

The Recorder

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CCSU Hosts Connecticut Supreme Court Hearings at Davidson Hall



Photo: Jasper Kulinski

BY IAN YALE & JASPER KULINSKI
Staff Writers

Central Connecticut State University hosted the Connecticut State Supreme Court in Torp Theatre at Lawrence J. Davidson Hall on Thursday, Oct. 19.

Chief Justice Richard A. Robinson, accompanied by justices Andrew J. McDonald, Gregory D’Auria, Raheem L. Mullins, Steven D. Ecker, Joan K. Alexander and Nora Dannehy, heard two cases. The event was organized by the Criminology department and Dr. Beth Merenstein.

The first case, *State of Connecticut v. Lawrence Lee Henderson*, opened with the defense attorney arguing for the modification of a previous case, *State v. Arroyo*. The modification would allow for judicial review of legally inconsistent verdicts.

The prosecution’s rebuttal revolved around the subjectivity of a jury, stating that any singular jury could make rulings with legal inconsistencies and overcharge a defendant.

After the court

took a recess, the defense attorney Pamela Nagy gave her take on the potential verdict.

“They’re testifying on behalf of the state,” Nagy said. “It’s no benefit to them [to overcharge.]”

The second case, *Vincent G. Benvenuto v. Kevin Brookman*, is rooted in a series of confrontations and disputes involving Benvenuto and Brookman, both of whom are well-known figures within the community.

Benvenuto, a local police officer and community activist, alleges that Kevin Brookman, a prominent local blogger, engaged in a campaign of online harassment, defamation, and the dissemination of false information about him.

Benvenuto’s legal team and his attorney Gregory Jones, argued that Brookman’s actions had caused irreparable harm to their client’s reputation and livelihood. They presented a series of online posts, comments, and articles

published by Brookman, which they claimed were false, malicious, and intended to tarnish Benvenuto’s image.

Conversely, Brookman’s defense attorney, Mario Cerame, argued that his client had merely exercised his First Amendment rights to free speech and expression, presenting his online posts and articles as protected forms of opinion and commentary.

They contended that Benvenuto’s claims lacked merit and that his lawsuit was an attempt to stifle the free exchange of ideas and opinions in the public domain.

Central to the case was the question of whether Brookman’s online activities had crossed the line from legitimate critique and commentary into harassment and defamation.

The *Vincent G. Benvenuto v. Kevin Brookman* case has sparked debates not only about the balance between free speech and reputation but also about the responsibility of individuals when they express their opinions online.

President Toro Condemns SGA Email

BY JASPER KULINSKI
Staff Writer

The Central Connecticut State University Student Government Association sent a “Call to Action” email to all students regarding the “All Out for Palestine” protest in light of the Israel-Palestine conflict and was quickly condemned by President Zulma Toro.

“It’s a beautiful day to exercise your right to protest at the Connecticut State Capitol,” SGA stated in the email. “I’m sure you heard about what’s going on in Palestine, but sometimes what we hear is not always true.”

Haneen Alkabasi,

SGA president, said she was not aware of the impacts that the email would have.

“It was a miscommunication,” Alkabasi said. “As individuals, we can have our own opinions. As a collective, we [SGA] are supposed to stay neutral, basically, the university stays neutral. It’s school policy. I wasn’t aware of the policies. My emails never have to be looked through by anyone. After it was sent out, the administration told me to retract the email. It was just an oversight.”

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How CCSU is Buzzing Towards Sustainability



Central Connecticut State University has recently implemented a bee apiary into the campus ecosystem to help the university reduce its carbon footprint.

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Schlock Club is A Barrel of Laughs For All



Central Connecticut State University’s improv club, Schlock, provides students an on-campus opportunity for comedy and fun through improv skits.

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About

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President Toro Condemns SGA Email

BY JASPER KULINSKI
Staff Writer

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President Toro said students and faculty should educate one another during these times.

"We do support free expression by working with faculty to hold lectures open to the public," Toro said. "In addition to that, the students are encouraged to host events that will help edu-

cate and inform the campus and general community about the situation," Toro said. "I continue to encourage faculty to have those conversations in the classrooms and hallways. Faculty members are the key to help us educate everyone."

CCSU has an antisemitism taskforce and is considering bringing in other religious groups, Toro said.

"Last year put

together a task force for antisemitism," Toro said. "We scheduled to meet with them Thursday to see their feedback how to continue fostering education process around this conflict. Should we bring different religious leaders to campus to help us with a peace event or walk, to see what is next? I continue to encourage faculty to have those conversations in the classrooms and hallways. Keep in mind,

conflict that has been happening for centuries, all need to be educated."

Students struggling with recent events can reach out to counseling at the Wellness Center, located at Willard-DiLoreto Hall room W101. Both walk-ins and appointments are welcome. Faculty members can reach out to the Human Resources Department, located at Davidson Hall room 201.

LALCC Open House and Mariachi Performance



Photo: Nathalia Blair

BY NATHALIA BLAIR
News Editor

Latin American, Latino, and Caribbean Center fostered a sense of pride and acceptance among students of diverse backgrounds at its open house and Mariachi performance on Friday, Oct. 13. Director of LALCC and professor of history and Latin American history, Mary Ann Mahony said Central Connecticut State University is a growing community for Hispanic or Latino students.

"We discovered through our analysis of student registrations that perhaps two-thirds of Connecticut cities and towns have sent Hispanic or Latino students to CCSU to study," Mahony said.

Mahony said LALCC continues to raise awareness and educate residents of the cultures of Latin America, the Caribbean and Latinos living in the United States.

"Our goal with the program as a whole is to help the citizens of Connecticut and particularly those who live in the area around CCSU to understand the richness and the complexity of the cultures of Latin America, the Caribbean and Latinos living in the United States," Mahony said. "We've been doing that now for several years and this year we're focusing on Mexico."

Mahony said this is their last major event but there are other ways to get involved.

"We have a bi-weekly series one called Mentoring Mondays and the other one called

Talking Tuesdays," Mahony said.

Although Mahony is not Hispanic or Latin herself, Mahony said different cultures can explore ways to embrace and celebrate diverse cultures without being a native.

"I have a doctoral degree in Latin American history and an undergraduate degree in Spanish," Mahony said. "So, I don't actually think you have to come from the culture to be able to study it."

Anthony Moreno, the student representative and president of the Latin American student organization said he was disconnected from his culture when he was younger and didn't have a community that he felt like he belonged to. Coming to CCSU reaffirmed him to embrace his culture again, he said.

"I am really enjoying the event," Moreno said. "I am Mexican myself. I came over when I was five and ever since then, I think there's been a disconnect with me in my Mexican culture. The first time that I came here to CCSU was the first time where I really came back to my culture."

Gladys Moreno Fuentes, an associate counselor at Counseling and Student Development said, this event encourages diversity and inclusivity by showcasing the contributions of different ethnic groups.

"This is a country of immigrants and celebrating all the contributions of the different groups in this country is very important," Fuentes said. "It's important to recognize, validate and celebrate. And I think that is exactly what this event is doing."

Fuentes said people in the United States should remain curious about other cultures.

"This country is very mixed and this type of event is another opportunity to continue integrating," Fuentes said. "Learning from each other, understanding each other, and appreciating each other."

LALCC is located in Elihu Burritt Library on floor four.

How CCSU is Buzzing Towards Sustainability



Photo: Savanna Yelling

BY SAVANNA YELLING
Editor-in-Chief

Central Connecticut State University has recently implemented a bee apiary into the campus ecosystem to help the university reduce its carbon footprint.

The two beehives in the CCSU apiary were donated by David Serino, the director of Environmental Health and Safety and Cornell University certified Master Beekeeper.

The apiary is kept by Serino and Dr. Alicia Bray, an entomologist and biology professor at CCSU, but they are looking for students to get involved, Bray and Serino said.

Beekeeping is used as a form of therapy due to its repetitive, monotonous nature, Bray said.

"You're forced to be calm," Bray said. "So, it actually helps with PTSD and that could help any student. Like if you're feeling stressed, that is one of the benefits of a pollinator club. You can actually have part of this as your routine to kind of force you to get grounded and be calm."

Serino said he is looking forward to sharing his passion for beekeeping with students to ensure that the apiary is cared for after his time at CCSU.

"I would love to share what I know," Serino said. "I would love

to be able to get younger, passionate, another generation, a new generation of beekeepers."

Serino donated two hives from his at-home apiary to CCSU this year.

Pollinators, such as honeybees, increase the sustainability of plants. The longer plants are kept alive, the less they need to be replanted, Bray said.

"The sustainability aspect is it increases pollination services," Bray said. "So we have a lot of landscape on our campus, the flowers, all the plants that we have need to be pollinated. It increases the health of the plants that we just love to look at."

Honeybees not only enhance the appearance of greenery on campus, they will also increase harvest in the campus greenhouse which is located directly behind the apiary.

"That's one of the benefits," Bray said. "So we have grapes, we have, tomatoes, we have, peaches and pears. We have a wide range of, food and this increases our yield."

Despite the apiary being a new addition to campus, Serino has already noticed an increase in produce from the greenhouse, he said.

CCSU's apiary is still a few seasons away from being able to extract honey. But, Serino's at-home apiary has yielded about 200 pounds of honey so far. By next honey-harvesting season

CCSU's apiary will be ready for an extraction, he said.

"They make it through the winter... I mean, there'll be some honey," Serino said. "We'll have some honey for sure. We could get 50 pounds of honey from one of the hives."

The apiary is also placed near the campus community gardens alongside Copernicus Garage. Bray and Serino said they hope for students to be able to utilize the community garden plots.

"Just being able to take care of a small plot, not only can you grow food, but you can also, reduce your stress and increase school performance," Bray said. "The beehives right there allow for easy pollination. We can come together as a community and actually just crank this out if we have enough people sign up. And then we can subsequently have people sign up for their own plot. Which I think is nice."

The gardens have been out of use since the COVID-19 pandemic, Serino said.

"There's no reason why they can't be resurrected," Serino said. "Joe, who's head of facilities, he can kind of help facilitate getting it cleaned up. If there's going to be people actually doing it."

The campus community garden and apiary can be kept by students for them to reap the benefits of them.

Editor's Column: The Tightrope of Unbiased Reporting

BY SAVANNA YELLING

Editor-in-Chief

As journalism students, we are taught to be unbiased at all times. In our reporting and even our personal social media presence. But, we all have biases whether we act on them or not, which makes this increasingly difficult during times like these.

Before I got into journalism I aspired to be an activist, which is the case for many journalism majors. When you go from being outspoken and opinionated on every social justice issue or political conflict that arises, you're in for a rude awakening when you're taught to be unbiased as a journalist.

We learn that our activism must shift from sharing personal opinions on issues and sharing information that aligns with our beliefs, to seeking out the truth and telling people's stories from an unbiased perspective.

While opinions vary on who the oppressor is in the ongoing Israeli-Palestinian conflict, one thing is clear: everyone is taking a side.

One quote that has stuck out to me for years is from Desmond Tutu: "If you are neutral in situations of injustice, you have chosen the side of the oppressor."

Are journalists siding with the oppressor by remaining unbiased and seeking the truth

from both sides of a conflict?

Our writers pitched stories wanting to shed light on certain groups and I found myself asking other writers to cover the "other side" in hopes of the paper not being perceived as biased.

When one writer did not complete the coverage of a certain student group on campus, I worried that I would have to scrap the other story because "both sides" were not getting equal coverage. This was not due to a lack of intent to uplift all voices, but because one student ran out of time to cover the story. I then contemplated writing the story myself, but then I worried that running a story that highlights one side of a conflict coming from the "Editor-in-Chief" may give readers the wrong impression.

We have already received backlash for our unbiased coverage of a protest, with people claiming that we support one side. Let this be a reminder to readers: The coverage of an event or organization does not equate to the support of said event or organization. The writers and editors at The Recorder are working hard to leave our natural personal biases out of stories and give ethical, accurate reporting.

SGA Briefs

The Student Government Association meets every Wednesday at 3:05 p.m. in Bellin A and B of the Student Center. The meetings are open to all of the Central Connecticut State University community.

These briefs are from the SGA's Senate meeting on Oct. 18.

Swearing in Ceremony

Dr. Kellie Byrd Danso swore in the new first-year, resident, and commuter senators. The new senators are as follows: Senator Orellana, Senator Lewis, Senator Guzman, Senator Sanchez, Senator Kasamba, Senator Smith, Senator Castro, Senator Sandvliet, Senator Henry, Senator Medina, Senator Mitchell, Senator Adeniyi, and Senator Doung.

B. Motion to reallocate \$15,000 from SG9010 Reserves to SG9018 New Club Base. (Palardy, Cidern)

a) Treasurer Palardy moved to reallocate \$15,000 from SG9010 Reserves to SG9018 New Club Base. Seconded by Senator Cidern
i) Treasurer Palardy spoke in favor of his motion stating that SG9018 is running low and needs more funding in it.

(1) There was a vote by roll call.

(a) Yes – 24

(b) No – 0

(c) Abstentions – 1

(d) This motion was passed.

Silent Sky Presents the Best of CCSU Theatre

BY JAYDEN KLAUS
Lifestyle Editor

Central Connecticut State University Department of Theatre's production of "Silent Sky," directed by Christie Maturo and with book by Lauren Gunderson, tells the story of Henrietta Leavitt, an American astronomer who made strides in astronomy through the discoveries she made. The play celebrates Leavitt and her peers as they shake things up in the field of astronomy.

The show was put on in the Blackbox Theater in Maloney Hall and had a run time of 90 minutes. I enjoy theater immensely, but I haven't seen many shows based on historical events, so I was curious as to how this instance of real-world history combined with theatrical presentation would play out for this show and performance.

The show begins with Henrietta informing her sister Margret about how she has just accepted an offer to work at Harvard College Observatory to further the field of research of the stars. Margret is upset that her sister is leaving but Henrietta departs for Boston. After a rocky introduction to her boss Edward Pickering's assistant, Peter Shaw, Henrietta meets her colleagues Williamina Fleming and Annie Cannon.

Henrietta begins

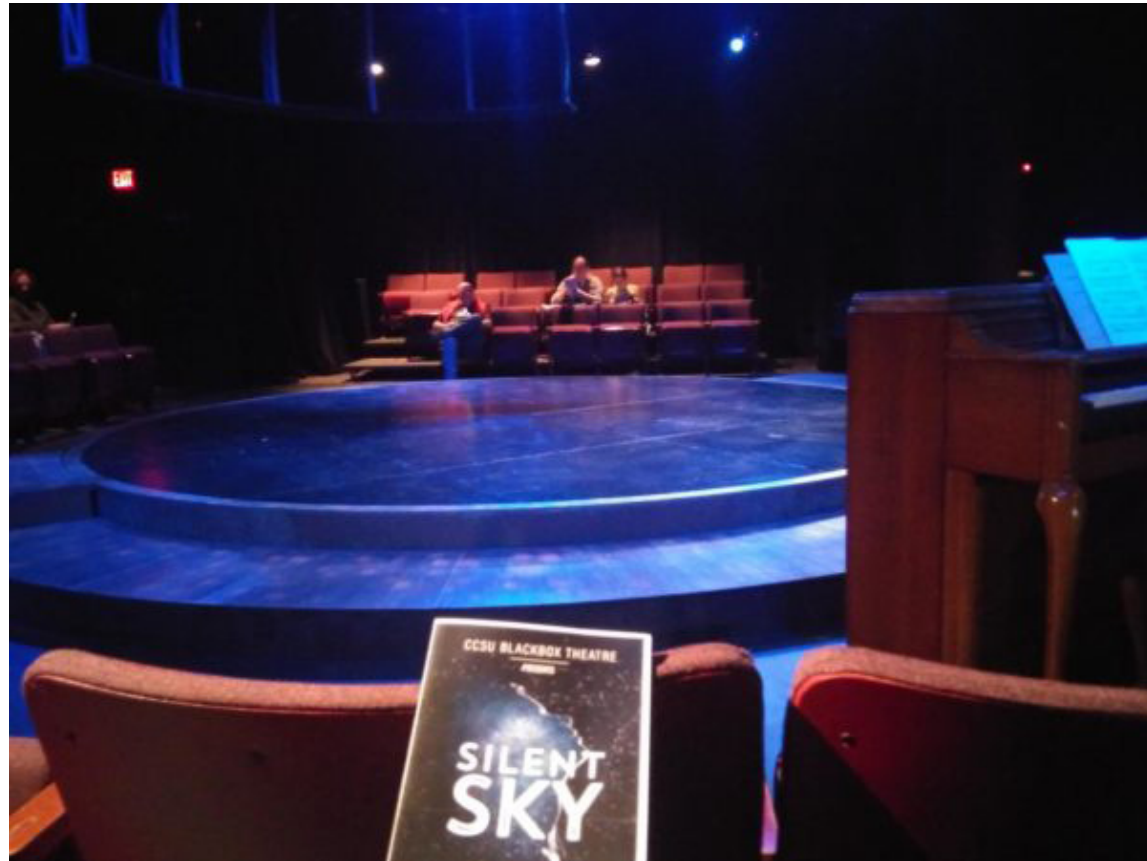


Photo: Jayden Klaus

working as a human computer, a typical woman's job for the time where she examines and measures the brightness of stars recorded as data on photographic plates. Margret frequently updates Henrietta about their family back home in Wisconsin but Henrietta is too busy with her work to respond most of the time and the sisters have a bit of a falling out as a result.

Henrietta begins to notice many instances of Cepheid variable stars in the Magellanic Clouds galaxies and how their brightness changes. She reasons that there must be an explanation for it and pours herself into finding out. Henrietta becomes closer with Peter and they realize they have feelings for each other.

Unfortunately, Henrietta's father falls ill and she returns home to be there for him and her sister. She continues her work and repairs her relationship with Margret. While she's home, Henrietta realizes that the pattern of how bright the Cepheid stars are can be used to determine how far away from Earth they are, which in turn can be used to calculate the size of the universe.

Henrietta's work gets published and it gets used by many other researchers in their own discoveries. After she had lost contact with Peter, Henrietta meets back up with him but their relationship has gotten cold and distant, so Henrietta instead devotes herself back to her work. After

she returns from a trip to Europe, Henrietta meets up with Margret, Williamina, and Annie to hear about what has been happening with them and to share what she has learned.

Henrietta falls ill and is forced to start working from home but she gets promoted to the head of the department of computers where she first made her discovery. Henrietta reconciles with Peter, who tells her that her data and discoveries have been used to prove that the universe isn't solely confined to the Milky Way galaxy, but is vast and huge like she believed it was. To celebrate, Henrietta, Annie, Williamina, Margret, and Peter break into the Harvard Observatory to look

through the telescope and see the stars.

The play ends with Henrietta explaining how after her death, there was an attempt to nominate her for a Nobel Prize for her work and she recounts all of the scientific discoveries and accomplishments that mankind has made in space as a result of her work.

This was a rather enjoyable play to watch. The cast was small but fantastic. Aria Adee was passionate as Henrietta and on point in every scene she was in. Ceara Sweet as Margret was bold and did very well with her more minor role. Margarita Rivera and Allie Nadeau as Annie and Williamina respectively were very funny and gave a lot of humor and wit to their characters. And Cedric Westcott was fantastic as Peter, putting his all into the role and doing great with every line of dialogue.

The CCSU Department of Theatre did a fantastic job of putting on the show and presenting it to the audience. Many people showed up for opening night, and the cast and crew did not disappoint. I look forward to seeing how the CCSU Blackbox Theatre will do future shows.

CCSU Blackbox Theatre will be performing "Eurydice" from December 6-9, 2023 and "The 39 Steps" from March 6-9, 2024.

Upcoming Campus Events

Friday, Oct. 27

- Capture the Flag cybersecurity competition in Applied Innovation Hub room 416.

Sunday, Oct. 29

- Undergraduate Open House at 9 a.m.

Tuesday, Oct. 31

- Happy Halloween!
- Trick or Treat E-Resource Fair at 1 p.m. in Elihu Burritt Library

Saturday, Nov. 4

- Free planetarium show: "Stellar Zombies" in the Copernican Planetarium

Wednesday, Nov. 8

- The Recorder headshot workshop at the First Gen Fair

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LIFESTYLE

THE RECORDER

Schlock Club is A Barrel of Laughs For All

BY JAYDEN KLAUS
Lifestyle Editor

Central Connecticut State University's improv club, Schlock, provides students an on-campus opportunity for comedy and fun through improv skits.

The club hosts improv games in both short and long form formats. It is self-proclaimed to function like the television comedy series, "Whose Line Is It Anyway?" so there are plenty of hilarious shenanigans to be had. Even if you haven't seen the show before, Schlock is still a great time to be had for all interested in a funny, good time.

The club offers a warm and inviting environment, where anyone is able to come and participate if they want, or they can simply watch others perform and enjoy their time there. It's a really fun way to spend time and make friends with others on campus through comedic skits.

At the meeting,



Photo: Jayden Klaus

club members host several kinds of improv games where participants have to come up with and play along with various scenarios. The games are open to anyone attending the meeting and you can get up and participate with others in them. Even if you decide to stay a part of the audience, you can still be a part of the game by responding to the asks for suggestions for elements to be present in the

scenario.

As an improv club, it is important to keep the scenarios going until the scene is ended, and this results in some very funny moments. People are encouraged to say or do anything to prevent stagnation and progress the scenario forwards, even if it is ridiculous. Some of the best parts come from people just saying what comes to mind and the other participants rolling

with it.

There is no shame in being silly at Schlock, as everyone is there just to have a good time and some laughs. Some people will give each other advice on how to make scenarios and performances run smoother to make it more enjoyable for everyone. It's all in good fun and trying to help others get more into the groove of improv, while still having fun with it.

Club Secretary Kolby Rios said that he enjoys being a part of Schlock because he likes hanging out with his friends in it and the club provides people a way to have fun with their friends.

"We have a saying in Schlock," said Rios. "'Come in and leave your brain at the door.' The club gives people a place to have fun and find their people."

Cathal Leone said that she finds Schlock to be a great way for her to destress and have a great time with other people on campus.

"I like to participate and be able to talk in front of other people," said Leone. "It's a great way to learn public speaking because you're making it up as you go."

Schlock is hosting an upcoming improv comedy show on November 15, at 8:00 PM in Alumni Hall. The club currently meets twice a week every Tuesday and Friday at 4:00 PM in Davidson 123 in Lawrence J. Davidson Hall.

Student Center Hosts Family Feud on Campus

BY DAVID COCCHIOLA
Staff Writer

Usually, any headline with the words "Feud on Campus" is not the best thing to see in the newspaper, but last week's Devil's Den @ 10 PM event flipped the script and showed us just how much fun a feud could be.

That's right, everyone's favorite gameshow paid a visit to Semesters last Thursday when the Student Center hosted a lively game of Family Feud.

The game ran mostly faithful to its star-studded origin. Two "families" composed of four students faced off on stage, having to answer what they thought was the most popular response to certain survey questions.

Instead of surveying a random selection

of America's citizens on questions like, "What's the last thing a robber would want to see when he breaks into a house?" Student Center employees were selected as the survey's targets, and were asked questions like "What's the best residence hall on campus?" and "What is a broke college kid's go-to food?"

Each family of students had to come up with an original name for themselves. The first round pinned the Andreas family and the Washington family against each other.

The Andreas family emerged victorious from that round, making good points with the questions, "Name something associated with

vampires," and "What is the most popular food at Devil's Den?" with the top answers of, "blood" and "burgers."

The Andreas family went on to face the Charlie family, and once again, emerged victorious, but not without a fight. Charlie stole twice but, didn't put any answers on the board. Leaving them high and dry, and returning the points back to Andreas.

The best question from that round was "What is the first thing CCSU students do when they wake up?" The top answer was, "check their phone." The best answer was "cry."

The feud continued, and the Andreas family got knocked off their two-round streak when the Blindside family managed to dodge two attempted steals and emerged victorious.

This was the round with the ever-controversial question, "What's the best residence hall on

campus." The top answer was the "suite" digs of Mid-Campus.

The Blindside family's victory was short-lived however, losing to the Bulldozers who went onto the final round. The Bulldozer's final opponent was the Johnson family, and it was a round of the ages.

The Bulldozers dropped the ball on two steals, giving the Johnsons a major advantage in points moving into the third question. On the third question, points were doubled, the Johnsons fumbled the steal, giving the Bulldozers all the points, winning them the game.

The final question of the game was, "Name something people might do once a week." The top answer was, "laundry."

The four members of the winning Bulldozer family walked away with a Student Center mug and a Starbucks gift card. But, everyone who showed up got something, with

an open buffet of buffalo wings, jalapeno poppers and lemonade. If that wasn't enough, the crafts table was making custom spray-painted bucket hats for any attendee.

Isiah Thornton, a Student Center worker and the host for the night, said he was pleased with the event.

"The night went well," Thornton said. "It was my first time hosting something like this and I had a lot of fun."

Thornton, despite hosting the games, also admitted that he had fun as well.

"[I had] full faith in Andreas, but they sold," Thornton said.

All in all, Devil's Den @ 10 PM proved itself to be a great way to spend a Thursday night. Next Thursday night is the "Schlocktober Spooktacular", which promises "Some good laughs and some spooky fun," according to Schlock improv club advertisements.

The Return of Sampha: 'Lahai' Album Analysis

BY DASCHALL HAYES
Staff Writer

English singer and songwriter Sampha has endured a lengthy hiatus from music after his critically acclaimed debut album "Process" released in 2017, documenting his feelings after the death of his parents. The album would receive numerous music victories, and he would become a collaborator with the likes of Drake, Kendrick Lamar, Travis Scott and many more well-known musicians. His absence from music has left a sour taste in the mouths of R&B and electronic fanatics, desperately waiting to hear his soulful yet melancholic tracks about distress and reflection. Thankfully, Sampha has unleashed his sophomore studio album titled "Lahai," taken from his middle name. This album will take you on a rollercoaster of emotions, with self-discovery, independence, and acceptance at the forefront.

"Spirit 2.0" was the first song Sampha gave the public in six years. The relaxing piano keys and amusing drum patterns make the song a perfect lead single. The chorus alone makes you want to bust a move, even if the subject matter is not as optimistic. Sampha examines his methods of self-reflection and how he wishes to connect better with loved ones. He knows that he needs help and that being clueless is okay. Living in the moment is the best medicine for his confusion.

The second single, "Only," shows a unique perspective on Sampha's mind and how he copes



Photo: Dexter Navy

with societal pressures like finding romance and authenticity in his life. He is still going through the pains that life has brought him, but God is taking him through it. I love the upbeat drums, the sporadic beat drops, and the simplistic yet refreshing melody of the piano.

Sampha can beautifully connect his feelings of freedom and self-discovery with a theme of flying high like a bird. He mentions the idea of flying multiple times on the project, but the best instance is in the song "Jonathan L. Seagull." The song goes in-depth about Sampha's skewed view of his romantic relationships and considers the fears and comforts they can bring. The well-sung and infectious chorus and mesmerizing production make it feel like you're soaring in the air with no care. The title references a book Sampha's older brother read him as a child. Written by Richard Bach, it details the story of a seagull who distances himself from his

flock and learns how to fly by himself, which can tie into the general theme of the album and how Sampha is learning to deal with his issues solitarily.

Similarly, the song "Inclination Comppas (Tenderness)" uses more metaphors relating to flying on this jazzy beat. With lyrics such as "And we're in need of some tenderness, mm/Like sunrise through a flying crowd/Did we have to be so featherless, mm," the desire for emotional warmth and connection amidst the chaos is something Sampha needs.

Every song on the album is interconnected as the topic matter is relatively similar. While you may think that could hinder Sampha's lyrical growth, you would be far from correct. Sampha makes each song sound different with refreshing production and introspective lyrics that leave you thinking about your life and how you could be a better version of yourself. "Satellite Business" has you recognizing the

limits on your everlasting journey, even speaking this message through his daughter's eyes, reminding him that he still has time to get through everything.

The pacifying production and soothing vocals make you want to fall asleep to the music, and I've found myself dozing off to the tunes a bit, but that isn't a detriment to the overall feeling of Sampha's statements. I see myself re-listening to these songs and catching new topics and meanings with each verse, heightening the experience of the album, and allowing for more self-reflection.

When listening to the bridge of "What If You Hypnotise Me?" I initially focused on the questions Sampha writes, "Is it that I need some love, love of the selfish kind?/Is it that I need to know what's in the depth of mind?/Indeed if I do find out, would I just stay confined?" which ask about self-love and understanding which could lead to either happiness or

loneliness, but I completely glossed over him saying, "Is it 'cause memories break, why I feel lost in time?/Is it 'cause I've made mistakes, karma taking flight?/But if you could hypnotize me/Then maybe, then peace would find me," which note the mistakes Sampha makes and if comprehending them can bring tranquility.

As expressed, Sampha's long-awaited sophomore studio album, "Lahai," marks a triumphant return to the music scene after a six-year hiatus. This album presents a fascinating and thoughtful voyage through themes of self-love, freedom, and more. Each track is a carefully composed masterpiece, showcasing Sampha's power to investigate relatable subjects through his melodies. While some might find the gentle and comforting production conducive to relaxation, it does not detract from the profound impact of his lyrics. Sampha's thoughtful introspection and the album's interconnected themes invite listeners to engage. The desire for emotional warmth and connection during life's chaos resonates deeply.

"Lahai" may only clock in at 41 minutes, but the emotional depth and lyrical complexity leave you yearning for more. This album is a testament to Sampha's artistic growth and an exploration of the human experience that leaves a lasting impression on its listeners. It's a journey worth embarking on, and one can't help but wish for an elongated musical trip in the world Sampha has created.

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Raye Fights Back with Debut Album, My 21st Century Blues

BY DEANNA PRESCOTT
Staff Writer

From soulful jazz to funk and R&B, Raye proves on her debut album, “My 21st Century Blues,” that she can finesse the sound of any genre. The London-based singer, Rachel Keen, rose to fame after her No. 1 single, “Escapism,” went viral on TikTok. Don’t be fooled by the overnight virality, because the UK artist has been in the industry for several years.

The album begins with an emcee introducing Raye over a background of soft piano melodies, transporting the listener into a jazz club. Raye chimes in soon after, saying, “Hello, it’s Raye here. Please get nice and comfortable and lock your phones because the story is about to begin.” The album chronicles themes of heartbreak, loss, self-acceptance and female scorn. “Oscar Winning Tears” kicks off the album with a hard drum beat followed by piano, bass, synths, strings and smooth vocals. Raye’s clever lyricism quickly shows as she speak-sings, “Look how you talk to me, cursing



Photo: D Abc/Callum Walker Hutchinson

and blasphemy, cinematography, get this on camera please, or no one gon’ believe this here.”

“I wanted to create a big dramatic classic feeling record with live strings to capture the audacity of his silly tears, to feel powerful whilst telling this story,” Raye said in a Spotify storyline.

Raye further displays her quick-witted songwriting in “Hard Out Here,” where she lays out lines that seem to be targeted towards her ex-record label, Polydor, who withheld the release of her album. This record serves

as a freedom anthem as she flaunts her newly found independence.

The pace quickens as we get to “Black Mascara” and “Escapism,” two songs that embody Raye’s signature house and electronic dance music sounds. Both songs mirror each other in the way that they tell a story of her dark healing process.

“This song was very intentionally me creating sonic medicine to ease my pain at this point,” the singer said in a Spotify storyline about

“Black Mascara.”

“Escapism” is perhaps the most captivating single, beginning with a haunting consonance of violin strings before transitioning into a catchy dark-pop beat. The sonic symbolism of Raye’s pain from addiction is apparent throughout the track; it mimics the ups and downs of a high as the beat quickens and slows.

“When you’re your lowest of lows, it’s like survival mode mind-numbing, running from real life because it’s not something you

want to see,” Raye said in an interview through DIY Magazine. “Sonically large and dramatic, something to accompany this feeling, to get lost to and maybe you might find some healing inside of it like I did.”

Raye’s sultry voice is especially apparent in deeper cuts such as “Mary Jane” and “Worth It.” The enchanting sound of the electric guitar swoons through “Mary Jane,” and “Worth It” is characterized by warm harmonies and vocal layering.

“Buss It Down” stands out sonically, featuring a gospel-like choir that echoes Raye’s stripped-down melodies and runs; the secret, though, is that there is no gospel choir.

“Me and Mike Sabath also recorded hundreds of vocals on top of each other to create the choir together,” Raye said in a Spotify storyline.

My 21st Century Blues is a fine body of cohesive work that illustrates Raye’s passion and talent. The album is an extremely strong independent debut and leaves the pressing question of what will she give us next?

Bad Bunny’s “Nadie Sabe Lo Que Va a Pasar Mañana” Takes Music World by Storm

BY JASPER KULINSKI
Staff Writer

Latin music sensation Bad Bunny is back and making waves with his latest album, “Nadie Sabe Lo Que Va a Pasar Mañana” (Translation: “No One Knows What Will Happen Tomorrow”). Released on Oct. 20, the album has been met with widespread acclaim, further solidifying the Puerto Rican artist’s status as one of the most influential and innovative musicians of our time.

Bad Bunny, born as Benito Antonio Martínez Ocasio, is a Puerto Rican rapper and singer. His stage name was ultimately chosen after looking at a childhood photo of him wearing an Easter bunny costume and being angry, stating the name fit well with his personality.

He is the first non-English language artist to be Spotify’s most streamed artist of the year and has been on this list

since 2020. He has created over 60 songs, including five studio albums, and one mixtape.

Bad Bunny’s “Nadie Sabe Lo Que Va a Pasar Mañana” has also debuted at the number 1 spot on Billboard 200, which resulted in him claiming his third number 1 album. His previous album, “Un Verano Sin Ti,” had led the Billboard 200 chart for 13 consecutive weeks when it first came out in May 2022.

“Nadie Sabe Lo Que Va a Pasar Mañana” is a 16-track masterpiece that showcases Bad Bunny’s signature blend of reggaeton, Latin trap, and hip-hop. The album is a reflection of the artist’s experiences and emotions, delving into themes of love, loss, resilience, and the unpredictable nature of life. It features collaborations with several big names in the Latin music industry, including J Balvin, Rosalía, and Daddy Yankee.

The album’s second

song, “Monaco,” was an instant hit, amassing millions of streams and dominating music charts around the world. The emotionally charged lyrics and hypnotic beats struck a chord with fans, creating a buzz that only intensified as the release date drew nearer.

Bad Bunny’s ability to connect with his audience through his music, touching on real-life experiences and emotions, has been a key factor in his meteoric rise to fame. “Nadie Sabe Lo Que Va a Pasar Mañana” is no exception, with tracks like “Gracias Por Nada” and “Baby Nueva” resonating with listeners on a deeply personal level.

Some personal favorites of mine from the album include “Monaco,” which was mentioned earlier, “Mr. October,” “Hibiki,” “Where She Goes,” and “Vou 787.” All of them bring to light Bad Bunny’s rise to fame and his new lifestyle in California, away from his home in Puerto

Rico, also experimenting with the sensual side of his music, and even boasting about his success and becoming a legend. Although he has these meaningful lyrics, he also uses futuristic sounds to encapsulate resonant echoes and electronic trap beats.

The album’s accompanying music videos, known for their striking visuals and thought-provoking narratives, have also been met with high praise. Bad Bunny’s artistic vision continues to push the boundaries of what music videos can achieve, making him a groundbreaking figure in the music industry.

In addition to his new album, Bad Bunny has announced an exciting development for his fans in the United States. The artist is set to embark on a highly anticipated tour in 2024, bringing his electrifying live performances to cities across the country. Fans can expect an unforgettable experience as Bad

Bunny promises to deliver his signature high-energy shows, complete with elaborate stage setups, stunning visuals, and a dynamic mix of his chart-topping hits.

Although it is confirmed Bad Bunny will be coming to our very own Hartford, Connecticut on April 20, fans can hardly contain their excitement for the opportunity to see Bad Bunny perform live. Given his track record of sold-out concerts and his growing global fan base, securing tickets to this tour is expected to be a hotly contested affair.

Bad Bunny has managed to captivate audiences worldwide with his innovative music, striking visuals, and his ability to relate to his fans on a personal level. “Nadie Sabe Lo Que Va a Pasar Mañana” is just the latest testament to his remarkable talent, and his 2024 U.S. tour promises to be an event that music enthusiasts will not want to miss.

Offset's 'Set It Off': Trap, Trials and Triumphs

BY DASCHALL HAYES

Staff Writer

Offset, formerly a part of the legendary trap group Migos, has majorly influenced my music taste. Migos stood atop the globe at one point, altering the rap game with their triplet flow and timeless tracks. The heartbreaking death of Takeoff, a relative and member of Migos, and the beef that sparked between cousins Offset and Quavo led to the group disbanding. Now that he's a solo musician, Offset plans to take over the game with his second studio album, "Set It Off." His journey from the streets of Atlanta to superstardom has been nothing short of impressive.

The singles on this album demonstrate the variety that Offset brings to the table, as they are all distinguishable from one another. "Jealousy," featuring Cardi B, has a catchy and hard-hitting rhythm with a classic Three 6 Mafia sample. Offset and Cardi go back and forth to advise haters in their business to mind it before they act on business, solidifying their romantic and musical chemistry. Cardi disses an influx of rappers and media personalities like JT of City Girls and Tasha K, who got sued for up to \$4,000,000 for defamation.

I was not a fan of the song "Fan," no pun intended. While the two beats utilized were amusing, Offset constructed tiresome bars regarding those who snaked him and even emulated Project Pat's flow that



Photo: Leey/Motown Records via Billboard Hot 100

has been used in contemporary rap songs like Drake's "Knife Talk."

"Worth It," featuring Don Toliver, is a buttery mix of alternative R&B and hip-hop that gives me Afrobeats vibes. Don supplies an infectious chorus and velvety vocals about being heartbroken, but Offset's flow and delivery leave me snoozing. Thankfully, his lyrics are on topic.

The final single, "Say My Grace," featuring Travis Scott, is a vigorous trap banger where Offset reflects with God about the loss of family members and systemic racism in America. This song would be one of the best tracks on the album if Travis hadn't spat such an apathetic verse.

The highs on the album are up to the sky. Offset only reinforces that he can release bangers and is one of the best trap rappers ever. Tracks like "Broad Day," featuring Future, and "Fine As Can Be," featuring Latto, are alluring. Offset has mastered mentioning his struggles and flexing on the world. The

feature artists inject fresh perspectives into each song, elevating them to new heights. "Skyami" is another tune I want to note as the beat reminds me of Autumn! or Summrs, who create Pluggnb music known for wavering melodies and drums. I am also immensely impressed by Mango Foo, a rapper I have never heard of before being able to match a vibe with Offset.

The last two tracks, "Upside Down" and "Healthy," are the most meaningful for Offset's growth as an artist. I've been listening to the Migos for as long as I can remember, and I am shocked to see Offset crack at emotional topics since I am so used to him chatting about designer clothes and million-dollar homes. But you see him explain how he's mentally not at his best with all the success he holds, going in-depth about this on "Upside Down." In "Healthy," he details how money and drugs don't make him happy, but he knows that discussing it is necessary to improve. Other than these songs I spoke about

deeply, other tracks like "Freaky," "Buss My Watch," "Blame It On Set" and "On the River" are respectable and add hype to the project, even if they may run a bit too long or have minor weird moments.

In contrast to the high-energy and exhilarating tracks that intrigued me earlier in the review, a notable collection of songs falls short of anticipation. They exhibit monotony, lackluster beats, and a scarcity of the dynamic character that makes the album gripping in the first place. Titles like "I'm On," "Don't You Lie" and "Big Dawg" are monotonic failures with no reason to be on a project that is supposed to show a fiery personality. The production of both adopts a deliberate tiredness, reminding me of the ASMR audios that I listen to help me fall asleep at night. While boring me is not as powerful of a bother, it's harder to support Offset when he releases low performances of auto-tuned mumbo-jumbo or wanna-be Magic Mike

pieces.

"Hop Out the Van" and "Dissolve" are hot garbage with the worst attempts at auto-tuned, falsetto vocals. The former is musically better because the beat has cool drums, similar to a marching band. The latter makes me ill, since the concept of a dissolving pill concerning a happy-go-lucky romantic relationship is cringeworthy and lacks common sense. It is a despicable excuse for a love song, and I will never listen to it again.

Don't get me started with Offset trying to sound sexual on "Princess Cut," featuring Chloe. I know how common it is for rappers to talk about intimacy in their music, but Offset is the worst person to ask if you want a genuinely intimate song, especially for something over four minutes long. Chloe does not help because her verse worsens the blow with her speedy rapping. Sure, she can sing, but she can do better.

Overall, Offset's "Set It Off" is a solid addition to his discography, showcasing his ability to deliver hard-hitting trap tracks with a range of features that elevate the project. While the lows of the album, such as the lackluster beats and disappointing auto-tuned vocals, are present, the highs are soaring and demonstrate his growth as an artist. Fans of Offset and trap rap should give this album an open-minded listen, as it provides a glimpse into the future of rap, even if the beloved trio of Migos can't share the spotlight with him.

OCTOBER 26, 2023

LIFESTYLE

THE RECORDER

Blink-182's "ONE MORE TIME..." Has Less Angst and More Hope

BY MADISON MUSCO
Staff Writer

After 12 years, Mark Hoppus, Tom DeLonge, and Travis Barker of Blink-182 have granted the wishes of pop-punk fans around the world and released a new album, "ONE MORE TIME..."

The band began teasing the new album in early October 2022 with cryptic social media posts and shared an official announcement video on Instagram on Oct. 11 telling fans, "We're coming."

A few days later on Oct. 14, they released "Edging," the first single of their new album, which screamed the sound of old Blink-182. The song is reminiscent of their early works with heavy guitar riffs and DeLonge's signature vocals, complete with a bizarre music video of the band kissing mascot rabbits at a carnival. The excitement was instantaneous and their long-awaited reunion had me jumping to buy tickets as soon as they announced their world tour a few days later.

Once the news was out, they began selling out shows all over the United States. At the UBS Arena in Belmont, NY, in May 2023, the concert was full of the same antics that had them considered to be a joke during their early years. DeLonge and Hoppus bantered between songs, cursed at the crowd, and reminisced. The show



Photo: Madison Musco

took a more serious turn when Hoppus shared with fans the details of his battle with stage four large B-cell lymphoma and his new outlook on life and the band. The arena recovered quickly from the heartfelt moment and jumped straight back into their older discography.

In recent weeks, Blink-182 has released four songs teasing the new album, none of which felt particularly promising. They lacked the emotion that you expect when you turn on "Enema of the State" full blast after a particularly rough day at work. The songs were technically good but unfulfilling. But left with "Edging" to carry me through, I still had high hopes for this album.

While "ONE MORE TIME..." holds true to Blink-182's

high-energy style, the tone is less angsty and more optimistic, giving up some of what made them so popular in the first place. The album opens with "... ANTHEM PART 3," and instantly pulled me back to "Take Off Your Pants and Jacket," where they released "Anthem, Part Two." While Barker's drumming and generous use of the hi-hat draws on the nostalgia, the hopeful messaging is new for the band. "... ANTHEM PART 3" is all about starting over and creating a meaningful life, with more colorful language in typical Blink-182 fashion.

Blink-182 has always had a unique sound, utilizing DeLonge and Hoppus' dynamic vocals to create music that is instantly recognizable as their own and the same

goes for "ONE MORE TIME..." but with a twist. Both DeLonge and Hoppus started their bands during their time apart, Angels and Airwaves and +44, respectively. The new record draws a lot from the sound of both bands, weaving slower riffs with a lighter sound through songs like "TERRIFIED" and "ONE MORE TIME."

The album tells a story of regret, nostalgia, growing up, and changing. Through their separate careers, each member has developed their own styles and brought that back to the table to create something new, but still undeniably Blink-182.

Then in "TURN THIS OFF!" a 22-second track, we're reminded of exactly who Blink-182 was and always will be – man-children mas-

querading as a pop-punk band. "If you're too sensitive, well turn this off. If you're offended by these words then please f*** off," starts the fast-paced track, which is followed up by "WHEN WE WERE YOUNG," a look back on teenage love and growing apart, a stark contrast to the previous.

Blink-182's first five albums are angsty and angry taking jabs at their parents, the system, and the world in general. Songs like "What's My Age Again?" "Anthem," and "I Miss You," painted a detailed picture of the emotional rollercoaster that is growing up, while energetic and vulgar performances gained the band global recognition. Their original style and sound are there, but it's lacking the intensity that distinguished the band in pop-punk.

This album is Blink-182 but different, which can be viewed in two ways. The first is through the lens of nostalgia and excitement just to see the band back together. The other is aching disappointment, the loss of that edge that comes with being young and angry. I fall into the latter of the two camps. While "EDGING" and "ANTHEM PART 3" will definitely find their way to my favorite playlist, overall "ONE MORE TIME..." didn't live up to the hype and anticipation Blink-182 created over the last year.



: @centralrecorder

Men's Soccer Avoids Fourth Straight Loss After 1-1 Draw



Photo: Steve McLaughlin Photography

BY EARY BANUSHI
Staff Writer

The Central Connecticut State University men's soccer team drew against Fairleigh Dickinson University on Sunday, Oct. 22, at CCSU Soccer Field.

The Blue Devils came into the game off of three straight losses after falling on the road to Sacred Heart University, 2-0, on Sunday, Oct. 15. Star player Austin Rocke received a red card against the Pioneers and was ineligible for the game against FDU.

The game's first goal came in the 39th minute when FDU's Mario Ibeas slipped past Central defenders and received the ball from teammate Tony Gomez before taking a low-driven shot at the bottom left corner of the net, beating Central goalkeeper Daniel Wilmore.

The Blue Devils responded less than two minutes later when a cross into the box by midfielder Zane Brown made its way past defenders to a wide-open Jakob Welle, who put it away, bagging his second goal of the season and tying the game 1-1.

"I was at the right place at the right time, and I managed to put it in," Welle said. "Not much else to say. I'm happy to score and help the team. It's a good feeling."

Co-captain and countryman Ola Telje said he was impressed by Welle's goal and thinks that the defender may have a future playing more of an attacking role.

"He's been playing center back with me the whole season, but now that we put him out wide and up top, he showed what he's good at, and that's scoring goals," Telje said. "He'll probably stay up there for the rest of the season."

FDU had difficulty getting into CCSU's penalty box, something Welle said he attributes to pre-game adjustments.

"We changed our formation to a 4-4-2, and the defense did a tremendous job to keep them [FDU] from creating a lot of chances," Welle said. "We let in one goal, that's how it is, but I think they [defense] did a fantastic job."

Tempers flared in the 88th minute after FDU's Jaime Barbero wasn't called for a foul by the referees, leading to a retaliatory foul on Central forward Ethan Agyare-Danso by FDU's Alberto Herranz.

The foul led to a scuffle between both teams, leaving the game paused for nearly six minutes as referees handed out punishments to the players involved.

FDU's Herranz and Barbero, and CCSU's

Johnny Morell received yellow cards.

The game was resumed with less than two minutes on the clock.

FDU's Jayd Hamdaoua took a last-second shot but Central's defense held strong to finish the game in a 1-1 draw and avoid their fourth straight loss.

Blue Devils' head coach, David Kelly, acknowledged his team's resilience against FDU, attributing it to the team's mentality.

"We knew that we were going to need a warrior mentality," Kelly said. "FDU is always a quality side; they always create a lot of chances, and we battled. They didn't have a lot of chances, and we were right there with them every step of the way."

Coach Kelly said other players stepping up helped minimize the impact of Rocke's absence.

"One of the strengths of what we have is our depth. We have a good squad, we have a deep squad, and so it's next guy up," Kelly said. "But fortunately, Austin will be back next weekend, so we have that to look forward to."

The Blue Devils will look to pick up their first conference victory of the season at Stonehill College on Thursday, Oct. 26.

Volleyball Suffers Agonizing Loss to FDU

BY IAN YALE
Staff Writer

The Central Connecticut State University volleyball team dropped a five-set match to Fairleigh Dickinson University at Detrick Gymnasium on Saturday, Oct. 21.

The Blue Devils, looking to improve upon their 2-6 conference record, could not pull out a win in a devastating fifth set.

After winning a close first set 25-23, CCSU dropped the following two sets 25-17 and 25-9, respectively.

Central came roaring back in the fourth, with a 25-17 victory. After jumping out to a lead in the deciding fifth set, the Blue Devils could not seal the deal, losing the set 15-13.

Sophomore Weronika Poczynek's 15 kills led the CCSU offense. While freshman Victoria Sanabria continued her breakout weekend, adding 13 kills.

The pair was followed up by senior Isabelle Roufs' six kills and junior Isabella Bratzke's five.

Splitting time at setter, freshman Kylee

Baranski and junior Madison Massaro-Cook combined for 40 of the Blue Devils' 44 total assists.

Bratzke said she held herself and the team to a high standard following the match.

"We could've just played a little better volleyball," Bratzke said. "They just went on a run ... It's just little things like getting a good pass, hitting it over and in, stuff like that."

Central had a solid defensive showing, led by junior Lauren Milani's 20 digs and Bratzke's 30 error-free receptions and two solo blocks.

Poczynek again led Central in total points, with 18.5, while Sanabria followed her closely with 13.5.

Despite the fifth set not going Central's way, the team kept the energy high on the court, Bratzke said.

"Even in the second half [of the set], when it started not going our way, we still were in it together," Bratzke said. "Win or lose as a team."

The Blue Devils take on Sacred Heart University on Friday, Oct. 27, at home before going on the road.



Photo: Ian Yale

CCSU Volleyball Holds Student-Athlete Mental Health Night



Photo: Ian Yale

BY IAN YALE
Staff Writer

The Central Connecticut State University volleyball team held a student-athlete mental health awareness night at Detrick Gymnasium on Friday, Oct. 20, at a match against Long Island University.

As part of the event, the team collected donations for Morgan's Message, a non-profit organization aiming to eliminate the stigma surrounding mental health in sports. Donations can be made at <https://www.morgansmessage.org/donate>.

Senior Margaret Nolan was a pivotal part of organizing the night. As a strong mental health advocate, Nolan is very passionate about mental health.

"[Good mental health] means being happy and not having a sense of feeling alone," Nolan said. "One of the most important things, being an athlete, is that you have a sense of comfort around the people that you're playing with, and if you're on the right team, you'll feel strength with each other."

Morgan's Message

was founded in honor of former Duke University student-athlete Morgan Rodgers after she committed suicide following a long, silent mental health struggle. The organization aims to eliminate the stigma that student-athletes are too tough to talk about mental health, according to their website.

Carrying an equally strong passion for mental health, junior Madison Massaro-Cook continues to take a strong stand against the stigma.

"Athletes are supposed to be people who are tough and strong and mentally strong," Massaro-Cook said. "When they are struggling with issues where they are not in a good headspace, they get looked down upon when they reach out for help because they are supposed to have that tough, strong shell."

Head coach Linda Sagnelli supports her players as athletes and ensures that her team stays mentally healthy as students.

"[Mental health] means everything," Sagnelli said. "What we ask our student-athletes to do is a lot, and there are a lot of things that aren't easy. Mental health is very

important to your daily life, but also when you have the stress of competition. You have to be able to have very healthy outlooks."

However, the Blue Devils couldn't translate the positive energy into a win, falling to LIU in four hard-fought sets.

After winning the first set 28-26, Central couldn't recapture the magic. They lost the second set 25-21, the third set 27-25, and couldn't keep the fourth set close, dropping it 25-18.

Freshman Victoria Sanabria could do no wrong on offense, logging 14 kills with just three errors. She also assisted on a block and led the team in points despite not starting any of the four sets.

Sanabria largely credited her big night to her coaches and teammates.

"In practice, Coach [Sagnelli] kept pushing me to be a better player," Sanabria said. "My teammates also push me, and it really gives me the confidence to play well."

Sophomore Weronika Poczynek continued her breakout season, totaling 11 kills

and 25 receptions while finishing just behind Sanabria with 13 points.

Also contributing on offense was junior Isabella Bratzke with nine kills and four assists, as well as junior Mia Lombardo with seven kills.

Fellow freshmen Kylee Baranski and Massaro-Cook had 13 assists and 22 assists, respectively. The duo combined for just two errors in the match.

The Blue Devils totaled 11 blocks as a team, with Lombardo and junior Kaylin Hadley leading the way. Hadley had three solo blocks and three block assists. Lombardo added a solo block and four assists. Bratzke and senior Isabelle Roufs contributed two assists each. Roufs also added a solo block for good measure.

Bratzke, Poczynek, and junior Lauren Milani kept the sets close by extending rallies and combining for 52 of Central's 75 digs.

CCSU faces Fairleigh Dickinson at home on Saturday, Oct. 21, then will take on Sacred Heart University on Friday, Oct. 27, to finish their five-game homestand.



CCSU ATHLETICS SCHEDULE

FOOTBALL

Oct. 26 vs. LIU
Nov. 4 @ Sacred Heart
Nov. 11 @ Merrimack
Nov. 18 vs. SFU

MEN'S SOCCER

Oct. 26 @ Stonehill
Oct. 29 vs. Howard
Nov. 2 @ Merrimack

WOMEN'S SOCCER

Oct. 26 vs. Wagner
Oct. 29 NEC Quarter Finals

CROSS COUNTRY

Oct. 28 @ NEC Finals
Nov. 10 @ NCAA Regionals

VOLLEYBALL

Oct. 27 vs. Sacred Heart
Nov. 3 @ Le Moyne
Nov. 4 @ SFU
Nov. 10 vs. Merrimack

SWIM & DIVE

Oct. 27 @ New Hampshire
Oct. 28 @ New Hampshire
Nov. 4 vs. SCSU

MEN'S B-BALL

Nov. 6 @ Rhode Island U.
Nov. 10 @ Quinnipiac
Nov. 13 vs. Framingham St.
Nov. 19 vs. Manhattan

WOMEN'S B-BALL

Nov. 6 @ Manhattan
Nov. 10 @ Syracuse
Nov. 13 @ Saint Peter's
Nov. 17 @ Bryant

Mental Matters: A Look Into Student-Athlete Mental Health

BY IAN YALE
Staff Writer

When a freak injury abruptly ended Central Connecticut State University sophomore Gavin Taylor's 2023 football season, it was a scary moment for everyone present at Arute Field.

The hush that came over the venue when the training staff escorted the stretcher onto the field was enough to know that Taylor would not be playing football again for an extended period. Such an injury provides an immense amount of physical pain, but the mental toll can be just as damaging.

As a student-athlete, mental health can take a backseat. There is a stigma among athletes that they will be looked down upon for asking for help with mental health. At CCSU, it is no different.

Whether it is through injury, performance or another factor, a student-athlete's mental health can decline throughout the season or in some cases, longer. CCSU's Athletics Department works tirelessly to ensure that no student-athlete feels like they have to work through their problems alone.

Taylor said his injury has come with substantial support from his teammates, coaches, and family. They are all helping him stay positive about his recovery.

"[The coaches] try to make sure I'm in good spirits," Taylor said. "I always get texts and calls from my coaches, just making sure I'm alright and making sure that if I need anything, they're there."

Head coach Adam Lechtenberg and outside linebackers coach Michael Day are integral figures in keeping Taylor



Photo: Ian Yale

in good spirits during the recovery process, he said.

"[Coach Day] is really on top of making sure I'm good," Taylor said. "He never wants us to feel like he's just a coach ... He's a coach at the end of the day, but he's also someone that we can call just to talk."

Outside of coaches, the CCSU Athletics Department boasts a host of resources to keep student-athletes feeling well, both mentally and physically.

Director of Athletics Tom Pincince has made taking care of student-athletes a point of emphasis in his first two years in the role and said he plans to keep mental health at the top of his agenda.

"The mental health of our student-athletes is a priority for us," Pincince said.

Pincince knows that being a student-athlete is very difficult between practice, games, travel, taking a full course load, and all other responsibilities. He said he aims to make life as smooth as possible for the students while supporting them in any way he can.

"What we ask our student-athletes to do on a regular basis is pretty tax-

ing," Pincince said. "We really just make sure they have the tools necessary to get through what is a very hectic schedule."

The day-to-day struggles of a student-athlete are no secret to junior volleyball player Madison Massaro-Cook.

"A lot of struggles I face personally are the social life, academic, and sport balance," Massaro-Cook said. "That balance becomes really hard when we're getting into the depth of our season."

Pincince and Assistant A.D. for Compliance and Student Services Molly McCarthy brought a student-athlete wellness room to Harrison J. Kaiser Hall as a resource for student-athletes to use. The purpose of the wellness room is to have a place for student-athletes to do homework, study, or just unwind.

Located in Kaiser 115, the student-athlete wellness room is open Monday through Friday, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. It comes fully stocked with snacks, drinks, coloring supplies, a computer, and anything else a student-athlete might need to decompress.

Each student-athlete is assigned an advisor based on the sport that

they play. The advisors are always available to their student-athletes by phone and can help with anything from reaching out to a professor about missing class to talking about feelings. Sophomore soccer player Joey Tata commended the Athletics Department for providing the services but said that most student-athletes don't take advantage of the resources.

"We do have a lot [of mental health resources], but I don't think people use them as much," Tata said. "The coaches don't push them, and I don't think they realize that we have them. I think that's something they should push."

The awareness of the resources offered to student-athletes varies throughout the programs. While some were unaware of the wellness room's existence, others said they use it daily.

Massaro-Cook said she thinks very highly of the on-campus counseling center, located in the Wellness Center on the first floor in Emma Hart Willard Hall, but said that more sports-specific mental health resources would benefit student-athletes.

Graduate professor Dr. Michael Voight is an available resource, Massaro-Cook said. But, the CCSU Athletics Department itself does not employ a specialized sports psychologist.

"I feel like if we had more resources, more counselors available, people would feel like they could get the help that they need," Massaro-Cook said. "A lot of times, people will reach out, and if it takes them three to four weeks to answer, that three to four week period could be really crucial. It could be life or death."

Feeling mentally well is one of the most important things an athlete can do to help their on-field performance, it has been a focal point for Massaro-Cook, she said.

"I realize that when my mental health is low, my performance is even worse," Massaro-Cook said. "If your mental isn't good, your physical is going right along with it."

Taylor looks to a quote from Football Hall of Famer Deion Sanders for guidance, he said.

"Feel good, play good," Taylor said.

Tata echoed the importance of feeling good going into a game.

"It's huge," Tata said. "If you're going into a game and you have all these thoughts in your mind, you can't focus on the game when you need to."

Massaro-Cook, an active mental health advocate, said she has one message for all students, athletes or otherwise.

"I want people to know that it's okay to ask for help, no matter if it's a counselor, a coach, or a peer," Massaro-Cook said. "Reaching out is more important than not at all because your problems do matter. Even if you think it doesn't matter, it does."