

Standards, accountability mark Thompson's tenure at WSSU

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I do not have all the answers," he explained. "I try to listen as much as I talk. I try to learn something new each day."

He went on to note that he is a very proud individual — proud of the university to which he is connected.

"I believe in the work ethic, to work hard up front and celebrate the reward," Dr. Thompson said.

"I'm respectful of people and have adopted Peter Drucker's model of management and that's simply trying to get things done through people."

Esponsing academic excellence at WSSU is one of the many things that the people at the university have helped Dr. Thompson accomplish. Since the chancellor set about his mission of reform at WSSU, four years ago August 1, the overall Scholastic Aptitude Test average score for entering students has increased by more than 60 points.

The better crop of students are instructed by a better qualified and more committed faculty, Dr. Thompson said.

"We have spent a lot of time with our faculty clarifying programs, scopes of programs and filling vacancies with the best quality persons we could attract to the university," he said. "When one speaks of faculty development, one must first look at the present faculty and see what improvements can be made . . . in regards to faculty training, that is an on-going process."

Under his direction the university has progressed academically simply by redefining courses offered in major programs. An example of this can be seen in the revamping of WSSU's business division. Rather than offering concentrations in finance and business administration, the college now offers students the opportunity to major in accounting, finance or marketing and economics.

In the works, is a "master plan" of facilities for the institution, Dr. Thompson said.

"The master plan had to be last since we wanted to clearly reidenti-



Chancellor Thompson, Mayor Wayne Corpening and Tom Hearn, president of Wake Forest, participate in a ground-breaking ceremony.

fy the focus and scope of programs so the facility plan would truly reflect the needs of the institution," he explained. "The major focus coming out of that exercise dictates a need for campus expansion through land acquisition, upgrading some of our current facilities as to today's purpose or use, and the addition of certain buildings in response to our expanded academic offerings."

Despite the structural and academic improvements, those made and those pending, some still view the state university as one solely for Afro-Americans. There are also people, like one businessman at a recent Greater Winston-Salem

Chamber of Commerce forum, who don't consider WSSU a "major" branch of the UNC system.

"An undergirding assumption to a statement of that nature, I assume, permeates the misconception that the five historically black universities in the state system are still viewed by many as institutions for black people," he said. "I don't know how long it will take to overcome that misperception."

The gentleman wanting a "major" branch in Winston-Salem was asking for what the then federal Department of Health, Education and Welfare (HEW) wanted in the 1970s — to eliminate historically

Afro-American colleges and make the other 15 schools in the system like the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

As he rallied against that proposal then, Dr. Thompson stands firm in his belief today that it is not financially sound or feasible for the state to support such an undertaking.

"I would say to anyone here (in Winston-Salem) to utilize the resources at the baccalaureate level as well as the graduate center in which the MBA is offered and master's in education," said Dr. Thompson. "Use this institution as a conduit, a connector, to the other institutions in the system. Their resources can be our resources if the community indicates there is a need for a special course offering or program. . . . A case in point is the engineering issue."

The university recently demonstrated how self-imposed and UNC mandated admission requirements have improved the quality of students admitted to WSSU. Some, however, maintain that by requiring certain SAT scores and college prep classes the university is no longer serving the Afro-American youth who otherwise may not have gained entry into post-secondary education. The chancellor, a graduate of historically black North Carolina Central University, strongly disagrees with such beliefs.

"Through that plan, the Strategic Plan, that particular issue is addressed among students, among faculty members, trustees and some community members as new needs were derived, and statements were retained to insure the continuance of the types of programs needed to address the needs of the under-achiever," Dr. Thompson explained.

The Strategic Plan, first released in July 1988, is a university-developed road map for the future stating the institution's vision and needs in the areas of student, faculty, community and finances.

"However, as those needs and programs were declared to continue, it was also determined that the

remedial or developmental educational thrust would not be the major thrust of the university," said Dr. Thompson.

"This university is not to be a remedial institution but an institution of quality with the same opportunities for some under-achievers to be admitted and hopefully advance in their development and graduate as true baccalaureate graduates. We are and will continue to be very sensitive and responsive to the original mission of the institution. I wish to be clear on one point and that is any student awarded the baccalaureate degree from this institution will be certified as prepared to compete in our total society. Anything short of that principle would indeed be criminal."

The job of chancellor is not an easy one, Dr. Thompson concedes, for he is a man who is accountable to students, faculty and staff, trustees, community members, the UNC Board of Governors and the state General Assembly.

"It is one of the most challenging occupations one can seek today, for it's one in which the buck stops here," said the man who studied to be a physician and even earned a bachelor's and master's degree in biology. "This seat is one in which you're accountable to all and we get directives, requests, suggestions, mandates and charges from all segments of our society or our community. So we view ourselves as a CEO or a senior administrator who must by the same token take state policy, university policy, desires, wishes, hopes and dreams and convert them into programs."

"The job of chancellor is not a glorious job. It truly is a public service job. The chancellor must work and conduct his or herself on a day-to-day basis to make decisions, resolutions and issues and maintain that environment that is conducive to learning and teaching and at the same time make no mistakes."

When the new freshmen arrive on campus next month, Dr. Thompson will scan their faces, their expressions and, during the

101st commencement exercises, he will search them again and note the changes.

"There is nothing more rewarding than that," he said of that experience. "That's the greatest reward in this job."

Dr. Thompson will remain WSSU's chancellor until the job, the mission, the strategic plan "is done," he said. One day he hopes to venture into private enterprise. Many, such as his executive assistant, Jimmi Black, idolize him and pattern their professional lives after his.

"He's the kind of person many of us will look back on and realize how significant he was in our lives and our development," Mr. Black said.

Beaufort O. Bailey, a 30-year veteran at the university, has seen the likes of Chancellor Emeritus Kenneth R. Williams and Dr. Douglas Covington pass through the university's doors. He credits Dr. Thompson with having a different management style.

"He's always open to suggestion," said Mr. Bailey, who also sits on the city-county school board. "Whether it's from the janitor, a maid or top administrators, he's always open to suggestions."

At age 58, Dr. Thompson is considered a success by many but, according to him, he has yet to reach that pinnacle in his career.

"No (I'm not a success), but I hope to be one day. I will let those around me, one day, make that decision."

"I approach no task for self-aggrandizement. I approach it from commitment and interest. I would never approach a job or take a job that I would not want to do."

His is a philosophy that many must follow in order to make WSSU an institution that pales in comparison to none, he said, adding "If we are to be successful in achieving our goals at Winston-Salem State University, it will take the involvement and support of many people inside and outside of this institution."

City Board of Aldermen to consider loitering ordinance

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- behaving in a manner as to raise reasonable suspicions that he or she is about to engage or is engaged in unlawful drug-related activity,
- repeatedly passes to or receives from others packages which appear to be similar to those containing drugs,
- running when approached by a police officer,
- being at a location frequented by drug users and sellers.

"Standing alone, it's just one more tool. But if you add it to the arsenal of other measures, this ordinance will substantially impact the numbers of people loitering for the purpose of selling drugs and will give police officers a useful tool to combat this problem," said Police Chief George L. Sweat. "We want to start slow with this . . . utilize our narcotics unit on the initial enforcement of the ordinance and we'll use our most experienced officers to make the first cases and successfully prosecute them."

Alderman Lynne S. Harpe said she has and would support any measure that would lead to the elimination of drugs, dealers and users, but said the ordinance, as written, could infringe on the rights of law-abiding citizens.

"If there was some way that we could rewrite this ordinance, with maybe a combination of the circumstances," Mrs. Harpe said. "The way it's written right now, I'd have to abstain from this at this point."

In an effort to reassure Mrs. Harpe, Alderman Burke said, "In some areas it is so obvious what they're (drug dealers) doing. I can imagine many folks who would have this problem in their communities would be very elated because those people are gathering in a neighborhood for no other reason but to purchase drugs."

Chief Sweat said his more experienced officers working in the narcotics division know who the dealers and sellers are because they are often repeat offenders.

"With my most trained officers we would go into the high drug areas and we could pick out the drug offenders," Chief Sweat said.

"I'm not trying to put any stumbling blocks in your way," Mrs. Harpe said, "but I'm trying to protect you (police), the city and its citizens."

Alexander Beatty, assistant city manager and assistant superintendent in charge of law enforcement, assured Mrs. Harpe that the city attorney and legal advisers on state and local levels have reviewed the ordinance and that it has been rewritten to comply with their suggestions.

"The direction that Chief Sweat will give his officers . . . they will target locations where they know they've got a problem," he said. "They know who they (dealers) are but they don't have the tools now to inconvenience them."

Only two of the four committee members were present, but with Alderman Harpe abstaining and Mrs. Burke in favor, they forwarded the ordinance to the full board. Mrs. Harpe requested that the city staff forward a transcript of the discussion during the meeting to the full board, and Mrs. Burke asked that board members be polled on their views concerning the ordinance before the July 17 meeting.

In another meeting, the Finance Committee of the Board of Aldermen approved Wachovia Bank & Trust's gift of its Patterson Avenue branch. The city plans to use the facility at 2305 N. Patterson Ave. as a multi-purpose neighborhood service center.

The center would be used as a site offering information about jobs, training and other government-sponsored programs and services. And possibly a location where city residents could pay utility bills.

The building has three floors and 4,780 square feet of space. The structure will require renovations, about \$94,207 worth, to install restrooms which are accessible to the handicapped, an additional office, a collection work area and

other modifications to create an open meeting area. An exterior stairway is planned to give the required additional entrance to the basement level, Mr. Beatty said.

City staff has recommended that three full-time employees be hired — one to collect utility payments and sell tickets to public events, and the other two serving as operations staff members. An additional \$54,110 would be needed to pay the staff for nine months, with a \$26,770 operating budget. A capital outlay of \$15,550 is proposed to purchase equipment and facility furnishings to supplement those Wachovia donated.

Coble's top team raises concerns

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in the local system for four years; spent two years as counselor; two, as a planning coordinator on the Career Center Project; and was the center's assistant principal for one year before he was moved into central office administration.

In contrast, Dr. Phillips joined the local system as a guidance counselor in 1959. She worked for one year as the school librarian at Carver Crest and Columbia Heights elementary schools; three additional years as a counselor; served as school psychologist for one year at the central office level; three years, teacher/director of the Continuing Education Program; three years, central office coordinator of the Model Cities Program; and was principal of Lowrance Intermediate School for 10 years.

Mr. Jessup joined the system in 1960, taught for five years, was moved to central office as a purchasing agent and after nine years was made director of purchasing.

He served in that capacity for six years and in 1980 was appointed Assistant Superintendent for Business Affairs (or Auxiliary Services).

A four-member study team headed by L. Linton Deck, director of education and non-profit applications for the Center for Creative Leadership in Greensboro, a private non-profit group.

"You must understand that literally hundreds of people were interviewed and just because any individual qualifies on paper doesn't mean they're best suited for the job," Dr. Coble said. "In the estimation of the outside group we felt her (Dr. Phillips) skills could be better matched with the position she was assigned to."

Her new role would be that of Assistant Superintendent of Student Services. In that capacity she will supervise in excess of 200 employees in the areas of guidance, health, testing, drop out pre-

vention, social work, student records, substance abuse and exceptional placement. Her current \$58,104 a year salary will not change, nor will her assistant superintendent title because of her contract.

Dr. Coble admitted that while the new position would allow Dr. Phillips to supervise more people (she now oversees 17) it is not a promotion.

"It is more a lateral than an upward move, but it's a great deal more responsibility than she had in the other role," he said.

Perception others had of a potential supervisor was an important factor the study group reviewed, Dr. Coble said. When asked whether Dr. Phillips could have been perceived negatively because she's Afro-American and if that factor could have affected the study group's decision, Dr. Coble said, "I can guarantee you that absolutely no racial motivation was involved in my decision

making."

The Afro-American community was outraged when Dr. Phillips didn't make the final four cut in the most recent superintendent search. Before that they were angered because Mr. Jessup was named acting superintendent. When Dr. Coble met with the entire staff at the school administrative offices Wednesday morning, some Afro-American staff members reportedly were angered because of what they deemed another slight of Barbara Phillips.

"What happened to Barbara Phillips before I got here has nothing to do with me," Dr. Coble said. "I think that I'm in a pitiful situation when the only way I can smooth over racial tensions in this community is by where Barbara Phillips will fit into a chart. I will not be held hostage."

Dr. Phillips was in Freeport, Bahamas and could not be reached for comment.

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