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# SOUTHERN NEWS

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## Presidential debate watch party in Buley

**By Jay'Mi Vazquez**  
Managing Editor  
**Vaughn Keeney**  
Contributer

As party divides widened, students at the university united to watch the presidential debate as a community.

On Sept. 10 at 9 p.m., students and faculty alike gathered on Buley Library's ground floor to view the presidential debate on the big screen.

The 2024 election is the first presidential election most students will be eligible to vote in, and as such, it holds significance for the university community.

"As educators, we are committed to supporting that process with educational tools to help students not only become informed, but to find out when they need information," Director of Library Services Amy Beth said. Beth hopes to foster curiosity among the student body and believes debate is a great way to do that.

Decked out in red, white and blue, library chairs were full of students of every major interested in politics or just looking for insight on which candidate to cast their vote for this November.

The intimacy of the setting allowed students



Director of Library Services Amy Beth holding a tray of red, white and blue candy.

PHOTO | VAUGHN KEENEYX

who did not have cable television the ability to enjoy the debate, accompanied by friends and snacks.

"This year is just more interesting than the others," nursing major Janelle Lawrence, a freshman, said.

Associate Professor of Political Science and Urban Affairs Jonathan Wharton echoed similar sentiments.

"Some character attacks were also expected between the

candidates, which led into countless off-topic charges, but this is why presidential candidate debates are not taken seriously," Wharton said.

Both the College Conservatives and the College Democrats, who jointly helped organize the event with the university, sent representatives to the watch party.

Despite the difference in viewpoints, all sat watching together, laughing at the same time

and generally enjoying themselves.

Both sides agree that this election is one of extreme importance and will set the stage for all future elections to come.

Many students, like communication disorders major Zach Thornton, a senior, had already decided on their vote before coming into the party.

Thornton said he will be casting his vote for former President Donald Trump, who he believes

will follow through on his promises of tax cuts and stricter immigration laws.

Thornton voiced his displeasure with Vice President Kamala Harris's performance as the attorney general in California.

"If Trump wins, hopefully we see a resurgence of a bit of nationalism," Thornton said.

The president of the College Democrats, marketing major Tom Gilbertie, a senior, was

also in attendance.

Gilbertie asserts his vote will go to the Harris-Waltz administration, citing his appreciation for her policies, especially what she plans to do to address the affordable housing crisis.

Harris would be the first female president and the first Asian American president, something Gilbertie appreciates.

"If you haven't voted in a while, this is the election to vote in because if we don't vote in Kamala, then I feel like our democracy is going to get dismantled," Gilbertie said.

He worries Trump brings no policy and is a risk to democracy as we know it.

Regardless of political party, students should feel like their vote matters. Everyone deserves to be represented.

Psychology major Ce'ahnne Khan, a junior, said that she wanted to watch the debate with a community of students instead of alone.

"Watching it with a live audience is great just to see others' reactions and learn from people around me," Khan said.

The library will be hosting a vice-presidential debate watch party on Oct. 1, as well as an election night watch party on Nov. 5.

## Wellbeing offers suicide prevention

**By Vaughn Keeney**  
Contributer

According to a 2021 study from Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, suicide is considered a societal epidemic, as someone in the U.S. dies by suicide every 11 minutes. Annually, this translates to approximately 50,000 Americans.

The university's Wellbeing Center, located on the first floor of Schwartz Hall, hopes to bring awareness and perspective to this preventable loss of life.

The Wellbeing Center offers QPR training—which stands for question, persuade, refer—and is a 2-hour session where students and faculty can gain what Erin Duff, the university's wellbeing specialist, refers to as "soft skills."

Duff gives students the tools to "have conversations around a tough subject that can be challenging and anxiety provoking."

Offering hope through positive action is the motto of QPR, though it is not a substitute for counseling or treatment. QPR sessions are interactive and participation-based, and the attendees seemed engaged and willing to share their own experiences and be vulnerable.

Psychology major Nora Losty, a sophomore, said the issue is close to her heart and "because it is such a taboo topic, not a lot of people want to talk about it, and knowing about these things prevents things in the future."

Losty pointed out that death makes people uncomfortable, which leads to contrived ignorance surrounding suicide, which is a shame when suicides are preventable if the signs are recognized early enough.

If someone is concerned about a friend or family member committing suicide, they should look out for direct verbal clues, indirect verbal cues and behavioral clues.

If they suspect that someone else is thinking of committing suicide, first the concerned party should question the person. Ask them how they are and make sure to use an even and kind tone.

"How you would want someone to ask you is how you should talk to someone else," Duff said.

The next step is to persuade them to seek help.

Remind them that, as psychology major Alex Cruz Velasquez, a junior, said, "the storm doesn't last forever."

The last step is to refer them to resources where they can seek help.

All session participants left with a pamphlet full of contact numbers to refer to if they or someone they know is struggling.

When asked what they learned from QPR training, Cruz Velasquez said, "I hadn't thought about the difference between a less direct versus more direct approach."

Cruz Velasquez also

said that they felt they gained a "small sense of community" after the session.

Completing the QPR training rewards participants with a certificate confirming their QPR-certified status, which remains valid for 2 years before it needs to be renewed.

This certificate can be put on a resume to help the applicant stand out, especially someone interested in a career in social work. QPR training is offered once a week, and the dates are posted on OwlConnect with an option to RSVP beforehand.

The Wellbeing Center also offers a mental health first aid training session for anyone looking to delve deeper into mental health training.

If you are struggling with suicidal ideation, please call the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline or text "HOME" to 741741 to talk to a trained volunteer crisis counselor. Help is available; it is never too late.

## Wellness has new amenities available

**By Roselyn Ilo**  
Contributer

The university is stepping up its wellness game with the introduction of new amenities aimed at enhancing student wellbeing.

The campus now boasts two nap pods, massage chairs and multiple Zen Dens as part of a broader initiative spearheaded by Counseling Services and the Wellbeing Center.

Nick Pinkerton, the associate dean of counseling services and wellbeing, has championed this initiative.

"Our goal is to create environments where students can take a break, decompress and ultimately improve their overall wellbeing," Pinkerton said.

The nap pods are in the library on the first floor and near the gym in the student center. Massage chairs are in Schwartz Hall and Recreation and Fitness, while Zen Dens are in the Adanti Student Center, CASAS and Schwartz Hall.

The initiative, funded by grants, aims to integrate mindfulness and relaxation into students' daily routines.

"We want to make sure students have access to spaces that support their mental health," Pinkerton said. "These new features are designed to offer quick and effective ways for students to improve

their wellness."

The university's investment in wellness spaces aligns with a broader trend among universities to prioritize mental health resources as part of their support systems for students.

"Creating these spaces is part of our prevention strategy rather than just addressing issues after they arise," Pinkerton said. "We want to proactively support students' mental health and provide them with resources that help them manage stress before it becomes overwhelming."

Student responses to these new features have been mixed. History major Madison DeStefano, a freshman, acknowledged the existence of the nap pods and Zen Dens but admitted she had not used them yet.

"Even though I haven't used them, I think it's good to know they're available if I need them," DeStefano said. "It's helpful for those long days on campus, especially if you're a commuter."

In addition to these amenities, the university is hosting a QPR, Question, Persuade, Refer, certification workshop on Oct. 15.

This training will equip students with skills to recognize and respond to signs of suicide, further emphasizing the university's commitment to mental health support.

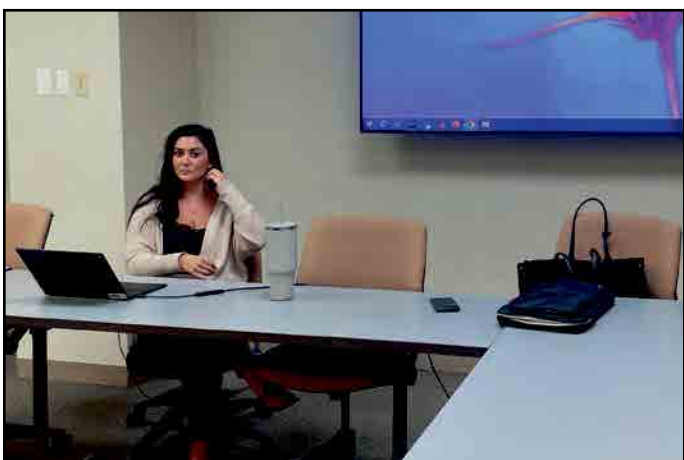


PHOTO | VAUGHN KEENEY

Wellbeing Specialist Erin Duff getting ready for the session.



Psychology majors Ian Maggi, a freshman, and Alex Cruz Velasquez, a junior.



# Voter registration table makes voting accessible

By Brianna Wallen  
News Editor

As the 2024 election creeps up, it is important for college students to participate.

According to Tufts University.edu, College students, with a population of 18 million, make up a sizable enough voting cohort to influence election results as well as the future and wellbeing of an informed, fair and participatory democracy.

For this reason, the Office of Student Conduct and Civic Responsibility set up a voter registration table.

On Sept. 11, students learned about the voting process.

Graduate Intern for the Dean of Students and Student Conduct Angelina Ovalles was present at the event.

Ovalles said that the event was a way to reach out and inform students on how they can fulfill their democratic duty.

“It’s to educate students around the topic of voting and also just the importance of voter registration in general,” Ovalles said.

Ovalles said that displaying on-campus resources can make voting easier for students.

“It also makes things a little bit more accessible for our students given the importance of this election,” Ovalles said.

Ovalles, who graduated

in May, is also a part of the college student demographic.

For this reason, she said she hopes that her peers exercise their right to vote.

“It’s important for our demographic of students to vote because of our age and diversity,” Ovalles said. “I think it’s just really important that all students have their voice and be heard.”

Voting allows citizens to voice their opinion on various issues that are important to them and can overall enhance civic awareness.

Ovalles wants students to know that “voting is their opportunity to kind of just exercise the things that they kind of hold valuable to their rights and like their morality.”

While it is crucial to encourage college students to vote, it is important to also recognize the hurdles in their way.

For many students, this is their first time voting. As a result, they can be left in the dark about ways to register and cast a ballot.

For healthcare studies major Elise Ryan, a sophomore, the upcoming election will be her first time voting. While Ryan said she is thrilled to do so, she expressed some confusion.

“I’m excited, but I haven’t decided how I’m going to do it,” Ryan said.

Ovalles shared various ways both in-state and



PHOTO | BRIANNA WALLEN

Graduate Intern for the Dean of Students and Student Conduct Angelina Ovalles in her office at Engleman Hall on Sept. 13.

out-of-state students can cast their ballot.

Connecticut residents can do in-person voting near their home address or vote via mail.

Out-of-state students can vote ahead of time through an absentee ballot instead of traveling to their hometown. Ovalles

also acknowledged that voting is very new and fresh to her demographic.

“It being so new that we can vote, it’s really important to educate ourselves around the topic of voting and understanding that if you don’t vote, that’s kind of exempting your voice

within the election,” Ovalles said.

Even though voting is a new practice to most college students, voting in the upcoming election can allow them to implement that practice early on.

“I think all college students should go out and vote so it’s easy to do

in the future,” communication major Alan Brockman, a sophomore, said.

It is also important for students to recognize that registering to vote is just the first step.

“The next biggest hurdle is just voting, like, just vote,” Ovalles said.

# The Hartford visits campus in a Meet and Greet event

By Brianna Wallen  
News Editor

The university provides ample resources to set students up for success outside of campus.

Meet and greets hosted by the university with local companies seeking fresh perspectives and prospective employees like The Hartford are some of the most valuable of those resources.

“It’s always nice as a student to hear these different perspectives from people in the industry,” computer science major Miraj Jara, a senior, said.

Thanks to various companies visiting campus, the opportunity for students to attend events and gain internships or jobs is at their fingertips.

Founded in 1810, The Hartford is an insurance company based in Hartford, Connecticut. The company is currently recruiting a new generation of future leaders at the university.

“There is a plethora of opportunities for new grads to get their foot in the door,” University Relations Consultant at The Hartford Alex Martinez said.

From business and liberal arts majors to computer science majors, Martinez said the company has available spots for every student to fulfill and develop new skills.

“We make sure you guys are growing and keep you guys growing and developing,” Martinez said, “and blossoming into leadership roles.”

Employees from The Hartford served as panelists, where they shared their firsthand experience working for the company.

Cloud Engineer Tom Stoeher and Data Engineer Kaira Ramon shared advice on what they wish they knew as a senior in college.

“Use your alumni network and career center, along with making sure your resume is up to date,” Stoeher said.

Ramon said she did not have a resume by senior year, so she recommends students start making one immediately.

“Be proactive and use the resources available on campus to help you,” Ramon said

When creating a resume, Ramon said that “important projects” in class that show “results and valuable skills” can be listed as experience.

The data engineer also said it is crucial that students get comfortable in practicing effective communication.

“It is important to convey your experience to show how it gives value to the company,” Ramon said. “If you can do that, you’re going to stand out.”

With approximately 18,500 employees, Ramon said that The Hartford gives workers flexibility.

“You’re learning something new every day and wearing multiple hats,” Ramon said.

By exchanging roles, employees can gain experience in different departments and develop new, vital skills that they can contribute to the team.

Through these many advantages, students are encouraged to apply to The Hartford.

There are various programs for students to get involved.

From first years to seniors, the company is recruiting for endless programs and internships.

Starting with the Freshman Experience Program (FEP), freshmen can get exposure to the insurance industry and connections with employers.

Sophomores can apply to the Early Immersion Program for resume building and networking opportunities.

For upperclassmen, juniors can apply to the Summer Internship Program while seniors can apply for full-time employment opportunities to get hands-on experience in the industry.

If interested, visit [www.thehartford.com](http://www.thehartford.com) to apply and learn more.



PHOTO | BRIANNA WALLEN

Kaira Ramon, Tom Stoeher and Alex Martinez discuss their roles at The Hartford on Sept. 11 in the School of Business.



Students having open conversation and interactions with panelists.



## Friendship bracelets with Chase Hall RAs

By Lexi White  
Features Editor

The best way to unwind after a long day of learning is by doing something relaxing. The Chase Hall Resident Advisors, or RAs, enacted this idea and hosted a friendship bracelet making event for their residents.

The RAs who hosted this event were nursing majors Prisilla Tshinguta and Hillary Lim, seniors. They are both RAs on the sixth floor in Chase Hall and wanted to help residents become acquainted with each other during their first few weeks on campus by hosting their event on Sept. 9.

"Some of the freshmen came here with no friends, so if they all gather here and get to know each other and make little conversations, then maybe they will end up walking together to class or to the cafeteria," Tshinguta said.

Tshinguta and Lim had \$50 from Residence Life, or ResLife, for their budget for their first event of the semester.

"We were kind of limited on what we could

do, and I feel like this is something affordable and fun that will bring all the residents together," Tshinguta said.

The start of this school year was also the start of Lim's first semester of being an RA. Lim said that she and Tshinguta make a great team, especially when it comes to figuring out event ideas.

Lim said: "She brought up friendship bracelet making, and I loved it. So, we kind of just rolled with that and thought that it would be a good way for students to relax at the end of their day."

Once the RAs had their event idea figured out, they emailed ResLife a list of items that they needed: string, beads, snacks and drinks.

"Southern makes it easy to have this stuff ordered," Lim said. "I emailed ResLife what I needed, and it was here the next day, so to have this event like a week later was really nice."

Students made their own personalized friendship bracelets while enjoying free snacks and talking to the other students living in their building.

"I think our event is

beneficial in the social aspect because residents are able to meet people on different floors, and I was able to meet the residents who are not on my floor," Lim said.

Art history major Ryenne Davis, a freshman, was one of the students who attended the friendship bracelet making event. She said she came to the event because she was done with her schoolwork and wanted to give herself a way to relax.

"I think this helps students de-stress because crafting activities are very helpful," Davis said.

Another student who attended the event was finance major Luke Martinez, a freshman. He said he came to this event with his friends after leaving swim practice.

"This event is good for students because we can connect with each other and hang out with friends without being in a dorm or going out somewhere," Martinez said.

Martinez made his own bracelet and described this event as "chill, in the best way possible."



Residents of Chase Hall making friendship bracelets.

PHOTO | LEXI WHITE



Finance major Luke Martinez, a freshman, making his bracelet in Chase Hall.

## 'Speed friending' with RHA

By Lexi White  
Features Editor

Most know that speed dating is a way to find a potential romantic partner, but the Residence Hall Association, or RHA, came up with a unique way for students to get acquainted on campus: "speed friending."

During the RHA's summer training sessions, members were to come up with event ideas for the semester. That was when marketing major Murielle Myrtil, a sophomore, thought of this creative friend-making activity.

Myrtil said that during her freshman year, she did not start making friends until the middle of the fall semester. She wanted to create an event that caters to those who have a hard time making friends.

"In our generation, making friends is not as natural, and sometimes college could feel cliquey in a way," Myrtil said. "I feel like the sole purpose of this event is to leave with a new friend in a way that isn't awkward or weird because everyone here has the same intentions."

Just like speed dating,

"speed friending" consists of people sitting across from each other at a table. They have 5 minutes to talk about their interests, career goals and whatever else they please.

In addition, RHA supplied students with question cards to help get the conversation going. When time is up, one side of the table shifts down a seat so that they can get to know someone else.

RHA also provided pizza for the students who attended their "speed friending" event.

Myrtil said, "I feel like this will help the introverts who want to become more extroverted and have a safe space to do so."

The vice president of RHA, health and wellness coaching major Ta'Niyah Mabry, a sophomore, said she was very excited that Myrtil came up with this event idea.

"Our biggest thing when we were freshmen was that we wanted to have that space where we could actually meet people," Mabry said.

"This is our chance of giving people the perfect opportunity to do that."

Mabry said that her goal for this event was to help students get out of

their shells and interact with each other.

"I want students to know that feeling alone and isolated in college is completely normal," Mabry said.

Recreation and leisure studies major Lindsey Caplan, a freshman, said she did not know what to expect from this event since she had never heard of "speed friending" before.

"I am definitely more introverted, and I came to this event because I want to get out there more," Caplan said.

Another student who wanted to get out of her comfort zone was human resource management major Chrysannia Tibby, a freshman. She came to RHA's event in attempts to make new friends.

"After I get out of class, I usually go straight to my dorm," Tibby said. "So, an event like this is helping me to get out and socialize."

Interdisciplinary studies major Ashley Jenner, a freshman, was another student who wanted to expand her horizons.

"Meeting new people makes me nervous, but it makes me feel better that everyone is in the same boat," Jenner said.

## Owls Decide Summer or fall?

By Lexi White  
Features Editor



"My birthday is in October, so obviously I like fall. I like the weather."  
-Sociology major Larry Freeman, a junior



"I prefer summer because I like the weather, and we don't have school."



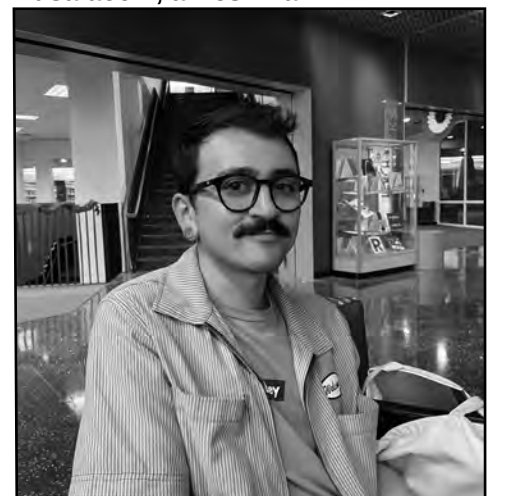
"I prefer summer because we're on vacation. I have time to myself, and I could be outside under the sun."  
-Business management major Arleny Abreu, a freshman



"I like fall because summer has no holidays, but in the fall, you have Halloween. Plus, in Connecticut, it gets really beautiful."  
-Computer science major Joseph Busalacchi, a freshman



"Something about the fall just hits different. With the seasons changing, it's getting to that hoodie type of weather and pumpkin carving is so fun."  
-Nursing major Finn DeMott, a sophomore



"I prefer fall because I was born in the fall."  
-Studio art major Daniel Santiago, a junior



PHOTO | LEXI WHITE

Students getting ready to start the "speed friending" event.



Goodie bags provided by Residence Hall Association for the students who participated in their event.



## Students' insight on TikTok fashion trends

By Jay'Mi Vazquez  
Managing Editor

In recent years, TikTok has emerged as a dominant force in shaping fashion trends.

Whether it be every content creator's infatuation with Adidas Sambas or Timberland boots with denim shorts, the trends and influences are inevitable.

However, there is growing concern that the TikTok fashion phenomenon is detrimental to the broader culture of fashion.

Some argue that TikTok's fast-paced content creates an environment of immediacy and disposability.

Unlike "traditional" fashion cycles, which are marked by seasons and trends developed over months or years, TikTok trends emerge overnight and instantly become popular.

This turnover encourages a brief approach to style. The result is a relentless churn of trends that prioritizes short-term virality over long-term fashion integrity.

TikTok has shifted the sense of individuality and creativity previously seen within the culture years prior. Trending outfits are frequently defined by their viral potential rather than their originality or craftsmanship.

Influencers and fashion brands often promote trends that drive sales

rather than those that contribute to something that can have an everlasting impact on people.

This commercialism can overshadow smaller independent designers who may not have the resources to compete with the marketing power of larger brands.

Business economics major Sean Cremins, a junior and clothing brand designer of Denim Endings said he believes TikTok has completely changed the fashion culture in the long run.

"TikTok has oversaturated and commercialized the small-scale fashion industry," Cremins said. "This basically ruined the 'if you know, you know' aspect of fashion. Due to this, there is a lack of originality and a lot of people making clothes with little to no passion."

The "if you know, you know" aspect of fashion refers to the "insider understanding" and appreciation of certain styles, brands, or trends that are not immediately apparent to the general public.

This involves a level of niche knowledge that only those deeply immersed in fashion circles or subcultures would fully grasp.

Fashion trends on TikTok are a double-edged sword.

While it is considered negative to the culture for the reasons above, some people view the platforms' impact on

the fashion culture differently.

Health science major Dean Cruz, a senior, said he believes TikTok trends are needed to help people navigate their own style.

"It exposes people to more styles and allows people to discover clothes they like and dislike," Cruz said. "For example, I really liked when I saw someone using a tie as a belt."

Interdisciplinary studies major Sarah Khan, a senior, said that she also views TikTok as a platform that inspires people to find things they like and find unique.

"I think TikTok makes looking at fashion all the more exciting and new," Khan said. "I think TikTok is opening up a lot of western fashion trends to the more global scene."

Undeniably, the platform offers a diverse range of content that can inspire people to try new things, fostering a sense of personal growth and self-expression.

TikTok fashion trends can transform how individuals perceive and engage with their style, which leads to a more adventurous and positive approach to personal fashion senses.

Overall, TikTok fashion trends will continue to be a factor within the community and its impact will continue to be viewed positively and negatively by people within the culture.

## VMA Awards captivate millions in viewership



PHOTO | INSTAGRAM

The host of the VMA Awards, Megan Thee Stallion.

By Solé Scott  
Editor in Chief

Finally, a host connects with the audience without brewing up drama as a form of publicity.

On Wednesday, Sept. 11, the 2024 MTV Video Music Awards premiered, hosted by Megan Thee Stallion.

I watched the entire live show and enjoyed it more than any of the last four years'.

The energy this year was positive and did not feel like a dark cloud was looming around, so much that this year's ceremony saw an 8% increase in viewership.

This VMA ceremony was the most viewed in 4 years, with 4.08 million people watching.

The best performance of the night was GloRilla, who performed a medley of her hit songs.

Sabrina Carpenter also stole the show, as she performed her hit songs from her album "Short n' Sweet," which she released in August.

Carpenter won Song of the Year with "Espresso," which was a no-brainer.

The recipient of the Michael Jackson Vanguard Award this year was none other than Katy Perry.

She was worthy of the award, as she pushed the envelope for pop stars in the 2010s.

Taylor Swift collected 7 moonmen like infinity stones throughout the night, as she now ties Beyoncé for most wins at the VMA's.

Swift questionably won Video of the Year, which should have been given to Doja Cat for "Paint The Town Red" or Ariana Grande's "we can't be friends."

Also, Best Collaboration should have been awarded to GloRilla and Megan Thee Stallion for "Wanna Be" or Jungkook and Latto for "Seven."

This year, it was refreshing to see that the newer generation of singers like to sing live, such as Benson Boone.

The newcomer performed his smash hit "Beautiful Things" with kinetic energy, as he ran and jumped across the stage without altering his voice.

Chappell Roan was a performer I was intrigued to watch because I had never seen her perform live, and she did not disappoint. The artist sang her hit song "Good Luck, Babe!" on a medieval-themed set.

What grinded my gears throughout the night was the constant camera pan to Taylor Swift.

I am sure she felt the same way because the cameras are purposely in her face, and she cannot enjoy herself as much.

MTV has declined since the organization no longer pushes and promotes music videos. This is a bummer because MTV's success was the backbone of the music industry when it was founded in 1981.

However, its history is not without blemish. The television channel famously barred African American artists from appealing on their channel.

Artists such as Michael Jackson and Whitney Houston had to fight for their music to be included.

Unfortunately, this issue is still prevalent because Victoria Monét was told that she was not allowed to perform at the 2023 VMA awards because she was not ready.

Yet, Monét has been in the industry for over 10 years now and wrote smash hit songs for Ariana Grande and Chloe x Halle.

This year, Monét did not perform, and I was bewildered by the fact that she was "not ready" to perform, but newcomers Chappell Roan and Benson Boone were.

Nonetheless, the 2024 MTV Video Music Awards was a massive improvement from the last few years, and I hope Megan Thee Stallion continues to host from now on.



PHOTO | INSTAGRAM

Various examples of influencers showcasing TikTok fashion trends.

## SOUTHERN NEWS

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Visit [www.TheSouthernNews.org](http://www.TheSouthernNews.org) for more.



## Remembering 9/11: Paws and Reflect

By Carly Russell  
Photo Editor

On Wednesday, Sept. 11 the university held its second annual Paws and Reflect event. The event, organized by Sergeant Cynthia Torres and sponsored by the K-9 Jules Foundation, was created as a way for students and the surrounding community to come together in remembrance and honor of those impacted by Sept. 11, 2001.

Campus faculty members and guest speakers came together to speak about the importance of remembering the tragedy in a brief but impactful service. The Navy Seal and author James Hatch shared his personal experience being a member of the military and how the events of 9/11 directly impacted him and his career. Other guests included Police Chaplain Rodney Valdes, the university Police Honor Guard and service dogs.

Following the service, Stef Corbeil, founder of TAO Dog Yoga, and her dog Tao were joined by other police and service dogs in leading students and community members through a relaxing yoga session.



Officer Sandy Quinones from the Bridgeport Police Department singing the national anthem.



Service dogs Tao, Heidi and Chaplin posing for a picture before the start of the ceremony.



Flag flying at half-mast outside Buley Library.



Stef Corbeil and her dog Tao leading community members in yoga.



Students and faculty greeting service dogs Jules and Heidi.



Sergeant Cynthia Torres being interviewed by NBC CT.



Tao the yoga dog.



Interim President Dwayne Smith speaking during the ceremony.



## Football beats AIC in Friday Night Clash

By Matt Cain  
Contributor

The Owls defeated the American International College, AIC, Yellow Jackets 35-21 with their dynamic offensive weapons.

Quarterback Keith Ridley Jr., a graduate student, racked up 194 passing yards and connected with three different receivers. Ridley also matched his career high in touchdowns with four.

The Owls also showed off their unique and powerful run game, using three running backs throughout the game. E'Lijah Gray, a senior, led all running backs with 132 yards on 12 carries and a touchdown. Following Gray would be Kieran Falzon, a sophomore, with 49 yards and Shawn Martin, a senior, with nine yards.

This is the first time the Owls used three of their running backs effectively. The Yellow Jackets had no answer for the powerful run game that the Owls displayed. Offensive Coordinator John Weiss threw the Yellow Jacket defense off its game and exploited the holes in the run game.

"When the gameplan



Running back E'Lijah Gray, a senior, tackled by several defenders.

PHOTO | CARLY RUSSELL

calls for heavy run, we run. It calls for heavy pass, we pass," Coach Weiss said. "Whatever is necessary to win the game and get us the win, we will do."

With the Owls jumping out to the early lead, the defense played a big factor in the win. Keeping the AIC offense contained had a lot to do with the pass

rush from the Owls.

Linebacker Joe DiGello, a senior, and defensive end Youseff Gamel, a senior, put pressure on the opposing quarterback, making him run out of the pocket and forcing an interception early in the game.

"Our defense did well last week. This week, they

showed up, but there are still some things we need to clean up," Head Coach Tom Godek said.

Godek was happy with the defense but was not satisfied. The Owls racked up two penalties on the defensive side of the ball in the second half. Luckily for the Owls, this did not slow down

the momentum, as they scored 14 points in the third quarter.

This game will not be counted as a conference matchup.

In NE10 football, each team will play one other NE10 team twice in the season. The Owls will see AIC again later in the year.

The Yellow Jackets and SCSU have been a rivalry for some time, in fact the longest-running rivalry in both schools' history.

The Owls know the task at hand when facing the Yellow Jackets. This game was different because of the new defensive coordinator the Yellow Jackets picked up in the offseason. With the new coordinator not having enough film to study, the Owls came in with a gameplan set.

"They showed a lot of switches throughout the game. We did a good job of capitalizing on that," Ridley said.

This win put the Owls at 1-1 and built momentum into their next game against Bentley University which will be the first conference game of the season. The Owls showed chemistry and leadership on the field.

The next game will be the same it will also be under the Friday Night Lights.

## Sports Recap

**Men's Soccer - Record: 1-1**  
Sep 14 - @ West Chester University - L 1-0

**Women's Soccer - Record: 1-1-1**  
Sep 14 - @ University of New Haven - L 2-0

**Women's Field Hockey:** Sep 11 - @ Saint Thomas Aquinas College - W 2-0  
Sep 14 - @ American International College - L 1-0 - F/OT

**Women's Volleyball - Record: 1-6**  
**Sep 13 - @ Jefferson University - L 3-0 / @ Holy Family University - W 3-1**  
Sep 14 - @ Wilmington University - L 3-2

**All information has been provided by SCSUOwls.com**

## Week Ahead

**Football:**  
Sep 20 - @ Bentley University - 7 p.m.

**Men & Women's Cross Country:**  
Sep 21 - @ UMass Dartmouth Invitational - 12 p.m.

**Men's Soccer:**  
Sep 18 - vs Queens College - 7 p.m.  
Sep 21 - @ Southern New Hampshire State University - 4 p.m.

**Women's Soccer:**  
**Sep 17 - @ Holy Family University - 5 p.m.**  
Sep 21 - vs Adelphi University - 5 p.m.

**Women's Field Hockey:**  
Sep 18 - vs Franklin Pierce University - 4 p.m.  
Sep 21 - vs American International College - 1 p.m.

**Women's Volleyball:**  
**Rollins Tournament @ Winter Park, Florida**

Sep 20 - @ Trevecca Nazarene University - 10 a.m. / @ Millersville University - 7 p.m.  
Sep 21 - @ Lynn University - 9 a.m. / @ Rollins College - 2 p.m.



Football team enters the field vs AIC led by tight end Jack Hennessy, a junior.



Owls offense in Yellow Jackets territory.



Tight end Michael Strachan, a sophomore, celebrates with his teammates in the end zone.



Strachan scores one of his two touchdowns.

## Knox relieved of duties as gymnastics head coach

By Dillon Flanigan  
Sports Editor

Over the summer, the university athletic department announced

that former longtime head coach of the gymnastics team Jerry Nelson had been named interim gymnastics head coach.

Nelson, a former Owl,

was the university's head coach from 2005 to 2020. During his 15-year tenure, Nelson had many successful seasons.

Nelson was the 2007 National Coach of the Year, earning four Eastern College Athletic Conference, ECAC, Gymnastics Coach of the Year honors, and guided the university to three ECAC Gymnastics Championships.

The release went on to say that, "Nelson's squads also featured an All-American in 12 of his 15 seasons as the Owls' head coach as well as 82 USA Gymnastics All-America Scholar-Athletes, 73 WGCA Scholar-Athletes, 19 All-Americans, eight ECAC Scholar-Athletes of the Year, five ECAC Rookies of the Year, and four student-athletes who have earned ECAC Athlete of the Year or Most

Outstanding Performer laurels."

During that span, the Owls also won several ECAC championships.

It was also announced that former Owl gymnast and Assistant Coach Isabella Antonangeli would return for the 2024-2025 season.

Nelson is taking the place of the former head coach, Byron Knox. Knox served four seasons at the helm after 16 seasons in the same position for the University of Bridgeport.

The university wished Knox well but did not answer the Southern News' request for comment.

The Southern News reached out to Knox as well, who stated he was surprised about the move.

"I was told that they wanted to move in another direction," Knox said. "So, I was given no reason, so I

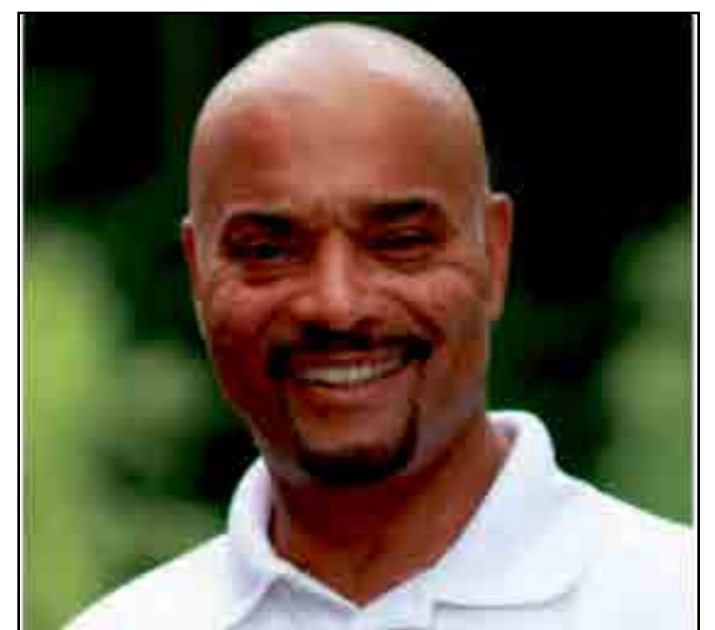


PHOTO | WESTPORTY.ORG

Former Gymnastics Head Coach Byron Knox.

had to respect that."

In the 2023-2024 season, the team had two perfect 10 scores, as the team made a trip to Nationals in West Chester, Pennsylvania in April.

Southern News reached out to the athletic department to comment what they envisioned for the gymnastics program, but did not hear back.



PHOTO | SCSUOWLS.COM

Interim Gymnastics Head Coach Jerry Nelson.