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THE COLLEGE VOICE

CONNECTICUT COLLEGE'S INDEPENDENT STUDENT NEWSPAPER SINCE 1977

Staffing Plan Leaked: Faculty Hiring Permissions for AY 2019-20

MAIA HIBBETT
EDITOR IN CHIEF

If you attended any combination of the meetings about the employment status of Visiting Assistant Professor Andrea Baldwin during the first half of the semester, you've heard the term cited, defined, and repeated: staffing plan. While many students—including myself—had never learned much about the College's staffing plan before, members of the faculty and administration invoked the term frequently when discussing the availability of a new tenure-track line in the Gender and

Women's Studies Department as it relates to Baldwin's position. Outside of instances when it must be referenced, as in Baldwin's case, students typically know little about the staffing plan. But shortly after its release, the *Voice* was sent a draft copy of the staffing plan for Academic Year 2019-20 by an anonymous source.

Dated April 7, 2018 and attributed to Dean of the Faculty Abby Van Slyck, "Connecticut College Staffing Plan AY 2019-2020" outlines which departments and programs—known

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\$20 Million in Donations to Go Toward Palmer Renovations

SOPHIA ANGELE-KUEHN
ARTS EDITOR

"I have some wonderful news about the future of the College," said President Bergeron, smiling to an uncomfortably-packed Chu Room on Thursday, April 12. Professors, students, alumni, and friends of the College came in a horde to Shain Library that afternoon, many prompted by a vague



Photo courtesy of Sophia Angele-Kuehn

email the day before from the President announcing "Exciting News!" about "Building for the Future" of Connecticut College. President Bergeron

and Board of Trustees Chair Pamela Zilly '75 got right to the point: the College had

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Catching up with Campus Safety Director Mary Savage

PRICE DAY
NEWS EDITOR

Mary Savage has been director of campus safety here at Connecticut College for a little over six months, with that important high school relationship anniversary passing on April 9. But what do most Connecticut College students know about our new campus safety director?

The *Voice* sat down with Mary Savage in the campus safety office in Nichols House, behind the Williams School, in an effort to get to know Savage. Before starting her position at Conn, Savage was the director of emergency planning, safety, and security operations at the Virginia Community College system, which features 40 campus locations



Photo courtesy of Connecticut College online

in the Old Dominion, the site of the iconic Jamestown colony. "I spent a lot of time trav-

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Is It Your Right to Grow Your Food? The Criminalization of At-Home Agriculture

JENNIFER SKOGLUND
OPINIONS EDITOR

84% of Americans get their food from a supermarket or supercenter, like Walmart. But increasingly, people are opting to grow their own food. A 2014 report by the National Gardening Association showed that 35% of households in America (42 million) were growing food in a community garden or at home, with the largest increase in participation among younger households. These numbers signal a growing interest in agricultural self-sustainability and

independence.

Yet in many places across the U.S., it might be against the law to grow your own food. It was so for Denise Morrison, a gardener in Tulsa, Oklahoma who grew over 100 species of food and medicinal herbs in her front and back yard until receiving a letter from the city citing a complaint about her garden in 2012. After photographing her lawn, Morrison "went to meet with city inspectors who told her 'Everything... need[ed] to go' when she asked for problem areas to be pointed out."

Upon entreating the police to is-

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NEWS

Christina Tougias details recent changes to student housing on page 4.

OPINIONS

Lauren Baretta discusses Conn's silver STARS environmental rating on page 8.

OPINIONS

Max Amar-Olkus cautions against corruption of news by Sinclair Broadcasting Group on page 10.

ARTS

Elizabeth Berry reviews this year's WE production on page 13.

The News We Miss

As is typical for me, I've spent the past two weeks doing a lot of thinking about the news—what makes it to the national stage, what stays local, what we manage to cover, and what we miss. There's a lot, in every issue of the *Voice*, that we have to forego. As a volunteer-run student newspaper, we're limited both in staff and in resources, but we try to make it work.

On April 9, Dana and I visited a publication with a staff bigger and pockets deeper than the *Voice*'s by I don't know how many hundreds of times. It was *The New York Times*, in the eponymous Times Square. Every year, the *Times* hosts a free workshop for student newspaper editors at colleges with *Times* subscriptions, like ours.

April 9 was an awesome day, though I wouldn't say the workshop's revelations were groundbreaking. My big takeaway was that our headlining style is boring and outdated, and believe me, that's a big deal—so in this issue, look for changes in that department. But mostly, we learned about operations at the *Times* that we can't possibly implement here, because we don't have a team of graphic designers who can develop renderings for 13 hours straight when news breaks, or a division of editors devoted entirely to Snapchat. We don't even have a Snapchat.

Still, it was undeniably cool to be inside the *Times* headquarters and learn about all the incredible things they do that we can't do—though maybe in the future, the *Voice* will do some of them, and our staff will go on to bigger and better publications where they can do all the things a biweekly student paper can't. With the help of a friendly staff member who will remain anonymous, we even snuck down to a floor we weren't supposed to go to and met up with Jazmine Hughes, former *Voice* editor in chief, current *New York Times Magazine* assistant editor, and upcoming Conn commencement speaker. She showed us around the newsroom, asking why we'd been kept cooped up in the fifteenth-floor conference center all day.

The whole experience reminded me that as much as it's about writing, news is about access. Dana and I were only invited to the *Times* in the first place because SGA keeps up a student subscription, which a lot of the student body utilizes to stay informed. I think sometimes we forget that not everyone has access to top-quality journalism all the time, and sometimes we forget that not all top-quality journalism comes from a national outlet like *The New York Times*.

During my first and second years at Conn—if I recall correctly—the College had a print subscription to the *New London Day*. You could find it in newsstands next to copies of the *Times* and the *Voice*, forming the middle piece in a nice progression from the global to the hyperlocal. But now, *The Day* never turns up on campus. I think that's a huge problem.

The College talks all the time—in classrooms, administrative meetings, and even in these pages—about how to improve our relationship with New London, how to get students engaged and interested in the city. Doesn't it seem hypocritical to proclaim that we've made progress in local engagement when we have, presumably, discontinued our campus subscription to the city paper?

Of all the things that have slipped through our coverage cracks, this is a big one. We should've written about it the second it happened, especially because of the many ways *The Day*'s staff support this paper. We print through their publishing department. Their reporters come to our journalism events and courses. I've called *Day* reporters up on the phone and asked for help with sourcing before, and they've messaged us on Facebook to let us know about job opportunities.

As a soon-to-be early-career journalist, I know that the disappearance of local newspapers will probably impact me directly. But I want readers to know that it will impact them too, because thorough, reliable, local reporting matters (and for a reminder of that, look to Max's article on page 10). If you think you care about New London, that's great. *The New York Times* doesn't. So read your *Times*—or whatever your preferred publication is—to learn about the world at large, and then pick up a copy of *The Day* to learn about the world right here. Their scope covers a lot of what ours can't.

-Maia

THE COLLEGE VOICE

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

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Community Bulletin

Immigration Story Slam to Benefit IASC

The bilingual immigration story slam provides an opportunity for adults in New London to share stories of their immigration experiences. These carefully-workshopped narratives will be presented on April 20 at 7 pm in Olin 014 for free, with donations to IASC encouraged at the event.

Criminal Justice and the Media: A Discussion with Carroll Bogert

Join *The College Voice* and student tutors in the Petey Greene Program for a public conversation with Carroll Bogert, president of *The Marshall Project*, on April 20 at 4 pm in the Chu Room. As president of a nonprofit, criminal justice-focused news organization, Bogert will discuss the relationship between criminal justice and journalism.

\$20 Million Pedestrian Bridge Funded in Downtown New London

The Connecticut Board Commission approved an additional \$19.5 million in funding, adding to an existing \$500,000, for a new pedestrian bridge in downtown New London, *The Day* Reports. The bridge is intended to correspond with an anticipated Coast Guard museum, for which the National Coast Guard Museum Association is in the process of raising funds for a \$100 million project.

Sports Spotlight

By GEORGE GROTHEER

Featured Team: Sailing

10th/18 scoring teams @ Dellenbaugh Trophy (Women)
6th/12 scoring teams @ New England Team Race (Coed)
16th/18 scoring teams @ Emily Wick Regatta (Women)

Seniors:

Emilia Clementi
Walter Florio
Haley Kachmar
Charlotte List
Hugh MacGillivray, Captain
Allie Maurillo, Captain
Albert Rodiger

Coaching staff:

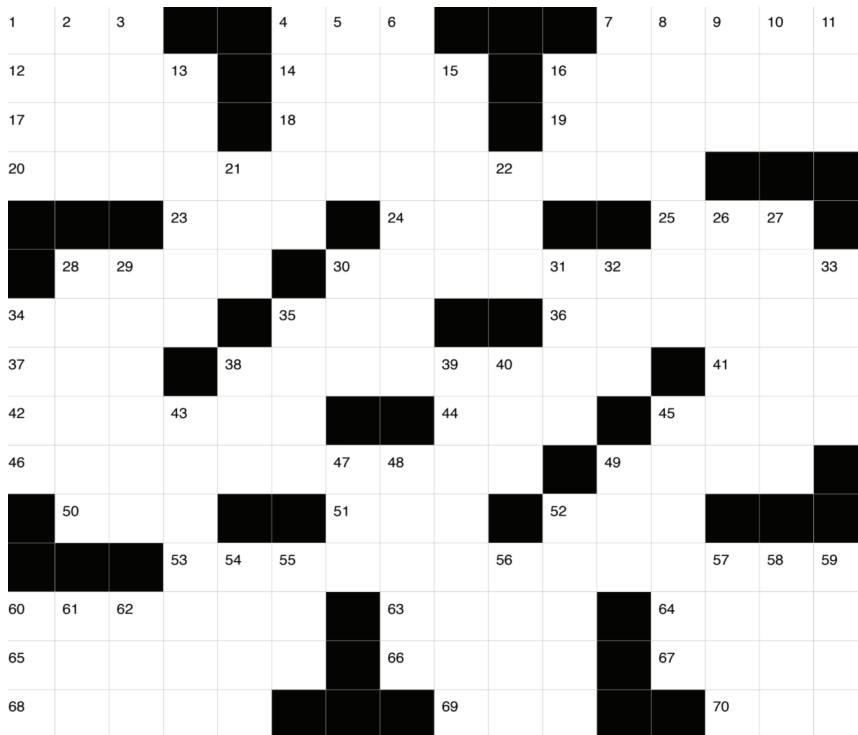
Jeff Bresnahan, Head Coach
Emilie Mademann, Assistant Coach

Upcoming events:

April 14-15 Thompson Trophy (Coed)
April 21-22 Reed Trophy (Women)
April 28-29 New England Dinghy Championship (Coed)
April 28-29 Southern Series Seven (Women)

The College Crossword

By ELEANOR KNAUSS



ACROSS:

- 1. Ph.D candidate, in progress
- 4. Molecular energy, abbr.
- 7. Evaluate
- 12. Internet amateur
- 14. Italian city
- 16. Remove
- 17. Honolulu's island
- 18. Nerve
- 19. Places where milk is found
- *20. Exhibitionist instinct
- 23. Cleaning chemical
- 24. Ocean State uni
- 25. Sound made after sipping a refreshing drink
- 28. Level

- *30. Like Achilles's heel
- 34. Complication
- 35. ___ kwon do
- 36. English model Boyd
- 37. Linguistic theory, abbr.
- 38. Witty repartee, and what the beginnings of the starred clues hint to
- 41. ___ out a living
- 42. They're needed to calculate an area
- 44. Nosh
- 45. Crap
- *46. It may be told around a camp-fire
- 49. Tree and rock covering
- 50. Younger Manning
- 51. Windy City rails
- 52. ___ I am
- *53. Humorist's knack
- 60. Word with "tough" or "monster"
- 63. 17-Across, por ejemplo
- 64. "Sure"
- 65. Open
- 66. And others, abbr.
- 67. Close
- 68. Couples
- 69. Hit NBC show
- 70. Year, in Lisbon

DOWN:

- 1. ___ and a wink
- 2. Wild pig
- 3. Capital of Qatar
- 4. Subside
- 5. Cab
- 6. Obtained
- 7. Like Skywalker

- 8. Rising current
- 9. Bambi's mother
- 10. Sound from an angry dog
- 11. Subjects of many X-Files
- 13. Reason a horse may be put down
- 15. Prefix with red
- 16. Singer Lipa
- 21. Author Rand
- 22. Take advantage of free perks
- 26. Changes
- 27. Structured poems
- 28. Seduce
- 29. One who tags
- 30. ___ and feather
- 31. Environmental equation
- 32. Low bank
- 33. Garden pest
- 34. Cuts, like a tree
- 35. Lob
- 38. "What's your reason?"
- 39. Perseveres
- 40. Set down
- 43. "___ treat!"
- 45. Ordinary
- 47. Golf accessory
- 48. Like many an Elvis hit
- 49. ___ Tai
- 52. Delay
- 54. Greases
- 55. Encountered
- 56. Tribe
- 57. Furniture giant
- 58. Indian bread
- 59. Greek sub
- 60. There are 4 in a quart
- 61. "I'm ___ a roll!"
- 62. Kimono belt

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Palmer Renovations Promised

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received a \$10 million grant from the Sherman Fairchild Foundation (which had previously gifted \$5 million for renovating New London Hall), as well as \$10 million from alumna Nancy Marshall Athey '72 and her husband (who had sponsored Conn to be an All-Steinway school in 2012). Both donors have supported advancing the arts and/or sciences at Conn in the past.

Bergeron continued to say that the \$20 million will go toward renovating Palmer auditorium and the neighboring Castle Court, to “enhance Palmer’s facilities and technology to match the excellence of the educational program” by including more accessible entryways, comfortable auditorium seating, and a shock-absorbent stage with what’s called a “sprung floor.” Audience members gasped and burst into applause. Two students turned toward each other and squealed.

Jokingly calling herself a “historian,” Bergeron fondly presented the history of the 1300-seat auditorium and the more important history of the arts that it has held. Palmer was built in 1939 by the principal architect of the Empire State Building, William Lamb, back when Conn only had about 600 students. The Art Deco building has gone on to host dancers and musicians such as Martha Graham and the New York Philharmonic, and more recently the successful production of *Spring Awakening* under the direction of David Dorfman '81, who choreographed the Broad-



Images courtesy of Connecticut College online

way play *Indecent*.

Therefore, Bergeron repeatedly made clear that this would be a “historically informed renovation” that would be “preserving historic architecture” while allowing students the space and opportunity to more effectively create their artistic projects.

“There’s so much I don’t know about making art,” laughed Chair of the Theater Department David Jaffe '77, who was invited to speak next. “And this fires me up so much—what makes a great theatrical work?” He had explored this question in the Palmer auditorium as an undergraduate, and continues to do so now as a professor with his students: “That is our research on campus, getting into that room and figuring it out.”

He continued, “I believe creating exists in space” and that “good space gets you going.” Even though Palmer was a central focal point in his college career, he expressed deep-felt, tearful thanks for the gift for its renovation: “I cannot understate what this gift means.”

While making a speech, Kelley Fairman '18, a Dance major, agreed: “art transcends time and space.”

The second great surprise of the afternoon was the mini-concert of actors from *Spring Awakening* standing up one at a time from the crowd to sing “The Song of Purple Summer” with piano accompaniment, while the president swayed in her seat. The performance spoke to Bergeron’s earlier statement of “a day of hope and awakening to possibilities” while highlighting the worthiness of Camels for the renovation of the concert venue.

Zilly concluded the ceremony by explaining the College’s “big campaign” ahead, with plans to further update the campus, starting in the south end and eventually working north and across the river, improving buildings such as the athletic facilities and Cro. Zilly restored hope in those in the room feeling sad and nostalgic for the past by firmly reassuring all, that “five years from now, this college will be better.” •



REAL Restructures Housing, Takes First-Years Out of South

CHRISTINA TOUGIAS
STAFF WRITER

As students have begun choosing their housing for next year, many have raised questions about changes being made for the upcoming year. This year brought the first all first-

year dorm to Connecticut College, so what’s next? Following the feedback from this decision, the College has implemented a few more big changes to the housing process and design, including another all first-year dorm (Morrison) and the elimination of first-years from the

three southernmost dorms on campus (Jane Addams, Freeman, and Harkness). Additionally, in these three South dorms, as well as Park and Wright, there College will no longer restrict the distribution of class years housed in each building, as it had in previous years.

Since Hamilton was turned into an all first-year dorm, there has been talk of creating more first-year dorms, so the conversion of Morrison is not surprising. Sara Rothenberger, Assistant Dean for Residen-

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Staffing Plan Leaked

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collectively as “academic units”—requested authorization to conduct hiring searches in AY 19-20, then distinguishes between which units’ requests were granted and which were not. The staffing plan’s decisions are made by the Dean of the Faculty in consultation with the Educational Planning Committee (EPC), the Faculty Steering and Conference Committee (FSCC), and the chairs of relevant academic departments.

Of the 20 total academic units requesting 20.6 FTE (full-time employment) hires—with the point six representing an adjunct position—the plan grants ten tenure track hires, in addition to one three-year visiting position and the conversion of one visiting lecturer position into a permanent lecturer position.

With the opening observation: “this moment calls on us to think very strategically about the College’s long-term staffing needs,” Van Slyck begins the plan on a somewhat grim, but measured, note. She goes on:

“As the number of high school age students decreases across the country, and a decline in average household income increases the need for us to provide ever greater amounts of financial aid, the admissions landscape has become increasingly competitive. Our own student body has been affected by the trends. By contrast to the rapid growth we saw between

2000 and 2010, we have witnessed over the past several years a slow return to earlier enrollment levels. In the context, even if we plan to maintain our generous faculty-student ratio, we face the prospect of a modest reduction in the size of our faculty.”

This potential “modest reduction” is not reflected by the 19-20 staffing plan, which continues to increase the size of the faculty. Shifting to a more positive focus, Van Slyck then notes that the College’s first-year-to-sophomore retention rate increased from 89% to 91% in 2017 before addressing the hiring plan.

The staffing plan approves new hiring searches during AY 19-20 in the departments of Art History and Architectural Studies; Behavioral Neuroscience; Biology; Biology/Computer Science (Bioinformatics); East Asian Languages and Cultures; Film Studies; Government and International Relations; Human Development; Italian Studies; Mathematics; Physics, Astronomy and Geophysics; and Psychology. It denies requested searches in Anthropology, Botany, Computer Science, Education, History, Religious Studies, and a combined request by the Center for the Critical Study of Race and Ethnicity, Africana Studies, American Studies, and Religious Studies.

In the case of the latter, “the center, department and programs request two tenure-track lines to support a new academic unit, provisionally called the Institute for Critical Public Inquiry,”

the request states. It goes on to clarify that one tenure line would be housed in Africana Studies, while the other would convert an existing visiting position in Religious Studies to a tenure line “for a scholar with expertise in the religious histories and cultures of the Americas with a focus on the global study of race, religions, and peoples” and requests opportunity hires for both positions.

In its denial, the staffing plan notes that the request “depends on making changes to the structure of academic units, including creating an unprecedented amalgam of a center with a department and two programs,” deeming it “premature” to authorize the hire. The plan adds that as an academic program, not a department, Africana Studies cannot serve as the home of a tenure line. The denied request for a visiting to tenure-track conversion in Religious Studies coincides with the denial in the Classics department, which had requested not to begin an entirely new hiring search but instead to shift the position of Professor Sharon Portnoff, whose current department is Religious Studies, to Classics.

The Classics department cites “a desire to find the best institutional home not only for Professor Portnoff, whose training is in Jewish Studies, but also for the College’s new Jewish Studies program.” It adds that Arabic Studies is already housed within Classics and that the transfer would open the possibility of “new courses on the intersection

of the ancient Jewish and Greco-Roman worlds.”

In response, the staffing plan states that “given the compelling possibilities for bringing together Greek, Latin, Hebrew and Arabic and for creating a Mediterranean studies program within Classics, this transfer is looked on very favorably,” but denies the shift because it would bring the Religious Studies department below three FTE lines. As the plan reports, this staffing level is the minimum permissible on campus. The maximum is 12.

To be clear, not every search approval means that a new tenure line has been created. In some cases—as with Art History and Architectural Studies, Biology, East Asian Languages and Cultures, Government and International Relations—a search is approved to fill a position that has been vacated in an existing tenure line due to a resignation, retirement, or death. Additionally, while most positions approved are tenure-track or at least full-time, not all of them are: Behavioral Neuroscience was approved to extend three existing adjunct contracts, and Italian Studies was approved to hire a three-year visitor, though it requested a tenure line.

With a broader, institutional focus, the staffing plan also includes an overview of the EPC’s work and findings during AY 17-18, which stress “the importance of Connections in staffing decisions,”

as well as “the establishment of the Walter Commons [as] a vitally important step in providing institutional stability in the work identified in the Mellon Initiative on Global Education and reflected in Connections and the strategic plan.” The EPC also notes the importance of “curricular innovation and nascent programs with a focus on interdisciplinarity as vital to a forward-looking academic program” and addresses a key change between this new plan and old ones: “while recent EPC reports have acknowledged that high enrollments are a factor to be considered, they have moderated the high priority that previous plans had given to positions that relieve pressures in very high-enrollment departments.”

While the staffing plan may seem tedious and bogged down by academic jargon, it’s an essential indicator for the future of the College. The faculty teaching at Conn determines the direction the institution’s academic programming will take, especially considering that most faculty members stick around a lot longer than most students. •

CROSSWORD KEY

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

Director Savage

CONTINUED FROM FRONT

eling, doing drills, writing plans, doing a lot of training and things like that,” Savage said. “So it’s good to be in one spot here.” When asked if it was a strange to now be in charge of one campus in a different part of the country, Savage replied, “Well actually I’m originally from New York so it’s not that big of a change, it’s almost like coming back home.”

Savage says the most important thing about adjusting to her new environment is learning the culture. “You just have to learn your surroundings, learning what Conn needs and what they want. I think the shared governance helps a lot,” she said, praising the involvement students have in the goings-on around campus. “The student leadership here has been awesome to me, in receiving me and informing me, and I find that to be really helpful. It’s a refreshing change from where I came from.” Another fun fact: Virginia is also the state with the cheapest cigarettes, an important distinction in these trying times.

Savage’s philosophy on keeping a campus safe prioritizes student safety through education. “The most important thing is to teach and train people to do what they need to do. I can’t ask you to evacuate a building if you don’t know where to go,” she said, noting that her current objectives include safety training and acquiring a newer, student-interactive emergency notification system. She also stated that her department is striving for a

closer relationship between students and campus safety officers. “I’d like to say it’s going pretty good. I think my department and I are working hard to be more accessible to students.”

We won’t see any drastic alterations to campus safety policy compared to previous years, at least in the near future. “I wouldn’t call them changes,” Savage said. “Right now we’re training the staff and administration on how to handle situations on campus, and going forward, to train the Res Life and REAL staff for emergency response.” In addition, Savage outlined her staffing plan for the future: “Right now we have 17 [campus safety] officers, and I’m looking to hire a couple more, we just finished the recruitment process for one more part-time on-call officer that I think will be a good addition to the department, adding some diversity.”

When asked if these new hires stem from a greater need for campus safety officers, Savage replied that this is not the case. “When you have a department that runs 24 hours a day, you don’t want to burn your staff out... It would be nice to have enough people so that the current staff isn’t overworked or taxed. They need days off just like everybody else.”

As far as the new campus safety vehicles go, Savage says they were already in the works before she arrived, but she likes the new look. I think most can agree—they’re a definite step up from the fleet of white minivans of previous years. She notes she is responsible for the flash-

ing lights on the new cars, but stresses that these are only for emergencies. “Our goal is not to act like police, but we have to have some way to identify ourselves, escort ambulances and fire[trucks] and folks like that. I think it’s a good look, it’s not too much.” I, for one, was surprised the first time I saw a campus safety car with a full light rack, but that’s just me.

Savage stresses that the office environment of the campus safety director has evolved since her tenure. She elaborates that her office in Nichols House “used to be a storage room,” but is now a working office. Savages says she “didn’t like the idea of being upstairs because all of the officers are downstairs, and I wanted to be where they were. So I had the fireplace covered up and got all the storage junk out of here, and I like it.” She also voiced that her long-term goal is to move the office closer to the center of campus, unlike where it is now, in the conveniently-located South Lot.

Lastly, the million-dollar question: Florialia plans. “This is my first Florialia, so I’m not making any major changes, I don’t really have any frame of reference... The hope is that we don’t have any major issues, but I’m not making dramatic changes, not this year anyway, until I’ve had a chance to experience [Florialia] and make my own assessment.” Savage also added that “as long as we can keep everybody safe and everybody can have fun, that’s what the day is supposed to be about, right?” Indeed, Director Savage, indeed. •

Clubs Get a Closer Look: Understanding SGA’s New Re-evaluation Process

SHAE ALBERTSON
STAFF WRITER

Beginning in the fall of 2017, a new committee formed by the Student Government Association (SGA) began auditing clubs on campus. Two types of clubs exist on campus: affiliated student organizations (ASO) and registered student organizations (RSO). An ASO may form at any point as long as it attains 10 members and an advisor. An ASO does not receive yearly SGA funding and does not have a budget, unless it does fundraising. It is allowed to book spaces on campus, hold events, or apply for speciality funding from current Chief of Finance Amanda Yacos ’18 and her committee. RSOs, however, apply yearly for SGA funding, so the SGA Re-evaluation Committee formed to evaluate RSOs.

Vice President of SGA Yoldas Yildiz ’18 initiated the Re-evaluation Committee. He explained that his commitment to clubs inspired questions about the way clubs allocate and utilize the SGA budget. Having served on various club executive boards since his first year, Yildiz has questioned why SGA allocates funds without initiating any follow-up on club spending levels. He observes that SGA should evaluate clubs, “not in a scary way, but in a way like: so how are you using your money? What is your impact on campus?” Clubs can go through phases on campus when they go from having a lot of members to losing their popularity once leadership graduates. Club audits, Yildiz said, “[are] a way to make sure that doesn’t happen.”

Yildiz explained that clubs with prominent first-year membership should know how to continue leading clubs. As of April 13, every RSO should have completed the evaluation process. Yildiz described that after he sent emails to each club through primary contacts on ConnQuest, club leadership responded by setting up a meeting with three representatives. Each club picks its representatives, whether it is a president, treasurer, or member. The Re-evaluation Committee does not decide who attends the meeting.

Yildiz explained that beyond his presence at the meetings, RSO hearings are attended by Associate Director of Student Engagement and New Student Programs Jeannette Williams and students Samantha Kellogg-Howell ’18, Kyle Hawk ’19, and Ian Semon ’20. “That was a great way so that I don’t make all the decisions because everyone has an equal vote,” Yildiz said. “It’s kept equitable. Jeanette is there to give any information and then there are various other people to represent the finance clubs so that they know how much money they’ve gotten, and how much money they have. That’s all very private information.” As an RSO, the *Voice* had its own re-evaluation hearing, and notes that not all members of the group Yildiz described were in attendance; only Yildiz and Kellogg-Howell were.

According to Yildiz, each meeting was set up like a conversation. The committee asked questions ranging from what they have been doing with their funding to what

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REAL Redesign

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tial Education and Living, mentioned that the feedback has been overwhelmingly positive. “I hosted a focus group in February with students there and many indicated they hope to continue to live in the Plex next year close to friends they have made in Hamilton,” Rothenberger said. “Our hope is that this model creates 4-year friendship and support systems in the class of 2021 and classes to come.”

Caroline Smith '18, housefellow of Hamilton, expresses that “Hamilton seems to have a much more cohesive bond than other houses, with more interaction between the floors and between individuals on the floors. I feel like in other houses people don’t know their neighbors as much but in Hamilton it feels like everyone pretty much knows each other.” Many students agree with this and have reported many positive aspects to the all first-year housing, such as being able to make friends quickly and being surrounded by people who are in the same position as they are. At

the same time, there are a few drawbacks. Smith comments that some students have mentioned not getting to know upperclassmen as a negative, but she thinks that that can be done through joining clubs and other organizations as well.

The decision to remove first-years from South campus came mostly from feedback over the last several years which indicated that first-years living in Harkness, Jane Addams, and Freeman have a more difficult time transitioning into campus life. Students have commented that upperclassmen are not very involved with welcoming the first-year students on their floors into the community. Rothenberger explains that “it is more likely that first-year students will meet upperclass students through classes, teams and co-curricular activities than through their floor communities.” This feedback has come from Camel chats, focus groups, surveys, and transfer data.

Eve O’Brien ’21, a first-year currently living in South, says that while she likes living in South as a location, it is hard living there as a first-year. She explained that the first-years and upperclass students don’t really talk to each other,

and that since there are so few first-years living there, it is hard to find a community of people in the dorm there. When asked if she would rather have been housed in an all first-year dorm, O’Brien responded yes. She believes that it would have made the transition into college much easier. Smith also mentioned that she sees how it is easier for the first-years to go through the shared experiences together.

Rothenberger added that “as we consolidate more first-years through the renovation of Morrison this summer we have to choose to take first-years out of some buildings.” It makes sense then, for it to be from South if students are having a more difficult time adjusting and living there. If these changes go as well they did this year, then they should be successful. There is always a question, however, about first-years being separated from the upperclass students and how that will impact relationships between classes, but as the students and staff said earlier, it seems that first-years and upperclassmen meet more through sports and clubs than through housing. •

Club Re-evaluations

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

events they have been hosting. To legitimize the evaluation process, Yildiz explained: “this whole process is also a huge motivation for SGA this year. As a whole, the ‘exec board’ has been more accessible to the student body. It’s also an evaluation process for SGA, because, the question I ask every single club is: how can SGA be better for you? How can we better support you? Not just financially, but in other terms.”

Yildiz explained that the feedback has been positive. Students have asked how they may collaborate

with other clubs, and Yildiz offered helpful advertising through the SGA email. Marking a divergence from last year’s policy, this year, SGA has begun circulating publicity notices for any club on campus. Regarding the success of the standards set by SGA and the Committee, most clubs have exhibited acceptable activity.

“Most of the clubs are fine, as a function,” said Yildiz. SGA evaluations have mostly provided clubs with “little pointers, here and there, that they should be doing. Especially clubs, where they’re affiliated with certain departments on campus, it’s just to remind them that, ‘Hey, by the way, if you have an event, fill it

out on ConnQuest so that it’s on the College calendar.’ That helps you because then it will be on the College calendar, everyone is going to be able to see it, to go to a show, a piece, or an event.” Yildiz reiterated that SGA hasn’t “really seen any major problems.”

Yildiz is currently working on changing the SGA constitution and by-laws so that the re-evaluation of clubs occurs every five years. He described that he found it ineffective to evaluate clubs every year, as clubs are going to pass on recent knowledge. After five years, the Re-evaluation Committee will evaluate maintenance of membership and student engagement. Yildiz explained that

evaluation is crucial process as the popularity of certain clubs on campus waxes and wanes.

The Re-evaluation Committee meetings have raised questions about what SGA can do to assist clubs on campus. One resolution that has been discussed, but not formally proposed, would instate a Chair of Athletics, though this position would deal more with varsity sports than with club activities. Yildiz explained that the idea arose in discussion during some clubs’ meetings with the Re-evaluation Committee, which seeks to amend disconnects between clubs and SGA to further cohesive student engagement. •

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Shoot for the STARS: Conn Receives Silver Environmental Status

LAUREN BARETTA
OPINIONS EDITOR

“We are going to make gold if it is the last thing I do,” said Professor of Government and Environmental Studies Jane Dawson, in an uncharacteristically assertive tone.

Dawson was referring to the College’s recent award of silver by the Sustainability Tracking, Assessment and Rating System (STARS) subset of the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE) program. Though Dawson is spearheading a movement to elevate our current STARS status from silver to gold, receiving a silver rating certainly warrants a moment of celebration. As Dawson

put it, “are we doing what we say we’re doing? Silver indicates we’re doing a lot [though] it is hidden from students, and faculty, and staff. There’s a lot that we don’t know that’s going on.”

In September of 2016, the Environmental Model Committee—along with help from the Office of Sustainability and the Goodwin Niering Center for the Environment—began a long and tedious process of collecting the 400 pages of data necessary to apply to STARS. A point system, based on this data, dictates each participating institution’s ranking.

Margaret Bounds, Assistant Director of Sustainability and an active member of the Environmental Model Committee, spoke to why Conn

chose AASHE from the multiple environmental ranking systems available for institutions of higher education: “AASHE STARS is really the only national ranking system that looks at holistic sustainability including social and economic issues along with environmental issues.” Dawson echoed Bounds’ explanation: “We decided that in keeping with the mission and identity of the College, we would go with the rating system that was the most appropriate to our definition of sustainability.” The Environmental Model Committee supports the idea that social justice, economic consciousness, and sustainability are all intrinsically connected.

Our STARS application and subsequent silver status mark a major ac-

complishment for Conn in that before 2016, we had never applied for any type of outside environmental ranking. Furthermore, it is common for separate sustainability groups on campus to get caught up with their own goals and fail to work together. In this case, individuals and organizations across department lines worked alongside one another to create tangible results.

Because the STARS rating is so comprehensive—it asks for data in the categories of academics, engagement, operations, and planning & administration—environmental groups had no choice but to share the workload. Both students and staff members were heavily in-

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On Tourism, Aid, and Insufficiency: Reflecting on a Trip to Puerto Rico, and Learning Back at Conn

JADE HUI
CONTRIBUTOR

At the recent teach-in “When Global is Local: Hurricane Maria, Puerto Rico and Connecticut,” State Representative Chris Soto, the event’s keynote speaker, raised awareness for the Puerto Rican population as it continues to recover from Hurricane Maria. Nearly seven months ago, the Category 4 hurricane hit Puerto Rico, leaving some 900,000 people without power. The hurricane left an official count of 64 dead and an estimated death toll of more than 1,000 from the conditions of the aftermath. Some residents were able to leave Puerto Rico in search of safety, but many of these people would be returning to their homes in the “sin luz” (without light) zones which make up most of Puerto Rican communities.

In light of these disastrous conditions, Soto—along with panelists Kevin Booker, Educator Coordinator at Bennie Dover Jackson Middle School; Ricardo Pérez, Professor of Anthropology and Latin American and Caribbean Studies program coordinator at Eastern Connecticut State; Mark Stelzner, Professor of Economics at Conn; and Ron Flores, Professor of Sociology at Conn—contextualized the efforts to rebuild Puerto Rico with the history of neglect that the island has received from the U.S. government.

“What is happening in Puerto Rico right now should go down in history as the worst American government failure,” Soto said. Before the hurricane, the island’s infrastructure was hanging on by a thread, and the situation only worsened from the impact of Hurricane Maria. Due to the lack of support from the U.S. government and President Donald Trump, there have been more deaths in the aftermath of the hurricane than during the hurricane

itself. However, despite these facts, Soto stated that “it’s time to rebuild.”

One of the panelists is doing just that. Along with his effort to organize local relief efforts in New London, Booker traveled to Puerto Rico to provide first-hand assistance. He posed: “I didn’t want to sit back and observe... what can I really do to help?”

To ensure he would offer substantial assistance, Booker participated in training through the Red Cross and became part of the Disaster Relief team. What he witnessed during his time in Puerto Rico was that a lack of resources killed many people post-Hurricane Maria. Booker discussed his work in what he called “tarp cities,” where many Puerto Ricans live following the loss of their homes. After an exchange with a resident in this community, Booker realized that people had not been there in months to offer help. Despite the devastating and dejected state of communities, Booker believes in the resiliency of Puerto Rican people. He shared a saying that he learned while doing relief work: “se levanta.” It means that the implied subject—a person, a community, etc.—rises up, as Booker thinks the people of Puerto Rico will continue to do.

The panelists’ comments helped me reflect on my own recent experience in Puerto Rico, where I had the privilege of traveling over spring break. In anticipation of the trip, I prepared for much of the town and neighboring communities to still be in the thick of reconstruction—not to mention my apprehension of the destroyed foliage and trees that once spattered this beautiful island. When I touched down in San Juan Airport, my expectations were complicated by my experiences.

Promptly after leaving the airport, my family and I grabbed a bite to eat

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Personal Agriculture Under Attack

CONTINUED FROM FRONT

sue a citation so she could have her day in court, city workers showed up at the gardener's home "with a bobcat and a riding lawnmower and cut down her yard as she watched in horror." When she tried to sue the city for cutting down all of her plants before her court date, a federal judge threw her case out without hearing it. Tulsa city ordinances state that plants can be over 12" tall if they are edible, a rule by which Morrison says everything in her garden complied. Unemployed and uninsured, Morrison says her garden was her primary source of food and medicine to treat her diabetes, high-blood pressure, and arthritis.

Morrison's case isn't unheard of. Cities across the country are cracking down on the right of property owners to use their property to grow food, citing the practice as "unsightly." These crackdowns are lucrative: in 2010, Steve Miller of Clarkston, Georgia received a \$5200 fine for growing too many vegetables in his backyard. In 2016 an Orlando couple were told they would be fined \$500 a day until they uprooted their 25x25' vegetable garden. In some cases, grassroots efforts help to reverse fines or rulings. In the case of Jessica and Jason, the Orlando gardeners who faced a \$500 fine per day, a door-to-door petition campaign which gained over 10,000 signatures helped force the city to back down. It remains legal to grow vegetables on one's property in the city of Orlando thanks to Jessica and Jason.

Yet not everywhere are property rights pre-

vailing. In November of 2017, after years of legal battles between local gardeners and the local government, a Florida Third District Court of Appeal ruled that homeowners do not have the right to garden on their own property. Tom Carroll and Hermine Rickets had been growing food in a garden on their lawn for 17 years when they received notice in 2014 that their garden violated recently changed zoning laws—and that they would be fined up to \$50 per day for violating this newly-created infraction. Rather than dig up their garden, Carroll and Rickets sued the city for violating their constitutional right to use their own property as they wanted and the equal protection clause. City officials had changed zoning laws to strictly prohibit food gardening, but not, they said, ornamental plants. Growing lettuce was suddenly illegal, but flowers were perfectly permissible.

The Institute for Justice, a nonprofit "libertarian" NGO which represented the couple, called the 2017 ruling a "major blow to property rights":

"If Hermine and Tom wanted to grow fruit or flowers or display pink flamingos, Miami Shores would have been completely fine with it...They should be equally free to grow food for their own consumption, which they did for 17 years before the village forced them to uproot the very source of their sustenance."

Michael Bindas, director of IJ's National Food Freedom Initiative, said "the Institute for Justice will continue to fight until courts make clear that all Americans have the right to peacefully and productively use their property to feed themselves and their families."

Not only do these kinds of arbitrary property restrictions infringe on constitutional rights, but they also reflect a deeply-seated enmity towards independent, cooperative, and functional ways of living. The idea it should be a crime to use the earth around one's home—also called a "lawn"—for anything other than growing grass (no higher than 4") is not only ludicrous, it is deeply neurotic and signals a profound alienation from the natural world.

The labor and water costs alone of maintaining a perfectly groomed and uniform plot of grass around one's home are a less-than productive investment; in fact, research shows that planting fruit and vegetable gardens in the same space a lawn takes up could reduce water usage by about 66%. Yet the functional goals of the suburban lawn—to serve as an aesthetically uniform, genetically homogeneous, and meticulously manicured foundation for our lives—reflect a more insidious cultural obsession with conformity and artificiality, and a fundamental antipathy towards functionalism and nature. The hostile reactions of many suburban landowners to neighbors who violate norms of lawn appearance, whether by allowing one's grass to grow too long, or by growing vegetables, demonstrate an acute intolerance that is not merely aesthetic, but also existential; directed towards any reminder of the role of humans in our natural habitat. What else is a well-manicured lawn than a costly artificial ornament which seeks to remove us from nature through its sterilization and control? •

Tourism and Aid in Puerto Rico

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at a favorite place of ours, where I got the fish tacos I had been craving for weeks. The food was delicious, the surrounding colored buildings added for nice scenery, and there was never a quiet moment with upbeat music playing in the background. Our waiter, Manuel, offered us appetizers and his thoughts on the post-hurricane environment. He said, "We could be better! These seats used to be filled with tourists last year, but now we have a smaller crowd. But we Puerto Ricans, you know, we're tough."

Though some local businesses have struggled in the last couple of months as their popular tourist season has been scarce since the hurricane, Puerto Rico has institutions in place to facilitate aid efforts. However, Soto established that the efforts to rebuild Puerto Rico rest on a partnership between outside aid groups and the already-established Puerto Rican organizations. Perhaps the U.S. government should provide adequate federal aid instead of supporting an unstable economy through tourism.

As a tourist myself, one of the most informative experiences of my trip was a visit to Castillo San Felipe del Morro, a fortification that was built to

guard the entrance to San Juan Bay during the Spanish-American War. I reflected on my experience at the site as Pérez noted that immediately after the Spanish-American war, Puerto Rico became a U.S. colonial possession, but this magnificent Spanish landmark still serves as one of San Juan's treasured destinations in its beauty and age. Built in 1587, the fort still stands after Hurricane Maria ripped through the town. As I stood at the entrance to the fort, I was comforted by the grandeur and history of the monument, but I realized that it, too, is living evidence of conquest and colonization.

While Puerto Rico still has a ways to go in recovering from the devastation it faced a couple of months ago, it is important for us to realize that individual citizens can offer the aid that Puerto Rico has yet to see from the United States. Pérez laid out the extensive work that must be done in order for Puerto Rico to recover from the hurricane. He stated, "we must restore basic services to the entire population, rebuild the island's economy, slow down the exodus to the United States, and regain peoples' confidence in government." For further information or a chance to donate, visit publicgood.com. Like Castillo San Felipe del Morro, Puerto Rico is still standing despite its misfortunes and will persevere with strength of spirit and love of home. •

Sinclair's Syndicated Propaganda Infiltrates Local News

MAX AMAR-OLKUS
CREATIVE DIRECTOR

Since 2016, discerning fact from fiction, real from fake, and truth from lies has become increasingly difficult. Some blame social media and its potential to spread falsehoods or “fake news” (my least favorite term), to unsuspecting and easily manipulated consumers. Others, such as, for example, President Trump, point to national news organizations like *The New York Times* and CNN and denounce their left-leaning political affiliations as attempts to mislead Americans through one-sided commentary. Finding accurate and relevant news in today’s highly fragmented media landscape is an exhausting work, and, according to a recent study by the Pew Research Center, Americans across the political spectrum are putting more trust in their local news organizations to give them reliable information.

Local news organizations serve a vital role in our society. They give us updates on our high school alma mater’s sports rankings. They cover human interest stories and tell us where and how to watch live-streams of pandas growing up in the local zoo. Sometimes, they even do hard hitting investigative work that gets picked up by national news outlets. While you can expect to receive overtly biased coverage from places like MSNBC or Fox News, local stations have a reputation for being balanced and uncontroversial.

A recent viral video has made many people question that reputation, however. The video be-

gins with one or two anchors introducing themselves and saying, “I’m [we are] extremely proud of the quality, balanced journalism that [proper name of local station] produces. But I’m [we are] concerned about the troubling trend of irresponsible, one-sided news stories plaguing our country.” As the video goes on, viewers see the frames fragment—Brady Bunch style—to include 9, then 36 different sets of anchors all repeating the same

ments. When taken at face value, sure, these comments have some validity. But that’s precisely what’s so troubling about this script and the accompanying video exposing just how widespread the message is. You’re probably wondering, “How is it possible for local news stations from California to Connecticut to all run the same message word for word?” That’s where Sinclair Broadcast Group comes in.



Screen capture from Deadspin

script in an ominous chorus.

They continue, echoing the criticisms of the media popular among conservatives, saying, “The sharing of biased and false news has become all too common on social media. More alarming, national media outlets are publishing these same fake stories without checking facts first. Unfortunately, some members of the national media are using their platforms to push their own personal bias and agenda to control ‘exactly what people think’ ... This is extremely dangerous to our democracy.”

If you viewed one of these segments from the comfort of your own home, you probably wouldn’t find anything wrong with these com-

incorrect. “I probably give more money to Democrats than I give to anybody,” he said, in an article from *The Guardian*. Despite these claims, federal filings show that Smith has given \$206,650 to Republicans and \$132,350 to Democrats in presidential and congressional campaigns since 1995. Smith probably just forgot about that paltry \$75,000 spending difference. We’ve all been there.

A CNN report exposed the “must run” content (from the aforementioned video) disseminated from Sinclair’s headquarters to local stations, and gave insight into the way local journalists reacted

Sinclair Broadcast Group is the owner and operator of 193 local TV stations across the country, and Sinclair’s chairman, David D. Smith, has made several programming decisions in recent years that push the company in a decidedly right-wing direction. Though some view Smith as a Republican firebrand, he professed that he has “no interest in politics” and his reputation as a backer of Republicans is

Going for the Gold in STARS

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volved. Amelia Morrissey '19, a Goodwin-Niering scholar, spent the summer of 2017 working to collect greenhouse gas emissions data for the STARS rating. For her part, Saskia Stark-Ewing '18, another Goodwin Niering scholar, recently succeeded in bringing a food waste software system to Conn called "Phood." Director of Department Management Trina Learned helped the Environmental Model committee collect data on energy emissions and operations in buildings around campus.

"The real value of STARS is to benchmark our own progress on campus sustainability," explained

Bounds. She added, "By collecting all of the data for STARS we now have a much better sense of how we are doing and what areas we need to focus on for improvement."

Conn has always been a leader in environmental awareness. We boast one of the oldest environmental academic programs in the nation, send our food scraps to Secchiaroli Piggery, have added concrete environmental actions to our strategic plan, and are part of the "We're Still In" movement—this means we have promised to uphold the standards set by the Paris Agreement, even though we as a nation have withdrawn. Dawson commented on our environmental progress since we decided to apply to STARS, "We brought down the

energy used in heating. They re-did the steam house, a lot of changing to LED lights. The geothermal [energy system] we put in New London Hall also gave us some pretty good points."

Our STARS' point sum is also heavily affected by the 37-acre forest in Costa Rica that was sponsored by Conn in 1999. This forest alone offsets the carbon dioxide emissions Cro produces. Though I am in support of protecting natural areas, we must be aware that offsetting our carbon emissions is not the same as decreasing our carbon emissions. As Dawson commented, "There is still more to be done."

In the works are a college-wide composting system, a shift to more renewable energy, and a student led

movement to divest from unethical investments such as fossil fuels and concentrated animal feeding operations (CAFOs). I am optimistic that our current rating of silver will spark student, faculty, and staff engagement in order to rise to the next level; this is a movement that requires a group effort.

Toward the end of our interview, Dawson reaffirmed her commitment to continued environmental initiatives. "I saw President Bergeron last week," Dawson began. "She hugged me and congratulated me on silver. And I said, 'But, we're still going for the gold, aren't we?' and she said, 'You're absolutely right, we're going for the gold.'"

Syndicated Propaganda from Sinclair Broadcast Group

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 10

to the task of bashing the media, Trump style. "I felt like a POW recording a message," said one anchor, who chose to remain anonymous for fear of losing their job.

"At my station, everyone was uncomfortable doing it," another local anchor said. Journalists have expressed concern that "must run" segments are not relevant to their local audiences, but instead are filled with hot-button stories for conservatives. One such example is the "Terrorism Alert Desk" segment, which airs daily in some locations, even if there are no real instances of terrorism to report on.

One such story, about ISIS chopping nine teenagers in half with a chainsaw in Iraq was run, despite not being independently verified by any outlet. The story was picked up by tabloids and Breitbart.com, and when confronted about their sources, these organizations tried to distance themselves by using words like "allegedly" or "reportedly"—a marked difference from the definitive, fear mongering language used by Sinclair Broadcast Group.

There are people who believe that Sinclair Broadcast Group has become a mouthpiece for

President Trump, though Smith obviously denies such claims. In an interview with The Guardian, Smith discussed conversations he had with Trump after he had secured the Republican presidential nomination.

"I asked Trump, 'Would you like us to embed with you during your campaign?'" Smith said. After bringing a number of aides into the room, Trump said, with that classic thoughtfulness he's so well known for, "Well, whatever." To which Smith responded, "We are here to deliver your message. Period."

Smith downplayed these comments, arguing that he simply meant Trump could be interviewed by Sinclair whenever he wanted, and that he extended the same offer to Hillary Clinton but was not taken up on it.

Smith also defends the "must run" commentary segments hosted by former Trump adviser Boris Epshteyn. Though Smith is adamant that Epshteyn's segments are "not news," Sinclair headquarters still instructs local stations to run the segments during news bulletins, creating controversy because of the way Epshteyn regurgitates White House talking points.

Knowing what you're getting from a news source is key. You know you'll get a conservative perspective from Fox News, and you know you'll

get a liberal perspective from MSNBC. But trying to avoid "the spin" by heading to local news is becoming less and less possible, especially when "the spin" is dressed up in familiar garb, coming from your trusted local anchor. Sinclair's influence is broad, reaching about 38% of households in the US, and if their proposed merger with Tribune Media is approved by federal regulators, they could potentially add another 42 cities to their portfolio.

The "must run" content peddled by Sinclair's Washington D.C. headquarters threatens to do exactly what it claims to be against: the destruction of our democracy. Sinclair's local journalists are forced to surrender their integrity and push propaganda from the White House. This not only infringes on Freedom of the Press, but represents an Orwellian turn to a world where notions of right and wrong, true and false, and good and evil are dictated by those at the highest levels of government. My advice to you, dear reader, is to look up your local television news station. What do they report on? Have they normalized Trumpist propaganda? Are they owned by Sinclair Broadcast Group? Try and find some answers to these questions, and then think about the impact they may have on your local community. •

In Advertising, Is All Press Good Press? Heineken's Offense Signals a Need for Change

EMIR KULLUK
BUSINESS MANAGER

In an era where DVRs and Netflix exist, it is harder than ever for advertisers to come up with ways to grab the attention of consumers and successfully promote a product. No matter how well an ad is packaged or filmed, the overabundance of advertisement media has caused consumers to become desensitized to it. Good advertisements must overcome this hurdle. One might suggest advertisers market in more creative ways. For instance, Gucci painted murals on city buildings in New York City. However, most advertisers run on a budget—they are greedy enough to attempt to create the biggest impact with the lowest possible expense. This thought process can lead to controversial advertisements that may generate more buzz around a product than more benign ads.

This is exactly what happened about a week ago with Heineken, as the company featured an ad with a racially offensive undertone. The now-removed ad features a bartender sliding a bottle of Heineken past two black women and a black man, only for the bottle to end up right beside a white woman as the slogan “sometimes, lighter is better” appears on the screen. The ad has been criticized for glorifying whiteness and

portraying blackness in a demeaning way; the black people featured in the ad can look at, but not enjoy, a bottle of Heineken, a symbol of leisure. The ad has been discussed on several news outlets for its racial undertone, as well as by celebrities such as Chance the Rapper. With many people talking about the ad, and immediately recognizing its fault, one can't help but think: how did the people who made it did not recognize the racist undertones of the ad?

One possible answer is that the company did recognize it—in fact it intended for the ad to be racist—because it knew that controversy would help promote Heineken even further. People would be shocked enough to look into the ad and therefore become more aware of Heineken's products. We are living in an age where a piece of information does not stay fresh for a long time, as there is a constant influx of new information every second. This means that anything—despite how racist, controversial, or weird it may appear—will be forgotten too soon to have a negative long-term effect on the person or organization who shared it. It has barely been a year, and Kendall Jenner's tone-deaf Pepsi ad—which trivialized protest by implying that tensions between demonstrators and police could be assuaged with a

can of soda—has been forgotten.

It is hard to find an example in which the negative effect from an advertisement has attached itself to the reputation of a company in the long term. Corporations do try to remedy the situation with short-term solutions. They take action by firing an executive or director responsible for greenlighting the ad, but that is usually the corporation putting the blame on one specific person and trying to resolve the situation without causing too much trouble, as multiple people approve the ads. Usually, the advertisement is reviewed by the advertising team that created it, the executive who is overseeing the production process, and the executive board that owns the product. “The phrase, “any publicity is good publicity” has been carried to its logical extreme when something as blatantly racist as this Heineken ad is broadcast. The fact that Heineken chose to broadcast it would be forgotten in a matter of days. With nothing to lose, Heineken would rather publish the ad to get some brand recognition than not publish it and possibly lose sales. It is impossible to say that it takes the same amount of time for the negative effects of any ad to be forgotten, however, based on previous scandals, it is certainly not that long.

This Heineken ad is far

from the only instance of obvious racism within the advertising industry. Whether it is the black child sporting a hoodie that reads “Coolest Monkey In The Jungle” for H&M's ad campaign or a Nivea ad stating “white is purity,” the advertising industry seems focused on creating ads that create controversy large enough to draw attention, but not too large that it will permanently damage the brand.

There are possible long-term effects of advertisements like this from which the masses are turning away. The lack of protest and the lack of punishment surrounding these ads imply that it's okay to create them. One might say that children of younger generations, kids who consume hundreds of hours of online content including ads, will be negatively affected by these ads and unconsciously internalize their racism. Publishing these ads acts as a catalyst for such possibilities, where the whole world questions whether racism is okay or not, because a global conglomerate allowed for something like this to be published. One might even say that if an enterprise, maybe one that kids like, produces and publishes such an ad, they will support it despite the controversy because they are loyal to that brand.

The developments and innovations within the digital

world of the 21st Century have certainly altered how the human mind works, as we have become accustomed to seeing advertisements and therefore more capable of ignoring them, searching instead for the type of content we demand. But the development of this mental filter has put advertisers in a tough spot, as their hard work is easily put aside by the consumer. It seems that in their desperate times, some advertisers have embarked on an all-or-nothing mission, where they risk their careers by creating an ad that would stir up debate, having people question international brands and their ethics.

Even if advertisers are in a tough spot, they should not bypass morals and ethical values. Just like professionals in every other industry, advertisers have to improvise, adapt, and overcome challenges. They should make their advertisements more interactive, thoughtful, or visually pleasing. It is this new extreme that causes people to question the limits of advertising, the lengths at which greed will cause people to forego their moral ethics and how the decrease in attention span alters our societal tendencies. In the midst of all the controversy and all the chaos, one cannot help but think: it is time for the saying “any publicity is good publicity” to become obsolete. •

With “Like Thunder,” WE Wows Once Again

ELIZABETH BERRY
STAFF WRITER

April is Sexual Assault Awareness Month, and appropriately, Conn students performed the annual Women’s Empowerment Initiative show on April 7. The show is composed of monologues written by female and non-binary students. During a time of social and political turmoil that is bringing difficult questions to the surface about gender inequality and sexual harassment and violence, the Women’s Empowerment Initiative presented “Like Thunder,” continuing an appropriate and meaningful tradition in the Conn community that is especially relevant now considering important movements such as #MeToo and Time’s Up.

This year, over 160 students participated in the show, serving both as cast and crew members. Michelle Lee ’18, chair of the reading committee, explained that after students submit their pieces in the fall, the committee meets to select which monologues will be read. This year, she added, all of the submitted monologues

will also be made available for students to purchase. Rather than voting on pieces, the committee discusses until they reach a consensus on which pieces to include. After the monologues are chosen, cast members audition and are assigned to a monologue. WE keeps its show open and accessible by ensuring that everyone who auditions gets cast in a piece,

tion, rehearsals, and fundraising, the hard work of the members of WE paid off in the two performances on April 7. The show’s venue, Evans Hall in Cummings, was decorated with bright lights and paper lightning bolts—an homage to the title. All of the members came onto the stage dressed in black outfits of their choice with red ac-

four Black female students repeated the phrase “Ain’t I a Woman” together, which made the monologue’s power resonate. “Finding my Pride,” directed by Margie Giacalone ’19 and Sarah Potter ’19, combined issues of race, sexuality, and homophobia into a single monologue. While topics including racism, gender identity, sexuality, sexual

Even though many monologues were serious, there were others that were uplifting and funny. My favorite monologue was “Just Girly Things” directed by Santaflorentina, which conveyed the hilarious story of the narrator waxing the hairs above her upper lip. Grace Neale ’21 enjoyed “Heart,” directed by Julia Horowitz ’18, which told the story of

an individual who realizes that while no one may love her, she can fight to save the whales. Neale said that “as a science nerd, [she loved] the whale reference,” but found the other deeper sentiments of this piece relatable because it was written by a fellow student.

Not only is WE’s annual performance a form of entertainment, but it is also a means of

personal expression and sharing. Lee states that the show “provides a platform for voices that are not always heard” and believes that WE allows students to “express [their] identity creatively,” similar to shows such as Eclipse and Color Brave Monologues on campus. Similarly, Gero believes that this year WE achieved their goal of moving beyond



Photo courtesy of McKenzie Griffith Potter

though the number of lines spoken varies depending on a person’s role. Chiara Gero ’18, artistic director and co-president of WE, explained that there are six directors, including her, who are each assigned to several monologues to oversee during rehearsals and give feedback to the performers abide by any wishes the author of the monologue and in this way respect the piece.

After months of prepara-

cents here and there. While the twenty-one monologues performed varied in length and topic, they collectively impacted the audience. I enjoyed how some lines were read solely by one individual while others were read by multiple participants. In the first monologue, which was titled “Ain’t I a Woman,” directed by Gero, and addressed the intersection of race and gender and the erasure of Black womanhood,

assault, were touched upon in the show, so were mental health, suicide, body image, and eating disorders. “Little Gray Monsters,” directed by Potter, describes the depression that often follows the narrator and the feelings which she often keeps bottled up inside. Performed in the second act, “Beast,” directed by Hayley Santaflorentina ’19, told the story of a girl struggling with body image and eating disorders.

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The Things We Cling to

A Prose Poem

HANNAH JOHNSTON
NEWS EDITOR

Blankets, stuffed animals, washcloths, dolls, pillows... Anything that is soft enough to hold all of our young strife and all of our young tenderness.

Unrequited love. Specifically, the love where we never say what we feel. The love we had for high school friends that a part of us still believes could be fulfilled even though we haven't spoken to them in six years.

Songs. Songs that change us for those few minutes they're playing. Songs by The Beatles and Patrick Park and Fleetwood Mac. Songs we sing in the car when we're driving home from work and we're alone, and we feel freer and more private than we ever have, even though we're on the highway during rush hour.

Paper. Birthday cards, receipts, address books, journals, pictures drawn with crayon on thin, waxy paper, notes from a speech, A+ tests in our favorite classes and B- essays in the classes we hated and tried so hard in. Composition notebooks, lists of names and birthdays and to-dos. We cling to business cards and stickers we'll never stick, articles cut out from local newspapers and love letters written when our partner was studying abroad in Germany. Movie ticket stubs, concert ticket stubs, theater ticket stubs, gift cards for niche shops we'll never go to, pages from books long since destroyed by time and water. Scraps of paper with phone numbers and names and job leads. Beer labels we think are pretty. Birth certificates. Cards from our grandmothers with long-gone twenties and fifties that she sent, just because.

People. But not really people. Their stories. We cling to the stories of the people we know and have known. We haven't spoken to Noah Linklater since eighth-grade, but we still tell the story of when he asked our health teacher how to make a girl squirt. Or Alicia Collins, we haven't spoken to her since our freshman year of college, but we still tell people the story of her finding out

that her father cheated on her mother with her mother's sister.

Shirts that hide our upper-arms and show off our midriff. Dresses that fall just below our weird-looking knees but still show most of our defined calves. Shoes that hurt like hell but that make us two inches taller. Big sweatshirts that belonged to ex-boyfriends that still smell like them, even after seven wash cycles.

Good pens.

How we felt about Christmas when we were eight. Every year after that it becomes less and less special, but we can still remember when there definitely were reindeer on our roof and almost all of our presents were toys.

Numbers. We cling to numbers on scales and clocks and price-tags. We cling to the number of days we've gone without smoking a cigarette and the number of times we've seen our favorite movie. Dates, account balances, pairs of shoes, passwords, phone numbers, coupon codes, countdowns, grades. We cling to the number of years we've lived and the things we lose and gain by growing older, and older.

Rejection. Acceptance we let go of like crusty, used tissues we don't want to hold onto as we walk down the street, but rejection we keep like a chronic rash on our heart.

A sixth-grade award for most sportsmanship in soccer and a valedictorian cord at our high school graduation and anything else we can hold in our hands as proof that we were here and that we mattered and that people knew it.

Noise. Repeats of our favorite TV show and mindless pop music and classmates talking about their Organic Chemistry test and coworkers talking about the best orthodontists in the area. The fridge running and your dog barking and a chair rocking. Above all we cling to the noise, because the noise fills us up, and without it we have to find out what's still in us when it's gone. •

WE Initiative Presents

"Like Thunder"

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a concentration on "white-feminist" topics and instead incorporated a wide spectrum of identity topics. Gero and Moll Brown '18, producer of WE, worked to build coalition among other affinity groups. In addition, co-chair of ideology Shaniqua Shaw '18 and chair of outreach and co-chair of ideology, Sam Weisenthal '18 organized a "Stride of Pride" this past Sunday with the goal of "build[ing] more solidarity amongst groups on campus that value social justice," according to Shaw.

It seems that this year's theme was intersectionality, marking a contrast from last year's theme, which Hannah Johnston '18, chair of fundraising and Safe Futures liaison, stated that "last year a quarter of the monologues in the show were about sexual assault." Although sexual assault was discussed in this year's performance, the monologues addressed a broader range of topics. Johnston appreciated this diversity because it adds "to the narrative that yes, [women and non binary students] experience violence, pain, and terrible things, but there are all these other things that we are thinking about and doing."

The show not only provides a creative platform, but also one for friendship. A cast member of WE, Maggie Ruff '20, explained that there is a buddy system in the club which allows students to support one another. Another cast member, Fiona Noonan '21, also spoke highly of the buddy system, saying that it allowed her to meet students she would otherwise never have met. Both Ruff and Emily Suher '21 emphasized how the expansive cast and crew is not only supportive, but also inspiring.

While WE is a popular and vital event for the Conn community, its impact goes well beyond the campus. Johnston explained that the club gives all the funds they raise to Safe Futures. Last year, WE's donation reached roughly \$10,000 and this year the club will be able to donate around \$7,500 and perhaps more as fundraising efforts continue. Johnston and Brown both emphasized that WE is ultimately a fundraiser and, in this sense, a way for Conn students to become involved with the New London community.

In many ways, the Women's Empowerment Initiative represents a liberal arts education: it combines varying subject matter and ways of thinking through creative expression into a culmination of one performance, while simultaneously questioning the impact of the show both within and outside campus. Ultimately, it reaches out to the audience to entertain them, but also to suggest a call of action for social change. •

Kacey Musgraves Points Where Country Music Ought to Go

SAM WEISENTHAL
STAFF WRITER

At the home studio of Sheryl Crow, Kacey Musgraves recorded the new sound of country music. In her latest album *Golden Hour*—the East-Texas singer-songwriter's thirteen-song tribute to love and humanity—Musgraves has made waves in how the music industry views country music. Musgraves' last two albums felt as though they were cut from the same home-sewn cloth. Now, however, she is venturing beyond the front porch hum of country music and into a more feminist country-pop that much of America seems intrigued by. The work on the album draws on classic rock with sounds reminiscent of Elton John and Neil Young, while interweaving a hazy psychedelia through a Daft Punk influenced disco-house on a handful of the tracks.

The sound of country music has changed significantly over the past several years as a result of genre mixing. But, the culture of the industry has remained painfully stagnant for the past several decades, one of the reasons why it's so surprising that Musgraves' progressive work is being so highly recognized. The limited number of women featured on country radio, the medium most country music fans use to listen to their music, is staggering. Billboard's Country Airplay Chart attributes only six of the Top 60-charting songs to women, an extremely low number considering how many talented female country music stars already exist and are established in the industry. It's hard to link these statistics without acknowledging that sexism is perpetuated by powerful radio executives like Keith Hill, who claimed in 2015: "if you want to make ratings in country radio, take females out," the *Guardian* reports.

In addition to the sexist culture she faces as a country artist, Musgraves does not quite fit the standard archetypes of women in country. She is not a southern belle, a fiery tell-off like Miranda Lambert, or a maternal good soul like Dolly or Reba. This is why it is so amazing that Musgraves' new album has been so musically influential in the world of indie and country music alike. In a genre fraught with sexism, Musgraves has managed to make a country album that challenges conceptions of which music in the genre ought to top the charts.

In *Golden Hour*, Musgraves covers topics ranging from her recent marriage, to taking LSD and receiving a text from her mother, to resounding beauty that exists in LGBTQIA youth. Many of the themes are being perceived as new terrain for mainstream country music. Although Musgraves may not be the first singer-songwriter to gain recognition for songs which push political boundaries, it is important to remember that she is only just the first to break the ice. We must remember Steve Earle and Darrell Scott's critique of the coal industry, Lydia Loveless and Margo Price's statements on the devastating impact of corporate farming, and Hurray for the Riff Raff's consideration of gentrification and violence against women in New Orleans.

In an interview for *Refinery29*, Musgraves said that when writing the album, she focused her intentions on the hypothetical question: "What would it sound like if Imogen Heap made a country record?"

It is easy to observe in the work that Musgraves was trying to do something different than most mainstream country music. She says, "It would be really hard for me to label this as just a country album... It's a melting pot of many different influences that have come together.... I thought

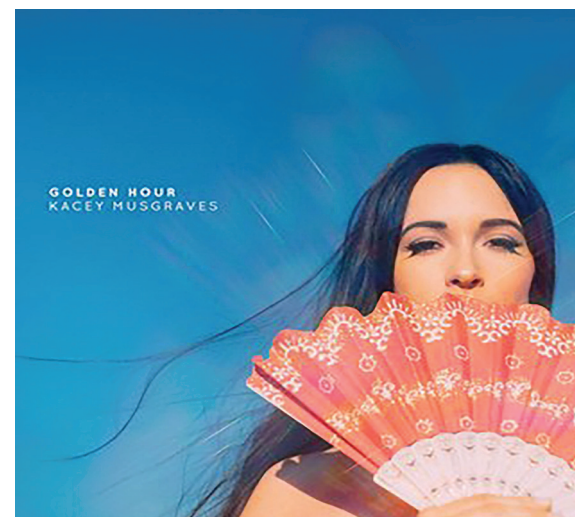


Photo courtesy of Pitchfork

there's got to be a world where all these things can live together harmoniously – a place where futurism meets traditionalism."

It is clear in the work that the artist is mindful of not getting too lost in her effort for change, the album sounds genuine and clean and authentic all at the same time. As a lover of old country, and a hater of country radio, I think this album walks the line between the mainstream and something that's both completely original and heavily influenced by past music geniuses. I can't say that *Golden Hour* will be something I'm playing on repeat, however I do have immense respect for Musgraves' call to change the culture of country music. The album imagines a world in which the work exists as the mainstream, as the norm, rather than a somewhat influential outlier. With each song standing strongly on its own, *Golden Hour* is a great listen for anyone who's looking to have their opinions of country music changed. •



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Second Annual Pride Rally Lip Sync Battle Took Observers to Another World

BROOKE SPONZO
STAFF WRITER

Loud music. Bright lights. Emphatic cheering. I might as well follow these descriptions with an astute exclamation of “Oh my!” To my reticent self, these things are just as intimidating as lions, tigers, and bears. Feeling quite like a frightened Dorothy did I observe this new world created in Cro’s 1962 room. It was a world of rainbow colors and flashy costumes, and music that vibrated into the air while shouts competed for ear space. The Second Annual Pride Rally and Lip Sync Battle was as much like Connecticut College as Kansas was like the land of Oz.

And like in *The Wizard of Oz*, the Lip-sync Battle was presided over by two powerful beings, each vying for the attention of the viewer. Only, in this circumstance, the duo of rulers were not witches at all, but drag queens. These individuals bewitched attendees not with charms or spells but with gaudy, extravagant costumes and snazzy dance moves. While the intended main focus of the evening was for the lip-syncing competition, the queens had audiences laughing from one act to the next, enraptured by the allure of their pizzazz.

The witches of the West and South at this event, Ivanna Riggie and Bella Daleadho (read that last name out loud: you’ll figure it out), performed lip-sync numbers and dances to multiple popular songs whilst exiting and returning in different, increasingly superfluous costumes. At one point, as Lana Del Rey’s “Summertime Sadness” began to play, Ivanna made a dramatic entrance in a gigantic scarlet gown, twirling for the audience to marvel at the bright red fabric.

The duo’s witty banter was also humorous. The



Promotional portrait of Bella Daleadho by Rahvisions. Bottom left: Ivanna Riggie

little digs and stabs they took at the other’s expenses were brought delight to the viewers who seemed to feed into the queens’ energy and grew more excited as the evening drew on. A near-impossible feat, the queens’ egos and personalities were even bigger than their hair, making them the perfect hosts for the ensuing lip-sync battle.

Three student groups competed in the battle, each performing a total of three times. The first grouping consisted of five young women who excelled in dancing, particularly hip hop. In a notable number, they performed to the song “Hollaback Girl” by Gwen Stefani. The second contestant was a sole challenger who wooed the audience with 80s throwbacks and aviator sunglasses. Lastly, there was a competing trio who put on a hilarious rendition of “Barbie Girl” by Aqua and performed a dramatic interpretation of “Never Enough” from the movie *The Greatest Showman* featuring glitter and rose petals.

In the end, the trio took home the prize of \$500, with the soloist in second and the large group coming in third. The contest was judged not by the two queens of Oz but rather by the women behind the curtain: three of Connecticut College’s own faculty members, who sat at a table taking notes to evaluate which competitor was worthy of the prize money. In my mind, they made the right choice; the trio’s over-dramatic numbers drew many positive reactions from the crowd.

The event was most certainly a success. While it could have been a bit more highly attended, the group of people there fully embraced the evening and made the most of the atmosphere. There were lots of laughs, lots of shouting, and, at points, the vibe was very much like that of a concert. The beloved contestants quickly became rockstars once stepping on stage, inciting the audience to cheer and call out their names. The crowd got the most wild when the contestants occasionally stepped off the stage to grab the hand of an audience member or to include a random viewer in the dance number. The drag queens? They weren’t made rock stars by stepping onto the stage: they were proclaimed stars by the crowd upon their very entrance into the room. Their larger-than-life flare setting fire to the student audience, which engaged vivaciously with them, bouncing their energy right back and matching their rambunctious behavior in spirit and in voice.

The Second Annual Pride Rally and Lip Sync Battle, which was organized by Student Engagement, the Student Activities Council, and the LGBTQIA Center will make a return in future years based on the reaction of the exuberant crowd. The event added a vibrant splash of color to student’s lives that might just stand out among the monotony of coursework like a pair of ruby slippers in a drab Kansas town. •

