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Students cope with grief as a community

Dealing with grief from memorial services to kind words, a community comes together to help each other move forward



PHOTOS | IZZY MANZO

On Dec. 6, sticky notes were left for Melanie Coleman and her family on a Pelz Gymnasium door during her memorial that celebrated her life and students paid tribute.



PHOTOS | IZZY MANZO

Students wear shirts with "MC" on them for Melanie Coleman at her memorial on Dec. 6.

**By Tamonda Griffiths
Editor in Chief
Jessica Guerrucci
Managing Editor**

Grief, according to Chaplain Jim Furlong, is an inevitable part of life. Loss, he said, is another one of those realities that everyone will encounter, and all go through.

"You know the stages without even following them, unless you can't get out of grief and that is where the concern comes in," said Furlong. "People do have serious adverse reactions to grief."

After the loss of two students during the fall 2019 semester — nursing major Melanie Coleman, a junior, and history major Sean Gallo, a transfer student — the campus had to find ways to cope.

In an email sent out by

the Director of Integrated Communications and Marketing Patrick Dilger, he said the death of a student is "among the most difficult things that a campus will ever deal with."

"In these days of social media, you need to pull together a message quickly," said Dilger, "and typically you want to give the community the essentials of what happened without going too far."

It is important, Dilger said to inform the campus community not only what occurred, but also how the university is handling the situation and what resources are available to deal with the sudden loss. Often times, he said, students especially tend to learn information, whether factual or not from social media.

"They're all tragic deaths," said Dilger.

One of the ways the campus honored Coleman was by holding a memorial in her honor which gave her teammates from her gymnastics team, as well as her professors and her peers, an opportunity to share stories about her.

Despite the tragic nature of the situation, Furlong said he saw different communities on campus come together and honor Coleman as they tried to move forward together in the grieving process.

"Human beings are social animals, we need each other," said Furlong. "There's no such thing as individual spirituality. It has to be done in a community in order for it to be healthy. You have to have other people around you just to get through life."

Though Gallo's untimely death did not gather the national attention that

Coleman's did, Furlong said his friends and family still got together to cope with the grief.

"There was hugging, there was crying, there was pats on the back, there was 'I'm there for you,' 'I love you,' all the social things we do as people," he said.

However, in some cases, Furlong said people often do not know what to do when people encounter a friend who has had a family member or friend who is close to them pass away, and the best thing you can do is ask if there is anything you can do for them or just be there and listen.

Considering all this, for both student deaths, counseling services were offered to students to help them cope. Director of the Counseling Center Nick Pinkerton said they try to make a presence to those who are most affected and

let everyone know how to access services in case they need support.

In his experience, however, Pinkerton said students do not come immediately after the passing, instead it takes a little while for people to want to come into a professional.

"I think the initial shock is difficult, but there's also a community that's around and understands the loss and is feeling that loss and experiencing it together, and the fact that they're experiencing it together can sometimes be protective and supportive," said Pinkerton.

When people do come in for counseling, he said he likes to let them know about the stages of grief, but he prefers to think of them as "phases." He said the first is denial, then anger, bargaining,

depression and acceptance.

He said out of all the stages anger is the most "taboo" because it is difficult to know where to put it and where to direct it.

"It's important to know that anger is a part of many people's grief," said Pinkerton "so it's important that people give them a sense of compassion and understanding. Anger isn't bad, it's more about what you do with it."

Sophomore, Elida Flores, an English major said while she did not know Gallo nor Coleman personally, but she still felt shocked by the news of their untimely deaths.

"They're kids your age," said Flores, "and you kind of think they're trying to do the same thing you are."

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Students find Southern commuter policy lacking

**By Abby Richards
Contributor**

In the pouring rain, communications major Sebastian Gonzalez, a senior, was on his way to his job at the digital production facility on campus. The rain was so powerful that the rubber on his windshield wipers came off and he had to stop and remove them.

The metal of the wipers was left scratching against his windshield as he drove, late, for his shift. This is just one of the concerns for students commuting to Southern; with snow threatening, it could get worse.

Roughly 6,600 students at Southern commute to school and the commuting experience is different for everyone. It can be difficult to get to school with traffic and inclement weather and as winter continues this experience is about to get even harder, especially since there are no policies in place to protect commuters.

Communications major Emmanuel Soares, a junior, drives about 25 minutes from Stratford to get to school.

"It's really different from last semester where I lived on campus up in [the] North [residence hall]. It's way less convenient," he said. "I feel like I'm way more tired than I was last semester."

Southern has a page on its website dedicated to commuter students. Here, commuters can find information about the Commuter Commission, a group that meets once a week to support commuters and discuss ways they can get involved, commuter parking, how to get a U-Pass, tips for commuters and frequently asked questions.

Even so, the tips for commuters on this page are just that: tips. There are currently no concrete policies regarding inclement weather, parking, or policies overall, that apply solely to commuter students at Southern.

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University Forums discusses issues



PHOTOS | FAITH WILLIAMS

Building Empathy in the Classroom: Paying Attention to Mental Health" session was led by Steven Hoffer, Ph.D and Mark Cameron, Ph.D.

**By Faith Williams
Contributor**

Generation Z makes up most of the student body on Southern's campus. To continue to effectively serve the current Southern community and bridge the gap between generations, professors are now learning new ways to mend the divide.

This year's University

an inclusive learning environment.

Wright said that mentorship is the number one component in the success of students.

"Sometimes mentorship just happens, but how can we make it more apart of the university's culture?" Helen Marx, Ph.D. said during the "Mentorship Techniques for our Diverse Student Population" session.

During the session, professors and faculty discussed how they would develop mentorship relationships including intentionally approaching students to build relationships and making themselves available in highly populated student locations on campus like the student center and library.

Mentoring students can create a sense of belongingness, which according to Wright, students crave and drives their success.

A session called "Facilitating Difficult Discussions in Comfortable Environments" helped professors know how to

tackle tough topics in the classroom. Controversial topics including race and religion can come up and to have a successful discussion, it should be approached and executed correctly. Sarah Roe, Ph.D., Cheryl Green, Ph.D. and Amal Abdel Raouf, Ph.D. led the discussion and explained that as an instructor, it is important before bringing up the difficult topics, to create a safe and respectful environment.

According to the professors, students can be more susceptible to share their thoughts and ideas when they are comfortable.

"Imagine if you just met someone in the grocery store and they want to talk to you about abortion," Roe said.

The instructors are to thoroughly prepare for the discussion by getting to know their audience, taking into consideration age, time of class and how the class generally engages in discussion, according to Roe.

See Forum Page 3

IT Department redesign Engleman B121

By Jacob Waring
News Editor

The Information Technology Department had recently completed its renovation of Engleman B121 which occurred in December, a room that frequently sees utilization by the campus community for many meetings and events.

Trever Brolliar, Director for academic technology who was part of the team that oversaw the renovation of EN B121 said that the space needed remodeling.

"It gets a lot of traffic and the equipment was aging and there was an evident need for the space to be renovated and improved for future use," he said.

Executive Vice President

of Student Government Association, Brooke Mercaldi, a senior said that the room is utilized often by the Southern community.

"A lot of really important meetings happened in that room, not just for student government," she said, "but all across campus, different clubs and organizations and a lot of faculty presentations happened in that room."

Mercaldi said one of the challenges in having meetings in the room was a pillar that was obstructing the view of the meeting.

"[The pillar] makes it hard for people sitting in the back of the room to see what's going on and be involved. There are also a lot of tables that are behind that pillar," Mercaldi.

The renovations incorporating additional screens will help students be able to participate more or encourage more involvement according to Mercaldi.

The IT department, according to Brolliar, said they tried to use equipment that Southern had already owned when possible. They estimated the back half of the room was equipment that was repurposed from other rooms. He also said the only pieces of equipment that they had to invest in the podium, the computer, and the monitor projectors which are staples in classrooms across campus.

Phillip Bryant, coordinator of AV/TV Multi-Media said he oversaw the installation of

the room working with the outside vendors and to make sure everything got accomplished.

According to Bryant, the IT Department can remotely monitor the room from their office to ensure control, security and operational function.

There is a failsafe where the room gets shut down after two hours of inactivity which Brolliar said just, "made sense."

"If there's no one in here for two hours, everything gets powered down," said Brolliar "It saves equipment. It saves like electricity. [It] saves money."

According to Bryant, the I.T. Department is committed to ensuring every piece of equipment function at a certain quality, not just that it works.

They said that machine powering the equipment is housed in a closet in the back of the room, enabling the podium to be moved freely. Bryant also said that all the equipment is the same as is housed in classrooms.

"The average faculty or student who has used a smart room before could manage their way because it's so similar," said Brolliar, "There's just a couple extra features."

One of those features is wireless compatibility which can be used anywhere in the room. "We have a wireless touch

panel where you can walk around at any corner of this room and run the room as if the podium was sitting up there," said Bryant.

Brolliar said due to the size of the room, it might be hard to hear people speaking, so the room has to ability to have different microphone setups.

"We do have the ability for lapel mikes and

microphones and multi microphones for panels" he said.

Microphone stands, according to Brolliar can be set up on tables when it is a meeting as large as student government meeting. He said that "they do a great job without the microphone" but the ability to use microphones is always there if needed.



PHOTOS | JACOB WARING

The computer monitor the wireless touchscreen that are the new addition to B121



PHOTOS | JACOB WARING

Trever Brolliar, director for academic technology (top) and Phillip Bryant, coordinator of AV/TV Multi-Media (bottom) showing the changes to EN B121.

Students feel a disconnect from academic advisers



PHOTO | JESSE MULLEN

Student worker at the front desk in the Wintergreen Building provides instruction to another student to one of the offices housed in the building.

By Jesse Mullen
Contributor

The distance students feel from their advisers is a common problem on campus.

Maria Petruzzelli is a public health major who transferred to Southern from The University of Bridgeport. One problem she faced: she did not know who her academic adviser was.

"A lot of people don't know [who their adviser is], so that's one thing that I think Southern as a community struggle with," said Petruzzelli, who is now a transfer assistant.

Finding her adviser was not her only departmental struggle, however.

"When I transferred here two and a half years ago, I didn't know how to do degree evaluations. I ran into issues like 'do these credits transfer?' — a lot of my credits didn't transfer," said Petruzzelli.

However, Southern is exploring a new model of advising involving

academic neighborhoods.

"Neighborhoods are essentially a collection of similar majors," said Helen Marx, Faculty Director of Undergraduate Advising. "They are designed to help students who might need more help than a typical adviser would be able to provide."

The system is designed to get away from what Marx calls the "transactional" aspects of advising, such as students walking into advising only to get a PIN number that allows them to sign up for classes and leaving.

"[In the past] the PIN was everything," Marx said. "But what we want is for discussions with faculty to be real discussions. I'm struggling in this part of my major and I need some support."

Director of Academic Advising, Harry Twyman agreed.

"The model is based on the belief that the 'heart' of advising lies within the academic majors and their faculty," Twyman said. "There has to be a focus

on building mentoring relationships and deepening students' sense of belonging to an academic home."

Officials have said each neighborhood will have its own academic success center by 2021. There are currently six neighborhoods implemented and two still in progress, according to an academic advising executive summary.

"We currently have AACs in place for Arts and Humanities, Business, Interdisciplinary Studies, Social and Behavioral Sciences, STEM, and Exploratory [students]," said Twyman. "We are scheduled to have Education and Health and Human Services ready to go for Fall 2020."

According to Marx, the process has been five years in the making.

"[The new system] came out of a faculty committee where we did research on the numbers of students in different majors, and what the needs of those students were," said Marx.

Frank LaDore, Director of

Transfer Student Services, was also a member of that committee. He said the new model was designed to help "exploratory," or undeclared, students.

"The reason for the model is that students would be 'swirling' — not knowing what they want to do," said LaDore. "And now if we at least know if they are thinking about psych or sociology [as majors], they would go into the social science academic advising center, meet with a professional [adviser], and then meet with a faculty adviser."

For students already in a major, however, not much will change.

"They will continue to be advised by faculty members [in those majors]," Marx said.

Students who transferred — and continue to transfer — during the ongoing transition between new and old feel the growing pains of the new system.

Communication major Emily Zirkelbach, a junior, is one of many students

who have had this issue.

"[Currently] I don't know who my adviser is, although I do have an appointment," Zirkelbach said.

Zirkelbach also had an issue with receiving permissions for a communication class she needed which could have hindered her ability to graduate on time.

"I was granted permission [for the course], but somehow I wasn't added to the roster," Zirkelbach said. "Luckily, I was able to meet again, and they were able to fix it, but that could have set me back."

There were also other issues with the online catalog. Such was the case for computer science major Olivia Liebler, a junior.

"For me it was really important to be able to look online how my credits would transfer before committing," said Liebler. "And their online lookup system is very cumbersome."

Not all students had problems, however. Communication

major, Liana McCool, a sophomore, said she was satisfied overall with how her advising has been handled thus far.

"I like that they offer both [prescriptive and professional] advising," said McCool.

Ultimately, Marx said she empathizes with the struggles of the student.

"There's a sort of reflective part of being in college where you're figuring out who you are and what you want to be," Marx said. "And that's hard work." again, and they were able to fix it, but that could have set me back."

There were also other issues with the online catalog. Such was the case for computer science major Olivia Liebler, a junior. "For me it was really important to be able to look online how my credits would transfer before committing," said Liebler. "And their online lookup system is very cumbersome." Not all students had problems, however.

Grade release delayed by technical issue

By Faith Williams
Contributor

The end of the semester comes and students wait for the final grades of their classes. Unfortunately, due to issues out of professors hands, students are forced to wait another few days to get their final grades. Once finals are done, professors are allotted a certain amount of time to get each student's final grade to the university for students' records. Some may think it is a simple

process, but it becomes frustrating for students.

"As a graduating student, having to wait for my grades can be annoying, because I want to know what my grades are so I can make sure everything is good," business management major Sean Wilder, a senior said.

There can be various reasons for a slight delay in grades, and professors not turning in their grades is one of them.

It can be assumed that when something goes wrong with computers, it

is because of a technical issue. When asked about it, Southern's I.T. department confirmed that when things like registration and grade releases happens, they make sure that the technical side of things is all set up for the influx of use of Banner Web.

According to Southern's IT department website, the department also routinely maintains the system so that it continues to run smoothly.

On Friday, Dec. 20, students received an email from the Registrar's Office

stating that grades were "taking longer than normal to process." The email said it would take up to three days before grades would be released, and not only this but degree evaluations and transcripts were also unavailable during that period of time.

A few hours later, students received another email saying that the issue was fixed and grades were finally available. These setbacks can be frustrating for students because they are uncertain when they will receive their grades.

This is not the only

issue students come across when using Banner Web. During registration time, students wake up at 6 a.m. to register for their classes to ensure they are in the classes they need. However, when registering for spring semester, seniors experienced technical issues. This caused immediate concern.

This time however, was a technical issue. As stated before, the I.T. department ensures that the system can continue working when there are hundreds of students using the

site and registering for the same classes. The uncertainty of being able to register for a class necessary to graduate is one no student wants to be in. These technical issues ultimately require patience from the students.

From grade releases to registration for the next semester, Banner Web is not always the easiest site to navigate for students and faculty. Technical issues are inevitable as technology is not perfect, but with patience and preparedness, issues will be at a minimum.

Grief

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Flores said these deaths make students think about their own lives and the trials, tribulations or successes they may have encountered on their own journey to earn a degree.

"[Gallo] he transferred here," said Flores. "So, he probably did the community college thing, like WestConn then come to Southern. He probably really worked hard; [he was] working for his future. And then [Coleman] was a gymnast."

Flores said some of her teammates on the Women's Rugby team knew Coleman and seeing their grief caused her sadness as a result.

"Just seeing my friends distraught over it - I heard all the good things about her [and] it's like, 'Man, that's somebody, one less person really good,'" said Flores.

As a married woman, Flores said she coped with the two untimely deaths with affirmations of love and support toward her family members.

"I talk to my husband a lot," said Flores. "I [say], 'Hey, I love you.' [to him] or my family. It makes you think about your own family."

Sophomore, Angel Rodriguez, a music and creative writing double major said he was also shocked.

"Honestly, I never expected it to happen," said Rodriguez, "especially in the ways both of them had passed, I would have never expected both of them to have passed in such tragic ways."

Coleman had passed away on the evening of Sunday, Nov. 10 after sustaining a spinal cord injury following gymnastics training session the prior Friday,

According to several reports. Gallo was found unresponsive in his parked vehicle in the West Campus Parking Garage the morning of Sunday, Oct. 20.

Southern Police Chief Joseph Dooley said his department has continued their investigation of the incident and found no foul play surrounding Gallo's death.

Police officers, Dooley said to get into law enforcement because they want to help people in the most professional way possible.

"Our role is first and foremost the protection of life," said Dooley, "and so we treated it with the utmost expediency in getting there and realized that what we had was that he had expired. So with that, it's our job to stabilize the scene, determine, you know make a determination for what we have."

While they are trained to deal with various emergency situations, Dooley said Southern Police grieve with the campus too.

"[Gallo was] a member of our community and we're - it's not just police protecting the community, it's the community as a whole that keeps everyone safe," said Dooley. "It was very, very tragic."

Dooley said although the campus police did not respond to Coleman's death since it was off-campus, it does not diminish the loss of life nor the grief.

Deputy Chief Kenneth Rahn, Dooley said coordinated with the Milford Police Department to assist during the funeral procession as a sign of respect to the Coleman family.

"I came from a very good community in Milford," said Rahn, who formerly worked as deputy police Milford Police Department, "just

like Chief Dooley came from a good community in Orange where we had strong ties with the communities. The effect that it had on the emotions of the officers in the aftermath [of these deaths], it really hits home on both levels."

Dooley named Sergeant Richard Anderson and Police Officer Sergio Nunez as just a few officers who had attended the funeral; Anderson, he said knew the family personally.

At Gallo's wake, Dooley said Detective William Rivera was in attendance as a show of support and respect from the department.

"It was important that we be there as a member of our community," said Dooley, "we are the police."

Dooley said it is important to check up on officers following these sort of tragic incidents.

"Southern has an Employee Assistance Program for all the employees here on campus," said Dooley, "and the police department is part of that. We also have an EAP program that's specifically public safety related to deal with police officers and the trauma that we see."

In addition to the EAP, Dooley said the department provides a peer support program run by Sergeant Anderson and Officer Kim Clare called Serve Well, Be Well.

The Serve Well, Be Well program, Dooley said designed to address what the department refers to as "an after-action."

"Even if they say they're okay, we monitor our people," said Dooley. "When you're seeing tragedy, it can wear on you and a good professional department will conduct those sessions whether someone says they're fine or not."



PHOTOS | JABBY RICHARDS

One of the parking garages at Southern that commuters can park their vehicles.

Commuter

Continued from Page 1

"I feel like there's not really anything that's set in stone policy-wise for commuters, at least not at the moment," Charlotte MacDonald, a graduate intern who oversees commuter programming said.

Other universities in the area have policies for their commuter students, many of which address student safety in the winter months.

At the University of Connecticut there are 11,000 commuter students and a policy for inclement weather that applies to them. If students do not feel safe driving to campus they do not have to.

"The policy that's in place right now is really one that helps students feel safe, and if they do miss a class because of inclement weather there's no implications," John Armstrong, the director of off-campus and commuter student services at UConn, said.

The administration at Sacred Heart University has a similar policy for their commuter students and students and faculty.

"[Professors] are required to host class online through our Blackboard system [if there is no school due to inclement weather]," said Amy Novak, the director of student activities at Sacred Heart. "That is a policy that was actually just communicated recently."

Southern does not have a policy regarding hosting class online or any commuter policies. Denise Bentley-Drobish, a Director in the Office of Student Involvement and Leadership Development, said while the university may move to this in the future, "I think we need to be aware of that [not everybody has access online]."

If commuter students do in fact have access online and want tips, they could go to Southern's commuter page. Even so, what they will find may not offer much help as one tip says, "Leave home with plenty of time to get to class!" For some students his is easier said than done.

"I get up around 6 a.m. so that way I can get to my car around like 7:30 [a.m.] so I can get to school at 8 [a.m.]," said communications major Trinity Collins. "It takes me a while because I have a lot of traffic. It takes me a while to get to school and get to

class and get to work and then do other things."

If there is inclement weather, this can cause an already high volume of traffic to increase. Bentley-Drobish said that from a weather standpoint, the faculty is understanding. "My experience having conversations with students is that most faculty are pretty good about taking into account where a student's coming from if the student were to communicate ahead of time," Bentley-Drobish said.

Communication between a professor and a commuter student is simply encouraged. It is not policy.

"We encourage commuter students to be the line of contact because a professor won't know if you're a commuter or not," MacDonald said. "They just see you as a student."

This does not mean a formal policy for commuter students will never be enacted.

"I would say that I'm going to do some more research. And we'll have a conversation with student government about it," said Bentley-Drobish.

"I would be in favor of seeing a policy that's more directive as far as dealing with commuter students."

Forum

Continued from Page 1

Another part of knowing one's audience is understanding what they could be dealing with outside of the classroom. College students more than ever are experiencing mental health issues which in turn affects their education. According to the American College Health Association, from 2009-2018, there was a 29 percent increase in overwhelming anxiety, a 36 percent increase in significant depression, and a 102 percent increase in seriously considering suicide.

Steven Hoffer, Ph.D. and Mark Cameron, Ph.D., encourage professors and faculty in the

"Building Empathy in the Classroom: Paying Attention to Mental Health" session to not only manage the different issues that students are suffering from but to also be empathetic to the various situations.

"I think empathy is hard," Cameron said. "I don't know that everyone feels like that's their job." Hoffer and Cameron said rather than react to students with irritation, professors should put themselves in their students' shoes and show students a caring and compassionate adult.

Inclusion was discussed in the "Role of White Accountability Group Work" session. Wright noted that Generation Z is the most racially diverse generation. According to Data USA, 56.7 percent of students on Southern's

campus are white, while 15.3 percent are black or African American and 14.2 percent are Hispanic or Latino. Because of this large gap, the sessions taught that it is important for white students and professors to create a sense of belongingness for the minority students and to resist microaggressions.

"This idea of promoting equity resides within our student population," Wright said. "There is indeed a correlation between promoting equity and academic success."

"Building Empathy in the Classroom: Paying Attention to Mental Health" session was led by Steven Hoffer, Ph.D and Mark Cameron, Ph.D. They encouraged faculty to be empathetic to their students and their various situations in Engleman Hall at Southern on Jan 16.



PHOTO | FAITH WILLIAMS

Southern faculty, Ankur Kumar, Jakell Burgess and Rachel Cunningham-Exavier discuss microaggressions during the "Role of White Accountability Group Work" session in Engleman Hall at Southern CT State University on Jan. 16.

Week of Welcome



Column by Tamonda Griffiths
Editor-in-Chief

Over the break, students tend to regroup and recuperate from the previous semester.

Other students continue to work over the break whether through a seasonal and/or part-time job off-campus or through classes offered at the university over the winter session.

For me, coming back to school was both a welcoming and dreaded experience, as I was happy to not have to be home in a state of perpetual boredom, but also never pass up the opportunity to sleep in well past noon.

One thing I greatly appreciated every first week of school is the Office of Student Involvement's bi-annual Week of Welcome.

While the week helps acquaint students with the various services and opportunities offered on the campus to students outside of their areas of study, what really draws crowds is the copious amounts of free food.

Take note clubs: offer free food and students will come.

I'm not sure if this is part of the school's effort to solve the issue of food insecurity which is prevalent amongst the Southern community, but I know many students who plan their day from free meal to free meal not only because of the affordability but the convenience of knowing regardless if they did not eat breakfast that morning, pack a lunch for the day or find themselves on campus well pass their regularly prescribed dinnertime, they can find a free meal in the Adanti Student Center.

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

Coming back to school is a struggle

By Jessica Guerrucci
Managing Editor

Rolling out of bed at 7 a.m., the fight for a parking spot, cold air biting at my face as I run from Pelz to Jennings Hall doors to find some warmth — all these familiar things tell me winter break is, in fact, over.

The blissful days of hiding out under the covers of my bed until noon have ceased, the many empty days are suddenly full, but the transition back is not always smooth. The odd thing about winter break that makes it unlike summer break is that it is just long enough to relax, but short enough that you cannot get too comfortable.

Winter break is also a complete switch up, especially if you live on campus. You stuff your life into a few bags for a month, move out of the dorms, and go from having full freedom to do as you please to back under your parents roof and their rules once again.

It is also one thing to return to school when the grass is green and the sun is shining and three months to rest was more than enough. It is now cold, the days are short and motivation is just not there. The impact of winter hits hard for some of us and makes it not so easy to get back to the flow of things.

According to Psychology Today, the shorter day causes us to be out of sync with our

natural circadian rhythm, and in the winter we produce more melatonin, meaning serotonin levels go down which can create feelings of sluggishness, loss of motivation, excess sleepiness and sad or anxious moods.

Now, I would not say the break was not needed, because it definitely was, but I imagine I am not the only one who struggles to come back to school. Professors are not waiting for any of us to catch up either. "Syllabus week" is no more — they are just jumping right in. It feels like you've been cruising along for the past month and now someone has just slammed on the gas pedal. In that case, however, sometimes it is better than having to introduce yourself to five different

classrooms full of people, even though I know we all love those icebreakers so much.

I am, however, trying to keep in mind that it is going to get better. Transitions are never easy to make and it is okay if it takes some time to get reorganized and get back on track. School does not have to be stressful if you manage your time right and take care of yourself.

No matter how impossible it may seem, we all have to make it until May somehow. Until then, take in some sunshine whenever you can get it, try to get to sleep at a somewhat decent time and, even though it is not break anymore, do not forget to take time for yourself every now and then.



PHOTO | JESSICA GUERRUCCI

Students head to class dressed in winter clothing as they cross the bridge into the Academic Quad on Jan. 27.

Global warming is causing wildfires and other natural disasters

By Sofia Rositani
Reporter

Australia has been up in flames since July of 2019. This fire has harmed or killed over half a million animals, and one-third of the koala population has been decimated due to these wildfires. So far 3,000 people have lost their homes, and 28 have lost their lives, but we do not realize that this is just the beginning.

Climate change has been affecting this world for years and only now are we catching on. These wildfires usually

happen in Australia in July due to the heat and dryness of the country but it has not been this bad since 2009 when 173 people were killed in wildfires recognized by Australians as the "Black Saturday," according to CNN.

In the past week, it has rained in Australia, but the lightning that came from the rain caused more fires due to the areas being dry. According to the New York Times "Early this month, NASA began tracking a plume of smoke from the fires that was the size of

the continental United States." This means it is going to get worse before it will get better. Many people will most likely get sick from the smoke, and this can also cause severe respiratory problems for millions who live in or near Australia. According to the New York Times who interviewed Dr. Bradstock, a scientist said this kind of problem of long dry seasons in Australia should not have happened for another 40 to 50 years.

What does this mean for the rest of the world? If we do not work to stop

climate change then we are dead men walking, it has been admitted that due to climate change, the world is starting to get diseases that existed a long time ago, we are getting flooding in areas that should not be flooding, and warm weather during the winter. Iceland even had a funeral for their Okjokull glacier that melted with a plaque that read "In the next 200 years, all our glaciers are expected to follow the same path, This monument is to acknowledge that we know what is happening

and what needs to be done. Only you know if we did it."

Paul Reed, the co-director for the National center for Research in Bushfire and Arson at Monash University in Melbourne said in New York Times interview said, "The wildfires decimating Australia, killing people, ravaging wild habitats and pushing communities and firefighters to their absolute limits are growing and coalescing into the country's worst peacetime catastrophe precisely because of climate change."

As students in college who want a future, we should work to find a solution to this climate issue or else what we do now will be for nothing. We will not have a future if we decide to not do anything to help the world we live in. What is happening in Australia will continue, and grow Australia will become uninhabitable, certain animals will go extinct, there will be havoc. Australia will be the least of our problems but we must act now before it is too late. How long must we wait before it becomes too late for us?

SOUTHERN NEWS

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Global Brigades fosters good health in Panama

By **Alexandra Scicchitano**
Opinions & Features Editor

Students in the Global Brigades chapter at Southern went to Panama this past winter break to help communities by building water pipelines and treating locals in clinics.

Paul Nicholas, the president of the Global Brigades at SCSU club, said they went to the towns of El Retiro, Santa Rita Abajo, and El Limón in Panama.

According to the Global Brigades website, the organization is an international non-profit that uniquely implements

a holistic model to meet a community's health and economic goals.

"What we do as a club is, we ask all of our members what type of brigade they would like to go on," said nursing major Martha Polanco, a junior. "We as a university, we tend to choose public health or medical. And based off of that, we look at which countries are doing those brigades around the timeframe that we will be free because we always try and go around the winter break, and then after that we say, OK, which of these countries would you like to go to? Again, we

do another vote and we decide."

Depending on which brigade Southern chooses, the cost changes, said exercise science major Jane Sherman, a sophomore, who said it cost over \$1,000 for a public health trip, but for Southern's recent trip to Panama, the cost was over \$2,000.

Polanco said this trip to Panama was a hybrid brigade of water and medical and ran from Jan. 11 to Jan. 17 for the volunteers attending. In the past, Southern students traveled to Nicaragua twice, as well as Ghana.

"The first two days we arrived in Panama, we were digging trenches in a mountain in a rural area where communities didn't have access to water, or had limited access," said Polanco.

To get to the top of the mountain to lay down pipes, people climbed mountains with pickaxes, said Sherman.

"We dug trenches there with pickaxes and dug out the dirt with shovels [the first day]," said Sherman. "Then the second day we finished up and we filled in the trench after they laid the pipe down."

After laying the pipes down, a giant tank would be put at the top of the mountain that would be

maintained and replaced when need be, said Polanco.

"The remaining three days were us in the actual clinic and the clinic consists of intake, triage, consultation, dental, charla [and] pharmacy."

According to Polanco, patients first went through intake at the clinic, where they provided their name, date of birth and gender. Patients then went to triage, where volunteers took their vital signs.

Patients also got a consultation with a doctor, and then opted in or out of dental care, but children under age 12 had to get a fluoride clean. Outside of the clinic, volunteers spoke to the community about good hygiene practices, a tradition known as "charla".

Lastly, the patients would go pharmacy to get their medications and a goodie bag some got feminine sanitary products, while others got condoms, but all received soap, a toothbrush and toothpaste, according to Polanco.

"I like going there and doing the volunteering myself instead," said Paul Nicholas, the president of the Global Brigades chapter on campus. "I really like talking to a lot of the people there, even though I barely know Spanish. We do have some



PHOTO | GLOBAL BRIGADES AT SCSU
Members of Global Brigades club preparing medicine for the clinic they were helping to work.

translators, but it was nice going there and actually doing it yourself and talking with the people that you're helping. Work[ing] with [and] out of the actual committee members too, because they are also a really big part of us."

It is good to travel to other places because staying in one makes you unable to open your mind to the outside world, said exercise science major Greta Brunello, a sophomore who attended the Global Brigades trip to Panama.

"When you go [anywhere], you are open-

minded. If you stay always in America, like I was from Italy, so I always stayed in Italy, you don't really have an idea of the [outside world]," said Brunello, who lived in Italy her whole life until moving to the U.S. for college.

Nicholas said it is a really good opportunity to experience a different culture.

Brunello, who has already taken two trips with Global Brigades said, "every time you go somewhere, it's a different problem, so you learn something different [every time]."



PHOTO | GLOBAL BRIGADES AT SCSU
Members of the community standing in line at the clinic to be checked in.



PHOTO | GLOBAL BRIGADES AT SCSU
The Global Brigades Club at SCSU poses for a picture where they dug trenches to help build more water lines for communities they were helping in Panama.

REC the Night event pushes open recreation hours

By **Téa Carter**
Copy Editor

Music reverberated through Moore Field House as students tried their hand at mini-golf, pick-up basketball, and inflatable obstacle courses.

The event, REC the Night, featured most of the activities students can expect during the semester's open recreation nights hosted by the Office of Recreation and Fitness.

One of the activities most popular with students at the event was a one-time offer: mini-golf. The nine-hole course was the first stop on several students' tour of REC the Night — after grabbing free food, of course.

"I like the variety,"

said nursing major Ernie Yelenick, a junior with a plate of pizza in hand. "It's cool they have mini-golf and the blow-up [obstacle course]."

Yelenick and his friend said they would like to see mini-golf incorporated into more open recreation nights. Even regulars of past open recreation nights saw it as a welcome addition.

"I've been to open [recreational] night. I like to shoot hoops. I like to hang out. If they have the mini-golf again, I'd love to do that. It's a really cool atmosphere to be around," said sports management Will Steinbrick, a senior.

The goal of Thursday's event was to convince regulars like Steinbrick and newer faces like

Yelenick to attend open recreation nights in the future. REC the Night was the first promotional event for open recreation hours that may feel otherwise familiar to Southern students.

Until this semester, open recreation hours were under the scope of the Department of Athletics. Now that the Office of Recreation and Fitness has taken over, some within that office thought some changes were in order.

Aside from holding a promotional event, the biggest change the Office of Recreation and Fitness has implemented for open recreation nights is a new way to sign in.



PHOTO | TEA CARTER
A paper popcorn container showing the raffles prizes of at REC the night.

See REC Page 6

Clubs recruit at the Student Involvement Fair

By Faith Williams
Contributor

The Adanti Student Center Ballroom was filled with students, talking, dancing, filling out papers and connecting with each other to get involved with clubs on campus.

The Student Involvement Fair was held on Wednesday Jan. 22, and the 170 clubs on campus were all recruiting new members to get involved. Ranging from club sports like rugby and Southern's dance team to different ethnic clubs like African Student Association and Chinese Student Association, all were in attendance to share information with new and current students.

The Student Involvement Fair was from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. in the ballroom and is one way to give students the opportunity to see what the campus offers so that students can get involved. Club leaders promoted their clubs to those

walking by and made sign-up sheets to contact students for upcoming meetings and events.

"We share background information on the organization and upcoming events we have coming up," Walcott said. "We have 'Meet the Greeks' on Jan. 23 and 'Meet the Sisters' on Jan. 22."

The 11 fraternities and sororities were in attendance, sharing pictures, principles and memorabilia of their organizations to encourage students to join.

Social work major Shakaya Walcott, a senior, and the president of Sigma Gamma Chapter of Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority Inc., said she had several students come to her table.

Not only was the Student Involvement Fair a chance for students to sign up for clubs, but it was also going to be announced who the performer for the spring concert

would be.

The students' attention was turned toward a projector screen when a video began to play. "Lotus Flower Bomb" music video began playing, but because there are two artists in the video, it was unclear if it would be Wale or Miguel. Finally, it was confirmed that Wale, a hip-hop artist, will be the performer.

Wale is famous for being on the record label Maybach Music Group with other notable artists like Rick Ross and Meek Mill. According to All Music's website, the D.C. artist gained fame from songs like "Lotus Flower Bomb" and "On Chill". The show is scheduled for April 19 in the Lyman Center and tickets will be on sale the week of Jan. 26.

Club sports also showcased pictures and videos from past performances or games. Hopeful for students to try out for their teams, each club sport had a sign-up sheet for students to leave their

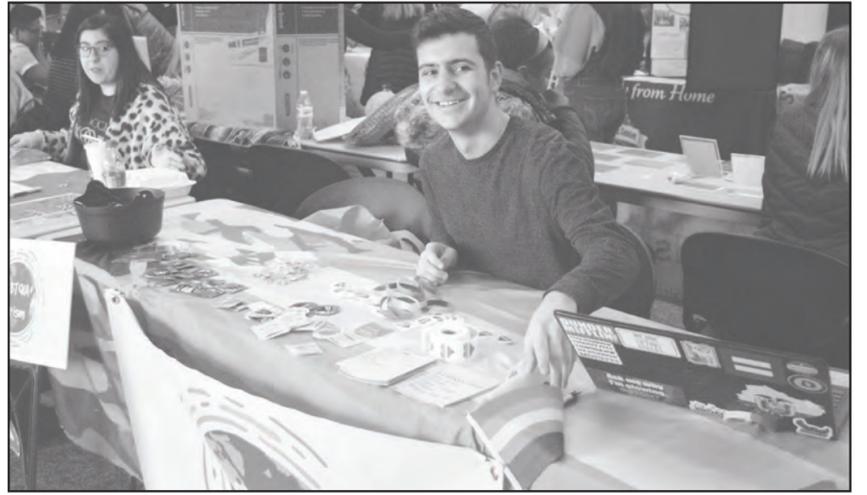


PHOTO | IZZY MANZO

LBGQIA Prism member Vincenzo Venditti at the Student Involvement Fair.

name, email and phone number for later contact about tryout dates and times.

Southern's dance team members practiced choreography while waiting for students to approach. The team currently has 14 members but is looking to expand.

"We'd like to have as many people as possible, it just depends on how many people come to the tryouts," said

psychology major Jelise Nimons, a sophomore, and one of the captains of the dance team.

The African Student Association is a club that spreads awareness of African heritage to the Southern community. Exercise science major Letitia Adumoah, a junior, and the club's community chair, said in the meetings students discuss growing up in America versus their home countries.

They also sometimes collaborate with other clubs on campus during their weekly meetings.

"We have students from other clubs that come to our meetings like BSU and OLAS," Adumoah said. "It's very diverse. We talk about the similarities we have, even though we come from other countries, but all the differences we have. Also, the adversity we face coming from foreign countries."



PHOTO | IZZY MANZO

A picture of a bike with Department of The Environment, Geography & Marine Studies written on it for a table at the Student Involvement Fair.



PHOTO | IZZY MANZO

English major Grace Tunicci, freshman talks to Bookmarks treasurer and political science major Dabar Ratupenu, senior.



PHOTO | IZZY MANZO

Business administration major Claudio Rojas, junior, handles the Omega Alpha Upsilon's table for the Student Involvement Fair.

REC

Continued from Page 5

"We [held this event] to show people the new app we're using to sign students in. It's called Atleto," said Kaylee Roux, a university assistant for the Office of Recreation and Fitness.

While using an app makes sign-in easier for students, the benefits extend far beyond convenience.

"It's nice because people can sign into the

areas that they're using specifically," said Roux. "Say we have 10 people signed into the weight room. Then we know 10 people use this area and we can hold events there [and] we can put more money into the areas that people are using more."

An informational booth explaining how Atleto will fit into future open recreation nights sat along the walls of Moore Field House. Not all students stopped by the table, but the sentiment toward Atleto's sign-in system was generally positive among them.

"Atleto makes things definitely more organized," said sports management major Steve Prussin, a senior. "It's definitely safer to know who's here and why they're here rather than just having people swipe their cards and then have access to everything."

Alongside the Atleto informational booth were tables promoting other campus activities, like club/intramural sports and Blue Crew, a commission aimed at increasing school spirit. While these booths had students milling about, the tables a few steps

further were crowded.

Tables offering free slices from Pizza Heaven, chicken nuggets and fries from Garden Catering and protein shake and tea samples from Rise and Grind Nutrition drew attention from hungry students.

While future open recreation nights may not offer all the amenities enjoyed at REC the Night, students can come by every week Monday through Thursday from 6:30 p.m. to 9 p.m. to use the weight room, the basketball courts, the pool and more.



PHOTO | TEA CARTER

Staff and students getting food from Garden Catering.

‘Happy Trees: Paint Night’ helps deal with stress

**By Sofia Rositani
Reporter**

Painting has often been an escape for some, especially during stressful weeks, which is why Brownell, Schwartz and North Campus put on an event called “Happy Trees: Paint Night” in Schwartz Programming Space.

The event offered free food, canvases to paint on, paint in a multitude of colors, and Bob Ross tutorials on screen for those who wanted to paint along with him.

Bob Ross is a painter from the 1980s who did

instructional videos in the 80’s and that taught all age groups how to paint on Public Broadcasting Service, or PBS. The show was called “The Joy Of Painting,” though now most of these videos can be found on YouTube now, which is how the tutorials were shown.

These three halls got together to host this event for students to relax, and paint. Because Bob Ross is very popular, all the hall directors and resident advisers for these halls collaborated for this event.

Some students who decided to attend this event

were commuters to just rest for a few hours after the first week of classes. English major Kiersten Conner, a sophomore said they decided to go to this event with a group of her friends and her sister to “hang out with my friends on campus that is different than what we usually do.” Conners said she also finds painting fun even if it is not something she is good at and that it is also very therapeutic.

Graphic arts major, Bria Kirklin, a freshman said she attended the event on Thursday. Kirlin said she loves Bob Ross and has

watched several of his videos. Instead of following the Bob Ross tutorial Kirklin instead drew and painted a character from the Simpsons.

“I love art, and technically it is my major so I couldn’t resist,” said Kirklin.

Painting has been involved in events in the past at Southern and it has become a very popular pastime for many students on campus.

Psychology major Hannah Rosario, a freshman said she enjoys painting, even if she admits to not being that good at it.

She said she also watches Bob Ross tutorials because she loves his voice and attitude, even if they are never completed.

“Ten out of ten difficulty,” said Rosario. “This is hard. His is so beautiful and although he does talk about how it’s okay to make mistakes, you still want to live up to his standard.”

Rosario also said that she does see forms of realism in Bob Ross’s paintings and that he may be difficult, but his soothing voice makes her able to fall asleep.

Theater major Nicole Thomas, a freshman said

she has gone to the past two painting events that the university has put on. Thomas said she enjoys it and that even though it is very difficult to live up to Bob Ross’s standards she said she will definitely come back to events like this again, even if she does not know how well her paintings will look like.

“It’s worth it most of the time,” said Thomas “because then you get your own version which is what Bob Ross wants for you.”

See more ‘Happy Trees: Paint Night’ photos on Page 12



PHOTO | IZZY MANZO

Communication major Alyssa Couture, freshman (left) and English major Gabrielle Tunucci, freshman, painting trees at the event on Jan. 23.

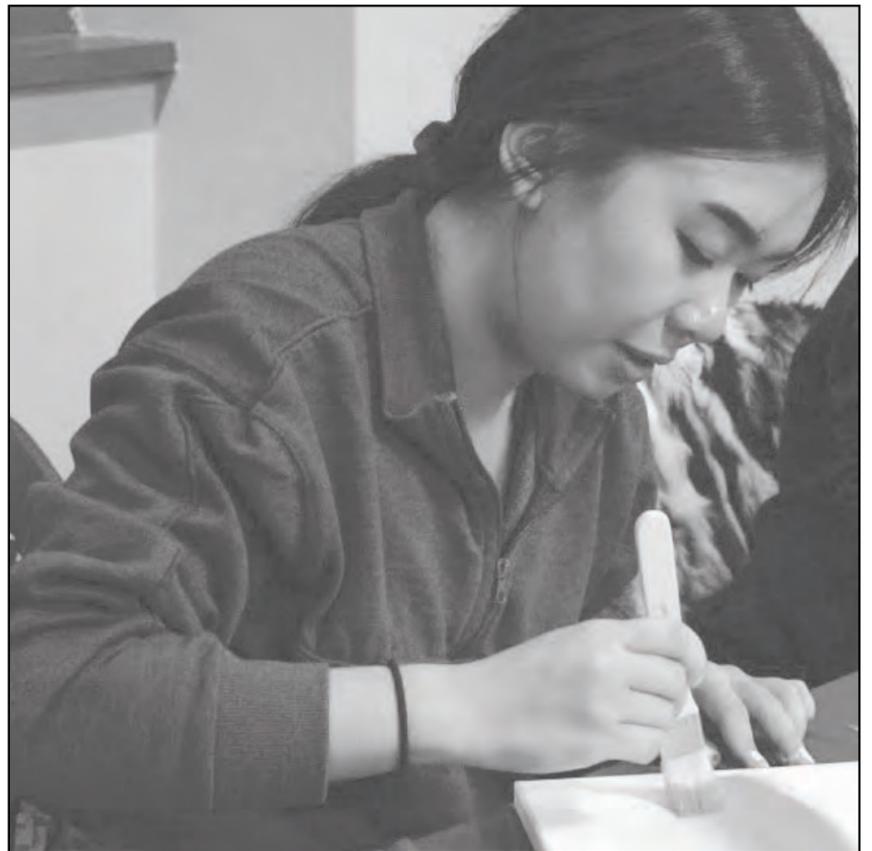


PHOTO | IZZY MANZO

Studio arts major Dalena Tran, freshman, participating in the event last Thursday in the Schwartz Programming Space.

‘Everything’s Gonna Be Okay’ tackles grief and disabilities

**By Sofia Rositani
Reporter**

“Everything’s Gonna Be Okay” is a new show on Freeform and Hulu about an Australian man who must take care of his half-sisters after their father passes away from pancreatic cancer.

Both sisters are high school students: one of them autistic and the other very emotional. The show started out a little rough with cringy moments, areas of silence that felt very awkward, and a very

Carrie-like scene where one of the main characters was being pelted with tampons in the middle of a history class.

The show itself does show autism in a very real way with the actress Kayla Cromer being autistic in real life. While watching one episode, the viewer gets a real idea of how a student in high school goes through their day. Cromer also does a great job of showing how a teenage girl with autism goes through normal teenage girl problems like having a crush, going out

with friends, and going to school.

The show itself tackles grief in a way that is realistic. Genevieve, played by Maeve Press goes through all the stages of grief in the first episode from finding out her father is passing away, to the funeral when she is angry with the world, to finally accepting his death at the end with her siblings.

At the funeral, Cromer’s character, Matilda, showed what death is like for someone with autism. It is hard for her to go through

the stages of grief and Cromer shows it well in her acting how hard it is for her to feel the grief of losing her father.

Matilda does not understand social cues so it was hard for her to be able to talk to anyone during the funeral. She seemed almost alienated away from everyone as she listened to opera. She did end up doing the eulogy because her father asked her to, and instead of it being sad, it was funny, and made the funeral less awkward and uncomfortable.

Scenes with the eldest brother Nicholas, played by Josh Thomas, who is now the guardian of Genevieve and Matilda, were very goofy. The first scene we see him in is when he is on a date with Alex, played by Adam Faison, his soon to be boyfriend. The characters are unsure about it, and Nicholas talks about his family and how his dad has had multiple girlfriends and got three different women pregnant which kind of makes Alex feel awkward. Nicholas is the first of his family

to find out his father is dying and helps his father with his final work to prepare for his funeral, guardianship and making up for lost time.

The first episode was sad to me because the scenes all have a dark undertone to it as the characters are being introduced. Before watching this, the viewers know the show was about the death of their father and how it will affect them going on in their life and how they have this goofy, crazy neurotic Australian man for their guardian.



PHOTO ILLUSTRATION | SOFIA ROSITANI

The opening scene of the new Freeform show “Everything’s Gonna Be Okay,” featuring the characters Genevieve, (left) Nicholas and Matilda.

Pokémon releases demo of former Nintendo game

By Jacob Waring
News Editor

Remakes or remasters of games can be a hit or miss. Overhauling a game to upgrade visuals and core controls can also either make or break a game. Adding or removing any mechanic with an eye on creating a gaming experience that replicates the magic of the original gameplay can be a gamble.

Thus far, the demo of “Pokémon Mystery Dungeon: Rescue Team DX” is looking like it is going to be a hit. The upcoming game is a remake of the 2005 Gameboy Advance and Nintendo DS “Pokémon Mystery Dungeon: Blue Rescue Team and Red Rescue Team.”

In the Pokémon

Mystery Dungeon spin-off franchise, the gameplay is roguelike, a genre that can be characterized as turned-based gameplay with procedural generating dungeons. The goal is either to complete the dungeon by reaching the final floor or by completing “jobs” such as delivering items, rescuing or escorting Pokémon.

The demo takes you through the first two hours of the game. If you have played the original Pokémon Mystery Dungeon then you will likely finish a bit quicker since it follows the same plot. The demo ends before you even unravel the mysteries surrounding the protagonist: the mystery of how a human somehow became a Pokémon or the mystery of natural disasters wreaking havoc

on the world that these Pokémon inhabit.

The classic quiz has made its triumphant return and was the classic way to pick your starting character. I restarted the demo a few times to see if the results still either drags you through the mud or boosts your ego. Hilariously, it still does both.

If you wanted to be Pikachu but got stuck being Skitty in the original game, then you had to reboot the game and retake the quiz. It was a tedious process which got resolved as the demo allows you to reject the quiz’s choice and select the Pokémon you desire.

It allows purists of the original to play the game like it was back in ‘05 and allows players to pick whatever they want.

It has all the starters

from the generation one to three games along with Pikachu, Eevee, Machop, Cubone, Psyduck, Meowth and Skitty. It omits starters from generation four through eight which is a bummer. I hope that they are available in dungeons to recruit or are obtainable post-game.

In the game’s trailer, I saw a Lucario and Mega Charizard X which means the game’s developers, Spike Chunsoft, are willing to add Pokémon that were not in the original. It is not game-breaking, but it is a missed opportunity to not include the newer starters.

The visual fluidity of the game shown in the demo is glorious. The graphics such as the environments and Pokémon have a painterly texture in appearance. This artistic choice makes the game look modernized

while still capturing the nostalgic vibe of the original. The appearances of the dungeons shown in the demo have been underwhelming.

There have been some quality of life improvements made to the game as showcased in the demo. You can save the game via a menu by pressing X. It does not sound revolutionary, but considering the fact that in the old games you had to go to your bed to save (which meant if you failed a dungeon that you had to redo the dungeon), this is an improvement.

The developers also added an auto mode which can be activated by pressing the L button. You can select it to search for stairs or to collect items unless you encounter a wild Pokémon and must

manually play. This is a good mechanic for newer players or for people with younger family members like me, as the mode would enable my 4-year-old nephew to play the game only needing to hit the X button to fight and the L to restart the mode. It can be easily ignored by veterans of the series.

The best aspect of this demo is that players will be able to carry all your progress over from the demo. This enables players to skip through the tutorial and get to the meat and potatoes of the game.

This demo showcased what I believe will be an exceptional game and a remake that honors, captures and even surpasses what makes the Pokémon Mystery Dungeon games a joy to play.



PHOTO | JACOB WARING

The original Pokémon game displayed on the Nintendo 3DS XL and the new demo displayed on an undocked Nintendo Switch.



PHOTO | JACOB WARING

An in-game photo of the demo Pokémon Mystery Dungeon: Blue Rescue Team DX released on Jan. 9.

‘Let’s Smash (Avocados)’ encourages healthy food choices

By Sofia Rositani
Reporter

Students surrounded themselves with homemade guacamole, tortilla chips and vegetables as they learned about nutrition for an event called Let’s Smash (Avocados) to help them start off the new semester by making healthy choices.

The nutritionist, Courtney Huggins from ShopRite comes to Southern twice a year for the Week of Welcome to teach the students how to eat healthy and not fill up on junk food.

“It’s really about balance and moderations,” said Huggins. “Balancing out your plate making a quarter of your plate starches, a quarter protein, and then filling in the other half with vegetables. So that’s like the key to being healthy.”

Students were also able to ask Huggins questions about how to eat healthy and how they could substitute healthy food into their diet.

“Guacamole is just a healthy snack, an alternative, to just having chips and cookies. The

guacamole has some nice nutrients in it we have some tomatoes, onions, and we have veggies so a different snack that’s better for you.”

She showed how she made the guacamole during the process.

Health services along with the wellness and fitness center put on this event and Jakell Burgess, a nurse practitioner at health services, helped with the event.

“Our Week of Welcome motto in collaboration with wellness and fitness was ‘new year healthy you,’ so we just wanted to promote healthy snacks.”

Assistant Director of the Fitness Center, Jessica Scibek, was another specialist who came to help educate students on the importance of eating healthy, having a proper diet, and how to prep foods.

“We just really wanted people to meet the dietitian who provides nutrition counseling with us on campus and get students off to a healthy start with some veggies and dip and kind of interest in making their own food or being a part of the process and thinking about what’s

going into your body,” said Scibek.

Some students lined up to get a taste of the homemade guacamole and chips to learn about eating healthier. Nursing major Kyley Fiondella, a senior said she enjoys eating healthy because “healthy food is yummy and good for you at the same time.”

Other students said they were there because they just needed something to eat. Week of Welcome always provides food and they enjoy guacamole and avocados.

However, the event mostly consisted of Huggins making the guacamole while the students sampled it. There were pamphlets that offered new and healthy foods that the students can incorporate to make homemade guacamole in the future.

“We have done some make your own guacamole in residence halls with the dietitian before and it was really fun. The students really liked it,” Scibek said. “We thought we would do one for the week of welcome and see if we can reach more students than just the couple that come in the halls.”



PHOTO | SOFIA ROSITANI

ShopRite dietitian Courtney Huggins at the ‘Let’s Smash (Avocados)’ event last Tuesday in the Adanti Student Center.

Men's basketball winning streak ends

Despite career-night for Owl's forward, Southern drops game at home to Stonehill College

By Hunter O. Lyle
Sports Editor

Matched up against NE10 opponent Stonehill College, the men's basketball team was unable to carry on their winning streak, losing 67-59 despite a late game surge from the Owls.

Coming into this game, Southern had won their three previous games, all of which were in-conference. Most recently, in the team's match up against Franklin Pierce on Jan. 22, when the Owls won 75-66 at home, forward Greg Jones, a junior, finished the game with 25 points and 15 rebounds, becoming the first Owl to garner that stat line since 2016.

"We competed," said head coach Scott Burrell of the teams three game win streak, "We didn't compete tonight."

In the first half against the Skyhawks, the game was centered around ironclad defense, but not for the Owls. Stonehill was able to stop ball movement, deny entry inside and strip the ball from the Owls

relentlessly, forcing 10 turnovers in the opening half alone.

On the other side of the ball, both teams chose to attack inside, as the shots from distance refused to sink for either the Skyhawks or the Owls — who shot 3-11 and 3-10 respectively. Post play became a major focus.

At the end of the first, the Skyhawks had run up the score to 33-25 off 15-32 shooting (46 percent), while the Owls fell behind due to offensive woes — 9-25 shooting from the field (36 percent), including 3-10 (30 percent) from deep while also shooting 4-7 (57 percent) from the line.

Jones, who could be seen as the reason the game was still somewhat competitive, was the only Owl to score over five points in the first half, tallying 12 points and five rebounds.

"We had to be aggressive with them. Be physical," said Jones on the teams attempts to slow the Skyhawks inside. "Don't let them keep on bringing the fight to you. You [have to] throw a couple punches

back. You can't keep letting them score."

The second half for the Owls was completely dominated by Jones.

Jones opened the half with a three, and preceded to go on a hot streak from beyond the arc, connecting on four more deep shots throughout the game.

Despite the efforts from Jones, the Skyhawks were still able to create successful possessions, starting six for eight out of the gates — Southern started three for seven. With just over six minutes in the game, Stonehill was on top 56-44.

However, a block from forward Taurus Adams II, a senior, as well as a steal and some instant offense from guard Lyron Bennett, a freshman, sparked a 10-0 run that put the Owls right back in the fight. With 1:22 left on the clock, the Owls trailed by just five, 61-56.

"We just kept fighting," said Adams. "We had been down the whole game, all you can do is fight at that point."

See Basketball Page 10



PHOTO | HUNTER O. LYLE

Guard Levar Allen, freshman, during a home game on Jan. 4 against Pace University.

Comeback falls short as losses pile up for women's basketball

By Edward Rudman
Contributor

The women's basketball team was not able to overcome a slow scoring first half against Stonehill College, eventually falling 64-54.

The Owls came out looking to score a lot of points from behind the arc, but unfortunately couldn't get shots to fall. The team was 2-15 from three in the first half and Stonehill took advantage of it by building their lead.

The score was 24-16 at halftime and the Owls were struggling to get the spark they were looking for offensively, as they scored four points in the second quarter.

The Owls came out of halftime shooting at a much higher level than in the first, going 6-14 from

behind the arc and getting themselves back into the game. They trailed by as much as 37-20 in the third quarter but found themselves a rhythm in the fourth and were able to bring the score to 54-52 with 1:36 left in the game.

Stonehill felt the pressure and responded, closing the game out strong and separating themselves in the final 90 seconds, finishing the game out with a lead of 10.

Head coach Kate Lynch addressed the poor offense from three in the first half and the necessary adjustments made during halftime.

"In the second quarter, we shot 7.1 percent from the field I think and 0-7 from three. We always have a quarter, at least a game, where we're just not shooting well but it's

not that we aren't good shooters, it's not like we can't do it," said Coach Lynch. "During halftime I just said stay the course, they're going to fall at some point. Keep taking those open shots and they started to fall for us."

One player who helped ignite the offense in the second half was redshirt freshman guard Alexa Kellner, who shot 4-8 from three and 5-11 overall. She also lead the team in scoring with 16 points and also recorded seven rebounds.

"I just know my role on this team which is to not stop shooting, so even if my shots aren't going to fall, if they kick it to me and I'm open, I'm going to try my best to knock down a shot," said Kellner.

See Losses Page 10



PHOTO | HUNTER O. LYLE

Guard Imani Wheeler, senior, driving to the rim during a game against Stonehill College



PHOTO | HUNTER O. LYLE

Male practice players helping up a female teammate during a training session earlier this season.

Male practice players offer new competitive training

By Sam Tapper
Sports Writer

Off the court, nobody would know who they are. These men work hard. However, the entirety of their work is done in the dark, behind closed doors. They are tasked with giving the women's basketball team worthy competition between games.

The people in question are the four women's basketball practice players: Quentin Kelly, Nas Smith, Mike Mohan and Max Vadakin, who, despite being men playing women's basketball, have a vital role in the eyes of Owls' head coach Kate Lynch on her squad.

"The thought process with [having male practice players] is that they are bigger, they are stronger, and they are faster," Lynch said. "If we can compete

against them it should make it a little bit easier for us in the game because, obviously, the teams we play against aren't that big, aren't as strong and aren't as fast as men. So, the idea is that they get us better every day in practice and we compete against them. That's the hope; that's the goal."

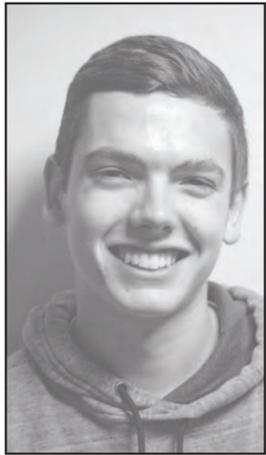
It is not uncommon for collegiate women's basketball programs to bring in male athletes to their practices, as UConn basketball coach and Hall of Famer Geno Auriemma has been using male practice players for over a decade. The players themselves do not get a lot of credit or outside recognition. However, the practice players themselves say the experience is well worth it.

"At first I was kind of skeptical — going from playing with guys to try

playing with girls," said exercise science major Kelly, a fifth-year senior and former Southern football player. "But they're a good team. They're really professional about it, and you can tell that they're a Division II program because [of how] they practice every day. So, you can kind of tell that their skill set is different from just the regular girls you will see at LA Fitness or something. Just being around people that actually know the game — it's kind of tough and I like it."

Though the four players in question did not make it to the next level of playing college basketball themselves, being a practice player allows them to return to the game they all have love for and experience with, experience which Lynch

See Practice Page 11



Home opener serves as tribute to Coleman

Column by Sam Tapper
Sports Writer

Just over two months since the tragic and untimely death of junior gymnast Melanie Coleman, the Owls' gymnastics team took the mats at Moore Field House once again.

Sunday's home opener for the Owls was dedicated as 'Melanie Coleman Day.' The team competed in her honor as they hosted the College of Brockport, Springfield College and Cornell University.

As warm-ups concluded and the four teams were introduced, the Owls came out last, with "MC" painted on their backs, followed by a moment of silence held in Coleman's honor. All eyes were locked on the banner reading "Fly High, Melanie" signed by all her teammates dangling over the mats along with the leotard she once wore, both of which will travel with the team going forward.

Following the moment of silence, the Owls' voices echoed through the gym as they shouted: "One clap for Mel!" In addition to the banners and face paint, the Owls had a stuffed animal which will also travel with them.

"The owl is a stuffed animal from one of the universities' gymnastics teams that sent it to us," said senior captain Isabella Antonangeli. "It meant a lot; it was one of our most cherished gifts. And to us, we literally call her a 'Mini Mel,' just because it's supporting us, so we've got to bring her because we would bring Mel."

Following the opening tribute, the meet proceeded as normal. Southern finished in second behind Cornell, with team results of 47.875 on vault, 45.525 on bars, 46.900 on beam, 46.725 on the floor and an all-around score of 187.025.

When the Owls competed on the beam, they each paid their own little tribute to Coleman. Each of them would "hit the 'woah'" after, which is a dance move Coleman would always do.

"It was one of her favorite dance moves," said Antonangeli. "You'd look at Mel and you'd see she'd hit the woah and we were like 'Okay, Mel.' It was a classic move that she did."

At the conclusion of the competition, the four teams gathered together for a video honoring Melanie, consisting of a montage of photos of her with her friends, family and teammates, depicting the love so many say she had for the sport, those around her and, above all, life.

"She was not only a teammate, she was a sister," Antonangeli said. "Being able to come here and support her, she saw how many people cared about her and loved her. I think it was a good day."

Student of the game, Seaforth pursues stardom

By Sam Tapper
Sports Writer

If one were to ask Owls' men's basketball guard CJ Seaforth to describe himself, there are a multitude of things he would say. However, in the end there is one thing he would refer to: basketball.

"What makes me, me? Probably basketball," Seaforth said. "Basketball takes a big role in my life, especially being a student athlete — you have to do the right thing — I try to do the right things, I try to be a better person every day, I pray a lot, I just have a lot of blessings."

Seaforth, a junior, comes from right around the corner in Hamden, Conn., like his head coach, Scott Burrell. For Seaforth to describe his identity through basketball is appropriate, as he has been playing the game since the third grade.

"I remember I was in the third grade, but I was playing up with the fifth graders, AAU and stuff like that," he said.

As a kid, Seaforth was a two-sport athlete. However, once he got older, he ultimately chose basketball, he says, to follow in the footsteps of

his family, like his father who played collegiately at Virginia State.

"Before middle school I used to play football, so I had a choice between basketball or football," said Seaforth. "But basketball was just always there — my dad played basketball, my brothers played basketball, so I was just seeing it growing up and I had fell in love with it."

Seaforth began to take his game to the next level at Hamden High School. By his senior year, he averaged 21.5 points per game and became a 1,000-point scorer as well as an all-state selection and a Connecticut High School Coaches' Association All-Star, where he earned MVP of that game.

By that point, Seaforth had multiple collegiate offers from multiple divisions, including Division I schools like Boston University, Iona, Fairfield, Robert Morris and hometown Quinnipiac.

Seaforth ultimately chose Iona, where he played in 19 games as a freshman. Though he only scored a total of 46 points on the year and logged around seven minutes per game, Seaforth picked up valuable experience like playing at



PHOTO | HUNTER O. LYLE

Guard CJ Seaforth, junior, during a home game against Pace University on Jan. 4.

Madison Square Garden against St. John's and even in the NCAA Tournament, against Mike Krzyzewski's Duke Blue Devils led by Marvin Bagley, now of the Sacramento Kings.

"It took me to where I am now. I realized [at Iona] that I have to work on certain aspects of my game," Seaforth said of his old school. "But then March Madness and facing Duke, that was probably the best experience I had even though I didn't get a chance to do what I wanted to do in the game, that was a great experience, shaking Coach K's hand, seeing all those Duke guys, just watching the game like I was watching on TV but really, I'm on the sidelines."

After his freshman year, Seaforth entered his name in the transfer wire. Knowing that he would have to redshirt if he transferred to another Division I school, he fielded offers from other schools, most of which were junior colleges. After talking with Burrell, Seaforth chose to come and play at home at Southern.

"Very talented player," Burrell said of Seaforth. "He can do a lot of things on the court; can score at all levels: inside, outside, mid-range. Confident player, his

ability to be great is within him, he's just got to keep growing and getting better."

Last season, Seaforth averaged 14.6 points per game for the Owls and started in a backcourt with Isaiah McLeod and Kealen Ives, three players Burrell said can get 20 points on any given night. Seaforth was able to learn both how to better his game under those two and how to be a better leader, something he says he is always looking to do.

When he first arrived at Southern, Burrell said Seaforth could be the player of the year in the league multiple times "if he puts his mind to it," something he still believes might happen — but not without hard work.

"You've got to be a tenacious person to be player of the year, at both ends," Burrell said. "I think he's learning, he's not there yet but he's learning. And when he does get there, he could be player of the year in the league, because there's not many players as talented him in the league."

This year, Seaforth is averaging 15.2 points per game, 15th in the NE-10, in addition to over two assists and three rebounds. He has also scored in double-figures all but three times.

Now he plays in a backcourt with freshmen, Levar Allen and Lyron Bennett, which forces Seaforth to bring out all-facets of his game as a self-described combo guard, while also gaining leadership experience.

"He's definitely more scoring-minded, but don't get me wrong he has some great play-making ability," said junior wing Ulyen Coleman, Seaforth's former roommate and close friend and teammate. "We have great chemistry together. He knows how to find people in their spots but, when 'C' is hot, you let him be hot because he can knock four or five down in a row from deep. You've just got to let him rock sometimes."

The Owls are currently 10-6 and 6-4 in the NE-10 with a conference that is wide open. As the stretch run of the year draws close, Seaforth's goals are clear: win, both personally and as a team.

"I want to definitely try and get player of the year [in the NE-10]," Seaforth said. "I know it's a lot of work, but I want to get player of the year. I want to just be a better person all the way around and I want to win, I want to win. Just need to stay locked in and keep working hard."



PHOTO | HUNTER O. LYLE

Guard CJ Seaforth, junior, getting introduced before a game against Concordia College on Nov. 23.



PHOTO | HUNTER O. LYLE

Forward Taurus Adams II, senior, fading out of the post during a home game against Pace University on Jan. 4.

Losses

Continued from Page 9

On the defensive side of the ball, the Owls looked much better, recording eight steals and being able to capitalize on the opportunities, as they scored 23 points off turnovers. Senior guard Imani Wheeler harassed Stonehill in the passing lane, leading the Owls in steals with four.

"I have good instinct on defense. I've been playing a long time and I just know

where I would throw it to, so I kind of just go off of that and I read their eyes," said Wheeler. "I go off on instinct as what I would do as a point guard and a passer."

Wheeler now has recorded three or more steals in the past five out of six games and continues to be an anchor on defense. She has also scored double-digit points in seven straight games, scoring 15 against Stonehill.

With the loss, the Owls fall to an 8-11 overall record and 2-9 in Northeast 10

Basketball

Continued from Page 9

With the clock running down, the Owls had no choice but to continuously foul the Skyhawks, hoping to capitalize on any missed free throws, but it was to no avail. As the final buzzer sounded, Stonehill claimed victory, winning 67-59.

Besides Jones, who finished with a career-high in points with 31 and five rebounds, and Adams who was able earn his ninth double-double of the season — the first player to do so in one season since

conference play. There are nine games left in the season and the Owls will be looking to rattle off some wins so that they can qualify for the postseason.

"We've got to get ourselves a couple W's down the stretch here and get ourselves into the playoffs; give ourselves some new life," said Lynch. "We are young in some spots and we see the progression with all the small things we're doing to get better. It's anybody's game and we're going to be taking it one game at a time."

2016 — with 11 points and 10 rebounds. No other Owls ended in double digits scoring.

"We didn't come ready to play. I don't know why,"
— Scott Burrell on the loss to Stonehill

"We got man-handled, we got out-toughed and we didn't make shots," said Burrell. "We weren't

ready to play. I don't know why. We were riding off a big win against Franklin Pierce, but we just didn't come ready to play today."

With the team being in the second half of the season, facing only nine more games, Burrell said the team's goal is to bring more energy and capitalize on opportunities for wins.

"Number one we have to take care of home court. I mean, you can't give away games on home court, well [Stonehill] took it, we didn't give it away. They took it tonight," said Burrell. "We have to have more fight. We have to win home games and hopefully steal some games on the road."



PHOTO | HUNTER O. LYLE

Guard Ednaja Lassiter, redshirt junior, fighting over the defense during a home game on Saturday.

NIL rules look to promote change for Southern athletes

By Téa Carter
Copy Editor

Many female athletes at Southern and other universities feel as if they compete in the shadow of male sports teams that receive far more attention — from better game times, to presence of cheerleaders to funding.

However, for some female athletes, the NCAA's recent decision to allow student-athletes to profit from their name, image and likeness (NIL) presents an opportunity to level the playing field with men's sports.

"There's always equality issues between funding for different sports and notoriety of male players over females," said graduate

student Allie Smith, who is the starting goalkeeper for the women's soccer team. "If anything, this will provide more opportunities for the lesser-known sports of a university."

Smith is referring to a chance for all athletes — regardless of their athletic program's funding — to earn royalties based on the use of their NIL to generate revenue for their university.

Late in October, the NCAA governing board voted unanimously to change the organization's long-standing definition of amateurism in collegiate sports.

Currently, to maintain their amateur status, college athletes cannot receive money for

promoting or endorsing products, for their performance or even to offset training expenses.

The NCAA's decision came amidst national pressure to modernize, namely from California state legislature and Gov. Gavin Newsom, who passed a law allowing athletes within the state to profit from their NIL and protecting them from any NCAA retaliation.

Although the NCAA has only taken the first step in instructing each division to reform its bylaws regarding amateurism, the athletic department and athletes at Southern have started preparing for big changes.

Athletic departments will likely take on an "additional burden" when athletes' pay

eventually falls under the oversight of compliance administrators, said Southern's associate director of Athletic Compliance Matthew Letkowski.

"I anticipate student-athletes will need to report all earnings, along with who they got it from and what work was performed to accept such income," Letkowski said.

This new burden is not overly concerning to Letkowski, though, as Southern would need to make other changes in order for its athletes to be paid for their NIL. According to Letkowski, even if NCAA rules changed today, no student-athletes up to this point would have had an opportunity to earn royalties, as Southern does not currently hold any television contracts, sell jerseys or promote events using athletes.

Some student-athletes said they hope Southern does make the necessary changes to give them a chance to earn money outside of scholarship dollars.

"Even though we work just as hard, we wouldn't be able to get paid for playing our sports," said John Wells, a redshirt junior and tight end for the football team. "I think a lot of people would be fed up about that."

Like Smith, senior

outside hitter for the volleyball team Jillian Chambers sees the rule changes as a chance for women's and lesser-funded sports to earn a fairer share.

"Some people at the school are fortunate enough to have full scholarships, but there are a bunch of athletes and lower-funded sports that don't have that luxury of having a full scholarship," Chambers said. "Allowing jerseys to be sold or having promotional events would allow athletes who don't have the full scholarship to have some more money coming their way."

Although student-athletes like Chambers have high hopes for how these rules might benefit athletes, they cannot be sure yet how much will change, as the NCAA has only just begun to define new NIL rules. By 2021, though, all three divisions should have set their rules in place, per the request of the NCAA governing board.

For Southern's assistant volleyball coach Marshay Greenlee, she said these changes cannot come soon enough.

"Right now, the NCAA is profiting from these student-athletes," said Greenlee, "and it gives them the opportunity to be awarded some of that."

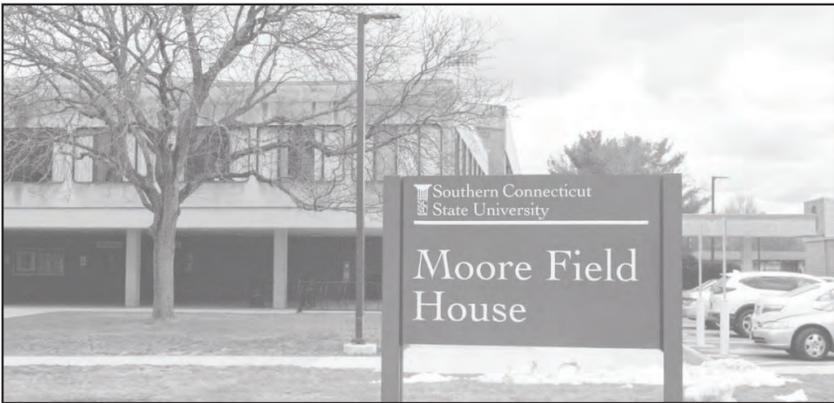


PHOTO | IZZY MANZO

The outside of Moore Field House, located on Wintergreen Avenue, the main hub for sports on campus.

Practice

Continued from Page 9

"It is a selection-type of process," said Lynch. "We are looking for students that know the game, have played the game before, it's not just anybody. Because as much as we want to get better as a team, we also don't want to put our student-athletes at risk for injury, if that makes sense. So, you kind of have to know the game a little bit. After that, we bring them in and we talk to them and I tell them exactly what we're looking for — tell them what the commitment level is, because it is a commitment — and then we kind of just go from there."

Despite not sitting

on the bench, traveling with the team or even having their own uniform number, Lynch and her players preach that the four men are a true part of the team and not a separate entity. Though after practice the men and women do go their separate ways, they maintain a relationship with one another despite going at it in practice.

"They're really cool guys. If I see them, they say 'Hey,'" said guard Imani Wheeler, a senior. "We have conversations on the court and sometimes off the court about basketball. They're really cool and understanding about us and they want us to win."

The story of how each player stepped into the role they currently have is unique to each of them. They all share the

common denominator of missing the game of basketball, but the benefits can go beyond just playing again. For Kelly, the opportunity he has been given serves as a segue into a potential career path.

"My freshman year I tried out for the men's basketball team, sophomore year I didn't, junior year I did, senior year I did too," said Kelly.

"This year I just gave up on athletics and just focused on what I'm trying to do after school. And then I found out they picked up a bunch of walk-ons — my major is exercise science and my minor is marketing so just working around athletes is something I've always wanted to do anyways."

"So, I asked if there was any way I could be a manager or practice

with them, just to get any experience under my belt," Kelly said. "Then I was sent an email about being a practice player [for the women's team] and I was thinking that's cool too because right now I'm working at Club 24 in Wallingford and I'm trying to be a personal trainer over there but I need to get my certification first, so just having experience working with athletes first before I actually have that experience at my job site, I feel like it would be a good opportunity, so when I was told I would be a practice player, I wanted to do it just for the experience."

The experience Kelly speaks of is one that does not come without some benefits. All four of the practice players are registered NCAA athletes and follow the

same regulations just as all other student-athletes at Southern. Though there obviously is not compensation, the practice players are able to register for their classes early and get some of their own gear for practice. Though the stories of how each of these men got to where they are on the team are different depending on each case, and though the women's basketball team is currently sitting at 8-10 and just 2-8 in the NE-10, the team and its practice players view this relationship as a mutually beneficial one.

"They are faster and stronger. Coach really has no sympathy for us in practice," Wheeler said with a smile. "Also, we're undersized in the NE-10 period, so it helps in that aspect too."



PHOTO | HUNTER O. LYLE

Quentin Kelly, a fifth-year senior, dribbling and driving during a practice on Dec. 8.



PHOTO | HUNTER O. LYLE

Mike Mohan, a practice player, taking a contested jumpshot in practice on Dec. 8.



Winter break does not stop SCSU sports

Column by Hunter O. Lyle
Sports Editor

As we look ahead to the upcoming semester, we cannot forget the six weeks of Southern sports that occurred over break. Here's what you might have missed:

Men's Basketball:

The men's basketball team played seven games against seven different NE10 opponents between the end of the fall semester and the start of the spring and was able to come out with a 5-2 record. After narrowly beating Pace University on Jan. 4, 64-61, the team had a two-game skid. Fortunately for the Owls, they corrected their course with a three-game winning streak. After losing to Stonehill college last Saturday, the men's basketball team now sits at 10-7 — 6-5 in the NE10.

Women's Basketball:

While the other half of Southern's basketball program was able to hit their stride over break, the women's team was not. Playing eight games between semesters, including a game against No. 12 nationally ranked Adelphi University, the women's basketball team was only able to come away with two wins — a 65-63 win over Saint Thomas Aquinas College on Dec. 18 and a 54-51 win over Saint Michael's College a month later on Jan. 18. With nine games left in the regular season, most of which are against in-conference matchups, the Owls might look a little desperate coming down the line.

Swimming and Diving:

The Owls were able to walk away with a winning record of 2-1, including a win on Senior Day against the College of Saint Rose on Jan. 19. With no matches left in their regular season, the swimming and diving team are now preparing for a run at the NE10 Championship as well as a possible national title.

Track and Field:

The track and field team only competed in two meets. On Jan. 10, the team traveled to Sparkill, N.Y. for the Spartan Invite, where junior Milan Spisek won the pole vaulting competition with a mark of 4.70 meters. Elaina DiSalvo placed third in pole vaulting in the same competition. The team then took to the University of Rhode Island on Jan. 18 for the URI Sorien Invitational. The team now looks to gear up for the NE10 Championships as their season comes to an end.

As my last semester covering Southern sports has begun, I hope the fans and Blue Crew are as excited as I am to watch the Blue and White.

PHOTO

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RAs host 'Happy Trees Paint Night'



Exploratory major Katherine Kiernan (left) and English major Kiersten Conner, both sophomores, paint during the Happy Trees: Paint Night on Jan. 23.



Communication major Alyssa Couture, freshman, paints during the Happy Trees: Paint Night.



Alyssa Couture paints during the 'Happy Trees: Paint Night' on Jan. 23.

By Izzy Manzo
Photo Editor

This week, the Southern News covered 'Happy Trees: Paint Night' with Schwartz, Brownell, and North Campus.

'Happy Trees' was hosted by Residence Advisors from the three campuses and was held in the Schwartz Programming Space on January 23.

The event was put on as a part of Southern's Week of Welcome, which occurs at the beginning of each semester as a way to "get better connected, meet new people,

and learn about new opportunities," according to Southern's website.

Students were encouraged to follow along with an episode of Bob Ross' "The Joy of Painting," which was being played on the televisions.

After the video ended, students were free to continue painting in the style of Bob Ross or "freestyle [their] own art," according to the event's page on OwlConnect.

See Page 8 in the Arts & Entertainment section for more about the 'Happy Trees: Paint Night'



English major Morgan Hines, freshman, poses with her painting during the 'Happy Trees: Paint Night.'



Student's finished paintings dry on a table during the 'Happy Trees: Paint Night' in the Schwartz Programming Space.



Special education major Samuel Martin (left) and Spanish and communication disorders major Abby Ashbey, freshmen, at the 'Happy Trees: Paint Night.'