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THE

FREDONIA LEADER

Student-Run Newspaper

BSU Fashion Show

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"Do you realize the Pandora's Box that this will open?" – Brian Lyght

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Faculty responds to administration officially discontinuing 13 majors

DAN QUAGLIANA

News Editor

On March 18 at 8:43 p.m., Fredonia's Executive Vice President and Provost Dr. David Starrett sent out an email to all students, faculty and staff, announcing that the 13 majors that were announced to be considered for discontinuation in December have officially been discontinued.

"Good evening," the email began. "I am writing to keep you informed about the proposed program deactivation, the formal review process and what happens next."

The email continued, explaining that, "After careful consideration of the arguments for and against the proposal, and following the agreed-upon timeline and our responsibility to keep our campus updated, I want to inform you of the final decisions made by the [President's] Cabinet:

We will discontinue the 13 majors on the original list

We will keep associated minors

We will keep necessary lower or upper division courses as needed for general education or other service within and outside of the affected departments

"Departments have the option to develop new relevant programs based on student demand and other market needs. In fact, those conversations with department chairs or program coordinators are already underway.

"The deactivation of these 13 majors, which currently enroll 70 first majors and 22 second majors, will go into effect no later than June 5. Any student admitted to or enrolled in one of the majors before this date will be able to obtain their degrees in these majors. After June 5, 2024, the university will not recruit students for or admit students to these degree programs."

The provost emphasized that students still enrolled in these majors will be given the opportunity to graduate. He also stated that a major's, "inclusion on this list does NOT reflect poorly on that major's quality or its dedicated faculty and staff."

"We want to acknowledge the trepidation during this process, and the disappointment people may have regarding these decisions," he wrote. "These decisions have not been made lightly, but have been made for the common goal we all share: ensuring that the university is responsive to student demand, directing our energies towards building degrees that students are seeking, the long-term financial health of SUNY Fredonia and the success of our students."

Responding to recent criticism regarding Fredonia's perceived shift to a vocational, STEM-based university, Starrett said, "Our commitment to a well-rounded liberal arts education remains strong ... Even with these program discontinuations, over 80% of Fredonia's undergraduate degree programs are in the liberal arts. Over 25% are in the arts, over 25% are in the sciences, and over 25% are in the other humanities."

In the last few months, the university has added a Master of Business Administration, a master's degree in clinical mental health counseling and a Bachelor of Science in nursing. They haven't added any new majors or programs in the liberal arts

or humanities.

"We will work together to ensure a bright future, utilizing our strategic plan as our guide to move us forward," the email finished.

Almost immediately, the decisions made by the provost, President Stephen Kolison and other administrators were met with widespread condemnation from the campus community.

"How they did it was so one-sided," said Dr. Jeanette McVicker, a professor in the English department and the university senator for interdisciplinary studies. "They didn't answer most of the questions [people asked them] and now they just know they didn't tell anyone anything. And they have not looked at [faculty] as partners in any way."

She went on to explain that, "Faculty have been told, ever since President Kolison arrived [in 2020], that the problem is faculty salaries ... And, so, you know, I don't think faculty feel respected ... We're not invited to any conversations."

According to the minutes taken during the Senate meeting on Feb. 26, President Kolison said that, "We're talking about \$7 million of the \$10 million deficit being negotiated raises." In this context, "negotiated raises" are pay raises for faculty that they negotiated to receive.

"If that alone were to be addressed, as SUNY is requesting," Kolison said, "our situation would be much more manageable."

In order to actually get a statement out to campus, McVicker introduced a resolution at the most recent University Senate meeting on March 18 that condemns the Program Deactivation Review Process (PDRP) at SUNY Fredonia.

"THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED," the resolution says, "that the Fredonia University Senate finds this entire process not only a resounding failure of shared governance, but that it has felt shut out of providing any meaningful feedback that would speak to the 'big picture' issues of how these program deactivations will 1) actually address the budget deficit; 2) contribute in any positive way to a more vibrant academic program array or to a 'distinctive identity' for the campus; 3) prevent harm to remaining programs, many of which are partners with the targeted majors and will themselves become precarious as a result of these deactivations; 4) prevent harm to the institution's mission, tradition and reputation; and

"THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Fredonia University Senate strongly opposes all administration-initiated program deactivations, and particularly condemns the absence of a dialogic process with campus stakeholders, the lack of clear administrative communication, the abrogation of faculty control of curriculum, the lack of adequate data or rationale, and the refusal to address the damage to Fredonia as an institution without such programs."

Since December, when the program discontinuations were announced, the administration has repeatedly shown enrollment data as justification, but they have "not provided any evidence of costs or likely savings" as a result of the cuts, according to political science professor Dr. Jonathan Chausovsky.

Continues on next page.

Chausovsky, who is the university senator for the Politics and International Affairs Department, also introduced a resolution at the last Senate meeting. This one aims for “SUNY University Faculty Senate (UFS) leadership under Keith Landa to begin the consultation process concerning the Fredonia Administration.”

“The administration has, at times, indicated that non-budget concerns are driving the process, while at other times pointing to budget concerns, and in the process has not provided a consistent explanation,” Chausovsky wrote as justification for his resolution.

“They’ve even admitted, basically, ‘Well, we know it’s not going to save us any money,’” he said.

SUNY University Faculty Senate functions much like Fredonia’s own University Senate, but on a SUNY-wide scale. Each SUNY college or university sends one Senator to UFS to represent them. Currently, Fredonia’s senator is Dr. Rob Deemer, a professor of music composition and the chair of the Department of Theatre and Dance.

The consultation process is a major step that faculty can initiate when they are sufficiently dissatisfied with the administration.

“A campus consultation is a process that leverages shared governance expertise across SUNY to assist a campus experiencing appreciable governance issues,” reads UFS’ handbook. “It should be viewed as a faculty-to-faculty process that can be utilized proactively to prevent a major communication breakdown between groups of faculty, between faculty and other campus constituencies, or between faculty and campus administration.”

In short, UFS will create a two-to-three person consultation committee, which will then travel to Fredonia to assess the situation and the current dynamic between faculty and administration. The committee will talk to both administration and faculty members to gauge the situation and mend the perceived rift, if possible.

“This is a mechanism for trying to improve a situation, not to walk away from it,” McVicker explained.

If this doesn’t work, it is possible that University Senate could request a UFS visitation at some point in the future, in which a few members of UFS would, “expect to meet with the campus president, the CGL(s), and key members of both the adminis-

tration and shared governance bodies. Faculty, staff, students or others in the larger campus community (for example, alumni, donors or college council members) may also meet with the Visitation Committee.”

Generally, UFS visitations are not requested unless a vote of no confidence in the president by Senate is imminent. A decision to hold a vote of that nature would be made after the Visitation Committee returns their findings.

While Chausovsky doesn’t think the process should go that far yet, he does think that, “This has not been healthy ... Just look at the tenor of the [Senate] meeting on Feb. 5, [2023].” At that meeting, Senators and members of the administration were openly arguing with each other, almost coming to the point of shouting.

“Some of you may know that the department and our amazing department chair responded to the proposed gutting of our programs with a revised curriculum. That’s the paradigm shift you’re looking for, that actually cuts more programs,” said sculpture professor Peter Tucker during the meeting.

“We have proposed two degrees instead of the nine that we currently offer. I hope that the administration will seriously consider our proposal, which adds efficiency and actually saves money. I’m hoping that you’re taking that seriously. Because Potsdam has announced they’re firing people and I’d like to know if you’re going to be doing that and if I’ll have a job next year,” he said, referencing SUNY Potsdam’s similar program removals and the fact that sculpture is one of the programs being discontinued.

“I just want to express how utterly disgusted I am with the administration. Why are they here? They don’t seem to give a crap. I really want them to leave,” Tucker ended.

“There’ve been people like myself who’ve been upset for quite some time,” Chausovsky said. “It’s a multi-level charade. The [SUNY] chancellor[, John King,] is engaged in a charade ... And it’s been done in a way that is actually going to be harmful to us. But it’s not going to save money, and neither are the cuts ... They can’t say that any of them lead to a line item cut in accounts payable.”

McVicker agrees, saying that, “[The administration] keeps alluding to some plan, some knowledge that [they] have, but [they] don’t share it.”

SFF & SA meet to address tension between students and administration

ALEXANDER BUCKNAM

Special to The Leader

On March 6, Students for Fredonia (SFF) and the Student Association (SA) held a town hall meeting welcoming all students and faculty to come address their questions and concerns about the administration.

The purpose of this town hall meeting was for SA President Rosemarie Rapisarda, Chief Justice Bethany Anderson and Sophomore Class President Dakota Richter to take students and faculty’s growing questions and concerns about the administration, recent program cuts and mental health support.

Rapisarda plans to take the questions and concerns from the meeting to the administration to get answers.

There will be an additional meeting on March 27 with the administration at 7 p.m. at the Kelly Auditorium in the Science Center. At this March 27 meeting, the administration will answer questions and address the concerns that students and faculty have.

The town hall gathering opened with SFF Co-Vice President Benjamin Evans giving a speech in which he talked about the program cuts, how they affect a majority of students all across campus and how important student activism is.

Evans started his speech by telling a story about a high school superintendent who wanted to retile the floor of a cafeteria, but then got baffled when the janitors imputed their opinion on what color the floor should be. The superintendent of the high school responded by saying, “What do janitors know about tiles?”

"I think the SUNY chancellor is making the same mistake, where that superintendent didn't understand why people who worked on the floor tiles every day would know something about them," Evans said.

He then went on to mention how the administration is moving forward with cutting all 13 programs, and how SFF has yet to see any financial data to support these cuts.

"Most of these programs are composed of classes that already support other programs. Others are satellite programs that support larger programs," Evans said.

He ended his speech by talking about how important student activism is.

"We are the only ones who can't be fired for speaking out. We are the only ones who are allowed to do what we need to do," Evans said.

Henry Domst, a senior graphic design and art history student, was the next to take the stage.

Domst originally came to Fredonia for graphic design, but later on added a second major in art history because he was passionate about it and liked the professors who taught the classes.

His case is not the only one; multiple students who take a class in the Visual Arts and New Media (VANM) program and get hooked later on add it on as a second major or a minor.

During his speech, he mentioned how students who have a second major in the programs that are being cut aren't being counted for the number of affected students.

He also talked about the administration not informing students of SFF's work.

"We are trying to further this problem and let people know what we are trying to do, but it's hard when I applied to be on [Fredonia's] campus report when we went to Albany and we are still not yet on it," Domst said.

Domst also discussed how the administration doesn't want to display what SFF is doing, stating, "It's really dangerous to ignore these types of issues and not display them to the entire campus, because then they have no idea what is going on ... Silencing our activism on this campus just shouldn't happen in the first place. If we can't inform the campus of what we are doing, who can we be acknowledged by?" Domst said.

Domst went on and talked about how students have yet to receive a formal apology.

He also talked about the mental effects students are experiencing. According to Domst, students within the majors that are being cut are currently having mental health crises.

"Dealing with the grief has affected my school work, relationships and overall willingness to continue my second major," Domst said.

He concluded his speech by referring to the lack of administrative care to help students who are having mental health crises due to these program cuts.

"What little they have done has made myself and others feel worthless to this campus," he said.

The meeting then moved forward with questions and concerns that students and faculty have for the administration.

"If you are truly taking our feedback into consideration, why [has] nothing changed in those 13 programs?" SFF Co-President Abigail Tartaro asked.

Evans asked, "Can they talk about what they think will happen to the remaining programs, such as the animation-illustration program, once all of its sibling programs are cut?"

One student brought up, "If we do matter ... why have they

"Silencing our activism on this campus just shouldn't happen in the first place. If we can't inform the campus of what we are doing, who can we be acknowledged by?"

—HENRY DOMST
Media Coordinator,
Students For Fredonia

chosen to ignore what we have said?"

There were also questions about what is going to happen to all the spaces these programs are using. Marz Quinteros-Chavez, a student at Fredonia, asked, "What's going to happen to all those spaces? Is it going to sit there like Erie Hall or the Hendrix complex?"

Evans also brought up the fact that Rockefeller Arts Center recently underwent a \$43.3 million renovation, and wants to know how the renovation was a financially beneficial decision if these programs have been examined in the context of being cut for a long time. He backed this up by saying, "If the answer to this is [that] the renovation will still be used and the classes will still be used and filled, then why are we cutting these programs?"

There were additional inquiries into the new master programs being added, with students questioning how the administration knows they will succeed. Several concerns involved the potential of data no longer being easily accessible to students and faculty.

Fredonia used to make a fact book each year about campus operations. Topics covered within the book included how many people are in each major and minor, how many people are in a graduate or undergraduate program, and the total operation cost. These fact books haven't been made available to students since 2021.

Fact books like this can be a way for students to easily receive and understand information. Taking away this fact book leaves students uninformed and left out.

The meeting then moved on to what students and faculty would like to see from the administration.

SFF Co-President Sophie Myers said that she would like to see, "[the] administration meet us with empathy as students and faculty."

"I would love to see answers that go beyond deflecting or not sharing information," Kevin Hahn, the associate director of Residence Life, said.

"I want to see questions answered," Quinteros-Chavez said.

"I want to see honesty," Myers said.

The meeting concluded with students' concerns about campus mental health.

As Domst and other students demonstrated, the program cuts are affecting students' mental health, so multiple students at the meeting agreed that a peer support group can help students who are struggling.

There was also talk about how the Counseling Center could put the Campus Lodge to use by taking a few students up there to go walk around and use nature as a way to help with any mental health struggles or stress they are feeling.

Henry Domst, who was quoted in this article, is the Design Editor of The Leader.



Photo by JEAN CASTRO | Special to the Leader

Career Development Office hosts annual Job and Internship Expo

SIERRA MILLS
Chief Copy Editor

Job and internship searching can be one of the most daunting tasks for anyone when it comes time to take a new step in their life.

To combat this, the Career Development Office (CDO) has decided to bring employers to the students, making the search process easier for anyone in need of a job or internship.

The Job and Internship Expo, held on March 6 from 1 to 4 p.m. in the Williams Center, featured over 100 employers looking for people to fill full-time, part-time, seasonal and internship positions.

Students were presented with opportunities to work for many different fields, with some on-campus positions looking to be filled as well such as academic tutors.

"This was the first time that we arranged the employers by industry. It seemed to work well. We also worked with some student groups and faculty, who were very helpful in bringing students to the event," Christopher LaGrow, the interim director of engagement and career development, said when comparing the running of this year's expo to preceding years.

Most of these employers were tabled in the Multi-Purpose Room (MPR), representing employers for law and government, human services, business and communication, STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) and healthcare fields. Education and support services were tabled at room G103ABC, and seasonal opportunities were tabled in the Blue Lounge.

"It was our largest event ever in terms of employers, with more than 100 in attendance," said Internship Coordinator and Career Counselor Jennifer Wilkins when reflecting on past job fairs and expos. "We had more STEM, government and

education employers, in particular, than we've had in recent years. We also had more alumni than ever representing their organizations. And although we always want to get more students at the event, turnout was solid and consistent with our past events."

As motivation to attend the expo, a raffle was held, with prizes including gift cards, headphones and a Fredonia cap and gown package for graduating seniors. Extra tickets were given to students by the employers at their discretion.

Reflecting on the success of this year's expo, Wilkins said, "Many employers shared compliments with us about the students they met with, so we know that they were very pleased to have connected with Fredonia candidates."

The CDO annually holds career fairs and other related events to allow students to have the opportunity to participate in the job search process on-campus, with other job-related opportunities available through various services from the office.

"We want to connect students with employers — not just seniors with potential jobs, but sophomores and juniors with potential internship opportunities and first-year students with professionals who can share their career experiences with them. Students should know that employers attend events like the expo because they want to meet and network with them in person, not just remotely," LaGrow said.

"We plan to continue working with employers on this and other career events. We hope to expand the industry categories for next year, which will make the event a must-see event for an even wider range of students," LaGrow continued, "We're always available to students and alumni, even in summer, for their career, job search and graduate school questions."

Since this event is annual, any students that were unable to attend this semester will still have the chance to mingle with potential employers in the upcoming semesters.

Life & Arts

Students behind the art: Jasper Glow

EJ JACOBS

Life & Arts Editor

Every student has personal and unique experiences and feelings towards the 13 programs up for potential discontinuation.

With the changes to Fredonia's academic offerings, some students are thinking about what got them to the SUNY Fredonia campus in the first place.

"I actually originally picked Fredonia for their animation illustration program, which I feel like a lot of art majors do," said Jasper Glow, a senior sculpture major.

Glow added that they then switched to sculpture halfway through their freshman year.

Due to the many offered majors within art, Glow was able to switch to what they wanted to do without having to transfer universities.

However, this opportunity may not be available to future Fredonia students with the recent cuts.

"The reputation of Fredonia as an art school is screwed," said Glow. "No one wants to go to a campus where there is not a variety in their art program."

Going into the world with the skills learned in the Visual Arts and New Media programs are seen as beneficial to having a well-rounded education to future employers.

Glow has noticed this as well.



Photos provided by JASPER GLOW | Special to The Leader

"Through sculpture, I learned welding, and I could go into a trade school for welding and then could be an incredibly successful welder," said Glow.

He feels that if students aren't given the opportunity to learn more about their major, they might be lowering their ability as well as their knowledge in other areas.

Right now, students like Glow are looking for an explanation as to why these program cuts are a reality for SUNY Fredonia students. Students are now demanding numbers and statistics.

"[Administration] knows that whatever they're going to show isn't going to back up these decisions," said Glow. "They know that this isn't the only way they could deal with this — it's just the one that they like."

Glow also spoke about the number of people in the programs and more on how the arts feel targeted as a whole for being the programs on the agenda to be discontinued.

"Meanwhile, there are programs with like two people in them that are still remaining," said Glow.

Overall, students, staff and the community are hoping to be given adequate information.



History of the Fredonia Guitar Quartet

LUKE VILLAVICENCIO

Asst. Life & Arts Editor

With the countless student performance groups that exist here on campus, it can be easy to go through your college career and miss out on a heaping handful of them.

The Fredonia Guitar Quartet (FGQ), organized by distinguished Professor James Piorkowski, is one of these groups that has an illustrious history that you may know nothing about.

For the average person, you likely hear more about jazz quartets and string quartets, but guitars? It can sound a bit odd to the uninitiated.

It was Andres Segovia, the godfather of the classical guitar, who said that “The guitar is a small orchestra.” If you listen to these renowned pieces of solo guitar music by Francisco Tárrega, Heitor Villa-Lobos, Leo Brouwer and Roland Dyens, among many others, and then imagine those thick, intentional harmonies and quick, fleeting melodies quadrupled across four performers — now that is an experience like no other.

I spoke with Professor Piorkowski about his experiences while instructing the quartet throughout the years. His insight brought an intense color to events that I had only seen in the black-and-white newspaper strips hanging on the walls of his office in Mason Hall, but that press did not come without its fair share of trials and tribulations.

“I came here in 1983,” said Piorkowski, “and there were only two guitar majors, so we couldn’t do a quartet.”

This is a massive juxtaposition to the collection of around 15 students who are guitar majors that are currently enrolled here with multiple different focuses in jazz, classical, composition, sound recording technology, education, etc.

It took roughly four to five years for enrollment to increase until there were enough guitarists to have a full guitar ensemble.

That year, 1986-87 according to Piorkowski, two students by the name of Craig Einhorn and Markus Wolf brought forth the question of why there was no Fredonia guitar quartet.

Piorkowski, known for being a member of the world-renowned Buffalo Guitar Quartet, saw no reason why there shouldn’t be one. The FGQ was created, with Einhorn and Wolf being two of the first four members.

“The time with the quartet was an important one because we developed a lot as players,” said Markus Wolf. “Real world experiences, not [being in a] practice room for x amount of hours [is what gave me] the best learning.”

The forming of the quartet led to many successes and experiences that took its ever-changing roster of wide-eyed student performers around the globe, further enhancing their skill in their beloved art.

Fredonia alumnus and previous member of the FGQ, Dr. Kenneth Meyer, recalls the tour they did in Venezuela alongside the Buffalo Guitar Quartet, where they premiered new compositions by Leslie Bassett and Edward Green. “Much of [the repertoire] that we played was very challenging,” Meyer said. “It really improved my musicianship.”

Meyer is now a professor of music at the Setnor School of Music in Syracuse, NY.

When Professor Piorkowski was asked a similar question



Photo courtesy of Marketing and Communications

about his favorite memories from his time as the FGQ instructor, he spoke on Roland Dyens, a famous French guitarist and composer who happened to be quite close to him. “We were doing a tribute concert to him playing his music, and [the FGQ] played a piece that’s tricky,” he recalled, “and I remember clearly: as soon as they got done playing, he stood up. He was the standing ovation in the audience.”

“A few months later, we had this piece sent to us as a gift from Roland called *Filmimaginaires*, and he dedicated it to the Fredonia Guitar Quartet,” Piorkowski said.

The specific musicians that this piece was dedicated to consisted of alumni Michael Carlos Mendoza, Jahzeel Montes, Mario Rubano and Anthony LaLena, who will be returning to campus on April 19 to give a presentation to the current guitar students.

A similar opportunity has arisen with this semester’s FGQ. Composer Jean-Jacques Fimbel, who was a classmate of Roland Dyens and a friend of Professor Piorkowski, is dedicating his piece “New York Graffiti” to Piorkowski and the student performers.

“Being in the quartet has been one of the highlights of my time at Fredonia,” says current FGQ member Rayne Mescallado, “I’ve had the honor of working with many other wonderful guitarists through the semesters.”

Mescallado has their senior recital in fulfillment of their guitar performance major on April 27 at 2 p.m. in Rosch Recital Hall.

Along with the fruitful relationships that the FGQ has had with world class musicians and composers, they have also been on tour countless times in countries saturated with their own music and culture that further developed the musicianship of the student performers.

They have made appearances in Bulgaria, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Spain, France, England, Venezuela and all over the United States.

For the 37 years of adventures and accolades, the Fredonia Quartet has had Professor Piorkowski alongside them cheering them on and helping them grow as strong musicians.

Now, with the love and respect of his countless students and peers here at Fredonia, he will be moving onto bigger things, as he is retiring after this semester.

Despite his history with the FGQ, Piorkowski feels good about his decision.

“Those will just be great memories,” he said, “and I don’t linger a lot about the fact that I’m going to leave; I’m focusing on the fact that we have music to make.”

The Fredonia Guitar Quartet and Ensemble will have their concert on April 18 at 8 p.m. in Rosch Recital Hall.

HitGRL Profile

LEE PYE
Staff Writer

Jamming their way into the local music scene, HitGRL is making their way to the stage.

HitGRL is a new band led by two female-presenting artists, Sarah Burke (she/her) as the lead singer-songwriter, and Katherine Wynn (they/them) as the backup singer and cellist,

The addition of a cellist makes the band different from most bands on campus. The band started last summer when Burke wanted to start a girl band.

However, the music scene is a little scarce of performing women, so it was difficult for Burke to find more female-presenting people in the music scene.

So, she saddled up Ryan Terry on guitar, Michael Tumbaco on bass and Gordon Hall on drums. Finally, she contacted Wynn to play in the band with their non-traditional instrument, their feminine look and their capability of performance she had noticed from seeing them in previous shows.

During the first set of rehearsals, it was a little rough as the band members were trying to feel out the sound for the band.

“We got together in Ryan’s house and we quote on quote ‘jammed,’ but we didn’t have a drum set at that point, so Gordon brought his drumsticks and just started tapping on the floor in intervals. Soon, I was like, this is never going to work out.”

Burke was proved wrong, though, because after the first few rehearsals, HitGRL was ready to play.

Terry said, “I think one thing that’s helpful is we’re all so used to playing live and playing in band settings. I think everyone was a little uncomfortable at the beginning. Gordon doesn’t normally drum, Michael hasn’t played bass in a long time, Katherine doesn’t normally play in rock bands, and this is Sarah’s first time singing in a band, so there was a degree of uncomfortability at first, but I think there’s an excitement in that. And to feel us lock in together and get more comfortable, it just feels right.”

The creation of the music comes from a joint effort between Burke and Terry, and then the whole band.

Burke brings the idea to the table and Terry executes the idea with his classical composition background. Then they bring it to the band, where Tumbaco finds the bass line, Hall figures out the rhythm and beat and Burke and Wynn have a lot of the creative control.

Wynn and Terry established a familiar pattern of colliding their unique sounds. With Terry on guitar and Wynn on cello, they tend to play the same parts of songs but play them differently.

“Ryan and I, we try to match the guitar part and the cello part, but it’s also cool because the cello does its own thing. For example, Ryan doesn’t have a bow. There’s stuff he can do that I can’t do and there’s stuff I can do that he can’t do, so it’s fun to play around with that difference.”

For example, in their original song “Whiskey,” they match the whole time for more intense sound on the string instruments. But for their original song “Fawn”, the cello and guitar have different personalities and are easier to stand out. Terry said, “We fill out the frequency range, Michael with bass on the bottom, Katherine with cello in the middle, me with guitar on top.”

Wynn might be better known in the Fredonia music scene as

Kiwi Grimm for their solo projects. It’s a name for their alter persona on stage. “Kiwi is like a character that I inhabit. When I perform as her I am performing as her, versus when I can perform myself.”

They elaborated, stating the difference between Kiwi and Katherine. “She’s mythical. She is a witch who casts a spell and makes people play music with her. She’s definitely a little girl. She’s a creature that bites. She definitely has an aggression to her that I personally don’t have.”

Another difference between Wynn and their aggressive-witch persona is the music that they play. Kiwi Grimm tends to play genres like witch house, sludge and slowcore.

Wynn, however, plays everything under the sun with their cello.

They perform classical, romantic and baroque music on cello. On electric cello they tend to lean into more contemporary music, a lot of improvisation, rock metal and indie rock. However, their entire span of music goes across the board, from classical to metal. They’ve played with local bands like Saint Blind, Amphobia and Relentless Moisture, but never were in a band like they are in HitGRL.

HitGRL is considered an indie rock band, but through the band members, it’s been called girl rock, indie, a version of 70’s Pink Floyd and a version of 90’s SoundGarden. For Tumbaco and Terry, whatever the genre may be, it is a bit different than what they’re used to.

When asked about the best part of the band, Tumbaco took no time to answer, “It’s the people. Everyone comes from a different music background. Ryan and Katherine are classically trained. We all have different music backgrounds, we all have different music tastes. I think that’s super unique when it comes to a band. There’s so many different genres, so many different ideas that can be brought to the table because we have such a diverse pool of music that we’ve all been accustomed to play over the years.”

“Support local music from basement venues, to BJ’s, to Rosch Recital Hall,” Wynn urged. HitGRL has some shows coming up, like Milkies in Buffalo on April 6th, the Eclipse show on campus on April 8th, Vax Bash in the summertime, which is a private event hosted by a Fredonia alumna Halle Cook and another show that is confirmed but left unannounced.

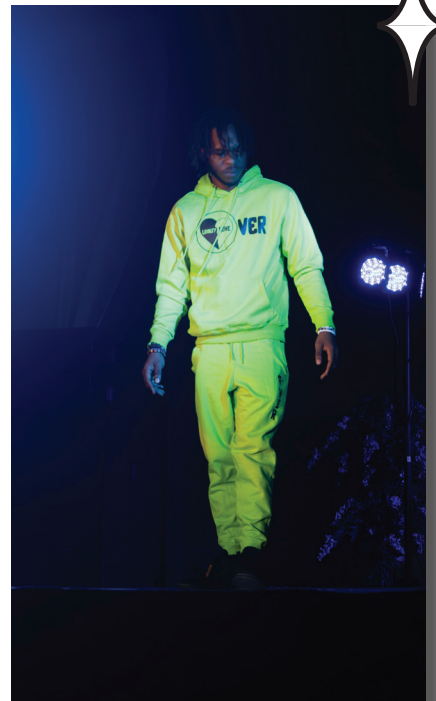
HitGRL can be found on Instagram @hitgrl_band.

Finally, Burke shared a clarification on the name of the band. “No, we do not hit girls, stop asking.”



HitGRL | Photo by LEE PYE | Staff Writer

BSU Fashion Show: Gallery by Drew Paluch





The solar eclipse at SUNY Fredonia: Preview

ROSEMARIE RAPISARDA

Staff Writer

After more than 100 years, SUNY Fredonia will once again experience a solar eclipse in the path of totality.

"Totality is an awe-inspiring phenomenon that includes darkness in the middle of the day,... [an] effect that only can be witnessed during totality," said Dr. Michael Dunham, associate professor of physics.

He explained that when a solar eclipse occurs, most locations on Earth are outside the strip and will only experience a partial eclipse. Luckily, this year, Fredonia is right along the strip, meaning that the campus will experience totality.

"Our totality will be just under four minutes," said Dunham.

He calculated the totality when the sun is completely blocked over the campus. It will start approximately at 3:17:29 p.m. and end at 3:21:14 p.m.

According to Dunham, the next time our campus will experience this is in another 100 years into the future. "It is truly a once-in-a-lifetime event," he said.

This past November, the 2024 Eclipse Event Planning Committee was formed.

Dunham is a co-chair of the committee.

The purpose of this committee is to plan for the solar eclipse that is taking place on Monday, April 8, 2024.

This day provides a unique opportunity for the committee to hold a full day of events that would be impossible if students and faculty were in classes.

"The committee brought the idea of canceling classes to the Fredonia administration and they wholeheartedly supported their recommendation," said Dunham.

The Fredonia administration acknowledged the desire to view this event. They considered how most people won't experience another total solar eclipse unless they travel during future eclipses.

In response to the cancellation of classes, students have shared their thoughts.

Michela Crescimanno-Dominguez, a senior voice major, said, "The solar eclipse is a beautiful event of nature that does not happen very often. I'm glad the school decided to cancel classes to let us experience such beauty and rarity."

Jude Chiarella, a sophomore music education major, said, "Of course, it's a good idea... students are probably gonna skip class anyway."

The event has the potential to bring in prospective students and surrounding community members by showcasing all that Fredonia has to offer.

There are hopes to "provide a fun and engaging environment to witness this once-in-a-lifetime event," said Dunham. "Eclipse glasses will be provided to all students, staff and faculty, so nobody should feel that they need to go out and purchase their own," he added.

There will be designated viewing areas for the eclipse at the University Stadium, athletic fields and parking lots. A portion of Ring Road will likely be closed so that people can

"Totality is an awe-inspiring phenomenon that includes darkness in the middle of the day,... [an] effect that only can be witnessed during totality."

—DR. MICHAEL DUNHAM

Associate Professor of Physics,
SUNY Fredonia

walk around.

According to Mark Suida, the director of Campus Life, there are many events being planned.

Some ideas are to host an "activity maker fair" to showcase student organizations, arts and crafts, pep rallies, student performances, food trucks, telescope viewing and stargazing.

"We envision clubs working together on [putting together] things if they'd like... Please reach out to Campus Life with any questions," said Suida.

He noted that clubs should look out for an email that will contain a form for clubs to sign up to participate in the activity maker fair or performances. In addition, once events are officially scheduled, all activities will be listed on the Campus Life website.

Campus Life and the Student Association (SA) wish to include events designed for all to have a fun-filled day that is enjoyable and memorable.

This would not be possible without the help of student-run organizations.

Bethany Anderson, Chief Justice of the SA, said, "I'm excited to see how our clubs on campus get involved and participate in the fun."

In anticipation of what the event will bring to campus and the community, students have already expressed their excitement.

"I think this event can boost attraction for the campus," said Sangai Keita, a senior political science major.

"What I think is exciting about this event is that it's fresh and a bit different from what we usually see on campus," said Keita.

She also added, "This would give students [the opportunity] to volunteer or help around for this event to be fulfilling for all, and also bring the students and community together to mingle."

Dakota Richter, a junior biology major also thinks that this event can boost attraction to our campus.

"If we do a community outreach and plan events during that day, not only will we have students involved but the community members who support the college," Richter said.

Richter also added, "I think this is what's best for our community here at Fredonia. We need to connect...so we can all enjoy this event."

Hopefully, the eclipse will boost recognition of what SUNY Fredonia has to offer to not only students but also community members.

FRS wins awards at Intercollegiate Broadcasting Systems

ISABELLA INZINNA

Staff Writer

Fredonia Radio Systems (FRS), SUNY Fredonia's student-run radio station, is now nationally recognized following the Intercollegiate Broadcasting Systems Conference.

During the first weekend in March, FRS attended the conference, which consisted of panels with successful broadcasters. The first day consisted of six sessions, each session having multiple conference options to learn about different aspects of radio and broadcast journalism.

There were some notable speakers that day, such as Kristin Thorne of WABC-TV and John Santucci of ABC News.

The second day of conferences continued with panels, but ended with one event everyone was looking forward to: the awards ceremony.

Fredonia Radio Systems was up for the following awards:

Best Live Music Broadcast- Rockin' the Commons 2023, Brian Valencia & FRS

Most Creative/Innovative Show- Lovercall: Gay Culture at Fredonia, Lovercall Crew

Best Comedy Program- Just the Facts, Hunter Halterman, Chloe Kowalyk & Alex Erwin

Best Sports Update- News at Noon Sports Update, Matt Volz & Lee Pye

Best News Interview- Graduate School Fair Interview, Chloe Kowalyk

Best Liner/Sweeper- Veggie Tales Liner, Alex Erwin & Natalie Wilks

Best Station ID- WCVF Community ID, Hunter Halterman

Best Business Director, Radio- Dan Granados

With eight nominations, FRS members were hopeful that they'd be able to bring at least one trophy home.

FRS' General Manager Hunter Halterman, a senior double majoring in audio radio production and video production, agreed with this sentiment.

He said, "I was very hopeful. I knew we would win something, but I didn't know what they would be."

FRS took home not one, not two, but three trophies.

The late-night show Lovercall won for the most creative/innovative show.

Lovercall is an anonymous advice show that explores the culture around college dating and relationships.

The winning episode was titled "Gay Culture at Fredonia," and featured students describing their experiences in the LGBTQ community at Fredonia.

In addition, a Veggie Tales liner won the best liner/sweeper trophy.

This radio promotion was a spin off of the children's show "Veggie Tales," and included two staff members singing along to the theme song encouraging people to listen to WCVF 88.9.

Finally, Dan Granados, FRS business manager, won best



FRS award winners | Photo courtesy of Fredonia Radio Systems

business director in radio.

There was a lot of anxiety and excitement leading up to the awards being announced.

Halterman said, "Leading up to Lovercall's win, I was biting my nails, heart beating fast."

For best liner/sweeper, alumnus Alex Erwin was surprised that his work won.

Erwin said, "Something that could break the norms of what radio is and something that goes in a creative direction won an award...that's crazy to me."

He continued to describe that this liner was very creative; it tends to make those listening laugh.

Erwin explained the contrast that this liner has compared to the typical winners of this award.

"Usually the liners and sweepers that win these awards are more professional-sounding," he said.

However surprising this win was, Erwin mentioned that it showcases some of the best parts of public and college radio.

He said, "Fredonia is such an amazing place to explore creativity that you won't be able to find in the real world." He acknowledged how special it is to have this creative freedom in college when commercial radio allows for much less creativity.

The final trophy of the night was more about one person than the collective station.

Winning Best Business Manager for radio in the nation was a massive honor for Dan Granados.

Granados said, "I was both in shock and relieved that all the work we've been doing at the station was recognized at such a level."

However, Granados doesn't feel as though he's the only one being awarded this honor. Granados said, "We all kind of won in a sense," acknowledging that he wouldn't have won the award without those who supported him.

He said that everyone who helped him get to this point is also deserving of the award.

Granados also hopes that the awards can prove the importance of college radio.

Isabella Inzinna, the writer of this article, and Dan Granados, who was quoted in this article, both attended the trip to IBS with FRS and are members of FRS staff.

SPORTS

Double feature: Allie Wandell's dual-sport experience

PARKER GURNETT

Staff Writer

When you think of a two-sport athlete in college, cross country and track and field typically come to mind first, as those two sports commonly feature many of the same athletes.

What about competing in both basketball and softball, and even being a starter on both teams?

That is exactly what junior Allie Wandell does.

Wandell is a junior English adolescent education major who excels both on and off the field.

"Most dual-sport athletes you see at the collegiate level are women," said former Sports Information Director Jerry Reilly. "It truly is amazing to see how successful they are at the college level."

The time commitment for one college sport is significant, but to go from one to another in back-to-back seasons is even more impressive.

This past basketball season, Wandell was a star forward for the team, helping lead the Blue Devils to their best season since 2016.

Starting all but one game, she led the team in rebounds while being second on the team in free throw percentage, points, and steals, all behind star freshman Grace Alexander.

Not only does Wandell's play on the court help her team win, but her leadership both during games and practice helps the team grow and compete at a higher level.

She uses her voice to help the team to improve over the course of the game and season.

"She goes to every practice and always talks the truth which helps the team grow," said Mary Culeton, a junior guard on the team. "[Wandell's] always working the hardest in practice and games, always there for her teammates through encouragement."

This level of encouragement and truth helps a team grow closer together and work harder. It is one thing to hear these words from a coach, but to hear them from a teammate themselves goes a long way.

"It helps the team become better because she shows up everyday putting in work and encouraging others around her to become better," said junior guard Jaden Sciotti of Wandell's leadership. "Overall, she wants to compete and pushes that upon her teammates."

Wandell shows up to every practice and game with the same energy. That energy is focused on the basis of creating a winning culture.

Not only does she bring her leadership and skill to basketball, but to softball as well.

Last season, she led the Blue Devils in nearly every major statistical category, including batting average, hits, walks and runs batted in (RBI).

"She had great leadership as a sophomore last year ... She started to really become a leader [and] continued into the fall ... Even with basketball, she did things to stay involved with the team," he said. "She is always in for extra hitting and practice,



Allie Wandell | Photo by KAYLA WELSH | Sports Photographer

which really motivates other players on the team."

Ciccarello also spoke glowingly of Wandell's character, and said that her will to win is "off-the-charts."

He mentioned how this is the first year in a while that he has gone back to having captains on his team for consecutive seasons.

Wandell is co-captains with graduate student Emily Chelius, and Ciccarello mentioned how Wandell and Chelius "basically forced [his] hand" into making them captains again because of their exceptional leadership.

"[Being a two-sport athlete] shows you her athleticism and dedication to both sports. College sports is a lot at times for one, let alone two [sports]," Ciccarello said. "[Wandell's] a player the freshmen can look up to. Being a junior for that is rare ... [I'm] extremely glad to have her."

"I think leadership is truly what can make or break a team. I'm hoping my team feels that they can lean on me through the lows and celebrate with me through the highs," said Wandell. "Having a good culture is extremely important to our team, and I'm excited to see how I can help improve our culture through having this leadership role."

Still, the hectic nature of being a two-sport athlete cannot be overstated.

"To be completely honest, it's a lot but it is all so worth it. I am so glad Fredonia has given me the opportunity to play two sports at the college level and I wouldn't trade it for the world," she said. "I love both of my teams and I feel so privileged to have been able to create lifelong friendships with both the basketball and softball teams."

In her future, Wandell plans on being a teacher and coach, and she believes that the dual-sport experience will help with her career goals. "I will eventually have to teach a full day and then go straight to practice, and that is basically what I'm doing now," she said.

Wandell's next game with the softball team is April 12 at 3 p.m., in a double header against Potsdam.

5th Quarter Column: The madness has begun

MITCHELL HORUCY

Assistant Sports Editor

‘Madness’ is defined as a state of frenzied or chaotic activity.

When it comes to March Madness, that might be the best description possible.

The 68-team, single-elimination tournament wasn’t always as grand as it is now though.

The tournament was started in 1939 by Ohio State Head Basketball Coach Harold Olsen.

For the first 11 years of its existence, it only had eight teams.

It continued to gain popularity and expand, which has led us to the 68-team bracket we have today.

The field expanded to 64 teams in 1985, and then would add four “first four out” teams in 2011.

The bracket has stayed the same since.

One of the many reasons March Madness has become so popular is the amount of upsets.

An upset is when the underdog, big or small, beats a team they weren’t projected to beat.

With the tournament being single-elimination, it doesn’t take much for one of these upsets to happen.

This is different from how the NBA does things, with their playoffs being a best-of-seven series.

Some of the biggest upsets in March Madness history were 16-seed UMBC over 1-seed Virginia in 2018, 16-seed Fairleigh Dickinson (FDU) over 1-seed Purdue last year and 15-seed St. Peter’s over 2-seed Kentucky in 2022.

UMBC over Virginia is highly regarded as the biggest upset of all time, however.

Virginia was the top seed in the entire 68-team field.

The Cavaliers also entered the game as 20.5-point favorites. After going 31-2 during the regular season, Virginia would lose to the UMBC Retrievers by 20 points with a final score of 74-54.

UMBC would lose its next game in the round of 32 to the Kansas State Wildcats, 50-43.

Another term used in March Madness is the term “Cinderella.”

This is used to describe a team who wins multiple games as an underdog and goes a run deep into the tournament.

The St. Peter’s Peacocks team that I mentioned earlier might have had the best Cinderella run of all time.

They were matched up with the 2-seed Kentucky Wildcats, who were 18-point favorites.

The Peacocks would go on to win the game with a score of 85-79, advancing to the round of 32.

In the round of 32, they would play 7-seed Murray State.

They were underdogs in this game too, coming in as eight-point underdogs.

Against all odds, they pulled off the win with a score of 70-60.

After this win, they became the third 15-seed in NCAA history to reach the Sweet Sixteen.

Now facing a matchup against the 3-seed Purdue Boilermakers, surely the Cinderella story is over.

Little did we know, St. Peter’s had other things in mind.

Going into the game, the Peacocks were underdogs in their third straight game, as Purdue was favored by 13 points.

Purdue had future top five NBA draft pick Jaden Ivey and fu-



Graphic by ROEN CLOUTIER | Staff Artist

ture NCAA Player of the Year Zach Edey.

The two were no match for the power of the Peacocks as they won a nail biter 67-64 to advance to the Elite Eight.

Unfortunately, the run would come to an end as they lost by 20 to the eventual national champion runner-up North Carolina Tar Heels.

This is not bad for a school that has an enrollment of 3,500.

With this year’s tournament underway, there have already been a handful of upsets.

The biggest one in my mind, and in most people’s minds, is 14-seed Oakland beating 3-seed Kentucky.

Going into the tournament, the Wildcats had the ninth-best odds to win the championship at +2500.

The team also has multiple future NBA players with two potential top-15 picks.

However, that wasn’t enough to stop the story of round one — 24 year old Jack Gohlke from the Oakland Golden Grizzlies.

The graduate student played four years at a Division II school before transferring to Oakland.

What makes him so special is his three-point shooting ability. Going into his matchup against Kentucky, he shot 335 shots this season. Eight of those came inside the 3-point line.

He kept the trend going when he went 10-for-20 from the field, with all 20 shots being 3-pointers against Kentucky. He led all scorers with 32 points en route to a huge upset.

The other big upset was Yale beating a championship contender and our very own sports editor’s favorite team, the Auburn Tigers.

The Yale Bulldogs came into the matchup as a 13-seed after winning the Ivy League championship.

Auburn was also riding high, as they were coming in fresh off an SEC title.

Unfortunately their ride didn’t last long as the Bulldogs, led by John Poulakidas with 28 points, knocked off the Tigers 78-76.

There were also some smaller upsets, with two 12-seeds and three 11-seeds winning.

The madness isn’t close to being over, as the Sweet Sixteen tips off this Thursday on CBS.

Not your typical sports team: Esports at Fredonia

ISABELLA INZINNA
Staff Writer

When you think of playing a sports game, where do you imagine playing?

Most people probably imagine a basketball court or soccer field, but what about a computer?

Though you may not be familiar with the Fredonia Esports team, they are playing and competing every week. Alyssa Legrette, a senior transfer student in graphic design and president of the campus Esports club, walked us through what the Esports experience is like.

There's a company called "League Spot," which hosts the SUNY Esports league.

Legrette says they look at the list of games, then figure out where they have interest and what games will gain more interest.

Some popular games on the SUNY Esports list are Call of Duty: Modern Warfare III, Apex Legends and Valorant.

Legrette says, "This semester, we're playing Overwatch, Super Smash Bros and Rocket League."

She continued explaining the schedule for practices during the week. "Monday is Overwatch, Tuesday is Rocket League and Thursday is Smash Bros."

The teams on campus don't have a one-shot tournament, but for most of the semester, they are competing and practicing.

Many people may not be entirely sure how Esports works compared to a regular sports team.

"It's structured similar to a team. They have practices, they don't just meet up for tournaments," said Legrette.

The Esports team is just as much of a commitment as a bas-

ketball or soccer team.

In some schools, Esports teams are just as prominent as any other sport. Some colleges even offer Esports scholarships.

Legrette said, "At my last school, their Esports program makes up a third of athletics. They're a part of athletics."

The league can be compared to many of the March Madness brackets that people are making and keeping track of. Legrette said, "Every week they play, record their scores in the system, then a bracket is made and played through."

Last semester, the teams looked a bit different.

While the Overwatch 2 and Super Smash Bros teams existed, Fredonia also used to have a Valorant team.

Legrette said that all of the teams went to the playoffs.

With Super Smash Bros, not only did they make it to the playoffs, but they won the whole tournament.

AJ LaMacchina, who is currently in charge of the Super Smash Bros for Esports, won the tournament.

Legrette said, "We currently have the best Super Smash Bros player in the league as a SUNY Fredonia student."

The Esports team is also a community to those involved. "It gives people a place to go and a place to meet up," she said.

If you're interested in joining, Legrette says to reach out, regardless of skill level.

The Esports Lounge, located in Schulz Hall, is open to all students looking to level up their skills.

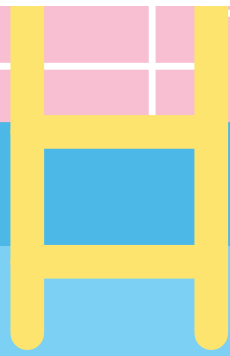
The lounge is open all week with hours that work for almost anyone. Monday through Friday, the lounge is open 2 p.m. to midnight and on the weekends, noon to midnight.

Even if sports aren't your thing, maybe you can excel in Esports.





THE LEADER PRESENTS



Pool Party



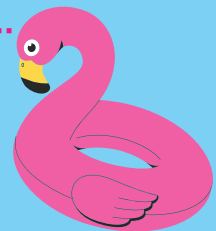
**MEDIA SUPPORTING WOMEN'S HEALTH
MENSTRUAL PRODUCT DRIVE
CLUBS - FOOD - DRINKS - GAMES**

.....
FRIDAY APRIL 12, 6:30PM-9:30PM
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\$2 ADMISSION

Steele Hall Natatorium



Changing for the better?

MARISSA BURR

Opinion Editor

For as long as I can remember, I wanted to be a kindergarten teacher.

In eighth grade, I shadowed my kindergarten teacher for a day, and then as a junior, I spent a semester interning there. For graduation, I was given teacher supplies that I could use wherever my early childhood education degree would take me.

And then the pandemic went and ruined everything.

Now I didn't know that it had messed with my dreams right away, but a little over a year into college I started dreading going to classes and doing my observations. Health issues in the family gave me an excuse not to attend, and I knew that it was time to reevaluate my decisions.

It was a rollercoaster ride trying to determine where I would go next.

Interior design crossed my mind, but schools were far and my support system thought it was a ridiculous idea — which it was. I considered music, but the fact that my college at the time had just eliminated the major made that impossible to pursue.

I don't remember how the idea of a writing major came to mind, but once it did, it was stuck in there.

I'd loved writing since I was little, and had a bedroom full of certificates and awards to prove it. My mom still has a copy of a story I wrote in eighth grade about a family of chalk pieces living in a classroom.

The more I thought about it, the more I fell in love with the idea. My favorite part about my education program was getting to write lesson plans, which is something you don't see very often.

So, I found a creative writing program and was thrown into experiences that I hadn't known I needed. Colson Whitehead and Sylvia Plath and Nathaniel Hawthorne filled my backpack with stories to inspire.

Add in being able to continue writing opinion columns for school newspapers and I was set. This path had to be the right one.

Even when I transferred to Fredonia, I still was able to be surprised at what I could learn. In less than a year, my writing has greatly improved and I've been churning out stories like they're batches of Nestle Toll House cookies. Those in my program are more than supportive and I feel confident that I can be an accomplished writer in the future.

However, an old love of mine has come knocking.

In order to pay tuition, I work at a daycare as a preschool teacher and occasionally moonlighting in the toddler classroom. The job made sense; I haven't lost my experiences with young children, but I'm aware that I don't want to do it forever. At least, so I thought.

I've started writing lesson plans for different books and units for the classes I work with, and it is probably one of my favorite things that I've ever done. Getting to research, plan, and execute them makes me unbelievably happy.

I did two full days on Eric Carle's "The Very Hungry Caterpillar," where I was able to incorporate fine motor skills' like hole punching as well as phonics practice by making caterpillars out of the letters in their name. We displayed their work in the hallway and everyone loved it.

This semester, I've also had the opportunity to take a professional writing course, and I've realized that I could do this for a living.

Fredonia even has a master's program. I can spend the next few years honing both my writing and lesson planning skills to create a curriculum that anyone can follow, even if they are a substitute in a classroom and don't have a teaching degree.

The problem is, I would need certification as a teacher and most likely a bachelor's degree in early childhood education to apply for this program.

But in 2025, I will have just spent five years earning one in writing. It's making me question whether I made the right decision back in 2021 when I changed my major.

Thinking about that is terrifying; there are so many what-ifs.

Where would I be now if I hadn't ever changed my major and just stuck it out?

Would I have been able to stay on a four-year path and be graduating in two months?

What would that mean for my relationships or my location?

So, I've been trying not to go down that rabbit hole.

Writing has given me so many experiences that without them, I may not have ever returned to college after taking a few semesters off. Being a part of both The Griffin at Canisius University and The Leader at Fredonia has opened the door to a career in journalism, whether it be for a newspaper or literary magazine. I have the skills and the experience to do it, but will it make me happy forever?

I'm also wondering if this is burnout.

Am I just getting bored with my life like I did back then and feel the need to shake it up?

If I change my major, I will be in school for at least three more years, which I do not have the capacity to do — physically or financially.

I'm ready to start my life, but overall, I'm just frustrated at the fact that everything isn't as aligned as I thought it would be when I entered my final year of college.

It may sound childish, but I just want what I want. I'd like to work from home writing lesson plans for daycare teachers, while occasionally writing an opinion piece or novel, just to keep it fresh.

Is that too much to ask?

University counseling centers in crisis

JOSEPH BORYNSKI

Special to The Leader

It's not secret that being in college can be stressful.

The pressure students often face while trying to balance their coursework with the rest of their life responsibilities can feel overwhelming.

Campuses have implemented counseling centers to help students combat their mental health issues, but lack of adequate staffing, and a lack of gender and racial diversity among counseling staff, exacerbate a problem that has only increased since the COVID-19 pandemic disrupted students' routines.

A 2022 article by Zara Abrams from the American Psychological Association details this worsening situation on many campuses across the United States.

Cited was a study by Sarah Ketchen Lipson, an associate professor in the Department of Health Law Policy and Management at the Boston University School of Public Health.

According to Lipson, "By nearly every metric, student mental health is worsening. During the 2020-2021 school year, more than 60% of college students met the criteria for at least one mental health problem."

The article by Abrams includes data from Penn State University's Center for Collegiate Mental Health (CCMH). The number of students seeking help at campus counseling centers increased almost 40% between 2009 and 2015 — that's well before COVID-19.

"That rising demand hasn't been matched by a corresponding rise in funding, which has led to higher caseloads," the study's authors state, according to the article.

I was inspired to write this piece after seeing several comments on Yik Yak, an anonymous social media app, from students in the app's SUNY Fredonia community complaining about problems that they've had with the campus Counseling Center.

I posted on Yik Yak: "What are some problems that you've had with the Counseling Center?" and received three separate responses each from different people.

"My counselor wouldn't show up to our Zoom sessions and canceled on me too many times."

"My counselor basically body shamed me lol."

"I was ghosted by two of the counselors during a very low point of my life."

Psychologist Brett Scofield, executive director of CCMH, suggested certain factors that contribute to situations like those Fredonia students have felt.

"We find that high-caseload centers tend to provide less care to students experiencing a wide range of problems, including those with safety concerns and critical issues — such as suicidality and trauma — that are often prioritized by institutions."

I believe that this offers an explanation for why some of the counselors from SUNY Fredonia's Counseling Center may have bailed on some of the students.

Regardless, I know that is not, by any means, an excuse for what occurred.

In an email interview with Jeffrey Janicki, director of the Counseling Center, he said, "We conduct a survey of students every semester to get feedback from them about [their] experi-

ence at the Counseling Center. In our last survey in the Spring of 2023, 88.6% of respondents (35) indicated being satisfied or very satisfied. We know, however, only about 10% of students were served by our center last spring and not all have had a positive experience. It would be very difficult for me to comment on any of the specific YikYak posts without further context."

Janicki continued on, essentially saying that the Counseling Center isn't always capable of meeting each individual student's needs and may not always be the best place for a student to receive treatment. The Counseling Center is always looking to make room for improvement, and students who do visit the Counseling Center may change counselors if need be.

In addition, Janicki talked about how sometimes, events in a counselor's personal life may prevent them from providing the best quality care to their clients.

Compounding this, Janicki mentioned, "Staffing shortages in the field have made it difficult for us to remain fully staffed, despite our campus' allocation of financial resources to hire/retain qualified staff. We recognize that it is a burden on students when their counselor leaves Fredonia, leaving them feeling abandoned and having to start over again," Janicki said. "Unfortunately, high staff turnover is not unique to Fredonia or higher education. There is a very competitive market for qualified/licensed counselors."

I myself have only had one prior experience with the Counseling Center, but it was a very positive one.

During the Spring 2023 semester, I was having trouble focusing on my assignments, and I was worried that I might have ADHD. I ended up getting diagnosed with anxiety and prescribed Escitalopram, which has helped me tremendously.

One possible reason why my experience was positive may also be due to race. According to a March 2023 article in *neatoday*, "46% of White college students sought mental-health treatment compared to 23% of Asian students, 26% of Black students, and 33% of Latino students."

The racial background for counselors can also contribute to these numbers. "72% of college counselors are White. Just 11% are Black," the study's authors observed.

While diversity among counselors is important, it's also important to remember that there's a large amount of diversity among academic programs. Therefore, the mental health needs of each individual student may vary. According to the article from Abrams, "Many schools also support faculty by embedding counselors within academic units, where they are more visible to students and can develop cultural expertise (the needs of students studying engineering may differ somewhat from those in fine arts, for instance)."

Campuses are taking steps to meet the needs of students within different academic programs. These are some more concerns that I have seen echoed by students in the SUNY Fredonia community on Yik Yak.

"Whoever decided music majors should have classes so close together that they don't get to eat deserves to choke on all their meals."

"Why is getting a major in theater so hard??? I haven't slept more than 3 hours at a time in days and I still have so much to do."

Continues on next page.

“It’s so sad how much professors exploit them.”

“Just to ‘make it in the biz’ you have to put in 60 hour work weeks for the rest of her [sic] life.”

Some college students’ mental health struggles are so great that they’re considering dropping out of college altogether, reports a March 2023 article from CNN. “More than 40% of students currently enrolled in an undergraduate degree program had considered dropping out in the past six months, up from 34% in the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic, the survey found.”

Quoting Marcus Hotaling, a psychologist at Union College and president of the Association of University and College Counseling Center Directors, “Take a semester. Take a year. Get yourself better — whether it be through therapy or medication — and come back stronger, a better student, more focused and, more importantly, healthier.”

I took that advice myself, and sat out the second semester of my junior year to focus on my physical health. I’m much better for it now.

Abrams’ article also discusses alternative ways for college campuses to provide mental health care to students. Train faculty to recognize when students may be struggling with their mental health. Nine hundred faculty and staff at the University of North Carolina have received training in Mental Health First Aid. This provides basic skills for supporting people with mental health and substance abuse issues.

Other institutions are offering workshops and materials that teach faculty to recognize, respond and refer. They are taught that a sudden change in behavior, such as a drop in attendance, failure to submit assignments or a disheveled appearance could indicate that a student is struggling.

Faculty can also work on ways to discuss difficult world events that are affecting students during class. Changes in course policy can also help, such as allowing students more time to turn in assignments. It would also be helpful if students could walk in for a same-day intake or single counseling session, rather than have to deal with a waiting list.

Group therapy can be implemented to help decrease the stigma around seeking treatment for mental health. Institutions have found that students are more likely to reach out to peers before faculty, staff or administrators. Students should have access to peer counselors who have received training in dealing with mental health issues.

Colleges could also help by implementing “counselor chats.”

Having counselors meet with students in public spaces around campus, outside of the counseling center, can help students who may be less likely to actually go to the counseling center.

The mental health of college students has been gradually declining for years. Counseling centers on college campuses lack adequate staff and funding to combat this issue, including Fredonia. It’s clear that there are many alternative methods to traditional therapy that colleges can implement in order to prevent their declining enrollment.



Lovercolumn: Consent & Communication

THE ELECTRICIAN

Executive Producer of Lovercall

THE ARCHITECT

Lovercall Producer

THE QUARTERBACK

Lovercall Producer

Hello!

We are The Electrician, The Architect and The Quarterback: producers and hosts of the radio show Lovercall right here at Fredonia. Lovercall is an anonymous late-night talk show about love, relationships and more. Students who come on the show use a codename to protect their identities when discussing potentially personal topics, hence the codenames of the writers of this column.

“The Electrician” is a 21-year-old cisgender female student who uses she/her pronouns and is a senior at Fredonia.

“The Architect” is a 21-year-old cisgender male student who uses he/him pronouns and is a senior at Fredonia.

“The Quarterback” is a 19-year-old cisgender male student who uses he/him pronouns and is a sophomore at Fredonia.

On each episode, the hosts and guests of Lovercall participate in a variety of segments. The cast discusses a relevant news story, a date idea, a wacky game and a main topic for the episode.

Listeners also write into the show, either via Fredonia Radio’s Instagram, @fredonia_radio, on Yik Yak, or through the QR code provided in this column.

We typically answer the questions asked right here in this column, so be sure to look out for student stories and questions in future columns.

The show is now being streamed weekly on Wednesday nights from 10 p.m. to 12 a.m. on WDWL 89.5 on www.fredoniaradio.com.

This column runs in conjunction with Lovercall and can be found both in print and online at fredonialeader.org.

Date idea of the week

We hope to provide our fellow students with a fun and unique date idea in every column. These “date” ideas aren’t just for

romantic partners — you could go with your friends, your classmates or you can even go solo for a fun activity in Fredonia.

For this week, we recommend going to a dance class!

Sure, the idea of you and your partner going dancing may be a little old-fashioned, but it could also be tons of fun!

You and your partner don't have to be all that good at dancing. In fact, it could be even more fun if you both have two left feet! The more comfortable you feel with being awkward around your partner, the deeper your relationship can get.

Of course, you can always go dancing with your friends too.

After all, it's more about the experience and the fun you have than it is about your skill on the dance floor.

As a matter of fact, The Quarterback shared a bonus fun fact with the Lovercall audience — he knows how to waltz!

But don't worry — you and your dance partner don't have to know how to waltz in order to have fun. Maybe you can even learn together!

Consent & Communication

We recently had a strong conversation about the importance of consent and effective communication between partners on our show.

First, it is important to define what consent is.

Consent is, in this context, agreement between participants to engage in sex or a sexual act.

There is also affirmative consent, which is consent that is explicit, informed and voluntary.

It is extremely important to gain consent prior to engaging in any sexual activity.

It's also crucial to know that mature and informed adults are the only people who can give consent, and that people who are incapacitated in any way are not able to give consent.

Because of this, we here at Lovercall recommend having conversations with your partner about your sexual preferences, fantasies and desires.

Open and honest conversations are the key to good communication between you and your partner.

In these conversations, be sure to avoid using language that places blame upon your partner. A good way to avoid it is to try not to use statements that begin with "you".

"I feel" statements are typically a healthy way of expressing

what you're feeling to your partner without making it seem like you're coming at them.

However, it's important to remember that a big part of communicating is listening. Your partner also needs to have the opportunity to express how they feel.

Remember to stay in control of your emotions, too. It isn't going to be an effective conversation if you're overly angry with each other, and you may end up saying something you don't mean in the heat of the moment.

You may have heard the expression, "Don't go to bed angry," and this is along those same lines.

Overall, we believe that communication is a crucial element of any relationship, which is why we call it one of the two "C's" of Lovercall.

The other "C" is, of course, consent, which is the basis of any sexual relationship and must be given before any sexual act.

Reach out!

Do you want to ask the authors of Lovercolumn a question? Do you need advice? Fill out the form by using this QR code.

Interested in being a guest on Lovercall? Email frs@fredonia.edu or visit Fredonia Radio Systems, located in McEwen Hall 115 and open Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

"The Electrician," "The Architect" and "The Quarterback" are members of Fredonia Radio Systems and are involved in the production of Lovercall.

<https://forms.gle/pFHcFzJ7Qc9fcsLP9>



Join The Leader for General Body meetings!



Every Tuesday at **7 p.m.**

In The Leader Office!
S206 Williams Center



ART-icle: Laylah Ali in the Marion Art Gallery

JIMMY KELLER
Staff Writer

You and I are essential to art.

Declaring a piece as art relies on us.

With our involvement in experiencing it, the piece that was merely an object advances into artwork.

At midnight, when an art gallery is resting behind locked doors, the objects inside only exist as things layered onto a wall. But at noon the following day, when the lights get switched on, the art is reborn the moment someone lays eyes on it. Each new smile, tear, clenched jaw or curiously furrowed eyebrow that experiences the work is what constantly makes the art come to life.

The Marion Art Gallery facilitates a space that provides a community of people with one thing in common: they are all driven towards the intrigue that art bleeds. Artists, students, local community and devoted travelers come together in this gallery, transforming objects into dialogues surrounding creativity.

January 23 was the first day of the exhibition *Is Anything the Matter? Drawings by Laylah Ali*, in the Marion Art Gallery.

Laylah Ali is a Buffalo native and is highlighted by the highly selective ART 21 organization. Her work has been shown and collected by MoMa, MASS MoCa, Institute of Contemporary Art Boston, and now, the Marion Art Gallery.

While most read about Ali and learn her work through art history classes, it is an extraordinary and rewarding opportunity for our community to have her be a part of the SUNY Fredonia campus. The exhibition is on display until April 14.

Some of Ali's work takes a traditional approach to drawing in her large black-and-white ink drawings as in her "Typology Series", mimicking patterns of history and convention.

Other pieces push the traditional constrictions into unbound thoughts presenting themselves as artistic expressions, almost in a childlike way. The lines throw themselves from the confines of the paper and weave through the audience's mind like a half-sarcastic, half poetic relay. In works such as her "Studies Series", Ali shares her mind and makes visible the intuitional creative process.

In all pieces though, Ali's directness of influences surrounding sex, race, power and politics prevail in a way that contrasts conveniently with the traditional.

Li Seagren, a drawing and painting major, had a chance to speak with Ali during the reception. Seagren later reflected on Ali's work, saying, "I obviously felt she's careless about others opinions and just let her intuition lead her." Whether that is true or not can only be answered by Ali, but the confidence she throws into her work is clear.

Vulnerability leads to powerful artwork. I, like many other artists including Seagren, understand the importance yet the intimidation that goes along with making confidently truthful art.

Seagren recalled after her conversation with the artist, "Ali strongly encouraged me to go after my own life experience and observations and put those thoughts into my art."

This 30 years of Laylah Ali's artwork displays truth, life and confidence.



Photos by PAIGE SMITH | Special to The Leader

The Marion Art Gallery supplies an irreplaceable opportunity for university life and the surrounding Fredonia community.

Seagren said, "I know the Marion Gallery has always tried to introduce us to all different types of art. It's a small gallery but it plays a big impact in our art community's life."

When a young artist visits the gallery and looks up to Ali's work, they view a dream being pursued. When a student has a conversation with an internationally known artist, they realize their unique story is worthy of being shared with the world.

As soon as the gallery light halos onto the object we label as art, the only shadow left to conquer is in our minds.





Gemini Confliction: An ekphrastic poem

QUINN NOVA

Staff Artist

THis vision Becomes Irritating
Poking, prodding, putrid, pulsating
Asking if I've "*found it yet?*"
Always breathing down my neck
Looming over my every move
"They've all found it, why can't you?"
Toss me, turn me, round and round
Clock keeps ticking, can't stand the sound
Where am I supposed to go?
What is there for me to show?
Have you-
Heavy choices weigh down my skin
Now it's tearing and wearing thin
Whiplash grinds my vertebrae
This or that way? I can't say
HAVE-
I could run or I could stay
All I want is to get away
Winter's melting, summer's frozen
I'm so dizzy and still unchosen
YOU FOUND-
Lungs constrict, my lips turn blue
My brain is mush, I'm a sickly hue
Rotten, stagnant, stuck in time
The vision claws at my weary mind
HAVE YOU FOUND-
No late-night epiphanies
Nor moments of clarity
Forever forking paths ahead
And fig tree allegories in my head
HAVE YOU FOUND IT?

NO.

I have not found It!
Only that I'm too malleable
And that I have the urge to do it all
Experience everything
While confined to nothing
Many facets
Many paths and
Cloudy visions, ideas vague
My story's written day by day
Labels won't stick this metamorphic flesh
And limitations can only oppress
Boxes can't hold ever-growing bones
Fuck, just call me "Jack", and let me roam
My roots will never grow too deep
Air and wind control my feet
Your single purpose is not for me
I am endless, fleeting, forever
Free

Q.N.

What's the Buzz?



*Time to get
advised
and pick
classes.*




FREDONIA
STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

The Transgender "Issue"

JACE JACOBS

Assistant Scallion Editor

Content warning: Discussions of death, violence, murder, self-harm, and suicide

My people are dying and no one is doing anything about it.

As a transgender person in the United States, I am exhausted. And I am terrified. I wake up every day to the news that a different state is passing a bill denying my existence. More often than not I wake up to the news that another trans person is fatally wounded, or worse, dead. Victims of unfounded hatred, of fear and darkness in the hearts of the ignorant. And every day I feel a little less. This has become the unfortunate norm for transgender people, and I am tired of it.

According to data collected by the Human Rights Campaign, 33 trans people were victims of "fatal violence." In the first three months of 2023, four transgender lives were lost to the same. The most heartbreaking instance was sixteen-year-old Nex Benedict, a high school student from Oklahoma.

In 2022, a law was passed in Oklahoma that dictated that all students must use the restroom associated with their sex assigned at birth when in school. Sixteen-year-old student Nex Benedict identified as non-binary and used they/them pronouns, but was required to use the women's restroom. While there, Nex was attacked by a group of fellow students, who allegedly bashed Nex's head on the bathroom floor several times. Nex allegedly retaliated by splashing water on the girls, and despite the severity of their retaliation not being anywhere near the violence committed against them, Nex faced a two-week suspension as a consequence.

At home with their grandmother, Nex complained of a sore head and was taken to the hospital. They were discharged, but the next day, Nex collapsed while at home and was rushed back to the ER. They died in the hospital later that day. Within the last few weeks, the beginnings of an autopsy report were released. Nex's death was ruled a suicide due to an overdose of an antihistamine and an antidepressant. The bathroom attack was ruled to have not had an effect on Nex's death.

As time marches on, it has become clear that there is no respect for transgender people or the lives they lead. Nearly every day there is news about atrocities committed against trans people and news of bills across the United States attempting to criminalize our very existence.

Why do cisgender people feel they have a right to my body? Why do they have a right to murder me, my friends, my family, my community? Transgender people pose no threat to anyone. We don't want to hurt anyone, or indoctrinate anyone into our "way of life."

We just want to live our own lives.

Gender dysphoria is a medical diagnosis wherein one feels the gender they identify as does not match with their sex assigned at birth. Relieving dysphoria can come from something as simple as dressing in a way that reflects one's identity, or can constitute undergoing hormone replacement therapy and/or gender-affirming surgeries.

As a transgender person, I can say that not many people

would choose to go through the grueling processes related to the act of transitioning.

Our options to fit into society are to either jump through the hoops presented to us or be forced into a box that doesn't fit our entire being. If you jump through the hoops, you are still viewed as a freak or a threat.

If you confine yourself to a box, you feel constricted and like you could collapse in on yourself at any moment.

I would not choose to be transgender. Very few people would. The statistics surrounding the rates of transgender youth considering taking their own lives and committing acts of self-harm exist for a reason. Most trans people have a lived experience surrounding those awful thoughts, and I am no exception.

If I could have been happy and healthy living as a woman, I would have lived that way. But I've always known something was off about me. I never fit in with the other girls, I never felt like I belonged anywhere. I hurt myself in many different ways. I threatened to end my own life and attempted to do so several times. I never had a word for my feelings until I reached high school. My parents forced me into therapy with a specialist focused on LGBT youth, and I am so glad that they made the choices they did.

I stayed in the closet until I started college. I was so scared to come out to my family that I did so via a text message, which is one of the worst decisions I have ever made regarding my transition. Despite the learning curve and grieving processes they each went through, my parents and my sister have been nothing but supportive.

When I started hormone replacement therapy (HRT) and binding my chest, life suddenly felt worth living. Things were difficult, especially adjusting to a new way of life and being seen in a new way. I knew I was a man, but so many people still saw me as a woman, or as something they couldn't define and therefore hated. However I eventually learned to act in a more masculine way out in public in order to pass better earlier on in my transition, and it helped a lot.

Despite where I'm at now, there was a time when using a public restroom was one of the most terrifying things I could do.

Existing in public in a predominantly Republican-leaning area in itself was a risk. I didn't start fully passing as a male until this past spring/summer, and it's something I'm still getting used to. I get nervous everywhere I go that I will be clocked, or that I will be hurt.

That anxiety never truly leaves trans people, no matter how long they've been transitioning or how well they pass, and at the end of the day, it isn't right that we're destined to live our lives in fear.

As I stated earlier, every day there are new reports that signify things are getting worse for trans people in this country. It's becoming harder and harder to transition.

It's becoming more difficult for youth to be educated on the proper protocols and procedures necessary to begin a gender transition.

Transgender people just want to be left alone. We don't want to be perceived as threats. Our existence is not up for debate, and the laws attempting to outlaw us need to stop.

We just want to live our lives, receive the medical care we need, and feel safe out in society.

Transgender healthcare saves lives. It saved mine.

THE SCALLION



Satire and parody for Fredonia

America... I am NOT Dating Jace Jacobs

MEGAN KIDBY
Scallion Editor

Dear devoted readers,

As a humble reporter, I never thought I'd be thrust into the limelight of love, scandal and the unpredictable world of reality television.

Alas, here I am, penning a response to the utterly absurd rumors circulating about my alleged romance with a certain bachelor.

Brace yourselves for a tale that transcends the boundaries of logic and dives headfirst into the sea of baseless speculation.

Firstly, let me assure you that I am not, in fact, secretly rendezvousing with Jace in the shadows of the Leader office. The only romantic involvement I have with Jace is through the notepad in my hand.

As much as I appreciate the creativity of the rumor mill, I must confess that my heart belongs to the art of satirical journalism, not to the very attractive man hoping to find his true love.

In the twisted game of telephone that is social media, whispers have become roars, and before I knew it, I found myself at the epicenter of a fabricated love affair.

It seems that in the eyes of some, every smile exchanged between Jace and I is evidence of a torrid romance, rather than the result of a charming interview and a shared sense of humor.

I must say, the lengths to which people will go to craft a narrative are truly impressive. Forget investigative journalism; we've entered the era of speculative storytelling.

Perhaps next, they'll claim I am the secret puppet master behind the rose ceremonies, pulling strings from behind the camera to orchestrate the perfect love story.

It's disheartening to see the imagination of the public running wild, fueled by the desire for scandal and intrigue. Can't a journalist simply do their job without becoming the star of a romance novel?

Must every exchange with a contestant be dissected like a Shakespearean sonnet, searching for hidden meanings and secret rendezvous?

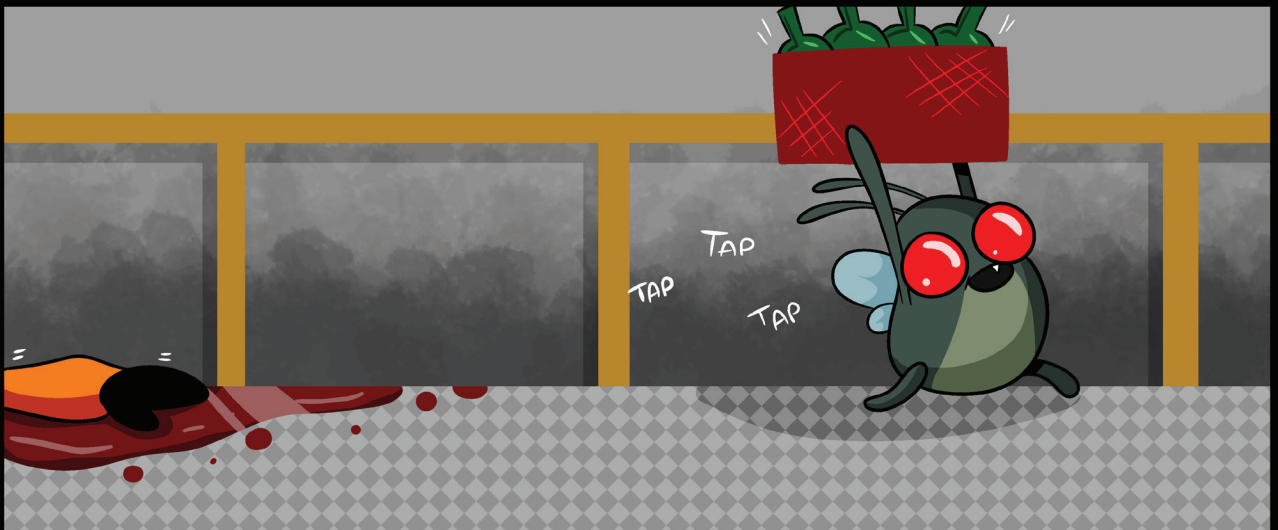
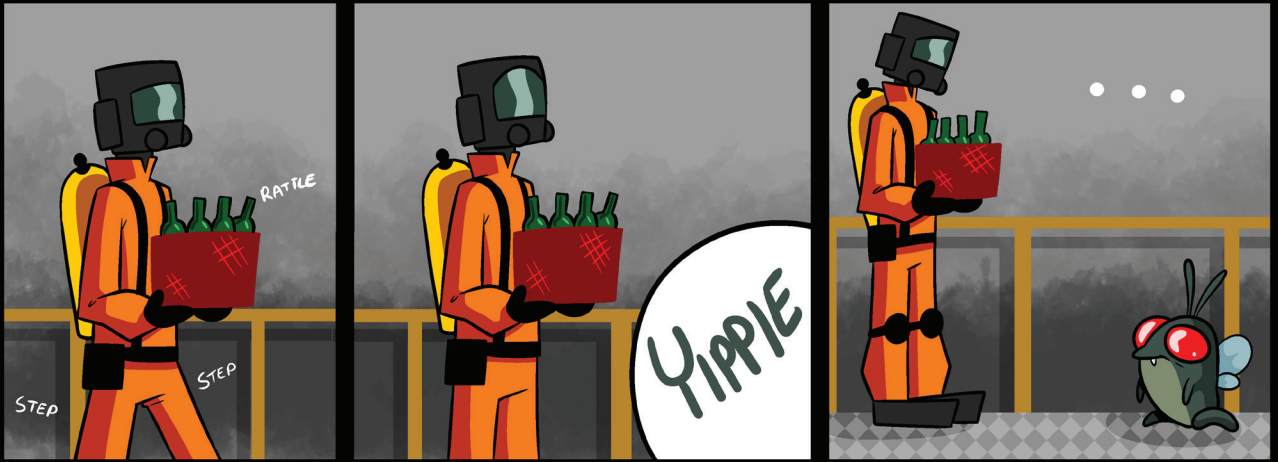
In conclusion, dear readers, let us all take a step back from the absurdity and embrace a reality where journalists are just that — journalists.

As for Jace, who unknowingly became entangled in this web of fiction, fear not, for my love life remains firmly rooted in the realm of headlines and deadlines.

Yours in disbelief,
Megan Kidby



Graphic by ISABELLA RIZZO | Asst. Art Director



THE PARTY B4 GRADUATION

page 2 of 5
updates bi-weekly

Now let's see...

OMG THEY HAVE
BEER PONG!!

Excuse me!

My Drink!

I can't hear you!

Squeezing through

Move over

We want next
round.

Good luck
Babe.

Hehehe

Jemah, you know
I can't throw.

Girl it's not that
serious. Just have
fun!

See!

PLOP

Beginners luck.
Just watch.

PLOP

PLOP

PLOP

PLOP

GG. Now let's
drink and go to
the dance floor!

Hell Yea! Time to
shake some tail!

HOROS

Why Your Sign Should Sign Up For The Bachelor

FACE FACOBS

New Asst. Editor of The Scallion, Jace's Replacement

Hello everyone! My name is Face Facobs and I am Jace Jacobs' official replacement! In light of his horoscopes being too long, he has been fired, and I have replaced him. Although we've never met, I've decided to throw my predecessor a bone and tell the signs why they're compatible with him (in all honesty, I'm just doing this because it would be really embarrassing if The Leader's first event of the semester is a failure). Happy reading, and maybe next time I won't be forced into writing something no one cares about!



Aries

Jace's ex is an Aries, so maybe you should sit this one out...



Taurus

Jace is also a Taurus, which he never shuts up about. He's a male Taurus and he has a J name. Girl, run.



Gemini

Jace will try to talk you out of every impulsive decision you make, but at the end of the day, he'll join in. If you're going down, he's going down with you.



Cancer

Every man Jace has been too afraid to talk to has ended up being a Cancer, no joke. Taurus and Cancer are two really well-matched signs, so maybe you should make a move so he doesn't have to — just a suggestion.



Leo

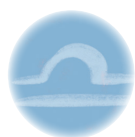
If you love a passionate post-argument makeout session, go for it. Jace is stubborn and argumentative, just like a lot of Leos, so good luck there.



Virgo

If you want someone who is literally afraid to hurt your feelings, you've found your man. He is overly concerned with how everyone around him feels. Virgos tend to value someone in tune with their emotions, and although he isn't in tune with his own, being in tune with everyone else's is a good start, right?

COPIES



Libra

Birds of a feather stick together! In this case, the birds are couch potatoes. Jace loves a lazy day, which Libras also appreciate.



Scorpio

Scorpios usually have a jealous or possessive streak, and lucky for you, Jace thinks that's kind of hot. Concerning, I know.



Sagittarius

If you want someone who commits to the bit, you've found your man! Jace commits a little too much sometimes, so a joke can become a bit overplayed. I have a feeling you wouldn't mind that though.



Capricorn

To be honest, a relationship between Capricorn and Taurus may not be the best idea. Constantly butting heads and locking horns isn't great, and unfortunately, that is exactly what would happen between you two.



Aquarius

Aquarians are creative little weirdos, and so is Jace. If you want someone to stay in and create art with or go out and get gourmet food on a whim with, he is definitely the right choice for you.



Pisces

A lot of Jace's close friends are Pisces, so clearly there are some good vibes there! Taurus and Pisces balance each other with their respective energetic and easygoing natures, so definitely go for it.

