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Connecticut College

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# THE COLLEGE VOICE

CONNECTICUT COLLEGE'S INDEPENDENT STUDENT NEWSPAPER SINCE 1977

## Congress's New Blue Blood Bleeds Green

MAX WHISNANT  
STAFF WRITER

In Capitol Hill lingo, AOC used to be shorthand for “Architect of the Capitol.” That position still exists. But, at least since Jan. 3, 2019, AOC means something different entirely: Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez.

Young, progressive, and whip-smart are just three of the adjectives already used to describe the first-term congresswoman from New York. AOC isn’t a naïve millennial yearning for attention. She’s the real deal and people are starting to pay attention.

During her short time in office, conservative critics have kept their eyes on what the voters really care about: her dancing skills. Nevertheless, she persists. One month into her tenure, she, alongside Senator Edward Markey (D-MA), introduced House Resolution 109 in early February. Five days later, it was referred to various committees and subcommittees where it is currently awaiting further action in the House of Representatives. AOC is the lead sponsor on what is more commonly called the “Green New Deal.”

Taking its name from FDR’s New Deal, the Green New Deal places environmental issues at the forefront of the American consciousness. It backs the almost universally held belief that climate change is real and that “human activity is the dominant cause of observed climate change over the past century.” The resolution lays out a series of goals which include net-zero greenhouse gas emissions, millions of high-wage jobs, investing in infrastructure and industry, and the cultivation of a sustainable environment for all. Under the current proposal, the resolution hopes to accomplish all this and more in just 10 years.

The Green New Deal isn’t just fluff. It highlights the inconvenient truth surrounding historically oppressed communities and pushes for equity where lacking or absent. According to the Cato Institute, a libertarian think tank based in Washington DC, FDR’s New Deal had significant shortcomings.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 11

## SGA Election Results

Table compiled by Jacee Cox and Alex Klavens, News Editors

### President

Candidate	Votes (811)	Percent
Maryum Qasim	340	41.924%
Aleksandra Plucinski	324	39.951%
Abstain	147	18.126%

### Vice President

Candidate	Votes (811)	Percent
Hana Kristensen	337	41.554%
Amiansu Khanal	162	19.975%
Chloe Hunwick	162	19.975%
Abstain	150	18.496%

### Chief of Communications

Candidate	Votes (811)	Percent
Kayla Johnson	323	39.827%
Samantha Barth	265	32.676%
Abstain	223	27.497%

### Chief of Finance

Candidate	Votes (811)	Percent
Hope Murphy	263	32.429%
Christian Carr-Locke	227	27.99%
Abstain	110	13.564%
Demetrius Latridis	96	11.837%
Sitesh Goonjur	67	8.261%
Nick Cardenas	48	5.919%

### Chair of Honor Council

Candidate	Votes (811)	Percent
Conor Xanders	452	55.734%
Helen Fulmer	232	28.607%
Abstain	127	15.66%

### Chair of Academic Affairs

Candidate	Votes (811)	Percent
Ben Meyer	241	29.716%
James Murray	204	25.154%
Abstain	193	23.798%
Emily Siegel	173	21.332%

### Chair of Equity and Inclusion

Candidate	Votes (811)	Percent
Paloma Camarena	279	34.402%
Abstain	218	26.88%
Samii Figueroa	159	19.605%
Ismael Mora	155	19.112%

### Chair of Residential Affairs

Candidate	Votes (811)	Percent
Daniel Angel Varela	623	76.819%
Abstain	188	23.181%

### Chair of Sustainability

Candidate	Votes (811)	Percent
Liam Lofgren	637	78.545%
Abstain	174	21.455%

### IN THIS ISSUE

TUESDAY, APRIL 16, 2019

#### NEWS

Dana Gallagher travels to Philadelphia to hear Stacy Abrams discuss voter suppression on page 4.

#### OPINIONS

Joshua Coleman provides a brief Brexit guide for those still confused on page 9.

#### OPINIONS

Fiona Hull interviews Scholar in Exile Bina Nepam on page 10.

#### ARTS

Elizabeth Berry keeps us up to date on the newest local yoga trends on page 15.

## From the Editor

While many students are still feeling a certain post-spring break sleepiness (or pre-graduation senioritis), we at *The Voice* have been hard at work bringing you this most recent issue of the paper. It's always interesting reading the articles writers or contributors submit because, in a way, it gives us a glimpse into what students at-large are thinking about and what is important to those in our community. After reading through this issue, we hope you are left considering the common theme that seems to tie a number of these articles together: Democracy— how well it functions (or doesn't), and the ways in which it can improve.

In this, our second to last issue of the year, we have fantastic articles from staff writers, frequent contributors, and several new names. *The Voice* is proud to represent a plethora of opinions and perspectives from students here at Conn, and this diversity in thought can be seen in Fiona Hull's '21 profile of resident scholar Bina Nepram, Emir Kulluk's '21 analysis of the nation-wide college bribery scandal, and the CCRCC statement on the value of the Electoral College. First time writer and longtime reader of *The Voice*, Joshua Coleman '21, an international student from Northern Ireland, has also penned a brief yet brilliant Brexit guide for us in the wake of the European Union's decision to delay Britain's exit from the EU until October.

While our writers, and Conn students in general, tend to focus on debates going on in Congress or on the campaign trail, it would be inappropriate and ill-advised to focus all of one's energy on national politics. To concentrate our attention there takes vital attention away from local issues and developments. As Andrew Lopez pointed out in our previous issue, Conn students— and, by extension, young people at-large— have much more political power than they think.

Outside of city/state/national politics, people our age seem to forget about— if not actively avoid— political participation on even the most micro of levels, such as Conn's Student Government Association (SGA). This past week the campus was painted red with student campaign posters for a variety of Executive Board positions, most visibly for the position of Honor Council Chair. The winners of the elections were shared with the campus community via an email from SGA on Sunday night, but the full list of competitors— including student vote tallies and percentages— were not. While some people may be insecure about receiving low vote counts, it is fundamental that students see these numbers, either to gawk at the impressive margins of success or to feel an energized solidarity about high turnout rates or to reflect on the reasons in which certain positions received high rates (up to 28% in one case) of votes for “abstain.”

Both globally and locally, it seems democracy and democratic systems are being threatened or dismantled by strongmen or public apathy or both. I'm proud of the work done by those who submitted articles for this issue of *The Voice*, because, clearly, they are not part of the majority. And they sure as hell aren't silent.

- Max

## THE COLLEGE VOICE

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

MAX AMAR-OLKUS '19  
*Editor in Chief*

DANA GALLAGHER '19  
*Editor in Chief*

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# Community Bulletin

**Coast Guard Delivers Documents on Harassment Allegations at Academy**  
Congressional lawmakers have asked to review all documents relating to allegations of harassment or bullying made by any student or faculty member at the Coast Guard Academy during the past three years. Connecticut Senators Richard Blumenthal and Chris Murphy made similar requests. Separately, the inspector general also is looking into how allegations of discrimination at the Academy have been handled.

**Third Case of Measles Confirmed in Connecticut**

Measles has made a comeback in recent years as skepticism about vaccines, despite scientific consensus, has led some parents to forgo vaccinating their children. Since the beginning of 2019, 465 cases of measles have been confirmed in 19 states, making it the second-highest number of cases reported in the U.S. since measles was considered eliminated in 2000. Although Connecticut has a high vaccination rate, the number of children who are not vaccinated has more than tripled over the past 15 years.

**Lawmakers Advance Bill For Free Prison Phone Calls**

The Connecticut state Judiciary Committee passed a bill this week that could make prison phone calls free. With phone charges around \$4 per 15 minutes, the state reportedly collects about \$8 million dollars a year on those calls — revenue that’s used for probation positions, criminal justice programs, and other related expenses. If passed, Connecticut is poised to be the first state to implement such a measure.

# Sports Spotlight

BY PRICE DAY

**Men’s Results**

Lacrosse loses to Amherst 8-23, wins vs. Hamilton 21-9

Tennis loses 2-7 vs. Middlebury, 0-9 to Babson

Track & Field finishes 6th at Silfen Invitational

Sailing finishes 8th at New England Team Race

**Women’s Results**

Lacrosse loses vs. Amherst 6-18, 9-19 vs. Hamilton

Tennis loses 2-7 vs. Trinity, 4-5 vs. Babson

Track & Field finish 4th at Silfen Invitational

Water Polo win vs. Penn St. Behrend 13-9, lose vs. Wittenberg 12-15

**Upcoming Events**

April 17th, Men’s Tennis @ Coast Guard  
April 20th, Men’s & Women’s Track & Field @ Trinity Invitational, Women’s Sailing @ Reed Trophy, Coed Sailing @ George Morris Trophy, Men’s & Women’s Tennis @ Tufts, Women’s Lacrosse vs. Smith, Women’s Rowing @ Lake Quinsigamond

# Staff Recs

Media and journalism recommendations from the staff of *The College Voice*

Dana Gallagher:

“Tracking Phones, Google Is a Dragnet for the Police,” *The New York Times*. Google records people’s locations worldwide. Now, investigators are using these records to find suspects and witnesses near the scene of crimes. Although technology companies have long provided law enforcement with the information of specific users, the use of new warrants hints this information is heavily relied upon in the absence of other evidence. Critics warn that an over reliance on technology runs the risk of implicating innocent bystanders.

Saadya Chevan:

“The Many Reasons to Run for President When You Probably Don’t Stand a Chance,” *The New York Times*. The article suggests that running for president is an endeavor with no downside. Even already-announced minor candidates in the 2020 Democratic primary election such as Eric Swalwell and Tulsi Gabbard have benefitted from the increasing name recognition that accompanies running for president.

Max Amar-Olkus:

“Anti-Semitism Is Back, From the Left, Right and Islamist Extremes. Why?,” *The New York Times*. Reporter Patrick Kingsley writes from Berlin about the rising tide of anti-Semitism in Europe and the United States. He shows that anti-Semitic attacks and rhetoric are not simply limited to right-wing politics or Muslim extremists, but also sprout up among those on the far-left.

Sophia Angele-Kuehn:

“Cross Campus Episode 6: Inside the Yale Admissions Machine” *Yale Daily News*. This podcast produced in February from a fellow student newspaper highlights how the admissions process works behind-the-scenes at Yale University. It features a lively interview with a dean of admissions and ex-admissions officer on how they decide who gets to attend and who doesn’t, including those who receive “special treatment” and “institutional distinctions.”

Jacee Cox:

“27 Possible Graves Have Been Discovered at a Reform School with a History of Brutality,” *The Washington Post*. Dirt can reveal decades of details and secrets. An environmental cleanup company stumbled across what are considered to be dozens of human graves at the site of an old 20th century Florida boys reform school. This school has a graphic and grim history of abuse and death, and this article highlights the poor treatment of youths and school children that has been endured for decades. Human remains have been exhumed from the alleged graves, and there is likely more to be uncovered.

## Conn History Professor Moderates Conversation with Stacy Abrams

DANA GALLAGHER  
EDITOR IN CHIEF

Unlike many politicians who have lost big races, Stacey Abrams has made it clear that she isn't leaving the national spotlight any time soon. One of those rare politicians whose stock has actually risen after a defeat (think Beto O'Rourke), Abrams is becoming a leading voice of the Democratic Party's progressive wing. Since her defeat in Georgia's 2018 gubernatorial race to her Republican opponent, Brian Kemp, by a 50.2% to 48.8% margin, Abrams has emerged as an outspoken critic of voter suppression--which she attributes to her opponent's slim margin of victory. She has received public attention for refusing to concede the race and, instead, forming a political action committee dedicated to pushing for changes in Georgia's elections system. In the latest indication of her rising star power, Abrams made history as the first African-American woman to deliver the Democratic response to a State of the Union address when she spoke to the nation after President Trump addressed the U.S. Congress earlier this year. "Let's be clear: Voter suppression is real," Abrams asserted in Atlanta where she was surrounded by supporters as she delivered her response. "From making it harder to register and stay on the rolls to moving and closing polling places to rejecting lawful ballots, we can no longer ignore these threats to democracy."

Abrams delivered this same compelling message to another very different audience--a group of leading historians--on April 5 during an invitation-only conversation in Philadelphia moderated by Connecticut College Professor Jim Downs. The program was attended by several Conn students as well as major media organizations like *The New York Times*, which also reported on the event. Joining Downs and Abrams were historians Carol Anderson, Heather Cox Richardson, Heather Ann Thompson, and Kevin M. Kruse. Anderson has gained widespread recognition for her book *White Rage*, which earned her the National Book Critics Award in 2016; Richardson co-hosts the NPR podcast "Freak Out and Carry On"; Thompson is the recipient of the 2017 Pulitzer Prize in History; and Kruse has attracted substantial attention for his Twitter threads that contextualize timely political issues. The talk will be published next year by the University of Georgia Press as part of its new History in the Headlines series.

Downs began by asking participants to share their own early memories of voting. Kruse recalled voting for Gerald Ford in a preschool mock presidential election because Ford, like his father, played golf. Richardson recounted having opted against voting in the 1980 presidential election and thereafter needing to process President Reagan's victory. Abrams imparted that voting for her has been a family affair--even before she herself was old enough to vote. As a child, she and her six siblings would travel with their parents to the polling station and watch them personally engage in democracy. The strength of her political convictions was apparent as early as the second grade when she actually had a "physical altercation" with a classmate who had labeled candidate Jimmy Carter a communist. "I got into my first fight--Democrat versus Republican," she observed. A fight, Abrams noted with apparent satisfaction, that "I won."

*"Let's be clear: Voter suppression is real."*

During the nearly two-hour program, the panel of historians defined voter suppression as policies directed at specific populations intended to prevent voting or to increase the challenges faced in exercising vote rights. To the panel, the Supreme Court's 2013 decision in *Shelby County v. Holder*, which invalidated portions of the 1965 Voting Rights Act, has precipitated subtle yet pernicious barriers to the ballot box. Most conspicuous have been state-level efforts like voter ID laws or cutbacks in the availability of early voting, which critics say disproportionately affect minorities and the poor. Less evident, but often just as contentious, have been numerous voting changes enacted at the local level by counties and towns across the South and elsewhere around the country.

In Sparta, Georgia, for example, the Board of Elections and Registration that oversees elections systematically questioned the voter registrations of more than 180 of its black citizens in 2016. The board dispatched deputies bearing summonses that commanded these black citizens to appear in person to prove their residence or face losing their voting rights. Abrams directly attributed the treatment of black Georgians to the relaxed federal oversight of elections ushered in by the Shelby decision. "The fact that

you can have a divergent democracy within each state--that's a problem," she contended.

Moving to a discussion of the 2016 presidential election, Cox insisted that historically marginalized groups remain politically engaged--even if they tend to vote less often than their more privileged peers. "In the election, there was all this talk about how white voter turnout is up and black voter turnout is down. We somehow confuse [turnout] with who cares about the

race," she observed. This year alone, nearly six million African-American citizens are disenfranchised. In Kentucky, 25% of African-Americans lack the vote. Cox holds out these citizens as examples of "voters who you literally don't see but are immediately assumed to be apathetic."

In a question directed to Abrams, Downs asked how she had reached the decision to end her campaign for governor without actually conceding. Abrams recalled that, even into the early hours following election night, *The AP* had not yet called the race. She believes that Andrew Gillum--the Democrat running for governor of Florida last November--received "bad advice" when he conceded his race despite allegations of voter suppression. Abrams says she "could not even say the word [concede] out loud" when she heard Gillum deliver his concession speech. The use of the word concession, she believes, confers legitimacy to an election. "Politicians are supposed to be stoic," Abrams articulated. "They are supposed to stiffen their backs when [the system] is beating you. I was not going to do that with an election speech."

Abrams urged the historians and journalists in the room to use their platforms to correct faulty narratives that circulate about disenfranchised populations. "Part of the historical challenge is that there aren't a lot of moments when you don't have to call into question the whole of democracy to say that the process may not have been valid," Ms. Abrams stressed. "The candidates who are either the victims or benefactors [of voter suppression] are disinclined to say anything because our culture--which I think historians can help us recast--says asking the question in itself diminishes our democracy." •



## Founders Day Challenge Raises Money and Student Pride

SAADYA CHEVAN  
MANAGING EDITOR

In just two days, over 3,000 donors pledged more than \$350,000 to help Connecticut College win a \$500,000 challenge gift sponsored by Brad Brown P'12 '15 '20, Rob Hale '88 P'20, Zoe Klein Henriquez '99, and Raj Vig '93 and an additional \$250,000 stretch grant sponsored by several current and former members of the College's Board of Trustees as part of the College's fourth annual Founders Day fund drive. At an event in Shain Library celebrating the success of the Challenge, Vice President for Advancement Kimberly Verstandig stated that 2,500 people gave to the College online, the highest number of donations the College has ever received via its website in a single 48-hour period. Verstandig estimated that the College would receive around 3,500 donations in total when her office finishes processing phone and mail-based pledges. She noted that some donors had not supported the College in a long time; about 50 online donors had not given to the College in almost 20 years.

The Challenge has raised over \$1 million for the 2018-2019 Connecticut College Fund through the generosity of individual donors and challenge gift supporters, which will be used to support areas of greatest need this year. Additional online donors gave around \$50,000 for financial aid and \$25,000 for athletics. This year's challenge marked a significant departure from previous Founders Day fund drives, which previously have lasted for around a month. The 2018 Founders Day Challenge ran for 34 days and raised money from 2,556 donors, earning the College a \$100,000 challenge gift from Trustee Emerita,

Susan Lynch '62. When asked about the ambitious decision to shorten the Challenge's official length to two days, Verstandig noted that the decision to do so stemmed in part from the high level of generosity expressed by the donors of the original \$500,000 challenge gift. Verstandig noted that she and her colleagues were overwhelmed by the support of the Conn community that ultimately led to the Challenge's success this year.

Declan Rockett '20, who attended the Founders Day tea celebrating the success of the fund drive, noted that he was both surprised and glad that the College was able to receive so much support from its donors in such a short period of time. Jordan Westlake '22 who also attended the event noted that she liked the Camel pride aspect of it. •



Image courtesy of Connecticut College

## Calling all editors!

**The College Voice is looking for applicants for positions next year!**

**Below are the open positions:**

**News Section Co-Editors**

**Opinions Section Co-Editors**

**Arts Section Co-Editors**

**Managing Editor**

**Business Manager**

**Public Relations Team**

**Layout Team**

**Photographers**

**Applications will be sent out through email on April 17th!**

## Senior Spotlight: Scott Brown

GEORGE GROTHEER  
SPORTS CORRESPONDENT

Tennis. Squash. A cappella. Vegan. Human development. Teaching. Coaching.

If Connecticut College ever were to look for its own Renaissance man, senior Scott Brown would fit the bill.

After beginning his career at Skidmore College in 2015, the Old Greenwich, Connecticut native transferred to Conn in advance of his sophomore year.

"I was in contact with the [squash] coach [at Conn] since sophomore year of high school. This was the dream school for me for squash – being able to play here," Brown said. He was able to join the team seamlessly for his sophomore season.

On the tennis court, Brown became the first player to have no prior contact with the tennis team at Conn to show up to try-outs and walk on to the team. After starting for his team in

high school, Brown had to adjust to becoming a bench player.

"I took over a role of coaching and mentoring [our players]. My tennis ability wasn't at the same level as other players, which has kept me motivated to stay on the team," he said.

As his role on the tennis team changed over his three-year camel career, Brown elected to retire as a player following his senior squash season and in advance of his final spring tennis season. He is currently coaching at the Williams School after he realized that he is more passionate about that facet of the game.

"I wanted to get more experience [coaching] before I moved on to a school where I could coach – to maybe even become a college coach at some point." He will begin teaching and coaching both tennis and squash at Greenwich Country

Day School after he graduates. "That's something I really want to do," he added.

His last-ever college athletic match on the squash court has been a 'camel moment' of sorts for the senior, as he rallied from down 0-2 in games against Hobart College to win in five on his hometown court in Stamford, CT in this year's national tournament as his team upset the higher-ranked Hobart.

Off the court, Brown is a human development major and a co-pitch of the ConnArtists a cappella group.

"I love being part of a school environment and being involved with a ton of different activities and really knowing everyone on campus," he said. "Everyone is involved in these crazy extracurriculars and crazy studies because they have the opportunity to do so. I've seen

what other people have done and that's given me motivation to get more involved."

As he nears the end of his time at Connecticut College, Brown is fixated on staying focused in each aspect of his life at school.

"It's important to stay focused and keep an eye on the task at hand before going; it's important to keep that mentality going because once I have a job, I'm not going to be able to take time off with a 'senior spring' mentality."

While he still does not feel as though he's reached his athletic peak, Brown has reached peace with the fact that he'll be graduating in May, and he is ready and excited to begin the next chapter of his life as a teacher and coach.

He added, "I'll figure it out." •

## CT State Judiciary Committee Approves Legal Marijuana

PHILIP KUHLE  
STAFF WRITER

On April 8, the Connecticut State Judiciary Committee approved a bill that would legalize recreational marijuana and abolish criminal records for small possession counts. The bill narrowly passed by a margin of 21-19 and now awaits a full vote in the state House of Representatives and Senate. Ned Lamont, Governor of Connecticut, made marijuana legalization a priority during his campaign said in response to the committee approval, "it's an idea whose time has come, and I'm going to push it in the first year." This push for legalization in Connecticut originally began in March 2019 when the General Law Committee passed the HB 7371, a bill that would regulate marijuana; consequently the work of HB 7371 lead to the SB 1085 bill that would legalize marijuana possession and erase records of low-level offenses on April 8. This recently passed legislation allows individuals 21 years or over to possess up to 1.5 ounces of marijuana.

This is a step in the right direction for Connecticut, where in 2011 possession of half an ounce or less was considered a civil violation and punishable by a fine of up to \$150. If subsequent offenses occurred, fines ranged from \$200-\$500.

In its current form, the bill stipulates a 20% tax on legal marijuana, resembling the current tax percentage for legalized marijuana in Massachusetts. The bill also designates all revenue generated from the tax to be reinvested in local neighborhoods and city school zones with low education performances such as New Haven, Hartford, and Bridgeport. This policy has been partially endorsed by Senate President Pro Tempore Martin Looney of New Haven. He has said, "I think there has to be some municipal retainage of some of the funds where the dispensaries and the stores are set up." However, there is some push back from Connecticut Republican Representative Chris Davis, a member of the Finance Committee who believes legalization, "seems to be a money grab for a new revenue source that benefits a select few communities at the detriment of

the children and families all over Connecticut that would be impacted by the legalization of a drug." Furthermore, Davis recommends a better allocation of the revenue saying, "I'm concerned about that the money wouldn't be directed against opioid use across Connecticut, public safety or other public health initiatives." The plan will go through and be reviewed by the Finance Committee prior to the May 2 deadline when final votes will be cast by both the House and Senate.

How legalization will affect the Connecticut College community remains to be seen. Connecticut College's drug policy states: "The use, possession or sale of illicit drugs or drug-related paraphernalia as defined by Connecticut state law is strictly prohibited on Connecticut College property, as is the misuse of prescription drugs." Allowing marijuana on campus is going to require more than merely state legalization. Additionally, federal funding may become an issue if an institution allows their students to use marijuana, since it has not been legalized federally. Only time will tell. •

## Thrifting on Instagram Grows in Popularity

AMANDA SANDERS  
STAFF WRITER

Check your Instagram follow requests. Check your recommended lists. Chances are that an online thrift store will be there. Connecticut College places a strong emphasis on sustainability. In March 2018, the College won a Silver rating from the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education. The Goodwin-Niering Center, which provides selected students with a certificate in environmental sustainability, has played a large role in garnering this rating for the College through its work to eliminate plastic straws on campus. And Instagrams like @thriftycamel, @camelcloset\_, @socothrif, and @conncamelthrift are doing their best to reduce clothing waste at Conn.

"I started this page in August of 2018 because I had done a lot of thinking about sustainable shopping," said @thriftycamel. @thriftycamel, which currently has 125 posts and 332 followers, is run by Rose Montera '19. "I thought maybe I could sell some clothing and supply Conn with a funky little on-campus shop and resource." All the clothes on her page are below twenty dollars and on average below ten. Clothes vary in sizes, and she updates her page often with new items. Twenty percent of the proceeds go to Planned Parenthood, a choice made by her followers. When starting her account, she asked her followers where the money made should go and the vote was almost unanimous. Things that aren't sold go straight to Goodwill.

@camelcloset, which is run by Amy Zhou '20 and Serenity Chen '19, is a slightly newer insta-thrift account. Started during spring break, the two girls aim to clean out their closets of things they may not wear come graduation day while helping to reduce clothing waste. While prices range item to item, they typically range between five and twenty dollars.

Instagram account @socothrif, which features predominantly

male clothing, buys items from predominantly big thrift stores and sells them as a way to make some extra cash. "It's fun and it's ethical and we wanted to sell some stuff because we're all pretty broke," said one of the students running the account.

While you may wonder why students even bother at all with online thrift stores, clothing waste is a reality of the pain we put our planet through. The average American throws out about 82 pounds of textile waste per year. That's 11 million tons of waste produced

every year by just the United States alone.

While it may seem harmless to throw away out of style items, these fabrics are likely to end up in landfills, where they pile up to produce toxic greenhouse gasses that are emitted into the atmosphere. Clothes can take up to 40 years to decompose; the dyes and chemicals in their fabrics can affect the quality of soil and water. Every garment purchased second-hand means one less new one is produced, which is important because the production of clothing is costly to the environment. To produce synthetic fibers like polyester requires lots of energy, as well as crude oil like petroleum; byproducts of this production include toxic gases and chemicals. Pesticides used on most plants mean that even cotton and linen garments have a negative impact. Transportation-related pollution also decreases when clothing is re-used, as new clothes are much more likely to travel long distances before being sold than are their second-hand counterparts.

So next time you want to revamp your wardrobe, maybe hit up these accounts before stopping at Forever 21 or American Eagle.

@Thriftycamel is also organizing a clothing swap that will happen later in the spring. "I think it would be a great way to reuse/recycle clothing but also help people clear out their closets!" @Thriftycamel says. Keep an eye out for posters and on the Instagram for dates of the swap. •

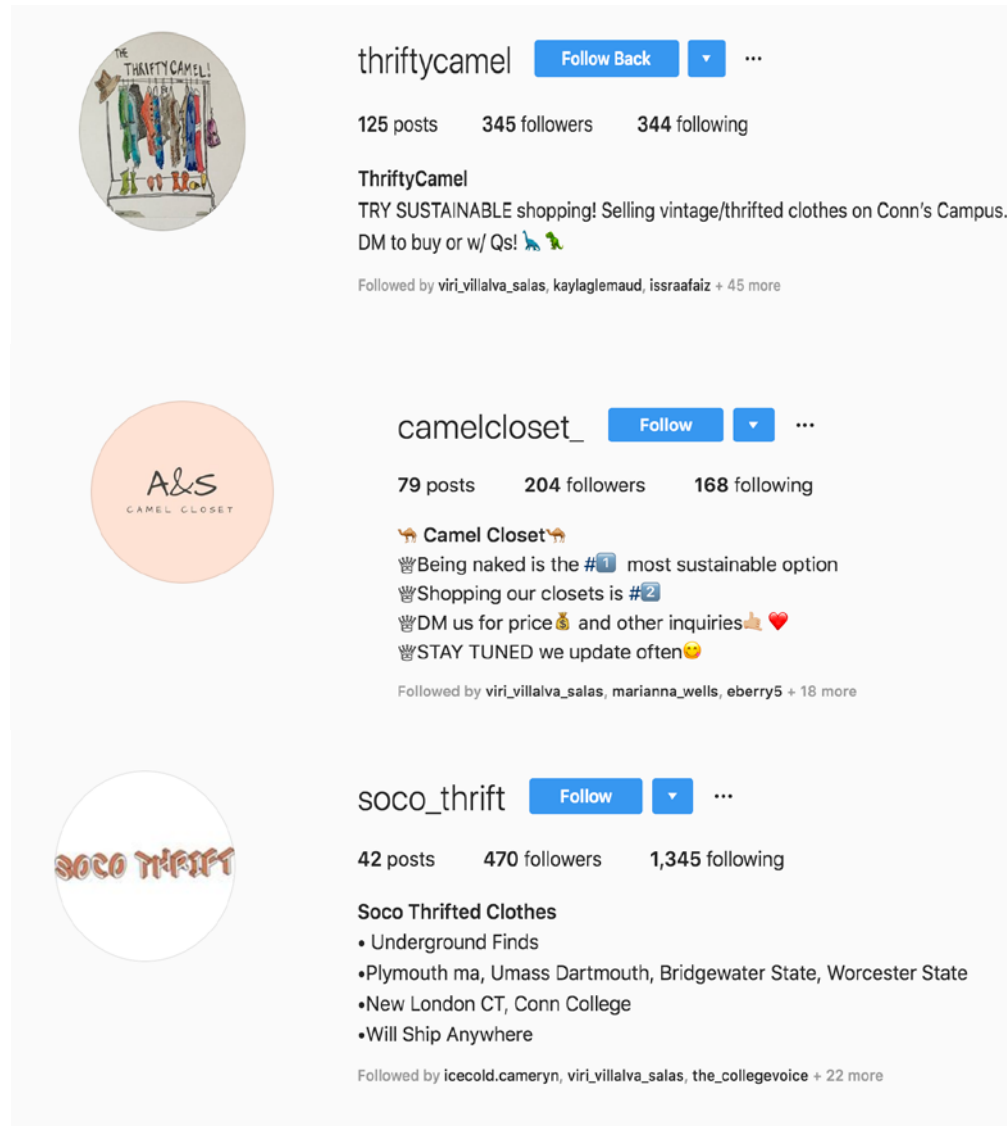


Image courtesy of Max Amar-Olkus



# CCRCC Statement on the Electoral College

ISAAC MOSKOWITZ  
CONTRIBUTOR

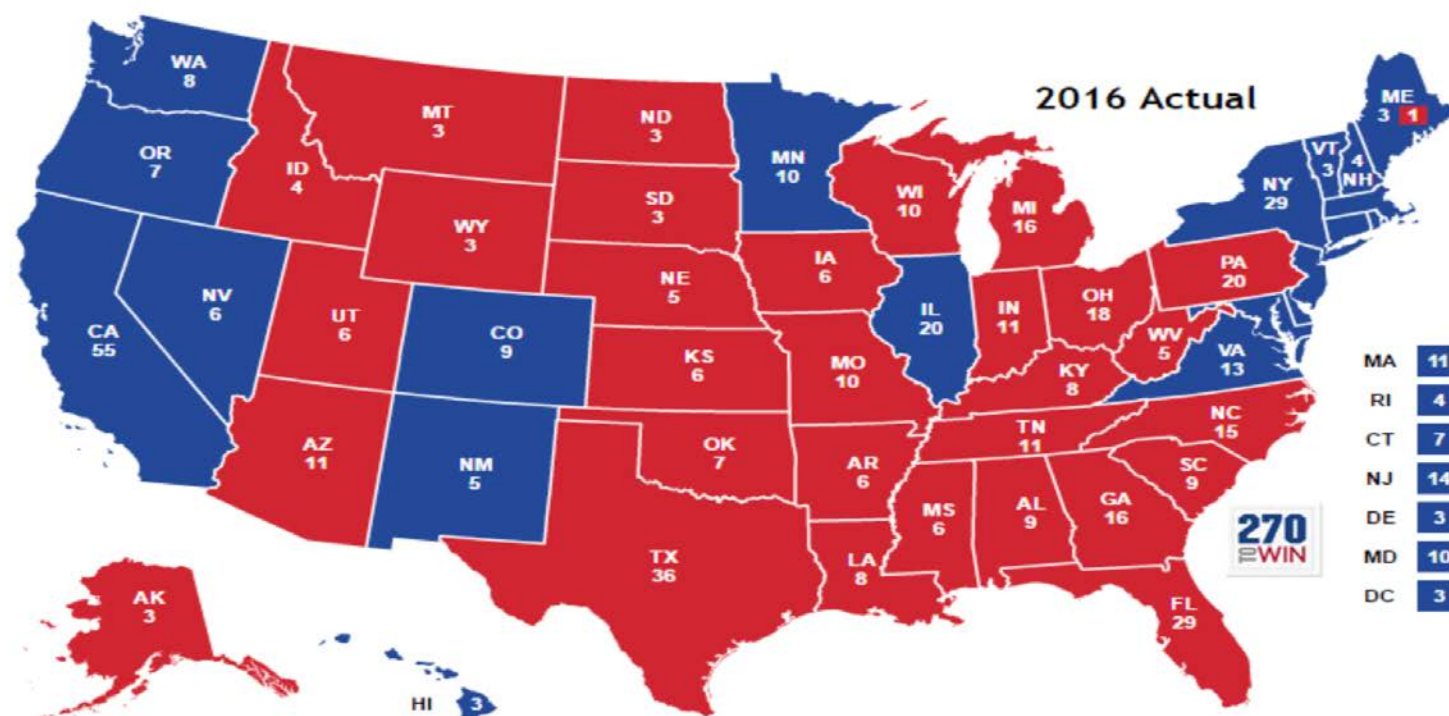


Photo courtesy of 270towin.com

What was once only a memory from most of our ninth grade civics classes has now made national headlines in these past few weeks: the Electoral College. Out of the 15 Democratic candidates competing for Presidency in 2020, an alarming eight of them support abolishing this system; four are open to the idea and a lonely three are against it. Generally, most individuals who are trying to abolish the system would prefer the president be elected by popular vote. While this method may sound like the most fair way to elect the president, given a bit more thought, it would surely lead to disaster.

A “one person, one vote” system does not restrain a majority group from imposing its will on a minority. Regardless of how small a state is, it has at least three electoral votes in deciding the presidency. These votes can be pivotal: no one state can be ignored by anyone running for the presidency. In this way, the Electoral College (EC) was designed not to reward candidates who receive the most votes, but candidates who can get the most different kinds of votes.

To win the presidency, a candidate must have the support of a large variety of voters from different locations. Securing only the Northeast, Midwest, or South cannot guarantee victory. And an individual cannot win by campaigning only in large cities, rural towns, or the coasts. Such a system is far more fair than any other alternative. The United States is a coalition of different cultures and people, and the only way to ensure that the needs of a minority group are not overshadowed by the masses is through a system like the EC.

Those moving to abolish the EC point to both swing states and safe states, arguing that they have far too much power in deciding the presidency. In particular, people argue that politicians in “safe” states lack ideological diversity. Those who make this claim have certainly not looked at a map of the electoral spread in the United States over the past several decades. According to the website 270towin, one of the safest blue states, California, was reliably Republican up until 1992. Texas was a blue state up until 1976. Even some of the most import-

ant swing states (like New Hampshire and Virginia) are constantly changing in legislative makeup. A popular vote, however, would concentrate power in locations that are not likely to change at all. Despite only representing a small portion of the country’s innumerable lifestyles and cultures, city centers would have total authority in choosing the president. The political fact checking website, Politifact, reveals that the two most populous cities in the country would have voting power over the smallest ten states. Importantly, the president is tasked with fighting for and representing all types of Americans, no matter how small their state.

The EC incorporates the opinions of the majority just as much as the minority. It is appropriate for the most powerful individual in the nation (and possibly, the world) to be elected via a system that more evenly distributes political power among states. Personally, I think “The President of the United States” has a better ring to it than “The President of New York City, Los Angeles, and Chicago.” •

# A Brief Guide To Brexit

*Why hasn't it happened yet?*

JOSHUA COLEMAN  
CONTRIBUTOR



*Photo courtesy of Ian Forsyth/Getty Images*

Brexit continues to baffle minds both in and outside Europe. The House of Commons has yet to settle many unanswered questions nearly three years after the verdict of the referendum. Moreover, despite the recent October extension afforded to the UK over the terms of Brexit, many still believe that this is merely kicking the problem of brokering an acceptable deal down the road. There are many difficulties surrounding the UK's withdrawal from the EU and I hope to shed light on a few of them.

The first question you might have may be "What is Brexit going to look like?" There is a simple answer. Nobody knows. However, this is not to say that efforts have not been made. Originally, Theresa May--the UK's Prime Minister and leader of the Conservative Party--agreed to a deal in principle regarding the nature of the UK's withdrawal from the EU in November. Nonetheless, this deal did little to wet the appetites of many British politicians on both the left and right sides of the political spectrum, as the deal was rejected by a 432 to 202 vote in January. This was the biggest defeat for a sitting government in the country's history. Moreover, the Prime Minister brought her deal back to the Commons twice in March, after receiving small changes to the nature of the Irish border, but both votes did not go in her favor.

The outcome of such defeats has led May to temporarily lose her influence over the Brexit process, as Members of Parliament (MPs) narrowly voted to take control of Brexit and the parliamentary timetable to try and get a deal through the House of Commons last month. This led to the holding of several indicative votes. These were votes held by MPs on a series of non-binding resolutions, such as maintaining a customs union with the EU, membership of the European Economic Area (EEA) & European Free Trade Association (Efta), and requiring a public confirmatory vote once a deal was agreed. Essentially, these votes were a means

of testing the will of the House of Commons on different options relating to Brexit. However, this process proved to be fruitless as none of the indicative votes received a majority in Parliament.

Moreover, a section of the public attempted to gain a degree of influence over the Brexit process, as a record breaking petition on the UK's Parliament website calling for Brexit to be cancelled has now received over 6 million signatures. While, on the other hand, a similar petition calling for the UK to leave the EU immediately without a deal only garnered roughly 600,000 signatures. I also believe that it is crucial to note the validity of this petition process as every signatory was asked to tick a box stating that they were a British citizen or UK resident and to confirm their name, email address and postcode (zip code) in order to sign. Many experts believe that this would have made it extremely difficult for the petition process to be influenced by 'bots', which would have skewed the results. However, an 100% guarantee of British citizenship is not given.

One of the biggest hopes for Brexit was to make the UK economically stronger and better able to dictate its own progression free from the shackles of the EU. However, nearly three years later, this is not the case. The UK has been reduced to the tribalism of Brexit, with Brexiters and Remainers being pitted against each other. Moreover, many sections of Scottish society are calling for another independence referendum and Northern Ireland has been without a government for over two years. These nations voted to remain in the EU and both are facing the consequences of being dragged into the implications of Brexit by the backs of their heels. I believe that Brexit has exacerbated the fractures in British society and proved that the UK is still dancing to the beat of the EU's drums. Essentially, Brexit has created an unanswerable question of whether democracy allows people to change their minds or whether popularly decided referendums are set in stone. •



## Bina Nepram: Conn's Resident Scholar and Activist in Exile

FIONA HULL  
CONTRIBUTOR

With nearly 68 million people displaced in our war-torn world, many believe that refugees are groups of nameless masses. But, in fact, thousands are scholars and academics. Just like our professors. Just like us. In countries where authoritarian regimes are on the rise like India, Turkey, and Russia, academics are challenging the narrative perpetuated by the state--and they are being aggressively targeted in their home countries. These scholars are forced to flee to preserve their safety. In Turkey alone, more than 6,000 scholars have fled the country since the coup in 2016. Authoritarian-dominant countries have increasingly sought to align the academy with state rhetoric. In short, independent research poses a direct challenge to any authoritarian state, and thus states have begun to target intellectuals.

Binalakshmi "Bina" Nepram is a resident scholar and activist here at Conn who came here after fleeing violence in her native Manipur, India, in 2017. She currently works with the Gender, Sexuality and Intersectionality Studies Department and CISLA teaching and supporting students. I had heard Professor Nepram's name being thrown around in a few circles since I first came to Conn last fall, but it wasn't until a couple of weeks ago when I heard her speak at an event that I understood the magnitude of her virtually-unknown position at our college.

Professor Nepram's research addresses armed violence, small arms proliferation and women and peace in Manipur. Manipur is home to South Asia's longest-running armed conflict where more than 50,000 deaths have been recorded. Having a background in History, International Relations and South Asian Studies, Nepram continued her research at Jawaharlal Nehru University and was instrumental in creating the Control Arms Foundation of India and founding the Manipuri Women Gun Survivor Network. She has represented Indian civil society at the United Nations on multiple occasions. But these accomplishments made her unpopular with the Indian government, and that is why she is here with us at Connecticut College today.

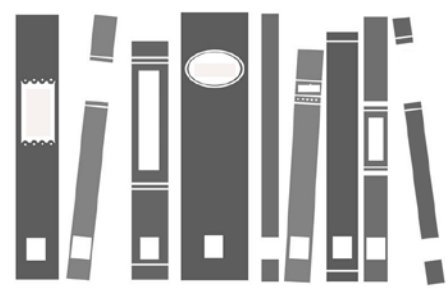
Intrigued by her story, I sought out Professor Nepram for an interview. I stumbled into her office post head-cold while desperately trying to suppress my cough. Before I could even ask a few questions, she abruptly left the room only to return with a warm cup of tea to soothe my throat. The kindness in Professor Nepram's heart is apparent quite immediately. We

launched into our discussion about the lives and importance of scholars in exile--scholars like her. In her home of Manipur, 84 students and 9 professors were jailed for protesting against the government. Nepram's own research regarding violence and advocacy for gun control in Manipur and northeast India brought her dangerous and unwanted attention. "The threats kept coming because we were speaking and writing the truth. But then, little did we realize that the authoritative government who is composed of criminals and drug traffickers did not like what we were researching and what we were sharing" she explains. In 2017 Nepram came to the United States, and after staying on friends' couches and eating 99 cent pizza in New York, Nepram applied to the Scholar Rescue Fund and was placed at Connecticut College. "I got my dignity back. For eight months I was in the lowest point, the Scholars Rescue Fund saved my life."

Just last fall, Connecticut College joined a consortium created by The New School called the New University in Exile (New UIE). Each of the participating institutions provides academic space and resources for endangered and exiled scholars, people whom the New UIE determines have "faced or recently (within the past two years) fled from severe and targeted threats to their lives and/or careers in their home countries or countries of residence." This arrangement is impactful for exiled scholars and students. As Professor Nepram says, "when a scholar comes to campus, they come bringing the global and local together." Nepram gives Conn students the opportunity to engage with "the global" on a level that takes us beyond our "Conn" bubble. She serves as a concrete example of what happens when a researcher-turned-activist takes a humanitarian issue to the international level to create tangible policy. We should remember that it is our honor to host and engage with her during these years. But as much as Nepram is a scholar, she also made clear that she is human. And as hard as her path has been, she is not seeking pity; she is seeking community and action and most of all humanity.

I was profoundly moved by Professor Nepram's powerful story throughout our interview. I encourage all Conn students to engage with her, hear her story, and allow themselves to be moved by her words because exiled scholars all over the world are looking to find a community through knowledge and scholarship; and in Nepram's words "when you give support to someone else, you strengthen yourself." So go. Go talk to her in her quaint office in Blaustein, and maybe she will brew you a warm cup of tea over the common connection of being human. •

# BOOK



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## Congress's New Blue Blood Bleeds Green

CONTINUED FROM FRONT

According to a 2003 commentary, Jim Powell argues that the New Deal was not government work at its finest, but rather that “mounting evidence...makes clear that poor people were principal victims of the New Deal.” It punished the consumer, the exact reason the New Deal was implemented. Jobs were created by New Deal spending, says Powell, but “we cannot see jobs destroyed by New Deal taxing.”

AOC's Green New Deal hopes to address those very problems. Louis Hyman wrote for *The Atlantic* that “if we are going to fund a Green New Deal, we need to acknowledge how the original actually worked.” The architects of the Green New Deal understand this challenge. They have methodically reviewed the shortcomings of the original New Deal while making as many assurances that history doesn't repeat itself.

Whether the bill accomplishes its goal of filling in the holes created by the New Deal isn't the only barrier to its passage in committee. It

must endure intense scrutiny to determine its feasibility. Conservatives and some progressives alike bash the resolution for being too broad and for “including wish list items not directly related to climate change.” Before the Senate voted on whether or not to allow debate on the bill, one of the co-sponsors, Senator Chris Murphy (D-CT), said he expects “almost every, if not every” Senate Democrat to vote “present,” allowing them to avoid taking a formal position on the resolution.

The measure, if passed along to the House of Representatives, would most likely pass simply because the Democrats are in control. But even its future there is uncertain because Speaker Pelosi has not committed time for a hearing regarding the measure. As predicted by Senator Murphy, it had no such luck in the Senate.

March 26 marked the appearance of the Green New Deal on the Senate floor. In a significant blow to supporters of the resolution, it failed to garner the 60 votes necessary to take up the resolution. Four Democrats voted against the measure with the other 43 others voting present.

On the surface, AOC's Green New Deal is exactly what this country needs. It will address the growing inequalities facing millions across the country. It will and already has brought the environment into the minds of Americans, which is sorely needed. They are noble pursuits in their own right and the bill should be commended for its efforts to eliminate many of the New Deal's biggest problems.

Where the resolution fails, however, is in its scope. Its goals are laudable, but a 10-year rollout seems unrealistic and overly optimistic, espe-

cially when one reads the bill. Even though it leaves much, if not all of the policymaking to later administrations, the proposal is aspirational. It lends too much credit to the sensibilities of our politicians.

The problems multiply the deeper one looks at the resolution. Even if the goals were slightly more realistic, attaching AOC's name to anything immediately becomes political fodder for conservative and right-wing pundits. A huge swath of the American public is instantly turned off to the resolution for that reason alone. Here, as in most policies, moderation is key and bipartisanship is a must if we want long-term solutions.

To be clear, I have nothing against aspiration. Senator Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY) holds it in just as high a regard as I do saying, “We don't know if we can get to net-zero carbon emissions in 10 years, but we should certainly try.” With the White House doing whatever it can to halt environmental reforms, Republicans and centrist-Democrats benefit

from significant political cover in opposing the Deal. No matter how righteous the issue of climate change may be, all efforts seem insignificant in the face of fierce resistance.

Even in the crowded 2020 Democratic field, only two have the environment as their number one issue and only a handful have it in their top three. The two: Jay Inslee, Governor of Washington, and John Hickenlooper, Governor of Colorado. Inslee is essentially running a one-issue campaign on the back of climate change. Unfortunately, the environment isn't sexy. No one cares

enough about climate change solely to elect someone based on their environmental credentials. The environment certainly deserves more attention than that. But, the American populace has spoken and want immigration reform, healthcare reform, and economic policy.

For each strength, there is a glaring weakness. For each ambitious goal, there is a skeptic. I admire the new Congress for even attempting to tackle such an issue, but an attempt is not action. The Green New Deal has merit and it should be taken seriously as a building block upon which future legislation can be built. Yes, we do need a Green New Deal. Just not this one as it is written.

I do hope something comes of this version of the bill but I am, uncharacteristically, pessimistic about its prospects. So, I'll take a cue from our nation's leaders and do what has become the norm in our politics. I choose to punt on the issue at hand, hoping something else will come up and provide me cover. With an acute and biting sense of hypocrisy, I vote present. •



Photo courtesy of Al Drago/Bloomberg

# Higher Education: Money Over Merit

EMIR KULLUK  
BUSINESS MANAGER

When the college scandal broke out a couple of weeks ago, people were infuriated to learn that the wealthy elite paid large sums of money to get their kids into prestigious schools like the University of Southern California (USC)--to the detriment of students who actually put effort into their applications but lack the opportunities of these more privileged peers. However, one thing that flew under the radar of many was the distinction between donating money to a school and outright bribing college employees to secure a student's spot. Prosecutors in the Office of the U.S. Attorney for the District of Massachusetts, led by United States Attorney Andrew Lelling, stated that there is a difference between "donating a building" and donating "a large sum of money," a statement that clearly condones the legality of bypassing the traditional college application process. In short, if one donates enough to significantly improve the economic and financial status of a college, one's kid stands a greater chance of being admitted into that college without as heavy scrutiny paid to grades or extracurricular activities.

The truth is, as much as higher education has been praised as a tool for economic mobility, colleges are businesses that need to be sustained-- except in the case of public schools funded by the government. The financial needs of colleges come before the needs of academia. This is why many colleges allocate a very small sliver, around 5 percent, of their endowment toward the development of specific academic departments. Considering the large endowment of schools like Harvard (which has 39.2 billion USD), one would think that even 5 percent of that number would be more than sufficient to fund academic department. However, this money is also used to pay for faculty, facilities, the renovations of dorms and academic building, food services, clubs, and organizations as well as financial aid. When all this adds up, the funds in higher education are either barely enough or not sufficient.

To further strengthen their financial standing, many colleges hire financial teams to invest in stocks, companies, and land--in essence, to try to raise money for the college through other exterior means. All of this points to how much colleges operate under business models, leaving one to question how much value administrations place on the quality of academic programming.

All of this talk regarding financial development leads to the main discussion that has taken center stage: student admissions.

The easiest way for colleges to make money and add to their financial strength is through admitting students with money. With rising tuition costs, students who pay full or even half of tuition provide colleges with extra funds beyond their endowment.

Even though colleges and universities admit students who work hard to earn merit and even provide them financial aid, this is a mandatory public relations move. Colleges need to cultivate a public image that attracts intelligent and engaged students. Applicants who are able to pay full tuition, have parents who donate large sums of money, or have legacy are able to bypass the scrutiny of an admissions team. Thanks to the lack of legal restrictions on how the college admission process is conducted, colleges are empowered to accept students based on the funds they are willing to provide, rather than solely on their academic merit. This is not

to say that students who have money and are admitted do not meet the requirement to make it into the new class of students, only that the colleges are heavily influenced by the financial aspect as well.

Legacy admissions are another big aspect of the college application process. A legacy student is a student who has a parent or family member who is an alum of the college. Colleges are attracted to legacy students

because research suggests that legacy families are far more willing to donate to their college.

The financial motivations of college admissions lead one to ask: how much space is left for the student who does not have the funds, does not have family members who have graduated from said college, but does have the exam scores, the extracurriculars, the active personality, and the ambition to go to said college? The answer to such a question? Not a lot. This is where the problem really manifests itself, as one has to wonder: does merit have any value if one is able to easily bypass it through connections or finances? It is when this question arises that a potential student becomes demoralized, cynical and even more stressed on top of everything regarding grades and academia. Such a mental state is not good for students--and we can see this in the rising rates of depression and stress in our youngest generation.

If the recent college admissions scandal has done any good, it is that it has shown how deep-rooted inequalities impact admissions decisions. In a world where places of higher education value money over merit, one cannot continue to believe in the age-old notion that hard work alone brings success. To make admissions more equitable, the government needs to step in and remind colleges why they were created in the first place: to inform, develop and unite--not to profit. •



Above comic credit to Lisa Benson



## Wishing on Shooting Stars

### PRICE DAY

#### OPINIONS EDITOR

Outer space is pretty nuts. Its unimaginable vastness combined with how little we know about its reaches has made space a point of fascination for millennia. Only recently has our species found the means to explore our nearby planetary neighborhood, beginning in 1957 with the launch of the Russian Sputnik 1 -- a name and shape reminiscent of a potato. Countless satellites and other mediums of space exploration have been shot into the sky since then, so much so that their orbiting debris is becoming a problem. We trashed our planet and now we trash space too! Humans are so cool.

Anyway, for all the junk we launch past our atmosphere, outer space fires back. Scientists estimate that 25 million space rocks, mostly classified as meteoroids or micrometeoroids, enter Earth's atmosphere every day, although very few of these reach the surface. The nomenclature for these rocks is important and I will try to explain them, but I am very much not a scientist so bear with me here.

Asteroids are large space rocks or minor planets. They mostly reside in the asteroid belt between Mars and Jupiter, although they can sometimes veer off course and destroy all the dinosaurs. A meteoroid is a smaller space rock in orbit, but once a meteoroid enters Earth's atmosphere, it is called a meteor. Meteors burn in the atmosphere, making a streak that we have aptly named a shooting star. Most meteors are completely burned up in their descent, but if a piece of them survives the journey and collides with Earth, they are called meteorites. It's kind of like an evolution of a Pokemon: basic, stage 1 and stage 2; meteoroid, meteor, meteorite. Comets are similar to asteroids but have their own atmosphere and are also icy, burning up and releasing a tail if they orbit too close to a sun. To anyone who actually knows about comets, please let me know if I'm totally wrong. pday1@conncoll.edu is my email.

A collision of an asteroid or large meteorite with Earth would have disastrous consequences for its inhabitants. Ask your boy the T. rex. Or look up the Tunguska Event on Wikipedia. This event occurred in 1908 in Siberia and is pretty telling of what happens when space rocks get too close. A meteor burst over the Siberian tundra, flattening trees in an 830 square mile radius and releasing 1,000 times the energy of the atomic bomb dropped on Hiroshima. There were no recorded casualties because this happened in the most sparsely populated region of the world, but if it occurred anywhere else it would have been the tragedy of the century. The craziest part: the meteor did not even collide with the Siberian surface, dissolving 3-6 miles in the air.

What would happen if this event occurred again in a more populated area of the world? Depending on the size of the asteroid, the result could be anywhere from nuclear-bomb sized destruction to complete

apocalypse. And the best part is that there really isn't anything we can do about it. NASA has said it would need five years in advance to create some sort of asteroid interceptor, which may or may not work and we probably wouldn't get five years notice of an asteroid headed toward Earth. Asteroids don't really care about stuff like that. Stephen Hawking noted on Asteroid Day 2016 (June 30 this year if you want to start preparing to celebrate), that "One of the major threats to intelligent life in our universe is a high probability of an asteroid colliding with an inhabited planet." Stephen Hawking was really smart. People who are not as smart, like you and me, should listen to his words.

Our planet is dying, and no one really cares. Climate change experts insist environmental disaster is imminent, logically followed by societal collapse and mass extinction. Regardless, we condone our polluting, destructive society and gleefully careen towards a human-engineered planetary meltdown. Environmental collapse due to climate change would take a few years, but the impact would be felt immediately.

Which fate is worse? One that we as a species predicted, propagated and did nothing about, or one that we are powerless to prevent? Should we be put out of our misery? Next time you see a shooting star, you should wish for our society to be saved. If you're lucky, the shooting star may grant your wish. •

T-rex: Look at that big ass shooting star haha.  
Make a wish.

Raptor: I wish we were dead haha

T-rex: Lmao

T-rex:

T-rex:

T-rex: Aye bruh that shit looks kinda close, doesnt it



# “One wonders about something”, or “Castalia”

SOPHIA ANGELE-KUEHN

ARTS EDITOR

Wondering about something:  
you wash yourself – they wash themselves  
and wonder.  
Wander  
after the thought  
where you like to wonder.  
Cozy,  
with history.  
Goethe  
with God.  
Gladly  
she will hike here  
where man  
cannot wonder.  
To wander  
and to wash  
with history –  
cozy, and  
divine.

Yourself  
Myself  
Reflexive  
Reflecting  
animals, etc.  
The water  
where she washes  
herself, or  
you all –  
a body,  
a thought. •  
Sich über etwas wundern:  
Sie sich waschen – Sie waschen sich  
und wundern.  
Wandern  
nach dem Gedank  
wo man sich wundern gern.  
Gemütlich,  
mit Geschichte.  
Goethe  
mit Gott.  
Gerne  
wird sie hier wandern  
wo Man  
nicht sich wundern kann.  
Wandern  
und waschen  
mit Geschichte  
gemütlich, und  
göttlich.

Sich  
Ich  
reflexiv  
reflektieren  
die Tiere und so weiter.  
Das Wasser  
wo sie wäscht  
sich, oder  
ihr –  
ein Körper,  
ein Gedank. •

# Havana

CAM DYER-HAWES

CONTRIBUTOR

You are tired of Americans –  
of watching them smile like people on T.V and pour cream, without  
fat  
into coffee.  
Americans turned history into Star Wars and Star Wars into CGI  
aliens  
with Jamaican accents.  
Around us are palaces  
the color of Easter  
that look like Paris.

We are sitting on a terrace in the City of Columns arguing whether  
people are civilizations.  
On the streets below  
children spill out of yellow

school buses imported from Quebec their inscriptions read: “ECO-  
LIERS”.

In the cracks between traffic  
the children move through this day –  
through the years –  
like rain runoff through a dry streambed  
and puddle  
around relics from the dawn of the nuclear age:

Chevy Bel Airs  
the color of sunrise  
with chrome eyebrows over their tail lights. Thunderbirds with tor-  
toise shell  
interiors and engines idling  
sounding like sour mud.

On the bronze terrace  
the dust has settled like fresh snow and the light from a sun climbing  
down into the sea  
looks like desert sand.

As it sinks below the horizon the children freeze –  
the chariots of industry settle and the men in them look up as if in  
prayer.

Havana was the future once –  
several times –  
and you say this in evening’s old heat stagnant as air over brackish  
waters with your eyes unblinking  
letting the sky’s violence fall into them. There is a window between  
night  
and what it swallows  
you say  
where you can wait for a beginning, but it closes  
and the streetlights flicker on. •

## The Newest Yoga Trend: Downward Dogs at the Lyman Allyn Art Museum

ELIZABETH BERRY  
STAFF WRITER

In recent years, yoga has transformed from a way to connect with your body to a sport involving baby goats, ropes descending from the ceiling, getting naked, and using paddle boards as your yoga mat. The newest trend is practicing yoga in unconventional spaces, specifically in art museums. Wellness is taking on a whole new meaning as it finds a connection to art, a trend which has woven its way to the Lyman Allyn Art Museum located right next to Connecticut College's campus. These classes have already reached a local hype, with *The Day* posting photos from a class that took place in McKee Gallery.

The Lyman Allyn Art Museum is not the only museum partaking in this trend. Yoga classes have also been held within the Metropolitan Museum of Art (MET), Indianapolis Museum of Art, and Rubin Museum of Art. The MET calls its adaption "The Museum Workout," led by Monica Bill Barnes and Anna Bass. The two women lead participants in a high energy workout through various exhibitions around the MET. Maria Kalman provides the narration and class route, while the Monica Bill Barnes & Company--an African-American contemporary dance company based in New York--prepares the choreography. Barnes and Bass set out to change the typical way people experience museum tours. They offer those interested in yoga to explore the MET before beginning their class amongst sacred art. Marya Ursin, who teaches yoga in Connecticut College's Dance Department, felt that Kalman and Barnes did not utilize the space as much as she would have. Although Ursin is not involved with the yoga classes being taught at the Lyman Allyn, she and other yoga instructors went into galleries at the MET in the 1970s and interpreted the paintings through movement.

On the first and third Tuesdays from 8:30 - 9:30 a.m. through the end of May, interested souls can participate in yoga at the Lyman Allyn Art Museum. Class costs \$10 for members and \$15 for non-members. Perhaps offering yoga classes in local spaces for cheaper prices than a deluxe yoga studio will help remove the elitism of high-end workouts. Marcia Gipstein, a trained yoga instructor in Kripalu yoga, guides the class through breathing techniques, physical postures, and mindfulness. Kripalu yoga draws from contemporary and traditional yoga disciplines, recognizing that all bodies are different which in turn allows everyone from various ages

and abilities to participate. Gipstein explains that Kripalu yoga relies on four types of yoga: "bhakti yoga (devotion), karma yoga (action/service), jnana yoga (knowledge), and hatha yoga (physical health)."

On its website, the Lyman Allyn museum states, "... experienced together, art and yoga can offer new ways of experiencing the world." Gipstein believes the gallery allows for a more reflective and sooth-



Photo courtesy of Elizabeth Berry

ing atmosphere than a gym or yoga studio. "Being surrounded by the art makes it seem as if there's another presence in the room welcoming us to connect with it," according to Gipstein. She hopes other participants will feel this connection as well. After all, "yoga is a practice of introspection and inquiry, uniting body and mind," explains Gipstein.

While I did not leave the Lyman Allyn Art Museum with a newfound perspective on the world, I left feeling relax, rejuvenated, and ready to tackle my day. This feeling is why Ursin believes yoga is so important for college students: yoga helps relieve tension in a stressful environment. The yoga class which I attended took place in the American Perspectives gallery in the museum. Participants were surrounded by post-war and post-modernist

pieces, which Gipstein suggested we should observe throughout our practice. Gipstein led a traditional gentle yoga class and came prepared with extra yoga mats, blocks, straps, and blankets for anyone who desired these accessories. She played soothing music throughout the practice. We began the yoga practice with a breathing exercise. As I have been practicing yoga for many years now, I am familiar with the usual slew of postures: warrior one and

two, tree, child's and star pose, cot cow, and plank. However, Gipstein explained a way of breathing that I was not explicitly aware of, although probably practiced without even knowing; she instructed us to breathe in and out through our noses, holding the exhale for a few seconds, and then inhaling again to take in air in our diaphragm, stomach, and chest. I have always struggled with this component of a yoga class, preferring more intense vinyasa breathing movements that leave me in a sweat.

After Gipstein's class, I realized that taking time to practice breathing is vital to the yoga and mindfulness principle of staying in the present. While this fact has been obvious to me for a while, being in an artistic environment which showcased abstract pieces, rather than blank walls in a dimly lit yoga studio, helped focus my mind. So often we are told to let all thought seep away when meditating, something which often puts people off from this practice. Perhaps, the answer to a balance between empty thoughts and mindfulness is choosing the right setting that can stimulate your mind without distraction. Granted, sometimes your eyes are closed, but rather than focusing on your to-do list for that day, you can listen to the sounds of an art museum and try to repaint the painting you were looking at while in tree pose.

Although I will admit that my mind tended to focus on holding a pose rather than the artwork at times, Gipstein reminded us of the pieces surrounding our mats. In particular, she referenced the acrylic painting "Arcane" by Argentine artist Kazuya Sakai. In the painting, Sakai paints rain-bow swirls on a bright orange canvas in reference to musical sound waves. Gipstein also brought our attention to "Yellow Band," an oil painting on canvas by Esteban Vicente. This painting is also abstract, depicting blue and gold rectangular sections with a single thick, yellow line in the bottom half. Vicente's painting invites the viewer to contemplate, a notion relevant to the practice of yoga which Gipstein reminded us.

Regardless of where you practice yoga, I think it is most important that we remember the wise words of Ursin: "yoga is whatever the person needs it to be." •



## Student Perspectives and Photos from Study Abroad

GRIFFIN TAYLOR  
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Starting my semester abroad, I tried to keep my expectations to a minimum. Morocco was not the first country I wanted to study in, but there I was on a plane bound for Fes, with only a fraction of knowledge about the country and Arabic language skills of a three-year-old child. I had worries about how I would communicate, what I would learn, and whether or not I just sealed my fate as a 5th year senior, but most of all, how I would come to terms with my positionality. Over the course of the last few months, I have had the absolute pleasure of meeting some of the most talented and intelligent people I've ever come across. I have loved getting to know them, laughing and crying with them, speaking horrifyingly bad Arabic with them, seeing their homes, and meeting their families. Despite all of this, or perhaps because of all this, I have found myself returning to the same question: with all my privilege and positionality as a white American man, how could I understand the lived experience of Moroccans? My life has been so vastly different than my Moroccan friends here. Even if they are part of the "privileged" upper classes, they still have had trouble leaving the country, have faced bigotry both from Moroccans and others based solely on their heritage, and continue to face intense gender discrimination and live under an Islamic monarchy.

As the last few weeks of my semester are



*Images Courtesy of Griffin Taylor*

approaching, I've reflected on everything I have experienced. One of the biggest things I felt that I've learned is the universal rationality of life. Speaking with my friends about how they view their own country, I have learned that many of them, despite not practicing Islam while living in an Islamic monarchy, were able to understand the conservative views of their fellow Moroccans. They instead believe that the society they were raised and live in actively teaches patriarchy and suppresses democracy, and that the strength of religion in Morocco means that change can't come now, but slowly. This is not to say that I feel like I've lived in an authoritarian regime -- far from it. To elaborate, a friend who studied in Cairo reflected to me once that the homeless in Cairo are not simply people without homes like in the United States. In Morocco, I found the same. The people here care for each other unconditionally. Restaurants will always serve the homeless. Children outside of school are scolded by strangers for not attending. If neighbors are sick, the entire community supports them.

I came to Morocco to learn Arabic and see how others lived their everyday lives, but I will leave having learned the way of life I had forgotten -- unconditional community support. This country has a long road ahead to achieve equity on a myriad of issues, but it is one that comes to the forefront of my mind in terms of emphasizing community solidarity. Here, the response to hate is love, and I think everyone can try that out a little more. •

