

# THE DECREE

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NORTH CAROLINA WESLEYAN COLLEGE, ROCKY MOUNT, NORTH CAROLINA 27804

## Wesleyan Enrollment Hits All-Time High

By Decree Staff

For the second consecutive year, Wesleyan has seen a dramatic increase in its first-year class, as enrollment climbed in the traditional day program to just over 900 for the first time in the school's history.

First-year students total 420, which includes freshmen and transfers. This represents an increase of 35 students over 2014, when enrollment rose to 385 from 275 the previous year. First-year student enrollment is up 191 from 2011, according to statistics provided by President Dewey Clark.

The president attributed the enrollment increases to "basic marketing 101. We're much more customer-focused. We've developed a process and procedure for everything that's done" in admissions. He added that Wesleyan has stepped up its recruitment of students from small Christian high schools.

The president praised the efforts of Vice President Judy Rollins and her staff in Admissions. "She's considered a marketing genius," Clark said. "She's put together a tremendous team and trained them well."

As of September 1, total enrollment was 901 in the day program, one student

over the stated goal of 900. President Clark said that the previous high mark, around 870 students, was recorded in both 1979 and 2004, the year Wesleyan introduced its football program. Wesleyan enrolled 650 students in fall 2013.

Here are some facts about the freshman class:

- Average SAT score: 911, an increase over last year's 901.
- Number of international students: 45.

This brings the total to about 90 students from 28 different countries. Twenty-three come from Nepal. President Clark credited Donna Patterson, a staff member in the Admissions Office, for her efforts in recruiting internationals. "She's very student-focused and does a tremendous job of follow-up," the president said.

- Number of new football players: around 100, about the same as last year. That brings the total number of student-athletes to 400, President Clark said, noting that the number is equal to last year's figure when total enrollment was about 780.
- Number of Heritage Scholarship recipients: 24, a decrease of 16 from last year.

The Admissions Office did not respond to requests for the following additional information: the average and median high school GPAs for freshmen, the median SAT scores, the gender breakdown, and the total number of student-athletes in the freshman class.

Expressing favorable reactions to the college's recent growth spurt, many students said the higher enrollments have led to improved activities and a more vibrant and diverse campus community. Many, like junior John Jackowski and freshman Grace Lee, said that the growing student population has made it easier to make friends.

Junior Dana Baker said Wesleyan's growth is a positive reflection on her hometown. "It's a symbol of the overall success of Rocky Mount," she said. "I love that Rocky Mount is growing and excelling."

Not all student comments were positive. Many complained about parking in general, and their inability to find a spot close to the Braswell classroom building in particular. "I'm glad to have eight o'clock classes every day," said junior Cable Beck. "I can get here early and just leave my car in the same spot all day."

Junior Ayla Brewer agreed that parking is more limited, and Lee said that the cafeteria and other campus spaces have become too crowded at times. Sophomore Holly Long has detected a change in the size of her classes. "Just last year I remember having classes with 15 to 20 students," she said. "Now all of my classes are pretty much full. It makes for a harder time learning and getting to know your professors."

The NCWC administration has taken steps to accommodate the new students. This year marked the opening of Daniel Hall, which houses 40 students in single rooms. And like last year, the college has contracted with the Rocky Mount Inn, located on North Wesleyan Boulevard, three miles south of campus. According to Associate Dean Jessie Langley, 92 male upperclassmen now live there, compared to 73 last year at this time.

Dean of Students Ed Naylor said that a number of students requested rooms at the Inn, even though there were openings on campus. Capacity is about 700 for the residence halls, with 652 students living on campus in mid-September, college officials said. "I often hear comments from students who prefer the Rocky Mount Inn to the residence halls," Dean Naylor said, listing as attractive features the Inn's private bathrooms, larger beds, linen and cleaning services, and the overall size of the rooms.

Inn resident Curtis Cummings likes the private bathrooms and the overall freedom of life there. "If I want company, I don't have to sign in my guests," he said.



This year's first-year students total 420, pushing overall enrollment to an all-time high.

E. Bower photo

Dean Naylor said the college is eyeing a second new residence hall for the 2016-17 academic year. It's considering either a fourth unit along the lines of Boddie, Centura, and Daniel halls, or a 100-occupancy facility near Petteway at the south end of campus.

Academic Affairs has moved into the new era by adding faculty and working to manage its classroom space while offering a variety of courses throughout the schedule, Provost Michael Brown said.

In the past two years, the college has established new positions in some of its most popular degree programs. That includes criminal justice (Professor Mary Jackson and Visiting Instructor Richard Allsbrook), exercise science (Assistant Professor Shannon Crowley) and psychology (Assistant Professor Gregory Preuss). For the second consecutive year, the biology department has hired a visiting instructor as a fifth full-time faculty member, with Dr. Joseph White filling the position for 2015-16. Assistant Professor Ian Boucher has joined the library staff as an Emerging Technologies and Outreach Librarian.

The provost hopes to hire additional faculty next year as well. He said that his "wish list" includes five or more new positions. Some hires will be made to fill vacancies in English and political science, as well as a long-standing opening in business. The provost is recommending that the college bring in a second political science professor and new faculty in English, marketing, religious studies, and theater and entertainment.

Some veteran faculty have expressed concern that the sudden growth in the day program would mean an over-reliance on adjunct, or part-time, instructors. The provost calculated that adjuncts are teaching about 30 percent of fall courses.

The Decree found that Humanities courses were among the most reliant on adjuncts, who staff 11 religious studies courses as well as 19 freshmen composition classes offered by the English Department.

The provost was asked if he was comfortable with the percentage of classes taught by adjuncts. "Our part-time faculty all contribute to the student learning experience here," he said. In the coming years, "we'll continue to add both full-time and part-time faculty members to keep up with our growth in the student body."

The provost would like to raise the percentage of courses with full-time faculty by 10-15 percent. "I don't know that there's a commonly accepted 'ideal' mix of full-time to part-time faculty members," he said, "although in the long run my goal would be to get the ratio up to 80 to 85 percent full-time faculty members teaching on campus."

Dr. Brown noted that his staff coordinated with Admissions in planning the fall 2015 course offerings, which were set in early spring. He said that classroom utilization during the day is now about 80 percent, suggesting that there is room for the college to grow. He believes the current classroom space is sufficient to handle 1,100 students, though the college will soon face a shortage in faculty office space.

ASPIRE has witnessed a concomitant growth in its population of adult degree students. Total enrollment now stands at 1,179, just under the all-time high of 1,216, achieved in 1996, according to Dr.

Evan Duff, Vice President of Adult Education and ASPIRE. The ASPIRE program's fall 2013 enrollment was 976, he said.

Significant growth has come from two of Wesleyan's 10 campuses. The Wilmington site's enrollment has risen from 24 students in 2012, its first year, to

## Parkes in Recreation Post

Karen "Karie" Parkes wants to establish a "safe, inclusive environment" for Wesleyan students in her new role as Director of Student Activities.

Parkes, 31, joined the Wesleyan community last spring following an exhaustive search. She was one of 70 applicants for the position and one of two invited to campus for a day of interviews.

The new director brings six years of experience to her post. Before moving to Rocky Mount, she worked at Campbell University, where she earned undergraduate and graduate degrees. She succeeds Adia Cuthbertson who left for a new opportunity last spring after five years at Wesleyan.

A native of West Palm Beach, Florida, Parkes drew praise from students based on her campus interview last spring.

Senior Macon Hammond, a member of the search committee, said Parkes came to the interview with plenty of ideas for NCWC student activities. He likes Parkes' "energy and down-to-earth demeanor." He called her "confident, but humble."

Jessie Langley, Associate Dean of Students for Campus Life, cited Parkes' previous experience at Campbell, noting "I've been impressed by her enthusiastic engagement in the work of student activities." Langley added that Parkes possesses the right ideas for "building community" and providing the student body with "meaningful leadership opportunities."

Hammond said he expects Parkes to be successful in her new position. "She is very driven and student-centered," he explained.

The Decree conducted a recent interview with Parkes about her background and plans for the future.

**Q.** You served as Assistant Director of Student Activities at Campbell. What was the most important lesson you learned during that time?

**A.** One was not to stress when things didn't turn out as we had planned. When things went wrong or something was forgotten at an event, I learned to stay calm and help students work through the speed bumps.

**Q.** What drew you to this work and what do you find most satisfying about it?

**A.** I was at Campbell University working on my master's of divinity when a graduate assistant position in Student Activities opened up. I got the job and spent the next two and a half years as a GA for the department. I loved it so much and it was such a good fit for me and the school that when I graduated, they offered me a full-time job. I knew I wanted to do some

the current level of 134, said Dr. Duff who highlighted the college's successful partnership there with Cape Fear Community College.

Rocky Mount's enrollment has jumped from 293 students in 2013 to 364. While attributing some of that growth to a new relationship with a local company, Cummins, Dr. Duff cited the leadership of Site Director Michael Drew as well as efforts of staff member Doretha Chichester. "Michael and Doretha have done an amazing job of recruiting since 2012," Dr. Duff said.

As far as 2016, President Clark would like to see a total enrollment of 1,000 in the day program. The college hopes to attract 100 more students each year until it reaches total enrollment of 2,000. "Saturation is a long way off for us in our current markets," the president said. "Next year should be our best one yet."

kind of college ministry and felt this was where God was leading me.

**Q.** Campbell is a larger school than Wesleyan. What particular challenges will you face in working at a smaller school?

**A.** I think pulling student volunteers from such a large athletic population in a small-school setting is going to be challenging. In the past I've had only a few athletes volunteer, but here many of my students are athletes and learning to work around multiple schedules is going to be difficult.

**Q.** When it comes to student activities, what are some advantages found at a smaller school?

**A.** One of the biggest advantages is that I can get to know a large segment of the students and actually listen to what they want to happen on campus.

**Q.** You hold a master's degree in divinity. How will that background influence your work in student activities? Should we expect programming to have a more spiritual component?

**A.** My degree is more focused in Biblical studies, like Biblical languages and studying the Bible. The way it will most come into play for my job is how I treat students, staff, and faculty and expect the students to treat each other. I want us all to have fun, but in a safe, inclusive environment that everyone

will enjoy. My organizations are all student-led, so I'll help guide them in the selection of events. But I like for them to make most of the decisions about programming.

**Q.** You began last April. What were your initial impressions of the student body?

**A.** They were all very friendly and helpful.

**Q.** What are your early impressions of the staff and the campus itself?

**A.** It's a beautiful campus and the staff is very easy to work with.

**Q.** The Decree often surveys students regarding their likes and dislikes. They will often state that there is "nothing to do on campus." What can you do to erase this perception?

**A.** I'm working on communication with the students and making sure they know there's always stuff to do on campus. I have a calendar full of organizations' events that everyone is welcome to enjoy.

**Q.** What are some early plans you have for making campus life more vibrant?

**A.** I'm working to strengthen our "Wesleyan Cinemas" program to make it a fun movie experience. We moved it to the Carlton Board Room so we could have a great picture and sound, and serve snacks! I'm working with SEAT to bring new events to campus. I want to bring fun acts that this campus has never seen before. I want to help the clubs and organizations create new, exciting events for their fellow students.

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## Freshmen Urged To 'Get Involved'

By Carolynn Davern  
Decree Staff Writer

Upperclassmen, faculty and staff urged members of Wesleyan's record-breaking freshman class to get involved with campus life.

That was the most common advice found by The Decree in recent interviews. Interviewees were asked to provide one suggestion for freshmen to flourish in the first year of college.

Provost Michael Brown encourages students to take part in activities and opportunities such as plays, clubs, or lectures. "A four-year education is more than what you do in the classroom," he said.

Aubrey Motley, a senior, is a member of Alpha Sigma Phi fraternity, the Psychology Club, and the new Film/Media club. He said that if students don't get involved as much as possible, they're going to be bored. Other upperclassmen added that Wesleyan students possess the freedom to create their own activities, if existing programs don't interest them.

Junior Christina Huber also urged students to experiment and become part of an organization. "Step out of your comfort zone because this is the time that you will find out who you are," she said.

When students get involved on campus, it's easier to make new friends and connections. Sophomore David White advises freshmen to come "out of their shell" and meet people that could help bring them success. "Don't shut yourself up in your room," he warned. Two other sophomores, Jessica Konopka and Kayla Laughinghouse, cite The Bridge worship group as a great way to meet people with common interests as well as create connections for later in life.

Of course as students add new activities to their schedules, time management becomes critical to achieving the proper balance of classes, exams, sports, clubs, plays, and parties. Junior Karishma Patel and Provost Brown both stressed that a student's education should come first in the list of priorities. "Schedule study time first (about 15-20 hours a week), and then everything else around it," suggested Dr. Brown.

Laughinghouse agrees with Patel and the provost. She works in the campus bookstore and another bookstore off-campus, takes part in organizations on campus, and works to fulfill requirements for her elementary education major. Needless to say, she knows a lot about time management. "Your social life is important," she said, "but your studies shouldn't suffer." Senior Kristopher Harris echoed Laughinghouse's comments. "Take care of your GPA from the start," he said. "Don't mess around and have too much fun."

A good planner—either an electronic or paper one—is integral to successful time management. Sophomore Samantha Morton

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