

The Recorder

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Incoming Class One of the Largest in CCSU History



Photo: Stan Godlewski

BY SAVANNA YELLING
Editor-in-Chief

Central Connecticut State University welcomed 1,416 new full-time students this semester, marking a 15.5% increase that places this class among the largest in university history.

"We have some good news to share! The final census numbers are out, and they are very promising," CCSU President Zulma Toro said in an email sent to all academic departments and administrators.

The increase in new students has led to a 2.6% increase in total enrollment. The total fall 2023 campus enrollment is 9,712, according to the census.

Last fall, CCSU reached the lowest total enrollment the university has seen since 1975, with a total of 9,468 enrolled students.

"We have more than surpassed our First-time, Full-time goal of 1,350 enrolled students," Toro said. "Another exciting piece of news is our

housing occupancy for this fall."

The university set a housing goal of 2,100 students living on campus. This goal was exceeded by 167 students, according to the census.

Last year only 1,985 CCSU students were residents.

Aside from the numbers, this growth in the student body is contributing to one of CCSU's diversity goals, Toro said in the email.

"This diverse class is poised to contribute significantly to Central's goal of becoming a Hispanic Serving Institution," Toro said.

An HSI is defined in Title V as an institution of higher learning where at least 25% of full-time students are Hispanic, according to the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities website.

As of fall 2022, 17.9% of undergraduate students at CCSU were Hispanic, according to the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment.

If CCSU meets this goal they will be the

joining six other HSIs in the state. Capital Community College, Goodwin University, Housatonic Community College, University of Bridgeport, University of Connecticut Stamford, and Western Connecticut State University are currently the only HSIs in Connecticut, according to the HACU website.

Despite not being an HSI, Hispanic students at CCSU are vital to the community, with multiple Hispanic and Latino clubs on campus, Student Government Association President Haneen Alkabasi said.

"The Latin American Student Organization enhances the CCSU campus by representing Latino heritage," Alkabasi said. "Latin American, Latino, and Caribbean Center is putting on wonderful events to celebrate National Hispanic Heritage Month that everyone should check out."

Before this influx of students, CCSU enrollment was on a steep decline of 20% over the past five years. The

university had a student body of 11,085 full-time students in the spring of 2018 which dropped to 8,891 students by the spring of 2023, according to the OIRA.

This fall, undergraduate admissions applications increased by 13.2% over the past year. 8,099 applications were submitted and 6,186 students were accepted, an increase of 15.5%, according to the census.

CCSU has a target goal of increasing enrollment to 12,500 students according to the Strategic Plan 2030, developed by the Strategic Planning Steering Committee.

The SPSC is comprised of Toro, CCSU faculty, staff, students, alumni, community, and business leaders, that developed the plan in 2019, according to the Strategic Plan website.

"I am very appreciative of everyone for their contributions to getting Central to this position, which is a strong foundation of our plan for financial sustainability as we move forward," Toro said in the email.

CCSU's financial sustainability model includes enhancing financial aid, providing grants and funding initiatives, through stewardship, entrepreneurship, and partnership, according to the Strategic Plan 2030.

High enrollment helps both the university and its students financially. SGA's budget is from student activity fees, more students leads to a bigger budget for them, Alkabasi said.

SGA plans to use these added funds on events for students throughout the semester, leading up to their collaboration with Central Activities Network for the annual spring concert, Alkabasi said.

New Britain Demographics Key in Mayoral Race, Candidates Say

BY EZRA KAPROV
Staff Writer

Two candidates are facing off for mayor in Central Connecticut State University's hometown.

The Republican incumbent, Erin Stewart, has coalesced a unique coalition of landlords, real estate, developers, and city workers. Former mayoral candidate and co-founder of New Britain Racial Justice Coalition, Alicia Strong, suggested that support for Mayor Stewart among Puerto Rican Evangelicals may be slipping.

The Reverends Caremlo and Nancy Rodriguez have long worked to anchor their community in the GOP. When the RNC opened its first ever Connecticut office in New Britain for the 2022 midterms, the two helped lead a "Latino outreach" campaign. Evangelicals in the Puerto Rican community, like most Republicans, tend to be socially conservative.

Strong mentioned Mayor Stewart has had success courting Democrats with a socially progressive streak, wary of alienating traditionalists in her base. Stewart's pro-choice stance and support for cannabis legalization seemed to foreclose her 2018 gubernatorial run during the Republican primary.

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Secretary of the State Helps CCSU Students Register to Vote

BY SAVANNA YELLING
Editor-in-Chief

Central Connecticut State University hosted Secretary of the State Stephanie Thomas for a National Voter Registration Day press conference and Voter Registration Drive on campus on Sept. 19.

The CCSU Center for Community Engagement and Social Research held the event in the Student Center Circle.

Thomas urged eligible students to register to vote and vote in every election, including local ones.

The Secretary of the State's office took Tuesday in particular to focus on voter registration of college students, Thomas said.

"So many young people are very passionate about an issue," Thomas said. "Whether it's gun violence prevention, climate change, fill in the blank."

In her work, Thomas hears complaints about the time it takes for noticeable change to be made, she said.

"I think people have this energy and they go to rallies, they may write letters, they may not, but the democratic process is actually a little more complicated than that," Thomas said. "So, you have to vote. You have



Photo: Savanna Yelling

to follow up with the people you voted for."

Thomas recommends voting in local elections rather than sitting out on them and blindly accepting the changes that are being made around you, she said.

"How much space this campus was allocated, how much of it is green, what kind of classes you're required to take, all these things have passed through elected office," Thomas said. "Whether you're involved or not, decisions are made about you."

Niya Blizzard-Ireland, a CCSU sociology major, was one of two student speakers at the press conference.

Ireland was raised to be involved in her community since she was young and has continued this through adulthood, she said.

"Voting has always been important to

that there are ways to make your city better," Ireland said. "Make it how you want it."

Monica Long was among the first CCSU students to register at the Voter Registration Drive.

"I came to support, and then I realized I didn't register to vote ever," Long said. "So I decided to do it today."

As a membership coordinator for Central Activities Network, and a First-Year Experience peer leader, Long is heavily involved on campus. After listening to the press conference, she is looking to pursue civic engagement as well, she said.

"I feel like voting is important," Long said. "Not just for presidents, but also for what's around you in your community."

Long and other students were able to register to vote immediately following the press conference.

"It took less than five minutes to register," Long said. "Just do it. If you don't do it, you won't have the opportunity to vote."

While there is still the physical voter registration form on paper, the on-campus drive assisted students with registering from their cellphones.

"I advocate online because it's the easiest and it all only takes two minutes," Thomas said.

me and my family," Ireland said. "My mom has always taken me to the polls with her and has always stressed the importance of it to me. It's been the same with civic engagement. We've always been involved in our community and trying to make it better."

Ireland is a John Lewis Institute Scholar, a group of students on campus who work to create social change on and off the campus, she said.

"Now that I'm in New Britain I try to help out here as well since I feel like I occupy this city so I should work to try and help with whatever they have going on," Ireland said.

On top of voting regularly, Ireland said she recommends students be involved in bettering their community year-round.

"I really just think that it's important to get to know where you are and understand

Class of 2027 Steps into their Academic Careers



Photo: Stan Godlewski

BY NATHALIA BLAIR
News Editor

Central Connecticut State University's class of 2027 had differing experiences when it came to registering for classes this semester. Some freshmen had an easier process than others, while other freshmen said they went through the process blindly.

Taniya Hoskie, a first-year student at CCSU and psychology major, said registering for classes was self-guided.

"Once you talk to them, they help you," Hoskie said. "It's not like they'll automatically reach out to you, obviously because it's college, you must go to them and then they'll do everything for you. So, that's really nice."

First-year students meet their advisor during orientation and get assistance from there to register for classes, Hoskie said.

"I struggled with my schedule a little bit," Hoskie said. "He helped me know when I had to turn in my AP courses and when I had to turn in my transcript."

During orientation, Hoskie said she has learned about all the opportunities provided by

orientation leaders.

"There's a lot of people that help you with your college experience, and I appreciate that. They know the place," Hoskie said. "They know what they're talking about, and that makes me feel like if they know that stuff so quickly and they're only a sophomore, then that means I can learn quickly, and I can adjust quickly."

Hoskie said she is confident in registering next semester. The only problem she has run into is classes being full.

Scotti Wallace, a first-year student, and an undecided major said during orientation those who were undecided got to register for their general classes first.

"I don't even really know if I have enough credits at this point because they kind of just said, 'Pick whatever you want,'" Wallace said. "These are the gen-eds pick something in that category. I did it. It was weird. I don't even know where I stand academically. I'm just in classes."

Wallace said she had not been contacted prior and had only met with an advisor once during orientation. She is willing to speak to them if needed.

"As much as I hate to say it, I've met with them once during orientation and never again. I've never been reached out to or anything," Wallace said. "I guess I can take it upon myself to go out and talk to them if I need to. I mean I'd appreciate it if they reached out because I don't even know what to ask for."

Lena Alves, a CCSU first-year and bio-ecology major said there were revisions made to their schedule to keep them on track. Alves met with an advisor before orientation and learned what was needed that way.

"My advisor checked into my schedule when I first made it out. But they did make a few changes class-wise," Alves said. "These changes happened a week before my orientation, and they were very informative as to why they made those particular changes. Mostly due to some not being needed for my major, or the course was just not available. My advisor has also let me know about potential internships and international studies regarding my major, but it is not in my interest due to me not getting those credits since I am a freshman."

New Britain Demographics Key in Mayoral Race, Candidates Say

BY EZRA KAPROV
Staff Writer

Continued from front page

Mayor Stewart's coalition crosses party lines thanks in large part to Sharon Beloin-Saavedra. The main organizer behind "Democrats for Erin" also supported conservative Superintendent Kelt Cooper, whom Mayor Stewart praised as a "trailblazer" and whose decision to cut bilingual education from New Britain schools increased racial disparities in learning outcomes.

Mayor Stewart is well into a project to push the Democratic base Rightward, appealing to them as she pulls Republicans behind progressive positions, balancing priorities of divergent forces within her alliance.

Erin Stewart isn't New Britain's first Mayor Stewart. Her father held the seat from 2003 to 2011, when he resigned to become a commercial realtor.

He briefly vacated his seat on the city School Building Commission after calling Connecticut's 5th District Rep. Jahanna Hayes and other women in congress "bitches in heat" on his Facebook page. Two years later he was reappointed as chairperson by his daughter the mayor.

After successive attempts, Mayor Stewart could not be reached for comment.

Chris Anderson, the Democratic challenger, has been active in local politics since he and his wife moved to town from Colchester in 2016.

"We quickly fell in love with New Britain's sense of community, its diversity, its history," Anderson said. "That was right after Trump got elected, and then Merrill Gaye lost."

Gaye was a Democratic mayoral candidate in 2017 who lost to Stewart by approximately 1,000 votes.

"That was strange to me. Why is a Democrat losing in a city like New Britain?" said Anderson.

Most majority Black and Brown cities tend to be firmly Democratic, with Waterbury as the other Connecticut exception. Anderson became active in the local Democratic Town Council (DTC), using his background as an accountant to help craft fiscal policy proposals.

"That's when I start-

ed volunteering. I was just a background person. I wanted to help," said Anderson.

Anderson ran for Common Council in 2019 and won. He said that the increase of Republican influence in 2021 also had affects in New Britain and its Democratic Aldermen were swept out. He went on to chair the DTC, working to move local politics out of Republican control while addressing municipal pragmatism.

"Needs that come up at the city level are more things like, 'I need my road paved; I need my kid's classroom renovated.' It's a lot of dollars and cents talk, and that's exactly my background," said Anderson.

Neither time the Common Council voted to raise education spending since Stewart took office was enough to address existing cuts or stop new ones, Anderson said. The city continues to sit at the bottom for education funding in the state, Anderson said. It receives less than half the education funding of Darien, one of the wealthiest towns in the country.

Anderson wants to build a diverse coalition among people who don't normally vote or have never voted, he said.

"Not just to win the election but to make things happen afterward, we need young people, people of color, women, LGBTQ people, everyone who wants to see change all together," said Anderson.

He noted challenges for getting low-income workers to the polls, citing them as critical to the Democratic base.

"You go to work, pick up your kid from school, and then go straight to your other job, when are you supposed to vote?" Anderson said. "There's mail-in but being busy people don't take the time, or even think about it."

Poverty as a barrier to political participation stands against Anderson's chances, he said.

"But we've got diverse Common Council slate and all of us are out there knocking doors, so people know: this slate is representative of the people of New Britain," he said.

Election day is Tuesday, November 7th with polls open from 6am to 8pm. Same day registration will be available in-person at City Hall in room 108.

Climbing for Gold

BY ELIJAH HERNANDEZ

Contributor

PARIS, May — **R**ight hand stretched out so far that only your fingers are able to grip anything. Left hand still trying to find a hold sufficient to support your body weight. Right foot lodged in a crack on your right. Left foot on a two-by-two-inch hold to your left, leaving you looking like a starfish as you search for your next move.

Rock climbing started as a pastime for daredevils seeking adventure, but it has since grown into a sport with millions of participants around the world.

“There are more than eight indoor gyms within the Paris region alone, so it has gotten quite big here,” Yaniss Belkbla, an Arkose Nation gym member, said. “I personally come about three to four times a week, it just depends on if I’m not busy.”

The first organized climbing competition was held in Vaulx-en-Velin, France, in 1986, and in 2020 it officially became an event, known as sport climbing, at the Olympics in Tokyo and will be included once again in the 2024 Olympics in France.

A group of 20 competitors will be tested to go through rigorous challenges that consist of

speed climbing, bouldering, and lead climbing.

In the 2020 Tokyo Olympics debut, each competitor had to compete in each event for one set of medals, to emphasize a more balanced aspect of ability.

However, in the 2024 Olympics, there will be two sets of medals available by separating speed climbing from bouldering and lead climbing.

“I think it is a good idea to separate the events because climbers usually focus on one or two types of climbs and practice them until they are perfect,” Alexis Laporte Fauret, an Arkose gym member, said. “To make them show off skills they rarely practice is unfair in my opinion.”

To qualify for Olympic sports climbing, competitors would have to place in the top three of either the World Championship 2023, the Continental Qualifiers in 2023, or the Olympic Qualifier Series in 2024.

Of the 40 Olympians who qualified to participate in the event in 2020, 19 different nations were represented spanning from Japan to Slovenia. The same amount of diversity is expected in the 2024 games.

Tomoa Narasaki of Japan and Mejdi Schalk of France are favorites to win on the men’s side for bouldering. Brooke Raboutou from the U.S. is the clear favorite for the women in bouldering.

The market for rock climbing has been experiencing a shift in the last few years due to the Olympics as well as through accessible indoor rock-climbing gyms and documentaries following the lives of athletes as they climb, according to the athletes.



Photo: Elijah Hernandez

Arkose Nation is an indoor rock-climbing gym in the 20th Arrondissement surrounded by multiple restaurants, two parks and even an Office Depot.

“It’s so much more than a climbing gym, it’s a place where you can come to eat, study, hangout with your friends, and climb of course,” Tamazirt Smaili, an Arkose Nation representative, said.

By taking the approach of offering a place of comfort outside of just climbing, Arkose is successful.

Arkose built its community through its familial feel, which in turn, encouraged climbers to suggest the gym to their friends through word of mouth.

“I found out about this place from a friend of a friend,” Fauret said. “If it wasn’t for his friend, I probably wouldn’t have found Arkose on my own.”

In France, there is already an established rock-climbing community that goes further than just professionals, including

all walks of life at different levels of experience.

How does the Olympics impact a market that is already thriving?

“I think it is going to be very chaotic and messy,” Claude Girard, an Arkose Nation staff member, said. “We are already pretty busy during our happy hour, so I can only imagine it might be triple what we would get on a usual day.”

The possibility of an influx of gym goers at Paris gyms during the months around the Olympics and Paralympics are going on is not necessari-

ly welcomed by regulars.

Mark Robinson, who lives near Arkose, is one of those who says he will feel inconvenienced.

“I choose to climb here because it’s one of the only places I can come and enjoy climbing without having to wait 10 minutes to get on the wall,” Robinson said. “Knowing it’s going to be worse, kind of lessens the appeal of the gym to me.”

The climbers say the sport requires not just strength and skill, but also encouraging others and giving them tips when someone is struggling. They believe the reason climbing gyms have a tight-knit community is due to everyone knowing each other and wanting others to succeed.

“A big part of why I come to the gym three to four times a week is due to the vibe and support that comes with climbing here,” Belkbla said. “Part of finding out how to complete a wall is communicating with peers and trying different moves together to figure out the best line of success. Communities do make room for newcomers.”

“There will definitely be more people coming to enjoy what we have built here at Arkose,” Smaili said. “However, climbing is about more than just the sport itself, we will welcome everyone with open arms because we think everyone should have fun while they are here.”

Paralympics to Follow Olympics in Paris 2024 Games

BY JOLISE REYES

Contributor

PARIS, May — **T**he Paralympics logo is depicted by three points moving around to come together, the three Agitos. Agitos means movement in Latin para athletes come together through this movement in this

massive event to represent many disabilities.

Marie-Amélie Le Fur is a Paralympian, president of the French Paralympic and Sports Committee, and three-time gold medalist in the Paralympic games. Le Fur has represented France in the games for 15 years and is now representing them in other aspects of the games.

“It’s going to be the communities, it’s going to be all the health sectors, the management associations,” Le Fur said in an interview with Handirect France. “That said, we also hope, through communication, the promotion of the 2024 Paralympic Games, the para-sporting competitions, to be able to demonstrate a view a little

new to the ability and skills of the person with a disability.”

In Paris, there are advertisements for the Olympics, but the representation of the Paralympics lags. Le Fur is working with the committee to get the games advertised correctly and have proper media coverage of para-sports.

The Paralympics

require accessibility in all facilities for wheelchair users or individuals with decreased mobility. Tristan Bayle, a spokesman/representative at the Olympic Village, said there will be accessible elevators, ramps, and routes to athlete buses for the games.

The 2024 Paralympics will begin on Aug. 28 and end on Sept 8.

2024 Olympics: How Much and Where?

BY MARIA CACARES
Staff Writer

PARIS, May — As the 2024 Paris Olympics get closer, tickets are being sold for seats during the Games and Opening Ceremony, people are asking: “What views will I get?”

Opening Ceremony ticket prices range from €5,000 (\$5,396.55 USD) to €9,500 (\$10,253.44 USD) as listed on the official Olympic 2024 website. They are graded as gold and silver packages, where gold gets the best and silver places you a short walk away from the Seine River.

At €9,500, people get the VIP Gold Package, with a 360 degree view from the Alma Bridge. This includes access to a Hospitality Center before, during, and after the ceremony. There is also a cocktail dinner, live music, entertainment and a gift at the entrance. People also see a large view of the Eiffel Tower and the Seine River.

This is right in the middle of the river, giving a view over the top of the boats during the opening ceremony.

For €7,500, people are placed in Palais de Tokyo which has a view of the Eiffel Tower and Hospital Center care before and after the ceremony. Live music, entertainment and a gift at the entrance are part of the experience.

The location is right across the street from the



Photo: Maria Cacares

Seine, about a block away from the Alma Bridge. People skateboarding and the fountain in front of the building of the Palais de Tokyo are part of the view.

With €5,000, a silver package, ticket holders are located at the Maison de l’Amerique Latine, surrounded by museums and in front of the Place de la Concorde. People only have access to the Hospitality Center before the opening ceremony. There is also a buffet and cocktail dinner available with music and live entertainment. It also located about two blocks from the Seine and is in front of a road that gives easy walking access to the view.

From April to May, a lottery allowed people to sign up for free tickets to watch the Opening Ceremony without charge. According to France24, free ticketholders win spots in 20 different locations away from those who pay for their packages.

Some people say the Olympics are expensive and

not accessible to many.

Pedro, a French resident who recently moved to Paris said that, although many people in Paris might be rich, it is hard for anyone in the middle class and lower to afford the tickets. He considers himself a middle class worker and said most of his money goes to his bills or other basic necessities.

“It is very expensive, I have seen tickets (not including the Opening Ceremony) for 400 euros,” Pedro said. “It’s not accessible to everyone in Paris.”

He said that people who are not rich typically have bills and other things to spend their money on.

“I would not be able to pay between 4,000 to 5,000, the bills, you won’t be able to pay for them,” Pedro said.

The Olympics are closing in and the ticket drawing process has officially closed. Many are anticipating to see who got which seats and looking to see if the price is really worth it.

Street Vending Scams at the Eiffel Tower

BY RYAN HAYES & GRACE WOZNICKI
Contributors

PARIS, May — The Eiffel Tower is one of the most visited attractions in all of the world, not just for tourists but also for illegal street vendors.

Anyone who has spent more than a minute at the tower has surely been solicited to buy a €1 miniature Eiffel Tower, or a low-price pair of cheaply made sunglasses.

What many don’t realize is these vendors are selling illegally while risking arrest and prosecution with every sale. The vendors are typically part of a much larger and lucrative black market for cheap and illegal merchandise.

The French government has attempted to slow down the illegal vending around the tower. There have been large raids, such as in 2011 when French police seized 300 tons of merchandise, including 270 tons of miniature Eiffel Towers.

According to Radio France Nationale, illegal street vending carries a maximum prison sentence of 6 months and up to a €3,570 fine.

The government can attempt to slow these vendors down but there are too many around the Eiffel Tower and Paris, which makes stopping them an impossibility. Instead, the government tries to crack down on the larger suppliers.

Karla Campbell, a tourist from the United States, said she bought an Eiffel Tower figurine because she thought it meant the vendors would finally leave her alone.

“I didn’t even really want this,” Campbell said. “I just felt like the guy would stop coming up to me and bothering me if I bought one from him.”

Campbell said she regretted her purchase after she realized how cheaply it was made and how little use she would get out of it.

Despite the focus on the large suppliers, the French government still sends police to attempt to crackdown on small vendors, as our reporters observed.

When walking around the tower someone screamed, “Police!” Suddenly metal clanging against metal sounded and every vendor began sprinting in the opposite direction of two police officers.

A police officer successfully caught up to a vendor just after he swooped up his merchandise into what appeared to be a tablecloth.

The officer then tackled the vendor to the ground and took him into custody. Shortly afterwards, the vendor was in the back of a police car as his merchandise was counted and sorted.

Seine River May be Compromised Following the Olympics

BY ANIYA POUNCEY
Contributor

PARIS, May — The biodiversity in the Seine river may be compromised due to fishing, and swimmers using the river for the Olympic games, Bill Francois said.

Bill Francois, 29, is a member of the Union of Fish of Paris. This week he is outside of the Seine on Biodiversity Day with a fishing simulator. He is there

to educate people along the river about the harms of overpopulation and maintaining the rivers biodiversity through fishing, Francois said.

Activities in the river such as swimming for the Olympic games will compromise the biodiversity that organizations such as the UFP have built through fishing and advocacy, he said.

“For Paris fishing,

we are afraid of biodiversity. We have to keep an eye [on the river] and that’s what I am here to do,” Francois said. “Fish biodiversity has improved over the past few years, we will have to make sure the infrastructure we build will not destroy that.”

Francois visits the river about three times a week, but will celebrate the Olympics by leaving for a few months to head South of France, Francois said.

“I think I’m going to escape Paris,” Francois said. “I think I’m going to leave Paris for a few months, and I think a lot of Parisians will move.”

The reality of tourism for the Olympics will negatively impact the infrastructure of Paris. Streets will be blocked, traffic jams will increase and bus stations will be overcrowded, Francois said.

“It’s good for the majority of the city, but it should not be a priority and it costs a lot of money,” Francois said. “I’m not enthusiastic. Only a lot of rich people can enjoy it. For a few rich tourists, I’m sure it will be great entertainment.”

Issues such as seaweed being cut or removed will also negatively impact the River. It kills fish eggs,

so we have to be careful, Francois said.

“It will be interesting to see!” Francois said.

Renovation crews want to cut down historical trees for the Olympics, but, locals protest and petition to avoid that, Francois said.

“If you live in the Seine, the river is important because it makes the city breathe,” Francois said.

Francois is most concerned about biodiversity when it comes to the 2024 Olympic games. He hopes that his advocacy will bring more awareness to the importance of taking care of the river.

Jon Hart's Party School Is a Must-Read for College Students

BY JAYDEN KLAUS
Lifestyle Editor

Jon Hart's "Party School" is an anti-school shaming novel that seeks to create more awareness about college students being shamed.

The form of shame that appears in the book is shame over what college you are attending. This is a problem that can seriously affect people who choose to attend college as they can be demeaned by friends, family, peers, community members, and people online for their choice in school. This can be especially prevalent with schools that have certain reputations from being very prestigious to being a party school.

But, "Party School," says that it is okay to attend whatever college or university you have enrolled in because what matters is what you do to further your education and not the name of the school you are getting your education. As Hart puts it, "It's not the brand of the school. It's the character of the student!"

The novel follows Dylan Mills as he attends North South University, a school that carries a reputation for drug use, which gives Dylan much shame to be going there to the point where he tries to avoid telling people in his hometown of Castleton where he's going for school to avoid their judgments. For most of the book, Dylan wishes to leave North South for a different university that rejects him.

Dylan's beloved girlfriend, Rosemary Silversmith, is going to a

very reputable school, or it school as Dylan calls it. While Rosemary never says anything outrightly negative about Dylan's choice of school, Dylan still expresses some level of shame that he's not going to a noteworthy school like Rosemary. It's an interesting example of how sometimes others can impose shame on us, even if it is unintentional.

Rosemary decides that she and Dylan should take a break from each other while they are a college to get a more rounded experience now that they are moving into a new stage of life. Dylan is upset by this but relents to Rosemary and the couple part ways, agreeing not to speak for three weeks.

Dylan goes to North South and starts to get into the groove of college life and makes friends with other people on campus including Wally, Jimmy, and Samantha. Barring some embarrassment from his divorced parents, Dylan does alright at North South. But he still longs for Rosemary and their relationship.

Then, Dylan suddenly gets a call from Rosemary, informing him that her parents are in the hospital. Dylan drops everything to go and support Rosemary. But despite Dylan being glad to be around Rosemary, there is a noticeable distance that has grown between them and Dylan wonders if Rosemary is taking issue with him attending North South.

Even more distance grows and Dylan decides to try and make things better between

them by visiting Rosemary at her school. But Dylan can't find Rosemary anywhere and is forced to leave by campus security. Rosemary lets Dylan know that she's seeing someone else and Dylan returns to North South, greatly upset and missing what he had with Rosemary.

In a fit of frustration, Dylan begins going out with his friends on a motorcycle and drinks a lot, getting "North South-ed" as the locals and

about it too much and keep at it to finish his first semester at North South. Dylan takes what Berkowitz says to heart and begins to realize that he doesn't need Rosemary as much as he thought he did. Dylan begins to enjoy his time at North South and makes the most of it.

But one day on winter break, as Dylan is working at The Luncheonette, a local restaurant in Castleton, Mr. Zelman, who Dylan formerly had as the voice in the back of his head, judges him for going to North South and his actions there is arrested. It comes out that Mr. Zelman,

due to lack of evidence but this still shatters the last of the trust Dylan had in Rosemary and he parts ways with her to move towards something new.

Dylan additionally received a call from the admissions office of the school he had wanted to go to that he had been accepted for the spring semester. While he initially agrees to it and tells his North South friends about his decision, Dylan declines and returns to North South to continue to "build something special here." Dylan reunites with his friends and agrees to go on a date with Samantha.

Dylan's first-year struggles were very relatable. There's a palpable sense of anxiety about starting college for the first time and trying to find your place in it and wondering if you've made the right choice in coming to this particular school. While most people would probably think that your concerns about attending the right school would be financial in nature, "Party School" highlights the fears of how you will be perceived for which school you attend.

Dylan very often feels ashamed for going to North South instead of the "wannabe it" school he had wanted to go to and tries to avoid and escape from the preconceived notions that people have about North South and what it means for him to attend it.

He eventually accepts that it is okay for him to be here and live in the community that he has discovered and helped to build. This is important, more now than ever, in this age where school shaming can greatly affect people as they choose to go to college.

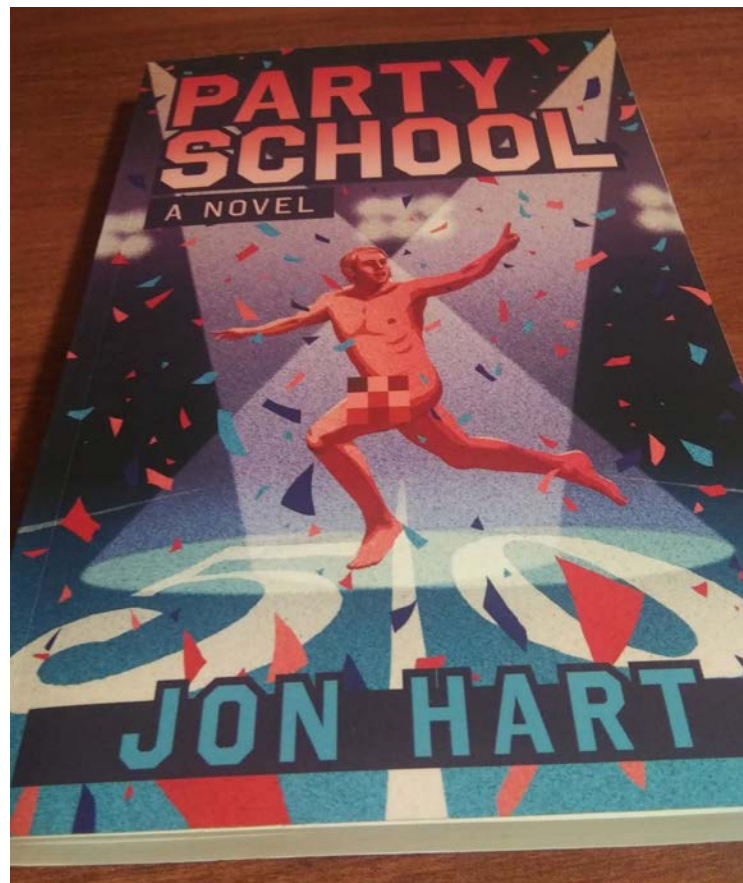


Photo: Jayden Klaus

students call it. Dylan participates in party games where he and others strip to their underwear and make fools of themselves, culminating in Dylan running naked across another college's football field and getting suspended.

Getting suspended makes Dylan feel like he's brought down the name of North South, especially since his escapade was filmed and posted online, but he gets reassured by his sociology professor, Berkowitz, to not worry

along with many other people, including Rosemary's parents, are being arrested and accused of making bribes to falsify their children's college entrance scores.

Dylan doesn't want to believe that Rosemary is involved, but while visiting her, he finds proof that she used personal experience from his life to write her college essay and passed it off as her own. The charges against Rosemary's family are eventually dropped

Unmasking Olivia Rodrigo's Vulnerability: "Guts" Album Review

BY DASCHALL HAYES
Staff Writer

Olivia Rodrigo is finally back after taking a two-year hiatus since releasing her debut studio album titled "SOUR." Multiple people dubbed her an industry plant when she first blew up after getting her career birth by performing in Disney shows like "Bizaardvark" and "High School Musical: The Musical: The Series" but she's proving those mistaken by winning numerous Grammys, shattering Spotify records, and maintaining a number one album on the Billboard Hot 200. Now with her brand-new sophomore studio album "GUTS," she followed up bigger than before.

Before the album was released, Rodrigo dropped two singles "vampire" and "bad idea right?" Both tracks commercially crushed and solidified herself as a modern pop superstar. "vampire" is the better song of the two, in my opinion. Bringing me back the same vibes I received when I first heard "driver's license" back in 2021. The analogy of her partner being a life-sucking vampire that only brings her misery is an intriguing way to display heartbreak and disloyalty.

"bad idea right?" gave me the contrasting feeling of the project. I despise how she doesn't even sing much on this track, mainly just talking



Photo: Youtube

over this really interesting beat. I could care less about her lying to friends about visiting an ex, it adds nothing to the grand scheme of things. This is a song that should have been left out of the album, let alone be a lead single.

The album starts strong with the initial slow but then becomes a powerful rock track titled "all-american bitch." She goes into the unrealistic standards set by men in America towards women which she doesn't fit into. "teenage dream" does a similar thing where the beat changes from slow to aggressive and I find those to be some of the most interesting parts on "GUTS."

I heavily enjoy the tracks on this album that discussed deeper topics that women face when dealing with men

and insecurity. "pretty isn't pretty" is another great example as she talks about following beauty standards yet still feeling miserable within herself over a catchy alternative beat. I give Rodrigo credit for being able to express herself very openly and honestly about some of her poor experiences with romance and pain, especially so early in her professional musical career.

I feel the need to make a separate paragraph about the track "lacy," which is a slower ballad that has minor climaxes where it picks up but enough to change the whole song. Rodrigo talks about a woman named Lacy in great praise and how she's allured by her yet jealous over how perfect she is. Rumor has it that the song could be about Sabrina Carpenter

and the insecurity that Rodrigo feels knowing that her ex-boyfriend Joshua Bassett broke up with her to be with Carpenter romantically. The lyric "Dazzling scarlet, Bardot reincarnate" could be a comparison between Carpenter and Brigitte Bardot, who is recognized as one of the most beautiful women of all time. The openness and metaphorical context that Rodrigo uses to display signs of envy and obsession make it one of my favorite songs that she's written in her short discography.

My main issue with this project is how it has moments where it feels like I'm relistening to something she's made in the past. I do not hear as much musical change as I see her grow as a person. There are plenty of songs on the album that

sound like they were cut from a 2005 Avril Lavigne or 2019 Taylor Swift project. I understand that she has a gimmick that works with the whole resurgence of pop-punk that she helped spark, but it would be nice to see some experimentation with different styles of rock or even a different genre.

I also find many of the songs to have a common perception of romance through the eyes of a middle school girl and can sound not only immature but just downright annoying at times. Songs like "get him back" and "making the bed" are tracks that I feel do not add much value to the project that other songs might, they would have been better off as loose singles. While these offenses aren't major enough to deem the album as garbage, it is something I have to mention.

Overall, I am fairly satisfied with her second album. It is good to see that Rodrigo is showing the world that she is here to stay, and not just a Disney Channel actress who happened to get lucky with a successful debut through corporate funding. She is making her mark in contemporary pop music, and doing well at it. It would be great to see Rodrigo experiment more with using different forms of punk and alternative rock to her advantage, but I can't say that she isn't killing it with the plan she already has.

Opinion: Being an Orientation Leader is Unpredictable

BY MARIA CACERES
Staff Writer

During the summer, I was an Orientation Leader for incoming students at Central. Considering how many applications were sent in, I was lucky to have the summer job of everyone's dreams. As fun as it was, I would consider it one of the most physically and mentally demanding jobs that I've ever worked, and wouldn't consider it a job for everyone.

I have worked a few other jobs; renovating apartments, cleaning houses, and even the on-campus café, but nothing compared to the work I had to do this past summer. You go through fun training sessions and learn about team-building exercises while also living in residence halls during the summer. But nothing prepared me for having to

be up from 7 a.m. until 11 p.m. or the mental strain of having students disrespect me and talk badly about me.

Going in, I believed this was going to be the summer of my life, and it was, but not in the typical, "this is life

have fun but also feeling the mental and physical strains that I did. Many first-year students were placed into the wrong classes or missing critical FYE courses. This included the shifted blame onto us OLs, as we were put into a position where

is that we were learning alongside the students, using a new system different than what we were used to for registering for classes.

Every session we had was filled with hundreds of students, some orientation groups having

energetic and active. On many occasions, I turned to my partner and told him I needed a few minutes to myself. I would come back to help him while also trying my best to make sure the students weren't able to tell how exhausted I was and how much I wanted to go back to sleep.

While the summer was fun and a great learning experience, it was nothing like I expected. It was hard and it was sad at times, but it taught me a lot along the way. It taught me amazing skills in talking to people and making hard situations better.

I will miss everyone, as they have become my family and I always greet my orientation students as I pass them. But I hope to push forward in my career and I will be taking the lessons I learned along the way.



Photo: Danni Alari

a movie," type of way. Rather I found myself surrounded by people who were also trying to

we had to help guide the students alongside a few academic advisors. What many don't understand

almost thirty students with only two OLs. Even though we had this mental strain, we had to remain

A Weekend of Excitement and Enrichment for CCSU Students

BY JASPER KULINSKI
Staff Writer

The atmosphere on our campus this past week was nothing short of electric, as students and faculty alike came together to celebrate a diverse array of events that showcased the vibrant spirit of our university community.

From the athletic triumphs to artistic exhibitions, the week was an inspiring testament to the dynamism of campus life. The week kicked off with Devils Den at 10 p.m. on Thursday night in the Student Center, presented by the Student Government Association with the theme of "Free Money Game Show."

There was a huge

turnout of students, as well as free customizable spray painting of foam fingers. There was also free food including mozzarella sticks, chicken tenders, and more.

There was an incredible amount of participation from CCSU students, and there are high expectations for the upcoming Devils Den @ 10 this coming Thursday, which is presented by the CCSU Women's Club Rugby Team with the theme of "Grocery Bingo" with the catch of being able to keep the groceries after winning bingo!

Our university is not just a place of learning but also a hub for club engagement and fun.

On Sept. 1, the African Student Organization hosted the Quad Block Party, featuring DJ Montez, many great foods and beverages, basketball, volleyball, and much more.

The event brought the importance of incorporating culture and cuisine to students, while also celebrating the rich cultural diversity of our campus. This event fostered unity among our diverse student body while also serving as a reminder of the enriching experiences that come from embracing and celebrating our differences.

As the weekend's events came to a close, the campus community left with a renewed

sense of purpose and inspiration. The weekend's activities not only celebrated our collective

talent, dedication, and spirit of our students and faculty. The symposium, athletic achievements, community outreach, and celebration of diversity all came together to create a weekend of excitement and enrichment.



Photo: Jasper Kulinski

achievements but also encouraged us to look ahead to the future with enthusiasm and determination.

This past weekend was a testament to the thriving campus life at our university.

It showcased the

It was a reminder of the vibrant and dynamic community we are a part of, leaving us eagerly anticipating the next opportunity to come together and celebrate our collective success.

Opinion: The New Standard? Still To Be Announced “Grand Theft Auto 6” Rumored To Release At \$150 Price Tag

BY EARY BANUSHI
Staff Writer

Not too long ago, there was a time when the standard retail price for video games on consoles was \$60. You remember it, I remember it. Walking into your local GameStop on the day of a new game launch and going up to the counter with your new game and the right amount of cash in hand. You always knew how much it was going to cost you. Your parents and their wallets probably knew, too.

It's been nearly three years since everyone's favorite video game developer and publisher, 2K Sports, announced in September 2020 that their release, “NBA 2K21,” would be the first to deviate from this fifteen-year-long tradition with a shiny, new \$70 price tag. This announcement caused outrage among the gaming community. Not because 2K Sports and its parent company, Take-Two Interactive, already have a controversial history when it comes to moves aimed at trying to maximize their profits. From lawsuits accusing them of exploiting children with microtransactions, to trying to profit off Kobe Bryant's death with overpriced special editions of their games.

While 2K Sports took the brunt of the heat, the rest of the industry was already preparing to follow suit with a \$10 price increase to their new games. Only a couple of months after NBA 2K21 came out, Activision dropped its annual “Call of Duty,” “Call of Duty: Black Ops Cold War.” While the game's Xbox One and PlayStation 4 versions were released for \$60, the Xbox Series X/S and PlayStation 5 versions were released for

\$70. In the same month, Sony dropped its PlayStation 5 exclusive “Demon Souls” for \$70 and later dropped “MLB The Show 21” for the same price. Since then, every new video game release for consoles has come at this new standard price.



Photo: Youtube

While gamers may accuse video game publishers of taking advantage of the COVID-19 pandemic to increase their prices, when millions of people lost their jobs and were shuttered inside their homes with nothing else to pass the time but video games, it can be argued that this change was a long time coming. While on paper, the prices of games have increased, we can't forget about this little thing called inflation.

According to the article, “\$70 Video Games: Is This The New Normal?” written by Ben Stegner of MakeUseOf, the price of a \$50 PlayStation game in 1995 is about \$87 in 2021, and a \$60 Xbox 360 game in 2005 is about \$81. Video games today, even with the massive improvements in technology, graphics, storage, and memory, are technically still cheaper than a PlayStation game. Let that sink in.

So what do we make then of the recent rumor making the rounds on the internet saying that

“Grand Theft Auto 6,” the long-awaited sequel to 2013's “Grand Theft Auto 5,” will cost gamers \$150? First, let's get a little background. “Grand Theft Auto 5” was re-released on Xbox 360 and PlayStation 3 all the way back on September 17,

2013, and unless you have been living under a rock, you know about it or have even played it.

Currently, the game is celebrating its tenth anniversary. Back then, no one had any idea that ten years later, it would go on to become the most successful entertainment product ever created, selling over 185 million copies worldwide and earning an estimated 8 billion dollars in revenue. We also didn't know that, ten years later, we would still be waiting on its sequel.

But with all the cash that “Grand Theft Auto 5” brought in, it makes sense that its developer, Rockstar Games, would want its next installment in the series to be even bigger and even better, and with all the hype surrounding “Grand Theft Auto 6,” it is almost a foregone conclusion that it will bring in even more revenue for Rockstar Games than “Grand Theft Auto 5” ever did. But for that to happen, Rockstar Games will also have to spend more

money and time creating its next game than it did on “Grand Theft Auto 5.”

Another massive title by Rockstar Games, “Red Dead Redemption 2,” which was released in 2018, took eight years to develop and cost anywhere between \$170 million and \$240 million to create. “Grand Theft Auto 5” itself took five years to develop and reportedly cost \$265 million to develop and publish. The next “Grand Theft Auto” will be expected to surpass these previous games in cost to develop and publish.

Now let's get back to price. Why? Why do all video games cost the same uniform price? Is it fair that a game like “Super Mario” on the Nintendo Switch should cost the same amount as a game like “Red Dead Redemption?” According to an article titled, “Here's the reason most new console video games cost \$60,” by Michelle Yan Huang and Ben Gilbert of The Business Insider, “The \$60 price is mostly due to consumer expectation, so if you're Nintendo or you're Sony or Microsoft or any of the other game publishers out there if you released your game the base level price being \$70, \$80, more than that, it's a strong possibility people just won't buy it.”

But shouldn't a game that has been in development for nearly a decade, being worked on by thousands of employees, and costing hundreds of millions of dollars to create be worth more than another game that took less time, less manpower, and less money? This is the dilemma many video game companies are having.

There's a reason not all TVs cost the same. What would be the point of making a high-end TV that's thinner and lighter

with high-quality pictures, smart capabilities, and a larger screen if a basic TV costs the same? There would be no competition, and everyone would make their TVs as inexpensive as possible. The same concept should exist for video games. Some games shouldn't be worth \$70, some should be worth \$20, some games should be worth \$60, some should be worth \$120, et cetera.

A game's price should fall in the sweet spot between what the consumer is willing to pay for it and what the developer believes that it's worth, and I believe “Grand Theft Auto 6” will be responsible for ushering in this change. A consumer may be willing to pay \$150 for a new “Grand Theft Auto” game because they know what to expect. They expect a massive and immersive game with photorealistic graphics and a long, interesting, and creative story that they'll delve hours of their time into, created by one of the most renowned studios in Rockstar Games, the same way they would pay more for a brand-new Samsung TV than they would a huge early 2000's Projection TV.

While we should all take rumors, especially those about “Grand Theft Auto 6,” with a grain of salt, we should also be mindful that whether or not “Grand Theft Auto 6” releases for \$70 or \$150, it is sure to be a massive success. All the hype around the game, all the love for the previous games, the excruciating wait, and all the rumors, leaks, and secrecy surrounding it suggest that this will be Rockstar Games' largest game yet. It's sure to shatter records and transform the gaming landscape when it does eventually come out.

Opinion: Things Have Gotten ‘Messi’ in Miami

BY JACK PIXTON
Staff Writer

It is hard to deny the impact and ripple effects that soccer superstar Lionel Messi has had on the soccer landscape. His move to Inter Miami and Major League Soccer has not only ignited soccer fans in the United States but has also had a tremendous economic impact on American soccer.

As reported by Sportico.com, Messi's contract is for two and a half years, worth \$150 million, including partnerships with apparel and kit sponsor Adidas, streaming partner Apple Inc., and a stake in the club itself. When the calendar turns over in 2025, Messi's contract will reach an upwards of \$1.6 billion, ranking him in the top five of the richest contracts in sports history.

Along with the signing of Messi, Miami signed two of his long-time teammates with the Spanish club FC Barcelona. Midfielder Sergio Busquets and left-back Jordi Alba signed on the dotted line shortly after the agreement with Messi was official.

Messi has



Photo: Youtube

achieved about all that he can in the world of professional soccer. In his tenure with European giants FC Barcelona and Paris-Saint Germain, he captured four Champions League titles, 10 La Liga titles, two Ligue 1 titles, and seven Copa de Rey championships. He has won seven Ballon d'Or awards, awarded to the world's best soccer player, and recently led Argentina to their first World Cup title since the great Maradona in 1986.

A player like Lionel Messi is a once-in-a-

lifetime athlete. Spending all his career up to this point in Europe, it is not surprising that fans are chomping at the bit to get a glimpse of the magic Messi displays. The Athletic reported during a League Cup between Inter Miami and Columbus Crew in July that the 25,513-person capacity stadium only took one day to sell out with Messi in the picture.

According to data from TicketIQ, average home game tickets for Inter Miami have increased from \$153 to \$864 since

Messi's arrival. A ticket for Inter Miami's 2022 game in Los Angeles against LAFC was around \$140. Just a year later, the price for that same ticket skyrocketed to \$2,400 because of Messi's presence.

Messi has affected not only the spike in ticket sales but also in streams. In June of last year, Apple TV announced a 10-year agreement with the MLS, which allowed every game to be watched without any restrictions.

The club's social media pages have also seen a huge increase in followers after the signing. Inter Miami's Instagram has more followers than every NHL, MLB, and NFL team. They grew from 1 million to 6.1 million in just 24 hours after announcing Messi. Currently, that number has risen to an astonishing 15 million followers.

The increase in revenue for the club, league, and its business partners is due to Messi as a brand, but it comes down to how he performs on the pitch.

Most avid soccer fans would agree that the MLS is more competitive than European soccer is not as good. In the past,

the MLS has served as a retirement plan for some of the world's best, such as David Beckham, Wayne Rooney, and Zlatan Ibrahimović. However, Messi has kept the same excellence and magic expected from him.

In 11 games, Messi has scored 11 times and tallied five assists, catapulting Inter Miami to a League Cup win, the club's first major trophy since it was founded in 2018. In his 11 games, Inter Miami is 10-1-0. Messi is the key to Inter Miami and their success.

Inter Miami games have become the must-watch soccer team in the United States and one of the world's most expensive and star-studded shows.

Messi has drawn fans who were not soccer fans into the sport, along with some of the United States' most famous athletes and celebrities. Figures such as LeBron James, Kim Kardashian, and Selena Gomez have been some of the few seen attending Inter Miami games to catch a glimpse of the wizardry Messi brings to the 'beautiful game.'



: @centralrecorder

Second Year Transfer Kellen Amos Feels at Home With Blue Devils

BY ARI KINDER
Staff Writer

Kellen Amos, H-Town's own, is here to stay. The smooth-operating 6-foot-7, 190 pound senior shooting guard does it all on both ends of the floor.

Coming off an outstanding season for a first-year transfer, averaging 14 points, three rebounds, and an assist, Amos has made an immediate impact for the Central Connecticut State University Blue Devils.

This is no surprise for him, though. Coming from Binghamton University, he has been patiently awaiting his turn to shine. During his sophomore year with the Bears, he had a game where he broke out for 26 points in only 23 minutes of play and produced five other double-digit games that season alone, only playing 23 games.

"I felt like I should've been playing way more than I was, but I wasn't, and you know it sucked at the time," Amos said. "I feel like it made me look more in-depth into my game, look at things I may not have looked at if I was playing, and make me look at it and be like, let me get better at this so I could play."

Amos looked elsewhere in search of more playing time and opportunities to prove himself, ultimately landing him in New Britain with the Blue Devils and head coach Patrick Sellers.

"What really led me here was I felt like I was killing in practice, and I went into games that



Photo: Steve McLaughlin Photography

I felt like I killed, and yet I felt like I wasn't getting my opportunity," Amos said. "So, I sat down with my family like I needed to look somewhere else."

Sellers, an alumnus who played for CCSU, was named the head coach of the program in May of 2021 and had been looking to turn the program around. Amos has been a pivotal piece to coach Seller's plan, starting all 32 games and putting up good numbers in his first season.

"I always felt like if I had the opportunity, I was going to play well, and I know coming in he said he would let me play through my mistakes, and I came in last year with no real expectations," Amos said. "It's not like everything was ran through me, so I kind of just had to fit in with the team, and he let me just play my game, and I think it's only going to get better this year when they know who I am and know how we can help him do more."

Not satisfied with how his first season

went here, he returned to the lab and worked on his game. He's looking to make an even bigger impact this season. When asked what he worked on in the offseason, he smirked.

"The big thing to basketball is people don't really know what they want to do, so in every situation, I want to know what to do, and that's what I tried to sit down and focus on," Amos said. "Of course, I added little things here and there, but that's the biggest thing I focused on."

Coming off a 10-22 season and a heartbreaking loss in the quarterfinals for the Northeast Conference Tournament for the second year, they're looking to make an impact for the 2023-24 season.

"I'm feeling good; the only thing I'm looking forward to is winning. All the other stuff, all the personal stuff, is going to come. I put in the hours; I put in the work. All that stuff is expected, but the thing I'm looking forward

to the most is winning," Amos said. We got some good pieces coming in, and I think we're a better team than we were last year. We're an older team, a more mature team, and I think winning is just the biggest thing."

Amos credits his hard work and patience with getting him where he is today and wants all the up-and-coming athletes to never give up on themselves or their dreams, no matter the situation they may be in.

"If you work hard, you may not see the benefits next week, next month, next year, or the next five years. But I promise it's going to come. You just got to keep working because that's what I did," Amos said. "I was sitting at Bingham for two years on the bench, not playing. I was in the gym every single day, then I came here, and you start to see things. People haven't even seen the whole package, and I just keep working through the failures, and it'll always come back."



CCSU ATHLETICS SCHEDULE

FOOTBALL

Sept. 30 @ Brown
Oct. 7 vs. Delaware State
Oct. 14 @ Duquesne
Oct. 21 @ Wagner

MEN'S SOCCER

Oct. 1 vs. Le Moyne
Oct. 8 @ Saint Francis
Oct 15 @ Sacred Heart
Oct. 22 vs. FDU

WOMEN'S SOCCER

Sept. 28 vs. Howard
Oct. 1 @ Delaware State
Oct. 5 vs. Sacred Heart
Oct. 12 @ Merrimack

CROSS COUNTRY

Sept. 30 @ Paul Short Invite
Oct. 13 @ IC4A/ECAC
Oct. 20 CCSU Mini Meet
Oct. 28 @ NEC Finals

VOLLEYBALL

Sept. 29 @ Merrimack
Sept. 30 @ Stonehill
Oct. 3 vs. Bryant
Oct. 7 @ Sacred Heart

SWIM & DIVE

Oct. 6 @ Fairfield Invite
Oct. 7 @ Fairfield Invite
Oct. 21 @ Stony Brook
Oct. 27 @ New Hampshire

CCSU Marching Band Comes Off Hiatus Better Than Ever

BY IAN YALE
Staff Writer

The most exciting day of the week for the average college student is football game day. A day when students and supporters rally around their student-athletes as they represent the school. But, no game day is complete without the marching band, ready to inject the crowd with energy at a moment's notice.

A marching band's continuous bursts of music as the offense scores on a big play or as the defense makes a key stop has the power to bring a stadium of people to their feet. This was an aspect of the game that Central Connecticut State University had been missing until now.

When the COVID-19 virus shut down the world in 2020, it took CCSU's marching band as one of its many casualties. Four years later they are back in business under the leadership of director James Minnix and drum majors Drew Benard, Jacob Hubbard, and Lia Means.

Minnix was hired just a month before the fall 2023 semester and received



Photo: Ian Yale

a blank slate and very little time to work with before CCSU's week one football game, he said. What he and his team of drum majors put together for both pregame and halftime blew the proverbial roof off Arute Field.

The rehearsal process is a rigorous one, beginning in the summer with band camp. The band starts to work on techniques, as well as begin to learn sets for the football season. It is nothing that the band can't

handle, Hubbard said. "You make the noise, do the walking, then make noise while you walk, in that order," Hubbard said.

In more detail, the first step is to learn and memorize the music in the band room. After that, the band transitions to the field to work on the marching aspect. Finally, they put the two pieces together to finalize their show for game day.

The marching band's primary focus is to

build up a community and a family, the drum majors said.

"Building a community has been one of our goals, and that's been Minnix's goal," Means said.

"If you can't trust each other, you can't work with each other," Benard said. "It's all about trust."

It has been paramount to drum up interest and excitement surrounding the band in its first year back in action. Not only does the

band positively affect the atmosphere during football and basketball games, but it also positively affects the image of the CCSU Music Department, Minnix said.

"The marching band can bring a ton of energy and excitement to the football games and to the community at large," Minnix said. "It helps to build the music department if we can grow the marching band. It's an ensemble that benefits everyone at the university."

Joining the band is an open invitation as it requires no experience in either marching or playing an instrument. If you are willing to be patient and take your time learning, you can be a vital piece of the puzzle, Minnix said.

"We won't turn anyone away who wants to march," Minnix said.

In the return of the marching band on September 2, CCSU won its season opener against American International in a 44-0 blow-out. The energy added to the experience in short, simple bursts of music was tangible and will continue to factor into the remainder of the football season, as well as the basketball season.

All Square as Blue Devils Battle To 1-1 Draw

BY EARY BANUSHI
Staff Writer

The Central Connecticut State University men's soccer team battled against Northeast Conference rival Long Island University to a 1-1 draw on Sunday, Sept. 24, at CCSU Soccer Field.

The game's first goal came early in the 12th minute when CCSU defenders failed to clear a cross into the box from LIU's Ben Assane-Fall, leading to an easy goal for Long Island's Ethan Homler.

It didn't take long for the Blue Devils to respond. In the 17th minute, Central was awarded a penalty after a counterattack resulted in sophomore Justin

Rivas being fouled inside the box.

Austin Rocke, who scored a penalty in CCSU's last game against University of Connecticut, was called up to do it again today and nestled the ball into the right corner of the net to tie the game at 1-1.

Being the Blue Devils' primary penalty kicker, Rocke remained cool, calm, and collected even in the game's biggest moments.

"I'm always confident taking those [penalties]," Rocke said. "I've been taking them for a while since I've been here at Central, so I'm always confident and willing to step up and take it, especially to tie the game."

Despite the goal, the half was dominated by LIU, who, by the end of it, had 65% possession to CCSU's 35%. LIU had eight total shots, two being on target. CCSU had only two total shots, with both being on goal.

One of Central's captains, junior Ola Telje, expressed disappointment in the team's first-half performance and said they played afraid.

"I think the first half was kind of weak," Telje said. "We looked kind of scared, scared to press, scared to get forward, but in the second half, Coach told us to get back up on our feet and go at them, and that's what we did."

CCSU's performance did pick up significantly in the second half, and the match no longer felt like it was only being played on Central's side of

the field. The Blue Devils started dominating the ball and counter-attacking much more.

While the team may have been 'scared' in the first half, Central came out in the second half much more physical. At the end of the first half, CCSU had committed six fouls, but by the end of the game, that number more than doubled to 15.

The physicality coming out of halftime seemed to surprise LIU. However, they were able to adapt, and the game soon turned into a back-and-forth bout in the rain. It would remain this way until the final few minutes. With the pressure on, both sides tried desperately to break the stalemate and score the game-winner.

Frustrated with how the Blue Devils started the game, head coach David

Kelly expressed disappointment that they could not carry over the momentum they had built in the second half of their Sept. 19 loss to the UConn.

"I thought we came out and looked a little bit intimidated tonight. Maybe we were a little jittery because it was the first conference game," Kelly said. "I actually thought we looked really poised and confident against UConn, and I was hoping that would carry over into today, but in the end, the second-half response is what we were looking for."

Head coach David Kelly hopes to see more of that second-half response in their next game at home on Oct. 1 against winless Le Moyne College before playing on the road in their next two matches against Saint Francis University and Sacred Heart University.