

# THE MIRROR

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## Follow an Undecided Student Preparing to Vote in the National Election

BY MAX LIMRIC  
Editor-in-Chief

Sophomore John Beam's home in Connecticut is only an hour away from Fairfield University, however, he's registered to vote in Fairfield and will take to the polls in his college town on Election Day.

Beam thinks there's something to be said for the traditional pen-and-paper style of voting: "Absentee ballot is a perfect way to do it for some people, but for me, I'd just rather do it the traditional way in person," he explained.

For Beam, it's the sense of community and patriotism he believes he'll find at the polls: "You feel more patriotic, like you're a part of it rather than just shipping it away via mail."

For students who would like to vote in this election, the online voter registration deadline has passed, and in order to register for Same Day Voting either during the Early Voting window or on Election Day, students will need to provide proof of identity and residency.

verify that it matches their records. The poll workers will then provide the appropriate ballot based on which district their residence hall is located in.

Those students who live off-campus should follow the CT Voter ID & Residency Verification Requirements to verify their identity and proof of residency. Typically, off-campus students take a copy of their signed lease or a bill with their name on it to prove their residency status, Kaler offers.

The Town also sent out a Voter Reminder Postcard with people's names and address on it to the address on record. Students can use that postcard as proof of residency as well.

Being a first-time voter, Beam looks forward to Election Day; however, despite being only days away from the election, he is undecided on the national level.

When Beam arrives at the polls to vote on November 5, the political issues that will guide his decision are the economy, as well as his belief in the need to "end the wars abroad."

"My roommate from boarding school was from Ukraine and I really want to see him and his family reach harmony once again," he clarifies.

Another political issue that will be at the forefront of his mind leading up to Election Day is immigration, and his belief that "we have to close the southern border."

Beam adds, "Making sure that we're safe," will guide his decision making process. "We're very safe here in Connecticut, but a lot of other people aren't."

When Beam takes the paper ballot in his hands and prepares to vote for the first time ever, he knows he wants to vote for someone that will "get the issues fixed, but do so in a way that is proper for the 21st century."



Erica Schindler/The Mirror

Early Voting began on Oct. 21 in the Media Center and will run until Nov. 3. As of 3:00 p.m. on Monday afternoon 6 students had cast their vote at the Media Center and Matthew Waggner, Fairfield democratic voter registrar anticipates 3,000 Fairfield University and Sacred Heart students will vote there.

## Early Voting Begins at Fairfield University Media Center

BY ERICA SCHINDLER  
Assistant News Editor

A first for Fairfield University, early voting for the November 2024 election started on the North Benson campus this week. Beginning on Oct. 21 and running through Nov. 3, registered Fairfield voters can cast their ballots in the university's Media Center.

In addition to the Media Center, Fairfield is also holding early voting at Town Hall located on Old Post Road. Both locations are open to all voters who are registered as Fairfield residents, including students who now have the ability to vote without leaving campus.

According to Cathy Politi, the town's republican voter registrar, the 2024 election is the first time Connecticut has offered in-person early voting for a general election. It's one of the last states in the nation to offer early voting.

"Early voting is an important initiative that allows all voters the flexibility to cast their ballots in person on a day that works best for them before Election Day, including two weekends, which adds significant convenience," Politi said.

Located on the south side of campus, the Media Center was once home to the Dolan School of Business. Today it houses classrooms, production studios and offices in addition to the open lobby area where voting is taking place. Signs are up around campus pointing voters to the building and the adjacent parking lot.

Upon walking in the Media Center doors, voters are greeted with Fairfield Department of Public Safety officers standing near the entrance. Tables manned by poll workers are set up for both same-day registration and check-in. From there, voters descend to the lower level of the room to privately cast their ballots.

The decision to hold early voting here on campus was made, in part, to encourage students to participate in the election. Now, voting is now just a short walk away from student dorms and townhouses.

"I've always felt that the student populations

are the largest under-engaged part of the Fairfield community, and it's been a priority to address voting services to the students with an understanding that many lack transportation and are unfamiliar with the voting process," said Matthew Waggner, Fairfield democratic voter registrar. "We have considered the university as a permanent regular voting location, and hosted election day registration at the Barone Center in 2016."

Despite the easy access to voting on campus, many Stags are choosing to vote via other methods. Students that we reached out to said they had plans to vote by mail using their home addresses rather than registering as Fairfield residents or to vote in Fairfield on Election Day. A recent article in The Mirror reported that students have begun sending in their absentee ballots. Among them is Kaitlyn Conroy '25, who recently sent her ballot back to her home state.

"I think early voting is great, especially for people who cannot vote on Election Day," Conroy said. "It's also a great way to increase voter turnout in my opinion. I chose to vote in New Jersey because there are Senate and Congress Representatives that I want to win against their opponents, so for me my vote mattered more [there]."

According to Waggner, they are anticipating the turnout among Fairfield and Sacred Heart University students to possibly exceed 3,000. While some students may feel more connected to the candidates running to represent

### Early Voting Tips and Tricks

- CT online voter registration has passed. Register for same day voting at an early voting location: Fairfield University Media Center or Town Hall or on Election Day
- On campus students: simply bring your Stag Card for ID!
- Off campus students: bring ID and proof of Fairfield residence

For Early Voting through Nov. 3, poll workers at the Media Center will have a roster of students to confirm residence of those living on campus. Stag Cards can be shown as identification for on campus students, as well as for Same Day Registration location in the Town of Fairfield. Off campus students who want to register to vote will need to bring documentation of their residence to the polling place.

According to Jeremy J. Kaler, Director, Office of Student Engagement, upon arrival at the polls, students should indicate that they are on-campus residential students at Fairfield University and present their StagCard or other photo ID to the Poll Workers.

The poll workers will ask which residence hall they live in, and then



Erica Schindler/The Mirror

A sign directs voters toward the Media Center. Early voting will be held there through Nov. 3.

### What Stags need to know about early voting:

- Media Center or Fairfield Town Hall
- Oct. 21 to Nov. 3
- 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.
- Extended hours on Oct. 29 and Oct. 31

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Fairfield University

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Scan the QR code below to register, and get 20% off your event pass with code CTSTATE20.







Compiled by Erica Schindler

Information contributed by the Department of Public Safety

10/15

8:20 a.m.

There was a report of theft in the parking garage on campus. A university vehicle, an electrician's car, was broken into and a voltage meter was stolen from it.

10/17

3:50 p.m.

Accidental private property damage was reported at the conference center. A landscaping vehicle from an outside company hit a parked car in the lot. The driver notified the owner and the problem is being resolved with their insurance companies.

10/18

10:10 a.m.

A lost wallet was found and turned into DPS. It is a black wallet with a Pennsylvania driver's license inside. DPS is currently looking for the owner, who should come to their office on the bottom floor of Loyola Hall to pick it up.

10/19

10:30 a.m.

During Alumni and Family Weekend, a white gold or platinum wedding band was found and turned into DPS. If the wedding band belongs to you, stop by the DPS office.

10/20

7:10 p.m.

A witness saw a vehicle hit a green transformer box outside of Townhouse Block 10. The situation was deemed not a hazard and electricians were notified. DPS is currently looking for the vehicle involved in the incident.

## FUSA Just Wants to be Part of Your Symphony

BY OLIVIA MARCEDA

Assistant News Editor

On October 18th, Fairfield University's Student Association announced the MainSTAGE Fall 2024 edition with Zara Larsson and Special Guest Fitz and the Tantrums in an email sent out to the student body.

Taking place on "Halloweekend" FUSA is promoting attendees to show up in their costumes.

First-year Claudia Pettinato is planning to dress up as Pete Davidson from the SNL skit, "Rap Roundtable," and go see the MainSTAGE performance. "I am super excited!"

Zara Larsson has been around as a pop princess since 2015 with her viral singles "Lush Life" and "Never Forget You." First steaming popularity from winning Talang, the Swedish version of The Voice.

Recently, though, her song released in 2017 called "Symphony," began climbing the charts again as an internet meme boosted it to popularity. People would post outlandish confessions such as "I'm scared of people," and "I have depression," with dolphins, rainbows and the song in the background. Zara Larsson even posted repeatedly online herself joining in on the mega viral trend. Her TikTok, which has the dolphins and a song which is captioned, "What the F-k is happening," has over 10 million likes and 47k comments.

The famous 2010's band, Fitz and Tantrums are the special guest performing for MainSTAGE. They are an American indie pop and neo soul band from Los Angeles, California that formed in 2008. Their most well known songs are "HandClap," and 2013's release of "Out of My League."

This is reimagining of "Red Sea Madness," FUSA's



Just recently FUSA announced Zara Larsson as MainSTAGE headliner. Tickets are on sale now.

concert held in past years. Last semester, the "Spring Concert" transformed into MainSTAGE branding as in previous Fairfield years. Typically there is one MainSTAGE performance held in the spring. Last year's MainSTAGE artist being 2 Chainz, where many Fairfield students were initially upset with the ticket's upcharge which is continued onto this year.

Student Tickets are \$45 for the Lower Bowl and \$55 for the Floor. Student Guest Tickets are \$55 for the Lower Bowl, and \$65 for the Floor. Guest tickets are limited to one per student. Fairfield student tickets went on sale on Monday at 12 p.m., and if tickets are still available students may be able to purchase guests tickets the following Monday, Oct. 27 at 12 p.m. Guests must be 18 years or older. Doors will open at 7 p.m. and close at 8 p.m. sharp.

"I am excited to see Zara Larsson," said Rebecca Pfeffer. "I just wanna be part of her symphony."

## L.E.A.F Club Leads Fairfield to a Greener Future

BY CAITLIN SHEA

Head Vine Editor

For Fairfield Seniors, a relaxing walk on the beach is a great way to start a weekend morning. From the sand under their feet to the miles of shimmering blue water on the horizon, to the piles of trash that litter their path. Wait, what?

Whether it's discarded plastic bottles and containers or other garbage from recent college parties, the amount of trash swallowed by the waves of Long Island Sound is difficult to ignore, as noted by news outlets such as News12.



Senior Vice President Grace Brogioli and Senior Public Relations Laura DiMeo at this year's most recent beach cleanup.

For years Fairfield Beach has been at the forefront of a debris disaster. With a lack of trash cans and an increase in University beach bashes, litter has become a progressively relevant and harmful problem within the community.

Not only have town halls given voice to residents' concerns over litter as news outlets like Patch cover tense email exchanges between Fairfield residents and President Nemeč, but the trash also creates irreversible damage to the environment. To

combat this and many other environmental issues in and surrounding the town of Fairfield, students have created initiatives to take action.

Each Sunday the Leaders of Environmental Action of Fairfield, or L.E.A.F, don blue latex gloves and large garbage bags during low tide, collecting pieces of trash left behind by beachgoers.

Senior and L.E.A.F President Grace Brogioli speaks about how during these beach cleanups, you never know what you're going to find. "I remember last year we did a cleanup in the fall and there were at least a hundred dead horseshoe crabs along the beach, it was insane," Brogioli comments.

Since joining the club her first year, Brogioli explains that in participating in the beach clean up every Sunday morning she starts off her day by making the community a better place for everyone, an aspect she still enjoys to this day. She finds that the beach cleanups are not only a great way to help the environment but also a way to catch up with friends or debrief about the weekend.

While students are at the forefront of the litter issues dominating the beaches of Fairfield, they also work to combat the problems. In a statement from First Selectman Bill Gerber, as of Oct. 6, 342 students have participated in the weekly beach cleanups since they began on Sept. 15. Not only do hundreds of students show up each weekend to the cleanups, but clubs like L.E.A.F are taking action to provide trash cans on the beaches, something that the town or the University has yet to do, Brogioli pointed out.

Senior and Public Relations Manager Laura DiMeo describes how at one of Fairfield University's students' beach parties, there was a

large amount of trash floating into the Sound. With no one picking it up, Laura took action into her own hands, grabbing a few trash bags from a random house, other students soon following suit. "We're not stupid, when we see trash bins we are going to throw away our trash, they are just not there in the first place," DiMeo states.

Grace further emphasizes this point by explaining that providing trash cans for students and even the Fairfield community in general to use it benefits everyone, as long as students take responsibility for their own garbage.

Alongside keeping the beaches clean, one of L.E.A.F's major goals is to reconnect the University's relationship with the environment. Initiatives to make the dining hall more sustainable, to create pollinator pathways and to bring back community gardens are all ambitions the club is seeking to achieve.

L.E.A.F not only focuses on the surrounding community but dedicates time to blossoming their own group. Senior and Vice President Joey Nizzardo explains that the club is a great way to find like-minded people who are passionate about helping the environment. He encourages anyone who is interested to reach out, as they are there to help.

DiMeo reflects on her own first-year experience, and how the club acted as a way for her to make connections with upperclassmen. Explaining how being an underclassman can feel isolated and stressful, DiMeo is thankful that she had people she knew would support her and give her advice.

"Although science can be intimidating", Laura states "I've learned so much just through the osmosis of the club." Emphasizing that L.E.A.F is a legacy and that anyone can make an impact, no matter their background.

### THE MIRROR

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## Students Reflect on Alumni and Family Weekend

BY SAMANTHA RUSSELL  
Executive Editor

Stag families past and present arrived on campus this weekend for Fairfield University's annual Alumni & Family Weekend, celebrating with food trucks, sports games, "StagFest" and Stag reunions. Vice President of Marketing and Communications Jennifer Anderson '97, '02, estimated 2,000 people in attendance, hopefully more with the "beautiful" weather that occurred.

"AFW is a Fairfield Tradition," she said. "The hope is for attendees to leave with a stronger connection to Fairfield and to create meaningful moments with family and friends."

In the traffic circle of the Barone Campus Center (BCC) "StagFest" took place, complete with returning food trucks, live music alumni band St. Hubbin's, a Lil' Stags Zone and a wine and beer garden. Athletic facilities were also highly visited, with a pep rally in the Leo D. Mahoney Arena to kick off the new athletic season, RugbyFest and sports games.

Anderson underscored the opportunity this weekend grants to reconnect with friends and family and gain a stronger understanding of life on campus. "...The weekend provides opportunities for alumni to reconnect and families to experience student life firsthand, making it a highlight of the fall semester," she said.

Senior Hannah Bershefsky felt similarly towards the occasion, relishing the time spent with friends before going

their separate ways in May.

"I'll miss Rugby Fest and spending that time with my family surrounded by fellow Stags," she said.

As for moving on post-graduation, recent alum David Turiel '24 credits the weekend with allowing him to reconnect with old friends and campus. "It was really great getting to see and catch up with friends who I haven't gotten to see in a while," he said. Turiel participated in the Young Alumni Mug Night at The Seagrape on Friday night, but out of the entire weekend could not pick a favorite experience.

"The entire weekend was great and I don't think I could pick a favorite thing, it was just great being back in Fairfield again," he concluded.

This year, the university debuted three new partnerships with external organizations for the Stag community to enjoy. A merchandise collaboration with Dustbowl with "throwback products" was available for purchase at StagFest and online, along with '42 Brew, a recently-launched craft beer through a partnership with alumni-owned Elicit Brewing Company.

For a next-morning recovery drink, a final collaboration with Silvermine Coffee Roasters and Fairfield University has issued its new "Red Sea Coffee," a roast with a rich, aromatic flavor, as described by FairfieldNews.

"My family and I really

enjoyed family weekend this year," said Emily Lamoureux '27. "There was always something going on around campus, so we were never bored." Moreover, she praised the diverse options of food trucks present at StagFest.

The nice weather attracted the Lamoureux family to attend this year, as opposed to their absence last year. "It also gave a great chance to socialize with my friends and their families," Lamoureux said, mirroring Anderson's thoughts.

In addition to StagFest and Stag sports, the Glee Club hosted a concert, the Egan School of Nursing hosted their Clinical Initiation ceremony and a family concert took place Sunday night at Fairfield Theater Company on Post Road. StagFest did welcome some new additions, such as Friday Night Family Sports Night, Online Student and Alumni Mixer, as well as different vendors and products.

Sophomore Rebecca Mattei-Brown appreciated her time spent with family this weekend, also noting the undeniably improved weather from last year. "It was so nice to have my family on campus and to get to show them what my life is like at Fairfield," she said. For her, the food trucks and petting zoo were two standout features.

"Overall, it was a great time," she said.

## Early Voting Begins at Fairfield University Media Center

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their hometowns, both registrars expressed their hope that the on-campus polling location will help increase voter turnout among students.

"Fairfield University has wgenerously stepped forward to serve as an early voting location, offering their facilities at no cost," Politi said. "This will make it easier for university students, faculty and local residents to participate in the election process in a safe and efficient manner."

Through Nov. 3, poll workers at the Media Center will have a roster of students to confirm the residence of those living on campus. Stag Cards can be shown as identification for on-campus students. Voters can also register day of

and at either early voting location. Off-campus students who want to register to vote will need to bring documentation of their residence to the polling place.

On Oct. 21, the first day of early voting, the Media Center saw a sizable turnout of total voters with about five to six students voting at the location as of 3:00 p.m. Poll worker Jeff Hendrickson described the number of voters as "steady all day long, but manageable." Evan Snapper, also working the polls on Monday, emphasized the importance of the early voting and same-day registration option for students.

"The important thing for students is if they didn't ask for a mail-in ballot at home, the only way they

can vote is to come here," Snapper said. "They can come in here and register same day."

Early voting will be open from 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. at Town Hall and the Media Center seven days a week from now until Sunday, Nov. 3, with extended hours on Oct. 29 and 31. On Election Day, Tuesday, Nov. 5, voters can cast their ballots at their assigned polling location, which can be found on the town's website.

The Mirror is currently looking for a Fairfield student who plans to participate in early voting on campus for our upcoming election coverage. If you might be interested, please contact us at [info@fairfieldmirror.com](mailto:info@fairfieldmirror.com).



Signs direct those looking to cast their ballots into the Media Center for early voting. Early Voting will be open until Nov. 3, students need only bring their StagCard if they live on campus.

## Seniors React to Sold Out Oktoberfest Tickets

BY CHRISTINA SILVESTRI  
Contributing Writer

Fairfield University is no stranger to celebrations—especially those in which students of legal drinking age can enjoy festive libations.

Oktoberfest is a holiday of beer and pretzels in observance "of the marriage of the crown prince of Bavaria, who later became King Louis I, to Princess Therese von Sachsen-Hildburghausen," according to Britannica.

The Seagrape hosts its own Oktoberfest celebration exclusive to Fairfield seniors aged 21+ on October 26th from 12:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

This year, there has been discontent among the class of 2025 due to a limited number of tickets. The tickets went on sale on October 10 at 5:00 p.m. and sold out rather quickly, in the span of just a few hours.

Senior Frances Harmon was unable to get tickets and stated "I am a little disappointed, but I understand that there were a limited number of tickets available. I just wish that the senior class was made aware of how limited tickets were and when exactly they would go on sale in advance."

While there are a limited number of tickets available due to capacity reasons, students did feel that part of the issue was a lack of awareness. Senior Grace Lombardi, who did buy a ticket, said, "Luckily, my friends let me know about the tickets going on sale. If they did not tell me, I would have missed it completely."

Students are accustomed to ticketed events where the race for tickets is often a stressful one – especially events like President's Ball, where students are given the date and

time tickets go on sale in advance. This method allows students to set aside that time to purchase their tickets.

All the notice that seniors were given in regard to purchasing Oktoberfest tickets came on Oct. 7, telling the class that more information was coming.

Even though the event is exclusive to seniors, one student took to Fizz stating, "Shoutout to the juniors who got tickets to Oktoberfest and took them from ACTUAL seniors...have fun losing ur money and getting turned away. Y'all suck for that."

This caption accompanied a screenshot of the disclaimer seen when purchasing tickets for the event explicitly stating that "you must be 21 years of age or older and a Fairfield University Senior in order to enter the event. All others will be turned away at the door. This is not a university-affiliated event but is only open to Fairfield University seniors."

The Fairfield Mirror has not been able to independently check the validity of the Fizz post and whether juniors purchased tickets.

Despite the displeasure of some, students with tickets are excited for the event on the 26th. It is tradition for seniors to go all out for the festivities, dressing up in German attire such as lederhosen and dirndls. In addition to admission to the event, tickets include unlimited drinks, bratwursts, Bavarian pretzels, along with access to the outdoor tents and port-a-potties. The class of 2025 is looking forward to their first Oktoberfest. Grace Lombardi

concludes her thoughts stating her excitement. She says, "I am looking forward to it, I think everyone is!"



Last year's seniors enjoyed Oktoberfest. With tickets sold out in just a few hours, some seniors this year are worried about juniors buying tickets instead.

# Opinion

## A Modern Jesuit Experience: The Indirect Influence Of Faith At Fairfield University

By ALEXANDRA FITZPATRICK  
Contributing Writer

On the first Sunday of the semester, Sept. 1, I attended the 7:30 p.m. Mass at Egan Chapel. To my surprise, the chapel was packed. With every seat taken, people had to stand along the aisles for the entire hour. The following weekend, the same crowd returned, and to accommodate this, extra rows of folding chairs were added for the overflow. Still, there were people left without a seat. Now, six Sundays into the semester, the 7:30 p.m. Mass is still drawing in the same crowd.

At first, I was taken aback by how many students dedicate their Sunday nights to Mass. However, considering Fairfield University is a Jesuit Catholic school, it shouldn't be surprising. So, why was I?

I think it's because, despite its Jesuit Catholic foundation, Fairfield presents itself as a "modern Jesuit Catholic University," as found on the Fairfield website. In day-to-day life, most students do not feel the direct influence of the Catholic Church that one may expect from a religious university.

Just because many students do not recognize the influence of Jesuit ideals doesn't mean it isn't there. These values, taken from the Jesuits, are deeply rooted in the University's mission and values.

The Jesuits were a Catholic order dedicated to education and service. Because of this, the university embraces "cura personalis," which means to care for the whole person. This principle shapes all aspects of life at Fairfield, even without some realizing it.

For example, our core curriculum here requires students, regardless of major, to take courses in English, religion, philosophy, math, science, social justice-focused classes and a language. While I have heard students call these requirements inconvenient, they are part of Fairfield's holistic educational approach. These courses are a part of the Magis core, another Jesuit concept that means more. The Magis core encourages students to explore outside their major and be educated in different disciplines.

The course offerings themselves reflect Jesuit values. For example, some religion courses here invite students to explore Catholic teachings, participate in group prayer and reflect on their faith with the help of the Murphy Center. The Murphy Center at Fairfield offers spiritual direction and outlets for students and faculty to deepen their faith. They also offer retreats and faith-sharing groups for those who want to explore Jesuit ideals and spirituality.

Fairfield also has a strong emphasis on community engagement and service. Students are encouraged, but not pushed, to participate in service projects on and off campus. Students can engage in service trips, outreach programs and more to help communities outside Fairfield.

Sophomores Give Back is a way that Fairfield allows students to participate in its mission as a Jesuit school. Moreover, the Ignatian Residential College is another program for sophomores who want to give back to the community through service and leadership. Students who participate in this, and live in Langguth, are required to go on retreats, participate in service and more. This concept is inspired by Catholic and Jesuit teachings to give back to the community and help students be agents of change.

Father John Savard, director of Campus Ministry and a Fairfield alum, views Jesuit and

Ignatian values as important connections for students to make. At Fairfield, he hopes students will learn to "be critical thinkers, be articulate and to know what they stand for." Father Savard, as a professor tries to help students "see education not just [as a way] to get a job, but about when [they] go out in the world, how do they make it a little better".

Father Savard thinks these Jesuit teachings are sprinkled all over campus. He sees this as a strength the university has, where students' brains as well as hearts are being educated.

But, to do more as a Jesuit university, he would like to encourage students to ask more questions. He would also like to see the University incorporate Jesuit teachings on how to be a better member of the community into the classroom, especially in relation to Jesuit ideals of service.

For the majority of students, Fairfield might feel like any other secular college, as they may see it as a typical liberal arts institution. This is because here at Fairfield religion is not always emphasized unless students personally seek it out.

While there are Catholic traditions, I feel that students of all religious backgrounds, or none, can participate fully in student life without any sense of religious imposition.

That being said, the Jesuit approach is still deeply rooted in the University's values and is reflected in its commitment to critical thinking, service and education.



The Egan Chapel houses the Campus Ministry offices and is home to many Jesuit oriented resources and personnel. For students, this building is one of countless places they will encounter Jesuit values and their influence on Fairfield University.

## Spirit Shop Prices Are Squeezing Students

By CONOR DOONAN  
Contributing Writer

How much do you pay to go to Fairfield University?

The answer for most students is close to \$80,000 annually. To this price, add on the cost of textbooks from Red Stack Direct (which I wrote about in a previous article), and then add on a price that many students never think about: merchandise.

Do you know how much money you've spent on merchandise?

There's the early rush when you were first accepted and wanted to wear college merch to your high school. For many people, there were dorm decorations to purchase. Then there's the first days of your Freshman year when you might have needed some more clothing, or just wanted a warm sweatshirt or maybe a hat. Then there's the holiday season and gifts for family and friends. Then there are four years of occasional purchases that build on each other, each as innocuous as the last.

Purchasing one sweatshirt or a single pair of pajamas isn't so bad, even without any discounts. Making five, or ten or twenty purchases? That's another matter altogether. Not to mention the merchandise your family might have purchased on their own. It adds up quickly.

Don't believe me? Check the online store.

The cheapest sweatshirts are \$45, except for one which is inexplicably \$35, but also the ugliest of the bunch. The most expensive are \$115, again, except for one which is \$185. The store also sells \$100 cufflinks which look like they should cost no more than \$20. Additionally, they sell \$300 branded wristwatches. More ridiculous is a \$450 leather bag which looks like something you could buy for \$150 in downtown Fairfield or Westport, except this one has a monogrammed F on it, so that makes it special.

The website is clearly massively overpriced. That isn't really a question. The store in the Barone Campus Center (BCC) is just as bad. Take the \$100 Fairfield wool sweaters that in a reasonable world would be something like \$60. Or the ballpoint pens that are priced so high they might as well be made of gold.

There is a similarly frustrating part of the BCC to consider, however. They never seem to restock, and not all of their items are available online. I, for one, have spent the past few weeks trying to get a pair of pajamas. They have not restocked yet, and having asked the staff, it seems they don't expect to restock soon, or at least aren't entirely aware of their own restocking schedule.

None of this is good, and it doesn't paint Fairfield University in a particularly great light.

There is, you might find, a general sentiment among the students that the University would gladly pick their pockets if they could get away with it. Here, as

with textbooks, this seems to be the case. With rising class sizes, overpacked housing and an overpacked Tully, the least Fairfield University could do is offer a discount to students who already pay \$80,000 just to attend school.

Mostly, I just want a pair of pajamas.



The Stag Spirit Shop in the BCC offers a wide variety of merchandise offerings for Fairfield students, parents, alumni, etc. Many students feel that these options are unfairly priced and drain their already limited budgets.



# Ode To A Nashville Weekend: Class Trip To Nashville Is Perfect Senior Tradition

By SAMUEL PONESSA  
Contributing Writer

If you had told me at any moment before this year's fall break that a thirty-dollar cowboy hat, the Country Music Hall of Fame Museum and the better part of two dozen pieces of Texas toast would constitute one of the best weekends of my life, I would have laughed and told you how far from realistic that sounds to a Fairfield University senior who has spent his entire life circling the same eight blocks of a Philadelphia suburb. Despite this, though, you would be correct.

In what has become somewhat of a tradition among Fairfield University seniors, a great migration took place over the University's long weekend. Hundreds of members of the Class of 2025 booked flights to Nashville to take in the sights and sounds of a city known for its amazing food, storied musical history and, of course, bustling nightlife. Flying out of LaGuardia early Saturday morning, I could not have been more apprehensive. To put it bluntly, I was pressured pretty substantially to book this trip. Despite my deepest desires to rot the weekend away in bed watching football and ordering Colony Grill takeout, the underhanded "It's our senior year" and "How many more times do we all get to do something like this together" inevitably got to me. Equipped with nothing more than an overflowing backpack, headphones that somehow failed to charge the night before and a glossy yellow crossword puzzle book purchased fifteen minutes before take-off, I took a deep breath and boarded my flight.

Upon arriving in Nashville, I met up with some friends, was quickly shuttled into an Uber to an Airbnb fifteen minutes outside of the city, then into another Uber to convene with the rest of our group who had already made their way to dinner. After hopelessly roving through a labyrinth of honkey tonks, cowboy boots, celebrity bars and thick plumes of cigarette smoke, I finally found them tucked away in a corner of Assembly Food Hall, a seemingly endless food court with some of the best of what Nashville has to offer. In a moment, smelling loaded pulled pork platters and the twinge of the city's iconic hot chicken, every apprehension I had was gone. The next three days were heaven for someone who stopped counting calories the second his plane touched down. Whether it was a late lunch at Hattie B's for hot chicken and waffles with a gooey pimento mac and cheese or greasy dinners at the famous Martin's BBQ Joint, platters overflowing with smoky brisket, pan-fried cornbread, crispy hushpuppies and short ribs you have to see to believe. It seems like something about the South is just different; like Tennessee hickories spend every moment of some two hundred years in the soil waiting only for their smoke to give the perfect bark to a rack of ribs. It is life-changing.

The nightlife was just as great. Walking down Broadway, the heart of downtown Nashville, you would think that every artist who has the money has scooped up a spot. Jason Aldean, Kid Rock, Morgan Wallen and Luke Bryan, to name a few, all have their own

version of a restaurant and bar along the strip. From the street, their glowing neon signs pull passersby inside in droves. On any given weekend, each of their four or five floors is packed from wall to wall with patrons listening to live music and dancing along. If you plan it well (or are willing to wait in an hour-long line on a Friday night), hopping from rooftop to rooftop and soaking in the unique atmospheres is enough to make a weekend on its own. Even without this though, it is impossible to spend even a moment in the city without feeling the rich history that surrounds it. As a center for food and culture, there are countless museums and attractions that make every second worthwhile.

In the end, I could not write up another weekend as fun as what became of this new Fairfield tradition. Whether it be food, sights, music or buy-one-get-two-free cowboy boot deals, this is a trip I am so glad to have been convinced to take. While this tradition of a senior trip is still new, I don't see it ever falling out of favor. Even though it might drain your bank account a little faster than you'd like at times, it is absolutely worth it.



Samuel Ponessa/The Mirror  
Fairfield students flocked to Nashville's Broadway to enjoy music, food, drinks and the atmosphere. This senior trip has evolved into a class tradition with many students opting to go this fall break.

## Underclassmen Face Barriers in Off-Campus Involvement

By RICHARD HERRERA  
Contributing Writer

Looking at underclassman participation in events and activities outside of Fairfield University's campus, I believe that it is rather difficult for these earlier years to get involved than it is for upperclassmen to do the same. I say this for the reason that there are certain factors that inhibit underclassmen students from involving themselves in these off-campus occurrences.

One factor that I would like to bring up is the reliance on the Stag Bus as the primary means of transportation. Now, I do not hate the Stag Bus, but as an underclassman, I strongly dislike that it is the only reliable way to get from point A to point B. This over-reliance is due, in part, to the fact that underclassmen are not permitted to keep their vehicles with them on campus until the beginning of their junior year. The only exceptions are nursing students who need cars and other forms of transportation for clinicals or for students who have certain accommodations.

Most underclassmen are forced to use the Stag Bus as their way of getting to locations like downtown Fairfield, the train station, supermarkets and more. Sophomore Iris Rivera stated "the Transloc app doesn't always show the current location of the bus and so it's hard to accurately plan when to go back on without risking missing the bus and having to wait one hour for the bus to loop again." She continued to say, "the amount of time [the] bus takes to run its entire route depends on the amount of students riding at a given time. This [number] varies depending on the time of day, as a route running at 5 p.m. carries significantly more students than one at 10 p.m." I personally think that going on the Stag Bus, for the first time in particular, is very stressful and to have these additional problems and inconveniences to worry about, it really makes the experience difficult and unenjoyable.

Another factor that underclassmen students encounter is the fact that they most likely do not know what activities are going on outside of the university. When it comes to on-campus affairs, I believe that most students have access to information on these events and how to participate.

When it comes to activities that happen outside of the university, there is little to no information given as to how to involve yourself. I know that there are definitely some events that you can throw yourself into. In my experience, I was able to go with some of my Langguth classmates to New York City. This trip came about, however, only because I am a part of the creative life track within the Residential College, thus granting me the opportunity. This example furthers my point that in order to involve yourself as an underclassman in some of these off-campus events, you must be a part of a club or group that allows you to participate in such activities. This can be limiting to some underclassmen

who are not involved in many clubs or organizations and thus not afforded these luxuries like other students, such as myself.

The final factor I wish to touch on is Engagement Fairfield's newsletter entitled "#TheWeekender." This newsletter functions as a way to give students updates on what exactly they could do on a particular weekend off-campus. My reasoning as to why this is a factor is simply because it is advertised poorly to the general student population and is way too long for the average person to read. I personally had never come across, nor read, the newsletter prior to Oliver Merriam '27 bringing it to my attention. I believe that this newsletter really could serve as a way to notify students of upcoming events off-campus if it were promoted more and condensed certain sections to make the report more appealing to the average student.

Overall, I believe that Fairfield University does attempt to make off-campus life and events accessible to all students. Unfortunately, there are more barriers for underclassmen in comparison to other types of students.



Trent Ouellette/The Mirror  
Employees at the Stag Spirit Shop preside over the distribution of textbooks ordered through RedStack Direct. The new system has upped the workload and urgency for these employees as students line up to receive their textbooks.



# The Vine

*Editor: Caitlin Shea*

## MENU

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# A Haven of Hope: The Caroline House Club

BY FIONA WAGNER  
Assistant Vine Editor

On the eastside of Bridgeport, a sanctuary of hope and love awaits mothers and children at Caroline House.

With a beautiful yellow exterior, Caroline House stands as a beacon of warmth and support, welcoming any who wish to join. Inside its walls, the air is filled with love and laughter with the promise of new beginnings. As Fairfield University students step in to assist the staff at Caroline House, they embark on a journey of learning, lessons and growth with mothers and children.

In this nurturing environment, a group of dedicated students makes a huge difference in the lives of those in need. Committed to providing educational and loving support, these Fairfield University students work directly with Caroline House.

This Victorian-style home is filled with many educational and hospitable rooms. With three floors, there is a kitchen, living room area, multiple classrooms and a daycare. Gifted by the School Sisters Notre Dame, Caroline House offers a cozy and enriching environment.

With around 50 members participating in weekly meetings, Senior Kate Enriquez is the President and works very hard to ensure the club prospers. The actual Caroline House program was created in November 1995 and

Fairfield has been working alongside it for years. It was only last year though that the Caroline House Club became an official Fairfield University organization, before that it was just a junior board.

Enriquez explains that while she has a lot of tasks including planning events, scheduling meetings and communicating with the house, her main goal is always to support the women and children at Caroline House.

A big part of what the club entails is going to weekly tutoring sessions at the house. Club members sign up to visit Caroline House every Tuesday and Thursday, tutoring the children in their after-school program.

Enriquez says, "The Fairfield University students work one-on-one helping the children solve whatever problems or difficulties they may have with their homework."

While tutoring is a large part of what the club does, they also play a part in fundraising events for Caroline House. Sophomore Giuliana Camilleri is the Public Relations Coordinator and she works hard to spread the word of the club through their events.

Caroline House offers a plethora of events throughout the year including an Easter Egg Hunt, Trunk-Or-Treat, Valentine's Day card making and wine tastings. Caroline House Club works alongside its staff to make

sure these events happen.

The Easter Egg Hunt was Camilleri's favorite event she participated in last year. She commented on how great it is to get hands-on experience with the children saying that, "it's so nice to see a balance of the children having fun while still learning important life skills."

Enriquez also loves the annual Easter Egg Hunt, but her favorite is the Trunk-Or-Treat event they hold every October around Halloween. This is the first year that the Caroline House Club is planning and organizing this event all on their own.

She explained, "We as a club, dress up in Halloween costumes to hand out candy from our decorated cars to the children at Caroline House."

Enriquez said that these types of events are so nice because she gets to see smiles on the children's faces.

Camilleri works specifically on the club's social media, running their Instagram account. Her job as Public Relations Coordinator is to spread the word throughout the student population. Since Caroline House is a newer club at Fairfield University, Camilleri emphasizes how important it is to gain attraction to grow as a whole. She works hard running social media, creating graphics, Ins-

tagram posts and photographing events.

Other editorial board roles consist of Vice President, Administrative Chairs, Volunteer Coordinator, Education Liaison and Co-Fundraising Directors. All of their roles play a crucial part in keeping the Caroline House community thriving.

Both Enriquez and Camilleri believe in the power that community service holds. There is a lot of support and contributions throughout Fairfield County that contribute to the success of Caroline House. Enriquez explained how lucky she is to be a part of Caroline House's mission and expressed her gratitude towards helping others through non-profit work.

Camilleri agrees and believes that it's important for Fairfield students to recognize the privileges they hold. She said that, "Caroline House is a great opportunity to get outside of Fairfield. Understanding the differences in the world around us is very important."

As the Caroline House Club continues to grow, it continues to embody the spirit of service and compassion and offers students amazing opportunities to get involved.



## CAROLINE HOUSE

Photos Courtesy of Kate Enriquez

