

The Recorder

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What a 5% Tuition Increase Means for Students

BY SAVANNA YELLING
Managing Editor

Students looking to balance academics with a minimum-wage job must pick up 63 additional shifts to meet rising tuition and fees for the 2024-25 school year.

The Connecticut State Colleges and Universities Board of Regents voted on Dec. 14 to increase tuition and fees of the CSCUs by 5%. The vote was met with resistance from both students and faculty.

"We are acutely aware that a 5% increase will add burden to our students directly and our students' ability to pay and their ability to balance work, life and family obligations," said Chancellor Terrence Cheng at the BOR meeting. "We will continue to lobby state leaders intently and consistently for the funding we need to address the system shortfall and hopefully mitigate any tuition fee."

Fabiola Murati, a resident student from



Photo: Ian Yale

Watertown set to graduate in the spring of 2025, said she was unaware of the increase but will have to anticipate working extra shifts her senior year to cover the cost.

"It impacts me greatly because it's an extra expense I have to add on to my already long list of things to pay for," Murati said.

The vote means a \$610 increase for in-state commuter students.

For full-time resident students, this brings an overall \$990 jump from this year's cost as the BOR voted to increase the cost of room and board by \$234 and food services by \$146.

As tuition increases nationally, so does student financial stress. The Ohio State University's Student Financial Wellness Study found 72.5% of students in 2023 were stressed about

their finances compared to 68.1% of students in 2020, OSU reported.

Murati said working as an emergency room patient access representative is just one of her two jobs that she will have to juggle on top of academics.

"I have two jobs," Murati said. "This [increase] does cause me to work extra shifts on top of being in school."

An increase just

shy of \$1,000 places students in a position to decide whether they want to go further into debt or prioritize work, ultimately risking poor performance in the classroom.

"I will not take more loans," Murati said. "This just means that I'll have to work more, which could potentially affect my academic responsibilities."

Jayline Guzman, a commuter student from Southington, said that due to the lack of financial aid assistance, she would have to pay more out of pocket and take out more loans.

"Tuition increase just causes me to have to pay more just because I don't get financial help," Guzman said. "I will have to take out a bigger loan to help pay."

Guzman said she was unaware of the tuition increase.

"I was not aware, but now that I am, I have to start doing things to get more money," Guzman said. "I do have a job, and I will have to work more."

Housing Occupancy Increase



Photo: Ian Yale

BY NATHALIA BLAIR
News Editor

Associate Director of Resident Life Ryan Bau-

man said all residential students are accommodated this term despite increased housing occupancy.

Considering the increase in enrollment in Fall 2023, the housing occupancy count was 2,267. Exceeding Central Connecticut State University's goal for housing occupancy.

Fall 2023 housing occupancy expectations were 2,100 and exceeded expectations by 9%.

With the occupancy limit being 2,500, the associate director of resident life discusses the forming process and gives insight into the

reality of Central Connecticut State University reaching its limit.

To manage the housing process efficiently, they keep the applications open until they reach full capacity. Doing so allows for flexibility in accepting applications.

"Students had thought they were going to come to CCSU, and then they changed," Baumann said. "So as those spaces opened up, we would definitely backfill with students

that apply for housing."

Baumann said these rates fluctuate considering students who withdraw or take a leave of absence.

"I know that next year, the university has set, I believe right now it is the goal of 2300 students to live on campus," Baumann said. "We do have the space to be able to accommodate that."

For the start of the semester, the housing occupancy count as of Jan. 30 is 2,143.

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Students Navigating Textbook Pricing

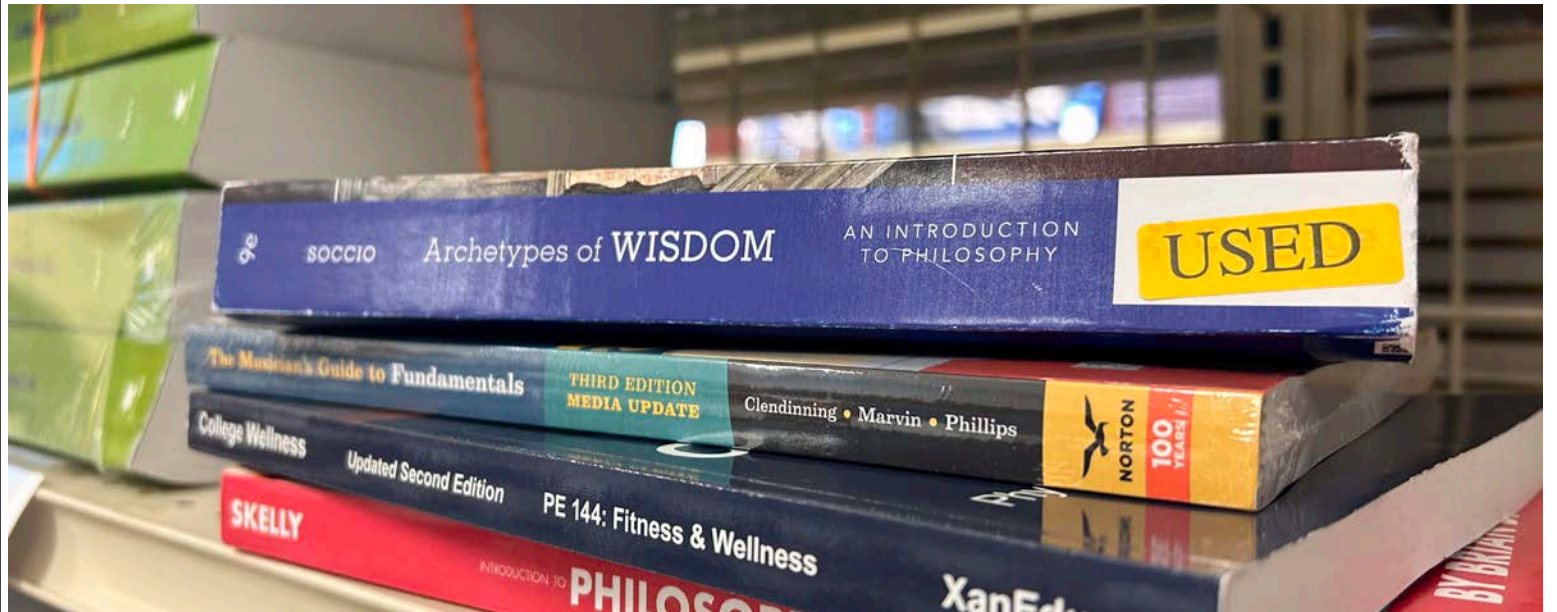


Photo: Ian Yale

BY NATHALIA BLAIR
News Editor

Some students say they have had to work extra hours to afford required textbooks at school, while others have the consideration of professors to be able to participate in class.

Areesha Waseem, a sophomore and psychology major at Central Connecticut State University, said textbooks for psychology classes range in prices that she could only afford with the scholarships she earned.

Ray Monaccio, senior and international studies major at CCSU, tries to save her money like most students when it comes to purchasing textbooks.

"I don't buy textbooks until it's do or die. 'If you don't have this textbook, you will fail,'" Monaccio said.

Associate Professor in the English

Department, Brian Folker, said he is provided by publishers the textbook he can require for his courses and does more research to determine whether to make them required.

Folker said he understands how expensive textbooks can be and helps as effectively as possible, choosing less expensive alternatives and encouraging students to purchase cheaper used copies.

"I know there have been a couple of occasions when I have investigated what students were paying for a textbook," Folker said. "I've been kind of shocked at how expensive it is."

With the time Monaccio spends at school, she said food does not become affordable when also reserving money for textbooks and tuition.

To afford food and still afford textbooks and tuition, Monaccio said, it results in working more

hours. She said some cooperative professors will help by copying the assigned readings in the textbook to email to students who may be navigating textbook prices.

"They're [Professors] pretty understanding in textbooks," Monaccio said.

Austin King, a junior at CCSU and Computer Science major, said professors' consideration helps with required textbooks in computer science.

"All the professors are considerate. Like, just one example is one of them posting the reading on blackboard," King said.

Considering how expensive textbooks can be, Folker said students selling them at the end of the semester is a minor concern, as it could hinder their engagement with the text, which is crucial for students to understand their courses.

"I know whenever I'm processing a text, I've really got to have a pencil in my hand, and I need to be marking the text up," Folker said. "I wonder about students being reluctant to do that."

Mentzer said students can access textbook assistance through the library, where they can check out the textbook they need and read it there or ask professors for spare or older editions.

Mentzer, chair and professor of the English Department, said departments may provide scholarships to aid students in purchasing textbooks. Mentzer said there is a scholarship for English majors called "The English Major Endowed Book Scholarship." This scholarship was donated by a retired professor, Mary Anne Nunn. With this scholarship, English majors can purchase at least one of the required literature textbooks for their course.

SGA Events in the Works

BY EARY BANUSHI
Staff Writer

The Student Government Association passed a motion to collaborate with the Black Student Union for an event on Feb. 20 to celebrate Black History Month during their weekly meeting on Wednesday, Jan. 31, in room 105 of Vance Hall.

Members of SGA discussed several different ideas for celebrating Black History Month, including events such as a black history jeopardy,

black trivia, black poetry, activism in the black community, and a movie night.

Senator Amaya Smith, a newly created Student Issues Committee member, said SGA will be busy deciding which events to put on over the month.

"Black History Month is definitely going to be a busy month for all of us," Smith said. "So, I think I will just have to take it back to my committee to see what events we're going to do."

Smith added that she wants to see an event

that brings the school together and teaches people information about black history that isn't readily available.

"I do like the idea of black trivia," Smith said. "It's very hard to get a lot of information about black history, so I think it will be a good time to give the community a chance to come together."

The president of the SGA, Haneen Alkabasi, said that two events would likely be the most they could put on, with the senators agreeing that one informational event and one celebratory event would suffice.

The meeting also discussed other top-

ics, such as scheduling e-board elections and a proposal to give Central's 2024 graduating class a prom after not having one in high school due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

There was also a debate between members of the SGA after a proposal was made to increase their stipends. The senators would pass a motion to table the discussion to internal affairs and revisit it during their next meeting.

The next SGA meeting takes place on Wednesday, Feb. 14, at 3:05 p.m. in the Bellin room of the Student Center.

Connecticut Rapper Ericdoa Makes Waves with New Album

BY DASCHALL HAYES
Staff Writer

Ericdoa is starting 2024 strong with his third studio album, “DOA.” The 21-year-old Connecticut-born rapper got his start on Soundcloud before working with other underground musicians like Glaive. He has been featured on the second season soundtrack of HBO’s *Euphoria*, had a viral moment involving Fortnite streamer Ninja and a taper fade haircut, and created a song and music video for the popular video game *Valorant*. His eclectic production and buoyant flows balance out his melancholy lyrics. This new record combines the styles of hyper-pop, trap and alternative. It shows the emotional growth of a young man going through the trials and tribulations of heartbreak and fame.

The three lead singles are all different stylistically. “Dancin-withsomebawdy” is a funky dance-inspired track that showcases Ericdoa’s vocal talent. The song discusses the concept of being with a cheater and realizing that he was “jumping through hurdles” for someone who does not value him. It reminds me of “Hey Ya” by Outkast in that it is cheerful and makes you want to dance, but the nature of the lyrics is dismal. “Kickstand” is the most popular of the three, being teased for months before release. The song is a traditional



Photo: Instagram

trap song with familiar hyper-pop melodies and synths. He raps about women using him for money, being famous, and even references guns which I would not expect to hear from somebody who described where they come from as a “small ass farm town.”

The two songs, “kickstand” and “paystub,” do not fit the lyrical context of the record, as they are pretty much the same song about minuscule things. That doesn’t make them bad songs, but they do not align with the rest of the tracks. Lastly, “sweet tooth” is an alternative love song where Ericdoa compares his relationship and how he treats his partner to Sour Patch Kids, but in reverse order. He says that he acts sweetly towards his girl, but then things go sour and cause pain, yet he wants things to improve. I am fond of the drums

and calming chiming noises, reminding me of a Los Retros or Tai Verdes song.

My favorite track is “lastjune.” It is technically a single but was not released before the record. This song has the most potential to be a hit. The song’s best part is how the chorus’s main melody cuts out. The primary backing sound during that point is a weird and disorienting noise that is difficult to describe but simultaneously intriguing, enhancing the lyrics. The song is about people staying in his business and disconnecting with people who will not support him and are praying for his downfall.

This sentiment is best described in the chorus when he says: “I can’t keep fighting over (Fighting over)/Hiding over (Hiding over)/I wish you would pick my side.” I relate to

the lyrics of “arm and a leg” as he explains how it will cost him “an arm and leg” to be loved by somebody who does not value him. It is unfortunate how hard it is to find love, especially when you have something to offer instead of being loved unconditionally.

The subject matter throughout the record is consistently about heartbreak, mental health, and individualism. A song like “crisis actor” is a fair representation of Ericdoa’s cries for help. The beat and vocals are simple, but their use is intended to emphasize how he acts on impulse, especially involving romance, instead of letting time take its course. Songs like “bigassbearman” and “imcoolimgoodimstraight” have a matching effect lyrically but not as sonically strong. “Bigassbearman” is a

forgettable piece with a relaxed beat and stable vocals. The lyrics continue to carry Ericdoa’s performance. “Imcoolimgoodimstraight” has a promising intro consisting of ethereal Clams Casino-esque noises that are huge in the early 2010s cloud rap era. The song then shifts into a dance track with an annoying chorus about Ericdoa and his partner letting certain behaviors slide and coming off standoffish when encountering challenges. I understand that both parties are damaged and reacting calmly to avoid pain, but I do see that Ericdoa is trying to encourage growth, which is pleasant.

In summary, “DOA” marks a vigorous beginning to the new year. The album displays emotional maturation through its blend of musical styles. While lead singles like “dancing-withsomebawdy” showcase his vocal prowess, the album experiences some stylistic disparities, notably with “kickstand” and “paystub.” “Lastjune” emerges as a potential hit, featuring a unique chorus and meaningful lyrics about overcoming negativity. The album consistently explores themes of heartbreak, mental health, and individualism, though some tracks like “bigassbearman” and “imcoolimgoodimstraight” may lack sonic impact. Overall, Ericdoa’s record delivers a compelling musical journey.

“Hazbin Hotel” is a Rapturous Musical Experience

BY JAYDEN KLAUS
Lifestyle Editor

In 2019, when I first saw the pilot for “Hazbin Hotel,” created by Vivienne Medrano, it instantly captured my heart. With sharp and stylistic animation, compelling characters, and an intriguing premise, I was excited to see future content for the series and this world. Sure, it was rather adult for my tastes at the time, but it still had me hooked.

Then, when the news broke in 2020 that it had been picked up by A24 to be an official show, I was ecstatic to see what would be in store.

The series follows Charlie Morningstar, daughter of Lucifer and princess of Hell, as she attempts to create a rehabilitation hotel in Hell that will allow people who have died and gone to Hell, Sinners, to cleanse themselves of sin, thereby redeeming them and enter Heaven to put an end to the yearly extermination of Hell’s citizens by the exterminator angels. Charlie, assisted in her endeavors by her girlfriend Vaggie, porn star Angel Dust, “Radio Demon” Alastor, and others, is determined to see her goals through, despite all the pushback and obstacles that arise at every turn.

The first four episodes, released Jan. 19 on Amazon Prime Video, start the show off with a bang, picking up not long after the events



Photo: Amazon Prime

of the pilot as Charlie tries to make the hotel a success through her patron, Angel Dust. As the show progresses, the gang faces several struggles, from the extermination getting shifted to six months instead of a year to skepticism that redemption is possible before culminating in a massive battle against the exorcists in front of the hotel.

One of my favorite parts of the show is the animation. In this age of adult animation having similar, bland styles, Medrano’s eccentric art style is a breath of fresh air. Each character is distinct in appearance and a joy to see on screen. The backgrounds are so detailed and rich and give so much life to Hell. While the 2019 pilot’s animation was amazing and still holds up today, it is clear that there is an improvement in the Prime series. Everything is so crisp and well done. Even when blood and

gore are on screen, it is beautifully done and clear that the animators put in a lot of love.

The voice acting is also top-notch. When I found out that the voice cast from the pilot would not be returning, it was rather disappointing. I enjoyed all the actors who lent out their voices and was sad to hear they would be going. I had tentative hopes for the new actors doing justice to these characters.

As it turned out, I had nothing to worry about. While the pilot cast still holds a special place in my heart, the cast for the Prime series is amazing. Erika Henningsen is as sweet and fun as Charlie and plays the softer, sadder moments wonderfully. Stephanie Beatriz, as Vaggie, is sharp and witty but has a tenderness that comes through in her moments with Charlie and the song “Whatever It Takes.” Keith David as Husk is

wonderful and brings so much charm and charisma with his silky-smooth voice, making Husk a lot more likable than he was in the pilot. Nifty is primarily the comic relief in the show, but the manic energy delivered by Kimiko Glenn makes her a ton of fun to watch.

Blake Roman and Amir Talai, Angel Dust and Alastor’s voice actors, respectively, surprised me with how good they were. Angel Dust and Alastor were hands down my favorite characters and voices from the pilot, so I was a little worried that their new voices would not live up to the bar set by the characters’ previous actors. Instead, they brought so much more to the table and exceeded my expectations.

It was also great to see the familiar names of Alex Brightman, James Monroe Igleheart and Brandon Rogers. They all voice characters from “Helluva Boss,” the

sister show web series of “Hazbin Hotel,” and do a fantastic job with the characters they play in “Hazbin Hotel.” I could not be happier to see these characters being given such wonderful voices. Every actor in the show shines in every scene they are in, especially in the songs.

As a result of having such talented and amazing singers on the cast, the music numbers in each episode are incredible to listen to. It feels like you are watching a Broadway show, which likely is because many cast members are known for their roles on and off Broadway. Songs like “Stayed Gone,” “Poison,” “Loser Baby,” “You Didn’t Know,” “Out For Love,” and “Finale” are fantastic and left me breathless. Medrano’s work has always had killer music, but “Hazbin Hotel” steals the show entirely.

I am so happy for Medrano that she made this story idea into a full-blown show. It is an opportunity that does not come as often as it should. Season two of “Hazbin Hotel” has already been greenlit, so hopefully, it will not be too long before more of this fantastic show is released, hopefully with more than eight episodes. I cannot wait to see what will happen next for Charlie and her friends as they try to realize her dream.

“Hazbin Hotel” is currently available on Amazon Prime Video.

FEBRUARY 8, 2024

LIFESTYLE

THE RECORDER

Benny Butchers the Rap Game with “Everybody Can’t Go”

BY DASCHALL HAYES
Staff Writer

Hip-hop started in New York and has shifted in many ways that immortalized the genre forever. Buffalo native Benny the Butcher is bringing hip-hop back to its grimy roots inspired by the 1990s with raps about poverty, gangster activities, and selling drugs on his latest record, “Everybody Can’t Go.” The 39-year-old emcee has been building his name alongside his cousins, Conway The Machine & Westside Gunn, as the Griselda collective. His newest album continues to showcase the struggles of living in the slums of New York, drug dealing and the storytelling capabilities Benny holds as he raps over beats from The Alchemist and Hit-Boy.

The first lead single, “Big Dog,” featuring Lil Wayne, presents Benny and Weezy spitting bars on a low-key Alchemist beat about being at the top of their game, with Benny uttering street memories of being a dealer. At the same time, Weezy uses intense wordplay and references to talk about having multiple guns, women who flock to him and diamonds. Lil Wayne has had hilarious lyrics over the years, but “B-----s on me like fleas, but I don’t need no bugs, bunny” has got to be up there.

The second single, “One Foot In,” featuring Stove God



Photo: Youtube

Cooks, is similar. The chorus hits hard, and the Hit-Boy production would be perfect to play on game day. The most memorable aspect is the flow and delivery from Benny and Stove. The last single, “BRON,” a braggadocious comparison of Benny’s success to the legacy of four-time NBA Champion LeBron James, details the work put in to move his family out of the hood and become a mighty figure in hip-hop.

You can tell Benny has grown from his past and is genuinely blessed to be in his position today. Some lyrics contain that sentiment, like “I’m from the jungle where n----s count war wounds as accolades,” on the titular track featuring Kyle Banks, who had a phenomenal chorus. The intro, “Jermanie’s Graduation,” also examines seeing drug abuse and violence in his neighbor-

hood but being grateful to have made improvements in his life, like investing money and bringing his family into a better environment.

Since the lyrics are similar throughout, I want to discuss other riveting moments. A line that made me laugh out loud was on “Pillow Talk & Slander” featuring Jadakiss & Babyface Ray, where Benny said, “I lay on a n---a like Katt Williams perm.” That song also showed a change in sound for Babyface Ray, who mainly makes Michigan-style rap. I am not a fan of his boring flows on trap production, but he thrives on these relaxed, conscious beats. Plus, Jadakiss still sounds the same after 30 years. Armani Caesar’s feature on “Buffalo Kitchen Club” is also a record highlight. She is next up for women in hip-hop; I can predict it now. I must mention the small ounces of Snoop

Dogg we received on “Back Again.” I wish he had a verse, and it is great to see them collaborate after Snoop helped Benny get a good record deal.

My favorite song on the whole record is “TMVTL.” The song is split into three parts with beat changes, all produced by The Alchemist, each telling a unique story about the risks of partaking in street life. The first story entails a female corrections officer falling for an inmate and begins selling contraband on his behalf. She tries to quit, but he ends up telling on her and gets out early from prison. The next is about two brothers from the projects. One becomes a gangster, while the other gets involved in stocks and business. They both end up dating the same girl and are shocked to find out about this fact and that she’s pregnant. One of the brothers ends up killing the other and

the child after finding out he’s not the dad. The last story is about Benny recovering after being shot in the leg and how he wants to settle his difference with violence. This song is complex in ways I could barely comprehend.

“Griselda Express” featuring Westside Gunn, Conway The Machine, and Rick Hyde is a sorry excuse of a collab. I love the classical strings mixed with the kicks and hi-hats, but the hype is destroyed by Westside Gunn’s poorly mixed chorus and Conway’s lazy verse. Rick Hyde and Benny were better, but it was too late to fix it. “Big Tymers” is also disappointing, as I am not used to Benny on a traditional trap beat, and the chorus sounds unnecessarily autotuned. The flows are boring, and Peezy’s guest verse is average at best.

Benny the Butcher’s “Everybody Can’t Go” is a solid hip-hop album that exhibits his unique storytelling abilities and gritty style. The album has a consistent sound, with well-produced beats from The Alchemist and Hit-Boy featuring talented artists like Lil Wayne, Jadakiss, and Armani Caesar. While there are a few misses, such as “Griselda Express” and “Big Tymers,” the album is evidence of Benny’s talent and growth as an artist. Fans of classic hip-hop and raw storytelling will appreciate this record.

21 Savage Finally Drops a New Solo Album

BY DYLAN BRACCIA
Staff Writer

The new year began with a bang for 21 Savage, who released his third solo album, “American Dream,” in January.

Just a week into the new year, Savage teased the album with a movie-like poster on Instagram featuring himself, Donald Glover (aka Childish Gambino), and “Stranger Things” star Caleb McLaughlin. The next day, he posted a trailer for the album, again similar to a movie, and announced the album to release on Jan. 12.

With his last two albums coming out as collaborations with Metro Boomin and Drake, it was great to hear a solo album announced finally. Fans of Savage, myself included, have been waiting to listen to a solo album from the artist for a long time. His last solo album was “I Am > I Was,” released in 2018.

The album opens and closes with Savage’s mother, Heather Carmillia Joseph, speaking of her son’s past and future. I found that really strong. You do not usually hear many personal things from the artist. In between these, Savage goes to work in 15 tracks.

Savage strikes gold on track three,



Photo: Sue Kwon

“Redrum.” Over a classic-sounding beat crossed with heavy drums and bass, Savage delivers an amazing hype song. I immediately feel like I can run through a brick wall with this song. Savage pays homage to the 1980 film, “The Shining” on this track. In a scene from that movie, “redrum” is spelled out in red. Flip around “redrum,” and you get murder. Savage also includes Jack Nicholson’s iconic line at the end of the song, “Here’s Johnny!”

The album features some of the biggest rappers in the game, including Lil Durk, Young Thug and Travis Scott. Savage and his features deliver great verses, but none better than Scott’s on “Née-Nah.” It very

well could be Scott’s best feature he has ever done. His rap over the Metro Boomin beat to match the speed and pacing of the beat, along with his rhyme scheme, makes this a great track.

Savage also has three strong features from three great women in the industry. Summer Walker’s hook on “Prove It” is the best on the album. Doja Cat matches Savage’s unique style in her verse on “N.H.I.E.” by including her own ad libs. I find it hilarious that her word choice was just to say “ad lib.” Mariah the Scientist linked up with Savage for the outro, “Dark Days.”

Although not featured on the album, Drake’s influence is felt. With many of the beats

feeling old-school and sample-driven, they sound like they are for Drake instead. Savage, a frequent collaborator with Drake, continues his style over the songs, keeping true to his form of bars and ad libs.

Metro Boomin does make his way onto the album for four songs. I do not know if a better duo exists right now between a rapper and a producer. These tracks deliver more complex beats for Savage to spit over. With all the work these two have done together, including two collaboration albums and multiple features on each other’s albums, they continue to improve.

A song I have not seen a lot of love for is “Sneaky.” Savage’s abili-

ty with rhythm is evident. Both verses maintain the same rhythm scheme and include a new ad lib for Savage. I enjoyed this ad lib, with him just saying, “mhm.”

Overall, I would give this album a nine out of 10. Savage came through with this album. I feel a couple of the slower songs, like “Letter to My Brudda” and “See the Real,” do not draw to me as much as the rest, but even then, I am still listening to the whole album in order without skipping songs. If you have not heard this album, this is a must-listen. It has the feel of a top rap album that will be discussed all year.

Savage’s album debuted at No. 1 on Billboard’s Top 200, marking it his fourth consecutive No. 1 album. The album sold 131,000 units in its first week, matching his previous solo album. With little promotion and no lead singles released before the album, this is a massive success.

Unfortunately, it seems we will not actually be getting a movie to accompany the album. Savage admitted it was just to promote the album, calling it a “parody” on Shannon Sharpe’s “Club Shay Shay” podcast. He did go on to say that his story can be made into a movie, so there is potential for that.



: @centralrecorder

Men's Basketball Narrowly Defeats Saint Francis



Photo: Ben Daddio

BY JASON HARTMAN
Staff Writer

The Central Connecticut State University Blue Devils men's basketball team held on to narrowly defeat the Saint Francis University Red Flash, 63-62, on Thursday in Detrick Gymnasium.

The win extended the Blue Devils' record to 7-1 in Northeast conference play and 13-8 overall.

Senior Kellen Amos led Central in scoring with 13, while junior Jayden Brown led in rebounds with nine.

The Blue Devils shot 50% in the first half, leading Central to a nine-point advantage at the halftime break.

The second half proved to be a physical one, with the two sides combining for 22 fouls. The Red Flash came out

of the break hot from beyond the three-point line, allowing them to keep the contest close until the end.

Saint Francis eventually took a one-point lead with just over four minutes remaining. The two sides traded the lead back and forth throughout the rest of the game.

The Blue Devils retained a one-point advantage for the final 2:22. Jayden Brown's block on the final Saint Francis possession gave Central a slim victory.

Central missed seven free throws, which served as part of the reason Saint Francis kept it close. In the end, critical defensive plays proved to be the difference maker.

Brown's game-winning block tied his career-high at four.

"I saw Joe (Os-

trowsky) was defending and forcing (the ball-handler) to me," Brown said. "When he did, I went up for the block."

Ostrowsky played well on both ends of the floor. He tallied 11 points, including a 3-4 effort from behind the three-point line, along with four steals and played a pivotal role in the game's final sequence.

"The team did a great job finding me today," Ostrowsky said. "A lot of steals were tipped. But overall, it was a great job by the team to get me going and get out and run once I got a steal."

The Blue Devils now focus on a pivotal NEC road matchup on Saturday against Merrimack College, who will enter the game in second place, just behind the Blue Devils.

Head coach Pat-

rick Sellers stressed the importance of keeping things in perspective ahead of the upcoming matchup.

"We are going to need to lock in and concentrate," he said. "We gotta get guys feeling comfortable so they can be confident in hitting open shots."

A win against Merrimack will go a long way in solidifying the Blue Devils' chances of hosting Northeast Conference Tournament games inside Detrick Gymnasium. They already defeated Merrimack at home, 75-70 on Jan. 15.

Central will return to Detrick Gymnasium on Thursday, Feb. 8, when they take on in-state rival Sacred Heart University. The game will start at 7 p.m., and fans are encouraged to wear blue.



CCSU ATHLETICS SCHEDULE

MEN'S B-BALL

Feb. 8 vs. Sacred Heart
Feb. 10 vs. FDU
Feb. 15 @ Le Moyne
Feb. 22 @ Wagner

WOMEN'S B-BALL

Feb. 9 @ Sacred Heart
Feb. 15 vs. Le Moyne
Feb. 22 vs. Wagner
Feb. 24 vs. Sacred Heart

MEN'S TRACK & FIELD

Feb. 10 @ BU Invite
Feb. 10 @ Coaches Invite
Feb. 18 @ NEC
Feb. 19 @ NEC

WOMEN'S TRACK & FIELD

Feb. 9 @ BU Invite
Feb. 10 @ URI Invite
Feb. 18 @ NEC
Feb. 19 @ NEC

SWIM & DIVE

Feb. 20 @ NEC
Feb. 21 @ NEC
Feb. 22 @ NEC
Feb. 23 @ NEC

SOFTBALL

Feb. 10 vs. Saint Peter's
Feb. 10 vs. Saint Peter's
Feb. 25 vs. Saint Peter's
Feb. 25 vs. Saint Peter's

Athlete of the Week: Jewelle Maziarz, Swimming and Diving

BY IAN YALE
Sports Editor

Central Connecticut State University swimming and diving is widely considered one of the top swim and dive programs in the Northeast Conference, and sophomore diver Jewelle Maziarz has led the way.

Maziarz competes in one of the more nuanced sports offered at the Division I level, and she excelled this week.

Winning her second NEC Diver of the Week award, Maziarz became the first Blue Devil to qualify for NCAA Zone Diving in six years.

In a meet at the University of Rhode Island, Maziarz took home gold in the 1-meter dive, scoring 282.45, less than a point off the program record.

Despite competing in a largely solo sport, Maziarz keeps her team's success in mind nonetheless.



Photo: Ian Yale

"I do have goals that I set for myself every meet," Maziarz said. "But I also think about it as the better I do, the more I contribute towards the team."

However, Maziarz's goals reach much higher than just meet-to-meet as she looks to outdo her 2023 NEC Diver of the Year performance.

After already reaching the top of the

conference, Maziarz's development is self-driven.

"My goal is to excel more where I know I can," Maziarz said. "I like to take it one meet at a time and one dive at a time."

Maziarz was very open about the expectations of being a Division I athlete and the stress that comes with it.

"I've had a lot of awards, and sometimes I

get stressed about what the conference expects from me, what my coaches expect from me and my teammates," Maziarz said. "I try to just be myself."

Diving at the NCAA level was not part of Maziarz's original plans, much less at a Division I program. Despite her numerous awards and achievements, she has only been a diver for four years. She said her gym-

nastics background has done a lot of heavy lifting in her development.

"I didn't think I was going to do college athletics," Maziarz said. "When I met the team, it was a very team-oriented group of girls. We're all one big family."

Maziarz spoke highly of the role the team plays in her life and the role she plays on the team.

"I love it," she said.

Just like all student-athletes, Maziarz's day-to-day life is a balancing act. Between classes for her biomolecular science major, practices, lifts, and anything else thrown her way, she had proved to be an asset to Blue Devils' Swim and Dive and the entire Central community.

Maziarz will compete to defend her NEC Diving crown as the Blue Devils travel to Geneva, Ohio, for the NEC Championships at the end of February.

Women's Basketball Gets Revenge Against Merrimack

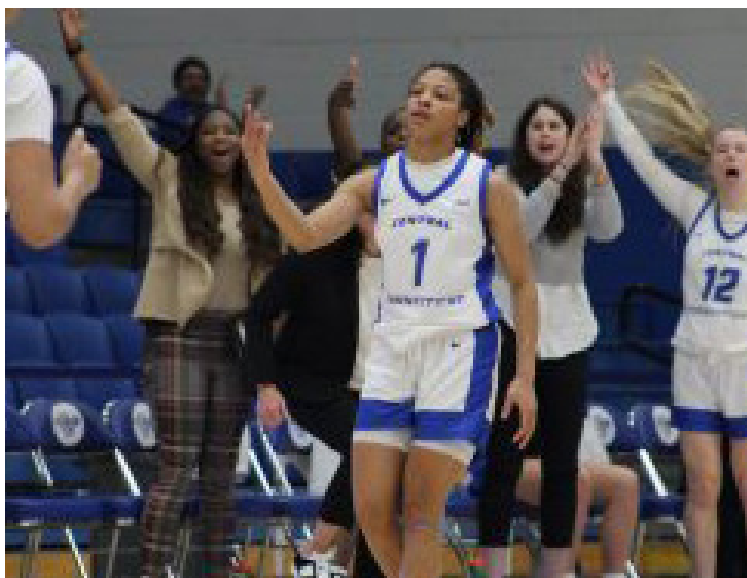


Photo: Ian Yale

BY KRISTIN ROSE
Staff Writer

The Central Connecticut State University women's basketball team had complete

control over Merrimack College in their 78-72 win on Saturday in Detrick Gymnasium.

The win tied CCSU and Merrimack

for fourth place in Northeast Conference play with a record of 4-5.

Sophomore Samora Watson dominated the scoring with 37 points, her fifth game with over 25 points.

"The team feeds off my energy," Watson said. "When I have good energy, we have a good game, so I try to keep my energy high."

Watson dominated not only on offense but on defense as well. She recorded two steals and seven rebounds.

Merrimack handed CCSU their first conference loss in Jan-

uary. Watson scored six points in that game and was seeking revenge this time. She said losing was not an option.

"First time we played them, I had a bad game, and I just had to get my get back," Watson said.

The 2023-24 Northeast Conference women's basketball preseason poll had CCSU picked to finish ninth, which is last place.

Watson said the team knows that the NEC preseason poll predicted them to finish in last place, and they carry a chip on their shoulders each game

because of it.

"This win was very important for the team," she said. "We had a couple rough patches at the beginning, but now we just have to keep it going."

Central looks to extend their two-game winning streak as they hope to creep up in the NEC standings.

The Blue Devils will be on the road for a game against Sacred Heart University before returning to Detrick Gymnasium to host the Le Moyne College Dolphins on Feb. 15 at 7 p.m.