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Fiscal management a consistent issue for Quinnipiac, audit shows

By CAT MURPHY
News Editor

Quinnipiac University's auditors identified "significant deficiencies" in the university's financial control processes for the fourth time in the last five years, a copy of its 2022-23 audit report showed.

The university's most recent audit, conducted by independent auditing firm Marcum LLP and obtained by The Chronicle from the Federal Audit Clearinghouse, revealed that Quinnipiac improperly managed both federal and state funds during the 2022-23 fiscal year.

The auditors found that Quinnipiac at one point returned federally issued funds to the Department of Education approximately two weeks after the legal deadline had passed.

Quinnipiac owed the federal government \$401 in Pell funding, the audit said, because a Pell Grant recipient had withdrawn from the university after receiving their federal award.

If a student receiving federal funds withdraws from a university, the institution is legally required to return any unobligated funds to the Department of Education within 45 days.

However, the audit revealed that Quinnipiac did not have enough available Pell funds to disburse in March 2023, when the return was due.

The university evidently froze more than \$33,900 — including the \$401 return — until

more Pell funding became available the following month.

The university's lack of adequate Pell funding also meant 31 students were unable to collect the remaining balances on their federal grants until April. It is still unclear why Quinnipiac did not have enough Pell funding in March 2023.

In a separate but similar instance, university administrators failed to return more than \$8,500 in unawarded state funding until two-and-a-half months after the May 1 deadline.

Marcum LLP found that two students had withdrawn from the university after receiving state-issued scholarship funding. However, Quinnipiac officials "inadvertently missed" these returns and subsequently failed to return them to the state of Connecticut on time.

The audit report directly attributes both instances of program mismanagement to personnel turnover. One of the university's corrective action plans specifies that Quinnipiac's Office of Financial Aid lacked a director for approximately six months after the former director's November 2022 resignation.

An archival search of the university's official job listings page revealed that Quinnipiac posted jobs for at least three other university finance positions during the 2022-23 fiscal year: the assistant director for student accounts, assistant director of financial aid and the associate director of graduate financial aid. The reason

for the recent turnover remains unknown.

"The change in personnel and administrative difficulties delayed processes that were historically performed on a timely basis without error by this individual," one of the university's two corrective action plans states.

The auditors recommended that Quinnipiac adopt a process in which management reviews awards "on a monthly basis to identify and return unobligated funds in a timely manner."

And one of the university's corrective action plans notes that university officials implemented new procedures to "prioritize" federal returns. But this is contradictory to the university's other corrective action plan, which argues that procedural changes are "unnecessary" because Quinnipiac's current internal control system "will ensure all future compliance deadlines are met on a timely basis."

It is also still unclear why the university's previous review processes — which the audit report indicates were already conducted on a monthly basis — did not identify any of the errors.

Regardless, the "significant deficiencies" in Quinnipiac's financial control processes expose the institution to "the risk of regulatory sanctions," according to the audit's findings.

A significant deficiency, according to the audit, exists when an institution's financial control system does not allow employees to "prevent, or detect and correct" instances of noncompliance on a timely basis.

Although Marcum LLP has always concluded that Quinnipiac complies "in all material respects" with legal requirements, this is far from the first time in recent years that the university's auditors have uncovered significant deficiencies in the university's internal control over compliance.

Although Marcum LLP did not identify internal control deficiencies during former President John Lahey's final three years as Quinnipiac's chief executive, the university's audits have identified eight separate instances of noncompliance in President Judy Olian's five years in Hamden.

The university's 2020-21 and 2021-22 audits, for instance, revealed that university officials had lost several students' loan documentation, effectively rendering those loans unenforceable. And in fiscal year 2018-19, Quinnipiac officials miscalculated 18 Pell awards, improperly documented dozens of federal loan records and misallocated \$28,000 in federal funds. That same year, much like in 2022-23, the university returned state-issued scholarship funds over three months late due to turnover in the financial aid office.

It is unclear if turnover is wholly responsible for this pattern of internal control failures.

"We do not comment on inquiries related to university finances," John Morgan, associate vice president for public relations, wrote in a Jan. 29 email statement to The Chronicle.

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A timeline of the recent turnover within Quinnipiac’s diversity ranks

By CAT MURPHY
News Editor

Upon her resignation earlier this month, Sarah Hellyar, Quinnipiac University’s then-interim Title IX coordinator, joined a growing number of Quinnipiac diversity administrators whose titles now contain the word “former.”

In the last 12 months, six key diversity officials have left Quinnipiac — and it is still not entirely clear why.

Here is a full timeline of the recent string of departures affecting Quinnipiac’s diversity ranks:

JAN. 10, 2023

Quinnipiac kicked off 2023 in much the same way it did 2024: with a Title IX coordinator staffing update.

Don Sawyer, then-vice president for equity, inclusion and leadership development, announced via email on Jan. 10, 2023, that Title IX Coordinator Dennis Kwarteng was leaving Quinnipiac at the end of the month “for another professional opportunity.”

Kwarteng’s post-Quinnipiac employment remains unknown.

Hellyar, who had served as Quinnipiac’s sole civil rights and Title IX investigator for more than a year, was named interim coordinator.

Sawyer said the university intended to have “a new Title IX coordinator in place by July 1, 2023.”

JAN. 23, 2023

Less than two weeks after announcing Kwarteng’s resignation, Sawyer himself became the subject of a “transition” email.

President Judy Olian announced in late January that Sawyer would resign at the end of the academic year to accept a position at nearby Fairfield University.

Sawyer, who had served as Quinnipiac’s chief diversity official since 2019, now serves as Fairfield’s inaugural vice president of diversity, inclusion and belonging.

“Don will be missed,” Olian wrote in the Jan. 23 email. “I congratulate Don for this new opportunity and for all he has accomplished in his 11 years at Quinnipiac.”

JULY 2023

A slew of administrative movements occurred when the new academic year began in July 2023.

With Sawyer’s departure official as of July 1, Olian on July 5 appointed Wayne Gersie, Michigan Technological University’s inaugural vice president of inclusion, to succeed him as Quinnipiac’s vice president of equity and inclusion.

Gersie took over as the university’s chief

equity officer on July 31.

Daymyen Layne resigned as the university’s director of multicultural education around the same time. Layne, who had served in the role since 2019, left Quinnipiac to accept a position as The Hotchkiss School’s director of diversity, equity and inclusion.

Claude Mayo, Quinnipiac’s director of academic integrity, is serving as the interim director of multicultural education in Layne’s absence, according to his LinkedIn profile.

DEC. 1, 2023

Veronica Jacobs, associate director of multicultural education, subsequently announced her decision to step away from Quinnipiac in early December.

Jacobs, who had recently returned from parental leave, told students in a Dec. 1 email that she was leaving to “focus on my health and my family.”

DEC. 7, 2023

Just over a week before the end of the fall 2023 semester, Olian announced via email that Gersie — Sawyer’s successor as chief diversity official — would not be returning for the spring semester due to “personal reasons.”

Gersie, who Olian had tapped as the university’s vice president for equity and inclusion just five months earlier, left Quinnipiac at the end of December to return to Michigan Tech.

David Fryson, a former college diversity administrator at Brandeis University and West Virginia University, replaced Gersie on an interim basis in January.

The university will launch a search for a permanent vice president once “the complete equity and inclusion team has been assembled,” Olian wrote.

In the same Dec. 7 email, Olian announced a complete overhaul of Quinnipiac’s former Department of Global and Cultural Experience.

By restructuring DCGE, Olian wrote, the university is hoping to “enable singular focus on equity and inclusion on the one hand, and on international students and global education on the other.”

The newly reorganized Office of Inclusive Excellence, unlike DCGE, does not oversee global education or international student affairs. Study abroad programming is now a function of the Office of the Provost, and the Office of Student Affairs now oversees international students.

JAN. 23, 2024

On the second day of the spring 2024 semester, Hellyar resigned as interim Title IX coordinator.

Fryson announced in a Jan. 23 email to the Quinnipiac community — just his second university-wide communication as interim vice president of equity and inclusion — that Hellyar had left the university “for another professional opportunity.”

Hellyar’s LinkedIn profile confirms she accepted a position as Antioch University’s Title IX coordinator.

When Hellyar became the interim coordinator last January, Sawyer said the university planned to install a new Title IX coordinator by July 2023.

And although Quinnipiac posted the position on its job openings page as early as March, university officials never named a permanent coordinator. Accordingly, Hellyar served as both the interim coordinator and the Title IX investigator for last year of her tenure.

However, Fryson wrote that the university is “concluding a national search for the permanent Title IX coordinator.” Brittany Swett, a Title IX professional from Aleta Law, will serve as the interim coordinator in the meantime.

Swett previously worked as a Title IX investigator and prevention specialist at the University of New England. The Maine-based lawyer has an “extensive background in conducting Title IX, civil rights compliance, and workplace investigations,” according to her Aleta Law profile page.

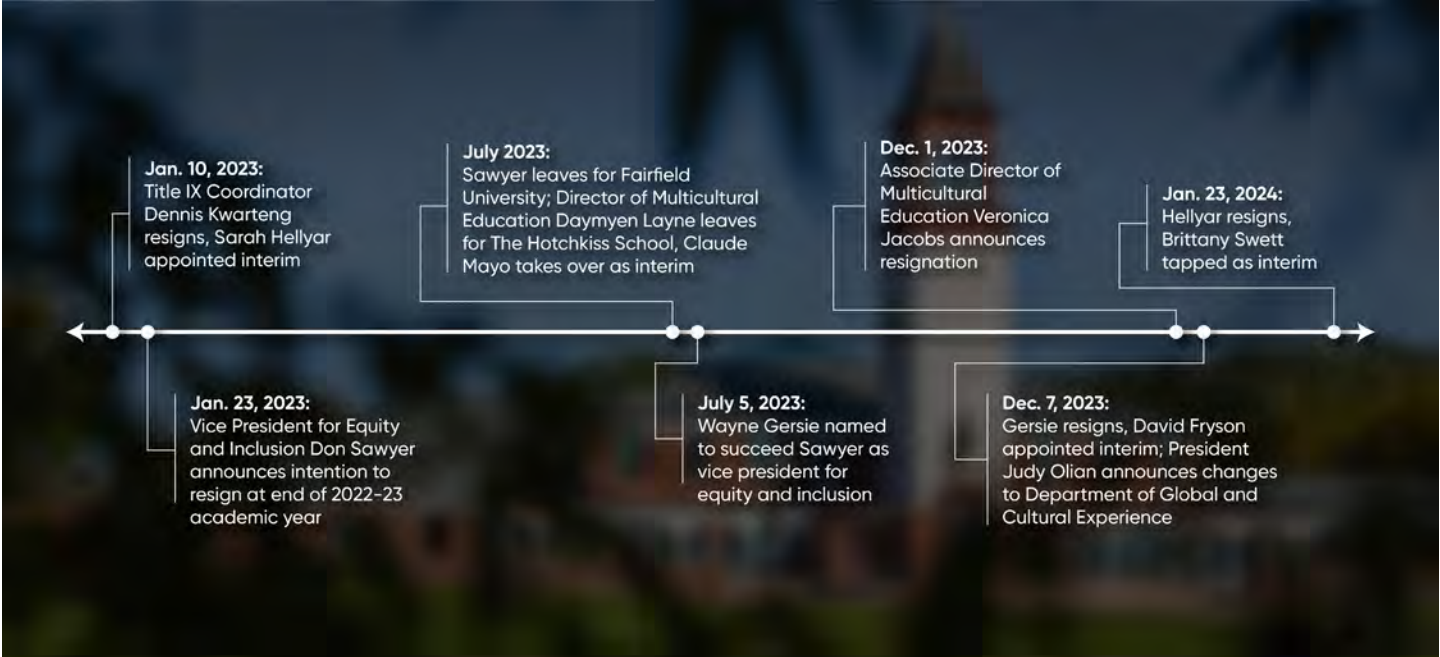
Fryson’s email announcing Hellyar’s resignation shares a number of similarities with Sawyer’s January 2023 email announcing Kwarteng’s equally sudden departure.

That is, despite supposedly being written by two different people more than a year apart, the two emails are nearly identical. Compared side-by-side, the announcements — not including differences in names and pronouns — share more than 90% of their content.

Case in point, both emails describe a “dedicated colleague” who “built wonderful partnerships across (the university/campus) and in the community.”

Likewise, both Fryson and Sawyer credited the former coordinators with “elevating the importance and visibility of Title IX on our campus,” and each email ends with a request to “please join me in thanking (Sarah/Dennis) for (her/his) service and wishing (her/him) well on the next stage of (her/his) professional journey.”

It is still unknown if any of these six departures are related. But no matter the reason or relation, top diversity officials keep leaving Quinnipiac — and the broader impact of the recent turnover remains to be seen.



INFOGRAPHIC BY PEYTON MCKENZIE

Ledges residents face new warnings, surveillance cameras following vandalism incidents

By ALEXANDRA MARTINAKOVA
News Editor

Quinnipiac University’s Office of Residential Life has increased watch over the Ledges Residence Hall in the wake of recent vandalism incidents.

Thomas Rouse, director of Residential Life, welcomed the first-year residents of the dorm hall with an email on Jan. 17, three days before move-in for the spring 2024 semester.

“I am excited to welcome you back to the Ledges community and to share the proactive steps being taken to address issues of vandalism and disruptive behavior in the Ledges Residence Hall,” Rouse wrote. “This past semester, there were a number of frankly disgusting incidents in the bathrooms. I ask each of you to take responsibility in helping end the vandalism and the extreme disrespect shown to those living in Ledges.”

Rouse continued, informing the community that “because of the behavior documented last semester, cameras have been installed in the

Ledges residence hall to identify those responsible for the inappropriate behaviors.”

“The camera kind of looks right at our door, I assume, I don’t really know the reach on that thing,” said first-year game design major Parker McCarthy. “In the first floor common area there’s a 360 (degree) camera in the ceiling, although some people have been suspecting that there’s not even a camera there, but it’s just one of those fake security things that you install to make people feel like they are being watched, which is incentive enough I suppose.”

Rouse also stated that additional consequences for those found violating expected behavioral standards will include: billing for excessive cleaning or repairs in bathrooms and common areas, lowest priority in the sophomore housing lottery for fall 2024 and revocation of guest privileges.

“While we certainly prefer not to resort to these measures, if the community doesn’t lift its own behaviors to assure appropriate conditions

for all residents in Ledges, we are prepared to take these actions,” Rouse wrote.

However, McCarthy said residents do not know whether these measures have already been set in place or are meant to serve as a warning.

“As far as we know, they basically wagged their finger at us and told us, ‘Don’t do that to our beautiful building,’” McCarthy said. “And we just assumed that’s now in place, but nobody really told us if it is.”

Rouse said the Office of Residential Life has communicated the problems to residents through both emails and flyers. In September 2023, Residence Hall Director Dani Mascia held a floor meeting to address the issues, which was then followed by the revocation of guest privileges for all residents for two weeks and the introduction of the anonymous tip line — (203) 582-6201.

However, as Rouse pointed out in the email, “although these measures alleviated some issues, problems in the hall began to escalate again after the guest restrictions were

lifted, leading to more damage and unseemly behaviors in the building.”

Some of these incidents included spit and feces on the walls and property damage.

McCarthy claimed that there was also an incident in which residents filmed others for a TikTok video without their consent.

Rouse reiterated in his email that if anyone is aware of any violations (including vandalism and disruptive behaviors) they are to share this information with a residential assistant, Public Safety officer, the Dean of Students office, their Residential Hall director or report it on the Rave Guardian App or through the anonymous tip line.

In his words, “if you’re protecting the few who are responsible for these horrible behaviors, you’re harming the rest of our community.”

“I feel like the camera has definitely helped us, we haven’t had any incidents since they’ve been installed,” McCarthy said. “But then again it’s the first week, so who knows what’s going to happen.”



PHOTO COURTESY OF THOMAS ROUSE

Sauce splattered in a communal shower stall in The Ledges Residence Hall last fall.



PEYTON MCKENZIE/CHRONICLE

Quinnipiac University officials installed a 360-degree camera in a first-floor common room in The Ledges Residence Hall.



PHOTO COURTESY OF THOMAS ROUSE

Explicit graffiti on a bulletin board in The Ledges Residence Hall last fall.

OSHA fines South Quad construction contractor \$5,200 for several worker safety violations

By KATIE LANGLEY and CAT MURPHY

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration fined a Quinnipiac University contractor more than \$5,200 for three instances of noncompliance with Department of Labor safety policies on the university’s \$293 million South Quad construction site.

Inspectors issued Connecticut Mason Contractors, Inc. citations for three separate safety violations — one of which was considered serious — following a surprise inspection last October.

OSHA records obtained by The Chronicle indicate that Connecticut Mason Contractors on one occasion did not instruct each employee to recognize and avoid unsafe worksite conditions.

Specifically, during construction of the residence hall, the Middletown-based masonry contractor did not educate an employee on the hazards associated with “walking under an aerial lift while window installation work was being performed approximately 24 feet, 6 inches above ground level.”

The contractor’s inadequate employee training procedures, the report said, failed to

“control or eliminate any hazards or other exposure to illness or injury.”

Inspectors fined Connecticut Mason Contractors more than \$4,200 for this violation alone.

OSHA also fined the contractor \$1,000 for failing to report two employee injuries within seven days of their occurrence. The work-related injuries in question occurred around Jan. 10 and March 20 of last year, according to the citation.

Officials initially imposed a \$6,000 penalty for the improper training citation and an additional \$2,000 fine for the two injury report violations. However, OSHA reduced the fines to \$4,200 and \$1,000, respectively, on Jan. 23 following an informal settlement.

Inspection records dating back to 1972 indicate that OSHA had never previously cited the 60-year-old contractor for health and safety violations.

John Pettit, Quinnipiac’s associate director of public relations, did not comment on Connecticut Mason Contractors’ unsafe practices on the university’s South Quad site. It is unclear if the safety citations have impacted the construction process.

“The construction team is making great progress on the development of the South Quad,” Pettit wrote in an email statement to The Chronicle. “We are very proud of the project and safety is always of the utmost importance.”

Connecticut Mason Contractors did not immediately respond to The Chronicle’s request for comment.

OSHA also documented health and safety complaints filed against two of Quinnipiac’s other South Quad contractors: FIP Construction, Inc. and Advanced Performance Glass, Inc.

Officials inspected both contractors during the Oct. 27 surprise inspection but did not issue any violations.

OSHA has not conducted further inspections at the South Quad site since October.

The South Quad site has been under construction since the end of the fall 2022 semester. The new development — which includes a residence hall, a new School of Business and an interdisciplinary academic building recently dubbed “The SITE” (Science, Innovation, Technology and Exploration) — will open between August 2024 and May 2025.



JACK MUSCATELLO/CHRONICLE

The Occupational Health and Safety Administration fined Connecticut Mason Contractors, Inc. for violating federal safety laws while constructing Quinnipiac University’s new residence hall.

Opinion

Nikki Haley stands her ground despite defeat

What Trump’s New Hampshire reaction could mean for the 2024 election



Former U.N. Ambassador and Republican presidential candidate, Nikki Haley, speaks to the press during a gathering at Mary Ann’s Diner in Amherst, New Hampshire, on Jan. 19.

By LILLIAN CURTIN
Associate Opinion Editor

Former President Donald Trump’s victory in New Hampshire’s Republican primaries took him one step closer to a second term in the White House. Although you could expect him to be excited, he was, instead, angry.

He looked frustrated with his own former United Nations ambassador and former South Carolina Gov. Nikki Haley. Haley — currently running against Trump in the Republican race — lost to Trump on Tuesday night in the New Hampshire primary.

After her loss, Haley took the stage to congratulate the former president on his victory, but then made it clear that she wasn’t giving up anytime soon. Many who do not support the former president viewed it as the right thing to do, as do I.

I met Haley in New Hampshire while on a trip with one of Quinnipiac University’s political science classes and I watched her speak multiple times. She was very articulate and graceful. It’s very easy to trust her when she’s talking directly to you. Throughout her campaign, she hasn’t changed her position

when it comes to the fact that Trump should not be president.

Unlike Haley, former candidates Sen. Tim Scott and Vivek Ramaswamy have rallied behind Trump now that they are out of the race. Haley, though she lost in New Hampshire and Iowa, did not. She stood her ground.

But even in debates, Ramaswamy and Scott didn’t dare insult Trump. While falling behind in polls throughout their campaigns and Trump leading the race, they most likely knew they were not going to win in the end. Hence, why they decided to back him. From what I observed, they knew he would most likely be the Republican nominee, and chose to backtrack on what they said to get on his good side.

But why?

I think they felt threatened. There was, and is, only one Republican opponent at the moment for Trump, and that is Haley.

Trump’s tone in his “victory speech,” was defensive, and left me with the impression that he’s not as confident as he was in the beginning of the race. When he realized Haley wasn’t giving up, Trump spent his

speech exclaiming that he won. Despite the obvious win in the polls, he still felt the need to repeatedly state it. He showed animosity toward Haley, saying to Scott, “you must really hate (Haley).”

At the time of Ramaswamy’s departure from the race, Trump was significantly ahead in the polls. Although the gap is still there, it’s shrinking.

Haley isn’t backing down in order to please Trump and take a place in his staff. She is standing by what she says, and because of this, she comes across as more trustworthy than other politicians.

Haley is an example that not everyone wants to kiss Trump’s ring, and that he does have opponents that can take him on. She is getting under Trump’s skin.

During her speech in New Hampshire, she stated, “today, we got close to half of the vote,” which showed an optimistic approach to her defeat. From what I gathered following Haley’s closing statements, Trump was visibly annoyed. He was condescending and even threatened her, saying he would put her under investigation if she won.

Trump’s “tantrum” — what Karl Rove of the Wall Street Journal is calling it — was a poor demonstration following final remarks from Haley, when he sought to embarrass her with insults instead of celebrating his win. This was leverage for Haley and her campaign and it shows the country that Trump feels threatened. Many MAGA supporters believe him to be untouchable, but if he continues to behave the way he did in New Hampshire, Haley may have the potential to smash the pedestal he stands on.

Trump has never been challenged like this from someone in his own party and it exposed him as, frankly, immature. If Trump turns off his own supporters with his poor sportsmanship, or even weaknesses, they will turn Haley into the next president of the U.S.

One of the many things I heard Haley say while I was in New Hampshire was “we don’t want the same.” Her commitment to her campaign, and Trump’s reaction to this, only attests to her dedication to the Republican Party and the American people.

Opinion

How J-Terms can be ‘slay-terms’

Bobcat Buzz



By **MICHAEL LAROCCA**
Opinion Editor

If you discovered that you were able to condense a full semester of coursework into three weeks, would you ever pass that up?

Quinnipiac University decided to offer that opportunity to its students beginning in 2011, allowing them to register for fully-online, three-credit courses that are conducted in between the fall and spring semesters.

During the aptly named January Term, or J-Term, students can register for courses ranging from Understanding Theatre to Managerial Accounting. These courses are efficient ways to check off any University Curriculum requirements you need.

Classes are broken down so that one day of work is viewed as the equivalent to one week of work during a normal 15-week semester. Despite the quick pace, the flexibility that comes when a course is asynchronous

makes for a less stressful experience.

The only issue that might deter students from partaking in a J-Term course is that they are held directly after the holiday season, right in the middle of winter break. Students likely just finished a difficult fall semester and the last thing they want to do is complete more coursework, especially when it’s accelerated to near-light speed.

However, with good time management, there is no possible way for a J-Term class to take up more than two hours a day for less than three weeks. If the three credits you take in January means three less credits you need to take in the spring, it should be no question.

J-Terms are even offered at minimal cost for those in accelerated programs at Quinnipiac. If people in those programs take one J-Term every year of undergrad, that’s nine free credits for courses where the work

is likely much less difficult than it would be during a full semester.

However, there are chances that students might not learn as well in an accelerated online setting, or feel isolated from their classmates. Those problems might carry more weight if a student is taking an online course during a full-length semester.

But remember, J-Terms are for the sole purpose of working toward your degree when you are home for winter break, when you likely would not be interacting with your classmates anyway.

J-Terms are simply a perfect means to an end, and if that’s what you’re looking for, you’re in the right place. If your academic advisor recommends taking one at any point during your undergraduate education, don’t pass it up. You likely won’t realize what you’re missing until the opportunity has already passed you by.

By **A.J. NEWTH**
Opinion Editor



Dealing with federal student loan debt

DISCLAIMER: This piece is strictly based on the opinions and experiences of the writer and should not be viewed as a substitute for professional financial advice.

Spending money is simple when it’s the occasional clothing purchase or treating yourself to take-out food, but individuals — specifically students — neglect to realize their biggest financial burden is lurking unnoticed; federal student loan debt.

At the end of 2023, 43.4 million Americans had federal student loan debt, according to the U.S. Department of Education. The same site reveals that 14.2 million borrowers are still paying off their loans well into their late-40s.

This statistic isn’t meant to scare you or deter you from borrowing, but simply to make you aware of a problem most are unaware of — and how to tackle it.

There are plenty of reasons why we see so much student loan debt. Sky-high college costs and pressure to compete in the job marketplace are big factors. Federal student loans are also the most common form of educational debt, which contributes to why the loans seem so intimidating to pay off.

Not all debt is scary. Federal student loans tend to have lower, fixed interest rates, so you can feel slightly assured about paying them off slowly while you save for other important goals. These could be large expenses such as medical procedures, purchasing a home —

though in this crazy housing market that’s less likely — or retirement.

However, others prefer to aggressively pay down their student debt, which is the best option if you can afford it, per CNBC.

Most individuals reading this are college students, and if you’re paying off your loans yourself, chances are you do not have the funds nor the choice to aggressively pay your loans, as you’re prioritizing the cost of living and other expenses while at college.

Therefore, I offer you several alternatives for staying on top of your loan debt.

Investopedia recommends calculating your total debt and being familiar with all terms of your loan agreement. Also, review the loan’s grace periods, which are the length of time that you have post-graduation before you need to begin paying back. Furthermore, exploring loan forgiveness and payment plans is a good alternative.

Personally, the option I find easiest and most rewarding as a full-time student is paying down the principal. This is the initial amount of money borrowed, and determines your payment plan, interest rates and other factors of the loan. The faster you pay off your principal, the less interest you pay over the duration of the loan.

I decided to put a portion of

my part-time job paycheck towards the principal of my loans, knowing that while I may have to say no to an excursion or a meal out here and there, in the long run I won’t be writing checks for my Quinnipiac tuition when my kids are applying for colleges.

Some other options include setting up automatic payments or consolidating your loans. Consolidating decreases the burden of your monthly payments when you do start to pay the loan off. Doing this can also lengthen your payoff period, giving you more time to pay the loan back.

You can also defer payments. Deferment is an option if you are not yet employed after school, and the federal government may even neglect to charge you interest during this time, depending on your loan type.

There are plenty of options to explore when it comes to tackling student loan debt, but the most important thing is to get ahead of it. If you can afford it, put \$25-50 toward your principal each month, or some other form of payment that works for you.

I promise you’ll thank me later when you’re reaping the benefits of a cushy job post-graduation without having to worry about a massive, looming loan bill.

Arts & Life



ILLUSTRATION BY CONNOR YOUNGBERG

Sundance 2024: The ones to watch

By **CONNOR YOUNGBERG** and **JENNIFER MOGLIA**

January started off with a bang as the Sundance Institute hosted the 40th edition of its annual film festival in Park City and Salt Lake City, Utah. Staff writers Connor Youngberg and Jennifer Moglia made the trip out, and now they’ve got the scoop on all the films you can’t (and can) miss, from documentaries to “different men.”

CONNOR'S PICKS

'HIT MAN' This Richard Linklater film follows Gary Johnson, an undercover cop and college professor (Glen Powell), who poses as a hitman in order to catch people at their lowest. This film is effortlessly funny as Powell shines in this dynamic role that sees his character enter an unpredictable plot along with Adria Arjona’s character, Madison Masters.

The film is loosely based on the real Gary Johnson, as Linklater was inspired by the Texas Monthly article also titled “Hit Man,” written by Skip Hollandsworth in October 2001. However, it’s not a direct adaptation, with Linklater and Powell — who both have writing credits for the film — taking creative liberties for the audience’s enjoyment.

'A DIFFERENT MAN' When Edward (Sebastian Stan), an aspiring actor, struggles with insecurities due to his facial deformities, he undergoes an experimental procedure in an attempt to become a different man. When things go right, things immediately go wrong, making this unpredictable story a must-watch for when it hits theaters this year.

Stan delivers an exciting and fresh performance. By casting Adam Pearson, a British actor with neurofibromatosis, and having the story surround an off-Broadway play, writer and director Aaron Schimberg plays with real issues regarding casting in Hollywood.

This is Schimberg’s third feature film and the camera work is spectacular. Schimberg’s camera is always moving, utilizing pans and zooms that give the film so much character. The grain gives “A Different Man” such a vintage feel and the film is simply shot beautifully.

However, the best part of “A Different Man” is arguably the score. Composed by Umberto Smerilli, the music adds so much

to the film, matching both the emotional and darker tones extremely well.

'ROB PEACE' Writer, director and actor Chiwetel Ejiofor adapts Jeff Hobbs’ 2014 book “The Short and Tragic Life of Robert Peace: A Brilliant Young Man Who Left Newark for the Ivy League” to near perfection.

This emotional tribute to the life of Rob Peace is truly spectacular. It left the Sundance audience in tears, including Jackie Peace, Rob’s mother, who received a standing ovation following the film’s premiere.

The cast consists of Ejiofor himself, Mary J. Blige, Camila Cabello and, most importantly, Jay Will, who delivers a heartfelt portrayal of Rob in what should be his breakout role.

The film explores Rob’s dual life as an intellect and a drug dealer, while centering around the love Rob has for his family and trying to do the right thing for the ones he loves.

'SASQUATCH SUNSET' Possibly the most polarizing film of the entire festival, “Sasquatch Sunset” follows a family of sasquatches throughout the calendar year. Going in blind to this film was certainly an experience to remember.

Jesse Eisenberg, Riley Keough, Christophe Zajac-Denek and co-director Nathan Zellner star as the sasquatch family. The film doesn’t abide by the three-act structure, rather using seasons as acts to tell this family’s story. And while we’re on the subject of unconventional, there is not a single word of dialogue throughout this entire film.

While it’s certainly worth it to applaud the filmmakers for this extremely unique idea, the film utilizes a lot of middle school toilet humor that is either really funny or really not. There is a lackluster attempt to make this film actually say something meaningful, but by the point we get there, the film is already held back by the unserious poop jokes.

The cinematography is absolutely stunning and there are many filmmaking aspects to love, but if you don’t love this movie, you’ll hate it.

JENNIFER'S PICKS

'MY OLD ASS' Most Sundance attendees walked into “My Old Ass” knowing next to nothing about the plot, but they left with tears

in their eyes and their bodies out of their seats for multiple standing ovations. The sophomore feature from producer Margot Robbie and director Megan Park follows Elliott (Maisy Stella), who dabbles in substance use for the first time during the final summer before she leaves for college.

During her drug trip, Elliott meets a version of herself from 20 years in the future (Aubrey Plaza). Throughout the film, older Elliott gives younger Elliott some mysterious answers and advice that complicate her senior year summer, for better and for worse.

The entire cast shines with the help of a refreshingly original script, with many of the actors serving in their first or one of their first few major roles. Despite its time-travel elements, this is an incredibly relatable, funny and heartwarming story about enjoying the time you have with the people and places you love while you can.

'WILL & HARPER' This is a great year for Sundance documentaries and “Will & Harper” was no exception, especially with the help of actor Will Ferrell’s star power.

This documentary follows Ferrell and his best friend Harper Steele, who met while they were both working for “Saturday Night Live” throughout the late 1990s and early 2000s. Steele came out to her family and friends as a transgender woman in 2020, and to properly understand how he can best assist her throughout her transition and help her rediscover herself, Ferrell takes Steele on a road trip across the country for two weeks.

While Ferrell’s name recognition may have gotten movie buffs’ eyes on the film, Steele’s humor, charm and heart while addressing the realities of being transgender in America were the highlights of the documentary. The relationship between the two is incredibly wholesome, and the way they support each other is a breath of fresh air in a time when so much transphobia is present in the United States.

'WINNER' When you hear something you’re not supposed to that has the potential to change lives, do you keep quiet, or do you tell the world? Dark comedy “Winner,” directed by Susanna Fogel (“Booksmart”) and starring Emilia Jones (“CODA”) answers that very question.

Screenwriter Kerry Howley penned this script based on her own New York Magazine feature, “Who Is Reality Winner?,” published in

2017. The real-life Winner, an air-force veteran and former NSA translator, received the longest prison sentence ever given for the unauthorized release of government information to the media for leaking a report on Russia’s involvement in the 2016 U.S. presidential election.

For those who have never heard Winner’s story, this is an eye-opening look at just how corrupt and unfair our government and justice system can be. It isn’t all doom and gloom, though — there are tons of laughs and heartwarming moments as well.

Anyone could decide to make a movie based on a true story, but a stellar cast brings this to life, highlighted by the performances of the Winner family: the aforementioned Jones (Reality), Kathryn Newton (Reality’s sister Brittany), Connie Britton (their mother Billie) and Zach Galifianakis (their father Ron). The best part? The film received the seal of approval from the real Reality Winner herself, who appeared at the premiere in Park City.

'I SAW THE TV GLOW' Writer and director Jane Schoenbrun made their second appearance at Sundance with “I Saw the TV Glow,” as their debut “We’re All Going to the World’s Fair” was featured in the online edition of the festival in 2021. Both movies share themes of dependence on the internet, yearning for a sense of community and personal discovery, specifically in the vein of gender expression and transgender identity.

“TV Glow” was one of the most anticipated films of the festival for many, produced by Emma Stone and it featured appearances by musicians Fred Durst (Limp Bizkit), Lindsey Jordan (Snail Mail) and Phoebe Bridgers.

Its plot centers around Justice Smith (“Jurassic World Dominion”) and Brigette Lundy-Paine (Netflix’s “Atypical”) as an unlikely pair of childhood friends through multiple decades who can’t tell the difference between reality and their favorite TV show, spiraling into chaos and madness when the series is mysteriously canceled and one of them disappears.

This film didn’t land for a lot of audiences; the non-linear storytelling and unclear delivery of themes and messages proved to be too much for many. However, the film’s inclusion on this list remains because of how much it does mean to so many people, and how much it will mean to even more people when it gets a wide release.

Unboxing Greta Gerwig's talent beyond ‘Barbie’

By ZOE LEONE
Arts & Life Editor

There are a few things as high stakes for a media lover as the Oscar nominations. The categories are always stacked, but always full of "snubs," and every year without fail, the Academy decides a movie no one has ever heard of is worthy of the famed awards (this year's pick was "Nyad," which I personally thought was the fictional college in "Glee.").

"Barbie," one of the most talked about movies of the last year, racked up an impressive eight nominations. But Greta Gerwig was notably missing from the Best Director category. The internet quickly erupted as reactions began to pour in and debates fired off for what felt like an excruciatingly long couple of days.

Some were upset about the perceived snub and moved on with their lives. But for many, a larger conversation sprung up as posts and TikToks began popping up faster than I've ever seen with people arguing about anything and everything. From using whataboutism, to claims that those talking about the nominations didn't care about other world issues, to those discussing whether or not Gerwig even deserved a nomination to begin with. Just about everyone had something to say.

I've never been the kind of person who cares too much about movies. I'm eternally the person who responds with "Oh, I've never seen it," when mentions of cult classics pop up in conversation. I tried to force myself into a cinephile phase, but quickly realized I will always prefer a good TV show instead.

I've seen about seven movies in my life, and two of them are "Ratatouille."

But all of that changed for me on a December evening at a small movie theater in Tennessee in 2019. I was out of state visiting family, and somehow we'd managed to wrangle my mom,

aunts and cousins of all ages to the movies to see a new film adaptation that had just come out.

It was, of course, "Little Women," directed by none other than Gerwig. I was utterly entranced. I'd read the book as a young girl, but something about Gerwig's vision resonated completely differently with me as an 18-year-old floundering somewhere between girlhood and womanhood.

So naturally, I, like thousands of others, flocked to theaters in July 2023, dressed in as much pink as I could muster out of my closet. It had been months of lead up to the phenomenon that would become "Barbie," and one of the most popular films of the summer had finally arrived.

Sitting in the theater to see "Barbie" was the first time I realized exactly why people love movies so much. At the risk of sounding cheesy, it was a visceral reaction that I had only ever once experienced in a theater, almost four years ago when I watched "Little Women."

The general attitude surrounding the film seemed to be pretty consistent with the way the movie had resonated with me. Audiences, mostly made up of women, gathered in theaters in droves of pink. Articles were written about the brilliance of "Barbie." And yet, just like anything else that has ever been loved in an online sphere, the tides began to change.

It would be naive and baseless to insinuate that media should exist in a world without criticism. No piece of art is above the thoughts of those who consume it, and as someone who has spent a very large amount of my life writing words about anything and everything I've watched, I'm the last person to raise the argument that reviews and critics do not have a place in entertainment.

But the switch-up surrounding "Barbie" and the extensively rolling criticism of Gerwig

and her directorial choices came quickly and dropped hard. Suddenly the film was either too devoid of feminism — the themes explored were basic, ones that any woman in her right mind would know — or too feminist.

Films that deal with societal and cultural issues will always be faced with an innumerable amount of criticism. They will always be too surface level for some, too in-depth for others, too cheesy, too theory-heavy, too focused on men or too focused on women. And those critiques all have a valid place in the bigger conversation about how the media we consume reflects the world we live in.

But to me, Gerwig's work — and "Barbie" in particular — are not at their core about feminism, but about womanhood.

To me, it's about the experiences I had while watching "Barbie" in theaters. It's the way two older women whooped and cheered after Gloria's monologue. To me, it's my friend grabbing my

hand and whispering in my ear, "That's going to be you!" when Journalism Barbie won a Pulitzer Prize. And to me, it's about the way my mom grabbed my hand after hearing "We mothers stand still so our daughters can look back to see how far they've come" as tears dripped silently down my cheek.

The world is messy and complicated and often very scary at times, especially for women. We all have lived experiences and intersecting identities that affect the way we interact with the world around us and how it interacts back with us. And for some, that might mean Gerwig's films, and "Barbie," hit as rudimentary.

But while I've never been a movie person, I have been a Greta Gerwig one. Through her films, about the complex and intersecting ways we experience the joys and burdens of womanhood, she taught me how to close my eyes and feel. And that's worth more than any award nomination to me.

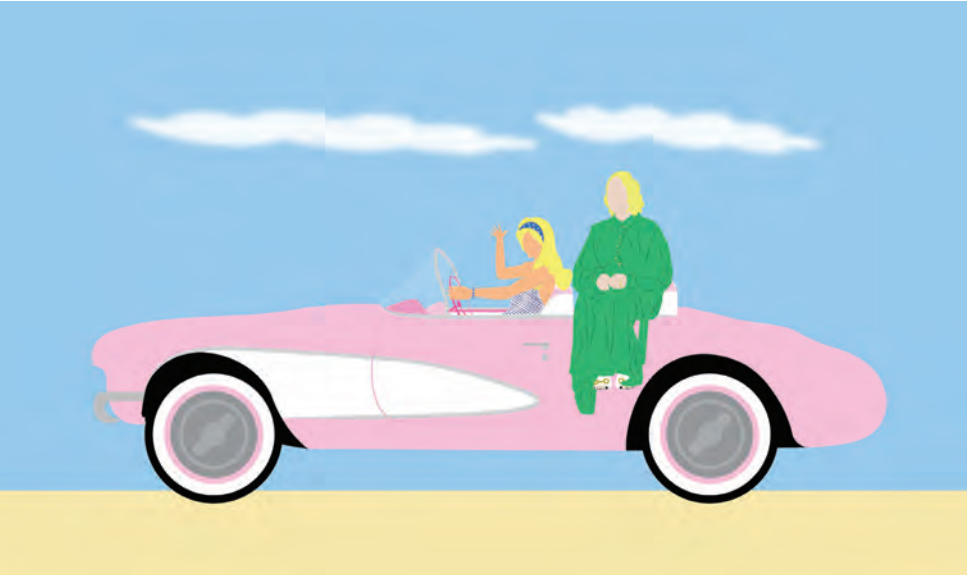


ILLUSTRATION BY SHAVONNE CHIN

Don't be fooled by the pink: ‘Mean Girls’ falls just short of being fetch

By ZOE LEONE
Arts & Life Editor

Every school has its rules. And for North Shore High School, they've long revolved around mathletes, pink and cheese fries. But now almost 20 years after our first introduction to The Plastics, we've entered into a new era of "Mean Girls."

"Mean Girls" is a painful 2024 adaptation of the smash-success Broadway musical — that was based on the original 2004 film. With so much source material in its history, "Mean Girls" had a lot to live up to before it could be officially labeled as "grool." So the question bares, does it?

The short answer is no. It would be nearly impossible to exist in the current digital age and not have seen the countless videos of awkward camera angles, poor costume choices and groaning audiences as every new song started. But as a long-time fan of both the original movie and the musical, my crosses to bear lie elsewhere.

Casting is one of the most important aspects of a film, more so in musicals than any other genre. It's much easier to find an actor who can give a good dramatic performance than it is to find someone who can carry the energy of a musical. And while "Mean Girls" occasionally knocks it out of the park, several of the leads stumble like baby deers along the way.

Angourie Rice, the actress behind our newest Cady Heron, was rather regrettably the weakest performer of the whole movie.

Her voice is painfully monotone, turning the gleeful "Stupid With Love" — a song about Cady discovering she's filled with "calculust"

for Aaron Samuels (Christopher Briney) — into a low-energy, autotuned number that sounds more like royalty-free music than a beloved Broadway number.

The production choices on the vast majority of the songs — way over-popified versions of Broadway songs as a way to "appeal" to a general audience — kill a lot of what makes "Mean Girls: The Musical" so good.

The campy, over-the-top theatrics of the musical are what makes The Plastics belting in the cafeteria work. But when you have a film that cuts over half of the original songs and an Aaron who never once sings, it makes the audience wonder if the film knows it's

actually supposed to be a musical.

"Mean Girls" does not go without its bright spots. Auli'i Cravalho and Jaquel Spivey shine as Janis 'Imi'ike and Damian Hubbard. They bring the perfect "too-cool-for-school" and "too-gay-to-function" vibes to their beloved characters, and their musical backgrounds elevate their performances into what the movie should've been the whole time. And while it's a shame that all of Spivey's solo songs were cut in favor of dialogue, Damian's iconic one-liners remain a bright nod to the original film.

There is no doubt, however, that the star of the film is Reneé Rapp. While the actress-turned-singer is mostly known now for her

music career and stint on "The Sex Lives of College Girls," Rapp actually played the iconic Regina George on Broadway when the original actress left the production.

And time has only proven to have made Rapp's Regina even stronger. Her vocals are somehow even more impeccable, showing how strong a film musical can be when actors with the proper training are given the chance to do what they know best. Perhaps it's because of the year she spent playing her, or maybe it's Rapp's now-famous lack of filter, but she manages to play the perfect mean girl without sliding into cringe-worthy territory.

"Mean Girls" is truly not the worst movie I've seen in recent memory. But with so much to stand up against, it's hard to call it objectively good with the large amount to base it off of. It's not as perfectly comedically acted or quote-worthy as the original film, and it's definitely not as musically interesting as the Broadway show.

Unfortunately, the film finds itself landing in the middle of the road. Not the worst adaptation we've seen, but not one good enough to be talked about for years to come. And considering that comedic mastermind Tina Fey was involved in the story and production of the "Mean Girls" projects, the lack of quality continuity amongst all three seems out of place.

Regardless, the film is still worth a casual watch if you're a long-standing fan, or just looking to kill an hour or two out of your afternoon. After all, that's just, like, the rules of feminism.



ILLUSTRATION BY SHAVONNE CHIN

‘The Iron Claw’ wrestles with the pain of what could’ve been

By JENNIFER MOGLIA
Staff Writer

“The Iron Claw,” a harrowing sports drama based on the true story of a cursed wrestling family, is the latest film from A24. While the studio is most well-known for its hard-hitting horror features like “Hereditary” and “Midsommar,” this marks another successful and heavily emotional foray into a different subgenre for the company.

This film follows the Von Erich family throughout the ‘80s and ‘90s as brothers Kevin (Zac Efron), Kerry (Jeremy Allen White), David (Harris Dickinson) and Mike (Stanley Simons) try to make it in the world of professional wrestling. They are coached by their father Fritz (Holt McCallany), who gives them the toughest love possible to ensure their success.

The first half of this movie is a wrestling

fan’s dream. The fight sequences are extremely well done thanks to stunt coordinator Chavo Guerrero Jr., a former professional wrestler. Current All Elite Wrestling stars Maxwell Jacob Friedmann (MJF) and Ryan Nemeth also make cameos.

However, things take a turn when the famous “Von Erich curse” makes its presence known. When Fritz changes his last name to Von Erich, his mother’s maiden name, tragedy begins to follow them. Kevin explains to his then-girlfriend Pam (Lily James) that the curse started with his oldest brother Jack Jr., who was electrocuted and then died at six years old.

After all the triumphs and championships of the opening act of the film, the dominos begin to fall when David travels to Japan for a match and never comes home. With the

exception of Pam and Kevin’s wedding, the rest of the film is a bleak series of death and disaster that pulls no punches.

While the entire cast puts on incredibly memorable performances, I felt this served as a breakout role for Efron, despite being 36 years old and an actor for over 20 years. He absolutely shines as the last living Von Erich brother, highlighted by a deeply emotional scene with his children late in the film.

White made the leap to the big screen after making a name for himself in TV shows like “Shameless” and Hulu’s “The Bear,” which he recently won an Emmy for. His scenes as Kerry are some of the most touching in the film, and I doubt this will be the last we see of him in full-length features.

Though not featured in the cast list, the music in this movie plays a pivotal role. Rush’s iconic ‘80s hit “Tom Sawyer,” the Von Erichs’ real-life entrance music, is used in a fun transition moment that takes us from watching the brothers train to seeing them hitting the ring.

John Denver’s “Thank God I’m A Country Boy” is featured in one of the last lighthearted scenes in the film, Kevin and Pam’s wedding. Besides being a sweet family moment, this also showed that Efron certainly did not forget his dance moves from when he starred in “Hairspray” and the “High School Musical” trilogy.

All visual media has the power to impact lives and change viewpoints, and I think “The Iron Claw” will do that for a lot of people. This is a sports story on the surface, but at its core, it’s all about family.

Fritz clearly pressures his sons far too

much throughout the film to live his dream of being a world-famous wrestler, something that they don’t feel as passionately about as he does.

They do have other dreams, though — Mike loves to play music in his band and Kerry is a track and field star hoping to make it to the Olympics. But to Fritz, his kids aren’t good enough.

However, the real Kevin Von Erich said recently on the “Talk Is Jericho” podcast that the film portrayed his father inaccurately and that he was an “honorable, good man” who comes off too harsh on screen. While he thinks that drugs and medical issues were what pushed his brothers to commit suicide, the movie certainly implies that Fritz was a factor.

Regardless of what happened to the real-life Von Erich family, A24’s interpretation of its story serves as a reminder to support the ones you love and uplift them regardless of if their aspirations are different than yours. It will also hopefully open the door for more movies and TV shows based on real-life wrestling stories, dipping into the rich history of such a dark yet glorious sport and form of entertainment.

Despite not receiving any Oscar nominations (and being absolutely snubbed, in my opinion), I think “The Iron Claw” will go down as one of the best sports dramas ever. Even if it doesn’t, and its only impact is that a few people hug their siblings tighter or remind them how much they love them, I think the Von Erich family would be happy with that outcome in the end.

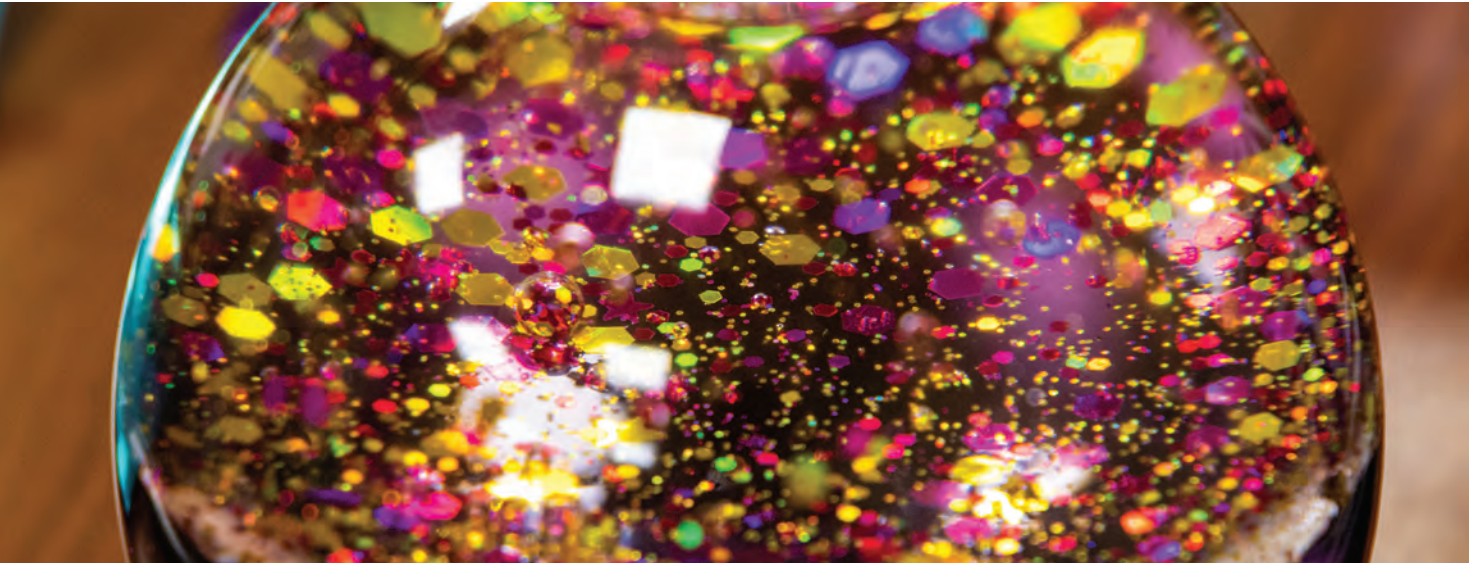


ILLUSTRATION BY CONNOR YOUNGBERG

SPB has students seeing stars

By AIDAN SHEEDY
Photography Editor

Quinnipiac University's Student Programming Board rang in the new year by offering a new event for students on Jan. 25. Students conversed while making constellation jars and galaxy globes. Constellation jars are made by stamping stars into glossy paper that you wrap inside of a glass jar. Then, insert a fake candle, and it looks like stars in the sky. The galaxy globes were the biggest hit. This take on a snow globe needs just baby oil, water and a lot of glitter. Students had a blast shaking up their new crafts.



AIDAN SHEEDY/CHRONICLE

One student's clear globe resembled outer space and was made with baby oil, glitter and sparkling shapes.



AIDAN SHEEDY/CHRONICLE

Sophomore media studies major Carter Kane carefully taps in some glitter into his galaxy globe.



AIDAN SHEEDY/CHRONICLE

Charlyse LaMantia, a first year in the 3+1 mechanical engineering program, marvels at her friend's galaxy globe.



AIDAN SHEEDY/CHRONICLE

Gianna Aregnano, a first year in the 3+3 physical therapy program, shakes her galaxy globe.

I don’t smell what the Rock is cooking: the phoniness of Dwayne Johnson

By BENJAMIN YEARGIN
Managing Editor

When I first saw that Dwayne “The Rock” Johnson was set to return to WWE on Jan. 1, I was excited to see someone so famous, and frankly so good, back in the wrestling business.

I previously viewed Johnson — acclaimed actor, celebrity and former professional wrestler — as a guy who can captivate people wherever he goes because he’s relatable and a solid dude.

Well ... I was wrong, mostly. He still can hold a crowd in the palm of his hand, but as I’ve witnessed more of Johnson’s antics, I can no longer smell what The Rock is cooking. All I smell now is phoniness and a shell for public relations firms to espouse their narrative.

My view of Johnson started to shift on Dec. 29, when one of my favorite YouTubers, “penguinz0,” otherwise known as “MoistCr1TiKaL,” made a video about Johnson’s recent trip to the fast food chain In-N-Out Burger.

Johnson posted a video to his Instagram of him going to In-N-Out, which he claimed to be visiting for the first time. In summary, the video shows Johnson going through a couple of In-N-Out drive-thrus and people being amazed to see someone so famous. He took a couple of pictures, tipped handsomely and pretty much exuded “look-how-famous-I-am” energy the whole time.

In other words, he stroked his own ego. He wrote in the caption of said video “Loved everyone’s positive vibes and ‘holy shit it’s the rock’ energy.”

Seems arrogant enough, but the problem is Johnson lied about something as innocuous as going to In-N-Out for the first time. He posted on Instagram on Feb. 23, 2017 saying that was his first time at In-N-Out too.

And again on Aug. 1, 2022, Johnson claimed he had In-N-Out again for the first time, pairing it with his very own Teremana tequila.

Why lie? I have no problem with Johnson

going to In-N-Out and posting about it, more power to him. My problem comes in lying about something so harmless and for seemingly no reason.

Then, Johnson went on the Joe Rogan Experience, one of the most popular podcasts on the planet and for better or worse, a place known for people being authentic and free in their beliefs. Rogan has hosted people from all walks of life, from Alex Jones, to Ye, formerly known as Kanye West, to Candace Owens.

So Johnson being on could’ve been something really interesting, but it wasn’t. He didn’t share his view on pretty much anything of substance.

Johnson admitted that a political party reached out to him to run for President, but he said nothing conclusive about his positions, values or who he would be as a politician.

The straw that broke the camel’s back for me was Johnson’s recent return to WWE, where I now have realized he goes back to when he needs his ego boosted.

Johnson’s return was hyped up with Paul “Triple H” Levesque, the chief content officer of WWE, tweeting, “Not going to confirm or deny the rumors of a former @WWE Champion appearing at #WWE Raw Day One... but I will say to stay tuned.” When Johnson returned, he interrupted a segment featuring former WWE Champion Jinder Mahal, who came out first as the false return.

The promo Mahal delivered wasn’t great, but he made it work. Mahal, a Canadian, trashed the U.S. the whole time, and some of which he said was true, but it furthered the “foreign heel” stereotype — a standard where wrestlers who aren’t from the U.S. or speak foreign languages are viewed as a bad guy.

Johnson returned with a massive roar from the crowd and delivered his shtick.

He defended the U.S., did an impression of the late WWE Hall of Famer The Iron Sheik, dissed his own movie “Baywatch” (which is funny, I won’t hate) and continued doing

what he always does, the same catchphrases and ways of entertaining the crowd.

There’s no denying that Johnson is one of the greatest professional wrestlers of all time. He’s one of the best on the microphone and one of the biggest draws in wrestling history.

His catchphrases are the most recognizable in all of wrestling. “If you smell, what The Rock is cooking,” “finally, The Rock has come back to (insert city here)” and, when referring to the fans, “the millions (and millions)” are sure to make any fan recite them with him.

But like many superstars before him, I fear his coming back to wrestling will halt the current talent in the WWE and only

boost Johnson.

Johnson made his name being the “people’s champ.” The WWE Universe rallies around him and hangs onto every word he says. People clamor to have their picture taken with him and be around him constantly. In the wrestling ring, he was the lovable heel, someone who had swagger and an effortless charisma.

But now with his lucrative deals with Under Armour, Ford, Apple and his millions (and millions) of dollars, Johnson is no longer relatable. He can’t be down-to-earth in his mansion and massive pick-up truck.

It’s time to stop pretending that he’s the “people’s champ” and recognize Johnson as merely the corporation’s seller.



Dwayne "The Rock" Johnson returned to the WWE on Jan. 1 to a subsequent roar of applause.

EVA RINALDI/WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

How e.l.f. has been duping the makeup industry

By KRYSTAL MILLER
Associate Arts & Life Editor

Walking into a drugstore, you see shelves stacked with makeup from brightly toned blushes to glitter lip glosses. Now more than ever, customers have more options at an affordable price that are worth the money.

When I first got into makeup in middle school, I thought I needed the same expensive makeup products that social media influencers or celebrities had. As I got older, I learned that I don’t need an Hourglass Cosmetics foundation or Natasha Denona eyeshadow palette to do makeup. As much as I do love occasionally splurging on a fancy foundation or bronzer, it’s not necessary to spend a lot of money to have makeup that looks great.

Inexpensive products with nearly identical quality to luxury items —

commonly called dupes — are great choices for makeup lovers on a budget to join in on trends and recreate popular looks from social media. Dupes give makeup lovers the feel and look of a luxurious product without having to stress about the cost of it, especially because makeup expires fast.

The brand e.l.f. has grown in popularity over the past few years for its dupes of higher-end brands. Over the past year, e.l.f. has skyrocketed 216% in the stock market, signaling the company’s rising popularity.

TikToker Kelly Strack, who has 644.5k followers, has made several videos about e.l.f. and comparing expensive products to luxury dupes. She has overall positive reviews about the e.l.f. products and has concluded that the dupes are identical on the skin to the luxury versions.

e.l.f. has consistently released new

products within the past few years, which prevents customers from getting bored and forgetting about them. I’ve been using the brand for years and not had any issues, so I trust they will put out quality products.

Here’s some of my favorite e.l.f. dupes that will give you a luxury feel.

LIQUID BLUSH

The \$7 e.l.f. Camo Liquid Blush is a great dupe for the Rare Beauty liquid blushes, which are \$23.

I was just able to get my hands on it after going to several stores because it has been sold out everywhere. The product has blown up on TikTok, with 62.4 million views total under the hashtag #ElfCamoLiquidBlush.

I have the shades Dusty Rose, Pink Promise and Comin’ In Hot Pink. Each shade is strikingly similar to its luxury counterpart, and there is an abundance of pigment and color options. Although nothing beats the original Rare Beauty formulas, I would much rather purchase the e.l.f. products to save money.

LIP OIL

The e.l.f. Glow Reviver Lip Oil, which is \$8, has recently been gaining traction on TikTok as well, racking up 275.8 million views under

videos about it. Influencers claim it’s a dupe for the Dior Lip Oil, which is \$40. I refuse to spend that much on lip oil, so I can’t confirm, but I have tried a lot of lip oils and this one is great. The shade Rose Envy is a lip product that I often reach for.

HALO GLOW WANDS

e.l.f.’s Halo Glow Wands come in highlighter, blush and contour shades, which are each \$9. These are also dupes for the Charlotte Tilbury wands, all of which are \$49. I have the contour wand in the shade fair/light. I usually don’t like using liquid contours, but this one is really easy to blend and doesn’t look muddy or patchy. If you are a person that likes natural makeup, these products will work well for you.

If you use any of the expensive makeup products, it’s worth trying the e.l.f. dupes. Although some people online complain about e.l.f. “stealing” brands’ product ideas, there’s always going to be a market for popular expensive products.

Makeup companies also use similar concepts and ingredients all the time, e.l.f. is just more blatant about it. For now, I don’t think e.l.f. is going to stop creating dupes, and I think customers like me will continue buying them.



ILLUSTRATION BY PEYTON MCKENZIE

Women’s hockey on verge of collapse amid four-game skid

By COLIN KENNEDY
Associate Sports Editor

It’s very rare in sports that a team will dominate their way through a season without at least encountering a speed bump. Bumps in the road are common, and most of the time, great teams are better off for it.

Perched atop that speed bump is exactly where Quinnipiac women’s ice hockey currently finds itself, and if it’s not careful that speed bump could send it barreling toward disaster.

“We’re fragile right now in our belief in what we can do,” head coach Cass Turner said after a Jan. 26 loss to Yale. “We’re there for certain moments, we’re there for certain periods and then it falls off as soon as something hard happens.”

This wouldn’t be an overly concerning two weeks for a team that is still ranked No. 9 in the country despite four-straight losses – for the first time since 2018 – but the problem is, the same thing happened each of the last three years.

The Bobcats ended their final eight games of the 2022-23 regular season at 4-4, one of those losses being an 11-3 beatdown to Princeton. They did find themselves in the NCAA Regional Finals, but were outclassed by Ohio State for the second-straight year.

The biggest problem in their recent skid? Losing close games against good teams. A home loss to Cornell and on the road against Yale have seen the opposing team out-execute the Bobcats down the stretch. A common theme between the two losses has been numerous penalties that buried Quinnipiac late in games.

“We really need to be a bit more disciplined to stay out of the penalty box,” Turner said following a 4-3 loss to Cornell. “It could have been a very different game.”

It’s not just penalties either, as a poorly-timed line change in the third period against Brown allowed enough space for freshman forward Margot Norehad to pull off a Michigan goal. The Bobcats certainly don’t want to see themselves on the receiving end of a SportsCenter Top 10 No. 1 play when they should be ramping up for another postseason run.

“We got to keep it simple and get back to understanding that we’re a good hockey team,” Turner said.

Following a 2-1 loss to Yale, Turner mentioned how, “we can put the puck in the back of the net,” and she’s right. The Bobcats are fourth in the nation with 106 goals. There’s a slight problem, though. They haven’t scored more than three goals against a ranked opponent since Dec. 9, potting six in a 6-5 win over No. 12 Princeton.

That being said, barring a total collapse, this is still a top-10 team, but they’ll have to prove it. Home games against Princeton, No. 4 Clarkson and No. 8 St. Lawrence will give the Bobcats ample opportunities to find themselves against good competition before the postseason.

There’s plenty of chances to right the ship but there’s plenty of chances to sink it, too.

“If this is the adversity we needed, then this is the adversity we need to get there,” Turner said.



CASEY NEDELKA/CHRONICLE

From left: Quinnipiac coaches Tom Pecora, Shaun Morris and Bradley Jacks during a game against Mount St. Mary’s on Jan. 25.

Suits and sneakers

Why ‘Coaches vs. Cancer’ hits close to home for men’s basketball coaching staff

By ETHAN HURWITZ
Sports Editor

In the midst of the 2020 season, then-assistant men’s basketball coach Tom Pecora went on a two-week sabbatical.

Without telling anyone on the staff, he quietly went to get treated for prostate cancer.

“I just went in for my annual checkup,” now-head coach Pecora said. “My primary care guy ... was like, ‘Look, Tommy, the (test) numbers aren’t high, but they’re jumping.’”

Cancer has touched Pecora’s life in many ways. His mother died after a bout with cancer at the turn of the century. His college roommate also fought cancer.

That’s why the Coaches vs. Cancer initiative is so important for the Bobcats’ head man.

A nationwide effort from both the American Cancer Society and the National Association of Basketball Coaches, the Coaches vs. Cancer initiative has created awareness and promoted healthy lifestyles through fundraising and advocacy events.

To raise awareness, college basketball coaches wore suits and sneakers during their games this past week. The sneakers are meant to draw attention to the overall cause.

“Most of the guys wear (sneakers) anyway, so it doesn’t have the impact it used to,” Pecora said. “But it’s something that’s close to my heart.”

For 14 years, Pecora has hosted a “Coaches vs. Cancer” golf outing on Long Island. He even helped raise half a million dollars in donations for Manhattan’s Hope Lodges — a facility-based community for those impacted by cancer.

“There’s a place in Manhattan called Hope Lodges where you can go with your

family (if) anyone you know is ever going to get treatment. Not only at (Memorial) Sloan Kettering (Cancer Center), but any of the hospitals in New York City,” Pecora said. “We have a room there with my mom’s name on it ... It’s really important.”

Assistant coach Bradley Jacks, who is in his fourth season on the Bobcats’ staff, took time after last Thursday’s win over Mount St. Mary’s to speak to the media — something assistants are rarely asked to do.

For Jacks, the disease also hits close to home.

“My mom, she’s battled breast cancer three times,” Jacks said. “It’s huge, (I’m) encouraging anyone and everyone to donate until we can find a cure for this tough disease.”

“It’s a special event, many coaches bought into this,” Jacks added. “I think it’s huge to continue to raise awareness because everyone’s affected by it.”

In Sunday’s two-point win over Fairfield, both coaching staffs remained in suits and sneakers. During the game, Fairfield sold commemorative hockey jerseys to honor a Fairfield student who battled cancer, with proceeds going to the Jimmy Fund.

“The more that we can continue to raise awareness and donate and give back, it’s awesome,” Jacks said.

There’s more work to be done, yet Pecora — who is leading the Bobcats to their best start (16-4) in program history — doesn’t forget those he’s lost.

“I think of a lot of people on those days,” Pecora said. “I think we’re making tremendous progress in finding cures and it takes programs like this to help. Not only raising money, but also (letting) people not forget.”



CASEY NEDELKA/CHRONICLE

Cancer survivor and Quinnipiac head coach Tom Pecora sporting sneakers during the “Coaches vs. Cancer” initiative on Jan. 25.

Once a Beanpot hero, Vinny Duplessis shows poise under pressure at CT Ice

By ETHAN HURWITZ
Sports Editor

HARTFORD — It certainly isn't Boston and it most certainly isn't the Beanpot. But for Quinnipiac senior goaltender Vinny Duplessis, the Connecticut Ice Tournament felt just the same.

"I treat it the same ... as any championship game," Duplessis said after Saturday's championship 4-3 victory over UConn. "It's unreal to have the chance to play for a trophy."

Unreal would be a mild way to describe Duplessis' weekend in the most recent installment of CT Ice. Over a two-game stretch, the Bobcats' newest netminder stopped 48 shots en route to a spot on the All-Tournament Team and the Most Outstanding Player award.

"Gotta give credit to Duplessis, he played really well," UConn head coach Mike Cavanaugh said Saturday. "He shut the door on us in the third ... That's hockey."



Senior goaltender Vinny Duplessis is 12-4-2 in 18 games played this season.

Friday's opener — a masterful 1-0 performance over rival Yale — was just an appetizer. Fourteen saves and Duplessis' first shutout since Dec. 12 sent the Bobcats into the championship round for the third-straight season.

It wasn't the flashiest game of hockey, as both sides struggled to muster up any offense. But in the end, the Bobcats defense stepped up and got the win.

"We made sure we were protecting the puck," Quinnipiac head coach Rand Pec-nold said Friday. "There's no easy games and tonight was tough, that was a hard game."

Not even 24 hours later, Duplessis gave fans the entire meal and then dessert. In a game which found Quinnipiac down 3-1 in the middle frame, he turned a corner and performed his magnum opus as a Bobcat netminder.

The former Boston University Terrier stopped 11 shots in the third period — including a frenzy in the final five minutes — helping the Bobcats to their third-straight championship win and Duplessis' twelfth win of the year.

"There's always that little extra desire to win towards the last couple minutes," Duplessis said. "We want to show up every night and be the best we can."

It's been an off-and-on first half of the year for Duplessis, following national champion Yaniv Perets between the pipes and struggling at times late in games. But with the eyes of the state on him and a trophy on the line, he kicked his play into the next gear.

Duplessis' play against the Huskies, combined with the stellar efforts of the Bobcats defensemen, shut down a UConn offense that was hard to shut down all weekend.

"I have a lot of trust in our defensemen, a big part of our game is to stay tight in the slot," Duplessis said. "I

made a lot of saves, I wasn't really worried about it ... Our team battled hard."

He did make a lot of saves — 42 in two games. Not too shabby with a trophy in the balance.

"He just made saves," Cavanaugh said. "I'm not a goaltending coach, but he made saves when he had to."

Now with two in-season championships under his belt, including his 2022 Beanpot championship with the Terriers, the Quebec City native has bigger fish to fry as his first campaign in Hamden nears the postseason. A long road remains if the goaltender can help the Bobcats claim both the conference regular season and postseason titles, but if there's award on the table, he will elevate his game.

"There's a lot of bragging rights, being the champion in Connecticut is a little bit the same as being the champion in Boston," Duplessis said. "We want to win trophies when they're on the table."



Graduate student guard Matt Balanc is averaging 18.4 points through 20 games this season.

Quinnipiac rises to the occasion in local battle with Fairfield, budding rivalry emerging between schools

By JAMES KASSAN
Staff Writer

Quinnipiac men's basketball faced off against a familiar foe — and in-state rival — Fairfield this past Sunday at Leo D. Mahoney Arena. With both teams residing in Connecticut, and the added factor of being a major conference matchup, victory seemed even more important than usual.

Postmarked as a clash of MAAC heavy-weights, the battle between the No. 1 Bobcats and No. 2 Stags showed all the signs of a rivalry to come. Both Fairfield and Quinnipiac played well and it came down to the wire. Graduate student guard Matt Balanc was the difference maker for the Bobcats, scoring the game-tying and go-ahead layups in a tight 66-64 victory.

"Both teams played their butts off, it's a natural rivalry because of the proximity of the two schools," Fairfield head coach Chris Casey said. "I don't know if there's a description for it other than both teams

came to play and played really hard. If you're a college basketball fan, that's a great game."

Each side played with high intensity, both defenses imposing their will in a fast-paced game.

The packed arena, filled with over 3,100 rabid fans, was apparent even on television. Fans arrived on campus way before tip-off to revel in the atmosphere.

"Before the game, I came out early and there were six little guys in third or fourth grade and it just brings me back to sneaking into St. John's games, trying to get a ride up to Fordham or Manhattan when I was a kid, and that's what this rivalry can do," Quinnipiac head coach Tom Pecora said.

The game was a back-and-forth battle, with each team trading baskets and many lead changes throughout.

Quinnipiac — first in the conference heading into the Sunday matchup — is off to its best start in over 40 years. With first

place on the line, the Bobcats held on to the No. 1 slot and earned their eighth-straight MAAC win.

A playoff-like atmosphere took over the arena on Sunday, filled with a mixed crowd of Stags fans as well as traveling Bobcats fans, eagerly rooting on their team to see who would be crowned the king of the rivalry. With both schools boasting an abundance of talent and off to a great start to the season, this game had a different feel than a regular college basketball game.

It's quite possible that these teams meet again in the MAAC Tournament in March. Both teams have gotten strong guard play this season, with Balanc and graduate student guard Savion Lewis emerging for Quinnipiac, and Fairfield's trio of senior Jalen Leach, redshirt senior Brycen Goodine and graduate student guard Caleb Fields stepping up for the Stags.

The Quinnipiac-Fairfield matchup has been a back-and-forth rivalry for some time

now. Last year, the season series was split, with Quinnipiac winning by double-digits at home, and Fairfield gaining the advantage in the second matchup on its home court.

"I've been coming to MAAC games since the '80s," Pecora said. "I have a lot of friends who have played here and saw a couple before the game. It's a great rivalry and it's great for the state of Connecticut."

In hockey, Quinnipiac's long-standing in-state rivalry with Yale is well known throughout Connecticut and beyond. If Sunday's game is any indication, a similar local feud is begin to brew on the court.

But before the teams shift their vision to a conference tournament Quinnipiac has another chance to face the Stags, this time in Hamden.

There are only a few weeks to wait for the next chapter in this story. Quinnipiac hosts Fairfield on Feb. 23 at 7 p.m.



TRIPP MENHALL/CHRONICLE

Quinnipiac erases two-goal deficit, delivers final punch in Connecticut Ice championship

By CAMERON LEVASSEUR
Sports Editor

HARTFORD — After hitting snooze on the proverbial alarm clock for the last week and a half of hockey, Quinnipiac finally woke up halfway through the second period of Saturday’s Connecticut Ice Tournament final against UConn. The Bobcats roared back from a two-goal deficit and took the lead 4-3 early in the third to reign supreme as tournament champions for the third year running.

“I love how we battled back from being down 3-1 and found a way to win,” head coach Rand Pecknold said. “It was a big one.”

Graduate student forward Zach Tupker notched the game-winner just 28 seconds into the final period, skating into the offensive zone and ripping a shot glove-side high past Huskies senior Ethan Haider to make the game 4-3 Bobcats.

For the 19 minutes and 32 seconds that followed Tupker’s goal, the score remained, but the intensity from both sides only continued to rise. Haider made several spectacular lunging stops to keep UConn within striking distance, while Quinnipiac senior netminder Vinny Duplessis put on a tournament MVP performance at the other, shutting the door on a Huskies team in desperation mode.

“I have a lot of trust in our defensemen,” Duplessis said. “A big part of our game is to stay tight in the slot ... the last couple of minutes I made a lot of saves, so I wasn’t really worried about it. I was pretty tight myself, kept my body tight, not letting anything out.”

The win was not only Quinnipiac’s third-straight title, but also its third-consecutive victory over UConn in the tournament final.

“They found a way to win it again, so I’ve got to give them credit,” UConn head coach Mike Cavanaugh said. “It was a heavyweight match ... and they got in one more punch than we did.”

But a lackluster first period effort put doubt in that outcome. The Bobcats struggled with the pressure UConn applied on their breakout, handing the Huskies a number of great chances off turnovers in the defensive zone.

Duplessis was up to the task on most of the Huskies’ chances, but even he eventually cracked under the high volume of quality looks. A seeing-eye shot from UConn graduate student defenseman Harrison Rees gave the tournament hosts the lead heading into the intermission.

A turnover forced by senior forward Travis Treloar behind the Huskies’ net set up freshman forward Mason Marcellus to momentarily tie the game for the Bobcats. But another

pair of Quinnipiac turnovers, this time at the offensive blue line, put UConn back in the driver’s seat shortly thereafter.

Just seconds into a Bobcat power play, graduate student defenseman Jayden Lee fumbled the puck into a breakaway for Huskies junior forward Chase Bradley, who beat Duplessis shorthanded to retake the lead.

Two minutes later, it was sophomore defenseman Charles-Alexis Legault with a blue line bobble that ended with a tap-in goal for UConn sophomore forward Matthew Wood at the far post.

Down 3-1 and poised for its third loss in four games, Quinnipiac flipped a switch. Under the gaze of over 6,400 fans at the XL Center, the Bobcats bought into the playoff atmosphere and began to play with fire.

They connected on more passes, won more puck battles and played with more energy than they have in weeks. Less than four minutes after UConn extended its lead to two, sophomore forward Victor Czerneckianair struck back for Quinnipiac and the chase was on.

“(Sophomore forwards Alex Power and Anthony Cipollone) did a good job of crashing the net,” Czerneckianair said. “I just floated one in there and it went in.”

Fifty-four seconds later, great puck movement on a zone entry left Treloar open for a

one-timer that he rocketed past Haider to tie the game at three.

“We want to create chaos and play fast and play at a pace,” Pecknold said. “I think it does wear teams down and teams start to make mistakes.”

Junior forward Cristophe Tellier appeared to have the go-ahead goal in the minutes that followed, but after a discussion between the officials it was ruled no goal due to a high stick without a review.

“It was a goal. And then it wasn’t a goal without reviewing it. So I’m really confused as to what happened,” Pecknold said. “I will say this though, (Jeremy) Tufts is an elite ref, I’m pretty sure he was in the Frozen Four last year with us, so he’s one of the better ones in the country.”

With a recharged offense thanks to some mid-game line shuffling, Tellier’s almost-goal ultimately didn’t play a factor in the final result, as Quinnipiac adds another title to its trophy case and leaves the state capital with momentum to build from.

“I think this was huge for us,” Pecknold said. “To win a championship in that atmosphere, UConn was playing great down like that. There’s just a lot of positives we can take out of tonight.”