

NEWS & OPINION

Issue In-Focus: *The Web Page Should Reflect NC Wesleyan's Diversity*

In logging on to Wesleyan's web page in recent months, discerning readers may have noticed a trend. The college rotates seven photographs in the top left corner, which is the focal point of the home page. One photograph is an exterior shot of Braswell and a second features the college's signature serpentine wall. The other five photos show members of the Wesleyan community: three student-athletes in action, a professor and two students in a chemistry lab, and a smiling co-ed, clasping her books, on her way to class.

After looking at the photographs, one may have wondered: Where's Wesleyan's well-known diversity? It's noteworthy that all of the students shown in the photograph rotation are white. As the college upgrades its webpage, it should consider adding more photographs of black and International students so that the page—the face of Wesleyan to the outside world, not to mention its current students—is more representative. Here are individual responses from Decree staffers.

Meghan Herd

I believe that the pictures shown on the college website are a misrepresentation of what the Wesleyan community truly is. Having been at this college for the last four years, I have always believed that I attend a diverse college, where the majority of the students are non-white. I also feel as if these pictures are not fair to prospective students because it gives the idea that we are not a diverse college which could potentially alter one's decision to attend Wesleyan. Although I think the pictures are nice, I feel there could be a little more done to insure that all students are represented and feel a part of Wesleyan.

Rodney Holley

As a student I feel this is a misrepresentation of the school. How can the college's webpage feature no African Americans when two-thirds of the traditional program is made up of black students? Is this just a ploy to encourage parents to send their children to a place that appears to have a "white picket fence and nice neighbors" for lack of a better comparison? Do the higher ups of the college feel there are no black students who can represent the college in terms of academics or at the very least appear presentable? If so, I hope I am not the only one offended that the college has no problem with accepting black students' money, scholarship or not, but has an issue with placing their picture on the webpage. So much for diversity and growth!

John Kostet

Looking at the NC Wesleyan website this morning, it did not take long for me to

realize that something might not be right. To be honest, the website is not the most attractive, maybe not the most modern and it definitely does not offer the coolest functions and applications. But it was not the lack of an appealing design that struck me. It was the false pictures that welcome you on the front page. I am not saying that they were artificial or stolen. The trees and the people are certainly real, and the pictures are taken on campus. But the selection made me very suspicious and curious. There are seven pictures possible and one of these is randomly selected every time you land on the website. Besides the two photos of campus, there are a total of four students and three student-athletes shown: Four girls and three guys, all white. From what I've heard, our student body is two-thirds black. So why is there not a single black student on display? Should not the webpage promote and represent the reality? I am not saying that the webpage has to be equal and represent the student body to its very percent. Maybe it's just a coincidence. But maybe it's not, and if it's not a coincidence we might face a miserable problem.

Alyson Matarazzo

On Wesleyan's main webpage the pictures are all of white students. There are white student-athletes and white students just standing there and looking pretty. When I applied here, I saw the web page and thought "Is there any diversity?" While the college is two-thirds black and the rest of us are a bunch of white people from around the world, why would we have the school's web page, which is supposed to inform people about our school, not really express the reality of the population. I went to a high school that had kids of all shapes, sizes, and colors and wanted a college that was like that. When I came to visit Wesleyan, I met all sorts of people and thought this was the school for me. Why can't we have some pictures of different student organizations, pictures of friends—a variety of them—sitting in the cafeteria for lunch or dinner? Where are the photos that actually depict the population and diversity of this school? The pictures up on the web site now seem to characterize the school as all white, and all Americans at that. Where are all the international students? Our school is overflowing with them and that's part of what makes the school accessible to people.

Makeda Rose

For many years African Americans as a whole have been under represented by our governments and in the media. Apparently

this condition is also applicable to college websites. If one would visit the home page of North Carolina Wesleyan, you would be led to believe that the student body consists of only white students. This is far from true. Blacks account for two-thirds of the population on campus. It would not be impetuous to assume that the governing body of the college was trying to project a certain image to those who are not familiar with Wesleyan. This image would be that the majority of the students that attend Wesleyan are white and therefore the environment here would lack all the stereotypes associated with people of color. At this point in our nation's history, this is very disheartening. It should not be that images of Hispanic or Asian or black students are absent from our webpage. It may not be an obvious slight to those who were fairly represented by our school, but to people of color it is just another reminder to us of past injustices. Attending college should be an experience where we learn and grow together, not a place where students should feel inferior or forgotten. We contribute to this school academically, socially and financially just as everyone else does, so we should be given the same privileges and respect.

Gregory Spence

Here at Wesleyan our campus is by and large populated with more blacks but pictures on our school web site only include white students and white athletes. I find this to be a disturbing and unfair representation of our school. Those who view our web page will definitely get a false perception

of our school. This type of negligence is harmful and unfair not only to the students here but potential students who may view our school's web page. Not only that but why do you have to be an athlete to be on the school web page? There are other representations of our culture that could have been posted, such as performing arts, talent shows, various choirs, and also academic organizations. Yes, a lot of people come to participate in sports here at Wesleyan; nevertheless a large number of students come only for a good old fashioned education. The bias that the website creates is reckless and inappropriate.

Jarad Brown

As a student I'm not sure how big of a problem it actually is since it had to be pointed out to me and most of my colleagues. With that said, it is an absolute joke that of seven pictures shown as the

Dr. Matthews Entered the Arena

Political Science professor Cameron Matthews competed in Rocky Mount's recent city council elections, placing fourth in ward six with three percent of the overall vote. The incumbent, W.B. Bullock, won reelection to the ward, located in the southwest part of the city, claiming 53 percent.

Dr. Matthews, 31, a Houston native with a Ph.D. from the University of Houston, teaches a range of political science courses as the only full-time member of Wesleyan's political science department. His specialty is the American presidency.

When he's not teaching, Dr. Matthews plays receiver for Fantasy Hall of Famers, an intramural flag football team at Wesleyan. He roots for his hometown Houston sports teams and he's a passionate fan of the Denver Broncos. Twice a month, he discusses politics as host of a talk show, "The Spotlight," on WZAX (99.3 FM), a Motown station in Rocky Mount. Dr. Matthews's wife, Rosie, is a first-year law student at Campbell University.

Following the election, Dr. Matthews was interviewed by staff writer Bill Grattan:

Q. Tell us about the office you sought.

A. I ran for the Ward 6 on Rocky Mount City Council. The ward stretches from Sunset to the city's southern border and across to its western border. City council is responsible for setting the general direction of the city, establishing official policy and approving the budget that is carried out by the professional staff.

Q. What prompted you to run for this office?

A. Why not run? Rocky Mount has a lot of potential and I thought I could do a

lot to help it achieve that potential. I still do and will try to do just that although not on council.

Nastasia Bumette

Wesleyan's home page, several pictures are displayed and the images do not signify how diverse the campus really is. NCWC's population is actually two-thirds black and many participate in student activities, are honor students, athletes, organization members and leaders. Some are also very photogenic and would be honored to represent our school.

Q. What was your wife's reaction to your decision to run?

A. She was fine with it. She probably knew that it was only a matter of time.

Q. Describe the type of campaign that you ran.

A. Low budget. It was really the campaign of the poor. I had to rely on low-cost resources (God bless the students who chose to help out!) and wholesale politics.

Q. Were students involved in the process?

A. Yes, of course. I wouldn't be much of a political science professor if I didn't get them involved somehow. Mostly, they made phone calls to registered voters on my behalf between studying for my class and writing all the papers I assign.

Q. What might you do differently if given the chance to run for office again?

A. Run the campaign of the rich! It's much easier. I'd also choose an occasion when I had more time to give to the effort. Campaigning requires more time than there is in a day and really pushes other things out of your life. I had responsibilities—like my work at the college—that had to come first.

Q. Put on your pundit hat: Why did you lose?

A. I wasn't the incumbent. Never, ever, ever underestimate the sheer power of incumbency. They have pre-existing name identification, which is all-powerful in elections like these. Incumbents don't have to do a thing to get elected, but everyone else does. We shouldn't be surprised that all the incumbents won on election day.

Q. What was most surprising to you about this process?

A. How important, or perhaps pervasive, social networks are in the city. While that in-and-of-itself is not uncommon, I was surprised about how strong it was.

Q. In what ways will your run for office benefit your teaching and your students?

A. We'll find out soon enough. At the very least I'll be able to start some sentences with, "When I ran for office..." and then watch the eyes roll.

Q. Will you run again?

A. I don't know. The seat is up again in four years. We'll see. I think I'm more suited for party politics, so I might explore that avenue later on, after I get tenure.

DIVERSITY from pg 1

Sherman reported a breakdown of 62.2 percent male and 37.8 percent female in the class which adds to an already male-dominated campus.

This disparity could be attributed to athletics which attract large numbers of males via the football team.

"I think things are getting a little better," senior Anthony Tyus said. "I think football brings a lot of guys to campus. Also with ROTC on campus now, guys interested in the Army might be being drawn in."

Not all students thought the imbalance was a positive thing. Junior roommates Tierra Williams and Jasmine Knotts agreed that having so many guys on campus brings a certain level of immaturity.

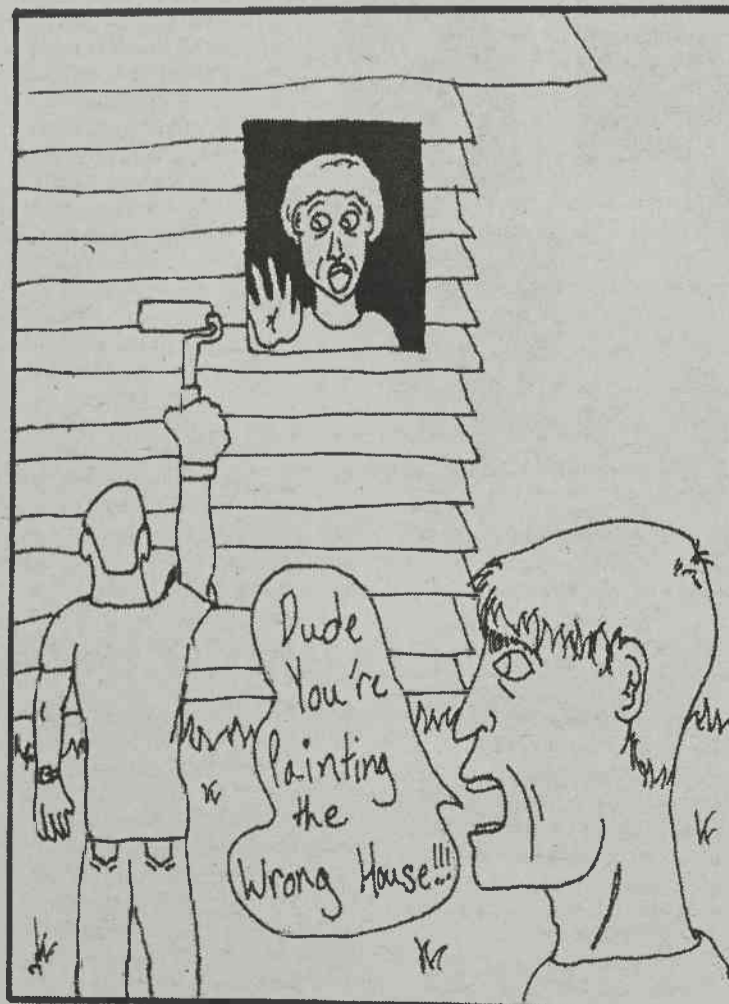
"I don't feel like it affects me personally," Williams said. "But I think some females might feel overpowered in the presence of so many males."

SERVICE from pg 1

and the Bassett Center, a homeless shelter for Rocky Mount families. Volunteers also worked at the Down East Festival helping set up the face painting sections and inflatable rides.

Barbara Sears, an NCWC budget officer, collaborated with students Jasmine Harris and Kimberly Drayton to rearrange the store front and set up display shelves at the Historical Preservation Society of Rocky Mount. The group also moved doors and cast-iron sinks back into storage and Sears joked that they "could have used a few more guys" to help with the job. After finishing their tasks, Sears and the students were treated to Boone's hotdogs; the restaurant is a historic landmark. "We had fun," said Sears.

Cox-Steiner noted that there will be a Hunger Awareness week from November 16-20 and that there will be a Hunger Banquet and a panel that will consist of speakers from the Bassett Center. The speakers will debunk "the myths surrounding homelessness," she said.



"College Service Day"

THE DECREE

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

STAFF

Editor

Jarad Brown

Cartoonist

Lorenzo Whitley

Senior Staff Writers

Joyce Collins
James Randolph

Staff Photographers

Raishael Tanner
Claudricia Thomas
Lorenzo Whitley

Staff Writers

Nastasia Burnette, Richie Fender,
Georgettae Fields-Turrentine,
Amanda Frimpong, Leila Heinonen,
Meghan Herd, Rodney Holley,
Lorane Johnson, John Kostet,
Alyson Matarazzo, Ashley Meadows,
Kathleen Penrod, Juliana Richardson,
Makeda Rose, Gregory Spence,
Jacob Strickland, Jesse Tamez

Special Contributors

Joshua Cain
Grace Wallace

Faculty Advisor

Dr. William Grattan
171 Braswell • Phone: 985-5336
Email: WJGrattan@ncwc.edu

The Decree office is on the first floor of the Hartness Center.

Copyright Policy

The Decree holds the copyright of every article and graphic for one-time and future publication at the discretion of the editorial board. Submission implies agreement with this policy.

Editorial Statement

Commentary/opinion and letters to the editor represent the individual author's views, and not necessarily those of North Carolina Wesleyan College, the Decree staff or the Decree advisor.

Submissions

To suggest an article, or submit an opinion piece or letter to the editor, send an email attachment (Microsoft Word) to: WJGrattan@ncwc.edu. Note that the Decree staff checks all submissions for accuracy and edits in accordance with acceptable grammar and punctuation as well as AP Style.

Corrections

The Decree corrects mistakes of substance. If you would like to request a correction, send an email to WJGrattan@ncwc.edu, or call 985-5336