

Brandon Bess - New SGA President

By Art Menius

Brandon Bess looks like an ordinary college student, unassumingly dressed in a faded t-shirt from a major sporting goods chain. Once you hear him speak with eloquence beyond his years, however, you realize he is a leader and a strong communicator. Bess is one of those folks who can talk to anybody about anything and knows how to listen, too. With those attributes, he has been elected to serve as president for the 2005 – 2006 academic year of the Student Government Association (SGA) at Wilkes Community College. The SGA officially represents the student body and is responsible for coordinating a variety of educational, social, community service and recreational events for students.



“Brandon is a positive role model for our student body and an asset to our Student Activities Program,” reports Scott Johnson, Student Activities Coordinator at Wilkes Community College. “He works extremely well with others, is energetic, and demonstrates the initiative needed to carry out his responsibilities.”

Bess, a North Wilkes High School alumnus, was born in Pageland, SC, and moved to Wilkes in 1993 with his mother and stepfather, Angie and Dennis Wyatt. They reside in the Mulberry neighborhood. He will be entering his second year at WCC studying for an Associate in Arts degree. Next year he hopes to transfer to Appalachian, NC State, or UNC-Chapel Hill. “I plan to major in Environmental Science because I am an outdoors person who loves wildlife,” Bess says. “The more I can be outdoors the better. That’s why I enjoy working at Jimmy’s Superette because I’m outdoors and get to meet lots of people, and I am a people person.”

As a people person, Bess was drawn to Wilkes Community College because the school helps foster direct personal relationships among students, faculty, and staff. “I didn’t want to jump into the big four-year scene, and I can get the same first two years of education here. The instructors here are more willing to work with you one on one. You’re not just a number at WCC. Instructors have time to talk to you.”

In that environment, Bess quickly thrived. “Brandon has been active in the Student Government Association and Baptist Student Union this past year,” Johnson says. “As an assistant programming chairperson in the SGA, he helped with organizing several student activity events. He was very supportive of the SGA executive officers and was always willing to take on extra responsibilities.”

Bess enjoyed those activities so much, that he decided to run for SGA president. “If I ran for president, I felt I could reach out to the students more. So many people at WCC are willing to help. I want to give back and make a difference. I value this college. I wish more people around here would become aware of this great resource. I want to see more involvement in the clubs on campus. I want to let the students know that there is more than just going to class. I want to get more people involved and show that people are concerned. I want students to see how much fun community college is and that it is not just a stop on the way to a four-year university.”

Bess’ service to his fellow students has brought him a wealth of opportunities over the past couple of months. On May 20 he traveled to the ASU campus with a select group of WCC sophomores for the L.E.A.D. (Leadership Exploration And Development) Retreat. The purpose of this retreat was to bring together students from the various clubs and/or academic departments to participate in discussions and information sessions about issues related to college life. The next month he and Meleah Gambill, SGA programming co-chair, spent a week at Peace College in Raleigh for the NC Community College System Student Leadership Institute. “We learned about different kinds of leadership and how to reach out to others. We talked about how to be better leaders who can change with the times.”

As western division chair, Bess represents 16 colleges for the North Carolina Comprehensive Community College Student Government Association (N4CSGA). “We meet the second weekend of each month in Raleigh,” he explains. “We bring ideas to a higher level that can take them before the Legislature. We also do fall and spring conferences. We try to get all 58 community colleges to come together to learn about everything from diversity to parliamentary procedure. We identify the biggest concerns in the community college system and serve as the voice of the system. I’ve been on board for two months and will serve until next May.”

The SGA presidency also gives Bess a seat on the Wilkes Community College Board of Trustees. “The WCC Board of Trustees values input. I am there as the

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