

Quinnipiac’s first national champions and their fight for respect

p. 10-11

PEYTON MCKENZIE/CHRONICLE

Law school homelessness program receives \$540K state grant

By **LILY PHILIPCZAK**
Staff Writer

The Quinnipiac University School of Law’s Homelessness Mitigation Mediation Program received a \$540,000 grant from the Connecticut Department of Housing in early October to alleviate some of the consequences that the global pandemic had on the state’s housing stability.

This grant allows for a two-year extension of the program and provides law students the opportunity to get hands-on experience and give back to the community.

In February 2021, the School of Law began the six-month pilot program in partnership with the Department of Housing.

Now in 2023, Quinnipiac’s mediation clinic provides landlord-tenant dispute resolution services to clients deemed eligible by the Department of Housing. This is an effort to assist as many clients as possible prior to formal court proceedings and help them maintain their housing.

“Not only does the mediation clinic provide our students with opportunities to engage with dispute resolution and learn new techniques for resolving housing issues, it also allows the law school to make a positive difference in the life of our community,” said Jennifer Brown, dean of the School of Law.

The grant given to the HMMP will assist the Department of Housing in serving individuals applying for the UniteCT Eviction Prevention Fund.

UniteCT offers rent assistance to Connecticut residents who have fallen behind on rent payments due to the financial strain of the pandemic.

The Eviction Prevention Fund offers up to 12 months in rent, or \$15,000, to renters to prevent final eviction rulings in court.

“It is really great to have the opportunity to serve the community and give them a less stressful alternative,” said Brendan Holt, a clinical professor of law and the executive director of the HMMP.

In the midst of the pandemic, many people were unable to pay rent because of high unemployment rates and were on the brink

of homelessness.

The program reached clients all over the state through virtual mediation meetings. The meetings are strictly virtual for efficiency because it is more affordable to clients and less-time consuming.

Law students have the opportunity to observe the program and the team of mediators as they work virtually to connect clients to resources and assist in repairing the relationships between landlords and tenants.

“It’s great for the law students to be able to

work with actual clients in really tough spots and be a positive impact on the community,” Holt said.

Students do not need to be studying a particular area of law to participate in the program.

“Observing mediations conducted as part of the Homelessness Mitigation Mediation Program has been a valuable experience as a student of mediation,” said Charles Dumais, a second-year law student. “Getting to sit in as experienced mediators are facilitating complex tenant-landlord issues to help participants reach solutions that will hopefully keep them from having to enter a courtroom.”

As mediation clinic director, Holt emphasized the importance for lawyers to understand the value of facilitation.

All clients go to court, even when an agreement has been reached during mediation. The agreement is then presented to a judge to be made an enforceable court order.

“This alleviates pressure on the court docket, because less time is needed for folks who arrive with a drafted agreement already in place,” Holt said, which “lessens the anxiety and uncertainty experienced by tenants who are not as familiar with what will occur.”

Juliana De Castro, a second-year law student, shadowed a mediation that, in her opinion, was a conduit for hope and relief.

“The mediator was very transparent in explaining the mediation process in detail,” De Castro said, adding that the mediator had made sure that “the parties understood her role as a facilitator in resolving the dispute through the party’s own self-determination.”



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The Quinnipiac University School of Law’s Homelessness Mitigation Mediation Program received a \$540,000 grant from the Connecticut Department of Housing.

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The Northford-based Small family poses with the Quinnipiac University men’s hockey team at a fundraiser held at Hamden’s Louis Astorino Ice Arena on Sunday, Oct. 22, for their son Luca (center, in wagon) amid his multi-year battle with brain cancer.

Small kid with a big reach
Hamden, QU come together to support local child with cancer

By CAT MURPHY
News Editor

Luca Small’s name may be indicative of his young age and short stature, but it is rather ironic considering his immense impact on the Hamden, Connecticut, community.

On Sunday, Hamden residents came together at the Louis Astorino Ice Arena — affectionately referred to as “The Lou” — to support Luca and his family amid the 5-year-old’s ongoing battle with cancer.

“This is obviously a good cause,” said William Onofrio, Hamden’s newly appointed deputy police chief. “It’s dear to my heart. It’s dear to the town.”

Diagnosed with brain cancer at just 18 months old, Luca has been battling the devastating illness for the majority of his life.

“It’s just so tragic when kids get sick,” Hamden Mayor Lauren Garrett said. “I think it’s really important that we’re there to support, as a community, anyone who’s struggling.”

The young boy — one of some 10,000 children under the age of 14 diagnosed with cancer in the U.S. each year — has since undergone three-and-a-half years of chemotherapy and several brain surgeries to slow the cancer’s progression. But Luca’s parents, Hamden natives Kevin and Lauren Small, recently found out that their son’s tumor is still growing.

An ensemble of local organizations — namely, K&J Tree Service and the Hamden Police Benevolent Association — helped organize Sunday’s “Skate for Luca” event to raise money for the Northford-based Small family’s medical expenses.

“When I heard Luca had to travel to Boston Children’s Hospital to receive treatment, I wanted to do something to support the Small family,” wrote Kyle DeLucia, founder and CEO of K&J Tree Service and a longtime friend of Lauren Small, in an Oct. 22 statement to The Chronicle.

The fundraiser attracted dozens of sponsors from in and around Hamden, including Quinnipiac University.

Luca himself, sporting a teal sweatshirt and a navy blue baseball cap, arrived at the rink in a decked-out wagon decorated with blue and yellow streamers and a banner commemorating the Quinnipiac men’s hockey team’s 2023 national championship victory.

The banner was fitting for the occasion. Soon after arriving at the rink Sunday afternoon, Luca and his 3-year-old brother, Matteo, met with 26 of their closest friends: the entire Quinnipiac men’s hockey team.

“Luca and his family, they’ve been through a lot — it’s been a long battle, and the battle’s going to continue,” graduate student defenseman and team captain Jayden Lee said. “Anytime we can support them and raise awareness and really lend them a hand, it means a lot to us.”

But the event wouldn’t have been complete without the Quinnipiac women’s ice hockey team, who joined the men’s team at the fundraiser on Mix Avenue.

“I think being able to just play a small part in supporting him and his family, it means a lot to us,” senior defender and assistant team captain Kendall Cooper said.

At a press conference Saturday evening, women’s head coach Cass Turner called the event a “great opportunity for us to show just how much we care about the Hamden community.”

“Getting the men’s and women’s teams here, it’s so cool — it’s actually indescribable,” senior forward Nina Steigauf added. “We hope that we can raise a lot of money.”

Hundreds of local residents — many of them dressed in either “Warrior Luca” or Quinnipiac Bobcats gear — attended the two-hour skating fundraiser, where, beside the raffle tables, sat Quinnipiac men’s hockey’s national championship trophy.

“Everybody makes a small donation, and it adds up to a lot to help this family quite a bit,” said Onofrio, who, in addition to being the deputy police chief, is another of DeLucia’s childhood friends behind the fundraiser. “It just shows that we all do this together.”

And raise a lot of money they did. As of publication, the Hamden Police Benevolent Association has raised more than \$63,000 for Luca and his family — \$13,000 more than its \$50,000 goal.

“Today was an amazing example of what can happen when community leaders, volunteers, families and friends join together for a deserving cause,” DeLucia wrote. “I am so proud to have worked with Quinnipiac to support such a deserving family through a difficult time.”

Quinnipiac’s presence at the event was far larger than just its ice hockey teams, though.

“The fact that we’re having this public skating event for Luca is made possible, actually, by Quinnipiac,” Garrett said.

Prior to the fundraiser, university officials do-

nated \$200,000 to the town to purchase scores of brand new ice skates for the rink.

“It’s because of the contribution from QU that we were able to outfit our rink with ice skates,” Garrett said, noting that the town of Hamden did not have the resources to purchase public skating equipment until just a month ago. “We were really thrilled that we were able to make that all come together in time for this fundraiser.”

Bethany Zemba, Quinnipiac’s vice president for strategy and community relations, contextualized the donation as a recent example of the university’s yearslong drive to “contribute toward a need that is in alignment with our strategic vision” in Hamden and North Haven.

“It’s about supporting with the financial resources where we can, but it’s also about the awesome and amazing things our students do in the community,” Zemba said. “We have a Building Bobcats program where we emphasize the importance of youth participation in athletics, so it aligned very well with that.”

Although those closest to Luca appreciated the outpouring of community support amid his lengthy battle with brain cancer, the heart-breaking reality of the 5-year-old’s situation remains the same.

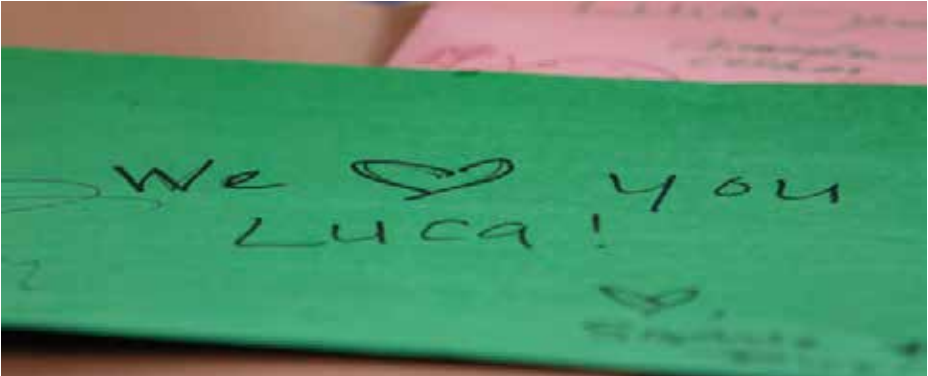
“I know that they are so thankful for this level of support,” said Alyssa Piroli, Lauren Small’s best friend. “The town coming together means so much to them, but it doesn’t take away the fact that it’s her baby that’s behind this and has to fight this fight every single day.”

And the inability to escape that nightmarish truth, Piroli said, can make events like Sunday’s immensely painful to attend.

“We all hate being here,” Piroli said, tearing up as she spoke. “It’s just absolutely fucking hell.”

Still visibly fighting the urge to cry, Piroli said she hopes, above all else, that Luca and the Small family will remain in the community’s thoughts.

“Never stop thinking about them, never stop praying for them and just keep believing that Luca will fight this fight and be on the other side of it,” Piroli said.



CAT MURPHY/CHRONICLE

Handmade construction paper cards addressed to 5-year-old Luca Small pile up at an Oct. 22 event held to raise money for his family while he undergoes cancer treatment.

New Britain high school students visit Quinnipiac to learn about forensic science

By ALEX MARTINAKOVA
Copy Editor

Quinnipiac University welcomed students from New Britain High School to the Carl Hansen Student Center on Oct. 20 to learn about the different branches of forensic science.

The demonstration for the students — who are on a health and science track at their high school — started just before 9 a.m. and ended around noon.

“We have a Quinnipiac alumna who works for ReadyCT — they are a group that works in high schools to help prepare students for both university and career post high school,” said Jaime Ullinger, Quinnipiac’s director of anthropology. “(The students) get a whole day of university experience out of it.”

The organizers separated the group of nearly 50 students into three groups in different classrooms, with each class focusing on a different aspect of forensics: forensic psychology, forensic anthropology and forensic biology.

Forensic psychology is a specialty in pro-

fessional psychology intended to provide professional psychological expertise within the judicial and legal systems, per the American Psychological Association.

“We see that forensic science and everything forensic related is a growing field,” said Diane Langlan-Wortz, adjunct professor of psychology and criminal justice who was in charge of the forensic psychology class. “Media has certainly helped that happen, I think that it has certainly pushed more young people to be interested in the field of forensics.”

As Langlan-Wortz explained, Quinnipiac professors were “giving these students a little bit of information, hopefully piquing their interest in all of those different areas” with the hope that one day, they might attend Quinnipiac and study them.

Langlan-Wortz focused specifically on crime profiling, a section of forensic psychology that, in her words, students tend to enjoy the most.

“I love forensics,” said Adelina Avdic, a junior at New Britain High School. “We were all excited when we found out we get to go to

the campus. It’s just exciting to see college life and what we could potentially be doing if we follow this career path.”

In the next room, Ullinger led a class on forensic anthropology — a special sub-field of physical anthropology that involves applying skeletal analysis and techniques in archeology to solving criminal cases. The students gathered around multiple tables, working with models of human skeletons to either assemble them or assess their injuries.

Lisa Kaplan, professor of biology, led a forensic biology class in one of the many labs in Buckman Theater. Forensic biologists examine blood and other bodily fluids, hair, bones, insects and plant and animal remains to help identify victims and support criminal investigations.

“Today, we’re focusing on something that they often see on TV, which is trace evidence,” Kaplan said. “The specific kind that they’re focusing on is fiber analysis. (Students) have to observe things, wonder about things, ask questions and make a hypothesis.”

Multiple Quinnipiac students volunteered to assist the professors.

“I go and walk people around, if the kids have any questions or if the professors need anything,” said Kylie Allardice, junior psychology major. “Dr. Ullinger is my advisor for my forensic minor, she sent out an email that (the students) are going to be here from this time to this time, so I’m just helping out between my classes.”

Even if the students were not interested in the field of forensic science itself, the prospect of getting to see a college campus intrigued them.

“It’s really exciting,” New Britain sophomore Analise Jones said. “I’ve never been to this campus, but this is far from home for us so it’s interesting to see.”

While educational, the purpose of this demonstration was to spark interest in the students’ minds.

“They’re thinking about forensics in a broader context, they’re thinking about science and they’re also having fun,” Kaplan said.



New Britain High School sophomore Analise Jones gets excited to study a human skeleton with her peers in the Carl Hansen Student Center on Oct. 20.



New Britain High School junior Milayna Torres (right) works with sophomore Sarah Wol to examine human bones in the Carl Hansen Student Center on Friday.



New Britain High School sophomores Julia Parzych (right) and Valerie Perez examine a bone collection at the forensic science event.

Quinnipiac hosts winter clothing drive for international students

By KRYSTAL MILLER
Associate News Editor

Quinnipiac University’s Department of Cultural and Global Engagement is hosting a winter clothing donation drive for international students through the month of October.

The drive is open for Quinnipiac students, faculty and staff to donate items such as winter coats, hoodies, gloves, hats, scarves and boots. People can bring items to Room 190 in the Center for Communications and Computing and Engineering between 10 a.m. and 5 p.m. Monday through Thursday until the end of October.

Starting on Nov. 1, international students can begin to look at the free items in the office’s newly established “winter closet.” Students will then be able to come by Room 190 between 2 p.m. and 4 p.m. Monday through Thursday for the remain-

der of November.

Sarah Driscoll, the director of International Student Services, said the idea for the donations arose amid conversations with international students about how they had never experienced a cold winter before. Winter clothing items can be additional costs for international students and a lot of people from the Northeast U.S. already own these items, Driscoll said.

“As you can imagine, even the weather now is an adjustment for some of our students from warmer climates,” Driscoll said. “And many of them are not prepared for what is ahead during the winter months.”

Driscoll estimated that the drive currently has around 100 donated items. Setting up the drive did not take long, she said, but there is still ongoing coordination between her and her staff.

“I think that it’s an opportunity to give back, to support students that are new to this country and to this community in particular, and to help them feel cared for and supported in this kind of small way,” Driscoll said.

Raya Al Wasti is the administrative assistant to multicultural and global education and helped with working on the clothing donation drive. She said she expects the number of donations to increase before the collection process ends.

“We are not entirely sure about the turnout, as this is the first year we are providing this service,” Al Wasti wrote in an email statement to The Chronicle. “However, we are looking forward to seeing a significant number of students benefiting from this initiative.”

Kikelomo Adetula, an office assistant for DCGE International Student Services

and a graduate business administration student, created the design for the flyers and social media posts advertising the program. Adetula is from Nigeria, and came to the U.S. in December 2022.

“It will be cost effective because buying all these things now, most (international students) don’t have the money because they’re new in the country,” Adetula said. “I know that most of them don’t have jobs yet, so I’m pretty sure they will love this.”

Adetula said her family in the U.S. helped her figure out the changes in the winter months, but a lot of international students do not have that benefit.

“All year round, it’s about 80 to 90 degrees (in Nigeria), so coming from that to here even the spring was cold for me,” Adetula said. “It was a big adjustment, but I think I’m used to it now.”

Opinion

Menstruation matters: Let’s talk periods

By **LILLIAN CURTIN**
Staff Writer

My least favorite response to hear from men when a woman is upset is, “Are you on your period?”

You know what? Maybe it is because I’m on my period, and that’s perfectly reasonable. Do men even know why we’re so upset?

We have to deal with bloating, cramping, headaches, dizziness and a million other painful things happening in our body. Instead of making us feel bad for being on our period, men should try to sympathize. If they’re going to make comments about our periods, they should at least be educated on them.

To state the obvious: periods are a natural process. It’s biology. It’s a topic that should obviously be included when teaching how the human body works. Sadly, it’s not. According to the 2021 State of the Period report, 76% of students surveyed said they are taught more about the biology of frogs than the human female body in school.

This is due to a pervasive stigma around periods. There is a negative connotation surrounding periods, simply because so many people are ill-educated about them.

In fact, 65% of students surveyed agreed that “society teaches people to be ashamed of periods,” according to the State of the Periods report. We can see it when we try to censor the word “period” with words such as “Aunt Flo” or “that time of the month.” It actually makes

periods sound less scientific and makes it feel dirtier than before.

Many men think menstruation is gross or unclean and don’t want to discuss it. If we teach periods in school, and truly educate people on all of the symptoms that come with them, they’d know better than to shame us.

The response to “I’m on my period” shouldn’t be, “Ew, I didn’t need to know that.” Instead it should be, “What can I do to make it easier?”

Opening up the conversation can lead to so many great things, such as discussions about cleanliness and safety.

It’s also helpful to educate people about pe-

riods for hygienic reasons. Being educated to take care of your own body can help prevent infections and reduce odors. It’s important that we prevent serious conditions like Toxic Shock Syndrome, which is life-threatening and can be caused by using a pad or a tampon for too long.

There’s also a common misconception that periods and menstrual cycles are the same and the words can be used interchangeably. They’re actually very different. A period is just one phase of the menstrual cycle.

Normalizing conversations about periods can also help people with their health. There are many menstrual disorders, such as fibroids and endometriosis. Some of these disorders can

even cause difficulties with pregnancy. If people are educated on the symptoms of disorders and diseases, they can identify whether or not something could be wrong with them.

So how can we help destigmatize periods?

We should be talking about biology in biology class. It should be mandatory to have a discussion on the menstrual cycle during the reproductive health unit, since they go together. There should also be discussions of reproductive health during health classes.

Young people usually get their period between the ages of 11 and 14, so it’s better to start the conversation sooner than later. Having open discussions helps normalize the topic, making the period conversation less taboo.

Talking about periods with normality will create comfort around the topic, and thus decrease fear of discussing important issues including symptoms of potentially harmful disorders. It also increases self-esteem when young people don’t have to feel ashamed or even gross for being on their period.

It’s incredibly important that we educate people — no matter their gender — about periods and the menstrual cycle. We should especially teach younger kids and teenagers about preventing infections and disorders because it will protect them in the long run.

We need to stop the stigma surrounding periods. They are not gross, they are just a natural bodily occurrence. Period.



ILLUSTRATION BY KLARA DHANDILI

‘You can’t pour from an empty cup’ Handling post-midterm burnout and prioritizing self-care

By **CASEY WIEDERHOLD**
Staff Writer

As we come out of midterm season, the combination of academic pressure, cramming and a lack of sleep is a recipe for burnout.

Being a college student can be tough on your mental health. You’re finding your sense of independence and, for the first time, you can create your own schedule. When that happens, it becomes easy to slip into the habit of skipping class and not doing any work. I can admit that I have done both of these at one time or another, especially during midterm season.

Sometimes when I’m studying, I worry about what everyone around me is doing and wonder if I’m doing as well as the rest of my peers, both academically and socially. I actively ponder the thought of who I would’ve been if I didn’t do so much.

As a sophomore, I’m working an on-campus job, as well as taking part in student organizations and taking my allotted classes for the semester.

I know that I’m not alone in this type of situation. From what I’ve seen, burnout is a common occurrence. I decided to have a conversation with one of my organization advisors about how I was feeling. She told me, “You can’t pour from an empty cup.”

That phrase really stuck with me and now I say it to everyone. It means that you can’t keep giving people time and energy when you aren’t feeling that energy yourself. I did what was best for me and took a step back

from activities and it helped. Every once in a while I still stress out to the point where I can no longer function, however, I’ve learned the importance of self-care.

When they first start college, most students try to figure out where they can fit in. This leads to signing up for several different activities and organizations that can quickly fill a schedule. It comes to a point where my friends and I often talk about how we’ve taken on too much.

During midterm week of my first year, I struggled with finding the motivation to study or do work because I was constantly tired or stressed out from the organizations I’m in or the amount of work I had to do.

Around 40% of college students have found themselves too stressed out to even function, according to Malvern Behavioral Health.

The “too stressed to function” mindset is one that I am all too familiar with. I have been constantly stressing out about school since my



sophomore year of high school. I knew I could feel myself falling behind in my classes, but it didn’t hit that hard until I got to Quinnipiac University.

The burnout of taking classes and participating in organizations recently got to me. Darling Downs Health, a health and wellness organization based in Australia, provides a list of some of the burnout symptoms I was feeling.

When I feel burnt out, I have constant headaches, my anxiety increases and I tire myself out, even if I get a good night’s sleep.

Even as a current sophomore who just switched my major to a subject I am more passionate about, I still find myself in a low motivation mindset where I don’t want to do anything, because I have a to-do list that feels like it stretches out for miles.

Unfortunately, the semester is going to keep getting more difficult. Even after midterms, there are very few breaks or days off. When I look at the Quinnipiac academic calendar, there are

no days off the entire month of October. When students arrive back to campus after Thanksgiving break, there are no days off until after finals.

With a mere two weeks of classes between Thanksgiving break and finals, the race to cram material in before the end of the semester creates unwanted stress for students. Since everyone has a different threshold for stress, people handle the increased work load differently.

There are many different ways to practice self-care to avoid burnout. The National Institute of Mental Health provides good examples such as setting goals, exercising and even finding a relaxing activity.

I have found that my forms of self-care include sleeping, reading and listening to my favorite music. I make a playlist for all of my moods and can turn to music when I’m feeling down.

Understandably, it can feel difficult to find time for self-care when you have an insanely busy schedule, just as I do. Granted, I chose this for myself. However, the mid-semester burnout is beginning to creep into my daily life and I’m still trying to navigate the self-care that I need.

Self-care and taking time off have become essential to me when getting through the midterm burnout. It’s important to take breaks and be able to focus on yourself, even if that sounds like the last possible option. But trust me when I tell you, you’re doing great — even if you don’t think you are.

ILLUSTRATION BY ALEX KENDALL

Opinion

Breakdowns to breakthroughs

Why everyone should go to therapy

By A.J. NEWTH
Opinion Editor

In a world filled with twists and turns, therapy is the compass we all need to find our way.

When you picture a therapy session, you may think of the typical patient sprawled out on an office couch, spilling their deepest darkest secrets and being cured of any mental ailments. This couldn't be farther from the truth.

Therapy is becoming increasingly more common, as society becomes progressively more perceptive to the conversation around mental health. In 2021 alone, 41.7 million adults in the U.S. received treatment or counseling for their mental health, according to Statista graph citing data from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. For perspective, that's roughly three times the population of New England.

I firmly believe that everyone has their baggage. Whether it's a memory from childhood or a current issue they face daily, all individuals could use extra support. Sometimes having an unbiased person to bounce thoughts

and ideas off of is comforting, knowing that no matter what you say, their job is to help you without judgment.

Contrary to popular belief, you don't have to be a significantly troubled person to seek counseling. Even generally "happy" individuals can benefit from talking to a therapist. The smallest of concerns can be easier to deal with after speaking with a professional, per Medium.

Therapists provide crucial coping mechanisms and teach valuable skills that not only help combat current problems, but aid clients in dealing with future problems.

By giving patients the tools necessary to deal with things like conflict resolution, navigating difficult conversations and handling deep and troubling feelings, therapists prove they can help prevent future problems as well as face present ones.

I didn't think I was struggling enough to need therapy. I was tricked into thinking — like many others I know — that counseling is only for the extreme end of mental health, for people that really need it.

I had convinced myself that my feelings and issues were too little to warrant therapy. I was wrong.

The media portrays therapy poorly, which is why many people may be opposed to seeing a therapist. Therapy is either used for comedic reasons to poke fun at the profession, or therapists are seen breaking rules and becoming strangely involved in their clients lives, like in Netflix's "Lucifer" or HBO's "The Sopranos."

In a world where one in five American adults struggle from some form of mental illness, the last thing we need is the media telling viewers that therapists are either dismissive and ignorant or sexually involved with their clients.

Because of how I saw therapy on television, I didn't think I needed it. I assured myself that I was strong and hadn't needed it previously through really challenging times in my life, so why did I need it now?

However, when I did eventually seek counseling, the changes I saw in myself after just a few sessions were monumental. On average, 75% of people who enter psychotherapy show some benefit, and thankfully, I fell into that category. I observed my conscious decision-making change into more calculated and intelligent choices. I put myself in better situations and surrounded myself with people that support me instead of those who tear me down.

I also saw an improvement in my emotional maturity. I learned to identify my feelings and why they were happening. As a result, I developed healthy coping mechanisms, centered around mindfulness and finding creative outlets to help me destress from the more challenging aspects of my day-to-day life.

You don't need to be struggling to seek help. There is no measurement that defines your challenges and outlines whether or not therapy is suitable for you. Talking about conflicts and

feelings isn't always comfortable, but it's always beneficial.

While I highly recommend everyone seek a therapist, I acknowledge that in today's world, finding a good one is difficult. A study from the American Psychology Association states that six in 10 psychologists say they don't have openings for new patients. Some therapists do online sessions — telehealth — but not all insurance companies take therapists, making treatment expensive and sometimes unattainable.

While the idea of therapy is becoming the social norm, the fallout of the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as other significant social issues across the globe, are packing therapists' schedules full with depression and anxiety-riddled clients, per The Washington Post.

I'm an avid therapy advocate, but I can admit that it's not effective without the right match. Just as you need the right size for a pair of pants, the right work schedule to fit with classes and the right skincare routine that won't dry out your skin, you need the right therapist.

Counseling is all about the bond between doctor and client, and it can be discouraging. After not clicking with a few therapists, it may seem easy to give up, especially given limited options while demand for the industry soars. Continue to persevere, the right match exists — don't settle for less.

Therapy will change your life, and that's tried and true. No matter what specific thing you struggle with, whether that be depression and anxiety, conflicts in interpersonal relationships or any other plaguing problem, talking it out with a licensed professional is the solution.

Seeking help doesn't make you weak. It doesn't mean you can't handle things yourself. It just means that life can get really heavy, so why not confide in someone that can help lighten the load?



ILLUSTRATION BY AMANDA RIHA

Bobcat Buzz



PEYTON MCKENZIE/CHRONICLE

Students continue to follow the unspoken rule against walking on the grass of the Quinnipiac University Quad.

Quinnipiac's unofficial grass rule: A tradition worth breaking

By AIDAN SHEEDY
Photography Editor

Quinnipiac University has many traditions. From the "Bobcat Roar" chant and "Beat Yale" hockey games, generations of students are connected through these rituals. However, there's one tradition that's gone too far and is an absurd rule for all students to follow. I'm talking about staying off the quad grass.

One of the first things students are told as a first-year is to never, under any circumstances, walk on the grass. Orientation leaders say it's not cool and something that no one does. Thus, as scared first-years, new students immediately follow this blindly. Perhaps the biggest perpetrator of this fear is Quinnipiac Barstool.

On Sept. 1, not even one week into the new semester, the Quinni-

piac Barstool account posted a video to Instagram of a student walking directly on the grass with the caption, "What should be the punishment for this?" The replies were exactly what I want to preach about.

The top comment, which received around 11,400 likes, said, "The person posting this is the one (that) should be punished." Another comment used a more rational approach and emphasized that students pay too much in tuition to be scared to walk on their own quad.

The post attracted over 200 comments from current and former Quinnipiac students and the most-liked comments were overwhelmingly supportive of walking on the grass.

However, I have yet to see more students doing this. There is power

in numbers. If we all start utilizing the grass space more, others will join. The grass was meant to be walked on, layed in and touched.

They say the quickest way from point A to point B is in a straight line, but if you go to Quinnipiac, there are no direct routes from one place to another. If a student needs to walk from the Recreation and Wellness Center to the Buckman Theater, they need to maneuver around curvy paths that intersect with each other, or walk swiftly through herds of slow walkers.

It's time to end the frustration and pressure. It's time to rebel against the status quo and just walk on the grass. I hope the first-year students reading this can be the class to end this anti-green regime.

Arts & Life

Louder and gayer than ever: New Haven Pride returns despite threats and cancellations

By AIDAN SHEEDY
and JULIA KUSMENKO

New Haven County community members gathered at the corner of Orange and Crown streets on Sunday afternoon to celebrate the area's LGBTQ+ identities at the 2023 New Haven Pride festival. The New Haven Pride Center hosted its annual block-party-style event the day after it was rescheduled due to inclement weather. But the event almost didn't happen for a reason much more serious than the weather.

NHPC board member Nick Bussett said the center received an anonymous email warning in September that there were explosives placed in the Pride Center. Police swept the area and found nothing, causing a huge sigh of relief from board and community members.

"With the current narrative of (the LGBTQ+ communities) out there, I'm not surprised that that happened," Bussett said. "It was very upsetting and scary."

The event — originally scheduled for Sept. 23 — was rescheduled twice because of inclement weather and then a third time because of the threats.

As a result, New Haven Police Department offered its services for the entire six-hour festival — on three closed-off blocks — for free and local forces swept the area prior to its commencement. Bussett praised the efforts from NHPD and said that the event became even more important for all people.

"Visibility is one of our most powerful weapons," Bussett said. "In order to combat hate, we have to be as present as possible."



AIDAN SHEEDY/CHRONICLE

Marge Erin Johnson, 33, isn't an ordinary drag queen — they're a minister too. Johnson said they grew up in a very Christian household and now runs their own 'drag church' services. 'I think drag and church is a really fantastic thing,' they said. 'It challenges the Church and it's anti-queerness ... drag church is a way for you to be loved as who you are, approved under the eye of God.'



JULIA KUSMENKO/CHRONICLE

Pride flags on the Community Alliance for Research and Engagement table.



AIDAN SHEEDY/CHRONICLE

Ocean Phillips, 72, of West Haven (left), sits with New Haven local Tia Waters, 57 (right), representing the Rainbow Elders & Friends organization on Sunday.



JULIA KUSMENKO/CHRONICLE

Transgender rapper Cuee watches fellow performers at New Haven Pride.



JULIA KUSMENKO/CHRONICLE

A crowd cheers on performers, including two drag queens, who used the pavement as their stage.



JULIA KUSMENKO/CHRONICLE

Pride flags hang on the Community Alliance for Research and Engagement table.



AIDAN SHEEDY/CHRONICLE

Void M., a 15-year-old from Branford, said he could express himself at New Haven Pride because he doesn't get to wear enough pink in other spaces.

The 'entanglement' of Jada Pinkett and Will Smith

By BENJAMIN YEARGIN
Managing Editor

“Keep my wife’s name out your fucking mouth.”

Following the slap of the century at the 2022 Academy Awards, those words that actor Will Smith shouted to comedian Chris Rock about his supposed wife (we’ll get into that later) ruined, or severely halted, Smith’s career. All over actress and new author Jada Pinkett Smith.

The ensuing drama that played out between the Smiths about their marriage, Pinkett Smith’s “entanglement” with R&B singer August Alsina and the “are-they-married-aren’t-they-married” debacle leaves a bad taste in anyone’s mouth, including mine.

So in order to understand how we got here let’s take it back — way back — to 1997.

Pinkett Smith became pregnant in 1997 — after dating Smith for around two years — with her and Smith’s son, Jaden, and felt pressure from her mother to marry Smith.

“I was under so much pressure, you know, being a young actress, and I was just, like, pregnant and I just didn’t know what to do,” Pinkett Smith said on her “Red Table Talk” talk show. “I never wanted to be married.”

She literally cried down the aisle on her and Smith’s Dec. 31, 1997 wedding day.

Conversely, on the same episode of “Red Table Talk,” Smith said he couldn’t wait for their wedding day.

“There wasn’t a day in my life that I wanted anything other than being married and having a family,” Smith said. “From literally five years old, I was picturing what my family would be.”

So going into their marriage, you have two people with extremely different views on the actual wedding; one extremely hesitant and one bursting with excitement. The concoction of their marriage doesn’t have good ingredients to start.

But from their wedding until 2020, everything was fairly smooth in Smith and Pinkett Smith’s relationship to the public eye — that is until Alsina entered the picture.

Alsina — a c-list R&B singer — has long dropped hints that he and Pinkett Smith engaged in a romantic relationship while Pinkett Smith was still married to Smith.

In July 10, 2020, Pinkett Smith confirmed she and Alsina engaged in an “entanglement” on “Red Table Talk.” For those that don’t know what the hell an “entanglement” means: Pinkett Smith cheated on Smith with Alsina.

At the end of that episode of “Red Table Talk,” Smith and Pinkett Smith took inspiration from the former’s film series “Bad Boys” and said in unison, “We ride together, we die together, bad marriage for life.”

I don’t get it. I don’t get why either of them can admit that this marriage has caused them a lot more pain than good and still both persist in not getting divorced.

Staying in a relationship that’s not only toxic for Smith, but now for his and Pinkett Smith’s public personas is just a lose-lose for the both of them.

But Pinkett Smith’s and Alsina’s relationship gives me more red flags than just the obvious one of infidelity.

On top of that, Alsina has opened up in the past about his drug and sex addictions and trauma, and having a relationship with a woman 21 years older than him screams of red flags to me.

But it continues to get worse. Along with the infamous 2022 slap to Rock, Pinkett Smith has repeatedly talked about her relationship with the deceased rapper Tupac Shakur.

She recently claimed that Shakur proposed to her in jail, while he was serving a prison sentence at Rikers Island in Bronx, New York, for sexually assaulting a former fan named Ayanna Jackson, and has called



Actors Jada Pinkett Smith and Will Smith live in current news headlines thanks to their recent interviews about their tumultuous relationship.

Shakur her “soulmate.”

Shakur has been dead for over 25 years. I bet every time Pinkett Smith brings up his name, he rolls over in his grave, or in a villa in Havana, Cuba.

The reason I’m writing this, and the reason for all of Pinkett Smith’s recent claims, is her media tour following the publication of her memoir, “Worthy.”

Pinkett Smith appeared on NBC to discuss her and Smith’s relationship on top of the contents in her memoir.

And boy did she spill the tea.

For starters, Pinkett Smith claimed in a “Today” show interview with Hoda Kotb that she took the psychedelic drug ayahuasca, which was a “turning point” in her mental health. She claimed that she thought the slap between Smith and Rock was a skit and the most absurd claim of them all — her and Smith have been separated since 2016.

She claims her and Smith live completely separate lives and have been everything but legally separated since then.

I call bullshit. For starters, Smith’s heartbreak on “Red Table Talk” when she told him about her affair with Alsina was so evident on his face, it became a meme. Also, why would they appear on red carpets together? And why in the world would Will say “my wife” in “keep my wife’s name out your fucking mouth,” if they had been separated for nearly six years at that point.

I don’t know why Pinkett Smith would claim this or even what Smith thinks about this, but the whole relationship is an entanglement of people with different beliefs and massive egos.

Now if you’ll excuse me, I’m going to go use a neuralizer on myself, “Men in Black” style.

Bad Bunny chases GOAT status with new album

By AIDAN SHEEDY
Photography Editor

World-renowned musical artist Bad Bunny surprised fans on Oct. 13 with a brand new 22-song album titled, “nadie sabe lo que va a pasar mañana.” The album is deep and personal, but the Puerto Rican superstar remains his flashy and performative self, while reverting back to his trap roots in his most intimate record yet.

The title translates to “no one knows what’s going to happen tomorrow,” and is chock-full of certified bangers at a runtime of just over one hour and 20 minutes. While I don’t believe this release lives up to the hype of his Grammy-nominated album, “Un Verano Sin Ti,” Benito Antonio Martínez Ocasio — “Benito” to fans — is real and open about how he feels being the fourth-most streamed artist on Spotify. He even shaved his head as he had it back in 2017, his signature look for several years.

The first track is arguably the best composed of the 22 songs. “NADIE SABE,” which translates to “no one knows,” begins with an orchestral interlude, overlapping with a simple, slow trap beat. For most of the song, Benito sounds like he’s reading poetry. It’s an emotional, introspective look at who Bad Bunny really is.

While the song isn’t necessarily heavy in itself, there were a few lines that had me in deep thought.

When Benito refers to his haters and fans, he utters the words, “Y hasta te deseen la muerte / Pero yo no, yo le deseo buena suerte,” which translates to, “And they even

wish you death / But I don’t, I wish you good luck.” I believe this speaks true to Bad Bunny’s character.

As much as he is performative and rich, he still cares about how people feel. This remains true as later in the song, he sings, “Este disco no se pa’ ser tocado, ni un billón de vistas / Es pa’ que mi’ fan’ reales, estén contento,” which means “This album is not supposed to be played for a billion views / It’s so my real fans are happy.”

The next song is “MONACO.” The music video made the song for me, as it captures audiences with its cinematic production. In 1960s New York City, Bad Bunny rolls up to the world-famous Carbone Italian Restaurant and dines with legendary Italian-American actor Al Pacino. A gorgeous backdrop with antique decorations sets the scene before Benito begins the bass descent. Charles Aznavour’s French orchestral record “Heir Encore” plays as the sample in the dance-trap beat.

Later on in the album, “TELEFONO NUEVO” is another stand-out. The first minute is a fun, almost pop-like beat that Benito uses to sing about how successful he is. Then, his line gets cut off, literally. The tracks transitions into an old dial tone to the voice of the operator saying, “the number you have dialed has been changed.” I believe this could be an ironic clapback to the fan who claimed in January that he threw her phone into the ocean, according to Vulture. In reality, Benito only tossed it aside after the crazed fan got in his face.

The rest of the song is extremely fast.

After a brief interlude, this new guy begins spitting bars at 1,000 words per minute. Luar La L, a 23-year-old fellow Puertorriqueño songwriter, joins in and compliments Benito’s background vocals for a true Bad Bunny throwback track.

“TELEFONO NUEVO” has raw, comical and nearly contradictory lyrics. Bad Bunny once again alludes to the fact that he doesn’t want to be famous and that he’s just like everyone else. One example is in the beginning, he says, “La gente ve una cabra y yo sólo soy otra oveja.” This means Benito may be considered “the GOAT,” but he only feels like a sheep.

In the same song, he also denounces his desire for fame, claiming he never wanted any of this. In the end, it’s another song about being rich and living a luxurious life (yachts, Gucci, exotic vacations), leaving listeners confused as to whether Bad Bunny really wants to be in the limelight.

I noticed that a lot of these new tracks remind me of his 2020 releases, “YHLQMDLG” and “EL ÚLTIMO TOUR DEL MUNDO,” in that most songs start off with slow tempo rapping about social struggles. Then, all of a sudden, the track goes silent. Slowly an instrumental fades back in, but this time it’s behind a new, faster beat.

This album does not resonate with me as much as “Un Verano Sin Ti.” Personally, that’s disappointing, but Benito’s original fans should love this.

There are several songs I enjoy analyzing as a Spanish student, and even the generic

trap songs about sex and money are super fun to dance to. When it’s all said and done, what does it matter? No one knows what’s going to happen tomorrow anyway. What we do know is Bad Bunny will continue to make record-breaking and trend-setting music for years to come.



Puerto Rican rapper Bad Bunny surprised fans with a new album on Oct. 13.

Ten years of '3005': The impact of Childish Gambino's existential anthem

By CONNOR YOUNGBERG
Associate Multimedia Editor

Childish Gambino released “3005” 10 years ago, in October 2013, and it is loved by many people for many different reasons. Some people love it for its catchy chorus, or even the nostalgia that surrounds the song.

I love “3005” because it brought awareness toward a struggle I didn't know wasn't exclusive to me.

Existentialism, the main theme of the song, explores the meaning of life and asks questions about our existence, as well as our inevitable non-existence. An existential crisis occurs when someone starts asking themselves these questions and cannot find a comfortable conclusion, resulting in constant thoughts of loneliness, death and a lack of purpose. This is something I experienced many times throughout my life, and it's the core of Gambino's “3005.”

I think existentialism is an important concept for people to know and learn about. Before I even knew what it was, I was suffering from this kind of thinking, wondering why these depressing questions were consuming my thoughts. Researching Gambino's “3005” was the first time I knew other people had the same struggles.

Gambino — also known by his real name, Donald Glover — is a writer, actor, producer, artist, comedian and more. The swiss army knife of entertainment notably left the NBC sitcom “Community” during its fifth season to pursue other goals. While he didn't leave the show for the sake of making music, it happened to be where he found the most success.

In “3005,” Gambino says, “got a house full of homies, why I feel so the opposite?” and “‘cause when them checks clear, they're not here, ‘cause they don't care.”

These lyrics show that Gambino feels he has been wasting his time with people that don't actually care about him, but rather his

money. This reinforces his inner feeling of loneliness, which combined with his thoughts of death, result in an existential crisis.

While the lyrics contain references to Gambino's darker thoughts, the music video's cryptic deeper meaning is a perfect representation of how it feels to be going through an existential crisis.

The video shows Gambino and a teddy bear, wearing a plaid trapper hat, riding a ferris wheel at an amusement park. Throughout the video, the camera follows Gambino and the bear until the camera rotates to show the outer world, and eventually ends in the same spot. This motion happens twice throughout the video and each time reveals something new.

The first loop around the ferris wheel shows Gambino and the bear in their seats, with people around the same age as Gambino seen sitting in the cars behind them. The first camera tilt shows the calm, outer world with

glimpses of a park.

When the camera comes back to Gambino and the bear, the stuffed animal is slightly ripped. Furthermore, the people behind Gambino are now elderly. The final camera tilt shows the world around them is on fire and the lights on the ferris wheel are no longer on.

When the camera orients itself for the final time, Gambino and the background people are gone, leaving only the teddy bear on the ride, which is now beaten up beyond repair.

In this video, Gambino perfectly portrays the harsh truth that everyone we love, including ourselves, will eventually die.

The setting is an amusement park because existential crises can happen even in moments that should be happy and positive. Being someone who has dealt with this form of anxiety, I found it was often when I was having fun that I would have thoughts that

eventually what I love wouldn't exist.

Graduating from college is a difficult pill to swallow. It's the final chapter of school, something that has been a constant in all of our lives for as long as we could remember. As we transition into adulthood, it can be difficult to prepare ourselves for the unknown, which is why I think awareness of existentialism is so important.

It's easy to hit a mental wall when life gets tough and start questioning our purpose, and knowing that other people are going through the same thing is extremely important. We can't stay kids forever, and that's something Glover understands too.

In Glover's 2012 stand-up comedy special, “Donald Glover: Weirdo,” he makes a joke about childhood, saying, “All of us have had that moment when we're at Home Depot and was like, ‘Oh, that's a cute little mailbox.’ Bury your dreams ‘cause you're not a kid anymore. You're dead.”

While this is a hilarious joke from an underrated comedian, it's true. Eventually, you have moments where you feel your childhood slipping, and I believe that's the point of the teddy bear in the “3005” music video.

While there are many different theories about the meaning of the bear, I believe that it's meant to represent childhood, as it's closely associated with the wholesomeness of being a little kid. However, that wholesome childhood feeling can easily become lost in the chaos and realness of adulthood.

Throughout the music video, the bear becomes more and more beat up until it's ripped to shreds, just like how it feels to constantly drift further away from your childhood.

At the end of the day, we're all just ticking time bombs, and it's something that we have to accept, no matter how difficult it is. Even with a Grammy nomination, “3005”'s greatest accomplishment is showing everyone who has ever struggled with existentialism that we're not alone.



ILLUSTRATION BY CONNOR YOUNGBERG

Two voices, one person: The Adam Ulanicki story

By JASON BUYP
Staff Writer

Three years ago, I discovered one of the best voices of our generation.

I was meandering through the depths of Soundcloud looking for new music when I came across an obscure cover of the Nea song, “Some Say.” This song is more famously known for its remix by Felix Jean, but nonetheless, it is an amazing song. This cover was by a German

artist named Adam Ulanicki. I was expecting a deeper voice, however, I was pleasantly surprised to hear higher vocals. Ulanicki's voice was smooth, elegant, beautiful and touching; he breathed a new and different life into the pop song over a beautiful orchestral and piano background instrumental.

I was hooked.

The 57-second snippet was some of

the best music I had heard in a while. I immediately went to Ulanicki's profile on Soundcloud and there were not that many songs, just a bunch of one-minute snippets and covers of random pop songs. A lot of them were mashups, such as “Soulmate x Disturbia,” “Airplanes x What's My Name?” and my personal favorite, “Let You Down x Heart Attack.”

I am not a habitual Soundcloud user. Although I am a product of the 2015-16 Soundcloud era rap and enjoy listening to Lil Uzi Vert, Lil Yachty and Playboi Carti, I never used it as my main streaming platform.

On occasion, I'll revisit the platform and the playlists I made of obscure songs and random mashups, Travis Scott leaks or songs that just never made it to Spotify. I would always revisit the “Some Say” cover and put it on repeat for hours at a time, whenever I was feeling sick of the same old Spotify playlist.

In summer 2022, almost two years after I had first discovered the infamous cover, I decided to check up on Ulanicki on Instagram, since I noticed he hadn't posted a new song on Soundcloud in almost a year. I brushed past it and assumed he was just done making music. Then in early 2023, I saw a post come across my feed from Adam Ulanicki. It read, “January 27—presave link is in my bio,” and I was floored.

The time that Ulanicki spent absent from his accounts was time that he spent in his transition, as he is a transgender artist. He was finally releasing the full version of the “Some Say” cover. This time, finishing the song with his new, fully-transitioned voice. The result was a fusion of harmony between his old voice and his new voice. The duet was unlike anything that I had ever heard.

In a time where transgender artists are facing more scrutiny and obstacles than ever, it's important to discover and support smaller artists that are just getting their start. Since the beginning of 2023, at least 83 active bills targeting transgender individuals were passed across the country, which makes it harder for transgender artists to feel safe and accepted while promoting their music, according to Rolling Stone.

Music is an avenue for people to express themselves and share with the world their talents and abilities as artists. We should, as a society, encourage more people, especially transgender artists, to express themselves in creative ways. It helps people find themselves and by encouraging this, we also encourage acceptance in our society and in our creative industries.



ILLUSTRATION BY AMANDA RIHA

Is bed rotting the best way to decompress?

By GRACE CONNEELY-NOLAN
Contributing Writer

Have you come across posts on your feed that encourage you to stay in bed? A trending social media phenomenon called “bed rotting” has many wondering how beneficial this form of self-care is to your health.

Coined on TikTok, bed rotting has influenced social media and gone viral, amassing over 50 million views with the hashtag #bedrotting. This trend promotes the idea of treating yourself by recouping and calming your body from the stress and exhaustion of the day.

Bed rotting involves staying in bed all day, scrolling on social media, snacking, relaxing and binge-watching your favorite TV shows. Overall, it is taking a break from life. This mental interlude allows for a time without outside expectations or pressure — a time to rot. Bed rotting rejects the constant need to be productive.

This recent recognition of lounging in bed validates individual's desires to lay around without feeling guilty and permits us to accept that rotting in bed is not just a choice to be lazy, but a response to working hard.

Recharging our batteries can be considered sluggish and fruitless when, in reality, it is a way to recover and prevent burnout, according to Clinical Psychologist Nicole Hollingshead of Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center.

While everyone needs time to unwind, this latest self-care trend can do more harm than good. Staying in bed for hours can negatively affect your mental and physical health.

Long periods in isolation are not good for your well-being, according to mental health

experts at The Healthy. Although rotting in bed can be helpful, problems arise with the inability to practice self-restraint. Overdoing it causes more problems than you started with. Rotting in bed is a form of escapism; dissociating from reality to avoid your issues, while allowing your outside problems to grow.

Engaging in fewer activities during the day can fuel a cycle of depression and anxiety. When rotting in bed becomes a habitual pattern, it could be a sign of mental health issues, and it is crucial not to let this get out of hand.

Bed-rotting can impact your sleep schedule, according to Dr. Dianne Augelli, a sleep medicine specialist at NewYork-Presbyterian/Weill Cornell Medical Center.

Augelli emphasized that using your bed for passive activities can lead to problems initiating sleep or your brain's ability to shut down. It can take longer to quiet the mind and fall asleep as bed rotting becomes recurrent.

So, how do we utilize bed rotting in our favor? What is the best way to sustain a busy life by allowing us to breathe without getting wrapped in an unbreakable pattern? The key is balance and moderation.

Many practices can help people rot in bed responsibly. Setting timers on your phone can help you control and utilize time spent in bed. Having an allotted time during the day to rot can put your mind at ease. Planning out when you can relax during the day might seem tedious, but it allows time to decompress

while leaving space to be productive.

Bed rotting needs to be approached with mindfulness and intention. There are alternatives to recharging and decompressing other than staying in bed. Practices such as yoga can produce similar results with its incorporation of meditation and breathing, which reduces stress and negative thoughts by relaxing the mind.

Learning to recharge peacefully is essential because rotting in bed is more than staying in all day. It normalizes and sustains our everyday addiction to technology. The term bed rotting has become popular because it justifies and pokes fun at how much we're on our phones.

It's branded as a relatable form of relaxation after a long day and something to look forward to. However, it encourages the idea that the only way to unwind is by gluing our eyes to a screen.

This trend is part of the movement that has pushed once private matters online into a collective conversation, encouraging feelings of togetherness and unity.

Overall, it promotes the intentional aspect of doing nothing. While kicking back can start as self-care, it can soon become a constant cycle of lying in bed to cope with feelings of avoidance and anxiety. Bed rotting can lead to solely relying on happiness from online interactions without proper moderation.

The phrase self-care has been so normalized that we encourage and give in to guilty pleasures that are not necessarily healthy and do not benefit us. TikTok reveals the toxic side of mental wellness; bed rotting can be beneficial in the short term but does not fit the bill for self-care.



ILLUSTRATION BY KAYA DONAH

Acclaimed jazz musicians serenade QU audience

By TYLER RINKO and QUINN O'NEILL

On Oct. 19, Tatiana Eva-Marie and The Avalon Jazz Band wowed audience members at Quinnipiac's Buckman Theater with their rendition of "Djangology." The band, comprising Gabe Terracciano on violin, Dion Barardo on guitar and Wallace Stelzer on bass, played classics by the French composer Django Reinhardt with the twist of modern French lyrics sung by Eva-Marie. While each artist impressed, Terracciano stole the show with multiple violin solos, leaving the audience amazed. Eva-Marie's "Djangology" was a proper tribute to Reinhardt, as well as jazz music as a whole.



TYLER RINKO/CHRONICLE

Violinist Gabe Terracciano flanked by bassist Wallace Stelzer (left) and guitarist Dion Barardo (right) kick off the concert on Oct. 19.



QUINN O'NEILL/CHRONICLE

Dion Barardo plays his part as his guitar provides harmonic support and creates a rhythm while the band plays "Swing 42."



TYLER RINKO/CHRONICLE

Singer Tatiana Eva-Marie continues the Frank J. Natale concert series with "Djangology" in Quinnipiac's Buckman Theater.



QUINNIPAC ATHLETICS, PEYTON MCKENZIE/CHRONICLE, PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY CAMERON LEVASSEUR

Three titles, a fraction of the recognition

Quinnipiac rugby was the university’s first program to win a national championship, but rarely are its achievements recognized

By **ETHAN HURWITZ**
Sports Editor

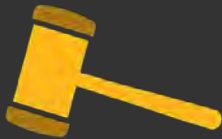
Becky Carlson sat at home on April 8, 2023, watching the tail end of the Quinnipiac-Minnesota men’s hockey national championship game. Goosebumps appeared on her arms, even retelling the story. By the time the Bobcats scored the game-winning goal, Carlson’s immediate reaction said it all.

“(My former players) just heard somebody on ESPN say ‘this is Quinnipiac’s first-ever national championship,’” Carlson, the Quinnipiac rugby head coach said. “All of a sudden, (my phone) was like, ‘ding, ding, ding’ and I could do nothing. It was this bittersweet thing.”

There’s no malice between the rugby and men’s hockey teams. For the rugby alumni who won three consecutive National Intercollegiate Rugby Association titles in 2015, 2016 and 2017, they are proud of all student-athletes who pass through Quinnipiac’s doors.

However, the problem stems from the fact that the NIRA is not the NCAA, it’s a separate entity. Women’s rugby doesn’t have enough teams to fully compete in the NCAA with only 21 teams across three divisions. Rather, it is considered an NCAA emerging sport. Emerging sports only reach “championship” status once the sports “demonstrate that steady growth has occurred” during a 10-year period, according to the NCAA’s website.

Here is a comprehensive breakdown of Quinnipiac rugby’s championship era and the fight for respect on campus — the good, the bad and almost everything in between.



TITLE IX AND ‘HUMBLE’ BEGINNINGS

Rugby was not originally a sport on campus. It arrived following the 2009 departure of multiple men’s sports: golf and

outdoor track and field.

It’s only here because of a transformative Title IX sex discrimination suit filed in 2010, which made Quinnipiac only the second school in the country with a Division I women’s rugby squad. The team was officially founded in 2011.

“I know where Quinnipiac rugby comes from,” former all-American flank Tayler Schussler said. “It was the fruit of the Title IX case against the school where the school was mandated to add two more women’s teams because of the difference in a percentage of the student body.”

As written by U.S. District Court Judge Stefan R. Underhill in July 2010, “Quinnipiac University has violated Title IX ... by failing to provide equal athletic opportunities to its female students.”

A four-year legal battle ensued after the school repeatedly appealed (and lost), forcing the new head coach to speak in front of a jury up on the stand. The university settled in 2013.

Poor conditions ensued with no true home field until 2017. At least not one of regulation size.

In the years that followed, Carlson said the men’s soccer team took issue with her squad practicing on their field. Rugby also had to share a locker room with the men’s cross country program — “not what we want,” as Carlson remembers.

Her thoughts were that they team is going to practice regardless of what the other teams thought “because (Quinnipiac) brought us here and (it’s) getting sued, so you might as well let this happen.”

So rugby would just roam around and find places to play their schedule.

“We had no home field,” former prop Karee Helgeson said. “We traveled for every game. That was our chip on our shoulder.”

Former prop/hooker Emma Shipton, who spent her entire freshman season on the road, said that she couldn’t imagine “the seniors who had put so much effort and work into this program and their senior year, they

didn’t get to play a home game.”

It was an uphill battle trying to build up the program in the formative years. Carlson struggled to recruit high school athletes and the rugby facilities were subpar at best. Not the ideal standards for bringing in new talent.

“Are we entitled to all of the riches? No, but we’re going to operate and have the same resources,” Carlson said. “We didn’t have an academic coordinator working with our team ... We would stretch in the parking lot, then I would have my car lights, myself and my assistant coach, we’d put our car lights on.”

So that’s what it took. 5:30 a.m. practices with the headlights of Carlson’s 2002 Subaru Impreza Sport — the first car she ever owned — providing the only source of light to the team. The team had to scrap its way to earn respect. And it all started with their head coach.



THE FEARLESS COACH

Her office is small, sharing the limited space with new assistant coach and former player Emily Roskopf.

The desks are cluttered (they truly aren’t, Carlson just says they are). Above the comfortable plush couch is a wooden shelf, bronzed with pictures and trophies from the winning teams of the past. A box of oranges sits beside the desk on her left. A whiteboard — scribbled with a riddle on it — sits atop the fruit.

Carlson laughs when she reminisces on her past players. She gets fired up on the sidelines during games. She is openly blunt, both in her storytelling and her social media presence. Her “Fearless Coach” persona speaks her true mind, both on and off the rugby pitch.

“I don’t think there’s anyone who didn’t appreciate what she did and the effort she put in with the administration and getting us to be fairly

acknowledged,” Shipton said. “She definitely made me a more confident individual, regardless of if it’s on the field or in the workplace.”

It’s a common theme for Carlson’s proteges to speak highly of her.

“She gave me this opportunity and I am forever thankful to her and I learned so much from her outside of rugby (about) being a boss woman,” former all-American center/look Mikah Mapless said. “I will forever be thankful (to her) for giving me this opportunity to come to Quinnipiac and play for such a high-caliber team.”

Helgeson felt the same way, saying that her former coach is “one of those people that is able to bring out pieces of individuals that they may not even recognize in themselves.”

“I really respect Becky. When I first arrived here, I wasn’t sure exactly what to expect,” Sarah Fraser, deputy athletic director and senior woman administrator, said. “I knew that she was a very successful coach and she has strong opinions and strong values. Obviously that can be a little intimidating, but I think we hit it off pretty quickly.”

Carlson was on Quinnipiac’s radar well before the rugby team was even adopted.

“I remember going to an NCAA convention, I think it was in New Orleans and I met Becky Carlson when she was working for USA Rugby,” former Quinnipiac athletic director Jack McDonald said. “I go back with her many, many years. I was a big fan of adding rugby as a sport at Quinnipiac.”

After Carlson’s hiring in 2011, she brought a team-first type culture to Hamden, there was no “me-first” players. Athletes work for the team’s goals, not their own personal ones. It was an adjustment for some.

“She definitely was tough,” former all-American wing Rebecca Haight said. “She held us to a high standard and she built her program a certain way ... But we all bought into that, we all shared the common goals and vision that she had and I think that’s what ultimately led us to the success that we had.”

Roskopf, the team’s new assistant coach, agrees, someone Carlson calls one of the best

students of the game she's ever seen.

"Our relationship has obviously changed and she pushes me in many ways as a coach that she didn't as a player," Roskopf said. "As a player, I didn't really get to see ... how much she does just outside the sport in general."



QU'S FIRST (ACTUAL) NATIONAL TITLES

The team was fresh off a 24-19 win over Army West Point in the NIRA Finals in 2015, earning what still is the school's first-ever national title.

Was there a rowdy celebration when the team arrived back onto campus?

"No," Carlson said. "There was nothing."

The Bobcats followed that up with a 46-24 victory against Central Washington a year later. The celebration on campus wasn't much more than a small police escort and a brief reception on the second floor of the Carl Hansen Student Center.

"We did have a police escort once we got back to campus (from the second national championship)," Haight said. "That was like a really big deal to us at the time. That was really the biggest thing that I remember us getting in terms of recognition. There was never any sort of announcement that was posted to the university broadly. There was never any sort of like, 'get together and celebrate' or anything like that."

Quinnipiac Athletics posted on its website an announcement promoting the hour-long event at 12:30 p.m. — "when classes were at their peak," Maples recalled.

In comparison, the 2022-23 men's hockey team came home to a packed M&T Bank Arena and numerous celebrations across both the Mount Carmel and York Hill campuses. The campus bookstore still sells merchandise commemorating the championship-winning game. For rugby's win, the team had to supply their own championship gear because the school-issued gear was filled with spelling mistakes.

"When we won the national championship, we went and got our own gear from our own vendors," Carlson said. "(Administration) said 'you can't do that.'"

In 2015, the championship t-shirts the program received and the athletic department's YouTube video had a conference spelling error (NCWVRA was spelled NCVWRA). In 2016, the team had to open up its own online store to provide tees to the players. In 2017, the school opened up an online shop for friends and families. For all three years, the school did not make the gear available to the student body in the campus bookstore, forcing the team to do all the publicity.

There were telling signs that Carlson and her players weren't taken seriously. Maybe it was the merchandise that was spelled wrong. Maybe it was also the school acknowledging the men's hockey team's loss to North Dakota in the 2016 Frozen Four in a university-wide email instead of the rugby team's actual national title. Maybe it was removing half the field's bleachers without the team knowing. The student-athletes still aren't sure.

"We won those championships for ourselves, for each other, for our team, but also for the university," Haight said. "It definitely didn't feel like we were really valued and backed by the university as a whole, so that was something that I remember vividly be-

ing extremely disappointing and hurtful at the time. It still is today."

When people did get together to celebrate the team after the 2016 title, it was a good time, as Carlson remembers. A lot of faculty members were there, the administration trickled in and students even came to support. The celebration was well-attended.

Except for one major absence: then-university President John Lahey.

"These girls had just won the first-ever national championship," Shipton said. "(I realized) that the university's response wasn't as excited as (the team) was about winning this championship."

The absence of the university president rubbed team members the wrong way and seven years removed, Lahey does not remember the pep rally in question.

"I have no recollection about any event in the student dining hall to which you are referring," Lahey wrote in an Oct. 23 statement to The Chronicle. "Unfortunately, with 20-plus athletic teams, I'm sure I missed more than my share of athletic events."

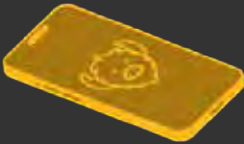
It wasn't just the pep rally, but the entire three-year championship span.

"There's a way to go about it to say, 'Oh, you know what? Maybe we weren't doing things well and here's how we can do better,'" Carlson added. "Quinnipiac upper admin just doubled down, like 'No we don't, we're not going to recognize (these championships).'"

In an Oct. 1 email statement to The Chronicle, Lahey wrote that he "really didn't have anything to do with starting the rugby program" and gave credit to both current and former athletic directors for launching the sport.

"I organized a group of athletic directors and coaches to start the National Intercollegiate Rugby Association," McDonald said. "For a while there I was the (unpaid) commissioner."

Despite multiple requests to Quinnipiac athletic communications, both director of athletics Greg Amodio and senior associate athletic director Bill Mecca were not made available for comment.



'NOBODY GIVES A FUCK BOUT THEM'

Quinnipiac rugby became an attraction on campus. Following the 2017 championship win against Dartmouth, student media began to cover the Bobcats more than it had been — something Carlson's proud to share. Her office still has Chronicle clippings from those championship teams. Those squads were, as Maples called them, "tenacious."

"Our practices were not aggressive in a bad way, but just intense in a really good way," Maples said. "Every time we went out to the field, we were there to practice, we were there to get better. I really enjoyed ... being on such a successful team with really, really incredible girls to play with."

Those "incredible girls" helped put Quinnipiac rugby on the map. Ilona Maher — the all-American-turned-Olympian — put NIRA on notice. Fly half Flora Poole's op-ed in The Chronicle showed the student body that student-athletes are able to stand up for themselves. Scrum half Destiny Henry walked onto the program in 2017 and was heralded by her head coach as "the strongest person coming in as a first-year."

"I was pretty thrilled to get to work with a team that had won a national championship and was a contender," Fraser said

about when she was hired by Quinnipiac in 2016. "The time I arrived, they had already won the first one. They were still really strong and that's my defining memory."

Those players were just part of the collective group of Bobcats it took to bring home championships. Those titles, aided by the talent on the pitch, were won with — in Carlson's eyes — team chemistry, hard work and advocacy.

"(Carlson) taught me a lot about advocacy, and how to advocate for myself and how to stand up for myself," Haight said. "Having that drive to not just sit back and accept things for the way that they are, but to really fight for what we deserve."

For instance, while the team would fight for respect, their own peers would pour fuel onto the fire.

That fuel came in the way of YikYak, an anonymous social networking app popular on college campuses that started gaining headway in the mid-2010s. Whether it was the rugby team's petition to get Lahey to recognize the championship squad, promoting their upcoming games or just trying to get support, it was met with some rather harsh student responses.

"Nobody cares about women's sports. It's not mean it's just the truth. Get your head out of the sand and realize you won't be praised for athletic accomplishments the way men are," one user wrote.

"I knew some girls team would complain that Lahey did not acknowledge them... Smh u can never win with them," wrote another. "Women's rugby should stop bitching cus they should know nobody gives a fuck bout them," another user posted.

Those posts, still in Haight's camera roll as screenshots, are just a constant reminder that despite the wins and despite the accolades, the respect from their fellow students was less than zero.

"I know that not everybody cares about sports," Schussler admitted. "It is something that brings a lot of visibility to a school, especially a small school (like Quinnipiac). I just think that celebrating those (wins) a little bit more would have been a smarter choice."



REUNION, RESPONSE, REACTION

This past April, alumni, family and friends all gathered for a reunion of sorts for the rugby program. Hosted in the M&T Bank Arena, former teammates could bond over their collegiate careers.

That included reminiscing over NIRA national titles and retelling memorable moments. Then came an ill-worded email from administration.

"Every single day for the next two weeks after hockey won their national championship, the Quinnipiac newsletter was (about) hockey winning the national championship," Maples said. "I almost went back and looked to see if (the university) even sent out one thing about us. I just wished that they would have publicized us a little bit more."

Following men's hockey's victory in the Frozen Four, all Quinnipiac athletic alumni got the same email, which congratulated the university on its first-ever national championship. The email then asked for donations.

"Then came the email to the alumni association, congratulating all of us as university alumni on our first-ever national

championship, which, for all of us, was really a slap in the face of just totally erasing the success of your women's sports," Helgerson said.

So Helgerson didn't send back any financial donations, but she did respond.

"Unfortunately you seem to be forgetting that the Women's rugby team brought home national championships titles for Quinnipiac in 2015, 2016, and 2017," Helgerson wrote in an email response to the Quinnipiac administration. "We can support our men's teams and be extremely proud of the hockey team's amazing achievements but please do not erase the achievements of your women's teams in the process."

And just like the three championship trophies that sit in Carlson's office, the response from administration was silent.

"Because they won the national championship in hockey, the non-response is what created this ability for it to stay alive," Carlson said. "If there had been that response, there would have been no demonstrative event that would make us see such a glaring parity."

Quinnipiac athletic communications had no comment in regard to the email, stating that it was not involved in the process. Former Quinnipiac vice president of development and alumni affairs Todd Sloan did not immediately respond for comment.

"I think the university responded in a poor way," Helgerson said. "It really would have just taken some Google searches, or a little bit of research into your program to really recognize it's one little thing, but it has a lot of weight behind it."

Fraser disagrees, stating that "the way we view it from an athletic perspective is that women's rugby is the first national championship we had, and men's hockey the first NCAA Division I championship."



'I LOVE QUINNIPIAC ... BUT'

When you ask those who won the university's first national championship, the rugby alumni will tell you it was the rugby program. Fraser will say it, McDonald will say it, athletic communications will say it. But in the hoopla of the men's hockey's title in April, most everyone suddenly forgot — or never even knew in the first place.

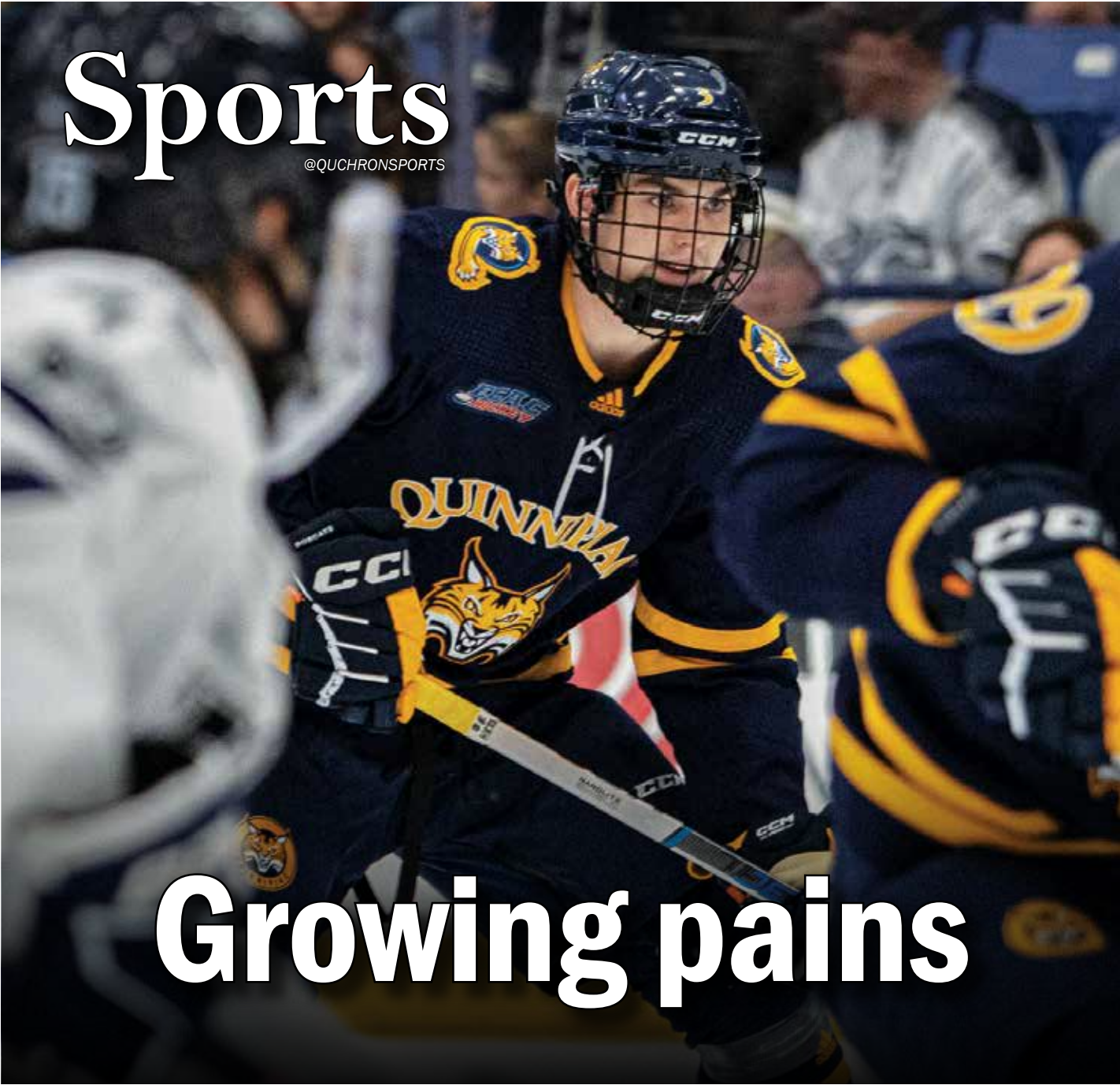
"I think I'm even more mad now than I was back then," Maples said. "I love Quinnipiac until the day I die, but seeing all of the hype that the school had for (the men's hockey team) was very frustrating as an athlete who has won two national championships."

The men's hockey banner will forever hang at M&T Bank Arena, as will the championships etched into the scoreboard at the rugby pitch. Both programs are national champions, they're just not seen at the same level.

"There is a difference (between NIRA and NCAA)," McDonald said. "That is not the same and never ever will be the same as winning a championship in basketball or hockey or football. It's never gonna happen."

Those championships may never been seen as equal, but for the athletes and coaches that have poured their hearts into the rugby program, they're just as meaningful.

"We are the national champions," Helgerson said. "We are here. We're loud, we're proud."



Sports

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Growing pains

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Turnovers, injury haunt Quinnipiac in split with New Hampshire

By CAMERON LEVASSEUR
Sports Editor

It's just five games into the regular season for Quinnipiac men's hockey, but as head coach Rand Pecknold put it following an overtime loss to New Hampshire on Oct. 21, the team has been "all over the map."

The Bobcats split a non-conference series at UNH this past weekend, working from behind to secure a 5-2 win on Friday before falling 5-4 in overtime the following day.

The loss marked just the fourth time in the last four seasons that Quinnipiac has given up five or more goals in a game, and the only loss of the four against an unranked team.

That's not to say UNH is a bad team. The Wildcats knocked off No. 1 Boston University the week before their upset over Quinnipiac, but on the weekend as a whole, most of the Bobcats' wounds were self-inflicted.

"There was just a lot of panic," Pecknold said after the loss. "The amount of turnovers we had, especially in that third period, and even the overtime goal ... We made a lot of mistakes and give credit to UNH, they capitalized."

Four of the seven goals Quinnipiac gave up came directly off turnovers, two of which were failed breakout passes, a struggle for the Bobcats in both games, leading to long stretches where they were stuck in the defensive zone.

"It's not just our freshmen and our transfers," Pecknold said. "Some of our returners are struggling. I don't know if it's a hangover from the national championship or what, but we've got to be better."

UNH chased freshman goaltender Matej Marinov from Saturday's game after he gave up three goals on four shots. That stat is certainly padded by poor defensive puck

protection, but after a shutout in his first collegiate start on Oct. 14, the performance left a lot to be desired.

Quinnipiac was dominant in stretches in both games, its top two lines pouring pressure on in the offensive zone, invigorated by the play of junior forward Collin Graf in his second and third games back from injury.

But Graf's presence was short-lived after he left Saturday's game in the second period with a lower-body injury. He was seen the following day in a walking boot and using crutches.

"I'm not happy with how we played," Pecknold said on Oct. 21. "Not just the loss. I thought the game changed for us once we lost Graf. We've got to be a little more resilient."

It's Graf's second injury in less than three weeks. He missed two games — one exhibition and the series opener against AIC — after suffering an apparent head injury in the Bobcats' home opener against Boston College.

Senior transfer Travis Treloar slid onto the first line right wing in Graf's absence against AIC and presumably will resume that role against Maine on Oct. 27 and 28.

"I love how he's just really working on his game, being a 200-foot player," Pecknold said. "His faceoffs have been great. That was an issue for him last year so I've challenged him in a couple certain areas and he's really responded."

That pushes sophomore Victor Czerneckianair up to center freshmen Mason Marcellus and Andon Cerbone, who each chipped in multiple points against UNH.

Czerneckianair's fourth line spot was filled by freshman Matthew McGroarty against the Yellow Jackets, who will likely retake the position against Maine.

McGroarty, along with sophomores Antho-

ny Cipollone and Alex Power, have been bright spots on the Bobcats' bottom line in limited ice time this season.

Cipollone scored his first of the season to give Quinnipiac the lead in Saturday's game, while the hustle play of McGroarty and Power has been noticeable as they've swapped in and out of the lineup for one another.

Sophomore Timothy Heinke could also reappear in the lineup against the Black Bears, though he hasn't played since the Oct. 7 game versus BC and did not travel with the team to New Hampshire this weekend.

One year ago this week, I headlined my column "Championships aren't won in October," after a shutout loss raised alarm bells in the Bobcats' road split at Maine — a take that aged well in April. That sentiment holds just as true this year.

"October's always a unique month for every college team, we're no different," Pecknold said after Quinnipiac's 8-0 win over AIC on Oct. 14. "(We're) trying to find our way, find our identity and integrate — half our team is new ... everything kind of settles in once you get to November."

Quinnipiac hasn't lost a game in November in four years. The series with UNH highlighted a number of growing pains for a team that turned over nearly half its roster in the off-season, Graf's injury throwing yet another wrench into the equation. But like last season and so many before it, as the weather gets colder, the Bobcats heat up. After all, they're the defending national champions for a reason.

"It's a growth process," Pecknold said. "We just need to mature, have a little growth spurt here and understand 'Why do we win games?' We didn't do that this weekend."

Sacred Heart, Merrimack to join MAAC in '24-25

By COLIN KENNEDY
Associate Sports Editor

Both Sacred Heart and Merrimack will join the Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference starting in the 2024-25 academic year, the conference announced Oct. 23.

"Merrimack and Sacred Heart are two institutions that share our emphasis on the overall well-being of our student-athletes," wrote MAAC President and Quinnipiac President Judy Olian in a press release. "We're a conference that has always prided itself on the academic focus of our student-athletes, their character, alongside their athletic distinctions. All of us in the MAAC are enthusiastic to expand the conference with these two schools as they share our values and commitment to the academic, athletic and personal growth of our students."

Both schools are current members of the Northeast Conference, but will become full-member institutions in the MAAC in 2024-25 and push the conference membership to an all-time high of 13.

"This is a significant and exciting day for the MAAC as we welcome two outstanding institutions to our conference," wrote MAAC Commissioner Travis Tellitocci in the release. "The addition of both schools extends our presence in major metropolitan areas, elevates our brand and enriches our conference. We are proud to welcome the Merrimack and Sacred Heart student-athletes, coaches, administrators, alumni and fans to the MAAC."



Merrimack is a relatively new member of Division I athletics, making the move from Division II in 2019. The 2023-24 academic year marks its first year of full Division I eligibility following a four-year reclassification process. The Warriors have had success since making the jump, most notably the men's basketball team, which won the NEC regular season and tournament championships in 2022-23. Merrimack will also be the first school from Massachusetts to join the MAAC.

"The entire Merrimack community is thrilled for the invitation to join the MAAC," Jeremy Gibson, Merrimack's Director of Athletics wrote. "Our ascension in Division I has been rapid and we are eager to build our momentum as a member of the MAAC."



Sacred Heart, a Division I university since joining the NEC in 1999, has also seen success, collecting 73 team championships and nine Brenda Weare Commissioner's Cup (given to the most successful NEC school across all sports in a given year).

"Joining the MAAC is an excellent opportunity for the Sacred Heart University Athletics Program," wrote Judy Ann Riccio, Sacred Heart Executive Director of Athletics. "We look forward to our teams competing for championships for years to come."

Both Merrimack and Sacred Heart boast at least 28 Division I teams, including football. The MAAC does not sponsor football, so both programs will have to find another conference or remain in the NEC as affiliates. Much like Quinnipiac, both universities' hockey teams also reside in other conferences: Merrimack in Hockey East and Sacred Heart in Atlantic Hockey.