concerned than ever about institutional effectiveness, the timing couldn't be better for faculty scholarly research efforts.

To Dr. Dan Wishnietsky, Assistant Professor of Mathematics and director of the Academic Computer Center, research is an imperative to personal and professional development. His book in press, Electronic Mail/Message Systems in the Educational Environment, due for publication in January 1991, exemplifies his continued quest for knowledge. A message system is when two or more computers in different locations can communicate by transmitting and receiving information originating among themselves;

electronic mail is individual short messages that computer operators send to one another.

The book will be published by Phi Delta

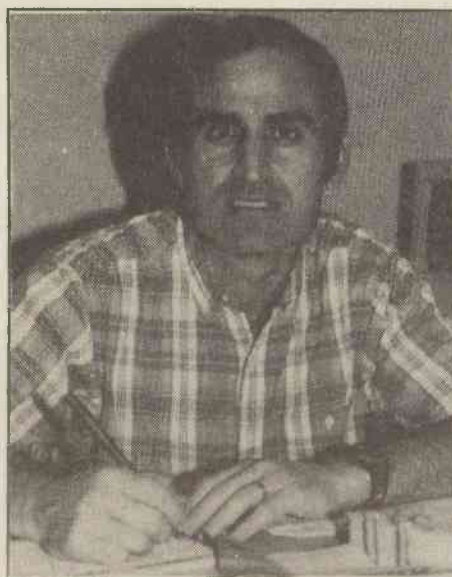


Photo by Chuck Hanes

Dr. Dan Wishnietsky

Kappa, the professional fraternity in education that houses a publishing house, research center, and an educational

foundation. The fraternity also publishes a journal, Kappan, and two book series called Hot Topics. Other publications of the fraternity include fastback series, books on current issues in education, and monthly reports to improve curriculum development and instruction.

"I obtained a three-year grant to develop an electronic mail network for Winston-Salem/Forsyth County School system in 1987," he said, "and wanted to share both the positive and negatives discovered during the implementation of the project." The grant was to develop future communication technology in the classroom.

It became part of the curriculum as class projects were designed for students from grade one through high school to give them an opportunity for hands-on experience. The project was also to provide computer literacy education for the students, and to expose them to the real world of information. "Fifth grade students