

The Recorder

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OPINION: The real value of studying abroad



The Scottish Highlands, one of the many places I visited in the U.K.

Photo by Lucas Amoroso-Whittles

By Lucas Amoroso-Whittles
Social Media Editor

During the fall 2024 semester, I had the opportunity to participate in a full exchange abroad program through Central in the United Kingdom at the University of Central Lancashire, one of the several schools that the Center for International Education (CIE) partners with. For five months, I got to live, study and travel around a new country and new setting, making it all the more exciting.

I have always been someone to get up and go explore a new place spontaneously, whether it's driving a few

hours away to go on a hike at a state park I've never been to or getting up at the break of dawn to go on a long bike ride. The idea of solo traveling can be daunting at first with so many options for places to travel and stay, but when you book hostels and train tickets and set out to your destination, it comes full circle. The traveling experience from my study abroad allowed me to do even more of that and explore everything from the gigantic city of London in the south, all the way to the stunning Scottish Highlands way up north

Navigating public transport proved to be a challenge, with

delays due to strikes and bad weather being almost inevitable all over the U.K., but I didn't let it deter me from getting to my destination every single time I set out from my flat. You appreciate the typical modes of transport, like cars, a bit more, but you also try your hand at something that can prepare you to deal with the unexpected, and how to handle it a bit differently than you normally would. The people you meet through solo traveling also add to the experience; I always met someone new at almost every single hostel I stayed at in the U.K., through

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Black History Month and Valentine's Day: Three Black Men reflect on love through family and identity

By Aniya Pouncey
Copy Editor

February marks both Black History Month and Valentine's Day, providing an opportunity to explore how some Black men experience love and relationships.

Some explore how their upbringings impact their relationships today through the lenses of personal histories, cultural identities, and social contexts.

Dyan Cadet, Florida, said that growing up, love in his family sometimes felt conditional. He said he believes this has affected how he approaches relationships today.

"It always felt like love was based on what I did, and it definitely shapes how I interact with women and people in general now," Cadet said.

Cadet said that early experiences of love can impact how one builds future relation-

ships, especially in terms of emotional connections.

Elijah Hooks, Florida, said he received a lot of love from his mother and grandmother. This support played a big role in how he treats women in his life today.

"It's shaped how I treat women with respect and appreciation. I was raised by strong women, so that's always been part of how I see relationships," Hooks said.

Hooks said growing up around strong, loving women helped him develop a deep sense of respect and care for others, which he carries into his relationships today.

Lattrel Hogan, of Chipley, Florida, said his experience was influenced by the love he saw in his grandparents, even though his parents divorced. He says this shaped his view of love but also created a fear of loss. "I saw how much my

See *Valentine's Day* on Page 3



Stock Image

Russia-Ukraine: A Ukrainian university student's new reality

By Maria Sevilla Sola
News Editor

As 19-year-old Anna Isaienko walks to the school shelter to continue her university classes.

Every day the sirens sound several times, disrupting the lives of thousands of people who live there.

This became reality after the invasion of Russia into Ukraine on Feb. 24, 2022.

Life became harder for those living in the country, especially those in the cities that were taken first.

"I'm lucky that we don't have soldiers," she said. "But right now we have a lot of air

raid sirens when they start bombing my city."

The war in Ukraine started years earlier, in 2014, when Russia annexed Crimea and raised military presence in the region.

Andrew Roth from The Guardian reported Vladimir Putin's comparison of Peter the Great and himself.

Roth said former prime minister of Sweden, Carl See *Russian-Ukraine* on Page 2

About

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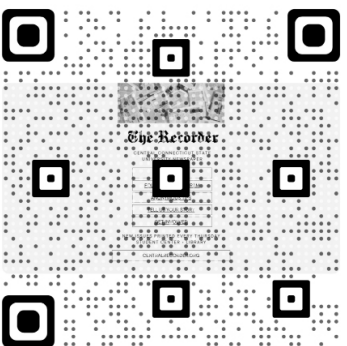
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SCAN FOR OUR LINKS

Russia Ukraine

Bidlt, called Putin's desire to take back lands a "recipe for years of war."

"Carl Bildt, a former prime minister of Sweden, called Putin's desire to take back lands claimed by Russia a 'recipe for years of war,' he said.

In Putin's essay, *On the Historical Unity of Russians and Ukrainians*, Putin claims that Ukraine didn't have an identity of its own.

"Therefore, modern Ukraine is entirely the product of the Soviet era," Putin said. "We know and remember well that it was shaped – for a significant part – on the lands of historical Russia." Isaienko said she knows Russian as well as many others in the country. She said this has helped her understand the negative sentiment that some Russian people have on the situation between the countries.

"A lot of people died because there was no food to eat," she said. "And they [Russian citizens] want to repeat it. So maybe not all Russians are the same, but they're not doing anything."

She said that, since the beginning of the war, she has spent her holidays scared that it might be her last.

"So why should I be kind to Russians when I'm being scared and bombed every day?" she said. Statista reported that about 35,160 people died during the invasion from 2014 to 2024. Isaienko said it is required for there to be shelters in every building because of the air raids and those that are in apartments have to follow the two-wall rule.

"First wall will get destroyed, but the second wall will protect you," she said.

She said it is required for

all public buildings to have a shelter, such as institutions, work, building and schools.

She said that Odessa is safer and does not think the invasion will move into the port. But, a report by the Hudson Institute, says that Odessa is a big component for Russia while Putin asks for the city to "come back home."

"The savage bombing of ports on the Black Sea and the Danube," it said. "As well as the use of mines, blockades, electric warfare and abusive inspections of ships to disrupt maritime communications and GPS, are all part of Russia's strategy to undermine Ukraine's economy and freedom of navigation in the Black Sea."

This action would be both a buffer and a tactical decision from Putin as they box in Ukraine by taking cities near the port closest to Turkey.

This would stop the idea of Ukraine joining NATO and also produce a stronger relationship between the two countries.

A paper by the Carnegies Endowment for International Peace said that Turkey has also expressed interest in joining BRICS, led by Russia and China.

Isaienko said that if the war moves to her city, she and her family would be forced to leave everything behind and move somewhere else.

"I don't think it will ever happen, but, if it did, we would just have to move to another [place]," she said. "My town is also close to the border with Moldova, which is a country next to us."

Isaienko is not the first in the country to think of leaving. After the invasion started, many thought it would help their situations.

"My sister does work in

London now," she said. "And there was a building construction site. They did a loud noise, so she was scared of it."

Many of those who did move are faced with the traumas of the war and the loss of the homes they had.

She says some of those outside the country are naive to this reality that millions have to face.

"They think it's so far away," she said. "And if you're from Ukraine, you don't actually feel the situation."

Others, like Nataliia Chaikovska, a Ukrainian native, said the war came as a surprise because both countries acted like brothers.

"A lot of Russians, especially from eastern Ukraine, didn't speak Ukrainian well," Chaikovska said. "We were very close, really close."

She said, when the war started, people were in disbelief and denial because they didn't believe it would happen. Chaikovska said that it was common to talk in Russian, especially in the eastern towns, and to see Russian concerts.

"Right now, for Ukraine, [there are] no good Russians," she said. "Most Ukrainians start[ed] to speak Ukraine, even in eastern parts. It's like a bad tone to talk in Russian."

She said that every night people in the country fall asleep to bombs and worry if they will die. Chaikovska also said that a lot of people have started becoming fatalists.

"A lot of people are not going to the bomb shelter," she said. "A lot of our employees said they have a choice. Do not sleep and my life is a nightmare?"

She said that part of why Russia was able to invade

so easily had to do with the fact that Ukraine didn't have enough military weapons. She said that when the Soviet Union split, they sent their weapons to other countries.

"Russia, Britain and [the] United States will protect us when someone tries to invade, but that is not happening," Chaikovska said.

She said that this is still the biggest problem and she hopes countries like the United States will send reinforcements so that the country can defend itself.

She said that people are gaining a new perspective on life and that it affects everyone.

Chaikovska said her friend was walking to the shelter with his family when bombs fell overhead.

"They were on the way actually to the underground and [the] husband just went because he forgot something from the apartment," Chaikovska said. "And at that time a bomb came and he actually lost everyone dearest. A wife and three kids."

She said she wants people to learn about what is happening in the country and hopefully Ukraine will receive help against Russia.



Have a story that needs to be told?
Tips or ledes that should be investigated?
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or fill out the contact form on our website
centralrecorder.org

Valentine's Day

grandparents loved each other. That love influenced me, but I'm also scared of losing love like my parents did when they divorced," Hogan said.

Hogan said the love he saw in his grandparents gave him something to strive for but also created insecurities due to his parents' separation.

Hooks said the love he learned from his family has become second nature in how he shows affection in his relationships.

"Love is about what you do, not just what you say. I show my love by being caring and respectful," Hooks said.

Hogan said his parents' divorce left him with lingering insecurities growing up.

"I try to show love like my grandfather did for my grandmother, but sometimes I still feel like nothing will last, like I saw with my parents," Hogan said love in the Black community feels different from what's often shown in mainstream media.

"Where I'm from, there's a

different kind of love. People love each other with a sense of power and peace, and it feels different from what you usually see in media, like the image of a happy White couple," Hogan said.

Author Bell Hooks of Hopkinsville, Kentucky, has written about love in communities like the Black community.

Hooks stated in her book, "All About Love," that love in the black community is about caring for others in your community and is not limited to individual romantic feelings for your partner.

Elijah Hooks said that love, for him, goes beyond romance and includes taking care of family and friends.

"For me, loving as a Black man means being there for my partner, my family, and my friends—no matter what happens," Hooks explained.

Hogan said his view of love also includes platonic relationships.

"To love as a Black man means being there for my partner and my family. It's about unconditional support, not just romance," Hogan shared.

Students kick off the semester with Karaoke Night



Photo by Chike Oniyuke

By Chike Oniyuke
Staff Writer

The Breakers Game Room hosted a karaoke night Wednesday, Jan. 29. With different songs performed and snacks provided, the night was full of laughter and lots of talented students singing.

Saquan Taylor, a senior Political Science major and member of Central Activities Network (CAN), said he's an artist and makes music in his spare time, which helps him when it comes to singing on nights like these.

Taylor said karaoke night gives him a break from studying by performing on a regular basis, and listening to different types of music helps him escape the stress of being a college student.

"I listen to music all the time. I love music, so karaoke night is just like an escape," Taylor said. "Chill, relax, there's free food, good vibes, music. There are people stepping out of their comfort zone, doing something that they normally don't do, that they do in their houses or cars."

Taylor said there should be more karaoke nights this semester and beyond.

"Maybe even a talent show, to be honest," Taylor said. "I think a talent show can showcase the multiple talents here, can engage the campus, but aside from that, get students out of their comfort zone, do something different. Make it available, maybe midday when people are on campus."

Marisa Johnson, a graduate student from Hartford and supervisor with CAN, said the main reason why she attended karaoke night was to her with her CAN internship.

"I help oversee Breakers Game Room with two other interns and I helped with the tech," Johnson said.

Johnson said having a karaoke night gives students a much-needed break from all their classes.

"It means so much," Johnson said. "College isn't 100 percent about academics. The things you're going to remember most are the friends you make and the memories that consist of going to events like karaoke night."

Johnson also said she does not know if there will be another karaoke night this semester because it depends on

how many people turn up and how many more talk about it.

Johnson said CAN holds meetings to determine how well events are received and makes decisions based on student feedback.

Johnson said that in the future karaoke night could be a weekly thing.

FEBRUARY Campus Events

- **CAN Talent Show Audition, Feb. 7, 3:00 pm, Sprague/Carleton Room, Student Center**
- **Spring Show Auditions, Feb. 9 9:00 am, Dance Education Center**
- **Spring All majors career and internship fair, Feb. 11 1:00 pm - 4:00pm, Student Center**
- **Lunar New Year Celebration, Feb. 12 12:30 pm - 3:30 pm, Student Center**
- **SGA Weekly Senate Meeting, Feb. 12 3:05 pm, Bellin Gallery, Student Center**
- **Devil's Den @ 10, Feb. 12, 10:00 pm, Student Center**





Photo by Chike Oniyuke



Photo by Chike Oniyuke

OPINION: Crypto euphoria has peaked

By Nicholas Dest, Staff Writer

Forget about investing in Apple, Nvidia, or Tesla. Why not buy TrumpCoin? Or maybe Vine Coin? From our president's own virtual token, to a short-form video app turned bust, there's cryptocurrency for practically everything.

Attempting to weed out the useful from a sea of uselessness is laughable, since utility is nonexistent within each one of them. Uneducated buyers are coaxed into believing they are "investing" in an idea, when instead they are speculating on a medium of exchange.

Communities are often formed around these tokens through social platforms like X and Reddit. These communities act as a vehicle for relevancy, since it's the only variable that sustains their million, sometimes billion-dollar market caps. This is vastly different from the stock market where valuations are based on the present value of future cash flows, a concept crypto enthusiasts find too hard to grasp (granted, this doesn't stop them from speculating in the stock market, too).

You'll also find that most crypto supporters don't understand blockchain technology either. They instead focus on technical analysis—the art of drawing random lines on charts and attempting to predict price action. The harsh reality is when hype eventually dies down and buyers are left holding their worthless digital assets. This is shockingly like the dot-com era, where only a handful of websites stood the test of time and are still around today.

Perhaps that comparison is a little too extreme though, and it's better to assume that absolutely none of these coins will survive. What about Bitcoin? Often referred to as "digital gold," due to its deflationary nature and clunky transaction speeds, speculators expect Bitcoin to appreciate regardless of cultural shifts or what's trending on X. But, what's the problem with that? What goes up must come down, and at some point, the music will stop for Bitcoin.

With our own president leveraging his social status to launch another pointless token, I see this as a clear inflection point demonstrating just how delusional cryptocurrency backers have become. Not only will small tokens drastically fall in value, but so will Bitcoin once buyers reevaluate its underlying fundamentals (hint: there aren't any). I suspect this cryptocurrency euphoria will start unwinding during this year, into early next year, following an extended period of little to no innovation within the space.

It's no surprise crypto is in such chaotic dysfunction, given the average consumers are between the ages of 18 and 40. Maybe they should focus on paying next month's rent instead of yolo'ing into Vine Coin.

Abroad

events or just from sitting next to someone and striking up a conversation. Solo traveling is definitely a challenge, but you learn to be more comfortable being alone, and you become your own navigator, ready to explore whatever it is that comes your way next.

Academically speaking, it was one of the most enriching experiences in the last four years I've been in school. The rigor of the U.K.'s higher education system is much different from the United States. Your final grade comes down to a project that encompasses everything you learned and studied for during the semester, so the pressure to do well is higher, and more time is given to complete projects. I got to do everything; from creating a research poster on intersectionality and how it affects black transgender women in the criminal justice system for my criminology course, to reading outstanding modern literature by authors such as James Joyce, Ernest Hemingway and Kazuo Ishiguro for my English course. I even tried my hands at writing a story on the popularity and struggles of American football in the U.K. for my sports magazine course, where I worked in a team of four others to compile stories and layout a specialty magazine. Each one

of these classes challenged me more in my learning and made me deeply appreciate the three subjects I took when I was there. It's an excellent challenge to take, and it's highly rewarding to see your work pay off.

I was lucky to have met a wonderful crowd of people at the university I was at, all of whom were also international students, trying to figure out life in a new place, too. I actually met one of my closest friends right off the plane when I landed in Manchester in September while trying to find our coach bus to the campus together. From there, our circle began to grow as we got introduced to everyone else in our group through university events and roommates. Through that, we all got to know each other really well, and shared our own world experiences while forming new ones in the U.K. We shared a lot as a group, from dinner nights, social events, emotions and trips together, and I'm happy to have met a family that I can go back overseas and visit again one day soon.

Studying abroad also redefined what I considered home.; I've been back at home in the United States for nearly three weeks, and it still feels very strange. Nothing prepares you for the feeling of detaching and leaving an environment where you built upon yourself,

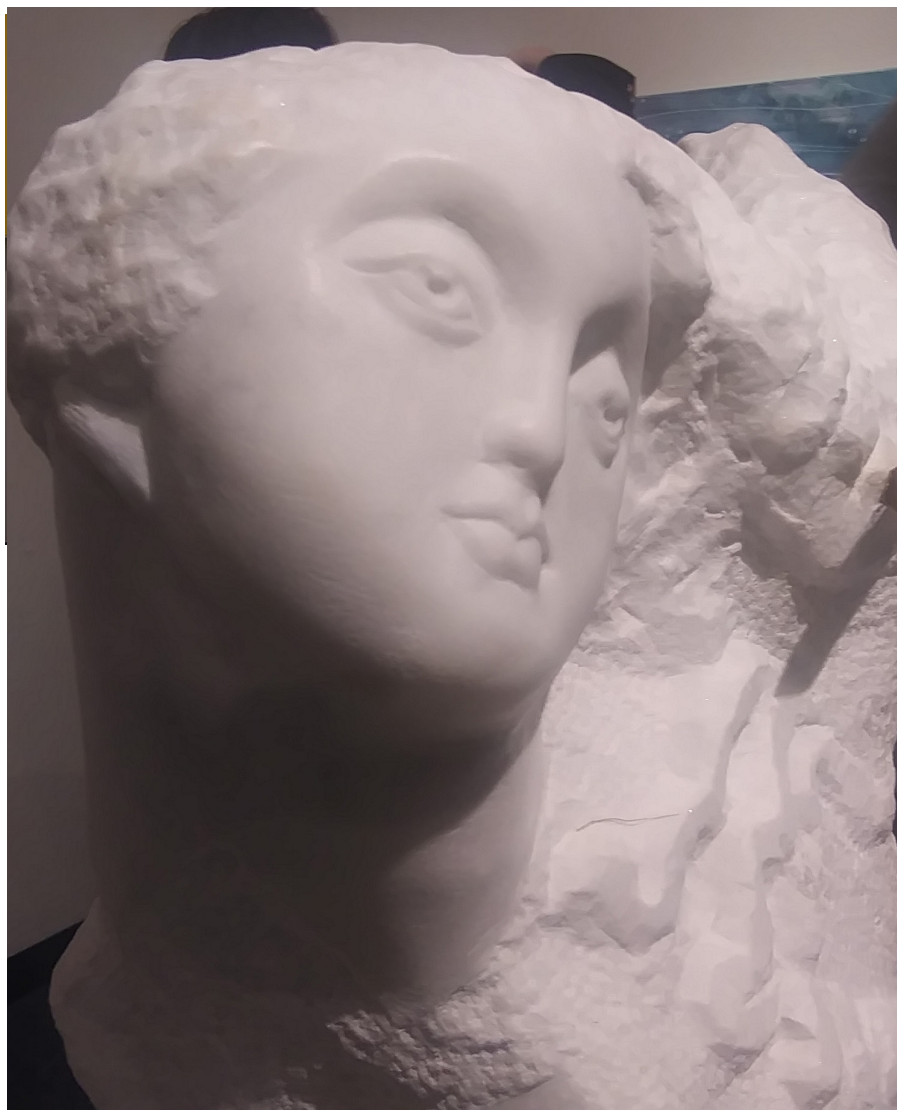
took risks, connected with the people and culture around you, and the experiences you get both in and out of the classroom, back to what is familiar. I don't fit the previous mold of myself I had when I left in September, and I am happy I don't.

When you break away from the comfort of what you know, you begin to learn so much about yourself, and it can turn into a drive to continue to explore and learn from this world even more.

When you combine all these experiences together, you begin to develop a much different attitude to the world and how you choose to learn from and explore it. I am truly grateful that I was able to have this experience, which forced me out of my comfort zone and deepened my passions for learning and traveling, all of which make me more excited for the possibilities in the future to do something like this again.

I cannot recommend doing an exchange program enough, as the challenges, sights, lessons and people you get out of it will only make you want to stay curious and push yourself into new, transformative experiences.





Marble statue: Iulian Budea



Applewood carving: Liviu Cupceancu

Piece behind applewood carving: Adrian Panaitisor

Chen Art Gallery: ‘5ive Perspectives’ exhibition explores Romanian Heritage

By Jayden Klaus, *Lifestyle Editor*
Photos by Jayden Klaus

Chen Art Gallery’s first exhibition of the year opened on Jan. 23 in Maloney Hall at Central Connecticut State University

The exhibition, ‘5ive Perspectives,’ was organized by the Romanian Artist Connection (RoArtConn) and features the works of Romanian-born artists. ‘5ive Perspectives’ is the first comprehensive exhibition of the RoArtConn group’s artwork, according to a Central press release.

The featured artists include Ioana Barac, Iulian Budea, Luiza Budea, Liviu Cupceancu, Ileana Dumitriu, Flavius Lucacel and Adrian Panaitisor. Panaitisor also served as a guest curator for the exhibition.

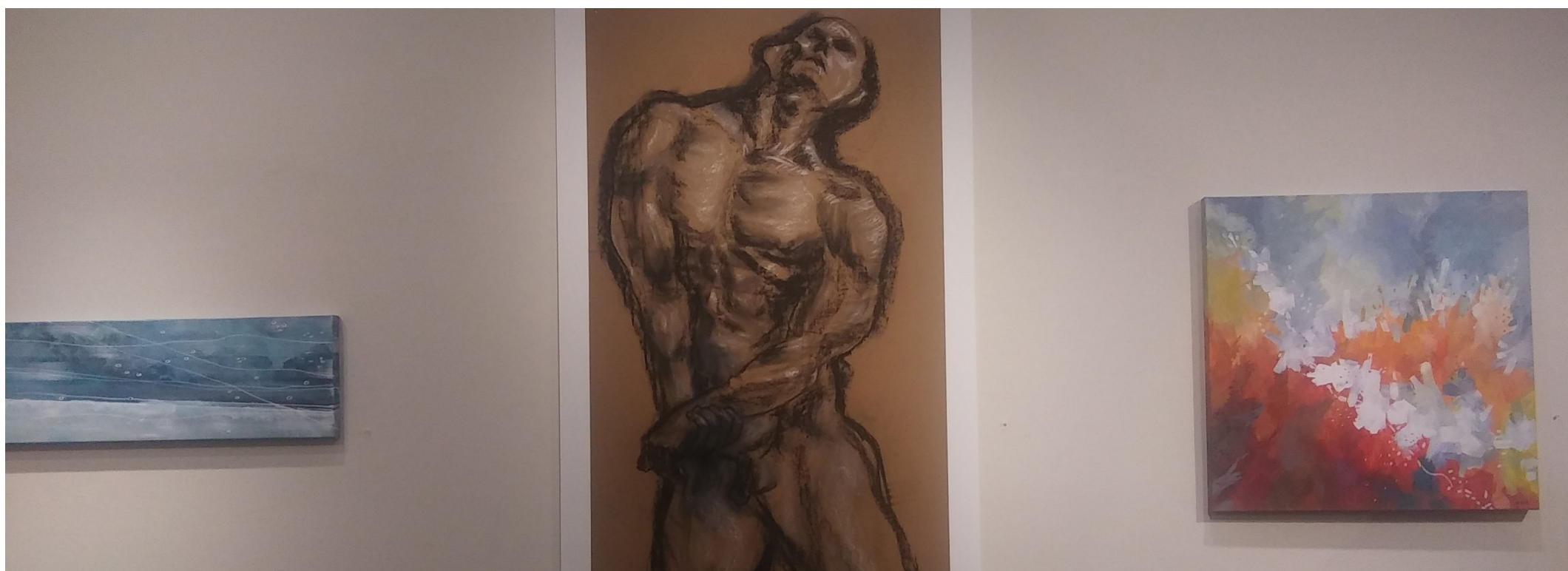
At the opening reception, Panaitisor said that the goal of the exhibition was to engage with the Romanian- American community in Connecticut and beyond,

and to bring local Romanian artists together to show diversity in Romanian heritage. He said the goal of the exhibition was to find the best art they could, rather than following a specific theme.

Guests were free to browse the pieces and had the chance to ask a few of the featured artists in attendance about their artwork. (Ioana Barac, Iulian Budea, Luiza Budea, Liviu Cupceancu).

The artwork on display spanned a variety of mediums including metal print, mixed media, pen and ink, charcoal, marble sculpture, plaster, acrylics, applewood, oil and acrylic and print. The pieces all varied in their subject matter, including abstract, cityscapes, human figures, Pop Art and more.

The exhibition is open to the public from Jan. 23 to Feb. 21.



Charcoal drawing: Iulian Budea

Paintings on either side of charcoal drawing: Ileana Dumitriu

The Irish Connection: How CCSU Women's Soccer Thrives with International Talent



Women's Soccer Head Coach Mick D'Arcy

By Eary Banushi
Sports Editor

Central women's soccer team stands as one of the most successful sports programs in the school's history, boasting 13 Northeast Conference titles, its most recent coming in 2023.

An often-overlooked aspect of the Blue Devils' success is the role of their Irish coach and players. Mick D'Arcy has coached Central to 11 conference championships since he took the helm in 2000. Since then, 12 players who either came directly from Ireland or have Irish heritage have contributed to the program.

"The Irish connection obviously comes from me knowing them, either from home or players that know them from home," D'Arcy, 60, said. "Those connections introduce me to players on a regular basis."

Today, that connection is embodied by current Blue Devils Aoife Horgan and Eve O'Sullivan, both of whom also hail from the island nation. They follow in the footsteps of Irish former players such as Roma McLaughlin (2018–2023), Zoe McGlynn (2019–2023) and Amanda McQuillan (2019–2022).

Horgan, whose older sister Rebecca played soccer with McLaughlin in Ireland, said that her familiarity with some of Central's players made her decide to play for the Blue Devils.

"Knowing that there were a lot of Irish people here as well, when I was doing my research," she said, "kind of made it feel like a little home away from home."

D'Arcy's Irish roots run deep. Born in Dublin, he later moved to Naas, a suburb south of the capital, and credits

his upbringing as the foundation of his soccer journey. His father, Eamonn D'Arcy, a former player and coach, introduced him to the sport early on.

"I grew up in a soccer family," D'Arcy said. "My dad was a professional soccer player, and he also was the head coach for the Irish women's national team. So at a very early age, before women's soccer really had caught on, I was familiar with the women's game."

At 21, D'Arcy came to the United States to attend Methodist University in North Carolina, where he played goalkeeper for the men's soccer team. From 1996–99, he was an assistant coach for the University of Hartford's men's and women's soccer teams before coming to CCSU.

O'Sullivan said that having a coach like D'Arcy, who

Since top domestic prospects choose to play for bigger soccer colleges, such as Stanford and Florida State, D'Arcy said that he has opted to recruit international players who have experience playing at the highest level.

"For CCSU as a school, specifically for our women's soccer program, we're not getting the players around the U.S. women's national team," D'Arcy said. "They're going to the power four schools, and so we're never going to be able to attract them here. But we can bring in other quality players too."

One of those quality players was Horgan. In 2023, she scored nine goals, had five assists, was named the Northeast Conference Midfielder of the Year and was selected for the All-NEC First Team.

Horgan, a senior majoring in early childhood education, joined the Blue Devils in 2021 and is from a small town called Listowel on Ireland's southwestern coast.

She said that she started playing soccer when she was four years old after being inspired by her older sisters, who also played.

"I'm not sure if I just loved playing soccer or if I just loved being like them," said Horgan, who credits her Irish heritage for shaping her approach to soccer, which focuses on hard work, determination and team success over personal glory.

"I think I'm very passionate and I work really hard for the team," she said. "Everything I do on the field is for the team. It's not individual work or whatever. Just like passion. I think that's a very Irish thing. Bringing passion on the field and working your ass off, basically."

See *Irish Connection* on Page 7

Photo by Steve McLaughlin went through a journey similar to that of his Irish players, makes it easier to connect with him and adapt to living in a new country.

"I definitely think he's like any coach at home, really," O'Sullivan said. "It was definitely nice coming over to an Irish coach. I think that helped a lot. I think he understands us because he came over when he was young as well, so he definitely relates to us."

When recruiting players from Ireland, D'Arcy said he looked for those who had experience playing for their national team.

"Everyone that we've brought in from Ireland has represented Ireland at the international level, either with the under-17s, under-19s, or with the full team," D'Arcy said. "Because it's that caliber of player, we know they're a top-end player."

Belle Lanpher Earns Third NEC Player of the Week Honor After Leading Central to Comeback Win

By Eary Banushi
Sports Editor

Graduate guard Belle Lanpher of the Central women's basketball team was named the NEC/Atlantic Tomorrow's Office Women's Basketball Player of the Week on Monday, splitting the honor with FDU's Ava Renninger. It was Lanpher's third player of the week selection this season, having previously been recognized on Jan. 13 and Dec. 23.

The honor came after Lanpher led the Blue Devils to a 71-59 comeback victory over the second-place Stonehill Skyhawks on Saturday in a game that witnessed her move into third place on the Central women's basketball all-time scoring list with 1,314 career points.

Against Stonehill, she led all scorers with 26 points on 43.8 percent shooting from the field (7-of-16) and 66.7 percent from deep (4-of-6). It was her eighth game this season, and sixth straight, with at least 20 points. She also added three rebounds, three assists and three steals.

Lanpher has scored in double figures in all 11 games she's played in this season, averaging 23 points per contest. Since conference play began, she leads the NEC in scoring with 23.9 points per game.

Alongside Lanpher, freshman forward Selina Monestime was also recognized for her outstanding performance last weekend, and was included on the NEC's Prime Performers list.

Against Stonehill, Monestime had 16 points on 8-of-14 shooting. 14 of those points came in the second half of the game—10 in just the fourth quarter—helping erase the Skyhawks' lead and propelling the Blue Devils to their second straight win. Monestime also led the team in rebounding with six and added three steals.

Lanpher and Monestime's performance on Saturday helped the Blue Devils improve their record in the NEC to 5-3, placing them in a three-way tie for second place in the league.

Both players will look to continue their good form into Central's last game of a three-game homestand before hitting the road when they take on FDU on Thursday, Feb. 6 at 4 p.m.



Belle Lanpher putting up a floater during Saturday's 71-59 win over Stonehill Photo by Steve McLaughlin

Irish Connection

O'Sullivan is the most recent Irish player to join the Blue Devils, arriving in 2022. The junior exercise science major hails from Pallaskenry, a village of about 600 people on Ireland's west coast.

O'Sullivan said that after years of competing in her home country, she needed a change of scenery and wanted to play in the U.S. She reached out to Horgan, her former teammate, who connected her with D'Arcy.

"I just wanted to get out of Ireland. I was just kind of sick of it," O'Sullivan said. "I heard that Aoife came to America like a year before

me, and I had played club with her for a couple of years...

So I got in contact with Aoife and she got me in contact with Mick, and then Mick said that he'd take me."

O'Sullivan, who played in the League of Ireland Women's Premier Division, Ireland's top professional women's soccer league, said that she had to learn and adapt to the regulations of women's college soccer.

"College soccer has different rules, with subs and all that," she said. "At home, you can only make four or five subs in a whole game. You come out, you can't go back in, whereas here, it's like in and out, which I find really odd.

There's definitely some rules

that I needed to get used to."

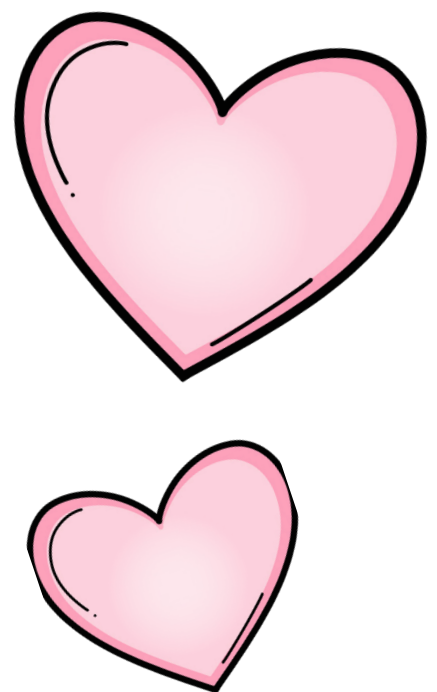
D'Arcy said that all of the Irish players who came to Central and played for four years have graduated. He takes pride in the fact that they don't only come to play soccer and experience living in the U.S., but also to get an education.

"One of the things I love about our international players compared to a lot of other places... most of them graduate from here," D'Arcy said. "It's not just coming in for a year to play soccer, get a taste of what it's like to live in America and then go back home. They leave here after four years with their degrees."

D'Arcy attributed Central's inclusive environment and

welcoming attitude as the key reasons why international players, not only from Ireland but around the world, have played, and will continue to play for the Blue Devils.

"Everybody that's come here has really felt welcomed by the CCSU community, not just by the soccer team," D'Arcy said. "The university has really welcomed and taken in a lot of our international players and made them feel like this is their home away from home. Experiences like that will just encourage more people to come in the future."



Jones Earns Second NEC Player of the Week Honor, Leads CCSU to First Place

By Marcus Saunders
Staff Writer

Senior guard Jordan Jones of the Central Connecticut State University men's basketball team was named the NEC/Atlantic Tomorrow's Office Men's Basketball Player of the Week on Monday---his second time receiving the honor this season after previously being recognized on Nov. 11.

Jones' selection marks the sixth time that a player on the CCSU men's basketball team has been named Player of the Week this season---a league-best achievement.

Jones averaged 18.5 points, 5.5 rebounds and three steals in two road wins against the LIU Sharks and the Stonehill Skyhawks last week, helping the Blue Devils improve



Jordan Jones

Photo by Tyus Phengkaen

their record in the Northeast Conference to 7-2 and propelling them to first place in the league.

In a battle of the conference's top two teams, Jones scored a team-high 17 points in a 63-50 away win against

LIU on Thursday, Jan. 30. He shot an efficient 6-of-7 from the field, including 2-of-3 from deep, while adding five rebounds and three steals. A couple days later, on Saturday, Feb. 1, Jones was tied for a game-high 20 points, nine of

which came in the final four minutes, sealing the 71-63 victory against Stonehill on the road. He also added six rebounds and three steals.

Jones continues to stuff the stat sheet, ranking fifth in the NEC in points per game

(13.3), sixth in assists (3.2), sixth in steals (1.5) and third in assist-to-turnover ratio (1.8).

Also recognized on Monday was senior forward Abdul Momoh who, alongside Jones, was included in the NEC's Prime Performers list. Momoh averaged 12 points, 7 rebounds and 2 blocks last week on 64.7 percent shooting from the field. Momoh leads the conference in blocks (1.4) and ranks second in field goal percentage (.630).

With a three-game home-stand beginning on Thursday night against the FDU Knights, Jones and Momoh will try to defend the Blue Devils' hold on the league's top spot from the team currently behind them in second place.



Brady Short

Photo by Steve McLaughlin

CCSU Baseball Ranked Third in NEC Preseason Poll, Eyes Redemption in 2025

By James Studley
Staff Writer

On Monday, Feb. 3, the Northeast Conference released its preseason rankings for the 2025 season, placing Central Connecticut State University third. Last season's NEC champion, Long Island University, claimed the top spot while Wagner College

ranked second.

Although Central was technically tied for third with Fairleigh Dickinson University, the Blue Devils received one first-place vote, giving them the edge over FDU who received none.

Five-time NEC Coach of the Year Charlie Hickey returns for his 26th season, boasting eight NEC tournament titles---two in the last 5 years (2021 & 2023).

Central's experienced roster features senior infielders Brady Short, Aidan Redahan,

Bo Yaworski and Josh Taylor, along with outfielders Kyle Gorden and Gianno Merlonghi. Utility player Colby Brouillette and pitchers Wyatt Cameron and Omar Garrido also return. Junior infielders Danny Rodgers and Domenic Crocenzi, pitcher Drew Munn, and utility player Louis Jordan round out the key returning players.

Short and Merlonghi were standouts in 2024, with Short leading the NEC in batting average (.388) and on-base percentage (.473), while Merlonghi's .378 average ranked third in

the conference.

Last season, the Blue Devils struggled with a championship hangover, finishing 18-24. However, they have surpassed 27 wins five times in the last seven years and are determined to return to form. All-NEC selections Merlonghi and Short, alongside a veteran core, aim to reclaim the NEC title and secure a berth in the 2025 Division I College Baseball Championship.

Central opens the season on the road in the Midwest against

the University of Central Arkansas before hosting the University of Albany in their home opener on March 4th.

CCSU SCOREBOARD - SCHEDULE



MEN'S B-BALL

Feb. 6 vs. FDU
Feb. 13 vs. Mercyhurst
Feb. 15 vs. Saint Francis U.
Feb. 20 vs. Chicago State

WOMEN'S B-BALL

Feb. 6 vs. FDU
Feb. 13 vs. Mercyhurst
Feb. 15 vs. Saint Francis U.
Feb. 20 vs. Chicago State

MEN'S TRACK AND FIELD

Feb. 8 @ URI Coaches Invitational
Feb. 8 @ 117th Millrose Games
Feb. 16 @ NEC Championship

WOMEN'S TRACK AND FIELD

Feb. 8 @ Scarlet & White Invitational
Feb. 8 @ URI Coaches Invitational
Feb. 16 @ NEC Championship
Feb. 17 @ NEC Championship

WOMEN'S SWIMMING & DIVING

Feb. 19 @ NEC Championship
Feb. 20 @ NEC Championship

SOFTBALL

Feb. 8 vs. Saint Peter's
Feb. 8 vs. Saint Peter's
Feb. 14 @ UNC Wilmington
Feb. 14 @ Charleston So.
Feb. 15 @ UNC Wilmington
Feb. 15 @ Charleston So.
Feb. 16 @ UNC Wilmington

WOMEN'S LACROSSE

Feb. 12 @ Quinnipiac
Feb. 19 @ Rhode Island