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# SOUTHERN NEWS

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## Career fair held for business and STEM majors

**By Brianna Wallen**  
News Editor

With a new season comes new opportunities for students to seek experience in their desired field. Especially for seniors who are graduating this spring, it is more important now than ever for students to learn about internships, jobs and post-graduate positions.

For this reason, the annual "Career and Internship Fair" was held for students, alumni and staff to attend and take advantage of the resources available.

On March 6, the Adanti Student Center Ballroom was filled with booths from multiple companies offering jobs, internships and opportunities for participants to gain experience.

However, this year, the fair stood out from the events done previously. The "Career and Internship Fair" focused specifically on business, STEM and manufacturing.

Assistant Director of the Office of Career and Professional Development Rachel Cunningham-Exavier said that in the previous years, the event was a career fair for all majors. This year, the career fair ran for multiple days and was categorized into various fields.

"We broke it up because



PHOTO | BRIANNA WALLEN  
**Presidential Student Ambassador Mialexandra Valezuela helping students navigate the job fair in the Adanti Student Center Ballroom on March 6.**

we want students to be able to see that no matter what their major was, they could see opportunities for them in various industries," Cunningham-Exavier said.

By separating the fair into different sub-groups, it allowed for a greater emphasis on opportunities for specific

interests that students have. Through this event, students could network in a professional setting and take advantage of the opportunities available to them.

Cunningham-Exavier said she hoped students showed themselves off as qualified candidates and ensured that they

discovered companies that suit their needs.

"I hope they gain relationships with different professionals in the industry and see the vision of the different companies," Cunningham-Exavier said.

Cunningham-Exavier's aspiration for this event was fulfilled, as students

shared the support that the career offered them.

Computer science major Kayla Ortiz, a senior, said that she attended the event to gain more information about internships and entry level opportunities in her major.

After speaking to multiple representatives

from various companies, she found a few open positions that she was interested in.

"Multiple firms are willing to offer internships for recent graduates," Ortiz said. "I'm interested in Yale & MIT."

The event helped direct Ortiz on the right track. She said she did not know where to apply for jobs before the event.

"It helped me get a step into the field by providing multiple assistance with programs," Ortiz said.

The event was not only helpful to seniors. Business major with a concentration in management Mialexandra Valezuela, a freshman, said that from attending the event she was able to learn more about what she wants to do in her future.

"I'm definitely just getting started and finding a career, but it can connect me to future employers," Valezuela said.

With recruiters ready to help interested students, it can make the job application process easier. Computer science major Shafqat Mashrakey, a senior, said that the fair helped him navigate the job market as he prepares for graduation.

"It was helpful when it came to understanding the job market right now," Mashrakey said, "especially in a competitive field."

## Volunteers help donate excess food from campus

**By Brandon Cortés**  
News Writer

The Office of Sustainability food recovery program alongside the Haven's Harvest group held a groundbreaking initiative to combat food waste and support local communities on March 8.

Haven's Harvest, a nonprofit organization dedicated to processing, distributing and accepting food donations for those in need, brings to the table a dedicated team of 400 volunteers.

Cultural anthropology and criminology major Chris Kowalski, a junior, is deeply involved as a student worker in the food recovery program. Kowalski's commitment underscores the importance of individual engagement in addressing critical social issues.

"As a student and member of this community, I'm proud to be a part of initiatives that make a real difference," Kowalski said. "This collaboration represents a collective effort to tackle food waste and support vulnerable members of our community."

Tessa Marquis, a volunteer at Haven's Harvest, is equally enthusiastic about the partnership.

"Through collaborations like these, we can maximize our impact and reach more individuals in need," Marquis said.

The joint effort, scheduled from Monday to Friday each week from 2:30 p.m. to 4 p.m.,

focuses on recovering surplus food from campus establishments and redistributing it to individuals and families who can benefit from it.

As the daily food recovery initiative gains momentum, anticipation is running high among participants and supporters. The prospect of rescuing nutritious food and redirecting it to those in need serves as a powerful reminder of the transformative potential of collective action.

"In these challenging times, it's heartening to see organizations come together for a common cause," Marquis said. "Together, we can make a meaningful difference in the lives of others."

Most of the time, Kowalski is the only one collecting leftover food, which is why the sustainability office encourages volunteers Monday through Friday.

However, now that the Haven Harvest is there to help, Kowalski and Marquis begin their daily routine by collecting food from where they initially left the Bagel Wagon in Engleman Hall.

Subsequently, they moved on to Dunkin Donuts in the Adanti Student Center before concluding their rounds at Connecticut Hall.

Kowalski said, "this collaboration embodies the spirit of community and compassion that defines our campus culture."

According to Kowalski,

the university is home to a chapter of the Food Recovery Network.

The chapter was founded in 2016 and is currently the only active chapter in Connecticut. Across Connecticut, the average rate of food insecurity hovers around 13%; however, New Haven is at 22%.

NewHallville, a neighborhood which borders our campus to the south-east, is the lowest income neighborhood in all of New Haven and the third lowest in the whole state.

Kowalski said that since the beginning of the food recovery program, they have been able to save over 70,000 pounds of food, diverting it from the landfill to community partners in need.

The university chapter is expanding its network of community partners. In addition to Haven Harvest, the university recently established a connection with a newly established soup kitchen in Newhallville called Newhallville fREshSTARTs.

Newhallville fREshSTARTs aims to offer a restart not only through food but also by addressing the diverse needs of its patrons beyond hunger.

"It brings me great joy to witness the increasing number of people you are assisting each time. Observing their smiles as they receive their food fills me with happiness and invigorates me with a sense of purpose," Marquis said.

## Innovation Hub hosts panel promoting career confidence

**By Jack Abbot**  
General Reporter

On March 5, the Innovation Hub and BioPath organized a panel of current students to discuss how to find career and internship opportunities through the university.

"Today's event is part of a series of engagements with students, all of which lead to students getting confidence, not only while they're in school but afterwards once they have their degree," Grant Program Administrator Peter Dimoulas said.

The purpose of this event was to help students understand how to find internship and career opportunities. Many at the event said it can be difficult for students to find internships due to competitiveness and not knowing where to start.

"For some, it's straightforward. For others, it's not," Dimoulas said. "There's growing pains. There's uncertainty. They need support."

Dimoulas also expressed that with internships being competitive, students may lack the confidence to advocate for themselves. He also said that one mistake students make very often is not having their materials ready on time and applying too late.

"They have to be strategic. They have to think in advance of what they want to do," Dimoulas said. "What are the skills for that, and then work



PHOTO | JACK ABBOT  
**Panelists giving advice for students to be ready for their careers on March 5.**

with their councilors and advisors to actually chart their academic pathways so that they are checking all the boxes and getting the skills that they need for the job they want."

During this event, three student panelists spoke about their experiences with internships and careers. The panelists included computer science major James Petkin and chemistry major Paula-Marie Simpson and computer science major Peter Chukwu, juniors.

"I wanted to help out because I received so much value from working with the BioPath Office or the Southern Connecticut Innovation Hub in research, in internships

and in networking," Simpson said. "I wanted to be able to give back and tell of some of the things I've learned along the way that I think would be of value."

Simpson is pursuing a career in product formulations to help research and manufacture consumer goods. She believes that the organizations on campus have helped her greatly to pursue her career.

"Through BioPath, I've been able to not only just learn more about my industry but also been able to talk to industry professionals as well to be better prepared to pursue the industry and be better equipped for it," Simpson said.

# VPAS reaches a helping hand to students

**Brianna Wallen**  
News Editor

College students are one of the most vulnerable populations, especially regarding domestic violence according to Domestic Shelters.org.

To combat the threat of domestic abuse, there are safety resources on campus to help survivors and students seeking support. The main organization is the Violence Prevention, Victim Advocacy, And Support Center, VPAS.

Through the provision of victim advocacy, education on violence prevention and support services, VPAS is dedicated to fostering a respectful and safe campus community. The organization's goal is to address sexual misconduct and highlight healthy relationships to educate students.

The organization hosts events to reach their goal. Their latest event was in the Adanti Student Center on March 6 at 1 p.m. The event educated participants on signs of domestic abuse.

Apart from their events, their office is in Schwartz Hall. Their cozy office area offers anything from condoms to counseling for students. Residents who live at the hall take special advantage of the office.

Healthcare studies with a minor in Spanish

Kalangi Pedro, a sophomore, is a Schwartz resident who visits the office often.

"I went to VPAS because although I am not a victim of sexual violence, I'd love to be educated enough on the topic that if any incident were to occur in my surroundings as a bystander, I'd want to be able to do the right thing correctly," Pedro said.

Other students have also taken the opportunity to be a part of the organization's cause. One of these is biology major Clarisse Aminawung, a junior. Aminawung has been a Peer Educator at VPAS for three years since she began during her freshman year of college.

Aminawung joined due to her desire to get involved and help her community.

"Our work on campus is really important. To be a support resource for students and to educate students on important issues has honestly been an honor," Aminawung said.

By being a part of the organization, Aminawung has seen her job's mission manifest its way on campus. Specifically, through certain events such as the "Take Back the Night" event that can help survivors that have experienced abuse or assault.

"I feel it truly gives back to the students," Aminawung said. "It

allows survivors of sexual assault and domestic violence to have a safe and supportive environment to take back their voices and speak out about their experiences."

Their recognition continues to grow and major sub-groups on campus have been positively impacted by their cause.

"In the past, we have held discussions with athletes on healthy and unhealthy relationship signs, and the feedback we received from the athletes really shows that they appreciated our presentations and have taken something away from them," Aminawung said.

VPAS not only benefits survivors or students, it helps staff members as well.

"It's just been an overall rewarding experience, educating myself and educating other students on information to help them decide what choices are best for them in certain situations and to provide support and encouragement for them," Aminawung said.

Highlighting the existence of sexual assault and domestic violence on campus helps survivors be seen and allows prevention plans to be installed.

"Not only that, but talking about violence on campus helps students know to step in and prevent violence from occurring," Pedro said.

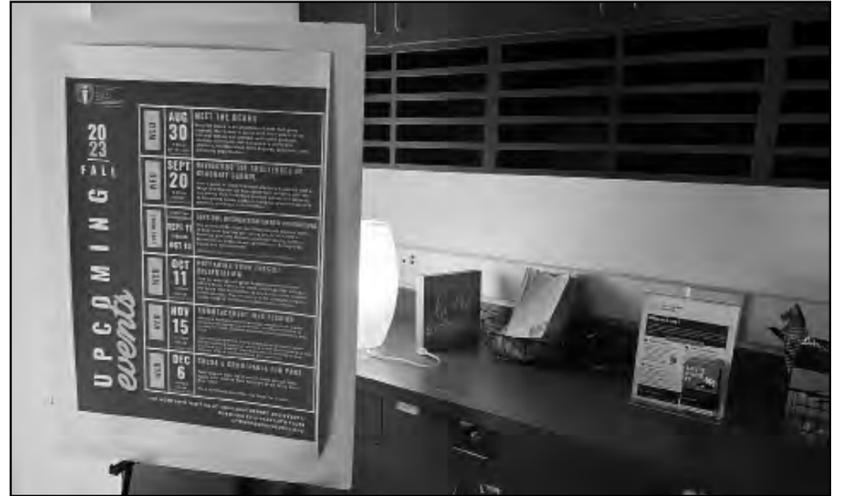


PHOTO | BRIANNA WALLEN

Upcoming events calendar and resources in the VPAS Office located in Schwartz Hall on March 8.



Healthcare studies with a minor in Spanish Kalangi Pedro, a sophomore, sits in the VPAS Office located in Schwartz Hall on March 8.

## Owls attend 'PEP Talk'

**Brandon Cortes**  
News Writer

Students were captivated with Heather Latorre's remarkable story during a heartwarming "PEP Talk" in the School of Business. Latorre went from being an intern to becoming the CEO of Marrakech, a well-known disability services and support organization with headquarters in Woodbridge, Connecticut.

Originally hailing from Brooklyn, Heather Latorre's story resonates with ambition, dedication and the pursuit of making a difference in the lives of others.

Her journey began when she ventured to Connecticut to pursue a degree in special education at the university. Little did she know, this decision would pave the way for a remarkable career dedicated to advocating for individuals with disabilities.

Latorre's immersion in the world of disability services commenced during her internship at Marrakech, where she found herself deeply drawn to the organization's mission of empowering individuals with disabilities to lead fulfilling lives.

"Joining Marrakech as an intern was a turning point for me," Latorre said. "I really enjoyed working there as an intern."

Her journey was not without its obstacles. Balancing coursework, internships and personal commitments, Latorre persevered, driven by her unwavering commitment to creating a more inclusive society.

"It wasn't easy," Latorre said, "but every challenge I encountered fueled my determination to contribute positively to the lives of those in need."

As Latorre delved deeper into her role at Marrakech, her dedication and leadership qualities shone through, earning her the respect and admiration of colleagues and stakeholders alike.

Through her tireless efforts, she rose through the ranks, assuming increasingly significant responsibilities within the organization.

Today, Heather Latorre stands as a beacon of inspiration, steering Marrakech towards new heights of success and impact. Reflecting on her journey, she emphasized the importance of perseverance and passion in overcoming obstacles.

"Believe in yourself and your ability to effect change," Latorre said. "Every small step forward matters and also keep doing things that are uncomfortable to you. Get out of your shell."

Under Latorre's guidance, Marrakech has expanded its reach and scope, pioneering innovative programs and initiatives aimed at enhancing the quality of life for individuals with disabilities.

From vocational training to community integration initiatives, the organization remains steadfast in its commitment to fostering independence and empowerment.

Latorre's journey serves as a testament to the transformative power of passion and purpose. Her unwavering dedication to advocating for the rights and dignity of individuals with disabilities exemplifies the values of compassion and empathy that define her character.

In a world fraught with challenges, Heather Latorre's story offers a glimmer of hope and inspiration. Her legacy serves as a reminder that with perseverance and conviction, any obstacle can be overcome.

In closing, Latorre left her audience with a poignant message of encouragement.

"Embrace your passions, pursue your dreams and never underestimate the impact you can make," Latorre said. "Together, we can build a more inclusive and compassionate world for all."

## Students attend public health career fair

**Jack Abbot**  
General Reporter

The Office of Career and Professional Development hosted a fair for students in health to meet with employers in their field for employment and internship opportunities.

"It's important for students to be able to connect with different industries and different people within professional settings so that they can make connections themselves that lead to other opportunities," Assistant Director of the Office of Career and Professional Development Rachel Cunningham-Exavier said.

Several organizations from across the nation visited the university on Thursday to offer opportunities to students.

The event was held in the Adanti Student Center Ballroom where these organizations had tables set up with resources and handouts.

"We get to be able to broadcast our brand within Trinity Health as a nationwide Catholic hospital system," Talent Acquisition Partner of Trinity Health Jennifer Leonard said.

Trinity Health came to provide information on career opportunities from within their hospital, both in terms of administration and health care. There were several other hospitals as well as career opportunities in health research.

"We are really looking to widen our search in terms of getting talented employees as new staff," Yale's Associate Director for Clinical Trial Operations for the Cancer Center Clinical Trials Office Kira Pavlik said. "We really love to partner with Southern because it's a great opportunity for us to support a local university while also getting great talent."

Pavlik is an alumnus from Southern. She also represented one of many

different organizations from Yale to attend this event.

"Today, we're offering an internship for someone to come to Yale University School of Medicine and do a one-year internship through our department" Senior Manager of Pathology in the Yale School of Medicine Cindy Deriso said.

Many organizations have expressed that working with the university has been a good experience for recruiting in the past.

"We've had several nursing internships with them," Talent Acquisition Partner for Nuvance Health Joshua Gaffrey said.

The event had a good turnout. Many students expressed that the event was helpful for networking and learning about different career opportunities in the public health sector.

"Today's event is about networking with

recruiters and employers from different healthcare organizations that students are looking to work with" healthcare studies major Ahzanay Mccall, a senior, said. "I got to network with a few companies that I was planning to work with since I was a kid."

The university has held career fairs in the past; however, this event is a new system that the Office of Career and Professional Development has been working with.

Rather than having one singular career fair, they are instead hosting fairs for specific concentrations, which allows for more representatives to attend and more specialized help for students.

"It's a field that not a lot of people know about, so we wanted to give public awareness to what's out there," Deriso said. "This is my first time here, so we're hoping it will be successful."



PHOTO | JACK ABBOT

Students learn about career opportunities in the Adanti Student Center Ballroom on March 7.

## Career readiness week two: multiple career fairs

By Kahiona Senior  
Photo Editor

The university is holding their career readiness weeks, which aid students in creating job-ready resumes, finding internships and endless opportunities. On March 6, the Office of Career and Professional Development held a business, STEM and manufacturing internship and career fair for Career Readiness Week. Shortly after, they held the communications, marketing, media and the arts career fair. On March 7, they held a healthcare and public health career fair and shortly after was a social work, MFT and counseling fair. Students learned about participating organizations and inquired about internships.



Many students attended and dressed professionally. Some handed out their resumes to the organizations.



Students talking about Audobon Arts at Neighborhood Music School.



Students looking at what the Yale University Art Gallery has to offer.



Healthcare and public health career fair goes, learning about Yale Pathology Labs.



An Adelbrook Behavioral and Developmental Services worker informing students about the facility.



Some booths had websites and interactive sign ups.



New Haven Museum's internship program had many students interested.



Wednesday and Thursday brought hundreds of students together.



There were over 25 different organizations at each internship fair, offering jobs and advice to students.

## ScHoolboy Q stuns fans with return album “Blue Lips”

By Jay’Mi Vazquez  
Managing Editor

Rapper ScHoolboy Q returned to the music scene, releasing his sixth album titled “Blue Lips.”

After his last album “CrasH Talk,” which released in 2019, ScHoolboy Q went quiet. Sporadic features lingered, but now he is back with an impressive 59-minute, 18 track album.

This album consisted of his most experimental songs yet, incorporating styles of surrealistic rock, soul and jazz. All of these were polar opposites of what he has traditionally done.

The album starts off slow with a song titled “Funny Guy.” This track highlights the project’s production, as he does soft mumbled raps over an impressive beat, not

showcasing any real lyrics.

The second song, “Pop” featuring Rico Nasty, is the best example on the project of something ScHoolboy Q has never done before.

It is ferocious with the rock influences displayed in the lyric delivery. It takes listeners on a journey, as it has a grungy rap flow. This song was on par for Rico Nasty, as she flowed effortlessly.

This album did not disappoint with its features. Besides Rico Nasty, the album also featured Devin Malik and Lance Skiiiwalker on “Love Birds,” Az Chike on “Movie,” Freddie Gibbs on “oHio,” Ab-Soul on “Foux,” Jozzy on “Lost Times” and Childish Major on “Pig Feet.”

The project takes listeners on many twists



“Blue Lips” official cover art..

PHOTO | SPOTIFY

and turns, as he switches genres from song to song. “Blue Lips” lacks consistency, but fans ignore it, as the project highlights many unique perspectives.

“Yeern 101” is by far the most popular song on the album, gathering over 3 million streams since its release.

This song reminds fans of recent Tyler the

Creator tracks with his flow, delivery and production. But fans of ScHoolboy Q are used to this sound, as this is one of the least experimental songs on the album.

However, it still shows great production, as it incorporates multiple beat switches throughout.

The best song of the album by far is “Blueslides,” which features that jazz influence with the sample production. Its message runs deep, as he raps about the struggles of balancing the life of an artist and being a father.

He also opens up about his mental health on “Blueslides,” as this is one of the few songs on the album that gets emotional.

Throughout the album, he mentions the biggest reasons he took a break from music. The loss of

fellow artist and friend Mac Miller, the impact of the government and navigating envious friendships caused him to slide mentally.

However, the album ends with a song titled “Smile,” which features a whimsically positive beat.

He starts the song with the lyrics “I fell off, oh word,” clearly sending a message to the people who believed his music career was dying.

This song serves as an ending on a positive note. He shows that he is happy to be back in the music scene, as he feels he proved himself as a great artist with this album.

With Kendrick Lamar no longer being a part of the label Top Dog Entertainment, ScHoolboy Q has proved that he is one of their best artists with this project.

## Staff Q&A- Brianna Wallen

Role at Southern News:

News Editor

Year: Freshman

Major: Journalism

Hometown: Manchester, Connecticut



Q: What was your favorite story to write?

A: My favorite story to write was on FACE. I really liked interviewing the E-board members. I also love a lot of creative freedom because it was a feature story.

Q: What do you like about writing?

A: I was always bad at math. With writing, everything really clicked. The words just flow off my mind. I get to look up, like, fancy words and make everything flow. What I like about writing is it’s another form to express myself. I can talk all day and all night if I wanted to.

Q: What are your interests?

A: I love shopping, writing. I like baking, and I like cooking. I also do babysitting. My friends and I host movie nights, like back at home, and we just spend the night watching movies. I also watch movies with my family.

Q: Are you involved in anything else on campus?

A: I’m in SPJ, Society of Professional Journalists. I’m a desk attendant. That’s one of my jobs besides here.

Q: What do you love about Southern?

A: I like the community. I think it’s the most diverse state school, and it’s not too big of a campus, but it’s not small either. It’s a really good size. You get to know people. Everyone’s very helpful and funny.

Q: What do you like about working at Southern News?

A: I like the community here as well. You guys are all very nice, welcoming and very social. I also like doing articles and going to events. I think this was a good vibe as well. The atmosphere, the climate is high.

Q: Can you tell us a fun fact about yourself?

A: I like to travel. I want

to go to Bora Bora in the future, but I always travel with my sister. We like Boston and New York. I’ve been to Chicago, Jamaica, Florida. I’ve been to California for a fast trip, and I’ve been to Washington, D.C. two times. My favorite trip was California; it was a school trip. That was really fun. I plan to move out to Chicago once I graduate.

Q: What do you want to do in the future?

A: I haven’t decided if I want to be on camera or do print journalism. In high school, I did a news channel for the school, and I was a reporter or a news anchor, and it was really fun. I like being in front of the camera. But I also did writing. I was Editor-in-Chief of our news online. But I know I want to be an author one day. I think I might just do broadcast journalism and then public write my own book.

## Ariana Grande releases an impressive seventh album

By Solé Scott  
Features Editor

The famous singing ponytail is back and better than ever.

Ariana Grande released a new album titled “Eternal Sunshine” on March 8 which marks her seventh studio album since 2013.

The name derives from the 2004 film “Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind,” which starred Jim Carrey and Kate Winslet.

The album has 17 tracks and is 48 minutes long.

At first, I was not feeling the project, but now I am slowly but surely digging her new era.

The music is pop infused with R&B. Certain songs sounded like they would be played at Zara or Nordstrom to persuade customers to buy more items as they jam out to Grande’s hits.

The songs that are automatically bops are “yes, and?” “bye,” “we can’t be friends (wait for your love)” and “the boy is mine,” which is an interpolation of Brandy and Monica’s 1998 hit “The Boy Is Mine.”

This song could not have come out at a more perfect time, as Grande

has been accused of stealing the married actor and father of one Ethan Slater.

Grande has been relentlessly ridiculed and slut shamed all over the internet for not only stealing a married man but allegedly cheating on her husband Dalton Gomez.

Grande released the “we can’t be friends (wait for your love)” music video that displays her going to a clinic to erase memories of an ex.

Some fans speculate she wanted to erase memories of her ex-husband or another ex-lover that may have spoiled over the years, such as rapper Mac Miller who tragically died in 2019 or Pete Davidson who was a rebound after Grande and Miller broke up for good.

The album cover is different from those in her discography, as she is known for black and white, upside-down covers. For this project, she chose to have her back turned as she lays on a replicated version of her.

I am completely shocked and impressed that Grande was able to record, shoot music videos and set up photos all while she shot

Broadway readaptation “Wicked” in England for almost two years.

Before this album was released, Grande had over 70 million monthly listeners on Spotify, which is impressive considering she has not released music since 2021.

As of Friday, March 15, Grande has amassed over 83 million listeners, making her the first artist to have over 80 million listeners four times on Spotify.

As of now, there are currently no plans to tour, which is a bummer because this summer is the perfect time to kick off a nationwide concert.

Yet, I totally respect her process of letting the audience have their own mini concert through their headphones or listening parties on X and TikTok.

Overall, this album has ushered in a new era of light, as Grande finally sheds all the negativity surrounding her personal life and career.

This vulnerable album is a solid seven out of 10 in my books. In the future, as I continue to listen and watch some interviews she partakes in, the album rating will increase.

## ProCon organizes “March Madness” de-stress event

By Lexi White  
General Reporter

As midterms approach, students’ stress levels are high. That is why the Programs Council, or ProCon, decided to host an event that will help students relax and take a break from studying.

On March 5, ProCon hosted “March Madness” in Room 217 of the Adanti Student Center.

ProCon provided them with fuzzy socks, face masks, stress balls and lip balm. In addition, students were able to participate in the relaxing activity of painting.

One of the ProCon members helping to host this event was biology major Craig Huydic, a sophomore.

“Today’s event is all about mindfulness,” Huydic said. “We have positive affirmations, sleeping masks and special guests coming.”

The special guests happened to be Sergeant Torres and K9 Jules.

They stopped by to bring the students some extra support during this demanding time in the semester.

“If we can somehow make it so that coming to school can be a good thing, then I think we have done our job,” Huydic said.

Aside from painting canvases, the students spent their time petting K9 Jules, which brought tons of smiles.

One student at the event who spent a lot of time with K9 Jules was psychology major Alyssa Murphy, a freshman. She had a special connection with this event.

“I am really enjoying the painting because that was something my grandma and I used to do all the time before she passed,” Murphy said.

Murphy said that she gets very stressed in times like these, and that this event significantly helped her.

Another member of ProCon that was hosting the “March Madness”

event was biology major Prasaus Yeager, a sophomore. She thought this kind of event was very beneficial for those who attended.

“It is very therapeutic to paint and color, and that is what I like to do when I am stressed out,” Yeager said.

Murphy also thought ProCon’s event was very favorable for students.

“I definitely think this helps to meet new people,” Murphy said. “You can make creations, get stuff for self-care and get to know Sergeant Torres and Jules.”

Another student who attended was collaborative education major Michaela Schweikert. She heard about the event through ProCon’s Instagram and really wanted to do some painting.

“I am most enjoying being able to be in my thoughts and relax myself because I suffer from anxiety, and I feel like this is one thing that relieves it,” Schweikert said.

## SOUTHERN NEWS

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## Anime Society unites students on campus

By Solé Scott  
Features Editor

Students gathered into a conference room on the third floor of the Adanti Student Center, ASC, on a rainy March 7.

The Anime Society hosts their weekly meetings every Tuesday and Thursday.

Chemistry major Natalia Coombs, a freshman, is the current president of the Anime Society after resurrecting it from the dead with Vice President and computer science major Alana Parris, a freshman.

“Well, it was honestly my passion for anime, and just having that sense of belonging, and making my own place where people can come and share the passion, whether they love anime or not, or they wanted to explore,” Coombs said.

Parris is the current vice president that united with Coombs to get the club back up and running.

“I work with Natalia to make sure things go smoothly,” Parris said.

The Anime Society had been running since at least 2012 according to Parris and Coombs under a different name. The club’s original name was Baka Chan Anime Society before it was changed to Anime Society in 2013.

Anime is a Japanese animated genre of film and television that is targeted towards all age groups; however, there are some that depict graphic storylines that are not recommended for children.

“I think I started watching anime somewhere in mid-high school. Some of my friends introduced me to it,” Coombs said. “At first, I wasn’t interested until like COVID time.”

Exploratory STEM major Anthony Heyward, a freshman, is a body member.

“I thought it actually was a good club to join at the time. I did not have anything else better to do,” Heyward said.

The club brings a community of students together to bask in the essence of anime and

what it truly means to them on a personal level.

“I like the diverse amount of anime they watch, and they are passionate about different things,” Heyward said.

The club not only watches films and television shows but also hosts game nights.

Out of the two days a week, Tuesday is meant for watching footage, and Thursday is for members to play games.

Anime Society is looking to attend Anime Boston this semester or Anime New York next semester.

“This would be an every year thing,” Coombs said.

Anime Society is always welcoming to new members that are either die-hard fans or curious ones.

“Also, if you like to game, you guys can come by. We have game nights,” Parris said.

Anime Society hosts their meeting every Tuesday at 5 p.m. in ASC Room 309 and Thursdays at 2 p.m. in ASC Room 305.



PHOTO | SOLÉ SCOTT

Chemistry major Natalia Coombs, a freshman, has been the president of Anime Society since fall of 2023.



Vice President and computer science major Alana Parris, a freshman, after the Anime Society meeting ended on March 7.

## Owls Decide: How are you spending spring break?

By Lexi White  
General Reporter



“I have no idea.”

— Communications major Michael Rivera, a senior



“I am going to be getting a lot of projects done since we have a couple shows in April.”

— Studio art major Daniel Rosario, a senior



“I am going to work and hang out with friends.”

— Business management major Nik Matejek, a sophomore



“I am probably just going to chill with my family and hang out with friends.”

— Undecided major Josh Rodriguez, a freshman



“I am going to enjoy myself by being with family and doing sports activities at home.”

— Business management major Allen Livits, a junior



“I am going on a vacation to South Carolina.”

— Social work major Daniel Biblekaj, a sophomore

## Adversity no match for Helms

By Dillon Flanigan  
Sports Editor

In a basketball career spanning so much adversity and uncertainty, from the Connecticut shoreline to the cornfields of Nebraska and back, guard Makenzie Helms, a graduate, has climbed mountains, grasping a wealth of experience and knowledge along her journey.

This past August, the university women's basketball team welcomed a transfer into their backcourt. In the last ride of her collegiate basketball career, Helms has taken flight to redefine her new purpose, a question she has been asking herself for years:

Why does she love basketball?

"I'm very spiritual and have a sense of just connecting with what I think the universe is," Helms said. "I think that that's really kept me grounded. It's has also shown me how when I do push through adversity."

Her journey does not start in college but commences in her youth with her dad on the court. As years passed by, East Haven native Helms knew she wanted to continue to play basketball. Her father, Lance Helms, a star athlete in high school, worked with Helms to pursue her passion.

"My dad was always a huge role model for me," Helms said. "Growing up, I was always just able to be with my dad in the backyard, or he would bring me to work out almost every day."

Entering high school, basketball was the only thing on her mind. Looking towards a potential collegiate basketball career, she



PHOTO | DILLON FLANIGAN  
Guard Makenzie Helms, a graduate, stares down a Chargers player.

**"She's really grown here and flourished here. We're very fortunate to have her."**

— Head Coach Kate Lynch attended Loomis Chaffee high school in Windsor, Connecticut.

Helms's tenure at Loomis laid a foundation for her future endeavors. She found immediate success at East Haven. It was fast and furious.

After two years of constant training for a future in basketball, her talent spoke volumes. Local offers across Division I flowed in from University of Penn, Quinnipiac University, Rutgers University, Syracuse University and Yale University.

Other institutions that showed interest included Georgia Institute of Technology, Iowa State University, University of Kentucky, Wake Forest University, and the University of Wisconsin.

In January of 2018, she committed to Nebraska. A few months later, Helms and the Yellow Jackets defeated Southern

Connecticut Conference, SCC, foe Career Magnet in the 2018 CIAC Class M State Championship game.

Throughout high school, not a moment went by when her daily grind did not go without bouts of leg pain.

It was not until her senior year that she was diagnosed with chronic compartment syndrome, a dreadful buildup of pressure around her lower leg muscles, forcing a surgical procedure. "I barely got any time to recover because we had to go right into basketball season," Helms said. "As soon as I could walk, I was back in the gym. I didn't really give myself any time to recover."

As we age in society, we learn, we build and we grow. Through the blood, sweat, tears and grit Helms chose not to falter.

Helms said, "I have one of my first tattoos and

says, 'through hardships to the stars.' That was for my legs. It's kind of just showed me that when I do push through my adversity and fight through my injury, I'm able to alchemize the pain into passion and the anger into confidence."

In her final season, despite the Yellow Jackets ending their playoff run in the CIAC Class L quarterfinals, she seized the Gatorade Connecticut High School Player of the Year honors, averaging 26.5 points, 7.4 rebounds, 6.6 assists and 4.3 steals per game.

But before she could play for the Cornhuskers, Helms earned herself multiple accolades.

She was named in the USA Today First Team All Connecticut in 2018 and 2019, and the latter year was also named the SCC Player of the Year while being ranked the No. 27 point guard in the nation by ESPN.

Helms gave every school a chance but fell in love with the spirit of Cornhusker fans.

"Their fans were insane. It was like there's nothing else to do out there but go watch the university's games," Helms said. "Seeing all the support they received lit something else inside of me, and it made me excited. I just wanted to be somewhere where we truly were supported by a community, and it was somewhere that I felt the most loved."

If you do not know already, basketball is Helms's heart and soul. In her transition to college, a second surgical procedure was needed to suppress her pain again. She had to learn how to run and flex her feet in a different manner that provided her with comfort.

As a true freshman, it was not an easy landing for her. Although cleared to play, she was still dealing with the recovery of her surgery.

Helms appeared in thirteen games off the bench in her freshman year and two games in her sophomore campaign. Though she only spent a brief time in the mid-west, irreconcilable differences in conjunction with personal notions began to take a toll on Helms.

"Being in Nebraska and being away from my dad, who was honestly my most motivating factor, I never really took into account how being so far away from him and not being able to have him with me in the gym, how much that was going to affect me," Helms said. Shortly into the 2021

season, Helms transferred to the nearby Division I Quinnipiac Bobcats, where she spent her junior and senior seasons closer to home, attempting to rectify one problem.

Completing her degree in the law enforcement field, she combined two seasons and appeared in 62 of 63 games, starting in 11 her junior season.

She averaged lower numbers in both seasons, yet sustained an average of 14-16 minutes per game in each season while being named to the Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference All Academic team twice.

After four years, Helms contemplated what would come next. Late in August, on a mission to solve her quest, she jumped at the opportunity when multiple calls and emails produced mutual interest between Helms and the university's women's basketball Head Coach Kate Lynch.

"It was an opportunity to keep one of Connecticut's best talents close to home," Lynch said. "So, it was a home run on our end, and we just want to make sure that she felt that same way. It's not often that a player like Makenzie Helms comes knocking on your door."

Guard Jillian Martin, a senior, attended Amity Regional High School in Woodbridge, an SCC school, and faced off against Helms in four games across two seasons.

"We played in the SCC Conference, and every single time we played East Haven, obviously it was a very big matchup," Martin said. "Kenz was always like an amazing, amazing player and just definitely a tough player to play against."

East Haven won all four games, as both Helms and Martin respectively swapped to blue, bringing the once conference rivals on the court as teammates.

"It was cool to finally reconnect after not seeing her since high school," Martin said. "We honestly talk about it a lot, how it's so weird how it works out that we just ended up on the same team. It all works out, and its fun being able to play on the court with her."

On the hardwood, it is always favorable for a coach to have a player that is trusted and relied upon that also brings the wealth of knowledge and experience that Helms does. It is crucial to lean on them to control situations and lead younger players by example.

"Having that level of IQ on the court really

helps me out as a head coach. I trust her in a lot of different situations and trust the decisions that she's going to make," Lynch said. "She has been a great teacher for our underclassmen, our younger players, a great model."

Helms's history and record has proved to her coaches what she could bring to the team, but what separated her was her precise preparation and intensity. In fact, the aura around Helms rubbed off on her teammates, instructing them from an individual perspective.

"Always just working hard, she's dealt with a lot of adversity, injuries, and every day she shows up and just competes," guard Hope Fox, a sophomore, said. "She just taught me a lot about the game."

Helms brought more than just experience on the court.

"She's taught me to be confident in myself a lot, and she instills confidence in a lot of other people. And that's because she's confident in herself, and she builds other people up," Fox said.

Fox idolizes Helms and has been impacted in more ways than one.

"The bottom line: you must show up, work hard and be a great teammate," Fox said. "Those are the things that I hope to do next year and be a great leader like her."

When the women's basketball team turns the calendar page next year, Helms hopes to leave behind a legacy of love, unity and mindfulness. Instead of looking in the rearview mirror, look in the windshield, and look for what is next.

This past season has been one to remember on many levels.

"My biggest, if any regrets that I do have throughout college, would be just limiting myself because of the perceptions of others," Helms said. "Having coaches and amazing teammates who do trust me to put them in their best positions, I think that that has really brought my spark back."



PHOTO | KAYLEE BLAKE  
Helms goes all out for the shot.

## Owls advances to NE10 final

By Avery Martin  
Contributor

The men's basketball team advances to the finals against Southern New Hampshire University after a thrilling 82-73 win against Saint Anselm College on March 6.

The Owls played great defense in the semifinal game. Guard Marty Silvera, a junior, scored a game-high 30 points, as well as nine rebounds, nine assists and three steals in a packed Moore Field House.

It was a dramatic first half with several fouls on both sides. The university led 13-4 in the first few minutes before Saint Anselm made it a closer match.

Despite a brief lead from their opponents, Silvera and forward Kazell Stewart, a sophomore, were able to combine for 11 points. Forward Josh McGettigan, a graduate, scored 10 points as well.

Silvera said, "in the first half, we came out kinda slow. We were still playing good, but I just felt like we were playing slow. But I feel like in the second half, Coach just came out with a game plan, and we just locked in and played hard."

Going into the second half, Silvera said Head Coach Scott Burell encouraged the team to double down on offense while still upholding a solid defense strategy.

After halftime, the Owls pushed ahead with a 45-36 lead. A three-point shot by guard Sean James, a junior, pushed the score to 64-50 with 8:21 to go.

Burell said a strong defense and offense were



PHOTO | NEIL BAINTON  
Forward Cherif Diarra, a sophomore, dunks.

the keys to success.

"Our guys are locked in. They played 40 minutes of great defense, ran the ball, had real good offense. A lot of guys stepped up and had a great game. I think everybody stepped up and had a great game," Burell said.

Guard Mason Williams, a graduate, scored a three-pointer in the final minutes to further widen the score. Silvera scored 19 points in the half, and forward Cherif Diarra, a sophomore, scored seven.

The Owls won 82-73. Burell said the important nature of the game helped the players push for the win.

"We fought. We fought for 40 minutes. A grind-out game. They knew what to do; they'd been here before. They know how to play; they know how to win," Burell said.

Stewart also said the game was a hard-fought win.

"We executed and played good defense,

rebounded the ball well. And at the end of the day, playing good defense and executing is going to help us win the game at all times," Stewart said.

As the Owls dominated in New Haven, Southern New Hampshire won their game against Saint Michael's College. They will advance to the finals, where the Owls are waiting for them.

Burell said consistency is a key approach going into the final game.

"We're playing against a really good team—shoots the ball really well and coming off a huge win against Saint Michael's. We just got to be focused," Burell said.

This will be the Owls' second time in the finals of the NE10 Championships since 2001. They previously won the title in 2014 against the University of New Haven.

The Owls advanced to the NE10 Championship to face Southern New Hampshire in Hooksett, New Hampshire.

## Owls Sports Recap: March 3-17

### Women's Basketball:

Overall Record – 19-13  
NE10 Quarterfinals – March 3 – @ Saint Rose College – W 58-52  
NE10 Quarterfinals – March 7 – @ Assumption University – W 60-47  
NE10 Finals – March 10 – @ Bentley University – L 64-49

### Men's Basketball:

Overall Record – 22-11  
NE10 Quarterfinals – March 3 – @ Bentley University – W 88-78  
NE10 Quarterfinals – March 6 – vs Saint Anselm College – W 82-73  
NE10 Finals – March 9 – @ Southern New Hampshire University – L 75-60  
NCAA D-II East Regional – March 16 – @ Saint Michael's College – L 68-62

### Women's Gymnastics:

March 13 – @ University of Arizona – L 196.900-102.725  
March 15 – @ Arizona State University – L 194.400-197.600

### Men & Women's Track & Field:

According to the Owls website, the team competed in the New England Championships and the NCAA D-II Indoor National Championships. However, no information has been released.

### Women's Lacrosse:

Current Record – 4-2  
March 6 – vs University of Bridgeport – W 16-6  
March 9 – vs Georgian Court University – W 18-17  
March 13 – @ Saint Andrew's College – W 23-2

### Softball:

Current Record – 2-8  
March 10 – @ St. Thomas Aquinas College – L 3-2  
March 10 – vs Caldwell University – L 7-3  
March 11 – @ Salem University – W 8-0  
March 11 – vs University of Pittsburgh @ Johnstown – L 3-2  
March 12 – @ Southwest Minnesota State University

### Baseball:

Current Record – 11-7  
March 3 – @ Mercy University – G1 L 6-5/G2 L 4-3  
March 9 – vs Assumption University – W 20-3  
March 10 – vs Molloy University – L 25-6  
March 11 – vs Bentley University – W 10-2  
March 12 – vs Molloy University – W 13-5  
March 14 – @ Lynn University (FL) – L 5-4  
March 15 – vs Felician University – G1 L 15-5/G2 W 9-5  
March 16 – @ Felician University – W 2-1

All information has been provided by SCSUOwls.com