

Nursing Students' New Prescription for Stress Relief

BY DYLAN MILANO
Staff Writer

Could therapy dog interactions transform student success at Sacred Heart? The Davis & Henley College of Nursing (DHCON) and the psychology department are trying to find the answer. Project Zora was created by Dr. Gina Reitmeyer, Clinical Assistant Professor, and her colleagues with the approval of the Dean of the DHCON, Karen Daley, to determine whether these furry friends may help to decrease stress and anxiety.

Students have already expressed confidence in this initiative's ability to positively impact their study habits and overall mental state. Ideally, Project Zora will allow them to achieve improved academic performance by promoting a calmer and more focused mindset.

"I think it would be really beneficial to meet with a therapy dog before an exam. I have a therapy dog at home and I know other students could find it helpful. I think it would be really cool," said

freshman Sophia Fiore.

Zora is a Belgian Tervuren Shepherd. She just turned one this past February and was adopted at seven weeks old from a family in Vermont. She has been training to become a therapy dog since she was three months old with Reitmeyer, her owner. She is now training at a facility called "Where Sit Happens," where she is ranked a level four out of five based on her achievements.

"In the department of nursing, we have noticed collectively that the students tend to have high anxiety and stress due to the difficulty of the program. We have noticed that the levels of stress have heightened over the past year. Project Zora is going to be an outlet that can help them in decreasing their stress and anxiety," said Reitmeyer.

The department has high hopes for Zora and her ability to help the students. Its staff wants to develop the project so that Zora can come to Sacred Heart more frequently.

"Zora is another resource to help with anxiety. Our study and our plan is to have her on campus once a week. Students are going to volunteer to see her, and if there are times of stress we want students to just come and see her in the lobby of the CHE [Center for Healthcare Education] with hopes of lowering students' anxiety and stress before exams," said Theresa Soltis, Clinical Assistant Professor of Nursing.

"Dr. Yeater and Dr. [Dawn] Melzer have been studying therapy dogs on campus, looking at the students before and after they interact with the dog. The interventions last only 10 minutes. We collected data on the perceived stress scale and generalized self ethicality," said Dr. Deirdre Yeater, Psychology Department Chair.

More extensive research has also been conducted.

"We collected saliva samples before and after they interacted with the dog and measured the



Daniel Passapera, Sacred Heart University

Zora, a Belgian Tervuren Sheperd therapy dog, is the center of a new SHU project to decrease students' stress and anxiety levels.

cortisol levels in each person. We also replicated the study at two local high schools and we found that after meeting with the dog for 10 minutes, the stress levels were down and people felt better and more confident in themselves," said Yeater. "We are trying to scientifically provide evidence to back the fact that therapy dogs have a positive impact. It's a little bit of a gray area because a service dog receives funding and a therapy dog is a volunteer."

"Zora is only one, so as we get her started in the fall working with the students, she will have grown into an adult. Over the next three years, things can only get better as she gets older, and she's going to get familiar with the students," Soltis said.

In the event that students are allergic to or scared of dogs, their participation in Project Zora will be optional.

For now, Project Zora will only exist within the DHCON. Such an initiative is still very new to Sacred Heart since there has never been a therapy dog on campus for students of a specific major.

In the future, the idea may be extended to other programs.

Although the project hasn't officially begun, it is set to launch over the course of the next two or three years. Daley is on board and applauds the idea of having a therapy dog for the students.



Daniel Passapera, Sacred Heart University

Zora interacting with a nursing student at the CHE.

This Week in the White House

BY GEORGE TRIEBENBACHER
News Editor

On Sunday, March 9, President Donald Trump told reporters that a deal with TikTok could come soon. Shortly after taking office on Jan. 20, Trump gave TikTok a 75-day extension of the Jan. 19 law of TikTok either being banned or ByteDance, its parent-company based in China, having to strip themselves of ownership. As a result of Trump's executive order, this law would now go into effect on April 5.

Based on the current deadline, TikTok would once again be banned on April 5 if it is not sold

to an approved buyer by then, but Trump said another extension is possible.

According to the Associated Press, the AI startup company Perplexity AI and a consortium originated by billionaire businessman Frank McCourt are two of the entities with bids on TikTok, with the former proposing a merger with ByteDance.

In February, Trump suggested that the U.S. could potentially own part of TikTok through a "new government-owned investment fund," per AP.

The AP reported that many details would need to be negotiated between ByteDance and

a potential U.S.-based buyer to determine the flow of content between the U.S. and rest of the world, among other topics.

"I am skeptical that TikTok will actually be banned in April since this has been threatened many times before and never happened, but it is a possibility. As someone who scrolls on the app regularly, I hope that it will be bought so that people who use it for fun, work, or both won't lose access," said senior Amanda Valency.

Lauren Kehrle contributed to this article.

For more... shuspectrum.com  [@shuspectrum](https://www.instagram.com/shuspectrum)  [@TheSpectrumSHU](https://www.twitter.com/TheSpectrumSHU) [@shuspectrum](https://www.instagram.com/shuspectrum)

P. 3 FEATURES | PAGE 3
INTRAMURAL SPORTS
FOSTER FRIENDLY
COMPETITION

P. 4 CAMPUS LIFE | PAGE 5
ST. PATRICK'S DAY IN DINGLE

P. 6 A&E | PAGE 6
THE KRUSTY KRAB
TAKES OVER JP'S DINER

P. 7 SPORTS | PAGE 7
WOMEN'S HOCKEY'S
HISTORIC RUN TO THE NCAA
TOURNAMENT

News

Students Help Build a Safer Future with WeSkreech

BY BROOKE GODBERSON
Staff Writer



Instagram, @weskreech

The company WeSkreech has been collaborating with SHU students in marketing development.

More than a dozen Sacred Heart University students have been gaining hands-on business experience while helping safety startup WeSkreech prepare for its upcoming product launch. The company, co-founded by Shana Moore and Chief Technical Officer Larry Lopata, has been collaborating with SHU students on marketing, sales and operations since last fall.

Moore, who serves as WeSkreech's Chief Executive Officer, said the inspiration for the company came three years ago when she and Lopata were developing sonic defense technologies for large spaces. She noticed a growing trend in keychain safety alarms but found most were weak and ineffective.

WeSkreech, which develops the SKREECH, a personal safety alarm, was born from Lopata's work designing sonic defense technologies for homes and businesses. Moore saw an opportunity to adapt this technology into a more effective keychain alarm.

"The SKREECH is a sonic punch that causes instant 'brain pain' but no lasting damage," Moore said. Unlike traditional personal safety devices like

pepper spray or tasers, SKREECH does not require physical contact or risk blowback.

Students have played a major role in shaping WeSkreech's marketing development. They have been involved in market research, design input, social media management and marketing strategies. According to Moore, student contributions have had a direct impact on product development.

In addition to the practical business experience, the partnership gives students a chance to contribute to a cause that is important to the university: community safety. SHU students often work with the Center for Family Justice in Bridgeport, which provides services to victims of domestic violence and abuse and offers education to prevent violence and promote safety, according to the Sacred Heart website.

One of the most significant contributions from SHU students was a research project by interns.

"Our interns conducted and filmed more than 100 interviews, showing that our product, the SKREECH, outperforms the most popular keychain alarm 100% of the time," Moore said. This is a promising result as the company prepares for its official launch.

WeSkreech is preparing for an early April pre-order campaign, resembling a Kickstarter launch. "In early April, a link to SHU friends and families will go out to preorder the SKREECH, and we will offer an initial run of 500 units to be delivered in early August. Any orders over 500 will be delivered on a set schedule thereafter," said Moore.

For students, the partnership is viewed as more than just an internship; it's their chance to gain entrepreneurial experience while contributing to a cause that matters.

Senior Nick Milidantri, a psychology major, was one of the first students to join WeSkreech. He now serves as the company's chief operating officer (COO) and handles day-to-day operations.

"I wanted to help out with WeSkreech because of their mission," said Milidantri. "Promoting community safety and, more specifically, women's safety is something that I immediately wanted to be a part of. Giving back to my community and making the world a better place is a lifelong goal of mine."

He credits his work with WeSkreech for enhancing his education beyond the classroom.

"The hands-on experience is one of a kind and has allowed me to become more professional," said Milidantri. "Opportunities to collaborate and network with other companies and intelligent people has taught me numerous skills."

Milidantri also encouraged other students to get involved.

"This student-led movement we are promoting on campus is something we want everyone to be a part of," Milidantri said. "Safety is something people fear daily, and with our product and student support, we can work together to change that."



Instagram, @weskreech

Photo of WeSkreech, personal safety alarm, using sonic defense technology.

SHU Introduces the Encore Fellows Program for Fall 2025

BY WILL MORGAN
Staff Writer

In the fall of 2025, the Encore Fellows program will begin at Sacred Heart University. This program contains six seminars and courses over the one-year duration of the program.

The program is custom designed to be one year, and it includes two core seminars. Fellows will be able to participate in academic courses and be exposed to the intellectual, cultural and athletic resources at the university. The program considers opportunities for community building as a core element of Encore Fellows.

"Encore Fellows represents Sacred Heart University's Pioneer venture into this new form of higher education program that we see across many institutions such as Stanford, the University

of Notre Dame, the University of Chicago, Boston College," said Dr. Michelle Loris, Associate Dean of the College of Arts & Sciences.

The Foundational Core Seminars included within the program are A Life Worth Living: Create Your Path, Your Purpose and Wisdom & Wholeness. The former emphasizes gaining a deeper understanding of the world and yourself. It will feature discussions of philosophers of the past and present, as well as regularly scheduled luncheons with university faculty.

The latter emphasizes spiritual reflections to develop self-understanding, which will be accommodated to fellows of any religious beliefs and affiliations, or lack thereof.

Participants will complete six seminars over the course of the Encore Fellows program. The previously mentioned seminars A Life Worth Living and Wisdom & Wholeness will occupy four of the six seminars. These seminars meet once a week over four weeks, with each session lasting 90 minutes.

The remaining two options will be the choice of each student, with the option to add more, and each student will be given an advisor to help them find courses that align with their interests.

Supplemental enrichment opportunities include Meeting of the Minds. These wine and cheese discussions are held every other week with faculty

and Fellows' conversing on a variety of subjects. In addition, there are a wide range of university events. Fellows will be encouraged to attend in an effort to engage with the SHU community.

"Encore Fellows offers an optional journey abroad to aid in the cultural explorations of the program. Study abroad opportunities include trips to our campus in Dingle or the Camino in Spain or a trip including Rome, Florence and Assisi. The study abroad opportunities will include additional costs. But these ventures allow for deeper focused study, enrichment and community building among the Encore Fellows," said Loris.

The Encore Fellows program has a tuition price of \$17,000.

On Thursday, March 27, Sacred Heart will hold two open houses, where students can meet the directors and learn more about the program, to share information about the Encore Fellows program. An in-person session will be held from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. and an online session will be conducted from 7 p.m. to 8 p.m.

Freshman Blake Mattessich said that he plans on learning more about the program at future info sessions.

"It feels like a cool opportunity to really expand my horizons and engage with the world," said Mattessich.

The Encore Fellows program will be accepting rolling admissions, but students who submit applications by the priority deadline of May 1 will receive higher consideration.

Students with inquiries about the program can contact Dr. Michelle Loris at lorism@sacredheart.edu.



Will Morgan, Staff Writer and Photographer

Sacred Heart will begin offering a non-credit, year-long program to teach students how to live a more meaningful, purposeful and healthier life in fall 2025.

Features

Intramural Sports Foster Friendly Competition

BY FERNANDA GUEVARA
Staff Writer

SHU offers an intramural sports program that provides students with an opportunity to stay active, meet new people, and engage in friendly competition. Whether you're a seasoned athlete or just looking for a fun way to exercise, intramural sports may be for you.

Alex Faccenda, Assistant Director for Club Sports, said intramural sports at Sacred Heart provide students with an opportunity to compete in a competitive sport with their friends on campus. Students will create lasting memories and friendships while competing in our semester offerings.

"We offer a wide range of sports each semester for intramurals. We run intramural flag football, soccer, floor hockey, volleyball, basketball, and pickleball," said Faccenda. "These sports provide students with multiple opportunities to stay active and engage in a competitive yet fun environment. Whether students are looking to try a new sport or compete in their favorite one, the variety ensures there is something for everyone."

The intramural program hosts a variety of events and tournaments throughout the year. Popular programs include flag football in the fall, basketball leagues in the winter, and soccer tournaments in the spring. The program also hosts one-day events such as dodgeball tournaments and volleyball nights.

Schedules are typically flexible, with practices held in the evenings or on weekends to accommodate students' academic commitments. The specific times and locations for each sport are posted at the beginning of each semester.

Faccenda said students can register themselves as free agents or as a team on DoSportsEasy, an online platform. Students need to be full-time undergraduate students or obtain a graduate student membership to have access to the system.

"We offer various events outside of our normal intramural season," said Faccenda. "We host one day tournaments, 3v3 basketball games, bowling events, and more. Students receive global emails anytime we are looking to run an event outside of our offerings."

Faccenda said that intramural sports does not need to be a large time commitment. Students who want to play sports but don't want the larger responsibility of a club or Division 1 sport can turn to intramural sports.

"The beauty of intramural sports is that there are no required practices. Students can leisurely enjoy their sport and not have the time commitment that a club sport or varsity sport has," said Faccenda.

Faccenda said many students turn to intramural sports to continue sports they've played growing up. He also says it's a great opportunity for people to get together, offering a flexible schedule.

"Students decide to join intramurals or club sports for various reasons. First, they want to continue playing a sport that they've grown up their whole lives playing. Second, the flexible schedule provides students an opportunity to explore other campus life activities and groups that enhances their college experience. Third, they can enjoy it with their friends," said Faccenda.

Senior Jay Chacon plays intramural basketball with his team, which consists of members of the Sigma Chi fraternity. "It's a great way to stay in shape and have some fun. Any excuse to get out with the guys is a good one, especially in a competitive setting," said Chacon.

For students who are interested in intramural sports, head to <https://www.sacredheart.edu/sacred-heart-life/fitness-recreation--sports/intramural-sports/> for more information.



Instagram, @kappasigma_shu

Members of SHU's Kappa Sigma fraternity pictured after their intramural flag-football game in Fall 2024.

Campus Wellness Center Offers Safe Space for Students

BY ALEXANDRA POND
Staff Writer



Tracy Deer-Mirek, Sacred Heart University

The Maureen Hamilton Wellness Center, located on Park Ave, is open and free to all Sacred Heart students.

The Maureen Hamilton Wellness Center at Sacred Heart University is a free, confidential service providing mental health support including both individual and group counseling for all students.

The Wellness Center is composed of licensed mental health providers and graduate-level interns, dedicated to providing students with goal-oriented, solution-focused counseling. The Wellness Center also houses Collegiate Recovery for students dealing with substance abuse and addiction, as well as the Center for Family Justice which provides confidential support for students that are impacted by sexual abuse, harassment, or violence.

"The goal for the center is to support our student's diverse range of mental health needs. Mental health is a broad concept. It engages so many aspects of our lives. It is something every single person will be impacted by," said university counselor Suzanne Christoferson.

"When considering your mental health, you are examining the stressors of life, the impact of relationships, identifying our greater purpose in life, our impact on the planet, and the impact in our communities. In acknowledging the impact of mental health, we are recognizing that our well-being impacts the way we act, feel, and think."

These services are open to all students as the center provides grief groups for people coping with loss, individual counseling, group counseling, a group for

students who are dealing with family members struggling with addiction, and students struggling academically.

"The mission for the center is to empower students to health and wellness," said Director of Counseling Jeffrey LaBella. "The Wellness Center has helped students navigate difficult and challenging times as we support them in making decisions and openly talking about their problems,"

LaBella said the kinds of issues that he sees when students come to his appointments are students seeking support from different relationship issues whether it's with their roommates, professors, coaches or family members. Many students also struggle with stress and anxiety, but academic stress has become a more frequent concern.

"When I'm stressed, I try to clear my mind as much as possible. I will go for a walk and just take deep breaths to calm down. Staying active like going to the gym also makes me feel better when I'm stressed. Talking to loved ones and explaining to them how I feel and having their support makes me feel better," said freshman Emily Lupo.

Another resource students can access is the Yale New Haven Health Clinic located down the street from campus at 5520 Park Avenue in Trumbull. Transportation is available through the SHU West/Yale shuttle service. All visits to the Clinic are by appointment only and walk-in hours are Monday through Friday, 8:30-11:30 a.m.

Access to the Wellness Center is available by appointment only, and to schedule, you can simply reach out by email at conselingcenter@sacredheart.edu.



Tracy Deer-Mirek, Sacred Heart University

Staff at the Wellness Center, offering individual and group counseling, posing for a group photo.

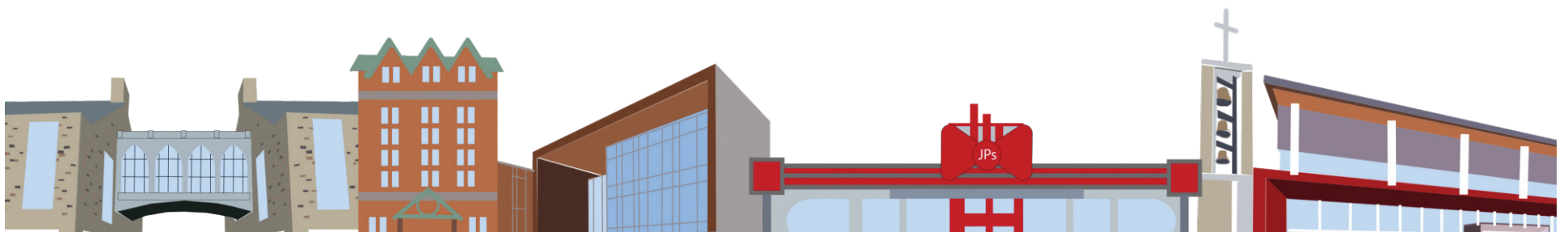
CampusLife

St. Patrick's Day in Dingle



Contributed by Sami Egger '26

Saint Patrick's Day in Dingle, Ireland through SHU Global.



Interested in contributing to Campus Life? Contact us at spectrum@sacredheart.edu

CampusLife

SHU Madness Bracket!



**Do you have an upcoming event
or new business?**



For all advertising inquiries contact:
spectrum-advertising@sacredheart.edu

**YOUR AD
HERE**

Arts & Entertainment

SHU Performing Arts Travels Worldwide for Spring Break

BY VALENTINA MASSONI
Managing Editor of Content

Over spring break, multiple cohorts of Sacred Heart University's performing arts program traveled to advance their skills and knowledge of the arts. The Theatre Arts Program (TAP) took a trip to Chicago from March 4 through March 9.

The trip allowed students to immerse in Chicago's theatrical offerings and provided the ability to explore off-Broadway-style productions.

"I think this trip enhanced my knowledge of performing arts by showing me all different types of theatre. Since we saw so many different types of shows, it was amazing to see what people wrote and put on stage. Some shows were better than others but seeing the not-so-good shows makes the good shows even better," said freshman Brigid Gawley.

One of these shows was "A Raisin In the Sun" at the Court Theatre. According to the Court Theatre's website, this play is the first show to be produced on Broadway written by a black woman, and it depicts a family's fight for dignity and the right to dream. Gawley said this show was amazing.

Gawley also noted some of the provided excursions for attendees.

"We toured Chicago and saw one or more shows everyday while we were



Contributed by Moira Staples, '25
Features Editor Moira Staples holds a baby lamb in Co. Kerry, Dingle, Ireland during Spring Break.

there. We saw mostly off Broadway shows, and it was very interesting to see the difference between New York Broadway shows and shows in Chicago," she said.

Sophomore Adam Petrosino explained why he wanted to attend.

"I went on the trip because of my career aspirations in theatre and interest in seeing the theatrical ventures being explored in Chicago, which I knew to be a place where many shows first find their footing," Petrosino said.

"In a city where theatrical performances prioritize sharing their story over critical acclaim or economic success, the shows we had the opportunity to see were widely impactful and of many different backgrounds," he said.

Similarly, Gawley said, "Since I was the only freshman on the trip, I was a bit nervous, but I went on the trip because I wanted to not only see Chicago and the shows, but also hang out with the upperclassmen and form connections with people I did not have before."

Experiencing professional productions first-hand and engaging with industry professionals inspired students and helped prepare students for future careers in the ever-evolving world of theater.

"This trip was incredibly impactful in enhancing the group's knowledge of theatre arts and other important learned experiences," said Petrosino. "Being able to see so many performances from widely diverse economic backgrounds, we learned much about how theatre operates on each respective level - from massive city funded theatres to ramshackle improv groups in crowded city buildings."

In addition, SHU's Claddagh Dance Team recently embarked on a trip to Dingle, Ireland as a part of a cultural exchange and performance tour. Their trip lasted from March 1 until March 9.

While in Dingle, the members of the team trained with professional Irish dancers. While they were mostly focused on dancing, the trip also offered tourism-based experiences. An Instagram post from the SHU Dance Program stated that the team enjoyed afternoons engaging with local culture and animals.

"We had a Gaelic lesson and did some set dancing with the locals, which was a great time. The Irish dance team had daily workshops with Tomás O Sé and his wife Niamh O' Brien, who have both toured with the world famous group Riverdance, which was such an incredible experience," said junior Moira Staples, Features Editor for the Spectrum and member of the Claddagh Dance Team.

Salo Pizon contributed to this article.

The Krusty Krab Takes Over JP's Diner

BY SUNNIVA HALVORSEN
Staff Writer

On March 12, the Student Events Team (SET) hosted a "SpongeBob Squarepants"-themed event turning JP's Diner into the Krusty Krab.

"I thought it was a really fun atmosphere. I thought the menu was super creative and interactive. I liked how they had a raffle, it was really fun overall and a really good experience," said senior Jenna Massaro.

SET used JP's classic menu and incorporated the theme into the food offerings. The options were references to the show such as Chum Bucket Chilli Fries, the Krabby Patty and a Kelp Milkshake.

"I thought the menu was really fun. I liked all of the different names they gave, and I loved the decorations," said freshman Sophia Recupero.

SET decorated the diner to bring the vibe of the Krusty Krab to life. JP's staff wore themed hats from the show to resemble employees of the Krusty Krab.

The event was an idea that SET came up with after hosting a Luke's Diner event inspired by "Gilmore Girls" in the fall of 2024.

One highlight of the event was the raffle basket.

"For Luke's Diner we had a Luke's coffee mug and 'Gilmore Girls' tote bag. This time we had a huge SpongeBob themed basket with a Patrick comfy, a pineapple plant holder, a coffee cup T-shirt," said junior Isabella Defrancesco, SET President. "We thought a themed basket was kind of cool to tie into the event, so that it feels like there is an actual theme here."

According to Defrancesco, students showed enthusiasm for the raffle basket.

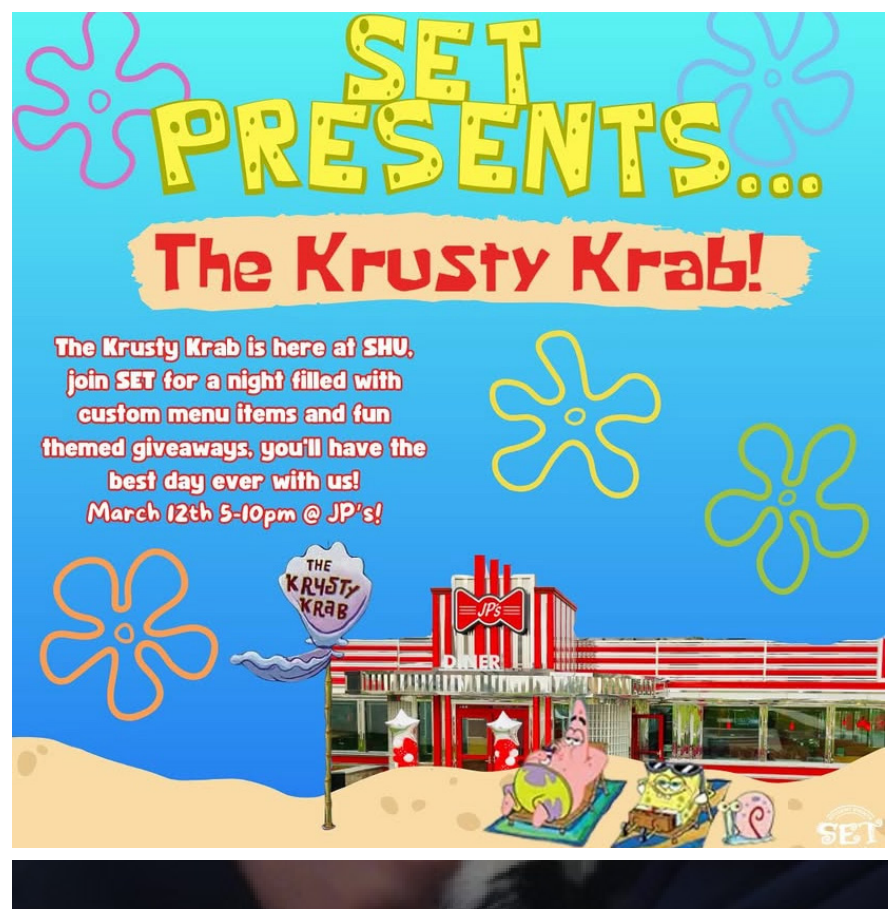
"We have had some good people putting in their names for it. People were really energetic about it so we love that kind of reaction," said Defrancesco.

SET hosted this event to create a better campus community. The team felt it was a success as there were lines out the door during a majority of its 5 p.m. to 10 p.m. time slot.

In the future, students said that they would want to see more themed events at JP's.

"I think it does bring everybody on campus together. It gets everybody involved, and it was really fun to see people you knew," said freshman Sophia Ryan.

Jessica Balogh contributed to this article.



**UPCOMING
PERFORMING
ARTS
SHOWCASES**

**THURSDAY 3/20:
TORCH SONG
LITTLE
THEATRE
AT 8 P.M.**

**SUNDAY 3/23:
PIONEER BLAST!
SHU COMMUNITY
THEATRE
AT 3 P.M.**

**SATURDAY 3/29:
GAIA'S RHYTHM
SHU COMMUNITY
THEATRE
AT 7 P.M.**

**SATURDAY 3/29:
GOSPEL FEST
CHAPEL OF THE
HOLY SPIRIT
AT 8 P.M.**

Sports



Women's Hockey's Historic Run to the NCAA Tournament

Jack Cavicchi, Assistant Photo Editor and Web Manager

Senior defense Savannah Popick celebrates after scoring the game winning goal in overtime against Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute on Oct. 4, 2024.

BY **SAM MCCANN**
Staff Writer

The women's ice hockey team skated their way untouched through the New England Women's Hockey Association (NEWHA) to claim their rings and punch their ticket to the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Tournament.

"This was a special group we had, and if we were going to accomplish this, it was going to be with this team," said fifth-year captain Paige McNeil.

The Pioneers ended their regular season with a 17-14-3 record. This included up and down games throughout the season, like their 1-1 record against in-state rivals Post University. However, the Pioneers were able to push past this and set themselves in a great position for the postseason.

The women claimed the No. 3 seed in the NEWHA tournament. This set up a battle with No. 6 seed Assumption University, whom they had swept in the regular season matchups.

"We knew going into Assumption that after the last regular season weekend we needed to be on top of everything and play the game we know how to," said McNeil.

The Pioneers won the playoff opener against Assumption on home ice, courtesy of first-year student Brianna Morden netting the only goal of the game and senior goalie Carly Greene getting a shutout with 37 saves.

"Going into Saturday, we came out firing on all cylinders and closed that weekend out, which is what we really needed, and it brought a lot of momentum for us," said McNeil.

Following their sweep, the Pios rolled on to face Saint Anselm College in a win or go home matchup, where they dominated the game from start to finish, resulting in a 6-2 win. This scoring outburst bolstered the Pioneers' confidence heading into

the finals against number one seed Long Island University (LIU).

"We know we are the best team in this conference, and we know what we can do. We know how special we are on and off the ice," said senior Savannah Popick. "We wanted to get what we, at the end of the day, earned and deserved."

It was the LIU Sharks that struck first, however, but the Pioneers answered back in less than 20 seconds with a goal of their own by McNeil. They continued the pressure and scored two more unanswered goals. LIU scored once more to bring the game to a one-goal difference, but the two-goal lead was restored after Popick assisted first year student Ella Holm for the final goal of the game.

"We weren't nervous and we had all the confidence in the world in each other. We knew going into this game, it was ours. Going down was tough, but we worked all season on responding," said Popick.

The 4-2 win secured Sacred Heart as the NEWHA Tournament Champions. Four Pioneers were named all-tournament, including senior Carly Greene, who won Most Valuable Player for the tournament. Alongside her, Popick, sophomore Grayson Limke and sophomore Isabella Chatput were recognized for their efforts on the ice.

"This is a special group of players who have worked very hard this season to get where they are," said Head Coach Thomas O'Malley.

With the NEWHA Tournament won, the Pioneers clinched their first-ever appearance into the NCAA tournament as an automatic bid.

Their memorable season came to a close on Thursday, March 13 as the Pioneers faced off against the University of Minnesota Duluth, the No. 6 seed. SHU fell short in the second period letting up three goals and ended the game and season with a 6-1 loss.

Sacred Heart Athletics contributed to this article.

Men's Wrestling Ends Season with Three Podium Finishers

BY **TAYLOR MAGUIRE**
Staff Writer

Is a season defined by its record or by the athletes who rise when it matters most? For these three men's wrestling podium finishers, the answer is clear.

On March 7 and 8, the Sacred Heart University men's wrestling team went to Bethlehem, Pa., to compete in the Eastern Intercollegiate Wrestling Association (EIWA) Championship. Lehigh University hosted 12 universities for the two-day event.

"The 'W' in EIWA stands for wrestling, so it's a wrestling only conference," said Head Coach John Clark.

The men's wrestling team had an overall record of 1-17 this season. Although no one qualified for nationals, they had three top eight placements. One of which was junior Hunter Perez, who finished in seventh at 184 pounds.

"Placing seventh in a tough tournament really builds your confidence," said Perez.

Jakob Gilfoil of Army West Point forfeited the match, allowing Perez to secure his seventh-place finish.

"The final match was just going out there and wrestling well," said Perez. "It didn't really matter how it went since I was already on the podium, so it was more about going out there, having fun and letting it fly."

Another podium placement from the championship came from junior Felix Lettini, 157 pounds, who finished in eighth and first-year Braxton Fries-Appello, 133 pounds, who finished in seventh. Both finished the championship with an overall record of 2-3.

With the end of their 2024-2025 season, the Pioneers look towards the off season and the next season back on the mat with optimism.

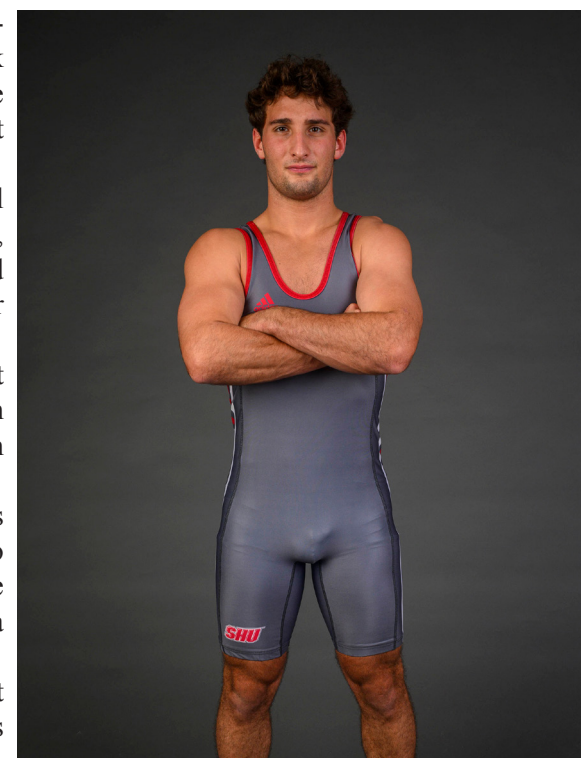
"I make sure I'm still wrestling during the off season, staying fit and in shape, and then, just coming in next year ready to wrestle," said Perez.

Clark plans to have at least 61 student athletes on the team next season, a step up from their current number.

"We have a lot of recruits coming in, so we're trying to change a little culture here that hasn't been changed in a while," said Perez.

"I feel like every student athlete did well, and it's something to build on going into next year," said Clark.

Sacred Heart Athletics contributed to this article.



Mark F. Conrad, Sacred Heart University

Junior Hunter Perez poses for a photo on media day.

Sports

EDITOR IN CHIEF
MADISON BEEKMAN
2025

MANAGING EDITOR: CONTENT
VALENTINA MASSONI
2025

MANAGING EDITORS: ADMINISTRATION
MOLLY BRUTON
2025

SAMANTHA MARANO
2025

COPY EDITORS
COLLIN MOURA
2025

GEORGE TRIEBENBACHER
2026

NEWS EDITORS
LAUREN KEHRLE
2025

GEORGE TRIEBENBACHER
2026

ASST. NEWS EDITOR
DANIEL GREENE
2026

FEATURES EDITORS
MOIRA STAPLES
2026

SARA HASENEY
2026

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT EDITOR
JESSICA BALOGH
2025

ASST. ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT EDITOR
ISABELLA GENERAZO
2026

SPORTS EDITOR
SHANNON TUTTLE
2026

ASST. SPORTS EDITORS
JOHN HEINZE
2025

COLLIN MACLEOD
2027

CAMPUS LIFE EDITOR
COLLIN MOURA
2025

ASST. CAMPUS LIFE EDITOR
EMMA RICOTTA
2026

PHOTOGRAPHY EDITOR
ALLY FABBO
2025

ASST. PHOTOGRAPHY EDITORS
JAKE WALSH
2025

JACK CAVICCHI
2027

JORDAN DORSEY
2026

PUBLIC RELATIONS MANAGER
SAMANTHA MARANO
2025

ASST. PUBLIC RELATIONS MANAGER
LAURYN ENGLISH
2025

WEB MANAGER
JACK CAVICCHI
2027

GRAPHICS EDITOR
ALLY FABBO
2025

CIRCULATION MANAGER
ERIN PELLEGRINI
2026

EDITORS AT LARGE
JACK CAVICCHI
2027

KAYLEE SHINDEL
2025

FACULTY ADVISOR
PROF. JOANNE KABAK



Men's Basketball's First Run in the MAAC Tournament

Instagram, @shu_menshoops

First-year guard, Mekhi Conner, warming up before a big game against Merrimack College this past week.

BY RYAN BRADLEY, JR.
Staff Writer

The men's basketball team ended their 2024-2025 season and Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference (MAAC) playoff debut with a loss to Merrimack College in the quarterfinals.

The Pioneers took their first game of the tournament 71-58 against cross-town rival Fairfield University on March 11. Senior guard Amiri Stewart had a strong game, finishing with 18 points and eight rebounds.

"It's a big day for our university and our program to be playing in the playoffs and to get a win against your crosstown rival," said head coach Anthony Latina.

This was the Pioneers' third win over Fairfield this season, giving them a matchup record of 3-0. Before this season, the men have never won a game against the Stags.

"The first time that Fairfield played us a couple years ago, we had felt like we had arrived and now we are going head-to-head with them," said Latina. "It was a great game, we jumped on them early, and we led for 38 minutes and 21 seconds."

"We usually go out there and try to set a tone, which makes us get out to a fast start," said redshirt junior Tanner Thomas, who finished right behind Stewart with 14 points and six rebounds.

Advancing to the semifinals on March 12, the Pioneers played their second game in the playoffs versus No. 2 seed,

Merrimack. A tough battle uphill all game, Stewart was able to tie the game with two seconds left on the clock, forcing a five minute overtime.

However, it was Merrimack that dominated the overtime and sealed the semifinal game 66-62, sending Sacred Heart home in their inaugural MAAC tournament.

"I'm proud of our team," said Latina. "We didn't play our best, and I think Merrimack had a part in that. We sent it to overtime, and we had some chances. They deserve some credit for finishing it out, but I am really proud of our guys and what they established."

Stewart was again a prominent figure in the semifinals, finishing with 19 points and six rebounds. Redshirt junior Anquan Hill also put in an impressive performance with 14 points and 21 rebounds.

"Even the last two games against [Merrimack] were one-point games. We just came up short; I expect to have a lot more great matchups with them," said Hill.

The team ended their first season in the MAAC conference with a record of 15-18 and 10-10 within conference play. This record holds the most conference wins in the last three years, in a conference they were picked to finish No. 13 in.

"Sports can be cruel, the highs are really high and the lows are really low, and we are feeling that right now. I don't think we will be picked 13 again," said Latina.

Sacred Heart Athletics contributed to this article.

Women's Wrestling Places in Top 10 at Nationals

BY KEANE PELLETIER
Staff Writer

The women's wrestling team headed to Coralville, Iowa, where they capped off their season in the National Collegiate Women's Wrestling Championships (NCWWC). The team finished ninth overall with seniors Alexandra Fitzgerald and Madison Sandquist both finishing as All-American honors.

The Pioneers kicked off the tournament winning 17 total matches on the first day led by senior Temi Sanusi, sophomore Love Daley, and Fitzgerald, all of whom secured three wins, along with Sandquist, who finished the day with two.

"I was very happy for [Fitzgerald] because she made it to the semis, which is definitely a big deal. I was also happy that Love, Temi and Maddie Sanquist were still alive after the first day," said head coach Paulina Biega.

At the end of day one, Fitzgerald was still in the championship bracket looking to take home gold as well as Sanusi, Daley and Sandquist remaining in the consolation bracket fighting for a chance to finish as high as third place. The Pioneers had 39.0 points and were ranked No. 7 in the tournament.

"I think that we should have done a little bit better," said Biega. "But when you go to tournaments like that, you have to win in your head first."

On day two, Fitzgerald lost in the semifinal round and went on to place sixth overall. Sandquist won two of her next three matches in the consolation bracket to finish seventh. Sanusi and Daley both ended up losing their matches and failed to place within the top eight. The Pioneers finished

ninth as a team in the tournament.

"Placing ninth was not our best performance. I know I didn't have my best performance as well. As grateful as I am to come back having placed, I think we could have done so much better," said Sandquist.

The two day event concluded with Sandquist and Fitzgerald earning All-American honors after their performances. This was Sandquist's fourth consecutive All-American selection and Fitzgerald's third consecutive All-American selection.

"Being a four time All-American, that meant a lot to me because not a lot of people get to hold that title of doing something like that four times," said Sandquist.

"That's a lot of pressure to be on the top at all times; it's very hard. Sometimes it's easier to be an underdog," said Biega. "They dealt with a lot of things and there were a lot of ups and a lot of downs, but they persevered. There is a lot to be proud of, and I am very proud of Ally and Maddie."

Much of the team success is credited to coach Biega's work ethic and how she was able to pass it down to her players.

"Coach Paulina is probably one of the most passionate people ever for the sport. And if you're lucky enough to know her and see her loyalty, she will always have your back, and she'll always do whatever she can for her athletes and for her friends, and it is just such a pleasure to be coached by her," said Sandquist.

The team is looking to come back next year and build off of this success in the future.

Sacred Heart Athletics contributed to this article.