

President gets acclimated to Winfield

By Taylor Forrest
Convergent Copy Editor

From 8:30 to 5, his days are filled with non-stop meetings, daily interactions and constant conversation with individuals from all across campus.

While this may seem like an exhausting workday, he has a secret. In order to power through the long and arduous days, he requires a daily pit stop at College Hill Coffee for two large coffees.

After being officially welcomed into the Builder Family following his inauguration on April 14, Brad Andrews, president, has almost made it through his first academic year at Southwestern College, and he is heading into the home stretch with a determined mindset. Despite having spent a large portion of his first year getting acquainted with the college and its occupants, Andrews has proactively tackled issues, and implemented changes to build a better Southwestern.

Before coming to Winfield, Andrews spent 16 years at Carthage College in Kenosha, Wis, where he served in numerous positions.

For eight years he was dean of students. For the next five years he was vice-president of student affairs, admissions and financial aid. Eventually he oversaw fundraising, alumni relations and communications.

After accepting the position at Southwestern, Andrews and his wife Trish packed their bags and moved to Winfield. The Andrews' have four children. Two sons live in Wisconsin, and their daughters live in Winfield.

After taking the helm last July, Andrews was immediately faced with two demanding issues- the budget and the decline of admissions. So he studied the strengths the college already had in place, and pushed the college to continue to build on those strengths. Since day one, he said that he has consistently emphasized the importance of communication between the administration, faculty, staff and students. Andrews said that one key place they are working to implement this improved communication is in the budgeting process.

"We have implemented a number of new components to the



Brad Andrews, president, enjoys the company of Kenna Corley, coordinator of social networking, Dawn Pleas-Bailey, vice president for retention and student success, and his son Tyler before the first inauguration event of the day. (Kylie Stamper/Staff Photographer)

budgeting process by going out to faculty and staff in order to get their feedback about what they think should be or should not be included in the budget," said Andrews. "Essentially, we are creating a mechanism for individuals who work at the college to help suggest budget expenditures."

Andy Sheppard, provost, said that he has watched Andrews work hard all year to put a new budget process into place to create more transparency through communal decision making, allowing individuals to feel like they have a voice.

Another thing that Andrews has stressed is a growth in admissions. In the fall of 2015, Southwestern kicked off the semester with 464 residential students. This was a significant dip in admissions as the college usually opened its doors with approximately 515 to 530 residential students. In order to combat this decline, Andrews decided to reboot the recruitment and admissions process.

To do this, Andrews brought in someone he trusted and knew would do a good job-Dean Clark from Carthage College. Having worked together, Andrews was certain of his abilities and hired

Clark as the new vice-president for enrollment management.

Andrews and Clark initiated the Pillars Scholarship Competition. While Southwestern had not previously bestowed full-tuition scholarships, Andrews decided to award renewable full-tuition scholarships (worth 150,000 each) to two incoming students each year to bring potential bright students to campus. The admissions office has also started to increase the number of campus visits to expand prospective student exposure.

While Andrews has already focused on implementing these immediate changes, he does not have tunnel vision. Andrews said that he is thinking long-term as well, and is set on a five-year plan to better the college.

"My vision is remaking and remodeling some of the things that we are already working on, but to also grow the on-campus residential students to approximately 650 students in the next five years," said Andrews. "And in the midst of that growth, I hope that we have a campus-wide discussion between students, faculty and staff to pinpoint what our vision for Southwestern will be 10 years

from now."

Andrews has made another important hire this year, Matt Shelton, athletic director, was hired in February and began work April 1. The provost, Andy Sheppard, will be taking over the presidency at Thomas College in Thomasville, Georgia. Having spent almost 20 years at Southwestern working in different roles, President Dick Merriman named Sheppard as the first provost of the college in 2014.

Having worked alongside Merriman for several years, Sheppard said that he and Merriman had built up a great level of trust, and he can't ever remember a time when he didn't want to come to work. Now as he is preparing to leave for Georgia, Sheppard said he will leave behind only one regret.

"I only have one regret, and that is not being able to get to spend the same amount of time working with Brad as I did Merriman," said Sheppard. "Because Brad Andrews is a great guy, he's just a class act."

Andrews has worked to build steadfast relationships with some

See Andrews page 3



Brad Andrews, president, arrived on campus July 1. His office is in Christy Administration Building. (Kylie Stamper/Staff Photographer)