

THE BEACON

Wilkes University - Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania

The news of today reported by the journalists of tomorrow.

Two weeks down: University COVID-19 update

By Sean Schmoyer
News Editor

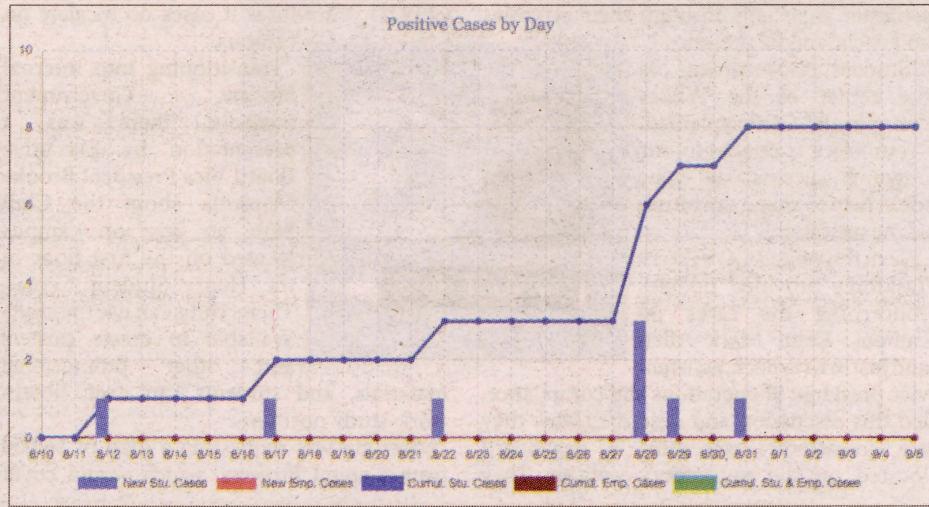
The week of Aug. 31 began with Wilkes University having confirmed four students to be positive for COVID-19 and 18 students in quarantine. By the middle of the week, President Greg Cant had emailed the University community informing them that the number of students who had tested positive was seven.

As of Sept. 5, the number of positive cases is eight, and the number of students in quarantine is approximately 90. While the number has increased, the university sent out an additional email with important information regarding the designation of students who are quarantined versus those who are in isolation.

“Quarantine keeps someone who was exposed to COVID-19 away from those who have not been exposed. Quarantine lasts for 14 days from the time of last exposure,” explained Diane O’Brien, director of health and wellness services at Wilkes, in the campus-wide email.

“Isolation separates those infected with and testing positive for COVID-19 from people without COVID-19, even in their own home. Isolation separates people for the duration of infectiousness, which is two days before onset and at least 10 days after onset,” said O’Brien. “Isolation can end when symptoms are improving and after the absence of a fever for at least 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medicine.”

The reason for the large increase in



Graphic from <https://www.wilkes.edu/coviddashboard>

The first positive COVID-19 case appeared on Aug. 12. Until Aug. 28, no day saw more than one positive case reported. Three positive cases were reported on Aug. 28. Since then, two more positive cases have been reported, one on Aug. 29 and one on Aug. 31. To date, one student case has been confirmed.

quarantine numbers was that two pharmacy labs were possibly exposed to a student who tested positive for COVID-19. According to Provost Terese Wignot, those labs and the pharmacy department have moved online for the time being.

Every day, the university keeps students up to date with what is going on through the COVID-19 dashboard (<https://www.wilkes.edu/coviddashboard>), which is updated in the morning at 10 and in the evening at 6.

The information comes from various

places, but the dashboard relies heavily on the Health and Wellness office.

Members of the Wilkes COVID Daily Response Team meet to discuss the information known to students on a daily basis.

Justin Kraynack, assistant vice president of operations and compliance and member of the Daily Response Team, explained the process of how students are tested.

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Sordoni Art Gallery reopened with “Drawn to Abstraction” exhibit; ready for socially distanced visitors

By Maria DiBuo
Life, Arts & Entertainment Editor

The Sordoni Art Gallery has reopened on campus, providing students with an escape from classes and everyday stressors. “Drawn to Abstraction,” the featured exhibition, showcases prints from the 1960s and 70s, capturing the vibrancy of emerging abstract movements of the time period.

Works displayed in the “Drawn to Abstraction” exhibition originate from a time of boundary testing and social critique in America. In response, artists from the time period challenged accepted techniques and subject matter, in addition to examining the role of art in society.

Abstract expressionism, minimalism and op and pop art can be found amongst the works in the Sordoni Gallery, including widely recognized artists of the twentieth century, such as Josef Albers, Helen Frankenthaler and Claes Oldenburg.

“The exhibit was supposed to open this past spring, so it’s been self-quarantining as well,” said Karley Stasko, outreach coordinator for the Sordoni.

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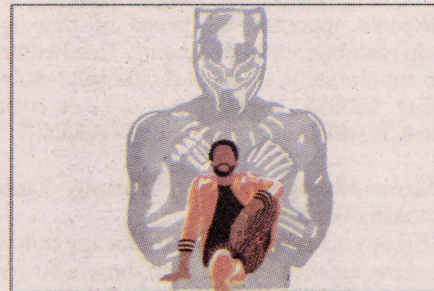
The Beacon/Sean Schmoyer

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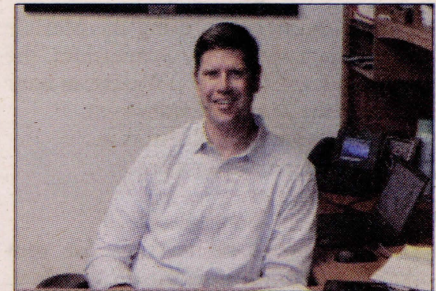
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News

Have a breaking story or a press release to send? Contact the news editor: Sean.Schmoyer@wilkes.edu

Student Government: Sept. 2 weekly meeting notes

By Sara Ross
Asst. News Editor

Student Government conducted its first virtual meeting of the semester this past week, and it began with Student Body President Kevin Long introducing the university's President Greg Cant and Vice President Paul Adams.

Cant and Adams welcomed back Student Government members and discussed the preparations made for students' return to campus. When making these decisions, they wanted to ensure students could maintain as much of a normal college experience as possible, even during a global pandemic. However, they also require everyone to follow the rules implemented by the university, which will keep students safe but engaged in a way that keeps the school open and retains opportunities for the students.

Adams further stated how they appreciated the continuity that Student Government provided when students were sent home last semester, especially through their activities and social media presence.

"Student Government is the center of the Wilkes community," Cant explained. "Your voice is critical to our ongoing success, as your ideas help to shape the future of the university."

Next, the Wilkes COVID-19 Taskforce provided updates concerning the cases on campus. Dean Mark Allen and Justin Kraynack, assistant vice president of operations and compliance, led this discussion and described how they are consistently refreshing a dashboard located on the university's website. They

informed members that they will be having a meeting with the Wilkes Department of Health and may be making adjustments to COVID procedures if cases do escalate on campus.

Transitioning into internal Student Government business, there was a presentation by Executive Board Vice President Brooke Mazzotta about the Club Hub, an area on campus located on the first floor of the Henry Student Center. There, clubs can use the crafts available to create posters and other promotional materials, and students can even obtain work-study positions.

Mazzotta was requesting a total of \$6,000 from Capital Projects, which would cover

purchasing Club Hub craft supplies and provide the funds for the work-study positions. At the next Student Government meeting, it will be decided whether or not this amount will be allocated.

The sophomore, junior and senior classes have all begun planning for their fundraisers and socials as well. Each of them are looking to have virtual events and are trying to modify activities that would typically be held throughout the year. Some of these events include the Downtown Establishment Tour, Homecoming and Casino Week.

Some final notes included Virtual Club Day coming up on Sept. 11, and the Programming Board hosting a contest for students to show off their masks on social media.



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Graphic by Madison Hummer

Beacon Briefs: Upcoming Events

Compiled by Sean Schmoyer

How to Make Reservations at the Fitness Center and Recreational Time

For those interested in using the Fitness Center, they should use the Calendly link to reserve an hour time slot in the fitness center.

- 1.) Log on to www.gowilkesu.com.
- 2.) Click the Fitness Center link at the top of the page.
- 3.) Click the link to the desired date.
- 4.) Choose a one-hour workout time.
- 5.) Make sure to be on time for your workout, which will be limited to an hour.

For those interested in using the McHale Athletic Center and Henry Gymnasium, the Calendly link will be used to reserve an hour time slot in the MAC or Henry gym.

- 1.) Log on to www.gowilkesu.com.
- 2.) Click Athletic Department.
- 3.) Click Open Rec.
- 4.) Choose a one-hour time slot.
- 5.) Make sure to be on time for your workout, which will be limited to an hour per day.

Council of the Clubs This Week

The virtual Council of the Clubs will be held at 3 p.m. on Friday, Sept. 11. Student

Development will send a Zoom link closer to the meeting date. Before Council of the Clubs, make sure to update your club contact information using the links provided in Wilkes Today's email updates. For any questions, contact Megan Pitts at megan.pitts@wilkes.edu.

American Red Cross Blood Drive

The American Red Cross will be hosting a blood drive through its American Red Cross Bloodmobile, a bus that will be parked in the parking lot behind the Henry Student Center on Tuesday, Sept. 15 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

The Red Cross encourages students to schedule appointments ahead of time to help maintain social distancing. To schedule an appointment, students should call 1-800-RED CROSS (1-800-733-2767), or visit RedCrossBlood.org and enter: WILKESU.

Stress Management Art Therapy Club Looking For Members

The Stress Management Art Therapy club is looking for members to join, those who are interested in learning stress relief techniques by doing arts and crafts should contact courtney.dolan@wilkes.edu. Other activities include stress management through coloring, painting, crafting and more.

Parking Ticket Appeals

Parking Services will be working remotely this fall semester, as such all Wilkes University parking citation appeals will be conducted via email. Appeals should be directed to parking@wilkes.edu.

When making an appeal, be sure to include: your name, WIN, the number on your parking citation (located at the top right of the citation), your Wilkes parking permit number (if applicable) and the reason for your appeal.

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Want your event featured in the calendar?
Email: TheWilkesBeacon@wilkes.edu

Dr. Kuiken named interim director of Honors Program

By Genny Frederick
News Staff Writer

Dr. Jonathan Kuiken has stepped into a new role on campus as the Interim Director of the Honors Program. Kuiken is an associate professor of history in the Global Cultures Department and was previously on the Honors Advisory Board.

The Honors Program at Wilkes gives “self-directed, self-motivated, intellectually curious students” the chance to “join others with shared interests and aspirations in a collaborative learning community.”

This type of program is something Kuiken has considered important, even before his time at Wilkes.

“When I was an undergrad, I participated in a version of an honors program, which was very focused on community and leadership. It’s actually where I met my wife. So, it was a pretty meaningful experience for me,” stated Kuiken.

The experience of the Honors Program is, as he says, “not just about, academically-gifted people coming in and taking classes. The idea behind the Honors Program is really to emphasize leadership and emphasize service to the campus community and the broader community.”

These traits of community, leadership and service extend outside of the classroom and are what attracted him to the Honors Program in the first place.

“The attitude in some schools’ honors programs is to set these students up as not just normal students – they’re honor students – and I really want to avoid that,” described Kuiken.

“We want to be elite without being elitist. Being a member of the Honors Program is much more about service to other people than it is about glory to you.”

Teaching honors courses has brought Kuiken many fun class experiences as well.

“Honors students are very motivated,

and that helps when you have a whole class of people who really want to be there and are really doing the readings and stuff like that. It’s just fun,” said Kuiken.

“I feel like when you have people who are motivated and want to be there and want to participate, it really elevates the whole class.”

It is not just Honors Program students that bring excitement to classes. Rose Dietrich, a member of the Honors Program and also a student in one of Kuiken’s classes, noted how his excitement to teach makes a class so much better.

“Despite it being a 9 a.m. class, a time that some people aren’t quite awake yet, he was able to bring energy into the classroom. The energy he brought was often in the form of passion. Personally, for me, it makes the class experience so much different when the professor is visibly passionate about the class,” said Dietrich.

The President of the Honors Program Student Committee, Olivia Raymond, has not had Kuiken in class but is already aware of the enthusiasm he brings to the program.

“I have never had a class with Dr. Kuiken, but I had the chance to meet him through attending the faculty Honors meetings due to my position as president of the HPSC,” said Raymond. “He was always an active participant and leader at these meetings, so I am confident in his abilities to be a leader and look forward to seeing what he will do with the program.”



Dr. Jonathan Kuiken in the new offices on the second floor of Stark Learning Center, room 262.

Photos: The Beacon/ Sean Schmoyer

fun stuff like Netflix watch parties and online trivia to get a chance to come together and have some fun and blow off some steam. I think we all need a little bit of that too,” said Kuiken.

In addition to a change in how events will be held, the Honors Program also saw a change in location.

The new offices for the Honors Program and the new lounge for student use are located on the second floor of the Stark Learning Center.

The offices are located in SLC 262, and the lounge is in SLC 258.

While Kuiken is excited about his position, he noted that Jennifer McLaughlin, the administrative assistant, has been a huge help.

“She is the real heart and soul of the Honors Program, and honestly, she’s the brains of the operation,” explained Kuiken. “I’m not exaggerating when I say that I could not do this job without her.”

While Kuiken is taking over at a time that will require some adjustments and new solutions, he explains, “I have a year, so I’m going to make the most of it.”

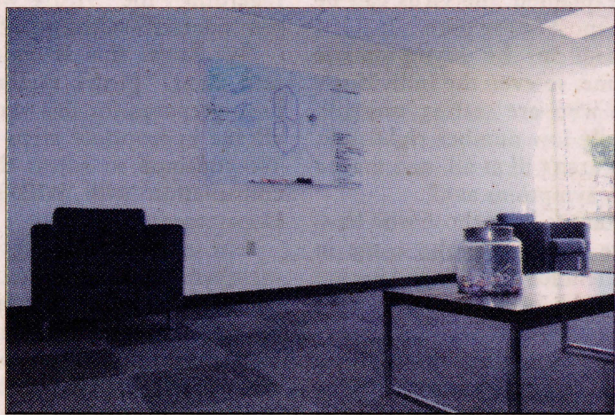
Along with every other organization on campus, the Honors Program has to make some changes regarding events for the year, while continuing to emphasize the ideals of the program and help students.

Kuiken plans to have speakers from within and outside the campus community speak over Zoom about a variety of topics, such as health during the semester, the upcoming election and leading through crisis.

Conversely, he also plans to have some more laid-back meetings.

“We’re thinking about doing some

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The new honors lounge has socially-distanced furniture for students, as well as a white board for students to share messages.

New Hours for On-Campus Buildings

Academic, administrative and auxiliary building hours have been adjusted for COVID-19 cleaning policies:

Monday: 6 a.m. to 10 p.m.
Tuesday: 6 a.m. to 10 p.m.
Wednesday: 6 a.m. to 10 p.m.
Thursday: 6 a.m. to 10 p.m.
Friday: 6 a.m. to 10 p.m.
Saturday: 12 p.m. to 5 p.m.
Sunday: 12 p.m. to 5 p.m.
(Double check with individual departments to ensure exceptions have not been arranged.)

The Sordoni Art Gallery has updated hours to provide adequate cleaning time:

Monday: Closed
Tuesday through Friday: 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Saturday: 12 p.m. to 5 p.m.
Sunday: Closed

The lower level of the Farley Library will be closed nightly from 2 a.m. to 5 a.m. to allow the Facilities Department to clean the building.

COVID-19, from frontcover

“Generally, students are going to our health and wellness services and they are being evaluated there, and the tests are being taken at that point and monitored by Health and Wellness services,” said Kraynack.

Kraynack also explained that students tested elsewhere have their information passed on from the Wilkes-Barre Health Department to the campus. The Wilkes-Barre Health Department also handles contract tracing, which starts with a positive case.

Once a student has been identified through contract tracing, Student Affairs will reach out to them.

“We give students an idea of a length of quarantine and answer any questions,” explained Mark Allen, dean of student affairs. “We then also assist if they are residential students in respect to meals and other needs.

“Out of the office of student affairs, we systematically contact all of the faculty of the affected students and indicate, but not being very specific, that the student will be out for a period of time. We direct the students to work with the faculty and engage with them so that there is no miscommunication in terms of the assignments that are necessary to keep up with their work.”

Whether students return home or stay in halls on campus is on a case-to-case basis. Students who quarantine are allowed to stay on campus when they have their own bathroom or those they share a living space with are also in quarantine.

Currently, there are 48 of the 50 beds

available in residence halls for student quarantine. Shiowitz, Sterling, Ross and a small number of apartments on campus are all being used for quarantine.

Vice President Paul Adams addressed that the increase in cases within the pharmacy department highlights how the campus is going to approach COVID-19 for the remainder of the semester.

“We have come to the conclusion that our approach is going to be phased,” said Adams. “I think you wouldn’t find a situation where we would move directly from being face-to-face to sending everyone home. We would operate in a much more phased way and concentrate our attention where the issue is concentrated.”

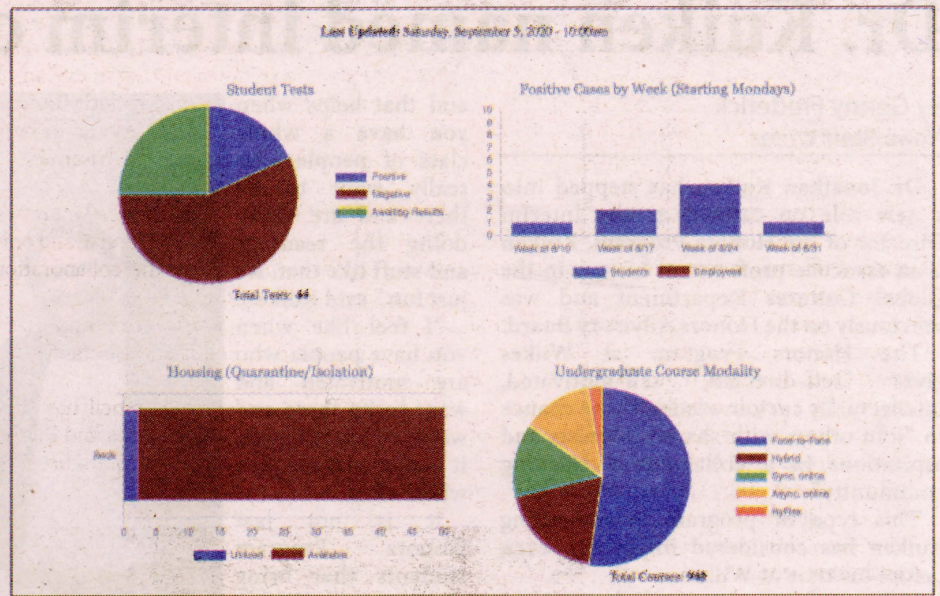
Adams continued, “I think as we did with the situation with the pharmacy school, you can see where we acted in one place where there was a concentrated issue. We would continue to do that, whether it is in a residence hall, a class, a lab, a team or whatever the situation was.”

As the pharmacy department was moved online, Wignot expressed that faculty have prepared for situations like this one.

“Our faculty did prepare all summer long for the eventuality for both short term, and we hope not, but longer term remote instruction. For the places we can, faculty are ready to transition to a remote environment for a week, a month or longer.”

As students become more aware of the number of students in quarantine, occurrences such as fire alarms can cause slight fear and panic.

The Daily Response Team stressed that



Graphic from <https://www.wilkes.edu/coviddashboard>

As of Saturday at 6 p.m., eight students tests have been positive, 11 are awaiting results and 25 are negative. The week of Aug. 24 remains the week with the most positive cases at four. Only two of the 50 beds set aside for quarantine have been occupied. Four hundred ninety-seven courses are being conducted face-to-face, 179 are being conducted as hybrid courses, 128 as synchronous online courses, 120 as asynchronous online courses and 24 hybrid-flexible (HyFlex) courses.

the safety of students in events like fire alarms and other potential hazards take priority over COVID-19, in that, students who are quarantined will be evacuated like any other for their own safety.

This is possible because not only are environments like stairwells and hallways low risk compared to long face-to-face interactions, but also because, as Kraynack explained, the virus can be asymptomatic most of the time.

“This disease can be asymptomatic most of the time, so even the individuals that we have who are testing positive, which is a really low number right now, many of them aren’t ill at all, and maybe won’t have any symptoms at all.

“It is important to keep those who have tested positive and those who came in contact with them for a prolonged period of time away from other students,” said Kraynack.

Kraynack also explained that there are no students in campus apartments or halls who are in isolation, and there never would be.

“It is important to remember that because you are quarantined, you are not sick, and you do not have COVID-19. The idea is to separate from individuals in case you become symptomatic.”

Overall, the best thing students who are nervous can do is follow regular protocols like wearing masks and social distancing, especially during fire alarms.

Adams, as well as the rest of the Daily Response Team, expressed how grateful they are that students are cooperating with quarantine processes and working to keep each other safe. He also commended students, faculty and staff for following social distancing and mask wearing policies across campus.

Cant closed his email to the campus regarding the virus with important reminders of health and safety procedures.

“We know this is concerning news,” said Cant. “Please understand that we have prepared for this very scenario and all the appropriate steps are underway. We continue to assess the situation in consultation with Wilkes-Barre Health Department.

“For everyone’s safety, we remind all members of our campus community to continue to wear your face covering at all times, wash or sanitize your hands frequently, maintain social distance from others and monitor your health and seek medical advice when needed. The health and safety of the campus community is our top priority.”

Any questions or concerns, should be expressed by emailing covidupdate@wilkes.edu.



Courtesy of the COVID-19 Daily Response Team

“I think we would be remiss to leave this conversation without expressing our appreciation to our colleagues, and the students, faculty and staff for how patient they have been,” said Paul Adams during a Zoom call with members of the COVID-19 Daily Response Team. From left to right, top row: Justin Kraynack; Gabrielle D’Amico, executive director of communications and graduate marketing, and Mark Allen; bottom row: Paul Adams, Terese Wignot and Sean Schmoyer.

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Socially-distanced spaces allocated for commuter students

By Genny Frederick
News Staff Writer

The pandemic has brought about a change in the everyday experience of going to school. For commuter students, these changes can be especially daunting and confusing.

Matt Costello, a junior electrical engineering major, remarked on how strange this school year feels.

“I see some of my classmates when I come to campus for labs, but that’s only a few hours a week. Once those few hours are up, I don’t see anyone for a whole other week,” said Costello. “It’s a surreal feeling because I feel like I’m not in school, but I still have tons of work to do.”

To prevent the spread of COVID-19, specific spaces on campus have been designated to allow commuter students to attend online classes on days in which they also have in-person classes.

This has been a significant problem for commuter students. Junior earth and environmental science major Erika Wintersteen has faced this problem already.

“One of the biggest challenges going into the first week was where I was going to be able to take my online classes, since I can’t exactly go back to a dorm room and take it,” explained Wintersteen.

“One of my online classes on Monday and Wednesday is right in between two in-person classes, so I struggled in the

10 minutes between classes to find a quiet enough place to sit down and log in to Zoom.”

Some of the rooms set aside include Breiseth Room 105 and collaboration rooms in both Stark Learning Center and the basement of Farley Library.

It is important to note that the collaboration rooms in the library must be reserved, and only two people are allowed in the collaboration rooms in Stark at a time.

While these spaces are important, commuter students require more than just a place to take classes.

The Wilkes Commuter Council has tried to intercept the needs of students and help to organize places to stay on campus between classes.

Bree Polascik, the president of Commuter Council and a P2 pharmacy student, reminded commuters of places on campus that they are safe to hang out in.

“The commuter lounge on the second floor of the SUB is a great place to study or relax between classes; however, with the COVID regulations, there is a maximum capacity of eight students allowed in the room at a time, so please keep this in mind when you are entering the room. Check on how many people are in the room, wear a mask and follow social distancing guidelines,” stated Polascik.

Wintersteen has some of her own favorite places to hang out on campus, such as, “the lounges in Cohen, especially the fourth-floor lounge overlooking the river, and the collab rooms in Stark.”

Many commuters are used to spending most of their days in different spots around campus, so the change requires some adjustment.

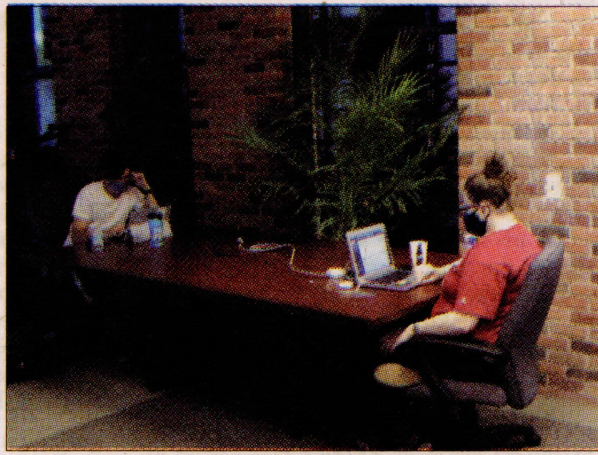
For students who are nervous about handling in-person classes, Polascik reminds everyone to wear a mask, keep hand sanitizer nearby, wash your hands and “if you’re uncomfortable attending class, be honest with your professors, and they will work with you.”

Costello noted teachers’ understanding as well.

“Teachers have been a little more understanding with attendance this semester,” said Costello. “Some teachers made certain online meetings optional, since we may have other obligations at that time and other classes offer multiple meeting times to accommodate



Breiseth Room 105 is a full, socially-distanced classroom available for commuters to use to study.



Photos: The Beacon/Sean Schmoyer
Nick Alfano and Lindsay Becker study in the commuter lounge on the second floor of the SUB, at one of the four tables set up for social distancing.

everyone’s different schedules.”

Polascik and the rest of Commuter Council want everyone to feel comfortable on campus and encourage involvement even though that may be more challenging this semester.

“Although this semester is extremely different from anything we’ve experienced, my advice to the first-year students remains the same: Get Involved! Sometimes, it can be challenging for commuters to feel like they are a part of the campus community, especially now. So, keep an eye out for Virtual Club Week, and sign-up for some clubs. There is sure to be something here at Wilkes that you’d love,” said Polascik.

She advised that upperclassmen should go by the same advice, “Stay involved on campus, and enjoy your time here because it will go quick!”



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Wilkes, LCCC announce enhanced dual admission agreement

By The Beacon News Staff

This past Tuesday, President Greg Cant and Luzerne County Community College President Thomas P. Leary signed-off on an expansion to the pre-existing dual admission agreement between the two schools.

Under the agreement, LCCC students who transfer to Wilkes will receive more benefits through various scholarships. Students will be able to qualify for merit scholarships ranging from \$10,000 to \$18,000 annually.

LCCC Presidential Scholars who have earned their associate degree with a minimum 3.5 grade-point average or higher will receive Wilkes’ Presidential Scholarship, one of the highest merit scholarships available to Wilkes students. It is currently valued at a minimum of \$21,000 per academic year.

Community college students who are

members of Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society have additional scholarship awards available in the form of \$2,000. In addition, LCCC students who are receiving the Francis S. & Mary Gill Carrozza, R.N. Health Sciences Endowed Scholarship may be eligible for a Leaders in Science Scholarship of up to \$1,000 upon admission to the university. A 3.0 grade-point average and entrance into a science program is required.

The Leaders in Science scholarship cannot be combined with other add-on or bonus scholarships.

“Wilkes University is pleased to expand our dual admissions agreement with Luzerne County Community College by providing scholarships that will encourage the most talented students to continue their education at Wilkes,” said Cant. “The agreement allows Wilkes to build on its historic mission of providing access to a four-year degree to all

those who show promise.”

Alongside the scholarships, the universities have also signed new program articulations, which will create seamless transfer pathways for community college students entering programs in the Sidhu School of Business.

Accounting, corporate finance, financial investments, management and marketing, sports management, as well as the accelerated bachelor of business administration program (ABBA), are included in the transfer pathway.

For LCCC students to participate in the dual admission program, they must sign a dual admission intent form at the LCCC admissions office by their third semester at the community college.

A new change is that students enrolled in the Dual Admission Program used to only be eligible to register free-of-charge for a maximum of nine credit hours in courses offered by Wilkes University. Now, students

can take up to 12 credits at Wilkes free-of-charge, while still enrolled in LCCC.

“Improving the transfer process between educational institutions is vital, and these comprehensive agreements allow our institutions to work collaboratively to help students build their futures and change their lives,” said Leary.

“The significant opportunities for scholarships will greatly benefit our graduates and help alleviate their student debt.”

Students interested in learning more about the dual admission agreement and any new changes should contact the Luzerne County Community College Admissions Office at 570-740-0342 or the Wilkes University Admissions Office at 570-408-4400.



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How COVID-19 guidelines have changed campus dining

By Sara Ross
Asst. News Editor

Wilkes University's dining areas have not been left untouched by COVID-19, as students and dining hall staff are responsible for adhering to both federal and state guidelines as instructed by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Pennsylvania Department of Health.

General Manager James Watkinson has been a member of the Wilkes Dining Staff since this past May and has played a crucial role in ensuring that the university's dining locations are following the necessary procedures.

When getting ready for students' return to campus, all dining areas had to make adjustments. The Henry Student Center's cafeteria, also known as the "SUB," had to make changes to seating layout, meal preparation, food delivery, cleaning procedures and sanitation.

"We have even taken steps further by utilizing Nano Strips, a self-sanitizing adhesive guard, on high touchpoints in all our locations, so students have another safeguard against COVID-19," said Watkinson.

Signs are posted throughout the SUB, and other high-traffic student areas on campus, to enforce the wearing of face coverings and maintaining proper social distancing.

masks as a part of their daily uniform, have their temperatures checked and answer health screening questions before the beginning of their shift.

For first-year students, adjusting to the changes made to the cafeteria has been challenging, as they are still trying to learn their way around campus. Dustin Edsall, an electrical engineering major, has only made visits to the SUB so far to get his meals. At first, he found the layout of the cafeteria confusing but was able to adapt to the setup.

"Once you get into things, it becomes so much easier," Edsall stated. "You just have to make sure you stay within the markers that begin at the entrance of the cafeteria and continue throughout the different meal stations."

Students are directed by the decals and tape located on the floor. There are bubbles that students can stand on, which enforce social distancing and ensure they stay at least 6 feet apart.

"The only area that may cause some confusion is when the line reaches Nosh Deli station," said Watkinson. "We have instituted a separate line for the students to use to bypass that area, if they do not want to get food from the deli."

The food stations available to students are mostly serving the same types of items as they have in previous years. The SUB still offers burgers, fries, pizza, pasta, sandwiches and salads, along with other alternating meal options.

Adjustments have even been made to Grille Works' and Wich's menus in the Rifkin Cafe. They have been resized and focus only on student favorites, which helps to streamline the ordering process.

According to Watkinson, this is one of the best ways for them to accommodate the campus community, and in time, they will

eventually be returning other food items to the menus.

Meal preparations have not changed, as they produce fresh food daily. Although, handling has been modified to reduce the risk of possible virus transmission, which has caused the cafeteria to no longer

provide buffet-style meals. With their new grab-and-go policy, the cafeteria has now substituted plates for styrofoam containers.

Another first-year, Ray Anderson, a pharmacy student, discussed how he enjoys placing his food in the takeout containers, as it has made it convenient for him to carry it back to his dorm. If he does not finish his meal, he can heat it up later in the night. However, he also likes being able to sit down to eat in the SUB.

"All of the seating available inside the cafeteria is either for one or two people and no more," explained Anderson. "The cafeteria provides an escape from all the work of college because whenever I go there, I find time to relax."

While the weather is nice, students have also been taking advantage of outdoor seating to eat their meals. There are tables set up around the back of the Henry Student Center if students want to enjoy their breakfast, lunch or dinner outside. Starbucks has been offering this option as well, as students can sit down to drink their coffee.



Outside seating behind the Henry Student Center is centered around the campus gateway and runs along the grass toward Fortinsky Hall.



Photos: The Beacon/Sean Schmoyer

The Rifkin Cafe's socially-distant lines, pathways and seating mimic that of the third floor's cafeteria. Students Nick Surgent, Gabe Crowley and Christina Mahama are pictured at dinner.

Hand sanitizer and disinfectant wipes are provided, as well. There are even limitations to the number of students who can be in the cafeteria, which has been capped at 137.

Watkinson stated that before the start of the semester, employees received additional training. They are now required to wear



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The gaming lounge across from the elevator in the Henry Student Center has had the pool tables turned into seating. Other tables have been socially distanced to provide more room for students to eat downstairs, as well.

Life, Arts & Entertainment

Have any restaurants that should be reviewed or artists to be featured? Contact life, arts and entertainment editor: Maria.DiBuo@wilkes.edu.

Family Business Alliance hosted diversity initiative webinar Local leaders discussed various strategies for increasing diversity in college and the workplace

By Emily Cherkauskas
Life, Arts & Entertainment Staff Writer

The Family Business Alliance held a diversity initiatives webinar on Sept. 3 to discuss how Wilkes University, Penn State Scranton and other business leaders in the area are tackling discrimination and inequality in the workplace and on college campuses.

The webinar was conducted by Sue Reilly, executive director of the Family Business Alliance. A panel discussion featured Erica Acosta, associate director of diversity affairs at Wilkes University; Dharti Ray, coordinator of diversity, student services and engagement at Penn State Scranton; and Kim Wylam, president of Baker Tilly Vantagen.

The objectives of the webinar included how millennials and Generation Z are changing their social perspectives of workplaces and employers, as well as reviewing initiatives that colleges and universities are forming and undertaking toward diversity and inclusion. The panel also discussed what businesses can do to show solidarity with minority groups.

“It’s time we talk about systemic racism and social justice,” Acosta said.

Acosta discussed the efforts Wilkes University has taken to advocate for equality. She explained that the university received a grant to the Multicultural Student Coalition (MSC), a mega council at Wilkes that aims to celebrate cultural diversity.

Acosta also recalled the moment Wilkes President Greg Cant sent a newsletter to the campus in May, speaking out regarding the death of George Floyd and the rising tension, racial violence and injustice in America. According to Acosta, “We knew where the whole university stood” on the matter.

Wilkes University also plans to hold more forums so students and faculty can hear stories from various speakers on their own personal experiences. The plans include holding virtual meetings, which can aid the university’s efforts to raise awareness and increase listeners for its cause.

Due to costly expenses that allow speakers to visit the campus, Wilkes has developed a racial justice scholarship, allowing

up a town hall to plan a diversity action plan for their campus. Penn State Scranton was able to create various subcommittees across all Penn State locations that focused on allowing students to speak out about how they felt about various issues.

Penn State Scranton also held a Juneteenth event over the summer to commemorate the ending of slavery in the United States, studying the significance of that day and how important it is to the black

said. “It’s not offensive to have these open conversations about how we want to do better and have more minorities in the workplace, regardless of race, age or gender.”

Wylam discussed how important it is for businesses to have diversity initiatives, noting that she never walked into a company without a policy. She expressed that if a place of employment does not have any diversity initiative in a company, they are not diverse. Wylam also expressed the difficulties for people to support a company if that same business does not represent them.

“Businesses are serving a client,” said Wylam. “If I am buying your product, and don’t see myself represented in any of your products and advertising, then you’re not attractive to me.”

Wylam also explained a silver lining of the worldly changes of the COVID-19 outbreak. Prior to the stay-at-home order, the labor market was tight.

However, now that many employees are working from home, businesses are able to hire out of their small areas, allowing for a more diverse field of employees from different backgrounds.

“When you are invoking that diversity, it’s not just creating a diversity of color,” Wylam said. “It’s a diversity of thought. It also allows people to reinvent themselves a lot easier.”

Wilkes University and Penn State Scranton both noted that the younger generation of graduates are more socially and economically aware of issues and wish to be represented, and hope to collaborate in future discussions.

“Diversity is one thing – inclusiveness is something else,” Wylman said. “Are businesses walking the talk?”

students to form their own social justice initiatives.

“We want to engage in the conversation of diversity and what we can do with it,” Acosta said.

Acosta hopes to spearhead a conversation with students and faculty where people speak out about how they feel regarding societal issues.

Ray explained Penn State Scranton’s efforts to include a more diverse environment on their campus. The university also spoke out about injustice for equality, with President Eric Barron setting

community.

Ray noted that the university’s student council focused on the diversity of students and faculty, educating them on why it is important to be mindful of others’ lives.

“There is basically no tolerance for racist activity or discrimination on campus,” Ray said.

Wylam felt the need for change and acceptance in American society. She believes that silence can be considered offensive for needed conversation.

“There needs to be more conversation about diversity and inclusion,” Wylam



Emily.Cherkauskas@wilkes.edu
Graphic by Mia Walker

Coping with the stress of COVID-19 during the fall 2020 semester

By Emily Cherkauskas
Life, Arts & Entertainment Staff Writer

The lingering threat of COVID-19 has left the world in chaos, with Wilkes University students feeling rising tension and stress from the virus. Although students and faculty have been taking extra precautions in preventing illness, a factor that many are not sure how to treat is the stress and anxiety that comes along with an overwhelming semester.

Cassidy Taylor, a junior in communication studies and psychology, expressed her confusion and fears pertaining to the peculiar semester.

"It's just been so weird," said Taylor. "My friends and I have been trying to wait it out. I'm trying to figure this out as best as I can."

Maddy Kinard, a sophomore in communication studies and English, cited how she initially expressed fears when returning to campus.

"For me, personally, I was primarily the most stressed coming into the semester because there was so much uncertainty," Kinard said, recalling her worries over the new rules and regulations around campus.

Although students are separated from one another, these negative feelings of fear can be felt by anyone. Melissa

Gaudio, a campus counselor of Health and Wellness Services, acknowledges that this is a difficult time in everyone's lives right now.

"The way of life to which we have grown accustomed to has become majorly upended and that produces a wide array of thoughts and feelings," Gaudio said.

Many students have been suffering from isolation and loneliness due to avoiding others. Gaudio believes, however, that people are still able to socialize properly by wearing masks, social distancing and frequently washing their hands. She also notes that "reaching out through social networks and virtual connection with peers, friends and family" can help reduce those feelings of stress and loneliness.

Kinard also felt that proper socializing helped her stress levels decrease. She noted that watching movies or going out to eat with roommates or friends is calming.

"I feel like coming back to school and seeing professors and friends have led me to better manage that stress because you're with people who are going through the same exact thing, as opposed to being at home," Kinard said. "Dealing with that sort of stress by hanging out with friends in a socially-distanced environment helps a lot."

Gaudio encourages students to work

wisely and creatively by forming healthy routines, listing a variety of activities any student can engage in. She recommends walking or biking, yoga and meditation, casual exercise, arts and crafts, watching lighthearted shows or programs, listening to music or podcasts, photography, playing an instrument and engaging in old or new hobbies.

Now that students are cooped up in their dorms and homes, it can be noted that even a simple self-care routine can help boost spirits in oneself. Eating healthy, sleeping well and taking note of emotions is a great way to keep one's body and mind in check as the semester goes on.

"Connect with nature by observing the sensory experiences and noticing what is happening around you," Gaudio said. "Take good care of yourself by eating three meals per day and getting seven to nine hours of recuperative sleep. Keep a gratitude journal to recognize the uplifting rays of life in your life, within the storm."

Additionally, it is important to avoid drugs, alcohol and other harmful substances as a way to cope with stress. According to Gaudio, those are dangerous ways to handle stress, and "will only create more problems."

Instead of exposing oneself to negative

news stories, Gaudio believes students should focus their Internet use on positive outlets. She cites helpful relaxation apps, including Headspace, Moodpath, PTSD Coach, Relax Melodies or Calm.

If you are suffering from any overwhelming negative feelings, including stress, anxiety and depression, you are encouraged to contact various resources, including counseling services at Health and Wellness Services, Campus Interfaith, the Learning Support Center, Student Activities and Career Services.

Due to the current environment, it is important to stay involved with developments at Wilkes University. Today@Wilkes sends out daily emails to students, highlighting various events, socially distanced or virtual, that are happening around campus.

"It is time to shift the paradigm from solely a 'me' focus to a 'we' emphasis," Gaudio said. "Consider how you can help contribute to the greater, collective good and the healing of our society in all forms. It starts with an open mind, consideration and ultimately a mutual respect and sense of personal responsibility for one another's safety and well-being."



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BEACON BUMPS

Each week, the Wilkes Beacon staff adds a song to their Beacon Bumps playlist. Look below for this week's list of songs.

Kirsten Peters, Editor-in-Chief: [Acquainted - The Weeknd](#)

Sean Schmoyer, News Editor: [Hey Wait - Mid-Day Moon](#)

Sara Ross, Asst. News Editor: [SUPERBLOOM - MisterWives](#)

Genny Frederick, News Staff Writer: [Hello Hello Hello - Remi Wolf](#)

Maria DiBuo, LA&E Editor: [Voulez-Vous - Abba](#)

Emily Cherkauskas, LA&E Staff Writer: [LEMONS \(Demo\) - Brye](#)

Breanna Ebisch, Opinion Editor: [Lost In The Wild - WALK THE MOON](#)

Zarquya Ansari, Asst. Opinion Editor: [The Other Side of Paradise - Glass Animals](#)

Jordan Daniel, Opinion Staff Writer: [Lights Up - Harry Styles](#)

Dylan Mehl, Co-Sports Editor: [Back2Barre - TeyGnec](#)

Ariel Reed, Co-Sports Editor: [Titanic - Juice WRLD](#)

Chris Gowarty, Sports Staff Writer: [Novacane - Frank Ocean](#)

Steffen Horwath, Staff Photographer: [Post Humorous - Gus Dapperton](#)

New learning environments cause uncertainty among students

Students have mixed emotions about combination of face-to-face and online classes

By Maria DiBuo
Life, Arts & Entertainment Editor

With in-person classes in the midst of their third week, many Wilkes University students are pleased to resume face-to-face and hybrid approaches to learning, even with new precautions put in place, while some feel the return to campus holds a great deal of uncertainty, especially in coming weeks.

With 495 courses being offered in a face-to-face fashion, in addition to 176 hybrid courses, the university has implemented safety procedures to ensure the well-being of students who have returned to campus this fall, including one-way stairwells, sanitizing stations and online ordering for dining halls.

While some students feel the new protocol can feel a bit excessive, they are happy the university is allowing the return of students to campus, rather than cancelling in-person classes entirely, seen at many larger institutions.

"I like in-person more than online, but the new rules are kind of annoying," said Matt Matrisciano, a student attending face-to-face classes, despite unknown factors associated with returning to campus during this semester. "I'm really just glad we're back in classrooms."

In addition, students have recognized the efforts of faculty and staff in ensuring coursework and classes will still continue, despite the challenges associated with the virus.

"It's new," said Genesis Belliaid, a student taking in-person, as well as hybrid classes this semester. "While I only have one face-to-face class, it's really interesting to see the new ways they've been holding classes."

courses entirely online, as well as 24 listed as HyFlex.

While the administration at Wilkes has been quick to adapt from business-as-usual, there are students who feel an entirely-online approach to the fall semester would have been better suited with so much left unknown and conditions rapidly changing at universities such as Temple and Penn State.

be online instead of having a mix of face-to-face, online and hybrid classes."

With just under three months left in the fall semester, guidance on the pandemic will adapt as necessary.

In an email to students, Gabrielle D'Amico, executive director of communications and graduate marketing, reminded individuals of the changing conditions and guidance from health officials, adding that students should stay current with university communications and be compliant with changing directives, in addition to exercising patience "as we get through this challenging time."

Questions regarding policies related to the pandemic or COVID-19 on campus should be directed to Wilkes' COVID-19 response team, which includes Dr. Mark Allen, dean of students, Justin Krainack, assistant vice president and chief of operations, or Dr. Paul Adams, vice president of student affairs.

Additional information can also be found on the FAQ page of Wilkes' fall 2020 website.


Quoting a message from university president Dr. Greg Cant, "We can do this. Together."

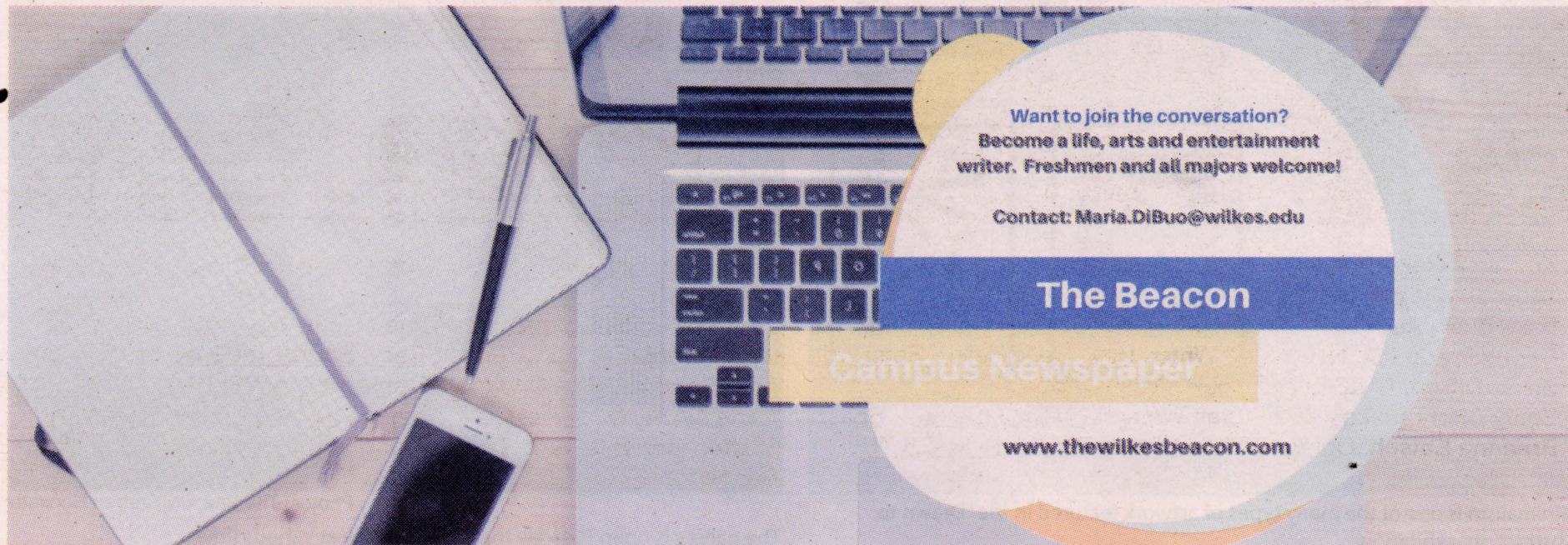
"In-person classes this semester seem to be going alright — it's just a little stressful looking at all the colleges near us going back online. In the end, I would prefer us to be online instead of having a mix of face-to-face, online and hybrid classes."

- Arieli Brabant

Despite precautions, a handful of positive coronavirus cases have been seen on campus, in addition to several in quarantine. For students who feel the risk of attending classes in-person is too great, the university is also offering over 200

"In-person classes this semester seem to be going alright — it's just a little stressful looking at all the colleges near us going back online," said Arieli Brabant, another student attending face-to-face classes this semester. "In the end, I would prefer us to

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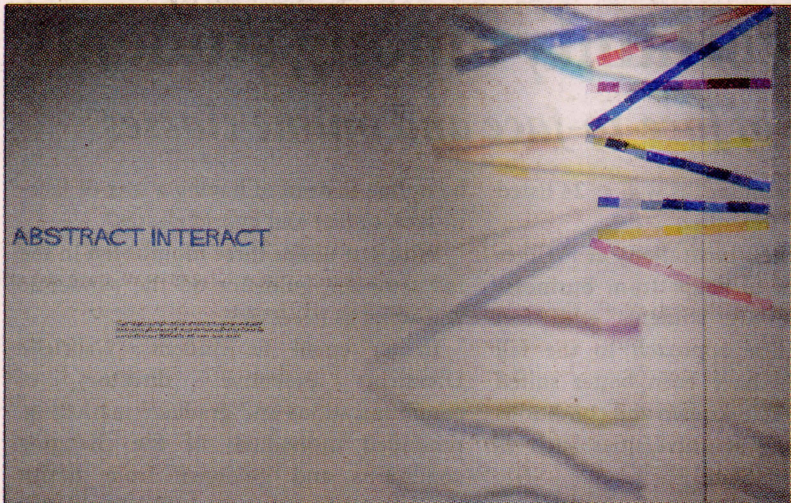


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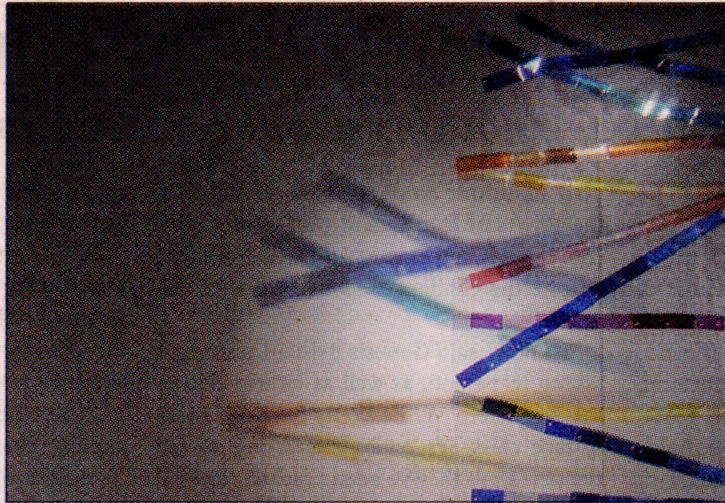
Contact: Maria.DiBuo@wilkes.edu

The Beacon
Campus Newspaper

www.thewilkesbeacon.com



Abstract Interact is a replicated print, providing students with the opportunity to take selfies and photos with the artwork.



Visitors are invited to place themselves within the four walls of the frame, take a photo and share their #SAGselfie on social media.



Shadows are created by this interactive piece.

SORDONI, from frontcover

Pieces from “Drawn to Abstraction” traveled from the Kalamazoo Institute of the Arts, located in Kalamazoo, Mich. In addition, local artists and businesses have donated their work to be displayed in the gallery.

“We were able to get art from local donors — we have pieces donated by local artists. Axelrad also makes a ton of our shirts, so we thought it would be cool to feature them, so they actually donated one of their silk screens,” said Stasko.

While the gallery is now open to students and the public, some things have changed since being open on campus this past spring. In addition to masks and social distancing, the interactivity of the gallery is something that has been modified in recent months due to the

pandemic.

“Normally, we would have things people could touch and move, but since we want to stay away from that, we’ve had to adapt a bit,” Stasko explained.

Creatively, the Sordoni Art Gallery has adapted one of the prints from the “Drawn to Abstraction” exhibition, by turning Fenice, by Piero Dorazio, an Italian artist, into an interactive piece using light, where guests are able to take pictures and selfies.

In addition to the re-opening of the gallery, an online event via Zoom celebrating display of the exhibition will be held at 6 p.m., Sept. 10, featuring a lecture by Rehema Barber, chief curator at Kalamazoo Institute of the Arts.

Barber will discuss the exhibition, as well as other works in Kalamazoo Institute of the Arts’ collection.

Additionally, Barber will take audience questions and feedback. Local talent will be showcased, putting a twist on the event and making it more than the traditional lecture.

Registration is required by Sept. 7 for the event. Those interested in attending can email Karley Stasko, karley.stasko@wilkes.edu, to secure their place, as well as join an email list for other online events through the exhibition, such as as a 60s and 70s themed mask-making event that will be held via Zoom in the coming days.

The Sordoni Art Gallery is housed in the Karambelas Media and Communication Center, and is open from 10 a.m to 5 p.m. Tuesdays through Fridays and from noon to 5 p.m. on Saturdays.

Unlike previous semesters, the gallery is now closed on Sundays for cleaning

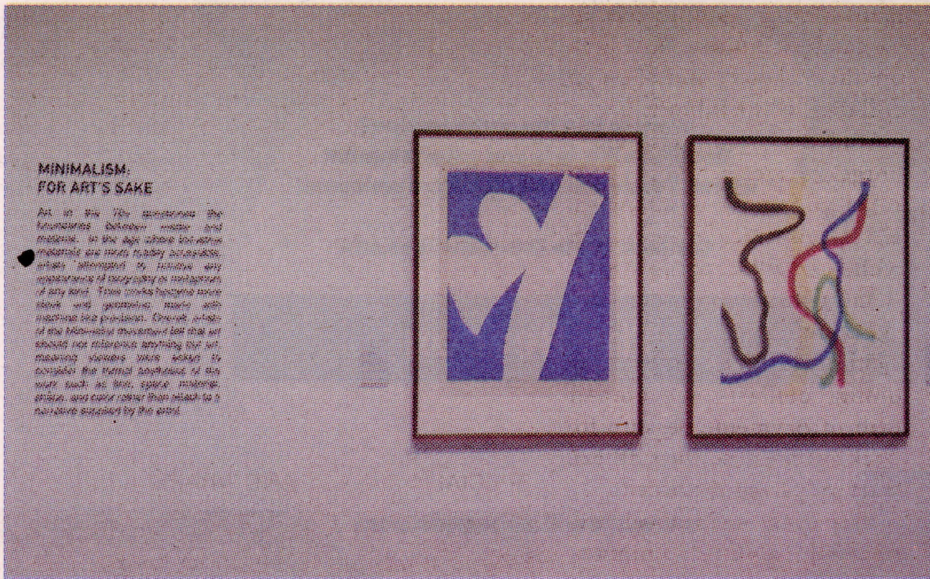
due to the coronavirus pandemic. Masks and social distancing are required for all visitors.

“The space really lends itself to social distancing,” said Stasko, when speaking of the safety protocols put in place now that the gallery has re-opened. “You’d really have to try (in order) to not be socially distant.”

“Drawn to Abstraction” will be displayed until Nov. 1. Admission is free for both students and the public, promoting the gallery’s mission of encouraging an appreciation of the arts and an understanding of its role in society through direct engagement.



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Minimalism is one of the many types of artwork featured in the “Drawn to Abstraction” exhibition.



Photos: The Beacon/Steffen Horwath

The gallery is open Tuesday through Saturday at various times.

Dining on campus goes mobile through the Dining Sidekick app

Ordering from your campus favorites with increased safety and ease

By Liz Cherinka
Staff Writer

Wilkes University Dining has brought its services into the age of technology, adding a new app for mobile ordering. The app, Dining Sidekick, allows students to order meals from the comfort of their dorm room.

Mobile ordering has existed for years and has been utilized by many places, including restaurants, grocery stores and coffee shops. Some of these options include Dunkin Donuts and Starbucks, which are favorites for many students.

This year, Wilkes joined the online dining sphere, allowing students the option of reducing contact with others while dining on campus.

During regular hours of operation, students can order from Grille Works, Which Wich, and Greens to Go from virtually anywhere at any time. The meals are prepared and ready when one arrives. This makes eating much more convenient, as students don't have to wait in lines, which at times, can be very long and hard to properly social distance.

Mobile ordering is convenient during the COVID-19 pandemic, as it limits the amount of people in the Rifkin Cafe or the P.O.D. at one time, as well as one's personal contact with others. In addition, the mobile ordering system increases the safety of Wilkes' food service staff by lessening the amount of individuals they come in contact with daily.

Food orders get packaged to go, so individuals can simply walk up to the counter, pick up their meal and head home, or wherever they desire to eat, as long as they're in a place where it is acceptable not to wear a mask for the period of time it takes to eat the meal.

Many students have already started to use the new Dining Sidekick app. Freshman Ashley Gangaware said her favorite thing about the app is "how easy it is to use."

Senior David Miller explained that he has not yet used the app, but he intends to. He believes, however, the app is less convenient than ordering in-person.

"Despite the added safety effects created through using the mobile app versus in-person, I feel that the implementation of the app has been difficult,

with many students not knowing the process of where to wait, how to know when their food is ready — despite the complications, it is a reduced menu anyway," said Miller.

Contrary to Miller's belief, Gangaware considers the app to be more convenient than waiting in-person. She would choose to use the app over ordering in-person. She ordered her food, which was ready within minutes of her arriving. She then was able to eat while she got much needed studying done.

Freshman Cayla Stiles also thinks the app is more convenient than ordering in-person.

"It is really easy to use," said Stiles. "You can click on anything you want, add anything to your order and pay on the app. It tells you all the dining options and how long the wait is for each. The notifications when your food is ready is also really nice."

The first step to making your dining more efficient is to download the Dining Sidekick app from the App Store on iPhones or Google Play on Androids. Then, select Wilkes University and log in using your Wilkes email.

The app will display the many dining options offered on campus. Students can click on their choice, and the app will display the full menu.


Students can customize burgers, create their own salad and make a sandwich, all at the touch of a button while using the app. Add your item(s) to your order and checkout.

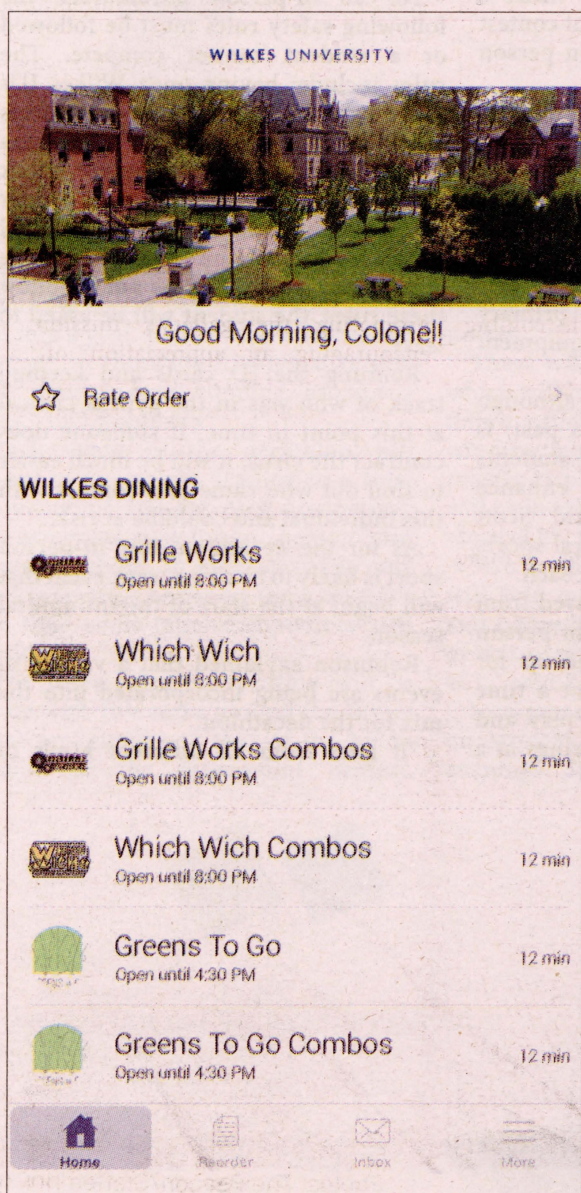
Students can pay using dining dollars or another form of payment. Be sure to click check-in, so the staff can start preparing the order.

Preparing one's meal will only take about 15 minutes, so be ready to get it before

it gets cold. Make sure to turn on notifications to be notified of when your food is ready. Feel free to eat where you feel comfortable on campus, as long as it is a safe space where you can socially distance while masks are removed.

The whole process of ordering takes about two minutes for a decisive individual and about 10 minutes for a picky one. Overall, Dining Sidekick speeds up the process of ordering, waiting in line and dining on campus.

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INTRAMURAL SPORTS ARE BACK WITH A

By Dylan Mehl
Co-Sports Editor

Intramural sports will be back at Wilkes University for the Fall 2020 semester; however, they will not be exactly what students are used to.

Due to COVID-19, intramural sports will be slightly different than normal. Six new sports will be offered, including three esports games and three in-person games. Madden, NBA 2K and Fifa comprise the esports options, while a Colonel decathlon, a three-point contest and cornhole make up the in-person options.

The health of students is of concern, which is why several measures are in place to ensure the safety of participants. With esports comprising half of the offered intramural sports, as well as one-athlete games like the decathlon and three-point contest, the safety of participants has been of primary importance. Additionally, all equipment will be sanitized after use.

"I think that intramurals, although it will be different from years past, is still a great opportunity for students to get involved and to help enhance their college experience," said Scott Robinson, director of intramural sports and assistant men's basketball coach.

All esports games will be played from student dorms and not at an in-person location. The players matched-up for the week will be able to select a time that works for both of them to play, and then report the results. Gatherings at a

central location will not be permitted, as to better social distance and work around individual schedules.

Each game will come with settings that the games must be played on, as well as additional rules and what to do if there is an online disconnect.

All three esports games will be available for Playstation and Xbox users. Madden 20 and Madden 21 will both be acceptable options, due to how recently the newest Madden game came out.

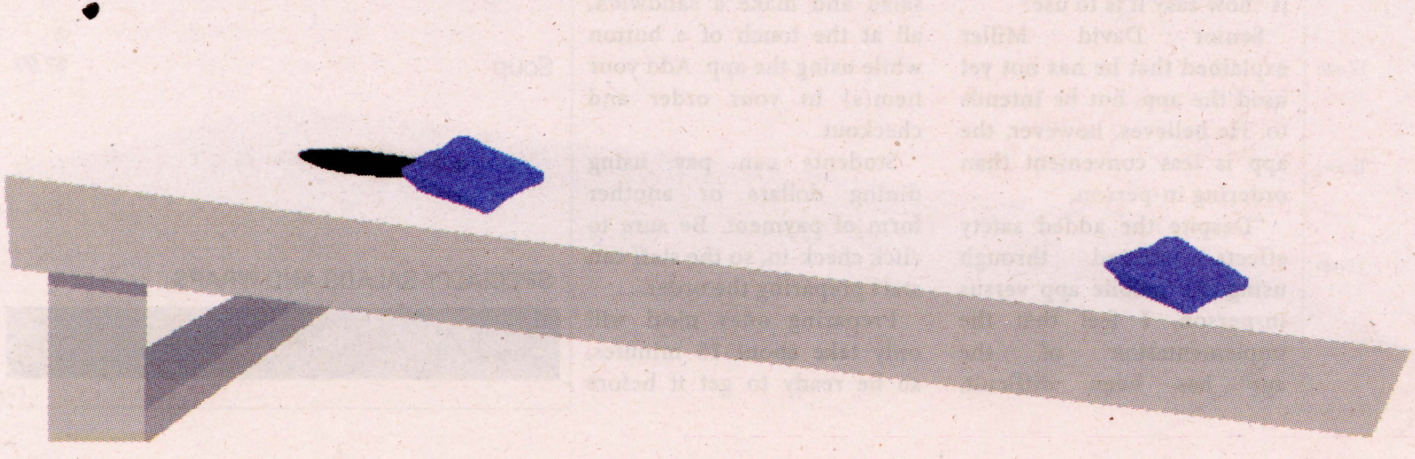
For all in-person intramurals, the following safety rules must be followed or a student cannot compete. The rules include: having one's Wilkes ID/ swipe card on-hand, having the Wilkes Shield app and showing a current green badge, passing the temperature check upon arrival, maintaining a proper social distance and wearing masks at all times. Masks must be worn, even while competing. If one chooses not to follow these rules, the student will be asked to leave.

Running the ID cards and keeping track of who was in the gym is critical at this point in time. If someone does contract the virus, it will be much easier to find out who came into contact with this individual and could be at risk.

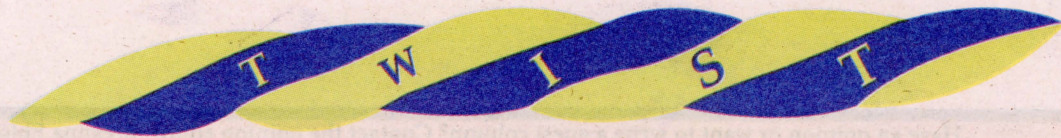
As for the decathlon, this in-person sport is likely to be a two-week event that will begin at the start of the intramural season.

Robinson explained that a variety of events are being incorporated into the mix for the decathlon.

"It goes from all different kinds of



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skill stuff – from shooting free throws, to kicking soccer balls in between cones and into a goal, to throwing a football at a target, to throwing frisbees at targets and some indoor running around a track,” said Robinson.

Each event in the decathlon will be out of ten points, leading to a total score out of 100 for each competitor. The estimated time for one person’s run would be about 20 minutes, with only one competitor being on the gym floor at a time while other competitors wait outside.

The three-point competition will be set up with five racks around the three-point arc, similar to that of the NBA’s version of the three-point contest.

There will be six balls in each rack – five regular and one moneyball worth two points.

There will also be a cornhole league, which will be played in teams of two and follow official cornhole rules with the winning team being the first to score exactly 21 points. Cancellation of points will be in effect, and if a team goes over a score of 21, they drop down to 15 points.

“We are fortunate that we are able to still hold intramurals in some capacity, and I hope that students take advantage of this opportunity and make the most of it,” said Robinson.

Intramural sports will likely be held on Monday, Wednesday and Thursday evenings. Sports will not be held on

a specific night, as events will be based on popularity and how many sign-ups are received.


Referees are also gaining new responsibility this year, as they will be asked to take temperatures, monitor mask-wearing, ensure social distancing and, as usual, keep stats and make sure game rules are followed.

“I think the fact we’re still having intramural sports is actually great,” said Laura Booths, one of this year’s referees. “We’re on campus anyways, so might as well get what we’re paying for.”

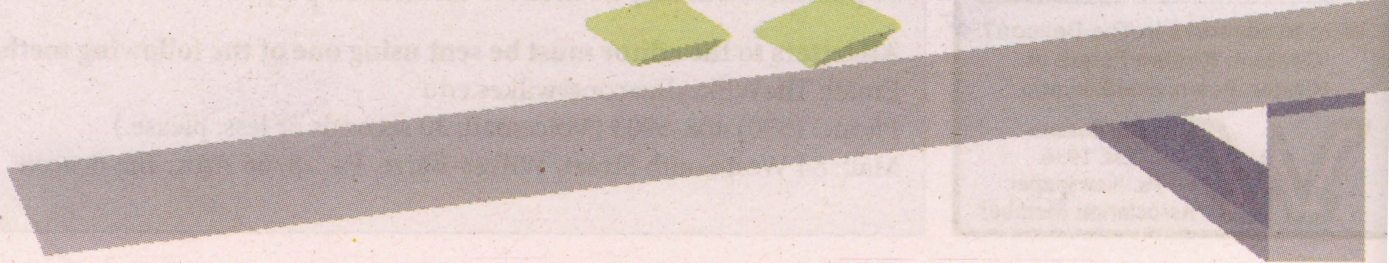
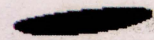
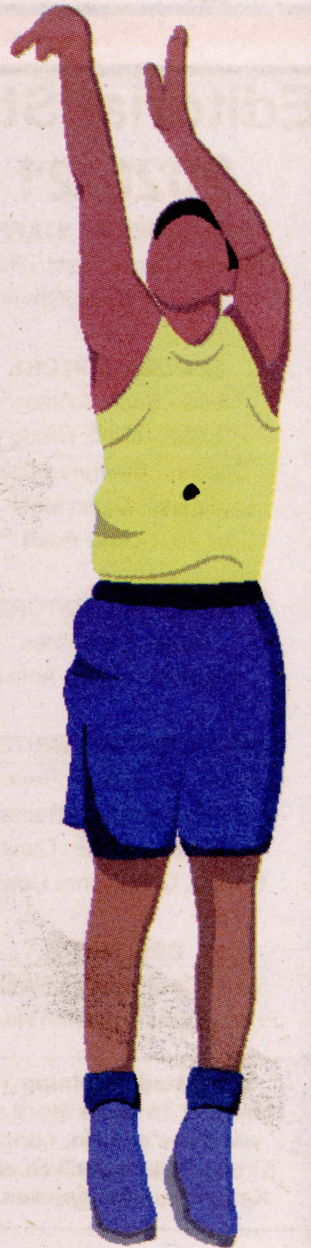
Booths further explained how she believes intramurals being closed to only Wilkes students is a major factor as to why they were able to continue this semester, as this poses less of a risk than traveling athletics.

To sign-up for intramural sports, visit imleagues.com to register for one or more of the leagues offered during the fall semester. The deadline for sign-ups is Sept. 11.

Anyone with questions should email scott.robinson1@wilkes.edu for more information.

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Opinion

Have an opinion or want to write a guest column? Contact the opinion editor: Breanna.Ebisch@wilkes.edu

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Each week, The Beacon's editorial board will take a stance on a current issue.

The dangerous choice of single use plastics at dining locations

Among the countless changes COVID-19 has implemented in our daily lives since the start of the pandemic in mid-March, a small but harmful change has been put in place at Henry's Food Court on Wilkes University's campus.

The elimination of reusable utensils, dining ware and self-serve options due to measures taken to further prevent the spread of the virus has led to single use items being used at all dining locations. The change to styrofoam or plastic items is severely dangerous for the environment, and now hundreds of Wilkes students are unknowingly contributing to harming the Earth during each meal.

Although the safety of all students, faculty and staff at the university is now the highest priority with the return to campus during the pandemic, it is extremely hard to ignore the negative impact this decision has on our planet, which is already experiencing the dangerous effects of climate change.

At all dining locations on campus, including Starbucks, Henry's Food Court and the P.O.D., reusable or personal items are no longer permitted, which promotes and reinforces the use of single use items. With the heightened use of plastic, styrofoam and other harmful products, the Wilkes community is now a large culprit in contributing to the already devastating climate crisis happening across the globe.

According to the Marine Pollution

Bulletin, nearly all of the plastic that ends up in the ocean comes from single use plastics like the ones used in the dining hall. Twenty-one percent of the plastic in the ocean comes from plastic bags, drinking straws and bottles.

We all know that plastic doesn't degrade in nature the same way organic compounds like banana peels and apple cores do. The degradation of plastics is a process that takes thousands of years. Additionally, as plastics degrade, they become microplastics, or tiny plastic beads that attract other pollutants and coalesce into toxic chemicals. These are absorbed by plants and consumed by animals either directly or through the consumption of the plants. Eventually, those same plastics end up on our dinner plates.

According to GreenAmerica, COVID-19 has caused a 35 percent increase in residential waste due to suspensions of curbside recycling in efforts to quell the spread of the disease. Annually, 300 million tons of plastic waste are produced, with almost 80 percent of that plastic ending up in landfills.

GreenAmerica also states that nearly 90 percent of all pollution in the ocean comes from just ten rivers. These rivers run through large cities and dump their polluted water into the surrounding earth. Plants and animals alike use this toxic water, further spreading the toxicity.

Plastic companies capitalized on the fact that plastic is considered the safer alternative than reusable products in the pandemic ridden world. However, it still remains to be proven that plastic products are actually safer. The studies cited by many of the companies advocating for single use plastics are not focused on the survivability of COVID-19 on plastic, but rather other contaminants such as E. coli.

Not to mention the university's budget needs to consistently account for plastic or other single use products throughout the semester. By eliminating the use of the traditional dining ware and washing them after each use like the cafeteria has done in previous years, it becomes necessary to think about purchasing the correct amount of containers, utensil sets and other items necessary for single use eating and take out options.

Presently, it is unclear how COVID-19 affects the consumption of single use plastic products and the disposal processes associated, but it has become increasingly evident that mindful consumers are a major factor in the solution to the problem, which includes the Wilkes community.

Be mindful of the items you use everyday and how you are contributing to a major, global crisis.



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Chadwick Boseman: Honoring his legacy beyond “Black Panther”

By Zarqua Ansari
Asst. Opinion Editor

The revelation of Chadwick Boseman’s death on Aug. 28 shook the world. The actor and director, only 43 years old, passed away after a secret four-year battle with colon cancer.

The late actor’s work left a lasting impression in the minds and hearts of countless fans and shone a light on Black culture and history. In addition, his 12-year span of work overcame many long-held stereotypes and paved the way for a better and brighter future for Black Americans.

American media loves to reassure us that America is white. In fact, the Oscars and Grammys have overlooked works by Black artists for decades, effectively maintaining representation as a steady source of controversy. Since the media is a reflection of the American image, without representation, we fall subject to a monotonous and inaccurate image of our nation.

By overlooking representation in the media, we effectively erase the ability to learn about other cultures and fail to see other perspectives. This leads to a deficit in knowledge, which creates fear. Humanization of underrepresented groups becomes increasingly difficult, further perpetuating this fear.

Boseman’s work overcomes these barriers, making him an incredibly important asset to the Black community. He was an embodiment of the qualities that Black Americans strive for. His roles showed respect, courage and determination. His characters are creative and humorous without sacrificing the truthful and often difficult-to-swallow reality. Boseman worked to display insight into the struggles of being a black person in today’s society.

For example, the “Black Panther” star fought for the African accent for his most famous role as King T’Challa, ruler of the fictional nation of Wakanda in the Marvel Cinematic Universe. According to The Washington Post, Marvel originally thought African accents for the entire movie would be “too much,” but Boseman fought for the accents to be included in the movie. He stated that British accents were not seen as an obstacle, and therefore African accents should not be either.

He wanted the movie to show that Black excellence does not occur from European

colonization, but rather is a product of the people themselves. By keeping the African accents in the movie, Boseman was able to change the entirety of its tone, showcasing the power of Wakanda as self-made rather than a power acquired as the nation was conquered. In a way, Wakanda stands as a testimony to what African nations could have achieved if they hadn’t been colonized and enslaved.

Normally in American film, minorities are used as help or comedic relief sidekicks that don’t get a dynamic character arc. This phenomenon is so prevalent it has been dubbed the “Magical Negro.”

According to TvTropes.com this term was popularized by film director Spike Lee in 2001. The Magical Negro is simply a stock character who comes to the aid of white protagonists in a film, often possessing some kind of magical powers or sagely advice, but has almost no role outside of their portrayal as an aid to the white protagonist. This character is

given no development, background or interesting characteristics. Lee used the word “negro” as it is often considered offensive and underlines the stereotypes of the “noble savage” seen previously in American film.

The late actor’s roles stay away from this harmful stereotype. In fact, Lee’s own 2020 film “Da 5 Bloods” featured Boseman’s talents. The movie focuses on the story of four Black veterans. The story does not focus on the journey of a white protagonist that needs help from a Black person, but rather focuses on the rich Black history that brings these characters to life.

Boseman saw the importance of paying it forward. Having played iconic roles such as Jackie Robinson and James Brown, the importance of these excellent Black men was not lost on him. Denzel Washington famously paid for Chadwick Boseman’s tuition, and Boseman thanked Washington for it publicly at the 47th Lifetime

Achievement Awards last year.

Boseman went on to visit children in hospitals, as they finally saw a hero that looked like themselves on the screen. He was reportedly changed by the experience of visiting those terminally ill children and wanted to do more for them, according to “Black Panther” executive producer Nate Moore.

In light of recent events surrounding the Black Lives Matter protests, the Black community felt especially pained. The political climate this year is unstable, and the apples may fall on either side of the metaphorical fence. As a symbol for Black empowerment, Boseman’s name alone was enough to inspire Black people into positive fueled action. The actor exuded peace; in fact, according to Bio Reports, while studying for his role in “Black Panther,” a Cape Town native gave him the nickname Mxolisi, meaning “Peacemaker.”

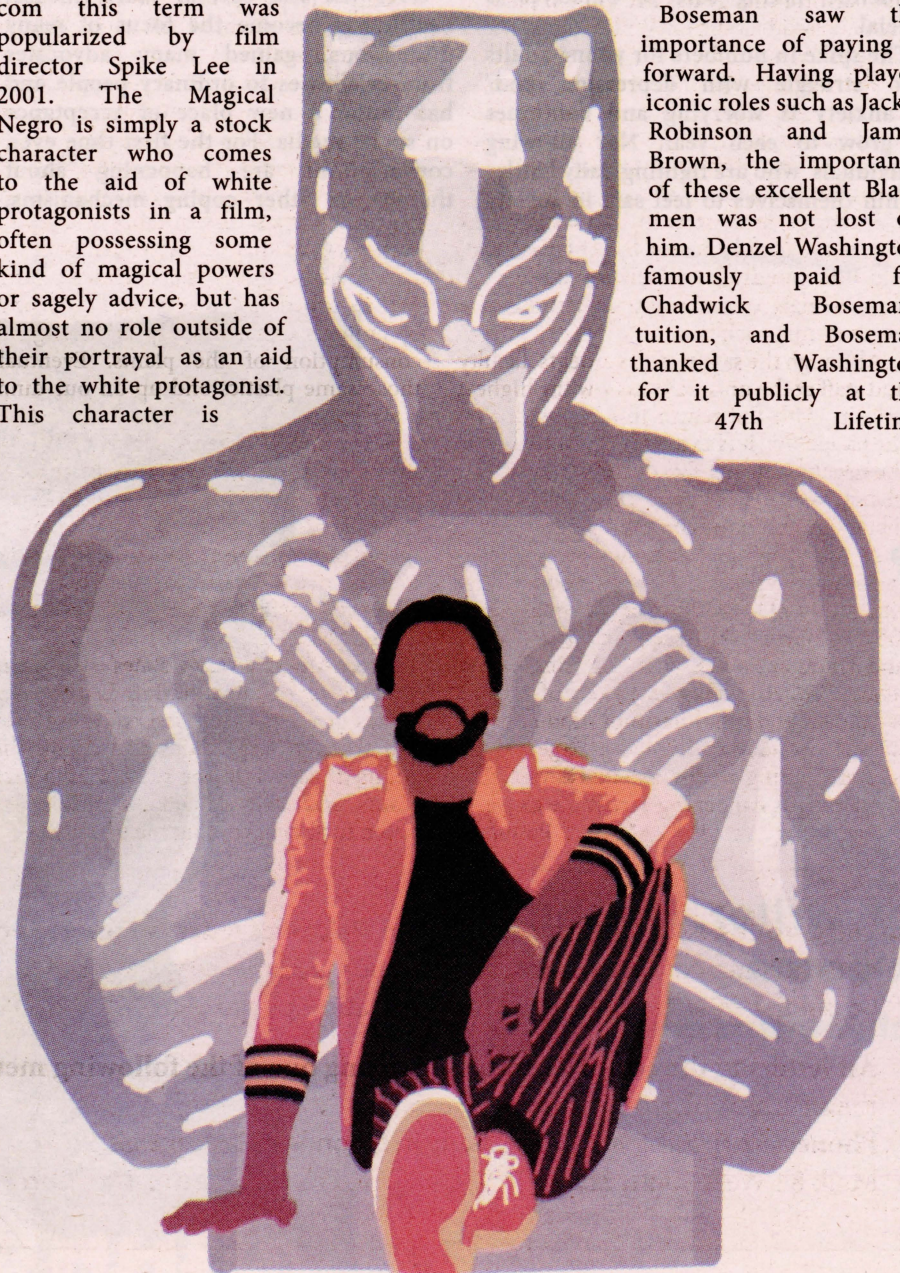
Boseman faced challenges directly related to the issues raised by the Black Lives Matter movement. Born in South Carolina in 1977, the area he lived in had only been recently desegregated, according to Bio Reports, leading him to live much of his early years under strict regulation and rules to prevent attacks from the Klan.


According to TheaterMania, as a junior in college, one of Boseman’s classmates was shot and killed, inspiring him to write a screenplay title “Crossroads.” Both of these life-changing events exemplify the very reality Black Americans face in their day-to-day lives – a reality the actor worked hard to bring to light.

Anderson, S.C., Boseman’s hometown, saw the importance of representation and empowerment in his movies. They paid him a tribute by airing “Black Panther” at the city Amphitheater on Sept. 3.

All this goes to say that representation in the media means that America can self reflect on its multicultural and multiracial richness. Representation in the media means that America sees more to minorities than stereotypes. Representation makes disadvantaged groups become real people and allows them the opportunity to improve their situations.

As for Boseman, his legacy will live on (Wakanda) forever.



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Graphic by Zarqua Ansari

Breaking the unnecessary stigma around therapy in 2020

Breanna Ebisch
Opinion Editor

How many times have you heard someone say, "I go to therapy," or a similar variation of that statement aloud?

You can probably count on a single hand the answer to that question.

Even in 2020, a year where mental health is at the forefront of many conversations, the likelihood of hearing anyone openly admit they regularly go to therapy is a rarity.

The associated stigma that comes with getting professional help relating to any aspect of mental health needs to end. Millions of American struggle with depression, anxiety and other mental illnesses that affect their daily lives, but they find it difficult talking about those experiences or seeking out professional help, such as therapy.

Our society has given mental health a negative connotation, and even though

it's a rising issue especially in young people, many don't regard it on the same level as physical health, which is not only damaging but incorrect.

Despite the deeply embedded stigma, there is absolutely nothing wrong with going to therapy or seeking out help. In fact, it's encouraged to find a mental health professional and start on the journey full of support, resources and coping mechanisms in order to combat the harmful effects of various mental illnesses.

In a constantly changing world where we are all taking on new experiences that have never happened before, like a global pandemic, taking care of ourselves is crucial.

The spike in numbers for young adults who struggle with depression and/or anxiety is worrying and continues to grow to each year. Not allowing individuals who are fighting daily battles within themselves to feel safe in society

to openly talk about their emotions is an issue. They should not sense disapproval or feel that it is not "O.K." to get the support and help they need, as this is dangerous in more ways than one.

Many who go to therapy on a regular basis or are considering that option are looked at in a poor light because they are considered "weak," "can't handle their problems by themselves" and "have no reason to need help." These are only a few of the speculations that have created the harmful stigma around therapy.

Breaking this societal mindset and stigma is not going to be easy, but the work has already begun.


Over the last several years, mental health has become the focus of many discussions, gained many advocates from celebrities to ordinary people and has found a new place of acceptance on social media. For the first time ever, conversations are happening about therapy or other coping mechanisms,

different experiences with mental illnesses and how effective getting help is.

Young people are not scared to share what they are going through and what has personally helped them. These individuals are the main reason this stigma is slowly being torn apart piece by piece.

By finding a community of people on the Internet who relate to each other and are willing to be open about "taboo" topics, such as mental illnesses or going to therapy, it's one step closer to achieving the main goal of bringing that mentality to society.

The most important thing to remember is that going to therapy is a completely normal and acceptable path of action to help cope with mental illness no matter what society might try to convince us. Let's break the stigma.

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Have an opinion?

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Become an opinion writer. Freshmen and all majors welcome.

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The backlash of social activism on and off the court

By Liam Flynn
Staff Writer

On Aug. 26, 2016, San Francisco 49ers quarterback Colin Kaepernick refused to stand for the national anthem before his preseason debut against the Green Bay Packers.

"I am not going to stand up to show pride in a flag for a country that oppresses black people and people of color," he said after the game. "To me this is bigger than football, and it would be selfish on my part to look the other way."

In the days, weeks, months and years after Kaepernick first explained why he was protesting, trenches were occupied. Some understood and applauded Kaepernick's efforts. Others failed to separate the cause of the protests from the method of protest and repeatedly chastised the quarterback.

A year after Kaepernick's first protest, hundreds of his supporters staged a rally outside the NFL's headquarters in New York.

"We believe that the NFL has been complicit in the ostracization of Colin Kaepernick, "And today, it is time for the NFL to take a stand," said Democratic strategist and CNN political analyst Symone Sanders.

Kaepernick, now a 32-year-old free agent quarterback has not played in the NFL since the last week of the 2016 season. He still remains a polarizing Civil Rights activist to this day even though he is no longer granted the platform of NFL quarterback.

In late 2017, President Donald Trump praised an NFL ban on players kneeling during the national anthem, questioning whether such protesters should stay in the United States.

"You have to stand proudly for the national anthem or you shouldn't be playing, you shouldn't be there, maybe you shouldn't be in the country," he said.

In September of that same year, at an Alabama rally, Trump told a group of supporters that players who protest during the national anthem should be fired. Unfortunately, it is pretty evident that social justice has never been something that our commander in chief prioritizes.

People fail to realize that professional athletes protesting for a cause is not a new practice. Just look at basketball legend Bill Russell, and the other black members of the Boston Celtics, boycotting a game during the 1961-62 NBA season after they were refused service at a restaurant.

Or when Major League Baseball all-star Curt Flood filed an antitrust suit against MLB, saying that being owned by a baseball team

was akin to "being a slave 100 years ago" after the St. Louis Cardinals traded Flood to the Philadelphia Phillies. He took the case all the way to the Supreme Court in 1972, sacrificing the last years of his career, and though he lost the case, he helped gain economic freedom for the next generation of players.

After the NBA resumed its season in Orlando, Fla. this July, the Colin-Kaepernick-originated practice of teams lining up and kneeling during the national anthem to protest systemic racism and police brutality became a standard feature for every game played. The protests followed the deaths of innocent African Americans by law enforcement this year, including Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, George Floyd, and unfortunately many more.

Trump commented soon after, saying that the protests presented by the players in the league are "disgraceful" and vowed to stop watching games. LeBron James, a familiar face when it comes to activism in professional sports, said that the basketball community

was not "sad about losing his viewership."

On Aug. 26, in the wake of the police shooting against Jacob Blake, the Milwaukee Bucks decided not to take the court for their playoff game against the Orlando Magic, ultimately deciding to boycott the scheduled matchup. The rest of the NBA followed suit and it set off a chain reaction unlike anything ever seen in American sports. Within hours, several MLB and MLS teams, led by their players, decided to pause the night's contests. The boycotting stretched into a second day as more MLB teams postponed games.

The WNBA, always at the forefront of sports activism, halted its season.

A meeting was held between NBA players in the Orlando bubble that Wednesday night. It was reported that LeBron James walked out of the meeting with the rest of his Los Angeles Lakers team following him. They were soon followed by the Los Angeles Clippers, making it clear that James had no intention of resuming the unorthodox season if teams and ownership did not do what they could

to create change for the African American community that has been immensely targeted against.

The league and players union released a joint statement that Friday announcing resumption of the games, and said that the league and its players would work together on several initiatives to promote voting access, combat social injustice and racial inequality, and advocate for police reform. In every NBA city where the league's franchise owns and controls its arena property, team owners will work with local officials to turn those arenas into voting locations for the 2020 general election.

Trump was once again not supportive of the protests exhibited by the professional athletes. The president warned the NFL not to become a political organization like the NBA and proceeded to attack the NBA's poor ratings.

Trump tweeted, "People are tired of watching the highly political @NBA... Basketball ratings are WAY down, and they won't be coming back. I hope football and baseball are watching and learning because the same thing will be happening to them. Stand tall for our Country and our Flag!!!"

Trump has time and time again voiced his disapproval of people speaking out against the social injustice that is undisputedly displayed in the United States on a daily basis. In a country that is currently extremely polarized by political preference and stances on race issues.

Donald J. Trump is not the commander in chief we need. Rather than reach a compromise that is beneficial to all citizens and work towards ending the social injustices prominent in our nation, filled with diversity, he chooses to ignore the problems altogether.

It is highly concerning to know that instead of wanting unity between citizens, Trump would rather turn a blind-eye to the tragedies that strike on a daily basis and verbally attack anyone who simply calls for change that benefits their own well being.

In a nation that preaches liberty and justice for all, the United States has lately displayed the opposite of that. We are as divided as we have ever been (excluding the Civil War), and we need a leader who wants to unite our people.

It is right to applaud these professional athletes for taking matters into their own hands, which gives comfort to many who watch our lazy commander in chief sit back and ridicule people.



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MTV's 2020 Video Music Awards: Lady Gaga wins big

By Jordan Daniel
Opinion Staff Writer

On Aug. 30, MTV hosted their 37th Annual Video Music Awards via cable and livestream.

The award show was presented live in New York City and was hosted by Keke Palmer, who did her best to keep the same energy that the VMA's has produced in past award shows amid the new normal that is expected for entertainment events.

Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, there was no in-person ceremony. However, some artists and presenters were still in attendance.

The Weeknd opened the show fantastically on top of the Hudson Yards Edge building with a performance of his hit song "Blinding Lights," which ended in a display of riverside fireworks. The artist also took home a moon person for two categories: Video of the Year and Best R&B. In both of his speeches, he chose to use his voice to declare justice for Jacob Blake and Breonna Taylor.

Not only were there appropriate

infiltrations of pro-BLM sentiments, but pro-masking attitudes were present too. The biggest advocate of the mask movement was Lady Gaga, who made sure to accompany every single one of her brilliant outfit changes with an equally amazing and well-designed face mask, so people would get the message they need to mask up.

Gaga even went as far as to wear a mask during her whole performance medley of songs off her new album "Chromatica," including "911," "Rain on Me" ft. Ariana Grande, and "Stupid Love."

The Mother Monster herself strutted her way, mask and all, to accept the five moon persons she won that night for Song of the Year, Best Collaboration and Best Cinematography, which was shared with Grande for their collaborative track. The superstar's other two trophies were for Artist of the Year and the Tricon Award, which honors a highly accomplished artist across three disciplines, highlighting their impact on music video culture. Gaga was the first-ever recipient.

Since the pandemic forced the VMAs

to alter the usual operations of the show, performers had to try different tactics to enhance their performances in order to hold up to the expectation of an artist's "iconic" VMAs performance.

Some artists, including DaBaby and BTS, pre-recorded their performances and chose to add visual effects. Others, like Maluma and Latin American boy group CNCO, performed at the Skyline Drive-in NYC, which allowed them to have a few audience members watch the performance live from their cars. These strategies proved to make the performances fun and dynamic, although the environment is completely different from the live version of performances viewers are used to.


The night also made history with BTS' debut MTV performance of their new all-English hit-single, "Dynamite." The K-Pop band's performance was pre-recorded, and spectacularly shot back in South Korea. The performance featured the group dancing in front of a green screen of the Brooklyn Bridge. The band won all four awards they were nominated

for that night: Best Pop, Best K-Pop, Best Group and Best Choreography.

It was nice to see the global representation of artists in the music industry. Aside from BTS representing South Korea, K-Pop group Blackpink also won the category for Song of the Summer with their catchy single "How You Like That," which was the first time ever a girl group from South Korea won a moon person, and the first time in three years since a girl group won an award at the VMAs.

Plus, the night continued to include global artists with performances from Latin artists Maluma and CNCO. Both won their first-ever moon persons – Maluma for Best Latin and CNCO for Best Quarantine Performance.

Overall, the year's VMAs were entirely new and could potentially be something to get used to for future award shows.

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Bre's Beats: TikTok, Taylor Swift and tremendous hits

By Breanna Ebisch
Opinion Editor

It was a summer to remember in the music industry. From surprise album releases and unbelievable record breaking, the warmest months of the year provided some of the best new music of 2020.

Despite the cancellations or postponements of several major tours, reimagining annual award shows and figuring out the new "normal" of releasing music during a pandemic, countless artists left a remarkable impact on the industry this summer.

For the last several months, one look at the Top 40 charts will tell you one thing – the "TikTok songs," or songs better known for their use and discovery on the highly popular social media app, were racking in the streams and ruled the highest spots for a majority of the summer.

Doja Cat's instant hit "Say So" and Megan Thee Stallion's catchy "Savage" were the first singles to gain attention in early May on TikTok. After making

the transition over from the app, both remained in the top 10 for several weeks.

"Roses" by SAINt JHN, "Rockstar" by DaBaby featuring Roddy Ricch and "Savage Love (Laxed-Siren Beat)" by Jawsh 685 and Jason Derulo also made notable appearances on Billboard's Hot 100 Chart.

TikTok gave each of these songs the platform to gain a fanbase before making the jump to radio play.

It's almost a guarantee that if you listen to any Top 40 station or Today's Hits playlist, at least one, if not all of these singles, will be played. Using irresistibly upbeat melodies, easy-to-remember lyrics and the quick access to be shared among millions, it's no surprise that these songs found the success they did.

Beyond the collection of music that

landed on the charts from TikTok, there were monumental additions made by many well known artists. Ariana Grande and Lady Gaga released the power anthem "Rain On Me" as a leading single off Gaga's latest album "Chromatica,"

landing them both with the most nominations and wins at the 2020 VMAs.


Harry Styles released the highly loved and perfect summer tune, "Watermelon Sugar" from his 2019 album, "Fine Line," as a single with an accompanying music video. The song immediately broke out onto the charts and earned the singer his very first Number One song of his solo career.

But the biggest surprise of the summer in the music industry was from none other than Taylor Swift. In late July, the singer/songwriter posted about

releasing her eighth album as a shock to fans across the globe. "Folklore" was recorded, produced and put together entirely during quarantine, but that fact only made the studio album even more stunning. Swift left behind every sound and label she's ever fit into since she started making music and released an album full of heartbreaking, yet lovable songs that were all created within her imagination in isolation.

The album itself broke several records for Swift. Besides becoming her seventh Number One record, it also holds the title of best selling album of 2020 so far, and made Swift the only artist to ever have an album debut at the top of the Billboard 200 chart and a single debut in the first spot on the Hot 100 chart simultaneously.

From exciting new songs rising up the charts to monumental releases, nothing stopped artists from doing what they love and giving fans the gift of music during this past summer.

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Graphic by Madison Hummer



Sports

Want your sport covered? Deserve to be a Senior Spotlight? Contact the Sports Editors: Ariel.Reed@wilkes.edu or Dylan.Mehl@wilkes.edu.

The Preview: East and West

A breakdown of the NBA East and West semifinal matchups, what each team needs to do to win

By Dylan Mehl
Co-Sports Editor

The NBA postseason is in full swing and the Eastern Conference is down to its final four teams, all battling for a spot in the NBA Finals for a chance to call themselves champions.

As of the writing of this article the five seed Miami Heat currently led the one seed Milwaukee Bucks two games to none in their east semi-finals matchup. The three seed Boston Celtics are also up on the two seed Toronto Raptors, two games to zero, putting both lower seeds at the advantage going into their games three's.

Miami has looked very impressive in its first two games picking up an 11-point win in game one of the series behind Jimmy Butler's 40-point performance. Then in a close game two, the Heat once again secured the win on walk off free throws from Butler.

As they were all season, the Heat has looked like a deep team, full of guys that can step up. Goran Dragic has had a big first two games, averaging 25 points and 4.5 assists.

Depth has been a huge reason for the Heat's success all season behind unexpected contributions from the likes of Duncan Robinson, Tyler Herro and Kendrick Nunn, while they have also had veteran presence from Andre Iguodala and Jae Crowder.

The Heat is looking to make its first conference finals appearance since 2014 when LeBron James, Dwyane Wade and Chris Bosh were all on the team.

The Bucks down early in the series have to be wondering when their MVP Giannis Antetokounmpo is going to step up, as his 23.5 point per game average through the first two games certainly won't be enough. These are awful numbers compared to the first round against the Magic where he averaged over 30 points per game.

Antetokounmpo's lack of offensive presence on the court has drastically

affected the level of play that Milwaukee is use to doing.

Milwaukee has a huge concern being down to a Miami team that seems to have had its number since the regular season. However, concerns for them don't stop there as if they lose this series, Anetokounmpo is a free agent this offseason and could be on the move. Rumors suggest that Miami and Toronto would be at the top of the list of teams he's interested in.

Boston currently finds itself in a favorable position up on the defending champion Raptors behind their three man tandem of Jayson Tatum, Jaylen Brown and Kemba Walker. Tatum has averaged 27.5 points per game so far while Walker is averaging seven assists.

Marcus Smart and Robert Williams have both proven to be spark plugs for the Celtics off the bench as well, like Miami Boston is a team that runs deep.

The Celtics have been able to find success despite loss of starter and great scorer Gordon Hayward. Hayward is likely out for the rest of the playoffs and could come back to hurt the Celtics, even if they do make it past this point.

For the Raptors, this series is showing that they miss superstar Kawhi Leonard, who left this past offseason, as they don't have someone to take over in fourth quarters. Guards Kyle Lowry and Fred Van Vleet, who usually play the role of fourth quarter scorers, have had some serious shooting woes early on in this series.

Pascal Siakim, who was believed to be the next Raptors star, is averaging just 15.5 points per game this series, a number he will need to increase if Toronto has any hope of staying in this one.

Toronto's depth is what it may have to rely on with struggling shooting early on in this series. Guys like OG Anunoby, Norman Powell and Marc Gasol will have to show up on both ends of the court.

By Ariel Reed
Co-Sports Editor

The road to the Western Conference Finals has been an interesting journey to watch unfold. With two buzzer beaters and some rivalry games, the semifinal games are going to be an interesting series.

The Denver Nuggets vs. Utah Jazz was a thriller throughout the entire seven game stretch.

Game 7 between these two foes showed that both teams hungered for the opportunity to advance and face the Los Angeles Clippers. However, fate rolled in favor of the Nuggets.

Coming off of a physical seven game series, the Nuggets looked tired and sluggish in comparison to the well rested Clippers.

Kawhi Leonard was firing on all cylinders for the Clippers scoring 29 points with 31 minutes of play. Leonard's counterpart, Paul George, also had a strong offensive night scoring 19 points.

For the Clippers to continue the momentum of their success, this duo needs to put up consistent double digit figures.

The core part of the Clippers defense rests on the shoulders of George and Leonard. Without them, this team would not be as great as they are today.

Denver was looking good early on in its contest; however, the second quarter was where a lack of rest showed, and the Clippers started to break away.

It was prevalent in the second half of the contest that the Nuggets were starting to feel the fatigue of playing essentially back to back games.

Nikola Jokic and Jamal Murray were both off their game, only scoring 15 and 12 points respectively. For Denver to have any chance of winning, this power couple needs to put up a better offensive effort.

On the other side of the bracket, the Houston Rockets faced off against the Oklahoma Thunder in what was another

game seven that came down right to the wire.

James Harden, usually a name one would hear on the offensive end of things, ended up with the defensive play of the game: blocking the game winning shot from the hands of Lu Dort.

Dort had a phenomenal shooting night, making 50 percent of his 3-point attempts on the evening. If he had not had his shot blocked, Oklahoma would be competing against the Los Angeles Lakers instead of Houston.

The Los Angeles Lakers and the Houston Rockets competed in their first battle of the series on Sept. 4. The Rockets ended up making a fourth quarter run and upsetting the number one seeded Lakers.

Despite being undersized in the matchup, the Rockets ended up making the small ball game work for them.

Houston used their small size to their advantage by out running and hustling the enormous sized Laker lineup.

Harden put up a stellar offensive scoring night with 36 points. His sidekick, Russell Westbrook, chipped in 24 points.

Eric Gordon also contributed to the success of the team with a 23 point game.

In order for the Rockets to have a chance against the Lakers, they need to continue to push the pace of the game and play "Grinnell" style.

This style of play is where you try to shoot as many shots possible and push the tempo of the game.

Grinnell style is not ideal for most professional teams due to both teams having the shooting ability to still compete with each other, but Houston is able to out shoot the Lakers from behind the arc.

The road to the Western Conference finals will be an interesting one with four of the best teams in the league battling it out for the chance to add another championship.



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Athletes continue training efforts despite suspended seasons

By Chris Gowarty
Sports Staff Writer

Despite the suspension of all athletic competition within the Middle Atlantic Conference (MAC) due to COVID-19, student-athletes at Wilkes University have training and conditioning alternatives in place to remain prepared.

The announcement was made on July 24 to suspend intercollegiate competitions through the fall semester. Despite this decision, Wilkes athletes aren't letting up and are putting in work at the Marts Fitness Center.

"It's awesome being here - finally having weights and all this stuff to use. I love it," said freshman Jackson Shafer, a dual-sport athlete on the men's basketball and men's volleyball teams.

During the beginning of the pandemic, athletes were forced to take on new forms of training. In most cases, this resulted in using whatever equipment they had on-hand and doing any exercises they could while at home.

"I had to adjust to using whatever I had at my house," said Shafer. "From playing basketball in my driveway and using the weights I have in my basement, that transition was kind of tough. I couldn't do it with anybody, so it was all self-

motivated, and some days were harder than others."

Unlike Shafer, junior softball player Rhia Aurand made the switch midseason from training with her team to working-out at home, as her sophomore year got cut short when students were sent home in the middle of March earlier this year.

"We had the idea that we were coming back in a few weeks, and we just lost it all," explained Aurand. "It was devastating because we prepared so much, and we only got two games in for our season. It just got taken away from us."

Similar to other athletes at Wilkes, Aurand learned to train at home before finally being able to work with her teammates at the Marts Fitness Center.

"I did a bunch of cardio on my own, watched work-out videos on YouTube and used the dumbbells I had. I did the best I could do with what I had at home," said Aurand. "It's nice to come back, get some really good workouts in and to get to know my team as best as I can with the circumstances."

Training at home proved easier for some athletes, as women's lacrosse members Sophia Gavigan and Laurel Hopfer credited the Teambuildr app with easing their transition from face-to-face training to remote conditioning.

"We'd have our lifts on the app, as well as workouts," said Gavigan.

The app allowed coaches to assign workouts or lifts to their teams from the safety of their homes.

"We would also have alternatives posted on the app, so we wouldn't need to go to a gym since they were all closed at the time," said Hopfer.

Head football coach Jonathan Drach explained that his roster hadn't been overly affected by the pandemic.

"It's been pretty easy for us with Teambuildr - making sure our guys are staying on track with what they need to be doing," said Drach. "I don't think there have been many gaps in our training. Accessibility to equipment was the biggest hurdle, but everybody was continuing their work the entire time."

Even though there won't be any competition for the fall semester, Wilkes athletes are remaining hopeful for the spring and are lifting each other up through these trying times.

"It's nice being back with the team because it feels like we're back to normal somewhat," said Aurand. "We're getting together, preparing for the season and making sure everyone knows about nutrition and getting our workouts in."

Hopfer and Gavigan shared similar

sentiments, noting that they are optimistic about the prospect of playing with their teammates.

"We just like to stay positive and hope that potentially we get to have a season," said Hopfer.


According to Gavigan, staying connected is a key component of staying upbeat and looking ahead.

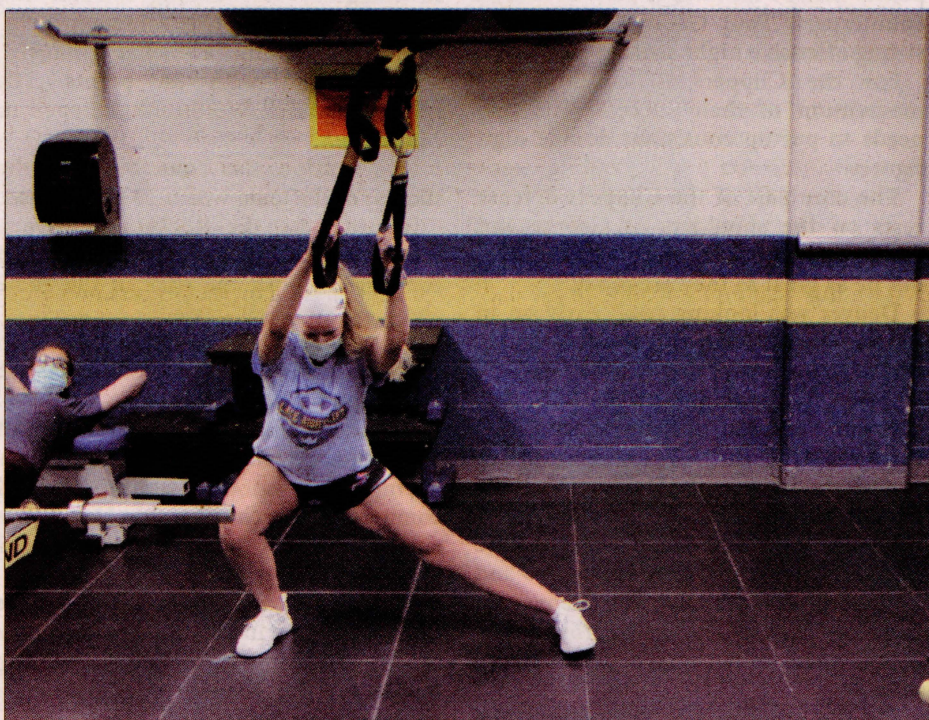
"We all have each other's numbers, so we're able to keep each other positive," said Gavigan.

With a potential spring season to prepare for, Drach stated that his team is remaining busy and will begin their training two weeks into the semester.

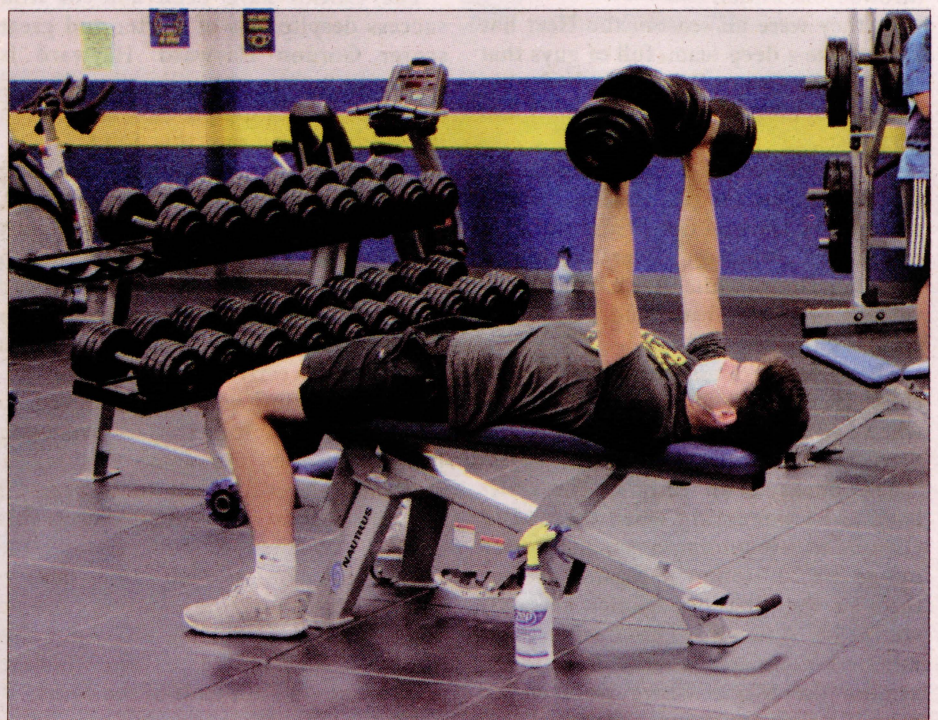
"We're doing our study halls and starting to do our team building activities," said Drach. "We're getting into the social initiatives that we talked about over the summertime. It's nice to have these two weeks where it's a little slower with the workouts so we can build right into it."

The MAC plans to shift fall sport competition to the spring season, if possible, and to start winter competition in January 2021.

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Allie Murie, sophomore women's basketball player, completed a set of JG lateral lunges to conclude her workout for the day.



Trent Fisher, freshman men's basketball player, did a set of dumbbell chest presses.

Photos: The Beacon/Ariel Reed

A day in the life of a Wilkes head coach: Jonathan Drach

By Baylee Guedes & Ariel Reed
Sports Staff Writer, Co-Sports Editor

Jonathan Drach, a third year coach, held high expectations for the upcoming season. The Colonels are improving upon a hot record of 8-3 and a Mayor's Cup championship.

The postponement of the upcoming season to spring 2021, definitely put a delay on the process of rebuilding the football program. However, even in the extended off season, Drach finds ways to keep himself occupied with football.

This year is unlike any other due to the limitations of COVID-19. Under Drach's leadership, the coaching staff and players are executing an audible off of the field.

"We are doing a ton of recruiting," said Drach. "We have been offering some roster spots and doing things like that for recruiting. We are really focusing on the class of 2021. We have a plan to implement athletic activities as we move forward."

In addition to Drach's recruitment plan, he has implemented a five stage plan focusing on academics, safety and getting back to the field.

This plan consists of first an academic stage, where players focus solely on improving their GPA. This is done primarily through mandatory study halls with the coaches.

"When I got here the cumulative GPA was around a 2.38, and now we are at a 2.98," said Drach. "I think that is really a reflection of how we have had success on the football field, too. We have been paying attention to all details, not just football."

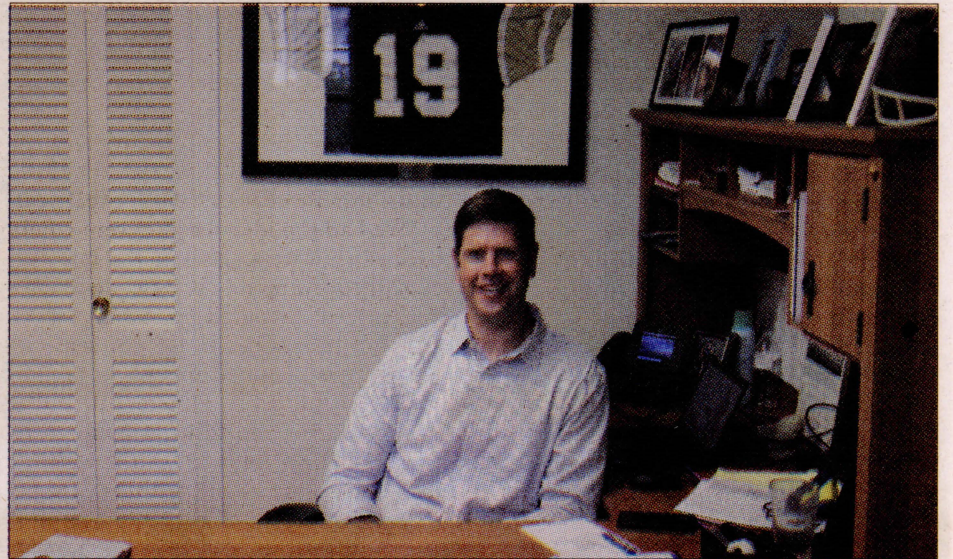
The second stage builds upon the first stage by incorporating small group lifting into their study halls. From there, the team will phase into small pod practice, then half team practice and finally full team practice.

"As we get into the next three weeks, we will begin small pod training," said Drach. "Once we clear that three-week barrier we would add small pod practices. After that, we will have half team practices, and then potentially full team practices."

The close-knit aspect of a team is still being implemented from a socially distanced standpoint. The team is working hard off of the field as they prepare for what is hopefully to come in the spring.

Most people know Drach solely from a Wilkes football aspect; however, his love and passion for football stems deep from his childhood.

"My dad was a high school coach for almost 40 years," said Drach. "I grew up around football. I remember when I was super little riding the bus with my dad and being around the team; it was always



The Beacon/Ariel Reed

Currently, head coach Jonathan Drach's day is filled with recruiting calls and scheduling academic support for his players. something that I loved."

Drach was a multi-sport athlete in high school-- participating in football, basketball, baseball and track. He went to college at Western Michigan where he had the chance to continue his football career, while double majoring in economics and finance.

After graduation, Drach continued his passion for football by driving back to his hometown every day and helping his father coach high school football.

"I was a double major in economics and finance, and I was trading equity futures in Chicago for about two years," said Drach. "After I graduated, I would drive to the suburbs in the afternoon to coach high school football with my dad."

From there, Drach continued his pursuit of his dream job: coaching football. Drach made his debut at Western River High School. Soon after, he jumped to the collegiate spectrum of the game.

Before making his coaching debut as the Wilkes University head coach, Drach had previous coaching experience at Hobart College.

Drach's decision to leave Hobart College after 11 seasons was a difficult one, but the potential that Wilkes' program held brought him to the area.

"I think the area itself, and the ability to lead a program that had all the resources to be successful was something

I saw when I took that opportunity," said Drach. "I think we have been able to do that over the past three years. We have been able to change some of the trajectories of where the program was: by paying attention to details and finding some blue-collar kids who really want to work hard academically and athletically."

Drach has been able to elevate the level of play that the athletes play at alongside getting players to subscribe to that winning mentality.

"Players have been buying into every bit of that improvement culture throughout the course of our time here," said Drach. "We are definitely more process-focused than we are results-focused. We are kind of just focusing on the process now which in this time period is more applicable to being successful."


Drach's decision to join the Colonels was not only a coaching move, but a family move.

"I think that it has been a joy to be here with my young family and everything that they do. I have a 3- and a 5-year-old," said Drach. "It has been a great fit for me and my entire family. This was not only about the opportunity for me, but for the rest of my family as well. My wife is the director of the YMCA at Pittston. I look forward to seeing things grow together."



Courtesy of Wilkes Football Instagram

Drach studied his opponent's formation in order to decide on the best method of attack.

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The Beacon/Ariel Reed

Getting to know...

Nick Yanik

Senior Football Player

The Beacon: Senior Spotlight Athlete

Why Nick Yanik was selected: Last season, Yanik averaged 14.9 carries per game and totaled 610 receiving yards, proving to be a consistent force for the Colonels.

Name: Nick Yanik
Year: Senior
Major: Communication Studies
Minor: Marketing
Hometown: Edison, N.J.
High School: Edison HS
Position: Wide Receiver

If you had to choose one thing about your program that you could improve, what would it be?

I love everything about our program, but if I had to change anything, it would be that Wilkes builds a dome for our athletic fields. I just get so cold out there.

Driving force for your decision to come to Wilkes?

My first day out here, the football team made me feel like I was a part of a family, and I didn't feel that way about any other school. The campus is beautiful, and the students and faculty are very friendly and helpful. I wouldn't trade my experience here for the world.

Other interests or hobbies off of the field?

I love everything about music and playing basketball.

Post-graduation plans in terms of a career?

I would like to work for VICE Media company in their music department and travel the world, learning about different styles of music.

Favorite building on campus?

Karamela's Media and Communication Center.

Favorite professor?

Dr. Kalen Churcher.

If you could have dinner with a famous person from the past, who would it be?

Tupac Shakur.

Favorite memory as a Colonel?

Senunas.

Most influential person in your life?

Momma Yan <3

Hopes for this season as a Colonel?

I hope to not tear my ACL this year and want to bring Wilkes a MAC championship.

A quote you live your life by?

I have two: 1) "Minor setback for a major comeback" and 2) "Tomorrow hopes we learned something from yesterday."

When/Why did you first begin playing?

When I was little, the only things to do in my neighborhood were play sports or get in trouble. My mom didn't like me getting in trouble, so I chose to join the football team for my town, and I fell in love instantly.

What does "Be Colonel" mean to you?

Just be a good person and treat others the way you want to be treated.

Favorite thing to do during practice?

Stretch because it's the calm before the storm.

Anyone to give a shout-out to?

Big shoutout to my family and the HUNCHOS. Go listen to Duwhop, Fat Glo and Big C on Apple Music. And last, but most certainly not least, ARREST THE OFFICERS WHO KILLED BREONNA TAYLOR.

Getting to know...

Catherine Gregoire

Senior Soccer Player

The Beacon: Senior Spotlight

Why Catherine Gregoire was selected: Gregoire has been one of the backbones holding the Colonel defense together for three seasons. Playing centerback, Gregoire has kept Wilkes in contention with tough teams.

Name: Catherine Gregoire

Year: Senior

Major: Nursing

Minor: None

Hometown: New Cumberland, Pa.

High School: Trinity HS

Position: Defense

If you had to choose one thing about your program that you could improve, what would it be?

Having a bigger locker room.

Other interests or hobbies off of the field?

Outside of soccer, I enjoy basketball, dancing, watching TV and hanging out with my friends.

Favorite building on campus?

The E.S. Farley Library.

Favorite professor(s)?

Dr. Joyce Victor and Dr. Maria Grandinetti.

Favorite meal to eat on campus?

Chicken Caesar salad from the POD.

What color/flavor of Gatorade is your favorite?

Original grape (not the G2).

If you could have dinner with a famous person, who would it be?

Kevin Hart.

Most influential person in your life?

My mom.

A quote you live your life by?

"Let all that you do be done with love."

What does "Be Colonel" mean to you?

Taking pride in everything you do and always striving to succeed.

Anyone to give a shout-out to?

My dog Jackson and my mom's cookies.

Driving force for your decision to come to Wilkes?

I decided to come to Wilkes because of the excellent nursing program and opportunity to play collegiate soccer with a welcoming group of girls, who would later become some of my best friends. The small campus size and distance from home were also added factors.

Post-graduation plans in terms of a career?

I am determined to pass the NCLEX and start a job as an RN at a hospital near home. I also plan to go back to school to further my education later on in my career.

Favorite memory as a Colonel?

Going to the NCAA Tournament my freshman year.

Hopes for this season as a Colonel?

I hope we are able to have a season in the spring and can win a MAC Championship.

When/Why did you first begin playing?

I first began playing soccer at the age of five because my older brother was already playing, and my dad was my first coach.

Favorite thing to do during practice?

Tails or headers during corner kicks.



The Beacon/Ariel Reed



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