



**Swastika found
in Engleman
Hall
Page 2**



**Textbook prices
get higher this
semester
Page 3**



**Swimming and
diving senior
day
Page 4**

SOUTHERN NEWS

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Students return to campus with high hopes for the semester

By Tyler Fisher
Contributor

Students on campus are hopeful for a successful semester, and one that is free from the grasp of COVID-19.

While the semester may be new, several students still maintain the worries of old. For many, COVID-19 is still at the forefront of their minds.

From Jan. 21 through Jan. 27 of this year, the COVID Dashboard reported 39 positive tests for COVID-19. Four residential students were reported positive, compared to the 26 commuters that were reported as such.

Health science major

Jone Mwape, a freshman, is still getting adjusted to life as a college student. Mwape's only concern is the potential for students in his class to go out and contract COVID-19.

"It was difficult trying to get used to the system of going to class and time management," said Mwape. "The only concern is, how would we know if some students have COVID or not? A lot of people go to parties, but you'll never know. A kid could have gone to a party yesterday and has COVID, and then gone to class."

Sociology major Tamar Kalangala is a sophomore and recent transfer from Sacred Heart University.

So far, Kalangala's experience here has made her feel welcomed.

"I like it, it's different. I feel like I kind of fit in here more and there are a lot of resources. At Sacred Heart I was always

but here there are like four, five, or six of us (to a class) so it's more of a homey feeling," said Kalangala.

While Kalangala's experience has been, for the most part, a positive



PHOTO | TYLER FSIHER

Health and science major Jonè Mwape, freshman.



PHOTO | TYLER FSIHER

Healthcare studies major Ashley Rojas freshman.

the only black person in all of my classes so I was kind of uncomfortable,

one, her concerns about COVID-19 still remain the same.

"Last semester I was kind of worried about it," said Kalangala. "This semester I feel like because there are so many different variants coming out, and a lot of parties going on that COVID might spike again. I just hope this semester is better than last semester, I hope everything goes well, COVID goes down, and everyone hits their goals."

Physics major Greg Vanderlin, a freshman, is

worried about COVID yet, I'm more just worried about just getting into my classes, I am kind of just starting to get into my major. I feel like this is a semester were I really have to learn to apply myself and try to teach myself stuff out of the classroom," said Vanderlin.

Ashley Rojas, a freshman, is also a newcomer on campus. As a student in healthcare studies, Rojas said



PHOTO | TYLER FSIHER

Picture of Physics major Greg Vanderlin, freshman.

more concerned with his classes than COVID-19. As a member of the honor's college, Vanderlin said he and those that are also members of his living community have helped support each other in their learning.

"I'm not exactly

her experience at the university is not what she expected.

"Honestly, it isn't what I expected, but it's alright. I feel like I expected something from high school musical, but it is just so different than high school," she said.

Video surfaces mocking D9 Greek life

By Sofia Rositani
Editor-in-chief
Sarah Shelton
Features Editor

On Friday Jan.28, a video surfaced on the public platform Instagram of students from the Greek organization Omega Zeta Pi sorority.

In the video, they are seen imitating strolls and mocking cultural and historical values from sororities of the Divine 9 (D9), well-known historically Black Greek organizations which first started at Howard University. The D9 sororities at the university are Zeta Phi Beta and Sigma Gamma Rho.

On Sunday, the Southern CT State Greek Life instagram, @scsu_greeklife_, account posted a statement saying, "On Friday, a video surfaced showing members of Omega Zeta Pi imitating and disrespecting the traditions of Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc. This is inexcusable and intolerable. GLC prides itself on unity and this act was a blatant rejection of our ideals. We stand with the sisters of Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc. and all NPHC and NALFO organizations and will be

discussing our next steps at our next meeting."

President Joe Bertolino also sent out a letter to the university regarding this incident.

"As president, I want to acknowledge the disrespect and hurt that this incident has caused to the Zeta Phi Beta membership, other Multicultural Greek Organizations, and indeed individuals of color across our campus community," Bertolino wrote. "The behavior shown in the video clip is unacceptable and goes against our commitment to being a social justice and anti-racist university. Please know that we are committed to listening, learning, and taking concrete steps to do better as a university to support and protect you."

Bertolino mentioned the university will be working with Zeta Phi Beta, Omega Zeta Pi and other Greek life organizations to confront this issue.

"Regarding the incident in question, we have already been in conversations with the individuals involved and appropriate student and university leadership are addressing this matter with our various campus

constituencies. I am aware that a meeting has been scheduled tomorrow with the leaders of both sororities to discuss a resolution and steps that need to be taken," Bertolino wrote.

The meeting was held Monday, but before this, Zeta Phi Beta Sorority released a statement.

"As members of Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Incorporated's Psi Omicron Chapter on Southern Connecticut State University's (SCSU) campus, we have represented Greek Life as part of this campus community for over 25 years. As students of CSU, we support our campus community on all fronts and continue to uphold the principles of our beloved organization: Scholarship, Service, Sisterhood, and Finer Womanhood. With Greek Life as a focal point of the on- and off-campus community, we can no longer accept or tolerate the blatant disregard for our rich 102-year history, the appropriation of our culture, and the lack of accountability for those that continue to threaten the psychological safety between students," Zeta Phi Beta's president,

Ashley Perez, wrote in a letter posted on Instagram.

Perez goes on in the letter to discuss previous problems with Omega Zeta Pi.

"Prior to this incident, members of Omega Zeta Pi discussed their chapter's desire for their Fall 2021 Powder Puff Football team during a Greek Life Council meeting on October 22, 2021. In particular, an Executive Board member of Omega Zeta Pi openly shared the chapter's disdain for integrating the football teams with members of other Sororities and that they did not want their teams 'mixed with other Sororities,'" Perez wrote.

The video was picked up and posted by a Connecticut "tea" social media page with over 32K views, 12.8K followers and over 300 comments.

"To see an SCSU Greek-lettered organization not only participate in such negligible actions but also record a video and share it on social media highlights the blatant disregard for our organization," Perez wrote. "For the success of Greek Life on SCSU's, campus, we must respect each other's values regardless of the full understanding of

the principles of our organizations, as well as the cultures, ethnicity, or race of it's members."

Zeta Phi Beta wrote they seek the following actions and activities to hold Omega Zeta Pi accountable: A required mandatory cultural education training for all incoming Greek Life members; Omega Zeta Pi charter suspended for one academic year. They want to engage Omega Zeta Pi in moderated mediation efforts to repair the relationships between their organization and the Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, also requiring the Omega Zeta Pi chapter members allegedly in the video to volunteer 20 hours of community service each within a local organization serving underrepresented people of color and communities in New Haven County.

They add that they would like to establish a Multicultural Greek Council, deploying hiring efforts toward selecting culturally diverse candidates for employment and using resources to increase the recruitment of students of color in underrepresented communities throughout New Haven County.

Omega Zeta Pi released a statement on Jan. 31 publicly on Instagram. They stated that they will be holding the members accountable after finding out about the video.

"We are currently in contact with many people in regard to many different aspects of this situation," The statement said. "The actions in the video of those affiliated with our organization do not adhere to the standards we hold of our members or our beliefs and values. We aim to celebrate cultural diversity on campus and in Greek Life, and to create unified bonds between each of the SCSU's Greek organizations. We hope to repair and strengthen these bonds going forward by educating ourselves better and further."

Student Involvement could not be reached for comment

Diane Ariza could not be reached for comment.

Greek Life could not be reached for comment.

According to a statement from the Omega Zeta Pi Instagram "Omega Zeta Pi Sorority will not be holding recruitment events for the Spring 2022 semester."

Meet Jules the new campus police service dog

By Sofia Rositani
Editor-in-chief

Officer Brody officially has competition. Jules is the new service dog the campus police has gotten through the organization "Pups behind bars."

Sargeant Cynthia Torres is the handler for Jules, a black Labrador, who had to go through training to learn how to work with Jules.

"The training was rigorous and comprehensive, and it was long and great, all at the same time.

It was very intense, I am glad I went into it with a very open mind and a lot of humility knowing that I needed to learn about how to give the commands and how to handle it," Torres said.

A typical day with Jules starts at 7:30 am, at that time, Torres exercises with Jules and then has breakfast with him. They would then go to class from 10 am to about 3:00 pm. Torres would learn the commands from the incarcerated individual who trained Jules.

"Brody is an Explosives



Sargeant Cynthia Torres with Jules.

PHOTO | ROMA ROSITANI

in ordinance detection canine. So that is his primary function, Jules is a service animal. So, he was bred and trained, and very empathetic, so when there's a lot of emotions, like happening in a room, he's going to that person. He senses that and he'll sit with that person. And we also have some commands that will help that. It bridges that

communication. Brody is specifically about detecting explosives or anything flammable," Torres said.

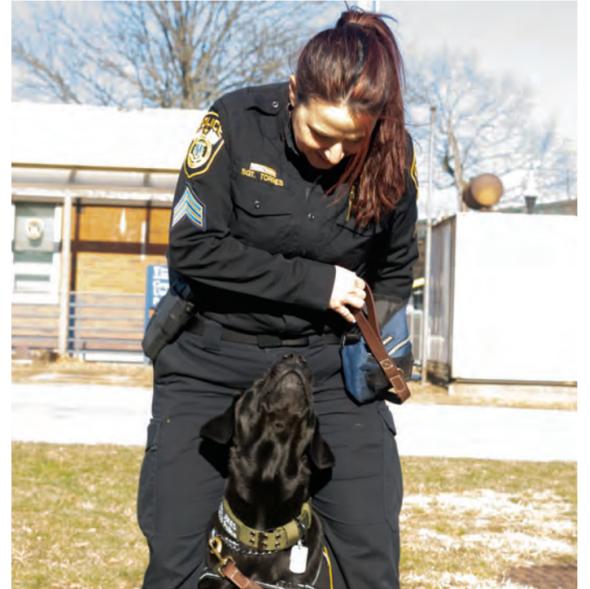
Jules had already started his job; he and Torres got a call to help calm a person down and make them feel comfortable.

"Brody has done double and triple duty, connecting with the community, helping us, our community policing program and

so Jules coming on board specifically purposed for that is going to really complement what Brody's already done," Chief Dooley said. "So, they're both going to be in the community and help us get the message out and hopefully both dogs will put a smile on people's faces."

@k9jules_scsupd and @k9brody_scsupd.

Bi-lingual Elementary Education Samantha Maces, a freshman, said, "I've seen it (the dog) on the Instagram. I think that the therapy dog service is a good thing because a lot of students especially those coming back for their second semester are



Sargeant Cynthia Torres giving Jules a treat.

PHOTO | ROMA ROSITANI

Jules and Brody have gotten their own Instagram. They were created as a fun competition between the dogs and campus police, according to Officer Torres. The Instagram handles are

overwhelmed with new classes, new schedules. So, it's a good way for students to relieve their stress."

Tyler Fisher contributed to this article.



Jules, the new campus police dog posing on a chair in the Police station.

PHOTO | ROMA ROSITANI

Swastika carved onto hidden wall in Engleman

By Sofia Rositani
Contributor

On Nov. 22, there was a call made by a student worker who found a swastika carved in the B-wing of Engleman hall.

"It's open right now (an investigation), it unfortunate that it was placed in this hallway, that was not very visible to people. You actually have to go down that to see it was there. So immediately once we had it, we photographed it and started the investigation to try and see who may have placed it there," Chief Dooley said. "It was quickly covered up so that people don't see that any longer and trying to figure out who placed it is difficult because there wasn't a lot of people around during that time, it was just before thanksgiving break. But it's open and we're hoping that at some point we'll come up with some

information that might lead to it."

If they do find any more information or anyone else coming forward with information, they will document it. There were no cameras in the area it happened, making it harder for them to find any data on who put it there, how they put it there, and when they put it there. As of now this is not considered a hate crime.

"It's not considered a hate crime, although it could lead to that, if we get additional information. So, we're not saying that wasn't the intent we just don't know at this point. In other words, we would have to identify the source before we could make that claim," Chief Dooley said.

While there was an immediate action with the campus police, it took two weeks before the university announced that this was found on



Picture of secret study area onclave in Engleman Halls B wing

PHOTO | BRIA KIRKLIN

the campus. On Dec. 10, the announcement was made campus wide through an email sent by

Patrick Dilger written by President Joe.

President of the Faculty Senate Deborah Weiss said

she found out accidentally through an email that was sent to her by another faculty member.

"So first, I was surprised by it and then I was also disappointed that there was not a faster, a swifter reaction to what had happened," Weiss said.

She brought it up during the Judaic Studies coordinating committee meeting and those apart of the committee were "understandably very upset" about this discovery. This caused them to put a statement together.

"Universally the people on the committee felt that it was a very painful thing to see on our campus, it's obviously the symbol of the Nazi's in Germany," Weiss said. "I personally have family members who were murdered in the holocaust, I am a second-generation holocaust

survivor and having this be something that was a part of my life growing up to me it was very painful to see this on our campus, to see a symbol of hatred, hatred of Jews on our campus was very disturbing."

Weiss said she felt she did need to push to get a statement about this. She did think that President Joe was very understanding and forthcoming about this situation and he volunteered to speak about it at the Judaic studies committee meeting.

"I would have liked for there to be an immediate statement that came. Was I satisfied? Overall, I think they did the right thing in the end. The question is what had to happen before the right thing happened. So, I would have preferred that independently they would have taken that action. They would have realized the seriousness of this, and they would have made that statement. That would have been my preference," Weiss said.

She added that while it did take a while before they made a statement, it is better than no statement or action at all.

Just like Weiss, English Professor Corinne Blackmer found out about this by accident prior to an announcement made.

Blackmer said there should be more acknowledgment and respect for the Jewish community on campus. More visibility of their lifestyle and holidays.

"I think we need better holocaust education. I think we need, in general, acknowledgment of Jewish life," Blackmer said.

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Weekly Meetings in ASC222 on Monday's at 1 pm!

Contributors Welcomed!

Already expensive textbook costs are rising

By Benjamin Paquette
Contributor
Brian Green
Contributor
Devin Hollister
Contributor

Textbook prices are on the rise. Nationally, the average a full-time undergraduate student can expect to pay on textbooks is roughly \$620 per semester.

The University is not immune to price increases; however, initiatives like bookstore rentals, textbook assistance programs, and library-assisted textbook rentals provide current and future students with cheaper alternatives.

"Access to textbooks is not only a matter of equity; it improves student success and retention," explained Clara Ogbaa, director of the Hilton C. Buley Library since 2018. "Our research has revealed the high cost of textbooks and student dissatisfaction with the price of textbooks [at Southern]."

Buley Library staff conducted an internal survey from Sept. 1 to Sept. 30, asking students "How much did you spend on textbooks this [2021] fall semester?"

Results show students paying a median price of

\$319.32 for their textbooks, lower than the 2021 national average reported by the Education Data Initiative.

Still, 54 percent of undergraduate students are classified as coming from low-income households, making them eligible for Pell grants, according to the university's 2021 census data.

"I think it's ridiculous how expensive they are," said media and screen studies major Christopher Rosales, a senior. "[One semester] I had to buy a book for an Italian class that was \$300. Even if that were for multiple semesters, that's still way too overpriced."

Larry Gal is the director of the bookstore in the Adanti Student Center. He admits textbook prices will continue to rise as projected, blaming publishers for the high prices. However, he said he is confident in the bookstore's array of pricing and sale options.

"[The SCSU Bookstore] provides several affordable textbook options such as used books, rentals, and digital format books, which decrease costs from 30 percent to 50 percent," said Gal.

At the SCSU Bookstore, 85 percent have a rental option while 45 percent of books provide a digital option.

"I try to rent as often as I can," said art education major Samantha Scott, a junior. "I'll even go digital if it's available since usually, it's a much cheaper option."

For some disciplines—Biology, Chemistry and Math—low cost textbook copies are set aside. Bookstore staff work with these professors so each student can have access to the books.

"Our goal is to help SCSU and its students address the rising costs of academic course materials," said Gal.

Affordability was a critical factor in professor Robert Smith, Jr.'s decision to write a Business Management textbook with his co-author, professor Kauther Badr.

"I don't like textbooks to be expensive; I want students to have affordable access to materials. That's why our book is going to be so reasonably priced," said Smith.

Badr and Smith, Jr. will be donating any sales made at the university to the SCSU Foundation's Food Insecurity Program.

"We decided to donate our royalties because we didn't want there to be any misconception about the motivations behind us writing the book," said Badr. Some students may re-

quire additional assistance. This is where programs like the Textbook Assistance Program through the Dean of Student Affairs Office work to bridge this financial gap.

Jules Tetreault, the dean of Student Affairs, addressed how initiatives like the Book Assistance Program are helping those struggling to pay for textbooks.

"There is a great need for these programs, and we try to support what we can," said Tetreault. "We offer book assistance programs that help students who may, financially, find themselves in a difficult spot and may not be able to access their textbooks."

The book assistance programs cover all or some of the cost of textbooks.

"If you buy a book with the money you receive from the book assistance program, at the end of the semester, you are required to donate that book to the book loan program, which is how we keep restocking some of the more recent editions," said Tetreault.

Once housed in the Multicultural Center, the book loan program now has a new home at Buley Library as part of an initiative to offer students a one-stop-shop for textbook needs.

Ogbaa explained that Buley has always had a reserve collection of textbooks from behind the checkout desk, but students were not allowed to remove them from the library.

These textbooks are also in short supply, with Ogbaa describing how they are usually voluntarily donated by professors or students at a rate of one to two per semester.

In addition, financial and logistical barriers prevented the library from supplementing missing, or low-volume textbooks professors could not provide. Ogbaa attributes high textbook prices, along with a lack of funding as the reason an up-to-date collection cannot be achieved. Ogbaa knew something needed to change.

"I have seen students who come to me and say; it's about putting food on the table, paying my rent or buying a textbook," said Ogbaa. "We have students who have dropped out because they don't have the money for their textbooks."

Ogbaa received a \$10,000 grant from the university provost, Robert Prezant, in November 2021.

The goal is for students to have the option of taking out semester-long textbook loans from a closed reserve

of books. In addition, while the university currently has a closed reserve, grant funding would buy what Ogbaa calls "current and recent editions of high cost or highly assigned" textbooks, expanding the reserve collection beyond its current capacity.

The library will also offer old reserves and donations from the Multicultural Center as free-to-access for students on the first-floor reference area.

Students could borrow these textbooks for up to one semester.

"The library will provide increased information and support for the adoption of Open Education Resources textbooks," said Ogbaa, who emphasized her push to encourage all professors to consider using OER material.

When 51 percent of students are eligible for a Pell grant, the need for affordable educational resources is not just the focus of students.

"We want to give people the opportunity to acknowledge that our students do have external financial concerns and that there are options to consider," said Tetreault. "Putting it on someone's radar puts it in front of them and brings awareness."

Residents compete via video Peacemaker Episode Five

By Sarah Shelton
Features Editor

America's Funniest Home Videos is a wide-known TV show which showcases submissions of videos they believe are funny. The funniest one wins a prize. For Week of Welcome, the Office of Residence Life decided to do a spin-off.

Held online, "West Quad's Funniest Home Videos" was a video compilation competition between residents and advisers of Hickerson Hall, Neff Hall and West Campus. On Owlconnect, it says "over the course of the first week, West Quad RAs will collect submissions for West Quad's Funniest Home Videos."

Brett Harrell, West Campus' new Hall Director, said not many videos were submitted.

Some of the rules for these videos included: a maximum of 60 seconds, videos recorded on campus must abide by policy and no use of derogatory language including but not limited to sexist, racist, homophobic remarks.

"In Southern's film classes, we're allowed to swear, I felt like they had limited options on stuff to submit because of all the rules," communications major Chris Rosales, a senior, said. "But, I

understand why."

Harrell informed students the top prize was a first-place trophy and a \$100 SCSU Bookstore gift card. Second place was a \$50 Amazon gift card and Third Place prize was a \$25 Chipotle gift card.

"The community will also vote for a fan-favorite video," Harrell said before the event. "We are running a poll after all the videos are viewed and the winner will receive a prize."

The hosts Tony Galvan and Palak Patel played the submissions from Neff and Hickerson hall, while Brett Harrell played the submission from West Campus.

After playing the videos, the hosts muted themselves and turned off their videos to decide the winners.

At the end of the event, they were not clear what students won, but the videos that were top three were a student

laying on the ground in a shark costume with baby shark playing, someone attempting a long jump and someone doing a backflip.

The baby shark video came in first place and the chosen fan favorite was a tik tok of a dog chasing a girl in slow motion.

The fan-favorite prize ended up being a \$25 Dunkin' gift card.

"I think it was a good event to have. Even though it was virtual we still had fun," West Quad resident Shyhiem Jones, a sophomore, said.

Jones said the "Baby Shark video," which came in first place, featured his roommate and was edited by him.

"I screamed when they picked that video [as the winner]," Jones said.

Jones said he would love to go to another event like this.

"I encourage all to participate," Jones said.

By Sofia Rositani
Editor-in-Chief

Peacemaker is the latest show HBOMAX has brought to life. After the success of "The Suicide Squad," the director, James Gunn, thought it would be a great idea to create a show for one of the most hated characters, Peacemaker.

Last time we saw Peacemaker, played by John Cena, he was working with "The Suicide Squad" to work on Project Starfish.

There he turns against them and kills Rick Flag, in what I would say is one of the saddest moments I have witnessed in any DC movie, which says a lot due to how bad all of them are. Suicide Squad ended up being one of the best DC films I have seen and is the only one I will rewatch over and over.

While I hated Peacemaker at the beginning, I have learned to accept his annoying behavior due to learning that he was raised by a racist and a sexist. His personality is typical for a man who was raised in the 1980s and so is his music choice. He listens to hair bands such as 11th Street Kids, Hanoi Rocks, and The Dogs Amour. These bands were played in episode five of the show. The band 11th Street Kids is what Peacemaker named the group chat in the show.

"This is back when men were real men, because they weren't afraid to look like women," Peacemaker said.

The best part of each episode is the intro. It is so funny, but so serious. The intro is all the cast members dancing to "Do You Wanna Taste It" by Wig Wam. They all have serious looks on their face as they do a choreographed dance to the song. At the end of the opening, Eagle, Peacemaker's "sidekick," ends it with a screech, the



PHOTO | ROMA ROSITANI

Peacemaker episode five playing on a laptop

CGI for this eagle to be phenomenal.

The opening can also allude to all the characters, but Vigilante, played by Freddie Stroma, ends up becoming a "Butterfly," which is an alien that takes control of the person's mind. As of now, only one is infected in the group, the leader Clemson Murn, played by Chukwudi Iwuji. After episode five, it is believed that Leota Adebayo, played by Danielle Brooks, who is Amanda Wallers's daughter, could now be infected.

There is so much to love about this show: the character development, the CGI, the music. It is hard to hate it. I went in expecting to not like it because I personally did not like Peacemaker in the movie, but the character development of this show makes me love this character.

Vigilante is a mysterious character, until we find out who he really is. This character is very funny and has similarities to Deadpool. They even sound similar. He considers himself as Peacemaker's "best friend" and tries everything in his power to keep it that way, including putting himself in prison to kill his dad. A theory, created by my brother,

suggests that Vigilante is the only character who will not be infected by a "butterfly" and may ultimately save the day. This would make sense by the opening credits. But as of now it is only a theory.

"We're working on something else now, another TV show that's connected to that universe," Gunn told us, "I can't quite say." In addition, Gunn said, about a second season of Peacemaker, which recently dropped episode five today, "There's a really good chance of that," according to a Deadline article.

If this is true, I am very excited to see more. Gunn is known to make amazing films and he has worked in both the DC universe and the Marvel universe with "Guardians of the Galaxy." All his films have the same signature, and you can tell you are watching one of his films, like Quentin Tarantino.

As of now, Peacemaker is number three in best shows, which is no easy feat with shows like "Euphoria" dominating HBO currently. If you think he is a villain, think again, because according to Peacemaker he is not, I can see him as an anti-hero though. Peacemaker said, "not a supervillain, that's a misconception."

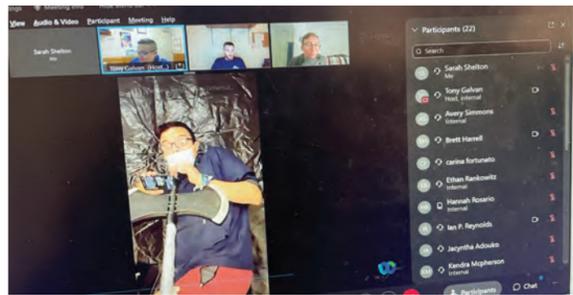


PHOTO | SARAH SHELTON

Tony Galvan playing a student's submission online.

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Advisers:
Cindy Simoneau
Frank Harris III
Contact information:
Email: scsu.southernct.news@gmail.com
Southern Connecticut State University
501 Crescent Street Student Center
Room 222
New Haven, CT 06515
Issues printed by: Valley
Publishing, Derby, CT

Sofia Rositani
Vacancy
Editor-in-Chief
Managing Editor
Section Editors
Vacancy
News
Sarah Shelton
Vacancy
Online Editor
Features & Opinions
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General Assignment
Copy Desk
Wula Cham

Swimming and Diving Senior Day Owls women compete against D1 CCSU at home ahead of NE10's

By Morgan Douglas
Sports Editor

The sight of shimmering water. The smell of chlorine. The sounds of splashing. Such sensory thoughts never stray too far from the mind of a swimmer.

For several swimmers at the university, their time in the pool is winding down, after the swimming and diving team celebrated senior day with a meet against the Central Connecticut State University Blue Devils this past Friday at home in the Bruce Hutchinson natatorium.

"It's definitely great to get to see them be appreciated," swimmer Maddie Dean, a junior, said. "They've all done this for four years and it's incredibly hard. I know they're going to swim here in Conference, and they all know that too, so that might have taken away a little bit, but I liked all the energy today, considering there were no people in the stands."

With the NE-10 Conference Championships set to begin of Feb. 17, this meet against Division I opponent Central was a good chance for the team to work out any remaining kinks, while seeing how they stack up against D1 level competition.

"Nothing has been easy, so I would say that on



PHOTO | MORGAN DOUGLAS

Women's swimming gets up on the block prior to a race during last Friday's meet.

a team front they have handled, overcome and adapted to anything that's been thrown at them," Head Men's and Women's Swimming Coach Tim Quill said. "And that's why we feel so positive and excited for what this program can do in two and a half weeks because if they can handle what they've already done, then this should be a breeze, the conference meet."

Even though there were no fans in the stands due to the COVID-19 spectator policy, the Owls brought the noise and kept the energy level high from the start of the meet through the finish.

Although the results did not go in the Owls' favor, which is gone into greater detail in the next story,

there are always takeaways to be had from meets like this one.

"I think we did really well," Dean said. "People might not have been in their best events, but now's the time to figure out what events we're going to swim in two and a half weeks, so I think that was the biggest part of figuring out how we're going to win."

When the meet was over, the team played a video made by the underclassmen, showing their support and appreciation for the six seniors moving on.

"I came in my sophomore year, I was a transfer, and these guys took me right in, made me feel like I was at home," swimmer Chandler Tucker, a senior, said. "So,

have them next year."

The camaraderie between the men's and women's swimming and diving team was evident as they would all come together to cheer on their teammates and share in the duties of setting the pool up for different events.

They will look to take full advantage of their teamwork and reliability in one another when they compete in the NE10 conference championships, but this day was about the seniors.

"The job of the upperclassmen is we just want to tell the underclassmen what the culture is here, and our goal is to get them to buy into the culture, and I think they did a good job about that this year," Tucker said.

with Tyler (Cusano) and Evan (Bombery) leaving, It's sad. Been training with them the last three years now. It's sad that I won't



PHOTO | MORGAN DOUGLAS

Women's swimming competing in the 100 yard backstroke against CCSU this past Friday on senior day.

Women's swimming falls to CCSU at home

By Morgan Douglas
Sports Editor

In a rather unique format, the Women's swimming and diving team was defeated by the Central Connecticut State University Blue Devils this past Friday at the Bruce Hutchinson natatorium, 193-50.

What made this event unique was while the women from both universities competed against each other, Central's men's team was not there to compete against the Owls, leaving the Owls men's team to engage in friendly competition against one another while still posting times just as if they had been competing against another school.

"It's a fun competition. When we go against other schools, we want to beat them, we want to win the races," swimmer Chandler Tucker, a senior, said. "Now, we still want to win, but we can joke around, so it makes the meet fun."

It was not as much fun for the women competing against the Blue Devils. The best finish an Owls swimmer had in an event against Central was swimmer Maddie Dean, a junior. Her second place showing in the 400 yard individual medley, with a time of 4:47.66.

"We've got conference in less than three weeks so it's time to work on all the little things," Dean said. "Make sure you've got all your stroke counts down, all of your little techniques we've been working on the whole season."

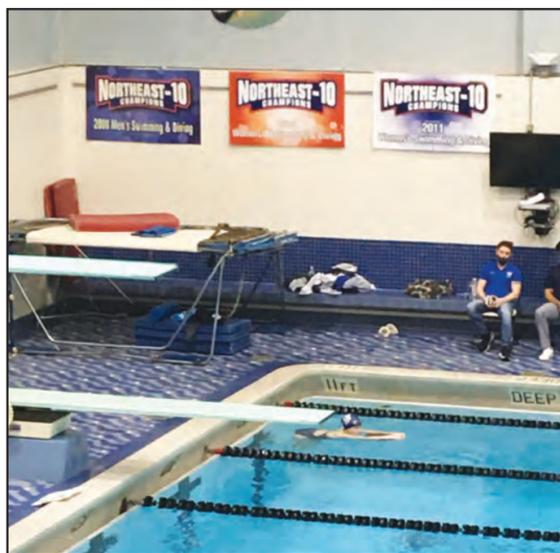


PHOTO | MORGAN DOUGLAS

JT Treller, freshman, performing a three-meter dive during last Friday's meet against CCSU.

As for the divers, Nicholle Denault, a sophomore, placed second in the one-meter diving with a score of 205.73.

"It's really hard because they're really good divers," Denault said. "I think we did really well, especially against a D1 team."

Men's diving also had their turn in the one and three-meter diving, giving them the opportunity to put some scores up as the regular season wraps up.

"It was kind of weird for the guys not going against guys, and the girls competed their best," diver JT Treller, a freshman, said. "And I think we all just did a good job overall."

The Owls having five third place finishes in their events against the Blue Devils, encapsulates what kind of meet it was for the team. They were always

close, competitive and hung around, but never posed a real threat to the Blue Devils in terms of handing them a defeat.

Olivia Strelevitz, a junior, and Ella Marzec, a freshman, both finished as the Owls' top scorer in two events apiece.

With the NE10 Conference Championships looming, just weeks away, this meet was a good opportunity for the swimmers to get some work in and put up some times ahead of their most important competition of the season.

"The guys didn't have competition on the opposing side, we were racing ourselves, so it has a lot of a mental aspect," Tucker said. "How are we

going to swim fast without competition? And the guys were excited to get up and race."

Tucker finished first among the Owls' men in both events he competed in.

In the 100-yard Butterfly, he had a time of 52.62 seconds and a time of 57.87 seconds in the 100-yard Breaststroke.

Head men's and women's swimming coach Tim Quill said, "We're just trying to post some times and kind of see where we're at in certain races so that we can make those final decisions as to what event each athlete on the team is going to compete in when we start the meet because it's all about scoring, maximizing our point totals."



PHOTO | MORGAN DOUGLAS

Olivia Strelevitz, junior, placed third in the Women's 100 yard Butterfly.

Quarterback

By Morgan Douglas
Sports Editor - Opinion



Changing of the guard. A typical cliché, but one so applicable to today's NFL.

As Ben Roethlisberger retires and the futures of aging veterans Tom Brady and Aaron Rodgers remain uncertain, a new crop of young, talented quarterbacks have emerged from the shadows to take some of the spotlight reserved for the old guard.

Josh Allen vs. Patrick Mahomes has the feelings of this generation's Brady vs. Peyton Manning. Joe Burrow is leading a team to the Super Bowl at 25 years old. Lamar Jackson has an MVP award. Justin Herbert is an incredible talent.

The AFC is loaded with these dynamic superstars at quarterback. Mahomes is the oldest of the group I mentioned and he's only 26.

Expect AFC playoff races and divisional rounds to be exciting for the foreseeable future.

Even as some of the older QB's age out and trade their shoulder pads for gold jackets in Canton, Ohio, they can retire knowing the future of the position is in fine hands.

Retirements also create job openings, as does mediocre performance.

The Pittsburgh Steelers are likely to have interest in Russell Wilson or Rodgers to take the place of Big Ben. They must know by now that Mason Rudolph will not cut the mustard.

Rodgers will have many potential suitors if he chooses to leave the Green Bay Packers.

The Denver Broncos have long been linked to Rodgers, as have the San Francisco 49ers. After the 49ers were bounced from the playoffs due in part to a back-breaking Jimmy Garoppolo interception, no one should be surprised if they looked to trade Jimmy G to make room for Rodgers when given the chance.

I cannot help but marvel at the precision of today's NFL. Chiefs vs. Bills from a couple weeks ago was football nirvana and was the only game of the past six to have a margin of victory greater than three points.

All these teams have been so evenly matched to the point where walk-off kicks are becoming all the rage. Kickers have not gotten this much attention since the infamous double-doink in Chicago from 2019.

The only thing which makes me sad is its ending. One more game and then I will be spending my Sundays differently and having to get more creative with what I write in these columns.

Until now, a football column has been my security blanket. My Travis Kelce.

But I do not need to worry about it right now. There's still 13 seconds left on this game clock, and I know I am looking for #87 running up the seam.

White 80. Set. Hut.