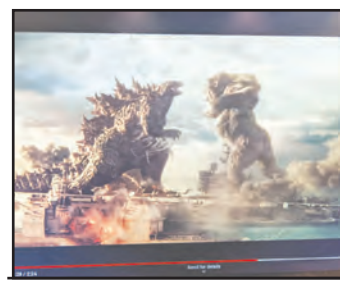




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# SOUTHERN NEWS

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APRIL 7, 2021

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## Tuition will not increase next semester COVID-19 leads to decision from Board of Regents

**By Madeline S. Scharf**  
Reporter

University tuition will not increase in the upcoming semester. The Board of Regents (BOR) has agreed on a complete tuition freeze next semester for all CSCU colleges.

The last year has been difficult for many people. According to a Congressional Research

Study updated in Jan. 2021, “COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant effect on unemployment in every state, industry and major demographic group in the United States.” A significant strain has thus been added for many, including those paying for college.

With unemployment affecting those from many different

backgrounds, the CSCU colleges decided to step in. “The COVID-19 pandemic has hit Connecticut students particularly hard,” said CSCU President Interim Jane Gates in a release posted Mar. 25. “The Board of Regents, recognizing that we cannot ask our students and their families to shoulder a greater share of the burden during these difficult times, made the wise but difficult decision to freeze tuition and most fees for the upcoming academic year.”

According to the March 25 Board of Regents agenda release, Southern will not see an increase in tuition. “The tuition and mandatory fees proposal for FY2022 (Fiscal Year 2022) reflects zero increase for all in-state undergraduate/graduate commuting students and for residential students,” from page

185 of the memo. While a few programs, such as the UPASS system, will have an increased fee, mandatory tuition payments will remain as they were for the upcoming fiscal year.

Unfortunately, freezing tuition has potential consequences. In the press release, BOR Chair Matt Fleury raises concerns about what the current tuition freeze may mean for future tuition costs. “CSCU’s labor contracts, which drive 85 percent of its total \$1.2 billion in expenses, could cost more than can be sustained, forcing tuition to go up,” said Fleury. This means there is not enough money to keep tuition frozen, and it could result in later inflation.

Fleury said, “the effects of the pandemic on student experiences and higher education could last longer than expected and be

more dramatic than anticipated.”

Enrollment at many colleges has dropped due to the COVID-19 pandemic. According to the National Student Clearinghouse Research Center, “postsecondary enrollments declined 2.5 percent in fall 2020, nearly twice the rate of enrollment decline reported in fall 2019.” This will have a significant effect on the CSCU budget.

With lower enrollment and a frozen tuition rates, it is likely that in the future, tuition rates will once again increase. An article in the Hartford Courant cites Chairman Matt Fleury as cautious, saying he “noted that future tuition increases were not off the table.”

Not all Connecticut State Universities experience the same level of benefits. In the BOR Agenda release, Central Connecticut State University has a

different budgeting level compared to Southern. Central also has a different proposal.

The tuition and fee proposal for FY22 (Fiscal Year 2022) reflects a reduction to food service plan of \$542, or 2.1% decrease cost for all students that participate in the plan. Due to the COVID 19 pandemic, CCSU eliminated all online fees, normally charged as \$50 per online course and charged part-time online students the same registration fee as part-time on-ground students. There is no reason given in the agenda release as to why Central will receive this reduction and other CSU will not.

“Our colleges and universities must have sufficient state funding from the legislature; and we must have a continued recovery from the pandemic,” said Fleury.

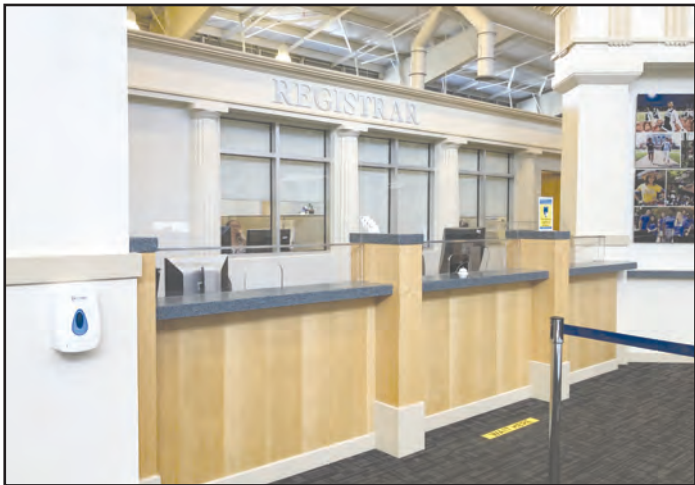


PHOTO | ROMA ROSITANI

The registrars' office where students can pay tuition fees.

## Ranked in top 15 for salary scores

**By Caitlin O'Halloran**  
Reporter

The university has been ranked on GradReports' 2021 as one of the Best Colleges by Salary Score in Connecticut's list.

“Big thing with GradReports versus other ranking sites is we're very, very big on data first and foremost, rather than prestige like something like U.S. News and World Report is. That's the big thing. We often get compared to them and we feel like by using strictly government data and not factoring all of these other things, this other noise, as we say, that these other ranking sites use, we think that we offer something that a lot of other sites aren't doing,” said Optimal, GradReports parent company, outreach manager Brian Hepp.

GradReports' site states that with their college rankings, they focus on the things that matter to graduates. Students looking for a career after graduation without the worry of drowning in debt. The site expresses value of focusing on real-life data and how salary scores can overall benefit students by focusing on their future income.

Some appreciation should go to some of the offices at Southern that helps students go in the right direction with their majors that lead to

a successful career path because they are part of the reason that Southern is able to be successful enough to be on this list.

“At a core level, our office really helps all students in three major areas, so while they're here at Southern, we talk a little bit about career exploration and navigating and finding the right kind of experience that aligns with their career choice, whether that's through an internship or other learning experiences or sometimes contributing to experiences on or off campus,” said Director of Career and Professional Development Kelvin Rutledge.

On the GradReports list, Southern was ranked 14 out of 15 schools in Connecticut with a salary score of 49.92.

Another helpful department that results in a student's success after graduation is the Office of Career and Professional Development.

“We'll help students prepare and discover a major that fits best for them, you know make a career goal, a career path or just help them with job searching so it really depends on what the students need but, we can help with any of it,” said Graduate Assistant in the Office of Career and Professional Development Emily Velidow.

See Reports Page 2

## University's largest endowment

**By Caitlin O'Halloran**  
Reporter

The School of Business was gifted a \$500,000 ceremonial check for leadership development.

“It's a very important gift that's really going to enrich the educational opportunities for our students in the school of business,” said Interim Dean for the School of Business James Thorson.

The award was presented by Lindy Lee Gold, who has a commitment to Southern and a life dedication to serving the community. The Amour Propre Fund helped Gold's dedication by awarding the School of

Business Endowment for Leadership Development with a \$500,000 check, the largest contribution ever made to the university according to a previous Southern News article.

“Lindy Gold's gift for leadership development in the School of Business is going to be transformative to many of our students and will allow us to develop programs that we know they need to help them succeed in their careers,” said former Dean Emeritus of the School of Business, Ellen Durnin. “While Southern provides a strong academic foundation, we hear from employers all the time that students and graduates from

all universities could benefit from help in professional development areas and what they call the ‘soft skills.’

This gift was granted to the School of Business to help programs that are part of the Leadership Center there, such as Women's Leadership and Mentoring Program as well as IMPACT Greater New Haven, but in the future will also support peer-to-peer mentoring.

“We have a well-defined curriculum in business, but also many other aspects of business that don't always get covered in the curriculum, so this funding will allow our students to learn more leadership skills that

are not necessarily tied to the classroom, it'll give them experiences in internships and hear guest speakers,” said Thorson.

Gold has multiple volunteer experiences, like President of the Gateway Community College Foundation, membership on the Board of Directors at Southern's Foundation Board, a member of the Board of Directors at the Housatonic Community College Foundation, Connecticut State Board Member at the Anti-Defamation League and Vice President of the Jewish Federation Association of Connecticut.

See Business Page 2



PHOTO | ROMA ROSITANI

The School of Business building that houses the university's business courses.

# More outdoor class options coming next year

By Donovan Wilson  
Reporter

Full use of outdoor classrooms can be expected at the beginning of the next academic year.

“Back in early fall, I received a call requesting outdoor classrooms,” said Eric Lessne, associate vice president for capital budgeting and facilities operations.

After receiving a call that the school wanted to sanction outdoor classrooms, Lessne and university officials scouted campus for possible locations. The locations decided upon for full-fledged outdoor classrooms were right under the canopy of Earl hall and behind Engleman Hall, in front of the sculpture. There is a third location under the canopies at Parking Lot 1, but those are strictly ‘bring-your-own-chair’ and have no provided furniture.

Lessne said, “We knew some materials would get ruined.”

One of the biggest things factored into choosing these locations and the furniture for them was the elements and the weather, especially moving into the winter months. Lessne made sure all furniture permanently placed outside in these locations were element resistant and could endure most conditions. In addition to this, all furniture has

been placed at least 6 feet apart to ensure social distancing, even in an outdoor environment.

“There was originally a fourth location under the solar panels near Davis,” said Brad Crerar, director of the student center.

The fourth location was also a “bring-

your-own-chair” situation, like the location near parking lot 1. According to Crerar, this location has never been used and there has not been any requests for it for next semester thus far. However, as Crerar does handle most outdoor classrooms scheduling, he said that up until this

point, the outdoor classrooms were only used “a little bit every now and then.”

Crerar said, “All classroom scheduling normally goes through Drobish, but because these were one off meeting spaces they go through us”.

Robert Drobish, academic scheduling coordinator, usually

handles all classroom scheduling but since these outdoor classrooms were originally meant only to be used here and there by professors, they go through Crerar and his colleagues at the student center. They use a program called EMS to put in a system of who is using which outdoor

classroom at which time on which day. The reservations are done essentially through a first come first serve basis, especially when it comes to unscheduled- last minute meetings.

“I’ve only received one request for the Earl Outdoor Classroom space for several dates in March and April for botany lab courses. The faculty member who requested the space is Rebecca Silady,” said Janet Klicsu, assistant director of the student center and coordinator of conference services.

As reservations for classrooms including outdoor classrooms are currently open, Klicsu is at the forefront. However, at the time of this writing, there had only been one request made to reserve an outdoor classroom. Klicsu said, “All I can tell you is that Bob must assign and approve classroom locations on campus. I’m not sure what his process is but if the faculty member requests an outdoor location and Bob approves it, then they must submit a Facilities usage request for the space. I then reserve the space in EMS. There are currently two locations, one in front of Earl Hall and one by the sculpture near Morrill. These areas have been set-up by Facilities Operations.”



An empty outdoor classroom setup, located in front of Morrill Hall.

PHOTO | ROMA ROSITANI



Students attending an outside class session in front of Earl Hall.

PHOTO | ROMA ROSITANI

## University offers 2020 graduates in-person ceremony

By Sam Tapper  
Editor-in-Chief

By Abby Epstein  
Managing Editor

The Class of 2020 is coming back. The university is giving the 2020 seniors the opportunity to walk at this year’s commencement.

“We have five ceremonies, so what we are going to do is we are going to look at our numbers,” said Patrick Dilger, director of integrated communications and marketing. “On April 15th we will have the numbers, that is the shut off point for expressing your interest in walking and then we’ll see how we incorporate [the Class of 2020] whether it’s per school or college or

whether it’s all together at one of the ceremonies.”

Last year, the university’s graduation festivities were called off due to the COVID-19 pandemic. To compensate, the university held a virtual commencement ceremony for its graduating seniors. While it served as an alternative, not all participants were pleased.

“We still had a handful of students – maybe two handfuls of students – that were really still feeling like their experience wasn’t complete,” said Vice President of Student Affairs Tracy Tyree, “that they needed this in-person, walk-across-the-stage experience. And that led us to a lot of conversation.”

Dilger said they have

been talking to the other Connecticut Universities and are all allowing last year’s graduating class to come back. Southern is looking to incorporate the Class of 2020 into the five ceremonies already planned.

The decision yet to be made is if they all will have one ceremony together or if they will be split up amongst the other ceremonies.

“It really depends on the numbers from the 2020 class and it also depends on the numbers from the 2021 class, because some of the schools and colleges have potentially far more graduates than others,” said Dilger.

There are still many things to figure out, if the Class of 2020 will be able to have guests. Dilger said they hope it will be possible but cannot be

sure until after April 15.

“We are able to accommodate about 1,000 parents based roughly on 500 graduates per college or per ceremony,” said Dilger. “There is still uncertainty out there so we wanted to give everybody the option, after April 15 once we know our numbers then we will determine how we will set this up.”

There was a group of students who started a petition regarding a chance to walk at graduation. Dilger and Tyree said they were aware of the petition, but it was not a deciding factor in letting the Class of 2020 come back. There were other students who individually reached out asking about coming back to walk at graduation.

“We were looking at student interest from all angles, but the bottom line we thought this was thing to do because students who wanted to walk, we’re giving them the opportunity to walk and we certainly understand that,” said Dilger.

Last year’s seniors will be announced as members of the Class of 2020 when they are called to walk across the stage. Dilger said they want to give every student the chance to walk at graduation.

“We are trying to create opportunity for everybody here, I think having our graduates outside with faculty, staff, friends and family members, even a limited capacity will be a great thing after almost two years of not being able to do things as we normally

would,” said Dilger. “It will be a great way to hopefully move forward into the fall.”

While this may not be an ideal solution to all of last year’s graduating seniors, Tyree suggested they all keep the “glass half-full” mentality, as this is a result of things getting closer to normal.

“I would ask, if somebody were asking me, to have the glass half-full perspective, which is that in some ways, this class is getting more,” Tyree said. “This class got this cool memory board, these videos, this way to celebrate their friends. They got these yard signs, there were a lot of things that we did for the Class of 2020 that we have never done, some that we will retain because they were so great.”

## Buisness

“One of the things that is a strong projector of career success is having an internship while you’re in college and many of our students are also working while they’re going to school, and it’s difficult for them to leave a job and take an internship,” said Durnin. “So this funding helps us make sure that these internships will all be paid, that there will be a stipend provide for students even if the organization can’t provide.”

Gold participates in these fundings

because she believes it is a great factor in “breaking the cycle of poverty.” Because of this generous donation, there will be a suite on campus dedicated and named after Lindy Lee Gold, in the new building for the School of Business that will open in the Spring of 2023, with hopes of receiving other contributions to raise a \$2.5 million endowment, according to a Southern News article.

“Southern is a social justice university. That means that we provide access to high quality, affordable education for our students and then within that, the

School of Business is committed to what we call ‘change for good’ the idea that business students are learning how to make a difference, we say ‘doing good while doing well,’” said Durnin.

Southern has a Business Success Center which is supported by Wells Fargo. It is there to help students with resources in the business community and help with the professional development of students and even alumni.

Southern has a Business Success Center, supported

by Wells Fargo. It is there to help students with resources in the business community and help with the professional development of students.

The center also helps students find experiential internships that will help qualify them post-graduation careers.

“It’s really going to enrich the education of our students,” said Thorson. “I just think that the School of Business has been very fortunate that we have people like Lindy Lee Gold who value what we do and are willing to support us in such a large way.”

## Reports

Optimal’s Marketing Manager Kellen Schwartz assures it is a beneficial and positive thing especially during the time of making a decision on a school to go to.

“It’s still an achievement to be on the list. In order to qualify you have to have had a number of graduates who are from many different degrees that all have this data reported and it’s still definitely a positive. Even though you might not be number one on the list, you still qualified for the list and it’s still a

very positive thing to be on and you can see the actual salary scores that you have are very near the median and mean so it’s not like it’s a negative thing,” said Schwartz.

According to their website, in order to be considered for qualification of being ranked on the state rankings, schools have to be offering and provide at least eight different bachelor programs.

“Just because a school is a little bit lower, as Kellen said, it can still have a higher salary score and we just hope that the data we are providing is of use to students,” said Hepp.

## Allowing last year's seniors to walk at graduation



**By Abby Epstein**  
Managing Editor

*These are the opinions of The Southern News Editorial Staff.*

The Class of 2021 is having an in-person graduation—and so is the Class of 2020. An email was sent out to last year seniors saying they are welcome to come back and walk. The university will now be combining the Class of 2020 graduation with the Class of 2021s’.

After four years of college, many students look forward to walking across the stage to accomplish finishing their degree. Last year’s seniors were stripped of this joy when

everything was shut down due to the pandemic.

The university did look at holding a graduation in the summer, but was not able to as the pandemic was still in full swing. The best the university could offer was a virtual graduation where seniors saw their pictures come across their TV screen. This does not match the experience of walking across a stage in front of friends and family along with their classmates.

Those seniors never thought they would not

get to have a proper graduation. So, it is nice that an in-person graduation is able to happen and they are allowing the class of 2020 to come back and walk if they choose to.

To some seniors, it never felt like they graduated and that the year just abruptly ended. Many said it did not feel like they graduated until everyone else was heading back to campus and they were not. For some seniors this could be the closure they needed, as it does not feel like they

graduated until they have walked across the stage.

With myself being a senior this year, I was excited when I heard that graduation would be in-person. I was also excited when I heard the university is allowing the Class of 2020 to come and join graduation. Other 2021 seniors have said they do not mind and are happy for the 2020 seniors.

There was a petition the Class of 2020 had in hopes the university would allow them to

come back. A rally was also supposed to be held but never did take place because the email saying the class could attend this year’s graduation was sent out prior.

It looks like the university listened to the demands of the class of 2020 and wanted to give them what they unfortunately missed out on last year. The university made the right decision in allowing the 2020 seniors the chance to come back and walk at this year’s graduation.

## Political science department should be expanded

**By Jose Vega**  
Contributor

Policymakers, lawyers and now even a Rhodes scholar have been produced by the staff and professors in the political science department. I feel as though that should warrant for some more recognition.

The political science department homepage states, “you don’t have to be in politics to be affected by politics. Health care, the environment, free speech, human rights—all of

these are political issues that can be deeply and profoundly personal.”

The department excels at providing an excellent education for its students and allow students to practice civil discourse in the classroom. While many courses at Southern try to incorporate some elements of social justice into its courses, none match what you can learn in a political science course.

For the first time in our institution’s history, an outstanding peer, an SCSU political science student

has won the prestigious Rhodes Scholarship.

There are fellow peers of mine with soaring GPAs who will become great lawyers and defend both the law and our constitutional freedoms, while some with gifts for public administrations will become a part of the next leading generation of politics.

Others will become public health officials, go on to start work within government, non-governmental organizations, think tanks, non-profits and so much

more within this field..

A few have even been able to garner international experience, whether that is studying global governance abroad or working within other continents to uplift disproportionately affected communities.

The department harbors experts in every realm you can think of, from international policy to local and state governance.

While social justice remains the theme of the campus and the department, the

professors truly provide a transformative experience when it comes to how we can incorporate social justice with our work. Specifically, preparing us to handle emerging issues in the world and the country.

I and my peers would not have gotten as far as we have without the backing and support we have received from the professors.

After transferring, it was these same faculty members that aided in guiding me in the current direction I am heading.

Hopefully, as I graduate this semester, I am able to share and be an example of the fruits of their labor.

As well as encourage those who are worried about receiving a “state university education” in political science.

While politics is heavy, emotional, and tiresome, there is nothing more rewarding and no greater department at the university.

Who knows, maybe a coalition of students from the past will build a research center one day—to be continued.

## Easter has a distanced setting as COVID-19 lingers

**By Sofia Rositani**  
Arts & Entertainment Editor

“He has risen” is a quote you will hear as a Christian all day on Easter. I grew up attending Easter mass at 8 a.m. and having a large family dinner. This is so weird for it to be different this year.

Walking into service on Sunday was odd as every other row of pews was sectioned off, which meant it was very hard to find seating as there were many people there for mass.

Everything else was the same, with masks added and COVID-19 precautions in place. This

made it a little harder for me as a Catholic woman who likes taking communion the original way rather than by hand.

I also found it odd during the moments of “peace be with you,” because I am used to shaking hands and giving hugs, so when there was none of that, it was very odd to put a peace sign.

While the Priest who did the mass at the church, I attend talked about how people who litter are like sinners—they throw away the trash like it’s nothing not knowing that it is harming the environment which can then harm us, the Pope talked about harder topics, including the

ongoing pandemic.

“The pandemic is still spreading, while the social and economic crisis remains severe, especially for the poor. Nonetheless— and this is scandalous — armed conflicts have not ended and military arsenals are being strengthened,” Pope Francis said.

While the pope spoke about people suffering around the world from terrorism in their countries and democracy, there was one theme that continued to shine during mass and that was hope.

“The risen Christ is hope for all who continue to suffer from the pandemic, both the sick and those who have lost a

loved one,” Pope Francis said.

This speech was very powerful for those who watched it, bringing me to tears as he spoke these words.

Usually, the Easter Vigil at the Vatican brings in over 10,000 people to the Vatican each year but due to COVID-19 restrictions, only 200 people were able to attend the mass, standing 6 feet apart while wearing masks in the secondary altar of St. Peter’s Basilica, according to CNN.

In Waterbury, CT, mass was held in Holy Land at sunrise, with people who attended showing up at 5 a.m. and the mass starting at 6:15 a.m. They were to

bring their own seats. This mass constantly happens in Waterbury, but due to COVID-19 making it harder for people to attend indoor mass, they opened up Holy Land to do more masses.

During the day many people took to Twitter posting about how Christ has risen and a new day is upon us, many of these tweets were deleted under violating community guidelines on Twitter.

A new way people are able to attend mass from the comfort of their homes, something that only the Vatican usually does prior to COVID-19, is livestreaming mass; making it easier for the older generation and

devoted Catholics who may have COVID-19 to attend mass and not miss a week.

This is something that works, because it makes it easier for people who cannot attend due to work or something else in their lives. Having the opportunity to do it from home after work can help from getting the catholic guilt of not attending.

Pope Francis said during the Easter Vigil, “May the efforts to resolve conflicts peacefully continue, in respect for human rights and the sacredness of life, through fraternal and constructive dialogue in a spirit of reconciliation and true solidarity.”

## SOUTHERN NEWS

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# PHOTO

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## Schwartz and Farnham Programming Spaces

**By Roma Rositani**  
Photo Editor

Last week in Schwartz Programming Space, hall council members threw a “carnival” event which

consisted of games such as Connect Four, pin the tail to the donkey and ring toss. Students who participated in these events were awarded tickets for prizes.

On the other side of

campus, RHA held an event in Farnham Programming Space. Students made goodie bags filled with self care items such as lotion, chapsticks, tea bags, face masks and fidget toys.



PHOTO | BRIA KIRKLIN

Student participates in pin the tail on the donkey while using a mask as a blindfold.



PHOTO | ROMA ROSITANI

Students playing a game of Connect Four to get tickets for prizes.



PHOTO | BRIA KIRKLIN

RHA provide an array of goodies for students to make self care goodie bags.



PHOTO | ROMA ROSITANI

Prizes students are able to get with their tickets at the carnival.

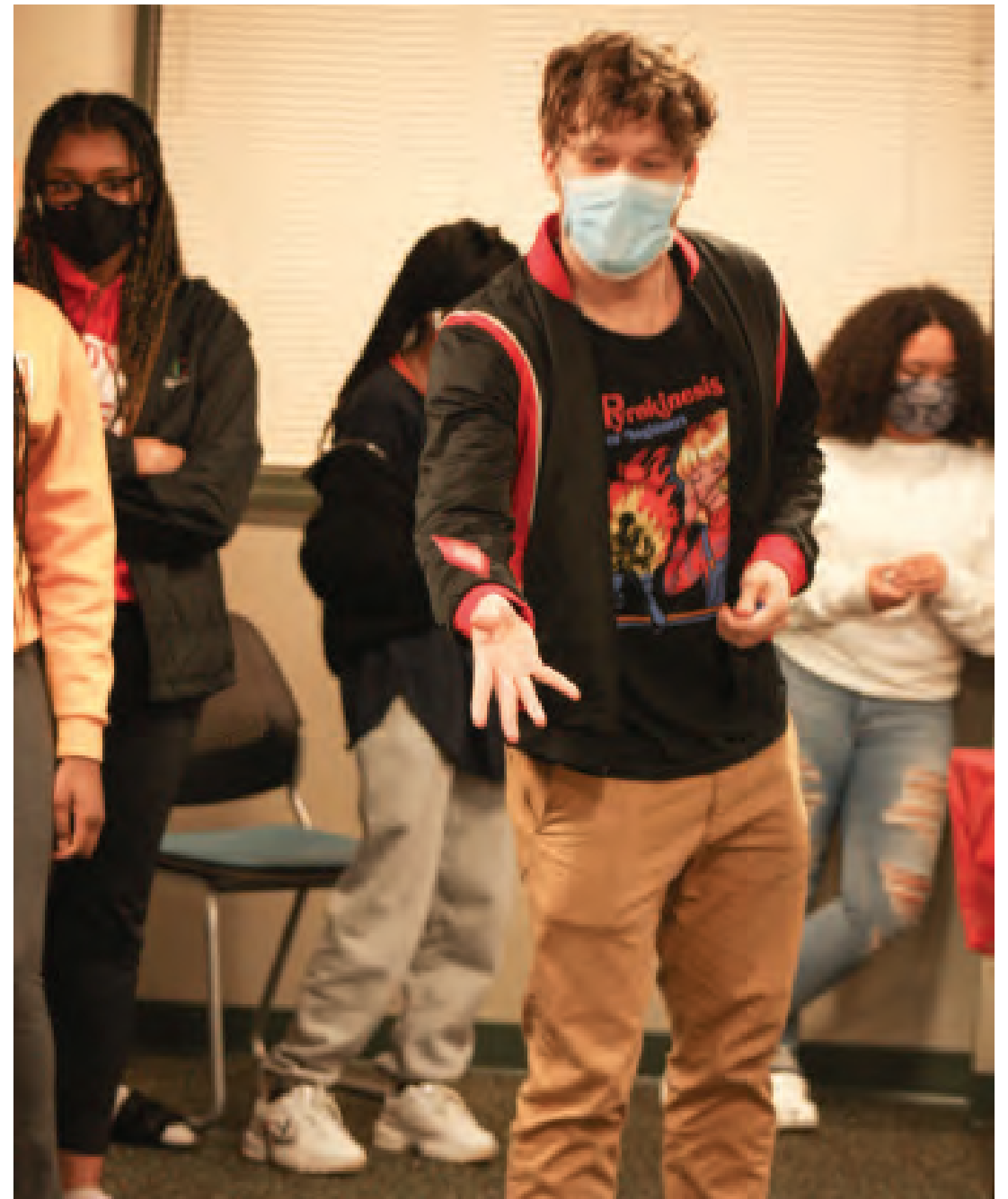


PHOTO | BRIA KIRKLIN

Students watching and participating in ring toss at Schwartz carnival.



PHOTO | ROMA ROSITANI

Tea bags and face masks were provided for goodie bags.

## Lacrosse wins season opener Rowe records three goals, guides Owls to first victory of 2021

By Edward Rudman  
Sports Writer

The women's lacrosse team won their season opener against American International College, 12-7, on Wednesday, March 31 at Ronald J. Abdow Field.

The first four games of their season had been postponed due to COVID-19 reasons. The team is now 1-0 on the season and 1-0 in Northeast 10 conference play. AIC dropped to 1-4 on the season with the loss and 1-3 in NE10 matchups.

"I really had no idea what to expect. AIC has not been stalled at all. They haven't had it stop practicing; they haven't cancelled any games. We were their fifth game," said Head Coach Kevin Siedlecki. "Most of our team was in quarantine for 10 days, we didn't practice for 10 days so we started off very very sloppy. We had four or five turnovers in the first five or six minutes. It was our first game, and we lost a week and a half of practice leading up to it. But I was really really proud of the way they played, we got away with a lot of mistakes because we played really hard. They played with so much intensity and they were so competitive."

AIC was the first to score in the game, but the Owls responded quickly, as they scored four straight goals in a three-minute span to take a 4-1 lead.

With 14:16 remaining in the first half, AIC answered back with a goal of their own, making the game 4-2. The Owls were then able to score twice more, making the game 6-2 an.

AIC was able to find the back of the net two more times in the first half and the score headed into halftime was 6-4.

The Owls dominated the scoring in the second half, scoring six of the first seven goals scored and giving them their largest lead of the game 12-5. AIC scored the last two goals of the game.

"AIC couldn't really capitalize on our mistakes because we kept going after it. We kept trying to cover for our mistakes and we were kind of able to get away with some," said Siedlecki. "Now, that's not going to happen against Adelphi, that's not going to happen against LeMoynes, we have to clean some stuff up going forward but I was really proud of how hard everybody played."

A lot of first year players on the team made their collegiate debuts, as the starting lineup consisted of four freshmen, with more coming off the bench. The team's young core of 12 first-year students are now beginning to get some collegiate level experience.

"Luckily, our upperclassmen took really good care of the freshman and sophomores, who obviously haven't played

many college games, cause all of us were a little nervous," said midfielder Jettke Gray, a sophomore. "Luckily, our team was very supportive of us. When we did make mistakes, they kept giving us pep talks and making sure we getting comfortable."

Siedlecki said he gave the green light to the offense prior to the game to get a high number of shots off and to be aggressive when the opportunities presented themselves.

The Owls scored 12 goals on 31 shots, giving them a shooting percentage of 39 percent. Siedlecki said he'd like it to be closer to the 50 percent mark and that it is something to work on for upcoming games.

Three players notched a hat trick in the game: Gray and attackers Karlie Rowe and Savannah Feinberg.

This was Rowe's seventh game as an Owl with at least three goals scored. Feinberg, a freshman, scored the

first goal for the Owls, her first collegiate goal. Feinberg is the first Southern freshman to record a hat trick since Rowe did so herself when she had four against Assumption University on April 24, 2019.

Gray, a sophomore and transfer from Ithaca College, was the second Owl to score. This goal, would be the first one in her career as an Owl.

See lacrosse page 6



Karlie Rowe (center), who scored a hat trick last week, is greeted by teammates.

## Backed by offense, baseball wins

By Edward Rudman  
Sports Writer

The Owls baseball picked up its first win of the season in its home opener when they defeated Felician University 14-9 on Wednesday, March 31.

The Owls improved to 1-2 on the season with the win. Felician dropped to 3-9 with the loss.

"The more we play, the more consistent we're going to become," said Head Coach Tim Shea. "As I told the guys at the end of this game, the win was great but the team that played today is not going to be the same team in a month from now once we start to play some games and can get really consistent out there on the field. Pitching, defense and hitting, we're going to get better and it's nice when you're not playing your best and you get a win."

The game was close throughout and the Owls had to put together a huge offensive eighth inning to get the game out of Felician's reach.

Heading into the bottom of the eighth inning, the game was tied 7-7 after Felician scored three runs

in the top of the inning.

The Owls' bats got hot though, scoring seven runs and making the game 14-7 after the eighth had wrapped up. Catcher Billy Sullivan, a sophomore,

drove in three of those runs when he notched a triple with the bases loaded. It was Sullivan's first collegiate hit of his career.

"Coming off of last year, the shortened season, it

definitely left a bitter taste in my mouth because I wasn't happy with my performance as a whole," said Sullivan. "I hate letting my team down and I'm very fortunate that Coach

Shea kind of gave me an opportunity late in the game. Going up there, I wanted to have a very simple approach, just try to stay with it and get a good pitch to hit and I wanted to do it for my team."

In the top of the ninth, Felician showed heart and scored twice off of two solo home runs, but the lead the Owls created for themselves in the eighth proved to be insurmountable.

Outfielder Andrew Eng, a junior, smashed a three-run home run in the bottom of the third, his third home run this season in as many games. He's the first player in program history to hit a home run in each of the first three games of a season and he leads the team in RBIs with eight through three games.

Middle fielder Anthony Zambito, a junior, led the Owls on hits for the day, going 4 for 6 and driving in two runs. He also noticed two stolen bases. Four hits are his career high as an Owl for a single game.

Pitcher Mike Szturma, a freshman, got the start on the mound. He pitched three innings.



Tony Zambito, who had four hits, two stolen bases and drove in two runs.

PHOTO COURTESY | WWW.SOUTHERNCT.OWLS.COM

See Baseball page 6



## Outfield fences gain style

Column by Mike Neville  
Sports Editor

A few short years ago in fall of 2017, the Owls revealed the new logo and mascot for the sports teams that will guide the university into the future.

The new look, an intimidating owl with an almost devilish royal blue, has finally found its way to the athletic fields.

The basketball court at Moore Field House was the first to adapt to the new look. Jess Dow Field should follow shortly.

This semester, the Owl found its way to the baseball and softball diamond, which looks pristine from afar.

Since my freshman year on campus, admiring the respected diamonds of play, I always believed something was missing.

At first glance, the Ballpark at SCSU and Pelz Field looked like a little league or high school field that had not seen a game since the days of Roger Clemens.

The fields were unimpressive and failed to catch the eye of those who walked past it. Unless it was a look of disgust.

The university finally addressed the issue at hand with the addition of banners on the dugouts and outfield walls.

These banners have the university's new logo, along with the lettering "Southern Owls" and "Southern Connecticut State University." The softball team has an oversized logo of the Owl on their dugouts, which is a nice touch.

It is a stark difference from the former look of a blue tarp and the metal gates just after the warning track in the outfield.

These additions to both respected facilities offer a clean cut and professional look.

Looking at the fields from the walkway leading up to the building of science, the majestic royal blue colors bring the fields to life.

It is simply a step in the right direction.

This officially marks a new beginning in the history of the university's athletics, and the putting to rest of the winged Owl.

With a new athletic director and COVID-19 going away, an age of excellence has finally arrived on campus.

# Second self care event held by Residence Life for students

On Sunday, Apr. 4, the Office of Residence Life hosted a second self-care kit event. This event was a part of Residence Life's ongoing Strengthening Sundays.

This is the second self-care event Residence Life has hosted. Reaunna Bartell, a graduate student who ran the event, explained why. "We held a self-care event two weeks ago," said Bartell. "It was really popular, but we had some supplies left over. Instead of leaving them in storage, we decided to have another event like the last one."

Not everyone had gone to the previous event. Kaivon Leon, a freshman, had never been to an event like

this. "This is the first event like this I have been to," said Leon. "My RA told me to come."

Leon thought the event was a positive one. "I enjoyed this event," said Leon. "It was relaxing. I would definitely come to more events like this."

The self-care kits are part of the university's Strengthening Sunday events. "Strengthening Sunday was created for health and wellness," said Bartell about the events. The self-care kits fall under this umbrella, with being relaxing and helpful for students.

Students come to these events often. Sydney French, a Sophomore

Nursing major, is enthusiastic about the events held. "I come to every one of these events. Everyone," says French.

The items students can choose for their kits are varied. "Students can get smoothies, fidget cubes, hand cream, chapstick, tea, face masks, and journals," said Bartell.

All items serve a different purpose. According to the University of Rochester Medical Center, journaling can have a positive impact on mental health. "Journaling helps improve your mood by: Helping you prioritize problems, fears, and concerns. Tracking any symptoms day-to-day so that you can recognize trig-

gers and learn ways to better control them. Providing an opportunity for positive self-talk and identifying negative thoughts and behaviors," the article says.

The other items hold similar purposes of relaxing and being positive items for mental and physical wellbeing. "I really love this event," says French, "I think every item is a thoughtful thing."

Despite a previous high turn-out for the first self-care kit, this one was slightly less popular. "The last self-care kit event we had over 20 students come," said Bartell. "This time, though, with it being Easter Sunday, it is less popular."

The popularity of the

event taking a dip was not a problem for the administrators, however. Each student was greeted with a smile and showed how to make their kits one-on-one. Relaxing music played from the speakers.

The low turnout due to it being a holiday weekend has not deterred the administrators from their programs. "Look out for more of our Strengthening Sunday events in the coming weeks," said Bartell. "There are events all throughout April."

While most of the Strengthening Sunday events have been held in the Farnham Programing Space, the coming events will be held in different

places. "We are having a movie night in the residence quad this April. We want to take advantage of the weather more," says Bartell.

With the event being held outside, there may also be hope of more students being able to attend. The Farnham Programing Space must follow indoor COVID-19 guidelines and may only have 25 people inside the basement at a time. With an outdoor event, more students will be able to join.

This self-care kit event was a fun and helpful activity to students. French said, "Yes, I will of-course come to more events like this,"



PHOTO | ROMA ROSITANI

Students attending the self care kit event hosted by Residence Life.



PHOTO | ROMA ROSITANI

Face masks and tea that students could take at the self care event.

## Lacrosse

The three other goal scorers in the game were midfielders Mia Pulisciano and Steph Seymour and attacker Molly Kelly, each scoring one a piece.

"We had two freshmen starting on defense and two on attack. Clearly, all four of them stepped up as much as they needed to," said Rowe. I think they all stepped up in different ways, they were all ready to get into the game. A few came off the bench and got into the game, so they came ready to play and it was clear through our win."

Goaltender Laura Morton, a senior, recorded 10 saves on the day and allowed seven goals for a save percentage of .588. It was Morton's 22nd game with at least 10 saves and

her career total is now 406. She's the second player in program history to reach 400 career saves.

Siedlecki said, "At our best, we moved the ball well. We moved the ball

quickly. We are very aggressive on defense, can create turnovers, can create chaos for the offense and really get them out of what they want to do."



PHOTO COURTESY | WWW.SOUTHERNCTOWLS.COM

Karlie Rowe attacking during a game.

## Baseball

Szturma pitched three innings, allowed two earned runs, and struck out three batters.

Pitcher Tommy Hughes, a junior, was awarded the win on the day, making his record 1-0 on the season. He

came in during the top of the eighth inning and secured the games with the last five outs.

"Having not played in over a year, the first time we played was against Adelphi on Saturday, and then to come home and get a game, and I'm very appreciative to our

administration for allowing us to add this game," said Shea.

"This was an add on game, it wasn't on the schedule and they understand that these guys want to play. We don't play again until after Easter and hopefully we can keep the thing rolling."

## Mugs

"I understand if people are nervous because of COVID and such, and that some people may be busy," says said Augustine, "but more people should come to these events."

Burgess has a similar sentiment, but also wishes to get the message out about the event hosting space

Farnham Programing Space, located under

Farnham Hall, is a resource she thinks not enough students are aware of. "I want to encourage residence to enter FPS, to just come and hang out," said Burgess.

Currently, all dorms have a policy of only one guest at a time. Burgess wants students to know that, if they follow proper guidelines, FPS can be a space for hanging out and catching up.

"You and your friends can come, just watch movies,

study, play games. If you follow procedure, you can catch up with your friends here," said Burgess. She wants students to know this is more than just a place for occasional events and studying, it is also a resource available to all residence students.

The mug program, even with a small turn-out, was a place for students to relax and unwind after a busy week. Augustine said, "It really was something to destress with."

## Interested in joining student media?

Get involved by applying for any of the following openings next semester!

\*You may apply for more than one position and apply to more than one club\*

### Southern News:

- Editor-in-Chief
- Managing Editor
- News Editor
- Features Editor
- Sports Editor
- Photo Editor
- Layout Editor
- Web Asst.
- Sports Writer
- General Assignment Reporter (4)
- Copy Editor (3)
- Photographer
- Business Manager
- Delivery Driver

### WSIN Radio:

- General Manager
- Programing Director
- Music Director
- Production Director
- Promotion Director
- Sports Director
- News Director
- Webmaster

### Crescent Magazine:

- Editor-in-Chief
- Managing Editor
- Features Editor (2)
- Online/Video Editor
- Photo Editor
- Asst. Photo Editor
- Layout Editor
- Asst. Layout Editor
- Copy Editor
- Delivery Driver

### SCSU TV:

- General Manager
- Operations Manager
- Promotion Manager
- Technical Director
- Technical Assistant (2)
- Programming Director
- Programming Asst. (2)
- News Director
- News Asst. (2)

### Folio:

- Editor
- Associate Editor
- Art Editor
- Fiction Editor
- Poetry Editor

Applications are due by Friday, April 16.

Follow this link to apply: <https://forms.office.com/r/G2SUaKoygj>

For any questions, feel free to reach out to [tappers1@southernct.edu](mailto:tappers1@southernct.edu)

## Vaccines reach campus this semester

By Donovan Wilson  
Reporter

Vaccines became available to all adults April 1. This availability has already impacted campus.

“The process has since changed, now allowing you to choose which vaccine you want,” said English professor Timothy Parrish.

Parrish was vaccinated through Yale and has received both of his shots as of this past Monday. He described the process as simple and was vaccinated only two weeks after the day he signed up, making for a quick turnaround time considering the high demand.

Parrish said, “It rivaled any vaccination I’ve ever gotten.”

While he does endorse the shot, Parrish also mentioned the side effects people may experience. Parrish experienced a sore arm and the pain went all the way up to his neck. He also experienced a runny nose, fatigue and headache on the day of his shot and has anticipated it to be worse with his second shot.

“I was anxious to get a

shot, primarily because of my family and certainly the statistics are favorable so I went online and signed up,” said President Joe Bertolino.

His experience was a little different than that of Parrish’s, as he signed up early and had a sizable wait. Things are much easier and accessible now as the vaccine becomes very widely available and you can even now choose which vaccine to get. Bertolino did not have this luxury, and was given whichever vaccine they chose for him. His first vaccine ended up being the Pfizer vaccine. Patients can now choose from Pfizer, Moderna and Johnson, according to Parrish.

Bertolino said, “By the start of May, I should be good to go.”

President Joe received his first shot on March 28th and due to the three week wait in between doses that all patients will receive, will get his second and final dose on April 18. This shot will then take about two weeks to take full effect, making the whole process, from sign up to fully vaccinated, about 7 weeks or a

month and a half. Due to the process being quick and easy in addition to safe, Bertolino is recommending all students who have the ability to get the vaccine do get vaccinated.

According to Connecticut’s official state website, “Connecticut’s vaccination program will open to the final group of adults—all individuals between the ages of 16 and 44—on Thursday, April 1. Individuals within that age group will be eligible to schedule appointments starting on that date.”

The state itself has shifted focus to vaccinating all groups of adults over the age of 16, somewhat placing a spotlight on college students, according to Bertolino.

Due to this, the school is now exploring options on having their very own vaccination clinic which would aim not only to vaccinate members of the campus such as students, staff and faculty but also include members of the surrounding community. All of this is currently up in the air and not at all set in stone but President Joe describes it as “an opportunity to jump on” if the chance arises.



PHOTO | USNEWS.COM

COVID-19 vaccine syringe shown before injection.

According to Connecticut’s official state website, “Connecticut is the first state in the nation to receive one of FEMA’s newly created mobile

vaccination units, which will help the state in its ongoing efforts to bring the COVID-19 vaccine to people who live within socially vulnerable neigh-

borhoods.”

These FEMA units will be available in 17 different towns including the university’s home of New Haven.

## Contract proposals

By Ellis McGinley  
Copy Editor

Contract negotiations between the Board of Regents and professors union continue as state senators get involved, open letters professors published and rallies are held across the four colleges.

“I am reaching out to you because, as President of the faculty union, I believe you have the right to know what is happening at your university. In December the Board of Regents (BOR), the entity that oversees Central, Eastern, Southern, and Western Connecticut State Universities, exchanged contract proposals with your faculty. The BOR’s proposals shocked us because they are so extreme and because, if they prevail, they will diminish the quality of your education,” wrote CSU-AAUP president Dr. Patty O’Neill in an open letter to students.

The BOR and the CSU-AAUP negotiate university contracts every four years. The BOR is a government body composed of volunteers tasked with overseeing the CSUs: the CSU-AAUP represents university professors and faculty.

“The CSU Professors from SCSU, WCSU, ECSU and CCSU composed a letter protesting the BOR’s positions because of our commitment to the excellence of your personal education and that of all your peers,” Vivian Shipley, professor of English, said.

On March 16, professors from the four universities published

“AN OPEN LETTER TO THE BOARD OF REGENTS” in the CT Inquirer, saying “the contract proposed by the BOR attacks standards of academic freedom” and addressing BOR proposals which would limit faculty’s ability to conduct independent research.

13 Connecticut senators also signed a letter to BOR Chairman Matt Fleury, saying “in these proposals, we see a clear threat to the working conditions of educators whose expertise and dedication have built the reputations of the State Universities as accessible institutions where working- and middle-class students receive an excellent education.”

The letter says the senators “must communicate our dismay at the Board’s rejection of a shared value.”

“I have taught full time at SCSU since 1969 and this is [the] most serious threat to the quality of the educational process that I have ever witnessed,” said Shipley. “My major concern is that the students do not have their education ‘watered down’ by having class size increased to make more money.”

The BOR contract proposals included an increased workload of five classes per semester, or a five-five, which would bring CSU workload to one of the highest in the United States.

“A few sessions ago, the chief negotiator for the other side, for the Regents—we understood him to say they were taking their five-five proposal off the table. Well, we thought

that was great news,” Cynthia Stretch, professor of English, said. The CSU-AAUP also reported the five-five proposal had been retracted in the Session 6 update, posted on their website under “Table Talks.”

“Then he sent an email to our chief negotiator, Professor O’Neill, and said ‘no, no, we said that we would both withdraw our proposals on workload.’ And we are not interested in withdrawing our proposal,” Stretch said.

The union proposal is a “three plus one,” which would give professors the option to use their fourth course for “service or creative activities. We would be able to do the kind of research that keeps us up-to-date in our field,” Stretch said. This type or courseload is used in departments such as computer science and within the School of Business.

“The current load is 4 courses and the more preparations and students the faculty member has to teach, the less time there is to give to each individual student,” Shipley said.

The CSU-AAUP has held protests regarding the proposals at Central and Eastern, with plans for more. O’Neill’s letter includes a petition for a “student, alum, friend or family member” to sign, and other professors have encouraged students to contact their representatives.

“The boots on the ground, that stuff really matters,” Stretch said. “If [representatives] start hearing from students, I think they’d absolutely pay attention.”

## Fire alarm becomes issue

By Caitlin O’Halloran  
Reporter

The fire alarms on campus residence halls have been harmful to students with certain sensitivities and disorders.

“The fire alarms are pretty ableist,” said special education major Gina Barron, a freshman who lives in Chase Hall. “They are not good for people who have sensory issues.”

In an article called The Fire Drill Freak Out by Pathfinders for Autism, Mary Beth Collins writes how auditory over-responsiveness sensitivity to sounds in general or sounds at a certain volume and also trouble hearing while a loud noise is going off.

“I know we just had a fire drill recently and fire alarms go off quite frequently and from those instances I’ve noticed a few things—I have friends who have sensitivity to loud noises I myself have problems with them, and the loud fire alarm can be quite debilitating, especially to those with anxiety or processing disorders,” said communication science and disorders major Sam Gontarz, a freshman who lives in Chase Hall.

As it is Autism Acceptance Month, it is a good time to bring attention to the issues that can arise from certain disturbances that come with things like fire alarm sounds and lights. In an Autism Speaks article about autism and anxiety with loud noises, Dr. Judy Reaven of the University of Colorado School of Medicine and Children’s Hospital Colorado notes that anxiety symptoms and reactions are common

in those with autism spectrum disorder and can have an impact on those individuals in their home life, community and in-school settings.

“I honestly really hate the fire alarms here. They are way too loud and high pitched for no reason. I’ve asked around upperclassmen and RA’s to ask why they are so unnecessarily loud and they claim it’s to ensure that it wakes up anyone who is asleep or hard of hearing, but I think that’s ridiculous because I have a friend who is hard of hearing and they ended up sleeping through a fire drill anyway,” said biology major and marine studies minor Bianca Troche, a sophomore who lives in Schwartz Hall.

Troche noted she and her boyfriend have issues with loud noise as he also has PTSD. She was visiting her boyfriend in Brownell Hall at the time of the most recent fire drill and the fire drill sent the two into a panic attack, which caused her boyfriend’s roommate to have to help them get their belongings and actually get out of the building.

“The fact that we could have both possibly faced disciplinary action for not leaving the building over something we cannot control is both frustrating and scary, especially since the fire drill came with no notice that could have helped us either prepare beforehand or at least make sure we weren’t in the building when it went off,” said Troche.

On the university emergency preparedness site, it’s written that students on campus in the community should be aware of the protection

features to reduce the chance of death, injury and property damage. Still, there are students who are focused on the harmful impact caused by the fire alarms, even though they are supposed to be there to help.

“I’ve spent several nights at housing buildings on campus and got woken up by the alarms a lot,” said journalism major Emily Merly, a senior. “It was always in the middle of the night and it was jarring. But to someone who has a sensory processing issue, that must be even scarier because it’s so sudden and overwhelming.”

Most of the students stated that they believe there should be a better way for fire alarms to warn students because of the negative and harmful impact it can have on students.

“Of course I understand that they need to be loud so that it alerts people that, okay, there’s a fire you need to get out of the building, that makes sense to me, but it goes beyond loud, it’s like a blaring noise,” said Barron.

Some students have a hard time concentrating when the fire alarm starts going off.

“When it happened the other week, first I had my headphones in but I took them off because I had to leave and I tried to stand up but then immediately fell back into my chair and had to sit with my eyes closed for a bit just because of how overwhelmed with sound I was, said Barron.

And then, I was able to tell myself okay I need to leave, and that I was safe and then I left but I know that if maybe in the past, I wouldn’t have been able to do that”

## Sodexo offers students wide varieties

By Donovan Wilson  
Reporter

The university offers an array of different options for food to students but the feedback is mixed.

"I feel as if the options are great for those who need it, however as a commuter who lives very close, I almost never feel the need to get food on campus as I can go home and make better food," said exercise science major Cassidy Girolamo, a junior.

The main dining option on campus is Connecticut Hall, which is the typical college dining hall and serves meals in a buffet-style setting. The main purpose of Conn Hall is to provide quick and easy either sit-down or to go meals at any time to undergrads who do not have kitchens in their rooms or easy access to a kitchen. However, those who either commute or do have easy access to a kitchen may prefer cooking food and find Conn's food rather unsatisfactory.

"Before COVID put

most of my classes online, I would occasionally eat at the student center because I feel as if they have better food and a much more relaxed area to study," Girolamo said.

The general point is the student center is a better place to go for lunch or dinner. The food is considered much higher in quality or at least preferred to as it is made to order style and wider variety of customizable options. The environment is also much more open with many more seating options than Conn and the fact it is not exclusively a dining area makes it a bit more inviting for eating and just generally socializing with peers.

"Not having Starbucks on campus is kind of an inconvenience," said biology major Morgan Gatewood, a senior.

There is a Starbucks on campus in the Owl Perch, a small lounge to buy drinks and snacks in the Buley library. This semester, Sodexo made the decision to keep the Owl Perch closed due to low attendance. This impedes on students'

ability to go get coffee as conveniently as possible while studying in the library, using the computers or any of their other services. The only other service available is the coffee vending machine near the owl perch.

Gatewood said, "Personally knowing I can get coffee at the library motivates me to go and be productive."

Coffee is a major part of on-campus dining options as it is a major component of what college students consume. However, Starbucks is not the only coffee option on campus as the Dunkin', in the student center is still open and attracting a lot of traffic. In the end, Starbucks not being open is not necessarily a huge blow to on-campus dining but makes it difficult for people who want coffee but do not like Dunkin' to get access to coffee.

Business and finance major Ava Boyd, a sophomore said, "I think it's good and when I went, it had a lot of everything and the workers were nice."



PHOTO | ROMA ROSITANI

Dunkin Donuts in Adanti Student Center where students can get breakfast.



PHOTO | BRIA KIRKLIN

Connecticut Hall, where residential students dine in or takeout food.

## Godzilla and Kong fight in new film

By Sofia Rositani  
Arts & Entertainment Editor

Ever wanted to see a gigantic gorilla and lizard fight? Well in the new film "Godzilla vs. Kong," you can. As someone who is not a huge fan of the films, I really enjoyed it. The film was action packed and full of creatures attempting to kill other monsters, robots and even each other.

Throughout watching the film, you can easily tell they had a large budget for the filmmaking.

"He (Adam Wingard) had already been tapped to direct the fourth film in the MonsterVerse series, "Godzilla vs. Kong," with a \$160 million-plus budget to match," according to IndieWire.

This film, like said above, is one of four films in this franchise. The first three films that came out before this one was "Godzilla," "Kong: Skull Island," and "Godzilla: King of Monsters." You

might be thinking that you have to watch these films to understand the latest movie, but that is incorrect. I have not seen any of the prior films, the only films I have seen was the old "Godzilla" from 1967 and the old "King Kong" from 2005. While "King Kong" is not the oldest film, it is older for our time.

The beginning of the film was very interesting because I did not think they would have introduced Kong with the music they did; the song they used when introducing Kong was "Over the Mountain (Across the Sea)" by Bobby Vinton. The soundtrack in the film was overall very good. It had a lot of different artists like Elvis Presley, Judas Priest and The Hollies.

"The film was released this week in both theaters and on HBO Max, is already a box office hit around the world; last week, it debuted to \$121.8 million worldwide, the biggest worldwide opening of the pandemic.

As the U.S. box office starts bouncing back, it's expected to do big business stateside, too," according to IndieWire.

"Kong vs Godzilla" had a great cast of younger actors, a few we have seen before in films and shows. Like, Millie Bobby-Brown from "Stranger Things" and "Godzilla: King of Monsters." Her scenes actually reminded me of scenes from season 3 of "Stranger Things" where Steve and Dustin snuck into a Russian lab. Another actor in the film was Julian Dennison from "Deadpool 2." He was in the scenes with Bobby-Brown, and they reminded me of scenes from a teen action film.

The highlight of the film, in my opinion was child actor Kaylee Hottle, a deaf actress who was able to talk to Kong. One scene in the film which had me emotional was one of her scenes where she got down to the floor trying to see if Kong had a heartbeat and

as she listened, tears came to her eyes and she signed to her adopted mother that his heartbeat was getting slower. After this happened, the action began again. There is probably a five-minute break in-between the action scenes because it is a very heavily packed action film.

Something that happened that have not just left me, someone who does not really watch or understand the films, but also my brother and father who I watched the film with, confused is that Kong has not become "King Kong" yet. Will there be another film that explains that? Is he the king of Skull Island now or will he end up in New York City like the other films? What happened to Godzilla at the end of the film? He just got up and left. Does that make Kong the "alpha" or is neither of them alpha? So many questions left unanswered, which hopefully means more films for people who are obsessed with them.

## Paint mugs with Program Council

By Madeline S. Scharf  
Reporter

On Friday, Apr. 2, Residence Life hosted a mug painting event. This event drew some students to relax and decorate mugs in the early evening.

The Programming Associate for this event, Kaheira Burgess, was enthusiastic about the event and what it may bring students. "I wanted to do a laid-back event," said Burgess, "something students can have creative liberty over."

Burgess believes activities such as the mug painting may help students.

"Especially with mid-terms right now," she said, "being able to express yourself is really important, and it helps engage our students."

Attendees have a similar attitude to the mug painting event. Biology major Azaria Augustine, a freshman, came to the program for a calming night. "It was Friday," said Augustine, "and I wanted to come to the program to destress and enjoy myself and be creative."

It has been scientifically proven that art and craft can help relax and de-stress someone. In a 2016 scientific study, 39 adults cortisol levels were measured before and after creating works of art. Cortisol is the body's main stress producing hormone. These adults' levels of cortisol, compared before and after creating a piece of art, were often lower than when they began. Written responses by participants also showed that they felt

more relaxed and less stressed after making a piece of art.

The popularity of DIY events on campus this idea as well. "These DIY events allow us to express creativity," said Augustine, "and gives us something to de-stress with."

In an article from the American Institute of Stress, it cites that "eight in 10 college students experience frequent stress." This is attributed to new social environments, higher workloads, and expenses racked up from getting a college education.

College students need de-stressing activities. The article also comments that "students are not necessarily given healthy coping methods for managing stress." Artistic endeavors such as the DIY mug painting event allow students to relax and de-stress. They are free to be creative and express themselves in a healthy manner.

DIY events seem to be well liked on campus. "I think these events are popular," said Burgess. "From what I have seen, students like events where they can take something back. Especially take something back that they have put a bit of themselves into."

Despite the enthusiasm for DIY events, this mug painting did not have a very large turn-out. The combination of it being a weekend event and on Good Friday did not lend to a large crowd. Those, along with concerns about COVID-19, are theorized to kept people away.

See Mugs on Page 6



PHOTO | SOFIA ROSITANI

Godzilla and Kong fighting on boats in a scene from the film on YouTube.