Students Take Concerns to President's Door

Students walked the campus with heavy hearts on Sunday, Mar. 29, 2015, pursuant to the discovery of racist hate speech spray-painted in the first floor bathrooms of the Crozier Williams College Center. The graffiti was quickly removed, but not before several photographs went viral via social media.

The event shocked a campus still reeling from a series of charged events, starting with a controversial Facebook posting by a member of the faculty. The impact of the comment led to President Katherine Bergeron to call an all-campus forum this past Wednesday in order to address the issue. The event was then followed by an open-meeting of the Student Government Association where two resolutions were passed with the intent of legitimizing a condemnation of hate speech by the student body.

At around 4:00 p.m. that Sunday, an impromptu meeting was moderated by Associate Dean of Student Sarah Cardwell and Director of Student Engagement and Leadership Scott McElver, as well as a number of other staff members. This event was well-attended for having received little to no official publicity, but the dissatisfaction with Bergeron’s absence was ubiquitous. “How can we solve anything if the President isn’t actually here?” asked Randell Brannum ’17.

The students proceeded to leave the College Center, heading straight to the President’s house on Williams Street in order to discuss the issue directly. Quite quickly, Bergeron opened her door to all, hosting upwards of fifty Connecticut College students in her living room. Following a short address expressing her profound disappointment and sympathy, Bergeron discussed with what seemed like a renewed urgency the mounting issues of bigotry, racism and hate speech on campus.

While some students continued to press for her to condemn the initial controversial posting, this meeting was largely a dialogue concerning structural steps for the College to take.

Suggestions included an immediate cancellation of classes this Monday (Mar. 30) as well as a dramatic re-envisioning of the College curriculum to more adequately integrate issues of racial and cultural diversity into the College’s ethos.

When students left, Bergeron returned to campus in order to continue the campus conversation with the students that remained at the original forum. There, she spoke with a larger group of students in Cro’s nest in order to more formally address the morning’s occurrences.

Much of the student group then left to engage with an NBC news crew, who arrived on campus around 8:00 p.m. outside of the campus’ Williams Street entrance. Because the campus is technically private property, the students read pre-written statements off-property. SGA President Ethan Underhill ’15, as well as Dean Jordan ’17 read statements on local television in front of their many peers who came to show solidarity.

“There is no way we can begin to heal until we confront these issues head on”, said Underhill. His statements were echoed by students Ramji Kaiss ’17 and Aparna Gopalan ’17, who urged people to continue speaking out. Gopalan also pointed out that “since the instance that catalyzed this was made in a public forum, the administration’s response also needs to be public.”

By 8:45 p.m., students regrouped in the College Center where another discussion was joined by Dean of Student Life Victor Arcelus and a handful of faculty members concerned with campus life. Students vocalized their suggestions for the next day’s event. Both parties worked to plan the logistics around a secondary, mandatory all-campus forum, one designed to have more scope and impact than Wednesday’s forum.

The group closed the open session around 10:30 p.m., breaking into a smaller, more focused group of faculty and students in order to make solidify the next day’s plans. The NBC news story broke at 11 p.m. EST.

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I wrote the following editorial before spring break, when the current conversations were only just beginning. Since then, there have been two racist hate crimes on our campus, in the span of four days. The destruction of my artwork (which you may read about below) pales in comparison to the hurt, fear and anger other members of our community are currently feeling. As you read the following editorial, please keep this in mind, and what these instances say about the values of our community.

On Monday, Mar. 2, I received an email from a project partner in my Design: Object and Environment class. Technically, our project was already finished and on display, so I knew it wasn’t good news for her to be emailing me. And I was right; the email was letting myself and our third partner know our project was gone. Completely missing.

Some members of our campus community may be familiar with the cardboard chair project that Professor Andrea Wollensak assigns in this specific class. However, most people probably haven’t seen them because in the past these chairs, which are completely designed and built from scratch by her students, have only been displayed in Cummings Art Center, where they have remained respected and untouched. For Professor Wollensak’s class, this year was a year of firsts: the first time the class has partnered with Professor Emily Morash’s Interiors of Connecticut College, the first time the project has used site specificity outside of Cummings, and the first time chairs have been vandalized to the point of complete destruction.

Our chairs were built be placed in was the hallway outside of the Academic Resource Center in the Flex, in the hallway between Harris Refrectory and Johnson, Wright and Park (before the ARC moved into the new library).

My partners and I built three cardboard chairs to be exhibited solely in this location, this is what made them site specific. Extensive historical research and analysis of the site was done by our group, including two students in Professor Morash’s class. This project was no easy undertaking, and my partners’ chairs, which were much, much sturdier than mine ever was, were also completely destroyed when they were found in garbage bins. This isn't just students trying out the chairs. This is a deliberate act of destruction, and an honor code violation. Above all, it's just disgusting.

As an art student, I rely on my work to be in good condition for my portfolio. Like most students at Conn, one day hope to be employed, and my art portfolio will inevitably help me get there. Because of the treatment my chair received, I have nothing to show for this project. Sure, I took photos of the chair in progress, but my naivete in trusting people didn't just sit on it. They kicked it, tore it, threw all their weight on it. And my partners' chairs, which were much, much sturdier than mine ever was, were also completely destroyed when they were found in garbage bins. This isn't just students trying out the chairs. This is a deliberate act of destruction, and an honor code violation. Above all, it's just disgusting.

Nothing will change what has happened, but to whoever destroyed our chairs, all I ask is that the next time you have the urge to destroy the creative achievements of your peers, shoot me a text. I have plenty of unused art supplies that I would be more than happy to lend you. You may even find that it's more enjoyable to create than it is to destroy.

-Dana

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The College Voice meets each week at 9 p.m. on Monday.

Join us.

THE COLLEGE VOICE

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Letter to the Editor:
A Response from Professor of Philosophy Andrew Pessin

I am truly sorry for the hurt and offense that I caused via my Facebook post of last summer, to individuals on this campus and now beyond. It was written last August in the middle of the war between Israel and Hamas, and it struck me as rather defensive in tone. I see now—particularly after a moving conversation with a group of bright, brave, and sincerely wounded Conn students—just how damaging and hurtful the language of that post was. I made a great mistake in writing in an inflammatory manner that I did, and deeply regret the injury that I caused and have now directly witnessed.

It's essential for me also to remark that I in no way hold and do not condone the terrible racist views that have been ascribed to me on the basis of the language of this post. I hope that my past actions and words already demonstrate that I am not the person some now think I am; I know that my future actions and words will. Let my first such action be the reiteration of my deepest apology for causing such wounds.

Andrew Pessin
Professor of Philosophy

Dear Connecticut College Community,

We are writing, in light of recent events and conversations, to stress and defend the importance of what we hold to be a most crucial component of Connecticut College—our community's Honor Code. This letter is meant to address the wide issues that plague our college community and threaten the Honor Code, rather than specific events in particular.

As entering students, each of us signed a pledge of matriculation, a tree of which stated: "I accept membership into Connecticut College, a community committed to cultural and intellectual diversity. I understand my obligation to this community under the Honor Code and pledge to uphold standards of behavior governed by honor. I pledge to take responsibility for my beliefs, and to conduct myself with integrity, civility, and the utmost respect for the dignity of all human beings. I pledge that my actions will be thoughtful and ethical and that I will do my best to instill a sense of responsibility in those among us who falter." The pledge contains three central tenets—Community, Integrity, and Civility. These tenets are meant to govern how we behave, each to the other, as well as each to the larger Connecticut College community. The principles engendered by these tenets form a chain, and when any link is severed it severed the entirety.

The second sentence of the Matriculation Pledge establishes the first tenet of the Honor Code—our obligation to our collective college community. Our community is fractured. Each and every one of us is obligated to protect it, and to make it back to health. With this in mind, we encourage everyone to look toward the broader community within which each of us resides. Get involved in the dialogues, forums, and discussions. Speak, to be sure, but please, also exercise the equally important obligation to listen and learn.

Integrity is the core of the Honors Code. Integrity involves honesty, morality, and virtue. Racism is devoid of morality, virtue, and integrity. Integrity also has a second meaning, which is to say, whole and undivided. Our community is currently divided. And, in this regard, our community currently lacks integrity. We, as its constituent members, are mandated to push past this division and we must do so to reestablish a sense of cohesion within our community.

Civility is the final tenet. Civility entails respect. Respect is the natural evolution of the first two tenets and it does not, indeed cannot, exist in the absence of the first two. Under the Honor Code, we pledge to conduct ourselves with the utmost respect for the dignity of all human beings. Racist words and sentiments lay in direct, flagrant opposition to this idea. Racism is unlivable. As our community embarks on its efforts to heal, improve, and push forward, we must all keep the principle of civility in the forefront of our minds. We must conduct ourselves with the utmost respect for the dignity of all human beings by listening to what others have to say, empathizing with their perspective, and exhibiting a care beyond ourselves.

Sunday's incident and those like it, cannot, should not, and will not be tolerated. But those who are behind these egregious acts can only be held responsible if they are identified. The Honor Code fosters freedom, but it also entails an imperative amount of responsibility. The 1924-1925 Connecticut College "C" Book, which marked the first formal iteration of the Honor Code and its practice stated: "A student who is aware that a fellow-student has broken a College rule or established principle of conduct is honor bound to admonish that student to report herself. If the delinquent fails to respect this admonition, the student shall herself bring the case to the attention of the Student Council."

We have the responsibility to hold each other accountable. This responsibility is central to the functioning of our Honor Code system. With this in mind, if you have any information concerning Sunday morning's incident or any of the incidents listed on the bias incident log (available on CamelWeb) please bring it forward. You may report information to us at honorcouncil@conncoll.edu, Dean Cardwell, Campus Safety, or file a report using CamelWeb. Finally, we would like to take this opportunity to encourage all efforts to bolster the Honor Code and the community that it creates. We view both as integral to Connecticut College and its identity, and the experience of its members. We believe that this pivotal moment is an opportunity to broaden and deepen our commitment to the Honor Code across our entire campus. As such, we whole-heartedly endorse the idea for Connecticut College Faculty and Staff to be invited to pledge themselves to the Honor Code and the values that it promotes. We will work with the SGA on the resolution they are putting forward to this effect, and pledge to encourage other ideas and efforts that will protect and strengthen our College's Honor Code and the community that it fosters.

Sincerely,

The Connecticut College Honor Council
I am writing this letter to the editor for three reasons. The first is to comment on a resolution passed this past Thursday by the SGA, the second is to comment on the way in which it was passed, and the third is to express a sentiment that I fear could be lost amongst the impassioned diatribe and discourse of the past few days.

To the first of my purposes, I am speaking in reference to CC 14-15 #22. Resolution for the Connecticut College Student Government Association to Demand an Administrative Response Condemning Dehumanizing, Racist, and Hateful Speech by Members of the Campus Community. This resolution was brought to the floor and passed in a single night, and before I address what I believe to be an irresponsible breach of protocol, I want to speak to resolutions in general.

There has been much talk on campus recently about what exactly freedom of speech means on a campus like ours, about what exactly should and should not be protected, and about how we as a community and an institution should respond to incidents like the Facebook post by a professor here. On one side of this issue are those who demand an official condemnation from the administration of the kind of language which has been so hurtful to members of our community. On the other side of the are those who believe that such an action would invariably diminish the ability of this campus community as a whole to engage in free speech. My own opinions are in line with the values of the latter. This is not to say that I believe that those seeking an administrative condemnation in any way desire to abridge the right to free speech we all enjoy; far from it. Many have said themselves that condemnations of speech need not silence the voice of anyone involved. On this I agree in all cases except that of the greater institution.

When I (or any singular person) condemns the speech as hateful and racist, as I rightfully do, and when departments or other organizations on campus do, the condemnation does not carry with it the force to silence the voice of the condemned. We are each of us individuals operating beneath the umbrella of the institution we belong to, and as cohabitants cannot exert this kind of influence over each other. However, if the institution itself condemns the speech, regardless of the intent behind such an action, the very dimensions of the community change. The effect would be a narrowing of the umbrella, a de facto suppression of thought. It becomes impossible to freely express an idea within a system that has openly disallowed it.

There are those who might say that, even with this being the case, the importance of an administrative condemnation here is paramount. To them I would say this: principles are hard to maintain free speech in the face of such offensive and hurtful ideas is hard. But as hard as it may be, it is equally as necessary.

Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr. is a personal hero of mine, and has been for many years. I doubt if most of you will recognize his name, but I think he and his words are worth knowing. Holmes was a Supreme Court Justice serving about 95 years ago. In case of Abrams v. United States, where two men were convicted under the Espionage Act of actively subverting the United States' war effort during WWI through the distribution of leaflets with inflammatory writing, Justice Holmes wrote a dissenting opinion in defense of free speech so powerful that it resonates to this day:

"Persecution for the expression of opinions seems to me perfectly logical. If you have no doubt of your premises or your power, and want a certain result with all your heart, you naturally express your wishes in law, and sweep away all opposition. To allow opposition by speech seems to indicate that you think the speech impotent... or that you do not care wholeheartedly for the result, or that you doubt either your power or your premises. But when men have realized that time has upset many fighting faiths, they may come to believe even more than they believe the very foundations of their own conduct that the ultimate good desired is better reached by free trade in ideas – that the best test of truth is the power of the thought of the right to get itself accepted in the competition of the market, and that truth is Sworn to in each generation by the single heart, and as cohabitants cannot have to wager our salvation upon some prophecy based upon imperfect knowledge. While that experiment is part of our system, I think that we should be eternally vigilant against attempts to check the expression of opinions that we loathe and believe to be fraught with death, unless they so imminently threaten immediate interference with the lawful and pressing purposes of the law that an immediate check is required to save the country."

Justice Holmes is speaking about the country as a whole, and we here are merely concerned with the state of our campus community, but the same principles still do apply. The ideas expressed in the Facebook post in a single night were not power here, the last few days have made that abundantly clear. The market of ideas which is our campus has spoken resolutely and in unison to declare that we want to be a place of learning and acceptance, where people can do better than hate. This hour Justice Holmes served about 95 years ago, and will continue to happen, without the administrative condemnation that so many seek, and I think we should be proud of that.

The greater institution, as I see it, and as I hope that upon reading this you will at least consider it, has a responsibility to provide a forum for this discussion to take place, and any failure on its part to do so can be addressed as it arises. But it is not the institution's task to steer the conversation in any direction, even we want it "with all our hearts." It does us no good to demand otherwise.

Concerning my second stated purpose, with respect to the events surrounding the passage of this resolution, I want to say that it is in my opinion that the principles of shared governance were done a disservice. I, as a house senator, am bound by my responsibility to bring before my residents each week the resolutions that are on the SGA floor. In doing so I receive feedback and can have productive discussions with my constituents regarding the substance of the resolutions.

CC 14-15 #22 was proposed, voted on, and passed in a single meeting, allowing none but those present in the room a chance to view and comment on the bill before it was voted truth in doing so, I believe that my house, and all the other houses, were deprived of their rightful opportunity to see and comment on the affairs of their government. It makes no matter that, as some
Department Statements Against Dehumanizing Speech

Date: Mon, Mar 23, 2015
Subject: CCSRE clearly states that we do not condone dehumanizing speech

In response to the many events that transpired on campus prior to and during spring break regarding a Facebook post by a member of our faculty, the CCSRE would like to clearly state that we do not condone speech filled with bigotry and hate particularly when that speech uses dehumanizing language and incites or celebrates violence and brutality.

We make this public statement with particular attention to those students, staff, and faculty whose identities and affiliations position them as the targets of such speech. We feel a public statement that directly names the harm of biased incidents is essential to supporting the well-being of various members of the Connecticut College community, their right to educational opportunity, and their right to work in a non-hostile environment. We will continue to play our part in creating spaces for productive engagements around inclusive excellence. We look forward to collaborating with others to help move the College forward in achieving our goal of full participation.

From the following members of the CCSRE Steering Committee (arranged alphabetically):

Courtney Baker, Associate Professor of English
Sanil Bhattacharyya, Professor and Chair of Human Development
David Cantor, Associate Professor and Chair of History Department
Nathalie Enoke, Associate Professor of French and African Studies
Leo Garofalo, CCSRE Director, Associate Professor of History
Sandy Grande, Associate Professor and Chair of Education Department
Tracie Reiser, Associate Dean for Community Learning, Associate Director of the Holleran Center, and Director of OVCS
Ariella Rotramel, Visiting Assistant Professor of Department of Gender and Women's Studies
Bryana White, Coordinator of Multicultural Counseling, Student Counseling Services

We invited other Centers and Departments to sign or reissue this statement, or to create their own to share with the College community.

Date: March 24, 2015
Subject: History Department Statement on Hate Speech

March 24, 2015
To the Campus Community.

The history department would like to clearly state that we do not condone dehumanizing language and incites or celebrates violence and brutality in response to the many events that transpired on campus prior to and during spring break regarding a Facebook post by a member of our faculty; we join the CCSRE in condemning hate speech.

The history department would like to note the particularly salient tactic of dehumanizing language as a means to justify brutality and harm otherwise “well intended” people into silence and, effective- ly, complicity in racism, sexism, discrimination, colonialism and the numerous genocides throughout human history.

We make this public statement with particular attention to those students, staff, and faculty whose identities and affiliations position them as the targets of such speech.

We feel a public statement is essential to supporting the well-being of various members of the Connecticut College community, their right to educational opportunity, and their right to work in a non-hostile environment. We will continue to play our part in creating spaces for productive engagements around inclusive excellence. We look forward to collaborating with others to help move the College forward in achieving our goal of full participation.

From the following members of the History Department (arranged alphabetically):

David Cantor, Chair, Associate Professor of History
Sheetal Chhabria, Jacob and Hil-dur Blumenthal Assistant Professor of History
Ann Marie L. Davis, Assistant Professor of History
James T. Down, Associate Professor of History
Marc Forster, Henry B. Plim Professor of History
Leo J. Garofalo, Associate Professor of History
Eileen Kane, Associate Professor of History
Jen Munson, Associate Professor of History
Frederick Paxton,.Brígida Pacchiar
Diana White, Associate Dean, Community Learning, Director OVCS

Members of the Department in Alphabetical order:

Lauren Anderson
Charlie Cocores
Sandy Grande
Mike Jones
Dana Wright

Date: Wed, Mar 25, 2015
Subject: Holleran Center and OVCS clearly state that we do not condone dehumanizing speech

To the Campus Community.

In response to the many events that transpired on campus prior to and during spring break regarding a Facebook post by a member of our faculty; the Education Department joins the CCSRE, the History Department and the Holleran Center in stating that we condemn speech filled with bigotry and hate particularly when that speech uses dehumanizing language and incites or celebrates violence and brutality.

We make this public statement with particular attention to those students, staff, and faculty whose identities and affiliations position them as the targets of such speech. We feel a public statement is essential to supporting the well-being of various members of the Connecticut College community, their right to educational opportunity, and their right to work in a non-hostile environment. We will continue to play our part in creating spaces for productive engagements around inclusive excellence. We look forward to collaborating with others to help move the College forward in achieving our goal of full participation.

From the following members of the Holleran Center and OVCS:

Rebecca McCauley, Associate Director HC
Tracie Reiser, Associate Director HC, Associate Dean, Community Learning, Director OVCS
Ariella Rotramel, Gateway Course Professor, HC
Kim Sincich, Associate Director OVCS
Chris Soto, Instructor, HC
Diana White, Associate Director, HC

Members of the Department in alphabetical order:

Sheetal Chhabria, Assistant Professor of History
Dena Ferhatovic, William Meridith Assistant Professor of English
Seema Goelачach, C3 Mellon Postdoctoral Fellow, Anthropology
Afghan Jafar, Associate Professor of Sociology
Eileen Kane, Assistant Professor of History
Karolin Machowsky, Assistant Professor of German
Fred Paxton, Brígida Pacchiar Ardenghi Professor of History
Caroleen Sayej, Assistant Professor of Government and International Relations

Date: Wed, Mar 25, 2015
Subject: Global Islamic Studies

In response to the many events that transpired on campus prior to and during spring break regarding a Facebook post by a member of our faculty, the Global Islamic Studies Program joins CCSRE in denouncing speech filled with bigotry and hate particularly when that speech uses dehumanizing language and incites or celebrates violence and brutality.

We make this public statement with particular attention to those students, staff, and faculty whose identities and affiliations position them as the targets of such speech. We feel a public statement is essential to supporting the well-being of various members of the Connecticut College community, their right to educational opportunity, and their right to work in a non-hostile environment. We will continue to play our part in creating spaces for productive engagements around inclusive excellence. We look forward to collaborating with others to help move the College forward in achieving our goal of full participation.

Sofia Mendez Uldin, Associate Professor of Religious Studies and Director of the Global Islamic Studies Program

Joseph Alchemists, Associate Professor of Art History and Director of Architectural Studies

Sheetal Chhabria, Assistant Professor of History
Dena Ferhatovic, William Meredith Assistant Professor of English
Seema Goelachach, C3 Mellon Postdoctoral Fellow, Anthropology
Afghan Jafar, Associate Professor of Sociology
Eileen Kane, Assistant Professor of History
Karolin Machowsky, Assistant Professor of German
Fred Paxton, Brígida Pacchiar Ardenghi Professor of History
Caroleen Sayej, Assistant Professor of Government and International Relations
Date: Thu, Mar 26, 2015
Subject: Message from the Department of Human Development
March 25, 2015
To the Campus Community,

The Department of Human Development would like to clearly state that we condemn speech filled with bigotry and hate particularly when that speech uses dehumanizing language and incites or celebrates violence and brutality. In response to the many events that transpired on campus prior to and during spring break regarding a Facebook post by a member of our faculty, we join the CCSRE in condemning hate speech.

We make this public statement with particular attention to those students, staff, and faculty whose identities and affiliations position them as the targets of such speech. We feel a public statement is essential to supporting the well-being of various members of the Connecticut College community, their right to educational opportunity, and their right to work in a non-hostile environment. We will continue to play our part in creating spaces for productive engagements around these issues and look forward to collaborating with others to help move the College forward in achieving our goal of full participation.

From the following members of the Department of Human Development (arranged alphabetically):

Swati Bhattacharya, Professor and Chair of Human Development
Michelle Dunlap, Professor of Human Development
Jennifer Fredricks, Professor of Human Development
Loren Marsalis, Assistant Professor of Human Development
Joseph Alchermen, Associate Professor of Art History
Robert Baldwin, Associate Professor of Art History
Karen Gonzalez Rice, Sue and Eugene Mercy Assistant Professor of Art History
Emily C. Morash, Visiting Instructor in Art History
Qiang Ning, Chu-Niblack Associate Professor in Asian Art
Christopher B. Steiner, Lucy C. McDannell '22 Professor of Art History

Date: Thu, Mar 25, 2015
Subject: Statement from the Department of Sociology
Dear colleagues,

In response to the many events that transpired on campus prior to and during spring break regarding a Facebook post by a member of our faculty, the Sociology department unanimously joins CCSRE and other departments in denouncing speech filled with bigotry and hate, particularly when that speech uses dehumanizing language.

We feel a public statement that directly names the harm of bias incidents is essential to supporting the well-being of various members of the Connecticut College community, their right to educational opportunity, and their right to work in a non-hostile environment. We will continue to play our part in creating spaces for productive engagements around these issues and look forward to collaborating with others to help move the College forward in achieving our goal of full participation.

From the following members of the Department of Sociology (in alphabetical order):

Ana Campos-Holland
Ron Flores
Robert Gay
Cherise Harris
Afshan Jafar

Date: Thu, Mar 26, 2015
Subject: Statement from the Department of Theater
March 26, 2015
To the Campus Community,

The faculty and staff of the Department of Theater would like to clearly state that we condemn speech filled with bigotry and hate particularly when that speech uses dehumanizing language and incites or celebrates violence and brutality. In response to the many events that transpired on campus prior to and during spring break regarding a Facebook post by a member of our faculty, as well as other reports of acts or incidents prior to this, we join our colleagues in condemning hate speech.

We make this public statement with particular attention to those students, staff, and faculty whose identities and affiliations position them as the targets of such speech. We feel a public statement is essential to supporting the well-being of various members of the Connecticut College community, their right to educational opportunity, and their right to work in a non-hostile environment. We will continue to play our part in creating spaces for productive engagements around these issues and look forward to collaborating with others to help move the College forward in achieving our goal of full participation.

From the following members of the Department of Theater (arranged alphabetically)

Virginia Anderson, Assistant Professor
Donna Holman, Academic Assistant
Lisa Pollack, Associate Professor
Shiron Portnow, Associate Professor
Safia Uddin, Associate Professor

In response to the many events that transpired on campus prior to and during spring break regarding a Facebook post by a member of our faculty, members of the Department of Religious Studies joins CCSRE and other departments in denouncing speech filled with bigotry and hate, particularly when that speech uses dehumanizing language.

We feel a public statement that directly names the harm of bias incidents is essential to supporting the well-being of various members of the Connecticut College community, their right to educational opportunity, and their right to work in a non-hostile environment. We will continue to play our part in creating spaces for productive engagements around these issues and look forward to collaborating with others to help move the College forward in achieving our goal of full participation.

From the following members of the Department of Religious Studies

Gene Gallagher, Rosemary Park
Lindsey Harlan, Professor of Religious Studies
Sharon Portnow, Associate Professor of Religious Studies
Safia Uddin, Associate Professor of Religious Studies
Statement to the Campus Community

In response to the recent events on campus regarding a Facebook comment by a member of our faculty and the many targeted and anonymous posts on social media, the Ammerman Center joins CCSRE, the Holleran Center, academic departments and others in stating that we condemn speech and actions filled with bigotry and hate—in all its forms, both online and off—particularly when that speech uses dehumanizing language and incites or celebrates violence and brutality.

We make this public statement with particular attention to those students, staff, and faculty whose identities and affiliations position them as the targets of such speech. We feel a public statement that directly names the harm of bias incidents is essential to supporting the well-being of various members of the Connecticut College community, their right to educational opportunity, and their right to work in a non-hostile environment. We will continue to play our part in creating spaces for productive engagements around these issues and look forward to collaborating with others to help move the College forward in achieving our goal of full participation.

From the following fellows of the Ammerman Center: (in alphabetical order)

Joseph Alchermes, Associate Professor of Art History and Architectural Studies
Ginny Anderson, Assistant Professor of Psychology
Naddav Azor, Assistant Professor of Studio Art
Greg Bailey, Associate Professor of Art
Catherine Benoit, Professor of Anthropology
Lindsey Brannon, Digital Scholarship and Visual Resources Librarian
Bruce Carpenter, Director of Technical Support and Information Security Officer
David Dorfman, Professor of Dance
Libby Friedman, Assistant Director of the Ammerman Center
Karen Gonzalez-Rice, Assistant Professor of Art History
Anthony Greashe, Associate Professor of Anthropology
Charles O. Hartman, Professor of English
Ted Hendrickson, Associate Professor of Art
Lee Hilde, Vice-President for Information Services
Shawn Horn, Assistant Professor of Dance
Ozgur Izmirli, Associate Professor of Computer Science
David Kyuman Kim, Associate Professor of Religious Studies
Priya Kohli, Assistant Professor of Mathematics and Statistics
Art Kreiger, Professor of Music
James Lee, Assistant Professor of Computer Science
Steve Laber, Adjunct Assistant Professor of Theater

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GWS Statement

Subject: Statement from the Ammerman Center

Dear Connecticut College campus community,

The faculty of the Department of Biology would like to clearly state that we condemn speech filled with bigotry and hate particularly when that speech uses dehumanizing language and incites or celebrates violence and brutality. We are calling upon ourselves and others to act in order to strengthen our community and to move away from indifference.

We make this public statement with particular attention to those students, staff, and faculty whose identities and affiliations position them as the targets of such speech. We feel a public statement that directly names the harm of bias incidents is essential to supporting the well-being of various members of the Connecticut College community, their right to educational opportunity, and their right to work in a non-hostile environment. We will continue to play our part in creating spaces for productive engagements around these issues and look forward to collaborating with others to help move the College forward in achieving our goal of full participation.

From the following members of GWS steering committee, faculty and associated faculty have signed this statement:

Ginny Anderson
Sunil Bharti
Joyce Bennett
Mary-Anne Borelli
Bianche Boyd
Dan Damrose
Sheela Chhabria
Shani Collins-Achille
Ann Marie Davis
Amy Dooling
Michelle Dunlap
Leo Garefo
Heidi Henderson
Candace Hovsepian
Michael James
Suzuko Knott
Julia Kuhlgat
Manuel Lizarralde
Karolin Machans
Rosemarie Roberts
Ariella Rotramel
Suzuko Knott
Lisa Wilder
Dana Wright

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Date: Fri, Mar 27, 2015
Subject: Statement from Biology

Dear Connecticut College campus community,

The faculty of the Department of Biology would like to clearly state that we condemn speech filled with bigotry and hate particularly when that speech uses dehumanizing language and incites or celebrates violence and brutality. We are calling upon ourselves and others to act in order to strengthen our community and to move away from indifference.

We make this public statement with particular attention to those students, staff, and faculty whose identities and affiliations position them as the targets of such speech. We feel a public statement that directly names the harm of bias incidents is essential to supporting the well-being of various members of the Connecticut College community, their right to educational opportunity, and their right to work in a non-hostile environment. We will continue to play our part in creating spaces for productive engagements around full participation and for all College constituents.

We publicly recommit ourselves to, as stated in the Connecticut College matriculation pledge, "take responsibility for [our] beliefs and to conduct [ourselves] with integrity, civility, and the utmost respect for the dignity of all human beings."

Robert Askias
Marystone Borrelli
Jane Dawson
Anthony Groush
Kristine Hardeman
Pam Hine
Chad Jones
Paul Lizarralde
Michelle Neely
Page Owen
Jen Payach
Peter Silver
Rachel Spencer
Sardha Suryaparamma
Douglas Thompson
Marc Zimmer

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Date: Fri, Mar 27, 2015
Subject: Statement from Biology

Dear Connecticut College campus community,

The Advisory Committee for the Program in Environmental Studies, the Department of Botany, and the Goodwin-Niering Center encourages all members of the college community to acknowledge, value and accept the humanity of all individuals. Speech or actions that incite or celebrate violence are dehumanizing and incompatible with our individual and institutional values.

An institution that publically espouses principles of inclusive excellence must, both collectively and individually, work to create an environment that is supportive of and non-hostile to all members of our community.

In response to the recent events that have transpired on campus regarding a Facebook post by a member of our faculty, we publicly recommit ourselves, in support of the goals stated in the Connecticut College. We will continue to play our part in creating spaces for productive engagements around full participation and for all College constituents.

We publicly recommit ourselves to, as stated in the Connecticut College matriculation pledge, "take responsibility for [our] beliefs and to conduct [ourselves] with integrity, civility, and the utmost respect for the dignity of all human beings."

We look forward to collaborating with others to help move the College forward in achieving our goal of full participation.

Robert Askias
Phil Barnes
Anne Berhard
Deborah Baum
Marylynn Fallon
Martha Grossel
Kristine Hardeman
Steve Loomis
Sardha Suryaparamma
Sue Warren
Stephen Winters-Hilt
Subject: Statement to the Community from the Department of Anthropology

To the Students, Staff, and Faculty of Connecticut College,

In response to recent events on campus regarding racism, bigotry, and intolerance, the Department of Anthropology at Connecticut College wishes to publicly voice its opposition to all speech and acts that dehumanize any member of our community or incite suffering, violence, and/or brutality.

We recognize that the rights to free speech are indivisible, but we stand against speech acts, non-verbal forms of communication, and actions that attack the humanity of students, staff, and faculty. Statements or acts directed at students, staff, and/or faculty that are homophobic, sexist, bigoted, or hateful are protected by the First Amendment, but we passionately support the capacity of others to identify, interpret, and scrutinize such acts. Indeed, we believe that all speech and acts that are bigoted and hateful should be made public and subjected to thorough and thoughtful consideration with respect to the ways that they harm individuals as well as our broader intellectual community.

Furthermore, we are committed to helping guarantee that all Connecticut College students, staff, and faculty are afforded equal rights to education, intellectual exploration, and everyday campus life without fear of physical harm, directed hate, harm to their personal property, or any other form of hostility.

In anthropology, we believe that it is our professional responsibility to identify, question and when necessary call out racism in our everyday lives as well as in the policies, practices, and norms that define our institutions and structures. We are committed to collaborating with students, staff, and faculty across the College for the purpose of continuing to develop programming and creating spaces in which we can discuss and find meaningful resolutions to both the incidents and structures of racism, in our lives, in our community, and in our institution.

From the following members of the Department of Anthropology (arranged alphabetically),

Joyce Bennett, Visiting Assistant Professor
Catherine Benoit, Professor
Seema Golestanian, CI Postdoctoral Fellow
Anthony Graesch, Associate Professor and Chair
Maniul Lizarzalde, Associate Professor
Chris Steinle, Professor

Date: Fri, Mar 27, 2015

Subject: Statement to the Connecticut College Hillel community forum on Wednesday, March 25, and especially wanted to show appreciation for the students who both share their opinions and listen to others respectfully. We appreciate everyone who engaged in sharing their views at the community forum on Wednesday, March 25, and especially wanted to show appreciation for the students who both share their opinions and listen to others respectfully. We appreciate everyone who engaged in sharing their views at the community forum on Wednesday, March 25, and especially wanted to show appreciation for the students who both share their opinions and listen to others respectfully.

Shanti Collins-Achille
Susan Connolly
Amine Couture
David Dorfman
Heidi Henderson
Shawn House
Lisa Race
Rosemarie Roberts
Richard Schlenk
Greg Surman
Marya Urisin
Derrick Yingled

Sincerely,

Connecticut College Hillel Executive Board
Date: Sun, Mar 29, 2015
Subject: Statement from the American Studies Program
As the oldest interdisciplinary program at the College and a founding partner of the Center for the Comparative Study of Race and Ethnicity (CCSRE), the American Studies program condones all hate speech and any other representations, expressions, or actions that denigrate human beings and their communities, whether close to home or across the world. We also applaud the courage of the Connecticut College students who have brought forward their concerns in the tradition of non-violent student protest, despite the very real risks they face by doing so. In expecting the college and its officers to uphold its own mission, core values, and honor code, student protesters have in fact "put the liberal arts into action." Furthermore, they have shown that they believe the highest purpose of their educations is not to obtain a credential or assimilate into the corporate structure of the global economy but rather to actively participate in advancing principles of peace, justice, equity, and inclusion. We stand with our students in this pursuit.

Program Director
Catherine McNicol Stock

Program Advisers
Courtney Baker
David Cantor
David Canton
James Downes
Karen Genslea Rice
David Kim
Jen Manion

Affiliated Faculty
Lauren Anderson
Ginny Anderson
Chris Barnard
Joyce Bennett
Suniti Bhattacharya
Tiran Bose
Ron Flores
Leo Garofolo
Anthony Grauech
Sandy Grande
Clariweth Doore
Alfman Juker
Michael James
Emily Marsh
Michelle Neely
Dentist Pelletier
Julie Richman
Rosemarie Roberts
Christopher Stein
Sofia Udinni
Lisa Wilson
Dana Wright

Date: Sat, Mar 28, 2015
Subject: Statement from Hispanic Studies

In response to the many events that transpired on campus prior to, during, and after spring break regarding a Facebook post by a member of our faculty, the Hispanic Studies department joins many others in stating that we condemn speech filled with bigotry and hate—in all of its forms and particularly when these communications use dehumanizing language or imagery and incite or incite violence and brutality.

We make this public statement with particular attention to those students, staff, and faculty whose identities and affiliations position them as the targets of such speech. We feel a public statement is essential to supporting the well-being of various members of the Connecticut College community, their right to educational opportunity, and their right to work in a non-hostile environment. We look forward to collaborating with others to help move the College forward in achieving our goal of full participation.

Sincerely,

John Anthony
Art Kreiger
Wendy May
James McNichol
Mark Soto
Midge Thomas

Date: Sat, Mar 28, 2015
Subject: Statement from Italian Studies
To the Students, Staff, and Faculty of Connecticut College:

The members of the Department of Italian Studies join CCSRE, the Centers, and the academic departments in denouncing hate speech and bigotry.

We greatly value the respect and dignity of all individuals in their diversity. Our recent campus forum revealed that we are all affected by acts of racism, xenophobia, homophobia and sexism over time, and we are especially concerned about the effect of bigotry on the well-being of those who have been the targets of hateful speech.

We are committed to building a thriving community at our college. We support all those who have voiced their opposition to hate speech and racism, and are actively engaged in the collective effort to improve our sense of safety and constructive dialogue at the college.

In alphabetical order:

Carmela Patton
Frida Morelli
Robert Proctor
Paola Sica

Date: Sat, Mar 28, 2015
Subject: Statement from the Department of Slavic Studies
Yes to free speech, no to racist language. This is the position of the Department of Slavic Studies in response to recent events on campus, and our concern is to our students about anonymous attacks aimed to harm, discredit and oppress others. Such language in no way advances the civil, public discourse that is so vital to any academic institution, indeed, to any open society.

We are committed to working with others across the campus to create a better, more just environment for students, staff, and faculty who are alienated and harmed by the current climate.

Christopher Colbeath
Pietro Fravecchio
Andrea Lioness
Tony Lim
Laura Little

Date: Sat, Mar 28, 2015
Subject: Statement from Hispanic Studies
Dear Connecticut College campus community,

In response to the many events that transpired on campus prior to, during, and after spring break regarding a Facebook post by a member of our faculty, the Hispanic Studies department joins many others in stating that we condemn speech filled with bigotry and hate—in all of its forms and particularly when these communications use dehumanizing language or imagery and incite or incite violence and brutality.

We make this public statement with particular attention to those students, staff, and faculty whose identities and affiliations position them as the targets of such speech. We feel a public statement is essential to supporting the well-being of various members of the Connecticut College community, their right to educational opportunity, and their right to work in a non-hostile environment. We look forward to collaborating with others to help move the College forward in achieving our goal of full participation.

Sincerely,

John Anthony
Art Kreiger
Wendy May
James McNichol
Mark Soto
Midge Thomas

Date: Sun, Mar 29, 2015
Subject: MUSIC DEPARTMENT STATEMENT
We of the Department of Music clearly state that we do not condone dehumanizing speech filled with bigotry and hate. We will collaborate with others to help move the College forward in achieving our goal of full participation.

Sincerely,

John Anthony
Art Kreiger
Wendy May
James McNichol
Mark Soto
Midge Thomas

Date: Sun, Mar 29, 2015
Subject: A message from the Philosophy Department
Dear colleagues, students, and friends,

We in the Philosophy Department want to thank you for your understanding of the very difficult situation we are in. We also want to say a special thank you to students and colleagues who have shouldered much of the burden in recent weeks. Several of us wrote to our majors and minors just before spring break, but we now appreciate the need to share our thoughts more publicly.

First, we think that there is an important difference between (a) stating a political view that some one might find offensive and (b) expressing one's political view in a way that dehumanizes or devalues other people. We join with other colleagues and students in rejecting (b) as inconsistent with our individual and departmental values.

Second, we support those students who feel moved to speak out about dehumanizing speech and other bias incidents. The blame and burden must not be shifted onto them.

Third, we hope that all students will feel welcome in our philosophy classes and at department events.

Fourth, we strongly support our colleague Andrew Peterson's academic freedom. We deeply value his contributions to our philosophical community and we look forward to welcoming him back at the end of his leave. We know him to be an excellent teacher and a first-rate scholar. And we are committed to including him in the intellectual life of the department and the college.

Fifth, although we do not believe that any students or colleagues are trying to silence political speech about the Palestinians— Israeli conflict, we would stand strongly against any attempt to do so. Our commitment to inclusivity means that we have to be open to a variety of perspectives on complex issues of the day, even (and perhaps especially) when those issues are painful to discuss.

Finally, we reaffirm our department's commitment to helping all to participate fully in the shared aspects of college life. We believe that our discipline has a special contribution to make to building an inclusive community of inquiry. We will work hard to try to understand how different members of the campus community experience things in different ways. Our doors are open to any and all students and colleagues who would like to talk with us.

Yours,

Simon Feldman
Kristin Pfister-Korn
Derek Turner
Larry Vogel
Mexican Non-Profit Speaks to Conn Community
A conversation about human rights

MAIA HIBBETT CONTRIBUTOR

On Mon., Mar. 23, Connecticut College hosted Pablo Obando and Stuart Schussler, two representatives from the Mexico Solidarity Network, an organization that promotes social change in Mexico and facilitates students' involvement in solidarity activism.

Obando's center has been located in Chiapas, the southernmost state in Mexico, since 1989. He explained that aside from being Mexico's southernmost state, Chiapas is also its poorest state—but in a financial sense alone. He not-

tered that due to the presence of indigenous tribes including the Tzotzil, Tzeltal, Tojolabal and Zoque peoples, Chiapas is culturally rich. Accord-

ing to the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), this richness can potentially be used to further develop the area.

Obando's role is to get involved when indigenous groups' rights are violated. For the cases—between eight hundred and one thousand per year—that Frayba receives, members of the non-profit assess the human rights in-

fringements in question and then investigate and document qualifying cases. The purpose of documentation is simple but very powerful; when atrocities are exposed, they become real. Once these cases become real, it becomes easier to promote awareness and prevent future violations.

In order to provide deeper context for his talk, Obando discussed several atrocities that have been documented by Frayba. He noted these accounts, however, with the assertion that his intent was not to scare the audience nor to instill pity for Mexico's in-

digenous people, rather to focus on the negative, Obando challenged listeners to concent-

rate on the ability to organize, demonstrated by the people of Chiapas, and to view the situation with hope. "Come to Mexico and share hope with us," he said.

Obando quickly condemned Mexican former president Ernesto Zedillo Ponce de León, who approved a counter-insurgency plan that killed 45 and injured 26 youth in the Acraal Massacre at a refugee camp called Las Abejas, or "the bees." This massacre was only one of many attacks by Ponce de León, and since his presidency Mexico's "low-intensity war" has continued to be per-

ceived. He also brought up a recent case in August of 2014, when one of such groups eliminated Caracol de la Realidad, a unit of the Zapatista movement that promoted autonomy.

Chiapas wants autonomy, Obando explained, but the Mexican government aims to suppress the movement. Therefore, Obando posed the question: "Is it a matter of human rights autonomy?" Why is it so dangerous?

Because the Mexican government wants to maintain its control over Chiapas, the low-intensity war tactics have continued to fray divisions in the people of Chiapas, thus making it more difficult for them to unite and gain independence. The fact that the majority of Americans hear so little about this situation in the United States promotes the si-

lence that the Mexican government wants. In the eyes of the corrupt government, American media is doing its job. On the role of the media in address-

ing this conflict, Obando said, "They want us to associate a million different things with fear. And they want Mexico to be one of them."

With this statement, Obando reminded the audience of the stigma that exists in the United States against Mexico and the general fear of any con-

flict within the region. Obando brought up how easily people distance themselves from world conflict and oppression. In ref-

erence to Chiapas's dead and disappeared people, he stated: "They are not only ours."

Obando's aim was not to guilt the audience, however, but rather to reinforce the impor-

tance of solidarity on a global scale. To the audience, he said, "Please don't ask me "how can we help you?" reminding them that Frayba's purpose was not to seek charity, but rather soli-

darity. The non-profit's pow-

er stems from the notion that with solidarity, "We can make the same noise in 30 different countries."

Because Frayba is a non-profit, Schussler explained, it relies largely on volunteer work. Volunteers either serve as employees at the center in Chiapas or complete 15 day sessions as observers stationed in various neighbor-

hoods whose purpose is to bear witness to human rights viola-

tions, should they occur. Oban-

do explained that although work as an observer sounds risky, it is actually extremely safe. Because the Mexican authorities want to keep their practices from being exposed, they stop committing atrocities when observers are present. Therefore, observers protect themselves and Chiapas's ci-

vilians simply by being there.

In an interview after the talk, Obando explained that the ma-

jority of observers come from the United States; he said, "We need more.

Stuart Schussler's role in the talk was mainly to pro-

vide occasional interpretation and clarification, provided one asked. He explained that American involvement with Frayba. When asked how he got involved with Frayba and Mexico Solidarity Network, Schussler responded, "The short answer is that I signed a mailing list at a talk like this."

Schussler elaborated by ad-

mitting that he, like many stu-

dents here, had been raised in a relatively sheltered American culture and was "pretty oblivious" until he got to college and involved himself with solidarity activ-

ities. Once you start seeing the truth about how the world works, he said, "you have to do something about it."

Obando had two closing thoughts to leave with Conn's student body with. First, he stated that those in the U.S. need to learn more about oc-

currences in Mexico and re-

alize that the United States is part of the problem, but with a little effort, it can become part of the solution. As his final statement, he said: "If we have a call for solidarity, respond."

New SEAT Stop for Conn

On Mar. 24, 2015, only a couple of days after returning from spring break, a group of Connecticut Col-

lege students, faculty and staff, as well as members of the New London community, gathered on Williams Street for the unveiling of the new Southeast Area Tran-

sit (SEAT) bus stop. The new bus stop, which can take riders into New London as well as neighbor-

ing towns such as Norwich, is one of the many new initiatives furthering integrating Connecticut College into New London. Speakers at the event included President Katherine Bergeron, New London Mayor Daryl Finizio, SEAT Bus board member and former mayor of New London Margaret Curtain, Community Learning Coordinator in OVCS David Cruz, and SEAT Bus General Manager Michael Carroll. Vice President for Admin-

istration Ulysses Hammond gave introductions.

Cruz, a New London na-

tive, saw the need for a bus stop to aid in transportation between the College and community, and called the decision to forward with the initiative "a no brainer." Virginia Gresham '17, Senior Fellow for Resource Management in the Office of Sustainability, assisted Cruz in the planning of the new SEAT bus stop last spring and attend-

ed senior administrator meetings with him. She said The College Voice that, though the new stop is officially open to the public, more will be coming to encourage peo-

ple to use the bus, including both a physical and digital copy of the
"HATE CRIMES AND FEAR OF ISLAM IN THE US:"

Students and faculty gather for an important discussion

MOLLIE REID
NEWS EDITOR

On Friday, March 27, approximately fifty students gathered in Coffee Grounds to engage in a critical discussion on "Hate Crimes and Fear of Islam in the United States," with Professors Bhattacharya, Borer, Hammond, Jafar, and Campos-Holland.

Professor of Sociology Asghar Jafar opened the talk by mentioning how important it was on paper, although the event was originally supposed to take place in February. The content is still very much relevant today, globally and locally. She told the audience that what prompted her to want to hold the event was the murder of three Muslim students (Deah Barakat, Yusor Abu-Salha and Razan Abu-Salha) by Craig Stephen Hicks near the University of North Carolina Chapel Hill on Feb. 11, 2015. In particular, the lack of media coverage of the murders in Chapel Hill was surprising to her. As she went on, she mentioned the few times it was covered, it was done in a "very roundabout way," with that some people wondered if the UNC murders could be considered hate-crimes. Jafar said: "I wonder if we've been going around in circles trying to avoid such questions. It seems that there are very obvious clues leading us to this is a hate-crime...so why are we trying to label it as a hate-crime?"

After opening the talk, Professor of International Relations and Government Trish Borer discussed another related event to the talk's title, the attack by Hansyl Mourad, Said Kouach and Cherif Kouachi on the French satirical magazine, Charlie Hebdo, that occurred in Paris in January. She noted that in that same week, the Charlie Hebdo attacks occurred. Boko Haram committed acts of violence in the Nigerian towns of Baga and Doro Baga on Jan. 5, yet the former was less discussed by the media and by students. Professor Borer then mentioned that one way that media has reacted and covered the Germanwings incident has been through stereotypes and wrongful framing that attempt to connect the co-pilot, Andreas Lubitz, to terrorism because Lubitz's girlfriend is Muslim. "The reports immediately [wondered] oh is he Muslim? Was this an act of terrorism?" Professor Borer also used the capturing of trophy photographs of Muslim prisoners at Abu Ghraib by American military personnel as another example, and other ways in which the process of dehumanization of groups leads to violence.

During the event, students and professors alike frequently integrated the issue of belonging and citizenship into the dialog. "To me the question of belonging is at the center of all of this," Hammond stated. "And at the center of that is, do you have an entitled right to say you are an equal citizen, are you an equal citizen of the United States?" Professor Jafar said, first commenting on the theme of belonging or the lack of it. These questions then become further complicated when individuals are faced with the reality of living in an environment of ignorance and bigotry, which can lead to hate crimes and feelings of exclusion. Professor of Human Development Sunil Bhatia contextualized and expanded on Professor Jafar's comment by stating that, "We want to establish here that this [hate crime and questions of belonging] happens in different dimensions of the world. The stories of hate crimes are very similar in many ways," he said, using historical examples of atrocities during World War II to contemporary times.

There is a certain language that gets involved when we think about what hate crimes are, that is, to think about Nazis, for example. Hate speech was adopted as official policy so that the entire apparatus could use propaganda. Professor Bhattacharya continued. Professor Bhattacharya stressed that there is real danger when the state sanctions the use of hate speech, making it "legitimate," by giving it "full license." In cases of hate crime, Professor Bhattacharya commented that, "As it goes, [the rage involved] is never neutral."

Another prominent theme that filtered throughout the talk was the need for more conversations on campus, nationally and globally that seek to educate everyone on various levels. Several students and faculty agreed that it is essential to gain a better understanding of groups and ways of thinking that people may not be familiar with. With the constant need to engage in dialogues, students at the talk believed that in order to fight hate crimes and need for a thriving multicultur- al world, people must question the notion of hybridity, framing and American exceptionalism.

In relation to "hybridity," many students felt that by addressing people as say "Irish-American," a feeling of difference occurs that can cause those understood by the public through "hybrid labels," to be seen as "non-American."

As a Residential Educations Fellow (REF) event, floor governors Molly Rosen '17 and Tuohy '17 worked with REF Professors Bhattacharya, Borer, Hammond and Jafar to plan a meaningful event for Coffee Grounds. According to Tuohy, coordinating the event was a "very collaborative process because the professors are truly invested in organizing productive events that will spark discussion in our community."

Tuohy feels "particularly excited about "Hate Crimes and the Fear of Islam in the U.S." because of its "definite relevance in our community right now."

"It seems that there are very obvious clues leading us to this is a hate-crime...so why are we trying to label it as a hate-crime?" Professor Borer asked.

"What is the CCSRE?"

ANDREW SHAW
STAFF WRITER

Due to recent events in the College's community, its Center for the Comparative Study of Race and Ethnicity (CCSRE) has been mentioned quite frequently in conversations across campus. It started in 1985 through the work of its first director, David King, Associate Professor of Religious Studies and chair of that department; Sandy Grande, Associate Professor of Chair and Education; and Tracee Reiser, the Associate Dean for Community Learning. "It comes out of activism" regarding diversity on campus, said the current director, Associate Professor of History Leo Garofalo.

Located in "The Pink House" (740 Williams Street) its purpose is "to create a space such as it does, for the generation of ideas (about race and ethnicity)"

Garofalo said. By bringing "faculty, staff and students together in the 'Pink House'" research "race and ethnicity in and across multiple disciplines is "centered" on investigating relationships that have been fragmented across the College's academic departments and programs, and thus, weakened.

Although as a Professor of English Courtney Baker said, the CCSRE does "call the administration (listening): sometimes cultivating a set of standards for what it thinks an intellectual community that is equitable" should look like, it does not act on place only or even primarily-to handle crises.

"It's not," Professor Baker said. "Just people talking about their experiences and feelings." Rather, "it's a safe space" for research relating to race and ethnicity that recognizes that those topics, and the students, matter, "that brings intellectual support."

Interested since its founding in furthering inclusive excellence, the steering committee is vocally involved in how will specifically support its advertised goal of inclusive excellence. In this work of improving "inclusivity and working to achieve full participation by all," Garofalo said, for topics of race and ethnicity and, as mission statement notes, "other categories" that are performance, "it does not offer a certificate, major or minor. Instead, it supports "knowledge production" across the campus community; faculty and student research and programming (lectures, film screenings and other events) related to issues of power, politics, gender, race, ethnicity and social justice. It helped to start the new Global Islamic Studies program, which, like the Center itself, is interdisciplinary and aware of the identities intersect with one another. Associate Professor of History David Cantor and Professor Baker are working to revitalize and restructure African Studies major.

The Center hopes to make these and other interdisciplinary programs permanent, "to seed ideas, seed initiatives [and] to plant them broadly," said Garofalo. That is the goal that Garofalo said that the CCSRE "are aiming to get everybody thinking."

It does not matter where someone starts, "they can get engaged." Wefulful discussion encourages in the Center is generally through research and planning programs, students can become involved in the "categories of" Race and Ethnicity (CRE) courses. The designation allows "faculty across campus," Garofalo said. To be "involving multiple studies of race and ethnicity directly in a given course."

This semester, for example, American Studies, Gender and Women's Studies, History, Dance, English, Anthropology, Art History, Education, Religious Studies and Psychology all offer courses that will spark discussion in our community: faculty and students together in [the Pink House]."
Complicated Contemporary Politics in Venezuela

ALEX MILOFSKI
CONTRIBUTOR

After former Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez's death in March 2013, current President Nicolas Maduro, Chavez's hand-picked successor, has spent almost his entire tenure dealing with the monumental problems facing his country. These dilemmas have sparked widespread riots and protests. The opposition is protesting mainly because of the following factors: alarming crime rate and the scarcity of basic and medical commodities, President Maduro has reacted to these protests with an iron fist. According to the international organization Human Rights Watch, 200 people have been killed as a result of violent clashes with protesters, "almost all of them civilians," and there has been a torrent of reports on torture and states. The new exchange rate that attempts to silence the country's scarcity on health care, with only 6.3 or 12 bolivars per dollar, has plunged the economy into inflation. People especially concerned and protecting their families are emptied of their U.S. dollars and have shown a history of the U.S. sanctions, moving to hide his country's evidence to prove they are attempting to restructure their diplomats. Chavez's government, as one of the bigger oil exporters in the western hemisphere, has much political sway in the region. Some of the biggest political and economic woes, crime rates and financial stagnation, have required the U.S. to reduce its diplomatic presence in Venezuela to a mere 24,000 murders in Caracas, home of the recently installed opposition leader Leopoldo López. Furthermore, Venezuela has a murder rate of 4.3 for every 100,000 citizens. Venezuela's currency, the bolivar, has been severely devalued, with the government forcing the exchange rate of either 6.3 or 12 bolivars per dollar, while the market has been trading at around 170 bolivars per dollar and the black market right around 190 bolivars per dollar. TheWall Street Journal recently wrote an article describing the effect of the country's scarcity on health care. Good health is one of Venezuela's biggest challenges, which has required the U.S. to reduce its diplomatic presence in Venezuela. The president's socialist policies, nationalization of large industries and falling oil prices have plunged the economy into inflation. The government for Democracy (NED) had imposed sanctions on seven Venezuelan military and intelligence officials, accusing them of human rights violations. These sanctions were also put on members of their families and barring them from doing business with American citizens, traveling to the United States, and possibly having their assets in the U.S. frozen. In response, President Maduro has required the U.S. to reduce their embassy size, placed new restrictions on U.S. visa applicants and have even taken out a full-page ad in The New York Times condemning President Obama's actions and declaring that Venezuela is not a threat to the United States national security in any way.

While the U.S. denies Mr. Maduro's accusations of backing opposition efforts to overthrow the government, it is interesting to note that Freedom of Information requests and Wikileaks cables have shown a history of the U.S. funneling money to Chavez opposition groups. Agencies such as the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the National Endowment for Democracy (NED) had given up to $20 million dollars to organizations in Venezuela. The goal of these organizations is not regime change, but rather "democracy promotion." The U.S. is also one of the United States top five oil exporters. Amid a severe economic crisis, widespread civil unrest and increasingly hostile diplomatic relations with the strongest power in the western hemisphere, Venezuela's future looks bleak. President Maduro has received the power to legislate by decree in response to the U.S. sanctions, a move that could give him greater power over political dissenters as well. The turmoil is evolving, but having to contend with all these crises in such a condensed format will prove difficult at best for President Maduro and for the citizens of Venezuela.

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Complicated Contemporary Politics in Venezuela
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The Critical Role of Professors in our Shifting Community

SARAH ROSE GRUSZECKI STAFF WRITER

Over spring break, I wrote an article for this issue of The College Voice examining professor and student relationships within Connecticut College and how they are unique to our institution. As the first post-spring break week at Conn began, this article was close to complete. With interviews conducted and sources cited, it appeared as though I was perfectly on track for my assigned due date.

However, after witnessing and experiencing the startling events of this week, something about my article did not feel quite right. Its humorous tone detailing professor-student relationships through sources ranging from "rate my professor" ratings to informal meetings no longer felt appropriate to best serve this article's premise.

It is difficult to deny that there are many fantastic professors on our campus. The fact that we live in a community where professors invite their students over for dinner and frequently introduce themselves on a first name basis are qualities which make our school incredibly special. Upon returning home from college many of my friends were indeed surprised that one of my friends had joined her seminar professor and peers for a home cooked meal. These intimate and meaningful relationships play an essential role for many in the overall Connecticut College experience and help to foster a unique and important sense of community.

However, it is evident through the events of this week that our professors have most certainly changed. As our campus has been turned upside down to engage in critical discussions over racism and discrimination, some individuals have undoubtedly expressed concern about the current state of our academic institution. While many have certainly worried about a lack of clarity and understanding and relate to these student perspectives, I sat in this week's forum and at Thursday night's SGA meeting, I also experienced a profound sense of pride to be part of such an exceptional community.

In a moment where experiences in high school were often held as a distant memory, many students, faculty and staff are struggling to recover from the pain of this week's incidents and the challenging discussions they have provoked. I have proudly witnessed professors and students come together to find a space to productively heal.

Furthermore, over the course of this week I have been further impressed by the time which professors have allocated within their classrooms to engage in conversations about racism, discrimination and community values. As a first-year student currently enrolled in two classes and separate departments, I was incredibly surprised to discover the majority of my professors allotted at least one full class period to discussing this week's events. Interrupting their pre-determined syllabi to address the needs of our community and student body is an act that I sincerely appreciated. Unlike many of my experiences in high school where instructors appeared solely fixated on the courses they were responsible for teaching, it has become strikingly evident that Conn's professors hold a overarching commitment to the success and safety of our greater community.

The past week has exposed me to a side of Connecticut College that was not evident in the enthusiastic guided tours, informational sessions and colorful pamphlets used in our application experience last year. Wednesday's campus forum and the consequential events which followed have revealed to many others that our college and community remain in a vulnerable state. However, this week has also illustrated the real value our professors hold in the place I chose to be my home. At the end of the day, our professors truly care about creating a community where all individuals feel safe, respected, and above all, genuinely heard.

Campus Forum Leaves Concerns Unaddressed

LUCA POWELL MANAGING EDITOR

On March 25, President Katherine Bergeron hosted an all-campus forum, billed as "a community conversation on free speech, equity and inclusion." The event started on time at 4:30 pm in Palm Auditorium, but went over the expected end time by over 45 minutes. The entire auditorium was nearly full, resulting in the use of an overflow room with a stream of the event.

President Bergeron pledged to erect a five-part agenda aimed at assuaging concerns. She plans to have policies toward speech on social media reviewed, as well as the procedures for reporting alleged incidents. In addition to finding a full-time Dean of Equity, Bergeron will appoint an interim dean. Last, she pledged to create a campus forum to discuss campus-wide issues.

Following Bergeron's comments, Liza Talusan '97, former chair of the Connecticut College Alumni of Color committee, and a member of the College's Alumni Association Board, spoke briefly about her role as a facilitator. Short of a few attempts to enforce the time constraints of the forum, Talusan gave the students nearly unfettered ability to speak their minds. The forum quickly took a life of its own.

Ayla Zuraw-Friedland, editor-in-chief of The College Voice, spoke as an individual in solidarity with marginalized groups on campus, specifically calling out President Bergeron, asking her to speak off the cuff and to condemn hate speech by name. Zuraw-Friedland's insistence voiced many of the student body's concerns: that the forum would not suffice, and neither would the administration's five-part agenda if it did not recognize and decisively address the rights of the offended.

Bergeron pushed back on the implication that anyone, other than herself, felt the words were too non-committal. Zuraw-Friedland remarked, "[...] you need to know that. I don't think anyone stands more in solidarity with the students than you. [...] I stand in solidarity with you, Bergeron remarked, "I care about creating a community where all individuals feel safe, respected, and above all, genuinely heard."

East of all of the speakers, two students stood up for Professor Pessin. One argued that his words were misconstrued and the professor bashed The College Voice for "yellow journalism." Connor Wolfe '16 spoke about the injustices of anti-semitism, before detailing some his opinions about Israel's political and militaristic situation.

Subsequent student speakers channelled their concerns about anti-Semitism into a discussion about the well-being of this greater campus community. The Professor's claims of bias because of his pro-israel political stance never factored into the discussion. Arguably, the whole event was only indirectly about him, although one Palestinian student who had the words 'pitbull' spray-painted on his ear by racists, sarcastically thanked the professor for providing the ammunition. The student told the story of being a refugee from a war-torn country, ending his contribution with a concise "free palestine."

Largely, however, the forum was mostly concerned with the visibility of the underrepresented at Connecticut College. "Why did it take this incident for us to start talking about this," said one student, who urged that we use the recent events to address a larger problem: the stories and experiences of minority students and their experiences of bigotry, discrimination, and racism at Connecticut College.

The campus conversation quickly became a forum for these experiences, but perhaps more importantly, it became a space for all in attendance to listen and empathize with their peers.

Many stories detailed emerging difficulties of being stopped by campus police on the suspicion of not being a student, or of bias reports going largely unconsidered by the administration. Jamie McKay told the audience how the experience of the student speakers, but says that "stories of pain and of anguish" were the motivating factor in her choice to speak up.

One student, Jason Hamburger, at first intended to defend Professor Pessin, a favorite professor of his. However in hearing narrated the emotions of the student speakers, Hamburger decided and instead took the microphone and apologized for his ignorance. He was met with a roaring applause. Alumnae Max Nichols '14 used the forum to bemoan the college's policy of 'risk-aversion,' suggesting the College use this opportunity to take definitive, progressive action rather than remainya

At one point, Bergeron did eschew diplomatic language, expressing a sincere, "I love you." to the many in attendance. The proclamation, however, seemed to fall flat on the ears of the students, particularly those feeling estranged from an administration unwilling to openly denounce the elephant in the room.
Rocking the Dot

CIARA HEALEY
ARTS EDITOR

Scores of students shuf¬
tered to the Dark¬
ness Chapel on Friday eve¬
ning to hear six A Capella
groups "Rock the Dot." As April
raced to a close, Sexual Assault
Awareness Month, the concert was
the first of several planned on-campus events highlighting
the concern for the campus.

The Green Dot program teaches violence preven¬
tion strategies to students, encourages bystanders to
intervene, and focuses on cultural influ¬
ence to change abusive be¬
havior. Since the program was
implemented in September of 2010, more than 645 students
have participated in the 6-hour
Green Dot training, vowing to
be thoughtful and ethical and
establish a sense of responsi¬
bility in others.

Before the groups took the mic, Dustin Fiolson, the Direc¬
tor of Sexual Violence Preven¬
tion & Advocacy on campus, read a quote by Frank Zappa,
which is always a commentary on society. "Much of what is heard on the radio
today is degrading and disre¬
tect of women. This seemingly constant sexual ob¬
jectification of women in the media does not help to create a moral atmosphere on campus,
or anywhere else in the world for that matter. Recognizing this, the A Capella groups

wanted to celebrate love rather than lust, and chose to sing
songs from the 2000s that exemplify healthy relationships.

Featuring songs such as "Lucky" by Jason Mraz and Colbie Caillat, "Beautiful Soul" by Jesse McCartney, "Everything" by Michael Bublé, the concert was an en¬
deavor to kick off to a month of very important advocacy. The event, lacrosse game, several discussions, and Green Dot training are among some of the events planned for April by the Think S.A.F.E. Project (Sexual Assault Free Envi¬
ronment). "The main reason that Green Dot has been so successful at Conn is because students from across the entire community have been invest¬
ed. Prevention of power-based
personal violence cannot be
done by one entity all on its
own; this is a cultural issue
and could be a part of making the crucial change that is
necessary," Fiolson said.

Green Dot continues to partner with other organizations on campus, including SAC and A Capella groups, in or¬
der to reach more students and
deepen the relationship with the campus community.

As a bonus for the end of
the concert on Friday, SAC
announced the Florilla 2015
headliners, MisterWives and
Cash Cash are set to open the all-day music festival in May, among several other artists and bands. Both of the groups feature pop and elec¬
tronic dance music, and are quickly gaining wider fan bas¬
s.

MisterWives is an indie-pop
band based in New York City, most known for their song "Reflections." With upbeat
music doused in hypnotic mel¬
odies, MisterWives is said to be a must-see and surely
unquestionably will not fall short at Conn. Cash Cash has a similar sound to MisterWives, with their highest charting song
being "Take Me Home." Cash Cash has produced three full¬
length albums and also has provided official remixes for artists such as Krewella, Katy Perry and Bruno Mars. Hav¬
ing performed at several music festivals including Firefly and Lollapalooza, Cash Cash is worth getting excited for.

SAC, A Capella, Green Dot and SafetyNet are among many of the on-campus organizations that collaborate to put on student events such as Rock the Dot, Sexual Assault Aware¬
ness Month, and an amazing and safe Florilla. While so many schools struggle with sexual assault on campus and do not know how to go about fixing the problem, it is good to know that here at Conn, we have events and discussions planned to make a change, and that at least 645 students will act by looking out for each other while singing along to Cash Cash and MisterWives.

Student Poetry

Irisidence

Past breakers
beyond the fishing boat,
where gentle winds
mold quiet waves
and nothing to do
is plenty,
the seaward swaths are drifting.

Ruffled edges
in sprawling dance
wash a glass tabletop and weave
like needles through wet cloth
all shimmering
in the black button eyes
of a bobbing marble seal.

How lucky they are
to have this to themselves
in the vast and swinging volumes
of a hushed sovereign sea.

Samanth A Brown

Panther

Meeting her
in a warm gaze,
I wish I could
shatter and hone
my bumbling stare
of a hushed sovereign sea.

With the heat of a solar flare,
in the galaxy
in the black button eyes
of a bobbing marble seal.

Each one a souvenir
that has kissed her
lightly across a history
just out of reach
of curious claws,
then move on
to her blank spaces.
Cage and gentle points
holding black ink,
dive in
with the beat of a solar flare,
and the smooth ferocity
of a wild cat.

Cecilia Sorensen

The College Voice is seeking student poetry for publication. Please send all submissions to arts@thecollegevoice.org
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Women’s Water Polo: 14 Wins and Counting

AIMEE MAMDERLINK
STAFF WRITER

With an undefeated conference record of fourteen wins and no losses, Connecticut College’s Women’s Water Polo team is the team to look out for on campus this season. The Camels began their conference play last week with a tournament at Monmouth College in Illinois in which they opened the first day with three consecutive wins. The team beat Macalester College 16-6, then went on to gain victories against Penn State-Behrend University and home team Monmouth. University beating both teams by wide margins (16-2 and 19-2 respectively).

Among those adding to the Camels’ high scoring results were seniors All-Americans Kate Jacobson and Nicky Jabson who added three goals and an assist in their triumph against Macalester. The Camels furthered their commendable three game sweep by racking up three more wins the following day of the tournament. The first victory of the team came against Washington & Jefferson, where they doubled the goals of their opponent achieving a 14-7 win. Their next win arrived against Carthage College, in which the camels matched their 14-7 score of the last game. The Camels ended their second triple-header with a 15-8 victory over the Utica College Pioneers. The weekend ended on a high note when the team gained their final victory against Pennsylvania’s Govey City College, beating them 13-4. Several members of the team walked away from the final four games with an impressive number of goals. Jacobson and Jabson netted another ten goals each, and fellow senior classmate Isabell Bianus earned eight goals. On the defensive side, the Camels also made waves. In the team’s victory against Washington & Jefferson, junior Ashley Amey made ten saves. Sophomore Susan Doetsch managed ten stops in the day’s next game against Carthage. Freshman Sarah Purley demonstrated the Camels’ unstoppable, triumphant momentum by gathering nine saves and one steal in the victory against Utica. The Camels proved their immense stamina as they emerged with seven consecutive wins after the weekend. This weekend at Connecticut College the Women’s Water Polo team swept the tournament winning seven games and keeping their 14 game winning streak alive.

After an Icy Preseason, Camels Sailing Plans to Head Up Nationals This Spring

WELLER HLUINOMAZ
STAFF WRITER

After winning the semifinals at the Inter-Collegiate Sailing Association national championship last year along with a 16th place finish at the co-ed national championship, the Connecticut College Sailing Team plans to build on their previous season with great hopes and promise of an exceptional season this spring. While many of the Camels of our community were on spring break, relaxing at home or tanning and vacationing at exotic places, the Camels on the water were on the freezing and windy Thames River as well as Saint Mary’s River in Maryland. On the Thames, often the windy Thames River as well as the ocean was too cold for our water sport, though mid 30 degree weather was not ideal for our water sport, the team bonded over breaking the ice and even sometimes swimming in the frigid water.” They both concluded that the preseason was rewarding. Additionally, they said “the spring training and even sometimes swimming in the frigid water.”

The Connecticut College Sailing team had “successfully beat out Mother Nature.” Although the conditions were strenuous, Nefsky believes “the squad had a very strong preseason and is ready to make a move.”

The spring training Nefsky believes “the squad had a very strong preseason and is ready to make a move.”

Another sophomore, Rebecca Quirk, said “the spring training was a massive success and the first year sailors have brought excellence in both skills and attitude.”

In Maryland, the Women’s team sailed in the Saint Mary’s Women Intercollegiate Regatta where they competed for some great results. In the B division, rookie skipper Emilia Clementi along with classmates Alexandra Maurillo, Isabelle Pieper and Haley Kuchmar scored 101 points cruising to seventh place. In the A division, first year skipper Charlotte List was joined by Alexandra Maurillo and Isabelle Pieper in 17th place with 184 points for the Camels. Freshman Charlotte List and senior Alex Israel have been honored as the New England Intercollegiate Sailing Association sailors of the week for their recent break-out performances. At the Navy Women’s Intersectional, List and Israel had the highest New England finish in B division, locking up 3rd place after 4 races on March 15.

The Connecticut College Sailing Team strives in a division comparable to NCAA Division I sports and has had major success with both the current squad and with the alumni. Of the 16 American sailors competing in the 2012 London Olympics, two of them were Connecticut College alumni. Amanda Clark in the class of 2005 and Bob Willis of 2009 made not only the United States, but also Connecticut College Camels proud in the Olympics. This has set the tone for excellence at Connecticut College, and the sailors continue to compete at an extremely high level to meet these standards. The high standards in the sport, however, come with the responsibility and rigor of a Connecticut College education. Rebecca Quirk said, “The caliber of competition we encounter has students travelling as far west as Oregon, south as Texas and north as Maine for regattas weekly, while trying to juggle the NECAC caliber of school work.” As the sailing team is consistently ranked in the top 20 teams in the country, the Camels plan to continue their success and move up the ranks this spring season. With spirits up from the successful presea-son, the Camels plan to build on last year’s achievements. Quirk said, “This year I believe we will improve on last year’s finish considering our success in the preseason and the talent on this team.”
Track and Field Athletes: Sprinting into a new Season

LIZ VAROLI
CONTRIBUTOR

Connecticut College Men's Track and Field team has already finished the first half of their 2015 season with some solid results, and is looking forward to finishing the second half of the season with an even stronger showing. In the most recent weeks, the men traveled to Wesleyan University, Assumption College, Emmanuel College, Salve Regina University and others. Some of their best results at this meet included the 4x400 meter relay in which Aidan Cort, Nick Fischetti, Brent Lo, and Rich-Piodella finished in third with a time of 3:40.69; the 3000 meter run in which Billy Barnes finished in fourth with a time of 9:20.39; the pole vault in which Fischetti finished in sixth at an apex of 10 feet, eight inches; the 1500 meter run in which Joyce finished in eighth with a time of 4:22.14; and the 60 meter hurdles in which Cort finished in eighth with a time of 9.50 seconds.

The season is far from over, the men have some important, exciting events to train for in the upcoming weeks. In April, the team will compete at the Amherst College Invitational, the Silfen Invitational, the MIT Invitational, the NECAA Track and Field Championships, and at the New England Division III Championship.

I recently had the opportunity to sit down with the three graduating seniors, Patrick Dermody, William Barnes and Michael Joyce to talk a bit about their perspectives as seniors running in their final season as Connecticut College athletes. When I talked to Dermody, he explained to me that his mentality has changed somewhat since when he was a freshman on the team. Dermody said, "I have been worried less about stressing over specific races or workouts, and focused more on working hard while running, and enjoying the competition with the other runners." Barnes also explained how this season feels just a little bit different than the previous ones. He clarified that his personal goals have remained the same, do well in the 800-meter and contribute in relays, but this season, he has developed a new sense of how important reaching those goals really is. Barnes' mentality is, "this is the last time I'll ever get the chance to do it (reach his goals)" so he's going to give it his all. Joyce revealed he has a similar outlook on his final season, that this is his last chance to accomplish his goals. All three revealed how much they are looking forward to the Silfen Invitation-

Women's Hockey Coach Named NESCAC Coach of the Year

For the first time in her 14-year coaching career Coach Steele has been selected as the NESCAC Coach of the Year. Leading her team to a 7-7-2 conference record this season the lady camels were able to receive their highest NESCAC Tournament seed under her direction. In her 14 years of coaching, Steele has led the team to eight consecutive NESCAC Tournament appearances and has made it to the semi-finals three seasons.

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Following the NCAA Tournament

PETER BURGE
CONTRIBUTOR

With the burgeoning excitement of this year’s Men’s NCAA Tournament, we are in the midst of something special. Something men’s college basketball has been waiting for through a decades-long drought of sound teams and also-rans sharing prestige in sports’ greatest event. College basketball has a powerhouse. A true powerhouse.

It has been thirty-nine years since men’s basketball saw an undefeated season. The 1976 Indiana Hoosiers were the last, running the table and finishing 32-0 in their championship year. Through the good years and the great teams, no one has since finished unblemished, even if the blemishes were faint. But it will happen this year.

The Kentucky Wildcats are that team without blemishes. The undisputed heavyweights in a class of featherweights, Kentucky is tall and athletic, and nasty and impenetrable. If they were an NBA team, they would be the second-tallest in the league. And they would be vying for a playoff spot. Kentucky needs only a few more wins to finish their season 40-0, and they will win without issue.

But is this good for the sport? College basketball is falttering. Outside of the sensation around March Madness and the obligatory filling out of brackets, national focus on the sport is near null. 2008 had record low television viewership and this year was not much better. The National Championship Game in 2014 had half the TV audience that it did twenty years ago. Half. Why is that?

One can point to the movement en masse of freshman talent. The best in the sport often leave for the NBA draft after one year in college, leaving little room for the sport’s great players to become household names while still in school. That’s absolutely true, but in reality, that cannot be the sole reason—only nine freshmen entered last year’s NBA draft, not necessarily the mass migration that seems to be ruining the sport.

In a sense, with great players leaving early, it can actually create more attention. Last year, all eyes were on Andrew Wiggins and Jabari Parker, who were destined to be selected first and second in the upcoming NBA draft. The hype around Parker and Wiggins was actually magnified because their arrival in the NBA was imminent. People wanted to know if Parker and Wiggins would live up to the gamble of early draft picks. Their flash-in-the-pan careers created a sensation. If their tenures in college were more drawn out, the hype surrounding them would not have been as intense.

If these players leaving early are not the problem, is it the lack of scoring? Offense has steadily declined in college since 2000, leaving the NCAA to experiment with a reduced shot-clock of 30 seconds (down from 35), in theory creating more possessions and quicker opportunities to score. The decrease in action on the court could certainly be keeping viewers away, but teams scoring in the low-50s and 60s can’t be the reason that half the number of people tuned into the 2014 Championship game than the one in 1994. Were half of those people so disgusted and bored by a few fewer points that they refused to tune in?

In all sports, what keeps viewers away is a simple lack of interest. What turns them away is the knowing that no one else really cares, that there is no public attention and therefore little reason to watch. What draws viewers is in a team that has a story behind it and it is worth watching because it matters in the grand scheme of the sport.

Even without rooting interest, people have watched and will continue to watch Kentucky this year simply to witness. To wonder if this is the team that can go undefeated. To say that they saw this team play and it was the greatest they’ve ever seen. College basketball needs this. Just ask the women’s side.

2010 was a banner year for women’s college basketball. It saw record attendance, high television ratings, front-page press, and the greatest run of success it may ever know. Through the course of 2010, the UConn Women’s Basketball Team challenged UCLA’s venerable 88 game winning streak, an unreachable record that had stood in front of college basketball for nearly four decades. But the team played an underappreciated sport, a sport that garners hardly any national attention for even its greatest accomplishments, with the exception of maybe “two paragraphs in USA today and one line on the bottom of ESPN” as Huskies’ coach Geno Auriemma sees it.

Popular momentum blossomed into a national story as the year moved on and it seemed all too obvious that UConn would in fact break UCLA’s record. But the nation was not holding its breath to see if UConn could in fact pull it off (the team outscored opponents by an average of 33 points during the streak). They tuned in simply to see it happen.

In their record-breaking game against Florida State, the Huskies played in front of 16,000 people at the XL Center in Hartford, beyond the arena’s capacity. In an ensuing game against Stanford, the game in which UConn’s streak ended, ESPN2 broke its record for viewership. More people watched the game than two simultaneous NBA games on TNT and a college football bowl game on ESPN.

It was a low-scoring game. Neither team had what could be called superstar or household names. But people watched to see something happen. They watched because they knew that they would be reading about it, talking about it and watching its highlights the next day. They watched because it was sensational, because there was a story. UConn brought interest back to the game. And Kentucky can do the same.

Kentucky has done the same, if only to a small degree. Television ratings are still down this year, but the Wildcats played in four of this season’s six most-viewed games. Kentucky’s game against Arkansas in the SEC conference tournament had the highest TV audience the conference has seen in five years. The team’s coach John Calipari has constant interview requests and he nails them all. If Kentucky does lose in the Tournament, there will be national frenzy. If the team makes it to the championship game, it will without a doubt be the most-watched and most-talked about in those twenty long years.

Kentucky carries the burden that the UConn Women did. They must bring interest back to a hobbling sport. They must move the trend back to college basketball’s era of giants. Geno Auriemma made it work for his team, and he knew what it meant for the sport: “Like it or not, we made you pay attention.”

Senior Kelsie Franlick wrapped up her final season as goalie for the Connecticut College women’s ice hockey team with an astonishing amount of career saves, 2,016 to be exact. Her achievements this season, including a national caliber 947 save percentage, earned her a spot on the All-New England Small Athletic Conference Women’s Hockey First Team.
The Goodwin Neiring Center presents

Feeding the Future

This Saturday the Goodwin Neiring Center for the Environment hosted the landmark Feeding the Future conference. The conference, which kicked off on Friday with a talk from Dan Barber, author of The Third Plate, showcased many innovative speakers in the fields of sustainability and food systems technology. Led by Jane Dawson and student members of the GNC certificate program, the conference entertained alternative approaches to big issues with a "broken" food system. Speaker Malik Yama, for instance, illustrated the power of the urban-farming movement in downtown Detroit, while technologist Andreas Ferguson probed the world of cultured, "animal-free," meat production. The event also featured a capstone dining event provided by Chef Bruce Lau of Miya's Sushi, who served up the winds and tastes buds of attendees with sushi dishes designed around invasive species and a maverick movement to redefine ecologically sustainable and nourishing food traditions. 

PHOTOS FROM LUCA POWELL