

The Decree

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Trustees approve initiatives

The North Carolina Wesleyan College board of trustees approved new initiatives for the college last week which will continue the momentum started at the beginning of the year and continues to strengthen the position of the college.

The college has already moved forward in several areas this year: a major fund-raising effort to accelerate the capital campaign for the Dunn Center is nearly completed; a positive recruiting year with increased enrollment enabled the college to balance the budget

for the current fiscal year; personnel vacancies were filled with outstanding leaders; program initiatives in critical administrative areas are meeting with success; plans are being laid which will enable the college to become more aggressive in the marketplace, enhancing both the recruiting of new students and the retention of current students; and a new spirit seems to be taking root on campus.

The board of trustees plans to move the college forward — especially in areas that will enhance enrollment and reduce attrition — using the momentum created by successful fund-raising, an increase in enrollment, and other successful initiatives.

In a Thursday meeting, the board approved plans for Wesleyan College to create a "Campus Quality of Life Project," which enhances the student environment and moves the college into a higher level of student-oriented services.

The project includes several features, including the design for an addition to the Everett Gym-

nasium, which will expand recreational, wellness, and fitness programming at the college. It offers students, faculty, staff, and even local community members through partnerships with the Wesleyan College, access to modern equipment, adequate space, and learning opportunities.

The additional space will also provide the college important multipurpose space for meeting and dining — supporting Wesleyan's use of the Dunn Center for major conferences and events that require catering services.

Other features of the Campus Quality of Life Project include the renovation of the current student activities center to become the Pearsall Fine Arts Center, the restoration of the former power plant to become a new student center, and the creation of a commons on the green space linking the Dunn Center to the main campus.

There is more than \$500,000 already committed to the Pearsall building. Those resources in hand enable Wesleyan College to move

ahead now to create a better use for the current student center, while offering students and community members a new, well-planned facility to meet expanding student needs for a game center, informal food court, meeting rooms, lounge space, and offices for the student government association and campus student publications.

The green space in front of the Dunn Center provides an opportunity for beautification of the campus and for tying the rest of the campus to the Dunn Center, the new Pearsall Fine Arts Building, and the Russell Chapel.

New and refurbished buildings cannot alone create a new campus ambiance. The programming necessary for lively activities, having facilities open when students are looking for a place to go, and offering amenities that attract students will be crucial. Creating important partnerships with local community groups will be important to obtaining financial support for the campus quality improvements, officials believe.

Sacred text explored

By MONICA ALSTON

Dr. Beverly Gaventa rendered an insightful Staley Lecture in the Leon Russell Chapel last week titled, "The Bible — What's It Good For?"

With the Bible being a highly sensitive subject for so many religious people, the lecture drew a significant number of people from Wesleyan's campus as well as from the surrounding community to witness this contemporary interpretation of the Christian gospel.

The lecture began with Gaventa's review of the various reading behaviors of people who read the text. This included the way people from different religious denominations read the Bible, along with bureaucratic and feminine views.

Gaventa mentioned that some readers of the text interpret the Bible as a guide for daily living, for help in challenges of life such as finance and bill payment, and for inspiration. She quoted a line from the former United States' President Ronald Reagan stating his view that the bible "held answers to every problem ever known to man." She also commented that the text is used as a rule book or treasure chest for some politicians who makes mentioning of the religious subject to solicit votes during campaigns, the previous campaign being one example.

According to Gaventa, some women view the Bible as a "positive evil." This view takes consideration of how the female is presented within the text. The roles of women were subordinate due to the time significantly, and contemporary women themselves disagree with this treatment today.

While concentrating on the ways of reading the Bible, Gaventa offered her own method of interpreting the holy text, and it was to simply read the text as a whole, not just by a few passages. As this is the typical way to read most literature, it seems that Gaventa is true to the Thomas F. Staley Foundation persuasive teaching that the message of the Christian gospel, when proclaimed in its historical fullness, is always contemporary, relevant, and meaningful in any generation. This was the true message Gaventa sought to communicate to the students at Wesleyan.

On reading the Bible for its full meaning, Gaventa stressed that you must think and not be a passive reader. In that event the Bible becomes "a parable to the church, as riddles really... not morality plays." She also stresses that we not try to domesticate the text but listen to the entire message. In so doing we learn that God deals with the sins of humanity, she tells us, and she doesn't believe herself that the Bible is for everyone everywhere.

Faculty to get raises

North Carolina Wesleyan College ended fiscal year 1995-96 with a surplus of approximately \$400,000 in unrestricted funds.

Friday, the Wesleyan board of trustees voted to allocate \$100,000 of those funds to salary increases for faculty and staff, \$75,000 for technology improvements to classrooms, \$100,000 to debt retirement, and \$50,000 to additional marketing and image improvement. The remaining \$75,000 will be designated as unrestricted next assets of the college. These allocations will help position Wesleyan College better for the future.

The last salary increase the college's employees had was 20 months ago, at which time a salary study was conducted and the first phase of equity adjustments was made. The distribution of the

new \$100,000 fund would be effective Jan. 1, 1997, after Phase II of a salary study is complete. The college hopes the third phase of the equity adjustments would be carried out sometime in fiscal year 1997-98.

These adjustments will help make Wesleyan more competitive in recruitment and retention of employees, trustees believe.

The additional \$75,000 for technology improvements to classrooms will allow the college to install hardware and software in each classroom, secure it, and provide workshops for faculty to explore ways in which to provide classroom instruction using technology.

This is possible because the recently announced energy improvement contract with Honeywell created a fiber optic network

on the Rocky Mount campus.

Officials said the technology improvements are a step toward positioning Wesleyan College to become a leader in small colleges who teach through technology, an obvious benefit for recruiting students.

The \$50,000 used for marketing and image enhancement will be used to provide more exposure for Wesleyan, aimed at recruiting more students and to publicize the college's advantages.

These projects will take place in the college's current fiscal year. Designating these unrestricted net assets will still leave approximately \$75,000 to increase the total unrestricted net assets. That exhibits a degree of financial strength to future grantors, in fund-raising or for seeking financing for future projects.