

# Welcome Parents!

# THE HILLTOP

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## Enrollment At Eight Year High

MARS HILL - To get a face-splitting smile from a Mars Hill College administrator these days, just ask about enrollment. Over 450 new students enrolled this fall, making this the largest freshmen class since 1981. The goal for the fall was 400 new students," says Jim Black, director of admissions at the school, "but the applicants kept coming in and we ended up with 450," he smiles.

These figures represent a whopping 26 percent increase over last fall's freshmen class, the highest number of newcomers in the school's history. Total enrollment at the college is up also, but at a moderate five percent increase. Overall, with a freshman class of 450, the total enrollment would be higher, but we graduated an unusually large senior class in May," says Dr. Donald Schmeltekopf, President of the college. Still, the total enrollment of 1,020 is the highest in four years.

These smile-producing figures come as a result of a renewed effort at the school

and a revamping of policies. "We've tried to adhere to the findings of an enrollment management task force," says Schmeltekopf, "and it is working well for us."

The task force's findings stated that Mars Hill needs over 1,000 students for the college to remain viable financially as well as to support the programs the college offers. The optimum number is pegged at 1,200, and that's the number the school hopes to have in two to three years.

The recommendations from the task force also mandated changes ranging from residence hall refurbishing and campus beautification activities to efforts aimed at helping new students overcome the difficulties of adapting to college life.

Among the changes affecting admission policies has been a closer matching of prospective students' abilities and needs to college offerings. "We're taking a closer look at the students we admit to Mars Hill," says Black. This has also resulted in a student body whose

average Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) scores are substantially higher than the average scores of ten years ago.

Another new program is the involvement of current and retired faculty and staff members with alumni to canvass certain portions of the state. The personal contacts this group maintains eases the progress of students' admission procedures. Black also compliments his staff with hard work in following up on prospective students, which has been made easier this year with new computer technology that keeps up with each applicant's progress and notifies the admission counselors of possible problems.

Also new for this year is a toll-free telephone number and a financial aid program that guarantees a N.C. student that he or she will receive 90 to 100 percent of eligible financial aid awards if application is made within the current school year. This guarantee is good even if the college has to make up some of the finances out of its own pocket.

Securing enough students is far from

an easy task, and Black notes that it will not become any easier in the future. Demographics predict that the number of high school seniors in N.C. will continue to drop at a rate of two percent per year until 1995. Other surrounding states will show an increase, however, and the admission staff has closely examined the areas where the school recruits. The result has been the strengthening of efforts in some areas while other, non-productive areas have been dropped.

"The setting of realistic goals that everyone can help in achieving has stimulated the entire campus," says Schmeltekopf. "It has taken a serious commitment of financial and staff resources, but the success of this year's enrollment has encouraged the entire community. I am confident that we will reach our goals ahead of schedule."

Information about admission procedures at Mars Hill is available by calling 1-800-543-1514.

## Help Has Arrived! . . . Student Support Services

Mars Hill College now has a new program, the Student Support Services, that helps students stay in college and successfully graduate. This is a federally-funded project that offers free services to eligible students. In order to be such, students must meet the following criteria: a) You are weak in some academic area; b) You are handicapped or physically disabled; c) Your parents did not graduate from a four-year college; d) Your family's income is modest. The services available from the program are as follows: counseling (academic, personal), tutoring in difficult subjects, special contact with college faculty, access to special workshops, attendance at selected cultural events, and help in locating financial aid.

Ara McKinney, Director of Student Support Services, said that the program for this year will hopefully be completely staffed for full operation by September 19, 1988; however, if students need help, tutoring is available on a limited basis. The program provided by this program will be on a one-to-one basis and should be

in full swing by the 19th, also. Tutors will be MHC students who have volunteered for a position or have been recommended by the college faculty. These people will be paid an hourly wage of \$3.35. McKinney requests that any prospective tutor contact her for a position. The program calls for approximately 40 tutors and will serve an estimated 175 students.

The Student Support Services offices are on the ground floor of Marshbanks Hall. The general office phone number is (689) 1380. McKinney's office phone is 1464.

Ms. McKinney is originally from Yancey County and lives in Newdale, outside of Burnsville. She taught high school English for 11 years, then spent several years in the NC community college system both as an English instructor and an administrator. Before coming to MHC, she taught at McDowell High in Marion. She received her B.S. and M.A. in English from Appalachian State, and she did a year of post-graduate work in English.

McKinney's basic responsibility at MHC is to oversee the operation of the Student Support Services Program. Presently, she is screening and hiring new

staff: a staff counselor and tutor coordinator. She will be working with faculty and qualifying students; however, if a student does not qualify, she will refer him to the right place to get help. All qualifying students are invited and encouraged to utilize this program.

When asked how she feels about her job at MHC, McKinney responded, "This opportunity is exciting for me. I like the college setting, the family sense of Mars Hill, and the opportunity for service that the Student Support Services Program is going to make available for Mars Hill students and I want to be a part of that."

## MHC Joins the Club

Kevin Byrd  
Contributor

Yes, that's right, Mars Hill College has joined the club — Club Coca-Cola, that is. Saturday night after the first football game of the season, the Club Coca-Cola dance-party's national tour came to Mars Hill. The tour is a non-profit venture for the support of Special Olympics. Jay Hurst, Director of Student Activities, and Moira McConnell were the chief coordinators of the event, along with the Student Activities Board. The tour was brought to Mars Hill thanks to a \$2,500 donation. Included in the donation are the costs of admission and all refreshments. Students were invited from many area high schools, churches, and colleges. The dance offers such attractive features as 20-foot high video screens, lights and special effects. The tour has been successful so far and should prove to be an effective fundraising effort for the Special Olympics organization. Special thanks are also to be given to all of the fraternities and sororities of Mars Hill College, who assisted with the event.

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