

# THE MIRROR

Week of February 14, 2024 | Vol. 51 Issue 3

Independent student newspaper

fairfieldmirror.com



The Spring Career Fair scheduled for Feb. 14 has been postponed due to inclement weather.

## Career Fair Canceled Due to Winter Storm

BY BRIDGET KEOHANE  
Assistant News Editor

Fairfield University's Career Center was originally set to host its annual Spring Career Fair on Wednesday, Feb. 14 from 12-3 p.m. in the RecPlex. The event was scheduled to be the first of three career fairs set to take place this semester.

In an email sent to students and all employers on Feb. 12, the Career Center announced "Due to the winter storm warning in effect for the entire region, the University Career Center has decided to cancel the Career & Internship Fair scheduled for this Wednesday, Feb. 14."

The email goes on to acknowledge that it was not an easy decision for the Career Center to make, but that they needed to prioritize the safety of employers, students, vendors, and staff. They also stated "We are already looking for alternative dates for later in the semester and will keep students apprised."

Junior Leslie Abbott, who was originally planning to attend the Fair, remarked "I am excited for the possibility of a snow day but disappointed about the Career Fair getting canceled. I am hopeful they will reschedule it before the end of this semester."

In the meantime, students can continue to prepare for the Career Fair in the case that it gets rescheduled, while also looking to attend additional fairs that are set to take place later in the semester.

The Education and Human Development Fair will be held on Tuesday, March 19 from 3-5 p.m. in the BCC Oak Room, as well as the Nursing Virtual Fair on Tuesday, April 9 from 3-5 p.m. on Handshake.

Outside of those two fairs, individual schools are set to host additional networking opportunities throughout the semester.

In the case that the Spring Career Fair occurs, it will likely feature numerous employers from multiple industries, eager to meet Fairfield students and relay information about job opportunities—part-time and full-time—at their organizations.

The full list of companies attending will be posted on Stags4Hire, also referred to as Handshake, closer to the event.

**"I am excited for the possibility of a snow day but disappointed about the Career Fair getting canceled. I am hopeful they will reschedule it before the end of this semester."**

**-Leslie Abbott '25**

the official date of the Fair. Some notable organizations who were scheduled to attend this year include Bic Corporation, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Gilbane Building Company, PwC, Vineyard Vines and several universities for those considering graduate school.

Last year's Spring Career Fair hosted over 105 companies and organizations, with over 600 students in attendance. Many students held the event in high regard, as it allowed them to form multiple connections with employers and work on honing their networking skills.

When reflecting on her time at last year's fair, Ari Karampekios '25 remarked, "The Career Fair is a beneficial event to go to even if you don't land an internship on your first try. I practiced networking which is crucial in any industry. I loved meeting new people from all different kinds of companies and being able to talk to them about future opportunities."

To prepare for upcoming fairs and the job search process, the Career Center has been advertising resources for students looking for help with Stags4Hire, resumes, cover letters and networking skills. Information about specific workshops, such as the "Master the Interview" session on Feb. 21 from 10-11 a.m. on Zoom, can be found on Life@Fairfield.

Students are also encouraged to email the Career Center to schedule an appointment or drop in to meet with a Career Peer Advisor (CPA), whose schedules are also posted on Life@Fairfield.

While the Feb. 14 Fair has been postponed for the time being, students are still encouraged to complete their Stags4Hire profile and upload their current resume. They should also develop an elevator pitch to answer the question, "Tell me about yourself." An elevator pitch is a short introduction of yourself, usually about a minute long, that lets the employer know more about you and why you might be a good fit for their organization. Hopefully with this extra time, students will be even more prepared for the Career Fair when it is rescheduled.

For any questions regarding the fairs, students are advised to contact careers@fairfield.edu.

## Dr. Ruiz-Mesa Delivers Keynote Address

BY SAMANTHA RUSSELL  
Executive Editor

"In social justice, there is no neutrality," affirms Dr. Kristina Ruiz-Mesa, Associate Professor and Graduate Director of Fairfield University's Department of Communication. Freshly hired by the university this past semester, Dr. Ruiz-Mesa has already transformed its graduate program while teaching what she deems as "upper-level classes on identity." Her work and research hold a strong focus on navigating organizational communication through inclusion and diversity.

On Monday, Feb. 5, Dr. Ruiz-Mesa delivered a keynote address at this year's Annual Faculty Spotlight as its inaugural speaker. As a new faculty member, Dr. Ruiz-Mesa confirmed the honor that was being selected. Using her time, she informed her audience of students and faculty on the significance of achieving diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) on not just Fairfield's campus but on campuses nationwide.

"We need to be really clear about what diversity is, what equity is, what inclusion is," Dr. Ruiz-Mesa declared regarding organizational and communication scholars. "We need to be able to talk about these in a really comfortable way."

The featured speaker began her discussion with a necessary distinction between the elements of DEI. While she nodded to models frequently used, such as the "sitting at the table" notion, she

believes a stronger example stems from an image of a unicorn cupcake.

Dr. Ruiz-Mesa highlighted the common knowledge that the ingredients of a cake all come from different places and provide different flavors; this concept can be seen as diversity. All of these ingredients require different amounts to build a cohesive cake; this concept can be seen as equity. Despite these differences, all of these ingredients must be mixed in together to serve their separate roles – a concept viewed as inclusion.

While she used additional models and examples to serve her point, her overarching message described the importance of embracing these elements to expand our networks and eradicate tokenism: the idea that people serve as representations of ideas and, as a Latina woman, something she has experienced herself.

Earning her bachelor's and master's degrees in Communication at Villanova University, Dr. Ruiz-Mesa has always been fascinated with the ways people hold conversations. She grew up admiring how people built relationships and often studied movies to watch how these dynamics formed. Her favorite, she affirmed, is "My Girl."

Through five transformative undergraduate internships, Dr. Ruiz-Mesa bounced from NBC10, to Ford Motor Company, to working with her state Senator – but never quite finding her professional home. It was not until she landed at the Philadelphia Zoo teaching in

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## Stags Savor the Snow Day



Shea Burns/The Mirror

Following the cancellation of in-person classes and activities on Feb. 13, Stags indulged in the snowy weather by building snowmen and even sledding. Some may have even tried out Dean Johnson's Famous Snow Day Chili recipe he sent out to students the night before the winter storm.

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PRESIDENTS' DAY WEEKEND HOURS:

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 16TH-MONDAY, FEBRUARY 19TH



FRI. 2/16: 7:30AM-8PM  
SAT. 2/17 - SUN. 2/18: 8AM-8PM  
MON. 2/19: 7:30AM-8PM



FRI. 2/16 - SAT. 2/17: CLOSED  
SUN. 2/18 - MON. 2/19: 4PM-10:30PM



FRI. 2/16: 11AM-9PM  
SAT. 2/17 - SUN. 2/18: 3PM-9PM  
MON. 2/19: 11AM-9PM



FRI. 2/16: 11AM-8PM  
SAT. 2/17 - SUN. 2/18: CLOSED  
MON. 2/19: 11AM-8PM



FRI. 2/16: 8AM-3PM  
SAT. 2/17 - MON. 2/19: CLOSED



FRI. 2/16: 8AM-4PM  
SAT. 2/17 - MON. 2/19: CLOSED

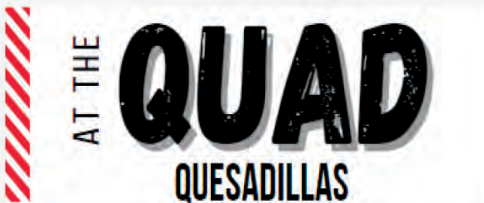


FRI. 2/16: 7:30AM-3PM  
SAT. 2/17 - SUN. 2/18: 8AM-3PM  
MON. 2/19: 7:30AM-3PM

FOOD TRUCKS



FRI. 2/16: 11AM-8PM  
MON. 2/19: 3PM-8PM



MON. 2/19: CLOSED

ROTATING TRUCK

FRI. 2/16: 8AM-2PM  
SUN. 2/18: 4PM-8PM  
MON. 2/19: 11AM-8PM

STAGSHospitality



# Campus Ministry Spreads the Love with Cupid Crew Initiative

BY ERICA SCHINDLER  
Assistant News Editor

For many, Valentine’s Day is an occasion to show love to those they care about – and the holiday is not complete without Valentine’s cards. But what about those who might be going without a Valentine this year? Fairfield Campus Ministry is working to send love to people by participating in the Cupid Crew.

Cupid Crew is an annual, nationwide initiative started by the AARP’s Wish of a Lifetime. The goal is to create and send Valentine’s cards to senior citizens across the country. Schools and other volunteers can participate by making Valentines and hosting events to encourage others to join in the effort.

Fairfield University Campus Ministry is participating in Cupid Crew this year, as it has for the past two years. Campus Minister for Social Engagement Kathleen Byrnes states that the initiative has seen growth on campus over the years. “This is our third year joining in the project and it grows in popularity every year,” Byrnes said.

Participation in card-making for Cupid Crew was open to all students in the days leading up to Valentine’s Day. Campus Ministry housed the card-making in McGrath Commons, located in the lower level of Egan Chapel. Students stopped by McGrath between the hours of 8:00 a.m. to midnight to decorate a card or two for local seniors. The event was advertised on Life@Fairfield, where students can also look for other service opportunities.

“CampMin has lots of projects where you can spend some time giving back, check out Life@Fairfield in the Service portal!” Byrnes said.

While this is Campus Ministry’s third year participating in Cupid Crew, Wish of a Lifetime has been hosting the national event for 11 years. An affiliate of the AARP, Wish of a Lifetime aims “to shift the way society views and values our oldest generations by fulfilling older adults’ dreams and sharing their stories to inspire those of all ages.”

Through Cupid Crew, Wish of a Lifetime helps older adults feel valued on a holiday when they may otherwise feel left out. They hope that receiving a Valentine in the mail will make a lonely senior feel loved and appreciated.

The Cupid Crew will also do rose deliveries for Valentine’s Day, a facet of the program that they’ve brought back

in person this year after several years without it. Volunteers deliver the roses, furthering the mission of bringing cheer to older people on the holiday. Byrnes highlights the need for this, considering the amount of isolated seniors in the United States.

“According to AARP, nearly 1 in 4 adults ages 65 or older are isolated,” Byrnes said. “This [is] over 50 million Americans who may not see or hear from anyone else on Valentine’s Day. We can’t let that happen!”

As a Jesuit university, it’s clear that Fairfield places an emphasis on service. Part of the University’s mission is to prepare students to lead with “a determination to serve and promote justice.” Taking part in Cupid Crew is just one of the many service opportunities Fairfield and Campus Ministry offers to students.

While awaiting next year’s Cupid Crew event, students can keep an eye out for other service opportunities and stay

“According to AARP, nearly 1 in 4 adults ages 65 or older are isolated... this [is] over 50 million Americans who may not see or hear from anyone else on Valentine’s Day. We can’t let that happen!”

**-Kathleen Byrnes**  
**Campus Minister for Social Engagement**

up to date on Campus Ministry. Service events like this happen throughout the school year.

Although Cupid Crew is relatively new here at Fairfield, it has had a big impact. Byrnes expresses the importance of small acts, such as making a Valentine for someone. “Raising awareness of how important acts of service are – no matter how small – and the impact we can all make in the community around us,” she said. “We are putting our mission of being men and women with and for others into action!”



Photo Courtesy of Fairfield News  
Students make Valentine's Day cards for senior citizens as a part of the Cupid Cre initiative. This national event was adopted by Campus Ministry three years ago and occurs on the days leading up to Valentine's Day.

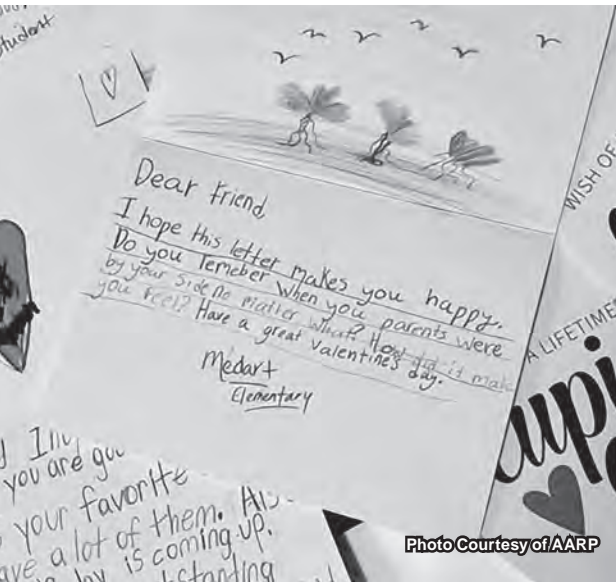


Photo Courtesy of AARP  
Campus Ministry partnered with Cupid Crew cards bringing love to seniors on Valentine's Day. The project is in its 11th year.

## THE MIRROR

Incorporated 1977

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# HA Club Turns Valentine’s Day Into a Chance for Change

BY CLAIRE DEMARCO  
Copy Editor

One of Fairfield’s most impactful clubs is making its impact known this Valentine’s Day through its service efforts for the non-profit Wine to Water. The Humanitarian Action Club – a group dedicated to humanitarian service, action and reform–hosts many events throughout the school year to aid local and global causes working mainly in disaster relief. These causes vary from natural disasters to refugee crises to poverty. The Humanitarian Action Club prioritizes identifying these areas of crisis and partnering with the right organizations to make the greatest change.

That is why, for several years now, the Humanitarian Action Club has focused its efforts on Wine to Water, continuously hosting events and fundraisers for the organization. Wine to Water’s mission is to eliminate the water crisis globally and increase awareness of the fact that many communities all over the world still do not have close and stable access to clean water. The global nonprofit recognizes both the power of clean water and the right all individuals possess to access it, and looks to both provide and empower through clean water access.

Wine to Water takes its mission right to the communities and local leaders that not only need their funds, but their technology, ideas and support in building sanitation techniques to provide stable sources of clean water for their members. This nonprofit relies on not just the generosity and money, but time and commitment, of their partners to aid through both monetary contributions as well as service.

The Humanitarian Action Club’s partnership with Wine to Water allows the club to use its service-based mission to create tangible change in the lives of many in need all over the world. In the past, the Humanitarian Action Club has held events to build the water filters that Wine to Water uses to more directly provide clean water, sending the filters all over the world to allow communities to find and filter their own water.

However, this Valentine’s Day, the club’s efforts have turned into fundraising and will provide a fun opportunity for Fairfield students.

This past Wednesday, at their bi-weekly 7:30 p.m. meeting, the Humanitarian Action Club members hand-dipped pretzels and marshmallows for our student body to buy. In

the Center for Social Impact, these service-oriented students gathered, giving up their Wednesday nights, to help contribute to a cause greater than themselves- and have some fun with the upcoming holiday. The treats will be for sale in the Barone Campus Center, along with the chance to anonymously send a group of five plus singing athletes on the men’s lacrosse and/or rowing team to a loved one of your choice. These two options not only contribute to a worthy cause, but are sure to earn some smiles!

The money raised is then donated directly to Wine to Water for whatever their needs may be in aiding the global water crisis. Contributing to the sanitation techniques and technology that save lives and empower communities, Fairfield students are making a deeper impact this Valentine’s Day. Keep your eyes open in the BCC for when you can buy the treats, or the caroling, so you, too, can contribute to the Humanitarian Action Club’s efforts, or join them at their Wednesday meetings to get more involved with Wine to Water, and the many wonderful organizations they support!



# New Graduate Director of Communication Emphasizes DEI on College Campuses

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

the animal house did she realize her true calling.

“I loved teaching about preservation,” she said about how one’s actions matter in helping others. From here, she gives credit to Dr. Terry Nance for convincing her to join Villanova’s graduate program in Multicultural Affairs as their first student. Dr. Ruiz-Mesa received a stipend to participate in the program, but the professional revelation it gave her surpassed any funds.

“This is it. This is what I love,” Dr. Ruiz-Mesa recalled. “I am best when I am teaching.”

Dr. Ruiz-Mesa’s passion for educating was in clear sight during her Faculty Spotlight address. Like a classroom, she posed knowledge-based questions about her subject to her student attendees and channeled her typical conversational atmosphere through sincerity and casual jokes.

In line with her success as an educator, Professor and Chair of Communication Dr. Sean Horan distinguished Dr. Ruiz-Mesa as a top competitive candidate during her own hiring process.

“She is the total package: an accomplished researcher, a talented and engaging teacher and someone who is deeply committed to Fairfield’s mission,” he expressed. “On top of that, she fits the collaborative, respectful and friendly organizational culture that is the norm among Department of Communication colleagues.”

A vast portion of Dr. Ruiz-Mesa’s speech emphasized the power presented by communication. She reminded her audience that communication equates to how organizations represent themselves and discussed the concept of communication policies and practices.

“How we name things, how we frame them, is going to change how we expect them to be,” she said. Further, she explained how this notion of organizational communication fits into DEI. “Communication is not one size fits all,” she continued. “When I think of my communication, I have to think about my audience, I have to put myself in my audience’s shoes.”

Dr. Ruiz-Mesa went on to say that the more perspectives she hears and the more experiences she gains, the more equipped she becomes to handle DEI-related topics and discussions. Although her following point acknowledged the discomfort that these conversations bring to a majority of people, she challenged that perspective with the thought that no one is born having these conversations- no one, not even Dr Ruiz-Mesa herself. “I had to learn. I had to read,” she shared. Late nights and early mornings in the library defined her college experience; she is “so glad” they did.

According to the scholar, communication is not only power but something we all must utilize with thought. “Once it’s out there, there is little you can do to take it back,” she advised. “With a single word, you can make or break a relationship.”

Communication, however, extends far beyond managing interpersonal relationships. In the nature of DEI, communication allows all voices to be heard. In order for an organization to correctly claim its value of “inclusive excellence,” for example, it must be “holistically excellent,” meaning, it incorporates a variety of ideas, perspectives and people.

The Jesuit values of Fairfield University align with social justice and thus DEI. A lover of Catholic social teaching and its preferential treatment for the poor, Dr. Ruiz-Mesa includes this type of teaching within her classrooms and attributes Jesuit values with attracting

her to a private institution.

“Social justice is why I do this kind of work,” she said.

In part, her lecture was a question for all communication scholars in the room to ponder how they are fulfilling their part in the strive for social justice. Her presentation was a call to, or challenge for, them to take initiative.

“Every day we have the opportunity to engage in conversations,” the speaker announced with urgency. “Think about the power of those [words].”

Dr. Ruiz-Mesa believes an incredible step for Fairfield University in terms of social justice was hiring its first Chief Diversity Officer this year. This move ultimately confirmed her decision to come to Fairfield; its recognition of the need to guide the campus was “huge for her.”

Chief Diversity Officers are typically chosen from communication professors because, according to Dr. Ruiz-Mesa, they already know how to discuss those particular topics. Again, she explained that talking about DEI will vary by audience and that how those messages are framed has a profound effect on how they are delivered.

Professor of Communication Dr. Michael Pagano agrees that Dr. Ruiz-Mesa’s work on organizational DEI deserves critical attention. Furthermore, he applauds the professor for her admirable work at Fairfield.

“We are so grateful that Dr. Ruiz-Mesa chose to join our Communication Department,” he said, “and we hope that she will be able to work across the Fairfield University community to help the organization attain its stated social justice and DEI goals and values.”

Throughout her time as the Graduate Director of the Department of Communication, Dr. Ruiz-Mesa has transformed the program from on-campus, hybrid and face-to-face to entirely online. This transition, she believes, has really helped the graduate program to grow.

Something she is particularly interested in improving, however, is the development of Bellarmine Campus.

“Fairfield has a lot of opportunities to continue to live our values,” stated Dr. Ruiz-Mesa. “Bellarmine is an incredible way for us to really lean into our social justice practices and to recognize the value of having a diverse, inclusive campus.”

**“Fairfield has a lot of opportunities to continue to live our values... Bellarmine is an incredible way for us to really lean into our social justice practices and to recognize the value of having a diverse, inclusive campus.”**

**-Dr. Ruiz-Mesa**  
**Associate Professor and Graduate Director of Department of Communication**

During her address, the Graduate Director noted that 80 percent of Fairfield undergraduates are white. Being so, she reported a



Dr. Ruiz-Mesa was hired this past semester as Associate Professor and Graduate Director of Fairfield University’s Department of Communication.

necessity to expand our networks and think about how we are engaging with individuals and how our messages are hitting.

From her talk, she further hoped that students realize the true power and influence of their words.

“How [students] interact with the world matters,” she declared strongly. “They have a powerful position in society to influence others,” and added that power is especially tied to their actions.

Personally, her talk forced her to think about how she could utilize her research specifically for Fairfield’s campus. She advised those with authority to express inclusion and to use their power to invite diverse voices. She advised students to use social media and television shows to follow DEI creators and initiate meaningful conversations.

Yet, at the heart of it all, she concluded, is kindness.

Dr. Ruiz-Mesa deems herself spoiled from a first semester of focused and open-minded students. “I really care about being a good teacher, and that for me is really important,” she confided. “I love connecting with students.”

Of all the work she has accomplished, from published books to DEI research to establishing the St. Thomas of Villanova Scholars pre-college bridge program, her major message to students is to make the change they hope to see. To the people who complain that “society is not doing well,” she responds:

“We are society. We get to dictate how we communicate ... the kind of energy we want to bring into a space ... model what we want, not mirror the chaos around us.”

## Stephen Wilkes Art Installation Coming to BCC

BY ERIN MCGETRICK  
Contributing Writer

A new art installation was introduced to the Barone Campus Center on Dec. 1, 2023 in acknowledgment of the war between Israel and Palestine. “Holy City” by Brian Whelan represents the coexistence of Christianity, Islam and Judaism, demonstrating Fairfield University’s belief that all faiths are welcome to be practiced on campus. This work is hard to miss, its 9-by-12-foot frame surely catches the eye of anyone who passes through the BCC.

Now, another artist’s work is being highlighted right in the student hub of campus.

Stephen Wilkes is an American photographer whose “Day to Night” collection depicts our conscious passage of time and how many moments occur within a single day. In order to create these impressive panoramic images, Wilkes shot from a fixed vantage point and remained in the same spot for 15 to 30 hours a day. The thousands of photographs captured within the day were then digitally edited for months to construct a cohesive image filled with moments and memories. In Smithsonian Magazine, Wilkes states that he’s “focused on how the eye sees and the scale in which we



“Holy City” by Brian Wehlan was hung in the BCC beginning in early Dec. “Easter Mass” by Stephen Wilkes is set to be on display Feb. 21.

see the world. [In my photographs, I try to] create as much depth and peripheral vision as possible, like you’re looking through a window.”

“Easter Mass” is the photograph from the collection that will be displayed and it shows Vatican City on the religious and highly celebrated holiday. The entirety of the collection was featured in a solo exhibition at The National Geographic Museum in Washington, D.C., in 2018 and also at the Fenimore Art Museum in Cooperstown, N.Y., in May of 2023. This museum-quality piece will be

enlarged, much like the “Holy City” artwork, and will most certainly stop those passing by.

The reason for these works being added to the Fairfield University campus is credited to Stephen Wilkes’ friendship with Dr. Philip Eliasoph, a longtime professor of Art History and Visual Culture. Additionally, Dr. Eliasoph was appointed by President Nemec in the summer of 2023 as Special Assistant to the President for Arts & Culture, in which she works closely with the Fairfield University Art Museum on-campus events. He was having dinner with Wilkes and his wife when the idea was suggested. The gigantic photo was in temporary art storage in between exhibitions, allowing availability to be borrowed by Fairfield University.

“Anticipating the pleasure – and jaw-dropping wonder – of viewing a jumbo-scaled photograph by Stephen Wilkes,” comments Dr. Eliasoph, “Fairfield University will be enriched and enchanted with the artist’s audaciously scaled format.”

**“Fairfield University will be enriched and enchanted with the artist’s audaciously scaled format.”**

**-Dr. Philip Eliasoph**  
**Professor of Art History and Visual Culture**

The hope is that students passing by through the BCC, perhaps walking to the Tully or taking a shortcut to get to class, are enriched by the art placed in front of them. “Our university is rising in its stature and quality, and we’re making remarkable progress,” Dr. Eliasoph says of the addition of art into everyday life on campus. “It is such a privilege to use what resources we have to broaden our relationship with culture and the world around us.”

Stephen Wilkes’ “Easter Mass” will be available to view in the Barone Campus Center on Feb. 21.



# Opinion

Editor: Roisin McCarthy

Assitant Editor: Natalie Dripchak

## Is Taylor Swift Ruining the Music Industry or Is She the Music Industry?

By **ASHLEY DEVLIN**  
News Editor

For those who love Taylor Swift, you may be overjoyed that the singer took home two Grammys this year, but the rest of the world has few good things to say about her achievements.

Swift had a banner year with her Eras Tour, the release of “Speak Now Taylor’s Version” and “1989 Taylor’s Version”, and the release of her new movie documenting the Eras Tour.

She was nominated for six Grammys: Record of the Year for her song “Anti-Hero,” Album of the Year for “Midnights,” Song of the Year for “Anti-Hero,” Best Pop Vocal Album for “Midnights,” Producer of the Year Non-Classical for “Anti-Hero,” Best Pop Solo Performance for “Anti-Hero” and Best Pop Duo/Group Performance for “Karma” ft. Ice Spice.

Impressive, to say the least, but with all of these nominations is Swift stealing

others’ chances to win a Grammy? Many believe that she is.

As one of her number-one fans, I’m glad that she’s getting recognized.

She has worked extremely hard and the Eras Tour is something no other artist has been able to achieve.

However, there are plenty of other artists that deserve the spotlight. Imagine working on an album for years, just to get snubbed by Taylor Swift in every category.

While Swift only won Album of the Year for “Midnights” and Best Pop Vocal Album for “Midnights”, other artists are starting to find it impossible to keep up with her.

“Midnights” was a magnificent album, filled with some of my favorite songs, like “Snow on the Beach,” “Midnight Rain,” “Hits Different” and “You’re On Your Own Kid.” I listened to the entire album on repeat for over a year and knew I had to purchase Eras Tour tickets after listening,

as did hundreds of thousands of people on TikTok.

I wholeheartedly believe that she deserved to win Album of the Year for some, but “Anti-Hero” is nowhere near my top favorite song or her best-written song on the album. Many think that her other songs deserved more of a spotlight.

Also, “Karma” ft. Ice Spice received a great deal of backlash on social media when first released. Many claimed to love Karma without Ice Spice’s contribution, as she did not add much to the song at all and detracted from Swift’s lyricism.

Joe Aeschliman, a Northeastern student, even posted on his Instagram that “Ice Spice and Taylor was unpleasant to the audible palate”.

Thousands of others echoed that sentiment, so many were confused why it was nominated for a Grammy, stealing a nomination from other more deserving songs.

Furthermore, millions of Taylor Swift fans and Grammys watchers are outraged by the way she conducted herself at the awards show. When presented with the Grammy for Album of the Year, Swift did not acknowledge Celine Dion, the presenter.

This has sparked a great deal of controversy. Most celebrities take time to first acknowledge their presenter, especially if they are such a musical icon, like Dion.

Finally, fans flocked to TikTok to express outrage over Swift’s decision to bring Lana del Ray on the stage when accepting her award for Best Pop Vocal Album for “Midnights”.

Mariel Darling, a famous singer and TikToker stated that she “cringed so hard” and others were reportedly upset because

Lana del Ray looked extremely uncomfortable being “dragged” onto the stage.

Lan del Ray was nominated for the same category so it is understandable that she would be uncomfortable standing on stage while her friend accepted the award.

Finally, Swift announced a new album at the Grammys: “The Tortured Poets Department.” Many were expecting “Reputation Taylor’s Version”, both upsetting and exciting fans.

However, this announcement feels like it may have just overshadowed the achievements of all of the other Grammy nominees and winners.

While Swift has more than 200 million fans, many are upset at her recent behavior and music connoisseurs are tired of her immense presence in the award show realm.

This begs the question, is Swift ruining the music industry? Or is she the music industry?Regardless of your belief, she is a formidable artist with immense talent.



Taylor Swift on stage at the Grammys accepting her award for Album of the year and announcing her new album she is realising in April. This is her 14th Grammy's award.



Taylor Swift struts the red carpet at the 2024 Grammy's Awards. Her dress was white with black gloves.

## Valentine's Day Is Overrated

By **NATALIE DRIPCHAK**  
Assistant Opinion Editor

For single people all over the world like me, Valentine's Day is the day we all dread. I can't bear to see the endless Instagram stories and posts about how much these couples love each other. To be honest – I really do not care. That being said, it is important to show love and appreciation for your significant other but do we need a whole day dedicated to that? I don't think so.

Personally, if someone needs to wait for one day a year to celebrate their significant other, there is a bigger issue within the relationship. I am not in a relationship, but if I was, I would find little ways every day to show my love and appreciation for my partner.

These things don't have to be extravagant or even cost money, it could be something as simple as sending a nice text, doing their laundry or making them dinner. Love can be shown in many different ways and there doesn't need to be a whole day dedicated to it.

Valentine's Day, even though it is not recognized as a national holiday, will always exist. So many people place a huge emphasis on this “holiday of love” that it creates huge trends on social media. Many popular brands will advertise their Valentine's Day collections, which creates a huge buzz amongst their buyers. For example,

Kim Kardashian and her brand Skims launched a Valentine's Day collection with singer Lana Del Rey, and social media, especially TikTok, was heavily influenced.

Social media is one of the main reasons why Valentine's Day has so much traction in the first place. Along with many brands releasing special collections or products, celebrities and influencers love to celebrate this holiday, even if it means they celebrate with their friends.

Galentine's Day has become increasingly popular since we are coming to the realization that having a significant other isn't the end all be all. We should cherish our time and connections with our friends just as much as a romantic relationship.

To me, personally, there will be no difference in society if Valentine's Day is recognized as a national holiday or not. There will always be a lot of commotion about it whether it is nationally recognized or not, especially in the United States. However, I don't think there is a necessary reason for Valentine's to be declared a national holiday.

There isn't anything particularly special about this holiday and it often causes distress to single people who feel



A scene from the movie Valentine's Day starring Jennifer Garner and Ashton Kutcher. This movie is a classic Valentine's Day rom com that will have you searching for true love.

sorry for themselves that they aren't in a relationship. Almost every single rom-com movie that is about a single character on Valentine's Day only depicts them crying and eating chocolate while watching sad movies, and I don't want to spend my Valentine's Day like that.

Not everyone will agree on the matter of Valentine's Day, but have you ever met anyone who said their favorite holiday was Valentine's Day? No, I don't think so, because there isn't anything that special about this holiday. More people look forward to the Super

Bowl than they do Valentine's Day – and that is not even close to becoming a holiday!

Of course, everyone is entitled to their own opinion, but what benefit do we gain from making Valentine's Day a national holiday? Sure, one could argue it's a nice holiday for couples to show their love but is it really necessary?

I don't want to be depicted as the girl who sits in front of her TV eating a box of chocolates while crying over the fact she doesn't have a boyfriend, and you shouldn't either, because Valentine's Day isn't even a real holiday.



# Campus Safety Should Be a Higher Priority

By ROISIN MCCARTHY  
Opinion Editor

Safety is a feeling that is essential while living on a college campus. For many, it is a large factor in deciding on a college to attend. Today, it can be challenging to find a lasting feeling of safety. This uneasy feeling has made me look deeper at the safety protocols here at Fairfield.

My dorm is where I feel the safest. I have always felt a strong sense of security in my dorm rooms throughout the years, due to having keypads with specialized codes. All buildings and dorms lock after 11:00 p.m., which helps create a sense of security. The RAs do an amazing job of patrolling and creating a safe environment for all. However, this feeling of safety does not carry over onto other places on campus, as campus wide security is not as strong as dorm security.

Whilst driving into campus, I am rarely asked to scan my Stag Card, showing me that many people enter and exit campus undocumented. It is somewhat frightening that pretty much anyone can come onto our campus whenever they feel like it. Junior Kate Enriquez proclaims “I feel as if with recent events in our world, it is important for students to feel safe and protected at our schools. I think that a simple checking of your Stag Card isn’t too hard of a task for a little bit more protection and safety.”

In March of 2023, catalytic converters were being stolen around the town of Fairfield and on campus. On Mar. 7 2023,

Fairfield University put out a statement, “a suspect vehicle has been identified and the Fairfield Police Department is investigating the theft. As a deterrent, the Townhouse gate on North Benson Road, and the Jogues gate on Round Hill Road, will temporarily be closed. Please use other campus gates for ingress and egress.” For many students, this was an unsettling period. There was much uncertainty in not knowing if student’s cars were safe on campus.

Moments like these make me frustrated knowing that we have multiple gates with guards who are supposed to check and scan Stag Cards. Our Stag cards are meant to be scanned, and our campus security should do a better job of protecting our gates. I have noticed on multiple occasions that there is no office or gate attendant at the Barlow gate. I find this somewhat troubling as that is a popular gate. I also see people who attend Fairfield walking in and out of campus on foot constantly. I visited Harvard in the summer, and they consistently asked me to show my student ID, and when I didn't have one, they checked my other IDs and asked me what the purpose of my visit was. This may be annoying to some people, however, even as a guest I felt safe because I knew security was keeping an eye on people entering and exiting the premises.

Even though Stag cards are checked by DPS at the main gate in the evening, the assumption that a danger to the campus is only

posed after a certain hour is irresponsible. Department of Public Safety (DPS) Officers can and should do a better job of keeping our campus safe, and that starts at Fairfield’s entrances and exits. Given student concerns and the state of our nation, there is no question that campus safety cannot be overlooked and should be a conversation with not only DPS, but our administration and students as well.



Department of Public Safety(DPS), ensures safety amongst all Fairfield University students and staff. They patrol campus, whilst also being housed in Loyola Hall.

## Don't Charge Students For Housing Over Break

By BROOKE LATHE  
Executive Editor Emerita

Spring break is usually a wonderful opportunity for students and professors to take a much-needed break amidst a chaotic semester. Most use the week for extravagant vacations or just time to breathe. I always thought my senior year I would do something special with all of my friends, but this year I have something even better: a wonderful internship in New York City! I have a family vacation coming up in the summer, so I honestly don’t mind that I’ll be working over the week, especially since I love my job. However, I quickly realized that students who plan on staying on campus need to pay \$75 per night.

I’ve heard of this rule before for previous breaks, but thought that if I reached out to Residence Life and told them my situation then I could potentially stay without paying the additional fee. After all, I’m a senior student who has an internship in the city four days a week. If I went home it would add an additional two hours to my commute, and the final cost would be equal to my entire paycheck. Still, I was met with a response that read “Permission will not be given to students because of their need to pursue outside employment over the break.” I was honestly shocked reading this because, in my mind, we go to college to get a job. So why would the university not grant students housing when they are finding workplace opportunities?

The university already keeps the heat on so the pipes don’t freeze and they don’t shut off electricity or water. What exactly would we be paying extra in the first place? If it’s to pay employees over break, there should just be a disclaimer that the dining services, facilities, and maintenance will not be here which would be perfectly fine. I’m not on a dining plan anyway! It seems like it’s just another cash grab at this point. Athletes have games and practices over the break, but they don’t need to pay an additional fee—which of course, they should not be expected to—but why would other students need to? For students who don’t even have a job, what if they live across the country and plane tickets are hundreds of dollars they can’t afford? Are they stuck paying an enormous fee either way?

I’m not sure why students would need to pay money to stay in their own room or apartment over the break, but even in circumstances where it does cost the university money, I feel that the institution’s income is enough to cover our stay for a week. All

students pay a flat fee for housing at the beginning of the year—single rooms costing over \$12,000! I can’t seem to understand what the extra \$525 would do except put students in a stressful situation and give the university more money for no reason.



In order to stay over break, students must pay 75 dollars a night to live in their residence hall such as Barnyard Manor. Totalling 525 dollars for spring break, students question why they should pay to stay in a room they pay tuition for.

## How Helpful is FYE?

By TJ CRIARES  
Contributing Writer

For incoming first-year students, the start of college ushers in a new wave of excitement for some, while for others it brings about feelings of overwhelm and stress. For many, it’s a blend of all emotions, highlighting the crucial need for guidance through the initial stages.

Fairfield University’s First Year Experience (FYE) program provides new students with an outlet through their first semester with the support of New Student Leaders (NSL).



A group of NSLs posing for a fun picture! The NSL program is essential to FYE and for helping incoming students adjust.

Kevin Wilson, an NSL at Fairfield, emphasizes, “The most important thing first-year students take from FYE is the connections they make. Learning that you are not alone is a big emphasis by FYE especially early in the semester.”

The scope of FYE extends beyond academics, delving into topics such as hookup culture, making new friends, the presence of alcohol in college and other social dynamics.

While FYE has always been valuable, its significance became even more apparent with myself and my peers in the graduating Class of 2024. As incoming first-year students at the height of the pandemic in 2020, we needed to adapt to university protocols on top of adjusting to a new chapter in our lives.

I’d be lying if I said I enjoyed going to my FYE classes at the time, especially during these unprecedented circumstances, but as a senior reflecting on these last four years, I’ve come to realize that the topics and skills taught in these sessions are pivotal for any college kid to be aware of.

If anyone needed a resource during difficult times, the NSLs made themselves available to all of the students. This is even more important when looking at how prevalent mental health issues

are on college campuses. In a 2022-2023 data report done by The Healthy Minds Network, 20% of the students paneled identified that they had been going through severe depression and 41% indicated that they went through depression in any form at all.

Having a peer like an NSL, who is similar in age, is so important and can be the only accessible mental health resource available from the onset for incoming first-years, as they are still getting acclimated to their friendships. Also, the thought of seeking counseling services from the onset may seem daunting for some individuals, but all of this was amplified even more during the years of the pandemic.

To reiterate, I won’t claim that FYE magically reshaped my college experience, but it undoubtedly presented me with a valuable resource for addressing questions and concerns, benefiting countless others as well.

Whether people like to admit it or not, college life is not an easy transition for anyone, making the FYE program so critical for initial guidance in the first few months of what evolves into a transformative four-year journey of personal growth and development.



# THE VINE



HAPPY  
*Valentines*  
DAY



Editor: Caitlin Shea



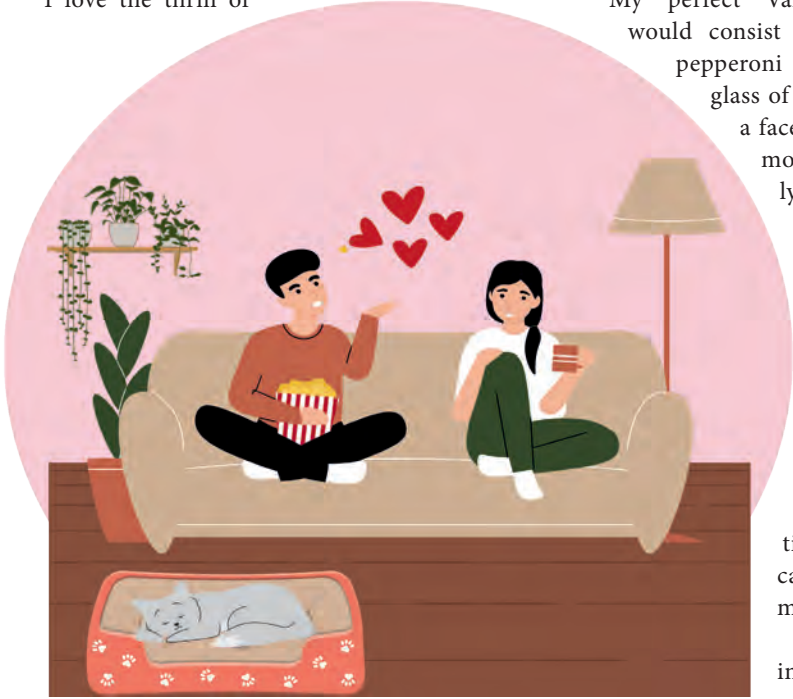
Love and Laughs:

The Best Rom-Coms to Watch This Valentine's Day

By **ABBY WINEY**  
Contributing Writer

Ahhhhh Valentine's Day, a day some absolutely love and some absolutely hate. I've always been a Valentine's Day lover, I can't lie.

I love the thrill of



seeing people in love or feeling extra love from my friends (yes, Valentine's Day isn't just about romance people!!!! It's about all kinds of love.)

I love rom-coms year round but nothing hits harder than a rom-com around Valentine's Day.

My perfect Valentine's Day would consist of a LARGE pepperoni pizza with a glass of wine in hand, a face mask on and most importantly, my favorite rom-com playing in the background.

While I'm a huge rom-com girly, there are a few that are just so top tier and you can't change my mind.

So settle in, grab your remote and start watching some trailers.

**"The Proposal" (2009)**

This amazingly hilarious movie stars Sandra Bullock as a Canadian executive who coerces her assistant, played by Ryan Reynolds, into a fake marriage to avoid deportation. They fly to Ryan Reynolds' hometown and Canada and I swear I laugh the entire time.

**"Crazy, Stupid, Love" (2011)**

This movie follows the intertwined love lives of several characters but in some way, they all connect.

I love those kinds of movies. Steve Carell who plays a recently divorced man needs some man mojo back and he meets Ryan Gosling, who is a young (hot) smooth-talking bachelor, played by Ryan Gosling. The end has the BIGGEST twist!

**"10 Things I Hate About You" (1999)**

This modern adaptation of Shakespeare's "The Taming of the Shrew" stars Heath Ledger and Julia Stiles as high schoolers.

Julia Stiles is hard-core and stubborn but Heath Ledger changes everything for her. I absolutely love this movie.

It's funny, heartwarming and romantic all in one.

**"How to Lose a Guy in 10 Days" (2003)**

This movie stars Kate Hudson as a journalist who has the opportunity to write an article about how to drive a man away in 10 days. Her victim is played by Matthew McConaughey.

But what neither of them knows is that they are both betting on each other. Matthew has a bet to make a woman fall in love with him in the same timeframe. Kate Hudson pulls the most hilarious things to get him to break up with her. This movie is funny AF but also a true romantic comedy that I am truly obsessed with.

**"13 Going on 30" (2004)**

This movie stars Jennifer Garner as a 13-year-old girl who magically wakes up one day as a 30-year-old woman.

She begins to navigate NYC with a 13-year-old mind in a 30-year-old body.

Her main goal is to reconnect with her childhood best friend, played by Mark Ruffalo. I love this movie because it isn't like most romantic movies.

It brings childhood energy alongside romantic butterflies.

Whether you love it or hate it, any Valentine's Day can be made so much better by watching these films!

Tips and Tricks for a

Successful Study Abroad

By **JACQUI RIGAZIO**  
Contributing Writer

Ciao, Fairfield!

I'm writing to you from Florence with another study abroad update.

I have officially been here for two weeks, and while adjusting to this new environment has included many naps, it's been the time of my life!

I adapted to living in Florence much quicker than I anticipated, which has been critical in establishing my daily routine and feeling comfortable while abroad.

This being said, it is definitely intimidating to pack up your whole life and move across the world for three and a half months.

After being here for two weeks, I have already learned so much about adapting to a foreign country and maximizing my study abroad experience.

For those of you who are studying abroad soon or are thinking of applying, here is my advice for conquering your initial two weeks abroad!

**Put yourself out there!**

Because I did not apply to study abroad alongside any of my friends, I was very intimidated by the thought of going to a new country and not having solid friendships to rely on.

Instead of letting this freak me out, I made a goal to reach out to new people and

form connections from the get-go.

Asking people from your orientation groups and classes to simply grab a coffee goes a long way.

I started saying yes to hanging out with people I barely knew and ended up having some of the best nights of my life.

Studying abroad also brings students from across the world together, and two of my closest friends in Florence are from different universities. Most everyone who studies abroad is looking to make new friends, so always jump at the opportunity to connect with new people!

**Do your own thing!**

While studying abroad will give you lifelong friendships, it is also important to do things on your own. After all, studying abroad is known to be one of the most valuable growth experiences for college students. Take some time to walk around your city after class and get to know your new home. If there are sights you want to see, don't wait for others! Experiencing moments like these on your own will be so profound and make you realize how much you are accomplishing all on your own. I recommend keeping a journal to record your experiences. This is an awesome way to look back and reflect on your personal growth during your time abroad. Even after just two weeks in Florence, I am already so proud of how much I have grown.

**Don't rush**

The second that I landed in Italy, my head was spinning thinking about places I wanted to visit during my time here. Studying abroad opens doors to so many bucket-list travel destinations that I have never had the opportunity to explore before. While traveling across Europe is the experience of a lifetime, it is also very important not to overlook your host city. I have loved taking these past two weeks to explore and become grounded in Florence. There is so much culture, history and art all within a two-mile radius of me – something that I do not take for granted! While seeing other countries is very exciting, make sure to show your host city some love!

**Keep an open mind**

While this is such a cliché piece of advice, it really does ring true for those who study abroad. It is inevitable that some things won't go according to plan, or that you may not even have a plan at all. The unknown is very scary – but also very freeing. You will never get an experience like studying abroad again, so be sure to cherish every moment of it! Even if things go wrong, learn to take it in stride. While change is scary, it also signifies the start of something incredible. Always be open to new experiences, new places, new people, and new food—it will make your time abroad so much richer!

Even just after two weeks abroad, I feel



Photo Contributed By Jacqui Rigazio

Fairfield Junior Jacqui Rigazio's view of the Duomo from the rooftop study space at Biblioteca della Oblate in Florence!

as though I have grown so much as a person. I have tasted some of the best food, created meaningful relationships with people I just met and seen some of the most beautiful sights of my life (I am currently writing this on a library rooftop that overlooks the Duomo ... it really doesn't get much better than this!). For those of you considering studying abroad, I promise you it will all be worth it!





# Mind Body and Soul: Self-Care Rituals to Nourish Every Aspect of Your Being



By **SOPHIA COSSITT-LEVY**  
Staff Writer

With the semester well underway and Valentine’s Day right around the corner, some may be looking for some new self-care ideas and tips. So, here are a few ideas for inspiration.

**Spa Night**

Go visit Marshall’s to grab a few cheap face masks for you and your friends (and while you’re there, buy yourself a little treat – you deserve it!). I highly recommend the sheet masks with animal faces printed on them – they look ridiculous and are so much fun to laugh at. Add other spa-like elements as you see fit – maybe paint your nails or do a hair mask, too. Then, watch a movie, or listen to music and dance while you wait. The last time I did one of these, my friends and I learned the TikTok dance to “Is It Over

Now” by Taylor Swift, which was so much fun!

**Movie Night**


Get your friends together and have a movie marathon. Personally, I’m a huge fan of rom-coms, especially around Valentine’s Day. I recommend “When Harry Met Sally”, “You’ve Got Mail” (this one is definitely the best), “10 Things I Hate About You”, “Sleepless in Seattle” and “How to Lose a Guy in 10 Days”. They’re all such fun and adorable movies. Also, don’t forget some snacks! If you have a kitchen, whip up some cookies before you watch or sneak a few out of

the Tully. **Valentine’s Day** This one is especially for the girlies.




Get your friends together, exchange gifts (get some candy and check Target or Marshalls for some other small things), and maybe head downtown for dinner. I recommend Molto, Sophie’s, Centro or Colony Grill. The food there is delicious, and a dinner debrief is always a good time. Don’t forget to grab a sweet treat at 16 Candles, and if you go to Sophie’s, don’t leave without having the apple pie. **Take a Day For Yourself** If you’re not looking for something to do with friends, and you need some time just for you, take the time you need! Spend a day in bed with some good movies or TV shows, catch up on your reading and ignore your responsibilities.

We all have a lot going on, and it can be nice to just let yourself relax, even if it’s only for a little while. **Take An Everything Shower** If you know, you know. While an everything shower can be tiring, it always feels nice when you’ve taken one. Round up your favorite lotions, your favorite skincare and your favorite hair products. If you can, make a playlist for the shower with a whole bunch of hype songs. A few quick recommendations are: “Mr. Perfectly Fine” by Taylor Swift and “Live While We’re Young” by One Direction. When you’re all done, you’ll feel accomplished and relaxed, and you can proceed to enjoy your favorite movie or TV show. So, this is a reminder from me to you to take some time for yourself and do the things you love, and I hope these tips give you some good ideas for your next self-care night!



# Crafting the Perfect Valentine’s Day Playlist



By **FIONA WAGNER**  
Assistant Vine Editor

Love is in the air as Valentine’s Day approaches, and what better way to celebrate than listening to timeless love songs? From classic ballads to modern anthems, the power of music to express affection knows no bounds. As couples everywhere prepare to celebrate their affection, let’s take a moment to appreciate the timeless melodies that have defined this day of love for generations.

**“Unwritten” by Natasha Bedingfield**

This early 2000s empowering anthem is such a classic in my book. I have always loved this song but it has especially gained popularity after being featured in the new romcom “Anyone But You” starring Sydney Sweeney and Glen Powell. This is known as Powell’s serenity song and it is mentioned throughout the entire film. I know that I was jamming out to this song for weeks after watching the movie– it’s such a feel-good love song that will get anyone on their feet.

**“Until I Found You” by Stephen Sanchez**

This is such a heartfelt ballad that truly captures the journey of finding love. Sanchez’s powerful vocals combined with the song’s poignant lyrics could make anyone emotional. I promise that you will fall in love listening to this song, it’s breathtakingly beautiful.

**“With Or Without You” by U2**

Unpopular Opinion, but “The Lion King” is the best Disney movie. I know I cry every time Mufasa falls off the cliff and dies. “Can You Feel The Love Tonight” beautifully encapsulates the love story of Simba and Nala. This song is pure Disney magic and always fills me with nostalgia when I listen to it.

**“Valerie” by Amy Winehouse**

Maybe “Valerie” isn’t one of the greatest love songs of all time, but it’s so much fun to get up and dance to. This energetic track captures the essence of longing. With its catchy melody and upbeat energy, my mood is instantly brightened when this song comes on.

**“With Or Without You” by U2**

Does anyone think of that one “Friends” episode when Ross and Rachel had just broken up and this song plays as Rachel stares out the window? No? Just me? I have loved that song since I first watched that episode – it is a hauntingly powerful masterpiece about longing for and losing the one you love. Even though this is on the sadder side of my list, it’s still a wonderful love song- plus this is one of my mom’s favorites. (Shoutout to you mom!)

**“Kiss Me” by Sixpence None The Richer**

If this love doesn’t capture all the early 2000’s feels then I don’t know what will.

“Kiss Me” is a charming and romantic song that provokes the innocence of love. This song will always remind me of “Gilmore Girls”, specifically Rory and Jess.

**“Love On the Brain” by Rihanna**

Hands down, the best Rihanna song ever written– “Umbrella” is a close second. The amount of times I have listened to this song is quite concerning. “Love On The Brain” is the perfect song to blast in the cars with your windows down. Rihanna’s vocals are absolutely insane and the complexities of love and addiction are enthralling.

**“Slipping Through My Fingers” by ABBA**

For this last song, I decided to choose one that focuses more on platonic love rather than romantic. “Slipping Through My Fingers” is genuinely one of the most gut-wrenching songs I have ever heard. This song beautifully portrays the relationship between a mother and daughter as the daughter grows up. The tender melody and heartfelt lyrics make me want to cry every time I hear it. I love the ABBA version, but there is something so special about hearing Meryl Streep and Amanda Seyfried sing this together in “Mamma Mia.”

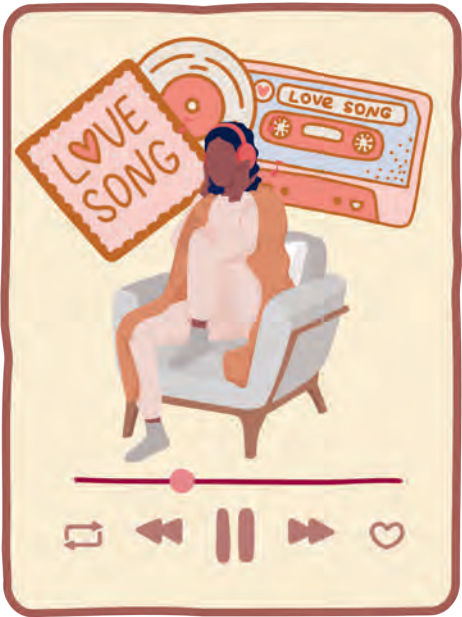
As Valentine’s Day approaches, the enduring appeal of love songs continues to captivate people worldwide. I hope you enjoy this list of some of my favorite songs,

and maybe even give some a listen!

**“R.E.M.” by Ariana Grande**

UFrom the very first beat, this song does not sound like a typical love song. Under the surface of the drums and the hums begins Ariana’s dreamy lyrics about her beloved, who is so perfect and otherworldly, she almost cannot believe that they are real. Fun fact, the four minute ode to her lover was once supposed to be Beyonce’s song, but was transformed to be Grande’s hit.

So there you have it- my favorite song- for Valentine’s Day to play with anybody.





# Be My Valentine: Best Gift Ideas

## For The Season Of Love

By CAITLIN SHEA  
Head Vine Editor

Sitting atop a cloud above, cupid sharpens his bow, marking the start of the season of love.

With Valentine's Day here, the search for the perfect gift intensifies, echoing the sentiments of love and appreciation.

Whether celebrating with a significant other, cherished friends or beloved family members, the quest for a meaningful token of affection can be both exciting and daunting.

In a world abundant with options, navigating the vast array of gifts to find one that encapsulates the depth of one's feelings can be a journey in itself.

From traditional gestures to innovative creations, the possibilities are endless. If you are scrambling, do not freight, as I have crafted a list of the most perfect gifts to share this Valentine's Day!

Read quickly and then get to a store even quicker to pick up that perfect gift!

**Sweet Treats**

Experiencing the after-holiday slump? I know I am! Who doesn't love some sugary sweet treats as a pick-me-up?

**Chocolate Hearts**

A box of heart-shaped assorted chocolates is a classic for Valentines. Ghirardelli hearts are some of my favorites! The perfect mixture of crunch and gooey sweetness, they

also have options for the white chocolate and dark chocolate (my personal favorite) lovers in your life. Not into fancy chocolates? Well who doesn't love the Peanuts? I know I would love to receive Snoopy themed kisses this Valentine's!

**Chocolate Covered Strawberries**

Chocolate covered strawberries are also a classic Valentine's Day treat! Made easily at home or picked up from a local grocery store, these berries provide the perfect mix of sweet and tart. They never disappoint!

**Homemade Cookies**

What says love more than some good ol' homemade cookies! The possibilities are endless, from chocolate chip to the infamous



oatmeal raisin, throwing on an apron and rolling out some delectable dough will make

the perfect gift!

**Cup of Coffee**

Don't like chocolate? No worries! Getting your loved one their favorite cup of coffee from your local cafe will be sure to put a smile on their face. As a Boston girl myself, my go to is always Dunkin'. This holiday season marked the return of the Pink Velvet Macchiato, which in my opinion, is the perfect cup of joe for the season of love!

**DIY**

Can't make it to the stores? Who doesn't love a DIY night? Pull out some art supplies and get to work with these next ideas!

**Photobook**

What better way to show your appreciation for someone other than making a memory book! Collect all of your favorite photos and mementos and make a piece of art that will last forever!

**PhotoFrame**

On a similar note, decorating a framed photo of you and a loved one that can be placed in their home as a reminder of your shared love is an incredible gift!

Paper Bouquet

Want a bouquet of flowers that will

never wilt? Would you believe that paper is the only thing you need? Following the steps from this Paper Flower Tutorial you can craft an everlasting bouquet in mere minutes!

**Friendship Bracelets**

Take a page out of the Swifties book and make some friendship bracelets! With a little bit of string and some beautiful beads, a stylish piece of jewelry can be crafted as a token of appreciation!

**Stuffed Animals**

Receiving a new fluffy friend is always an amazing way to spend your Valentine's Day!

**Build-A-Bear**

Why just purchase your new buddy when you can create your own! Take a trip to Build-A-Bear where you can choose a stuffed animal, dress it, name it, and make it your own! You can even drip them out with the latest Valentine's fashion!

**Squishmallows**

Taking the world by storm, these cuddly toys act not only as a new friend but a comfy pillow!

**JellyCat**

These cute and fluffy friends are not only extremely adorable, but they help you "find love wherever you are"!

Whether you are spending this day of love with a significant other, family, or friends, these gifts are sure to show your appreciation, and put a smile on everyone's faces! Happy Valentine's Day!

# London Calling: Catholic Students' Experiences of Faith and Learning Abroad

By TRENT OUELLETTE  
Contributing Writer

Last semester I had the privilege of studying abroad in London.

This meant giving up the opportunity to spend the first half of junior year on a campus, and amongst peers that shared my Catholic faith, for the chance to live in a city filled with secular institutions and an Anglican history.

This was a uniquely significant trade to make considering I had recently made a full reversion to the Catholic Church just months prior to departing.

What I found once arriving, however, was a city and people that, if navigated correctly, were rich in Catholic tradition.

Like most, when I thought of churches in London my mind would recall the great Anglican structures such as St. Paul's Cathedral or Westminster Abbey.

After spending a semester in London, my mind now pictures the beauty of Westminster Cathedral, St. Patrick's in Soho Square or St. Etheldreda's.

When stepping into these churches it was nearly impossible to ignore the presence of God.

Common features such as high ceilings and walls of religious artwork worked

together to create exceptional, glorious settings.

My favorite of which was within the walls of the London Oratory.

This church, officially named the Church of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, has many features which are becoming increasingly endangered in the modern church including a high altar, a communion rail as well as numerous side altars and chapels.

To me, attending mass at these churches was a greater memory than seeing Big Ben or walking across Tower Bridge.

The beauty of the churches was surpassed only by the immense reverence that was displayed at every mass I attended.

This was especially true of Newman House, which is London's central chaplaincy for university students.

This chaplaincy housed a small, modest chapel and was where I went for the majority of Sunday obligations, a great number of daily masses as well as weekly adoration.

What Newman House lacked in physical grandeur it more than made up for in its respect for the liturgy and reverence for the Eucharist.

Fr. Philip, who was the resident priest, made regular use of incense, employed Latin in various parts of the liturgy and would end daily masses by leading the Angelus Prayer.

Before departing for London I began receiving the Eucharist on the tongue, a practice that has become quite rare in America.

At Newman House, however, with its majority college-aged group of parishioners, receiving on the tongue was normal, with some even opting to kneel when receiving.

During my time in England, as part of a group trip through Newman House, I was able to visit Canterbury Cathedral.

During our visit, we had the privilege of participating in sung vespers followed by veneration of a relic of Saint Thomas Becket who was martyred in the cathedral in 1170. Taking part in the liturgy of the hours was a new experience, as was being able to kiss the relic of such a culturally consequential saint. This was not only my favorite Catholic experience, but my favorite experience overall while abroad.



Photo Contributed By Trent Ouellette

The Westminster Cathedral in London, which is the seat of the Archbishop of Westminster. Fairfield students can explore their faith by visiting many of the cathedrals that London has to offer.

My time studying in London ended up being a time of deep immersion in the beauty, history and theological depth of the Catholic Church. It allowed me to both grow in faith and form an appreciation for the many men and women who built, preserved and maintained England's Catholic tradition.





# From Campus to Community:



# 10 Ways to Express Love and Kindness

By **LUIZA SPERLING**  
Contributing Writer

Feb. 14th is a much-anticipated holiday for many, with CVS shelves adorned with heart-shaped pillows, pink everywhere, sweet treats, chocolate and gifts weeks in advance. Valentine’s Day, a time to cherish love and express affection for significant others, is eagerly awaited by most. However, while this is a reality for some, others find themselves single, opting to celebrate Galentine’s Day instead.

For those who may feel lonely on Valentine’s Day, it’s time to shift perspectives and focus on the various enjoyable activities you can share with your girlfriends, both on and off campus. Here are 10 delightful ways to celebrate the occasion.

Coffee Date

Do you adore coffee? Rally the girls and head out for a fabulous coffee date at the cutest café in town. I’m obsessed with Chef’s Table; their coffee is delicious, which I love to pair with their mouthwatering breakfast sandwiches! Or, if you’re feeling cozy, why not host a gathering at your place? Have everyone bring their adorable mugs and snuggle up for a heart-to-heart gossip session.

Movie Night

Just like me, I’m sure many girls are huge rom-com fans. Hosting a movie night on Valentine’s Day is almost always a guaranteed hit! Throw some buttery popcorn in the microwave, order some delicious food, indulge in ice cream, and then dive into a rom-com that will make you laugh, cry, and feel everything in between. Here are some recommendations: “Love, Rosie”, “Crazy Rich Asians”, “Valentine’s Day”, “Someone Great”, and “Falling Inn Love”. If you’re looking for more options, there’s a whole list from Oprah’s article.

Cooking and baking

Besides indulging in popcorn and movie nights with

your besties, why not get your inner chef on and whip up some tasty treats? Picture baking mouthwatering chocolate chip cookies or gooey brownies, or getting creative with a delicious pasta dish. Check out this article listing 26 Galentine’s Day Recipes to shower your girls with love. And while you’re at it, crank up those tunes that make you want to sing, giggle, and dance like there’s no tomorrow.

Dinner

If staying in isn’t your vibe and you’re itching to go out,



why not dress up in a cute outfit (pink is a must!), rock your favorite makeup look, and hit the town for dinner with your besties? There’s something so special about sharing laughter and good conversation over a meal with your closest friends. I love going to Flipside and treating myself to comforting food like a delicious burger. It’s the perfect way to spend Valentine’s Day with your squad!

Pottery

Pottery is a super fun activity to indulge in with your besties! Make the day nostalgic with a pottery painting session at

Hands On Pottery in town. It’s a relaxing pastime and the perfect opportunity to let your creative juices flow.

Blowouts

In college, many girls frequently have time to pamper themselves if they are so busy with assignments and whatnot. Take this opportunity to treat yourself to a stunning blowout, and what better way to relax than to get your hair down and do it with your friends? Here are some places you can go: ASH Hair Salon and Blow Dry Bar, Alchemy Salon, and H Salon.

Nails

If you’re already out and seeking more self-care, why not treat yourself to a mani-pedi at the nail salon? A good manicure and a relaxing pedicure can work wonders. One of my favorite spots in town is Grand Design Nail Salon. They consistently deliver excellent service, do a fantastic job, and offer reasonable prices.

Target Run

We’ve all experienced the unexpected fun of a Target run. We’ll browse but spend over 100 bucks! It’s silly but always enjoyable. So, why not gather the girls, throw on some comfy outfits, and head to the Trumbull Target for a good time? Even if you have nothing specific to buy, just being with your friends and embarking on an adventure is so much fun. It’s sure to make you laugh and feel good.

Shopping

Going shopping with your best friends is a one-of-a-kind experience. I adore visiting the mall (or Soho if you visit NYC) with my friends. Picture this: a day of laughter, gossip, and trying on fabulous outfits together. You stroll through the stores and swoon over the newest fashion trends. Sephora is a must; test out all the latest makeup trends on TikTok and Instagram. And when your feet start to ache from all the exploring, recharge with some delicious snacks from the food court and just talk. Trust me, darlings, a mall day with the girls is the ultimate recipe for fun, friendship, and fabulous memories!



# Fairfield Eats:



# A Guide To Dining Downtown

By **SOPHIA COSSITT-LEVY**  
Staff Writer

While we have many fabulous food options on campus, it can be nice to go downtown and get a nice meal with your friends.

Here are a few restaurant options for your next outing.

**Sophie’s Pizza Bar**

Starting strong, Sophie’s is my favorite



restaurant on this list.

The atmosphere is wonderful, and the food is even better.

If you’re looking for some appetizers, I recommend the bread service, the bolognese egg rolls, or the fried mozzarella sticks.

You can never go wrong with bread and sauce, and the egg rolls are phenomenal.

The spicy vodka sauce for dipping really completes the dish.

And of course, mozzarella sticks are a classic.

For the main meal, my favorite dish is the spaghetti pomodoro with meatballs. It’s delicious and always hits the spot. If you’re looking for something else, try a pizza.

The Fra Diavolo is incredible – the peppers and pepperoni with the spicy sauce are an elite combo.

Dessert may be my favorite part of a meal, so of course, I have plenty of recommendations.

The apple pie is, quite honestly, the best apple pie I’ve ever eaten.

It’s served warm with a caramel sauce drizzle and vanilla gelato on the side. Perfection.

They also serve mini cannolis with chocolate sauce and berries, which is another fabulous option for dessert.

The cannolis always taste fresh, and the presentation is beautiful.

**Molto**

Another favorite of mine.

I love the atmosphere at Molto – it’s such a fun place to go with your friends.

For an appetizer, I recommend their meatballs and sauce.

They’re delicious and easy to share with others.

For a main meal, my go-to is the gnocchi bolognese.

The flavors go so well together, and it never misses.

While I haven’t had much more than just a slice of the margherita pizza, I can tell you it’s delicious.

The presentation for the pizza is just as beautiful.

Of course, you need a sweet treat to wrap up your meal.

The key lime pie is excellent, as is the chocolate lava cake, which comes drizzled in a raspberry sauce. A perfect combo.

**Colony Grill**

Clearly, there’s a trend with pizza here. Colony Grill serves some of the best if you ask me.

Colony has a chill atmosphere, and it’s a great place to bring your friends.

Unlike Sophie’s and Molto, Colony serves only pizza, so start thinking about your toppings.

They’re known for their hot oil pizzas, which are delicious, but I find you can never go wrong with sweet peppers and pepperoni.

Also, their crust is thin and crunchy, which is the only acceptable way to make a crust.

I highly recommend it. Unfortunately, if you’re looking for a sweet treat, you won’t find it at Colony.

But, stay tuned for more dessert recommendations at the end.

**Centro**

A classic restaurant with plenty of options.

I recommend getting the olives as an appetizer – they’re definitely some of the best, and the bread and oil are so good.

For your main meal, the lemon chicken is delicious. But, be sure to check the specials menu, as they always have some hidden gems on there.

I went with my mom once, and we got the best salmon dish, so keep your eyes peeled!

**16 Handles**

16 Handles has plenty of yummy froyo options, even if you have allergies or other dietary restrictions.

So, start thinking about your flavor combos and what toppings you’ll get now because there are a lot to choose from!

Hopefully this gives you some ideas for your next meal downtown! Bon appetit!

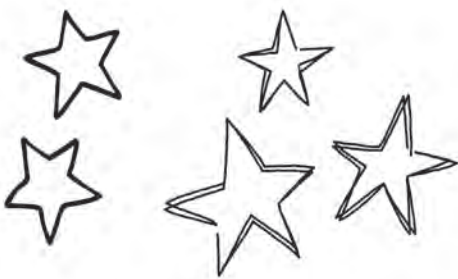




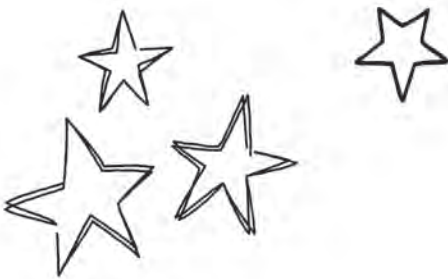
# COFFEE BREAK



GAMES, PUZZLES AND MORE  
Editor: Matthew Robles



## MIRROR WORD SEARCH



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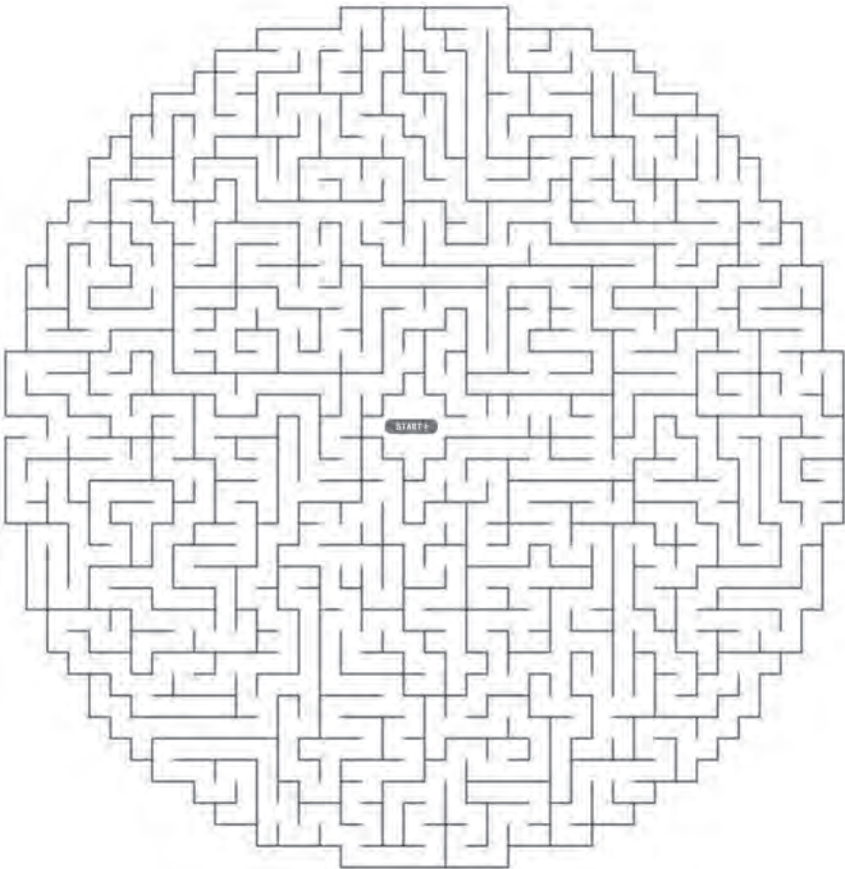
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Answer Key  
Montego Bay,  
Kingston,  
Usain Bolt  
Patrick Ewing  
Sean Paul  
Brown Stew Chicken  
Jerk Chicken

## Mirror Maze





Feb. 14	Feb. 15	Feb. 16	Feb. 17	Feb. 18	Feb. 19	Feb. 20
Men's and Women's Swimming and Diving at MAAC Championships Cleveland, Ohio All day  Women's Lacrosse vs. University of Connecticut Fairfield, Conn. 3 p.m.	Men's and Women's Swimming and Diving at MAAC Championships Cleveland, Ohio All day	Men's and Women's Swimming and Diving at MAAC Championships Cleveland, Ohio All day  Softball at East Carolina University Greenville, N.C. 4 p.m.  Baseball at University of North Carolina Greensboro Greensboro, N.C. 4 p.m.  Men's Basketball vs. Niagara University Fairfield, Conn. 7 p.m.	Men's and Women's Swimming and Diving at MAAC Championships Cleveland, Ohio All day  Men's Lacrosse vs. University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill North Bethesda, Md. 12 p.m.  Women's Basketball at Mount St. Mary's University at Emmitsburg, Md. 2 p.m.	Softball vs. Marshall Greenville, N.C. 10 a.m.  Baseball at University of North Carolina Greensboro Greensboro, N.C. 12 p.m.  Men's Basketball vs. Mount St. Mary's University Fairfield, Conn. 2 p.m.	No games scheduled	No games scheduled
					 <div>Photo Contributed by the Sports Information Desk</div> <p>The men's and women's swimming teams will travel to Ohio to compete in the MAAC championships for four days.</p>	

# Stags Complete Season of Two MAAC Opponents

**By CRYSTAL ARBELO**  
Assistant Sports Editor

The Fairfield University men's basketball team had a successful pair of games against Rider and Saint Peter's this past week. In a year marked with mostly highs and a few unfortunate lows, the Stags have been proving their place at the top of the table and reminding MAAC foes that they are a threat. With these wins, the Stags stand with 15-9 overall and move to 9-4 in the MAAC.

In the Stag's Thursday night matchup against Rider University's Broncs, a halftime trail lead to an electric second half performance that propelled the Stags to a 84-67 win. This win marks another MAAC sweep under the Stag's belt, sending the Broncs home with their last loss to complete the sweep.

Impressive performances are

not rare for guards Jalen Leach '24, graduate Caleb Fields and Jasper Floyd '25, as their day-to-day performance proves how strong the core of the Stag's offense really is; each of them scored at least 20 points Thursday night, with Leach topping it off at 22.

Fields is currently the MAAC's leading three-point shooter and has an average of 3.0 triples per game that he topped with 4 against Rider.

The turn-around after the half was the result of the Stags outscoring the Broncs 49-28, lead by Leach going 8-for-11 and 4-for-5 from outside the three-point line. The final result of 84-67, and it's 21-point difference, is the Stag's largest lead against a D1 opponent this season.

A huge highlight from the game was the return of forward and graduate student Alexis Yetna and guard/forward Louis Bleechmore '24 to the court after

injury. Yetna, who had yet to play for the Stags following a long-term injury, scored five points in his 18 minutes of action; this was his first game in over 690 games. Bleechmore missed four games due to injury, but came back stronger with six points.

In the game's official press release, Interim Head Coach Chris Casey commented, "We challenged our guys at the half to step up defensively, fight for loose balls and find a way to grind this one out."

Moving on to the Stag's away game at Saint Peter's, the Jersey City matchup came close up until the final moments. This is the third sweep the Stags have collected this season, arriving on their way back to Fairfield with yet another victory under their belt.

After trailing in the first half by as many as 11, the Stags showed signs of bouncing back

and put up a 11-0 run to even it out, which was followed by the Peacocks biting back to make it 36-33 heading into halftime.

After the break, Fairfield answered with a 60-51 lead as the clock was drawing closer to its final minutes. This was followed by the Peacocks having an 8-1 run, making the score 61-59 in the final minute of play; they then sent Leach to the free-throw line, to which he went 2-for-2, giving the Stags a little leeway with 26 seconds left on the clock. After a layup and free-throw from Saint Peter's guard Marcus Randolph '25, the score moved to 63-62 with 16 seconds left. The Peacocks then fouled guard James Johns Jr. '26 after a promising key pass, sending him to the free-throw line where he made one shot and put the Stags up by 2. With 4 seconds left on the clock, the Peacocks went for a layup, but failed to make the shot against Fairfield's

defense.

Once again, Fields and Leach led the pack with 17 points each. Fields' 17 points come from four three-pointers, while Leach set the high for rebounds with seven. Joining them for the games' noteworthy performances is Johns, who put up 11 points.

According to the game's official press release, Casey complimented the Stags following the game, "Everybody is grinding, everybody is banged up. And I'm proud of our guys for staying focused and fighting through all of that to come away with another tough road win."

The Stags head back to Leo D. Mahoney Arena to host Niagara Univeristy's Purple Eagles on Friday, Feb. 16 and then Mount St. Mary's College's Mountaineers the following Sunday.

## In this week's issue...

- Women's Lacrosse Loses Heartbreaker At Holy Cross (Page 14)
- Stags Late Game Comeback Falls Just Short In Season Opener (Page 15)
- Stags Survive Scare: Extend Winstreak to 19 (Page 15)
- Caleb Fields On Joining 1000 Point Club (Page 16)



# Women's Lacrosse Loses Heartbreaker At Holy Cross

BY BILLY MCGUIRE  
Contributing Writer

The Fairfield women’s lacrosse team kicked off their 2024 campaign on Saturday, Feb. 10, with a tilt against the College of Holy Cross in Worcester, Mass.

In a thrilling back-and-forth battle, someone in the end had to run away with the win. Despite a spirited effort, the Stags lost a heartbreaker, 17-16.

The Stags got off the ground running quickly, as graduate student and hybrid attackman/midfielder Elizabeth Talluto scored the first goal just under two minutes into the contest. Holy Cross then scored

three unanswered goals before the Stags found the back of the net with just 2:50 to go in the first quarter with Talluto finding fellow graduate student and midfielder Christine Fabrizi to make it a 3-2 margin. Holy Cross regained their two goal advantage before the end of the quarter to make the score 4-2.

A man-up opportunity gave the Crusaders a 5-2 just under a minute into the second quarter. The Stags soon started to fight their way back, as junior and attackman Brooke Marotti added her name to the scoresheet at the 12:46 mark to make it 5-3, before they won themselves a man-up opportunity. They took advantage of

it by scoring again 37 seconds later with a shot from senior and attackman Amanda Kozak to put the Stags down one.

Holy Cross soon regained their three-goal lead shortly thereafter on two man-up opportunities with goals at the respective 10:38 and 9:41 minute marks. The Herd once again dug themselves out of the rabbit’s hole with Talluto collecting her second tally of the contest with 8:39 remaining. Kozak took advantage of yet-another man-up opportunity with her second goal of the game at the 6:06 minute mark to once again bring the game within one goal.

After another Holy Cross goal brought the game to an

8-6 Crusader advantage, the Herd went right back to work. Talluto collected the first Stag hat trick of the season on another man-up challenge at the 2:28 minute mark to make the game 8-7, while junior and attackman Grace Slater helped set up Kozak in collecting the second Stag hat trick of the season just under 30 seconds later at the 1:59 mark to tie the game at eight apiece. Holy Cross responded with a goal of their own just before the conclusion of the half as they headed into the locker room with a 9-8 lead.

The first half of the third quarter was all Holy Cross, as they stormed out of the gates with four goals to give themselves their biggest lead of the day with five. Fairfield started to play with a little more urgency with junior and midfielder Haley Burns finding Slater at 5:05 minute mark to make it 13-9 on her first goal of the campaign. Graduate student and attackman Libby Rowe became the sixth Stag to score just under a minute later to close the gap to three. At the 3:05 mark, Kozak scored her fourth goal of the game off a dish from Talluto to bring the Stags within two. Holy Cross scored once more as they headed into the fourth quarter up three.

The Crusaders scored once again to start things off as they once again saw themselves up four. Marotti scored her second goal of the game at the 12:29 mark, bringing the margin back down to three. Graduate

student and midfielder Maggie Fort became the seventh different Stag to score as she found the back of the net just under two minutes later with 10:55 to go to bring the Stags down to just two.

A back-and-forth scoring contest soon followed, as Holy Cross scored at the 10:04 minute mark before Marotti became the third Stag to snag a hat trick at the 8:59 mark to make it a 16-14 game. Holy Cross scored for the last time just under a minute later at the 8:02 minute mark to once again make it a three-goal game. Given another man-up opportunity under a minute later, Rowe found Fort at the 7:39 minute mark to make it 17-15 before the battle fizzled out. No other bookkeeping was needed for until Fabrizi found Rowe at the 1:41 minute mark to put Fairfield within striking distance on a man-up to make it 17-16.

Despite a disappointing result, the Stags headed back to Fairfield eager to return home to Conway Field at Rafferty Stadium, where they will hold back-to-back games to kick off their home schedule. The University of Connecticut will visit the southwestern part of the state on Wednesday, Feb. 14, while the University of Albany will do the same on Saturday, Feb. 17. For more information on the Fairfield Stags women’s lacrosse team, please visit [www.fairfieldstags.com](http://www.fairfieldstags.com) for more information.









Photo Contributed by the Sports Information Desk

The Stags fell in their season opener, losing by one goal to Holy Cross. They will take on #24 UCONN this weekend.

## The Weekly 5x4

Five People. Four Questions. Because we have witty things to say.

	 <div>Max Limric Editor-in-Chief</div>	 <div>Samantha Russell Executive Editor</div>	 <div>Kathleen Morris Managing Editor</div>	 <div>Ashley Devlin</div>	 <div>Danny McElroy Assistant Sports Editor</div>
Who’s your valentine?	Ok brutal first question Crystal ... You trying to keep your job or not?	I’ll go with my dog for this one, miss you Danny	Wouldn't you like to know? ;)	Maddy Bombard.	Sam took my dog answer, so... Tully cheesecake?
What’s the name of your most played playlist?	“New” – it’s the only playlist I listen to besides my “On Repeat.” I know it’s a little weird.	6/6/23...because I made it on June 6, 2023	I’ve been defaulting to the “On Repeat” playlist, courtesy of Spotify.	143 which is for my house. It’s my address, but don’t go looking.	“Grind Time”, for the end of last semester
What’d you get up to on the Snow Day?	I showered. Did some homework. And then exported and sent this paper to the printer.	Work for The Mirror, of course! And hit up the Tully for lunch.	I spend far too much time working in the Tully, but I’m not complaining.	I woke up, watched “The Bachelor” with my roommates, then International Law class and now I’m here.	Work in The Mirror office. The press cares not for inclement weather.
When’s the last time you’ve been to a Women’s Basketball game? (They’ve won 19 straight!)	Now you see, I don’t go to any basketball games. My childhood was filled with them. I’ve seen them opening	Sadly last year, but I’m hoping to go with my sister over Siblings Weekend!	On Saturday! They're on fire!	Saturday, Feb. 10.	Saturday! They’re 21-1, go to the games people!



# Stags Late Game Comeback Falls Just Short In Season Opener

By SEAN BELLAMY  
Contributing Writer

Men’s Lacrosse Displays Potential in Home Opener Despite Loss

This past Saturday, the Fairfield University men’s lacrosse team kicked off their season against the Lehigh University Mountain Hawks. The game was played at home on Conway Field at Rafferty Stadium. The final score was 7-8.

Sophomores Will Consoli and Jake Gilbert were the stars for Fairfield, with both players getting a hat trick in the losing effort.

The game overall was a defensive showdown. The first score of the game didn’t come until the final ten seconds of the first quarter, scored by Lehigh’s Scott Cole.

The Stags would answer quickly, as just 30 seconds into the second quarter Gilbert would find the back of the net. Unfortunately, the second quarter would soon take a bad turn for Fairfield.

Following the goal from Gilbert, Lehigh would proceed to score five unanswered goals over the course of the second quarter. Going into halftime, Lehigh would lead the Stags 6-1.

The third quarter followed a very similar pattern to the first, as both team’s defenses held firm and allowed no points. This time around however, Fairfield would be the one to break the stalemate. Captain Luke Okupski scored off a nice pass from fellow senior Jake Coleman.

Going into the fourth quarter, the score was 6-2. The Stags would mount a comeback effort, started by Consoli’s first goal of the day two minutes into the fourth quarter.

The comeback effort would ultimately come up short, but the Stags did have an opportunity to tie the game in the last 10 seconds.

Something that should be noted is that the Stags had four shots go off the goal posts in the game. If even one of those shots had connected, the game could have ended very differently.

Even though the team did ultimately lose, they should still hold their heads high. Last year, the Fairfield’s men’s lacrosse team also opened up their season against Lehigh and lost 20-10.

Additionally, Lehigh finished as the 25th ranked team in the nation last year, whereas Fairfield finished ranked 57th. While it’s a new year and a new team for both programs, the results of this year’s match marks a notable improvement for Fairfield.

Earlier in the week, The Mirror talked with captain Cam Barisano, and he expressed very positive sentiments towards the team this year.

“I think we are the most connected we have ever been,” said Barisano, “and you can tell on the field.”

One of the ways this became apparent was the assists Fairfield was racking up. All of the goals Fairfield scored on Saturday were assisted.



Photo Contributed by The Sports Information Desk

Sophomore midfielder Will Consoli had three goals and one assist in the Stags season opener against Lehigh.

For some context, almost half of the goals Fairfield scored last year were unassisted (48%). The number of assists on Saturday show a drastic improvement from last year.

Barisano discussed this during the interview, as leading up to this season the team has apparently been emphasizing more team play. Barisano said “We have been really harping on our one more mentality, sharing the ball and giving up a good shot for a great shot.”

While it is a small sample size, the Lehigh game should be looked at as indicative of potential future issues. A concern for the team this season might be the actual scoring itself.

Of the seven goals Fairfield scored against Lehigh, six of them came from just two players, Consoli and Gilbert. If the Stags want to continue to improve this year, more players are going to have to score.

Last season, only four Fairfield players managed to score double digit goals. The emphasis on spreading the ball around should help with this problem. But, better individual output might be required for the Stags to take the next step.

This game against Lehigh is a good indicator for Fairfield’s potential this season, even if the game did end in a loss. The players and coaches seem to have a good idea of what they need to improve on. Whether or not they can execute this remains to be seen, but the Fairfield men’s lacrosse team definitely seems to be on the right track.

The Stag’s next game against the University of North Carolina will be a big test for them. The game will take place on Saturday February 17th at 12:00 in North Bethesda, Maryland.

# Stags Survive Scare: Extend Winstreak to 19

By DANNY McELROY  
ASSISTANT SPORTS EDITOR

Fairfield women’s basketball came back home last week, overcoming some weekend struggles to take victories over Marist and Saint Peter’s and improve their record setting win streak to 19.

The Stags first took on the Red Foxes in an early Thursday morning tip off. With over 1,000 local elementary school kids in attendance for Fairfield’s annual Kids Day Out game, the team put on a show on both sides of the ball, leading to a decisive 76-49 win.

Offensively, the Stags posted a season high 24 assists on 32 made baskets, shooting 50% as a team in the contest.

“The first time we played [Marist], I

believe we had very few assists,” said road runner Emina Selimovic ‘25. “The biggest thing coming into this Marist game was to share the ball, make the extra pass, limit overdrizzling, and I think that’s what led to our success.”

The biggest contributor to that total was guard Janelle Brown ‘24, who alongside scoring 15 points also tallied a season-high 10 assists, culminating in her first double-double performance of the year.

Equally as impressive was the Stags’ defensive effort against the Red Foxes, as they nabbed a staggering 19 steals en route to 29 Red Foxes turnovers, both season bests.

“Defense is something that we work on every single day in practice because it translates to our offense,” said road runner Meghan Andersen ‘27. “Working hard for all 30

seconds of the shot clock to get a stop allows us to then push the ball in transition, which is something I believe we excel at.”

Brown also served as the defensive catalyst, finishing with a team-high six steals, followed by guard Kaety L’Amoreaux ‘27 with four of her own.

Leading the way in scoring was guard Kendall McGruder ‘25 with 16 points, backed up by Brown’s aforementioned 15 and Andersen’s 10.

But as the calendar turned to Saturday and the Peacocks came to town, earning yet another win wouldn’t be as easy for the Stags.

A handful of turnovers and a lack of rhythm early on offense for Fairfield helped the visitors sprint out to an 11-3 lead that lasted well over halfway through the opening quarter. A late flurry from the Stags closed the gap to just one by the end of the frame, but the team still found themselves trailing after the first 10 minutes for the first time this year in conference play.

“I think we lacked a sense of urgency coming into the game,” Selimovic said. “I truly believe that the way we prepare is the way that we play, and our Friday practice wasn’t as sharp as we would’ve liked, so I think that had an impact on the beginning of the game against Saint Peter’s.”

It was Selimovic, as well as guard Izabela Nicoletti-Leite ‘24, who stepped up in the second quarter to jumpstart the offense for the Stags. Selimovic recorded six of her 11 points in the period, including a tough “and-one” layup to spark the crowd, and Nicoletti-Leite had seven of her team-high 12, giving the Stags a 27-19 halftime cushion.

Despite the deficit, the Peacocks refused to go away in the second half. After outscoring the Stags 16-12 in the third quarter, they found themselves down just three points with five minutes to play.

As they’ve done all year long though, the Stags rose to the occasion, as McGruder hit a clutch three just before the shot clock buzzer to force a Peacocks timeout. She connected on another three on the ensuing possession, effectively putting the game out of reach for Saint Peter’s.

Still, the 52-46 final score line is likely not what the Stags were anticipating in a game against the Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference’s last place team.

“I know there was a lot I could have done better and the team could have done differently in that game,” Andersen said. “But at the end of the day, it’s important we take it as a learning experience. .we are the ones that choose how we show up, and we have to choose to show up the same way every day.”

Thankfully for the Stags, their suffocating defense remained present even when the offense couldn’t get things going. The Peacocks became the sixth opponent in their last seven games that has been held under 50 points.

Regardless of the fashion in which it was done, a win is a win. But as their historic streak continues to climb and they inch closer and closer to a national ranking in the AP poll, the Saturday scare served as a reminder of how hard it will continue to be for the Stags to reach their ultimate goal of a conference championship.

“Stay humble and hungry. That’s what we always say every day in practice and film,” Selimovic said. “We haven’t done anything yet, nothing matters until we win the MAAC championship.”

The Stags will continue that quest this Saturday, as they hit the road to take on Mount St. Mary’s. Tip-off is at 2 P.M.



Photo Contributed by The Sports Information Desk

Senior Janelle Brown is averaging 13.9 points per game on 59.6% shooting from the field.



# Caleb Fields On Joining 1000 Point Club

By KATHLEEN MORRIS  
Managing Editor

When Caleb Fields steps into battle, his focus is laser-sharp. An introspective player, Fields is aware that he must immerse himself in the heat of the game. His inner fire is fueled by his competitive spirit, which allowed him to set the court aflame on Jan. 7.

Fields' light was shining bright as he led the Stags to a victory against Marist College, securing an 82-61 win. Fields managed to add two accolades to his lengthy list of athletic accomplishments, netting his 1,000th career point and tying the program record with 10 three-pointers.

His focus never falters. Fields' friends and family were anticipating his eclipse of the 1,000-point mark, but he remains locked in the present. Fields admitted that he was unaware of the three-point record, which was set by Landon Taliaferro '20 in 2019. He recalled a conversation with Graduate Assistant Chuck Assetta, who approached him during a timeout toward the end of the game.

"Chuck came up to me and was like, 'I have to tell you something,'" Fields described. "Then he said, 'You know what? Nevermind.' I got an idea that I was close to the record, but I think he didn't want to tell me because he didn't want to jinx it."

Fields strays away from superstition. His pregame ritual is undefined, as he grounds himself in his religion rather than relying on luck. Fields attributes his recent success to his faith. By reading the Bible and engaging in

daily prayer, he finds peace within his demanding schedule as a student-athlete.

"I've been through depression and anxiety," Fields disclosed. "Believe it or not, I'm actually very open about that. My faith helps me overcome everything that I'm going through."

By prioritizing his own mental health, Fields is able to extend his energy to support his teammates. As the transfer portal has created shifts within the roster, his experience allows him to serve as a mentor to players entering the program.

"The guys call me the 'OG,'" Fields shared. "I see the young guys doing things I've experienced and already done. So, I try to guide them in the right direction."

When asked about his greatest asset as a basketball player, Fields could have defaulted to technical skills: whether that be his defensive finesse or his ability to drain a free throw. Instead, he expressed gratitude for his innate leadership qualities.

"People always gravitate towards me and I lead by example," Fields revealed. "I always motivate people to play for themselves. People always say, 'play for your brother.' But, if you can't play for yourself, how are you going to play for someone else?"

His mentality is influenced by his older sister, Lauryn. After a game against the University of New Hampshire, Lauryn called Fields to initiate a candid conversation.

"I scored zero points," Fields started. "But, she didn't call because I scored zero points. It was

because I was not interested in the game. I was just going through the motions. I was coming back from my hamstring injury, but that's not the excuse."

Lauryn prompted Fields to reconsider his intentions and long-term career goals. She asked him to think about whether he truly wanted to play basketball, or if

he would be satisfied working a nine-to-five. This moment of self-reflection allowed Fields to reclaim his passion for the sport, creating a newfound sense of purpose that catalyzed his subsequent success.

Birima Seck '25 affirmed the undeniable impact of Fields' leadership. As a transfer student from the University of New Mexico, Seck underscored the role that Fields' kindness played in easing his transition to Fairfield.

"He helped me to adjust quickly to everything since I was here, which allowed me to be able to stay at Fairfield," Seck said.

Seck suffered an ankle sprain at the beginning of the season, which made it difficult to navigate campus. So, Fields stepped in.

"When I was hurt, he would drive me to practice and make sure I stayed involved with the team," Seck remarked. "I



Caleb Fields is averaging 13.4 points per game on roughly 40% shooting from the field.

remember every time that I have been hurt or wanted to quit. He would come up to me personally to say, 'Get up, bro. Let's go, man.'"

Alexis Yetna, a graduate student hailing from France, contributed to the discussion. He commented on the pride he possesses for Fields, as his success is an extension of his overall character.

"I was happy for him because it's a hard thing to do," Yetna exclaimed. "People don't always make it to that stage. So, for him to be able to achieve that milestone speaks volumes to his work ethic through the years."

Before joining the Stags, Yetna played for Seton Hall and suffered an injury that sidelined him for nearly two years. Fields has played a crucial role in uplifting both Seck and Yetna throughout the 2023-24 season.

"When we got hurt, he was basically like a trainer and manager for us," Seck said. "He was taking us everywhere every day. And that's when he was hurt, too. It was super easy to adapt and then it translated to the floor because of the relationship we all have."

Their team dynamic was unshaken by an unexpected staffing change, which occurred two weeks before the season's start. Coach Casey was selected as the interim head coach, prompting a transition marked by drastic changes and genuine love.

"We had to catch up to the play style," Fields noted. "You're throwing like eight to nine weeks' worth of information at us to get ready for the season within two weeks. But, we got into the flow of everything. Coach Casey trusts us and we trust him."

This trust has enabled the team to rise to the top of the MAAC rankings, sitting in the second spot just below Quinnipiac. Yetna, who returned to the court on Feb. 8, is confident in the continued growth as the championship looms closer.

"I'm very excited because I feel like we are nowhere near our full potential and we are one of the most dangerous teams in the MAAC," Yetna declared. "We can win in so many different ways. When we get to March and have our full strength, we will be at a level where nobody will be able to [mess] with us."

Moving forward, Fields has his sights set on the MAAC Championship and the NCAA tournament. He will continue to live fearlessly in each moment, following the wise words of his coach.

Fields concluded, "One thing Coach Casey always says is, 'tomorrow is never promised.' When you're here in practice or the classroom, why not give it 100%?"



Shea Burns/The Mirror

Interim head coach Chris Casey put his arm around graduate student Caleb Fields during the game to discuss upcoming plays.