

## Lil Yachty and Loud Luxury Spring Into Campus

BY CASEY MCGRATH  
Staff Writer

If you have been wanting to attend a Lil Yachty concert, students will have the opportunity to do so on Thursday, April 16 at 8 p.m. at the Martire Family Arena.

Grammy-nominated artist Lil Yachty is headlining the university's 2026 Spring Concert, with DJ duo Loud Luxury as special guests. Sacred Heart University Student Involvement announced the concert lineup on March 27, and ticket sales for full-time undergraduate students began March 31.

"The spring concert is a longstanding SHU tradition with students attending to hang out, listen to music, and celebrate the last few weeks of the semester," said Katie Morovich, director of Student Involvement and First Year Programs.

Although the concert takes place during the spring semester, the planning process began in the fall when Student Involvement emailed students a genre interest survey. The 2026 Spring Concert features two different genres: rap and dance music.

According to Billboard, Lil Yachty is a rapper who "rose to prominence following the success of his 2016 mixtape 'Lil Boat,' and the Atlanta star was hailed as part of a new wave of young artists changing the game." He has had multiple songs on the Billboard Hot 100 like his 2016 hit, "Broccoli."

According to Loud Luxury's official website, "Loud Luxury is a Canadian-born, Los Angeles-based international touring dance music duo, composed of Andrew Fedyk and Joe De Pace." The duo is known for their career-launching song, "Body."

While student interest matters, administrators must consider other factors when deciding on artists.

"Budget, artist availability, campus space, production availability, and background checks all play a factor into who we submit an offer to," said Morovich.

More than 15 offers were submitted to different artists. The booking process is difficult because of high production and labor costs. Despite these challenges, administrators try to stay on trend with what students enjoy on social media.

"TikTok has played a major role in the music industry, so as college shows used to be for the up and coming/current artists, college shows have increasingly become throwback events," said Morovich.



Instagram, @sacredheartuniversity

Students at the 2025 Spring Concert at Martire Family Arena.

Students could purchase either floor tickets for standing room or bowl tickets for seating. Prices vary depending on whether you are a student or guest, the type of seat, and the year.

"We want to keep student ticket pricing as low as possible, \$15 for bowl seats and \$20 for floor general admission," said Morovich. "Lower than last year."

Despite low ticket prices, some students are uninterested in the concert. Because of his dislike for Lil Yachty, sophomore Jackson McLaughlin is not attending the concert; however, he liked last year's concert starring rapper A Boogie Wit Da Hoodie and DJ Pauly D.

"Even if you don't know A Boogie, you've definitely heard a few of his songs," said McLaughlin. "It was definitely a fun concert."

Sophomore Ryan DeSimone is also not attending the

concert because rap is not a genre of music he listens to often.

"I think they need to switch it up now," said DeSimone. "The past two years it's been rap artists."

Past performers at SHU included Ne-Yo in 2008, the Chainsmokers in 2015, among others. DeSimone wants a return to artists like those of previous concerts.

"I think they should try to target more country artists, pop artists, or R&B artists rather than rap performers," said DeSimone.

Doors will open to the concert at 7:30 p.m. and the first 100 students will receive a free T-shirt.

"Administrators are hoping for a great SHU student showing that is fun and safe for all," said Morovich. "Campus events are successful when students show up and make memories with their classmates."

## DHS Shutdown Impacts Travel

BY JAMIE VAN DER MERWE  
Staff Writer

"Honestly, I was expecting worse. I was expecting hours or something," said sophomore and Spectrum staff writer James El-Hage. El-Hage had gone to Florida over Easter break, expecting a nightmare situation caused by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) shutdown.

The DHS shutdown began on Feb. 14, and, as of publication time, has continued, making it the longest government shutdown in United States history, partial or otherwise. However, Transportation Security Administration (TSA), which is part of DHS and does security checks, received their first paycheck on March 30, based on an executive order by President Donald Trump. This eased waiting times in airports.

"I would say it affected the trip—maybe mentally. The preparation. We got there super early because we didn't know what to expect," said El-Hage.

He only ended up waiting an average of 30 minutes at every airport he went to.

The shutdown was caused by a lapse in funding for the DHS, which meant Congress had to agree to reallocate funds for the department. However, deep disagreements regarding the funding for Immigration and Customs Agency (ICE) and Customs and Border Protections (CBP) led to no resolution for the issue being met, thus causing a shutdown of the department.

"ICE/CBP have not been directly affected because those agencies are funded through Fiscal Year 2029. But a number of agencies, like the TSA, within the DHS have been

seriously affected due to lack of pay. This has resulted in many TSA agents quitting or not coming to work, causing long lines at airports," said Dr. Gary Rose, professor of political science, chair of the Department of Government, and scholar in residence.

Freshman Jadelynn Garrido sees the shutdown as the result of a failure of ICE's professionalism.

"I think that the shutdown was a positive thing personally. It's not the fact that I don't support border protection, but I don't support tyranny when it comes to the American citizens," said Garrido. "I would support funding if it was pumped more into training and effort to catch criminals rather than go after people that are living their lives here."

However, senior William Kurnick feels that the shutdown is disappointing, and that the average Congress member is paid a tidy sum to stop things like this from happening.

"American people will become tired of it, and politically, it would be wise for either side to start making concessions because the midterms are coming up in the fall. And it's important to look good for the midterm elections. So, I think those politicians are going to have to make concessions, and both sides are going to have to come to some kind of agreement that meets both their needs," said Kurnick.

According to AP News, Senate Majority Leader John Thune and Democratic leader Chuck Schumer of New York settled on a deal: It would not include funding for the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement and for U.S. Border Patrol, and would set aside Democratic demands for new limits on the agencies.

However, House Speaker Mike Johnson threw out .....  
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# News

## DHS Shutdown Impacts Travel

BY JAMIE VAN DER MERWE  
Staff Writer

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the deal, calling it a “joke.”

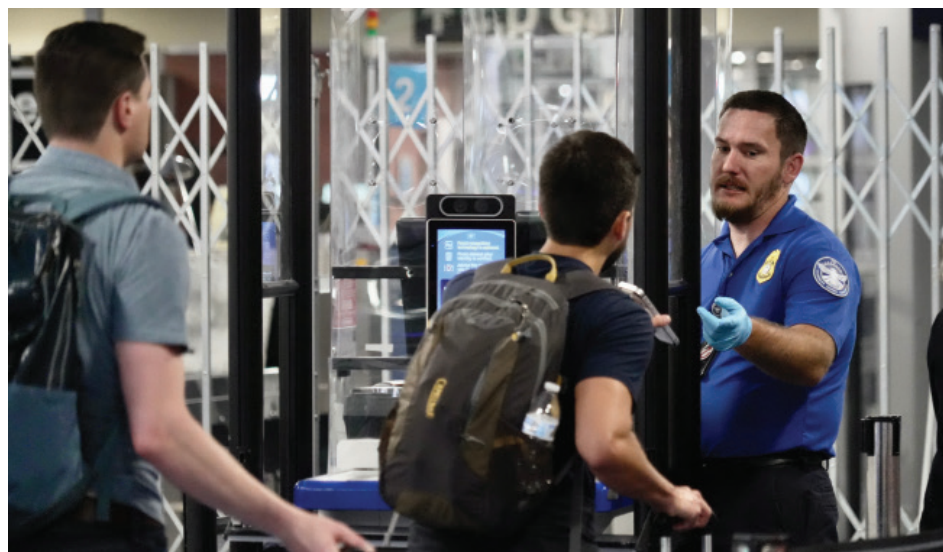
The issue lies in the split between Senate and House. While the Senate Republicans had agreed to the terms of the deal with the Senate Democrats and were able to come to a deal, when the bill moved to the House a far-right bloc of Republicans known as the Freedom Caucus blocked it, moving the issue back to the Senate.

“I don’t think it’s going to reopen anytime soon, because if Democrats or Republicans can’t come to an agreement, there’s no chance for it to open back up,” said Garrido.

“I don’t know what the path is for them. Considering both sides are really steadfast in what they want to happen, right? Whether it’s ICE reforms or a continuance of funding or changes to the funding. It seems like neither side is really letting up,” said Kurnick.

As of publication time, the Senate is set to meet on April 13 where a new deal to resolve the shutdown could be struck.

“No party emerges victorious during a shutdown. Nobody wins. The American people are almost equally divided, based on party affiliation, as far as assigning blame—a further reflection of the polarized state of American politics and society,” said Rose.



Ty O’neil, AP News  
A TSA staff member at a check point at Harry Reid International Airport, Saturday, March 21, 2026, in Las Vegas, NV.

## SHU Dance Program Welcoming Auditions

BY EMILY RICHMOND  
Staff Writer



Instagram, @sacredheartuniversitydance

The SHU dance program performs in SHU Slam.

Sacred Heart University students who are interested in participating in the dance program but did not audition prior to enrolling, can audition throughout their undergraduate years.

Students with varying levels of experience can join the dance program considering that it offers an array of styles, as well as performance opportunities.

Senior Marissa Lambert is the recruitment chair for the dance program. She said that auditions are required but are designed to place students rather than eliminate them.

“It is very much a placement audition to see where you would fit best within the program,” said Lambert.

There are many different cohorts throughout the dance program: Dance Company, Dance Ensemble, Core, Inception Dance Crew, Rhythm Tap Crew, Irish Step and Claddagh Dance Team.

The company and ensemble being the largest two cohorts, as well as including opportunities for students to audition to be a student choreographer and choreograph a piece on their peers.

Core is a non-performance cohort in which dancers do not perform in the shows at the end of the semester. They train and learn from faculty members of the dance program.

Inception Dance Crew and Rhythm Tap Crew are audition-based crews specialized in hip-hop and tap dance. Dancers who are placed in any cohort have the opportunity to audition for these two crews to receive professional training in such styles.

The dance program also offers dance and performance opportunities for Irish step dancers. These dancers have one show a year during the Spring semester and even collaborate with other cohorts like the tap crew.

Once accepted into a cohort, students can choose from a wide range of classes that fit their schedules and interests.

“We offer all styles, ranging from ballet and contemporary to hip hop, heels, and jazz,” Lambert said. “The program is very much a community and a great way to meet new people.”

Students enrolled in performance-based classes also can participate in the program’s showcases at the end of every semester.

For current students, the audition process is simple. Students must sign up for an in-person audition through the university’s performing arts website. While prospective students may submit video auditions, current students are required to audition in-person.

“In-person auditions are held on weekends, usually Saturdays or Sundays, and there are typically several opportunities each semester,” said Lambert.

The audition itself includes multiple components designed to evaluate a dancer’s ability and style.

“You start with a warm-up and stretch, followed by progressions across the floor, and then you perform a short solo,” said Lambert. “It can be any song and style of your choosing.”

After the audition, students are contacted by the program’s faculty with their placement results.

Sophomore Jessie Olanick, a member of the dance program, said the process is welcoming and accessible for students at all levels.

“You show your piece and then hear back with your results,” said Olanick.

Both Lambert and Olanick emphasized that students should not feel intimidated by the audition process. Instead, they encourage students to approach it with confidence and curiosity.

“Don’t be afraid to ask questions,” said Lambert. “The purpose of the audition is to give dancers a look into how the program works.”

The program offers a lot of opportunities, but depending on the semester, certain schedule and class availability and details may change. For the latest and most recent information, students are encouraged to get in touch with the dance program directly.

“Go into it with an open mind,” said Olanick. “The program is very welcoming, and you’ll fit in regardless of your experience level.”

**UPCOMING  
EVENTS ON  
CAMPUS**

**FRIDAY 4/17:  
IRISH DANCE  
SHOWCASE  
7 P.M. EDGERTON CENTER**

**SATURDAY 4/18:  
WOMEN’S LACROSSE  
VS QUINNIPIAC  
1 P.M. PITT CENTER  
FIELD**

**SATURDAY 4/18:  
MEN’S SOCCER VS  
POST  
5 P.M. PARK AVE FIELD**

# Features

## Leading For Healing

BY BELLA MAZZILLI  
Staff Writer

Dr. Marguerite Lawrence, associate clinical professor, has been awarded the Outstanding Nurse Practitioner Educator Award from the National Organization of Nurse Practitioner Faculties.

“The Outstanding Nurse Practitioner Educator Award is deeply meaningful because it reflects the impact of my work on students and the profession,” said Lawrence.

Lawrence is the assistant program director for the Master of Science in Nursing (MSN) Family Nurse Practitioner (FNP) Program at Sacred Heart University.

The National Organization of Nurse Practitioner Faculties was founded in 1974. It



Marguerite Lawrence, Sacred Heart University

**Marguerite Lawrence, who was named the Outstanding Nurse Practitioner Education Award from the National Organization of Nurse Practitioner Faculties.**

represents nearly all institutions in the United States that offer nurse practitioner programs.

Each year, it honors educators who go above and beyond in shaping the future of healthcare. The Outstanding Nurse Practitioner Educator Award is one of its most prestigious honors.

This national award recognizes faculty who demonstrate exceptional teaching practices,

develop strong curricula and have a true commitment to advancing the profession.

“The Online MSN FNP program provides me an opportunity to shape the next generation of nurse practitioners who are clinically competent, compassionate and prepared to lead in complex healthcare environments,” said Lawrence.

Her leadership and impact have not gone unnoticed within the university. Dr. Karen Daley, dean of the Dr. Susan L. Davis, RN & Richard J. Henley College of Nursing (DHCON), said the recognition confirms the program’s exceptional status.

“When we hired Dr. Lawrence, we knew she was an experienced, talented nurse practitioner faculty member,” said Daley. “To have that recognition at a national level just affirms and confirms what we already knew about her.”

Lawrence’s approach to education is shaped by her extensive and diverse background. She has 20 years of active-duty service in the U.S. Army Nurse Corps and brings that real-world experience into the classroom.

Daley described Lawrence as a unique educator who is compassionate, while setting high standards for students. According to Daley, Lawrence’s FNP students consistently achieve certification exam pass rates between 95% and 100%.

“That doesn’t happen by accident,” said Daley. “She is very careful to teach at the highest level, while also inspiring and motivating students.”

Lawrence gives credit to her students for growing as an educator.

“They have shown me the importance of meeting learners where they are,” said Lawrence. “Many balance significant personal and professional responsibilities, and their dedication is inspiring.”

Students in the DHCON echo that sentiment.

Sophomore Nicole Kleinhenn, an honors nursing student, described the college as supportive and student-focused.

“I am really grateful for the opportunity to be a part of such an amazing nursing program. They provide their students with endless amounts of support and guidance, which makes the experience so much easier to learn from,” said Kleinhenn.

Beyond the classroom, Lawrence says the nursing profession itself has shaped her identity. Her work with underserved and migrant populations reinforces her commitment to nursing and people.

“Professionally and personally, nursing has strengthened my commitment to service, integrity and making a meaningful impact in the lives of others,” said Lawrence.

“The nursing professors are very attentive and dedicated to wanting students to succeed,” said Kleinhenn.

Sacred Heart’s nursing program continues to gain national recognition; Lawrence’s award represents more than an individual achievement.

“It’s blending that toughness with inspiring and motivating students, I don’t know whether that comes from her military background or I suspect it’s just her wonderful personality, but she has a real wonderful way of calmly approaching situations, seeing all of the options, really making compassionate decisions with the students, and that’s what I ask of all of our faculty members here in the Davis and Henley College,” said Daley.

## CLLAs for Pioneers That Make a Difference

BY BRENNAN TAUBER  
Staff Writer

On a campus filled with ambition, creativity, and service, one night each spring shines a spotlight on the students who truly make a difference. The Campus Life Leadership Awards (CLLAs) at Sacred Heart University celebrate the individuals who go above and beyond to strengthen their community through leadership, involvement, and dedication.

On April 22 at 6 p.m. at the Edgerton Center for the Performing Arts, students can gather to watch fellow Pioneers get recognition for their leadership on campus.

The CLLAs are nomination-based awards that recognize outstanding undergraduate students who have made meaningful contributions to campus life. All full-time undergraduate students in good standing are eligible, with students from every class year considered.

The most prestigious honors include four Pioneer Awards, one for each class year, as well as the John Croffy Outstanding Leader Award and the Doug Bohn Unsung Hero Award.

What distinguishes award recipients is not just participation, but also impact.

Katherine Morovich, director of Student Involvement, says that leadership takes many forms.

“There isn’t one size fits all to leadership. Showing up for your campus and community makes a difference,” said Morovich.

Pioneer Award winners are recognized for going above and beyond and building strong relationships, while the John Croffy Outstanding Leader Award honors students who have displayed outstanding leadership.

The Doug Bohn Unsung Hero Award highlights those whose efforts often go unnoticed, recognizing a student who has made significant contributions to campus life behind the scenes.

The nomination process reflects the strong sense of community at the university. Students, faculty and staff can anonymously nominate individuals during a two-week period in March by sharing examples of their leadership and involvement.

“All nominated are anonymous, so you are unaware of who or how many people nominated you,” said Isabella Neves, former recipient of the John Croffy Outstanding Leader Award.

After being nominated, students must complete an application highlighting their contributions to campus life.

“There is a committee made up of staff members from various areas across campus,” said Morovich.

The event brings together students, faculty and staff to celebrate leadership across campus.

“The event is very similar to any award ceremony that you would see on TV,” said Neves.

More than 60 awards are distributed, and the evening concludes with a reception where attendees can celebrate together.

Beyond the ceremony, the significance of the CLLAs is rooted in recognition and community.

“This is the time of year to recognize the impact that our student leaders have on campus,” said Sara Helfrich, assistant dean of students.

According to Morovich, recognizing student leaders is essential because it validates their hard work and inspires others.

“Recognizing student leaders affirms the time, effort, and impact they invest in building a stronger campus community,” said Morovich.

“These awards can make students feel seen and appreciated for the work they do behind the scenes,” said Neves.



2025 CLLA Awards Fraternity of the Year, Delta Tau Delta

Instagram, @shudelts

# CampusLife

## A New Band is Rocking Campus

BY WILL MORGAN  
Audrey's Corner Editor

Sacred Heart University has a new rock band on campus. Consisting of senior Giancarlo Broccoli on guitar and vocals, juniors Ricky Rodriguez on vocals, keyboards and brass, John Wassersug on percussion, and Chris Napolitano on bass, sophomore Thomas Stofega on brass, and freshman Frank Flora on drums, the Goon 5 are making appearances across SHU.

Between the six members of the Goon 5, accounts differ on how they formed, but all agree it involved a hangout in a car.

"We were driving to New Jersey, because I left my french horn at home. Someone in the car said we should start a band called the Goon 5," said junior Ricky Rodriguez.

"It started because of the Noah Held Big Band performance," said Broccoli. "And so we needed a few more acts, so we said this could be something, and it was."

"We sorta just made the band on a whim, realizing we all had instruments," said Flora. "That's just how it happened."

Stofega adds more detail.

"It was on an impromptu Costco trip, we were yelling and screaming at what not. It was a fun time and someone said if we made a band we should call it something stupid. So we came up with the Goon 5 as a really dumb name," said Stofega.

At their Inaugural Performance at Noah Held's Big Band concert on Nov 16, they were joined by Wassersug on additional percussion.

"He came like 10 minutes before and I couldn't say no because I love John. Everyone loved it even though we barely rehearsed beforehand," said Rodriguez. "We still don't really practice that much."

"I love being in the band because I get to play drums and hang out with friends who I like spending time with," said Flora. "When we're on the stage, the crowd is always really into it, really interactive, and we feed off that energy, it makes us play better and makes them go wilder."

"We like having a lot of interesting instrumentation; we're all in SHU Band, so its fun being a party rock band and having a horn section in addition to the typical stuff," said Stofega. "It fills out the sound and makes us a lot bigger on stage."

"We love doing bits on stage," said Wassersug. "It's a really fun stage show and to have gags and jokes in between songs keeps the audience on their



Instagram, @thegoonfive

The Goon 5 band poses for a picture after their performance.

toes and laughing while we change tunings".

A typical setlist for the Goon 5 includes mostly 60s party songs like "Not Fade Away", a medley of "La Bamba" and "Twist and Shout", and "Do the Monkey."

"It's more of an entertainment/performance group," said Rodriguez. "The music side, that's more of Broccoli's thing, he chooses setlists and outfits. My side is more logistics, gigs, equipment, and we come together to make a cohesive whole."

The Goon 5 have played at The Noah Held Big Band show, Theater Arts Program's Miscast on Feb 6, and at La Hispanidad's Moda Del Mundo on March 26. But big plans are held for April 25 at the Edgerton Theater.

"April 25th is the culmination of everything not only the Goon 5 have been doing, but also everything we've all been doing individually" said Rodriguez. "The live performance is going to be legendary, spectacular. At 6:30 p.m., we'll have a battle of the DJs, followed by the Great Nolan Egg Hunt, the winner of which will earn a JBL speaker. At 8 p.m., the Goon 5 will take the stage and blow everyone away."



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# CampusLife

## Furry Friends Make the Purr-fect Companion

BY THEO WEISMANN  
Campus Life Editor

For most students at Sacred Heart University, managing classes with social life on top of personal responsibilities can feel overwhelming most of the time. However, some students have sought out different ways to alleviate that stress through adopting a furry companion.

Many students will seek out friends or campus resources in times of high stress, others find comfort in having a pet by their side during their daily routines. For senior Arianna Corrente, that support comes from her dog, Max.

“Having my dog Max in my life, whether I’m on campus or at home, makes a huge difference in my stress levels during the semester,” said Corrente. “When things start to feel overwhelming with classes, assignments and everything else, Max gives me a break from it all.”

For other students, that companion can look different but carries the same impact. Senior Javier Alicea-Kahn shares a cat, Oliver, with his girlfriend.

He emphasized that having Oliver around creates a sense of calmness in otherwise busy days, giving him something consistent to come back to.

“Even if the day’s hectic, just being able to come back and hang out with Oliver resets everything a little bit,” said Alicea-Kahn.

Beyond emotional support, having a pet also introduces structure into students’ daily lives. Corrente said caring for Max the last couple semesters has helped build a consistent routine into her schedule.

“I usually start my day by taking him out for a walk or letting him outside, then feeding him and spending a little time playing with him before I go to class,” said Corrente.

Similarly, Alicea-Kahn said sharing Oliver with his girlfriend requires extra communication, especially when balancing classes and hanging out with non-furry friends.

“We have to plan around each other’s schedules to make sure Oliver’s taken care of, which definitely adds another layer to everything,” said Alicea-Kahn.

But it’s no secret that owning a pet in college comes with its own set of challenges that extend beyond daily routines. Corrente said being flexible



Brett Clowry, Staff Photographer and Writer

Therapy dog at the “Dogs and Dogs” event in Cabrini Hall on Wednesday, March 25, 2026.

with your schedule is one of the biggest factors students may not consider before adopting a pet.

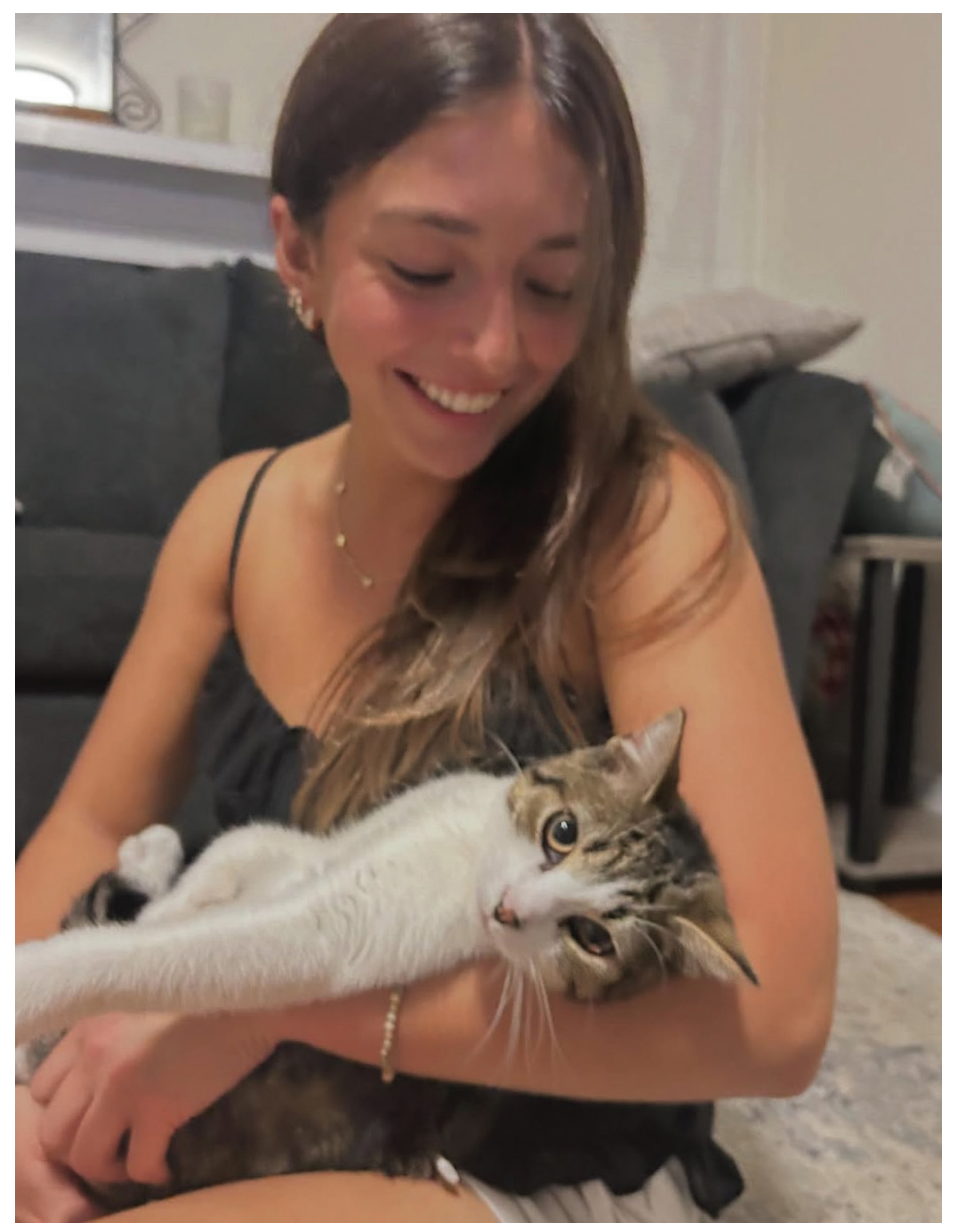
“College schedules can be really unpredictable, and having a dog means you can’t just stay out all day or night—you have to plan your schedule around feeding times, walks and making sure they’re not alone for too long,” said Corrente.

Alicea-Kahn reinforced this perspective saying even with shared responsibility, that commitment is always present.

“Even though we split things, it’s still something you always have to think about—you can’t just be spontaneous all the time,” said Alicea-Kahn.

Despite those challenges, both students said the benefits of having a pet far outweigh the added responsibility. In the case of Max, he provides a constant sense of comfort throughout the ups and downs of the semester.

“He brings so much comfort and warmth into my life, making everything feel a little easier no matter what I’m going through,” said Corrente.



Madison Conklin, Copy Editor

Spectrum Copy Editor Madison Conklin with her cuddly cat Ricky.

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# Arts & Entertainment

## Mark Ballas and Whitney Leavitt Reunite on Broadway

BY AMELIA SALADINO  
Staff Writer

Echoing footsteps fill the Ambassador Theatre in New York City as Mark Ballas steps into his four-week engagement as Billy Flynn in “Chicago the Musical,” running April 6 through May 3.

Ballas is best known for ABC’s “Dancing with the Stars,” where he built a reputation for his creativity and strong performance over 20 seasons. Ballas will step back into the spotlight as a charismatic lawyer known for turning court cases into media spectacles. Billy Flynn’s character relies less on dance and more on acting and stage presence, making it a different kind of performance challenge.

“Ballas is very creative, and he has a lot of music experience,” said senior Victoria Cutalo. “He definitely has that performance quality, and Billy Flynn is very performative.”

This will be Ballas’ fourth time on the Broadway stage.

According to Playbill, “Ballas made his Broadway debut at the August Wilson Theatre, later performing the role in the national tour. He went on to star as Charlie Price in Kinky Boots on Broadway in 2019, and previously appeared in the U.K. national tour of the Buddy Holly Story.”

The Broadway production will reunite Ballas with his most recent “Dancing with the Stars” partner, Whitney Leavitt. From Hulu’s “Secret Lives of Mormon Wives,” Leavitt made her Broadway debut as Roxie Hart on Feb. 2.

“I wasn’t really surprised to find out Mark Ballas had booked this role. I felt like Whitney was doing so well as Roxie that the next step was for Mark to do it with her,” said Cutalo. “I think they will work well together.”

Ballas and Leavitt finished in sixth place for “Dancing with the Stars” season 34. Across Ballas’ career on the show, he is an 11-time finalist and three-time champion, earning a Primetime Emmy Award nomination for Outstanding Choreography, according to Broadway.



Instagram, @whitleavitt

Mark Ballas shares a moment with Whitney Leavitt after joining the cast of Chicago.  
Source: @whitleavitt on Instagram

“His stage presence and the chemistry that he and Whitney had last season will be so awesome to see,” said junior Sarah Downing. “Casting someone who is well known to more people than just Broadway fans bring more people into the theatre to see them and leaves audiences appreciating theatre as a whole.”

Junior and dance student Genevieve Seanor also highlighted Ballas’ talent as a performer.

“He is a very strong dancer,” said Seanor. “He is such a versatile and dynamic performer, so in my opinion, he could do practically anything.”

## Music at the Heart of SHU

BY NORA DELEHANTY  
Staff Writer



Contributed by Alysa Feldman, '27

Members of the student band cheering on fellow Pioneers at a Sacred Heart Hockey game.

On Friday, April 17, the Sacred Heart University Band and Orchestra will perform the Chambers Ensemble Concert at 8 p.m. at the SHU Community Theater in Fairfield. The concert will feature both classical and contemporary styles of music performed by students in the chamber ensembles.

“Audiences are going to hear some contemporary avant-garde pieces, some more contemporary pieces for various ensembles, and a lot of traditional pieces from the classical music era,” said Keith Johnston, the director of performing arts band and orchestra. “They’re playing in smaller groups and are typically not led by a conductor. The idea of chamber music is very often a self-led ensemble.”

According to junior Alysa Feldman, students rehearse for the concert primarily on their own time and meet once a week for about an hour. Feldman plays the clarinet in a quintet within the ensemble. She is also a member of the wind ensemble, marching band, pep band and orchestra.

“We’ve been rehearsing since the beginning of this semester, and it’s been really fun,” said Feldman.

Andrew Kolar, the associate director of bands, said that chamber music is different from larger, more orchestral-sounding music for a concert band or symphony orchestra.

“There will be jazz, pop tunes, classical music, avant-garde modern music and everything in between,” said Kolar.

“We’re playing the mambo, so that’s going to be really exciting,” said Feldman. “It’s a really fun piece and very different from the classical pieces that we would play normally.”

This is a different form of musical communication by how they interact with each other, according to Johnston.

“As an ensemble, they work together through musical questions to try to make up what their own interpretation is going to be,” said Johnston. “They have discussions about tempos, phrasing, dynamics, cueing, ritardandos, accelerandos, all the different musical elements they need to discuss to make the piece what it is.”

Senior Sean Manole, the vice president of the band council, plays the alto saxophone and flute in the band and orchestra.

“When you’re in any type of small group like concert ensemble orchestras, you really have to know how to listen and play with everybody else that is around you,” said Manole. “You have to blend really well.”

“It’s a really fun experience to come together and hear what everyone’s been working on in their own time,” said Feldman.

The Chamber Ensemble Concert has been an annual performance taking place at the end of the spring semester for over 15 years at SHU.

Kolar said the event highlights the range of talent within the university’s music program.

“We are looking forward to showcasing our students’ diverse musical talents,” said Kolar.

Tickets for the Chambers Ensemble Concert are free for SHU students, faculty, and staff with a SHU ID. Further information regarding ticket prices for the general public, reservations and additional details can be found at shucommunitytheatre.org.

“Not only will there be incredible performances, but because everyone holds music in a special place in their hearts, supporting our students by coming to their concerts is the very best way to show it,” said Kolar.



Instagram, @shu\_orchestra

Members of SHU Orchestra look towards Keith Johnson in preparation for a concert.

# Sports

## Fighting for the Post Season

BY JAMES SPOTO  
Staff Writer

As the spring season ends, the women's lacrosse team is fighting for one of six spots in the Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference (MAAC) Championship, starting April 26.

The team is 5-9 overall but has a 4-3 record in their conference. Currently, they are in sixth place and looking to hold on to the final playoff spot.

Head coach Laura Korutz spoke on the team's intensity and competitiveness and how they can translate that onto the field.

"As a team, we have been inconsistent," said Korutz. "We took the top team in the conference, Fairfield [University], to overtime, but we need to see that level of play every day out, including practices."

Two of the team's three conference losses have been one-goal games. Additionally, two of their conference wins have been one-goal games where the Pios' defense only allowed four, six and eight goals, respectively, in those victories.

"I think our defense is amazing. They are probably the best in the MAAC," said sophomore attackman Nadine Galiano. "Seeing our defense all come together and hold these conference teams is really amazing."

The Pioneers started the season allowing 16 goals to Bryant, 14 to Columbia and 10 to New Haven in their 0-3 start. Since then, the defense has been shutting down offenses, allowing double digits only three times over the last ten games.

"Offensively, we have to score more goals," said Korutz. "We are creating great scoring opportunities. We need to finish more of those to put us in a better position to win."

Furman transfer Galiano added that the team doesn't shoot a ton and needs to be more aggressive when opportunities to do so come about.

The Pioneers had one game in double digits scoring this season against Merrimack on March 28, where Galiano netted two in that outing.

"I feel like this year there were a lot of new people, alongside me being a transfer," said Galiano. "It took a while for us to try and figure out what works well, understand each other, and compete with these tough teams."



Contributed by Nadine Galiano '28

The Pioneers huddle together before their home game against Merrimack College. Contributed by Nadine Galiano '28

This year the Pioneers welcomed 12 freshmen and two transfers to their roster this season. Senior attackman Ryann Kearns emphasized the welcoming environment and how the group showed those new athletes how the Pios play.

"I think that we just need to lay it all out for the final game, giving 100%," said senior attackman Ryann Kearns. "I spent the whole last season on the sideline with a season-ending injury, so just giving that perspective that not everyone gets these opportunities is key for our team."

The Pioneers beat Rider University 6-4 on April 11. Junior Jamie Tanner scored five goals in the win.

"We need to play consistently game in and game out," said Korutz. "Finding a way to win, having that heart and that extra gear in these must-win games is key to focus on."

The Pios will close out the season with a conference matchup against Quinnipiac University on Saturday, April 18 at 1:00 p.m. on Campus Field.

*Athletic Communications contributed to this article.*

## Rugby's Undefeated 7s

BY NICHOLAS BOSTICCO  
Staff Writer

Four games, four wins and double-digit margins in every match. The women's rugby team delivered another undefeated performance at the Pioneers 7s tournament on March 28, securing the team's second consecutive undefeated tournament championship this spring.

The Pioneers defeated each opponent by at least 12 points. Despite trailing early in multiple matches, Sacred Heart consistently responded with scoring runs, including a 31-point comeback victory over Long Island University in the championship match.

"It feels really good," said junior Marley Gurmendi. "We've been taking each game one step at a time, and it feels like we're doing the right things to keep improving."

Sacred Heart's ability to respond under pressure was a key factor throughout the tournament. In three of their four matches, the team allowed the first score but remained composed to regain control of each game.

"I don't like being scored on first, but it teaches us how to stay composed," said head coach Michelle Reed. "We need to be intentional with our opportunities because 7s is such a short game."



Greg Vasil, Sacred Heart Athletics

Junior Reese Torticill kicking off for the Pioneers during a game on Park Avenue Field.

The team showed a balance between physical play from the forwards, allowing quick ball movement to the backs on the outside. Players highlighted the successful usage of creating space and capitalizing on speed along the wings.

"Getting the ball out wide and using our speed was huge for us," said junior Reese Torticill. "That's where most of our points came from."

Sacred Heart also relied on structure preparation, which includes their three team goals the team sets before each match. According to the players, the approach helps maintain focus and builds consistency throughout the day.

"Before each game, we come together and set three goals as a team," said Gurmendi. "Coaches try to stay out of the goals, and they try to discuss as a unit. It keeps us connected and focused on what we need to do."

The Pioneers' depth also played a role in their success, as the program fields a "Red and Grey" team during each tournament. The Red team is highlighted as the main squad, while the Grey team acts as a development squad.

"Spring is a time to develop, but we also have a group that wants to compete at a high level," said Reed.

"Balancing both is a challenge, but it's rewarding. We are trying to build their toolbox for situations that may arise," said assistant coach Salvatore Tondi.

Looking ahead, Sacred Heart is preparing for the College Rugby Association America (CRAA) women's 7s tournament in Indianapolis on April 25, with a focus on refining skills and improving consistency after finishing third in the nation last season. The team has incorporated film sessions and situational practices to prepare for high-level competition.

"We're taking it game by game and trying to get 1% better every day," said Gurmendi. "We know we're not going to be perfect, but we're working to fix the small mistakes."

The program has also gained national recognition, as juniors Olivia and Reece Woods were named to the USA Eagles roster for the 2026 Pacific Four Series, showcasing the team's growing presence on a larger stage.

"Our connection as a team is only getting stronger," said Torticill. "We're excited to see how far we can go."

*Athletic Communications contributed to this article.*

# Sports

## NFL Draft Expectations Across Campus

BY ASHTON DAVIS  
Staff Writer

As the National Football League (NFL) Draft gets closer, football fans look ahead to one of the most anticipated events of the offseason.

This year's class holds a variety of high-profile players, highlighted by quarterback Fernando Mendoza, safety Caleb Downs, running back Jeremiyah Love and linebacker Arvell Reese. Each player brings a different skill set, and each has become a major talking point as fans try to predict how the first round will unfold.

Mendoza is one of the top quarterbacks in the class and is expected to be one of the most closely watched names on draft night. As quarterback is often the position that draws the most attention, Mendoza could become one of the first players selected if a team believes he can fit with their offense.

Downs is another player expected to hear his name called early. He is known as one of the best all-around defensive players in the class due to his ability to make plays in multiple areas of the field. Love also stands out as one of the most exciting offensive players available, while Reese has become one of the most interesting defensive prospects due to his athleticism and upside.

"I think the Giants should take Caleb Downs because he feels like one of the safest players in the draft," said freshman Jayden Miller. "He can come in right away and improve the defense, and I think that's something they need."

Another Giants fan, freshman Chris Leggett, thinks the team should look in another direction to spark a turnaround from their 2025-26 campaign, in which they went 4-13.

"I know the Giants already have a good running back, but Jeremiyah Love is just one of those players you cannot pass up on," said Leggett.

While the two students support the same team, they view the draft in different ways. Miller wants the Giants to add a versatile defensive playmaker, while Leggett believes elite talent should outweigh positional concerns, if the right player is available.

Similarly to the Giants, the New York Jets also struggled, posting a 3-14 record that saw them at the pit of the American Football Conference (AFC) East.

"[Arvell Reese] just looks like the kind of athlete every defense wants," said junior Tristen Pena. "If the Jets could get a guy like that, it could turn the team around."

Love also drew support from students who believe he could become one of the most exciting players in the class, no matter where he lands.

Junior Shakeel Johnson, a Tennessee Titans fan, said Love is the player she hopes Tennessee lands.

"He's explosive, and he feels like the type of player who can make our offense more dangerous immediately," said Johnson.

As the night of April 23 draws closer, Mendoza, Downs, Love and Reese remain some of the biggest names to watch heading into the 2026 NFL Draft.



Instagram, @nfldraft  
Notre Dame's Jeremiyah Love leads Bucky Brooks' ranking of the top running back prospects entering the 2026 NFL Draft.



Instagram, @nfldraft  
Indiana's Fernando Mendoza headlines Bucky Brooks' updated list of the top five quarterback prospects for the 2026 NFL Draft.

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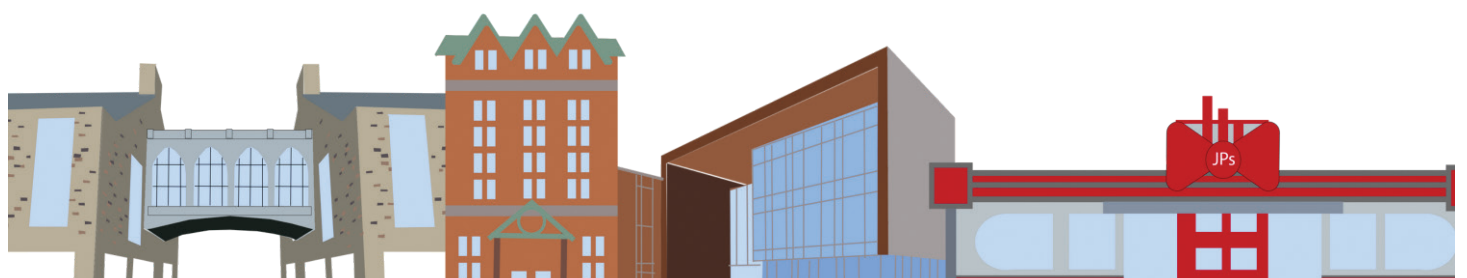
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