

Catharine Kendall Emerald

Northwest Christian College students lounge in the 'rug room' Mike Stear (front left), Amanda Harmon (front right), Caron Koch (back right), Rob Brittain (back center), and Jason DeVries (back left).

# NCC comes into the light

Northwest Christian College uses fundraising to make improvements and spread its message

By Andrew Adams  
Oregon Daily Emerald

In its own little corner under the shadow of one of the state's largest universities, Northwest Christian College has quietly begun its first major fundraising drive in the school's 100-year history.

Often unmentioned in a county that is home to both Lane Community College and the University, administrators hope the quest for increased donations will draw this secluded private school into the public spotlight.

NCC administrators publicly announced the capital campaign early this month, which will raise funding for a new activities center, technology upgrades, scholarships and renovations to the school's 79-year-old music building. The goal is \$13 million, and \$5.9 million has already been raised through trustees, employees and alumni. Groundbreaking for the new activities center is expected to happen in two years.

Jim Womack, NCC president, said the campaign will make the college more active in the Eugene community and give its students more opportunities.

"This will enable us to do a lot more on campus that we [currently] can't do," he said.

He added the largest room on the NCC campus holds just more than 200 people. The new activities center will allow the school to host more lectures and events that will increase the school's role in the community. Womack said even though the college prides itself on providing a close-knit family atmosphere for its 490 students, the decision to open up to the community was not difficult.

"It was several years in the making, but once it was time to do it, it wasn't hard," he said.

As NCC moves forward with its campaign, Womack said he hopes more students will think of NCC for their higher education and more community members will understand what the school does. He said he hopes the campus improvements will also strengthen the already positive relationship between NCC and the University.

"To create an overall environ-

ment where students are supported in their faith development is our primary mission," he said.

Students at NCC said they are looking forward to the improvements at their school, even though many of them will have graduated before the fundraising campaign will be completed. They also said they hope the fundraising will attract more attention to the school.

Rob Brittain, a junior studying ministry and film studies at NCC, said the majority of students believe it is exciting to break new ground at the school, which hasn't seen a new building in 46 years.

He added some students were not so sure about the fundraising drive. "There's a minority that's confused about spending money on a new building and not ministry," he said.

But in Brittain's opinion, the fundraising will give the college more venues to spread its message, and let more people in the community understand what the college does.

He said he often meets University students who have never even heard of his school.

"I think the biggest thing is we're kind of mysterious," he said, but that hasn't hurt the student relationship between the two schools.

"Everyone at NCC has nothing against UO," he said, "I think UO students just don't know about NCC."

If the school becomes better known because of the fundraising campaign, Brittain said he is not afraid that a larger college will mean the loss of the close-knit atmosphere.

"The family feel isn't in numbers, but in the people who are here," he said.

Sophomore Mark Bradbury, who is studying pastoral ministries, said one of the college's best features is that it is small.

"I've loved it so far," he said. "When I got here, it's like a family."

He said he has noticed a barrier between NCC students and those at the University who expressed the belief that Christians are "more talk than living."

Bradbury said that while he believes this perception is untrue, he could understand how University students may not understand his school, because it often reminds him of being "in a little Christian bubble."

He added that despite people not knowing too much about the college, it remains active in local ministry efforts and is a fun place to go to school.

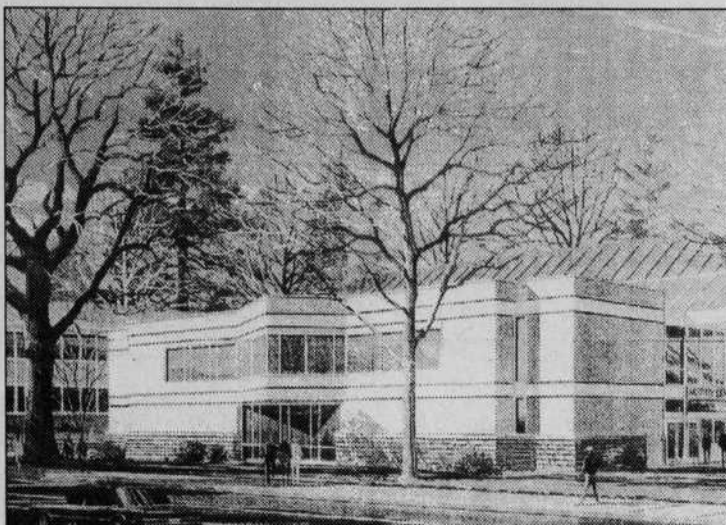
While NCC students can't help but be aware of the University, students in the University often don't know much about NCC.

University journalism junior Eric Zentmyer said he doesn't know much about what goes on at NCC.

"I really don't have a perception of the school because I've never had contact with [any students]," he said. "They're pretty isolated."

Vicki Miles, a junior who is studying general science, said she had never met any student from NCC, and was unsure about what students at the college do.

"I assume they do Christian things," she said.



Courtesy Illustration

This future building addition to the NCC campus will be made possible by the school's first fundraising campaign drive in 100 years.

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