

Franklin: Many changes are ahead for St. Aug

(continued from page 1)

asking citizens of Raleigh to provide financial assistance.

President Franklin also shared his frustrations, challenges, and goals since coming to office in August 1995. The questions ranged from fees, security, the school's physical structure to honoring the Delaney sisters and professors. Here are some of his responses:

Q. Why does tuition go up every year and why did the fees for room keys increase?

A. Let me correct one thing. Tuition has not gone up in this institution for three years. So the notion that it went up every year is just not true.

What students need to realize is that the tuition they pay only pays for 60 percent of what it costs to run this institution. That other 40 percent must be raised.

Now, put it this way. The institution needs a \$20 million budget (operating cost). Out of this we feed students, provide certain services and institutional scholarships to students—yet students only pay 60 percent of that cost. The other 40 percent must be raised. So if we charge off to students what it really costs to educate them some could not afford to come here.

When students damage things, even if it is old, what we have to do is go out and raise more money. But everyone must understand we are all fund raisers. The image of St. Aug is created not only by the President, but also by faculty and students. People see St. Aug not just through my eyes but through students and alumni and if we are not positive about this institution, why should somebody want to support it who has no allegiance to us whatsoever. Everything, inflation is going up. When you have a situation where faculty have not had increases for a number of years you have to close the gap.

In addition to that, St. Aug is extremely affordable in comparison to our sister and brother schools (UNCF institutions). So what I think students have to keep in mind is that we want to keep the cost of St. Aug affordable. Too, we must remember that everything goes up, electricity, everything. So, somewhere that cost must be passed on, either we raise more monies or decrease the number of students we can service and that would be unfortunate.

Q. You keep talking about these costs...where does debt come into play. How much are we in the red?

A. We have about (physical plant) \$9 million debt. This is the debt from buildings built and so your operating debt, interest and principal payments are included in the operating costs of the institution.

Q. What role can students play in helping to raise funds?

A. I do not think the students are asked to come here and raise money. But, this is how they can help, by coming here and being the best that they can be. To take advantage of the resources we have in the community. For instance, I was proud of the number of students who participated in the "Juvenile Watch for Cure" this past weekend. That says to the larger community that they are making a worthwhile investment in St. Aug when students, faculty and staff are involved in our community. It makes it much easier to go out and raise funds to get people to invest. We are not asking people to give money to St. Aug, because there are thousands of people out there asking them to give money. But, we are asking them to invest and when they see successful students, then they see it is a worthwhile institution.

Q. Why are Bahamians discriminated against? Why can't a student, who is in need, and has a 3.7/3.8 or better average get financial aid?

A. Hard for me to answer that. It is an individual issue. If you are asking, "Do we need to look at our financial aid' and the distribution of scholarships"? you are

absolutely right. We have to put more money into academic scholarships.

It does not make sense for someone with a 3.8, if they have the need, (because some of this financial aid money is based on need, but it has more to do with performance, and I am not debating whether that is right or wrong), not to be assisted.

If we are going to attract and retain those students with high academic proficiencies then we will have to put more money in there and we have to be able to do that, but again it does not happen overnight. It does not happen that quickly. Back to my frustrations, I can see the problem or better yet the challenge that is there about how you create change. You realize we did not get there overnight and changes will not happen overnight.

Q. What specifically are you referring to when you say changes?

A. I think if you go to the dining hall you see a tremendous change. I remember when I first arrived, I seemed to hear constant complaints about that. I think our grounds look much better and why is that important? Because people make more assessment about an institution based on what they see and if you look good then rightly or wrongly they assume that there is a quality that is going on there. I think when I sit and talk with students about the quality of student life, they speak very favorably about that. When I look at the faculty and see Dr. Fred Hall, who comes to head the Urban Research area—to me that reflects change. The fact that we have reduced credit hours that one would have to graduate, again that extra expense would have been passed on to parents. What we are getting ready to do in the library—more students on campus will have their own E-mail address. By next semester the library will be computerized. When you look at the whole picture, I can see the changes, but we must move on.

Q. WRMY: What long term benefits are we going to get? What does it do for WAUG?

A. To answer the long term benefits first, I think it does three primary things. One, it creates a revenue source that we do not have. It gets more revenue for the institution because we have a revenue stream that we did not have before. Secondly, it creates internship possibility for students with state of the art equipment that we quite candidly and honestly do not have. But now we do have it and it is on our campus and we have access to it and that's critical to our students. Thirdly, it brings to campus a unique characteristic that separates us from our brother and sister institutions. Where else can you go in the U.S., under one roof, and find two black-owned commercial television stations?

Q. That is true and indeed perhaps, a good venture: But how will communication students benefit?. There is a limit to even internships.

A. I cannot say by coming on the campus that it automatically is a cure all. But I think it does offer for some of them an opportunity they simply will not have had elsewhere. If you look at the logo on WRMY, that was done by one of our students. To be a college student and say you designed a logo for a commercial television station makes you more marketable. So again it is not a cure-all answer but it offers long term benefits for the school.

In answer to the second part of the previous question, WRMY is the strengthening part of WAUG. It subcontracts with WAUG to do certain productions for them. WRMY also gives WAUG a larger market place than just Raleigh. WAUG can now move throughout the Triangle Area. So it opens a window of exposure.

Q. Students have expressed concern of how the gates (around campus) are opened and closed at random. Do you have a policy or can you help us work out a policy?

A. I don't know about this. I guess if there is a policy of time (as to when the gates should be opened) then we need to do a better job of communicating it.

Q. In light of Hurricane Fran and its scare to North

Carolina residents and more importantly our students, what measures are being taken to protect students should another hurricane occur?

A. We all have learned from that experience. We have implemented a series of drills in the case of fires, which has always been of major concern to us. We took precautions and tried to distribute flash lights to the residence halls but I do not think that anyone anticipated the kind of damage that was caused by Fran. We were fortunate people, even better to say we were blessed, given the amount of damage the campus sustained. We're looking into how we can best protect our students.

On the question of generators I really don't know what Mr. Nichols, vice president of finance, is going to do. I know that we were prepared to purchase generators during that period without electricity, but someone at CP&L kept telling us that we would have electricity soon.

Q. Last year you promised to stay in the dorm and see how students live? Are you still going to carry out that promise. And when?

A. That did not materialize and I don't know what happened. But I still want to do that. I would relish the opportunity.

Q. Will you also attend classes with students?

A: Yes. I have one class I am going to speak with next week. In the past week I met with 25 student leaders and we talked about issues affecting campus, but I also enjoy interacting with students, not only talking about St. Aug—that is not to minimize the problems we have here—but surely there are more things that St. Augustine's students can talk about. So to sit and talk with students about the Presidential Elections, the death of Tupac and other things including St. Aug was quite interesting.

Q. We have heard rumors about working toward new majors?

A. We added one, International Business. What we have to do is look at the demands of the marketplace in terms of how do we prepare students. I do not think it is a matter of majors but also an issue of requirements and courses. What kinds of skills are we saying you must have to be successful whether pre-med, journalism or business. There are still skills that are critical that I'd rather offer you some training in. I think that as we move to the 21st century we must have changes in the curriculum. If we do not we become a dinosaur and we know what happened to dinosaurs. They became extinct. So we have to change, because if we do not we will be left behind. As we move to the 21st century, we will move to expanding the curriculum.

Q. The Junior Comprehensive Exam, what is going to happen to it?

A. That is an issue I would rather leave to faculty. Everyone thinks the president makes the decisions on everything. Not only is that far from the truth and should not be that way. Faculty really dictates the academic standards and I would much rather let that be an issue for them, even senior comprehensives.

Q. You said earlier that the library will soon be automated. Are there any immediate plans to put books in the library?. Students still need information for classes and this may not happen as fast as we would like.

A. I take issue because by the time you get a book it is out dated. Yes, we need more books but we are looking at some time next semester in having everything set in the library.

Q. The Allied Health Building has been damaged. Is it self insured? Do we get anything from it?

A. Where do you get this stuff? It would be ludicrous to say. Of course we have insurance. Once it is adjusted from the insurance company we will fix it.