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# THE COLLEGE VOICE

CONNECTICUT COLLEGE'S INDEPENDENT STUDENT NEWSPAPER SINCE 1977

## Students Rally Behind Dr. Baldwin

HANNAH JOHNSTON  
NEWS EDITOR

The Connecticut College Gender and Women's Studies department is in a time of transition. Last year, a long, national search yielded the hiring of a department chair, Professor Danielle Egan, who officially began at the beginning of this semester (Spring 2018). At a recent intra-departmental GWS meeting, consisting of Egan and fellow tenure-track professor in the department Ariella Rotramel, and the majoring and minoring students, the future of the GWS department was discussed. Part of the meeting's purpose was to announce the changing of the department name (from Gender and Women's Studies to Gender, Sexuality, and Intersectionality Studies). Visiting Professor Andrea Baldwin, who started at Conn in the 2015-16 academic year, was not invited to this meeting. After several students, including Joseph Castro '19 and Zaiden Sowle '21, inquired as to why Baldwin was not at the meeting, Egan disclosed to them that Baldwin had decided not to return for the 2018-2019 academic year.

Castro and Sowle reached out to Baldwin after the meeting and found out that she had been offered an extended visiting contract for the next year and an offer to be included in the national search for a new tenure-track position being created in GWS. The search to fill the tenure-track position was to occur in

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North and South Korean athletes waving the unified Korean flag. Photo courtesy of Matthias Hangst/Getty Images.

## 2018 Olympics: A Chance for Peace

JADE HUI  
CONTRIBUTOR

The world came together in anticipation of the 23rd Winter Olympics currently taking place in Pyeongchang, South Korea. In Olympic Games of the past, fans have expressed excitement regarding specific events, favorite athletes, and even the designs and fashions presented in the opening ceremony. News headlines to do with this year's Winter Olympics include the participation of Russian athletes competing under the Olympic rather than the Russian flag as a result of a doping scandal; the first Ni-

gerian women's bobsled team; and the promise of American gold-medal favorites Nathan Chen (ice skating) and Chloe Kim (snowboarding). However, the games' location in South Korea has dominated 2018 Olympic conversations, as the location in Pyeongchang has stirred apprehension regarding the country's relationship with its neighbor North Korea, as well as the role the United States will play in their geopolitical standoff.

South Korea and the IOC Executive Board extended an invitation to North Korea to participate

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## Title IX Coordinator Debate Continues

DANA GALLAGHER  
MANAGING EDITOR

Within a week of the announcement of Associate Dean of Equity and Inclusion and acting Title IX coordinator B. Afeni McNeely Cobham's departure, students gathered in Cro to discuss the shortcomings in Conn's approach to upholding Title IX requirements. Although the 2015 "Dear College Letter" released by the U.S. Department of Education states: "Designating a full-time Title IX coordinator will minimize the risk of a conflict of interest and in many cases ensure sufficient time is available to perform all the role's responsibilities," Conn does not currently embrace this protocol. Since Spring 2018, Title IX coordination has fallen under the Associate Dean of Institutional Equity and Inclusion's jurisdiction, and previously, the Dean of Institutional Equity and Inclusion had assumed the responsibilities of Title IX coordinator.

At the Feb. 14 meeting, concerned students noted the distinction between designating Title IX as a responsibility under a full-time position, like Dean or Associate Dean of Institutional Equity and Inclusion, and making Title IX coordination itself a full-time job. The Associate Dean position holds additional responsibilities, which some students say prevent the office from providing full-time attention for Title IX complaints. The meeting—organized by Hannah Johnston '18, Michelle Lee '18, and Emma Race '18—represented an initial step in a process to

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TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 20, 2018

#### NEWS

Grace Amato previews the upcoming Sustainable Agriculture Symposium on page 4.

#### OPINIONS

Price Day takes a campus tour and considers admissions marketing strategies on page 6.

#### ARTS

Summer Wrobel reviews local Hygienic Gallery's open mic night on page 13.

#### ARTS

Brooke Sponzo reflects on Wig & Candle's most recent production on page 16.

## Covering Title IX

We're shaking up our structure a little with our Title IX coverage. I think it's an essential issue (otherwise I wouldn't have put it on two consecutive front pages), so we need to make sure it's getting fair, thorough coverage. That's why this week's Title IX story—managing editor Dana's report on a group of student organizers demanding a full-time coordinator—despite being newsy, appears in Opinions.

The story would normally fall under News, but Hannah Johnston, one of our News editors, is among the organizers taking this initiative into her hands. That's fine with me. As I've stated in these pages before, I don't believe in the concept of objectivity, the view from nowhere, etc.—I think that journalists should be able to reveal their beliefs if they so choose, and I think that “objectivity” is too often cited in attempts to squash deviation from the norm. But that doesn't mean I don't believe in straight reporting: sometimes, the best approach really is to present all the sides available, in a balanced manner, without imbuing the story with the reporter's opinion. Essential to this process, and to all reporting, is the disallowal of subjects from reviewing the stories in which they are featured, because people tend to want to tailor how they come across. That's why Dana's story, as well as any coverage of this particular group of Title IX activists going forward, falls in Ops. It's not that I don't trust Hannah not to editorialize the piece; but it would be neither fair nor transparent if we gave her the chance.

This all relates, too, to the letter from Dean McKnight included below. Clearly he wasn't pleased by last issue's cover story, for reasons related to individual perception as well as factual accuracy. For the factual corrections, I thank Dean McKnight: as editor in chief, I should've caught the mistakes about McNeely Cobham's responsibilities and Pierce's position. I thought they were well-sourced, but I should have verified. The point about distributing responsibility versus offering more options, I have a harder time accepting: it seems like regardless of the officially-stated rationale, the effect falls in line with the reasoning presented in the letter as well as the article: the work *is* divided, and that division *does* provide more options.

Factual errors and differences in opinion alike remind me that running this paper—like running an educational institution—is a learning process, and we're constantly improving. If you want proof, turn back to the front page and check out Dana's story. That one is airtight.

-Maia

## Letter

To the Editor,

I am writing to clarify information and correct inaccuracies in the article about Title IX in the Feb. 5 issue of *The College Voice*. I had been acting as the interim Title IX Coordinator after the departure of the College's former Title IX Coordinator, whose position was part-time. As I managed the transition and planned for the future of this critical position, I determined that the College should combine Title IX oversight with oversight for other forms of bias, harassment, and discrimination. Title IX, remember, is fundamentally about harassment and discrimination on the basis of sex and gender, so this trend to combine these areas is becoming more commonplace in higher education.

With this decision, I appointed Associate Dean McNeely Cobham as Title IX Coordinator, moving oversight of the operations of Unity House, the Womxn's Center and the LGBTQIA Center out of her area of responsibility, adding in campus-wide education, training and response to all forms of harassment and discrimination, and making the position full-time. It's a very good model for Conn, and one I believe will be quite effective. Unfortunately, Associate Dean McNeely Cobham decided to leave the College to pursue another opportunity. As I look to fill this important role, I will invite students to participate in the planning and hiring processes.

Lastly, to correct the most glaring inaccuracies in the article, our former part-time Title IX Coordinator did not leave because of workload. As a part-time position, it was very well aligned with the average number of cases Conn experiences. And finally, the expansion of the advocacy team is not about distributing responsibility, it is about giving students, staff and faculty more options for support. Our goal is to ensure people feel comfortable reporting issues. This expanded team of confidential campus advocates are now a more diverse group who can respond to the needs of the members of our community.

Sincerely,

John F. McKnight Jr.  
Dean of Institutional Equity and Inclusion

## 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.

MAIA HIBBETT '18  
*Editor in Chief*

DANA GALLAGHER '19  
*Managing Editor*

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## Community Bulletin

### IASC Benefit Concert on Friday, Feb. 23

New London's Immigration, Advocacy, and Support Center (IASC) is this year's beneficiary in an annual Pete Seeger Tribute concert hosted by Friday Night Folk, an organization that uses folk music to support social and environmental justice. The show will be held in All Souls Church at 19 Jay St., New London at 7:30 p.m. Admission is free; donations encouraged.

### Local Public Transportation Faces Cuts

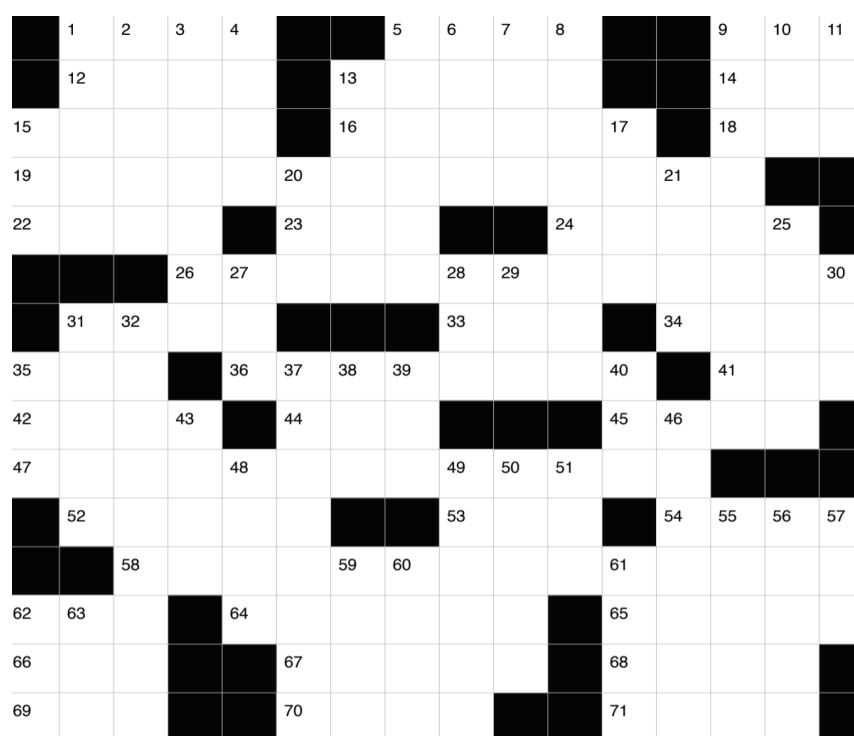
In New London, transit systems including SEAT are facing a budget cut of up to 15 percent for the upcoming fiscal year, the *Day* reports. The Shoreline East rail system also faces cuts, which could eliminate all weekend train service and half of weekday service, potentially starting July 1.

### Connecticut Exceeds 1,000 Annual Overdose Deaths for First Time

As of Feb. 16, the state of Connecticut has seen 1,040 opioid-related overdose deaths in the past year. According to an AP release, Connecticut chief medical examiner James Gill says that with a 300 percent increase in overdose deaths in the past year, his office lost its accreditation because medical examiners had each performed too many autopsies.

## The College Crossword

BY ELEANOR KNAUSS



### ACROSS:

1. "\_\_\_\_\_ honored"
5. Belonging to the U.S. Dept. of Health and Human services
9. Irritate
12. Dribble
13. Grand instrument

14. Marie's boyfriend
15. Fad
16. Inconvenience
18. Like DnD or LARPing
19. See 58-Across
22. Un being?
23. Noah had one

## Sports Corner

BY GEORGE GROTHEER

### Women's Track & Field

- Valentine Invitational @ Boston Non-Scoring
- Valentine Invitational @ Boston Non-Scoring
- Gordon Kelley Invitational @ MIT Non-Scoring
- New England DIII Championships 6th/6 Scoring
- New England DIII Championships T-26th/30 Scoring

### Women's Squash (9-12)

- Wellesley W, 7-0
- Haverford W, 6-3
- William Smith L, 3-6

### Women's Basketball (15-9)

- @ Trinity (Conn.) L, 50-52
- @ Emerson W, 80-51
- Bowdoin L, 63-80
- Colby W, 63-44
- @ Tufts L, 48-85

### Men's Track & Field

- Valentine Invitational @ Boston Non-Scoring
- Gordon Kelley Invitational @ MIT Non-Scoring
- Valentine Invitational @ Boston Non-Scoring
- New England DIII Championships No Team Score
- New England DIII Championships 12th/28 Scoring

### Women's Squash (9-12)

- Wellesley W, 7-0
- Haverford W, 6-3
- William Smith L, 3-6

### Men's Basketball (6-17)

- Trinity L, 65-82
- @ Bowdoin L, 60-77
- @ Colby L, 70-77

24. A perfect cube
26. See 58-Across
31. Served perfectly
33. Badger
34. Bollywood actor, Kapoor
35. Belonging to us
36. See 58-Across
41. Genetic information
42. Depressing
44. Head of WSJ
45. Actress Rae
47. See 58-Across
52. Spanish mister
53. Born
54. Org. founded by Lucy Stone in 1869
58. Where the answers to 19-, 26-, 36-, and 47-Across struck gold
62. Eggs
64. Harry's uncle
65. Potential 2020 election candidate
66. Actor Patel
67. Pierre's praise
68. Not a chance, in verse
69. Summer, in Paris
70. Like psoriasis or shingles
71. Totals

### DOWN:

1. Elba, of film
2. Canadian rapper
3. Strange
4. Fencing sword
5. Disaster
6. Salt or pepper amount
7. U.S. business assoc.
8. Solmizations
9. Farm helpers

10. Ref
11. Show
13. Like CVS or Walgreens, abbr.
15. Award won by Miranda Lambert and Garth Brooks
17. Great Lake
20. Boy
21. TB test
25. Braxton sister
27. Festival held in Las Vegas, abbr.
28. New Haven to Hartford dir.
29. Prescott, of the Cowboys
30. DOD agency
31. Atmospheres
32. 1985 Sam Raimi comedy
35. Petrol magazine, abbr.
37. More robust
38. Jeremy, of the Nets
39. Condition characterized by neuroticism, abbr.
40. Drink enhancer
43. Small
46. Broke
48. Years and years
49. Plenty
50. Danish size
51. African archipelago, abbr.
55. Hyper
56. Injury reminders
57. Fire residue
59. Iceland's most notorious woman, Bolladottir
60. Boxer Brandon
61. \_\_\_\_ Lisa
62. Poem
63. Fido's doc

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## Baldwin

CONTINUED FROM FRONT

academic year 2018-19, and though Baldwin would be able to extend her visiting contract for the duration of the search, there was no guarantee that she would be hired into the tenure track. The students, along with Samantha Weisenthal '18, organized a meeting with Egan, Dean of Institutional Equity and Inclusion John McKnight, and Dean of the Faculty Abby Van Slyck, for the students to voice their concerns regarding Baldwin's employment status at the College. In addition to the student organizers, more than 40 students and several professors attended the meeting that took place on Thursday, Feb. 8.

Egan began the meeting by providing context on the situation with Baldwin and the rationale behind the decision to change the name of the department. Professor of Sociology Cherise Harris then read a statement on behalf of Baldwin, who was not initially invited to the meeting and who, upon finding out about it the day of, decided not to attend. Darryl Brown '18 quickly pointed out that "the classes that Baldwin offers would be optimal [for fostering intersectionality]," and several students also voiced their concerns at having a department called Gender, Sexuality, and Intersectionality Studies with no professors of color on staff. Egan responded by saying that whomever they hire to replace Baldwin would fulfill the need for intersectionality within the department.

A major source of student concern was a perceived inconsistency in hiring procedures within GWS, as students pointed out that while Baldwin would be expected to withstand a national search, Rotramel had been hired from a visiting to a tenure-track position without the same formalities. According to Van Slyck, the GWS department was nearing state of crisis in AY 2014-15, as one professor was denied tenure (the academic equivalent of a dismissal) and the other retired. At the time, the two departing professors occupied the only full-time, tenure-track positions in the GWS department. Their departure allowed the department to offer Rotramel an "opportunity hire," which means she was hired without going through a national search first.

Van Slyck explained that the situation in 2014-15 differed from the GWS department's current status, as GWS currently has two full-time professors. While Egan, Van Slyck, and McKnight were hesitant to refer to any of Baldwin's work outside of the GWS department, Castro pointed out that three of the main faculty members involved in running the Africana Studies program will go on sabbatical next fall; if Baldwin were to depart as

well, it would be difficult for members of the classes of 2019 and 2020 to finish their Africana Studies majors and minors.

The students also tried to discuss Baldwin's situation in relation to a larger institutional problem. Nifemi Olugbemiga '20, said, "it would be unwise for us to treat this issue [as if it were] about a sticky situation involving only one person...What I have seen is that a person, a black woman, was let down by this institution...as a black woman I do not feel protected [by Conn]." Dr. Marcelle Medford, a Mellon Postdoctoral Fellow in the Sociology department, supported Olugbemiga's assessment and the comments of other students, saying, "the students hit the nail on the head, being visiting or adjunct is a tenuous position to be in—it's an exploitation of labor—I'm a woman of color; I don't have a fraction of the students that Andrea has... How can we make [the College] better rather than being another one of those colleges that exploits women of color?" McKnight was quick to assert his dedication to the retention and support of women of color faculty at Conn, but pointed out that "there is no other profession in the world that is nearly as absurd as academia," referring both to the intensity of the hiring process and the unique benefit of employment for life.

The meeting did not reach a clear resolution, but many of the students, deans, and faculty involved expressed hope that further communication will lead to a solution that can make both students and the department and administration happy. The students involved have no intention of giving up or stalling their advocacy for Baldwin, as she has been an extraordinary influence in many of her advisees' lives. A flood of Facebook posts have materialized in the past week, each one working from the same template including the phrase, "I stand in solidarity with professors of color being exploited by academic institutions. Who are deemed less valuable than their white counterparts." Students are hoping to draw attention to the larger issue of primarily white institutions (like Conn) not valuing work done by contingent, women of color faculty. Professor Harris summed up the bigger picture at Thursday's event. "It just feels sometimes that we're moving at a glacial pace—that when we have an opportunity to make a change it doesn't happen...maybe this is a time when nothing could be done, but when it's combined with all the times that something could've been done...[it makes the impact feel worse]."

*Editor's note: Maia Hibbett contributed reporting. •*

## Sustainable Agriculture Comes to Conn

GRACE AMATO  
STAFF WRITER

In its initial form, the upcoming Community-Supported Sustainable Agriculture Symposium would only have lasted one day, but with speakers coming all the way from Missouri, Kira Kirk '18 decided to expand it from Feb. 22 to 25. Kirk completed her career-funded internship at the Columbia Center for Urban Agriculture in Columbia, Missouri and found the experience highly beneficial, claiming: "[CCUA] changed my life...It was the first time that I had a job that I liked." In an attempt to expand her life-changing experience into a project of greater public influence, Kirk decided to organize an event open to members of the public interested in learning about community activism and sustainable agriculture.

Kirk first began to think about bringing the keynote speakers to Connecticut College during the Fall 2017 semester, when she attended two conferences for her independent study. When Kirk attended the 7th Annual Black Urban Gardeners conference in Atlanta, Georgia, she encountered keynote speakers Trish Woolbright and Matthew Dolan also in attendance, and she thought, "Why not bring them here?" Dolan is an AmeriCorps Opportunity Gardens Associate and has a passion for teaching refugees to feed themselves and their families through agriculture. Woolbright is the Opportunity Garden Manager who works to "enhance the community health by connecting people to agriculture and the land through hands-in learning opportunities," Kirk put it.

Kirk initially planned the symposium as a one-day event, but the expansion into a four-day series offered more programming opportunities. Thus, Kirk began to plan the rest of the days, including a New London community tour, a composting workshop, and multiple community meals with speakers. One featured event will be a "chicken happy hour" on Saturday, Feb. 24 at 10 am where Sprout Garden will let the chickens

out for Conn students to be able to play with them. Kirk says that the process for putting together the symposium was relatively easy, despite having to do most of the work and planning around it, because she knew that she had support on campus. She split up the budget among different staff, faculty, and centers on campus in order to be granted the needed amount in the end.

Last Thursday, SGA voted in favor of funding the Community Supported Sustainable Agriculture Symposium. Kirk will use the \$3,500 to fly speakers in from other parts of the country and the world to speak about community support in sustainable farming. The funding comes from the Sustainable Projects Fund (SPF), which has \$40,000 to spend each year to support student initiatives like Kirk's symposium. However, despite the large budget for SPF, some projects with good potential are not funded due to either skepticism from the student body or push back from the administration.

Another issue with the SPF is the lack of projects being proposed, especially by younger students. According to Lera Shynkarova '20, the Chair of Sustainability, all of the projects proposed this year have been from seniors. She feels that there is "a common misconception when we are talking about sustainability, people always think that it is something related to [the environment]" which can be discouraging to students who may not have ideas regarding this aspect, "but when you actually think about sustainability, there are three different pillars," those being environmental, economic, and social sustainability. Therefore, the projects submitted to SPF don't have to focus entirely on improving the college or the New London community's impact on the environment, but if a student were to have an idea regarding social or economic equity, it could also be supported by the fund. It is important that as many students as possible

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## Flu Infection Rates at Conn: High, but not Shocking

SHAE ALBERTSON  
STAFF WRITER

This year's influenza season has progressed in a similar way to last year's plethora of influenza activity and cases on campus. Influenza, also known as the "flu," is a contagious respiratory illness caused by flu viruses, according to the Connecticut State Department of Public Health. Two types of the virus circulate throughout the United States annually. Influenza A can cause moderate to severe illness, while Influenza B causes milder symptoms that are typically found in children. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention encourages all people over the age of 6 months old to be vaccinated, as each year millions of Americans safely receive seasonal flu vaccines. Not getting vaccinated, as the CDC warns, could result in disease or putting others at serious risk for illness, particularly babies or people with cancer.

In the state of Connecticut, the illness was categorized as sporadic between Oct. 1 to Oct. 21. Between Oct. 22 to Nov. 18, it was categorized as local, and between Nov. 19 to Dec. 2, categorized as regional. Since Dec. 3, it has been categorized as widespread.

The Connecticut Department of Public Health reported on Feb. 8, 2018 that, "in Connecticut, influenza activity remains high and widespread with continued

increase in the percentage of patients presenting to hospital emergency departments and outpatient providers with ILL, as well as increasing numbers of flu-associated hospitalizations and deaths." Throughout the entire flu season, a total of 1,360 patients have been hospitalized with influenza. There have been a total 77 influenza-associated deaths in the state of Connecticut alone, with 61 associated with flu A and 16 with flu B. Of those who died, just one patient was between 19-24 years of age. The number of deaths reported this season, Connecticut reports, "is within the range of influenza-associated deaths (1-65) reported during the previous five seasons."

Shauna Rago, current Interim Director of Student Health Services, explained that the volume of influenza on campus has been similar to what it was last year. Rago explained, "I've been here since 2015. The first year I got here, I don't think we saw that much flu activity. Last year, we had a pretty active year. With over 100 students diagnosed in Health Services, within a 4 week period. This year, it's really only been since we got back from break. We're still seeing active cases. But I'd say it's a fairly high volume, comparable to last year. We don't run any statistics until it's over."

As there has been discussion of students leaving campus in an effort to avoid

the flu, Rago explained, "that would be something that would be self-directed, that is not directed by us." She observes that, although the health center can track the number of students diagnosed with the flu on campus, it cannot easily determine the number of off-campus diagnoses. She says, "if people went to Position 1 or the Emergency Room at Backus or LNM, we wouldn't necessarily know about that." Typically, the health center advises students diagnosed with the flu to miss class until they have been fever free for 24 hours. The center also gives diagnosed students a sheet to hand out to roommates or friends who they think they might have exposed. The slip simply says, "You may have been exposed. Please contact Student Health Services." Students would then make an appointment and decide if they should take TamiFlu, a medication to help prevent someone from contracting the flu.

The instructional flu sheet that Student Health Services outlines symptoms including fever, dry cough, body or

muscle aches, sore throat, runny nose, fatigue, or nausea and vomiting. Rago instructed, "We want anyone with a cough and a fever to not go to class, not go to work. We also encourage people not to go to the dining hall. We tell them to send friends with their ID, and they can ask for special containers and bring food back."

Rago explained that even those who have gotten the flu shot are still getting the flu, often in more mild or

shorter cases; however, she suggests that "the vaccine is still really the best way to prevent." The instructional sheet also suggests that "the best way to prevent the flu is by getting a flu vaccine each year." Rago reported that about 350 flu shots have been given in student Health Services, and are still being given with a \$20 cover charge. The flu is active in the winter and spring, and Health Services expects it to be prevalent until April or May. •

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- New ways of doing research with published materials

*Shain Library's Research Support and Instruction Team manages this blog, but we welcome entries by other members of the community!*

## Sustainable Agriculture Symposium

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

propose ideas because the money comes out of students' tuition. The SPF collects \$25 per student, and if the money is not spent, it does not carry over into the next year, but instead is returned to the

College. The SPF is, therefore, entirely enrollment-driven and specific to each academic year, so if students want to get the most out of their yearly tuition, they should take advantage of existing sustainable projects or pursue projects of their own. •

## With Community Meals, BRIGAIID Makes Nutrition Public

LAUREN BARETTA  
OPINIONS EDITOR

“You’re trying to change food for people to be healthy and to try new things, but before that there’s the need for people to eat,” said Dan Guisti, the former head chef of Noma in Copenhagen. Guisti made it to the top in the world of fine dining—as Noma is widely considered the “world’s best” restaurant—but when I sat down for an interview with him, it was over a simple dinner of mashed sweet potatoes, chicken, and kale at Bennie Dover Jackson Middle School in New London.

In early 2016, after leaving his position at Noma, Guisti founded BRIGAIID, an organization that brings professional chefs to public schools in need. Since its start, the program has hired a team of chefs, many of whom used to work in fine dining, to cook free meals for students at public high schools and middle schools across New London. They have one common purpose: fight food insecurity. As Guisti heads to New York City to expand BRIGAIID’s mission and provide for other cities in need, I think the program that will continue to serve New London after his departure deserves recognition.

For Guisti, the transition from

working as a chef in an expensive, modern, and highly creative atmosphere to serving food to public school students was difficult. “When I first came into it, I thought we were going to do all this cool stuff with the food, but then you realize that these kids are just hungry.” He continued, “You see it on long weekends, that there’s kids who are not eating much. You know, you hear about these things and you know that’s the situation, but when you’re right there - it hits home.” Guisti’s ability to provide children and teens with nutritious meals they may not have access to at home is exponentially more important than his ability to present gourmet meals, which distinctly contrasts his previous role at Noma.

In fact, when Guisti first began BRIGAIID he faced criticism from the New London community. He explained, “When I first came here people built up this idea that I was this world class chef. It seemed overboard.” Guisti recounted a message he received from a community member when he was first beginning, “We should just send our kids to school in limousines.”

Since then, Guisti has overcome the negative perceptions, largely by interacting with the wider New London community. Throughout

our interview, Guisti mingled with several of the 200-250 individuals he considers regulars. The community meal, which takes place every Wednesday night from 5-6pm at Bennie Dover Jackson Middle School, is a subset of BRIGAIID. It expands the mission of providing quality, nutritious and affordable food to include not only school-children, but all who live in the county. Because BRIGAIID does not have to pay for its kitchen space, residents pay \$5 for a meal that would otherwise cost \$12-13. “Instead of people going to McDonald’s, they come here,” said Guisti. “These community meals have changed everything.”

The community meal aims to be affordable, but even for those who cannot pay, alternative payment options exist. An organic pay-it-forward movement is part of what makes Wednesday nights so community oriented. Every week, 40-50 extra tickets are paid for by individuals attending the dinner. When I asked what BRIGAIID did with these additional meals Guisti responded, “We can ask people from shelters to come in or people come in sometimes — you know you start to be able to identify some people that are kind of on hard times— and we offer them free meals.” He furthered, “So we kind of have this bank going.

If people come in and we think we should give them free meals, then we give them free meals.”

It is clear that Guisti is passionate about the work he does— a world class chef does not leave his position at Noma arbitrarily. With 9,860 food insecure children in New London county alone, his cause is sadly relevant to the times. Food insecurity affects more people than most realize. As Guisti claimed, “I think most people associate food insecurity with people who don’t have homes, but a lot of people have homes and their kids go to school everyday and they don’t have any food.”

To eat is a basic human right. Every person deserves access to nutritious food. As Conn students, we can take small steps. Despite attending a college with a tuition of over \$67,000 a year, it is easy to forget that we exist in a place of privilege, that we are part of the New London county. So, attend a Wednesday night meal at Bennie Dover Jackson Middle School. Volunteer at the United Way Food Bank or the Giving Garden in Mystic. Donate money or goods to food pantries. It is our responsibility to be active members of our community—we are failing if we refuse to recognize the needs of our neighbors. •

## Considering a First Look at Conn, Three Years in

PRICE DAY  
NEWS EDITOR

Have you ever wondered what prospective students see when they visit Connecticut College? Like most other Conn students, I’m often kept up at night by this question. Do they find out about the horrors of cilantro night? Are they warned about the legion of skunks? Are they shown how far away South Lot is from any conceivable location? So many questions.

One February afternoon I decided to put these questions to rest, and I walked leisurely down to the Admissions Office in the hopes of tagging along on a campus tour. Tours start at 10:30 a.m., 1 p.m., and 2 p.m. daily, but I guess the 1 p.m. tour was not a popular slot that day, as there were only two people on it, a high school senior and her mother. After asking the tour guide if I could join, we began by walking along Tempel Green

and looping past Cummings. There was an art exhibit going on, and being an artsy guy I was down to stay and look at art stuff, but the guide brought us outside to describe the arts center without disturbing the occupants. We continued past Palmer, where the guide told the prospective student she could be “spending a lot of time during orientation,” a comment that cannot be overstated.

We then walked to Fanning, and I couldn’t help but notice the lack of comment on Bill Hall, perhaps the most unfortunately named, and designed, building in the entire Constitution State. Fanning and New London Hall were described in depth, however, and we walked through the first floor of NLH and looked at a couple labs in progress.

We continued past the dorms of Central campus, and the tour group con-

## Title IX

CONTINUED FROM FRONT

increase student input over Title IX staffing.

Most Title IX coordinator positions began as part-time jobs or added responsibilities for faculty, but current Title IX coordinators have assumed greater responsibilities across the country as the scope of the law has expanded. In the last three years, dozens of institutions—including Franklin & Marshall College, Stanford University, and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill—have established independent Title IX offices with full-time coordinators. In fact, in its “Dear Colleague” letter, the Department of Education revealed that incidents of sexual misconduct actually decrease when colleges hire full-time Title IX staff. But despite the attention that developments in Title IX have received, just ten percent of coordinators surveyed by the Association of Title IX Administrators reported to have no major responsibilities other than responding to sexual assault and gender-based discrimination on campuses, the *Chronicle of Higher Education* reports.

In an email to supporters, Race contends that the “administration is just not giving [Title IX] the attention it requires and deserves.” The vacancy created by McNeely Cobham’s departure raised further questions among these students over whether the College will hire a new coordinator without addressing any of the structural issues associated with the current job description. Balancing the demands of multiple jobs, the Associate Dean of Institutional Equity and Inclusion cannot devote sufficient attention to the investigation of cases or provide affected students with appropriate support. It seems that the choice of McKnight as interim Title IX coordinator only compounds this problem, as one student who attended the meeting noted that McKnight sometimes takes several days to “get to sensitive cases, because he has too many jobs.” Johnston echoed this claim and observed that McKnight has said that he cannot take on the responsibilities of Title IX coordinator for a significant period “on top of his other jobs.”

It seems clear, then, that there exists a discrepancy between student and administrative perception of what successful Title IX coordination should entail. In an email exchange with the *Voice*, McKnight stressed: “there is a fundamental misunderstanding among students about the nature and volume of [Title IX] work.” He emphasized that the Title IX coordinator “is not an advocacy role “and that trained staff serve as advocates for survivors. He says that the coordinator assumes “highly administrative” tasks and that, “with an average caseload of about 8-10 cases per year over the past several years” the workload is “manageable for even a part time person.” Students, in their meeting, were quick to note that the referenced caseload reflects the number of incidents that actually get litigated rather than the number of incidents reported at Conn.

The merging of Title IX and Equity and Inclusion oversight is not explicitly condemned by the 2015 “Dear Colleague” letter, but not exactly endorsed, either. “Title IX does not categorically exclude particular employees from serving as Title IX coordinators,” the letter notes. “However, when designating a Title IX coordinator, a recipient should be careful to avoid designating an employee whose other job responsibilities may create a conflict of interest. For example, designating a disciplinary board member, general counsel, dean of students, superintendent, principal, or athletics director as the Title IX coordinator may pose a conflict of interest.” While the Title IX coordinator may not advocate on behalf of certain parties, the position requires direct contact with students over highly sensitive experiences. As a result, students believe that they deserve to have greater say in the coordinator hiring process.

The absence of meaningful student input in the hiring process of Title IX coordinators in the past remains a key point of contention. Race said that she and other students had tried to meet with McKnight early in the semester to advocate for an independent full-time coordinator as well as encourage more transparency in the hiring process, but

the meeting “was mysteriously delayed for weeks.” In announcing McNeely Cobham’s parting to the Conn community, McKnight revealed that he would “be convening a group of students, faculty, and staff” to advise on him on how the office of Equity and Inclusion may best fulfill the Title IX guidelines, but the degree that students actually hold influence remains unclear. Johnson, Lee, and Race have—however—have scheduled a meeting with McKnight for Feb. 23 to express the demands of concerned students. McKnight, in his separate email exchange with the *Voice*, says that students will be invited to attend open meetings with coordinator finalists.

These students have written and circulated a petition that highlights their list of demands. They call on President Bergeron, McKnight, and the College Board of Trustees to establish a full-time Title IX coordinator with the sole responsibility of addressing sexual assault cases. The position must be filled “through a process that is transparent and overseen by students,” the petition notes. They further advocate for the hiring of a coordinator with at least two years of experience “in the realm of Title IX litigation” who is accountable to Conn students as well as empowering a separate office to handle cases of discrimination based-bias.

The demands, to meeting organizers and attendees, seem winnable. Paolo Sanchez ’18, the SGA Chair of Equity and Inclusion, has said that he will draft an SGA resolution demanding a full-time coordinator. Race also noted that McKnight’s position was established as a result of student activism, and student activism can continue to spur structural change at the College. She contends that, because “money exists in all sorts of random places” at the College, Conn has the means to hire a full-time Title IX coordinator. The rallying-call of these student organizers declared at the Cro gathering references the consuming nature of sexual assault, harassment, and discrimination to capture the essence of their demands: “for a full-time experience, we need a full-time coordinator.” •

## “Guest Student” Programs: A Saturated Market for Symptomatic Treatment

MAIA HIBBETT  
EDITOR IN CHIEF

The narrative surrounding Hurricane Maria is ongoing and gruesome. It’s one we’ve all heard before and yet one we haven’t heard enough. It’s indicative of larger problems—climate change, environmental racism—that some members of the mainland U.S. population won’t admit exist; some others work arduously to combat; and most of us seem just to have accepted as reality.

Homes, businesses, and natural areas in Puerto Rico were decimated by a hurricane, and then their needs were largely ignored by the mainland United States. Its institutions of higher education mark no exception. “The rumor mill runs unusually fast in disasters,” writes Jeffrey Herlihy-Mera, a professor at University of Puerto Rico at Mayagüez, in the *Chronicle of Higher Education*. “Someone siphoned diesel from a generator at a funeral parlor in Vieques. AT&T Wireless will be out for a year. A ferry is shuttling people from San Juan to the Dominican Republic. Wi-Fi works at City Hall. An ATM near Sam’s Club has cash. The morgue in Aguadilla has been full for days. Cuban doctors are treating people at no charge in Añasco. Classes begin on October 8.”

Herlihy-Mera then qualifies that, in reality, there was neither wi-fi at City Hall nor cash at Sam’s Club. But classes were held on Oct. 8. “We aren’t going to lose the semester,” Herlihy-Mera stresses.

Enter, mainland United States. Enter, Connecticut College.

After Hurricane Maria, a wave of positive press coverage lauded the good deeds of several mainland U.S. colleges and universities that had chosen to offer in-state or free tuition to Puerto Rican students displaced by the hurricane. On Oct. 19, 2017, PRI’s “The World” ran the story: “Some Puerto Rican college students displaced by Hurricane Maria have already started classes again—in Florida.” Three days later, NPR published: “Mainland Colleges Offer In-State Tuition To Students Affected By Hurricane Maria.” Both start with the same appeal, highlighting individual college students and the impact the opportunity had for them. CNBC and Remezcla took a different approach by releasing listicle-style articles that featured the first wave of institutions to participate—including Brown, Tulane, and NYU.

The articles raise some good points about the importance of resources and the insufficiency of relief efforts. “The electricity, clean water and cell service available on campus—not to mention college classes—stand in stark contrast to conditions at home,” Carolyn Beeler writes for PRI. “Much of

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## Admissions Tour

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tinued to discuss Greek life presence (there is none) and the new Smith Game Room (RIP to Smith Dining Hall). I tried to stay quiet and let the tour guide do her thing, but she did ask for my input a few times. We then visited Harris and the Plex; we were supposed to view a dorm room in Morrison, but the door was locked, and the tour guide did not have her key. The guide noted that many first-years live in the Plex and highlighted its reputation as “living in a hospital,” which surprised me. I was also surprised that we visited Morrison and not the newly-renovated Hamilton, the least hospital-y of the Plex dorms.

Next up was Crozier-Williams. We entered through the back door to first appreciate the Sprout Garden. When the guide mentioned the moniker “Cro,” it took all my willpower to not interject by joking that real Conn students refer to the Student Center as “Willy.” This tour felt more personal than a normal tour, probably due to the attendance of two, which I hope added to its memorability. As someone who took a tour of Conn in high school and who does not remember a second of it—except that it might have been raining—I think that a memorable tour might have eased the college decision process.

The tour guide described the various uses of Willy, such as dance studios, late-night food, mail room, and offices. She then went into a description of the various academic centers and the Pathways system. I was glad she did not ask my opinion on that can of worms—as a junior, I have no idea where to even start when discussing Pathways. The next building was the library, and the different volume level floors were outlined, as well as the resources available to students in Shain. President Bergeron walked by at this time, and she told the tour members “come to Conn!” after saying hi to each of us. This school is my top choice, so I hope meeting the president helps my application.

We continued on to Blaustein, and the guide gave the typical, vague “collaboration and diversity” description of the Global Commons as we navigated the space-age first floor. We came out on the other side, overlooking Tempel Green. The tour was almost over, and we talked to the mother and daughter about Knowlton and the language dining hall in Freeman, as well as the chapel, as we passed by them. It was overcast and misty but warm, and the south side of campus looked very beautiful. I would certainly want to go here.

Back at Admissions, we said our goodbyes and I began the long walk back to Larrabee, another building left conveniently off the tour route. I thought the tour was just that, a tour of campus. Maybe it’s different because I already know all the buildings, but having gone on countless tours of campuses in my day, they blend together like nothing else. Before I left, I told the girl and her mom to go for a walk in the Arbo if they had time. I think even a small addition like that would go a long way towards making a Conn tour a more memorable one. Whether you think our school is different or boring, our tours should stand out. •

## Guest Student Programs

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Puerto Rico is still without power a month after the hurricane. Water contamination is widespread. The scope of the disaster there is still not completely understood.” But, like any form of publicity, this coverage does not capture the whole story, and it does contribute to a trend. The world of academia is notorious for its emphasis on recognition and ranking, and as a result, academic institutions are particularly susceptible to influence from their peers.

This seems to have happened at Connecticut College, which arrived a little late to the white-saviorism party. On Dec. 8, Conn announced the establishment of a guest student program that would provide free tuition, room, and board to “up to six” juniors or seniors at the University of Puerto Rico. The College later updated its guest student website to reflect that students from “any accredited university in Puerto Rico” would be eligible for the program.

Despite the offer’s seeming appeal, no students from Puerto Rico decided to take it, as Dean of the College Jefferson Singer confirmed. “The University of Puerto Rico put out a request in late December to try to keep its students on island and that basically stopped the flow of students to the mainland for the spring,” Singer noted.

In *Diálogo*, the official publication of the University of Puerto Rico, Julia M. García de León writes that institutions of higher education in Puerto Rico faced challenges in providing essential services even before Hurricane Maria, and after the hurricane occurred, UPR alone took a hit of \$118 million in damages, according to a report from Puerto Rico’s *El Nuevo Día*. “More than 200 thousand people have emigrated to the United States since the passing of the storm in search of better living conditions,” García de León observes\*. The emigrant population is largely comprised of “productive youths who, faced with the disjunctive to continue studying here or to obtain better conditions outside their native land, opted for the latter.” This wave had a negative impact on the University of Puerto Rico, which, like any institution of higher

education, seeks to fortify its retention.

García de León goes on to describe what we seldom see in U.S. narratives covering the impact of Hurricane Maria: professors holding classes outside, and students attending them despite the destruction. “The [traditional] classroom was traded for patios, gazebos, [and] tents, where light, air conditioning, and other commodities...were not necessary for the learning process. It was a return to the ancient times, as Socrates [taught] his disciples,” García de León writes.

The idyllic image should not, of course, detract from the severity of the situation in Puerto Rico. What it indicates is not that assistance is not needed, but rather, that perhaps shuttling students away from their home institutions is not the only solution. “It’s now, when perhaps we’ve returned to the traditional classroom, that we face the challenge of retaining student[s] and convincing [them] to stay in [Puerto Rico] to finish their academic courses,” Garcia de Leon adds.

It seems that mainland universities’ offers of education and housing, like many relief efforts, are a well-intentioned but symptomatic treatment that in some ways hinders the resolution of the problem as a whole. Perhaps it’s for the best, then, that Conn had no takers on its guest student program.

**\*Editor’s note:** García de León’s quotations were translated from Spanish by the author. •

### CROSSWORD KEY

I	D	B	E		F	D	A	S		B	U	G													
D	R	I	P		P	I	A	N	O		A	M	I												
C	R	A	Z	E		H	A	S	S	L	E		R	P	G										
M	I	K	A	E		L	A	S	H	I	F	R	I	N											
A	S	E	R		A	R	C			E	I	G	H	T											
					R	E	D	M	O	N	D	G	E	R	A	R	D								
					A	C	E	D				N	A	G		A	N	I	L						
					O	U	R			C	H	L	O	E	K	I	M		D	N	A				
					G	R	I	M		E	I	C							I	S	S	A			
					J	A	M	I	E	A	N	D	E	R	S	O	N								
					S	E	N	O	R		N	E	E						A	W	S	A			
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					O	V	A			S	I	R	I	O	U	S			O	P	R	A	H		
					D	E	V								E	L	O	G	E		N	E	E	R	
					E	T	E								R	A	S	H				A	D	D	S

## “Backpack Full of Cash” Offers a Partial Critique of Charter Schools

ABIGAIL ACHESON  
STAFF WRITER

With an hour and a half of interviews, heart-breaking testimony, and brief animation, “Backpack Full of Cash” will leave the viewer sufficiently disheartened about the education system in the United States. This past Tuesday, The Roosevelt Institute and Education Department screened the film to raise awareness among the Connecticut College and greater Southeastern Connecticut communities on the dangers of defunding public schools. The film’s message hit close to home, eliciting audience members to chuckle, cry, and even offer sarcastic responses to on-screen interviewees. Blank stares and exasperated sighs from the film’s speakers sometimes left the audience with no choice but to laugh at the almost comical absurdity of the miniscule funding public schools receive. Repeated sound clips of businessmen and public servants arguing for schools to be run as businesses drew out bitter laughter followed by under-the-breath criticisms from the audience. And, protests, testimonials, and the death of multiple children from preventable asthma attacks at one public school where funds were too insufficient to even pay a full-time nurse, evoked tears.

The event was well-attended with over fifty students, professors of the college, k-12 teachers, members from the New London NAACP Youth Council, and a representative from Re:publicEd (a coalition formed to better Connecticut’s public schools) all crowded into the cramped lecture hall. The event coordinators jumped at the opportunity to further discuss public education by promoting a follow-up event to be held on March 6 in New London, as well as to advertise available teaching positions at tables outside the screening.

“Backpack Full of Cash” avoided leaving interpretation to the audience and instead aimed to deliver a simple and straightforward message: the defunding of public schools is a danger to democracy and the future of American society. It centered with laser focus on the nation-wide school closures and teacher layoffs which are a direct result of the proliferation of private schools that attract students and funding at the expense of public education. The documentary missed the opportunity, however, to highlight the underrepresentation of people of color in teaching and administrative positions, and seems not to recog-

nize, that the intersectionality of race and class are not independent of the continued defunding of public education. Low-income students and students of color are disproportionately affected by public school closures and while other children are increasingly educated in private, online, and charter schools, these students often are prevented from accessing these better-funded schooling alternatives. Private and charter schools both receive public funding and are only held accountable to deliver on national education standards when contracts are due for renewal.

The content of the film consisted largely of interviews with parents and former-teacher activists, reels of protests and town hall meetings, and the principal of South Philadelphia High School. Intermittent between these are animated frames designed to illustrate the effects that alternative options to public schools have on funding. The animations also introduce key terms, which make the content easier to understand while giving the film a quirky grade-school flavor.

If a reader is looking for an intersectional exploration of the current state of education they will be disappointed, as that simply is not the goal of this piece. Instead, the documentary seeks to spark a discussion about issues with the education system specifically in regards to funding and privatization, and perhaps to demonstrate the dos and don’ts of reform. One peculiar aspect of the piece is its disjointed tone. Matt Damon narrates the piece in an attempt to offer publicity to an important social problem, but his deflated reading seems to lack intensity and urgency.

With footage that takes viewers inside public, religious private, online charter, and physical charter classrooms, the documentary can dash hopes of the most optimistic viewer with regards to the next few generations. Public schools, operating under insufficient budgets, have classes with more than sixty students to a teacher, forcing half the class to stand and making it difficult to focus. Public schools also struggle to hire enough guidance counselors, thus putting low-income and minority students disproportionately at risk of not receiving the advice and help they may need to overcome obstacles. Online charter schools remove students from the social aspect of learning that is so important, and instead turn their education, and yes, even Physical Education, into a series of buttons and on-screen videos. Meanwhile, physical charter schools spend millions of

dollars marketing their educational product and lobbying to receive public funding, while delivering an education that often proves to be worse than public school education. These are scary problems that affect, and have been affecting for many years, thousands of students in the United States.

There is one ray of hope, however, and it is found in New Jersey’s public education system. The story starts in the 1970s with New Jersey’s atrocious gap between the quality of public schools in wealthy suburbs and those in low-income areas. The state proposed an ultimatum that the various regional public education systems must determine how to level the playing field or else find themselves placed under state control. The film highlights one school, called Unity Charter School, as a positive example of this transformation. Though the documentary thoroughly demonizes charter schools for most of its duration it takes a wholly opposite position by offering a public charter school as the model for reform. Sarah Mondale, the director, is unclear as to why she makes an example of a charter school as opposed to some other traditional public school. Located in a low-income area, but among the best performing schools in the country, many of Unity’s graduates later attend Ivy League schools, and yet its status as a public charter school was hardly mentioned, if at all. Does the director intend to argue that charter schools can sometimes be a positive change, or is the audience still supposed to support exclusively traditional public schools? Mondale’s attempt to encourage a revitalized fight against the privatization of public education ends up instead confusing the audience and leaving them in the midst of a gray area of charter school vs. public school debates with no explanation.

The piece ends with the graduation of students from South Philadelphia High, where one of the last things the principal says to the camera is that it was a “pretty good year...considering the resources we had.” With that, he effectively sums up the state of public education today.

I recommend attending the follow-up community conversation on Tuesday, March 6 about the future of public education. The event is free, open to the public, and will be held at 6:00 pm in the All-Souls UU Congregation, Unity Hall at 19 Jay Street in New London. For more information email [info@republiced.org](mailto:info@republiced.org).

## Olympic Messages: The Peace Perspective

CONTINUED FROM FRONT

in the games in an attempt at making peace. North Korea accepted and was actively involved in the opening ceremony, which took place on Feb. 9. North Korea sent 22 athletes, along with several artistic performers and celebrated pop stars, to the Games—despite concerns that North Korea's involvement in the Winter Olympics would violate international sanctions. However, South Korea's president Moon Jae-in believes the Games to be vital in his effort to communicate with North Korea, to persuade the country into negotiations, and to put the North's nuclear missile program to rest. Moon stated: "Many considered it an impossible dream to have an Olympics of peace, in which North Korea would participate and the two Koreas would form a joint team." This dream was made a reality during the opening ceremony in which North and South Korea entered the Games as one team: Korea.

An image rests in the world's eyes of the penultimate torch bearers, North Korean Chung Su-hyon and South Korean Park Jong-ah, as representatives of the unified Korean hockey team. The athletes carried the torch up the final steps and handed it off to the dearly loved South Korean figure skater, Yuna Kim, who won

a gold medal in the 2010 Games and a silver in the 2014 Games.

While Moon is optimistic about the unification of the nations for the Games, some Koreans remain hesitant about the presence of North Korea. The director of the opening ceremony, Song Seung-whan, expressed his disapproval of the president's confidence in his effort to mend the relationship between the two nations. Song stated, "The crisis on the Korean Peninsula does not get resolved with a one-off event like sports games or an inter-Korean summit meeting."

While Song is apprehensive, others believe the Games symbolize hope. Kim Tae-yoon, a media studies student from Cheonan, South Korea states, "I wondered whether any of our efforts would be a step towards unification when we could very well just be used for North Korean propaganda." Kim continued, "But the two Koreas marching together looked good. I hope that the Pyeongchang Olympics will be remembered as one where we showed the world that we communicated well with North Korea."

A particularly surprising part of North Korea's involvement in the Games was the appearance of Kim Yo Jong, the sister of North Korea's leader Kim Jong Un. Kim Yo Jong, along with Senior North Korean of-

ficials, embarked on a three-day trip that included a meeting with Moon. The trip represented the highest level of contact between the two Koreas in more than a decade, as Kim Yo Jong is the first immediate member of North Korea's ruling family to touch down on South Korean soil since the 1950-53 Korean War. On the Friday of the opening ceremony, Kim Yo Jong met foreign dignitaries, including U.S. Vice President Mike Pence and Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe. This allowed for the possibility of unprecedented diplomatic encounters between North Korea and the leaders of enemy countries.

Despite South Korea's movement for peace, Mike Pence stated that his visit was an effort to counter North Korea's propaganda and highlight its abuses and atrocities to the world. Whether Kim Yo Jong's appearance was a message sent from Kim Jong Un to the president of the South is unclear. However, Moon has expressed that he would be willing to meet with Kim Jong Un if he were assured that this meeting would lead to an end of the crisis regarding nuclear weapons and missile development program. Time will tell, but for now, let the Games unfold and much luck to the athletes representing the United States of America. •

## Olympic Priorities: A Focus on Figure Skating

HALLIE CARMEN  
WEB MANAGER

Every four years, for roughly three weeks, American society is enthralled with figure skating. The costumes, artistry, drama and of course the sport, captivate American audiences during every Olympics. However, after the three magical weeks are over, life goes back to normal. For the American public, skating is put on the back burner for another four years.

I started figure skating when I was four years old. From early childhood through high school, I spent a lot of my time inside the rink. Like anyone who spends more than 10 years actively taking part in a competitive sport, I will forever feel a connection to the sport I love. It bothers me that during each winter Olympics, Americans suddenly decide they are figure skating fans and only watch the sport for its brief moment in the spotlight. Nevertheless, the heightened attention the sport receives during this time is important in the maintenance of the sport.

The three-week duration of the Olympics marks the only time when Americans only give figure skating the at-

tention it deserves. Despite the sport's popularity during the Olympics, the U.S. has experienced a "medal drought" in figure skating over the past several years. Though Meryl Davis and Charlie White won the ice dancing competition at the 2014 Sochi Olympics, and Evan Lysacek won a gold medal in men's singles at the Vancouver Olympics in 2010, U.S. skaters have not returned to a time where they have consistently swept the podiums at international events like the Olympics.

Take for example Dick Button, who is a legend in the world of American figure skating. Button became the first American figure skater to win back-to-back Olympic gold medals in the men's singles competition—in 1948 and 1952, respectively. In the 1956 Olympics, American skater Hayes Alan Jenkins won the gold in Men's Singles and Tenley Albright won the gold in women's singles. Four years later in 1960, the Americans won gold again with David Jenkins (men's singles) and Carol Heiss (women's singles) winning the gold. In later years, the U.S. skaters continued to dominate, winning more medals.

In the past couple of years, though, Russia, Japan, and Canada have topped

the podiums of each discipline.

To make it to the Olympics is a lifelong dream for many athletes. In the U.S., where the competition is tough in comparison to other countries which have fewer figure skaters, it is extremely difficult to qualify for an Olympic games. The qualification process for U.S. figure skaters is based on the decisions of a committee put together by U.S. Figure Skating, the national governing body that regulates the sport in the United States. To put it simply, the committee bases its decisions on the skaters' performances and placements at that year's U.S. National Championships and the prior year's major international events. Depending on prior international placements of U.S. skaters, the U.S. is allocated a specific number of Olympic spots they can fill in each discipline. Even before the start of this year's winter games, the U.S. proved its international dominance and potential to win more Olympic medals in all four disciplines of Figure Skating after being allotted more spots for U.S. figure skaters. At this year's games, the U.S. was given three spots for both Men's and Women's singles, three spots for Ice Dancing, and one spot for Pairs.

Given the increase in the number of U.S. figure skaters being sent to the Olympics this year, the end of the medal drought may be in sight. Additionally, the inclusion of the team figure skating event, which was introduced for the first time at the 2014 Sochi Olympics, added to the United States' collection of medals. The team event adds up points based on the performance of individual skaters in different disciplines, and this year, the U.S. defended the bronze medal they won in 2014. The team event consisted of Adam Rippon and Nathan Chen in Men's singles, Mirai Nagasu and Bradie Tennell in Women's singles, siblings Maia and Alex Shibutani in Ice Dancing, and Alexa Scimeca Knierim and Chris Knierim in Pairs.

While each U.S. skater in the team event contributed to the winning of the bronze medal, it seemed to be the stellar performances of skaters Adam Rippon, siblings Maia and Alex Shibutani, and Mirai Nagasu that especially increased the United States' chances for winning another bronze in the team event. In particular, Nagasu added a large amount of points to the teams final score by be-

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# Olympic Injustices: The Planning Perspective

EMIR KULLUK  
BUSINESS MANAGER

With the start of the Pyeongchang Winter Olympics last week, I once again started to think about the Olympics, and the last time I was so excited to watch them. The last time the Olympics really got my attention was in 2012, at the Summer Olympics in London. The 2014 Sochi Winter Olympics, as well as the 2016 Rio Summer Olympics, failed to get me to watch closely. In fact, the 2016 Rio Olympics were known not for their events or their opening ceremony, but rather the issues that bogged down the whole event. With problems ranging from an unstable federal government in Brazil to polluted seawater in the Guanabara Bay, it was a miracle that the Rio Olympics were not just cancelled. In my opinion, they should have been cancelled and many people agreed with me, but the Brazilian government went past the point of no return as soon as they began laying the foundations for the Olympics.

Hosting the Olympic games is no easy or cheap task, as it requires a massive workforce to construct the arenas, the Olympic Village, as well as the transportation system and roads that are

required. Most countries that host the Olympic games greatly exceed the budgets that they put aside for the event. For example, China spent 45 billion dollars on the 2008 Beijing Olympics, more than twice of the estimated budget. Another example is Rio, where the estimated budget was around 14 billion dollars, but the whole event ended up costing 25 billion dollars.

However, the issue is not resolved when the games end. Once the Olympics move on, numerous problems that remain, one of which is the presence of structures built specifically for the Olympics. Once the games are over, the Olympic-specific buildings are not demolished, but are instead left to deteriorate, causing the land they were built on to lose value. There is no way of dealing with these structures without a deficit. Demolishing them will cause a deficit for the government, while having the buildings remain there will affect the land they are found on and the land around them negatively in the long-term.

Another concern is the International Olympic Committee. Every two years, cities interested in hosting the Olympics make bids to the IOC, which in turn always pushes for, and prefers, more expensive plans. The IOC is known for

having a history of corruption; one example (out of many) came just last fall when Carlos Nuzman, former president of the Brazilian Olympic Committee, was arrested for bribery in connection to the selection of Rio for the 2016 games.

Beyond the issues of corruption and misuse of public money, more localized problems arise within each country that hosts the Olympics. The governments usually have to make space for all of these new structures that will be built for the Olympics, while also trying to improve the image of the city that the games will be held in due to the expected tourist traffic. However, due to the strict timeline they are on, the removal of citizens from certain areas of the cities could be rushed and violent. The best and most recent example of this is the Rio Olympics, where the Brazilian government sent in authorities to remove people from the favelas. The whole process resulted in riots, protests, and the Brazilian government building a highway directly from the airport that had walls surrounding it, to prevent tourists from looking at the favelas and the riots.

All of these issues raise one question: What could a solution look like? First of all, I believe in eliminating the bidding process in favor of reusing existing facil-

ities.

The location for each year's games could be chosen by a simple raffle. Another solution could be that countries are given even more time to build and prepare for the Olympics, and also have to include plans on how they would relocate their citizens and how they will regulate the infrastructure of the cities. These plans could be reviewed by a separate committee, comprised of city planners and architects.

After reviewing all of this, it is easy to say that the Olympics bring more harm than good both for the countries that host them and their populations. However, despite all of their deficits, the Olympics are the times where the entire world unites to see their best athletes compete in a myriad of sports, and where the best of the best are rewarded.

Personally, I will never forget the time where I saw Michael Phelps dominate most of the swimming categories during the summer Olympics in Beijing in 2008, and how it spiked my interest in the sport of swimming. That is another reason why the Olympics should not be discontinued: To raise a new generation that saw the best athletes during their childhood, and aspired to become even better ones. •

## Figure Skating

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coming the first U.S. woman to successfully complete the triple axel, which virtually no other woman in the field in this Olympics is attempting to execute.

In addition to the complicated new scoring system possibly contributing to figure skating's dwindling in popularity, American Figure Skating's popular past included more drama and politics as well as the winning of more olympic medals.

Following the 1994 Nancy Kerrigan and Tonya Harding incident in which Tonya Harding was accused of hiring her ex-husband to bash Nancy Kerrigan's knee before the National Championships - which would kept her from qualifying for that year's Olympics (this was also the event upon which the 2017 film *I, Tonya* is based) 48.5 million TV viewers watched Olympic figure skating, making it the third-highest rated sporting event after Super Bowl XVI and Super Bowl XVII, according to a CNN report. In comparison, the 2014 Sochi Olympics' 21.5 million viewers presents a large gap in viewership. While the publicity of the Harding/Kerrigan scandal definitely contributed to the popularity

of the sport in 1994, throughout the late 90s and early 2000s, the US figure skaters' domination of the international scene was able to help them make their way into mainstream American media. Skaters such as Michelle Kwan, Tara Lipinski, Sarah Hughes, Kristi Yamaguchi, and Sasha Cohen became household names, comparable to popular athletes today like Michael Phelps, Aly Raisman, and Simone Biles. During the Olympics that took place in the '90s and early 2000s, figure skaters' were plastered on cereal boxes and featured in advertisements. They performed in professional ice shows that toured around America, wrote bestselling books, and some even took part in *Dancing with the Stars*.

A key member of this 1990 early 2000 star group is Michelle Kwan. Virtually every American, whether they watch Figure Skating or not, has heard her name. As a two time Olympic medalist and five-time world champion, Michelle Kwan was, and to many, still is, the face of American figure skating, and during her peak popularity, she was the country's most popular female athlete. Since Kwan's retirement from competitive figure skating more than 10 years ago, no skater in the U.S. has won as many medals or become as prominent of an ambassador for the sport. While the likelihood

of another American figure skater becoming as successful as Michelle Kwan in the next couple of years is quite unlikely, there are already signs of a reemergence of American interest in figure skating. According to CNN and Google Trends, this year's Olympics have seen an increasing interest in figure skating among the American Public. Out of all of the winter sports googled throughout the past 12 months, "figure skating" has been the most popular. Again while this popularity of figure skating is seen only within the context of the winter olympics, the popularity of skaters during this olympics - skaters including Adam Rippon, Nathan Chen, siblings Maia and Alex Shibutani and Mirai Nagasu - seems to show hope in bringing figure skating into the mainstream once again.

Whether they earn medals or not, hopefully the performances of the members of Team USA during this Olympics will encourage Americans to continue watching the sport all year long. Whatever happens at this Olympic games, each American skater shows great promise and hope in reviving the American legacy in the sport of figure skating. •

## Rick and Morty Meets the #MeToo Movement

JAMES MURRAY  
ARTS EDITOR

Throughout my first year and a half at Conn, I genuinely felt like every other eclectic individual I met was asking me whether or not I'd seen this show, Rick and Morty. From the gangly, sleepy-eyed, effortlessly cool junior who lived in Larrabee my sophomore year to my philosophical, four-eyed,

suspecting McDonald's franchises over a speciality dipping sauce than the reasons I love it. I won't get into the szechuan sauce disaster too much here, but the limited edition dipping sauce was featured in the first episode of Season 3. Under a significant amount of pressure and demand from Rick and Morty fans, the sauce was reintroduced for one day at select McDonald's franchises. The sauce quickly ran out at one of the restaurants where it was avail-



Photo courtesy of Ethan Miller/Getty Images

botany-inclined companion who frequented Harkness patio to do organic chemistry; this show had a cult following that was rapidly transitioning into a mainstream obsession. Although the show has achieved a high level of success and popularity, it has not proven to be immune to controversy or justifiable criticism against one of the show's creators, Dan Harmon.

I attribute my own initial obsession with the show to the no-holds-barred raunchy comedy, nonsensical and flawed side kicks, and outrageous interdimensional adventures. However, I am more intrigued by what has made this show so wildly popular to the general public and induced riots at un-

able and a mild form of pandemonium ensued (but that could be an article all on its own).

Is it the melodramatic subplots that seem to always grapple with the fleeting nature of human existence and the search for meaning that make the show so popular? Maybe it's the fact that people genuinely appreciate the image of a dysfunctional, imperfect family in which no one—not even the kids—are sheltered from the cynical reality that you're no more special than anyone else on a rock floating through space that simply happens to possess the perfect conditions for carbon based life forms

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## Timberlake Underwhelms at Super Bowl Halftime

EMILY CHUN  
CONTRIBUTOR

The 2004 Super Bowl halftime show unraveled mass hysteria throughout the country. As the voices of backup singers, techno music, and basses reverberated throughout the stadium, Justin Timberlake made a surprise appearance during Janet Jackson's ballad, "Rock Your Body." On the final verse, Timberlake tore off a piece of Jackson's outfit, revealing her right breast on live television. Despite justifications and apologies, the incident was regarded as a wardrobe malfunction; Jackson had to apologize for something over which she had no control; and her career began to unravel. But when it came to choosing a performer for the Super Bowl LII halftime show, Timberlake was offered a second opportunity to redeem himself. To some, his 13-minute performance was a success—to others, a letdown.

For decades, the Super Bowl has been a cultural staple, an event during which families, coworkers, and friends come together on a Sunday evening to sit in front of a screen with snacks and drinks covering every square inch on a table and cheer on their preferred team. Four hours of attention get devoted to men wearing helmets and shoulder pads, tossing a ball around, and ramming into one another. Although football is, of course, the main attraction of the Super Bowl, the halftime show is a highly anticipated and watched performance. It is not unknown that the Super Bowl halftime show is the biggest platform in music, a booking reserved solely for pop culture icons. Pre-Timberlake 2.0, performers such as Beyonce, Katy Perry, and Lady Gaga lit the stadium ablaze. Their performances left attendees and viewers across the globe speechless, starstruck, and spellbound. For said performers, the Super Bowl halftime show served as a pivotal point in their careers. Beyonce took advantage twice to reinvent herself

through her 2013 performance of a medley of all her popular songs, and once again in 2016 with "Formation." Katy Perry performed a variety of her single ballads that propelled her career forward. Lady Gaga redirected the spotlight on her and her career at 2017's Super Bowl halftime show. With the return of Timberlake, he too was seeking a career revival.

Performing at this year's Super Bowl halftime show enabled Timberlake to showcase his new song, "Filthy," as well as a new tag name he has coined, "Man of the Woods." However, from his attire he wore that night—a shirt with two deer on it, a faded camouflage suit, and a red bandana tied around his neck—and the poor use of his vocals and background music, his performance was simply unimpressive. Despite being well-known for his lissome voice through his NSYNC and early 2000s career, his 13-minute performance heavily focused on dance rather than vocals. Throughout Timberlake's performance of "Cry Me a River," "SexyBack," "My Love," "Suit & Tie," and "The 20/20 Experience," it often sounded like he was just adding a few riffs here and there to the existing vocals in the songs. Even though several of his hit songs made an appearance that night with a complete backup band, they did not seem to have the same grand impact on his fans as they did a few years ago. It was not until Timberlake changed into a tuxedo and sat behind a white grand piano to sing "Until the End of Time" that his vocals fell in-tune, allowing their natural warmth to come through.

As expected, Timberlake's performance sparked much controversy due to his rendition of "I Would Die 4 U," which featured a projection of Prince behind him. Before Prince's death, Prince and Timberlake had a feud dating back about 11 years. During a 2006 post-Emmy party,

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## Hygienic Gallery Holds Poetry Open Mic

SUMMER WROBEL  
CONTRIBUTOR

“We are all artists, we are all family,” was the slogan of the Hygienic Art Gallery’s open mic on Friday, Feb. 9. Chairs formed a semi-circle around the microphone in the gallery’s space on Bank Street, New London. Those who didn’t come early enough to get a seat gathered in the adjacent room and craned their necks to see. Not a single wall was blank. In the background, paintings, sculptures, and collages came together to color in the lively atmosphere. The range of artistic styles on display that night was a product of the Hygienic’s declaration of “no judge, no jury, no fees, no censorship.” The motto pays homage to New London’s own *Salon des Indépendants* movement in the

late 1970s.

The Hygienic literally sits on history. When digging up the soil for a new underground gallery a cannonball was found. While the original building dates back to 1884, it went through a series of transformations until 1931 when it became the Hygienic Restaurant and Delicatessen. A popular eatery, the restaurant is said to have served President Roosevelt and Al Capone. The building was purchased in 1998 and renovated into the artistic hub it is today.

Yet the space still boasts the original countertop from the restaurant as a reminder of its past. There is no stage. Shanell Sharpe, the featured poet of the night, moved the mic behind her and paced at the front of the room. It would have felt like a private moment, were it not for the way Sharpe responded to the audience’s demand for more. A UCONN



Visitors at the Hygienic XXXIX Exhibition opening on Jan. 27. Photo courtesy of James Murray.

alumnus and a former member of the Poetic Release team, Sharpe made her writing debut in the third grade with “Ms. Williams and the Spice Girls,” a piece dedicated to the popular band and Sharpe’s teacher. Now

a poet, rapper, and singer, Sharpe ended her set by sitting down on one of the speakers and performing her recent single, “Lights Low.” The

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## Tuning in to Campus Tradition with WCNI

ELIZABETH BERRY  
STAFF WRITER

I will admit that I only knew Connecticut College has a student-run radio station because my uncle, a member of the class of ’78, was part of the radio station during his time at Conn. That said, discussion of Conn’s WCNI radio station (channel 90.9, also found at [wcniradio.org](http://wcniradio.org)) appears limited on campus. Wondering if my first-year status had just limited my scope of WCNI conversation, or if WCNI really is a ghost on campus, I decided to find out more about the mysterious station.

WCNI’s headquarters is located on the right side of Cro. Or, as Samantha Weisenthal ’18, a DJ who plays music every other Tuesday with Miranda Dimase-Nordling ’18, said: you can locate the office from the music radiating out from the speakers. This proved to be true: as I opened the doors to the office, I heard music pulsing throughout the room. Immediately, my eyes were drawn to the various stickers and posters that covered the walls and doors. A brief tour revealed a back room stocked with

hundreds of vinyl records and CDs. While 90.9 is best known for folk music, its vast collection of music spans all genres. But as Weisenthal put it, that “the youth prefers Spotify.” In fact, one of



Weisenthal and Dimase-Nordling in the WCNI booth. Photo courtesy of Elizabeth Berry.

Weisenthal’s Spotify playlists was on in the background during my tour.

Although set in a small space, Conn’s radio station has grown over the years. An old newspaper

clipping hung in the office explains that the radio station was originally created by Carol Crane ’50, and Phyll Hoffman ’51. Before my uncle, Michael Schiff, was part of WCNI—he had a weekly show that played folk and jazz music—students used to plug their radios into outlets in their dorms to listen to the station.

However, eventually WCNI became a real radio station that played music live. When Schiff was a student at Conn in the seventies, he said that members of the club used a ten watt station, which is the smallest FCC approved station. Despite this limitation, the station still thrived. Music ranging from jazz and classical to rock n’ roll was played through the turntables and sometimes cassettes. Even though the station had a limited range, not only students listened to the radio: faculty members and some locals who lived near Conn’s campus enjoyed it as well.

Fast forward a few decades and there is now a larger antenna that reaches listeners spread across a greater radius. There are now twenty DJs working at WCNI and each host has a three hour slot during which they play their music. Students dedicate time to making

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## Poetry Open Mic

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song has a steady beat that provides a simple background for Sharpe's strong lyrics. Available on all major platforms, Lights Low is a fearless response to a negative relationship. Filled with self-love, Sharpe sang, "Only wanna see me when the lights down low. I don't like this, I can't hide no more."

Applause followed Shanell's performance. In fact, the audience was receptive to all kinds of performances and the energy remained for the entire two-hour set. There were musicians, singers, poets, and rappers. Themes ranged from political commentary to personal anxiety and grief. The performances included local poet and teacher Laura Strobel, who describes her poetry as a "slice of life, silhouette style" and others, like Seth Howard, editor of the new Capsule magazine, who wanted to accentuate the quietness behind his words.

There are plentiful reasons for needing a space like the Hygienic in a community. Monica, a local poet, explained to me that when she graduat-

ed high school, where she took creative writing classes, it was as if her circulation was cut off. "It cut off every outlet to express myself," she told me, "cause there's not really a lot of opportunities to express yourself as an adult in New London." She described the Hygienic as being a life source and performing her poetry as coming up for air.

Open mics are an opportunity for creative expression. What made the Hygienic open mic so successful was the celebration of both the community and the individual. The Hygienic created a space for the collective where the individual was not lost. It is easy for an open mic

Open mics also provide a space to be heard and a platform for activism. Anita Dees, a poet and the current host of the Washington Street Café's open mic, told me that it is only the artists who can bridge the divides in our country. "You can preach all day long," she says, "and they will be impressed by you, but that does not mean they have internalized any word you've said. I'd far rather have people remember the ideas in my work and think they thought of it themselves."



A performer takes the mic. Photo courtesy of Summer Wrobel.

Organized by Juanita Austin and hosted by comedian Nika Domingo and DJ Prime, the event marked the closing weekend of the gallery's XXXIX Arts Extravaganza. Yet nothing about the event felt like closure. •

## WCNI

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Image courtesy of WCNI online

playlists and conducting research about new songs and albums, which helps them create suitable playlists that people will want to hear. However, Weisenthal admits that she, along with Dimase-Nordling, do not always have a planned playlist, which allows them to compose on the spot and "goof off on air" a little bit. Whether planned or improvised, music has the unique ability to inspire certain emotions in listeners that may have not been there before, Weisenthal explained.

The radio station is another comfortable and welcoming space on Conn's campus where students can mess around with music and have fun. Dimase-Nordling goes on to say that

the station is a "platform to explore." And indeed it is. Charlie King '18, the current student general manager and program director, said that the radio station helped him and other students go outside their comfort zone.

Although the station has expanded since its creation in the fifties, King still wants to go further. He explained in an interview that the station was very popular in the nineties and in fact never went off air—King wants to make this happen again and said that he only has five more slots he has to fill in order to have the station be live twenty-four seven. During my uncle's time at Conn, the radio station would annually host popu-

lar bands; including artists such as Billy Joel and Bonnie Raitt. This is a tradition that King hopes to revitalize, as well.

WCNI is one of many platforms that allows students to project their opinions. My uncle considers it an "essential voice of Connecticut College." According to King, the station gives students a chance "to get out of the [college] bubble" and have a relationship with the New London community. WCNI is not only about playing music that their listeners will enjoy, but is also a means of expression and connection to others that not all organizations possess. I know I will start tuning in to 90.9. •

## Halftime Show

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Photo courtesy of Kevin Mazur/Getty Images

Prince commented on Timberlake's "SexyBack": "For whoever is claiming that they are bringing sexy back, sexy never left!" During "Give It To Me," Timberlake came back with, "We missed you on the charts last week. Damn, that's right, you wasn't there. Now if sexy never left, then why is everybody on my shit? Don't hate on me just because you didn't come up with it." The bitterness between the two artists carried on into 2007 when Timberlake mimicked Prince's short stature at the Golden Globes by squatting to a low stance at the microphone in order to accept the award on his behalf. When the stadium lights dimmed low and purple surrounded the stadium, Prince appeared on a projector screen alongside Timberlake. Despite the controversy and the feud between the two, the projection was a stylistic homage to Prince's iconic Super Bowl halftime show in 2007.

Although there were numerous tweets, reviews, and memes made after Super Bowl LII's halftime performance that claimed Timberlake's performance was a disappointment, the country still came together to witness a halftime show that will likely be remembered as controversial yet creative. We also bore witness to a football game that had the country divided, and commercials that will forever be humorous. Whether the next performer will be Drake, Rihanna, Kendrick Lamar, or someone else, the nation will gather again in a year to celebrate one of America's most beloved cultural events. •

## Dan Harmon

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to thrive. Maybe it's the complicated familial dynamic among Jerry, Beth, Morty, Summer, and Rick that resonates deeply with your average person; viewers understand that being in a family takes work, sacrifice, trust, and support. Further, it could be the fact that the jokes and characters are so absurd and unique to the show that it effectively stands out amongst an overwhelming field of competing programs.

I think it is very likely and perhaps plausible that the obsession with the show is a confusing combination of all the previously mentioned characteristics. I don't think it should be understated that the show taps into some seriously heavy, dark, visceral themes mostly around the meaning of life, happiness, and mortality. There are few shows that can successfully combine the absurd and nonsensical with the relatable and cynical. Rick and Morty does this to great effect. Moving forward, it is unclear whether or not the show can replicate its past successes or even maintain the same core group of creators and writers. The show's future has been sitting in a relatively precarious position ever since early January.

With shows like Rick and Morty, it's not only the zany characters that get attention, but the show's creators as well. Dan Harmon, one of those creators, had considerable success on the program *Community* before co-creating Rick and Morty for Adultswim with Justin Roiland. It is hard to deny the show's popularity and loyal following, but as the #MeToo movement has swept through the entertainment industry, the public has come to understand a grimmer reality behind the lives of some of Hollywood's biggest names and budding stars.

Several weeks ago, a former *Community* writer named Megan Ganz implicated Dan Harmon in the #MeToo movement when she publicly announced on Twitter the sexual harassment and toxic working environ-

ment she experienced while working on the show. Ganz, challenged Harmon to own up to his indiscretions and his self-described "ass-hole behavior" which unsurprisingly consisted of more than just being a challenging person with which to work.

Harmon, in his lengthy apology on his podcast, "Harmontown" described the ways in which he misused and abused his influence and position during the production process of *Community*. This meant putting Ganz in oftentimes impossible and agonizing positions with the inappropriate and unacceptable ways that he acted towards her in the context of a boss-employee relationship. Importantly, Harmon's apology showed a level of detail and reflection that has all too often been missing from men who have been found guilty of similar actions.

On Twitter, Ganz voiced her approval for Harmon's apology when she noted, "I didn't expect the relief I'd feel just hearing him say these things actually happened. I didn't dream it. I'm not crazy." In a subsequent tweet she says, "this was never about vengeance: it's about vindication. That's why it didn't feel right just to accept his apology in private." The fact that this case stands out as much as it does is indicative of the tragedy that is not only the rampant sexual harassment and assault that occurs in the entertainment industry and the world-at-large, but also the failure of so many accused and charged to make any successful attempt at reparations, remorse, closure, or healing. It is all too rare to see the individual in question take full responsibility, own up to their actions, and communicate their shame not only to the victim, but the general public as well. It remains to be seen how this revelation will affect the so far smashing success of Rick and Morty. It would not be the first time when people are forced to rethink their affinity for certain TV programs when their biggest stars, creative minds, or writers turn out to be far less than the infallible geniuses that we sometimes make them out to be. •



## Constellations: A Story of Brilliant Love & Twisted Time

**BROOKE SPONZO**  
STAFF WRITER

It is often said that the fate of lovers is written in the stars, but for the characters of the play *Constellations*, things aren't that simple. The play, which was originally written by Nick Payne and given a new life under the direction of Connecticut College's Katie Rooney '21, focuses on the lives of two individuals—a down-to-earth beekeeper and a struggling science professor—and how these two seemingly different lives might come together or fall apart across multiple alternate realities.

The two protagonists of the play, Marianne and Roland, have a chance meeting at the barbecue of a mutual friend. Sparks fly, but the audience soon learns that Roland is married when he tells Mary that his wife is off fetching drinks. A chime sounds. The scene repeats, almost exactly the same, only now Roland, instead of being married, has just suffered a bad break up. The show continues in this respect, offering viewers a glimpse of the same scenes over and over, only each time the new scene is played out in parallel universe where some aspects of the scenario have been changed. This forces the audience to come face to face with the question: what if things happened this way instead?

The play displays a gorgeous balance of both joy and sorrow. In some scenes, the audience is laughing at a cheesy proposal repeated over and over again, emulating a charming Groundhog Day-like wit. Other scenes show the play taking on a darker tone, fully turning around such that the audience is now mourning, their heart strings pulled tightly, like the scene where Marianne

struggles to live her life with a horrid brain tumor over and over again.

The show is ultimately about time. Moreover, it's about how we choose to spend our time and if what we do with our time truly matters at all in the grand scheme of the universe. Rooney pens in her Director's Note, "I am essentially able to live at the mercy of chance, because who knows which word, choice, or idea will actually change my life." The multiverse theory in this play is not there for the science fiction element, but to prompt audience members to instead think critically about the choices they have made and to wonder if they were the right ones. If this show were to be summed up in a single sentence, that sentence would have to be: the choices we make can affect the course of our whole lives, so choose wisely because you don't get to go back and choose again.

Audrey Black '21 played the role of physicist and outer-space analyst Marianne, who slowly comes face to face with her own mortality upon the realization that she has a brain tumor. Marianne's intelligence makes her character intriguing because she has such a firm grasp on what the concept of time is, yet does not really understand what time means and how she should spend her numbered days. Black did a phenomenal job portraying this complex character. Audiences could feel how brutally Marianne's illness is affecting her and how it is handicapping her brain, which before was her strongest asset. We witness Marianne's character go from explaining complicated theories about the relativity of time to stumbling on her words as she tries to speak simple sentences. While many things in her life vary from universe to universe, her impending mortality and her illness remain an unchanging predicament.

Andre Thomas '20 played Roland, a man trying to make a living at beekeeping whose life is changed, for better in some circumstances and for worse in others, upon a chance meeting with Marianne. Thomas does an incredible job portraying this character, especially considering that, from universe to



*Photos courtesy of Katie Rooney*

universe, the character's traits vary. In some instances, Roland helps and supports Marianne, and in others he abuses her, is rejected by her, or leaves her. Thomas' ability to portray all these differing sides to Roland, while still conveying to the audience the essence of the original character was masterful. While Marianne struggles with the idea of time as a concrete and scientifically proven theory, Roland takes cues from his profession to grapple with the concept. Throughout the alternate universes he often brings up the lives of honey bees and how they work so hard only to be tossed from their hives when their time is up. So, like Black's character, Thomas' character also ponders if our time on this earth and the decisions we make are truly meaningful or just minute changes in an already set plan.

The show took place in Palmer 202, a small and homey theatre, which connected the audience to the play's story and morals more than a bigger production space could have. The production space allowed the play's strong message to be well received and ultimately reminded audiences about the fragility of time. With so many choices in our daily lives, sometimes we're all a little starcrossed. •

