

THE DECREE

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April 13, 2018

NORTH CAROLINA WESLEYAN COLLEGE, ROCKY MOUNT, NORTH CAROLINA 27804

After 20 Years AD Relinquishes Post to Focus on Basketball

By Quinn Tobias
Editor-at-Large

If 1997 graduates visited Wesleyan’s campus today, they would not recognize the athletic department.

In 1998 John Thompson took over the athletic director position from Don Scalf. At the time, the promotion surprised Thompson because he was still new to the staff, having served just three years as the men’s basketball coach.

“I never expected to become an athletic director,” he recalled. “I never gave one thought to an administrative position.”

After 20 years in the AD post, Thompson will give up his administrative duties and concentrate on coaching basketball and adding to his 344 career wins.

“It became increasingly difficult to give the appropriate time to the position, given the growth of the department,” Thompson said when the college



Coach John Thompson

SI photo

announced the change in February.

Over the past 20 years Thompson has guided the expansion and development of Bishop athletics. The college has achieved many accolades during his tenure, highlighted by the baseball team’s 1999 national championship. Among

other accomplishments, Wesleyan has won two USA South Men’s President’s Cups, and individual teams have won more than 50 regular season and/or tournament championships and earned 26 NCAA tournament berths.

Since taking on the AD role, Thompson has overseen the hiring of many full-time assistant coaches. He made the sports information director a full-time position. He helped establish the school’s football program in the early 2000s and added women’s tennis and cross country. Men’s tennis and women’s lacrosse were reinstated during his tenure. Among many improvements to the athletic facilities

on campus, Thompson was instrumental in the construction of The Slick Family Foundation Tennis Center, which debuted in 2012.

Carol Carson has been on the athletic training staff for 30 years and, prior to Thompson’s time as AD, served as trainer for all of the teams by herself. Before Wesleyan built new facilities and expanded her staff to four full-time trainers, Carson had to prioritize the risk of each sport and seldom traveled with teams.

She cited Thompson’s dedication to player safety. “One of his priorities was to better serve and protect his athletes,” Carson said. “I’m very thankful for his support in the improvement of the health and safety of our athletes.”

In conjunction with the addition of the football team, the school built the Vernon T. Bradley Field House, which housed multiple locker rooms, coaches’ offices and an athletic training facility that met the demands of the growing department.

Head Football Coach Jeff Filkovski praised Thompson’s work. “I appreciate that he gave me the opportunity to coach here,” he said.

“The last five years we’ve seen the program come a long way with improved facilities and the growth of the roster. Coach Thompson has been the driver in the improvements.”

Bridgette Walker, head coach of the lacrosse team, shared Filkovski’s sentiment. She added that Coach Thompson has been supportive in creating new facilities such as a new locker room for her athletes. “He gave me the opportunity as a first-time college coach and trusts (assistant lacrosse) coach Meadows and me by not micro-managing us,” she said. “He’s put us in a

position to succeed quickly.”

Thompson extended his influence beyond the playing field by establishing the Wesleyan Academy of Athletic Leadership (WAAL), a program designed to improve the skills of student-athletes. He also instated institutional random recreational drug testing that is unique to Wesleyan. Thompson hopes the policy encourages student-athletes to make smart decisions while on campus. “It’s not about catching and penalizing,” he said. “It’s about helping athletes make the right decisions.”

After 20 years as AD, Coach Thompson and the college decided it was time to make a change for the betterment of Bishops athletics.

With fewer administrative responsibilities, Thompson wants to rededicate himself to coaching and family. “My free time is family time,” said Thompson, who lives in the area with his wife, Laura, and their three sons.

Aaron Denton will take over as the NCWC Athletic Director on May 15, after serving in the same capacity for 10 years at Sandhills Community College in Pinehurst.

Denton plans to continue the growth and improvements started by Thompson. “I’m excited to begin my work with student-athletes, coaches, faculty, staff, and the entire Wesleyan community,” Denton in a statement. “The college’s recent record growth provides both enthusiasm and opportunity. It’s an honor to join those efforts to serve and lead a committed group of staff and students. Together we can achieve academic and athletic excellence while providing the best experience for our student-athletes.”

Internationals React to Shooting, Reflect on American Gun Culture

Bijaya Lamichhane
Decree Staff Writer

Following the February 14 shooting rampage at a Florida high school, Wesleyan international students shared their insights on the root cause of gun violence in America, regulations for stricter laws for gun purchase, and other possible changes America should implement to ensure protection for its citizens.

David Chang, an Australian, recalled that he felt “shocked and emotional” when he heard about the shooting. “It was a tragedy that no one should have to experience,” he said. “It was heartbreaking.”

He believes that the root cause of gun violence in America is the easy access to firearms. “It shocks me as a foreigner, that citizens are able to purchase guns at the same place they get their groceries,” he said.

Chang used to believe in the ban of all guns from the hands of civilians. But he said that living in the United States had changed his position. “Not only is it

impractical (to ban all guns) due to the population, but in the right hands—and only in the right hands—a firearm makes me feel safe in the case of an emergency.”

Although Chang does not support a ban on all guns, he does believe that the sale of assault rifles should be exclusive to military and security personnel.

He suggested that gun violence could be prevented by implementation of strict rules for gun buyers. “They should be required to take extensive classes, as well as physical and written exams to make sure that the gun owner is capable (of handling a gun),” he explained. “The gun owner should be required to take exams every few years.”

Chang mentioned that after 35 died in the Port Arthur Massacre of 1996, Australia implemented a law that banned ownership of automatic rifles and shotguns, a law that was opposed by many of his countrymen. Since its implementation, there has been a substantial reduction in gun violence nationwide.

“Gun violence is not something I had ever thought about before I arrived in the U.S.,” Chang said. “The only firearms I had ever seen in my life were on a police officer. Even the police were very careful with the use of firearms. They mostly resorted to Tasers.”

Talitha Rowan, a freshman from England, found the U.S. gun violence unbelievable. Like Chang, she thinks the solution lies in tougher laws for gun buyers. She suggested prohibition on sales of all guns, unless they were used for agricultural purposes. Even then, she said, “there should be rules and regulations on how they’re kept and used.”

Rowan noted that in England it is illegal to carry firearms in most instances. One exception is shotguns used by hunters. Even that’s uncommon, she said. “Most police officers don’t even carry firearms because it’s unnecessary,” she said, citing the low level of gun violence in her country.

Rowan struggled to remember a school shooting in England. She’s found the gun culture in America to be jarring. “It was very concerning for me to come here and know people are allowed to carry firearms,” she said. “Having to practice drills on our campus to prepare for an event of an active shooter is crazy to me.”

Rowan recalled a recent class when she expressed her opinion on guns. “When I said that I believed guns are dangerous, the American students looked at me funny,” she said. “To me that’s obvious, but their response was that people needed guns to protect themselves.”

Shanidhya Khanal, a junior from Nepal, said he was saddened by the Florida shooting. He believes civilians should be prohibited from using guns. “We never know when a person might go crazy,” he said. “Here, having guns is seen as a way of protection. But people who don’t know about the

dangers of weapons can easily buy one. I think this is the biggest problem.”

Khanal asserted that being from a military family, he had always maintained that providing security to the citizens should be a federal responsibility. “Giving civilians arms to protect themselves would be like them taking the laws into their own hands,” he said. “Then the defense department wouldn’t be necessary.”

He pointed out that in Nepal, only police personnel and the military are allowed to carry guns.

Risa Kawamura, a sophomore from Japan, said authorities should have taken seriously the warnings against the Florida shooter, Nikolas Cruz. There were multiple times when people reported their concerns about the troubled teen. All were discounted or ignored, she said.

“In Japan, they have to check your mental health before you can get guns,” Kawamura stated. The Japanese have guns for hunting purposes only. “I was surprised when I saw they sold guns at Walmart,” she said. “It’s so usual to have guns” in her country.

In response to various media outlets praising the Japanese gun regulations in comparison to ones in the U.S., she commented, “It’s not relevant comparison. It’s a different environment. If people want to be violent, they won’t need a gun. In Japan, mass murder has happened with a knife.”

She questioned whether a serious gun ban would work in the U.S. “The government would have to raid guns from so many gun owners,” she said. “There are already gangs and bad guys who have guns. To protect our lives from these guys, we need guns in America.”

Kawamura also believes that, as in Japan, American students should not be allowed to carry guns. She supports a ban on assault rifles and machine guns. “Guns should be used for protection, not killings,” she said.

When I approached Gabriel Guzman, a freshman from Venezuela, to talk about gun violence in America, he seemed uncomfortable. “Oh my God! This is such a controversial topic,” he blurted.

See GUN CULTURE on pg 2

Student Petition Leads to Expanded Library Hours

The college has extended the hours that the library will remain open, acting in response to a petition signed by 200 students.

Provost Evan Duff announced the change in March after meeting with two students about the issue. The library has pushed back closing time Sunday through Thursday from midnight until 1 a.m. On Friday the library closes at 7 rather than 5 p.m., while it will continue to close at 5 p.m. on Saturday.

Together with Sidney McCall, Jeremiah Handlon met with the provost after getting students to sign a petition that called attention to what they see as limited hours.

“I thought the meeting went very well. The two students had well-thought-out

and organized ideas on the matter and they had suggested solutions,” Dr. Duff said, noting that he was able to explain the costs involved in extending the hours.

Handlon agreed that the meeting was productive. “It went very well,” he said. “Dr. Duff seemed very receptive to our request and I believe he took our suggestions into account when coming up with a solution.”

Though pleased with the college’s decision, Handlon and the petition signers had requested a 2 a.m. closing time Sunday through Thursday and expanded hours on Friday and Saturday nights from 5 to 8 p.m.

Dr. Duff noted that the college “met the students almost halfway” by adding seven hours over the course of a week

rather than the 16 sought by the petitioners.

“I appreciate the college moving quickly to find a solution to student concerns,” Handlon said. “Even though the new hours were implemented as the semester winds down, it will give the administration a chance to see that making the changes was a step in the right direction in helping students succeed.”

Handlon said students had wanted the change because so many rely on library resources. Besides providing a quiet place to study alone or in groups, the library is vital for many who need access to computer and printer services. Along with day students, Handlon singled out the needs of ASPIRE students, many of whom work during the

See LIBRARY pg 2

Flu Cases Dwindle

Like many schools around the country, Wesleyan was hard hit by the flu in 2018. But the college’s Wellness Center director reports that the number of cases has subsided since spring break.

Jessica Brys-Wilson, a certified physician’s assistant, said that there were 84 cases of the flu in the three weeks prior to spring break. In the three weeks after break, she saw just two.

For this academic year, the Wellness Center treated a total of 140 patients, with most reporting the typical flu symptoms of fever, body aches, headache, cough and nasal congestion. In an average year, Brys-Wilson noted, the Wellness Center sees just 10-20 flu patients.

Wesleyan took an all-hands-on-deck approach to combating the flu. There were frequent reminders about the importance of thorough hand washing, and the college provided hand sanitizer bottles in every building. The maintenance department played a significant role in preventing the spread of illness. It used new disinfectant equipment to sanitize many common areas around campus.

According to Director of Facilities Raymond Thompson, his staff covered restrooms and other common areas of the residence halls, fieldhouse, Dunn Center, business office, and classroom buildings.

Brys-Wilson said the equipment allows maintenance staff to disinfect large areas within just a few minutes. And it enables them to treat hard-to-reach areas such as under desks and chairs, she said.

She said she worked in close coordination with the staff. “If we see an outbreak of flu or other contagious condition, I can direct them to disinfect a particular area of campus in a moment’s notice,” she said. “The new machine is going to be very effective at preventing the spreading of germs among the Wesleyan community.”

NEWS & OPINION

Issue In-Focus 1: How Would You Spend \$20 Million at NCWC?

Decree staff writers were given a hypothetical situation: "If you were in charge and the college received a \$20 million gift, how you would spend it?"

Brooke Bayse

I'd first think through what the school needed. The first need is a new cafeteria. I believe the new building should be set near the back of campus behind the single-room residence halls or behind Nash. That would give each side of campus a cafeteria and it would allow for more offices as well as more room for students and staff to enjoy their lunches. Given \$20 million, I would also hire more faculty for our current majors, add new majors, and, in the future, more graduate programs. Many departments include only two or three professors, with some having just one. This school needs more professors to offer more class options, while providing better service for the students.

Josh Campbell

My first investment would be to hire more faculty. Right now our history department has very few professors (two) in comparison to some other majors. Within the political science department there are only two professors that teach a total of eight classes as well as some online courses. This is a heavy workload for just two professors. If we hired more professors, students and the professors would be better accommodated. Next I would establish a track and field program along with a field dedicated to the sport. Many Wesleyan athletes have expressed interest in such a program after running track in high school. A track and field program would make Wesleyan more appealing to prospective students and would help diversify our athletic department. Last I would suggest the college create a ropes course, which would distinguish Wesleyan from its competitor schools. Such a recreational facility would generate job opportunities and give students an exciting activity without having to leave campus. A ropes course could feature a zip line, repel tower, and high elevation training that would help students relieve stress through adrenaline.

Landon Clark

I believe that the best use of that money would be to create a facility that mirrors the YMCA. By doing this, you'd be able to increase student work-study positions, provide more fun activities for students, and enhance the overall health of the student body. With a large enough facility, we could then convert the Hartness Center and Taylor Center into new classroom facilities. The changes would help expand the number of classrooms on campus and provide more space for both fun and exercise.

Sarah Grossman

I'd spend the money on building new dorms and making improvements to existing ones. I would first renovate all the dorms on campus. The heating and air conditioning units and water heaters need to be updated in all the buildings, in part to allow students to control their air year-round. I would upgrade all outlets, sinks, windows, and furniture; much equipment is broken. The improvements would give students a more comfortable living environment and allow them to enjoy staying on campus. The last renovation would be to add key-card scanners on every dorm to replace the key system. After renovations, I would build a new suite-style dorm. The changes would help

the college accommodate the increased enrollment and help retention.

Darius Jackson

I'd give raises to the faculty and more scholarship money to students. The professors are vital to providing the students with the proper education. So, it's only fair to reward their hard work and help keep professors here for the long-term. I would use the other half of the money to create a scholarship fund for students. That would help attract new students and allow more of our existing ones to remain all four years.

Mamadou Jallow

I'd make changes to the athletic facilities, giving our teams another proud reason to represent our school. First I would enhance the soccer field; most important I would add lights so that both the men's and women's teams can hold matches in the evening. This would enable the teams to draw larger crowds—including more parents—and extend the hours when we can practice. Next I would build a football stadium on campus; that would make it more convenient for students without a car to attend. After improving the athletic facilities, I'd work on the cafeteria. I would not only enlarge the facility; I would expand the menu. As far as remaining funds, I would check with student leaders to help identify the most serious needs on campus.

Bijaya Lamichhane

I'd spend a lot of it on research and educational funding. I would allocate a certain amount for research grants for every department, so students and professors can collaborate and research; their findings would help to promote the college. I would also allocate a sum for study-abroad and mission-abroad funding. With other money, I would distribute a sum to every academic department, to organize campus events that promote respective academic interests and increase student participation. For example, social sciences could organize debate activities like Model United Nations; the humanities school could produce short films. Such hands-on activities could open the doors to creativity for young minds and enable them to break free of the monotonous routine of theoretical learning. Still other funds could be spent on advertising and overseas recruitment efforts. With a good-looking international population like ours, I would appoint student ambassadors to promote Wesleyan in their home country, which would, in effect, increase diversity at Wesleyan.

Johnathan Pickler

I would break down the money into a few areas. With enrollment on the rise, I'd first build a new residence hall. Then I'd create a new weight room. The Taylor Center is too small to accommodate so many different teams. We need to build a

new residence hall because the college is growing so fast. I'd also spend a small percentage on improving the air-conditioning units in classrooms, which all seem to run too hot or too cold. My final investment would be to buy land closer to campus and build a football stadium.

Maggie Rankin

My first move would be to build a community pool. If we went with an outdoor pool, this would give students a break from school work, a place to relax when the weather is nice. A second option would be to extend the Taylor Center and build an indoor pool, which could permit Wesleyan to establish a swim team, bringing more students to campus. Regardless of whether it was indoor or outdoor facility, a pool would provide more exercise options for the campus community—from swimming to water

aerobics. Next I'd add lights to the soccer field, softball field, and football practice field. Such a change would create more times to practice and allow teams to play night games. I'd also enlarge the locker rooms. The fieldhouse is too small and all the locker rooms are congested. With remaining money, I'd increase the fund for student scholarships.

Qa'lexus Taylor

First I would repair the roads on campus to limit damage to student vehicles. Next I'd increase the amount of classroom space, which is limited given our enrollment. More facilities would help us recruit new students. I would add more specialty majors like music, art and design, and culinary arts. I would expand the dorms and create an honors dorm, which would come with more amenities. It would be available to students with GPAs over 3.5. I would increase the amount of money available

for work-study. I would create more individual offices for adjunct professors so they're not cramped into small areas. With such adjustments, NCWC can become unstoppable.

Gianni R. Teal

I would like to see some of the money given to the science departments to invest in more lab equipment and supplies. Next I would address the transportation needs of students who live off-campus. I've noticed that the only ones allowed to ride the shuttles are the boys from the inn. Transportation may fail you at some point; it'd be nice to gain shuttle access. Then I would give the NCWC faculty and staff equal raises. The faculty and staff work so hard to be available for the students here at Wesleyan. They deserve a reward.

Quinn Tobias

I'd enlarge the gym and add graduate programs. The school's remote location means fewer opportunities for non-academic activities. The Taylor Center is at capacity during the week. At the lone half-sized basketball court, one can always find 20 students (or more) waiting to play a game while the court is in use. If we expanded the number of courts, it would allow more students to participate, leading to a decrease in the amount of on-campus drinking and drug use. New courts would also allow for an expansion of the school's intramural programs, which would build participation in school activities and increase school spirit. The school wants to find ways to increase enrollment; a more lively campus environment would attract more students. Another attraction would be more graduate programs. By establishing graduate programs, the school could become the University of North Carolina Wesleyan. The university title would set the school apart from its competitors.

Toni Tutt

My first move would be to increase the fund for work-study; students need more hours, more pay. After that, I would make improvements to the library, with an eye toward extending hours and increasing its services—e.g., computer access—to the student body. We also could upgrade the media lab; right now it's in a small space, though it's supposed to meet the needs of the entire student body. Leftover money would go toward funding new equipment and making repairs at the Dunn Center. At present, when it rains, we must put out trash cans to catch the leaks from the roof. We should be able to use the space without worrying about damages.

Issue In-Focus 2: What Should Be Done after the Florida School Shooting?

Johnathan Pickler

After losing 17 students in one day due to a school shooting, things must change in America. There have been too many acts of violence in schools with little change occurring as a result. The first step the government should take is strengthen background checks for would-be gun buyers. Law enforcement must be much more thorough. An individual may have a clean criminal record but have other issues in his or her past (i.e., mental health problems). There were multiple reports about the Parkland High School shooter, but they were ignored by the FBI. Another thing they should do is have more school resource officers on campus. Although the school officer in Florida was reported to have stayed outside while the chaos happened, if there were more officers on duty that day, then maybe things would have ended a little differently.

Maggie Rankin

On March 14th, a national walkout was held. All over the country students walked out of their classrooms and protested against gun violence. The students want change! They want better background checks, or the age raised to 21 or anything that will end school shootings. They don't want to keep feeling frightened that somebody is going to come in their school and kill them or their friends. I think the government should respond by doing two things: First strengthen the background checks. If the employees at the gun stores aren't doing their job, then they need to be fired or face more severe consequences. If tougher background checks don't have the desired effect, then I suggest we ban all assault-style weapons.

Qa'lexus Taylor

Each school should hire more security around campus to maintain a safe environment for students to learn. I would raise the age to possess a firearm to 21 (unless you're licensed military personnel certified to use a weapon). We should also strengthen background checks with an eye toward identifying individuals with mental illness.

Gianni R. Teal

There is no reason for school shootings and other mass killings to become the norm in the U.S. The federal government should take several steps in order to halt this. Background checks should be stronger, more common. Psychological assessments should be required for gun buyers. You should be 21 or older in order to purchase assault weapons, because there should be the same kind of guidelines with weapons that there are with the purchase of alcohol. There should be a requirement that the weapon be locked away at home. It's way too easy for young people to get their hands on a gun. The mass media also is to blame. Is it right for a parent to take a child to see a movie with a bunch of shooting in it? Is that okay? It shouldn't be. Regardless of whether they're accompanied by a parent, there should be no children allowed to see a violent movie in a theater. The government may not be able to control what young people see in their homes, but it can control what they're exposed to outside their homes. Violence shouldn't be as normal as it is today. It has become worse over the years. If there is something done outside, it may have a positive effect on what happens inside.

Quinn Tobias

Mass shootings have become too frequent of an occurrence. Solving the issue requires more than one answer. Currently background checks are required but law enforcement doesn't investigate mental health because of HIPAA. I believe this needs to change. In order to own a firearm, buyers should undergo a thorough background check that includes their mental health history. If a buyer fails, he should not be allowed to make the purchase. But mental illness is not the only problem. A fundamental misunderstanding of guns exists in this country and the media can be held partially responsible. The media habitually relays misinformation about guns. For example, the AR-15 is a semi-automatic rifle just like handguns. That means one trigger pull equals one bullet. AR is the company ArmaLite Rifle. Because of the media, many Americans believe an AR-15 is an automatic machine gun, which is, in fact, illegal. It should be noted that many mass shoot-

ings have occurred in gun-free zones, making the victims soft targets for the perpetrator. I would argue that we need to have more gun awareness and an increase in armed security, whether it's in a movie theatre, night club or school. Gun crimes will occur even with strict laws. Consider the examples of Chicago and Washington D.C., two major cities with strict gun laws, but high crime rates. This suggests there is no correlation between gun control and a decrease in gun violence in the United States. Rather than disarming citizens we need to increase our education and awareness. Some would say a country that has guns and armed security everywhere is a police state. I would argue that a more dangerous scenario is one where a government disarms its citizens against their will, leaving only an armed military and police.

Toni Tutt

One of the first things anyone should do is have a service for the students who lost their lives. It's the proper and respectful thing to do. I think the government should strengthen background checks. And in my opinion, just banning assault weapons or raising the age limit is going to add fuel to the fire. People will look to black market dealers or other illegal sites for certain weapons. More accidents can happen with black market and illegal weapons.

Brooke Bayse

I don't believe anything needs to change besides the fact that gun buyers need to go through a mental disability check. I say this because someone who deals with mental problems should not be carrying a gun; we've seen this in many cases over the years. As far as arming teachers, I don't agree with that either; teachers didn't sign up to carry weapons. They go to school to be educators and that's what they should continue to be. We'd lose plenty of teachers if they had to get their gun license. American schools cannot afford to lose more teachers. When it comes to security, each school should have officers patrolling hallways, forming personal relationships with students. I've long felt schools should provide adequate security in their buildings. Students need to feel safe.

Josh Campbell

I'd support professors and teachers voluntarily taking classes to carry concealed weapons during work. This would act as a deterrent for students who are plotting to attack their classmates. This would also ensure that teachers could defend students and themselves in the event that police could not arrive at the scene in time. Along the same lines I'd suggest that we invest in education programs on the effects of bullying, while providing better counseling for victims. Many shootings have their roots in cases of bullying. School shootings are not a gun-control issue; they're a social issue. We shouldn't penalize citizens due to the ignorance and irrationality of those who choose to hurt others. Reducing our 2nd Amendment rights will not reduce problems but create more. If gun rights are stripped from our citizens, we won't be able to protect ourselves in cases of home invasions, or if the government was to become tyrannical. Our founding fathers believed that Americans should have the right to defend ourselves and our property. It would be ludicrous to take away this unalienable right for the "sake of protection" when in actuality it would put citizens in more danger.

Landon Clark

School shootings have become more prevalent in America, and it's excited much talk about the issue of gun control. Should we arm teachers? Should we increase the legal age of gun purchases to 21? Should we ban all assault-like rifles from public consumption? Concerning the first issue, I don't believe that teachers are paid enough as it is, and to ask them to risk their lives and take on another burden is above their pay grade. Second I believe that if you're able to serve and die for this country, then you should be able to own a gun at age 18. Raising the age won't fix the problem. It will just cause more anticipation, more desire among individuals to buy a gun when they turn 21. Third I don't see why people believe they need an assault-like rifle to protect their households when a handgun will kill a man just as fast. Hunting also doesn't require an assault-like rifle, so there aren't any reasons to own such weapons.

GUN CULTURE from pg 1

He expressed his thoughts on the Florida shooting. "Don't ignore the warnings from people," he said. "Some might think they're over-reacting, but we saw what happened in Florida."

Guzman stressed that America needed strict gun purchase regulations. "Raise the age to 21," he said. "When you're 21, you think better. They should also do a better job on background checks."

He added that schools should have metal detectors. "In the long run, it's gonna stop tragedies from happening," he explained.

At present only the military is allowed to carry firearms in his home country, he said.

Gambian David Koby Boompong said that action needed to be taken to stem gun violence in America, in the wake of Florida shooting. "We cannot keep losing people like that," he said. "It was so easy. If kids are dying because of gun violence, there is no hope for the future."

Basing his views on conversations with his American friends, Boompong thinks it's a matter of culture to carry guns for protection in the U.S. "But most of the time it seems a gun is not even used for protection," he said. "It's used for violence."

According to Boompong, a solution will be hard to implement. "It's going to be very hard because people are already programmed to believe that it's their right to have guns," he said. "But I think there should be stricter laws on who can buy guns."

In Gambia, civilians are not allowed to carry firearms. "I haven't heard a gunshot in my life," he said.

He continued, "Guns don't have anything to do with age. Just ban guns instead of debating who should be able to get one handed to them. If you're not a security person, you shouldn't have one. People have different motives. They could say they own a gun for protection but use it for different things."

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Jeremiah Handlon

Decree photo

SPORTS

Softball Team Finishes 10-6, Loses in First Playoff Round

Update: Wesleyan's softball team was eliminated from the first round of the USA South tournament after a two-game sweep at Averett.

The Bishops lost all four games to the Cougars in 2018. Last weekend, in a 3-1 first-game loss, Bishops freshman Beth Braswell (10-5) was outdueled by Averett's Kaitlyn Aherron, who tossed a 3-hitter. In the second game, the Cougars unleashed their offense against Logan Lowery and Shelby Godwin, winning 15-7 to clinch the series.

Editor's Note: The following story was filed prior to the tournament:

The Bishops tallied six runs in the fifth inning to beat a tough Pfeiffer team and split a double-header on Senior Day at Edge Field March 31.

With a 10-6 record, the team finished tied for third in its division and will travel to Danville, Virginia, April 7 for a best-of-three matchup against Averett in the opening round of the USA South tournament. While noting that Averett was the only conference opponent to sweep the Bishops, Coach John Brackett expressed confidence in his team's chances. "We're looking forward to the rematch," he said. "We have the talent and depth to make a deep run and win the tournament. We just need to stay focused, keep our composure in tough times, and pull together as one."

Senior Peyton Hyler echoed Brackett. "Our confidence level is through the roof right now," she said. "We're playing as a team and having fun while doing it. What I love about this group is that we're like family. We all have each other's back, one through twenty-four."

Wesleyan split its last two double-headers to wrap up the regular season.



Freshman Beth Braswell SI photo

After losing 9-4 to Salem, the eventual division winner, the Bishops bounced back in the second game to win, 11-1, in five innings. Then on Senior Day, the Bishops showed their resiliency once again, losing 12-1 in the first game to Pfeiffer before taking the second. (Though it compiled a 30-4 record in 2018, Pfeiffer is ineligible for the conference tournament while it transitions from Division II to III.)

"The doubleheaders told me a lot about our team," Brackett said. "We bounced back in a convincing way both times. The wins should give us confidence and momentum going into the conference tournament."

Against Pfeiffer in Saturday's first game, starting pitcher Logan Lowery gave up three home runs and 12 hits in four innings on the mound, while Falcons ace Kiana Millsaps limited the Bishops to four hits and struck out three.

In the second game, Wesleyan's Beth Braswell pitched a four-hit complete game and added three hits and two RBIs. The freshman struck the key blow in the decisive fifth inning. Seeing the Falcon outfielders shifted toward left, the Bishop cleanup hitter waited on a pitch from Kennedy Lester and stroked a line drive into a gap in right field to double in two runs. Shortstop Meredith Mize then singled in two more runs as the rally continued. Lester (10-1) absorbed her first loss of the season.

Braswell and Mize head a strong freshman class for the Bishops. Both have been instrumental in the team's success. Braswell leads the team with 31 RBIs and ranks second behind senior Peyton Hyler (.393) with a .380 batting average.

Mize, the starting shortstop, is third in RBIs with 18, while batting .288. Lowery said it's difficult for a player to step into a key position as a freshman, but Mize has committed just four errors on her way to a fielding percentage of .966.

Brackett offered an upbeat assessment as well. "Other than their pure softball talent and instincts, I've been most impressed by the work ethic and mental toughness of the freshmen," he said, noting that Mize and Braswell combined for almost 50 RBIs on the season.

The Bishops will count on Braswell (10-4, 1.90 ERA) and the strong arms of Lowery and Shelby Godwin to make a long run in the playoffs.

With 35 career wins and more than 400 innings on the mound, Lowery knows pitching. She said that Braswell's complementary strengths give the team more pitching depth, and confidence, as it prepares for the tournament.

"Beth relies on her changeup, which is her best pitch," Lowery explained. "Shelby throws more speed and works up in the zone and at the corners; she has a really good rise ball. I focus more on keeping the ball low in the zone, and working the corners."

Added Brackett, "We're very fortunate to have such depth at that position."



Freshman Meredith Mize SI photo

NCAA Tourneys Generate National Excitement

Division I women's basketball crowned a new champion, as Notre Dame staged a second-half comeback and beat Mississippi State, 61-58, with a dramatic three-point shot.

The game-winner was the second in the Final Four by the Fighting Irish's Arike Ogunbowale, who sank a similar shot to eliminate the number-one ranked and undefeated Connecticut Huskies in the semi-finals.

"The Final Four was incredibly entertaining," said Wesleyan coach Desiree Driver. "There were come-from-behind wins, buzzer-beaters, and the desperation of seniors competing in their last NCAA tournament. What more can you ask?"

While rooting for the Bulldogs, Driver was nonetheless impressed by Ogunbowale's poise. She pointed to Ogunbowale's contested fade-away shot as the tournament's most exciting moment.

"We've all imagined that shot while playing at the park or in our backyards, counting down the seconds and shooting the game-winner before the buzzer sounds," she said. "Arike lived the moment on the biggest stage and I couldn't be happy for her."

In contrast to the men's tournament, the women's playoffs saw all four number-one seeds reach the semi-final round. Asked to explain this, Driver pointed out that in the women's game, players tend to stay with their team all four years, while talented men often play one year of college ball and then enter the NBA draft, a scenario often seen with teams like Kentucky and Duke. That creates an opening for teams like Loyola-Chicago, she noted.

"If a women's team has a great recruiting class, that group will stay together and will only get better and better," Driver said. "So that team has a chance to dominate."

See NCAA on pg 4

BISHOPS SPORTS BRIEFS

Tennis

Shutting out opponent after opponent, the men's tennis team is cruising toward its 10th consecutive USA Conference title.

Led by senior Sebastian Sikh, the team won its first eight conference matches, all by 9-0 scores. The Bishops, ranked 24th in the nation, finish the season with matches against Methodist and Averett as well as Pfeiffer, a Division II team transitioning into Wesleyan's conference.

The Bishops have lost just three of their 16 matches this spring. In a preview of a possible NCAA showdown, Wesleyan lost to Emory, 8-1, in non-conference action.

Other losses were to 22nd-ranked Sewanee and Georgia Gwinnett, ranked #1 in NAIA.

The women's team has been just as dominant, racing to a 6-0 conference record with four shutouts of USA South opponents.

An early highlight was the team's 5-4 win over rival Methodist at home. After losing two of three doubles matches, the Bishops mounted a comeback in singles. Florencia Sorrentino led the way at number-1 singles, vanquishing Jema Landis, 6-2, 7-6. Freshmen Giulia Zanetti battled to victory at number-3, 6-1, 4-6, 6-2, and Stephany Barbera claimed victory at number-4: 6-3, 6-3.

With the two teams tied at four wins apiece, it came down to the match at number-6, as freshman Louise Hovhammer won in convincing fashion, 6-0, 6-4.

Baseball

The Wesleyan baseball team is rounding into form at the right moment.

After losing nine of its first 10 games in March, the Bishops finished the month on a 10-4 streak and hopes to continue its strong play when it competes in the USA South tournament at LaGrange next week.

Freshman Drew Tubbs (4-2, 2.49 ERA) has emerged to give the Bishops a solid one-two punch at the top of the pitching rotation. Junior ace Nate Gardner has logged a team-leading 60 innings, a 4-1 record and an ERA of 2.52. He recorded 15 of his 58 strikeouts in a dominating 15-K performance against William Peace on March 16.

As expected, the Bishops have featured a balanced offensive attack, with eight players driving in 16 or more runs on the season. Second baseman Brad Pennington leads the team with 27 RBIs, while outfielder Max

Johnson, a junior transfer student, leads with eight homers while driving in 24.

Golf

Paced by senior David White's stellar play, the golf team tied for a runner-up finish at the Marine FCU Intercollegiate hosted by Camp Lejeune.

White turned in a two-round total of 141, one under par. He shot 71 (-1) on Paradise Point's Gold Course and then followed with an even-par 70 on the Scarlet Course.

As a team, Wesleyan trailed Division III power Methodist, a USA South rival, by just 11 strokes as it compiled a cumulative score of 8 over par in the two-day tourney, cut short by inclement weather. The Bishops tied with Mary Washington.

White's performance put him in a tie for 6th-place. Sophomore Mariano Silvestri (75-68) and freshman Juan de Giacomo (74-69) finished tied for 10th with two-day totals of 143 (+1). Junior Grady Anderson bounced back from an 82 on Friday to score a team-best 67 (-3) on Saturday, while Luke Thornton rounded out Wesleyan's scorers with rounds of 83 and 71.

The improving Bishops will next compete

in the conference tournament scheduled for April 13-15 at LaGrange's home course in Georgia. The team was ranked 18th in the nation at the beginning of April.

Lacrosse

Freshman midfielder Alexandra Cucinotta has been named the USA South's Rookie of the Week in lacrosse.

A native of Drexel Hill, Pennsylvania, Cucinotta scored 16 goals with one assist, 15 draw controls, 13 ground balls and six caused turnovers as the Battling Bishops posted an 0-2 record last week versus USA South competition.

In a 13-12 loss to Salem, Cucinotta scored seven times with ten draw controls, nine ground balls, and five caused turnovers. In a 17-11 loss to Huntingdon, she tallied nine goals with one assist, five draw controls, four ground balls, and one caused turnover.

Wesleyan is struggling through its first season of play since it fielded a team in 2014. Wesleyan is 1-12 overall, 0-6 in the conference. Through March, Cucinotta had scored 51 of the team's 72 goals. The Bishops defense has yielded 245 goals, or 19.1 goals per game.

(Sports Information contributed to this report.)

Hoops Team Looks to Next Year after 2nd-Round Exit

By Quinn Tobias Editor-at-Large

The men's basketball team, winners of the East Division title, saw its season end on buzzer-beater finish against Covenant in the semi-finals of the USA-South Conference tournament.

The Bishops finished the season 16-11 overall and 13-3 in conference. In the 2017-2018 season the team rebounded from 13-12 record overall and a 6-8 conference record the previous year. Despite the improvement and division title, Head Coach John Thompson felt the season could have gone better. "I thought we were capable of winning the conference and making a deep run in the NCAA tournament," he said.

With less than five minutes left in the conference semi-final, Covenant led the Bishops 72-67, but the Bishops answered back with an 11-2 run. Covenant recovered with a three-pointer and a quick transition

basket off a Bishop turnover to recapture the lead, 79-78, with a minute to play.

Junior guard Chris Braswell hit a contested jumper with eight seconds left to give Wesleyan the advantage, 80-79. Covenant hustled down the court and Caleb Haynes put up a shot, missed, snatched his own rebound and hit the game-winning put-back with 0.3 seconds left.

Sophomore forward A.J. Frye echoed Thompson's disappointment in the tournament, but believes the team outperformed expectations. "We're disappointed with the result of the tournament," Frye said. "But the year was better than we thought it would be. We knew we were young and we were able to get all the young guys to buy into the system."

After a 1-5 start, Frye said the Bishops developed a strong team chemistry and finished the season by winning 15 of their final 21 games to claim the division title.

In the first round of the tourney, the Bishops turned in a dominating 113-86 victory against Greensboro and found the loss to Covenant difficult to accept. "The reality sets in that it's all over," Thompson said. "But you realize you have to move forward."

Looking to next year, Coach Thompson said the coaching staff and quality players will maintain a winning standard. Freshman Damon McDowell said next year's team will improve upon their 2018 success. "We were disappointed with the finish, but next year I expect us to come back better and win the conference," McDowell said.

The Bishops graduate two players, standout guard Adrian Moore and forward Malique Judd. Moore led the team in steals (95), assists (58) and points (424). He scored 15.7 points a game and shot 44.6 percent from the field. He was also second in minutes-per-game and rebounds.

Replacing Moore will be difficult, "He's one of the most unique players I've coached in terms of the diversity of skills," Thompson said. But the Bishops have talent in all classes, according to Thompson. "I anticipate many guys raising their game so collectively we'll fill the void," the coach said.

The coaching staff expects sophomore center Ricardo Bullock to continue his development next year. "That was the biggest surprise this year, the development of Bullock," Thompson said. "His growth exceeded all of our expectations and the pressure is on him to continue to improve."

The Bishops will return four starters next year, including Frye, who averaged 15.5 points and 6.4 rebounds a game; both were improvements on his freshman campaign. Looking to next year Frye wants to improve on his defense and rebounding. Also returning is junior forward Robert Wilson, who led the team in minutes and rebounds with 7.5 a game.



Max Johnson leads the team with 8 homers SI photo

Will Cavalier Trades Lead to NBA Title?

By Johnathan Pickler Senior Staff Writer

In the 2017 off-season, the Cleveland Cavaliers surprised basketball fans around the world by trading all-star Kyrie Irving for Isaiah Thomas, Jae Crowder, Ante Zizic and a 2018 first-round pick. But after starting the season 31-22, the Cavaliers decided to reshape their roster once again. On February 8th, the final day of the trade deadline, the team shipped out six players, four of whom joined the team in the 2017 off-season.

The first move was trading Thomas, Channing Frye, and a first-round draft pick to the Los Angeles Lakers for Jordan Clarkson and Larry Nance Jr. Clarkson is a guy who comes off the bench and can score in a variety of ways. He can play both point guard and shooting guard, a type of player Cleveland lacked coming off the bench. Another thing Clarkson brings is his defensive presence. Although Thomas averaged 28.9 points per game (ppg) in 2016-2017, his defensive flaws stood out on the Cavs.

Nance Jr is a young and very talented big man who's become a starter for Cleveland. The Cavs were drawn to his high-flying style

of play, along with his ability to protect the paint on defense.

This trade happened for a few reasons. The first is that Thomas wasn't producing as expected. After being hurt most of the season, he played only 15 games with the Cavs, averaging 14.7 ppg while shooting 36 percent from the field and 25 percent behind the three-point line. Another factor was that Thomas wasn't getting along with teammates. On January 23rd, an ESPN headline blared: "Isaiah Thomas Led Charge against Kevin Love in Cavs Team Meeting."

As a new member of the roster, Thomas must've made a bad impression by clashing with a teammate like that. Another key factor was that Thomas' contract expires after this season. Knowing how well he played with the Celtics, the Cavs believed he would ask for a maximum contract, something they could not provide, as LeBron James will also be a free agent at the end of the season. Frye was most likely traded due to his age. Although an important locker room guy, he's 34 and the Cavs were looking to rebuild with younger players.

The next Cleveland trade was a three-team deal that sent Derrick Rose and Jae Crowder to the Utah Jazz, and Iman Shumpert to the

Sacramento Kings. In return, the Cavs received wing Rodney Hood and veteran point guard George Hill. With this trade, the Cavs improved tremendously. At 6'8" Hood is a versatile player who can defend point guards as well as power forwards. He's been in the NBA for four years and has a bright future ahead of him.

The Cavs had sought Hill after last season. He's been in the NBA since 2008-2009. Not only does he bring the Cavs a veteran presence for the young guys in the locker room; he's started at point guard every game since he has joined his new team.

In its final move of the day, Cleveland traded future Hall of Famer Dwayne Wade back to Miami. This move was something done out of respect for Wade. He joined the Cavs in hopes of winning a ring with James, one of his best friends. Back in 2010 James joined Wade in Miami and the two standouts went on to win two titles with the Heat. After the team's slow start and reported locker room drama, Wade asked for a return to South Beach, where he's expected to finish his career. In return for Wade, the Cavs got a 2024 second round draft pick.

See CAVS pg 4

CAMPUS LIFE

Wesleyan's Ethics Put to the Test in Statewide Competition

By Quinn Tobias
Editor-at-Large

NCWC compiled a 1-3 record at a statewide Ethics Bowl held in Raleigh during the weekend of February 17.

The event, organized by the North Carolina Independent Colleges and Universities, attracted teams from 21 different colleges.

Wesleyan was represented by three seniors, Ishmail Harris, Joshua Campbell and Aneisha Felton, all rookies to the competition. The Bishops defeated Mt. Olive College, but lost to Barton, Salem and St. Augustine.

Campbell expressed happiness with the team's performance. "I think we did

a great job and performed well," he said.

Jarrod Kelly, an assistant professor of political science, traveled with the team as an assistant coach. He said the Wesleyan students made a strong impression.

"Other schools remarked on how polished we were as a team," he said.

Dr. Sherry Holland, an assistant professor of computer information systems, organized the Wesleyan team, which was competing for the third consecutive year. Before the event, each team receives a list of ethical issues that could be discussed and debated, so its members can decide on a stance and prepare to defend its position. A surprise issue is introduced at

the competition to test each participant's ability to think quickly.

During a match, each team speaks for three minutes. Following that round, the team answers questions asked by the opposition in regards to their opening remarks. Then it makes its closing argument on the topic. The outcome is determined by three judges, who assess a team's positions on the issues, a team's ability to articulate its stand and offer supporting evidence, and performance qualities such as eye contact.

During the February competition, NCWC's team debated homelessness

in Seattle, Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA), and vigilantes vs community policing.

Campbell enjoyed debating the vigilantes vs community issue against Salem. "We had incredible platforms and our questions stumped Salem's team," he said. The Bishops argued in favor of community policing. If community members observe suspicious activity, it's their responsibility to report the incident, the team contended.

Wesleyan's team believes it was penalized for the stands it took on particular issues.

"Students were able to choose the position they wanted," said Dr. Kelly. "Our students often chose the more difficult stance." On the issue of homelessness in Seattle, NCWC argued that the wealthy should not be taxed at a higher rate to subsidize housing for the homeless population.

"They were prepared prior to the match and they should have won," Dr. Kelly said. The judges were not well trained in ethics, and personal bias may have impacted the results, the team said. Dr. Kelly believes that even though the Bishops defended their positions well, their less popular stands hurt their score.

The competition level surprised the Wesleyan students. "It was way tougher than I expected," said Campbell, who like Harris, said he joined the team because he considered himself ethical and enjoyed debating political issues.

Entering the competition, Wesleyan felt it was at a disadvantage. "We did well considering other teams had taken classes dedicated to their ethics team," Campbell said. With just three students, Wesleyan's team was the smallest at the competition. Time, resources and other factors limited the Bishops' practice sessions.

Coach Holland recruited the three members of the ethics team last fall. None had prior debate experience. Surrounding schools were hesitant to compete in exhibition matches, she said. Looking ahead to future competitions, team members believe Wesleyan would benefit from an ethics or debate course similar to ones offered at other private colleges. Dr. Holland and Harris have spoken to Provost Evan Duff in regards to forming an ethics class.

Since all three members of the team are graduating, the coaches are looking to replace them so the school can continue to be

represented at the Ethics Bowl. Dr. Kelly implores students to participate because of the networking benefits. Many judges are prominent local business owners, and competitors get the opportunity to meet them during the weekend.

'Interview Anxiety' Takes First in Festival



Shamon Wright Bayse photo

Shamon Wright's play "Interview Anxiety" won first place in Wesleyan's 10th annual "Ten-Minute Play" festival.

Organized by the college's theatre program and Wesleyan Players, the festival staged the top five plays submitted as part of the competition. At the end, Wright's piece was voted the winner.

Asked for his reaction, Wright said, "Surprised! I didn't think this one was going to win."

Wright had submitted two scripts to the competition and each made the cut to the final five, all of which were staged in a single night at Powers Recital Hall in the Dunn Center. While acknowledging several production snafus—forgotten lines, etc.—he complimented the performers who brought his words to life.

A futuristic story, "Interview Anxiety" is about an interview that takes a surprising turn. Leads were played by Joseph Alexander, Dakota Casey, and Trey Russell.

Wesleyan students directed and acted in the five plays under the guidance of Theatre Professor Roger Drake, who established the festival in 2009. Other participants included Anna Dick, Savannah Flanagan, Stephanie Garrett, Brandon Jager, and Sandeepa Shahi. Besides Wright, the participating playwrights were Danielle Tomlinson, David Robinson and the NCWC Creative Writing Club, which entered a joint effort.

(Staff writer Brooke Bayse contributed reporting.)

Bee Garden Established as Part of Honors Project

By Carolynn Davern
Decree Staff Writer

For the past year, I've been working on adding a beehive and pollinator-friendly garden to our campus as part of my senior honors thesis.

Ever since the huge decline in bee population during the winter of 2006-2007, due to colony collapse disorder and other factors, many Americans have taken action to promote the importance of bees in our livelihoods and restore insect's populations.

Honey bees pollinate a majority of the crops that we consume—from coffee to strawberries. I did some of my own research into the bee population problem after a friend began posting online about her work with honey bee conservation.

In April 2016, my friend worked to get her campus (Randolph College in Virginia) recognized as a Bee Campus, USA. This designation is for college campuses that "implement integral programs to raise awareness, expand habitat, and celebrate gains for pollinators."

For my honors project, my original idea was to get NCWC designated as a Bee Campus as well, but then Dr.

George Whitwell mentioned that he knew a local man who could supply actual bees. My plan changed.

Starting last fall, nine students and faculty began taking beekeeping classes taught by master beekeeper Benry Hines, Sr. Numerous other students have also contributed to the project by helping to build a pollinator garden (located in a wooded area between the Dunn Center and the new Wesleyan Bed and Breakfast) and preparing the honey bee habitat. From now on, the first class of beekeepers will take care of the bees, with assistance from Hines. More classes will be offered next year to certify more students and staff. This project will have a huge impact on campus for years to come.

I want to allay the fears of Wesleyan students and staff. A major concern is the possibility of getting stung by a bee. But it's important to note that honey bees will only sting if they feel threatened. For example, if you swat at a bee or encroach on its hive or water source, it will be more likely to sting you than if you just let them investigate. If a

bee is buzzing around you, it just thinks that you look pretty or smell nice. They will figure out that you're not a flower soon enough.

In our class, Hines mentioned that bees are aware of their own mortality. "When bees sting you, they die because their stingers are pulled out of them," he said. "I think the bees know this, so they'll only sting if they feel threatened by you."

Our first bees should arrive on campus in the first half of April. The effects of their pollination should be evident in more blooms on plants and trees this summer and beyond. After a year, the bees will also begin to produce an excess quantity of honey that we can bottle and sell as a campus.

Along with establishing a bee garden, interested students and staff have formed a B Club.

Our goal is to increase biodiversity on campus by taking care of the bees and promoting the addition of bats, birds, and butterflies as well. Later, the club hopes to attain the official Bee Campus designation.



Students (l-r) Carolynn Davern, Jawuanna McAllister, Sidney McCall, Sainabou Jallow, Diamond Allen constructed the college's new bee garden on the west side of campus. Photo courtesy of C. Davern

Would You Travel to Mars?

By Landon Clark
Decree Staff Writer

With entrepreneur Elon Musk eying a space mission to Mars, the Decree asked members of the Wesleyan community whether they'd be willing to travel to the red planet.

In February Musk's SpaceX team made a successful launch of a \$90 million rocket known as Falcon Heavy, which is said to have produced the same thrust as twenty-four 747 aircraft. The hope is that such a rocket can carry humans to Mars in the future.

"I'd go to Mars to say that I got the experience," said senior Adrian Minondo, who added that he'd be hesitant to go if he wasn't assured of a safe return to Earth. "The only way I could go and not come back was if a lot of my family would come, and we knew life would be there."

Like Minondo, senior Richard Patton was hesitant to go without taking loved ones with him. "I can bring my family, then I'd go," said Patton, who noted that, as soon as he landed, he would "eat a Mars bar."

Others felt that visiting a new place would help change their perspectives on life.

"I'm interested in how another planet would change my personality," said Shamon Wright, who expressed enthusiasm about being the first to discover Mars. "It would be awesome."

Lamell Lewis echoed Wright. "I would love to see how living on a different planet would brighten my perspectives," Lewis said.

Although many were excited to go to Mars, others expressed concerns about traveling so far and living life on another planet.

Junior Rex Sauls feels like he'd be giving up on Earth.

"There's a lot more to learn here, and I think the idea of expanding our horizons is making us forget about the problems we have on Earth," said Sauls, who noted that he is interested in whether Mars can support life.

Dr. Jarrod Kelly, assistant professor of political science, wasn't interested in taking a rocket to Mars. "I'm not a big fan of space travel myself," he said.

Though exploring Mars sounds "like a fun thing to do," sophomore Nick Beaver said he wouldn't want to go to Mars because "it sounds like too much of a risk to be the first."

Besides family, friends and her Dachshund-beagle mix, junior Andie Batt didn't want to leave Earth because of a favorite food that might not be available on Mars: "I'd miss french fries."

Bishop Fall Athletes Train Year-round

By Mamadou Jallow
Decree Staff Writer

Champions are built in the off-season. In recent interviews, a few Wesleyan fall athletes described the spring and summer preparations they perform to dominate in the upcoming season.

Sheriff Secka, a junior on the men's soccer team, described his off-season: "Recovery, treatment and rejuvenation!" he said. "It's all to ensure I recover from ankle, knee and back injuries from the previous season and get ready for the next one."

Secka believes rehab is very important during the spring and should be used as a means of recovery to prepare for the following season. "To recover, I do treatment to my injuries that affected me in the previous season," he said. "I also get the help of the athletic trainers just to guarantee that I'm following proper procedure and guidelines of each exercise."

Other athletes prefer not to jump straight into anything after concluding their season. Instead they prefer to take time to rest and heal. Sarah Grossman, a junior cross country runner, is one of those athletes. "I take a month-long break from running before I start exercising again," she said.

That allows her body time to recover before she rushes back to her sport. After the break, she begins a weight-lifting routine. "Around the end of winter is when I slowly start to partake in running activities," Grossman said. She runs five to six days a week and then she does an occasional 10-mile run to test herself. Once she gets into spring, she runs local 5k races and the "Tackle the Tar" obstacle course.

Most NCWC teams take a break until late January or early February, but the football team gets back to work right after Thanksgiving. Its players focus on injury rehabilitation and begin a general weight-

lifting regimen that stresses high repetitions, rather than heavy weights. "That's to help with the recovery process," Quinn Tobias, a tight end, explained.

Tobias provided insights into how intense their offseason gets. He noted that the team holds spring workouts five days a week and, following spring break, dives into spring practices. The rising senior mentioned that pads and tackling aren't allowed in the spring. "Although we don't tackle, our spring practices continue to prepare us to be in shape and fit for the football season," he said.

Senior Ashley Major said she also uses her time off to refresh because of her position on the women's soccer team. "Goalkeeping is a stressful position and takes a toll on your body," she said. "So in the first couple weeks of the off-season, I try to take my mind away from things involving soccer just to make sure I clear up my head."

Fellow goalkeeper Alicia Jacobs has a similar mentality heading into the offseason. "Like Major, I do the same—just relax and recover," she said. "I don't participate in any physical activity right after the season is over."

Given that they play the same position, Major and Jacobs said they share similar workout activities. Major said that her workouts feature running and weight lifting. "Then over the summer I participate in co-ed leagues just to stay sharp on the ball," she said.

Jacobs said she also focuses on running and lifting until summertime. "During the summer is when I focus more on my technical skills," she said.

Brittney Moore, a freshman on the volleyball team, likes to use soccer and track exercises in the spring to prepare herself for her season: "Bleacher runs, suicides, wall squats, Indian runs, and

full-out sprints," she said.

For Benjamin Osei, a junior on the men's soccer team, there is more of a scholastic approach after the season ends. "I shift my focus straight to my books after the season," he said. "It's to make sure I catch up on the work I got behind on during the season."

He added, "At the end of the day, we're student athletes—student before athlete."

CAVS from pg 3

What was the biggest reason for the flurry of trades? LeBron James, of course. James is arguably the best player of all time. His contract runs out after the season. Knowing that he has left the team in the past, the Cavaliers must have felt pressured to make moves fast. Since the trade, James has seemed much happier. When he's on the court or on the bench, his body language is different. For the Cavs, the most important thing is that LeBron James re-signs. As a result, the team should be willing to do whatever it takes to make sure it happens.

The three trades improved the team in every aspect of the game. They are now young, something that is important, knowing that LeBron could leave in the summer during free agency. Hood, Nance and Clarkson is each only 25. Clarkson is under contract with the Cavs through the 2019-2020 season.

The team D has gotten better. Prior to the trade deadline, Cleveland was one of the worst teams in the league on defense. Every new player is known for his ability to defend.

Since the trades, the team is 16-8, winning eight of its last nine to end March, well positioned for the playoffs.

With the amount of talent on their roster, I still believe the Cavaliers have a good chance of winning the NBA Championship.

NCAA from pg 3

For the record, Driver predicted UCONN—32-0 prior to the tournament—would win the title. Here are the selections made before the tournament by Driver, Head Coach Artina Trader and women's hoop enthusiast Adrian Moore:

Coach Artina Trader's Picks, in ascending order:
5. Maryland
4. Baylor
3. Louisville
2. Mississippi State
1. Connecticut

Assistant Coach Dez Driver's Picks:
5. Baylor
4. Notre Dame
3. Louisville
2. Mississippi State
1. UCONN

Senior guard Adrian Moore's Picks:
5. Baylor
4. Louisville
3. Notre Dame
2. Mississippi State
1. UCONN

Men's Tourney:

'Nova Takes Second Title in 3 Years

Unlike the women's tournament, the men's playoffs featured plenty of surprise teams—Loyola-Chicago—and many upsets, none bigger than UM-Baltimore's dismantling of top-seeded Virginia.

Decree sports writer Johnathan Pickler made the following predictions for the men's tournament, won April 2 by Villanova over Michigan.

Pick's Picks for Men's Tourney
5—University of Virginia
4—Arizona
3—University of North Carolina
2—Michigan State
1—Duke