VPAS recognizes sexual assault activists

By Lexi White
Features Editor

While Black History Month has come to an end, that did not stop the Violence Prevention Victim Advocacy Support Center, VPAS, from educating students about Black women who made a difference.

Special education major Taylor Wasilewski and nursing major Gabriella Jordan, seniors, are VPAS members and set up a tabling event in the Adanti Student Center on March 12.

"We are trying to bring awareness by sharing the stories of some amazing Black women who were very involved in the fight against sexual assault and domestic violence," Wasilewski said.

Those who walked by were able to learn more about the women who stood up for women's rights and sexual assault awareness in exchange for candy, fidget toys, stress balls and bracelets.

VPAS is a resource on campus that students can utilize when they are dealing with issues such as domestic violence and sexual assault.

"People do not realize that some influential names have also fought against these problems," Wasilewski said. "Rosa Parks started the committee for equal justice and brought attention to sexual assault against Black women."

Wasilewski said she was surprised that students did not know Rosa Park's involvement with the movement.

"Sexual assault affects everyone and she really brought the attention to equal justice, not just like towards certain groups of people," Wasilewski said. "This has been an ongoing issue for years and students need to realize that."

Jordan also said she thought it was essential for students to know the backstory of the issue and who fought for the common good.

"Rosa Parks is a hero and stoodup for racial injustice, but she also did that in light of sexual assault and domestic violence," Jordan said. "I wish more people knew that."

Biology major Gary Parrino, a sophomore, said he saw the event and was initially intrigued by the fidget toys, but realized how important the event truly was.

"The toys make you want to participate because you get something out of it and then you learn about the message behind it," Parrino said. "When you come over and you participate you realize that this is something that's benefiting people."

Parrino said that he thinks it is important for students to know about the history of women who have stood up against sexual assault and domestic violence.

"Sadly, this is a very prevalent problem, so there should be a support group like this so people can learn about it and have a place to reach out to," Parrino said.

Jordan said in addition to educating students about sexual assault and domestic violence, she wanted to inform students of VPAS and how they can help with such issues.

"Students knowing about us can help them get out of a situation that's affecting them mentally or physically," Jordan said. "They could have a better career here at Southern versus struggling throughout their entire career, not knowing that they have the resources here."

VPAS is located in Room 100 in Schwartz Hall and they are open from 8:30 a.m. until 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday.



PHOTOS | LEXI WHITE

VPAS members special education major Taylor Wasilewski and nursing major Gabriella Jordan, seniors.



Biology major Gary Parrino, a sophomore, at VPAS' tabling event.

A college degree is no longer valuable in society

By Solé Scott
Editor-in-Chief

As my college years pass by, I am starting to wonder if all the trials and tribulations in college have been all worth it?

I feel a lot of anxiety as I get closer to graduating and obtaining my bachelor's degree in journalism, because the future is not certain anymore.

Tuition continues to increase nationwide; room and board is getting more expensive yet losing quality. Also, student loans and scholarships are in danger.

With the increase push from the Trump administration to get rid of the Department of Education, I and students ranging from kindergarten to the college level are in major trouble.

I am so far three years into college and now know that a college degree is not necessary for success. In today's society all you need is connections and a phone.

Depending on what industry you go in, social media may play a significant role, which eliminates the two or four-year college journey in obtaining a degree.

With the rise of TikTok, people can now earn money through this powerful tool by simply posting content that generates a large audience.

Attending college is no longer a priority for our society due to the ridiculous tuition hikes and less opportunities given.

According to the Education Data Initiative, student loan debt in 2024 totaled $1.7 trillion and the average student loan debt per person is $38,375 and could be higher depending on private loans.

This is not 1990 where we are guaranteed a high paying job while being able to buy a three or four bedroom home in the suburbs and driving the newest Lexus. Now, we are lucky enough to have a studio apartment driving a used Honda in this economy.

We are barely surviving living on minimum wage which is $16.35 in Connecticut or $7.25 nationally.

Apartments are an issue as there is a high demand, low supply and rising costs. Young adults can no longer afford apartments and living at home at an all-time high.

Why am I putting myself through this when there is a high possibility I will be living check to check and still living with my mother?

Even though I have noticed a significant change in the power of a college degree, I still find it to be meaningful and important because of my uprbringing and I will continue my journey.

Unfortunately, I do not have the privilege to have a job and earn a high salary based off connections. So, I have to do what I have to do to remain afloat in life.

Remember, college can be an opportunity for new skills or a job, yet does not guarantee success.

Owls Decide: Would you rather wear jeans or sweatpants?

By Lexi White
Features Editor







PHOTOS | CARLY RUSSELL

"I think sweatpants are more comfortable especially when you have a long day of classes."
-Nursing major Nya Nelson, a freshman

"Jeans because I don't like how people wear sweatpants in public."
-Math major Nicolas Mahoney, a junior

"Sweatpants are better and I am only wearing jeans today because my sweatpants need to be washed."
-Nursing major Ariana Rodriguez, a freshman







"Sweatpants are so much more comfortable for a casual setting."
-Communication major Larry Ferguson, a junior

"Sweatpants, of course, because you have to walk a lot on campus and they are very comfortable."
-Nursing major Khando Dorjee, a freshman

"Sweatpants are so much cheaper and more comfortable than jeans."
-Physics major Ethan Russ, a sophomore