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A CENTRAL CONNECTICUT STATE UNIVERSITY PRODUCTION

The Recorder

OCTOBER 6TH, 2026 VOLUME 139, ISSUE II

Dr. Kimberly Kostelis Made Temporary Overseer

by Eary Banushi
Social Media Editor

Doctor Kimberly Kostelis, provost and vice president for academic affairs at Central Connecticut State University, will oversee the university's day-to-day operations during its upcoming leadership transition, according to a campus-wide announcement sent Wednesday.

The move follows the departure of university president Dr. Zulma R. Toro, who announced Wednesday morning that she would be stepping down from her leadership post.

In an email addressed to the student body, Vice President of Student Affairs, Dr. Michael Russo, moved quickly to reassure students that campus functions, student services and classroom education would proceed without disruption.

"I am reaching out to assure you that your needs will remain at the forefront of everything we do at Central," Russo wrote. ***"It's important for you to know your academic programs will not be affected by this news. Your success is our number one priority, and that will not change."***



Dr. Kimberly Kostelis, CCSU provost and vice president for academic affairs, will oversee day-to-day operations during the university's leadership transition. CCSU

Kostelis steps into the role with more than two decades of administrative and faculty experience at Central. She originally joined the university as an assistant professor before serving as department chair and later as Dean of the School of Education. While serving as dean, she spearheaded the NextGen Educators Program to bolster teacher preparation initiatives.

Appointed interim provost in June 2021 before being selected for the permanent role following a nationwide search, Kostelis has overseen several major campus milestones. Her initiatives include the launch of the CCSU eSports Center, the expansion of the First Year Experience program and the creation of the Drop-In Child Care Center to assist student-parents. More recently, she helped launch the Central Community Health Education Clinic on campus in October 2023.

While Kostelis will oversee university operations during the transition, she has not officially been named interim president. Any formal interim president designation falls under the authority of the Connecticut State Colleges and Universities (CSCU) Board of Regents. There is currently no word on when a presidential search will begin.

Toro's Sudden Resignation Makes Waves At Central

by Liam McCusker and Ny'Asia Martin
News Editor, Lifestyle Editor

Central students say the resignation of President Zulma Toro has left them relieved but not surprised.

Toro announced her sudden resignation in a campus wide email to students' early morning Sep 23 amid several ongoing investigations surrounding alleged bullying, intimidation, and retaliation against former and current employees. The investigation was opened on Aug 20, and is currently ongoing. She has served as the campus president since 2017.

Toro added she would step down effective at the end of the day, saying that it was time for new leadership to ***"tackle the challenges ahead."***

CCSU senior Brendan Tierney said he assumed Toro's resignation would come eventually.

"She was completely ignoring news reporters trying to talk to her and really wasn't giving any sort of statement," Tierney said. ***"Obviously there was some stuff said about her that she probably realized was true and she was exposed for it."***



Zulma Toro has officially retired as of October 1.
Jim Michaud/Hearst Connecticut Media

Tierney did not have any interactions with Toro except for a video of her, played at his student orientation. He hopes the next leader of CCSU will be more involved in student life.

"I would definitely say a more involved leader would be important and beneficial to CCSU," Tierney said. ***"I don't think anyone besides a few students have had in-depth conversations with Toro or seen her participate in student activities."***

CCSU Senior David King said the news of the allegations against Toro left him feeling apprehensive, he did not expect Toro to resign so soon without knowing the results of the investigation, but he assumed her resignation was coming.

"I felt uneasy that our campus leader could act like that," King said.

CCSU senior Kailana Herbert said she did not expect to hear that Toro had allegedly been bullying staff members.

"Hearing that the president of our school was doing that was shocking and a little disappointing," Herbert said.

Herbert heard Toro speak when she went to orientation, but she does not recall having any other interactions with her. She added that she looks forward to seeing who is selected to be the next leader of CCSU and what they do for the campus.

Many students said they were happy to hear the news of Toro's resignation.

"All of my friends and I celebrated and when our professor shared the email, everyone started laughing," said CCSU junior, Jarry Secka.

Secka added that the ongoing investigation affects the entire community because it could affect how people view the university.

"It affects how you look at and how you trust the authoritative figures in charge," Secka said. ***"It was a conversation piece and a hot topic, and it just makes the school look bad."*** CCSU sophomore Chloe Djilani said she thinks CCSU would be a better community if the person in charge isn't a negative example.

"I'd like to see someone who really cares about everyone's well-being and not just the appearance of the school," Djilani said.

Djilani added that she and her classmates were also happy to hear of Toro's resignation.

"I don't think any of us wanted her as president anymore," Djilani said.

CCSU senior Kayla Manocchio said Toro likely made the right decision to resign to avoid further chaos on campus.

"I feel like if she didn't it could've gotten messy," Manocchio said.

Manocchio noted that this situation makes her question the transparency of CCSU's leadership.

"I don't know how when you're in charge of a campus it's okay to bully and intimidate your staff," Manocchio said.

CCSU junior Alexander Delales said he hopes the investigation will reach a conclusion.

"It is not clear if they are going to continue investigating or not," said Delales. ***"Toro did not make many comments about the allegations in the email of her departure, she mainly talked about her contributions and her part in CCSU history."***

ABOUT US

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All Eyes on Central's Flock Cameras

by Ronan Hinckley
Contributor



An ALPR camera located at the entrance of Kaiser Drive.
Eary Banushi

New Britain now has two different traffic camera systems moving forward at once, right as Connecticut argues over how much surveillance is too much.

On August 7, state regulators approved New Britain as the 18th Connecticut city or town cleared to use automated traffic enforcement cameras. These only turn on when a car runs a red light or speeds through a school zone. The plan grew out of a Vision Zero safety report and was approved by the city's Common Council in January. The first two cameras go up near school zones this fall.

Also on August 7, Governor Ned Lamont asked towns across the state to pause installing new license plate reader cameras, named 'Flock Cameras' after the company which provides them. These cameras work differently than the traffic cameras. They sit on poles and photograph the rear plate of every car that passes, logging the plate number along with details like color and make. They don't photograph drivers. Each photo gets checked against police databases, including the FBI's National Crime Information Center.

Connecticut doesn't have one clear law determining how long police can keep this data, and at least 40 local departments statewide already use the cameras. That changes October 1, when new rules under Senate Bill 397 take effect, limiting data-sharing to New York, Massachusetts and Rhode Island, barring use in immigration or reproductive care cases, and requiring officers to log a reason before every search. Footage must be deleted after 21 days unless it's part of an open investigation.

The ACLU argues the cameras let police track people without a warrant or any suspicion of a crime. More than 150 communities nationwide have canceled or shut off these systems this year, and there have been reports of officers misusing them, including one case where an officer allegedly used the cameras to track a former partner.

Not everyone agrees that the cameras themselves are the problem. Lt. Homestead of the Central Connecticut State University Police Department, whose department also uses Flock cameras, said misuse falls on the officer, not the technology.

"The intentional misuse of any technology or piece of equipment by a police officer, or a civilian for that matter, falls back on the individual who used it. It's not the technology," he said, adding that Flock cameras ***"do not run facial recognition or store biometric data of the driver or any of the passengers."***

The conflict over Flock cameras is not unique to Connecticut. In Winona, Minnesota, police discovered in early August that all eight of the city's Flock cameras had vanished, cut down at the base and stolen, leaving the department with no suspects and a $24,000 bill to replace them. Nearby Minnesota cities including Duluth, Plymouth, Edina and Faribault reported similar theft or vandalism, and Duluth ultimately let its own Flock contract expire rather than renew it.

Central Connecticut State University sits on the edge of New Britain, but it runs its own campus police department, with its own network of Flock cameras separate from the city's. CCSU and New Britain each operate their systems independently.

"We're totally different," said Lt. Homestead of the CCSU Police Department. ***"Our jurisdiction is the campus. [New Britain's] jurisdiction is the New Britain community off campus."***

For CCSU, the technology has meant more than watching for crime after the fact. Homestead said officers can enter plates proactively, generating an alert the moment a flagged vehicle is spotted, a use that has already helped locate a student reported as suicidal.

"This type of use has already helped us locate a reported suicidal individual," he said. ***"We were able to locate the vehicle and interact with that person based off of a motor vehicle stop, and it came to a successful resolution."***

The department used the same approach to enforce a protective order, arresting a domestic violence suspect after his plate was flagged on campus following the incident.

Trinity Duarte, 20, and her mother, Tristina, 39, are New Britain residents who don't live near the university but drive through the area constantly. Trinity said she doesn't trust how far the cameras could reach.

"I don't think the police should be able to track anyone they feel like," she said. ***"After what we've seen from ICE in Connecticut these past couple of years, I don't feel comfortable having cameras all over our neighborhoods."***

Tristina said she isn't convinced the cameras make anyone safer.

"They can make the community feel less safe because they're worried about who has access to that footage and what information is being collected," she said.

Owen Miller, 22, lives three blocks from campus and said he hadn't heard of Flock cameras until recently.

"But if a camera can help police find a stolen car or figure out where a suspect's vehicle went after a crime, I can see the value in that," he said. ***"At the same time, there's a pretty big difference between investigating a specific crime and having a system that can potentially show where people's cars have been."***

The new state rules kick in October 1. Whether that changes how CCSU and New Britain use their cameras, or how residents feel about them, is still an open question.

#KizerSays

Did someone wake up the lead singer from Green Day?

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Students Want A Say In Their Salary

by Noah Gavin
News Editor

A recent Quinnipiac University poll found that the economy and cost of living is the number one reason Connecticut voters are heading to the polls this November for the gubernatorial race between incumbent Ned Lamont and challenging Republican Ryan Fazio.

Young voters on Central's campus find themselves agreeing with the result of this poll, as they have also had difficulty dealing with inflation and the cost of living.

"100% [Affordability is a huge issue]. Let's look at the rise of gas prices for example, those have been fluctuating higher than my grades this semester," said Adam Hales, human biology major at Central.

"Based off who I've spoken with, whether they're living in Boston, Connecticut, New York, everywhere around American they are looking for [an improvement] in affordability." Hales said.

Hales said he has felt the burn in paying college bills, even while working and going to school.

"Recently I've gotten a job and it's not really helping me at all cover my bills with even just tuition for example," Hales said.

Hales said that he has heard people have had problems with the cost of living in multiple areas lately.

"There's [many] aspects in life, affordability of groceries [have been difficulty] for some of my friends out there, and even medical bills."

Computer science major, Ismael Castillo, shared Hales sentiment that tuition has been a difficult cost to handle among rising prices.

"The biggest [thing I've had trouble affording] has been school costs and having to pay that," Castillo said. ***"A few years ago, it was cheaper to go to school, and prices have surged up and I've had to pay more than I did before."***

Castillo has also noticed the cost of inflation in everyday life, from big to little things.

"[The price of] food has definitely gone up and even things like certain hardware parts I usually get have gone up too," Castillo said. **"So, a lot of things I kind of need and use a lot of the time."**

Castillo is not surprised by the results of the QU poll.

"I think that things that impact people in their day to day are generally going to be on people's minds the most," Castillo said. ***"Things like food prices, rent, taxes, things like that people notice them instantly because money is something tangible."***

Castillo knows that an improvement to the cost of living is always easier said by candidates than done.

"[Improving affordability] sounds good, there's a lot of other things that there is going to be a cost to making something more affordable." Castillo said.

Jada Appiah, business major at Central, said her and her family have felt inflation and has to allocate their spending differently to adjust.

"My mom used to always tell us don't put less than $20 [in your gas tank], always just fill it up, but now even she puts twenty in because she can't afford anything more," Appiah said. ***"Groceries [for example], are hard because we need to eat but we don't want to go broke trying to eat either."***

The QU poll found that 63% back Governor Ned Lamont in how he has approached the cost of living in Connecticut, but only the results in November will reveal how voters truly feel.

Central Police Department Publishes 2026 Clery Report

New Britain, Conn. – The Central Connecticut State University Police Department has published the 2026 Annual Campus Security & Fire Safety Report (also known as the Clery Report). To learn more about the report and view it online, go to ccsu.edu/police/clery-act and click on Annual Campus Security & Fire Safety Report. Go straight to the online report here.

The Clery Report is prepared annually by the CCSU Police Department in accordance with federal law (the "Jeanne Clery Disclosure of Campus Security Policy and Campus Crime Statistics Act of 1990" and subsequent amendments).

The report contains statistics on specified crimes reported over the previous three calendar years, as well as specific information pertaining to campus security, alcohol and drug policies, sexual assault prevention and response, victims' assistance programs, missing person reports, crime prevention, fire safety, and campus resources. Policies and procedures for campus-wide notifications and emergency response and evacuation are also included.

Please note: The statistics are only for certain crimes that occurred on campus, in off-campus buildings, property owned or controlled by the university, or on public property adjacent to campus.

All members of the campus community are encouraged to report crimes to the CCSU Police Department at (860) 832-2375. Emergencies or situations that may pose an immediate or ongoing threat to the health and safety of our students, employees, and visitors should be reported immediately by dialing 9-1-1 or by using one of the call boxes located throughout the campus.

If you are unable to download and/or print the report, hard copies may be obtained at the CCSU Police Department at 1500 East St., New Britain.

CONTACT: 860-929-1177
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – Sept. 29, 2026

THIS WEEK'S CAMPUS EVENTS

Exercise Science Club
Yoga with Dr. Cass
Tuesday 10/6 @ 3:30 PM
Vance Lawn

Student Center
Cozy Cider Connections
Tuesday 10/6 @ 6 PM
Wells Street Lounge [Student Center Lobby]

Central Activities Network
Finish The Song
Tuesday 10/6 @ 3 PM
CAN Office [Student Center Room 203]

Homecoming Weekend
Pre-Game Pep Rally
Friday 10/9 @ 8 PM
Arute Stadium

Dean Macey Brings Class To CLASS!



by Liam McCusker
News Editor

Central Connecticut State University Liberal Arts and Social Sciences [CLASS] Dean David Macey brings a wide range of experiences to his new role.

Macey grew up in Belmont, Massachusetts and graduated from Yale University in 1988 with a bachelor's degree in English. He later earned a master's degree from Brown University and a master's degree and Ph.D. from Vanderbilt University, both in English as well. Upon graduating from Yale, he worked as a chef in a soup kitchen in East Brooklyn for a few years. He later served as a Jesuit seminarian in Boston and then worked for a Boston bank. He taught English at the University of Puget Sound in Tacoma, Washington. After that, he worked at the University of Central Oklahoma for 20 years, where he worked in the English department, served as department chair for 10 years and was the university's chief diversity officer before becoming dean of the Liberal Arts and Social Sciences Department.

"Immediately before coming here, I was the dean of arts and humanities and social sciences at Fort Hays State University in western Kansas," Macey said.

Macey began his role in July 2026. He applied for the position in fall 2025 and in spring 2026, he was selected as one of the finalists and visited the campus.

"I met with a lot of people, made some presentations, answered a lot of questions from different constituencies on campus and then in late April, I was offered the job," Macey said.

Macey added that his semester has been very busy so far, but he is excited to get to know the campus.

"I'm orienting myself, meeting people, and trying to be in as many places as I can to attend events and talk with people one-on-one," Macey said. *"And to really get a sense of the culture and the needs and opportunities."*

Macey noted that he always enjoys hearing other people talk, hearing students present their work and attending musical performances at the campus theater.

"I made sure to tour the Student Involvement Fair and learn about what campus life is like here," Macey said.

Macey said he appreciates the diversity of programs at CCSU's College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences.

"There are wonderful and creative students and faculty, a whole lot of energy, and a very diverse set of programs," Macey said. *"I love the fact that the liberal arts are both major programs and the foundation of everyone's general education."*

Macey added that he sees strong community engagement on campus and opportunities for growth and development.

"I see an important part of my role as to be an advocate for the liberal arts and social sciences and also to help departments and programs achieve their goals," Macey said.

Macey said he has enjoyed interacting with others and hearing their thoughts on topics.

"I like the energy that people bring to projects," Macey said. *"I like that people have been willing to share with me what excites them about the institution, what concerns them, and what they hope for."*

Macey added that he always looks forward to *"transforming people's lives and giving them opportunities"* and seeing the different futures each person has.

"I love graduations because that's when we celebrate students' achievements," Macey said.

Macey noted that his position entails a wide range of responsibilities. Responsibilities range from defining policies to advocating for resources and solving problems.

"Problems can include a student having difficulty getting enrolled in a course that they need, and faculty members having questions about funding to travel to conferences," Macey said. *"So it's the continuous balance of very large ongoing projects, and small opportunities and crises that arise on a day-to-day basis."*

Macey said his role is not a 9-to-5 job and he typically works late during the week and on weekends as needed.

"Part of that's attending events and being visible to represent the college and support its work," Macey said.

CCSU's College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences has seen turnover in leadership in the last few years with two interim deans. Macey said he would like to bring a sense of stability to his role, especially because it is a challenging time for higher education nationwide in terms of politics and career readiness and investment.

"I think it's really important to remind people that when students learn, regardless of their major, they're learning skills that are going to serve them well across the course of a lifetime," Macey said.

Macey added that he has heard politicians say that investments should not be made in subjects that won't help people make a lot of money.

"That's not the whole story," Macey said. *"We should be investing in majors that allow people to live fulfilling and satisfying lives, doing work they find deeply meaningful. When we talk about investment, it's not just the individual students' return on investment, it's the community's return on its investment in higher education."*

Macey said he sees CCSU as having a *"rich history"* of serving its communities, which was one of the main reasons he was excited to begin his job.

"There's a lot of transition going on right now, but it's important to remember that what we're really here to do is teach and learn, and that's what's going on in a lot of different ways," Macey said.

Jump Start Growth With Japanese Club

by Liam McCusker
News Editor



Japanese Language and Learning Club Vice President, Lexus Vega, and President, Nathan Kudrle Liam McCusker

The Central Connecticut State University Japanese Language and Learning Club offers a space to learn the Japanese language beyond the classroom.

The Japanese Language and Learning Club was founded four or five years ago by a former Central student who wanted to create a communal space for learning Japanese. It meets on Mondays from 4:30 - 6 PM and Thursdays from 5 - 6:30 PM in the Asian American, Asian and Pacific Islander [AAAPI] Center, Room 205 in the Burritt Library.

Japanese Language and Learning Club president Nathan Kudrle said his favorite part of the club is that it allows members to practice the Japanese language and have broader discussions about language.

"It's really interesting to have discussions about language, for example, talking about Japanese relative to English, the differences and similarities and implications of that," Kudrle said. *"It's very interesting to just have discussions specifically about language as well as discussions about Japanese, because it's different from English."*

Kudrle is a CCSU senior majoring in secondary English education and minoring in Japanese because he is interested in pursuing a role in teaching English abroad in Japan, which motivated him to join the Japanese Language and Learning Club when he transferred to CCSU from Tunxis in fall 2025.

Japanese Language and Learning Club vice president Lexus Vega has been part of the club since she transferred to CCSU from CT State Community College at Manchester in fall 2024. She said it is a great place for members to interact with one another.

"I look forward to our meetings when people come in because you get a lot of different personalities that come at different levels," Vega said. *"I encourage people to learn Japanese even if it's hard, it's a welcoming environment too."*

Vega is majoring in graphic design and minoring in Japanese. She is interested in working on art abroad in Japan. She added that some of the members have more experience with the Japanese language and often assist in helping to guide new members.

Kudrle said the club is often not large in numbers, but it has seen new members at its meetings so far this semester. The club is open to anyone interested in learning Japanese.

Members can also study, ask any questions they have and practice speaking the language.

"It's hard to get into, but that's also why we wanted to establish this space and we want to continue maintaining a space for people to learn," Kudrle said. *"But as of right now, we've had a decent amount of new members and it's still going up."*

Kudrle and Vega said the club can also help with content and assignments from Japanese classes offered by CCSU's World Languages Department. They are aware of the study-abroad program hosted by the History Department and said their club is happy to assist any students who are interested in going.

"While we don't work in coordination with the study abroad program, we can totally provide resources or give suggestions to people who are interested in doing it," Kudrle said. *"We can talk about what you might want to expect, because we have had members and also previous alumni who still come to the club and talk about their experiences either going abroad for school or just going abroad in general."*

Vega added that the club does not have a strict attendance policy and wants everyone to feel welcome.

"We want to accept everybody and we understand that people have a lot of different things going on," Vega said.

Kudrle noted that people are welcome to attend meetings regardless of how much experience they have had speaking Japanese.

"We want to encourage everyone to come at any skill level even if you don't come that often," Kudrle said. *"It's an open space for anyone to come."*

Kudrle can be reached at n.kudrle@my.ccsu.edu and Vega can be reached at l.vega@my.ccsu.edu for anyone who has questions about joining.

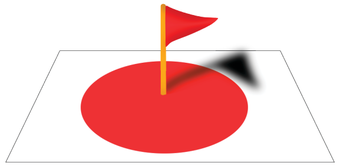


Illustration by Ron Marq

Funding For The Finish Line

by Liam McCusker
News Editor

The Connecticut State University American Association of University Professors [CSU-AAUP] is advocating for expanded access to Connecticut's Finish Line Scholarship to provide financial assistance to students transitioning from community college to a bachelor's degree.

The CSU-AAUP represents faculty from Central, Southern, Eastern and Western Connecticut State universities. It also advocates for issues including access to public higher education.

CCSU sociology professor and CSU-AAUP council member Fiona Pearson said the organization is pushing for the Finish Line Scholarship's eligibility to be expanded.

"We in CSU-AAUP will be asking the legislature and Governor to fully fund the Finish Line Scholarship for all transfer students who have completed 60 credits and not just those students who completed an associate's degree," Pearson said.

Finish Line is a scholarship for students who begin their education through Connecticut's community college program and later pursue a bachelor's degree at a state university or Charter Oak State College. Under Public Act 25-168, students who have completed at least 60 credits through the program can qualify for the scholarship.

According to CSCU's Finish Line policy, the initial implementation of the scholarship limited it to students who received an associate's degree from CT State Community College in fall 2025 or later.

As of Sept 2026, 261 CCSU students had received Finish Line Scholarships, according to Pearson. She said 605 students throughout the four state universities and Charter Oak State College had also received the scholarship at that point.

The program was established with $7.7 Million in funding through Public Act 25-168. Pearson said that funding is not enough to cover all the transfer students who meet the 60-credit requirement, which prompted CSU-AAUP to call for additional funding.

Pearson added the organization's student interns are also involved in advocating for affordable higher education.

"Our student interns are passionate about the fight for debt-free college-they see access to public higher education as a fundamental right not a privilege," Pearson said.

Pearson said two student interns are selected from each of the four state universities each year. Current members of each campus's CSU-AAUP executive committee recommend students, who are then interviewed by the CSU-AAUP student intern faculty coordinator.

"The interns are paid $20 an hour for up to 10 hours of work per week, with a maximum of $3,000 per semester," Pearson said. *"CSU-AAUP provides the funding, with some of the money coming from a grant from the national American Federation of Teachers."*

CCSU senior Terrell Thigpen, who has been a student intern for three semesters, said interns from the four universities meet regularly to discuss issues affecting their campuses and ways for students to get involved.

"Everyone should have access to education," Thigpen said.

Interns have gone into classrooms to talk with students and collect signatures for their advocacy efforts. Thigpen helped with a petition to Connecticut's General Assembly and Gov. Ned Lamont calling for full funding of the Finish Line Scholarship and the Student Loan Reimbursement Program.

The petition received 537 signatures and was delivered to the State Capitol in the spring. Thigpen also spoke at the Capitol in February about PACT funding which helps students attend community college tuition-free by covering tuition and fees after other financial aid is applied.

He added that his work with CSU-AAUP has given him a deeper level of knowledge on politics.

"I came into Central as an accounting major, so I wasn't really familiar with politics or anything like that," Thigpen said.

Lamont's office said he is committed to the Finish Line program.

"This is an important program established with $7.7 million in funding through PA 25-168," Lamont's Director of Communications Cathryn Vaulman said. *"The Governor is committed to working with CSCU and other leadership to evaluate funding needs for future years."*

CSU-AAUP's work also involves student loan issues. The organization, along with the Department of Sociology and other CCSU groups, will host Connecticut Student Loan Ombudsperson Michelle Jarvis Lettman at CCSU on October 7.

Pearson added that Lettman will discuss the services provided by the state's ombudsperson, changes to federal student loan programs and Connecticut's Student Loan Reimbursement Program. The event will be held from 11 a.m. to noon in the Connecticut Room of Memorial Hall.

Thigpen noted that his work with CSU-AAUP has made him interested in continuing his work in advocacy.

"It definitely made me want to do more of this stuff in the future, and I could see myself doing more stuff like this," Thigpen said.

VeegMyEats Hits The Streets of Middletown!

by Ron Marq
Design and Layout Editor

Starting as a nomadic small business, vegan bakery VeegMyEats has finally found a new home! Their storefront in the heart of Middletown's bustling downtown scene is located on 203 Main Street; adjacent to Aroy Thai Garden Restaurant. On a gorgeous Saturday afternoon, a line trailing the building perimeter was filled with folks waiting to get their hands on some delicious plant-based treats. Owner Sheena Salvador says she didn't expect such a warm welcome from the local community and beyond.

"It feels unreal but at the same time it feels amazing. I'm excited for everyone that's coming out, with a line out the door! I'm just super happy." said Salvador.

Usually, one must go to New York City or Massachusetts for specialty vegan bakeries, but we're blessed to have one that's woman-owned and in the center of our state! One facet that can turn people off about vegan foods and diet is how restricting they can come across. While all their cupcakes, cheesecakes, bars, brownies, and cookies are vegan they truly taste no different from their original alternatives made with milk, eggs, and butter.



The ribbon cutting ceremony at VeegMyEats in Middletown on Saturday September 5. Ron Marq



Owner Sheena Salvador at the helm of VeegMyEats with cupcakes in hand and menu behind. Ron Marq

Salvador says that you don't have to be vegan to enjoy her food. These foods can bridge the gap between what can what's possible to be made vegan and what can comparably taste good to the common omnivore. There are even future possibilities in store with a grand opening as successful as this one.

"We plan on bringing the community even closer, having more vegan businesses come about. We're very excited for the future for VeegMyEats here." said Salvador.

The connected business on the opposite side is Aroy Thai Garden Restaurant; a plant-based Thai eatery with authentic recipes, gluten and oil free options, and regional flair owned by native Thai, Lapat Watrous, that's been open since 2023! You can find them at aroythaigarden.com as well as @aroy_thai_garden on Instagram. This plant-based power-couple of businesses should give an idea as to how necessary healthy and delicious food options, community building and support, and the power of teamwork is to the great state of Connecticut.

You can also order online at veegmyeats.com and follow VeegMyEats on Instagram at @veegmyeats. They'll also be present at various cultural events, Pride festivals, as well as pop-up and public catering venues, within Connecticut and beyond, such as The Eastern States Exposition AKA The Big E, in Springfield, Massachusetts this weekend! Also be on the lookout for the first ever VeegMyStreets festival coming up on Saturday October 24, from 11 AM - 7 PM in downtown Hartford! It'll feature over thirty vegan food vendors ranging from savory to sweet flavors, a full street takeover, and tunes from DJs from Hot 93.7 and UConn! More information at veegmystreets.com



The flier for the first VeegMyStreets festival on October 24 in Hartford. veegmystreets.com



Frights or Fall, Get Your Fix!

by Ny'Asia Martin
Lifestyle Editor

As the temperatures drop and the leaves begin to change colors, Connecticut offers plenty of ways to embrace the fall season. From pumpkin patches to haunted houses, and corn mazes to fall festivals, college students looking for something to do off campus have plenty of options this October.

Here are some fall activities worth checking out - including a few that offer student discounts.

Lake COMPOUNCE

Logo & Phantom Graveyard lakecompounce.com



For students looking for a Halloween thrill, **Lake Compounce's Phantom Fall Fest** is bringing haunted houses, scare zones, and nighttime rides to Bristol. The event runs from Sep 19 through Nov 1 and features five haunted houses, two scare zones, along with rides and other fall activities. For college students, Lake Compounce is offering a special admission price of $24.99 Compared with the regular $65.99 ticket price. Students must verify their college status with a college email.

Since 1741 LYMAN ORCHARDS



Logo & Orchard Trials Haunted House lymanorchards.com

If you're looking for a more traditional fall experience, **Lyman Orchards** in Middlefield offers a four-acre corn maze through November. The 2026 maze admission is $12 for visitors ages 13+ and $7 for children aged 4 - 12. The maze stretches for about a mile and includes trivia questions and multiple decision points along the way. For students looking for a Halloween-themed activity, Lyman Orchards will also host its Orchard Trials haunted house throughout October. The interactive attraction takes place Friday through Sunday nights and costs $28 for general admission before taxes and fees.

Jones FAMILY FARMS



Logo & Golden Hour Fridays jonesfamilyfarms.com

Pumpkin picking is a fall staple, and **Jones Family Farms** in Shelton offers students a chance to spend an afternoon outside while picking out a pumpkin. At Pumpkinseed Hill, weekday admission is $6 per person, with $2.50 of the admission price going toward pumpkin purchases.

Visitors can also explore a mini corn maze, see farm animals, and participate in other seasonal activities. Hayrides are available for an additional $7 per person. For students looking for a Friday night activity, Pumpkinseed Hill will extend its hours until 6:30 PM on select Fridays in October for its Golden Hour events.

Fall festivals can be a cheaper option for students who want to get off campus without spending a lot. The **Southington Apple Harvest Festival**, taking place Oct 2 - 4 and Oct 9 - 11, is free to attend. The festival features food, entertainment, and its popular apple fritters.

The **South Windsor Apple Harvest Festival** is also free and will take place Oct 3 at the John J. Michell Fairgrounds. The event will include live music, food, and family activities.

For students looking for something a little farther from campus, Connecticut also has several **Oktoberfest** celebrations throughout the state during the first weekend of October, including events in Darien, Ridgefield, Stamford, Westport, and West Haven.

THE FARM

Logo thefarmwoodbury.com

The Farm in Woodbury is offering several classic fall activities through Oct.30, including a corn maze, pumpkin picking, hayrides, and sunflowers. The farm's Corn Maze Plus admission is $14.95 for visitors 18+ and includes access to the corn maze, MazeQuest, pumpkin patch, hayrides, sunflowers, and music afternoons when available. Students can also purchase a separate pumpkin patch and hayride experience for $4.95, with pumpkins sold separately.

Action Wildlife FOUNDATION

Logo actionwildlifefoundation.com

Action Wildlife Foundation in Goshen is combining fall activities with a visit to its animal attractions. Its Fall Fest runs through Nov 1 and includes a five-acre corn maze, hayrides, a pumpkin patch, hay maze, pumpkin activities, a petting zoo, and access to more than 250 farm and exotic animals. Adult admission is $28, while children ages 2 - 10 are $4.25. Weekday admission is discounted, although hayrides are not available on weekdays.

FRIGHT HAVEN HAUNTED ATTRACTION

Logo frighthaven.com

For students who want Halloween without committing to a full amusement park, **Fright Haven** in Stratford offers a traditional haunted-house experience. The attraction is open on select nights throughout October, with general admission ranging from $24.99 to $29.99. Students can also purchase optional upgrades, including Fast Pass and Front of the Line admission. Fright Haven will be open until 11 PM on Halloween night, giving students another option for Oct 31 plans.

Whether the goal is getting scared with friends, taking pictures in a pumpkin patch, or simply getting off campus for an afternoon, Connecticut has plenty of fall activities to choose from. For college students, weekday deals can make enjoying the season easier on a college budget. With October only lasting a few weeks, now is the time to grab some friends, check the weather, and make some fall plans.



Preston Green [29] in Home-Opener versus Wagner Steve McLaughlin

Blue Devils Rout Seahawks In Home Opener



Player Preston Green Steve McLaughlin

by Vic Isaacs
Contributor

NEW BRITAIN - After a tough month of September to begin their season, the Central Connecticut Blue Devils football got their first on Saturday October 2, in front of their home crowd at Arute Field in New Britain. The victory was a crushing 45-14 performance against one-win conference rival Wagner.

Leading up to Saturday, the Blue Devils' most recent game against Montana State would provide some much-needed momentum; although the game ended 35-30 in favor of the Bobcats, Central was a constant thorn on their side and threatened to upset the #1 ranked team as 42.5-point underdogs. A bye week followed the game in Bozeman as CCSU prepared to face Wagner.

Central was able to take the momentum and house the opening kick against the Seahawks, thanks to returner Gabriel Wiggins, and the offense would continue to fire on all cylinders. John Manning IV and Michael Trovarelli would both find the end zone, on the ground and in the air respectively, as Central led 21-0.

The team continued to steam into the 2nd quarter. Quarterback Ben Griffis took to the ground and ran in for a score, Wiggins had his second score of the game with a receiving touchdown, with Isaac Stopke also joining the party in the air as the Blue Devils went into the locker rooms up 42-7.

Wagner's only touchdown of the first half was from a pick six, at the hands of Julio Tatis.

As the second half went underway, CCSU's offense slowed as the team attempted to uphold their advantage, with the third quarter highlight being a school record tying 50-yard field goal from kicker Jack Hennessey.

The second half was where the Central defense shined, as the unit was able to prevent Seahawk scoring for the entire third quarter, and only allowed a single touchdown in the fourth, a back shoulder fade that the receiver took all the way.

Central outgunned Wagner 201 yards to 45 on the ground, one of fourteen times since head coach Adam Lechtenberg's arrival in New Britain that the team has held their opponent to under 100 rushing yards. The Blue Devils eclipsed 400 yards of total offense in their dominant home opener.

When speaking to Coach Lechtenberg, he was pleased to see that the defense played lights out in the first half.

"There was a bit of a slip," Lechtenberg described, that caused plays to be made that shouldn't have happened, but he was overall happy to win in front of the home crowd.

Defensive lineman Dylan Jones ***"felt great"*** in the home opener.

"Knowing that we're all getting after it," was a big factor in the team's performance, he would say. ***"We still have a lot of mistakes"*** in the defense but he thinks they can fix them come next week.

"Last week really showed us how good we can really be if we play together as one team and bring the energy. We just need to keep doing that all year."

Fellow lineman Wayne Coleman echoed many of the same sentiments, emphasizing the importance of getting a win on the board.

"Having trust in our other teammates knowing that they're gonna do their jobs," was important in the win, and when they're "in the right spot" they can make the play happen.

"[The] defense effort was amazing. Seeing what we are capable of when we play a team, we know we're scary," said Coleman when asked about the momentum from Montana State.

Coleman also talked about the importance of keeping this level up in the upcoming games. ***"Bring the intensity. Foot on the gas."***

Quarterback Brett Griffis, who threw 10 for 16 with 180 passing yards, 3TDs and rushed for 73 yards and 1TD, described that the minute that opening kick got housed as the moment he knew that this was where the fun began as he enjoyed playing in front of the home crowd for the first time this season.

"Nerves are present in the moment," he explained, with most worries dissipating once the lead was present. He would praise his teammates and coaches in the win.

"Those guys helped me out, the o-line kept me safe in the pocket, and the one to [Trovarelli] was a great call."

Griffis said the relatively late home opener was ***"obviously weird,"*** but he thought the team did a ***"good job"*** treating it like any other game, especially considering what came before.

The games before were tough, and they ***"absolutely"*** carried the momentum on both sides of the ball, the quarterback would mention.

"What we did a great job of was staying true to our scheme and staying hungry", emphasizing having a good week and the only thing carrying over week to week is confidence

Gabriel Wiggins said the team ***"Started off good. [Griffis] was making great plays, we just did fantastic around the board".***

When asked about what he saw when he returned the kick to open the game, all Wiggins saw was ***"green".***

"It feels electric. I felt the energy on the first kickoff. Both sidelines were hyped, it made me want to go crazy."

He closed with saying that the team needs to ***"Stay humble and keep filling that cup up."***

With this week in the books next week, the Blue Devils will be back at home against AIC on Saturday, October 10.

Late Struggles Cost Blue Devils on Court

by Jimmie Clark
Contributor

NEW BRITAIN - Rising into the thick warm air of Detrick Gymnasium, Olivia Keckler sees the ball and has one goal. She slams the ball down practically through the hardwood floor and records a kill for the Blue Devils. Despite Keckler's efforts, the Blue Devils would go on to lose 3-0 and drop their fifth straight volleyball match.

In Central Connecticut State's final non-conference match of the season, they wouldn't win a single set, but they would keep each set competitive. In the second set of the match, there were ten individual ties as Bryant would go on to win the set by a score of 25-23. The Blue Devils fell 26-24 in the first set, 25-23 in the second and 25-18 in the third, marking their seventh straight loss to Bryant in their 34th all-time meeting.

Aubrey Stitcher also posted seven kills for the evening, Stitcher averaged 1.93 kills per set this season and supported Keckler's 13 kills along with Breanna Ginley's five kills. Keckler averaged 3.75 kills per set this year and led the team in Kills during the match.

"Hats off to Bryant for the W, unfortunately we couldn't together string enough points towards the end of the match to finish up those sets," Coach Alyssa Broccoli said.

The team came into the match off only three days of rest in the past two weeks, playing matches on the 15, 17, 18 and 19 of September.

"We have been coming off a very long week of playing volleyball, I'm not sure if we're fatigued but we're gonna regroup tomorrow before conference play starts," Broccoli said.

Although the team fought hard, they still came up short, but they continued to fight deep into the match leading in the third set at one point 17-13.

"It feels really good, we work on it (tenacity) a lot in practice, these ladies have a will to win and they're very competitive," Broccoli said, *"But I think it would feel better to finish and earn a W in each set so we can keep the match going."*

It's hard to argue that any player fought harder for the win than Olivia Keckler, who led the offense throughout the night, while she was first on the team in kills, she also makes sure her teammates get credit first for her performance.

"My setters give me a lot of opportunities to swing and score, and my coaches tell me to stay aggressive and work with me on my feet to make sure I can get to the ball," Keckler said.

Despite the 2-11 record this season, Keckler and the team stay optimistic about the coming conference slate.

"I think we just have to keep an aggressive mindset to take chances and know our teammates have our back when we hit into the block that they'll cover us," Keckler said.

The Blue Devils will face off against New Haven on the road Oct 2 at 6 PM while Bryant improves to 6-11 this season and will play FDU on Oct 9 at 6 PM in Teaneck, NJ.



Breanna Ginley [2] spikes a volleyball.

Steve McLaughlin

WEEK RECAP STATS

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 1

MEN'S SOCCER
CCSU 1, Stonehill 0 (@ Central - New Britain, CT)
Stonehill 0 | 0 — 0
Central 1 | 0 — 1
Goals: Stonehill — None; CCSU — Anthony Recinos 1.
Assists: Stonehill - None; CCSU — Miguel Gonzalez 1, Colin Wright 1.
Saves: Stonehill — Felix Van der Hagen 4; CCSU — Carter Fitzgerald 4.
Shots: Stonehill — 11; CCSU — 10.
Records: Stonehill 0-2-0 NEC, 2-6-2 overall; CCSU 2-0-0 NEC, 4-6-0 overall.

WOMEN'S SOCCER
CCSU 2, Howard 2 (Tie) [@ Howard - Washington, D.C.]
CCSU 0 | 2 — 2
Howard 1 | 1 — 2
Goals: CCSU — Rachel Wygant 2; Howard — Nadia Bolden 1, Maya Blackston 1.
Assists: CCSU — Valentina Mangles 1, Emma Radoncic 1; Howard — None.
Saves: CCSU — Melina Ford 12; Howard — Trinity Knox 4, Ruby Lancaster 1.
Shots: CCSU — 13; Howard — 21.
Records: CCSU 2-1-1 NEC, 4-6-1 overall; Howard 2-1-1 NEC, 2-5-3 overall.

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 2

VOLLEYBALL
New Haven 3, CCSU 1 (@ The Hazell Center - West Haven, CT)
(25-10, 25-16, 16-25, 25-19)
Highlights: CCSU — Meg Barkland 4 digs, 1 assist; Annabelle Denommé 10 digs, 3 aces, 1 assist; Olivia Keckler 10 kills, 6 digs, 1 ace, 12 service points; Isabella Aviles Martinez 31 assists, 4 digs, 1 kill; Gabriella Burdier 6 digs; Cullen Winter 4 kills, 4 aces, 1 dig; Hanley Schmidt 11 kills, 3 digs; Madison Fulgencio 8 kills, 2 digs, 1 block; Adele Macer 1 kill.
New Haven — Lauren MacKellar 14 kills, 8 digs, 1 block, 15 service points; Payton Malinoski 17 digs, 3 assists, 1 ace; Zaira Kearns 38 assists, 4 digs, 3 aces, 2 kills; Josie Foster 12 kills, 4 aces, 2 blocks, 20 service points; Alejandra Mejia 5 digs, 2 aces; Kira Lynch 2 kills, 1 dig, 1 block; Camryn Harris 5 digs, 1 ace; Marley Alefaio 7 kills, 1 dig, 1 block; Quinn Yenshaw 7 kills, 5 digs, 1 block.
Records: CCSU 0-1 NEC, 2-12 overall; New Haven 2-0 NEC, 6-10.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 3

FOOTBALL
CCSU 45, Wagner 14 (@ Central - New Britain, CT)
Wagner 7 | 0 0 7 — 14
Central 21 | 21 3 0 — 45
Scoring Summary:
CCSU — Gabriel Wiggins 97 kickoff return (PAT). CCSU 7, Wag 0.
CCSU — John Manning 9 run (PAT). CCSU 14, Wag 0.
CCSU — Michael Trovarelli 4 pass from Brett Griffis (PAT). CCSU 21, Wag 0.
Wag — Julio Tatis 85 interception return (PAT). CCSU 21, Wag 7.
CCSU — Griffis 6 run (PAT). CCSU 28, Wag 7.
CCSU — Wiggins 18 pass from Griffis (PAT). CCSU 35, Wag 7.
CCSU — Isaac Stopke 33 pass from Griffis (PAT). CCSU 42, Wag 7.
CCSU — Jack Hennessey 50 field goal. CCSU 45, Wag 7.
Wag — Richard Perkins Jr. 73 pass from Jason Wiley (PAT). CCSU 45, Wag 14.
Records: Wagner 0-2 NEC, 1-4 overall; CCSU 1-0 NEC, 1-3 overall.

WEEKLY SCOREBOARD

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 1
MEN'S SOCCER | Central 1, Stonehill 0
WOMEN'S SOCCER | Central 2, Howard 2 (Tie)

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 2
VOLLEYBALL | New Haven 3, Central 1

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 3
FOOTBALL | Central 45, Wagner 14

CCSU ATHLETIC SCHEDULE

MEN'S SOCCER
10/8 • 1:00 PM • LIU
10/11 • 2:00 PM • vs Mercyhurst

CROSS COUNTRY
10/9 • Hopkinton Fairgrounds

WOMEN'S VOLLEYBALL
10/9 • 6:00 PM • @ FDU
10/10 • 6:00 PM • vs FDU

FOOTBALL
10/10 • 1:00 PM • vs AIC

WOMEN'S SOCCER
10/8 • 1:00 PM • LIU

PLAYER OF THE WEEK

Central football running back Gabriel Wiggins produced two receptions for 48 yards and a touchdown, as well as a 97-yard kickoff return touchdown in a 45-14 win against Wagner on Saturday afternoon to earn Northeast Conference Special Teams Player of the Week and NEC Rookie of the Week honors.

Wiggins was among six CCSU players recognized in the NEC weekly award honors as Players of the Week or Prime Performers. Other CCSU players honored over the past week are below.

NEC Football Defensive Player of the Week — Wayne Coleman, DL.

NEC Girls Soccer Player of the Week — Rachel Wygant, F.

NEC Football Prime Performers — Brett Griffis, QB.

NEC Boys Soccer Prime Performers — Carter Fitzgerald, GK.

NEC Boys Soccer Prime Performers — Anthony Recinos, MF.