



Photo by Anthony Drake, *Daily Post Athenian*

TWC is one of three colleges related to Holston. The others are Emory & Henry and Hiwassee.

Oct. 9

Tennessee Wesleyan hits record with 988 enrolled

Tennessee Wesleyan College President Steve Condon thought this year's enrollment could possibly see 950 or even 960 students at most. When the final enrollment number came in at 988 – a new TWC record – Condon had to pinch himself.

"Nine-eighty-seven," said Condon. After a short pause, he added, "Wow ... wow."

The Athens day program has the most students, with 737 full-time students and 34 part-time. The Athens evening program has four full-time students and 40 part-time, while the Knoxville campus' evening program has eight full-time and 60 part-time students. The nursing program has 104 students as of Tuesday, with five being part-time.

Condon attributed much of the 14.6 percent enrollment increase over last year's 861 students to spreading the word about the college through regional advertising, as well as the continued improvements to the campus over the last few

years. These include a new business school housed in the renovated Elliott Hall, a new entrance still under construction and the new residence hall Wesley Commons.

"We were overdue for a good return on investment, but this is it. Our little school is on its way," Condon said. "People have worked hard, prayed hard, dreamed. Folks have stuck with it through thick and thin. This is their reward."

Even with Wesley Commons, the college's four residence halls are almost to capacity now. With 332 residents, a jump from last year's record of 252, Condon said there are only 30 beds left on campus.

Condon said the college will likely never see "3-, 4- or 5,000 students," but he also said "there's no need" for it to.

"We can get up to around 1,040 or 1,050 'max,'" he added. "We want to grow, but yet we want to be able to maintain our small college charm."

Suzanne Hine, the college's vice president for Academic Affairs, said it's that "charm," in addition to brick-and-mortar changes, that has led to students taking a strong interest in pursuing degrees at Tennessee Wesleyan.

"Students and their families have come here to visit and have taken notice of the quality of education and the family-like atmosphere on campus. They've fallen in love with it," Hine said. "For a long time, TWC has been the world's best-kept secret, but now the secret's out."

Stan Harrison, TWC's vice president of Enrollment Services, has worn many hats since coming to TWC in 1982, including those of faculty member and coach. He's also seen the enrollment at points

so low that 987 would seem like a pipe dream.

"When I came here in 1982, we had a 515 head count," Harrison said. "We were struggling a little then, there's no question."

Since then, he saw the number dip to 435 in 1984, rising back into the 500s to 600s in the late '80s and early '90s, to breaking 700 in 1996 and getting over the 800 mark in 1999. This week, he saw enrollment hit 988.

"I'm excited," Harrison said. "We just need to make sure this happens a few more years and we'll be on course. This is just the beginning of where we want to go."

While there were "lots of keys" to opening up this year's enrollment, Harrison said one important key was in financial aid. This year, with a new system, the financial aid department was able to give prospective students financial aid and scholarship packages in 24 hours instead of two or three weeks.

"A big part" of the credit Harrison gave to the admissions department and the coaching staff who were on the front lines in terms of recruiting.

The admissions staff didn't have much time to celebrate their victory, though. They've already hit the road to begin recruiting freshmen to next year's class.

As for this year's freshman class, Harrison said he couldn't be more pleased.

"I think this is a very good freshman class that's come in," Harrison said. "It's a happy, receptive group, which is an asset to this institution."

In turn, the institution is considered an outstanding asset to the community by many, and news of TWC's record enrollment has already caused some excitement outside of the college's 40-acre downtown Athens campus.

TWC alumnus Hal Buttram, who serves on the Athens City Council alongside TWC graduates Dick Pelley and Bo Perkinson, said the record enrollment can only mean "great things" for the community.

"Anything positive for Tennessee Wesleyan is positive for the city," Buttram said. "We gain a lot in this community from having TWC as a part of it. The cultural benefits the college offers us are tremendous, and we have so many in our community – teachers in our school systems, business and civic leaders – who are graduates of TWC. This is great news for all of us."

– Greg Moses, *Daily Post Athenian*
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Texas kids find no mission impossible

They're kids on a mission, packing flood buckets for victims of recent hurricanes and making blankets for wounded soldiers.

"It's really fun because you get to help people," says Zoe Pitts, 7.

Mission Possible Kids are proving children can

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