

Controversial IVF Law in Alabama Raises Questions on Reproductive Freedom



Kim Chandler, AP News

The exterior of the Alabama Supreme court building in Montgomery, Ala. where the ruling took place.

BY LAUREN KEHRLE
Staff Writer

On Wednesday, March 6, Alabama Governor Kay Ivey, a Republican, signed legislation into law shielding doctors who provide fertility services from potential legal liability, according to the Associated Press. State legislators supported the immunity proposal as a solution to the concerns of clinics across Alabama, some of which are now in the process of resuming regular IVF protocols.

Following a recent accident at Mobile Infirmary Medical Center in Mobile, Ala. in which frozen embryos being stored at the hospital were dropped and destroyed by a patient, the state Supreme Court ruled on Feb. 16 that fetuses developing from in vitro fertilization (IVF) should be considered children under the law. The verdict is speculated to

stem from conservative leaders' desire to introduce and institute anti-abortion laws and policies that define personhood from the moment of conception, a mission that may affect or altogether eliminate a path to parenthood for those who have faced fertility challenges.

Several IVF providers across Alabama placed an immediate pause on their services, leaving patients with no choice but to look for other options, according to the Associated Press. Medical experts, educators, and citizens alike have already expressed fear and frustration towards the early consequences of the state's ruling and how it will expectedly continue to threaten women's reproductive rights.

"Students studying health sciences [or really any student] should be concerned about any

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Physical Therapy Trip to Guatemala

BY CHRIS BREWER
Staff Writer

Over spring break, undergraduate and graduate students in the Physical Therapy (PT) program at Sacred Heart University traveled to Guatemala for a service trip. In preparation for the trip, a "SHU" Drive was held on Monday, Feb. 27 through Thursday, Feb. 29 where students were able to donate shoes to be given to the adults and children in need, on the trip.

"While on our service week, we often see people in our PT clinics, the schools where we provide services, and on home visits who need better shoes. Sometimes inadequate footwear is contributing to their musculoskeletal problems," said Dr. Donna Bowers, Associate Dean of the College of Health Professions and clinical professor who led the trip.

Two groups headed to Guatemala,
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Caleb Jean-Pierre, Staff Photographer

A donation box for shoes that were given to those in need during the service trip.

Inside SHU's Faculty Peer Coaching Program

BY SONIA GIUSTI
Staff Writer

Did you know that Sacred Heart University faculty can receive peer feedback from their colleagues to help improve their teaching style? The Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL) has a program called Faculty Peer Coaching where any full-time faculty can participate.

This program was started by Literacy Program director, Dr. Kristin Rainville, and Dr. David Title, Clinical Associate Professor. They started this program when they realized their colleagues wanted to improve the way they taught to keep students engaged in learning.

"We began thinking about ways

that we could support our colleagues no matter what college or discipline they are in and become stronger at their instruction with meeting the needs of students," said Rainville.

The initiative of this method is to have discussions before and after classroom observations. The classroom observations are structured so faculty members are paired up with another faculty member and they observe how they teach in the classroom. This gives an opportunity for feedback before this step.

"In our first workshop I watched the personalities and interactions between the faculty and made drafts of partners based on that which has worked really well," said Rainville.

When the observation concludes each faculty member gives feedback to the other about what was done well and what could be improved. Smaller cohorts are formed after to debrief about what was learned during these observations.

"What we do at the end of the year is come together with a debrief about how it went, what we could do better and what we want to learn more about," said Rainville.

According to a press release from Sacred Heart, the faculty peer coaching program can help faculty strengthen their instructional practices, advance professional relationships as well as

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Tracy Deer-Mirek, Sacred Heart University

Jonix Owino, assistant professor in the psychology department, has participated in faculty peer coaching since her second semester teaching at the university.

News

IVF

BY LAUREN KEHRLE
Staff Writer

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legal decisions that impede access to quality healthcare, which this recent ruling does," said Patricia Lewis, Assistant Professor of Health Science. "As is the case with abortion bans, women of higher socioeconomic status can always travel to another state to seek reproductive care like IVF, but poor women do not have the same opportunities and will be severely limited in their family planning options."

In spite of the significant pushback by some members of the Republican Party towards maintaining fertility treatment availability following the storage facility incident, certain conservative representatives are taking action to address the harm that has resulted from the ruling. According to the Associated Press, Republican State Senator Tim Melson, who is also a doctor, intends to file legislation protecting IVF services throughout Alabama so that this possibility remains within reach for aspiring parents.

Still, the decision continues to breed controversy and criticism among politicians as well as members of the public who wrestle with such an ethical dilemma.

"I think that firstly students, regardless of background, ideology, or position on the topic of this, should approach it with an open mind willing to listen to the opinions of others," said junior Jacqueline Gonzalez, who is majoring in political science. "As far as implications of this are concerned, regardless of what side of argument one lies on, people spent time and money attempting to have a child through IVF and are rightfully upset that the system has interfered with such a time-sensitive process."

While the individual who is responsible for the accident will not be criminally charged under the ruling, as it revolves around civil wrongful death claims as opposed to criminal charges over the death of embryos, legal scholars expect more cases to develop nationwide regarding fetal rights.

"Although this is a state-centered ruling confined to Alabama, I would not be surprised if some courts located in other states where there is a large contingent of evangelical Christians issue similar rulings," said Gary Rose, Professor of Political Science. "What begins in one state sometimes has a ripple effect in other states. IVF might even work its way to the U.S. Supreme Court given the high court's conservative posture and willingness to address moral and social issues."

Besides noting this decision's potential national impact from a judicial perspective, Rose also recognized how it may determine who will occupy America's Oval Office next January.

"The Alabama ruling, although confined to one state, could structure opinions and perceptions about the two parties and thus make a difference in swing states. In other words, the ruling could impact the election results," Rose said.

BRIDGEPORT ELECTION UPDATE
BY Associated Press

Bridgeport Mayor Joe Ganim reelected in do-over of race upended by allegations of ballot box stuffing

Faculty Peer Coaching Program

BY SONIA GIUSTI
Staff Writer

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improve student learning.

"At the end of the day, we believe that if faculty use research instructional practices in their classrooms, student learning will improve," said Title.

Recently a Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging (DEIB) cohort was implemented into this program. Assistant Professor, Dr. Thomas Morgan facilitates this new cohort where there are group discussions about being more inclusive in teaching.

"This new cohort had a pre-determined focus on inclusive teaching practices. Faculty who signed up for this cohort are committed to these practices but want to do them better," said Title.

According to the press release, this new cohort is a very important addition to this program because it shows that DEIB is a university priority.

"We knew that inclusive excellence is central to who we are and what we do at Sacred Heart and wanted to reach out

to people who had knowledge in inclusive excellence to lead a cohort," said Rainville.

The total commitment to this coaching program is 20 hours per semester. Faculty attend one-hour overview sessions and two or three hours of learning sessions. In addition, they attend and conduct a peer observation, and take part in mid-semester check-in and wrap-up sessions.

Workshops take place after some of these observations and are held by Title, Rainville, Morgan, and assistant professor, Dr. Wendy Romney.

"We have done workshops on how to run more effective class discussions and on new ways of assessing student learning other than tests, quizzes, and exams," said Title.

The press release from SHU stated that the theory of action to this program is to engage faculty in peer coaching and have them learn effective practices so they can implement them into their teaching to help students' learning.

"Although I have never heard of this program, I do think it is important that professors are getting feedback on their teaching styles. I think what makes a good professor is when they engage students and make sure they are grasping the content," said sophomore Savannah Lovering.

Physical Therapy Guatemala Trip

BY CHRIS BREWER
Staff Writer

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one PT group being led by Bowers and Dr. Leigh Ronald, Associate Director of Clinical Education. The other group is a mix of pre-professional students and an occupational therapy (OT) graduate student, led by Sheelagh Schlegel, Clinical Associate Professor of OT. Each group did different things on the trip but traveled together.

"The total group is 16. There were three faculty, one staff (Elizabeth Gomez, Assistant Director of Global Health), and 12 students from PT, OT, nursing, pre-PT, and one undecided student," said Prof. Christina Gunther who is the Chair of the Department of Health Sciences.

There were guidelines to be able to sign up and go on this trip, "Only students in the Doctor of Physical Therapy program were eligible to apply. For the social determinants of health group that Dr. Schlegel is leading, any major was invited to apply," said Gunther.

The students and faculty went in hopes of making an impact on the community through various events being held. The two groups went their separate ways once they arrived, aiming to achieve the most they could in the week they were there.

"The physical therapy group held free community clinics, conducted home visits for patients who are housebound, and built wheelchairs with funds they raised for people in need. Dr. Schlegel's group assisted

Pictured is a "SHU" Drive flyer with information about the donation drive for The Physical Therapy Student Learning Experience for their upcoming trip to Guatemala.

an orphanage, a hospital shelter, and a nursing home. They also visited a few homebound patients in need of occupational therapy services and assisted with one of the PT community clinics," said Gunther.

This trip is held annually by Sacred Heart students, and they fund the trips themselves. Not only do they provide themselves with travel expenses but also supplies and equipment to be able to provide the proper care.

This mission trip is done in Guatemala for many reasons, one of those is the fact that they have such limited access to physical therapy, especially in the towns and cities the groups travel to. Students travel to local schools and homes to ask citizens if they need any assistance.

"I would be so excited for the chance to go and help people in need. The missions sounded very interesting, and I need to look more into them," said junior Kyle Jusas. "Guatemala is a beautiful place, and I am glad to be a part of a community like Sacred Heart whose students are willing to go into their own pockets to help others. Meeting new people and being able to help them would be such an amazing feeling so no doubt I would consider doing this if I was in the program."

Since 2010, more than 250 nursing, physical therapy, occupational therapy, and speech-language pathology students and faculty have gone and have helped over 8,000

Linda Higgins, Sacred Heart University

Features

A Look Into The Music Education Program

BY COLLIN MACLEOD
Staff Writer

Prof. Frank Martignetti, the founding director of the Music Education program, came to Sacred Heart University (SHU) in early 2021 with the task of creating this program, a Masters of Arts degree in teaching music.

"The dean of the college said to me, 'Design your dream program,' and I've gotten to do that which is a once in a lifetime opportunity," said Martignetti.

Martignetti immediately got to work, by getting a curriculum in place, having the state certify the program and advertising it. The first cohort of master's degree candidates began in June 2022.

Students can be a part of the program by following the five-year path, or students who have completed undergrad with a degree in music can come back just for the master year to obtain this degree.

This program has the goal of students finishing with a Master of Arts degree in teaching music. This certification will allow graduates to teach music to preschool through high school-aged students.

"Both routes lead to making you marketable and effective as a music teacher, and getting you Connecticut Certification," said Martignetti. "All of our graduates are really skilled, they're going to do great things, and serve students well, which is great."

A part of this path is that students will take part in a paid residency at a local school. The master's degree is 33 credits and the school system these students are placed in will pay the university 30 credits worth of tuition.

"Our graduates in residency can teach general music, chorus, concert and marching band, string orchestra, music technology, guitar, and more," said Martignetti. "People do specialize in what their strengths are. If you're a tuba player you might focus on band, if you're a singer you might do music and choir, but we give people training in everything."

To make sure the students are prepared in a wide variety, they take multiple introductory courses on each instrument family. These semester-long courses include strings, brass, woodwinds, as well as their main instrument.

Martignetti credits the program's strength to his "all-star team," with the help of other music faculty and staff already here at the university as well as his part-time faculty that he brought in

with him.

"We're just getting started, I'm really looking forward to seeing where we will be in just two years," said Martignetti.

Senior Melissa Blanco first came to SHU as an elementary education major but wasn't satisfied and temporarily switched her major to theatre arts. About a month before she began her sophomore year, she heard that the music program would be expanded, including a music education major.

"I felt like my prayers had been answered because I knew that's what I wanted to do, and the opportunity couldn't have come at a better time," said Blanco. "The first day of my sophomore year I knocked on Prof. Joseph Carter's office and asked if I could join the major, and the rest is history."

Blanco was the first student to be enrolled in this program and will be graduating after this semester, where she will then begin her master's year shortly after.

"Even though my undergraduate journey is coming to an end very soon, I'm very thankful for what this program has had to offer me, and I cannot wait to start my graduate classes soon," she said.

Blanco, after completing her master's, intends to work as a secondary choir teacher, an elementary general music teacher, or a private vocal instructor.

"This program is special because everyone is united by a common passion for music," said sophomore Victoria Saracino. "I love the community we have built, and I look forward to seeing the music education program grow."



Tracy Deer-Mirek, Sacred Heart University

Professor Frank Martignetti working with students in the master of arts in teaching music arts program.

Multicultural Center Wisdom Wednesdays



Instagram, @shu_multiculturalcenter_

Robert Johnson, Executive Director of Student Affairs, seen speaking in the Multicultural Center.

BY JORDAN DORSEY
Staff Writer

The Multicultural Center is a hub of opportunity to engage in cultural expression and cultural exchange. Students can relate to others who have similar college experiences through a cultural connection and many clubs run through the center.

Senior Nicole Sperling said, "I like to call it a home away from home." It is a space for anyone to meet and make friends, do homework, or study.

The center, found in HC111 of the main academic building is open from 9:30 a.m. to 9:30 p.m. and Wisdom Wednesdays are hosted every Wednesday from 1 p.m. to 2 p.m.

"Wisdom Wednesday comes from me because I know that students need developmental conversations to talk about their experiences consistently. It gives students the opportunity to build their own sense of emotional intelligence, build their own character. I feel like that's what students miss sometimes," said Executive Director of Multicultural Affairs, Robert Johnson.

"[Johnson] being an alumnus from Sacred Heart himself he has gone through the same stuff that we have gone through as an underrepresented student so he's able to talk upon how he's grown as an individual but also just talk about it from a holistic point as being someone older than us and has had those life experiences," Sperling said.

The Multicultural Center is a place for students to come together and talk about anything on their mind.

"I tell people that the Multicultural Center is my favorite place on campus," said senior Erin Paranal. "I think it's a great addition to SHU because it provides underrepresented students with the

opportunity to connect with one another and share our joined experiences."

Johnson noted the importance of this connection, which is fostered through Wisdom Wednesdays.

"You go through four years of school and all you've done is if you're in a fraternity, or you played a sport, or you've been a part of cultural clubs, and you're getting ready to leave and you feel unprepared because you haven't had real conversations about real stuff and wisdom Wednesday is the opportunity to do that," said Johnson.

Students are aware of the impact these conversations have as well.

"In Sacred Heart's mission statement, they specifically talk about their vision for social justice so being the office for exclusive excellence and the multicultural center we definitely have that aspect that we can grow and advocate for that vision for social justice," said Sperling.

The Multicultural Center was created in 2020 and has grown exponentially within the last four years.

"My hope is that the center can continue to evolve and be a place where students feel accepted, they can learn about other experiences, they can celebrate their own experiences and their own selves and know that who they are as they come into the space is okay but something like a wisdom Wednesday allows them to refine that and home in on it," Johnson said.

"The world is a diverse place and if you go four years of college and never interact with someone who doesn't experience the world like you, you're going to go out into the real world assuming that everyone experienced life the exact same way as you and that's not true," said Johnson.

"It Starts with Us": New Colleen Hoover Book Club

BY JOSHUA ARCHILLA
Staff Writer

Are you interested in young adult fiction and romance novels? The Colleen Hoover Book Club might be for you.

The Colleen Hoover Book Club is a new club at Sacred Heart University, created in 2024. The club aims to create student engagement through Hoover novels. Colleen Hoover is an American author who is famously known for her romance and young adult novels.

"I've read a lot of Colleen Hoover books, and they're very popular right now. I feel like a lot of her books are set in that college, late high school, or early adulthood setting," said junior and head of the club, Madison Croonquist-Rosario.

Hoover became popular after self-publishing her first novel titled, "Slammed." This novel made the New York Times best-seller list within seven months.

"We're going to go through a PowerPoint asking people in the club for different book recommendations and books that we should all read together," said Croonquist-Rosario. "I thought it would be nice for people to come together, talk about the books, the readings and how they are different. Also, how it's something that you love to take time to do within your day."

Croonquist-Rosario touches upon how the club is very new but has impactful plans in mind.

"We are going to do some volunteer work; we are going to run a book drive whether it's Colleen Hoover books or any books. We are also looking into donating to any community libraries, the Sacred Heart library, or maybe local schools," said Croonquist-Rosario.

Students will soon receive weekly emails with information regarding the club and how students can join.

Croonquist-Rosario said, "I'm going to create a GroupMe, also an email chain with weekly reminders. I'm also going to send weekly flyers over to Student Engagement, so, it'll be sent in a mass email to the entire university."

Students in and out of the club share their thoughts on Colleen Hoover and share their favorite Hoover novel amongst the students.

"Her books are less inspirational and are more about escaping the real world. Her books typically have a nice romance story that helps you escape reality for a little bit," said senior Kayla Ryan. "My favorite Colleen Hoover novel is 'Verity.' 'Verity' is a thriller novel that includes a good twist."

Colleen Hoover's writing targets individuals within the high school and college setting but her novels are enjoyed by many age groups.

"Most of her novels are targeted at individuals over the age of 16, I do believe that beyond that age they are for everyone," said junior Jessica Greenberg. "I would say from personal experience, not only have I read and loved her novel, 'Verity,' but so has my mom, my aunt and even my two grandmothers."

Greenberg has read nine Colleen Hoovers novels and thinks differently in terms of what it means to be a reader and author. When Greenberg is reading Hoover's novels, she sees various themes throughout her writing.

"Novels by the same author usually all share a similar underlying theme. However, her novels are each unique in their own perspective ways," said Greenberg.

Students share how Hoover's writing might be different from other authors.

"I would say Colleen Hoover is unique in her writing because she explores many different types of relationships and romantic stories," said Ryan.

Hoover allows readers to express their imagination and have different takeaways from her novels.

"She really gives her readers the option to interpret her work in their own way, which is really intriguing as it allows her books to mean different things to each individual who reads them," said Greenberg.



Tracy Deer-Mirek, Sacred Heart University

BY OLIVIA TEDESCO
Assistant Audrey's Corner Editor

Sacred Heart University is a beacon of intellectual illumination, nurturing a community where academic excellence, compassion, and creativity come together in the charming town of Fairfield, Connecticut. SHU has always been committed to providing a complete education, even outside of its beautiful campus, as seen by its modest origins and rise to prominence. Now with the class of 2027 opening their acceptances, we like to think back on some of the reasons we all fell in love with SHU in the first place.

Sacred Heart institution was the first Catholic institution in America to be run and managed entirely by laypeople. It was founded by the Most Reverend Walter W. Curtis, Bishop of the Diocese of Bridgeport. It was founded with a strong foundation in Catholic intellectual traditions and the liberal arts, however it has always maintained a modern attitude. Those who aspire to both academic brilliance and personal and spiritual development find great resonance in the aim of educating the full person while equipping them to lead and serve in the contemporary world.

One of Sacred Heart University's main selling points in terms of academics is its dedication to academic excellence. With six different colleges and two schools offering around 90 undergraduate, graduate, doctorate, and certificate programs, Sacred Heart offers a complete educational experience catered to individual interests and professional aspirations. With more than 60 study abroad programs spread across more than 30 countries, including a campus in Dingle, Ireland, Sacred Heart stands out for its global perspective. Students' views are expanded and their academic experiences are enhanced by this global viewpoint.

The dedication of Sacred Heart University to excellence is acknowledged both nationally and locally. As evidenced by U.S. News & World Report's ranking of Sacred Heart among the best national universities and by awards it has received for its undergraduate business school, nursing program, psychology program, and computer science program, the university continuously demonstrates its commitment to offering top-notch instruction in a variety of subject areas. Furthermore, its dedication to inclusivity and accessibility is

shown by its ranking as a top performer in social mobility.

In addition to academics, Sacred Heart University provides a dynamic student body that is enhanced by performing arts, sports, and a wide range of clubs and organizations. Students have plenty of opportunity to play competitive sports or support their fellow Pioneers with 33 NCAA Division I athletic teams and 39 intercollegiate club sports teams. Pioneer Village, which was constructed recently, offers comfortable and contemporary living alternatives that promote a feeling of community and belonging on campus.

The dedication to community involvement and service lies at the heart of Sacred Heart University's culture. Sacred Heart students actively participate in improving the world via more than 100 relationships with non-profit organizations and more than 115,000 hours of community service completed worldwide. Students are empowered to bring about change and exemplify the university's service goal, whether via worldwide service-learning opportunities in places like Greece and Colombia or local tutoring and mentoring programs.

Situated on 311 acres along Connecticut's southwestern coast, Sacred Heart University's Park Avenue campus offers a picturesque and conducive environment for learning and growth. With state-of-the-art facilities and a sprawling campus, students have access to over 2.5 million square feet of building space, including specialized STEM programs housed in the former General Electric world headquarters. Additionally, satellite campuses in Stamford and Griswold, Connecticut, as well as an international campus in Dingle, Ireland, further expand the university's reach and global footprint.

With all of this to offer and more Sacred Heart University's enduring appeal lies in its unwavering commitment to academic excellence, community engagement, and holistic student development. As students we will always be able to remember the first time we stepped on campus and the feeling of belonging. With the next class of 2027 enrolling in the fall let's make this transition for them the smoothest and the easiest as possible.

CampusLife

Social Justice Week Set to Start March 17

BY COLLIN MOURA
Campus Life Editor

Social Justice Week at Sacred Heart University is set to begin on March 17, offering a variety of unique programs focused on interrupting systems of oppression and marginalization at both a university and global level. Amanda Bonet, president of La Hispanidad is organizing the week's programming, bringing light to social justice issues through engaging learning activities and powerful dialogue. The Game of Life and the Unity Walk will be two featured events, each creating a space for students to take action in regard to equity and justice on campus.

"Our mission for this year is to create a campus wide week of events with the support and participation of different departments and organizations who can use their strengths and areas of expertise to educate the campus community on social justice issues. Although we have made many great advancements in society regarding diversity, inclusion, and overall fairness for all, it is still something that our society struggles with. The purpose of our theme for the upcoming Social Justice Week is to unite the diverse and unique students of Sacred Heart University while bringing awareness to these issues. The theme of Social Justice Week 2024 is **Activism**," said Bonet.



The Comfort of Stuffed Animals for College Students

BY COLLIN MOURA
Campus Life Editor

Balancing adulthood with the life of a college student can be very difficult. Simultaneously managing jobs, classes, and a social life is by no means easy. These burdens of responsibility often seep into nightly routines, disrupting sleep schedules in a major way. The National Sleep Foundation and the American Academy of Sleep Medicine and Sleep Research Society have found that over 68% of college students are consistently vulnerable to sleep deprivation, with overall mental health and well-being suffering as a result.

Stuffed animals are believed to improve sleep quality, especially when contributing to a calming bedtime routine. So the next time someone tells you that "you're too old for stuffed animals," pick up your favorite plush friend and show them this article.

According to the Associated Press, sleep deprivation is linked to heart disease and cognitive decline, influencing things like heart rate, blood pressure, stress hormones, and metabolism.

With the many stressors of adulthood and post college life piling up, it is crucial to take some time to rekindle the magic of childhood joy.

More than just toys, stuffed animals can provide a sense of security and familiarity, often associated with feelings of comfort and happiness from childhood. Studies show that holding and hugging your stuffed animal lowers stress hormones such as cortisol and epinephrine, while boosting serotonin and dopamine levels.

College can be a lonely and scary time for everyone. Settling into a new environment with new people and challenges is difficult, as homesickness is far more common than you might think. Stuffed animals have a wide range of social and emotional benefits, while providing the added bonus of looking adorable and brightening up your dorm room.

In a similar way to how pets can help their owners form secure emotional attachment bonds and heal from a past painful or traumatic experience, their fabric counterparts can also serve as a source for comfort and compassion. While the university will not be allowing your cat entrance into Roncalli Hall anytime soon, your stuffed animals are more than welcome!

So go on a shopping spree for a new stuffed animal or pillage through your attic for an old childhood favorite! It may just be the unexpected key to solving your sleep problems.

Article Inspired by the New York Times.

Stuffed Animals of the Spectrum Staff:

Sarah Margerison, Copy Editor & Assistant Campus Life Editor:

Bunny named Munchkin

Madison Beekman, Managing Editor: Content:

Steggy the Dino Nugget. Dumbo, Sherman the Jellycat, Callie the Cow

Collin Moura, Campus Life Editor:

Seal named Sammy

Molly Bruton, Managing Editor: Administration:

Seal named Doug

Brendan Williams, Editor in Chief:

Forgot his Whale's name :(



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

Arts & Entertainment

Professor Produces New Film Featuring Students

BY THERESA TARTAMELLA
Staff Writer

Prof. James Barnes is the producer of the film "Hiding Places" which is set to premiere at the Sacred Heart University Community Theatre today, March 13 at 7 p.m.

Barnes worked with his brother, Brad Barnes, who wrote and directed this film. It features students from Sacred Heart who were a part of this process as well as



Contributed by James Barnes

Sacred Heart students gaining real experience while working on the film with Barnes.

alumni from the University of Southern California (USC).

"Brad had the idea of working with his former students from USC. It was an opportunity for young filmmakers to take higher positions on the crew while saving on production costs. Once I heard that, I wanted to get SHU students involved," Barnes said. "My Acting for the Camera class was perfect. It allowed me to workshop the script while we were in pre-production."

Altogether, production took around four years and required Barnes to work remotely because the filming took place in Altadena, Calif.

The film is about a couple who is struggling with their marriage and they find out that their daughter found someone hiding from the police in their garden shed whom they then allow into their home. Tensions are high as loyalties are put to the test and they have to decide whether to help the fugitive.

Junior Chumani Heard was one of Barnes' students who is featured as an actress in the film. She said that she learned a lot from the experience, which has helped her grow as an actress.

"Prof. Barnes guided me through this experience by ensuring that we filmed various scenes multiple times. This involved incorporating diverse shots, such as close-ups focusing solely on either myself or my classmate, and introducing props to enhance the scene's realism," Heard said. "His patience was evident as he provided valuable

pointers on exploring different emotional scenarios within the scene, contributing to our overall learning process."

Graduate student Quinlan Sullivan, who is in the film and television master's program, is also an actor in the film. He was a junior during the time of filming and said that Barnes was able to help him branch out and was a huge influence in understanding the basics of the film industry.

"As a student actor, we were recreating scenes from the script, so it was interesting to act out scenes that haven't actually been made into a real film yet," Sullivan said. "I would say my main takeaway is that it truly takes different people and perspectives to understand the true meaning or intent behind certain scenes and scripts."

Tickets for the show are available online. A student ticket is \$10 and an adult ticket is \$12. The star of the film, Kristen Ariza will be at the premiere and will also be available for a Q&A after the film.

Junior Bente Bouges said, "I think it is really amazing that students get the opportunity to act in a film that is going to be shown in our community theatre. It seems like such a cool and fun experience."

Barnes is excited that his film, which has been in the making for years, will finally be premiered.

"It's a thrill to be able to show the movie at the SHU Community Theatre. It's a great screen to show your movie on and I can't wait to see it with an audience," said Barnes.

The Post Writers' Strike Entertainment Boom

BY EMMA RICOTTA
Staff Writer

The Writers Guild of America (WGA) strike put a halt in television and film production for five months, resulting in delayed releases, production shutdowns, paused work and canceled episodes. In late September 2023, a contract agreement with Hollywood studios was approved by union board members and signed by writers.

The WGA strike largely affected the film industry. According to the Associated Press, "It was a pivotal moment in Hollywood as writers' creative labor disputed against executives in a business transformed by technology to the emergence of artificial intelligence in the years to come."

Many television shows' release dates were postponed due to the strike. For example, "American Horror Story" on FX, "Grey's Anatomy" on ABC and "Stranger Things" on Netflix were paused and then continued work after the strike.

"Stranger Things" is one of sophomore Angelo Salotto's favorite television shows. The production of season five was paused and the release date of the season was pushed back.

"I'm pretty upset that the fifth season isn't coming out until next year," Salotto said. "I was looking forward to seeing what happens next in the show and now I have to wait even longer."

Some movies were forced to suspend production and eventually delayed their release date. "Deadpool 3" was originally set to be released on May 3, 2023. However, the movie will now be released on July 26, 2024. The release date of "Ghostbusters: Afterlife" has been moved from Dec. 20, 2023 to March 29, 2024.

Prof. Roger S. H. Schulman, of the film and television graduate program at Sacred Heart University, feels the strike had a powerful impact on the industry with postponing all productions.

"Studios, streamers and production companies retrenched left and right. Green lights turned suddenly to red," Schulman said. "The buzz I constantly hear nowadays is that the flood of content must be slowed to a trickle, or even reversed."

Late-night talk shows, such as "The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon," "Saturday Night Live" on NBC and "The Late Show with Stephen Colbert" on CBS had many canceled episodes as well.

Schulman is a fan of Stephen Colbert. "I really had to adjust to get used to not having his and his writers' brilliance to shape my understanding of the country, and make me laugh," Schulman said. "When he came back, I could tell that he missed me too. Either that, or he has no idea I exist."

Prof. James 'Todd' Barnes works for the film and television master's program (FTMA) at Sacred Heart, as well as a filmmaker.

"At FTMA, the graduate film school here at Sacred Heart, we talk about industry regularly," said Barnes. "Work stoppages like this can create more job opportunities for our students."

As a result of the strike, writers got the regulation of artificial intelligence (AI). They will no longer be competing with AI-generated stories for their screen credit, but it is unknown if this will repeat itself.

"I'm hopeful that it will lead to more sustainable work for writers," said Barnes. "It was probably necessary, but we will have to see if it worked in the long run."

"The courage and persistence of the WGA resulted in several breakthrough accomplishments," said Schulman. "To me, the most



Damian Dovarganes, AP News

SAG-AFTRA actors rally outside the Paramount Pictures studio in Los Angeles, Tuesday, Sept. 26, 2023.

remarkable is the recognition of artificial intelligence as something that urgently needs to be taken seriously, accepted as a valuable tool, and regulated to avoid abuse."

Now Showing at the SHU Community Theatre

BY BELLA GENERAZO
Staff Writer

Located in the heart of downtown Fairfield, the Sacred Heart University (SHU) Community Theatre hosts events available for all students and locals. From live concerts to theatrical performances to film screenings, students have plenty of options they can attend with family and friends.

On Thursday, March 14 there will be a live performance called "Dervish," a St. Patrick's Day celebration. On Friday, March 15 the theatre will be screening "Better Off Dead," followed by a talkback with Savage Steve Holland, an event that SHU students can go see for free if they show their SHU ID.

Matthew Oestreicher, executive director of the SHU Community Theatre, said, "As we are right in the heart of our third season, we have something for everyone."

In his role as executive director, he not only prepares for upcoming performances but oversees the company as a whole.

"Although we carry 'community' in our name, we function more like a versatile performing arts center, offering a diverse array of live performances and film screenings, catering to various interests and audiences," said Oestreicher. "For music fans, we have the legendary

artists Richard Thompson performing on March 21st, 10,000 Maniacs performing on March 24th, and Rufus Wainwright performing on April 5th. We are constantly adding shows so please check out our website at shucommunitytheatre.org."

The theatre takes pride in their staff and the work they produce.

"Our staff at the SHU Community Theatre is comprised of experienced artists and theatre professionals," said Oestreicher. "They are former Broadway actors, set and costume designers, music producers, touring musicians, and filmmakers who are passionate about sharing their love for the arts."

Senior Grace Posillico has attended movies with her friends at the theatre. She said they have popcorn and candy, and it is a fun experience. "One time we brought blankets in and went in our PJs," said Posillico.

"I like having a theatre nearby. They have great movie nights and guests that come in," said Posillico. "It's a fun way to take a break from homework and studying."

The theatre is an outlet for students to take a break, and is accessible to those living on campus. The Downtown Fairfield SHUttle makes a stop right in front of the theatre, so students can get there regardless of having a car on campus or not.

The auditorium has over 400 seats including a main floor, balcony and orchestra. They have a 46'x36' stage along with a backstage area, a V.I.P. green room and a front office.

"My favorite event I have been to at the SHU community theatre was the viewing of 'Theatre Camp,'" said junior Grace Peknic. "The Theatre Arts Program went together, and it was such a lovely time."

Peknic said she found the staff to be wonderful, and she felt they have hosted a great number of events and opportunities for SHU students.

The theatre also hosts performances by the SHU choirs, band and dance programs.

"I have heard nothing but great things about the choir and band performances at the SHU Community Theatre," said Peknic.

The theatre not only puts on its own performances and events but combines with the programs at SHU to create an inclusive and diverse environment.

"I love having a theatre nearby for students," said Peknic. "It is so beautiful, and I love that Sacred Heart University has access to this theatre. It's been a great addition to the growing Sacred Heart University campus in the Fairfield community."

Sports

SCM Alum, Shannon Szefinski, Earns Super Bowl Ring with KC Chiefs



BY JASON PILLA
Staff Writer

Former student of the School of Communication, Media, and the Arts (SCMA), earned a Super Bowl Ring with the Kansas City Chiefs last month. Shannon Szefinski, former Spectrum managing editor, was a part of SCMA as a Graduate Assistant and is now the Live and Gameday Seasonal Production Assistant for the Kansas City Chiefs.

Szefinski's road to success started here at SHU as a part of SCMA. As a Graduate Assistant for SCMA, she learned how to be a leader and gain confidence within herself.

"I attribute everything I've been able to accomplish to SCMA and the professors that make the program what it is," said Szefinski. "From editing to the control room to learning how to communicate with others, every lesson you learn at school is important and will only help you become a more well-rounded professional."

Szefinski spent the entire season with the

Chiefs organization leading up to this moment and didn't catch much of a break with all the time she put into her job.

"Every person plays a role in the success of our team and no person goes unnoticed by ownership," said Szefinski. "Everyone had to put in long hours and take ideas to new levels to be able to reach this point."

Other SCMA peers that Szefinski has worked with in the past for SCMA give her a lot of credit and are proud for what she is accomplishing.

Jared McCabe, a graduate assistant for SCMA, who previously worked with Szefinski, said, "The energy she brought every day you wouldn't even know if she was having a bad day, she always had a smile on her face and was always so willing to help me with any questions I had."

When it comes to SCMA, Szefinski contributed a lot to help the program become what it is today.

"She basically built this program. We've had a lot of great graduate assistants come through here, but she is easily the best graduate assistant they've had, and you can ask any of the professors," said McCabe.

Aaron Such, assistant director of production for SCMA, says she contributed a lot to SCMA.

"I think there are only a couple of students whose presence reigns after their time here at SHU," said Such. "She impacted so many students that she has not only contributed to her own success, but also the success of many others."

Senior Molly Jacob has also worked with Szefinski.

"Shannon is such a hard worker and that's something that I've always learned from her because she's always working long hours," said Jacob. "She's extremely helpful and taught me a lot in our program, she's very career-driven and that's something that makes her stand out."

Szefinski said she uses her ring as a symbol of all the amazing things she was able to accomplish and the challenges she had to overcome this season.

"The biggest piece of advice I could give to someone is to be passionate and be ambitious," said Szefinski. "Love what you do and take pride in what you do."

Contributed by Shannon Szefinski, BA '21, MA '23
Shannon Szefinski pictured with the Lamar Hunt Trophy, given to the champions of the AFC league.

Women's Golf Tees off in Pursuit of Third NEC Title

BY WILL RATH
Staff Writer

The women's golf team is aiming to make history this spring by becoming the first team to win three straight Northeast Conference (NEC) Titles in NEC Golf history. The team was picked to finish first in the 2024 NEC Women's Golf Preseason Coaches Poll.

Head coach Matthew McGreevy said his expectations for this season is to see his team secure another conference championship. He spoke highly of his team and the talent they bring on the course.

"We are fortunate to have upperclassmen who bring a lot of leadership and buy into what we want to do," said McGreevy. "We all have the same goal of winning."

McGreevy also credited the skill of the underclassmen and their development to where they are now.

Senior Chantal El Chaib has thrived with the Pioneers, winning NEC Rookie of the Year in 2021, NEC Golfer of the Year last season, and was also named to NEC All First Team.

While she has already accomplished a lot in her golf career, El Chaib is looking to further her success even more this season.

"I want to win more tournaments as an individual, but also as a team," said El Chaib. "I hope to win the conference again and go back-to-back as an individual, it's my last year so I want to make the most out of it and enjoy the season."

The Pioneers have a lot on their agenda this season, but they have a chance to make history by becoming the first team in program history to win three consecutive championships.

Graduate student Kailee Welch discussed the potential milestone for the Pioneers, and how important it would be, not only for herself, but for everyone associated with the team.

"Winning two titles in a row was a great accomplishment, and hopefully getting a three-peat

this year would be even better for us," Welch said. "We've come so far with our team and having the same top six, top seven travel with us for the past two years, we've gotten closer as a team and are able to overcome anything."

Welch has also been a big contributor to the team, earning a spot on the All First Team NEC last season. Her veteran leadership is crucial in the team's journey of winning three consecutive NEC championships.

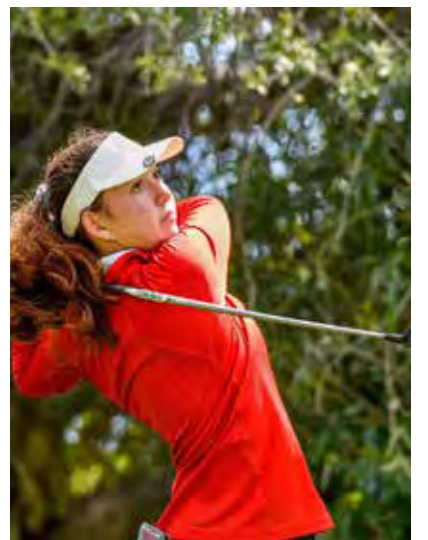
"We have a big target on our backs these past two years, and I feel like this year's definitely going to be a major competition, even more than going back-to-back last year," Welch said.

The women's golf team aims to uphold a positive outlook in the midst of their eventful season.

"There's a greater expectation with everybody looking to beat us," said McGreevy. "I think we have the team to do it, I'm confident in the way we play and the way we prepare. We're going to do our best to bring home a third championship."

The Pioneers will have their hands full, facing off against William & Mary at the Kingsmill Intercollegiate from Sunday, March 24 to Tuesday, March 26.

SHU will also match up against LaSalle University at the Prospect Bay Intercollegiate from Thursday, March 28 to Saturday, March 30 at the Prospect Bay Country Club in Grasonville, Md.



Instagram, @sacredheartwgf
Graduate student Kailee Welch in action.

A Year of Historic Firsts for Men's AAU Club Hockey

BY BRENDAN MURPHY
Staff Writer

The SHU Amateur Athletic Union (AAU) club hockey team defeated Stony Brook University 2-1 on Sunday, Feb. 25. to win the Empire Black Division championship.

Earlier in the weekend, the team won two games to advance to the championship game. Starting on Friday, Feb. 23 with a 3-2 win against Hofstra University. This quarterfinals contest went into four overtimes and was eventually ended by sophomore defenseman Luke Botti's game winning goal. The team continued this success going into Saturday as they won 6-4 in their semifinal game versus Farmingdale State College.

"The team knew early in the second semester what the goal was, and they were willing to make all the sacrifices to accomplish the goal," said Head Coach Joseph Lane. "They were looking to make a historic second semester push. Word around the locker room was that they wanted to go through them [Farmingdale and Stony Brook] to get the championship win, they didn't want an easy way out."

Early in the semester, the team lost back-to-back games against both Farmingdale and Stony Brook, two teams they would go on to beat in the playoffs. After these losses, SHU responded with seven straight wins and claimed the conference title. In this stretch, the Pioneers outscored their opponents 36-12.

A key component of the Pioneers success came from the 12 freshmen that made up most of the team's lineup. In the playoffs, freshmen Jake Calanni and Barry Burke scored goals in Sunday's championship game. Freshman forward Jack Kinahan also made a major impact, registering four points in the Pioneers semifinal win.

"The freshmen were absolutely a huge part of our success this season, and I could not be happier with the class we were given," said senior assistant captain Brendan O'Donnell. "It really says a lot about how quickly they were able to adapt to college hockey, coming from high school and travel hockey."

Another reason for the Pioneers success this semester came from junior goaltender James Burtch. After missing seven games in the fall due to injury, Burtch played in all 11 games this semester, finishing with a record of 9-2. He was named Second Team All-Empire.

"Burtch has a long history with the AAU team. Nobody wanted a win more than



Instagram, @shuhockeyaau
Sacred Heart University's men's club hockey (AAU) team celebrating their 2024 Empire division championship with a team photo.

him to solidify his place as one of the best goaltenders in the program. That intensity and passion is not something you can expect from an average goaltender," said Lane.

This season for the Pioneers was a year full of historic firsts. The team celebrated surpassing a new regular season high in wins at 18, as well as not only winning their first playoff game, but their first championship.

The team will return much of their lineup from this year in the fall. In the team's three-year history, they are yet to clinch an AAU (formerly CHF) Nationals bid, as they must finish as a top two team in their district.

"This year was a complete turnaround," said junior captain Jason Bonante. "From our first year, playing only four games, to being able to make a name for ourselves this year in the Empire, it was way more than I could ask for. The group is definitely hungry for more though, we can definitely make some noise next year and definitely make a national's push."

Editorial

Euforia Italiana

BY MADISON BEEKMAN
Managing Editor: Content

If you told me this time last year that I'd spend 10 days dancing in Italy with my best friends over the summer, I would've told you that you were crazy.

And if you told me that one of the choreographers from our Italy trip would come to Sacred Heart to work with SHU Movement (our Pro Track Dance Company) for the first half of spring break this year, I probably would've laughed in your face.

And yet, here we are. I'm writing this as I close out five of the most memorable, and tiring, days of my college experience so far, and can proudly say that all of the above has been done.

This was arguably the best spring break I've ever had and probably one of my favorite pieces I've ever been a part of here at SHU. Though I didn't get much of a break, my week with Fabrizio Prolli and my best friends on pro track was an experience I'll never stop talking about.

Leading up to this experience, there were a lot of emotions running through me. Scared, of course, because this was a brand new experience and I had no idea what to expect. FOMO because it was spring break and all of my housemates would be in the Bahamas while I was stuck in Bridgeport. But most importantly, excitement because this was a once in a lifetime opportunity and I got to experience it with the best people.

The hours leading up to Fabrizio's arrival, we were all extremely excited, extremely jumpy, and extremely anxious any time someone walked through the studio doors. We played games like we were in elementary school again, just trying to pass the time until he finally made his appearance.

And when he did, there was an evident shift in energy, and we were prepared to take on the next few days of non-stop dancing. Each member of the dance faculty noted a new passion within the group, one that was only brought out as a result of this opportunity.

Don't get me wrong, I did my fair share of complaining throughout the week, but have you ever tried learning an 18-minute piece in five days? Let me tell you, it's not easy.

Eight hours of dance a day definitely seemed daunting, but it never felt like a chore to wake up and go. I got more excited to get back to the studio every morning even though my body was more and more sore each day.

Since we didn't have our normal school schedules to worry about and to keep the feeling of spring break, we made an itinerary of activities to look forward to each night (thank you, Maura). We planned things ranging from going out to dinner to pasta night to game night. These activities truly bonded us and made the week even more meaningful.

When our last day of rehearsal came around, none of us wanted the week to end; the day was full of hugs, tears, and dragged-out goodbyes. This experience brought something new out of each of us and we wanted this feeling to last forever.

Personally, throughout this week, I rediscovered my passion for dance and was so inspired by what my friends and I were able to do in such a short time. The time, effort and dedication that we put in paid off in every way possible.

Yes, I need about seven massages for my body to return to normal, and yes, my brain still feels like absolute mush, but I wouldn't have wanted it any other way. I'll never stop talking about how grateful I am for this opportunity, and will remember this experience forever.

Noi non potremo avere una vita perfetta senza amici e balli.

To see our hard work come to life, come see "Euforia Italiana" at je suis belle on April 20 at 7 p.m. in the Edgerton Center for Performing Arts (tickets are free for SHU students)!



Madison Beekman, Managing Editor: Content
SHU Movement, Dance Company's Pro Track, before the first day of rehearsal with Fabrizio Prolli.



Madison Beekman, Managing Editor: Content
SHU Movement with Fabrizio Prolli and his assistant, Cassandra DeAngelis, on the last day of rehearsals in makeup and costume.

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