



Bainbridge College Foundation, Inc. Hears from Students During Annual Meeting 2009



At left, Jenny Maldonado, who is glad the nursing curriculum is tough, says scholarships make a positive impact on the student and the family.

At center, Victoria Fleming explains that her Bainbridge College scholarship means she only has to hold down two jobs while attending school.

At right, 2009-10 SGA President Chase Alexander tells the significant impact his scholarship has provided.

Three of the more than 40 Bainbridge College Foundation scholarship recipients spoke to Foundation members at their annual meeting Oct. 27, 2009, putting a face on the importance of the endowment. And Foundation members learned of the extent of activities at Charles H. Kirbo Regional Center since their first meeting there in 2008.

Students Chase Alexander of Climax, Victoria Fleming of Bainbridge, and Jenny Maldonado of Donalsonville, shared stories of the positive impact the funds make on their lives, their families, and their educational goals. For some, it means holding down fewer jobs while attending school full-time. For all it means less pressure as they work to reach their educational goals.

A biology major, Alexander serves as 2009-10 Student Government Association president, itself a full-time job helping plan all student activities and representing the students at official events such as ground breakings for the Student Wellness Centers on the Bainbridge campus and BC Early County Center. The Bainbridge Rotary Club Scholarship means he can focus on studies to maintain high grades in addition to his college leadership responsibilities and peer tutoring.

Ms. Fleming said that the Lillethun Scholarship means she only has to have two jobs to support her family as she works on a degree in business office technology. Foundation support is critical because she is a single parent.

A member of Sigma Kappa Delta honor society, Ms. Maldonado summed the sentiments of other BC scholarship recipients that the funds make a difference for the individual and for the family. The Robinson Scholarship helps fund her studies for the Associate of Science in Nursing degree. With less pressure about money, she can focus better on the demanding coursework.

“It’s tough,” the Donalsonville mother, housewife, and business owner said of the program’s demands. “And it should be tough because in nursing we are dealing with people’s lives.”



The lives of more BC students and their families can be impacted positively with the increase in the Foundation’s endowment, said BC President Tom Wilkerson. At the 2008 Foundation meeting he announced the endowment had grown from the \$60,000 level in 2005 to \$500,000. Responding to that news, Dewey Robinson challenged fellow Foundation members to raise the figure to \$1 million. They accepted the challenge.

At the 2009 meeting, which was his first day on the job, Development Director Emory Smith accepted the challenge to grow the endowment to the \$1 million mark and proffered his check for a donation. By Honors Night 2010, the figure was more than \$600,000. *(More on Smith follows.)*



President Wilkerson enumerated increases of another kind at the meeting, giving figures about use of the Kirbo Center during its first year of operation. With a total of 183 events as of the meeting, something happened at the center every other day since its dedication Oct. 26, 2008. The 70 non-college events represent activity by other groups every five days, while 113 BC events represent one every three days.

“That is a very impressive set of statistics given that we started with no base of clients at all,” Wilkerson said and complimented the work of Kirbo Center Director Vanessa Arthur.

Emory Smith Named as BC's Development Director

Emory Smith of Tifton, familiar to area residents for his work with Southwest Georgia YMCA District, has been named as the full-time director of development at Bainbridge College. He brings an extensive background in fund raising and in college teaching.

BC President Tom Wilkerson introduced Smith at the Bainbridge College Foundation's Annual Meeting Oct. 27, 2010, in the Charles H. Kirbo Regional Center where Smith has his office.

"I am not the fund raiser for the college," Smith said during a meeting at which he was introduced to colleagues on campus. "I am the fund raiser for the students." In his brief remarks to the Foundation, Smith accepted the challenge to raise endowed scholarships to \$1 million, saying the challenge is not about money, but about fulfilling dreams for a better life.

Illustrating his point, Smith spoke of his mother's dream of higher education for all her children, having been unable to attend college after her father's unexpected death. Her four children did graduate from college.

Smith, who served as executive director of Southwest Georgia YMCA and was its chief fund raiser 15 years, graduated from Brunswick Junior College, now the College of Coastal Georgia. He earned his bachelor's degree in sociology and master's in clinical psychology from Valdosta State College and holds a master of divinity degree from Emory University. He taught at Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College, Brewton Parker College, and Tift College and was Brewton Parker's campus director of its Norman Park site.