

Over 760 at Blakely
**BC Enrollment
Hits Record**

Expressing thanks and appreciation to the Bainbridge College (BC) community, for its record enrollment of 3,025, of which 762 are at the Early County Site, President Tom Wilkerson praised all who worked "so hard and effectively" to produce that record. Fall Semester 2007 had 2,586 enrolled, with 585 at Blakely.

Dr. Wilkerson praised Main Campus and Blakely personnel and specifically mentioned the work of Admissions Director Connie Snyder, "her dedicated crew," Michael Kirkland, who was interim vice president of student affairs, and Christina Jackson, who coordinates programs offered to high school students.

"I must also mention the wonderful work by our Financial Aid Office. With Debbie Turner's able leadership, the office is increasingly productive and student friendly," Wilkerson said, noting the college is improving efforts to keep students appropriately informed about their aid.

BC Welcomes Dr. Clay as Head of Student Affairs

With a record enrollment when he took up his duties Sept. 2 as Bainbridge College Vice President of Student Affairs and Enrollment Services, Dr. Martyn Clay set the bar higher with the aim of attracting even more students to the college.

The college has 3,014 students enrolled for Fall 2008 with 762 of them taking classes at the Early County Site in Blakely.

"My main goal is to achieve a dramatically increased enrollment at the college," Dr. Clay said his third day on the job. He noted that the male-female ratio is usually 47:53, but at BC it is about 30:70. He plans to work to increase and retain more male students as he did at in Florida where he also increased female student retention.

Dr. Clay came to BC from St. Petersburg College (SPC), which has four campuses and more than 65,000 students. He served as associate vice president of academic and student affairs from 2006 until he came to BC and was SPC's registrar and director of admissions 2000-06.

Integral in attracting and retaining students is improving the support structure, Clay said, noting that includes the financial aid component. He said that Spring 2009 there will be a change in the timeframe for students learning about whether they will receive financial aid and how much. He noted that the aid is tied to academic progress guidelines, and that one of his goals is improved communication with the students.

Dr. Clay, an Army veteran who retired as a major after almost 18 years of service, works to help students understand that a higher education can pay higher dividends in lifetime earnings. He especially aims those efforts at students whose family obligations cause them to focus on short-term financial responsibilities and take jobs with lower wages. He tries to educate them about how to finance their educations.

"Often these are people who have family responsibilities, a child or other family members they have to take care of," Dr. Clay said. "No one is taking care of them." He thinks BC can help fill that need through an initiative such as the one he helped develop in Florida.

SPC's effort to be a source to take care of the student included an extensive support system with the goal to show the long-term financial benefits of education. The programs he developed for men and for women included mentors, faculty, staff and community support, technological resources, career seminars, networking, a lending closet with attire appropriate for job interviews, and a scholarship program.

With Georgia's HOPE Scholarship program, BC has one asset already in place for the kind of support program he envisions. "At a minimum we need to do a better job of educating male students how to finance their educational goals. We need to try more to help on the academic side," said



Clay, who had both those responsibilities in his previous position.

A member of the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers, he served on the Florida Council of Student Affairs and the Florida Council of Instructional Officers. He served as president of the steering committee of Florida Community Colleges Registrars and Admissions Officers.

He earned his doctorate in educational leadership from the University of Missouri at Columbia, a master of arts degree in management from Webster University at St. Louis, MO, and his bachelor of arts degree in history from Bucknell University in Lewisburg, PA.

In addition to his work in Florida, the Virginia native worked at Southeast Missouri State University at Cape Girardeau 1996-2000, serving three years as assistant university registrar and one as associate university registrar.

Knowing the positive impact of intercollegiate sports at St. Pete, Dr. Clay can see that as a viable offering to BC students if the college continues to grow.

An outdoorsman who likes to work behind the scene more than in the spotlight, Clay enjoys fishing of all kinds, boating and hiking. He and son, Christopher, now 18, enjoyed regular paint ball competition for several years.

Clay and his wife, Evelyn, who is the new president of the Bainbridge-Decatur County Chamber of Commerce, also have a daughter, Kellie Anne, 21, a senior at the University of Central Florida. Their son plans to attend BC.