“We Stand with You:” Faculty Support Student Protests

ZOE DUBELIER
Layout Editor

Beginning on Feb. 9, departments across the College began releasing statements regarding Dean King's resignation. The Dance Department at 12:15pm was the first to release a statement, writing, "Please remember the power of the community you have formed through dancing. Lean on each other, and don’t forget the power of movement to help process strong feelings." Following the Dance Department, The Center for Critical Study of Race and Ethnicity (CCSRE), released a statement that has since been supported by many departments and faculty across campus. In reference to the goals set out by President Bergeron of "full participation" faculty members wrote, "At this point we’d actually recommend that any official verbiage related to these goals be stricken, as very little over the past almost decade has suggested that this is true" (see the full statement on @ccsreconncoll on Instagram).

On Feb. 10 at 10am, the Department of Gender, Sexuality, and Intersectionality Studies released a statement endorsing the CCSRE statement, following it with "we believe that now is the time to make change." At 7pm the Anthropology Department emailed students with support of students' efforts to create change and encouraged collaboration between students, faculty, and staff at the College.

On Feb. 11, Art History/Architectural Studies released a statement further supporting students by writing, "we want the student community to be assured that we stand with you during this difficult and challenging time."

On Feb. 12 at 3:30pm, Slavic Studies professors wrote to their students showing their support for the CCSRE statement and expressing their own commitment to the work of DIEI. "We are committed to advancing this aim in our field by decentering its Russo-centric orientation, striving to be more inclusive of historically marginalized communities in the regions we study, and unmasking disinformation and a lack of transparency as tools for reinforcing the status quo in the world and in our community." At 8:15pm, the English Department also sent their support for students and mentioned faculty efforts, noting, "We look forward to working with our faculty colleagues to ensure [Dean King's] sacrifice will not have been in vain."

On Feb. 13 The Departments of Film, Botany, Biology, Computer Science, Human Development, Education, and History all released statements. Both History (via the History SAB Instagram) and Computer Science at 3pm expressed their direct support for the statement made by CCSRE. The Film Department at 12pm and the Education Studies Department at 7pm wrote about their efforts within the faculty community to create change. A Film Studies professor noted, "We want to see something done, and we want to see it done now." Additionally the Education Department the field's direct connection to campus protests writing, "there is a long history of students protesting social injustice and also a long history of that protest

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Article continued on page 3.

Intergalactic Afronaut – Into the Afroverse Vol I

CAOIMHIE MARKEY
Arts Editor

"Everything I do is a love letter to Black people and Black culture. Afrofuturism is a way for me to show that," said Juanita Sunday at the “Into the Afroverse Vol I” event in Cummings Art Center on Saturday, Feb 18. After a casual viewing of the exhibition titled “6th Dimension,” attendees were treated to an immersive afternoon of performances, film, and discussion with featured artists.

Sunday, its esteemed curator, returns to Cummings after successfully developing and installing a show in 2021 styled as “NAPPY,” which celebrated the expression of Blackness through hair. Sunday’s newest artistic venture blends visual art with technology in a dynamic representation of Black futures across time and space.

Using the word “exhibition” to describe the experience that Juanita Sunday and her eleven chosen artists have created feels disembodied. The pieces staged in Cummings investigate the temporality of Black futures through a diverse variety of mediums inspired by science fiction and afrofuturism. The display includes everything from a playable version of “Space Invaders” on an early Apple Macintosh computer to 3D animated landscapes to digital prints inspired by African tribal masks. The “Into the Afroverse” event served as an introduction to the complexity and reach of this shared project

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Article continued on page 19.
Letter From the Managing Editor

At The College Voice, we publish arts, news, opinions, sports, and that which lies in between. In this special edition, you will find that the entire breadth of these sections covers our current campus protests. In other words, Dean King’s act of personal and professional sacrifice is one that permeates every corner of our campus environment.

Last October, I dived deep into the archives and found that campus-wide dissent through the years has been set ablaze by student protest, and student journalism has been a pivotal impetus behind this change. Students challenged the $10 million Shain Library renovation in a wave of protest against inaccessibility on campus, Fanning Hall was occupied in 2016 by pro-Palestine activists, and we now see a similar swell of collective action against President Katherine Bergeron.

Years from now, I suspect that future student journalists will sift through the digital archives to be reminded that Dean King’s resignation in 2023 was an act of integrity that made visible decades of an underfunded and unsupported DIEI. They will find stories on how each academic department critically responded to current climate (Layout Editor Zoe Dubelier ’23, page 1, 3), insight into how our lackluster community engagement efforts have in fact always been a symptom of undermining institutional equity and inclusion (Ana Ostrovsky ’23, page 8, 9), and an overall understanding about how culture might begin to change, starting with revising an outdated set of mission statements (EICs Sam Maidenber and Catja Christensen, page 6-7). These past two weeks have shown me in stark form how we see these student efforts as bodies of knowledge, agency, progress, and ultimately institutional reform.

Two weeks ago, TCV staff spent Wednesday night cooped up in the office fact-checking information and writing on the campus protest just moments before. The next day, we published our special edition story on King’s resignation, and it has garnered over 6,000 reads just on our website. The printed story has also rapidly traversed pockets of campus life. We hope that students, faculty, staff, and those far beyond our hilltop will look to The College Voice as both an outlet for information and platform for key voices.

Last edition, our EICs said it well: The College Voice acts as a biweekly archive of life at Conn. We want to publish your perspectives and hear your ideas. Come to our biweekly pitch meetings in the Alice Johnson Room at 8pm, send us an email at thecollegevoice@conncoll.edu, and follow our Insta @the_collegevoice!

Warmly,
Lucie Englehardt ’23 (Managing Editor)

*All articles were written as of Feb. 19, 2023

Correction as of Feb. 9: This article notes that Bergeron was incorrect in her capitalization of “dean of institutional equity and inclusion.” However, the AP Style Guide writes “lowercase and spell out title when they are not used with individual’s names.”

Correction as of Feb. 16: A previous version of this article reported that President Bergeron was in Florida on Monday, Feb. 6. The College Voice has since learned that Bergeron was not in Florida at the time.
“We Stand with You:” Faculty Support Student Protests

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Article continued from page 1.

leading to positive social change that wouldn’t have otherwise happened.” Continuing this trend Human Development at 6pm and Biology at 9:40pm reiterated their commitments to diversity, equity, and inclusion within their respective departments.

Responding directly to Dean King’s letter to the Board of Trustees (BoT), the Botany Department released a statement at 4:30pm writing, “We see this as part of a larger pattern of devaluing expert advice that needs to change.”

On Feb. 14, The Economics and Government/International Relations Departments emailed students to support action in response to Dean King’s resignation. The Economics Department faculty wrote, “We fully support every effort to make our campus a place in which everyone is treated equitably and where every individual is able to fully and meaningfully participate in all aspects of college life.” Similarly the Government faculty wrote, “We have heard the call to action by you, the students, as well as by many of our faculty colleagues, to use this moment to fight for the long overdue structural changes that will enhance diversity, equity, inclusion, belonging, and full participation by all at this college. We join in that call and commit to continuing to do this work.”

Finally on Feb. 15, the Department of Psychology/Neuroscience released a statement acknowledging the larger institutional issues at hand writing, “We believe all attempts to address the crisis of [Dean King’s] resignation must attend not just to the personal and interpersonal dimensions of what has occurred, but also to the institutional and ideological dimensions of racism, antisemitism, and other forms of oppression it is connected to in our country and at our institution.” The Theater Department also released a statement late Wednesday stating, “As we navigate our department’s role in what must be a new direction for the college, let us find inspiration in Tony Kushner’s Angels in America and declare that, in fact, the college’s “history is about to crack wide open.”

It is clear across all of the department statements that faculty are standing behind students’ efforts to seek change. Further, many faculty members tailored their letters to their respective fields, demonstrating for students what critically interrogating the institution means in their field of study. Whether by providing spaces to speak and process information, additional time on assignments, or grace to those students supporting or participating in protest, the faculty is working to support students in every way possible and strive toward creating change alongside the student body.

Lonnie Braxton II ’68 Visits Unity House, Shares Experiences as Civil Rights Movement Activist

Grace Contreni-Flynn
Opinions Editors

It is easy to feel as though our country and respective communities are radically different than they were in the 1960s. After all, numerous foreign wars, social movements, recessions, and medical epidemics have passed and left their marks in that time. Yet, this sensation was taken into question on Feb. 16 as students and faculty spoke with activist and former State Prosecutor Lonnie Braxton II. Braxton ’68 was born and raised in Greenville, Mississippi and spent his childhood in the throws of the Mississippi tangent of the Civil Rights Movement. During his visit he recounted living blocks away from the men who killed Emmett Till as well as his father’s close friendship with the NAACP’s first field secretary, Medgar Evers. Braxton acknowledged that this era of his life, while inarguably consequential, saw change that was “wide, not deep.” Rather, he reflected, “times then were no harder than times are now”; he urged audience members to understand that “[his] generation is about to exit stage left and leave the stage with you and the hard work for you is to not worry about the wide, you’re going to have to go deep. That deep change requires a lot of hard work. So, get ready, prepare yourself because your turn is not coming, folks. It's already here.” (Read the rest on the collegevoice.org)
How could the activism of some students affect students who are not participating at all or not participating in that way?

- Activism from students that violates other students’ rights as illustrated by the handbook may lead to conduct cases. After an extended period of time that students are unable to go to class or engage with the college in some way, they and their parents will complain to the school. This is tied to the interruption of orderly processes of the college and may result in a Disruption charge if drawn out too long. It is important to keep in mind how activism affects others on campus and balance applying pressure without creating unnecessary problems for neutral parties.

Are the risks different for international students?

- International students have the same rights to protest as any other student on this campus. There are only two scenarios where the consequences may differ, if they are arrested or if they are suspended. Suspension results in a pause in their student status and may affect Visas, arrests may have larger implications for this as well. Students with Green Cards are more secure in these situations as their residency is not dependent on their status as a student.

What about undocumented students?

- Undocumented students face the same chance of consequences as other students, but the risk is increased in cases of arrest. The college conduct process does not treat this status differently, but students should be mindful of legal ramifications to protesting, however unlikely.

- Do we have to worry about getting arrested?
- It takes extreme circumstances for law enforcement to get involved on this college campus. Serious threats, public safety concerns, or acts of violence would be considered.

**THE COLLEGE VOICE**

FEBRUARY 22, 2023

**BEN JØRGENSEN-DUFFY**

HONOR COUNCIL CHAIR

As conversations surrounding student and faculty demands for change have played out over the past two weeks, questions have been raised about what rights students have to protest, what kinds of demonstrations fit within or outside of our policies, and what potential repercussions students may face if they go outside of these policies. In an effort to make the information in the Student Handbook more accessible and respond to common concerns, refer to this “Know Your Protest Policies” document.

What Activism Leads to Conduct Sanctions?

- Activism that is in line with the listed policies can be done without any concern about conduct proceedings. This includes writing with chalk on sidewalks and walkways, posting signage on walls with temporary tape that aligns with the guidelines, expressing views verbally, digitally, or in writing, or any other action that does not violate policy.

- Demonstrations that cause unreasonable levels of disruption to college functions may have consequences depending on the circumstances. Historically, the conduct process has not been levered to put a stop to acts like the Fanning Takeovers, though the chances of this happening increase as the length of time that the college is disrupted grows.

- Damaging or unsafe actions are the most likely to lead to disciplinary action. These kinds of violations also tend to result in both a Disciplinary Status and financial charges as payment for the damage done or unsafe circumstances created.

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**RELEVANT POLICIES**

**GENERAL GUIDELINES**

- Students are expected to respect the need for ensuring the safety and health of others (see CSDC).
- Students may not unreasonably disrupt or interfere with the orderly processes of the College involving teaching, research, administration, disciplinary proceedings, or other College activities (see Disruption).
- Students need to ensure College buildings, grounds, equipment, or educational materials or other property is not damaged, destroyed, or misused (see Misuse of Property).
- Students are expected to provide factual and accurate information and comply with reasonable requests and directives of College and law enforcement officials.
- Students need to ensure their actions abide by dept. reg.
- Posters, signs, flyers, chalkings or similar medium need to adhere to the posting and advertising regulations.

**DISRUPTION**

- Students may not unreasonably disrupt or interfere with the orderly processes of the College involving teaching, research, administration, disciplinary proceedings, or other College activities (see Disruption).
- Students need to ensure College buildings, grounds, equipment, or educational materials or other property is not damaged, destroyed, or misused (see Misuse of Property).
- Students are expected to respect the need for ensuring the safety and health of others.
- EX: Theft, manipulation of door locks, peepholes, or emergency doors, illegal taking or destruction of College buildings, grounds, equipment, educational materials, or the personal belongings of others is prohibited, regardless of intent.

**MISUSE OF PROPERTY**

-EX: Theft, manipulation of door locks, peepholes, or emergency doors, illegal taking or destruction of College buildings, grounds, equipment, educational materials, or the personal belongings of others is prohibited, regardless of intent.

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**CALCULATED RISK**

Violations of these policies come with potential consequences of varying degrees. When engaging in activism, it is important to keep in mind which policies may be violated, if any, and what potential implications they may have. The potential consequences for violating these policies differ between policies, for example please be mindful that each student is operating from unique viewpoints and backgrounds. In the conduct process, previous conduct history is heavily taken into account and influences the level of sanctions.

With that in mind, several sanctions are possible:

**Disciplinary Warning:** For very minor offenses, does nothing unless found guilty.

**Fines:** Fines would range in amount and occur if students damage college property.

**EX: Vandalism: $100 - $250**

**Disciplinary Probation Level 1:** A status reflecting a more serious violation for 1-2 semesters. Violation of this status during this time will extend the status or result in Disciplinary Probation Level 2.

**Disciplinary Probation Level 2:** For egregious violations or previous/current DFI status, this status prevents students from serving in leadership roles, the ability to participate in some programs is limited, and parents/guardians, advisors/coaches may be notified. Students may participate in a 3-4 week RE Challenge Program to reduce their status to DFI. If other violations occur while on this status or with in the student’s record, suspension or expulsion may follow.

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**A NOTE**

At times it is necessary to violate one or more of these policies to push for action, do so thoughtfully. Actions that damage property, create work for custodial staff, or infringe on other students’ rights carry more risk and can be ineffective while reflecting poorly on the movement. Learn to your leadership and stay unified under our goals. Historically, those involved with the conduct process tend to avoid going against unified student activism until it has a significant impact on the college’s ability to operate or become dangerous. Reach out to leaders with questions.

Stay mindful, motivated, and unified.
Before... years later, only an empty field remains. In 2008, Pfizer demonstrated, the promised jobs never appeared; twenty president, was complicit in the process. As the image above would be completely destroyed and Conn, through its own conflict of interests (Reconnecting to the Mission).

As an executive, leading to accusations of an unethical connection. Gaudiani’s husband, David Bennett, worked them being to work at Pfizer, a new business alongside pricey upscale housing. Gaudiani’s husband, David Bennett, worked them being to work at Pfizer, a new business alongside pricey upscale housing. Gaudiani’s husband, David Bennett, worked them being to work at Pfizer, a new business alongside pricey upscale housing.

The allure began to fade in 1997, however, when Gaudiani became the president of the New London Development Corporation (NLDC), a position which would plunge her headfirst into the controversy that would lead to her eventual resignation. The NLDC spearheaded a project, first announced in 1998, to “redevelop” (read: gentrify) the Fort Trumbull neighborhood of New London. As the campus community contemplates what happens next, it’s worth remembering that we’ve been here before.

Gaudiani (‘66), the first alumna president of Conn, began her tenure in 1988 with high hopes from students and faculty alike, and indeed did bring forth many positive initiatives that are still active today. The allure began to fade in 1997, however, when Gaudiani became the president of the New London Development Corporation (NLDC), a position which would plunge her headfirst into the controversy that would lead to her eventual resignation. The NLDC spearheaded a project, first announced in 1998, to “redevelop” (read: gentrify) the Fort Trumbull neighborhood of New London. As the campus community contemplates what happens next, it’s worth remembering that we’ve been here before.

In May of 2000, 78 of the 105 tenured professors (approximately 75%) at Connecticut College voted no confidence in President Claire Gaudiani. Gaudiani had been embroiled in a scandal that feels uncannily familiar today as the student body and faculty deal with the fallout over Dean Rodmon King’s resignation in protest of President Katherine Bergeron’s plans to fundraise at a notoriously racist and anti-semitic club, the Everglades Club. As the campus community contemplates what happens next, it’s worth remembering that we’ve been here before.

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In light of the College’s decision to schedule a fundraising event at the Everglades Club, a historically and presently racist and antisemitic country club, students, faculty, staff, and alumni have been calling for institutional change at the College. A massive part of the frustration of the community stems from the performative nature of the College’s core values along with its response to this situation. As change will occur on this campus, the College should consider revising its mission statement and core values along with making institutional changes to actually uphold its goals.

The following statements were pulled from the College website and were adopted by the College and the Board of Trustees in October 2004. Now, nearly two decades later, it is time to revisit and reevaluate the College’s goals.

**Mission Statement:**

“Connecticut College educates students to put the liberal arts into action as citizens in a global society.”

In the two weeks since Dean King’s resignation, the students have been doing exactly what the mission statement directs them to. Through a range of classes, students are well-equipped to grapple with the ongoing situation. Classes across the social sciences teach us to examine historical social movements, inspire our organizational strategies, and equip us with the tools necessary to effectively communicate a message.

The students are living up to this mission statement, but the administration is not. While students examine and draw from historical social movements, the administration’s response appears more in line with stall tactics and, as the faculty in their letter to the board of trustees put it, “reputation rehabilitation.” While students articulate their feelings in passionate calls for change and the faculty brilliantly phrase their frustrations and list their demands, the administration refuses to appropriately address the situation and uses noncommittal language while remaining ignorant of the importance of intersectionality. While faculty and staff across the campus continue to do the necessary work to address institutional racism in all facets of life, the College schedules a fundraising event in Florida against the backdrop of its recent history of harmful political rhetoric and the ‘Don’t Say Woke’ bill.

**The College’s Six Core Values:**

**Academic Excellence**

“Rigorous academic standards, innovative and engaging faculty members, and a diverse classroom curriculum challenge students to reach their full intellectual potential. The College expects students to learn outside the classroom as well, through such activities as research, travel, and internships. The College facilitates those opportunities in the belief that a diversity of experiences is essential for genuine
To Have Morals

The current campus climate reveals that extracurricular learning does not have to happen so far outside of the classroom. Our editorial team, for example, has jumped into action to prioritize our journalistic integrity, turning our club into what feels like a full-time job.

Additionally, the College claims that it “strongly supports faculty scholarship, research, and creative work,” yet a year ago, faculty discovered that newer tenure contracts included an at-will clause, which threatened their academic freedom as educators and scholars.

**Diversity, Equity, and Shared Governance**

“In the early 20th century, Connecticut College was founded in the belief that all qualified students - women as well as men - deserve an opportunity to secure an education. The College strives to be a community in which all members feel comfortable, respect each other’s differences, and seek common ground. The College promotes understanding by offering a variety of academic and social experiences and is committed to building greater access, opportunity, and equity. Students, faculty, staff, trustees, and alumni all participate in the governance of the College.”

Shared governance is an integral value at the College. The core value lists students, faculty, staff, trustees, and alumni as participating groups in the governance of the College, alluding to the fact that when seeking change, these groups should do so together. However, while students, alumni, and trustees are represented in the presidential review process, as seen in the faculty letter to the Board of Trustees, faculty and staff are not part of this vital act of shared governance.

Additionally, this gendered language from 2004 no longer encompasses the range of identities that currently make up the College’s population. This statement is not inclusive of non-binary or gender non-conforming students. And although the value talks about diversity and equity, it does not specifically mention race, ethnicity, religion, sexuality, age, disability, or other identities covered by DIEI that suffer the most when the division is not supported. DIEI was formed in 2016, twelve years after these statements were first published, so the College should revise the language to fit today’s community values and prioritize intersectionality.
Education of the Entire Person

“The College supports and nurtures the intellectual, emotional, spiritual, creative, and physical development of its student body. Connecticut College encourages students to engage in a wide range of activities, including academic pursuits, athletics and physical education, artistic expression, and community service. The College fosters an appreciation for the natural and aesthetic connectedness of the mind, body, and spirit. It prepares students to be responsible citizens, creative problem-solvers, and thoughtful leaders in a global society.”

Throughout the College’s history, students have demonstrated that they are prepared to be thoughtful leaders in protesting for what they believe and refusing to comply with unjust systems of power. There have been three Fanning takeovers in the College’s history, first in 1971, then in 1986, and most recently in 2016, during President Bergeron’s first term. Each takeover included specific demands from students to the President and Board of Trustees at the time regarding representation and support of marginalized groups. The students value being “responsible citizens,” and faculty and staff go above and beyond to nurture their students, both in and out of the classroom. The administration has much work to do to support its leaders and divisions and encourage the development of the entire institution.

Adherence to Common Ethical and Moral Standards

“Connecticut College maintains a strong commitment to its long-standing Honor Code. Students are expected to monitor their own faithfulness to the principles of honesty and moral integrity and to display courage in academic and social interactions. The principles of justice, impartiality, and fairness - the foundations for equity - are paramount.”

There is a clear lack of accountability on behalf of the College if President Bergeron remains in power following her support of a racist and antisemitic club. Further, the history of her continual devaluation of DIEI throughout her tenure does not reflect the expectation for all to monitor their own “honesty and moral integrity” and uphold the “principles of justice, impartiality, and fairness.” If students are expected to uphold these principles, the administration should be too.
Community Service and Global Citizenship

"Connecticut College fosters civic responsibility and enhances academic excellence through a long tradition of community involvement and through courses that provide opportunities for service. The College promotes an understanding of local, regional, national, and international peoples, groups, cultures, and issues, and encourages students to take a life-long interest in them."

A college whose core values include the promotion of understanding of all peoples shouldn't be devaluing the Division of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. "In the classes of 2021-2024, the average BLACK student enrolled in 17 out of over 450 students. Just as lonely as in 1976," wrote former Vice President of the Alumni Association Board of Directors Lois Mendez-Catlin in a letter to former DIEI Dean, John McKnight. BIPOC and multiracial students make up roughly 28% of the student body according to the Demographic Data on Faculty Members and Full-Time Undergraduates from Fall 2022. That is the exact same percentage as 2019.

How can the College promote the furthering of multicultural engagement, intersectionality, and community diversity if they do not support the established division that was created to facilitate this goal? For a school that talks a lot about its diversity, the numbers don't reflect that. And for the BIPOC and multicultural students already at the College, Unity House has been all but closed since September of 2022 due to plumbing issues. Staff have been spread out to different office spaces across campus. Budgets for the department have not been publicized, but we know several DIEI staff members are on hourly pay rates which typically doesn't give them the same benefit packages as salaried employees.

In addition, as discussed in Ana Ostrovsky's article on page 8-9, the introduction of the Manwaring building has brought with it a slew of concerns regarding the relationship between the College and the greater community. Similarly, Caroline Snyder, on page 8, describes the Don't Say Woke bill in Florida and its relation to higher education and censorship.

Environmental Stewardship

"Connecticut College is proud of its pioneering tradition of ecological awareness and responsibility and intends to remain a leader in safeguarding the environment. The arboretum campus is an ecological showpiece, and the College's procedures and programs aim to preserve and protect the environment, both locally and globally, and to prepare citizens sensitive to the need for responsible environmental stewardship."

Recent renovations at the College have not been nearly as sustainable as initially promised. Students protested Palmer Renovations in Fall 2019 for the College falling short of their net-zero emissions goals. In Fall 2022, the CC Climate Collective cited the failures of Palmer Renovations to urge the College to prioritize its sustainability goals for upcoming Cro Renovations. Ilan Listgarten '25 wrote, "Either the College will act consistently with its values and its commitments and take a big step toward meeting its 2030 net-zero pledge, or it will set a harmful precedent for campus development for years to come." The College has consistently fallen short in addressing two of the most pressing topics of our generation – racial and environmental justice.

Mission statements and core values are important to an institution as they provide a moral framework through which the College operates. Therefore, it is vital for these statements to not only accurately reflect the College's current goals but also for the College to take real action to achieve them.
The Rhetoric of Resignation and Resistance

DAVID SCHULMAN
Arts Editor

Rhetoric holds immense power during times of turmoil. Following Dean of Institutional Equity and Inclusion Rodmon King’s resignation on Monday, Feb. 6, students’ email inboxes have been flooded with messages from Katherine Bergeron, the Board of Trustees (BOT), and academic departments. King resigned after Bergeron ignored his advice not to host a fundraising event at a social club in Florida with a history of racism and antisemitism. While that was the exigence for his resignation, King has made it clear that he resigned to protest against the “toxic administrative culture” that exists at Conn. In her three emails, Bergeron purposefully used rhetoric to avoid accountability for cultivating this environment.

Bergeron’s first email came out on Feb. 7 at 7:25 p.m. She claims, “I was saddened and shocked to hear this news [of Dean King’s immediate resignation].” In expressing these emotions, Bergeron establishes herself as a passive reactor to the situation rather than the active participant that she was. How could she be “shocked” to receive the news when countless staff members and administrators have attested to the “toxic” work environment she has fostered throughout her presidency? Bergeron goes on to call King a “valued colleague and thoughtful contributor.” This directly contrasts King’s letter to the Debo Adegbile ’91 and Karen Quint ’87 (the Chair and Vice Chair of the BOT), in which he notes the “culture of fear and intimidation” that made him and his colleagues afraid to speak up and “trigger Katherine’s anger.” Bergeron then defends the College’s commitment to DEI. She concludes by offering resources for those who need help “processing this news,” including a whopping total of four open office hours with Bergeron herself. This first email completely fails to mention any reason behind King’s sudden resignation and does not even come close to an apology or evidence of self accountability.

After an uproar of anger from students and faculty, Bergeron sent out a second email on Wednesday, Feb. 8 at 1:07 p.m. She recognizes that the news has caused “shock, anger, and grief” and writes, “I want to express again my sorrow at his sudden departure.” Again, Bergeron paints herself as oblivious to the fact that she was the main reason why King resigned. King sent his letter of resignation directly to Bergeron, so she has no reason to be unaware. Bergeron states, “Full participation is a core value at Conn, which is why I regret our decision to schedule an event at a location whose history and reputation suggest otherwise.” Note the shift from “I” to “our.” Who actually made the decision? The general “our” is misleading and attempts to shift the blame away from Bergeron. “We made that decision believing that our values were clear. But the decision to proceed came across differently, and we recognize now that we were wrong,” she continues. Again, who is included in the “we”? The email is only signed by Bergeron.

Evidently, Bergeron asked King and his colleagues to contribute to the College’s statement in defense of the choice of the Everglades Club in preparation for public criticism. She prioritized money over the humanity of Black and Jewish people, hoping a mere statement would cancel out the immorality of her decision. When she writes that “the decision to proceed [with the event]” (not “my decision”) “came across differently,” she once again uses passive language and implies that there was nothing inherently wrong with her choice; it was the reaction that was unwarranted. Why does Bergeron only recognize now that she and the unknown people included in the “we” were wrong? King warned her to cancel the event as soon as he was aware of it. Was his expertise as Dean of Institutional Equity and Inclusion not valued? Bergeron comes closest to an actual apology when she writes, “I want to apologize to all who saw our plans as contrary to Conn’s values or to the inclusive institution we aspire to be.” Wanting to apologize is not the same as apologizing. The phrase “all who saw” places the blame on the Conn. community for interpreting her decision as discriminatory rather than her taking ownership of her mistake. Whether intentional or not, “the inclusive institution we aspire to be” suggests that we are not currently an inclusive institution. This is arguably true.

The President’s formulated narrative persisted on Feb. 16 at 5 p.m. when Bergeron sent an email to all Conn parents/guardians. She once again refers to King’s “sudden departure” as if she was completely uninvolved and unaware. Bergeron states, “[T]he resignation was, in part, a protest of a scheduled fundraising event at a club in Florida that has been associated with discriminatory policies and practices. The resignation also raised questions about the College’s commitment to equity, inclusion, and full participation, and about my leadership.” By writing “the resignation” and not “King’s/his resignation,” Bergeron is unclear and depersonalizes the situation. She passively refers to “a scheduled fundraising event” without owning up to the fact that she was the one who scheduled it. Finally, Bergeron acknowledges the issue of her leadership, but she does it in a defensive way, immediately moving on and saying she canceled the event. Ironically, she cites her past emails as evidence of her “leadership.”

Then, Bergeron spins the situation and focuses on the recent student activism. She claims that she shares our commitment to make Conn “a place where all people thrive and experience a sense of belonging.” Her actions say otherwise.

“As your students work through the issues in their own ways, I wanted to write to you today to let you know that the wellbeing of your student is our highest priority,” Bergeron writes. This statement blames the students for seeing issues and does not acknowledge Bergeron/administration’s role. Bergeron once again lists the resources available for students to deal with the vague “issues” to which she refers.

She finishes the email, “One of the hallmarks of a liberal arts education is the ability to grapple with complexity in the pursuit of knowledge, truth, and justice.” If we did not have prior reason to believe that Bergeron prioritizes finance and the College’s appearance at the expense of people’s humanity, this sentence is proof. Everything always comes down to our college slogans. Was Bergeron’s racist and antisemitic decision a mere “complexity” that we must “grapple with” in order to “put the liberal arts into action”?

Courtesy of Connecticut College
“Crises that are not of our own making”

Faculty Condemn Board of Trustees and Bergeron

Zoe Dubelier
Layout Editor

Letter from the Board of Trustees:

Following the release of many faculty letters and two messages from President Bergeron, the Board of Trustees sent a letter to the campus community. The letter written by Chair, Debo Adegbile '91, reads, “Like President Bergeron, we acknowledge that the decision of the College to schedule a fundraising event at a venue that has been associated with discriminatory policies and practices was a mistake, inconsistent with our College's commitment to equity and inclusion, which is why the event was canceled.” After explaining the Board’s commitment to “full participation,” the letter describes what action the Board intends to take in response to Dean King's resignation. This includes funding a review of DIEI programming and practices, which will be followed by creating a plan of action to implement changes, hosting meetings with students, faculty, staff, and alums, and a restructuring of the upcoming Board meeting on Feb. 24 to address these new issues.

Letter from the Faculty to the Board of Trustees:

Over the course of the last week the faculty has met and a group of about a dozen faculty members drafted a letter to the Board of Trustees. This letter was not written by the faculty as a whole, so it was sent out to individual faculty members to sign. Normally the faculty would draft and vote on a letter collectively, but because of the urgent nature of this matter the group wanted to take action immediately. 162 of the roughly 233 faculty members (70%) have signed on to the letter, 51 of which signed anonymously.

On Feb. 14, The College Voice was given access to the letter from the faculty to the Board of Trustees. In this letter, the faculty expressed their indignation with the Board of Trustees letter mentioned above. The letter first addresses the hiring of a team to review DIEI programming:

“Hiring a team of consultants strikes us as a classic media relations move to deflect attention from the core issues by essentially postponing any actionable commitment to change and relying instead on a corporate PR strategy aimed at ‘reputation rehabilitation.’” The letter goes on to note that the Board of Trustees completely failed to recognize the issues “at the heart of the current crisis,” antisemitism and racism. The group of faculty states that faculty, staff, and students should be the group providing recommendations to the Board rather than an outside firm.

The letter continues with a strong critique of how the College has dealt with crises over the last few years. Writing, “Year after year under the current administration, the college community seems to begin and end each semester managing crises of various sorts. Crises that are not of our own making. Crises that could have been averted through meaningful and respectful dialogue which could produce real steps toward change. Crises that sap our energy, take us away from the real work of the college, our engagement in teaching and mentoring students, and away from the things that help develop our professional standing and reputation.” Again, the faculty group follows this statement with a call for a change in how the College will go about reviewing DIEI.

The faculty group then outlines eight expectations for the response to Dean King’s resignation.

1. Increase staffing budget and benefits and support for DIEI.
2. Fill the Dean of DIEI position with a tenured faculty member.
3. Hold an open forum with the campus community on Feb. 24.
4. Announce a search for a new president “now.”
5. Conduct a presidential search that includes faculty, staff, and students.
6. Change the process of presidential review to include faculty, staff, and students.
7. Increase transparency of the College's budget from the last ten years.
8. Create space for faculty and staff to be represented on the Board of Trustees.

The letter ends with a simple question to the Board of Trustees: “Does President Bergeron have the continued confidence and support of the Board of Trustees?”

Why are only some professors signing the letter?

The answer to this question is twofold. Some professors may disagree with the content of the letter, however, others place their job at risk by signing this letter. The level of risk a professor faces is determined by their tenure status. Tenure is a position held by professors who have been at the College for many years, have extensive published research, have gone through a process of review of their teaching performance, and have been recommended by several senior members of the faculty. Following a professor’s tenure appointment that professor gains significant job security and academic freedom, which would include minimal repercussions for signing the letter above.

In contrast, visiting, assistant, and tenure track professors do not have the same job security and academic freedom as tenure professors. As such, signing a letter like the one sent to the Board of Trustees, could put these professors’ jobs at risk. With this in mind, some non-tenure professors chose to sign the letter with their names and others anonymously.

What is a vote of no confidence?

There have been many rumors around campus about the faculty holding a vote of no confidence. Although The College Voice is unable to confirm whether the faculty will hold this type of vote, here is a brief explanation of what it is and what it would do. A vote of no confidence is a formal vote to indicate a lack of support for the current president. There is no formal procedure for a vote of no confidence outlined in the faculty handbook, but it is covered as a basic function of a parliamentary system. Although the Board is the only body that can fire a president, a vote of no confidence is a way to relay faculty feelings about the president to the Board. If the vote passes, the faculty shows a powerful unified front against the president that would be difficult for the Board to ignore. However, if the vote does not pass, the faculty would demonstrate an inability to unify on a single message and if the current president remains in power this puts some faculty members at risk. In recent history, the only example of something close to a vote of confidence was a petition signed by faculty members demanding the resignation of Claire Gaudiani in the spring of 2000. A College Voice article from May 8, 2000 noted that the petition was circulated to tenured faculty and “received nearly unanimous support.” However, despite calls for resignation from the faculty, the Board of Trustees stood behind Gaudiani and she maintained her position as president until her resignation in October of 2000.

See the full letter on thecollegevoice.org •
Protest and Partisanship: What Stop WOKE Spells for Free Speech

Caroline Snyder
Staff Writer

To live in the United States in 2023 is to be well familiar with partisan politics, regardless of where one might find themselves on the political spectrum. In the post-Trump era, where it is all too common to hear reports of far-right politicians and conspiracy theorists (or, often, individuals who fall within both categories) pushing often-outlandish ideas and legislation, it is perhaps not shocking that the facets of education bound to help form young peoples’ opinions and political ideas have come under fire. Enter: the stop WOKE act.

Though Florida may be known as the “Sunshine State,” the implications of this 2022 bill do nothing except dim the potential for students to understand the often-dark past of the ground they stand on. Passed by the Florida State legislature with the support of the state’s controversial governor, Ron DeSantis, the bill has a variety of alarming implications that stretch far beyond the state itself. First and foremost, the mere title of the bill— an acronym standing for “Wrong to our Kids and Employees,“ insinuates the idea that it is wrong to teach and understand history and concepts in ways other than those proposed by those in power— a very dangerous assertion.

While not every single facet of the bill is outlandish, much of the language within it has serious potential to do harm. A pamphlet released by the governor’s office on the act directly mentions the idea that concepts such as implicit bias, examining the origins of traditionally American virtues and values and questioning their origins in regards to race or sex, and the idea of privilege based on those things are to be considered “indoctrination—“ when, in reality, many of them are simply factual, or, at the very least, worth examining and allowing people to think through. If those things are not taught, there is no opportunity to think through them, and thus no chance to understand them. Unfortunately, though this may be the first bill of its kind in the nation, the ideas within it are not unpopular— meaning more bills like it may very well follow. Though I do not have the space nor the skill to put into words every single nuance of the bill or why its contents are so harmful, I do invite you to think beyond the ideas prohibited by this bill and examine more broadly the idea of censorship in education. It is, undoubtedly, a very slippery slope— and students have the right to be able to think and understand different perspectives on ideas that bills like this attempt to censor. With no ability to learn something— even something one may not agree with— how is one supposed to understand or form a nuanced understanding and opinion of anything? Ideas should be accessible, and ideas should be available. Being in power should mean serving the people, and limiting what they are allowed to know and be exposed to is doing them nothing if not a disservice. Regardless of where your opinion may fall on any given matter, you could not have formed that opinion without some sort of education that made it feasible in your mind. Even the most poorly-formed opinions do not come out of thin air– which is why there will be no prevention of the forming of one. If students are not exposed to all possible sides or perspectives, they will simply form their opinions off of their limited knowledge. While this may unfortunately be the goal of those behind this legislation, it should not be. They should aim for what is best for those they lead, and censorship is not that. It is impossible to live at Conn right now without at least some knowledge of the resignation of Dean Rodmond King, the actions of Katherine Bergeron allegedly behind said resignation, and the immense and expansive work of student voices and coalitions to advocate for and enact institutional change as a result. There are many fantastic articles and resources available that are far beyond what I could provide on that for anyone looking to find out more (which I encourage you to do), but it has certainly shed light on the importance of information. If one were only to read the emails sent by Katherine Bergeron and the Board of Trustees on the current situation, they would get a far different and more limited perspective on why Dean King felt it necessary to resign and why students are as angry and desirous of change as they are than if they were to also have access to and engage with sources such as local news articles, firsthand accounts from students, and King’s letter to the Board of Trustees— all of which provide much more context and nuance to the situation. Access to information and the ability to learn are paramount to ensuring well-rounded learners with nuanced opinions and ideas— and thus, to progress. No one in power should limit this. •

The Defy Boundaries Campaign Claims that Camels Do, but Manwaring is Not Doing Anything for the Community.

Ana Smiler Ostrovsky
Contributor

As I near the end of my four years at Connecticut College I have observed a predictable pattern when incidents occur. Something happens of campus concern, the administration responds with a virtue signaling email, SGA hosts hearings and Q & As, we get lofty unkept promises of policy changes, long overdue maintenance solutions, band-aid solutions, or straight up implementation of police surveillance.

The administrative pattern under Katherine Bergeron’s leadership has been talking a big game. However, what is achieved is not reflective of her stated values or priorities. A pivotal example of this is the College’s priority of community engagement and experiential learning. Last year, our hilltop college decided to collaborate in a new big game. However, what is achieved is not reflective of her stated values or priorities. A pivotal example of this is the College’s priority of community engagement and experiential learning. Last year, our hilltop college decided to collaborate in a new

Having more Conn students spending time downtown has been long overdue. As reported in the Day on June 4, 2022, the city has been waiting for the college to be more present in the community. Students living downtown expands upon the City’s vision of revitalization: more people participating in the local economy. The possibility is great, but the question is how Conn students are inhabiting the space.

The College’s stated goals of experiential learning, local engagement, equity, inclusion and anti-racism should be reflected in this new living opportunity. We must be intentional about who represents the college living downtown. To achieve this I argue that the Manwaring Building should be implemented as specialty housing through the Holleran Center.

This year, REAL had one goal: renovating and filling the Manwaring building. This meant little to no intentionality around who would live in downtown New London, nor supportive programming around how to be an attentive, ethical, engaged community member and neighbor. The result is 62 students in a cloistered college building right in the middle of downtown. Important to note is this building was formerly the only brick and mortar location of Black-owned and operated organization CultureAF until they were finally forced to leave after ramped landlord neglect and raises in rent. Histories of urban renewal in New London add to an intervention—

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Article continued on page 13.
The Defy Boundaries Campaign Claims that Camels Do, but Manwaring is Not Doing Anything for the Community.

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Article continued from page 12.

The Holleran Center, among other programs such as the Sprout Garden, have strived to bridge this gap between students and the New London community, with success in recent years with programs such as Civic Leaders and collaborative partnerships with the New London Homeless Hospitality Center.

The Holleran Center’s mission is:

- to cultivate responsible civic engagement and leadership for social justice through engaged scholarship and reciprocal community collaborations.

Reciprocal community collaborations involve intentional, meaningful connections and partnerships that go both ways, beyond the surface level. Reciprocity and engaged scholarship cannot mean acting from savior assumptions of what the community needs, but rather fostering intentional relationships with community members. Responsible civic engagement and leadership for social justice means collaborating with community members to solve problems, to co-create sustainable systems that tackle challenges within the community by the community, rather than outside entities inserting external band-aid solutions. Having Connecticut College students living downtown but not engaging intentionally within the community is completely antithetical to this mission.

The College website clearly states:

The Manwaring Building project will help the College meet immediate student housing needs prompted by the largest incoming class in Conn’s history; offer a new dimension to student life; provide expanded opportunities for community engagement and academic programming downtown; strengthen Conn’s relationship with its host city; and contribute to the economic revitalization of New London’s historic center.

The goals of the Manwaring include a commitment to community engagement. Without any follow through of actions that uphold, live out or reflect said goal, Manwaring follows the performative pattern of Katherine Bergeron’s presidency. Why state such priorities if intentional programming is not present to reflect them?

One of the priorities of the College’s Institutional Equity and Inclusion Action Plan similarly reflects this lofty promise of engagement around campus life and the student experience. This priority states:

Connecticut College promotes experiential learning to help students develop the necessary skills for life beyond graduation. Through experiential learning, students can build solid foundations in identity development, cultural competence, and social justice awareness—foundations that will, ultimately, prepare them for their lives as leaders within their professions and as responsible members of their various communities. This plan prioritizes the enhancement of campus life and the student experience to maximize learning and improve the climate.

These words must be followed by action. Students and New London residents alike deserve more than empty promises and some woke performance of values. Making something a priority means that it is important to the community and requires active attention, effort and funding. Manwaring has the opportunity to present actual metrics for tangible steps of how the college can reflect our stated priorities. As it stands however, Manwaring is just a performance — value signaling of community engagement at best.

Experiential learning means learning by doing. Living in downtown New London provides students a tangible landscape for learning cultural competency in real time. Proximity is not enough to develop an intimate understanding of social justice, however. By having no intentionality around which students are granted off campus housing in Manwaring, the College is minimizing the possible learning potential of this experience. Students who are committed to social justice oriented community engagement should be who live off-campus. Students should enter this city dynamic with at least an entry level understanding of social justice issues so they are able to more fully and respectfully live out the College’s stated values of honor and equity.

Civic engagement and leadership for social justice should be doable.

Why not make the Manwaring community engagement speciality housing? We have Earth House on campus where students have to apply through the Office of Sustainability to live there. Let’s create a similar model through the Holleran Center for off campus living. Plant was an attempt at community engagement housing in the past, but this hasn’t been realized since my first year in 2019 – a model highly reliant on student REAL staffers.

Students who work with the Holleran Center either in PICA or as volunteers are more adequately prepared to live in New London. This is not to mention what a great service living downtown would do for these students’ experiential learning. Imagine being able to walk to your community placement, living as neighbors with the folks you are volunteering with, running into them at the grocery store, or learning in real time the struggles of unhoused neighbors. Manwaring provides the perfect stage for a living and learning experience; why aren’t we pushing this to its fullest potential?

The Connecticut College community is a size fit to make this happen. We could be a role model for how to integrate a student population into the local community. There is so much possibility in this new off-campus venture to actually live out our stated values of Honor, Diversity Equity and Inclusion, and local/global engagement. So let’s do it Camels.
Seven people are sitting around a table in Abbey. It's 9:35, Wednesday night, April 31. Sheila Gallagher puffs on a Merit, smiling often as she shuffles through documents. Richard Greenwald, in a button down, blue oxford shirt, sits, rocking his chair on his hind legs, amazed and excited that it’s going to. Trying to keep up with the conversation, his pen racing across a yellow legal-sized pad, Dan Besse writes down the statement, making light of the group's seriousness. Bass Ale in one hand, a pack of Marlboro 25's in the other, Jed Allerd, Doesn’t want to mince words, “Don't dilute it”, he says. Christine Owens looks down and nods, “we’re running out of time, let’s do it.” Sipping apple juice and making jokes, Reed Thompson worries, “Can we get another padlock? Do you have one?” – Reporter's Notebook.

After eighteen and a half hours, a group of 54 concerned majority and minority students unlocked the doors of Fanning Hall. Their occupation began at 4:55 A.M. Thursday May 1, and ended at 11:15 P.M. when the Administration's Senior Staff and protestors jointly signed a statement, outlining steps to improve minority life at Connecticut College. The protest was peaceful from beginning to end.

“We are fifty-four diehards who are not trying to get attention, but an adequate response,” senior Richard Greenwald said.

The students demanded that the Administration create: an affirmative action plan; sensitivity training for the staff; development of an Afro-American/Black African studies major; increase in the minority enrollment to 15% by the class of 1991; increase in minority faculty; a resolution of the questions “concerning the directorship of the Office of Minority Student Affairs”; improvements to Unity House; and at the resolution of the protest, immunity from prosecution for all the protesters.

“I don’t think the demands are radical- they can be met with goodwill and hard work,” said Bruce Kirmmse, associate professor of history.

“I think the minorities are pampered beyond reason. The Administration has been preoccupied with the minorities in exclusion of other concerns,” said William Frasure, associate professor of government.

The protest was sparked by a twenty-seven page “Statement of Expression”, submitted to President Oakes Ames by UMOJA, prior to spring break. The report explained what it is like to be a minority student at Conn, and outlined ways in which the College could improve minority life. The suggestions made in the report later became the demands of the protestors.

The day after spring break, Ames replied with a three-page letter, sketching the steps already taken by the College to meet the needs of minority students. Sheila Gallagher, Vice President of SOAR, called the letter, “superficial and inadequate”. She complained that the letter focused on past achievements rather than future goals.

“The protest is the students’ attempt to reach the Administration. President Ames got our reports and heard our concerns, but failed to respond in a meaningful way. We have no place to go. This protest is our last stand,” said Frank Tuit, 1985-1986 president of UMOJA.

“Students have been patronized. The Administration had been saying things just to keep us content. The protest will lead to action (on the Administration’s part),” said David Flemister, 1986-1987 vice president of S.G.A.

“I wish they had publicized the issue. All that I know and have heard has come from the protestors at the window. I realize something has to be changed,” Freshman David Flemister, 1986-1987 vice president of S.G.A.

After a lengthy negotiation process, including a total of three revisions and several concessions, the students at last found the proposal worthy of negotiation. At that time they invited eight members of the Senior Staff into Fanning to iron out the details with twelve of the protesting students. Verbal agreements were then placed into written form and submitted to all of the protestors for approval. The “Statement By Concerned Students and Senior Staff” was signed by Ames and the protestors.

The four spokespersons for the protest, Sheila Gallagher, Richard Greenwald, Erik Rosado, and Frank Tuit, all agreed that the greatest achievement of the protest was the adoption of an affirmative action policy to be implemented by December 31, 1986.

“We are happy. Both the students and the Administration have the same goals in mind. We can now leave (Fanning), because we are satisfied and have the Administration’s respect,” said Tuit.

Throughout the day the protestors said, “We have the power to fight for our freedom”. By the end of the negotiations, the students proved that this was true.

The joint statement which ended the occupation comprised: an affirmative action policy; implementation of sensitivity workshops; a minor in African-American and Black African studies by 1988 (a total of five courses); a conference of Black and Hispanic scholars to be held at Connecticut College; increasing minority enrollment of each class entering by 2% every two years; increase in the 1987-1988 budget for Unity House by 5% over the previous year; renovations of Unity House will be top priority of the Director of Unity House; implementation of an affirmative action policy to be implemented by December 31, 1986.
The Athletic Department Reacts to Dean King’s Resignation

Hannah Foley
Sports Editor

The aftermath of Rodmon King’s resignation from his role as Dean of Institutional Equity and Inclusion has had an impact on all walks of life on Connecticut College’s campus. The Athletics Department is no different. Though Conn may not be known for its sports in the way some other NESCAC schools are, the athletics experience is a vital part of the college experience for most student-athletes, whether they be sailors, basketball players, soccer players, and so on. The sports teams are also central to the social life and culture of the campus, especially given the College’s lack of Greek Life. Leading up to this week’s publication, in light of Dean King’s resignation, The College Voice Sports Section felt it important to connect with key figures in the Athletics Department, including directors, coaches, trainers, and student-athletes to hear their thoughts on everything that has transpired recently. The tone of their responses was largely somber and frustrated with the events and culture that led to Dean King’s resignation, and expressed a strong desire to take action and create change.

Though we could put fluff around these statements, we’ve decided they speak the loudest while standing alone. Different questions have been asked to different people and others were just asked to comment on their reactions. If the context of a question was necessary to understand the quote it has been included in italics about the answer.

MO WHITE, Director of Athletics:
We reached out to Mo White for comment but due to an unforeseen family emergency, she was unable to comment before our print deadline. Her comment will be included in a future edition.

JACKIE SMITH, NCAA Representative for Diversity & Inclusion, Faculty Sponsor for AOCC, Head Women’s Basketball Coach:

What was your reaction to the fundraising event at the Everglades Club, the resignation of Dean King, and the student response to the lack of DEI support on campus?

After learning of Dean King’s resignation, I immediately thought about the student-athletes that I have the opportunity to work with in my role as ADID. I then got just a wave of overwhelming sadness. He was an amazing partner in the work I am trying to do within the department, with our Athletes of Color Coalition, and the NESCAC as a whole as our ADID. I loved his approach to mentorship and collaboration with our athletics department. He was helping me create a framework for a DEI and Leadership training program that was based in inclusive dialogue and focused on strong foundational work with long-term objectives and goals. I am really upset that we have another hurdle to jump over in order to implement this program and so I understand, empathize, and support the student’s response at this moment.

What DEI supports are available within the Athletic Department?

Within the Athletic Department, we have myself as the ADID as well as our Title IX Coordinator and we both provide DEI support to students and coaches. Head Coaches are also encouraged to engage with their teams/athletes to support the ongoing dialogue of current and future needs to support our student-athletes. Administrators and our DEI representatives are engaged with our AOCC (Athletes of Color Coalition) to support the ongoing dialogue of current and future needs to support our student-athletes. As previously mentioned, our department was actively working with Dean King to build out a DEI and Leadership training program framework for athletics.

Do you support Camel athletes who choose to participate in protests that may be occurring in the coming weeks?

I completely agree with the Connecticut College Athletics Department in their full support of the rights of students to engage in peaceful protests.

ANALISSE RIOS ’08, Director of Sports Performance: “As a Connecticut College alum, hearing about Dr. Rodmon King’s resignation and the reasons behind it, proved to be quite disheartening and frustrating. I stand in solidarity with Dean King and applaud him for taking action to incite change on our campus. Our campus community needs change, and has needed change for quite some time. Dean King is using his voice for the betterment of Connecticut College, and therefore, as alums, it’s time we do the same to support the students and faculty demanding change.”

MIA SANTANA ’20, Assistant Women’s Soccer Coach: “As a Connecticut College alum, fairly new staff member, and native of the New London community, it was very upsetting to hear about Dean Rodmon King’s recent resignation. While I only met and spoke with him a few times, I always felt moved by his knowledge, his passion and want for change. This time is no different and I, therefore, stand in solidarity with Dean King’s act of protest and act for change. His actions must not be ignored and I fully support the student and faculty’s demands for change on campus.”

We are still awaiting a response from the Athletes of Color Coalition, Student Athletic Advisory Committee, and Deputy Title IX for Athletics, Eva Kovach. We sincerely thank those who responded to our request for comment on these issues. Athletics is not simply about playing a sport, they are about cultivating a community and growing together, so the environment that we play in has a huge role in that.

Going forward, if any student, staff, or faculty member would like to contribute something to the sports sections, or any other section in The College Voice, please do not hesitate to reach out to thecollegevoice@conncoll.edu.
**Spring Sports Preview**

**Kevin Lieue**

As the days fly by, the arrival of the spring sports season is nearly upon us. As such, The College Voice has interviewed captains and members of each team to bring together an in-depth preview of the coming spring season.

While this preview may seem trivial in light of more important matters currently happening on campus, we wanted to give all of the College's spring sports teams a spotlight ahead of their upcoming seasons. Many members of the College's teams are involved and plan to help the student movement by participating in protests. For example, the women's water polo team, who "worked with Dean King in the fall and felt really supported by him in campus culture were definitely disappointed by his resignation and frustrated with Conn's administration."

**Women's Lacrosse**

After last season, in which the Camels won their first NESCAC match since 2016, the women's lacrosse team has doubled down their efforts to continue improving. With only three seniors having graduated from last spring's team, there is no shortage of experience on the roster. Among those returning include IWLCA All-Region first-team junior goalkeeper Violette Nidds and All-Region second-team midfielder sophomore Aine Downey. The team is further strengthened by the addition of six first-years. The team will play their season opener at home against Keene State on March 4.

**Men's Lacrosse**

Coming off their first appearance in the NESCAC tournament since 2018, expectations are high for the Camels to continue improving. "Our team's expectations for this season is to continue to build and improve from last season," said senior co-captain Sean Fox. "What that means specifically is...to win games in the NESCAC Tournament and then qualify for the NCAA Men's Division III Lacrosse Tournament." Though the Camels have graduated ten seniors from last season, leading scorer Jared Rainville and All-NESCAC defenseman Jack Venturelli return and headline a team bolstered by the addition of nineteen first-year players. "Like any team, the senior class was a key part of our success last year," said co-captain senior Brandon Allen. "[But] any given year anyone on the roster is given an opportunity to compete for a starting job." The Camels will begin their season against Endicott College on March 4.

**Women's Outdoor Track and Field**

Whilst still in the midst of their winter indoor season, the women's track and field program is excited for the spring season ahead. "Our team is very close and we hope to keep up the general friendship across the team," said senior captain Julia Curran. "We hope to have as many people as possible qualify for the [spring] NESCAC and New England championships." Though the team graduated 11 seniors last spring, the new runners have settled in nicely. "We have an incredible freshmen class who has brought a ton of talent during both cross-country and indoor," said Curran. "The returners have been doing just as well and we hope to carry this momentum into the spring." Of the new Camels, many are expected to immediately score points in the spring: "In particular, first-year's Alexa Estes, Grace McDonough, Abby Fernald, Liz Freeman, Alsacia Timmerman, and junior Edin Sisson, who is new to the team," said Curran. The Camels open their outdoor season as a full team at the Tufts Invitational on April 1.

**Men's Outdoor Track and Field**

Coming off a 24th-place finish at the D3 Cross-Country National Championships in the fall, the men's track and field program has worked to keep the momentum going through the winter. "Making nationals for the first time in twenty years was amazing," said senior captain Chris Verstandig. "We've had a lot of big PRs [personal records] in the winter and hopefully we continue to improve." The Camels' main focus is on the postseason. "We hope to qualify as many people as we can for the postseason meets and we look forward to hosting the NESCAC Championships at our track," said Verstandig. A large group of seventeen freshmen has joined the Camels this year and first-years Luke Alban, Anders Larson, and Johnathan Norton have scored many points in the winter. "Hopefully Johnathan Norton will score some points for the steeple [steeplechase] crew in the spring," said Verstandig. The Camels will begin their outdoor season as a full team at the Tufts Invitational on April 1.

**Women's Rowing**

With the completion of the College's Waterfront Revitalization Project, the women's rowing team is once again able to practice using the College's waterfront for the spring season ahead. "We are especially excited about our new docks and waterfront," said junior captain Annabelle Tanger. Coming off a fall season highlighted by an eighth-place finish at the Wormtown Chase, the Camels hope to "improve [their] endurance and speed" in the coming season. The team is bolstered by the return of many women who studied abroad in the fall. "We are excited to have them back and know they will contribute to the success of our program," said Tanger. The Camels hope to perform well at the New England Rowing Championship and begin their spring season at Clark University on April 8.

**Men's Rowing**

Following an impressive spring season in which the men's rowing team placed third at the New England Championship Regatta, the Camels endured a difficult fall season. However, the focus has already shifted to upcoming competitions in the spring. "Our men's rowing team will be competing in postseason competition at the National Intercollegiate Rowing Championship (NIRC) on May 12th in Worcester," said Head Coach Ric Ricci. "The team has not competed in the eight and four-oared events at that Regatta since 2005." Given the importance of the competition, the Camels focus is clear. "The team goal for the men's rowing team is to peak at the NIRC," said Ricci. The Camels open their spring season at Clark University on April 8.

**Co-ed and Women's Sailing**

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*Article continued on page 17.*
As the days fly by, the arrival of the spring sports season is nearly upon us. As such, The College Voice has interviewed captains and members of each team to bring together an in-depth preview of the coming spring season.

While this preview may seem trivial in light of more important matters currently happening on campus, we wanted to give all of the College’s spring sports teams a spotlight ahead of their upcoming seasons. Many members of the College’s teams are involved and plan to help the student movement by participating in protests. For example, the women’s water polo team, who “worked with Dean King in the fall and felt really supported by him in campus culture were definitely disappointed by his resignation and frustrated with Conn’s administration.”

### Women’s Lacrosse

After last season, in which the Camels won their first NESCAC match since 2016, the women’s lacrosse team has doubled down their efforts to continue improving. With only three seniors having graduated from last spring’s team, there is no shortage of experience on the roster. Among those returning include IWLCA All-Region first-team junior goalie Violette Nidds and All-Region second-team midfielder sophomore Aine Downey. The team is further strengthened by the addition of six first-years. The team will play their season opener at home against Keene State on March 4.

### Men’s Lacrosse

Coming off their first appearance in the NESCAC tournament since 2018, expectations are high for the Camels to continue improving. “Our team’s expectations for this season is to continue to build and improve from last season,” said senior co-captain Sean Fox. “What that means specifically is...to win games in the NESCAC Tournament and then qualify for the NCAA Men’s Division III Lacrosse Tournament.” Though the Camels have graduated ten seniors from last season, leading scorer Jared Rainville and All-NESCAC defenseman Jack Venturelli return and headline a team bolstered by the addition of nineteen first-year players. “Like any team, the senior class was a key part of our success last year,” said co-captain senior Brandon Allen. “[But] any given year anyone on the roster is given an opportunity to compete for a starting job.” The Camels will begin their season on the road against Endicott College on March 4.

### Women’s Outdoor Track and Field

Whilst still in the midst of their winter indoor season, the women’s track and field program is excited for the spring outdoor season ahead. “Our team is very close and we hope to keep up the general friendship across the team,” said senior captain Julia Curran. “We hope to have as many people as possible qualify for the [spring] NESCAC and New England championships.” Though the team graduated 11 seniors last spring, the new runners have settled in nicely. “We have an incredible freshmen class who has brought a ton of talent during both cross-country and indoor,” said Curran. “The returners have been doing just as well and we hope to carry this momentum into the spring.” Of the new Camels, many are expected to immediately score points in the spring: “In particular, first-year’s Alexa Estes, Grace McDonough, Abby Fernald, Liz Freeman, Alsacia Timmerman, and junior Edin Sisson, who is new to the team,” said Curran. The Camels open their outdoor season as a full team at the Tufts Invitational on April 1.

### Men’s Outdoor Track and Field

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**Sports Spotlight**

**Featured Team: Men's Swim and Dive**

Congratulations to Justin Finkel, Julien Legros, Kai Listgarten, Tadeusz Trzewik-Quinn, and the entirety of the Men's Swim and Dive team for their preformances at the NESCAC Championship!

**Upcoming Events:**
- 3/4 3pm @ Endicott College
- 3/7 7pm vs. UMass Boston
- 3/11 12pm vs. Middleburg College
- 3/14 5pm vs. Massachusetts Institute of Technology

**Featured Team: Women's Swim and Dive**

Congratulations to Vaugh Ammon, Tiernan Shea, Anika Svoboda, Kate Edison, Sarah Daly, and the entirety of the Women's Swim and Dive team for their preformances at the NESCAC Championship!

**Upcoming Events:**
- 3/4 1pm vs. Keene State
- 3/8 7pm vs. Smith College
- 3/11 12pm @ Middlebury College
- 3/14 5pm @ United States Merchant Marine Academy

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**Featured Team: Men's Lacrosse**

**Upcoming Events:**
- 3/4 3pm @ Endicott College
- 3/7 7pm vs. UMass Boston
- 3/11 12pm vs. Middleburg College
- 3/14 5pm vs. Massachusetts Institute of Technology

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**Featured Team: Women's Lacrosse**
Instead of Florida, this year the team will be heading to southern Maryland to St. Mary’s College for spring break training camps. The past three years spring break training camps were held at Eckerd College in St. Petersburg, FL. This year’s team is different from those of years past; it includes eleven seniors, many of whom are “fifth-year” seniors. It was a common theme within College Sailing for athletes to take a semester or two hiatus during the 2020-2021 academic year. It was an astounding effort that the College Sailing body was able to host a national championship event given the circumstances. The sport is thankful to have fully returned to pre-COVID ways.

The team has been fortunate to take annual spring break training trips. The past three years spring break training camps were held at Eckerd College in St. Petersburg, FL. Instead of Florida, this year the team will be heading to southern Maryland to St. Mary’s College of Maryland. Camel sailors last trained there in March of 2018. The coaches and sailors alike look forward to this unique time of year, one where the academics are paused and training and team bonding is prioritized. From the 10th-17th of March, the team will be joined alongside training partners Harvard and St. Mary’s. Coach Bresnahan continually expressed his excitement for this week: “these three teams all have very similar players, and I think everyone will get along very well.” It is always beneficial to hone skills training alongside other teams; all have particular strengths. These three programs have consistently placed in the top 20 of the Sailing World Magazine College Sailing national rankings. Harvard is currently ranked first and sixth on the co-ed and women’s national rankings, respectively. It will no doubt be an invaluable experience to practice side-by-side some of the nation’s best!

The Camel Sailing Spring 2023 season will culminate at the annual College Sailing National Championships; held this year at the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy, Kings Point, NY. “Given our roster of experienced seniors, and having made it to two coed finals with this group, we are looking to make a strong run and sail at our highest level,” said Coach Bresnahan. This eleven-day Championship is broken down into three separate Championships: Women’s Fleet Race (May 23-26), Team Race (May 27-29), and Co-ed Fleet Race (May 30-June 2). Friends, family, and fans are cordially welcome to come support; it is the last collegiate event ever for the senior class. Kings Point is less than an hour’s drive from NYC, we hope to see you there!

Below you can find a list of this spring’s home events. A full list of regattas may be found on the camel athletics website: https://camelathletics.com/sports/sailing/schedule.

Let’s Set Sail: The “Sea”son is here!

It is February in New London, which means one thing is for certain—the Connecticut College Varsity Sailing team will shortly begin its long-awaited spring season! There is no time like the present to be a member or supporter of Camel sailing. This past fall, the remarkable re-designing of the College’s waterfront came together before the team’s eyes. This project, which now includes three docks, is highlighted by our very own sailing “Z Dock.” It holds both fleets of standard ICSA one-design sailboats, Z420s, and FJ’s. These are double-handed boats, approximately fourteen feet in length, and are the most commonly utilized dinghy sailboat at the high school and college levels. The dock system, similar to that of most other college sailing counterparts, allows for increased efficiency in running practices and regattas. Let’s look ahead to this season: What exactly is at stake?

Like everyone on campus, the sailing team has been affected by the fallout of Dean King’s resignation and the wave of student activism that followed. The team hasn’t met as a full group to discuss it, but has instead had many formal and informal discussions about Dean King’s resignation. Many team members attended the student-led protest on the evening after the news broke. Head Coach Jeff Bresnahan reached out to the team via email shortly after the news to make himself available for individual or small group meetings with anyone who felt that they wanted.

Coach Jeff Bresnahan, in his thirty-first year at the program’s helm, along with assistant Coach Emilie Blinderman, in her eighth year, have enthusiastically awaited this time of year. Both have had a busy offseason between conference calls, scheduling events, planning practices, meeting with players, recruiting, and more. I sat down with Coach Bresnahan earlier this month to hear some of his thoughts surrounding this season. He remarked, “We are collectively poised to do good things, and ultimately, individuals need to assume their roles and perform when they are called upon.” Many team members have gained valuable experience from sailing on College Sailing’s biggest stages. This season is no different and the team looks to peak at season’s end, come College Sailing Nationals at the US Merchant Marine Academy.

This year’s team is different from those of years past; it includes eleven seniors, many of whom are “fifth-year” seniors. It was a common theme within College Sailing for athletes to take a semester or two hiatus during the 2020-2021 academic year. It was an astounding effort that the College Sailing body was able to host a national championship at that year’s end. The sport is thankful to have fully returned to pre-COVID ways.

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through the showing of a short film, poetry reading, artist panel, and special performance.

“When people ask me, ‘what do you want people to take away from this?’ I say that I want people to think about how to break free of colonized thinking,” Sunday said in her welcome speech. “But also I want to create because I want to see people interact with art. I want to see people connect with my art.”

“Into the Afroverse Vol I” also supplied an artist’s panel and Q&A with Sunday and three featured artists, Ira Revels, Greg Aimé, and AnUrbanNerd, who sat down and took a deep dive into their processes, influences, personal and ancestral history.

“As a young Black male it was never easy for me to envision my future,” said Greg Aimé, a Haitian-American visual artist. “I appreciate and love this space because it’s forward thinking and melanin-centered.”

Ira Revels, Creative Director at Black Tech Futures Media, spoke about her artistic methodology in producing digital prints based on Khosian tribal masks (on display on the second floor of Cummings) and envisioning what it would be like for someone of African diaspora to exist in the past, present and future. AnUrbanNerd, aka Josh, also credited “Harry Potter” for inspiring him to construct “melanated Mandrakes.”

Not only is the “6th Dimension” exhibit a visceral, fantastical homage to the importance of visualizing Black futures, but it also provides a fresh and exciting take on extending and imagining the reach of Black influence in a way that empowers and invigorates other Black creators. The underrepresentation of Blackness in science fiction becomes null and void in this production with a wash of steampunk prints and digitized animation. The interactive nature of many of the pieces allows viewers to physicalize the versatile Black future and take its envisage with them into the real world.

It is a timely exhibition given all that’s transpired with the resignation of Dean Rodmon King in the past two weeks. More than ever, Conn College needs to be showcasing and supporting Black artists, innovators, and entrepreneurs.

Do your part by visiting and absorbing “6th Dimension,” which is on view in the Cummings Art Center until March 9. The “6th Dimension” series continues with the “Quantum Black” performance at the Garde Arts Center at 6:30 p.m. on February 23rd.
Ronald K. Brown’s EVIDENCE Returns to Palmer After 21 years

JOCELYN LEWIS
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CO-EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

For the first time since 2002, Ronald K. Brown’s EVIDENCE dance company returned to Palmer Auditorium on Feb. 10 as part of Conn’s On-Stage performance series. Presenting “The Equality of Night and Day,” the program notes how Brown — founder, artistic director, and award-winning choreographer — “seeks to break open the truth in a world wrought with exploitation, racism, and xenophobia.”

The evening featured the titular dance along with “Open Door” and “Grace,” which were all performed during a successful run at The Joyce Theater in New York City.

The evening began with “Open Door,” a joyous arrangement with an Afro-Latin flair. The musical score included an evocative, gentle piano solo, groovy jazz, and an excerpt from “Afro Latin Jazz Suite” to build layers of rhythm, auditory texture, and an infectiously jovial mood. Multicolored chiffon skirts emphasized the dancers’ swishing legs and polyrhythmic, full-body undulations. The nine dancers exchanged movements and smiles equally, repeating the same choreography but infusing their individuality into each phrase. One such moment was a sequence they each performed as smoothly as silk, whipping their legs around on the floor to a seated position then rapidly pulling their legs back to lie flat on their stomach for a luxurious second of stillness. These instants of pause were breathtaking in contrast to the Afro-Latin energy, with seemingly effortless shoulder shimmies and precise, buoyant footwork. The lighting design complemented this nonchalant athleticism with soft washes of warm tones, from a sunny orange sidelight to a shocking pink to a fiery red that matched two of the dancers’ costumes.

One of Brown’s newest works, “The Equality of Night and Day (TEND),” followed, comparatively more somber in tone. The dance “[examines] the concepts of balance, equity, and fairness in light of the conflicting present-day issues that young people, women, and people of color now face” according to the company website. Dressed in flowing, wide-legged blue pants and matching fluid wrap tops on a dimly lit stage, the artists first danced to the voice of Angela Davis criticizing the treatment and conditions of Black people in America. Fabric banners hung downstage, covering the top third of the stage with projections of protest photos collaged throughout the piece. The narrower aspect ratio both focused attention on the intricate choreography and also reflected the project’s ambitious goal of lifting up the voices of people who will be imprisoned in their lifetime.

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The final piece of the evening’s performance was titled “Grace.” Originally choreographed for the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater in 1999, this bright high-energy piece incorporated Modern and West African movement vocabularies to achieve a powerful yet airy quality. The project felt like a celebration of joy, music, and movement, as the dancers embraced community through joyful group and individual movement. The dancers were often oriented towards each other which helped to build a sense of community on stage. Dancers dressed in red and white popped against the stage design. The upstage black curtains were almost shut, but a rectangle of color shone through, creating a sort of pathway for dancers to enter and exit between. While there was a lot of unison throughout this dance, each dancer was still given a moment to shine, and similarly to the unison movement in the other two pieces, no one’s individuality was compromised by moments of uniformity.

The end of “Grace” culminated in a group bow joined by Professors Shani Collins and Lisa Race who took to the stage with flowers in hand for Brown. Brown had a stroke a year ago but is slowly regaining some mobility. It was inspiring to watch him stand up to take a bow with his company. The bow was followed by a Q&A session where audience members had the opportunity to ask questions to Brown and some of the dancers.

Additionally, the day before the show, Brown and Associate Artistic Director Arcell Cabuag taught a master class open to all students with support from the Dance Department, whose professors have worked closely with Brown over the years. Also attending the class was Conn professor and former company member Shani Collins. Collins first visited Conn while dancing with Brown’s company in 2002. She met Brown in her youth at the American College Dance Festival, and he became one of her first and most influential mentors as a dancer and choreographer. The company’s return to Conn marked a full circle moment and sparked discussions in the department about performing citizenship in times of protest.
Groovin’ with Professor Shani Collins

Professor Shani Collins has been sharing her expertise and passion for dance at Connecticut College since 2009. Her practice and research over the past 14 years has led her to become a wealth of knowledge in many dance forms and disciplines including West African Dance, Modern Dance, Choreography, and Dance History. In particular, Collins’ love for West African dance has led her to create programs where she gets to bring students from Conn to West African countries such as Ghana and Senegal. Last year Collins and her two children spent eight months living, working, and going to school in Accra, Ghana, where they all learned a lot about life, culture, and dance in the country. This experience reaffirmed Collins’ commitment and belief in the importance of bringing Conn students to the continent, and over spring break she is bringing six students to Ghana through Conn's TRIPS program.

Before being able to call Conn’s department home and develop these programs that bring students to West Africa, Professor Collins had an impressive professional performance dance career that took her all over the world. At a young age, Collins began attending the American College Dance Festival in North Carolina where she took classes from artists such as Baba Chuck Davis and Ronald K. Brown, two important teachers, mentors, and choreographers who began sowing the seeds of Collins’ passion for West African Dance from a young age. Collins knew from age 12 that she wanted to work with Brown’s Company – EVIDENCE Dance Company – and even did an internship for the company in high school. Collins did not take West African Dance as a part of her dance training until later in life, but often engaged with the form as a community building practice even as a young dancer.

At age 15 Collins continued her dance training at North Carolina School of the Arts, a conservatory-style high school program that “offers young artists the best of all worlds — focused conservatory arts training combined with top-tier academics.” Primarily studying modern, ballet, and other contemporary dance forms throughout high school, Collins knew that dance would be a part of her collegiate life, but she also valued the breadth of knowledge she would gain at a liberal arts college. Collins attended Hollins University in Roanoke, Virginia where she explored Dance alongside Gender Studies and other academic disciplines. In her senior year at Hollins, Collins was invited to tour with Urban Bush Women, a dance company that “seeks to bring the untold and under-told stories to light through dance.” The company achieves this vision by centering women of the African Diaspora “in order to create a more equitable balance of power in the dance world and beyond.” Collins was drawn to the company’s mission and worked with Urban Bush Women for a couple of years. But Collins’ roots and heart were still with Ronald K. Brown and EVIDENCE Dance Company, so after some time dancing with Urban Bush Women, she left to dance for Ronald K. Brown where she was a company member for eight years.

It was Brown’s company that brought Collins to Connecticut College’s campus for the first time to perform in Palmer Auditorium. During her time with EVIDENCE Collins was able to return to Hollins to complete her Master’s. During her performance career Collins danced as a guest artist for many other companies such as Bill T. Jones/Arnie Zane Dance Company, The National Dance Company of Mozambique, David Dorfman Dance Company, and in Trinidad with the Roots and Wings Movement. It was ultimately Collins’ connection to David Dorfman, another dance professor in the Conn department, that brought her to start teaching dance here at Conn.

For a few years now Professor Collins has been wanting to bring her family to live in Ghana for an extended period of time. “I want to go and I want to live,” she said. Collins has built a relationship with Ashesi University in Ghana and has been teaching West African Dance to students remotely for two semesters. The time difference allowed Collins to foster collaboration between her Conn students and Ashesi students. Collins shared that teaching at Ashesi is very different from Conn, but no matter where she is teaching Collins sees West African Dance as a way to build up confidence in students, especially in young women. Collins and her family learned a lot themselves in their time in Ghana. For one thing, her kids were exposed to African history in a way that they never would have otherwise had access to in American schools. Collins was also struck by the way students at Ashesi University were continuing to learn more about their own histories and cultures through dance.

In the spring Collins will return to Ghana with a cohort of Conn students. The group has been working all semester practicing dances to be performed abroad and learning more about what to expect about culture and life in Ghana. Collins stresses the importance of preparing students for these trips so that they will get as much out of the experience as possible.

Our Dance Department would not be the same without Professor Shani Collins. Collins continues to teach, dance, and make choreographic work, and every experience working with her brings so much personal and community learning. She brings students from every movement and personal background together through her classes, and we are lucky to have a professor as charismatic, talented, and passionate as she is.

Hillel House Hosts Pride Shabbat

On Friday, Feb. 10 at 5:45 p.m., a group of around 50 enthusiastic students gathered in Zachs Hillel House. Ready to share in deep conversations and in a home-cooked dinner, the students walked down to the basement to kick off the event they came for, Connecticut College Hillel House and Gender and Sexuality Program’s Annual Pride Shabbat.

To launch the night, students circled up as event planners Ilan Listgarten ’25, Amelia Greenwald ’25, and Sitara Takyar ’25 spoke about a few guidelines for the affair. They shared that attendees were there to engage with people they might not be used to talking to, hold a safe space with respect on campus, and take a break from everything that was happening on campus in light of the disregard for marginalized communities. The students then split off into small groups to delve into thoughtful conversions based on seven different discussion questions. They were given questions such as: “How can someone be an ally to a community you’re part of?” “What do you think of recent events relating to DIEI on campus and the subsequent student action?” “How has the...
Hillel House Hosts Pride Shabbat

“How has the culture where you were brought up differ from that of Conn?” and “What do you believe people misperceive about your community?” The students shared intimately about identity, labels, unity, respect, independence, feeling safe, and countless other topics, listening and learning from one another.

After their conversations, the assembly of students moved upstairs to enjoy their home-cooked meal. Director of Zachs Hillel House and Rabbi, Susan Schein, gave an introduction before the regular Friday-night service. Then, the Board members of Hillel led Shabbat prayers as they would at any other Shabbat. Finally, attendees and planners alike shared an Ethiopian meal of doro wat, tofu, cabbage, rice, and salad.

Andrew Kupovich ’26 attended the event and shared a few thoughts on the experience.

“This is a really cool event and it’s been really enjoyable,” Kupovich says. “I felt like I should attend this event because I am both Jewish and gay. It was really cool to have conversations, especially in light of what is going on on campus right now, about what allyship looks like, about what community looks like, and about what unity on this campus looks like. [These conversations were exciting], especially with seniors and some older people who have seen this campus change over the course of four years and through COVID-19. Hearing their perspectives on what’s going on now too was a really cool experience. It adds an element of perspective to what Shabbat is normally like.”

Many students shared similar sentiments. The importance of an event on campus to celebrate and bring together two intersecting, marginalized communities on campus does not go unspoken. In light of recent events relating to DIEI on campus, a safe space for these groups to gather, exist together, and have meaningful conversations about their identities was essential.

GSP Lead Fellow and event planner Takyar voiced their feelings about the event as well. “I think it’s important always to acknowledge the intersections that we exist at that we are always affected by,” Takyar said. “Religion & spirituality and queerness tend to have a lot of intersection points whether in a positive way or in a negative way. I think, even in my conversation just now with Rabbi Susan, there’s just something very beautifully communal about this space that in some ways it feels like a found family. People were describing this as a family dinner. It feels like the same structure that in queer community we find and we create. So, for me, it has been beautiful as a purveyor of this event to be able to step into these shoes, to say “Shabbat Shalom,” and to be able to understand people around me a little bit more. To be able to sit next to someone whose beliefs might vary, although we might connect on various, strange axis points, but we understand each other, at least a little bit, because we are in this space together.”

Pride Shabbat has been an annual tradition since 2018. Hillel hosts other similar events year-round that emulate the community and togetherness of this event, but in a different way. Unity Shabbat, sponsored by Hillel and Race and Ethnicity Programs, as well as Multifaith Shabbat, sponsored by Hillel and Religious and Spiritual Programs, are both collaborative events like Pride Shabbat for students to share in their intersecting identities.

Rabbi Susan Schein has enjoyed Pride Shabbat each year it has been held and spoke about its history and importance.

“[Behind the event there was] the idea that there were all these different communities that didn't know each other,” Schein says. “So, we wanted to start reaching out and Pride Shabbat just seemed obvious for several reasons. One reason is because there are people who are Jewish who would benefit from meeting queer people. Another reason is that there are people who are queer who would benefit from feeling welcome in a religious setting even if they are not Jewish. Often, at least in the past, religions did not welcome queer people. So, to let people know that there is a welcoming space, even if it’s not the tradition that they grew up in or the faith that they have, that they don't have to be outsiders. The third reason is that there are Jews who are queer. I think people here feel welcome, whether they know or not that I am a lesbian. Hillel strives to be open and pluralistic. For students who are queer and who are Jewish, they don’t always necessarily think that those identities overlap, but here they do.”

Pride Shabbat was a rousing success that got the ball rolling on open conversations. It celebrated intersecting identities and gave students a safe haven for the night. It allowed students to rest and recharge by taking a break from the chaos on campus and connecting with those around them in a shared space.
As we all know, Dean Rodmon King recently resigned in protest following President Katherine Bergeron’s decision to host an event at the Everglades Club in Florida, a social club with a controversial past and a history of antisemitic and racist behavior. The incident and Bergeron’s email responses have provided “The Hump” with material for many headlines, mainly calling out Bergeron for her poor handling of the situation. Currently, “The Hump” posted a headline that reads, “Kathy B Adds Faculty To Arboretum Hunger Games Tribute Pool.” By referencing the popular book series, “The Hump” called Bergeron out for her refusal to take accountability for her actions.

Currently, “The Hump’s” Instagram bio details a switch in content: “Pivoting to Kathy B content until DIEI is fully funded, vital staff are hired, salaried, and retained, Unity [House] is renovated, and all demands are met.” As many students know, Bergeron’s plan to host a fundraiser at the Everglades Club and King’s resignation are just the tip of the iceberg. Historically, DIEI has been underfunded and its employees underpaid, and the Dean of Institutional Equity and Inclusion has changed multiple times in the past years.

“The Hump” is a unifying force on campus in these trying times. At 680 followers, about 39% of students follow the account. Most days, I see a headline posted on my feed, or on a friend’s story. Many of “The Hump’s” posts have triple digits in likes. The account has become a popular conversation topic on campus, making many people laugh at the silliness of the situations that Conn students face.

As the saying goes, “laughter is the best medicine.” Throughout history, humorous satire has provided people with a space to cope with serious issues and express their beliefs. Saterical publications like The Onion turn current events and social phenomena into funny, over-exaggerated articles. “The Hump” provides a space for students to see their frustrations aired out. I reached out to the account for an interview, but received no response.

Two headlines following the Dean King’s resignation focus on the concept of a “Hunger Games” in the arboretum. On Feb. 9, “The Hump” posted the headline: “Kathy B Announces Hunger Games In Arboretum,” with a caption stating, “Two tributes will be selected at random from each dorm; hopefully their sacrifice will teach the student body to be grateful for the stability of my leadership.” In the comments, students fleshed out their very own “Hunger Games.” “Morrison is District One: luxury. Larabee is District 13: the trenches,” wrote one user. “The Hump” posted a comment saying “The ridges are District 13,” and another user wrote, “Laz is 12 (impoverished but still standing).” After the faculty wrote a letter in support of the students, King, and the Division of Institutional Equity and Inclusion, “The Hump” posted a headline that reads, “Kathy B Adds Faculty To Arboretum Hunger Games Tribute Pool.” By referencing the popular book series, “The Hump” compared Bergeron to the Capitol, calling her out for her refusal to take accountability for her actions.
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