

## Students from page 1

The information above can be boiled down to this: if Methodist College is to provide *anyone* with *any* type of education, it must, of course, stay in business. In order to stay in business, it must recruit under-prepared students who are much more likely than the average student to drop out or fail out of college. A high drop-out rate costs the college money, which in turn puts the college in further danger of going out of business. Methodist College has begun to implement programs designed to halt this downward spiral toward disaster.

Since 1989, Methodist College has been building a program of "remedial" (alternately termed "developmental") assistance to its students. It now offers an orientation program for incoming freshmen, new core requirements which give students greater exposure to liberal arts subjects than was required in the past, developmental math and English courses, a Writing Across the Curriculum program, and a new program, called the Mentor program, that identifies and assists under-prepared students and monitors their progress through remedial programs.

Dean Bitterbaum said that the Orientation 109 course, which teaches students time and money management techniques and makes them aware of certain potential problems such as race relations, has proven successful, receiving no negative comments on student evaluation forms.

The college offers developmental English and math courses designed to bring the skills of under-prepared students up to a level that should enable the students to do well in subsequent college courses. Of the Fall 1991 entering freshmen, 102 (over 34% of the class) were placed in developmental writing classes, and 109 (40% of the freshmen) were required to take developmental math classes. Dean Bitterbaum expressed hopes that students who are assigned to these courses would not feel that there is any stigma attached to being enrolled in them, but rather hopes that they look

upon these courses as opportunities to gain the skills they need to earn a college diploma.

The Mentor program, which is headed by Mr. Jesse Smith, consists of three main parts—a study skills class, a tutoring system, and a system to monitor the students' progress.

The study skills class, which is taught by Mr. Smith and Dean of Student Affairs Michael Safely, teaches students how to take better notes, how to read text books for better reading comprehension, even how to be more creative. Student tutors are available to help not only the students enrolled in the Mentor program, but also any Methodist College student who would like help in a specific subject. Mr. Smith monitors the Mentor program students' progress and meets face-to-face with each student as often as possible, preferably, Mr. Smith said, once a week.

The Mentor program has proven to be even more successful than the administration had expected. Mr. Smith cited one example of a student in the program who received a GPA of approximately 3.9 for the Fall 1991 semester and said that the average GPA of students in the program was higher than expected.

Although the college has already implemented the above changes and is pleased with their success, the administration has identified other areas in which it would like to see improvement but for which adequate funds are not available. The proposal cites a report which states that 60% of college students who drop out before graduation do so for social, personal, or financial reasons, rather than for academic reasons. Yet Methodist College has only one person in Student Affairs who has the entire responsibility for "Guidance and Placement," and this person is currently having to spend most of her time on personal counseling, rather than splitting her time equally between personal guidance and career counseling. The college would like to use Title III funds to create

a new position for a Career Development Officer, who would counsel students about career opportunities and graduate school, and who would implement a job placement bureau. This would allow the current Guidance and Placement Counselor to become a full-time Director of Counseling.

Perhaps the most dramatic improvement for which the college would like to secure Title III funds is a proposed Teaching-Learning Center. Students who had been admitted to Methodist with a low SAT score or low high school GPA would be required to enter the TLC program as a condition of admittance. The TLC Coordinator and Mentors would test all students entering the program to determine each individual's needs. Each student would then be assigned to a self-paced program that meets that student's individual needs. Any portion of this program would also be available to students who have not been assigned to the program but who want or need help on a specific skill.

The administration hopes that these programs will increase Methodist's graduation rate from the current 18% to 40% by 1994-5 and to 65% by 1998. They also hope that the increased retention that should result from these proposed programs will enable the program to begin paying for itself in three years so that the college will require no further grant money for these programs.

The programs currently in effect and those that have been proposed will greatly increase the chance for every Methodist College student to obtain a college diploma, but the last element in the formula for success is motivation. Dr. Perkins, in the *Small Talk* interview for the "Tough Teachers" article, stated, "I'm frustrated because I don't see a lot of motivation in my students." Mr. Jesse Smith, head of the Mentor program, echoed this sentiment. He said that many of the students now in the program are making a sincere effort to improve their skills by taking advantage of the help that

the Mentor program offers them, but that some are failing to do so because they are unaccustomed to the freedom of being away from home. "Every once in a while," Mr. Smith said, "I'll have a student in my office to talk about his low GPA and I'll figure out that he is having trouble, not because he doesn't have the ability to do the work, but just because he doesn't get up and go to class. He's used to having Mom and Dad there to tell him it's time to go to school." He said he sees the same lack of motivation in those who "have papers due but don't start working on them until the night before they're due." "Ideally," he said, "they should have been working on them a little bit at a time over the previous few weeks."

Dean Bitterbaum agreed that all the programs now available to students and those that may soon be available if the college receives the Title III grant can only take the student so far. During the interview with *Small Talk*, he shared some lines of verse which he said had been given to him by a Biology professor from whom he had taken classes at Catawba College. He said that these lines, quoted below, sum up his philosophy about the student-teacher relationship in education.

This bridge will only take you halfway  
there  
To those mysterious lands you long to  
see:  
Through gypsy camps and swirling Arab  
fairs  
And moonlit woods where unicorns run  
free.  
So come and walk awhile with me and  
share  
The twisting trails and wondrous worlds  
I've known.  
But this bridge will only take you half  
way there--  
The last few steps you'll have to take  
alone.

Author Unknown

## Student Robbed at ATM

by Gil Un

A Methodist College student was robbed and badly beaten on Mar. 1, 1992, while using the automatic teller machine at the BB&T bank branch on the 5300 block of Ramsey Street. Martin Knoll, 23, of Cedarwood Apartments, Fayetteville, was struck from behind about 12:05 a.m. He suffered lacerations and bruises to his face. Mr. Knoll's wallet, which contained \$22, three credit cards, a bankcard, and his driver's license was taken. Mr. Knoll was taken by ambulance to Highsmith-Rainey Memorial Hospital immediately after the assault, but he was released that same morning around 5:00 a.m. According to a recent police report, a suspect was arrested after using one of Mr. Knoll's stolen credit cards.

Mr. Knoll said, "I really don't quite remember what happened that night, be-

cause it happened so quickly. Although I had a broken nose, broken left jaw, broken right check bone, concussion, busted-open lips, and two black eyes, Highsmith-Rainey hospital didn't do much for me. I was so upset with the hospital and the way they treated me!"

Mike Safely, Dean of Student Affairs, first received a phone call at 12:30 a.m. from student witnesses, Pamela Johnson and Brian Smallwood who called from Dominos Pizza that night. Dean Safely said, "Martin's face was so unrecognizable with blood, I wouldn't guess he was a Methodist College student without recognizing his car!"

Dan Maher, Martin Knoll's roommate, received the next phone call at his apartment from Dean Safely at 12:45 a.m. "Martin's face was so totally smashed that I couldn't even recognize him at the hospital. It seemed someone tried to kill him and not just take his

money," Mr. Maher said.

Mr. Knoll has been recovering quickly at his apartment since the incident happened. "I'm doing better everyday. I want to thank everyone who helped me that night. I want to tell everyone to please be careful out there, because it could happen to anyone anywhere in this town. Look at me, I need a plastic surgeon to reconstruct my face," he said.

"I was glad that Martin was okay and hope it won't happen to anybody again. Please don't go outside all alone late at night! Use your common sense!" Dean Safely said.

Dan Maher suggested, "To minimize the possibility of crimes in this town, I think we should have a Bank Machine inside the campus! And if you must go to the hospital, go to Cape Fear Hospital."

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