

The Road to Recovery for Student's Facing Addiction



Tracy Deer-Mirek, Sacred Heart University

The Sacred Heart University recovery house is part of the Collegiate Recovery Program.

BY LAUREN KEHRLE
Staff Writer

Sacred Heart University offers several options and resources for students who choose to stay sober throughout college or are actively seeking recovery from alcohol addiction.

As more campuses across the country establish collegiate recovery programs (CRPs) to help students maintain an abstinence-based lifestyle while pursuing higher education, SHU is following suit. Sacred Heart's CRP consists of campus meetings, counselors, coaches, and the Recovery House, a safe and substance-free environment featuring community-building activities, according to a university press release.

"We create structure and safe places for students who choose

a recovery lifestyle," said Brian Dolan, SHU Recovery Program Coordinator and alumnus.

Dolan dealt with a drug, alcohol, and gambling addiction during his time as a student before becoming sober seven years ago. Since assuming a position at Sacred Heart in Oct. 2022, he has made it his mission to educate staff and students on the warning signs of addiction while also maintaining a judgment-free culture across campus.

Besides promoting acceptance within the recovery program, Dolan advocates for participants to explore activities that do not entail drinking.

"We encourage our students to be very involved on campus

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A "Heart to Heart on College Student Mental Health"

BY SONIA GIUSTI
Staff Writer

On Wednesday, Feb. 14, Sacred Heart University held a Colloquium entitled "Helping Friends and Helping Ourselves: A Heart to Heart on College Student Mental Health." The colloquium was open to all Sacred Heart University students and provided information about helping those struggling with mental health, as well as resources to address situations involving mental health crises.

This event was hosted by associate professor of psychology Dr. Jessica Samuolis, Director of Prevention, Education & Early Intervention Services at SHU, Karen Flanagan, and the Student Wellness Education and Empowerment Team (S.W.E.E.T.).

"My key takeaway from this colloquium was, it is important to monitor your own mental health and it is a normal experience to seek support in any way you or a friend may need it," said sophomore Jordan Rice.

Recently SHU was awarded a \$96,255 grant for mental health service initiatives by the Connecticut Office of Higher Education.

According to a Sacred Heart press release, the funds are meant to enable institutions to enhance prevention, early intervention, and access to care for students struggling with mental health issues.

"I think that it is important and exciting that SHU received a grant for mental health initiatives. It shows that mental health continues to be a priority and I am hopeful that more students will have

access to information surrounding mental wellness," said Jeffrey LaBella, Director of Counseling at the university.

The Maureen Hamilton Wellness Center on Park Avenue is a free, and confidential resource where students can seek support for individual purposes as well as group counseling. They are open from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on weekdays for counseling or students can call (203)-371-7955 to make an appointment.

LaBella said, "We validate how difficult it can be to ask for help and share personal struggles. It is our hope that by creating these necessary conditions in our center, we can take small steps towards helping others feel more comfortable opening up about their challenges."

See A "HEART TO HEART"
continued on pg. 2



Sacred Heart University Photo

The green bandana project is dedicated to preventing suicide through promoting help-seeking behavior and increasing awareness of vital mental health resources.

Registration Opens for "Destination Senior Week"

BY CHRISTOPHER BREWER
Staff Writer

Starting Feb. 21, seniors will be able to sign up for Sacred Heart University's senior week held at the end of the semester. A pub night for seniors will be held at Red's to celebrate the registration opening.

Registration will be open from Feb. 21 to March 27 on the Senior Week website. Cash, card, or check payment will be collected in the Student Life

Office, following confirmation of student registration. Payments must be turned in no later than April 2 and students must bring your SHU card and a valid state ID.

"After helping out with the behind the scenes of senior week last year, I am beyond excited to participate in it this year," said senior Caitlin Dalton. "You can tell that the seniors truly enjoy this each year. It is such a great opportunity

See "DESTINATION SENIOR WEEK"
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"Chasing the Dream," SCMA Student Internships

BY EMMA RICOTTA
Staff Writer

Various students in the School of Communication, Media and the Arts (SCMA) program at Sacred Heart University have different internships and job positions with well-known media companies.

Senior Victoria Montouri is Brian Kilmeade's "One Nation" intern for FOX News Media. She often travels to the FOX News office in New York City.

"It has always been my dream to work

in the city," Montouri said. "Being able to do that at FOX News is really rewarding."

Senior Stephanie Patella is a production intern for "The Late Show with Stephen Colbert." She works on-site in New York City as well. Throughout her time in the office, she sets up the band's equipment and refreshments, communicates with the research team and explores good headlines for any of the segments on the show, among other responsibilities.

See SCMA STUDENT INTERNSHIPS
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News

Sobriety

BY LAUREN KEHRLE
Staff Writer

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in clubs. Just because we're sober shouldn't mean that we run away and hide from anything," he said.

According to Dolan, "Move to Heal," a nonprofit organization with which the university recently partnered, is a critical campus resource for those seeking sobriety. Meetings, which occur on Wednesday afternoons in Bergoglio Hall, prioritize participants' exercise and mental health by consisting of a workout followed by a talk session where they are invited to share what is going on in their lives in a comfortable setting.

"We're always looking for more ways to help out and establish a space on campus for students who feel they need it," said Max Satriano, SHU's Recovery House Manager.

Satriano, who has been working in the field for over seven years, described the role that this program plays in promoting positive outcomes.

"If you feel like you've been developing a problem with substances, we have a place where we're able to have these conversations," he said.

An additional resource the university offers to address student addiction is the option to apply for residency at its Recovery House, situated next to Roncalli Hall. Since opening last January, this location has served the dual purpose of helping students remain sober while encouraging them to receive a higher education.

The house features four bedrooms as well as a fully operational kitchen, washer and dryer, and backyard, among other amenities. Residents receive services and support from an in-house manager, recovery coach, and clinical therapist and also engage in weekend activities designed to foster fellowship, according to a university press release.

While all interested applicants are required to attend at least three recovery-based meetings, agree to university and program policies, and comply with drug and breathalyzer tests at any time per the housing manager's discretion, Satriano said that each individual may have a unique housing process. Although the house is currently only open to men, he looks forward to welcoming female students during the fall semester of 2024.

Regardless of whether students plan to pursue residency, the Recovery House hosts all program meetings on Tuesdays at 7 p.m.

"After hearing about the house, it seems like a really great resource," said junior Kate Fleissner.

Those seeking more information regarding SHU's recovery program may visit www.sacredheart.edu/recovery.

"The opposite of addiction isn't abstinence, it's community," said Dolan.

A "Heart to Heart on College Student Mental Health"

BY SONIA GIUSTI
Staff Writer

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The counseling center also provides services through S.W.E.E.T. S.W.E.E.T. Peer Educators are a group of students that provide information and opportunities for other students seeking mental health care. They offer programs such as the Bar Exam, S.W.E.E.T. Dreams, Paws & Relax, Project Connect, and the Bandana Project.

Sacred Heart's press release states that Project Connect is an evidence-based program that builds connections and community to combat loneliness and isolation. The Bandana Project is a national suicide prevention campaign and also under the guidance of the nonprofit organization Suicide Awareness Voices of Education.

Junior Emma Borland said, "Being a S.W.E.E.T. is rewarding. A lot of people struggle with mental health and don't know how to overcome or deal with it. Us as peer educators are always there for each other and it is so nice knowing I have a community that has my back."

James Geisler, the Executive Director of Wellness Services on campus, said the goal is to increase staff and faculty knowledge about mental health and teach them the skills they will need to respond when they identify a student in distress, according to a Sacred Heart press release.

LaBella said, "It is a privilege to work with students who come to the Counseling Center, and I think it is the most rewarding job in the world, but I may be biased. I often tell students that one of the greatest rewards in this work is the moment we can laugh about the things that used to stress us out."

"Destination Senior Week"

BY CHRISTOPHER BREWER
Staff Writer

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for classes to come together one last time."

Senior Week takes place May 7 through May 10 and this year's theme is "Destination Senior Week." At the end of the week, the 2024 commencements will be held at Hartford Health Amphitheater.

Kicking off the week on Tuesday, May 7, students will be taken to Stonebridge in Milford, CT for an experience of a "Night in Dingle, Ireland." Seniors will have access to pub food and an open bar while socializing with their peers at the outdoor bar.

On Wednesday, May 8, students will then be transported to Mohegan Sun Casino for an experience of "I Took a Trip to Monte Carlo." Mohegan Sun is a casino and resort located in Uncasville, Conn. Seniors will have free-range to gamble, shop, dine out, or go to the bars. Sacred Heart has the club "Avalon" rented out just for SHU seniors. At this club, students will receive vouchers for drinks if they choose to go.

Thursday, May 9, Senior Week 2024 schedule of events. seniors will have the option

to attend the Commencement Ball at the Martire Family Arena. Here, they can celebrate with dinner, dancing, and signature cocktails. The theme of the Commencement Ball is Mexico. Students get to dress up in formal wear and come enjoy dinner and drinks from Mexico.

The senior week package will not include a guest ticket for the commencement ball, but an extra plus-one ticket is available for purchase.

On the last night, Friday, May 10, the Ciao Famiglia will take place. At this event, students' friends and families will be introduced with appetizers and cocktails. The family event's theme is Italy, with cheese, meats, Aperol spritz, and cannolis.

"Every year is a little different, but we are expecting around 800 students to buy packages which include all of the events," said Raymond Mencio, Executive Director of Campus Life.

The Senior Week package includes student tickets to the events, transportation from place to place, and a custom class of 2024 T-shirt. Within each event, there is access to food, drinks, and different venues.

Packages will not include "Housing in the Halls"

which is a SHU tradition and entrance to Senior Garden after parties. Seniors will be able to purchase "Housing in the Halls" in the registration process and seniors will be able to pick their residence hall and roommates if interested.

If a student chooses to purchase the "Housing in the Halls," they will stay in Seton or Merton hall and have access to the after parties. The after parties will be bring-your-own-beer styled and the school will provide food for the students.

"We also have a dedicated Instagram that will

have events @shu_seniorweek and the SHU Senior Class Instagram page will have updates," said Mencio. "We are excited about the event this year and want to see a lot of students staying on campus and enjoying the Senior Garden after events," said Mencio.

Leading up to senior week, there will also be the third senior pub night on Feb. 21, taking place at Red's, which is located in the Linda E. McMahon Commons. This pub night is "Pancake and Pajama" themed. Students will get two dollars off admission if they wear their pajamas. Red's will be serving mimosas

and there will be a make your own pancake bar with different topping options.

"At senior pub night, we will announce a reminder to sign up as well as the winner of the free senior week raffle we have," said senior Erin Clark, Senior Class President and Spectrum News Editor.

The senior week raffle winner could win free senior week if selected. Raffle tickets were bought in the fall and included admission to Reds on pub nights.

"After not getting a senior week during my high school senior year due to COVID, I've been looking to finally be able to experience one, and come together with all of my friends I've made here at SHU the last four years. I'm definitely most looking forward to Stonebridge and the Commencement Ball," said senior Ashley McCrady.

If you are interested in participating in or looking for more information regarding senior week, visit <https://www.sacredheart.edu/commencement/senior-week/>.

News Editors Erin Clark and Valentina Massoni contributed to this article.



Contributed by Erin Clark, News Editor

Features

A Learning “Playground for Everybody” at the IDEA Lab

BY COLLIN MACLEOD
Staff Writer

The Innovate, Design, Engineer, and Apply (IDEA) Lab is in Sacred Heart University’s (SHU) West Campus, on the first floor of the west building.

According to the SHU Engineering website, the lab is said to, “facilitate a transdisciplinary, problem-based, community engaged innovation environment through digital fabrication and advanced manufacturing.”

“The IDEA Lab opens up new avenues for exploration within engineering. It allows students to go beyond the standard curriculum and learn about emerging technologies, gaining valuable experience and knowledge,” said sophomore computer science and engineering student, Julia Piascik.

The IDEA Lab is not only limited to engineering students.

“The space serves the entire university, it’s an open playground for everybody,” said Tolga Kaya, Professor and Director of Engineering. “Any student can come with any prototypes or ideas.”

Part of what Kaya does at the IDEA Lab is to aid student learning and growth.

“Students in the lab are able to have a place where creativity is fostered, and failures are celebrated,” Kaya said. “Being able to have that place proves to be extremely important for learning.”

“I love the IDEA Lab as it’s an inviting space for all majors, and being in this space seeing other students work on their projects inspires me to continue learning,” said Piascik. “The professors here also constantly remind you that failure is natural, and it will happen when working on a project, but to turn that failure into an opportunity for growth.”

Piascik uses the lab often and is experienced with all the tools there, which includes 3D printing, soldering, laser cutting, and more. To ensure safety, students have to earn badges to use any of the equipment.

With the tools available, “The lab can be used to make so many things,” said Piascik. Some creation possibilities include making circuits, phone cases, motor prototypes, laser cut puzzles, or embroidering on fabrics.

The lab first opened in 2020, right before the pandemic hit, “Which was good timing in the way we were able to help make some PPE supplies, that at the time was in short supply for health care,” said IDEA Lab manager, Michael Altis.



Tracy Deer-Mirek, Sacred Heart University

Engineering students building go-karts in the IDEA Lab at Sacred Heart University’s West Campus.

The lab is not only used for creation, but there are also engineering classes held there.

“The lab is the main space that us engineering students take our classes in, and it always proves to be extremely beneficial to learning,” said junior Luke Bellacini, majoring in both computer and electrical engineering.

Bellacini spends most of his time at the lab, whether that is in class, doing homework, working on projects, or even just for fun.

“Students have the opportunity to make whatever they can think of, I’m currently working on making an animatronic Lego hand with the tools available in the lab,” Bellacini said.

“It has also prepared me for the engineering work force, as I can now design, print, and apply theoretical knowledge to practical projects,” Piascik said.

The Lab’s page on the SHU website expands on the capabilities within the facility, encouraging students to experiment with the various equipment within the space.

“IDEA Lab is the space where dreams will come true, but you need to make it happen,” according to the page.

Meet New Athletic Mental Health Counsler, Elizabeth Lavin

BY JORDAN DORSEY
Staff Writer



Contributed by, Elizabeth Lavin

Pictured is Elizabeth Lavin, SHU’s new athletic mental health counselor.

Only 10% of all college athletes with known mental health conditions seek care from a mental health professional, according to a study done by the American College of Sports Medicine.

Elizabeth Lavin has recently been hired by Sacred Heart University as the athletics mental health counselor to combat the stigma surrounding mental health among student-athletes.

Lavin graduated from Long Island University where she was a student-athlete herself. She was part of the women’s volleyball team and after graduating, she combined her degree with her passion for sports.

“When the position opened, I was like this is taking my two worlds and combining it into one which is incredible,” said Lavin.

She works directly with the counseling department and the athletics department.

Jeffrey LaBella, Director of Counseling said, “We really did want to look for someone who has that experience of being a collegiate athlete and a combination of that experience and that of a professional counselor.”

Lavin hopes to make connections with each student-athlete. She has reached out to

coaches and met with teams one-on-one to ensure everyone feels they have a safe space to talk about their concerns.

Rob Machan, Head Coach of Women’s Volleyball said, “It’s vital for the athletes to have a place to go. There are so many challenges that are unique to being a student athlete.”

Lavin wants to give student-athletes hope, solutions, and strategies to get through situations.

“When I was in college I suffered with anxiety. I understand how that also affects a person just because my personal experience but the professional side as well,” said Lavin.

Student-athletes can go to her for more than just athletic related obstacles to prevent transferring outside stress and anxiety onto their athletic performance.

Machan hopes Lavin helps student-athletes organize their thoughts and get comfortable with their responsibilities.

“I really appreciate the university recognizing the need to have someone,” said Machan.

“College isn’t where you go to find yourself, it’s where you decide who you are going to be. I think that’s kind of what the resources like her really help with.”

“At the end of the day, it’s really being able to help students meet their wellness goals, whatever that looks like,” said LaBella. “We want to help them be the best version of themselves.”

Lavin encourages students to reach out to her as she wishes she did when she was a student-athlete.

“I didn’t utilize the counseling services at my campus which I regret doing, so I feel like if I had, I would have enjoyed my experiences a lot more and not be so anxious about things,” said Lavin.

Machan hopes that student-athletes will utilize Lavin and reach out to her for support.

“To have someplace to go that’s just going to have an open mind and listen and get good advice, I can’t tell you how important it is,” said Machan.

“We have meetings weekly on Wednesday nights,” said Legerme. “We also have a prayer board night coming up, where we hang out and make prayer boards.”

“We are going to have a few Worship Nights this semester, this looks like people coming together, singing to the lord, and praying,” said Hrzic. “I like to describe the event to people who haven’t heard of it as live modern-day Christian pop music.”

The group goes to various church events together within the Bridgeport and Fairfield area.

“It has been amazing because all of our best friends are from Delight. I just see such a light coming from the girls I have done a bible study with,” said Hrzic.

Club members are also making connections outside of the club.

“I have met so many people because of Delight, and there are so many outside events from Sacred Heart that we can do together,” said Legerme.

The club’s members regard their bond as unbreakable.

“I have seen these girls grow with their walk in God, and they have seen me grow,” said Legerme. “It feels nice to see God moving in our community.”

According to the Delight Ministries website, “You will find Delight chapters on 200 plus college campuses across the country. Delight is reaching over 15,000 women for Jesus each and every semester.”

Students can join Delight by heading over to the Sacred Heart Clubs website.

“Everyone is welcome, and we are open to questions. Come as you are as we just want to share the love of God,” said Hrzic.

Embracing Faith Through Sisterhood

BY JOSHUA ARCHILLA
Staff Writer

Delight Ministries is a nonprofit organization that recently made its way to Sacred Heart University in Aug. 2023.

The club’s mission is to bring Christian women together to establish a Christ-centered community.

“I was searching for a Christian community within a Catholic campus,” said senior Julian Hrzic, Delight’s Team Director. “Our mission is to bring together women who are after the heart of God and to love and serve God while building relationships with one another.”

Delight allows its members to express their emotions while building special bonds through the words of God.

Sophomore Hann Legerme, Treasurer and Book Coordinator said, “Delight has empowered me to speak up about my faith to other girls. Your faith is a big part of who you are, and we are empowering women to walk in that faith.”

The club holds events exclusively for the members and also outside events that welcome everyone.



Sacred Heart University's Collegiate Recovery Program hosted "Move to Heal" at Bergoglio Hall on January 24, 2024. Photo by Tracy Deer-Mirek

Sacred Heart University Photo by Tracy Deer-Mirek

Move to Heal at SHU

BY CAROLINE CLIFFORD
Audrey's Corner Editor



In an effort to address the mental health struggles that are common for college students, Sacred Heart University unveiled its partnership with Move to Heal on January 24th, 2024.

This pioneering initiative incorporates group workouts with support groups aimed at tackling mental health struggles, including trauma, addiction, grief, PTSD, and depression.

Its mission is to foster a community of support and provide a safe haven for individuals to express themselves and embark on their journey to recovery. Move to Heal operates as a non-profit organization committed to offering these essential services free of charge, according to its official website.

"Our vision is to be recognized and acknowledged as a community of support and a safe space for people to be themselves, speak their minds, and recover," the Move to Heal site states, echoing the program's core values and objectives.

Move to Heal collaborates with local gyms, including Crossfit, to create an inclusive and inviting atmosphere, offering fitness classes and personalized coaching sessions. These physical activities are followed by

group support meetings, allowing participants to connect both physically and emotionally with themselves and, hopefully, others with relatable experiences.

"We encourage our members to bond physically through workouts, and on an emotional level at meetings. At Move to Heal - stigma evaporates, and EVERYONE is welcome!" expressed a spokesperson for the program, highlighting its commitment to inclusivity and accessibility.

The innovative approach of Move to Heal reflects Sacred Heart University's dedication to holistic student well-being and its broader mission to serve the community. By addressing mental health concerns through physical activity and supportive interventions, SHU aims to empower individuals to thrive beyond academics.

As Move to Heal gains momentum and support, it signifies a significant step forward in the conversation surrounding mental health on college campuses. Sacred Heart University stands at the forefront of this progress.

Students, faculty, and staff can attend the program on Wednesdays for the 4-4:30 pm workout and a 4:30-5:30 pm group support meeting in Bergoglio Hall.

In Honor of Audrey Niblo

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.



CampusLife

A Guide to SHU Global

BY MOIRA STAPLES
Editor At Large

“How do I get myself back to Dingle?” This question has haunted me for the past year, ever since my trip with the Claddagh Dancers last spring. After a visit full of laughter, music, dancing, and loads of craic, I knew that before my time at Sacred Heart University was through, I would have to find my way back to Dingle.

Last fall, after attending a study abroad session, I decided to meet with my academic advisor to entertain the possibility of spending a semester in Dingle. Walking into that meeting, I knew that while I was certainly interested in going abroad, this was a dream for the future: little did I know that thanks to my high school credits, this future was fast approaching. To make a long story short, my advisor told me that it was now or never, and with the application deadline racing into view, I knew I had an important decision to make.

When applying to Sacred Heart, the opportunity to study abroad in Ireland and continue my love for Irish dancing were undeniable factors in my choice. Last year,



Instagram, @shuindingle

A look at the welcoming streets of Dingle, Ireland, where Sacred Heart has a campus.

as I have already mentioned, those two passions collided as I was able to visit Dingle while on spring break with the Claddagh dance team. It may sound cliché, but this trip was truly one of the most influential experiences of my life. Nothing compares to the feeling of dancing to live Irish music in an authentic Irish pub! This trip allowed me to experience Irish culture with a group of girls who cared about it as much as I did. From the moment we returned to campus, I could not get the memories of this incredible adventure out of my head.

Now, with the weight of my

impending decision looming heavily on my mind, I found the choice more difficult than I had imagined it would be. I grew up in Milford, Conn., a quick 15-minute drive on the Merritt Parkway from SHU: I had never really had the classic college experience of leaving home. While I had often thought of Ireland as my “home away from home,” the distance between the two seemed far more intimidating than I had always pictured. While the thought of leaving my friends and family seemed nearly impossible, I knew that I owed it to myself to give myself this once-in-a-lifetime experience, no matter how scary it seemed.

Fast forward five months later, and I have just finished the first month of my semester abroad in Dingle. Since being here, I have not only explored the countless pubs, experienced the breathtaking views from Connor’s Pass, and held a baby lamb, but I have also been able to explore other countries like Scotland and, soon, England. I also plan on visiting Spain, France, Italy, and Austria during my time abroad. If you were to ask any one of my friends or family if they knew I would have gone to study in Ireland, they would have responded with a resounding “Yes!” However, if you had asked me five months ago, I would not have been as confident.

To anyone thinking of going abroad, please learn from my experience. Go talk to your advisors and learn more about the incredible opportunities SHU has to offer. Go explore.



Instagram, @shuglobal

Celebrate National Study Abroad Day at SHU Global to hear about a wide range of global experiences.



Photos contributed by Shannon Tuttle '26, Assistant Sports Editor and Isabel Haglund '24, Features Editor

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

Inside the Life of a SHU Dancer

BY BELLA GENERAZO
Staff Writer

Sacred Heart University (SHU) has a wide variety of options when it comes to performance. The dance program offers many opportunities for students to showcase their skills on and off the stage. The dance program has many types of classes to offer, along with a minor opportunity that requires 18 credits of both academic and performance-based classes.

Dance Company is a pre-professional track for dancers who are high in skill and wish to perform at a high level. Dance Ensemble encourages students to keep their passion through college and offers classes to strengthen technique and performance. There are also many other programs including SHU Movement, SHU FORCE, Irish Dance Ensemble, SHU Claddagh Dancers and Hip-Hop production, to name a few.

Junior Billy Kasheta is a member of the Dance Company. "I came into SHU not knowing what I wanted to do in the world of performing arts and I knew there were so many options," said Kasheta. "I can confidently say I have found a home with the Dance Company and the girls within the program."

Kasheta takes dance classes every week on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays. He also is a part of the Company Choreographic Fellowship Project (CCFP), which gives company members the ability to highlight their choreographic skills.

"I teach my own choreo to 11 girls at 8 a.m. on



Mark F. Conrad, Sacred Heart University

Dancers performing at the Company Choreographic Fellowship Project show at The Edgerton Center in Nov. 2023.

Tuesday mornings," said Kasheta. This is his first semester choreographing for the CCFP. His piece is musical theatre jazz. He has formed a strong bond with these girls in the past four weeks and is excited to see his work on stage at the end of this spring semester.

"Dance gives me a space to forget about all of the other stuff going on in my life and room to express my emotions through my movement," said sophomore Samantha Hart, a member of the Dance Ensemble.

Hart has been dancing since she was five years old. She said her favorite style of dance is contemporary because it is the best way for her to tell a story, and she feels most confident when performing that style.

Hart is taking a hip-hop class on Sunday nights, which is new to her. "It is my first time taking hip-hop, so I'm not picking up the choreo as fast," she said. "I watch the videos from class to learn and go over what I need to with my friends."

Although this can be a challenge for Hart, she is putting her best foot forward, and enjoying the learning process. She

said she is supported heavily by her fellow Dance Ensemble members and has made strong bonds since joining the dance program at SHU.

Kari Williams, Director of Dance, said, "I allocate a significant portion of my time to administrative duties, including scheduling classes, organizing performances, managing budgets, conducting outreach, communicating with students and staff, designing curriculum and facilitating events."

Williams has a busy schedule but makes a point to keep a strong connection between the art form and her students.

Williams said she enjoys teaching at the college level because the deep commitment of her students makes it fulfilling. It can sometimes be a challenge for her to schedule dancers around academic classes, but she honors their schedules and works everything out the best she can.

Williams said, "On a personal level, dance serves as a form of self-care for me, enabling me to recharge and navigate life's challenges with greater resilience and clarity."

SCMA Student Internships

BY EMMA RICOTTA
Staff Writer

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Contributed by, Victoria Montouri'24

Senior, Victoria Montouri (Right) with Fox 5 NY anchor, Rosanna Scotto (Left).

"Last week, I pitched a story on the science behind dogs wagging their tails and it was selected to be included in the 'Sound of Science' segment," said Patella. "This was a super fun opportunity to see my work not only get picked, but recognized in the show."

Senior Molly Jacob is a part-time freelancer for YES Network and NBC Sports. She works at some Yankees games where she helps reporters with whatever they need while learning from them.

"Let's say the Yankees game is at 2 p.m.," Jacob said. "I am waking up at 4:30 a.m. and driving to the Bronx."

At the end of the game, she goes to the clubhouse where interviews are taking place and then starts her drive back home from the Bronx.

"Working with sports deals with long weekends and late nights, but I find that so rewarding," said Jacob. "The New York market has the best of the best and I am exposing myself with all these people and making so many connections."

The process of finding these types of internships and jobs could be the hardest part for students.

"It's all about connections," Jacob said. "My neighbor goes to spin class with one of the creative directors of YES Network and I just reached out, introduced myself and expressed my interest in the industry."

College students that have internships can discover and explore what kind of career they would want to pursue in the future.

"I always knew I wanted to work for a live (or live-to-tape adjacent) television show," said Patella. "It is just so surreal to have a dream like that come true before even stepping out of college."

Many Sacred Heart students are inspired by these students' initiatives. Sophomore Isabella Zalescik, a strategic communication, public relation and advertising major, hopes to follow in their footsteps.

"I've heard some students have internships with the Yankees, Boston Red Sox, the Patriots, and many more," Zalescik said. "It's exciting to see that people who went through a similar learning experience as me are achieving their dream internships or jobs."

According to the Indeed Career Guide, internships allow you to network with both new and experienced professionals.

"One piece of advice I have is to keep applying and keep networking," said Montouri. "The application process doesn't end after just submitting the form."

"My favorite part is whenever I walk off the field after a game is over and just feeling that I am a part of something," said Jacob. "Feeling that I made an impact on this broadcast, and I am chasing my dream."

Super Bowl LVIII Ad Recap

BY THERESA TARTAMELLA
Staff Writer

During the Super Bowl, companies spend millions of dollars on a 30-second advertisement in order to have a guaranteed high number of views and try to stick out to the viewers.

Prof. Thomas Herles teaches an Advertising and Consumer Culture class and incorporates the ads into his class time. He believes the "successful" ads are the ones that stood out and are memorable.

He said, "It is the one opportunity we're all watching the same thing. The one question I like to ask is 'which one stood out to you and why?' because ultimately all of these companies pay millions of dollars and we've already forgotten most of them."

Sophomore Morgan Plitnick said her favorite commercial of the night was the Dove commercial. This advertisement shared a message that says to keep girls in their sports and support their confidence.

"The Dove commercial emphasized confidence in oneself and especially in young girls while also highlighting their dedication to their sport," Plitnick said. "Body confidence is an important topic and Dove represented the importance of this and also instilled the power of not giving up."

Senior Isabella Giardina who majors in strategic

communications, public relations, and advertising, enjoyed watching the commercials. She feels that studying advertising as a part of her major allows her to have a different point of view when seeing the commercials.

"I feel like being a student in media and advertising we notice things that others wouldn't notice and I try to look for the intent of that commercial," Giardina said. "I try to understand what angle that company was going for and how it was executed."

Based on her knowledge from her studies, her favorite ad of the night was the Kia commercial. In the commercial, a girl was performing her figure skating routine and showed a missing seat where her grandfather would have been. It then shows the dad and daughter in the Kia car driving to the grandfather's house for him to watch her routine through the window.

"I loved the Kia commercial because of the storyline behind it. It's hard to create an emotional story with only 15-30 seconds that somehow relates to a car brand," Giardina said. "I think Kia did an amazing job and this is a perfect example of using pathos in advertisements to appeal to an audience."

Prof. Debra Danowski, who teaches multiple public relations and advertising classes said she likes to incorporate the Super Bowl ads into her class discussions when appropriate.

She said, "Having students watch advertisements as part of a class allows students to critically evaluate the messages in



AP News, Frito-Lay

Image provided by Frito-Lay presenting the Doritos 2024 Super Bowl NFL football spot featuring Olivia Negron, Patricia Mauceri, Jenna Ortega, and Danny Ramirez.

these advertisements to determine whether or not these ideas are valuable to society. It also allows for discussions about persuasion techniques as well as advances in media production methods."

Sophomore Isabelle Ricks said that her favorite ad of the night was the Michelob Ultra ad, which featured professional soccer player Lionel Messi, because she enjoyed watching one of her favorite players on the big screen.

She feels that the advertisements are just as much a part of the day as the game.

"The Super Bowl ads are known for being lavish and funny, so I really look forward to seeing them each year," Ricks said.

Sports



A New Court for a New Conference

Renovations Announced to the William H. Pitt Athletic and Convocation Center

BY JASON PILLA
Staff Writer

On Feb. 7, Sacred Heart University (SHU) announced on social media that they are planning to renovate the William H. Pitt Center, where all Division I athletes are required to report, and majority of games are played.

Judy Ann Riccio, Director of Athletics at SHU, helped with the decision and came up with ideas about what should be done.

“The Pitt Center had not been renovated since its opening in 1997,” said Riccio. “The rest of Sacred Heart’s campus is stunning; it was time for the Pitt Center to match the same aesthetic.”

Riccio said the renovations will be helpful to the transition from the Northeast Conference (NEC) to the Metro Atlantic American Conference (MAAC).

“The renovation plans were in place when we were in discussions with the MAAC and having a brand-new arena certainly made us an attractive candidate,” said Riccio.

Steven Conn, Senior Associate Athletics Director for Communications at SHU, says that it was time for an upgrade and that there were problems for both teams and fans.

“The competition area, in many ways, was worn out, and the mobile seating units had become difficult to move,” said Conn. “Those bleachers were set back so much that it did not create an environment a home team could take advantage of.”

With the change, the arena should be able to hold around 2,200 fans.

“Comfortable chair back seating, the best technology and lighting, concessions, and a VIP area, it will be a whole different way to watch a game,” said Riccio.

Head Coach Jessica Mannetti of the Division I women’s basketball team is looking forward to the renovations being done for the team’s inaugural season into the MAAC.

“We are extremely grateful,” said Mannetti. “I think the timing could not be better. Being able to be a part of the MAAC puts you on a playing field with a lot of great universities. It’s a great opportunity for our program, and we are very grateful to have these valuable assets poured into the program.”

Men’s basketball Head Coach Anthony Latina wants the renovations to be able to help his players in practice to play better on gameday.

“Improving our practice situation and our opportunity for players to improve is really what excites me,” said Latina. “That’s what is going to help our program move the needle the most.”

Not only basketball will be affected by these new renovations. Sports like volleyball, fencing, and wrestling, will have the same impact as they will also be playing in the newly renovated Pitt Center.

The renovations start on March 18 and should conclude in the middle of the fall. The plan is to have it ready for the start of the 2024-2025 winter season.

On Saturday, Feb. 24, SHU will be having an Athletics Showcase and will show visuals of the new renovations and insights into the change to the MAAC at the Pitt Center.

Softball Picked To Finish Fifth in Conference

BY BRENDAN MURPHY
Staff Writer

The Sacred Heart University (SHU) softball team kicked off their season on Friday, Feb. 16 with a trip down to Greensboro, N.C. The team had a busy schedule, playing two games against Ohio University, two against Drexel University, and one against the University of North Carolina (UNC) Greensboro.

The Pioneers started their weekend with two losses, 4-3 against Ohio, and a 5-3 loss against UNC Greensboro. This was followed up by another two losses on Saturday, Feb. 17, with a 6-0 loss against Ohio and 5-3 versus Drexel. However, Sacred Heart ended their weekend on a high note with a 3-2 win over Drexel on Sunday, Feb. 18.

“We are absolutely ready to play. We have practiced as much as we can, we played against each other as much as we can. We need an opponent and we are excited for it and ready to see what our hard work has produced thus far,” said Head Coach Pam London.

Despite finishing with only one win in their first weekend, the team was excited and ready to get some games under their belt. As most of the Pioneers’ Northeastern Conference (NEC) opponents had already begun non-conference play last weekend, the team waited until this weekend to get their season underway.

The Pioneers are returning many key players from last year’s team, despite six players graduating. SHU returns sophomore pitcher Sam Kowalski, who won the NEC Rookie of the Year in 2023.

“It has made me want to work harder because I feel like I have to keep proving myself. I know my team has my back and I trust them in full confidence, and I know we are going to do great things,” said Kowalski.

Kowalski was a major presence for the Pioneers on the mound in 2023 as she led the team in innings pitched with 133.1. The sophomore also threw 117 strikeouts on the season, fifth among all pitchers in the NEC.

Another key player returning to the Pioneer lineup in 2024 is senior outfielder and team captain, Victoria LoPinto, the recipient of last year’s NEC Gold Glove Award.



Instagram, @sacredheart_softball

Senior captain, Victoria LoPinto, 2023 Gold Glove winner.

LoPinto proved to be effective in the Pioneer outfield in 2023, with a perfect 1.000 fielding percentage against NEC opponents.

“Winning that award is huge, and I am just super grateful for it. It reassured me to have confidence and carry that mentality over with me, to take it on to my teammates and be a leader,” said LoPinto.

After finishing with a 9-12 record in conference play in 2023, the Pioneers are seen as a middle of the pack team currently. In the preseason poll that was released on Feb. 2, Sacred Heart was placed fifth in the rankings and received zero first place votes.

“I am okay with being fifth because I would love for people to underestimate us,” said London.

The Pioneers return to the field for their home-opening double header against the Fordham University Rams on Saturday, Feb. 24 at Pioneer Park. The team will then start the month of March in Madeira Beach, Fla., where they will play 12 games before returning home on March 16 when they face the Wagner College Seahawks at Pioneer Park.

All statistics contributed
by Sacred Heart Athletics.

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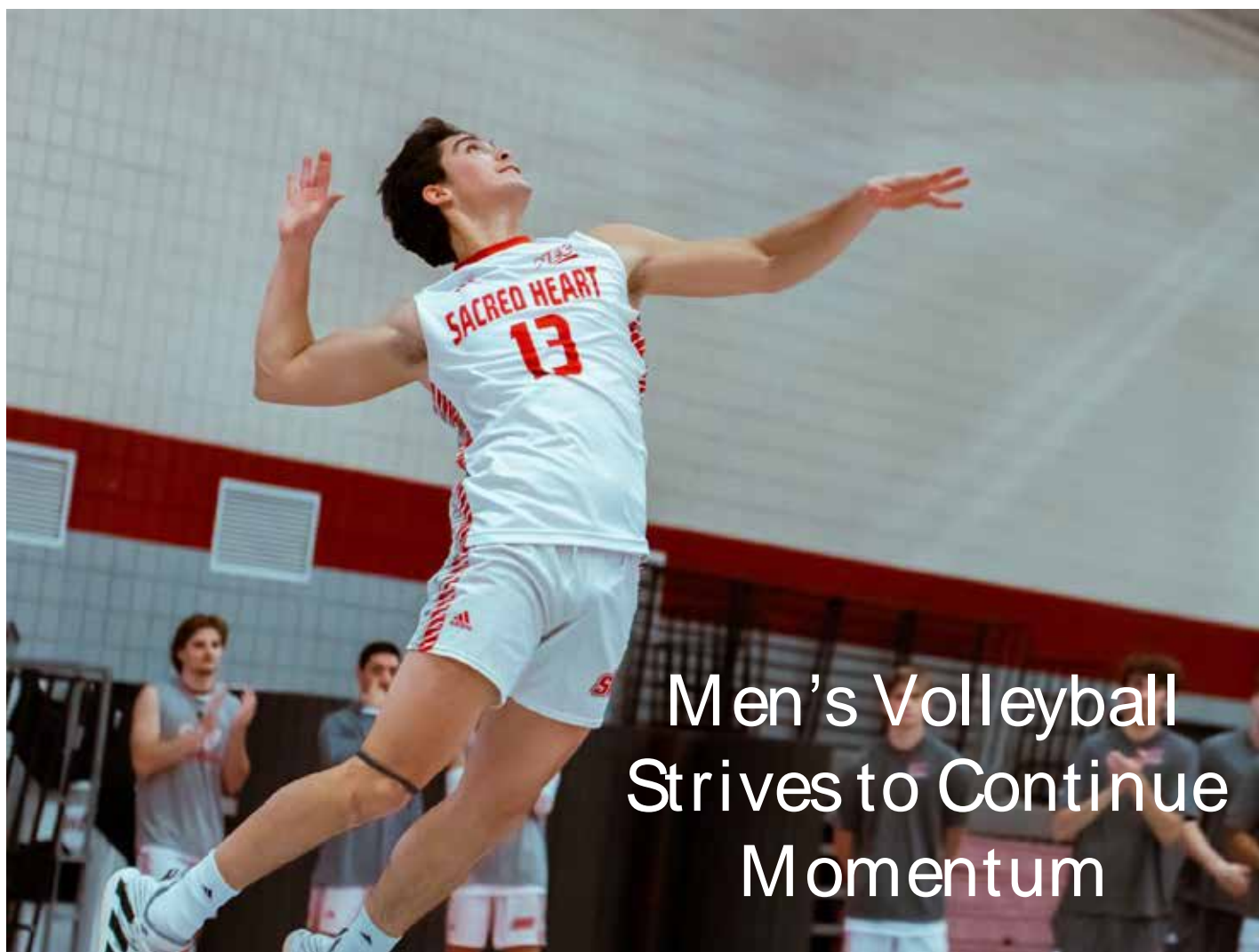


Photo by Josh Gee

Men's Volleyball Strives to Continue Momentum

Senior Carlos Santa Cruz, Men's Volleyball Outside Hitter.

BY WILL RATH
Staff Writer

The Sacred Heart University (SHU) men's volleyball team has been dominant as of late, overcoming top opponents such as New Jersey Institute of Technology (NJIT) on Feb. 8 and Princeton on Feb 10.

After starting their season 0-6, the Pioneers have won six of their last seven matches to pull within a game of being .500.

"We had a rough start to the season," said Head Coach Adam Niemczynowicz. "However, the guys kept working hard and were able to find a new identity for themselves."

Niemczynowicz credits the strong work ethic of his team and finds this to be the driving factor in becoming successful.

"Our mentality is every rep counts, and winning comes from hard work and doing the right things every day. If we can keep this mindset then the winning will be a byproduct of that," said Niemczynowicz.

Senior Mark Berry acknowledges the challenges that come with playing through a long and emotional season and recognizes what it takes to remain diligent.

"We just need to keep the momentum going," said Berry. "Just keep doing what's been working for us, and trying to go undefeated is what we're looking to do."

The Pioneers' momentum propelled them towards a

win over rival Princeton, who they beat for the first time since 2017.

Senior Patrick Mucherino recognizes the victory as an achievement for the team and believes it is a product of the work everyone has put in.

"The win was huge for us," said Mucherino. "We've played them every year the last four years, always away at Princeton. It's difficult, always playing a team on the road in front of a big crowd, but getting the win was exciting and it got the ball rolling for us."

Mucherino has also been of the Pioneers top performers, totaling 31 kills, 8 blocks, 12 digs, and an ace in his performances against Princeton and NJIT.

"I'm playing well right now but there's also a few things I'm still working on," said Mucherino. "I want to get the consistency right, but it'll come with continual play so I'm not too worried about it."

The Pioneers are looking to build on their recent hot streak and carry that level of play for the remainder of their season.

"We hit a stride, and we're still reshaping ourselves," said Niemczynowicz. "Hopefully we continue to grow and learn as we go, but this is a special group and I have confidence in them."

The Pioneers are back in action at home Friday Feb. 23 vs Saint Francis University (SFU).

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