

# Disorientation

## '24



"Wesleyan has the potential to take the average young mind and blow it wide open. But here's the secret: it's the people, NOT the institution. And that fact will blow your mind up."

***-Disorientation '86 Team, 1986  
Disorientation***



"Thus it is with proud silly people, who think themselves above everyone else, and are too proud to ask or take advice."

***— Grimm Brothers, Grimm's Fairy Tales***

# Table of Contents:

Opening Letter .....	03
Wesleyan Activist Timeline .....	05
A Brief look at Wesleyan/Middletown Relations .....	10
Being an FGLI Student at Wes .....	13
Boon Tan, From an Alum .....	14
Re-Opening His Curriculum .....	15
Spectrum .....	17
Top 10 Supervillains at Wes .....	18
Giant Sloth Spotted on Campus .....	20
Chalking at Wes .....	21
Wesleyan Must Divest Now (1986 Reprint) .....	23
Wesleyan Will Commodify this Article .....	27
The Wesleyan Solidarity Encampment .....	29
POSSE Kind of Sucked .....	31
Lessons from an Invasive & Stories from Its Home .....	33
Let's Talk about Fashion at Wes .....	35
Vicious Circles .....	36
Wesleyan Women in Science .....	37
Community, Brought to you by the Resource Center .....	38
Psi U & Sociability .....	39
Red Tape, No Money: Sustainability @ Wes .....	40
Monopsony and the End of Labor Peace .....	45
Meet Michael Roth .....	47
The Anatomy of Accountability .....	48



# Editor's Note

*By: August Gardyne & Amira Pierotti*

Welcome class of 2028! You're probably picking this up wondering what the fuck Disorientation even is. Well, there's no easy answer for that. We're one part resource to freshmen, one part activism group, and one part vessel for preserving student voices. We've been around on and off since the 70s and our primary goal is the publication of this zine. One thing that drew me to Wes was the promise of culture. Wes isn't like any place you've ever been, or any place you'll go. We're here

to prep freshmen for that, and tell y'all some of the things admin won't.

This institution has existed for a long time and has a rich and complex history. The things you heard about Wes before coming here are probably true, but what makes this place special is that you can get sucked down so many Wes-related rabbit holes. Seriously, just look into the tunnels, any of the board members, student art in Olin's special collections, or

talk to Ken from Summies! You'll learn quickly that Wes is exceptionally weird. Our job is to give a little TL;DR on the things that you need to know to navigate this space.

Wes kind of exists as an isolated bubble, but it's important to understand where we fit into our greater community and the world. Shock of all shocks, but this institution has a long history of unethical decisions regarding its investments and treatment of the Middletown community. As you can imagine, the left-leaning and activism focused student body has never exactly been happy about the way the institution runs itself. We at Diso believe that the future of activism is bright at Wesleyan. Most of the clubs and organizations at this school have the primary goal of making this community (and the world) a better place for all. In this zine, we'll outline some of the super cool groups you



can join here, ranging from our non-cis-male frisbee group Vish to our SOC fashion show! We'll also look at some Wesleyan history including activism timelines and an article about Wes graffiti from the 70s. Other authors take a serious look at the problems of cancel culture, the end of peaceful labor relations, and the need for new forms of community. Whether you are here for a lighthearted review of campus culture or a review of how we can do better, we welcome you to Disorientation.

Overall, this zine is your handy dandy handbook to all things Wes. We don't pretend that the student body is perfect. We know it isn't and we know we aren't. So, if you finish this and think, "Wait, why didn't they talk about [relevant topic]," make your voice heard! Join us or any other group, attend protests, go to WSA meetings, etc.

**It doesn't matter who you are or where you come from, there is space for you here.**



# Wesleyan Activism Timeline

Edited by: August Gardyne '26 and Amira Pierotti '26

## **Charles B Rey (1832)**

Rey was the first Black student admitted to Wesleyan. Due to intense harassment and prejudice from white students, he was forced to withdraw 6 weeks into the semester.

## **The Wesleyan Experiment (1871-1912)**

Wes admitted a small group of women, who graduated with honors despite harassment from their male colleagues. The "experiment" was shut down in 1912.

## **12 Black Students Burn The Yearbook (Oct. 1968)**

on the steps of North College. Members of the Afro-American society protested its lack of representation of the black student body, aggravating the white status-quo.

## **The Fisk Hall Takeover (Feb. 1969)**

Dozens of black students, faculty, staff, and Middletown residents occupied Fisk to increase the administration's support for people of color, resulting in the creation of Malcolm X house.

## **Wesleyan Enrolls Women Again (1970)**

By 1974, 100 women were enrolled and active in student culture, overcoming sexist harassment and abuse to finish their studies.

## **The Student Strike (May 1970)**

Wes students organized and protested the Vietnam War and Black Panther trial for a month. This was an inaugural moment for women and Black students' leadership on campus.

### **Apartheid Protests (1978-1990)**

including students building a mock South African shantytown outside Olin, occupying the president's office with 100 students for 15 days, carrying coffins at graduation, and firebombing the president's office.

### **Iraq Protests (1993-2003)**

Protests against US policies towards Iraq and, later, the Iraq War. In 2003, students were arrested while attempting to shut down federal buildings in Hartford.

### **Chalking Ban (2002)**

Chalking sidewalks was banned on campus and all chalk was erased from campus sidewalks overnight making it more difficult for students to protest for the next 20 years. The ban is still active today.

### **Gender-Neutral Housing (2004)**

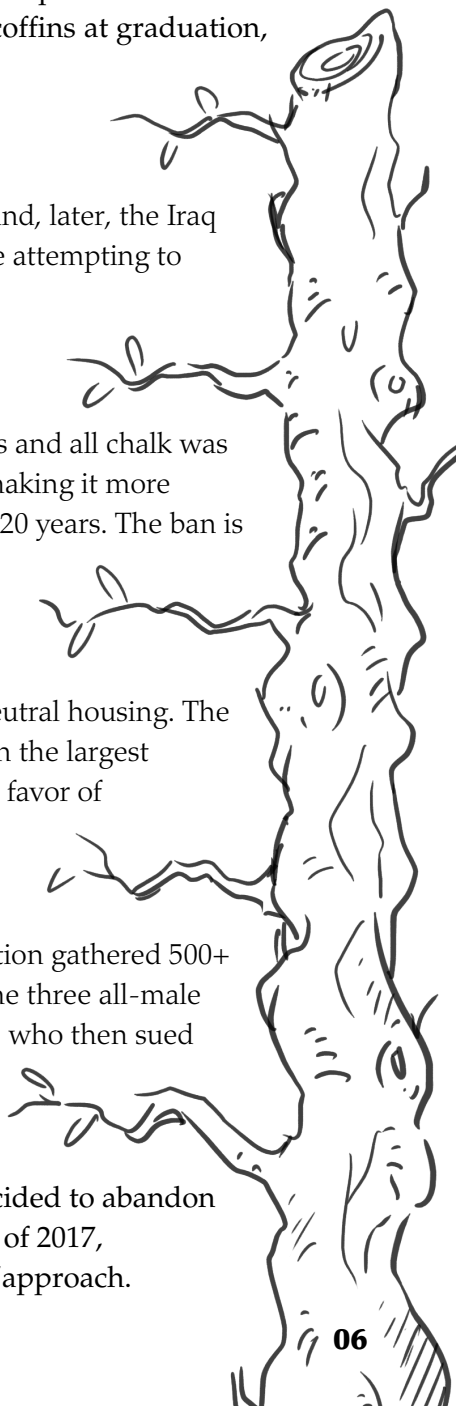
Dean Patton eliminates first year gender-neutral housing. The student referendum on the policy brought in the largest turnout in WSA history, with 92% voting in favor of reinstating gender-neutral housing.

### **Fraternity Controversies (2010-2014)**

After several sexual assault incidents, a petition gathered 500+ signatures demanding the coeducation of the three all-male frats. Wesleyan dissolved the all-male DKE, who then sued the University.

### **Need-Blind Controversy (2012)**

President Michael Roth and the Board decided to abandon 100% need-blind admissions for the Class of 2017, choosing instead to adopt a "need-aware" approach.





### **Wes Needs CAPS (2015-2016)**

Protest to hire two additional counselors at CAPS (Counseling and Psychological Services) due to overly long wait times and insufficient mental health support on campus.

### **IsThisWhy Campaign (2015)**

Students of color published a list of demands for the administration to fight racial inequality on campus and demand institutional change.

### **Five More Workers (2018-2019)**

Wesleyan students from USLAC and other groups protested the firing of several custodial workers on campus and the increased demands on the remaining custodial staff.

### **Ban the Box Campaign (2018-2019)**

SEMI (Students for Ending Mass Incarceration) organized a campaign to “ban the box” on college applications which asks about prospective students’ criminal history.

### **Hong Kong Protests and China Campus (Fall 2019)**

Students protested in solidarity with Hong Kong and against the announcement of a possible Wesleyan campus in China. The University cancelled its plans.

### **Climate Walkout (Fall 2019)**

Students and staff walked out of class in a Fridays for Future march for climate justice. They participated in a “die-in” in front of North College to push for the University to divest from fossil fuels.

### **FGLI GoFundMe (2020)**

A group of FGLI students working in conjunction with the Resource Center created a GoFundMe to distribute money to low-income students needing assistance

### **Instagram Campaigns (Summer 2020)**

@blackatwesleyan\_u highlighted the experiences of Black students on campus. @wesleyansurvivors allowed survivors of sexual assault to share their experiences.

### **Middletown Mutual Aid Collective and Community Fund (2020-2022)**

Wesleyan students fundraised for a Middletown-based mutual aid group organizing direct cash assistance and a community fridge.

### **#KeepKloverFree (Fall 2021)**

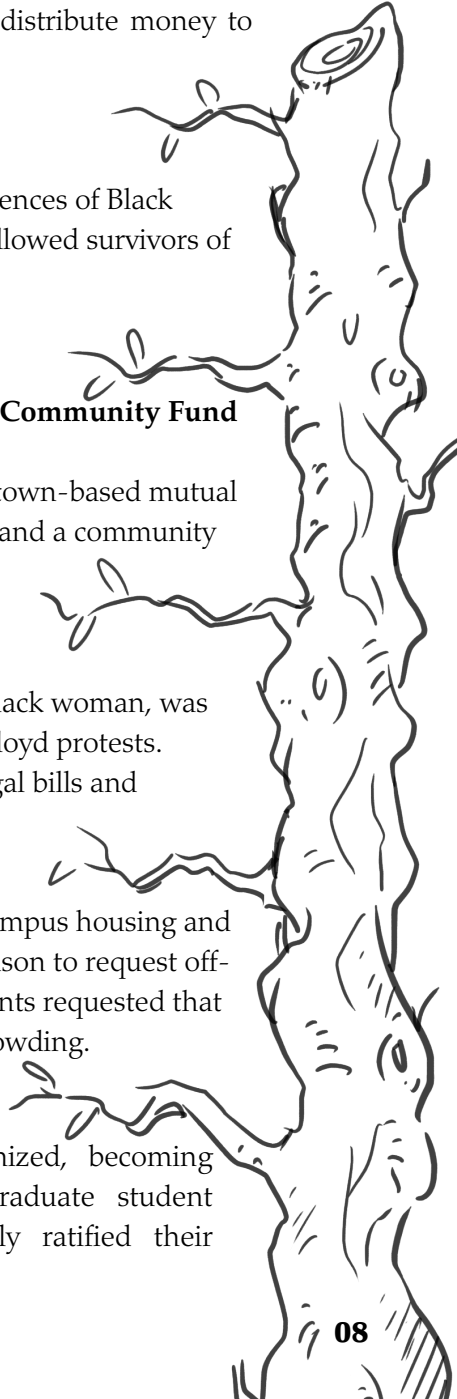
Klover, a Middletown resident and queer Black woman, was arrested for protesting during the George Floyd protests. Wesleyan students raised money for her legal bills and protested her arrest.

### **Reform ResLife (Spring 2021)**

ResLife refused a student petition for off-campus housing and insisted that homelessness is not a valid reason to request off-campus housing. Three months later, students requested that more students live off-campus to relieve crowding.

### **WesUSE (Spring 2022)**

Residential Life workers successfully unionized, becoming the first voluntarily recognized undergraduate student union in the country. They successfully ratified their contract in the fall of 2022.





## **WesDWU (*Spring 2023*)**

The Bon Appetit workers won voluntary recognition, while the Swings and RBC workers were met with resistance from their employers. They won their union after a successful card check.

## **WesDS Secures Reproductive Health Coverage (*Spring 2023*)**

Wesleyan Democratic Socialists successfully petitioned the school to cover all abortion and emergency contraceptive costs for all students, regardless of insurance plan.

## **Dr. Rebecca Hall Mistreatment (*Spring 2023*)**

A queer black scholar was invited by the FGSS dept. to give a talk. At the open bar event that followed, the sponsors, a white alumni, made racist and homophobic comments to her and grabbed her hair.

## **Chalking Returns (*Spring 2023*)**

Campus-wide chalking re-emerges on campus during WesFest and again during Spring Fling. Messages chalking ranged from critiques of the post-COVID Wesleyan to inequitable treatment and financing within the institution.

## **Begging for Table Scraps (*Spring 2024*)**

An anonymous zine titled “Beginning for Table Scraps” critiqued the Board of Trustees and President. A copy of the zine can be read here: [thisisnotaprotest.weebly.com](https://thisisnotaprotest.weebly.com)

## **SJP Encampment (*Spring 2024*)**

On April 28th, Wesleyan Students for Justice in Palestine established a solidarity encampment alongside dozens of other schools. Hundreds of students camped outside of North College for weeks. The encampment ended as the result of a deal with the Board of Trustees who agreed to vote on divesting from Israel.



# A Brief Look at Wesleyan-Middletown Relations

*By: Anna Tjeltveit '24 (reprinted from Disorientation '22)*

Wesleyan's position near the North End, a low-income area in Middletown, and Traverse Square, a subsidized housing project, makes it a place where wealth inequalities are very pronounced. Whereas 1 in 5 Wesleyan students come from the top 1% income bracket, 40% of Middletown residents earn less than the cost of living in Connecticut. As such, one of the most important ways which Wesleyan and its students can engage in Middletown is by redistributing this wealth.

Theoretically wealthy institutions should support their communities through taxes, but Wesleyan does not pay taxes to Middletown. As a nonprofit organization, it is expected to make "Payments in Lieu of Taxes" (PILOT), but for the last few years it has been underpaying Middletown by several million dollars. Considering the wealth disparities mentioned above and the University's 1.6 billion dollar endowment, this lack of support reflects a purely instrumental view of Middletown as a resource to be exploited. Even University-led community service efforts serve primarily as opportunities for resume building and remain mostly uninterested in a deep understanding of the community. In order to better understand Wesleyan's relationship to Middletown, here are some of the most important examples of the University's extractive behavior:



## **TRAVERSE SQUARE & JUNIOR VILLAGE**

Junior Village, the apartment complex near Red and Black, sits next to Traverse Square, a low-income housing project. Both were constructed in the 1950s, and Hi and Lo Rise were conceived as graduate housing, with a playground where children of graduate students and local families could play together. Eventually, the apartments were converted to undergraduate housing and the playground torn down. Today, there are recurring tensions between Wesleyan students and residents of Traverse Square, with students calling the police on the Black and Latine children who play near Wesleyan apartments. Connections between Wesleyan admin and Traverse Square have remained minimal, and as of 2019 Traverse Square residents reported having no contact with Wesleyan administrators.

## **GREEN STREET ART CENTER**

Wesleyan created the Green Street Art Center in 2005 as a place where students could volunteer and support after-school programs for Middletown students. The program was wildly successful and engaged low-income students from the North End in extracurricular opportunities which were otherwise not available to them. However, in 2018, Roth abruptly announced the closure of the Center because it had failed to turn a profit for Wesleyan, devastating community members and removing an invaluable resource for families in the North End.

## **BEMAN TRIANGLE**

The Beman Triangle, once located at Knowles Avenue, Cross Street, and Vine Street near Neon Deli, was one of the first free Black neighborhoods in the United States at the turn of the 19th century and an important stop on the Underground Railroad. Its rich history ended at the beginning of the 20th century, when an influx of white working class people combined with an expansion of Wesleyan's campus forced the community's AME Zion church to

relocate and scattered the neighborhood's residents. Today, nearly all of the formerly Black-owned houses are owned by the University.

## **URBAN RENEWAL & SPRAWL**

Wielding an outsized influence in local politics, Wesleyan has helped reshape Middletown to be a more appealing city to students and their families, resulting in attractive restaurants and sights but limited functionality for low-income residents. In the past, the University has recommended limiting social services on Main Street and removing subsidized housing from downtown, pushing unhoused people into shelters in the south of Middletown, cut off from resources and walkable areas. Additionally, Wesleyan has sprawled beyond its campus boundaries in recent years. During the pandemic, Wesleyan rented out the Middletown Inn, initially as a quarantine facility for COVID-infected students but later as a dorm when they admitted 400 students too many in the class of 2025. This in combination with a new Office of Advancement, located on Main Street, reflects a growing view of Main Street as an extension of Wesleyan's campus, which may result in further expansion in the coming years.



# Being an FGLI Student at Wes

*By: Andrea Herrera*

Being a first-generation low-income student is a badge I wear with honor. It's responsible for the person I've become. It's made me funny and powerful at the same time. It has given me amazing life stories and made me one of the strongest women I know. Still, don't get it twisted, no es facil. It's a journey you take on your own. It means carving a path others can follow so your future children can earn a bachelor's or higher after generations of middle school or less. I'll be honest: there are days I wonder why I'm here. There wasn't a single night during my first semester when my eyes didn't water. When you ask yourself if the pain is worth the degree, reflect on the fact that our parents are warriors traveling across countries for us. They work their whole lives to let us live ours. You are living life through them, so it's okay to stop and send a billion pictures back home. Remind yourself that you used to dream of being where you are. It's okay to be angry at the world. Channel that rage and use it as motivation. You'll be surprised how far you'll get. You may think others are smarter than you, but I've had to explain to people how to use a Tide pod (even though there are visuals on the box), how to heat up Pop-Tarts, and that aluminum foil is not microwave-safe.

As a child of immigrants, stop, look around, soak in the fruits of your labor, and feel proud of yourself for overcoming the odds stacked against us. So, from one FGLI to another, keep fighting. Hold your head up and take up space. Your word is just as valuable as everyone else's. Hold the FGLI title with pride. Don't be afraid of trying new things. When you hit a roadblock or make mistakes, get up, dust yourself off, and try again. Yes, I know that's cheesy, but just know every mistake you make is a lesson, and trust that you've been through worse. Lastly, ask for help. One thing I've learned is that Wesleyan is filthy rich, and for an FGLI student, money solves problems. Reach out, build those connections, and use those resources. Wes loves using FGLI as advertisements and diversity campaigns...so at least make them work for it.

# Boon Tan, From an Alumni

*By: Tim Redmond '80*

There was a time when you couldn't go to Wesleyan and not hear about "Boon Tan." The name was a meme in the 1980s before there even were memes. Graffiti with his name and an iconic image were all over the tunnels. The class of 1980 (of which I was a member) had "where is Boon Tan" T-Shirts at one of our reunions.

But there's a story here about a real person, and it's pretty disturbing—and frankly, incredibly racist. Boon Tan was a Malaysian student admitted for the fall of 1976, same year as I started at Wes. He was assigned a roommate, his luggage arrived at WestCo—but he never showed up.

Nobody knows why. Nobody bothered to ask. It just became a joke. Gee, this guy from Malaysia with what the students thought was a funny name just never appeared, so let's make it A Thing.

The graffiti image that accompanied his name was, and is, a horrifying racist trope, although none of the "cool kids" of the 1980s seemed to care. Soon, that image was in weird places all over the country, sort of a sign that a Wes person had been there. At one point, one student noted:

"The Boon Tan lore helps people form a sense of identity and belonging. This is especially important to freshpeople. The introduction to Boon Tan forms a kind of rite of initiation; it marks passage into the community of Wesleyan."

Unfortunately, that "meme," that "lore," was a disgraceful sign of anti-Asian sentiment, of crude racism, and of a phenomenal lack of respect for another culture. I have often wondered if Boon Tan ever found out about all of this. For his sake, I hope not.



Learn  
more  
here!

# Re-Opening His Curriculum: A Retrospect

By: *summiesgirl78*

Last fall, I, under the moniker summiesgirl78, published “Opening His Curriculum”, a piece of erotic satire depicting Roth in a sexual setting with a doppelganger made of sentient mold. After it came out, it kinda blew up on Archive of Our Own with over 300 hits, and a lot of students were talking about it online and in groups. At least one club did a dramatic reading of this fic.

When I wrote “Opening His Curriculum” last October, I honestly didn’t expect the reaction it had. After all, no one had ever published something like this before, at least not on Ao3. That was the main reason I wrote it. As someone who grew up on the internet, where erotic fiction is a medium often used for satire, I noticed the lack of Wesleyan-oriented erotic satire, and wanted to try my hand at it (or in other words, fill a hole that was positively begging to be filled). That said, my piece is meant to be a satire, and therefore, does not reflect my personal attractions (sorry Roth, I don’t want to boink). The point of this piece was to be ridiculous and subversive. When I checked on it later that week, however, I saw that it had gotten way more than the twenty views I was expecting. I saw memes about my disturbing little fanfiction, and I heard random athletic people talking about it—people who should have no idea what Ao3 is.

One of the main takeaways I had from the experience was how it brought everyone together, if only for a moment. The fact that such satire spread about campus speaks to a lot of the discontent I see on campus, specifically with Roth and the administration. Of course, I have some level of discontent, but seeing other people share in that told me two things: plenty of people have issues with the school and no one takes Roth seriously.

No one is content with the way this school operates. For this caricature of Roth to gain popularity as it did, it meant that people here already didn’t see him as someone to be highly respected. Roth’s on-campus persona is one of a public figure with some



clownish energy, and he's known for having wild reactions (like that time he full-stop stole someone's microphone). While I appreciate and respect that Roth is willing to let himself be framed like this, when combined with the dissatisfaction of students, it gives space for extreme satire to go unchallenged beyond "ew how did someone write this" (Honest answer: alcoholism).

I respect that he's willing to be a bit of a clown and a little weird (it's funny, I won't lie), but it really calls into question why he's like this. Roth may seem like a serious figure off-campus, but that is not how he interacts with students. Roth flips between being hostile or memeable to students. People aren't always happy here, and Roth is an extremely easy target as a public figure, so he's more likely to appear as a target for signs, chants and apparently, erotic satire! Is there a solution to this? I don't know. I'm definitely not the right person to ask, but this is definitely a question that everyone reading should consider. We shouldn't have a climate where it's culturally acceptable to write what I did. There should be barriers of respect keeping this from happening, but alas. This is not a problem I can fix alone, this is Wesleyan.

XOXO-- Summiesgirl78

PS: Please stop questioning Summies workers. I wrote it while eating at late night, nothing else. While Summies has committed many sins, this is not one of them.

PPS: Please don't sue me thanks <3



# Spectrum

*By: Ivan Lopez*

The main affinity group for queer people of color (QPOC) at Wesleyan University, Spectrum, is a vibrant network of support, empowerment, and friendship for LGBTQ+ people at Wes. Spectrum is an essential resource for this community, providing a space for queer POC to connect, share experiences, and form bonds.

As President of Spectrum, it is my goal to provide a secure environment for QPOC students to find empathy and support. The board members of Spectrum help me establish a space where anyone can be authentically themselves without worrying about being judged by others through frequent board meetings, annual events such as Speed Friending or The Gay-La, and social get-togethers. These social events provide validation to individuals navigating the intersection of their identities, providing space to speak about the QPOC experiences that are too easily dismissed on this campus. Apart from promoting inclusivity, Spectrum is a catalyst for advocacy and activism on campus. Many of our own Spectrum members and board members plan and take part in activities around campus that increase public awareness of problems impacting queer people of color on and off campus.

As a QPOC student, I had difficulty finding my space on campus. Attending a PWI and being the only student of color in the classroom can be tough. From impacting my sense of belonging to my academic experiences, my journey is complex compared to my white peers. However, the resilience and determination of many students of color on this campus, including myself, should not be overlooked. Fortunately, cultural spaces, like Spectrum, FXT, Wes Latin and Ballroom, have allowed me and others to feel that sense of belonging again and strive to create positive change. Although the Wesleyan experience as a QPOC student on this campus is filled with challenges and obstacles, it is, most importantly, defined by resiliency, community support, and a shared commitment to promoting equity and inclusivity.

# Top 10 Supervillains at Wes

*By: Eva Gamboa*

## 1. Marc Casper

When he's not contributing to ethnic cleansing, Marc enjoys collecting grubs from his garden to snack on. That's right! Marc Casper is an insectivore, and he's very hungry. Word around town is that he hatched from an egg! What a guy...

## 2. The Physics Professor With Military Contacts

Seriously, dude? You work for a liberal arts college. Consider applying for a job at West Point; you'll fit right in!

## 3. The Guy Who Spit On the Tents at the Encampment.

While we appreciate your attempt at bio-terrorism, it's kinda gross. Consider something less disgusting like writing an angry letter or maybe shaking your fist with rage.

## 4. The Ham Man

## 5. John B. Frank

Much like Bling-Bling Boy, John knows no boundaries, has a questionable hairline, and only cares about money. He also has a secret lair! If you look carefully in the basement of the PAC, you can find innocent children running on a hamster wheel to fuel the giant robot he plans to unleash upon Middletown.





## **6. People Who Throw Up On the Floors of Bathrooms**

You were so close. Just a couple more steps and you could've prevented the creation of a quarantine zone. The black mold is bad enough without a pool of pink whitney and mozzarella sticks.

## **7. ResLife Administration**

Yes, we know. Campus housing closes at one. Now please stop knocking on our doors.

## **8. The Workers Who Put Rocks on Top of the Groundhog Holes**

Just admit that you hate God's creations.

## **9. WeShop Prices**

I'm not calling for a WeShop boycott (yes I am), but seriously, these prices are getting out of hand. Why am I being charged the cost of a sack full of truffles when all I'm buying is Honey Nut Cheerios?

## **10. People Who Have Sex in the Encampment**

When we said get a room, we didn't mean a tent. I understand that you are liberated, but that doesn't include your penis. Put that shit away and go to Exley or something.



# **Giant Sloth Spotted On Wesleyan's Campus (Just Kidding It's a Storytelling Collective)**

*By: Natalie Sweet*

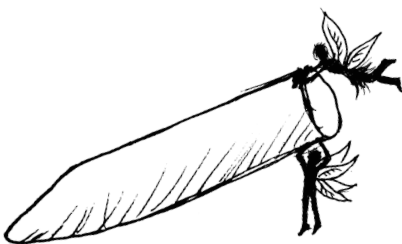
The Sloth is Wesleyan's storytelling collective, inspired by The Moth, a radio show and podcast presenting true stories live. Every semester, we host two to three storytelling events, such as open mics or story showcases. Some of our themes in the past have been Secrets, Firsts, and Stuck With Me. Students share all sorts of stories relating to these themes: comedic tales, stories submitted for a personal narrative class, even songs! The only requirement is that the stories have to be true, come from your heart, and connect to the theme in some way, large or small. Before our story showcases, we rehearse together with everyone who's sharing a story for a practice run-through before the show begins.

Before joining Sloth, I had never told a story to a group larger than maybe five friends. Getting on stage was a nerve-racking but rewarding experience. I met new friends from getting to rehearse with the other storytellers, and telling the story itself was super fun. I've cried, laughed, and felt pretty much every range of emotion at The Sloth story events. There really is so much we can learn from each other, something that I'm reminded of every time I get to listen to my classmates share stories at The Sloth.

The Sloth has been around as a group at Wesleyan since before COVID. Though it took a hiatus during the pandemic, we've bounced back and are always looking to grow the storytelling community here at Wes! If you're interested in telling stories and/or joining The Sloth team, please email [nsweet@wesleyan.edu](mailto:nsweet@wesleyan.edu)!



# Chalking at Wes



*By: Sam DosSantos*

Chalking began its life at Wes as a university-sanctioned yet subversive method of expression. The chalk culture was one small piece of a vaunted Wesleyan legacy of protest and activism, one piece of a puzzle that includes monumental movements like the Fisk Hall takeover.

Chalk was banned by President Bennett in 2003 after complaints of vulgarity and intolerance in the chalk. These kinds of messages are indefensible, even by the biggest advocates for a return of chalking to Wesleyan. This does not reflect the medium's potential for subversive and radical messaging. According to Teresa Younger via the New York Times in 2003: "It is unfortunate that in these times the school's administration has chosen to shut down this avenue of communication as opposed to doing educational outreach around hate crimes."

Potential objections aside, chalk has returned as a subversive action against university rules in several forms since 2003. The most notable instance was in 2013, when the decision was made to remove Wesleyan's need-blind status. Students organized a "legal chalk-in" by Usdan which led to one of the most controversial episodes of the Roth presidency. President Roth grabbed two students by the backpack and dragged them to a Public Safety officer for discipline, while saying "these students think they can change a financial issue with chalk."

Roth displays himself, particularly to those outside the Wesleyan community, as a free-speech champion who adores his students' activist culture and does what he can to aid it. His Op-Ed in the LA Times, "College students were 'woke' in the '60s, annoying to elders and drivers of social change. Meet their successors" serves as a great example of this, as his conclusion is



a hope for practical collaboration and his own learning from the protestors, just as he hopes they might learn from him.

The real Roth feels far detached from the utopian vision of his off-campus persona. While the student expectation is for anti-administrative action to be met with some level of hostility and tension, Roth's office has rarely been willing to engage with student requests, often sending them through the bureaucratic ringer of North and South college automatons. Many times, the anti-university or anti-administrative protests result in discipline for those protestors unfortunate enough to be caught, followed by silence from the administration as they work behind the scenes to de-incentivize a following protest. A great example of the latter would be the Fall 2023 WesDivest protest outside of the BOT meeting. The board members were informed that the peacefully protesting students constituted a danger to them and were encouraged to depart as quickly as possible, rather than engaging with the students which could have sparked productive dialogue. Students were not formally disciplined, to



my knowledge, but the protests increased antagonism between students and policy makers.

As a student, I find it incredibly frustrating that Wesleyan and its administration have taken the steps to govern their campus in this way, while also touting itself as a center for activism and free speech. As students begin to claim lost power brought on by the COVID pandemic and the Roth presidency, I call on President Roth to heed his own words and ease the administrative pushback on student protests.

# Wesleyan Must Divest Now

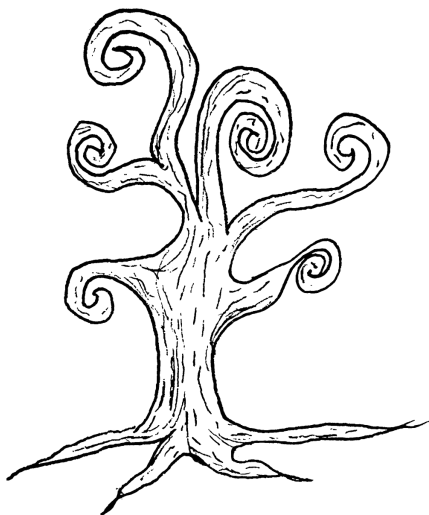
By: *The 1986 Disorientation Editorial Board*

As an incoming student, you might be wondering why South Africa is such a major issue in comparison with Central America or Nuclear Freeze. Well, the concept of Apartheid is relatively easy to comprehend and abhor since there is no conceivable way of justifying it morally. Apartheid is just as much a heresy and denial of the intrinsic worth of humanity as was Nazism. Apartheid is easy for Americans to comprehend because it touches on race issues, which are still a sore point to America. Rightly or wrongly, the fact that colleges have stakes in South Africa has persuaded students that it is their duty to influence U.S. foreign policy. So far, they have done a good job in realizing that goal.

Before going further, I find it imperative to make a distinction between Divestment and Disinvestment since the two can easily be confused. Divestment is an effort by colleges to compel the reigning regime of a country to revise or even repeal its unjust laws by withdrawing/relinquishing their (the colleges) stock in companies operating there. Disinvestment, on the other hand, is the radical form of coaxing a given country/gov't to alter its policies by having foreign corporations pull out of the country,

thus sending the country into socio-political and economic turmoil -- a situation no country or government particularly envies.

As students, we are very limited as to what pressure we can apply on the U.S. government to realize our grievances. Students, nevertheless, realize that Divestment is their one and possibly only formidable weapon which has the potential to effectively alter the course of events in South Africa. In fact, it is believed that the



divestment movement has become the broadest and most passionate crusade on American campuses since the movement to end the Vietnam War. It is important, however, to realize that divestment is not an end in itself, but can be used as a means to accomplish disinvestment. The economic logic behind divestiture is that if all universities divested, then U.S. corporations would pull out of South Africa, thereby weakening the economic and military might, which have made it easy for the South African government to perpetuate its racial policies.

In Wesleyan, like in many other colleges throughout the country, divestment has for a long time been one of the major issues. Basically, the argument breaks down into two sides. One side, made up of mostly students and some faculty, believes that divestment is the only significant step Wesleyan could take as an institution to show its abhorrence of apartheid regardless of its impact. The other side, defended by the administration, believes that corporations can help move South Africa away from apartheid. They argue that giving Black South Africans economic autonomy and education will eventually lead to the dismantling of the Apartheid system. I must state that this side of the argument has failed to realize that as some Blacks - a dismal fraction unworthy of mention -- gain economic status and education, the South African government more than equally strengthens economically and militarily, thus becoming more resistant to change. Furthermore, it is important to realize that U.S. companies (or any other companies dealing with South Africa) have commitments to adhere to, such as providing South Africa with whatever materials, ranging from raw mineral resources to advanced technological equipment and Know-how. This, of course, renders many of the anticipated sanctions, some of which have already been imposed on South Africa (e.g. arms embargo) null and void.

Based on the Sullivan Principles (the code of conduct the U.S. companies doing business in South Africa are required to adhere to), the Wesleyan Administration has refused to adopt a divestment policy. Rather, they have opted not to invest in firms

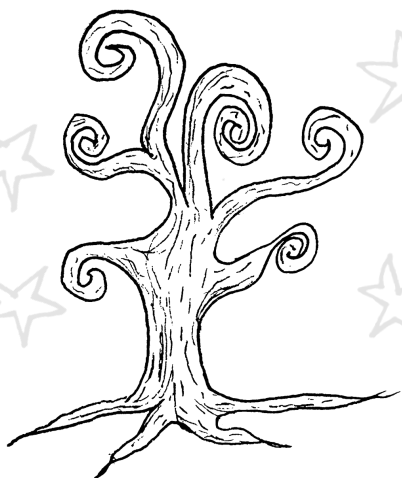
with a record of poor compliance to the Sullivan Principles. The divestment activists (supporters) have charged that the Sullivan Principles are a non-starter (sort of an avoidance measure) to be used as guidelines in dealing with the Apartheid issue. For instance, one of the Sullivan Principles calls for equal pay for equal work. A provision like this is meaningless in a situation like South Africa where the workforce is so racially stratified that the managerial workforce is 99% White and the menial workforce 99% Black. All managers can be paid the same and all the menials the same, but different from managers. The crux of the matter is that the Apartheid system was designed to keep Black people in inferior positions. Even when taking the Sullivan Principles in their entirety, they do not lead to any authentic equality beyond cosmetic changes. In addition to a number of renown political activists, Bishop Desmond Tutu has argued that the U.S. companies are using the Sullivan Principles as an excuse to continue providing vital resources to the Apartheid regime. It must be borne in mind that U.S. companies operating in South Africa are not necessarily under any form of obligation to play a role in molding the socio-political set-up for the good of all inhabitants in that troubled country. It is therefore our duty as students with respect for the dignity and intrinsic worth of humanity that we should champion our course for divestment.

The actions of the South African government in the last couple of months have proved that the Apartheid system is not only a technical problem for its architects, but an endemic one. First of all, rather than deal with the realities of the situation, the South African government has responded with the implementation of a series of state of emergencies. Thus, instead of moving towards the realization of the importance of the situation, the South African government has opted to move towards becoming a police state. Secondly, It is becoming more evident that change in South Africa is unlikely to be negotiated, let alone decided by use of constructive engagement. The harsh reality -- which has been denied by proponents of constructive engagement and liberals - that true change can only come to South Africa through

bloodshed and immeasurable loss of human life, is becoming a reality more so than ever before. Finally, since the last state of emergency was imposed by the South African government on June 12th, more than 250 people have died, and well over 2000 detained without charges. Given these conditions and the circumstances which South Africa is presently under, more momentum and fervor is needed to fuel the divestment movement.

To sum up: The divestment movement has a long history at Wesleyan and should continue if each successive class can keep its energy alive. Each year, it edges closer to success, more so this year than ever before. With President Colin Campbell having recently visited South Africa, it stands within reason to hope that his experiences could only improve the present Wesleyan policy in regard to S.A. Those interested in becoming involved with the divestment movement should be careful not to fall into the trap of being for or against divestment without fully understanding the issue. Though this issue may appear to be straightforward, it is somewhat complex. Take your time to familiarize yourselves with the facts.

The main activist group on campus dealing with this issue is the South African Action Group (S.A.A.G.). On the administrative side is the Board of Trustees' Social Implications of Investments Subcommittee.



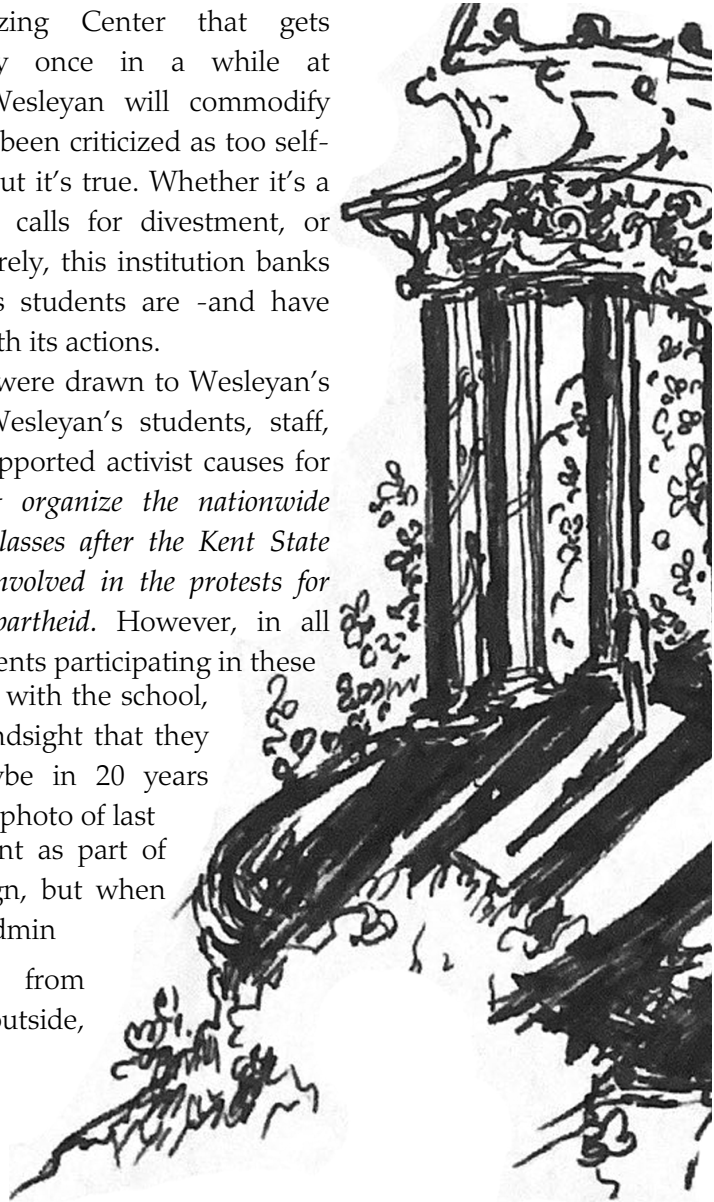
# Wesleyan Will Com

By: Ari

There is an old cardboard poster in the University Organizing Center that gets brought out every once in a while at demonstrations: "Wesleyan will commodify this protest." It has been criticized as too self-aware and cringe, but it's true. Whether it's a labor disputes, the calls for divestment, or something else entirely, this institution banks on the fact that its students are -and have been- displeased with its actions.

Many students were drawn to Wesleyan's "activist culture" Wesleyan's students, staff, and faculty have supported activist causes for years, *from helping organize the nationwide student boycott of classes after the Kent State Shooting to being involved in the protests for divestment from Apartheid.* However, in all these cases the students participating in these things were at odds with the school, and it is only in hindsight that they are rewarded. Maybe in 20 years Wesleyan will use a photo of last spring's encampment as part of advertising campaign, but when it was happening, admin

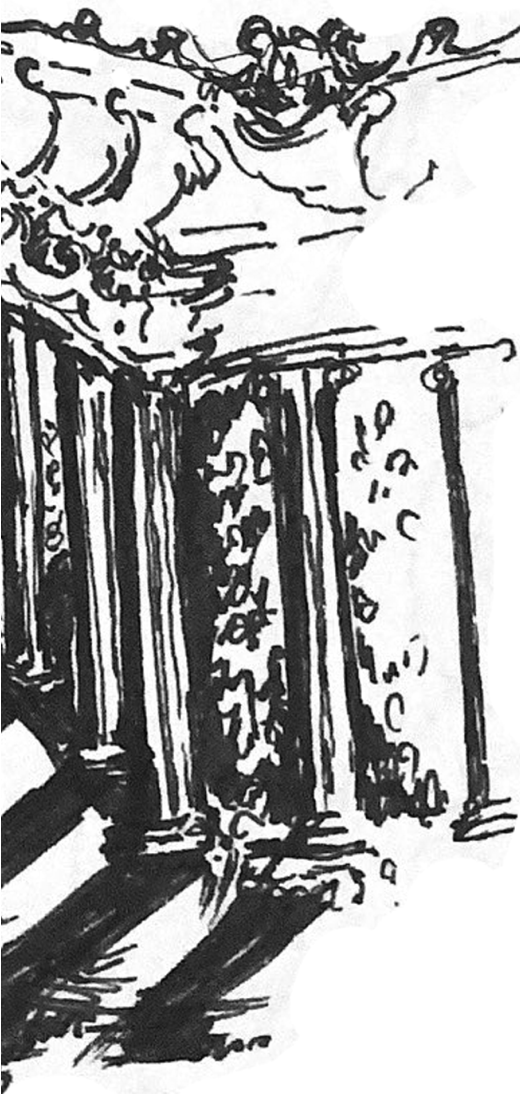
forbade professors from holding class outside, saying that it might





# modify This Article

Randall



make students opposed to divestment uncomfortable. The Five More Workers campaign was a selling point for the school, but admin didn't listen to its workers or students. Roth said taking a pay cut to pay those 5 workers (less than 1/4 of his pay that year) would be "performative."

Tour guides are told to make detours to avoid prospective students seeing protests but at the same time are told to answer questions by saying activism has a home here. However, the activist community that exists at Wes is not one the school has fostered.

Does any of this make it wrong to talk about Wes as a center of student activism? Of course not. *Wesleyan does have a culture of activism, one you might reasonably feel proud to be a part of, but that pride, insomuch as it does exist, belongs not to the institution but to the people who have worked within it, and the institution has no right to pat itself on the back about it.*

# The Wesleyan Solidarity Encampment

*By: Amira Pierotti*

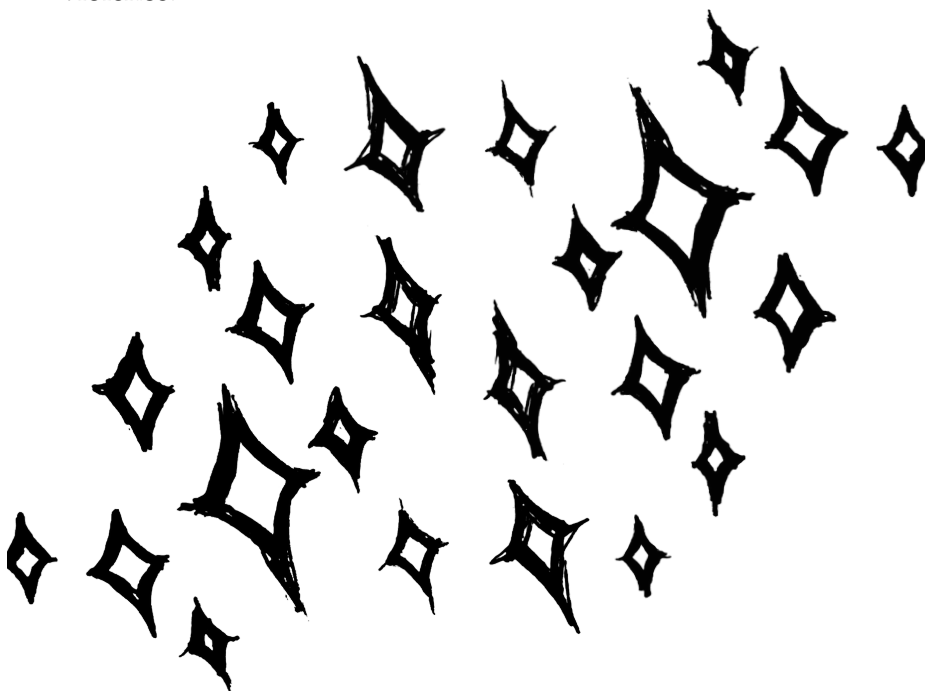
On April 28th, Wesleyan Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP) established a solidarity encampment alongside dozens of schools worldwide. Tens of thousands of Palestinians had been murdered in an incessant bombardment by the Israeli government. After the October 7th attacks, the Israeli government began a nearly year-long (and ongoing) assault on the Gaza Strip. Students across the globe stopped everything to recognize the voices of displaced and murdered Palestinians. The Wesleyan Solidarity Encampment brought attention to the ongoing genocide and tried to make Wesleyan divest from all organizations complicit in the violence. Hundreds of students camped outside of North College for the last few weeks of the 2023-2024 school year. The encampment brought hundreds of students, staff, faculty, and Middletown residents together for the largest student-run demonstration in recent Wesleyan history. The Committee of Investor Responsibility was created, a group of students and staff that brought ethical concerns about investments to the Board of Trustees. An internal review of Wesleyan's investments was conducted which determined Wesleyan was in fact invested in the Israeli government.

The encampment resolution also required the Board of Trustees to vote on divestment from the Israeli state. Encampment representatives were told by representatives of upper administration that the encampment was pointless as it was impossible to share the totality of Wesleyan's investments and that Wesleyan is not directly invested in weapons used against Palestinians. However, as the Wesleyan Solidarity Encampment noted, divestment is no longer as simple as divesting from the Israeli Occupation Forces, but also the institutions that make up the complex web of financialization which supports the IOF.

On September 20th, 2024, a group of students disrupted a Community Standards Board meeting at North College, refusing

to move until Wesleyan fully divested. President Roth called Middletown Police to remove the students almost immediately. He also reportedly threatened to suspend a student for recording him and the protest. The takeover of North College ended when five students were brought out of the building in handcuffs. None of the students were charged. The protest brought attention to the upcoming Board vote on whether or not to divest from the Israeli occupation of Gaza.

Just a day later, the Board of Trustees voted to reject a proposal from the (CIR). This proposal advocated for divestment from the U.S./Israeli war machine. Their justification was “that the endowment should not be used as a tool for political advocacy or social change” (per their campus-wide email). However, the endowment has always been used for social change, including Wesleyan’s 1990 decision to divest from South Africa’s apartheid. Money is always political and so is wealth. Don’t fall for their rhetoric. This is Wesleyan avoiding taking responsibility for the involvement it undeniably has in this violence.



# POSSE Kind Of Sucked

*By: Diego Olivieri*

The Posse program kind of sucked. Let me get it out of the way in case someone from Posse responds or someone else decides to defend Posse for free. Without Posse, I would have never known that Wesleyan University existed. Posse also teamed me up with a writing mentor who was a big reason why I received an A in my Intro to Latinx Art class. So, thank you for those two things, Posse.

But outside of that, Posse kind of sucked. Posse is a scholarship for veterans that provides no money to the University we attend. Wesleyan and U.S. taxpayers paid the entire tuition bill for my four years here. Posse is not really interested in helping veterans who do not want to go into consulting, investment banking, or politics, and they do not provide support for people interested in other areas.

When Posse asked me what I wanted to do in my career, I told them I wanted to do NGO work in Latin America, helping groups of people that had been negatively impacted by U.S. intervention in the 20th century. Posse set me up with exactly one internship, a consultant company named DGCI. The consultant group is made up of U.S. military veterans who told me in the interview that they do two things: protect oil extraction out of the Middle East and train the Honduran Military. In 2009, the Honduran military executed an illegal military coup of the country's president, and in March, the former president of Honduras was sentenced to prison for using the Honduran military to traffic cocaine into the United States. When I brought my concerns about DGCI to Posse, Posse responded with "Wow, it sounds like you would make a great professor" and completely ignored the ethical concerns I had with DGCI.

Posse sets veterans up for failure. Posse promised Wes that they would provide twenty high-quality veterans a year for Wes to choose a cohort of ten. Posse never provided those veterans. Many of the Vets Posse chose would never stand a chance at

surviving the academic rigor of a place like Wesleyan. Wesleyan knows that too. Wesleyan said that they would admit only seven to eight vets a year knowing that at least one of the vets was a massive risk because they would struggle mightily. Wesleyan Vets might not be as open to talking about this point outside of the Vet community, but within the Vet community, we know.

From my perspective, Posse cared more about the social clout and tax breaks than actually helping veterans. This does not mean that the individuals working there were not well-intentioned. Many were in it because they wanted to help.

If Wesleyan wants to help veterans the way they say they do, there are two big areas of improvement. One is housing. They cannot reasonably expect people in their late twenties, early thirties, and some in their forties to live in the housing they provide. Every veteran should be able to live in their own house or apartment. If there is not enough housing to provide that, then Wes should partner up with someone in the Middletown community so that veterans can have adequate housing for all vets and their families.

Second is the financial side. Why does the school need an extra \$1,000 from me? Realistically, if the veteran is using the GI Bill, and taking winter and summer classes, then the veterans will make close to \$25,000 a year. How much is a school with a billion-dollar endowment expecting an adult who makes \$25,000 a year to contribute? Especially when, through the Post 9/11 GI Bill, the school will receive \$20,000 a year per vet from taxpayers. If the Vet is, like me, eligible and using Chapter 31 benefits, then taxpayers pay \$64,322 a year. Other vets have their own concerns that were not heard by Posse or Wes, and if you have the time and care to listen, then I suggest you do so you can learn a little more about the veteran Posse program and the Wes veteran promise.



# Lessons from an Invasive, and Stories from Its Home

*By: Isaac Moss*

*Artemisia vulgaris*, or Common Mugwort, is one of the most common invasive plants in the state of Connecticut. It reproduces in two ways: by dispersing seeds after the plant dries out and by producing new plants from existing root networks.

Mugwort is an outstanding plant because of its resilience. Every lawn that you walk across here at Wesleyan probably has mugwort on it, not to mention the abundance of it in wild spaces around campus. It can resist mowing, most herbicides, and even burning. When you cut down mugwort, it comes right back—again and again and again.

Mugwort's strength comes from its deep root network: each piece of mugwort root stores enough nutrients, genetic information, and energy to start an entirely new mugwort plant. They lie dormant under the ground, gathering their power, until the soil warms—at which point they push through the ground, ready to grow and produce new roots. Mugwort is nigh unkillable. We must ask ourselves: what can we learn from the mighty mugwort?

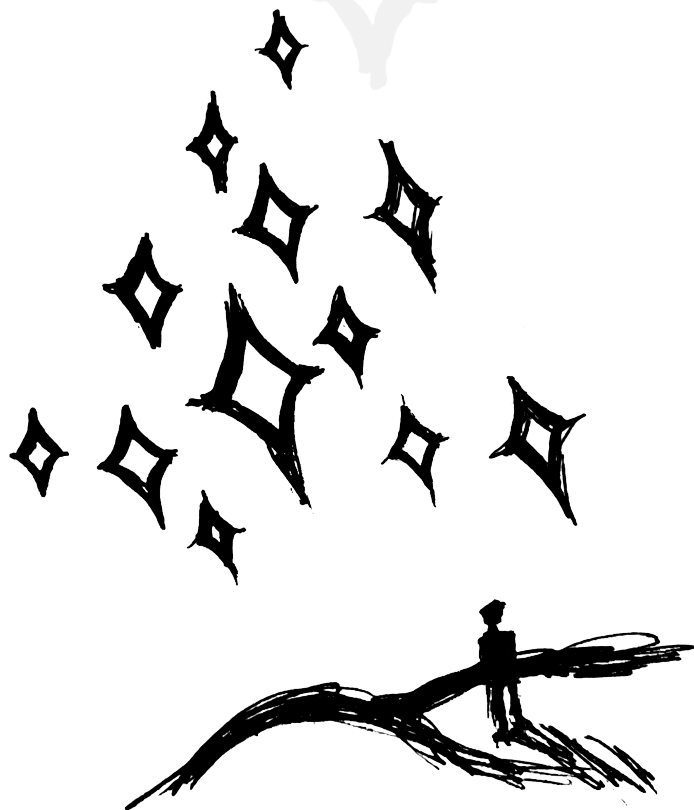
Long Lane Farm, or LLF, is a student group (and job and location) on the Wesleyan campus, dedicated to growing food for Wesleyan and the larger Middletown community. It reproduces in two ways: through word of mouth and by club drives during the school year.

Many clubs are not as resilient. Each club that you encounter here at Wesleyan can face leadership change, interpersonal turmoil, and a lack of institutional memory. The farm is no exception—so one must ask themselves, how do we fight back? How can we resist (proverbial) mowing, herbicides, and burning? How do we come back again and again and again?

The farm's strength comes from its comprehensive records and its physical place within a larger community (and our

dedicated members). There is always a physical farm that people will work at. We keep physical records so that others down the line can piece together our history, our production, and our process (everything from harvest records to tool manuals). The dedicated farmer can learn everything they need to know about the farm just from reading.

This is all to say: be like mugwort—collect your information and your power deep in storage, but where you can still utilize it. Document anything you do, especially if you think you'll do it again. Keep something for unexpected crises. And when the soil warms, burst from under the ground and grow.



# Let's Talk Fashion at Wes

By: Andrew Hsu

So you want to know about fashion at Wesleyan. You've heard that Wesleyan is an artsy school with so many well-dressed students. Everywhere you look, you see well manicured outfits that look fresh off the runway.

When I first got to campus, I had this exact same experience. I got into fashion and sewing before college and started making/upcycling clothes. Hearing that Wesleyan had a culture of fashion-forwardness is what drew me to apply here, honestly. However, when I got to campus, I did not see as many options for people looking to *make* clothes as I had hoped. There aren't any construction-based fashion classes. There are amazing options like FRAY magazine however publications like that seem to be more focused on the style aspect of fashion than sewing and design. What changed my mind was when I saw the Student of Color (SOC) Fashion Show table at the club fair. I enlisted two of my close friends, and we applied. A few days later, we set up an interview, and were approved as designers.

Being in the SOC Fashion Show has been one of the most rewarding experiences I've had at Wes. I got to see the clothes I spent countless hours on be shown off to a crowd of my peers in the coolest way possible. While being a designer was a lot of work (getting models, organizing looks, making a playlist, and rehearsals), I got to do that work with close friends of mine and get to know our 8 amazing models.

So to any incoming freshmen of color out there who are into fashion and looking for something to do, or even if you're an upperclassman that hasn't figured out your niche at Wes yet, I urge you to try out the SOC fashion show. It's an experience that you won't regret, and certainly one you will never forget.





# Vicious Circles

*By: Kayla Harrison*

Walking around campus on a chilly day, it is very likely that you will see someone wearing a gray sweatshirt with the word “VICIOUS” in bright red on the front. This is the iconic sweatshirt of Wesleyan’s non-cis-male competitive ultimate frisbee team, Vicious Circles. Founded in 1986, Vicious Circles (colloquially known as “Vish”) has been combining fitness, fun, friendship, and frisbee for decades. Vish is unique in that it is entirely student-run, self-coached team. However, that does not stop it from being one of the best D3 frisbee teams in the country, with multiple appearances at Division-III Women’s Collegiate Nationals. Although Vish is competitive, it is still incredibly inclusive and open to everyone of all frisbee abilities. No prior frisbee experience is required to join the team, and the Fall season acts as a learning season for people to learn how to play the sport while making friends with other Vishies. In addition to practices, scrimmages, games and tournaments, Vish also has many social events for vishies (and friends) to have fun outside of a frisbee context. Perhaps the biggest combination of fun and frisbee, however, is Vicious Circle’s annual trip to Myrtle Beach, South Carolina to compete in the High Tide tournament over spring break. For a week, Vish plays frisbee, lounges at the beach, and forges unbreakable friendships. Vish truly embodies the “work hard, play hard” sentiment.

Vish is a very queer space (although obviously one does not have to be queer to join the team). This is partially due to USA Ultimate’s emphasis on queer acceptance and gender equity and exemplified by how players are allowed to compete in whatever gender division makes them feel the most comfortable. Vish also emphasizes the importance of equity both on and off the field.

Whether you are looking to play intense frisbee, casually toss plastic, make friends (or perhaps more than that :)), find community, or all of the above, you should join Vicious Circles!

# **Wesleyan Women in Science**

*By: Victoria Dozer, Ishani Dave, and Mikoto Nakamura*

Wesleyan Women in Science (WesWIS) is a student group dedicated to addressing the issues affecting female-identifying and non-male students in STEM. The group has a Steering Committee made up of women from all classes and majors which come together to organize opportunities for other non-male STEM students. However, membership is open to all with no requirements.

Each semester, we plan a packed few months of events. Our activities range from pre-professional opportunities to panel discussions to community-building functions. Our events are not only aimed at building a student's resume but also advocate for equity within Wesleyan departments. WesWIS addresses topics like imposter syndrome, failure, and how to navigate underrepresentation.

Some of our events include the Alumni Career Panel, the Stargazing and Hot Chocolate event at the observatory, and the Faculty Failure Panel, where faculty candidly discuss the obstacles they've faced through their careers. We have dedicated faculty advisor, Dr. Meredith Hughes of the Astronomy department, and a network of female and nonbinary professors supporting our activities. We also partner with groups like WesMASS, SACNAS, and the Jelly Rolls to plan events.

Currently, the group has eight steering committee members and hundreds of student participants. We seek students who are dedicated to tackling relevant issues for women and nonbinary people in STEM, and who are seeking community spaces. All majors and identities are welcome in the club, and no membership sign-up is required to attend events.

You can find us on instagram @weswomeninscience and join the mailing list by emailing [adane@wesleyan.edu](mailto:adane@wesleyan.edu)!

# Community, Brought to You by the Resource Center

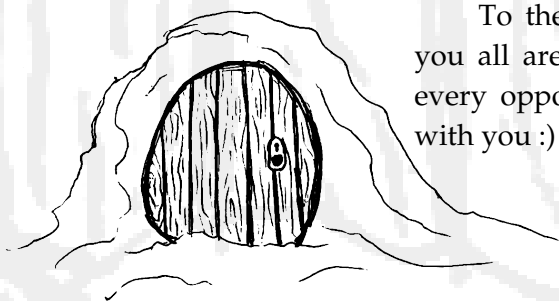
*By: Zain Punjwani*

As someone who was completely out of his element by coming to Wes, the Resource Center (RC) helped me find community at a private, elite, PWI. The first connection I built were through First Things First (FTF), a program designed for prefrash FGLI students to get to know Wes and each other. FTF was where I made my first friend at Wes and how I got my job at the RC! Every year, the RC supports and uplifts students of varying identities with a range of events: Ankhsgiving, the Winter Clothing Connection Program, many identity month events, and more. For many students, the RC is where community building happens.

Because it was born out of student protest, advocacy for oneself and one's community is embedded in the very foundation of the RC. Events range from study sessions to formals and are the perfect spaces for students to get to know one another, take time for themselves, and celebrate.

The RC provides validation to underrepresented communities who struggle to find a place in the academic setting. With validation comes feelings of acceptance and, thus, a doorway to embracing ourselves. I am forever grateful to the RC for not only letting me get my bag as a student worker but also for providing space to connect with other FGLI students and students of color. I have learned so much about myself, how to uplift myself and my peers, and lean on others when I need.

To the wonderful RC staff members, you all are so amazing and I have loved every opportunity this past year to work with you :)



# Psi U and Sociability

*By: Sophie Clapacs*

When I came to Wesleyan, I made a point to know no one. I trusted everything would work itself out. I knew two things about the school when I committed to going here: 1. It's mentioned in *How I Met Your Mother* a lot, and 2. Kids here like to smoke weed and sit around listening to indie music.

That second impression created an idealistic picture. I seriously thought that was what my next four years were going to be like. In my first weekend, I squeezed my way into crowded parties on Fountain, ate and regurgitated a chicken sandwich from the Dope Fried Food truck (r.i.p.), and learned what the term "NARP" means. Finally, I was in college.

Everyone formed a friend group, but there was no greater sense of community, like a sea of high school cliques. Now, as I'm finishing my third year, I was asked to write about my perspective based on my time as a brother of Psi Upsilon.

PsiU, from the outside, seemed like a group of kids that sat around being cool all day. I was reluctant to join until friends encouraged me. From my first days in the organization, it was emphasized that the mission of the group was promoting social space for everyone and reckoning with its history as a fraternity.

I think that for a lot of people, a space with a main objective of universal connection and providing a social outlet for a whole campus seems unnecessary. It certainly did for me for a while. What I've learned is that when people tell you that college is going to be "the best four years of your life," they mean that you get the opportunity to make a community out of anything, and let it be fun. So, if you find yourself halfway through your freshman year with a community in a big house on High St. or in a study room in SciLi, fight that seemingly irrelevant fight to keep things social and connected, for school culture's sake.

# **Red Tape and No Money: How a Lack of Support is Harming Sustainability @ Wes**

*By: Lily Krug*

Walking on High Street in Middletown, Connecticut, you may pass a little blue building that looks like it could be a house in a fairy book. You wouldn't know it by just looking, but tucked into that building is the office of Jen Kleindienst, a superhero of Wesleyan. Jen is not only one of the kindest and most hardworking people I have ever met. She manages 30+ employees (most of them students who work at the Sustainability Office) and spearheads many of the sustainability projects and initiatives that take place on campus.

Despite creating so much positive change at Wesleyan, Jen, and more specifically the Sustainability Office, are consistently met with red tape and a lack of support. The biggest way this presents itself is through funding. Similarly to any type of programing on campus, many of the programs that the Sustainability Office runs require funding. But the university is very stingy with the way they distribute funding for sustainability initiatives on campus.

One example of this is the Xtra Mile Shuttle Service, which is run by River Valley Transit. The Xtra Mile Shuttle Service is a fairly new project to help go beyond the bounds of Wesleyan's campus. This encourages students to engage with the community of Middletown, even if they do not have access to a car. The Sustainability Office has worked with River Valley Transit to make the cost free to Wesleyan students when they show their IDs. While this seems like a great program that would benefit both Middletown and Wesleyan, the Sustainability Office has received a lot of pushback from the university, even though the agreement with River Valley Transit only requires Wesleyan to pay half the cost of the program.

A similar situation occurs every spring and fall when the beloved Wesleyan program called Waste Not occurs. Waste Not is a Wesleyan yard sale where people can donate any and all belongings (kitchen supplies, furniture, etc.) at the end of the spring semester and it is sold at low cost values in the beginning of the fall semester. This program prevents large amounts of stuff from going to landfills every year and is more cost effective than purchasing new items, making it especially beneficial for FGLI students. Wesleyan provides no money for the program.

In the past, the money made at Waste Not goes towards supporting the program the following year, with the remainder donated to an organization voted on by the volunteers. Recently, there have been conversations among the Waste Not Coordinators about trying to pay those who in past years would volunteer. This would incentivize more people to work for both collection in the Spring and the sale in the fall, and, in turn it would help Waste Not be a more successful program, raising more money for the following year. Because Wesleyan does not give Waste Not any financial support, it is not possible to pay workers. Even if we used the money we donate, we would not have nearly enough to pay minimum wage for the many hours people work.



Another problem encountered during Waste Not is issues related to Wesleyan's electric vehicles (EV). The EVs are small, two person trucks that are crucial for the Sustainability Office work. EVs are used by Waste Not workers to transport large items. Every year, Waste Not workers many trips to move all the items from donation bins to the Waste Not garages. Compost Interns heavily use the EVs to transport compost bins. While an EV can hold many compost buckets at once, but one EV is so rundown that it typically dies at 50% battery and must be recharged, which can take a couple hours. While

recharging, Compost Interns are told that they can use a van but must keep it smelling good, an impossible task when transporting multiple buckets of smelly compost around in an enclosed van.

While the Sustainability Office has made countless requests to the university to purchase a new EV through new money requests, they have consistently been told that it is their responsibility to replace it because it is used by the Sustainability Office. But in reality, Physical Plant and many sports teams also use the two EVs that Wesleyan owns. While the Sustainability Office makes up only one-third (less than half) of the groups that use the EVs, they are repeatedly told it is their responsibility to fund a replacement, all while university programs outside of the Sustainability Office use the EV more than the office does.

If the Sustainability Office had the budget to purchase a new EV they would, but where the office stands right now, they do not have enough budget to even pay all the workers in the office. In fact, multiple necessary office positions—five positions that are always in the office and nine that come and go—are paid through the College of the Environment (COE), the Green Fund, Academic Affairs, and the Allbritton budgets because the university does not give the Sustainability Office nearly enough money to pay the students who work in the office. While it is generous of other organizations like the COE and the Green Fund to support the office in this way, it is not their responsibility to fund the Sustainability Office, but the university's job. To add onto the problem, even with the help from other parts of campus, there is not enough money to pay student workers for all the hours they work. In fact, many of the student workers last year were asked to only work a certain, lower than usual, amount of hours towards the end of the year so the office would not go over budget.

While the issues listed above are the main, ongoing problems occurring in the Sustainability Office and are all direct results of a lack of resources given to the office from the university, Wesleyan shows their lack of support in other ways as well. One

clear example occurred during this past Homecoming Weekend. One office worker made clear and colorful graphics to help explain the various steps of the Sustainability Strategic Plan (SSP). The SSP shows the steps Wesleyan plans to take to make campus more sustainable and place a greater emphasis on environmental justice in both the curriculum and campus-community. The Sustainability Office used the graphics to make small, yard sign-like about the SSP and placed them around central campus to help raise awareness about the SSP during Homecoming Weekend. Nothing on the signs said anything bad about the university. In fact, they were good publicity for the university, showing the sustainability work being done. Yet, the office was requested to take down the signs. The reason given by the university was that “sustainability was not a priority of the weekend”, once again showing how little respect and support Wesleyan has for the Sustainability Office.



To the students who work in the Sustainability Office, it is clear that behind the navigation of all these issues, the management of 30+ employees, and the consistent advocacy for sustainable efforts sits only Jen. She manages all of this on her own. She is constantly trying to find support for the office and programs it runs, all while completing her own job. It is because of this that she, and many of the students who work for her, have been advocating for a second full time position to be added to the Sustainability Office to help support the office, the programs it runs, and Jen. In fact, Jen has requested a second full time position four times—everytime, she has been told no.



Annie Volker, a student worker in the Sustainability Office, shared that in a meeting with Michael Roth, she advocated for a second full time position to be added to the Sustainability Office. Roth responded by saying that it wouldn't be sustainable. It is a line that feels like he was attempting to make light of a very serious and necessary ask, possibly alluding to the joking manner the university views the Sustainability Office, a manner that results in all of the issues explained throughout this article.



The problems with the Sustainability Office speak to a larger issue throughout campus—a lack of support and funding for offices and departments that support their student workers' activism and organizing. The Sustainability Office, the Jewett Center for Community Partnerships, and the Resource Center, just to name a few, are underfunded and unable to receive the support they need. These offices, and others like them, are constantly trying to do the most with the little they have. They support their student workers, both on the job and in the organizing they do outside of their jobs, all while running programming and receiving very little from the university administration.

While the problems the Sustainability Office is facing are present and prevalent, the office is not an anomaly. More support—both financial and other—is needed for offices and departments across campus. The Wesleyan administration needs to realize that it is these programs that create the campus community they like to brag about so much.

# **Monopsony and the End of Labor Peace at Wesleyan**

*By: Ruby Clarke*

More than a thousand Wesleyan Students work for the University every year. Hundreds of thousands of hours are worked by students for the University. And yet, many are paid just above minimum wage and have stressful relationships with their bosses.

This is a MONOPSONY: when one company has control of all the jobs within a given sector or location (like a University) and is able to unfairly control the value of wages. Many students are forced to work on campus because of their visa status, student loans, or lack of feasible ability to maintain external employment without sufficient means (car, long blocks of time, etc). Unlike other workplaces, however, working for a University as a student provides no meaningful opportunity for competition. Students don't choose where they go to school simply because of the school's wages in a particular on-campus job. Thus, there is no 'market rate' for their labor because there is no market. A market needs competitive movement, and students provide a captive and wanting working population.

Starting in the 2021-2022 school year, undergraduate Wesleyan students began organizing their workplaces because the state of monopsony in their workplaces had led to a twenty-year stagnation in pay. In March of 2022, the Wesleyan Union of Student Employees (WesUSE) representing all Resident Assistants, Community Advisors, and House Managers on campus went public and successfully won through card check less than a week later. In Spring 2023, Dining Workers United (DWU) went public representing undergraduate dining workers at BonApp and locations managed by two people named Ed and Karen. After significant persuasion, DWU was able to win a card check at both locations. In Spring 2024, the Wesleyan Graduate Labor Union (WesGLU) went public, however, things were different.

Up until 2024, Wesleyan had maintained positive labor relations on our campus. No other student labor union has been voluntarily recognized besides those at Wesleyan University. Wesleyan has ended this era of Labor Peace. This past spring, Wesleyan hired a new head of Labor Relations who had previously worked at Trinity Health, a workplace notorious for contentious and anti-union sentiment. I, the author, was invited to sit in on the final interview process, during which he said he didn't believe in card checks.

When WesGLU went public, instead of using the card check mechanism as had been established as the norm at Wesleyan, the new head of Labor Relations decided to go forward with an election and hire Littler and Mendelson, a law firm notorious for its union busting tactics.

Wesleyan has decided to end its era of labor peace at Wesleyan *and we must respond*. Who is Wesleyan without its workers? Without its graduate students? We must support WesGLU and all workers on campus!

Interested in learning more and getting involved?

INSTAGRAMS

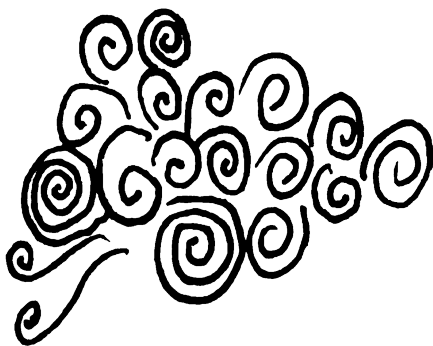
WesGLU - @wesglu

WesUSE - @wes.use

DWU - @wes.dwu

Ruby - author - @ruby.raye

JOIN United Student Labor Action Coalition <https://wesuslac.org/>



# Meet Michael Roth

*By: Miles Horner*

Description: Want to learn more about our university president, Dr. Michael Roth? Read an online article where you can actually hear his voice as he denies genocide, spouts big oil propaganda, and stands up for his shitty friends! Either scan the QR code or go to [bit.ly/meetmichaelroth](http://bit.ly/meetmichaelroth) !!



# The Anatomy of Accountability

*By: Amira Pierotti*

We've all heard the thinkpieces and podcasts of disgruntled adults railing against cancel culture. Most of the time, we roll our eyes while grumbling "OK Boomer" under our breaths. It's hard to take these criticisms seriously when they're lodged between complaints that this generation is full of snowflakes. Our generation has high expectations of each other, and for good reason. Every person should try to be less of a dick. Wesleyan's campus is skilled at calling people out and pointing out every mistake or faux pas a person makes. This is necessary, at times, when an individual is not taking advantage of opportunities to grow. But we have forgotten how to give people the opportunity to fuck up, learn, grow, and most importantly, be forgiven.

Accountability has become a buzzword and for all of the wrong reasons. At its core, accountability is simple: acknowledge the harms you caused, try to right your wrongs, and prevent similar wrongdoings. But accountability in leftist spaces has devolved into public shaming rather than an opportunity for growth. The demand for accountability at the Wes is often a display of moral superiority, of proving I-am-better-than-you. Once an individual is deemed problematic, they find themselves ostracized, with no opportunity to do better. This helps no one. If students do not have a chance to learn from their mistakes, they are likely to make the same mistakes in the future. We are setting each other up to cause more harm.

One of the most rewarding friendships I have made on this campus only blossomed because we gave each other grace as we learned. They were a little



antisemitic to me, as I was their first Jewish friend. I was a little classist to them. We were idiots, we talked, we grew, and we are now comfortable enough to joke about it. Neither of us held any hate in our hearts, we simply did not know better. Putting each other on blast to be fodder for the rest of campus would not have helped either of us become better people. One of the joys of college for me has been meeting people who are fundamentally different from myself. And I have fucked up. I've been ignorant. We all have. But it's only from our mistakes that we can grow, and that's the beautiful part of growing up.

This is nothing revolutionary, but it's an important thing to remember as we enter the 2024-25 school year. This may be one of the most left-leaning spaces in the country, but you will still hear problematic things. Be prepared for that, but be prepared to correct when possible, forgive when you're able, and move on.



# Have you been disoriented?

## What to do now:

- Join some things! Try to find spaces that feel good to you, and remember to stay open to new change and new people
- Attend events! Campus culture is here again post-COVID, but that doesn't happen by accident
- Text someone you haven't seen in a while! A community of care is built out of small gestures

The Disorientation team is incredibly grateful to you for picking up this zine and informing yourself. We hope that we have awakened something in you that won't die down until you take action yourself.

Four years can fly by when you're having fun, and we think that the perfect four should make you feel like you have lived every facet of your being at this school. For us, that has meant late-night studying, late-morning partying, plenty of good food and exercise when we can help it, and answering the call to action.

*So fly, Cardinal fly!*

*Spread your wings and swoop between the buildings and construction projects that dot our beloved campus.*

Make a beautiful ruckus.

**Follow @disorientation.wes on IG  
to get involved and stay informed**

Want more? Check out '22, '23 for:

- Wesleyan Admin power map & salaries
- Hiring & firing at Wes
- How to host a party
- Housing insecurity status
- Navigating Hook up culture
- How COVID Changed Wes



Thank you to all the people that made this zine possible.  
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Solidarity forever!

