

Northwest University's Student Magazine

TALON



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NU YEARBOOK MOVES ONLINE: MODERN OR MISTAKEN?

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Photo by Jeff Sheldon



Our society's evolution into an increasingly digital culture is now strongly felt by Karisma – Northwest University's student produced yearbook. What once was a hardcover publication passed out at the end of each academic year is now fully adapting to an online format.

"The greatest benefits are timeliness and breadth that we can offer to the student body," said Associate Professor of Communication Kara Heinrichs, who co-advises Karisma with Visiting Assistant Professor Thor Tolo. "The new system we utilize online allows us to insert stories and make any necessary changes in real time."

Students will be able to view it via a link placed on the NU Eagle site with photos placed on *The Talon's* website. This arrangement will be more cost effective, sustainable and accessible. "There will be a section devoted to student life stories and profiles where students can go and see information from all year long," Heinrichs said. "This will largely mimic the yearbook goals."

Senior Alayna Wood thinks the online yearbook is more beneficial. "It will be more accessible for people who want to go online and look back at it," she said. "Things that go on the Internet stay on the Internet, and so I think it could potentially stand the test of time more so than a hard copy yearbook."

Wood, a former yearbook editor, said she understands the decision to go online. "A lot of times we would order a huge bulk of yearbooks every year and maybe half of them would end up getting picked up, so it wasn't very cost efficient," she said.

Elise Carpenter, another graduating senior, has a different opinion about the transition. "I'm all for the hard copy," she said. "It will save on printing costs, but students are disappointed. I won't have a senior yearbook to physically flip through and look back on. I have [a yearbook] from every year from elementary school on, but I won't have one from my senior college year."

According to Andy Hall, Director of Student Programs, approximately \$20,000 was saved this spring due to the decision to move Karisma out of hardcover and entirely online. Hall said an initial down payment of \$7,600 was required before even the first photo was taken or the first word typeset in the hard copy edition.

Hayley Hanford, a senior communication major, said she doesn't see the point of a yearbook. As a former NUSG member, she expressed shock at how much money was budgeted for producing Karisma, especially because of her belief most students never look at a yearbook more than once.

"I would be more willing to look at a website that contained pictures from the year – sort of like a magazine," said Hanford, who hopes the online format will be sleek and more like an image bank of memories.

"Going fully online is sad in a sense because it changes the tradition in a significant way," said David Kimball, who graduated in December. "However it makes much more sense to do that because saving money for something optional like this is always a good idea, and the memories will still be saved and they'll be on the Internet where physical copies can be made if need be."

Senior Maricres Castro seemed torn. "I love that they are saving resources and trees, but I'm missing that tradition of having my senior

yearbook signed by my friends before I graduate, he said. "There is nothing better than a handwritten message from a friend. We are such a small university. Having a yearbook is very feasible."

Nikolas Johnson, a junior, told *The Talon* this transition is good. "I guess for the people who *do* care, they will be a little sad. But the money saving more than outweighs [any sadness]," he said.

Laura Ritchart, a senior who transferred to NU from the University of Washington, does not believe having a yearbook in college matters. "We shouldn't have a yearbook in the first place," she said. "It's more of a high school thing, anyway."

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