

Legislators asked to 'freeze tuition gap' between colleges

Chowan College has appealed to area legislators to help "freeze" the "tuition gap", the difference between the average tuition at independent colleges and state universities, through increased financial support from the General Assembly for North Carolina students attending the state's private colleges.

President Bruce E. Whitaker spoke recently in the President's Dining Room in Thomas Cafeteria to a gathering of legislators, trustees, alumni, students, community leaders and other supporters of the college.

The meeting was sponsored by the North Carolina Association of Independent Colleges and Univer-

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sities, representing the state's 38 private colleges.

Whitaker noted that high inflation rates in the early 1980's forced independent colleges and universities to raise tuitions to meet the rapidly rising costs of energy and personnel.

He said that as a result, a wide

"tuition gap" developed, which continues to grow each year.

"Despite increased state support in recent years for students attending in-state independent colleges and universities, this gap has widened from \$972 in 1973 to \$2,382 in 1984. And projections indicate that the gap could exceed \$3,000 by 1987," noted Dr. Whitaker.

The president added, "It is feared that, as the tuition gap grows, some North Carolina students may be forced to forego educational programs and the small-college atmosphere that may best suit their needs simply because of cost."

"Also, some of the highly regarded independent colleges and universities may be forced to reduce their programs or raise tuitions to the level that they are affordable for most North Carolinians."

Whitaker said the tuition gap exists and continues to grow because taxpayers subsidize a substantial portion of the actual cost of public universities for all students, regardless of their ability to pay or state of residence.

"The annual amount subsidized for students attending our public universities is \$4,329 per student for in-state undergraduate students and \$2,224 per student for out-of-state students," he said.

"On the other hand, the state appropriates \$1,050 per year for North Carolina students attending in-state independent colleges and universities. Each full-time student receives \$850 per year through the Legislative Tuition Grant program, and appropriations of \$200 per student are

distributed in varied amounts based on financial need," Whitaker explained.

Whitaker then sounded the alarm. "An ever-widening tuition gap caused by increasing state subsidies threatens the future of affordable freedom in higher education for tens of thousands of North Carolina's young people."

The problem for the private colleges is compounded by the fact that since reaching a peak in 1979,

"As the tuition gap grows, some North Carolina students may be forced to forego educational programs and the small-college atmosphere that may best suit their needs simply because of cost."

"the number of North Carolinians graduating from our high schools has declined by nearly 10 percent," Whitaker explained.

"While projections indicate that this situation might improve slightly in the next few years, the decline in high school graduates is expected to accelerate in the 1990's."

Whitaker said that "while our independent colleges and universities provide programs to meet the expanding higher education needs of our adult community, students aged 18 to 21 still represent the foundation of our institutions. The era of growth in college enrollments has come to an end.

"This, combined with the economic conditions beyond the control of independent colleges, threaten the diversity of educational opportunities upon which this state's system of higher education is founded," Dr. Whitaker stated.

The double pressures exerted by a declining number of high school graduates and rising tuitions has put a tremendous strain on independent colleges.

Enrollment of undergraduate North Carolina students in our independent colleges and universities has declined every year since 1980 by more than 5 percent."

Whitaker emphasized that the solution is to "freeze" the tuition gap. "There is an urgent need for the General Assembly to appropriate the same per-student increase for students in the independent sector as was granted North Carolina undergraduates in the public universities last year-\$325."

Whitaker said the Association of Independent Colleges and Universities, on behalf of the 24,000 North Carolina students in its 38 member institutions, has formally made this request of the Legislature.



Attend special meeting

President Whitaker is flanked by Bob Kolin, left of Raleigh, and former State Senator Vernon White of Winterville at the recent meeting on "tuition gaps". Kolin is a staff member with the North Carolina Association of Independent Colleges and Universities. White, a trustee, served 16 years in the General Assembly before his recent retirement. The three men led in efforts to increase financial support from the General Assembly for North Carolina students attending the state's private colleges.

"If approved, the total per-student allocation would be \$1,375. This would be allocated according to the following formula: \$1,100 per year for each student under the Legislature Tuition Grant program and \$275 per student to be distributed in varying amounts to students according to financial need under the State Contractual Scholarship Fund," declared Dr. Whitaker.

He stressed, "If the independent sector is to remain as a strong and viable choice for our college students, the tuition gap must not be allowed to widen. Anything short of full funding of the Association's request would result in a further erosion of the independent sector's ability to compete and survive in the higher education marketplace."

Scholarship guidelines set

Preferences may be given to South Carolina residents, especially from Horry, Chester, and Fairfield Counties, by members of the Scholarship Committee when awarding the Herbert Hugh Lewis Memorial Scholarship which is worth \$2,500 to the recipient for the 1985-86 term.

Recipients are selected on the basis of academic ability, leader-

ship potential and financial need. Application forms for the Herbert Hugh Lewis Memorial Scholarship have been mailed to the Directors of Guidance in the high schools of South Carolina. For additional information on the scholarship, interested persons are encouraged to contact Clifton S. Collins, Secretary of the Scholarship Committee.

Former professor dies

A former Chowan business professor, Helen Gibbons Burgwyn, 64, died Dec. 11, 1984. She was a native of Hamlet and the widow of Henry King Burgwyn.

Mrs. Burgwyn was a member of Murfreesboro United Methodist Church. She was secretary of the Murfreesboro Historical Association.

Survivors included her mother, Helen Weaver Gibbons of

Durham; three sons, Henry King Burgwyn Jr. of Denver, Charles Buxton Burgwyn of Murfreesboro and William Hyslop Sumner Burgwyn of Charlotte; a brother Lemuel Gibbons of Wilson; and four grandchildren.

The funeral was conducted at Murfreesboro United Church by the Rev. Horace McLaurin. Burial was in Burgwyn Family Cemetery, Woodland.

W. C. Meekins named to Board of Advisors

William C. Meekins, Jr. of Elizabeth City, community relations manager for the Carolina Telephone and Telegraph Company, has been appointed to the Chowan College Board of Advisors, according to President Bruce E. Whitaker.

He previously held the positions of vice president and secretary-treasurer of the Norfolk Carolina Telephone Company.

Meekins attended the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. He is a member of the Board of Directors of the Elizabeth City Area Chamber of Commerce and is a member of the Pasquotank County Extension Advisory Council.

He is a former president of both the Albemarle Area Development Association and the Elizabeth City Junior Chamber of Commerce. He has served as community coordinator for Junior Achievement.

Meekins is an elder and member

of the session at Cann Memorial Presbyterian Church. He is a member of the Board of Directors of the Carotel Club of the Independent Telephone Pioneers.

The new advisor received the Jaycees Distinguished Service Award. He is married to the former Mary Ellen Blades of Elizabeth City and they have three children.

Dr. Whitaker said that he was pleased that Meekins had accepted the invitation to serve as a Chowan advisor. He said that among other duties advisors serve as interpreters of the college in their communities. Whitaker said that despite a heavy demand on their time from their work and other civic and community service, Chowan advisors find time to devote their interest and energies to the college. He said their "suggestions and ideas serve to strengthen all phases of the operations and programs of the college."