

THE DECREE

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NORTH CAROLINA WESLEYAN COLLEGE, ROCKY MOUNT, NORTH CAROLINA 27804

College Experiences Spike in Freshman Enrollment

By Rebecca Staylor
Senior Staff Writer

This year North Carolina Wesleyan saw its number of freshmen rise by 121 students, an increase of 45 percent over last year.

According to the college's latest figures, the new students include 344 freshmen and 40 transfers.

Alicia Burns typifies members of the freshman class who were attracted by the small campus. "I chose NCWC because it was an easy transition from high school to college," said Burns, a member of the softball team.

For the first time in the past three years, Wesleyan has welcomed over 300 new faces onto campus. In the 2012-13 school year, 266 students enrolled for the fall semester; of those, 47 were transfers. Last year, the college brought in a freshman class of 223 and 60 transfers for a total of 283 new Bishops.

Last year's admissions effort was spearheaded on an interim basis by Michael Pratt, the college's vice president of advancement. He has been succeeded by Judy Rollins, vice president of enrollment services and marketing.

Provost Michael Brown noted that the college has hired new admissions

counselors during the past year in an effort to strengthen recruitment efforts.

Reflecting on this year's success, the provost pointed out the role of the college's trustees. "Last year the board set tuition in October, which allowed us to determine financial aid and scholarships early in the year," Dr. Brown explained. "This ensured that applicants knew what their financial aid package was much earlier in the year."

The provost added that last year the college put together a task force on financial aid awards, which also enhanced new student recruitment.

A new scholarship program has helped as well. Wesleyan's Heritage Scholarship grants students full tuition, room and board, and books. According to the provost office, scholarship recipients must possess a high school GPA of 3.5 or higher.

One Heritage recipient is Amanda Mazza, a freshman on the women's soccer team, whose average high school GPA stood at 4.18. "I chose NCWC because of the scholarship and soccer," she said.

Over all, among freshmen, the average high school GPA was 3.16,

compared to 2.92 last year, while the average SAT score rose to 900 from last year's 869, NCWC said.

Citing preliminary data, the college reported that about 56 percent of freshmen come from North Carolina, while about 32 percent are out-of-staters and 10 percent are from overseas.

The freshmen class boasts 25 international students from 18 different countries, including what are believed to be Wesleyan's first-ever Chinese students (5). Among the student body as a whole, other foreign countries represented are: Australia, Brazil, Cameroon, Canada, Costa Rica, Denmark, Ecuador, El Salvador, England, Gambia, Germany, Ghana, Iceland, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Nepal, Norway,



Taylor Williams, a freshman from Fayetteville, snaps a "selfie" with Dr. Dewey Clark. The college's new president and his wife, Suzanne, greeted freshmen on the opening day of school.

Photo by S. Best

Biancur. "So I decided to follow my intuition. Fortunately, I was right and the school offered me an ambitious soccer team and a great environment to continue my studies."

While the college has not yet compiled data on the number of freshman student-athletes, the provost's office reported that 52 percent of all Wesleyan students play a Division III sport.

Freshman Christian Heisey said he came to NCWC because of his generous financial-aid package and the athletic teams. "I came because I got a full ride and for the chance to play baseball and football," he said.

Dr. Brown cited the efforts of second-year Head Football Coach Jeff Filkovski, whose staff brought in a considerably higher number of freshmen this fall. According to an email distributed before the Christopher Newport game on September 18, the roster listed 141 total players, or about 18 percent of the study body in the day program.

Due to the surge in football players, the gender gap widened among freshmen. The breakdown is 72 percent male and 28 percent female, the college said. In addition, the large freshman class filled the residence halls and prompted the college to contract with the Rocky Mount Inn, which now houses more than 70 upperclassmen, all males.

Wesleyan's total enrollment has risen to 793 students in the day program, the college said. Freshmen make up 44 percent of the student body.

(KeCharna White contributed reporting.)

Free Advice Given for Freshmen

By David Robinson
Decree Staff Writer

FRESHMAN! Call home! Explain to your significant parental figure(s) why you cut class.

In a recent unscientific and informal poll, it was determined that for every one hour of class that is cut, it costs someone (you?) \$136. Professor Gail Stafford, chair of the math and sciences division at NCWC, said "think about that money you throw away when you cut class."

A series of interviews, conducted with students and staff, posed the question "What advice would you give to incoming freshmen?" This produced a variety of interesting suggestions. For example, Dr. Bill Yankosky, head of NCWC's Taylor-Crocker Honors Program and professor of math, noted that in high school, students are in a structured environment between 25 and 35 hours each week. When they get to college they find themselves in class only about 15 hours per week. "That extra 10 or 20 hours you have each week is not free time," he said, "it's time to be used for study and work."

Vann Brock, a sophomore studying criminal justice and history, had some pointed advice for freshmen: "Show up and pay attention," he said. "Stay in a right state of mind, don't get in an unfit state - keep control of your problems." Brock also noted that he had a room-mate who was into drugs and drink. "That person dropped out before the year was over," he said.

Besides the clear and emphatic message to go to every class every day, heard loud and clear from every respondent, advice to incoming students included a variety of other items. Samantha Godsey, staff adjunct professor of mathematics, a professional tutor and graduate of NCWC, said to new students: "I definitely advise them to care about what they do. There is lots of help available, so if there is a problem, see a professor, go to the Writing Center for tutoring, get help." Professor Godsey also suggests getting involved in extracur-

ricular activities and organizations. "Don't isolate yourself. Get to know people. Students can help each other," she said.

Amanda Gauthier, a junior majoring in English, had this advice: "Communicate with your professors because they will sit down with you and help you understand." She also advised students to be willing to meet with people, go to events, and see what other students are like. Gauthier follows her own advice by participating in drama. She will appear in the NCWC production of "The Rabbit Hole" showing October 6 - 8 in the Dunn Center.

In a departure from most advice, Cindy Davis, NCWC expense accountant who is a 2014 graduate of NCWC, had some words for students who may not be traditional just-out-of-high school enrollees. Her advice reflected the difficulty some encounter when pursuing a college degree later in life. "Go while you are young. Every year education is put off makes it harder to go back and do it," she said. "Your mind is fresher while you are young, and it will be easier without children." Davis did not follow her own advice, but did the harder thing and got her degree later, after she had been married and had children. "School made a big difference for me," she said. "It made my kids look up to me, and now my daughter is in college, setting an example for her kids."

Some other important things for freshmen, and all students really to keep in mind while having a successful time in college are "Be an adult" (Professor Gail Stafford); "Manage your time" (Dr. Bill Yankosky); "Don't study too long - all-nighters make you tired and forgetful the next day, so study regularly, don't cram" (Cindy Davis); "You can learn something from every class you attend, so make sure to go to class" (Professor Samantha Godsey); "Don't get totally stressed out" (Amanda Gauthier).

A clear idea of the purpose of attending college underlies all of these suggestions. Every person interviewed for this article seemed to be interested in success, for all students. As professor Stafford said, "Be a student who wants to learn."

And don't forget to call home.

Davis noted that parents don't want you moving back in with them when you're done, so they're very interested in how you're doing. "Your success reflects well on them, so keep in touch" she said.

Almost 8,000 Miles from Nepal, Bikash Finds Home at Wesleyan

By Decree Staff

Pop quiz: What foreign country has the most students on Wesleyan's campus?

If you guessed neighboring Canada or Mexico, or Russia, or one of the many European countries represented among the college's nearly 800 day students, you'd be wrong. The correct answer is Nepal, a small Asian nation with a population (around 30 million) that is one-tenth that of the United States. Tucked between two behemoths, China and India, Nepal is perhaps best known for having the tallest mountain in the world, Mt. Everest, though the country's landscape is varied. According to timeanddate.com, Katmandu, Nepal's capital and largest city, is 7,942 miles from Raleigh.

With two freshmen on campus for fall 2014, Nepal boasts a total of nine students. One is Bikash Thapa, 20, a sophomore, who is a double major in biomedical science and psychology, as well as a student worker at the library.

In an interview with The Decree, Thapa discussed his country, his impressions of Wesleyan, as well as the inability of American students to find his country on a world map.

Q. Describe your hometown.

A. I'm from a city, Lekhnath, so there is not much landscape to see, but there are many beautiful lakes. So my place is also known as "The city of seven lakes." The climate is mild throughout the year; it's not too cold and not too humid. I'd say that the temperature ranges between 8 to 35 degrees centigrade (about 45 to 95F).

Q. What is your native language?

A. Nepali is my native language. Indian dialect is the most comparable dialect to the Nepali language.

Q. How many years did you study English prior to coming to NCWC?

A. I studied English for almost 16 years. I studied in a school where subjects were written and studied in English language.

Q. Describe the trip you make from Nepal to Rocky Mount.

A. My recent flight originated in Katmandu, the capital city. From there, my flight landed at Qatar for the first stop, at New York at JFK for the second stop and then the Raleigh-Durham airport for the last stop. The entire trip takes around 26-28 hours.

Q. Had you been to the U.S. before coming to Wesleyan? Do you have relatives in this country?

Panama, Russia, Sweden, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, and Venezuela.

Cissi Edehult, a member of the women's soccer team, was among the international students drawn to NCWC because of its welcoming atmosphere. "I came here because I got a good impression from talking to my coach," the Swede said, referring to Beverly

A. No, this is my first time in the U.S. I have some relatives in Georgia and California. In addition, my friends have brothers who attend other U.S. colleges.

Q. How did you hear about NC Wesleyan?

A. I heard about NCWC from my college counselor. Then, I checked it by myself in collegeboard.com.

Q. Was you family worried about you attending college in the U.S.?

A. Since I'm the youngest child in my family, my parents were not that "happy" to send me away from them. My sister is in London for three years. So, my parents were sad. But, they sent me with a big smile on their faces on the day I left, hiding their pain, I think. At the same time they've been happy for my success.

Q. What do you like most about NCWC?

A. Wesleyan is a small, beautiful college where brotherhood, love and friendship float anywhere you stop. Most of all, I like the Southern friendliness and the prestige that the college has maintained all this time. That has impressed me. In addition, the scholarship is not that bad at all.

Q. What about American culture most appeals to you now?

A. I like the freedom to speak and share your thoughts, and the freedom to leave class anytime you want.

Q. What bothers you the most about American culture?

A. Many Americans don't seem emotionally attached to each other. I feel like they're just filling the obligation. I don't see that "love" among friends and families. I don't find the "real" care among friends. In addition, American culture lacks traditional festivals, special customs and dresses, which we can find in many other cultures, including Nepali culture.

Q. Think back to your first weeks at Wesleyan. How did your previous impressions of America and Americans differ from what you found once you arrived?

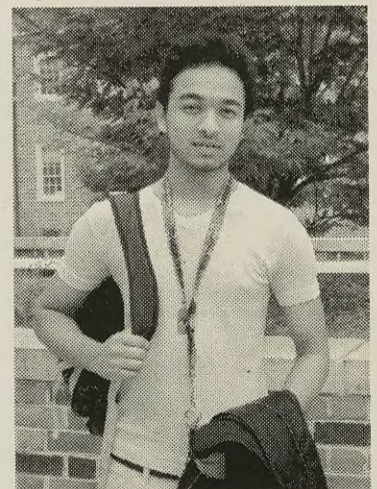
A. At first when I arrived to NCWC, I was disappointed. There was forest everywhere, and no skyscrapers, no local transportation systems, and no Asian food houses. But, after some days, what most struck me was the hospitality, the friendliness and the respect people showed towards me. I love it! I had heard that Southerners are the most sharing and caring people, which I found pretty impressive.

Q. What are some presumptions that Americans had about you and your culture?

A. Some Americans thought I was an Indian or Mexican. And some American friends thought I was a Muslim from Pakistan (I'm Hindu; Hinduism is the predominant religion in Nepal).

Q. Have you encountered many American undergraduates here at Wesleyan who can find Nepal on a map?

A. No, not a single undergraduate. Every time I say I'm from Nepal, I have to give a backup explanation on where



For sophomore Bikash Thapa, Wesleyan is 8,000 miles from home. Photo by G. Wallace

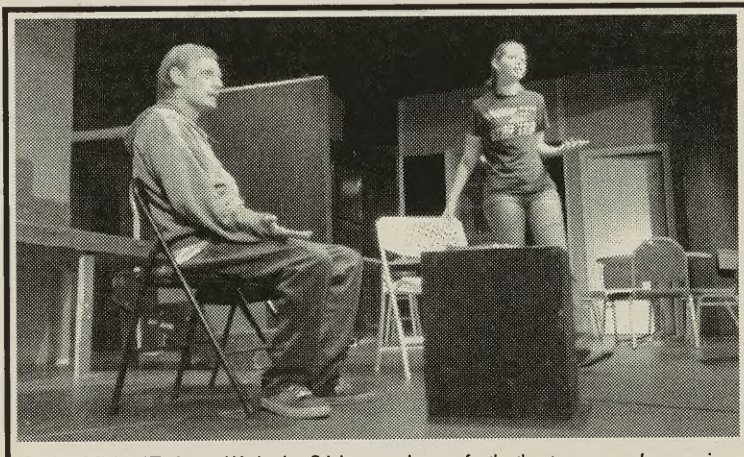
Nepal lies. Like, I have to say, "Nepal is in between India and China and students will be like oh, yeah! Got it, bro!" But I'm still not sure they get it. Others don't even know about Asia. Once I told a friend that Nepal lies in Asia. His reaction was, "Is Asia a big country?" I was like, "Dude, it's a continent."

Q. What does the average American student seem to know about your country?

A. The average American student seems to know about the Mount Everest, Gautam Buddha and the Himalayas of Nepal. But the most common response I get would be like: "Nepal, and where is that, buddy?"

Q. What other aspects of American life have surprised you?

A. I've found that Americans are more strictly bound to their religion. In addition, many Americans are fat and bulky, which I had not expected.



Seniors Michael Taylor and Katherine Crickmore rehearse for the theatre program's upcoming production of "Rabbit Hole." Turn to page 4 for a preview. Photo courtesy of NCWC Theatre