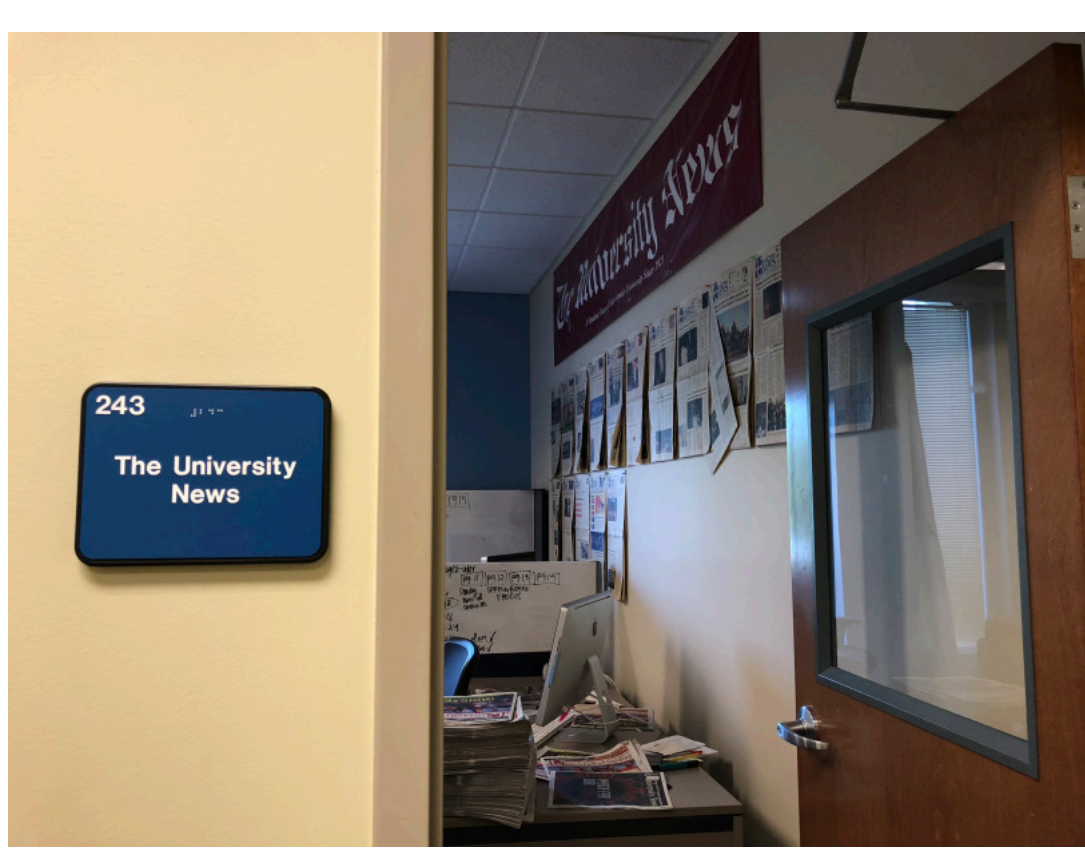


STUDENT MEDIA MOVED TO SMALLER SPACES



On national #savestudentnewsrooms day, the actions taken by Saint Louis University Student Government Association and administration demonstrated the inspiration behind a movement on campus across America.

On April 25, Saint Louis University's student run paper, the University News, was moved to a smaller location. The relocation of U-News follows the relocation of SLU-TV in 2016, leading many students to wonder if there is a disregard for student-produced media.

For the staff of U-News, the notification came as a surprise. According to U-News Editor in Chief, Megan Anthony, the staff was not given any previous indication about any change for the upcoming school year.

Anthony said, "this confusion soon turned to frustration because the administration continued to insist that we didn't ask the right people for help, but we didn't even know this was happening, so how do we ask for help?"

Little did the staff know, a panel of two representatives of the Student Government Association, or SGA, and SLU administration had been discussing the situation for some time. However, SGA technically has no authority over U-News, since they are not a Chartered Student Organization (CSO) under SGA.

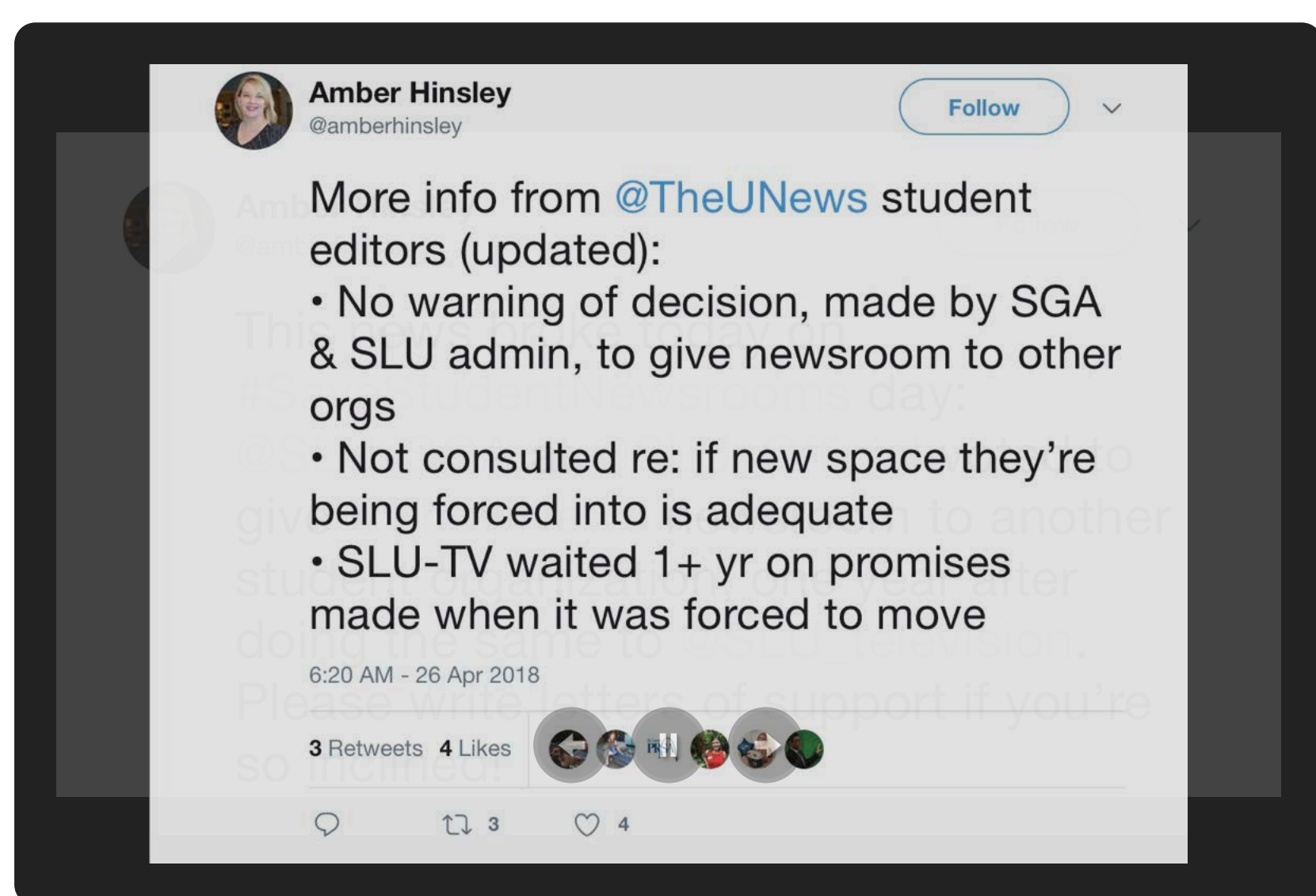
What sets U-News apart from other student organizations and most other newspapers in the country, is that U-News is self-funded. U-News receives no money from SLU and relies on advertising to fund its endeavors.

In fact, Bobby Stillwell, sports editor, said U-News is "a bargain for the University to work with us because they don't pay for much."

Many staff members of the U-News are worried. Anthony explained how she feels the future of U-News is in danger. Due to the space constraints, the incoming editorial board has no room for meetings. But the problems reach far wider.

Anthony is most worried about how the loss of their current office will detract from the collaboration within U-News, expecting some staffers to drop when they realize they'll be working alone. "When we have less staff, it affects our product, which affects our readers. It's a chain reaction that in five to ten years will be evident across SLU's campus," said Anthony.

Amber Hinsley, SLU's communication professor and a former journalist, posted her opinions on social media.



Hinsley empathized with administration, but didn't agree with the steps they took. Hinsley said, "not notifying the U-News that their newsroom was under consideration for being given away and not offering student editors an opportunity to make a case for staying in their space is unacceptable." She continued, "the university's decision to move the newsroom with no input from the student editors demonstrates an absolute lack of respect for student media and its position as the voice of students."

The move sounds eerily similar to another student news organization, SLU-TV, which was moved from their studio last year into a storage closet in the KSLU studio.

<https://youtu.be/-bjKcdf1xsU>

Unlike U-News, SLU-TV is a CSO under SGA giving them more room to appeal. However, when SLU-TV Executive Board Members attempted to appeal, SGA didn't allow SLU-TV to fight for their studio.

SGA notified SLU-TV during midterms of Fall 2016, but gave them barely a week to move all of their equipment out of their studio. Like U-News, there was no previous indicator that change was coming.

When SLU-TV asked for reasons why, SGA told SLU-TV that they didn't do enough for the community to warrant the size of the space they occupied. However, SLU-TV president, Kayla Colwell responded, "a large studio is needed for what we do."

SLU-TV's process after relocation has been a long and slow one. Although they moved during midterms of Fall 2016, their studio was not finished until January 2018. SLU-TV placed a request with the Student Involvement Center (SIC) for a door, desk, chairs, computer table, and a new coat of paint. Colwell wishes she would have done everything herself saying "it would have been way more reliable" than counting on the SIC. Still today, the studio can't fit most of SLU-TV's equipment. "I tried to stay optimistic," said Colwell, "but it became really hard when the process was glacier slow to set up the new studio."

This relocation and subsequent waiting game caused SLU-TV to scrap its weekly live newscasts and limited their production to only three videos during 2016-2017 school year.

Colwell offered U-News some solace during this difficult time. Colwell said, "know that all media groups on campus are standing behind you and are ready to fight with you. SLU Media is stronger than what SLU thinks it is."

According to Anthony, U-News has appealed the decision, but is working together with SGA to come to a compromise.

According to the official notification, SGA was planning to make the office a common space for cultural groups. However, U-News staff thought that using the empty areas in residence halls would be better equipped for cultural groups.

Student journalists at SLU are not alone in their problems. Recently a campaign emerged on Twitter to bring awareness to diminishing student newsrooms called #savestudentnewsrooms. According to the organizations website, #savestudentnewsrooms educates people about threats to student-run newsrooms and features testimonials from past and present student journalists. To learn more, visit <https://savestudentnewsrooms.com>.