

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 Bery 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.

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

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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.

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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.