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The news of today reported by the journalists of tomorrow.

Paul Adams reflects on his interim presidency

By Sean Schmoyer
News Editor

In spring 2019, then Vice President of Student Affairs Dr. Paul S. Adams was appointed to the position of interim president at Wilkes University. A year later, Adams led Wilkes through the appearance of the coronavirus pandemic in March of the 2020 school year.

In May, Dr. Greg Cant officially took his role as president of the University, and Adams returned to his position as vice president of student affairs. With Cant stepping into his presidential role sooner than expected, there was little time to reflect on Adams' time as the interim president.

Dan Cardell '79, a member of the Wilkes Board of Trustees, praised Adams in a May 24 leadership update.

"I want to take this opportunity to thank Paul for his incredible service to Wilkes over the past year," shared Cardell. "I have known Paul since we were undergraduate students at Wilkes, and more than 40 years later, I had the great honor of participating in Paul's installation as interim president. In my remarks, I expressed that Paul was the best person to lead Wilkes during this period of transition. He has certainly delivered."

Adams started his career at Wilkes roughly 40 years ago as the director of residence life. He went on to hold positions as the associate dean of student affairs, dean of academic support services, dean of university college, dean of student affairs and university college, vice president of student affairs and finally interim

president.

"It was a whole range of emotions," said

Adams. "You think, am I up for it, and can I serve the university the way it needs to be served? You think, this place is so important to me, and I would never want to do anything that would bring it any harm. That was part of the conversation in my head, but people were very kind and expressed a lot of confidence in me.

"You know that there are so many unanticipated things that come when you are president, and they run through your mind. Those were all the things that kind of went through my head – there are a million thoughts that go through your head."

Since he was 24 years old, Adams has worked at Wilkes University, allowing him the opportunity to work with six out of the seven campus presidents.

"I have had the blessing of great relationships with all of them. You learn from each one of them – you watch where they were successful and where they were challenged, and you

hopefully absorb a lot over the years and understand it in the context of Wilkes."

Although Adams learned from his predecessors, one challenge he could not prepare for was a global pandemic.

Adams revealed that the pandemic changed by the hour, and that he now realizes many of the goals set changed rapidly and required quick adaptation to guidelines from health experts in the nation.

"Through out everything, we had a number of goals that we set – first and foremost was to keep everyone safe," said Adams. "These were the things that I think guided all of our decision making; how do we keep people

safe, how do we respond to the urgent needs of the people on campus and what could we do to ameliorate their situation? Third, how do we create the best product that we could deliver to our students, and how do we assure the future viability of the university?"

Adams described the decision-making process as incremental, moving from the plan

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Courtesy of Wilkes Marketing
Dr. Paul S. Adams

Wilkes Athletics uprooted with MAC's suspension of fall sports, delay of winter sports until 2021

By Kirsten Peters
Editor-in-Chief

Suspended.

That's the word that uprooted the fall season for Wilkes Athletics and postponed any potential competitive play until January 2021.

"We still have a lot of goals in front of us," said Jonathan Drach, Wilkes' head football coach. "It may not be a MAC championship in 2020, but that doesn't mean it's not a MAC championship in 2021. That doesn't mean we can't start working for it – if you stay ready, you never have to get ready."

On the morning of July 24, the Middle Atlantic Conference, which governs 18 institutions and 7,000 athletes, announced the decision to suspend competitive play. The decision came only two weeks after the MAC approved a conference-only plan, in which universities in the MAC Commonwealth and the MAC Freedom would be able to compete against each other beginning on Sept. 18.

With unwavering concerns regarding COVID-19's impact during the fall, the MAC revised its initial plan and is considering a reconfigured fall season in the spring.

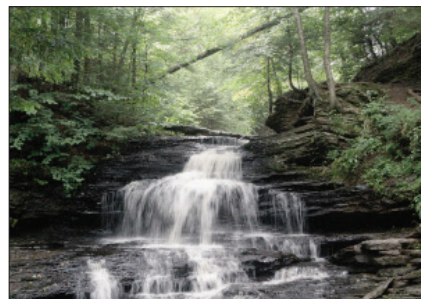
"The MAC worked nonstop this summer to come up with the safest and healthiest way

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Courtesy of Knot Just Any Day

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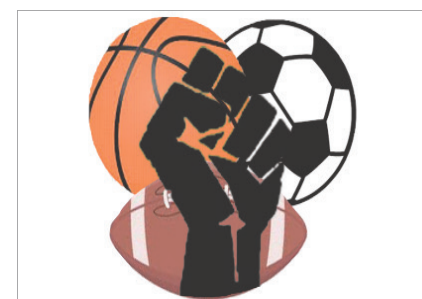
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News

Have a breaking story or a press release to send? Contact news editors: Sean.Schmoyer@wilkes.edu or Sara.Ross@wilkes.edu.

Welcome from Wilkes' seventh president, Dr. Greg Cant

By Dr. Greg Cant
University President

Members of the Wilkes community – greetings!

My name is Dr. Greg Cant and I am very proud to be the seventh president of Wilkes University. I hope that this message finds you safe and healthy wherever you are spending your summer. I am grateful to The Beacon for this opportunity to share my best wishes and outlook for the upcoming academic year with you, especially since the pandemic has made it difficult for me to meet you in person.

Despite the short time we have been on campus, my wife, our daughter, our son and I already feel as though we are members of the Wilkes family of Colonels. When we experienced campus for the first time late last year, we were immediately impressed by Wilkes' close-knit community, excellent academic opportunities and vibrant student life. Leading up to our relocation to Wilkes-Barre, I visited campus numerous times and had the pleasure of meeting motivated

students, passionate faculty and dedicated staff members. Even during the mandatory separation caused by the pandemic, the strong connections that exist between Wilkes students, faculty and staff are evident.

Since becoming president, technology has afforded me the opportunity to get to know more members of the campus, interact with community and business leaders, meet alumni and participate in campus meetings and events. I have especially appreciated the chance to listen to the thoughts of our students during a town hall hosted by MSC last month and speak with prospective students during virtual open houses.

In the coming weeks, I look forward to virtually meeting the Panamanian students who are learning English at Wilkes as a part of the IFARHU program, welcoming our newest cohort of EdD students to campus and, ultimately, assisting with move-in day and welcome weekend activities. During the semester, you can expect me to be a frequent presence at campus gatherings, performances and athletic contests. I have already become

a “regular” at the YMCA and spend much of my time on the weekends exploring campus and the region that my family and I now call home.

Our world faces great challenges right now, and an unpredictability that few of us have experienced before. All of us at Wilkes admire your adaptability, perseverance and optimism and pledge to you an unwavering commitment to your success. We are so eager to welcome you back to campus later this summer. I can't wait to meet you in person and share with you my enthusiasm for Wilkes. Until then, follow me on Instagram @drgregcant to see how I'm getting to know the people, places and stories of Wilkes.

Sincerely,

Greg Cant

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The Beacon/Kirsten Peters
Dr. Greg Cant prepares to welcome the Wilkes community back to campus in his mask.

Wilkes recognized for distance learning efforts

By Genny Frederick
Staff Writer

Educate to Career, a nonprofit organization dedicated to helping students make informed decisions about their education and careers, has named Wilkes University a tier one institution for distance learning efforts amid COVID-19.

Tier one institutions rank the highest of four tiers, with the capability of providing classes either in-person or online, with at least three years of online experience.

According to Educate to Career's website, this ranking recognizes Wilkes as an institution that “has the systems required to deliver a full curriculum online and in-classroom.”

According to University president Dr. Greg Cant, “When Wilkes made the necessary decision to transition to remote learning in March 2020, our faculty and staff responded in a collaborative way that allowed us to continue to deliver on our educational promise to students as seamlessly as possible.”

This seamless transition was not possible without a significant amount of effort from

students, faculty, staff and campus offices, especially the Office of Technology for Teaching and Learning (OTTL).

Dr. Megan Youmans, an assistant professor of chemistry and biochemistry, expressed her appreciation for OTTL.

“As we all got to know last semester, the OTTL staff is amazing. I was familiar with Bongo virtual classroom because OTTL had demonstrated it for me a few hours earlier. I was able to share my knowledge with colleagues, who, in turn, explained how question pools work for quizzes.”

OTTL's first hurdle, however, was the faculty's ability to move online.

“That was my initial concern, ‘Do we have the capacity to help everybody?’” said Kristine Pruett, director of OTTL. “I think once we started talking about it, we started realizing that a lot of people aren't going to need hand-holding. They're going to figure it out if we put the resources out there.

“We have a lot of self-starters in terms of our faculty. They come to us when they need it, but they don't need us to show them every single thing.”

The faculty's motivation to try new methods of teaching was evident during the spring semester.

Dr. Mischelle Anthony praised the faculty in the English department, as well as OTTL on the remote transition during the spring.

“Here in the English Department, every single faculty member – full-time, part-time and emeritus – transitioned to remote instruction with a class-specific synchronous and asynchronous mix,” said Anthony. “A handful of us sought help from the Office of Technology for Teaching and Learning's in-person trainings or online modules. The vast majority of our English faculty, though, were self-taught in their innovations to course delivery.”

“I was humbled and honored as a department chair to see our English faculty work harder than ever to deliver a rigorous, engaged curriculum.”

Similar to the English Department, the School of Business and Leadership also continued discussions about new methods of

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Editor's Note: All information was factual and current as of Friday, July 24 when The Beacon was sent in for publication. Students, faculty and staff should abide by any updates regarding fall semester plans in their Wilkes University email. Current information can be found at www.wilkes.edu/fall2020.

ADAMS, from front

to have students return to campus in April to keeping students home. Commencement had to be cancelled due to the virus, forcing Adams and his staff to adapt constantly – something he says has not changed.

“Paul led the University during one of the most challenging years we have experienced in our history. And, he did so with honesty, compassion and with a commitment to students that has defined his career,” shared Cardell in his leadership update.

“The first things for the year were to keep the trains running and make sure the university functioned as effectively as it could. The second was to complete the strategic plan because this was its last year. The third was to get us through the middle states self-study, which we seemed to have done pretty successfully, and the fourth thing was to get the campus ready to select and welcome a new president, which I think we have managed to do pretty darn well, too.”

Adams is going to continue his work on campus as the vice president of student affairs, which means he will work alongside newly-appointed Cant.


“I have been blessed by an incredible team,” said Cant. “Paul Adams is a good example. Paul has just a modest experience with Wilkes – I think it is maybe 40 years. If Paul doesn’t know you, you are probably not here. It is a part of his immense sort of mental library he has.”

Despite having to face the pandemic and budgetary problems, Adams still looks back fondly on the past year.

“In terms of wonderful moments for me, nothing will surpass the two commencements that I got presided over and to be able to present a diploma on behalf of all my colleagues to a graduating student. That is the pinnacle of my career to be able to do that,” shared Adams. “I tease about this, but I will take credit as being president and being undefeated in the Mayor’s Cup with King’s.”

Bridget Giunta, executive assistant/director for the president’s office; Dr. Donald Mencer, the head of the faculty affairs council; Jeanne Rabel, the chair of the university staff advisory board; and Cardell were among those Adams wished to acknowledge for all of their hard work during his time as interim president, as well as all of his other colleagues.

“I would be so remiss to not give all the credit I need to give to my wife Jean, who bore the brunt of this more than anybody,” said Adams. “She was the one, who when I came home at night feeling challenged, she was the one who had to live with those emotions and challenges throughout the year. I couldn’t have done it without her. She is my partner, and she is my rock.”

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BLM, diversity emphasized at town hall event

By Genny Frederick

New Staff Writer

The Office of Diversity Initiatives and the Multicultural Student Association worked together to hold a town hall meeting to share students’ stories of racial inequality in light of the national Black Lives Matter Movement.

“The motivation or goal of having the town hall meeting was to spread awareness and to get the ball rolling on the conversations about diversity and Black Lives Matter, so that our campus understands and students feel safe,” said Brianna Rowland, the president of the MSC and a senior musical theatre major.

The meeting gave students a chance to share their narratives with other students, as well as faculty and administration – a goal Georgia Costalas, the executive director of diversity affairs, highlighted.

“We wanted to get as many people as possible participating and talking about their experiences – their narratives – so that campus administration and others on campus could hear the narratives and better understand the students’ experience,” said Costalas. “The students presented everything in such an authentic, low-key, this is my life way. I think that was very impactful because they were just talking like, ‘This is what I live – this is what I go through every day on campus.’”

While the meeting opened listeners’ eyes to the everyday experiences of Black students and students of color, it was simply the start of many more conversations.

“MSC took an active leadership role, and they have a couple things in the pipeline,” said Erica Acosta, the associate director of diversity affairs. “One is to engage more with the deans and the faculty members – to talk about their experience and what they go through. The second one is having a sit down with our campus police.”

Rowland explained some of her early plans

RECOGNIZED, from page 2

course delivery well after the spring semester’s conclusion.

“We knew that at some point, we need to pay extra attention to the online teaching model and discussed that faculty should learn more about how to maintain a high-quality online course in the Jay S. Sidhu School of Business & Leadership,” said Lee.

Lee has worked to make a new plan to structure his courses for the fall.

“In fall 2020, I have decided to adopt a HyFlex teaching model in my classes. This teaching model allows students to choose to attend face-to-face, synchronous class sessions or complete learning activities fully online without attending class,” explained Lee.

for connecting with faculty and staff in the fall.

“We’re looking into setting up a presentation or some sort of activity in order to make sure that faculty and staff are on the same page as us and make sure that they aren’t subjecting students of color to micro or macro aggressions,” shared Rowland. “We want to focus on educating everyone and making sure that communication is open.”

The MSC and ODI have also connected with Christopher Jagoe, the chief of campus police, so that a relationship is formed before students are back on campus in the fall.

“The Wilkes-Barre Police reached out to further conversation and to make sure that all the African-American students and students of color feel safe on campus,” said Rowland. “Chief Jagoe spoke about meeting with the executive board of the MSC first, and then opening it up to a bigger scale.”

While both the MSC and ODI have a number of plans and have been working with administration, Rowland expressed her concern that the conversations may slow down.

“I don’t want this to be one of those things that gets really hyped up for a bit and then starts to slowly die down,” said Rowland. “I want it to be a topic of conversation 24/7. I know it’s heavy stuff, and sometimes you need the mental health break, but in order to keep pushing, this has to be the conversation 24/7.”

When students come back to school in the fall and want to contribute to the Black Lives Matter Movement on campus, Rowland encourages their support.

“When our sister clubs or other cultural clubs have events, then show your support. Join the Multicultural Student Coalition, do the major things to show you’re there with us and that you’re listening, rather than giving a quick look.”

Acosta echoed this message: “You don’t have to be in the front lines saying something, but

While OTTL had concerns about faculty during their transition, the students ranked as their primary concern. According to Pruet, “As an institution of higher learning, we all value the student experience on campus. We don’t want to see that go away. We wanted to change the culture. We wanted to give students options for completing assignments, so it’s not always on paper. Let them create videos and do more creative activities.”

“Balancing the incorporation of technology and the convenience that it offers students who have to work and have other responsibilities to deal with – that’s a very real thing for a lot of our students.”

Lt. Col. Mark Kaster expressed his appreciation for the students throughout this transition. The Director of Veterans Affairs also serves as a teacher in the environmental



Courtesy of Brianna Rowland


MSC president Brianna Rowland helped to enact change on campus in regards to diversity initiatives and student safety.

show your support, and be there in solidarity. That means a lot because then we know who our allies are.”

Conversations about race can be challenging, but Acosta emphasized the importance of kindness.

“I might not agree with you, but I’m still going to be next to you. I am going to be kind to you because at the end of the day, we cry the same – we share pain the same. If we focus on those fundamentals, we can still be with one another,” explained Acosta.

Students can watch for events in the fall with the MSC, such as a possible movie night or ice cream social.

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engineering and earth sciences department.

“I’m very proud of the way our students adjusted to this difficult challenge,” said Kaster. “I saw my students adapt every day to do what was needed, to complete their assignments, write papers, deliver briefings and take exams. To work hard for their education. To complete their mission. Working together professionally: students, faculty and staff, the Wilkes team delivered under extreme conditions.”

The OTTL is planning on distributing a student survey, which will allow students to share their experience with online learning during the spring semester and what they would like to see in the future.

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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.

To mask or not to mask: Why we should wear a mask

By Emily Cherkauskas

Life, Arts & Entertainment Staff Writer

Following the announcement that Wilkes will be holding in-person classes this upcoming fall semester, many changes in protocol have been announced. The university is considering practicing various ways to curb the spread of COVID-19, with the most controversial being mask-wearing.

The topic of wearing a face mask or not has become a heated issue in the United States, especially regarding its effectiveness. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) maintain its usefulness, explaining “face mask coverings may slow the spread of the virus, and help people who may have the virus and do not know it from transmitting it to others.”

The CDC also has explained the disease can “spread mainly from person to person, mainly through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs, sneezes, or talks.”

Wilkes University biology professor Debra Chapman has encouraged the use of masks.

“Think about it, if everyone wears masks, it would make sense that the risk of infection

by COVID-19 is decreased,” Chapman said. “The mask is certainly better than nothing.”

The sudden requirement of wearing masks has led to strong opposition, citing claims of ineffectiveness and causes of harm to the wearer. However, the World Health Organization (WHO) has been debunking these popular myths and rumors regarding the possible cons of mask-wearing.

A debated rumor is that the wearer can suffer from CO2 intoxication (the gas we exhale) or oxygen deficiency (the gas we breathe in). Additionally, other claims have risen regarding those with breathing problems being exempt from mask-wearing in buildings. The WHO has refuted these, stating that masks should be tight and snug around the face, but loose enough to be able to breathe properly.

“The prolonged use of medical masks can be uncomfortable,” the WHO said. “However, it does not lead to CO2 intoxication nor oxygen deficiency.”

If one is in need of a mask, the Pennsylvania Department of Health (DOH) has offered directions on how to make a homemade fabric mask, and can be found at health.pa.gov. The

materials needed are fabric (preferably 100 percent cotton), elastic or fabric ties, scissors and a sewing machine or needle and thread.

Chapman also recommends a few tricks to ensure a proper face mask, including “using material such as that used for flannel pajamas or 600-count pillowcases.” Coffee filters worn within bandanas or scarves are not as effective as cloth masks in capturing and blocking air particles, according to Chapman.

“To determine if the cloth mask may be effective, hold the mask up to a light,” Chapman said. “If you can see through the mask, it probably won’t work that well in filtering out microscopic particles.”

However, if one is unable to make his or her own mask, reusable cloth masks are available to purchase online from sellers on websites such as Etsy or Amazon.

For anyone wary or hesitant on wearing a mask, the DOH wishes to reassure the public by saying: “My mask protects you, my mask protects me.”

Although face masks are effective against the virus, other simple measures can be taken for extra precaution.

When it is possible, social distancing

between others at a distance of at least six feet, or two arms’ length apart, can prevent infected droplets from reaching others. These practices apply to anyone who is sick, even if they are in your home. Social distancing while outside is especially important, as some infected people may not show symptoms.

Another factor in staying healthy includes maintaining healthy levels of stress in order to boost the immune system. Although this may be difficult in the upcoming compressed semester, students should make sure to follow a balanced schedule of finishing homework and getting enough sleep every night.

These practices, especially mask-wearing, are important due to the lack of a vaccine for COVID-19. The public itself is responsible for preventing the spread of the contagious virus.

As a result, we must work together and cooperate with each other to prevent this illness from harming each other. As the CDC states, “the best way to prevent illness is to avoid being exposed to the virus.”



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BMT, Ricketts Glen among spots to stay active outdoors

By Maria DiBuo

Life, Arts & Entertainment Editor

Among activities COVID-19 has limited, exercise is no stranger. Due to the spread of the virus, some gyms have closed their doors and reduced exercise options for many.

While some facilities are beginning the process of re-opening, some patrons feel the risk of contracting the virus is still too high to hit the weights once again.

Whatever the reason, the trend in exercising outdoors has increased as of late. There are many spots in the Wilkes-Barre area for outdoor exercise, including parks, community-funded trails and recreation areas.

Luzerne County Levee Trail

The Luzerne County Levee Trail, affectionately known as “the dike” to many Wyoming Valley locals, is a paved 12-mile path that spans throughout Luzerne County and protects neighboring communities from

flooding during periods of high-water in the Susquehanna River.

The trail stretches through the communities of Wilkes-Barre, Hanover Township,

Plymouth, Edwardsville, Kingston, Wyoming and Forty Fort. It is frequented by joggers, walkers and bikers.

A portion of the trail lines the river, and

provides relaxing scenery for any workout. There are also numerous access points for the trail, such as Kirby Park in Wilkes-Barre. These access points also provide parking at no fee.

For information on the Levee Trail, including access points, visit www.susquehannagreenway.org.

Back Mountain Trail System

The Back Mountain Trail System spans from Luzerne to Lower Demunds Road in Dallas, Pa. The location affords hikers, joggers and bikers with a location to safely see some of the scenic views in the Wyoming Valley.

The trail system was originally a train-route for the Lehigh Valley Railroad Company, and was restored by the Anthracite Scenic Trails Association in 1996. In 2009, two more miles were added onto the trail, making the system a hometown favorite for many locals.

In Luzerne, the Back Mountain Trail



The Beacon/Maria DiBuo

The Back Mountain Trail, located at 97 Parry St., spans from Luzerne to Dallas, Pa.

OUTDOORS, page 10

Local businesses slowly reopen in Downtown Wilkes-Barre

By Sara Ross & Emily Cherkauskas
Asst. News Editor, LA&E Staff Writer

With Luzerne County having transitioned into the green phase, more businesses in Wilkes-Barre are beginning to reopen.

In Downtown Wilkes-Barre, the Public Square near Wilkes University is a popular spot for residents and students in the community. Being closed for months has impacted businesses that were not essential during the early stages of the pandemic, leading to financial losses.

The Greater Wilkes-Barre Chamber of Commerce is assisting local businesses' reopening efforts through their three-step online initiative, Luzerne County Ready.

They can view all federal, state and local guidelines and take the pledge to become a "Luzerne County Ready Business." Through this designation, they are required to follow proper social distancing, sanitation and cleaning protocols. Taking this pledge also enables small businesses that sell personal protective equipment (PPE) to become designated PPE providers.

Vice president Lindsay Griffin of the Wilkes-Barre Chamber explained that it is beneficial for these community businesses to take the pledge, as it encourages people to shop local and frequent these smaller establishments for supplies.

"We also wanted a place for all local businesses to easily find government, CDC and OSHA guidelines, and we have outlined measures for each type of industry," said Griffin.

This includes restaurants, an industry that has been hard-hit. At the beginning of the state shut-down, restaurants in our area temporarily ended dine-in services and only offered takeout and delivery.

Restaurants can now seat customers inside, with tables spaced at least six feet apart. All customers are also required to wear masks and maintain social distancing.

Other establishments are taking advantage of the summer weather by using their outdoor seating. Restaurants

such as Rodano's and Franklin's have been providing this option for customers.

Junior sociology student Justin Glidden is one of the many people eager to return to normal life.

"Now that businesses are open again, I'm hoping to eat out at my favorite restaurants," said Glidden.

Another aspect of the Wilkes-Barre community came back on July 25 as well. Mayor George Brown led the reopening of the Public Square's Farmers Market,

enabling local farmers to sell their fruits and vegetables every Thursday.

The City of Wilkes-Barre elaborated further on the market's reopening in a press release, stating, "As the market is outdoors, masks are recommended, but if social distancing is not possible, a mask is required."

The Osterhout Free Library has also joined the number of businesses reopening in Wilkes-Barre. The library is offering a convenient way of no-contact pickup. Anyone looking to pick up books can call the library between 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Monday through Friday.

The Wilkes-Barre Family YMCA has now reopened to members and will operate at 50 percent capacity with limited hours. The facility has reopened its childcare programs, pool, summer day camp and outdoor group exercises.

Although businesses have reopened to the public, the threat of the COVID-19 pandemic is still lingering. Glidden feels it is important to remember the virus is still a present concern.

"This doesn't mean we get to go back to our full normal selves," he said. "We must continue to practice social distancing and frequent hand washing to keep the spread of the virus contained."

As the green phase continues, more businesses are reopening in Wilkes-Barre, but with added health/safety measures in place.



The Beacon/Sara Ross

Istanbul Grill, among other locations, has reopened and is offering outdoor seating.



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Students have mixed emotions about fall calendar update

By Maria DiBuo
Life, Arts & Entertainment Editor

The Wilkes fall academic calendar has been restructured in response to COVID-19, creating mixed emotions for both students and staff.

The fall semester, originally set to begin Aug. 31, will now begin Aug. 24. Residential students will move back to campus in a "staggered fashion" during the week of Aug. 17, according to information at wilkes.edu/fall2020.

Classes will also be conducted on Labor Day, Sept. 7, and during days in October traditionally reserved for fall break to allow for the semester to be completed in a "slightly condensed time frame," according to administration. Overall, class days for the semester will be reduced by four with the adjustments.

Incoming transfer student Lauren Gardner is excited for the return of face-to-face instruction, especially as a new student at the university.

"Even without breaks, I'm happy that some of my first classes at Wilkes will be in-person, rather than in a remote setting," said Gardner. "I'm looking forward to getting involved at Wilkes, and that's much easier in-person."

While many students are eager to resume face-to-face instruction on campus, nursing student Josh Hospodar is dissatisfied with the change, even if it means a return to campus.

"I'm not a fan," said Hospodar. "Especially, since I'll be losing Fridays off in the accelerated nursing program."

According to Wilkes administration, this decision to adapt the fall semester schedule was made based on several factors, including the prediction of a second wave of COVID-19

in the late fall or early winter months. The university also hopes to limit the spread of the virus beyond Wilkes' campus by eliminating breaks where many students travel home.

Face-to-face instruction, as well as final exams for the fall semester, will conclude Nov. 25. The week following the Thanksgiving holiday will be reserved for the completion of any additional virtual assignments, according to administration.

While the fall semester is only a few short weeks away, it is important to note that plans remain tentative and are still in progress, pending the health of the community, as well as the nation.

Wilkes is also exploring options for those students who may be in isolation, or have health challenges that require avoiding crowds.

"The university has established screening and testing protocols for students who exhibit

symptoms of the virus," explained Dr. Mark Allen, who is leading the COVID-19 task force at Wilkes, along with student Justin Krainack. "Arrangements have also been made with food service and academic affairs for those who have to continue coursework remotely."

In addition, new health and safety standards, as well as the implementation of social distancing and face masks, will be seen on campus during the fall semester. High-traffic areas, such as entrances, exits and stairwells will be monitored and flow in a single-direction.

Information on Wilkes' plan for the fall semester was last updated on July 22. For updates regarding the new fall schedule or the pandemic, visit www.wilkes.edu/fall2020.



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Welcome, Dr. Greg Cant

Getting to know Wilkes' seventh president and his family

By Sean Schmoyer
News Editor

Thirty years of experience in education paired with a passport that has seen over 30 countries, Dr. Greg Cant assumed the role of Wilkes University's seventh president on May 26. Cant moved to campus with his wife Angela and their two youngest children Eliza and Jackson.

Cant's more than 30 years in education consists of academic and administrative experience in the United States and abroad, ranging from being the dean of the Feliciano School of Business at Montclair State University, to a professor in Guangdong, China and working in education at the United Kingdom and in his home of Australia.

"I'm excited for the experience and knowledge that Dr. Cant is bringing to Wilkes. With his extensive travel and international experience, it gives me hope and excitement for the future of Wilkes," said Abby Love, director of international admissions. "We have an opportunity with Dr. Cant's leadership to really internationalize the campus and give Wilkes students an opportunity to not only experience the world but bring the world to the doorstep of Wilkes."

Learning and teaching across the globe

Three decades ago, Cant began his journey through higher education as a junior faculty member. After being a student in Canada

and Australia, the Australia-native went back to his homeland to begin his first academic position.

Cant identified that in higher education there exists a core relationship between a professor and his students, in which a learning environment is created to challenge the students.

"One of the great blessings of being a faculty member is your job is to explore, learn, challenge your own ideas, develop research that pushes the boundary of ideas and then engage students," said Cant. "I was fortunate from the outset to work with both undergraduate and graduate students, and that core relationship was still the same."

From a boy down under to the top

Just before the age of 17, Cant's parents allowed him to travel to Southeast Asia. While there, he celebrated his birthday and discovered his desire to keep traveling.

"When you get the bug of what that meant, I grew up in a very safe and secure and happy environment, and the world is an amazing place. So, part of it was the genuine thrill of exploration. I am not the jump off a mountain kind of dangerous guy, but the idea of learning about people and places, I just love and I learned that early. Part of what drove me from then on was the exploration, the learning, something new and being somewhere different," said Cant.

The Cants have also traveled to Jamaica and

parts of Asia and Europe.

"Everywhere I have been, there are typically remarkable people, and their lives in some ways mirror mine, but in other ways are profoundly different. What I most enjoy, in a sense, is to try and understand their environment and their culture," shared Cant. "You can learn something interesting wherever you go, and I haven't really got a pecking order of experience – they have all just been incredible."

Having grown up in Australia, Cant explained some similarities between his homeland and the U.S., as well as some challenges he endured when adjusting to a different country.

"All of us grow up in families that are different from each other, and Australia has some things that make Americans feel very comfortable," said Cant.

Language, various cultural norms, food and climate were among the similarities. Certain television shows transcended geographical boundaries as well, as Cant grew up watching Britain, U.S. and Australia-created shows. Despite not knowing popular TV personalities like Mr. Rogers, Sesame Street was well-known while Cant grew up in Australia.

"Often the cultural differences are subtle, but will hit you every so often," explained Cant. "When we first moved to the U.S., people couldn't understand what we were saying. Apparently, the accents would be so difficult that I would have to pronounce my

name over and over again."

As for interests of the Cants, they spend a lot of time outside. Being outdoors and playing sports have always been a part of Cant's life, whether it's hiking, kayaking, visiting national parks or playing basketball. With his dad being a "basketballer," Cant began playing at the age of 14.

"I always loved basketball and played season after season until I got into administration," said Cant. "We would always find a way to be in nature. When I was younger, we would camp. I had a lot of family holidays going tenting in parts of Australia, so I've done that with my kids."

Traveling hasn't stopped while Cant has raised his own family. All four of his children became world travelers shortly after they were born. For instance, the president's son was less than six months old when they moved to Scotland, and his daughter was flown from one side of the world to the other at three weeks old.

Settling in

The Cants have begun to adjust to their new life in Wilkes-Barre. As for the nature-loving bunch, the local hiking trails have been a refreshing fan favorite.

"While the pandemic has certainly made this an unusual time to be joining a new community, we are excited to be making our home in Wilkes-Barre," said Angela Cant. "We are loving the proximity to nature and



Dr. Greg Cant posed with his family after being announced as Wilkes' seventh president. From left to right: Cant's son Jackson, his wife Angela, himself and his daughter Eliza.



Cant delivered a speech and sat next to interim president Dr. Paul S. Adams (forefront) at the presidential announcement in May.



great hiking and have been working our way through the take out menus at local restaurants to find a favorite. We are looking forward to better days ahead when we can welcome students, faculty, staff and community members to the president's house."

During his travels, the president hasn't neglected to explore the university he will be governing. The older mansions weathered with character and the gateway that connects multiple facets of campus are two of the features that stand out to the Australian-native and make Wilkes' campus appealing to the eye.

"We have a gorgeous campus," shared Cant. "It is still urban, but it also has this beautiful walk-ability. You can walk down the streets here and think, 'This is actually a gorgeous spot.' There are folk who have fireplaces in their offices. I joke now that unless an office has a chandelier and a fireplace, it is not really a good office."

A global mind put to work

Being a well-rounded traveler, Cant is likely to use his background to adjust to Wilkes University, despite the additional challenges a pandemic may impose.

"Whenever you come into an organization, essentially everyone knows each other and you are the new guy, even without the pandemic," said Cant. "On the upside, people were really excited to have us join, which is tremendous."

Senior leaders on campus have helped

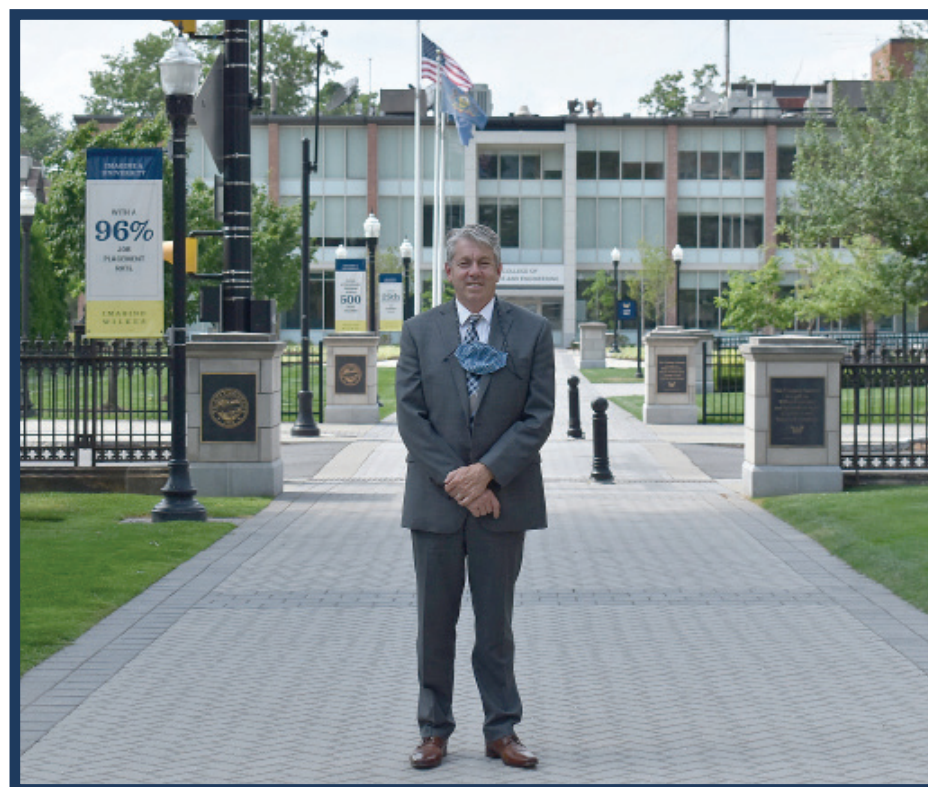
Cant tackle issues related to COVID-19 with remote cabinet meetings. Important decisions have been made in regards to how and when campus will reopen, as well as addressing difficult financial concerns and employment.

"What I have been blessed by is an incredible team," said Cant. "In some ways, people expect a president to come in and drive a decision or be the final arbiter of something, but essentially these are collective decisions based on their experience. In every case, it has been the wisdom of the group that has allowed us to move forward."

In May, non-reappointment letters were mailed to faculty members – an example of one of the tough financial decisions. Although Cant did not choose those affected by the letters, he has monitored its development.

"Because of those financial challenges, a hand was forced, and we did give notice to a number – not a substantial number – but a number of tenure track faculty. We are in the process now where those individuals are able to appeal that decision, and they appeal it to me. I will finalize whether there may be an opportunity to reverse that, but it would happen on a modest scale. There isn't a chance to reverse them all," explained Cant.

The main question to be taken into consideration is how essential each faculty member is in the area s/he works in. Non-reappointed faculty have been given a substantial amount of time to find other places of employment, and any faculty given



The Beacon/Kirsten Peters

On a barren campus earlier this summer, Cant was able to remove his mask for a quick photo. The COVID-19 pandemic has made the mask a part of Cant's regular wardrobe.

those notices are able to continue to work through the end of the 2020-2021 school year.

"It really is a matter that our finances need to be in better shape, but there were literally tears shed by those involved in that decision-making, and our hearts go out to those impacted by it," said Cant.

Wilkes' future in a changed landscape

The University plans continue to address financial concerns, as well as respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition to those important topics, Cant is looking toward the future.

Despite the fact that graduate programs do not get as much attention, Cant shared that more students are continuing to look into graduate programs. This offers a great potential in the university's graduate program, both nationally and internationally.

Second, Cant emphasized the residential undergraduate experience.

"What else can we do? What we can do is continue to evolve what we do in preparing young people for a changed world. If there is a reasonable critique of higher-ed for all of us, it is that we are pretty slow at changing. If you think about disciplines, we are stuck in some pretty old-fashioned ways to understand disciplines," said Cant. "I think we are going to have fun reimagining what the curriculum looks like and tie ourselves into new realities."

Despite this experience being "shaken-up" for students, Wilkes intends to offer the richest

experience possible. Cant cites digital realities, or the increased speed of digital impact, as being a positive of the pandemic.

"More people living and working online are doing new things," said Cant. "How we buy things and how we interact with each other has a digital focus. What are those jobs of the future, what does digital media look like, what do future companies and entrepreneurs look like? We need to keep evolving to get students to prepare for a future that has always been fast moving. What we are doing about preparing you for how to thrive in that environment, and that will include everything from the programs we teach to the ways we connect with people."

According to Love, one thing is for certain: Cant will make his mark at Wilkes University on an international level.

"I think having the background that Dr. Cant does will really inspire action and bring newfound energy to our staff, students and faculty," said Love. "I'm thrilled to have the opportunity to work with international students and partners around the world and represent Wilkes. With the support of Dr. Cant, I know we will be able to make Wilkes prominent on an international level."



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Page Design: The Beacon/Kirsten Peters
Photos: Courtesy of Knot Just Any Day

Opinion

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

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2020-21

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White silence equals racial violence, it isn't O.K.

By Zarqua Ansari
Asst. Opinion Editor

In the weeks following the death of George Floyd, protests for the Black Lives Matter Movement have taken over the world.

In New Zealand, for example, leaders have shifted away from arming police officers in an effort to show their solidarity with the BLM Movement. Protests took place in cities including Berlin, London, Seoul, Karachi, Tel Aviv and even Tunisia.

From famous celebrities to common folk, people are enraged at the lack of change in the systemic oppression of black people, especially under the hands of police officers.

Some argue that police officers should be educated, require a bachelor's degree in some social science and tested for potential prejudices before being given their position of power.

Others say police should be trained longer. The example being passed around is cosmetologists, who are required to complete 1,250 hours of training, whereas police officers are only required to complete 850 hours.

According to the State and Local Law Enforcement Training Academies, of the 850 hours of training, 110 are used for firearm training and only eight are used for conflict management.

Many people are urging others to speak up, use their voices and use their privilege to make a change. "Silence is violence" is a common rallying cry amongst the peaceful protesters.

It's important for people to speak up about the issue. Typically, when a person doesn't talk about something, it's because they don't know about it. With how prevalent the protests are on social media and the news, it's obvious that people know about the movement and the protests.

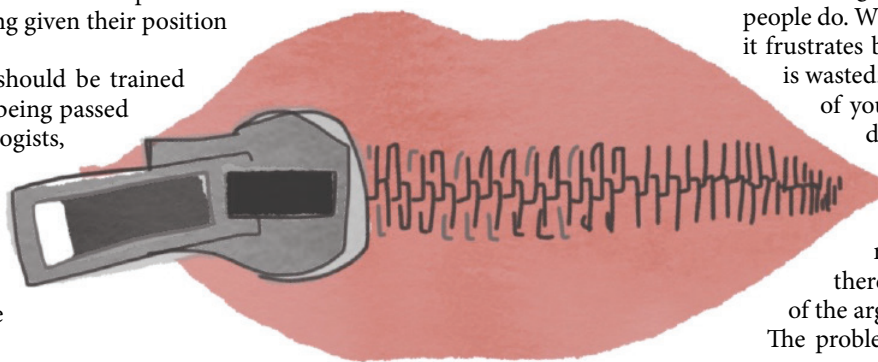
The matter becomes that people are informed, and yet they still haven't said anything, done anything or made an effort to help. This behavior exhibits disinterest.

Even if it isn't your intention, the implication is heavy.

From the perspective of a non-black person of color, here is why silence is perceived as violence.

When I was a kid, I was bullied. Every time I took a complaint to the teachers, they'd tell me not to react, to stay silent and to avoid the kids harassing me. They told me if I didn't react, the kids picking on me would get bored and move on. Of course, none of that advice helped because I continued to get heckled.

I had a number of characteristics that would have been susceptible to being bullied: I had a speech impediment growing up, I didn't speak proper English and I was very underweight. Instead, I was picked on for being a different race.



As a child, I didn't realize that I looked different from other kids. I assumed there was something inherently wrong with me. The only thing that stuck with me was that I was getting bullied and being told to be quiet about it.

It got to the extent that I was being physically abused. I told teachers yet again to put a stop to it, and still nothing was done.

I once tattled on a POC (person of color) kid, and he got suspended for a week. That struck me as weird. I had taken complaints to teachers about various students multiple times for hitting me, but I had only complained about the POC kid once for using a slur. It wasn't until years later that I realized white privilege was acting in place for the other students.

The point of the story is not to garner pity, but to put things into perspective.

Being told to be silent, while I was hurt emotionally and physically, messed with my self esteem. No one seemed to hear when I spoke up about my problems, making me believe it was my fault or that I was overreacting. I was repeatedly attacked in the same, unfair manner, and nothing was being done to change it. It was frustrating and manifested as self doubt, rage and aggression.

When white peers don't speak out for a black person's rights, it feels like being told to be quiet and complacent in your own oppression. It feels like your problems aren't significant enough to even mention.

White people have this secret super power in their whiteness that protects them from facing injustices as harshly as black people do. When they don't use their voices, it frustrates black people that the potential is wasted. It's like saving the perfect bite of your sandwich and finding your dog snatched it off your plate while you answered the door.

Many people prefer to remain neutral, citing that there are valid points on both sides of the argument.

The problem with this mentality is that no compromise or change is happening. Instead of picking a left or a right turn on a road that doesn't go straight, the person choosing to be neutral is driving their trolley into the wall ahead.

Picking a side doesn't mean you can't support points the other side is making, nor does it mean you support every point the side you picked has made. For example, I don't agree that abolishing the police would be the right move. The police, if trained properly, are a useful tool for maintaining crime in a society.

However, I agree that the police are over funded. Education, housing, public health and youth services would benefit greatly by providing marginalized communities (often over-policed) with necessities. This would, in turn, reduce crime.

SILENCE, page 9

First year: expectations versus reality

By Jordan Daniel
Opinion Staff Writer

After graduating high school and deciding to continue my education at Wilkes University, many people asked how I expected my first year of college to go. My typical answer was that I expected to learn a lot from my professors' lectures, make new friends, receive a decent GPA and enjoy my time on campus.

Yet, it never crossed my mind to add completing my first year of college during a global pandemic to my list of expectations.

Although the end of my first year was different than how I imagined it to be, and at times stressful due to COVID-19, my first semester did not stray too far from my original expectations.

Regarding my fall semester classes, I took a lot of general education courses outside of my major of communication studies, which were required for me to take. I did not have an interest in taking most of those required courses, but at the end of the semester, I realized I learned a lot from all my professors.

Even though I learned a lot from those classes in my first semester, I decided when scheduling for spring semester came around, I would take some more courses related to my

major.

I even took a new course, Global Cultures: Issues & Perspectives, that was being offered for the first time by professor Dr. Gina Morrision, whose FYF: Going Global class interested me during my first semester. I enjoyed both of her classes so much that I decided to add global cultures as a minor, which I did not expect to do in my first year at Wilkes.

I am also thankful for the new, exciting friendships I've made while attending Wilkes. I was hoping to meet new people and was fortunate enough to be able to do that as a result of the many different opportunities provided by the school.

I made some friends at orientation and in classes my first semester, and I got to know others by joining clubs like UNICEF and the school's newspaper.

The first thing I noticed when I came to the university was that almost all the upperclassmen students were welcoming and friendly, which surprised me because I thought most of them would be closed-off due to their studies and work. Nevertheless, the upperclassmen I encountered always offered a helping hand if needed and made sure I was comfortable adjusting to the college lifestyle.

Just when I thought I was getting used

to attending classes and balancing studying with having a social life, my time on campus was cut short in the spring semester because of COVID-19. This was quite disappointing because, after experiencing my first semester of college, I was excited for what my spring semester would hold.

I wanted to try doing work outside on the greenway or walking around town with my friends while we enjoyed the beautiful weather and flowers in bloom, but in reality, I was meeting my professors and classmates online from inside my bedroom back home, as we all tried to get through this new, yet chaotic moment in our lives.

The end of my first year at college was completely unexpected and a struggle to switch from face-to-face instruction to online instruction.

But, I did not let this obstacle deter me from finishing off the year how I envisioned. Fortunately, my hard work paid off in the end, and I received a 4.0 GPA for my spring semester, allowing me to check my last expectation for my first year of college off my list.



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COVID-19 poses danger for campus return

By Breanna Ebisch
Opinion Editor

The threat of COVID-19 is still very much alive and well in the United States. As cases rise across the country due to states being reopened and with safety precautions slowly being lifted, many are skeptical of returning to normal life.

Wilkes University, in hopes of having students return for the fall semester with new regulations and changes in place, is expecting to conduct classes on campus while taking precautionary measures to ensure members of the community remain safe. But questions still remain: Is the university making the right decision, and is it entirely safe to resume face-to-face classes in the fall?

With the removal Labor Day and mid-October breaks, as well as ending the semester before Thanksgiving and starting classes a week early, students will be at the university from mid-August to the end of November.

Limiting travel for both students and faculty is an effort to try to keep the virus from spreading to campus. Almost all other higher education institutions across the country are making similar decisions to help

keep their communities safe, but it might not be enough.

Although face masks/coverings must be worn at all times on campus/within buildings and social distancing rules will be followed, several aspects of college life that flourished in pre-COVID times are going to make the transition difficult and potentially unsafe.

Unless drastic measures are taken to alter certain parts of the university's living standards, how can anyone be sure it's safe to return to campus?

Roommates living in dorms together automatically break the social distancing rules, and public areas/group settings that are always open to students such as the library, dining hall and study spaces would make it difficult for safety precautions to remain in place.

Large events planned by the Programming Board, Student Government, Student Development or other organizations known for hosting beloved events on campus will have to adapt to the new "normal" in order to continue with these happenings for students.

Although it will be very important to follow the rules in order to keep everyone on campus protected, there is always the possibility of students choosing not to wear

a mask or not adhere to the campus or state guidelines.

Unfortunately, due to the uncertain and unnerving times of the world, it's easy to feel skeptical about returning to the life that was considered "normal" a few short months ago.

Resuming face-to-face classes for the fall semester is a step forward in recovering from the way COVID-19 has directly impacted our daily lives. The decision was well thought-out by the university and allows students to return under new circumstances to protect themselves and others from the virus.

However, without thorough and much needed changes to the typical way of life that many Wilkes students are accustomed to, the lingering danger of COVID-19 may be closer than expected.

Having everyone's health at risk leaves the question of whether it is truly safe for Wilkes to continue forward with their plans for the upcoming semester. The Wilkes community is awaiting further information about the future of their education due to the pandemic, but it's most important that everyone stays safe and healthy while on campus in the fall.



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SILENCE, from page 8

Picking a side shows that you stand in solidarity with humanity. The Black Lives Matter Movement isn't about marking black lives as more important, but rather highlighting that black lives are in danger in an unfair systemic clash that needs resolving.

By saying Black Lives Matter, you are saying that everyone should have equal rights and be treated with the same level of respect.

Some people fear speaking out about their opinions because of potential consequences.

For example, many people work for corporations that have asked their employees to remove any mention of their employment at the establishment to remain politically neutral. (For a business that is trying to make money, this seems like the right tactic. They want everyone's money, not just the side they might be affiliated with because of their employees).

In this case, I believe it's possible not to speak about the issue, but to compensate with your actions. Going to a protest, donating money and spreading awareness are important parts of any movement; you don't have to publicize your efforts, but you should be making efforts, especially if it's a cause that you believe in.

There is no point in believing in a movement if you don't do anything to help. After all, doing nothing to help is what the people who don't believe in the cause are doing.

Lastly, everyone wants to make a change in the world. When a movement of such historical magnitude is taking place, the opportunity to be involved is once in a lifetime.

With much time to self reflect this summer while in quarantine or while social distancing, I want you to think for yourself. How can you use your voice, your privilege or your status to help a cause that simply asks for a second chance to breathe?



Graphics by Zarqua Ansari
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Sports

Want your sport covered? Deserve to be an Athlete of the Week? Contact co-sports editors: Dylan.Mehl@wilkes.edu or Ariel.Reed@wilkes.edu

College recruiting takes a hit during global pandemic

By Dylan Mehl
Co-Sports Editor

Recruitment plays a major role not only in each athlete's decision on where to continue his/her academic and athletic career, but it also impacts every university's athletic department. Coaches, in particular, have had to readjust their recruiting processes as a result of COVID-19.

In this sense, Wilkes University is no different and has found itself having to make many changes.

Several athletic programs were affected as soon as the pandemic hit. Spring seasons had just begun and recruitment was reaching its peak when COVID-19 halted all things sports-related. Much of the recruitment process was slowed down, or even came to a stand-still, as the whole world went into frenzy.

In April, assistant men's basketball coach Scott Robinson explained one of the major points of concern.

"Families don't want to make a

commitment to a school right now until they see how all of this shakes out with the economy, since college is a huge investment," said Robinson on April 21.

Since that day, conditions in Pennsylvania have begun to improve, and the economy has begun to reopen. Both of these positives have made coaches, players and fans more optimistic and given families peace of mind when it comes to athletics in the near future.

Yet, many sporting events for the summer were either postponed or cancelled, which caused recruitment over the summer to also change.

"COVID has eliminated all summer showcases and qualifying tournaments that I annually attend," said Joseph Czopek, men's and women's volleyball head coach. "Efforts will shift to more localized single day events or high school matches."

Wilkes' head football coach Jonathan Drach listed many ways recruitment has taken place, including virtual tours or phone calls with high school coaches and players. Drach did highlight that the "face-to-face

evaluation" is missed in this scenario.

Relationships between prospective players and coaches have become more important than ever, as this connection is one of the few things both parties have to go off of.

According to Robinson, "All we can do now is just continue to build a strong relationship with potential recruits and their families, and hope that soon, they will be able to make a visit."

With the 2020-2021 sports seasons being affected by COVID-19, the recruitment process for the 2021 season will also take a huge hit.

If there are high school sports seasons, there will certainly be several restrictions made to the amount of people who can attend, along with many other safety rules. There is a world, however, where high school sports are cancelled for the upcoming season. A scenario like this alters the recruitment process going forward at Wilkes.

If high school sports do not happen

this year, Drach claimed he would base his recruiting off of junior film, as well as conversations with coaches, players and teachers. He cites that this is "the fair way to do it."

Czopek had a similar perspective, claiming, "All evaluations have been based on highlight videos, coach recommendations and gut-feeling based on my experience."

While it may be the only safe option, cancelling the 2020-2021 high school season may come at the expense of players, coaches and college athletic programs for years to come.

There is no telling what kind of jump players can make from their junior to senior years, and this scenario could cost them the chance to continue playing the sport they love at the collegiate level, while universities could simultaneously lose out on athletes destined to alter their programs' success.



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OUTDOORS, from page 4

System can be accessed at 97 Parry Street. More information on the Back Mountain Trail System can be found on the Back Mountain Trail's Facebook page, or discovernepa.com.

Francis E. Walter Dam

A short 20-minute-drive from campus, the Francis E. Walter Dam is located just outside of Bear Creek, and provides the space for boating, picnicking, running and jogging.

"One of my favorite places for outdoor recreation has always been the Francis E. Walter," said Jake Peters, a 25-year-resident of the Wilkes-Barre area.

The Lehigh River, which feeds the Francis E. Walter, is also another popular location for boating and fishing; however, it is a further distance from campus.

Swimming is not permitted at Francis E. Walter Dam, and can be extremely dangerous. Remember to use caution when visiting any area in the Wyoming

Valley. For more information on the Francis E. Walter, visit www.recreation.gov.

Ricketts Glen State Park

Ricketts Glen State Park is described as "one of the most scenic areas in Pennsylvania," according to the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources. A 35-minute-drive from campus, Ricketts Glen offers the perfect location for hiking, swimming, camping, boating and fishing.

While much of the park was closed temporarily due to the pandemic, as of June 26, all areas are open, including the beach on Lake Jean.

"Ricketts Glen has always been my favorite spot back home," said Ky Rice, a Wyoming Valley native who recently moved away from the area.

If you are eager to visit the park, driving directions, as well as maps of the area, are available at dnrc.pa.gov/StateParks/FindAPark/RickettsGlenStatePark.

Visiting Procedures

Remember to use caution when visiting

any area in the Wyoming Valley, especially in these "new-normal" times. Face masks, as well as social-distancing, are required for many recreation locations in the area, especially those that are state-funded.

Familiarizing yourself with trails and packing essentials, as well as telling a friend where you are going, are also important tips suggested on many recreation-area websites.

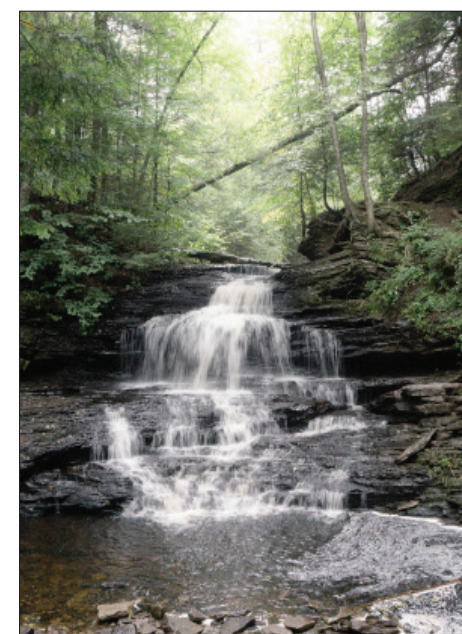
For Erin Tollinger, an earth and environmental science major at Wilkes, these tips ring true.

"I would definitely say to be familiar with where you're hiking," explained Tollinger. "The trails in NEPA have a bunch of different paths you can go down, so it's easy to get lost. I would definitely bring sunscreen and bug spray, too — those are two of the biggest things that bother me while hiking."

Keeping them in mind can make all the difference while you are sweating off the stress this semester.



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The Beacon/Steffen Horwath
Ricketts Glen State Park is home to 21 waterfalls, one of which is pictured above, along the Falls Trail.

BLM Movement gains strength among professional athletes

By Dylan Mehl
Co-Sports Editor

The Black Lives Matter Movement has been growing throughout the world in recent months, and the sports industry is no stranger to the movement's impact.

With athletes across the globe participating in a variety of protests, supporting the cause and speaking out on social media, the assumption is that this behavior will continue on their respective fields of play.

As European football resumed play before other sports, many look to them as a model of how the movement can be transitioned into the sports world. The players have been seen wearing Black Lives Matter clothing items and kneeling at the start of games to demonstrate their support.

The first league to demonstrate its support for the movement was the German soccer league, Bundesliga.

According to Gianni Infantino, the president of FIFA, or the governing body of the world's football, "For the avoidance of doubt in a FIFA competition, the recent demonstrations of players in Bundesliga matches would deserve an applause and not a punishment."

With American sports making a return since the COVID-19 pandemic, many have been left wondering how American athletes will show their support for the BLM

Movement.

Several athletes immediately took to social media when the movement gained steam, including LeBron James and Serena Williams who confronted the situation head on.

Many athletes also took part in Blackout Tuesday on June 2, in which social media and other business operations were put on pause to shed light on the racial injustices around the world by sharing a black photo on one's timeline.

Athletes did not shy away from taking the lead in protests as well, as former NBA player Stephen Jackson took on a leadership role. Jackson even referred to the late George Floyd as his twin in a display of strength and unity.



The NBA has become player-led league over the last decade, with players freely and openly speaking out on social issues. Under the commission of Adam Silver, this behavior has not only been tolerated but encouraged of the players.

"I think we have had a rule on our books that goes back to the early 80s, that precedes even David Stern's tenure as commissioner, that calls for players to stand in a line and attention during the national anthem. I also understand the role of protest, and I think that we'll deal with that situation when it presents itself," said Silver at a June 30 press conference when asked about players kneeling during the national anthem.

The NBA will be painting "Black Lives Matter" on all courts used in the restart of the league to demonstrate their support through action.

In addition to the NBA, the NFL has been a major subject of conversation when it comes to kneeling during the national anthem. The NFL can attribute this conversation to quarterback Colin Kaepernick's decision to kneel during the anthem as a way to bring awareness to police brutality and the oppression of people of color.

Several players have expressed their intent to kneel during the anthem, including Baker Mayfield, Kyler Murray and Alvin Kamara.

"I have the utmost respect for our military, cops and people that serve OUR country," shared Mayfield, the quarterback of the Cleveland Browns, in a social media post. "It's about equality and everybody being treated the same because we are all human. It's been ignored for too long, and that is my fault as well for not becoming more educated and staying silent. If I lose fans, that's O.K. I've always spoken my mind. And that's from the heart."

The MLB has also shown their commitment to the movement by donating over \$1 million dollars to different organizations that support the BLM Movement. Like the NBA and NFL, MLB teams and players have also shown their support through various social media posts.



Graphic by Ariel Reed
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Coronavirus takes its toll on all levels of collegiate football

By Ariel Reed
Co-Sports Editor

With cancelling March Madness, postponing spring sports seasons, delaying the NBA post-season and delaying the start of the WNBA, COVID-19 has taken its toll on the sports world.

This begs the question: Will the sports world ever be the same?

Discussions about the safety of student-athletes during this global pandemic have been the top priority on the minds of NCAA members.

With the start of fall sports right around the corner and preseason training having started as early as June 15, major universities are doing whatever they can to try and get their athletes on campus to start preseason training.

"Our first priority is to keep our players safe and healthy," said Jonathan Drach, Wilkes' head football coach. "I do believe that we can play football and do this at the

same time. Our administration, athletic department and campus community have been working hard to set protocols for the return of our student body. These steps will enable us, as well as the entire MAC, to move forward with fall sports."

Most Division I universities are hosting optional workouts on campus for their athletes, while also adhering closely to the policies put in place.

Some of these policies include regular temperature checks and testing, wearing facemasks wherever possible, constant sanitizing of equipment, quarantining out of practice hours and social distancing.

In the Centre Daily, Penn State sophomore cornerback Keaton Ellis asserted, "Everything is not going to be normal when you go back. I understand that and the team understands that, and we're ready as players to make some sacrifices because that's what it's going to take to move forward.

"They (the Penn State Athletic

Department) have a good plan put in place, and I believe we can get through this successfully."

Another one of the precautions that may happen to NCAA football is reduced stadium capacity. This means that PSU's Beaver Stadium or Wilkes' Schmidt Stadium, alongside all of the other stadiums in the NCAA, will be reduced to approximately half capacity.

This reduction in fans will affect ticket sale prices, but it may not affect the atmosphere of the game.

"I do not think that reduced stadium capacity will affect our overall atmosphere," said Drach. "At the Division III level, it is not about the size of the crowd. It is more about the spirit of competition and the love of the game."

Talk of reducing the amount or completely cutting out non-conference games has been a hot topic in the NCAA. The discussion of cutting non-conference games has been fueled by the increasing

amount of positive COVID-19 tests at the Division I football level.

"Non-conference is beneficial to see how we stack up against other teams in different conferences," said Billy Doron, a sophomore linebacker for Wilkes. "However, trying to contain our team to a certain region because of coronavirus and removing non-conference games from our schedule seems like a logical sacrifice we need to make."

Without these sacrifices, Wilkes may end up cancelling their season like Bowdoin College in Maine and the University of Massachusetts, who were two of the first Division III schools to cancel their fall sports seasons.

The removal of non-conference games could negatively impact football, but as Doron said, sacrifices like this may need to be made to ensure the safety of the players.



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Welcome letter from Student Body President Kevin Long

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By Kevin Long
Student Body President

Hello Colonels,

My name is Kevin Long, and I will have the honor of being your student body president for the 2020-2021 academic year.

I'd like to tell you all a little about myself, so you can get to know me a bit better, as I hope to get to know each of you better this fall.

To begin, I am an upcoming senior biology major with a minor in sports psychology. In addition, I have the privilege of being a student-athlete on campus as a member of the cross country team. Lastly, for those of you who reside on campus, you may have seen me around our beautiful residence halls. This is because I have the honor of serving as an RA on campus, as well.

In Student Government, I have served in multiple positions over the past three years. I began as a class representative and rose to a class treasurer position. As a junior, I earned the executive treasurer position, where I spent last year as the chief financial officer and planned events such as Casino Night, which we all look forward to every year.

Finally, this past spring semester, you all elected me to the honor of student body president. I cannot thank you – the student body – enough for entrusting me with this honor. You have my word that I will do all I can to serve you and be the voice of the student body until the last day of my presidency.

As you all know, the past several months have not been in any way comparable to normalcy. The future also looks to be unprecedented, as we progress through the current COVID-19 pandemic. The good news is that all Colonels are anticipated to return to campus in the fall, and we will be together

again as a student body.

Things will likely be different in regards to gatherings and events, but the Executive Board and I are committed to being innovative and creative in our planning. We intend to keep you informed during these hard times we all are going through.

I know many of you have questions or concerns about a variety of topics regarding the university and how things will be. I ask that no matter how small or how big your questions are, you send them to the Student Government email (studentgovernment@wilkes.edu) or our social media (@wilkesg). We will address them all or provide you with the source to get your answers.

Similarly, if you have ideas, concerns or things you'd like to see for the upcoming semester, we are here to be your voice.

From the day I started in Student Government, I have always lived by its motto: "For the students, by the students." I intend to hold that motto close throughout the year.

My goal in this coming year is to bring Student Government back to the students by advocating as the voice for the student body. However, I cannot do this alone and am asking the student body to collaborate with Student Government.

Together, we can make a difference on our campus and pave the way for future generations.

I cannot wait for the fall to welcome everyone back to Wilkes!

See you all soon,

Kevin Long



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Courtesy of Louie Greco

Kevin Long, Wilkes' 2020-2021 student body president, prepares to take office and mold innovative events for a unique fall semester. The senior urges students to reach out to Student Government with ideas and concerns to allow representatives to be the voice of the collective student body.

ATHLETICS, from front

for our student-athletes to compete," said John McNichol, women's soccer head coach. "I am optimistic about the spring, as that is a few months away."

A women's soccer season in the spring would afford senior athletes the opportunity to play one last time and finish their careers – a sentiment that rang true among all fall athletic teams.

"Having my final year of competitive soccer filled with uncertainty and questions is a bit scary," shared Niamh Harkins, a senior defender. "Of course, I would love nothing more than to have some type of final season in the spring, but knowing there's still a chance even that won't happen makes it hard to stay positive."

Harkins isn't alone, as fellow senior Lauren Baldwin, a member of Wilkes' field hockey team, expressed her concerns.

"In one word, it's stressful," said Baldwin. "Not knowing whether I should mentally prepare to red shirt, play a fifth year and pursue a master's degree or to play an unconventional spring season is difficult. You truly take for granted when you're told to 'play like it's your last' – you never really take that seriously until it actually is."

For men's and women's volleyball and cross country coaches Joe Czopek and Nicholas Wadas, the opportunity to play in the spring is motivation enough to begin preparation plans.

"I am hopeful that volleyball will be able to play in the spring, and even a shortened season is better than none," shared Czopek.

Following NCAA guidelines, Division III

athletic teams are able to define the playing season by a certain number of days instead of consecutive weeks. With 114 days allocated for impacted teams, athletes will still have the opportunity to practice and weight train.

"I sent a message to the team that said, 'I'm bummed out. I love coaching you guys, but let's make this work and make this the best experience possible,'" explained Wadas.

In addition, Wadas noted that some athletes are optimistic about what advantages this extra time can have for making improvements.

Despite this elongated time frame being advantageous for some, it creates a host of problems for dual-sport athletes.

Maddie Kelley, a senior field hockey and women's basketball player, has concerns about the quality of her final seasons.

"Thinking about having two sports

potentially start in January of the spring semester is definitely one of the first things that crossed my mind once I heard the news," said Kelley. "I would never want to pick one sport over the other, and I hope I don't have to."

One thing is certain for Wilkes Athletics, and that is these decisions are a work in progress.

"I think it's important to be as transparent as we possibly can be. We don't know what the spring is going to look like, just like we don't know what the fall is going to look like," said Drach. "We need to be very cognizant and data-driven when we're making decisions, and I think we need more time and data to make those decisions on what the fall and the spring are going to look like."



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