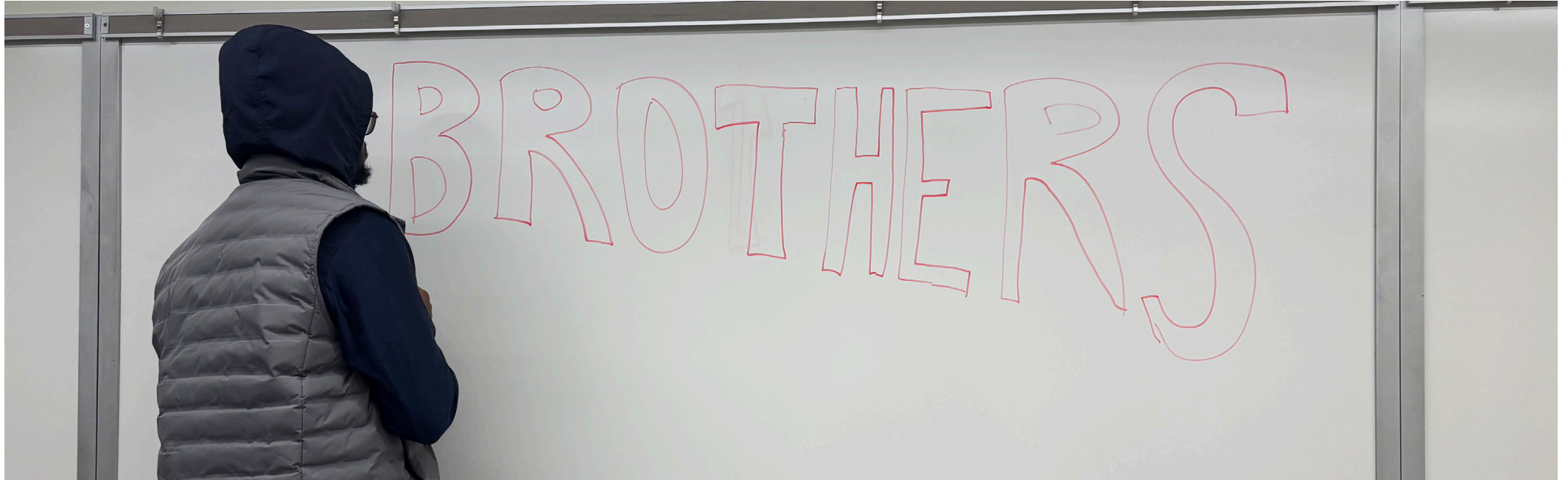


THE RECORDER

February 5, 2026

VOLUME 138 ISSUE 1



The Brotherhood is a safe space where young men can go and uplift each other; **Ronan Hinckley/The Recorder**

Breaking Silence: How CCSU's Brotherhood Initiative Is Tackling Men's Mental Health

By **Ronan Hinckley**
Staff Writer

For many men, dealing with mental health and academic pressures can become an overwhelming burden while attending university. At Central Connecticut State University, the Brother-

hood Initiative, a men's mental health and academic support program founded by Professor William Fothergill, has emerged as a response to these issues.

The group was founded in 2007, when it was known as the Man Enough Support Initiative. The Brotherhood Initiative's goal is

to provide a space where young men can come together and discuss problems they are facing in the classroom or in their personal lives. It is led by William Fothergill and volunteer CCSU students who take time out of their day to tackle men's issues that are often left unaddressed.

Research from the American Institute for Boys and Men found that in 2021, only 41% of bachelor's degrees were earned by men, a number expected to decrease over time. Additional research by Imed Bouchrika found that at public universities, 66.2% of women graduate compared with 60.2% of men.

"This project emerged out of my creative research 18 years ago," Fothergill said. "The programs we put together are student-led. We try not to separate academic issues from mental health issues because most of the time those things go hand in hand."

See *Brotherhood* on Page 2

CCSU Students Build AI Enrollment Forecasting Tool

By **Nicholas Dest**
Staff Writer

A student-led interdisciplinary team at Central Connecticut State University has leveraged artificial intelligence to develop enrollment forecasting software, specifically targeting courses and subjects within the School of Business to support academic planning.

The project, sponsored by Management Information Systems department chair Dr. Michael Gendron, is part of Central's AI 460 course, in which students are tasked with applying AI in

real-world scenarios. The application was developed over approximately 16 weeks and is currently in its alpha stage.

According to the project team, enrollment forecasting at higher education institutions is often based on informal or outdated practices, and lacks the technical precision to accurately estimate course offerings as a result. This approach can lead to underfilled or overfilled classes, causing unnecessary scheduling conflicts for students.

"Forecasting student demand is

currently based largely on intuition," the team noted during a recent presentation to President Toro and School of Business Deans. "Trends are not always mathematically proven."

The AI application aims to address this issue by predicting enrollment trends two to four semesters ahead. It uses machine learning to analyze more than 10 years of enrollment data obtained through Central's Office of Institutional Research and Assessment. Data

See *forecasting* on Page 3



The team behind the extensive work in AI 460; **Mohamad Oufi**

About

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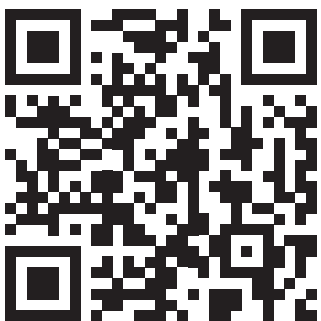
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Brotherhood Continued From Page 1

One of the primary programs run by the Brotherhood Initiative is its weekly B-Men meetings, held every Tuesday at 6 p.m. in the Campus Tour Room of Memorial Hall. The meetings are structured around openness and personal connection. Students gather to discuss issues they have been facing in an open and honest environment.

The B-Men meetings can vary week to week, with some focusing on individual issues and others addressing broader, systemic issues that affect the men within the Brotherhood.

The meetings are designed to teach young men how to deal with stressors in their daily lives. They are led by Brothers who have been in the program and act as mentors, passing along information they received when they first joined the Brotherhood.

One of the Brothers, Ashariel Velasquez, described what the B-Men meetings are like and how they have helped him.

"The B-Men meetings are quite fun," Velasquez said. "Usually, at the beginning, we are posed a question. This week, we were asked about different beauty products and whether we need them to keep ourselves healthy and fit. We all went around the room and shared our opinions. From there, the conversations can go in any direction based on what the Brothers are experiencing. The conversations are very open and fun and encourage Brothers to share their opinions in a space where they won't be judged."

Through these conversations, the Brotherhood Initiative focuses on solutions, not simply naming problems, but actively working

together to address them. The discussions take place in a friendly, lighthearted environment and emphasize that men should not have to "tough it out" alone.

Fothergill said he has been pleased with the growth he has seen among Brotherhood members.

"Within our core group, we have seen increased academic performance, increased class attendance, increased retention and increased graduation," Fothergill said. "When we talk about mental health support, we are one of the few support groups for men that has embedded mental health support, and I think that's one of the reasons it's been effective."

Complementing the emotional support of the B-Men meetings is the initiative's academic support system, particularly the "Making the Grade" study sessions held every Wednesday from 4 to 6 p.m. These sessions are hosted in various classrooms around CCSU, depending on room availability.

The structure of these sessions is straightforward, bringing Brothers together in an environment where they can focus on their schoolwork and receive academic help from their peers.

Tyler Little is one of the leaders of the "Making the Grade" study sessions. He said he has noticed tremendous growth among his peers and enjoys helping fellow Brothers.

"We really just want to help college men get through college," Little said. "Any college student can come, not just Brothers. We're running these sessions to help with any homework or assignments students might have. It provides a community where like-minded students can meet and work toward our goal of graduating from college."

Another leader in the Brotherhood, Zion Caines, spoke about the development he has seen among members during his time in the initiative.

"When I first came here, Cade was the elder brother," Caines said. "Seeing how he carried himself and stayed committed to the ini-

tiative through all the challenges of college was inspiring. He made the dean's list and graduated with very high honors. He's a testament to what can be achieved through the Brotherhood Initiative."

Despite the initiative's successes, challenges remain. One of the primary issues has been funding and institutional support. Many members report a lack of school funding and budgetary constraints for events they have tried to organize. Securing consistent meeting spaces has also been a challenge, depending on university scheduling and room availability.

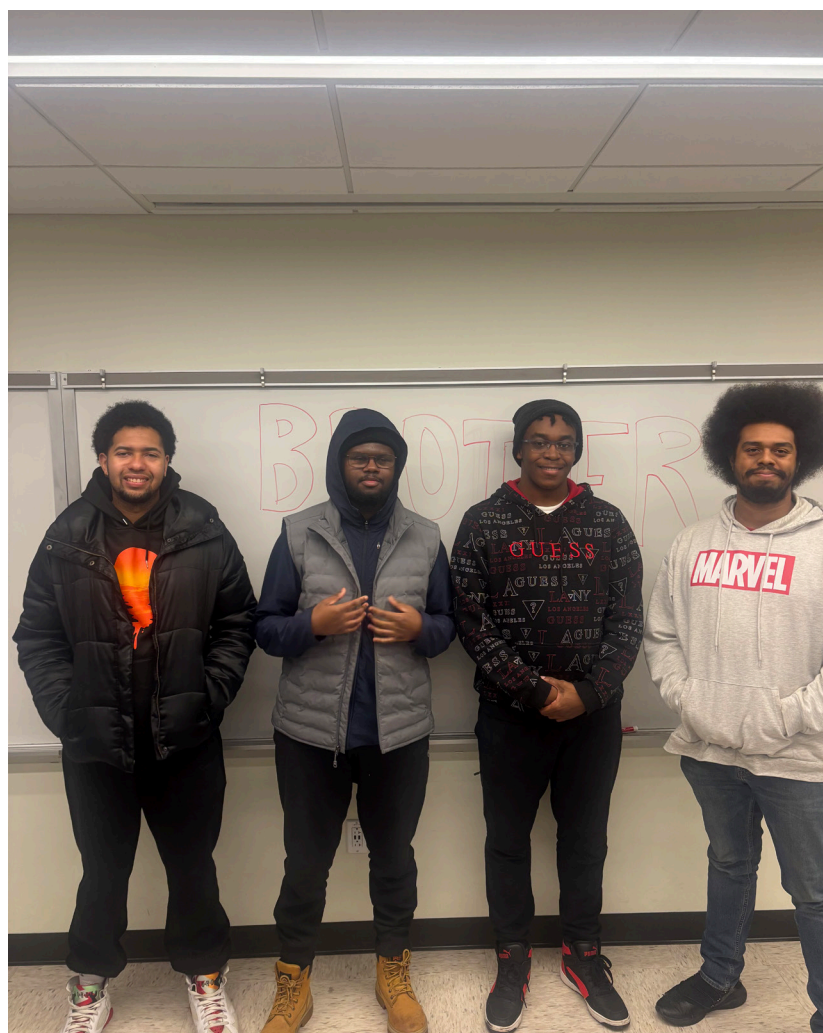
Some members feel other campus groups receive more consistent institutional support. A recurring sentiment among Brothers is that programs such as the Women's Center, which is well established and highly visible, are better able to obtain funding, dedicated staff and promotional resources. Members of the Brotherhood Initiative emphasize that they support these groups and recognize the importance of their work, but feel men's mental health often receives less recognition despite growing national concern around male student retention and mental well-being.

"The challenge for me is not getting students to come," Fothergill said. "It's how the institution has incorporated us on campus. For example, men don't have a center. Women have a center. We don't have a commission that reports to the president of the institution. We don't have a place to call our own. All of our initiatives and programs have to be done on the fly because we don't have a dedicated place to meet."

Caines and Drew Meyers echoed Fothergill's sentiments.

"We hold meetings with faculty members or res life on campus, and at first they say they're up for our ideas," Caines said. "Then later, they send emails or tell us they're not up for our ideas once the semester starts. It feels like saying no has become a habit."

"We haven't been able to do as much as we want," Meyers said. "But we try to take that challenge and learn from it. We have to hold our meet-



Brothers have found connections that will last a lifetime;
Ronan Hinckley/The Recorder

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or fill out the contact form on our website
centralrecorder.org

ings in the Campus Tour Center, and it feels strange when other groups have their own space.”

Despite these institutional challenges, the initiative continues to produce meaningful outcomes for participants. Brothers describe

improved grades, stronger friendships, healthier coping strategies and a sense of belonging they struggled to find elsewhere on campus. Others say the initiative taught them leadership skills or gave them their first experience taking emotional health seriously.



These events help bolster the message that the Brotherhood is trying to spread; Ronan Hinckley/The Recorder

Forecasting Continued From Page 1

from the COVID-19 period was excluded to prevent outliers from influencing the model’s accuracy.

The software was developed by a team led by Luis Sebastian. Team members included Stefan Louis, technical lead; Morrighan Dayton, full-stack developer; Jonathan Orlando, data lead; Luca Mollica, data scientist; and Gabriel Bifore-Skitromo, technical writer.

Together, they identified three core tenets for the project: scalability, accuracy and ease of use. The software is trained exclusively on CCSU School of Business data and is designed to support—not replace—the decision-making process for administrators. It is not a course scheduling software and does not automate final decisions.

“The goal is to enable data-driven scheduling and improve resource planning,” Louis said. “The software is intended to provide better information earlier in the planning process.”

By identifying high-demand courses earlier, departments can avoid last-minute modifications and plan instructor assignments with greater confidence. The team

estimates cost savings of \$4,000 to \$7,000 per section when implementing their software.

From a technical perspective, the application is coded in Python and can run locally from a classroom computer. It uses a service-oriented architecture with training and testing modes, a standardized data schema, and an application programming interface (API) to connect the user interface with backend code. The team used GitHub repositories for collaboration and SQLite to package data in a portable format.

Beyond code, the project serves as an applied learning experience for students enrolled in AI 460, an interdisciplinary course with no prerequisite where students are able to exhibit their skills in real world scenarios.

“Bringing people across disciplines together to build a product for the School of Business that benefits our peers and colleagues was a core part of the project,” Louis said.

“AI is an interdisciplinary domain, and this group represents that pretty well,” Gendron added.

Other team members expressed similar takeaways from the project, highlighting their ability to adapt to the needs and expectations of faculty members, administrators and stakeholders.

University leadership also responded positively to the project, with future implications being discussed to incorporate more projects like these to students’ curriculum to offer opportunities.

“I am impressed with the professionalism of the students,” Toro said. “I firmly believe we require at least two project presentations to graduate,” she added. While the project demonstrates the potential for applied learning at CCSU, access to resources necessary remains limited.

Going forward, the team plans to continue refining the enrollment forecaster with the goal of achieving cloud-ready status in spring 2026, allowing other departments across Central to use the application. Documentation has been structured so future students can build upon the project and expand its capabilities.



President Toro discussing what the future may look like for perspective may look like with Department Chair Gendron; Mohamad Oufi

This Week's Campus Events

Devil's Den @ 10: Paint Night, Feb. 5, 10 p.m.

Semesters Cafe, Student Center

CIG Distinguished Speaker Series Prof. Shi Joyce Sim, Feb. 6, 11:30 a.m.

Nicolaus Copernicus Hall Room 231

Dance Club Auditions Spring 2026, Feb. 8, 9 a.m.

Dance Education Center, Rm 001

Access to Industry Mentorship (AIM) Shadow Day, Feb. 11, 12:30 p.m.

COCC, Southington, CT



Bad Bunny posing with the iconic Grammy cradle; **Matt Winkelmeyer/**Getty Images for The Recording Academy

More Than a Halftime Show: Bad Bunny Carries Puerto Rico's Story to the Super Bowl

By **Mia Lozada**
Contributor

NEW BRITAIN — Benito Ocasio, better known as Bad Bunny, has recently won Album of the Year at the 68th annual Grammy Awards, to which fans and critics around the world have responded with overwhelming positivity toward his album *Debi Tirar Más Fotos*.

With the Grammy wins and the NFL's announcement of Bad Bunny being the headliner for this year's Super Bowl halftime show, he's using his platform of success in a unique way.

Through his music, Bad Bunny has reminded audiences worldwide of Puerto Rico's struggles. After completing a record-breaking 30-show residency at the Coliseo de Puerto Rico in San Juan, his show, *No Me Quiero Ir de Aquí*, brought both pride and an economic boost to the island.

Yet many residents say they continue to face everyday challenges, including ongoing power outages and extreme heat tied to climate change.

CCSU student Neyleannie Franco, who previously lived in Puerto Rico, said the island's climate crisis is something residents experience daily.

"As a person who was born and raised in Puerto Rico, you can tell the changes in weather are still happening and how hot it's gotten," Franco said. "It's sad because climate change is real. People on the island are still living without resources."

Joseph Torres, a Central Connecticut State University biochemistry major, shared his firsthand experience living in Puerto Rico one summer.

"You see one street with lights on and another completely dark," Torres said. "Through his visuals and messages, Bad Bunny shows the reality of what Puerto Ricans face every day."

According to Environmental Health News, Puerto Rico's electric network is among the most vulnerable in the nation, facing frequent outages following hurricanes Irma and Maria — a reality Bad Bunny references in his song "El Apagón" from the album *Un Verano Sin Ti*.

Torres said he hopes the Super Bowl performance will shine a spotlight on Puerto Rico and its ongoing struggles.

"It's bittersweet," he said. "I just hope the show honors Puerto Rican pride without overshadowing the island's fight for independence."

Franco emphasized how the artist uses his platform to expose corruption on the island and criticize how the United States addresses those issues.

"He finds a way to make people think and open their eyes," Franco said. "I wonder what he's going to say."

Edward Antigua, a CCSU BFA theater major and proud Dominican American, said the recognition on the biggest stage felt historic.

"When I heard the news, it felt like I was witnessing history being made — not only because an all-Spanish album received the award, but because of what the album and his speech stood for," Antigua said. "In a time of fierce attacks against our community, I hope it continues to open the eyes of those who seem

blind to what is happening."

As the Super Bowl approaches Feb. 8, many in the Latino community view Bad Bunny's role as more than entertainment, seeing it as a cultural milestone that highlights both his artistry and the issues facing their communities.

"As someone drawn more to the arts, I'm not deeply invested in the game itself," Antigua said. "But I'm excited to see his performance. He's excellent at what he does, and I hope it becomes another moment where he uses his platform to address what is happening."

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One More Conflict With A Similar Question: Who Authorizes U.S. Military Action?

By Liam McCusker
Contributor

From Vietnam to Iraq to Venezuela, the United States has a long history of intervening in other countries' affairs without a formal declaration of war.

President Donald Trump has failed to follow proper protocol to take such a step, which includes going before the United Nations and seeking full approval from Congress. He has followed in the footsteps of his predecessors going back many generations.

President Harry Truman bypassed Congress when North Korea invaded South Korea in 1950 and instead sought approval from the U.N. Security Council to intervene in the conflict. Approval was granted in part because Chinese and Soviet officials were absent from the meeting. China had not yet been given a seat on the Security Council, and the Soviet Union was boycotting the meeting because of China's exclusion, according to the Declare War Clause.

That action led to the conflict in Korea escalating further when U.S. Gen. Douglas MacArthur asked for and was given permis-

sion to send troops into North Korea, prompting intervention from Chinese soldiers. The conflict was not settled until 1953.

Similarly, while President Lyndon Johnson went before Congress during the Vietnam War to pass the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution after the 1964 incident in the Gulf of Tonkin, the resolution did not grant permission for the eventual deployment of troops in South Vietnam or the deaths of more than 58,000 American soldiers, according to U.S. National Archives records.

Under the War Powers Act of 1973, Congress mandated that a president must consult with Congress whenever possible before taking military action, report to Congress within 48 hours of taking action, withdraw troops within 60 days of deployment, and seek congressional authorization for any extended deployment.

However, President George H.W. Bush did not seek approval when he sent troops into Panama in 1989 to arrest Manuel Noriega on drug trafficking charges, ar-

guing the mission did not meet the criteria of war. Bush did seek congressional approval when he launched Operation Desert Storm during the first Gulf War.

It is important to remember that tensions between the United States and Venezuela long predate Trump's presidency. Hugo Chávez, who led Venezuela from 1999 to 2013, frequently accused the United States of meddling in the affairs of Latin American countries, including Venezuela. Chávez provided oil to countries such as Russia, Cuba and Iran to strengthen diplomatic relations.

Living conditions in Venezuela worsened further when Nicolás Maduro, who was recently taken into U.S. custody with his wife, Cilia Flores, to face drug trafficking charges, took office. The country faced a collapsing economy, hyperinflation and mass emigration.

Venezuela celebrated the success of the military action, as many citizens believe they are better off now that Maduro is no longer in power.

However, while the U.S. oper-

ation in Venezuela successfully removed Maduro from office, it did not alter the structure of the government in the way the 2003 invasion of Iraq did. In Iraq, the U.S.-led operation overthrew Saddam Hussein and oversaw a transition to a new government. In Venezuela, no such transition has occurred, and Maduro's vice president, Delcy Rodríguez, has assumed control.

Trump's allies will argue he cared enough to end Maduro's rule over the Venezuelan people, but critics say the operation was conducted improperly and claim access to Venezuela's vast oil reserves was a significant motivating factor for the administration.

Beyond Venezuela, the operation also sends a message internationally. It may signal to U.S. adversaries such as China and Russia that the United States is willing to act swiftly and decisively when it believes its interests are threatened.

Conversely, it may also suggest that power and strength take precedence over law. This concern is heightened as Russian President

Vladimir Putin continues military operations in Ukraine and Chinese President Xi Jinping has expressed interest in Taiwan. Both leaders have closely monitored how the operation unfolded.

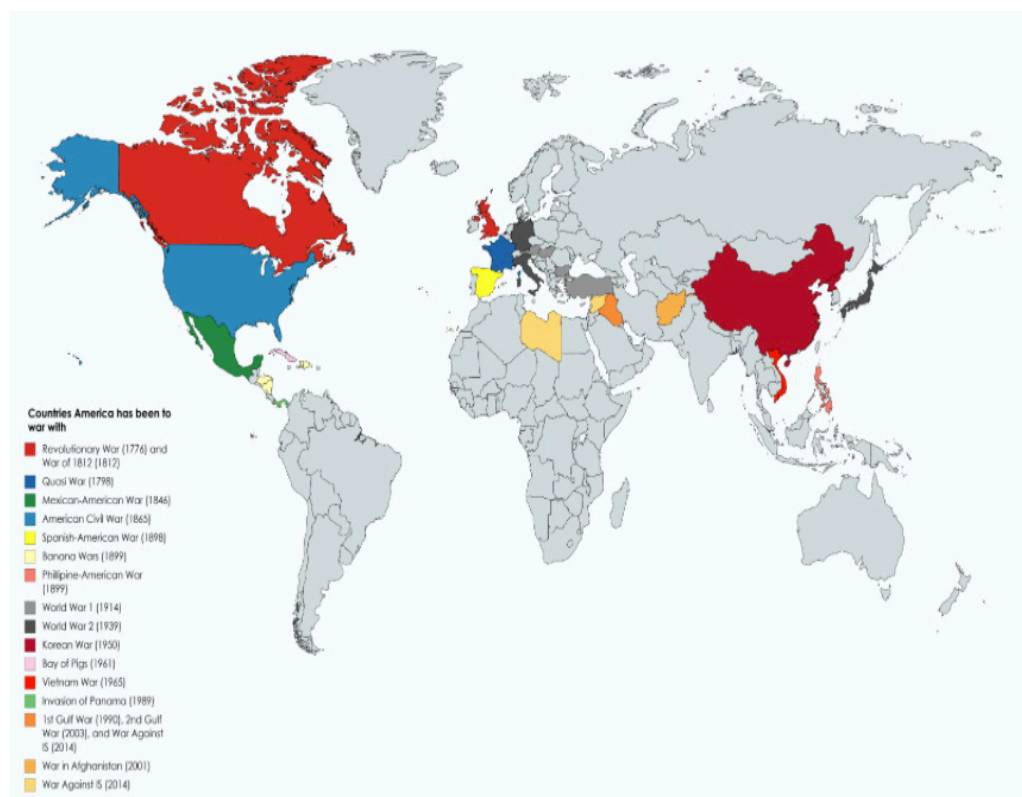
Ultimately, the U.S. operation in Venezuela is another example of military action taken by a sitting president without congressional consultation, echoing decisions from Korea to Vietnam to Panama and beyond. While Maduro's removal may be welcomed by many Venezuelans, the manner in which it occurred has raised serious questions about congressional authority and international law.

At a time when global tensions are already high and leaders in Moscow and Beijing are closely watching American actions, how the United States exercises its power matters as much as the outcome. The operation in Venezuela is not merely an isolated event but the latest chapter in the ongoing debate over who has the authority to decide when and how the United States intervenes in foreign conflicts.



Maduro in handcuffs after being detained by American personnel; GC Images/Getty Images

Pictured below are highlighted countries that the U.S. has been in conflicts with; Gentlemen Seal on Reddit



Redemption or Repeat? Super Bowl LX Rematch Set

By Noah Gavin &
Kyle Zarnoch
Staff Writers

INTRODUCTION:

Drake Maye vs. Sam Darnold. Two stingy defenses. A brainiac second-year head coach vs. a veteran coach trying to win a Super Bowl with the same team he won with as a player.

Super Bowl LX is set and it's a rematch: the New England Patriots vs. the Seattle Seahawks.

The Patriots will seek their NFL-record seventh Super Bowl victory when they face the Seahawks on Feb. 8 at Levi's Stadium in Santa Clara, California. It's a rematch of Super Bowl XLIX in 2015, when New England intercepted a Seattle pass at the 1-yard line in the final seconds to steal the championship.

New England Patriots Preview:

Following a whiteout second half in Denver, the Patriots head to Santa Clara for Super Bowl LX after going 9-0 on the road this season, something no team has ever done in NFL history.

The Patriots (14-3) won their division in the regular season after going 3-14 the previous year. The huge turnaround can be credited to Coach of the Year finalist Mike Vrabel and MVP finalist quarterback Drake Maye. The two have clicked with the

Patriots offense, which scored an average of 28.8 points per game, second-best in the NFL.

Wide receiver Stefon Diggs had a 1,000-yard receiving season, while Kayshon Boutte has been a clutch target for Maye throughout the playoffs. Through some great catches while playing in tough weather conditions, Boutte has grabbed 194 yards on just eight receptions.

While Maye has been listed as questionable with a shoulder injury the past week leading up to the big game, the Patriots will not necessarily have a problem leaning on the run. Maye has run for 141 yards on 24 attempts over the course of the playoffs, while running back Rhamondre Stevenson has added 194 yards on 51 carries this postseason.

This is going to be yet another matchup in this game that must go perfectly for the Patriots, as the Seahawks have allowed zero rushing touchdowns this postseason.

New England might also be without defensive captain and linebacker Robert Spillane, who has been dealing with an ankle injury and has missed a few practices before the Super Bowl. Spillane has come up big for the Patriots with five solo tackles and nine assisted tackles during the playoffs.

On the defensive side, the Patriots have defensive end Milton Williams, a postseason veteran presence for the young New En-



Both predictions have either team winning by a margin of a touchdown, signifying a dog fight to claim the Lombardi; **Kyle Zarnoch/The Recorder**

gland roster with four years of playoff experience with the Philadelphia Eagles, including two Super Bowls. Williams has five total tackles through the Patriots' three playoff games with two sacks.

The Patriot's defense has allowed just 8.7 points per game through its three postseason games. This stat will be interesting to watch develop, considering that Seattle has scored at least 31 points in back-to-back playoff games.

The Patriots defense will have to keep its game up to shut down this Seattle scoring onslaught and prove it is for real.

The New England defensive tackles need to break through the Seahawks' interior and get to Darnold to effectively shut down the Seahawks offense.

Lastly, cornerback Christian Gonzalez will find himself matched up with Seattle wide receiver and PFWA Offensive Player of the Year Jaxon Smith-Njigba. The Patriot's defense has struggled against the wide receiver position this season and will need to shut down Smith-Njigba to keep the football out of the end zone.

Gonzalez could be up for the task with his 15 total tackles this past postseason and one interception that secured the AFC championship for New England in Denver.

How the Patriots will win:

While a lot must go right for New England to pull off this upset, its defense matches up well against a slightly shorthanded Seahawks offense, particularly the Patriots' defensive tackles against Seattle's interior. In a defensive battle for most of the game, the Patriots could edge out the Seahawks.

MVP prediction and score: Drake Maye; New England 21, Seattle 17

Seattle Seahawks Preview:

The NFC champion Seahawks (14-3) earned the No. 1 seed after one of the league's most consistent seasons under second-year head coach Mike Macdonald.

Seattle crushed the injury-depleted San Francisco 49ers 41-6 in the divisional round before beating Matthew Stafford and the Los Angeles Rams 31-27 in the NFC Championship Game.

Quarterback Sam Darnold, a No. 3 overall pick in 2018 who was passed over by four teams before landing in Seattle, has been masterful in the postseason. He's thrown for 470 yards and four touchdowns without an interception through two playoff games, silencing doubters along the way.

The offensive firepower has been undeniable. Star wide receiver Jaxon Smith-Njigba, who led the NFL with 1,793 receiving yards during the regular season, was quiet in the divisional round but exploded in the championship game with 10 catches for 153 yards and a touchdown.

The Seahawks' backfield has been



The two favorites to win the Super Bowl MVP, the weight of expectation weighs heavy on these athletes' shoulders; **Sportslogos.net**

a dual threat all season, with Kenneth Walker III and Zach Charbonnet splitting carries effectively. When Charbonnet went down early against the 49ers, Walker took over as the workhorse and hasn't looked back, totaling 256 scrimmage yards and four touchdowns in the playoffs. Seattle's offense scored the third-most points and gained the eighth-most yards in the NFL this season.

As good as that is, arguably the Seahawks' greatest weapon is their defense. The "Dark Side" defense, a nickname adopted by the players themselves in 2025, has been suffocating all year. Defensive lineman Leonard Williams explained the origin of the name, saying it reflects the disciplined, dominant and downright nasty approach the unit has taken under Macdonald.

The dominance starts with a punishing front seven featuring All-Pro cornerback Devon Witherspoon, veteran edge rusher DeMarcus Lawrence and tack-

le Byron Murphy II. Seattle led the league in pressure rate, making life miserable for opposing quarterbacks all season long.

And the results speak for themselves. Seattle allowed just 17.2 points per game during the regular season, the fewest in the NFL. The "Dark Side" ranked number one by DVOA (Defense-adjusted Value Over Average) and led the league in scoring defense, establishing itself as the stingiest team in football.

The run defense has been particularly stingy, the Seahawks haven't allowed a 100-yard rusher since Oct. 27, 2024, when Buffalo's James Cook ran for 110 yards in a 31-10 Bills victory, a streak spanning over three months.

How the Seahawks will win:

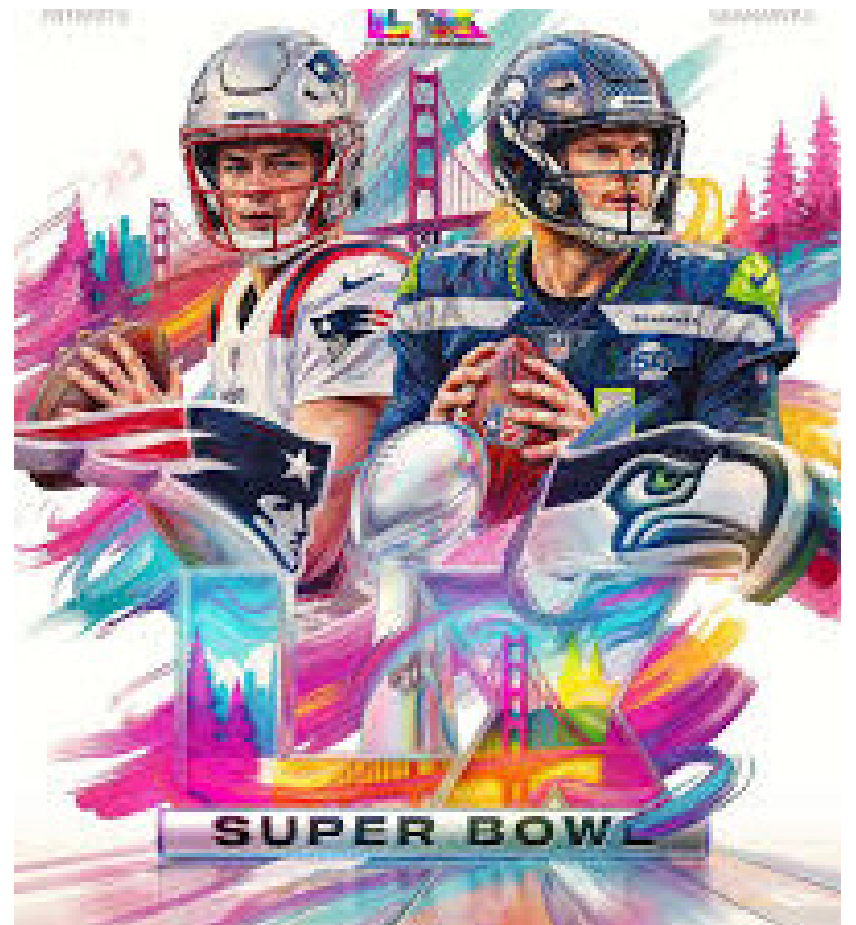
Seattle will win by continuing the championship-caliber football it has played all season. While its explosive offense could challenge

New England's tough defense, the Seahawks' greatest advantage lies on the other side of the ball.

Patriots quarterback Drake Maye will face his toughest test yet against a defense that will live in the backfield, creating relentless pressure and chaos for the young QB. Don't be surprised if it looks similar to Super Bowl LV, when Patrick Mahomes was under siege all game, pressured 29 times, hit eight times and forced to scramble 497 yards just trying to make plays. Seattle's "Dark Side" defense could have Maye running for his life.

Just as New England's defense won it a championship the last time these teams met in the Super Bowl, Seattle's defense could be the difference-maker in Super Bowl LX.

MVP prediction and score: Jaxon Smith-Njigba; Seattle 23, New England 13



Two teams, one victor this Sunday; the official Fox Sports website

Reynolds & Frazier Earn NEC Honors for Blue Devils

By Marcus Saunders
Co-Editor-In-Chief

Ashton Reynolds was named the Northeast Conference (NEC) Rookie of the Week for men's basketball on Monday, Feb. 2. This is the third time the freshman guard has been recognized with the award.

Reynolds helped the Blue Devils split their two games against the Wagner Seahawks and the LIU Sharks, who sit atop the NEC standings. In those games, he averaged seven points, three rebounds and shot 50% from 3-point range in just 14.5 minutes of play. He also shot 100% from the free-throw line and 44.4% from the field.

On the season, he is averaging 4.4 points and 2.2 rebounds while shooting 30.8% from



Ashton Reynolds (13) taking a pull-up jumper against LIU; Steve McLaughlin

3-point range in just 11.4 minutes per game, making this week an encouraging sign for the young guard as he continues to make his transition from high school to Division I basketball.

Reynolds wasn't the only Blue Devil to be acknowledged. Junior forward Max Frazier was named an NEC Prime Performer. Frazier averaged 15.5 points, six rebounds while shooting an efficient 66.7% from the field. Frazier scored 17 points, his most since Jan. 2, and grabbed four rebounds against Wagner and then stuffed the stat sheet against LIU with a near double-double of 14 points and eight rebounds. He also added two assists, two steals and three blocks to round out his performance.

Frazier is enjoying his best season as a student-athlete, setting career highs in points per game (11.9), rebounds per game (6.9), blocks per game (1.7), field goal percentage (64%) and minutes per game (26.7).

Reynolds and Frazier will look to help Central bounce back from its loss to LIU on Jan. 31 in their next matchup against the Chicago State Cougars at Detrick Gymnasium on Thursday, Feb. 5. After that they will remain at home to host their rematch against Wagner on Feb. 7 in their second matchup of the season in 10 days.



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CCSU Drops Key Conference Game at Home Against LIU

By Andrew O'Sullivan
Staff Writer



James Jones (24) raising above the defender to get a tough bucket in a close game; **Andrew Johnson/The Recorder**

The CCSU Blue Devils men's basketball team dropped a crucial home conference game against the visiting LIU Sharks on Saturday, Jan. 31.

LIU and CCSU were the top two teams in the Northeast Conference in overall record, with LIU sitting at 13-8 and CCSU at 11-9, but the Sharks had only one loss in conference play to the Blue Devils' four, putting CCSU in fifth place in conference play while the Sharks led the NEC. The high-pressure mid-major matchup was broadcast nationally on ESPNU.

Although LIU scored the first points of the game a minute in, Central jumped out to an early lead in the first half, with shots from Nico Ashley and Melo Sanchez leading the way. A few LIU

fouls followed as the Blue Devils pulled out to their biggest lead of 10, nine minutes into the game. The Sharks fought back, with layups and 3-point shots making up the main bulk of LIU's scoring. Although Central kept the game close with multiple blocks and buckets from Max Frazier contributing to a one-point game at the half, LIU took a 37-36 lead.

The game remained close as play resumed in the second half, with Daniel James scoring off the bench as Central kept LIU within a score for the first three minutes, until a sequence of layups and fouls for the Sharks extended their lead to 10 points nine minutes in, and Central was unable to recover. Despite contributions from Ashton Reynolds and Roddy Jones, LIU's defense was able to stifle any momentum CCSU could

generate, and its offense continued to blaze through the second half, with the final score ending at 80-59 in favor of the Sharks.

The contest extended LIU's lead atop the NEC standings by two games over Le Moyne, while Central fell to seventh in the standings with a .500 record in conference play.

The bulk of LIU's points came unexpectedly from Mason Porter-Brown, who dropped a career-high 29 points (including 17 in the first half) despite averaging just 6.1 points per game entering Saturday.

CCSU's head coach Patrick Sellers described him as "a massive problem for us."

Jamal Fuller and Shadrak Lasu also

reached double figures for LIU.

Central struggled with turnovers and generating offensive momentum throughout the game, especially in the second half, which led to no Blue Devil scoring more than 15 points. Frazier led the way alongside Jay Rodgers with 14 points apiece, while Darin Smith Jr. added 10 points as well. Frazier also led the way with eight rebounds.

Sellers spoke at length about the loss, emphasizing that his team will have its work cut out for the rest of the season and complimenting LIU on a strong performance.

"They have a lot of talent. Coach Strickland has done a great job with them, and you can tell they've gotten better and better and better," he said.

Sellers specifically discussed LIU's prowess in the fast break.

"It's so fast," he said. "They can kill you on a make or miss with a head full of speed. It's really hard to stop the transition."

He was able to find some positives despite not getting the results he wanted.

"Right now we're down, but we had two very good defensive games this week," he said. "We only got one win, sometimes that's basketball."

With the Division II to Division I transitional period still in effect for Mercyhurst and Le Moyne (the two schools ahead of Central in the NEC standings), many have penciled in Central and LIU as contenders for the NEC Championship Game in March, which Central lost last season to St. Francis.

When asked about his chances to return to the title game, likely against the Sharks, Coach Sellers was optimistic.

"I think we're that good. We ran some good offense, we just didn't make shots," he said. "We can score with these guys. The way we have to beat them is to get back in transition and keep them off the glass. They're relentless."

The Blue Devils will try to get back on track at Detrick Gymnasium on Feb. 5 to host Chicago State.



CCSU's ATHLETIC SCHEDULE



Men's Basketball

February 5 – vs. Chicago State at 7 PM

February 7 – vs. Wagner at 1 PM

Women's Basketball

February 5 – @ Chicago State at 7 PM

February 7 – vs. Wagner at 4 PM

Women & Mens Track and Field

February 6 – @ Scarlet Knights Open

February 7/8 – @ ECAC/IC4A Championships