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Students applaud news of campus events, improvements

April 30, 2008 | Mitzi Bible

The last convocation of the semester featured several announcements from LU Chancellor and President Jerry Falwell Jr. that will greatly impact student life on campus.

Students cheered loud and long for their leader as he took the podium, a tradition that began when he spoke in his first convocation as chancellor last August.

The cheers continued when he announced there would be additional offerings by Sodexo, the school's dining services vendor, next year, a result of its money-saving trayless initiative. "While not popular, it is working," Falwell said. Sodexo will spend an additional \$240,000 to provide more food selections, including more proteins on the salad bar, increased beverage selections, filtered water selections, enhanced meat offerings, more fresh fruits, a larger variety of desserts, and carved meats three times a week.

Falwell received even more applause when he announced he and his wife Becki's "little gift" to students for the end of the semester — an ice cream truck that will roam campus between 11 a.m. and 5 p.m. on May 1, 2, 5 and 6 offering free ice cream to students.

For the first time, a senior picnic has been planned at the Bedford County farm of Jerry and Becki Falwell on Saturday, featuring food, swimming, a concert and a bonfire. The first 500 attendees will receive free T-shirts.

"When she [Becki] was growing up, her family always had a farm, so we bought a farm when we got married and thought it would be a great way to raise kids, but now we don't have time to enjoy it that much anymore so I wanted to let you guys enjoy it," Falwell said.

Falwell also announced priorities for capital improvements to LU's campus this year and next year. They include: library space under construction in DeMoss Hall, a perimeter road that will run between the baseball field and railroad tracks to Campus North, a new Barnes & Noble bookstore, a new student activities space at LaHaye Student Center (now being used as warehouse space) and a new vehicular tunnel.

Falwell also announced a recent gift from an alumnus that will make it possible to build an indoor soccer field to be attached to LaHaye Student Center. The indoor turf can also be used for flag football and lacrosse.

The alumnus who made it possible for LU's baseball team to have a lighted field, Greg Clendenin, spoke briefly on what it meant to him to give back to Liberty. Clendenin helped to build the largest privately-owned pest control company.

Falwell then commended students for their actions this year in academics, athletics and representing Liberty in the community. He spoke on “being a good alumnus” and the efforts of those who built the facilities that are here now.

“It’s the alumni in the end that must give back to LU,” he said. “That is the core group that will build our endowment. If we have an endowment of sufficient size, we could help every student who needs help financially.”