

# THE CHARGER BULLETIN

*The student news source of the University of New Haven.*



## THE END OF A STRANGE, NEW YEAR



Photo courtesy of Lismarie Pabon, Photography Editor

# BULLETIN BOARD

## BULLETIN BRIEFS

### Page 3

*Study abroad is back*

### Page 4

*A perfect playlist for graduation*

### Page 6

*Thank you, Charger Bulletin writers*

### Page 7

*A final reflection of the semester*

### Page 8

*Wins for the Chargers*

### Page 11

*Should COVID-19 vaccines be forced?*

### Page 12

*Pyramid schemes and capitalism*



## THE CHARGER BULLETIN

300 Boston Post Road | West Haven, CT 06516

chargerbulletin@newhaven.edu | www.chargerbulletin.com

Office: 203.932.7182

Our office is located on the second floor of 46 Ruden Street, Room 202.

**Editor-in-Chief** Kayla Mutchler

**Managing Editor** Amanda M. Castro

**Student Life Editor** Beth Beaudry

**Sports Editor** Joe Klaus

**Entertainment Editor** Tiara Starks

**Opinion Editor** Kristen Marcus

**Staff Writers** Elisa D'Egidio, Cam Garden, Isabelle Hajek, Lindsay Miller, Shaylen Stancil, Samuel Weimann, and Tyler Wells

**Multimedia Editor** Jada Clarke

**Associate Editor for Photography** Lismarie Pabon

**Associate Editor for Graphic Design** Christopher Colquhoun

**Associate Editor for Videography** Nick Meaney

**Advertising Manager** Hannah Providence

**Community Engagement Editor** Victoria Cagley

**Advisor** Susan Campbell

To view previous issues, go to  
[www.OurSchoolNewspaper.com/Charger](http://www.OurSchoolNewspaper.com/Charger) or  
[issuu.com/chargerbulletin](http://issuu.com/chargerbulletin)

The Charger Bulletin staff strives for excellence and accuracy in writing and reporting. We recognize that mistakes may occur and encourage readers to notify the Bulletin if they feel a correction is necessary. Please email the Editor-in-Chief at [chargerbulletin@newhaven.edu](mailto:chargerbulletin@newhaven.edu).

Since 1938, *The Charger Bulletin* has been the official student news source of the University of New Haven.

#### Advertising

*The Charger Bulletin* ad rate sheets are available upon request or by calling 203.932.7182 or via email at [chargerbulletinads@gmail.com](mailto:chargerbulletinads@gmail.com). *The Charger Bulletin* reserves the right to refuse any advertisement. Advertisements within *The Charger Bulletin* are inserted by outside sources identified in the advertisements themselves and not by the University of New Haven. Advertising material printed herein is solely for informational purposes. For the most up-to-date information, visit [www.ChargerBulletin.com/advertise](http://www.ChargerBulletin.com/advertise).

#### Letters to the Editor

The submission deadline for letters to the editor is 5 p.m. on Friday for publication in Mondays issue. Letters to the Editor are also published online the same day as the release of print issues. Letters should not exceed 300 words if they are to be considered for print publication. All submissions by outside writers to *The Charger Bulletin*, unless otherwise approved by the Editor-in-Chief, will be treated as letters to the editor.

Letters to the Editor are published under the discretion of the Editor in Chief, and not every submitted letter will be published. The Charger Bulletin also reserves the right to withhold Letters to the Editor that are excessively vulgar or nonsensical, or do not meet our editorial standards.

Letters can be sent via email to [ChargerBulletin@newhaven.edu](mailto:ChargerBulletin@newhaven.edu) and must contain the writers name and contact information for verification purposes. The opinions expressed in Letters to the Editor are of the authors themselves and not *The Charger Bulletin*.

**1st Place - ASPA Annual Contest/Review for Scholastic Yearbooks, Magazines and Newspapers, 2018**  
**Honorable Mention, Mobile App of the Year - Pinnacle Awards by College Media Association, 2017**



The Charger Bulletin



@ChargerBulletin



@ChargerBulletin



The Charger Bulletin

# NEWS

## The future of study abroad seems bright

BY ELISA D'EGIDIO  
Staff Writer

On Apr. 28, Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs Mario T. Gaboury sent out an email to freshmen, sophomores and juniors saying that the Prato, Italy campus will be reopening for the fall 2021 semester.

The announcement said that all students will begin classes online from their homes and leave for Italy in early September for approximately 85-89 days, meaning students will not need to apply for an Italian Visa. Students would return a few weeks before the semester ends to complete the rest of the semester online.

Kevin Murphy, dean of the Prato campus, said, "I think we are seeing great improvements. We've seen massive improvements in the rhythm and volume of the vaccination."

The University of New Haven described this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity of studying abroad, saying, "The historic city of Prato offers University of New Haven students an authentic

Italian cultural experience."

The deadline to apply is May 15 and all those interested are asked to complete an interest form. All students who would like to study abroad this fall must be fully vaccinated from COVID-19. The program is looking to have a minimum of 40-50 students, in hopes of giving the experience to as many students as possible.

"We are aiming optimistically at reopening in fall 2021," said Murphy. "The more students the better."

### Piazza San Francesco

Photo courtesy of Kayla Mutchler



Director of international programs Elena Quarti said that the application process is similar to previous years, where students will still need to take courses to keep themselves on track along with obtaining a passport. While studying abroad, students will be able to take up to two online courses at the main campus in New Haven and three in Prato.

"We want students to acknowledge the risks because when you travel abroad during this time," said Quarti, "they should understand that depending on the situation - masking wearing, social distancing,

certain travel restrictions -- that we will try to educate students and talk to them about all of these possibilities of what might happen."

In reflection on having to send students back to the U.S. last March, Murphy said, "I remember when I was talking to the students, I will never forget the day I brought the students together in the classroom and told them that they had to leave. I will never forget that moment. It was very hard not to cry, I was heartbroken. It was one of the worst meetings I have ever had with students."

Junior criminal justice major Andrew Prendergast studied abroad at the Prato campus during the Spring 2020 semester and would love to go again. Prendergast said that his experience in Italy, although cut short, allowed him to become more "confident, independent, and resourceful."

Murphy emphasized the importance of studying abroad by saying that although students were sent home last spring,

it was still a valuable experience. While studying abroad, some students were completing internships, teaching English to Italian students and volunteering.

"They were learning a lot, they were making friends, they were having extraordinary experiences," Murphy said. "They were also having a lot of fun. But they were also getting a great education."

"I think studying abroad is just a beneficial experience in general," Prendergast said, "It challenges you in ways you never thought would be a challenge. Just trying to order food at a restaurant can be an ordeal."

Zoom sessions are being hosted on May 3-7 to give students more information on the fall semester. If students are interested in attending, they should fill out this form.

Students are encouraged to register to apply for study abroad as soon as possible and to express interest to study-abroad@newhaven.edu.

## After a long year, graduation is here and in person

BY KAYLA MUTCHLER  
Editor-in-Chief

On May 17, the University of New Haven will host the spring commencement ceremony at the Hartford Healthcare Amphitheater. The College of Arts and Sciences, School of Health Sciences and the Tagliatela College of Engineering will commence at 11 a.m.; the Pompea College of Business and the Henry C. Lee College of Criminal Justice and Forensic Sciences will commence at 4 p.m. There will also be a live stream of the events for those who cannot attend in person.

In order to attend, students and guests must provide proof of full COVID-19 vaccination, a negative test or proof of infec-

tion in the last 90 days. Students and guests can read the full list of requirements on the university's website.

According to class of 2021 president and criminal justice and legal studies double major Amanda Pappas, the university is one of a few institutions that is able to have a commencement where students can actually walk across a stage.

Similar to past years, there will be professional photography and graduates will be required to keep their masks on throughout the whole ceremony, including for their photo when they cross the stage.

Pappas also said that there will be events lined up for Senior Week. "Seniors will be invited to participate in commencement

week activities in collaboration with graduate students," she said. "The final schedule has not been disclosed yet, but a lot of thought went into the schedule and I am so excited to execute the plan."

Senior criminal justice major Ciara Gallagher shared her thoughts on an in-person graduation, "I feel on the fence about having an in-person graduation," she said. "I'm grateful to have one and not have my family watch through a screen but part of me still feels uneasy due to COVID[-19]."

Gallagher and Pappas also reflected on their time at the university. Pappas said, "I am forever grateful for UNewHaven because I really feel I received the best education, mentorships,

experiences and guidance. As Class President specifically, I hope that I make the class proud with commencement and have made the class proud in general over the past few years."

"Graduating makes me feel relieved and depressed at the same time," said Gallagher. "While I'm excited to move on and start

working in my field, I am also sad that I'm leaving the friends I've made along the way. I'm going to miss seeing everyone so consistently."

For more information about the event, visit the spring commencement website.

### Charlie the Charger

Photo courtesy of University of New Haven



## You have to watch The Falcon and the Winter Soldier finale

BY EMILY  
MCDONOUGH  
Contributing Writer

The Falcon and the Winter Soldier has come to an end after six weeks. The final episode titled “One World, One People” delivered the best action scenes in the series as well as a moving and powerful speech from Sam Wilson cementing his status as Captain America.

Although all the emotion of the last episode is very overwhelming, it still leaves viewers wondering what’s next for the characters. Sharon Carter was pardoned and offered her old CIA job. In her last scene, it seems as though Carter will continue to be the Powerbroker while working in the CIA. Instead of selling the super soldier serum like Carter initially wanted to, she’s going to start selling the government’s secrets to her buyers in Madripoor. This is a significant plot that many fans want to see play out. If there is a season two, they would also love to see Sharon come back.

One of the most important and heartwarming scenes was when Sam took Isaiah Bradley and  
*Photo courtesy of The Falcon and the Winter Soldier’s Twitter*

his grandson Eli to the Smithsonian. There is a whole exhibit dedicated to Isaiah honoring his legacy complete with a statue and an engraving reading, “Isaiah Bradley is an American hero whose name went unknown for too long.” Isaiah never wanted his story to come out because he was afraid of how the government would treat him again. While looking at the statue Sam tells him, “Now they’ll never forget what you did for this country.”

John Walker officially became U.S. Agent thanks to the surprise character, Val, played by Julia Louis Dreyfus. There is a lot of mystery surrounding Val, and many are wondering when she will show up next. Since she has ties to Nick Fury in the “Nick Fury, Agent of S.H.I.E.L.D.” comics it is speculated that she will return in Marvel’s Secret Invasion, another Disney Plus project that is supposed to start filming later this year. With Walker becoming U.S. Agent this could be the start of a new team of reformed super-criminals called the Thunderbolts, who were originally formed by Baron Helmut Zemo.

While the finale wrapped up

many plot points it did feel a little rushed. The fight between Karli, Batroc, and Sharon felt awkward and the conversation should have been between Karli and Sharon since she was a mentor to Karli in Madripoor. Another rushed part was John Walker’s redemption arc. After he took the super soldier serum and killed the wrong person for his friend Lamar’s death Walker became the character the audience hated. During the finale, there was a moment where he could have gone after the Flag Smashers or help Bucky rescue hostages. He chose to help Bucky and assisted with the arrest of the Flag Smashers. Since Walker helped Sam and Bucky, it seemed like we’re supposed to be ok with him now.

The show turned out to be very successful. On the same day as the finale, Deadline reported that showrunner, Malcolm Spellman, and writer, Dalan Musson, are developing a fourth Captain America movie. It is speculated that the project will continue Anthony Mackie’s Sam Wilson story.

All episodes of The Falcon and the Winter Soldier are now streaming on Disney Plus.

## End of the year

BY CAM GARDEN  
Staff Writer

Follow the Charger  
Bulletin on Spotify!



For the last playlist of the semester, here are the best songs to finish out the year. Congratulations to the graduating class of 2021!

### 1. Congratulations – Post Malone

A go-to song for any graduation playlist. “Congratulations” is the quintessential end of an era song. It’s nearly impossible not to sing along.

### 2. Good Old Days – Macklemore, Kesha

As the year comes to a close and for the seniors, an entire experience, it’s important to reflect on the best of times this year.

### 3. Hey Look Ma, I Made It – Panic! At the Disco

Another essential song for a graduation playlist. Especially in the midst of a pandemic, graduating or just getting through the year is a huge accomplishment.

### 4. The Time (Dirty Bit) – Black Eyed Peas

Hopefully this song is true for everyone graduating. College is meant to be the time of our lives. For anyone who isn’t done with undergraduate experience yet, here’s your sign to start making memories that will last you a lifetime.

### 5. Raise Your Glass – P!nk

P!nk celebrates one of the most important parts of life: being unapologetically you. This is the perfect track to celebrate yourself.

### 6. Time of Our Lives – Pitbull, Ne-Yo

Again, I hope college has, in fact, been the time of everyone’s life. You only get one undergraduate experience, so live it well!

### 7. Unwritten – Natasha Bedingfield

The page before us is definitely blank. Here’s to making the best of life and having as much fun as possible. Going into the next year of school or into the real adult world, it’s unwritten and yours to explore.

### 8. Life is a Highway – Rascal Flatts

Through ups and downs and bumps in the (Boston Post) road, life is ultimately what we make of it. Happy end of the year!



# ENTERTAINMENT

## The impact of Asian representation in entertainment

BY AMANDA CASTRO  
Managing Editor

Though Asian and Asian American inclusion in American pop culture has increased in recent decades, questions over prejudices, stereotypes, and assumptions are becoming more widely recognized. With the recent increase in violence against the Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) community, concerns have been raised about how the Asian community is portrayed in contemporary American entertainment.

Asian Americans have had a grim cinematic history, with actors usually overexaggerating accents and promoting harmful stereotypes. And despite any progress in regard to this, recently, Hollywood has been confronted for its racist and discriminatory past around the disparity of Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) and Black, Indigenous, people of

color (BIPOC) representation, deservedly so.

Asian actors have also been pigeonholed into small, limiting roles, usually playing doctors or a stereotypical classmate in accordance with the “model minority” ideology. In an interview with *TIME*, actor Randall Park said that he had played doctors many times during his career.

“The roles weren’t super offensive, but when you look back

and realize how many doctors you play, you think, OK, that’s how they see us.”

Until recent years, Asian people were mainly portrayed in Hollywood films by martial arts actors, such as Jackie Chan and Jet Li – and it’s what a lot of people know them from, resulting in an inability to separate them from the numerous martial arts characters they have played throughout their careers.

According to *TIME*, a report

**A Scene from *Crazy Rich Asians*** showed that although Asian

*Photo courtesy of Crazy Rich Asians’ Twitter*



Americans made up 5.4 percent of the US population in 2014, they only accounted for 1.4% of lead roles in studio films.

Behind the scenes, the problem persisted: according to a 2018 survey, just 12% of showrunner titles were occupied by people of color.

To no one’s surprise, white actors have dominated the silver screen for decades, with more diversity occurring only in recent years. This trend may be seen as a collective movement in media toward inclusivity, prompted by critiques of Hollywood’s systemic promotion of “Straight White Men” and the popularity of minority-led productions in subscription-based media such as Netflix and similar streaming services.

Following the release of “Crazy Rich Asians” in 2018, other creators were inspired by the critic and fan response.

Though improvement is encouraging, there is still more to

be done in terms of true portrayal of Asians in television and movie characters on-screen and off. What is on television or film has an effect on Asian Americans’ mental health, identity perception and race relations in ways that go beyond entertainment. Content producers and business decision-makers must alter the way Asian people are represented in the mainstream, as they have both the ability and the responsibility to use this powerfully popular platform responsibly.

More Asian faces, representative of the vast experiences of the AAPI community, have appeared on television and films in recent years. In the next decade, AAPI and BIPOC representation may not be proportionate to white representation on TV, but at some point, the industry will reach a regularity where people will become less surprised because inclusion is normalized.

## The 2021 MTV Movie and TV Awards are almost here

BY ELDRICK  
GREENWAY

Contributing Writer

After a year-long hiatus because of the COVID-19 pandemic, movies and television strikes back with the 2021 MTV Movie and TV Awards happening on May 16.

Jumping straight into it, the nominees for “Best Movie” goes to the following: “Borat Subsequent Movie Film: Delivery of Prodigious Bribe to American Regime for Make Benefit Once Glorious Nation of Kazakhstan” directed by Jason Woliner, “Judas and the Black Messiah” directed by Shaka King, “Promising Young Woman” directed by Emerald Fennell, “Soul” directed by Pete Doctor and Kemp Powers, and “To All the Boys: Always and Forever” directed by Michael Fimognari.

All of these movies are outstanding; however, one can’t drop a list of the best movies for the 2021 MTV Movie and TV Awards without mentioning the best performances. The first nomination for “Best Performance in a Movie” goes to actress Carey Mulligan for her performance in the thriller, “Promising Young Woman.” Mulligan has the ability to make her characters angry while looking sweet, balancing her seriousness with her radiance.

The next nomination in that category goes to the unforgettable and inspirational late Chadwick Boseman for his performance in “Ma Rainey’s Black Bottom.” Boseman will always be a source of motivation for everyone on and off the big screen; for him to be receiving this award posthumously is nothing but outstanding.

Known for movies such as

“Get Out” and “Queen and Slim,” the next nomination goes to Daniel Kaluuya for his performance in “Judas and the Black Messiah.” From supporting actor to best performance, Kaluuya cannot be stopped; a nomination much deserved for this talented actor.

Next up is the one-and-only Sacha Baron Cohen for his performance in “The Trial of the Chicago 7.” Cohen is one of those actors that can switch from a comedic film to a dramatic film at the drop of a hat and “The Trial of the Chicago 7” proves that with this nomination.

Finally, there is the hardworking, stunning and unbreakable actor, Zendaya, for her performance in “Malcolm & Marie.” Despite the film being a more dramatic “Marriage Story,” Zendaya pulls her character off perfectly. She is a talented actor

and it wouldn’t be shocking if she receives this award.

There are other nominations on the list, such as “Best Fight Scene,” namely, the final fun-house fight from “Birds of Prey (And the Fantabulous Emancipation of One Harley Quinn)” or the final fight against Steppenwolf scene from “Zack Snyder’s Justice League.” Other categories include “Best Villain” with a nomination for Ewan McGregor’s Black Mask in “Birds of Prey” and best breakthrough performances, such as Maria Bakalova in “Borat Subsequent Movie Film.”

MTV opened up fan voting in 25 gender-neutral categories at [vote.mtv.com](http://vote.mtv.com) through April 30 and additional details about the 2021 “MTV Movie & TV Awards” and “Movie & TV Awards: Unscripted,” including hosts, presenters and more will be announced in the coming

weeks.

The 2021 “MTV Movie & TV Awards” will air live on Sunday, May 16 from the Palladium in Los Angeles at 9 p.m. ET; the inaugural “Movie & TV Awards: Unscripted” will air the following night, May 17 at 9 p.m. ET.

**Borat Subsequent Movie Film poster**

*Photo courtesy of Borat’s Twitter*



# STUDENT LIFE

## The aftermath of a semester with no breaks

BY BETH BEAUDRY

Student Life Editor

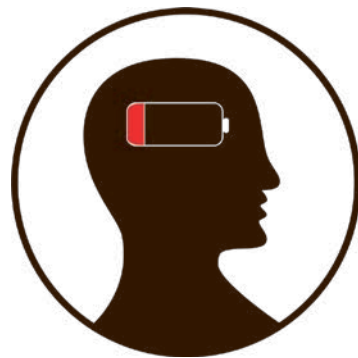
It is expected to feel burnout by the end of a college semester. As students prepare for finals and anticipate the impending vacation break ahead, it may be difficult to find the motivation to push through those last few weeks.

This has been an issue this semester in particular, in which there were no consecutive breaks, additional anxiety because of the pandemic and fewer opportunities to unwind with friends because of COVID-19 guidelines. While the University of New Haven granted four Recharge days in replacement of spring break, it was not an effective substitute, as none of the days offered consecutive breaks and many students used those

days to catch up on schoolwork.

Interim director of Counseling & Psychological Services (CAPS) Paige Bartels said that CAPS has seen an increase in depression and anxiety among students and that more students have been utilizing their service.

"This has impacted student's academic lives as students are more easily stressed out, and many are having difficulty moti-



*Graphic courtesy of Christopher Colquhoun*

vating themselves to do work," said Bartels.

Regarding the lack of spring break, Bartels said, "This is just one of the ways that COVID-19 has truly drained our resources. Students are lacking the mental breaks from academics and many are feeling burnt out, making crossing that so-called finish line more difficult."

Emily Smidt, freshman hospitality and tourism major, believes that lack of spring break has impacted her mental health, and that of many students.

"My mental health has been tremendously impacted. I have been more stressed lately than ever before," said Smidt. "Stressed to get my assignments completed, stressed about making sure I am still excelling in my studies, and much more, the

list goes on.

However, she feels that the university is doing well to recognize the hardships of this semester. Some of her professors have either cancelled their final exams, or have lessened their workload.

"I am very happy and relieved that a couple of my professors have actually taken into consideration how much work us students have and how our mental health has been impacted by the pandemic."

Senior psychology major Bradley Kozikowski said that he has been surrounded by issues this semester and that the changes COVID-19 has provoked have taken a toll.

"This semester has definitely been overwhelming, without a long break it feels like every-

thing's been pushed together and making me work harder," said Kozikowski. "Compared to last semester, this one feels longer and has been more detrimental to my mental health."

Bartels said that students can best prepare for finals by taking advantage of the many resources that the campus offers.

"We would encourage students to utilize the Center for Student Success, CLR, the Dean of Students office, have candid conversations with their professors and advisors, in addition to utilizing CAPS if needed," said Bartels.

CAPS is open 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. on Monday through Friday and has a 24/7 crisis support line at 203-932-7333. Students can find more information on their webpage.

## Saying goodbye to the Charger Bulletin's class of 2021

BY ELISA D'EGIDIO

Staff Writer

As the spring 2021 semester comes to an end, so do the college careers of two Charger Bulletin editors. After an eventful year in news reporting, it is time to highlight the seniors who will be graduating this May.

**Beth Beaudry**

Student Life Editor Beth Beaudry is graduating with a

**Beth Beaudry**

*Photo courtesy of Lismarie Pabon*



degree in communication and with a double concentration in journalism and public relations. She is also the vice president of the university's English Honor Society, Sigma Tau Delta, and is involved in the marching band. Beaudry said, "I really think a part of the job is... connecting with other students who want to write, and you know, experience journalism and the Charger Bulletin."

For future Charger Bulletin writers and editors, Beaudry encourages them to get involved on campus whether that be through social media, Charger Connection or MyCharger, as they are all tools to keep students informed. She also said that students should get involved in the Charger Bulletin and Charger Bulletin News as she wishes she had gotten involved earlier in her college career.

Although this was the first position Beaudry held within the Charger Bulletin, she is a very accomplished editor and writer. Her articles have covered

important topics on campus, such as Sexual Assault Awareness, Commuter Appreciation, COVID-19 and more. This semester Beaudry also focused on doing features on different clubs on campus. Some that she covered were the Women in Business club, the Marine Conservation Society, and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.

"I think one [article] that I am really proud of is one I worked on with Kayla and Amanda this past semester. We did a feature on students who use OnlyFans during the pandemic," said Beaudry, "I think [it] was a really great article."

Reflecting on her college experience, Beaudry said that she has had the same college roommates since sophomore year and said that her college experience would not be what it was without them.

Beaudry said, "I really think I was able to find people that I will have in my life, for the rest of my life, through college, so I am very very grateful for that."

One of Beaudry's friends, Ciara Gallagher, wished her well.

"You're going to do amazing in life, I love you!" said Gallagher. "I'm so proud of all your accomplishments!"

"I know Beth is going to be an amazing journalist," said Kayla Mutchler, editor-in-chief of the Charger Bulletin. "She has incomparable drive and passion for this field. I, and the rest of the Charger Bulletin, are so grateful for and proud of what she has accomplished this past year."



**Kristen Marcus**

Opinion Editor Kristen Marcus is graduating with a degree in communication with a concentration in journalism. She has been a part of the Charger Bulletin on and off since her sophomore year of college. Marcus is also a diversity peer educator and the vice president of the university's Black Student Union.

She is most proud of having

*Continued on pg. 7*

**Kristen Marcus**

*Photo courtesy of Lismarie Pabon*

# STUDENT LIFE

## Saying goodbye

*Continued from pg. 7*

been excited to be a part of the Charger Bulletin editorial staff. Her favorite articles that she has written are “From resident to commuter” and “The First-Year Experience.”

“I like to keep everybody engaged,” said Marcus. She likes “being a person that anyone can talk to.”

She has left her mark on the Bulletin as she helped inspire a possible, new TMZ-style section being implemented into the Charger Bulletin next year.

Marcus said that she is excited for the opportunity to rest after graduation and the hard year she had, “That’s what the plan is – it’s relaxation and having fun. I just want to take a break.”

Looking back on her college career here at the University of New Haven, Marcus teared up. She encourages students to get involved on campus and attend as many in-person events as possible in order to make memories as it was the highlight of her college experience. She met many of her close friends through events hosted in the German Club and the Myatt Center for Diversity and Inclusion.

“Kristen is one of the greatest souls I’ve been lucky enough to call a best friend,” her friend, Lily Manzo said. “I’ll forever be grateful to the girl who was outgoing enough to say ‘hi’ to a stranger in Life on Earth.”

Mutchler said, “Kristen is going to accomplish whatever she sets her mind to. She redefined some of our sections and pitched some amazing ideas this year that improved the Charger Bulletin. I know she will have an amazing future.”

On behalf of the Charger Bulletin, we thank Beaudry and Marcus for their hard work and wish them the best in their future endeavors. Congratulations, Charger Bulletin class of 2021!

## Students reflect as spring 2021 semester comes to a close

BY ELISA D’EGIDIO  
Staff Writer

This spring semester has differed from those prior and students hold conflicting opinions on how the changes have affected their college experience. According to some students on campus, this semester has been mentally draining because of virtual learning and a lack of communication from the school, while others are supportive of how the university has reacted to the pandemic circumstances.

In a Charger Bulletin article from Feb. 9, students were asked to rate how excited they were for the start of the spring semester on a scale of one to 10 – one being not excited and 10 being most excited – 21% of the votes rated one.

Recently, students participated in a survey that asked, “Which of the below statements most relates to how you feel about this semester?” As of May 1, 44.4% of respondents said they were satisfied with this semester.

Junior criminal justice major Chase Kozak said he is satisfied with the school implementing ReCharge days, “After being

upset about not having spring break, at first, I have now come to realize that ReCharge days are so much better,” said Kozak, “I think we should continue this method going forward.”

Max Anderson, a junior industrial and systems engineering major, said that this was the “worst semester of my college career, can’t wait for it to be over!!”

In an Instagram poll asking University of New Haven students “overall, how did you feel about this spring semester?”, user @mariaaruehl said, “overwhelming stress and too much work hard to balance.”

Some students even lost their love for learning, such as junior criminal justice major Mattina Benedetto.

“I’m spending countless hours crying, being stressed, and frustrated because I constantly feel like I’m failing,” Benedetto said. “Giving four days throughout the semester for a break is such a joke, every student (most of my friends that attend UNH) are having mental breakdowns almost daily, and sending us an email that says “the school offers counseling” doesn’t cut it.”

Benedetto also suffers from chronic Lyme Disease, which flairs up with major stressors, COVID-19 being one of them. Because of severe pain, she struggled to get assignments done in a timely manner. Although she already had accommodations made with the school, she felt frustrated that during this semester it was very hard to learn and work with professors as “they automatically assume that you’re slacking off, that you don’t care.”

Freshman forensic science major Jennifer Tucci and senior marine biology student Amanda Bella both said that the school still needs to improve its communication with students.

Tucci said, “I think UNH did a good job controlling cases, but they did not do a good job answering students’ questions

about guidelines. They also changed rules very suddenly without considering the impact on students.”

“The school likes to distract students with events instead of addressing many of our real problems and concerns,” Bello said, “I tried my best to adapt to online classes but it was very tiresome and took a large toll on my mental and physical health.”

Disappointed with this semester, Bello shared that she felt unsafe on campus after being in many classrooms that had not been disinfected.

Benedetto and Tucci agree in saying that ReCharge days are not as beneficial as a real break away from school.

In regard to what she was most disappointed about this semester, Tucci said, “It’s incredibly difficult to get involved and make friends because of the [COVID] restrictions. My mental health has been affected because I’m stuck in my room most of the time. Clubs and classes are online, which means I don’t connect with professors, and I don’t know any of the students in my classes. This has made me incredibly lonely.”

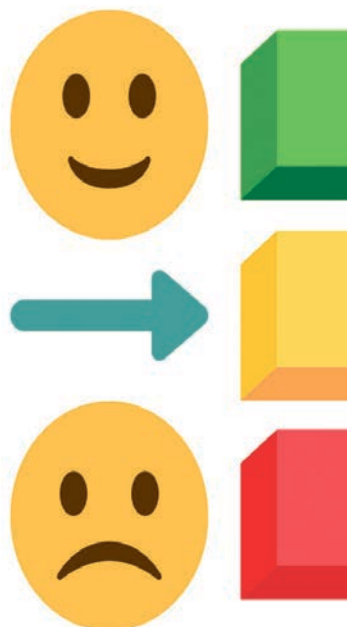
Senior criminal justice major Rudibeth Martinez said that although last semester she was very unhappy with how New Haven handled COVID-19, she feels neutral about this semester.

“As a senior me and a lot of other people were looking forward to at least having the carnival we usually have. Martinez said, “The pandemic has impacted all the activities that we were looking forward to and the ones that we are being given are not the best.”

Forensic technology graduate student Katerina Athaide said she believes that the university did a good job handling COVID-19, and she is unaware of any other university that has put in as much effort in keeping their students on campus.

“They were able to make it a safe environment while bringing students back on campus,” said Athaide, “With the weekly and monthly requirements of testing, social distancing guidelines, and CoVerified system, I believe that UNH did the best of its ability to have students remain in person.”

Graphic courtesy of Elisa D’Egidio



Calling all Chargers!

# IT'S NOT TOO LATE!

Join Our Teams!

PHOTOGRAPHY, SOCIAL MEDIA, GRAPHIC DESIGN & ADVERTISING

[CHARGERBULLETIN@NEWHAVEN.EDU](mailto:CHARGERBULLETIN@NEWHAVEN.EDU)

## Chargers lacrosse earns semifinals trip after win

BY JOSEPH KLAUS  
Sports Editor

What better way to pick up a playoff win in the conference playoffs than against crosstown rivals, the Southern Connecticut State University Owls?

That is exactly what the New Haven Lacrosse team did Friday night, beating the Owls, in the NE-10 opening round 14-6.

Marina Skelly led the way for the Chargers on the night, netting six and assisting one of the Blue and Gold's 14 goals. Freshman Annie Acquavita continued her dominant season, earning her fifth hat trick of the year to add onto the offense.

It took the Chargers 60

seconds to find the back of the net and they never looked back in this opening round of the playoffs.

Goalie Gabby Buscemi stopped eight of the 14 shots taken by the Owls.

After the opening round win, the Chargers travel to New York to face off against the No. 1 Dolphins of Le Moyne in the NE-10 Semifinals on May 3.

Back in April, when the Chargers traveled to Le Moyne, they dropped a tough one with a 14-4 loss and are looking to rebound with a win in the semifinals.

The match will be available to stream on Charger Sports Network and on the NE10 Now app.

*Photo courtesy of New Haven Athletics*



## Chargers continue hot streak against Pace University

BY TYLER GARNET  
Contributing Writer

The University of New Haven softball team continues their dominant season by winning game one 3-0 and game two 7-5 against Pace University winning. They improve their record to 23-5 for the season and 18-4 in conference play. They have won 17 of their last 18 games and a big reason for that is because of junior Ava Fitzmaurice's play.

It was a beautiful day at the New Haven softball field with not a cloud in the sky and the Chargers brought the excitement. Game one was a pitching duel between Fitzmaurice and Maxibel Garcia for the Pace Setters. Both pitchers did not give up a run until Fitzmaurice hit a solo home run in the bottom of the third inning to give the Chargers a 1-0 lead and threw a complete-game shut-out, with the Chargers winning 3-0. The two other runs came from senior Melissa Bike, who knocked in Ellie Frederick with a base hit. In the sixth inning, Ashley Veisz earned the RBI when she was hit by a pitch with

the bases loaded.

Game two felt like it was going to be a pitching duel like game one. There were no runs scored again through the first two and a half innings. The Chargers got on the board first in the bottom of the third inning. This time, the Setters scored their first run of the day tying things up at one in the top of the fourth inning. Junior Mia Iodice was on the mound for game two of the doubleheader and was cruising for four innings, only allowing one unearned run. The Chargers took the lead right back in the bottom of the fourth when the Chargers bats put together four straight hits. The first was a double from Jovanna Hillman then a single from Frederick with the third hit driving in a run, a single from Bike. Freshman Hailey Laforte followed that up with another double driving in two more runs making it 4-1.

It seemed like that would be enough runs for Iodice but after loading the bases with two outs, freshman Kaylani Miller hit a grand slam on the first pitch that absolutely stunned and silenced the crowd; the New Haven

bench gave the setters the 5-4 lead. The silence would only last for a short period of time as the Chargers stormed back capitalizing on two errors and taking the lead right back 6-5. The Chargers would add one more insurance run in the sixth on a home run from shortstop Mya Case, making it 7-5. The Chargers called on Fitzmaurice to record the final six outs of the game and secure the doubleheader sweep.

New Haven will look to finish their regular season on a high note Sunday afternoon when the two meet again for another doubleheader.

*Photo courtesy of New Haven Athletics*



## Fall 2021 athletics signal a return to normalcy

BY LINDSAY GIOVANNONE  
Contributing Writer

It has been nearly two years since Fall Sports have taken place at the University of New Haven due to the spread of COVID-19. While updates are limited, both the Northeast 10 Conference (NE10) and the University have been cautiously optimistic about their return amidst a subsiding pandemic.

The University of New Haven has stated that their current plan is to "roll back many compre-

hensive health measures put in place to mitigate the spread of COVID-19" and to host varsity athletic competitions with "students and family members in attendance as fans."

While it can be expected to see postponements or even cancellations, hosting athletic competitions provides a sense of normalcy to students. The uncertainty of the season has done little to waver the overall anticipation of student-athletes and coaches.

Aidan Kennedy, a first-year offensive lineman from Newtown, CT feels the football team

is well prepared for the fall. "With football it's one of those sports where the second you're put back in pads, everything comes back to you. We were lucky enough to get a few weeks of practice with pads on so it definitely helped [us] feel more prepared for the fall season."

Navigating a pandemic has not been easy, and students have done their best to abide by strict measures and policies. COVID-19 testing has been constant with the entire student population, especially student-athletes. "The most challenging part was definitely

the few times that we got shut down for a few days due to cases" says Kennedy. "We then had to jump right into a full practice which was hard at first."

The University of New Haven plans to relax some preventative policies should 85% of the campus achieve natural or acquired immunity before July 1. All students and faculty are strongly encouraged to get vaccinated. Vaccination clinics are widespread and eligibility has been opened up to all adult Americans; in Connecticut, over 33% of the population has had two doses of the vaccine with

over 50% awaiting another.

Dr. Anthony Fauci, Director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, envisions "packed crowds in the fall thanks to the development and distribution of the vaccine." With confidence, it can be said that the eerie empty stadiums and bleachers will become a distant memory, and the highly-anticipated return of fall sports signaling a light at the end of the tunnel for COVID-19.



# POLITICS

## Q&A: University professor talks local politics and civic engagement

BY SAMUEL  
WEINMANN  
Staff Writer

On April 25, I sat down via Zoom with University of New Haven political science Practitioner in Residence Patricia Crouse, who has an extensive background in politics — specifically in local politics and civic engagement. As her research background focuses on political participation, I sought to get some insight into voting trends among the youth. Crouse was passionate about the subject and urged students to become involved in local politics.

**Q: I saw on your bio that you do have an extensive background in both public administration and public policy and that your research interests**

**Patricia Crouse**

*Photo courtesy of Patricia Crouse*



**have focused on civic engagement. Would you mind speaking a little bit more about that research interest and how your interest in local government really took hold?**

A: In essence, I am really interested in civic engagement in kids your age... because what we have found is that 18–29-year-olds are the least likely to register and the least likely to vote. In the last couple of elections, we have seen an increase in youth voting, but I still think we're far behind where we need to be. You know, I've always had an interest—ever since I started teaching... in youth voting. My interest in local politics really didn't start until we moved to Virginia... we had county government, and it's a very unique system, and what I learned was that these major decisions were made at

[the] county level that really impacted the cities that fell into that county, but they weren't always the right decisions for those particular areas.

I'm kind of fascinated with local politics because it's so different from national politics and even state politics. It's almost more, it's almost more volatile, but not because of party if that makes sense.

**Q: That makes sense. So would you say that there has been an upward trend in involvement after the 2020 election, specifically?**

A: You know what, it's funny that you asked that because I'm curious to see what turnout rates are for local elections this year, because what I have noticed — at least in my town — is an uptick in voter turnout, just in general — for general elections, statewide elections [and] local elections. I think a lot of people have burnout from the last four years — political burnout, and that's not saying whether you liked Trump or not, it's just it was a volatile four years at the national level. I have always taught that you can make the biggest difference in local politics.

**Q: Do you think that social media has a large role in youth involvement?**

A: When you're talking about the younger generation, definitely. I have students who would be pointing stuff out to me on Twitter or on Facebook... even if it was wrong information, it still gets passed along and gets the younger generation engaged. And I think that that is a good thing; I think that social media is problematic in that way also. You have to be able to decipher what's true and what's not true, and a lot of people don't take the time to do that.

I always talk about social media as sort of a curse and a blessing, because it definitely transfers wrong information out there, but I do think it gets the conversation started. I don't

think we should rely on it the way we do. It could go away tomorrow, and elections would be the same.

**Q: For local politics, in particular, I think that a lot of students may feel that it's not that important, or it's not that impactful, because the focus, on the large end, is on national politics. And so, I think that a lot of students don't put in the time to learn anything about local or state politics. What would you say to a student who feels that way and feels like it may not be worth the effort?**

A: I mean, I teach it all the time; it's absolutely worth the effort. I'll tell students if you vote in no other election, you should vote in your local election because these are the people that pass school board budgets, these are the people that pass your town budget. This is why you have fire and police, and trash pick-up. And I am trying to convince them that you can make a difference.

The pandemic really did change a lot about politics. And particularly, I think states and local governments. The fact that almost 600,000 people are dead because of it, in my perspective, is a direct result of the failed policies of the federal government. But if you look at what states and localities did, I think that Connecticut did a good job. Without localities having the locations to distribute the vaccines, the state never would have been able to do what they did.

Local politics define almost everything about government in the U.S. Not to diminish the value of state and national politics, but your life is most affected by what goes on at the local level.

**Q: As the semester is coming to an end and students go home — many of which I assume to their hometowns — what is some advice that you would like to leave them with as they go home for the summer when it comes to getting involved, es-**

**pecially if they haven't actually been involved before?**

A: My message always, in an election year is, go home, get involved, learn who's running, vote. I know that they want to go home over the summer and forget everything. I try to tell them, you know, see what's going on, get involved, join a campaign... see what these people have to offer.

Even just knowing who's in charge, like, who runs your town? That's all you need to know. And then, from there, you get a little more involved, you go to a meeting, or you volunteer.

Kids need to feel like it's not a waste of their time; that doing this can bring results. It's doable. But you have to put the effort in.

If something positive can be viewed from the pandemic, it's that local governments have shown the power they have to address an issue like this.

Sitting back and doing nothing should never be an option. And I think unfortunately, [with] too many of the younger generation... it's the choice that they make. And I'm not saying it's because they don't necessarily care, I think a lot of times, it's because they think nobody wants to hear what they have to say. And they should never feel that way.

Here's your copy of  
The Charger Bulletin!



# POLITICS

## Marijuana legalization: The battle is not over

BY SAMUEL WEINMANN

Staff Writer

As marijuana legalization continues, millions across the U.S. have been hosting celebrations. This year, thousands gathered in celebration of marijuana legalization in New York, while in Connecticut, residents rallied in support for marijuana legalization with music, food and dance. Currently, marijuana use is fully legal in 17 states, highlighting the current trajectory of U.S. policy.

Despite this trend, 40,000 Americans were incarcerated due to marijuana use in 2020, with Black people being nearly four times more likely to be arrested, despite using the substance at nearly the same rate as white people.

Thus, while there is much rea-

son to celebrate, we must combine celebration with action—a majority of cannabis business owners are white, and Black and Latinx people are still disproportionately being incarcerated. Additionally, white cannabis users should research the racist history behind marijuana prohibition — especially as they celebrate its legalization.

As an area of discourse, the legality of marijuana use began to take hold in the early 20th century, after the creation of a film called “Reefer Madness,” which altered the public’s perception of the drug. Featured in the film were teenagers who slowly become addicted to marijuana, losing their innocence and morals. The film brought an idea to the public that marijuana is a gateway drug that will lead to crime and degraded moral

characters.

Since the movie came out, that view of marijuana has prevailed among lawmakers, perpetuating its racist origins. This can be shown in President Nixon’s declared war on drugs in the 1970s when he increased the size of federal drug control agencies and pushed no-knock warrants to stop the prevalence of drug use.

These types of strict drug laws weren’t fully intended to stem drug use but were instead a continuation of racist policing, in which Black people were targeted more for the same crimes as white people, and in direct response to Civil Rights Movements.

Although this trend was especially prevalent during the 1970s, it has evidently continued to today — as the Black

community is forced to contend with racist drug laws.

According to the NAACP, 5% of illicit drug users are African American, while they represent 29% of those who are arrested and 33% of those who are incarcerated.

In essence, we have much to

celebrate as more states begin to legalize marijuana use. However, there is also much inequity to address in marijuana legislation, making it necessary for more white marijuana advocates to take a more nuanced approach to the issue.

### The Charger Bulletin

Graphic courtesy of Elisa D'Egidio

JOIN US. FOLLOW US.



## Chauvin conviction marks continuation of movement, not end

BY TYLER WELLS

Staff Writer

Nearly 11 months after kneeling on the neck of George Floyd for over nine minutes, ex-Minneapolis police officer Derek Chauvin was found guilty on charges of second-degree murder, third-degree murder and second-degree manslaughter. He now faces up to 40 years in prison.

Chauvin becomes one of a few officers that have been convicted of killing people while on duty. Between 2013 and 2019, there were 7,666 police officers who killed people, with 99 being charged with any crime. Of those 99, only 25 were convicted, according to The Guardian.

The conviction serves as a victory for civil rights activists who are calling for reform of the criminal justice system. The verdict sparked emotional celebrations across the U.S. from communities that view the outcome as a step in the right

direction.

Floyd’s family and legal team have called the conviction a historic moment showing how justice is offered to all Americans.

“This is a victory for those who champion humanity over inhumanity, those who champion justice over injustice, those who champion morals over immorality,” said Ben Crump, civil rights attorney and representa-

Photo courtesy of Creative Commons



tive of the Floyd family.

However, it is being considered as a small step towards reforming the justice system. That is especially the case as a series of multiple officer-involved shootings have sparked more public outrage. The most notable of these was the April 11 shooting of Daunte Wright, who was killed by police during a traffic stop just 10 miles from where Floyd died.

13-year-old Adam Toledo was

also shot by a Chicago police officer after a short foot chase. The case sparked anger among supporters of the Black Lives Matter movement after body camera footage showed Toledo dropping a handgun just before being shot.

While Chauvin’s conviction provides a high-profile precedent for officer accountability, these recent shootings highlight that the Black Lives Matter movement is not over. Focus now shifts to the federal government to see what change follows the case’s outcome.

President Joseph R. Biden was vocal in his support of Floyd, his family and the movement to address police brutality after the verdict was announced.

“‘I can’t breathe.’ Those were George Floyd’s last words,” Biden said. “We can’t let those words die with him. We have to keep hearing those words. We must not turn away. We can’t turn away.”

The president called on

Congress to act quickly on approving a bill named for Floyd. The bill offers an overhaul on federal policing that would address racial discrimination and use of force among law enforcement. However, it would likely not pass through the Senate as Republican opposition would not allow for passage. If Senate Democrats elect to remove the filibuster, then a majority would be needed to pass the bill and begin implementing the policy reforms.

While the outcome of Chauvin’s trial was significant, it is just the start of the movement’s next phase. It represents a moment of rejoicing that names such as Trayvon Martin, Michael Brown, Freddie Gray, Tamir Rice, Breonna Taylor, Philando Castile and many more have not been forgotten. Though justice remains pervasive, the Black Lives Matter movement now has a true legal victory as they look to propel more change.

# OPINIONS

## Should the COVID-19 vaccine be mandatory or optional?

BY KIANA WHITE  
Contributing Writer

For over a year, the COVID-19 pandemic has raged the world with deaths, terror and fear, and continues to impact the changing sense of normalcy. Many industries that once thrived in in-person settings, environments and industries, such as tourism and hospitality, have fiercely transitioned or ceased services. As a result of the pandemic, there has been an increased reliance on telecommunications. This includes platforms such as Zoom, Microsoft Teams and many other platforms. But for most people, there is a strong desire to get back to a sense of normalcy. But in order to return to normalcy, people must be willing to receive the COVID-19 vaccine.

The university COVID-19

Task Force has sent important email updates in regard to the upcoming fall 2021 semester. The classroom guidelines for social distancing will decrease from six feet to three feet, there will be more on-ground classes and events for incoming freshmen, such as Family Day and Charge-In, which will help foster more social relationships. However, in regard to vaccine protocols and policies, there is an increased move for students, faculty and staff to receive the current two-dosage COVID-19 vaccine. As examined throughout the campus there are lawn signs placed that state why staff and students took the vaccine.

For many students, receiving the vaccine is a difficult choice to make. Freshman business management major Anna Katz took the Pfizer vaccine. She said, "I want to stop the spread

of COVID and protect myself, my family, friends, and peers around me."

Like Katz, I wish to help protect my family, friends and the university community. On April 12, I went to the Floyd Little Athletic Center to get my first shot of the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine. I was nervous because I was unsure of how my body may react to the dosage, but I knew that this was the right thing to do to ensure that any possible spread of COVID-19 is kept to a minimum. Some days after receiving my first dosage, my left arm felt sore, but I was not in any excruciating pain. Currently, I plan to receive my second dosage on May 4. Although I am the first in my immediate family to receive the vaccine, I am firmly aware of the skepticism behind the vaccines. Some believe that it

will make women infertile, and others believe there are bits of technology implanted to track someone for the rest of their lives.

However, sophomore communication major Stephen Gangi believes in the positivity of the vaccine. He said, "Honestly, I fully support the idea of making the vaccine mandatory for private organizations as I believe they have the ability to do so by law, however in my opinion, I do not believe that anything should be forced upon someone when it comes to their body."

Similar to the students, I don't favor the idea of making the vaccine mandatory. I believe that it is up to every individual to make this decision for themselves. On April 27, the Connecticut Senate passed the bill to remove religious exemptions

for childhood vaccinations. This decision would result in CT children taking vaccines even if it is against their religious beliefs. These types of decisions I believe restricts and constrains Americans' individual rights and moral beliefs. Yet, I am also conflicted that when people are given the option to accept or reject receiving the vaccine, they will become careless of the need to abide by COVID guidelines. I fear that as more people get the vaccine, those who are not vaccinated may rely or "free-ride" on those that are vaccinated. However, there is also a possibility that as more people get vaccinated, this will encourage others to get vaccinated. This dilemma may be two sides of the same coin, but with completely different outcomes.

## Which is the problem: TikTok or its users?

BY KELLY ADKINS  
Contributing Writer

Over the course of a year, we have heard too many conspiracies behind TikTok; anything from it being a spying device under China's reign to Howie Mendel being held captive and hiding secret distress signals in his content. But, is the harm behind this app that sinister? Arguably, it is not the platform itself that causes harm, but rather the users within it.

Like any social media platform, I have observed that there are two driving factors behind content creation. First being the expression of thought, and second, the amplification of these thoughts. As you can imagine, these factors are not exclusive. In fact, the entanglement of these intentions is evident in the app's trending videos tagged with #BlackLivesMatter and #JusticeforBreonnaTaylor. These are movements that

amplified the voices of others, specifically their frustration, hurt and support.

1930s British politician, Pearl Strachan Hurd, said, "handle them carefully, for words have more power than atom bombs." Her words still reign true in the present day, especially on TikTok. While the hashtags above created feelings of hope, honor and truth, other horrific trends like "National Rape Day" on April 24 still find themselves trending on the app.

As a female college student susceptible to sexual harassment and violence, this trend both appalls and immensely worries me. It is the same worry about the over-portrayal of stereotypically beautiful women, and the cyberbullying of others who are not. This content is being brought forth to a relatively – if not mainly – youthful audience. In fact, one study showed that 32.5% of users are between the ages of 10 and 19, and 29.5%

between 20 and 29. This means that over half of the 1.1 billion active users are of a young age, and their minds are malleable to this information.

But blaming TikTok for its misuse by others is the equivalent of blaming a crying baby for keeping you up all night. It takes time for it to learn how to communicate properly, and it is up to TikTok to guide them until they can properly learn. Which it does through the community guidelines that even flag my own content for small "inappropriate language" violations.

The same baby analogy applies to the spread of false information, it all chalks up to developing media literacy. During the Presidential Election, TikTok went wild with the spread of misinformation regarding falsified ballots, among other things. Discerning facts from speculation is something that can only be developed over time by one's self. This skill

is applied even to major news sources, so how can you blame a social media app created for entertainment for other people's misbeliefs?

With this being said, if you are trying to label the platform as "good" or "bad" the distinction has less to do with TikTok independently. It more so poses the question: is social media, as an entity, good or bad? If this is something that psychologists and sociologists alike have not been able to discern, I am not sure that 20-year-old me can,

either.

Besides, TikTok is also to

Photo courtesy of Creative Commons



thank for the discovery and popularization of small artists such as Olivia Rodrigo – whose hit single "Driver's License" broke the Spotify record for most streams in a week – or small businesses and the creative arts.

That's why I will continue making humorous, pointless TikToks and reporting anything malicious that comes my way. Just as it takes all the individuals within Charger Nation to create a community of care, TikTok community members must promote the same ideals.

# VIEWPOINTS

## Deconstructing taboos: Pyramid schemes and capitalism

BY CAM GARDEN &  
ISABELLE HAJEK

Staff Writers

“Hey, Isabelle! Have you ever thought about making an extra income from your phone? Would you like some more info?” Most people with a social media presence have received similar direct messages trying to entice them into a multi-level marketing company (MLM) better known as a legal pyramid scheme.

When asked what people do in such a circumstance, many will explain that they ignore the message and block the sender, or something similar. In essence, they know better than to participate in what is commonly perceived as a scam.

The term “pyramid scheme” comes from a form of investment, now illicit, where people are asked to recruit new investors for a commission or return on those investments. This practice is repeated until no longer sustainable and the company

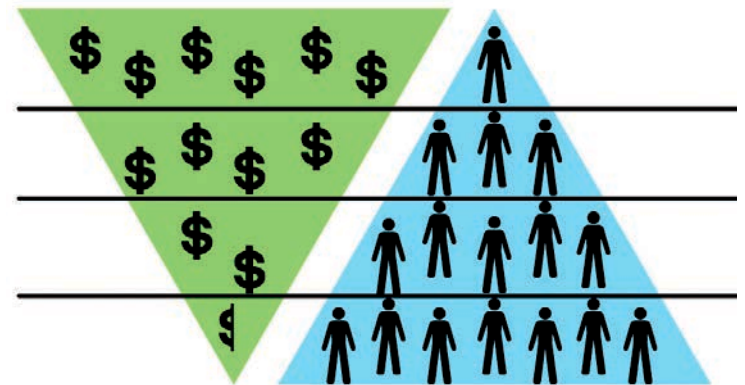
collapses. The monetary reward structure resembles a pyramid, where the majority of the company’s investors receive little to no returns on investments while a small number of people at the top receive the majority of the investment capital. Those in-between receive graduated compensation depending on what level of the pyramid they are on, and the only way to advance is to corral more low-level investors into the company to exploit. The whole system relies on exploiting others to make your way to the top.

This hierarchical structure, where those at the top make the most money and those at the bottom make the least, was made illegal by the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) because they promise a return on investment that is impossible in the structure in which they run. MLMs are legal singularly because they run that structure over a business model, where even the lowest workers can work hard enough to make

sales for commission for the company, on top of bringing in investors.

The FTC cautions people on enlisting in MLMs without first determining if the lifestyle that accompanies it is palatable. They warn that MLMs are highly time-consuming, sometimes having largely negative effects on family, friends and love lives and lacking financial security. Pyramid schemes and MLMs are heavily monitored and restricted because of their reliance on exploitation and lack of financial sustainability for all involved. The federal government and the average citizen know the danger that lies in such practices; however, they are unable to recognize it in their own society.

Capitalism, currently, is a pyramid scheme at worst and an MLM at best. As universities around the world are approaching another graduation season, releasing thousands of new workers into society, these individuals should understand



Graphic courtesy of Isabelle Hajek

that they are about to enter, level-one, into the longest-lasting pyramid scheme to exist. At its theoretical conception, capitalism is a system where the means of industry and economics are owned privately, rather than by the government. Adam Smith, widely regarded as the first theorist to conceptualize a capitalist structure said of it, “every man, as long as he does not violate the laws of justice” This free-spirited perspective on capitalism has since been perverted by greed that infringes upon those “laws of justice” in the exploitation of individuals in the name of pursuing personal profit.

The International Monetary Fund posits interesting hypocrisy in the system as they write, “Economic growth under capitalism may have far surpassed that of other economic systems, but inequality remains one of its most controversial attributes.” While the numbers suggest that the economy flourishes, that grand economy only benefits individuals who are already at the top as their scraps are left to fall to those beneath them in socioeconomic status. This is the principle behind trickle down economics, a nearly 50-year-long practice that’s efficacy has been debunked multiple times over.

It relies on people at the top using their abundance of capital to stimulate the economy by creating more jobs and giving back to society. But the practical application results in money

hoarding by the socioeconomically privileged and graduated levels of begging by those below them, depending on the level of the pyramid they are on. The reality is that those who advance past the preliminary levels of begging for scraps can only do so unethically, as any advancement under our current system of capitalism requires the exploitation of those beneath to provide their product and service at what is most likely an unlivable wage.

This will remain true until the majority commits to reforming the system of economics as it exists. Debate will always exist between reformists and revolutionaries but at the very least, there can be a commitment to conscious capitalism. In 2019, the university hosted a discussion with alumni and students on the topic focusing on shifting the current social goals of capitalism away from profit and toward a higher purpose in a practice referred to as conscious capitalism.

On the practice, practitioner in residence at the university Al Bhatt said, “Conscious capitalism takes into account social, cultural, and environmental wellbeing, and enables people to make a difference”

Without an ideological shift in how capitalism is valued and practiced in society, it will eventually go the way of all pyramid schemes, as they are unsustainable, and collapse.

Graphic courtesy of Elisa D'Egidio

Thank you for a great year! 

We wish you all an amazing and safe summer and look forward to seeing you next fall.

THE CHARGER BULLETIN FAMILY

