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Enrollment Levels Up Financial Condition Stabilizes

As Mars Hill College enters the 1983-1984 school year, it is on a much better financial standing than expected last year. "Enrollment figures for this year are better than expected," according to Miss Frances Snelson, Assistant to President Bentley, who was unavailable for comment last Friday. Dr. Smith Goodrum, Associate Dean for Admissions,

said in a public statement issued by the college on August 18, that paid student deposits are running ahead of this time last year by better than two percent. This coupled with the college's traditionally high retention rate of upperclassmen, means that the college could be reversing a trend of declining student enrollment. Goodrum also noted several factors

which he believes are leading to the increased student numbers: more confidence in the nation's economy, attraction to the college's financial aid program (Mars Hill will award over \$3 million in scholarships and other forms of financial aid this year), and an increased interest among North Carolina students. Dr. Bentley stated at the faculty workshop August 17 that he was "encouraged," but "we still have a long way to go." Regarding the increase in enrollment, Jeff Gordon, an Admissions Representative speaking for Dr. Smith Goodrum who was unavailable for comment on Friday, states, "it's really too early to tell anything yet, not until add-drop is over."

When asked if the financial condition

of the school had actually improved, Internal Auditor Claude Vess Jr. replied "I would not be overly optimistic. We had to make terrific cuts last year, and we are still working under those cuts. It's just that enrollment figures are more in line with what we had anticipated." He went on to add, "it's not a complete turn-around, but it is much more positive. It's on par with what we had anticipated under the austere budget formulated last year."

Regarding the outlook for programs during the upcoming school year, Miss Snelson stated, "governing bodies will be determining priorities under the 1983-1984 budget." "Overall," Claude Vess summarizes, "the plan is working; it's a stabilized situation."

Student Overcomes Handicap to Earn First Degree in New Program

Sarah Page Hall, a vivacious young actress-singer, credits her Mars Hill College professors with helping her overcome a mild form of dyslexia to become the first graduate in the college's Musical Theatre Performance program.

"When I came to Mars Hill, I wasn't very well qualified academically," she states. "Dyslexia (an impairment of the ability to read) was a new ailment when I was going through school, and mine wasn't really diagnosed until I got to Mars Hill. My teachers in the public schools didn't have the time to spend with me, and I was doing average work anyway, so I just passed myself off as a not very bright student. My parents were the ones who really caught it, because the teachers would tell them I wasn't college material, and that they should send me to a tech school to learn a trade."

After entering Mars Hill, she enrolled in a basic study skills program that the college sponsors to learn how to study. "I had absolutely no study habits when I came, but my teachers here picked up on my dyslexia right away and were very patient in bringing me along, and believe me, if you don't have good study habits, you just will not make it." She became interested in drama in high school and naturally pursued the subject in college. By her open and animated conversation, one finds it hard to believe that she was once a shy girl. "Oh yes," she states, "and fat. Drama became a way for me to talk to people."

Mars Hill's Musical Theatre Performance program was added to the curriculum in the mid-1970's and is designed

for students interested in singing careers in musical comedy and/or opera. This specialized program is one of only a handful in the nation.

"I became aware that a straight drama major was not what I wanted soon after I had to take my first technical class," Sara Page notes. "I just do not do well around technical things. Rigging lighting for a play terrified me. Plus, I wanted to continue with my singing. So this major seemed to be tailor-made for me."

"After changing her major to the musical theatre program, she immediately learned that she had a lot of ground to make up in music classes. "I had never had to live in the 'catacombs' of the music department before, but these two areas, music and theatre, are so demanding of your time. You have to spend the time practicing and rehearsing, or it just isn't going to be there when you have to use it."

Being the first person through a new program has both advantages and disadvantages. "My teachers would not let me 'slough off' any of the requirements just because I was the first one to go through it," she states, "but by the same token, when problems arose, they were very cooperative in discovering suitable arrangements. All of the faculty in both departments were cooperative and helpful; in fact, I consider them my friends and don't hesitate to take any problems I have to them."

Sarah Page has had important roles in most of the college's recent productions, including "The Great American Musical

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The Biltmore House and Gardens featured in the new Where To Go/What To Do section. See page 3 for complete story.

Open House

On Monday, August 22, as a part of the Gateway orientation program for Freshmen and Transfers, Dr. and Mrs. Bentley opened their home to students for an informal walk-thru visit and reception. The Bentley home is a very beautiful one, which greatly impressed many students. One of the most impressive features of the house was the many interesting and diverse art works present in the decor. According to Dr. Bentley, "these were done by friends, so that we can have all of our many friends, from our many travels, around us at all

times."

One of the highlights of the evening occurred when Barbi McKay, while speaking with Dr. Bentley and drinking a Coke, momentarily lost control in response to his humor. Dr. Bentley later stated "no permanent damage was done and only limited mopping was necessary." Overall it was a very enjoyable evening, and in this writer's opinion, this event should become an annual tradition.

One final note, at this hour Dr. Bentley is still searching for the student or students responsible for turning up his electric blanket full blast in the middle of one of Western Carolina's most severe heat waves.