

THE RECORDER

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Democrats Are Big Winners Finding a New Identity

By **Elijah Hernandez**
Co-Editor-In-Chief

Robert (Bobby) Sanchez, the Democratic candidate in the New Britain mayoral election, won the role of mayor with more than 57% of the votes, on Nov. 4, according to poll data collected by News 8.

The Democrats in New Britain won more than just the title of mayor.

In New Britain, the treasurer who was elected was a Democrat. The Democrats won back con-

trol on the Board of Education. As well as but not limited to the Democrats won the supermajority among the town council.

This abrupt and momentous swing in representation among

local government officials, some said, reflects the necessity for change in hard times.

But this flow of Democratic representation isn't limited to Connecticut. The other elections

that were taking place at the same time in New York, Virginia, New Jersey, Texas, California all elected Democratic officials to positions of power.

This apparent call for change
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Federal Issues, Local Impacts

By **Sabiha Dodd-Brown**
Staff Writer

As the federal government shutdown continues, its effects are starting to hit home for many Connecticut families, including college students. While many are now realizing how political issues in Washington, D.C., can affect everyday life, others are already feeling its impact on their jobs, financial aid, and communities.

The shutdown, now entering its fifth week, began after Congress failed to agree on a new spending bill. Without that funding, many federal agencies have been forced to close or operate with reduced staff. Across the country, hundreds of thousands of federal workers are either suspended or working without pay.

For college students, the connection may not be obvious to a lot of people. But with federal aid, work-study programs, internships, and research grants all tied to government funding; the consequences are becoming apparent.

"I didn't think it would affect me at first," said Gianna Reyes, a freshman at Central Connecticut State University who relies on federal work-study. "But now I'm hearing that if this goes on longer, it could delay next semester's aid. That's

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Men's Basketball Dominates Vermont State Johnson in Season Opener

By **Marcus Saunders**
Co-Editor-In-Chief

In an offseason with much player turnover, Central showed on Nov. 3 that its goal of winning the NEC Championship hasn't changed. The team has ten new players on the roster and showcased their depth against their Division III opponent.

In their 117-55 win, sophomore forward Darin Smith Jr. led Central in scoring with 20 points. He also grabbed seven rebounds and stole the ball twice. Junior forward Max Frazier stuffed the stat sheet with 14 points, seven rebounds, two assists and a block while shooting 100% from the field in just 15 minutes of play. 12 Blue Devils put up five or more points.

Senior guard Jay Rodgers finally made his return to play after tearing his ACL against Maine in December 2023.

"First, thank God, man. [What] I've been through, it's hard sitting out for that long watching," he said. "It was fun being a part of a winning season [last year] but [not being able to play] it's tough."

Even though he was able to score 11 points in his first game in nearly 23 months, he still critiqued his performance.

"I missed some shots that I should've made and I'm mad about my two turnovers at the end of the game," he said. "But it felt good just being out there with my teammates."

With a big season in mind, Smith scored the first points of the season with a putback layup. It then turned into an 11-3 run heading into the first media timeout of the game. Freshman guard Roddy Jones checked into the game for the first time as a Blue Devil at the 13:17 mark of the first half and was able to sink a 3-pointer 16 seconds into his career. Key transfers Melo Sanchez, Ja'Kobe Williams and Jayden Mott proved that they belonged, combining for 18 points in the first half.

At the end of the first half, CCSU led 67-29. Central shot the lights out, shooting 26-for-38 from the field (68.4%) and 9-for-15 from beyond the arc

See New Era on Page 5



Darin Smith Jr. (5) taking it to the rim utilizing his frame and strength to get easy buckets;
Jameson Lynch The Recorder

Gen Z Voters Aren't Showing Up

By **Ronan Hinckley**
Staff Writer

On a brisk election day in November, Peter Varhol, a poll moderator who has worked the polls at St Francis of Assisi Church in New Britain for over six years, greeted each voter with a smile and handshake. The room was filled with people from all walks of life. However, of those who walked through the door, very few were under 28.

Central Connecticut State University, which is only three blocks away, is home to nearly 9,000 undergraduate students. Out of the seven students interviewed, aged 18-24, only one had voted in their local election.

The singular voter was Sullivan Bartalotta, a 20-year-old from Rocky Hill. He considers himself an informed voter and wishes more voting-aged youth would find the time in their day to support their local candidates.

"When it comes to politics, I feel it is very mixed. Some people are very informed and do appreciate the democratic process we have. But generally, youth need to take more time in their day to get informed and vote for the candidates who they genuinely support," Sullivan Bartalotta said.

See Showing up on Page 2

About

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News Editor

Elijah Hernandez

Sports Editor

Marcus Saunders

Social Media Editor

Jameson Lynch

Copy Editor

Nathalia Blair

Photo Copy Editor

Ian Yale

Staff Writers

Eary Banushi
Nicolina Coronis
Sabiha Dodd-Brown
Noah Gavin
Andrew O'Sullivan

Contributors

Ronan Hinckley

Co-Editors-in-Chief

Elijah Hernandez
&
Marcus Saunders

Meetings

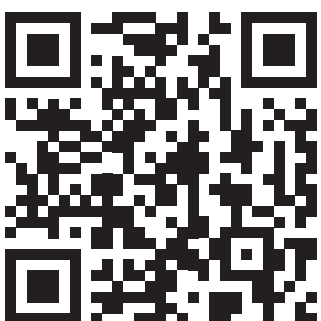
Thursdays at 3:00 p.m.
Recorder Room
Student Center

THE RECORDER OFFICE

Student Center
1615 Stanley Street
New Britain, CT 06050

860-832-3744
editor@centralrecorder.org
CentralRecorder.org

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SCAN FOR OUR LINKS**Local Continued**

money I need for textbooks and housing.”

Financial aid experts across the country share the same concern. While most aid for the current semester has already been processed, a shutdown could slow down FAFSA processing, Pell Grants, and federal work-study payments.

Beyond financial aid, some students are seeing the effects of their families' financial situations. According to the Office of Personnel Management, more than 8,000 federal employees live and work in Connecticut. Many are now facing delayed paychecks.

“My mom works for the federal government, and she hasn't been paid in a few weeks,” said Marie Rodriguez, a biology major at CCSU. “We're cutting back on groceries and trying to make ends meet. It's stressful because she's still working full time.”

The shutdown's impact also reaches off-campus life. Programs that rely on federal funding, such as food assistance and housing aid, are beginning to feel the squeeze. Organizations like the Community Renewal Team in Hartford, which provides assistance to low-income families, report a demand.

“For college students who come from lower-income backgrounds, those programs can be life or even death,” said Dalia Allen, a criminology student at Central. “When funding freezes, the people like my family, including students like me, are the ones who pay the price first and have to deal with the consequences.”

Despite these challenges, not everyone is paying close attention. Many young adults admit that the issue feels “distant,” until it starts affecting their wallets or classrooms.

“I've seen posts about it on TikTok, but I didn't really know what was happening,” said Maliya Jones, a sophomore majoring in biology. “It's crazy how something happening in D.C. can end up impacting my financial aid here in Connecticut.”

According to CTNewsJunkie, State Senate leaders are urging Gov. Ned Lamont to be more aggressive in publicly assigning blame to the national Republicans.

The governor reassured Connecticut families who receive benefits from the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Woman, Infants, and Children (WIC) that state funding will allow the program to continue without interruption, according to a news press release from his website.

For now, most students are left watching and waiting and hoping for a resolution soon.

“I'm just hoping it ends soon,” Jones said. “I'm focused on mid-terms and trying to get through the semester, but it's hard not to worry. When politics stops paychecks, it's not just an issue that you don't have to worry about and wait for it to pass; it's people trying to live their lives.”

“Hopefully this shutdown doesn't last long because I will start to feel the effects soon, and I can't afford my assistance to be taken away,” Allen said.

Showing Up Continued

Outside the polls are fellow representatives using one last chance to sway your vote; **Ronan Hinckley The Recorder**

Peter Varhol voiced similar concerns about the lack of Gen Z voters.

“Our obligation as American citizens is to get out here and vote,” Peter Varhol said. “I am ecstatic each time a new young buck voter comes in, because they are the future. However, it's not as many as I would like. I

want the younger generation to realize this is your country, and if you want to see a change in your community, this is how you do it. To put it simply, many need to get off their lazy behinds and do something about it. Because if you don't give a damn now, when will that change?”

While youth voter turnout was

low in the morning and during early voting, Varhol hopes younger voters will turn out later in the day.

Although those interviewed didn't vote, all of them emphasized the importance of local elections.

Two of the students who didn't vote but understood the importance of our local elections were Manny Demiraj and Chris Tasho, 18-year-old students from Waterbury, CT.

“I find that a lot of Gen Z are either super into politics or are completely burnt out from it,” Manny Demiraj said. “Me personally, I am not involved as politically as maybe I should be, especially at the local level, where many of these decisions have direct impacts on the community we live in. And I think a lot of Gen Z can relate to that feeling.”

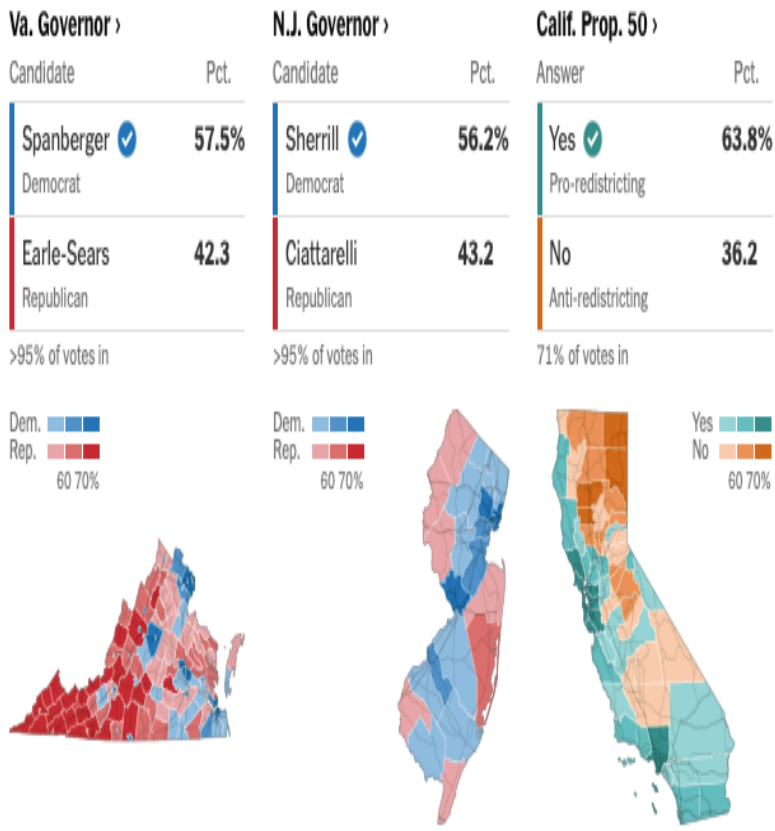
The students interviewed all expressed feelings that the Presidential elections are when people actually start getting involved in voting.

This is consistent with data from Tufts University, which saw 47% national youth turnout for the 2024 Presidential election but only 23% for their local elections in 2022.

As the gap of youth voter turnout continues to widen, there is a common sentiment amongst voters and non-voters alike. Gen Z youth must do more to make their voices heard and fulfill their civic duty by voting.

Have a story that needs to be told?
Tips or ledes that should be investigated?
Email us at elijahh@my.ccsu.edu
or fill out the contact form on our website
centralrecorder.org

Dems Continued



Source: Associated Press

While there is still a distinct split between both parties, the wins and loses are determined by what's happening in the margins; **Associated Press**

among the voters across the nation is not without recognition from the representatives they elected to office. In his remarks following the win, Sanchez said residents' voices matter, no matter their affiliation.

"There will be people that don't agree with everything that I do, but I've spent my whole life working with people ... I will listen to people; I won't walk away even when it gets tough, when people get loud and want answers right away, I'm not the type of person that's just going to walk away and ignore people," Sanchez said. "I'm just going to treat people how you should treat people, and that's the bottom line. I will be more than willing to sit down and compromise with people; that's just how I am."

When asked about what his initial plans for the office would be, he gave a very New Britain answer.

"As mayor, one of the first things I need to resolve is the issue on Allen St. The area near Allen St. and the surrounding streets has been flooding, sewage has been going in their basements," Sanchez said. "This has been a concern of theirs for over 30 years and they feel that the mayors have let them down. I would have to come up with a substantial amount of money, but we'll find it."

Just a train stop away in New York, Democrat Socialist Zohran Mamdani won the mayoral election for New York with more than 1 million votes in a race with national implications.

In his speech at Mamdani Campaign HQ, in downtown Brooklyn he illustrated how New York is going to be the city to pave the way to a better future.

"Years from now, be our only regret that it took this day so long to come. In this moment of political darkness, New York will be the political light," Mamdani said. "If tonight teaches us anything, it's that convention has held us back. We will leave mediocrity in the past. Our greatness will be anything but abstract. New York, this power is yours. This city belongs to you. Thank you."

Facing ridicule from President Donald Trump due to his left-leaning ideology, Mamdani chose to directly address the president.

"This is not only how we stop Trump, but the next one as well. Trump, I know you're listening, turn up the volume," he said. "To get to any of us, you will have to go through all of us."

These elections have broken down barriers and etched in his

tory the integration of different cultures in American history as government representatives. The representatives of the people, by the people, for the people.

Abigail Spanberger won her gubernatorial race against Winsome Earle-Sears in the pivotal state of Virginia. These states have chosen the opposition to candidates Trump has backed himself.

In what was supposed to be a nail-biter, Gov. Mikie Sherrill gave a speech after being declared the winner in Bridgewater, New Jersey.

"This was a tough fight, and this was a tough state, but I know you, New Jersey, I love you," Sherrill said. "I know your struggles; I know your dreams; I am incredibly honored to be your next governor. When I was 18, I raised my hand and swore my allegiance to the Constitution. Liberty is not enough when you can't feed your family, get a good education, or get a good job. Good government doesn't just manage problems; they solve them. I know not everyone voted for me, but I'm working for everyone."

New Britain is typically a microcosm of what the general population of the United States tends to feel politically, and this election cycle is no different.

This Weeks Campus Events

Anime Family Feud, Nov. 6, 10 p.m.
Student Center

Changes in Snow Properties to Landscape Evolution and Natural Hazards in Northern Latitudes, Nov. 7, Noon
Copernicus Hall Room 501

AI in the Workplace, Nov. 12, 12:15 a.m.
Student Center, Philbrick Room



Surrounded by town council members and New Britain resident, Bobby Sanchez's collaboration with the community gave him the traction to win; **Dr. Frank Gerratana**



“Regretting You” Movie Review: When Love, Lies and Loss Collide

By Nicolina Coronis
Staff Writer

The adaptation of Colleen Hoover’s novel “Regretting You” turns a complicated family drama into a cinematic experience full of love, grief and betrayal.

The movie was released on Oct. 24, 2025, and stars Allison Williams as Morgan Grant, McKenna Grace as Clara Grant, Dave Franco as Jonah Sullivan, Mason Thames as Miller Adams, Scott Eastwood as Chris Grant and Willa Fitzgerald as Jenny Davidson.

This film revolves around high schoolers Clara Grant (McKenna Grace) and Miller Adams (Mason Thames) as they navigate a budding romance full of passion and complications. While this is happening, Clara’s family experiences unforeseen drama and a sudden loss.

This adds stress to Clara’s life and to her relationship with her mother. Morgan Grant (Allison Williams) faces devastating challenges of her own.

The film has sparked mixed reactions online, especially on TikTok. While many viewers praised it as a heartfelt romance with the desired elements, others criticized it for promoting infidelity and including several plot inconsistencies.

Some viewers say it is a beautiful romance movie with all the desired elements, with users such as “Noelle_Grace” commenting, “I LOVE IT,” and “Jayden Bo Bayden” writing, “MOVIE OF THE YEAR.”

Others say the movie promotes cheating and has many plot holes. User “Calliepgirl” shared her disappointment, writing, “Regretting You? More like regretting watching this movie.” Another user, “Camilla_spens,” posted that the movie was “bottom tier” and “doesn’t get worse than that.”

The overall response to this anticipated film shows a divide between those who were deeply moved and those who felt it fell short of expectations.

Admittedly, I loved it. While I do see the plot holes and the film’s predictability, I find that’s part of the romance-movie experience. Of course, you know the guy will get the girl in the end, but that’s not why romance lovers watch it; we watch it for the chase. To see how far the guy would go, Mill-

tion, Morgan and Jonah discover Chris’s car at a hotel with a room in his name and Jenny’s bags in his car. In addition to this, Jonah discovers love letters written from Jenny to Chris in his toolbox. This confirms what the viewers anticipated about their relationship.

Morgan, upon learning the truth of her sister’s affair with her husband, is left devastated, feeling both grief and anger. Meanwhile, Clara faces the grief of her father and her aunt, with whom she was very close; it’s not until

This movie is packed with drama and emotion. At each new plot twist, I was left thinking it could not get worse for them, but it always did.

Watching Clara and Miller’s love story unfold was a storyline I adored; you could feel how much they meant to each other. Miller’s character displayed patience and maturity and became the character I rooted for in every scene. Miller restored faith in traditional romance. Clara’s storyline really developed as she

to the camera and asking her to prom in a series of videos she never knew existed. The moment that truly stole my heart was from the very first day they met. In one clip, Miller says that Clara just drove by him, and if she turns around to offer him a ride, he’ll ask her to prom someday. And she did.

The amazing gesture of this two-year-long video project was shown to Clara once they had been dating for a while, and as a viewer and a romance movie enthusiast, it was one of the best romantic gestures I have seen. A moment I am still fangirling over today.

Morgan and Jonah end up together as well. I really admired Morgan’s struggle as she wrestled with her feelings for Jonah while carrying the guilt of how her choices might affect Clara. In the end, she made the right decision, choosing, for once, to follow her own heart.

Jonah was also an amazing character to watch. His love for Morgan was so strong that he moved away for years because he could not stand seeing her with another guy (his best friend). He was truly devoted to her.

Overall, this movie is well worth watching for people who appreciate a dramatic, fairly cheesy romance, with scenes that will stay with you long after the credits roll. I will certainly be rewatching and idolizing Miller’s grand gesture for eternity. Oh, and I am only eating the watermelon-flavored Jolly Ranchers from now on.



“Regretting You” currently sits at a Rotten Tomatoes score of 28%, with a majority of reviews stating that the book is better; **Pearl & Dean Cinemas**

er Adams perfected that chase.

The rest of this review will include spoilers ... you have been warned.

In the film, Clara’s father, Chris Grant (Scott Eastwood), has an affair with his sister-in-law, Jenny Davidson (Willa Fitzgerald). This comes to light when Grant and Davidson pass away in a car accident and are found in the same vehicle. After further investiga-

tion, Morgan and Jonah discover Chris’s car at a hotel with a room in his name and Jenny’s bags in his car. In addition to this, Jonah discovers love letters written from Jenny to Chris in his toolbox. This confirms what the viewers anticipated about their relationship.

The film also shows that the four of them (Clara’s parents, her aunt, and her aunt’s boyfriend) have been friends for years. Although Jonah Sullivan (Dave Franco) has also lost his cheating girlfriend in the accident. The film reveals that Sullivan has been in love with Morgan for as long as they’ve known each other. This plot twist leads to a popular line in the movie, “We got it wrong,” referring to who Morgan and her sister chose to be with in their friend group.

navigated her feelings of love and grief. And as everyone predicted, they end up together.

Their story concludes with both of them attending the same college, where Miller finally confesses that he has loved Clara long before they ever spoke. His grand gesture was a heartfelt video he secretly filmed two years earlier, which reveals just how deep his feelings ran. In the video, Miller records himself at one of Clara’s school plays, watching her in complete admiration. Over time, he continues adding clips, talking

WFCS Goes From the Studio to Twitch with Boiler Room Sets

By Andrew O'Sullivan
Staff Writer

The CCSU campus radio station WFCS 107.7 played host to The Boiler Room, a live DJ showcase and Halloween event on Oct. 30, highlighted by five DJ performances that were livestreamed over the station's official Twitch channel.

The event ran from 7 to 10 p.m. and featured sets from DJ Miles, DJ Josh, DJ Tolu, DJ Hilly, and DJ Ron Marq.

For the first time, WFCS streamed the entire set over their new Twitch channel. The livestream was partly hosted by WFCS Training Director Mari Vazquez, who spent time interviewing the attendees around the studio and surrounding student center hallway on their costumes and Halloween plans.

Overall, students liked how WFCS managed the event. They were intrigued by the free candy they saw in the studio which

drew many passersby from the student center who might not have otherwise attended.

The event's layout drew some criticism from attendees. Some students said the WFCS studio was relatively cramped. The cramped floor space was too small for a live DJ set. Noise levels were also a concern, with many choosing to stay outside the station where they could listen to the music without being right next to the speakers.

Community came alive at the WFCS Boiler Room, where the music and the food created a welcoming atmosphere whether you were right up to the turntables or conversating outside.

"I thought it was cool. Cute, simple, little get together. Everybody was awesome," Eme Garcia said, who attended as the titular character of The Nun.

Cordell Shepard, in costume

as James Gunn's Superman said, "In terms of things I liked, good food, good drinks, good snacks, music choice was good, loved all the decorations."

Shepard would concede that the problem of setup was a flaw of the event that he would like to see fixed would the event take place in the future.

"If possible, a little bit more space," he said.

He would further explain that if the event was in a bigger separate room, it would be "amazing" with a different setting, or alternatively paired with Devil's Den.

The event was one of many events WFCS was a part of so far in the semester, as the station also was present at the Flavors & Sounds of Brazil event on October 14th, as well as providing live music for CCSU's homecoming weekend festivities back in September.



This live event hosted some of CCSU's most famous DJs; **Elijah Hernandez The Recorder**

SPORTS

New Era Continued

(60%). They were also stout on defense, forcing six turnovers and blocking three shots, all by transfer Nico Ashley. Smith was tied for the leading scorer at the half with 14 and Rodgers added nine.

In the second half, fans were able to see some more of the new faces that Sellers recruited. For the transfers, Ashley, Gabe Spinnelli, Sanchez, Williams, Mott and Daniel James finished the game with a combined plus-minus of +149. Freshmen Jones, Parker,

Ashton Reynolds and Adam Fox were all able to make their debuts. Central finished the game shooting 60% from the field and 38.7% from 3-point range.

Central head coach Pat Sellers spoke about his team's performance after the game.

"We were the better team, [and] we shared the ball, which is what we wanted to do," he said. "We wanted to play disciplined, [and] for the most part we played that way."

He said he loved seeing Rodgers back on the court and jumping in traffic. He mentioned that it's a tough mental battle to overcome, and Rodgers did it.

Smith talked about how he's taking on more of a leadership role this season.

"I had a lot of great leaders, great teammates along the way, and our coaches are keeping me confident and motivat-

ed," he said. "I know the system so well and I love the game so leading will be fun for me."

Central will now turn to Quinnipiac for their first game on the road at M&T Bank Arena on Thursday, Nov. 6 and Sellers predicted how the game to play out.

"They got picked in the top of their league this year, Coach Pecora is a really good offensive coach. They're always good on the offensive end," he said. "So,

I think it's probably gonna be a game that'll go down to the wire."

He also mentioned that since he and his coaching staff have been at CCSU, they played Quinnipiac twice on the road and lost both down the stretch, so they need to defend and rebound to get their first win at Quinnipiac.



Coach Sellers (left) and Jay Rodgers (right) discuss the importance of leading by example; **Jameson Lynch The Recorder**

Built from Blue: Patrick Sellers' Journey from Player to Architect of the Blue Devils' Basketball Revival



Coach Sellers emphasizes the importance of defenses and hustling for the little gains; **Elijah Hernandez The Recorder**

By **Eary Banushi**
Staff Writer

In late August of 1987, Patrick Sellers arrived on the Central Connecticut State University campus with nothing but a few bags and an uncertain future.

"I remember... mom dropping me off, making my bed in Vance Hall and leaving," Sellers said. "I'm like, 'Is that it? You're leaving me?' And she left me."

With nowhere else to turn, he did what came naturally. He walked to Detrick Gymnasium, met a few teammates he barely knew, and jumped into a pickup game. What he didn't realize then was that 38 years later, he'd be back in that same gym, this time as the head coach of the very team he once played for.

In 2021, Central hired Sellers to take over its struggling men's basketball program. The decision paid off. Just four seasons later, he has revitalized the Blue Devils, leading them to back-to-back Northeast Conference regular season titles and their first appearance in the conference championship game since 2007. For his efforts, he earned consecutive Jim Phelan

Northeast Conference Coach of the Year honors in 2024 and 2025.

And the future only looks brighter.

What makes Sellers' rise so remarkable is that, despite a long and accomplished coaching career, he didn't become a collegiate head coach until 2021. By that point, he had spent more than 25 years as an assistant coach, working under Hall of Famers, recruiting future pros, and helping build winning programs at nearly a dozen schools. He coached in packed out arenas and empty gyms, across mid-majors and high-majors, from Connecticut to China. And yet, for decades, he remained one seat over, never the one calling the final timeout, never the face of the program.

So how does someone so seasoned, so prepared, wait so long for a chance to run his own program?

To understand why it took so long, and why Sellers was ready when the opportunity finally came, you have to go back to where his coaching journey really began, right after graduation, when his playing dreams were suddenly thrown off course.

Sellers graduated from CCSU in 1991 after a four-year career with the Blue Devils. Known for his toughness and court awareness, he was named East Coast Conference Defensive Player of the Year as a senior.

While many players leave college unsure of their next move, Sellers already had a clear vision.

"I knew I was going to coach," he said. "Even when I was a player... I knew it wasn't going to last forever, and I wanted to be around basketball."

After graduating, Sellers stayed at CCSU as a graduate assistant under new head coach Mark Adams. At the same time, he was drawing interest from the United States Basketball League (USBL), a professional men's summer basketball league. At the time, the USBL was considered a developmental league, giving players a chance to earn a spot on an NBA or Continental Basketball Association (CBA) roster.

But just as Sellers was preparing to take that next step and play in the USBL, he suffered a major setback, breaking his ankle during an offseason workout. The injury sidelined him for an extended period and ultimately cost him not only a shot at playing in the USBL, but also his best chance of making it to the NBA.

However, Sellers' dream of playing professionally wasn't over just yet. As he recovered from his injury and worked his way back into shape, he began participating in basketball training camps. At one of these camps, hosted by UConn, he was spotted by Tony Hanson, a former UConn standout who was then serving as a player-coach for the Tees Valley Mohawks, a top-tier professional basketball team in England.

Hanson recruited Sellers to join him overseas.

"Tony called me and said, 'Hey man, I think I have an opportunity for you here. We got out to a really slow start in England, and we need to bring a foreigner over. Would you be interested?'" Sellers recalled. With Coach Adams' blessing, Sellers packed his bags and left for Middlesbrough, England, ready to finally begin his professional play-

ing career. In his first year there, the Mohawks went to the British Basketball League championship.

Despite early success in England, Sellers soon suffered another setback, an injury to his iliotibial (IT) band that required surgery. After dealing with two significant injuries in a short span, he began to realize that his playing career might be nearing its end. Around that time, a friend offered him an assistant coaching job at St. Thomas Aquinas High School, a Roman Catholic school in New Britain.

Sellers had a deal lined up to play in Sweden, but he began to question whether it was worth continuing to chase short-term contracts overseas. The opportunity to start building a coaching career, back home, in a familiar community, proved too compelling to ignore.

"I just put two and two together," Sellers said. "Am I going to keep going to Sweden, England, messing around, or is it time to get my career started? So, I just chose the career part of it and came back and started coaching high school."

Sellers spent the next five years (1994–1999) coaching at St. Thomas Aquinas High School. He began as an assistant coach for three seasons before being promoted to head coach for his final two years with the program.

He said his coaching journey truly began at Central Connecticut under Coach Howie Dickenman, a figure he credits as a major influence.

"It all started here," Sellers said. "It all started with Coach Dickenman at Central Connecticut."

Dickenman, a respected name in college basketball circles, had served as an assistant at UConn under Jim Calhoun, where he played a key role in recruiting standout players like Ray Allen, Donyell Marshall and Sellers' younger brother, Rod Sellers. When he returned to his alma mater to take over the head coaching job at CCSU, he brought Patrick Sellers on board near the end of his high school coaching tenure.

Sellers, who was transitioning from coaching at the high school and AAU levels, admitted he was still "young and green" when he arrived. But under Dickenman's guidance, he said he quickly

learned the importance of detail.

"I learned so much," Sellers said. "When you're recruiting a player, we had to know his guidance counselor, his favorite food, who's his favorite player, what does he like to do. We had to know every little detail, and when we did the scouting report, we couldn't leave any stone unturned."

That experience, Sellers said, laid the foundation for the rest of his career.

"When I left to go to UMass and then UConn and Creighton and all the other places, everything was easy," he said, "because my upbringing was four years of working at Central Connecticut with Coach Dickenman. It really prepared me."

During Sellers' four-year stint as an assistant at CCSU, the Blue Devils captured Northeast Conference regular season and tournament titles in both 2000 and 2002. The program also earned NCAA Tournament berths in each of those championship seasons.

Sellers departed Central in 2003 to join the coaching staff at UMass, marking the beginning of a nearly two-decade journey through the ranks of college basketball. After one season in Amherst, he returned to his home state to join the University of Connecticut, initially serving as director of basketball operations from 2004 to 2007. In 2007, he was promoted to associate head coach under Hall of Famer Jim Calhoun, helping guide the Huskies through multiple NCAA Tournament appearances.

But the grind of recruiting at the high-major level eventually wore him down. The constant travel, calls and pressure meant he was no longer enjoying the game the way he once had. So in 2010, when the opportunity came to coach professionally in China, Sellers saw it as a chance to reset and reconnect with what he loved most, the game itself.

"China came at the right time," Sellers said. "At that point, I had been recruiting for so long... recruiting was nonstop, 24/7, especially when you're at a high-major situation."

He joined the coaching staff of Shanxi Zhongyu in the Chi-

nese Basketball Association, where he found a renewed sense of purpose. The job re-ignited the love he had for the game. “China was just refreshing because it ended up being all basketball. It was a chance to coach pros... and it was just strictly basketball, no recruiting,” he said. “It helped me sharpen my game. I would call up college coaches, NBA coaches. I was working on my game as far as out-of-bounds plays, what you do on defense, ball screens... all the little nuances.”

The roster was full of high-level talent. NBA veterans like Stephon Marbury and Jamal Sampson passed through the program, as did standout overseas players like Sam Douglas. Sellers also crossed paths with God Shammgod, now a player development coach with the Dallas Mavericks.

“[China] was just like a basketball clinic... from guys who played in the professional leagues, guys who knew all the tricks of the trade,” Sellers said. “I learned a lot that I was able to teach to younger guys when I got back to college.”

He left China in 2011 and returned to the world of college basketball, joining Hofstra’s coaching staff. From that point on, he worked exclusively as an assistant coach. His year overseas had reaffirmed something he already knew, that his place was on the court, not behind a desk or in a front-office role.

In 2016, while coaching at DePaul, Sellers saw a familiar opportunity arise, the head coaching job at Central Connecticut State University, his alma mater. As both a former player and assistant coach at CCSU, Sellers had deep ties to the program. He applied, interviewed and quickly became a serious candidate.

“One of my college buddies always said, ‘If you look back at Central Connecticut’s history, the guys who’ve been successful at this school have been Central Connecticut alums, guys who’ve played here,’” Sellers recalled. “‘They know the ins and outs of the school, they know what you’re working with, they know the strong points and they know the weaknesses.’ And so I said something like that in my interview too.”

But the university went in a different direction, hiring former NBA forward Donyell Marshall to lead the team.

“I think they believed in me [in 2016],” Sellers reflected. “It was just... a big former NBA player type guy that was hard to say no to.”

Although disappointed, another opportunity soon emerged, one that may have been even more appealing. The Houston Rockets, one of the NBA’s most storied franchises, offered Sellers a front-office position with elevated responsibilities in scouting and player evaluation, work that often serves as a stepping stone to long-term NBA careers.

For many, it would have been a dream job. But for Sellers, the position seemed like a step backward, requiring him to be away from the court and the action that he thrived off of. His time in China had reminded him of just who he was.

“I love working guys out. I love being in the gym,” Sellers said. “It’s hard to just be a front office guy and watch, take notes and make decisions. I want to be on the court and in the game.”

Still, out of respect, he flew to Houston to meet with then-Rockets general manager Daryl Morey. He had breakfast with members of the organization, including Nick Nurse, then head coach of the team’s G League affiliate. They suggested he could occasionally spend time on the court if he needed to “get his fix.”

But for Sellers, it wasn’t enough. “I said, ‘Let me sleep on it,’” he recalled. “Then I flew back and said, ‘No thanks. I need to be on the court.’”

It was a defining moment, not just in his career, but in his clarity. For all the prestige the NBA could offer, Sellers never lost sight of what mattered most, coaching.

In 2021, five years after being passed over for the CCSU head coaching job, Sellers got a second chance, and this time, the circumstances were different. The university had a new Director of Athletics, Tom Pincince, who saw Sellers not just as a qualified candidate, but as someone uniquely equipped to rebuild the program from the ground up.

“[Tom] said, ‘Pat, you know the strengths and weaknesses of this school, so you know how to recruit with that mindset. We want guys like you,’” Sellers recalled.

This time, he got the job.

Sellers wasted no time establishing the identity he wanted for the program, unselfish, hard-working, and tough, just like the city it represented.

“New Britain’s a blue-collar town. That’s the place that we’re at, and so that’s what we recruited,” he said.

Several of the players Sellers brought in during his first year were already on his radar from his time at Fairfield or had been recommended by coaching contacts. From the start, he could tell they were the right fit.

“We knew right at the beginning that these guys were really good kids,” Sellers said. “We knew that they were hard workers, and they were hungry to prove to people that they were overlooked, and that fit what we were looking for. That blue collar, underdog mentality.”

In his first recruiting class, Sellers brought in eight players, four of whom would stay with the program through all four years: Jayden Brown, Joe Ostrowsky, Devante Sweatman, and Abdul Momoh.

In Sellers’ first season with his new team, the Blue Devils went 8-24. In his second, they improved slightly to 10-22. The progress was modest, but the foundation was starting to solidify.

“We were new,” Sellers said. “We were growing as a staff and they were growing as players. So we had to figure things out in both of those years.”

While the win totals remained low, the team was far more competitive than the record suggested. In Year 2 alone, Central lost nine games in which it led during the second half, many of them by just a possession or two.

“If you win those games, you’re looking at 18 or 19 wins,” Sellers said. “We knew we were close.”

That belief never wavered. Inside the locker room, the message stayed consistent. Players were buying in. The system was working. They just needed time.

“We’d come into the locker room, have our team meeting, watch the film and say, ‘Hey fellas, we’re this close,’” Sellers

said. “‘We’re this close to being 5-4 instead of 0-9.’ I told them, ‘That’s a big difference... The stated course is going to turn for us,’ and eventually, it turned.”

Year 3 was when all the pieces finally started to come together for Sellers and the Blue Devils. It was also the year that saw the arrival of Jordan Jones, a high-motor guard who would become a cornerstone of the program. Like Sellers, Jones hailed from Florence, South Carolina, a connection that made their bond even stronger.

With a maturing core of four-year players and a new leader in Jones, Central took a major step forward.

In the 2023-24 season, the Blue Devils jumped 10 wins to finish 20-11. It was their first winning season since 2010-11 and clear evidence that Sellers’ blueprint was working. Central captured the Northeast Conference regular season title and advanced to the conference tournament semifinals.

The transformation didn’t go unnoticed. Sellers was named NEC Coach of the Year, a recognition of both the team’s success and the rebuild that made it possible.

And while the Blue Devils fell short of the conference finals, the momentum was undeniable. The culture was in place, the foundation was solid and the belief was growing. The stage was set for what would become an even more historic season.

Building on their first winning year in over a decade, the Blue Devils returned in the 2024-25 season with experience, depth and belief. They didn’t just maintain their momentum, they elevated it. Central finished the regular season 25-7 and captured their second consecutive Northeast Conference regular season title for the first time in program history.

The accolades reflected their dominance. Jordan Jones was named Northeast Conference Player of the Year, becoming the first Blue Devil to win the award since Ken Horton in 2012. Abdul Momoh, one of the original recruits from Sellers’ first year, was named NEC Defensive Player of the Year.

And Sellers was once again awarded NEC Coach of the Year, further cementing his role in one of the program’s most impressive turnarounds.

Riding the nation’s longest active winning streak at 14 games, Central returned to the NEC championship game for the first time since 2007, playing in front of a packed gym in New Britain. But the dream ending slipped away in a 46-43 loss to Saint Francis (PA).

The text messages came pouring in.

“After that St. Francis, PA game, I got a million texts,” Sellers said. “‘Oh, sorry about the loss,’ blah blah blah. ‘Great season,’ this and that.”

But Sellers didn’t dwell on it, and he didn’t want his players to either. He thought back to his time at UConn, when his team lost a six-overtime thriller to Syracuse, and associate head coach George Blaney told them something that stuck with him for years: People are going to talk about this game for the rest of your life.

So that’s exactly what Sellers told his team.

“I said something similar,” he recalled. “I said, ‘Hey man, you guys [are] gonna always be remembered. You had a great year, blah blah blah. It didn’t go the way we wanted it, but... the beauty of basketball is you got the next season.’”

For some, that next season will mean another year in a Central uniform. For others, it may come as a pro player or coach. Either way, Sellers wanted them to know this wasn’t the end, just another step in the journey.

That included himself, already shifting focus to what’s next.

“People would call me and ask, ‘Are you OK?’,” he said. “And I’m like, ‘Hey man, the next season is upon us. We’re working on putting together the roster so we can have another fun run and exciting time.’”

Nearly four decades after walking into Detrick Gymnasium as a freshman with no idea what lay ahead, Patrick Sellers now walks in with purpose, not just as a head coach, but as the heart of a program he helped build, lost, and brought back. The dream didn’t end with a final score. It lives in what comes next.



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Stoll's Block Secures Central's 10-7 win, Remains Unbeaten in NEC Play

By Noah Gavin
Staff Writer

As LIU kicker Will Johnson attempted a field goal as time expired, CCSU senior Jack Stoll leaped forward and blocked it, causing celebration to erupt on the field as time was completely out for Long Island University.

In a close contest, LIU moved the ball 56 yards downfield on their last drive of the game.

The Sharks had the ball inside CCSU's 20-yard line and ran six total plays in the red zone while being as close as the 1-yard line, but the Blue Devils' hard stand forced a field goal attempt.

Alongside Stoll's blocked field goal attempt, he also had 12 tackles, eight of them solo.

Stoll credited his heroics to a team effort.

"[The blocked field goal] felt great, but it's all credit to the D-line, putting a big push right in the middle so I could sneak through off the edge and make a big play for the team," he said.

He also expressed what he enjoys most about the team.

"The best thing about our team is we all play as one unit," Stoll said. "That's our biggest pride; we work together as a team better than anyone in this conference."

This was the second blocked field goal of the game, the first coming from sophomore Stylz Mitchell

earlier in the fourth quarter after the Blue Devils held the Sharks out of the red zone despite allowing more than 70 yards of offense.

Senior quarterback Brady Olson gave a lot of credit to the defensive plays made like these to keep the Blue Devils in the game.

"We struggled a little bit on offense," he said. "But the defense definitely helped us. They played a heck of a game, lights out."

Central's defense was a huge factor for the Sharks, as they were held to 0 points and only 43 yards of offense in the first half.

The offense did put decisive points on the board, though. The first came from freshman kicker Jack Hennessey's first-half field goal, capping a 56-yard drive.

Olson kept that drive alive on a 12-yard rush in a huge third-and-1 play.

Those were the lone points of the first half for both teams, in what was a slow start to the game for both offenses.

The Sharks scored their only points on a 3-yard touchdown pass from quarterback Luca Stanzani, caught by Sharks running back O'Shawn Ross.

This touchdown came just as time was running out in the third quarter, after a 77-yard drive that came off a missed field goal attempt from the Blue Devils.

The offense answered right back for the next drive, however, scoring a touchdown on a 69-yard drive. 51 yards of the yards came on a deep touchdown pass from Olson caught to wide receiver

Donovan Wadley.

After the blocked field goal, this touchdown was the deciding score in the contest.

Olson made many passes caught by his receivers, contributing to his 200 passing yards of 317 total yards of offense for the Blue Devils, and was happy to see the success it brought to the team.

"They were attacking the football in the air, which I love to see," Olson said. "They made some huge plays down the end that definitely helped us."

This win moves CCSU to 4-0 in conference play, guarantees the Blue Devils at least a .500 season for the second straight year, and gives them a winning record in conference play this season.

Head coach Adam Lechtenberg was happy with the difference

the big defensive plays down the stretch made and was just happy to notch the conference win.

"We played well on defense," Lechtenberg said. "Offense didn't play as well as I'd like, missed plays, missed opportunities, but we don't care if we win by 50-48 or 10-7. It doesn't matter to us."

He was happy with the fight the Blue Devils put in every game.

"LIU is a very talented team, so we knew it would be a tough game and we made some big plays at the end," he said. "It's close every week in this league. Everybody's good so we're just fortunate to get a win."

Lechtenberg said the team is ready to keep the conference play going.

"We only worry about next week now," he said. "We don't worry about a streak or anything like that."

Olson backed up Lechtenberg's "on to the next" mentality.

"We're going to get back to the lab, get back to being on the same page, being more consistent," Olson said. "That's our job for next week."

The Blue Devils will host the Stonehill Skyhawks at Arute Field Saturday, Nov. 8, looking to keep their undefeated conference play going.



Defense wins championships, and for the Blue Devils it keeps their NEC title hopes alive; **Andrew O'Sullivan The Recorder**



CCSU SCHEDULE



Women's Soccer

November 6 – @ FDU at 4 PM

November 9 – @ NEC Championship (If Win on Nov. 6)

Women's Swimming & Diving

November 8 – vs. Binghamton at 1 PM

Men's Soccer

November 6 – vs. Le Moyne at 3 PM

November 9 – @ Saint Francis at 2 PM

Women's Volleyball

November 7 – vs. New Haven at 6 PM

November 8 – vs. New Haven at 5 PM

Men's Basketball

November 6 – @ Quinnipiac at 7 PM

November 11 – @ Boston College at 7 PM

Women's Basketball

November 10 – @ Providence at 7 PM

Football

November 8 – vs. Stonehill at Noon