

# OPINION & NEWS

## Issue In-Focus: Students Respond to Penalties for Marijuana Possession

According to Edward Naylor, Vice President for Student Affairs, the college is enforcing the existing regulations as outlined in the student handbook. In a drug case, Dean Naylor or an Associate Dean—Jessie Langley or Stephanie Battle—will meet with a student who has been accused of using or possessing marijuana. During the meeting, the administrator will review the facts of the case as well as other pertinent matters and then discuss possible sanctions, which typically involve suspension for two semesters. The accused then may elect to have the case heard by the college's Honor Board, which is comprised of students, staff and faculty. If the Honor Board finds that the accused has violated the Student Code of Conduct, the student will face sanctions that range from probation to suspension to expulsion.

Through mid-November, Dean Naylor reported, three Wesleyan students have been suspended and two have been expelled. "All five students were charged under the Student Code of Conduct with drug violations and some had charges additional to drug violations," he said.

**What's your reaction to the procedures followed by the college in cases involving marijuana possession?**

**Katie Beeman**

I think it's good that the school has started cracking down more on the marijuana problem. It's something that has gotten worse over the past couple of years, and the rules and penalties need to be followed. Marijuana is illegal, and by having it, students are breaking the law. That's something that does not need to be happening at Wesleyan, especially since we're a school that's affiliated with the Methodist Church. However, I do believe that a violator should be suspended for one semester rather than two. Being away from college for a whole year is a big deal. The student should be allowed to come back after one semester and continue with his education. Being in school would be more helpful to that student, I think.

**Tiffany Brown**

The college is cracking down on marijuana possession. I'm aware of students who have been suspended or expelled for marijuana. I find the sanctions to be eye-raising. Marijuana is not legal, but at the same time the drug has never killed anyone. On the other hand, alcohol is a legal substance that may cause one to be involved in a drunk-driving accident, which can kill. In light of these considerations, I'm not in favor of the college's current policy. I think the administration should be more lenient. A simple warning should be enough to teach a student a lesson. With the current policy, even if a student has committed his first offense, he's guaranteed to receive some type of punishment. This will turn off some students and decrease the student body at a time when the college is trying to raise enrollment to 1,000. Plus, you never know who uses marijuana. It could be some of the brightest students, with the highest GPAs. I think the college should focus on more important issues.

**Trinity Carter**

I think the enforcement of the zero-tolerance policy is excessive. We've lost so

many students in the last few weeks because they got caught with weed or it "looked like" they were smoking. But I wonder if Wesleyan's administration has ever thought about why students are even smoking in the first place. College can be a difficult adjustment and very stressful. Maybe some students have turned to marijuana to cope with the changes they're experiencing. Instead of resorting to harsh penalties, maybe Wesleyan should be helping the students. College is supposed to be everyone's first taste of freedom and it's where we're supposed to make mistakes and learn from them. The school might have just gone too far with this one. I remember when I started school here and the environment felt so welcoming, and now it's "I can't be here for ten minutes without seeing a police officer ride past." It's intimidating! I'm not saying that it's right to smoke weed, but there has to be a common factor as to why so many students turn to the drug. I feel that instead of trying to figure out the causes, the administration is being too one-sided. Wesleyan students should at least be given a warning for first-time offenses. College is our last chance to live as young adults before branching out into the "real world"

and we should be able to live a little.

**Ella Monroe**

I don't think this is the right policy for the college. When students first come to college, they're basically screaming "Freedom!" They're here to expand their learning but also establish a lot of responsibilities that they most likely didn't have at home. So when I first got here, I thought there was going to be a lot of parties, meeting new people and so on. What I did not expect were students being treated like we're still in high school. We're all grown, right? I personally do not smoke and pretty much everyone knows that it's illegal. But isn't it up to the individual to make these decisions, to take that risk to smoke weed? Also, it's pretty harsh to suspend a student for two semesters or expel him. What about all that tuition money? Pretty much wasted.

**David Robinson**

These days, the difference between right and wrong is blurred, and the right of a person to do harm to himself (and others) seems to be almost inherent and self-evident. This observation is a puzzle to me, as I grew up knowing it was wrong to harm anyone,

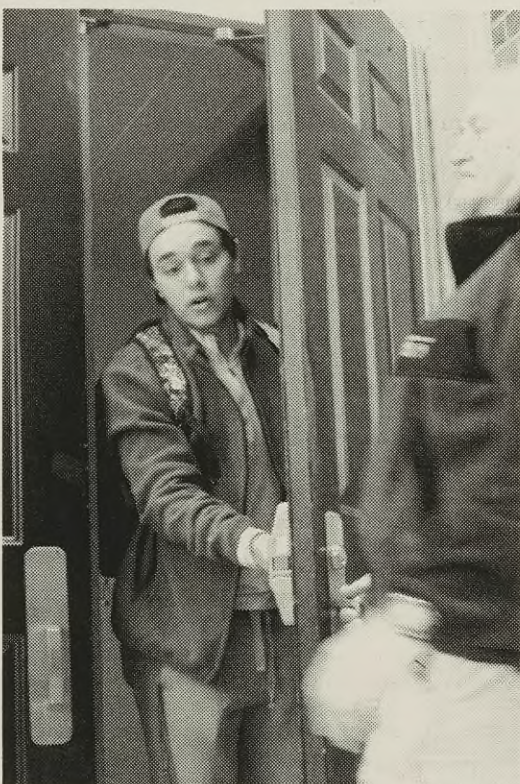
## College Must Get Handle On 'Left-Door' Syndrome

The Decree interviewed Dr. Andrew Stern, assistant professor of religious studies, after he diagnosed a common, but solvable problem on campus. He calls it "left-door" syndrome.

**Decree Faculty Advisor:** Our staff writers have witnessed you muttering to yourself as you enter and leave the Braswell classroom complex. What's up with that?

this reminds me about my grade school years, when the nuns forbid students from writing with their left hand. I'm sensing a little Sister Agnes Therese in your attitude.

**Dr. Stern:** On the advice of my attorneys I wish to state that I have no recollection of the incident with this so-called Reba. Furthermore, I affirm that I do not discriminate against, nor do I condone discrimination against, individuals on the basis of hand-preference. Having said that, I would think that, as an English professor, you would know that the word "sinister" is derived from the Latin word meaning "left." Just saying.



**Dr. Stern:** Well Bill, it could have been any number of things. Perhaps someone had taken my favorite parking spot, or I had caught a student espousing heresy, or I was just arguing with the voices in my head. Or maybe I was concerned about something more important. Much more important.

**DFA:** Oh, what's that? Was it the Braves letting you down once again?

**Dr. Stern:** No, it wasn't the Braves' latest September collapse. As with my children, I've grown accustomed to the Braves disappointing me. I've got a different problem on my mind—the failure of many members of the Wesleyan community to follow one of the basic principles of civilization and common decency: entering and exiting a building through the right-hand door. One might expect such deviance from psychopaths, freshmen, or Pittsburgh Steelers fans, but I've seen respectable people—the sort of people who wear ties to work—doing it as well, and that troubles me profoundly.

**DFA:** I'll just ignore the comment about my Steelers. But I've noticed this tendency as well, and you're right that it's widespread. But I wonder if you haven't gone a little bonkers. In fact, I understand that you got into an altercation with an honors student, after she—let's call her Reba—exited Pearsall through the left door. Digging into this story, dogged Decree reporters found that Reba is left-handed. Isn't that a valid argument for using the left door? In a way

my reckless and irresponsible colleagues. I prefer to focus on the issues at hand. You might ask: Why do I care which door people use? The response is simple—safety. Granted, "safety" is often an excuse for oppressive governments to erode civil liberties. But there are legitimate concerns in this case. Imagine someone attempting to enter Braswell via the proper, right-hand door. Suddenly, that door shoots out towards him, propelled by someone on the inside exiting, improperly, on the left-hand side. What's going to happen? Perhaps the person on the outside of the door will merely be startled. But it's also possible that he could be hit on the hand, or perhaps even the head. Serious injury could occur! So, all I'm saying is, everyone should use the proper doors, and those who forget and slip up should be flogged and banished. That's all.

**DFA:** I see. I think you make a good point. Other than threatening a "flogging," what can we do to promote proper door etiquette?

**Dr. Stern:** It's all about education. In general I think the value of education is overrated, but in this case the first and most important step toward changing people's behavior is making them aware of the issue. I'm certain that if we can make members of the Wesleyan community realize that using the wrong door threatens the safety of their friends and colleagues—to say nothing of the very fabric of civilization—they will change their ways. I just hope it happens before someone gets hurt, specifically me.

including myself. North Carolina Wesleyan supposedly models itself on the Wesleyan ethic from past centuries, and therefore the strict adherence to rules denying illegal drug use seems obviously right and acceptable. The students here are mostly literate and can absorb the code of honor, as written and distributed. What about "NO" is so hard to understand? The object of attendance here is to prepare for a productive and responsible adulthood, and part of that preparation is to ready oneself to enter the work force. With such a goal, what possible benefit could drugs and abuse of other substances be? College is expensive, and maturity would dictate a sober approach to it. A more innocent approach to having fun, unmonitored, seems reachable and laudable. In other words, do right because it's the right thing to do. Put the campus police out of business!

**Rebecca Staylor**

I don't agree with the policy our school has made. Wesleyan administrators have made commendable efforts to help the campus crack down on drug use. However, their policy seems to be a bit flawed; while I feel that our students should be punished for marijuana possession, a first-time offender should not be suspended or expelled. The current policy should be revised to help the student who is in violation to better himself, rather than sending him away, which may make him feel alone and unable to find help for his problems. The college should adopt a "three-strike" rule to help the student rather than abandon him. The three-strike rule would require that first- and second-time offenders perform an ample amount of community service and attend Narcotics Anonymous classes. Under this policy, expulsion would only occur after the third offense. This would allow stu-

dents to make mistakes—something that we all do—but still suffer consequences. It would still limit the number of times a student will be "forgiven" for his actions, thus teaching him accountability and responsibility. While I do appreciate the college's efforts to reduce the negative influences within our campus, revisions can be made to make the policy more flexible. Overall, though, the policy is the policy and as young adults we must abide by it, whether we agree with it or not.

**Michael Taylor**

I think enforcing a tough policy for students using marijuana is understandable because it's an illegal substance. Also, using marijuana may adversely affect a student's academic performance and social life. However, I think the policy is a little harsh. Punishment should be more lenient for a first-time offender who only has a small amount of marijuana or is only suspected as having used it. Instead of jumping at the chance to punish a student, it's more beneficial to find out why the student is using marijuana in the first place. Suspension and expulsion should only be applied to the most extreme cases. Probation, counseling, and treatment would be better for the student. Students depend on the school's faculty and administration to provide guidance when they make mistakes. A one-size-fits-all style of punishment is as bad for the school's image as is drug use.

**KeCharna White**

NCWC has always been strict about the no-drugs policy. Whether or not the administration is stricter than it used to be, there have always been consequences if you're caught with drugs and alcohol on campus. Dean Naylor and other administrators have been enforcing the college rules and, in general, haven't given students second or third chances. In my opinion, first-time offenders should be offered another chance.

## PHONES

from pg 1

word "five." "I will do so for each offense."

Dr. Sanborn enforces the same policy. "Each use of the cell phone equals a five-point deduction," echoed the psychology professor.

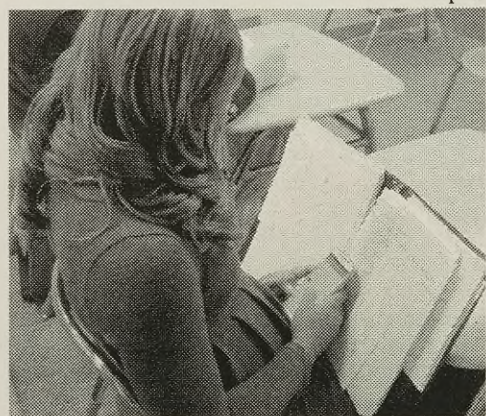
Many math and science professors allow their students to use their phones as calculators. Using cell phones during a test is a different story. Dr. Bill Yankosky described his punishment. "I take the cell phone and test and they get a zero," the mathematics professor said, noting that this is a new policy for him because of past problems with cheating.

Most Wesleyan students understand the policies towards cell phones in class, whether they follow the rules or not.

"They're understandable, I suppose, based on how far students have gone in the past," Crickmore said. A more laid-back view was expressed by Whitten. "I really don't mind."

Not all students fully accept the no-cell-phone policy. Shayne DeWitt said she understands that the policies are to keep students focused in class. "But I feel there's limits to it," the freshman stated. Jerome Little also expressed some reservations about the policy. "It's a mixed thing because some might use it to take pictures of notes," the entertainment major said.

While some students adhere to the no-cell-phone policy, others do not. One of the most common in-class uses of cell phones is to check the time. Little commented that he never uses his phone in class. After thinking twice, he corrected himself. "Technically yes, to tell time," the junior said. Crickmore



G. Wallace photos

also denied using her phone during class, especially during lectures. After a pausing a moment, she admitted, "I use it to keep time." Dr. Yankosky also confessed to using his phone to check the time. "There are no clocks in the rooms," he said. Many other professors also use their phones for this

purpose.

Other students, many requesting anonymity, acknowledged that they use their phone for entertainment reasons. One freshman revealed that she uses her phone to email and text to "make plans outside of class." A junior admitted that he texts or calls his family "when needed for an emergency." He further stated that sometimes he plays games on his phone. "The other day I played the hell out of them games in class," he continued.

Another junior also admitted to texting during class. When asked whom he was texting, he replied, "anybody." In one recent in-class text exchange, a student revealed, he was responding to his fiancé, who wanted him to "pick something up at the store." Asked to explain the reason for texting during class, many students denied that it was done out of boredom. "Well, it depends on the class," admitted one junior.

"No cell phone" policies mean that students must conceal their usage in some way. Their methods are as varied as their reasons for using their cell phones in the first place. Many female students keep their phones in their purse, while others keep them in their book bags. "I check like I'm finding a pencil," a freshman said.

Another popular method is to keep the phone in a pants pocket and take a peek at it to check the time or texts. Other students conceal it any way they can. One junior stated he would act "like I'm doing work." He hides it in his lap, notebook, hoodie, or hat. Another junior said he doesn't bother concealing it. "I just don't," he said.

Dr. Sanborn addressed concealment of cell phone usage from a professor's viewpoint. "I sometimes find it oddly amusing that students think they can 'hide' their phones from me when I'm standing right in front of them," he said.

Although professors find cell phones distracting, it doesn't bother most students unless there's sound involved. Crickmore noted that she finds a cell phone distracting "only when it makes noise." Scott doesn't notice classmates using cell phones. "Because I sit up front," he stated. Whitten summed up students' awareness of cell

phones. "I'm immune to it now," he stated. Regardless of students' views on cell phones, one thing is clear: No-cell-phone policies have curbed usage during class time. "I have almost no problem now, but I used to have a lot of problems," mathematics professor Gail Stafford said.

**THE DECREE**  
since 1960  
"of, by, and for the Wesleyan community."

### STAFF

#### Senior Staff Writers

Katie Beeman, Katherine Crickmore, Rebecca Staylor, KeCharna White

#### Staff Writers

Tiffany Brown, Trinity Carter, Amanda Gauthier, Shenika Harper, David Robinson, Michael Taylor

#### Special Contributors

Grace Wallace (Photos)

#### Faculty Advisor

Dr. William Grattan  
(ext 5336)

179 Braswell • Phone: 985-5336  
Email: WJGrattan@ncwc.edu