

Political club takes a different stance on politics

College Heights Herald: Western Kentucky University

March 26, 2020 Thursday

University Wire

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 1

Length: 504 words

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Body

There are clubs at WKU that serve as a safe haven for people to express their political beliefs, like the Young Democrat Club and College Republicans. Another club has stepped up to include everyone no matter the affiliation.

Western Thought Club is a nonpartisan group that discusses everything about politics. The club was started by Kyle Bale and Kevin Ownes in Fall 2017.

Owens and Bale named the club with an intended play on words - the Western school of thought and the fact that WKU is simply known as Western.

"We wanted a nonpartisan club where we could come together and discuss anything that we wanted," club President Jesse Ricketts said.

In creating the club Owens and Bale also desired an informalized club where everyone could get together and foster a strong sense of camaraderie. The objective is to have open political discourse.

"We might not agree with each other, but we are able to acknowledge the other person's point of view and be open to even conceding to their perspective," member Ethan Berg said.

Another objective of the club is tolerance and always being ready to learn. Ricketts said people come to the table with different expertise and backgrounds, and in the process of collective learning members hope to become more informed on topics.

"There are gonna be people more informed than you are on certain topics, and you're gonna be more informed on certain topics than other club members are," Ricketts said.

Because the club welcomes anyone, members are able to listen to the different perspectives others have. Berg recalled a time when a member who is Chinese-American showed him different cultural perspectives.

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"When we talk about issues, he points out how Americans approach a certain issue, which is different from the Chinese perspective," Berg said. "It was interesting to learn about that and to be able to clearly see that difference."

Another example of learning from one another is how Owens helped others understand economics and politics because he is an economics major.

"There are a lot of things in economics I had know clue about," Ricketts said. "That was definitely something huge that he was able to be a huge help with in the aspect of discussion."

Club meetings typically start with a pre-selected topic, where everyone comes together. Ricketts tends to have questions to start everything off or to ignite a discussion and then lets everyone else take off with the subject.

"Sometimes we'll go around the table and let everyone have a chance to speak on the topic or share their opinion on something we're discussing," Ricketts said. "It's very freeformed and relaxed."

The club accepts anyone who wants to join and take in opinions that may vary so they themselves can learn and see the other side of things.

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Load-Date: March 27, 2020