

# THE DECREE

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NORTH CAROLINA WESLEYAN COLLEGE, ROCKY MOUNT, NORTH CAROLINA 27804

## Graduates Look Forward to Next Step in Journey

By Decree Staff

Fall graduates leave NC Wesleyan with fond memories, varying job prospects, and student-loan debt that ranges from zero to tens of thousands of dollars.

The December 8 graduation featured a well-received baccalaureate talk by NCWC Chaplain Barry Drum, a thoughtful commencement address by a Methodist bishop, and an emotional commissioning

ceremony of a Wesleyan senior. In total, there were 126 graduates from the traditional day and ASPIRE programs.

In his talk, Rev. Drum compared the Wesleyan community to a quilt, noting its accepting nature and the numerous and varied threads that it ties together, its "many colors and textures." He said, "We are Wesleyan, we are quilted together, we are welcoming."

The commencement speaker was Hope Ward Morgan, resident bishop at the North Carolina Conference of the United Methodist Church. In her remarks, Bishop Morgan urged graduates to be "open to new ideas and new friendships," adding that they should strive to make the world a "gentler, kinder, stronger, more just and loving place."

Education has allowed the new graduates to understand the complexity of contemporary life and equipped them to care for the needs "down the street and around the world." She repeatedly called on grads to "overflow" to the less fortunate.

Just before degrees were conferred, the Wesleyan community witnessed its first officer commissioning in 20 years. Conducted by Major Bill Drew, the moving ceremony saw Germal Minick be commissioned as a second lieutenant, with involvement from his mother, brother, and father, a retired Army master sergeant.

Audrey Friedrich was one of 97 ASPIRE graduates to cross the stage at Minges Auditorium. A student in the Rocky Mount program, she became the first in her family to earn a bachelor's degree.

Looking back, she said she liked the structure of NC Wesleyan's night program. "ASPIRE is great for working adults.

The eight-week schedule allows us to be full-time students while working full time," said Friedrich, a senior procedures analyst at PNC Bank.

Friedrich hopes to use her accounting degree to seek a higher position, but she's not sure what that will be at this point. "I want to find a position that fits my personality and uses my new degree," she said.

Like many ASPIRE students, Friedrich balanced her studies and a full-time job with family life and work in the community. A mother of three, she volunteers at her church and serves as a co-leader of her daughter's Girl Scouts troop.

Here is a rundown of what the future holds for six other new Wesleyan grads:

**Kristi Lucas**

Plans: A native of Aliquippa, Pa., Lucas has lined up a job at Sign Innovations, a small sign company based in western Pennsylvania, where she interned last summer.

"I think it is a lot harder to get a job with this economy," she said. "It was tough to find an internship back home, and my father had to help me."

In her new position, Lucas will work in project management. "I will coordinate between what goes on internally between designers, fabricators, and engineers, with what goes on externally, with customers and vendors," said Lucas, a business major, and member of Rotaract, Student-Athlete Advisory Council, and Fellowship of Christian Athletes.

She added that she intends to take a hiatus from school, but eventually plans to attend an MBA program to study finance.

Fondest Wesleyan Memory: "My fondest memory was my time playing volleyball," said Lucas, who was an all-conference setter for the Bishops. "I was with my closest friends; we traveled together and were with each other every day."

Student Debt Burden: "I'm one of the lucky ones whose parents paid for their education, so will not be stuck with student loans," Lucas said.

**Victor Goldsmith**

Plans: "I plan on applying to jobs I know I can get quickly," said Goldsmith, "so that I may have more work experience to go with my business degree." Besides majoring in business, Goldsmith attained minors in marketing and visual arts.

To strengthen his résumé, he added that he might take more marketing courses, now that Wesleyan has adopted a marketing major.

Fondest Wesleyan Memory: Goldsmith mentioned Homecoming 2010. "There were a lot of old friends and new friends that came together that year and had fun!" Goldsmith recalled.

Student Debt Burden: Goldsmith estimates that his indebtedness is \$15,000 to \$17,000.

**Jesse Southerland**

Plans: Southerland, a former Bishops football player active in Refuge Campus Ministries, intends to travel this spring and do his own brand of missionary work. After stops in London and Israel, he will head to the Democratic Republic of Congo. "There, we'll be rescuing child prostitutes and child soldiers out of the conflict in that region, working with a friend's ministry," said Southerland, an Edenton native, who majored in political science and minored in marketing and history.

After his trip to Africa, Southerland expects to tour the U.S. by bus. "From Dallas to Miami to Boston to LA back to Dallas for the whole summer, just loving on people and bringing the love of Christ everywhere we go," he said. "We're calling it Glory Tour. I'm sure you'll hear about it soon."

Next summer Southerland will become involved in a ministry in Dallas, while seeking an on-line masters degree in international government from Regent University. "Some friends and I are thinking about creating a relief team to go into warzones," he related.

## Bishops Resolve To Be Healthy, Generous, Patient in New Year

It's the time when many Americans resolve to improve their lives during the coming year. Bishops were asked to share their resolutions for 2013. Following is a selection from students, staff and faculty:

**Beverly Biancur**

My resolution has to do with the "pay it forward" theory. I've resolved to do 50 acts of good (one per week) to people I do not know without recognition. I want to do this to bring a little more positive light to a struggling time. I believe this will be a good way to continue my endeavor to see the positive in people and, more importantly, within myself. I'm also making a concerted effort to be more positive with every situation, as opposed to the negative within my own life. Of course, the usual fitness and overall health resolutions are in the mix for me personally, but I wanted to tackle the more internal side of life on this trip around the sun.

**Emily Bower**

I actually don't make resolutions because, once I say I'm going to do something, I always

"I feel that having a masters is going to help me have a platform to go into these regions."

Fondest Wesleyan Memory: Southerland said that it occurred last semester at a Refuge meeting. "A student came to tell us she had just been diagnosed with cancer and it was a rare, fast-moving kind," Southerland recalled. "We prayed over her and believed God for her healing. Three weeks later the doctors told her that she did not need treatment, because the tumor was shrinking. God was healing her. Now she is cancer free."

Student Debt Burden: \$20,000 to \$25,000.

**Sara Sallenger**

Plans: Sallenger, a criminal justice major, would like to find a job in juvenile justice as a court counselor. "Location is not a factor," she noted, "as I'm willing to move anywhere for the right job."

A two-year member of the women's soccer team, Sallenger transferred to NCWC from Cape Fear Community College. She had intended to major in exercise science, but after she arrived here, she figured it would have taken her 3 1/2 years to graduate, which she was unable to afford. As a criminal justice major, she finished in two years.

Fondest Wesleyan Memory: "Meeting my boyfriend would definitely be one of my fondest memories at Wesleyan," said Sallenger.

Student Debt Burden: \$65,000.

**Kristin Seidel**

Plans: The Laaken, Germany native plans to participate in an OPT (Optional Practical Training). That will allow her to remain the U.S. for a year and gain experience in her field, business administration.

Seidel said that the state of the economy was not a factor in her decision to major in business. "When I started my studies, I didn't really know exactly what I wanted to do," she said. "I chose business since it's a pretty big field of study and you can go afterwards in pretty much any direction."

Fondest Wesleyan Memory: Seidel said she will always remember the friends she made at Wesleyan. And she's got fond memories of her time on the women's tennis team, which last year won the regular-season conference championship. "The team always had great times and lots of fun," she said. Student Debt Burden: \$0. Seidel said that she saved money prior to college and worked summer jobs back in Germany to help finance her education.

"My parents helped me out a bit," she added. "I'm really glad that this worked out so well because I think it's not an easy situation to pay off all the loans."

**Keith Blunt**

Plans: Blunt, a former Bishops linebacker, wants to continue playing football and earn a job with The National Football League. Because of his goal, the criminal justice major said he is not concerned by the present state of the economy.

Fondest Wesleyan Memory: "My fondest memory was when I entered the Christmas play held in the Dunn center, 'The Best Christmas Pageant Ever,'" he said.

Student Loan Burden: "I'm graduating," Blunt remarked, "with enough debt to drive me crazy."



Brandon Givens scored a school-record 50 points in an upset of nationally ranked Christopher Newport. The senior forward leads the USA South Conference in scoring average. See story on page 3.

SI Photo

## NC Wesleyan Administrators Lay Groundwork for Recruiting in China

Bill Allen and President James Gray traveled to China last fall in a delegation of North Carolina colleges, as part of Wesleyan's growing recruitment efforts.

Allen, the vice president of Enrollment Management, was interviewed by the Decree staff about the trip, which occurred from October 23 to November 3.

**Q.** What areas of China did you visit?

**A.** We traveled the entire coastal region from Beijing to Hainan Island. We also stopped in Guangzhou, Hangzhou, Shanghai and a few smaller cities.

**Q.** What was the forum for your interactions with the Chinese students and officials?

**A.** It varied. We did not have fairs but had meetings with schools and at times met with students directly. The purpose of the visit was to give us the opportunity to see what the educational system in China was like, and then we could decide how we might work within that system to attract students to Wesleyan.

**Q.** What was the purpose of Mr. Gray making the trip? Wouldn't it have made more sense for a student or a young recruiter to accompany you?

**A.** Mr. Gray was able to meet with college officials, etc. Many people we met were very impressed that our president was interested and traveling with us. Position carries a lot of weight in China. In general education is highly valued.

**Q.** Besides the fact that China is home to more than a billion people, what about this market appeals to NCWC?

**A.** We developed this connection through NCICU—the North Carolina Independent Colleges and Universities—which is working with a group called Global Classroom Alliance. It was maybe a once-in-a-blue-moon opportunity for the institution. The trip included other colleges from around North Carolina and was almost entirely paid for by sponsors. It cost NCWC almost nothing to go and we've made good connections that have already started to foster opportunities for us.

**Q.** What questions did the Chinese officials and prospective students ask you?

**A.** They asked a lot about our rankings. They asked a lot about college life in the U.S. Many also wanted to know about our campus—it was very similar to what U.S. students and officials might ask us.

**Q.** What was your marketing pitch? What aspects of NCWC did you stress?

**A.** Our size, our international flair and our programs.

**Q.** Did our Nepalese student population figure into your discussions in any way?

**A.** No, not really. This was seen as a unique opportunity for us to get a foot in the door in one of the largest markets in the world.

**Q.** Do you see China as a source for student-athletes?

**A.** Not so much. Most of the students I have been in contact with are focusing on studies here in the U.S. There has been no interest on their part in athletics at this point. I do think there may be a future for tennis recruiting in China. Time will tell.

**Q.** What happens next with our efforts in China?

**A.** We've already had one college visit our campus. We're planning a day visit from a high school group in February which should include a student who is interested in coming here in the fall. We're working on some direct relationships with some educational firms that will help us recruit and we hope to have more high school students visit in the spring and summer. We may also consider some direct relationships with schools in China.

**Q.** When will we begin to see Chinese students at Wesleyan? How many do you expect to see in, say, the next three years?

**A.** I'm hoping for one or two for next fall. I think that could grow over the next couple of years. I would like to see a steady flow of three or four a semester, if it works out. They're very hard-working

students and would be great additions to our community.

**Q.** Should a group of Chinese students enroll in the next few years, what kind of English skills should faculty expect to see in the classroom? What additional support services, if any, will be necessary to accommodate the students?

**A.** All Chinese students have had to take nine years of English. What I've been told is that they're a little rough with the spoken word at first, but because of the amount of English they have had, they catch on pretty quick. I think we'll need to provide them support, as we do with other international students. I also think our social settings maybe a bigger challenge for them. They study a lot and are used to that.

**Q.** Over all, how would your characterize your trip and our prospects in China?

**A.** I was exhausted by the time we were done. We saw so many colleges and high schools that I had a hard time keeping them straight. I believe that there are real opportunities for NCWC. We'll continue to work with Global Classroom Alliance (GCA) and we've already had a couple of follow-up meetings to plan the visits mentioned above. Our feeling is if we can get Chinese students to visit our campus, they'll be more likely to return as our students in the future. GCA will continue to help us make connections in China.

**Q.** Are there other new countries you would like to enter?

**A.** No, right now we're trying to strengthen what we're doing and open up places like China and South America more. Specifically, Brazil, Venezuela, Chile are on the list. Frankie Taal (Men's Soccer Coach) has connections, and I helped fund his recent recruiting trip (to Brazil). Patricia Infantino (Director of International Student Services) has connections, and we've picked up some baseball players from Latin America in recent years.