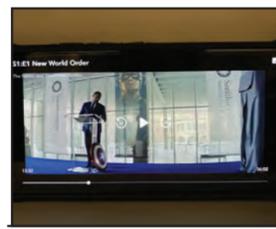




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SOUTHERN NEWS

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University's first fully online major Virtual sports management bachelor's degree coming in fall

By Madeline Scharf
Reporter

The first completely online bachelor's degree will be offered this fall. The sports management degree will be provided with both on-campus and online options.

"I act as a liaison between each department and the Board of Regents," said Trudy Milburn, the associate vice president for academic affairs, who has played a key role in establishing the online degree.

The Board of Regents oversees many aspects of Connecticut higher education. Among their various responsibilities, they control the construction and formation of new degrees.

James MacGregor, a faculty athletics representative, said he was working when sports management was first offered as a degree. It was originally only supposed to be available in-person.

"Back when we

were getting the sports management degree licensed and accredited in 2014 and former regent board member Larry DiNardo, who has since passed away, suggested we should also license it for an online delivery as well," said MacGregor.

At that time, MacGregor and others trying to get the degree running virtually did not do much to pursue it. But now the sports management degree is to be the first online bachelor's program at Southern.

To earn a degree, classes outside of one's specific major must also be taken. These are referred to as the Liberal Education Program credits, or LEP.

LEP Director of Advisement and Policy, Braxton Carrigan, also played a major role in putting together ways for students to earn a sports management degree online. "I ensure that there will be courses offered on-line in each area of the LEP for these

potential on-line degree students," said Carrigan.

Upon registering, students are offered many options for classes in different subjects and studies that will meet requirements.

With the online degree, however, there are limitations to this. "Not all courses will be offered in an on-line modality," said Carrigan. Despite the limited options, Carrigan assures there will be enough courses available so that the degree can be completed all online.

With the onset of the pandemic, many classes have been moved online. The transition seems to be positive for this upcoming online degree. "Faculty are now more comfortable with teaching online," said MacGregor. "They now feel more confident delivering content online."

Regarding how popular an all online degree will be, MacGregor said "I believe there is



PHOTO | DESTENY MARAGH

Virtual description of online major.

a demand, though it is hard to say as Southern does not have a benchmark." MacGregor has looked at other colleges in the New England area which have had an online presence and sensed a potential market. However, he said the launch "won't be without trial and error."

The start of an entirely online degree creates

many options for students. "It is important for students to have choices," said Milburn. With the added option of online classes, students now have more ways to gain their education.

The options extend to those who previously may not have been able to get a degree. "Students from anywhere can now achieve the 120 credits to gain a degree," said

MacGregor. This means more options for those unable to travel and out of state students who do not wish to move away.

There is great excitement for the start of this program. Milburn said she believes all online classes will go well: "we have several online master's and doctoral degrees and they have been well received by students."

Free clothing closet located in the Sage Center

By Sofia Rositani
Arts & Entertainment Editor

The SAGE Center is a safe haven for students who seek aid with their sexuality, gender, problems at home or any other situation.

SAGE stands for sexuality and gender equality, it is located in the Adanti Student Center on the third floor. The center offers many different resources including an open-door closet, a place where students can obtain free clothing.

"Our open-door closet, I believe, was

started a couple years ago. We saw that a lot of students were experiencing insecurity around clothing and they needed more access to free clothes," said the center's graduate intern, Aaron Morabito.

"Transgender and non-binary students weren't able to get clothes that kind of matched how they wanted to express their gender," said Morabito.

"Someone started the closet and now we have a full collection of clothes, accessories, and other things that students can have access to for free."

Morabito said that since the SAGE Center opened the open-door closet, they have noticed people coming in using it, but due to COVID-19, they have been noticing less traffic. Even though COVID-19 has impacted the university and lessened the number of students on campus, it is still open for those who need it or would like to donate clothing.

"The SAGE Center works to support our LGBTQ+ students as well as their allies. We do things like social and educational programming events.

Some of the resources and stuff that we have are open-door closet, we also have things like the preferred name policy, the map of all gender restrooms that are on campus, as well as links for the gender inclusive housing," said Morabito.

COVID-19 has made it harder to reach students on a virtual platform, but Morabito said they have been working to try and support students both virtually and in-person because they know many first-year students are online this year. Trying to reach out to the students has

been their main focus.

"Over the past few weeks as it's been getting warmer and COVID is starting to lift up a little bit. I've been seeing more students come by and access all of our resources," Morabito said.

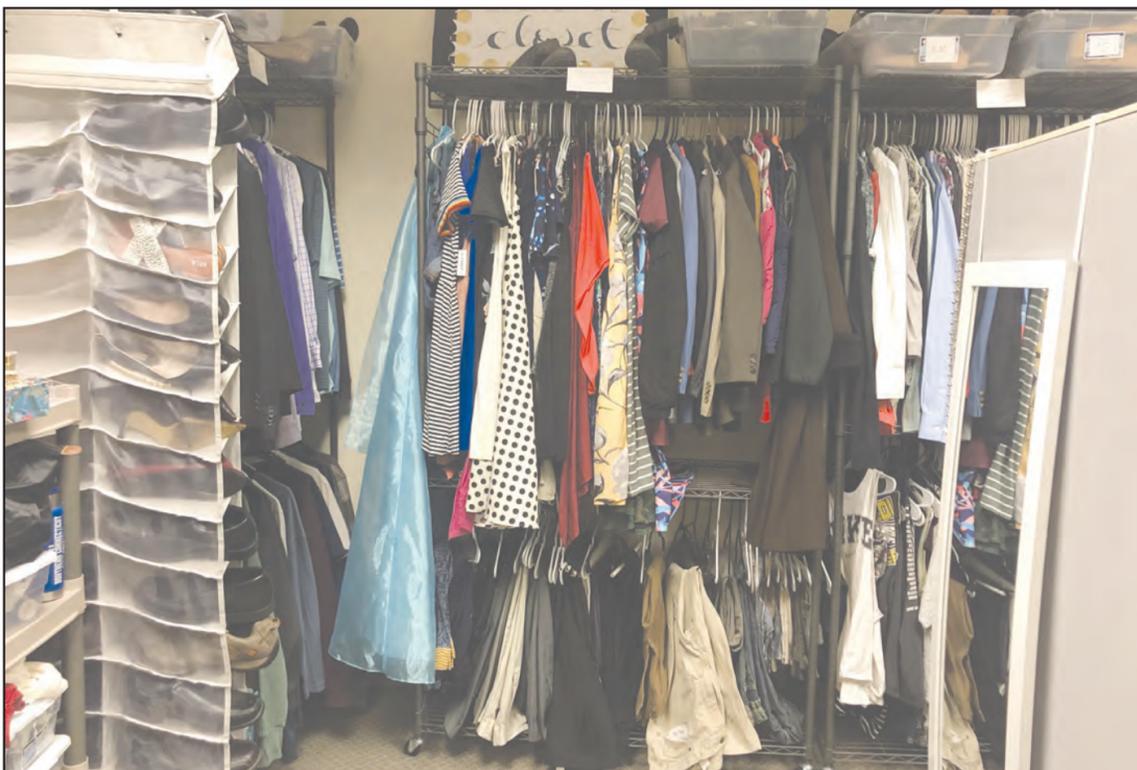
Theater major Samhain Perez, a freshman, said he is always at the SAGE Center and it is a regular haunt. He often visits when he has the chance.

"The clothing rack has definitely been a lifesaver. There have been times where I have an interview on campus and it turns out

I don't have things that match. Even for this past show, for 'Songs for a New World,' I needed a button up for the house and I didn't have any. It turns out I don't have things that match," Perez said.

For the recent musical, "Songs for a New World" Perez said he used the open-door closet to get a button down because at the time he didn't have one in the material he needed.

"I am really happy that it's an option on campus and that they keep it running its very well stocked," said Perez.



The SAGE center's free clothing rack.

PHOTO | ROMA ROSITANI



Aaron Morabito sitting inside of the SAGE center.

PHOTO | DESTENY MARAGH

Dining Hall delivering food to Students in quarantine

By Caitlin O'Halloran
Reporter

The university has been delivering food to students in quarantine through the school's food service provider, Sodexo.

"Through Microsoft forms, it outlines so that they can pick out what they want for lunch that day and then what they want for dinner to be delivered that night, so very much customizable to what they need," said Dining Services General Manager Tony DeLuca.

The link provided to the students in quarantine contains the menu for that day's dinner and the lunch. Students can choose what they would like to have the following day.

"If there's any special request like 'Hey, I don't want tomato on my sandwich' or whatever the case may be, we can customize each one based on the comments section that they can give us," said DeLuca.

On the sheet they are sent, students must fill out information regarding their quarantine building name and number. Their dietary restrictions and choose a drink. Options of at least five different dishes for dinner is given and at least four choices for lunch and a dessert.

"Process for meals, I think, has changed quite a few just so we can

maximize the process and make sure it's as efficient as possible," said Office of Residence Life graduate intern Leslie Garcia, "what's going on this semester is I'm notified of a student going into quarantine or isolation I then also take charge of relocating them from their residence hall and into a town house for the duration of their quarantine and isolation."

The list students in quarantine can choose

from also include vegetarian and vegan options, for those who have dietary restrictions/preferences.

"I like that they gave a lot of different things, like during lunch they'd drop off the lunch but also breakfast and dessert and different drinks like water, orange juice, stuff like that," said psychology major Andrew Keeton, a senior who was in quarantine in Neff Hall for two weeks.

Some of the options that students can choose from are a few of the same items that they could pick if they were eating in the dining halls in-person.

"Obviously, we can't offer all the variety we have upstairs, but you know if they'd rather have something a little unhealthy like a cheeseburger or a pizza or something like that or as opposed to what the main entrée is that night, they can kind of pick and

choose from there," said DeLuca.

The process was altered from the beginning of the semester where students filled out sheets for their food in the upcoming days, which left students just moving in with no meals, to the process of them filling out the forms in the morning and getting their food that same evening.

"We're not perfect, we've stumbled a little bit throughout the process

just like we've tried to perfect the process but we do everything we can to make sure that it's right and we're doing it right and the good news is, if there's something wrong they can call over and we can correct it very quickly," said DeLuca.

The dining hall follows local health department protocols and food is checked for its temperature before being sent out. The dorm or townhouse where students are quarantining have bins set up outside to keep the food in where it is protected from outside germs, then students can pick their food up from the bin.

"I think the hardest piece probably is just the communication between the testing center, the school and us, so that we don't miss anybody," said Dining Services Marketing Manager Liz Floyd. "We make sure that we have all the information we need and that all the information that we need to send out gets to the right people and comes back to us and everything."

Floyd noted the dining hall's appreciation for feedback regarding questions or concerns from both students and parents so their team can address the issue that was a problem before it became a problem for another student.



Dining Services General Manager Tony DeLuca and Marketing Manager Liz Floyd.

PHOTO | CAITLIN O'HALLORAN

University experiences budget cuts due to COVID-19

By Madeline Scharf
Reporter

Keeping a university up and running during a pandemic is a great expense. In October 2020, there were fears surrounding the budget cut that would affect Connecticut State Universities.

The budget cuts for the CSCU schools initially sparked controversy. According to the CT Mirror, CSCU President Mark Ojakian asked the governor for a bailout of around \$69 million.

But in the five months since this cut, worry has diminished. Benjamin Barnes, Chief Financial Officer of

CSCU schools, spoke about how budget cuts were the right direction to take. "A lot of spending that would normally occur has not happened," said Barnes.

"Costs have naturally been reduced under the pandemic," said Barnes. The loss of many in-person activities, like teacher conferences and school-funded trips, has made the financial burden on the school a lot lighter.

In addition to the normal spending cut, the retirement age for many teachers has been reached. "There is currently a hiring freeze in place, as it takes a long

time to hire faculty," said Barnes, "and the university has not necessarily been filling these missing positions."

Budget cuts also worked in favor for CSCU schools, because some people choose to not enroll in college at all due to COVID-19. "Enrollment went down about 5%," said Barnes.

The loss in tuition and mounting expenses for PPE and COVID-19 testing put a strain on the school's \$234.4 million budget. The federal government has stepped in to offer aid. "The federal funding is a source of comfort

for both students and the institution," said Barnes.

The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act of 2021 put into place many benefits. "A lot of federal funding gives assistance to students," said Barnes. "It is also to reimburse lost revenue."

The yearly budget is around \$15 million more than last year. That additional money comes from quite a few different sources. "Around \$115 million is in tuition fees," said Barnes. "About \$43 million comes from state taxes, and \$45 million in fringe benefits. This year,

about \$11 million comes from housing, \$6 million from food, and the remainder from school stores and renting space out."

Most of the university's funding comes from tuition, so the 5% drop in enrollment was noticeable. However, Barnes assures that apart from some minor adjustments, "tuition is to be pretty much frozen at its current rate," said Barnes. "Universities are very mindful not to raise tuition, they understand now is not the time."

Though there are fears for the universities' long term

financial health, the university does not want to put pressure on students and raise tuition.

From the additional money provided by the federal government to the normal amount provided through revenue lanes, the university seems to be in a good situation. "The university will remain relatively stable," said Barnes.

There is hope for the future. "The pandemic has left us all hesitant to make any decisions," said Barnes, "and people are reluctant to predict, but there is optimism. We want to be able to function normally next fall."

President Joe Bertolino speaks at SGA meeting

By Sofia Rositani
Arts & Entertainment Editor

By Ellis McGinley
Copy Editor

Sarah Gossman, student government president, presented university president Joe Bertolino with questions from the Student Government Association (SGA) representatives and student body.

Questions concerned the future of COVID-19 testing on campus, isolation housing, diversity, the university hiring freeze and more regarding next semester's student life and university culture.

"We're not going to take anything away. Whatever we're doing now, we're going to continue. In fact, we're being encouraged by DPH to encourage that testing anyway," Bertolino

said, referring to the university's anticipated fall COVID-19 procedures.

"I think that's going to alleviate a lot of student anxiety towards going back in the fall, knowing that whatever COVID regulation we have now will be continued on," Gossman said.

The university has required free testing for all residents and offered it to commuters as necessary. But the testing schedule has changed before. Last semester, students were tested in randomized groups: now, all residents must be tested every week.

"Today I was told that maybe, out of all our residents, maybe four tested positive out of twelve hundred. So, we've been doing well," Bertolino said.

Regarding COVID-19 vaccinations, he said "I would be careful to

assume that by 'x' date, everyone that wanted to be vaccinated will be vaccinated." The university also cannot require students to receive the COVID-19 vaccine. Bertolino said, "trying to get an appointment for some folks has been a bit of a challenge."

His first dose is scheduled "for next Sunday" and will be publicized on his social media. Members of the student body expressed interest in the potential benefits of Bertolino making his vaccination public to potentially alleviate student fears around vaccines.

"We're thinking about partnering with a third party to see if we can have a vaccination site on campus. I'd really like that, but I can't guarantee it. Again, if we can make that happen - and it wouldn't just be for

students, it'd be for students, staffers, community members - if we can provide easier access for students, that certainly doesn't hurt. That's one of the things we're exploring."

Bertolino was also asked about efforts made by administration officials to diversify university faculty, particularly given the ongoing hiring freeze.

"Even though there is a hiring freeze, that doesn't mean we don't hire people... Look, the truth of the matter is we are always talking about the diversification of the administration, of the faculty, of the staff, of our students, and it's been a challenge for us as an institution. Personally, it's frustrating at times. But that is one of the reasons why we hired vice president Ariza," he said, referring

to Vice President of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Diane Ariza.

For the President's report, Gossman said that there is an approval of an INQ class for students who are struggling with their classes. This class will help students who are academically struggling with their courses and skills such as time management.

Nichole Henderson, Director of First Year Experience, implemented it for the following Fall semester.

Gossman's report also said there will be a list of courses based around racial injustice. The Diversity Equity and Inclusion department will be sending out links for students who are interested in these courses to register for next term. These classes will range from English courses, to STEM courses,

all based on racial injustice.

According to the Vice President of SGA Madison Miceli, the Chairperson of the World Language department Resha Cardone said in a meeting with Miceli and Gossman that many students have liked the online courses in the language department, so they will continue with online, hybrid, and in-person courses. For the STAMP test, Cardone has noticed less students taking it due to it being online, so she thinks it is because it is not offered on campus that less student has been taking it.

There also may be future talks on eco-friendly utensils at Adanti Student Center and Conn. Hall, according to SGA member Brandon Lovene.

Allowing clubs to have more in-person events



By Abby Epstein
Managing editor
These are the opinions of The Southern News Editorial Staff.

The pandemic shut down the country over a year ago and getting back to normal is still in question. In the last recent weeks, clubs on campus have been hosting more in-person events, slowly making their way back to normal.

This is a great sight to see, that students around campus are able to socialize with each other face-to-face. Attending an event online has nowhere near the competitiveness and energy an event in-person has.

The Residence Hall Association (RHA) is hosting

multiple events in-person this week for RHA Hump Week. They are finally able to get students to interact with each other outside of a computer screen. RAs that I have interviewed before mention how hard it is to keep the residents involved when events are online. Many students already have online classes and do not want to sit in front of a computer longer than they have to.

Having in-person events gives students the opportunity to leave their dorms and step away from the

computer screen. Along with RHA, the Office of Student Involvement is holding more in-person events. The Recreation and Fitness Center has been holding tournaments in Moore Field House for different sports on Tuesdays. It is nice to see different organizations starting to get back to how their events used to be.

Governor Ned Lamont has increased the number of people that can be in one area, this gives the clubs more breathing room as the guidelines for capacity have become more lenient.

On top of the capacity limits being increased, Lamont has announced, starting April 5, anyone 16 or older can receive the vaccine.

Capacity increase, college students able to receive the vaccine and residential students getting tested once a week are all valid reasons to allow for events to happen on campus. Yes, social distancing protocols should be kept in place along with mask wearing, but with all these precautions, it is time to start migrating back to in-person activities.

Not every event should

be held in-person as COVID is still around. One example is club meetings. They do not need to be in-person even though club members wish they could see each other not on a computer screen.

The online world is what people have adapted to, but many students are looking forward to being back on campus for classes and getting back to some type of normalcy. Having in-person events and allowing people to socialize without a barrier is one way to start getting back to normal.

Fight against COVID-19 should not be politicized

By Jose Vega
Contributor

During this unprecedented time for the world, it is becoming increasingly clear that the fight against COVID-19 will be looked back at as a political issue instead of public health.

With the federal government tasked with pushing us forward through this pandemic, I like to believe people are curious as to why legislators can't seem to agree on emergency relief spending.

Be able to push personal feelings aside, especially when it comes down to the components of the relief

packages. Particularly as the federal government is spending trillions of dollars on preserving the backbone of our economy.

It never ceases to amaze as a new stimulus package is announced, the news cycle is set into a frenzy of speculation and more importantly blame. It occurred when FOX News got wind of Democrats opposing the original CARES Act and when CNN heard no Republican senators were in support of the America Rescue Plan.

All three of the emergency economic relief bills passed by Congress were meant to keep the backbone of America's economy from breaking, not for pilot programs or

cutting funding to handle future costs of the packages.

In no small part thanks to the media, congresspeople continue to fight amongst themselves, creating further division within our nation's Capitol. It is almost considered taboo to speak of this divide, especially when the ideological extremes would wholeheartedly disagree with that opinion.

But both sides of the political aisle have had their fair share of controversy when it comes down to where exactly the money is allocated, either in the form of hidden agenda items or bringing up party lines when it comes to cost.

In the most recent \$1.9 trillion dollar America

Rescue Plan, there were hidden agenda items within the original proposed plan by leading Democratic officials. Most likely, people are still unaware of the original draft of the bill, where there were billions of dollars set aside for two pilot bridge projects in California and New York.

According to a CNN article, "the original bill, passed by the House, included \$1.425 billion in funding to help with transit rail capital projects, including the extension of the Bay Area Rapid Transit line from San Jose to Santa Clara, California... The relief package will also no longer include funding for the Seaway International Bridge in upstate New York."

The Seaway International Bridge in New York was even proposed by the Trump Administration and supported by Republican congresspeople.

People who have at least a little experience with policy writing understand this is a common practice. The ability to have a hidden agenda behind the policy you propose is how politicians function and get around any red tape that would, in any other situation, block their proposal.

While the transportation and construction jobs that would have hypothetically been created would have been positive, the Senate parliamentarian ruled against it. These projects

would be started with the funding and as they are not ongoing, it was not categorized as emergency relief. Republican congresspeople also have been clearly opposed to such big spending in this third economic relief package, citing the cost being too great.

The purpose of these economic relief packages is for more money towards fighting COVID-19, helping families in need, supporting our small businesses, getting our students back to school, and returning life to some essence of normalcy: not for allowing politicians to have hidden agendas in a 600-page bill the average voter won't read in its entirety.

St. Patrick's Day is a lie, but at least it is fun

By Ellis McGinley
Copy Editor

Another Saint Patrick's Day has come and gone, its festivities subdued by the pandemic - but not yet quashed. Everywhere, some small recognition could be found: Conn Hall put up shamrocks! The Chicago River went green! President Biden wore his lucky tie!

While I spent it in my PJs hacking at midterms, St. Patty's is of personal significance. I am the product of a sprawling Irish-Catholic brood: on my mother's side, a great-great-great-

something grandfather was deported during the famine, and more would come to settle in Maine and Massachusetts. On my father's, some went to Nova Scotia, while others scattered fleeing the Irish Civil War.

So I think I have the right to say it: Saint Patrick's Day is a corned-beef-and-cabbage-scented lie.

First, St. Patrick wasn't Irish. He was born in Roman Britain, although the land is now part of Scotland, and brought to Ireland in captivity where he was forced to tend sheep. While enslaved, he found Christianity, and at

age 20 claimed to receive a "dream from God," according to the aptly titled Catholic.org.

St. Patrick would later return to Ireland as a missionary and bishop. He took some nature-based rituals from native practices, like sun icons and bonfires, and "chased the snakes out of Ireland" - a phrase speculated to refer not to real snakes, but paganism, which featured braided hair and snake-like tattoos.

Within 200 years, Ireland was Christian. And St. Patrick?

Well, not a saint. He was never formally canonized.

After his efforts, much of Ireland's native faith was lost, as the Druids were oral storytellers. Anecdotes like Brigid - the blacksmithing, poet-goddess - became more "palatable" as St. Brigit, and Ostara, the spring equinox, melted into Easter.

Not-quite-St. Patrick's original color was blue, and only became green to better match the Isle - and while we're on Irish imagery: the shamrock may grow over the Isle, but the national symbol is actually a harp or cláirseach. It was a symbol of resistance against the Church good ol' Patrick laid the roots for.

How did we derive the ultimate party from a bishop in blue? Irish-American immigrants. St. Patrick's Day was once a quiet religious day, but when famine, unrest and accursed British pushed us out, it came with.

At the time, upper-class Americans famously didn't care for the Irish - 'need not apply' signs may ring a bell. It wasn't until the Civil War public opinion changed, as we enlisted en masse for the cause. In the in-between, we turned St. Patty's from a celebration of religion and folk heroes a celebration of being Irish - America didn't like us and

Ireland couldn't take us, so what were we to do?

Generations removed, I appreciate the sentiment. I can't speak for the true Irish, but even if it means I must look at hideous 'Kiss Me I'm Irish' shirts, I'm glad to have a day to reflect on how much times have changed, preferably over a Shamrock Shake and soda bread.

Next St. Patty's, have fun. The holiday may be as fake as the green of your drink, but the world will be a different place then, and I suspect we'll all need a day to pretend we have no troubles. What better day than this?

SOUTHERN NEWS

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Farnham Programming Space events



Students participating in rock painting while conversing with graduate interns.



Students engaged in a game of Kahoot at chocolate goodie bag event.



Public health major Maggie Mahoney, freshman, making a chocolate goodie bag.



Jillian Valeta, junior, at Wellness Rock Painting Event in Farnham Programming Space

By Roma Rositani
Photo Editor

Last weekend, Farnham Programming Space had events for students to attend.

Students who took part in the chocolate goodie bag event were able to participate in a game of Kahoot, along with making their own personalized bag of treats.

At the 'Kindness Rocks' event, graduate interns were able to discuss the effects kindness has on students and their mental health while painting and drawing on rocks.



Graduate intern talking to students about mental health at Kindness Rock Event.



Array of chocolate laid out for students to take at the chocolate goodie bag event.

PHOTOS | BRIA KIRKLIN



Softball continues early season success Owls improve to 5-1 record; team's hottest start since 2014

By Edward Rudman
Sports Writer

The Owls softball team is off to a hot start, winning three out of four games in a weekend series against Le Moyne College, improving their record to 5-1 overall and 3-1 in Northeast 10 conference play.

"It feels really good, it's a great start to the season," said infielder Sara Buscetto, a graduate student. "I wish we took all the games, but you know, it was good to get that loss out of the way and we're hot right now, so we're going to keep it rolling into the week."

The Owls played a total of four games during the series against Le Moyne, split between two doubleheaders, one on Saturday and the other on Sunday.

They won their first game on Saturday 3-2. Going into the bottom of the seventh inning, the Owls were down 2-1 but were able to get a walk off win. They scored two runs in the final inning.

The Owls dropped their second game of the

doubleheader on Saturday, their first loss of the season. Le Moyne put together a strong offensive outing and won the game 12-7. Heading into Sunday, the team was ready to end the weekend on a high note, as they won the first game 5-3 and the second one 8-4.

"We really felt energized top to bottom throughout the entire weekend and yes, the days are long, but it's a mental thing," said Buscetto. "I think we're all in it together and we all picked each other up when started to have those sluggish moments and that made the difference for us this time."

Buscetto had six hits on 13 at bats throughout the series and notched eight stolen bases. With that total, Buscetto moved into sole possession of second place in career steals as an Owl, with 56. Nicole Buch holds the school record at 64, according to Southern's athletic website. Buscetto has 11 stolen bases through the first six games of the season.

Offensively, the Owls are firing on all cylinders, as they've scored 36 runs in

their first six games, most since they scored 44 in 2012.

The team made sure they were prepared to show they can be a contender in the conference this year.

"Our situational hitting is really great right now,"

said Interim Head Coach Christine Akcer. "We worked on that in practice all week, so it was just people doing their jobs and putting the ball in play, being productive, and not letting those 1,2,3 innings happen to us on offense."

Pitcher Jazmyn Martinez, a senior, got the start on the mound for games one and three of the series, winning both her outings and improving her season record to 3-0.

See softball Page 6

No fans in stands

Column By Mike Neville
Sports Editor

As the NBA and MLB have just begun to open their doors for spectators, the same cannot be said for Southern.

The Northeast 10 Conference mandated a spring policy that will put a halt on fan attendance to all games.

This mandate includes family and friends of the student athletes for both home and visiting teams. This also includes media personnel like me, who will need to adjust to covering games online this spring.

The only way to access the games will be from a livestream. This presents its own level of challenges. How strong will the connection be to view games and how will camera angles appear?

Journalists are not the only ones that will need to adjust to these circumstances. Parents of student athletes will have to cheer from the computer rather than the stands.

Scrolling through the comment sections on Southern's Instagram athletic page showed the distaste of many parents and fans.

Division I schools are in the beginning of March Madness with limited spectators. Connecticut opens its doors back up to 100 percent capacity on March 19. If top level schools and high schools can do it, then why can't the NE10 not do the same?

Vaccinations are becoming available each day to more individuals and people are becoming less susceptible to COVID-19. On April fifth, vaccines will be open to those 16 years of age and up.

Parents who have been vaccinated should be allowed to attend games. Those who are not should also be allowed if a six-foot distance is maintained.

In the statement put out by the NE10, the university will decide if faculty members and staff will be permitted to attend "home" athletic games.

This needs to be reevaluated by the NE10. I remember as a former athlete growing up the best part of playing was the fan attendance like friends and especially family.

The Owls softball team is off to a hot start and track, lacrosse and baseball are soon to follow if all pans out. It is a very good time to be a fan of the Owls right now.



Outfielder Ally Patrella scoring for the Owls in a game vs Felician.

PHOTO COURTESY | SOUTHERNCTOWLS.COM

Women's lacrosse opening games postponed

By Edward Rudman
Sports Writer

The women's lacrosse team held an intrasquad scrimmage at Jess Dow Field on Wednesday, March 17, in response to their first scheduled game of the season against University of New Haven postponed due to a positive COVID-19 case on the Chargers program.

"At first, we were all extremely heartbroken because we were so ready and prepared," said attacker Hailey Gordon, a senior. "Your mental state is so important during these games too. People have to mentally prepare and people have to get through their routines that they do before games and what not. That's what we were all doing and then Kevin told us that we weren't having the game and we were heartbroken, but that'll be happening a lot this season and we can't let it effect our mentality."

Even though a scrimmage took place instead of an official conference game, the event was still treated as if it was the real deal. The game was livestreamed on the Owls' athletic website and referees officiated the scrimmage.

The team broke into two squads, blue and white.

They played a full 60 minute game. Stats were not provided by the athletic department.

"We knew that we had to treat it as a game because we were all so excited to get back out there," said Gordon. "The game having refs and announcers, it's really what energizes you. So it felt so good to actually be back on the field and putting our all into it and show what this long practice time has made for us."

With 12 freshmen on the squad, it was an opportunity for a large class of first year players to get a feel of the collegiate level and to play somewhat of a real game with their teammates.

"It was very exciting because us freshmen haven't played in so long, not even a scrimmage before this. It was very exciting to all go out together and push through it. It was really fun," said midfielder Payton Papa, a freshman. "The whole game the upperclassmen were all helping us, even the upperclassmen on the other team. They were just giving us tips and helping us through it."

Papa was able to score multiple times in the scrimmage, something she said helped her build

confidence during her first collegiate experience.

"I was nervous at first but then once I got the first goal," said Papa. "I gained more confidence and I worked harder throughout the whole game to hopefully get more."

Although no stats were posted, the athletic department released an

album of photos can be found on their website.

"Southern Connecticut State University women's lacrosse's non-conference matchup at Felician slated for Saturday, Mar. 20, 2021 will not be played as scheduled, per the established institutional and Northeast 10 Conference protocols," said the athletic

department in a press release on March 20. "The Owls' NE10 matchup against Pace scheduled for Wednesday, Mar. 24 has also been postponed."

As of now, no decision has been made on when the postponed games with New Haven and Felician will be rescheduled. The next game is scheduled for March 27.



Captain attacker Bailey Takacs, junior, high fives her teammates from the blue team before the team's scrimmage.

PHOTO COURTESY | WWW.SOUTHERNCTOWLS.COM

Opening baseball series postponed

By Mike Neville
Sports Editor

The Owls' baseball season opener will have to wait another week, as last weekend's series against Saint Anselm was postponed, according to a press release from

the university's athletic department.

Both the outings on March 20 and 21 would have been doubleheaders, making that the first four games the Owls lose off their schedule, at least for now.

The games were postponed due to "the

established institutional and conference health protocols," according to the release. The makeup dates for the series are yet to be announced.

Head coach Tim Shea could not be reached for comment, nor could any players. With Sports Information Director Ken Sweeten cited it as a potential "privacy issue."

Now, the Owls' next games are scheduled for Saturday, March 27 in New York against Adelphi University. They

will visit the Panthers for a four-game set with doubleheaders on Saturday and Sunday. The opener on Saturday, if everything holds up, will be the team's first game in over a year.

Adelphi will be looking to write the wrongs from the last time they faced the Owls.

The last time the Owls traveled to Adelphi was on May 7, 2019, almost two years ago, where they upset the top-seeded Panthers in the first round of the NE10 Conference

Tournament 9-6. This was the team's first victory in the conference tournament since 2011.

Three home runs were hit in that game by the Owls, including one by catcher Michael DeMartino. Shortstop Jim Palmer had a career-high five hits.

After Adelphi, the Owls will have matchups with Pace, followed by American International, then New Haven taking them through the month of April. The games against Pace and AIC will be at home.

Softball

She pitched a complete game in game one, allowing one run. In game three, Martinez pitched 5.2 innings and allowed three runs scored. She struck out 10 batters in total throughout her two starts, five in each game.

Three freshmen made their collegiate debut on Saturday: pitcher and outfielder Rachel Miller, outfielder Emily Lange and infielder Katrina Roy. Miller pitched 2.2 innings as a reliever in game two, while Lange came in as a pinch hitter and Roy as a pinch runner.

"A lot of players were able to play today and get playing time to see how it is and get some extra reps," said outfielder Liz DeRosa, a junior.

Looking ahead, the Owls have an out of conference

doubleheader today, Wednesday, March 24, against Franklin Pierce University. The first game is scheduled to start at 3 p.m.

Their next NE10 matchup will be against Adelphi University in a four game weekend series on March 27 and 28.

"Obviously we want to keep it rolling. It's going to take a lot of focus for us and we kind of have to prove ourselves in the conference," said Akcer. "I think the girls are ready to prove people wrong and just make a statement this year, especially after having last year taken away from us when we felt like that was our year, so we're definitely trying to make this our year."

The Owls currently hold the top spot in the Southwest Division going into next weeks games. Adelphi University is a close second.



PHOTO COURTESY | WWW.SOUTHERNCTOWLS.COM

Members of the softball team celebrating a post game victory versus Felician.



PHOTO COURTESY | WWW.SOUTHERNCTOWLS.COM

Sara Buscetto hits a ball to the outfield vs Felician



PHOTO COURTESY | WWW.SOUTHERNCTOWLS.COM

First baseman Jayden Delaporta waiting on the on deck circle versus Felician.

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

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- News Director
- Webmaster

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- Features Editor (2)
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- Asst. Photo Editor
- Layout Editor
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- Copy Editor
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- Promotion Manager
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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

Mental health check in's brought back

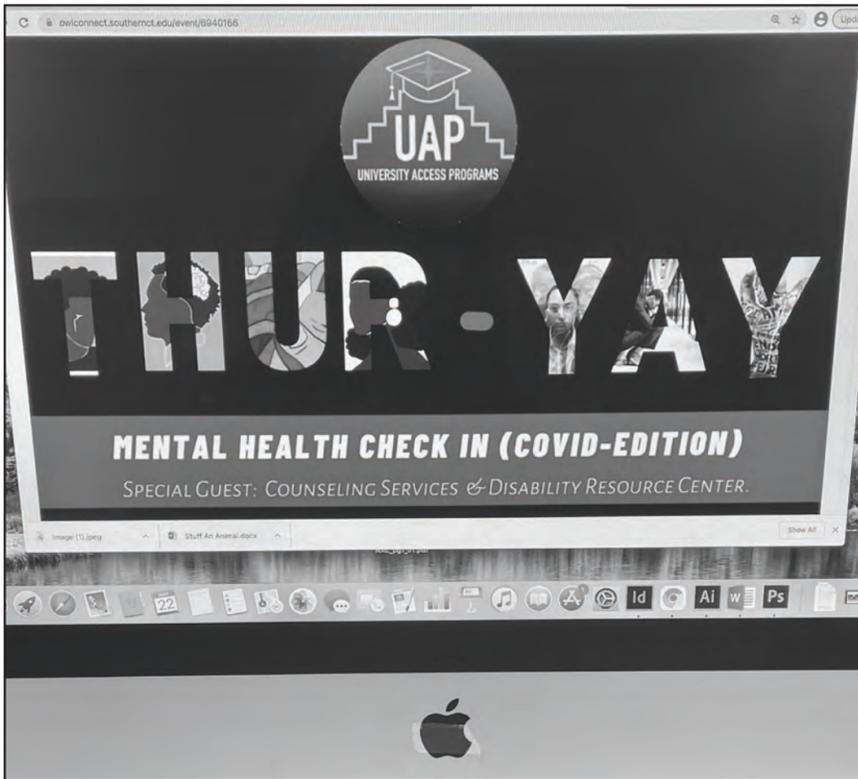


PHOTO | BERNADOTTE SUFKA

UAP mental health check in flyer on OwlConnect.

By Donovan Wilson
Reporter

COVID-19 has heightened mental health issues, which are already bad for

college students.

Last Thursday, the university put on a mental health check-in, which is a workshop open to students where mental health can be discussed

and tools to help with mental health are shared. This workshop was put on by the University Access Program and their Counseling Program Outreach. These events have

been run in the past and just now brought back due to popular demand.

"I picked this week to bring this back because it was supposed to be spring break so I figured we should check in," said Kyle Augustine, the host.

To kick and settle everyone in, a video was played about the mental impact of COVID-19. The video focused on the story of a woman with OCD whose mental state has gotten even worse during COVID-19 due to her heightened germophobia.

This video tied everything together as a solid introduction, as much of the conversation focused on each individual's mental health relationship with COVID-19.

Augustine hosted a Mentimeter poll to gather answers from the audience and spur conversation about how everyone's lives are going right now. The first question focused on how everyone feels mentally right now and the general consensus is that they are feeling happy but also overwhelmed with everything going on right now. The second question focused on how the audience copes

with stress and the general consensus was that physical activity is what has been creating mental relief for a lot of students and staff during the pandemic.

"It takes up to four weeks to get an appointment, because clients we would only see during a crisis and move on can't move on anymore because the crisis is now ongoing," said Randolph Brooks, a member of the panel.

There was also a focus on discussing two separate mental health tools students can use. The first one is a nationally renowned service known as To Write Love On Her Arms which focuses on creating a general uplifting message and providing resources to lift people's spirits. This organization has been around for a very long time and was originally inspired by a large volume of self-harm rising in the alternative community.

The other app tool mentioned was Liberation. It is a meditation app that works much in the way of apps like Calm but it focuses entirely on peo-

ple of color and liberating them in ways that tailor to the issues they go through day to day. Obviously, there are many resources like the aforementioned Calm that can be used by anyone that will provide the same results and help to relax your mind at the end of the day.

"When it comes to how we're feeling right now mentally, what's important to remember is what are the things we can control and what are the things that we can't," said Niasia Mercado, member of the panel.

The closing section of this workshop was dedicated to thanking everyone for coming and celebrating the fact that we're here and working through it. All the students who attended were offered goodie bags that contained water, juice and snacks to ensure students are properly taking care of themselves.

The bag also contained a thank-you note to show the department's appreciation for students continued support. The students pick up the goodie bags in the departments office as this event was not in person.

Stuffed animal event

By Caitlin O'Halloran
Reporter

The Programs Council held an event on where students could partake in stuffing animals at the Farnham Programming Space on Friday, March 19th.

"We've mostly been having virtual events at the beginning of the semester because of COVID, but now we're starting to be able to do more in-person events but still with safe measures," said senior weekend programmer and biochemistry major Matt Berry, a junior.

Students were allowed to sign up for a time slot every 30 minutes from 12 p.m. to 2 p.m. to build either a stuffed fox or polar bear. After students picked their stuffed animal, they were given a Ziploc bag with stuffing to put into their animal, a little star, and a birth certificate so they could fill out the animal's name, date of birth and put their names as the person who made them.

"This year has obviously been unique, and we've done so much virtually to try to keep students engaged and keep them excited and kind of replicate the experience that they would typically get to the best of our abilities, so we're in a place now where we can kind of transition — at least start to transition — back to some in person programs and get some face-to-face interaction," said Assistant Director of Student Involvement and Leadership Development, Eric Lacharity.

Due to the pandemic, many events the Programs Council would have traditionally held in-person have transitioned



PHOTO | CAITLIN O'HALLORAN

Stuffed animals are placed on table for students.

to an online format. But with the warmer weather approaching, they hope to have more in-person events that can be held outdoors where students can get involved in a more traditional and typical fashion.

Berry noted that of all of the events that they try to put together for students, they tend to enjoy the stress-relieving activities that the Programs Council has to offer, like the animal stuffing ones. It is also beneficial to students because as long as they sign up in time, they are able to get their stuffed animals for free.

Out of 88 spots available for students to sign up for this event, 64 students signed up for the four different time slots that were available.

"They always request this on our Instagram," said weekend programmer and social work major Jenna Dearborne, a senior. "We always do polls or meetings, we have body meetings with students who are not even in ProCon, they just want to hear their voice on campus, and they'll tell us 'we want this, we want stuffed animal events' and they're the ones that live here, so we try to meet their

needs."

The Programs Council will be offering many other upcoming events, including Sticker By Number, Virtual Kahoot, Donuts and Kahoot and many other fun events for students to sign up for and take part in.

Students are able to keep up with the events that are being held by the Programs Council by either checking in on their Owl Connect, or by heading over to their Instagram that is updated regularly @ programs_council_scsu.

The mission of the Programs Council organization is to give students a memorable experience throughout their time at Southern by providing events where students can engage and interact with one another.

"End of March going into April, you're going to see a lot more in-person programs, a lot more experiential things happening on our campus. So we feel really strongly about that and our programmers obviously represent our student body and our student community and what they want, what they need, so this was all their idea," said Lacharity.

How to start a new club

By Donovan Wilson
Reporter

The process of getting a new club off the ground may be somewhat long, but it is straightforward. With the help of student involvement, you can easily get your club recognized as soon as possible.

The university thrives on the connectivity of its campus. One major component is clubs and organizations. Starting a new club is a pretty long process as it is designed to weed out the clubs that aren't wholeheartedly dedicated. However, the Office of Student Involvement and Leadership Development is here to help along the clubs who are dedicated to the process and need assistance.

"We are always here as a department to help any student with any part of the process of starting a new club on campus," said Daphne Alston, assistant director of the office of student involvement and leadership development.

All of the info needed to start a new club on this campus is within the Owl Connect website. There is a tab, "How to Create a New Club," which contains all of the proper documents, including the constitution papers. The biggest component is the document that walks you through all of the steps you must complete in order to become a full-fledged club at Southern.

The first step to becoming a club is to attend a new club workshop, which is run by Daphne Alston and put on by Student Involvement. Attendance is taken at these meetings because they are mandatory so



PHOTO | BERNADOTTE SUFKA

Poster flyer of starting a new club on OwlConnect.

students must make sure they attend the meeting. The next step in the process is to complete and submit a new club proposal from where students detail their club and place down two contacts.

"I am here looking to start a local based Greek sorority," said Evelyn Folsom-Bertrand, a southern student and an attendee of a recent new meeting workshop event.

Step three is split into three separate sections that can be done in any order and one of those is to build the constitution of your club, which there are templates for on Owl Connect as mentioned previously.

Students also have to choose an advisor for their club, a full-time staff member at the school, and have them sign an advisor agreement form.

The final component is to hold a student interest event to gauge interest in the club they are proposing and determine if there is

enough interest to move forward. This step is usually encouraged to go first in step 3, as it would help students decide if they even want to continue to go forward.

Students are then asked to revise their work. The next step is to propose the club to the student government association, which will vote on whether or not it will be officially recognized.

From there, prospective founders receive an official recognition letter and are added into Owl Connect. The club can then begin functioning normally.

The final part of this whole process is to enter the provisional period, a normal club, just without budgeting from the school and funding for trips. This lasts for two full semesters or one full academic year.

"I'm here with Evelyn, we are forming this club together because it's been so long since someone has started something like this here," said Karyme Serrano.

Tabletop uses virtual platforms for meeting

By Donovan Wilson
Reporter

Tabletop is one of the many clubs on campus thrown upside down due to COVID-19, but thanks to Discord, they were able to find new life.

Tabletop originally started as LARP or Live Action Role Play, a scenario played in real life through each member's characters. Due to general interests shifting towards tabletop board games such as "Dungeons & Dragons" and "Magic: the Gathering," the club changed from LARP to Tabletop.

"After the shift to being Tabletop, the club became much more of a social based club," vice president, Leo Palumberi said.

Even though a lot of changes happened before COVID-19, such as the club shifting to a more casual setting, the most change came with the pandemic. Everything halted when COVID-19 stopped mostly everything. The version of the club that exists today is "unrecognizable," Palumberi said.

Everything is now entirely online, as are most clubs on campus. As a result, everything has become less personable.

Although how the club is run and conducted has changed drastically, a lot of what was happening before is still happening. It is all out of Discord rather than in-person. A major component of the online activities has been "Dungeons & Dragons" because they have their own online service. Along with the Steam game "Tabletop Simulator," which allows the player to play any board or card game, making the club compatible with Discord.

"It is a constant trial and error process and everything is changing constantly," art education major Sara Lareau, a freshman, said.

Lareau is the main person running Tabletop's discord.

Moving online caused many obstacles regardless of how things may seem to be going. Most of that lies within the social aspects of the club as mentioned by Palumberi. It is hard for all the members to feel comfortable online

amongst a lot of people they may have never met face to face. The first solution to this issue was creating a Discord server.

"We decided to operate out of Discord even though it's a little less personal," Pulamberi said. "We're trying to build a culture on Discord, even though it has not been easy."

Previous to COVID-19, Tabletop did have a Discord.

"It's getting cleaner and it had problems with organizing. We're at a pretty good state with the Discord in organization," Lareau said.

She was brought in for her experience with Discord and was utilized to get the Discord to where it is today, Palumberi said. The server started out as a large group of unspecified channels, but Lareau helped to craft channels dedicated to each game.

"When COVID struck, we had to move to a platform and try to make it accessible for everyone," secretary Ryan Kirkpatrick, a sophomore, said.

There is a lot that goes into running a club

most students do not experience. Many of Tabletop's responsibilities fall into Kirkpatrick's lap. One of his responsibilities

is to keep a steady head count on every member. His other major responsibility is filing paperwork for the club.

Kirkpatrick said, "If someone ever plays a game online that's meant to be in person, make sure you do your research."

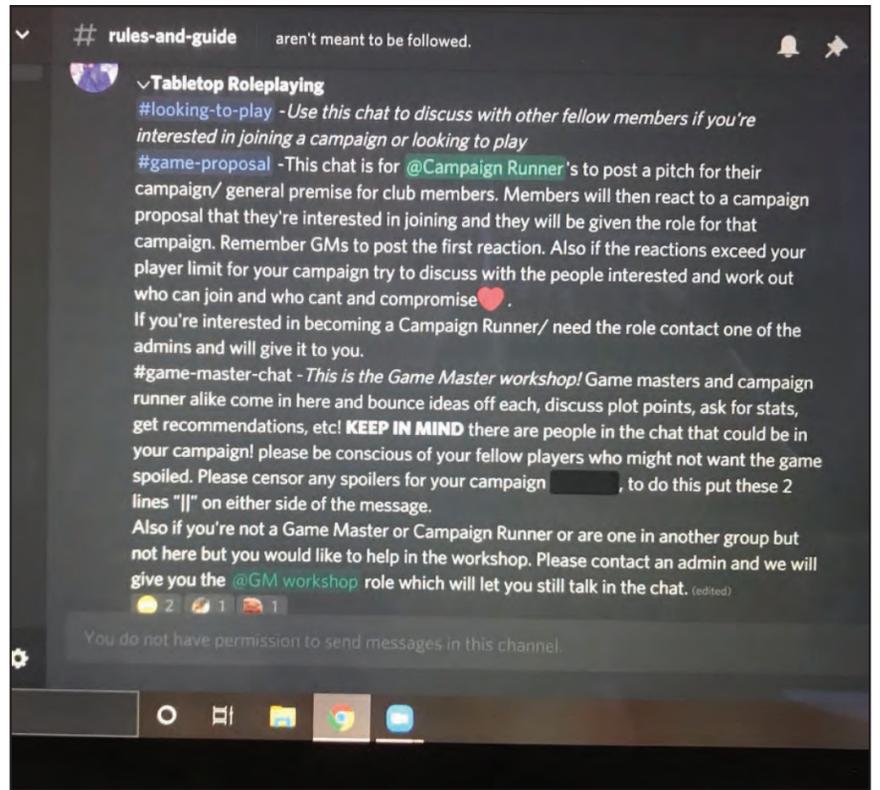


PHOTO | ELLIS MCGINLEY

Tabletop Discord chat. Due to COVID-19, this is how the club has been in contact.

Falcon and Winter Soldier return

By Sofia Rositani
Arts & Entertainment Editor

Watch out, "Wanda Vision," there is a new Marvel show stealing the spotlight. Marvel has finally released "Falcon and the Winter Soldier," a new show about Sam Wilson, played by Anthony Mackie, and Bucky Barnes, played by Sebastian Stan, and what happened after the events of "Avengers: Endgame."

The beginning of the episode started action-packed, something I was shocked about, with Wilson flying towards the border of Libya trying to stop a terrorist organization called LAF. The fight scene is chaotic, with Wilson flying through different helicopters and holes in the canyon. A character in the show, Joaquin Torres, played by Danny Ramirez, was making the fight scene very lighthearted with the comments he kept making. Eventually the fight scene does end with Wilson

stopping LAF.

We ultimately see Barnes, who is trying to lay low and possibly relax after the events of "Endgame." The first time we see him on screen is very different, though, it is The Winter Soldier, not Bucky. We see him killing many people, which, after watching Zack Snyder's cut of "Justice League," the fight scene had minimal blood and gore, unlike the R-rated film. I personally think that this show should have gotten an R-rating, just because the fight scenes would look more real and the way they act would be more genuine, like some clips from deleted scenes of them that could not be used, and it would have been way more hilarious.

Barnes is facing a hard time in his life, first waking up with his memories being erased every day, and second, going from one war to another. Because of this, seeing Barnes attending therapy sessions is a really

impactful scene because while he doesn't want to be there it shows he is trying to be a better person. I also know that Barnes and Wilson will be going to a therapy session together, which I am looking forward to because they are hilarious together in and out of character.

Torres is apparently a fan favorite on social media, such as TikTok and Twitter. He has become a favorite for me and it has only been one episode. The moment I saw him I knew he would be a favorite, even if at the time I did not know if he would be in the full show. His comments, personality and looks has have made many people swoon, including me. In the comics, his character actually becomes a superhero, The Falcon. He takes over after Wilson when he becomes a literal Falcon due to an experiment done on him. I really hope we see this in the show, especially with Hydra still prominent in the show.

The huge part in the show is when "Captain America" is introduced, after Wilson put the shield in the Smithsonian Museum and they said that no one will be Captain America again. Well, like in real life, the government lied to him. Now Wyatt Russell's character, name yet to be announced, is Captain America—which angered not just Wilson but also many people in the audience, including me. In the comics he is not a good person, so I hope they follow that storyline.

Wilson said in Captain America and the Mighty Avengers Vol 14, "Captain America is not just for the good days. He can't be. I can't be. If Captain America can't stand for the Dream on the very worst day — when America is fallen — then there is no Captain America. Because our worst day is where we start from. Where we rise from. And if the man in the flag is too special to fall and rise and struggle with the rest... Then God help us all."

VPAS speaks out at iChoose event

By Madeline Scharf
Reporter

The Violence Prevention, Victim Advocacy and Support Center (VPAS) held an event in front of Connecticut Hall on March 17. The two-table set-up was advertised as an interactive activity about domestic abuse and awareness.

Public health major Mariah Billanova, a senior, spoke about the importance of the VPAS organization. "Our goal is to create a community of students that are aware of bystander intervention," said Billanova. "We want to ensure students are safe."

VPAS has a goal to help ensure healthy behaviors and reaffirm preventative measures to keep people safe from sexual violence. The organization is also committed to encouraging healthy sexual practices. The VPAS webpage also has information about their cause and ways for victims to file reports.

VPAS is working on this event with the Connecticut Coalition Against Domestic Violence (CCADV). According to their website, CCADV is a part of a network wanting to "provide critical support to victims including counseling, support groups, emergency shelter, court advocacy, safety planning and lethality assessment."

The iChoose event wanted to address a specific topic: domestic violence. "The campaign is to address healthy behaviors in relationships," said Billanova. The hope is by enforcing healthy behaviors, people will understand abusive behaviors and shy away from them.

According to WHO, "over a quarter of women aged 15-49 years who have been in a relationship have been subjected to physical and/or sexual violence by their intimate partner at least once in their lifetime." This prevalence is an international problem, not just in the United States.

Through the VPAS event, Billanova hopes that students will learn how to "advocate for others." Billanova continues stating "It is important for people to understand their rights and the rights of others. Consent is so important."

The public event, held in front of Connecticut Hall, drew plenty of students. Hospitality major April Hackenson, a freshman, decided to join.

"Me and my friend saw it while walking past," said Hackenson, "and we were drawn in by the poster."

It is considered important to cover these topics. Educating one person can influence many. "Students maybe have the wrong perspective of healthy relationships. By telling one person, they can notice other's behaviors and continue to educate others," said Billanova.

The event has had a positive effect on students who attend it. "This event helped show how to have a healthy relationship," said Hackenson.

Billanova expressed the importance of the lessons about domestic abuse. "Red flags can occur in any type of relationship," said Billanova. Being aware abuse is not just from romantic relationships is important.

The final event date is March 31 at Moore Fieldhouse from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m.

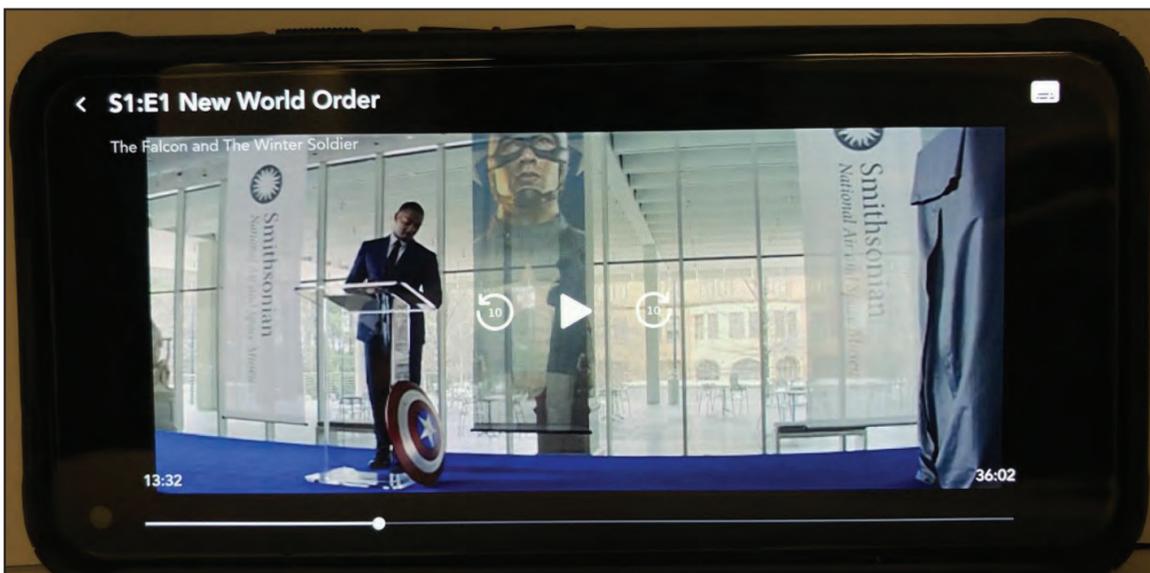


PHOTO | ROMA ROSITANI

A scene of Sam Wilson giving a speech from "The Falcon and Winter Soldier" shown on a Pixel 4a 5G.