

THE DECREE

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NORTH CAROLINA WESLEYAN COLLEGE, ROCKY MOUNT, NORTH CAROLINA 27804

President Trump Earns Mixed Reviews after First Year in Office

By Joshua Campbell
Decree Staff Writer

While some expressed support, many other Bishops were critical of President Donald Trump's performance during his first year in office.

In recent interviews, students and a Wesleyan political science professor gave their opinions on topics that ranged from the president's communication style, to his foreign policy, to his stand on immigration.

Communication

Many remarked on President Trump's unique style of communication. Brescia Reynolds, a freshman, stated that she believes the president would not last his four-year term because he “runs his mouth.” Robert Burns, a sophomore, highlighted the president's conduct and his lack of tactfulness. “I would like him to stay off of Twitter more, because that's counterproductive,” Burns said. “I would tell him to just watch his mouth.”

Senior Thomas Henderson noted that Trump's ability to communicate affects perceptions of his presidency. “Experts and analysts have raised the point several times that President Trump exhibits a different way of communicating his policies and ideas to foreign leaders as well as the American public,” Henderson explained. “Presidents represent the government to the American people and the style of the president's communication determines the state of the administration almost as much as the president's policies do.”

While many students were critical of President Trump, some offered a positive perspective on his style of communication. Despite the president's excesses, Reynolds likes that he speaks his mind. That has an honest appeal to many Americans, she said. “He says what people have been wanting to say for years.”

Divisiveness

Reflecting on the past year, some students commented on the president's handling of political situations that divided the country. Junior Beverly Anaele described Trump's presidency as one filled with “division and controversy.” Anaele cited examples of the president's divisiveness such as the proposal to build a border wall. And she noted his ongoing conflict with the Democratic Party. “Instead of bringing people together, he pulled people

apart,” Anaele said. “(This) shows what we need to work on as a country. We need to work together even if our parties tell us we should work apart.”

Dr. Jarrod Kelly concurred with Anaele. A first-year assistant professor of political science, Dr. Kelly pinpointed Trump's inability to stay with a bargain and promote bipartisanship. “He had that agreement with Schumer and Pelosi on DACA and then the next day he said ‘no deal’ . He walks back any effort at compromise,” Dr. Kelly said, referring to the president's recent negotiations with the senate minority and house minority leaders on Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals.

Many interviewees expressed concern over President Trump's lack of bipartisanship. Henderson said the president should consider both Republicans and Democrats “as neighbors” and partners that offer unique ideas and strengths to the country.

Immigration

Students reserved their strongest views for President Trump's stance on immigration. Reynolds was one who criticized his policies. “I don't like how he's trying to kick immigrants out of the U.S.,” she said. “Immigrants have helped build this country. If you come to this country, you should be able to live here.”

Ioannis Brokakis, a native of Greece, expressed similar discontent with the president on immigration. He echoed Reynolds' view that America was built by immigrants. “I really believe in equality and better chances and (Trump) is running immigrants out of this country,” he said. “If you focus on immigrants that can help the country, then you'll be able to make America great.”

Almost all interviewees mentioned President Trump's proposal to build a wall on the U.S.'s southern border. Dr. Kelly called the idea, “a silly pet project.” But he did not discount the possibility the president would work out a compromise on border security.

Trump's wall is personal for first-year student Jesus Berber, a native of Mexico. Berber said his countrymen fear Trump's next move. “The Mexican people are afraid of him,” Berber said. “It's the same for all Mexicans, the poor, the rich, the military.”

See President pg 2

Teams Bond during Tour of Italy

Wesleyan's volleyball and women's soccer teams just returned from a memorable 10-day trip to Italy where the athletes competed in exhibition matches against local teams, took in the tourist sites, and earned one credit in music.

Lucia Davids, a senior on the soccer team, was enjoying her second European trip in four years. As a freshman, she joined members of the soccer and the volleyball teams in a tour of Spain.

“The trips have been two of the major highlights of my time at the college,” she said. “I'm grateful that I was able to go on both trips and experience new cultures with my teammates.”

After two days of travel, the Bishops enjoyed sightseeing in Milan and the medieval town of Domodossola before taking on Rosaltiora (volleyball) and Romagnano Calcio (soccer) in the first of three matches for each team. Sunday then saw the two teams travel to San Marco Island via boat and enjoy a walking tour of Venice, including stops at St. Mark's Basilica and the Grand Canal.

On Monday, the 8th, the Bishops headed to the historic city of Florence and ended the day with their second matches of the tour versus Pallavolo Capannori (volleyball) and Monsummano (soccer). Tuesday and Wednesday included tours of the Tuscan countryside, while Thursday, the 11th,

featured a much-anticipated tour of Rome, including the Colosseum, the Roman Forum, the Spanish Steps, and Pantheon Square.

Friday began with a trip to the Vatican and culminated with the teams' final matches against Citta di Frascati (volleyball) and Res Roma (soccer). Wesleyan faculty member Tony Sawyer, as well as President Dewey Clark, accompanied the teams on the trip, and after completing a series of assignments, student-athletes will receive a 1-hour course credit.

Soccer's Maggie Rankin identified two aspects of the trip as personal highlights, one musical, one touristy.

“When we were in Florence,” she said, “I heard an Italian man playing the guitar and I listened for a few minutes and he started playing ‘You got a friend’ by James Taylor. That song means a lot to me so it was amazing to hear.”

As far as her favorite site, Rankin said she most enjoyed seeing Rome's Trevi fountain, the landmark made famous in movies like “La Dolce Vita.” “That's been on my bucket list since I was in middle school,” she said. “It was beautiful.”

Volleyball's Callie Cline enjoyed the iconic gondola ride around Venice.

“When I think of Italy, I think of riding in a gondola,” the freshman said. “It was very soothing and peaceful as we got to look at all the buildings and shops throughout Venice. This was a wish come true for me.”

see Italy pg 3



Wesleyan has introduced lacrosse as an NCAA Division III sport for the third time since the early 2000s. The team is under the leadership of first-year Coach Bridget Walker. The Bishops dropped their first USA-South conference match to Averett. See preview and other sports on page 3.

SI photo

Wesleyan Continues MLK Day Tradition

By Landon Clark
Decree Staff Writer

Around 100 Wesleyan volunteers joined together January 15 to help local organizations as part of the annual Martin Luther King Day of Service

Volunteers included members of many clubs and organizations on campus. They worked with community groups that included Habitat for Humanity; Make America Beautiful; Meals on Wheels; and Peacemakers, a corporation run by Church on the Rise that helps the poor by providing

after-school education programs.

Student Activities Director Elliott Smith organized Wesleyan's participation, continuing the college's tradition of honoring the civil rights leader who was slain 50 years ago in Memphis.

“Martin Luther King Jr. would be proud that we as a community take time to serve those that are serving others,” Smith said.

Student Joe Alexander echoed Smith's comments. “There's no better way to celebrate a man who lived his life to serve

others by serving others,” said Alexander, who's a resident advisor and a quarterback on the football team, who's active in Fellowship of Christian Athletes. He worked to clean an area park. “I felt really good cleaning the park and making it look more presentable,” he said.

He said his intent was to build a, “better environment,” a safe and cleaner park for the youth of Rocky Mount.

Like Alexander, junior Ivan Cockman worked for Make America Beautiful. The GenUn member derived a similar sense of satisfaction. “I feel like we did something,” he said after he cleared up beer bottles, cigarette butts and other litter along Sunset Park Lake.

This was a time, “to celebrate his memory and legacy by doing volunteer work, not for just the community but the environment,” said Cockman.

Junior La'vonn Glenn, a representative for the gospel choir Voices of Triumph, had more of a comical experience helping Make America Beautiful. “I had two right-hand gloves, and it was cold,” he said. Despite his wardrobe malfunction, Glenn still found a sense of pride in his work. “I know I'd do it again,” he said.

Senior Joshua Jones, a representative of Leadership Wesleyan, worked with Peacemakers by helping to sort through a book inventory and help the organization with afterschool programs. He said Peacemakers was pleased with the volunteers' work and said he thinks he made a huge difference. His service was “something that Dr. King would enjoy seeing us do.”

Freshman Natalie Larson, president of Refuge, said her volunteer work with Peacemakers was necessary in memorializing Dr. King. “He was a leader in society, and he put himself out there to make a difference,” she said. “This is our small way to make a difference.”

She enjoyed her work so much that she plans to volunteer for Peacemakers again in the future. “Refuge ministry plans to continue doing service at Peacemakers,” she said, hoping to visit the site at least once more this semester.

Junior Anna Dick, a representative for S.A.F.E., volunteered for Meals on Wheels, a program that delivers meals to the elderly and shut-ins.

“It was really sweet to help the elderly,” said Dick. “Sometimes that would be the only human interaction they'll have all week, so it brightens their day as well.”

Senior Joshua Campbell, president of Young Americans for Liberty, felt pride in his work for Meals on Wheels. “My organization brought speed, efficacy and commitment in our volunteering efforts on MLK Day,” he said.

Senior Brain Alston, a representative of Greek Organization AKA, helped to register citizens to vote. It's important work, he said. “I felt like it was a necessity that would have made Dr. King proud,” Alston said. “He was a man who chose to give service, not to himself. His contribution was a service to all America.”

Declining Adult-Degree Enrollment Impacts NCWC's Bottom Line

Reflecting a national trend, NC Wesleyan's adult-degree program has seen its enrollment drop in the past year, with the college losing \$800,000 in revenue as a result.

Known as ASPIRE, the adult-degree program had been on the rise in the past seven years, as it established new campuses and offered new programs.

The Decree reported in October that ASPIRE had lost 213 students between fall 2016 and fall 2017. At the time its enrollment stood at 1,001, the college reported.

Dr. Evan Duff was hired in February 2011 to oversee the program and its expansion from three campuses in Rocky Mount, the Triangle and Goldsboro. The Decree conducted a recent email interview with Dr. Duff, who continues to direct ASPIRE in his role as college provost.

Q. Could you provide a brief overview of the ASPIRE program and your involvement.

A. I was hired on February 1, 2011 as Wesleyan's Vice President of Adult Education to oversee the growth and development of the adult program. Wesleyan has been offering adult studies programs since the mid-70s, but there hadn't been a VP-level position to guide this area of the college. Since 2011, Adult Studies has grown from the original three sites to 10 campuses. The remaining seven locations are with community college partnerships in Manteo, New Bern, Greenville, Washington, Wilmington, Brunswick, and Raleigh. We used to have a location in Whiteville, but we closed that in 2015-2016. From 2011-2016, we grew from 600 to 1,200 students. During this time, we added new majors in marketing and organizational administration.

Q. What's the relationship between the ASPIRE program and the traditional-day program? In other words, do proceeds from ASPIRE tuition go into the budget for the day program and/or general operation of the main campus?

A. Yes, ASPIRE revenue is put into the general operating budget of the college. It goes to support the entire operation, much of which does go to the traditional campus. To keep it simple, ASPIRE contributes close to 40 percent of the yearly operating budget of the college. The remaining 60 percent comes from advancement and traditional admissions.

Q. How much does each ASPIRE student pay per credit hour? Compare that with tuition for traditional students.

A. In summer 2018, ASPIRE tuition will be \$355 per credit hour at all locations except Durham where it will be \$385. The traditional rate is closer to \$500 a credit hour. However, this is not apples to apples because there are discount rates, internal grants, and scholarships in the traditional day program. Based on that and the fact that traditional students can take 18 hours without being charged extra, sometimes their credit hour rate comes out to \$416, which includes room and board. I should add that traditional students also have access to special programming, more majors, and all of the amenities on the Rocky Mount campus.

Q. How much did ASPIRE revenue decline between September 2016 and September 2017?

A. We declined about 8 percent, which was close to \$800,000.

Q. In an interview last fall, you indicated that the decline in ASPIRE enrollment could be attributed to a national trend in adult education. Summarize that trend.

A. It is part of a national trend. In a recent “Fortune” magazine article, it was reported that many prospective adult-degree students have chosen to pursue employment opportunities rather than a college degree. This is normal. When the economy slows and unemployment rises, many will leave the workforce and attend college; when it's strong, the same students will forgo college for a full-time job. A December “Inside Higher Ed” article indicated that overall college enrollments had declined for six consecutive years, with 224,000 fewer students last fall. The National Student Center Clearinghouse Research Center found that adult-student enrollment has declined by 1.5 million students since 2010. Wesleyan was able to overcome this trend until 2016, based on our geographical outreach and adding two new degree options. But this expansion started to slow down at the end of 2015.

Q. Since reporting the downturn in September, have the numbers improved or continued to drop? Could you furnish the latest figures for January?

A. This is hard to determine since the year hasn't ended, but since late fall, we've continued to see a 15-18 percent decrease over last year at this same time.

Q. What specific changes has ASPIRE made as a result of the lower enrollments. What you have done in in terms of both cuts (e.g., personnel, courses) and refocusing of resources? What's been done to attract more students?

See ASPIRE pg 2

NEWS & OPINION

Issue In-Focus: NC Wesleyan at 2,000 Students—Most Endorse the Plan Decree staff writers were asked their opinion on the administration's goal of increasing enrollment in the day program to 2,000 students.

Bijaya Lamichhane

North Carolina Wesleyan was ranked as the North Carolina's fastest-growing private college during 2013-2016. According to College Factual, it ranks above average in terms of diversity as well. The goal is expand the college further by raising enrollment to 2,000 in the traditional-day program within a decade. I think it's a worthwhile goal that would increase the diversity of the college even more. The 10-year time-frame gives students, and faculty and staff, the chance to adapt to a new setting since the process would be gradual, not sudden.

With the higher enrollment, students could experience more of what college life has to offer. Networking is an essential part of college and has proven to be beneficial for professional development after college as well. One thousand more students would create a socially and culturally diverse environment, with opportunities for new experiences. Unlike it is now, weekends could be more than just two days that you spend by yourself. With the increased number of students, we'd have more resources. And while a more crowded campus would mean more competition and more dissenting views and ideas, the campus would, in effect, make us more open-minded and force us give our best to compete. That is how a college should be.

Justin Long

Two thousand students would bring many benefits, as well as quite a few negatives. Benefits would include: more social interaction between students, more classes to include in the curriculum, greater diversity of students, and an increased number of events for the students to enjoy. On the down side, class sizes may be bigger so there won't be as much one-on-one time between the professors and the students. Competition would increase for work-study jobs, and students would need to look for jobs off campus, which isn't ideal for some, due to a lack of transportation.

Maggie Rankin

The 2,000-student goal sounds ideal for Wesleyan as we keep growing. The increased enrollment could provide a better atmosphere on campus. Rather than becoming a ghost town on the weekends, the college could offer students more fun activities. There would be more sports and intramurals. Instead of two or three athletes, the cross country team roster could grow to double-digits. We could add swimming, wrestling, and field hockey. With more teams and more students, we would have more fans at the sporting events. On campus, there would be bigger sorority/fraternity groups. The music/theater clubs would flourish and provide the Wesleyan community with

more viable opportunities beyond sports. As far as academics, more students would mean more study groups and tutoring.

Qa'lexus Taylor

Change can be good. I mean, the more students, "the merrier." Think about it: More organizations could be created on campus, and there'd be a better atmosphere to meet other students. On the down side, increased enrollment may mean less face-to-face communication between students and professors, and there may be fewer opportunities for work-study jobs.

Gianni Teal

The bigger the school, the bigger the name is for outsiders. Some employers and internship providers look at the reputation of the applicant's college, so if Wesleyan becomes larger, our higher profile will help students in finding work after school. Once Wesleyan gets more students and expands, it will become a more well-known school and it will make the admissions process more competitive.

Quinn Tobias

Wesleyan would benefit from a 100-percent increase in enrollment. At 2,000 students, the school will still be small enough for us to know everyone on campus, and clubs will benefit from an increase in students with more interest in their organization. School pride may become more prevalent with more students participating in school events and sports. Going from 1,000 to 2,000 students, Wesleyan would move from a microscopic school to a small school. The higher enrollment would generate additional revenue, which, in turn, could fund more programs that now operate on a smaller budget. Additional funds could address other shortcomings now found on campus. With more students and more money, the school could increase the number of majors and minors it offers. The one potential drawback could be the student-to-teacher ratio. If the school increases the number of students without hiring a corresponding number of teachers, the ratio, now a source of pride, would suffer. Given that I've taken several courses with five or fewer students, I'm confident that the ratio will remain attractive. All in all, when it comes to reaching 2,000 students, the benefits outweigh the negatives.

Toni Tutt

I would feel indifferent to population of 2,000 students. I attended an early-college high school. Aside from the college classes at North Carolina Central University, my actual school building served fewer than 1,000 students. Then I attended Louisburg College, whose enrollment was about 2,100 students. Like Wesleyan, it featured a small and renovated campus. I'm used to the smaller settings. What attracted me to Wesleyan was the possibility of a new mass com-

ASPIRE from pg 1

A. We downsized one position in the fall and provided more responsibility to others. We've also been more strategic with our marketing efforts. Not only are we targeting community college graduates through articulation agreements, but we're concentrating on specific degree programs. We highlight on social media our criminal justice, psychology and marketing programs to students with similar majors in the community college system. We're also shifting our focus to let employees know that they don't have to make a choice between their job and their education; they can do both.

We continue to look for ways to improve student services and the student experience. We do this through surveys to our current students and implement cost-effective change where we can. One focus is in the classroom. We're monitoring evaluations and conducting classroom observations.

Q. What specific effects has the decline in ASPIRE enrollment had on operations in the day program?

A. At this time, traditional program operations have not been impacted by the decline in ASPIRE enrollment.

Q. What's the short-term outlook for ASPIRE and adult education in the region?

A. I hope we don't continue to see a decline but that could certainly continue through 2019. I hope we're starting to see it level off with an opportunity for growth with the new masters in criminal justice, as well as some new curricula that the faculty will review and, I hope, approve this year.

munications major. Without particular offerings to attract students, the increased enrollment does nothing.

Brooke Bayse

Our staff does really well in maintaining personal relationships with students and I believe that would stay the same if our campus would grow. I only say this because we would get more professors and will build new dorms and classrooms and expand the cafeteria, which is already over-crowded with longer lines and fewer available tables at meal times. As the campus adds new buildings, there is one change I would propose. In recent years we've built several dorms with rooms for single students; such rooms cost hundreds of dollars a year extra. In the years to come, the college needs to build dorms with double rooms, both co-ed and single-gender residences. More residence halls would have the added benefit of allowing the college to bring male students back to campus from the Wesleyan Inn. With all of that said, I still believe it's possible for Wesleyan to be a great school at an enrollment of 2,000.

Joshua Campbell

If Wesleyan were to have 2,000 students, the atmosphere would become more enjoyable. The larger population would create the feel of a large campus similar to that of East Carolina or NC State. Along with the change of atmosphere, more opportunities for work-study would be available for students. On

the other hand, a larger population could negatively affect the learning experience. Larger classes and less one-on-one time could discourage academic growth and lessen the ability of students to create relationships with their professors. Due to the larger population, students could also feel unimportant and could become depressed. While there are both pros and cons, I have faith that students would adapt to a larger population. Together with growth, new facilities, and better accommodations, Wesleyan could reestablish itself into a viable, vibrant campus, unlike the bland weekend ghost town it is now.

Landon Clark

Wesleyan was rated as the fastest-growing private college in North Carolina, but I don't think it has outgrown itself. The number of on-campus activities is insufficient, and the community suffers from a lack of flavor. Many academic programs are weak and suffer from the lack of sufficient faculty for all necessary classes. Growth would produce benefits, I think. Having said that, even if Wesleyan was to grow to President Clark's proposed 2,000-student population, and assuming that all went well, I don't believe I would enjoy the campus any more. Unless Wesleyan changes dorm visitation hours or the drinking policy, this college is nothing more than a boarding school. Wesleyan tries its hardest to protect students from making mistakes by having safeguards (e.g., the drinking policy), but I don't think it

Perspective: On DACA, Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals

Last September, President Trump decided to end President Obama's DACA program, which protects "dreamers," the children of illegal immigrants, from deportation. The program is set to expire March 5. As Congress debates whether to extend DACA, Decree staffers offered their opinions on whether 800,000 "dreamers" should be allowed to remain in the U.S.

Bijaya Lamichhane

Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals was an American immigration policy that allowed illegal immigrants who entered the country before their 16th birthday to receive a deferred action from deportation and earn the eligibility to work. It was established during the Obama administration. It was a controversial move by the chief executive, whose constitutionality was often questioned. As of 2017, around 800,000 were enrolled in the program which has been repealed by the Trump Administration.

DACA holders, also referred to as "Dreamers," were brought to this land by their parents who sought a better future for their child than the life they had lived. With the hopes of achieving the "American Dream," parents of Dreamers landed in United States of America. Escaping their poverty-ridden, war-stricken countries must have been harder than anything I can fathom. Nevertheless, they had hope in the country where they took refuge. They had high hopes that their children, the Dreamers, would live a better life.

Since Dreamers came here before they could even understand the ways of the world, the United States is all they know. For them, the U.S. is their home just as much as it is for any legal resident. With DACA, they had earned the eligibility to work and provide for their families without living in constant fear of deportation back to their poverty-ridden, war-stricken countries. DACA should be extended so these immigrants have a chance to live without fear, in a country which they have viewed, served and accepted as their own for their entire lives.

Landon Clark

President Trump proposed terminating DACA last year, and politicians have been in an uproar over whether to grant citizenship to some 800,000 undocumented immigrants that are under the program. After considering all the solutions, I only agree with Senator Rand Paul's proposal. He proposed that we limit other types of immigration and that we fill those spots by granting legal citizenship to DACA recipients. This proposal will allow a compromise by both parties, because it will cut down immigration, and will not demoralize

those who are here under DACA. I also stand behind this proposal because I don't see DACA recipients as a burden to America. DACA recipients were not able to choose whether they came to America, and they shouldn't be punished for it if we can come to a compromise.

Joshua Campbell

When President Donald Trump ended DACA, I believe he made a good decision. When DACA was created, it was an abuse of power by President Obama. It's Congress, not the president, that's given the ability to make laws that regulate immigration. While I don't agree with President Obama in creating DACA, I also don't believe that we should deport the 800,000 "dreamers" who are in the country. Instead I think we should reform the naturalization process. The U.S. could maintain the difficulty of the naturalization test, but provide help for the test and legal paperwork needed for citizenship at specific sites. As Americans, we should try to understand the plight of the dreamers. At the same time we must realize that they've been living illegally in the U.S. In light of this, the U.S. should analyze individuals on a case by case basis to establish what action should be taken. For example, if an individual has an immediate family, has paid taxes, and has attempted to become a legal citizen and or legal alien, I would suggest that rather than deport that person, we should set conditions or allow them to explore their options.

Wesleyan Students on Beauty

Decree staff writer Toni Tutt has produced a 12-minute video that explores notions of beauty. In it, she asks a diverse group of Wesleyan students to explain what it means to be beautiful.

To hear their responses, go to the YouTube web site and look for "What is it to be beautiful?" at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wpm4m4vmTIE>

should be up to the college whether or not we ruin our lives.

Sarah Grossman

The planned growth would benefit the campus. Students would be exposed to more cultures and beliefs from their classmates. Club enrollment would also increase, allowing the groups to provide more for the campus. Some existing clubs struggle to draw committed members, so more students would help them. With a higher enrollment, new clubs and organizations would emerge with new ideas. We'd grow the number of sports teams (field hockey?), and the smaller existing teams, such as cross country and lacrosse, would see their rosters fill with more athletes.

Darius Jackson

I wouldn't have a problem with attending a college with 2,000 students, because I feel it would add more of a university-type atmosphere. It would lead to more sports, clubs, activities, and classes for the students. It would create an excitement that the college has never seen before, especially since we would have to expand into a larger and more open campus.

Mamadou Jallow

The planned growth seems like a positive idea. I feel that 2,000 students would not be too much as long as the college makes it a smooth transition. Even with 1,000 more students, the school would still be much smaller than many other schools around the region. Wesleyan would still be ideal for students who, in the classroom, prefer not to be in large educational environments where they would be just a number instead of a name. Overall, I would have no problems with attending a school with 2,000 students given the proper accommodations. At 2,000 students Wesleyan will still be small enough for students to know each other.

PRESIDENT from pg 1

Berber took exception to President Trump's characterization of Mexicans as job-stealers. He said that immigrants perform jobs that many Americans would rather not do. "In the U.S., (manual labor) cannot be done except by immigrants," he said. "They work for less salary and it's really hard work." For Americans, Berber added, the wall would be a waste of taxpayer money.

Foreign Policy

As with President Trump's immigration policy, many students pointed to problems with his foreign policy. Burns discussed his growing fear of war between North Korea and the U.S. "I feel like Trump and Kim Jong-Un (Dictator of North Korea) are trying to see who has the bigger weapons," he said. Speaking for his countrymen about the president's stand-off with North Korea, Brokakis said, "They're afraid he'll screw up."

The North Korean situation was one of several foreign policy issues noted by students. Anaele would like to see President Trump support the United Nations more and adopt the role of peacemaker. "The UN is doing a lot of good work, such as providing vaccinations and performing humanitarian work in Syria and countries in Africa," she said.

Positives

While many students expressed concern and described many negative aspects of the president's first year, others praised his accomplishments. Burns said that he admired the president's persistence in achieving his goals. He likes his "America First" focus, which Anaele mentioned as well. "He's put an emphasis on helping citizens here," she said. "He's made America focus on helping here rather than overseas."

Brokakis cited President's Trump's program to strengthen the economy. "He's operating the U.S. government as a business and he's trying to find ways to expand the American economy and overcome the Euro," he said.

Like other Americans, many Wesleyan students remain optimistic about the future, despite their reservations about the president. Anaele expressed confidence in Americans and hopes they will be more at peace with one another. In 2018, Reynolds would like to see the advancement of minorities in the U.S. "Let's hope for the best," she said.

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SPORTS

Bishoops Rebound in 2018, Take First in Division

Quinn Tobias
Decree Staff Writer

The NC Wesleyan men's basketball team won its last 11 conference games to capture first place in its division and earn a number-one seeding in the conference tournament.

The Bishoops finished with a 13-3 record in the USA South, one year after compiling a 6-8 mark. The team was 15-10 overall, after losing its regular-season matchup to Pfeiffer, 132-76.

All season NCWC combined aggressive defense and balanced scoring as it went on its second-half streak. The first-place finish means the Bishoops will host rival Greensboro College in the first round of the conference tourney on February 20.

Staff writer Quinn Tobias filed the following reports on recent home contests: **NCWC 85, William and Peace 70**

The Bishoops defense stifled the Pacers and stole their way to an 85-70 victory as senior Adrian Moore led the way with an efficient 21 points.

Defensive pressure fueled the Wesleyan victory. The Bishoops generated easy baskets off the Pacers' 27 turnovers.

Leading the Bishoops in steals was Moore with six. According to Moore an aggressive mindset helped him lead the team in steals, points, rebounds and assists.

The Bishoops overcame a sloppy opening to the game when the Pacers' full-court trap forced three turnovers in the

first three possessions of the game. The Pacers held the Bishoops to two points in the first 6 minutes and started the game on a 14-4 run. Turnovers plagued both teams, but as the Pacers got away from the full-court press, the Bishoops began to enforce their will later in the first half.

Junior Chris Braswell and sophomore Ricardo Bullock infused the Bishoops with hustle plays that ignited a 25-12 run to end the first half. "I think we needed to find a fire and the team did that," Braswell said. "Basketball is a game of runs and it all starts with defense, because defense turns into offense."

After struggling from the field early in the half, easy transition baskets helped the Bishoops take a 29-26 lead into half time.

According to freshman Josh Covington, Coach Thompson was displeased with the team's performance in the first 13 minutes of the game, remarking that the team made history with how poorly it played.

The Bishoops came out of half time with a renewed defensive energy and executed their traps to perfection, forcing seven turnovers in the first five minutes. In the first half the Bishoops were cold from the field, shooting 31 percent, but the second half told a different story and they shot 51

percent from the field. During that time they extended their lead to 15, making the score 50-35. Two dunks by the Bishoops put an exclamation point on the run.



Adrian Moore was among the scoring leaders as the men's hoops team went on an 11-game conference win streak. SI photos

The Bishoops widened the margin to 23 in the second half and despite the Pacers' best efforts, they were unable to cut the lead below 15 for the remainder of the game. The Pacers dropped to 4-13 and the Bishoops improved to 9-8.

NCWC 101, Averett 88

Freshman Damon McDowell scored 18 of his 25 points in the second half to

Women's Basketball Team Falls in Second Round

Greensboro—The NC Wesleyan women's basketball team saw its 2017-18 season come to an end on Saturday with a 70-54 loss to Greensboro College in the USA South Tournament quarterfinal round.

The top-seeded Pride forged an 11-point lead at intermission and out-scored the 4th-seeded Bishoops 34-29 in the second half to seal the win.

Deep, Experienced Softball Team Eyes Conference Title

By Johnathan Pickler
Decree Staff Writer

Projected to finish sixth in the USA South by the coaches in the conference, the Bishoops are looking forward to proving the pundits wrong and coming out as champions.

The Bishoops are returning many players and have a "big recruiting class that is loaded with potential," according to Head Coach John Brackett, whose team finished 13-9 in conference last season (18-20 overall).

"I feel good about our preparation so far, the weather has caused a few problems but overall our practices have gone well," said Coach Brackett. "Our intra-squad scrimmages have been very competitive."

Coach Brackett stated that the Bishoops' strengths will be their depth as well as their experience. They only had four players who graduated last season, three of them starters. "We also have some impact players in the freshmen class who will challenge for a spot in the starting line-up," stated Coach Brackett.

The team is returning two previously awarded all-conference pitchers, Shelby Godwin and Logan Lowery. Godwin started and appeared in 18 games for the Bishoops last season and finished with a record of 8-8. Lowery started 15 games last season but appeared in 19 games. She finished the season with a record of 9-8 with one save. The Bishoops also have "a number of freshmen pitchers who had plenty of success in high school," according to Coach Brackett.

The Bishoops will play against the defending national champions this season as well as some other nationally ranked teams. "I'm not overly concerned about our schedule because I feel as if our team is up for the challenge," Coach Brackett said. "Our tough out-of-conference schedule will prepare us for the USA South, which is always very strong and balanced."

In the USA South preseason poll, Meredith College was first, Averett University was second, and Ferrum College was third. "Meredith won the regular season championship last season and has a lot of returners," Coach Brackett said. "Averett won

see Softball pg 4

Junior Nadiya Holley paced the Bishoops with a team-high 11 points off the bench, and she completed her first career double-double with 10 rebounds. Freshman Javana Jones joined her in double-figures with 10 points. Playing her final collegiate game, senior KeChae Parker wrapped up her solid career with five points and eight rebounds.

As a team, the Bishoops out-rebounded the Pride 53-46 on the day. But Greensboro shot a little better than 37 percent from the floor while holding Wesleyan to just 29 percent accuracy. Shania Haynes led four Pride players in double-figures with a game-high 15 points.

Wesleyan ends the season with a 13-14 overall record, which included a 9-7 mark in USA South play. With a young roster that included just one senior, the Bishoops will now begin preparing for the 2018-19 campaign.

(Article courtesy of Sports Information)

Baseball Team Features Lethal Offense, Young Pitching Staff

By Quinn Tobias
Decree Staff Writer

The Bishoops baseball team returns to the diamond in 2018 with plans to improve on last year's performance, relying on a lethal offense and a young pitching staff to catapult them to a conference championship.

The 2017 campaign fell short of the Bishoops goals. After a strong regular season performance (24-16 and 11-7 in the USA South), the team lost to top-seeded LaGrange and 8th-seeded Piedmont in the semi-finals of the conference tournament.

Entering the 2018 season the USA South pre-season coaches poll predicted Wesleyan will finish 5th out of 12 playoff-eligible teams. The Bishoops lost 10 players to graduation last year including their top two pitchers, Ryan Grant and TJ Wilkie, who combined for 112 innings pitched and nine wins.

Coach Charlie Long acknowledges some of the challenges his ball club faces in the upcoming season. "Young pitching scares me," he said. "The keys to success will be young players. This is the first year in a long time we're entering the season unsure of the three starters because we have an abundance of talent. I think that's a good thing."

Despite the middle-of-the-pack prediction, Long believes the Bishoops can dethrone LaGrange as the conference champion. "We have a really good team," he said. "On paper we have a chance to win the conference. As always it comes down to pitching and our defense."

The Bishoop defense should be a strength, since the team returns both double-play partners, Brad Pennington at 2nd base and Alec Titmus at shortstop. The pair ranked second in the nation last year in double plays turned.

Long feels confident that this season will be a success in large part due to a dominating offense. "We're as deep offensively as we've been in a long time," Long said. "Some people that should be playing will be watching." Long believes the offense can keep them in any game and will help make a push to break the 30-win plateau.



Senior KeChae Parker paced her team with a 12.6 scoring average.

The Bishoops have come a long way since two dreadful seasons in 2014 and 2015. Part of the resurgence in the program can be attributed to an active JV program, which helps develop younger players. Long recognizes the importance of developing underclassmen in order to replace talent that graduates.

Long sees the payoff from the JV schedule during practice. "I feel like we're making some small steps in the right direction and we're getting the offense and defense in place," he said.

The Bishoops will rely heavily on their offense to keep them in games while the young pitching staff finds its stride. Five returners had 20 or more RBI last season, four of whom had over a .300 batting average. The team will need to find some power in the newcomers to replace the six homers that graduating senior Tony Sanchez hit last season.

Sophomore second-baseman Brad Pennington returns this season after making an indelible mark last year, when he was named D3baseball.com's All Regional Rookie of the Year. He led the team in batting with a .390 average, a .472 on-base percentage and .643 slugging percentage.

Junior Nate Gardner returns as the only regular starting pitcher from last year's team. Gardner started nine games last year, posting a 3-3 record. He pitched his way to a 2.49 ERA through 50 innings of work and posted less than one Walks and Hits per Inning Pitched (WHIP).

Gardner believes he will lead a strong rotation this year and his numbers will continue to improve. "My pitching has improved a lot because I have started to challenge guys," he said.

Gardner also wants to make an impact at the plate and in the field. Last year Gardner hit .333 with two home runs.

The Bishoops begin their conference action February 24th at Maryville. They avoid last season's champion, LaGrange, which also finished first in the pre-season coaches poll. The conference tournament is scheduled to begin on April 12th.

ignite the Bishoops second-half scoring explosion as the team posted 59 points en route to a 101-88 victory over conference opponent Averett.

McDowell provided a spark off the bench shooting 55 percent from the field and 60 percent from beyond the arc. His performance earned him the USA South's Rookie of the Week honors. Besides leading the team in scoring, McDowell led in assists with six, and chipped in six rebounds in the winning effort.

Junior Robert Wilson played a pivotal role in the win scoring 21 points, going 75 percent from the field and hauling in eight rebounds. Wilson led the team in minutes with 32 and his hustle was vital to the team's success in the first half.

Averett relied on senior James Contreras, who carried the Cougars in the first half. Contreras scored 30 points going 9-19 from the field and 12-13 from the foul line. He also led his team in steals with two and played 32 minutes.

The two teams entered the game with different approaches. The Bishoops relied on moving the ball around to create open shots while Averett looked for Contreras to create plays in isolation. The Bishoops had more than twice as many assists as the Cougars.

The Bishoops jumped to a quick 5-0 lead before the two teams settled in to exchange baskets the remainder of the first half. Averett played aggressive defense, extending their pressure while Wesleyan prevented the Cougars from getting in the paint by blocking six Cougar shots. Averett held onto its advantage, leading the Bishoops at half-time, 44-42.

Tough defense stifled both teams and after five minutes in the second half both teams only had recorded eight points. The Bishoops' depth became a problem for the Cougars as the second half progressed. Capitalizing on Averett's fatigue, Wesleyan increased its defensive pressure and forced Cougar turnovers, which led to easy baskets during a 24-5 run midway through the second half.

The run put the game out of reach at 74-57. During the run the momentum shifted when Darin Kettner of Averett got hit with a technical foul.

The lead got as large as 20, but the Cougars trimmed the margin to 13 before the final buzzer. Ricardo Bullock put on exclamation mark on the end of the game with a slam dunk to increase the score to 100 in the closing minute.

The Bishoops improve to 11-9 overall and 9-3 in conference while the Cougars fall to 10-10 and 5-7 in conference.

NCWC 82, Berea 62

The Bishoops welcomed Berea College to Everett Gym with an 82-62 thumping as junior Robert Wilson scored a double-double in the win.

A new member of the USA South Conference, the Kentucky school was unable to keep pace with Wesleyan, which played aggressive defense and

Lacrosse Returns To NCWC Campus

By Quinn Tobias
Decree Staff Writer

On February 13th North Carolina Wesleyan reintroduced its women's lacrosse program after a three-year hiatus.

The team lost its opener, 20-3, at Barton, and then fell in its first USA South Conference match, 17-2, at Averett.

The Bishoops entered the season with a young roster, hoping chemistry will carry them to the post season.

Coach Bridget Walker was appointed to restart the program in June 2016 and since then she's been hard at work rounding out a roster and preparing the new team. During the fall of 2017 the team participated in "Fall Ball Play Day" where it played three abbreviated games.

Coach Walker has been impressed by her team's early efforts. "The new kids figured out the game," she said. "All the players are coachable and everyone is all in."

Sophomore Ashlee Johnson has stood out to the coaches and her teammates. She will serve as the primary goalie and team captain. Johnson has five years of experience as a goalie and wants to bring her knowledge of the game to a roster that includes many newcomers to the sport. "I want to build a bond with my teammates and hopefully generate interest that leads to a good foundation for the program," Johnson said. She was one of 11 athletes recruited by Walker.

see Lacrosse pg 4

made plenty of substitutions during the game, held February 3.

Wilson scored 19 points, many in close, and grabbed 10 rebounds, as center A.J. Frye sat with an injury. The Bishoops trailed Berea early in the first half, but held a four-point lead at half-time and pulled away in the final 20 minutes, outscoring their opponent, 45-29.

"I was able to get to my sweet spot," Wilson said. "My midrange shot is one of the strongest attributes to my game. I got to the spots either off the dribble or a great pass by my teammates. Berea's defense was solid, but I dictated where I wanted to shoot. Along with the dribble penetration from our guards and kick-outs to open shooters, I got more looks close around the rim."

Guard Chris Braswell scored 19 points to tie Wilson for the team lead. Riccardo Bullock collected a game-high 12 rebounds. Damon McDowell and Justin Tankewicz scored 11 piece, while guard Adrian Moore (15.7 ppg) was limited to 8 on 4 of 15 shooting.

Wilson said the Berea game showcased the balanced scoring that has characterized the Bishoops' offense all season. When one shooter is off, others pick up the slack.

"We have scorers at all levels on our team, from the starting line to the last man on the bench," he said. "We have guys who can score in the post, shoot the midrange, shoot the three, and drive and get to the basket. We also have a few guys that can score multiple ways, Adrian Moore, being one of them. So, when one of us is having an off-night Coach Thompson has multiple options to pick off the bench."

ITALY

from pg 1

Dauids relished the opportunity to see Italian art in many manifestations, in both Venice and Florence.

"There were so many artisans out painting and selling their pieces and I just loved watching them work," she said. "I also thought the artistry of the buildings in these two locations was wonderful to see. It was exciting to find the hidden graffiti throughout these two cities."

Like Dauids, teammate Marissa Aguilar said the art made the strongest impression on her.

In particular, she enjoyed the visit to Vatican City and called the artwork in the chapel and basilica "mind-blowing. It was very overwhelming, intense, and exciting, because of all the history there," she explained. "The experience was indescribable."

Dauids added that the educational aspect of the two trips enhanced her experience. "It helped me to see and enjoy the two European countries in a way that I might not have if I had taken the trip just for the heck of it," she said, noting that due to music professor Tony Sawyer's instruction on the Italy trip, "Wherever we went, I found myself keeping an ear open because of the musical focus of his class."

Samantha Morton, a senior on the volleyball team, was most excited by the volleyball competition. In particular, she'll retain happy memories of a match against a team in Rome.

"We got to eat dinner with the other team," she related. "We had fun learning about each other and our countries. By the end of the night we didn't want to leave them because we had made such great connections. We traded contact information so that we could keep in touch. I really wish that we could have spent more time with them."

Though she is set to graduate, Morton believes the trip will help members of her team to bond. "I'm hopeful the experience will get all of the players on the same page as a team," she said. "The trip really brought us together and allowed us to get to know more about each other."

Rankin, a junior, agreed that the trip provided a beneficial team-building experience. "You spent 24/7 with most of you teammates, staying in rooms with some of your teammates that you don't necessarily hang out with outside of school," she said.

She noted that all the players got the chance to play in the matches, another benefit. "You learn how to play with different teammates, since we all got an equal amount of playing time," she explained. "It was good to build relationships. Having a better relationship with one another can only help us be better on the field next season."

(Sports Information contributed to this report.)

CAMPUS LIFE



Austin Mooney takes in Grace Li Wang's "Radiance in Nature" show at the Mims Gallery.

A. Stern photo.

NC Wesleyan Campus Hit Hard by Flu Bug

As is the case around the nation, NC Wesleyan has been enduring a tough flu season.

Jessica Brys-Wilson, the director of the NCWC Wellness Center, reported a dramatic rise in the number of students that she's treated since the beginning of the school year.

She was interviewed by the Decree in mid-February.

Q. Can you share stats that show the severity of this year's flu?

A. In a typical year, I treat between 10 and 20 cases of flu during the entire flu season. In the last three weeks, I've treated 107 cases. There are many students who have chosen not to seek treatment or who were examined off campus so this number under-represents the actual number of cases.

Q. When did flu season start at Wesleyan?

A. I saw my first case of the year during the last week of January.

Q. As far as you can tell, what percentage of your patients had gotten a flu shot?

A. If they're coming in sick, it doesn't really matter so it just isn't a question I typically ask.

Q. In laymen's terms, why is this year's flu shot less effective?

A. The flu shot has some effectiveness. The vaccine developers have to make their best hypothesis about which strains of the flu virus will circulate the following year so that there's time to make the vaccine before flu season. Sometimes the virus mutates in a way that surprises us and doesn't match their hypothesis. The shot is, therefore, less effective. This year the prevalent strain, H3N2, wasn't anticipated so it hasn't been a great match.

Q. Is late February too late to get a shot?

A. February is not too late to get a flu shot.

Q. In general do you recommend that all members of the Wesleyan community—undergrads and older folk—get a shot next year and every year? Why should they if the shot isn't working? What do you say to skeptics who contend that flu shots make you sick?

A. The flu shot cannot give you the flu. However, when you get your flu shot you make an immune response to it so your immune system is busy fighting it off. That way, if you're exposed to the strains in the shot, you already have antibodies and your body is able to fight it off before you get sick. Unfortunately, if your body is working hard to fight off the flu from the shot, it's harder for you to fight off other illnesses or flu strains that come into contact with you. For this reason, I usually recommend that people get their flu shots early in the season—like September or October—before there are a lot of circulating illnesses.

Q. What are the most common symptoms you've seen?

A. Most commonly, I'm seeing sudden onset of high fevers, body aches, headache, and cough.

In general, flu sufferers feel awful, but will recover without complications. Unfortunately, with the higher number of cases this year, I've been seeing a handful of complications, such as post-flu pneumonias, that need to be treated with antibiotics and watched a little more carefully.

Q. What specific steps should members of the NCWC community do to help stay healthy and combat the flu?

A. The most important thing you can do is wash your hands with soap and water! Frequently! You should also be sure to get plenty of rest and eat a healthy diet to keep your immune system working at its best. Avoid sick contacts when possible. If you are sick, stay in your room. If you get sick overnight or during the weekend, ask your resident advisor for a flu kit that contains germicidal wipes, a mask, and some meal tickets that will allow a friend to pick up a meal for you from the cafeteria. The Residence Life staff has been awesome at wiping down surfaces in the residence halls, and the cafeteria staff has been wonderful about making changes to prevent the spread, as well. These small steps have really made a huge impact on the number of cases I'm seeing.

Olive Garden Named Favorite Local Restaurant In Decree Poll

The Italian eatery Olive Garden received the most votes in an informal survey of Bishops asked to name their favorite sit-down restaurant in the Rocky Mount area.

In contrast to the results of The Decree's annual survey of fast-food restaurants, there was not one or two sit-down restaurants that dominated the voting. And there was near equal support for both national chains and local establishments.

Olive Garden finished first with 11 votes, while in second was the Mexican Restaurant El Tapatio with 8 votes and Applebee's with 7. Outback, Chili's and Brian's Cheesesteaks each received 6 votes, followed by San Jose with 5.

About Olive Garden, one fan said, "Their foods is delicious and always done right."

Added a second, "I have a love for Italian food and their endless soup and salad deal is excellent."

Said a Brian's voter, "Best food in Rocky Mount," while a Mexican food aficionado, a student, cited El Tap's "big portions and small prices." An Outback supporter likes the restaurant's "menu as well as the atmosphere."

The Decree survey, conducted last fall in conjunction with the fast-food poll, contacted 100 members of the Wesleyan community. While all 100 stated their preferences for fast food, only 89 filled in a choice for a sit-down restaurant. Twenty-nine different sit-down restaurants were named by survey respondents.

Perennial favorites Cookout (39 votes) and Chick-fil-A (32) dominated the fast-food race with more than 70 percent of the total votes.

Has Valentine's Day Lost Its Luster?

Three staff writers interviewed members of the Wesleyan community on the importance of February 14th.

**By Maggie Rankin
Decree Staff Writer**

NC Wesleyan students offered a range of views on whether Valentine's Day is still a significant day.

Carolynn Davern, a senior, said she enjoys Valentine's Day. "You can take the time to show loved ones that you care," she said.

Like Davern, junior Cali Green enjoys February 14th. "It's a day of happiness," she said. Green added that Valentine's Day allows you to show appreciation to the ones you love.

Dr. Brent Dozier, assistant professor of mathematics, expressed a nuanced take on the subject. He said that Valentine's Day can be meaningful, but that if it becomes a duty, then it's empty. "If there are no expectations, then giving and receiving a card, note, or gift can be very meaningful," he said.

Like other interviewees, Valentine's Day makes Dr. Dozier think back to childhood. In elementary school, he remembered, he'd design and exchange valentines with other pupils. "It turned into a class party," he said.

Most Bishops either used to celebrate Valentine's Day with their families or retain a tradition. Sophomore Bradley Pennington celebrates the day of love by exchanging presents with his parents. "My parents go on a date," he added.

Chris Green, a senior, also receives gifts from his folks. "My mom always gets me and my brother a box of chocolates," he said.

Davern recalled one of her parents' customs before she came to college. "They used to give me little candies and gifts before school in the morning," she said.

While many students enjoy Valentine's Day and celebrate it in some fashion with their families, most have not made plans for the day. Junior Kevin Berry expects to follow his normal school-day schedule. "I'll go to class, go to practice, do some homework, and go to sleep," he said.

Junior Madeline Williams hopes to earn a little extra cash on Valentine's Day. A waitress at Outback Steakhouse, she anticipates a busy night for a special occasion like Valentine's Day. "You make a lot of money," she said.

Of the Bishops interviewed about Valentine's Day, about three-quarters felt that it was less important in today's society than it was 10-15 years ago.

"It's more commercialized and people don't take it seriously," said senior Samantha Morton.

Berry and Trey Jones expressed similar views on the subject. "Everything is done for an Instagram picture," Berry said.

Added Jones, a senior, "Ain't no love round here anymore."

Musa Ceasay, a new student, was even harsher in his response to the approaching holiday. "Forget Valentine's Day," he said, using a different "F" word (one not suitable for a family newspaper) to communicate his feelings.

Dr. Dozier said that Valentine's Day has become more meaningful for him as he's grown older. For a time, the day was insignificant to him. "It gained meaning when I met my wife," he said.



**By Alijuah West
Decree Staff Writer**

Valentine's Day is the day of love, the day of affection, the day of cherished memories, the day that gets less and less important every year.

Wesleyan students have expressed their views on the holiday—how they feel about it and how it's changed.

When asked about their holiday, a majority expressed negative feelings.

With a habitual smile, sophomore Richard Smalls is seldom negative, but when Valentine's Day came up in conversation, his mood changed. "I really can't stand Valentine's Day," he said. "It's one of those holidays I feel has no purpose to it."

Eron Darby agrees. "I think it's pointless to celebrate Valentine's Day," he said. "You shouldn't have to pick one specific day to show someone you love or appreciate them."

Other students claimed that Valentine's Day has changed since they were younger. "When we were little, it was a better time because everyone was included," said sophomore Matthew Swales. "We'd give a little extra to our crush, but everyone would still feel important."

Iyanna Weathers added, "It's not that the holiday has changed; it's more so that the holiday is really meant for couples and it's just not that important to us anymore."

Valentine's Day may be on the decline for some, but to others it's still one of their favorite holidays. Sophomore Taryn Washington loves Valentine's Day. She likes the presents, the way her boyfriend makes her feel. She likes to get spoiled on a specific day.

"My boyfriend already does a lot for me," she said. "But it's nice to know there's at least one day he'll go out of his way."

She explained that sometimes students look at this day in a negative light because they've been hurt or they're not in relationships. "I'd probably dislike Valentine's Day too, especially if it comes up after a tough break-up," she said.

Eric Melton is pro Valentine's Day as well. He feels like it's a day for new experiences. "Why not use this day to try something new?" he said.

Instead of doing the clichéd dinner and movie, Melton suggested trying new date ideas such as roller skating, indoor sky-diving and bowling. "When you're with someone for a long time, you can't keep doing the same things over and over again," he said.

Sophomore Breon Foust is another big fan of Valentine's Day. "Valentine's Day became very special to me when I was younger and it still is today," he said. He follows a tradition where he goes out with a group of friends for Valentine's Day. "It gives you that childhood feel," he said. "Your friends are all included no matter if they're in a relationship or not."

For sophomore Donnell Alexander, Valentine's Day has taken on new meaning now that he's a father. It gives him alone time with the mother of his child. "Almost every day is about your kids besides your birthday, anniversary and Valentine's Day," he said. "You learn not to take those days for granted because you rarely get time just to be with your significant other."

When it comes to Valentine's Day, sophomores Jarrod Lassiter and Monteris Cromartie neither hate nor love Valentine's Day. "Valentine's Day doesn't affect me in any way" Lassiter said. Cromartie added "It's just another day to us."



**By Brooke Bayse
Decree Staff Writer**

By the beginning of February, many couples were preparing for Valentine's Day.

Many love February 14th, especially Nepal native Shreya Thakuri. She described the way she and her boyfriend, Sunny Khanal, celebrate the day in her country. As in America, the Nepalese emphasize the color red and the exchange of gifts. They take a broad perspective on the day. "We celebrate love, not just to (our significant others), but to everyone in general," she said.

Khanal, a junior, thinks that Valentine's Day is a "special day for love and spending time with my significant other. I've spent four Valentine's Days with her and it's been amazing," he said. "Our first Valentine's Day was so special to me."

Danyelle Rube, an enrollment service specialist in admissions, expressed mixed feelings about Valentine's Day, but takes pleasure in seeing the happiness of others. "I like watching people get super excited to be treated special and I like the 'hoopla' around it," she said.

Junior Keaira McMiller was effusive in her opinion about Valentine's Day. "I love, love and I like 'mushy' stuff and it's a 'mushy' holiday. It's just a cute day," she said.

Melissa Whitley, a staff member in Gateway Technology Center, believes Valentine's Day serves a vital function in today's society. "Every relationship has periods of ebb and flow," she said. "So there's value in having an outside force to

remind you to celebrate the relationship."

James Parrish, McMiller's boyfriend, likes Valentine's Day, but doesn't see the specific day "making or breaking" a relationship. "People look forward to these extravagant gifts based off of what they see on social media," he said. "And that's not the point of Valentine's Day." Despite this view, Parrish does spend his day with his significant other and "likes the idea of showering her with affection and love."

Although Rube delights in some aspects of Valentine's Day, she believes it's changed over the years. "I feel like we've gotten more and more materialistic," she said. "Back in elementary school, it was all about being kind to everyone," she said. "As adults, it's all about getting flowers that die and candy that you will eat."

Whitley agreed that Valentine's Day has become "commercialized" and said that she and her husband avoid restaurants on February 14th due to the crowds. But there's one recent trend that she thinks is positive. "I like the rise of singles events on Valentine's Day because it celebrates another form of self-love," she said. "You don't need to have someone else to have value."

Junior Carley Mackie also feels that Valentine's Day has lost its specialness. "It's a Hallmark holiday now," she said. "With the stuffed animals, cards, and chocolate, it all becomes a stereotypical thing."

Mackie has been with her boyfriend for three Valentine's Days. While the couple doesn't have a tradition, one V-Day was memorable, she said. "I don't get to see him a lot, but I remember my first year at Wesleyan he came up to surprise me," she said. "We just got to relax and watch movies together."

It's okay with McMiller if Valentine's Day has lost some of its luster. "James makes me feel like it's Valentine's Day every day," she said.



Shreya Thakuri and her boyfriend, Sunny Khanal, celebrate Valentine's Day.

Photo by Brooke Bayse

LACROSSE from pg 3

Freshman Ali Cucinotta will also be a captain and will lead the offense. Cucinotta has transitioned to midfield after playing defense in high school. She brings a team-first attitude to the field. "My goals are for us to figure out the chemistry so everyone can enjoy the sport," Cucinotta said. "I want to help everyone be successful."

Walker plans to challenge for a playoff spot in the first season. "I want to win some games," Walker said. "The conference is expanding with a lot of coaching turnover so our goal is to finish in the top half of the conference and make the conference tournament."

Walker plans on using new rules and the introduction of a shot clock to their advantage. "With the new rules we can play better defense quicker," Walker said. "With the new shot clock we'll play a packed-in defense rather than aggressively trying to force turnovers."

The Bishops were predicted to finish 8th out of 10 playoff-eligible teams in the pre-season coach's poll.

The Bishops will host Meredith, the team picked first in a pre-season poll of USA South coaches, on February 21st.

SOFTBALL from pg 3

the conference tournament last year and is very well coached." Brackett expects Ferrum to be tough because of a dominant pitcher who is returning for her senior season.

The Bishops are aiming toward their fourth regular season title as well as their fourth USA South Tournament championship since Brackett took over as the head softball coach. "I believe that if all the players on our team has a role and as long as they accept their roles and put the team first, then we can reach our potential and have a shot at winning the USA South Conference championship," stated Brackett.