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What Is the Purpose of a College Education?

By Leila Heinonen
Decree Staff Writer

(This article is based on the reporting of Michael Billinger, Georgettae Fields-Turrentine and Alvin Hare.)

Attaining a college education has become a prized commodity, especially with the onset of the recession. Several NC Wesleyan students were recently asked what they thought the purpose of a college education was. And the responses varied—from gaining new experiences to securing a degree and a better salary.

Many Wesleyan students know what is expected in the real world and how a college degree can improve their marketability in a tight job market. Seniors Tiffany Ross, Denver Nixon, and Orlando Webb see a college education as a requirement for better job opportunities. "A college degree gives you the best chance in landing a great job," said Ross, a criminology and sociology major.

Webb stood out by stating that obtaining a college degree does not always guarantee immediate success or any form of success at all. But he did state that "the chance of finding employment is much more likely for someone who has a college degree versus someone who doesn't have a degree. It's something that opens the door for other opportunities."

Linh Nguyen of Vietnam said the current economic downturn makes a college degree essential. "It would be very hard for one to succeed without a college education in the bad economy," he said.

Students were not only interested in acquiring better job prospects, but also the skills developed while in college. Webb offered some of his wisdom by stating that college gives one an opportunity to "better your life in preparation for the real world. College is a time to gain skills." He referred to the leadership skills that he developed while a member

of the Battling Bishops football program.

Devon Whitaker emphasized the ability to network that one gains in college. "College offers the opportunity to meet interesting people through networking," he said. "It can be an invaluable resource since it might open the door for employment in this struggling economy."

While many student responses focused on job opportunities, others discussed the personal development and enrichment that can occur at a college like Wesleyan. Many mentioned the new sense of freedom and independence.

Earning a college degree is a high priority for Tyler Payne, a sophomore business major. He feels that it prepares one for the rest of his life. In college, he said, "you learn so much and it's probably the first time you're not under your parents' supervision for long periods of time. It helps mold you into the person you will become as an adult. It's that important."

Shamika Grenardo, a sophomore, agrees with Payne. "Obtaining a college education helps promote self-independence," she said, adding that she wants to avoid "returning to the nest" after graduation.

Other students stressed the unique experiences that college provides. Junior Vivian Brown stated that learning about other cultures was one of the reasons why she chose to attend college. "I came from a standard home where everything was the same," Brown said. "I wanted to learn about different people and their cultures that were outside of the United States."

Senior TaQuetta Jones, a psychology major, echoed Brown's comments. "College allows you to better yourself and gives you a chance to meet different people and see things you wouldn't normally see," Jones stated.

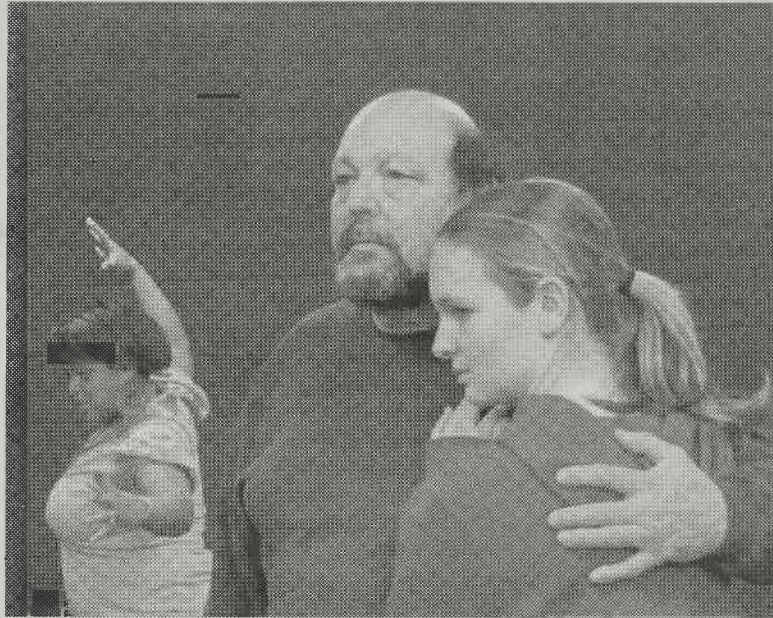
Like several other students interviewed, Bakari Walker came to college in hopes of inspiring his family. On top of the personal satisfaction one feels by

earning a degree, Walker wanted to be a role model. "Not a lot of people go to college in my immediate family," said Walker, a freshman psychology major. "I'll be the second male to attend."

Senior Brittany Holiday, a criminal justice and sociology major, expressed similar sentiments. She pursued a college education in hopes of not only bettering herself and her family, but all who come in contact with her. "I can have an opportunity for success and those who look up to me can better themselves as well," Holiday said.

Sophomore Jennifer Rich is the first in her family to attend college. "I want to show nieces, nephews and cousins that it's not about where you came from or how much you had," she said. "It's about where you're going in life."

According to John Mendy, in addition to giving one a better chance of being successful, a college degree offers students a chance to find their niche and contribute fully to society.



Dionne Luckett, Steve Pavelsky and Kathleen Tolbert rehearse for Shakespeare's "The Tempest," which Wesleyan will stage in Minges Auditorium March 8-10. All shows will begin at 8 p.m. See the cast list on page four.

Photos courtesy of R. Drake.

In New Position Infantino Supports Growing Number of Internationals

By Georgettae Fields-Turrentine
and Leila Heinonen
Decree Staff Writers

As the number of international students increases, NCWC has called on Patricia Infantino to lead the new office of International Student Services. The Brazil native has a double role: While guiding and helping international students, she teaches Spanish and English as a second language (ESL).

Infantino starts her day at 5:30 a.m., taking care of her two daughters; she is at her office by 7. "I teach an 8 o'clock Spanish class," she said, "so I have to come early to prepare and be here if the students have something to ask."

After years of foreign language classes being nonexistent, NCWC has brought back Spanish and Infantino is working hard to develop a Spanish minor.

"It's very important to learn foreign languages, especially Spanish in the U.S.," she said. Infantino has noticed that Americans are not as interested as international students are in learning a foreign language. "International students are more interested because they have been more exposed to it (foreign language instruction)," she said.

Infantino stressed the importance of learning

about other ethnic groups. "Learning a foreign language opens up a student's mind and their sense of the world," she said. "I wish American students would realize that. Here in the U.S we don't have a culture that is open to learning foreign languages or about other cultures."

Junior Evgeniy Bukatin, a business major, is interested in a Spanish minor. "I think it would be really good if we get the Spanish minor, because it is very important to learn foreign languages to increase the global understanding of different cultures," he said, adding that bilingual job candidates have an advantage in the job market.

Bukatin thinks Infantino is doing a fine job of teaching and developing the language program. "I like Mrs. Infantino," said Bukatin. "She knows how to teach and interact with students."

Enrollment in Spanish classes climbed to 32 students last fall and 19 this semester. Infantino would like the college to consider not just a Spanish minor, but a major. "Nowadays, we must

compete with a globalized world," she said. "If we don't start teaching our students how to speak at least one foreign language, we do not have a chance."

Infantino not only teaches Spanish but also classes in English. There are two types of classes—the basic ESL and advanced ESL, depending on the student's ability to understand and speak English. Now taught under as College 195, ESL classes will become part of the Wesleyan curriculum in the fall. The classes were developed to help international students with four linguistic skills: reading, writing, listening and speaking. "They support the students in their academics and to help them get used to the teacher expectations," said Infantino.

As the Director of International Stu-

dent Services, Infantino's responsibilities include working with students once they have arrived on campus. She listens to students and advises them about their problems and concerns. NCWC has 74 international students; most of them are northern Europeans but there are an increasing number of students from Asia, Russia, South-America, and Africa.

"It's very important that they have a place to come and talk about language problems and culture shock," Infantino said, "and that's why I'm here, to help and support them."

With an office in the Student Success Center, Infantino provides a wide range of support services, from helping students find a work study job, to taking them to the Social Security or DMV offices in order to obtain proper documentation. "I care about the international students and help them the best I can," she said.

She emphasized the importance of taking care of the student's emotional needs as well as the academic ones. "It's not easy to come to a foreign

country and learn a whole new culture, language, and a school system," said Infantino. "If they fail to feel safe, it creates more problems academically."

Senior Freddy Acheampong is grateful for Infantino's support. "She is very helpful," he said, noting that she's assisted him with his application for graduate school.

Heather Johnson, associate director of Admissions, trusts Infantino's ability to advise and help the students. "Mrs. Infantino is doing an excellent job working with the international students," she said.

Infantino enjoys her work, but finds it challenging. "I need to deal with so many situations with students and faculty—there is always something new," she said. "It is also very challenging to convince students what they need to do because they don't really understand how the American school system works."

At NCWC, her goals are "to make a difference in the lives of students" while encouraging them to keep an open mind and take advantage of the resources available to them.

What brought Infantino to Wesleyan in the first place? She liked the school's affiliation with the Methodist church, as well as the quality staff and faculty and the attractive, small campus. "That's a real plus for students coming out of high school," said Infantino, who added that she was excited by the prospect of growing the foreign language program.

Infantino received her B.A. in linguistics at a Catholic school in Brazil and then went to Universidade Federal do Rio De Janeiro to pursue a concentration in English, Portuguese and Spanish. In addition, she attended UNC-Chapel Hill where she earned an M.A. in romance languages and a second masters in TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages). She is now working on her Ph.D. in education with a specialization in ESL.

Infantino's previous employment was a public school teacher in North Carolina. She also taught in the public school system in Buenos Aires and Brazil for two years before coming to the U.S.

Outside of teaching, Infantino enjoys traveling ("It's a wonderful way to meet people"), reading, cooking, and playing tennis and soccer. Stressing the importance of family in her life, she reserves weekends to spend time with her children. "Family is important to us," Infantino said. "We go to Mass (we're Catholics) and then we cook on the grill, play with our dog, Mouro Hunter, and our cat, Sammy."

Infantino stated that since her employment here at Wesleyan she has learned a lot from the students. "I want to thank my students for everything they have taught me because the beauty of being a teacher is this," Infantino said, "we teach and learn at the same time."

Resolutions Not So Prevalent, But Wesleyan Community Still Sets Goals

By Leila Heinonen
Decree Staff Writer

New Year's Eve is a time to look at the past but more importantly look forward to the coming year and set new goals. Many Wesleyan students, faculty and staff set new goals for 2011, ranging from academic excellence to house renovation.

Stephen Bahnman, librarian and assistant professor of reference and electronic resources, didn't really make New Year's resolutions but his goal for this year is to learn many new things. "I just bought a house with my wife, and my goal is to renovate and finalize it," said Bahnman. "That means I need to learn a bunch of new stuff to be able to renovate it by myself."

Sophomores Alex Thompson and Trevor Huber also try to avoid the major resolutions. "My goal is just pass all the classes that I have," said Thompson, a CIS major. Huber agreed with Thompson, adding "My goal is just to follow through with everything."

Many students were making goals related to academics. "My personal goal is to be on time, graduate and get a good internship," said senior Jarrett Hedgpeath. Junior Anton Filonov of Russia said he's established high academic standards for himself: "My goal is to get a 4.0 GPA." Post-Wesleyan, he added, he would like to "just be cool and rich."

Gene Kemble's goals involve academics and finding a job. "Right now I just want to graduate and do my masters," said the exercise science major. "And then I will try to make big bucks." Senior Ryan Bain is setting goals toward graduation. "I want to graduate magna cum laude," he said.

Many student-athletes were not only promising to keep up with academics, but setting big goals for their sports teams. A center on the Bishops basketball team, junior Ric Yarbrough intends to "get good grades and to win the basketball conference championship." Sophomore Artsiom Prostack also set a goal for the tennis team: "I just want to

enjoy my life, play tennis and win the NCAA tournament this spring."

Some Wesleyan students were focused on their physical as well as the emotional well being. Junior Kiara Hill wants to concentrate on positive things: "My goal is to eliminate the bad and focus on the good, which includes people and personal situations. And I want to focus on everything I want to do in life during and after college."

Senior Ashley Meadows also emphasized feeling good and eliminating the negative things. "My plan is to get my life back on track," said Meadows. "I'm going to focus on school, and things that are going to make myself, and not others, happy." Chynna Law wants to be a better Christian. "My plan is to read the whole Bible in a year and go to church more," she said.

Marine Meyet of France is not used to making New Year's resolutions because she said it's hard to follow through. "My plan for this year is to find a school in France to finish my studies," she said, "and of course win the lottery and find love." Besides academic goals, Bain also promised to start living healthier. "My goal is to quit smoking and drink less," he said.

Chaplain Barry Drum thinks that there is nothing wrong with New Year's resolutions or setting up goals. "We should all have goals in life," he said, "but you don't have to wait until New Year's Eve to make up one." Reverend Drum did not make resolutions, per se, but he hopes to complete his doctorate in 2011.

Some students and faculty did not make New Year's resolutions because they think it is old fashioned or a waste of energy. Krystal Mitchell, a student account representative, agrees with Rev. Drum's philosophy. "I have a lot of things within myself that I feel I need to work on," she said. "I set my goals last year when I felt I needed a change; I didn't want to wait for the New Year to come around."



Patricia Infantino

G. Wallace Photo