

Editor's Note

What a difference a year makes, but mission far from over

BY BILL WAGNON

What a difference a year makes.

It seems like an eternity to me now, but it *was* only 15 months ago that the college's Board of Trustees voted to transition the intercollegiate athletics program from NCAA Division I to non-scholarship Division III. That announcement came less than three months after two of our students were arrested for conspiracy and arson of nine rural Alabama churches. In August 2006, the college welcomed a smaller than usual freshman class of 292 students.

What a difference a year makes.

August 25, 2006: "The solution to our structural problem is going to be primarily enrollment. Enrollment, enrollment, enrollment."—BSC President David Pollick in his third annual State of the College address to the campus community.

August 24, 2007: "Well, you were nothing short of amazing! Led by Sheri Salmon [Dean of Enrollment Management] and her wonderful staff, we got better in every way. Our 'Southern Ambassadors were living examples of why we all believe in the students and graduates of this college. Admissions, while examining every aspect of their operation, opened their minds to the change and growth that was essential to success. And the faculty and staff took up the challenge, visiting with prospective students in person, on the phone, and via the computer, in many cases numerous times. And our coaches, the veterans as well those leading programs for the first time on our campus, were so focused that you didn't even realize it when you blew by the goals that had been set for your teams. A world-class performance. ... The Alumni Association set as its goal for this year to provide 500 new student referrals to admissions. They provided 600!"—President Pollick in his fourth annual State of the College address.

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August 25, 2006: "There is no doubt that we are in a challenging period for fundraising. While we have been the grateful beneficiaries of some large and generous bequests ... these naturally are unpredictable. In contrast, annual gifting had become more difficult even before we entered this transitional phase, indicating that much work needs to be done to reverse that trend."—President Pollick.

August 24, 2007: "Well, the good news is that enrollment is not the only thing growing at the college. Fundraising for the academic programs and athletics is growing as well. ... Last year was one of the most successful fundraising years in the college's 151-year history. ... And while all of this is great news, securing the future with our alumni has also been a major goal. ... And not at all surprising, alumni participation in events on campus and around the country increased. ..."—President Pollick.

What a difference a year *does* make. Record freshman enrollment. Alumni and friends pledging their support to the college. A new beginning in Division III athletics and the numbers and kinds of scholar-athletes it is attracting to our campus.

It's nice to be able to celebrate some exciting times at the college with this issue of *'Southern*. Yet, there is still much work to be done. As President Pollick reminded us in this year's State of the College, "Today, we should all be proud of what was done this last year in the critical areas of enrollment and advancement. But you won't be seeing any banner behind me that says, 'Mission Accomplished,' although you might hear the more accurate, and certainly more eloquent, words, 'This is not the end. It is not even the beginning of the end. But, it is, perhaps, the end of the beginning.'"

The day before school started for the fall 2007 term, a faculty member told me that he's never seen such a buzz about the campus. For the first time in his nearly quarter of a century here, everyone—faculty, staff, students, and alumni—is pulling in the same direction.

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