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THE COLLEGE VOICE

CONNECTICUT COLLEGE'S STUDENT NEWSPAPER, SINCE 1977

NEW LONDON, CONNECTICUT

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 20, 2023

VOLUME LVIII ISSUE 1

THECOLLEGEVOICE.ORG

Connecticut College's Middle Reliever

FRITZ BALDAUF
GRACE CONTERI-FLYNN
CO-EDITORS-IN-CHIEF

Dr. Leslie E. Wong assumed the position of interim President of Connecticut College on July 1, 2023. Wong has a long history in upper administration, having served as President of Northern Michigan University (NMU) from 2004 to 2012 and of San Francisco State University (SFSU) from 2012 to 2019. He served as a member of the Board of Trustees at Conn for several years prior to his appointment as interim President.

When asked about what drew him to join the Connecticut College community, Wong stated "When I look back at the places I've been fortunate to be a part of there are a couple of themes. I've always been student-committed and the notion of a phrase called 'students first' really dominated where I went." He continued, "I've been super pleased with the quality of students at Conn. The social consciousness, the desire to do something impactful. To be a good president you need good faculty and good students."

Wong grew up in Oakland, California, where he attended Bishop O'Dowd High School, a Bay Area catholic high school. He earned his bachelor's degree from Gonzaga University in Spokane, Washington in 1972, his master's degree in experimental psychology in 1974 from Eastern Washington University, and then

his doctoral degree in 1986 from Washington State University.

During the end of his tenure as President of San Francisco State University, Wong's administration faced criticism surrounding his response to antisemitic incidents on campus. His administration grappled with the campus' strong reaction to his response to a 2016 pro-Palestine protest against an on-campus event featuring Jerusalem mayor Nir Barkat. Wong initially refused to respond to the protests which was interpreted by some members of the community as discrimination against Zionist and Jewish members of the community. He later released an apology in which he stated, "Let me be clear: Zionists are welcome on our campus." This statement, resulted in additional protest from pro-Palestine community members.

Connecticut College Rabbi Susan Schein disclosed in an email to the Hillel community that she met with Wong over the summer to discuss "the history of Jewish life at Conn. as well as the current needs of Conn. Hillel students." Rabbi Schein remarked that she, along with Pastor Stephanie Haskins, asked Wong to meet with members of the campus Jewish community and to support the College's "critical DIEI initiatives." These sentiments also speak to the DIEI-focused protests that occurred on campus last Spring semester.

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Connecticut College Sees Yet Another Voyeurism Incident

ADRIEN POUTRY
MANAGING EDITOR

On August 29, at 11:14 PM, Mary Savage's email titled "Campus Safety Bulletin- KB Incident" arrived in inboxes informing people of the most recently known incident of voyeurism on Connecticut College's campus, which occurred earlier that day at approximately 8:30 PM. This first communication to the campus did not include the term "voyeurism," but it explained that "a student was taking a shower in the basement of KB and observed an individual taking photos of them with a phone over the shower stall." Interested students will find that the vast majority of communication from the upper administration regarding these incidents will always avoid using the term "voyeurism" (the single outlier is

the recent email from deans Victor Arcelus and Nakia Hamlett).

This incident comes after the arrest of two students convicted of voyeurism in 2019 and 2020 and an alleged incident of voyeurism in 2021. Despite searching for more information, it was not possible to find additional, concluding information communicated to the campus regarding the incident in 2021.

Voyeurism is an issue that is clearly plaguing Conn's campus as it is other college campuses around the country. Though it may be reassuring to some to find that two of the culprits, Carlos Antonio Alberti in 2019 and Nicholas Spellman in 2020, were arrested, it is equally upsetting that voyeurism continues to take place on Conn's campus and that the 2021 incident

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Courtesy of conncoll.edu

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Courtesy of Minnie Madden '25

On Sunday, September 10th, Connecticut College's a capella groups came together to perform at their annual Fall Showcase in the Harkness Chapel. The chapel was packed with students eagerly awaiting the evening's...

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Letter From the Editors

The new school year here at Conn is fully up and running, and everyone is settling back into the swing of things. It is with sincere excitement that we are publishing this first fall edition of *The College Voice*. We have a great editorial team this year, a mix of returning and new faces.

We were over the moon after our first pitch meeting two Sundays ago when we saw what we believe to be the biggest turnout we've ever had for a pitch meeting and got more article signups than we can remember in our years working for TCV.

We were honored to step into the roles of Co-Editors-in-Chief this past summer. It has certainly been a transition for the both of us taking on greater responsibilities here at the Voice, and managing the behind-the-scenes operations that even we, as previous section editors, didn't see last year. It's given us a far greater appreciation for the hard work of our graduated Co-Editors-in-Chief from last year, Sam Maidenbergl '23 and Catja Christensen '23.

Although Sam and Catja – along with all of the wonderful seniors from last year – will be dearly missed, we have a lot of exciting plans for this year and hope to be as closely involved with the rest of the campus as we can. We are working hard to make the newspaper available in more places than it has been in the past and plan to host various writing and journalism workshops for the broader campus community.

On that note, we'd like to highlight that we can never have enough writers for the paper. We welcome any and all articles, so long as they are fact checked and well-written. We would love to continue seeing new faces at our pitch meetings. The energy in the room was palpable. We hope to ride that momentum throughout the whole year.

In this first fall edition of TCV, our incredible writing team tackles a variety of issues around campus, in the local community, and in the broader world. Firstly, we (Fritz and Grace) provide insight from our summer interview with interim President Leslie Wong, focusing on his transition into the role and his goals for his presidency.

New Opinions Editor, Wade Anthony '24, delves deep into the leadership advisory firm that Conn has hired to conduct the presidential search. Sports Editor Kevin Lieue '26 provides a preview for the fall sports teams, and Staff Writer Caroline Snyder '26 takes a look into the disturbing trend of voyeurism on campus.

Finally, we'd like to highlight the new members of our editorial board. Of note, Adrien Prouty '25 is taking over as Managing Editor. New in the News section is Minnie Madden '26, joining TCV veteran editor Keri Krasnoff '24. Wade Anthony '24 is joining Davi Schulman '25 in the Opinions section. Jocelyn Lewis '24 and Emma Dinkelspiel '25 are taking over the Arts section. The aforementioned Kevin Lieue '26 and the new Evan Young '26 will be this year's Sports section editors. On the management side, Bhavana Muppala '26 and Andrew Kupovich '26 are joining team MVP Robbie Lynch '24 in layout. Finn McKittrick '26 is joining social media veteran Sophie Mulvihill '25 to run our Instagram, Facebook, and other social media. Lastly, Ilan Listgarten '25 is our new Business Manager. We have an incredible staff, and we know they are going to do great things this year!

We can't wait for what this year will bring to the world of student journalism, and we hope that you will write for TCV if you feel inspired to do so. You can reach us via email or talk to us around campus. We have pitch meetings every other Sunday evening in the Alice Johnson room of Cro, feel free to drop in!

Sincerely,

Fritz Baldauf and Grace Contreni Flynn, Co-Editors-in-Chief

THE COLLEGE VOICE

The views and opinions expressed in *The College Voice* are strictly those of student authors, and not of Connecticut College. All content and editorial decisions remain in the hands of the students; neither the College's administration nor its faculty exercise control over the content.

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Connecticut College's Middle Reliever

Article continued from page 1.

Naturally, the elephant in the room since Wong's appointment has been the nature in which his predecessor, President Katherine Bergeron, resigned from the position in light of the now infamous planned fundraiser at the Everglades Club last February, and the ensuing protests occupying Fanning Hall several weeks later.

On the protests and their aftermath, Wong stated:

"I'm a big fan of resilience. I think college students have been told too much about finding something that you're proud to do and you know, that kind of stuff. I actually think life is about handling difficult things and developing skill sets that build resilience, and Conn was not alone in the spring. There's campus disturbance across the country, big campuses, small campuses, campuses closing because of financial issues. So there's a challenge out there. Personally, I thought the management of last spring was respectful. I thought the students did a great job. I think the faculty and staff did as well. And I thought the issues were brought out clearly. And honestly, I have a lot of respect for that."

Wong, additionally, expressed an eagerness to approach issues of accessibility on campus. He described his experience touring the Health Center, "I was disappointed that the first and third floors are inaccessible." Wong recognized that many faculty and staff members cherish their offices, and he acknowledged that it can be difficult to ask people to move for the sake of campus construction. He outlined a plan he hopes to implement as a means of addressing inaccessibility on campus, "I want to be able to put some proposals in front of faculty, students, and staff that announces that down the line, if we move this unit to this building and made some minor changes, we could improve service. Like, counseling and mental health ought to be on the ground floor." Wong expressed interest in learning about every inaccessible space on campus with a focus on speaking with students, faculty, and staff who identify as disabled. Wong has continued to navigate learning curves such as this as he adjusts to working for a small, private liberal arts college.

Wong mentioned that being on the board offered him a learning experience of being at a private college, professionally and personally. He said, "My whole career has been in public institutions, and they've ranged from small

like 1500 students [to big], San Francisco was 31,000 students and urban. So, this is really a different environment. And I'm intrigued by those kinds of things. And I thought – well – I'm just kind of a learning junkie, I thought I could keep learning by being at Conn College and that's coming true."

A key topic for Wong was his goals for moving Connecticut College forward during his interim presidency. On this subject, he provided that: "One of the aspects of the strategic plan I want to push on is the question of how to extend connections into the junior and senior year and how we stabilize the funding and the staffing of it. Those are questions we can get going on this year. And then when the new President is here, he or she can push

that along as well." Additionally, he said, "I'm also working with the Board to look at the potential of a staff-trustee subcommittee. Students have one, faculty have one, there is no staff-trustees committee... They're absent from that. So it's hard to have shared governance when one of the major pieces is absent."

When asked about his adjustment from life in the San Francisco Bay Area to southeastern Connecticut, President Wong said that he was enjoying the transition, citing that his children and grandchildren are now based in the northeast. He also added that "The smell in the air from the water is just wonderful... The forest is close by. I've been pleased with how diverse New London is."

In light of last semester's protests and the occupation of Fanning Hall, Connecticut College is experiencing institutional change on a series of levels. Wong commented on this shift and the systematic changes being made, "To use a baseball analogy, I'm just the middle reliever, or the setup man here.

I'm setting it up for whoever the next president is, because they are going to be our closer." Effectively, he's Taylor Rogers (the SF Giants' setup man) to the next President's Camilo Doval (the Giants' closer). In his concluding thoughts, Wong drew attention to the position of student voices on campus: "You gotta be present at the table. And I hope to set a culture, or at least an environment where you all can speak your mind intelligently, and forcefully if you have to. And I'm going to listen. And if I make a mistake, because I didn't listen, you have to call me out." •



Courtesy of @conncollege on instagram

Connecticut College Sees Yet Another Voyeurism Incident

Article continued on page 1.

has been seemingly disregarded by the administration without closure for the impacted students (including not just the victims of the incident but those that were emotionally and psychologically impacted by the news and perhaps previous experiences).

In an article published by The College Voice in 2021, Jackie Chalghin '22 outlined the announced measures to be taken by the college and their perspective regarding the implementation of those measures during their time at Conn.

In 2019, then President Katherine Bergeron claimed the school would work to install cameras at the entrances/exits of residence halls, create a Conn College app to make critical phone numbers more easily accessible, prepare a year-end report regarding sexual misconduct complaints, place additional blue lights in the River Ridges/Winchesters, administer a survey to gather data regarding experiences of sexual misconduct, and create a working group of students, faculty, and staff to assess the college's policies, procedures, and communication strategies. Two years after the incident, Chalghin reports that the students "rightfully rallied against the cameras, as they add a discomfiting layer of surveillance" (students serving on the Student Government Association at the time recall lengthy discussions with the administration arguing against the installation of cameras, the administration ultimately decided to go ahead with the camera project despite student pushback), the Rave Guardian app is a retroactive solution to a problem necessitating proactive action, the sexual misconduct reports now available on CamelWeb are retroactive and difficult to find, the vast majority of blue lights do not work, the last time they had personally received a survey was pre-COVID, and "working groups only work if [the] administration heeds their suggestions."

In other words, the school made promises to mostly retroactively address voyeurism, which were not properly fulfilled, included actions that were against the wishes of the student body, and proved unhelpful in truly preventing the problem.

There is no mention of an email from Bergeron following the 2020 incident, but there was one sent in November of 2021 following the poorly communicated incident that occurred earlier that month. In the email, she promised that "locks will be installed in single stall bathrooms that are not currently lockable, upper windows in Larrabee bathrooms will be frosted, any remaining gaps in stalls will be filled, architectural studies will be conducted to identify other future solutions, [and] new mounted signage will include the 24/7 On-Call Line for the confidential Sexual Violence and Prevention Advocate." These are the immediate steps listed but Bergeron went on to commit the college to a slew of additional actions that have been – unsurprisingly – entirely unfelt by the student body including increased funding for the Office of Sexual Violence Prevention and Advocacy, expanded educational programming regarding sexual violence and its prevention, an updated Equity and Inclusion Action Plan related to ending sexual violence, an appointed committee who will update the plan, and expansion of SVPA-focused staff.

Bergeron ends this email by reminding the campus that "of course, all of us are responsible for creating the culture we seek," deflecting the majority of the responsibility from the shoulders of the administration and making it sound perfectly reasonable that all parties on campus – the students, faculty, staff, and administration – should and can share this burden equally.

Neither in this email from Bergeron nor the prior email alerting the campus to the event sent by Mary Savage, the Director of Campus Safety and Emergency Operations, and the then Associate Dean for Equity and Compliance Programs/Title IX Coordinator Ebony Manning mentioned

the word "voyeurism," though Savage's email once again described "that an individual was photographed without consent while showering in Katherine Blunt House."

The only email from the administration that used the term "voyeurism" was signed by Victor Arcelus, dean of students, and Nakia Hamlett, interim dean of institutional equity and inclusion. Though little details are known regarding the recent voyeurism incident on campus as it remains an ongoing police investigation, this email included much more pertinent information than any previous locatable email regarding voyeurism on campus.

Most notably, the deans informed the student body of immediate actions taken the night of the incident when on-call staff met with the students who reported it and Dean Arcelus met with the student accused of voyeurism. Geoff Norbert (associate dean for Campus Life), Eric Barnes (director of Residential Life), Taylor Chafey (assistant director for Residential Life), Nicole Powell (director of Sexual Violence Prevention and Advocacy) met with the residents on the impacted floor of KB the next day. Similar to the bathrooms of Lazrus, a lock was added to the exterior door of the bathrooms on the floor to transform them into single-occupancy spaces.

Though the plan has been met with less-than-positive reactions from many students, deans Arcelus and Hamlett also provided a moderately detailed outline of the bathroom renovation plans for the campus. In response to one criticism that the bathroom renovations should not take so long, they informed the campus that "this project is far more complex than simply replacing the existing partitions with floor-to-ceiling partitions," in fact, "the ventilation system, fire suppression system, and lighting needs to be redesigned" so that each stall can have its own ventilation, sprinkler, and lighting. As students are certainly aware, such extensive construction for buildings as old as many of the dorms on campus is difficult, costly, and time-consuming. The deans added that all bathrooms that have not been recently renovated are being fully renovated including work beyond the not-so-simple addition of privacy partitions. All bathrooms of standard campus residence halls are set to be completed by Summer 2025.

Though this addresses a number of the questions raised by students, valid criticisms still remain: why did the College wait to begin these renovations until 2021 when 2019 and 2020 saw major incidents of voyeurism? Why were there no plans for construction during Summer 2022? Why are there no further plans for construction during winter breaks besides 2022 and 2023?

The renovation of the bathrooms is one step taken that will – once complete – likely be effective in proactively preventing future voyeurism on campus. More steps are certainly possible and the school has proven that it will listen when students effectively wield the tools of shared governance and strong voices. As Interim President Wong said, "if I make a mistake, because I didn't listen, you have to call me out." If the administration makes mistakes and does not listen to the student body, it is well within the power of the students to call them out. •

Hopefully, once the College knows more, the administration will inform the student body. Until then, students are directed to the following resources for support:

Campus Advocates: svpa@conncoll.edu or <https://bit.ly/ConnCollSVPA>
 Student Counseling Services: 860-439-4587
 Campus Safety: (860) 439-2222
 Sexual Assault Crisis Center of Eastern Connecticut 24-hour hotline, off-campus advocate 860-437-7766
 Safe Futures, off-campus domestic violence or relationship violence advocates, 24-hour hotline 860-701-6000

Remembering Jimmy Buffett

NICOLE SANFILIPPO
CONTRIBUTOR

Beloved American singer-songwriter sensation and businessman, Jimmy Buffett, passed away on Sept. 1, 2023. He had been struggling with a four-year long battle with a rare, aggressive form of skin cancer called Merkel cell carcinoma. He was confirmed to be in hospice care in August. Known for his laid-back, Florida Keys persona, his country-esque songs portrayed an alike image: living on beach resorts, having one too many drinks, getting high, and escaping the everyday woes of life.

Jimmy Buffett, whose real name was James William Buffett, was born in 1946 in Mississippi. He was introduced to maritime-life by his grandfather, a sailor in Newfoundland, which inspired his song “Son of a Son of a Sailor.” His time in college was spent flunking classes, working with ships, and playing guitar. After eventually graduating, he started street performances in New Orleans. He discovered his passion for country music, moving northwest to America’s country music capital, Nashville, TN. In Nashville, he performed gigs in various bars and clubs and released his first album, but he wasn’t yet satisfied with life. In 1971, He took up an offer to live in Jerry Jeff Walker’s house in Coconut Grove, his first introduction to Florida and later Key West.

Buffet immediately fell in love with the Keys, moving there just a few months later. He began singing at bars and working on boats again, and even indulged in the literary scene. Most notably, he signed his first record contract, beginning his journey towards stardom.

Buffet wrote most of his hits in the Florida Keys including “Grapefruit - Juicy Fruit,” “Come Monday,” and “A Pirate Looks Forty” to name a few. Of all his songs, the single that made his name was “Margaritaville,” a song originally written sarcastically about Key West tourists (as he would later sing, “Changes in Latitude, Changes in Attitude”). The public, however, interpreted it as a definition of paradise, increasing tourism to the Keys.

Given his tremendous success, Jimmy Buffett toured practically every year from 1976 all the way through 2023. His dedication to his music and

the island-escapism aesthetic gained him a multitude of devoted followers, nicknamed “Parrotheads.” They became synonymous with the image of baby boomers in tropical floral shirts, cargo shorts, and margaritas in hand attending concert after concert, transporting themselves into “Margaritaville” or Key West resorts alike.

To give “Parrotheads” a personal taste of their self-proclaimed utopia, Jimmy launched several enterprises, most popular being the restaurant Jimmy Buffett’s Margaritaville. The restaurants later transformed into resorts, casinos, even a partnership with a retirement home, Latitude Margaritaville.

Alongside his music and business, Buffett engaged in other ventures. He wrote fiction novels detailing island escapism, most of which hit The New York Times Best Seller list. He also owned a merchandise line, including clothes, shot glasses, and even furniture. Jimmy became one of the top artists to successfully capitalize on their music persona and create a larger enterprise, illuminating the path for other singer-songwriters such as Dr. Dre (Beats by Dre) and Jay-Z (40/40 Clubs).

Buffett was incredibly charitable as well. He co-founded the Save the Manatee Club in 1981, and worked to introduce the corresponding license plate, allowing citizens to donate to the cause. His charity work for animals didn’t stop there. He also lobbied for adapting the Endangered Species Act of 1973 to the more modern environmental conditions of 1987. He used his music platform for relief efforts too, such as his Surviving the Storm relief tour and his concert in Hong Kong, donating funds to hurricane relief funds and to support children in need, respectfully.

Despite the endeavors of the music and business trade, Jimmy always stayed true to himself and had fun with his career, once disclosing, “It’s pure escapism is all it is ... I’m not the first one to do it, nor shall I probably be the last. But I think it’s really a part of the human condition that you’ve got to have some fun.” His aspirational tropical vacation spirit will be forever missed, and may he rest in peace, eating a “Cheeseburger in Paradise.” •

Should Conn Students Worry About Deadly Bacteria in Long Island Sound?

SOPHIE MULVIHILL
SOCIAL MEDIA MANAGER

No, probably not. The *Vibrio vulnificus* bacteria that led to the deaths of three people in Connecticut and New York is rare and there is no need for most to worry.

Dean of Students, Victor Arcelus, said that the college administration was not previously aware of the increase in bacteria in the region. Arcelus suggested that students follow the guidelines provided by Connecticut Department of Public Health (CT DPH) over the summer. He was not too concerned about the impact the bacteria will have for students or those living in the area.

“I don’t think that students should be worried about swimming in the area. Based on the conversation I had with the CT Department of Public Health, this bacteria has long been in the water in this region and more so along the US coastline in warmer waters where many people swim,” said Arcelus.

The bacteria is typically transmitted to humans through eating raw shellfish, or by swimming with an open wound in an area with high levels of bacteria. *V. vulnificus* can cause symptoms including blisters, abscesses, ulcers, fevers, diarrhea and vomiting. In extreme cases people can develop septicemia, a type of blood poisoning.

Three people died in Connecticut and New York this summer as a result of being exposed to *V. vulnificus* after both swam in infected waters and ate raw shellfish. They were also each over 60-years-old. This matches the information the CT DPH explained to Dean Arcelus, that “the risk of dangerous infection due to the bacteria is highest in the elderly and immunocompromised.”

Dr. Maria Rosa, a professor of biology at Conn, who studies marine biology and ecology, explained that the bacteria lives in brackish water, which is where fresh water meets salt water, like in the Thames River. *V. vulnificus* also thrives when there are periods of heavy rainfall. Dr. Rosa said that this means increased levels of the bacteria can be predicted for our area.

“When there is a high concentration of bacteria, then you can get infections,” Rosa explained.

She said that there is a lot of testing for dangerous bacterias done in the region since Connecticut is such a large exporter of shellfish. There are clear standards set by the Department of Agriculture for determining safe waters and the frequency of testing increases when the conditions are met for excessive growth. Because of the high standards of testing, as long as people avoid non-certified shellfish, infection is unlikely. •



Courtesy of Sophie Mulvihill '25

WittKieffer Waste?

WADE ANTHONY
OPINIONS EDITOR

Today's economy is increasingly dominated by "the middleman." Firms, distributors, and advisors thrive by skimming off the top of producers' and consumers' hard-earned profits, siphoning billions of dollars into their pockets as they assert their significance. This parasitic template of business exists everywhere and has recently been employed in Connecticut College's search for a new president. On June 23, the Presidential Search Committee announced its selection of the "premier executive search and leadership advisory firm," WittKieffer, to help identify the College's 12th president. While the decision to hire a firm of this caliber is hardly surprising, given executive search firms have become a norm throughout higher education, it raises the question: Does the benefit outweigh the cost?

Founded in 1969 and headquartered in Oak Brook, Illinois, WittKieffer is a major player in the world of executive search firms. Forbes ranked WittKieffer as the 13th best search firm in the US in 2023. Operating as a 'retained search firm,' a term analogous to a retainer for an attorney, firms like WittKieffer are considered the gold standard in executive searches. This distinction means they work exclusively with the client. However, the advantages offered by the firm come with a catch: they are paid regardless of the outcome of the hiring process, and their services come at a steep price.

The cost of hiring a retained search firm like WittKieffer is typically calculated based on a percentage of the first-year salary for the open position, along with overhead and expense fees. For a prominent firm – such as WittKieffer – this percentage often hovers around 30% of the first-year salary, sometimes even higher. Taking former president Katherine Bergeron's first-year salary of approximately \$430,000 in 2015 as an example, the cost of hiring an executive search firm at that time would have amounted to nearly \$130,000. However, the expenses escalate further when accounting for overhead and additional fees. In 2016, WittKieffer collaborated with the Oregon Institute of Technology to find their next college president. In that case, a 10% overhead fee was applied to the professional cost (determined by the first-year salary), along with approximately \$15,000 in supplementary expenses covering advertising, travel, shipping, and other related costs. Applying similar figures to Conn, it is conceivable that the college could face a bill exceeding \$200,000 for enlisting WittKieffer's assistance in the search for the next president.

This is an enormous sum of money, yet there is an argument that justifies it. Over the past several decades, the average tenure of a college president has steadily shrunk, sitting at just below six years today. With astronomically high presidential salaries at many institutions, hiring a president is a significant financial commitment. That's without even considering the financial losses that can arise out of the instability created by a poor-performing president, or worse, one that doesn't stick around. Therefore, it is no surprise that higher education

institutions and large companies around the world are willing to pay a significant price for promised stability and prosperity. WittKieffer appears to offer precisely that, as their website boasts, "We have conducted more than 130 president searches for colleges and universities in the last decade alone. The average tenure of the chief executives we place is nine years, well above the national average." However, there is one area in which WittKieffer excels even more than in hiring executives: convincing schools their service is needed.

The firm's website is flashy and modern but largely substanceless upon closer inspection. Headers that read "Your mission inspires our work" and "We work better by working together" litter the tabs of the site; "Success Stories" are placed on every page. While the firm does have a notable background in hiring for higher education, much of its work seems to be in the healthcare sector. Hiring leaders for hospitals, senior care, and digital healthcare dominates most of the firm's website, yet WittKieffer claims it operates in the "Quality of life ecosystem" where healthcare delivery, science, and education intersect.

Ultimately, the question of whether following the corporated approach of using a company like WittKieffer was the right choice for Conn must be explored. In 2021, analysts from HigherEd-Dive interviewed several college boards on the effectiveness of search firms like WittKieffer, and their research suggests that many major retained search firms often lack the deep understanding of higher education institutions that governing boards possess. These firms' corporate mindset towards hiring can overshadow the intricacies of higher education leadership and exert excessive control over presidential searches. Ideally, they conclude that the responsibility should rest with the institution itself. The sheer number of consultants and researchers these firms employ means institutions may not even know who is doing the critical work of creating job announcements, running listening sessions, and conducting interviews. While an independent search process lacks the resources a major firm has, it does allow the institution to fit its unique needs into everything from the job posting to the final contract itself. Had Conn chosen to run the search inde-

pendently, the process would almost certainly be more precise and personalized to the College's needs and far less costly. However, running a search is challenging, time-consuming, carries a number of inherent risks, and – as with so many other things – the College more than likely lacks the staff to take on this responsibility. Thus, institutions like Conn opt for the easier path and willingly reach for their checkbooks.

WittKieffer is just one of many multi-million dollar middlemen that continuously justify their existence to higher education institutions by capitalizing off schools' fear in times of uncertainty and portraying themselves as saviors. As the firm has wiggled its way into the search, it has blocked the College from locating its next president in a more personal and potentially less costly manner. Hopefully, despite these shortcomings, WittKieffer will be able to help the College's presidential search committee identify our 12th president and set Conn on an upward trajectory for many years to come. •



Courtesy of conncoll.edu

Investigation into the Growing Numbers of Camels Joining Conn's Herd

ELLIS IURILLI-HOUGH
CONTRIBUTOR

Connecticut College: a small liberal arts school in southeastern Connecticut known for its “Little Ivy” academics, NES-CAC and national champions, and...camels?

Despite the allure of the unique and beloved mascot, Conn isn't exactly a household name outside of New London. Yet, every year since 2021, admissions rates have been steadily rising as increasing numbers of students are interested in the school. What is it about this tiny, unassuming campus that interests so many students? Did last year's campus activism impact this year's admissions? What does this population boom mean for the herd already here? The answers to these pertinent questions are found by asking the students themselves.

When asked about her decision to apply Early Decision to Conn, Ellie Weinzimer '27, a Connecticut resident, said “I wanted to be able to walk to class and bump into friends.” She added that “The strong academics and Connections program allows you to test out a bunch of different areas even if you're not sure what you want to study.” Gracie Donabella-Pedlow '27 from Cranston, R.I. said, “I really appreciate the proximity to home. And, coming from a small private school in Rhode Island, Conn's diversity and student body was really enticing.”

When asked what comes to mind when they think of Conn — and how much our mascot played into their decision when applying — both Weinzimer and Donabella-Pedlow responded with, “Camels!” “The Camel mascot was honestly a big part of my decision to come here,” said Donabella-Pedlow. “Conn is a very serious place, but it shows that the school is willing to make fun of itself a bit. That lightheartedness is what I've been looking for.”

Matias Martin '27 from Houston, Texas talked about his choice to come to the East Coast. “Before choosing Conn, I was mainly looking at the University of Houston. I thought I wanted a big school and that Conn would be too small, but it's honestly just the right size. I'm always meeting new people and I really feel like I'm a part of the community already,” he said. For him, the nerves of flying halfway across the country settled down once he found his groove here.

Tom Harrison '27 is also pleased with his choice, despite Conn's significant distance from his home in Christchurch, New Zealand. “When I think of Conn, I think of a small, tightly-knit community where everybody looks out for each other,” he said. “I was recruited to play basketball here, and the coaches really sold me on the communal aspect of the school. I'm definitely happy with my choice to come here.”

None of this comes as a surprise to most. Conn is a great place. It's small, but what it lacks in size, it makes up for in solidarity. The students here have a mission: to collaborate, to facilitate connections, and to make a difference during their time here.

Looking into what may have been a deterrent for students in their application and decision processes, it seemed obvious that the ousting of ex-President Katherine Bergeron in the spring of 2023 would be a front-running concern. With this assumption, it was particularly surprising that the class of 2027 actually reacted positively to the student activism. Instead of anxiety or nervousness, students expressed feeling inspired and excited to join a community that unifies to make their voices heard on campus.

As Harrison puts it, “Because of how the students rallied together, it definitely had a positive impact on my decision to attend Conn, as it looked like a community I wanted to be a part of.” Martin said, “It was really reassuring to see students come together and take a stand for their beliefs. If this was a bigger school, perhaps the student's voices wouldn't be heard. But here, we can be loud and proud.”

Not only did the class of 2027 decide to join the herd even with the knowledge of the controversy, they were actually inspired by how the community came together to stand up for their beliefs. Because of that, the college received one of its biggest applicant pools in the history of the school and accepted an idiosyncratic group of world changers into the community. •



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First-Year Success: Senior Advice to the Class of 2027

JOHN NUGENT
SANJEEWA KARUNARATNE
OFFICE OF INSTITUTIONAL
RESEARCH AND PLANNING,
CONNECTICUT COLLEGE

Each fall, public interest in higher education revolves primarily around admissions. The media inundate us with information about selectivity, enrollment targets, Ivy League admissions, financial aid packages and—particularly this year—the use of race and other considerations in admission decisions. Unfortunately, we hear less about

how students can successfully transition to and succeed at the institutions they've chosen to attend. We want students not just to get into the best institution for them but to thrive and complete a degree on time. So, what steps can new college students take to enhance their likelihood of success?

The importance of the transition to college has been noted by higher education scholars such as Vincent Tinto, Daniel Chambliss, and Christopher Takacs. Tinto's research on student retention is premised on the idea that to succeed, students must integrate academically and socially with their new institution. In their 2014 book, *How College Works*, Chambliss and Takacs emphasized the importance of "entering," noting that if it doesn't go reasonably well, "all of the well-designed courses, the carefully planned majors, and the exciting extracurriculars won't matter at all."

At Connecticut College, we conduct an annual survey of graduating seniors, covering various aspects of their college experience. One question asks: "What's one piece of advice you would give to a first-year student this fall about how to make the most of their time at Conn?" The 2023 senior survey had a 60% response rate and 166 responses to the "one piece of advice" question.

Five or more students mentioned twelve specific pieces of advice, which we've consolidated into the following areas:

"Get involved"

The most common piece of advice by far was to actively engage in campus life. Students recommended trying different activities, joining clubs, organizations, teams, and attending numerous events. Comments included, "clubs are the best way to get involved and make friends" and "get involved with groups on campus. It will give you a lot of opportunities [that] you may not realize." It was suggested that new college students "find as many different activities and interests on campus as you can your first year, then decide what is important to you and focus on just a few of those for the next three years." Similarly, others said to "pick a few clubs to start in and don't be afraid to drop the ones that aren't for you or don't bring joy."

"Foster friendships"

Another key theme was the importance of meeting new people and establishing solid social and support networks. Chambliss and Takacs noted that "friendship is so strong a factor for most people as to be, for practical purposes, virtually a prerequisite for success in college." Institutions can and should do several things to ensure students find one another, but students need to do their part and "put themselves out there." Advice from our seniors included "reach out to people even if you're nervous about it. I am sure they want to do things and go to events with someone, too" and "push yourself out of your comfort zone often."

Some seniors advised first-year students not to get worried if they don't find their best friends right away; that will come with time. One graduate wrote that "everyone finds their people here even if it takes a while and that's honestly the best thing about this place." Others noted that students should re-evaluate relationships often and move away from those that aren't working for them sooner rather than later.

"Do what makes you happy"

The survey revealed that prioritizing personal happiness and well-being is fundamental to a fulfilling college experience. Students suggested that first years "have fun and enjoy your time. It goes by fast" and "remember to take time aside to do what makes you happy." Taking care of oneself and prioritizing one's mental and physical health were also mentioned by many seniors. "Always prioritize your physical and mental health while in college because it will affect your academic performance and overall college experience" and "find what you love and immerse yourself in it. Be present and be kind to yourself!"

"Use your institution's resources"

Many seniors stressed the importance of taking advantage of the institution's resources, often specifically highlighting the Hale Center for Career Development. "I would say that [new students] should establish themselves in the career center to talk about internships early on. I think the best way to figure out if your major is for you is by seeing the application in the real world," said one student.

Students also mentioned other academic support offices and the importance of engaging with staff who are there to help, saying to "utilize as many facilities as possible – the Academic Resource Center, writing center, student counseling services, and the Hale Center are all here for your benefit and are extremely helpful. DO NOT feel embarrassed about using tools that are made available to you."

"Cultivate relationships with faculty"

Another common suggestion was to develop strong connections with faculty members. Students wrote "connect with professors. They are the ones who will help you in times of crisis better than your friends (who are probably going through their own crises) and have been in your shoes" and "all efforts to connect with professors and peers alike go a long way. You never know how a contact may benefit you in the future."

"Explore a wide range of academic fields"

Academic-related advice came in several forms. The most common was to investigate a wide range of academic disciplines. This is consistent with Connecticut College's mission as a liberal arts college that exposes students to a wide range of academic fields through its general education program, called Connections. Students advised, "take advantage of Connections and just try out a variety of subjects. You never know what major would fit you unless you try." Another said, "register for classes that make you excited and nervous! Try something new. That's what liberal arts are for! You don't have to get started on a major yet."

"Be resilient"

Lastly, graduating seniors shared general advice that centered on resilience. "It's going to be a big change and a lot of figuring stuff out on your feet. There's this expectation/romanticization of college life as if you enter college – and bam! instant knowing adult skills! But that's not true. It's okay to stumble, to seek help, and to figure things out as you go," said one student. Another said, "it's going to be tough at first, but it would be anywhere. Put yourself out there and trust the process." •

The Sound (on the Sound) of Connecticut

EMMA DINKELSPIEL
ARTS EDITOR

Sound on Sound Music Festival will be returning to Bridgeport, Connecticut on September 30th for its second year, bringing a weekend filled with music. Over 20 bands and musicians will be performing with notable headliners such as Red Hot Chili Peppers, Alanis Morissette, and John Mayer. It's looking like this will be a can't miss event!

Jordan Wolowitz, one of the founders of Sound on Sound, is responsible for booking the festival and building the setlist. As a music-lover, he was motivated to found Sound on Sound after growing up in Connecticut and observing that "There was never a real music festival in Connecticut." He says, "It was always a goal of mine to build [one]."

Wolowitz explained how supporting local artists was extremely important to him in building the setlist this year. "John Mayer grew up in Fairfield, Connecticut. Sammy Rae is from Connecticut. Every year, we save some of our first spots for local Connecticut bands and students from the Berklee School of Music in Boston. We always support young artists." Wolowitz noted that he is particularly excited to see Steel Pulse. He said, "They're a legendary reggae band that I'm not sure a lot of people in Connecticut have seen live."

Governor of Connecticut Ned Lamont praised the festival saying, "This amazing line up is just one more thing that makes it clear, Connecticut is the place to be, not just to live and work. You can enjoy everything from great State Parks to incredible music."

The first year of Sound on Sound in 2022 featured Zach Bryan and Noah Kahan. Now, these artists are some of the biggest names in music, but one year ago, they weren't even headlining the event.

Wolowitz said, "That's why festivals are so great. Over the years, you can see artists grow from club acts to arena acts or stadium acts. In the meantime, a festival can help support them."

"Instead of a focus on pop and hip hop, you won't necessarily see a lot of that at Sound on Sound," he said when asked what makes Sound on Sound distinct from other music festivals. "It's also about the experience at the show." At Sound on Sound, Wolowitz intentionally capped the audience at 30,000 in order to make the environment more relaxed. "Sound on Sound is definitely still a party, but it's also more comfortable," Wolowitz told me as he explained the single-stage aspect of the festival. "We're going to have a round table stage with only one artist playing at a time, so people know where to go to see the music. Audience members will be able to see as many of the artists as they want."

Between sets, audience members can enjoy food and drink from over 40 different vendors from both Fairfield County and the greater New England area. There will also be a ferris wheel, a sports hall, and a wine grove.

Just an hour away from Connecticut College's campus by train, the two-day festival is a convenient commute for Conn students whether they want to attend one day or both. Concerts will begin at noon on Saturday September 30th with local bands leading up to the headlining events in the evening. •



Courtesy of Colin Lloyd

Burning Benedict

RYAN YANKO
CONTRIBUTOR

On a quiet September night in New London, hundreds gathered wearing costumes, brandishing pitchforks, and chanting "death to the traitor!" The target of their calls was a two-faced effigy of Benedict Arnold, the former hero of the Continental army who defected to the British. On September 6th, 1781 his forces burned the city of New London to the ground. Tonight, the crowd chanted, we will burn him to the ground.

These bloodthirsty cries are all part of the Connecticut Maritime Heritage Festival, which is run annually by OpSail Connecticut Inc. based on a bigger event called "Operation Sails," which is hosted to foster goodwill between nations and celebrate maritime heritage. As a seaport city, New London has a rich history of sea-faring activities, with interesting tidbits written on informational plaques and signs all around downtown.

Moored to the city docks, the U.S. Coast Guard's Barque Eagle immediately draws the attention of anyone arriving at the festival. With a rig height of nearly 150 feet, the aptly named "America's Tall Ship" is visually stunning. On board, the Coast Guard demonstrated how the pulley systems work and gave information on the history of the

ship (it was originally commissioned in Nazi Germany). Just down the river from the Coast Guard academy, it's clear to see the military importance of a port city.

Before that, however, the waters were a source of food for the native Pequot people. After the arrival of European colonizers and the trans-atlantic slave trade, New London also became a major part of the middle passage. By 1774, New London county had the largest population of enslaved people of any New England county. These atrocities aren't on full display at the family-friendly festival, but it is well laid out on plaques across the docks.

Also well documented in text is the historical importance of the whaling industry. New London was, at one point, the second largest whaling port in the whole world, bringing great prosperity to the city. Arriving at the city dock, attendees were immediately greeted by an inflatable whale sitting in the plaza. Despite the town's history of whaling, this is not to celebrate the killing of whales, instead it's promoting their protection. Representatives from the Stellwagen Bank

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Burning Benedict

Article continued from page 9.

National Marine Sanctuary set up shop at the festival to give out information on preservation and the sanctuary itself, which is located off the coast of Massachusetts. The inflatable, with fake organs on its inside, was custom built based on a humpback whale named Salt.

Along the city docks, representatives from museums, banks, and various food trucks joined to support the festivities. During the festival, the city is a center for history, curiosity, and entertainment. It is New London's proximity to the water that brought it fame and fortune and made it into the city it is today. Its economic importance is also what made it a strategic target for the British during the American Revolutionary War. To any American Revolution buffs, the name Benedict Arnold is synonymous with the word "traitor," but what some might not know is that he has a specific connection to New London. Benedict Arnold grew up mere miles north from where the Coast Guard's Eagle sits on the water and where people sang along to sea chanteys at the festival. Arnold was con-

sidered by many to be a hero in the fight against the British and was no doubt a source of pride for the area where he came from. When he turned into a commander for the British, it dishonored the region.

Coming up on the street as the sky turns dark, a crowd slowly gathered. Soon, hundreds of costumed people were standing, ready to march. Drummers from the Colchester Continentals began to beat their drums. The sound of firing muskets ricocheted through the streets. The two-faced Benedict Arnold, was pulled on a wagon and accompanied by a devil wearing stilts, just as it was over 240 years ago, when the first march of the traitor took place. When the parade reached the docks, the crowd stopped and the mayor stepped up to say a few words. First, there was a moment of silence for all of the lives that were lost in the fight for independence. But then as he retold the story of how Benedict Arnold returned home and burnt nearly every building to the ground, he reminded the crowd that "New London never forgets!" The effigy was doused in lighter fluid, lit from a tiki torch, and the traitor was up in flames and the crowd cheered. •

Finding the Right Key: A Cappella Auditions at Conn

LILLY MCGEE
CONTRIBUTOR

As said in the truly riveting and powerful film "Pitch Perfect 2," let's Talk-apella. You'd be living under a rock if you weren't aware of the large number of a cappella groups on campus. One might think seven is an excessive number, especially for such a small student body, but the Conn community embraces these groups and their powerful voices with a passion.

The talent, legacy, and absolute commitment to these clubs can all be intimidating for newbies to approach, regardless of one's skill level when it comes to singing. This enthusiasm is displayed in the intensive audition process amplified by the large number of people auditioning for several groups. Seven groups means seven different musical styles and collective "sounds", as well as seven different group dynamics between members. For first-years, these can be intimidating groups to audition for.

Olivia Shultz, a sophomore, is the A Cappella Council representative for the ConnChords, an all treble group, and one of the oldest groups on campus. She describes her personal audition experience during her freshman year as "terrifying, because, personally, [she] felt extremely scared of singing alone."

Auditions themselves typically go late into the night and are just as much about getting to know people and how they collaborate with established group members as they are actual singing.

Since there are so many groups on campus, it seems like it would be impossible for everyone to find a group that fits them, whether that be because of the sheer number of choices, or the fact that every group wants new, talented people to sing alongside them.

When asked if the number of groups was a positive, or if the amount was a cause of any stress, Charlotte Steinhauer, a freshman interested in auditioning replied, "I think it's good to know that there's options, but it is a little stressful to, like, try and pick one, you know?"

Now that she's on the other side of the audition process, Shultz insists that while, "there is definitely some competition there... there is a right place for everybody and everyone always ends up in the place that's right for them."

But that doesn't mean the process is easy. Natalie Chace, a junior and the president of the ConnArtists, spoke about the process of placing auditionees in each club. "Every year we have Fight Night. Like, it's literally called Fight Night. It's not violent, I promise!"

Chace was joking, but the process of Fight Night is actually really important to placing everyone in the right spot and making sure each group is getting what they need. After all the auditionees have displayed their skills and interacted with other singers, two members of every group go to a meeting with leaders of the other groups about who would fit in where. Singing talent, the skill-sets or voice parts each group needs that year, and, as stated by Chace, "vibe," are all heavily considered when assigning people to groups. These discussions among the representatives of each group can apparently get competitive, especially when it comes to tenors and basses, which a lot of groups are in strong need of.

After all that happens, on the fabled night when the auditionees are chosen and initiated in, members of the groups will come to the doors of those they have accepted.

Schultz describes her experience: "Once I was accepted into the ConnChords, that was one of the best nights of my freshman year. They showed up at my door, and there was a really loud banging, and I was so shocked, I had no idea what was going on. And it was the ConnChords out there and they all stood and sang the initiation song to me and I was so surprised, I could not even say something. But then after that, they brought me along for initiation, and it was so much fun."

On Sunday, September 10th, anyone interested in a cappella, as well as anyone on campus who wanted to hear some singers, was invited to watch every group perform a song in the chapel, which is where most a cappella performances throughout the year will take place. This gave the auditionees an idea of what a typical performance of every group looks like. Far more than just interested freshmen showed up to show their support of their friends, classmates and performing arts communities on campus arrived as well. The place was packed and you could actually feel the temperature increase as more people entered.

But the large turnout proves that despite the daunting nature of a cappella auditions and general a cappella culture on Conn's campus, there's no denying how positive those involved are about it. Shultz says that becoming involved and participating, "has been one of the most rewarding things that I have ever done in my life."

Auditions are upcoming, so don't be afraid to give it a shot. As Chace wanted to say to any readers, "Everyone is really excited to meet you!" •

A Cappella is Back, Better than Ever

MINNIE MADDEN
NEWS EDITOR

On Sunday, September 10th, Connecticut College's a cappella groups came together to perform at their annual Fall Showcase in the Harkness Chapel. The chapel was packed with students eagerly awaiting the evening's entertainment, and the ensembles brought their singing 'A-game' with the hope of attracting new members this season.

The a cappella group council opened the night introducing the seven groups: Conn Chords, Williams Street Mix, Shwiffs, Vox Cameli, Co Co Beaux, Miss Connduct, and Conn Artists. Josh Moylan began the night by welcoming the class of 2027 to the a cappella scene and introducing the audition process for this fall.

The first singers of the event were the Shwiffs, the oldest a cappella group on campus, which originated in 1944. The group arranges every piece they do by ear alone. For tonight's performance they pulled out an arrangement of "Dreams" by Fleetwood Mac that the Shwiffs arranged last week. Lucie Bernheim '24 soloed the piece to tightly blended vocals from the group.

Second to perform was Williams Street Mix, the oldest gender-inclusive a cappella group on campus. Decked out in matching green, Stella König and Jason Pittner introduced the group's arrangement of Billie Eilish's "When The Party's Over." The soloist Imogen Morehouse '24 opened the piece with her rich lower register. This arrangement was characterized by crisp harmonies, and the performance was made by the lovely vocals and the silences between them.

Singing third was Vox Cameli, cheering themselves to the stage from the chapel stairwell. This co-ed group is known for its themed performances and they did not disappoint. In honor of their rendition of "Linger" by The Cranberries, they performed as Vox Cran-eli. Their outfits were red with



Courtesy of Minnie Madden

Ocean Spray Cranberries Inc. labels stuck onto their clothes. Madelyn Fisher '26 soloed over a lovely building of "do-doo's" as other voices slowly joined in one-by-one swelling into background harmonies.

Next up was Miss Conduct who entered coordinated in denim and white. The all-treble group was introduced by Jilly Pearson '25 whose talent shone through in her vibey arrangement of "You Know I'm No Good" by Amy Winehouse. Sophia Ethington '26 sang the melody as the group's voices



Courtesy of Minnie Madden '25

built to an epic beatbox entrance from Jilly Pearson herself.

The Conn Chords followed, performing in dreamy floral outfits. In unison, their co-pitches Kelley Wilson '25 and Katherine Rubel '24 introduced the inclusive treble group that has been running since 1946. Miranda Ma '24 excelled singing "Crazy" by Gnarls Barkley with Caroline Skrebutenas '25 on beats and the group accompanying. The seamless pre-chorus dynamic build and quiet bridge that erupted into the final chorus were exceptional. At the conclusion of the piece, one audience member was heard exclaiming, "Wow! They were so so so good!"

Co Co Beaux – running since 1978 – followed Conn Chords. They are the only tenor bass group on campus. In khakis, blue shirts, and ties, the group pulled out an original number celebrating Co Co Beaux itself. Moving around the solos so every group got a moment to shine, their sound relied on a signature Beaux chorus: "Smith Burdick, I'll take you baby / Back to Cummings, to Palmer, come on, pretty mamma / In the chapel, in Harris, you can be embarrassed by the Co Co Beaux." The iconic group was thoroughly enjoyed by the chapel crowd.

The Conn Artists took the stage for the night's final performance. With a Capri Sun in her pocket, Natalie Chace '25 introduced the ensemble. The group ended the night with "Can't Get You Out Of My Head" by Kylie Minogue with Joshua Moylan '24, Brielle Blood '24, and Hannah Calaman '24 each soloing separate pieces of the song. Terrific runs were heard from the lead vocalists as the audience clapped along to their "la-la-la" harmonies.

Whether you loved attending the a cappella showcase or were sad you missed it, don't worry. There is a whole year of a cappella concerts to look forward to. •

Meg 2: More IS Better

MANU MONOGENIS
CONTRIBUTOR

If you were to name a few movies that would be up for an Oscar early next year, *Meg 2: The Trench*, released on August 4th, would not be on that list.

However, with a rise of experimentally surprising films like *Everything Everywhere All at Once* sweeping the competition, it is not out of reach for *Meg 2* to get its moment in the spotlight this year.

This film is no *Jaws*, it's better. Do you want sharks? Check. Bigger sharks? Check. A big climactic battle with a Kraken-sized octopus? Check.

Five years after the events of the previous film, *Meg 2* continues the story of environmental crime-fighting Jonas Talyor, played by Jason Statham, as he leads an expedition into the depths of the Mariana Trench to research a Megalodon. The premise may sound simple, uninspired, or even like recycled garbage, but if there is one thing that can bring people to theaters, it is an action-packed heartfelt shark extravaganza.

"That was definitely a top 10 movie of all time," I said after exiting the theater. With so many depressing films leaving you sad or "part ones" leaving you on a cliff-hanger, I felt satisfied and entertained, which is something that doesn't happen often.

This movie is no *Spotlight*, *Parasite*, or *Nomadland*. It doesn't leave you fearing for your safety, questioning morality, or pondering the state of society, but that is the charm of this movie. It leaves you feeling just as chill as the main characters as they casually enjoy a drink on a beach.

The success of the *Fast and Furious* franchise has led Warner Bros to expand on the same fan-favorite theme of family in their *Meg* series. In *The Fast and Furious* franchise, protagonist Domonic Torretto uses cool cars and crazy stunts to protect the world from unlikely events while putting the heartfelt theme of family front and center. Torretto's famous line, "I got family," inspired the chemistry between the cast of *Meg 2*.

While the *Fast and Furious* franchise implies that our main characters are close as family, *Meg 2* shows us how they become a family through their trials and tribulations. With the likes of Wu Jing, Cliff Curtis, Page Kennedy, and more, this film is a recipe for a great time at the cinema.

The standout character in the movie was DJ, played by Page Kennedy, who stole every scene he was in. Near the end of the film, for example, it is revealed that DJ had been trained in martial arts when he completely wipes out a group of enemies. "Whoohoo. Yeah baby, get some!" he says.

While he may not have been given the most extraordinary lines to work with, like "Really, Mac? So, we're just going to follow some giant sharks to an unknown sector?..." he did get a cackle out of me and my friends due to Kennedy's hilarious line delivery.

Although I didn't initially consider Kennedy to be one of the stand-out comedy actors of our generation, this, coupled with his incredible one-take-action scene, led me to believe that his career will only continue to skyrocket. Although many people believe that the best supporting actor award at the Oscars next year will be Ken in *Barbie* played by Ryan Gosling, or Robert Strauss in *Oppenheimer* played by Robert Downey Jr., they are neglecting the great work of Page Kennedy. Mark my words, he will most certainly receive Best Supporting Actor at the 2024 Oscar Awards.

Many top-rated critics also heavily endorse this film and its impeccable genius. "Meg 2 is confident in its schlock, piling on one ridiculous conceit after another at such a pace that the audience can't help but be swept up in it. That is a harder needle to thread than many filmmakers seem to think -- it's not enough to just be stupid." said top Vanity Fair critic Richard Lawson. As Lawson wrote, this film takes what far too many people believe to be bad elements and flips that on its head.

You can't help but be engulfed by the MEGA action of the film because the CGI is truly out of this world. It definitely doesn't look like it was displayed at 480p. The film constantly keeps you on the edge of your seat and doesn't slow down, just like that damn *Meg*. Lawson conclusively says that this film is far more difficult to make than a film like *Oppenheimer*.

Meg 2: The Trench is a fun, bombastic spectacle that is exactly what the Academy Awards is looking for. I have no doubt that this film's easy-to-follow premise, chemistry-filled cast, and mega scope of a story, will help it sweep awards season next year. •

Conn Fall Sports Preview

KEVIN LIEUE
SPORTS EDITOR

As leaves fall and temperatures cool, Connecticut College's varsity fall sports teams are all in season. Accordingly, The College Voice was able to catch up with captains and members of teams to provide an in-depth preview of each fall sports team. All records and scores are as of September 17th, however, you can see fully updated scores and schedules at camelathletics.com.

Women's Cross Country

Last season, the women's cross-country team placed tenth at the NCAA Division III Mideast Regional Championships. While disappointing, the team has their eyes set on improvement this season. Despite the loss of captain and top runner Julia Curran '23, the team retains four of last season's top five scoring runners, including DIII Nationals qualifier Lauren Hino '24. Additionally, the Camels have added a strong first-year class of sixteen runners looking to make an immediate impact. The women of the desert are currently ranked sixth in the Mideast region and aim to make nationals as a team. The women's cross-country team will compete at home at the Connecticut College Invitational at Harkness Memorial State Park in Waterford on Saturday, October 14th.

Men's Cross Country

Following a dream season in which the men's cross-country team qualified for the NCAA Division III National Championships for only the second time in program history, the Camels hope to make it back to the big dance this year. "We set a high bar last season but we go into each season with new goals and expecta-

tions and hope for everyone to put their best foot forward every day," said captain Brenden Meillit '24. "We finished in the top twenty-five last year [at nationals] and we just want to get back and finish as high as we can." While the Camels lose their top two runners in All-Americans' Matt Carter '23 and Jeffery Love '23, the team has added a strong group of eight first-years. "Obviously losing Matt and Jeff will be a huge blow for us because they gave us low sticks [in scoring]," said captain Robbie Lynch '24. "But we have a lot of depth in freshman and sophomores who are ready to contribute." Competing against NCAA Division I schools in the first meet of the season, the Camels held their own and first-years Ellis Iurilli-Hough '27 and Ronan Staab '27 both placed in the team's top seven. The men's cross-country team races at home at the Connecticut College Invitational at Harkness Memorial State Park in Waterford on Saturday, October 14th.

Women's Field Hockey

After a season in which the women's field hockey team recorded their most wins since 2017 and won multiple NESCAC matches for the first time since 2016, the Camels are hoping to continue their improvement this season. With no graduating seniors, the team returns all members from last season and a first-year class of nine Camels. The team is captained by McKalynn Jacobsen '24, Hope Melanson '24, and Kylee Quinn '24. Leading the forward line is NFHCA (National Field Hockey Coaches Association) DIII All-Region and All-NESCAC Second Team forward Bridget McGann '26. Having lost close matches against nationally

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Conn Fall Sports Preview

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ranked Babson and Bowdoin, the Camels have their sights set on making the NESCAC tournament this season. The field hockey team is currently 1-3 and will play their next home match against Amherst College at Silfen Field on Wednesday, September 27th.



Courtesy of Hailey Pemberton '23

Women's Rowing

Having competed at the National Invitational Rowing Championship last spring, the women's rowing team hopes to use the fall season to build momentum for the spring season. "The first varsity boat made a huge jump last spring and we are expecting to use that motivation to bring up the second and third varsity eights to a similar level this fall," said captain Elizabeth Elsbree '24. Aiding their cause is the fact that no key members have graduated. "We did not have any teammates graduate last year, so it's a good opportunity to continue building on the momentum from last season with the same group of athletes, with some new additions," said Elsbree. With only three races in the fall, the Camels hope to improve from last season's finish of 35th at the Head of the Charles regatta. This regatta is the largest rowing regatta in the world and features over 1,000 boats from around the world. "We have two boats entered in the Head of the Charles and our whole squad will make the trip up to Worcester for the Wormtown Chase," said Elsbree. "The Head of the Charles is a really incredible opportunity so we want to try to enjoy it as much as possible and make the Charles weekend a good reflection of all of the work we have done so far." With no The Camels return All-NESCAC Second Team coxswain Emma Lanahan '24 and are captained by Lanahan, Elizabeth Elsbree '24, and Bridget McTague '24. The women's rowing team opens their fall season at the Head of the Snake in Worcester on Saturday, October 14th.

Men's Rowing

For the first time since 1988, the men's rowing team will be coached by a new face. After over thirty years coaching the College's men's rowing team, Ric Ricci has been replaced by Cian Noone, who formerly served as assistant head coach and recruiting coordinator for men's rowing at Bates College. As fall is not the main season for rowing, the Camels hope to build fitness for the spring

season ahead. "Our new head coach, Cian Noone, has already begun building the team, starting with two new 8+s," said captain Callista Crisonino '24. "He has set his expectations for the team high, and we are excited to exceed his expectations." Like the women's team, the men's rowing team will also be racing at the Head of Charles. "We are going to The Head of the Charles, the largest race in the world, [and] we are excited to race in the Men's Collegiate 4+," said Crisonino. "The goal is to place better than the last men's 4+ in 2019." Though the Camels have only lost two seniors, both losses are great. All-NESCAC Second Team and captain Eric Pica '23 and Caleb Macenka '23 both will be missed. "Pica was a strong captain who helped move this program forward last season," said Crisonino. "Macenka's personality made him a key member of the team and a friend to all of us still rowing. However, in their void, a large group of walk-ons will try to fill their shoes. "A great thing about rowing is that many people do not start rowing until college [and] the current group of walk-ons is the largest in recent memory," said Crisonino. "The returning squad has been great about taking them under their wing during [the] challenging learning process." The men's rowing team will open their season at the Head of the Snake in Worcester on Saturday, October 14th.



Courtesy of @conncollxctf on instagram

Co-ed Sailing

Coming off an impressive 14th placed finish at the Intercollegiate Sailing Association (ICSA) National Championships, the sailing team hopes to utilize the fall season to bond as a team to prepare for the important spring season. "The fall season is primarily dedicated to the national championships for sing and heelboat and the championships we are most competitive at are the team and fleet which doesn't happen until June," said captain Wade Anthony '24. "The fall season is for us to mesh as a team, get to know each other better so that once the fall season ends we can hit the ground running when the regatta

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Conn Fall Sports Preview

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season is intense and the championship season is going.” This bonding is more than necessary as fourteen seniors have graduated. “We graduated roughly half the team and a lot of those guys, particularly three of them, were starting sailors for all four years they were here,” said Anthony. “One of the big goals is getting the big freshmen class bought into the expectations and values of the team and establish a new dynamic on the team. The co-ed sailing team will compete next at the Hoyt Trophy at Brown University in Providence on Saturday, September 23rd.

Women’s Soccer

Last season, the women’s soccer team finished with a 7-6-3 record and made it to the first round of the NESCAC tournament. While by no means disappointing, the Camels fell short of the previous season’s success, in which the team made it to the first round of the NCAA Division III National Tournament. However, the team is bolstered by the addition of twelve first years. Additionally, the Camels return a majority of last season’s team. Leading the charge is captain, leading goalscorer, All-Region, and All-NESCAC first-team forward Myra Johnson ‘23, who is back for a fifth season, and All-NESCAC second-team defender/forward Alexa Weiner ‘26. The women’s soccer team is currently 2-2 and plays their next home game against John Jay College at Freeman Field on Saturday, September 23rd.



Courtesy of @cocowoso on instagram

Men’s Soccer

Last season, the men’s soccer team faced the difficult task of defending their 2021 NCAA Division III national championship win. While the Camels performed admirably and made it to the finals of the NESCAC tournament, they ultimately fell short of defending their title and failed to make the national championships. This season, they hope to improve through a different approach. “This year we

are planning to take more of a game-by-game approach to the season,” said captain Matt Scoffone ‘24. “By meeting each of our small goals consistently throughout the season, we can achieve goals similar to what we have had in the past.” Though the Camels have lost seven seniors and all three captains, nine first-years have arrived and are ready to contribute. “Having high profile players such as Steve Yeonas and Augie Djerdjaj leave [is] never easy to replace,” said Scoffone. “However, I think as an overall unit, we are much stronger and much deeper this year.” In particular, Scoffone is impressed with the skill of the first-year class. “The freshmen have shown a lot of talent already this season,” said Scoffone. “It is never easy coming into such a competitive team, so I am pleasantly surprised by how they have already been able to impact our team.” The men’s soccer team is currently 2-0-1 and plays their next home game against Amherst at Freeman Field on Tuesday, October 3rd.

Women’s Volleyball

Finishing 7-14 last season, the women’s volleyball team aims to continue improving and win more NESCAC games this season. “A main goal we have for this season is to be in the top 4 of NESCAC,” said Valentina Baehrle ‘24. “This is something we are definitely aspiring towards, and I know we have the skill this year to achieve it.” To achieve this goal, the Camels are trying a new method to stay mindful throughout the season. “Staying mindful of our individual and team performance is a huge goal this year,” said Baehrle. “This season, we’re all keeping journals to make sure we stay in tune with ourselves throughout practices and games.” Half of the eighteen players on the team last season have graduated, transferred or gone abroad, creating a great change for the team. “There’s been a massive shift in team skill set and team dynamic,” said Baehrle. “This has really given us an opportunity for a fresh start with a smaller team, allowing for deeper connections amongst ourselves and better potential for success.” A first-year class of four players had given the Camels well needed reinforcement for the season ahead. “We have two Libero/DS players, and two Middle/Right Sides [joining],” said Baehrle. “These are two positions we are grateful to have reinforcements in, and we can already see some of these women having made NESCAC leaderboards with their performance.” The women’s volleyball team is currently 3-4 and plays their next home match against Bowdoin College at the Luce Fieldhouse on Friday, September 22nd.

Men’s Water Polo

Following an improved season in which the men’s water polo team recorded their most wins since 2019, the Camels are shooting to do even better this season. “Our team’s main goal for this season is to be a very highly competitive team and perform better than the previous years with new teammates and [a new] assistant coach,” said captain Jonathan Rojas ‘25. “We want to compete against the Division 1 teams we play.” While the Camels have only lost three seniors, they are all big losses. In particular, captain and two-time All-American Christian Jacobsen ‘23 has graduated. However, a strong group of four first-years have joined the team and Rojas is hopeful their impact will be great. “We have Cormac Stevens (‘27) and Ethan Hipsky (‘27), who both will make a big impact on our offensive plays along with Jesse Ellis (‘27) and Jeffrey Harrington (‘27) who have [already] made an impact on team morale and will be big additions to our offensive and defensive plays,” said Rojas. “I look forward to their huge impact on the team and having these guys as my teammates.” The men’s water polo team is currently 0-2 and plays their next home match against Wheaton College on Thursday, October 26th. •

"Dream Bigger": Nebraska Volleyball Shatters World Record

CLAIRE HLOTYAK
CONTRIBUTOR

On a balmy August evening, the Nebraska Women's Volleyball team made the impossible possible after setting the world record for the largest women's sporting event in an unconventional and magical manner.

The five-time national champions initially set out to reclaim the NCAA Regular Season Volleyball Attendance record after losing that title to Wisconsin. After having their record bested, Nebraska Volleyball head coach John Cook told USA Today, "Wisconsin, being as competitive as they are, went and took one of our attendance records away... So we're like, 'How are we going to get it back?'" How indeed? Nebraska Volleyball's venue, The Bob Devaney Center, lovingly referred to as 'The Bob,' seats about 13,595. Breaking this highly coveted record would require a much bigger stage. Or, perhaps, a field.

As the athletic department brainstormed, they decided to do the unexpected: Play a match under the lights of the University of Nebraska's storied Memorial Stadium. Capacity? 90,000. Many people questioned if there would be enough interest in the team to make this worthwhile. To their surprise, tickets for the game sold out in a matter of days.

What started as a way to best their friendly rivals quickly became a historic day for Nebraska Volleyball and a paramount moment for women's sports.

Fans flew in from all over the country to partake in what was her-



Courtesy of Matt Smith

alded as Volleyball Day in Nebraska. Local businesses saw lines out their doors as thousands poured into Lincoln, the home of the University of Nebraska. Despite the business drummed up, this day was about so much more than the money. Lexi Rodriguez, a junior libero for the Huskers and two-time All-American, touched on what this day meant to her, saying, "It's so huge for little girls to get to see a women's sport and volleyball being played on this big of a stage."

One of Nebraska Volleyball's many slogans is "Dream Bigger." On

August 30th, that mantra manifested in an electric crowd and an inspiring moment for a new generation of female athletes.

I spoke to first-year Rae Wartelle ('27), a middle hitter for Con-



Courtesy of Matt Smith

necticut College's women's volleyball team, on what this event meant to her. She says this event made her feel "a sense of empowerment as a female athlete," and her team's reaction to the match was full of "overwhelming excitement." She sees this record-breaking event as a recognition for "every female athlete devoting hours, days, months, and years of their lives to their sport."

The #4 ranked Huskers swept their opponent, the University of Nebraska-Omaha, in a dominant fashion. The final score was 25-14, 25-14, 25-13.

Following the match, the entire stadium watched with bright eyes as drones moved quickly through the air to illuminate the new world record across the night sky: 92,003. 92,003 fans had gathered to make history. Fireworks sparked in the sky to the soundtrack of thunderous applause. The moment was undeniable and awe-inspiring. A world record shattered in the most unlikely of places.

The gratitude and joy was apparent on the players' faces. This day was no longer about earning a shiny new title. Instead, it acted as a love letter to the sport, simultaneously honoring the legacy of Nebraska Volleyball and paving the way for a bright future.

Every player left their heart out on the court and, in the process, showed the world that, when the opportunity arises, people will show up and show out for women's sports. •

Stiff Arms, Hurdles, and Bone-Crushing Hits: 2023 NFL Preview

LUKE CORLESS
CONTRIBUTOR

With the new season upon us, some things will stay the same; nasty stiff arms and hurdles, bone crushing hits, hail mary's, and Patrick Mahomes making magic. However, with young talent added through the draft, veterans hanging up the cleats, and coaching changes, the NFL has something new in store with every passing year.

Patriots

Last season, quarterback Mac Jones had a sophomore slump from his pro bowl level performance in 2021. Jones lost confidence in the offense while relations with the coaching staff soured, resulting in one of the worst units in the NFL. With former head offensive coaches replaced, Jones is expected to improve. The receiving corps were also revamped, giving Jones a strong receiving corps to cement himself as a solid starter.

Giants

With a slew of injuries and an overall lack of talent, the New York Giants ended the year with one of the worst receiving corps in the league, without a single receiver pulling in over four touchdown passes all season. General Manager Joe Schoen re-signed Isaiah Hodgins, newly signed slot receiver Parris Campbell, drafted Tennessee speedster Jalin Hyatt in the third round, and sent a third round pick to the Las Vegas Raiders to acquire veteran tight end Darren Waller. It is safe to say the Giants have an improved unit and should have a more dangerous offense.

Eagles

The Super Bowl losing Philadelphia Eagles are itching to get back to the big game. Quarterback Jalen Hurts is under contract for the foreseeable future, two defensive weapons out of Georgia, Jalen Carter and Nolan Smith, added in the first round, and not enough can be said about the elite duo of A.J. Brown and Devonta Smith. However, the offensive and defensive coordinators have both left for head coaching jobs elsewhere, leaving massive shoes to fill.

Bills

The Bills have been on the fringe of a Super Bowl berth for years now, but the offensive line has consistently been a let down. The left side of the line is solid however the right side has some uncertainties with rookie guard, O'Cyrus Torrence and the so far disappointing tackle, Spencer Brown. While the Bills are always a dangerous team because of quarterback Josh Allen, a rowdy Buffalo fan base can only wait so long to make it to the big game.

Bengals

Quarterback Joe Burrow was made the highest paid player in NFL history this offseason. Unfortunately, his legs have been subject to multiple knee tears and muscle strains, including one this summer leaving him inactive for much of the offseason. It is paramount to the Bengals' success that Burrow is healthy and stays that way for the entirety of the season.

Browns

The Cleveland Browns have arguably one of the best rosters in the NFL,

although quarterback Deshaun Watson is the main wildcard. He was easily a top five quarterback in his time with the Texans but a mix of legal troubles and a desire to leave Houston led Watson to sit out the entire 2021 season. With a complete offseason with the team Watson should be better than last season and if he can get back to old form the Browns could be a Super Bowl contender.

Chiefs

The 2022 Super Bowl champion Kansas City Chiefs are looking to repeat and get quarterback Patrick Mahomes a third ring. It is hard to bet against a team which seems to always be a contender, likely why most analysts are projecting the Chiefs to win the Super Bowl in a second straight year. However, the roster does have questions, particularly with the receiving corps.

Cowboys

With quarterback Dak Prescott coming off a season where he threw the most interceptions in the league, serious questions have arisen if he has enough to bring the Cowboys to the Super Bowl. With a talented receiving core, a top tier running back, and one of the best defenses in the NFL, the Cowboys have huge expectations. This offseason the Cowboys acquired potentially promising athletic quarterback Trey Lance and may be looking to replace Prescott as a starter.

Dolphins

It has gotten scarier and scarier as the seasons pile up for quarterback Tua Tagovailoa. The concussions Tagovailoa sustained last season have put into question not only if he is going to lose time this season but if he can continue to play the sport. Repeated head injuries, like the ones he has sustained, are seriously harmful for a person's mental health. It is a tragic reality for a promising young star, but reality nonetheless.

Lions

The Detroit Lions ended last season on a high note in a serious push for the playoffs but came up short. The Lions have a young roster which should only improve with more NFL caliber coaching and experience working as a unit. However, the roster has a few question marks particularly with the receiving corps, consistency of the run game, pass rushers not named 'Aidan Hutchinson,' and the secondary's performance.

49ers

San Francisco touts a stellar defensive unit, an elite tight end, an underrated receiving corps, and a fantastic run game. Unfortunately, injuries and a lack of athletic upside at the quarterback position have held the team back.

Rams

The Rams gambled their future for the Super Bowl victory in 2022 and the roster has felt the consequences since. Much of the roster is not made up of big names and expectations have only lessened over the offseason.