

THE MIRROR

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Kyler Erezuma/The Mirror

A Community in Action: Sharing Our Work in and Commitment to Diversity and Inclusive Excellence event was held on Monday, Feb. 28 in the Event Hall at the Charles F. Dolan School of Business. At the event, student and faculty protestors arrived right before University President Mark Nemec, Ph.D spoke. After Nemec finished speaking, protestors left.

Students & Faculty Protest at University's Community in Action Event

By Molly Lamendola
Editor-in-Chief

At 3:39 p.m., just minutes before President Mark R. Nemec Ph.D. was set to talk for the "A Community in Action: Sharing Our Work In and Commitment to Diversity and Inclusive Excellence" event, over 100 student and faculty protestors entered. Protestors wore black, had various Black Lives Matter buttons and carried signs declaring, "Black Lives Matter," "#NoMoreNeutrality" and "People for Others Includes Black People," a reference to the Jesuit value of "Men and Women for Others." The event took place on Monday, Feb. 28 from 3:30-5:00 p.m. in the Charles F. Dolan School of Business Event Hall and came just about a week after The Mirror broke the news that University administration directed the removal of a Black Lives Matter flag from the front window of Counseling & Psychological Services.

The first person to speak — Jocelyn M. Boryczka, Ph.D., associate vice provost for scholarly, creative and community engagement opened the event stating that "We have come together today as we have done in the past, to advance our work for racial and social justice." Boryczka continued to invite members of the event, to "recognize the pain that some members of our community may experience, however unintended it may be, and the need for healing and reconciliation."

She further asked, "...that we embrace a spirit of forgiveness."

After her introduction, she handed off the stage to Rev. Paul Rourke, S.J. who is vice president for mission & ministry at the University. Rourke offered a blessing. After this blessing, Boryczka introduced Nemec who was the keynote speaker of the event.

As Nemec began speaking, all protestors took a knee around the room. Some of the protestors

then proceeded to hold up Black Lives Matter flags in front of the speaking podium while Nemec was talking. Nemec began by emphasizing that the event "...is meant to be a celebration and, at large, it's a journey."

He continued to highlight his past with this work, as "This discussion is actually framed, as all discussions are, by any academic, by our personal narrative."

"Since my senior year of high school, when I wrote an essay for our high schools Journal of Opinion defending the California system and affirmative action," he states, adding that "It continued until 1997 when I wrote an essay for the Review of Higher education, on the role of curriculum in the University, and probably had its fullest formation in my book, Ivory Towers and Nationalists Mind."

"Now, this is not meant to be a bibliography," Nemec adds, "But what it is to signal and what it is to stress is that these are issues that require depth. These are issues that require inquiry, not simply instances."

He states that this is what needs to be kept in mind when discussing the removal of the Black Lives Matter flag from the Counseling and Psychological Office, as reported by The Mirror last week.

He first goes over some "factual points" over the removal.

"First, staff were asked and acceded to the requests to remove the banner due to policies related to building code and public spaces," Nemec states, "But more importantly due to our principles of free expression wholly irrespective of the content of that banner."

He continues that Fairfield's principles on freedom of expression were motivated, "...by the public targeting, through social media, of a faculty member for sharing research and analysis on race" and two documents, "The Stone Report" and "The Kalven Report." Nemec quotes specifically from the "Kalven Report" stating "...that the instrument of dissent and criticism is the

individual faculty member or the individual students."

"As we see today," Nemec states in reference to the protestors, "The university is home and sponsor of critics, it is not itself the critic."

He adds that "Neutrality of university as an institution arises then, not from a lack of courage, nor out of indifference or insensitivity, it arises out of respect for free inquiry and the obligation to cherish a diversity of viewpoints."

"As a Jesuit Catholic institution, we are committed to economic, social, and racial justice" Nemec says, adding that this "...path to justice must be a subject of deep inquiry and discussion amongst individuals from all across our campus. As a Jesuit Catholic University, our discussion welcomes socialist capitalists, distributed libertarians, anti-racist and anti-racist perspectives, and all points across the spectrum characterized by rigor and intellectual honesty."

He continues that he would like to "further clarify the record and reiterate, yet again, that the issue for the health center banner was its conflict with the spirit of institutional neutrality."

Nemec adds that a contrast to this situation would be his support of a group of student-athletes wearing "statements on their jerseys" to the Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference that he "fully supported" and "received significant criticism" for, as the chair of the MAAC diversity and gender committee.

Nemec then shifts to highlight the Diversity & Inclusion Excellence Narrative that is the "launching point" for the University's mission, holding up a printed copy.

The "Diversity & Inclusive Excellence Narrative" was created through, "a process of campuswide engagement... a leadership survey, Board of Trustees presentations and listening sessions with community members across campus" and driven by the University's

Presidential Working Group on Inclusive Excellence.

The introduction of the narrative first highlights its mission statement. Stating, "Members of the Fairfield University community are committed to respecting and valuing one another, finding the common good rooted in us all, and working collaboratively to achieve our potential as a modern Jesuit Catholic institution."

It continues that they "...aspire to be an inclusive, welcoming community that is representative of an ever-changing and diverse global populace" and that Cura Personalis, the Jesuit value of "care for the whole person" supports their mission.

"We educate men and women who serve for and with others within the rich tapestry of cultures that comprise our contemporary world," the statement continues, ending with, "By encouraging dialogue, communication, community partnerships, and a culture of understanding, we foster in our students, faculty, and staff the capacity and desire to build a better world through productive citizenship and societal stewardship."

“ As a Jesuit Catholic University, our discussion welcomes socialist capitalists, distributed libertarians, anti-racist and anti-racist perspectives, and all points across the spectrum characterized by rigor and intellectual honesty.”

- Fairfield University
President Mark
Nemec, Ph.D

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Nemec Unveils University's Diversity & Inclusive Excellence Narrative



Kyler Erezuma/The Mirror

Protestors took a knee as President Nemec began to speak. Over a hundred protestors consisting of both student and faculty came to the event, some carrying signs and Black Lives Matter flags.

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The narrative then diverges into three chapters: "Where We Have Been - Remembering," "Where We Are Now - Welcoming," "Where We Want To Go - Belonging." The "Where We Have Been" section highlights the University's past, highlighting certain significant moments in Fairfield's history, "focused on religion, race, and gender" that opens a window onto Fairfield's recent past.

The narrative then moves to Chapter Two, "Where We Are Now" discussing the "...current terrain of diversity and inclusive excellence at Fairfield University with an eye on our achievements and towards areas in need of attention."

"We do so in the midst of a nation reckoning with its past as manifest in a present marked by a resurgent concern for social, cultural, economic, and political inequities faced by Black American communities in our nation, contentious border politics, and a polarized polity," it reads, continuing that, "In particular, our current moment calls us to recognize race as a historically important issue, often focusing national conversation."

In this section, the narrative also states that "Fairfield University approaches diversity with an intentionality of inclusion that provides the groundwork for our curricular, co-curricular, and community-oriented initiatives."

They state that their work under the "Inclusive Excellence" category includes the introduction of a "Black Lives Matter" course that emerged after Fairfield students, faculty and staff formed the Racial Justice is Social Justice group, "in the wake of Michael Brown's shooting by a police officer in Ferguson, Missouri on August 9, 2014." They would then lead a die-in protest in the DiMenna-Nyselius Library's lobby that was attended by then-Fairfield President Father Jeffrey von Arx S.J.

“Fairfield has always stood for inclusiveness, and we want to make sure that as a Jesuit, Catholic university we have a welcoming atmosphere from all of our students.”

- Former Fairfield President von Arx S.J.

In The Mirror at the time of the protest, von Arx stated, "I'm here to support our students who are in solidarity with their peers and friends across the country. Fairfield has always stood for inclusiveness, and we want to make sure that as a Jesuit, Catholic university we have a welcoming atmosphere from all of our students. So I'm here to support this and I look forward to seeing the dialogue with these students about the issues they're concerned with."

In the "Inclusive Excellence" section, the narrative continues to discuss more educational and community opportunities students have, including community engagement opportunities and certain interdisciplinary programs. Fairfield's narrative then moves to discuss the second segment, "A Diverse Community" striving "...to welcome individuals from the fullest range of social, economic, racial, cultural, national, and religious backgrounds possible."

It continues, "Building our diverse community begins with recruiting students, staff, administrators, trustees, and faculty to join us at Fairfield University, and then supporting them in their personal and professional development to meet an ever-changing world — and our students — continually where they are."

The third aspect of the narrative is, "Global Engagement" and is supposed to convey the University's commitment to "...preparing our students to become global citizens at home in the world, able to engage in different cultural contexts with an open mind and capacity to empathize with the perspectives of diverse peoples."

The narrative then moves on to the third and final chapter, "Where We Want to Go" stating that, "Looking to the future, Fairfield aspires to ensure that all members of our campus community feel that they belong at Fairfield and consider it to be their home."

The narrative ends by stating that, "We aspire to accompany our students and by extension, young people everywhere, in their efforts to build a shared human society that respects the dignity of all people and is enriched by diversity."

The entire narrative can be found on the University's website under their Mission, Values & History section.

After highlighting the printed narrative, Nemec then moved on to discuss his personal connection to the question of access and affordability.

"For me, this is again, a very personal journey" Nemec adds, "I think many of you know I was fortunate enough to grow up in Southern California in the 1970s and '80s, which was a particularly unique and notable time."

Nemec adds that the Los Angeles Unified School District created a 40,000 square-mile district in order to create magnet schools to diversify the district, and his family committed him to attend for four years.

"Reflecting upon this with my mother recently, I really asked 'Why did you put me on a bus to go an hour and 20 minutes each way,'" continues Nemec.

Nemec states that firstly, the curriculum of the school was "top notch." "But secondly, animated by our Catholic faith and values, was the thought that there is nothing more important for the dignity of every individual than advancing themselves through education."

He continues that "It's with that spirit in mind that it would call all of you to engage, as I have, in this

effort for access and affordability."

Nemec adds that there is still work to be done looking at the statistics, as the University is "78% white, 22% other, including biracial, including those students who identify as Black, Hispanic, Asian, and alike."

"Notably, this number has not moved in the last six years," he continues, "Interestingly, though, one of the benefits of growth, is the fact that while the percentages remain the same, we have gone from having 853 students who identify as non-white to over 1,000 students who identify as non-white."

"Is that enough? Of course not," he adds, "Our ambient environment, our country, is so much more diverse, and we must be so as well."

After mentioning the initiatives the University has taken to work towards diversity and inclusive excellence, Nemec goes on to address that there has been a "problem of the pool of available students of color and first-generation students, especially in the northeast, is dropping precipitously."

Nemec relays that current data from the Common Application points out that students of color, specifically black males, dropped by 15% in terms of those who are applying to college in 2021.

He continues that the new mission is to bring more students to the Fairfield Community, and that the way the University is tackling this problem is through "Bellarmine College."

Bellarmine College was announced at the end of Sep. 2021 and would be in partnership with the Diocese of Bridgeport as a program that, "...would offer an associate degree to students from low-income families and underrepresented communities, primarily in the surrounding Bridgeport region."

"And I have to confess, as a classical liberal that is the way I frame this challenge," Nemec says, finishing that, "For me, the question we have in front of us is not what we're going to say. It is rather, are we going to roll up our sleeves and do the work as contemplatives in action? I have committed this institution to do so. And hopefully this event allows you the occasion to engage as well."

Immediately following the end of Nemec's speech, all student protestors stood up and exited the room before Vice President for Student Life Karen Donoghue closed the event's speaking portion.

She stated, "This work is hard. You will never get it right, which is why we are committed to this work."

Vice President of Marketing and Communication Jenn Anderson said in a statement to The Mirror after the event, "Fairfield University encourages our students to express their views and opinions and fully supports their rights to free expression."

She continued that today's event was "...an opportunity for the University community as a whole to

engage with our University's history and commitment to diversity and inclusive excellence, and to review and discover a narrative that will work as a framework for the University's continued efforts."

Anderson continues that the University welcomes students to "express themselves with a spirit of humility, inquiry, generosity of spirit and intellectual honesty and rigor" and encourages "...our community to engage in the important work we are embarking on around Diversity, Inclusion, Access and Affordability."

"As President Nemec stressed in his remarks, the University must maintain an environment that is conducive to open dialogue and freedom of expression for our faculty, students and staff," Anderson stated, mentioning the Kalven Report and Nemec's quote of it that, "...the instrument of dissent and criticism is the individual faculty member or the individual student. The University is home and sponsor of critics; it is not itself the critic."

“Looking to the future, Fairfield aspires to ensure that all members of our campus community feel that they belong at Fairfield and consider it to be their home.”

- Diversity and Inclusion Excellence Narrative

She finished by stating, "The neutrality of the University as an institution arises then not from a lack of courage nor out of indifference and insensitivity, it arises out of respect for free inquiry and the obligation to cherish a diversity of viewpoints."

After the event, many students provided comments regarding the "Community in Action" event, including those that organized the protest against the event.

Senior Tushi Patel, senior resident assistant, and one of the main organizers of the protest stated that a good friend and mentor encouraged her to take her anger at the removal of the Black Lives Matter flag from C&PS and channel it, and she did so, through organizing.

She continued that, "Throughout my life, I've learnt the lesson that if you want something, you must do it yourself, whether that is academic success, experiences, whatever it may be. However, in the past few years I've added the insight that sometimes you must lean on others to achieve that goal."

Patel continued that initially she considered a dialogue, but decided "now was the time for action."

"If not now, then when?" Patel adds, continuing, "It's my last semester at Fairfield University, and I wasn't entirely surprised by the request to remove the BLM flag, but I was tired. I was tired of the lack of support. I was tired of the neutral stance consistently taken. I was tired of consistently discussing and not seeing anything being done. So, we did it."

Senior Ruby Francis, president of Gender & Sexuality Alliance and College Democrats, added that she is both proud of all of those who participated in the protest and grateful for Patel for "taking the initiative to start organizing."

"I am once again extremely disappointed, but not surprised by what was shared by University admin during Monday's event," Francis continues.

Francis stated that as the president of GSA, "I want to note the importance of intersectionality. When we say Black Lives Matter, we mean that Black gay lives matter, Black transgender lives matter, Black disabled lives matter and so on. The genuine support of Black students on our campus is crucial and this

diversity narrative changes nothing." Francis moved on to discuss the University's stance on neutrality. Adding that, "Neutrality here means that he and other admin are taking the side of the oppressor."

"Further, Nemec stated that the University is welcoming of various beliefs, and included what he called 'anti anti-racism,'" Francis added, continuing, "It is clear here that he means racism and therefore is perfectly fine with racism on campus. The tone of his speech, especially while discussing the BLM flag, seemed very aggressive, and was the same while addressing those who were protesting."

Senior Emily Marshall also discussed the "aggression" in Nemec's speech.

"It was disgusting and disappointing to not have to digest what was being said throughout the duration of the event speeches but especially the tone and aggression coming from Nemec" Marshall added, continuing, "In trying to advocate for a movement that addresses social injustice, human rights and public health and pushing our Jesuit Institution to also be in support it was not the response needed or necessary."

Sophomore Kayla Medina stated that she spent the morning after the event rewatching clips of Nemec's speech and that she found herself "more and more disgusted with each clip."

"To hear him openly state that 'our discussion welcomes...anti-racist and anti-anti-racist perspectives' at Fairfield makes me truly embarrassed to be a student here. Anti-anti-racist is the equivalent of racist" Medina stated, continuing, "Our so-called leader of the University, at an event meant to share Fairfield's 'Work In and Commitment to Diversity and Inclusive Excellence', literally stated that racist perspectives are not only tolerated but WELCOMED. Where do you go from there? How is this school ever going to change when these dangerous, bigoted statements come from the top?"

Sophomore Donna Ismail added that they were frustrated by the administration's lack of reaction to the protestors at the event, stating, "Nemec stood in front of 5 Black Lives Matter flags and did not acknowledge us or the movement once!"

Junior Ray Hinds stated that they wanted to firstly thank all the students that participated in both the "blackout" and the protest.

The "blackout" Hinds is referring to was held the day of the "Community in Action" event, where the Fairfield University Community was asked to "wear black to show your solidarity to the Black Community on campus."

"To our administration, DO BETTER!" Hinds continues, adding, "The students at Fairfield University have come together and used their voices to be heard and listened to, not ignored. Time and time again, the administration fails to address us as the population that we are, erasing our identities and invalidating our experiences. They continue to spread harmful ideologies of neutrality and silence when it is known for the fact that that is not what Jesuits stand for."

Hinds also states that as a Jesuit university, a Jesuit leader is needed. "Although we cannot put the blame on one person," they continue, "Nemec is one of our main leaders and he must feel our wrath for the actions he commits, knowing the damage it causes. It is time for a change in the higher administration, meaning a businessman/politician should not be our leader. Someone who understands the Jesuit values and how to apply them should be!"

Junior and Director of Diversity & Inclusion for the Fairfield University Student Association Eden Marchese agreed with Hinds' statement, "Nemec's speech proved that he is not fit to lead this University and that he is the coward and

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Compiled by Madeline West
Information contributed by the
Department of Public Safety.

- 2/24
2:24 a.m.
A no-contact order was issued to a non-student at the request of a student. The non-student was charged with harassment.
- 2/25
7:31 p.m.
The smell of marijuana was reported in Regis Hall. Students were identified in possession and referred to student conduct.
- 2/27
3:33 a.m.
An unwanted guest at the checkpoint refused to provide identification and was identified as a non-student. DPS issued a criminal trespassing warning.
- 2/27
4:26 a.m.
Vandalism was reported in the Townhouses near 13 Block. The fence was knocked down and maintenance was notified for repairs.
- 2/28
1:43 a.m.
DPS received the report of an individual starting a fire in Hopkins Pond near the village. The student was also in possession of drug paraphernalia. The student was referred to student conduct.
- 2/28
10:54 p.m.
A student reported being threatened by another student. The student was referred to student conduct.



Mask Mandate Change Leads to Significant Shift Reduction at RecPlex

By Julia Lanzillotta
Executive Editor

On the night of Tuesday, Feb. 22, student employees at the RecPlex were sent a message from Assistant Director of Fitness and Programming in the Department of Recreation, Betsy Blagys, regarding their employment for the remainder of the semester.

In the email given to The Mirror by a RecPlex staff member, Blagys states that due to the mask mandate being lifted on Monday, Feb. 28, the RecPlex would “no longer be staffing at the level we have been,” and regards this email as something she has “been dreading” Fairfield University President Mark R. Nemec, Ph.D. released a message on Monday, Feb. 14 announcing the end of the mask mandate for the Feb. 28 date, and these University-wide changes have prompted the RecPlex to readjust their staffing and scheduling.

Director of Recreation Eli Olken-Dann outlined that the end of the mandate correlates with staffing in many ways. He listed no longer needing student employees to enforce capacity counts in all areas of the RecPlex, no longer needing to dedicate student employees towards mask enforcement and compliance, no longer needing the amount of cleaning and sanitation efforts that were put in place due to COVID and no longer needing students to monitor specific areas of the building related to programs and services offered as reasons for the changes in staffing.

During the height of the pandemic, between four-six people worked each shift. Now, “The building staffing model is 2 to 4 people per shift .. two people at the front desk, one person in the equipment room and, when warranted, one “floater” who will be situated in the weight room and responsible to cover other positions as necessary,” said Blagys in a Feb. 24 email to all staff.

Employees seem to agree that the building was overstaffed, so these cuts are fairly practical considering the change in COVID-19 guidelines. Supervisor at the RecPlex, Delaney Hall ‘22 said, “Since cases on campus have been consistently low this semester and with the lifting of the mask mandate, the extra staff are no longer needed in that regard,”

Carly Manzi, a three-year-veteran at the RecPlex and first-year supervisor agrees, and said “We are already over staffed as it is and now we have less of a responsibility which requires less workers.”

“The RecPlex was already over-staffed even before the mask mandate,” said Fiona Tynion ‘22, a staff member at the RecPlex who has worked as a non-work study student since September of 2019. Tynion was taken off of the schedule as a result of recent changes.

Students whose hours have

remained protected include the entire Intramural sports staff (who are primarily non-work study) scorekeepers, referees, lifeguards and supervisors, “because they perform a specific function,” as per Olken-Dann.

Olken-Dann assures that staffing changes will only impact the building staff, who are primarily non-work study students. Currently, the RecPlex employs 83 building staff members. “After the cuts, we will be employing 58 building staff,” leaving 25 students to lose their weekly shifts.

Blagys writes “After discussing this with Eli and taking into consideration our operating budget, starting next week, Monday [Feb.28], shifts will be covered by our existing scheduled Federal Work study staff.”

All 25 students affected are

“ I do feel bad for all of the students losing their shifts because I believe many of them are like me in the sense that the money I earn from the RecPlex is my spending money week to week. It’s hard enough to get a job on campus without a work study reward, so to lose that job and that money as a college student isn’t an ideal situation.”

- Delaney Hall ‘22

non-work study students, meaning that their job was not federally-funded to help cover the cost of their education.

“In the event that a shift does not have FWS students, we will take a look and decide which students keep the shift,” said Blagys to employees. Although the budget was mentioned in the original email to staff, Olken-Dann implores that “This is not necessarily a budgeting issue.” Instead, the reality is that the RecPlex “...will no longer need the amount of students that we had in place during the pandemic, and we have prioritized students who were awarded federal work study money.”

This notion is unclear to some staff-members, however, as they are under the impression that funds, or issues related to funding, are more seriously related to this change at the RecPlex.

“My understanding is that

this is a budget issue and the RecPlex couldn’t afford to keep us all on even before the change was made,” said Tynion.

Senior Julia Brown has been a staff member since her sophomore year. She sees the shift cuts as understandable, and says “I was told it [staffing changes] was for budgeting reasons.” For that reason, she says, “I think they are reasonable in that sense.”

Olken-Dann clarified to The Mirror that affected students are “... NOT going to be terminated, they will still be eligible to take sub shifts from students who cannot make their regular time slots and will remain on the departmental communication chains.” Shifts for students averaged to about six hours total each week, according to Olken-Dann, and for some students, losing that pay can be difficult.

Hall began working during her first year as a work-study student. Although she is no longer a work-study student, she has been able to keep her hours each week due to her supervisory role.

“I do feel bad for all of the students losing their shifts because I believe many of them are like me in the sense that the money I earn from the RecPlex is my spending money week to week,” said Hall. “It’s hard enough to get a job on campus without a work study reward, so to lose that job and that money as a college student isn’t an ideal situation.”

Employees that are taken off of the schedule will not be taken off of payroll. If COVID-19 protocols and mask-wearing become mandatory again, Olken-Dann said, “... these 25 students would instantly be put back on their shifts and/or added to existing shifts where we would need more building staff.”

Blagys let all staff, whether they were put on the schedule or not, know via email that if shifts are available, they are available to take. However, she wrote “Preference will be given to staff that has no scheduled shifts and to staff that does not have another job on campus.”

Alaina Moger, now graduate student, has worked at the RecPlex since September of 2020, while she was an undergraduate student. She said, “While I feel bad for the kids losing jobs and/or hours here, so many other places are hiring right now due to being short-staffed so I think they should look into working elsewhere!”

Tynion was surprised by the news, and how abruptly the change would be implemented. “They could’ve given us a warning about the possibility of a change and then given everyone time to find a new job on or off campus.”

Although this change is not ideal for affected employees, Olken-Dann said that, “The bottom line is that since the covid-19 restrictions are being lifted, we no longer need the amount of staff we had in place during the pandemic.”

THE MIRROR

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Gale and Seenauth Seal the Deal in 75th FUSA Presidential Election



Photo Contributed by Steven Burns

In the Lower Level of the Barone Campus Center on Tuesday, March 1 at 8 p.m., it was announced that Jordan Gale ‘23 and Aliyah Seenauth ‘24 won the Fairfield University Student Association Presidential Election with 639 votes. Will Bradshaw ‘23 and Angie Dortenzio ‘23, who also ran, came in with 395 total votes. There were 20 write-in votes and eight votes that were invalidated by the FUSA Court. In total, there were 1,062 votes in the 75th FUSA Presidential Election.

Fairfield U Community Demands Institutional Change For Future



Kyler Erezuma // The Mirror

While President Nemeč spoke, protestors surrounded the podium holding up BLM flags. Some protestors feel that President Nemeč should publicly say “Black Lives Matter.”

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disgrace many have thought him to be behind closed doors. He is nothing more than another example of an old, white man who has benefited all his life from his privilege and is terrified at the notion of losing it. Instead of saying anything meaningful, he doubled down in racist rhetoric while yelling at the students he is supposed to support while attempting to manipulate them so that he can call himself the victim.”

In Oct. 2021, it was announced that Nemeč's contract was extended through the summer of 2027.

Sophomore Aliyah Seenauth, associate director of Diversity and Inclusion for FUSA stated that “After all that was said, though I was not shocked, I was once again disappointed.”

“ It’s my last semester at Fairfield University, and I wasn’t entirely surprised by the request to remove the BLM flag, but I was tired. I was tired of the lack of support. I was tired of the neutral stance consistently taken. I was tired of consistently discussing and not seeing anything being done. So, we did it.”

- Tushi Patel ‘22

She continued that, “This could’ve been an opportunity for him to acknowledge his wrongs and commit to learning more and doing better, but instead his ego was higher than that. Him being aggressive as he was felt like the epitome of being mistreated by a white man as a person of color. Students needed to protest to gain the power and strength amidst everything going on. Regardless of all he said, we put our all into what we did. When we all knelt, I felt tears in my eyes. I felt it was so unfortunate that we even had to do this, but there was something still so powerful about it. If he showed the slightest bit of empathy, maybe we would be more likely to respect him.”

“A part of me feels guilty for calling my peers into action into the silent protest because the speeches given, specifically Nemeč’s, elevated a sense of toxicity and was traumatic. Personally, the words that were said are in a constant loop in my head and I am upset that we had to experience that,” Patel added.

She continued that the choice to utilize a silent protest was simply because “why not?” “It was due time that we were seen,” Patel adds, “I feel that there have been conversations and that senior administration has heard concerns of ours, alums, and faculty/staff. And if they haven’t, then we have them. If you want to hear them, you know who we are. Reach out to us. Show us that you care. Show us that you are going to do something, not just give performative action. Start listening to the concerns and requests of your students. Because we’re not going to stop trying.”

Patel continues that, “Silence often speaks louder than words and we were hoping that our silence in that room would speak louder than our words would.” Patel adds that, “But now I don’t think we can remain silent. Now it’s time that you hear our real voices, to hear a real narrative because the one that you are depicting is not representative of us. Our demonstration is not one that Nemeč can take credit for. Nemeč cannot say that a neutral stance allowed for this free expression. No, it didn’t. The neutral stance is only hurting our community. As for why he is the one that is being ‘pinned’ with all of this. It might have to do with his role as our university president. He manages to dictate many policies on this campus, i.e., the removal of the mask mandates and the community for the most part follows. What do you [Nemeč] think saying Black Lives Matter would do? That we would lose donors? Isn’t it your job to work with them to support your community of students and faculty and staff? So, yes, I am unsurprisingly upset because I hadn’t expected to receive anything in our favor, still there were many things that were unexpected. And I’m sorry, even though it’s not for me to be apologetic, I still am to all those that showed up, that you also had to experience that because that was wrong and painful.”

Marchese continued by adding that the event itself was “...a perfect example of performative activism as the University used more marketing photos of students of color to push Nemeč’s racist agenda. Not one of the speakers at the event actually spoke to the students there but tried to use the event as a way to congratulate themselves for the mediocre work they’ve done in creating an incomplete ‘narrative’ of Fairfield University.”

Marchese continued that though they cannot speak for the reasons of other students, “I know there is a general feeling of being tired of this institution. Too much of this University’s history is steeped in the pain of students, faculty, and staff of color and I think the activism around the removal of the BLM flag is just another example of the culture of racism that is lovingly fostered by Nemeč and others.”

Marchese added that though many members of FUSA worked to support and represent students during the event, “...I would be lying if I said I wasn’t disappointed in those that were notably absent and those who did not join in the protest while being at the event. FUSA speaks a lot about being leaders for the students though many members who preach this kind of idea failed to do anything other than sit in their ignorance and privilege.”

“This movement is one that students, faculty, and staff must do together,” Marchese adds, “While it is true that students have a lot of power on this campus, students have been in this battle alone for far too long and need more people to have the courage to speak out against those in positions of power.” Many of the faculty then reacted to the student protest and the event in total.

Dr. Rachele Brunn-Bevel, Ph.D., associate professor in the sociology department, Faculty Chair for Inclusive Excellence and member of the Presidential Working Group on Inclusive Excellence stated that “The release of the diversity

and inclusive excellence narrative is a very important moment for the university and many people attending the event have been working very hard to make Fairfield a more equitable place.”

“However, many community members, including myself, were deeply troubled by the administration’s instruction to remove the Black Lives Matter flag,” Brunn-Bevel continued, “The student-led silent protest at today’s event was incredibly powerful and impactful. I have never been more proud of our students.”

“ To our administration, DO BETTER!”

- Ray Hinds ‘23

Assistant Professor of Politics, Aaron Weinstein, Ph.D., stated that “I have never been more proud of the student body than I am today. In their solidarity, each and every student in attendance was doing exactly what Jesuit education calls for: they were acting as men and women for others. They listened and expressed themselves respectfully and thoughtfully at a time when that’s far from the norm. Their example was inspiring.”

Associate Professor of History and Co-Director of the Program in Latin American and Caribbean Studies, Jennifer Adair stated that, “Along with many faculty and staff, I was proud to support student actions protesting the removal of the BLM flag.”

Director of Humanitarian Action and Professor of Politics Janie Leatherman, Ph.D. stated that she participated in the “blackout” and posted a sign on her office to support Black Lives Matter.

“Those are small, symbolic gestures that I hope convey support,” Leatherman adds, continuing, “I am in solidarity with the cause of lifting up the lives of our students (faculty, administrators and staff, too) of color and honoring their human dignity and human rights that have been denied historically and are still violated and trampled today.”

Leatherman finished by saying that she believes that it is “... fundamental to the mission of a Jesuit university to stand against systems of oppression and express empathy for and seek ways to understand the perspectives, feelings and needs of those who are vulnerable and marginalized.”

“That seems indispensable to bring all the members of our community into an embrace that is inclusive. I am committed to that,” Leatherman said, continuing, “We need to be in dialogue to listen and learn from each other; and to take into account how policies and actions, such as removing the Black Lives Matter flag from the window of the Counseling and Psychological Services center, impacts especially students who already feel excluded. This is a painfully poignant example, not least as the mission of this office is to serve students in distress. I hope this experience alone utterly galvanizes us to come together to find new ways of becoming a more whole and truly welcoming community.”

Associate Professor of Marriage and Family Therapy, and Program Director of the Certificate in Sexuality and Gender Minority Mental Health, Erica Hartwell, Ph.D. stated that she was disappointed by Nemeč’s remarks.

“It almost might have been better if he didn’t address the Black Lives Matter flag incident at all. His response was defensive, aggressive at times, and completely insensitive to the student experience,” Hartwell said, adding, “He did not address the students in the room with any kind of humanity or empathy. Never told them they were valued or welcome. He never acknowledged the emotional impact on them. In fact, he tried to gaslight them by saying that both he and the institution are, despite their own experience, on their side.”

Hartwell continued that the Nemeč seemed not to realize that the community’s response wasn’t just about the flag’s removal, “It is about a pattern of ignoring, excluding, and tokenizing students of color. It is about trying to address diversity through a handful of programs, some of which reek of saviorism. It is about not saying the words, black lives matter. It is about not providing the resources, structure, or leadership to create an inclusive and welcoming campus.”

“[Nemeč] defended the low numbers of students of color by saying that fewer young black men are interested in college. And that we recruit with the intent to graduate. Both of these statements put the responsibility on the individual and whether they choose to come to Fairfield and whether they can graduate from Fairfield. What about our responsibility as an institution? Perhaps these young people are making the wise choice in not attending college, especially Fairfield, because these institutions were not built to serve them, they were built to exclude them. And if they cannot succeed at our institution, perhaps we need to examine our definition of success. Instead of looking at students as the problem, we need to look at ourselves,” Hartwell said.

Hartwell finishes by stating that, “The President emphasized institutional neutrality, which is a tool of white supremacy. Neutrality is inherently unequal in a society where some groups have more power than others. Furthermore, Jesuits are not neutral. Jesuits are people for others, they serve in the name of justice and love, and they find God in all things. How, then, does anti-anti-racism belong on a Jesuit campus?”

“ Furthermore, Jesuits are not neutral. Jesuits are people for others, they serve in the name of justice and love, and they find God in all things. How, then, does anti-anti-racism belong on a Jesuit campus?”

- Erica Hartwell, Ph.D



Kyler Erezuma // The Mirror

Students dressed in all black for the Blackout protest during President Nemeč’s introduction of the Diversity and Inclusive Excellence Narrative. Protestors lined the event hall.

Opinion

Editor Peyton Perry » peyton.perry@student.fairfield.edu

Letters to the Editor :



Fairfield Community Reacts to BLM Flag Removal

Dear President Nemeč,

As faculty in the School of Education and Human Development, we are frustrated and disturbed by issues raised in articles recently published in *The Fairfield Mirror*: “Minority Voices at Fairfield Want to Be Heard” (Feb. 2, 2022) and “Black Lives Matter Flag Removed by Administration” (Feb. 23, 2022). More troubling is that these issues are part of a pattern of decisions and embarrassingly tepid responses that reveal insensitivity and a lack of leadership. We stand in agreement with faculty across Fairfield University who condemn the actions of our current administration as published by Dave Crawford of the Faculty Wellness Committee on Feb. 24th.

As educators, social workers, marriage and family therapists, counselors and school psychologists, we lock arms in solidarity with those who have been and are currently marginalized by a pervasive system of racism.

We proudly support the Black Lives Matter movement and consider the removal of the Black Lives Matter flag a trauma to our Black students and colleagues, to our campus community, and to the broader communities we serve. The censoring of the Black Lives Matter message signals a failure of inclusive excellence by the leadership at Fairfield University.

We remind the institution that we are still in the midst of two pandemics. That of COVID-19, which the University has taken numerous mitigation strate-

gies to ensure a safe campus for learning, and that of racism and anti-Black racism, in particular. We call on the institution to take up the work of fighting for racial justice and against anti-Black racism with the same rigor and level of priority as it has shown COVID-19.

The removal of the Black Lives Matter flag triggered yet another crisis in our campus community, traumatizing students and faculty alike. One student described a classmate as “curled up in a fetal ball.” The first step in responding to a crisis is to affirm physical and psychological safety.

As SEHD faculty, we are addressing the crisis with our students in various ways. However, a faculty response is not enough. Students—and faculty—have yet to hear an affirmation of safety from you, President Nemeč. Your silence is continuing the trauma and causing harm. Do no harm is a universal ethical principle held across our disciplines. The lack of a response is simply unethical.

The removal of the Black Lives Matter flag also goes against the values of all of the professions represented in Fairfield’s School of Education and Human Development.

This action is in direct opposition to the statements of our respective professional organizations expressing solidarity with the Black Lives Matter movement and condemnation of racial violence: American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy, American Counseling Association Anti Racist Statement, American Education Research Association, National Association

of School Psychologists, National Association of Social Workers.

Our professional organizations have spoken out clearly and consistently against racial injustice; why hasn’t Fairfield? In fact, our accrediting bodies require us to demonstrate our commitment to diversity in every aspect of our work.

More alarming, the ongoing silencing and censoring of speech and language around “Black Lives Matter,” “anti-racism” and “equity” is out of step with our Jesuit values and those promoted by our colleagues at other Jesuit institutions of higher education.

A visit to the websites of our peer institutions makes clear their commitments to anti-racism, BLM and racial equity. Why is Fairfield an outlier?

Throughout many years, especially the past few, we have seen the actions of our campus leaders operating in opposition to what they claim Fairfield University to be.

There is richness, strength and knowledge that comes from heterogeneity, and Fairfield University is shamefully unrepresentative of the United States of America. At a time when the U.S. population is growing more diverse and dynamic every day, the administration at Fairfield University seems to want to keep our campus homogeneous, exclusive, unwelcoming and for some, unsafe.

As faculty, we refuse to tolerate the violation and traumatization of any individual and stand with voices across Fairfield University who speak out for the value of Black Lives, locally, national-

ly and globally. We support the demands made by the Fairfield Alumni Response Team and make the following additional requests of you, President Nemeč:

1. Rehang the Black Lives Matter flag at the Office of Counseling and Psychological Services and hang additional BLM flags in other prominent locations on campus;

2. Articulate a clear and unequivocal statement of support for the BLM movement; articulate your definition of inclusivity and diversity and justify your actions in relation to these definitions;

3. Release a statement immediately to the campus community stating your commitment to and reaffirmation of safety for all members of the Fairfield community;

4. Support Fairfield University schools, departments and programs to publicize their commitments to equity, anti-racism and Black Lives Matter without censoring their language;

5. Host monthly forums to discuss issues of equity, diversity and inclusion at Fairfield, with sessions expressly between the President and students, faculty and staff of color;

6. Hire a Chief Diversity Officer.

Ibram X. Kendi (2019) writes that the heartbeat of antiracism is self-reflection, recognition, admission and, fundamentally, self-critique. Racism is institutional, but it doesn’t have to be. Leadership can commit to and embody the values of Jesuit ideals and antiracism, which go hand in hand.

Sincerely,
Dr. Kimberly Barba (Assistant Profes-

sor, Mathematics and Educational Studies and Teacher Preparation). Dr. Julie Bennett-Abebe (Assistant Professor, Social Work). Dr. Evelyn Bittas-Lotis (Associate Professor, Psychology and Special Education). Dr. Anne E. Campbell (Associate Professor, TESOL, World Language, and Bilingual Education). Dr. Ryan Colwell (Associate Professor, Elementary Education). Dr. Bryan Ripley Chandall (Director, CWP-Fairfield and Associate Professor of English Education). Dawn Q. DeBiase (LCSW Director, Social Work). Dr. Joshua C. Elliott (Assistant Professor of the Practice). Dr. Nicole Fletcher (Educational Studies and Teacher Preparation). Dr. Paula Gill Lopez (Associate Professor, School Psychology). Bob Hannafin (Professor, Educational Studies and Teacher Preparation). Dr. Erica Hartwell (Associate Professor, Marriage and Family Therapy). Ms. Maryann LaBella (Clinical Director, Marriage and Family Therapy). Dr. Alyson M. Martin (Associate Professor, Special Education). Dr. Stephanie S. Morrison (Associate Dean and Associate Professor, Counselor Education). Dr. Jocelyn Novella (Assistant Professor, Counselor Education). Dr. Nicole O’Brien (Associate Professor, Marriage and Family Therapy). Dr. Pierre Onelus (Associate Professor and Director of the Teaching and Foundations Program). Dr. Veddi Park (Assistant Professor, Social Work). Dr. Dilani Perera (Professor, Counselor Education). Dr. Rona Preli (Associate Professor, Marriage and Family Therapy). Dr. Michael Regan (Associate Professor of the Practice, School Psychology). Dr. Tracey Robert (Professor, Counselor Education). Dr. Emily R. Shamash (Assistant Professor, Special Education). Dr. Emily Smith (Professor, English Education). Dr. LaTasha Smith (Assistant Professor, Social Work). Dr. Stephanie Storms (Associate Dean and Associate Professor, Educational Studies and Teacher Preparation). Jay Taylor (LCSW Clinical Director, Social Work). Laura Whitacre (Director of Educator Preparation)

Dear Fairfield Community,

When I read *The Mirror*’s article on the removal of the Black Lives Matter flag from Counseling & Psychological Services’ office last Wednesday, I was disappointed, yet unsurprised. It follows a trend of the University’s reluctance to make statements and failing to identify a clear stance on the phrase. Despite considerable criticism from alumni, faculty and students on the University’s statement following the murder of George Floyd, which omitted “Black Lives Matter,” the University’s senior leadership has still avoided unequivocally vocalizing their support for its sentiment, and as of Monday, Feb. 28, it has refused to do so.

As President of the Fairfield University Student Association, I have close relationships with many of our administrators and I know that the vast majority fundamentally believe that we must support and uplift the marginalized members of our community. They share our desire to be a diverse, equitable and inclusive campus. Their values are the same as ours. But they can’t say it to everyone else.

From my conversations, and following President Nemeč’s speech at the “Community In Action” event this week, two explanations for the BLM flag’s removal have been put forward. The first is that the signage was in violation of hanging policies and posed a potential safety hazard, preventing the egress of individuals in the event of an emergency. Assuming this is true, there are surely locations where it would be safe to hang (say a wall) and it would not explain why the flag has not been

re-hung in such appropriate, yet visible spaces.

The second explanation is far more problematic, and stretches farther than this one incident. There is a belief among some members of administration that universities are to remain neutral in the discourse of the day and that debate should not just be led by students and faculty, but restricted to them. They believe that institutions of higher learning are meant to sponsor discussion but not engage in it, host the critics, but not be a critic themselves. I simply disagree with this approach.

I am under the belief that an institution like ours cannot remain neutral, nor should they. The University’s work to make the University more diverse and serve the marginalized (expanded scholarship programs, the new Bellarmine College, etc.) is evidence that they are not neutral on these matters, they are only neutral when it comes to speaking about them. If the University was truly bound by a position of neutrality, would not Campus Ministry and the Student Diversity and Multicultural Affairs Office be expected to remove their Pride flags?

While it is true that, nationally, the LGBTQ+ community has become more accepted over the past few years, this does not overcome the fact that students walk these very halls believing gay-marriage is immoral and that queer people do not belong here. I know several students personally who have been called slurs both behind their backs and to their faces. Who have been demeaned and humiliated in front of classmates and dormhalls for their sexual orien-

tation. At what point does hate stop being “discourse” and start being hate?

Furthermore, part of Fairfield University’s mission is “to be an inclusive, welcoming community that is representative of an ever-changing and diverse global populace.” How can our University espouse these beliefs and lay out these goals but stay silent when their voice can move them closer to that mission? How can our University claim to want a welcoming community and then fail to tell our students who are most vulnerable to hate and exclusion, that they are actually welcome here? This second explanation, this doctrine of neutrality, runs counter to the University’s core mission and, as we have seen time and time again, it only undermines their own standing on this deeply important issue.

Another challenge to this way of thinking is why the University has been so quiet about its position of neutrality. The first time I and others at this university heard this argument spoken publicly was at the university’s Diversity Narrative rollout this Monday. But why not earlier? Why was President Nemeč noticeably nervous when speaking on this issue? Was he embarrassed by his beliefs? He cited several statements and reports on the principles of free expression, but holds these ideas as the one-true-opinion and chooses to ignore those that critique an institution’s ability to remain neutral in the eyes of racism and discrimination.

Finally, I must state that the Diversity Narrative released this

Dear Fairfield Community,

The deplorable decision to remove the Black Lives Matter sign from the Health Center building needs to be addressed from the perspective of the historic mission and identity of Fairfield University. As a Jesuit and Catholic institution, Fairfield is committed to remediating the sad history of the Catholic Church’s record of many centuries of racism. It does not matter what this or that student, faculty member or senior administrator might think, the identity of Fairfield is not up for debate. While the Church has often failed in this regard, the tradition of Catholic Social Teaching, building upon the wisdom of Hebrew and Christian scriptures, insists not only on the absolute equality in dignity of all human beings, but also on the special concern for the marginalized members of society that goes by the name of commitment to the common good. At this moment in history in America, the

week fails to address the real history of Fairfield’s inclusive excellence. I spoke up multiple times in the presence of my colleagues on the President’s Working Group to impress on them the importance of telling the full story. I wanted to ensure that although the university is working to promote a diverse future, we cannot possibly ignore our troubled past. We have had extraordinary struggles—the 2016 “ghetto party” to name one. But to write a narrative that focuses solely on the positives of our University’s diversity work pretends that

proclamation that Black Lives Matter is central to showing our institutional commitment to becoming an anti-racist community. God knows we have some distance to go, but the trumped-up excuses for removing the BLM sign set us back in the noble cause of the dignity and equality of all people.

It is also a major public relations disaster. The only people who take offense at the idea that Black lives matter are, obviously, those who think that Black lives don’t matter. And those people, whoever they are, have no place on our campus. Equal dignity, unlike political or lifestyle choices, is simply not up for discussion. I hope that our university president will make this clear by saying publicly that Black Lives Matter. And the sooner the better.

Sincerely,
Paul Lakeland
Aloysius P. Kelley, S.J.
Professor of Catholic Studies and the Director of the University’s Center for Catholic Studies

our advancement has been entirely linear. It has not been.

Fairfield University, and President Nemeč in particular, need to reevaluate their stance on institutional neutrality because it fundamentally does not adhere to the university’s current actions, their mission, and given the inherent harm that their silence causes.

Sincerely,
Fairfield University Student Association President
Tyler Heffern

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5



Dear Fairfield Community,

We, the undersigned faculty of color, are deeply disappointed by the administration's decision to remove the Black Lives Matter flag from the front window of Counseling & Psychological Services, a place where students seek acceptance and help at a stressful time.

Our shared mission, as a Jesuit Catholic institution of higher learning and enshrined in the University's Mission Statement, asks that we develop "a greater sense of community, a sense that all of our members belong to and are involved in the University, sharing common goals and a common commitment to truth and justice, and manifesting in ... the common concern for others."

We fear that the removal of the flag represents a betrayal of the University's commitment to building a truly inclusive community committed to the above-stated, shared goals of social jus-

tice and common concern for others.

As reported in The Mirror, the administration evidently chose to remove the flag, "out of concern that it may make some people uncomfortable." This statement, we believe, is extremely troubling insofar as it appears that the administration prioritized the personal freedoms and comfort of "some" over others, grossly disregarding the experiences of many of our Black students (who already grapple with unique challenges of social exclusion) as well as other underrepresented student and faculty groups and their allies, many of whom view the BLM flag as a symbol of hope and inclusion.

The removal of the BLM flag, a symbol of one of this nation's most salient social justice movements in the twentieth-first century, is incongruent with the University's expressed "commitment to truth and justice." As we incorporate social justice more meaningfully into our new Magis Core, we should point out that the BLM flag symbolically refers not merely to a particular set of activists or a single organization, but has come to signify a larger and indisputable truth: "Black Lives Matter." The fact that the criminal legal system has yet to embody this truth is why this statement is a social justice issue.

The tone of the administration's explanation for removal of the flag regrettably mirrors its callous description of the murders of Ahmaud Arbery and George Floyd as "unfortunate deaths," individual events unconnected to broader, historic and ongoing issues of systemic violence and exclusions. In this case, it appears from The Mirror article, that the University administration chose "standard practices" and "brand consistency" over our "commitment to truth and justice," over structural understandings of social justice, as well as over building meaningful links between different groups across campus.

In fact, the question of how to address the issue of the BLM flag was a missed opportunity on the part of the administration to engage in a small but important act of social justice, in that administrators could have worked with Counseling & Psychological Services "to follow necessary approvals" by exploring alternatives to hanging it on the window, rather than requiring its outright removal. As an act of social justice, it could have demonstrated the administration's commitment to shared dialogue and mindful action aimed at developing workable, thoughtful, solutions that better reflect our institutional Jesuit values.

We are concerned that this

incident is a part of a wider pattern that reveals a worrying state of affairs on our campus. We fear that the distance between our stated ideals and the reality on our campus is turning into an unbridgeable chasm that further undermines our efforts, as faculty and members of the university community, to bring life to the University's Mission and Identity. In order to rebuild trust and alter our current trajectory, we demand a full and honest accounting of what has transpired, of where we stand currently, and of what is to be done. As an institution, we can and must do better.

We want to express our appreciation for and support of all of our students and especially students of color and other underrepresented student groups during this challenging time. The above statement was written prior to the "A Community in Action: Sharing Our Work In and Commitment to Diversity and Inclusive Excellence" event. We are incredibly proud of our students who participated in the silent protest at the event and hope to continue engaging with them as we move forward.

Signatories:

Rachelle Brunn-Bevel (Faculty Chair for Inclusive Excellence), Claudia Calhoun (Assistant Professor of Visual and Performing Arts), Nicholas Kapoor (Visiting Instructor of Mathematics),

Eugenia Kim (Adjunct Professor, MFA in Creative Writing Program), Dilani Perera (Professor, Counselor Education), Martin Nguyen (Professor, Religious Studies), Stephanie Storms (Associate Dean and Associate Professor, Educational Studies and Teacher Preparation), Tanika Eaves (Assistant Professor, Undergraduate Social Work Program, Egan School), Silvia Marsans-Sakly (Associate Professor of the Practice, History and Islamic World), Ashley Byun (Associate Professor of Biology), Shannon King (Associate Professor of History and Director of Black Studies), Olivia Harriott (Associate Professor of Biology), Sunil Purushotham (Associate Professor of History), LaTasha Smith (Assistant Professor, Family Therapy and Social Work), Juwei Xiao (Associate Professor, Modern Languages & Literatures), Kris F Sealey (Professor, Department of Philosophy), Stephane Morrison (Associate Dean and Associate Professor, Counselor Education), Jessica Alicea-Planas (Associate Professor, Egan School of Nursing and Health Studies), Gwen Alphonso (Associate Professor of Politics and [Interim] Director of American Studies), Clarence Hardy (Associate Professor of the Practice, Religious Studies), Mehmet Cansoy (Assistant Professor, Sociology and Anthropology), Danke Li (Professor, Department of History), Sergio Adrada Rafael (Associate Professor, Modern Languages and Literatures), Pierre Onelus (Associate Professor, ESTP), Wen Zhao (Assistant Professor, Communica-

EDITORIAL BOARD

"THE MIRROR'S NEW MISSION WILL NOT STOP WITH ME"

MOLLY LAMENDOLA
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

We often joke in The Mirror office that there are a lot of people on campus that will be happy to know that this is my final issue at the paper. In just my last year as Editor-in-Chief, we've covered some amazing stories and in doing so revealed many issues and inequities within the University. In doing that, our viewership has skyrocketed. Not only do we have thousands of additional views a month on our website, but I no longer have to throw out stacks of unread newspapers on my delivery route. For the first time in my four years at the paper, students are really reading it, and in doing so, they're learning things the University would rather hide.

Take our most recent series of Black Lives Matter articles. Last week, the entirety of my Social Justice Literature class was spent discussing the first article on the flag's removal and its connection to what we were learning. As a senior, and member of The Mirror, the stories regarding President Mark Nemeč's, Ph.D. ineffective letter in the Summer of 2020 and the "Ghetto Party" of 2016, were nothing new to me. But, to these first-year and sophomore students who had only consumed the marketing materials dispersed by the University, this was a shock.

This wasn't a shift that happened overnight. It has honestly taken blood, sweat, tears and a lot of sleepless nights to get The Mirror's reputation back to an actual true example of an organization that is "For the students, by the students."

I'd say it all started in the summer of 2020. At this time, the peak of COVID-19 caused people to be filled

with worry and unease. Schools were shifting online for the entirety of the 2020-2021 school year or sending plans regarding reopening while complete radio silence came from Fairfield. So... bored out of my mind and laying in my childhood bedroom I began sending emails.

I interviewed professors and administrators, read through hundreds of pages of Academic Council Meeting minutes and published my first Investigative piece, "Stags Come Home: Who's Actually Making the Decisions for Reopening in the Fall?" and would later work on another long-form piece that summer about Fairfield's budget gap.

It was then that I discovered that The Mirror could be more than a club, and rather an opportunity to learn journalism skills- we could be a true voice for the student body.

In my junior year, I slowly began writing piece after piece for the News section, but it wasn't until I became Editor-in-Chief that I truly began to see the shift in our content.

We covered the future of the Pass-Fail policy after interviewing professors and reading through pages and pages of the Academic Council Meeting notes.

We covered students' overall disappointment in the Office of Residence Life, from the forced triple situation to the lottery pick times for Sophomore students to their treatment of the Residence Assistants.

What's been interesting about all of this is the University's reaction to it.

Though it's unsurprising that they weren't overjoyed over The Mirror's new

mission, almost immediately doors started closing for us on who we could talk to.

In October of 2021, we published an article regarding the fact that the University was charging \$200 a night for quarantine housing and we were starting to reach out to sources regarding the University's proposed "Belarmine College" program.

Two days later an email was sent out to administrators from Jennifer Anderson, vice president of Marketing & Communication at Fairfield University, regarding communications with The Mirror. A University employee who received the email released it to The Mirror.

Anderson stated, "Over the last week, it has come to my attention that The Mirror has outreached to several of you and/or your teams regarding information on strategic initiatives or programs under development/consideration."

"As we do with all media, the Mirror should be following the same process of reaching out to our public relations team for comment" Anderson stated, adding, "It is important that as we consider responses, we consider messaging that supports our overall efforts and positions responses in a way that best represents efforts in the broader context of our University goals, objectives and pillars," She continues, "This also helps with consistency and factual accuracy."

She ended her statement with, "If you or your team receive inquiries from the Mirror or any media outlet, let's discuss responses before responding back to the reporter. Collectively, we can determine the best approach."

In conversation with Anderson at the time, she stated that this policy wasn't new and that it has been, "... something that has been in place and discussed with Mirror editors annually" but added that COVID-19 disrupted this.

As someone that's written for The Mirror for almost four years, including two years without COVID-19 influence, I'll state that this is my first knowledge of such a policy. Anderson may have looked through some administrators' comments before they got sent to us, but never were we blocked from communicating with administrators directly.

But, quite quickly, this is what we stumbled into. Almost immediately all emails sent to administrators went unanswered and Anderson was the only respondent.

This had almost the opposite impact that I think Anderson and the administration at large wanted.

Our work didn't stop, and it almost gave us a boost knowing that all of this work was actually having an impact. We continued to write articles highlighting issues within the university and raising up student voices. With me leaving, this mission will not end.

There's a new fire in that little office in the Lower Level of the Barone Campus Center.

They've seen that The Mirror can be a platform to empower students, hold the administration accountable and uncover what's actually happening within the university behind the marketing department's varnish.

The Mirror is a new paper, and I just know that they're going to do amazing things long after I graduate.

The Vine Is On Spring Break!



Arts, Entertainment, Features
Editor: Brooke Lathe



By Christian Mannino
Contributing Writer

It's almost here, that time of the semester when we can (justifiably) ignore our responsibilities and pretend like we're in a college movie—that's right, it's nearly spring break.

Coming out of an extra cold winter season, it's the perfect time for us hard working Stags to recharge while enjoying some



sun and fun.

Whether you want to live large or you're on a budget, here are some of the best tips to make your spring break 2022 unforgettable.

Before choosing your destination, there are a few ways to ensure you're getting the cheapest possible flight out of here.

In the mad rush, many college students buy the first available tickets and just deal with the new hole burned in their pocket.

With so many search engines to find cheap flights, it's hard to know which one is really giving you the best price.

Even with tools like Expedia, Skyscanner and Hopper, there's one that stands above the rest.

Enter Google Flights. What makes Google Flights so powerful—aside from the countless filters that help you find the exact flight you want—is that it allows you to book directly with the airline you'd like to fly with.

By cutting out the middle man, you're not only presented with the cheap-

est prices, but it gives you the opportunity to deal directly with an airline agent as opposed to a third party agency.

Now that we know we can go on spring break without breaking the bank, we can answer the real question—where to?

Florida: Aside from being everyone's favorite butt of a joke, it's sunny, beautiful and a go-to for spring breakers across the country.

If you've got your eye on Florida, Miami Beach has a lot to offer.

Aside from the Magic City's nightlife, Miami's culture and history is almost worth the trip alone.

If Miami isn't really your style, Jacksonville will most likely have something to offer no matter who you are.

Florida's First Coast is often overlooked, despite its beaches, the slew of amazing restaurants to choose from and even clubbing if that's more your speed.

Plus Daytona Beach is only an hour away by car, so taking a day trip to the world-famous beach is incredibly easy.

Next: Outer Banks, paradise on Earth.

If you've watched the show, you're probably itching to live the sun-soaked Pogue life.

Located off the coast of North Carolina,

the Outer Banks has plenty to offer, from open-sea beaches, state parks and even shipwreck diving sites.

Also, given its location, it's a far better destination choice if driving is more your style.

If you really want to splurge, look no further than Nassau in the Bahamas.

In recent years, Nassau has quickly become a top pick for spring breakers of all kinds, whether you're more of a partying type or just prefer to soak in some rays on its white sandy beaches.

If you're not sick of the cold yet, a ski trip might be ideal for you.

Given the close proximity of many New England ski resorts, packing the car and taking the week off is far less involved than many other spring break choices.

Last, but certainly not least, is a good old staycation.

For some of us, forgetting about our assignments for a week and finally getting some well-deserved sleep is the ultimate vacation.

And, unlike the other choices for spring break, the only money you might have to spend is on Uber Eats.

Either way, enjoy your time off Stags, it's well-deserved!

DR. AKHLAQ SHARES HIS "JOURNEY TO FREEDOM"

By Abby White
Contributing Writer

The Fairfield community welcomed professor and scholar-at-risk, Sayed Hassan Akhlaq, Ph. D. last week on Feb. 24, for a series of classroom visits, guest lectures and a presentation of his research. During Dr. Akhlaq's visit to Fairfield, I was fortunate enough to meet him and attend his lecture titled "Afghanistan: Looking Back, Looking Forward – My Journey to Freedom."

In his lecture, Dr. Akhlaq shared his fascinating and inspiring life story: his refugee experience, his strategies for teaching critical thought and promoting academic freedom in Afghanistan and his forced exile due to his philosophical and political ideas and teachings.

He began with descriptions of his childhood and education. Born in Bamyan, Afghanistan, Dr. Akhlaq was forced to emigrate to Iran with his father at the age of four after the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan in 1979. His father was a scholar and a religious leader, with over twenty-five published books on Islam. Because of this, Dr. Akhlaq had always been interested in going to school and receiving an education. He explained that after high school, he attended university in which he joined an intellectual debate club. During a time in which many Afghans were left vulnerable and education was difficult

to receive, Dr. Akhlaq was committed to promoting academic freedom and women's rights. As he proved in his lecture, his commitment did not end with his college career.

It is through his professional and public contributions to educational reform in Afghanistan that he has become an acknowledged and praised individual.

Throughout the course of his lecture, Dr. Akhlaq spoke of many of his initiatives to promote academic freedom, one of them being the founding of Gharjistan University in Afghanistan. He claims that the goal in founding this professor-invested university was to support those in vulnerable or low-income situations and create an environment in which people felt at home, supported and as if they could follow their dreams. Dr. Akhlaq also conducted many public speeches at various universities as he claimed he did not want the ideals of academic freedom, human rights and women's rights to be "strangers" to students. He aimed to familiarize people with these modern ideals and bring about hope for change in his speeches.

There were many strategies that Dr. Akhlaq employed to bring about this hope and change he spoke of. A big one was the "reconstruction vs deconstruction strategy." Dr. Akhlaq claims that as a preface to his public speeches at universities, he would clarify that he was

not there to destroy traditional values but to build something new. He explained in his lecture that he did not intend to build a political wall in promoting academic freedom or women's rights. Instead, he intended to build a meaningful education for the people of Afghanistan. It was important to him that he avoided politicized or military action in the promotion of his ideals. Another big strategy that Dr. Akhlaq promoted in his lecture was the "step-by-step vs. rapid change strategy." This was his acknowledgment that change in education is something that will take time. Despite this acknowledgment, he was persistent in his goal, remaining patient and working step-by-step towards change.

In 2012, Dr. Akhlaq was forced into exile due to his philosophical and political ideas when it came to academic freedom. However, he claimed in his lecture that this forced exile did not force him to abandon his dream. He continued his educational work in Afghanistan, explaining that he felt he still had a lot he could do to help his people.

Still in the United States of America, Dr. Akhlaq is currently an adjunct professor at Coppin State University in Baltimore, Md., Maryland University in Virginia and Northern Virginia Community College. He has been a visiting scholar at many universities across the country and we have been fortunate enough

to welcome him here to Fairfield University.

At Fairfield, many of us may take our educational opportunities and academic freedom for granted. Dr. Akhlaq's lecture is a reminder that education is not as accessible, inclusive or free in many other parts of the world. In Afghanistan, there is still work to be done, step-by-step, to promote academic and human rights.

I owe thanks to Fairfield's Cen-

ter for Social Impact, the College of Arts and Sciences' Humanities Institute and the Scholars at Risk organization for organizing Dr. Akhlaq's visit to campus and for providing the Fairfield community with this opportunity to learn and reflect.

I, again, feel fortunate to have met and learned from Dr. Akhlaq, an individual who has done so much impactful work in the promotion of academia and human rights in Afghanistan.



Photo Contributed by Julia Neil

Dr. Akhlaq delivers his speech at Fairfield University on Feb 24, 2022.

Steps To Enhance School Spirit



By Peyton Perry
Opinion Editor

A huge part of campus life should be great school spirit shared by everyone! Some may say, however, that Fairfield lacks school spirit at times, such as at certain sporting events.

It is no secret that cultivating a strong sense of pride and unity among students takes shared efforts. If more Stags begin to show their school spirit, more and more will slowly join in.



Here's a guide as to how we Stags can begin to raise the energy a bit and show off our school spirit!

First, go to more events! You can't show off any school spirit if you don't attend any sport events, rallies, etc. You only get four years, so really make the most of them.

Hop on the bus to Webster Bank Arena in Bridgeport, Conn. to cheer on our men's and women's basketball teams, or stop by Lessing field to cheer on soccer and lacrosse.

Having a large crowd at games to show support for fellow stags is an easy way of increasing our school spirit.

Second, have confidence! Do not be afraid to be the first one to make some noise at an event. If your friends are with you, it can

help ease some of your nerves as you all cheer loudly and proudly together. The other stags will surely appreciate it and many are sure to join in.

Third, buy some Fairfield swag to wear around campus and at big events. Any easy way to raise school spirit is wearing around your school's colors for others to see. It's easy and you can look good while doing it!

Fourth, if you want to really get creative, try making some posters to bring to big sport events or other school activities.

Grab some markers and paints with your friends and make signs to hold up proudly in support of those you are cheering on. It will surely mean a lot to them as they look into the crowd and see all your support!

Lastly, just be involved around

campus. Showing school spirit is easier than you may think.

Fairfield allows for so many wonderful opportunities, whether that be to engage in research with a tenured professor, study abroad in a foreign country, decorate succulents hosted by Fairfield at Night, listen to a prominent guest speaker in the Regina A. Quick Center of the Arts and so on. Don't let all these opportunities pass you by.

Form connections with professors and peers, be active in our community and work to continue making Fairfield a better place for incoming generations. You have the power to create positive change, you just have to want to!

I hope this guide helps as you think about ways to raise your

own school spirit.

We stags can do anything and I have no doubt that if enough of us put our minds to it, we could maximize our school spirit.
Go Stags!



By Brooke Lathe
Vine Editor



The housing lottery. It's exactly that. But before I start off this "how-to" column, I would like to point out that while this process might be based on pure luck, just know that whatever building you end up in, you will be happy as long as you approach it with an open mind.

This current school year, I was placed into the absolute last building my roommates and I had in mind, but we honestly couldn't be happier with where we ended up. With that being said, here is a simple, to-the-point, concise guide on what this whole operation consists of.

The first step is logging onto my.fairfield.edu and completing the housing application on the "Housing Director". Once this is submitted, your housing lottery eligibility should be confirmed.

Next up is picking roommates. But, depending on what hall you plan on living in, the number of people in your group can vary widely (when the housing options are discussed below, you can decide how many friends you need from there). If you have a large group of friends that you know you want to live with, you still have to figure out who will be your direct roommate.

So, I suggest not only factoring in how well you get along but comparing your living styles too, as it's one of the biggest factors to keep in mind. I have a few friends that I absolutely love, but never in a million years would want to share a room with.

Once you have your group all situated, you will have to visit the "Housing Director" icon again. On the left-hand side, there will be a list of folders, but this time, you will need to click "select roommate". From there, input who you will live with. However, don't forget that the request needs to be mutual. If

only one student adds a person as a roommate and the other does not include them, the request will not be accepted and you will be placed into a random lottery.

Next, you and your group will be entered into the lottery and in the next few weeks, you all will receive a time slot. Out of the entire group, you will take the average number to represent your pick time. Students will then select housing on the specified date and time (sent via email) starting with the lowest group number and ending with the highest.



The Housing Director

The Housing Director

So what houses can you pick? Great question! If you are a rising sophomore, the standard housing options have always included the "village". Some of these choices within the village include Kostka Hall and Claver Hall which consist of two-person bedrooms conjoined with another two-person bedroom via bathroom aka "jack and jill" style. One thing to note is that only Kostka hall has laundry facilities, so those of you who live in Claver will have to walk to another building in order to wash your clothes.

The other dorm hall in Southside is Faber Hall which includes two living styles:

four people in one room (with a bathroom) or a suite-style option. The suite is set up so that you walk into a larger bedroom that has enough room for living space where a small hallway leads you to a bathroom and the smaller room for an additional two people.

A new twist to the housing lottery is that another village residence is now a part of sophomore options: Meditz Hall. Since this is usually an upperclassmen building, residence life has turned this building into a program you must apply and get accepted into (no information has been provided yet,

suites with two-person bedrooms and a personal bathroom. However, this is a part of the Ignatian Residential College programs (leadership, creative life or service for justice) which means in order to live here, you must apply for a specific program of choice and get accepted.

For rising juniors, as most of us know, our choices continue to consist of the townhouses, Mahan Road, Meditz Hall or Dolan Hall.

Now that you know all of the steps to the housing lottery, there are just three more important tips you can't forget. Watch the clock. It happens more than you think, but some people actually oversleep or forget what their housing selection time is. So, make sure you triple-check your slot and set an alarm for ten minutes prior.

Secondly, before selection day, try to estimate where you will end up depending on your pick time. And because not everything goes your way, prepare to have three backup rooms in case your first few are taken. Lastly, try to have all of your future roommates together so that you can mutually decide what room will be your new home.

Nevertheless, just try not to stress! I always say that everything happens for a reason, and I have never been proven wrong. I feel so fortunate to live in the hall and room that I do when I was originally dreading moving in.

Now, I absolutely love it because all of my neighbors and I have become great friends (I probably wouldn't have met them without living near them), I have a kitchen and a laundry room right next to me and countless lounge options that I always study in. Any room can be made a home with the right decorations, people and attitude - trust me, whatever room you get, you will be just fine!

so keep a lookout in your emails for a future message from IRHA or residence life). If you are accepted, the styles consist of six or eight person rooms with a kitchen, living area and bathroom.

In the quad, there are three other options as well. Loyola Hall, which has two-person bedrooms with communal bathrooms. McCormick Hall, another dorm-style residence hall with two-person bedrooms and communal bathrooms, but they have hardwood floors giving them a very homey feel.

And Langguth hall, which was built in 2018, consists of four or eight person style

IF YOU'RE SEARCHING FOR FAIRFIELD'S BEST SUSHI, SHIKI HANA HAS IT ALL!

By Madison Gallo
Head News Editor

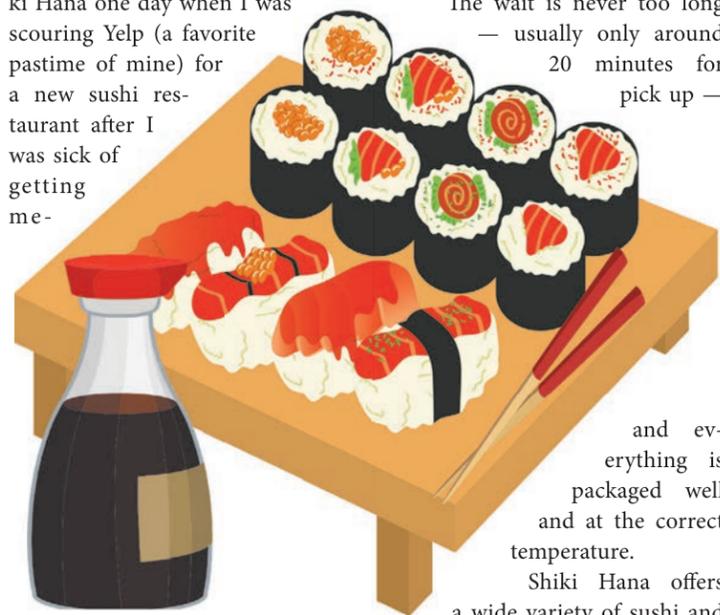
Words can't express the excitement I felt when I finally found my favorite and forever go-to spot for sushi in Fairfield: Shiki Hana. It took three years for me to find this wonderful location, but the wait was so worth it.

I actually found out about Shiki Hana one day when I was scouring Yelp (a favorite pastime of mine) for a new sushi restaurant after I was sick of getting me-

diocre dishes that never really fulfilled my sushi craving.

Located in the Post Road Plaza near Craft 260 and Post Nail Spa, you will find Shiki Hana. Though this restaurant is currently only serving take-out and delivery, the sushi makes up for the lack of indoor-dining experience, and I am very excited to eat at the restaurant once that option opens up.

The wait is never too long — usually only around 20 minutes for pick up —



and everything is packaged well and at the correct temperature.

Shiki Hana offers a wide variety of sushi and

kitchen-made options.

Some of the best specialty rolls I have tried include the Gold Fish Roll (Spicy shrimp crunchy roll topped with shrimp and avocado), Hanukkah Roll (Yellowtail, tuna, crunch topped with salmon and tobiko) and the Sex Roll (Shrimp tempura, spicy tuna topped with white tuna and avocado).

As for the more classic, standard options like the Shrimp Tempura Roll, Spicy Yellowtail Roll and Cucumber Avocado Roll, they are just as amazing and fresh!

Whenever my friends and I order sushi, we usually get around 4-5 rolls to split between the three of us, which we have found to be the perfect number.

One thing I really like about Shiki Hana is that they give generous servings in each roll.

I never feel like they are conservative with the amount of fish and other ingredients they include in the rolls — a unique quality that other sushi places lack in the Fairfield area.

My favorite roll Shiki Hana offers is definitely the Gold Fish Roll. This roll is described on the

menu as a "spicy shrimp crunchy roll topped with shrimp and avocado." It always tastes so fresh and I love how crunchy it is. All of the textures and the flavors combine to make the perfect dish in my eyes.

But something Shiki Hana really nails on the head is the consistency throughout all of their rolls. We have ordered at many different times and days and have never been disappointed in the quality or the tastiness of the different rolls we order.

We usually stick to a few of our all-time favorites and then try to change up one or two of the rolls so we expand the range of what we order.

Another great quality about Shiki Hana is the lunch special. The Lunch Special runs from 11:30 a.m. until 3:30 p.m. and they offer options from the kitchen and several sushi specials.

For lunch from the kitchen, Shiki Hana offers a variety of \$9 Special Boxes that are served with miso soup, salad, rice, a dumpling and a California roll.

The types of boxes include "Chicken Teriyaki, Beef Teriyaki,

Salmon Teriyaki, Beef Negimaki, Chicken Katsu, Shrimp Tempura, Vegetable Tempura, Tofu Teriyaki, Chicken Maki and Chicken Yaki Udon or soba."

The sushi bar offers two types of options: the sushi bar special and the maki special.

The price of sushi in the sushi bar special ranges from \$9 to \$14 and will include an assortment of rolls with sides of miso soup or salad.

The maki special, my typical choice, comes with either miso soup or salad and either two assorted rolls for \$8 or three assorted rolls for \$10.

Although, the maki special only includes classic rolls such as the California roll, tuna roll, Alaskan roll and tuna avocado, to name a few.

This lunch special is such an easy way to get a large assortment of rolls for a relatively and comparatively inexpensive cost.

So, if you're looking to indulge in some delicious, flavorful and fresh sushi, gather up a few of your fellow sushi-loving Stags and give hidden-gem Shiki Hana a try!

FOUR FIERY FEMINIST READS

By Molly Lamendola
Editor-In-Chief

I've been called a "dirty feminist" and enough offensive words against my gender to charge up a small motor that runs on fragile masculinity. Thus, I've read a lot of phenomenal "woman power," gender empowering books to fuel my fire against these easily frustrated men.

So without further ado, here's a list of some of my favorite reads if you too want some fuel to the old feminist fire.

1: "Three Women" by Lisa Taddeo

This book has mixed, but some pretty poor reviews on Goodreads and different accounts. But, I actually really enjoyed it. An author conducted interviews with three women over the course of many years and wrote this book all about their lives, focusing on their sexual desires or histories.

Her message is that we focus so much on what men want, that what women want in a relationship is always second, or even not thought about at all. I liked it because it's real and these are actual women

struggling against this toxic patriarchal system of all these ridiculous men. Who, just because they're men, are seen as smarter, better, more competent and more important, which I think that's ridiculous.

This book really fired me up and made me completely insufferable for almost two weeks, so I'd add it to your list immediately.

2: "The Bloody Chamber" by Angela Carter

If you're not a big fan of non-fiction or more reality-based fiction, this book is for you. It's a re-telling of many of the famous fairy tale books but with a darker, feminist edge. I had to read and write some papers on this book in my Fairytale Literature class, so I know it pretty intimately.

But, it's just one of those books that you can read again and again and again and find more symbolism and allegories that you missed the first time around.

The writing is phenomenal, the storytelling makes your skin crawl at times and again, truly makes me feel like women have just completely suffered for centuries. It made me intolerable and the men in my life hate me, so it should be added to everyone's list.

3: "Literally Anything" by Alice Walker

I'm a huge fan of Alice Walker and her

books. I think she writes such amazing, deep, realistic characters that you often feel as though you could reach in, pull them out and they'd be standing next to you.

The good thing about her is that she wrote a lot of short stories and essays, so if you don't want to dive right into something like "The Color Purple," you could read "In Search of Our Mothers' Gardens," a collection of non-fiction essays.

She's just a fantastic author and she truly is able to tell stories, and not just write about the struggle of women in the 20th century, but Black women and the need for intersectionality in modern-day Feminism.

If you read anything this year, grab something of Alice Walker's, maybe even "The Welcome Table" as just nothing makes me cry more.

4: Margaret Atwood:

Okay, I know I'm supposed to be recommending books but I'm a big fan of most of Margaret Atwood's publications. To be honest, I like some of her other books better than the famous, "Handmaid's Tale."

Don't get me wrong, "The Handmaid's Tale" is good as it truly highlights how in a patriarchal society women also oppress other women in hopes of reaching a higher place in society, but in reality, we're all oppressed

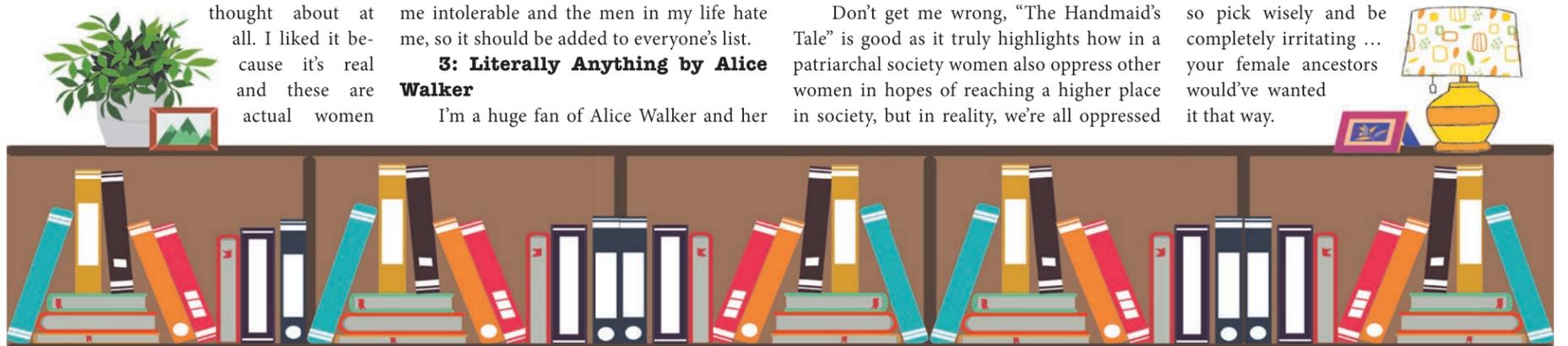
by men. But it's Atwood's story collection, "Bluebeard's Egg" and her novel "The Robber Bride" that truly impacted me in innumerable ways.

She writes, "Even pretending you aren't catering to male fantasies is a male fantasy: pretending you're unseen, pretending you have a life of your own, that you can wash your feet and comb your hair unconscious of the ever-present watcher peering through the keyhole, peering through the keyhole in your own head, if nowhere else. You are a woman with a man inside watching a woman."

You are your own voyeur," in "The Robber Bride". It's a passage I think about all the time.

Amongst the argument between women about being too basic or too "pick me." All I can think is that all this in-fighting in gender is allowing men to go about their lives unchallenged. How unstoppable would we be as a gender if banded together?

All in all, there are a lot of phenomenal options to make you an insufferable woman to be around, so pick wisely and be completely irritating ... your female ancestors would've wanted it that way.



EUPHORIA'S ROLLER COASTER SEASON FINALE

By Brooke Lathe
Vine Editor

On Feb. 27, HBO's popular hit, "Euphoria," premiered its second season finale with its eighth and final episode. For two months, fans have been hooked by the thrilling plot twists and crazy storylines that follow an intense group of high school teenagers, all of whom carry varying personal and private issues with them. While the show portrays harsh concepts, it is done with the intent to inform viewers about drug abuse, sexual assault and more, rather than glamorize the wrongdoings of such awful behaviors.

Spoiler alert: if you have not watched the finale of "Euphoria" yet, and plan on doing so in the future, you might want to pause this read for another time.

Okay, now that that's out of the way, for my season finale review I would like to start off by discussing the aspects of the episode that I really enjoyed since I have more questions than I do praise. Like every other fan posting on social media, I of course enjoyed watching Maddy finally get her chance to fight Cassie; something that should've been done the second she found out about her and Nate's secret relationship.

Even further, I loved the attitude Maddy gave Cassie by saying "it's just the beginning" after Cassie shared how he broke up with her. She's totally insane for falling in love with someone she watched her friend fall victim to for years! But, in time, she will hopefully learn her lesson; because we all know Nate won't be the one changing.

Additionally, I appreciated the closure I got between Nate and his father. While it had me tearing up because Cal's background explained how he became the person he is, I agree that Nate calling the police on him to receive punishment for non-consensual voyeurism is the only solution he can really face. However, I can't help but still feel sympathetic towards Cal because I know he was never able to live out the life he truly wanted to have and was never able to feel

truly happy in his life besides his night at the bar with Derek. This, in total, means that Sam Levison did a wonderful job making viewers feel empathy for a horrible character; one of the greatest accomplishments for a screenwriter in my opinion.

Now, onto the "what's up with this" part, because there are just so many. Don't get me wrong. As a writer, I am a strong believer that cliffhangers are a necessity at the end of a television show since it leaves the audience in suspense, counting down the days to the next season. But, there were just so many missing pieces that were left out.

What happened with the whole Laurie situation? If she truly is this "grandeur drug dealer" and human trafficker, why hasn't she sent someone to kidnap Rue to pay back for all of the money she lost? Isn't that what she threatened Rue with when she entrusted her with the \$10,000 suitcase full of drugs. Maybe, Levinson is saving the answers for next season, but I feel like he should've added a two-minute scene foreshadowing what is to come, leaving viewers to come up with predictions. This type of discussion will undoubtedly enhance the series following.

This leads to the question: what happened to Kat's storyline? She was such a big character in season one and now got pushed to the side. In the finale especially, I don't even think she had more than five lines.

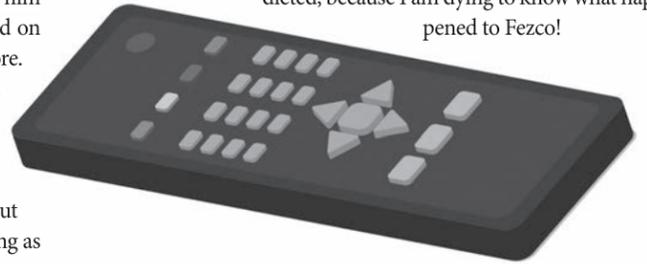
Furthermore, I think not explaining what happened to Fezco is an amazing suspense tactic, but I just didn't understand why Ash-tray was so sadistic in this episode. There was no reason for him to stab Custer when Fezco told him he had it figured out. And on top of that, the shoot-out with the FBI made no sense even more. It wasn't because he was trying to protect Fezco, since he shot him, and it wasn't because he'd rather die than go to prison because he was in shock seconds before his death. So, I'm having trouble finding the purpose. Maybe you can say he was a confused and scared kid who acted on heightened emotions, but I feel like that isn't good enough of a reason to lead to something as

big as that. Especially when he has lived a life surrounded by crime starting from birth - it makes no sense!

Lastly, like pretty much everyone else I have talked to, Elliot's song took up so much unnecessary screen time. I knew immediately that the inclusion of the tune was a marketing tease for an upcoming EP or single, but after it lasted longer than 30 seconds, I was so confused. And once it passed three minutes, I was just plain angry. In an episode that's only an hour, especially a season finale, four minutes is a very very long time that takes away from the action and other more important plotlines. Plus, not only does he sing to Rue, who's girlfriend he slept with and is still not mentioned, but if someone sang me a song for that long and I had to stand there, I would probably cry out of awkwardness. And that's exactly how the scene was portrayed. Zendaya honestly just looked uncomfortable and bored.

Don't get me wrong, I absolutely love Dominic Ficke's voice and music, but I think it would've had the same effect (or maybe even better) if it was cut short so listeners could be curious to what the rest of the song sounds like outside of the show. With that, we would also get an extra scene or two of action that actually correlates to the plot.

Even with these points of criticism, I am still a huge "Euphoria" ride or die fan. I believe that the cast could not be better, the soundtrack is absolutely breathtaking and the plotlines are incredibly thought provoking. I'm excited to see what season three will bring to the table, but hopefully it comes out before 2024 as predicted, because I am dying to know what happened to Fezco!



Neat Noodle Rankings For National Noodle Month

By Madison Gallo
Head News Editor

By Tobenna Ugwu
Managing Editor

The month of March is National Noodle Month. However, noodles should be celebrated all the time. To celebrate National Noodle Month, we are going to review some of the most popular pasta shapes and provide you with a definitive and 100 percent correct ranking and review of the pasta shapes.

You might ask yourself what qualifications we have to be making this list, but I (Madison) have pajama pants that have pasta shapes and their names all over them. My dad is also an Italian chef, so I have 20 years of eating Italian food and pasta on my resume as well.

And I (Toby) am a staunch critic of pastas solely based on their shapes because I am a firm believer that the shape somehow alters the taste and the texture of the pasta. I also have two Italian roommates so I guess there's that as well.

Penne:

Madison: 10 → Penne, to me, is second to none. It is my favorite pasta shape, my ride or die. Penne is even better when it's mini. It also tastes good with any sauce or meal but my personal favorite is penne with pesto or penne with vodka sauce.

Toby: 8 → I am generally not fond of hollow pastas, but penne is one of the few exceptions, mainly because penne in my opinion is the best shape to make baked chicken alfredo. I've tried making chicken alfredo with a lot of pasta shapes but penne simply has the best consistency.

Spaghetti

Madison: 6.5 → I am not particularly fond of spaghetti, but I recognize why it's a classic and need to respect it as such. I much prefer angel hair (capellini) over spaghetti. I just feel like it's over-done, but I of course love spaghetti and meatballs and that meal will always have a special place in my heart.

Toby: 10 → I absolutely love spaghetti. Yes, yes I know it's a basic pasta but you can simply never go wrong with

spaghetti especially if you're a college student. If you do not feel like making an elaborate dinner, boil up some spaghetti, three frozen meatballs in Rao's Homemade Sauce (and personally I add a spoonful of red pepper flakes as well) and you have yourself dinner! Top it off with some pecorino romano or parmesan cheese and enjoy.

Cavatappi

Madison: 8 → Cavatappi is a less common pasta shape, but it's one of the best. The spirals mix with any kind of sauce it's in to flow perfectly around the noodle and cover it all. However, I do prefer cavatappi with a meat sauce like bolognese because otherwise I feel like the noodle can overtake the sauce, but the addition of other components like a bolognese has makes for a really good balance all throughout.

Toby: 7 → Cavatappi is a good substitute for macaroni in mac and cheese, since I hate the shape macaroni with a passion. As you might realize by the end of this, I dislike short pastas so where macaroni has just one spiral, cavatappi has a few making it not as short.

Bowtie (Farfalle)

Madison: 2 → I do not enjoy this shape of pasta. I really consider a pasta shape's ability to hold onto sauce and this one has zero ability to do so. If

it's in front of me, I will eat it, but I will for sure be disappointed the entire time I do so.

Toby: 2 → I simply hate the shape of bowtie pasta. It is too flat and it's also difficult to pick up with a fork. I prefer not to have a full workout while trying to eat.

Rigatoni

Madison: 4 → Not my favorite, not my least favorite. Nothing special to me. Similar to penne, I prefer it in its tinier form of Mezzi Rigatoni.

Toby: 5 → I am gonna go with Madison on this one. The only reason I gave it a five is because the name is kinda nice.

Orecchiette

Madison: 9 → Orecchiette isn't the type of pasta I would eat with just anything, but the meal I will eat it with is to die for. Orecchiette with broccoli rabe, sausage, cannellini beans and diced tomatoes makes for one of my favorite comfort meals. It is so delicious in the winter and the small ear-shaped pastas make for a great pairing to the other ingredients in the dish.

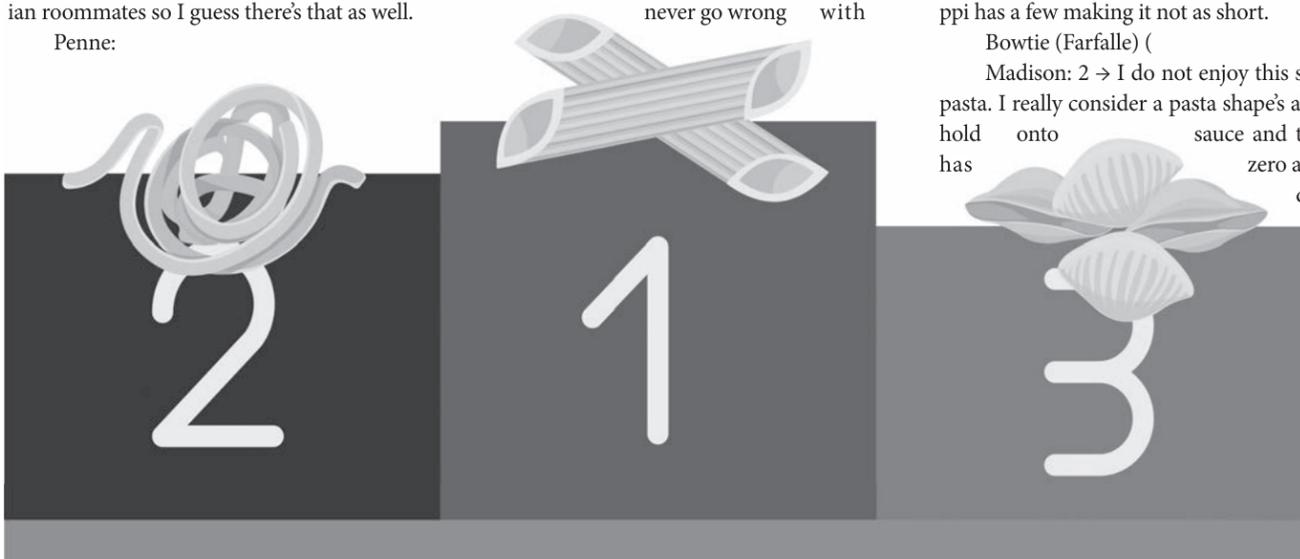
Toby: 3 → Another style with weird shapes and this one has the added disadvantage of having an unpronounceable name. Enough said!

Rotini

Madison: 1 → Worse than bowtie. I would never pick it up for myself.

Toby: 1 → This is definitely the worst on this list, I despise the spirals and once again it is difficult to pick with a for. The one was simply for playing, so consider that a zero.

Some honorable mentions for amazing pasta shapes include fettucini, stringozzi and pappardelle and some dishonorable mentions include orzo, gemelli, cavatelli and tortellini. Let us know what your favorite and least favorite pastas are by DMing the Mirror Instagram (@FairfieldMirror) and if you disagree with any of the ratings or want to see us rate other foods let us know!





COFFEE BREAK



SATIRE, GAMES, PUZZLES AND MORE

Editor: Tristan Cruz
tristan.cruz@student.fairfield.edu

What a Stag Spring Might Look Like...

Nick Silvia, Contributing Writer

It's officially that time of year where the high is 66 degrees one day and three inches of snow is expected the next. Mother Nature is changing her mind more than a junior deciding if he should wear a Lakers jersey or a flannel over his sweatshirt to the darty. Spring is here, and nature is healing.

Now that the weather is getting nicer, students will undoubtedly start migrating outside to get their fix of fresh air. While a few people will play Spikeball or toss around a football, some guys in Regis will evidently get bored of this and choose to bring one of the lounge couches outside so that they can soak in the sun while laying back and blasting Drake out of a \$400 speaker.

Even though Spring is right around the corner, many people use the season as a preparation to get ready for Summer. But this year, instead of hitting the gym to get that Summer bod, Spring should be a time to grow out the mullet so you can confidently rock the mullet-jean shorts combo once Summer rolls around.

"It's an unbeatable duo," said me. "Winter is over and you don't have any way to show off your favorite jeans anymore? Just grab a pair of scissors and cut those bad boys up. That's how you make a statement."

Happy Spring, Stags. And if you're stressing about midterms, take a deep breath, go into your dresser, and grab those jorts for that extra confidence boost.

Spring Break Word Search

- Beach
- Vacation
- Fun
- Spring
- Family
- Friends
- Travel
- Swimming
- Camping
- Home
- Relax
- March
- Memories
- Trip
- Tourism
- Swimsuit
- No School
- Warmer Weather

X K A Y M I S Q S X O U P M L C I A G W K A T G O
T A V J Y H T Z T Q T V I U A Y P J L O P H V N B
P V L B I D U S N O M H A M V M A C X Y D F T I R
Z X F E S C C B B C H B P Y D A T X B Q V D P R C
C J F O R V U W S T E I S E H R B O J W H T E P L
P B F X F R L E M A N U W N X V P Z G W R F N S Q
W Z N X V B I U C G R N I E V V D V M V R E Q P A
X B C J D R Y H C K I D M F G T X L W D U F L N K
G Q I T O F J J I X I J S Y T G J X C Y L X A D Z
P P X M O E M G B S H B U F F S W M I T O Z O H U
P A E A D U Q T N H J I I B I H E G C G R C U L F
S M V N G K R O O A H F T B I K D D Z E W A P P E
W A F F F F S I R E H T A E W R E M R A W F V F P
I Y U T C C J G S H W F E M X Y W K J H J W W E B
M Z W Z H I S L K M U N O I T A C A V C D B Q U L
M W P O H H G A X B K H M Z Y I Q R Z R M M E F L
I P O Q K X Z Y D H Z L Q M S D H B R A O Q X S Y
N L J L N D V Z Q N K N I Y F B F U O M Q P M I E
G B Z K Z T O O R C T D L H Z F Z D X V Y W Q L C
O I B A C T I N C H E I D P U G K D O M A G G I A
C J Z R R Q W A U M M E I X G J A U K E M O H Z G
N S F D U R M I C A P H D E F R Z X H R M V R P E
S U T R I P A K F W Z K W P D M Q N R Y L K X Z V
J S F R I E N D S M C K W A J V A U Q L Q H H R V
M A S V R V E T B Q D C K O H S M F M E Q Y X G T

SPORTS

Sports Editor: Tommy Coppola
>>thomas.coppola@student.fairfield.edu



WE ARE STAGS



March 2	March 3	March 4	March 5	March 6	March 7	March 8
FAIRFIELD	<p>Women's basketball vs. Rider University Bridgeport, Conn. 5:00 p.m.</p> <p>Men's basketball vs. Rider University Bridgeport, Conn. 7:30 p.m.</p>	<p>Baseball at St. Joseph's University Philadelphia, P.A. 3:00 p.m.</p>	<p>Men's tennis vs. Merrimack College</p> <p>Women's tennis vs. Merrimack College Fairfield, Conn. TBA</p> <p>Men's lacrosse vs. Harvard College Fairfield, Conn. 1:00 p.m.</p> <p>Men's basketball at Saint Peter's University Jersey City, N.J. 1:00 p.m.</p> <p>Women's basketball at Saint Peter's University Jersey City, N.J. 7:00 p.m.</p>	<p>Women's tennis vs. Bryant University Fairfield, Conn. TBA</p> <p>Baseball at Saint Joseph's University Philadelphia, P.A. 12:00 p.m.</p>	FAIRFIELD	<p>Men's lacrosse vs. Quinnipiac University Fairfield, Conn. 7:00 p.m.</p>

Softball Ties Tournament Series with USF, SJU



Photo Contributed by the Sports Information Desk



Photo Contributed by the Sports Information Desk

Pitching tandem Bailey Taylor '24 (left) and Katie Kudlacik '22 (right) shared the mound this past weekend, helping the Stags secure wins against the University of South Florida and Saint Joseph's University.

By Tommy Coppola
Sports Editor

The Fairfield University softball team dropped three games in the University of South Florida tournament hosted in Tampa, FLA. There, they faced competition like St. John's University and Saint Joseph's University, as well as the hosting University of South Florida themselves.

In their first matchup, they fell 7-1 to St. John's, and that same afternoon fell short of USF by a

score of 8-0 to cap off the first day's events. Against Saint Joseph's, pitcher Katie Kudlacik '22 fueled a flame for the Stags. Unfortunately, the Stags dropped the game by just one point in a 1-2 final score.

To close out the tournament, the Stags took one last crack at USF and Saint Joseph's before heading back home for over a week's rest.

In a dominant final stand, the Stags took back wins against two previous losses, taking home a commanding 4-0 shutout of USF and a closer 2-1 victory over Saint Joseph's. They will next travel to Marshall University in Huntington, W. V.A. for their "Thundering Herd Invite".

In this week's issue...

- Women's Lacrosse Halted By Hofstra, Preps for Road Trip (Page 14)
- Kennesaw State Sweeps Series With Stags (Page 15)
- Stags Close Out Campaign With Regular Season Title (Page 15)
- Club Martial Arts Is A Hidden Gem On Campus (Page 16)

Women's Lacrosse Halted by Hofstra, Preps for Road Trip

By Tommy Coppola
Sports Editor

The Fairfield University women's lacrosse team, upon returning to play for the spring season, has shown their normal signs of promise in the Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference championship.

This season, the team has collected big wins against established teams like the College of the Holy Cross and Boston University. However, they have fallen short only twice, their first time being against the #23 ranked University of Connecticut and the other, most recently, Hofstra University.

The team has come up with a big rebrand this season. With new faces on the field like Brooke Marotti '25 and Casey Collins '23, the future is incredibly promising. Marotti, who contributed to the scoring effort against Hofstra, found the back of the net for her first collegiate goal.

Collins, similarly, found success in her second career start in net for the Stags. She posted an impressive 12 saves with a .571 save percentage, according to the official recap page for the game posted by FairfieldStags.com.

The Hofstra Pride were able to outscore the Stags by four points for a final score of 9-5. At the halfway mark of the game, Hofstra held a 5-1 lead. Although the Stags scored four goals in the second half, Hofstra kept them at bay with four of their own.

Graduate student Kelly Horning still boasted some impressive stats in the loss. With two goals, two shots on goal and two ground balls, the midfielder left no stones unturned on both offense and defense.

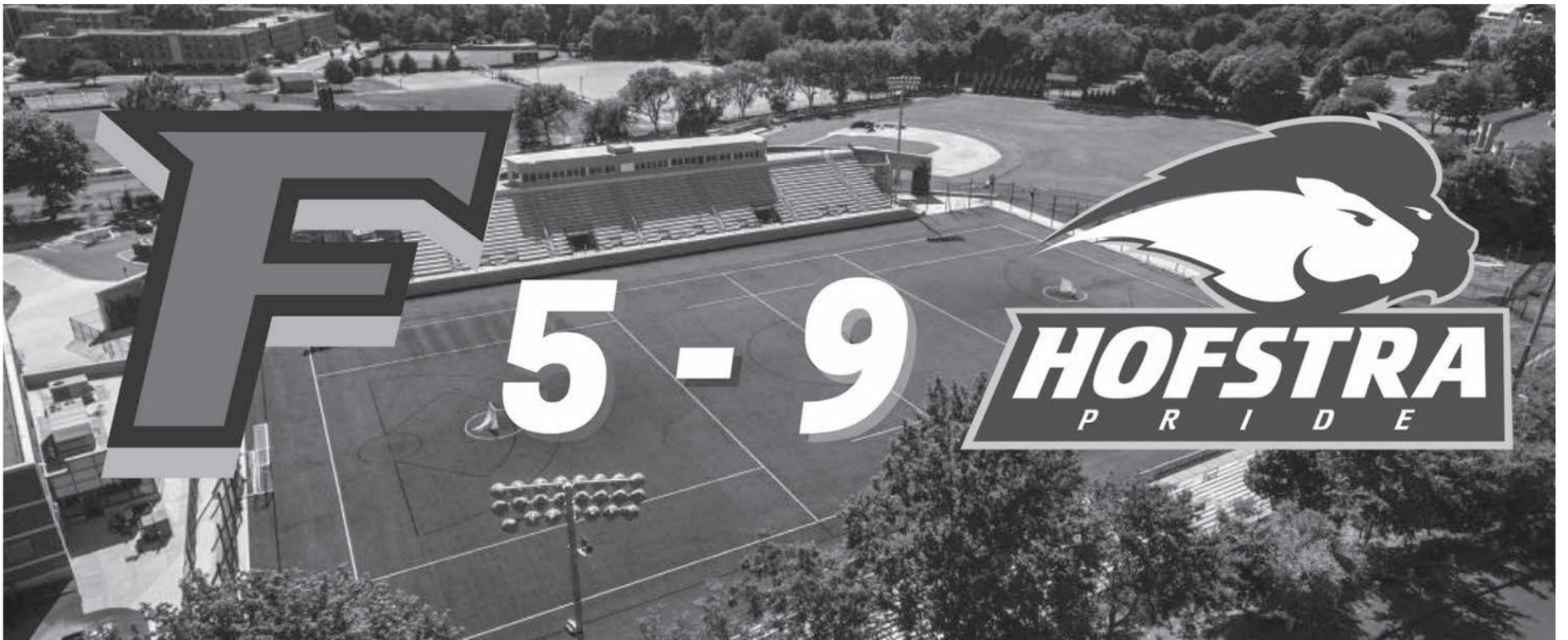
The women's lacrosse team's two-game winning streak was snapped; however, they will look to continue on their normal winning ways with an upcoming away slate against Lafayette College as well as the University of Denver.

This will be the first time since March 16, 2002 that Fairfield will be taking on Lafayette in women's lacrosse. Fairfield will look to claim a historic win over the Leopards, who have gotten the best of them all four times that they have played each other, dating back to the '90s.

Although the Stags have taken on the Denver Pioneers four times as well, the last three contests have been much more recent, taking place in the 2016, 2019 and 2020 campaigns. Like Lafayette, unfortunately, the Stags have lost all four of their bouts with the University of Denver. This will be the fourth time that the Stags will play as the away team in the Mile-High City.

Clearly, if the women's lacrosse team is able to topple these teams, program history will be made.

The Stags are now 3-2 and will look to continue their dominance over the league in the coming weeks as the latter half of their schedule changes to MAAC-exclusive competition.



The Fairfield University women's lacrosse team lost 5-9 to a visiting Hofstra University team, whose defensive effort was able to keep the Stags' offense at bay for the entirety of the game.

Weekly 4x5: Final Issue Edition

Because we have witty things to say ...

Instead of the traditional layout of the 5x4, we wanted to use this space to look back on some of this staff's funniest, most memorable, or most heartfelt responses over their time with The Mirror.

Here are five questions and answers compiled from the past, four graduating columnists.

Molly, Julia, Sheila and Toby...we're going to miss you!

- The 2021-22
Mirror Staff

Welcome back to campus!! What is one thing you are excited about in this upcoming year?
(5x4 9/22/21)

Julia: Being able to live on the beach with my best friends!

Molly: Raccoons.

Sheila: Being able to be in a classroom again! I like it so much better than being online!

Toby: The Salad Robot in the Stag Diner

What do you think of Brady's over-indulgence this week following his Super Bowl Win?
(4x5 2/17/21)

Julia: If he wants to have a few drinks to celebrate being one of the greatest to ever play, then who cares? He's a grown man and was on his own boat, so let him enjoy himself.

Catherine: Well, it created a new SNL character for Beck Bennett, "Drunk Tom Brady," so that's fun!

Sheila: I think if I won the Super Bowl, I would also want to be allowed to celebrate on a boat in Florida in peace!

Molly: I just like the end of the 2007 film "The Game Plan," directed by Andy Fickman.

If you could play on one game show, what would it be?
(5x4 10/20/21)

Molly: CNBC

Julia: Squid Game. Can't you tell how my week is going?

Toby: I am going to agree with Lanz and say Squid Game, not for the same reasons though.

Sheila: I literally took the college Jeopardy test in The Mirror office!

What is your final message to your 4x5 fanbase?
(5x4 2/23/22)

Molly: I'm never joking.

Julia: I've been here the longest of the 5 of us, and this year has been the most fun for sure.

Toby: Doing these has been really fun! And as someone I know would say "the 5x4 is camp!"

Sheila: Being part of the 5x4 has been one of my favorite things about being on the staff at The Mirror and I will miss it immensely.

With The Mirror switching staff soon, in what ways do you want to see The Mirror grow?
(4x5 2/3/21)

Molly: I want our news section to be riveting for our readers and make sure that we are a paper that benefits the student body. I want us to be breaking stories that matter and impact students, holding transparency between the University and the student body number one in our mission statement.

Julia: I feel like in the last year, we as a staff have created a peaceful and cohesive environment to work in. I am confident that the new staff will contribute to a healthy camaraderie that will encourage the growth of our paper!

Sheila: I really want to see us continue to make new and different content, and get more innovative with the things we are covering!

Kennesaw State Sweeps Series With Stags

By Zachary Stevens
Contributing Writer

Fairfield University men's baseball team continued their southern road trip, traveling to Georgia to face the Kennesaw State Owls in a weekend three-game series starting Feb. 25.

After beating Elon University twice in a three-game stint, the Stags have started off the year strong and are eager to build off of last year's historic season.

The first game of the series against the Owls was certainly a thriller, where Fairfield took an early 4-1 lead by the fourth inning.

Charlie Pagliarini '23 helped the Stags score the first run of the game with a sacrifice fly in the first. Graduate student Colin Kelly would add another sacrifice fly in the second, followed by Mike Becchetti '23, who smoked an RBI single to make the lead 3-0.

After another Kelly RBI in the fourth, the Stags had a comfortable lead and looked in complete control of the ball game. Senior Michael Sansone would help the Stags keep this lead for seven innings from the mound, only allowing two runs on five hits. Sansone struck out four and did not walk a single batter, displaying a very efficient afternoon.

After a walk-in run by Matt Zaffino '23, Fairfield would extend the lead to 5-2 in the seventh inning, where the Stags looked like they were going to grab their third win on the year thus far.

The Owls would quickly load the bases in the eighth inning and would score three, tying the game at five apiece. The Owls started off the ninth with a single and got the winning run into scoring position with a sacrifice bunt. Cash Young walked off with a single to end the game tragically for the Stags.

A very disappointing defeat for Fairfield, the game slipped out of their hands in the final closing innings. With that being said, the Stags will have two more opportunities to get revenge on the Owls and win the series overall.

The second game started off very slowly, neither team was putting many runners on base or creating many opportunities to score. The Stags got on the scoreboard first, with a solo Mike Becchetti home run in the third inning, which marked his second of the season.

The Owls answered immediately with a run of their own in the bottom of the third, tying the game and putting the pressure back on the Stags.

The game would remain an even battle until the fifth inning, where Kennesaw scored three runs and stretched the lead to 1-4 for the Owls.

Fairfield did not go out without a fight and would have one final rally in the 8th inning, where Matt Bergevin '24 and Matt Venuto '23 both hit RBI singles to bring the game within one run.

Fortunately for the Owls, they were able to scrap their way out of trouble and strand the tying run at third base. The Stags would get another opportunity to either tie or take the lead but would fail and lose 3-4 in another very disappointing loss.

With two straight losses in the series, the Stags' morale had definitely taken a hit and a win is a must to salvage anything out of this road trip. The last game of the series would be only a seven inning affair, putting a lot of pressure on Fairfield.

Despite the two-game losing skid, the Stags once again took an early lead thanks to a Ryan Strollo '23 RBI single. With a lead early on in the game, it was essential that Fairfield contained the Owls offense.

The Stags managed to hold the lead or remained tied for half of the game, until Kennesaw State completely



Photo Contributed by the Sports Information Desk

Senior Michael Sansone eyes down a batter before throwing a pitch.

opened up the game in the fifth inning, plating seven runs to build their lead to 1-7. They would not stop there, scoring one more run in each inning to make the score 1-9. Fairfield would have six hits but would only score that one early run.

The Stags will continue to travel on the road, as they are on a 20 game away stint. They are facing Saint Joseph's University, where they will play in another three game series starting Friday, March 4 at 3:00 pm. Make sure to show your support and go Stags!

Stags Close Out Campaign With Regular Season Title

By Emily Miller
Contributing Writer

The Fairfield University women's basketball team has been unstoppable this season, with a 10-1 record at home and 20-6 overall. The Stags proved once again to be Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference champions as they faced off against Monmouth University and Manhattan College this past week.

The team dominated both

games, securing wins against both the University of Hartford Hawks and the Manhattan College Jaspers. The team began the tear with a 75-52 win over Monmouth on Thursday, February 24 at Webster Bank Arena in Bridgeport, Conn. The win boosted Fairfield's conference record to 16-1, the best in program history. Three Stags scored in dou-

ble figures. Guard Sydney Lowery, graduate student, secured a strong 18 points, followed by forward Lou Lopez-Senechal '22, with 16 points and guard Sam Lewis, graduate student, came up strong with 11 points and three three-pointers.

The women then headed to the Bronx, N.Y. to move past Manhattan 75-63. Lopez-Senechal and guard Rachel Hakes '22 both set season-highs. Lopez-Senechal dropped a career-high 30 points

for their tenth straight win, tied for the third-longest win-streak in program history. Hakes collected a solid sixteen points for the evening. Fairfield shot 53 percent from the floor, marking the twentieth win of the season for the team.

Head coach of the women's basketball team Joe Frager entered his fifteenth season with the Stags, taking pride in his student-athletes' performance on and off the court. He has consistently worked with the

team to produce a regular contender in the MAAC playoffs. Frager has 240 wins with the program and a .566 winning percentage overall.

Frager was thrilled with both performances and is immensely proud of the team's progression over the season. Frager says, "We are very proud. As a coach, all you can ask is that people do the best that they can and try to focus on what the coaching staff is asking them to do, and they have really done that."

Coach Frager continued, "We set a goal very early on that our first goal was to win a MAAC regular season championship, and we were able to accomplish that on Thursday. We are extremely proud of them and we are just trying to emphasize to them that there is more that we would like to achieve this season."

He is also confident in the team and the seniors' ability to carry the team to greatness. Frager admits, "This group's experience, we've got a lot of great senior leadership there, so we have confidence that they will do that."

Coach concludes that the main goal for the next few games of the season is trying to get better and sharper between now and Atlantic City, N.J., where the MAAC championship is held. He explains, "Just because we've won the regular season outright, we want to finish this regular season off in a good fashion, so we are just trying to get geared up for the next game."

The women's basketball team hosts Rider University on Senior Night which is slated to be on Thursday, March 3 at 5:00 p.m. The game will be streaming live on ESPN and ESPN+.



Photo Contributed by the Sports Information Desk

Senior Andrea Hernangomez and Janelle Brown '24 celebrate together versus Siena College, which was another victory on their current 10-game win streak.

Club Martial Arts Is A Hidden Gem On Campus

By Molly Lamendola
Editor-In-Chief

If you're ever walking through the Leslie C. Quick Recreation Complex at around 8:00 p.m. on a random Tuesday or Thursday you might stumble across Club Martial Arts practicing. They might not look like much, just six or seven people fighting each other, but Co-President Giacomo Giardina '23 assures me: "There's nothing quite like fighting someone to really become friends with someone." Giardina runs the club with fellow Co-President Patrick Shaw '23. Both decided to get involved after stumbling upon the club at the Activities Fair during their freshman year.

Shaw had a background in boxing and saw that Club Martial Arts offered something different, as they mainly practice Tang Soo Do.

"So I was like, this is fun," Shaw said, "It wouldn't hurt to broaden my horizon."

They meet every Tuesday and Thursday from 8:00 - 10:00 p.m. in the RecPlex. It's here that they spar, learn particular martial arts forms and bond with each other over all else.

"It's the best cardio in the world," Giardina says, "I mean that sincerely... If you fight for a couple rounds...you will be exhausted. And it's

like, wow, this really is like the best form of exercise in the entire world."

They both agree that the COVID-19 pandemic has slowed the club down slightly. Due to restrictions, they could no longer bring outside guests on and thus they were barred from having instructors from local gyms come and give lessons.

"It turned into just like an

all-around mixed martial arts class to an extent so you told me, people

te... It has turned into a real melting pot." Giardina tells me that pitching Club Martial Arts is tricky because "It's not like a normal sport, right?" "It's a contact sport, you are getting hit, you're hitting other people. So you have to, you have to let know is going adds, "There little bit of go out of and try Even if the of getting one people that, yeah, this to happen," he continuing, needs to be just a like willingness to your comfort zone something new... original kind of fear hit or hitting someone else might be a little off-putting to some. I think there's enough interest in it to really have people come in."

Shaw adds that Club Martial Arts might even be good for students just looking to defend themselves.

"We go through some situational

know," Shaw "We have that have back-grounds in wrestling, people who strictly do Jiu-Jitsu... one of our officers has a black belt in ka-ra-

work," he says, "Like what to do in the event somebody starts getting physical with you at a party or something like because nobody wants to end up in a situation like that. But in the event that it does happen, you know, we think that people should be at least ready to de-escalate and get away from the situation."

He adds that usually they talk through with the team on how to throw and take punches, but reiterates that they take all the necessary

pre-cautions and make sure no one is getting hurt.

"One of the things that we tell the members as soon as they get in there is that we are doing this for yourself, and you're doing it to get away from the situation not to create it," Shaw adds, continuing, "We don't try to create bullies, we try to get rid of them."

Both had fond memories of the club. Shaw stated that one moment, in particular, stood out to him: when the club decided to hold an event called "Running the Gauntlet."

"You spar everybody in one continuous shot," Shaw tells me, "So it would be like, if there were six people at the club, the first person is sparring against the other five people for a minute each. Then the next person rotates in... so you spar everybody twice."

"You're in there and you're just kind of blowing your lungs out and absolutely getting as tired as possible, while still trying not to get tired," he adds, but says that the paper plate awards after the gauntlet were also incredibly

special and gave everyone on the team "a little good uplift."

He continues, "It was a good way to finish out the year, because, you know, you'll walk away knowing that like, you know, you did something, right."

Giardina adds that though the Flavors of Asia event is one of his favorite memories, "It's the little stuff that's the most fun, like just going in and sparring with someone and you aren't expecting it, but then you have a real good match or something with them. Those are the parts that really make it fun."

Shaw agrees that the friendship of the team is special as they don't end their relationship at practice.

"Everybody that comes through and joins we end up hanging out with them afterward. It's not like a relationship with somebody [that's] going to end strictly at practice," he says, adding, "Especially because we're on such a smaller campus you're gonna see your other members around every so often. But it's not just a kind of wave goodbye and say like, 'Oh, hey, how are you doing?' You can stop and have a good talk and be friendly with everybody."

He ends by saying, "We're just trying to make friends. Try to make friends and break heads...but not really!"

If any students are interested in joining the Club Martial Arts meetings, they can go to the lower level of the RecPlex on Tuesday and Thursdays 8:00 - 11:00 p.m or visit their Life@Fairfield page to join!



Photo Contributed by Patrick Shaw

The club martial arts team had some fun on Halloween, with members of the club like Patrick Shaw '23 (left) and Kaitlin Genovese '23 (right) dressing up in costume to spar.



Photo Courtesy of @fu_martialarts Instagram

Pictured above is the club martial arts tournament team for the 2019-2020 season. Jiu-Jitsu, karate, and boxing are just a few martial arts offerings that the club offers.