

The Recorder

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Students Frustrated by FAFSA Delays

BY SAVANNA YELLING
Managing & News Editor

Navigating the delays and glitches in the Free Application for Federal Student Aid form has left some CCSU students frustrated.

FAFSA attempted to revamp the form by having “fewer questions and more automated features,” according to the Washington Post. While FAFSA tried to make the form easier, continuous delays and technical difficulties have occurred.

“My experience with FAFSA this year was frustrating,” Natalie Blacker, a junior secondary history education major, said.

The FAFSA delays leave students unclear of how much financial aid they will receive in the upcoming school year.



Photo: Keysa Mateo

“I have always done it the second it comes out to get it out of the way, and this year’s ‘testing’ time was very annoying, as it would claim to be open, but only a few people could do it at a time. With little-to-no updates, I found myself getting very frustrated with the process.”

Blacker said that

while the process was rocky, she was still able to complete the form and register for financial aid, but that did not solve the problem.

“I still have no idea how much aid I will receive next year and that’s kind of scary,” Blacker said. “I do pay for my own bills and such. So it’s nerve-wracking not

knowing how much I will have over my head.”

The CCSU Financial Aid Office sent an email to all students on Jan. 8 informing them that FAFSA was available. There were no follow-up communications regarding the delays.

“I think CCSU could’ve done a better job communicating with

students about these delays and potentially sped up their own work to get our aid out,” Blacker said. “I do understand it’s not CCSU’s fault that the form was late, but I feel like they could’ve done something by now.”

Rebecca Hayward, a CCSU financial counselor, said the financial aid office has been in communication with students to help them navigate the delays.

“We are just letting the student know to either check to see if they have an activity on their student aid account through FAFSA to answer any additional questions or we assist with the FAFSA in the (financial aid) office,” Hayward said. “We are now receiving the FAFSA at the university and have already begun offering awards for next year.”

SGA Sees 72% Decline in Votes

BY SAVANNA YELLING
Managing & News Editor

With a strikingly low voter turnout for the 2024 election, the Student Government Association experienced a steep 72.5% decline in votes since the 2022 elections.

Leticia Castro, SGA treasurer-elect, said she chalks these results up to a general disinterest in voting on a broader scale, extending to local and presidential elections.

“Unfortunately, people don’t want to go out and register to vote,” Castro said. “People don’t want to vote. So, I wasn’t surprised when I saw the

low number. I was taken aback by how low it was, but not surprised that it was low.”

In this year’s election, 747 votes were cast for president, vice president and treasurer. In 2022, there were 2,714 total votes, and in 2023, there were 2,157 total votes.

Castro said this theme was present within SGA as they struggled to find students to run for these roles.

“We extended the deadline to sign up to run for those positions,”

Castro said. “Because initially, it was a week ... or two weeks in February, which we extended all the way to March. It had to be done because no one signed up for those positions.”

While students may be involved in the campus community by joining clubs, this does not directly correlate to being involved in student government, Castro said.

“It’s more, ‘I’m going to stay in my club and pick out who’s running our executive board in our bubble,’ I’m hoping that we can figure out how to get more people to vote for senators for maybe next semester,” Castro

said. “And seeing if more people are willing to just find the process.”

Getting students involved and informed is one of Castro’s many goals in office. She said teaching students how to get on CCSU Club Central to vote is “half the battle.”

One method for increasing student involvement that Castro looks to implement is a place for students to vocalize their concerns.

“I think the other thing we’ve talked about is having a town hall where the student body can just come tell us what their issues are and tell us what they would like to see changed or even what they hope to see in the

future,” Castro said.

In the outreach Castro has done with registered voters and student voters, she said she has found a common theme of disengagement.

Castro said she frequently hears “I don’t care” from students. She also said she has volunteered at three voter registration events and heard similar responses there.

“More than half the people that I ask say, ‘Why would I bother?’ and that’s the same thing I’m seeing here,” Castro said. “Why would I bother? It’s not like it matters. The campus one matters a lot less than the national one, obviously. But it still matters, right?”

**THE RECORDER
OFFICE**

Student Center
1615 Stanley Street
New Britain, CT 06050
860.832.3744
editor@centralrecorder.com
centralrecorder.org

Printed By
Valley Publishing Company

Editor-in-Chief

Andrew DeCapua

**Managing & News
Editor**

Savanna Yelling

Sports Editor

Ian Yale

Lifestyle Editor

Jayden Klaus

Associate News Editor

Nathalia Blair
Madison Musco

Layout Editor

Andrew DeCapua

Social Media Editor

Lucas Amoroso

Staff Writers

Dylan Braccia
Daschall Hayes
Omar Gonzalez-Solano
Hollie David

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Religious Tensions on Campus: Muslim and Jewish Student Perspectives

BY SAVANNA YELLING
Managing & News Editor

Tensions and biases towards Muslim and Jewish people have escalated on a local, national and global scale. CCSU students said they have felt this pressure, even within the confines of campus.

Columbia University's president canceled classes and switched to hybrid learning in light of recent protests. Dozens of Yale students were arrested for protesting. While CCSU has held protests without legal incident, tensions have since flared.

"Free ... Free Palestine," a crowd chanted at CCSU's Students for Justice in Palestine and the CCSU Intersectional Justice Coalition's rally in support of Palestine on April 11.

Vanessa Paddy, a Jewish student, said that professors are accommodating and welcoming, but the protests are not.

"I would say the challenges really only come from the 'Free Palestine' movement because both on college campuses and in public spaces, they target visibly Jewish people or people who have made it known they are Jewish," Paddy said.

She said she is thankful not to have encountered any challenges or discrimination due to her identity but said, "It makes me feel unsafe on campus when they host protests."

Nylamar Samuels, a Muslim student who is a member of the Muslim Student Association and CCSU Students for Justice in Palestine, said that the administration has been repressing the recent protests.

"We did our protest for Palestine ... but it was supposed to be held the week before," Samuels said about the rally and vigil originally sched-



Photo: Instagram/@ccsusjp

uled for April 4. "There was a post saying that it was due to weather, but it was really because admin was saying they (SJP) didn't have 'all the boxes checked,' even though they did."

Lily Mercado, co-founder and president of the CCSU IJC, said the administration canceled the vigil and "have been unable to support that decision by citing what policy we had violated."

Jodi Latina, associate vice president of University Communications and Media, said the event was postponed due to policy, as the event was initially labeled as a "walkout," which is considered a disruption by CSCU's Free Speech Guidelines.

"The walkout was added to the initial request after the event was approved as a rally and vigil," Latina said. "It was clear through advertising materials promoting 'A Walkout, Rally and Vigil' that the club was promoting an event that was not pre-approved by SALD as required."

Latina said club leaders and advisors were informed in detail by the director of SALD and that clubs were informed on the event approval process via email last semester.

"It states that if

student clubs change what was approved, they will have to go back through the approval process, or the event may be postponed (or) canceled," Latina said. "And that is exactly what happened here. The students involved were a part of this discussion and made aware of the issues."

Samuels said the institution is "completely silent" on the issue.

"If you're silent on this issue, you have picked the side of the oppressors," Samuels said. "There are people who have direct connection to (Palestine). She's (Toro) not acknowledging that at all. Imagine going to school, and 83 of your family members were wiped away by a bomb. That's what happened to one of my friends."

On Oct. 10, the Student Government Association sent an email to all students with the subject line "TODAY: CALL TO ACTION!" inviting students to an "All Out for Palestine" protest. CCSU President Zulma Toro sent a follow-up email the same day apologizing and saying that SGA took one side and that it was a mistake.

"I was so deeply disturbed by that," Samuels said. "I even ended up having a meeting with her about that email being

sent out, and then after she had an email about an Antisemitism Task Force right after that. It's just like, where's the one on Islamophobia? Where is you all talking about what's actually happening? But it's just so one-sided. And it's because this is a state-funded institution. So, they're not trying to pick sides. But everything that they're being having sent out is one-sided."

This task force has since evolved into the Committee on Anti-Semitism.

"A big part of that committee is education," the campus Jewish faith consultant, Steven Bernstein, said. "Not just dealing with antisemitism, but the idea that it's a lot harder to hate someone, that you know. It's a lot harder to hate a group if you know that group."

This is a sentiment that Paddy said would leave room for less hate on campus. She said school events that educate students on different religions and cultures would be beneficial.

"I think we are all stronger together, and the more we know about each other, the more tolerant we are," Paddy said.

Along with feeling unsafe, Paddy said she has felt anger and frustration with the narratives being spread through the pro-Palestine movement.

"People have the freedom of speech, of course, but that doesn't mean their speech doesn't drive hate and misinformation," Paddy said. "I wish there was a larger voice for truth out there."

The recent rise in pro-Palestine protests and activism has not been met with backlash from the Jewish community because "Some of those voices are scared into silence," Bernstein said.

CCSU's Wellness Coaching Set for Expansion

BY MADISON MUSCO
Associate News Editor

CCSU's Wellness Coaching program surpassed its goal of 100 signups by March 2024, setting the program on the path toward expansion for Fall 2024.

Rec Central's program has taken a peer mentoring approach to mind-body wellness where students can sign up with a coach and work on their fitness goals without the more serious nature of working with a trainer.

Delia McGuire, a senior at CCSU and one of the program's founders, said that while other campuses have wellness coaching programs, Central's is different because

it is centered around physical exercises like weight training and yoga.

"Physical exercise and movement has just been shown as a really effective way to combat, like, mental struggles," McGuire said. "All different types of mental struggles like burnout, anxiety, depression, like, the list goes on. And so we were sort of thinking, like, how we could encourage people to start going into the gym and using exercise and physical movement as a way to just make themselves feel better as a way to just promote wellness for themselves?"

McGuire said that because of the program's success, they can hire more coaches next semester and ultimately serve

more students through Wellness Coaching.

Mikaela Andarowski, area supervisor of marketing and communications at Rec Central, sees between four and five clients per week, making her the busiest of the six wellness coaches in the program.

"At the end of the day, their end goal is to get into the gym and get comfortable," she said. "So that's like, the great thing about it is that every single person that we see is different. But we help them achieve all their goals, no matter how big or small it is."

Some students are referred to Wellness Coaching through counselors on campus, but coaches don't counsel

students. McGuire said they've set the boundary of not giving advice but will always listen to their clients, who often open up during their workout sessions.

"I'll work with somebody, and you know, they might be really shy their first session," McGuire said. "And they'll come back in a few sessions and be like, 'you know, I'm really glad you met with me, like this thing happened to me a couple weeks ago, and it was really hard.' and this and that. And then it's just one of those things where sometimes they just want someone to listen to them who's not like sitting down in a counseling center."

As the end of the semester approaches, Andarowski said that

Wellness Coaching can be a useful resource for students who are fighting burnout and feeling run-down.

"This is the time of the semester that it benefits the most," she said. "I've had a few people that I worked with this week, just talking about their week. It's basically the same thing, like, 'I'm not feeling school,' or like 'I'm done, I'm ready to get it over with.' And I just kind of take that as a perspective of while you're here right now, we don't have to worry about school, we have an hour to ourselves."

Andarowski said that anyone who is a part of the campus community, including graduate students and faculty, can sign up for Wellness Coaching through the Rec Central website.

OPINION

Unlocking Access to Education: Embracing Open Educational Resources

BY ANDREW DECAPUA
Editor-in-Chief

As the cost of education continues to soar, students face formidable barriers in accessing essential resources. Open educational resources break down these barriers, allowing students, regardless of their financial situation, access to the materials they need to succeed in any course.

To ease the financial burden on students, colleges and universities in Connecticut should incorporate more open educational resources. By doing so, students would have access to free or low-cost learning materials, ultimately reducing the overall cost of their education.

Statistics show that the average cost of textbooks in 2023 was as high as \$600 per academic year, according to Education Data Initiative.

Because the cost is so high, students often have to work more to afford expensive textbooks, while some go without eating so that they can afford textbooks for their courses.

According to the Education Data Initiative, 25% of students said they worked extra hours to afford textbooks, and 11% said they skipped meals to afford to pay for textbooks.

Open educational resources are free-to-use educational materials that are in the public domain or licensed for free use. They provide an opportunity for colleges and universities to help alleviate some of the financial burdens students face.

Professors in Connecticut and around the country are aware of open educational resources and have been increasingly implementing them into their courses. However, expensive textbooks or digital versions of

those textbooks are still predominantly used in college courses around the country.

According to an article from Inside Higher Ed on Sept. 7, 2023, usage and awareness of open educational resources reached an all-time high; 29% of professors surveyed said they use open educational resources in their courses, and 72% said they are aware of them.

Open educational resources are a cost-effective alternative to traditional textbooks. In addition to being budget-friendly, open educational resources can significantly enhance student engagement and success rates.

I have taken courses at Central Connecticut State University with professors who use open educational resources, and I have found that it is much easier to engage with open edu-

cational resources than with expensive, often confusing textbooks. Professors can present open educational resources in a more understandable and straightforward way than a textbook purchased at a university bookstore.

Professors who choose to use open educational resources send a message to their students that they care and are mindful of the stress that students face regarding textbook expenses. This makes students more receptive and ultimately helps them succeed in the course.

According to a study from the International Journal of Open Educational Resources, 75% of students surveyed said their grades and motivation to do well improved in courses that utilized open educational resources.

Opponents of open educational resources argue that quality-control

issues surround them because anyone is allowed to create open educational resources. However, students are not left to their own devices when seeking out open educational resources. Professors vet open educational resources before assigning them to ensure students receive credible, accurate information.

Adopting open educational resources not only eases the financial challenges students face but also fosters a supportive and inclusive learning environment. Professors who use open educational resources signal a commitment to student welfare and academic success. If entire universities decided to implement open educational resources in a wider selection of courses, it could lower the cost of education, thus making higher education a viable option for people who otherwise wouldn't be able to afford it.

Spring Concert Brings an Exciting Time to CCSU Campus

BY DASCHALL HAYES
Staff Writer

New York rapper Rich The Kid and Rhode Island reality television personality DJ Pauly D, of “Jersey Shore” fame, performed at Central Connecticut State University on April 20.

From 8-11 p.m., students, faculty and guests were elated as the 2024 Spring Concert, “The New Wave,” commenced.

Central Activities Network, Student Government Association, Africana Students Organization and the Latin American Students Organization sponsored and held the beach-themed event at Detrick Gymnasium inside Harrison J. Kaiser Hall.

Before the concert took off, the campus held the Boardwalk Market Pop-Up, selling vintage clothing, handmade accessories, and food. There were also inflatable toys and a photo booth for taking pictures.

Clothing vendor and former CCSU student Raya Pons, professionally known as Silk Switchblade, said she enjoyed selling her clothes in such a fun atmosphere as the Boardwalk Market.

“I love the interactive games and the beach theme, it gives off



Photo: Daschall Hayes

the positive summer vibes that we all need right now,” Pons said.

Freshman Jackson Sloan said the Boardwalk Market was a good time, and the vendors had a boatload of interesting clothes to purchase.

“I didn’t have any cash on me, but there were a ton of different things I would’ve bought,” Sloan said. “I also had a lot of fun with the blowup structures like the little obstacle course and the slide.”

At the main event, Rich The Kid went up first and played his biggest and most classic hits, including “New Freezer,” featuring Kendrick Lamar, “Plug Walk,” to the number one single on Billboard Hot 100, “Carnival” by Kanye West & Ty Dolla \$ign, which he

played three times.

CCSU student Jayden Meier said that getting last-minute tickets was a blessing in disguise, and he got to shake hands with Rich the Kid.

“I was chilling in the front row, and the man himself, Rich the Kid, decided to come up to the gate and dap me up,” Meier said. “I got the whole thing on video, so it’s a moment I can relive forever.”

Rich The Kid stayed on an extra few minutes to play “Carnival” again, which partially hindered the start of DJ Pauly D’s set.

Noah Derby said Rich The Kid had his hype up the whole night.

“The boosted bass could have knocked out my eardrums but that’s fine because the set was

lit,” Derby said.

Pauly D went on stage and greeted the audience. He then put on a show where he played the definitive bops of the past 20 years.

Student Raina Kemper said she enjoyed the show and it was a blast.

“The energy was present in the room,” Kemper said. “Sadly, Pauly was late, but it was still a great time.”

Freshman Nicholas Carroccio said the show was well-planned and was a perfect way to round out the school year. He said he hopes to see more big acts on campus to come.

“It was cool. I think they could get Baby Keem or someone like that for next year,” Carroccio said.

Student Elijah Smith said that CCSU fumbled by picking artists nobody listens to anymore, and they should’ve chosen someone who is relevant to the youth today.

“I feel they had a lot of potential for some artists that people listen to now, like 41, Lil Tjay, or even Sleepy Hollow,” Smith said. I feel like they had so many options for artists, and they chose one that people would’ve gone crazy over six years ago.”

It is rumored that Rich The Kid will release his fourth studio album, “Life’s A Gamble,” in 2024 after not releasing a studio album in over four years. DJ Pauly D continues to travel around the world deejaying, starring on MTV’s “Jersey Shore: Family Vacation” and narrating “All-Star Shore” alongside Snooki on Paramount+.

DJ Pauly D declined to speak about the event, but in an interview with James Clark, metal director on 107.7 WFCS The Edge, Rich The Kid said he’s ecstatic to share his new record with the world and hopes fans understand that the wait will be worth it.

“It’s a project I’ve been working on for like three years so I put everything into it, for sure,” Rich The Kid said.

Fashion Club’s Show Makes a Comeback



Photo: Ryan Zamboni

BY HANEEN ALKABASI
Contributor

Fashion Design Club highlighted “states of

being” at Friday night’s fashion show.

Damani Hough, the Fashion Club vice president, did the “state of being high profile.”

“I thought of the outfits before I thought of the ‘state of being,’” Hough said.

She said the club asked designers for a word and a description of what that word means to them. According to Damani, being high profile is highly sought after but rarely obtained. It’s like a rose trapped in a glass display, she said.

The club had vendors outside Torp

Theater, from Cielv, who specializes in hand-carved jewelry, to 906 Vaby, who sold their latest streetwear drop.

Johnson and Wales University students Marleesa May and Moya Johnson said they came out to support a friend in the show.

May said she was excited to see what they were bringing and that the different outfits associated with the various states of mind all popped out.

Johnson, a fashion business and merchandising major, said she is very

interested in fashion.

She said she likes seeing a model’s personality come through as they walk and express themselves down the aisle.

Johnson said she has been in fashion shows and is excited to see it from an audience’s point of view.

CCSU Student Jade Shaheed said she feels like the show went well.

“Not as good as ASO [African Student Organization], but definitely pretty good,” Shaheed said. “I’d come again.”

A Magical Night at IRC's Finest Pageant

BY JAYDEN KLAUS
Lifestyle Editor

Cheer and excitement were in the air during the Inter-Residence Council's pageant, IRC's Finest, last week at Central Connecticut State University.

Held in Alumni Hall, this was the first ever IRC's Finest after being rebranded from Mr. CCSU. The event had a Disney theme, with the contestants dressing up as various characters from beloved movies. Many people came to the event, including friends and family of the contestants, to cheer them on.

Five people from the IRC competed in the event: Ian Gracia, Liam DeLaney, Angelo Delgado, Gabe Barboza, and Lincy Valeta. At the beginning of the event, all the contestants came onstage to perform a dance to Rascal Flatts' "Life is a Highway" as a homage to Pixar's "Cars" franchise. Everyone in the audience whooped and cheered for them before they exited to get into costume.

Before every contestant performed, they each had a promotional video shown to convince



Photo: Jayden Klaus

the panel of judges why they deserved to win. The videos were all very silly and comical, making the audience laugh. It was great to see that the contest was so light-hearted and everyone was doing it all in good fun.

Barboza was first to perform and came onstage dressed as Prince Eric from "The Little Mermaid." Befitting his costume, Barboza sang "Under the Sea" for his performance. DeLaney was up next in costume as Flynn Rider from "Tangled." DeLaney performed a quick yet witty comedy sketch that had the audience roaring with laughter. Valeta dressed as Mirabel from "Encanto"

and delivered a beautiful rendition of "I Dreamed a Dream" from the musical "Les Misérables."

Delgado was dressed as Russel from "Up" and brought back the comedy with a goofy magic trick that involved audience participation. Fellow contestant Gracia was selected as a participant and had another audience member's selected card on him. Gracia was the Genie from "Aladdin" and gave a delightful performance on the saxophone.

Everyone gave it their all and clearly had a good time doing so. All the performances were a delight to watch, and the audience enjoyed them

immensely, applauding and cheering for all the participants.

While the judges were deliberating a winner, two raffles were held, with several people winning prizes.

At the end of the deliberations, Valeta was crowned the winner of IRC's Finest, with Gracia and Barboza taking second and third, respectively.

After the pageant concluded, the attendees and contestants piled into Semesters for the after-party, which functioned as the week's Devil's Den at 10.

Giulianna Hernandez said that she found the event to be fun to watch.

"It is pretty cute," Hernandez said. "Everyone was having fun. It's a really funny time."

Matthew Krajewski said he found the event well-curated and organized.

"A lot of thought and heart was put into it by the performers, and you could tell that," Krajewski said.

Barboza said that performing in the pageant was a lot of fun.

"It was a little nerve-wracking, but that's to be expected," Barboza said.

Barboza said that he enjoyed the other contestants' performances as well.

"That was my favorite part," Barboza said. "Just watching the others and their talents."

Valeta said she also liked the performing part of the event.

"It was relaxing," Valeta said. "I'm used to performing, so it was pretty easy."

Valeta said that she was really happy that she was able to win IRC's Finest.

"It feels good to win," Valeta said. "I feel validated in my ability to perform in front of others."

Adrienne Lenker's "Bright Future" is Americana-Folk Poetry

BY OMAR GONZALEZ-SOLANO
Staff Writer

Adrienne Lenker, singer-songwriter and lead vocalist of Big Thief, is as prolific as ever, with a showcase of songwriting mastery in her latest full-length record, "Bright Future."

Lenker's latest work is a lyrical beauty reminiscent of works from the likes of Bob Dylan and Nick Drake, and the obvious comparisons to Elliott Smith and Joni Mitchell are unavoidable. Lenker's lyrical prowess is painted throughout her work – an oeuvre filled with devastating poetry and raw intimacies, which are all present in her latest

effort.

"Bright Future," released on March 22, is more stripped back than any of Lenker's previous solo work, with sublime Americana-influenced production. The record consists of just a few instruments, used sparingly but evocatively. In the same creative fashion as her 2020 solo record, "Songs," Lenker confined herself to a studio in Massachusetts, and came out with an album that was true to life, unabashed and unforgiving, gut-wrenching, and gorgeous, and gritty in its messy but intentional demo-style takes.

However, Lenker still manages to deliver a refreshing sound despite the subtle and acoustic folk production of the record. It's in stark contrast to Big Thief's quirky instrumentation on their 2022 record, "Dragon New Warm Mountain I Believe In You," which is perhaps a better example of Lenker's skills.

"Do you remember running? / The purity of the air around / Braiding willow branches into a crown / That love is all I want / I'm a child humming / Into the clarity of black space / Where stars shine like tears on the night's face," Lenker sings on "Real House," the opening track, lamenting memories of her past during turbulent times in her childhood.

Lenker has mastered vulnerability in

the timbre of her voice and tracks like "Vampire Empire," released in late 2023 as a Big Thief single, retain the heavy rock sound present in the original rendition. "Reeling, feeding, feeling filled by everything you fed / I see you as you see yourself through all the books you read / Overwhelmed with guilt and realizing the disease." Again, Lenker effortlessly conveys a scene with simplistic yet striking language, utilizing alliteration and change in inflections.

Lenker can balance soft tones with fervent vocals which makes for an authentic listening experience and the artistic transition from Big Thief to her solo work is her towing that line perfectly.

"Evol" and "Ruined," much like the rest of the album, highlight

unique lyrics filled with wit and clever rhyme schemes. The latter works seamlessly as the closing track, with the albums most somber vocals yet. The former may seem like a predictable play on words, but Lenker successfully and gracefully incorporates several examples of palindromes, and is able to thematically connect them.

Although "Bright Future" is a work to behold, Lenker's "Songs" may be more palatable to new fans, with more accessible production and overtly poetic lyrics. But Lenker's ability to induce emotion through her inspired diction, and still convey relatability, is some of the best of her generation. "Bright Future" is yet another classic in her catalog of captivating lyricism.

The Missed Potential of “Under the Bridge”

BY HOLLIE DAVID
Staff Writer

Hulu’s miniseries “Under the Bridge,” adapted from the novel of identical title, delves into the chilling narrative surrounding the tragic murder of Reena Virk.

Reena Virk is a 14-year-old Asian girl who immigrated from India to Canada. In many ways, she was different from her predominantly white classmates.

Unlike many Asian families in the community, Virk’s family were not practicing Sikhs. Virk’s family became Jehovah’s Witnesses after moving to Canada. They were described as a minority within a minority, making Reena feel like an outsider. Reena wanted to fit in with her predominantly white peers, who had a fixation on Los Angeles gang culture. Reena was bullied relentlessly for being overweight and for being different; she was often called a “beast” or “bearded lady.”

On Nov. 14, 1997, Virk was invited to a party. As a small crowd watched, a classmate approached Virk and put out a lit cigarette on her forehead, accusing her of trying to steal her boyfriend.

Eight teens gathered around Virk; they kicked her and burned cigarettes out on her skin. She reportedly



Photo: YouTube

cried out, “I’m sorry.” The attack stopped, and then Reena staggered away. Two classmates then approached her, 15-year-old Kelly Ellard and 16-year-old Warren Glowatski. They then punched her and bashed her head into a tree until she lost consciousness. Then they dragged Virk’s body to the edge of the Gorge, where they allegedly held her head underwater and drowned her.

Even though the police stated that race was not a motivating factor in Virk’s murder, it seems like an important aspect to bring up. Starting with when she was attacked, one of the girls extinguished a cigarette on her forehead. Sheila Batacharya compares the placement of the burn and a picture of Reena and her traditional Indian clothing, where she has a blue dot in the middle of her forehead.

The miniseries does not focus on the racism or bullying

that Virk faced or the senseless cruelty of her death. Instead, it spends the majority of its time framing her murderer as a cool, troubled, bad girl who fantasized about a gang lifestyle. At the same time, Virk is framed as a wannabe “bad girl” who failed to fit in.

Yes, Virk was a girl who wanted to fit in, but more aspects of her life and subsequent death are essential to explore, such as the reasons why she struggled so badly to fit in, i.e., racism and sexism. Her death is not just girl violence. It’s about the multiple oppressions that she faced.

Reena is not part of this narrative. We see her in passing or in small snippets. The miniseries does not seem interested in her; instead, its main focus is her murder and the author who wrote about the crime.

This adaptation of the book is heavily fictionalized, but the miniseries feels like a waste of potential.

They could have told a greater story about racism and bullying. Its critiques about young teenage girls being viewed as disposable fall flat. Because it only focuses on the main white girl’s feelings of disposableness. Even though Virk was treated as disposable by the police and community, it took them eight days to find her body. Even though there were rumors spread around the school, no one felt it was important enough to call the cops.

It also fails to acknowledge the way that the narrative, being the face of how shocking it is for suburban white girls to lash out and to violence, also has an element of racism. Where white women are viewed as demure and need to be protected against other races, most often a man of color. With this mindset, violence against someone of color is rendered invisible except when a man of

color perpetuates violence against a white woman. This thinking leads to the erasure of violence against women of color.

This miniseries is inspired by the book written by a white woman who previously lived in the town and wrote about the investigation of Virk’s murder. In an interview in Interview Magazine in 2019, the author stated, “I went home soon after [the killing] and went into the prison; I was just stunned because the girls all looked like normal, cool, young teenage girls, not particularly like killers.”

This quote summarizes the author’s view of Virk’s murderers, the cool young people who, by her depiction in the show, want them to like her. She finds it easy to empathize with them because she is more like them, a white woman from suburbia who partied where they party, compared to Virk, whom she is very different from.

This miniseries is a missed opportunity to show the multiple forms of oppression that Virk faced; instead, it chooses to highlight the white women who were affected by her crime. If they had wanted to make a miniseries about how violent girls can be in suburbia, they could have left Virk out of it.

APRIL 25, 2024

SPORTS

THE RECORDER

Softball Celebrates Seniors, Wins Series Over Merrimack



Photo: Ian Yale

BY DYLAN BRACCIA
Staff Writer

CCSU Softball hosted its senior day for the four seniors on the team on Sunday, April 21. Paige Stringer, Brooke Fedison, Kaylee Whittaker, and Meg Gorman were honored before the game.

They took on Merrimack College for the weekend series, starting with a doubleheader on Saturday.

Merrimack took the early lead in game one after blasting a two-run homer in the first.

The second inning was controversial as the third base umpire called a ruled out. Merrimack's coach stormed out, calling for an obstruction call. After minutes of the umpires meeting, the call was reversed to safe. Central coach Breanne Gleason then had her turn with the umpire, but the call stood.

"I lost track of the play because the on-deck hitter was in my way," Gleason said. "They said there was contact, which then inhibited the girl to be able to get back to the bag."

This play set up Merrimack with runners on second and third. A

routine groundout resulted in an error on a throw home, leading to a run scoring. Another error allowed two more runs.

KC Machado scored on a passed ball in the third inning, and Meg Gorman scored on a wild pitch in the fifth. These would be the only runs of the game for Central. Merrimack would take game one, 5-2.

Kaylee Whittaker only allowed two earned runs and threw seven strikeouts.

In game two, Central came back with a vengeance.

Machado opened the hitting barrage with a two-run homer in the first. Reagan Vunak added an RBI, followed by a two-RBI double from Grace Lawton.

Ava Cino added an RBI double in the second inning to extend the lead to six.

The game was capped off in the fourth inning, as Machado and Stringer hit back-to-back home runs. This was Machado's second home run of the game.

"I felt more relaxed," Machado said. "I enjoy the game. Wipe away the first game because the first game

wasn't my best. So, I was like, wipe the page, new game."

On the other side of the game, Liz Hamilton pitched great. Not only shutting out Merrimack's offense, she threw seven strikeouts and only gave up two hits in the mercy rule five innings.

As of Saturday, Central was the No. 5 seed, looking in on Merrimack as the No. 4 seed in the NEC. Gleason said she didn't talk about standings during the week leading up to the game.

"The girls know what's on the line," Gleason said. "I think in the first game, we played a little stressed. Then, in the second game, we kind of just let ourselves play our game."

After celebrating the senior class, the final game of the series took place. Central picked up right where it left off the previous game.

Stringer would start the scoring early with an RBI single in the first, followed by Cino bringing her home with an RBI single. Lawton got in on the action, hitting a sacrifice fly to score Machado. In the next inning, Machado and Cino hit an RBI single each.

Merrimack would

answer back with two runs in the third inning to make the score 5-2.

Central found itself with the bases loaded in the bottom of the fourth, and Jazmine Lasane was at bat. She blasted one to center field to clear the bases and earn herself a bases-clearing triple.

Central won the game, 8-2. Whittaker finished the game with four strikeouts and six hits.

"This class is really special," Gleason said. "Obviously, they are really good softball players, but they are just great people. I think our culture the last two years is just a product of them being just kind and good to people and treating people the right way. That is something that is hard to teach, but they bring that character themselves. It's going to be hard to see them go, but hopefully, we don't have to let them go for a few more weeks."

Even after winning the series, the team still finds itself in fifth place. Central next takes on second-place Sacred Heart University for a three-game series mid-week on Tuesday and Wednesday at SHU.

CCSU ATHLETICS
SCHEDULE

BASEBALL

April 26 vs. Le Moyne
April 27 vs. Le Moyne
April 28 vs. Le Moyne
May 3 @ Coppin State

SOFTBALL

April 25 @ UAlbany
April 25 @ UAlbany
April 30 @ Fairfield
May 4 @ Stonehill

MEN'S
TRACK & FIELD

April 25 @ Penn
April 26 @ CCSU
May 4 @ NEC
May 5 @ NEC

WOMEN'S
TRACK & FIELD

April 25 @ Penn
April 26 @ CCSU
May 4 @ NEC
May 5 @ NEC

CCSU Football Welcomes New Batch of Transfers



BY DYLAN BRACCIA
Staff Writer

Photo: Ian Yale

Jared Martino- Linebacker, Graduate Student

Jared Martino started at UMass before going to Independence Community College in Kansas. He then went to Missouri State Southern University to play Division II football. While there, he stopped playing football until he had an itch to get back out on the gridiron.

While also trying to finish his degree, he went to Framingham State University and had a good season, getting 12 sacks and two interceptions in nine games. With one season of eligibility left, he hit the transfer portal.

Originally from Walden, Massachusetts, Martino chose CCSU due to its proximity to home and connections with Central's defensive coordinator, Ron DiGravio.

"I knew Coach DiGravio for a while," Martino said. "So, I kind of felt that sense of comfort. And then being able to be close to home. My parents are only two hours away, so being able to have my family out for every game is huge for me."

So far, Martino feels very welcome and looks forward to his place with the team.

"Everyone has welcomed me with open arms," Martino said. "We are a young team, so being able to add a guy like me who's had experience and is a little older. I think that my style fits well with them on the field. Then off the field in the locker room, I think I add that mentor kind of vibe, so I think I gel perfectly with the team."

In looking ahead to the next season, Martino has his sights set on making the most of his final season.

"I came from a DIII school last year, so being able to play Division I football," Martino said. "And then, like I said, having my family out there for all the games and being able to compete at the highest level possible every single week. It's the last ride, so I'm excited to go out with a bang."

Tristan Armstrong- Linebacker, Graduate Student

Tristan Armstrong spent four years at UMass. The Covid-19 pandemic shut down his first season, gaining back a year of eligibility. Then, in his last year, an injury took him out for the season, giving him two years of eligibility. Now, with Central, he has one thing on his mind.

"It's win time, and I wouldn't have come here if I didn't think that was the case," Armstrong said. "I feel like these guys know how to win, and I'm ready to be a part of it."

Armstrong feels strongly about the team and what they are capable of.

"It seems like everybody wants to win," Armstrong said. "Everybody shows up to the meeting 15 minutes early. I think with the new guys we got coming in, we can really develop a culture."

Armstrong said he would love to step up as a leader but doesn't want to step on anyone's toes to do so.

"I would love to do that if the guys would let me," he said. "I am a fifth-year guy, and I've been around the way. I got to make sure I'm doing the right thing in every aspect to lead by example and then hopefully guys will follow."

Jayvis Rayside- Defensive Back, Graduate Student

Jayvis Rayside had a full scholarship at Bryant University. He lost his freshmen season to the pandemic and then started three full seasons there. He intended to finish his career there but wasn't offered a scholarship for his grad year. Without it, he decided to enter the portal. Rayside was talking to a few DI schools but almost went to play DII.

"I was talking to Central, but they weren't showing a lot of love," Rayside said. "Out of nowhere, they hit me up. I went on a visit. They said they'd give me a full ride, and that's about it."

Rayside knows that the transfers are here for a reason. He has experience playing Northeast Conference teams and looks to bring that knowledge to Central.

"I know that all the transfers are all coming in to play a role," Rayside said. "I do think I'll be able to come in and play a pretty big role. At the same time, I think they want us to build and mold this program."

For Rayside's final season, he said he wants to go all out.

"I'm trying to go crazy for my final season," Rayside said. "I want to give it my all, giving more than I have before."

Brady Olson- Quarterback, Junior

Brady Olson spent two years at UMass before entering the transfer portal. He got a lot of help from his uncles, who knew coach Adam Lechtenberg and ended up choosing Central. So far, he has enjoyed Central.

"I've met so many guys that I think are going to be very beneficial to our success next year," Olson said.

In looking ahead, Olson feels the team has a lot of potential for the next season and is very excited.

"One thing that the coaches really touched on is that everyone is coachable, and everyone wants to work," Olson said. "We are all excited, and there's hype around this season. I've got a great sense of what they are about, and hopefully, I can contribute to that."

There are multiple quarterbacks on the roster, but Olson hopes to earn the starting position.

"Coming in as a transfer, you want to win the starting job right away, but earning respect and making as many friends and meeting new people as I can to earn that respect is just as important to me in terms of winning this job," Olson said.