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Faith Over Fear

BY **OLLIE WEISMANN**
Staff Writer



Instagram, @shucampusmin

Agape Latte student leaders pose for a photo at event Linda E McMahon Student Commons

Before every wrestling match, Clark would tuck a note written by his mother into his sock. Each note ended with a certain Bible verse. After reading the note, he would fold the paper small enough to fit inside his shoe and say a prayer, such as "Let your will be done," from Matthew 6:10.

"So I just encourage everyone, no matter what, you know, if it's classes, it's relationships, it's the sports, there are a lot of ups and downs. And if you can keep your faith through all that, it's just really nice to be able to have that," said Coach John Clark, head men's wrestling coach at Sacred Heart University.

Clark shared that memory on Nov. 12 during Agape Latte. The student-run coffeehouse series invites faculty and staff to share personal stories about faith and purpose. Clark spoke about how his Christian faith has shaped his response to family hardship and the way he supports his wrestlers.

Clark was raised in upstate New York, an area where hockey was a prominent sport. However, he chose wrestling and went on to attend The Ohio State University.

He became involved with Athletes in Action, an organization founded in 1966, also known as the "Campus Crusade for Christ."

During this Agape Latte event, he said his faith remained consistent through the many stages of his life, including his coaching path, which eventually brought him to SHU, where he has been for 10 years.

Aside from his career, Clark explained to students the importance of family bonds amid hardships.

After SHU's recent victory over Long Island University, Clark opened up to his wrestlers about his sister's current battle with stage 4 melanoma, a type of skin cancer, in an attempt to put their result into perspective.

Clark also mentioned the Casting Crowns song, "Praise You in This Storm," while explaining the loss of his younger brother in 2021.He encouraged students to call their families, tell them how much you love them and make time to commit small acts of kindness.

"You never know what day could be your last," said Clark. "You never know if you're gonna see tomorrow."

Following his initial talk, Clark discussed how difficult it can be to balance college and faith when students are far from home and face the stress of schoolwork. He recommended students try a devotional or a podcast, and he urged students to find people they trust and ask for help.

Junior Kevin Taylor is a wrestler and a member of the Peer Ministry Team who introduced Clark at the event. Taylor began helping set up Agape Latte events during his freshman year; he later joined the team, which helps plan the events.

Taylor said Clark's message about relying on faith during hardship stuck with him the most because college can get very busy and stressful, especially around midterms and finals.

"I think that having my faith has been a huge part of why I've had success at Sacred Heart," said Taylor.

Taylor has attended every single Agape Latte event since arriving at Sacred Heart and plans to attend the next one. He says that hearing from mentors like Clark gives students a chance to see how people with more experience have handled some of the same struggles they face.

Information on future Campus Ministry events can be found on the @shucampusmin Instagram page.

Kristallnacht Commemoration 2026

BY **MATTHEW CALIRI**
Staff Writer

"Anytime that we have an opportunity to gather together and commemorate past events that impacted our community on a larger scale, is a really important thing to do," said Rabbi Sarah Marion, the Jewish Chaplain of Sacred Heart University.

On Nov. 11, this is exactly what happened. SHU's annual Kristallnacht Commemoration was held in the Chapel of the Holy Spirit.

The German word "Kristallnacht" directly translates to "crystal night," and in English, it is known as the "night of broken glass."

According to the commemoration program, Kristallnacht was a large-scale, pre-WWII program in Nazi Germany, that began on the night of Nov. 9-10, 1938, where rioters looted and destroyed thousands of Jewish businesses, littering the streets with broken glass and attacked Jewish homes and apartments.

Throughout the course of those nights, the Nazis reported 91 Jewish people murdered and 267 synagogues destroyed. However, a more accurate number totaled at 2,000 murdered and 1,500 synagogues destroyed.

For Dr. Francis Origanti, Senior Vice President for Mission and Culture, holding this commemoration is a vital responsibility as a Catholic university.

"At Sacred Heart, our mission calls us to recognize the dignity of every person and to take seriously what happens when that dignity is denied," said Origanti.

Origanti described the school's roots in the Second Vatican Council and how that creates a commitment to Jewish-Christian understanding, as well as rejecting antisemitism.

"This commemoration brings our community together to honor those who suffered and consider how we put these commitments into practice in the way we treat one another," said Origanti.

"Kristallnacht Commemoration 2026"
continued on pg. 2

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News

Kristallnacht Commemoration 2026

BY **MATTHEW CALIRI**
Staff Writer

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One of those who suffered is Holocaust survivor Leo S. Ullman, who told his story at the event. Although he now resides on Long Island, he was not even a year old when the Nazis invaded the Netherlands in May of 1940. By the time he was three years old, his parents had to give him up, in order to put him and themselves into hiding.

"My father went to the train station and saw that young people who weren't yet 5 years old, were being pushed into these cattle cars, along with the elderly," Ullman said during his speech. "He knew, at that point that they had to go into hiding and make that ultimate decision to give me up to the resistance, not knowing whether they or I would survive."

In addition to Ullman sharing his testimony, there were also readings, prayer, music and lighting of memorial candles during the hour-long tribute.

"Those moments [readings, prayer, music, testimony] help us recognize the individual lives and families behind the history," said Origanti.

For Marion, a college campus is the perfect place for this recognition to take place, especially in the form of firsthand accounts.

"This is almost like a microcosm on campus of people coming together with all different faiths and identities, and having an opportunity to converse and hear perspectives you might not otherwise be exposed to," said Marion. "Holocaust survivors, sadly, as they age, are becoming less and less present and available to us, so as time goes on, it's such a gift to be able to hear them firsthand."

Sophomore Julia Fogel attended the event and hearing that personal experience left a lasting impression.

"It was extremely interesting and not something you hear often anymore," said Fogel. "Every story is so unique to that person, and I felt touched hearing about this."

Sophomore Malcolm Cortlandt was required to go for his Catholic Intellectual Tradition (CIT) class. However, he would have been there either way.



Matthew Caliri, Staff Writer

Speaker Leo Ullman addresses the SHU community at the Kristallnacht Commemoration on Wednesday, Nov. 11.

"Events like this are very important, not just for a grade if you're required to go, but also just to inform yourself on history," said Cortlandt. "It was very inspiring because he was just so open and seemed to also be proud about his experience and how he overcame it."

To Marion, the importance of these conversations is heightened, especially in a society with so much division. When asked about what she wants students to take away from the commemoration, she quoted the Apple TV show Ted Lasso.

"'Be curious, not judgmental.' I just think there's so much truth to that," said Marion.

Teachers@Heart

BY **ALEX DE LA TEJA**
Staff Writer

Where does your heart lead you? For some education students, it led them to the Teachers@Heart, a resident-teacher program that allows prospective educators to learn what it is like to be in the classroom.

Teachers@Heart is a program at Sacred Heart University that gives resident teachers more time to prepare before jumping into a career. According to SHU's website, students in the program remain in the same classrooms for 40 weeks, or about 1400 hours of work, as a co-teacher.

This longer period is to prepare students more than normal teaching placements, which typically range from 10 to 14 weeks or 450 hours in the classroom.

"Sacred Heart University and Bridgeport Public Schools are proud of the yearlong teacher residency program we launched together in 2019-2020," said Rene Roselle, the Sacred Heart Director of Teacher Preparation. "The program provides candidates with the opportunity to experience the full arc of an entire school year alongside a master mentor."

Roselle, along with Bridgeport Public School District TEAM Facilitator Michael Brosnan, spent a year discussing Teachers@Heart with the National Center for Teacher Residencies and visiting schools with the same program to perfect their version.

"The luxury of time, while still being supported by the university, is a gift we know translates to a well-prepared teacher," said Roselle in a SHU Newsroom article.

For Brosnan, it is important for teachers to get the necessary time and preparation before joining the school systems. Teachers@Heart allows for those residents to easily transition from the program to a career.

"I wouldn't go to a doctor who never completed a residency for licensure. We trust electricians and plumbers to complete multiyear apprenticeships, but we don't have the same standard for teachers, and we're giving them our children," said Brosnan to Newsroom.

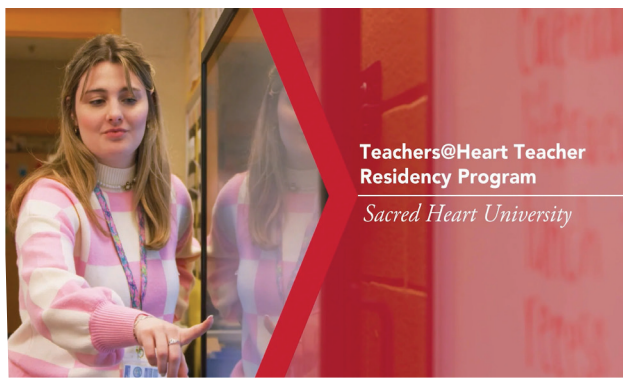
The program has many incentives for anyone who is interested. Teachers@Heart students are not only offered credit, but a career as well.

"Residents and their mentors join a specialized network grounded in ongoing, evidence-based professional learning. Graduates earn $30,000 during their preparation year, receive 30 credits of graduate tuition, and are offered a teaching position when they finish the program," said Roselle.

After the program is finished, teachers who go through the program thrive. Caitlin Wall was a resident who completed her Teachers@Heart spell at Central High School in Bridgeport. She praised the program for the lessons she learned and the preparedness she felt.

"I feel more confident to be myself and open to trying new things. I have been given opportunities to try new strategies during lessons and different ways to keep students engaged, even if it means embarrassing myself a little bit," said Wall in the article by SHU Newsroom.

"I am more prepared to have a classroom of my own than I ever thought I would be, and I am very excited about that! Bridgeport is a fantastic environment to work in. The staff is amazing, and everyone is willing to help and guide me through situations," said Wall to Newsroom.



Sacred Heart University

The Teachers@Heart Residency Program provides students time for preparation in the classroom.

Roselle and Brosnan believe this program they founded sets students up for success for the rest of their teaching careers. The two look forward to continuing to help prospective teachers make their dream come true.

For anyone interested in the program, you can contact Melanie Tietjen at tietjenm@sacredheart.edu or 203-371-2999.

UPCOMING EVENTS ON CAMPUS

THURSDAY 11/19:
ATHLETES IN ACTION BIBLE STUDY
7 P.M. LORIS FORUM

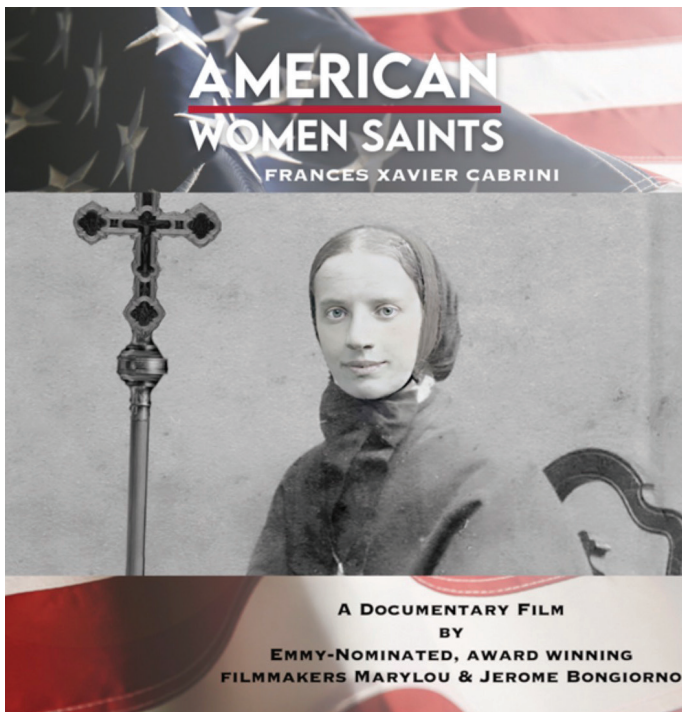
FRIDAY 11/20 & SATURDAY 11/21:
FALL DANCE CONCERT
7 P.M. EDGERTON THEATRE

SUNDAY 11/22:
MEN'S WRESTLING MEET VS MERCYHURST
12 P.M. PITT CENTER

Features

American Women Saints: Frances Xavier Cabrini Screening

BY **JOANNA ENCH**
Staff Writer



Contributed by, Deanna Bradshaw

American Women Saints: Frances Xavier Cabrini was showcased on Nov. 11 in the Martire Theater open to all students and staff.

On Nov. 11, The Human Journey Colloquia series hosted a film screening and discussion featuring award-winning, Emmy-nominated husband-and-wife filmmakers Marylou and Jerome Bongiorno. Their PBS documentary, "American Women Saints: Frances Xavier Cabrini" was presented to attendees at 6 p.m. in the Martire Theatre.

A two-part animated and historical documentary series, the Bongiornos' film used modern, first-person narration to bring Cabrini's voice to life, chronicling her journey from Italy to America and her resilience against systemic barriers. After the screening, the filmmakers joined faculty and students to discuss her historical and contemporary impact.

Born in Italy in 1850, Cabrini was sent to America by Pope Leo XIII to aid Italian immigrants. Despite fragile health and a fear of water, she crossed the Atlantic over 20 times, founding the Missionary Sisters of Sacred Heart of Jesus and 67 schools, orphanages and hospitals. In 1946, she became the first U.S. citizen canonized a saint.

At Sacred Heart University, Cabrini's name is already familiar on campus. Francis Xavier Cabrini Hall opened in 2020 as part of Pioneer Village, housing more than 125 sophomores.

"I didn't know anything of Cabrini, so I thought that was cool to actually do a colloquia of her," said sophomore Maya Feliz. "It helps people learn of the figures in their own university, not just for class, but for knowledge."

According to Professor and Associate Dean of Catholic Studies Dr. Michelle Loris, Cabrini's accomplishments are remarkable given the discrimination she faced upon arriving in the United States, including prejudice from American bishops and priests.

"Mother Cabrini was a frail and tiny woman, and she overcame so many challenges, prejudices and adversities with her single-minded and extraordinary courage, compassion and faith in the Sacred Heart of Jesus," said Loris.

Dr. June-Ann Greeley, a Catholic Studies professor, emphasized how Cabrini's refusal to accept a "bystander" mentality connects to Catholic Intellectual Tradition (CIT) coursework and offers a blueprint for modern student leadership.

"Mother Cabrini spoke 'truth to power' and did the hard work herself, even though she was in frail health and was, of course, a woman doing so at a time when women's voices were not always heeded," said Greeley. "She is a model in so many ways for young people today about how best to live out one's faith and values despite looming obstacles and multiple barriers, while never yielding to despair or hopelessness."

Students like sophomore Sophia Penny appreciated the documentary's creative choices like its visual style and hopeful tone.

"One thing that stood out to me was that the film wasn't like most documentaries I've seen," said Penny. "The sisters made the most of what they had. Students can learn kindness and selflessness from Cabrini's story."

Although Feliz said the voiceover's fast pace was occasionally overwhelming to follow, she praised the first-person format and the message of Cabrini's sacrifice to remain in New York rather than return to a more comfortable life in Italy.

"Go[ing] through the discomfort because other people needed it more was very admirable and something others should aspire to be," said Feliz.

Welcome Home Pios, Homecoming '26 Recap

BY **MICHAEL CASTNER**
Staff Writer

Alumni, families and current students gathered on campus from Nov. 6-8 for the annual Homecoming Weekend, featuring sporting events, university traditions and an outdoor concert headlined by country artist Dylan Scott.

The weekend marked a special occasion for the university, as Scott's performance was the first outdoor concert held on campus in more than 30 years. Current students were invited to attend the concert alongside alumni, a new addition to this year's Homecoming celebration.

Homecoming has been part of the university's history for nearly 50 years, according to Robert Gilmore, director of alumni engagement and events.

"Homecoming Weekend was originally held during the winter months and centered around basketball," said Gilmore. "The tradition eventually moved to the fall following the introduction of football in the 1990s."

Today, Homecoming serves as an opportunity for alumni, their families, former faculty and staff and members of the university community to return to campus and reconnect.

"It is a celebration of everything Sacred Heart," said Gilmore.

The weekend featured several major events, including Scott's concert, a football game against Towson University, the university's first Athletics Hall of Fame induction ceremony and a two-game hockey series against Canisius University.

Organizing Homecoming involves coordination among several university departments like the Alumni Board and the Office of Alumni Engagement. Planning takes place throughout the year to create a schedule that provides alumni with opportunities to reconnect with the university.

When selecting an artist, the university wanted someone whose music would appeal to a wide audience.

"Finding an artist who could attract different audiences was an important part of the decision," said Gilmore.

Traditionally, many Homecoming events have been designed primarily for alumni, with students generally attending athletic events such as football games. This year, the concert provided another opportunity for students to participate. Concert tickets were free for students thanks to a generous donation from a Sacred Heart alum.

"This year, we wanted to include students because of the concert," said Gilmore. "We wanted to have the opportunity for students to join in as well."

Students welcomed the opportunity to participate, particularly because the weekend provided a chance to reconnect with recent graduates.

Senior Mason Marino attended Homecoming after learning that several of his friends who had graduated were returning to campus.

"Seeing SHU alumni and students all at the new field was very cool," said Marino. "You see generations of Sacred Heart students all in the same place."

Senior Molly Farrell also attended the weekend to spend time with friends who graduated the previous year. Farrell attended the concert and football game and enjoyed seeing Scott perform live.



Michael Castner, Staff Writer

Sacred Heart students at Dylan Scott Concert for Homecoming 2026.

"It was nice to see him live, and on campus," said Farrell. "Even with all the rain on the previous day the ground was not very muddy, and it was nice and warm."

For nearly five decades, Homecoming has continued to provide an opportunity for the university community to reconnect and celebrate its shared history.

Features

Pucker Up: EOS on Campus

BY **COLIN MCPHERSON**
Staff Writer

"It was an opportunity that I had to take advantage of," said junior Natalie Drace.

The opportunity Drace is referring to is EOS, a skin care company that has grown rapidly in popularity since the launch of its egg-shaped lip balm back in 2009. Four representatives from the company visited West Campus on Nov. 9 from 12 to 2 p.m. to give a presentation to students centered around the brand's marketing department and strategies.

However, the presentation was not what students expected. EOS has visited in years prior, and based on those visits, many faculty and students anticipated a hands-on project opportunity.

Cooper Rothman, director of the Welch Experience, plays a major role in getting brands like EOS to come to Sacred Heart University. He addressed this misconception of the event.



Coin McPherson, Staff Writer

EOS company representatives presenting to SHU community.

"They've done [the project] in the past and maybe this year it was just that they didn't have a project to do for the students here," said Rothman.

Junior Daniel McEvily, a finance major, attended the event to participate in the expected project. Despite the mix up, McEvily still enjoyed the presentation.

"I thought it was useful, they answered every question," said McEvily.

Students asked the EOS representatives a variety of questions. Questions ranged from the choices of colleges that EOS chooses to market towards to simple career-minded questions about résumés and internships.

Sophomore Olivia Gancitano, a marketing major, came to the event because of the large nature of the EOS brand.

"Marketing is very broad, I feel like I got to see different aspects of what marketing really is," said Gancitano. "Now that I see different options, I feel like I can narrow it down more."

Prof. Patrick Fellin, a visiting professor in the marketing department, felt that this event and the benefits it could provide were so important that he offered extra credit to students from his Introduction to Marketing class who decided to attend the event.

"People are giving their time up from a company to come see us. We want to make sure that we support it," said Fellin. "It is great that we invite companies in to [come and talk to students]. When [students] see companies like EOS come in, they're seeing what people are doing day to day.

The success of the EOS event cannot just be accredited to the marketing department, it was a joint effort.

"With EOS specifically, that was due to a collaboration between the American Marketing Association," said Rothman.
Assistant Dean for Student Success Sean Heffron in the Jack Welch College of Business & Technology makes note of other pathways the program obtains guest speakers.

"We get a lot of great alumni, who will go and be successful and come back and say, hey I want to give back," said Heffron.
Marketing students like Drace appreciate the hard work that goes into organizing events and opportunities like this for students.

"I think [the events] are extremely important because if we didn't have them come in and learn from [companies], I feel like we would get nowhere, really," said Drace.

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Sports

Preseason Poll: Women's Club Basketball Ranked No. 4

BY **CHRISTIAN STELLA**
Staff Writer



Instagram, @shuclubsports
Sacred Heart Club Womens Basketball playing at the Valentine Health and Recreation Center.

After finishing last season with a 19–1 record and placing fourth at the NCBBA (National Club Basketball Association) women's national championship tournament, the women's club basketball team enters the 2026-27 season ranked No. 4 in the NCBBA preseason poll.

"I'm excited that we were ranked number four and I think it's a great reflection of how much work we have put in as a team," said sophomore guard Isabella Gracia. "It will continue to motivate us and give us something to work towards."

"We have a lot of expectations and a lot to prove, but we're getting there, and I think we will end up at number one soon," said junior guard Faith Erasmo.

Sacred Heart University may be a smaller school with about 6,700 undergrad students, but the team still finds ways to compete with some of the biggest schools in the country.

"I think it's great for the girls to see we can compete with anyone out there," said Assistant Coach Liam Murphy. "You see a small school like Sacred Heart, then you have schools like Michigan State University and Ohio State University who have 70,000 students."

The Pioneers played No. 7-ranked Westchester Community College in a preseason doubleheader on Oct. 31, splitting the two games, losing the first game 57-56 before winning the second 51-47.

"These games showed us what we needed to work on, and it showed us that even though we are ranked number four, other teams can come and knock us off our feet," said junior forward Rebecca Kelly.

The Pioneers rebounded with a sweep of Marist University on Nov. 7, winning 33-18 and 31-16.

"I think the conditioning factor is huge. What we strive for in the second game of a doubleheader is being in better shape and condition than the opposing teams," said Murphy. "So we're not trying to fight again in two close games, we can push the ball up the floor and establish an early lead."

The team's conditioning allows them to maintain their up-tempo style of play.

"Getting points on transition, we never slow down the entire game, and I feel like that's how we catch other teams off balance because our mentality is go go go," said Kelly. "We also have a deep bench, which can allow us to run the other teams off the court."

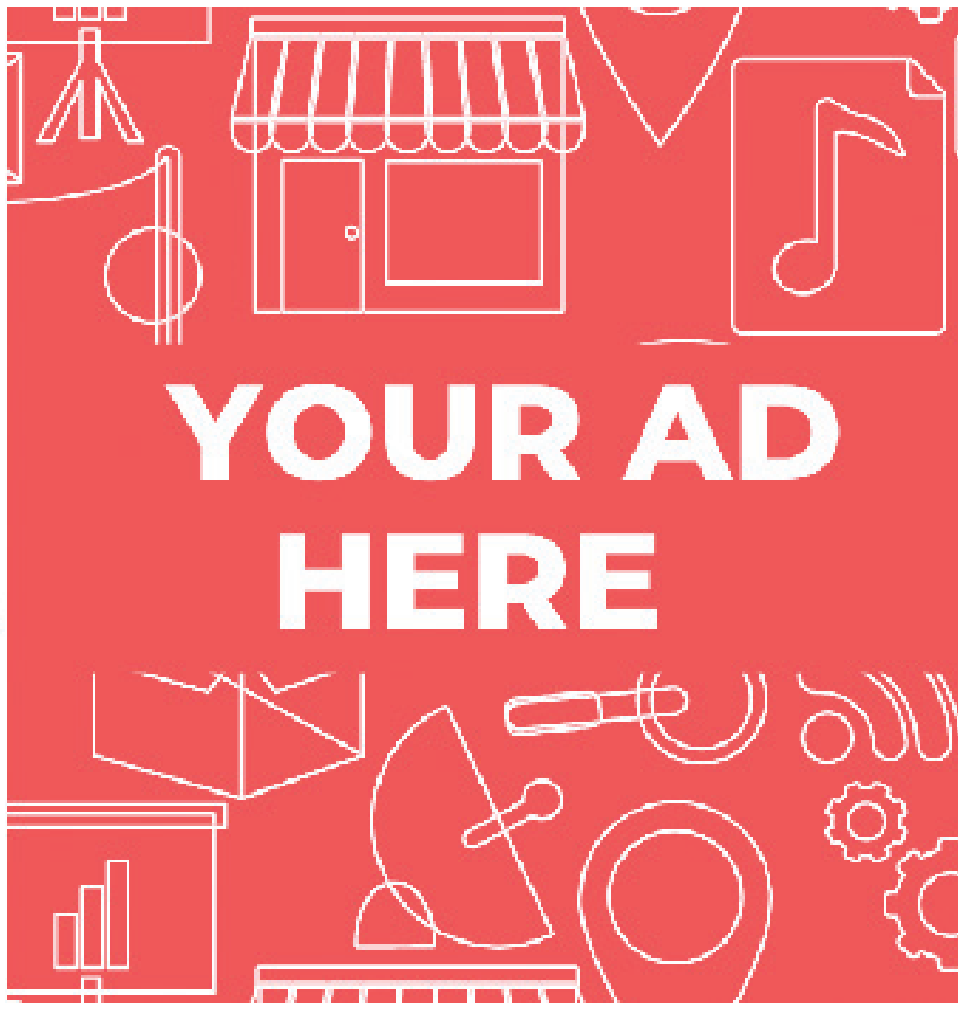
Much of the roster that contributed to last season's success has returned for this season.

"Having four out of five starters return, and 11 out of 18 players from last year's team. That's a great nucleus to start with," said head coach Michael Murphy. "Knowing the expectation of what we want to accomplish at each practice, but also as we're getting prepared for games, we're either breaking down film or going through scouting reports."

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Arts & Entertainment

Druski Takes on SNL

BY **KAI COMMERCIO**
Staff Writer

On Nov. 7, internet personality Drew Desbordes, known online as "Druski," made history as the first social media star to host "Saturday Night Live," the popular NBC live sketch comedy and variety show. He joined the show's cast for several sketch comedy segments alongside the performance from musical guests The Strokes.



Instagram, @nbcsnl

Druski's Saturday Night Live social media promo.

Druski is a popular content creator who makes short-form comedy videos, similar to the humor of SNL skits. He is most known on platforms such as Instagram, where he sits at roughly 13.7 million followers, and TikTok with 15.6 million followers.

He and many other social media stars have been popping up more frequently in mainstream media over the past few years. For example, popular TikTok creators Charli D'Amelio and Alix Earle have appeared as contestants on "Dancing with the Stars."

Sacred Heart University media professor Ann Marie Somma believes the rise of internet personalities in mainstream media has to do with their audience and engagement.

"It comes down to ratings. I think the networks are recruiting social media creators to boost their ratings by attracting young viewers who don't generally watch television shows," said Somma. "These creators have thousands of followers, often young men and women, who will tune into the shows. I think you'll see more social media creators become a part of mainstream entertainment if they are able to attract younger viewers."

Some believe social media stars have an impact similar to television and movie stars.

"I feel like a lot of people look up to them like they do to more traditional celebrities and look to and copy their daily lifestyles," said junior Mia Maurice.

Many social media users closely follow content creators and influencers. As a result, major media outlets have brought these stars onto their platform to attract their large audiences.

Druski's SNL appearance marked the very first time a social media content creator has been a host in the show's fifty-plus-year history.

However, some people who might watch Druski's short-form comedy skits online might not be willing to watch him on cable television.

"Everybody just has such different algorithms online that it's hard to find universal figures that would be a great fit in that space in my opinion," said sophomore Ben Toy. "They are growing though, so I wouldn't be surprised if we start seeing live streamers as hosts soon."

Online discussion about Druski questioned whether television was the best medium for his skits, as he is best known for being a social media personality. For Toy, he believes Druski's transition to live television felt a little bit unnatural.

"I do think his style could work in a show or movie; I just don't think it fits SNL," said Toy. "He did pull off some typical Druski comedy that is singular to his world, but in the context of the skits it just didn't always get the same laugh out of me."

"Stranger Things" to Come

BY **CHARLIZE PEDRETTI-MOUSSALLY**
Staff Writer

After a controversial series finale that left fans in disbelief and created backlash online, the beloved television show "Stranger Things" is coming back. Brothers Matt and Ross Duffer, creators of the series, are amid creating a prequel "Other Worlds: A Stranger Things Adventure," which is set to premiere in 2028.

The new series is set in the 1950s, before the "Stranger Things" gang discovered an unusual secret, and is slated to introduce new storylines, characters and another thrilling supernatural mystery.

Fans have begun speculating new theories for this prequel as well as some controversy that tied into the original show's ending. Debate has also sparked about the Duffer Brothers' ability to keep audiences feeling refreshed and interested in a series that once took over the world.

"I didn't necessarily think season five was bad, just definitely not as good or detailed as the others," said junior Gabriella Velez. "There were so many points in the season where it seemed like it was giving the viewers easter eggs that would lead into something else but never did. I found that to be disappointing."

According to Variety.com, the Duffer Brothers teased that this prequel will be heavily focused on the villain Henry Creel, or Vecna, and his life before being exposed to the otherworldly substance that gave him his powers.

A major topic that got fans speculating following the show's finale was a theory known as the "Conformity Gate." Fans started to believe that the relatively happy ending that showed Hawkins High School students graduating was just another illusion created by Vecna, who played a huge role in changing the characters' lives.

"Personally, I never had an issue with the way the series ended, but I understand why some people were bothered by it, especially once speculation started happening about a possible alternative ending," said sophomore Giuliana Soriano.

Throughout the graduation scene, fans claim they saw many clues that convinced them Vecna ended up getting his way. Characters wearing orange gowns symbolizing prisoner suits, or certain body positions they held throughout the scene imitating the power Vecna had over them, were all evidence that fans gathered to help their case.

The backlash brought attention back to the Duffer Brothers as people wondered if the script was written by AI. According to Futurism.com, the behind-the-scenes documentary "One Last Adventure: The Making of Stranger Things 5," which followed the season finale, had a clip of a computer screen in the background that was open to an AI chatbot.

While these claims are not confirmed, fans have felt upset by the possibility of it.

"Many fans have been invested in the show for so long, so to see an ending we were waiting patiently for have allegations of being written with the use of AI can hurt the show's reputation heavily," said junior Dakoda Coyne.



AP News, Evan Agostini

"Stranger Things"premiere of season 4 in New York City.

Since the first season debuted in 2016, there have been multiple additions to the "Stranger Things" universe including a Broadway show titled "Stranger Things: The First Shadow," and an animated spinoff series "Stranger Things: Tales from '85."

With the prequel being announced, many start to worry if the creators of the series are dragging it out a little too much, while others believe it makes the fandom stronger.

"I believe that when a franchise is spread out through the years, like 'Stranger Things,' fans are so excited and eager for the next season to come that they aren't too worried if the show has gone on for too long," said junior Frida Misko. "Unless the newly released media is a disappointment, then that's when it may cause backlash on the franchise."

Sports

SHUdents React to NCAA Basketball Season

BY **MADISYN ZITO**
Staff Writer



Jayden Hunter, Photo Editor
Jordanna Schrecker driving to the basket at women's basketball home opener.

March Madness may be several months away, but Sacred Heart students are already going mad thinking about who is winning the tournament in 2027.

The 2026-2027 NCAA basketball season is officially underway, meaning upset wins, Cinderella stories, and the road to the championship game is all just beginning.

On the men's side, the University of Florida is sitting as the No.1 team in the Nov. 8 Associated Press poll, followed by Duke University, University of Illinois, University of Connecticut (UConn) and Michigan State University.

The opening week has already provided plenty of surprises. The University of Memphis upset Iowa State University on opening night 73-69, making the Cyclones the only preseason-ranked team to fall out of the top 25.

With these rankings and early-season results, students are already thinking about who will hold the trophy come March.

"Florida is going to win it all this year," said sophomore Chris Barlotta. "AJ Brown is going to have a huge year and lead them to the championship."

"Duke is going to be able to win this year," said junior Tim Via. "They are due after how many times they've lost over the years."

Some students still believe in the underdog story, that teams from smaller colleges still have a chance to make it all the way.

"St. John's University is my front-runner," said sophomore Luis Felice. "They are always known for having a good team."

For the women's, the University of South Carolina sits at No.1 in the Nov. 8. AP poll, followed by the University of Michigan, the University of Southern California, UConn and Duke.

Even with a brand-new season, there have already been multiple upsets to shake up the Top 25 rankings.

"I was surprised when Michigan upset UConn, especially with a player like Sarah Strong," said sophomore Kristal Florentino. "I still think UConn has what it takes to win the tournament."

Since upsetting UConn, Michigan now sits at No.2 in the country, the highest ranking in program history.

A controversy heading into the new season is the expansion of the playoff tournament. The 2025-2026 season was the last year the 68-team format was going to be used. This season it has been expanded to 78 teams, making it a topic of debate, especially among students.

For some, the new rule is going to allow for more games, meaning anything can happen.

"There are going to be so many new players and teams that have never had the chance to be in the tournament," said Felice. "I think it's good for the sport."

"The new format can give more upsets, since more teams make it," said Via. "A lot of teams in the past have made deep runs when they weren't supposed to."

Others liked the tournament more when it was 68 teams involved.

"Expanding the tournament takes away the whole point of a regular season," said sophomore Nick Hans. "Now teams can lose multiple games and still make it in."

"There was nothing wrong with the format before," said Florentino. "It is just a change to make more money."

While students continue to debate the new format and make their championship predictions, Barlotta has one goal in mind heading into March.

"I just hope this can finally be my year to win the $1 million March Madness bracket," said Barlotta.

Women's Volleyball Clinches Playoff Spot

BY **MAGGIE JIMENEZ**
Staff Writer

"Now that we're here, there's really nothing to lose. You just go, and you either get it or you don't. You just go in with the mindset of I'm here to stay and I want it," said sophomore outside hitter Abbie Hagedorn.

The women's volleyball team clinched a spot in the Metro Conference playoffs with a five-set victory over Rider University on Nov. 7. Four Pios had double-digit kills, led by senior right-side hitter Lauren Hubert with 15 kills, three aces and two blocks. Hagedorn also had 15 kills and five aces.

"I think all 18 of us contributed to this win. It's really important that we're each doing our role," said Hubert. "Each of us worked together, stuck to our game plan and trusted one another to get that win."

The Pios won the first two sets before Rider battled back to take the next two and force a fifth. The teams were tied six times in the final set before sophomore Ryleigh Short sealed the victory with a match-clinching ace.

Securing a postseason berth was an important milestone for the Pioneers, who entered the season expecting to compete against the conference's top teams. With a playoff spot secured, the team's focus shifts to its goal of reaching the Metro Conference Championship game.

"We expected to be a playoff team this year. We have outstanding athletes, so we feel good about going forward," said head coach Rob Machan. "We've had a good streak going here now, so I think that the players are doing a really good job."

The Pios know that carrying their momentum into the postseason will require execution on both sides of the court. Strong serving from Hubert and Hagedorn will be important in disrupting opposing offenses.

"I think we do a really good job opening up and closing the game, but in that middle, we tend to lose it. We either get complacent or a little bit content with how we're doing," said Hagedorn. "Instead, we just need to find that consistency of, 'Let's finish it right now.'"

"If we keep improving, that's going to give us the best chance in the playoffs. We're already one of the top teams in the conference," said Mahan. "We work hard in practice. We're looking good."

Sacred Heart closed out the regular season by sweeping Niagara University and beating Canisius University 3-1 at home. They finished out the regular season on a six-game win streak, and look to carry their momentum into the playoffs.

"We talked earlier in the week about how we define success and how we feel as though we have had a successful season, but that doesn't mean that we can just stop and that there's nowhere else to go and grow," said Hagedorn.

The Pioneers finished fourth in the Metro Conference, finishing 20-10 (13-5), and as of press time have begun postseason play on Nov. 17, taking on Quinnipiac University at home.

Athletic Communication contributed to this article.



Jayden Hunter, Photo Editor
Lauren Hubert '27 preparing for a spike at the William Pitt Athletic & Convocation Center

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(Ice) Dancing Through Life

BY **TESS DONLAN**
Staff Writer

With 194.5 total points, the Sacred Heart University figure skating team finished fourth out of 27 teams in their first qualifying competition of the season. The 2026 Violet Ice Classic was hosted by New York University. It was held at the Skating Club of Boston in Norwood, MA on Oct. 24-25. As a member of the team, I competed individually but earned points that contributed to our overall team score.



Contributed by Eric Farley

Tess Dolan performing on the ice.

Collegiate figure skating is much different than the type of skating my teammates and I grew up with. Some of the skaters on the team come from singles or solo ice dance backgrounds where they are used to only skating by themselves. Other skaters come from pairs, theater on ice or synchronized skating backgrounds where they share the ice with other skaters.

While collegiate skating involves individual routines, each skater's final placement in their event earns them a certain number of points that get added to the team's overall score. Final team placements are decided by which teams have the highest total score at the end of the weekend.

One of the aspects I loved about collegiate skating is the team dynamic. For many of my teammates, competitions were something to stress over in the past. However, now, as collegiate skaters, competitions are lighthearted and fun. Knowing the whole team is standing at the boards, cheering you on, is very uplifting.

This year we had 12 freshmen join us. All our freshmen significantly contribute to the positive energy of the team and our success at competition.

Collegiate skating challenged me to venture out of my comfort zone. I first learned how to skate when I was around 5 years old. My dad, who loved hockey, taught me to march and glide at a public ice session at a rink near my house. I enjoyed it so much, I started taking group lessons. When I was 7 years old, I started working privately with a figure skating coach. That year, I performed in my first ever show and competition.

I continued skating as a solo skater all throughout elementary, middle and high school. I mostly focused on jumps, spins and programs that put all those skills together. During my high school skating career, I also skated with one of the Skating Club of Boston's theater on ice teams. We were fortunate enough to place first at Nationals during the season of my junior year.

But one field of skating I never attempted until college was ice dance. Our head coach at Sacred Heart, Lisa Fedick, wanted me to compete in pattern dance, but I was skeptical. Nevertheless, I trusted her and worked to learn this new style of skating. I was so proud when I took home a silver medal last year at the Northeast Intercollegiate Classic for my Fiesta Tango and a pewter medal this past month at the Violet Ice Classic for my Cha Cha.

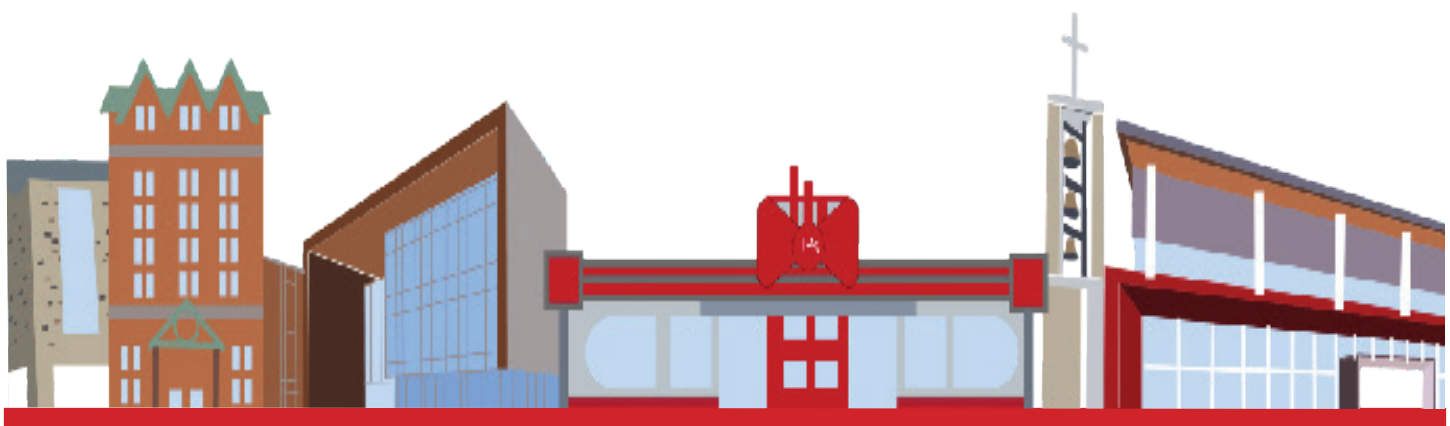
There are three qualifying competitions every year in collegiate skating. Teams must compete at the competitions in their region. SHU is a part of the Northeast region and faces some of the biggest competitors in collegiate skating nationwide. Boston University, New York University, Dartmouth College and Cornell University consistently place in the top five at Nationals every year. All four of these schools are a part of the same division as SHU. With only the top four teams of every region earning a spot at nationals, SHU will have to fight hard for the remaining two competitions if they want to be at the National Final this year. For the time being, SHU holds a small lead of 1.5 points over Dartmouth College. It is going to be challenging to make it to Nationals this year, but the team is putting in the work between qualifiers. We skate three times a week on campus at Martire Family Arena and skate another three times a week at Wonderland of Ice in Bridgeport.

Fedick and assistant coach Alyssa Dunn are continuing to strategize and work with skaters on routines for the MIT Figure Skating Classic. This next competition will take place Jan. 28-31 at the MIT Johnson Ice Rink in Cambridge, MA. The final qualifier of the season, the Scarlett Ice Classic, is hosted by Rutgers University. It will be March 5-7 at East Brunswick Ice Arena in East Brunswick, NJ.

If the team makes it to the National Intercollegiate Final, the event will be hosted by and held at the University of Delaware, April 16-18. The last time SHU qualified for nationals was 2022. The team, as well as our coaches, are focused on doing everything we can to try and secure a spot this year.

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