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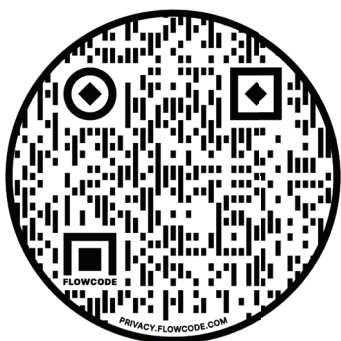
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SHU Announces 2021 Commencement

BY CITLALLI GODINEZ
News Editor

On Feb. 26, Provost Rupendra Paliwal provided commencement plans for the Class of 2021 in an email.

“We are excited to tell you that plans for your commencement exercises are starting to come together,” said Paliwal. “While there are still many details for the commencement planning committee to work out, we wanted to share what we know – in particular the dates – so you and your family can start making plans.”

Commencement will be held with three different ceremonies for undergraduates and one for graduate students.

On Wednesday, May 19, the College of Arts & Sciences and St. Vincent’s College with the College of Nursing and College of Health Professions will graduate.

On Thursday, May 20, the College of Business & Technology and College of Education will graduate.

On Saturday, May 22, all graduate programs will attend commencement.

“It is going to happen,” said President John Petillo. “It will be a commencement unless some horrific outbreak happens, and the state says forget about it. We have to have it outdoors. If not, we can’t have it.”

As to why the university is planning separate graduation days, Dean of Students Lawrence Wielk said, “It’s basically the only way we can do it. If we had the class graduate at once, then we would not be allowed to have guests.”

Some seniors were disappointed about the location and size of the crowd.

“After receiving the email regarding the graduation decision, I had mixed emotions. I was relieved, yet still felt I would not be getting the full SHU experience of the overwhelming crowd of friends and loved ones filling the stands of the Webster Bank Arena,” said senior Kali D’Agostinis.

Others said they missed the additional celebrations that are part of graduating from Sacred Heart.

“I am happy that we get to graduate but upset that we do not have any other activities leading up to graduation. There is nothing to look forward to graduation because there are no senior events,” said senior Brenna Leonard.

Overall, seniors were grateful that a ceremony could be possible during the pandemic.

“I feel very fortunate that the university has something planned for my graduating class. This is a difficult time for everyone, college seniors especially, so I definitely think that it’s as fair as it can get,” said senior Nicole O’Connell.

For international students, it can be harder to restrict family members.

“I do feel sad about only being able to bring two guests because we’re a family of four. It’s been hard going into this journey without them so having them there would have been nice,” said senior Marlis Prieto. “I’m just grateful I’m not missing the experience of having a

graduation ceremony, even though not all my family is going to be there.”

“It is time to pray for a sunny day. There will be a commencement rain or shine,” said Petillo.

The logistics of commencement are still being finalized. Michael Iannazzi, Vice President for Marketing and Communications, said that there are sub-committees in place to make commencement memorable.

“Every sub-committee, music, AV and registrar are meeting to discuss what they do for commencement and how they would adapt given this scenario,” said Iannazzi. “A lot of those logistics need to be worked out. I think we can do everything that has been done or all traditional aspects.”

Administrators and faculty are working together to provide a COVID-19-friendly yet distanced ceremony.

“Chairs set up on the field will be 6 feet apart. There will not be a handshake when handing out the diploma. Everyone will have their masks on,” said Wielk. “We want to make it as close to our commencement as possible. We are planning on incorporating all the normal tendencies.”

It is a tradition for every student to take a picture with President Petillo. Some students wondered whether he would be able to do so.

“I’m planning on doing it,” said Petillo. “They’re advising me that I can’t, but I’m hoping we can at least take a picture.”

As the semester continues, so do precautions on campus.

“Stay in the course. We are going to continue weekly mandatory testing. We will probably test the class the week prior to commencement,” said Wielk. “Hopefully we’ll be at a point where we don’t have to test parents but rather do a temperature check as they walk in.”

There are still challenges ahead even before commencement occurs.

“It concerns us with Easter coming back. Everyone is going home but everyone is going to have to get tested,” said Petillo. “Keep the Pioneer Promise. Don’t slack off.”

In other developments, Sacred Heart has opened a vaccination site that will begin giving vaccinations on March 10 under the rules of the state of Connecticut. In addition, there are more plans for the spring.

“We have to do more activities for our students as the weather gets nicer, but we need to be prudent,” said Wielk.

“In the next couple of weeks, we are going to be allowing students to watch sports outdoors on the field. There will be a capacity that the state requires,” said Petillo. “At least we’re going to let them be there.”

Many students remain hopeful that there will be a lot of positive changes, including for their commencement.

“Since May is some time away, a lot can happen. I have hopes that based on data and COVID-19 rates, SHU’s decision for the 2021 commencement can be improved within the months to come,” said D’Agostinis.



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News

Sacred Heart to House COVID-19 Vaccination Site

BY **FRANCESCA COMPAGNO**
Staff Writer

On Feb. 23, Sacred Heart University's Coronavirus Planning Team announced that a vaccination site on campus would open on March 8.

University President John Petillo said Hartford Healthcare wanted to partner with Sacred Heart for a vaccination site on campus, and St. Vincent's Medical Center will administer the vaccine.

"Our mission is to engage with the community around us," said Petillo. "St. Vincent's is administering the vaccine, so they decide the priority list for people."

Even though it is a convenient site on campus, Sacred Heart community members will not receive special considerations. However, Sacred Heart students are able to volunteer at the site.

"Students can go when their age group is available," said Petillo. "However, there is a call for student volunteers to administer the vaccine. They then can receive the vaccine."

Around campus, students are excited for the vaccination site to open.

"I think this is a great idea, so SHU students have easy access when it is their turn to receive the vaccine," said sophomore Joseph Winterhalter. "Hopefully when more students receive it, our campus will open up more since there will be fewer people able to contract the virus."

Gary MacNamara, Executive Director of Public Safety, said that Sacred Heart stepped up when the state of Connecticut needed more vaccination sites.

"The site will open in the West Campus Atrium," said MacNamara. "The first day of vaccinations is currently scheduled for Wednesday, March 10."

Although the vaccination site will be on Sacred Heart's campus, Sacred Heart will not be responsible for scheduling appointments.

"In order to get vaccinated, you must make an appointment through the Hartford Healthcare system," said MacNamara. "More information, such as the type of vaccine administered, will come when the state expands vaccine eligibility."

The state of Connecticut recently expanded vaccine eligibility to Pre-K-12 educators and child providers as well as residents and workers within the state who are 55+.

"Based on that eligibility list, we here at SHU were able to upload and register students who were in clinical placements, as well as some staff responding to medical calls on campus or those facilitating transportation for COVID-19 positive cases," said MacNamara. "As that eligibility list expanded, we then uploaded staff who were over 75, then over 65, and recently those 55 and older."

With more people eligible to receive the vaccine, campus may look different next semester.

"The more people within our community who receive the vaccine will go a long way to loosening restrictions and getting us back on the path of normalcy," said MacNamara.

"It won't happen overnight. But I do anticipate that over time, more restrictions will be removed if community spread is low."

Having a vaccination site at West Campus can be especially beneficial to younger students.

"Freshmen and most sophomores don't have cars on campus and cannot travel off-campus easily to get vaccinated," said senior Rachel LoJacono, a nursing major. "If they are able to get the vaccine here at Sacred Heart, then it will be fairly easy and convenient for them to do it here."

The vaccination site is not only beneficial for students, but also the Bridgeport community.

"It is a great idea to have a vaccination site on campus since it allows people easy access in the surrounding area," said LoJacono. "The more vaccination sites there are in the area, the faster we can vaccinate the population and hopefully get a better handle on the pandemic."



RIEANNA FLORES / SPECTRUM

SACRED HEART UNIVERSITY IS TO OPEN A VACCINATION SITE AT THEIR WEST CAMPUS ON MARCH 8. WHERE VACCINES WILL BE ADMINISTERED BY ST. VINCENT'S MEDICAL CENTER STAFF.

Johnson & Johnson Vaccine Approved by FDA

BY **JULIA HALLISEY**
Assistant News Editor

On Saturday, Feb. 27, Johnson & Johnson (J&J) became the third COVID-19 vaccine authorized for emergency use in the United States. However, unlike its predecessors, the J&J vaccine only requires one dose instead of two, which is something health experts have been waiting for.

"I think since there is only one vaccine to be given, it will affect the speed of the vaccine and more people will be able to get vaccinated quicker," said Dr. Theresa Soltis, a professor in Sacred Heart University's nursing program.

The J&J vaccine study spanned over three continents, and results were 66% effective in preventing COVID-19, 85% effective against severe disease, and 100% effective in preventing hospitalizations and death.

These results vary country-to-country.

"If you look at the U.S. only, it was found to be 72% effective," said Prof. Kimberly Foito.

The Federal Drug Administration (FDA) study detected no serious side effects from the vaccine. The main side effects were pain at the injection site, flu-like fever, fatigue and headaches.

As of this publication, the vaccine has only been approved for adults over 18, but J&J is planning to study how it works on teens, younger children and pregnant women later in the year.

J&J shipped 4 million doses across the country on Monday, March 1.

"I am volunteering at a COVID vaccine clinic tomorrow and administering J&J vaccines for over 800 people in just one day," said Soltis.

By the end of March, J&J has said it expects to deliver 20 million doses to the U.S. and 100 million by the end of June. They aim to produce 1 billion doses globally by the end of the year.

"I think it's possible to achieve these goals thanks to the help of many volunteers—medical and nonmedical," said Soltis. "It takes a village to get this pandemic under control."

This vaccine is being administered faster than Pfizer and Moderna vaccines because it only requires one dose.

"It will accelerate the rate of vaccine rollout because people receiving J&J will only need to book one appointment or walk-in to a pop-in clinic," said Foito. "For those who are fearful of injections, for people living in areas of the country where cold-storage is a luxury, or those living in communities where access to follow-up care is challenging."

Local health officials are looking to use J&J in mobile vaccination clinics, homeless shelters, and for those whose occupations leave them unable to return for a second dose, such as those working on fishing vessels.

Another benefit of J&J is that it lasts three months in a refrigerator, whereas Pfizer and Moderna vaccines must be kept frozen.

"I think this plays a huge role not only in the rate of production, but also the ease of

transportation for this vaccine," said junior Rebecca Oliveira.

According to Associated Press, some people in some countries are refusing the J&J vaccine to wait for another kind because of its 66% effectiveness rate, but that does not seem to be a problem locally.

"For the most part, patients aren't asking for a particular product, they are just so thankful to be vaccinated," said Foito.

Although J&J's effectiveness in preventing COVID-19 is lower than other vaccines, it makes up for it in its protection against COVID-19 variants.

"The J&J vaccine data reflects efficiency against variants, whereas the others do not," said Foito. "That's because the timeline for approval for Pfizer and Moderna occurred before the variants were known or widespread."

J&J is currently testing two doses of its vaccine in a separate study. If a second dose is deemed better, people who got one earlier will be offered another.

"I'm not eligible for the vaccine yet, but if I were, I wouldn't have a preference between the three," said Oliveira.

With a third vaccine now in rotation and more predicted to be approved soon, a greater number of people will be eligible for the vaccine in coming months.

"As a nurse and an educator, I encourage everybody to get vaccinated," said Soltis.



ASSOCIATED PRESS

THE JOHNSON & JOHNSON COVID-19 VACCINE IS NOW THE THIRD VACCINE TO BE APPROVED BY THE FDA FOR EMERGENCY USE IN THE UNITED STATES.

Perspectives

One Year of the SHU Coronavirus Planning Team

BY MACKNEZIE MAHER
Perspectives Editor

Do you remember where you were one year ago when you received the email that classes would be moved online for two weeks?

“I was at practice and everyone was also sharing the same feeling of surprise,” said senior Ryan Corbett. “It felt like everything was ripped away from our season and in just a couple of days most of us would be at home.”

On March 9, 2020, the Sacred Heart University Coronavirus Planning Team sent out an email that stated, “While there are no known or suspected cases of coronavirus on campus, we are taking the following steps out of an abundance of caution in response to the rapidly changing global health situation.”

Those steps included suspending classes for March 10 in order to prepare to move to a schedule of online classes from March 11 to March 29, with the exceptions of online learning being clinical placements and labs. Effective immediately, all major on-campus events through March 29 were to be canceled.

“When I got the email about going online for two weeks, I had just come back to campus from spring break,” said sophomore Madison Mancha. “I remember I was in class that day and I kept hearing rumors that we were going to be sent home, but I truly did not believe it until I saw the email for myself.”

Many students said they were hopeful that life would resume as normal after the two weeks of online learning were over.

“I initially thought we were just going online for a few weeks and then everything was going to go back to normal. I didn’t realize we were going to be shut down for the rest of the semester,” said senior Alexa Caputi. “I really thought I was still going to be able to study abroad in Dingle for two weeks in May and that everything would be fine by then.”

Similar to Caputi, senior Megan Mango did not expect two weeks to turn into a year of online learning.

“Honestly, at first I thought it was going to be ‘fun’ to have an extra two weeks of spring break,” said Mango.

Some students said that they never imagined things to turn out the way they did.

“When I first found out that classes would be moved online because of COVID last year, I was very shocked,” said Corbett. “Everything happened so fast, and I feel like we didn’t get to say goodbye to anyone.”

On the other hand, some students said they had a feeling that the outcome was not going to be a favorable one.

“I actually predicted we were not going to come back to school, so I stayed home waiting for the email because I’m from NYC and everything was going into full lockdown so I literally was just waiting for it to happen,” said senior Alessandra Leone.

Some students said that reality started to sink in when residential students began to move out.

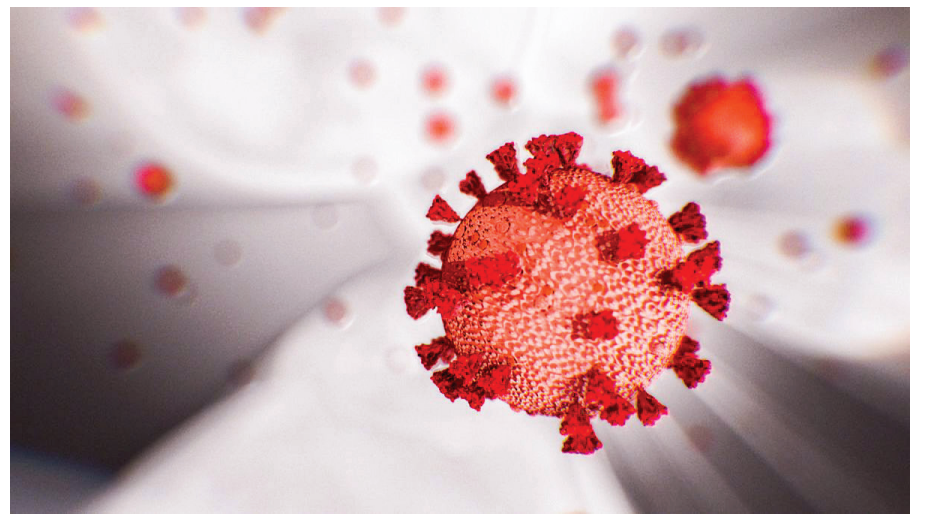
“At that moment, I knew that we were being sent home for the rest of the semester and I can honestly say that was the worst news a freshman could hear because I was not able to experience all the fun events that happen at the end of the semester,” said Mancha.

Although adjusting to a new way of life was difficult for many, some students said they were able to learn a lot from the changes and challenges that came with online learning.

“Looking back, I think the shutdown and taking classes online taught me to be flexible with change. I was never one to like change, so this process taught me a lot about being able to adapt to certain difficult situations,” said Caputi.

Some students said the adjustment to online learning taught them not to take things for granted.

“I learned a lot from the shutdown. Mostly to appreciate things more and that I missed in-person classes. I learned to become more organized with my online work and also picked up some new hobbies with extra time,” said Corbett. “In one year, I feel like we all adjusted in major ways.”



CNN
MARCH 9 WAS THE ANNIVERSARY OF ONE YEAR SINCE SACRED HEART STUDENTS RECEIVED THE FIRST EMAIL FROM THE CORONAVIRUS PLANNING TEAM.

No Stops for Spring Break

BY DEANNA DRAKOPOULOS
Staff Writer

Due to COVID-19 and in order to limit the amount of exposure associated with traveling, Sacred Heart University has decided to cancel spring break this year.

Many students said that the week off is an essential part of the semester.

“Without spring break, I feel like we are lacking a much-needed break from our academic workload,” said sophomore Patrick Lurgio.

According to the Sacred Heart academic calendar, the first week of March was when spring break began last year.

For this semester, the Sacred Heart Coronavirus Planning Team said in an email, “Our plan for our return for the spring semester builds on our successes from the fall and incorporates lessons learned.”

Part of the return plan included starting the semester a month later than previous years and eliminating spring break from the academic calendar.

“I wish that we could at least have some personal days off throughout the semester like other schools,” Lurgio said.

As an alternative to spring break, other institutions like SUNY Oneonta have given days off within the week as “personal wellness days.” The purpose of these days is so that students can still have time off from their vigorous schedules, according to the SUNY Oneonta academic calendar.

Even though there is no break, some faculty members have found ways to give students a bit of a break from heavy workloads.

“Since we started the semester late, I don’t mind too much going without a break. I included a week of lighter work for my classes right after midterms just so we could catch our breath a little bit,” said Dr. Emily Bryan of the Language, Literature and Catholic Studies department.

Seniors are missing out on their last college spring break this year, which many utilize to go on one final trip with their friends.

“I wanted to go to San Diego like I did last year,” said senior Michael DeSantis. “I’m pretty upset with not having a spring break as a senior.”

To get through the long semester, many students have found other things to look forward to.

“Having no spring break is unfortunate, but I am on the Sacred Heart cheerleading team, so we have been busy preparing for Nationals in April,” said junior Elizabeth Szachacz. “Being with my team and going to Nationals is helping me push through the semester.”

The Student Events Team (SET) has been holding a “Spring Break Staycation” week from March 1-7 for all students. There are events like beach charcuterie boards, sand art, mocktails and many more spring break-themed activities for students to take part in.

“I think our spring break events are giving students something to do since we can’t go anywhere this week and are keeping their spirits up despite what is going on in the world,” said senior Courtney Cardona, Vice President of SET.

Although the university took spring break away, there have been a lot of activities for

students to participate in to ease the stress of academics.

The Coronavirus Planning Team includes activities going on around campus in each of their emails to ensure that students are always aware of things to do.

“At first, I was disappointed that there wouldn’t be spring break, but after thinking about how there wouldn’t be much to do because of COVID, I’m just happy that we are still able to be on campus and do some things safely,” said freshman Daniella Bruno.



NEW YORK TIMES
DUE TO COVID-19 SACRED HEART HAS REMOVED SPRING BREAK FROM THE SPRING ACADEMIC CALENDAR AND STUDENTS HAVE DIFFERING OPINIONS ON THIS DECISION.

Features

s.w.e.e.t. ProjectConnect

BY JULIA PORTOGHESE
Staff Writer

The Student Wellness Education and Empowerment Team (s.w.e.e.t.) is launching a new program called ProjectConnect. This program is designed to help students develop connections and gain sense of community at Sacred Heart University.

“It is a six-session program of small groups led by one of the s.w.e.e.t. Peer Educators. We got very positive feedback from the first group who took advantage of this program; they all said that they would recommend this to a friend and would do it again,” said senior s.w.e.e.t. peer educator Grace Anneser.

s.w.e.e.t. peer educators are students who develop programs on campus to promote a healthy college lifestyle. Some may recognize the name from their “Stall Street Journal,” a flyer that hangs inside many of the bathroom stall doors. The peer educators aim to enlighten students to develop an understanding of both the negative and positive outcomes of social norms.

Their slogan, “A healthy life is a s.w.e.e.t. life,” coincides with their programs such as “The Bar Exam,” “s.w.e.e.t. Dreams,” “Canine Help SHU?,” “Speed Friendly” and “#sex@SHU.”

“They teach students about how to improve their sleep, which can protect mental health and improve academic success. They teach students harm reduction strategies if they choose to drink. They bring therapy dogs to campus to remind students to find healthy ways to manage their stress. These are often one-time workshops in residence halls or events on campus,” said Peer Education Coordinator Karen Flanagan.

The newest edition to the program, ProjectConnect, is run by peer educators.

“s.w.e.e.t. peer educators have a strong base of training in listening skills and protective mental health strategies, so when we decided to bring ProjectConnect to SHU, the s.w.e.e.t. peer education team was the ideal place to start. Our hope is that the program will eventually grow to the point where students across campus can be trained to facilitate groups,” said Flanagan.

ProjectConnect is open to all full-time undergraduates at Sacred Heart. The launch includes five groups that meet at different times during the week.

“The overall goal is to make stronger connections with people from different walks of life. It’s not just for freshmen or a select group on campus. Everyone is encouraged to join and participate. It focuses on tight-knit groups that share experiences,” said senior peer educator Johnathan Brown.

As a result of COVID-19, s.w.e.e.t. adjusted to new ways of learning and communicating with the student population.

“COVID definitely changed how we operate. Meetings and programs are all done virtually. In that aspect, it can be challenging to connect with others. That being said, we adapted to the situation and we are still doing programs. I can’t speak for the other

members, but I really miss bonding in person,” said Brown.

ProjectConnect is one of the ways that s.w.e.e.t. is acknowledging the changes that come with being a college student during COVID-19.

“To be frank, this program was made because of COVID. Loneliness is on the rise, especially among college students. Not having that in-person experience is very damaging to mental health,” said Brown. “It happens over Zoom, and everyone is encouraged to meet new people. You don’t even have to turn on your camera, but it would help to put a face to a name.”

This new way for students to connect is designed to rekindle the sense of community that some say Sacred Heart is known for.

“I encourage others to get involved because it takes everyone to make Sacred Heart a better community. If you have an honest heart and want to step out of your comfort zone, I recommend you take that leap,” said Brown. “I think ProjectConnect is a great program that’s here to stay. I think it’s important to broaden your horizons while also meeting people you would never talk to otherwise.”

If you are interested in joining a ProjectConnect group, reach out to Karen Flanagan at flanagank879@sacredheart.edu.



SACRED HEART UNIVERSITY
s.w.e.e.t. IS LAUNCHING A NEW PROGRAM CALLED PROJECTCONNECT TO HELP STUDENTS FORM CONNECTIONS, BUILD FRIENDSHIPS AND MEET NEW PEOPLE.

Calling all Film Buffs

BY CAROLYN BEDDOW
Staff Writer

At 7 p.m. every other Wednesday, students meet over Zoom to discuss movies, analyze plots and write screenplays. Sacred Heart University’s Film Club is a place for students to collaborate with each other and develop friendships with people who have similar interests in film.

“The Film Club watches movies, short films, documentaries and videos together so that we can come together and discuss certain aspects of what we watched, such as the acting, storyline, editing of the movie, symbolism and outfits,” said Film Club President Dillon Benison.

Covering all types of film and movie making, the club caters toward many different interests.

“The Film Club is evolving, like the entire entertainment industry. There are no limits on what the club can do,” said Club Advisor Todd Barnes.

Sacred Heart’s website states, “Here at the Film Club, we strive to open the minds of students at Sacred Heart University through a variety of films. We also plan to create short films. If you’re a movie lover or a lover of creating films, we welcome you.”

Last fall, the Film Club’s Executive Board chose to cease the club’s meetings.

“That only left us with only a short window of time to reconstitute the executive committee with a whole new group of people before losing the club,” said Barnes.

According to Sacred Heart’s Clubs and Organizations Resource Guide, a club must fulfill certain requirements throughout the year, including meeting at least bi-weekly. If a club fails to meet all requirements, the club will go inactive.

“Dillon and some of his friends were able to step up and save the club,” said Barnes.

The club has since made efforts to gain members and get a larger turnout at their meetings.

“The students this year have been talking about branching out and bringing in guest speakers or even shooting their own film,” said Barnes.

Due to COVID-19, there are no plans yet to allow clubs to meet in person for the remainder of the semester.

“Hopefully soon we will be about to get back into the screening rooms,” said Barnes.

“The club is open for anyone to join at any time. All they have to do is email me and I am happy to send them the information to join the meeting,” said Benison. “It is a niche group of people that all have similar interests in film. It also allows the members to see new cultures and movies they have never seen or heard of, and that allows them to look at film and life in new ways.”

If you are interested in joining the Film Club, contact Dillon Benison at benisond@mail.sacredheart.edu.



SACRED HEART UNIVERSITY
SHU’S FILM CLUB MEETS EVERY WEEK TO DISCUSS DIFFERENT MOVIES, ANALYZE THE ASPECTS OF THE MOVIES AND WRITE THEIR OWN SCREENPLAYS.

Spotlight



Sacred Heart Student Teachers Learn to Combat Bullying

KAYLA TESTI

CONTRIBUTING WRITER

When people hear of Audrey Niblo, they often hear the story of a bright and bubbly young woman with a passion for spreading kindness through her writing. They hear of an energetic and enthusiastic person with a gentle heart for animals, especially dogs.

But what many don't know is that Audrey's spunky personality, carefree spirit and resilience resulted from the many trials she faced throughout her childhood in the public school system. The bullying that she endured helped her rise above every hardship thrown at her, and her story continues to inspire others today.

An unfortunate reality is that instances of bullying are not uncommon. Bullying is an epidemic in America, something that has been taking place in schools for decades. According to the National Center for Education Statistics, 20% of students ages 12 to 18 experienced bullying at school in 2017. Furthermore, 13% of students have reported being victims of rumors, and 5% have reported being pushed, tripped or shoved.

Every semester, students from the Isabelle Farrington College of Education at Sacred Heart University are allowed the opportunity to interview teachers from local public schools to learn how to combat the issues that a first-year teacher will face.

According to one of these interviews, a high school teacher from Bridgeport Public Schools in Bridgeport, Conn., reported that instances of bullying have now shifted to an online setting due to the current pandemic.

"We have seen an uptick in more sexual harassment and inappropriate conversations between students through our digital platform," she said.

She stated that these inappropriate conversations between students take place on Microsoft Teams, a digital platform that the school district uses to host classes and communicate important information. She said that as a result, the school district banned

the use of the chat feature in Microsoft Teams. The school administration now saves all conversations held on this platform and has recently re-evaluated its internet policies.

She also noted the importance of teacher collaboration with different school departments to ensure that bullying does not occur in the classroom.

"We have a bullying office and a Title IX officer that handles interviews and meetings with the students," she said. "They work with administration and security to have mediation and given sanctions for the behavior."

In addition to interviewing teachers, all secondary education students at Sacred Heart take a course titled "Societal Issues in Adolescence" to learn how to handle issues students ages 12 to 18 may face in the classroom. One of the most common issues that student teachers taking this course learn about is bullying.

In this course, students read weekly news articles that cover current events taking place in schools, including events surrounding bullying. Students report on these current events during class and hold a class discussion on how to combat them.

Students taking this course also write an "adolescent autobiography," in which they reflect on their personal experiences involving bullying and other issues that adolescents face. After reflecting on these issues, students optionally share their reflections with the class. Sharing these experiences opens the class to a discussion on how to handle bullying instances in the classroom.

While bullying is undoubtedly a problem in America, future teachers are working to educate themselves on how to combat it and to promote kindness and inclusivity in the classroom.

Fashion

What is Fast Fashion?

BY SOPHIE CAMIZZI

Assistant Perspectives Editor

What do you know about fast fashion?

According to the Associated Press, fast fashion is "an approach to the design, creation and marketing of clothing fashions that emphasizes making fashion trends quickly and cheaply available to consumers."

"I don't know much, but I know there are different stores, like Forever21, that sell many clothes shortly after a trend comes out," said junior Shannon Tangel.

According to Good On You, a website that rates ethicality and sustainability in fashion brands, "The idea is to get the newest styles on the market as fast as possible, so shoppers can snap them up while they are still popular, and then discard them after a few wears. It forms a key part of overproduction and consumption that has made fashion one of the largest polluters in the world."

In addition to overproduction and consumption amongst consumers, the clothing companies that are involved in this process have been called into question over their use of cheap labor.

"One of the ethical issues of fast fashion is the cheap labor," said Tangel. "I don't think it's right. The conditions are terribly unsafe for workers. They are breaking basic human rights."

According to the New York Times, "In investigations conducted from 2016 through [2018], the [United States Labor Department] discovered Fashion Nova clothing owed \$3.8 million in back wages to hundreds of workers. Those factories paid their sewers as little as \$2.77 an hour."

In the same article, Fashion Nova sewer Mercedes Cortez said, "There were cockroaches. There were rats. The conditions weren't good."

Many environmentally-conscious consumers have raised concerns about fast fashion because the textiles used to make these clothes are often difficult to structurally break down once discarded.

According to BBC, "The fashion industry accounts for about 10% of global carbon emissions, and nearly 20% of wastewater. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency estimates that in 2017, 10.2m tonnes of textiles ended up in landfills while another 2.9m tonnes were incinerated."

Some Sacred Heart University students have pointed toward social media as the reason behind the popularity of fast fashion.

"I believe that fast fashion has become so popular from social media apps like Instagram and TikTok, due to the recent growth of influencer culture in the past few years," said sophomore Sophia DeAngelis. "Influencers are meant to promote certain brands and stylistic choices, but many individuals seek a cheaper way to achieve this goal, which has led to the propagation of fast fashion."

According to Forbes, "Influencer marketing is effective because it capitalizes on our most natural tendencies, emotions and desires. When we dive into the psychological details, we find that natural emotions, fear of missing out, care and relationship-building play out digitally."

Although social media trends are a popular way to participate in fashion, many Sacred Heart students have been using their own creativity to find their personal sustainable styles.

"I have recently started to upcycle clothes, which is super fun and also makes use of the clothes I don't use," said senior Fashion Club President Katerina Ringes. "I also pass

them down to other family members to make sure they're still being worn."

In recent years, it has been often publicized on social media and in fashion magazines that anyone can ethically participate in fashion by being more mindful of the choices they make when buying and consuming.

"I think that people can do their own research on brands and ensure they are socially responsible," said DeAngelis. "Once you make a purchase, it's important to recognize the value in clothes and find your way of being sustainable."



FAST FASHION AND SUSTAINABLE FASHION ARE BOTH ON THE RISE AND THIS IS LARGELY DUE TO INFLUENCER CULTURE ON INSTAGRAM AND TIKTOK.

ABC FASHION

Arts & Entertainment

SHU Alumni Present “Downtime TV”

BY CHLOE CURTIS
Staff Writer

“Downtime TV” is a podcast which was started by three Sacred Heart University alumni. The show is recorded at the Knowlton Studios in Bridgeport, Conn.

The podcast has three sections, the first of which being “The Dream is Free,” which showcases the stories of people from various places and has new episodes every Monday. There is also “Screen Time,” a segment that covers topics within film and television with new episodes released on Wednesdays. Additionally, “The Sports Port” is released everyday at 5 p.m. and covers many aspects of sports.

“We are real,” said Executive Producer Michael Theophil. “Nobody is sugar coating; nobody is acting, and if you are, you aren’t on ‘Downtime.’ Also, we put an emphasis on making our content educational, inspirational and motivational.”

Although “Downtime TV” has only been in production since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, it has already made its way to major streaming platforms such as Apple Podcasts, Spotify, Twitch and YouTube.

“March hit, then COVID, and the world shut down. It was a time to either sit back and relax or to grow. I chose growth. We got our first studio, and it didn’t work out for certain reasons. I went away, regrouped after losing my room, a friendship and my business essentially with gear and certain things of that nature,” said Theophil. “I went away to Fire Island, meditated, prayed, and called my brother from the island and said we are getting a room at The Knowlton. From there we have been nonstop. ‘Downtime TV’ really kickstarted right and we haven’t looked back.”

Theophil, who graduated from Sacred Heart in 2019, works alongside former classmates Anthony Mattariello and Geno Gonnello. The three manage and produce the podcast, which is a detailed process involving various kinds of equipment.

“Whenever we’re producing something, we have cameras and set up lights. We have a slider camera and the little studio area with green screens, chairs and microphones,” said Gonnello, who joined the podcast later on in Dec. 2020 while simultaneously working as a reporter for News12 in New York.

Although the equipment is important to the recording process, what is used to make the podcast available for streaming?

“When we stream, we use something called StreamYard, where we can stream on YouTube and Twitch at the same time,” said Gonnello.

StreamYard is a service that allows for interaction with the audience while streaming the podcast on multiple platforms. The audience can comment during the stream, making for a community-based environment.

“We love to hear from you all. Like and comment and be a part of our live shows,” said Theophil.

Because of the community surrounding ‘Downtime TV,’ listeners are often featured on the podcast, such as on the “Dream is Free” section. This allows for people to share their stories, whether they be founders or entertainers.

“If you want to be a part of the show, call in and DM us for info,” said Theophil.

When new episodes are released, viewers can be alerted on Instagram and Twitter, a way in which “Downtime TV” creatively grows their following in addition to streaming services.

“My inspiration was to create a media company where we offer educational, motivational and inspirational content,” said Theophil. “But also, to travel the world, and have a company where people can work, be themselves and be as creative as they want.”

People can stream “Downtime TV” on YouTube at https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCw0j-9vADju_sOD85Cg9XxQ and Spotify at <https://open.spotify.com/show/3g89rMZ48JjM1HQPOcrbEJ>. Fans also have the opportunity to follow or subscribe on either platform to get updates for new episodes automatically on their feed.



DOWNTIME TV

DOWNTIME TV IS MADE UP OF THREE SHU ALUMNI, MICHAEL THEOPHIL, ANTHONY MATTARIELLO AND GENO GONNELLO.

TAP Presents “Ghost Quartet”

BY CARLY JULIUS
Staff Writer

Sacred Heart University’s Theatre Arts Program is currently performing their own production of “Ghost Quartet.” “Ghost Quartet” is available for Sacred Heart students and staff to see in the Edgerton Center for the Performing Arts on March 4-6 at 8 p.m., March 7 at 3 p.m., March 11-13 at 8 p.m. and March 14 at 3 p.m.

Tickets for the show can be purchased in person at the box office in the Edgerton Center. Tickets for Sacred Heart students are \$5. The show is free for Sacred Heart faculty and staff with their Sacred Heart ID. General Public tickets are not available for this show.

The Theatre Arts Program is following all Sacred Heart’s COVID-19 guidelines and precautions. All the students will be wearing masks while they are performing, or they will be socially distanced by six feet and plexiglass dividers will be used. Only twenty-five guests will be allowed to attend each show in order to keep everyone in attendance safe and healthy.

“The cast of four has a crew of 40 around them,” said Executive Director of Performing Arts, Gerald Goehring. The Sacred Heart student cast members, Ally Engengro, Mark Bosse, Nicky Duca and Julianna Rezza will be performing the first Theatre Arts Program or “TAP” play of the semester.

“I am overly excited to see this production, I know that this is going to be a good show. They always are very professional,” said Devon Cavaliere, senior theatre arts member.

Sacred Heart normally puts on six plays a year, but due to COVID-19, the Theatre Arts Program was only able to put on one play and musical in the fall semester. “Ghost Quartet” is the first play of the spring semester.

Behind the scenes there are makeup artists, lighting crew, quick response crew, and a COVID-19 crew. The COVID-19 crew was added this year due to the pandemic. This crew will be in charge of checking the temperatures of the audience at the door before they are admitted into the theater. The crew will also make sure that everyone has a mask on while they are enjoying the show. Before guests enter the facility, everything will be wiped down and sanitized.

The play ranges with several types of genres of music. There are many stories being told over bottles of whiskey. The show could be described as a story told through songs discussing love, death, and whisky. It takes place throughout seven centuries.

According to the Edgerton Center website, “From the creator of the Tony Award winning *Natasha, Pierre & The Great Comet of 1812*, ‘Ghost Quartet’ is a kaleidoscopic journey spanning continents, centuries and the cosmos ensues. But even through the fogs of time and a haze of whiskey, Rose can’t shake the feeling that she’s done this all before...”

According to the Edgerton Center website, “‘Ghost Quartet’ is an intoxicating musical of love, loss and spirits – of both the spectral and alcoholic kind. This hauntingly beautiful

song cycle is a story about stories themselves; how we tell them, how we hear them, and how they evolve, intertwine and draw us in.”

The music, lyrics and text were all written by Dave Malloy.

According to The Guardian, “Working its way through myth, magic and several bottles of whisky, the UK premiere of Dave Malloy’s unearthly song cycle is intoxicatingly strange.”



SACRED HEART UNIVERSITY

SACRED HEART'S THEATRE ARTS PROGRAM IS CURRENTLY PUTTING ON “GHOST QUARTET,” THE PRODUCTION HAS IMPLEMENTED A COVID CREW THIS YEAR TO ENSURE THAT PROTOCOLS ARE BEING FOLLOWED.

Sports

Sacred Heart Softball Season Kicks Off

BY TOMMY KOUREBANAS
Staff Writer

On Feb. 28, the Sacred Heart softball team lost a pair of games against Lehigh University in their season opener. Sacred Heart fell 10-1 in the first game, and dropped the second game by a score of 8-1.

Their initial opener was scheduled for a double-header against University of Rhode Island on Feb. 27, but was cancelled due to COVID-19 related issues.

“Control the controllable, there’s nothing that we can do about COVID, right?” said Sacred Heart Head Coach Pam London. “We’re just going to get tougher mentally, work your game- all those little things that people don’t even know are such a huge part of the game.”

The team is used to beginning the preseason in warmer states like North Carolina and Florida, but COVID-19 has disrupted traditions for many Sacred Heart University teams.

“We wanted to be traveling and nothing could’ve made us feel better about that,” said London. “But the only saving grace was ‘Hey, we’re home. We’re wearing our white [uniforms] and we get to open up in our own stadium and sleep in our own beds.’”

London recognized the pandemic’s impact on preparation. Three players were inactive due to contact tracing against Lehigh.

“Your whole day changes, your whole [gameplan] changes,” said London. “I think that’s the difference, that uncertainty is brutal on your mentality.”

The same three players are still inactive for the next double-header against Stony Brook University on Sunday, Mar. 7. Fortunately, freshman in-fielder Grace Saad returned from concussion protocol.

London believes having players ready to make changes on short notice is critical to a successful season.

“We always prepare with our A-game, until we don’t,” said London. “Then we go right down to the next in line that have been preparing.”

Last semester, London started accountability groups for her team. This system promotes team bonding by rotating players into groups of two or three.

“We kind of talk about our softball and school goals, anything you want to try and achieve in the weight room,” said senior captain Caroline Kruger. “We can kind of hold each other accountable to those and just help each other work harder.”

Accountability groups are facilitated over the phone and Zoom to adhere within social distancing guidelines. The groups change every other week so that each player gets familiar with one another.

“We can’t all get together in one house anymore,” said Kruger. “Trying to have one-on-one connections with each individual person will hopefully lead to all of us being more bonded as a team.”

Last season, the softball team played 16 games before being cut short, finishing with an 8-8 overall record. Beginning on Mar. 20, the Northeast Conference schedule will

consist of 32 games in a round-robin format (four-game series) over eight weeks, with the availability of makeup dates.

“I think we just learned last season, and especially (against Lehigh) not to take anything for granted,” said senior captain Colleen Walsh. “We learned how much we miss being out on the field and that we need to keep growing moving forward.”

Sacred Heart returned 15 players from last season, while adding 12 new players to the roster.

“We are half upperclassmen, half freshman,” said Kruger. “Trying to gel as a team outside of practice has been the most challenging part.”

Though Kruger believes more COVID-19 related inconveniences will occur, expectations are still high for the team.

“I think we’ll be the most successful if we can adjust the quickest,” said Kruger. “I think we have a really good group of girls. I think if we just stick together, we’ll be good.”



TOMMY KOUREBANAS / THE SPECTRUM

FEB. 28 WAS THE FIRST GAME OF THE SEASON FOR THE SACRED HEART SOFTBALL TEAM WHERE THEY LOST BOTH GAMES TO LEHIGH UNIVERSITY.

Two Men’s Wrestlers Qualify for NCAA

BY ROBERT FINIZIO
Staff Writer

For the first time in 14 years, the Sacred Heart Men’s Wrestling team will be sending wrestlers down to St. Louis, MO. for the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) championships. Junior Joe Accousti and junior Nick Palumbo both qualified for the tournament at the Eastern Intercollegiate Wrestling Association (EIWA) championship on Feb. 26, according to Sacred Heart Athletics.

“It’s amazing. This is something that when you are a little kid you dream of and you look up to people who are national qualifiers,” said Palumbo. “To be able to be one, I literally can’t even put it into words.”

According to Sacred Heart Athletics, in the 2019-20 season, Palumbo wrestled nearly exclusively at the 149-weight class and posted a 13-8 record with a win in the first round of the EIWA championship tournament. This season Palumbo made the full transition to the 157-weight class, and finished with a 3-2 overall record in the regular season.

“His progression from when he was a freshman to now is unreal,” said Accousti. “He is probably one of the most dangerous wrestlers at his weight class in the country.”

Palumbo would go on to lose to Holden Heller of Hofstra in the final round of the EIWA championship, but this would be enough to qualify him for the NCAA championship as the number two finisher.

Number two, however, was not in Palumbo’s game plan.

“I definitely wanted to win that match,” said Palumbo. “For me it hurts a little bit so hopefully I will get to see him at nationals.”

In what was a shortened season, Accousti was bumped up to the 184-weight class and recorded a 3-2 overall record. He finished sixth at the EIWA championships, which allowed him to punch his ticket alongside Palumbo in St. Louis.

“I told him before the match I needed a roommate at NCAA’s, and that I didn’t want to room all by myself,” said Palumbo.

Accousti credits his progressive success at the collegiate level to fourth year head coach John Clark.

“He is the type of coach you want to work harder for,” said Accousti. “He’s been to nationals, he’s been an all-American, how do you not get better with someone like that coaching you?”

In Clark’s first season as head coach, the Pioneers were 2-10 and did not have any wrestlers place at the EIWA championship. This season, the Pioneers had six athletes place at the EIWA championship and two qualified for the NCAA championships.

“There’s a lot of ways to measure success in wrestling,” said Clark. “We’re looking to put all of that together next year. It is going to be powerful to see what these guys can accomplish.”

Being able to represent Sacred Heart at the national level is why both Palumbo and

Accousti are proud to step out onto the mat in St. Louis.

“I’m really proud. It is an amazing thing to be representing Sacred Heart especially when you grow up close to it and you know past wrestlers here, as well as being coached by past wrestlers here,” said Accousti. “I’m honored.”

The NCAA wrestling championships consists of 330 student-athletes that have qualified from all over the country, all competing to earn the title of national champion. The first round of the 2021 NCAA wrestling championships begins March 18 at the Enterprise Center in St. Louis, according to NCAA.com.

“I’m proud to wear that SHU logo on my singlet, and to bring notoriety to our school, and let people know we are on the come up,” said Palumbo.



SACRED HEART ATHLETICS

JOE ACCOUSTI AND NICK PALUMBO, TWO SHU WRESTLERS, BOTH QUALIFIED FOR THE NATIONAL COLLEGIATE ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION CHAMPIONSHIP.

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Bending and Snapping Since '01

LIZZY COYNE

ASSISTANT A&E EDITOR

I want to start out by establishing that the hit 2001 romantic comedy "Legally Blonde" is one of my all-time favorite movies. I watch it at least once a month, or really anytime I need a pick-me-up. There is not a day that goes by where I don't talk about the fact that Elle Woods and Bruiser Woods are both Gemini vegetarians, or whoever said that orange was the new pink was seriously disturbed!

Besides the obvious chic circa 2000s outfits, memorable quotes, and the coveted "bend and snap," this movie has some serious moxie!

Elle starts off the movie with heartbreak, after her expected proposal dinner turns into a break-up with her boyfriend Warner. However, by the end of the movie, Elle has completely transformed and is more independent than ever. She even manages to graduate top of her class, which the audience watches as the effortlessly catchy song "Perfect Day" by Hoku plays out.

Throughout the course of the movie, Elle uses her intelligence, social skills and the trust of her gut while she works to find her place at Harvard Law School. Not to mention the much-needed, gossip-ridden weekly manicures from Paulette.

I try to live my life as if I were Elle Woods, and while this may sound vain and materialistic to some, allow me to explain. Elle Woods is not just a pretty pink blonde who will crash her car when in desperate need of a manicure, she's a genuinely empathetic and determined woman fueled by what she wants.

I think there is something to be said about how looks can be

deceiving and while they sometimes work to give you power, they are nothing if not backed up by a strong sense of self. I try and use this philosophy to exercise my love of fashion and style, along with my passion for education.

Elle Woods is also a huge inspiration for me when it comes to being a better person and exhibiting kindness. Although she was put in a lot of rough situations, she never chose the option to get ahead over what she knew was right. Whether she was being denied entry to the evil Vivian's study group or feeling threatened to reveal Brooke Taylor's alibi, Elle always chose to do the right thing and to treat people with respect no matter what. I try to follow her lead and do the same with everyone I meet, even when I can tell they need some serious highlights.

I watch "Legally Blonde" as a way to remind me to have fun and go get the things I want. Like Elle, I want to be able to ignore all those who stand in my way and express myself as I see fit. If that comes at the price of losing a boring Harvard boyfriend, so be it!

More often than not, my bold and colorful outfits are what get me noticed and help me stand out in a crowd. However, I make sure it is my dedication and persistence that keeps me memorable. This is one of my favorite things I've taken away from my countless viewings of "Legally Blonde" and that I've implemented into my life. Well, that and the fact that my resume is pink and scented!

My Successes and Failures as a College Student

MARIA CIPRIANO

ASSISTANT SPORTS EDITOR

With success comes failure. Read that again.

Although I am only a junior here at SHU, I think that my time as a kid has started to come to an end. This is sad to say, but I think that I am starting to become an adult, or at least do adult things.

Recently, I landed my first internship at PrimeTime Lacrosse for this summer. Before this opportunity, I had been applying to a lot of internships.

Each time I sent my resume to a company, I would hope for a response, but never got one. This was very frustrating to me, as some of you can relate because not only was I not given a response back, I felt like I was not good enough.

Alongside this, I had been trying to obtain a higher certification as a National Ski Patroller. It was the next step to becoming something that I could be proud of and share with my twin brother and dad as they were also going through this training.

As ski patrollers, it is our duty to care for the general ski public when they need it, as well as ensure their safety. We are trained to the level of an Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) and can fix almost any situation.

This means that when you fall down and break your arm on the side of a double black diamond, me and some other patrollers will take care of you.

My dad is my hero and to go through this training with him was difficult. Long story short, we spent the winter of 2020 training to become Senior Alpine Patrollers but did not pass.

This not only made me frustrated again, but it also made me lose sight of why I became a patroller in the first place and made me question why I was not good enough to pass.

After last winter, I had given up on myself, and it was hard to continue to be rejected by so many companies for potential internships. This spring, that changed.

I received a message in the beginning of February saying that out of 120 applicants I was one of the few selected that would move forward to the interview process. I was ecstatic!

After this message I received an email notifying me what time I should pick for an online interview. I picked a day and time,

put on a nice shirt and went to the interview.

I was asked routine questions like, "Why do you want to work here? What do you want to do after college? What experience do you have?" etc.

After the interview, which went well, I did not hear back from them for about a week and a half. I got a little nervous until they reached out again asking for my references.

Then Feb. 22 came with an email. I read the first line, "Congratulations!" My excitement levels had risen to heights I had no idea existed.

I had finally done it. I landed an internship, one that I was passionate about. I am excited to start this journey during the summer and see what the future holds for me.

It is very important to keep moving forward. Keep trying at anything you are passionate about, even if it takes thirty years to obtain or master. Your hard work will pay off in the end.



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