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FEATURED

UNL student publishes dystopian novel

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Keegan Long holds his book "The Revelation" on Monday, Jan. 29, 2018 in Love Library, in Lincoln, Nebraska.

Photo by Jackson Wilford

When he was younger, University of Nebraska-Lincoln sophomore Keegan Long was never into writing. He always preferred to read. During his freshman year of high school, his passion for writing began to grow, but he never thought his work would get published.

Growing up, Long frequently read books such as “Harry Potter” and “The Hunger Games.” While reading the stories he loved, Long said he began to brainstorm ideas of stories he wanted to write.

“I was inspired by all these other different stories that I liked, and I just kinda wanted to create my own version,” Long said.

About four or five years ago, Long said he began to write a story that would later become his first novel, “The Awakening.” After spending a year on the first draft, Long decided to scrap what he had and start over.

“It was kind of an off and on, like I would go to it, and then I would go to it, and then I would leave it,” Long said. “There are certain aspects of the original draft that I kept in it, but it just didn’t feel right.”

The book series, titled “A New Revolution,” takes place in a futuristic dystopian society in which the United States no longer exists. After all technology is hacked and turns against the human race, a new world order is established. Long’s main character, Delaney, decides enough is enough and rallies a team together to stop it.

“It’s more about all these characters coming together, going on adventures, discovering these secrets, and figuring out how to destroy [the tyranny],” Long said.

When coming up with the plot and the characters for his books, Long decided to base all of his characters off people in his life.

Long said every character in the novel has the same name, physical features and personality as their real-life counterpart.

“I just wanted to create adventure with people I knew,” Long said.

As for the plot, Long said a lot of his inspiration came from “The Maze Runner” series. He said the stories made him want to write futuristic novels, though he wanted to put his own twist on them.

During his freshman year at UNL, Long decided he wanted to publish his books to give others the opportunity to read his story.

At first, Long used a company called Blurb that allowed him to self-print his books so his friends and family could read them.

"I did that for a little bit because at first I was just kinda doing it for myself," Long said.

Long then began to go through Amazon, which allows authors to self-publish their work.

"I wanted to make it more available for not just me and my close friends, but I wanted it to be more available to my friends and if they wanted to pass it on to their friends," Long said.

After his book was published, Long said being able to hold his own novel in his hands was a surreal experience.

"I didn't think it was ever gonna happen," Long said. "I was surprised. Just to see your name on something, rather than someone else's name, it's very [strange]."

As for his future, Long's friends and family, including his roommate, UNL junior Ethan Stuckwisch, believes he has the potential to be a successful author if he continues writing after college.

"He is really passionate about his writings and just needs a little promotion to really take off," Stuckwisch said. "He definitely has the potential to be a successful author if he sets his mind to it."

Though Long has plans to continue writing in his future, his main focus after college will be teaching. However, he has no plans of letting his future career get in the way of his writing.

"I love basically being able to go to a different world and not having to think of this one," Long said. "I'll definitely continue writing as I get more ideas and see more things that inspire me."

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