

THE DECREE

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

February 23, 2018

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 American 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 terms of both cuts (e.g., personnel, courses) and refocusing of resources? What's been done to attract more students?

See ASPIRE pg 2