

NEWS & OPINION

Dean Williams Reflects on Busy First Year at NC Wesleyan

Randy Williams is finishing his first year as NCWC's Vice President of Student Affairs and Dean of Students. The Decree staff conducted a recent email interview with Dean Williams, asking him to reflect on his first year as well as the challenges of balancing work, graduate school and family. Williams and his wife, Chiquita, are the parents of two daughters, Zanyah, 8, and Reagan, 3.

Q. Because of your many and diverse responsibilities, it's probably hard for you to describe a "typical day." So instead, please give us a sense of the range of tasks you perform in a given day. And tell us when most days begin and end.

A. My work day begins around 6 a.m. each day when I grab the I-phone to read and respond to the emails that I received throughout the night. (By the way, I receive roughly 65 emails a day requiring a direct response from me. When you consider the number of emails I initiate, you'll quickly see that I spend a lot of time corresponding electronically with people.) During my drive to the office, I'm usually in a 'preflective' and reflective mode as I consider the scheduled activities for the day and prepare for the inevitable surprises while gauging the implications of my decisions, actions, and discussions from the previous day. Once I reach campus, I'm engaged in a series of meetings with students and staff... between responding to emails. On Mondays, I am on campus performing Residence Life duty until 12 a.m. This gives me an opportunity to talk with

students on the yard, in the WesSide Grill, and in the residence halls.

Q. What's most surprised you about the job here at Wesleyan?

A. No comment.

Q. What's been the most satisfying part of your job?

A. I have really enjoyed working with the Student Affairs staff. These people champion students' efforts for personal and academic success through the meaningful programs and services they provide. I have the opportunity to provide leadership in the accomplishment of their goals.

However, working with students individually and in group settings is what gives me my greatest satisfaction. At those moments when I can ignite or develop some understanding, I feel invigorated. Whether during a discussion about an activity or in a disciplinary case, I approach the students with personal development in mind. Helping them connect dots is an exciting challenge.

Q. What's been most frustrating?

A. Failing to reach a student before he or she does something that risks his/her potential! Too often, students, good students, act without much thought thus resulting in negative consequences. I know that we all have individual will in spite of our child-rearing, but I do sense a degree of failure when a student is not successful here.

Q. What are some specific improvements and changes that we can expect to see in residence life next year? What about student life in general?

A. The major noticeable difference in

Residence Life will be the presence of a seasoned professional capable of leading the department and cultivating student leadership and ownership. I'm thrilled to relinquish my Interim Director of Residence Life role as we near the end of what seems to be a successful search.

Another improvement will be a more intentional integration of the freshmen with upperclassmen, a practice that already exists. However, we will dedicate freshman spaces throughout all residence halls except for Boddie and Centura. This change, which always causes anxiety for some upperclassmen, will have an overall positive effect on how our returning students will become change agents.

At the time of this interview, we are aggressively pursuing some of the townhouse units behind Food Lion. If acquired, these units will provide students a mature residential experience in very attractive college student housing. I have my fingers crossed!

Some of the bathrooms in Edgecombe and Petteway Halls will be redone to update functionality and appearance. Nice bathrooms are great to have in community settings. With the valuable input of Atilla Szekes, the director of facilities, we will continue to identify viable methods to upgrade the residence halls.

With regard to other aspects of Student Life, we're really excited about: our new student program consisting of a pre-orientation, orientation, and extended orientation; building on the community engagement foundation led by this year's VISTA Volunteer Cara Cox-Steiner; the resurrection of Greek Life, which may result in three sororities and two fraternities by the end of the fall 2010 semester; the implementation of the new Honor Code and the initial stages of a Student Honor Court; enhancements in the Student Success Center including a stronger Freshman Advantage Program; and more great activities and things to do.

Q. What have been the results of the measures implemented early this semester to curtail crime and mischief? Are you pleased with the results?

A. The Community Standards Board has returned to this campus and made a strong statement that disrespect of others and their belongings will not be tolerated. We have removed several problem-causing students by way of campus suspensions and expulsions. The heightened presence of the Rocky Mount Police has helped to create a stronger sense of security, and the Wesleyan community has expressed its appreciation.

The camera surveillance system was pivotal in recovering a stolen television and removing the culprits from our community. The horned plastic fire alarm pull station covers almost completely deterred the false fire alarms; there was only one false event since the installation of the equipment. So when you consider these and other outcomes not shared, I am pleased that we are moving in the right direction. Above all these initiatives, I would be most pleased with students taking ownership of their college experience by erasing the "no-snitch" culture and acting on the good values that I know they possess. It's a high aspiration, but I would love to see residence halls led by student leaders like Resident Advisors rather than professional staff like Resident Directors.

Q. How have you changed as a person in the past year?

A. This has been a transformative experience for me, but I have honestly not had a chance to be reflective about the change. My immersion in family, work, and school has not left much time to take an introspective look at myself. The summer, I hope, will provide that opportunity.

Q. Describe for us your graduate work—the topic of your dissertation, the expected date of finishing your degree, and the difficulties of balancing your school work with family and a time-consuming, often stressful job.

A. I'm always happy to discuss my dissertation topic focusing on the concept of resilience. I will examine an

amazing group of people who obtained doctoral degrees in spite of their parents being locked out of their public school education for five years. I will conduct a qualitative study from an interpretivist paradigm that will allow me to gain a deep understanding of the factors that contributed to the resilience and academic success of these people. My goal is to identify those factors with the intent of reaching logically generalizable conclusions. These conclusions may be helpful in guiding current educators who serve students with significant risk to completing their college education.

This semester, I've traveled to the College of William & Mary almost weekly to meet with academic colleagues as I draft chapters 1 and 3 for my dissertation. On these days, I make the 2½ hour drive to Williamsburg for this class and then return to Rocky Mount late that night. You may imagine that I lose a lot of family time because there have unfortunately been days where I leave home before my kids wake up in the morning and arrive home well after they have



Photo by C. Thomas

gone to bed at night. Those days are difficult because my kids have so much unconditional love, and they erase a lot of my stress.

My wife, however, has been the person who has made my juggling act possible. She assists our 8 year old with homework, supervises the building of our house, and takes care of several other daily tasks, but she's not a model of the 1940s domestic stay at home wife. She also takes the lead on issues and advises me on a number of work and school related matters. Soon, she'll be returning to work in a lab setting to use her talents and skills in chemistry as a scientist.

As for my timetable, I plan to defend my research proposal by September 2010, collect and analyze data by summer 2011, and defend dissertation by early 2012.

Q. When you do get some free time, what are your hobbies?

A. Hobbies?!?!?!

Q. How well have you, your wife, and daughters adjusted to life in Rocky Mount?

A. They are resilient and adjust to change quite well. We loved our time in Williamsburg, VA and look forward to increasing an already growing fondness for Rocky Mount.

Viewpoint: A Point of Contention with 'Christians' on the Wesleyan Campus—The Bearing of False Witness

By Jesse Tamez

At Wesleyan, we are a community of friends and neighbors, right? Or at least that is what guides tell you when they take you on your tour of campus the day you come to visit the school. Well, let me tell you the real truth of the matter: we aren't very friendly to everyone. As with any school there are social misfits, miscreants, and outsiders; but the key difference here is the issue of scale. Any volume of poison can vary in its lethality depending upon one very important factor, the size of the victim.

Our school is small and like many small organisms is somewhat frail when compared with larger institutions. As you might imagine, rumors and gossip have a somewhat different effect upon such a small student body than they might at a larger institution such as ECU. Within the smaller student body of NCWC, rumors and gossip tend to cause "social cell death." What I mean by this is that every person in this campus is like a cell in a much larger organism. Now whether you are a brain cell (Honors Students), muscle cell (Student Athletes) or even a bone cell (Administration), you can still be affected by the malady of rumors. Rumor in small volume is something one can overcome. But at this school, the volume of gossip feels astronomical in relation to the size of campus. I have often joked that at NCWC you can hear rumors about the things you plan to do before you even do them. Sadly, I almost believe that now.

Although I do not know the exact percentages for the faiths of our students (Hell, with our PC society, is it even legal for a school to ask a student's religion anymore?), based upon simple observations one can assume a majority of our students proclaim that they adhere to the tenets of the Christian faith. Although rumors and gossip are always a source of revulsion for me, to see our so-called Christian students engaging in these things takes my distaste a step further. Most of these people feel zero guilt about spreading lies and falsehoods yet they go to church on Sunday and feel so good about themselves. It's hypocrisy of the worst variety.

The Old King James Bible says "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor." Well gee, that's damn interesting. All that talk of Wesleyan being a community must mean we are all neighbors of a sort. And if we are all neighbors then we mustn't go around bearing false witness against one another, right? But, what if you are the victim of someone bearing witness against you falsely? Then I guess you should do as Jesus said and turn the other cheek and forgive your enemy. But no, we see none of that here. All we see is anger, and a continual perpetration of social injustices done via the

mouth and tongue (Romans 3:13 KJV). But you know, if people would just turn the other cheek and forgive then there could be no furthering of any of these problems. A minority of students cannot long maintain a trend, and to find gossips and whisperers of secrets in the minority would extinguish the flame of this particular issue. Alas, I do not believe it will be something I see in my tenure as a student here. Perhaps this treatise expects too much of the average collegiate mind. Perhaps I am demanding a standard of ethical maturity that is too far beyond the average Wesleyan student. Still, one does not act out of a sense of ethics to be accepted; one acts ethically to preserve society.

2010 HONORS

ACADEMIC SERVICE AWARDS

Internship Award
Shakelia M. Johnson
PASS Leader Award
Alexis Johnson
Tutor of the Year
Ashley Meadows

HUMANITIES AWARD

Freshman Writing Award
Taylor M. Jackson

SCIENCE & MATH AWARDS

Biology Award
Malynda Jones
Mathematics Awards
Ben Lilley
Tiffany McCord
Exercise Science Award
Alex Ivey
Donald Scalf Scholarships
Desiree Driver
Kasie Edwards
Patrick Laffin
Arkadiusz Trochoswski

EDUCATION & SOCIAL SCIENCES AWARDS

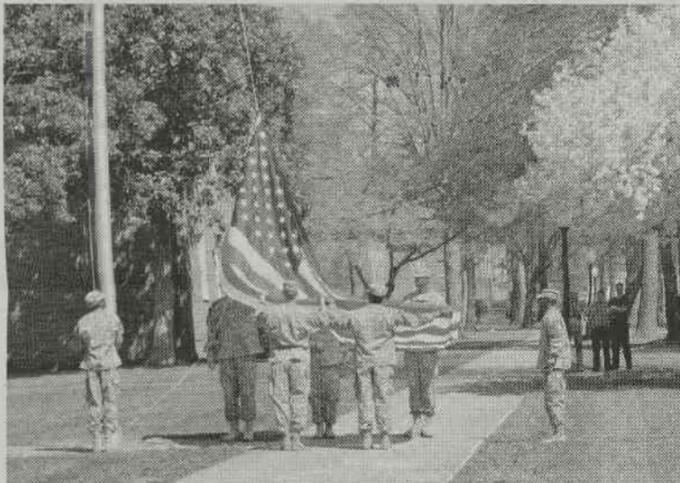
John Paul Jones History Award
Joye Ellington
Outstanding History Major Award
Joshua Akers
Allen S. Johnson Scholarship
Martha Hernandez
Corbitt B. Rushing Scholarship
Jacqie L. Flynn
Criminal Justice Award
Juliana R. Richardson
Psychology Award
Juliana R. Richardson
Sociology Award
Jessica Ashley

BUSINESS AWARDS

Accounting Outstanding Senior Award
Elena Pisarik
Business Administration Outstanding Senior Award
Elena Pisarik
CIS Outstanding Senior Award
Shakelia M. Johnson

ADULT DEGREE PROGRAM AWARDS

Outstanding Adult Degree Program Students
Goldboro Campus
Melissa Thames
Rocky Mount Campus
John "Richie" Fender
Triangle Campus
Maureen Frazer-Monroe



Wesleyan's ROTC unit raised the college's new American flag earlier this semester.

Photo by C. Lewis

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