

The Charger Bulletin

The student news source for the University of New Haven

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“Our Charger Pride is nearing extinction:” Students talk about winter commencement cancellation

BY SAMUEL WEINMANN
Politics Editor

The University of New Haven’s Commencement committee has announced it will no longer hold winter commencement ceremonies, and students aren’t thrilled.

According to the campus-wide email announcing the change, the decision was made to “maximize the celebration of our Commencement ceremonies held each Spring.” The email also said, “We are confident this will enable us to further enrich the traditional Commencement experience,” by “returning to an on-campus celebration.”

Now, students who graduate in December will attend a Spring Commencement on Sunday, May 15, 2023, at the Hartford Health-Care Amphitheater in Bridgeport.

While the committee detailed in the email that this decision would enrich the commencement experience, students at the university aren’t happy about it.

Some students took to the anonymous Instagram page, “@unh_afterdark,” to express discontent. On March 1, the page posted an anonymous submission from a student that said, “To the people who were supposed to have their Winter 2022 ceremony taken from them, I’m truly sorry for you... How is taking away a ceremony meant to reward students for all their hard work.... ‘enhancing’ their experience?”

Students also took to the university’s Instagram page. On the university’s most recent post, multiple people commented the hashtag “#bringbackwintercommencement.”

The same day the news was announced, a petition went up on Change.org, called “Reconsider Winter 2022 Commencement Ceremony at University of New Haven,” and, as of Sunday, gained nearly 900 signatures out of their 1,000 signature goal. The petition’s description said, “The fact that the University now decided to take the one last ‘real’ college experience we should have gotten... is appalling.”

Caitlin DeLuke, a junior forensic science major who is graduating in winter 2022, helped create the petition, and said she was “taken aback by the email we received,” and “noted a few flaws within it.”

She said, “First, the email states ‘We reached this conclusion following extensive discussions with University leadership and members of our community.’ Who are these community members? Surely it wasn’t the student body, who... [has] shown amazing support in our petition regardless of if this



graduation cancellation affects them personally.”

DeLuke also said she wished the decision had included input from the student body. She said, “Discussions should have been had prior to making this decision, as I firmly believe not a single student would agree with this choice.”

“We created our petition in hopes that the university reconsiders their decision... They let us pursue our education, get to the year of our reward... and then took our one show of pride away... At the very least, I am hoping the university reconsiders their decision impacting Winter 2022 graduates.”

“I want them to know that our Charger Pride is nearing extinction... I want them to do better for us,” DeLuke said, while also mentioning her hopes for the university to reconsider this decision.

Timothy Smith, a junior forensic

science major graduating in winter 2022, also helped create the petition. He said, “I feel like the news about the cancellation of Winter Commencement blindsided the students affected by this change. To hear about this news through a casual email on a Monday morning as if it was just another weekly announcement was disheartening and discouraging.”

DeLuke and Smith said that they decided to create this petition to speak up for their interests, as well as those of other students who have worked hard during the pandemic.

Although the plan is already in effect, students are also particularly upset about the disconnect between the experiences of winter and spring graduates.

Katherine Duseau, a genetics and biotechnology major who is graduating in winter 2022, said,

“With all the work that I’ve put into school, my accomplishments deserved to be celebrated. Even if I do get the opportunity to walk in the spring I know that my experience would be different. Kind of like celebrating your birthday 3 months late, it takes away the significance.”

Some students wondered how the decision would affect international students, for whom walking in the spring isn’t always plausible.

“We also have to think about the international students that might not be able to make the trip back to walk across the stage months after they’re supposed to graduate,” Smith said.

In response to the ongoing student concerns, the Commencement committee responded to the perceived disparity between the experiences of winter and spring graduates in an email to The Char-

ger Bulletin.

The committee said “For those who complete their coursework in the winter, we realize that some time will have elapsed before they are able to take part in a traditional Commencement ceremony. We will, of course, confer degrees when they are completed, but we are hopeful that those who finish their degrees in the Winter will choose to return [for the Spring Commencement.]”

The committee elaborated on their motives for this decision, saying, “We believe that a once-a-year Commencement celebration has the advantage of bringing all graduates together at one time,” and that their “primary focus when planning Commencement is creating a memorable experience befitting of all our graduates... as Chargers.”

Graphic courtesy of Jacey Ferraro.

“The Batman” is the detective story we’ve been waiting for

BY EMILY MCDONOUGH
Contributing Writer

“The Batman” is a dark, gritty detective story that is different from any other Batman movie you’ve seen. It shows Bruce Wayne, played by Robert Pattinson still dealing with the grief of losing his parents; he’s anti-social, and perfectly awkward. While watching, I could see there was inspiration from the ‘90s animated show and other comics such as “Batman: Year One” and “Batman Ego and Other Tails.”

When “The Batman” was first announced and Robert Pattinson was cast, I had my doubts. DC hasn’t put out the best comic book movies in the last few years and it was disappointing. What also made me doubt this movie was that director Matt Reeves was doing a version of “The Long Halloween” comic, which has been used many times before—but I was wrong. This is one of the best comic book movies of all time.

In this rendition of the series, Batman is in the second year of his career with his only confidante being Lt. Jim Gordan, played by Jeffrey Wright. The dynamic between Gordan and Batman is considered the best on screen relationship they’ve had thus far, and it felt like the same one the characters had in the Arkham-verse video games. Robert Pattinson did a fantastic job at separating Bruce Wayne and Batman and his performance exceeded all my expectations.

The relationship between Batman and Selina Kyle/Catwoman, played by Zoë Kravitz, is very different than we’ve ever seen their relationship on screen before. They quickly get comfortable together and have an exciting partnership that intersects with what Riddler, played by Paul Dano, has planned for Gotham City.

A part I was particularly intrigued by was the background on the Wayne family, specifically Bruce’s parents Thomas and Martha. We learn more about

their history with the city as well as Thomas Wayne’s short political career. It’s refreshing to not see them just get shot in an alley. The corruption of the Gotham City Police Department and city officials runs deep—classic Gotham. At times, it felt like Gordan stands alone in being a good cop and not corrupt, which is why Batman trusts him so much. Of course, all the corruption is thanks to crime boss Carmine Falcone, played by John Turturro, who has had control over everything in Gotham City for years. The star villain Riddler, played by Paul Dano, exposes Gotham’s darkest secrets in a dramatic way. Dano’s performance was another stand out for me, and I hope we see the character again.

You absolutely must go see this movie on the biggest screen possible. This theater experience was one of my favorites. You could feel that everyone in the audience was on the edge of their seats and fully invested in the story. This movie restarted the



A poster for “The Batman,” Oct. 15, 2021. Photo courtesy of @thebatman on Instagram.

love I had for the character as a child, which I lost a few years ago, and I’m so glad it has. It

left me wanting more and I can’t wait to see what the Reeves/Pattinson era of Batman has in store.

Billboard Music Awards recognizes women during Women’s History Month

BY ANTOINETTE YEN
Entertainment Editor

Billboard’s annual Women in Music Awards recognize the top female artists, producers and executives who have made significant contributions to the music industry in the previous year. Despite the fact that the annual event has grown in size since its inception, one woman is named Woman of the Year. Reba McEntire was the first to receive the honor in 2007, and Olivia Rodrigo received it this year. Taylor Swift is the only female artist to have won the award twice, in 2011 and 2014.

Olivia Rodrigo, former teen actor turned pop star, praised prior female songwriters and music artists for giving her strength as she accepted Billboard’s 2022 Woman of the Year award during the event held on March 3. Held at the YouTube Theater in Inglewood, Calif. she spoke about being lucky career wise and thanked Sheryl Crow, who presented her with the honor.

Rodrigo became the biggest breakout star with her confessional debut album, “SOUR,” which broke chart records and earned her numerous awards and nominations. All 11 songs from “SOUR” landed in the top 30 of the Billboard Hot 100, making her the first female artist to accomplish this feat.

Rodrigo opened Billboard’s show with her hit song “déjà vu” from her “SOUR” album. Upon giving her performance, she said, “Every woman here today



Olivia Rodrigo speaks during the Billboard Women in Music event, March 3, 2022.

Photo courtesy of @oliviarodrigo on Instagram. is working to break down those barriers and change the narrative and support each other.”

As she accepted her award for “Billboard’s 2022 Woman of the Year,” Rodrigo spoke about being “constantly moved” by young girls who write songs every day from their bedroom floors just as she does. She continued, saying, “I’m constantly moved by your vulnerability and your creativity and bravery, and I promise everyone here today is working to make this world and this industry a better place for

you.”

“What I love most about songwriting is its ability to perfectly capture how I feel better than anything I could have said in a conversation,” she said. “Song writing has always been everything to me, so for people to connect with my music is beyond a dream come true.”

Bonnie Raitt, a 10-time Grammy winner and activist who received the 2022 Icon Award, used her platform to address the current Ukraine crisis. Her song, “Angel From Montgomery”

was dedicated to the women of Ukraine. She went on to say that her “heart is heavy” for the Ukrainian people and that she is even praying for Russian President Vladimir Putin.

“I know the Russian people are not in agreement – so many of them – with what’s being done,” she said. “I pray for all the people who are working hard for peace, including the man who started the war. May he have a transformation.”

For Saweetie and Phoebe Bridgers, it turned out to be a family affair, with their mothers separately presenting the awards to them. Trinidad Valentin, Saweetie’s mother, described her daughter as a “force to be reckoned with.” Meanwhile, Bridgers’ mother, Jamie Bridgers, expressed gratitude that her daughter has found a way to “highlight people and causes she

cares about.”

Cade Foehner, Gabby Barrett’s husband, delivered a moving speech about his wife’s musical success as well as her role as a wife and mother.

The couple joined together on stage to sing “I Hope.”

“I grew up with this big dream. It certainly was not easy,” Barrett said, following her performance. “I did not come from a wealthy background. A lot of people doubted me – kids, adults, schoolteachers. I heard a lot of ‘nos’ and it seemed like every door that I knocked on remained closed for a long time. But by the graciousness of God, I am here today. I continue to work hard and persevere.”

Other musicians were recognized at the event, such as H.E.R., Doja Cat, Karol G and Summer Walker.

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Sweeping sanctions are placed on Russia amid ongoing Ukraine invasion

BY LILLIAN NEWTON
Staff Writer

Since the start of Russia's recent invasion of Ukraine, the majority of countries around the world have come together to condemn Russian Pres. Vladimir Putin and his administration for choosing to start a war. The nations have imposed an unprecedented array of measures in an attempt to halt Russia's attack, including harsh economic sanctions. The United States has followed this path, implementing their own measures as well.

On Feb. 24, the White House released a fact sheet entitled "Joined by Allies and Partners, the United States Imposes Devastating Costs on Russia," which includes statements on Russia's recent attacks and of the measures that are being taken against Russia. In the statement, the White House writes, "Putin's threatening actions and now his unprovoked aggression toward Ukraine are being met with an unprecedented level of multilateral cooperation... As a result of Putin's war of choice, Russia will face immediate and intense pressure on its economy, and massive costs from its isolation from the global financial system, global trade, and cutting-edge technology."

The U.S. in particular has imposed numerous restrictions in the finance and economic sectors of the Russian economy. The U.S., in conjunction with the EU, UK and Canada, has agreed to cut several Russian banks from the Society for Worldwide Interbank Financial Communication's international payment system.



Child protesting the war in Ukraine, Berlin, Feb. 24, 2022.
Photo courtesy of Pexels/Matti.

This widely-used payment system allows fast money transfers across a variety of different financial institutions.

This move will help block Russia's imports and exports while also denying the banks an ability to operate globally. These nations have also agreed to prevent the Russian Central Bank from accessing its international reserves to mitigate the effects of sanctions.

The U.S. has also put restrictions on Russia's top 10 financial institutions, which represent around 80% of the nation's banking sector. More specifically, Sberbank, the biggest Russian financial institution that accounts for more than 30% of Russian banking, has been cut off from conducting transactions within the US system.

Other economic sanctions that the U.S. has placed on Rus-

sia have included restrictions on technological imports, the freezing of trillions in Russian assets and the cut-off of several large companies from Western financial markets.

For individuals and their families, the U.S., as well as the EU and UK, have frozen the foreign assets of Putin, Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov, Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu, FSB Security Head Alexander Bortnikov, Armed Forces Chief Valery Gerasimov along with the members who are a part of the Kremlin's security council. While the U.S. has punished select members of Russia's parliament, the Duma, the EU has imposed sanctions on all 351 members. The UK, Japan, Australia and New Zealand have all decided to punish specific members.

Olena Lennon, adjunct professor of political science at the

University of New Haven said that "sanctions against Russia aim to not only deplete Russia's war chest and undermine its ability to profit from the global financial system, but also to turn Russian oligarchs against the Kremlin."

"Authoritarian regimes are rarely fractured by external actors or people's protests; rather, they are usually overturned by political and military elites from within," she said.

Beyond sanctions targeting the Russian financial sector, the U.S. has implemented measures in other sectors, such as restricting exports of chips and computers, as well as targeting Russia's defense, aerospace and maritime sectors. This last measure comes as an attempt to limit the Russian defense industry's access to Western material. The restriction placed on U.S. exports of high-end technologies to Russia comes as part of this measure.

As of Feb. 28, one of the most recent measures that the U.S. has taken against Russia was to expel 12 Russian U.N. diplomats who were accused of spying. This change was noted at the opening of the Feb 28. Security Council meeting.

Across the globe, many private companies, of their own free will, are boycotting Russian made products and exiting or cutting their investments in Russia.

"One of the most remarkable displays of condemnation of Russia's egregious violence in Ukraine was a withdrawal of individual companies from Russian markets on their own accord, without waiting for a government

mandate," Lennon said. "Among companies that discontinued or significantly limited their business ties with Russia are energy giants such as BP Plc, Shell Plc, Exxon Mobil and others."

Lennon added, "Sanctions will no doubt devastate the Russian economy and cripple its ability to modernize. However, the brunt of the financial burden will be carried by average Russian people, not the elites, and it is still unclear whether the current sanctions—harsh though they might be—will deter Putin from further aggression in Ukraine in the short-term. In the long-term, however, sanctions are certainly likely to throw a wrench into the Kremlin's killing machine."

The U.S. has also levied sanctions on 24 Belarusian individuals and entities for aiding Russia in invading Ukraine. These sanctions target Belarus' military and financial power through sanctioning two significant state-owned banks, nine defense firms and seven regime connected officials and elites.

Many of the aforementioned sanctions have been created by nations in tandem with one another to present a united front against Russia. Discussions between countries, especially within the United Nations, continue to occur in order to increase joint restrictive measures.

Throughout the past few weeks, the United Nations Security Council has met four times to discuss the invasion.

The General Assembly: Eleventh Emergency Special Session (Ukraine) - 1st Plenary meeting also convened on Feb. 28.

Connecticut mask mandates drop, local institutions follow suit

BY SAMUEL WEINMANN
Politics Editor

As we approach nearly two years since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, mask mandates across the U.S. have started to drop. In the second week of February, Gov. Ned Lamont (D-CT) announced a plan to eliminate schoolwide mask mandates, citing a "dramatic decline in cases caused by the Omicron variant."

This plan was officially executed on Feb. 28, when Lamont dropped the statewide school mask mandate, leaving masking regulations up to localities.

In the past few weeks, local institutions have begun to drop mask mandates, including Connecticut schools, state buildings and official city buildings.

West Haven Mayor Nancy Rossi released a joint statement with West Haven Health Director Maureen Lillis. The two collectively wrote, "Moving forward, it

may be necessary to revert to our mitigation strategies for future coronavirus variants. But for now, given that the positivity rate in West Haven is decreasing... face masks will be optional in all city buildings, effective Tuesday, March 1."

Connecticut schools are also following suit; according to Lamont, approximately 85% of school districts have decided to entirely drop mask mandates.

A large determining factor in these new regulations is the most recent mask guidelines published by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), which determined that around 70% of the U.S. population can take their masks off without a significant risk to their health.

Despite these regulations, local health experts are still skeptical. According to a statement from Sheela Sheno, an infectious diseases specialist at Yale Medicine, she "hesitate[s] to say that we are approaching a post-COVID

world when so many are still being ravaged by this virus."

Sheno elaborated, saying that "There's nothing that's 'safe'—it's always 'safer.'"

Last week, the University of New Haven COVID-19 Task Force updated their mask guidelines, announcing via a schoolwide email that as of March 20, masks will be optional in "most university facilities," with some

exceptions being Health Services and on university transportation.

In the email, the Task Force wrote that this decision resulted from "a very low number of cases of COVID-19 in our community." They also wrote, "If members of the community are more comfortable continuing to wear a face covering, they are certainly free to do so."

According to the email, the uni-

versity is still taking measures to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 outside of mask mandates. Going forward, students are still required to submit daily symptom checks via CoVerified.

Weekly testing requirements for those who are vaccine exempt are unchanged, as are university sponsored travel and guest policies.



Graphic courtesy of Samuel Weinmann.

Understanding the price inflation infiltrating the campus convenience store

BY MIA ADDUCI
Student Life Editor

University of New Haven students, especially those in campus residence, frequently stop at the “C-Store,” connected to Sheffield Hall, for quick access to necessities such as food, drinks and hygiene products. Students can use their dining dollars to finance these purchases, as opposed to spending actual money on these items.

However, the items found at the campus C-Store are priced noticeably higher than standard retail value. Here are some examples:

1. A pack of standard Golden Oreos, \$5.99 on campus, are sold for just \$3.79 at the local Target.
2. A can of Bang energy drink, \$3.49 at the C-store, is only \$1.99 to \$2.19 at Target.
3. A package of Double Stuf Oreos for \$6.49 on campus goes for almost half the price at Target, shelved at just \$3.69.
4. A standard loaf of Hostess bread cost \$4.99 at the C-store, price-matched at just \$1.98 at the West Haven Walmart: a 200% price increase.
5. A 13 ounce box of Chips Ahoy chocolate chip cookies was charged at \$4.49, comparable to a retail value of \$3.49 on Target shelves and \$2.96 at Walmart.
6. A 12-pack of The Original Donut Shop K-Cups, \$12.99 at the C-store, in turn are sold in a pack

of 24 for \$15.99 at Target. This means that instead of weighing out at \$0.67, students are paying \$1.08 per coffee pod.

Even if these food items are not necessarily considered a necessity, the following are sanitary items held at the same comparison:

1. An 8-pack of Tampax Pearl tampons, \$5.99 at the C-store, can be compared to a 34-pack of the same item for just \$1.50 more at Target.
2. A standard bottle of Colgate Total toothpaste, typically, \$1.97 at Walmart, is \$3.99 at the convenience store.
3. 12.5 ounces of Garnier Fructis shampoo, at the exact same scent, is going for \$5.99 on campus and \$2.82 from Walmart.

For students who do not have private transportation to go off-campus for groceries, or for those who do not have time to do so, the C-Store is heavily relied on for quick necessities.

The school factors dining dollars into each residential meal plan—a value of tangible spending which students have already pre-paid for prior to the start of the semester. Given this, the university theoretically has no need to inflate their prices, as the money they are taking from students is in their possession whether the students actually spend it or not. The value is fixed and paid for prior to its credit being presented to the student body.

Dining dollar values within



Outside of the C-Store, West Haven, March 6, 2022.

Photo courtesy of Charger Bulletin/Mia Adduci.

She said she felt that this limitation was “good knowledge to have” for students shopping on campus,

and wants students to know that “we do the best we can.”

residential meal plans grant students anywhere from \$200 in dining dollars with the Charger Pride plan, to \$625 with Charger Blue each semester. For commuters, dining dollar values per semester range from \$350 with the Blue Plate plan to \$625 with the Green Plate plan.

The C-Store’s manager, Stacy, provided insight on the limitations of being such a small-scale retail unit. They do not have the ability to order items in bulk, which is how larger retail chains gain access to discounted prices. Given that purchasing cost is much higher, the turn around price on the shelves must accommodate such.

University enforces three-day scheduling model for fall 2022

BY MIA ADDUCI
Student Life Editor

The University of New Haven is implementing a new class schedule that will include more courses scheduled to meet on Fridays.

This is a departure from the school’s current method of holding classes.

The university is seeing a surge in enrollment, and a simultaneous need to maintain the school’s small class size average of 20 students that it is known for.

At the same time, the administration has been discussing the use of classroom space.

As a result of an anticipated classroom space shortage, the President’s office is backing a new scheduling model for 1000-level courses to begin in the upcoming fall 2022 semester in order to increase classroom space availability.

The university currently runs on a primary cycle of classes meeting on Mondays and Wednesdays, with a second set meeting on Tuesdays and Thursdays. A small selection of classes, primarily math courses, run three days a week on a Monday/Wednesday/Friday or Tuesday/Thursday/Friday schedule.

With the new schedule, the university is switching to a drastic increase in courses running Monday, Wednesday and Friday, in three, 50-minute blocks, as opposed to two, 75-minute sessions on Mondays and Wednesdays. Given that this increase will be visible in the area of 1000-level courses, which are heavily populated by first-year students, the new model is set to hold less of an impact on current students in comparison to those starting this fall.

Chairs and professors, such as Christopher Dowd, chair of the English department, have been advised to submit their course schedules for the upcoming semes-

ter following this new three-day meeting model.

Dowd said he is concerned about student conflicts with this new model, saying that “I do worry that students will be less inclined to take Monday/Wednesday/Friday classes than Tuesday/Thursday classes. More significantly, I worry that there are populations of students who will not be able to take Monday/Wednesday/Friday classes because they have other obligations and activities scheduled for Fridays. Friday is a common day for students to do internships, to work off-campus, and to fulfill ROTC duties, for instance. This may unintentionally increase demand for Tuesday/Thursday classes.”

Dowd said he did not anticipate any need for altering courses as a result of the three-day model, as the new scheduling plan is “not impacting the amount or types of classes we are offering in the fall semester.”

As for professors, Dowd said that he has concerns with staffing, especially that of adjunct professors. One area of such concerns surrounds that of finances and the cost of commuting to campus an extra day each week. Dowd said “many [adjunct faculty] do not live locally,” and an extra trip to campus may be “burdensome” to professors assigned to three-day-a-week courses.

Other department chairs asked for anonymity when discussing the new schedule. One said that their concerns surrounded the notion that “with the lack of full-time faculty in some departments, finding adjunct faculty to teach on [Monday/Wednesday/Friday] will be a difficult task. I truly wonder how many full-time faculty will volunteer to teach on [Monday/Wednesday/Friday].”

Most department chairs declined to comment.

University women in leadership speak on value of Women’s History Month

BY SAIGE BATZA
Student Life Editor

For decades, during Women’s History Month, America has celebrated women who have fought for their rights, education and families to make this world a better place. Among the women at the University of New Haven held in high regard are Danielle Wozniak and Lauren Kempton.

Wozniak, the provost and vice president of academic affairs, said, “Women’s history month for me is an invitation to intentionally examine and celebrate the ways in which women have changed the course of history and continue to co-create the world we live in as well as the world we want to live in.”

“It is a time to be very thoughtful and intentional in continuing to push for access, equity, and inclusiveness,” she said.

Wozniak said she is grateful for what she has learned over the years. “In college, most of my literature classes featured the lives and writing of men while women’s voices were relegated to ‘special topics’ as though we existed in a decontextualized world of our own. I am grateful for those teachers who exposed me to the enormity of women’s lives and voices, creativity, struggles, and triumphs.”

Wozniak said she is grateful for the respect she has been shown as a woman today.

“Overall, over the course of



Lauren Kempton (left) and Danielle Wozniak (right).

Photo courtesy Charger Bulletin/Lismarie Pabon and Roger Castonguay.

my career, I suspect I have had to prove my mettle in ways that my male counterparts have not,” she said.

Wozniak said she would also like to see change in the way the university treats women. “I would like us to continue our work of pushing for inclusivity, access, belonging and leadership opportunities for women and to further our understanding of the ways in which gender is shaped and conditioned by and through our lived experiences. We must be reflexive educators and encourage reflexivity in our students so that we continue to critically examine who we are as individuals, who we are as members of a global society and how that vision is an inclusive and supportive one.”

Kempton is a practitioner in residence in the department of psychology and sociology at the university. According to Kemp-

ton, Women’s History Month should take place every month.

Kempton also said she appreciates the respect she has been given.

“I am a strong woman, for I was loved so deeply and encouraged by my parents so that I knew no boundaries,” she said.

Moving forward, she said she would like to see a change in the way the university treats women, as a whole.

“The hiring of Dean Rowe-Allen set a pattern of excellence as [she is] an innovator, program planner and leader and advocates for each student here,” said Kempton. “We must follow her model as we expand every department with people of color. I would also like to see all PIR’s elevated to the status and respect they deserve.”

For more about Women’s History Month events on campus, visit Charger Connection.

Hazell Nut Café reopens after two-year COVID-19 shutdown

BY SAIGE BATZA
Student Life Editor

The Hazell Nut Café is a student-run business that will reopen on campus after spring break, following a near two-year hiatus because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The staff and community at the café are excited about the reopening. Sadie Fraser-Read, a junior hospitality and tourism management major and marketing manager of the café said, “Nothing is confirmed so we can’t give out any information but keep an eye on the café Instagram @hazellnutcafe for current updates! Exciting things are definitely coming soon.” University of New Haven Alumni Jeffrey Hazell ‘83 founded the Hazell Nut Café in 2007. He is now the owner of Boston Lobster Feast in Orlando.

Fraser-Read said Hazell Nut was designed to give hospitality and tourism majors the opportunity to gain real life experience as a manager in a working café, serving the public. Not only does it give that opportunity, “it serves as a unique place on campus that

builds community and shines the light of hospitality.”

The café’s menu will include specialty items such as personal pizzas, pastries from local bakeries, breakfast foods and lunch sandwiches. A variety of beverages including boba tea will also be featured on the menu. Once the café is in full swing, it will be open from 8:30 a.m. to 2 p.m., Monday through Friday, although hours may vary.

When asked how they feel about interacting with new students on campus, Doanh Thieu, general manager of the café and junior hospitality and tourism management major said, “I’m really excited to welcome both students and staff back into the café because it definitely makes Maxcy feel less empty.”

Emily Smidt, a sophomore hospitality and tourism major and the public relations manager said, “I’m excited to meet new students who stop by for a quick bite to eat and/or drink while working in the café.”

John Brunetti, a senior hospitality and tourism major and the finance manager, is also excited about the transition. “I am



The outside of Hazell Nut Café, inside of Maxcy Hall, West Haven.
Photo courtesy of Charger Bulletin/Lismarie Pabon.

excited about the opportunity to interact with UNH students while working at the café,” he said. “I am also looking forward to how students will react to receiving genuine hospitality at the café... UNH students are special and the Hazell Nut Café will give them the exceptional dining experience they deserve.”

Staff members also said what they found to be the most rewarding aspect of their work. For Fraser-Read, the café reopening will let her participate in the most rewarding aspect of her job, which was “putting a smile on the faces of those that come visit us. Knowing how hard life can be for both faculty and students, we strive to be a place of joy both from the food, and the hospitality that we provide.”

Jackson Chamberlain, a junior hospitality and tourism management major, and the café’s employment manager, said, “The most rewarding aspect of this job is really connecting with the students when you are serving them. Showing them that you can make these good meals and cheer up their day is the best part. It makes me happy to see the faces of the students light up when they see us handing them their food and taking that first bite you can really see how much they enjoy the fresh food.”

“One reason students should choose the Hazell Nut Café is that many ingredients are sourced from local companies,” Fraser-Read said. “Not only are you supporting the students running the café, but the sur-

rounding companies as well! The items offered are mostly unique to our café and are always fresh and made to order!”

Fraser-Read also shared what items the café is particularly known for on campus, saying, “In the past, the café has been known for their specialty sandwiches and personal pizzas. While these options will still be available, we are currently working on revamping the menu into something special. Our beverage menu will be unique and have a wide variety of options for all guests such as coffees, teas, and even boba tea!”

For more information about Hazell Nut Café, follow their Instagram @hazellnutcafe or visit their location in Maxcy Hall on campus.



The Hazell Nut Café sign, lit inside of Maxcy Hall, West Haven.
Photo courtesy of Charger Bulletin/Mia Adduci.

NCIS agent shares experiences within federal workforce

BY MIA ADDUCI
Student Life Editor

“There is no typical day,” said Naval Criminal Investigative Services Agent Melvin Ramos, as he guest spoke for the American Criminal Justice Association (ACJA) last week about the processes surrounding work as a federal agent and his experiences in the line of work.

Ramos has worked for 22 years in law enforcement, and spent the past 11 with the NCIS, both as a standard agent and a member of the Regional Enforcement Action Capabilities Team (REACT), a move which he deemed “the best thing I could’ve done in my life.”

Describing the NCIS as a relatively small agency, which has transitioned into being fully civilian, he continued to develop a profound image of the structure and values of the agency.

The agency was formerly called

the NIS; however, the first NIS director said “this name is stained; there’s no credibility, there’s no honor,” and hence the rename that accompanied the restructuring.

Ramos said that “every agency has a different mission set,” and deemed four to exist within the NCIS: Criminal investigations (the “bread and butter”), counter-terrorism (his current field of work, which is “neutralizing threats through proactive investigations”), counter-intelligence (in regards to foreign threats) and cyber-crime threats (to prevent hacking).

He described special agents as “basically detectives on the federal level.”

Agent Ramos spent much of his discussion centered around the mobility of working within the NCIS, a characteristic not as prominent in other federal agencies.

Unlike other federal agencies, Ramos informed his audience that the mobility agreement signed by

agents is frequently acted upon within the NCIS.

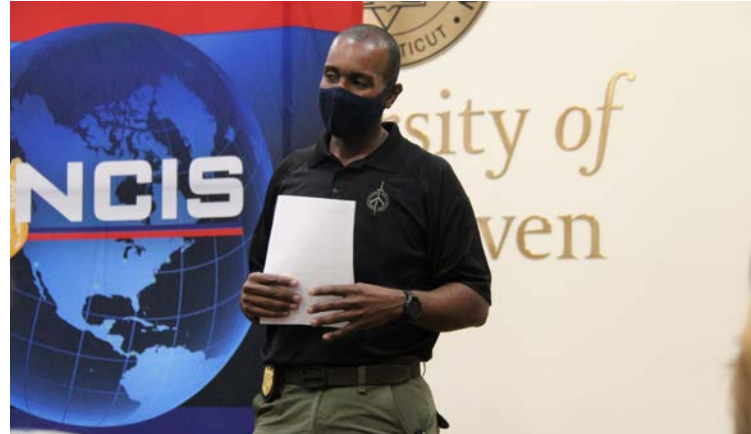
For Ramos, the mobility opportunities drove his decision to choose this career. Students were granted the opportunity to submit questions prior to the speaker event, one of which asked, “Out of all of the different possible agencies, why did you choose NCIS?”

Ramos said, “I found an agency where if I get bored, there’s so many other things I can do.”

For those considering a federal agency job, Ramos provided information on what the experience is like. In terms of prospective skills in application, he said that “being an agent, you have to have time management skills,” because an average caseload on a daily basis ranges from 10-12.

He also placed an emphasis on the necessity of paperwork; because everything needs to be documented, there is an essential value to prioritization.

On the training program, Ramos shared what types of processes have changed over the past year. He said, “We’ve taken over the entire program, so now NCIS does your initial criminal investigator program, and the agency specific [training] is all blended into one” condensing the once six-month-long program into just over four months.



Melvin Ramos speaks during the event in the Alumni Lounge, West Haven March 3, 2022.
Photo courtesy of Charger Bulletin/Mia Adduci.

For those seeking to understand the entry rigor for the NCIS, Ramos provided the statistic that “it takes 100 applicants, on average, to fill a class of 24,” primarily due to the lack of predictability in which locations might request recruitment entrances at any given time. This ties back into his emphasis on the mobility of working for the agency.

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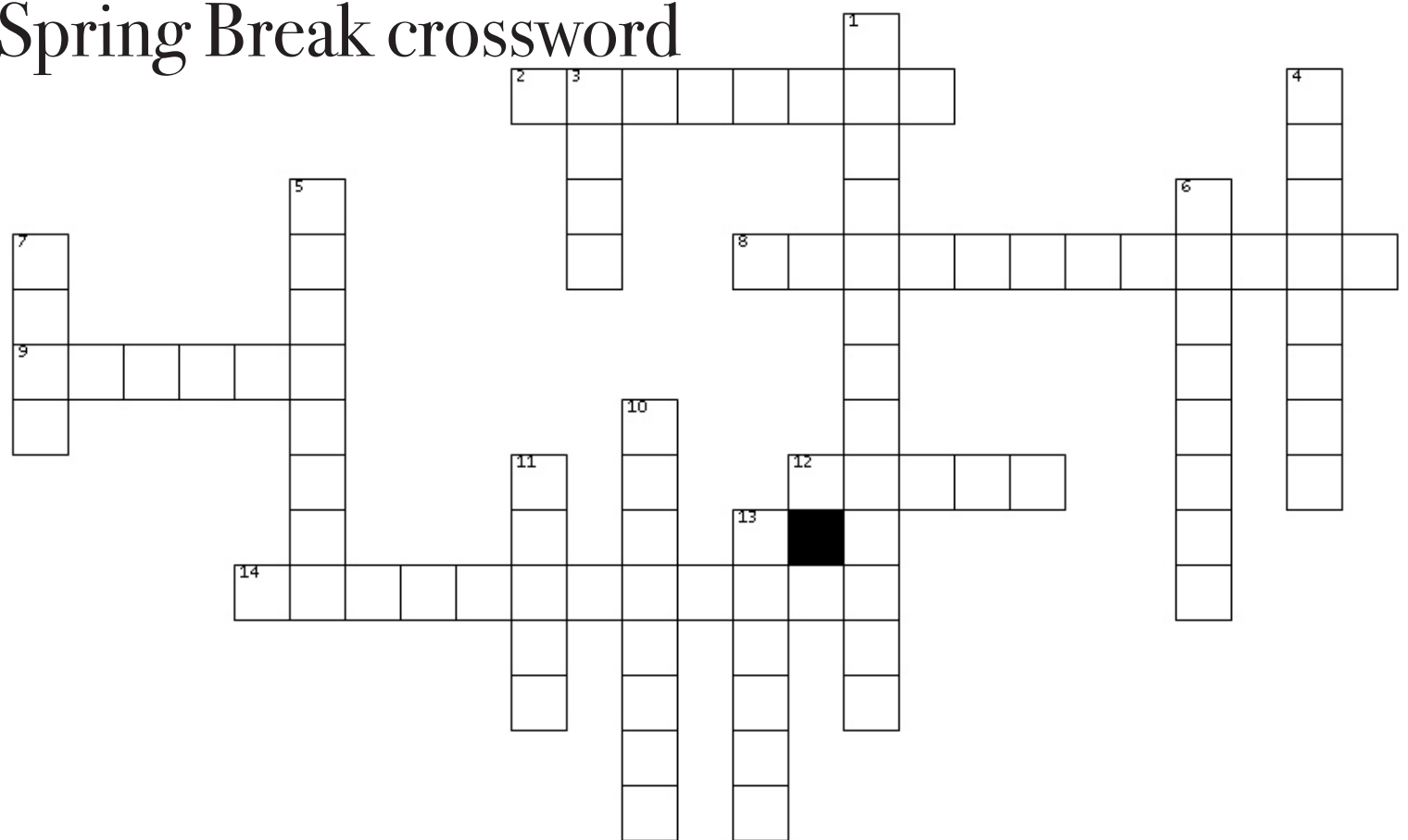
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Spring Break crossword

**DOWN**

1. Try of travel despite pandemic.
3. Responsible DD rideshare plan
4. Testing prior to break.
5. Physiological effect of overdrinking
6. Ambiance-producing audio.
7. Mandate lifted after break return.
10. Fossil fuel-guzzling transportation.
11. Seven, days left of semester after break.
13. Popular beach attire.

ACROSS

2. Popular destination: Mexico.
8. The day Spring break starts
9. starts March 20.
12. Drinking, maladaptive alcohol consumption.
14. Article-referred purpose of breaks.

Suffocating in my sleep: The black mold plague

BY MIA ADDUCI
Student Life Editor

Satire

It's 3:55 a.m., and you wake up, lungs on fire, throat dry, as you stare up at the patches of black mold taunting you as you struggle to find a sip of water to moisten the growing desert lining your organs.

We all know and cherish the university communal pet of black mold lining our walls, windowsills and showers, but does the university really understand the potential magnitude of the dangers of plaguing our lungs with *Stachybotrys chartarum*?

Black mold poisoning leads to a number of health complications, including, but not limited to, congestion, coughing, throat irritation, sleep disturbance, brain fog and digestion irritation. The last on the list is particularly convenient when working in conjunction with the raw food making a frequent appearance in our dining halls.

As someone who is chronically

asthmatic, it is especially pleasant to wake up already weakened in the lungs, the heavy weight of

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black clouds making it so that I cannot even sleep comfortably in the comfort of my own twin-XL-sized "home."

Sick Building Syndrome is a coined term for those living in a building infected with the mold, who resultantly are trapped in a constant state of sickness. Students across campus, most notably in the Forest Hills apartment complex, suffer from this disease on an endless cycle.

It is coincidental how a four-week sick period, complete with morning headaches and throat aches and locked in with all-day congestion will immediately dissipate after sleeping off-campus for a week.

When you have to buy overpriced bleach from the convenience store to soak windowsills where huge patches of black mold align perfectly with where your pillow rests atop a disintegrating mattress, you know you've officially entered the trenches. Then again, inhaling bleach is the more reassuring of the two; perhaps the bleach that seeped into my lungs that night

killed off at least some of the festering fungus.

The university clearly fears the acknowledgement of our infestation, which may just be the best part. From personal experience, it typically takes upwards of three weeks for a facilities repair request to be resolved, and in the case of my leaking ceilings, well over a semester of repeated reports. However, in the instance where I had discovered black mold lining multiple Westside washing machines last December, the order was filled and completed in a fifteen-minute window. The work order completion report held to the record that "DBS is wiping down the doors and surrounding areas. it is wet lint NOT MOLD," on Dec. 13. The all-caps choice really emphasized the importance of this "distinction."

In case this is my last article before the mold finally consumes me, stay safe out there Chargers, and maybe keep those masks on hand?

Two years late: Finally filling the prescription for Spring Break

BY ISABELLE HAJEK
Opinions Editor

Although Spring Break carries a prolific and less than savory connotation for college students across the country, it is a necessary component of the college experience—not because of the travel, parties or drinking, but because of the mandatory separation from campus.

For many students, college campuses are their homes, education and place of work. There is little time spent outside of the college community, but come Spring Break, when the residence halls close, students will be forced into a change of pace from the day-to-day college life.

At the University of New Haven, among many other institutions, this is the first real spring break since the beginning of the pandemic in 2020. During the 2020-2021 academic year, many colleges switched from a spring break to sporadically placed “break days” or in New Haven’s case, “recharge days.” This

divergence from the traditional university schedule disrupted the college students’ ability to pace their semester.

This change was predicted to impact students’ mental health detrimentally, as they faced prolonged separation from their families and home-based support systems and were forced to “marathon” the school year. In the U.S., long-term breaks from school are built into the education system starting in kindergarten, so for many college students in the country, last year was the first time they attended school without such a break. Spring Break marks the halfway point to summer break and graduation for seniors, but that symbolic marker was stripped from the student experience.

The predicted fears of the impact of disrupted breaks have come to fruition during the 2021-2022 academic year.

Unfortunately, college students are uniquely vulnerable to mental health crises as a population. Separated from their family and

support system that had been curated to their needs for probably the first time in their life, students are situationally primed to develop mental illnesses related to stress. This has only been compounded by the pandemic which has not only acutely impacted students’ experiences, but also carries major implications for job markets and the economy which they are entering.

A recent survey found that 88% of college students believe there is a mental health crisis on U.S. college campuses. This is consistent with recent numbers from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention which show suicide to be the third leading cause of death in college-aged adults and teens, only falling behind accidents and homicide. There are similarly concerning figures for anxiety disorders, eating disorders and other comorbid depressive disorders; they all highlight the importance of prioritizing student mental health.

Part of the prescription is Spring Break.



Graphic courtesy of Jacey Ferraro.

Ukrainian crisis solidifies white “Model Refugee” motif

BY ISABELLE HAJEK
Opinions Editor

The pure definition of a refugee is an individual fleeing their home country to escape a form of persecution or danger; however, modern context has definitely divided the concept into the desirable and undesirable, as it does with every growing marginalized group. Left, are the model (desirable) refugees and those other (undesirable) refugees.

Such divisions are traceable throughout history, but are most prolific with the “model minority” label placed on the Asian community in comparison to those other minorities—Black, Latine and Indigenous. This comes from a false perception that Asian individuals are more docile or civilized than those other people, discrediting the oppression faced by Asian people in the U.S. It is an inherently racist mentality and an ingenious division tactic. Now, the same script is being followed with refugees.

Thirteen days into the Russian invasion of Ukraine and the white Ukrainian has become the “model refugee.” As of March 5, nearly 1.2 million Ukrainians have fled to neighboring nations seeking shelter, and their reception has been astounding. Many countries have told Ukrainians that they do not need documentation of their identity, are mobilizing refugee intake plans and actively giving out food, shelter, money, education and other necessities.

To compound this, people on social media have taken to lamenting the Ukrainian experience in a truly inspiring showing. We are watching a war unfold in front of us, which is a first in the country’s history; never before has such horror been documented on such a dramatic scale.

That is the current narrative, but just another byproduct of the “model refugee” concept.

Ukrainians are the first predominantly white refugee population since World War II. According to the United Nations Refugee Agency the top five countries sourcing refugees were Syria, Venezuela, Afghanistan, South Sudan and Myanmar, mak-

ing up 80.19% of the identified refugee population as of 2021. From civil war, to humanitarian crisis, to famine, to 20-year long foreign incited conflict, each of the top nations sourcing refugees vary in hardship but maintain one commonality: they are perceived as majority non-white, as a minority.

Such refugees have not and are not treated with anywhere near the kindness that white Ukrainians have experienced. The experience by such refugees and like-migrants has been recognized by the United Nations as a predominant obstacle to their access to aid, coined under the

term “xenophobia” or discrimination against people not from one’s own country.

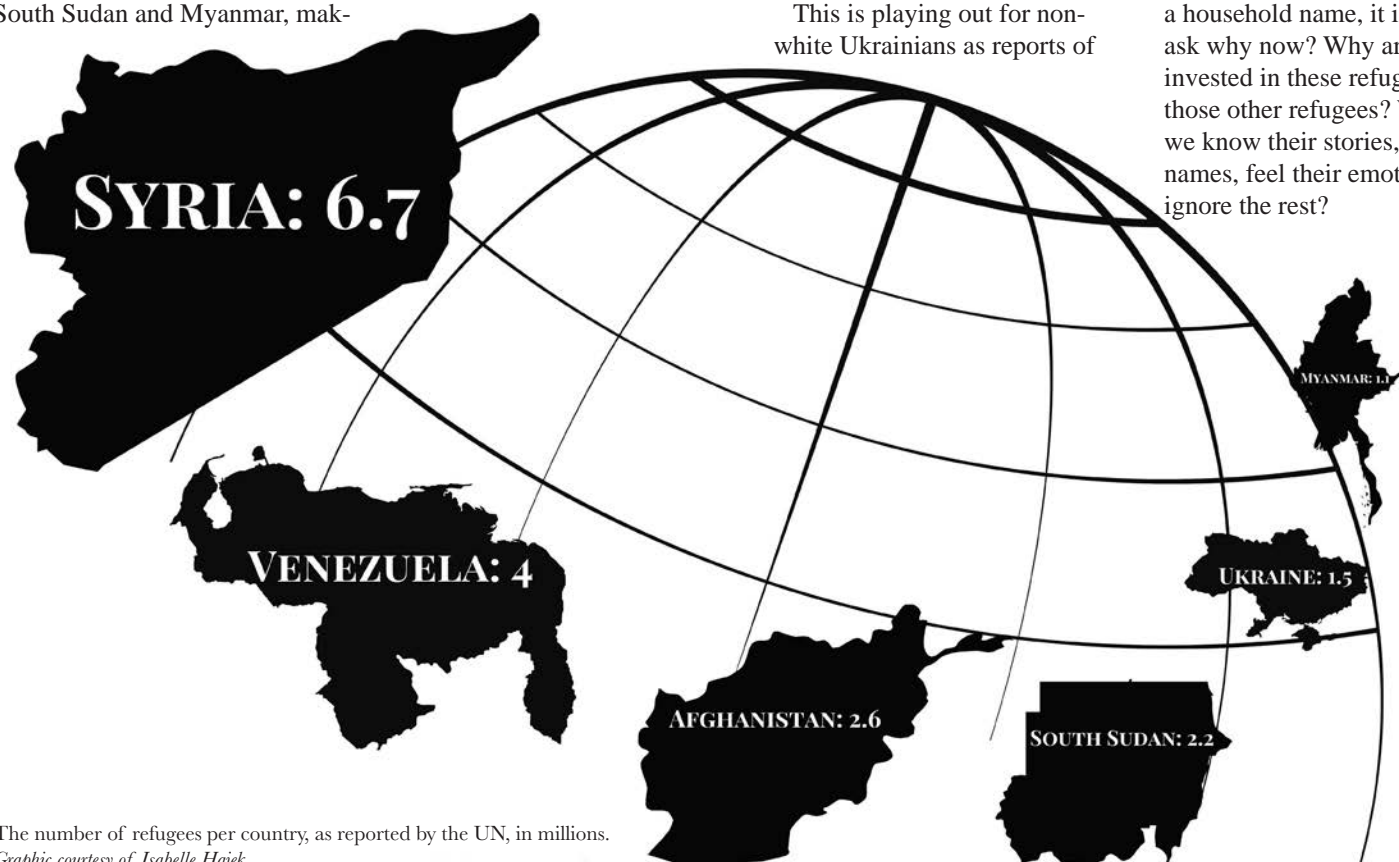
Multiple media correspondents have done their best to exemplify this, calling Ukrainians “civilized” relative to those from places like Afghanistan, or explaining that this crisis is somehow more distressing because the people look like them.

Despite what might be harmless intentions, what such-minded people are perpetuating is a long established racial hierarchy of people who deserve help and those who do not. It is the “we” versus the “they” as it has been throughout history.

This is playing out for non-white Ukrainians as reports of

Black refugees being denied entry—despite no documentation policies—segregated from the white refugees, being beat by border patrol officers or only allowed the scraps of food are pouring into news stations. A telling by-product of the increased sympathetic media coverage of the Ukraine crisis is the documentation of treatment inequities that support the trend of racist refugee treatment.

As women are writing songs to Putin, claiming he was not cared for enough as a child, the last texts of a Russian soldier to his mother are trending and Volodymyr Zelenskyy quickly becomes a household name, it is time to ask why now? Why are we so invested in these refugees but not those other refugees? Why do we know their stories, say their names, feel their emotions and ignore the rest?



The number of refugees per country, as reported by the UN, in millions.
Graphic courtesy of Isabelle Hajek.

Tennis Club encourages low-stakes, competitive environment

BY JULIANNA
PEGNATARO
Contributing Writer

When it comes to playing sports at the NCAA Division II level, students can feel overwhelmed and anxious. But for those seeking to play tennis on a less competitive level, the University of New Haven has a tennis club. The team holds practices every Monday and Wednesday. Tryouts will begin the week after spring break.

Cody Silverman started the club four years ago and said, "When I started at the University my freshman year, the club tennis team was really struggling with leadership and recruitment."

Silverman became president during his freshman year and remained until his junior year. "We increased the number of active members from 5 to 30," he said. "Now, the club is in good hands, and we have great retention of members."

Cody said his most memorable, yet challenging experience he had with the club was competing in the first club's sectional tournament at Harvard University. He said, "This was an opportunity for the club to face great competition and it was a wonderful bonding experience."

Silverman encourages other students to join. "It is a great way to get exercise and meet really great people. We are transitioning into a more competitive team, so if you played tennis in high school, this would be a great opportunity to continue playing tennis at a collegiate level," Silverman said.

Aryana Agli, a sophomore forensic psychology major, is currently the president. She discussed her plans for her fellow members of the Tennis Club, saying, "The club began with a relaxed, friendly atmosphere that we are trying to keep while also driving towards a more competitive level."

About her personal experience in the club, Agli said "We're all laughing and having fun, all while pushing each other to do better. If you have a tennis background, but do not want to commit full time to the varsity team, that's what we are here for!"

Other members of the executive board include junior business management major Matthew Cordell who serves as current vice president and freshman Leanna Franco as historian.

Franco said she is happy she joined the team. "I was looking for a group of people with similar interests as me. I met some really great people while doing something I love."



Members of the Club Tennis team with Charlie the Charger, Nov. 7, 2021.

Photo courtesy of @newhavenclubtennis on Instagram.

"People who have a tennis background should consider joining the Tennis Club," Cordell said. "We have created an environment that is competitive, fun and just an overall enjoyable experience. In the past year we have devel-

oped a plan that will continue to make ourselves more competitive so we can really challenge some other schools, but we are still out there having a great time during practice."

Cordell also said the organiza-

tion wants Club Tennis participants to feel at home. "One thing we are trying to incorporate is off court activities that get us all together to just have a fun time," he said. "We are more than a team but a family."

Including athletes in political conversation

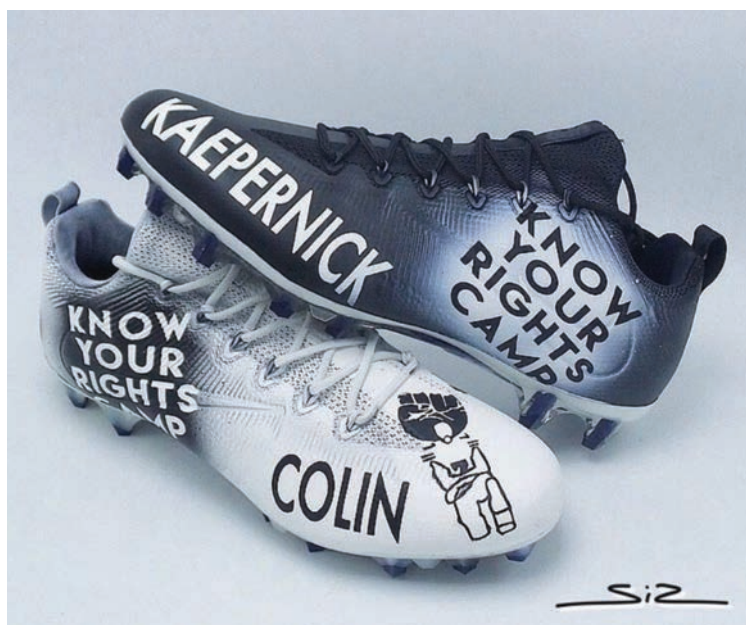
BY CHRISTOPHER
ELWELL
Contributing Writer

Perspective

In the realm of athletics, players from various sports try to advocate for change in the world. Professional and amateur leagues have made it known that they want to be involved in eliminating cultural appropriation and racial bias through different actions and policies. Many controversies surround the reception of this motion, however, the increase in prejudices in recent years has created an avenue that many are using to move forward with progressive thinking in professional sports.

Many arguments suggest that athletes should not have any say in what happens in our country from a political perspective. There is evidence of this on various news sources and social media platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, or Twitter; there are threads where people speak against professional athletes who are trying to make their voice heard outside of their sport. One of the more notable instances of this dates back to 2018, when journalist Laura Ingraham told basketball star LeBron James to "shut up and dribble" after he addressed political issues in an interview.

Athletes have used their status and platform to speak out against specific issues that are most important to them. Former San Francisco 49ers quarterback Colin



A pair of cleats sponsored by Know Your Rights Campaign.

Photo courtesy of @Kaepernick7 on Instagram.

Kaepernick sent a strong message when he first kneeled for the National Anthem back in 2016, taking a stand against racial inequality and police brutality. Kaepernick started a movement that has continued into the present day, as there are still athletes who choose not to stand for the National Anthem prior to games.

Speaking out against social issues has worked to steer away from previous standards that were in place. Moving towards a world where everyone is given a fair chance is what athletes are pushing for, and so far they have done a good job in accomplishing that. There is still plenty of progress to be made, and athletes will continue to push their beliefs into the game so everyone is treated fairly. Going

about this carefully would be the best option, because if they try to push all of their ideas into their sport, it may not come across to people in the way that they want it to.

Convergence of sports and political conversation has historically not been a very strong combination, but in the progressive era that we live in today, that script is slowly starting to change. Big-name athletes have been a big part of this change, and as long as they use their voice and their platform for the right reasons, the world of sports can turn into a place where race and religion does not matter. If you have the skill to play at the highest level, you will be given that opportunity.

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