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# Welcome to QUINNIPIAC



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**NEWS P.3: PROTEST FOR PRESERVATION**

Community members rally against the closure of Ireland’s Great Hunger Museum



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**OPINION P.4: COLLEYVILLE HOSTAGES**

Photography editor Jack Spiegel speaks out against current-day antisemitism in America



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**ARTS & LIFE P.6: BREAKING SILENCE**

Former Resident Assistant reveals grim moments of the position



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**SPORTS P.12: PRIVATE SECTOR TO SIDELINE**

How Quinnipiac men’s basketball head coach Baker Dunleavy is using his background to build a winning culture in Hamden

## Nurse anesthesia community questions Quinnipiac’s motive behind program’s closure

By **CHATWAN MONGKOL**  
Staff Writer

Nurse anesthesia students are facing an uncertain future after Quinnipiac University abruptly announced their program’s closure last year without a blueprint for what’s next.

Following the School of Nursing’s “careful analysis” of its offerings and how to best allocate its resources, it decided to begin a process to discontinue the nurse anesthesia program, according to an email the school’s Dean Lisa O’Connor sent to 43 students in June 2021.

After multiple failed attempts to schedule a meeting with the nursing school’s leadership to receive some clarification, second-year nurse anesthesia student Jasmeet Mahandru and other students asked the Connecticut Office of Higher Education for help.

The Chronicle obtained emails exchanged between July and August 2021 from the OHE through the Freedom of Information Act, which suggest that Quinnipiac

administration did not respond to students until after they wrote to the OHE.

Emily Bjornberg, OHE senior consultant, wrote an email to Quinnipiac Vice President for Academic Innovation and Effectiveness Annalisa Zinn after receiving student complaints asking her to contact Mahandru directly.

“I am hoping you can help me avoid a repeat of last time and try to nip this in the bud,” Bjornberg wrote.

Zinn later reached out to Mahandru, saying that the OHE informed her of the complaint and that she was pleased to answer questions and resolve any concerns.

“It is unfortunate it took the state of CT Office of Higher Education when someone could’ve done their job at QU and just responded to us,” Mahandru wrote to Zinn. “It took a (state) office to step in for a response but I’m grateful for their advocacy for the students in our program.”

In an interview with The Chronicle, Mahandru said another student in her class

filed a complaint with the OHE, and she contacted two Connecticut senators about her concerns before they directed her to the OHE. Now, she said she remains distrustful of Quinnipiac and the School of Nursing.

“It appears that there hasn’t been a lot of transparency between administration and our program,” Mahandru said. “They, not our directors, but the school itself has let, personally at least me, down.”

OHE Chief Academic Officer Sean Seepersad confirmed his office received complaints from students and has communicated with the university administration to assess the situation and ensure that students can graduate.

Mahandru described her experience with Quinnipiac, in an email to Zinn, as “overwhelming” because they had to deal with getting clarification from the university while taking care of their patients outside of the classroom.

“We’re upset, frustrated and tired,” Mahandru wrote. “Just because our program is closing, stop taking advantage of it. Because that is what it feels like.”

Mahandru told The Chronicle many people don’t know that nurse anesthesia students had to sacrifice a lot to be in the program, from quitting their jobs to working in intensive care units in hospitals when COVID-19 was at its peak last year.

The Chronicle reached out to multiple students in the program in recent months and has not received any responses.

Provost Debra Liebowitz told The Chronicle that the university met with students during the first week of September 2021 and the school had more answers to their questions.

“I don’t think it’s true that we haven’t been responsive,” Liebowitz said. “I think it is true that in the beginning, (we) did not have all the answers they wanted, that is true, and I understand why that was very hard.”

Liebowitz said the closure will not affect their education because the university is still committed to giving current students what they expected when they enrolled.

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See **NURSE ANESTHESIA** Page 2



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Hamden apartment complex fire impacts  
60 residents, including QU students

**By MELINA KHAN**  
Editor-in-Chief

After witnessing a fire tear through his apartment complex on Warner Street in Hamden Feb. 14, Quinnipiac University junior Tyler Woodward said the hardest part of the ordeal was yet to come.

The harrowing part came days later, Woodward said, when his insurance company sent him a spreadsheet to log the items he had lost in the blaze. All of his belongings, including a hat collection he had inherited from his grandfather and his roommate’s \$5,000 shoe collection, were now reduced to a handful of attributes on a spreadsheet line.

“Honestly, that hit me harder than the actual fire because I was one-by-one listing everything I lost,” said Woodward, a business analytics major. “When the fire was going on, there was maybe a portion of time where I thought I was going to have some things.”

The fire broke out at Woodward’s apartment complex at 42 Warner St. in Hamden Feb. 14, shortly after 7 p.m. Hamden Fire Chief Gary Merwede confirmed there were no injuries. A press release from the Office of the Mayor said 60 people were displaced as a result of the fire. A Feb. 23, press release from the Hamden Fire Department said the cause of the fire was found to be a mini freezer plugged into an extension cord within a pantry closet.

The town of Hamden offered the displaced residents emergency services, including CTtransit buses, American Red Cross services and vouchers for the Clarion Inn. The Keefe Community Center, which initially held the displaced residents during the aftermath of the fire, held a drive for household items for the residents. The Hamden Community Emergency Response Team announced Feb. 20, it would no longer be accepting donations.

The Quinnipiac University Bookstore on the Mount Carmel campus also held a donation drive for the fire victims. Cheryl Cartier, the bookstore’s manager, said she organized the drive along with Vince Contrucci, director of community service. As of Feb. 21, the store had collected six boxes of items to bring to the Keefe Community Center.

“I’m a lifelong Hamden resident, and I saw the fire in the news, and just really wanted to help and thought that it’d be a good idea to have the bookstore involved to try to collect some stuff for the families,” Cartier said. “I know Quinnipiac has a strong commitment to Hamden residents and the Keefe center especially ... there’s always better outreach when you elicit help from the community instead of doing it by yourself.”

Woodward and his girlfriend Elena Spangle, a sophomore international business major, said they had gone out for Valentine’s



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**A Hamden Fire Department press release said the cause of the fire was a mini freezer plugged into an extension cord in a pantry closet.**

Day and returned around 6:45 p.m., with no signs of fire. Less than 15 minutes later, they heard screaming coming from outside.

“We looked out the window, and on the snow, I saw the reflection of the flames,” Spangle said. “It was just orange.”

Realizing what was happening, Spangle, Woodward and his roommate Zach Wolansky, a student at Southern Connecticut State University, evacuated the building.

Once outside, Spangle said they saw a building several doors down from theirs in flames, with the fire spreading rapidly.

“The way that the apartments work, there’s one attic that goes across all of them,” Spangle said. “So it was already spreading, and it was just dark black smoke.”

Witnessing the fire escalating, Woodward said the building’s residents realized its severity.

“As soon as everybody realized that this wasn’t going away, the fire is just gonna continue to spread, our neighbors (were) knocking on doors, getting everybody out, making sure there were no animals inside of doors that were locked,” Woodward said. “The fire department was smashing in doors to get anybody, any life they could out of the building.”

Woodward said he had also gone back into the building to rescue his own pet.

“I immediately ran back inside, because our guinea pig was still in there,” Woodward said. “Looking back on it, things could have gone way worse.”

Even once they had evacuated, Woodward said he did not think he would lose all

of his belongings.

“When I first came out, I thought that that one part was going to catch on fire and it wasn’t going to spread,” Woodward said. “I was like, ‘OK, I won’t be sleeping here tonight, but my belongings will be safe.’ And 30 minutes later, that was not the case.”

With the loss of his apartment, Woodward moved home to Durham, Connecticut and has been commuting to Quinnipiac from there. He said the university’s Community, Assessment, Response and Evaluation Team has since been in touch with him and Spangle to provide them support.

Woodward and Spangle, who kept some of her things at the apartment, are now determining what will be covered by renter’s insurance.

“You never know with insurance or anything, but we did start a GoFundMe, which has been really helpful so far and I’m sure it will continue to be, so that’s giving me hope,” Woodward said.

The GoFundMe fundraising page to help Spangle, Woodward and his roommate has raised \$5,000 as of publication. However, Spangle said she worries more for the other families who have been displaced by the fire.

“I know that I’ll be fine and my boyfriend will be fine and his roommate will be fine, but I just feel bad for the families there because the socioeconomic status of a lot of those families is very different to ours,” Spangle said. “And we know that we have support systems but for a lot of those families, that place is their home and that’s all they have.”

**NURSE ANESTHESIA**  
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While the provost said the meeting with the nurse anesthesia students went well, Mahandru told The Chronicle she disagreed. She explained the leadership in the room did not seem happy when the students came well-researched and prepared to ask questions.

During the meeting, Mahandru said she thought people from the university had “no intention of answering our questions,” but they were there just to “show their face.”

“They don’t care about us, clearly evident by how unhappy the rest of the student body is at Quinnipiac, both graduate and undergraduate,” Mahandru said. “They want us to feel like this is a losing battle and to kind of keep our mouths shut and keep quiet

and just bow our heads down and graduate.”

Mahandru said a lawyer from Quinnipiac was also present at the meeting, whom she said attempted to talk over her when she asked questions.


“I cannot imagine why the school thought it would be appropriate to attempt to intimidate the students and bring their attorney, which also seems like they have something to hide or to cover,” Mahandru said.





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# Over 100, including Connecticut officials, protest Ireland’s Great Hunger Museum’s closure

By **NICOLE MCISAAC** and **CHATWAN MONGKOL**

With umbrellas in hands, over 100 people gathered on the streets of Hamden on a rainy Saturday sharing one goal — saving Ireland’s Great Hunger Museum.

“My heart is in the building, my blood is in the art,” said Frank McCarthy, former public safety officer who worked at the museum. “... I love the art, and I love what it represents. This isn’t fair.”

The rally on Oct. 30 2021, came after Quinnipiac University’s announcement of the museum’s closure that resulted in a community outcry. Over 100 people, some from the Committee to Save Ireland’s Great Hunger Museum, stood in front of the museum waving Irish flags, performing Irish music and dances, portraying street art, offering food and additional informational activities.

Hamden police patrolled the event. After rally-goers took photos in front of the museum’s entrance, officers instructed the group to stay off the property at Quinnipiac’s request.

Turlough McConnell, the museum’s former advisor, organized the protest. He said he wanted to make Quinnipiac aware that the closure was “one of the biggest public relations disasters” it has made.

“We’re very concerned that it shut down without any connection to the community,” McConnell said. “The community has come out today to say we wanted to be in that discussion.”

McConnell told The Chronicle that this rally was not an anti-Quinnipiac movement but rather was to voice reasons why the university should reconsider the decision.

“We’ve got bad university policy right here,” McConnell said. “We want to say ‘correct it, think about it, change your mind, be part of something positive.’”

Associate Vice President for Public Relations John Morgan said the university is not releasing any

statement in response to the protest.

The university shut down the museum because it generated 25% of its operational fund. President Judy Olian established a financial self-efficiency goal for the museum in 2019, and she said the goal was not accomplished over the past three years.

Lynn Bushnell, Quinnipiac’s former vice president of public affairs who argued against such financial goals, attended the rally. She thought the museum was too young to be financially sustainable as it opened in 2012.

“I think that it is, can and should be a huge resource for students,” Bushnell said. “... I just think there are so many ways it could have been developed, and I don’t think the effort was made to have that happen.”

Olivia Flynn, a sophomore nursing major who attended the rally, said she only learned of

the museum this year after being enrolled in an Irish studies course at Quinnipiac. After realizing the grasp the museum had on the community, she said “it’s a shame that it’s shut down.”

“I would have definitely made a visit, even a class visit,” Flynn said. “I’m hoping it gets reopened.”

Community members, including former Quinnipiac President John Lahey, said they are disappointed with the effort put forward to utilize the museum within the university’s community and the surrounding town of Hamden.

“The thing is that (President Olian’s) priorities are different from Dr. Lahey’s,” McCarthy said. “I don’t understand the board of directors and the board of trustees that the university has. I believe (it’s as if) none of them have come through the museum before the decision was made to shut it down.”

Connecticut Attorney General William Tong is looking into the closure, and Morgan told The Chronicle the university has been cooperative with the office.

“I can confirm we have an open and ongoing inquiry into this matter, but cannot comment beyond that,” said Elizabeth Benton, Tong’s spokesperson.

Sen. Richard Blumenthal, one of the event’s guest speakers who also served as Connecticut’s attorney general from 1991-2011, urged the university to reconsider the decision in efforts for Irish Americans and all of the people of Connecticut.

“This is a moral reckoning, it is a moral imperative,” Blumenthal said. “Put aside the legal inquiry that is ongoing. There is a moral obligation here to the people who worked hard for this museum, who contributed to it, who sacrificed to make it possible.”



**Turlough McConnell and his team organized the rally to echo why Quinnipiac should revisit its decision to close the museum.**

Blumenthal said that the museum is not just a part of Irish history, but instead a living part of American history. During his speech, he said “a great American university doesn’t walk away from a museum about Irish history.”

“Why would we walk away from educating people about discrimination and bigotry,” Blumenthal said. “It isn’t right.”

Whether or not this protest affects Quinnipiac’s reconsideration, the museum-saving committee is waiting for what Tong’s investigation could reveal.

“We feel at best Quinnipiac was sloppy in how it dealt with this,” McConnell said. “At worst, it could be criminal ... that they have taken works for a non-profit institute and museum and turned them into (its) own property without regard of those who gave them and for the purpose that they were given.”

Until then, Ireland’s Great Hunger Museum’s supporters mourn the loss of the museum and wait to see if their public objection to the closure will impact the decision.

# Quinnipiac fails to check in with victims of shuttle crash, students say

By **AIDAN SHEEDY** and **MELINA KHAN**

After a Quinnipiac University-affiliated shuttle crashed Dec. 5 2021, with several students onboard, the victims said they are disappointed by the administration’s lack of response.

Jenna Hill, a first-year occupational therapy major, Emma Zyk, a first-year biomedical science major, and two other Quinnipiac students boarded a university-affiliated shuttle at Union Station in New Haven around 7 p.m. The bus was headed to Quinnipiac. No one was injured in the accident.

Hill and Zyk said shortly after the shuttle driver began driving, she took a right turn from Union Avenue onto Church Street, entering a lane that was closed for construction. The road had an arrow board, which is an apparatus used to indicate to traffic where a lane is closed.

The driver, who the students said wore headphones at the time, crashed into the arrow board, leading to damage to all four windows on the right side of the shuttle. Three windows broke completely, while one shattered but remained in the original frame.

“I just remember seeing the cones and (seeing the driver) driving closer to the cone than the curb, which made me think she saw something too,” Zyk said. “I look down at my phone for one second, and all I hear is four quick noises of glass breaking.”

Hill and Zyk said the glass completely covered them and all of their belongings, but

no one on board sustained any severe injuries. They both said they later got minor cuts cleaning the glass shards off their possessions.

“I (was) panicking because I can feel it,” Zyk said. “I tried to get the glass out without cutting myself, (but) I cut my finger and so did (Hill).”

Shortly after the shuttle operator called 911, first responders arrived at the scene. The students said the officers took down their information while firefighters tried to help clean up the broken glass. All four students and the driver were examined by Emergency Medical Technicians. The university sent a new shuttle and driver for the students around 8 p.m.

When they arrived back at Quinnipiac, Hill and Zyk said public safety officers took photos of their student IDs. However, since this interaction with public safety officers, the pair said no one from the university has contacted either of them.

Associate Vice President for Public Relations John Morgan did not make Chief of Public Safety Tony Reyes available for comment and referred to the New Haven Police Department, who has not provided The Chronicle with any further information as of publication.

Administration also did not inform the student body of the accident. Many students were informed due to a post on the popular social media page Barstool Quinnipiac.

“Nothing, not even an email or a knock on our door asking how we are,” Hill said

of the university’s inaction. “I just thought Quinnipiac would do more.”

Zyk said she was also disappointed in the lack of communication from administrators.

“I’m not happy with (the response),” Zyk said. “Once those kids get on there, it’s Quinnipiac’s responsibility. Our lives are in your hands at that point.”

Both students said the incident was traumatic for them, resulting in anguish and sleepless nights.

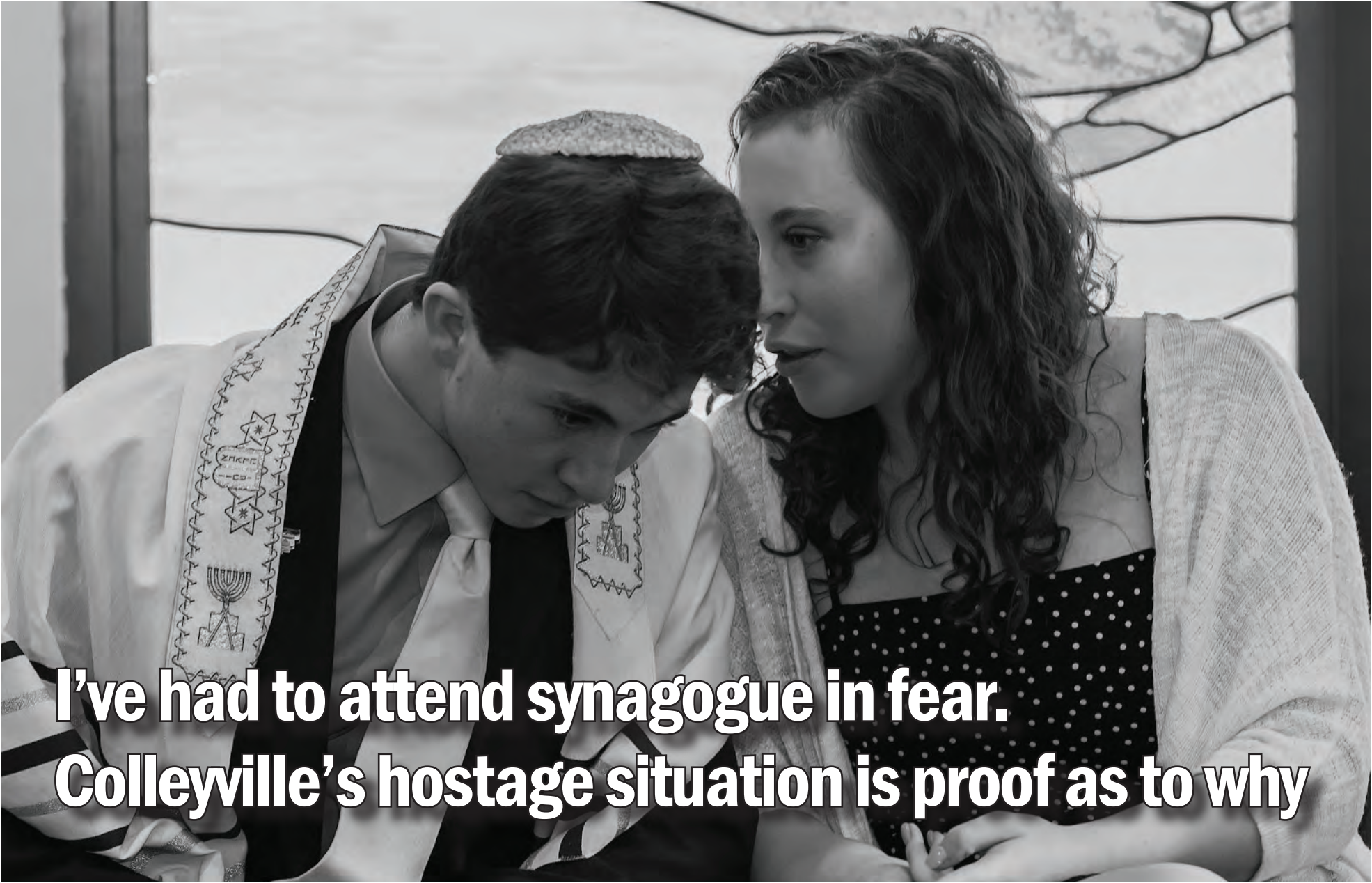
“We were shaken up,” Zyk said. “That night, I was nauseous, I was laying on the floor. I couldn’t get up. I was shaking. We didn’t sleep (Sunday or Monday) night.”



**All four windows on the right side of the university-affiliated shuttle shattered in the crash.**



# Opinion



Photography Editor Jack Spiegel with his sister, Charlotte, at Temple Sinai in Denver, Colorado.

PHOTO CONTRIBUTED BY JACK SPIEGEL

By JACK SPIEGEL  
Photography Editor

On Jan. 15, yet another act of extremism took place on the Sabbath at a synagogue in Colleyville, Texas. Four innocent men and women of Jewish faith left their homes expecting to share the Sabbath with other members of their kehila kedosha — Hebrew for holy community — and ended up spending their Shabbat as hostages.

Following the shootings at the Tree of Life synagogue in Pittsburgh and Chabad of Poway, California, I have found myself and others repeating the same sentiments: “My thoughts and prayers are with the Colleyville community,” “Check in on your Jewish friends” and “I am scared to attend synagogue.”

Contrary to some people’s beliefs, antisemitism did not magically disappear following the Holocaust. It is still alive and well today. The Anti Defamation League tracks antisemitic incidents and found that over 2,100 acts of assault, vandalism and harassment were reported in 2020, 12% higher than 2019.

Although an investigation is still needed to determine the hostage taker’s motive, no investigation is needed to determine the fear that Jews across the world have when attending services.

This bigoted man deliberately chose to enter the Jewish house of worship on the

Sabbath to torture four congregants for half a day. Many Jews are exercising caution every time they walk into temple. Where are the closest exits? Where can I hide in the event of an attack? Will our security be able to stop an armed individual from disrupting services?

Over the years, I have noticed an increased presence of armed security at my synagogue. It’s a place where I would rejoice with family and friends, spend hours on end in youth group and join my kehila kedosha in prayer on the high holidays. I have spent nights in my synagogue and been told by security to not leave the youth lounge out of fear for our safety.

I was confirmed holding a Torah that was desecrated in the Holocaust. Words, prayers and pages were torn out and destroyed. I will never forget holding that Torah for the first time, stunned by how light it was. I felt the missing pages and words. Just a few weeks later, during my confirmation service, I read from a separate Torah that survived the Holocaust, a powerful juxtaposition that I will carry with me for the rest of my life.

Rabbi Charlie Cytron-Walker was one of the four worshippers held hostage. He is known for his strong relationship with the Colleyville Muslim community. When speaking to the Fort-Worth Star Telegram, the president of the Islamic Center of Southlake, Texas, Jawaid Alam, said “[Cytron-Walker] and his family are considered part of the Muslim community, and he considers us part of the Jewish community. He has taught us how to live with people different from you and love each other.”

Interfaith and interracial relationships like the one described by Alam are needed now more than ever. During Martin Luther King Jr. weekend an annual interfaith service is held in my hometown of Denver, Colorado. Leaders of the Denver area African American Ministerial Alliance, and Jewish and Muslim clergy join hand-in-hand, praying for a year of prosperity.

Antisemitism, racism and islamophobia plague our nation and society. Leaders of these faith groups have long stood together fighting against hatred for one another. Now

is the time that those who are not in leadership positions must stand up against antisemitism. Whether it is going out of your way to attend a Shabbat service, lobbying elected officials to take a stronger stand against antisemitism or having a conversation with your Jewish peers to further understand their hardships, more action is needed.

It was not that long ago when people of different races and backgrounds across the U.S. and the world at large took to the streets to stand up against the injustices committed against Black Americans in the summer of 2020. We are also living in a time where antisemitic incidents and attacks are at an all-time high. Those same people who took to the streets in the Black Lives Matter Protests must also take action in response to injustices committed against those part of the Jewish faith. Antisemitism is an issue that affects all people, not just Jews.

I am tired of scrolling through my Instagram feed not seeing one non-Jewish person post following these incidents. I am tired of people sympathizing with neo-Nazis and extremists. I am tired of going to synagogue in fear.

I remain hopeful, though, following this incident. MSNBC host Mehdi Hasan, a Muslim, used a segment of his Jan. 16 show to stand in solidarity with Jews around the world. Hasan, speaking to Cytron-Walker and his Jewish audience, said, “You are not alone. We have your back. And in this moment of fear, hate, and violence, you can count on the rest of us.” I hope that Hasan’s words resonate with all – secular and non-secular. I hope that everyone really does have our back.

I will continue to live my life as a proud Jew and attend temple with pride. I encourage you to make an effort to build interfaith relationships, and I plead with you to make an effort to condemn antisemitism so it can end.



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED BY JACK SPIEGEL

Maytham Alshadood (left), a Muslim, Photography Editor Jack Spiegel (center), a Jew, and Rep. Jason Crow (right), a Christian, during Martin Luther King Jr. Day of service in Aurora, Colorado.

**“I am tired of people sympathizing with neo-Nazis and extremists. I am tired of going to synagogue in fear.”**

**– Jack Spiegel**  
**PHOTOGRAPHY EDITOR**



# Opinion

## Let dead artists rest in peace

**By MICHAEL LAROCCA**  
Opinion Editor

Listening to music is comparable to drinking water to me. In turn, I tend to care about the artists I listen to the most. Right now, my audial faucet has been dispensing plenty of the late Chicago rapper, Juice WRLD.

Listening to Juice WRLD’s music made me reflect on the considerable number of artists, especially in the hip-hop genre, that we have lost over the past half-decade. But with the way the industry moves, you would never know they left us.

From month to month, we hear too much about pieces of music coming from the estates of artists who have passed away. They mostly come in the form of short features on other artists’ music, but the real problems come in the form of larger projects.

Posthumous albums, which are produced after an artist’s death, have been one of the bigger trends in the music industry over the past several years. The inherent concept of them has good heart behind it, with them traditionally being released as a way for the artist to give a final goodbye to their fans from beyond the grave. However, the climate of the modern music industry has caused this definition to become blurred beyond recognition.

I first got into Juice WRLD’s music last summer after the release of his first posthumous album, “Legends Never Die.” The album itself was critically praised at the time, and for my first time listening to his music, I was thoroughly impressed. The more I listened to the record and the rest of his music, though, the more I began to wish I was listening to tracks that Juice WRLD had actually been present for the completion of.

To my knowledge, there are four late artists since

2018 who have had posthumous albums released that have gained significant traction: Mac Miller, Pop Smoke, XXXTentacion and the aforementioned Juice WRLD.

For the majority of these artists, their first posthumous release was seen positively in the eyes of the public. But once the artists’ former studios decided to come out with more material after that initial release, that is when they go from honoring the artist, to attempting to profit off their life.

When a posthumous album is released, it basically has a coin-flip chance of being good or bad.

Albums like Juice WRLD’s “Legends Never Die” and Mac Miller’s “Circles” both found the perfect balance of quality of work and care put in, leading to their deserved critical praise. On the other hand, Pop Smoke’s “Faith” and XXXTentacion’s “Bad Vibes Forever” came off as poorly crafted exploits of their original artist’s talent, hijacking their legacies in order to bring in major guaranteed revenue.

When more music is released, fans of these artists — including myself — were able to see

the productions for what they are, absolutely bare. In both Pop Smoke and XXXTentacion’s second posthumous albums, the main artists are almost nowhere to be seen. The thinning amount of content left in their catalogs became more evident as we saw the majority of each album’s runtime be occupied by swarms of features from fellow artists.

According to HipHopNumbers, Pop Smoke accounted for 63% of the lyrics on “Faith,” which was down from 68% on “Shoot for the Stars, Aim for the Moon,” a posthumous album that contained 14 features in 18 tracks.

XXXTentacion’s river of unreleased music ran dry a long time ago. His final appearance on a song most likely came in August 2021 when he had a verse on Trippie Redd’s song “Danny Phantom,” the verse itself being the focal point of the track.

Pop Smoke was a victim of this as well. When talking about the release of “Faith” on Aug. 17 2021, Pop Smoke’s friend, Mike Dee, said: “In my opinion, instead of dropping all 30 songs, I would have waited. Maybe 10 now, 10 the next year, that way his name would stay

alive, instead of dropping it all at one time ... I’m guessing this is it, what he had left in the vault, this is the end.”

Hearing stories like this are what makes me want to dislike posthumous releases as a whole. Milking an artist for everything they left behind, just to make more money, is unethical to the highest degree.

A single posthumous release, like what we’ve seen with Juice WRLD and Mac Miller, is the only moral way to go in these situations. Even then, the managers for both artists have stated publicly that there are more posthumous releases on the way for their clients, undoing the closure they had given the fans previously.

Even the artists of today feel the same about this component of the industry.

R&B artist and rapper Anderson .Paak showed off a tattoo in August 2021 that simply stated, “When I’m gone, please don’t release any posthumous albums or songs with my name attached. Those were just demos and never intended to be heard by the public.”

None of these artists need to have this much released after their death. Each of them,

with the possible exception of Pop Smoke, have done enough for their legacies while they were alive for people to be satisfied with what is available to them. Juice WRLD’s second studio album, “Death Race for Love,” is one of my favorite albums of all time. I would be fine if I could only listen to that album for the rest of my life.

Posthumous music is at its best and most warranted when it is released with the same level of care and attention that the actual artist would have used if they were still alive. It loses its impact when it is released recklessly and in abundance. At that point, if managers don’t know when to stop releasing the music, then they shouldn’t release it at all.



ILLUSTRATION BY CONNOR LAWLESS

## Bobcat Buzz

Appreciate shuttle drivers more



ILLUSTRATION BY CONNOR LAWLESS

**By EMILY FLAMME**  
Staff Writer

Students at Quinnipiac University complain about many things such as dining and parking. Perhaps the most notorious service on campus is the shuttles.

People often whine about the fact that the shuttles arrive late or not at all. And since my time at Quinnipiac began in 2019, I’ve had my fair share of poor shuttle experiences. However, I had an experience last week that has made me appreciate the shuttle system more than ever.

I live on York Hill campus, which means I have to use the shuttles much more frequently than in past years. Although the spring semester has just started, I have had nothing but great experiences. So far, I have waited less than 10 minutes for every shuttle trip I’ve taken, but the positive experiences I’ve had are not just about timeliness.

Just last week, when I was getting off the shuttle before my 8 a.m. class,

my cochlear implants fell off.

Cochlear implants are a hearing device that connect to my head magnetically and give me 100% of my hearing. I am not sure why they came off my head, but they hit the pavement as my foot came off the last step of the shuttle.

This happens often, so I know to remain calm. I immediately found my right cochlear implant, put it on and began my search for the left one. The rest of the students got off the shuttle and I prayed that no one stepped on it. I surveyed the area with no luck. I wondered if it stayed on the shuttle, so I approached the doors and the driver opened them for me. He asked if everything was OK, and I explained my situation.

He practically sprung out of his seat to help me. He looked up and down the bus and around the stairs to no avail before getting off the bus to search around on the pavement and walkway.

At one point, I turned around to

see him crawling under the shuttle to look for it. After another two minutes of looking, he found it. I thanked him profusely and said how I couldn’t believe he was so active in helping me.

“I gotta help my kids however I can,” he said.

I wish I got his name, but his kindness will not go unnoticed, hence why I am writing this story. This is why I appreciate the shuttle services. They want to help the students who utilize the services every day. I’ve had several drivers ask if anyone needs to get to the Theatre Arts center, so they know to go there first and get the students to class on time. Other times they’ll stop in between a shuttle stop to let on a student who was running late.

Despite the thoughtfulness these drivers express, students will still complain. Next time the shuttle runs a couple minutes late, try to remember the driver may have just been helping a girl find her hearing device.





DANIEL PASSAPERA/CHRONICLE

# Arts & Life

## 'I DON'T THINK THAT I CAN DO THIS ANYMORE'

### A former RA breaks the silence about mental health and the struggles associated with the position

By **DANIEL PASSAPERA**  
Multimedia Editor

Imagine responding to an incident involving self-harm and you can't relate to, reassure or connect with the person. Your title is to "provide personal and individual assistance to each student and (you) are responsible for the well-being of the unit," but this situation isn't in the job description. It's simple, right? Let the professionals step in and take control of the situation. However, the gap between suffering and assistance is traumatic for everyone in the room. This is what many Resident Assistants across the country encounter while on the job. The mental toll the position brings leaves its mark on students, including here at Quinnipiac University. College campuses have experienced increases of 40% or more in scenarios involving student alcohol abuse, drug use and instances of self-harm according to a 2014 study on RA self-efficacy. All examples of which Quinnipiac graduate student Mahlet Sugebo encountered in her first weeks as a sophomore RA in fall 2019. "No matter how thorough the training, it doesn't really mentally prepare you for the weight of the job," Sugebo said. Immediately put to the test on her first night, Sugebo was faced with a student experiencing a drug-induced asthma attack. She said handling a situation like this wasn't something she was accustomed to, and that she was "shaken to the core." Neither is what she would witness weeks later.



DANIEL PASSAPERA/CHRONICLE

**Mahlet Sugebo, a public relations graduate student and former resident assistant, struggled to cope with the harsh reality of being an RA.**

Responding to an incident of self-harm, Sugebo witnessed the struggle of a mental-health crisis but couldn't react, restricting her emotions until a professional arrived. RAs are not allowed to directly intervene due to the risk of the student developing an emotional attachment. "I wish I could have sat down with the person and talked to them from a personal level," Sugebo said. "But at the same time, I'm like 'how do I stop myself from having this very human reaction to want to just go and give them a hug.'"

In a position based on peer-to-peer connections, Sugebo ran into barriers finding her own connection with fellow RAs. It was hard to describe what transpired and the emotions that followed her after the incident. She was one of two RAs of color in her unit and felt a general "discomfort" disclosing any personal information that the other RAs "won't understand."

"That night I remember, going back to my room and I'll be like, 'OK, I don't think that I can do this anymore,'" Sugebo said. Given the stressful situations RAs encounter they are "particularly susceptible to experiencing a lower mental health status, or developing a mental illness," according to a 2015 research project based on the mental health of college leaders and resident assistants.

Sugebo served two semesters as an RA, not returning after spring 2020. Many RAs like Sugebo leave their positions due to those stressors affecting their mental health. However, for some, witnessing these types of crisis situations has mental repercussions that can be prolonged if RAs experienced it themselves. "They're going to develop something like post-traumatic stress disorder," said Clorinda Velez, associate professor of psychology. "It might bring up other difficulties that you've had or you just already had to struggle with some really significant events in your life."

Stressors are not limited to what you observe on the job but the time crunch as well, balancing being a student yourself while being responsible for up to 70 students. In an accelerated program, on top of the rigorous commitment to being an RA, Sugebo felt as if she had no time for the true college

experience — and she wasn't alone. "You're going to talk to people about things that are going on in your life and there were times, where I'd say to my friends like 'I'm sorry, I'm really tired,'" said a former RA who requested to remain anonymous for personal reasons. "I'm sorry I'm really out of it, I was up until 4 a.m. last night," and then naturally they'd be like, 'why?'"

Sugebo isn't the only RA at Quinnipiac to leave due to the mental toll the position can entail. "I know there are a lot of RAs that I work with that had really, really stressful situations that took a toll on their mental health," said a current RA who also wishes to be anonymous for job security. "Some of them even left being a RA because, I guess they didn't know that could've happened to them."

Despite RAs receiving eight to nine hours of mental health training and certification for 15 weeks in a semester, there are resources available on-campus for those who seek further assistance. However, there are currently seven full-time and no part-time counselors as Director of Counseling Services Ariela Reder told The Chronicle. With an enrollment total of nearly 9,800 students, the ratio is 1,400 students to one counselor.

Sugebo was able to receive help from Counseling Services, but stressing self-care as an RA, or in general, is equally important. "Sometimes you need to take a step back and recognize that self-care matters, that we have to sleep well, we have to eat well, we have to take care of ourselves," Velez said. "You aren't ever going to be perfect — that is just not a possibility — and so taking time to say you know rest matters too."

Two years later, Sugebo is pursuing a master's degree in public relations. After leaving her position as an RA she has seen significant improvements in her mental health. "I actually had time to take care of myself in the time I used to spend doing work for Residential Life, which felt great," Sugebo said. "I was no longer getting exposed to stressful incidents."

In what is advertised as a financial incentive for tuition assistance with the ability to help others, there's a lot beneath the surface people don't normally see — the mental toll. "I thought that the free room-and-board would be worth it, but I had to remind myself that I'm not going to college to be an RA but to get an education," Sugebo said.

The Chronicle reached out to Residential Life but did not receive a comment before publication. It's not easy being a college student, juggling perfection, extracurriculars and with the added stressor of COVID-19, it can be especially hard. If you or anyone you know is going through a tough time, there are resources available within Quinnipiac's Counseling Services. There are outside resources available through the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration or the Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-TALK (8255).

*Sugebo wrote four articles for The Chronicle from 2019-21*



# 'HE'S A ROCK STAR'

## QU student amazes crowd with his Vegas-bound magic tricks

By **XAVIER CULLEN**  
Staff Writer

Most businesses need an owner, CEO and a full staff of workers. TJ Salta just needs a deck of cards.

Salta, a senior 3+1 entrepreneurship major at Quinnipiac University, has been making magic since he was in high school. Inspired by Shin Lim and David Blaine, Salta said he likes the “seductive” side of magic, especially close-up and on-the- street performances.

His style was why the Rocky Top Student Center was packed with family, students, professors and fans coming to see Salta perform April 1, before he took his talents to Cirque du Soleil’s Mad Apple show in Las Vegas, Nevada.

Salta started his act by handing out slips of paper to dozens of audience members, telling them to write something they would bring to a party. After collecting them in a box, he had two random people each select a slip. The first slip chosen said “condom” to the dismay of Salta and laughs of the crowd. The second was a much more family-friendly word: “piñata.”

Salta then picked up a large gift bag, pulled out a piñata and shocked the crowd.

After putting both to the side, Salta riffled through a deck of cards and had one viewer tell him when to stop. Revealing the chosen queen of spades to only the audience, Salta put

it back into the deck. As he attempted to find the card, he turned the entire deck’s back from blue to red — except for the queen of spades.

The audience gasped and cheered, but nobody was prepared for when Salta turned every card blank with just the wave of his hand. Every trick looked so effortless for Salta, but that didn’t come easy.

“When I started, it could be six to eight hours a day (of practice),” Salta said. “Now, because it’s in my blood and I don’t have a choice to do it, it’s more the creative side ... Especially with the internet out there, how can I create tricks that no one can find online?”

But the best was yet to come in the show, as Salta had one guest draw an “X” on the queen of spades, and seemingly burned it to thin air. The magician went to the llama-shaped piñata, picked up a bat and handed it to a selected guest, Andrew Constantouris, a business administration graduate student.

With one homerun swing, Constantouris decapitated the piñata, almost hitting a front-row spectator with the headless body. “I was hitting that thing as hard as I can,” Constantouris said.

“But I knew something was in there.”

As Salta looked down at the candy guts of the piñata, one thing shined bright among the lollipops. It was a condom,

still in its wrapping, just like the slip from before said. The crowd went bananas. But when Constantouris ripped open the wrapper to reveal the marked queen of spades, the ensuing cheers could probably be heard from the Mount Carmel campus.

“It was just mind-blowing,” Constantouris said. “I’m really happy for (Salta). Just the environment here, everyone’s supporting him. It’s so cool that one of our Quinnipiac students gets a chance to do this ... He’s a rock star.”

After a couple more tricks, Salta walked into On The Rocks with a deck of cards to perform up-close magic with bar patrons. That day was the amalgamation of years of practice, and nobody was more proud of Salta’s progress than his parents, Liza and Tom Salta, who saw him perform.

“We both have an overwhelming sense of pride, of course,” Tom Salta said. “It’s



CONNOR LAWLESS/CHRONICLE

**TJ Salta demonstrated his magical talents at the Rocky Top Student Center on April 1.**

surreal in a way ... Now we’re standing here and our son is up there. Not only is he graduating, but he’s going to Vegas, and all these people are here to see him.”

The pressure of the spotlight and schoolwork has been a lot for TJ Salta, but he said his parents, peers and professors have made his dreams easier to obtain.

“It’s a lot to juggle,” TJ Salta said. “As you saw the support, the network. Just seeing people in this program and in this school having that same mindset of doing something they love, that’s kind of pushed me and given me that hope that I’m not alone.”

As TJ Salta leaves campus to join the rest of the Cirque du Soleil crew, he’ll be studying remotely. He lived just 40 miles away from home while at Quinnipiac, so his parents are naturally worried about how he’ll handle being 2,600 miles west.

“As a mom, I have some concerns with the whole atmosphere (in Las Vegas), and there’s a lot of things out of his control,” Liza Salta said. “But I know he’s with a good company ... and he’s got one of the top managers out there, so I feel comfortable with that. But, you know-”

“But we’re still parents, right?” Tom Salta said. However, TJ Salta said he’s ready for whatever Vegas throws at him, even if it’ll be a bumpy road.

“Obviously, I’m (an independent) college student,” TJ Salta said. “But I’m dependent financially, and I have a home at home with my parents. So dropping all of that at once, it’s not really something I’m being eased into. I’m being thrown in the water. It’s exciting, but it’s very overwhelming. I’m just



CONNOR LAWLESS/CHRONICLE

**Quinnipiac senior TJ Salta is taking his magical talents to Las Vegas, Nevada, with the famed Cirque du Soleil.**

# THE BOOK OF BOBA FETT

## A dismal example of wasted potential

By **JACK MUSCATELLO**  
Associate Multimedia Editor

The finale of “The Book of Boba Fett” was released on Feb. 9, 2022 on Disney+ after a tumultuous seven-part journey. But the final episode wraps up what has become a fundamentally broken return to glory for the beloved “Star Wars” icon.

Disney captured lightning in a bottle three years ago with the first season of “The Mandalorian.” The divisive movie sequel trilogy had erased much of the excitement surrounding the intellectual property and hopes for a healthy rivalry with Marvel collapsed following the disappointing box office returns for “Rise of Skywalker.” The jump to online streaming in November 2019 proved to be a fitting extension for the Star Wars canon, as the relaxed pace of weekly episodes allowed a smaller story to take shape gradually.

The streaming giant followed up their initial success with a look at the life of Boba Fett after his death in “Return of the Jedi.” For the uninitiated, the famed bounty hunter comically fell into the jaws of an old space worm, named the “sarlacc,” during the opening act of the 1983 film. The collective dismay from fans kickstarted the idea that he actually survived his infamous demise, and several novels and comic books explored this possibility in great detail.

With Fett’s surprise appearance in the second season of “The Mandalorian,” however, Disney rightfully followed up with an official backstory for the character. The first episode provided a visually striking look at his dramatic escape from the creature, complete with a race against time and a use of his signature flamethrower.

But the positive attributes of this concept largely end after this sequence. The show explores several facets of his life beyond this point, but does so in the most frustrating way possible.

The series initially splits its storyline between flashbacks and the present day. The opening episodes juggled Fett’s early efforts to heal himself, as well as his pursuit to become a leader on the planet Tatooine, but the editing fails this back-and-forth flow. Both sections are not layered evenly throughout each chapter, and this hopscotch between timelines creates a confusing disconnect.

However, a dramatic shift in “Chapter Five” further complicates everything. A blaring musical cue in the final moments of “Chapter Four” gives way to a violent return for the Mandalorian himself, also known as Din Djarin. But if the intense opening isn’t enough, the entire fifth installment plays like the beginning of the familiar hero’s third season.

Djarin receives a lesson about the strict tradition of Mandalorian culture, travels to Tatooine and makes a plan to visit his old friend “Baby Yoda,” now referred to as Grogu. Some impressive action beats and camera tricks from director Bryce Dallas Howard complement this new storyline nicely, and the thrills throughout the episode mark the first moments of genuine excitement in the show.

But this is a bizarre deviation for an already convoluted season of blockbuster television, and the random pivots only grow more intense.

“Chapter Six” quickly ushers in a surprising array of cameos and familiar faces, along with a completely new location. This is abundantly satisfying as a devoted fan of the franchise. The developments throughout this entire hour are completely devoted to scratching the nostalgia itch, and all of the technical achievements on display are truly a sight to behold.

But it is nearly impossible to appreciate all this episode has to offer when Fett is given little more than a glimpse in the opening scene. By this point, the show is less engaging and fundamentally boring when he is directly involved in the story. The stakes surrounding him are low, his villains are weak and his central plotline is stretched to its absolute limits. This is a complete failure on behalf of the screenwriting throughout, and an unwelcome reminder of Disney’s botched work on the sequels.

As the finale begins, all of the clutter begins to boil over. Director Robert Rodriguez’s outlandish vision culminates in a mess of plastic CGI, choppy action and jumbled character resolutions. Though the performances are all solid, the dialogue resorts to tired cliches and meaningless quips, reducing much of the emotional payoff to a glorified shrug.

As is the unfortunate theme with this series, Djarin receives a far more resounding send-off than Fett. The Mandalorian is

actually the last character we see before Ludwig Goransson’s theme erupts over the credits. This supersedes Fett’s final accomplishments, which would be much stronger if given more time. For a show supposedly devoted to analyzing the bounty hunter’s psyche, the audience is given almost nothing to latch onto, either emotionally or thematically.

These faults cripple Fett’s ability to exist outside of his historic archetype. His first appearances decades ago were short and quiet. His lack of dialogue was enticing and his refined behavior made him a respected nemesis. Possibilities for him to grow as a three-dimensional person during this series were virtually endless, especially given the boundless universe of “Star Wars.”

Now, the show has reduced him to just another old man. Any potential for him to become a nuanced anti-hero, underground criminal or wise mentor has been mangled, which makes it feel like the show has accomplished nothing.

“The Book of Boba Fett” is a hulking missed opportunity. The series tries its best to satisfy as many fans as possible, but manages only to corrupt the appeal of a classic figure. Though the outcome of the finale is tiny when compared to the galactic adventures of Luke Skywalker, the promise of a small-scale, character-driven adventure has been failed by a creative team blinded by the past glory of this timeless fantasy saga.



ILLUSTRATION BY SHAVONNE CHIN



# LONG-DISTANCE RELATIONSHIPS DON'T HAVE TO FEEL FAR APART

By KATIE LANGLEY  
News Editor

362 miles.

That’s the distance separating me and my long term partner, a student at McGill University in Montréal, Québec. That’s not to mention an international border and a pandemic between us.

Apart from the tedious six-hour road trip, travel restrictions are constantly in flux between countries. Until recently, travelers were required to get a PCR COVID-19 test within 72 hours of arrival to enter Canada from the U.S., which was often expensive and hard to come by.

Despite this challenge, my friends know me to spontaneously drive to a different country on the weekends to see my girlfriend when the daily stress of college gets too overwhelming.

I won’t tell you it’s not difficult; it’s hard feeling that the person who knows you better than anyone else is far away. I often feel like I’m missing out on her life, our lives together – things as mundane as having coffee together in the morning or movie nights not separated by a FaceTime screen.

Due to the ever-changing reality of COVID-19 and us both being full-time college students with responsibilities like tests, work and extracurriculars, it can be months between cross-border visits.

According to Dating at a Distance, as many as 75% of college students have been in a long-distance relationship at some point considering it’s not uncommon for students to decide to go out-of-state or out-of-country for school.

There is hope. Refinery29 reported that more than half of long distance relationships stick for the long term, and distance has no correlation to relationship quality or levels of intimacy, satisfaction and trust. A long-distance relationship can be just as strong as any other.

But it doesn’t come without effort. If you value your relationship, you will put in the work despite the distance. With so many couples forced apart by school, work and the pandemic, it’s important to find ways to feel connected to your partner every day. Here are a few that I’ve found helpful.



ILLUSTRATION BY EMMA ROGEL

### 1. Cyber-romance

FaceTime. Skype. Zoom. In this age, there is a plethora of web resources for nightly talks and online date nights.

Aside from daily debriefs about our days, my partner and I also video call to help sustain a sense of normality. Whether it's a casual study session, a comfy movie night or an intimate cyber date, the internet can help make separate feel less isolated. We love Teleparty and the Disney+ Groupwatch function for watching shows and movies together.

A date can be two people in two different countries watching “High School Musical 3: Senior Year” together or reading each other BuzzFeed quizzes to find out what “Schitt’s Creek” character you are. Finding something that makes you both laugh won’t necessarily fill the void of your loved one,

but it will help to make the distance a little less difficult.

**2. Look to the future, but don’t neglect the present**

When you miss someone, it’s easy to get caught up in thinking about how much you can’t wait to be in their space. I often catch myself thinking "Everything would be better if my partner was here." But basing your happiness or mental health on one factor is a slippery slope that can lead to disappointment. Instead, talk about your future life together; getting a cat, coming home to each other, being an arms-length from the one you love. However, don’t forget to also support each other’s individual lives, dreams and aspirations.

### 3. Little acts of kindness

My partner and I send letters to each other like we’re away at war in the 1800s. If you’ve ever received a surprise message in the mail, you know how it can make your day just a little bit brighter. We can’t shy away from being sappy and lovey-dovey when we’re over 300 miles away. Some of the best things don’t cost money; I make playlists for her all the time, and we use the NoteIt app to leave each other pictures and notes on our phones’ home screens.

If you feel like splurging on your long-distance beau, try sending them a stuffed buddy through SendAFriend or a customizable care package from Happy Box. Something as small as messaging your partner compliments or things that made you think of them throughout the day can help them feel important and cared for.

Despite what society may tell us, long-distance relationships are survivable, and healthy partnerships are worth it — no matter the distance. When it comes to your private relationship, no one but you and your partner can tell you how to make it fulfilling. So whether you’re a world away from them or your partner is sitting right next to you, do something kind for them today.

# SIZE, DOES IT MATTER?

By NEHA SEENARINE  
Arts & Life Editor

The least of my concerns is what a man is packing underneath his pants. If you think I’m going to whip out a measuring tape, you got it all wrong.

Penis. It’s a tough word to bring up in a conversation. I’m sure it’s in the forbidden topics along with sharing your social security number and airing out your medical records. Not many people want to talk about the little guy, at least in broad daylight.

I understand why most people feel uncomfortable talking about male genitalia. It’s not the most attractive body part and it’s never the best conversation starter. However, when “penis” does enter the chat, it’s usually about one thing — size.

People are oddly curious about penis size. It seems to promote a macho attitude and a high success rate in the bedroom. Individuals might find interest in having an ideal size when searching for a partner. Meanwhile, men may worry if their body is not good enough and if they were cursed with bad genetics.

Does size matter? No, not really.

The average erect penis size is around 5 inches in the U.S., according to a study by psychologist Bruce M. King. The results from men were self-reported, “researchers are rarely able to verify self-reported information with factual data, but there is evidence that social desirability influences some men’s self-reports of penis size.” In this case, the average size could be a bit smaller.

We often associate bigger with better and that’s not true at all. For example, when I order a burger at a restaurant, I’m disappointed when I can’t lift it with my two hands. It’s too tall and I’m furious when the toppings start to fall out.

It doesn’t surprise me that men would lie about their penis sizes. I’ve noticed men tend to bump up their height, whether it’s on a dating app or their driver’s licenses. There is a stigma that men have to be large and masculine, but people sometimes forget that men have feelings too. It’s

not always easy to keep up a certain physique and worrying about their private parts is just another stressor.

The correlation between size and achieving sexual excellence is beyond me. Just because you have a wand doesn’t mean you have the magic touch. People have different versions of what intimacy means to them, so relying on size doesn’t call for a good time.

X-ray vision is a made-up skill, and no one is hypothesizing how large some guy might be. Sometimes we forget that the sexiest character trait is personality. Beyond physical appearance, we’re attracted to the way a person acts. Someone can have the prettiest face in the room, but the most disgusting personality. I can guarantee you wouldn’t want to wake up next to them.

In reality, who’s asking? I could not remember a time when asking about size was an icebreaker question.

Honestly, if someone told me they had a monster truck underneath their boxers, I’d be embarrassed for them.

I’ve picked up on people who tend to brag about the things they don’t have. I remember seeing an Instagram post



ILLUSTRATION BY AMANDA RIHA

about a woman that had a Louis Vuitton bag without cash in it. People will tell you what they think you want to hear. They want to shape themselves in the way they want to be perceived. If a man is talking about their big size within your first few conversations with them, it’s a bluff.



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CONNOR LAWLESS/CHRONICLE

# Villanova, Wall Street and culture

## Why QU men’s basketball head coach Baker Dunleavy is entrusted with a team that needs to be ‘built back up’

By **TOYLOY BROWN III**  
Staff Writer

Winning sports programs do not appear out of thin air. They are developed behind closed doors and nurtured over time. The Quinnipiac men’s basketball team has aspirations of becoming a winning program, and head coach Baker Dunleavy is tasked with turning this hope into a reality.

Dunleavy played at Villanova from 2004-06 and started his head coaching career at Quinnipiac during the 2017-18 season after being on the coaching staff at his alma mater. Going into his fifth year as a Bobcat, he only has a single winning season, 16-15 in 2018-19. Last year during the pandemic-shortened season, the Bobcats finished 9-13 and lost in the first round of the MAAC tournament to eventual conference champion Iona.

Dunleavy’s record through four years stands at 52-64.

Do you know who had an eerily similar first four seasons as a coach? Dunleavy’s former head coach and 2021 Basketball Hall of Fame inductee Jay Wright. The renowned coach was 50-63 through four years at Hofstra University.

“Number one, I don’t think either of us would be advertising that,” Dunleavy said, chuckling before responding. “I think Hofstra was, as well as Quinnipiac, both jobs that needed to be built back up and so that’s reflected in what happens the first few years. But we want to win every game and we’re not a program that’s proud of that, that winning percentage.”

The process of going from a developing team to a contending one is not quick nor easy for most coaches. Creating a winner takes talent, as well as — every coach’s favorite word — culture.

“If you give coaches a platform to talk about the word ‘culture,’ they could go on for hours,” Dunleavy said. “The biggest thing for us is when we talk about attitude, which is the main word we use in our program. It’s really about response. When things are going against us, we have the best response of anybody in our league and anybody we’ll play against.”

Graduate student forward Jacob Rigoni, the Bobcats’ leading scorer from last year with 11.8 points per game, started his career at Quinnipiac the same year Dunleavy began coaching. He’s been familiar with Dunleavy’s philosophy of staying even-keeled from day one.

“That’s the foundation of this program,” Rigoni said. “When plays don’t go our way, we come together and regroup and we make the next play, and we know that’s the most important one. So, I think he’s done a great job instilling that, and guys really bought into that idea.”

The culture Dunleavy is building with the Bobcats is one that he derived from his time with the Wildcats.

“For me, that is something that I learned from coach Wright as far as attitude, and all the things that go along with it,” Dunleavy said. “I was very careful when I came here to Quinnipiac, and our staff got started, not to just mimic but to do the things ... that I believe in wholeheartedly and ... our players at this level could execute.”

When Dunleavy was with Villanova, Wright named him director of basketball operations in 2010, promoted Dunleavy to assistant coach in 2012 and elevated him to associate head coach in 2013. He helped the Wildcats win a national championship in 2016, his final year as a coach in the program.

“He excelled at every role and was a guy that nobody was surprised that he transcended through the ranks as quickly as he did,” said George Halcovage, Villanova’s current associate head coach. “(He) embodied everything coach Wright would want someone to (do) in the roles he was given.”

Halcovage said Dunleavy’s strengths are his abilities to communicate and build relationships.

“One of the best basketball minds I’ve been around in terms of how he thought the game,” Halcovage said. “He also was really good at just communicating and making sure that players could understand his message in a way that got across very quickly ... but it’s really about the relationships and being great with the players, and I think he was tremendous with that in his time (at Villanova).”

At Quinnipiac, Dunleavy has cultivated relationships with players, one being with sophomore wing Tymu Chenery. Last season, Dunleavy worked individually with Chenery on the mechanics of his jump shot, helping him gain confidence in it throughout the year. This kind of one-on-one work is not typical of head coaches, Chenery said.

Outside of shooting help, Chenery recalled the times when he had individual success last season and Dunleavy helped him keep his performances in perspective.

“(Coach said) ‘You haven’t done anything yet, you’re not where you want to be,’” Chenery said. “I feel like that stood out to me because you know a lot of people, a lot of coaches can just try to build your ego ... but I think he did the exact opposite.”

Halcovage explained how Dunleavy also has “a great way of knowing the pulse of the room and being able to keep things light when he needs to.” One moment that exemplifies Dunleavy’s lightness happened last year during a team practice in a live drill.

“(He) drives right by (junior wing) Brendan (McGuire), fake pass to the corner and then lays it up,” said Tyrese Williams, a senior guard. “And I’m like, ‘Yo, wait hold on, that

was kind of tight.’ It was just so hilarious just see the way he moved, the way he walked after the play. It was just like he had so much swag doing it. It was one of those moments, like he made something so serious look so hilarious.”

This moment doesn’t only live in the players’ memories. Video evidence exists.

“I think, actually, it was just thrown in the group chat, honestly, like two, three weeks ago,” Williams said. “We recently just bring it up because it’s just so funny.”

Having a balance of humor and gravitas is necessary at times to be an effective coach. Prior to entering the coaching ranks, he was a part of the no-nonsense corporate world, working at investment management company Merrill Lynch in New York City.

Dunleavy’s background in sales directly assisted him in his ability to recruit.

“He kept it straightforward, he’s very convincing,” sophomore guard Luis Kortright said about being recruited by Dunleavy. “He kept it ‘real-er’ than most of the coaches that I was talking to.”

The most important way Dunleavy’s time on Wall Street aided his coaching ability was through the adversity he faced.

“Number one, I was completely inexperienced, unqualified and green,” Dunleavy said. “So it really put me in a position to struggle, which is one of the best things that’s ever happened to me.”

The Bobcats have struggled to win more than they lose in three of the four years Dunleavy has coached the team. But there is a possibility that these struggles might be a thing of the past. Although the team was ranked No. 9 out of 11 MAAC teams in the MAAC Preseason Coaches’ Poll, the Bobcats have impressed so far.

In the season opener against No. 21 Maryland, the Bobcats only lost by 14 — covering the +22.5-point spread — and outscored the Terrapins 44-42 in the second half. In its next game, the Bobcats blew out Division III opponent Western New England by a Division I era program-record 51 points. Quinnipiac defeated Holy Cross 76-68 on Nov. 15, having five players score in double figures.

In Wright’s fifth season, he led Hofstra to a 22-10 record. Then, in his next two seasons, Hofstra won consecutive conference championships before Wright left for Villanova.

Although it’s unreasonable to expect Dunleavy to have the same ascent as his former coach did in year five, his season is off to a good start. Will this be the year Dunleavy begins to live up to the “superstar” potential Wright saw in him? Regardless of what happens, Dunleavy will keep the same attitude.



# Pete’s pond: Allentown aftermath

## Unsung heroes of QU’s season, freshmen joining the program and notable transfers

**By PETER PIEKARSKI**  
Staff Writer

While Quinnipiac didn’t achieve its goal of a Frozen Four appearance, the run this team made is still impressive. For the first time since the 2015-16 season, the Bobcats finished with more than 30 wins, just the third time to do so this century.

Along the way, this team collected a CT Ice championship and the Cleary Cup for finishing atop the ECAC Hockey standings winning a program-record 32 games. The record-setting performance from freshman goaltender Yaniv Perets made for an exciting and successful season for a team that drastically changed from the previous season.

This season was just one year removed from a shortened schedule where neither fans nor media were allowed to experience it in person. Quinnipiac took advantage of playing in the People’s United Center, winning 17 of its 20 homes games, including the home opener against then-No. 6 North Dakota, a shootout win over Clarkson, a shutout win over Harvard and blanking Yale to claim the Heroes’ Hat.

Three players took major strides in their game to contribute to the teams’ success this year. T.J. Friedmann, the senior forward from St. Louis, Missouri, had only accrued 13 career points with Quinnipiac prior to 2021-22. He finished the season with 10 goals and 13 assists in 40 games.

Another forward, junior Joey Cipollone, potted 10 goals this season along with eight assists, trouncing his production of two goals and five assists in the previous year.

Junior defenseman Jayden Lee finished the campaign with five goals and 10 assists, more than double his two previous seasons combined. Not to mention, he scored three game-winning goals along with arguably some of the most impactful goals for the team this season.

Lee scored the game-tying goal in the ECAC Hockey championship against Harvard late in the third period. Additionally, he opened the door for Quinnipiac to crawl back against Michigan Sunday night with a spin move that resulted in a shot that banked in off the post.

“In general, with Jayden I’m really happy with the season he had, I think he took a big jump,” head coach Rand Pecknold said. “He was outstanding all year long, he took another jump not just tonight but in the playoffs in general. Really high IQ player.”

It’s been nothing short of an emotional season, beginning with the death of Quinnipiac’s Team IMPACT member Michael

Torello over the summer, who Pecknold spoke about multiple times over the past few weeks. Team IMPACT pairs kids with serious illnesses to college teams to create a sense of community around the family.

It ended with senior captain and forward Wyatt Bongiovanni trying to maintain his composure and hold back tears during the post-game press conference following the Allentown regional final loss to Michigan.

The team now enters an interesting offseason as the five graduate student transfers and seven seniors are set to move on. Brendan Less, the Dartmouth defenseman that transferred to Quinnipiac over the summer, already signed a contract with the New York Islanders’ ECHL affiliate, the Worcester Railers HC.

In search of a new opportunity, sophomore defenseman Nick Bochen just entered the transfer portal, depleting the Quinnipiac blue line further. Following suit, freshman defenseman Jack Babbage and junior forward Ethan Leyh have also opted for the portal.

Though there is a possibility that some return, nothing has been confirmed. Pecknold maintained his focus on the team and the season, allowing the students to make their choices once it ended.

“To me, recruiting is 365 days a year if you want to win,” Pecknold said. “There’s a ton of kids in the portal right now. The grad transfers changed everything, we’ve got three more years of that. I refer to it like the Wild West right now.”

As of now, only 13 players are returning, which leaves the door open for incoming freshmen or graduate student transfers. Quinnipiac currently has 12 incoming freshmen, eight of which are forwards. It’s a position of dire need for this Bobcats squad should seniors move on.

It’s very possible that Pecknold explores the transfer portal if he feels this team is good enough to compete. As the regional round con-

cluded, many players entered the portal once their team had been eliminated.

Not much information is available on what the team’s plan is. But with the breakout performance of Perets this year, it should not shock anyone if Quinnipiac targeted a defenseman or two to bolster its defensive core.

There are a few intriguing players that likely will crack the lineup of that incoming freshman forward group. Sam Lipkin, a seventh-round draft pick by the Arizona Coyotes in the 2021 NHL Entry Draft, who is currently lighting it up in the USHL with the Chicago Steel. In 59 games this season, Lipkin has 29 goals and 56 points which rank sixth and 15th respectively in the league.

As the Frozen Four comes to an end, more questions surrounding the team will be answered.

It’s an exciting and mysterious end point of my four years covering this team. Four years worth of recaps and content have led to this point. My skills as a writer and journalist have grown tremendously from my experience with this team. For the last two years, I was able to cover the team in extreme detail, writing this column and providing analysis on multiple platforms. I’ve enjoyed every second of it, and I’m grateful for the opportunity I had to do so.



CAMERON LEVASSEUR/CHRONICLE

Quinnipiac men’s hockey set a program record with 32 wins in 2021-22.

# Problems on the professional stage

## Quinnipiac women’s hockey develops pro talent, but a divide at the next level fails to let it be seen

**By CAMERON LEVASSEUR**  
Sports Editor

The prolonged anticipation. The roar of the crowd. The sigh of relief as a lifelong dream is finally realized.

That’s the typical draft-day storyline for any of the major professional sports in the U.S. But it was not the case for Taylor Girard, a former Quinnipiac standout forward who was selected first overall by the Connecticut Whale in the 2021 National Women’s Hockey League (now the Premier Hockey Federation) entry draft.

As Girard’s name was called, the Macomb, Michigan, native was met not with the cheers of a packed arena, but rather a crowd of 12-year-olds at the Premier Ice Prospects Camp in New York where she was coaching at the time.

“After I got drafted, I came downstairs and it was kind of like a huge party,” Girard

said. “That was something that was super special that I feel like a lot of people in women’s sports don’t really get to have — that kind of ‘whoa’ moment.”

Those “whoa” moments, while on a smaller scale than other sports, are becoming more common in women’s hockey, a sport that has shown significant growth in the 21st century.

“I’m incredibly optimistic about where we’re going,” Quinnipiac women’s hockey head coach Cass Turner said. “You look at the excitement around the Olympics ... the product, just how good women’s hockey is. I think it’s exciting, but we’re at a really pivotal moment to come together and create products that people can watch all year round.”

Both Girard and former Quinnipiac goaltender Abbie Ives are part of the generation of players looking to seize the moment to bring the sport to the forefront.

they look up to these women, and I think that’s the amazing thing.”

The Quinnipiac women’s hockey team has been a force in developing professional talent in its 20 years of existence, largely due to the way it approaches the game.

“We really work to collaborate with our athletes in a way that they’re invested in their development, but (also) in their happiness and their success in enjoying hockey every day,” Turner said.

Ives credits the Bobcats’ coaching staff for allowing her to grow both on and off the ice.

“I think it’s just the staff’s attention to detail and the workouts they put you through, and the prep they put you through,” Ives said. “It just teaches you how to be a successful, first, hockey player, but just a successful worker. Cass is unreal. She’s so detailed and she just works so hard. It’s the same thing for Coach B — Brijesh Patel — the strength coach.”

One of the biggest issues stunting the growth of the game is the divide between the two major professional women’s leagues. The PHF and the Professional Women’s Hockey Players Association have been at odds since the latter league’s formation in the wake of the Canadian Women’s Hockey League folding in 2019.

A large portion of the animosity between the two leagues stems from the management of Dani Rylan Kearney, the founder and former commissioner of the NWHL prior to its rebrand. Rylan Kearney infamously oversaw the league’s salary halving during its second season, which spurred a number of players to move on from the league.

“I think what everybody wants is just all the best players playing in one league, making a living salary and having the resources to be real professionals and the facilities to be real professionals,” Ives said.

While there are improvements being made

on the financial front in the PHF, with the salary cap set to more than double to \$750,000 next season on top of a two-team expansion, many have called for the NHL to subsidize the league much like the NBA does with the WNBA. However, the NHL has made clear it will not do so until a single unified league exists.

While both leagues can see their own individual successes, the consensus is that in order to reach new heights the PHF and PWHPA need to put aside their differences and work to unify, something that Turner is optimistic will be a reality 10 years down the line.

“I’m hoping that we’re sitting here saying that there is a professional league for it,” Turner said. “There’s a place to play and really earn a viable wage and have women’s hockey players, those names be common names not just for young girls, but for fans, for sports fans, for hockey fans everywhere.”

Talent-wise, the growth is there, as Turner noted while reflecting back on her own playing days with Brown and later the Toronto Aeros of the old NWHL. The league was later disbanded in 2007 and refounded in 2015.

“It’s just so much more skilled,” Turner said. “There’s more college teams, there’s more money in terms of budgets for programs, there’s more girls playing all across North America and across the world ... there used to just be a few talented players and now you have a ton of talented players.”

Women’s hockey is on the rise, with Quinnipiac alumni helping lead the charge. The players are incredibly talented and there’s a clear appetite for the sport, as attendance records were set in 2019. It’s up to those involved with the day-to-day operations to realize the gravity of the moment they’re in and forgo their grievances for the good of the game.



AIDAN SHEEDY/CHRONICLE

Unification talks between the PHF and PWHPA have failed to make any headway.





# ‘That phone call will be something I remember forever’

## Walk-on Brendan Martin reflects on his time at Quinnipiac

**By MICHAEL LAROCCA and CAMERON LEVASSEUR**

It’s safe to say that when given a lineup of Quinnipiac students and one player on the men’s basketball team, one can correctly pick out the basketball player 99 times out of 100. Senior guard Brendan Martin is the exception.

Martin, a 5-foot-7-inch walk-on for the Bobcats, has spent the past three seasons proving his worth for a team with bona fide talent.

“I was grateful that they gave me the opportunity to come be a walk-on,” Martin said. “They weren’t going to really look for me to be a guy that would be playing a ton, but I’d be a guy that would be a strong locker room presence and a guy that would do whatever was needed in practice.”

A native of South Setauket, New York, Martin grew up just a quick ferry ride away from Quinnipiac. However, he was exposed to the bright lights of Division I basketball from a young age.

“I grew up in a place near Stony Brook University,” Martin said. “I always dreamed of playing for that, and the opportunity to play at Quinnipiac was really similar. Small town, good community base.”

Martin attended Ward Melville High School in East Setauket, where he was a three-year letterman. Averaging 11.6 points and six assists per game as a senior, he helped lead the Patriots to their first league title since 1990.

“In my high school we always said ‘put the dot on the wall,’ and the dot was the year that you’d win the league title,” Martin said. “That was a big moment for us ... just the idea of working together and winning a championship is a great feeling.”

Aidan Keenan, a former guard for nearby Commack High School, remembers Martin for his prowess on the perimeter.

“He’s a good ball handler, didn’t really turn it over much, and then he could just shoot from anywhere basically on the court,” Keenan said. “I remember him hitting like four or five 3s against us.”

Martin’s high school career came to a close in the state semifinals at the hands of current Quinnipiac junior guard Savion Lewis.

“I ended up losing to Savion in the high school semifinals for the second year in a row, and I told my parents that Quinnipiac was off the list,” Martin said.

While Martin may have taken Quinnipiac off his list, the schools he was looking to play for were doing the same to him.

“Throughout most of high school I figured I would be Division III basketball player and then towards the end of my high school career, a bunch of schools I had strong interest in weren’t necessarily interested in me,” Martin said.

Martin made the decision to attend Quinnipiac and play various intramural sports as well as club basketball in his freshman year. Lewis, the man who ended Martin’s high school career, was actually one of the first to tell him about walking on.

“My freshman year, I got the chance to talk to Savion,” Martin said. “He told me that there was a walk-on opportunity, and my roommate from freshman year also showed me the post on Twitter, and I ended up deciding to go to the tryout.”

Known to be a dominant player, Martin’s friends at the time believed that he would be the one to beat the odds when trying out for a Division I program.

“He always played pickup with us at the rec center, and it wasn’t fun playing against him because he was so good,” said Dalton Rice, Martin’s freshman year roommate and staff writer for The Chronicle. “If you were on his team, you were winning however many games you played that night.”

After a multiday tryout process and a lengthy wait, Martin learned that he had made the team, a lifelong dream finally coming to fruition.

“That phone call will be something that I remember forever,” Martin said. “I walked into the locker room and they showed me where I was going to be and Jacob Rigoni — who is definitely one of my best friends on the team — saw the emotion that I had and he asked if I wanted to go to a more private place to call my family. So he walked me outside and I called my dad ... and then connecting the phone call with my mom, we all just cried.”

Martin has been a member of the team for three seasons, celebrating his senior season in the winter of 2022.

During his career, he made appearances in seven games, accumulating 10 minutes played over that span. Despite the nominal playing time, the weight of the experience was not lost on Martin at all.

“I’ve told these guys time and time again that I live my childhood dream of being a Division I basketball player through them,” Martin said. “I don’t really get the opportunity

to play as much, but these are all my friends and we have had great relationships, so the opportunity to live my dream through them has been great.”

On Senior Day against Canisius on Feb. 27, the team honored Martin alongside graduate student forwards Jacob Rigoni and Kevin Marfo. Martin received his first career start as the Bobcats marched toward the MAAC tournament, playing during the opening tip-off but was quickly subbed out for sophomore guard Tymu Chenery, a decision he called “the right idea.”

“I was grateful that they gave me the opportunity to start, but I understood that it was an important game that we needed to win,” Martin said.

Martin accumulated five points and three assists in his career. He scored his first points off free throws against Division III Western New England on Nov. 12, 2021 in a game the Bobcats won by 51 points, and hit his first and only field goal, a 3-pointer, against Monmouth on Feb. 6.

“(It) felt good,” Martin said. “I don’t know if you guys know, but I have one shot, so I’m shooting 100% from the field, 100% from 3, and I’ve got two free throws so I’m shooting 100% from the free throw line. Maybe if we’re up by 20 in a MAAC playoff game, I’ll try to keep that perfect field goal percentage and free throw percentage.”

While Martin did not see the court in Quinnipiac’s first-round matchup against Marist, sometimes a positive attitude off the court is the best thing you can offer your team. Even after making the roster, Martin did not let his elevated status as a varsity athlete affect his morals and the way he lives his life.

“He’s always been the same guy, he’s just been a little more busy,” Rice said. “Obviously, school is big for him.”

Every year, when the MAAC All-Academic teams come out he’s always on it ... he loves the guys on the team, and he still makes time for us normal folks that aren’t Division I athletes.”

As a finance major, Martin is looking forward to his future beyond Quinnipiac and basketball as he exchanges his jersey for a suit.

“I like to work with a team so everything that I’ve learned in terms of teamwork and compassion and competitiveness I look to bring towards me in my working career,” Martin said. “I tell all these high executives when I interview with them, ‘I’m looking to stay competitive. I like to win.’”