

## Connecticut Sec. of the State Debuts College Voter Initiatives



BY BRENDAN WILLIAMS  
Editor in Chief

On Tuesday, April 9, Connecticut Secretary of the State Stephanie Thomas held a discussion on campus to engage young people in getting involved titled “Use Your (Civic) Power!”

The Princeton Review ranked Sacred Heart University as #15 on the list of least politically active students out of 389 colleges surveyed, based on student ratings of their own levels of political awareness.

22 seats of the 160 seat East Theatre at West Campus were filled for the event held to promote civic engagement. Of the 22 people in attendance, 11 were members of university administration or faculty, 4 were with Secretary Thomas, and 4 were members of the media.

Before the event, the Spectrum conducted a one on one interview with Secretary Thomas.

“People always ask me, when did you decide to get into politics, and I say, I never decided, I’m not in politics, I’m in governance. I just happened to have to run for office and a political system. But before this, I worked in the nonprofit sector. So I’ve always believed in giving back and doing good. And I think the same is true of the student body here,” said Thomas.

“They don’t have to be politically minded to be good civic citizens. Because I promise you, everyone either has or will have an issue that they care about, for student debt forgiveness, lower taxes, the ability to have a certain license

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Isabella Fabbo, Photo Editor  
Connecticut Secretary of State, Stephanie Thomas (left), being interviewed by Brendan Williams (right), the Editor in Chief for the Spectrum Newspaper.

## Spring Concert Returns, For Real this Time

BY CHRIS BREWER  
Staff Writer

Sacred Heart University has announced that this year’s Spring Concert will take place on April 26 with headlining artist, Quavo.

Quavo has found success in the music industry, including his number-one hit song on the Billboard Hot 100, entitled “I’m the One.” The track features other celebrities, DJ Khaled, Justin Bieber, Chance the Rapper and Lil Wayne.

Sophomore Nick Gadbois said, “I think it’s cool how Sacred Heart University is able to get a modern-day artist like Quavo to perform for the spring concert this year. Allowing some of the students to pick the artist is also a good way to get students more engaged and more people will probably attend.”

This concert will take place at Hartford Healthcare Amphitheater in Bridgeport. The venue is able to seat about 5,700 people for concerts.

“We were able to work with the Hartford Healthcare Amphitheater to schedule Quavo for April 26 at their venue. The university has a relationship with the Amphitheater, especially as we hold commencement ceremonies there, and we were lucky that we were able to pull this off,” said the Assistant Dean of Students,

Sara Helfrich.

Sacred Heart officials asked students about their music interests in order to ensure success for the Spring Concert. With rap and hip hop being some of the most popular genres around campus, they then spoke to an agent who gave potential options of artists.

“We receive lists from the agent and then talk to students about who they might want to see. If students are looking to be involved in helping pick future concert artists, they should get involved as a student leader,” said Helfrich.

Quavo has been featured on multiple hit songs alongside Justin Bieber, Future, Gunna, Young Thug, Drake, and more. He was also a part of a music group known as Migos which consisted of two other artists, Takeoff and Offset. This group achieved a number-one hit on the Billboard Hot 100 and another four top ten hits.

Ticket sales were held on April 10 and 11 in the new performing arts lobby. The ticket cost for Sacred Heart students was \$30 for floor seats and \$20 for seated admissions.

Guest tickets were also available for attendees outside of the SHU community, but the supply was limited and costs were increased. Those tickets were \$50 for floor seats and \$40 for seated admission.



Instagram, @quavohuncho

Quavo will be performing at SHU’s Spring Concert on April 26 at the Hartford Healthcare Amphitheater.

Tickets for the concert are still available for sale in the student life office.

“I think Quavo is a cool choice for the Spring Concert. I don’t know any songs that he sings himself but I do like his featured songs, so I really hope he performs some of those. I know they had him at the University of Miami last year and heard great things so I am excited,” said sophomore Ava Russo.

## TAP Presents “Promises, Promises”

BY ISABELLA GENERAZO  
Staff Writer

The Theatre Arts Program (TAP) took us back to the 60’s this weekend with their production of “Promises, Promises.”

Taking place in the Edgerton Center for Performing Arts, the show put on four performances on Thursday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday. The full company has been working since January to put up this musical.

Sophomore Erin Pellegrini, who played Fran Kubelik, the female lead of “Promises, Promises,” discussed how the show is a great piece of art through its solid music and script.

The show consists of popular music from the 1960’s, such as “I’ll Never Fall in Love Again” and “Half as Big as Life.” It follows the life of a junior executive who lends his apartment to higher ups in order to climb up the corporate ladder.

“Yes, the music is really good, but altogether it’s incredibly surprising how these themes can still be translated to a modern audience,” said Pellegrini. “We try to give the show as much life as possible, and all the little details have been thought about.”

The show consisted of many big ensemble numbers.

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See TAP PRESENTS “PROMISES, PROMISES”  
continued on pg. 6



Instagram, @shuthearts

The cast of “Promises Promises” performing the number, “Turkey Lurkey Time.”

For more... [shuspectrum.com](http://shuspectrum.com)  [@shuspectrum](https://www.instagram.com/shuspectrum)  [@TheSpectrumSHU](https://www.twitter.com/TheSpectrumSHU)  [@shuspectrum](https://www.tiktok.com/@shuspectrum)

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# News

## FINAL GREEK WEEK RANKINGS

1		<b>DELTA DELTA DELTA</b>	<b>300 PT</b>
2		<b>PHI SIGMA SIGMA</b>	<b>260 PT</b>
3		<b>KAPPA DELTA</b>	<b>150 PT</b>
4		<b>BETA THETA PI</b>	<b>130 PT</b>
4		<b>SIGMA CHI</b>	<b>130 PT</b>
5		<b>DELTA TAU DELTA</b>	<b>120 PT</b>
6		<b>DELTA ZETA</b>	<b>100 PT</b>
7		<b>KAPPA ALPHA THETA</b>	<b>90 PT</b>
8		<b>ALPHA DELTA PI</b>	<b>80 PT</b>
9		<b>KAPPA SIGMA</b>	<b>30 PT</b>
9		<b>ZETA TAU ALPHA</b>	<b>30 PT</b>
9		<b>CHI OMEGA</b>	<b>30 PT</b>
10		<b>PI KAPPA PHI</b>	<b>0 PT</b>

## UPCOMING EVENTS ON CAMPUS

WEDNESDAY 4/17:

### SET SHU JEOPARDY

LINDA'S FIREPLACE  
AT 7 P.M.

THURSDAY 4/18:

### TAYLOR SWIFT, GENDER AND THE MEDIA, COLLOQUIA

LORIS FORUM  
AT 2 P.M.

THURSDAY 4/18:

### FIRST YEAR FINALE

63'S PATIO LAWN  
AT 4:30 P.M.

SATURDAY 4/20:

### JE SUIS BELLE

EDGERTON CENTER FOR PERFORMING ARTS  
AT 7 P.M.

MONDAY 4/22:

### DOG THERAPY

CENTER FOR HEALTHCARE EDUCATION LOBBY  
AT 10 A.M.

## Buzzing with Excitement for Student Appreciation

BY LAUREN KEHRLE  
Staff Writer

Amidst a campuswide spike in studying as the semester comes to a close, Student Government is hosting Student Appreciation Week from Monday, April 15 to Friday, April 19 in hopes of recognizing and rewarding SHU's Pioneers for their continuous hard work.

Although this week consists of different events each day, every activity has been planned with the objective of providing a necessary break from finals preparation and other common sources of stress, especially those that typically arise towards the end of the year as students seek to balance school with social and club commitments.

"We're buzzing with excitement for Student Appreciation Week and can't wait to see everyone! With our theme of 'Thank you for BEE-ing the best student body,' we're gearing up to give back and celebrate all the incredible students who make our university community thrive," said junior Abby Lyons, who is the Director of Public Relations (PR) for Student Government.

Working with the rest of the PR board, Lyons was responsible for overseeing the planning of this week, which has become a tradition throughout recent years.

The schedule of events started on Monday with table times, held from 2:30 to 4 p.m. in the Main Academic Building. During this time, students were encouraged to enter to win a summer-themed raffle basket featuring several items designed to get them ready for fun under the sun, such as an Owala water bottle, UNO game, red and white beach towel, blow-up beach balls, handheld fan, sunscreen, and more.

On Tuesday, table times continued from 2:15 to 4 p.m., accompanied by candy-filled goodie bags.

On Wednesday, Student Government is hosting a grilled cheese giveaway from 4 to 6:30 p.m. on the patio of 63's Dining Hall.

Thursday's activity is a movie night from 8:30 to 11:45 p.m. in the Martire Theatre located in room E145 within the Martire Center For the Liberal Arts. Attendees will be able to watch "The Bee Movie" while snacking on candy and popcorn.

Student Appreciation Week will conclude with Table Times on Friday from 2:30 to 4:15 p.m. Cookies will be available and the winner of Monday's raffle basket will be announced by the end of the event.

"Ever since I heard that this week was happening, I have been so excited to take advantage of it and participate as much as possible," said junior Darcy Fruhschein. "As a future elementary school teacher, I am eager to implement similar events in my classroom one day."

Besides seeking to offer students a breather from their regular routines and immersion in academics, SHU Student Government officers also intend to capitalize on these activities by using them as tools to gather as well as gauge student input about the university's performance in several separate areas.

"This will be an excellent chance for students to give SG feedback on different areas of campus life as we begin to build our agenda for next semester," said junior and Student Government President Maeve Cahill. "There will be suggestion boxes at each event for students to voice their opinions and concerns."

After much preparation, Pioneers have the opportunity to take part in activities before finishing off the semester.

"I am so proud of the Student Relations board for all their hard work putting together Student Appreciation Week and I hope students are able to benefit from the events that we are putting on," Cahill said.

## Secretary of State

BY BRENDAN WILLIAMS  
Editor-in-Chief

CONTINUED FROM PG 1

for a certain job, like whatever it is, we all have things that are decided by elected people that will be important to us," Thomas continued.

Thomas's initiative, Next Gen Elections, trains 40 college students as poll workers for the November 2024 and 2025 elections. Applicants must be a freshman, sophomore, or junior undergraduate student enrolled in a Connecticut college or university for the 2024-2025 academic year. Before election day, participants will complete an eight hour, primarily virtual, training course.

The inspiration for the program came from wanting to expand the conversation of what Thomas referred to as overall "civic health."

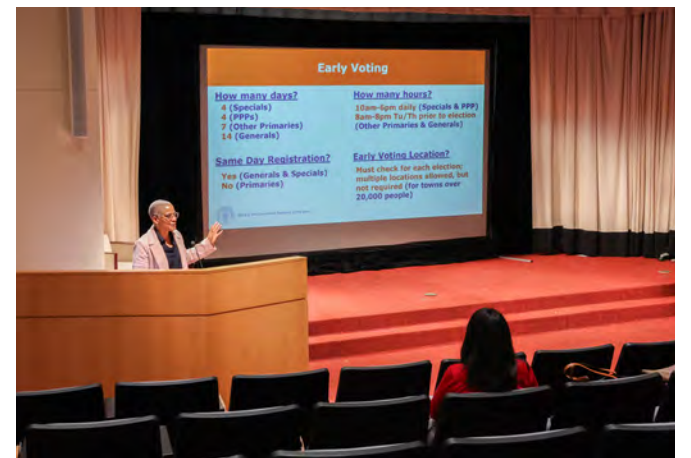
"Our inspiration was, how do you inspire the next generation to see either elections as a career as a registrar of voters or town clerk, but also just thinking about it, like a job that you can do much like you work at a summer camp or as a lifeguard. You can also be a poll worker," said Thomas.

Connecticut's Secretary of State is the Commissioner of Elections, responsible for administering all state and federal requirements relating to elections.

In a March letter to the State Election Enforcement Commission, Thomas referred several possible election violations following Bridgeport's do-over mayoral elections. A judge threw out the results of the original September Democratic primary, after evidence surfaced that Mayor Joe Gamin supporters had stuffed multiple absentee ballots into outdoor ballot collection boxes.

"After the Bridgeport court case, I was doing some research and I saw things have gone back for decades. So nothing's going to be solved overnight and like most complex problems, it requires complex solutions," said Thomas.

Thomas's office proposed mitigation legislation efforts



Isabella Fabbio, Photo Editor

CT Secretary of State, Stephanie Thomas, speaking to students to inspire them to become poll workers this upcoming November.

following the election.

"Ultimately, it's going to come down to a culture shift. And that's going to require funding and elections. And frankly, I don't think there's enough funding and elections, either at the federal level, the state level or the local level. And I think that is the crux of the problem. Here in Connecticut, we absent state funding, and like robust town funding, we basically rely on candidates and political parties to advertise to the electorate, and I just don't think that's a way to run a democracy."

Thomas concluded the interview with her hopes for the future of Next Gen Elections, before starting the event.

"My final hope is that it's a good potential model to be replicated not only around Connecticut, but in other places as well. That it raises the visibility around election work. It's one of the most important jobs in our democratic process. But most people don't spend any time thinking about it, and we all seem to think elections just work because they're supposed to," said Thomas. "But no, it takes a lot of hard work and dedication to make sure they work. So I would love to see the next generation think about their role in that process."

# Features

## SHU Closing St. Vincent's College and Relaunching Associate Program

BY JORDAN DORSEY  
Staff Writer

Sacred Heart University's St. Vincent's College will be closing at the end of the academic year. With the demand for more nurses, SHU has also decided to relaunch their associate degree program in nursing.

"What we saw was opportunities to keep some of the programs open but move them into colleges where they'd have more resources," said Karen Daley, Dean of the Davis and Henry College of Nursing (DHCON).

The brewing science certificate program moved into the College of Arts and Sciences, Radiography, an associate degree, moved into the College of Health Professions, and the associate degree in nursing will be moving into DHCON.

"At the time, it seemed as if the hospitals were telling us they wanted bachelor-prepared nurses. What we found post-pandemic, was that the nursing shortage was so bad, everyone was saying we just need nurses, get us nurses," said Daley.

Prof. Kim Foito said, "I just came from the National Student Nurse Association convention last week. They were talking about the shortage and whatever programs can do to help with that shortage, would be much appreciated. So Sacred Heart is doing their part."

The St. Vincent's College Nursing program has students are not the typical students attending a four-year undergraduate program, but have challenges such as a family or another job.

"It's a little accelerated because what DHCON does in four years, they do in two. It's by no means an easier, lower-level program," said Daley.

Sacred Heart will offer the two-year associate degree which sets an individual up to become an RN, Registered Nurse, and then go back to get their BSN, Bachelor of Science in Nursing. This stepping stone helps a lot of the students.

"For some people, they may be able to get their employer to pay for that, so that might be a less expensive option for them," Foito said.

Undergraduate students pursuing their BSN, like sophomore Lauren Balak, understand the impact of this change as well.

"With me being a part of DHCON, I can say that the resources we have access to will no doubt benefit the students that do the two-year program because they will still be part of the Sacred Heart Nursing School," she said.

There are currently three faculty teaching in the associate degree for St. Vincent's who will transfer over to Sacred Heart.

"They're just wonderful and amazing. They're the people we want because they have done the same thing. They really understand the challenges and can really speak to how to help these students," said Daley. "It's my heart's desire that no one goes by Sacred Heart and thinks I can't ever go there."

The options available now are the two-year associate degree, the four-year bachelor's degree, and the 15-month second degree accelerated.

"With having three different options for students to become an RN, there becomes flexibility and diversity," Balak said.

Daley expressed her excitement for these opportunities.

"We're excited to get them in. We're all reaching out to bring in and honor people's diversity and give people opportunities here at Sacred Heart that they may not have gotten somewhere else," said Daley.

## Need Your Taxes Done? Ask an Accounting Major

BY JOSHUA ARCHILLA  
Staff Writer

For almost 30 years, the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program has been led by Prof. Danny Pannese, Associate Professor of Accounting. This program is available for Sacred Heart University accounting majors who can gain course credit while also learning knowledge applicable to the real world.

Students volunteer within a VITA site at the North Branch Public Library that also works with the Burroughs Community Center in Bridgeport, Conn. The program provides eligible, middle to low-income clients with free tax return preparation.

"We created a class that is split into different teams of two or three students. Before the students are assigned any returns, Prof. Anderson and I will do the returns first every weekend. We then assign them to the students who must do a pre-audit with the clients," said Pannese.

After meeting with the students, they go over what issues the client may have. After laying information into a tax software and an Excel spreadsheet, the students must come to an agreement on an amount for refund before presenting it to Pannese and Anderson, who have to approve of these numbers.

Students taking the course find volunteer efforts to be very rewarding.

"It has been an excellent experience physically getting on the phone with the clients we are assigned to and rewards itself when we get thanks from each client after we finish helping them with their taxes," said senior and VITA member Ryann Greene. "It feels rewarding to know that I am helping lower and middle-income people within our local community around the greater Bridgeport area."

"VITA has made me realize how good it feels to do volunteer work," said senior and

VITA member Christian Campo. "Every time someone was due for a refund, they were so grateful and thankful. This just makes you feel good about what you are doing."

The program allows volunteering students to obtain new skill sets.

"VITA has helped strengthen my communication skills, especially since I was calling and speaking to clients myself," said Greene. "This is not something I did in my other accounting internships with accounting firms. As someone with social anxiety, the necessity of calling our clients helped push me out of my comfort zone and challenged me in a good way."

Campo also mentioned the importance of knowing how to file your taxes and how his communication skills were enhanced due to the VITA program.

"I think it is beneficial to know taxes and how they work," said Campo. "VITA has taught me great communication skills. I consider myself a people person and I really don't have trouble talking to anyone, I also love helping the community out."

This program is depicted as more of a job than an actual course.

"In this class, no student can hide because we are dependent on you," said Pannese. "You also can't blow a class because we have appointments and it's just like running an actual firm where we have clientele waiting for a call."

It has also given students opportunities to make connections.

"VITA has allowed me to make connections with my peers, as we are a small class of only seven people," said Greene. "We all have a few classes together outside of VITA, but being here in a small group helps us efficiently spend time working together to review each client, and I highly recommend other accounting students to consider taking this class, as it helped me better connect myself to the local community and other accounting majors that I usually do not spend much time with outside of classes."

## Spring Has Sprung for the English Department

BY COLLIN MACLEOD  
Staff Writer

The month of April is "Literary Spring" for the English department at Sacred Heart University. During this month, the department hosts several events that celebrate the arts.

"Events include student readings, theatre performances, open mic nights, workshops, and even reading events with writers outside of the SHU community," said Prof. Amie Reilly, the Literary Spring coordinator, as well as the Writer in Residence for Sacred Heart.

The first event of the month was an open mic night for student readings, hosted at the Edgerton Gallery on April 2.

At this event, there were 12 student readers and performers.

"I attended the kickoff open mic night, and it was amazing to see my creative peers share work they are proud of," said sophomore Olivia Plyler. "There is something incredibly special about listening to other's words as a group simultaneously. Whether we knew each other or were strangers, it felt as though if we were all connected."

Senior Victoria Rinaldi also attended this event.

"It was so much fun that everyone could present their work to the audience, which made it really cool to be able to hear their writing styles come to life," Rinaldi said. "I plan on attending as many events this month as my schedule allows."

President of the English Club, senior Dylan Chizmadia, explained how each event during Literary Spring brings something different and unique.

"The events are diverse for Literary Spring. One day could be a poetry reading, while

the next could be a Q&A with an author," said Chizmadia.

Every SHU student can attend or participate in these events, regardless of their major.

"The intention is for the whole SHU community to see what happens in the arts on campus," said Reilly. "I would love to see students from all disciplines participate."

Attending these events can help students develop skills and support each other.

"My favorite part about these events is the community it brings together," said Plyler. "I've always noticed that as an artist, I create some of my best work surrounded by other artists, therefore making some of these events very special."

Reilly credited Literary Spring and its benefits to students to his classmates who participate in these events.

"Getting to know all the poets, writers, journalists, and playwrights around me was a big part of making my college experience enjoyable," said Chizmadia. "There's a lot of talent in this university, and when it comes to Literary Spring, writers and artists aren't shy when expressing their craft."

The calendar with the list of Literary Spring events for the month can be found on televisions around campus, or by checking your email to see reminders of when an upcoming event is.

Some of the events coming up are Monologues and One Acts with Terrell Sledge, April 24 in Martire W349, My Lavendar Night, April 25 in the Little Theatre, and Christopher Conte, Live Out Loud, April 26 in the Little Theatre.

"Events like these are beneficial to us students because they're fun," said Rinaldi. "We're heading into the final weeks of our semester which can be very stressful, so it's nice to still have something to be excited about amidst all the preparing for finals."



# Claddagh Dancers Take on the World Championship

BY MOIRA STAPLES  
Editor At Large



Moira Staples, Editor At Large

Ava Leddy (left) and Bridget Hillman (right) pose for a picture after their Irish Dance competition.

On March 24, Irish dancers from around the globe arrived in Glasgow, Scotland to compete at the 2024 Oireachtas Rince na Cruinne, the World Irish Dance Championships. Every year, qualifying dancers have the opportunity to compete at this prestigious event, representing nations like the United States, Ireland, England, and even as far as Australia.

Among those competing this year were two of Sacred Heart University's very own Claddagh Dancers, freshmen Ava Leddy and Bridget Hillmann.

"The Irish Dance World Championships is the most exhilarating and exciting place in the World," said Hillmann. "Being at the Worlds, you know that you are dancing with the best of the best."

Hillmann began dancing at the age of three, just like her mother and grandmother before her. Over the past 16 years, she has competed at every level of competition, including seven national and five world championships.

"Qualifying for the Worlds the past three years has been such a dream come true," said Hillmann. "Competing at the Worlds is amazing and getting on that stage is so special. I am so thankful that I have been able to compete."

Most dancers, like Hillmann, spend their entire dancing careers dreaming of competing at the Worlds for the chance of becoming a World Champion. Fellow Claddagh Dancer, Ava Leddy, said that ever since she "fell in love with Irish dance," she has dreamt of dancing at the Worlds.

"Since a young age, I always wanted to climb up that podium to feel the excitement of a champion holding a shiny trophy," said Leddy. "I just came back from Glasgow, Scotland after competing at my sixth World Championships and I got an overall recall, placing 37th place in the World."

Like Hillmann, this was not Leddy's first time competing at the Worlds. Ever since she began dancing at the age of five, Leddy has competed in six World Championships, competing at her first Worlds

at just 10 years old. Leddy is ranked second in the Mid-Atlantic Region, seventh in North America, and has earned many World medals.

Outside of competition, Leddy recently had the opportunity to travel and tour with the world-famous show, Lord of the Dance, fulfilling another of her life-long dreams.

"It was an amazing experience and one of the biggest dreams any Irish dancer could have," said Leddy. "I often went to their shows when I was little and being on the stage more than 10 years later was a feeling I can't even describe."

Leddy explained that while the placements may sound nice, they mean practically nothing to her. Leddy's favorite part of dance has been the people and friendships she has made through it.

"I wouldn't say Irish dance is all about competing, placements, and training, but the main reason why I love Irish dance is because of the friendships I have made along the way, and I will cherish these memories forever."

Both Hillmann and Leddy expressed their gratitude towards SHU for allowing them to continue their passion for dancing while also connecting them to dancers just like them with whom they have been able to find a deep sense of community.

"Coming to Sacred Heart, as a freshman I was scared about making friends, but as soon as I met the people on the Claddagh Irish dance team, I knew I would have lifelong friends here," said Hillmann. "Connecting with people over something you all love is very special, and I am so happy that this school had an opportunity to do that."

Both Ava and Bridget, along with the rest of the SHU Claddagh Dancers, will be performing in the Irish Dance Showcase on April 19 at 8 p.m. in the Edgerton Center. Tickets are available for purchase in the Edgerton Box Office or by calling (203)-371-7908. Visit [www.edgertoncenter.org](http://www.edgertoncenter.org) for more information.



Moira Staples, Editor At Large

Sacred Heart University's very own Claddagh dancers, freshman Ava Leddy (left) and Bridget Hillman (right).

## Pawsitive Vibes: Dogs' Affects on Mental Health

BY CAROLINE CLIFFORD  
Audrey's Corner Editor

In the whirlwind of deadlines, extracurricular activities, and social lives that define college life, an unexpected source of comfort emerges: dogs. These furry companions have the power to transform the high-stress environment of college campuses, offering mental and physical health benefits to their student owners.

Dr. Dawn Melzer, a Psychology professor at Sacred Heart University who specializes in canine cognition, illuminates the profound advantages of dog ownership among college students. "Dogs are considered part of a student's social support network," said Dr. Melzer. "The attachment and emotional closeness of the relationship with the dog have been found to decrease anxiety and depression levels."

Considering the demanding lifestyle of college students, it's natural to wonder about the specific health benefits they can derive from owning a dog. Research conducted by Barker et al. in 2020 emphasizes that while dog ownership entails significant commitments, the benefits far outweigh the additional obligations. Dogs become integral members of a student's support system, offering companionship and emotional support during times of stress.

"Anecdotally we hear from students that they feel less stress when they are around their dogs, but their dogs are often at their family's homes and not near campus," said Dr. Melzer.

Dr. Melzer's research dives deeper into the effects of therapy dogs,

specifically on academic stress among college students. Collaborating with her research team, which includes Drs. Yeater, Pierce, and a dedicated research assistant conducted studies using both behavioral assessments, such as questionnaires, and physiological measures, like assessing cortisol levels—the primary stress hormone.

Their findings are remarkable: even a brief 10-minute interaction with a therapy dog significantly reduced stress levels. This suggests that the presence of therapy dogs on college campuses could alleviate the pressures of academic life.

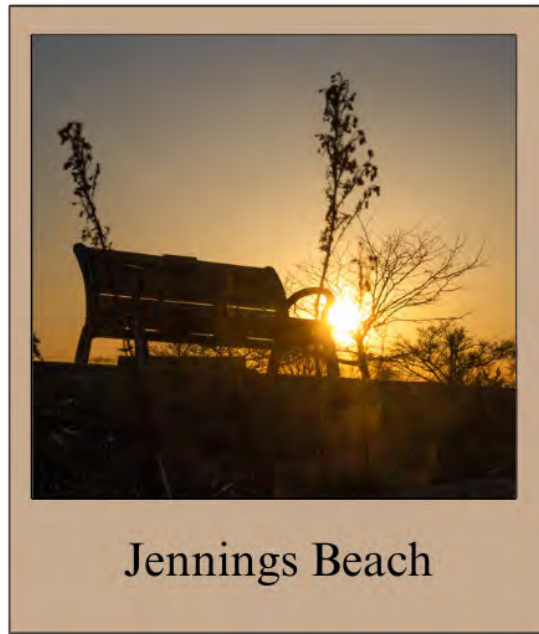
As colleges increasingly recognize the importance of supporting students' mental well-being, the role of dogs in promoting a positive campus environment cannot be overstated. From providing companionship to alleviating stress, these four-legged friends offer invaluable support to students navigating the challenges of higher education.



# CampusLife



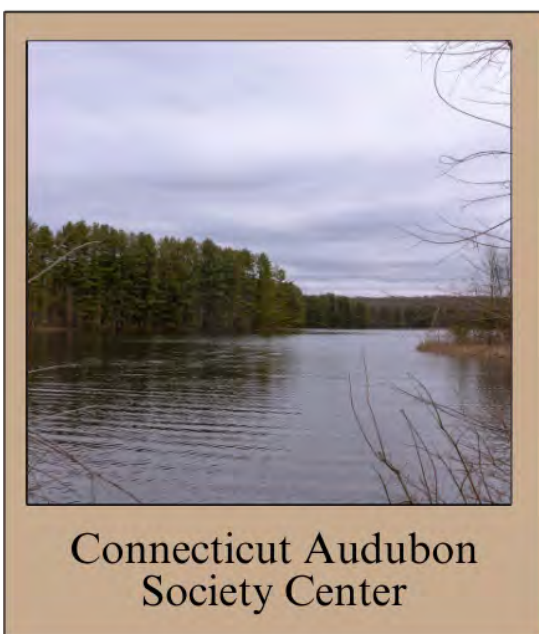
Trumbull Public Library



Jennings Beach



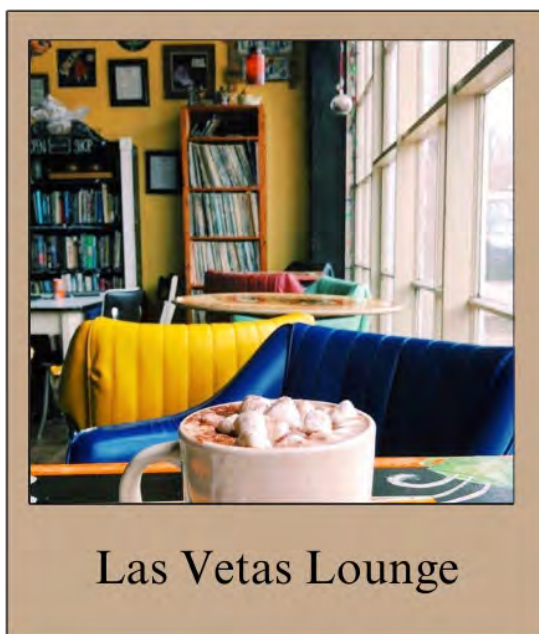
Candlewood Market



Connecticut Audubon Society Center



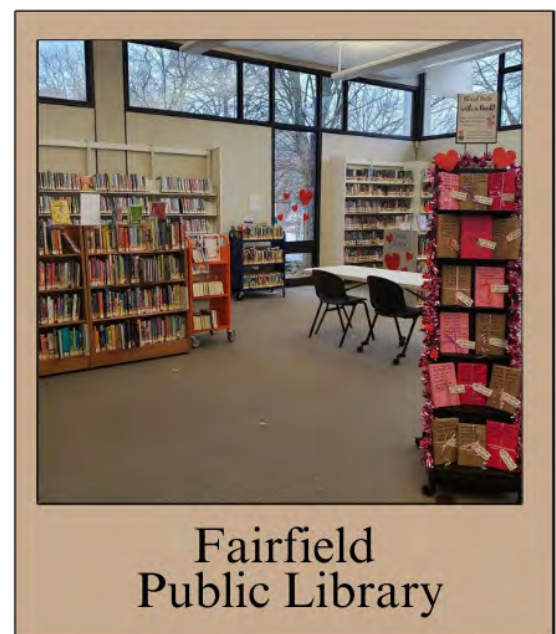
Harborview Market



Las Vegas Lounge



Crown Cafe



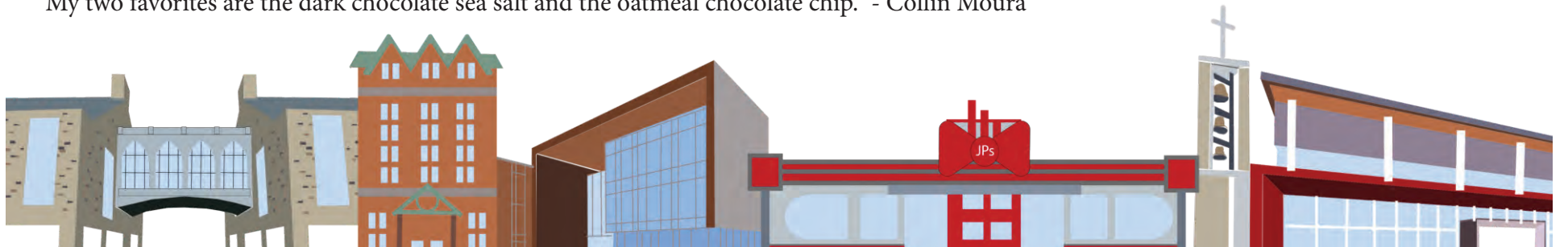
Fairfield Public Library

BY COLLIN MOURA AND SARAH MARGERISON  
*Campus Life* Editors

Contributed by Collin Moura, Campus Life Editor  
Instagram, @crowncafedmc, Instagram, @fairfieldlibrary, Instagram, @candlewoodmarket, Instagram, @lasvetaslounge, Instagram, @trumbulllibrary

“Candlewood Market in Fairfield is my favorite place to grab lunch and do homework off campus. If I’m there early, I’ll get a bacon, egg, and cheese on a bagel. For lunch my favorite thing to get is the Chipotle Chicken BLT on ciabatta. I’m obsessed with their cranberry pomegranate refreshers and get one every time I go! The ambiance is so calming, with plants and tons of space with rustic decor.” - Sarah Margerison

“My go-to place to relax and get some work done is Harborview Market in Black Rock. The atmosphere in there is incredibly welcoming, centered around community and conversation. My two favorite things on the menu are the sweet magnolia coffee with oat milk and the Lisbon sandwich, complete with chorizo, egg, homefries, manchego, sauteed kale, and chipotle crema on a portuguese roll. When I finish writing my weekly Spectrum article or editing some of my photography work, I always make sure to reward myself with one of their freshly baked cookies. My two favorites are the dark chocolate sea salt and the oatmeal chocolate chip.” - Collin Moura



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# Arts & Entertainment

## Jojo Siwa: From Dance Moms and Bows to Dream Guests and Karma

BY EMMA RICOTTA  
Staff Writer

Jojo Siwa, previously known as Jojo with a Bow Bow, has rebranded herself into something completely opposite of her former rainbow, glitter and bow aesthetic.

Siwa released her new song “Karma,” debuting her new dark and edgy look. This rebrand caused a lot of discussion throughout the media, and long-time fans of hers seem to be less than thrilled about her new reputation.

Sophomore Hannah Delamonico is a dancer herself and grew up watching “Dance Moms,” in which Siwa starred.

“I think that it’s a little inappropriate considering a lot of her followers were younger from Jojo with the Bow Bow,” said Delamonico. “She is getting fame from joking around and making inappropriate music videos and I think it’s disrespectful for the people in the industry who aren’t getting as much money.”

Dr. Lori Bindig-Yousman is a professor in the School of Communication, Media and the Arts (SCMA). She has also written a chapter in “Start of Something New?” Exploring Gender in Disney+’s High School Musical: The Musical: The Series,” in which Siwa starred in playing a queer character.

“I think it is really interesting how she is rebranding in her adult era and how the media is picking it up and making a very big deal of it,” said Bindig-Yousman. “She wants the publicity and by saying that it’s edgy and might not be acceptable for all audiences, that draws people in even more.”

In addition to releasing the song “Karma,” Siwa also came out with a music video that takes place on an island with her wearing edgy and rock n’ roll inspired outfits. The



Jojo Siwa debuting her new image at the iHeart Radio Music Awards. Instagram, @enews

music video includes sexual themes and strong language.

Sophomore Sydney Bosma felt the music video was inappropriate after watching.

“I think she is doing it for publicity, and she doesn’t really care what people view her as,” said Bosma. “That’s why her music video is so inappropriate because I feel like she doesn’t know what to do with herself and she thinks that it is normal, but it’s not.”

According to Billboard Magazine, one of Siwa’s inspirations for her child-star transition is Miley Cyrus.

“If we look historically, and we think about Miley

Cyrus, Hannah Montana was very wholesome and she really transitioned her look and style,” said Bindig-Yousman. “I think Jojo Siwa is following that path that’s been laid out for her, so I think that part of it is about her authentic growth and part of it is media strategy.”

According to Business Insider, it has been proven that it is challenging for child-stars to transition in a mainstream environment.

Bindig-Yousman compared Siwa’s transition to Miley Cyrus’.

“If you compare her to somebody like Miley Cyrus, she is much lower tier, so to try and break through and gain attention, she has to do something for the media,” said Bindig-Yousman. “I think her sexuality may have brought her to the forefront a little bit more because she was speaking out about being part of the LGBTQ+ community that people might not expect from someone her age, and that may have brought her some more attention.”

Delamonico feels that for children, like Siwa, growing up in the spotlight affects their mental health.

“In terms of all the Dance Moms girls, they become accustomed to the spotlight and when they’re not in it as much, it affects them mentally and they don’t know what to do with themselves,” said Delamonico. “Jojo had to find a different way to be in the spotlight and it just causes a lot of competition between herself.”

“People are saying that it is inappropriate, and obviously it is a different look and I understand that initially she was very child-friendly essentially with the big bows and rainbows and the sparkles, but everyone grows up and everyone evolves,” said Bindig-Yousman. “It makes perfect sense that she, as an artist and a human being, would want to evolve.”

## TAP Presents “Promises, Promises”

BY BELLA GENERAZO  
Staff Writer

CONTINUED FROM PG 1

“My favorite scene from the show is ‘Turkey Lurkey’ because it’s the biggest number in the show and it’s a fun and lively number overall,” said Pellegrini.

“What makes this show special is the charm that it has. It’s a very lighthearted and fun watch, it’s not hard to keep up with and it’s an easy entertainment for many audiences,” said sophomore Thomas Foley, the assistant stage manager of the show.

There was a lot of work going on behind the scenes of this production. “I’ve found that I’ve learned a lot from the people that I’ve worked with,” said Foley. “It’s been a fun learning experience and I have had a good time with everyone on the team and have made so many new friends that I didn’t have before.”

TAP’s production of “Promises, Promises” had a variety of costumes, and elaborate hair and makeup.

Senior Kayla Goncalves said, “Working with my co-costume designer, Emily, has been the best way for us to organize ourselves. We understand what our collaborative vision is, which allows us to divide the work.”

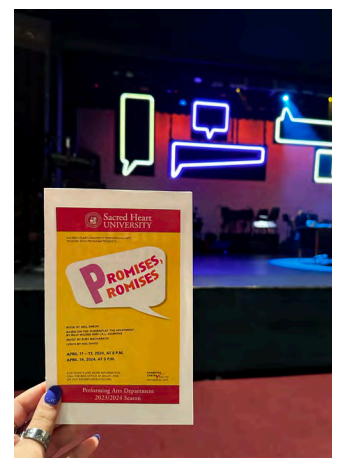
“My favorite costume in the show is Fran’s Oscar de la Renta green slip dress,” said Goncalves. The costumes were an integral part of the show, including different pieces like dresses, belts and shoes all dating to the 60’s.

“I think what’s amazing about this program is that we are always looking to put our own spin on things. Originality and creativity are two skills that all TAP members possess,” said Goncalves. “I think TAP is bringing a new level of innovation into this show through the TV’s and projections we use throughout the whole show. It really elevates the performance to a new standard.”

Due to its outdated themes, “Promises, Promises” is

a show that many schools shy away from, but TAP took the challenge head on, using its resources to produce a well-organized performance.

“The work that everyone in this company has put into this production is mind blowing, and this hard work translated onto the stage 100%. It is a fun show with a talented cast and an incredible production team to hold everything together onstage and offstage,” said Goncalves.



Daniella Baldino, Assistant Photo Editor  
Playbill from the TAP performance, “Promises, Promises.”

## Olivia Rodrigo Spills Her “Guts” at MSG

BY THERESA TARTAMELLA  
Staff Writer

Singer-songwriter Olivia Rodrigo came to the area for her “Guts World Tour.” She performed at TD Garden in Boston on April 1, and then made her way to Madison Square Garden (MSG) in New York, for four sold out shows on April 5, 6, 8 and 9.

The room was filled with high energy that Rodrigo radiated, with the fans reciprocating. In videos shared by her official Instagram and TikTok fan account, the crowd can be heard screaming the lyrics of various songs back to her as she performs.

Senior Grace Susanin, who attended her April 5 performance at MSG said, “My favorite part of my concert experience was definitely getting to see Olivia perform live. I was so impressed by how good her voice sounds live and how she was able to perform songs back to back without breaks while still sounding amazing and having high energy.”

Not only did she impress the crowd with her sustained energy, but fans like Susanin loved how interactive Rodrigo was with her fans, allowing for a more intimate feeling despite the large crowds.

Rodrigo’s multiple outfit changes were another highlight of her performances with most of them consisting of sparkles that shimmered under the light.

Fans matched the aesthetic of Rodrigo’s style and albums by incorporating purple and sequins into their own outfits. However, these outfit changes were only an accessory to her fans’ favorite songs that they heard live.

“My favorite part of the concert was when she sang ‘Teenage Dream.’ While she sang, there was a video montage on the screen, showing several videos of her when she was younger, and growing up. I thought that gave the song even more of an emotional touch than it already had,” said sophomore Casey Trzcinski.

Rodrigo used the screen behind her in engaging ways by adding visuals to match with each of the songs performed, such as her silhouette in a moon displayed as she

performed her song “Vampire.”

In addition to performing, Rodrigo has another project that she is passionate about—her organization called “Fund 4 Good.” This fund supports women’s reproductive health. According to Billboard, part of the proceeds from all her ticket sales will go toward her fund to support other organizations with the same values. Rodrigo also has had tables set up in the arenas with different resources for her fans that might not be easily available to them.

“I think it is very important that celebrities use their platform to spread awareness. I think it shows that Olivia cares a lot more about her fans than just that they enjoy her music,” said Trzcinski.

According to Rolling Stone, through the National Network of Abortion Funds groups, Rodrigo was handing out contraceptives at her concerts in places where abortion is illegal. According to the Hollywood Reporter, her management team later prohibited the abortion funds from handing out contraceptives as they were too accessible to the younger girls in attendance.

Although time has passed, fans are still left starstruck by Rodrigo and her performance. “Her concert was extremely fun and she knew how to get an audience excited. I would go again a million more times,” said Trzcinski.

Jessica Balogh contributed to this article.



Jessica Balogh, Assistant A&E Editor  
The view from Olivia Rodrigo’s GUTS tour at Madison Square Garden.

# Sports

## Women's Golf Looks For Three-Peat

BY BRENDAN MURPHY  
Staff Writer

The women's golf team concluded their regular season play on April 6 and 7, finishing in fifth place at the Rutgers Invitational in Piscataway, N.J. Despite the team's placement, the Pioneers had three players finish in the top 20 in individual play.

The team's standouting performance came from senior Chantal El Chaib, who finished with a three round total of 220. This score was good for fourth place overall, sitting at just seven over par across three rounds.

"I just came off a win the previous weekend, so I was just feeling much more confident," said El Chaib. "I just told myself to just hit the ball and play like myself, and it worked well."

El Chaib's performance was acknowledged as she received her second Northeastern Conference (NEC) Player of the Week award in the month of April. As a junior in 2023, El Chaib was named All-NEC First Team, NEC Golfer of the Year, and won the NEC Individual Championships.

"She has been building all spring. Her game is trending in the right direction and we are expecting big things at the NEC Championship," said Head Coach Matthew McGreevy.

The Pioneer's other top 20 finishers at the Rutgers Invitational were junior Maya Robilio and senior Margot Rouquette. Across three rounds, Robilio shot 229 for 16 over par, tying her for 16 place. Rouquette finished 15 over par (228 overall), placing her tied for 13.

"I was pretty happy with how I handled myself on Saturday, I just wish I had a better final day on Sunday," said Rouquette.

This invitational closed the Pioneer's regular season and the last season of collegiate play for seniors Chaib and Rouquette, along with Kerry Kline, Mollie Lewis and graduate student Kailee Welch. The players and coaches reflect on the impact this graduating class left on the team over the past four years.

"It has been nice. Their senior leadership and being able to watch them grow as they did throughout the four years," said McGreevy. "Just knowing that I can count on them as well as their teammates can count on them to always produce."

SHU women's golf has been a force within the NEC in the recent past, winning back-to-back championships. This season, the Pioneers look to continue this streak.

The women finished in either first or second place in six different events this season, including their own hosted events: the SHU Fall Classic and the SHU Spring Break Invitational.

The team looks to cap off yet another winning season with a chance at a three-peat NEC Championship.

SHU will travel to Pine Mountain, Ga. to play for the championship title from April 19-21. If they succeed, the Pioneers will have a chance at competing in regionals.

"We have had a good spring," said McGreevy. "We are going in the right direction and I think everyone is focused. We all have a common goal to bring home a third consecutive conference championship."



Instagram, @sacredheartgolf  
A team picture with the women's golf team and their coach after their win at Prospect Bay.

## Club Field Hockey Ready for Another Year

BY WILL RATH  
Staff Writer

The club athletics program offers students a casual, yet athletic experience for students who want to continue their athletic careers in a less stressful way.

One of the club sports programs that is popular on campus is club field hockey. Junior and captain, Emma Borland, detailed her experience as a club sports athlete.

"I came to SHU because there was a club field hockey team, and I knew I wanted to keep playing after high school," said Borland.

Sophomore Jenna Costa is another student that has had positive experiences with the program, and looks to

continue her field hockey career with the Pioneers.

"It's been a great experience," said Costa. "To be able to join a team as welcoming and as loving as the club field hockey team here was really exciting for me because I loved my team in high school, and I love these girls just as much."

The Pioneers typically play most of their games in the fall season against other universities in the tri-state area. SHU had a combined record of 1-3-1 on the season.

"The season was a ton of fun," said Head Coach Maria Bassett. "One of the games that sticks out was when we traveled to play Northeastern."

With the fall season now over, club field hockey athletes are eager to return to the field for another season.

"For my next two years I plan on doing whatever I can to stay on the team," said Costa. "We are losing some really valuable players, and we would love to keep going and have a strong team like we've had before."

Those involved in the club sports at SHU want to bring awareness to the programs and promote more involvement on campus.

"This team is so special, and I wish there was more

support and coverage from the university because I feel like the team is forgotten about," said Borland. "This team is remarkable, and the best thing SHU has given me, and I am forever grateful for that."

For those who may have an interest in joining club field hockey or any other club sports programs go to the club sports website for more information.



Instagram, @shclubhockey  
The women's club field hockey team celebrating their win.



Instagram, @shclubhockey  
The Sacred Heart club Field Hockey Team along with their coach.

## Tennis Coach Mike Guastelle Celebrates 30 years

BY JASON PILLA  
Staff Writer

Mike Guastelle, Sacred Heart University (SHU) Tennis Head coach for both the Men's and Women's teams, celebrates 30 years at SHU. Guastelle is not only a coach, but he is also a Senior Associate Athletic Director.

Guastelle's passion for tennis started when he was 12 years old playing throughout his high school and collegiate career where he attended Springfield College in Massachusetts.

"I did not have the path most kids do growing up in the game," said Guastelle. "I picked up the game later as a child and played other sports throughout high school besides tennis."

In 1994, Guastelle became the head coach for both the men's and women's tennis teams and Coordinator of Athletic Communications. Guastelle would help lead both tennis teams to success.

Guastelle led the men's team in 2004 to the finals of the Northeast Conference Championship and led the women's team in 2005 to the New England Intercollegiate Championship.

Judy Ann Riccio, Director of Athletics at SHU, says Guastelle has had a tremendous impact at SHU both as a coach and an administrator.

"I am so thankful for all that Guastelle had given to this University, both an administrative and a coaching

role," said Riccio. "He is a valued member of the athletics department, and I am looking forward to many more years of successful tennis with Guastelle."

Guastelle has won Coach of the Year twice as the women's coach, 1997 and 2023. Although Guastelle has seen a lot of changes since he started coaching, the student athletes are the same when he first started.

"They are highly competitive, highly motivated young people who I hope are having the best college tennis experience they can at SHU," said Guastelle.

Lefteri Apostolou, senior student athlete on the men's tennis team, has learned a lot from Guastelle and loves having him as his coach in his collegiate career.

"Coach has helped me a lot in understanding the game from a more strategic and tactical point of view, which has led me to make better decisions at important moments in my matches," said Apostolou. "I am very grateful to have him by my side these years and I hope he continues to do very well in his work."

Guastelle enjoys being around his athletes and likes to build good relationships with each one of them on and off the court. Riccio says it is one of the reasons why the tennis teams are successful.

"Guastelle is invested in his players, he advocates for his programs, has a wonderful working relationship with the teams and athletics administration," said Riccio.

While Guastelle builds relationships with his players he also learns lessons from them along the way.



Sacred Heart Athletics  
Head men's and women's tennis Coach Mike Guastelle leading a practice with his team.

"They taught me that everybody is different and when you deal with each person on an individual basis, you need to be flexible on how you approach them," said Guastelle.

Many people are very appreciative of what Guastelle has done for SHU as a coach and as an administrator in his 30 years.

"He is someone who cares about you on and off the court and always wants the best for you as a person and as a player," said Apostolou. "I have had ups and downs, and he has always been there as a support mechanism."

# Sports

## Football Prepares for a New Season with No Conference



Sacred Heart Athletics

Members of the Sacred Heart University D1 football team celebrating a touchdown.

BY JAKE CARDINALE  
*Sports Editor*

With the Pioneers heading to the Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference (MAAC) starting next season, the Sacred Heart University (SHU) football team is left without a conference.

On October 23, SHU announced that they would be leaving the Northeast Conference (NEC) and senior defensive lineman Tyreke Brown expected the team to go independent next season.

“With word from the NEC that they didn’t want us as an associated member, it was basically what we would have to lean towards. I also think going independent will help our program have time to grow into that caliber team and compete at a higher level,” said Brown.

With this independent status, the team’s schedule features several of the teams they played against in the NEC, including St. Francis University (SFU) and Stonehill College.

Although the Pioneers finished in seventh place in the NEC this past season after going just 2-9, they have had more success in previous years. They were the NEC champions in 2020 and 2021, as well as 2018, 2014, and 2013.

“I think the biggest challenge for a lot of the guys this year is just trying to play for a purpose. I think some people will not want to give their all just because we can’t play for a conference championship. We need everyone to buy in in order to get back to what we were just a few years ago,” said senior wide receiver Payton Rhoades.

Competing as independent makes it difficult to schedule

games each season, in addition to other challenges.

“Joining a conference could provide more stability, better scheduling, and postseason prospects,” said senior linebacker Myles Talley.

Brown has thoughts on where the team may fit into other conferences.

“I think the Big South or the CAA [Coastal Athletic Association] would be a good fit. I personally think we have what it takes to compete at the level of the CAA,” said Brown.

The CAA features some southern schools, as far as Elon University and Campbell University in North Carolina. However, the conference also includes many schools from New England, including the University of Maine and the University of Rhode Island.

Although the team plans to join a new conference, it is not guaranteed that they will have the opportunity in the next couple of years.

“I would absolutely like to join a conference. If so, it might happen when the ideal conference alignment and timing coincide with the team’s goals and ambitions,” said Talley.

For now, the team will see how the offseason plays out.

“I think Coach Nofri and the staff we have are men of adversity and they always find a way, and that’s something they’ve embedded in us players as well,” said Brown. “I do believe if we have the success we’re used to, then we won’t have a problem finding a new conference to be a part of.”

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