

Students compete in Squid Games event

By Valentina Toro
Features Editor

Students packed the Adanti Student Center Ballroom on Jan. 22 for Squid Games: Season Three, a Week of Welcome event that brought together 70 players for an evening of competition and campus connection. Inspired by the popular Netflix series, the event featured a series of fast-paced games — including Time’s Up, Marbles, Swap Meet, Getting Dicey, Legos, White Tee and The Key to Victory — with participants advancing through rounds for a chance to win a \$400 gift card. Each round eliminated players until only a small group remained, building anticipation as the competition moved forward. “Events like this make it easier for students to meet people,” Eric Lacharity, the associate director of Student Involvement & Leadership Development, said. “We love when students connect, and events like this are a pretty easy way to make that happen.” As the night progressed, the crowd grew louder, particularly during the final round, when the two remaining competitors examined a set of keys to determine the winner.

The challenge required careful observation and quick decision-making. After advancing through each round, nursing major Serena Newnham, a freshman, secured the win and the \$400 prize. “It was really close, and I was just looking at the keys and trying to figure out which ones stood out to me,” Newnham said. “I went with my gut.” While the final round proved intense, Newnham said the marbles game stood out as the most challenging part of the competition; she said staying calm and focused helped her advance through each stage of the game as rounds became more competitive. “I felt pretty confident going in, but the marbles round definitely tested me the most,” Newnham said. “You really had to think through every move.” Despite the pressure, Newnham said the experience was rewarding, and she plans to put the prize money toward savings. She said the mix of strategy and luck made each round feel unpredictable, which added to the excitement of competing. Although the prize added excitement, organizers said the primary goal of the event extended

beyond winning. Events like Squid Games encourage students to step outside their residence halls, engage with campus life and build connections early in the semester. Lacharity said Week of Welcome programs are designed to give students interactive ways to get involved and meet people early in the semester. Hosting an event of this scale, however, comes with challenges. Because of the nature of the games, participation was capped at 100 students, requiring organizers to turn some students away despite high interest. Capacity limits are set to keep the games running smoothly and safely, Lacharity said. “We often have to turn people away,” Lacharity said. “That’s one of the harder parts, but it also shows how much interest there is.” Organizers said they hope to continue offering similar events throughout the semester to give more students opportunities to participate and feel involved on campus. “Students pay tuition dollars and activity fees for events like this,” Lacharity said. “We want them to participate, be involved and make the most of their experience here.”



PHOTO | VALENTINA TORO
Nursing major Serena Newnham, a freshman, winner of Squid Games: Season Three holding the prize.



Students gathered around during the first game of the night.

Art and culture bring students together

By Valentina Toro
Features Editor

Mi Gente, Mi Familia, Mis Amigos invited students to pause and connect through art, transforming a campus gathering space into a shared mural that celebrated belonging and community during Week of Welcome. Held in Engleman Hall Room B121 on Jan. 28, the collaborative mural event encouraged students, faculty and staff to write or draw what family, friendship and community mean to them. Markers and stickers filled the tables as conversations unfolded organically around the

students’ artwork. “We wanted to do something more artistic, something that brings people together and celebrates Latino culture, especially with everything happening in the world right now,” Bursar Esteban Garcia said. “It’s about reminding students there’s a community here that can support them.” The event has been part of campus programming for several years, Garcia said, but this semester’s version emphasized participation and personal reflection. Organizers intentionally scheduled the event during Week of Welcome when students are still

forming routines and relationships. Rather than relying solely on student organizations, faculty members were encouraged to bring their classes. That approach, Garcia said, helps students who may feel hesitant attending events alone, particularly first-year and transfer students who are still navigating campus. “We hear from a lot of students, and sometimes they feel isolated or don’t have time to join clubs, so we like to partner with faculty members to bring their classes to create a low-pressure way for students to participate without feeling like they’re walking into a

space alone,” Garcia said. Around the mural, students gathered at tables drawing symbols and leaving messages both in Spanish and English. Flags and handwritten phrases filled the space, reflecting the diversity of experiences within the Latino community. “I always wanted something where I could celebrate my Hispanic side and meet other people who are Hispanic,” elementary education major Nyla Howard, a junior, said. “Seeing events like this on campus makes my heart smile.” For students like her, the event offered more than a creative outlet. It created a visible space

where identity and culture were not only acknowledged but shared openly, allowing connections to form naturally through conversation and collaboration. During the busy first week of the semester, the event created a calm space for students and faculty. Between classes and other commitments, it provided an opportunity to slow down and engage without pressure. Faculty members also saw value in stepping outside the classroom. Jesse Gleason, a professor who works in the world languages & literatures department, attended the event with her class and said the setting created

opportunities for more natural interaction. Outside the structure of lectures and assignments, students and professors were able to have more natural conversations and see one another beyond their academic roles, helping to ease early-semester tension and build familiarity. “Especially during Week of Welcome, when everyone feels a little overwhelmed, this kind of space offers a breath of fresh air,” Gleason said. “It allows students and faculty to connect outside the structure of the classroom and share in the cultures that make up our community.”

Owls Decide: Insomnia or Crumbl?

By Valentina Toro
Features Editor



PHOTOS | LILY RAND
“Crumbl Cookies. Me and my girlfriend love Crumbl.”
-Psychology major Ian Sood, a junior



“Insomnia Cookies because Crumbl is too sweet.”
-Health science major Zoe Frager, a sophomore



“Crumbl Cookies: it has a lot of options.”
-Nursing major Cassie Wisneski, a sophomore



“Crumbl Cookies have a more variety of flavors.”
-Healthcare studies major Sena Turkmen, a freshman



“Crumbl looks prettier and more aesthetic.”
-Nursing major Lilly Burke, a freshman



“Crumbl because they have more variety.”
-Biology major Adriana Farfan, a freshman