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Bad case of senioritis? See pages two and four.

Bush to lead Harding into year 2000

by April Mouser

Bison editor

Brian Bush will serve as Student Association President for the 1999-2000 school year. The election closed at 4:30 p.m. on Wednesday and the results were posted a short time later.

"I can breathe now," Bush said to a friend upon hearing the news. "I want to hit the ground running."

Bush's campaign platform included goals of establishing areas where men and women can watch television or movies together, as well as equipping each dorm with laundry facilities. "These ideas are very feasible," he said. "We've already started talking about them in the SA. They won't happen in August, but I'm going to get started on them right away."

"On the first day of school I want to announce that we've already made some progress," he said. "I'm very excited to lead Harding out of the old millennium and into the new."

Carson to replace Gardner as Assistant Vice President for Student Services

by April Mouser

Bison editor

Dr. Delores Carson, currently Associate Dean of the School of Education, will replace Butch Gardner as Assistant Vice President for Student Services beginning August 1. She will be the first woman to hold this administrative position, the highest office a woman has held in the University's history.

"It will be a plus for the University to have a woman in such a key administrative position," Dr. David Burks said. "Dr. Carson will bring a very positive outlook to the students regarding this office because of her close involvement with students. She is very student-oriented and she loves Harding."

"It's an honor to be asked," Carson said. "I accepted the position because I thought it would be very exciting to work with students in a positive way. I expect nothing but the best from the faculty, staff and students and I would like a lot of their input."

he said. "I'm honored that I have the opportunity to do that."

Bush said the campaign was a very clean and friendly one. "I want to thank Brian [Schwiger]," he said. "We were friends before the election and we still are. There was no running each other down."

Bush has been active in SA since his freshman year and told Monday's chapel audience that he has had his eye on the office of president since he began college. "I look forward to the work ahead of me," he said. "My main goal is to focus on the spiritual side of things and really serve God next year. This position provides me a great opportunity to do that with 4,000 people."

SA Graduate Assistant Jim Miller said, "The SA President has a great responsibility to the students to be an advocate for them to the administration. The goals Brian has set for next year are not impossible to achieve, but it will take a lot of hard work and communication with the administration."

Jasmine Flagg will serve as vice-president, Rocky Wyatt as treasurer, Kelly Lauterbach as senior women's representative, Jonathan Dismang as junior men's representative, and Megan Wierow as sophomore women's representative. There will be a run-off today between J.D. Eddins and Marcus Moore to determine the sophomore men's representative. Other positions will be filled in the fall.

Becky Henson, Robert Henson and Wheeler Howard cast their ballots for the SA elections on Wednesday. Brian Bush was elected SA President.

Carson will bring a very positive outlook to the students and the administration."

"I feel like I have a good rapport with students. I understand how they learn and respond, and I believe this will help me," she said.

Gardner will continue to work for the University as director of the Stephens Scholarship Program and Minority Student Affairs, which Burks said are growing in size and complexity. He will also be working part-time on his doctorate at UALR.

"This is simply a change of assignment," Burks said. "We are very appreciative of his 12 years in the dean's office."

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"I want to announce that we've already made some progress," he said.
**Flaming sweaters, wrestling clowns: Senior secrets exposed**

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Surprisingly, the Harding administration crowed on this creative campaigning. The day before the election, Halford was told he could win the race, regardless of the voting outcome. To this day, Halford maintains he received more votes than Veal. “I know I beat him!” he said. True outcome of that election will never be known.

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Of course, there were other burners in the lab, too, and one near Sawyer had been left on but not burning. Silently, her sweater gathered much heat. It ignited. From there, smoke and flames raced out of the nonburning burner. As she reached across her lab table, her sweater got in the way and extinguished the flame out. Then I watched April [Hidden] if it got it all.” Sawyer said. “April saw the fire flame climbing up my back toward my hair, and she yelled. ‘Holly! Stop, drop and roll!’ Immediate evacuation of the class picked up the chant. ‘Stop, drop and roll!’ they yelled. But Sawyer had dropped her tube instead and couldn’t roll because there was acid and broken glass all over the floor.

Surprisingly calm, Sawyer walked to another spot to light her fire, she revealed, “Everybody stared when I came in, including the wrestlers.”

For example, senior Matthew Miller, a native of Searcy, has a doozy of a tale. When he was a freshman, Miller had a problem zipping his backpack when he walked around campus. One morning he was late to chapel. Because he sat in the middle of his balcony row, he had to squeeze past many grumbling classmates. Unfortunately, as he neared his seat, his open backpack tip over, rumbling all of his books onto the girl in the row in front of him. Naturally, the entire freshman class snickered—some other burners were for no one else but the writers. Maybe you have no idea what I’m talking about because this is the first “I Say” I’ve ever written for the Bison student newspaper (namely, my parents and a few friends), I appreciate your comments and encouragement. And hey, maybe this stuff will be worth money someday.

As for your spirit of compassion. That driving force that motivates you to help tornado victims and Romanian children, defining the “slacker” image and those who would label you as such. No wonder others were for no one else but me. I wrote about my best friend Rachel, my crazy roommates and my experience with the books from her personal library. The method of catharsis as much as anything, it allowed me to vent.

I got set not to revolutionize the world or Harding with my words. I wrote to get a firmer grasp on the process — what I plan to make a career out of. In the meantime, I gained a better understanding of myself and the world around me.

However, I do hope you found something to extract from those words. Maybe you can go out in public without making a scene and make a decision to vote. Maybe you called your best friend and told him or her, “I love you.” Maybe you gained some understanding and tolerance for people who have different struggles than your own. Maybe you watched Monica Lewinsky’s interview and wished you would have read my column warning against it first. Maybe you sat down and wrote an old-fashioned, thoughtful letter — and mailed it. Maybe you can go out in public without being for no one but yourself. Yes, maybe you have no idea what I’m talking about because this is the first “I Say” I’ve ever written for the Bison student newspaper (namely, my parents and a few friends), I appreciate your comments and encouragement. And hey, maybe this stuff will be worth money someday.

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Combat fighting not a right, but a duty

In 1865, President Andrew Johnson awarded Dr. Mary E. Walker the Medal of Honor for her brave services rendered and loyalty to the Union in the Civil War. During the war, Walker faithfully served several years at a Confederate prison. However, Walker never shot a gun, fired a cannon or waited in trenches to earn such a noble honor. Without ever participating in hand-to-hand combat, Walker proudly served her country and subsequently earned one of the highest military commendations through her skill and practice of medicine.

Like Walker, many women today are turning to the branches of the military as a career avenue. According to an article in Issue 104, "Maintaining A Victorious Military," women now make up more than 32 percent of the U.S. Armed Forces. More than 35 percent of graduates from military academies such as West Point and the Naval Academy are female. Unquestionably, women are more than ever to serve in the military. It is true that the idea of all women in combat is more than a question of credentials. The essence of all military service—specifically close combat—is the adequate protection of the United States, its resources and its citizens. The advancement of careers is secondary to the military's fulfillment of its primary obligation—defense.

According to Title X, "Women may not be assigned duty on vessels or in aircraft that are engaged in combat." Integrating female ranks into ground combat and reversing such standards would inevitably require varying standards of performance and ability. Issue 96 reported, "There can be only one standard for a warrior, and that is determined by what it takes to fight and win combat. Having different standards for men and women would ruin morale and unit cohesion."

In order for a soldier to enter a battle situation, he must have the confidence that his comrades have a reliable and similar ability. While it may be politically correct to hail the modern woman as a warrior of many sorts, the fact remains that trust among soldiers is as valuable as any artillery or weaponry available. Introducing women into combat units may affect the readiness of a unit for military action. Issue 96 reported that the Navy aircraft carrier, the USS Eisenhower, attempted to incorporate females as part of their formerly all-male crew. However, in the first six months of deployment, 14 of the women became pregnant while on cruise and subsequently had to be released from their duties on the carrier. Those women failed to fulfill their obligation and service, once again reinforcing the idea of varying and unreliable standards for women and men.

Yet, many Americans feel that women should be allowed to fight in combat. According to a poll administered by the New York Times and CBS News in January of 1990, 72 percent of those surveyed said, "Women should be allowed to serve in combat units if they wanted to."

However, the response itself reveals the inherent problem of allowing women to serve in combat. The phrase, "if they wanted to," implies that each woman should be given permission in advance, while men are expected to fulfill similar duties without hesitation. The idea of equal rights should not hinge on a woman's indecisiveness but rather an assumed obligation. Public opinion urges increased female involvement in combat, yet that same sentiment fails to hold women to an unaltered obligation.

Issue 96 stated, "Access to the military has never been based on what is 'fair.' Military service is a privilege and sometimes a duty, not a right."

However, women have proven themselves indispensable to the work of the military. While women may not be best suited for roles involved in close combat, the opportunity for work in other essential aspects is already apparent. In 1989, "Women in the Military" reported that 100 percent of positions in the U.S. Coast Guard and 97 percent in the Air Force were available for female occupation. Such positions include everything from engineers to intelligence workers. Like Walker, who served in the Civil War, women who fill such positions can help accomplish military goals without compromising military standards or unity.

We have to look back and laugh at such foolishness. We have successfully engaged racially integrated troops. Critics once said that minority races would be separated. The days of separate facilities for different races have passed. What was accepted as smart and even necessary at one time is now regarded as the utmost in absurdity. Women were thought of as weak and unable to fight. However, the response itself reveals the inherent problem of allowing women to serve in combat. The phrase, "if they wanted to," implies that each woman should be given permission in advance, while men are expected to fulfill similar duties without hesitation. The idea of equal rights should not hinge on a woman's indecisiveness but rather an assumed obligation. Public opinion urges increased female involvement in combat, yet that same sentiment fails to hold women to an unaltered obligation.

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Excluding women from combat perpetuates sexism

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Students learn Swahili, make preparations for African mission trip

by Lindsey Fielder
Staff writer

When junior Josh Quinn told his parents he wanted to spend his summer in Africa, his mother said, "There are plenty of people who need help in America." But Quinn, along with more than 40 other students, will be working in a variety of African communities.

Janet and Fielden Allison, visiting missionaries at Harding this year, live on Mount Elgon, on the border between Kenya and Uganda. In late June, some of these students will become interns for the Allisons for five weeks. Some students will live in their guest room; others will live in a mud hut behind their house.

These students will substitute teach at an elementary school, hold youth meetings with teens on Mount Elgon, visit high schools and teach Sunday school. The biggest thing that the interns will be involved in is called "bonding." They will stay in an African's home where they will be cooking and cleaning alongside an African family.

The Allisons got the names of interested students from Mark Berryman at African Missions Fellowship (AMF). All of the students going to Africa heard about the trip through Berryman.

Junior Heath Amos is going to El Doret in Kenya. He said what interested him about Africa was the different lifestyle that the Africans live. "I want to go to see how other people serve God; how they read the Bible for themselves and apply it to their lives. In the process I hope to have a better understanding of God," he said.

Traveling to a foreign country was also a draw to students. Quinn said, "I've always wanted to go to Africa, and that was initially my motivation."

Preparations for this trip have been extensive. Every Thursday night, these students get together to learn Swahili and to pray for each other. On Sunday nights, they attend the regular AMF meetings. These students have to have vaccinations and oral medications for disease as well.

Personal preparation has also been very important to the students. Prayer and Bible studies are the main preparations the students make on their own. Quinn has been reading about servanthood in the Bible. "I want to become a servant to God and to those people," Quinn said.

In Africa, many practice Animism. They believe in pleasing their ancestors with certain rituals. Ninety percent of the people in Africa are Pagans.

Janet Allison said that these interns "generate enthusiasm among the church members, especially the youth." The goals of some of the interns include preaching to different kinds of people and seeing Christianity in a new light.

None of the interns will only be on Mount Elgon for five weeks, they don't expect to have a great effect on the country of Africa. The students going to Mount Elgon all said they know that they will leave Africa with more than they came with. "I don't hope for a difference in Africa - I hope for a difference in me," freshman Aaron LeCave said.

Some of the students are thinking about going into the mission field. "This will either encourage or discourage me from becoming a missionary," LeCave said.

The anticipation level of these students is building. "I'm just so excited to see God work in my life," Quinn said.

Separation anxiety genuine for professors with personal relationships to graduates

by Remie Beaslee
Staff writer

Excitement about graduation is common among students who are completing their final requirements and getting ready for the "real world." But what about the teachers and professors who invest so much of themselves in the students?

While not all instructors at Harding regularly involve themselves in the lives of their students, many develop very personal relationships with them. It's one of the things that make Harding unique.

Dr. Steve Frye, associate professor of communication, is one of many professors at Harding who makes extra efforts to spend time with his students.

"I've never been one to say, 'if it weren't for all these students, I could get some work done,'" Frye said.

During his 10-year tenure at Harding, Frye says he has seen about three "cycles" of students move through to earn their degrees. "There's like we get a whole new batch every three years," Frye said. "Graduation is always bittersweet for those that I've come to think of as friends."

Spending extracurricular time with his students is important to Dr. Frye because he realizes that his time with them is short. "Most of our students are going to end up somewhere else, somewhere other than Searcy, and the loss of that is significant at graduation," Frye said.

Frye also said that he was always excited to see students complete their education at Harding, even those who "are truly being 'educating for eternity.'"

But for both professors, the most important thing about former students' lives is their spirituality. "The cruelest to me," James said, "is how their spiritual life and family life is going, but most importantly, their spiritual life."

Graduation is Sat., May 15, at 10 a.m. in the Garus Athletic Center. Gov. Mike Huckabee will be the commencement speaker.
Dobson speaks on significance of life, after-life

by Ryan Cook

A nearly filled Benson Auditorium was the scene April 22 for the third and final American Studies Institute Distinguished Lecture of the 1998-99 season. Dr. James C. Dobson, president and founder of Focus on the Family, centered his remarks on the meaning of life.

"First you have to understand the brevity of life," he said. "Secondly, you need to know... success and achievement are not very significant to the meaning of life. Of course, God wants you to use the talent that you have... but as a reason for living, chasing after success and achievement as an end to themselves will not satisfy, especially as you get older."

Dobson lamented the moral decay of America.

"Seventy-two percent of the American people believe there is no moral absolute and 62 percent of evangelicals believe there is no such thing as moral absolute -- you make it up as you go along... That is a damnable philosophy!"

Dobson concluded by recounting a conversation with his son, Ryan. He told him that above all secondary goals in life, "I want you, on that resurrection morning on the other side, to be there on that glad day... That's the only thing that really matters. Be there."

"Use your ability, use your talents, but the most important thing I can say to you tonight is 'Be there.' Don't let anything dim that objective and that goal."

After concluding his speech, Dobson answered questions from the audience for around 30 minutes. The topics ranged from politics to Halloween.

Dobson arrived on campus in the afternoon after completing his daily radio show in Colorado Springs, Colo. Before his public appearances, he met with Arkansas Governor Mike Huckabee, who was on campus for Dobson's presentation.

"Dobson spoke privately for ASI sponsors and other special guests, Dobson presented Dr. David Burks with The George Washington Honor Medal on behalf of the Freedoms Foundation at Valley Forge. The award was in recognition of the "outstanding programs and activities" of the ASI. At the dinner, Burks announced that Dobson's birthday was the day before his trip to campus and gave him a birthday cake.

Dobson's lecture for the public was preceded by a prayer, the Pledge of Allegiance, and a performance by the combined Harding University choirs, who sang, Alleluia, and Go, Tell it on the Mountain.

["Dobson was the number one speaker that we were seeking for the 75th Anniversary Celebration] to help us celebrate the values that Harding stands for because he also... believes in the kind of values that we're teaching down to for all of these 75 years," Burks said in his introduction. He also called Dobson "our nation's foremost champion of family values."

Dobson introduced his wife, Shirley, and recounted the National Day of Prayer on May 6, an organization of which she is president. He encouraged the audience to be prayerful for the people of Littleton, Colo., after the shootings there last week.

"In a sense, it should have been anticipated that this would happen because of what is occurring with kids killing kids and the culture of violence that's out there," Dobson said in reference to the events in Littleton.

While Dobson said he believes the debate over gun control has a place in regard to the recent school attack, he said the real problems are rooted in individuals. "It's not what you've got in your hand; it's what you've got in your heart."

"I liked Dobson, but I thought there would be more of a topic that he would focus on," senior Jason James said. "Instead he just jumped around a lot."

"It was a great evening with a full house that was very responsive," said Dr. Bob Reely, associate executive director of the ASI. "[Dobson] is a great speaker. One of the things I appreciate most is what he stands for."

M.A.D.D. Dash runners raise $4,344 to help combat problem of drunk driving

by Sara Hardesty

At 8 a.m. on Saturday, most of the still sleeping contentedly, buried under layers of warm blankets. After a strenuous week of classes, the thought of about 225 determined athletes, the place to be last Saturday morning was the Car­michael Community Center, be­hind the starting line of the M.A.D.D. Dash. Races ranged in distance from a half-mile fun run to 5 or 10 kilometers, offering an event for any level of compet­itor.

I decided to enter the 5K because I haven't run a race in a while, and it's for a good cause," freshman Andrea Soule said. "I ended up running my best time ever."

Harding runners domi­nated the 5K and 10K races. Freshman Scott Tabut won the men's 5K in 16:11; sophomore Tia Tarole took the women's win in 18:55. In the 10K, junior Albert Tabor's 54:05 was good for first place and freshman Elizabeth Lucas was the first female fini­sher in 42:20.

Sponsors also made up a considerable portion of the rest of the field.

"We really appreciate all the Harding students that run [the races]," director Paul Pollard said. "Without them, we would not be nearly as successful as we have been. All the support we get from them makes a big difference."

Even a few members of the faculty donned their racing shoes for the early-morning show of athleticism.

"I've been running since its inception, except for spring of '86 when I was at HUF," Dr. Bob Reely said. "This is my goal in the spring. It gives me something to train for."

The day was cool and overcast, with a strong breeze blowing -- perfect racing weather.

"The weather was great," Tarole said.

The 5K course was mainly flat, with a few gently sloping hills. Runners enjoyed the picturesque scenery, which included lush pastures filled with cows and patches of brightly colored wildflowers.

"I really enjoyed the scen­ery," Penick said. "It's different from most road races that I run that go through a town, where all I see are city blocks and shopping centers. It was nice to be in the country."

With its miles of steep hills, the 10K course was consider­ably more challenging.

"The course is tough," Tabut said. "It has a lot of hills. It's good for training. Everyone was complaining about the hills, but I liked it."

Mothers Against Drunk Driving (M.A.D.D.) organizes the race to increase awareness of the devastation that drunk drivers cause and to raise money to help combat the problem. M.A.D.D. collected $4,344 from Saturday's race.

"It's been real successful," Pollard said. "We bought the White County Sheriff's depart­ment a video camera last year, and it looks like we're going to have enough to do it again this year. Eventually, we'd like to put one in every police car in White County."

Pollard first helped organize the races 16 years ago in memory of Harry Miller, a 29-year-old Harding alumnus killed by a drunk driver in 1981. Today, the 10K race is named the Harry Miller 10,000 in his honor.
Never Been Kissed relies too much on ‘geek to chic’ plot

The first line of "Never Been Kissed" is "You know how some movies have these dream sequences but they don’t tell you it’s a dream? Well, this is not a dream.” Many of us have had dreams or thoughts of what it would be like to relive our high school days. This movie makes you think about that and the teenager mentality. Priorities change as we get older, and this movie reminds us of how we used to act and how we have changed.

Josie Geller (Drew Barrymore) is an intelligent 25-year-old copy editor for the Chicago Sun-Times, waiting for her big break to be a reporter. That break comes at a company meeting where her boss (Garry Marshall) gives her an undercover assignment - she is to enroll in high school and investigate today’s teenagers.

Not only does this present Josie with the opportunity to pursue her dream career, but it allows her a chance to erase her miserable memories of high school, where her unpopular ways earned her the unflattering nickname of “Josie Grossie.” Barrymore convinces movie audiences of the nickname in the hilarious flashback scenes with her wild, stringy hair, pimply complexion and braces.

Josie enters high school wearing a ridiculous outfit, being mocked and having no success among the "in" crowd. Her 23-year-old "cool" brother Rob (David Arquette) saves the day when he also enrolls in high school and instantly becomes popular by eating a bucket of coleslaw in the cafeteria. Rob helps his sister become popular and she, of course, becomes prom queen. In the meantime, Josie dreams of romance and getting a "real" kiss (hence the film’s title.)

When the young, intelligent literature teacher Sam Coulson (Michael Vartan) enters the scene, there is no missing how everything will eventually turn out. Josie is so likeable that we overlook the fact that Sam would be attracted to someone he believes to be his student.

This film tells the story through the eyes of an adult and through the eyes of a teenager. The Chicago Sun-Times staff is glued to watching Josie when a small pin camera is attached to Josie’s sweater. The high school students notice that she made it "from geek to chic" and applaud her. The different worlds collide in a way to give them both importance, yet the film makes fun of them both.

It is inconceivable that two 20-year-olds would be able to enroll in a high school without having their age revealed or at least without generating some suspicion.

The story was predictable because of the worn-out scenario “from geek to chic.” But “Never Been Kissed” was an entertaining movie that takes you through the good, the bad and the awkwardness of being a teenager. The moviegoer is with Josie every step of the way and absorbs every dilemma she faces.

All of us have tried to fit in somewhere at some time. Josie, like most of us, has to go through many levels of embarrassment and discomfort before she finally finds acceptance from within.
Soccer team fares well in spring season with high hopes for next fall

by Amanda Jones
Staff writer

After completing their first season, the Lady Bison soccer team continues to work hard to prepare for the upcoming fall season.

The team has been practicing regularly throughout the spring semester. Similar to the rules set for football by the NCAA, soccer practices are regulated throughout the off-season. "Soccer has a spring season, in a sense like football does, except it is different in one aspect - the NCAA regulates very carefully how many days in the total calendar year we can practice and play. It does allow for five what it calls "game days" in the spring," Coach Terry Edwards said. "We practice significantly more than football, and we actually get to play a few games."

Of the five game days, the team is not limited to only one game a day. "The games are usually done at the end of the spring season; most universities do that," Edwards said. "By game days, that doesn't mean you play one game in a day. You can actually play more than that."

After finishing their last practice April 22 and their last game April 25, the team will not meet until late summer.

"We just finished our last practice, and we will not meet until August 15 to begin practice for the fall season, which is the main season for soccer," Edwards said.

During their spring tournament, the team was focused on improving their controlled passing and speed, which the team was lacking in, according to Edwards. "What we were lacking in some games that we either lost narrowly or were significantly defeated in was controlled passing and speed," Edwards said. "We must have achieved significant improvement in those areas because those two factors allowed the Lady Bisons to dominate even a seven-year-program like Oklahoma Christian's [this spring]." In their last game of the spring season, the Lady Bisons played in the University of Central Arkansas tournament and took first place.

The spring tournament brought teams together from the University of the Ozarks, Ouachita Baptist, Hendrix, UCA, and UALR (Division II). They scored 14 goals in the event while only allowing two to be scored against them by the opposing teams. The Lady Bisons closed out their spring play with their second first-place finish in two tournaments. In the two events, they outscored their opponents 30-2, and they shutout seven of their eight adversaries.

Edwards said he is proud of the teams' spring play, and he hopes that it continues into the next semester as they prepare for new conference rivalries.

Edwards anticipates a strong team in the future. He said the team has talent on the field and there are a large number of freshmen and sophomores on the team, which allows him a few years to work with them.

"We have a team of mostly freshmen, so we will be able to work on problems we may have for more than one season," Edwards said. "We will be bringing back 15 of our 21 players in the fall, and I've signed five new incoming freshmen. I am still trying out another lady."

Edwards also listed several players to watch for next season. "Our defense is going to be significantly improved as a packet. It will be significantly reinforced by new signees. Our top recruit is a defensive fullback or center back," Edwards said. "Beyond that, outstanding players recognized by the conference as well are Heather Grey, Sheridan Smith and Tree Richmond."

Because it was a first-year program, Edwards is excited about next year's team and the chemistry they will create together. "The team works very well together. They have a unique team spirit, and I believe that the new signees will only add to that," Edwards said.

According to Edwards, fan support also played a big part in the Lady Bisons' first-year success. "We are very appreciative of the support of the Harding student body in the fall," Edwards said. "Harding ranked fourth in the nation in attendance for NCAA Division II games. We had around 350 in attendance for our home games. We want to maintain that kind of attendance, and we hope to increase it next fall."

"We hope that the Lady Bisons will also put on games that will entertain to get more people out there and that people will enjoy them as much as or even more than they did last season."
Bisons to move to Gulf South Conference

by Landon Horton
Sports writer

President David Burks officially accepted an invitation earlier this month for Harding to join the western division of the Gulf South Conference (GSC).

Harding’s NCAA Division II athletic programs are currently competing as a member of the north division of the Lone Star Conference, but the desire to reunite rivalries with other Arkansas universities prompted the change.

Joining Harding in this move will be long-time rival Ouachita Baptist University. Both schools were extended an invitation to join on April 11 by the GSC Chief Executive Officers after an unanimous vote. Schedules for the 1999-2000 year will not be changed, but officials hope to have both Harding and Ouachita fully integrated into the new league by the 2000-2001 season.

In order to meet the necessary criteria for Division II schools in the GSC, the University must add two new sports. Harding has elected to add men’s soccer and women’s fastpitch softball.

Men’s soccer will be added for the 2000-2001 school year while the women’s softball starting date is still pending. The board has given Harding two to three years to add softball, so they will be making steps toward adding by that time.

Harding Athletic Director Greg Harnden said, “These programs will be very exciting for the University, and it is great from the standpoint of having more participation from the student body.

“It will give 20-25 students per team an opportunity to become involved. Harding already has more athletes than most of the other teams in our conference, so we are leading the pack.”

Other Arkansas universities currently competing in the Gulf South Conference include the University of Central Arkansas, Henderson State University, Southern Arkansas University, Arkansas Tech University and the University of Arkansas at Monticello.

Head men’s basketball coach Jeff Morgan said, “It will be good to be playing against Arkansas schools in Division II. The level of competition will be about the same when we enter the Gulf South Conference.”

Burks said, “We are delighted to join with our colleagues in Arkansas and the rest of the Gulf South Conference. This enables us to renew many relationships that were very beneficial to us over a long period of time and to develop relationships with some new rivals under the GSC umbrella. This is something that we really wanted.”

Geography and budget considerations were other motivating factors in accepting the invitation. The Lone Star Conference is the largest Division II conference in the country, so this change will significantly cut travel time for the Harding sports teams and fans.

Consequently, travel expenses will also fall. Currently, teams are forced to travel as far as eastern New Mexico and south Texas to compete in conference games, but more than half of Harding’s new opponents will be located in Arkansas, Mississippi and Tennessee.

“The shorter trips will be easier on the players because they won’t have to miss as much class,” Morgan said.

The conference change also means that there is now only one Division II conference in the state. Furthermore, the addition of Harding and Ouachita gives the GSC 18 schools.

The men’s soccer team will be fed through club players. Harnden said, “The boys’ soccer team should be competitive immediately because we have so many strong players from clubs.”

So, the future will be a great time for exploration as new rivalries are forged and new competition introduced to Harding University.

Harding University has recently accepted an invitation to become a part of the Gulf South Conference. The new conference will add two sports and more Arkansas competition to the athletic program at Harding.

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