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**“You don’t make a decision like this lightly” President Olian to step down at the end of the academic year**

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# Quinnipiac opens up Bobcat Den, adding smart pickup lockers

**By CHARLOTTE ROSS**  
Copy Editor

Chartwells completed renovation plans for the top floor of the Bobcat Den this past summer in an attempt to mitigate excessive crowding and encourage more student faculty connections.

The Bobcat Den, commonly referred to by students as “The Rat,” offers several late-night dining options to students including Mexican-style bowls and burritos, grilled sandwiches and salads.

The new, open layout replaced the previous snack shelves and cashier counter that were positioned in the middle of the upper dining room. New smart lockers were also added on a side wall for students to pick up online food orders from Q Diner.

The smart lockers send students a QR code to their phones through the Quinnipiac mobile order app, giving them a 15-minute window to pick up their food. Adjusting to any new system does come with its challenges, and students say the new technology will take some getting used to.

“It’s kind of like rolling the dice with them,” said Allison Garner, a sophomore law and society major. “When it all works it works really nicely, but the few times something goes wrong it makes the process longer and harder than it needs to be.”

Modern shelving along each of the walls has opened up the middle area for students

to form a line at Pico Mesa, the popular Mexican-style food option. The cashier counter has also been moved to the back wall in front of the entrance and exit, with new and colorful tiles behind it.

Norbert Ponte Jr., Chartwells’ resident district manager at Quinnipiac, noted how important it is to see faculty and staff interacting on a regular basis and how the new space has already contributed to a better experience for both even in such a short time.

“We really enjoy that interfacing with the students and our staff,” Ponte said. “We want to be able to open up the space more so they can do that and just have a better student experience.”

The student response for the Bobcat Den’s updated look has so far been a positive one. Students noting the renovations have contributed to less stress during meal-times and even improved air flow.

“I kind of like that they took out all the stuff upstairs so it doesn’t feel as crowded and overwhelming and busy,” said Emma Hatzel, a sophomore nursing major. “It also doesn’t feel as uncomfortably hot in there.”

Even for the first-years who hadn’t seen the previous look of the Bobcat Den, the new layout has proven to be straightforward.

“I don’t know really what I was expecting but I think on first impression you



TRIPP MENHALL/CHRONICLE

**The Bobcat Den’s new renovations include a wall of smart pickup lockers and an upgraded cashier counter.**

walk in and see the counters and you know where you need to go,” said Megan Marcille, a first-year behavioral neuroscience major. “Even as a freshman I felt like I knew where each counter was and what it was for.”

As for the future of Quinnipiac dining, Ponte said Dining Services has multiple

projects in the works that they hope to introduce to students in the coming years.

“In the near future we should have some really great additions,” Ponte said. “One being in the new School of Business, we are doing an internal coffee brand that’s going to be a retail location there ... it’s going to be awesome.”

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# The search for the next president begins

By **ALEXANDRA MARTINAKOVA**  
Editor-in-Chief

Three days before the start of the fall 2024 semester, while the upperclassmen were busy unpacking across campuses, Quinnipiac University President Judy Olian stood in front of a crowd of incoming first-years and announced her decision to step down from her position at the end of this academic year.

In an Aug. 23, university-wide email, Olian stated that it “was a difficult and emotional decision.”

“You don’t make a decision like this lightly,” Olian said in an interview with The Chronicle and Q30TV. “You think about it and its implications. I’ve been thinking about it for a while, about when the timing would be good. And you know, it’s never perfect timing.”

Olian — selected unanimously by Quinnipiac’s Search Committee in 2018 — served six years as the university’s ninth and first female president following former President’s John Lahey’s retirement.

“I will not be thinking about the fact that this is my last year,” Olian said.

While she fully intends to step down, Olian noted that to ensure no lull in university leadership, she will stay on until a new president is appointed — even if it takes longer than intended.

“Ten months, 12 months, 14 months,” Olian said. “However is necessary, I’ll stay on into the transition to the new president.”

With her final year still ahead, Olian is committed to “sprinting to the finish line” and upholding the “University of the Future,” — a five-year strategic plan created in 2019 to adapt Quinnipiac into 21st century society.

“I don’t think we’ll be slowing down at all this year,” Olian said. “I certainly won’t be. We’ll be making plans as if we’re continuing forever.”

During Olian’s tenure, wide corporate partnerships, such as with Hartford HealthCare, impacted faculty research and teaching opportunities, student learning and immersions and the range of services Quinnipiac delivers, according to a press release statement from John Morgan, associate vice president for public relations.

Her leadership added 59 new academic programs and dual degrees and 16 certificate programs and saw the construction of a Recreation and Wellness center. The South Quad project saw the opening of a new first-year residence hall, The Grove, in August, with two new academic buildings — new School of Business and The SITE — set to open in May 2025.

## “I don’t think we’ll be slowing down at all this year.”

– Judy Olian

QUINNIPIAC UNIVERSITY PRESIDENT

Older residence halls, like Irmagarde Tator Hall and Dana English Hall, have undergone recent renovations — including new roofs over the summer — which is a project that will continue, according to Olian.

For five years in a row, Zippia ranked Quinnipiac as the No. 1 university for employment success 10 years out.

“63% of our (incoming) students have said that Quinnipiac is their first-choice institution,” Olian said. “And that has totally changed this energy that you can feel in the hallways.”

There is no doubt that the university gained a lot under Olian’s leadership, but also still faces challenges.

In November 2023, an investigation by Connecticut’s Department of Justice placed Quinnipiac’s physician assistant program under accreditation probation after it failed to meet almost 25% of standards.

After low enrollment during the last few years, the Faculty Senate unanimously voted to sunset the theater major in late January 2024.

The 2023-24 academic year was impacted by a university-wide turnover, from committees responsible for advising the president to other high-ranking officials.

“Judy Olian’s leadership has been transformative,” Chuck Saia, chair of Quinnipiac’s Board of Trustees wrote in the Aug. 23 press release statement. “Her vision and dedication have propelled Quinnipiac to new heights, and her impact will be felt for many years. We are confident that we will find a leader who can build on the strong foundation (Olian) has established.”

The Board of Trustees is “committed to ensuring a smooth transition as we prepare for the next phase of leadership,” wrote Saia in an Aug. 26 university-wide email, noting that their goal is to appoint a new

president to assume the role in July 2025.

“This timeline will allow us to conduct a thorough and inclusive search, ensuring we find a leader who aligns with our university’s values and vision for the future,” Saia wrote.

Saia wrote that Spencer Stuart, a global executive search firm that also assisted with hiring Olian, will once again help in the search.

Along with them, Saia mentioned the formation of a multi-stakeholder group comprising faculty, staff and students to be announced shortly, which will provide input for the search committee.

Saia also wrote that on Sept. 9, representatives from Spencer Stuart will host community listening sessions on Mount Carmel and North Haven campuses to “actively seek feedback from the Quinnipiac community. We want your point of view on the necessary qualities of the next president and the priorities for our institution.”

“The Board chooses a successor and it’s really up to them to determine what they are looking for,” Olian said. “If they elicit any opinion from me, I’ll gladly give it, but the board is really conducting the search independently with a lot of input from stakeholders. They are looking to hear from you, what you think is needed.”

Olian’s future plans include continued service on nonprofit and corporate boards. She currently chairs the Division I Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference, co-chairs AdvanceCT and serves on boards of Ares Management, United Therapeutics and Mattel.

Olian and her husband plan to “maintain a presence in Connecticut” and “remain very engaged” with the university.

“I’m really excited about the future and I know this institution will do really really well,” Olian said. “And I’m proud of what we’ve accomplished.”



Quinnipiac University President Judy Olian plans to stay on until the next president’s appointment.

TRIPP MENHALL/CHRONICLE

# Heritage Kitchen succeeds Au Bon Pain

By **CARLEIGH BECK**  
Associate News Editor

Quinnipiac officials partnered with Chartwells to open Heritage Kitchen on Aug. 26 in the Carl Hanson Student Center, replacing Au Bon Pain café.

This concept is the first in the country that Chartwells has implemented.

Quinnipiac students learned about this change on the @qubarstool Instagram account, which posted a photo Aug. 19 showing a closed Heritage Kitchen. The photo was captioned “Exit: Au Bon, Enter: Heritage Kitchen?”

“I ordered from Au Bon a lot,” said Maeve Reardon, a sophomore psychology major. “I got my coffees there, mostly in the morning, instead of waiting in the Starbucks line. I just thought that (Au Bon Pain) was quicker.”

Au Bon Pain has shut down multiple locations in recent months, noticeably within other colleges and universities, such as Virginia Tech and the University of Buffalo. The company was sold by Panera to Ampex Brands in 2021 and has seen a decline in

locations since.

Heritage Kitchen provides a space for food trucks to serve food to students. The food trucks are scheduled to rotate weekly, focusing on cultural foods.

“I think it brings a lot of diversity with food and taps into other people’s cultures,” Reardon said.

The Taste of Grill food truck, which has Mediterranean food like gyros and rice bowls, was the first to enter the space.

They are a part of Food Fleet, a company that helps provide food trucks to various universities and businesses. Chartwells previously partnered with Food Fleet and has now chartered the company to provide services to Heritage Kitchen.

The Taste of Grill has served Quinnipiac for several years. The university reached out to them during the spring 2024 semester about the opportunity to work in Heritage Kitchen.

“I believe we are set to (come in) once a month for a week,” said Arek Kulikowski, who manages the team at the Taste of Grill. “It’s a pilot program right now, so we’re going to see how

it goes and see what the student reaction is.”

The Dining Services Advisory Board, made up of faculty and students, met in April to discuss options for filling the space left by Au Bon Pain.

“Part of our rationale was having a wider amount of time available for the food trucks,” said Alyssa Venus, a junior student on the DSAB, in a written statement to The Chronicle. “(Food trucks are) only for a couple hours. Plus, when there is inclement weather, many students do not want to wait out in the wind/rain/cold/heat for their favorite trucks.”

Food truck lines at the Quad can become long during peak dining hours, leading to students standing in line for extended periods.

“I do think Heritage Kitchen is nice because we have (more dining) options,” said Kristina Todd, a senior biomedical science major. “The food truck lines are really long, so this cuts it down because we’ll have it all day instead of just two hours.”

Food truck workers also faced challenges, and has benefited from being indoors.

“We’re confided to this tiny space, and it makes it more challenging,” Kulikowski said. “(With Heritage Kitchen), we can spread out and serve more efficiently ... we love the layout here.”

Heritage Kitchen also gives opportunities for students who don’t have the chance to go off campus for the chance to try different foods.

“It’s a good change from the dining hall,” said Elle Atwood, a first-year nursing major. “(First-year students) can’t go off campus because we don’t have cars, so it’s good to change it up.”

Heritage Kitchen is one of many new changes to campus dining over the summer, including Fuel Up — where students are free to choose from all-you-can-eat options.

“I think especially in the last year, (Quinnipiac) has been trying to listen to more students,” Todd said. “Having the dining advisor board gives more of an option to have a say. Partnering with the cultural student organizations has been helpful to be able to keep holidays in mind.”



TYLER RINKO/CHRONICLE

Students line up for the newly opened Heritage Kitchen.



TYLER RINKO/CHRONICLE

The Heritage Kitchen provides an inside space for food trucks.

## “I see us as community office” the future of Office of Inclusive Excellence under new leadership

By **ALEXANDRA MARTINAKOVA**  
Editor-in-Chief

In December 2023, President Judy Olian announced the restructuring of the Department of Cultural and Global Engagement, which led to the establishment of the Office of Inclusive Excellence. But what does the term “inclusive excellence” mean?

“Building the diverse community while building the community diversity,” said Claude Mayo, the newly appointed director of inclusive excellence. “I see it as meaning that I am one of the institution’s primary community builders.”

Inclusive excellence is defined as a framework for thinking about equity, diversity, belonging and student success in higher education and how colleges can tackle those challenges, according to The Chronicle of Higher Education.

Mayo explains it in simpler words.

“Building the diverse community is about looking at people who are recognized as diverse and making sure they have a community, that they feel safe here,” Mayo said. “It’s not just getting them here so that they sort of get lost. It’s about working with admissions to make sure we have students from everywhere coming and working with every single student here.”

Mayo explains that the office focuses on broadening, supporting and enriching the overall community.

“Politically, in the world, the word diversity is troubled now,” Mayo said. “Which I’m kind of cool with, because I don’t see us as the diversity office, I see us as the community office. I truly believe that our purpose is to serve everybody, faculty, staff and students.”

Mayo was among the first hires into the new office alongside David Fryson, the interim vice president of inclusive excellence and Patricio Jimenez, Title IX coordinator, after months of university-wide turnover.

As it is a new office, Mayo and his new hires from various other campus offices, spent the late part of the spring 2024 semester and the summer break not only restaffing the office but also “setting their direction.”

Since the office came out of DCGE, Mayo noted that they aren’t starting from scratch and had “the blessing of knowing some of what DCGE has done in the past.”

The Office of Inclusive Excellence, unlike the DCGE, no longer oversees the international student affairs or global education and study abroad programs — which fall under Office of Student Affairs and the Office of Provost respectively. However, Mayo plans to continue to work closely

with the new Office of International Students and Scholars.

“We had a fantastic multicultural welcome feast (last) Wednesday,” Mayo said. “I think that collaboration is the epitome of what we want to do. Going forward from here, the communication about (OISS’) students and the students that we serve is going to continue.”

And that is only the beginning, according to Mayo. In their programming plans are various events as part of the Critical Conversations series, which are set to start up again in September.

In his previous role as director of academic integrity, Mayo oversaw the First-Year Immersion program. This is where students from traditionally underrepresented and marginalized groups participate in social, cultural and academic initiatives and fully immerse themselves into the Bobcat community, according to the university’s website. He reassures that the program will continue even in his new role.

“I think inclusive excellence is about making opportunities for everybody in our community,” Mayo said. “My job as the director is to make sure that everything that we do is giving those opportunities to folks.”



PHOTO COURTESY OF QUINNIPIAC UNIVERSITY

Claude Mayo is the newly appointed director of inclusive excellence.

# Opinion

## We can't "keep politics out of it"

By **LILLIAN CURTIN**  
Opinion Editor

"Can we keep politics out of..." No, we can't.

If you claim that you don't care about politics, you are part of a bigger problem. Every day, the decisions made by elected officials affect people. If you claim you don't care about politics, you are a part of the bigger issue: apathy towards others.

It's easy to sit back and ignore political debates when you're privileged enough to do so. When policymakers are spewing information, you may not think their decisions affect you, so it doesn't matter if you pay attention. Congratulations, you're part of the small fraction of the American population that has the privilege to say that.

You don't like anyone running for president? Pick the one that you hate the least and vote for them. Vote against the person you hate the most.

On July 15, former President Donald Trump announced that Ohio Sen. J.D. Vance was his pick for vice president.

Voting for Trump and Vance would be like wanting to travel back in a time when only white men had rights. Not voting against this would be the exact same. Not voting is saying, "I see all of this, but it's not

my problem, so I'll let them discriminate."

Vance wants police to track people who have had abortions by accessing their personal medical records. He also endorsed Ohio's six-week abortion ban with no exceptions for incest or rape, and even compared abortion to slavery.

In 2022, Vance said he would oppose the Respect for Marriage Act — which ensures same-sex couples and interracial couples have the same federal marriage protections. He also referred to the LGBTQ+ community as "groomers."

We need to talk about these issues. The tough conversation is worth it, especially when Trump is seen as "hilarious." His humor is funny for reality TV, but not when he holds the lives of over 333 million people in his hands.

There are many things in this presidential election that we need to worry about, including Project 2025. In a NewsWeek article, Carrie Barker, professor of women, gender and sexuality at Smith College in Massachusetts stated, "It stigmatizes single parenthood, and makes cuts to social support for single parents and children in single-parent families. To incentivize marriage, it punishes people that don't get mar-

ried." Barker says that it wants to revive traditional patriarchal families.

I never thought I would have to give grown adults the "being a bystander is just as bad as being a bully" lecture on a greater scale, but it feels necessary.

You don't care about politics? Then you are helping detain another 500,000 children, just like in 2020, while you sit comfortably at home. You are allowing discrimination based on gender and race. You are allowing the ownership of semi-automatic and automatic weapons and then saying, "Oh no," when a classroom full of children are murdered. You are the problem.

I've also heard the argument that we shouldn't teach politics in school. Not teaching politics, specifically ideals and arguments, creates an uneducated group of students, and ultimately an uneducated new generation.

Of course, teachers shouldn't implement their own political beliefs to students, but teaching them to be informed citizens is important. We should want every person of every age to talk about politics and not "stay out of it" like it isn't important. Because it is.

You can either use your voice to help protect others or remain silent and harm others.



SARAH ZIETLOW/FLICKR

Being well educated in politics is essential, no matter what age you are.

## 2024 Has Changed the Future for VP's

By **ZACHARY PEREIRA**  
Contributing Writer

Harris vs. Trump. Walz vs Vance. The 2024 election has been hyped as "the most important election yet" for what seems like forever. While I do have some reservations with this rhetoric, there is one way I find it resoundingly important. It has given textbook examples for both a good and a bad vice-presidential pick. Let's break it down, and what it means for each candidate.

On July 15, the Republican National Committee nominated Ohio Sen. J.D. Vance as the vice-presidential candidate. Best known for his best-selling autobiography "Hillbilly

Elegy," Vance was elected in 2022, marking his first time holding office.

Hailing from a key swing-state and being one of the Senate's most powerful voices in cutting funding to Ukraine (a policy former President Donald Trump has vocally endorsed), Vance seemed like a no-brainer pick.

However, as the campaign pushed on, doubts about Vance began to arise. He has a history of criticizing Trump and the MAGA movement in the past. He even called Trump "America's Hitler."

Vance has been plenty clear that he has

grown and changed, but these statements have already come to the public light. More digging seemed to only unearth stranger and stranger quotes.

In 2021, he told former Fox News host Tucker Carlson that the government was run by "a bunch of childless cat ladies who are miserable at their own lives and the choices that they've made and so they want to make the rest of the country miserable too," citing Vice President Harris, Secretary of Transportation Pete Buttigieg and Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez as examples.

On the Charlie Kirk Show, he expressed a desire to raise taxes on adults without children and reduce their voting rights. The quotes resurfaced and were met to much outrage from the public, by celebrities and his peers in Washington.

He has since defended the remarks by saying it was a "sarcastic comment" that was "willfully misinterpreted," with his only regret being that they were taken the wrong way.

When asked about Vance's comments, Trump said, "Historically, the choice of a vice president makes no difference." Many people are in agreement that Vance did not have a great introduction, with many inside the GOP questioning Trump's choice.

Paul Dame, GOP Chairman of Vermont, said Vance "isn't the best choice" and "is not adding people to the ticket." With questionable policy viewpoints and a viral inability to order donuts, Vance seems to

bring nothing (if not the aforementioned donuts) to the table.

In stark contrast, Harris' Aug. 6 decision to elevate Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz to vice-presidential candidate has been met with acclaim. A 24-year veteran of the National Guard, former high school teacher and football coach, Walz has brought an energy to the Democrats that they have been sorely missing.

His policies have been centrist with early campaign movements opposing restrictions on gay marriage and abortion. However, once in-office, he maintained a very NRA-friendly stance on gun control — that he would admittedly forgo later down the line.

His rural background and charismatic speeches have made him a bit of a media darling, with a clip of him being warmly welcomed by a firefighter's union going viral, one that booted Vance.

Walz isn't without his faults, he once said of his military service that he "carried a weapon of war to war," despite the fact that he was never deployed.

Going forward, we may see less presidential candidates going with the Trump/Vance strategy of picking running mates who follow the party line to the letter, and more going with the Harris/Walz strategy of picking someone who can make waves online.

Even if these vice-presidential candidates do not have a large effect on the race, Walz undeniably has the media "x-factor" you want, and Vance simply doesn't.



GAGE SKIDMORE/FLICKR/ILLUSTRATION BY BEN BUSILLO

Republican Vice Presidential candidate, JD Vance (left) and Democratic Vice Presidential candidate Tim Walz speaking respectively to audiences.

# Opinion

## Un-bear-able

### RFK JR. and his diversion from Kennedy values

By **BEN BUSILLO**  
Associate Opinion Editor

For the last 70 or so years, the Kennedy name has stood as a symbol of American royalty. Members of the Kennedy family have held titles such as congressmen, ambassador, senator, attorney general and, of course, president.

Today, the most famous Kennedy alive is Robert F. Kennedy Jr.

RFK Jr. is an independent candidate for president of the United States.

Or was.

In a move I characterize as spineless, spiteful and egotistical, Kennedy dropped out of his long-shot bid for Washington and endorsed the Republican nominee and the former president of the United States, Donald Trump.

With this endorsement, he joins the long list of politicians and activists who kneeled to the golden throne after being trashed and ridiculed by Trump. Over the last year, Trump repeatedly attacked Kennedy, calling him a “radical” who’s further to the left of Kamala Harris. Trump also called Kennedy “the dumbest member of the Kennedy clan.”

RFK Jr. has proven to his supporters and the electorate as a whole that his manifesto of taking down the “deep state” and defeating the two party system was all an act. In 2024, Trump and his loyalists are the deep state. Over the course of his presidency, Trump molded his own bureaucracy to keep loyalists by his side, and advance his ultra-conservative agenda. Trump may have killed the country club wing of the Republican party, but in a way, he himself has now become the establishment.

Kennedy’s campaign platform, which centers on anti-corporation and environmental stances, is further undermined by his association with Trump, who’s administration rolled back many environmental protections. Not to mention how the Trump tax cuts catered to billionaires and corporate interests, which Kennedy opposes.

But what’s the real reason that Kennedy endorsed Trump? After all, he’s the same person Kennedy referred to on multiple occasions as “a terrible human being, the worst president ever and barely human,” and “probably a sociopath.”

Certainly a job.



ILLUSTRATION BY BEN BUSILLO

Kennedy remained in contact with the Trump Campaign throughout the last month before his eventual exit from the race. In exchange for dropping out and endorsing Trump, Kennedy wanted a potential spot in the Trump administration. He also attempted to call Democratic nominee, Harris, in an attempt to make the same deal he would eventually strike with Trump.

She never picked up the phone.

This contradiction is not just political but physiological, reflecting a broader pattern of erratic behavior that has defined RFK Jr.’s public and private life.

In 2014, Kennedy discovered a dead black bear cub on the side of the road, seemingly hit by a car. Puzzled over his discovery, Kennedy came up with the idea to skin and eat the bear. Kennedy then loaded the roadkill into his car and continued on his way to a dinner in New York City. After quickly realizing the bear would spoil in his trunk, he dropped it off in Central Park, staging a scene as though the animal had been killed by a cyclist. This story was broken by The New Yorker in early August of this year. After being asked for comment, Kennedy posted his own video to twitter attempting to get ahead of the story with the caption, “Looking forward to seeing how you spin this one, @NewYorker...”

The problem with Kennedy’s video is that

there’s nothing to spin. He just told everyone what happened — how he staged a dead bear in Central Park because he thought it was funny. Everyone had the same reaction: Nice one Bobby, way to get ahead of that one.

The bear incident may seem like a story your weird uncle tells you at the Thanksgiving table that starts off with “One time in college...” This theme remains relevant in some of Kennedy’s other debacles, including the photo of him allegedly eating a roasted dog (which he denies), or a dead worm that he claims ate a portion of his brain which caused him to “fog up,” or how he sawed the head off a washed-up dead whale and lugged it home.

However, your laugh will cease as you quickly learn how RFK Jr.’s judgment, and lack of morals and principles, are a danger to anyone unfortunate enough to be within his crosshairs.

Mary Richardson Kennedy, RFK Jr.’s first wife, discovered her husband’s private diary. In the diary, he recounted several affairs, sexual encounters and deeply personal thoughts about his lust for other women. The diary allegedly included a “scorecard,” where Kennedy marked how far he got with each woman. The discovery of the diary sent Richardson into a deep depression. After a messy divorce, the Kennedys distanced themselves from her, and RFK Jr. took custody of

their children. Richardson later took her own life.

RFK Jr.’s recklessness and disregard for public decency is entirely out of step with the legacy of the Kennedy family. These incidents collectively paint a picture of a man increasingly estranged from the values of integrity, public service and respect for others that his family has long embodied.

Since RFK Jr.’s exit from the race, Trump staffers have used images of Robert Kennedy Sr. and John F. Kennedy, depicting them in pro-Trump ads. This includes an altered image of RFK Sr. holding up a Trump flag.

Nicole Shanahan, Kennedy Jr.’s running mate before he exited the race, posted a picture to X containing RFK Sr., JFK, RFK Jr. and Trump. It was captioned “They started it. They’ll finish it.”

Using the images of JFK and RFK Sr. to promote rhetoric that stands against what they stood for, is hypocrisy at its finest.

RFK Jr. and his new ally are so far gone from his father and uncle’s values that shaped a vision of public service rooted in justice, civility, and a deep commitment to the welfare of all Americans. While the rest of the modern Kennedy family has stayed true to this oath, the same can not be said for Bobby.

The Kennedy’s have repeatedly come out against RFK Jr.’s vaccine conspiracies, bizarre behavior and his recent endorsement. Said in a letter signed by five of his siblings, “Our brother Bobby’s decision to endorse Trump today is a betrayal of the values that our father and our family hold most dear. It is a sad ending to a sad story.”

A sad story it is. RFK Jr. fought a drug addiction after the death of his father. He got clean and had a successful career as an environmental lawyer, who sued polluters, big oil and stood up for the environment.

Now he’s overshadowed by his embrace of vaccine misinformation and conspiracy theories. Once a champion of public health and environmental justice, RFK Jr. has since distanced himself from the values that defined his family’s legacy.

RFK Jr. may be the loudest voice in the modern day Kennedy clan, but his value system remains closely aligned with the same people that his father and uncle were fighting against.

## Bobcat Buzz



TRIPP MENHALL/CHRONICLE

The new residence hall, The Grove includes amenities that the older residence halls do

## Fix what we have before building something new

By **LILLIAN CURTIN**  
Opinion Editor

As a mentor in the new first-year residence hall, The Grove, a lot of people have asked me, “How do you like living in The Grove?” Of course, I express how amazing it is. When I moved into my room this year in The Grove, it felt like a five-star hotel.

But I can’t think about how amazing it is without thinking about the issues in the other dorms, especially from my own experience in Commons.

At the beginning of the fall 2023 semester, I was severely dehydrated and nearly passed out because when it was 90° outside, my room wasn’t any cooler. I remember when Quinnipiac had to keep the student center open overnight so we could

sleep there because the un-air conditioned dorms weren’t safe. And of course, how could I forget the bugs that were in our room last semester?

I have a thermostat in my room in The Grove, while most dorms don’t even have air conditioning.

I understand we needed a new residence hall, but instead of the little additions like large animals murals on every floor, we could’ve used that money to fix some of the old ones. I may come off sounding entitled to some, but I don’t think making changes to avoid medical emergencies and ensure quality living situations is too big of an ask, especially when the university has the money. It’s not just the new dorm and new aca-

demical building that got upgrades. The Bobcat Den also got some upgrades ... that nobody asked for. The school should’ve used some of that budget to make improvements that the majority of students were requesting.

Even small things, like making sure the older dorms’ paper towel holders work, or even getting more accessible beds in Ledges or Commons, because I can’t tell you how many times my ladder almost tipped over randomly and took me with it.

I’m grateful for where I live now, but it’s not fair to the new students and the upperclassmen who suffer when the university clearly has the funds to fix major issues.

# Arts & Life

## The rise and fall of being a celebrity Chappell Roan responds to harrassment

By **AMANDA MADERA**  
Arts & Life Editor

In a constantly evolving world, having any sense of privacy is difficult, even for the average person. For celebrities, that issue is magnified, especially when they gain attention suddenly.

Chappell Roan began her music career a decade ago and has been creating singles and EPs since 2017. Her first studio album, “The Rise and Fall of a Midwest Princess,” was released almost a year ago. However, she recently became a Generation Z household name in April.

With the help of TikTok, Roan amassed a cult-like fanbase, which unfortunately isn’t unusual for female singers. It can also present dangers.

She first addressed her concerns in two TikTok videos posted to her account on Aug. 19. “I don’t care that it’s normal. I don’t care that this crazy type of behavior comes along with the job... That does not make it OK... It doesn’t mean that I want it,” Roan said.

On Aug. 23, Roan then took to Instagram to share her feelings on unwarranted behavior from her “fans.” After reading her entire message, there’s much to take away and think about.

“I’ve been in too many nonconsensual physical and social interactions and I just need to lay it out and remind you, women

don’t owe you shit,” Roan wrote. This part hit hard, especially knowing what happened to Christina Grimmie and Selena Quintanilla. Both were talented singers who tragically lost their lives due to “super-fan” predatory behavior.

“I don’t agree with the notion that I owe a mutual exchange of energy, time or attention to people that I do not know, do not trust or who creep me out — just because they’re expressing admiration,” she continued.

Many took to social media platforms, such as X, TikTok and Instagram, to give their two cents on the matter. While many support Roan and respect her boundaries, a lot of people believe this is what comes with being a popstar.

On a TikTok video discussing the hate she received from publishing her statement, one user commented, “she is so entitled tho like who does she think she is?”

I personally don’t think asking to not be stalked is entitlement, but maybe that’s just me.

Celebrities and artists such as Hayley Williams, the lead singer of Paramore, have come out and supported Roan. She reposted Roan’s statement with a caption that read, “This happens to every woman I know from this business, myself included. Social media has made this worse.”

The prevalence of social media has made users too comfortable. Parasocial relationships are alarming and unhealthy. Just because someone decides to share bits of their life, doesn’t mean you know them on a personal level.

When I’m at work, I’m a different person. I’m there to do my job and go home. Chappell Roan’s persona and the act she puts on while performing is for her fans. When she’s clocked out, she deserves to have time to herself and enjoy things normal people like to do.

“I want to love my life, be outside, giggle with my friends, go to the movie theater, feel safe and do all the things every single person deserves to do,” she wrote. Just because she’s asking for privacy doesn’t mean she’s ungrateful for her fans.

Harassment and being a celebrity shouldn’t come as a package deal. Society has normalized this to the point where women will lose support when they ask to be left alone. The notion that artists owe their fans something just because they support them is disrespectful.

Take a moment to think about how you’d feel if a random person approached you on the street asking for a photo or a hug. Leave celebrities — especially women — alone. As Roan said, “[she’s] a random bitch, you’re a random bitch,” and if you can’t understand that, then “Good Luck, Babe!”



JUSTIN HIGUCHI/FLICKR

**Chappell Roan's debut album soars to No. 1 on Billboard's Vinyl Albums**

## It ends with bad press

By **GRACE CONNEELY-NOLAN**  
Associate Arts & Life Editor

Adapting a movie from a book always takes a hit because readers have high expectations for how they want it to be filmed.

However, with Colleen Hoover’s book “It Ends With Us,” there was turmoil around every aspect of the film: the press surrounding the movie, promotional approaches and the adaptation of generational domestic violence.

When I first heard that “It Ends With Us” would be adapted into a movie, I was excited but skeptical of how the film’s central message would be conveyed on screen.

The film follows Lily Bloom, an artfully messy character who is an aspiring florist with a traumatic childhood, who meets and falls in love with Ryle Kincaid. Their love story turns dark, and “It Ends With Us” goes into breaking the vicious cycle of generational domestic violence.

After watching, I felt emotionally heavy coming out of this movie; there were a lot of good things and a lot of not-so-good things.

Casting was a double-edged sword. The part of the main character, Lily, should have been played by a different actress, mainly because of the age difference. Blake Lively played the 23-year-old protagonist at the age of 37. Usually, this wouldn’t matter as much if the plot didn’t rely on Lily being a young, impressionable woman who falls for an older man.

On the other hand, I think Justin Baldoni was a great choice to play Ryle, the abuser in this story. He nailed Ryle’s appeal and charismatic look, a handsome, charming character that can be hard to let go of, emphasizing how scary it is

that those closest to you can hurt you the most.

As a director, he was uniquely positioned to play an antagonist while navigating the storyline in a way that represented the intimacy of partner violence.

In an interview with TheWrap, Baldoni said, “The only way that I was going to be able to direct this movie was if I had the support that I needed to make sure that I could put myself in a position to get it right.”

Baldoni entered a consulting partnership with the non-profit, No More Foundation, an advocacy group that specializes in combating domestic and sexual violence, calling to attention that one in four women experience some form of physical violence by a partner in their lifetime. This statistic is why this story needs to be accurately and sensitively depicted.

No More launched a site to offer resources to those affected by the movie, offering those to join the movement and break the pattern.

I think the movie did a good job of showing the sweeping romance and the love bombing, but fell short on the battle to leave Ryle and how simplistic it felt. There was no custody battle, financial struggle or experience that exposed the harsh realities of escaping domestic abuse.

One of the main criticisms of this film is not the storyline, but the film’s promotion. Controversies from this movie stem from the discussion of whether

production glosses over the fact that it is about domestic violence, not a love story, According to BuzzFeed. It’s not a rom-com but a serious topic that can be immensely impactful for viewers in the audience.

At first, while I was watching, I could see why people would think it is a rom-com, but there is an apparent shift that emphasizes the dark turn of Lily and Ryle’s romance. When Ryle hits Lily for the first time, it’s brushed off as an “accident,” a one-time thing that will never happen again, so it makes sense that Lily feels conflicted and doesn’t leave right away.

But that is why a third shift is needed so there is no uncertainty; abuse is abuse and reality has caught up with the romantic fantasy Lily has created. When she learns she is pregnant with his child, it is the final push to get out.

The two-hour movie documents the entirety of their relationship. I think that viewers needed to see all sides so they aren’t quick to judge Lily for staying in an abusive relationship and understand the mental side of it.

I think the movie did a great job of demonstrating the gray area around domestic violence; the abuse is not clear from the moment it starts, and it’s unbelievably painful because there’s love at the core of the relationship.

Aside from the filming of this adaptation, conflicting, out-of-touch marketing techniques for a movie about domestic

violence have led people to accuse Lively, the film’s producer, of giving the impression that it’s a light-hearted rom-com. Sharing the style choices and decisions behind the wardrobe is unnecessary to promote this movie.

On It Ends With Us’s TikTok page, they include a clip of Lively saying, “Grab your friends, wear your florals, and head out to see it.”

Her light-hearted demeanor, along with other problematic press outings — including a pop-up photo experience in Los Angeles based on flower shop themes — is part of the reason this movie received hate.

Lively has also been criticized for promoting her new hair care line and even shared press with her husband, Ryan Reynolds, while on his press tour to support his movie, “Deadpool & Wolverine.”

Baldoni, on the other hand, has done several interviews where he consistently addresses the topic of domestic violence in this film, encouraging viewers not to ask why did she stay, but why do men harm?

Overall, taking separate paths to promote their newest movie and steering clear of each other at press events and the premiere has been problematic for the movie to say the least. People can get caught up with the drama around the cast and not absorb what this movie is really about.

“It Ends With Us” takes on a complex topic, but by showing all sides of an abusive relationship, it gives insight into the patterns associated with domestic violence, promoting the important message that no relationship, no matter how deeply you love someone, is worth sacrificing your mental and physical health.



ILLUSTRATION BY KATERINA PARIZKOVA

# The never-ending era of 'Stick Season'

By **AMANDA MADERA**

Arts & Life Editor

So, remember when we thought Noah Kahan was moving on from his third studio album "Stick Season?" Luckily for me, this album is the gift that keeps on giving.

I first fell in love with Kahan's music when I heard "Stick Season" in October 2022. Since then, the album has evolved over almost two years. He's added new songs and collaborations with artists we know and love.

This past July, I had the most amazing opportunity to see Kahan live at Madison Square Garden on his "We'll All Be Here Forever" North American tour. I didn't know what to expect as I'd never been to MSG or even to a real concert. But Kahan exceeded my expectations.

While performing, he not only included songs from "Stick Season," but also songs from his older albums and EPs, such as "Busyhead" and "Cape Elizabeth." On top of this, he sang several brand-new songs we hadn't heard.

At my concert specifically, he sang three unreleased songs, "Pain Is Cold Water," "Spoiled" and "Way Up High." These songs left me feeling ecstatic about what's next for Kahan and his unapologetic storytelling.

However, he surprised his fans on Aug. 21 with the announcement of "Live From Fenway Park," which was released on Aug. 30. This album contained almost his entire setlist he performed in Fenway Park on July 18 and 19, including "Pain Is Cold Water."

This release officially made this song a part of the "Stick Season" era.

"Pain Is Cold Water" proves that no matter where the wind takes Kahan, he will always stay true to himself, his emotions and his fans.

As soon as the song starts, you're met with the slow twang of Kahan's acoustic guitar. He sings, "I'm the tall glass of water you lost in your kitchen/ I'm casually cruel like a senior prediction/ Most likely to leave at the sign of a fork in the road."

To me, this verse means that running away from your feelings can seem like a good idea, but eventually, you begin to distance yourself and become lethargic.

As the song builds, so does the emotion in his voice while he sings the second verse.

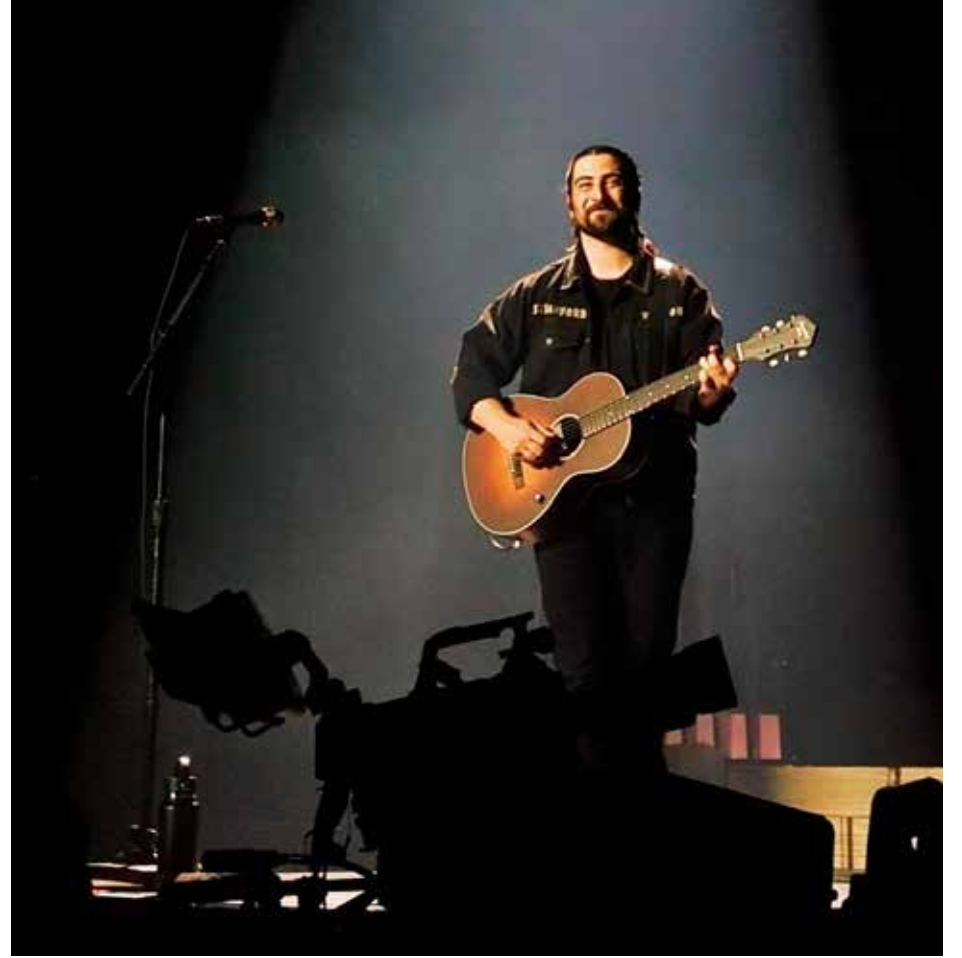
The lines, "And if love was contagious I might be immune to it/ Pain's like cold water your brain just gets used to it" depict struggling with your mental health. The longer you feel this discomfort and anguish, you become used to it and finally numb.

This song, much like others Kahan has written, hits you immediately. Although I don't relate to this verse now, it makes me think about the times when I did. What I admire most about Kahan is his ability to stay relatable and put thoughts into words that most people wouldn't be able to explain.

He goes on to sing "But they're fighting like dogs in the town across the river/ Over a brand-new crosswalk that won't matter come winter/ Lord, sometimes folks just need something to be angry about/ What're you angry about?"

To distract from the turmoil going on inside them, people choose to be angry over petty things, such as a crosswalk. This verse reminded me of Kahan's "New Perspective," where he sings about his hometown changing from a place nobody knew, to a place people visit and call "downtown."

In the chorus, Kahan is reflecting on his past. "I ain't bitter 'bout much these days/ In some ways I'm damn lucky to be here."



YEG CONCERT PHOTOS/WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

Noah Kahan performs in Edmonton, Canada on March 29, 2024.

Although he endured hardships, it's made him stronger and able to appreciate life now.

I love how this album is live because you can hear the crowd cheering for Kahan after singing that line, and the song feels much more personal and special. Hearing his banter with the crowd and how he explains what these songs mean to him was truly inspirational. This live album helps

keep the concert I went to alive.

I think I can officially believe that "Stick Season" is over, and I'm not mad about it. Hearing him perform his unreleased songs live made me realize that although this era may be ending, his music isn't going anywhere. Sometimes moving on and changing is a good thing, and I guess you could say "We'll All Be Here Forever."

# Celebrating 10 years of Ariana Grande's 'My Everything'

By **GINA LORUSSO**

Associate Arts & Life Editor

In August 2014, Ariana Grande's sophomore album, "My Everything," marked a pivotal moment in her career showcasing her evolution from rising star to global powerhouse.

A blend of pop, R&B and EDM, "My Everything" not only topped charts worldwide but set the stage for Grande to become one of the most influential artists of the 2010s.

As we celebrate the 10th anniversary of this album, it's a moment to recognize its cultural impact and how it shaped Grande's sound today.

"I don't want it to sound like an extension

of "Yours Truly". I want it to sound like an evolution. I want to explore more sounds and experiment a little bit," Grande said.

Grande used this album as a way to separate her music from her roles on Nickelodeon by adopting a more mature sound and diverse musical styles. Her 2013 debut album "Yours Truly" served as an introduction to Grande's discography, pulling inspiration from her idols like Amy Winehouse, Whitney Houston, Christina Aguilera and Mariah Carey.

To commemorate the 10th anniversary, Grande released digital bundles featuring acappella and instrumental versions of the tracks. She also treated fans to two new songs, "Cadillac Song" and "Too Close,"

that didn't make the album's original cut.

These anniversary releases offer fans a fresh way to experience the album while also revisiting the songs that have meant so much to fans over the past decade.

"On "My Everything," Grande "ditches the manic-Disney-dream-girl ballads and goes straight for the bangers," Meaghan Garvey, a contributing writer for Pitchfork, wrote.

Singles like "Problem," "Break Free," "Bang Bang," "Love Me Harder" and "One Last Time" all reached the top 20 spots on the Billboard Hot 100. "Problem," featuring Iggy Azalea, was especially successful debuting at No. 3, according to Billboard. Since then, the album has been certified four times platinum.

The second single from the album, "Break Free," further highlighted Grande's versatility. Not only was this song a summer hit, it bridged the gap between EDM and pop music in Grande's discography.

"Break Free" became a staple in Grande's performances because of its energetic instrumentals and how it underscores her incredible vocal range. Further, the song is another power-anthem, encouraging listeners to break free of anything that holds them back whether it be a toxic relationship, self doubt or societal expectations.

"One Last Time," originally written about a relationship's end, has adopted a new meaning with Grande's fans. The

song has become a symbol of remembrance of the tragic events that occurred after a Grande concert in 2017.

As fans were leaving the arena in Manchester, England, a bomb was detonated, killing 22 and injuring over 100 people, according to AP News. In the aftermath, "One Last Time" became an anthem of solidarity and healing for survivors and Grande herself.

For many fans, including myself, this album holds a deep sense of nostalgia. "My Everything" introduced me to Grande's music and I still keep her early tracks in circulation because it reminds me of how much I've grown and how much she's accomplished since then.

I've been following Grande's journey since her days on "Victorious" and "Sam & Cat," but this album resonated with me on an emotional level. No matter what I'm going through or what mood I'm in, I find myself turning to Grande's music, especially "My Everything," because there is always a song that perfectly captures how I'm feeling.

As we reflect on "My Everything" and its impact, it's clear this album remains a defining moment in Grande's career. It has become a timeless piece of her legacy and will continue to hold a special place in the hearts of fans around the world.



CHRIS APPANO/FLICKR

Ariana Grande's album "My Everything" celebrates its 10 year anniversary.

# Kinda short, very sweet

## Sabrina Carpenter creates a skipless album

By **GRACE CONNEELY-NOLAN**  
Associate Arts & Life Editor

I can think of no better way to start the school year than with Sabrina Carpenter's new album, "Short n' Sweet."

Her release radiates cheeky, clever confidence—a refreshingly sly and flirty album that sets the stage for her as a brand name in pop music. It's all fun and games until it's not, as she smiles and winks through songs and heartbreak.

It's safe to say she is single-handedly becoming my new favorite artist.

"Short n' Sweet" is a 36-minute, 12-track album that envelops you in a whirlwind of emotions. You are taken through past relationships as her lyrics and rhythms transcend you to another place.

Her early releases, "Espresso" and "Please Please Please," had already claimed themselves as prime summer songs, laying down the foundation for the launch of "Short n' Sweet" and adding more traction and publicity.

But "Short n' Sweet" certainly lived up to the hype of her ever-present summer hits. At just 25, the former Disney star is on her sixth album and is quickly rising to fame.

Since its release, I have been listening to her album on repeat. The order of tracks is essential for first-time listeners to get the whole experience and message of this album.

"Taste" is a killer opener. It's such a solid choice to kick off her lineup, immediately putting you in a confident, fun, raunchy headspace. This song is a jab at someone who's returned to an ex, "You'll just have to taste me when he's kissin' you."

Throughout her album, Carpenter is playful, almost poking fun at herself. She is fully aware of how she looks and the consequences of her actions. But she can't help but fall for these "men," mocking them and ripping them to shreds. Her glimmer elements of disco and pop have a conversational, flirty narrative that is a fun back and forth. She emphasizes the comedy in broken romance.

Carpenter co-wrote each song with Amy Allen, who also had a hit this summer with "Girl with a Problem," according to Rolling Stone. Her producers include John Ryan, Ian Kirkpatrick and Justin Bunetta. Jack Antonoff did four of the highlights, including "Please Please Please" and "Lie to Girls."

One song that was different from the rest is "Slim Pickins" which brings in some country twang. Using string-band country to complain about settling for second-rate men, "Oh, it's slim pickins/ If I can't have the one I love/ I guess it's you that I'll be kissin'." I am not a country fan, but this song is one of my favorites. It's such a light, smooth melody with an instrumental banjo in the background that plucks at your brain.

It's no surprise that TikTok has picked up several of Carpenter's songs, including "Taste," "Good Graces" and "Bed Chem," with lyrics that hit your head and heart. A behind-the-scenes clip of Sabrina's music video for "Taste" featuring Jenna Ortega went viral on TikTok with over 120 million views.

The music video took a gory turn, about a vengeance-filled quest to an ex and his new girlfriend portrayed by Ortega—a

three-minute video filled with bloody revenge on one another from chainsaws and voodoo dolls to machetes and shotguns. The video references classic horror films, including "Texas Chainsaw Massacre" and "Death Becomes Her." Carpenter wants to leave a lasting impression; no one else can replace her.

"Sharpest Tool" is a confrontation of someone who drew her into intimacy. A betrayal of trust and confrontation guilt that's fast-paced pop with guitar pickings, a disco beat filled with tension, "All the silence just makes it worse, really/ All the silence is just your strategy/ 'Cause it leaves you so top-of-mind for me."

Dare I say a skip-less album? Sabrina put her all into this one, and part of the reason it has succeeded so much is her personality. Her charismatic persona is addicting, often compared to Polly Pocket or Bratz doll with her bright blonde hair, sparkly mini dresses and platform boots. Part of the wave bringing iconic pop stars back along with Tate McRae and Olivia Rodrigo.

Seven days after her album was released, Carpenter released a surprise song, "Busy Woman," as a thank-you to her fans for all the love she'd received.

In an interview with Apple Music's Zane Lowe, she shares the inspiration behind her album's title. Contrary to popular belief, the title "Short n' Sweet" does not describe her petite figure but the short flings that have immensely impacted her life.

"I thought about some of these relationships and how some of them were

the shortest I've ever had, and they affected me the most," Carpenter said.

This speaks volumes about what motivated the creation of several of these songs—all the moments reacting to heartbreak: the good and the bad. Her 12 tracks explore how she deals with the rocky unpredictability of romantic relationships with a smile. The underlying theme is that anyone can break a heart, and sometimes, you are the one to break it. But if you do break hearts, do it gently.



JUSTIN HIGUCHI/WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

Sabrina Carpenter prepares for her Short n' Sweet Tour.

# Is Tate McRae the new Britney Spears?

## How the Gen Z singer is redefining pop stardom

By **GINA LORUSSO**  
Associate Arts & Life Editor

Tate McRae, the triple-threat sensation, is on the brink of becoming Generation Z's next Britney Spears. Having set the world on fire with the first leg of her "Think Later World Tour," McRae has crowned herself as pop's next reigning icon.

In an era where social media stands supreme, McRae's rise to fame mirrors the digital age that defines Gen Z. Unlike the early 2000s, when Spears dominated MTV and radio, McRae has tapped into the power of social media to connect with her audience.

McRae and Spears both emerged into the spotlight at a young age, quickly becoming household names. Just as Spears charmed the world in the late '90s and early 2000's with her blend of pop hits and

exciting performances, McRae is following a similar path, captivating Gen Z with her talent and undeniable stage presence.

I went to McRae's most recent show at Madison Square Garden on Aug. 22 and it was electric. Not only did she blow the crowd away vocally, but she also used her dancing skills to add a dynamic visual element, taking her performance to the next level.

Given McRae's background as a dancer, she is often teased on social media for performing with a handheld microphone. However, at her New York show, she debuted an unreleased song, "It's Ok, I'm Ok" wearing a head microphone, reminiscent of Spears' iconic performances.

"Britney's an icon and I adore her. I've been inspired by her for so long," McRae said in an interview for Yahoo Entertainment.

"I think that's just a very natural thing that everybody does any time a girl releases music. They try to find someone to pinpoint her to or compare her to. Obviously, I'm like, 'Sure. Great comparison.'"

Spears, often hailed as the "Princess of Pop," brought the stage to life during her prime in the 2000's with complex dance moves. She quickly cemented her status as a pop icon with high-energy choreography for hits like "...Baby One More Time" and "Oops... I Did it Again."

In an article for VMagazine, Spears interviewed McRae to discuss where inspiration for her music stems from.

"One of my favorite parts of the process is playing around and finding new variations of each song — I feel like that always inspires new choreography and a different feeling," McRae said. "However, looking back at iconic performances [like yours] is also very motivating."

Beyond McRae's performances, her authentic songwriting has struck a chord among Gen Z listeners. Her lyrics target the complexities of modern youth experiences like heartbreak, self-discovery and love which are refreshing and relatable for listeners.

McRae began posting her music on YouTube in 2017, using her channel "Create With Tate" to highlight original songs written and recorded in her bedroom. While gaining attention from these posts, it wasn't until 2020 that she achieved significant recognition with the release of

her single, "You Broke Me First."

"Becoming a performer was all I ever wanted to do, for as long as I can remember," McRae said.

As a self-made artist who gained initial traction with record labels through social media, McRae represents a new type of pop star — one that is not only talented but deeply connected with her fanbase through TikTok and Instagram.

This constant online interaction creates a feedback loop that influences McRae's music and strengthens the bond between her and her listeners.

While McRae openly acknowledges Spears as a major influence, she is determined to build her own brand.

McRae has already carved out a legacy for herself in the music industry at just 21 years old. This year, she took home two Juno Awards, winning Single of the Year for "Greedy" and Artist of the Year. Her success was also recognized when she was crowned Rising Star at the 2024 Global Awards, underscoring her status as a promising talent of her generation.

The emotional depth combined with McRae's contemporary pop sound and dancing positions her to become not just a performer following in Spears' footsteps, but a pioneering artist defining her path and giving voice to a new generation.

With new music on its way, McRae is bound to make a splash in the music industry and continue defining herself as the next pop sensation.



JUSTIN HIGUCHI/WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

Tate McRae shines on her North American World Tour 2022.



# Stray Kids domin(ATE)ion

By **ALEXANDRA MARTINAKOVA**  
Editor-in-chief

The best K-pop award at the Video Music Awards has only been around for the last five years, and only three artists have ever won. One of these names is the Stray Kids.

Stray Kids aren't a new name on the scene. Established through a JYP Entertainment survival show in 2017, the eight person boy group has since made its mark on the K-pop industry — and the music industry in general.

There's only a handful of K-pop groups who can say they were featured on a movie soundtrack, especially when that movie is "Deadpool & Wolverine."

So I think it's safe to assume this might not be the first time you ever heard their name. And if it is, I believe it won't be the last.

In every possible sense, one could say Stray Kids is the BTS of their generation. While K-pop as a genre and multiple other groups, such as ATEEZ or TXT, have been steadily gaining in popularity, I'd argue only Stray Kids can come even close to comparing with the impact of BTS.

Well, maybe Blackpink could, if they weren't releasing comeback albums every three years. But I digress.

While the majority of K-pop groups always had dedicated roles for every member — visual, main rapper, dancer, vocalist and so on — it is well established that all eight of these men (Bangchan, Felix, Seugmin, Han, I.N., Lee Know, Changbin and Hyunjin) are what is referred to as an Ace, or well, someone who fits all

of those labels.

The group also has its subgroup, composed of the leader Bangchan, Han and Changbin referred to as "3Racha," who are largely responsible for most of the songwriting.

Stray Kids has had five albums chart on the billboard 200 — 5-star, Maxident, Oddinary, ROCKSTAR and ATE — all of which peaked at No. 1. As of publication, they are the second male Korean act to surpass 8.3 billion streams on Spotify, and currently have over 11 million monthly listeners. And just recently, Stray Kids became the first Asian personality in history to feature on the cover of Rolling Stone UK.

What sets Stray Kids apart is their discography. While K-pop encompasses diverse musical styles, Stray Kids' goal has always been to pioneer a new musical subject that will be one day known as "the Stray Kids genre."

Which is heavily inspired by hip-hop, dubstep, heavy metal, electroclash and psytrance. Stray Kids have also been credited by various publications as the pioneers of "mala taste music," which is essentially defined as a genre of hot, strong and spicy songs. Listen to their song "God's Menu" and it will explain everything you need to know.

And their newest mini-album "ATE" is just further proof of all that.

I could go into detail about every song, but it would all boil down to the singular fact that there is not a single skip on this



ILLUSTRATION BY KATERINA PARIZKOVA

album. Granted, it's only seven songs and one festival version of "Chk Chk Boom," but still.

The original version of "Chk Chk Boom" has already surpassed 80 million streams on Spotify in the 42 days since the album dropped, their fastest song to do so yet. And it features Hugh Jackman with Ryan Reynolds.

My personal favorite though, has to be "I Like it," a song about situationships that the members swore couldn't relate to in any way, with the silliest choreography ever. I might not agree with the message of that song, but it is just so catchy.

The group recently started their fourth world tour called Dominate after a summer of playing on various music festivals, and becoming the first male K-pop group

to headline the annual BST Hyde Park Festival in London.

And after all of that, Stray Kids still didn't get nominated for the best group at the 2024 VMA's — even though groups that come from a company that is known for paying for votes and nominations. Yes HYBE, talking about you.

I'm not salty. Well, maybe a bit. But no one can say they didn't deserve it.

Stray Kids have created a great community among their fans. They chose their own group name, rather than being assigned one as most groups do, as it refers to lost children trying to find themselves and their dreams, which later created their fandom's name, "Stays."

Stray Kids everywhere all around the world, you make stray kids stay.

# 'Here Come the Irish': A love letter to football in South Bend

By **COLIN KENNEDY**  
Managing Editor

"We're Notre Dame and they ain't."

Those are the only words you need to describe Peacocks' new series "Here Come the Irish."

Straight from the mouth of legendary Notre Dame football head coach Lou Holtz, it perfectly encapsulates what the first two episodes showed of life and football in South Bend, Indiana.

The series was able to show off the rich tradition, history and expectation that comes with Notre Dame football, and how this program stands out from the rest of college football. And with a football team with such high expectations, I do believe the first two episodes were able to meet the expectations that their story deserves.

Episode one follows head coach Marcus Freeman, offensive coordinator Mike Denbrock and quarterback Riley Leonard throughout the spring as the team prepares for their annual "Blue-Gold" game.

With Freeman receiving most of the focus, I enjoyed seeing how he fully embraces what it means to be the head coach at Notre Dame. Watching as he made a trip to see Holtz and absorb everything he had to say should give Irish fans a good feeling about his progression at the helm.

"There are very few people that understand what it's like to be in the chair of the head coach at Notre Dame," Freeman said. "He surely does."

Another aspect of Freeman I enjoyed was seeing how he doesn't shy away

from the pressure of winning a national championship. While it's been 36 years since the last title, that expectation to be the best remains and Freeman knows it.

The episode then takes you over to the offensive side of the ball, featuring Denbrock and Leonard. Both are "somewhat" new to South Bend this year as Leonard is coming in as a transfer from Duke and Denbrock is returning for his

third stint at Notre Dame.

This part of the episode really highlights how special it is to wear those blue and gold colors, and neither Denbrock and Leonard take it for granted. Leonard himself has doubts about whether or not he can live up to the great expectations set by Notre Dame legends like Joe Montana or Joe Theismann. It's cool to pull back the curtain and see that these guys aren't

superheroes, but instead humans who think just like we all do.

The series then tells the stories of Xavier Watts and Jaden Mickey, both had to overcome serious adversity. Watts' father became paralyzed when he was a child and Mickey lost her mother in December of 2023. The show does a nice job of highlighting how the team has rallied around the two players, especially Mickey. Before the 2024 spring game the team wore purple to commemorate his mother.

That's where the series really excels, when it showcases the players' lives and telling their stories, both happy and sad. A bright spot was the story of Jack Kiser, we see him propose to his girlfriend during a team trip to New York City.

Where the series falls a little short in my opinion is on the football side. We don't see a whole lot of practice or even team meetings which I wish we could've gotten a little more of. One inside aspect that I enjoyed was the captain selection process. Seeing who wanted to step up to be considered and how Freeman selected the five captains was unique and I wish we got more of it.

Overall, "Here Come the Irish" does a good job of painting the picture of Notre Dame football in South Bend. I just wish we got a little more of the football. As Holtz said, "It's so important they named the sport after it."

Episodes three and four drop Dec. 5 on Peacock.



ILLUSTRATION BY KATERINA PARIZKOVA

# Men's cross country taking baby steps towards the future

By **JAMES KASSAN**  
Staff Writer

For some time, Quinnipiac men's cross country didn't have a coach. In the last three seasons, it hasn't finished above eighth of eleven teams in the MAAC Championships.

The Bobcats' recent woes are causing questions for concern. Will Quinnipiac ever know a team that can place in the top half of its conference?

Men's cross country has been dealt an extremely difficult hand, there's no sugar-coating it. But at this point, the Bobcats are used to being the underdog. Their entire roster in 2023 wasn't enough to fill a starting lineup in a baseball game.

"There was a time where we had no coach at all," senior Keegan Metcalfe said. "I'll just say that I am really happy to have coach (David) Scrivines as part of our organization and as our head coach. It goes more than just the coaching duties though, he's helped me plenty of times with other things I've got going on in my life."

Scrivines joined Quinnipiac's coaching staff in 2022 after a five-year stint as Fairfield cross country's head man. His tenure wasn't revolutionary, but Scrivines was able to rebuild a dying roster and see his runners improve.

It's called baby steps for a reason, and that's exactly the kind of mindset the Bobcats need. A program can't achieve a complete turnaround in one season, especially in Quinnipiac's situation, but there might be some promise.

"We've had a lot of hard times through this program in the last five years, thankfully with coach Scrivines getting added to the team, the team's been a lot more stable and much better off," graduate student Andrew Woodbine said. "This team has gotten a lot better under him, and the longer he stays, I feel the better each of his teams will be."

With a handful of newcomers joining the team, there are sure to be growing pains. But there are a couple of new faces who are sure to make an impact.

Freshman Alex Saldana led Quinnipiac at the Stony Brook opener on Aug. 31 with a ninth-place finish in the 5k. But he wasn't the only fresh meat on the course. Six of the Bobcats' newest seven competed, with another standout, Slater Von Stetten finishing 35th.

"The best way to lead is by example, and setting a good example, both (Metcalfe) and (Woodbine) do a great job of that, they're great people and do a great job of setting a good example in practice," Scrivines said. "Communicating with the guys, making sure everyone's on the same page, could be clarifying something or just making sure everyone has what they need."

Metcalfe, a veteran on the Bobcats, ran a personal best 10K at the 2023 NCAA Region Northeast championship, finishing in 35:31.8. He will be a key component for the Bobcats in 2024 both on and off the track.

"I remember exactly what I felt like when I was in their shoes," Metcalfe said. "It wasn't,



PEYTON MCKENZIE/CHRONICLE

## Men's cross country huddles at the 2023 NCAA Regionals.

in all honesty that long ago, I know what they are going through. I'm just trying to support them and make sure they know what they need to do and clarify anything they need, showing them the ropes and just trying to be a good leader."

Quinnipiac men's cross country isn't complete by any means. It's not perfect, it's not comparable to its opponents. But the drive to work hard is a light that can't be dimmed.

"My drive is definitely just for the betterment of the team," Wood-

bine said. The reason I came back for a fifth year is to help the team as much as I could before I left. The thing that keeps me going for however many weeks the season is, is to support the team and lead them the best I can."

There won't be a MAAC Championship plaque in Scrivines office anytime soon, that doesn't mean Quinnipiac can't take a step in the right direction.

## Field hockey finding its drive amid 30th season

By **AMANDA DRONZEK**  
Sports Editor

Quinnipiac field hockey was on the brink of making history last fall. Tied at two and heading to overtime against Temple, its first Big East Tournament berth lay on the line.

It was the tune the Bobcats sang all season long. Mere inches from getting the words right, Owls' graduate student forward Myrthe Schuilenburg clipped their wings with the winning goal.

"You can look back and you can dwell, or we can move forward and we can be resilient and, you know, resourceful and ready to learn," head coach Nina Klein said.

It appears the learning curve is steep.

Klein's inaugural year at the helm didn't invite many critiques. Despite a sub-.500 season, Quinnipiac never lost a game by more than one goal aside from an 8-0 clobbering by Old Dominion.

The Bobcats had offensive prowess, and often struck first throughout the season. But ultimately, they could not compete for all four quarters. Quinnipiac's inability to close games out showed in its 1-4 overtime record.

"We just need to trust each other," senior forward Lucia Pompeo said. "Trust the coaching staff, make sure that we're playing like the full 60 minutes, which we talked a lot about in practice, starting off strong and finishing strong."

That's the missing piece. If Quinnipiac can hang tough with its opponents — especially in the back — until the final whistle, it will see success.

"We went through a lot of tough run tests and lift sessions and stuff like that," junior goaltender Cristina Torres said of preseason. "(They were) definitely hard, but they made us better. And one of (Klein's) goals was to get us fitness-wise, like (a) top 25 team."

The Bobcats were always 'right there' and 'so close' in 2023, putting up fights with squads who had higher compete levels.

Quinnipiac was shifted to the Big East in 2016 when MAAC field hockey dissolved, and is yet to push past its conference woes.

Maybe that can change.

"We really want to fortify our defense this year," Klein said. "Last year we had some really exciting attacking opportunities, but the goal this year is to prevent the opponent from really, you know, in those goal-scoring opportunities."

Many of those opportunities were thanks to Big East Midfielder of the Year Stella Tegtmeier. The Bobcats will surely feel her absence, but that's also the name of the game.

"As coaches, you know, every year, we have to deal with losing immense and amazing talent," Klein said. "But we also, in terms of our recruiting, decided to bring in some midfielders that you know can hopefully fill some roles."

Sprinkle in the likes of two seasoned returners — senior forward Lucia Pompeo and sophomore defender Katie Shanahan — and

Quinnipiac is on its way to replacing integral parts of Tegtmeier's presence.

"We are a completely new team," Klein said. "We're bringing in seven new incomers, and we're putting everyone in a position that we're playing a lot faster than we were last season in terms of just the speed of the players, our practices have been exponentially better."

Game speed is crucial in most sports, as obvious as it may seem. A team like Quinnipiac likely harnesses the depth and skill of opponents such as Liberty or Old Dominion, but it hasn't always maintained the same fast-paced gameplay.

"We really have a fresh slate this season," Shanahan said. "With everyone working hard and just buying into the 'team first' mentality and making sure we're on our marks in the circle, making sure we're in-



GRAPHIC COURTESY OF QUINNIPIAC ATHLETICS

tercepting lines, we're not letting the other team step in front of us and just getting two women on the ball rather than just having one of us."

There's another driving force in Quinnipiac's quest for a Big East Tournament berth — it's the 30th anniversary of field hockey's arrival in Hamden.

"It's a huge year for Quinnipiac field hockey," Klein said. "This is our team and our 30th year of Quinnipiac field hockey. Obviously, the inaugural season was, you know, 1995 and we really were, we're knocking on the door. I mean, last year, we could have made history. And I'm excited for the drive and passion that these athletes have every day to continue to put the program on the map."

It's a feeling that echoes from the coaching staff to the players, from non-conference matchups to Big East faceoffs.

"Everyone wants to win a championship," Shanahan said. "So it's going to come down to who's putting in that extra work and doing that extra session, (getting) that extra touch on the ball."

The jury's out — Quinnipiac was picked to finish No. 7 via the Big East Preseason Coaches' Poll. Only six teams advance to the tournament, and the Bobcats expect no less than to break the mold.

"We want to survive, we want to advance," Klein said. "Something I say every year is we want to be playing our best hockey come October."

It's not October yet, but it's certainly on the horizon.



TRIPP MENHALL/CHRONICLE

## Quinnipiac field hockey begins Big East play on Sept. 15 at Providence.

# Rugby looking to create their own legacy in 2024

By **COLIN KENNEDY**  
Managing Editor

What will your legacy be?

It's a question many ask themselves. It's the same question head coach Becky Carlson is challenging her team with heading into the 2024 season.

"This group is interested in a legacy, and they're interested in carving out their own," Carlson said. "It's kind of a combination of both."

Quinnipiac rugby is a program filled with legacy. Three national championships. A bronze medal. It's rich in winning and tradition.

But that gold standard of bringing national championships to Hamden has gone to the wayside in recent years, falling short of the mountaintop ever since 2017.

"After we won the third national championship there was this feeling that these new athletes that came in, as well as the athletes that heard about it, were like, 'We want to be our own team, we want to be individuals,'" Carlson said.

"You have to make your own traditions. Don't just say you want to reject the old ones. You're actually going to have to make a new legacy. And we didn't, because we didn't win for the next three years."

These Bobcats have an opportunity to rewrite that legacy — one that they believe could bring a fourth title to the program.

"I feel like this year we're all more on the same page, we have that legacy, and we've won the national championship," graduate student lock Anna Van Dyk said. "I think we all see that and we understand that, and we all have that same goal, that is what we want to do this year."

That road back to the top started in Hamden, in August, when games weren't being played but the work is still being put in. Carl-

son believes this group is starting off on the right foot in its quest for glory.

"I think that in the last five years we haven't had a quicker start to preseason than this year," Carlson said.

The fast start can be credited to two factors: focus and experience.

"Typically we have four focuses," Carlson said. "This year it's go to class and win a national championship. We're being laser focused on this."

The experience comes in with the return of Quinnipiac's two All-Americans, graduate student fullback Kat Storey and Van Dyk.

"Anna and Kat are back as All-Americans," Carlson said. "When you get kids back for a fifth year, it's always a bonus."

Another returner expected to make an impact on the pitch is senior flanker Lily Cartwright. The Livermore, California, native missed all of last season after suffering a broken foot in a preseason scrimmage.

"Lily Cartwright, being back and not being able to play at all last year from a broken foot when we played Nova Scotia, but she's back now, and we're anxious to see what she's got in store for us," Carlson said.

Carlson is also expecting her newest class of recruits to make a major impact in 2024. And it seems like they've arrived exactly as advertised.

"I haven't been surprised by any of them," Carlson said. "I think every one of them has come in and they've done what we've asked them to do, in their prep to get here, and then as they are out on the field. We came in here and knew this is going to be a lights out class."

One notable freshman is Fia Whelan, who is sliding into the fly-half role, a position that isn't the easiest to pick up.

"She kind of stepped into the fly-half role

and she's only 17," freshman prop Lily Morris said. "That's quite a difficult position for someone who hasn't got the senior experience, but she's taken to it quite well."

The mix of talented veterans and freshmen should bode well for the Bobcats. But come late fall they're still going to have to line up against the best the league has to offer, Dartmouth and Harvard.

"I think we mutate a little bit and morph when we play (Dartmouth and Harvard), and a little bit of it comes apart based upon everything that's up here, and not in the tools that we have," Carlson said. "So it's sticking to the game plan and being committed to that, and knowing what championship actions look like, not just championship behavior."

Big Green has been a bit of a boogeyman

for Quinnipiac in recent years.

"I think it goes back to not really necessarily understanding the legacy, like we walked out on that field and Harvard and Dartmouth are like, we don't want to play Quinnipiac," Carlson said. To have that script flipped, where you're having to tell your players guys this is doable. They're not more talented than we are."

The Bobcats' first step in writing their new legacy ended in a 17-17 draw with Brown. They also won't have to wait long to go toe-to-toe with the reigning 2023 national champion, Harvard, on Sept. 6.

Quinnipiac and Carlson already have a legacy wrapped in gold. But as Carlson sat in her office, surrounded by memories of national titles past, the goal for 2024 seemed crystal clear.

"Win a national championship."



PEYTON MCKENZIE/CHRONICLE

Women's rugby huddles during a game against Harvard on September 2, 2023.

# Men's soccer playing the team game following difficult year

By **RYAN JOHANSON**  
Associate Sports Editor

The climb to the top of the mountain may be slow, but the descent can be swift. Quinnipiac men's soccer experienced this firsthand, finishing with an underwhelming 3-9-5 record after winning the MAAC championship in 2022.

Securing only three wins after a championship season signals that something went wrong. The problem, you may ask? Scoring. The Bobcats, who netted 56 goals across 21 games in the 2022 season, managed just 20 goals in 17 games during the 2023 season.

"We have to be more clinical," junior defender Joao Pinto said. "Last year we dominated most of our games that we played. We had more possession, we had more chances and it just came to moments where we weren't clinical in front of goal and we have to be much better in that aspect this year."

Although the record seems daunting after being at the top of the conference, it doesn't tell the whole story. In 11 out of its 17 games the men's soccer team either ended in a tie or a loss by one goal. Despite this, the Bobcats remained confident, feeling that they were just one step away.

"(Head) coach (Eric) Da Costa talks a lot about our mentality in these close games," captain and junior goalkeeper Karl Netzell said. "He likes to say that we got to be dogs out there, that we got to die before we lose and that's something I think we all need to embrace as a squad, that losing is not an option."

Putting last season in the past let's take a look at the 2024 squad.

Before the season began, the Bobcats named three captains, Netzell, senior midfielder Noe Cabezas and graduate student defender Terrance Wilder Jr.

Wilder Jr., decided to stay in Hamden for his fifth season of eligibility. The Miami, Florida, native started in every game last season — a ca-

reer-high — and was praised as one of the "best fullbacks in the league" by Da Costa in 2023.

"He's the guy that we look to for an example," sophomore midfielder Francisco Ferriera said. "He puts the work in every day, even if it's a practice that people think doesn't matter. They always matter to TJ. TJ is an example for everyone in his locker room."

Netzell, now entering his third season as the team's last line of defense, has started 26 games and earned nine shutouts, showcasing his consistency and reliability needed in a goalkeeper.

Cabezas, playing as the center defensive midfielder for the Bobcats, brings the ability to slow down the game with his comfortableness on the ball he can distribute the ball to his teammates.

But who are the captains leading?

The Bobcats' commitment to giving oppor-

tunities to all class years is one of their greatest strengths. The current roster features 10 players from the 2022 MAAC championship team, alongside 10 underclassmen, bringing a blend of experience. However, that doesn't guarantee a starting position.

"We don't have a hierarchy in our program, because everyone is an equal when you walk in the door," Da Costa said. "Whether you're a senior or freshman, whether you're 24 or whether you're 17, everyone is an equal and we train that way, we pick our teams that way and it's just the way it is."

Five freshmen have graced the pitch for the Bobcats with three of them, midfielder Fredrik Moen, attackers Andrew Monteserin and William Holum — who has started all three games so far, also playing in all three matches.

"I think we've got a lot of really talented

young players and new players, and hopefully they make an impact," Da Costa said. "If you can help us and you train well, and you can help us compete and help us win, you're going to play."

"Dying for the three points" is a common soccer phrase. You need to work as a team and sacrifice personal goals for the sake of the team, the way Quinnipiac did in its first win against Columbia. Whether it's playing 19 or just 11 players, the Bobcats are ready for the task at hand.

"When we face challenges individually, that continues to bring them together, and they understand why they're here, and we can share in everybody's success, whether it's individually or someone else beside you," Da Costa said.

The mix and matching for this team will become evident as the season continues because of conference expansion.

With the installment of Sacred Heart and Merrimack, it poses a steeper challenge if the Bobcats want to make it back into the MAAC tournament. With their inclusion, to make the tournament, Quinnipiac must finish within the top eight.

The MAAC has changed the number of conference games from 10 to eight, making it more challenging to get to the playoffs.

"We got to think game by game," Pinto said. "We're gonna have difficult games. The MAAC this year has two new teams, which means there's more competition in general. So we're gonna have to be at our A game to be able to win the conference."

Sitting at 1-2, the Bobcats will host five non-conference games in a row before taking on five 2023 MAAC playoff teams — Iona, Rider, Manhattan, Niagara and Marist — in their long road back to the top of the mountain.

"We're going to be playing the top guys. But we like that. We embrace that," junior midfielder Alex Miller said. "We want to be there. I think it's going to be a competitive game, every single game."



TYLER RINKO/CHRONICLE

Junior defender Gustaf Rosengren clears the ball in a 2-0 win over Columbia on Aug. 30.



QUINN O'NEILL/CHRONICLE

## Women's soccer vying for MAAC three-peat

By **AMANDA DRONZEK**  
Sports Editor

To little surprise, Quinnipiac women's soccer was ranked No. 1 in the 2024 MAAC Coaches' Preseason Poll.

Aside from the obvious — taking the cake as back-to-back conference champions — the Bobcats have the usual suspects that make their program a top candidate in the MAAC.

Quinnipiac carries experience in each position, operates as one unit and has sheer hunger for a third ring.

Here's a glimpse at how these qualities reinforce preseason expectations, but also shed light on its possible shortcomings.

### DEPTH

Quinnipiac's last two — and the program's only two — NCAA Tournament appearances were short-lived. A 4-1 defeat at Penn State in 2022, a 3-0 shutout against Brown in 2023. A loss is a loss on paper, but a score is merely a reflection of a game.

"It was two completely different teams," senior defender Madison Mandleur said. "I know the score maybe didn't show it, but I know we felt it on the field. So I think it was good for us just to be in the NCAA for two years and realize that maybe everyone watching saw scores (and) didn't think anything changed, but I think it's important because we knew something changed."

How? Because the program is built that way. "(Something) that we've done this year and even last year was we're not expecting (recruits) to come in and start," head coach Dave Clark said. "We are expecting them to come in and develop and looking forward to kick on in the spring in the following year."

Quinnipiac's potential starters prove exactly that. Stalwarts such as NCAA Division I All-Region Third Team graduate student forward Courtney Chochol and junior defender Madison Alves didn't enter Hamden the same way they'll leave.

Alves logged just over 200 minutes of

game action freshman year. She's now an integral starting center back, even deemed "statistically, one of the best players in the country," last fall by Clarke.

The proof is in the pudding for the system. To avoid entire transition years, most incomers don't see action right away. They have nearly a full season to watch Quinnipiac soccer, so they can spend future seasons playing it.

Take junior forward Morgan Cupo and senior midfielder Ana Costello, both veterans on the roster, who are just now making a dent and reinforcing this idea of the waiting game.

That's just two of several names Clarke sees assuming a larger role in the absence of key players such as No. 2 scorer Emely van der Vliet or NEWISA All-New England defender Kayla Minchagos.

"All of a sudden, you've got a very, very experienced team which then allows us to integrate the younger players," Clarke said of the current squad. "So do I expect some to step up? Yeah, I do."

### CAMARADERIE

For Quinnipiac to close the gap and secure its third consecutive MAAC, it needs a symbiotic starting 11. Individual players are only as good as the sum of their parts.

"What's good about us is that we know how to acclimate and we know how to really, you know, move within positions," Alves said. "So we have some versatility within the team. And I think with that, we'll be able to fill the gaps."

The Bobcats surely have chemistry on the pitch, their eye-catching resume demonstrates that. During 2023, they ranked No. 14 in points per game.

Quinnipiac also returns 2023 MAAC Gold Glove Sofia Lospinoso — a force in the cage who recorded seven shutouts last season, good enough for top 10 in the country.

But it's not about separate success. It's the culmination.

"I think that the mantras are still pretty much the same," Lospinoso said. "Consistency is what it takes. But yeah, it's definitely just like, we're one family. We're one. There's no me in this equation."

To even reach another conference tournament, Quinnipiac must be a top-eight competitor. As of this fall, MAAC playoff pools in soccer consist of eight teams rather than six.

"It's always like one day at a time like little wins," Mandleur said. "We need to win every game to get to that point, there's no looking ahead. What happened last year is in the past, we won last year (and it) has nothing to do with the team we are this year."

Mandleur isn't the only player with this mindset. According to Chochol, the preseason transition is as smooth as it's ever been, with this tight-knit group embracing these expectations to be No. 1.

"One of the things that our coach always preaches is that pressure is a privilege," Chochol said. "We are in the spot that we're in with all the pressure because of what we've done in the past, and any other team would give anything to be in the position that we're in."

All the more reason to work as a well-oiled machine. The road to victory isn't linear, and it's usually not accomplished alone.

"There's going to be bumps and bruises along the way," Alves said. "But I think if we continue on the path we're going towards and you know, keep that disciplined schedule, I think we're more than capable of retaining that three-peat."

### MOTIVATION

Quinnipiac doesn't have many adversities, which may be its biggest setback. There's an expectation that will follow the Bobcats wherever they go. Everyone wants to dethrone the champions.

"You just got to keep climbing that mountain and not worry about the molehill and tripping over that at the top," Clarke

said. "So the focus is definitely on the MAAC, nothing else."

To achieve a conference feat that only Monmouth has in its 2013-2019 dynasty, the reigning victors must ignore the noise and play their game.

"We're all in the right mindset to do it," senior goaltender Gwen Hoyt said. "And I think that's where it starts, the first step to getting something like that accomplished is making sure everyone is on the same page."

That starts in preseason. Quinnipiac's non-conference schedule is designed to prepare it for higher-level competition, facing mid-major teams from the Coastal Athletic Association, Big East and America East.

The Bobcats are 1-2-1 as of Sept. 1, their biggest blunder being a 5-0 loss to Georgetown last week.

Quinnipiac hadn't conceded five goals since a 5-2 blow in the 2016 MAAC Championships against Monmouth.

Then again, it's hard to use the Bobcats' performance in D.C. as a looking glass into their future. The Hoyas were ranked No. 12 in the NCAA last year and received votes in the 2024 United Soccer Coaches Women's Top 25 Poll. Quinnipiac on the other hand has yet to breach the second round of the tournament.

Additionally, the regular season slate looks slightly different for the Bobcats. Sacred Heart and Merrimack College — both former NEC champions — enter the MAAC this fall. This competition may be fresh for the conference but they're familiar faces to Quinnipiac, a former NEC affiliate itself.

"They don't know what we're like as a team, and we don't know what they're like as a team," Chochol said. "I think that's similar to what it would be like playing out-of-conference games. I think that it'll be a good challenge for us to see what we can do against a new opponent."