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Students and Faculty on the Cornell Case

BY **MATTHEW CALIRI**
Staff Writer

On Sept. 16 a woman going by the pseudonym Jane Doe filed a lawsuit against seven members of the Cornell University chapter of the Chi Phi Fraternity. The lawsuit was a result of the alleged incident that occurred back in Oct. 2024, where Jane Doe was reportedly sexually assaulted while incapacitated beyond the ability to consent at a Chi Phi party.

The re-opening of the case has sparked nationwide conversation and disgust, including students at Sacred Heart.

"I was so confused how something so obviously out in the open could be kept so under the radar and not handled differently," said senior Ryan Buchan, an orientation co-chair.

Senior Kylie Quercia, a nursing student, echoed similar thoughts.

"I believe individuals who come forward deserve to be taken seriously and supported, rather than dismissed or made to feel uncomfortable speaking out," said Quercia.

Some, like Dr. Nidhi Shrivastava, an assistant teaching professor in the English department at Sacred Heart, are calling for changes within fraternal organizations.

"We need to rethink campus policies, especially those related to Greek life," said Shrivastava. "We should introduce stronger regulations and trainings and zero-tolerance policies for chapters that tolerate dangerous behavior, hazing and sexual violence."

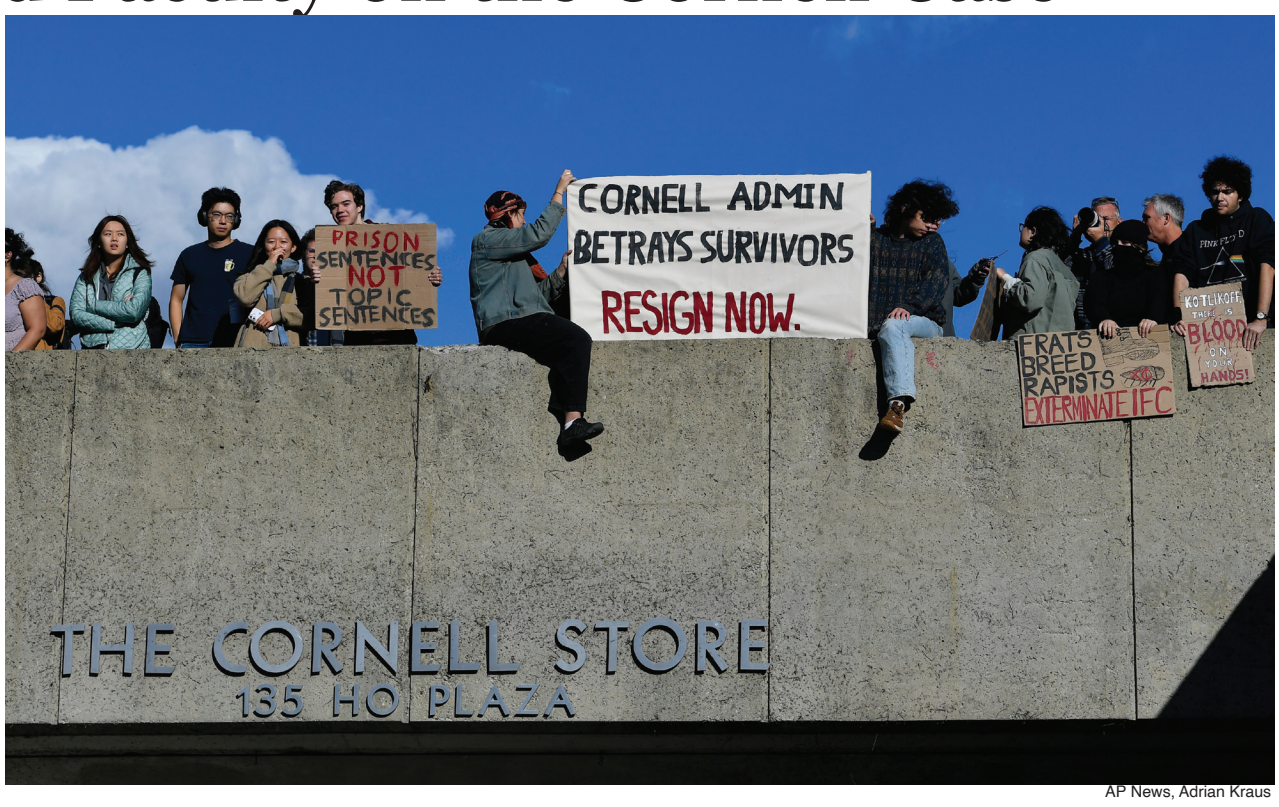
Sacred Heart University's Iota Tau chapter of the Delta Tau Delta (DTD) fraternity already implements these ideas.

"Delta Tau Delta has strict policies of no sorts of hazing or assault," said brother Alex Arrubla. "We make our rules clear to new members, and if they are not followed, board members and our Director of Standards will be involved to determine suspension or dismissal."

Philanthropic efforts of DTD also reinforce these policies.

"We work with The Center for Family Justice that helps out families or people that have suffered from sexual assault or domestic violence," said brother Jorge Munguia. "We raise money with our 'Walk a Mile in Her Shoes' event, as well as our 'Men Against Violence' campaign where people who have experience sexual assault or domestic violence come to share their stories."

Delta Tau Delta is not the only fraternity on campus that has taken steps to solve the issues of sexual violence. The Mu Lambda chapter of Sigma Chi enforces similar policies when it comes to these issues.



AP News, Adrian Kraus
Protesters at Cornell University holding up signs criticizing the University's investigation of the 2024 gang-rape case on Oct. 5.

"We want everyone who is around the brothers to feel safe and to have a good time," said philanthropy chair of Sigma Chi, Kevin Howard.

Regarding sexual assault trainings and education, Howard talked about how every new member goes through that process.

"We go over what to do, what not to do, what to do if you see or hear something and who to report it to," said Howard. "We take all of that very seriously, but I do think there could always be more education across all Greek life."

The reporting process can be challenging, and the Cornell 7 saw a lack of bystander intervention.

This was touched on during a colloquium centered around the book "#MeToo and Modernism," co-written by Dr. Robin E. Field and Dr. Jerrica Jordan, who both spoke at the event on Oct. 15.

"The actions or inactions of bystanders, all those who are complicit in, or who prefer not to know about the abuse, or who blame the victims, often cause even deeper wounds," said Field, quoting a book by Judith Lewis Herman.

Shrivastava moderated the discussion.

"I think if the Jane Doe rape victim-survivor had not filed charges two years later, we might never have known about the case," said Shrivastava.

This gap between the time of the incident and when the case was re-opened, is due in part to how it was handled by the officials handling the case, including Cornell administration.

While certain Sacred Heart faculty cannot directly address Cornell's response to the allegations, they have expressed their stance on Title IX procedures.

"We take allegations of sexual misconduct seriously and are committed to a fair and equitable process for all parties under our Title IX procedures," said Title IX Coordinator Beth-Anne Voight Jause.

According to Shrivastava, gender dynamics can play a role in the reporting of these incidents.

"Gender-based and sexual violence are universal phenomena shaped by a rape culture that often excuses perpetrators' behavior," said Shrivastava.

Although official Title IX reports can be a long process, SHU students have emphasized society's role in looking out for one another.

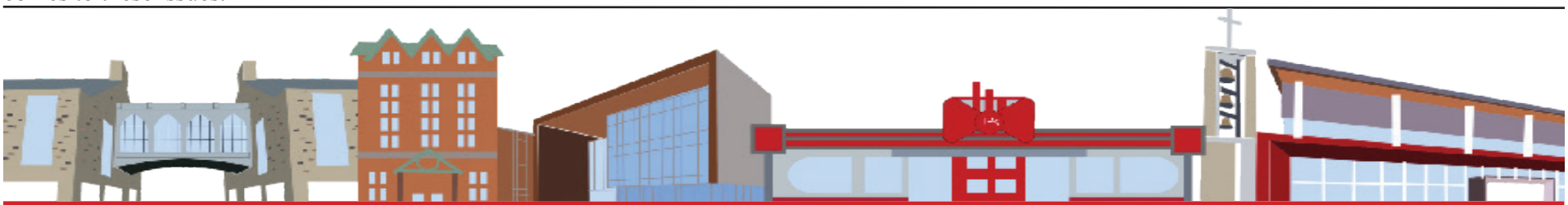
"I think a good chunk of that responsibility [preventing sexual assault] falls onto college students to support one another," said Buchan.

"It is important for everyone to strive towards cultivating an environment where everyone can feel safe," said Quercia.

For Shrivastava, the first building block to this new environment is discussion, keeping in mind SHU's mission.

"Open discussion gives us an opportunity to come together as a community to prevent these incidents," said Shrivastava. "We value the dignity of every human being."

The Associated Press contributed to this article.



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News

From Congress to Campus

BY **ALEX DE LA TEJA**
Staff Writer

How much of a role does faith play in your life? Does it guide your decisions and morals? On Wednesday, Oct. 14, Sacred Heart University (SHU) invited Democratic Congresswoman Rosa DeLauro as part of the colloquia series to discuss how her Catholic faith plays a role in her occupational decisions.

DeLauro represents Connecticut's Third Congressional District in Connecticut, from the New Haven area to Waterbury. She said her early life was surrounded by both faith and politics.

"I was raised by immigrant parents in the heart of the Italian-American community. I watched my parents use the church's teachings to guide their community work," said DeLauro. "My mother was the longest-serving member of the city council in New Haven."

One of the most formative parts of her childhood was getting a Catholic education. DeLauro attended Our Lady of Mercy Laurelton Hall and Marymount College.

This gave her a strong sense of community and how she would approach the rest of her life, and she was motivated to succeed by a specific moment with the principal of Laurelton Hall.

"I will never forget Sister Natalie. We were all talking about college and what we were going to try to do, and she said, 'Rosa, I don't think you're ever going to go to college, and I don't know that you will amount to much,'" said DeLauro. "I think her saying that to me was the impetus for me to say, 'Not on your life, not true. I am going to succeed.'"

As a Congresswoman, DeLauro stresses that her faith has led her to stand up for the lowly in society.

"My Catholic faith is guaranteed, as I have fought for the working class and the vulnerable," said DeLauro. "I have tried to center the moral principles of Catholic social teaching and the belief that government must serve the common good."

According to her official website, delauro.house.gov, "We, Catholic Democrats, believe the Church as a community is called to be in the vanguard of creating a more just America and world.



Alex de la Teja, Staff Writer and Photographer

Congresswoman Rosa DeLauro (D) speaks at Sacred Heart University about her Catholic faith's role in her life.

The fundamental tenets of our Catholic faith—social justice, conscience and religious freedom—compel us to defend a woman's right to access abortion."

Dr. Elizabeth Luoma is the Executive Director for the Center for Teaching and Learning. She attended DeLauro's talk and found it important for students to hear.

"It goes without saying that we are living in a time of polarized political discourse and divisive rhetoric," said Luoma. "Across our identities and political parties here at Sacred Heart, we can ask ourselves the same question. How do our religious traditions or values inform how we speak, act and advocate?"

Senior political science major Jack Marzi expressed the importance of engaging with lawmakers in an opportunity like this.

"There is something valuable from learning about why they do what they do, their motivation to serve others and the lessons they can teach us," said Marzi. "It takes civil discourse and an open mind to fully grasp the issues that affect our communities daily."

DeLauro's talk even drew in religious faculty from Sacred Heart. Sr. Joan Mahoney is a part-time Catholic chaplain on campus, who found her story inspiring.

"I was inspired by her living the social justice teachings of the Catholic Church so concretely in her work as a U.S. Congresswoman," said Mahoney. "She puts the needs of those struggling with the cost of living, with putting food on the table, immigrants fearing being picked up by ICE front and center in her seeking legislative justice for our country."

DeLauro continues to represent Connecticut with one common goal in mind: the common good for Americans.

"It is our view that the government and society have a moral obligation to help individuals and families meet basic human needs, provide economic opportunities and level the playing field," said DeLauro. "As for Catholic Democrats, we want an economy that works for all Americans and helps people get ahead."

Sacred Heart UNIVERSITY

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Features

ProjectConnect

BY **COLIN MCPHERSON**
Staff Writer

Starting college can be an adjustment for students who are away from their families, friends and familiar surroundings. Meeting new people and building friendships can also be challenging when entering a new environment.

To help students make those connections, ProjectConnect brings small groups together through weekly meetings focused on building relationships and creating a sense of belonging on campus. The program provides a structured setting where students can interact with their peers outside of the classroom.

Karen Flanagan, the program's adviser, explained how the initiative helps students adjust to college life and form new friendships.

"ProjectConnect is a peer-led program that helps students build relationships and strengthen their sense of belonging," said Flanagan.

Peer-led groups are a central part of the program and are often run by former participants who complete training to become mentors. Groups typically consist of four to eight students who meet for five hour-long sessions.



Contributed by Destiny Sanchez '27

Going through a stack of connection cards at ProjectConnect

Meetings include icebreakers, activities and guided questions designed to help students get to know one another on a deeper level. Rather than relying on brief introductions, the sessions give participants time to learn about one another through conversations and shared activities.

The small-group format also gives students opportunities to participate in discussions and become familiar with others over multiple meetings. Because the same students meet regularly, participants have several opportunities to continue conversations and build on connections made during earlier sessions.

When asked how the program measures success, Flanagan said it involves helping students feel that they belong on campus and showing them that making time for relationships is an important part of well-being.

The continued involvement of former participants as peer mentors is another indicator of its success. According to participant feedback, 95% of students said they would recommend the program to a friend, while 88% said they would like to continue spending time with someone they met through the meetings.

These responses provide insight into how participants view their experiences and whether they want to maintain the relationships formed during the sessions. Freshman Cole Gentry spoke about the experience of leaving behind familiar friendships and starting college.

"Something I took for granted was, I've been friends with the same kids my entire life," said Gentry.

His experience reflects one of the many adjustments students may face when transitioning from high school to college. Junior Destiny Sanchez, president of the s.w.e.e.t. peer educators and a program facilitator, participated during her freshman year. After enjoying the experience, she decided to become a mentor.

"That kind of led me to learn more about s.w.e.e.t., and now I'm here as the President," said Sanchez.

As president, Sanchez said her responsibilities include making sure students feel comfortable speaking up and maintaining a safe environment. She also encourages students to participate in discussions rather than remain quiet.

"I make sure everyone is participating," said Sanchez. "I try to shift [conversation] where it's easier for them."

Sanchez said she was initially skeptical about the program and questioned whether the conversations would make a difference.

"I didn't think that the conversations we had really would have an effect on me," said Sanchez.

However, her experience changed her perspective and encouraged her to continue participating.

"[Project Connect] helped me out so much that I wanted to continue going," said Sanchez.

Students interested in participating can look for announcements on the s.w.e.e.t. peer educators' Instagram account, @shu_sweetpeered, or check their university emails for more information.

Master of Public Health Program

BY **DANIELLA DILORENZO**
Staff Writer

Sacred Heart University's Master of Public Health (MPH) program reshapes public health education through real-world experience, flexible academic pathways and strong career outcomes.

At its core, the program aims to cultivate workforce-ready leaders capable of addressing systemic health inequities across local and global communities.

"The primary goal of SHU's program is to prepare future leaders to protect and improve the health of individuals, families and entire communities," said Dr. Jacqueline Vernarelli, MPH program director. "Rather than just studying data, SHU emphasizes using translational epidemiology to apply research directly to emergent, real-world public health challenges."

To tackle these critical issues effectively, the curriculum trains students to look beyond individual behaviors and examine the underlying social, biological and environmental drivers of community health outcomes. Students put those concepts into action through hands-on local partnerships.

"For example, students in Health Communication worked directly with Fairfield Cares on a community project to create and disseminate health materials for community use," said Vernarelli.

Students can choose between immersive fieldwork with local Connecticut organizations addressing food insecurity and health literacy or a mentored research thesis resulting in national presentations and peer-reviewed journal publications.

"Unlike programs where experiential learning may come later in the curriculum, we intentionally get students into communities during their first semester to work on real public health projects and apply classroom concepts to real-world situations," said Dr. Anna Price, professor of public health.

The program yields a 97% to 100% post-graduation placement rate within six months of completion. Graduates enter careers in epidemiology, health advocacy and policy development or pursue medical, dental or physician assistant (PA) programs.

"An MPH provides a distinct advantage for medical or Physician Assistant applicants by shifting your profile from a standard science major to a holistic, systems-thinking healthcare leader," said Vernarelli.

Students can participate in the program part-time or full-time. Incoming freshmen and current SHU students can utilize an accelerated dual-degree program to earn up to 12 graduate credits during their undergraduate studies.

"We are also seeing a growing trend of students choosing what we sometimes call a gain year rather than a gap year, allowing them to earn an advanced degree, gain practical experience and build professional connections before entering a professional program such as PA school," said Price.

Faculty mentorships and community involvement remain pivotal elements of student experience.

"The focus on public health policy, close faculty mentorship and the extensive network of community and faith-based partners make a huge difference," said MPH student Joseph Falcao.

For some students, studying health inequities alters their career trajectory entirely.

"Exploring health disparities and social determinants transformed my path from a clinical goal toward public health areas like epidemiology, outbreak investigation and community-based nonprofit work," said senior Deven Targgart, health science major.

By pairing flexible course delivery with community engagement, Sacred Heart's MPH program prepares future practitioners to lead change in public health.

"We prepare confident, workforce-ready public health professionals," said Price. "Our goal is for students to graduate not only with the knowledge and skills of public health, but also with meaningful experiences and tangible work they can showcase in a portfolio and on their resumes."



Daniel Passapera, Sacred Heart University

Sacred Heart Public Health students discussing notes in a classroom at the CHE.

CampusLife

Midterms: The College Vote

BY **CM 244: MEDIA, POLITICS, AND SOCIAL JUSTICE, THE RAMOS RESEARCH INSTITUTE**

For many college students, voting while away from home can feel more complicated than it needs to be. Whether you plan to vote in your home state or are eligible to register and vote in Connecticut, the most important step is knowing your deadlines and making a plan early. Election Day is Tuesday, November 3, but voter registration deadlines, early-voting periods, and mail or absentee ballot requirements vary considerably by state. This guide covers the states where many Sacred Heart students call home and is designed to make that information easier to find in one place. Midterm elections are an important opportunity to make your voice heard and participate in the decisions that will shape your communities and the country. Regardless of whom you support or how you identify politically, participation is what gives representative government its strength. Take a few minutes to review the requirements for your state, make a plan to vote, and encourage the people around you to do the same!

2026 General Election Voter Deadlines: Fact-Checked State Guide

BY **CM 244: MEDIA, POLITICS, AND SOCIAL JUSTICE, THE RAMOS RESEARCH INSTITUTE**

CONNECTICUT

1. Voter Registration Deadline: October 16, 2026, for regular pre-election registration. Same-Day Registration is available during early voting and on Election Day, November 3.
2. Vote-by-Mail Application Deadline: Not separate. Connecticut uses absentee ballots; beginning in 2026, eligible voters no longer need an excuse.
3. Vote-by-Mail Ballot Return Deadline: Not separate; see absentee ballot return deadline below.
4. Absentee Ballot Deadlines (if separate): Application deadline: November 2, 2026. Completed ballot must be received by the town clerk by 8:00 p.m. on November 3, 2026.
5. Early Voting: October 19-November 1, 2026.

MASSACHUSETTS

1. Voter Registration Deadline: October 24, 2026.
2. Vote-by-Mail Application Deadline: 5:00 p.m. on October 27, 2026. The application must be received by the local election office by the deadline.
3. Vote-by-Mail Ballot Return Deadline: If mailed, the ballot must be postmarked by November 3, 2026 and may arrive through November 6, 2026. If hand-delivered or placed in a drop box, it must be received by 8:00 p.m. on November 3.
4. Absentee Ballot Deadlines (if separate): Same application and return deadlines as Vote by Mail. Absentee voting remains available for qualifying circumstances, including absence from the municipality, disability, or religious belief.
5. Early Voting: October 17-30, 2026.

RHODE ISLAND

1. Voter Registration Deadline: October 4, 2026.
2. Vote-by-Mail Application Deadline: 4:00 p.m. on October 13, 2026.
3. Vote-by-Mail Ballot Return Deadline: The Rhode Island Board of Elections must receive the completed mail ballot by 8:00 p.m. on November 3, 2026.
4. Absentee Ballot Deadlines (if separate): Rhode Island primarily uses the term mail ballot rather than a separate absentee-ballot system. The emergency mail ballot period runs after the regular mail-ballot application deadline through 4:00 p.m. on November 2.
5. Early Voting: October 14-November 2, 2026. The period ends at 4:00 p.m. on November 2.

NEW YORK

1. Voter Registration Deadline: October 24, 2026. The registration application must be received by the county Board of Elections by this date.
2. Vote-by-Mail Application Deadline: Early Mail Ballot requests submitted by mail or online must be received by October 24, 2026. In-person requests may be made through November 2, 2026.
3. Vote-by-Mail Ballot Return Deadline: The ballot must be postmarked or returned in person by November 3, 2026. A ballot returned by mail must be received by the county Board of Elections by November 10, 2026.
4. Absentee Ballot Deadlines (if separate): Absentee ballots have the same request and return deadlines as Early Mail Ballots. Absentee voting is available to voters who meet a qualifying reason; Early Mail Ballots are the no-excuse option.
5. Early Voting: October 24-November 1, 2026.

NEW JERSEY

1. Voter Registration Deadline: October 13, 2026.
2. Vote-by-Mail Application Deadline: October 27, 2026, for an application submitted by mail. A voter may apply in person at the county clerk's office through 3:00 p.m. on November 2, 2026.
3. Vote-by-Mail Ballot Return Deadline: If mailed, the ballot must be postmarked by Election Day, November 3, and received by the county Board of Elections by November 9, 2026. Ballots returned in person or by secure drop box must be received by 8:00 p.m. on November 3.
4. Absentee Ballot Deadlines (if separate): Not separate. New Jersey uses Vote-by-Mail ballots.
5. Early Voting: October 24-November 1, 2026.

CampusLife

2026 General Election Voter Deadlines: Fact-Checked State Guide

BY **CM 244: MEDIA, POLITICS, AND SOCIAL JUSTICE, THE RAMOS RESEARCH INSTITUTE**

PENNSYLVANIA

1. Voter Registration Deadline: October 19, 2026.
2. Vote-by-Mail Application Deadline: 5:00 p.m. on October 27, 2026. The county election office must receive the application by this time.
3. Vote-by-Mail Ballot Return Deadline: The county election office must receive the completed mail ballot by 8:00 p.m. on November 3, 2026. A postmark is not sufficient.
4. Absentee Ballot Deadlines (if separate): Same application and return deadlines as a mail-in ballot. Mail-in ballots are available to any registered voter; absentee ballots are for voters who meet a qualifying reason.
5. Early Voting: No separate statewide in-person early-voting period. Voters may use on-demand mail-ballot voting at county election offices or designated locations while mail-ballot voting is available.

NEW HAMPSHIRE

1. Voter Registration Deadline: Election Day registration is available on November 3, 2026. Before Election Day, local registration cut-offs vary by municipality and generally fall 6-13 days before the election.
2. Vote-by-Mail Application Deadline: Not applicable as a no-excuse Vote-by-Mail option. New Hampshire uses excuse-based absentee voting.
3. Vote-by-Mail Ballot Return Deadline: Not applicable separately; see absentee ballot deadline below.
4. Absentee Ballot Deadlines (if separate): A request sent by mail must be received by the local clerk by 12:00 p.m. on November 2, 2026. In-person requests may be made through 5:00 p.m. on November 2. Completed absentee ballots must be received by the clerk by 5:00 p.m. on November 3.
5. Early Voting: No separate in-person early-voting period.

MAINE

1. Voter Registration Deadline: October 13, 2026, for online registration and registration by mail or third person. In-person voter registration remains available through Election Day, November 3.
2. Vote-by-Mail Application Deadline: Maine uses no-excuse absentee voting for voting by mail. The regular absentee ballot request deadline is close of business on October 29, 2026, unless special circumstances apply.
3. Vote-by-Mail Ballot Return Deadline: The municipal clerk must receive the completed absentee ballot by 8:00 p.m. on November 3, 2026.
4. Absentee Ballot Deadlines (if separate): Same as the Vote-by-Mail information above; Maine calls this absentee voting and does not require an excuse.
5. Early Voting: In-person no-excuse absentee voting, Maine's version of early voting, runs October 5-29, 2026.

VERMONT

1. Voter Registration Deadline: Voters may register through Election Day, November 3, 2026.
2. Vote-by-Mail Application Deadline: No application is required for an active registered voter in the general election. Vermont automatically mails a general-election ballot to all qualified active voters by October 1.
3. Vote-by-Mail Ballot Return Deadline: The town or city clerk must receive the completed ballot by 7:00 p.m. on November 3, 2026.
4. Absentee Ballot Deadlines (if separate): For the general election, the automatically mailed ballot serves as the early/absentee ballot. Voters may also request or obtain an early/absentee ballot through their clerk as needed.
5. Early Voting: Begins September 19, 2026, or as soon as ballots are available, and continues through November 2 at the town or city clerk's office during business hours.

UPCOMING EVENTS ON CAMPUS

FRIDAY 10/23:

SNA - BLOOD DRIVE

8 A.M. WEST CAMPUS - ATRIUM

SATURDAY 10/24:

FALL FEST: CIRCUS

4 - 10 P.M. NORTH LOT (NEAR BERGOLIO HALL)

TUESDAY 10/27:

PUMPKIN PAINTING NIGHT

5 P.M. RED'S

Arts & Entertainment

And the Winner is…?

BY **KAI COMMERCIO**
Staff Writer

On Sept. 30, director Curry Barker's "Obsession" was submitted for consideration at the 2027 Golden Globe Awards. Following this submission, controversy erupted among fans and viewers for its placement in the category of Musical or Comedy.



Instagram, @Obsessionthemovie
"Obsession" star Inde Navarrette receiving IMDB's Breakout award.

The online debate on platforms such as X, Instagram and TikTok stemmed from the opinion that the film simply does not belong in the Musical or Comedy category, and that its dark visuals and story elements land more fittingly under the Drama category.

On the other hand, there are fans who defend the category placement, arguing that the film has several comedic moments that warrant it to be placed there.

Sophomore Nick Deem feels that the themes of "Obsession" were overlooked by being placed in this category.

"I think that placing a film like 'Obsession' in the Musical or Comedy category tells me that the film industry does not understand the concept of the film at all," said Deem. "'Obsession' is one of the best horror films of the decade and is written like a modern-day Shakespearean tragedy where the two characters of 'Bear' and 'Nikki' are corrupted by the unknown powers of a wish Bear did not understand or even intend."

He also believes that the comedic aspects of the film are a result of its horror elements rather than traditional humor.

"Many of the comedic moments of the film immediately follow sequences of pure terror and suspense, so it's almost like the audience laughs out of fear and desperation rather than as a response to humor," said Deem. "Simply dropping the film into the category of Comedy or Musical is doing it a major disservice, because the comedy is incidental and made possible by the scare factor and horrific nature of the film."

Another topic of debate that this controversy has sparked is whether or not the genre is taken seriously by the film industry and award shows as a whole.

Sophomore Owen Telesmanick, President of the Short Filmmaker's Club, believes horror films do not receive enough recognition at awards shows.

"I don't think they're taken seriously. Over the past year, movies like 'Weapons' with Amy Madigan were nice to see," said Telesmanick. "Still, to prove my point, horror isn't seen as prestigious filmmaking because it doesn't appeal to older generations, who usually vote for the Oscars and other awards."

The placement of "Obsession" under the Musical or Comedy category has many movie enjoyers confused and disgruntled, wondering why horror movies aren't usually recognized at these awards.

"With the Golden Globes specifically, they have major categories in Drama and Musical/Comedy which almost explicitly excludes horror movies," said Film Professor Todd Barnes. "People don't naturally think of horror films in awards ceremonies because they haven't seen much of them in the past."

As the debate surrounding "Obsession" continues, some moviegoers hope the discussion will encourage major award shows like The Oscars and Golden Globes to reconsider how they recognize horror films.

"I personally think that Horror deserves its own category at major award shows," said Deem. "Even though there are entire award shows dedicated to horror movies like the Saturn Awards, and the Dead Meat Horror Awards, it would be nice for the genre to be noticed and respected by shows like the Oscars or the Golden Globes."

"I've Seen It": Heard It Before?

BY **CHARLIZE PEDRETTI-MOUSSALLY**
Staff Writer

When does inspiration become imitation? British singer-songwriter Olivia Dean is at the center of a copyright dispute over her song "I've Seen It," which allegedly bears similarities to Bill Withers' 1981 hit "Just the Two of Us."

Mattie Music Group, which identifies as Bleuing Music and owns rights to part of Withers' music catalog, filed a lawsuit on Oct. 1 in federal court in California. The lawsuit alleges that Dean's song copies a large portion of Withers' hit.

Sophomore Cassidy Boltz is a fan of Dean and said she did not notice similarities between the two songs when listening to Dean's music.

"I've listened to Dean's song many times and never thought for a second that it was copyrighting or too similar to Withers' song," said Boltz.

According to the BBC, the music expert Alexander Stewart identified strong similarities between the two songs. Sony Music Publishing and Universal Music Group's Capitol Records have been named in the case, while Dean and her co-writers have not. The allegations have not been proven in court, and Dean has not publicly commented on the case.

Released in 1981, "Just the Two of Us" features Withers on vocals and saxophonist Grover Washington Jr. Following its release, the song reached No. 2 on the Billboard Hot 100 and remains popular today. The lawsuit has brought attention to the classic and questions about how much inspiration one artist can draw from another's work.

Dean's "I've Seen It," featured on her 2025 album "The Art of Loving," is a soft love song that blends modern pop and soul. Mattie Music Group argued that the similarities between the songs go beyond artistic influence and incorporate elements from Withers' composition without permission, according to The Guardian.

However, similarities between songs do not automatically constitute copyright infringement. According to The Lovell Firm, songs can share chord progressions, rhythms and instruments without violating copyright law. The legal question is whether protected original elements of one song have been copied.

Boltz believes artists should be able to be inspired by earlier music while still making their work distinct.

"I believe artists should be able to take inspiration from prior music as long as they make it their own and change it in a way that won't cause speculation and most importantly give credit where credit is due," said Boltz.

Although Dean's song features different lyrics and arrangements, the dispute raises questions about whether similarities in melody and other elements cross the line from influence into copyright infringement.

According to the U.S. Copyright Office, the copyright law Title 17 does not technically protect every musical piece. Rather, it protects the originality of an older song that could be sampled by another artist at any time, if given rights to it. Determining whether copyright is active in this case isn't based on opinion but rather is seen through listening for different key musical elements in both compositions.

This dispute recalls another high-profile copyright case involving Robin Thicke and Pharrell Williams' 2013 song "Blurred Lines," which was compared to Marvin Gaye's 1977 hit "Got to Give It Up."



AP News, Chris Pizzello
Olivia Dean performing her newest top hit "Man I Need" at the 68th

Thicke filed a lawsuit to ensure that Gaye's family got no share of the earnings made from "Blurred Lines," but also admitted that he drew most inspiration for the song from Gaye's composition. In March 2015, Williams and Thicke was sued for $7.4 billion, the largest amount that has ever been granted for a copyright case.

For some listeners, copyright disputes highlight the importance of protecting musicians' work while allowing artists to build on existing musical influences.

"It's a tough situation because I think copyright laws are extremely important in order to give the artist credit for their work, but people still need to leave space for artists to continue to draw inspiration from older songs," said graduate student Ava Denicker.

Olivia Dean won Best New Artist at the 2026 Grammy Awards and the BET Awards, and is 11th on the Billboard Artist 100 chart as of the week of Oct. 17.

Sports

Camaraderie, Chemistry and Consecutive Wins

BY **MADISYN ZITO**
Staff Writer

With the second half of the season underway, Sacred Heart field hockey looks to finish conference play strong and make their way into the Northeast Conference (NEC) tournament.

The Pioneers currently sit at a 7-8 record, and third overall in NEC standings. Only the top four teams make the tournament, putting the team in good position for the remainder of the season.

Head coach Sydney Van Der Merwe is in his 11th season with the team and is ready to make the late season push.



Instagram, @Sacredheartfh

The Sacred Heart University Field Hockey team, against Providence College at Yale University.

"The girls know what we want and what the situation is. They don't want a repeat from last year," said Van Der Merwe.

The Pioneers started 0-4 on the season, but the team's chemistry allowed for a positive outlook. Senior goalie Brianna Cooper recognizes this in the team.

"Our team is amazing; I haven't seen it with any other team. We all are so close no matter what year you're in. There's no divide amongst grades at all," said Cooper.

Junior midfielder Celia Benson has seen how important it is to be close on and off the field.

"Our chemistry goes beyond just being teammates and just seeing each other at practice," said Benson. "We are all best friends off the field as well."

The camaraderie amongst the team has allowed them to get back on track by winning four consecutive games.

"They've come in and gotten better as the season's gone on," said Van der Merwe. "I've seen development and growth out of each of our student athletes."

There are still ways to improve for this squad, such as capitalize on scoring opportunities. Senior midfielder Blaire Sparks recognizes the importance of carrying the team's success in practice into their games.

"We need to work on getting the ball in the back of the net like we do it so well at practice," said Sparks. "We just need to bring that into our games."

The Pioneers had big games coming up against Hofstra University and NEC rival, Rider University.

"It's going to be a tough game against Hofstra, they are good opponents, they play us tough, we play them tough," said Van Der Merwe. "We've been having good practices, and ready for the challenge ahead."

The Pioneers came out on top, defeating Hofstra 5-1 on Friday, Oct. 16.

"We know how we need to play and what we need to do so we just need to play our game," said Cooper. "Which I'm 100% confident that the girls can do against Rider."

On Sunday, Oct. 18, Sacred Heart beat Rider, 3-2 in a come from behind victory. Marking a very successful weekend for the Pioneers.

Sacred Heart field hockey returns to action on Friday Oct. 23, where they host Long Island University at 11:00 a.m. at Johnson Field.

Athletic Communications contributed to this article

Women's Rugby Makes a Comeback

BY **COLLIN MACLEOD / CHRISTIAN STELLA**
Sports Editor/ Staff Writer

The Pioneers women's rugby team has started their season and hold a 2-2 record. They started off the season 0-2. The first loss came from playing against the three-time champions Harvard University, with the Pioneers falling 26-24. The second loss was against Army University in a close contest with the score ending 24-17.

"They were two emotional losses, and we all kind of took it pretty deeply because we were all kind of stuck," said sophomore Lily Perez. "We didn't know what we were doing wrong, and it kind of just boiled down to connecting together, as well as connecting our backs and forwards."

These losses created urgency and gave the players a chance to refocus their efforts.

"After our loss against Army and Harvard, it lit a fire under our team to pick it up," said senior captain Olivia Woods.

Reed's confidence didn't waver in the players despite the less than optimal start.

"This is probably the most talented team I've ever had so I'm excited to watch that blossom in the upcoming games," said head coach Michelle Reed. "I'm excited to see how the team connects and how we play as a unit."

The team was then able to secure two wins in their most recent games. Beating Queens University of Charlotte 69-7 and Davenport University 38-0. These two wins featured two hat tricks, one by Woods vs. Queens and the other by Perez vs. Davenport.

"I think a lot of the time tries are results of what others do on the field, so it doesn't really come down to just us," said Woods. "It comes down to who was surrounding us on the field and

who did the dirty work to allow us to get into the try zone."

"Everyone made themself a threat in the game, and I think that was the biggest thing for

us," said Perez.

Success can be credited towards the teams connected.

"Over the last few weeks, we have built a connection between our forward pack and our backs that has allowed us to be successful," said Woods. "It really showed up vs. Davenport and

the game against Queens."

Woods helps facilitate this connection through her actions as a captain.

"Olivia is a leader," said Reed. "She is always driving her teammates, constantly trying to make them better not for her own glory but because she knows how good they can be and their potential."

The Pioneers recently played a match against American International College on Sunday, Oct. 18. Both teams went back and forth in the contest, with each scoring a lot of points in the match. The result of the game was a narrow loss with a final score of 32-33. The Pioneers look to bounce back in their next match against Dartmouth College on Oct. 24 at 2 p.m.

Athletic Communications contributed to this article.



Instagram, @sacedheartwrugby

Women's Rugby getting physical in game against Harvard University.

Sports

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MLB Postseason

BY **MAGGIE JIMINEZ**
Staff Writer

The Major League Baseball (MLB) postseason has brought October baseball excitement to Sacred Heart University, where students are following their favorite teams as they compete for a spot in the World Series.

"It's been exciting to see all the teams that haven't won a World Series before in this group. Teams such as the Rays and Brewers really impressed me because of how dominant they were," said senior Matt Gavagan.

The early playoff rounds featured several one-sided series. Three of the four MLB Wild Card Series ended in a 2-0 sweep, and only one Division Series went to a fifth game.

"I was bummed that the Cubs lost, but I wasn't surprised by the results because the Cubs have been playing pretty average for the last month and a half. So, as sad as it is, the Padres beating the Cubs did not surprise me," said Professor John Barnes, School of Communication, Media, and the Arts.

The New York Yankees left their fans on campus disappointed following their postseason exit in the American League Division Series (ALDS).

"The Yankees are terrible, and I'm really sad about how they choked. So that's unfortunate," said sophomore Owen Telesmanick, a media arts student.

This year's postseason featured several matchups between teams from the same division, including the American League (AL) East and National League (NL) East. The number of divisional matchups in October has raised questions about whether or not MLB should reseed teams to reward those with the best regular season records.

Reseeding would rearrange playoff matchups after each round based on the remaining teams' record, which could potentially give higher-seeded teams a more favorable path to the World Series.

"It's a real question whether or not they should reseed because the more you add to the playoffs, the more chance you have to reseed and try to give an advantage to teams with the better overall records to make the regular season mean a little bit more," said Barnes.

"Seeing that there may be a strike next year, I really think there should be some changes made which should include reseeding for the playoffs," said Gavagan.

The MLB's collective bargaining agreement with the players' union is set to expire after the 2026 season, raising the possibility of a labor dispute if the two sides cannot reach a new agreement.

With the postseason narrowing down to the final series, attention will shift to the big stage. The World Series is scheduled to begin Friday, Oct. 23. The Milwaukee Brewers have secured their spot, but as of press time, the American League Championship Series (ALCS) had not concluded, leaving their World Series opponent undecided.



Instagram, @MLB
Tampa Bay Rays Junior Caminero slides into home during a game in the 2026 MLB Postseason.

