

# The Talon



# LETTER FROM THE EDITOR



Riley Sine, Editor-in-Chief

The 2018-2019 school year has been quite an adventure for the Northwest community, full of inspiring moments and more than a few crazy days along the way. The Talon strives to capture these moments, telling the stories of NU and serving as a voice for the students of the Kirkland campus. To that end, it is my absolute pleasure to present this year's "best of" print edition of The Talon. On the following pages, you will find the articles and images we feel best capture the journey of this last school year, the most-read and most important stories we have published throughout the year. The mission of The Talon is to "strive toward excellence as we pursue and present the truth," and I believe this goal is reflected in these pages. I would like to thank my fellow editors, our journalists, photographers and social media team, as it is their work that comprises this volume. Thank you to Dr. Mari, our departing faculty advisor – your energy, experience and exceptional work ethic have taught us so much, and your fingerprints will remain on The Talon for years to come. Lastly, I want to thank our fellow students and NU community. It is for you, the readers, that we do what we do. It has been an honor to serve you this year, and we look forward to continuing to be your voice and news source in the years to come.

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FALL 2018



SPRING 2019



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# ACKNOWLEDGING “THE POWER OF WE”: TAKE-AWAYS FROM NU’S FINAL Q UNION



By Alexis Savary

Photo by Aline Hernandez

**Q**-Union, a national event that celebrates diverse community in an attempt to engage culture well. This year’s theme focused on “The Power of We,” which encompasses a desire to revive hospitality and cultivate community between people of faith and the rest of society.

Northwest University had the privilege of hosting the evening event at Butterfield chapel where students were able to listen to video talks from Jo Saxton, Scott Harrison and Bob Goff as well as listen to student speakers including Emilie Heisel, Jonathan DeMacedo and Holly Hollopeter.

The night began with a video from Saxton, who spoke on “The Gift of Hospitality.” Saxton explained that hospitality is the choice to love people as an equal. She called the audience to act on this love without grumbling or discrimination.

“The definition of hospitality is a love, a friendship—viewing someone as an equal with a love directed towards the other,” Saxton said, “I think our challenge is whether we can show one another true hospitality.”

Following Heisel’s talk, DeMacedo spoke on the relationship between God and our plans. He called out the fears of many Christians to fully embrace God’s plan. While many people fear that God will call them to do something radical, DeMacedo asks how God’s plans could be anything less than the best for us. DeMacedo questions how we could question God’s invitation to walk with him in a life set out before us by fearing what we do not know we desire. We desire relationship with God and living according to his plans allows us to act on these desires despite the situations we may not have expected along the way.

“This question of ‘Lord, what is your will?’ is so often nothing more than a thinly veiled attempt within our nature to force God to bend to our desires,” DeMacedo said, “perhaps more sinister, however, is tricking ourselves into believing that what God has for us is less than the best.”

The final two video speakers, Harrison and Goff, spoke on “Solving Problems Together” and “Everybody Always,” respectively. Harrison shared his testimony on his radical life change reliant on the acknowledgment of the worldwide problem of bad water quality. Recognizing that many people are

unable to access clean water, Harrison took on a whole new life to work to provide this universal need. He also discussed the beauty of people with different backgrounds and lifestyles setting aside their differences to work together for clean water.

Following Harrison, Goff spoke on the why of our actions. According to him, it is good to act hospitably and to engage with the community, but it is not complete unless you know why you are doing it. Goff called the audience to act like Jesus—to love like Jesus. Goff’s message emphasized the importance of looking for the opportunities to fill the needs of others.

“The only thing that matters is faith expressed in love” Goff said.

Hollopeter concluded the evening with a discussion titled “Everyone, Everywhere.” In her message, Hollopeter talks about how we do not have to actively seek the world because it comes to us. She explains that we are surrounded by people of different cultures and backgrounds. People who pursue Jesus in different ways. Hollopeter concludes that learning from others is not a large commitment full of planning and financial sacrifice but an everyday choice to engage with those that surround us.

Q Union as a whole was an event geared towards asking difficult questions and leaving with a changed perspective on the world. As we move on from this event, let us pursue a renewed sense of hospitality and love for those around us both strangers and friends. NU does not plan to continue this event in the future, but is instead planning to create a new event where students will have the opportunity to engage with difficult questions in a more intimate way.

*Editor’s Note: Holly Hollopeter is on staff with the Talon as Photo Editor.*

# COMMENTARY: THE PERFECT CAR FOR NU STUDENTS



By Felix Duppong

Photo by Gyuri Kim

Like a significant other, there is a car out there for everyone. Today, it's time for the NU student to find that match.

Like people, there are a lot of cars in the world – countless types, brands, and models to choose from. However, there are some criteria that need to be met. Unfortunately, we can't all have that dream car that we want. That would be too easy.

The right car for a NU student must be a number of things, the first being that it needs to be reasonably priced. For example, I want a Ferrari 458 – but that is not reasonably priced. Secondly, it needs to be practical. Students need space in the car, especially the trunk. Let's say our NU student needs to put a relatively large item in the trunk, like Swoops the Eagle. The Ferrari 458 could not fit Swoops in its trunk.

Most importantly this ideal car needs to be safe, reliable, and comfortable.

Students don't want to be uncomfortably sitting at the side of 520 in a cloud of steam. Even more importantly, if an accident happens, they need to be sure the car will do its job well and protect them. With these criteria in mind, let's meet the contenders.

Our first contender is from Japan, the "safe" choice, the 2006 Honda Accord. Highly regarded as one of the best mid-size cars of all time, it's safe, affordable, comfortable, reliable, practical, and economical. Prices for a good used one range around \$4,000-6,000 which is very reasonable. That's pretty much it, and that's the problem. Logically, it is arguably the best car of the bunch. But the Accord's problem is that, while it's without a doubt a fantastic car, it doesn't have an ounce of character or soul. It is exceptionally boring. If the Accord was a person, its idea of having fun would be doing taxes. For me, a car needs to have a personality, a soul, something that will make me bond with it. The Accord can't do that. There it is; if you want a car that is extremely good in every way, but soul and personality mean nothing to you, look no further than the Accord.

The next contender is also from Japan, the 2001 Subaru Forester. This small/mid-size SUV, unlike the Honda Accord, is not a middle-aged photocopier salesman who thinks doing their taxes is fun. This car has tremendous character. It's got this loving sense of adventure and confidence. This character combined with its specs makes it a good option for our NU student.

The Forester isn't exactly a stranger, especially in the PNW. If you look to your left, you'll most likely see one. Let's start off with the basics. It has Subaru's signature 2.5-liter boxer engine, which gets 26 mpg, and is as dependable and reliable as the love and affection of Sam, the cat who hangs around outside the Caf. It fits five people comfortably – perfect for a late-night Taco Bell run with your friends. Plus, you can fit a lot of stuff in the back, including Swoops the Eagle. Its proportions and feel is this car's greatest feature. When you drive it, it doesn't feel big or awkward like a lot of SUV's. In fact, it feels like a slightly bigger Impreza. It drives like a smaller car, yet it still has all the space and room of an SUV. Prices for one in good condition range from \$3,500-\$6000. Safe, comfortable, practical, and lovable as a Corgi. I love this car very much and highly recommend it to our NU student.

Last but not least, from Germany, it's the 2004 BMW 325Ci. Fun fact: If you can find an older German car that has been well taken care of, you are in for a big treat because you are getting an exquisitely made luxury car for very good money. So how can an older German luxury coupe be good for a college student?

The 325Ci can fit five people comfortably, a little snug but still comfortable. It has up to 14.5 feet of cargo capacity. Its trunk could snugly fit our good friend Swoops the Eagle. The leather seats are the ideal balance between firm and soft, and the seating position is awesome, especially in the back, where you would normally expect the seating to be bad considering it's a coupe. The interior is just a really nice place to be.

Under the hood, it has BMW's home-cooked 2.5 liter straight-six engine. This not only sounds amazing, but when it is well taken care of, is one of the best engines in the world. It gets 29 mpg and has a respectable 184 horsepower, which makes it pretty fast. Unfortunately, you need to do your homework very thoroughly when buying this car. If it's been badly taken care of, it will become a money pit of reliability gremlins. Despite this, it is an extremely cool car that's safe, very comfortable, fast, spacious, and reliable if you buy a good one. This is a great option for our NU student.

We've come to the end; it's time to choose our winner.

The winner and perfect car for the NU student is ultimately up to you. All of these cars are fantastic, and there are loads more of great cars out there for the NU student.

# EDITORIAL: INTRUDER INCIDENT HIGHLIGHTS NEED FOR MORE TRAINING AND GUIDANCE



By Riley Sine

Photo by Walter Borbridge

On Tuesday, September 25, a man walked into Hurst Library, interacted with several students, walked into the women's restroom, and ultimately got into a fight with security.

According to a publicly available Kirkland Police Department report, the man "assaulted security personnel at Northwest University when they asked him to leave. [He] grabbed one security officer's genitals, bit another security officer's chest and pulled a knife from his pocket as he resisted the security's attempts to restrain him."

This incident is concerning, as it could very easily have turned out a lot worse. There are often jokes thrown around on campus that we live in a Christian bubble, isolated from "the world," but this episode shows there are some holes in that logic. It would be an alarming incident in and of itself, but it's only the latest in a series of unsettling episodes.

Over the summer, there was an attempted break-in at the student apartments. Security reports describe a male attempting to gain access to an apartment through a window around 11:40 p.m. on the night of August 9, before fleeing the scene when security arrived. Earlier in the year, another hooded male was spotted peeking through the window of a student apartment on the night of February 4, 2018. No harm has come to students as a result of any of these situations, but they highlight the necessity of having campus security officers, and of students needing to take appropriate measures to ensure their own safety.

First things first, if you don't have the number for Campus Security (425-864-1552) saved in your phone, do it now. Security Officers are trained to respond to a variety of situations and are an excellent resource.

"We are currently authorized to carry handcuffs and OC (pepper spray)," said Security Director Matthew Wilkinson. "In addition, we also carry radios to communicate with other members of the department, flashlights and gloves to protect against BBPs [blood-borne pathogens]."

A significant point on the student end of things is ALICE training. We absolutely need to be taking this training. I know it can be tedious to go through—speaking from experience, here—but it

involving armed intruders and other dangerous situations. Yet according to a university employee with knowledge of the situation, only about 80 students completed the ALICE online training last year. Not 80 percent, eighty people. That's an alarmingly low number, considering there are over 1500 students at NU.

And while there is a legitimate debate over whether or not security officers should carry more tools than they currently do, as students, we don't get to make that argument until we're doing our part. The training only takes about a half hour, and is not difficult. We don't really have an excuse. Calling security is a good first step, but it will take them at least a minute or two to respond, so you have to know how to keep yourself safe in the meantime.

If you've taken the ALICE training, but you're still looking to take matters into your own hands, there are a few options. One of the more obvious choices is to take a self-defense class. There are plenty of good options, and you can learn a few "tricks of the trade" (such as that your keys can be used as a weapon in a pinch) while coming away better prepared for a variety of dangerous encounters. And while I'm not going to tell you that you should start carrying pepper spray or a taser, I will note that the "Weapons, Fireworks and Explosives" section of the NU Student Handbook does not explicitly prohibit carrying either of them. We are of course a gun-free campus and students, faculty and staff (or visitors, for that matter) cannot carry firearms, concealed, locked in a trunk, or otherwise, while here.

As a general rule, make smart decisions. If something seems suspicious, call security (and the Kirkland Police, if necessary, via 911). Ensure the safety of yourself and those in your immediate vicinity as the first priority, and don't engage in confrontation except as a last resort. Take the ALICE training and remember what that acronym stands for (it's pretty easy, so take the training if you don't know).

I pray it never comes to this, but following the ALICE training and making smart decisions just might save the lives of you and those around you. Security is ultimately all of our responsibility.

forces you to slow down and consider how to react to various incidents

# ARTIST SPOTLIGHT: CAPE LIONS



By Landon Fleury

Photo courtesy Blake Carpenter

By day, Gospel Okoroafor and Edgar Sandoval are two normal Northwest University undergraduates. By night, however, the two students perform and craft music as one of the hottest up-and-coming acts in hip-hop: Cape Lions.

Since their debut in April 2018, Okoroafor and Sandoval have been hard at work to ensure their newest endeavor is a success, and the payoff has been extraordinary.

As of October, Cape Lions has accomplished what many artists aren't able to achieve in years; they've released 14 original songs (enough to fill a full-length album), have landed spots on numerous Spotify-curated playlists and currently have over 120,000 monthly listeners.

All of this was done without the help of a record label, too. While they aren't completely opposed to the idea of getting signed by a major label, Cape Lions would ideally like to hit it big while still keeping their independence.

"Everything is up to God," Okoroafor said, "who doesn't want to make it independent?"

"Who doesn't want to get signed by a label?" Sandoval added, amusingly.

"We're open to both," Okoroafor said, "whether we get signed or we don't, we'll still continue to make our music independently."

Cape Lions' music is self-described as a unique blend of hip-hop and pop, inspired by artists like Drake, Post Malone and Travis Scott. Lyrically, the duo explores themes which include relationships, Christianity, and their own hopes and dreams.

The two aspiring artists met while on tour with NU Choralons, where they were paired together at a hotel. They enjoyed listening to music and free-styling together, so they took the next step and began recording music seriously together throughout the following months. Their first project—an extended play entitled *Intro*—was released on May 3, 2018.

Okoroafor and Sandoval also have a great interest in fashion. They ran a limited line of Cape Lions Champion hoodies at \$100 a piece, all of which sold out within two days of its announcement.

Interestingly, the name "Cape Lions" played a key role in Sandoval's music career years before it became an alias of his. Sandoval came up with the name in 2015 and used it as a personal platform to release his music through, as well as an artist management company. Regarding the name's meaning, Sandoval said "I just thought it sounded cool."

With already over 600,000 combined Spotify streams (and over 300,000 on their single "8" alone), things are looking up for Cape Lions. Following their headlining concert at Calvary Chapel Eastside on October 31, Cape Lions is planning to "take a step back and reevaluate, and see what the next move should be." Whether that be new music, new merchandise or some kind of tour, Okoroafor and Sandoval are excited for what the future of Cape Lions will bring.



# LAST LECTURE: DR. ALAINE BUCHANAN DELIVERS IMPORTANT MESSAGE ON MENTAL HEALTH



By Kathryn Anderson

Photo by Abbagale LaVair

**D**r. Alaine Buchanan, adjunct professor in the college of ministry, continued the Last Lecture series with a heavy but important message: though times of darkness are inevitable, your life matters.

Buchanan is an ordained Assemblies of God minister, as well as a military spouse and a mother. She completed her doctorate in Theological Studies at Regent University. In the process of completing her doctorate, Buchanan had an experience that changed her life.

Buchanan was at the end of her degree program when she received a series of three emails explaining that her dissertation had been rejected by the committee.

"No one should ever, ever get to that point in their program and have it rejected," Buchanan said.

This rejection echoed the rejection she had experienced in months past. Over the course of her program, Buchanan experienced stress in her marriage as well as criticism from her family, the church and its leaders, and the military.

"That's the cost of following after Christ," Buchanan said.

After receiving the emails rejecting her dissertation, Buchanan said she felt alone, she felt darkness and evil around her. She called on Jesus for three hours, but received no response.

"I can handle it when people reject me, but I cannot handle it when Jesus abandons me," she thought. She began to plan how to end her own life.

It was her son's birthday that day. Buchanan held on for three hours and then picked him up from school, where a teacher noticed that something was wrong, and prayed for her. When Buchanan got home, she talked with her husband, who also prayed with her.

"Jesus left me," Buchanan said.

It took her a week to even consider talking to God again, but eventually she did. She questioned God, "Where are you? Where were you?". What she heard from God was this: "I wasn't there right beside you, but I was watching you the entire time. I saw, I knew,

and I was there."

A few months later, Buchanan decided to try again with her dissertation. In the midst of this process, a friend encouraged her to get help in the form of counselling. Buchanan took her advice and expressed great gratitude that she did.

Buchanan finally completed her dissertation in May of 2016. She explained how she then took a year to tell God exactly what she thought of him, and also to allow herself time to heal. She notes that doing this was far harder than the day she received the emails.

"Sometimes it was ugly, but other times it was beautiful," Buchanan said.

She felt the presence of God for the first time since the day she contemplated ending her life while speaking at a church camp. She described it as a huge gift to feel Jesus' presence again.

"All I have to offer God now is ashes. That's it. But he's taking those ashes and he's making something completely different than what I ever expected," she said.

Buchanan emphasized how serious and real the issue of suicide is.

"If you have not faced it yet in your life, you probably will," she said, "it may not be personally, but somebody that you know".

Suicide and suicidal thoughts are an issue at Northwest. They are an issue in the military. Buchanan notes that the community has lost three people in the last few weeks.

What she wants NU students to know more than anything else is that their lives matter more than they can imagine.

"You are loved, you are appreciated, you are needed, you are valuable. There is so, so much more to you than what you see right now," Buchanan said.

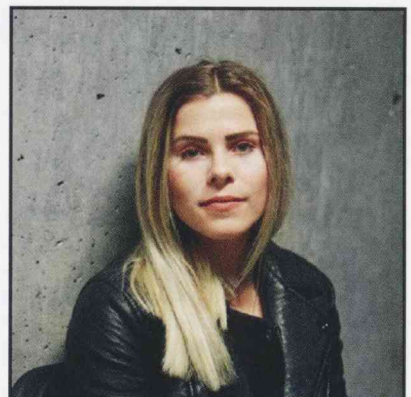
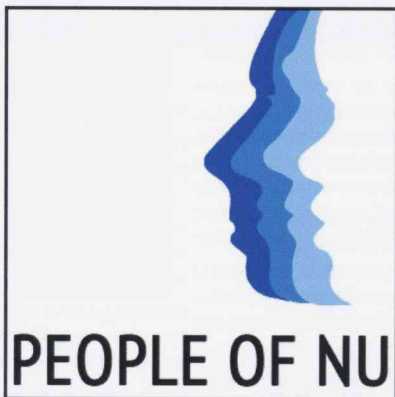
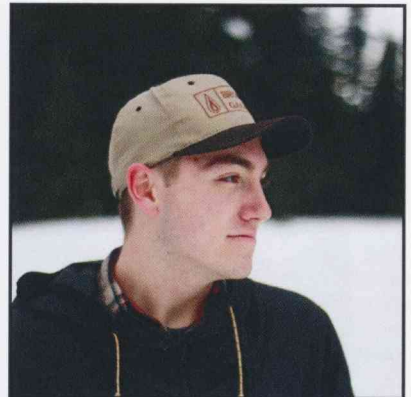
If you or someone you know is struggling with suicidal thoughts, please take advantage of the following resources:

NU Wellness Center: 425-889-5282

24/7 Confidential Suicide Hotline: 1-800-273-8255



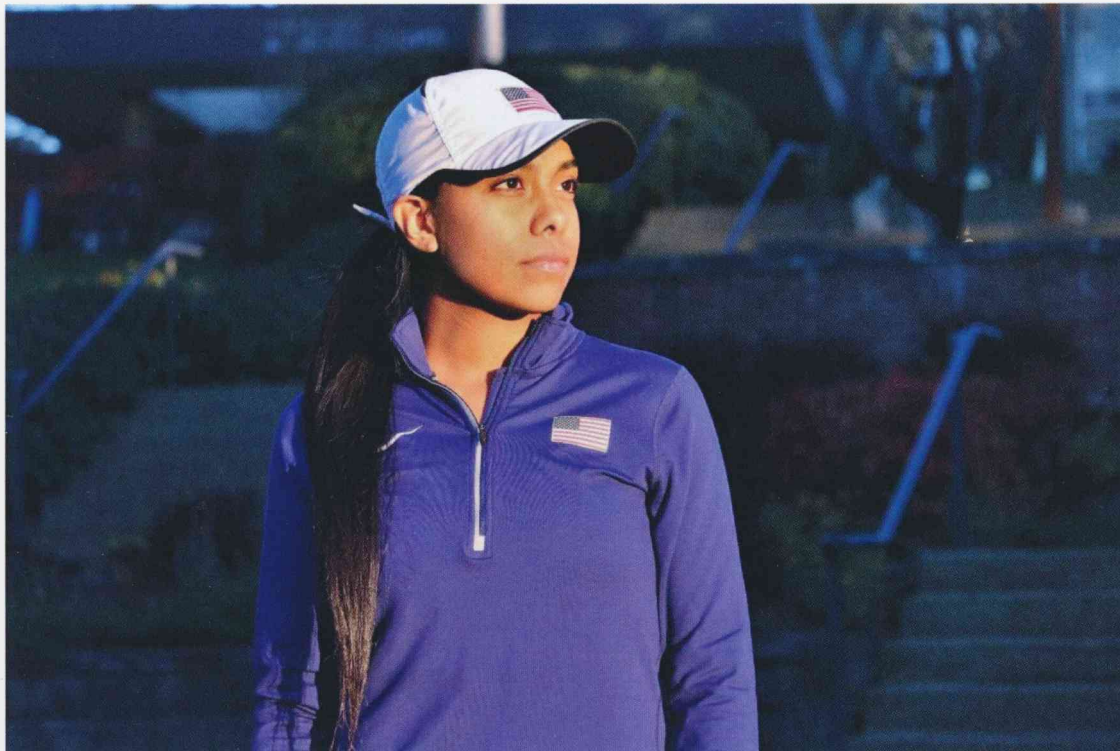
# PEOPLE OF NU



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# WALKING THE LONG ROAD

NU Alum sets her sights on the Olympic Trials



Story and Photos by Riley Sine and Maggie Bright

**R**unning down the Sammamish River Trail on a Sunday morning in the misty conditions that define mornings in Seattle is a surreal experience. Other runners materialize out of the mist like phantoms, only to vanish a few moments later as you pass each other.

Under these circumstances, you'd be forgiven for not giving much thought to a young woman on the trail wearing a white hat, matching bright white shoes and a dark blue long-sleeve shirt. From a distance, her stride would appear somewhat odd for a runner – you can't quite put your finger on it, but something is amiss. As you draw closer, you realize that she isn't running at all, but walking—at an alarmingly fast pace. Running by, you'd swear you catch a glimpse of a block "USA" emblazoned on her chest, but you aren't completely sure. As you continue on, she would most likely drop out of your mind entirely as the miles roll by. You wouldn't be the first to overlook Amberly Melendez, but the long road of her athletic career is populated by people who've made the same mistake.

## The Early Miles

That road begins in the Rio Grande Valley, in a small, three-bedroom trailer house outside of Edinburg, Texas. There Melendez began life alongside her siblings, and her drive to exceed expectations appeared early on. Elementary schoolers were not allowed to compete in cross-country until third grade, but Melendez and her twin brother were asked by the coaches to come out to practice as second-graders to see if they could keep up. And keep up they did, earning spots on the team a year before they were supposed to.

"She always was a very ambitious little girl," says Sofia Melendez, her mother and without a doubt her most staunch supporter. "Whatever she sets her mind to, she likes to follow through with that."

The first of several crucial moments in the early days of Melendez's career would not come until two years later, however, when a racewalking club visited her elementary school.

Racewalking is something of an unorthodox sport, as one has to essentially cover the race distance as fast as possible without crossing the line into running. The

The regulations of the International Association of Athletics Federations state that racewalking differs from running in that one foot must always be in contact with the ground. Three violations of this rule, or the requirement that your lead leg must be straight from when it hits the ground to when your

body passes over it, and you're disqualified.

The oddity of the sport perhaps explains why it wasn't visions of racewalking glory that first drew Melendez in.

"They said that they had done a whole bunch of trips to go compete, and one of them said they had gone to Disneyworld," she says. "So, my eyes immediately shot open, I had never been to Disneyworld so I was like, 'I need to go there.'"

Marching home with one of the applications, she announced to her mother that she wanted to go to Disneyworld, and so she needed to be taken to practice that afternoon.

Even early on, Melendez showed promise in the event, qualifying for the New Balance Indoor National Championship — a meet typically reserved for the best high school track & field athletes in the country — in the mile racewalk as a sixth-grader.

There would be a slight detour during middle school, as she quit racewalking for two years. Her coach at the time demanded that athletes focus exclusively on racewalking, but Melendez wanted to explore other sports.

"I did everything; I ran cross country, I played soccer, I played basketball, I played volleyball, and I did track, which I enjoyed so much," she says.

Melendez wouldn't stay away for too long, however, returning to racewalking during her freshman year at Thomas Jefferson High School, which doesn't offer interscholastic sports. Racing with her club team served as an outlet for the competitive drive she could no longer use to represent her school, she says, as well as providing the potential of an athletic scholarship for college. And the excuse to travel certainly didn't hurt, either.

"Being [from] such a small part of the Valley, we never really left Texas. It wasn't until I joined racewalking that it allowed me to go to different states around the U.S. and I just loved it. I instantly loved traveling and I still do," she says. "Racewalking was a way for me to be both competitive athletically and get to know more places, so it was a two in one for me."

## Eyes to the North

From Texas, the road heads north, winding through the Midwest to arrive in Milwaukee. In search of a college where she could continue her racewalking career, Melendez settled on Cardinal Stritch University, a small, private Catholic school which competes in the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics. The NAIA is the only intercollegiate athletic association to sponsor racewalking, as the discipline is not contested in the NCAA. Melendez says she wanted to get away from Texas a bit, and advice from her father also played a big role in her decision.

"When I was visiting colleges, he said 'you know I want you to be happy, and I know money is a big part of this, but if you're not comfortable, I really don't want you to go somewhere where you're not. Make sure you're comfortable, and make sure it feels like [somewhere] you would want to be for a while,'" she says.

The Cardinal Stritch coach was not a racewalking specialist, however, and so she received some criticism for her decision. But Melendez was looking for a change, she says, as her racewalking had begun to plateau.

"I was like 'you know, I think I need something different, I'm gonna go with the underdog,'" she says, "I had never been the top one anyways."

The decision proved an extremely effective one, as her coach's training clicked quickly, and led to a third-place finish at the NAIA Indoor National Championships in the 3000m racewalk as a freshman.

That accomplishment in itself is more than many would dare to dream they could achieve, but the road was far from over for Melendez. In her mind, she still had miles to go.



"But I have promises to keep, and miles to go before I sleep." - Robert Frost

## At a Crossroads...

But an unexpected turn in the road would soon appear, as her coach left Cardinal Stritch after her freshman year, leaving Melendez with a complicated decision.

"If I wasn't an athlete," she says, "I would have stayed in Wisconsin. But the snow is really hard when you're trying to train outdoors, especially as an endurance athlete." The prospect of facing endless days of 90 minutes or more on a treadmill had also lost its appeal, and so her road now turned west, headed for Northwest University and the more moderate climate of Seattle.

Her coach at Cardinal Stritch knew Mark Mandi, the head coach of NU's cross-country and track & field teams, from their high-school days, and so he put the two in contact.

"I love exploring and trying new things," Melendez says, "so I was like 'might as well, this guy seems really nice, and he seems like a really good potential coach, so let's take a shot at it.'"

Mandi was hesitant at first, because he had never had a racewalker on his roster and had no previous experience coaching the event, but says he was determined to use the resources of Northwest to support her.

"We have a great team, but I was like 'on this kind of important front, if you're looking for [the coaching needed to get to the next level], I don't have it,'" Mandi says. "The biggest thing I wanted to do was to support her as best I could with the infrastructure we had in place, and to really give her a place where she felt like she had as much of the tools available to her [as possible] to be successful."

## Pacific Northwest Calling

Arriving at Northwest in the fall of 2017, Melendez instantly made an impression on her new teammates. Sarah Estabrook, a recent graduate of Northwest and a three-time NAIA All-American, recalls being struck by Melendez's talent and work ethic.

"She works incredibly hard and fearlessly goes after a dream not many people have," Estabrook says. "It made me and a lot of our teammates better."

She made a similar impression on Dr. Kevin Leach, her academic advisor at Northwest and a man who spent seven years working with the juggernaut that is the University of Washington women's volleyball team.

"She's very smart, and very disciplined and just highly motivated to operate at that [high] level," says Leach, who also serves as Northwest's Faculty Academic Representative. "Frankly, she's thinking bigger than any other athlete that's come through here, that I'm aware of."

That work ethic and drive paid off almost instantly, as Melendez became a key member of the Northwest women's cross-country team, helping lead that squad to their first qualification for the NAIA Cross Country Championship meet since the early 2000s.

"If I'm being honest," Melendez says, "I've always loved running more than racewalking, I just happen to be better at racewalking."

She notes that running has also helped improve her racewalking, and says it was a tremendous joy to be part of helping a team succeed together.

## Racing Forward

Once the cross-country season ended, Melendez returned her focus to racewalking, and proceeded to go on a tear. She improved on her freshman performance from the previous year to finish second at NAIA Indoors, giving eventual champion Anali Cisneros a run — err, walk — for her money in the process.

She would go on to finish in the same spot at NAIA Outdoors in May, this time in the 5,000m racewalk but again falling to Cisneros in a fiercely contested race. But her signature moment of 2018 came in April, at the USATF Team Racewalking Trials.

While the rest of her teammates were chasing NAIA qualifiers in their various track disciplines, Melendez stepped away from the track to battle it out with the best racewalkers in the US on the streets of Philadelphia. At stake were a few coveted spots on the US team to the IAAF World Team Racewalking Championships in China that May. In an "off year" without an Olympics or IAAF World Track & Field Championships, this was a race for the right to represent the United States on racewalking's biggest stage of 2018.

Melendez had been putting in a lot of training going into this race, but the solitary nature of her training had caused doubts to start to creep into her mind.

"When you're training by yourself and you don't have any other racewalkers, it's easy to think that you can get off track," she says.

A slight injury to her ankle in the week before the race did nothing to calm her nerves, but she resolved to press on, although she says that even the night before the race she was disagreeing with her coaches on what she thought she could do in the race.

As race day unfolded, however, expectations were repeatedly shattered. In a 20-kilometer race mostly comprised of professionals (side note: yes, there are professional racewalkers, and Melendez will likely soon be one of them), Melendez was holding her own, and she was reaching every mile and kilometer split faster than she or her coaches were expecting.

It wasn't until two kilometers to go, however, that she says she finally realized how well she was doing. She crossed the line in one hour, 41 minutes and 32 seconds, setting a massive personal record for the 20k distance and bringing tears of joy to her face. That personal best wouldn't be the only thing worth celebrating that day, however.

She had finished fifth, seeming to miss the Worlds team by one spot; but one of the competitors was from Puerto Rico, which the IAAF recognizes as an independent country.

"After I prayed with my coaches, they came up to me and said 'Oh and you made the world team,'" Melendez says. "So, of course more tears came, and I was just really, really grateful for the opportunity and completely blown away."

The race also marked the first time she crossed a finish line ahead of Cisneros, winning their head-to-head battle by over two minutes. That victory, combined with the fact that the only athletes ahead of Melendez on the podium were professionals, made for an iconic moment.

The moment was made sweeter by the fact that Melendez didn't feel pain in her ankle during the race, something she describes as nothing less than miraculous.

"By the grace of God I didn't feel any pain while I was racing," she says. "[the race] really put things into perspective, and I even told my coach afterwards, 'I think this is going to be one of those career-altering races where I look back and realize you're able to do much more than you give yourself credit for.'"

This combination of relentless drive and humble faith is something which many who've crossed paths with Melendez note, and it seems to be a key to her success.

"I love that her faith is integral to her life, and she's humble," says Jamie Froebe, one of the NU cross-country/track and field assistant coaches, who traveled with Melendez to Philadelphia. "She'll say that [she] works hard, and gives up a lot, but she doesn't hold it over anyone, and I really appreciate that about her."

This humility is evident despite the fact that Melendez is one of the few people who has every right to bask in their own accomplishments.

"She had made several US teams as a junior [the term for athletes under the age of 21]," Mandi says, "so she had USA gear and she had gear on from big invitationals that the best athletes on our team from different events were like, wow. [But] I think one of the cool things was she didn't brag about it, she came in with such great work ethic and passion for the sport."

### On the World Stage

The road that began because she wanted to go to Disneyworld had now taken Melendez across the world, to compete against the best racewalkers on the planet.

She hadn't expected she would be there for that race, and recalls a meeting with Mandi to plan out the season where he'd said "We'll put it on there just for fun, see what happens."

She describes the trip to Beijing for the IAAF World Team Racewalking Championships as surreal, and although the race didn't go quite according to plans – she was felled by food poisoning, but gritted it out to finish the race – she soaked in every moment of the experience.

"Being in the presence of all the other professionals, at that level, I can't

even describe how amazing it was," she says.

The fact that she finished the race under the circumstances she did speaks to what is perhaps Melendez's greatest strength; come hell or high water, she ranks among the most ferocious competitors track and field has ever seen. And while she and those in her camp were no doubt disappointed with how things played out, it seems an almost foregone conclusion that Beijing was not Melendez's last time racing on the sport's biggest stage.

### Miles to go...

The road to this point has not always been a smooth one – she finished seventh at the 2018 USATF Championship meet at Drake University, again plagued with a case of food poisoning – but with her collegiate career behind her, Melendez now turns to 2020 and the U.S. Olympic Trials in Eugene. She still needs to shave time off her PR to achieve what will likely be the Olympic Standard for Tokyo, but at just 21 years old, she has established herself as one of the top competitors in the US – and she's only getting better.

"I will not be surprised if she goes to the Olympics," says Froebe. "I've never met anyone with the kind of focus and discipline she has. She clearly has talent, but she also has the discipline."

Estabrook echoes that sentiment, knowing first-hand what it takes to reach the elite levels of track and field.

"She has the experience, talent, wisdom, work ethic and most importantly, the heart to get there. I can't wait to brag to anyone that will listen that Amberly the Olympian was my college teammate," she says.

Mandi similarly seems to believe there is something special about Melendez, despite being known as someone who is not prone to hyperbole or overselling expectations.

"I think it's such a big difference to see her racewalk, then to watch other people racewalk," he says. "When you watch her it's like 'wow, this is someone who's really special and really good at this'"

Leach gives a more tempered assessment, noting the unpredictable nature of high-performance athletics.

"Anything can happen when you get to that [level]," he says. "But I would not be shocked. In other words, yeah I understand it's a longshot, but longshots never happen unless you prepare for them to happen."

The road she's walked has been a long one, but with the 2020 Tokyo Olympics on the horizon, Amberly Melendez still has miles to go.

*Editor's Note/Update: This March, Melendez qualified for the 2020 U.S. Olympic Trials. Follow her journey on Instagram: @amberlymelendez*



# IN FOCUS: DR. ZIEFLE STEPS INTO NEW ROLE AS DEAN OF COLLEGE OF MINISTRY



By Martanna Broom

Photo by Gyuri Kim

**D**r. Joshua Ziefle was recently promoted to the position of Dean of the College of Ministry. He stepped into his role as dean on July 1, becoming the youngest dean at Northwest University.

Ziefle was born in southern New Jersey and attended Houghton College in New York, before going on to attain his Masters of Divinity and Ph.D. in Church History from Princeton Theological Seminary.

While working towards his Ph.D., Ziefle was a youth pastor in New Jersey for around six years. When his time as a student and youth minister came to a close, Ziefle began looking for opportunities to teach at a university. He hoped to put his years of study to work, and in his search discovered Northwest University was looking for a Professor of Youth Ministry.

Although youth ministry was not where his passions lay, he thought it would be enjoyable to train future ministers along with the additional opportunity to teach church history classes. He held this position for six years.

About a year and a half ago, an American History position opened up and Ziefle was accepted by the College of Arts and Sciences to take on the position. Leaving the College of Ministry behind was tough.

Ziefle said he “just wasn’t settled in the role, work, and came to realize how much [he] enjoyed and valued the process of working with people who are training to become pastors and ministers.”

In the midst of this questioning and unaware of where God was calling him next, Ziefle became aware of Dr. Wayde Goodall’s plan to retire. Dr. Goodall was the Dean of the College of Ministry at the time, and his plan to step down from the position created an opportunity for Ziefle.

The position as dean lined up with where Ziefle says he feels led. He said he doesn’t as much enjoy the cyclical nature of being a professor, and the position of dean allows for much more space to create and build. As a minister or dean, he said, you’re moving in a direction and “as daunting as it is, there’s something enjoyable about that work as well.”

Ziefle applied for the position and gave it to God. He says he knew it was a competitive process and he had different qualifications to offer than the previous dean. After a long process, he was invited to step into the role of dean.

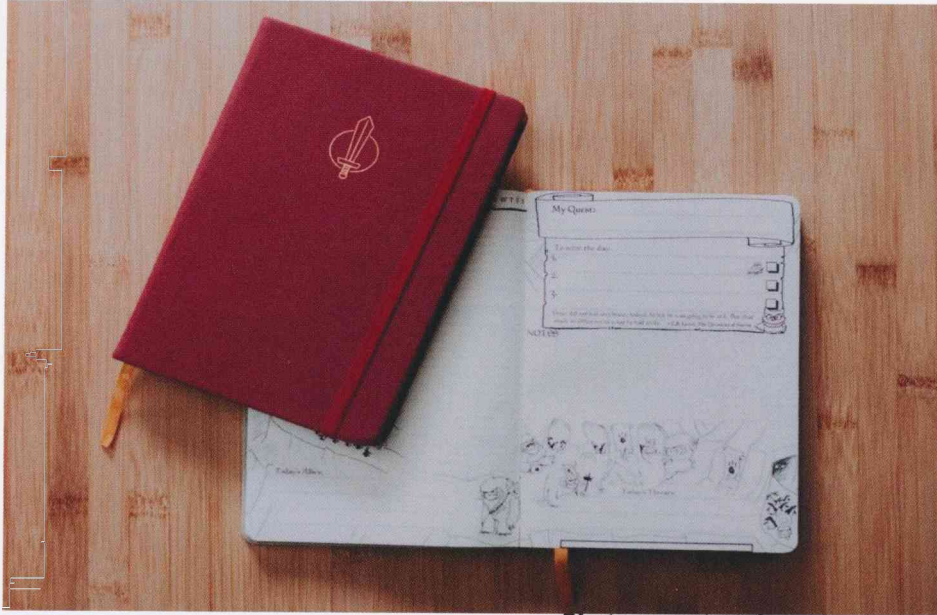
It is all new to him, but Ziefle says he enjoys the role and the discovery of what it means to be a dean. He said, “I feel like everyday I’ll discover new things that are my job that nobody told me was my job. But that’s all part of it.”

As the youngest person in the College of Ministry, Ziefle aims to bring fresh perspective and goals to the table. “Certainly I do represent a different kind of generation than our outgoing dean,” he said. This is on display with things like a newly created College of Ministry Instagram page (@nucollegeofmin), hopes to start a podcast, and the desire to have College of Ministry social events once a semester.

Ziefle has many plans to improve the College of Ministry over the upcoming years, and says he is very excited for this next step in his life. But he notes that the College of Ministry ultimately exists for something larger than itself.

“If we wake up one day and we’re not serving the Church, I don’t know what we’re doing in the College of Ministry,” he said.

# IN FOCUS: NU ALUMNI LAUNCH “THE HERO’S JOURNAL” PROJECT



Photos courtesy herosjournal.co

By Tiani Grosso

Kyle Cole and Nick Vitellaro, two recent NU graduates, announced the launch of their project, “The Hero’s Journal,” on February 5.

In creating “The Hero’s Journal,” they are hoping to offer a fun and inspiring journal to millennials.

Co-creator Kyle Cole said that the project was inspired by personal experience.

“The inspiration for “The Hero’s Journal” began when we realized that, through all of our efforts to be more productive, we lost the reason we were even trying to be productive in the first place,” Cole said in an email.

Cole and Vitellaro wanted a journal that would inspire them through stories. Finding that nothing like that existed, they decided to create one. This idea brought about a partnership across states, with Cole living in Arizona and Vitellaro in Washington.

Cole said that the partnership “plays out a lot like the two different sides of the brain: creative and analytical. Nick tends to come to me with big dreams and crazy ideas for the journal, and he does a great job at refocusing things and keeping us on track with what’s realistic,” he said. “In a funny way, it resembles the creative and analytical contrast of the journal itself.”

Cole noted that the journal takes a somewhat unconventional approach to the task, bringing story into the demands of everyday life.

“[It’s] different. It’s not designed to make you a right-brain robot whose mission is to destroy every task in its way,” he said.

“The Hero’s Journal’ is to help you take the menial tasks you know you need to accomplish to achieve your goals and make them fun and to help

you go from a person trudging through the day to day and turn you into a hero undertaking an exciting journey. The idea was to reimagine your day to day life as a story. One with friends, foes, mentors and of course, a hero with a quest.”

The pair announced the official launch of their project on February 5, and reached their funding goals on Kickstarter in a matter of days – raising \$15,733 to bring the journals into production.

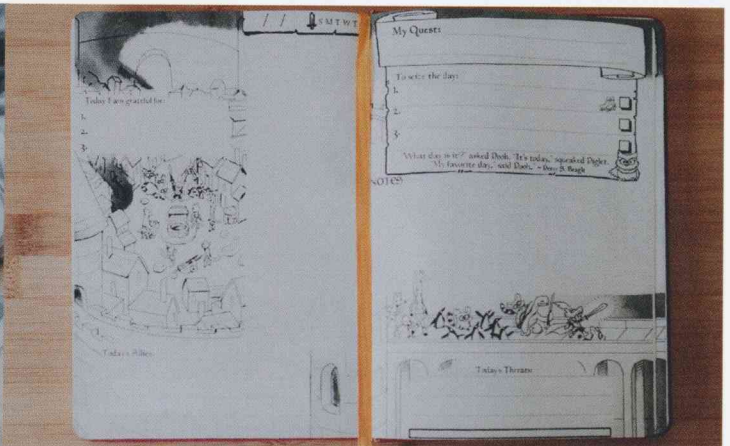
The two college friends have learned a lot from this project.

“This project in a lot of ways has been our own hero’s journey, we have had moments of great inspiration and major setbacks. When you start a business with your best friend, new parts of their personality are exposed, both good and bad,” Cole said. “Luckily, we both have a good pulse on when the other person isn’t in a healthy place, and we don’t let each other work when that’s the case.

Cole and Vitellaro have drawn inspiration from many, and hope that by sharing a project created from their own personal experience, they too can inspire others in their journey.

“Showing the world something you’ve created is an extremely vulnerable thing. We really fought hard to overcome perfectionism across the board. Our mantra throughout the project has been a Voltaire quote: “Don’t let the perfect be the enemy of good.”

To learn more about “The Hero’s Journal,” you can visit their website: [theherosjournal.co](http://theherosjournal.co)



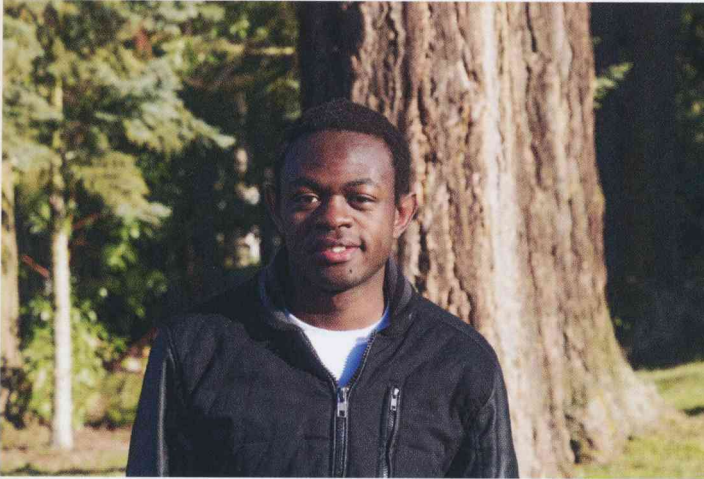
# NEW ASNU EXECUTIVE TEAM ELECTED

By Jaden Jenkins

Photos by Walter Borbridge

The ASNU executive team for 2019-2020 was elected Feb. 21. The role of the executive team is to advocate for students' needs. Additionally, the group contributes to the work of students and faculty to make Northwest University a community of faith and prosperity.

On Feb. 20, six candidates presented their platforms in speeches persuading the audience to vote in their favor. Each candidate explained why they thought they were suited for an ASNU position in the upcoming 2019-2020 school year. Voting took place over the next twenty-four hours, and ASNU announced the winners of the election in an email sent on Feb. 21.



Benjamin Mukumbya was elected student body president and said he is enthusiastic to help bridge the gap between students, the community, and NU administration.

"To achieve this goal, I want the students of NU to be open with me. They chose me as their president and I am here to be that for them," Mukumbya said.

Mukumbya said he has many other goals and ideas, which he plans to implement in his time as president, and is grateful for the opportunity to serve.

"I'm very appreciative for the role they gave me, and I am going to do my best to give them my best," he said.

Brittany Wagner was elected as vice president. She says she is passionate about serving and listening to the needs of NU students and looks forward



to creating the best experiences she can for them in the upcoming year.

Aside from connecting with the NU community in general, Wagner looks forward to focusing in on working with the ASNU team to find a common goal and accomplish it together.

"If we can come together and find a central goal then we can achieve more,"

Wagner said.

Wagner said she is excited to work in this position and looks forward to the great amount of responsibilities.

"Balancing work gives me peace, I enjoy working under pressure," Wagner said.

Cody Hanford will serve as ASNU chief of staff and said he is excited about this position on the executive team. Hanford intends to continue the work he has already begun as an ASNU senator for Crowder 600, Guy 300, and Perks 300.

A goal he says he is passionate about is allowing the senators to have more time to get know each other and letting the community learn more about the senators.



"You work so much better as a team if you know each other and feel comfortable around each other," Hanford said.

Hanford said he would like to hold an event so individual floors can get to know their senators. He looks forward to getting to know his fellow members of the executive team as well.

"Because we three are all so different, getting to know them will be really fun," he said.

The newly elected executive team will begin serving next semester and said they plan to continue improving campus life for the NU community and advocate for the voices of students throughout the 2019-2020 school year.

Have an idea or suggestion for ASNU? You can reach them at [asnu@northwestu.edu](mailto:asnu@northwestu.edu).

Or you can submit your suggestion via <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/asnuideas>

# HEROES OF SNOWMAGEDDON



By Martanna Broom

Photo by Holly Holloper

In February, the Greater Seattle area encountered record-breaking snow levels, which forced most of the region to shut down. Northwest University experienced six days in which snow either caused campus closures or road conditions prevented employees from making it to work.

**A layer of ice covered 53rd Street, preventing some people from driving to their apartments and causing others to slide off the street on the way down.**

Snow days are always an exciting prospect for students who want a break from the everyday hustle and bustle. A snow day has so many possibilities, and work is usually out of the picture. However, for many employees at NU, there was no break and work was doubled. All over campus, key individuals and departments worked diligently to keep students safe and fed during the hazardous weather conditions.

Ali Hamze, Director of Dining Services, spent multiple nights in his office so he could ensure campus residents were fed during the snow days. He personally picked up the chef each day and kept the kitchen running while it was greatly under-staffed. Hamze said he is thankful to the student workers who stepped up and put in extra work during these days.

Another important employee was John Jordan, Northwest's Chief Financial Officer. Jordan set up camp in his office over the school closure periods to help keep things running as smoothly as possible. Leading by example, he sacrificed several nights of sleep at home to be at the school. Jordan said he couldn't expect staff to stay if he didn't also stay. Jordan collaborated with the provost, Jim Huegel, about school closure decisions each day since the provost was out of town at the time, and Jordan set up all of the communication alerts, which were sent to students and staff.

The sidewalks and roadways wouldn't have been cleared if it wasn't for the labor of several contracted maintenance employees. They used the resources they had, including the school's small tractor, to shovel pathways and move snow. The first priority for snow removal was the pathways around the residence halls and other high-traffic areas. The pathways from the residence halls to The Caf were particularly important to keep cleared.

Kristian Andal, Director of Facilities, said it became discouraging and frustrating that there was only so much they could do. A landscaping company was eventually hired to come in and clear out the roadways and parking lots, which were initially very dangerous to drive on.

The university does not own many snow removal tools, which made it hard to control the situation efficiently. The frequency and amount of snowfall was so unusual for the area that it made it difficult to plan for the possibility of similar instances in the future. The school now has to decide whether or not it is worth investing in snow removal equipment with the unknown possibility of another instance such as this.



# ASNU TOWN HALL REVIEWS CHANGES TO STUDENT HANDBOOK



By Bria Figgins

Photo by Junya Yang

ASNU held a town hall meeting on Tuesday, March 19, to discuss revisions to the NU Student Handbook, specifically proposed changes to the Accountability Process. The town hall was facilitated by Rick Engstrom, Dean of Student Development, Peter Carlson, Area Coordinator for Gray-Beatty residence halls, and Sarah Jobson, Director of Resident Life and Housing.

This meeting was the final event in the process of revising the Student Handbook. The goal of these revisions is to clarify the pre-existing guidelines, as well as to clearly define the student accountability process.

"There is a structure issue here," Engstrom said.

The meeting was designed to get feedback from students regarding the new changes.

The main changes to the Student Handbook are:

- Improving communication regarding the accountability process
- Clarifying the steps of the accountability process
- Focusing on brevity and objectives

"We are not going toward victimhood, but striving to be godly and holy persons," Carlson said.

Carlson explained that the changes included in proposed revisions were specifically written through the lens of Galatians 6:1-2, which states, "Brothers and sisters, if someone is caught in a sin, you who live by the Spirit should restore that person gently. But watch yourselves, or you also may be tempted. Carry each other's burdens, and in this way, you will fulfill the law of Christ."

"We are not about shining light on your shameful activities," Carlson said, "We want to be with you in that shame and help bring you back into the light."

One of the major adjustments was to the criteria for appeals in the accountability process. The new criteria is three-fold. Appeals can now be made if: 1) there is new information presented after the first hearing; 2) if due process is not followed; and 3) if the processing of trial was inconsistent with the Student Handbook.

"We are setting people up to have more successful appeals," Engstrom said.

In the revised trial process, students are allowed to have greater choice in their support person. Previously, students were only allowed to have one support person who was faculty or staff. This support person has their own set of guidelines and responsibilities stated in the proposed changes to the Student Handbook, including but not limited to confidentiality, communication restrictions and disruption consequences.

Another main highlight of the revisions being made is the addition of bullet points to the pages. Previously, the format of the handbook was written in a longer narrative, which has been shown to inhibit the desire of students to read the handbook.

The meeting concluded with a question and answer session. One of the questions was regarding the accountability process for student-athletes. Engstrom spoke against campus rumors of favoritism toward athletes. He said that each student is held accountable in the same ways by Student Development. He also added that they allow the coaches to have a say in the disciplinary process, and that coaches are welcome to add any penalties that they see fit.

Engstrom also said that they can only attest to what problems have been brought to them, and if some students discuss with their peers about supposedly escaping consequences, then Student Development was not involved in that process.

In addition to student-athletes, scholarship holders have the same accountability procedures. The scholarship-awarding entity has a say in the disciplinary process as well. Rules and regulations for scholarship holders are outlined in the scholarship paperwork.

According to the handbook, Northwest University is striving as a whole to follow a Biblical accountability process. The changes are designed to promote community in accountability, and to give each student fair and due process.

The updated handbook will be put into effect by fall 2019. A link to the Student Handbook revisions can be found on the NU's Eagle website.

# ARTIST SPOTLIGHT: McKinneyDawson



By Landon Fleury

Photos by Walter Borbridge

At Northwest University, musical talent thrives far beyond the realm of the music department. At the same time, many musically-minded students and staff –such as marketing content writer Isaac Peabody and IT director David Bazan, Jr.– tend to be secretive about their abilities, with the people they know personally generally being the only ones that are aware of them. The university’s campus pastor, however, is not one of these individuals.

For Rev. Christian Dawson, music does not serve only as a hidden talent or a means of expression; it is a pivotal and crucial piece of his life’s work. Whether it be serving as the keyboardist for Choralons, infusing song into his chapel messages or leading worship on the road, music seems to be the driving energy behind everything the pastor does.

Beyond his pastoral duties, Dawson has written and performed music with several worship groups. His most recent endeavor is a project co-led by fellow NU alum Kaitlyn McKinney, aptly named McKinneyDawson.

The group was formed in 2017 and spawned songs such as “Lead Me” and “Found” (two pieces many NU students will recognize from weekly chapel services and Choralons performances). Both songs were featured on the larger “Above All” extended play, which was released that same year. On the EP, Dawson and McKinney cemented their signature sound, creatively blending worship with elements of pop and electronic dance music.

“Above All” is somewhat of an evolution of the sound showcased on an older project Dawson & McKinney previously took part in; Crossing. The band was formed while Dawson and McKinney –along with Connor Hedge, Ulises Ponce and Alex Rosas– were still attending NU as students. The band had an undeniable chemistry, crafting memorable, heart-wrenching worship cuts like “In Love” and “Kingdom Reigns.”

Thankfully, the eventual split of Dawson and McKinney from the rest of Crossing did not occur with any bitterness or animosity.

“Kaitlyn and I are both pastors in different church communities and we were feeling more of a call to do music towards that focus,” Dawson said, “the rest of Crossing had some other things that they were doing with music, which is awesome!”

McKinneyDawson is a project that is hyper-focused on pastoring through music.

“Everything is kind of based on a scripture,” McKinney noted, “if we’re read-

ing scripture, focusing on that ... whatever I see in that moment, you know, then we’ll write based off of that.” Fittingly, every song McKinneyDawson has released thus far is titled –or subtitled– to reference a specific passage from the Bible.

According to McKinney, her and Dawson first met in one of Professor Mizue Fells’ Ear Training courses, where they were assigned partners for an exam. “I made him plug his ears – in the same room with me – because I was too embarrassed to sing in front of him,” McKinney said. “That’s kind of how our friendship started.”

Despite some ongoing rumors of a forthcoming McKinneyDawson album, Dawson was hesitant to give an official confirmation.

“We’re not sure yet,” Dawson said. “We at least have four singles that are almost finished...we think we’re going to do a covers project, and then we have some originals we’re working on, and then we did live versions of a bunch of our songs a couple weeks ago.”

These “live versions” were recorded at a Monday night Pursuit –featuring McKinneyDawson– earlier in the semester.

While the project’s namesake is a combination of its lead vocalists’ last names, Dawson made it clear that McKinneyDawson reaches far beyond himself and McKinney.

“We actually have about eight or nine musicians who are part of McKinney-Dawson,” Dawson said.

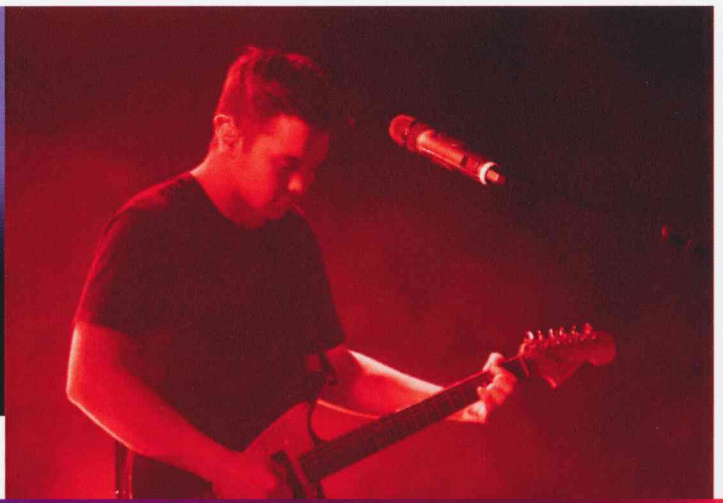
Matthew Lee –who is currently an undergraduate at NU– is one musician that writes and performs with the band; he co-wrote one of Dawson’s recent favorites, entitled “This I Know.”

Of this group, several musicians –including students like Jeffrey Adami and Darrick Strauss– accompanied McKinneyDawson on tour down under last month as a part of Australia for Christ Church’s Breakthrough Conference. When asked how this opportunity came about, Dawson explained that a pastor’s daughter came across McKinneyDawson on Spotify (on which the group currently has several thousand monthly listeners).

“They listened to it and they just felt like that’s who they were supposed to have [at the conference],” Dawson said. “It was a really bizarre opportunity and it was so great.”



McKinneyDawson can be found on Facebook, YouTube and Spotify.



McKinneyDawson performs in Pursuit, where they recorded live editions of a number of their songs.





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