

THE DECREE

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NORTH CAROLINA WESLEYAN COLLEGE, ROCKY MOUNT, NORTH CAROLINA 27804

Exemplary Teacher Jay Quinan Reflects on 32-Year Career

Psychology Professor Jay Quinan is Wesleyan Exemplary Teacher for the second time since he arrived at Wesleyan in 1986. The first time was in 1993.

A graduate of Siena College (New York), Dr. Quinan came to Wesleyan from the Ph.D. program at the University of Georgia, where he completed a dissertation titled “Recognition Memory for Expected and Unexpected Objects in Scenes.” (“I compared the ability of 6-year-olds and adults to recognize changes in pictures,” he explained.)

Besides teaching a range of psychology courses, Dr. Quinan has advised hundreds of Wesleyan students, chaired the Social Sciences and Education Division and served as faculty marshal at graduation and Founders Day ceremonies. He’s long-term member of Wesleyan Singers. The Rocky Mount resident was just elected a deacon at First Presbyterian Church.

As part of a continuing series, The Decree interviewed Dr. Quinan, a native of the Albany, NY area, about his interest in psychology, his career as a teacher and mentor, as well as his interests outside the classroom.

Q. How did you become interested in psychology?

A. I’ve been interested in psychology since I was a teenager. I spent my summers as a camp counselor and swimming instructor and became interested in the way children learn and interact with each other. When I took the introductory psychology course in college, I was eager to learn more about many of the topics which psychologists study and decided to major in psychology. While at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute I focused

on the physiology of drug addiction, and in my Ph.D. my emphasis was developmental psychology, cognition and learning. At Wesleyan, I’ve had the opportunity to develop and teach courses about all these areas.

Q. Paint us a picture of what you were like as an undergrad at Siena College.

A. I commuted to Siena since it was close to my home. At first I was a biology major, but I changed to psychology in my sophomore year. The library was a quiet and comfortable place to study between classes, so I spent quite a bit of time there. Outside of class I was a member of the Psychology Club and the college’s choral group, the Schola Cantorum.

Q. At what age did you know you wanted to be a professor?

A. It was during my graduate studies at Georgia. I had a teaching assistantship during which I taught my own sections of introductory psychology. I enjoyed working with students and helping them succeed in their courses, while I continued to learn more about the topics that I was teaching. I also participated in a graduate seminar about teaching, which discussed the many roles and responsibilities of a faculty member. I decided that college professor was the right profession for me to pursue.

Q. Let’s talk about graduate school at UGA. Describe your favorite professor.

A. I worked with many excellent professors there. One of the most influential was Dr. Milton Hodge, my dissertation advisor. His research interests were in the areas of memory and perception, and I was a student in many of his courses, including the teaching seminar mentioned. He provided valu-

able advice, equipment and laboratory space for my research, and encouragement during the long process of gathering data and preparing the manuscript. He was an excellent role model for a professor and mentor.

Q. What attracted you to Wesleyan back in 1986?

A. I was interested in finding a position at a small, church-affiliated liberal arts college. A liberal arts curriculum provides an excellent undergraduate education, and a small college provides many opportunities for students to interact with their professor in and out of the classroom. I wanted to teach a wide variety of courses rather than focusing on one or two specialty areas. When I visited Wesleyan to interview for the position, I learned that I would be half of a two-professor department, which would give me the opportunity to teach many courses in the areas of developmental, cognitive, and physiological psychology as well as the introductory course, senior seminars and research methods courses. I would be able to choose the textbooks and develop course content. The faculty here was dedicated to excellent teaching. There was a good match between my interests and Wesleyan’s needs.

Q. Describe your early teaching experiences.

A. My first courses provided lots of useful information in an organized manner, but I didn’t encourage much participation from the students. I soon discovered that lecturing for an hour while the students silently took notes was not very interesting for the students or me. I developed strategies to engage the students such as incorporating



Dr. Jay Quinan

A. Stern photo

short video clips that provided real-world examples of the topics we were discussing. And I began asking students to share their experiences and ideas in class discussions.

Q. What were the students like back in the mid-80s?

A. They were similar to those at Wesleyan today, but there are differences. For example, athletics was an important part of campus life in the 1980s, and the more recent addition of new teams such as the football team has increased the number of athletes at Wesleyan. Back in the 80s, students were more likely to come to my office to discuss course material and other topics. Today they usually send an e-mail instead.

Q. What are the other differences that you see in your students now?

A. Wesleyan students today are a very diverse group. The many international students share experiences and points of view that enrich our classes and our campus. Technological advances make it easy for us to access scholarly reference material at any time; so many students can incorporate this information into their assignments. However, I’ve noticed that some students spend a great deal of time using their personal technology. Instead of talking to other students or the professor in person before or after class, they take every available opportunity to use their laptop or their smart phone. We should take advantage of face-to-face opportunities to socialize with and learn from classmates. These may produce long-

lasting friendships and represent an important part of the college experience.

Q. What’s a typical Jay Quinan class like now?

A. At the start of class I typically make a few announcements about campus events such as writing workshops or guest speakers that may be of interest to my students. I pass around an attendance list and encourage students to write questions (anonymously, if they prefer) on the back; I address the questions later in the period. I may then give an informal, ungraded “practice quiz,” asking questions about topics we’ve been discussing in the course and invite students to share their answers. This “self-testing” strategy is an effective way for students to review material, and it provides an opportunity for me to review concepts that some students may find difficult. I create my own PowerPoint slides for each class, including a detailed outline of information from the text, pictures and diagrams to illustrate concepts, and relevant information which I’ve found from other sources. I post the slides in advance on the my.ncwc course page and encourage students to bring a copy to class so they can take notes which elaborate on the material instead of copying every word on the slides. I often ask questions for small- or large-group discussions, which encourage students to relate the concepts to their own experiences and share their ideas and questions about the material.

Q. Describe your research interests.

A. My interests are in cognitive, developmental and physiological psychology, and I’ve taught many courses related to these topics. I’m especially interested in helping students master these topics, so much of my professional reading focuses on instructional strategies and current research that I can share with students in my classes.

Q. Students can often be heard discussing your interest in sleep as a particular research area. How did this become an interest?

A. I am interested in sleep. Many people find the topic of sleep fascinating since we spend about a third of our lives doing it, and we often don’t remember much about what happened during that time. As an undergraduate and a graduate student, I led class discussions about sleep, and I continue to discuss this topic in several of my courses.

Q. What’s a common misconception about sleep and the human body?

See QUINAN pg 2

Winter Is Coming and So is Flu Season

One year after a severe strain of flu hit the Wesleyan campus, Wellness Director Jessica Brys-Wilson said the college is taking steps to prepare for the upcoming season.

She answered the following Decree questions in early November:

Q. When does flu season begin and end?

A. In a typical year, it’s from October through April.

Q. What has the federal Centers for Disease Control said about the upcoming flu season. Along the same lines, what have you heard about the current flu vaccine?

Based on the most recent data released by the CDC (for the week ending October 27th), North Carolina is still listed as having “minimal” flu activity. It’s expected to increase over the next few weeks and it tends to peak sometime in December through February. Flu often presents with fever, cough, headache, and body aches. Some will also experience nasal congestion and a sore throat.

Q. Besides a flu shot, what steps can we take to prevent the flu and lessen its effects?

• wash your hands with soap and water, often

- cover your cough/sneeze
- eat a healthy diet with five servings of fruits and vegetables
- get enough rest
- keep your hands off your face
- stay home if you’re sick

Q. Who should get the flu shot? Where is it available and how much does it cost?

A. Available you’re allergic to the vaccine, the CDC recommends an annual flu shot for all Americans over the age of 6 months. We held a flu shot clinic on campus at the end of September. If a student wishes to get a flu shot, he or she now can check with their primary care provider’s office or with most major pharmacies. Depending on the pharmacy and your insurance, the flu shot costs between \$0 and \$30.

Q. Compare last season’s flu season to the previous year.

A. Last year was a bad flu season for our community. The NCWC Health Center treated 140 flu cases, up from fewer than 20 cases in previous years. My best estimate is that 20 percent of our community was impacted by influenza last year, when most patients also seemed to have more severe symptoms.

Q. What steps has the college taken in advance of flu season?

A. The maintenance staff has installed hand sanitizers at all entrances of the Braswell Building and in the residence halls. We’re also using our Clorox disinfecting machine to cycle through the buildings on campus to treat all areas multiple times from October through March and then hitting hot spots that I notice based on flu or other contagious illness cases.

Q. What should one do if she/he catches the flu? Is it necessary to visit the health center? What’s the normal treatment you administer?

A. If you suspect you have the flu, you should rest and stay well hydrated. Don’t leave your room unless you’re seeking medical treatment or using the restroom. You can get a meal ticket from your RA or from the Health Center to have a friend pick up food from the cafeteria to prevent exposing other students to illness. Tylenol and other over-the-counter medicines can help to lessen your symptoms while you wait for the virus to resolve. Contact your professors to let them know you’re sick. You can schedule an appointment with me by calling 252-985-5186 or emailing jbrys@ncwc.edu. At the health center, you’ll fill out paperwork, be examined, and given a diagnosis. If appropriate, a prescription for an antiviral medication, like Tamiflu, may be written for you.

Is It Just about Jobs?

What’s the purpose of a college education?

That was the question posed to 114 Wesleyan students, or about 10 percent of the enrollment in the traditional day program. Respondents were asked to limit their statements to a single sentence.

In their responses, 69 students (about 60 percent) wrote that one of the main purposes is job preparation or attainment of a higher income.

Of that total, 51 (45 percent) stated improved job prospects or earning power as the only purpose.

Such responses were along the lines of: “To prepare students with knowledge and opportunities for their future professional career” (a senior business and marketing major); “To gain an edge in a competitive job market” (sophomore, computer information systems); and “To prepare students for what will be necessary to succeed in the work force” (sophomore, CIS).

Junior Catelyn Cink typified students in this group of respondents. The chemistry

major said the purpose of a college education is “To gain knowledge to perform a job.”

In their responses, 18 students combined career motivations with other benefits, such as attainment of “an independent life” (freshman, CIS) or the “American Dream” (senior, criminal justice). One student sees a college education as a way to “follow his dreams” (freshman, business administration). Another wants to become “a productive member of society” (freshman, sports management), while a senior accounting major hopes a four-degree will help her provide for her family and “not have to worry about money.” A senior English major said a liberal arts college allows students to meet students “with different ideologies from our own.”

The informal survey was conducted in late October and early November. Responses were solicited in common areas such as the library and cafeteria, as well as in three general education classes.

As might be expected with an open-ended question, there was a wide range of views expressed. Following is a sampling of other responses:

Senior Jeremiah Handlon (English): “A college education is meant to help you develop a stable sense of self.”

Senior Trevor Harris (biomedical sciences and psychology): “A college education lays the foundation for our youth to bring about change in our communities and the country as a whole.”

Senior James Parrish (business administration and marketing): “Education is important because I want to better myself for my future family.”

Junior Shamon Wright (theatre/entertainment): “To prepare the youth for the uncaring reality of the world.”

(The following staff writers contributed to this report: Brooke Bayse, Cameron Beal, Ali Cucinotta, Jovan Pope, Rex Sauls, Chasadie Seary, Qa’lexus Taylor, Gianni Teal, Bryant Versprille, and Tanisha Williams.)



Antonio Johnson was named conference Defensive Player of the Year. For sports coverage, turn to page 3.

SI photo

Wesleyan Profile: Vickie Davidson

By Bryant Versprille
Decree Staff Writer

When you walk into the NCWC Welcome Center, you’ll be greeted by Vickie Davidson, the admissions liaison.

When I interviewed Davidson, she answered a phone call using her sweet, soft voice to say the same thing she always does: “Hello, thank you for calling North Carolina Wesleyan College. This is Vickie, how may I help you?”

Born in Burlington, Davidson said she had a “fantastic” childhood. Growing up, she considered herself to be a “tomboy.” She loved baseball. She remembered bonding with her father over baseball and going to watch the Burlington Indians, a former minor league affiliate of the Cleveland Indians. Davidson told me her first crush was a pitcher for the Indians, Dick Beres. “I can remember his nice blue eyes,” she said. She also recalled her “magnificent” baseball card collection, which, sad to say, has disappeared over the years.

Davidson has been married for 42



Vickie Davidson

B. Versprille photo

years to Herb Davidson, or, if you’re in the Rocky Mount area and listen to the 98.5 Morning Drive, you might know him by his alias, Ron Eric Lundy. The Davidsons have two sons and two grandsons. Noting that her family means the world to her, Davidson said she goes through her family photos on her computer in her downtime at work.

Davidson attended The University of North Carolina—Greensboro and majored in secondary education and French and then returned to UNC-G for her masters. After her schooling, Davidson taught English and French for seven years at a high school.

Following her teaching career, Davidson took the opportunity to work in Rocky Mount as MBM’s Director of Customer Service. In her job, she oversaw the customer service departments of more than 30 distribution centers. She would help hire and train customer service representatives. She said she liked making training videos for them.

She worked for MBM Corporation for 29 years. “Me and my husband used to ride and walk through (the Wesleyan) campus and I used to tell him ‘I want to work here,’” she recalled, adding that she fell in love with the college the first time she stepped on campus.

She got the opportunity to work here when a job opened for admissions liaison in 2013. “I knew it’s what I wanted to do next,” she said.

Davidson likes the sense of community that a small, intimate campus offers to both students and staff. “I love how when you’re here at Wesleyan, you’re not just another number,” she said. “That’s what attracted me to this place.”

See DAVIDSON pg 2

WESLEYAN PROFILES

Zack Foster: After Accident, 'God Fills the Voids'

By Cameron Beal
Decree Staff Writer

When I saw Zack Foster coach a football game for Southern Nash High School, I was impressed. Standing on the sidelines on a recent fall day, dressed in navy polo shirt and khaki pants, the Wesleyan student yells encouragement, signals plays to Matt, his quarterback (and brother), and shakes the hands of his players as they trot off the field.

Though he exudes a positive attitude, the assistant coach is not afraid to use "tough love."

"If I see something one of our guys did wrong, I'll let him know when he gets to the sideline."

Football has long been important to Foster, a former Wesleyan quarterback. But due to a life-altering event, coaching is now his sole means of taking part in the game he loves.

Foster was born on December 17, 1997 to two loving parents, Brian and Kim Foster. Long-time Wilson residents, Foster, his parents and younger brother are Christians who attend church every Sunday.

Foster's parents are both teachers at Southern Nash High School. His mother used to coach tennis and softball there, while his father, Brian, is head coach of the Firebirds football team. His father has been the head coach at Southern for 21 years, but has coached for a total of 29.

Foster related that his father used to coach track, but stopped after the death of his younger brother, a track coach



Zack Foster is back in the classroom and on the sidelines after a serious setback in 2016. Photo courtesy of C. Beal.

at Clemson University. Once his uncle had died, Foster said, it was hard for his father to think about track. "So he just stuck to coaching football," the son said.

At six-foot, two and 180 pounds, Foster is a natural athlete. He attended Southern Nash Middle School where he played football during seventh and eighth grade. After middle school he moved onto Southern Nash High. Though he played basketball and ran track, Foster's main sport has always been football.

He was the quarterback for the Firebirds all four years, two on the junior varsity and two on varsity, where he set many passing marks. Foster's records include career passing yards (2,773), passing yards (1,508) for a single season, and career (29) and single-season (18) touchdown passes.

While Foster was the starter, the varsity went 9-4 both years. His junior year he led the Firebirds to a conference championship, earning a berth in the state playoffs. In his senior year the Firebirds came in second place in the conference to the Rocky Mount Gryphons, who went onto win the state championship. At the end of his senior year, Foster passed for 132 yards and a touchdown, as his team (the East) won the East-West all-star game.

After his high school career, Foster was recruited to play for the Bishops.

Foster now says he chose Wesleyan because, "it felt like that's where I was supposed to be. Nowhere else felt right." A recipient of a Heritage Scholarship, Foster had a bright future.

Then came the accident, a life-altering experience. Having sustained a wrist injury earlier in the week, Foster was given permission by the football team to join his family for a long weekend at the beach.

On October 14, while driving down I-40, with his mother as a passenger, Foster noticed something wrong with their car, a 2006 Buick Lucerne. "I no longer had control of the steering and it just veered left," he said. The car crossed the median and went into oncoming traffic, he recalled, noting that a mechanical problem was not found after the accident. "My mom tried to grab the wheel, but the car kept turning left."

Their Buick hit a northbound SUV head-on.

Cut out of the vehicle, Foster was airlifted to New Hanover Regional Medical Center in Wilmington. On the way there, emergency

personnel called him in as "dead on arrival." He had suffered three compound breaks and his femoral artery was severed. He had broken his fibula, tibia, ankle, knee, femur, and other bones in his left leg. Foster said his knee was "destroyed," and that he suffered trauma to his head, while his mother had several breaks. (The SUV driver sustained only minor injuries, Foster said.)

Foster stated that it was a long recovery. The doctors were pessimistic. "I was told I'd be lucky to ever walk again," he said.

Foster endured four surgeries, then was released from the hospital and sent for rehabilitation. In the aftermath of the surgery, he said moving the leg was difficult due to significant swelling. Then there was the mental toll. "I was pretty bad off," he said. "I was talking in third person and couldn't read or write without terrible headaches."

Following inpatient rehab at Bryant T Aldridge in Rocky Mount, he moved back home and did out-patient at WilMed Rehabilitation Center in Wilson.

In time he regained enough strength to walk without a walker, but mentally he was still struggling. "I had a lot of memory problems and, considering all my previous concussions (from football, basketball), I was concerned," he said.

Determined to resume his life, Foster put in the hard work, allowing him to return to Wesleyan last year.

"I like the trajectory my life is on even more than the one I was on before," Foster said. "Am I glad it happened? No. Do I think it was supposed to happen, and believe there was a purpose behind it? Yes. It was hard for a while trying to pick up the pieces and fill the voids (e.g., football) that were left as a result of the wreck. I had to let go and allow God to fill the voids for me."

The accident ended Foster's playing career, but he remains involved in football. Besides coaching at Southern Nash, he plays flag football and enjoys fantasy leagues. Among his other interests, the English major likes to read, write, watch basketball, attend church and follow politics. He hopes to teach English and, like his parents, coach at Southern Nash.

"Before I was unsure what I wanted to do," Foster said. "Now I know without a doubt. I'm thankful to be alive and know that the reason I'm here is because God wasn't done with me. I still have a purpose to fulfill."

Foster thinks his future is even brighter.

Profile: Dance Coach Starr Mitchell

By Chasadie Searcy
Decree Staff Writer

It was difficult booking this celebrity for my interview. Between working full time at Enterprise and serving as assistant coach of the Bishops dance team, recent graduate Starr Mitchell juggles a lot. I was lucky to schedule her for a pizza-making date on a Tuesday after her work hours and of course on a day she didn't have to run a practice.

She was prompt as usual. When she arrived at my residence hall, she was in her business-casual attire, a simple white blouse, brown pants, and tan heels. Her jewelry was dazzling: three Alex and Ani bangles, an AKA brand wristband, and an Apple watch.

Not five minutes into our session, Mitchell's hasty tendencies began to emerge. "Hurry up and ask the questions, Chasadie!" she said. "I don't have all day!" Even with her sharp tone, Mitchell's a loveable person; just don't waste her time.

I preheated the oven, which gave me a hard time and added to her impatience. Once I figured out the oven, I set the tone with one of her favorite musical genres, to help loosen her up. Usher's "Nice and Slow" began to play and because it was 90's R&B, she began to sing along.

When asked her name, she'll always reply with her full name, Starr Destini Mitchell. "I feel my name fits me because, of course I'm a star." She was born and raised about 30 minutes from Washington D.C. in Laurel, Maryland and even though she's lived in North Carolina for over a year she doesn't want to let go. Her favorite food is seafood, she makes frequent trips back to Maryland, votes absentee, and still hasn't changed her license plates; she's a diehard Marylander. Her only fault is that she isn't a huge fan of gogo music, which is popular in the DMV (DC, Maryland, and Virginia area).

Once we got the basics out of the way, we

began to get into her hobbies and her high school life. A dancer since age seven, Mitchell was quick to note that this was her own decision and not her parents living vicariously through her. She continued to dance, all the way into high school and college. Earning trophies, medals, and countless awards, she's performed jazz, ballet, lyrical, tap, hip hop, and modern. She attended Westlake High School, where she says she was very popular.

Forced by her mother, she had to choose a sport to play during high school, and her options were volleyball, track, or cheerleading. She didn't choose volleyball because she felt she didn't fit the image of a volleyball player, and she didn't choose track because she didn't want to mess up her hair, so the only option left was cheerleading. "I'm a girly-girl and I'm very prissy, so I chose cheer," she recalled. Beginning her freshman year, she cheered and soon became one of the team's top flyers.

As the questions about her hobbies began to wind down, I went to check the oven to see if we had made progress. "You don't know how to work the oven here?! This is your dorm hall!" she exclaimed. "How do you not know?"

We began to banter about the oven and the "Notorious Nash Kitchen." We joked about the stale smell throughout the halls, and how the sticky tables and counters needed to be wiped clean. After about four minutes of playful conversation, she became her snappy self and began to rush me. I finally got the oven at a steady temperature, put the pizza in the oven, and got to cooking.

As the interview continued, Mitchell talked about her time in college. She came to Wesleyan in 2014 to study business administration. She was also recruited by coach Kayla Wyal for the cheer team.

Her time was a bit rocky in the beginning, she said. Going from fast city

See MITCHELL pg 4



Wesleyan ROTC members led a Veterans Day ceremony on November 12.

Photo by C. Lewis

Tuition, Other Costs To Rise 3.6 Percent

Students will pay 3.6 percent more per year for a Wesleyan education, under an increase approved by the college's trustees.

In 2019-20, total costs will come to \$42,650 for a student who lives in a double-room and purchases the standard meal plan.

Suzanne Brackett, vice president of Finance, broke down the figures, with last year's price in parenthesis:

• Tuition:	\$31,500 (\$30,600)
• Room:	\$4,950 (\$4,800)
• Board:	\$5,800 (\$5,600)
• Student Activities:	\$200 (\$150)

Next year, for the first time, the college will assess a \$200 technology and administration fee to all students.

Brackett was interviewed by The Decree in mid-November:

Q: What are the specific reasons for the increases?

SB: They were mainly due to the increase in operating costs associated with utilities, cafeteria food, transportation services, and security, among others.

Q: What does the new \$200 technology and administration fee cover?

A: It'll support the technology used for on-line services such as registering for classes and applying for graduation. It'll provide funds to service technology—like new laptops in the library—that we received from grants. And it'll help pay for upgrades to WiFi and cabling.

Q: What, if any, new construction projects and enhancements are planned for 2019-20?

SB: At this time, additional classroom renovations are contingent on donor gifts. In other words, we'll only proceed with construction projects if we receive money from a donor; grant funding is another possibility. The college isn't looking to take on additional debt or raise tuition for this purpose.

Q: What's the status of the new academic building that would house the business school and provide space for other classes?

SB: We have \$1.5 million in an account and a land trust valued at \$2 million. Once the land trust sells—and we think it could be soon—that would give us \$3.5 million toward the \$5 million we would need for a new building.

Q: What is the college's current endowment?

SB: About \$10 million.

Q: The next two questions are linked: What is the anticipated deficit for the current year?

SB: As of the end of October, we're at a deficit of \$1 million, which is directly related to the decline in the ASPIRE enrollment. We expect to see ASPIRE continue to fluctuate until May. Spring enrollments have not been finalized in either the traditional and ASPIRE programs. Spring enrollment will impact the deficit.

Q: What are specific initiatives that the college has undertaken to rein in expenses?

SB: We're looking at ways to reduce spending, and we're restructuring departments and reviewing positions as staff resign. New reports have been developed for all department heads to help all of us understand how their area can help in the effort.

DAVIDSON from pg 1

Davidson relishes the fact that she has made many friends since she started working here and loves making new ones every year. "I love it when we add a new Battling Bishop to our family," she said.

She said that spring is her favorite time of year because that's when she meets the prospective students and their families during campus visits.

If you've ever seen Davidson, you'd notice that she's always wearing beautiful dresses and skirt suits, many with magnificent floral patterns on them. Every once in a while, she'll wear sophisticated solid colors. "I love to keep up with the current fashion," she related.

Asked when she started to be so stylish, she said she helped a friend run a boutique and that that's when it started. She added laughing, "I've been around a long time and accumulated a lot of clothes over the years."

When she's not at work, Davidson said that she loves camping and spending time outdoors. She also reads and studies French. She said that she's excited about an upcoming trip; she and her husband are travelling to Italy in June.

Davidson said that she would later like to get the chance to teach FLES (foreign language in the elementary school) at an elementary school. "I love the French language, and I'd like to share it with the youngins," she said.

As far as retirement plans, she said, "I'd love to be a campground host with my husband three to four months out of the year. But that won't be for a long time."

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SPORTS

Football Team Beats Methodist, Loses Last Three Games

Despite a mid-season loss to Averett, the Bishops football team was in contention for the conference title after its victory over rival Methodist in its homecoming game.

Two weeks after it beat the Monarchs, Wesleyan was scheduled to face the undefeated Maryville Scots in east Tennessee.

But it first needed to defeat a Huntingdon team that was enduring a rare losing season, arriving in Rocky Mount with a 2-5 overall record.

Playing before 500 fans at Rocky Mount Sports Complex, the Bishops came out flat, as Huntingdon jumped to a 27-9 first-half lead. NCWC battled back, but the Hawks held on for the victory and the Bishops fell out of the hunt for a playoff berth.

Following is a week-by-week recap from the second half of the NCWC season.

Averett 24, Wesleyan 14

Averett's Sean Bowman rushed for 229 yards, and Bishop quarterbacks were unable to ignite the passing game, as Wesleyan lost its first conference matchup of the season at home.

Danielle Totten and Nate Gardner completed a combined 12 of 32 passes for 114 yards, one touchdown and one interception in the losing effort.

Coach Jeff Filkovski said that his team was not as opportunistic as it had been the previous two weeks in conference wins over LaGrange and Greensboro.

"We missed on a bunch of opportunities that would have kept the offense moving," he said. "This game is all about making plays and if you miss that opportunity, it's magnified when you play a quality opponent."

Wesleyan 29, Brevard 21

The next week, playing in western North Carolina, the Bishops capitalized on Brevard's mistakes to beat their new rival and improve their conference record to 3-1.

"The key was the defense and special teams forcing turnovers on their side of the field," said senior tight end Quinn Tobias.

Brevard fumbled three times. Two led to Wesleyan scoring drives and a third was returned 50 yards by Antonio Johnson for a touchdown. "That play gave us a spark of energy that we really needed," Tobias said.

A junior linebacker, Johnson totaled 12 tackles on the day, including a sack, to spearhead the defense.

Nate Gardner passed for 175 yards and two touchdowns, while wide receiver Trey Lancaster returned a kick-off 56 yards to set up a Bishop score

and pulled in a total of six passes for 108 yards. It was his second 100-yard game to go with two 200-yard games.

In the third quarter, Wesleyan held a 29-13 lead, but the Tornados scored a touchdown and converted a two-point conversion to set up a dramatic ending.

Down by eight, Brevard drove to Wesleyan's two-yard line where it had the ball first and goal.

But the Bishops defense mounted a goal-line stand, as the front seven penetrated the offensive line and forced the Brevard backs to run sideways.

"That goal-line stand has to be the defensive series of the year so far," Tobias said.

Wesleyan 37, Methodist 10

Raising its conference record to 4-1, Wesleyan vanquished the Methodist Monarchs, 37-10, in its homecoming game.

It was a rare victory over its in-state rival. "The win was really gratifying for us seniors after losing close games to Methodist the past three years," said linebacker JT Litchenberger, who racked up six tackles, one for a seven-yard loss.

Running back Adrian Minondo rumbled for 249 yards and three touchdowns to lead the offense. Nate Gardner passed for 173 yards and connected eight times with wide receiver Trey Lancaster and four times with tight end Ben Dorfman.

Wesleyan scored on three sustained drives to open a 20-0 lead halfway through the second quarter. It played an error-free game, while James Parrish, Isaiah Williams and Nathyn Prantz each sacked the Monarch quarterback.

Huntingdon 51, Wesleyan 29

Needing a win to remain in contention for the conference title, the Bishops fell behind in the first half and Huntingdon exploded for 542 yards in total offense to win on the road.

Coach Filkovski discounted the notion that his team overlooked the Hawks, with first-place Maryville on the schedule the following week.

"Huntingdon has been king of the conference for the past five years," he noted. "They're not going to just fall off the map and we didn't see them as their record (2-5) indicated. A very well-coached team, they play a physical style. They made the plays and we didn't."

Jumping to a 27-9 half-time lead, the Hawks controlled the game with a balanced offense, as quarterback Michael Lambert completed 20-27 passes for 353 yards, and Eric Thomas

and Dontavion Cunningham rushed for a combined 179 yards. Huntingdon punted only once on the day.

In relief of Nate Gardner, quarterback Danielle Totten passed for 337 yards and four touchdowns, but it wasn't enough to erase Huntingdon's early lead.

"We had opportunities to change the momentum on both sides of the ball and in the kicking game, but we never capitalized," Coach Filkovski said.

Maryville 31, Wesleyan 14

Playing in their last conference game of 2018, the Bishops fell to the

eventual champs on the road.

Danielle Totten, starting at quarterback, completed 17 of 30 passes for 150 yards, but threw two interceptions. Maryville's defense stifled the Wesleyan running game, limiting the Bishops to 48 yards, while the Scots rolled up 244 yards on the ground.

"Maryville is just a solid football team and program," said Coach Filkovski. "We've beat them a couple times in the past and they've beaten us a couple times. I'm not downplaying their championship, but as a competi-



Freshman WR Jai Irvin made a sliding touchdown catch against Huntingdon, but the Bishops lost a key game at home.

SI photos

Young Volleyball Team Seeks to Improve in 2019

The Wesleyan volleyball team finished 5-11 and in sixth place in the East Division of the USA South Conference. The team was 10-23 overall.

The Decree interviewed fourth-year Coach Vicky Gentile about the season and her young team's progress.

Q: What was the high point from the past season?

VG: It was beating Methodist in five sets at home. It was a back-and-forth match all night. We won the first set, they won the second, we won the third, they won the 4th and then we put it all together and won the fifth. It was a great atmosphere. The fans were really the X factor in helping us pull out that victory. The best part was that we played as a team and supported each other in every aspect of the game. We showed our true Bishop pride that night.

Q: You had no seniors on the team and

plenty of freshmen and sophomores. If a fan were to watch a Bishops match this past season, how would she know that it was seeing a young team in action?

VG: Miscommunication was an issue. It comes from a lot of new players on the floor at the same time not really understanding how each other plays. It was all really minor things—not closing the blocks, inaccurate passing, hitting errors in crucial moments. But fans would also see that when we were playing in our system and everything was going our way, we were unstoppable and that we were very athletic in every aspect of the game.

Q: Are you expecting all your current players to return for next season?

VG: At the end-of-the-year meetings everyone stated that they'd be back.

Q: In what specific ways will playing together one full season benefit your players and help them to improve next year?

VG: Having been in our system for a year, the players will develop consistency and become familiar with their teammates, their styles and habits Confidence is another key component to becoming a successful team and gaining that through the first year is vital to winning. After a year the coaches can lay our expectations in even more in detail and the players start to understand and apply what we expect from them.

Q: Tell us about freshmen who came in this past season and became key contributors.

VG: Our freshman class did a tremendous job coming in and competing for playing time. There were freshmen that stood out, but I'd like to keep it focused on the group. At different points throughout the year, there may have been two or three freshmen that came in on a moment's notice and did a great job.

Q: Who was the most improved player from last year?

VG: All the returners made significant improvements over last year and the spring. They learned how to be leaders, and they improved in attacking different shots on the court and delivering more aggressive serves.

Q: In what specific areas do your players need to improve in order to reach the next level and compete with the elite USA South teams like Meredith?

VG: Strength is overall number one. We need to put the ball away when we're given multiple opportunities to do so. Passing is another critical area; everyone can always make passing better. We also need to have more of a middle-attacker presence.

Q: Let's turn to recruiting. What are the priorities for you and Coach Shoemaker?

A: This recruiting season we're looking for hitters (in particular we need outside hitters, since Autumn Spence is

graduating a year early). We ran into injuries early in the season with our hitters, so we want to make sure we have the depth on our roster to continue the job our starters were doing. At the moment, we have a solid list of potential student-athletes; we just need them to make their decisions.

Q: Are you targeting new areas of the country in your recruitment efforts?

VG: For the most part we're staying within the areas that have been good for us—Florida, Virginia and North Carolina. Of course we're always trying to get student-athletes from Ohio and Pennsylvania.

tor, I'd take our guys, as banged-up as we were, and roll the ball out there again. I believe we'd win."

The Bishops played without several injured offensive linemen as well as linebacker Antonio Johnson, named, after the season, the USA South Defensive Player of the Year.

Against the Scots, linebacker JT Litchenberger was the leading tackler with 17. **Bridgewater 21, Wesleyan 14**

Jay Scroggins scored on a one-yard run to break a tie and send Bridgewater to a 21-14 win over the Bishops in western Virginia on November 17.

In the final games of their careers, Nate Gardner threw for 196 yards and two touchdowns, Adrian Minondo ran for 73 yards on 13 carries, and Trey Lancaster snared two passes to up his season total to 69. Linebacker JT Litchenberger was second on the team with 11 tackles.

Reflecting on the season, Litchenberger said the highlight was the win over Methodist. He noted that the loss to Huntingdon produced a "spiraling effect" on the team, as it lost its last three games. "Not only were we no longer playing for a championship," he said, "but several key starters were hurt during that game. Even under the circumstances, I'm proud of the way we competed the last two weeks. It's disappointing how everything played out, but I wouldn't trade a second of it. I'm optimistic that next season will be a different story."

Soccer Seniors Look Back on Careers

The NC Wesleyan's women's soccer team lost to Methodist, 2-1, in the first round of the USA South Conference tournament.

Jordan Forbess scored her fifth goal of the season to tie the game 1-1 early in the second half. But Alexa Smith responded in the 71st minute as the Monarchs advanced to the next round.

The loss was the last game for the 11 seniors on Wesleyan's team, which finished 2-5 in the conference, 4-9-1 overall.

Following the playoffs, The Decree interviewed three seniors, Maggie Rankin, Cassie Sullivan, and Madeline Williams, about playing soccer and balancing athletics and academics. (*Editor's Note: the women's soccer team ranks a close second to women's tennis for the highest GPA among athletes: 3.45*).

Q: What are your overall feelings

about the 2018 season?

MR: It was rough. We knew it would be a tough start, because we lost some great seniors that had a huge impact on the team. We worked hard every practice, every game, and seldom saw the results we wanted.

CS: I wished it was longer! I expected us to get further in playoffs. Coming into the season, I saw so much potential for all the girls on our team. I'm sad the season ended in the first round of playoffs, but I'm proud of how hard we worked and the things that we achieved together as a team.

MW: This past season I tried to enjoy every practice and game as much as I could. Although the season didn't turn out as well as we would have liked, I'm still thankful for the last season that I had with the other seniors and the rest of the team.

Q: What did you learn about yourself the past four years?

MR: I learned to enjoy every moment, to enjoy the time with my teammates on and off the field.

CS: I learned that I can do anything if I put my mind to it. Being a student-athlete helped me push through so many adversities. I learned I can strive for excellence while having a lot on my plate at one time.

MW: I've learned so much about myself through being at Wesleyan and playing soccer. I learned how much I can accomplish when I set my mind to something, and I've learned what I really want out of my life.

Q: The women's soccer team is known for its academic accomplishments. What's your major? And do you think being a member of the team helped or hurt your academics?

MR: I'm doing a BA in biology. Being a member of the team has helped my academics. It helped because my team-

mates could help tutor me if I was having trouble in my classes.

CS: I'm a double major in criminal justice and psychology. I think it both helped and hurt my academics. Being on the team with 30 other girls helped my academics because there were a lot of other people taking the same classes as me, or had already taken the classes. This made it easy to have quick access to help when I needed it. On the other hand, if I hadn't played soccer, I would have had more time to focus on classes, and my grades would have been a little bit higher.

MW: I think it forced me to learn time management when I came in as a freshman. I was unsure of what I wanted to major in at first, but after I decided what I wanted to do—I'm double-majoring in biology and math—it was much easier to find time to do the work. Having to go to practice every day and having games throughout the week came with a lot of late nights and cramming, but overall I don't think that being part of the team hurt my academics.

Q: What's your best memory of being a student-athlete here?

MR: Getting free food before and after games, especially Chick-fil-A!

CS: I felt I clicked with the team during the first day of practice my freshman year. There is no better feeling than knowing you belong somewhere!

MW: It was last year when all the athletes wore their "Team Wesleyan" shirts and went to the gym for a photograph. When all of the sports teams were sitting in the bleachers waiting to take the pictures, the teams started the chants that we do at games and everyone joined in, and a lot of people were dancing. To me this showed the support that all the student-athletes have for each other, and that Wesleyan is truly a big family.



Christian Tippette finished 20th at the USA South cross-country meet and earned a spot on the all-conference 3rd team.

CAMPUS LIFE

WHIG Director Sees Opportunities for Wesleyan Students

By Ali Cucinotta
Decree Staff Writer

As Robert Morris gave me a tour of his studio, I couldn't help but notice how tall he was (He's 6', 2"). He was wearing khaki pants, a blue button-up, short sleeve shirt, and brown lace-up boots.

Morris, 27, was born and raised in Rocky Mount, so his southern accent was another characteristic that stuck out. He's been the technical director of the community TV station WHIG, for about a year and a half. Morris and a team started building the studio last December, and it was running by January.

Now located on Wesleyan's campus in the Gateway Technology Center, the studio is a large room with one wall that's designed to absorb light, a so-called "green screen," which, Morris explains, allows television studios to produce a "background behind the subjects that you film."

As we walked around the studio, Morris conveyed a deep knowledge of the technology and other furnishings needed to run a television station. The studio includes couches and tables for conducting interviews. And of course there are cameras and sound equipment in the studio to record WHIG programs. Behind the studio is the control room, which houses all of the monitors and other hardware needed to produce their shows. When you enter Morris' office, you notice the camera equipment and several computer monitors. He also has pictures with his family and a yellow sticky note with the words "I love you Daddy" written on it.

Morris said his career snowballed from a hobby he began as a child. He said he would write scripts and film short movies with his friend, Andy Smallwood. One movie script was about teenagers who disappeared at a Halloween haunted house attraction. The teens were killed as part of a revenge plot, he recalled with a smile, noting that the script was not produced.

Morris went to several schools as a child, and later settled on Nash Central High School.

School was "never really my thing," so he often rebelled as a teenager. After graduation, he worked in landscaping and when he got tired of that, he moved on to working at Firestone in Wilson. The tire plant provided him with more stable job to support his daughter, who was born when he was just 19.

Morris soon realized that making tires was not what he wanted to do with his life, but he had to stick it out for another year to save money so he could return to school while still providing for his daughter. After leaving Firestone, he chose to attend Nash Community College and earned an associate degree in arts. While at Nash, he became involved with the campus radio station and he revived his interest in film-making, producing a documentary titled "The Cost of Living High," which explores the opioid crisis and depicts the toll that addiction takes not only on the user but his community.

Through an acquaintance, Morris heard about a position at WHIG, which he joined in 2014.

When Morris started working for WHIG-TV, it was located at the Power Plants, near Chico's Mexican Restaurant. He took the job, he said, with the understanding that he was going to help the station rebrand its business after it moved to the Wesleyan campus. Morris is comfortable in his new environment, as he tends to work late into the evenings and he feels safe leaving the office. He also enjoys sharing his knowledge with college students, he said.

Three others work at the TV station full-time: Morris' wife, Britney Smith, the marketing director; his mother-in-law, Sandra Smith, the station manager; and Bobbie Booth, the sales director. Morris and his wife met her at Wesleyan and now work side by side. They also collaborate on a show every Saturday morning, reviewing country music. The four full-timers are accompanied by around 20 part-time employees that range from show hosts to videographers, Morris said.

WHIG-TV has been around for 20 years. "It was based around community," Morris said. "If you wanted to come on television and say something, you could build a show around it."

Each day WHIG airs "The Morning Show," which covers topics related to the Rocky Mount community. In recent weeks, for example, state senate and house candidates appeared on the program to discuss their platforms and urge citizens to vote. Around Halloween, local haunted house operators came to publicize their attractions.

Besides "The Morning Show," WHIG-TV's most popular programs include the Russ Varnell Show and two health-related shows, "Here's to Your Good Health" and "Remedy This Naturally."

According to Morris, WHIG generates most of its revenue from advertisements, but some comes from local residents who pay to rent studio space to produce video.

WHIG is expected to be a boon to Wesleyan students, communication and other majors, who want to get hands-on experience at a for-profit television station during their education. "A lot of schools have student-run television programs," Morris said. "I started in a student-run television program. But students learning from students is a whole different environment. You learn, but you don't learn as much as you will in an actual business."

Morris soon would like to introduce student-directed programming at WHIG. "We want to have a show that's about Wesleyan, put together by Wesleyan, for Wesleyan College," he said.

Morris is seeking students with skills and interest in broadcast journalism, videography, editing, and lighting, among other areas. "We're looking for a student that will come to us and say 'Hey I know a little bit, and I want to learn more,'" he said.



WHIG Technical Director Robert Morris.
Photo by A Cucinotta

On the Wild Popularity of Fortnite

By Jovan Pope
Decree Staff Writer

Unless you've been living under a rock for the past year, you would know that "Fortnite" is the most popular game worldwide. It launched in 2017, but wasn't popular until the actual release of the Battle Royale game mode.

The objective is to survive a battle against 100 players and emerge as the last one standing. One may play solo, duo (two players), or squad (three to four players) to oppose the other 100 players. What makes the game so addictive is that players can harvest wood from trees, metal from cars, and bricks from buildings to use as shelter during a battle. They use what's known as a pic-axe to harvest such materials. Throughout the map, players can find weapons, grenades, healing potions, and many more gadgets to help them get to the "number-one victory royale."

Tyler Bird has been playing Fortnite for a year. He plays the game every night for about two or three hours throughout the week. Despite his active participation, Bird explained that he's still able to keep up with school work and other hobbies. "Nothing is more important to me than my education," he said. "I have so much free time throughout my night because I complete all my homework earlier in the day."

Bird noted Fortnite helps him to unwind after a busy day. "Playing the game helps get my mind off school work and it's a great way to keep up with my friends back at home," he said. Two is company and three is a crowd. Deonte Camp and Rayquan Harris agree that playing with friends enhances the experience. "I like the social interaction that I have with my friends outside of school because playing by myself isn't as enjoyable," Camp said. "If you ask me, teamwork always brings in the easy win. When you win a game with your friends, it's like scoring a touchdown or passing a test after putting in the hard work."

Camp reports that he spends about 25 hours a week playing the game and has won a total of 102 squad games.

Robert Wilson and Kyle Garrett like the competition they find in Fortnite. "It's a very creative game and it can get very competitive," Garrett said. Garrett added that the game might be too competitive. To make the game more enjoyable for beginners like him, he wants the designers to refine the matchmaking generator. He believes "the pros" should face other players of the same experience and skill "There should be a separate area for beginners," he said, noting that it's frustrating to get eliminated from a competition as he learns how to play.

Fortnite has a player base of about 125 million from around the world. It's a free game to install on any platform, yet it makes almost \$1 million a day. Revenue comes from in-game purchases toward unique skins, dances, battle passes. The battle pass is a bundle that comes with multiple skins and virtual money known as "V-Bucks."

Josiah Wright refuses to pay for extra content in a game that's free. "As a sophomore in college without a job, money is scarce," he said. "I could spend money on Fortnite, but then I wouldn't have money to eat. I choose not being hungry as a priority over a video game."

In Fortnite, weapons and gadgets can be found throughout the map in golden chests or just out in the open. The weapons are not all equal in strength. Distinguished by colors, each weapon has a different "rarity." For example, grey weapons are common, green weapons are uncommon, blue weapons are rare, purple weapons are epic, and orange weapons are legendary.

Asked to name complaints about Fortnite, Jacob Brumley described his beef with the turret gun, one of the legendary weapons. It can be placed on a flat surface and it shoots continuously. It can be destroyed by an opponent with any gun. "I understand that all players can get their hands on the strongest of weapons; it depends on your landing spot," he said. "But nothing bothers me more than getting eliminated by a turret gun. It's very annoying when trying to escape from enemies, but they just keep shooting down my shelter. If it were up to me I'd remove the turret gun from the game."

That's enough about my peers and their views on Fortnite. How do I feel about the game? Fortnite is very colorful, creative, and competitive. I've spent up to \$50 on in-game purchases, acquiring many dances, skins, and battle passes. When I buy a battle pass, it motivates me to play for countless

hours. There have been weeks when I've spent more than 10 hours playing Fortnite. When I reached that level, I realized I needed to slow down. My grades and social life had begun to slip, as I was using study hours to play the game. Knowing it's important to manage my time, I made quick improvements before it was too late. Once you lose that time, you'll never be able to get it back.

Opinion: Expand DI Playoffs to 8 Teams

By Bryant Versprille
Decree Staff Writer

Like many observers, I think it's time to revamp—once again—the playoff system for NCAA Division I football.

The four-team playoff system is simply too small. Since it only has four teams, at least one of the Power Five conference champions isn't selected to the playoff every season. (The Power Five include the Atlantic Coast, the Big Ten, the Big 12, the Pac-12, and the Southeastern conferences).

Sometimes, more than one champion misses out. In the 2016-17 season, for example, Ohio State was selected to play in the playoff. That year, the Buckeyes did not play in the Big Ten championship game. The final four did not include the Big Ten champion, Penn State, and the Big 12 champion, Oklahoma.

In other years, some conferences have had two teams to make the playoff. In last year's playoff, for example, there were two teams from the SEC. The SEC conference champion, Georgia, was selected, as was Alabama, which lost to Auburn in their last-regular season game. Alabama entered the playoffs as the number-four seed and beat Clemson in the first game and then defeated Georgia for the national title.

In light of such outcomes, I think the NCAA should expand playoffs to eight teams. If it went to eight, then all Power Five conference champions could compete for the national title. This would also leave room for three at-large bids. The three at-large bids could be for the champions of smaller conferences or for another Power Five team that's deemed deserving by the selection committee.

Last season, the University of Central Florida went undefeated in the regular season and faced Auburn in the Chick-fil-A Peach Bowl. During the regular season the Auburn Tigers had beat both Georgia and Alabama, but lost to Georgia in the SEC championship game. UCF trounced the Tigers and finished 13-0. Since Auburn was the only team to beat the Alabama Crimson Tide, the winners of the Division I playoff, UCF declared themselves the "real" national champions. It's hard to argue with the claim.

So far this season, UCF is still undefeated and its players think they deserve a shot at the national title, but the team will never earn that chance as long as the playoff consists of only four teams. Their strength of schedule is 71st out of 126, and because of that UCF has no argument compared to a one-loss team, Georgia, that has the third hardest schedule. If the NCAA committee would expand the playoff, UCF would get an opportunity to show the country that they can compete with the big dogs.

Expanding the playoff would also give the NCAA more money. More teams equals more games, which equals more television and gate receipts, which equals more money, and the NCAA loves money.

Of course there are drawbacks to expanding the playoff. More teams means more games that the players have to play. This leads to more fatigue and higher chances for injuries.

The College Football Playoff has a contract with the NCAA that lasts until 2025. Is the playoff system better than the BCS computer ranking system? There are arguments on both sides. Will we see an expansion in the playoff? It's hard to tell. All that is certain is that no matter how the national champion is decided, there will always be football fans who disagree with the result.

Wednesday Prayer Offers Support, Calm for Students

By Brooke Bayse
Decree Staff Writer

Each Wednesday in the chapel there is a prayer meeting led by Chaplain Barry Drum and Dean Ed Naylor. Around ten attend in a typical week. They believe the noon gathering helps the school grow closer together and brings them closer to the Lord.

Will Plyler, a regular attendee, says that the meetings are important to the Wesleyan community because of its roots. "It's imperative that we guide our school into the future based on the Judeo-Christian principles that our founders intended for us," said Plyler, the SGA president.

A couple students noted that Wednesday afternoon prayer serves to bring different religious affiliations together. Kaitlyn Petteway believes that the student body has wanted a revival and sees that happening when we all come together as one. "For a revival to happen on campus, we need to come together across denominations and find a common ground," she said. "That common ground is prayer."

Petteway feels comforted by the campus prayer. "Seeing that there is a place for prayer, it's easy to feel support for whatever is going on in your life," she said. "Having Dean Naylor and Dr. Drum there, we know it will be heard by the important members of the community."

Joshua Strausser noted that campus prayer puts all members of the community on equal

footing. "The weekly prayer is important to this school because that's the time when all of us can come together, not as deans and students, but as God's family," he said.

Blaise Gourley echoed Strausser's remarks, explaining that weekly prayer gives students the opportunity to unite together with faculty and administration under one cause.

According to regular attendees, one major goal is to make God's presence known on campus. "As much as this is a Christian community, it's important we make Jesus prominent in everything," James Cheazar said. "The prayer meetings make us appreciate God's direction and guidance on campus."

Prayer can be important to the college, but it should also be beneficial to the student and staffs in their personal lives. "The weekly prayer meeting is the most essential activity on campus, because it awakens my spirit when we fellowship with the Lord," Cheazar said. "I see the weekly prayer meeting as an opportunity to give thanks for God's abundant grace not just upon me, but all Bishops."

Strausser said the presence of Dean Naylor and Rev. Drum at the prayer meeting makes him feel a sense of calm. "How many students from other schools can say that their school's staff is praying for them?" Strausser said.

Petteway said she likes the comfortable atmosphere that's been established at the prayer meetings. She said she feels more confident in her "personal walk with the Lord."

"When it comes to prayer and putting my faith in front of people, I'm not always very confident," she said. "I don't like to be pushy with my faith. So, getting to come to a place and hearing faculty and other students pray and pray for me gives me a feeling of confidence."

Dean Naylor shared that his personal walk grows whenever he is in a time of prayer. "My personal belief, one that's shared by many Christians, is that God is my creator and redeemer and worthy of our focus and prayers," he said. "Prayer is a fundamental part of being a Christian and I enjoy speaking with God regularly in prayer."

Plyler agreed with Dean Naylor's sentiment. "Being a Christian, prayer is a huge part of that," he said. "It's a great way to focus and have a positive enforcement on what's most important."

Dean Naylor and Rev. Drum recounted the origins of the prayer gathering, which began last spring. "When he began as president, Dr. Clark made it clear that prayer was a high priority on campus,



Senior Trevor Harris works in the new biology lab that opened in Gravely Science this fall. The pharmaceutical company Pfizer donated funds for the lab.
Photo by R. Sauls