



# SENATE TALK

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## President Delivers Convocation Address

### Text Of Speech

This summer I read an interesting book by Bruce Wilshire, a philosophy professor at Rutgers University. The book was entitled The Moral Collapse of the University. Wilshire's book has been described as a liberal response to Allan Bloom's The Closing of the American Mind as well as a step beyond his rather pessimistic critique of American education. If you are interested in education, and especially liberal arts education, I heartily recommend Wilshire's book. Some of what I say to you today can be attributed to him—although you cannot blame him for everything. I am quite capable of mistakes without any help.

One of the things that Professor Wilshire observes is that college professors spend very little time talking about the art and science of education. He notes that they talk about many things—including, he reports, administrators. I find that hard to believe but that is what the man says. I can only conclude that Rutgers must be a strange

place indeed if the faculty have nothing better to talk about. Faculty members also talk frequently about their disciplines but seldom do they talk about teaching as an activity.

Now I suspect that at liberal arts colleges like Methodist that the lack of reflection about teaching is not nearly so acute as Wilshire believes but he is onto something. Even at small undergraduate schools devoted to teaching very little attention is paid explicitly to the practice of teaching. I purpose today to reflect briefly with you on what it is we do as teachers—or at least what we intend to do.

The Romans had two words for education: Instructere from which we get the English word instruction. This Latin word has the meaning to build in. In rich contrast is the word Educare from which we get the English word education. It means to lead out or to draw out. The difference between these two words is striking.

"The educator leads students out to confront basic questions, while the instructor merely builds in information and techniques . . . [the instructor

provides] . . . answers to questions that each person need not ask anew . . ." (Wilshire, p. 22) Instruction has as its major thrust helping students to answer questions. Good instruction would leave no important question unanswered.

Good instruction provides information or in today's jargon it expands the database.

Good students are those who can store information, readily access that information and efficiently process it. Such students have a large number of genetically supplied memory chips and they can rapidly access archival storage and they can also efficiently process instructions. It is probably significant here that the directions that we give to computers are also labeled with the Latin root instruere.

Now please do not misunderstand me. We will not bash computers. I love computers. Programming is a hobby of mine. It is pleasant relaxation. One can build and retreat into a well-ordered and structured world where everything works according to clearly stated rules. It has a kind of fascinating

beauty. The words of this talk today were "processed" with a fairly sophisticated word processor. I love my computer.

But loading information into a database, whether the active memory is made of silicon chips on the motherboard or neurons in the brain cells is quite removed from what I mean by education. Of course one should learn to access a database just as one learns to use the telephone or to drive. An educated person should be able to use or not use current technology as personal preference and particular situations dictate. But also being instructed in the use of technology—or anything else—is not education.

Education aims to teach students to ask questions, perhaps even questions that have never been asked before. Edward Purcell, a famous Harvard physicist, said that "Knowledge advances at the rate at which we ask correct questions." These are questions that must be asked again and again—Good, Truth, Virtues.

Education prepares one to deal creatively with complexity and to re-

late different disciplines. Most of the major problems which will confront our world during the lives of our students are multidisciplinary issues. Consider genetic engineering or environmental problems. My first introduction to complexity was as a junior in high school when a teacher suggested that I read Dickens' A Tale of Two Cities. It begins with the famous passage "It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair, we had everything before us, we had nothing before us . . ."

I struggled with how so many contradictory things could exist simultaneously. I now realize that such contradictions and complexities are the rule rather than the exception of human existence. Education prepares us for the complexities and contradictions of life.

Of course, our students often encourage us as faculty to instruct them



President Hendricks

rather than to educate. They want us to provide a body of knowledge, preferably even a body of facts, which they can learn for the next test. All of us as faculty members have been disturbed

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## On the Verge of Exploring

by Linda C. Welch

On the Verge will play at Methodist College's outdoor O'Hanlon Theatre on Friday, October 5 and Saturday, October 6 at 8:00 p.m. and on Sunday, October 7 at 2:00 p.m. Methodist College students, faculty and staff are admitted free. For everyone else, the price of admission is \$5.00 for adults and \$3.00 for children and senior citizens.

The play will be directed by Methodist drama department faculty member Paul Wilson. Wilson admits he chose this work because it contains strong roles for women and more women try out than men. It is also a play that could easily be done at Methodist's O'Hanlon outdoor theatre. Mr. Wilson has previously worked at the Cape Fear Regional Playhouse and the Ft. Bragg Playhouse. Patrice Spangler, having had various roles at Methodist College, stars as Mary. Amy Currie, also having had previous Methodist roles, stars as Alexandria and Tracy Maness, a new talent here at Methodist, stars as Fanny. Tim Callahan—of Cape Fear Regional Playhouse, Ft. Bragg Playhouse, Manny's Dinner Theatre, and Methodist College fame—will play the only male part in which he will branch out into eight different characters.

Has anyone ever stopped to consider why certain plays are presented here at Methodist College? Many may wonder when they see the title of the upcoming Fall production, On the Verge by Eric Ovenmyer.

Ovenmyer, a former story editor and script writer for television's All Elsewhere, has given us an incredibly witty situational comedy filled with puns and hilarious physical comedy.

But why On the Verge? Who has heard of it? We like to see things we're familiar with. We feel safer then somehow. Why not Neil Simon? Ironically On the Verge is a play which deals with exploration. Many plays that you haven't seen but are familiar with may leave you with a preconceived notion. So why not explore?

The story begins in 1888 when three women set out to explore geographical space. The adventure takes them to darkest Africa, the highest Himalayas and Terra Incognita, spinning into time travel.

Our explorer heroines can accommodate themselves to any emergency (natural or man made) and are in no way representative of a weaker sex. Momentarily disorientated as they approach modern times, they journey through a rain forest of hundreds of artifacts from the future—household utensils, mechanical devices, and an automotive side-view mirror that reads "Objects in this mirror may be closer



Paul Wilson

than they appear."

Eventually Fanny and Alexandria, intrigued by such amazements as the surfboard, the barbecue ("the suburban charred meat festival") and the jacuzzi, decide to settle down in the year 1955. Mary, still ablaze with adventure, resolves to move on. The others know that Mary can take the future in her stride. And if Mary can, we may find ourselves thinking at the end of this unconventionally fun play, so can we.

The author himself is an ecologist of language and a shrewd observer of our quest to control our environment—and the environment of others. May you enjoy your journey through a continuum of space, time, history, geography, feminism and fashion.

## Students Are Unrealistic About Job Expectations

by Colleen Witt

said. On the national average, fewer than a third of the resumes sent out will receive responses. The applicant will either be immediately rejected or will be placed on file. The student must remember that he or she may be competing against 200 to 300 other applicants for the same job. It is not uncommon for a student to send out up to 30 resumes in order to secure an interview.

In today's society, the job market is highly competitive and students are going to have to work hard to get the job they want, Ms. Woltz said. She also stressed the importance of grades. "A degree is not everything, a GPA is very important when competing for a job." When all other factors are equal between two applicants, the one with the higher GPA will almost definitely be awarded the position.

Ms. Woltz is ready to assist all students with career counseling and job placement. She suggests that seniors should not wait until the last moment to start applying.

This is not the "real world," Ms. Woltz

expressed their displeasure with having

private rooms on the men's first floor in Garber Hall but Dean Ryan explained that the reason no men were moved into Garber to alleviate the crowding is because nobody asked to be moved into Garber. He said, "You have to fill out an application to be in Garber."

Omicron Delta Kappa (Last Year)

## Students Forced To Share Dorm Rooms

by Melissa Rogers

Last year many students were allowed private rooms, but over the summer all residents of both Cumberland Hall and Sanford Hall were informed that they would be sharing their rooms despite requests for private rooms. Space was suddenly at a premium due to the rise in male enrollment. According to Chris Ryan, Assistant Dean for Student Affairs, there were 495 resident students as of August 23: 252 new students and 243 returning students, 328 of the total number were men.

The high ratio of men to women can be attributed to the recruiting efforts of coaches for Methodist's sports programs. As Chris Ryan explained, the programs "don't offer females what they offer males." The football program brought in 70 new students while the golf program brought in 100 to 150 new students, and the majority of those students were men. The men's soccer team, the baseball team, and the track/cross country program brought in additional men. This large influx of males created the shortage of private rooms.

Many students have openly expressed their displeasure with having

roommates. Cumberland resident Eric Holle expressed his disapproval by saying, "They stuck a bunch of freshmen in with upperclassmen! That's bull!" Although many students were displeased, no one was guaranteed a private room even if they requested one. In Todd Pope's case, he was not guaranteed the room that he had put a deposit on. "I reserved a room last semester . . . and left a \$50 deposit, and when I came back they had put freshmen in my room. . . When I asked student affairs, they said they couldn't do a thing and left us on our own."

Overcrowding in the men's dormitories has led many students to ask two questions: Should another dorm be built? Should some of the men be moved to empty rooms in the women's dorms? The college administration has recognized that there is a problem and is attempting to find a solution. On-campus apartments were recently "renovated for the overflow" of male students. The idea of moving all of the women into one dorm was also considered. However, after a bit of arithmetic, the administration realized that this plan would leave 15 women without a room. Some male students have complained that there were plenty of

private rooms on the men's first floor in Garber Hall but Dean Ryan explained that the reason no men were moved into Garber to alleviate the crowding is because nobody asked to be moved into Garber. He said, "You have to fill out an application to be in Garber."

Discontent engendered by overcrowding may be a factor in campus-wide social problems—such as breaking dorm rules, parking violations, and fighting or vandalism. Dean Ryan agreed. "Sure the number of violators is up. That's a given." But he also added that the number of parking violations is down since the beginning of the year and the number of alcohol-related problems is not as high as would be expected with such a large number of residents.

Is there any chance of a Cumberland or Sanford Hall resident still obtaining a private room? During the 1990 spring semester, there were 58 fewer residential students than there were at the end of the previous semester. If this historical pattern holds, there may soon be private rooms available. Dean Ryan says the only way to take advantage of this opportunity is on a "first come—first served basis." Students are asked to "hang in there for a little longer."