ESCU's STORY: "They Shall Be Like Trees"

By JOHN T. WILLIAMS

ELIZABETH City, N.C. — When one travels through the great Dismal Swamp toward Elizabeth City, he sees the natural beauty of northeastern North Carolina.

He sees rivers, canals, underbush, a variety of animals and an overabundance of trees.

More than anxious to reach larger metropolitan areas, speed takes the traveler on to Norfolk, Va. or east to the "vacation wonderland" and fishing areas, or west to Raleigh and other larger cities.

See The Forest

Thus, the thousands of motorists who ask, after having passed through or visited the area, "Where is Elizabeth City?" are those who could not "see the forest," the forest of development and developmental opportunities, "for the trees."

So it is, perhaps, with Elizabeth City State University, which is naturally affected by the above factor.

The attractions of the larger, more prosperous, highly promoted and more prestigeous institutions of higher learning cause many parents, students, educators and donors to question, "Elizabeth City State University?"

For The Trees

Perhaps they do not see the beautiful, 82-year-old perpetual forest of higher educational opportunities, developmental project and progress at ECSU.

They do not see this "forest" for the trees of financial shortages, public questioning of the credibility of colleges and universities, and student questions and desires that surround all of higher education.

Last year ECSU was reaccredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and School, another major achievement, of the administration of Chancellor Marion D. Thorpe.

Major Improvements

Undoubtedly, the members of SACS' Self-Study Visitation Team, who highly commended the University "for major improvements which, by comparison, were unnoticed at many other institutions," got a good look at the beautiful ECSU forest.

They saw a great sense of purpose and direction on the part of the administrarion, a tremendous amount of dedication and continued preparation of faculty and staff personnel, a widespread involvement of students, not only in the process of decision-making and classroom affairs, but also in extra-curricula, intercollegiate and community-related activities and projects, and many other things which definitely give ECSU a plus rating.

Surrounding receipt of words of high praise and affirmation of re-accreditation, ECSU students and graduates, appreciative of the opportunities which the university's programs unlocked for them, were positively involved in, not only improving themselves, but also in announcing more clearly what the University can do and has done.

Love For ECSU

Out of their love for ECSU: the choir toured Europe, bringing back continuous praise from the people of the countries where concerts were given; a student now heads the Student North Carolina Association of Educators a year after the parent body was headed by the first black, Mrs. Ruth Jones, an alumnae of ECSU.

Athletically, the Vikings captured CIAA titles in football and wrestling and the District-29 NAIA crown which sent the basketball team to Kansas City where it had previously finished fourth and third in the national tournament.

A business education major became one of the 10 highest ranking sorority women, academically.

Performing Well

Professional athletes are performing well in football and basketball while other graduates are excelling in graduate schools and doctoral programs in English, instructional technology, education and administration as well as in law and medical schools.

A student organization and the 1972 graduating class gave a combined total of over $1,100 to the Elizabeth City State University Foundation.

Since its inception in 1891, the growth of ECSU has been a living phenomenon.

At Its Birth

At its birth, the institution was a one-year Normal School.

Today, with full accreditation by SACS, the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction and the North Carolina Association of Colleges and Universities, and with membership in more than 30 professional and-or learned organizations, it is a viable institution which is now an integral part of the University of North Carolina system.

Also, the addition of business administration to the curriculum now provides 24-year programs from which students can select a major.

These include the 14 teaching areas of early childhood education, art, intermediate education, general music, industrial art, basic business health and physical education, instrumental music; biology, comprehensive business, English, mathematics, chemistry and social science;

Non-Teaching Areas

And the five non-teaching areas of biology, English, chemistry, social science, including a sociology major with social work, and mathematics.

Programs are also available in library science, psychology, black studies, adult education, police science technology and other areas as minors or concentrations.

This makes ECSU a multi-disciplined four-year university that helps to prepare students to live instead of just "making a living."

Greater Significance

Of greater significance is the fact that ECSU is not just interested in recruiting sutdents, but also in providing programs and services.

The University is committed to providing educational opportunities to the culturally and economically deprived as well as to the advantaged students.

It renders special services to students who might otherwise experience financial, academic and other problems by providing programs such as Upward Bound, Five-College Curriculum, Special Services to the Disadvangaged, Basic Education and Enrichment and Summer Improvement Programs, the first three of which are federally funded.

Proper Motivation

It is amazing how even these students, when given the proper motivation and instruction, achieve and prepare to take their places in "the mainstream of the American society."

Finally, there can be no sitting down at Elizabeth City State University — sitting down and glorying over past achievements.

Being planned

Programs are now being planned in urban affairs, allied health education, computer science, environmental science, reserve Officers Training, geology and other undergraduate areas, as well as graduate

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