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Connecticut College

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# THE COLLEGE

CONNECTICUT COLLEGE'S STUDENT NEWSPAPER, SINCE 1977

NEW LONDON, CONNECTICUT

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 15, 2023

VOLUME LVIII ISSUE 5

THECOLLEGEVOICE.ORG

## Conn Evaluates Connections

**FRITZ BALDAUF**  
CO-EDITOR-IN-CHIEF  
**WADE ANTHONY**  
OPINIONS EDITOR

On Thursday, November 2, 2023, Connecticut College hosted its fifth annual All-College Symposium. The Symposium represents a culmination of the work of many students in various pathways and centers, and an important step for other students as they work on longer projects. Students presented posters and participated in panels sharing the skills and knowledge that they acquired in their pathways or centers, whether their focus was in the entrepreneurial world, media, studies of global and regional conflicts, science, or other areas. As the Connections curriculum is now in its eighth year of existence and the All-College Symposium has taken place for the past five years, The College Voice decided to explore Connections as a whole, wondering if it is successful and how it can improve. We talked to administrators, Pathway Coordinators, and students in various pathways and centers. The primary questions that we asked community members, particularly those in the faculty, were "What do you believe the successes of the Connections program have been so far?" and "How do you think that the Connections program can build and improve?"

### Staff/Faculty:

*Victor Arcelus, Dean of Students:*

"Having spent

all day yesterday going to sessions, it was really impressive the way that students are connecting all of the different parts of their education. It is front and center when you see it at the symposium. In the past when students took gen-ed classes, it was just a hodgepodge of classes, they didn't have any connection to them unless the student themselves actually made a connection... The question for college in the future is whether the college is ever going to have [the Connections program] be THE curriculum. Right now there's a percentage of students that don't do a center or a pathway, do we have an intention of changing this?"

*Libby Friedman, Assistant Dean of the College for Connections and Coordinator of Intersession:*

"The success of the Connections program is best exemplified by the advising team. ... faculty, staff, student, and career advisors supports the student in shaping and customizing their education, selecting majors, minors, extra-curricular activities, life on campus, study away, and more. They support students in almost every aspect of their college experience and deeply impact the overall success of the student experience. Many students ... continue to meet with their team, even after they declare majors... As we just experienced from the recent symposium, our seniors ... were very excited to share their passions with the community. The whole community had the opportunity to experience interdisciplinary learning and ...

Article continued on page 4.

## Uncovering History Underground

**KERI KRASNOFF**  
NEWS EDITOR

Down at Connecticut College's lowest athletic field, Archaeologist and Associate Professor of Anthropology Dr. Anthony Graesch is looking to answer the long asked question of whether there are burials underground. "The lower athletic field and waterfront area at Connecticut College is an archeologically more sensitive area of College-stewarded lands. Both Indigenous North American and European settler-colonial ancestors are buried in this area," explained Dr. Graesch.

The College has been aware of some burials in this area for several decades. Dr. Graesch said, "In 1981, a bulldozer exposed an Indigenous North American

burial during construction of the field." In 2009, a survey was conducted on the Rogers Family Burying Ground (an 18th century cemetery located off to the side of the athletic field) and revealed as many as 41 potential grave sites in the surveyed area, 39 more burials than currently marked by surface monuments.

The State Historical Preservation Office awarded a grant with the mission to "work toward preserving the places that give our nation a cultural identity found in the built environment," as stated on the website. This was made possible with help from TerraSearch Geophysical, a company that conducts surveys for a wide range of archeological and historic preservation projects. Students from the College have been given the opportunity to participate in ...

Article continued on page 3.

## IN THIS ISSUE

### NEWS



Courtesy of Robbie Lynch

## Con(n)flicting Interests: Conn's Presidential Search

Since last spring's campus protests resulted in Katherine Bergeron's resignation, Connecticut College has been on the hunt for a new president. Board of Trustees member Leslie Wong serves ...

See Page 5

### ARTS



Courtesy of Andrew Gernhard

## A Merry Mystic Christmas

Mystic, CT, knows how to celebrate the holidays, and a media giant has noticed. In October, the Hallmark Channel began rolling out their highly anticipated holiday movies, and local eagle-eyed viewers may have noticed...

See Page 15

## Letter From the Editor

Hello Camels,

It's a cool but sunny Sunday afternoon, and as usual, the staff here at The College Voice is hard at work producing the current edition of the newspaper. As Co-Editor in Chief, I'm super excited about this edition. As I sit here working with our layout team to get this edition done (while not so sneakily watching my 49ers take on the Jaguars in a game that we really need to win, fingers crossed), I find it hard to believe how fast the semester has been going by, and I couldn't be more proud of how our team has come together and continued to improve the paper with each coming edition.

In this edition, our News Editor Keri Krasnoff highlights the archaeological work in uncovering a Native American burial ground going on at the waterfront, and Opinions Editor Davi Schulman takes a look into the college's presidential search process. Our other Opinions Editor, Wade Anthony provides his take on the current hectic state of parking on campus. Wade and I also collaborated on an interview based piece on the campus' opinion on the current state of the Connections program.

In the sports world, our Managing Editor Kevin Lieue continues his column of Camel of the Edition, Luke Corless '27 checks in with the state of the NFL mid-season, Social Media Manager Finn McKitterick highlights his rowing team, and I wrote a feature piece on Strength and Conditioning Coach, John Pirla, who is the man. I hope your fantasy football is doing better than last time we talked, John.

Our arts team delivered a fantastic performance in this edition, with Mia Penasa '27 highlighting a recent Dance Club performance, Arts Editor Jocey Lewis '24 reviewing David Dorfman's dance performance, and Layout Editor Nicole Sanfilippo '27 reviewing a new movie.

I'd like to shout out our whole staff, who have all been absolute troopers this semester through a lot of turnover and challenges, and I'd also like to take the time to shout out our new Co Sports Editor Lilla Kate Tucker '27. Be sure to congratulate her when you see her! Speaking of new editors, we will be posting an official announcement about this soon, but we will be having several editorial board positions opening up, so if you're interested in joining the editorial team, please reach out to us! This is going to be our second to last edition of this semester, and the last one that comes out before Thanksgiving Break. We hope to see as many of you as possible at our pitch meetings and writers meeting. Our door is always open. With all of that said, we hope you enjoy this latest edition of The College Voice.

All the best,

Fritz Baldauf  
Co-Editor in Chief  
(Really hoping the Niners pull this one out!)

## 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.

ADRIEN PROUTY '25  
FRITZ BALDAUF '24  
*Editors-in-Chief*

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## CONTACT US

thecollegevoice@conncoll.edu  
270 Mohegan Avenue  
New London, CT 06320  
thecollegevoice.org  
@the\_collegevoice on Instagram  
@thecollegevoice on Twitter

## Uncovering History Underground

*Article continued from page 1.*

... this research as well. Students in ANT204: Archaeological Indispensables got the chance to learn about the site and to collect data themselves.

To detect burials, a survey is conducted of the ground using a ground-penetrating radar (GPR) technique, popular in the archeology field. “Geophysical methods are non-invasive in that we do not need to destroy a portion of the archaeological record in order to answer our driving research questions,” explained Dr. Graesch. GPR works by sending pulses to the ground which will create an image. “An instrument sends electromagnetic pulses into the ground, and a receiver interprets the signals bouncing back. Major changes in soil composition, the boundaries between soil and rock, and the presence of large objects return unique signals,” said Dr. Graesch. “We won’t see human remains using this machine but we will use the tell tale signs [of burials present] using archeological features,” said Dr. David Leslie, a team leader representative at TerraSearch Geophysical.

If anything is found during this data collection process, Dr. Graesch hopes it will encourage the formation of conservation protocols at Connecticut College and heritage management plans. Dr. Graesch also assured that the College has no plans to extricate the site if any subsurface anomalies are found. “We have no intention to excavate anywhere on the field, and certainly no intention of excavating any subsurface feature that remotely resembles a burial,” explained Dr. Graesch.

Dr. Graesch mentioned that the College has doubled-down on its commitment to more fully and responsibly steward the cultural re-

sources in the Arboretum in the last year. “This commitment is founded on an intentionally collaborative and consultative approach, whereby all projects that entail the disturbance of surface features and subsurface deposits are first discussed with the College Archaeologist who, in turn, collaborates with the Office of the Arboretum as well as our sovereign neighbors, the Mohegan Tribe, Mashantucket Pequot, and Eastern Pequot, to assess the heritage-related impacts of the proposed project,” explained Dr. Graesch. “I think our Phase 1 archaeological investigation on south campus—where the installation of an expansive solar array is planned—is a good example of this approach in action.” There is history of people here long before Connecticut College was founded, and it is important to preserve, remember, and honor those before us. •



*Courtesy of Connecticut College Office of Communications*

# Interested in becoming an editor?

Reach out to  
our staff at...  
[thecollegevoice@conncoll.edu](mailto:thecollegevoice@conncoll.edu)



Openings in  
Ops and Arts  
sections



## Conn Evaluates Connections

*Article continued from page 1.*

... exploration in person, and from many perspectives. First-year students are fully immersed in first-year seminars, benefiting from team-advising and taking a wide range of courses. Sophomores are actively joining Pathways and Centers, taking gateway courses, declaring majors, and exploring study-away options. In terms of future development, we will be further developing opportunities and supportive structures during the junior year.”

*Erica Smith, Dean of the College:*

“I have only been involved with Connections for a little over two years now, but have been completely impressed with everything I have seen and heard. The program as a whole, including the First-Year Seminar, ConnCourses, Modes of Inquiry, Social Difference and Power courses, World Language and Culture courses, the Global/Local experience, Pathways, and Centers really fulfills its promise of providing a deep and interdisciplinary experience that makes Conn College graduates really stand out in their capacity to think and problem-solve in meaningful ways... The program has been really successful, and we want all students to participate in all of its components. We have found that there is a gender gap in Center and Pathway participation. We'd like to learn more about that and close the gap so that more male students participate in those parts of the program. We would welcome any feedback or input in this regard, and will, of course, take our own steps to see how we can increase participation in this way.”

*Jeff Strabone, Pathway Coordinator, Media, Rhetoric and Communications Pathway:*

“Connections provides students multidisciplinary learning in a content area and in a way that shows up on transcripts and CVs. [The Connections program] is flexible enough to accommodate many student interests. In the Media pathway, we have students committed to journalism, fashion, government, economic, marketing, dance, sports, and a whole lot more. There's no wrong way to fulfill the pathway. One strength of the Media pathway is the training it provides in public speaking. Even the most nervous, audience-shy students look like polished professionals by the time they give their Symposium talks. I wish more students realized how easy it is to complete a pathway.

### Students:

When reaching out to students in the Connections program, we asked them a different, most specific set of questions, centered around their personal experiences in their pathway or center and how that experience informed their opinion about the program as a whole.

*Valentina Baehrle '24, Peace and Conflict Pathway:*

TCV: How has your pathway/center impacted your experience at Conn (academically, personally)?

VB: “The Peace and Conflict pathway has provided me with a space to really evaluate my personal passions and realize that I can discuss them in an academic environment. I think that this kind of exercise has opened up future possibilities for me to continue applying my personal experiences toward academic research.”

TCV: Would you recommend the pathway/center program to other students?

VB: I would recommend the pathway/center programs to students if and only if they truly want to study holistically. It is so important to cover certain requirements and they will sneak up on you your junior year if you don't look out for them.



*Courtesy of Connecticut College Office of Communications*

TCV: Knowing what you know now, if you could go back to sophomore year, would you choose to do your pathway/center again?

VB: Knowing what I know now, I'm honestly not sure if I would choose my pathway again. While I met some incredible people and participated in a wonderful symposium experience, the hoops I had to jump through to fulfill my pathway requirements and the expectations to fully integrate every single component of my academic studies was incredibly stressful.

TCV: In your opinion, what are the strengths and weaknesses of pathways/centers?

VB: The pathways/centers are extremely exciting ideas, in theory. In practice, its biggest weakness is that it embraces the openness and diversity of the liberal arts education so much that it bounces back and becomes rigid again. This also extends to the entire Connections program.

TCV: Is there anything you would want to change about your pathway/center?

VB: I would change the level of communication regarding what exactly we need to do every year. No communication junior year and two different professors led there to be complete discrepancies for my class regarding what we were told sophomore year versus what was expected of us senior year.

TCV: Did your experience at the All College Symposium impact your opinion of your pathway/center? In what ways?

VB: I think my experience at the All College Symposium reassured me that I made the right decision to go through with the pathway, simply because it felt very affirming to present in front of an audience and feel that I had finally made it to a culminating point. I will say that it feels partially fraudulent, knowing that so many of us figured out what we were going to present in the semester of.

*Keri Krasnoff '24: Goodwin-Niering Center*

TCV: How has your pathway/center impacted your experience at Conn (academically, personally)?

KK: “GNCE allowed me to explore my two interests in both environmental science and chemistry. The center also provided me the chance to meet students and faculty/staff who are also passionate about the environment and to network.”

TCV: Would you recommend the pathway/center program to other students?

KK: “I would recommend GNCE for those who are interested in environmental work.”

TCV: Knowing what you know now, if you could go back to sophomore year, would you choose to do your pathway/center again?

KK: “Yes I would choose GNCE again.”

TCV: In your opinion, what are the strengths and weaknesses of pathways/centers?

KK: “I think the strength of centers is that they allow you to align your interests by centering a two year project around them. However, the one weakness of centers is that they expect you to propose a project when you apply and stick to it even though a lot of people are still figuring out what they want to do.”

TCV: Is there anything you would want to change about your pathway/center?

KK: “I wouldn't change a lot, I would probably just want for there to be more networking and service opportunities for the center to offer.”

TCV: Did your experience at the All College Symposium impact your opinion of your pathway/center? In what ways?

KK: “Presenting at the symposium was a rewarding moment for me because it reminded me of when I first came to the center and was trying to figure out what I wanted to do. It was also really great to see all of my peers' projects and learn how different yet important each of our interests are from one another.” •

## Con(n)flicting Interests: Conn's Presidential Search

DAVI SCHULMAN  
OPINIONS EDITOR

Since last spring's campus protests resulted in Katherine Bergeron's resignation, Connecticut College has been on the hunt for a new president. Board of Trustees member Leslie Wong serves as interim president in the meantime. The Presidential Search Committee currently consists of four faculty members, two staff members, two students, and seven trustees, but will expand to include 18 more members (six students, six faculty members, and six staff members) for the interview process. WittKieffer is the professional firm hired by the College to lead the presidential search, despite faculty pleas asking Conn to refrain from hiring an external search firm.

Conn recently published its President Leadership Profile, a 16-page document created by the Presidential Search Committee, to advertise the College and outline the presidential position. Littered with typos, inconsistent italicization, and run-on sentences, the strength of this official document is diluted. The profile describes Conn as a "top liberal arts college," highlighting the distinguished Connections curriculum, the Building on Strength strategic plan, and the Defy Boundaries campaign. According to the document, "[T]he College has been attracting stronger and more diverse cohorts of students every year, seeing the largest number of applications in its history with the Class of 2027." While it was exciting that Conn had a record number of applicants, the campus is currently overcrowded, with students living in forced triples and quads, struggling to take the classes they want, and waiting for dinner in lines that wrap around Harris Refectory. Students wish to see a new college president who is committed to improving quality of life on campus: "There should be greater investment in the overall student experience, from improved resources for accessibility to better funding for food services to dorm improvements (i.e. mold issues)," wrote an anonymous student from the Class of 2025.

The Leadership Profile acknowledges, "To continue to fully realize its leadership position as an outstanding liberal arts college, Conn needs (equally) outstanding physical facilities and operational systems." As Conn is a residential college, dorm life is a significant part of the student experience. Students require comfortable living quarters in order to focus on their studies. The currently overcrowded dorms—with mold, bug infestations, malfunctioning laundry machines, and outdated heating systems—make life difficult for many students. Ian Rawlings '25 expressed, "I find it sad yet almost funny that the last time a new dorm was built on campus was before humanity landed on the moon." Conn's Campus Master Plan does include a proposal to build a new residence hall, but that is clearly not a priority for the College compared with the (arguably nonurgent) renovations of Palmer Auditorium and the College Center at Crozier-Williams, neither of which house students.

Notably, almost every photo in the Leadership Profile includes at least one person of color, although less than a quarter of Conn's student population is made up of domestic students of color. This tokenization is not unusual for Conn, or any predominantly white institution. It is no question that Conn students place a high value on equity and inclusion; last spring's protests demanded support for marginalized students on campus. On this topic, Nicole Sanfilippo '27 shared, "Given the [College's] track record of lack of DEI, I think the highest concern [in choosing a new president] should be a record of commitment to such." Not only is it important that the new president exhibit commitment to equity and inclusion, but they must have the courage to take real risks for the sake of marginalized students.

"Commitment to DEI is a necessity in a new president, but that commitment has to translate into action. I'm tired of administration professing a commitment to equity while making excuses about not providing it," wrote an anonymous student from the Class of 2025.

The profile's "Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion" page broadly states the College's goal to foster an inclusive community and promote full participation. The Search Committee explains, "The plan serves as a living document that responds to the changing needs of our community. Therefore, in solidarity with the global Black Lives Matter movement, the plan was updated in June 2020 to include a new set of goals specifically focused on antiracist education and action." This strangely specific statement includes the only explicit mention of race in the entire document. Even the DEI page does not use the words "race," "ethnicity," "gender," or "sexuality." The College seems to shy away from using precise language and directly addressing the demands of students. For instance, Interim President Leslie Wong did not use the word "terrorism" to describe Hamas's attack on Israel until his second written statement to the College community. Ben Rothstein '24

hopes, "When [the search committee] choose[s] the next President of Connecticut College, I urge [them] not to forget Conn's large and vibrant Jewish community, and to pick someone who is capable of showing empathy and support to all students." The fact that the Leadership Profile fails to even name various identities does not bode well for the selection process. Moreover, Rawlings noted, "In both the DEI section and infrastructure section [of the profile] there is no mention of the inaccessibility plaguing this campus, making these claims to inclusivity and improvement ring hollow."

The Presidential Search Committee wishes for the new president to be "a strategic leader," "a visionary," "a champion for Conn's administrators, faculty, staff, and students," "an enthusiastic friend-raiser and ambitious fundraiser," "an advocate [regarding DIEI]," "a proponent of sustainability," "a transparent and inclusive listener," and "an adept manager." These words sound powerful, but only time will tell whether the new president embodies these characteristics and puts them into action. All fifteen Conn students who responded to my survey indicated that commitment to shared governance and receptiveness ... student/faculty/staff feedback is one of the most important factors in a college president. This result aligns with the exigence of the Occupy CC movement—Bergeron's failure to heed former Dean of Institutional Equity and Inclusion Rodmon King's advice. Commitment to equity and inclusion, ability to represent the College, and innovation also emerged as vital attributes in the student survey.

When asked to rank their confidence in the College's and search firm's ability to select a president who will be well-received by the Conn community and bring about positive change, all respondents chose "2" or "3" on ... scale of 0-5 ("0" meaning not at all confident and "5" meaning completely confident). It is not surprising that students are skeptical of the presidential search process. Last semester's campus protests were a period of extreme student involvement and authority. The student body advocated for and achieved real progress at Conn's administrative level. At an open meeting, students were able to express their frustrations directly to the Board of Trustees. Now, students once again feel excluded from administrative processes and decisions; there is a looming fear of returning to where we started before the protests. It is vital that the presidential search process be transparent and inclusive of student voices. Student input and true shared governance must remain part of the culture at Conn. •



Courtesy of Sophie Mulvihill



## The Great Parking War

WADE ANTHONY  
OPINIONS EDITOR

When college students arrive on campuses across the country, nine-by-eighteen-foot asphalt spaces transform into battlefields. The wheeled troops of students, faculty, and staff clash with those of campus police, who arm themselves to the teeth with tickets, boots, and tow trucks. These battles have been fought time and time again with no ceasefire in sight, and for these reasons, they gain the persistent attention of student journalists. Connecticut College is no different, and tales of these battles are the frequent subject of student grievances.

This article dives beneath the surface-level noise created by disgruntled students made late to class from a parking pilgrimage. While the above description of parking at Conn is certainly melodramatic, for students with vehicles on campus, aspects of this experience ring true. Many students have experienced the chaos of the West gravel lot or the frustration of walking to South Lot on a snowy February day. While some students may feel as though the parking situation at Conn is in crisis, perhaps the issue is more internal than external.

I spoke with Justin Wolfradt, Conn's Interim Vice President for Administration, to get a better understanding of the current parking situation on campus. As of now, the campus has a maximum capacity for 595 faculty and staff vehicles and 460 student vehicles, Wolfradt said. However, he also reported that "a recent study from 2022 [shows] the demand for parking on campus is about 1,051." This means that, using 2022 figures, the campus is just below its maximum vehicle capacity.

However, these figures only cover the vehicle capacity of campus on paper. In order to grasp the actual number of vehicles on campus, I reached out to Campus Safety Director Mary Savage. According to Conn Campus Safety, the current number of registered vehicles on campus stands at 878 for students and 550 for faculty and staff. While the number of registered faculty and staff vehicles aligns with the stated campus capacity, the number of registered student vehicles is almost double that of the apparent campus capacity. This discrepancy led me to conduct my own brief survey of available student parking spaces using aerial imagery. In this very rudimentary survey, I placed the number of student parking spaces somewhere in the ballpark of 650. This is higher than the capacity on paper but still significantly below the current number of registered student vehicles. The parking capacity is perhaps greater given the recent renovations of North Lot, adding 80-90 more parking spaces, according to Dean of Students Victor Arcelus. Nonetheless, a more comprehensive survey of the number of vehicles and campus capacity is needed to understand these discrepancies. This data reveals that the number of vehicles on campus is above the campus capacity to some extent, a claim that contradicts statements from multiple administrators who say the campus is currently "at capacity."

While the overcrowding and chaos of student parking areas on campus certainly put a strain on students with vehicles, more often than not student complaints center around convenience. "There is sufficient parking on campus. Is it always convenient? No. But this is not necessarily a realistic expectation," said Arcelus. Considering Conn's size, students can walk (and most do!) anywhere they need to go on campus with relative ease. For residents of the Winchester or River Ridge apartments, or students going to the athletic center, walking becomes a more daunting mode of travel. However, the fact remains that most students on campus have no choice but to walk to these parts of campus. Thus, when students with the luxury of driving to and from these areas complain about a lack of parking in front of Harris Refectory or Shain Library, they should consider taking a page out of their peers' books and take a walk.

There is no denying that for students living on the main campus, the locations of legal student parking are inconvenient. The three main student parking lots are located on

the edges of the campus, requiring a five to ten-minute walk for students to get to their cars from most residence halls. Many will scoff at this number, and rightfully so, as in the grand scheme of things, a walk of this length is a small price to pay for the luxury of having a car at one's disposal. Nonetheless, whether due to rain, snow, a heavy bag of groceries, or pure laziness, students with vehicles consistently seek to shave a few minutes off this number by parking in illegal spaces. Consequently, campus security takes action.

The College's Campus Parking and Traffic Regulations document outlines the campus policies on parking, including information on vehicle registration, student conduct, and a list of violations and their corresponding fines or actions. For the most part, the parking regulations at Conn are straightforward: register your vehicle and park in designated spaces. Still, students violate these regulations on a daily basis, resulting in tickets or worse. Furthermore, it is very common to see repeat violators; Savage shared, "There are numerous students with pages of unpaid parking tickets." Since the start of the Fall 2023 semester, there have already been 825 parking citations issued on campus. Of these citations, 522 were for unregistered vehicles and 303 for other parking violations. Additionally, there have been fourteen vehicles booted and three towed. These figures are high, but what is perhaps even more shocking is the potential

revenue brought in from these citations. With the fine for an unregistered vehicle sitting at \$75 and the average fine for other parking violations at around \$35, in this semester alone, campus security has issued just under \$50,000 worth of citations. Therefore, it seems that over the course of an academic year, well over \$100,000 dollars worth of parking citations may be issued on campus. What percentage of these fines are actually paid and where this money goes is hard to say, but these figures are remarkably high.

Students who have been on the receiving end of these fines may look at this data as validation for a conspiracy against the administration, but the fact of the matter is that campus security has far more important things to do than writing citations. "We do not want Campus Safety to spend time ticketing or booting, there is no incentive in giving tickets," Arcelus ... said. In fact, Campus Safety could likely be ticketing far more vehicles each day if they sought every student parked in faculty/staff parking spaces. "...are flexible with students, but with this flexibility comes responsibility," Arcelus said. However, when students take advantage of this flexibility in the name of convenience and park their vehicles irresponsibly (or even dangerously), ramifications will certainly follow.

Regardless of the current demand, availability, or policies for parking on campus, the reality is that parking is likely going to become more inconvenient in the future. The College's master plan is highly focused on the "pedestrianization" of the campus, and plans are already underway for renovations to Cro Boulevard which will eliminate many of the street's faculty/staff spaces. A "shift in mindset" about parking on campus is going to be necessary, said Arcelus: "In the future, we are trying to make campus safer and better for pedestrians... Students should be able to walk to do everything." The beauty of Conn's campus is one of its biggest selling points, so it's hard to argue against increasing pedestrian accessibility, a coveted measurement of a campus's attractiveness. Many students come to Conn because of its small and unified campus, so grievances about parking convenience should and are typically brushed off.

While the parking situation is not perfect here at Conn, it could be far worse. Having a vehicle is essential for many students, and can be an enormous benefit to one's college experience. However, students who choose to be selfish and irresponsible with their vehicles have no one to blame but themselves when they are ticketed or booted. It's quite simple; use your vehicle when you have to, and the rest of the time save yourself the inconvenience of trying to find parking and leave your keys at home. •



Courtesy of Wade Anthony

## John Pirla: A Kick in the Ass and a Pat on the Back

FRITZ BALDAUF  
CO-EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

"My approach is to give you guys the accountability to understand that you're capable of more than you think." This is the philosophy and goal of John Pirla, who is the Assistant Strength and Conditioning Coach in Connecticut College's Athletic Department. Pirla, who has been in the Athletic Department since fall of 2022, takes a no nonsense approach to strength and conditioning, which is incredibly popular among Conn's athletes.

"What's helpful [for me] is understanding when [an athlete] needs a kick in the ass, and when you need a pat on the back, because both of those are important," said Pirla. "If you're only ever given a kick in the ass, you're always going to think that you're shit, and if you're only ever given a pat on the back, you're going to think that you're perfect, and nobody is perfect."

Prior to working at Conn, Pirla worked as a Strength and Conditioning Coach at Notre Dame West Haven in West Haven, CT, in particular working with an elite hockey academy. He also spent time at Central Connecticut State University, UConn, and several other private facilities.

At Conn, he works a very busy daily schedule fulfilling the strength and conditioning needs of the Camels' various varsity teams. "[My daily schedule] depends on the day, and it depends on the season, honestly," said Pirla. "The fall season is always the most busy because that's when we have the most in season and preseason teams. I open the gym every day around 7:00 a.m., regardless of what team I'm starting with, and I have my last lift of the day around 4:00 or 5:00 p.m." Pirla says that he usually isn't as busy on Tuesdays or Fridays due to the competition schedule of most teams, but that can be subject to change due to teams often needing to reschedule lifts to accommodate the game or practice schedule of any given week, with practices and games taking priority.

When addressing the most challenging aspects of working in Strength and Conditioning at Conn, Pirla stated that "the amount of teams and athletes is tough, but that's not to say that I can't handle it. Take a team like Men's Lacrosse, for example, where there are sixty guys on the roster. Some of the freshmen on that team I'm not able to see very often because of their class schedules, other team workouts, and the fact that there often just aren't enough lift times to accommodate everyone... The math doesn't always work out to where we can see everyone every week. We're not like Tufts, for example, who have unlimited time and space to train, and our ratio of athletes to coaches can be challenging at times."

Challenges aside, Pirla emphasized many of his favorite moments working with Camel athletes with visible excitement. "Most people think [my favorite moments would be] the Hockey team front squatting a lot of weight, it's a great moment don't get me wrong, but more of those best moments [for me] are when someone gets a personal best or does something for the first time that they never thought that they could do. For example, when somebody who couldn't do a chin up does one, seeing the excitement, that moment is like 'damn' they did something they never thought they could do, that's more of what really gets the heart jumping a little bit."

When asked about some of his proudest moments at Conn, Pirla highlighted "the sailing team testing on back squat and bench press at the end of the season was awesome, to see a team progress the way they have, the amount of personal records, that was awesome to see... The Field Hockey

team's progression throughout the season was also awesome to see. I want to shout out the female teams in particular [for their work and progression], it's been very impressive seeing them have the same and in many cases more intensity than the other teams. A lot of times female teams [are] regarded as not as strong or intense as male teams, and seeing them break that mold of being smaller and weaker and not as intense is very impressive and inspiring because they are athletes just like anybody else and they can show up and show out."

Pirla also proudly notes the visible progress that he's seen in the strength and conditioning of Conn's athletes in the year that he's been here. "We're a smaller school, [we're] not gonna have University of Alabama athletes, but that doesn't mean there still can't be progress... Team culture is changing, the small things that compound, that's what I get excited over; being self-sufficient, that's a win. Coaches that are getting excited to get their athletes in the weight room because they see tangible progress. Seeing [athletes] in the weight room more often, more excited to be in the weight room, to see technique improve, to see somebody come back from a major injury and be able to train normally, that's a huge win."

Pirla works with all sorts of different teams at Conn, and naturally those teams have different needs based on the demands of their sport. Pirla states that "the approach is always different based on the training needs and demands [of any given sport]. That's where needs analysis is super important. Obviously sailing and hockey train differently. With a sport like sailing I have to think in terms of movement quality a lot... Sailors need to be strong in all sorts of ranges of motion – as do all sports, of course – but sailing in particular because you guys put your bodies in so many different positions. That's something in particular that I need to focus on in your guys' training. Hockey is a super physical sport in a different way, where you see a bunch of hip and shoulder injuries, so I give them more shoulder specific strength exercises because that's what their sport demands."

Pirla also highlights how he approaches different athletes differently. "You have to know that not everyone will respond the same way to the same thing... it's situationally dependent... certain athletes, I can yell at them and tell them that a certain rep was shit and they'll be totally fine. Others, they might shut down so I approach that differently to get a response out of them."

Accountability and self sufficiency are major themes for Pirla. "So many people like to compare themselves to others. I do it all the time as a strength coach. I look at other coaches and see what they're doing, and think 'should i be doing that?' At the end of the day, you have to hold yourself accountable for what you're capable of. If somebody can front squat a certain amount of weight and they know that, why limit themselves?... Maximal strength can fluctuate up to thirty pounds daily, and some days you just can't lift as much as other days. Everyone has bad days and slips on certain occasions, that's okay. We're human... if you can't give it to me on the bench, give it to me on the back squat. If you can't give it to me on the back squat, give it to me on chin ups, and so on. I want to give you guys useful lessons that you can take with you when you leave here. I want those lessons to help you in your future jobs, internships, relationships, difficult situations, and so on. I don't want [Conn athletes] to remember me yelling at them to put more weight on their back squat, I want them to remember that when they wanted to quit or take weight off, that John told me that I could do it and believed in me." •



Courtesy of Connecticut College  
Athletics Department



## Camel of the Edition: Elliot Spatz '26

KEVIN LIEUE  
MANAGING EDITOR

Camel of the Edition is a continuous series which seeks to highlight extraordinary Connecticut College athletes who have stood out for their recent performances.

Elliot Spatz '26 was recently named NESCAC Men's Soccer Player of the Week for his man of the match performance in the NESCAC tournament where he scored two goals and assisted another in a 3-1 win over Hamilton at home. The Bellevue, Washington native has carved out an important attacking role for the men's soccer team despite only starting one game so far this season. Currently, he sits third in points contributed to on the team with 4 goals and 3 assists in 16 matches. Recently, The College Voice caught up with Spatz to learn more about how his struggles with injuries has surprisingly led him to his major, how he is able to make an impact in games coming off the bench, and how he unexpectedly found out he was named NESCAC player of the week.

### Could you please introduce yourself?

My name is Elliot Spatz, I'm in the Class of 2026. On the field, I play center forward also known as striker. I'm designing my own major in kinesiology studies, which is a knockoff of kinesiology. I'm also involved in the religious catholic group on campus [which] meets up every Sunday.

### Coming from the West Coast, what was your recruitment process like and how did you end up choosing Conn?

With Covid, talks between college coaches were delayed a little bit. So when it became time to talk to coaches, I was looking at division one [schools] on the west and east coast. But also, I was looking at some division three [schools] because there were some really good division three schools, Conn being one of them. I played at the Surf Cup tournament in California and the Conn coach, Ruben Burke came out to watch me, in California, along with some other players probably. I had a good game and he reached out [to me] again, because I had already talked to him before. He told me we'd love to have you and with Conn's great academic standards and the strong athletics program that the school as a whole [has], it was hard to say no. Along [with the fact], I have some family on the east coast too and the whole time we would always talk about how far apart we were so now that we're closer it's nice to have that.

### What was your journey through sports like and did you always envision yourself playing in college?

So growing up I kind of played a whole bunch of sports. My two main sports were baseball and soccer, but I also played lacrosse, tennis, and a little bit of football back when I was younger. At the age of 12, I made the transition to just focus on soccer and I dropped baseball. I kind of just wanted it to be my life. I remember back in elementary school when I used to play soccer with everyone on the sand. I always had a dream to play in college and when the opportunity arose I couldn't say no, I was super happy that I got a spot locked in for college and also on a good team as well.

### What is your favorite and least favorite thing about your position and have you always played as a center-forward?



*Courtesy of Sean Elliot*

Back in U10 when we were 8 or 9 years old, you got thrown everywhere [in terms of position]. But starting at age 9 or 10, I played center forward and I have played it ever since. Growing up I learned a bunch about how to play the position and got a lot of helpful tips from mentors. I like being able to put the ball in the back of the net, chase after the ball, and go against the defense because the defense's job is to defend you and when you're having a good game, you're tricky to defend and it's a nice feeling.

### What was your first college season like and was the adaptation from high school to college soccer hard?

It was good, unfortunately I came in injured and didn't get healthy for a little bit over a month. I was kind of down in the dumps and a little upset I couldn't contribute to the team and its success. But, out of nowhere, all the training I did in the summer started to pay off. My muscles all got healthy again and I was able to play. In one of my first practices back, I had a really good practice and I talked to Coach Burke after and he said he could probably throw me in and give me some minutes [in the following game]. This was amazing to hear after all the work I put in to get healthy and I really started to feel my training started to pay off. After that game, I played a good amount and started a couple [more] games. In the NESCAC tournament, we made it to the finals and that was fun just to get a lot of minutes there and start to gain the team's trust [playing] in the striker position. Unfortunately, we lost in the NESCAC final and we didn't get a bid to the NCAA [tournament] but it was a good first season and I learned a lot.

### Did you notice any big differences from club/high school soccer to college?

[College] is a lot more physical for sure. That's also because of the league we play in. The NESCAC is a very physical league for DIII soccer. In club and high school, it's definitely physical, but people won't go down [on tacklets] with their studs up. It's a lot faster in college as well. In high school and club, we'd have a lot more time to turn and think about what to do [with the ball]. But now in college, you have to be prepared before

*Article continued on page 9*

## Camel of the Edition: Elliot Spatz '26

*Article continued from page 9*

you get the ball, know what your next move is going to be, and that's something I didn't know in my first season.

### **What did you do following the season to improve and prepare for this current season?**

As a college team at Conn, we would train about five times a week and work out three to four times a week lifting and getting strong. Our practices would be intense but not too intense to get injured. It was also a good balance during the offseason. We still had some early wakeups even though we weren't in season and kept ourselves to a high standard. We weren't able to have our coach there [at practices due to NCAA regulations], but we did the best we could with ourselves and our captains. The energy [at practices] was very intense and it was really enjoyable. In the summer, I joined the Eastside FC U-23 team back in Washington, which is the club I grew up playing on. I had an amazing coach in an ex-[Seattle] Sounders and LA Galaxy player. He was a good mentor and was very enthusiastic about pushing towards professionalism and work ethic and it was great to learn from.

### **What makes the Men's soccer team at Conn so competitive nationally and in the NESCAC?**

I think the standard that we have in the NESCAC, it's the best division three conference and not just our coach but all our players have a big winning mentality. When you recruit the right players, like [Coach] Ruben has done, it really pays off with leadership and motivation. Even the players who don't play a lot are big motivators for those who are playing a lot and every guy on the team has a big role to play, which is being emphasized this season. We've always been getting to the NCAA [tournament] as of 2017 and ever since then our team has improved and setting a standard for yourself is very important.

### **Elliot, you are currently third on the team for points contributed to despite only starting one game, how has this happened?**

I don't know, my whole life I've started games and it's definitely an adjustment. I think [we've played] 17 games this season and I've played in 16 [games]. I think it's all about how you contribute to the team. Having a mentality even though you're not starting, that being able to help the team off the bench is just as important if not more important to raise the energy and make the defenders who are already tired work even harder. That's kind of what I've been exploiting. When I come in [to games], the defenders are already tired and I'm able to get in behind and help the team score whether it's getting an assist or getting a goal. I am just looking forward to every game, being supportive from the bench at the start. When it's my turn I try to raise the energy on the field and also encourage teammates [such as] when they make a good pass.

### **Your Coach Ruben Burke has called you a "huge impact sub" for the team, how does it feel to hear these words from your coach and did you expect to be playing in an impact substitute role this season?**

Coming in, I didn't know what to expect because just because you had a good offseason doesn't mean your spot is guaranteed for the season or just because you had a good game doesn't mean your spot's guaranteed for the next game. Our coach is very smart with how he plays the team and he brings guys off the bench who can make an impact and I'm very happy to be one of those guys that he trusts. It felt good when he gave me that compliment and I was just really happy to go into the field against Hamilton specifically, and score a couple goals and grab an assist. But, it's not just about the points but also the work rate [coach] demands from us. I love to chase after the ball and make the defense panic and I was able to do that as well. I was very happy to get recognized but although it's nice to get that award, it's just a game and there's many games, so you just have to try to do it the next game.

### **How do you get yourself hyped up coming off the bench?**

I visualize before games. I paint scenarios in my head where I'm making a run, scoring a goal, making a good pass just to get myself comfortable in an environment like that and it really helps. Before that game [against Hamilton] specifically, I was in the locker room and they were playing music and I kind of tuned it out and was thinking to myself what I wanted to achieve in the game and how I can help the team. Being able to visualize and picture myself succeeding on the pitch helps. When it comes to gametime, I'm there and in my head I've already been in that situation and this helps me on the all and makes me more comfortable making runs behind.

### **You've mentioned the Hamilton game a little already, but talk me through your experience of the Hamilton game where you scored two goals and assisted another in the 3-1 win in extra-time. Were you expecting to play such a key role coming off the bench and have such an incredible game?**

For the most part, our coach has a handful of guys he brings off the bench that he really trusts. Before he has said that we have a good amount of guys who can make an impact on the game and everyone can make an impact on the game. So when he brings me on, specifically [against] Hamilton, I was just thinking this is a big game, my first NESCAC [tournament] home game which was fun. The environment was great with 75 degree sunny weather and you've got to love things like that because we're only here for four years and after that who knows. We are most likely never going to play a competitive soccer match again so you got to enjoy it. So I went into the game and I scored a goal. Right after I scored I was like alright I'm going to have a good game, so [I] just got to do it again and play my game. Then, [Coach Burke] started me for overtime and I was super happy about that. About 5 minutes in, I was able to score my second goal. In the next half of overtime I got the assist as well. Hard work pays off. I've been trying to get in behind and score goals and help the team get points on the board and I was able to do so [during] that game on multiple occasions which boosted my confidence a bunch.

*Article continued on page 10.*



## Camel of the Edition: Elliot Spatz '26

*Article continued from page 9.*

### **Were you expecting to win NESCAC player of the week?**

I didn't really think of it actually, I didn't think of NESCAC player of the week being a thing in a sense that I was super happy with my performance and I'm glad [my hard work] paid off. Then, on Monday, I was actually in the library with one of my teammates and he [says to me] NESCAC player of the week and I'm like what? He showed me a picture of it and I was like oh my goodness, that's awesome. It's just great to get recognition. It was nice to just get a good performance out and get some more trust from my coach and my teammates and help the team get one step farther in the NESCAC tournament and also one step closer to an NCAA bid which we did end up getting.

### **How tough is the NESCAC conference truly in terms of soccer?**

It's a lot more physical. The NESCAC has a high standard. I don't remember the last time the NESCAC hasn't made the final four in the NCAA tournament and it's very competitive because there are many teams that can succeed. Williams made it to the finals last year, we won it the year before against Amherst in an NESCAC duel matchup in the NCAA final. I just think the players that go to these schools are very good players who can play at a higher level as well but they want a great education as well to better prepare themselves for the future and I think it's a very smart thing to do so the NESCAC really prepares its athletes and students.

### **Going back to your academic plans, how did you decide to self-design a Kinesiology major?**

Definitely, I think that the main reason I'm doing this is because I've spent a lot of time in rehab clinics and in [physical therapy] clinics. Unfortunately, I had a lot of bad luck with injuries growing up. It's kind of a blessing and a curse because I've fallen in love with helping people and learning about anatomy, physiology, and all of the stuff that comes along with injuries. I had an internship this past summer where I really got introduced to a specific type of therapy [called] muscle activation therapy, which is where you're really strengthening your muscles to prepare yourself for a game situation or for older people, strengthening your legs and your core to prevent yourself from falling down the stairs [for example]. The group I worked with was ATI, Athletic Training Institute, and the mentors I worked with were very passionate about their job and I saw myself kind of doing something like that in the future. So this internship between my freshman and sophomore year was a great eye-opener to the possibility of having this as my major. At that time, I kind of already had it planned out but got a little more background.

### **What was the NESCAC tournament experience like this year?**

It was fun being at home for a NESCAC [tournament] game and it was cool just to be with a crowd. Here at Connecticut College, the fanbase is amazing and we love how many fans we have out in the games, how many supporters there are not just on the field. Walking to class, I'll say hi to people and they'll say good job this weekend. Unfortunately, we didn't do this well this year losing to Amherst in the semi-final at Middlebury. The previous year we lost to Amherst in the final, so we haven't won a NESCAC tournament as a program yet, but I feel it coming soon. It's

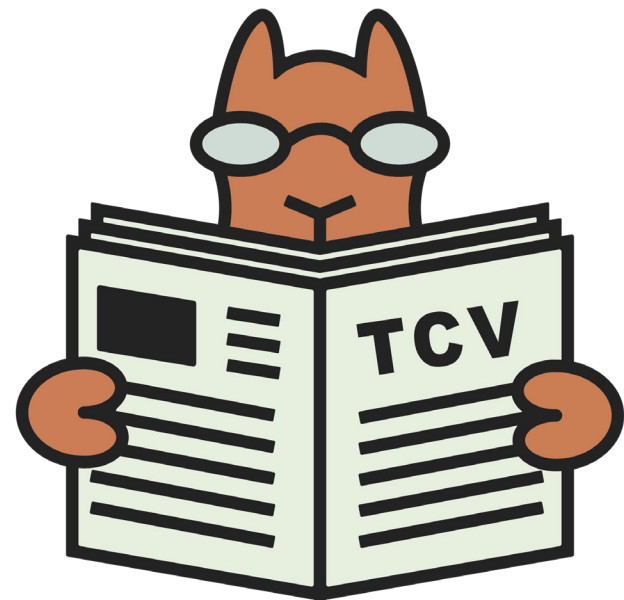
good preparation for the NCAA [tournament] because you never know if you'll get a bid and [playing in the NESCAC tournament] you kind of have the feeling of oh if you lose your season is over because you never know if you'll get a bid [to the NCAA tournament]. That feeling of oh shoot is my season over kind of drives you to succeed in the NCAA as well so I'm hoping it helps this year.

### **What are your hopes for the season ahead?**

Our team goal is to make the Final Four [of the NCAA tournament] in Virginia, but obviously there are so many steps from here to there. We head to Lanchester Thursday morning for our game on Friday to play a team from Ohio, Denison. If we do well in that game, we'll play the next day against the winner of Geneva and Franklin and Marshall. We hope to make a big statement on Friday and show everybody that, even though we just had our first loss of the season this past weekend, we're here to really compete for the NCAA title. As a group, we're hungry and the energy is there at practice and in the locker room. We set high standards for ourselves, but those high standards are helping us to succeed this season.

Note: This interview has been edited for clarity and brevity.

Please reach out to The College Voice ([thecollegevoice@gmail.com](mailto:thecollegevoice@gmail.com) or @the\_collegevoice on Instagram) to nominate an athlete for the next edition!





## A Revamped Program: Men's Rowing is here to Compete

FINN MCKITTERICK  
SOCIAL MEDIA MANAGER

Underneath the courts of the Athletic Center sits the Christoffers Rowing Training Facility, the hallowed training grounds for the men's rowing teams, whose palmares include a NESCAC conference championship in the '90s. The first thing a visitor notices are the two massive indoor rowing tanks—giant pools with a simulated 8 person “boat” in them to allow close-up coaching. Beyond the tanks are ranks of rowing machines, training bikes, and gym equipment, their patina of use a testament to the tens of thousands of hours that Conn athletes have spent training in this room. Yet, despite these amenities, the men's rowing program has been a shadow of its former glory days. The 2022-2023 season saw only fourteen people on the team, not even enough rowers to fill two eight-seat boats. Despite the efforts of the tiny team, there was little success in their races. Recruiting was suffering. Critical mass became more elusive. The future of the once-champion CoCoBroRow was dark and uncertain. Until this fall.

First, generous alumni, including a former champion rower Jessica Archibald '95, rebuilt the waterfront—a unique asset among NESCAC schools, where other rowers must shuttle from campus to their rivers. The Athletics Department then saw that while the waterfront had been revitalized, the men's rowing team needed that same touch. It was time to pull hard together for the successes last seen years ago. The first and largest step toward this was the hiring of Cian Noone as the new head coach of the men's rowing program. Noone is well experienced, having most recently served as assistant coach and recruiting coordinator for Bates College. Following Bates' high placement at the IRA National Championship, he was honored with the Intercollegiate Rowing Association's D3 Staff of the Year award. Now, as he begins his journey at Conn, he's aiming to make the same difference he made at Bates here at Conn.

“It's been a great experience so far,” reported Noone when asked about his time at Conn this fall. “Having athletes with this level of enthusiasm and seeing how happy they are when they come off the water as they know they're improving is the best part of the job.”

The men's rowing program is already improving. Their fall season yielded the most successful results seen in a while, having seen significant improvements in placement at the Head of the Charles. Their lead four-boat took home a silver



*Courtesy of Connecticut College Athletics Department*

medal at the Wormtown Chase, the team's final race of the fall— a resounding improvement from their second-to-last placement the year prior. These results are credited to the massive changes in form and preparation seen this season. “We all learned how to do the very thing we've done thousands of times a completely different way,” explained Philip Eppen '25, the stroke seat of the men's lead four-boat. “That offered many challenges in of itself.”

The practices themselves have seen quite the overhaul. While the rowers have had to learn a new and more effective way to row in a very short time, Coach

Noone has made a successful effort to always incorporate fitness into every practice. Nearly every session now features pieces (a timed, intense workout), as well as form drills. These types of rows, seen once in every few practices in years prior, now happen multiple times per day. Noone has also taken a much more hands-on and direct approach to coaching, with verbal corrections and constructive criticism offered on the water while rowing rather than in talks on land.

The aforementioned changes and victories have the rowers and Coach Noone in high spirits about the future.

“We have a new coach who is focused on not just improving our team right now, but through recruiting, he's invested in the team's future as well,” remarked Jacob Dietch '26, a well-experienced rower. Fortunately, Noone plans to do everything he can to meet these expectations.

“My end goal is a competitive program, of course. I want to see Conn College rowing back to the level it used to be,” Noone explained. “More so than that, I want to create an environment where people can learn not just about rowing, but about being a good teammate and person.”

Of course, more challenges await the newly-motivated men's rowing team in the spring season. More races, colder weather, and a longer season will definitely make things more difficult— but nothing Camels can't handle. The winter off-season will see no slowing down from the rowers, with captain's practices being held nearly every day on the rowing machines and in the weight room. The rowers are more than ready to crank efforts into overdrive, promising intense improvement in both strength and cardiovascular ability in time for a competitive spring. It won't always be smooth sailing— or rather, rowing—but with effort, resilience, and excellent coaching, the Connecticut College men's rowing team will certainly continue their upward trend into the far future. •

## NFL Mid-Season Update

LUKE CORLESS  
STAFF WRITER

The 2023-2024 NFL regular season is almost at its midpoint as November games kick off. As expected, this season has been full of the unexpected. Teams have come out of nowhere to shock the league, while others haven't come near preseason expectations. Every week, players have shaken the world with highlights aplenty. As coaches formulate identities and work around crippling injuries, this halfway mark is the perfect place to give an update. Teams at the top may be looking forward to January, while the ones at the bottom are likely calling it a year with dwindling hopes of the postseason. With tons of football left to play, teams can rise and fall out of nowhere, so continue to expect the unexpected.

### *New England Patriots Record: 2-6*

The Patriots' fall from grace has been quick and painful as they drop to the worst record in the AFC. The Patriots have had a season full of blow-outs, with their average loss coming by a 16.5-point margin. The offense has been one of the worst in the league, being in the bottom two in points and points per game. Quarterback Mac Jones is still unhappy with his situation, and injuries have dug the roster into a deeper hole. Despite an impressive week seven victory over the rival Bills, New England's 2023 season is over.

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*Article continued on page 12.*

## NFL Mid-Season Update

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*Article continued on page 11.*

### **New York Giants Record: 2-6**

Last season looks more like a fluke after every passing week. The Giants are bottom of the league in points and points per game with an offense unable to drive down the field and a special teams unit that can't capitalize on the production that is generated. The Giants were shut out by 40 points in week one to the Cowboys and, in week eight, lost in heartbreaking fashion to the cross-town Jets in a game the Giants were poised to win with less than a minute in regulation. With injuries throughout the roster and pieces being traded away, Giants faithful hope for a better season next year.

### **Philadelphia Eagles Record: 7-1**

The Super Bowl hangover has seemingly skipped over the Eagles as they climb to be the only seven-win team at this point in the season. The noise around this team has surrounded their number one receiver, A.J. Brown. Brown was named NFC Offensive Player of the Month for the month of October as he racked in 125+ yards in an NFL record six straight games. With a defense going from 8th to 21st in total defense, according to Pro Football Reference, a lot is on the offense and the nearly unstoppable 'Tush Push' or 'Brotherly Shove' to return the Eagles to the Super Bowl.

### **Kansas City Chiefs Record: 6-2**

Who would have guessed that the Patrick Mahomes-led Chiefs atop the AFC once again? Last year's NFL champions have also seemed to dodge the Super Bowl hangover, although questions have arisen after their week eight loss to the Denver Broncos. The loss snaps a 16-game streak of dominance over the Broncos, hailing back to 2015, and Mahomes' 16-game win streak in divisional away games. While the loss is concerning, the Chiefs are still in an advantageous position to make a deep playoff run.

### **Baltimore Raven Record: 6-2**

Their team's success is not a surprise to the Baltimore faithful. Steadily commanded by quarterback Lamar Jackson, the Ravens have made massive improvements on the offensive side of the ball, jumping from their 19th overall rank at the end of last season to just outside of the top five, according to Pro Football Reference. Jackson is in MVP talks while the defense demands respect, holding the number two spot in the league. The Ravens have been held back by injuries these past few years, and the injury to star running back J.K. Dobbins doesn't spell well for the rest of the season.

### **Miami Dolphins Record: 6-2**

The Dolphins have unlocked their offensive potential, led by quarterback Tua Tagovailoa, receiver Tyreek Hill, and Head Coach Mike McDaniels. With a 70-point performance against the Denver Broncos in week three, the Dolphins were cemented as a threat, leaving opposing defensive coordinators up at night. At this point in the season, Tagovailoa leads the league in passing yards, Hill in receiving yards, and a dangerous running game that can activate if need be. With the defense getting healthier, this may be just the beginning for Miami.

### **Detroit Lions Record: 6-2**

The Detroit Lions have been a spectacle this season, making massive

gains offensively and defensively. Quarterback Jared Goff has been facilitating the offense at a top-tier level, proving why he was a number one overall selection in his draft class. With rookie pass-catcher Sam LaPorta looking like a draft steal at this point in time, the young team is only poised to improve as the season goes on.

### **Jacksonville Jaguars Record: 6-2**

The Jaguars are right where they were expected at the top of their division. With a relatively slow start, the Jags have riddled off five straight wins. The offense and defense are in the middle range in ranking but are doing enough to get by. The team doesn't have a definitive identity outside of overall good team play, so the sustainability of their success will be tested in the coming weeks as their schedule toughens up.

### **Dallas Cowboys Record: 5-2**

With the highest-ranked defense in the league, the Cowboys at points look unstoppable. The season started with a bang as they shut the Giants out 40-0, then the Jets 30-10, followed by a crushing loss to the Arizona Cardinals, awarding them their only win on the season. The Cowboys then rattled off another impressive victory against the New England Patriots, to be shut down the following week by the San Francisco 49ers. The Cowboys are on a two-game winning streak coming off the bye week; with a massive test in Philadelphia, the Cowboys are searching for some consistency to make their long-awaited Super Bowl push.

### **Seattle Seahawks Record: 5-2**

The Seahawks are in business, coming off an impressive season where they astonishingly made the playoffs. Success has persisted as quarterback Geno Smith continues to prove the doubters wrong and put up solid performances week in and week out. Seattle has seemingly hit big again in the draft with their selection of cornerback Devon Witherspoon, who has the second-highest odds of winning Defensive Rookie of the Year. A recent trade for former NY Giant and Jet defensive lineman Leonard Williams indicates the coaching staff believes the team can make a deep playoff run this winter.

### **San Francisco 49ers Record: 5-3**

The 49ers have been a polarizing team this season, starting with five convincing wins in a row, all by no fewer than seven points each. However, these last three weeks have been a disaster where they have lost all three games in embarrassing fashion with signal caller Brock Purdy not commanding the offense with the same gravitas he did in his earlier starts. It isn't all disappointment in The Bay, as running back Christian McCaffrey has tied the NFL record for most consecutive games with a touchdown at 17. The 49ers have been passed in their division by the rival Seahawks, and with a trade for Washington pass-rusher Chase Young, they look to put themselves back at the helm of the division.

### **Buffalo Bills Record: 5-3**

The Bills started the year off in wild fashion, losing to the Jets on a punt return in overtime, then winning the next three games assuredly. They have had some embarrassing games, notably losing to the New England Patriots, a team struggling massively, and a win drowning in controversy over the New York Giants. The offense and defense are both formidable units but must be on the same page if the Bills want to return to the Super Bowl for the first time in almost 30 years. •



## Five Nights at Freddy's: Film Review

NICOLE SANFILIPPO  
LAYOUT EDITOR

After eight years of production, *Five Nights at Freddy's* (2023) was released on Friday, November 27. The movie is based on an indie video game created by Scott Cawthon that became an internet sensation and gained attention from Youtubers due to its eerie charm. Over the past decade, there have been seven sequels, additional spin-off games, and the growth of a devoted fan base. The film was predicted to be a huge success given its massive online popularity, but the quality of the film and story contents are up for debate.

For some background, *Five Nights at Freddy's* (FNAF) is a point-and-click survival horror game where one plays as a security guard trying to survive five nights at a family pizza chain ridden with animatronics who attempt to stuff you inside an animatronic suit. There's a subtle storyline implemented behind the scenes and bits and pieces dropped in mini-games, but much of the plot is left unclear and up to theorists to decipher. Its ambiguity is one of the main reasons it shot to popularity. Youtubers like MatPat from Game Theory have spent the better part of their last decade trying to piece together the puzzle of FNAF, which is still debated today. When Warner Bros. Pictures acquired the film rights to the franchise in 2015, the fanbase rejoiced, hoping it would give clarity to the Freddy's timeline.

However, after an eight-year wait for the release of the film's trailer, much of the fanbase had reached their late teens or early twenties and lost interest in the games. Luckily, the film was constructed with this in mind.

The film could be better, especially for viewers without a background in the game. Jacob Linnetz, a University of Connecticut student who recently watched the movie, has no background with the FNAF franchise. He commented on the dialogue's lack of substance, the multiple plot holes, and the lack of context for non-fans. For example, William Afton, the antagonist, has no significance if you aren't well-versed in the series' lore.

With a \$25 million budget, it was predicted to be a high-quality film. Jim Henson's Creature Shop created the animatronics, and an extensive portion of the budget went towards making the animatronics as realistic and functional as possible. Their quality makes up for what the movie lacks elsewhere because, and when later asked if the film has any redeeming factors Linnetz quickly mentioned these animatronics.

To long-time fans of the series, the film is a tribute to their childhood. Aspects of the game present in the film (like Foxy being the fastest animatronic) and hidden Easter eggs (a side character wearing a shirt with the design of Midnight Motorist) remind us of simpler times. Being a PG-13 film also opens the audience to the newer generation of fans, those who are just getting into FNAF through *Security Breach*, the latest sequel. It succeeds in uniting the entire fanbase, especially with the continuation of its ambiguous tendencies.

Just as with the baffling nature of the video games, the film leaves a lot of questions unanswered and has multiple inconsistencies from the theorized

timeline. Theo Andres '27, an avid FNAF fanatic, has been working non-stop to comprehend the film's connections to the original games. One significant inconsistency that stirs questions is that Mike is William Afton's son in the games. In the film, he's not Afton's son but rather some other family's son. Almost being murdered by your own father's creations multiple times is much more harrowing than from some random, unrelated guy's work. "Creating an emotional disconnection from the original storyline," also eliminates the story's iconic psychological, familial horror elements. Their commitment to maintaining the FNAF universe is still applaudable: the general story remains the same, and most of the characters are in both media.

However, unneeded additions of random subplots make the movie stereotypical and cheesy. The film's production company, Blumhouse, exercised their creative liberty to add a custody battle and human trafficking case! Though FNAF fans were quick to make jokes about the forced subplots, user "danidanadinha" on the film-oriented social media site Letterboxd commented on the film, "better movie about child trafficking than sound of freedom," comparing *Five Nights at Freddy's*, a comical horror movie for children, to *Sound of Freedom* (2023), a film actually about child-trafficking.

While it may come off as a silly horror flick to an unknowing audience, the film holds greater importance in the trend of adaptation films. There's been a long history of films adapted from novels or true stories, but only recently have video game film adaptations become more popular, including *The Angry Birds Movie* (2016), *Sonic the Hedgehog* (2020), and *The Super Mario Bros. Movie* (2023). However, *Five Nights at Freddy's* is unique because of its complex storyline. The video games don't follow a straightforward hero vs. villain plot, and they have multiple plotlines that couldn't all be covered in a single film without substantial context.

Due to this nature, FNAF fails to succeed as a mainstream movie. To appeal to a broader audience, many plot points and aspects had to be adjusted or cut (ex. no puppet animatronic). It upsets long-time fans due to its disconnect from the original games, but when films are produced for profit, sacrifices need to be made.

However, overall *Five Nights at Freddy's* is a hit film. Even if you dislike its cringey nature or poor execution, you can't argue with its box office numbers: best opening weekend for a horror film in 2023 (\$80 million), second highest simultaneous release opening weekend ever, and Blumhouse's new personal record. Its success is unsurprising. Its tribute to the series is nostalgic and endearing. Not only are multiple aspects of the games present, but also homage to the community through goofy cameos of iconic streamer CoryxKenshin and previously mentioned theorist king, MatPat, both accredited for FNAF's fame.

Despite being around for almost a decade, fans still emerge from the shadows at any sign of new content, eager to obsess over and decode it, and this film is no exception. No matter how much Scott Cawthon fleshes out *Five Nights at Freddy's*, the fans will always come back. •



*Courtesy of Nicole Sanfilippo*



## Halloweekend Dance Club Concert Wows Packed House

MIA PENASA  
CONTRIBUTOR

What's that flying through the air? It's a ghost, it's a witch, it's a...dancer? This past weekend, all types of costumes appeared on campus sidewalks and on stage as Conn Dance Club members turned, jumped, and tapped their way through the annual Dance Club concert.

Taking place at the Myers Studio on October 27, 28, and 29, the production of *Movement Mentality* was a treat indeed. Dozens of dancers took the stage, showcasing fifteen different works in styles ranging from ballet-based contemporary to hip hop to tap. Student choreographers were given free artistic reign, an opportunity each used to showcase their respective technical backgrounds, explore their own signature styles of movement, and create pieces enjoyable both to dance and to watch.

Though viewers have good reason to think the works presented took months upon months of rehearsal to perfect, dancers and choreographers were given just under eight weeks to complete the entire process, from holding auditions to choosing music to polishing the finished product for the world to see. According to Dance Club co-president Ava Dobro '26, this feat was made possible purely by a winning combination of group effort and sheer willpower. "I feel like collaboration has been the key thing. I definitely could not have done this [production] first off without the other two [Dance Club] presidents Emily and Gabby, but also all the choreographers and all the crew. I feel like putting on a performance, there's a chance that it could go competitively, there's always the risk of [competition] happening, and we really didn't want that this year," Dobro told me.

Onstage, dancers certainly seem to embrace this supportive atmosphere, cheering not simply for the advanced dancers showcasing their skills, but for the beginners making their performance debut. "We started the beginner piece—which is the first year we've ever done that—just as a way of kind of reaching out more to the community and growing our crew," says Dobro. Somewhat surprisingly, the beginner piece featured more dancers than many of the works starring more experienced movers, confirming The Dance Club's effort to be inclusive of those from all performance backgrounds resonated with the wider Conn community. In fact, judging by the smiles of those in the work, I would go so far as to say these dancers were more jovial than almost any other group of the night.

Of course, putting on a production of this scale couldn't possibly be all smooth sailing. When questioned about the highs and lows of the production, Dobro confided that her role running Dance Club did not exactly consist of sitting back and watching the show come together. After all, "it's hard to make everyone happy." So what, exactly, is the main culprit behind Dance Club difficulties? Apparently, it's the one thing students always seem to lack—the precious commodity of time. "I think one of our major challenges has been scheduling things, which is something that could be seen as minor but is very very difficult. With the show order, somebody always is going to have to rush into their next piece, [or] do a quick change. It's been difficult just because we do want to make everyone happy and not make anyone stressed with this process," Dobro revealed.

Luckily, the enthralling works laid out on the Myers Studio stage were anything but stressful to watch. The *Movement Mentality* immediately captivated audiences, transporting viewers on an emotional rollercoaster of fun, sorrow, nostalgia, excitement, cheek; even incorporating a bit of Halloween for good measure. On Friday night, the production opened with an explosive performance set to Madonna's "Vogue," showcasing a large group of dancers experimenting with a classical jazz style of movement. Alternating between smooth, repetitive choreography and sass-filled bursts of energy, Claire Lawrence '24's number proved to be a consistent hit with viewers throughout all three performances.



*Courtesy of Jun Yi He Wu '25*

Other works of note include two powerful contemporary pieces choreographed by Annabelle Breton '26 and Emily Brankman '26, respectively. Breton's piece to Hozier's "Sunlight" managed to feel grounded yet ethereal, putting a spotlight on both the physical and emotional range of the dancers as they flowed in a circle through movements onto the floor. Performers were full of purpose, articulating each reach of the fingertips before letting go into fast-moving, multi-level movements illustrating the emotional depth of the music.

Similarly, Brankman's interpretation of Earl St. Clair's "Sober" utilized unique movements and partnerwork to display a raw emotional state of exhaustion, pressure, and perseverance. Particularly impressive in this dance was the featured duet between Bella Donatelli '25 and Maya Kunschaff '27, who at one point matched the lyrics by quite literally rolling over one another's backs. The simple costumes of dark pants and a dark top blended with the low lighting, accentuating the movements of the dancers and contributing to the Blues-esque, 19th century New Orleans feeling of the work. Ultimately, it seemed to tell a story with each step, serving as a perfect example of contemporary dance at its very finest.

Contrasting these intensity-filled dances were several light-hearted, fun-focused pieces tempting spectators to get up, clap their hands, and dance. Ava Norris '26's tap number brought joy and Halloween to the stage as dancers drummed around the floor in boxer shorts to the song "Superstition" by the legendary Stevie Wonder, breaking the mold by playacting with one another as well as by adopting a relaxed style of movement.

The heels number choreographed by Sierra Mayoral '26 also injected a burst of energy into the show, embracing a modern movement style representative of dance in the 21st century. Dancers changed into heeled shoes on stage as Rina Sawayama's song "XS" transitioned from a restrained intro to an upbeat tempo ideal for strutting around the stage. One lone performer remained as the number ended, holding a one legged squat until the spotlight faded to black—a pose serving to paint an impressive picture of strength within femininity.

After three packed shows, it is undeniable fact that *The Movement Mentality* was, by all definitions, a success. For those who happened to miss the show, be sure to catch the Dance Department concert this December, where select works will be featured alongside faculty creations. To the Connecticut College Dance Club, we thank you for providing an open space for students to explore the boundaries of their creativity—our community is better off for the existence of these amazing works of movement. •

## Halloween Dance Club Concert Wows Packed House

JOCELYN LEWIS  
ARTS EDITOR

On Saturday, November 5, in Palmer Auditorium, the Connecticut College and New London communities came together to witness a heartwarming and tear-jerking evening of dance. David Dorfman Dance Company is a contemporary/post-modern dance company that aims to “de-stigmatize the notion of accessibility and interaction in post-modern dance by embracing audiences with visceral, meaningful dance, music and text”. This month, the company performed a work titled “(A) Way Out of My Body”. It is a piece that explores what it looks like and feels like to be “out of body”.



*Courtesy of Jun Yi He Wu '25*

With the help of a mind blowing technical design, inspiring live musicians, and, of course, dancers who seemed to transcend space and time with their physicality, dynamics, joy, intensity, and breath, the work also explores themes such as life, death, and relationships. The moment the house lights went out at the beginning of the show you could feel the audience settle in their seats, but this calm was quickly disrupted by several flashes of yellow light that abruptly hit the audience.

When discussing performance art, we often talk about the stage as a whole miniature world in itself, but lighting the audience in this way brings the viewers into the world of the stage. We are invited, not to passively settle in our seats, but to be active viewers in the theater. What followed this surprising invitation was a moment of stillness. All six dancers—David Dorfman, Lisa Race, Nik Owens, Lily Gelfand, Claudia-Lynn Rightmire, and Diamond Laurant—took the dimly lit stage in their stark white, layered costumes, and assumed a position that we would see repeated at some point during the rest of the evening. They stayed in these poses for a while as a sliver of light trailed across the stage and their bodies, lighting just pieces of faces and limbs. As the show went on, these contrasting themes of intensity and stillness, seriousness and silliness, continued to emerge. In one moment, Dorfman is telling a story about his mother who had MS. While the story is serious and sad, the audience is still brought to laughter through witty and engaging storytelling.

David Dorfman is a Professor of Dance in Conn’s Dance Department. The company is the department’s company in residence and they often spend a couple of weeks a year choreographing their work and guest teaching classes at Conn.



*Courtesy of Jun Yi He Wu '25*



*Courtesy of Jun Yi He Wu '25*

“(A)Way Out of My Body” was crafted in many different studios, but a lot of construction has been done on the work at Conn. In fact, the piece was actually first performed in 2020 at Conn in Myers Studio. Since then, lighting and casting and choreography have shifted, so it was exciting for the company to be able to perform a more mature version of the work this year.

The evening concluded with a Talk Back, where audience members had the opportunity to ask questions directly to the choreographer, dancers, and musicians. One audience member asked the cast to reflect on a moment in the dance in which they feel most at home, and the range of responses spoke to the range and complexity of the piece itself. For Lily Gelfand, who has been with the company since the beginning stages of this work, she feels most at home when she plays the cello on stage. Gelfand is a fierce and captivating dancer and performer, but she is also a talented cellist—a skill she shares with her father. Gelfand told the audience that she feels most at home in these moments because it makes her feel connected to music and her dad. For Claudia-Lynn Rightmire, home exists in moments of joy and silliness, “I feel at home when I get to laugh on stage with my friends,” she told the audience. Professor Lisa Race, who has been dancing with David Dorfman Dance for several decades, shared that she feels most at home during a solo she performs about her mom. The solo makes her feel close to her mom, and it used to have a somber feeling to it, but Race has recently been performing the solo with more lightness. “My mom wouldn’t want me to be so serious about it,” Race told the audience. This range of responses speaks to the emotional and artistic range of the work.

This could be one of the last times the company performs this work with the full technical production. “It’s bitter sweet,” Dorfman told me. While it is sad to put “(A)Way Out of My Body” to rest, the company is working on a new project that they are looking forward to expanding and learning from. •



## A Merry Mystic Christmas

CLAIRE HLOTYAK  
STAFF WRITER

Mystic, CT, knows how to celebrate the holidays, and a media giant has noticed. In October, the Hallmark Channel began rolling out their highly anticipated holiday movies, and local eagle-eyed viewers may have noticed a surprise in this season's lineup. On October 28, 2023, Mystic Christmas hit TV screens. A cheerful homage to Conn's neighbor, Mystic Christmas will join twenty-two other Hallmark holiday movies filmed or set in Connecticut, along with the cult classic Mystic Pizza, starring Julia Roberts.

While Hallmark Holiday movies do not boast the most star-studded casts, there are often a few recognizable faces. Jessie Schram, known for Chicago Med, stars in Mystic Christmas alongside Days of Our Lives actor Chandler Massey. Schram plays Juniper, an introverted marine veterinarian significantly more adept at communicating with sea creatures than humans. Sawyer, played by Massey, owns Mangoes Pizza and is the local golden boy known for helping anyone and everyone except himself. The two meet one fateful weekend, spark a romantic connection, and lose contact for over a decade when Juniper moves to Alaska. They meet again when Juniper returns to nurse a sick seal to health at the renowned Mystic Aquarium. In quintessential Hallmark fashion, the magic of the season, along with several baked goods from Sift Bake Shop, help them rekindle their relationship. With aerial shots of a wintery Mystic and many local small businesses featured, Mystic Christmas will have everyone coming to town. Correction: everyone will be visiting the village in a census-designated place—rolls right off the tongue, right?—as Mystic is neither a town nor a municipality.

Year after year, Hallmark produces more holiday movies than one person can watch. Believe me, I've tried. In 2021, I embarked on a mission to watch every new release, downloading the Hallmark Movie Checklist App. Long story short, I failed miserably after becoming overwhelmed by the 40 new films. Yes, you read that right, 40. Hallmark releases enough content yearly to keep you entertained long after you've packed your festive lights away. This year, there are 42 shiny new movies for everyone's

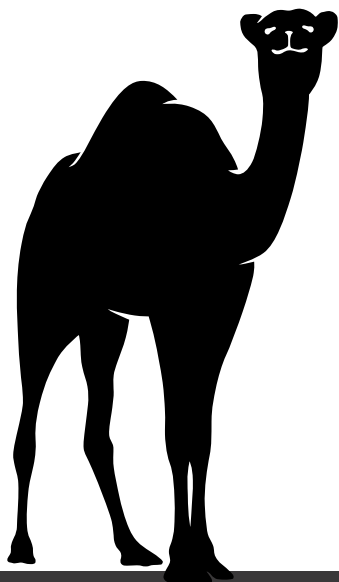
enjoyment. I've never quite been able to crack the case on how they produce so many, but I imagine the true secrets lie hidden in a high-security vault in Hallmark headquarters.

In many ways, this movie is a love letter to Mystic's photo-worthy locations and heartwarming traditions. I reached out to the movie's producer, Andrew Gernhard of Synthetic Cinema, to learn why Mystic was chosen as the primary filming location. A Connecticut native himself, he believes that the "Hallmark audience loves the classic Christmas "look" of New England." As for the Aquarium where many scenes are filmed, Gernhard initially wanted to promote its wildlife rehabilitation program and all it does for the community. In the end, he says the Aquarium became a main character and "helped this movie become the little gem it is!"

Dr. Allison Tuttle, Chief Zoological Officer and Director of the Animal Rescue Program at the Mystic Aquarium was delighted to be involved in the film. She is passionate about their program, which has cared for thousands of animals since its founding in 1973, and its mission to "protect our ocean planet through conservation, education, and research." When I asked her how she sees the movie impacting the Aquarium in the long run, she said she hopes it will "encourage people to visit our beautiful community" and be "inspired by [Mystic Aquarium's] mission to make a difference!"

Bruce Flax, president of Mystics Chamber of Commerce, mentioned the community's past success with major films like Mystic Pizza and its positive impacts on tourism. After that experience, he says it was "only natural that everyone welcomed the filming with open arms."

Whether you're in the festive mood or just want to learn more about everyone's favorite village in a census-designated place, tune in to Mystic Christmas, playing on the Hallmark Channel and Peacock all season long.



### Blue Camel Cafe

The Blue Camel Café offers a variety of specialty coffees, teas, snacks and baked goods.

First floor, Charles E. Shain Library

Monday-Friday 9 a.m. to 9 p.m.  
Saturday 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.  
Sunday 10 a.m. to 9 p.m.



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