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SOUTHERN NEWS

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2021 in-person graduation ceremony Five individual celebrations will take place on Jess Dow Field

By Sam Tapper
Editor-in-Chief
By Abby Epstein
Managing Editor

With the vaccination rollout continuing throughout the state, the university announced it will hold an in-person

graduation ceremony for the Class of 2021, according to an email sent on behalf of Director of Integrated Communications and Marketing Patrick Dilger, Adanti Student Center Director Brad Crerar and Adanti Student Center Administrative

Assistant Lisa Horelick last Wednesday. “We’re pleased to announce that Southern will be holding in-person commencement ceremonies this May, outdoors, on campus,” the email stated. “Each student will be able to have two guests in

attendance and the ceremonies will be livestreamed so other family members and friends may view the events virtually.” Dilger received word from the system office a few weeks ago that the university would be allowed to hold on-ground graduation events if it can be social distant and COVID-19 guidelines could be followed.

“When we heard that, we basically did a lot of measuring of campus to see what size of event we could host,” said Dilger. Last May, the university held a virtual commencement for the Class of 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This year’s commencement, according to the email, will be held at Jess Dow Field, as opposed to Webster Bank Arena in Bridgeport where the ceremony was held in years past.

“We did not think we would be able to have an event with parents or friends,” said Dilger. “We looked at Jess Dow

field and did a schematic of the bleachers, so if we have approximately 500 students per ceremony, we’ll be able to fit roughly 1,000 spectators.”

According to Vice President of Student Affairs Tracy Tyree, the university was looking at putting graduation in the Academic Quad that only would have allowed graduates. The ultimate decision came to having graduation on Jess Dow field as spectators will be able to attend while socially distancing.

“Due to social distancing requirements, there will be five individual ceremonies by college/school. Each will be combined events for undergraduates and graduates,” the email said.

The five ceremonies, according to the email, will begin on Tuesday, May 18 at 10:00 a.m. for students in the College of Arts and Sciences who study STEM disciplines, psychology, general studies and interdisciplinary studies. Another ceremony will follow at 2:00 p.m. on the

same day for all students in the liberal arts for the College of Arts and Sciences.

The remaining three ceremonies will be held on Wednesday, May 19, beginning at 9:00 a.m., beginning with the College of Health and Human Services. Following that will be the School of Business at 12:30 p.m. and concluding with the College of Education at 4:00 p.m. In case weather is bad, May 20 and May 21 are being held as rain delay dates.

According to the email, the Honors Convocation will not be held, but all students receiving honors will be able to walk and receive their diplomas.

“We will be recognizing Honor students when they come up to receive their diploma. Their name will be called but also all of their awards will be recognized as well,” said Dilger. “They will also be recognized in the program. We will have a combined program for each ceremony.”



PHOTO | DESTENY MARAGH

Virtual Announcement of 2021 Commencement ceremony.

Weekly intramural sport tournaments

By Caitlin O’Halloran
Reporter

Campus Recreation and Fitness will be hosting in-person, one-off tournaments of different sports every Tuesday night in Moore Field House at 8 p.m.

“Obviously because of COVID, we haven’t been able to do league-style games that we have in the past, where it’s kind of for longer periods,” said Graduate Intern Audrey Pancak. “Normally, we would run them for like six weeks and it would be specific types of sports.”

The center held a four vs. four volleyball tournaments on Tuesday, which contained four different teams

competing against each other throughout the event.

The center will be offering one-off tournaments such as cornhole next Tuesday and badminton the week following. Students can sign up for these events by heading to their website on Owl Connect and navigating to the IMLeagues link located in the description box.

“I think it’s good because it brings people together since with COVID, being in quarantine for like a year, it’s good to start bringing people around again and I think doing these events at night is a way to help people get involved more too,” said sport management intern

Gianna Spino, a junior.

The event was kept safe by following social distancing protocols, wiping down the ball after each round and requiring masks and students to sanitize their hands before and after each round.

Last semester, students were allowed to walk in to the events and sign up on the spot but as of this semester, due to recent high cases, students must pre-register before the event to be able to attend. The number of students allowed to play has been minimized as well.

“We are also doing a lot of esports stuff too right now because it’s virtual, we’re doing an in-person esports 2k tournament this

Thursday in Farnham Programming Space at 8 o’clock, so it’s kind of similar to how intramurals are run,” said Pancak.

The virtual esports night allows students to compete online, playing video games such as Rocket League, FIFA and others.

Even amidst the pandemic, the intramural sports program is a way for students to get involved in an environment where they can safely participate in sports.

“I think it’s fun just because I don’t really get outside of my dorm, so it’s good that I can go and I think it’s pretty safe. They’re on top of it,” said health science

major Nalani Dagraca, a freshman.

Some of the sports offered by the Intramural program are flag football, softball, indoor soccer, 3-on-3 basketball, dodgeball, 5-on-5 basketball, floor hockey, volleyball and outdoor soccer.

Aside from the tournaments, the center is offering various different activities throughout the rest of the semester as well.

Some of these events include First-Year Fit, a six-week program where students can take part in weekly group fitness challenges with exercises and goal setting while hanging out with peers and Spring Yoga Series, a weekly online

event to practice yoga. Lastly, they also offer Fitness Friday online where students can join T.H.R.I.V.E and join in on workouts.

“I think it’s a great idea to get people outside of their dorm rooms once in a while because usually it’s routine you wake up, go to class online and then you go to Conn and then you go home and that’s really what happens every day,” said health science major Arnold Arias, a sophomore, “and sometimes it can get repetitive and it could kind of be sad for a lot of people because they’re not getting the experience that they want so, I think it’s a great idea.”



PHOTO | BRIA KIRKLAND

Students playing during Tuesday’s four vs. four volleyball tournament.



PHOTO | BRIA KIRKLAND

Students in action at the volleyball tournament hosted at Moore field house.

International Women's Day Working through COVID-19

By Madeline S. Scharf
Reporter

People around the world celebrate women's achievements and rally for gender equality on March 8, International Women's Day. The entire month of March is dedicated to women's history and fight for rights and respect.

However, some students do not see the value of this day. Special Education major Gina Barron, a freshman, said "I think it is a nice thought, but it is not really useful. Its intentions are to bring light to women's history, but it does not actually do anything."

These feelings towards International Women's Day however, seem to be an American-centric mindset. Head of Women's and Gender studies Yi-Chun Tricia Lin finds other countries to be far more interested in this day. "International Women's Day is not often paid attention to in the U.S. In Taiwan, though, it is an international holiday! Women teachers even

have the day off."

Despite the advancements of women's rights, there continues to be gender inequality throughout the world. "Our world is still suffering from gender based injustice," said Lin.

The university has a long history with women, both as students and in faculty. "Southern was once just a teacher's college," Lin said. "This was predominantly a field for women." Through the education of women, since Southern conception in 1890, there was a welcome change to give women a higher education.

Within the past twenty years, Southern has also made strides towards inclusion of women in positions of power. Two of the last four university presidents were female, and staff members diversified from mainly men in the 20th century to an equal measure of gendered staff.

"President Joe and his commitment to social justice has made our work mainstream.

Their work within the Women's and Genders study offers a way to look at the world more critically, seeing injustices within the social structure and working from those problems," Lin said. "I think the study helps students get a more critical analysis of the world. It helps us make our world more accessible to others."

Activities on campus also highlight Women's History Month. "There are programs all year around that focus on women's history," said Lin. Many events specifically occur during Women's History Month, like interactive trivia games relating to women. However, some feel this is not enough or is not publicized correctly.

"I think Southern could do more about women's history," said comprehensive special education major Juliana Zaccagnino, a freshman, in an e-mail interview. "I haven't seen much else regarding International Women's Day, or even history."

By Sofia Rositani
Arts & Entertainment Editor

Associate Vice President Dean of Students, Jules Tetreault, oversees about 10 departments on campus such as health counseling, wellness, violence prevention, student conduct, recreation fitness and many more.

The main focus since the pandemic began was working with the COVID-19 coordinator to oversee the testing sites, the dashboard and data and monitoring the positivity rates and trends. Tetreault is also tasked with overseeing the contact tracing program, which in addition is new for Tetreault.

"I am currently working with the COVID coordinator and our student conduct person to make sure that our students are following their new guidelines. But I would say majority of our work, my work, has changed and increased around the proactive stuff," Tetreault said. "So, to surveillance testing, the contact tracing and all of that for the most part our students have been very compliant for those particularly on ground with what we have asked of them. So, we have spent some time but not nearly the amount of time that some might think around dealing with behavior. It has been primarily focused on our proactive work around surveillance and tracing and keeping the community safe."

Since the pandemic started, Tetreault is usually



PHOTO COURTESY | WWW.SOUTHERNCT.EDU

Headshot of Jules Tetreault.

on campus three to four days out of the week. The rest of the days he is works remotely from home.

"The difficulty, I would say, is just getting used to not having as many students in and out of your office, and even when I am on site it is still all of this [virtual]. That just happens to be how we need to operate right now and as long as we're able to keep in the back of our mind, or even in the front of our mind, we're doing this to keep our community safe, we are doing this to keep each other safe so it helps to negate any of those kinds of negatives that might come from having to communicate virtually," Tetreault said.

He said a normal day for him looks like sitting

at his computer and going in and out of meetings conversing with people on his computer or around him.

"That's the life of an administrator, sitting in meetings. So much of that hasn't changed. The focal has changed. So, the focus of those meetings a lot is around not only our kind of COVID response, but also how to facilitate experiences and manage departments in a time that is virtual," Tetreault said.

While the conversation has changed slightly, the work itself has not. In the meetings, Tetreault and others work to support students, but in a COVID-19 world. One example Tetreault used was how Week of Welcome took place virtually.



PHOTO | BRIA KIRKLAND

Four female students pose with their decorated pumpkins.

More single occupant rooms coming in Fall

By Donovan Wilson
Reporter

After a long history of students demanding more single occupant housing, the university will finally be offering more single rooms next semester.

Currently, only a few single rooms are offered. They are usually picked first rooms because of the high demand for a private space. Typically there are two-person underclassmen dorms and four-person upperclassmen suites or townhouses.

The only way to obtain a single room is disability priority or on a first-come, first-serve basis. Director of Residence Life Robert DeMezzo made it very clear that this is something wanted by both students and staff.

"COVID-19 has created an environment where more people than ever want a single room so we decided it was the right time to start offering those options," said DeMezzo.

It has been a very long time since North Campus offered single rooms. There has been

a demand for quite some time to bring that back. DeMezzo and the rest of residence life have decided that now is the time. However, this time, the option will not only be limited to north campus. The plan is to offer single student dorm options to every student, from underclassmen to upperclassmen.

A major change will be the conversion of Neff Hall to entirely single student room dormitory. The rooms will be the same structurally, but will be reworked to only function as a singular space. Similarly, North's single student rooms will end up essentially resembling the same model except it will be two residents in the previous four-person suite.

"There is limited availability currently. We are doing tabling in Connecticut Hall for Housing Deposits where you could win first pick of your room before general room selection where everyone chooses," said Nora Anderson, residence life coordinator and hall

director of the North Campus Midrise.

Nothing will change in the North rooms in terms of amenities that are offered to the residents. It will still be the same room offering of a living room, full kitchen, extra storage space and personal bathrooms. Similarly, Neff rooms will remain the same, structurally, just re-worked to accommodate only one person.

The only major drawback to the single student North rooms is that they are in high demand but have limited supply availability. The best way to secure one of these rooms is to go on of the tabling that residence life will host inside of Connecticut hall. These tabling's allow students to get a shot at getting a room, and is the easiest and most secure way to get one of the rooms.

"If COVID-19 still gets bad at least that one kid has a less chance of him getting COVID-19 but you know, you still want to be able to make friends," said computer science major Kristofer Dushi, a sophomore.



PHOTO | ROMA ROSITANI

North Campus Midrise, an upper classmen residence hall with suites.



PHOTO | SAM TAPPER

Neff Hall, an underclassmen residence hall that will be offering more single rooms.

Thankful for a ‘real’ commencement this May



By Sam Tapper
Editor-in-Chief
These are the opinions of The Southern News Editorial Staff

I remember my high school graduation like it was yesterday. I remember that feeling of shaking the hand of the Board of Education representative – who ironically was the father of my prom date – and receiving that diploma in front of my family.

That day, I never imagined for a second that it would be my only time wearing a cap and gown, walking across the stage. I expected a college graduation ceremony. I am sure all college-bound seniors in my class thought the same.

For the past year, however, I had not only imagined, but expected I had experienced my final commencement ceremony.

But with the announcement of an in-person commencement in May for the class of 2021, it appears I will be able to walk across a stage one more time, albeit in a mask, with my parents looking on.

After an interview a few weeks ago, Tracy Tyree and I briefly talked about graduation, to which she told me to “stay tuned” and that “I would like what I hear.” I

do indeed like what I have heard.

I am happy to have what we have been granted, but it will not be normal by any means. For one, it will be on campus, a different location than in years past. The mask factor is another thing. I am mentally preparing to forever be in a mask in the photo of me receiving my degree, but there are worse problems to have.

But I have no issue with the idea of, say, 1,000 people at Jess Dow Field. With the state’s vaccine rollout, I fully expect to be vaccinated by

commencement, as do both of my anticipated guests. Not only am I not worried about this crowd idea anymore, but I am also thrilled. We are finally starting up plans to have large gatherings together again.

My heart will forever break, though, for the class of 2020 and all of my friends and co-editors who graduated last year. For time in the late summer of 2020, it seemed as if everyone thought that the class of 2021, and even 2022, would be experiencing the same virtual graduation cere-

mony as those in 2020 did. The progress in beating the pandemic since then has advanced, and it now seems the world may open sooner than we all thought.

Still, I am happy and thankful to be able to literally walk across that stage and take in my accomplishments in May. And I am happy that my parents will be able to witness it. My senior year has not been easy, but that means this day will be extra sweet when it comes. And I am exhilarated I will be able to share the day with my classmates.

Normality in sight; Connecticut continues reopening

By Abby Epstein
Managing Editor

While living in Florida and attending school in Connecticut, I have experienced the differences in how states have handled the COVID-19 pandemic.

Connecticut was one of the first states to shut down with New York being its neighbor where the virus first viciously broke out. Southern sent all of their students home, so I did not experience the extent of the lockdown in Connecticut because I was at home in Florida.

With what my friends who live in Connecticut have told me, the

circumstances were much different and Connecticut had a much stricter lockdown than Florida. With only being up here during the pandemic from August to May, I am ready for Connecticut to open back up.

Governor Ned Lamont announced the state will begin to open up more within the coming months. A press release stated some changes will begin Friday, March 19 where restaurants, fitness centers, retail stores, churches and more are going back to full capacity. Restaurants will only have a capacity of 8 people per table.

Starting April 2, amusement parks can open, outdoor venues can

increase to 50 percent capacity and indoor stadiums can open at 10 percent capacity.

It is time for Connecticut to start opening up more and start getting back to some normalcy. Some of the current restrictions will still be in place, according to the press release.

Masks are still required, restaurants still have a curfew of 11 p.m. and bars that only serve alcohol will still be closed.

I can understand keeping the mask mandate, but restaurants should be able to open back up to their normal hours. What is the difference between someone going to the restaurant at 7:00 p.m. compared to 12:00 a.m.?

Their exposure to the virus will not change drastically and most people tend to go to restaurants around 5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. because that is normal dinner hours.

I also understand the reason for keeping bars closed due to the rule of not wanting a big crowd of people in a small indoor space. On the contrary, these businesses have been closed for over a year and are most likely forever closed or struggling. They should be able to open, but not to full capacity – just to start earning some revenue again.

Florida started reopening during the end of April and beginning of May. I do believe Florida

opened back up too soon, but businesses cannot afford to stay closed for a year. I went home during winter break and I noticed some businesses in my hometown were closed permanently as they took too big of a financial hit when they were forced to shut down.

Businesses were not the only ones that took a financial hit, universities lost millions of dollars and students lost the experience of college. The class of 2020 missed out on having an in-person graduation. With the plan Lamont has proposed for reopening, this has allowed for Southern to have an in-person graduation on campus for the class of

2021 this spring semester.

With the distribution of the vaccine, people are starting to feel more comfortable going out and socializing more. It makes sense that Lamont would look to start opening the state more with more people becoming eligible to receiving the vaccine.

Connecticut reopening is a positive thing. Everyone is ready to get back to whatever normal will look like now. The necessary precautions are still in place to keep people safe, but the state can move on to the next phase of opening. The first step to getting back to normal is having places open back up and allowing events to start happening again.

Fluctuating weather changes brings allergies

By Sofia Rositani
Arts & Entertainment Editor

This year, the weather has been fluctuating from hot and cold one day to sunny and snowy the next, and my allergies cannot handle it anymore. The dryness of the winter mixed with the warmth of the spring has been making my allergies so bad I have to carry a pack of tissues and reusable masks everywhere I go.

As a residential student, the heat is constantly on in my room. This has not helped, because heat and dry air do not mix well with someone who has allergies.

Keeping my windows open is the only way I can get fresh air and not feel like I am suffocating in a pile of tissues from non-stop sneezing and a runny nose. My allergies got so bad at one point I took four COVID-19 tests to make sure I did not have the virus.

“Changes in temperature and humidity can cause allergy symptoms like sneezing and congestion, which occur due to swelling that results from changes in the nose’s membranes. These types of symptoms are generally referred to as non-allergic rhinitis. Other weather specific

conditions, however, are allergic reactions rather than non-allergic reactions. For instance, cold urticaria is an actual allergic reaction to cold weather,” according to Premier Allergy and Asthma.

With snow on the forecast for next week and the weather shooting to 60 and then down to 30 degrees, I know my allergies will not be good. Days where it is windy, especially in the spring, are not a fun time either because my allergies get so much worse.

“No matter what kind of allergy you have, chances are windy days make it worse. Pollen, mold, dust

and dander are all harmless on the ground. These irritants need to be up in the air, where they can get into your nose, eyes, and lungs, to cause problems. Wind serves as the perfect vehicle, picking up these minuscule particles and whipping them around into the air for you to breathe in,” according to the Farmer’s Almanac.

Other aspects of weather can also make your allergies much worse or better, such as humidity and rain.

“Mold spores and dust mites love humidity. The wetter the better. If you live in an area that tends to become humid, chances are

summer isn’t your favorite season,” said the Farmer’s Almanac.

When it rains, it can actually clear your allergies, something I hope for next week, because according to the Farmer’s Almanac, when it rains it will “clean” the pollen and other allergens from the ground and air. Raindrops will bring pollen down to the ground where it will not be as bad for someone with bad allergies.

“Relief may be short-lived, though, because frequent wet weather causes the trees and grass to grow and produce even more pollen. Rainy weather

also creates the perfect conditions for mold spores and dust mites to thrive, offering no relief to those who are sensitive to those allergens,” The Farmer’s Almanac said.

Since Spring is right around the corner, it looks like people with severe allergies are about to get worse because we are about to face the brunt of allergy season. Pollen everywhere, eyes swollen for days, and nose running will be what most of us will have to go through even if we take medication to help it.

I wish those with allergies good luck, because we are about to get the worst of it.

SOUTHERN NEWS

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Corrections:

The staff of the Southern News strives for accurate reporting and editing of all stories, photo captions and headlines, but when we get it wrong we will offer a correction or clarification. We regret the errors.

A story in the Feb. 17 edition discussed the modality of courses offered this semester by the Math Department. Math courses are being offered at the 100, 200, 300, 400 levels in on-ground or hybrid modalities. And faculty said modalities are being offered to meet the wishes of the students.

In the March 10 edition, a page 1 headline incorrectly stated funding amounts being given to the colleges and universities to cover COVID expenses. The system will receive a total of \$25 million for COVID PPE, of that Southern will receive a portion.

Also in the March 10 edition, a story about mold in Schwartz Hall may have misrepresented the views of SCSU Environmental Health & Safety Coordinator Lisa Kortfelt. She said: “I never determined any mold to be insignificant. Mold always has the potential to be a significant health concern. SCSU takes the health and safety of the SCSU community seriously. When I assessed the residents’ room in September, there was not any mold present. I had spoken with the resident and discussed what I found. I provided my business card to the resident and stressed that if they had any further concerns to please not hesitate to contact me and I will address it immediately. I have not had any communication from the resident since the meeting in September. I do not regularly inspect the residential rooms on campus. The Residence Life Staff perform regularly scheduled inspections (you will have to verify with them the frequency). I will inspect a residential room when a potential health/safety risk has been identified and I am contacted.”

PHOTO

Warm weather brings students outside



Students conversing in front of The Adanti Student Center.



Group of students walking on campus with masks on.



Computer science major Aidan Riley (left), and Geogrpahy Information systems major Gia Mentillo (right) walking together on campus.

By Roma Rositani
Photo Editor

Last week, the campus finally experienced warm weather.

Students were able to

socialize in front of Buley Library while staying warm under the sun.

Violence Prevention, Victim Advocacy and Support Center held an event in front of the Library,

teaching students about violence through trivia games and photo activities.

Students used the warm weather to their advantage before more cold weather hit Connecticut.



Violence Prevention, Victim Advocacy and Support Center event in front of the Library.



Group of students talking in front of Buley on a Wednesday afternoon.



Student writing in front of Buley during a sunny day on campus.

Softball sweeps Felician in 2021 opener Botteon collects six hits; Owls start 2-0 in first games played in 378 days

By Edward Rudman
Sports Writer

The long-awaited return of sports competition has finally arrived. It couldn't have started off on a higher note, as the softball team swept their doubleheader against Felician College on Sunday, March 14 at Pelz Field.

"I'm riding on this high of nice two-win sweep on the day," said pitcher Jazmyn Martinez. "It's a good tone-setter for the rest of the season, that's for sure. We're going to conference games next weekend, so we're excited about that."

Softball was the first spring sport to return and they showed up ready to perform. The first game of the doubleheader started at noon and the Owls put on an offensive clinic. By the end of the game, the final score was 10-2. Those 10 runs were scored on an efficient 10 hits.

The Owls came out looking to set the tone right out of the gates. They were able to score three runs in the first inning and

followed that up with an even bigger second inning, driving in another six runs. They scored their last run in the fifth and final inning.

Martinez got the start on the mound, pitching a complete game and only allowing two runs, both in the fourth inning.

Felician couldn't score runs and capitalize on having players on base; they committed four errors as well. The Owls had a clean game, committing zero errors.

"I think that just because we've been practicing for so long and we've been working on all sorts of situations during practice, I think that we were just ready," said center fielder Cailey Botteon.

Botteon had a successful day at the plate, as she got three hits in her four at bats and drove in three runs in the first game. The Owls also showed their base running skills, as shortstop Sara Buscetto stole two bases and first baseman Jayden Delaporta added another.

Once the game ended,

a short intermission took effect before the start of the second game of the doubleheader at 2:15 p.m.

They continued momentum from the first game and were able to edge out Felician 4-2, improving to 2-0 on the season. Felician dropped to 0-6 with the two losses on Sunday.

The Owls came out to a hot start once again, as they scored two runs in the bottom of the first inning. They were able to drive in two more runs during the game, one each in the third and fourth innings.

Felician refused to go down without a fight, notching a two-run homerun in the fifth inning. The Owls stepped up on defense afterwards and did not allow another run in the last two innings.

Pitcher Jess Perucki was on the mound for the second game, pitching a complete game and allowed two runs on six hits.

The second game also saw an erratic showcase of weather. When the game started, it was sunny



PHOTO COURTESY | WWW.SOUTHERNCTOWLS.COM

Botteon running to first base during a 2019 game.

and clear, but as the game progressed, the wind picked up and blew dirt from the infield up into the air. A quick hailstorm followed suit, which only added to the drama of a close game.

"Felician was storming

in and the actual storm was storming in," said Interim Head Coach Christine Akker. "It was some of the most insane weather, not to make excuses, but that was some of the toughest weather I've ever seen a team have to play through.

We really gave it up to Jess Perucki for getting us out of that inning, and the defense. She was trying to get us out of the inning with all these extra factors going on and the perseverance was at an all-time high."

Shea's experience as player, coach a staple for decades



PHOTO COURTESY | WWW.SOUTHERNCTOWLS.COM

Head coach Tim Shea as third base coach during a 2019 home game.

By Mike Neville
Sports Editor

From his early years as a successful student athlete at Southern to head coach, Tim Shea's time at the university spans more than three decades.

"I came here to Southern and played under my mentor Coach Joe Bandiera," said Shea. "I was at first-base my freshman year and then moved over to short-stop after that."

Under the guidance of Bandiera, Shea was able to make the transition from assistant coach to head coach very smoothly.

"It is not much different on who I am working with. He allowed me to handle team travel, basic needs of team that you need to be knowledgeable in, so he

allowed me to do a lot," said Shea.

He was a special education major, although the long-term goal was to always become a baseball coach.

"I knew teaching would allow me the opportunity to coach. Everyone dreams about playing at the next level, but I was pretty realistic and wanted to make sure I was in a profession that would allow me to coach," said Shea.

Prior to becoming a full-time coach, Shea had worked in the Milford school systems as a special education teacher, football and baseball coach.

On May 1, 2019, Shea became the winningest coach in the program's history when he captured his 467th vs. Saint Rose.

See Shea Page 6

Wallin recognized for success

By Edward Rudman
Sports Writer

John Wallin, men's track and field and cross country head coach, has been named part of the Northeast 10's 40 Most Outstanding Individuals list in celebration of the conference's 40th anniversary. The conference also recognized the 40 iconic moments from conference history.

"I am truly honored and humbled to be recognized by the NE10 and SCSU as one of the top coaches in the NE10," said Wallin.

Underneath the tutelage of Wallin, the track and field program has been one of the most successful programs Southern Athletics has.

During Wallin's first 10 years as coach of

the Owls, the program has claimed seven NE10 Men's Indoor Championships, consecutively winning the last four. They've also won eight NE10 Men's Outdoor Championships, victorious in the last three.

Wallin has been named the NE10 Indoor Track and Field Coach of the Year eight times during his tenure and Outdoor Coach of the Year eight times.

He has coached 77 All-Americans, an individual national champion, and four Field Athletes of the year, according to Southern's Athletic Website.

"I want to emphasize the kids on the team really deserve all the accolades," said Wallin. "And before the head coach does, it's always going to be the assistant

coaches, the behind the scenes people that make the whole thing work. There's no two ways about it."

Wallin has built his staff of assistant coaches with Southern alumni who competed for the Owls during their own collegiate track and field careers. It's something Wallin said is paramount to the success the program has been able to achieve and sustain over the years.

Assistant Coach Brian Nill once competed as an Owl and had Wallin as his coach himself. He said that Wallin has been instrumental in his career as an athlete and during his career as a coach, and that their relationship together has evolved over the years.

"We've definitely grown a lot closer and we have a lot of the same

decision making, we have the same brain and we're on the same page for a lot of stuff," said Nill. "When you're an athlete, it's not that you're taking orders from your coach but your coach is kind of guiding everything and see where you're going. It's cool now to be able to work with someone to get to that point."

Wallin has coaching track in his blood, as his father was also a track coach. Wallin grew up around that atmosphere, learning whatever he could from his dad.

"My father was the head coach at Dartmouth College, and so I went to all his track meets when I was a kid and would go to his championship meets and I would go to some of his NCAA championships. I just fell in love with what he did on a daily basis, because he really loved his job and was all about it, and I just wanted to be all about something."

When Wallin graduated from Southern, he did not know what he wanted to do. His father suggested that he take on a graduate assistant position at Dartmouth for strength and conditioning. After a four- or five-month stint, he moved into his father's world as a track coach and the rest was history.

"Obviously we can talk about the weight room and stuff, but I feel like mindset, Coach Wallin, always ends his emails with 'welcome to the fire' and it really is all about welcome to the fire," said field athlete Mekhi Barnett, a senior. "It's not about how you start, it's about how you finish. Going into the weight room, I just feel confident. Believe it or not, this is Wallin's body."



PHOTO COURTESY | WWW.SOUTHERNCTOWLS.COM

Wallin at the Yale Invitational in May of 2013.

Selena Gomez latest album **Shea**

By Sarah Shelton
Contributor

Selena Gomez is here with new music and it's different than anything she's ever done before.

Gomez just released her last album "Rare" in January 2020, which featured her first number one song, "Lose you to Love Me."

However, now she is doing something she has always wanted to do: a Spanish-language album.

"I hope you guys like the album and have so much fun with it," Gomez said on Instagram stories the night of the release. "It's my first Spanish album, something I've wanted to do for 10 years."

Her first songs in Spanish were actually back in 2010 and 2014, when she still was Selena Gomez & The Scene, including "Un Año Sin Ver Llover" and "Más." She also featured in "Taki Taki" in 2019 with DJ Snake, Cardi B and Ozuna.

"De Una Vez" was the first single released from her new mini album (EP) "Revelación." This song

is about how her heart is now healed from the past.

In the De Una Vez video, Gomez is seen wearing a heart necklace, which seems to be the main element of the video but there are also many hidden meanings.

According to the YouTube video, "Selena Gomez - The Making of 'De Una Vez' | Vevo Footnotes," they wanted to find a concept for De Una Vez that represented Gomez's Mexican roots. "That's how we thought about the Mexican Heart as a metaphor of a wound, and how it gets healed through time. The heart is the Milagro Sacred Heart, rooted in Mexican culture," the video footnotes said.

People on social media pointed out that the "De Una Vez" video features many Easter Eggs (hidden messages) including her "Rare" vinyl in the background. Many fans also think it has a lot of similarities to scenes from her old Disney show, "Wizards of Waverly Place."

I found this song to be one of her best ones yet.

Her vocals felt soothing and it's a good song to listen to while healing from the past.

The next song dropped was "Baila Conmigo" featuring Rauw Alejandro. This song's meaning is very different from "De Una Vez," because it's about good energy, dancing, and the start of a new relationship.

The song is very catchy and has a reggaeton vibe. Gomez and Alejandro's voices also go well together, making this song a hit.

The video for "Baila Conmigo" shows a love story of two people drawn together and a fun choreography. Gomez is on a TV screen almost the entire video, but is featured wearing her makeup line, Rare Beauty.

On March 4, the track and music video for her song "Selfish Love," featuring DJ Snake, came out and was announced as the seventh track on the EP.

The music and vocals are very different from the rest of the songs, with a more of a jazz and club feeling to it, and featuring

a saxophone. It is also the only song on the EP partly in English.

It is a cute and fun song, but it does seem a little random to throw into this album considering it is so different from the rest. I will admit, though, I think it has the better music video out of the three released so far.

Fans on Twitter even pointed out the iconic "DJ Snake" whisper Selena did in the song that originally came from the song "Taki Taki."

One fan even posted before "Selfish Love" dropped: "If @selenagomez doesn't whisper 'DJ Snake,' I don't want it."

The other songs on the EP include "Vivio," "Buscando Amor," "Dámelo To' (feat. Myke Towers)" and my favorite, "Adiós."

I believe Selena Gomez did a good job creating this EP while still keeping her energy to it.

"Revelación" has seven tracks. Even if you don't know Spanish, I believe these songs can be meaningful and enjoyable for everyone.

Current assistant coach Ed Bethke is a former pitcher Shea coached when he was a student. He attributed much of his success in baseball to Shea.

"As a student athlete, I built a very good rapport with him. He is very open and honest, authentic with everything, so it has been a big learning curve but accessibility to have him has been a huge asset for me," said Bethke.

After his time as an Owl ended, Bethke took a head coaching job at Branford High School. When Shea came calling for him to become part of his coaching staff, the decision was easy.

"Through dialogue that we've had, the opportunity came around and when he offered the job to me. It was an instant yes and I've been here since fall of 2015," said Bethke.

Besides being a coach and mentor, the biggest accomplishment for Shea was getting to the College World Series in 2006 and 2011.

He said that he has used his experience in the big game and stage scenarios as a teaching moment for himself and his players.

"It is not an easy thing. We utilize the path as a learning experience to get us where we want to be," said Shea.

Entering his 20th year as the Owls head coach, in addition to watching his team win games and be successful, the best result is what his players do later in life.

"Seeing players graduate, move onto their professional lives and have families has always been enjoyable for me to be a part of their success," said Shea.

Catcher Michael DeMartino, who is entering his sixth season under the watchful eye of Shea, is one of those individuals he has seen grow. DeMartino gave great praise to his head coach.

"He's one of my favorite coaches I've ever played for. Every day it is something new with him," said DeMartino. "He is hard working and has a really good game plan."

Compared to other coaches he has had throughout his baseball career, the one thing DeMartino said stands out about Shea is his team organization.

"When it comes down to practices, games and rituals, I commend him on that. He has made me a better player in all walks of the game," said DeMartino.

A day in the life for Shea involves much preparation during the week leading up to games.

With COVID-19 still present in 2021, the handling of practices and games has been different.

"Normally in season, I start my day at 7:45 a.m. head into the office checking emails, phone calls and getting prepared for the practice plan later in the afternoon," said Shea. "Some days we have lifting in the mornings, some days we don't, so it's a pretty packed schedule."

With over a decade of coaching the Owls, the routine for Shea has remained consistent throughout in tenure.

The next level from college being the Major League level, anything is fair game regarding the future for Shea although his loyalty runs deep.

"I don't think you ever shut the door on that, keep the window slightly cracked. I've been here the better part of five decades. If I haven't left, I am probably not going to," said Shea.

When it is all said and done, Shea said he wants to look back on his career as making a positive contribution to the Owls.

"I hope to be remembered as a teacher and a mentor who was there for his players," said Shea. "Not just the baseball side of things, but as a person also."

Shea will lead the Owls into their first game of the season in over a year at Saint Anselm College.



PHOTO | ROMA ROSITANI

Selena Gomez latest EP "Revelación" on Spotify, Google Pixel 4A 5G.

Interested in joining student media?

Get involved by applying for any of the following openings next semester!

You may apply for more than one position and apply to more than one club

Southern News:

- Editor-in-Chief
- Managing Editor
- News Editor
- Features Editor
- Sports Editor
- Photo Editor
- Layout Editor
- Web Asst.
- Sports Writer
- General Assignment Reporter (4)
- Copy Editor (3)
- Photographer
- Business Manager
- Delivery Driver

WSIN Radio:

- General Manager
- Programming Director
- Music Director
- Production Director
- Promotion Director
- Sports Director
- News Director
- Webmaster

Crescent Magazine:

- Editor-in-Chief
- Managing Editor
- Features Editor (2)
- Online/Video Editor
- Photo Editor
- Asst. Photo Editor
- Layout Editor
- Asst. Layout Editor
- Copy Editor
- Delivery Driver

SCSU TV:

- General Manager
- Operations Manager
- Promotion Manager
- Technical Director
- Technical Assistant (2)
- Programming Director
- Programming Asst. (2)
- News Director
- News Asst. (2)

Folio:

- Editor
- Associate Editor
- Art Editor
- Fiction Editor
- Poetry Editor

Applications are due by Friday, April 02.

Follow this link to apply: <https://forms.office.com/r/G2SUaKoygj>

For any questions, feel free to reach out to tappers1@southernct.edu

Volunteer beach cleanup from GEMS club

By Essence Boyd
Online Editor

COVID-19 stopped most in-person programs from taking place, but the Geography, Environmental and Marine Sciences Club found a way around while not only protecting event attendees, but the environment.

On Saturday March 13, GEMS hosted their first cleanup of the spring semester with Gather New Haven.

“GEMS has a very long history of hosting beach cleans ups,” said environmental systems and sustainability major Leana Mauricette, a senior. “[We do] anything to get the community together and help clean.”

According to president of GEMS Shayla Peterson, having this event was needed not only for the community, but for students.

“During COVID, we found that interacting with each other virtually is not nearly as satisfying as going out and doing something as a group in-person,” said Peterson. “It’s just a really good opportunity to go out and see people while also

doing something good.”

Gather New Haven held the event at Long Wharf Nature Preserve. Many students came out to the Preserve to help the environment by picking up trash.

Grad student Allie Smith was one student who came out to join GEMS in cleaning up the Long Wharf Nature Preserve.

“[I came out] basically just to clean up the community. Especially by the water in New Haven, it’s such an important ecosystem,” said Smith.

Although GEMS mission in hosting the beach clean-up was to tend to their environment, keeping students and attendees safe was also a priority.

“Our protocol has changed a little bit,” said Mauricette. “So when we clean-up we don’t clean up in groups for safety. We try to clean up so that we can remain a six feet distance, we keep on our masks and we sanitize a lot more often than usual even if we don’t touch the trash with our hands.”

According to GEMS board members, enforcing the social distance policy is the most important part of keeping everyone safe.

“What it is really is just policing the distance between people once we get there to stay safe,” said GEMS Vice President Derek Faulkner.

According to Mauricette, COVID has even affected the way the organization celebrates their service of the day.

“Before COVID, we would all come together, do the clean-up and then we would go out and eat afterwards to kinda celebrate the day,” said Mauricette. “Unfortunately, we can’t do that. We don’t go out, but we do have a final gather with all of us that came out, which is really nice.”

COVID may have changed the way most things operate today. However, it has not changed the GEMS core values. Service is a value rooted in the organization despite the pandemic.

“Cleanups are part of our club goals,” said Faulkner. “That includes service to the community.”

According to Faulkner, beach cleanups are just one piece of the work the organization does for the New Haven community.

“We look to clean up parks and public spaces as

well,” said Faulkner. “We do this because it is good for the environment and it is good for the community.”

According to Faulkner, the goal is to highlight that everyone contributes to the state of the environment surrounding them, whether in a negative or positive way.

“For everyone to take a little bit of responsibility as a member of this community,” said Faulkner. “We all live in and share this city, this state, this coastline, this country and this planet. You can zoom out to different scales, but we are all on the same planet and I think gathering together to do something good for our coastline – by hosting this – it encourages people to actively participate in better the community.”

According to Peterson, the development of the new COVID-19 vaccine is a positive, as it allows people to do community service without the fear of the virus.

“We are trying to encourage people to still find opportunities to do volunteer service,” said Peterson. “In GEMS we do encourage community service and volunteer work. Now that people are getting

vaccinated and things like that, it is more possible

to get out and help your community.”



PHOTO | ESSENCE BOYD

Students work together to cleanup pollutants.



PHOTO | ESSENCE BOYD

Students searching for waste on coastline.

Black Excellence Alumni Jeopardy hosted by RHA

By Caitlin O’Halloran
Reporter

Four Black Southern Alumni that came to speak on their success including – LaShante James, Kelly Hope, Jason Facey and Willie Epps, Jr.

The Office of Student Involvement and Leadership Development held a panel discussing Black Excellence with Black Alumni student leaders.

“It was really important for me in our office as a whole to really celebrate the accomplishments of our Black alumni, especially those that held leadership positions on our campus,” said Assistant Director of Student Involvement, Daphne Alston.

The panel was held to reflect on the importance of Black joy, sense of belonging and leadership that the Alumni faced throughout their time at Southern.

“Leadership, for me, it is a state of being and it is about action. It’s about being unapologetic in your stance and in your beliefs and your ethics, and I think that’s really important to make sound decisions,” said current Assistant Principle of Brien McMahon High School in Norwalk, LaShante James.

When discussing adversity throughout their time at Southern, James stated she learned to handle it with “grace, class and perseverance.”

Throughout the event, the host and the guests discussed their times at Southern and how that time and their leadership positions have set them up for the careers they have now.

“At Southern, I was a

co-founder of Symphonic Pulse Dance Company, known as SPDC. I was also an RA in Wilkinson with one of my boy back in the day,” said Jason Facey, a professional dancer and actor living in L.A.

The alumni’s were asked to describe their Southern Moment – which was a moment where they knew they had made it as a leader.

“I was in a creative writing class, and I remember Professor Shipley read a piece of my poetry and recommended that I publish it or submit it to be reviewed for publishing and my poem was accepted and published in Noctua Magazine,” said current high school English teacher and adjunct professor at Housatonic Community College, Kelly K. Hope on her Southern moment.

Facey noted that his first Southern moment occurred in present times because he didn’t even expect to graduate Southern, yet alone sit sitting at a Black Excellence panel surrounded by other successful leaders. His second Southern moment was after his first tour with Gwen Stefani.

“I feel like I’m still having Southern moments, to be honest with you because I’m still here,” said Willie Epps, Jr. who is now the assistance director of residence life. “When I left Southern as a student and to see the people that followed behind, I think that was when I realized the impact that I had as a student leader.”

Alston brought up the past election cycle of the Alumni Association Board of Directors and the addition of more people of color, asking James and

Hope what the importance of them staying connected with Southern is, being that both are members on that board.

“The board is another vehicle for us to remain leaders on Southern’s campus you know, after we graduate we’re still looking for a way to be connected but this board allows us to have a voice and how we keep current students connected when they graduate,” said James.

The meeting’s final topic of discussion with the Alumni was over the question “Why Southern?” and why their time at Southern was worth it.

“If it doesn’t exist, you can create it,” said Hope. “I would say for our students at Southern, that Southern is a place to live, whether you are living on campus or if you’re commuting, you can come to Southern and you can find different avenues where you can experience life in a way that may not have been accessible to you outside of campus.”

All of the alumni noted on the significance of the opportunity that Southern is willing to give to students, as long as they are willing to put themselves out there and open to trying new things.

“The Southern experience is a reflection of what is to come,” said James. “You will receive life lessons about leadership and they’re real lessons and one thing I didn’t get to highlight before is there are people on campus who were student leaders and are now campus leaders. I think that’s really important for students to know: you can model yourself after some of those people.”

By Madeline S. Scharf
Reporter

On Wednesday, March 10, the Residence Hall Association hosted an in-person event for jeopardy. This is the second event RHA has held in-person this semester, owing to the COVID pandemic.

The goal of the RHA team is to balance student safety with fun activities. Hall Director and RHA Advisor Jenna Dunn wants students to enjoy themselves. “We have noticed more students want in-person events,” said Dunn, “we have heard their comments and want to do things that make the students excited.”

The push for in-person events was mirrored by theater major Nicole Thomas, a sophomore. “I like going to on campus events,” Thomas said of the activities.

In-person events also draw more students than online. “Virtual just does not get a large turn out,” said Dunn. Student involvement is the goal of these programs, so the drive for more in-person content is seen.

On-campus events, while exciting, come with the added risk created with the ongoing COVID pandemic. But some students, including elementary education Major Meghan Jensen, a Freshman, are not alarmed by this risk. “I have a class in here,” Jensen said, pointing to the Farnham Programing Space, “I think it is safe.”

Each desk is separated by the necessary six feet distance. Cleaning supplies sit on a table off to the side, and an automatic hand sanitizer machine is in front of the entrance. Dunn emphasizes the continuous push for safety. “Only 25

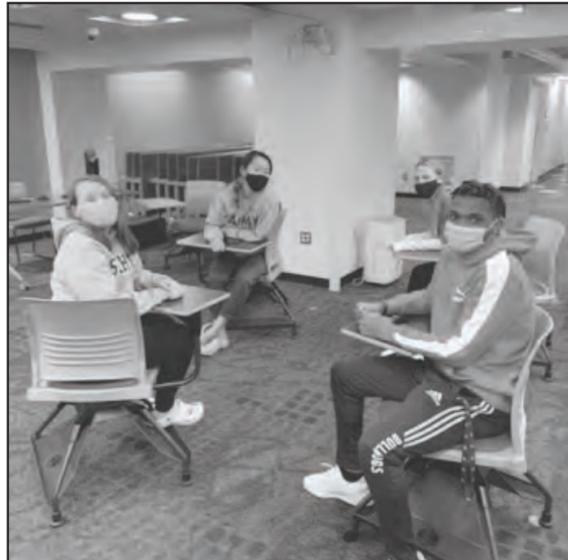


PHOTO | MADELINE S. SCHARF

Participants sit in groups, socially distanced.

people, including advisors and staff, are allowed in a given space. We made students sign up for certain time slots, with only 10 students at a time,” said Dunn.

“The RHA keep us safe,” said Thomas, “by having a maximum capacity and having us RSVP to each event.” Each student had to sign up for a specific time slot and had to show up at that time or they would not be able to compete.

Cleaning was also taken care of. “When students leave between time slots,” Dunn said, “Advisors sanitize all the desks.” This is in accordance with CDC guidelines, to ensure maximum safety. Students are also not allowed to enter the games if they do not wear a mask and are required to sign-in for both attendance purposes and potential COVID tracking.

Despite the small groups and social distancing, the Jeopardy event was a great success. Teams faced off in a five vs. five on different

trivia, from Southern facts to sports. The variety in topics ensured that everyone was able to contribute something. Even though they had to keep six feet from one another, the teams still enjoyed their games.

The prizes of the night ranged from Amazon gift cards to a flat screen TV. To win the bigger prizes, each student from the winning teams were given a raffle card which was placed in a bucket, chosen at the end of the night.

Smiling faces were the staple of the evening. When asked if she enjoyed the event, Thomas said, “Yes! It was fun. I hope they do it again.”

The Residence Hall Association are planning quite a few more events, mostly in-person. “We have a bunch of programs coming up,” Dunn said, “all campus residence can join!”

RHA events can be found on both Owl Connect and via their social media posts on Instagram..

LGBTQ club is safe space for students

By Caitlin O'Halloran
Reporter

LGBTQI+ Prism works as a safe and supportive environment for students to meet, discuss issues regarding the community and educate.

"Pretty much LGBTQIA+ Prism, I usually say, is a social organization on campus that provides a welcoming and open environment for students who identify as being part of the community which also includes allies, which I think is super important," said club president and psychology major Joaquin Selmeski, a senior.

The organization provides students with a safe environment where they can discuss issues regarding sexual orientation, gender identity and an opportunity to step towards ending homophobia surrounding the community.

Before the pandemic, the club used to hold events including bake sales, trips to the True Colors Conference at UCONN and GLSEN Day of Silence, which is to spread awareness about the outcome of bullying of LGBTQ people.

"So right now, we just finished up our last meeting which was on Tuesday and we did a kind of educational meeting about asexuality because we felt like often times during the club, there was a focus more on gay and trans identities," said club

Secretary theatre major Ren Hoerner, a junior.

The club spends other weeks spending time playing games, watching movies together to help the club members make friends, learning about different identities and educate others on information regarding the community.

"In terms of the significance, I think a lot of the students who don't necessarily feel like they have a safe space to discuss certain things, the Prism community is that," said Rachel Furey, club advisor. "They're really energized, knowledgeable and really open people."

One big event that the club is hoping to be able to host this semester is their annual Drag Ball where they have drag performers brought to campus. If it can't be held in-person, they are working a way to make this an online-event for the students.

"Our members really like it because it's a fun event and a lot of people within the community and allies of the community like to see the drag culture, so we have been kind of planning that out," said Hoerner.

Within the community, the members all touched on the amount of respect that there is in the club for one another.

"I really have a lot of admiration and respect for the e-board members and the way that they run the meetings and create this sort of community," said Furey.

One event some of the members are working on for the club is a mixer with other universities that have organizations similar to the LGBTQ+ organization at Southern. This will help students create connections with people outside of the campus community.

"It's definitely worth all of the planning because our club members are always like 'Oh my god, this is so fun!' and can't wait to come back next year and there are a few members who will return for many meetings and everybody just makes friends that way," said Hoerner.

Clubs like LGBTQIA+ Prism are essential to have in schools and on campuses because they are student-led and advocate for an improved school climate. They can also educate the larger school community about LGBTQ+ issues and are there to support LGBT students as well as their allies, according to GLSEN, an American education organization.

Selmeski noted the club is always open to new members throughout the semester and can be reached through Owl Connect or their Instagram, @scsuprism.

Selmeski said, "Part of our whole mission is to really make sure, especially people in the LGBTQI+ community feel like they have a home and some kind of community here at Southern."



PHOTO | ROMA ROSITANI

Front of SAGE Center office in Adanti Student Center.



PHOTO | ROMA ROSITANI

Board in front of SAGE Center giving tips to maintain a healthy lifestyle.

Botany club sets up for April plant sale

By Madeline S. Scharf
Reporter

The Botany club is a fun, interactive club on campus. Botany is described as the study of plants, but in the club, it is more than just studying specimens.

The students get hands on experience with planting, growing plants, and nurturing plants.

"Right now, we are planning for the plant sale. We are currently sprouting seedlings," said Environmental System and Sustainability major Derek

Faulkner, a senior

Each member gets their hands dirty. From scooping dirt into planting the seedlings, there is a lot of work to be done to get ready.

The club has one main goal; for people to get a plant. "We want to provide every student with a plant," said president of the club Ermira Elezi. The club spends their Fridays preparing for the spring plant sale, scheduled for April 29. On this day, the club sets up a stand from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. in the rotunda, in front of the

library. Any student will be provided with a plant. The sale is based off donations and the club is willing to give away plants to those who cannot afford them.

Those involved with the Botany club have fun and learn more about different plants. "We learn fun facts about plants," said Elezi. "We also learn how to propagate plants." Propagating is described as the process of growing a new plant, from wither seeds or clippings from larger plants.

COVID has affected the Botany club, like many

other organizations. "We have a lot of work," said Elezi, "but we can only have five students in a room at a time." This is to ensure each member can keep six feet from one another and work safely in the environmental lab. Despite the difficult circumstances, Elezi is confident about the club's prospect. "It is hard, but we are getting it done," she said.

Even with these limitations, the students are still happy to be part of the club. "I have always loved plants," said history

major Marie Perez, a junior. "It is just nice to be around others who enjoy them as well."

The Botany club is open to anyone who wants to join; no prior knowledge needed. "I am an accounting major," Elezi said. To join the club, it is not necessary to have any science specific major; just an interest in plants.

"Anyone who likes plants should join this club," said Perez. "Even if you haven't worked with plants before, if you want to learn, you should join."

The community built

within the Botany club is also important. Faulkner speaks positively of his experience with everyone involved. "I have been very happy with the community here," said Faulkner, "and Silady has been a wonderful advisor."

Professor Rebecca Silady, who has a PhD in Plant Biology, supervises the club and help's answer members' questions.

Perez describes the environment of the club positively. "Everyone is so nice and friendly," said Perez, "We just have a good time and play with dirt."



PHOTO | MADELINE S. SCHARF

Botany President Ermira Elezi, gathering dirt for seedlings.



PHOTO | MADELINE S. SCHARF

Members work on identifying markers for plant sale.