

# University nears final steps in re-accreditation study

By MEREDITH BOREL  
OLD GOLD AND BLACK REPORTER

The university is nearing the final stages in the production of its self-study, required for re-accreditation. The study will be reviewed by a committee of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools in March of 1997. The association requires member institutions to be accredited every 10 years.

SACS will send a group of consultants to review two aspects of the university: its compliance to certain criteria and its strategic planning for future progress and programs.

"What this group does is force each school to do a very careful evaluation of where it is and where it's going," said Bob Swofford, a professor of chemistry who is on one of the university's accreditation compliance committees.

Various committees have been working for the past year to gather documentation to prove the university's compliance to SACS' required criteria for accreditation. Each school in the university must demonstrate that it is following the criteria.

"That's what makes it so much work," said Ellen Kirkman, a professor of mathematics and computer science. "It is so all-encompassing," she said. Kirkman is a member of the Steering Committee for the self study.

In response to some of the requirements of the criteria for accreditation, several changes have recently been made in university procedure.

There is now a student on the Athletics Committee, Kirkman said. "And we now have a more uniform procedure for handling written student complaints."

The "compliance document," outlining references to prove the university's compliance with each "must" statement, should be completed by Dec. 1.

The second part of the accreditation process is strategic planning, designed to allow the university to receive evaluation, criticism and suggestions by expert consultants about a specific program of its choice.

"We got to choose what area we wanted to discuss," Kirkman said.

The university chose The Plan for the Class of 2000 as its strategic planning subject and assigned committees of faculty and staff to deal with three separate areas: "The Freshman Year," "The Intellectual Climate" and "Information Technology." These committees have been preparing documents outlining the

planning processes and achievements in each area. When the visiting consultants arrive in March, they will use the documents as background information.

According to Swofford, who is on the Information Technology Committee, two prestigious consultants are visiting to review the Information Technology program. He was amazed at the quick response of the consultants when asked to come. One consultant, who will be coming from a college in Oregon, expressed great interest. "He told me whenever he visits a university to talk about information technology, the name of Wake Forest is mentioned," Swofford said.

According to Swofford, the Information Technology report includes an outline of the steps the university has taken thus far to implement the plan, as well as about 15 open-ended questions to prompt evaluations and recommendations from the consultants.

"It's sort of priming the pump, giving the consultants a list of questions that are meant to promote recommendations," Swofford said. "There are a lot of approaches that don't work, and we'd like to avoid repeating those mistakes."

Carole Browne, a professor of biology, is on the committee reviewing intellectual climate. She said that this committee's report is a compilation of recent findings from the Lilly Group report, the Kuh report and other recent inquiries into intellectual climate at the university.

The Intellectual Climate committee also met last semester with a group of 15 students to discuss recent changes to include in the report and areas affecting the intellectual climate which need to be addressed further. Some of these included alternative social opportunities, the issue of diversity on campus and the perceived lack of undergraduate research.

"We are asking (the consultants) what do you recommend that could be done at Wake Forest to provide a more vibrant intellectual life," Browne said.

The consultants will review each of the three aspects of the Plan for the Class of 2000 and submit to the university a report of comments on the strengths of the programs as well as the flaws and areas in need of improvement.

"It will be up to the administration, in consult with the faculty, to decide how best to proceed given the environment at Wake Forest," Swofford said.

Following the university's response to these recommendations, the university is expected to be re-accredited in December 1997.

# Center offers listening ear

## Counselors available for individual and group sessions



LeeAnn Hodges

Counseling Center assistant director Johnne Armentrout and Director Marianne Shubert are two of the counselors available for individual and group consultations.

By JENNY SPRINGS  
NEWS PRODUCTION ASSISTANT

With the arrival of exams and the holiday season, many students may be feeling more and more stressed.

The university Counseling Center is available to any student free of charge to help deal with problems such as stress, as well as a variety of other issues.

Students can make an appointment to talk confidentially with one of the five counselors on staff, all of whom have either their master's or doctoral degree.

"One thing we want students to realize is that students don't have to have serious problems to come here," said Johnne Armentrout, the assistant director of the Counseling Center. "They could be struggling with what are normal developmental issues."

"Sometimes people get stuck and it's nice to have someone outside their families and friends to process those concerns with," she said.

Armentrout said that the counselors see students with problems ranging from adjustment difficulties, relationship difficulties, grief, eating disorders, depression or past or recent experiences of sexual assault or abuse.

The center also holds support

groups in different subjects, including eating disorders, homesickness, gay/lesbian issues and assertiveness, as well as general therapy support groups.

The groups, which have from four to 15 students, are usually started by students already in counseling or students interested in starting a specific group. Most groups are advertised before they begin. "Someone who has gone through the same or similar situation can help a lot," Armentrout said. "When a student realizes he is not the only one dealing with something, it eases the burden."

One of the main functions of the center is to provide consultations for people on campus. "In general, people look to us as mental health experts," Armentrout said.

She said that professors, students and even parents will call to ask for advice or recommendations for mental health situations.

Armentrout added that the counseling maintains the confidentiality of all patients. "We hold confidentiality in the strictest sense," she said.

Crisis response is also an important contribution of the counseling center, Armentrout said. "When traumatic things happen on campus, we're an integral part of the crisis response team, because we're trained to help

people deal with traumatic situations," she said.

She added that people in traumatic situations need to know the normal symptoms people experience so they can cope better. "If people are treated in appropriate ways, they are going to be a lot less traumatized," she said. Counselors from the center also give presentations to groups of students, such as to resident advisors or to classes, and also advise and train various student organizations, including Leadership Excellence Application and Development (LEAD), Policy Group on Rape Education, Prevention and Response (PREPAR) and peer educators.

Another feature the Counseling Center provides is career planning in conjunction with the office of Career Services.

A course in the psychology department titled Career Planning, is taught by the people in the Counseling Center. They also hold four week-long Life/Career Planning groups to help students in decision-making, choosing a major and a career and other aspects of a student's future.

These groups are held throughout the year and are open to all students, although Armentrout recommends that sophomores and juniors should be most concerned with these issues.

# Climate

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report, along with the Montreat Conference Report and the Lilly Report, into the backdrop for the intellectual climate segment of the university's self-study report, Zick said.

Zick, however, also said that the Kuh Report has and will continue to serve as an important catalyst in solving problems in the intellectual climate of the university.

The Student Life Committee, headed by Deborah Best, a professor of psychology, will also review the Kuh Report as they oversee student life policies.

"The committee will hold a retreat to focus on examining the recommendations (of the report) and to determine if a response is necessary, and if so, what that response will be," Zick said.

According to Zick, the committee will focus on what they believe is the central problem addressed in the report. "The biggest question we face is about expectations," Zick said. "We need to look at whether our expectations are clearly articulated and communicated to students and at the capacity of the university to develop methods and processes to communicate those expectations."

Though the Kuh Report has put the spotlight on many negative aspects of the university, Zick said that in comparison to the three other universities to which Kuh compared the university, student satisfaction at this school proved to be high.

"All of this has to be cast in light of some very fundamental global findings in comparison to comparable institutions. Student satisfaction here is higher than the norm... especially in faculty availability to students," Zick said.

As for the controversial areas, such as students' perceptions that they work harder than the report claimed, Zick said that these conflicting opinions should serve as a source of examination.

"We need to reflect on how perceptions can sometimes guide the quality of student life. We need to ask if it is a good thing to perpetuate those perceptions if they are different from reality," he said.

Zick said that the Kuh report has in less than six months already spawned a variety of new programs that have attempted to remedy areas in which Kuh said the university was lacking.

He cited several new programs sponsored by various campus groups that appear to have been initiated as a result of the issues brought up in the Kuh Report.

Such programs include the Benson Center Discovery Series, the Student Government banquet that allowed stu-

dents to dine with faculty, the Multicultural Affairs' new programs on the racial climate and the Grass Roots Initiatives by Greeks, a new program whose purpose states it will make "efforts at enhancing the intellectual and cultural environment on the campus."

Zick said that although there has been no real structured, organized attempt to set up programs specifically geared toward fixing problems the Kuh Report pointed out, these new programs that have sprung up around campus appear to result from the report and from the discussions and direction of thinking the report has generated.

There have been three specific initiatives resulting from the Kuh Report, Zick said. These include a new faculty orientation program that seeks to better acquaint new faculty members with the lifestyles and mind sets of students. "It shows them what works with students, what students respond to," he said.

The other programs include a strengthened faculty advising program implemented by Paul Escott, the dean of the college, and a piloted freshman retreat with another one planned for upperclassmen, which focuses on living a purposeful life.

Zick said that Kuh commented that the university is very unique in that everyone here has an opinion and wants it to be heard, which he said is the sign of a healthy community.



Kristin Thompson

## Toot your horn

Junior Robin Cook practices for the last time on the marching band field. The field will be paved over to make room for Polo Residence Hall and a parking lot.

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