

SHU to Purchase Notre Dame High School for \$15 Million



Mark F. Conrad, Sacred Heart University

Sacred Heart University President, Dr. Petillo, pictured with Notre Dame High School Principal, Dr. Cipriano, during a conference to announce the purchase of the Catholic high school on Feb. 1.

BY ERIN CLARK
News Editor

On Thursday, Feb. 1, SHU President Dr. John Petillo announced that Sacred Heart University and the Diocese of Bridgeport have agreed to purchase the Notre Dame Catholic High School for \$15 million. This campus sits across the street from Sacred Heart on the other side of Jefferson St.

Sacred Heart and Notre Dame have had a partnership since 2011. They share facilities such as parking areas, athletic fields, the Chapel of the Holy Spirit, and the library. Since this partnership, SHU has offered Notre Dame alumni who are accepted into SHU a 50% tuition scholarship, according to a university press release.

“As a representative of Sacred Heart’s admission office and an alum of Notre Dame High School, I’m excited to enhance our existing partnership,” said Assistant Vice

President of Undergraduate Admissions Pamela Pillo. “Our collaboration will strengthen ties within the local community and provide exciting opportunities for both current and prospective Notre Dame students.”

The news of Sacred Heart’s purchase was announced to students of Notre Dame on Thursday, Feb. 1. Approximately 20% of each Notre Dame Graduating class have gone to Sacred Heart since 2018.

“This is a very exciting opportunity for Notre Dame students,” said Notre Dame Principal Dr. Christopher Cipriano. “The resources that the university can bring to our school are certainly beyond the normal opportunities for our students.”

These opportunities include access to the communications, business, nursing, and faculty

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New Executive Director of Undergraduate Admissions

BY CAYLA MELLO
Staff Writer

The Sacred Heart University Undergraduate Admissions Office hired SHU alumna, Lexie Galan, as the new executive director undergraduate admissions.

After obtaining her bachelor’s degree in 2014, she went on to complete her master’s in criminal justice in 2015. The same year, she joined the staff at the admissions office on the undergraduate admissions and enrollment management team and supervised the New York and New Jersey recruitment territories.

Once her master’s in criminal justice was completed, she went on to Long Island University where she completed her masters in school counseling. Galan

is a certified school counselor in the state of New York, and recently worked as a school counselor and Assistant Director of College Counseling at St. Anthony’s High School in Huntington, N.Y, according to a university press release.

“I have a tremendous amount of respect for school counselors, being in the weeds and seeing what goes on and understanding the counselors needs and the schools needs and things like that really brings a different perspective for me now coming back here,” said Galan.

With what she learned while working at St. Anthony’s High School, she has an understanding of what prospective students are looking for and how Sacred Heart admissions can help.

“It is important to have the comfort level of meeting with families, anticipating

what their major concerns will be, and being able to proactively plan for that,” said Assistant Vice President of Undergraduate Admissions Pamela Pillo. “Even taking a look at our general communication, our website, are we addressing the questions most frequently asked from families who are new to the college admission process? I absolutely know Lexie will be an integral part of carrying us forward.”

In her new role as executive director, she is taking on new responsibilities for the admissions office.

“My main responsibilities are helping prospective students and families and showing them the great things about Sacred Heart, but also helping the staff and empowering them,” said Galan.

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Tracy Deer-Mirek, Sacred Heart University

Lexie Galan, Sacred Heart alumna, has joined the undergraduate admissions team as the new executive director.

Eco To-Go at 63’s Leaves Students Unimpressed

BY GEORGE TRIEBENBACHER
Staff Writer

On Feb. 5, 63’s, the all-you-can-eat buffet-style dining hall located in the Main Academic Building of Sacred Heart University, announced an immediate change involving their to-go system in a university-wide email.

These changes eliminated disposable to-go boxes from 63’s, and introduced reusable “Ozzi O2Go” containers to the dining hall. These containers are now the only take-out option at 63’s.

According to the university-wide email, Ozzi O2Go containers, described as “washed, sanitized and ready for reuse,” are easy to transport and have eliminated an estimated 25 million single-use disposables from landfills and oceans.

“Ozzi has built a system of over 300 colleges and university campus dining centers to eliminate traditional disposable take-out containers,” said Chartwells Marketing Director Danielle Bahr. “SHU Dining has been considering a partnership

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Mixtape Art Gallery

BY GIA ESPOSITO
Staff Writer

The Mixtape Art Gallery, hosted by the Sacred Heart University Department of Art and Design, commenced its opening reception on Feb. 8 at the Edgerton Center for Performing Arts. The exhibition, showcasing artwork from students, staff, and community members, will remain on display until March 10.

Artists were asked to submit a high-resolution image and link that portrayed their view of the community. The gallery

featured large-scale posters of the images submitted through the open call with QR codes to create an interactive experience for viewers. Each artist was allowed to submit up to five entries and there were about 40 submissions featured overall.

“The show is just an updated version of wanting to make a Mixtape utilizing the technology we all have available on our phones,” said Prof. Nathan Lewis, Chair of Art and Design and Director of the gallery.

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News

Notre Dame

BY ERIN CLARK
News Editor

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resources that Sacred Heart has.

"I think this is an incredible opportunity for the students at Notre Dame," said senior Julianna Aligo. "To be in high school and have access to the resources we have on campus is unlike almost all other high school experiences."

Notre Dame students complete a research paper in their junior year in American Studies. With the purchase, Cipriano is hopeful they will be able to utilize Sacred Heart's online library resources.

"We are beginning an international baccalaureate program," Cipriano said. "Having resources from SHU will be great for this."

Notre Dame's faculty and staff will be given tuition reimbursement if they choose to take classes at SHU. They will also be given extended lab opportunities and access to different areas of clinical studies.

As a part of the purchase, Sacred Heart will invest at least \$5 million into Notre Dame within 6 months of the closing date. This could be physical improvements, technology upgrades, or any updates.

"I am very appreciative of the university," said Cipriano. "This is a game changer for the high school. I'm excited for the opportunities that lay ahead."



Mark F. Conrad, Sacred Heart University

Sacred Heart and Notre Dame have had a partnership since 2011 that allowed both Catholic institutions to collaborate and support each other.

Executive Director of Undergraduate Admissions

BY CAYLA MELLO
Staff Writer

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Galan commented on the current state of admissions.

"We are in a good place. We're doing great. I think it's a good energy of the staff, they love talking to families. They are energetic about being in the recruitment process," said Galan.

"I loved my experience applying and getting to know Sacred Heart," said Anna Riolo, who is in her first year of graduate school in the Occupational Therapy (OT) program at SHU. My tour, and my tour guide were so helpful. I decided to apply early decision here, they had me do an interview and then I was accepted in the accelerated program for OT in December of my senior year."

There have been changes in the industry of college admissions in the past year and the staff at the Admissions Office has been working to adjust to those changes. One change

that was made this year regarded deadlines, which helped get families decisions sooner.

"We have had to be nimble and adjust to those changes, we have a lot of young professionals who work on our staff, and I think it's almost in a way, turning some of those changes into a positive," said Pillo.

Galan plans to continue working on communication from the university in her new position.

"Students don't know things that might seem obvious to me or somebody from admissions. It's not obvious for a high school student, or first-generation families. I think communication and wording is all something that we can continue to work on in admissions in general," said Galan.

Galan is looking forward to being back at SHU and helping prospective students.

"Just being back with high energy staff that want to be here, and want to work and just being able to share my experiences with everyone," said Galan.

Eco To-Go at 63's

BY GEORGE TRIEBENBACHER
Staff Writer

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with Ozzi for well over the past year. We decided the spring 2024 semester was a great time to start, as the university also began their recycling initiative."

These changes will help lower the costs that paper products often bring and help eliminate waste.

"These containers not only save trees and reduce emissions, but also help us lower our carbon footprint as we work to become a zero-waste campus," said Bahr.

When a student wants to get food to-go from 63's, they will need to pay a one-time charge of \$7.95 the first time they pick up an Ozzi O2Go container. Along with the container, students will receive a token that will allow them to get a clean container when they drop the old one off.

"The one-time charge is a nominal fee to pay into a responsible reusable program. It incentivizes and engages students to buy into the program," said Bahr.

SHU students are beginning to get used to these changes, as this past week was the first time they experienced the new system.

"I think the idea is good, but I think it's going to be very difficult for kids to have to carry it around, and the fact that we have to pay dining dollars for it is not right," said sophomore Tom Remmen.

Remmen also said that he frequently uses the to-go option at 63's, especially when he doesn't have as much time to eat before a class or a practice.

"I'm definitely going to do it a lot less, which is tough, because I do it a lot," said Remmen.

"I usually get to-go, but now I won't, because it's such an intricate, complicated system," said sophomore Aidan Connolly. "Last time I was there, this past Tuesday, I realized that they had implemented that, so I just ate there instead."

Connolly also expressed his concerns about losing the token. If a student lost a token, they would have to pay for a new one. The dining services staff will be accommodating at first as students continue to adjust to the new process.

"Included in the price of the container, a keychain is supplied that secures the token to a bookbag or key chain," Bahr said. "Knowing this is a new program to SHU we will honor any misplaced or lost tokens within the first couple of weeks."

Sophomore Jake Hoyt eats at 63's multiple times a week and has used both the to-go and in-person options in the past but will only eat-in at the dining hall going forward.

"I just feel like it's way more complicated than they need to make it," said Hoyt.

For more information on SHU dining services, visit <https://dineoncampus.com/SHU>.

SHU Shares Because SHU Cares

BY CALEB JEAN-PIERRE
Staff Writer

Starting Monday, Feb. 5, the Office of Community Engagement began its donation campaign "SHU Shares." This program was established in 2021 and aims to raise awareness towards and address food insecurity within the Sacred Heart community.

According to their site, SHU Shares is an initiative that strives toward inclusivity on campus by helping to remove the stigma associated with food insecurity.

"Back in 2021, some of the professors and deans of the different colleges and schools had been hearing from some of their students of issues of food insecurity, primarily because of economic hardships coming out of COVID, and students were sacrificing meals during the day to afford their basic academic needs on campus," said Annie Johnson, Director of the Office of Community Engagement.

A team consisting of the Dean of Students, Student Life, SHU Dining Services, the Alumni Engagement Team, Marketing Operations, the Board of Trustees, and the IT team contributed on-campus resources or financial contributions to get the program up and running.

According to the SHU

Shares site, contactless donations can be made to students in need, who may make confidential requests online.

Students can participate by clicking the "Donate Meal Swipes" button on their site or any mobile device, via QR codes, that can be found across campus. Monetary donations are also welcome.

All requests are confidential and given based on meal swipe availability. Participation does not affect financial aid or scholarships and swipes can be requested between five and 20 meal swipes at a time.

According to the SHU Shares site, all requests will be reviewed within 24 business hours. Eligible students will have meal swipes added directly to their SHU card and will be notified by email.

"For the past six semesters, SHU Shares has been able to award 7,000 swipes to students, for around 620 recipients over the last three years," said Johnson.

Instrumental to the advertisement of the donation campaign on campus, the SHU Student Government's Community and Inclusion Board has helped SHU Shares with the on-ground promotion of the donation campaign to get the word out. The Community and Inclusion Board is a Student Government division that

connects the SHU community with each other and the wider Bridgeport community.

Senior Emma Grady, Director of the Community and Inclusion Board, said, "For this month of promotion, the Community and Inclusion Board will be doing table times throughout the month to promote SHU Shares to the student community and ways they can participate."

Additionally, Johnson said how it is motivating that not only are there financial contributions from outside participants, but students will donate from their meal plans, crediting over 1000 student donors and their contributions to the swipes they were able to award over the past three years.

"SHU Shares is a great opportunity to help your peers and a resource for people to fully utilize the dining options while on campus," said Grady.

Sophomore and Vice President of the Gender Sexuality Alliance, William Conway said, "The buy-in from all areas of the campus community dedicated to service, inclusivity, and engagement in addressing food insecurity on campus, and continued student support is key to the success of SHU Shares."

"I think it is a good thing. It is representative of this campus' values and that we are dedicated to helping others out and lifting each other up," said Conway.

Donations to SHU Shares can be made Feb. 5-29. For more information on SHU Shares, how to donate, and other additional resources, visit <https://www.sacredheart.edu/offices--departments-directory/community-engagement/volunteer-programs/shu-shares/>.



Instagram, @shu_shares

Students dine at Thea's Abbey, one of the many dining halls in which meal swipes can be used.

Features

SHU's Kappa Kappa Psi Chapter

BY JOSIAH HANNA
Staff Writer

Approaching two decades since its founding at Sacred Heart University, Kappa Kappa Psi fraternity persists in fostering service, growth and empowerment through its music-centered brotherhood.

From coordinating campus performances to mentoring youth programs, senior Lauren Strong, President of the fraternity, emphasized the fraternity's open and engaging culture.

"In the fall there's social events hosted open to everyone and apple picking," said Strong. "We have meetings with the brothers, even evening events with Best Buddies organization and we show the kids how to play."

Strong spotlights their work with K.E.Y.S. (Kids Empowered By Your Support) as a major initiative. The Elks Lodge-sponsored program offers free music lessons to Bridgeport students from fourth through eighth grade.

"Every Saturday, brothers in orchestra participate in lessons earlier in the morning," said Strong. "We perform with them in their concerts, the next one being in May."

Senior MaryAnn Droesch, Vice President of Membership, echoed the fraternity's welcoming outlook.

"We appreciate help from any people that want to help out," said Droesch.

She noted upcoming fall events open to all, including mandatory happenings for current

brothers along with special programming hosted jointly with their campus partners, Best Buddies.

"I wanted to branch out and give new things a try. I was very big on service," said Droesch regarding her decision to join.

According to Keith Johnston, Director of SHU's Band and Orchestra and the fraternity's longtime advisor, starting a chapter first emerged as an idea in 2003 to facilitate the band program's expansion.

"If you haven't already, you need to start a chapter of Kappa Kappa Psi. It's a national honorary band service fraternity, and they do a lot internally for the band and externally," said Johnston. "That will help the program grow in a lot of different ways."

After securing institutional backing, Johnston moved forward rallying student leaders like Nicole Juba to handle the demanding year-long process in just six months. Officially installed in May 2005, Kappa Kappa Psi immediately began making an impact.

Johnston praises their continuous operational support, calling the work they undertake, from moving equipment to keeping music prepared, essential for streamlining all facets of the band's functioning.

"They make a huge difference in there," he said.

Now constituting over 40 members, the group provides inspired guidance and mentorship for the next generation of young musicians.

"There was one day when little kids, four, five and six-year-olds, and the look of sheer wonder as the brothers taught them to play the drums," said Johnston.

As Kappa Kappa Psi celebrates 20 years embedded within SHU's School of Communication, Media, and the Arts, the band-exclusive fraternity remains rooted in its founding mission—fostering service and inspiring young people's growth through musical engagement. Student musicians unite within an empowering brotherhood that reverberates outward, elevating surrounding communities.

Finding Weekly Peace through Guided Meditation

BY SARA HASENEY
Staff Writer

Sacred Heart University offers meditation sessions open to students, faculty and staff. This program is led by Venerable Shim Bo, the Buddhist Chaplain of Sacred Heart's campus ministry.

The sessions are held on Wednesdays on the first floor of Linda's at 8 a.m, 12 p.m, and 5 p.m. The sessions usually last about 20 to 25 minutes, and do not require registration or sign-up.

"I think meditation is beneficial because physiologically you're being kind to your body. And at the end of the day, the function of meditation is to help you become less compulsive and neurotic in your life because you're not chasing out of fear every thought that you have," said Shim Bo.

Shim Bo said that there are many benefits to meditation, and that people are able to mentally feel the benefits once they are done with their session. He said that after people have meditated, they usually find themselves more tranquil.

"People feel calmer. I think that they feel a little freer in their mind and body, and I think they feel more present to themselves and other people," said Shim Bo.

Rev. John Ograh, the University Chaplain of Sacred Heart is also connected with the mediation practice led by Shim Bo. He said that meditation is a highly important practice in his own spiritual life.

"Meditation is required of my priestly identity because as the Roman Catholic Church is concerned, meditation is considered a disciplined thought by which a person journeys into

himself, in order to connect properly with their god," said Ograh.

Ograh believes that meditation plays a huge factor in mental health. He said that with the practice of meditation, it can help with feelings of anxiety.

"Each time I go to meditation, I feel less anxious afterwards. Anxiety is caused by worries. There are gray areas in our lives, and each time I go to meditation, I am able to push those things out," said Ograh.

During the meditations, Shim Bo focuses on posture and breathing. The sessions are guided on how to properly sit and maintain consistent breathing for optimal focus. Sophomore Zoë Vella has attended the sessions guided by Shim Bo, and said that her experiences have allowed her to leave feeling better than when she walked in.

"Mediation was very relaxing for me. It allowed me to clear my head and focus on my breathing. After I meditated, I felt less stressed, and more motivated. Venerable Shim Bo would guide us through breathing techniques to use during the session," said Vella.

Vella has meditated before attending the sessions led by Shim Bo, but prefers the guided group sessions. She said that she finds it very comforting knowing that Sacred Heart has a place where she can go to relax her mind if she becomes too stressed or uneasy.

According to Shim Bo's meditation practice instruction guide, the intended purpose of these sessions is to feel calm, generate insight about oneself, and create harmony with the mind. The practice intends to let things be and learn to be at peace with them.

"A part of meditation is focusing on the breath and letting things be just as they are. If there is a sound, don't say to yourself 'that sound is interrupting my meditation', take a breath and let the sound be there. To summarize this process, it's an intentional process of being real with what life is showing you. It's being free from suffering," said Shim Bo.

Meet the EMS Club

BY OWEN HACKETT
Staff Writer

The EMS club started last year on Sacred Heart University's campus and already has a strong following, as they host meetings and classes for students interested.

The club is hosting two CPR courses this month, as February is American Heart Month, where students can pay \$10 and become CPR certified.

"We are applying for a Heart Safe Campus, so that means we need enough AEDs and students CPR certified to get the designation for the school," said junior Mackenzie Rothschild, the Chief of the EMS club.

To receive the Heart Safe Campus designation at least 10% of the school would need to be certified either by the club or on their own, including students and staff.

Sacred Heart becoming a Heart Safe

campus is one of the biggest goals for the EMS club, which is why they have added two more CPR classes for the month of March (March 15th and the 24th). Receiving this designation would make Sacred Heart an ultimately safer campus filled with qualified first responding officials.

"It's very rare to have a cardiac arrest but in the case of it happening, having the equipment and people around to help is paramount," said Justin Fortin, the club advisor.

As previously stated, the Heart Safe Campus designation will allow Sacred Heart students who are qualified to be first responders on their own campus. This could be majorly helpful and lifesaving in many cases, because when it comes to medical emergencies timing is everything.

"The sooner you start, the better the results will be, so if there are enough students trained there will always be someone nearby that knows what to do," said senior Alex Piehler, the Assistant Chief.

The goals that the EMS club has set are important and potentially lifesaving.

"It takes the ambulance about seven minutes to respond and get to campus, where students as first responders can respond in about two minutes," said Fortin and Rothschild.

In the event of a medical emergency, five minutes could be the difference between life and death for a victim.

If you are interested in joining the EMS club, go to their instagram @shuemsclub to see when their next meeting is. Also, if you are CPR certified please send an email to the club, shuemsclub@mail.sacredheart.edu, to help the club reach their goal of 10% of the campus.



Instagram, @shuemsclub

SHU's EMS club shares tips on how to keep your heart healthy.



Correction: In the Jan. 31 edition of the Spectrum an article titled "Connecting Hearts Through the Office of Community Engagement," misspelled the name and position of Tiyyaira Gilchrist, Graduate Assistant in the Office of Community Engagement



Emma Grimes Exhibition

CONTRIBUTED BY EMMA GRIMES '25

Instagram: @emmagrimesmedia

Website: <https://emmagrimesmedia.zenfoliosite.com/>

It is truly a privilege to be able to showcase my work through my exhibition here at Sacred Heart. I am extremely grateful to Professor Falco for allowing me this opportunity, the process of creating this has been such a fun experience.

On one of the boards is a photo story that I did for Falco's class during the fall semester of 2022. I chose to showcase the Women's Division I Equestrian Team here at Sacred Heart, which I am a part of. While our sport primarily takes place off campus and is not widely known, I felt like it was important to take the opportunity to showcase the hard work and dedication of the team. The team works tirelessly at practice, lifts, horse shows, and in the barn aiming to earn a spot at the National Collegiate Equestrian Association and the Intercollegiate Horse Show Association national championships each year. One of our most prominent team values is "play for each other" and I strived to emulate this within my story.

The other board showcases some of my miscellaneous work over the past couple of years, as well as my work for the Easton Courier. I have been fortunate enough to be an intern for the Easton Courier for the past two years. Through this experience I have been able to develop my skills as a photojournalist, and having my work published to an online newspaper has been crucial to building my portfolio. When I am taking photos, I always aim to capture the small moments filled with big emotion that speak beyond just the photo, for this board I chose photos that I felt emulated that.

Being a part of Sacred Heart's SCMA has been an incredible experience so far and I am looking forward to finishing up my undergraduate degree here. It is an honor to work and learn amongst so many talented students and incredible media professionals.

CampusLife

Celebrating Love and Laughter: Valentine's Day at SHU

BY MEG HARKINS

Assistant Campus Life Editor and Copy Editor

As Cupid's arrow draws nearer this Valentine's Day, Sacred Heart University is preparing for a celebration brimming with love, laughter, candy, and flowers. Embracing the spirit of the holiday, students and faculty are eagerly anticipating the upcoming festivities by planning to take part in the long-lasting tradition of watching romantic comedies.

Senior Jessica Waldron shared her affection for romantic comedies, even if her favorite falls outside the typical Valentine's Day fare. "Although it's a Christmas movie, 'The Holiday' is definitely my go-to rom-com," said Waldron. "It's such a feel-good film with a great cast including Cameron Diaz, Jack Black, Kate Winslet, and more."

While Waldron leans towards more contemporary rom-coms, Dr. Sara Ross, a film professor in the School of Communication, Media, and the Arts, prefers the classics. "I'm going to say it's a three-way tie between 'It Happened One Night,' 'Ball of Fire,' and 'The Lady Eve,'" said Ross. "These films are witty, boisterous entries in one of my favorite genres, created by writers and directors at the top of their games. I can watch them repeatedly and still be entertained every time. Above all, I adore them for their feisty female characters, portrayed by two brilliant

comedians, Claudette Colbert and Barbara Stanwyck, who consistently steal the show."

While Waldron enjoys the modern charm of "The Holiday," Ross finds solace in the timeless allure of classic rom-coms from the 1930s and 40s. Their difference preferences reflect the diverse tastes within the SHU community, where the appreciation for romantic comedies spans generations and genres.

Junior Courtney Churchill also prefers the more contemporary rom-coms.

"My favorite rom-com is 'How to Lose a Guy in 10 Days' because I love the irony of the plot," said Churchill. "Both characters Andie Anderson and Ben Berry do not know that each other have something up their sleeve to prove something to different parties. Andie, a columnist wants to write a piece of how to lose a guy in 10 days, hence the title, and Ben thinks he can make any woman fall in love with him in 10 days, however their plans backfire and they end up falling in love which is what makes it ironic and comical. Also, Kate Hudson stars in this movie and who doesn't love her."

With each person in the SHU community having their own favorite rom-com, the campus is sure to be alive with love and laughter this Valentine's Day.

Love in Bloom: Embracing the Spirit of Valentine's Day

BY OLIVIA TEDESCO

Assistant Campus Life Editor



Alessandra Fabbo, Assistant Photo Editor

Giving the gift of flower bouquets is a timeless Valentine's Day tradition with a variety of flower and color combinations that can be personalized for each person.

As February unfolds its romantic charm, hearts around the world beat a little faster in anticipation of Valentine's Day. This celebration of love, affection, and appreciation has transcended its historical roots to become a global phenomenon. A day filled with love, valentines, kisses, flowers, chocolates, romantic candle-lit dinners, and more. Some would say that Valentine's Day is just a superficial day and if your partner really loved you they would show you it every day of the year.

Valentine's Day has come to represent a variety of love manifestations in our culture. With lavish gifts and intimate meals, the day gives couples a chance to honor their relationship. It's not only for romantic couples, however. The circle of affection includes friends, family, and even pets, highlighting how universal love is. The genuine significance of Valentine's Day has been debated due to its commercialization. Opponents contend that ostentatious shows

of devotion might obscure the true meaning of a sincere bond. As a result, a lot of



Tracy Deer-Mirek, Sacred Heart University

Students can donate blood on Valentine's Day to aid in the national blood shortage and help save those in need.

people choose to celebrate in other ways or adopt minimalist gestures that emphasize connection and shared experiences above consumerism.

There is plenty to do for Valentine's Day both on and off campus. To celebrate the holiday on-campus students can enjoy a Chocolate Fountain & Valentine's Day and a Card making event at 12:00 p.m. in Lindas and also show their love for others in the spirit of helping by donating to the CT Blood Drive from 8:00 a.m - 6:00 p.m. in Edgerton Center for the Performing Arts Edgerton Atrium.

But beyond traditional celebrations, Valentine's Day offers an

opportunity for students to express gratitude and appreciation for those around them. It's a chance to thank peers for their support, professors for their guidance, and mentors for their inspiration. Often, it's the little things that make Valentine's Day so special—the smile exchanged in the hallway, the encouraging words before an exam, or the shared laughter over a cup of coffee. These gestures of kindness and affection contribute to a sense of community and belonging on campus. So, whether it's through a heartfelt note, a small gift, or simply spending quality time together, students can make Valentine's Day memorable by showing appreciation for the people who make a difference in their lives, creating lasting bonds beyond romantic relationships.

For counseling services and support reach out to the university resources:

Counseling Center

Open 9-5 on Weekdays

Make an Appointment: 203-371-7955

s.w.e.e.t. Peers

Follow the s.w.e.e.t. Peers on Instagram @shu_sweetpeered and stay updated on the programs run by their team

Public Safety

Routine Calls: 203-371-7995
Emergency Calls: 203-371-7911 or 203-374-9352



Interested in contributing to Campus Life? Contact us at spectrum@sacredheart.edu

Arts & Entertainment

Say “Bye Bye Bye” to TikTok Music

BY ALANNA WUNSCH
A&E Editor

On Feb. 1, Universal Music Group (UMG) decided to pull the plug on their contract with TikTok due to a disagreement related to fair compensation, AI usage and overall user protection. This left the app seemingly silent, losing some of music's biggest names from their sound library. Songs from artists such as Taylor Swift, Olivia Rodrigo, Drake and more have all been removed from the platform.

UMG's demands seem to be similar to those of Screen Actors Guild-American Federation of Television and Radio Artists (SAG-AFTRA), who went on strike last year. In an open letter to the artist and songwriter community, UMG discussed, “Why we must call time out on TikTok.” This letter explained their reasoning for removing all of their artists' work from the musically saturated app.

“Today, as an indication of how little TikTok compensates artists and songwriters, despite its massive and growing user base, rapidly rising advertising revenue and increasing reliance on music-based content, TikTok accounts for only about 1% of our total revenue,” the letter said. “Ultimately TikTok is trying to build

a music-based business, without paying fair value for the music.”

The letter also explained the looming threat that AI has on the music industry. “TikTok is allowing the platform to be flooded with AI-generated recordings—as well as developing tools to enable, promote and encourage AI music creation on the platform itself – and then demanding a contractual right which would allow this content to massively dilute the royalty pool for human artists, in a move that is nothing short of sponsoring artist replacement by AI.”

According to UMG, TikTok tried to intimidate them into accepting a deal, “worth less than the previous deal, far less than fair market value and not reflective of their exponential growth.”

Thus, leaving UMG feeling like there is no other choice than to remove their content from the platform and seek a new home to promote their artists' projects.

While there is no doubt that this has left the music and social media industry in a tough spot, this has also changed a lot for fans and platform users.

“I was shocked to see UMG had deleted all of their music. TikTok is a music-based app, so when almost every artist is removed it is tough,” said sophomore Isabella Defrancesco. “I used to love discovering new sounds or songs on my For You Page. Oftentimes they were added onto a playlist and became part of my

daily song rotation.”

“I have added so many songs to my Spotify that I have found through TikTok. If anything that's where I've gotten most of my new favorite songs the past few years. There's so many singers I honestly didn't know existed prior to their songs going viral on TikTok,” said freshman Sabrina Matzer.

The lack of music on the platform has definitely proven to be an issue for many music-based content creators. It has left them to use covers of popular songs or even royalty-free music.

“I've definitely seen some content changes. Creators are using smaller bands' music or even covers as a loophole to this whole situation. I think this will also lead to a rise of ‘GRWMs’ and ‘Day In the Life’ videos,” said junior Tori Miller.

While it has definitely shifted the app, many users say they will still continue to use the platform.

“While it's definitely different, I think that the content and trends are able to mold to the next new thing, so I definitely won't stop using the app,” said Defrancesco.

It is unclear whether other major music conglomerates will join the movement, but it will be interesting to see how the industry and platform are impacted in the long run.

BY GIA ESPOSITO
Staff Writer

CONTINUED FROM PG 1

“We see QR codes used for commerce most often but there isn't anything in the technology that suggests it couldn't be used more artistically,” said Lewis.

Most of the images experimented with Artificial Intelligence, and other images were inspired by previously created artwork.

Sophomore Kayce Lewandowski was one of the many inspired artists who contributed to the gallery with her inspiration stemming from a previous piece she created.

“This piece was from a final exam project and I thought this one would be the coolest piece to scale up large,” said Lewandowski.

Her piece was inspired by her love for incorporating self-portrait and human anatomy elements into her



Madison Dickinson, Staff Photographer
Recent submission to the 2024 Mixtape Gallery of Designing the Impossible by student, Dyoë Hostin.

Mixtape Art Gallery

artwork. The piece revealed a face made up of yellow and blue colors using realism with colored pencils.

“I had bright blue hair and I thought of how I could put that in the drawing,” said Lewandowski. “I wanted it to look completely insane and I wanted viewers to see the crazy emotion from the colors and the lighting.”

Lewandowski's artwork was set alongside other artists' work throughout the lobby of the Edgerton. The gallery is an invitation for people walking past, to stop and interact with the exhibition of people's artistry. Lewis said, “We are constantly sharing stuff on our phones and learning things through our phones. The show is giving space for those interactions.”

At the gallery, attendees can explore the artwork while utilizing their smartphones to access the provided links via QR codes. These links directed viewers to a variety of multimedia content, including songs, speeches, podcasts, videos, and web pages.

Most of the links are to songs on YouTube that the artist felt represented the community and their artwork. Examples of some of the songs used were “Tongue Tied”



Madison Dickinson, Staff Photographer
Recent submission to the 2024 Mixtape Gallery of Designing the Impossible by student, Giovanna Garofalo.

by Grouplove, “Moonage DayDream” by David Bowie and “Do the Evolution” by Pearl Jam.

Another example of a link used in one of the pieces was a video on YouTube by Thirsty For Art called “How We Killed The ‘Little Artist’ Inside of Us.” Senior Bella Vaccaro featured this link in her piece she called “The Little Artist.”

“Growing up, my imagination and creativity always made life brighter and inspired me to find the beauty in the little things,” said Vaccaro.

Vaccaro along with other artists was able to express her artistry and give voice to what is happening artistically within the community.

Vaccaro said, “This piece is a sneak peek inside my brain and the importance of fostering the little artist that lives inside us all.”

Gospelfest Brings the “Energy”

BY LAURYN ENGLISH
Staff Writer

Sacred Heart University's (SHU) Gospel Choir celebrates the Black Pentecostal tradition with uplifting and joyful performances in their production of Gospelfest. This musical event takes place in the Chapel of the Holy Spirit on Feb. 17 at 4 p.m.

“They've been doing this here for several years now, and it's become a bigger event every year,” said Dr. Christopher Grundy, the Director of the Choral Program. He also describes the event as a fun, surprising and uplifting experience.

The performance is arranged by SHU's Gospel Choir director, Michael Brown. Brown has decades of experience directing Gospel music, and is described as an “astonishingly talented musician known for his soaring vocals, dazzling piano artistry and captivating stage presence,” according to Sacred Heart's website.

“He is very popular with the students and he's also very connected in the Gospel community, so he always brings in guest artists,” said Grundy. “He actually surprises us with them. I have no idea who is going to be there.”

Gospelfest is one of the university's efforts creating a diverse and welcoming community at Sacred Heart.

“This is a singing tradition from the Black Pentecostal Church. With all the inclusivity efforts at SHU right now, we feel like it's really an important thing for bringing diversity into our Choral Program, and for putting the spotlight on some really fantastic choral singing that is of a different tradition,” said Grundy.

The performance is primarily made up of songs written by Brown himself.

“He has always written us amazing songs for all of the performances we do,” said junior Christen Luongo, Vice President of the Choral Program. “It makes it really special to perform, knowing it was written from the mind and heart of someone who really loves what he does.”

Other classics on the set list include “I Go to the Rock,” “How Great Thou Art,” “I Wanna Know What Love Is” and “Seattle.” According to Billboard, “I Go to the Rock: The Gospel Music of Whitney Houston” peaked at no. 2 on their Top Gospel Albums chart in 2023.

SHU's Gospel Choir is an openhearted and lively community, which can be felt through their performances.

“My favorite part of Gospel Choir is how supportive and high-spirited everyone is. Going to Gospel rehearsal is always the highlight of my week,” said Luongo. “Michael Brown really takes his time to get to know us and it makes rehearsal relaxed and enjoyable.”

Brown knows how close Luongo and another choir singer are, so he wrote them a duet called “Forever Friends” to perform at the event.

Gospelfest is a performance with the ultimate goal of bringing our community together, with an infectious energy that enlivens the audience.

“My favorite part of it is the energy that Michael Brown brings to our students,” said Grundy.

General public tickets can be purchased for \$25 on the Edgerton Center for the Performing Arts Website, with discounted prices available. Visit edgertoncenter.org for more information.

Halftime History

BY MADISON DICKINSON
Staff Writer

The Super Bowl halftime performances have become their own game with artists in the spotlight. Over the decades, these shows have created some iconic performances.

One memorable moment in halftime history was Janet Jackson and Justin Timberlake's controversial performance in 2004. Timberlake had torn off a piece of Jackson's clothing exposing her breast in front of millions of people. After receiving widespread criticism throughout all platforms, he claimed it was a “wardrobe malfunction” which led both performers to apologize. Stricter regulations against the broadcasting of indecent material were put in place for all future halftime shows.

In 2007, Prince took the stage at Super Bowl halftime creating a medley of some of his songs including “Purple Rain,” “Let's Go Crazy,” “Baby I'm a Star” and “1999.” The Florida A&M University marching band performed as well as Shelby J, a back up singer, who received a spotlight singing with Prince during his version of “Proud Mary,” originally by Tina Turner.

Jennifer Lopez and Shakira took the stage in 2020 creating a halftime performance filled with some of their hits like “Let's Get Loud,” “On the Floor,” “Jenny From the Block” and “Hips Don't Lie” with appearances from J Balvin and Bad Bunny.

“I feel like Shakira and Jennifer Lopez are just an iconic duo,” said sophomore Kaleigh Porcu. “I would have to say that over the years Jennifer and Shakira have gotten more hype and I feel that more people started listening to their music.”

In 2022, Dr. Dre, Snoop Dogg, Mary J. Blige, Kendrick Lamar, 50 Cent, and Eminem created

a halftime performance blending all of their diverse talents. They performed some of their hits including “Alright,” “Family Affair,” “Still D.R.E.” and “Lose Yourself.”

“I thought that the performance was really good and I liked how there were so many different artists performing,” said sophomore Allegra Simon. “I feel like it benefited social media because it showed how hip-hop can bring everyone together as a whole.”

In 2023, Rihanna took the stage at the Super Bowl in a bright red cargo jumpsuit highlighting her belly bump.

“Rihanna's performance sticks out to me the most because her pregnancy announcement was iconic and I feel like so many people recreated the performance on different social media platforms like Instagram and TikTok,” said sophomore Anna Zambuto.

While performing, Rihanna even touched up her makeup as a way to soft launch her new Fenty makeup product.

According to AP News, “The halftime festivities have transformed from a family-oriented show with patriotic tunes into entertainment's biggest stage with top-tier performers, pyrotechnics and superb backup dancers.”

“Rihanna has to be my favorite halftime performance but Usher's performance will probably change that,” said Zambuto.

Usher took the stage at Super Bowl LVIII this year by opening the show with “Caught Up.” Alicia Keys was Usher's first guest, followed by other guest performances from H.E.R, Jermaine Dupri, Lil Jon, and Ludacris. With only 13-minutes to perform, Usher told AP News, “The hardest part is trying to figure out how to squeeze it all in when you actually have a large catalog, or a lot of records people celebrate and love.”

Sports



Men's Golf Teeing Up for Last NEC Season

Instagram, @sacredheartgolf

Sophomore, Mike Rothberg, in action at the Sacred Heart University Fall Classic.

BY MAURA CONWAY
Staff Writer

Coming off a successful fall slate, the Sacred Heart University (SHU) men's golf team is gearing up to tee off in their last season as Northeast Conference (NEC) competitors.

The Pioneers wrapped up their fall season at Nassau Intercollegiate, a tournament hosted by Long Island University (LIU) at the Nassau Country Club. The men proved to be successful, finishing fifth, with four of SHU's golfers finishing inside the top fifteen.

"Finishing fifth in our final tournament of the fall was a little disappointing," said Head Coach Matthew McGreevy. "I believe with hard work and focus, we can be successful and get back on top of the NEC in our final conference championship."

Starting next fall, the team will begin their season as members of the Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference (MAAC).

"This is the last year we will have an opportunity at an NEC championship," said senior Conor Handley. "It would be pretty cool to win a ring again."

Handley ended his fall season by placing 15th at the Nassau Intercollegiate.

"I want to continue my momentum into the first event at Georgia, and throughout the season, just keep pushing myself and my teammates to excel," said Handley.

Off-season preparations are important to the team's hope of success this

spring according to senior Victor Ginart.

"We tend to try to stay in shape by practicing most days of the week, usually on the range and short game areas," said Ginart. "If you live somewhere with nice weather, you try to play various rounds a week to stay in touch with the competitive side of the sport. I also like to work out six times a week, to make sure my endurance isn't a weak sport during the season."

Handley describes how he combats the struggles of staying in shape from the fall to spring season.

"It is definitely a lot harder to stay ready between fall and spring," said Handley. "I stay in the gym a lot and if it is nice out, I try to hit balls as much as I can and do indoor training. I like to stay loose and keep my swing in form as much as I can."

The Pioneers have a lot to look forward to this spring as they are projected to finish second in the NEC according to preseason rankings.

Ginart, having to withdraw last season due to injury, is looking forward to his last season as a Pioneer.

"I'm mostly looking forward to the tournaments throughout March and April, including my last home tournament," said Ginart. "Last year, I got injured in the first round, so I'd like to finish strong this time."

"We have a really good group of guys and I enjoy playing with them a lot," said Handley. "Getting back on the course with the guys will be awesome."

McGreevy's Pioneers begin the spring slate on Feb. 16 at the Savannah Intercollegiate.

The Powerhouse Pioneers of Women's Wrestling

BY JAKE WALSH
Staff Writer

The Sacred Heart University (SHU) women's wrestling team is 17-3 this season with one month left before the National Collegiate Women's Wrestling Championships (NCWWC.) The team's success dates back to three years ago when the university announced the women's wrestling team as an addition to their Division 1 program.

Paulina Biega was hired as head coach, making her the first female National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Division 1 wrestling coach in the country.

"I don't pay attention to it. I don't care if I am first, second or third," said Biega. "I do it for the kids and because I love the sport."

Since their inaugural year in 2021, the women have had two consecutive winning seasons. Going 6-4 in their first season and 17-4 in their second.

"Having a seventeen-win season is pretty good, but I try not to count them," said Biega. "I look at it and some women wrestle more than thirty-five matches a year."

Two wrestlers who have been successful under Biega are sophomore Aaliyah Payne-Parris and junior captain Maddie Sandquist

"Being a captain means a lot," said Sandquist. "Being here for the first season and not really knowing what to expect was really hard. Looking back now and seeing where the team is at feels good to know my leadership impacted my teammates."

Sandquist earned two All-Americans in each of her first two seasons wrestling at SHU.

"Coming to college I dreamed of being a four-time All-American. I always believed I could do it, it was just about putting in the work to get there," said Sandquist. "This year my goals are much bigger than they have ever been, I want to place first and head off to my first Olympic trials."

Payne-Parris was also named an All-American last season.

"I trust myself and try to do my best every time I step on the mat. Winning last year, really boosted my confidence in my wrestling ability," said Payne-Parris.

In capturing their 17th win this season on Feb. 9 against Western New England



Contributed by Maddie Sanquist, '25

Sacred Heart University Women's Wrestling Captain, junior Maddie Sanquist, during a match.

University (WNE), the Pioneers remain undefeated in the Northeast Region this season with a 12-0 regional record.

Both Payne-Parris and Sandquist have contributed to the team's success. Payne-Paris won by forfeit and Sandquist captured her victory by pin fall- when both shoulders of a wrestler comes in contact with the mat for a period of two seconds.

The team scored an overall of 37-9 in their win over WNE.

"I am very proud of my team, and how far they have come, but what's done is in the past," said Biega. "When your athletes win it is very cool and validates that the hard work has paid off."

The Pioneers are back in action on Feb. 23 at the NCWWC Regional Championships in Lock Haven, PA.

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The Hidden Harms of Microaggressions

CONTRIBUTED BY TIYAIRA GILCHRIST '24
Graduate Assistant, Office of Community Engagement

In today's society, microaggressions have become a barrier to fostering inclusive environments - particularly in academic settings. When discussing microaggressions, it's important to understand the concept itself. According to Derald Wing Sue a psychologist and expert on the topic, "Microaggressions are the everyday slights, insults, putdowns, invalidations, and offensive behaviors that people experience in daily interactions with generally well-intentioned individuals who may be unaware that they have engaged in demeaning ways." (Microaggressions/ Microaffirmations | Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, n.d.)

Microaggressions have an "othering" effect, particularly for members of marginalized groups who are perceived as outsiders in communities where they should feel a sense of belonging.

According to the author Sofia Garcia-Bullee, "Otherness defines people based on how they differ from the group, how we see ourselves. When we call someone "the other" rather than "one of us," we create a social, relational, psychological, and emotional distance that justifies the transgression of forbidden boundaries within our group." (García, 2022)

This sense of being an outsider undermines the experience of feeling connected, accepted, and valued within a community - which is so important in academic settings. A sense of belonging cannot be overstated as it is essential so that individuals are more likely to have positive experiences and become more resilient to challenges. Not only have I, but Sacred Heart University as well, been striving to foster an atmosphere of respect and understanding. It is important to create conversations about microaggressions as covert acts of discrimination and delve into the potential consequences or effects for our community.

Imagine sitting in a meeting, while discussing current events, and suddenly you feel a sharp jab in your side - it is a tiny insignificant gesture but leaves you with some discomfort. This scenario may seem familiar to many as it reflects the subtle yet impactful nature of microaggressions. I have personally experienced the wincing effect of microaggressions. My name is Tiyaira (Tee-air-uh) but more than often I do not introduce myself by my first name. When I introduce myself as Tiyaira, people often hear 'Tiara.' I guess I should just embrace it and start wearing a crown everywhere I go! The mispronunciation of my name has made me feel "othered" and signaled an atmosphere where I don't completely belong.

Our name is the first part of our identity that others learn. According to American author Ralph Ellison, "It is through our names that we first place ourselves in the world. Our names, being the gift of others, must be made our own." (Identity and Names, 2017) As a result of the pronunciation difficulties of my name, I just introduce myself as T. There are days when I get tired of hearing T and just want to be called by my first name. I have to change how I identify myself because others unconsciously say my name wrong. The constant mispronunciation of my name impacts my sense of identity. I want to reclaim the ownership of my name and be addressed by it correctly. It's not just a matter of pronunciation; it's about my individuality.

Honoring an individual's identity is important as mispronunciations can cause microaggressions. It is a small but significant step in creating an inclusive environment.

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Letters to the editor should not exceed 600 words and should be emailed to spectrum@sacredheart.edu. The Spectrum does not assume copyright for any published material. We are not responsible for the opinions of the writers voiced in this forum.



Audrey's Corner was created in honor of junior Audrey Niblo, a Spectrum staff writer, who passed away from an illness in 2018. In living a life of kindness, positivity and love of animals, Audrey chose to follow a path of joy, even as she was open about the many struggles young people face, including bullying. In articles, creative writing and images, Spectrum continues to promote the messages of Audrey's life for all students.



Photo by: Helen Neafsey
Audrey Niblo pictured with her dog, Sept. 9, 2013.