

**Rotary**  
Club of  
Charlotte



# REPORTER

March 14, 2017

## **Dr. David O. Belcher**

**Chancellor, Western Carolina University**



Western Carolina Alum Ben Pendry introduced the current Chancellor of the University, David O. Belcher. A native of Barnwell, S.C., Belcher graduated from Furman University in 1979 with a degree in piano performance. After receiving a master's degree (1981) in the field at the University of Michigan, he studied in Vienna, Austria, on a Rotary Foundation Graduate Fellowship before earning his doctorate (1989) at the University of Rochester's Eastman

School of Music. He is currently a member of the NCAA Division I Board of Directors, and also serves as a director of the NC Arboretum and the Asheville Area Chamber.

Eighteen months ago, Dr. Belcher was diagnosed with a malignant brain tumor. After surgery and treatment in Durham and Sylva, he is back at the helm full-time. As Ben noted, it would take a lot more than a brain tumor to keep David away from his calling. His introduction was followed by a recruiting video for WCU.

His talk centered around the University and its growth and impact on their 10-county service area and the State as a whole. The University was founded 128 years ago to educate the children of the western mountains of NC. It quickly added a state-funded normal department, and became the State's first normal school, a designation for a school to train high-school graduates to become teachers. It progressed from there to become a college, and then a full-service university, and was incorporated into the North Carolina University System in 1972.

The school had 10,805 students enrolled in the fall of 2016, and is expected to exceed 11,000 students in 2017. Dr. Belcher estimates that the enrollment will reach 13,000 within the next 5 years. Not only is the school attracting more students, but over the past five years it has improved its retention rate of freshmen by over 12%, and currently 80.17 % of freshmen return for their sophomore year. He attributes this to an excellent faculty that is dedicated to the student's success. While 79% of the school's students are eligible for Federal financial aid and 42% of students are eligible for Federal Pell Grants (offered only to low-income students), the schools performance and reputation allow it to be selective, resulting in steadily increasing GPAs of incoming students, up to 3.78 in 2016.

Beginning in 2018, the NC Promise tuition plan will take effect, lowering tuition fees at WCU and requiring even more selectivity in order to avoid being overwhelmed by an increase in enrollment while they grow the infrastructure to support more students. This initiative is an attempt by the NC Legislature to address three of the major issues in higher education today: access, affordability, and high levels of student debt.

A major strategy for WCU is a focus on six areas of learning that are critical to the needs of the western region of the state: Education; Healthcare; Innovation & Technology; Creative Arts, Environment; and Tourism & Recreation. Their budgeting and development programs have concentrated in these areas and they have eliminated some areas of study not related to this strategy. He extended thanks to UNCC and Chancellor Phil Dubois for their help in starting WCU's undergraduate degree program in Engineering, and its program for Doctor of Nursing Practice.

Dr. Belcher discussed WCU's large and growing construction and renovation program; the need for funding to replace their 95-year-old steam plant; the start of private construction on University property of facilities to support the University's mission; the addition of 186 endowed scholarships since 2011; and their work to improve and add energy to their athletic programs. He promises that they will do it right, with athletes that excel in the classroom. Performance has improved, but it is not yet consistently excellent.

He went on to list some of their more famous faculty members and some of the University's many national awards and recognition it has received for academic excellence, including ranking in the US News and World's top 10 public universities nationally for the last 11 years. They will continue in the business of changing lives for the better, and with their passionate commitment, there is no telling how far they will go. "GO CATS!"

Speaker Write-Up: *Rick Handford*

Head Table: *Tom Bartholomy, Ben Pendry*; Invocation: *Susan Evans*; Visitors & Guests: *Ken Poe*; Health, Happiness & History: *Colleen Brannan*; AV: *Jessica Dupree, Nikki Keith, Steve Eanes*; Photos: *Bert Voswinkel*

## CLUB NEWS

**Meg McElwain** (*Mitchell's Fund*) and **Amy Burkett** (*PBS Charlotte/WTVI*) are in the 2017 Class of the 50 Most Influential Women named by the Mecklenburg TIMES; Updated email for Tom Burgess: [tlbhuger926@gmail.com](mailto:tlbhuger926@gmail.com); Project results aren't always communicated back to the membership – 49 coats were collected for the project to serve unaccompanied immigrant children from Central America, coordinated by **Vernon Menard**.

**Fae Shaffer** serves as the District's chair for *Seminar for Tomorrow's Leaders* (SFTL) and provided the following recap of the leadership program that is celebrating its ninth year: four day camp for rising high school juniors and seniors; event will be held at Davidson College, July 13-16, 2017; 90 students will participate and 25 more applicants/scholarships (\$500 per student) are needed; 30 volunteers are needed for various positions; six Rotary mentors are needed for the four day commitment – mentors receive a day of training in the spring; sponsorships are available to advertise your business – items for welcome bags, etc.

*All are invited to the opening reception at Davidson College on July 13 at Carnegie Clubhouse around 4pm. TWO club members have indicated an interest in volunteering. Ed Pickett and Em Syrewicze are coordinating registration for three Myers Park High School students that will be sponsored by Charlotte Rotary. More information: Fae Shaffer: [fae@refreshtech.com](mailto:fae@refreshtech.com).*

**Ben Pendry** extends an invitation to attend the 26<sup>th</sup> Annual Barnhardt Seminar on Ethics and the World of Business, March 22, 2017 – 5:30pm reception/6:30pm program; 8:00pm dessert and coffee; featuring Carl S. Armato, President and CEO of Novant Health; Event held at UNC Charlotte Center City, 320 E. Ninth Street.

RSVP: <http://specialevents.uncc.edu/2017-barnhardt-seminar>

## 100 SERVICE PROJECTS (80 completed; 203 participants; 2347 volunteer hours)

The idea behind the commitment to complete 100 service projects is to TOUCH 100 organizations. We are starting to lap ourselves and although we can count the community service hours, we can't count the organization if we've already provided a service for them. Example: Christmas breakfast at Charlotte Rescue Mission, coat collection for Crisis Assistance, bell ringing. Do not read into this that we will not continue supporting these projects. Just that we need to identify new organizations that need something done....manpower, no funding, prefer minimum of 2 Rotarians (can be more) volunteering to make it count. I'm looking forward to your new ideas.

### NEW PROJECTS *in red*

- **Classroom Central** will hold their *Color a Brighter Future* philanthropy breakfast April 4, 2017, Bojangles' Coliseum, 8-9AM. Table hosts are needed to fill a table of 10- you and 9 guests. Contact: **John Phillips:** [john@parkcre.com](mailto:john@parkcre.com)

- **The Jamie Kimble Foundation for Courage** will be hosting the "Women for Courage" luncheon on April 5, 2017. Table hosts are needed; sponsorships are available. Contact: **Terri DeBoo:** [terri@terrideboo.com](mailto:terri@terrideboo.com)

- **BBB's Annual Shredding Event** will be held Saturday, April 8, 2017 from 9am until noon. Location is in the parking lot at Charlotte Latin, 9502 Providence Rd. Contact: Tom Bartholomy: [tom@charlotte.bbb.org](mailto:tom@charlotte.bbb.org)

- **Freedom School Partners** need help to supply 120 classrooms at 16 sites serving over 1,200 scholars. Contact [sandy@charlotterotary.org](mailto:sandy@charlotterotary.org) for list of specific items needed. Contact: Nikki Keith: [nikki@freedomsschoolpartners.org](mailto:nikki@freedomsschoolpartners.org)

- **2017 PGA Championship**, August 7-13, Quail Hollow Country Club. Volunteers needed to help in their concession areas. Several schedule options range from 6am-1pm, 7am-2pm; 8am-4pm, 9am-4pm, 10am-close, 11am-close. I have additional information if anyone is interested.

### ONGOING

-**Allenbrook Elementary School:** North Star Reading Partners with a commitment to read to a 3<sup>rd</sup> grade student one hour a week. **Eric Davis:** [eric.davis@wellsfargo.com](mailto:eric.davis@wellsfargo.com)

-**Platelet Donation:** Register at the American Red Cross or Community Blood Center of the Carolinas to donate platelets. **63 donations to date!** **John zumBrunnen:** [jzumbrunnen@zumbrunnen.com](mailto:jzumbrunnen@zumbrunnen.com)

-**American Youth Soccer Organization (AYSO):** Coach, referee, board member, linesman, snack shack worker, etc. Kathy Riley at [rc@ayso05.com](mailto:rc@ayso05.com) or **Carolyn Carlburg** [c.carlburg@gmail.com](mailto:c.carlburg@gmail.com)

## MEMBERSHIP

07/01/2016 318

03/14/2017 321

Net Increase: +3

New Members:

Resignations:

Visitors & Guests 12

Club Members 155

Total 167 (57.4%)

Guests: Tucker Horne, Lynn Lee, Lori Lewis, Carson McMillan, Blaise Stevens, Jackson Widener, Angelo Vecchio, Lindsay Blaire Beeman, Jason & Malea Habbal, Carla DuPuy, Barry Smith, Dave Thompson, Doug Barr, Bill & Loretta Dodgen, John Horne, Bob Clark,

### UPCOMING BIRTHDAYS (03/23/17 – 03/29/17)

03/23 Jon Hannan

03/24 Matt Joyner

03/26 Mike Crum, Brian Huber

03/28 Alan Simonini

03/29 Eric Davis

**UPCOMING ANNIVERSARIES (03/23/17 – 03/29/17)**

03/24 Adrienne Eric Davis; Amy & Mark Norman

03/26 Kit and Peirce Ward

**UPCOMING PROGRAMS**

03/21 – Mirsad Hadzikadic, College of Computing & Informatics, UNC Charlotte

03/28 – How I Got Where I'm At

04/04 – Kevin Poet, Head of Plant Operations, Siemens

04/11 – Mark W. Boyce, True Homes: Building a company culture that produces success

Photos from our luncheons and other events can be found on Flickr [Click here](#)





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