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The news of today reported by the journalists of tomorrow.

President Cant reflects on his first year, challenges and all

By Sean Schmoyer
Co-News Editor

Dr. Greg Cant's time as Wilkes' seventh president has been a complicated one. His first year was one filled with obstacles. The COVID-19 pandemic and a large budget deficit going into Fall 2020 created many challenges for the administration, faculty and students. Efforts to overcome such challenges have resulted in a slow return to normalcy, allowing for the end of these past few semesters to look a little like the years before.

Before mid-May of 2020, the administration was faced with an obstacle when some faculty, specifically tenure-track and contract-yearly appointed faculty, received non-reappointment letters. Cant explained the letters were in response to budget issues and that sending out those letters and making other cuts around campus were not easy decisions. Faculty were allowed to appeal the decision, but many complicated aspects of the letters meant that it would not be a short or easy challenge.

As of the end of April 2021, Cant was pleased to announce that all current faculty who had received those letters almost a year ago will remain employed and in their positions.

"Over the period of about 11 months, each of the academic units worked through

other options that saved the money that was important for us to save that allowed the jobs to be preserved," said Cant. "Some of those fairly early decisions where those individuals were able to work out something, we were able to go back to them and say, 'We told you one thing, but as it turns out, your position is going to be preserved.' Between the departments, deans, provost and others, they came up with solutions and the final three were resolved within the last few weeks, and there are no outstanding letters of termination."

Chair of the Faculty Affairs Council Dr. Donald Mencer explained in detail the beginnings of the issue. He expressed that before the pandemic, the university had recognized that its spending patterns had become unsustainable in relation to income.

"Our largest expenditure category is payroll and benefits," said Mencer. "Almost all of Wilkes revenue is linked to

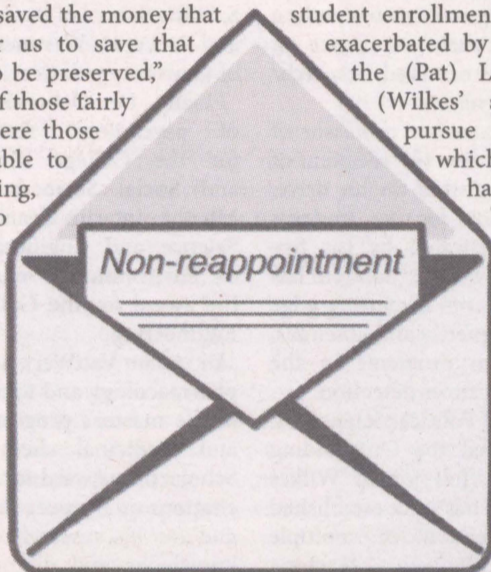
student enrollments. The problem was exacerbated by the decisions under the (Pat) Leahy administration (Wilkes' sixth president) to pursue capital projects for which complete funding had not been secured. To make up the deficit, the university's cash reserves were utilized, and \$6 million was borrowed on a line of credit."

In Fall 2019, \$10 million in bonds was secured to pay down the \$6 million line of credit and to also provide a cushion. The trustees worked closely with then Interim President Paul Adams to stabilize and reduce spending that could not be covered by revenue, while attempting not to have to cut positions.

The pandemic served to add more complications: The non-reappointment letters were forced to be sent out; Summer 2020 staff furloughs occurred; a conversion of 30 12-month staff positions to 10-month positions and another two from 12 to nine months resulted; elimination of some staff positions (full-time and part-time) took place; and the elimination of visiting faculty positions occurred.

Faculty who did not leave or see positions removed immediately were given a year's notice in advance, as their positions called for. One such faculty member was Dr. Benjamin Toll, assistant professor of political science and criminology.

"As someone who received that letter in the spring, it was difficult not to be sad. We had moved here from several states away for a job that we were very excited about," said Toll. "I was finishing my first year at the university and really liked my colleagues and students. The thought of having to apply for jobs was not exciting, made even more true by the fact that universities across the country were cutting budgets and not hiring for faculty positions."



REFLECT, page 3

Join The Beacon staff in sending off our seniors!

Our final centerspread spotlights graduating members Kirsten Peters, Dylan Mehl, William Billingsley and Steffen Horwath from our editorial staff. Visit pages 12 & 13.



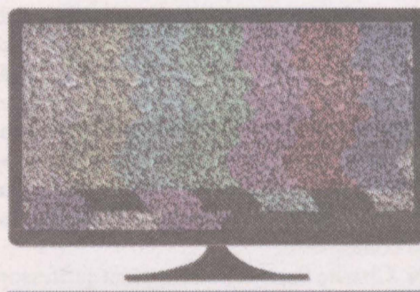
The Beacon/Sara Ross

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Courtesy of All Belgium

All Belgium, Wilkes-Barre's newest Belgian waffle dessert truck, page 11



Graphic by Zoey Rosensweet

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News

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

TREC award winners to be recognized virtually in spring

By Sean Schmoyer
Co-News Editor

Every year, Wilkes University recognizes its faculty with 10 different awards from the Teacher Recognition and Effectiveness Committee.

TREC members have four major responsibilities: Monitoring and recommending changes in procedures for gathering information on the teaching effectiveness and other areas of faculty evaluation; coordinating and recommending procedures for the selection of annual awards; evaluating and nominating candidates for the awards; and planning and hosting the annual TREC Awards Ceremony.

“Each award has specific criteria and stipulations for consideration, and each award winner is selected by the committee and is a committee decision,” said TREC member Dr. Troy Lewis. “Award recipient names are inscribed on a permanent plaque located in the Eugene S. Farley Library. In addition, each winner receives a personally engraved award.”

“Traditionally, we hold a live ceremony on-campus to celebrate and recognize our award winners; however, due to the pandemic, we are creating a ‘virtual ceremony’ where the TREC committee will announce the winners and showcase acceptance speeches via a video compilation.”

In regard to the virtual ceremony, Co-Chair Dr. Amy Sopcak-Joseph remarked that the TREC regrets being unable to hold the ceremony in-person, but she is hoping that the faculty award recipients will be able to be recognized and celebrated alongside next year’s winners in the spring.

Alongside Sopcak-Joseph, Dr. Edward Bednarz III serves as co-chair for TREC and is a Wilkes graduate who has been an award recipient in the past.

“The annual TREC awards give us an opportunity to recognize our colleagues for all the great work they do day-in and day-out with the students,” said Bednarz. “It is even more special that many of the awards for faculty and staff are student-nominated.”

The first award given out is the Carpenter Award, which is Wilkes’ most prestigious teaching award. The Carpenter Award is given annually to recognize an outstanding faculty member for their excellence in teaching and student-centered research/projects at Wilkes University.

Dr. Abas Sabouni, associate professor of electrical engineering, was the recipient of the award, being recognized for his drive, dedication and passion for the students at Wilkes, as demonstrated by his five previous TREC award honors. Sabouni has actively involved students in cutting-edge research in electromagnetics and antennas, most often related to problems in the medical field, such as cancer detection.

Assistant Professor of Political Science Dr. Benjamin Toll received the Outstanding New Faculty Award. Toll joined Wilkes University in 2019 and has since established himself through creation of multiple student-centered initiatives, teaching excellence, scholarly works and media contributions.

The recipient of the Innovative/Non-traditional Teaching Award is Dr. Ka Lok Hong, assistant professor in the Nesbitt School of Pharmacy. In his First Year Foundations course, Hong introduced cooking techniques into his lectures and allowed students to try food based on different techniques of breaking down chemical bonds. Hong has also incorporated a variety of technology innovations in order to successfully deliver content to students during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Outstanding Advisor Award recognizes one outstanding academic advisor for each college or school and requires the individuals to have “gone above and beyond the call of duty as an advisor to support students,” as stated by TREC.

This year, five faculty received recognition as outstanding advisors for their schools and colleges.

Dr. Charlie Smargiassi, assistant professor and master’s level department chair/coordinator of educational and school business leadership, received the award for the School of Education.

The recipients for the School of Business

and School of Pharmacy were Dr. Dina Udomsak, assistant director of Sidhu School Initiatives and instructor for the Jay S. Sidhu School of Business and Leadership, and Dr. Letitia Warunek, assistant professor of pharmacy practice.

Finally, Dr. Deborah Tindell, professor of psychology, received the award for the College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences, and Dr. Prahlad Murthy, interim dean for the College of Science and Engineering and professor of environmental engineering, received the award for the College of Science and Engineering.

Dr. Adam VanWert, associate professor of pharmacology and toxicology and director of the master’s program in pharmacology and medicinal chemistry, received the Scholarship Award for having nearly 1,000 citations on his peer-reviewed publications and for his research advancing scientific knowledge and discoveries in the areas of drug transporters and kidney stone therapies.

Dr. Michael Berry, adjunct faculty in the School of Education and Head of School for the Bandung Independent School in West Java, Indonesia, received the Multiculturalism Award. This award is given annually to recognize a faculty member who demonstrates leadership in the advancement of multiculturalism in the classroom.

The Adjunct Faculty Award was awarded to Robert Richards, adjunct faculty for the School of Education. TREC states that the recipient is “an instructor annually who demonstrates excellence in teaching through innovative practices, forming relationships with students, and/or contributing to the school/university.”

The final award, the Academic Support Award, recognizes full-time, non-faculty support personnel who facilitate classroom activities, laboratory activities or coordination of experiential learning opportunities. Pamela Koslosky, administrative assistant for the School of Education, is the recipient of the award this year.

“The committee members also extend their thanks to all of those who took

the time to nominate their professors, advisors and colleagues, as well as to all of those nominees who submitted materials for consideration,” said Sopcak-Joseph. “Wilkes has so many talented teachers and mentors working with students and adapting to the challenges of the past year.”


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Upcoming Events: Spring 2021

- May 15-22 – Final Exams Period
- 22 – Spring 2020 Commencement:
 - 10 a.m. Nesbitt School of Pharmacy & Passan School of Nursing
 - 1:30 p.m. College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences & College of Science and Engineering
- 5 p.m. Jay S. Sidhu School of Business and Leadership & School of Education
- 28 – Spring 2021 Commencement:
 - 6 p.m. Nesbitt School of Pharmacy
- 29 – Spring 2021 Commencement:
 - 10 a.m. Passan School of Nursing
 - 1:30 p.m. College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences
 - 5 p.m. School of Education
- 30 – Spring 2021 Commencement:
 - 10 a.m. College of Science and Engineering
 - 1:30 p.m. Jay S. Sidhu School of Business and Leadership

Getting to know...

Hope Mullins

Sophomore Softball Player

The Beacon: Female Athlete of the Week from April 14

Why Hope Mullins was selected: Mullins led the team to win 10 games against Lycoming and improved her overall record to 3-2 as a pitcher. She also has the lowest ERA on the team with a 2.52.

Name: Hope Mullins
Year: Sophomore
Major: Environmental Science
Hometown: Midland, Va.
High School: Liberty H.S.
Position: Pitcher/OF

Other interests or hobbies off of the field:
I enjoy doing different types of art of softball, as well as hanging out with my group of friends.

Favorite building on campus?
My favorite building is the library because it allows for a quiet area to study.

Driving force for your decision to come to Wilkes?

I am actually a transfer student-athlete and decided to come to Wilkes because I needed a fresh start at a new college.

What color/flavor of Gatorade is your favorite?
Cool Blue is my favorite flavor.

Post-graduation plans in terms of a career?

I hope to be able to work with animals in the future somehow – possibly through the conservation of wildlife.

If your life was a movie, who would you want to play you and why?

If my life was a movie, I would want Sandra Bullock to play me because overall she is a great actress and has a side to her. I feel as if our personalities are very similar, which would create a great character dynamic.

Favorite memory as a Colonel?

I actually have two favorite memories while being a Colonel. The first one has to be playing against King’s College and getting my first collegiate start and win. My second favorite memory has to be our most recent game against Lycoming, where we came together and won our first series of games. I wasn’t playing the second game, but cheering on the sidelines for my team while we played hard and passionately overall was a great time and memory.

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

It would have to be Robin Williams to watch his movies all the time when I was a child and found him to be a great actor. I would always make people happy. I would love to have a great dinner guest and keep great conversation while making a laugh.

Hopes for this season as a Colonel?

I hope that our team is able to slowly climb up the ranks in our conference and win our post season games.

Most influential person in your life?

The most influential person in my life would have to be my mom. She has been a role model since I was a little girl, and I don’t know where I would be without her.

When/Why did you first begin playing?

I first started playing softball when I was eight because of my dad. He brought me outside one day and decided to start throwing the ball around, and since then I have never stopped.

A quote you live your life by?

The quote I live by is: “Everything happens for a reason.” I grew up with my dad repeating this to me throughout my life.

– Compiled by Ariel Reed, Sports Editor

REFLECT, from front

When Toll applied for his position at Wilkes, there were over 125 tenure-track jobs that fit his specialty. This year, there were only 15.

"I knew that many students were fighting to keep my position," said Toll. "I had colleagues in my department and across campus who did whatever they could to keep my position, and I am eternally grateful to them for their effort ... I enjoy teaching here and am happy the letter was rescinded, and I can think about being here for the long-term. I have no ill-will toward the administration because of the very difficult position they were put in last spring."

It was a collective effort to keep all of the faculty positions, an effort that Cant, Mencer and the Dean of the College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences Paul Riggs stressed they alone could not take credit for.

"Securing these positions now seems like a simple matter, but it entailed a great deal of hard work and flexibility by the faculty and chairs involved," said Riggs. "Reaffirming the commitment involved – on both sides – in these tenure-track positions was important to our community and a great result for our students. I again want to stress the crucial role played by the faculty members themselves and their chairs. They were collegial, civil and flexible, and together we were able to make a compelling case in each instance."

A major aspect that made the rescinding of the letters possible was federal and state aid to the university, as well as strategic cuts to move some staff and faculty to positions for only parts of the year and/or sharing faculty across two or multiple programs.

Mencer also noted that recruitment of incoming students for the fall semester has been going well.

"I am sure the faculty who had their letters rescinded are all relieved; however, the process was stressful for all involved," said Mencer. "The entire community has felt the impact of the budgetary cuts coupled with all of the stresses that everyone has experienced over the months of pandemic closures and restrictions. I do not think this process will repeat any time soon. I believe the faculty positions have been restored based on realistic budgetary adjustments made by each department (or program or division) chair and supported by the deans involved."

Another aspect of these potential cuts

was a worry about the impact it would have on programs that professors were involved in, such as the marching band. The university has since released a statement addressing those concerns and plans for the future, and that information is presented in the accompanying sidebar to this piece.

The budget was not the only thing that Cant recounted about the year.

With the university addressing the pandemic through a large collection of policies, Cant also takes pride in the work everyone has done in remaining safe.

There were no new COVID-19 cases for the entire week of April 26, and many of the students and faculty are beginning to be vaccinated.

Cant recounted some of the enjoyable events he has gotten to experience with his family and the campus community from the fall athletics games that were able to be held to performances from the theatre department and the music program.

For Cant, his appointment still stands as an important moment in his life.

"A pinnacle moment of my professional life was being introduced as the seventh president of Wilkes," said Cant. "There was this personally amazing moment because of all sorts of things. We were telecasting it, and my family, my mother and sisters and essentially nearly the whole family back in Australia watching in real time. They were all watching this life-changing moment in real time. I will never ever forget that."

In addition, Cant was excited about an upcoming event to be hosted in his backyard for the students living in the Honors housing next to his home.

He expressed that it would give the students an opportunity to have a good time and talk with him and his family through an ice cream social, and that he hoped to get the chance to meet and talk in-person with more students in the years to come.

Despite the protocols that resulted in a lack of events in the Fall 2020 semester, this spring semester has started a small push back to normalcy.

"Everything since then (Cant's appointment), there have been challenges, but I do not wake up on a single day, with the exception of after I got the second vaccine, that I do not think what an amazing place we are and what an honor it is to be the president. That to me, it just does not get better than that," said Cant.



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Graphic by Zoey Rosensweet

Wilkes ceases to offer marching band

When non-reappointment letters went out to faculty, one area of concern was the university's marching band, the Marching Colonels. Once word got out that the current director of the marching band, Dr. Mark Johnson, had received a non-reappointment letter, current students along with alumni expressed concern over the future of the program.

Johnson's letter was recently rescinded, and it has been announced that he will continue to run the civic and pep bands.

"I am incredibly proud of the band students here at Wilkes and that I'm very privileged to be able to remain at Wilkes and continue working with them," said Johnson.

In an email sent out on Thursday, President Greg Cant addressed the campus in matters relating to Wilkes' music programs. After remarking on the variety of programs the campus offers, from civic and pep bands to chorus and chamber singers, he announced that the marching band program would no longer be offered.

"As you know, much time and effort has been dedicated over the past year to evaluate the costs, benefits and opportunities related to the experience we offer here at Wilkes," said Cant. "After a careful review of our musical offerings, it has been determined that Wilkes will cease to offer the marching band program after this academic year."

The marching band has been a mainstay at the university since 2014 and distinguished Wilkes as being the only university with a collegiate marching band in the region.

"It is disheartening that Wilkes has decided to sack the marching band," said Erika Wintersteen, junior earth and environmental science major who marched flute/piccolo. "I'm not alone in saying that one of the main reasons I chose Wilkes was because they had a marching band."

"When I toured Wilkes in 2017, they boasted about being the only college in NEPA with a marching band. They seemed proud of it. Dr. (Pat) Leahy my freshman year would always tell us how much he enjoyed hearing us play. Faculty and staff would tell us how much they enjoyed hearing us play. The band was clearly appreciated by students and faculty alike, so why is it one of the first things to go?"

Cant noted the central reason for disbanding the program was that the

costs to operate the program had become unmanageable. He expressed that the university would continue to try to identify unique ways that Wilkes can centralize programs and activities to offer rewarding experiences to students.

"Moving forward, the university pep band will play at various events including athletic competitions," said Cant. "The pep band has historically provided the musical backdrop for our school spirit at Wilkes and we are eager to hear their talents continue this fall."

Lauren Johnson, junior biology major and member of the Color Guard who marched piccolo, responded to the news.

"I am extremely saddened by the momentary termination of the marching band, as it was a defining characteristic of why I chose to attend Wilkes," said Lauren Johnson. "Music was an essential for me when choosing a college, and finding out I could also continue my career in Color Guard made the deal even sweeter. The program itself is so much more than the performances the campus community sees; we are a family."

Lauren Johnson did note that she understood the toll COVID-19 has taken on everyone, including the university. Despite that, she is hoping to see the program reinstated in the future.

The university also announced that it will be looking for a tenure-track choral director, as Dr. Leesa Levy has filled in since the death of Dr. Steven Thomas.

Dean of the College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences Paul Riggs commented on the importance of music in the liberal arts curriculum.

"Music as an academic discipline was a founding element of the liberal arts generally," said Riggs. "Though Wilkes has changed over the decades and now offers many professional and graduate degrees, the liberal arts core of our mission endures – and music as an academic discipline remains an essential part of that."

Cant concluded his email with a statement reaffirming the university's commitment to the music program as a whole: "We are eager to continue to make music at Wilkes. But we also recognize that the end of the Marching Colonels is disappointing news. We are committed to offering a pep band program and the musical offerings that reflect our students' passion and enthusiasm. We encourage their vision and ideas."

~Sean Schmoyer

Race and diversity courses outlined for Fall 2021 semester

By Emily Cherkauskas
Life, Arts & Entertainment Editor

If any students are interested in taking a course in the Fall 2021 semester that discusses race and diversity, they are able to choose from a catalog of handpicked courses — a list compiled by Dr. Christopher Zarpentine.

Zarpentine, associate professor of philosophy and chair of the Division of Global Cultures, played an important role in organizing the list of courses, which can be viewed in the Today at Wilkes email announcement chain.

With this list of courses, new and relevant topics for student discussion can bring forth fresh perspectives on what diversity and race can mean to the campus community on an intersectional basis. This comes after February's Open Forum on Race and the Curriculum and a handful of small student focus groups throughout April. Additionally, the Fall 2020 semester's Black Lives Matter protest on campus sparked an outspoken need for inclusive courses.

"One of the things that came out of these discussions is that students don't always have an awareness of the courses and programs that we are already offering

that address these topics," said Zarpentine. As chair of the Division of Global Cultures, Zarpentine is always aware of the various programs on campus that allow students to engage in societal discussion, including the minors in global cultures and women's and gender studies.

Overall, the courses are offered in the programs of anthropology, economics, English, history, philosophy, political science, psychology and sociology. Many of the courses included on the list are designated as credited courses for the women's and gender studies minor.

These courses are still open for registration, so it is encouraged that any interested students should sign-up for them as soon as they can to ensure a seat.

A large portion of the courses on the race and diversity list include English classes, with a handful of them being the general education requirement of ENG 120.

Dr. Mischelle Anthony, associate professor and chair of the English department, feels that making more legible diversity values in Wilkes courses can allow the community to have a better sense of inclusivity. By engaging in the ENG 120 course, students can discuss a variety of authors with ranges in gender,

identity, race and ethnicity and see how those perspectives have changed over time.

"What better place to witness and discuss writings and research by diverse authors in our general education classrooms, where students across majors can take part and be changed by these conversations?" said Anthony. "Part of being interested in English studies is about examining the way our language and literature influence us."

Another course that stands out from the rest is BIO 368: Medical Botany, a summer course offered by Dr. Kenneth Klemow, professor and chair of the biology department. It is the only STEM course currently featured on the race and diversity list, which can give the opportunity for interested STEM students to also partake in these discussions about diversity.

BIO 368 involves the scientific overview of how plants can be used to treat various ailments, with the focus being placed on different cultures.

"Plants have been used for thousands of years in that manner, and their specific usage is largely determined by cultural factors," said Klemow. "Herbal remedies are the mainstay treatments for people living in Asia, Africa and South America. In Western cultures, they are the basis of a

multi-million dollar industry."

A specific project includes Klemow, students and other professors actively researching to understand the ways that Japanese knotweed is able to produce a medically active chemical called resveratrol.

These courses regarding diversity and race will also have the potential to help pave the way for the proposed interdisciplinary minor in African American and Africana Studies, a topic that was discussed during February's Open Forum.

For Zarpentine, education is not just making the effort to let students learn new topics. He believes the quality of the education students receive plays a role in raising awareness on these issues.

"We want to raise awareness about the courses that we already are offering that facilitate these important discussions and to help students understand their value," said Zarpentine. "We also want to build on the foundation we have and find new ways to enrich the educational experience of our students by engaging with questions of diversity and inclusion throughout the curriculum."



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Questions raised about campus-wide vaccine requirement

By Ariel Reed
Sports Editor

Since the beginning of the school year, Wilkes has been battling with various difficulties surrounding COVID-19. A year with masks, limited events and condensed semesters has not been easy to overcome, but the hope of returning to normal may be possible through a potential campus-wide vaccine requirement.

"After seeing the immense amount of people on CPAPs (continuous positive airway pressure machines) and working with them in the hospitals, it's hard to forgo the numerous benefits of the vaccine," said junior nursing major Jess Turnitza. "I do believe the school should support the vaccine and consider mandating the vaccination. If you have the opportunity to receive the vaccine, get it. If you think of it this way — (Pennsylvania) schools and childcare centers require vaccines or at least a plan to complete appropriate vaccinations. If not, you may be unable to attend school (barring medical or religious

exemptions). I can see how this can be applicable to universities, especially since we're gathered in a small area."

Currently, the university is offering vaccines to those who want to get one. The next available reservation that students can make is on May 8. To secure a spot, students should check for an email from Today at Wilkes.

As per the university's website, students who are living in the area can return to Wilkes for their second dose. Students who are returning to a home that is outside of the area or in another state should work with a local provider to arrange their second dose. This applies to those who are anticipating receiving their first dose on May 8.

Although no official statement has been written on whether or not the school will require a vaccine, the members of Student Government stood at 63 percent in favor of requiring students to receive a vaccine.

"We strongly encourage that members of our campus community get vaccinated," said Justin Kraynack, associate vice

president of operations and compliance. "At this time, vaccines are not required, but we will continue to revisit the topic as we approach the fall semester. As you'll see in many of the national news stories, this is something that many businesses, including colleges and universities, are grappling with. It may take some time before a final decision is made. We will continue to rely on guidance from the CDC, Department of Education and other federal and state sources as we weigh our decision."

Once an official decision has been reached, students will be made aware of what they will have to do. Not all Wilkes students are in favor of a vaccine, as some are skeptical of how quickly the vaccine was created.

"The amount of time it took them to create the vaccine was much quicker than usual, which is pretty amazing," said Haley Greshko, sophomore political science major. "However, in order to do it that quickly, they did not complete the proper amount or types of trials. In my opinion, no establishment, whether a hospital

or a school, should be able to mandate a vaccine that is not FDA approved. The COVID vaccine is only FDA authorized, an important difference, and should not be required in order to attend school. We do not know the long-term side effects of this vaccine, and until we do for sure, it should not be a consideration to mandate it."

As per the FDA website, FDA "may authorize unapproved medical products or unapproved uses of approved medical products in an emergency to diagnose, treat or prevent serious or life-threatening diseases or conditions ... when certain statutory criteria have been met, including there are no adequate, approved and available alternatives."

Questions as to whether or not the vaccine will be required for next semester have been addressed. No official decision has been made, as this is a decision that will require further consideration from administration.



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Fall teams play exhibition

By Baylee Guedes & Kirsten Peters
Sports Staff Writer, Editor-in-Chief

Following the COVID-19 pandemic that created a halt in the athletic world, fall athletic teams were unable to compete in a regular season during Fall 2020. As spring sports have been underway for the Middle Atlantic Conference in a close to traditional fashion this season, the decision was made to allow fall sports to simultaneously play in a condensed exhibition season this spring.

As a result, Wilkes' men's soccer, women's soccer, football, field hockey and women's volleyball teams competed in various exhibition contests during Spring 2021 that did not count toward their respective records.

"Unfortunately, our fall sport teams missed a season of competition and the opportunity to compete in the MAC title games," said Athletic Director Addy Malatesta. "With guidance from the MAC presidents, every MAC school was given the option to conduct fall sport competition. Most fall sport teams played a compressed four-game conference-only schedule, and the football team played one exhibition game. It was very important to our coaches and the athletic department to give all of student-athletes an opportunity to wear their uniforms this semester."

Although the games did not count toward any team's record, Colonels from these five fall sports were enthusiastic about the opportunity to play again and face other teams.

"After waiting over 500 days to play a game, we were so excited to get out on the field and play," said junior field hockey player Lauren Shiplett. "There is no feeling like playing with your teammates and being able to do amazing things together on the field. Everyone was excited to make themselves and the team better."

As long as athletes tested negative and adhered to proper guidelines, they were able to participate in exhibition games.

Prior to their exhibition "season," athletes followed different phases of play that allowed them to slowly build-up their skills and return to practice.

"Each phase added a few more players, but the predominant session was still based around technical skill work," said men's soccer head coach Michael Piranian. "In the last phase, our players were able to compete in small-sided



Men's soccer senior Andrew Slusser (9) scores a goal during Wilkes exhibition season.

sessions. Through a series of phases, players kept masks on the field.

Additionally, athletes had to adhere to the new regulations, which included wearing a mask (for as well as having limited practice and modified practice sessions) and easing into full-team practices.

"Due to COVID-19, the schedule was definitely impacted. We had to ease into full-team practices and return to practice. Wearing masks and being able to compete and not being able to compete (team) in the fall."

Murie was not able to compete in small-sided sessions as sophomore Nic

Wilkes hosts Pain and Addiction Summit with Dr. Drew Pinsky

By Maddy Kinard
News Staff Writer

Wilkes University hosted the third Pennsylvania Pain and Addiction Summit virtually via Zoom, featuring well-known medical expert Dr. Drew Pinsky as the keynote speaker on April 23.

The idea behind the Pennsylvania Pain and Addiction Summit was prompted in 2018 by Associate Professor of Pharmacy Dr. Thomas S. Franko. It was made possible by Margaret M. Petty, the director of the Center for Continued Learning, as well as Tonyehn Verkitus, executive director for the Lackawanna and Luzerne County Medical Societies. The Lackawanna and Luzerne County Medical Societies sponsored the summit.

“The inspiration to start actually came from a presentation that two students and I gave on naloxone,” said Franko. “The real interesting thing was that the audience represented a bunch of different professions. After that session, (Petty) and I started talking and came up with the idea of a day-long summit, where we can get all of these professions together to learn with and from each other. When we approached (Verkitus) at the medical society,

she loved the idea and that partnership really set the stage for collaboration between professions for the summit.”

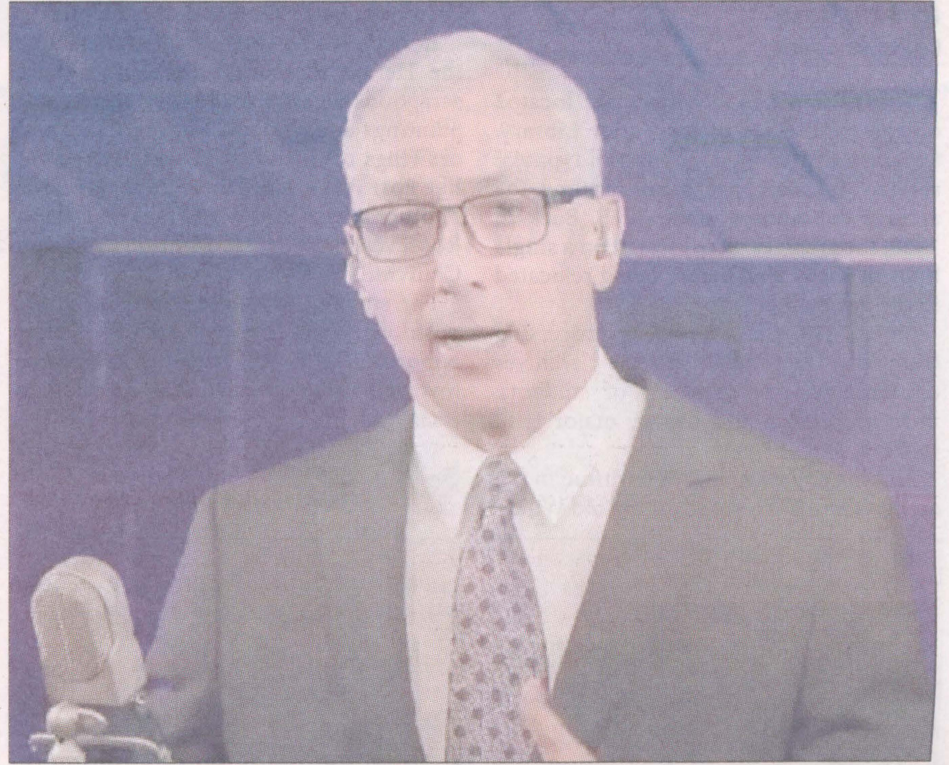
This summit provides the opportunity for physicians to be in the same room with all of the other professions that work on these issues. It also serves as the medium for an important goal: To fight against addiction stigmas and prevent overdoses.

“It is rare that physicians get to hear from social workers, physical therapists, law enforcement or any of the other various folks we bring together at this conference,” said Verkitus. “The opportunity for all of these passionate professionals to learn from one another is what makes this event so rewarding.”

Last year, the summit had to be canceled due to the COVID-19 pandemic. To cooperate with COVID-19 guidelines and ensure their message was still being spread, a compromise was reached and a virtual event was created this year, consisting of multiple webinars for attendees to view throughout the day.

“In 2018 and 2019, the summit was held live in-person at Mohegan Sun at Pocono Downs,” said Petty. “We are planning on holding the program in-person again in 2021.”

The summit’s theme for this year was



The Beacon/Maddy Kinard

Dr. Drew Pinsky, a medical expert on substance abuse, gave the keynote lecture on the opioid epidemic during the Pain and Addiction Summit.

“Collaboration for Change,” pulling from Luzerne County’s STOP Coalition. This alliance was formed with the goal of creating a healthier community by reducing the lives lost to overdoses.

“The evidence is clear that when we all bring our collective strengths together, the patient wins,” said Franko.

This year, the summit brought in Pinsky as the keynote speaker to lead the webinar, “The Opioid Epidemic: How Did We Get Here and What Do We Do Now?” Pinsky is an addiction medicine specialist who has been featured on MTV series “Teen Mom” and “16 and Pregnant,” as well as has published multiple books on the subject of substance abuse.

“Having such a highly respected professional come speak is truly something special,” said Hunter Maxwell, a P3 pharmacy student. “It speaks volumes to how passionate he is for topics such as pain and addiction to come speak at such an event close to campus.”

During Pinsky’s webinar, he discussed his career and how he got started in the medical industry, along with the origins of the opioid problem and its surge into an epidemic.

“I saw the miracle of recovery,” said Pinsky. “I saw young people going from dying to better than they ever knew they could be.”

Most importantly, the summit continues to hold beneficial information that is available to

anyone who registers for the event. It is not just tailored to those in the healthcare field, as anyone can walk away learning something critical to not only their own well being but for those around them as well.

“I am sure most people have had some type of pain in their lives,” said Maxwell. “How to handle your symptoms short- and long-term was something discussed a lot throughout the sessions I was in. On the topic of addiction as well, if you or someone you know has this issue, it was great to hear the support systems in place for people battling addiction.”

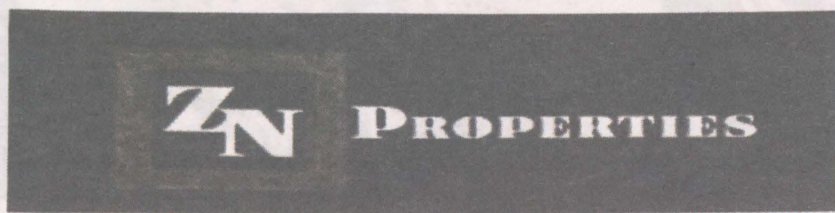
The message does not end there for Maxwell, as he hosts a podcast, “Saturday Pharmacist: Hosted by Hunter Maxwell” that airs every other Saturday on Youtube. Maxwell, accompanied by Franko, touches on public health topics that are pertinent to current issues in our world today.

Wilkes University also has future healthcare seminars planned, including a free program on medical cannabis on May 6. Speakers include Dr. Jenna Carmichael and Second Lady of Pennsylvania Gisele Fetterman.

For more information, please visit: <https://www.wilkes.edu/academics/continued-learning/healthcare-seminars.aspx>.



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Sports

Want your sport c

Ermeus will pursue MBA, return

By Chris Gowarty & Kirsten Peters
Asst. Sports Editor & Editor-in-Chief

Although COVID-19 has negatively impacted athletics for universities across the country, the NCAA provided athletes from all sports with some hope for the future by granting them an extra year of eligibility to compete.

In October 2020, the NCAA extended its year of eligibility decision to 2020-2021 fall and winter sport athletes. This decision came seven months after the NCAA announced that spring sport athletes would receive an additional year of eligibility, as sprig sports were the first to be shut down due to the pandemic.

This decision allowed fall sport athlete Richard Ermeus the opportunity to compete for one more season, while he pursues his master's degree at the start of the Fall 2021 semester after graduating this month with a bachelor's degree in marketing.

"This extra year of eligibility is refilling and hopeful because it was hard to just accept not being able to play again," said Ermeus, a senior wide receiver for Wilkes football. "I hope to grow as a student-athlete in my last year of competition."

Ermeus is from Sparta, N.J., and has been playing football for seven years, four of which have been with the Colonels. Now and prior to the pandemic, Ermeus has stood out as a familiar face on the Colonel roster and around campus.

"(Ermeus) is an extremely driven and personable young man," said head football coach Jonathan Drach. "He is intelligent and purpose-driven to be a success in all that he does. He can multi-task and lead those around him in a variety of situations."

"(Ermeus) has helped his teammates as a mentor and a big brother figure. He works hard to set a positive example on-and-off the field. His teammates see his level of dedication and discipline to everything that he does. It's hard not to push yourself to be better when you see all that (Ermeus) does on a daily basis."

When the pandemic started to affect life for citizens of Wilkes-Barre, Ermeus realized that it was challenging to transition into the new normal. He stated that his own

characteristics, as Drach also highlighted of the student-athlete, helped him progress into the society that has risen from COVID-19 guidelines and restrictions.

"It was very difficult," said Ermeus. "The sudden change of what everyone refers to as 'normal' was a big aspect to how every day life was altered in the blink of an eye. Adaptability and time management are two of my strongest attributes as a person, so being able to transition to a majority of events and classes online wasn't too difficult but was still a challenge."

Although Ermeus cited adaptability and time management as two of his strengths, the pandemic did put a strain on his athletic career.

"Not playing for a year was hard," said Ermeus. "It was hard to stay in shape for the year off, and toward the end, I fell out of shape due to the lack of motivation and reward. Being a collegiate athlete is a very prideful title, and I feel as though being able to compete and perform weekly is reward. So without it, the aspirations are



Richard Ermeus snagged a 52-yard touchdown pass to lead Wilkes up 10-0 in the Homecoming game.

Harold Cox Archives house pieces of Wilkes history

By Sara Ross
Co-News Editor

The Harold Cox Archives are located on the third floor of the Farley Library. Suzanna Calev, an archivist and public service librarian, has been running the archive department since 2018. Back in 1968, the archives were located on a single floor in Kirby Hall before being relocated to the Farley Library.

Since 2018, Calev has been processing countless materials in the archives department with the help of students, including intern and history major John Jenkins.

Jenkins enjoys spending his time in the archives and has been scanning old Wilkes

yearbooks and 1972 flood documents.

Besides these items, others include the Herald R. Stark collection, athletic scrapbooks, a Civil War diary, watercolor paintings and Thomas Nast cartoons and drawings of historical Wilkes-Barre sites like Fort Wyoming. There are also famous photographs of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt and Prime Minister Winston Churchill.

For students interested in work-study positions, the library archives offer opportunities for all students to become involved. Calev revealed that she caters to each student's areas of interest.

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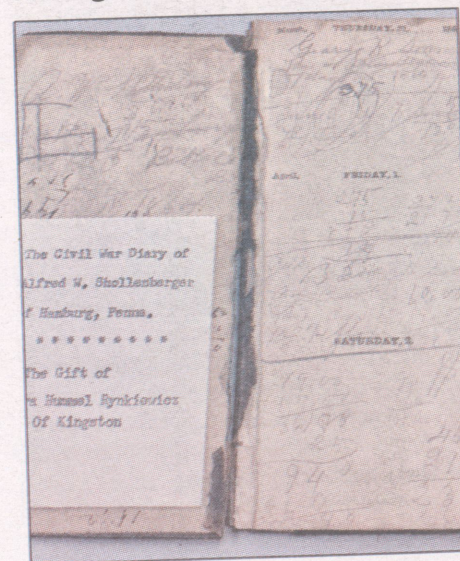
Farley Library's Suzanna Calev, an archivist and public service librarian, stores documents and materials between acid-free tissue paper to preserve them.



Painting created by W.T. Smedley (left), and a cartoon drawn by Thomas Nast (right).



The "Athletics at Wilkes 1940 to 1960" scrapbook contains old Wilkes sports photos.



Photos: The Beacon/Sara Ross

A Civil War diary (left) written by Alfred W. Shollenberger and photographs of famous figures (right), including Franklin Delano Roosevelt and Winston Churchill.



A drawing of Fort Wyoming is pictured during the American Revolutionary War, where the Battle of Wyoming or the Wyoming Massacre took place in 1778.

Life, Arts & Entertainment

Have any events or artists to be shared? Contact life, arts & entertainment editor: Emily.Cherkauskas@wilkes.edu

American Society of Mechanical Engineers hosts car show *Benefitting Veteran's Promise, located in Dickson City, Pa.*

Compiled by Emily Cherkauskas
Photos: The Beacon/Anna Culver



The cloudy weather on April 25 could not stop ASME's car show. Owners of the vibrant blue Corvette (left) showed off its beautiful deep blue finish. From pure white to chameleon print (right), cars enthusiasts made do with the potentially rainy day and showed up to create a sea of shiny colors to assist ASME in donating funds to Veteran's Promise for Veteran suicide prevention.

Classic, vintage and sports cars of all models and styles were parked with their hoods popped open to show off their intricate engines, letting curious car enthusiasts take a peek at the care put into their styles.



Cars of all types lined up in the Henry Student Center parking lot. All cars, even these two red mustangs, had unique variations between them from model and style to even the smallest details that visitors were able to take a look at.



Justin Burda, mechanical and electrical engineering senior, took a seat in ASME's Baja. Burda was one of the many student volunteers at the car show, with proceeds and funds going to Veteran's Promise, a non-profit organization.

Game night delight: Moody Foodie's sweet potato burrito snack

By Anna Culver
Staff Writer

This recipe is easy to put together to impress your friends during the next game night. You also can make this recipe for yourself.

Ingredients:

- 1 large sweet potato (about two cups of cooked potato)
- 2 teaspoons vegetable oil
- 1/2 onion chopped
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 3 cups kidney beans, drained and rinsed
- 1 cup water
- 2 tablespoons soy sauce
- 2 tablespoons chili powder
- 2 teaspoons ground cumin
- Pinch cayenne pepper or to taste
- 6 flour tortillas
- Cheese of your choice

Directions:

Preheat oven to 350 degrees Fahrenheit. Cook your sweet potato and remove the skin. Then, mash it up in a bowl, and set

it to the side.

While cooking, start heating the oil in a medium skillet, and saute onion and garlic until soft. Mash the beans into the onions and garlic. Gradually stir in the water, and cook until consistency of refried beans. Add in soy sauce, chili powder, cumin and cayenne pepper. Remove from heat when everything is mixed in.

In a separate pan, heat a little bit of butter (just enough to cover the bottom of the pan), and place the tortillas on top. Keep this on low heat, and split your bean mixture and sweet potato on the tortilla topping with your choice of cheese. Once the tortillas are hot, fold them burrito-style and place them on a baking sheet.

Bake in the preheated oven until warmed through about 10-12 minutes.

Enjoy!

Allergies: Wheat, dairy, legumes




Anna.Culver@wilkes.edu
Graphic by Anna Culver



The Beacon/Anna Culver


This sweet potato burrito recipe is a delicious guilty pleasure for any night to have something a little out of the ordinary.





BEACON BUMPS

Each week, the Wilkes Beacon staff adds a song to their 2020-2021 Beacon Bumps playlist under Chris Gowarty's account on Spotify. Look below for this week's list of songs.



- Kirsten Peters, Editor-in-Chief: [Growin' Up - Walker McGuire](#)
- Sean Schmoyer, Co-News Editor: [Alaska - Little Hurt](#)
- Sara Ross, Co-News Editor: [Good Day - DNCE](#)
- Genny Frederick, Asst. News Editor: [Roddy - Djo](#)
- Maddy Kinard, News Staff Writer: [Heroes - David Bowie](#)
- Emily Cherkaskas, LA&E Editor: [I Threw Glass at My Friend's Eyes and Now I'm on Probation - Destroy Boys](#)
- Jordan Daniel, Asst. LA&E Editor: [clementine - Halsey](#)
- Breanna Ebisch, Co-Opinion Editor: [Walk Backwards - Maude Latour](#)

- Dylan Mehl, Co-Opinion Editor: [Rapstar - Polo G](#)
- William Billingsley, Asst. Opinion Editor: [Sleepwalking - The Chain Gang of 1974](#)
- Ariel Reed, Sports Editor: [My Only Mistake - Elliana](#)
- Chris Gowarty, Asst. Sports Editor: [King of the Fall - The Weeknd](#)
- Baylee Guedes, Sports Staff Writer: [White Tee - Lil Peep](#)
- Mia Walker, Lead Designer: [FWMM- Tiara Thomas](#)
- Steffen Horwath, Staff Photographer: [White Room - Cream](#)
- Liz Cherinka, Social Media Manager: [Golden - Harry Styles](#)

Cena's "Be A Work In Progress"

By Shawn Austin
Staff Writer

Former WWE superstar and No. 1 New York Times bestselling author John Cena offers motivation and open-mindedness in his latest book, "Be a Work in Progress."

For the past 15 years, the public has known Cena as a professional wrestler, rapper, moviestar, philanthropist and social media sensation. Although his most famous phrase ("You can't see me.") insists that he is invisible to the eyes of others, Cena's most recent project renders him more transparent than ever.

"Be a Work in Progress" was released alongside Cena's book of encouragements, "Do Your Best Every Day to Do Your Best Every Day." While "Do Your Best Every Day to Do Your Best Every Day" is better suited for children, "Be a Work in Progress" is a sufficient read for audience members of all ages.

Ballantine Books published "Be a Work in Progress," while Valeria Petrone provided illustrations. Aside from the efforts Cena put into "Be A Work In Progress," he also stars in "Fast & Furious 9," which debuts in the United States on June 25, 2021.

As the world fought, and continues to fight, the ails of COVID-19, lockdowns and quarantines, "Be a Work in Progress" serves to offer many people a moment of solitude and reflection.

Prior to the pandemic, the display of hustle and restlessness seemed ever-important to contemporary society. By March 2020, that ideology was put to a halt, as COVID-19 forced businesses and institutions to close and/or operate remotely.

The circumstance, although tragic and unfortunate on numerous levels, gave people around the world the opportunity to refuel and refocus their lives.

One of those people happened to be Cena.

He opens "Be a Work in Progress" with a brief explanation as to why he wrote the book: "I generate these thoughts from self-reflection and self-exploration ... We all have a lot on our minds, especially now, given the state of the world."

The book is 169 pages of motivational quotes and illustrations. The material provides readers with insight into the life of the author and potentially themselves.

It is imperative to note that the book was not what I expected it to be, but I am impressed by what it was.

Instead of a typical autobiography to highlight the highs and lows of a career and personal life, "Be a Work in Progress" is an

inspirational read that offers insightful advice that stems from Cena's life experiences.

When I first noticed the brevity of the text on the pages, I was initially disappointed. However, as I began to read the content, I was quickly intrigued by the manner in which Cena chose to reflect on his life.

Although the current state of media demands transparency to the highest degree from celebrities, Cena precisely chose to present his experiences in a more subtle, yet substantial manner.

This is important to highlight, as the former WWE superstar has shared prominent moments of his life with the public in the past.

For the past decade or so, Cena's personal life has played out before audiences in an uncanny way.

Outside of the WWE, the Make-a-Wish Foundation and a few "B" movies, Cena had kept a relatively low profile to the world for the majority of his career. This began to change in 2012, when he started to date Nicole Garcia, also known as "Nikki Bella" in the WWE.

As time progressed in the relationship, his personal life began to be exposed to mainstream media due to the nature in which Garcia presented herself to the world.

Garcia and her sister Brie were the main stars of the reality television show, "Total Divas," as well as currently being the main stars of their spin-off show, "Total Bellas."

With this being the case, Garcia and Cena's relationship played out on television. One of the biggest issues in their relationship was Cena's reluctance to have children, despite Garcia's desire to start a family.

Five years into their relationship, Cena proposed to Garcia at WrestleMania 33. Less



Returning to normal: Summer Orientation to be held in-person

By Emily Cherkauskas
Life, Arts & Entertainment Editor

While trying to adapt to the COVID-19 pandemic, many beloved Wilkes events and programs turned to online formats, including first-year student orientation. However, for the incoming Classes of 2025 and 2027, these new students will be able to attend the college staple of summer orientation in-person.

Last year, orientation was completely virtual with online meetings and tasks that students and e-mentors were involved in, something that incoming students can avoid.

Melissa Howells, director of Student Development, oversaw the changes made for this year.

“We decided that, while the orientation that was delivered last year was informative, it lacked in displaying what Wilkes does best: having a powerful sense of community,” said Howells.

The summer orientation will be held as a one-day session across six days, where students can choose which day they prefer. The Student Development Office decided that the traditional two-day, overnight

experience was too risky to tiptoe along COVID-19 prevention guidelines, so this was the most fitting decision in order to still bring new students to campus.

“Students will be able to meet with their academic adviser to finalize their fall schedule; meet their e-mentor; hear about living on or commuting to campus; meet with a Financial Aid counselor; meet the staff of the Center for Global Education and Diversity Initiatives; even Socialize the Wilkes WAE,” said Howells.

Campus resources will be constantly available for students during orientation, even if they just want to chat.

In exchange for the shortened summer orientation, Student Development hopes to expand Welcome Weekend into a longer event, just to let first-year Colonels take in the spirit of Wilkes and grow closer to their classmates over a greater period of time.

Howells also feels confident in the support group that stands with her in Student Development with the large number of e-mentors and student coordinators, all of whom are eager to meet these new students and be able to physically welcome them to the Wilkes campus.

Junior communication studies student

Donald Ballou, this year’s orientation coordinator, is in charge of creating and organizing the activities of the summer orientation and Welcome Weekend events. He helped make sure that COVID-19 protocols are able to be followed while simultaneously ensuring the incoming class can travel to campus and meet each other.

“I’m very excited to hopefully introduce some fun changes to orientation and involve parts of the university not really touched on by past orientations yet,” said Ballou. “The theme we’re going for this summer is ‘vibey.’ We’re hoping to focus on expanding mindsets, welcoming new perspectives and finding confidence in new areas of ourselves in our new incoming class.”

The announcement of an in-person summer orientation is a stark contrast to the isolated world of last year’s campus atmosphere. For many, it brings hope.

Angela Croop, neuroscience and psychology junior and first-year student orientation e-mentor coordinator, was left feeling positive and hopeful by the changes. After all, many of these incoming first-year students had lost the experience of their remaining days of high school due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

“I am hoping to see a sense of normalcy return to the first-year students,” said Croop. “Many of their high school activities may have been canceled or held virtually, so this is a refreshing and new experience for them in more ways than one. Above all, I am mainly just hoping to see everyone have a great time and enjoy the day on campus.”

Kevin Long, former student body president for the 2020-2021 school year, welcomed the current first-year student body in that completely online environment. This summer, he sees a light at the end of the tunnel and trusts that Wilkes will have all COVID-19 precautions in place. He is confident that Wilkes will take the time of this remaining semester to safely organize the orientation.

“Orientation is a key part of the journey through college as the first step,” said Long. “So to bring back the in-person and traditional way that Wilkes has always welcomed our new Colonels will be a welcomed sight, as hopefully we are nearing the end of the recent pandemic that has changed all of our lives.”



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Liz's Craft Column: Painted wooden door welcome home sign

By Liz Cherinka
Social Media Manager

Nothing says "welcome" quite like a sign on your door that literally says "welcome." During these times, it is hard to welcome people into your home, but it is important to keep the spirit of better times alive.

To make this affordable DIY wood plaque welcome sign, you will need a circle or oval wooden plaque, three colors of acrylic paint, paintbrushes, painters or masking tape, hot glue, metal lettering that says "welcome" and optional fake flowers or ribbon.

The paint can be three shades of the same color, a color scheme or a fun set of colors that represents something, such as a flag. Be creative with the color choice.

All of these materials can be found at any craft store, such as Joann Fabrics and Michaels. The lettering can either be purchased as one piece or individual letters, depending on how large the plaque is. The example uses a one-piece lettering and a small oval plaque.

To start, decide where the first line of paint will begin, and mark it with the tape to create a straight line. The first line will be roughly around the middle of the plaque. The example starts a little less than halfway down, allowing for almost equal parts of color and wood.

Then, grab the lightest of the three paint shades or whichever color comes first in the sequence. The example uses white, light pink and a medium pink, so white is the first. Paint the whole bottom of the plaque with the lightest shade to add a background, if it is the lightest of three shades.

If the colors do not correlate in that way, use another piece of tape to section it off, and paint within that part. You

might want to start off by sectioning out three parts with tape if they cannot be a background to each other. Wait for this to be completely dry.

Now, take the second shade of paint. Tape off the section for this color. If this color can also be a background, feel free to just start after the first color's section and paint the rest in that color. If not, fill in the taped section with that color. Two coats of paint might be necessary, but again, be patient and allow time to dry.


For the final color, repeat the same steps. Once all the paint is dry, take a small paint brush and fix up any edges that may have leaked under the tape.

It is time to add the welcome part of the sign. Find a spot where the lettering looks appealing to you, and use hot glue to add it to the plaque.

This could be the end of the DIY or you can go a step further to add some detail. The example uses small fake flowers to match the pink color scheme. To add flowers, cut the stems short and hot glue the remaining part of the stems onto the top of the plaque. This adds a small flair to the decoration.

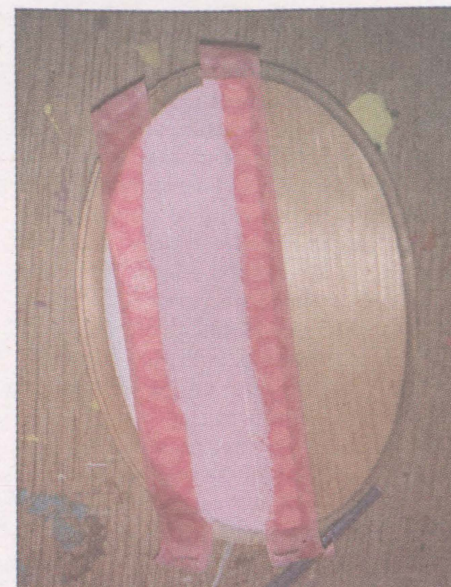
Another option is a ribbon detail. You can make or buy a bow matching the color scheme and add it onto the top using hot glue. To make a bow, fold the ribbon into a "ribbon" shape or an "O" with two tails, and hot glue in the middle. Add a small piece of ribbon around the center of the bow to finish it, and glue in the back. The bow is now ready to be attached to the plaque.

Once any details are added, the plaque is finished. Feel free to welcome a safe number of people into your space in a fun and decorative way.

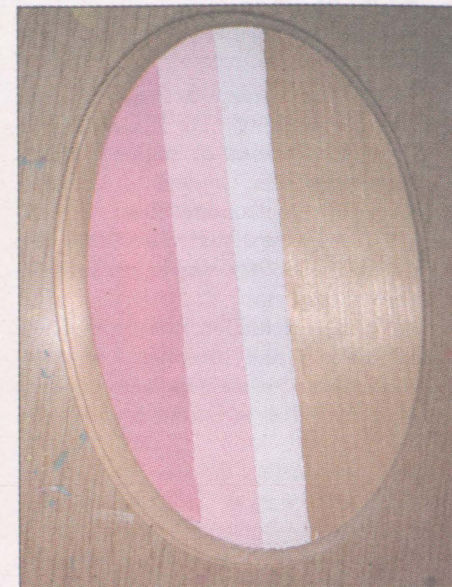
 Elizabeth.Cherinka@wilkes.edu
Graphic by Anna Culver



Liz's Craft Rating: Two out of five yarn-balls. This DIY wood plaque is affordable with materials being able to be purchased from a wide variety of stores, since the required supplies are simple. Additionally, the customization allows for an easy tutorial — just make sure you are confident



1) First, decide where the first line of paint will start, and mark it with the tape to create a straight line. The first line will be roughly up to the middle of the plaque. Preferably, start with the lightest shade, which will allow the colors to easily stack and correlate.



2) After painting the first layer, take off the tape before it dries to avoid chipping. Continue to mark tape in the areas where you are painting. If there are any imperfections, take a small brush and paint along the edges to smooth everything out.



3) Once you are finished painting the plaque, let the paint dry. After those steps are completed, prepare your welcome sign. Carefully, hot glue the sign onto the plaque, and let dry. If you like the simple look of the plaque, you can leave it completed as is.



4) If you would like to further decorate the plaque, there are multiple options for you, such as adding a ribbon. This example uses small fake flowers, which matches the color scheme. The personalization will help make your home extra welcoming.

Photos: The Beacon/Liz Cherinka

Share your completed crafts with us! Tag us on our Instagram account @wilkesbeacon with your craft.
#LizsCraftColumn

The never-ending debate of o

By Rudy Urenovich
Staff Writer

Well, fellow Wilkes students and faculty, this extremely long and strange year is finally coming to a close. It is bewildering; this has been both the longest and shortest school year I have ever experienced.

Mentally, I am still in March 2020, yet my physical being keeps pushing on day after day as 2021 marches on.

I must confess, one of the biggest challenges that I faced during this academic year was balancing online and in-person classes.

I vividly remember last spring when we went totally virtual, while others shed tears leaving campus and saying goodbye to friends, I was quite content as an introvert with my laptop being my lifeline to Wilkes.

The thought of fully online classes really did not phase me at all, and for the most part, I feel like I learned and performed just as well as I did in any normal semester.

I rather enjoyed making my own schedule, learning and completing assignments at my own pace.

I really felt like I was "adulting." It taught me how to prioritize my tasks and how to be totally self-reliant.

I do think that I carried that morale with me into the hybrid school term we had this spring, but the cons of online classes finally emerged.

I must admit I faltered when it came to balancing my online classes with my in-person classes, as well as jobs and extracurricular activities.

I feel like I often brushed my online classes aside, simply because they were the easiest to ignore.

If I was not on the computer, they might as well have not even existed. I found myself missing due dates and turning assignments in late more frequently than I have ever done before. I felt like I was playing a cruel game of hide-and-seek with my online assignments, with the Wilkes Live site as the chaperone.

In addition to all of this, I am a commuter, which made having to juggle virtual and face-to-face classes considerably more difficult.

I would have a virtual class followed by an in-person class, followed by another online class.

This made commuting especially taxing, as I do not have a room on campus where I could attend my virtual courses, and I would have to arrive and depart campus at

Change of weekend library l

By Breanna Ebisch
Co-Opinion Editor

As if places to study on campus were not already limited, especially now due to COVID-19, the library changed its Sunday hours from 11 a.m. to midnight to 3 to 11 p.m., as of last week.

While the weekend hours were already shorter than the weekdays, this change is quite frustrating for several reasons.

Many students, myself included, utilize the library to study, meet in groups for class projects or to complete assignments in a different setting other than their room. The building gives every student on campus the opportunity to use its resources and help enhance their academic career by giving them a space to complete their schoolwork.

With the loss of workspaces in Starbucks, the soon-to-be nonexistent Student Lounge in the Student Union Building and several other study spaces on campus due to COVID-19 restrictions and precautions, the library has become the hub for the campus community and allows students to continue on almost as normal in what still

is not a "usual" semester.

And now, as the semester reaches its busiest point leading up to final exams, the library decides that reducing its already short weekend hours was a good choice.

But, I can assure you that it is not.

Prior to this recent change, the library was open on both Saturday and Sunday, from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m., which was already at a later hour than desired by many.

Although the basement floor is open and accessible 24/7, it is not the ideal location for studying or working on assignments for a majority of the student body.

Sure, it is convenient, but it is certainly not where you want to camp-out for hours.

So, what is the benefit of changing the hours and making the library open later in the day and during less acceptable times for students who want to get an early start on their coursework?

Why does the decision come during the busiest weeks for the campus community? How does this change help students overall?

Isn't the library meant to be both accessible and the most valuable resource

All Belgium, Wilkes-Barre's newest Belgian waffle dessert truck

By Emily Cherkauskas

Life, Arts & Entertainment Editor

What does it mean to have a delicious dessert in the Wyoming Valley? According to Toon De Schepper, sophomore sports management major, and Billy Berry, sophomore financial investments major, all it takes is crafting together a prime Belgian waffle recipe.

De Schepper, a native of Nieuwenrode, Belgium, came to Wilkes and met Berry. As they have been roommates since they were first-year students and teammates alongside each other on the men's ice hockey team, their friendship grew immensely.

"I got to know (De Schepper) the first day we stepped on campus, and we both have played hockey our whole lives, resulting in our worlds colliding here at Wilkes," said Berry. "We have been glued to each other's hips since."

In his time living in Wilkes-Barre, De Schepper discovered the revelation that something was missing in this region; all he asked for was to have a simple, authentic Belgian waffle. Unfortunately, he found a lack of such a thing — and he sought to change that.

"People would talk about how good 'Belgian waffles' are, but they have yet to experience an authentic Belgian waffle," said De Schepper. "And because there is no similar food truck around the area, we thought it would be a great idea to bring that to Wilkes-Barre."

Thus, their project was born: All Belgium,

a food truck that seeks to bring authentic Belgian waffles to students and members of the Wilkes-Barre community. One day, De Schepper and Berry hope to turn their small business start-up into a large chain that reaches to all of the craving foodies of America.

"We are focused on our Wilkes-Barre truck for now, but we are planning on expanding with multiple food trucks in other cities across the country," said De Schepper. "The end goal is to be a nationwide-known company that serves Belgian waffles all over America."

Despite having begun their project recently, All Belgium has already garnered a loyal fanbase in the Wilkes-Barre area, showing their loving support of De Schepper and Berry's food truck.

"Keep it up boys, as it looks like it's comin' together," read one comment online. The rest of All Belgium's social media comment sections are littered with hearts and food emojis, eager to see the new food truck and get a taste of some freshly made waffles that hold the magic of Belgian culture.

As De Schepper and Berry further work diligently in crafting up some delicious Belgian waffle recipes, they plan to stop their food truck by the Wilkes campus some time in the near future. For further updates, follow their Instagram account @allbelgium and take a gander at their upcoming meals — just try not to drool everywhere.



@wilkesbeacon

Emily.Cherkauskas@wilkes.edu



Photos courtesy of Billy Berry, Toon De Schepper and All Belgium

Sophomores Billy Berry (left) and Toon De Schepper (right) are the creators of All Belgium. They hope to bring delicious waffles to the Wilkes-Barre community with their unique food truck.



All Belgium is a brand new food truck that will be driving along the streets of Wilkes-Barre in the future. Keep an eye out, and be sure to grab a waffle when you see it. They are currently creating their menu of waffles (shown below).



A Liège waffle with some bananas, strawberries and chocolate sauce.



A savory strawberry chocolate sauce topped on a waffle.



A combination of biscoff and waffles, topped with whipped cream.



A waffle topped with chocolate, bananas and strawberries.

SPRING 2021 SENIOR SEND OFF

The Beacon would like to send its sincerest farewells to:

Kirsten Peters, Editor-in-Chief

Dylan Mehl, Co-Opinion Editor

William Billingsley, Assistant Opinion Editor

Steffen Horwath, Staff Photographer

(Pictured from left to right.)

Page Design/Layout: Mia Walker
Photos: Steffen Horwath & Kirsten Peters



“When trying to write a reflection of my time with The Beacon, it’s almost impossible to put into words how much this paper has meant to me. Honestly, I’ve stared at a blank screen trying to determine the best way to compose my thoughts and express my gratitude, but for as much as I love writing, I’m used to being the journalist reporting on various topics – none of which include writing about myself. Yet, here we are – a reflection of my four years on staff in a matter of a few hundred words.

I guess the easiest place to start is that I never knew this is how my experience with The Beacon would transpire. In high school, I was the sports editor for our campus newspaper, Del.Aware, and that sports writing experience is the reason I joined The Beacon as a first-year student. My love for baseball and passion for sports photography allowed me to find my niche. After a year of covering sports, and truthfully enhancing my writing abilities more than I’d like to admit, I earned the position of co-sports editor alongside Ben Mandell, a position I held for two consecutive years as a sophomore and a junior.

But who knew I’d become the editor-in-chief my final year at Wilkes? I’ll tell you who – Luke Modrovsky, a former Beacon editor-in-chief. From the time I wrote an article as a staff writer in 2017 on

intramural sports that made its way onto the front page of the paper, Luke has told me that he knew I would be the paper’s editor-in-chief. I didn’t see it – I didn’t see that position as an opportunity until I realized how much I cared about the quality of the paper, having things done correctly, making improvements and providing feedback. I’m glad Luke, Ben, Cabrini Rudnicki and Dr. Kalen Churcher saw that the editor-in-chief position could be a fit for me before I did because I truly believe my identity on campus has been defined specifically by time with The Beacon, as well as in other leadership roles with Wilkes Now! TV and the Allan P. Kirby Center for Free Enterprise and Entrepreneurship.

Initially, the Sports section of the paper was my baby, but this past year, the entire paper became my baby. I wasn’t just a writer and photographer, covering game stories, player features, heartbreaking championship losses and thrilling playoff berths. Instead, I began to look through another lens as someone who could have a real impact on the weekly paper and all of its editors, writers, photographers and graphic designers. Hopefully, my weekly feedback for each section, my one-on-one meetings with anyone on staff and my tender love and care for each and every page, sentence, photo and caption of the paper will have left its mark.

As someone who takes an almost indescribable amount of pride in anything that has my name attached to it, The Beacon has become an extra limb extended from my body. I think my peers would agree that my time spent on the paper throughout the week, my Beacon Sundays of going through every last detail of that week’s 24-page edition, my countless color-coded emails, and so much more will make it hard for me not to identify as The Beacon’s EIC anymore.

To everyone who impacted my experience with The Beacon – thank you! To those who came before me and provided me with feedback, constructive criticism and, most importantly, encouragement: I am grateful to have had such tremendous predecessors. To those who I have had the ability to lead during this unique time of a COVID-19 pandemic college experience: I hope you know how much you impacted me and how much I hoped to have offered some takeaway for you to enhance your ability as journalists. Being the editor-in-chief of The Beacon was the most time-consuming, frustrating and simultaneously rewarding and enlightening experience I endured as a soon-to-be Wilkes University alumna. Thank you to everyone who has made writing this reflection and closing this chapter of my life so difficult. I’ll miss being the EIC more than I can put into words. ”

STAFF FAREWELLS

“Each senior has brought something to the staff that will be greatly missed but, more importantly, remembered and mimicked in the years to come. Kirsten and Dylan have a skill in the way they cover all things related to sports. Dylan and Will are not afraid to write the content they consider valuable in opinion, and I greatly admire that. Kirsten and Steffen’s photography have been a great aid in many stories. I wish all of them the best of luck in everything they go on to do, and I thank them all for everything they have taught me.”

– Sean Schmoyer, Co-News Editor

“Kirsten is someone I have gotten to know quite well over the past year. To me, she is much more than our Beacon leader, as she is also a friend to not only me but to many on The Beacon staff. Kirsten pushes us to do our best and is always willing to lend a hand. Whether she is helping out with tips on InDesign layout or providing us with advice on our articles, it is easy to tell that she cares and is passionate about the newspaper.”

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“The seniors at The Beacon have brought an indescribable amount of life to the paper. It has been nothing short of incredible to learn how to be a better journalist, a better student and a better person from each of them. The Beacon will certainly miss their smiles, hard work and dedication in the future, but we are very thankful to have worked with them for as long as we did!”

– Breanna Ebisch, Co-Opinion Editor

“Dylan and I have been inseparable from the start of my career in the COM department. He is one of my favorite people who will always be there for me and give me the hard advice I may or may not necessarily want to hear. I will forever cherish our friendship, many radio memories together and of course all the food runs we have gone on. Also, I have never encountered someone who is as passionate, self-motivated and indispensable as Kirsten. She was the first person I worked for on the paper. I still vividly remember my first article that I wrote and how she sat me down to make me better. You are everything I aspire to be, and I would be oh-so-lucky to be even an ounce like you in the future.”

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Colonel Proud



“When I first started writing for The Beacon last fall, I did so with absolutely no expectations for what might happen. After all, I literally had zero experience in writing anything outside of an academic setting, much less a college newspaper.

But events that occurred this past summer, like the university quietly firing Dr. Alberto Prado or reopening despite the COVID-19 pandemic, made me realize that if no one else was going to speak up and speak out about these issues, then I’d have to do it myself. And speak out I did.

Whether it be sobering topics like third-party voting, the death of Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg or more sanguine topics like banana bread, I tested the waters of this unknown river for the very first time.

Although I had thought myself to be wildly out of my depth as the semester progressed, I would soon learn that I had somehow placed second in a statewide college-level newspaper competition for column writing, which was a surprise, to be sure, but a welcome one.

And of course, I only grew more ambitious in what I wrote about as time went on.

From the loathed campus bookstore, the renaming of Sullivan Hall, the lack of recycling at the YMCA and even issues with The Writing Center’s feedback, I purposefully chose topics that ranged the gamut from obscure to the high-profile – but all were issues that I cared about.

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“The Beacon has been a great experience for me as a writer. I was inexperienced with a lot to learn, but the great staff my sophomore year brought me in and made me part of the team. Through late nights, a few disagreements and plenty of hours writing, I have become a better writer than I could have ever imagined. Some of my most memorable pieces are my Top 10 Athletes of All Time, my feature on Wilkes women’s basketball coach Tara Macciocco and the plethora of sporting events I covered.

While I can go on about all of the writing techniques, styles and ideas I learned, I think when I look back on my time on staff, I will most remember the friendships I built. Tuesday pizza in the bubble will forever be a vibe.

Having written for multiple sections, I have been all over the place. This diversity has improved my ability to work with a variety of people. I have also been able to combine my two favorite things – sports and having an opinion. Four years ago, I would have never imagined applying to be a sports writer at companies I grew up watching, reading and idolizing, but the opportunity to explore my passion in this paper has put me in just that position.

If I gave advice to future writers, editors or anyone interested in joining The Beacon, I would encourage them to go for it and explore a variety of options. You only have one life, so you need to chase every dream you have, and there is no better place to do that than college.

I want to give a big thank you to all of my fellow staff members both past and present, Dr. Churcher and all the readers. Without all of the people mentioned above, I would not be the writer I am today – not even close. I will forever be grateful to everyone who has helped me on this journey that is just beginning. ”



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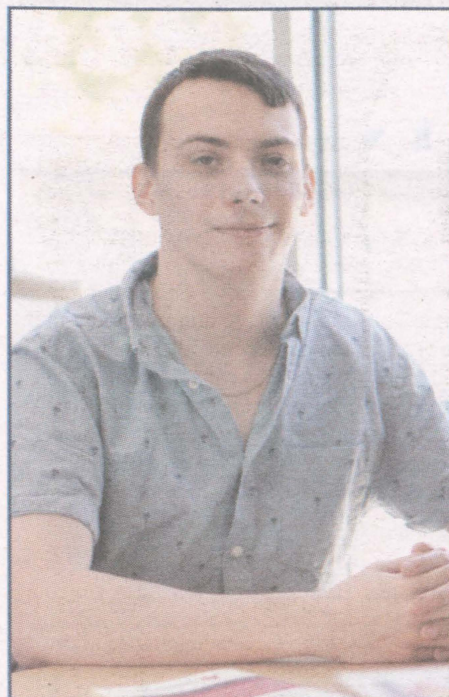
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Clearly, I must have dove into the river at some point, determined to figure out where the current would take me."

Still, I often found myself asking if what

I was writing about mattered at all in the slightest. After all, if nothing changed, wouldn't that mean that it was all for naught?"

But you know, I eventually realized that it wasn't only about the desired end result — it was also about the articles that we wrote along the way. Because the fact is that just saying something, anything, is far better than saying nothing at all."

And if my political science or history majors have taught me anything, it's that these organizations are usually hoping that you take your criticism and grumble quietly about it so that they can do what they want, with as little feedback as possible from those who it affects the most."

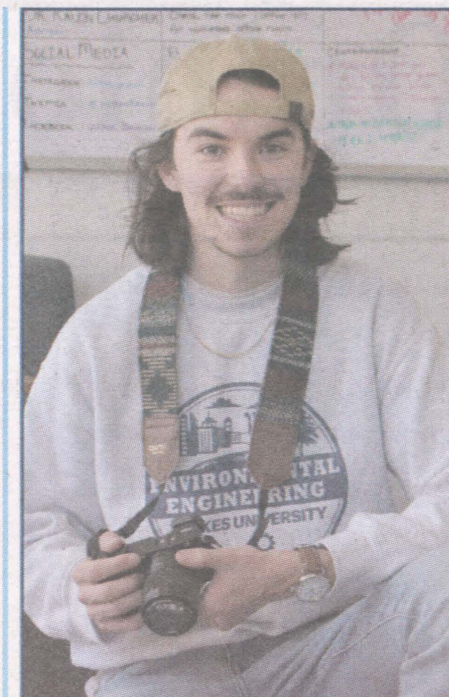
In other words, just shut up and fall in line. Just look at how we ended up with a campus bookstore."

So instead, speak up and speak out. Be like Master Gibbs: "Everyone's thinking it, I'm just saying it."

Overall, in looking back on my year with The Beacon, I can safely say that my lone regret was not coming aboard sooner. Just imagine how many other banana bread-esque articles and editorials I might have concocted with an additional three years on staff!"

Still, I've greatly enjoyed having the chance to write about the issues I care about. I may not know where this river is headed, but I'm optimistic about the journey ahead."

So if there's something amiss with our campus or even the wider world and nobody seems to be caring about it, why not start the discussion and become one of the journalists of tomorrow? After all, what's the worst that could happen? ”



"Throughout my four years at Wilkes,

I have been part of The Beacon as the photographer for the News section. It was always nice to have something other than math and science to expand my knowledge and interests across campus and to balance my life interests. Through my time on the newspaper, I have covered events for pharmacy, the Sordoni Art Gallery, clubs and award ceremonies. I spent most of my time photographing professors for their profiles and helping students understand a bit more about professional life."

I never thought of news photography as my forte, rather I prefer adventure, analog and landscape photography, but working for The Beacon allowed me to try out a bit of environmental portraiture and focus on a story through images. I have definitely benefited from working at The Beacon and gaining comfort in portraiture. I am thankful for being able to capture our events and the people of Wilkes University to be ingrained in history for many years to come. You know the saying, "Take a picture, it'll last longer."

After school, I am moving to Durango, Colo., to work for a small engineering firm. It's nothing to do with photography, but with my improved skills and confidence in environmental portraiture, I feel as though I will be able to see my photos pop with the energy of my new adventure. I will be able to see and enjoy my surroundings with a new perspective and appreciation learned through my time as a photographer. Creating a balance between creativity and rational mindsets proves to be a quick way of adapting to surroundings, new experiences and becoming a well-rounded individual. ”

Opinion

Have an opinion or want to write a guest column? Contact co-opinion editors: Breanna.Ebisch@wilkes.edu and Dylan.Mehl@wilkes.edu

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Adviser - Dr. Kalen Churcher

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Sara Ross
LA&E - Emily Cherkauskas
Opinion - Breanna Ebisch
Dylan Mehl
Sports - Ariel Reed

ASSISTANT EDITORS

News - Genevieve Frederick
LA&E - Jordan Daniel
Opinion - William Billingsley
Sports - Christopher Gowarty

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Sports - Baylee Guedes

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Lead Designer - Mia Walker
Photographer - Steffen Horwath
Social Media Manager - Liz Cherinka

Interested in joining or
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To learn more, contact:
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Our Voice

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

We need better research into gun violence

Eight people were killed in a FedEx warehouse in Indianapolis on April 15. Ten people were killed in a grocery store in Boulder, Colo., on March 22. Eight people, including six women of Asian descent, were killed across three spas in the Atlanta area on March 16.

All three events have one thing in common: gun violence.

These are just three mass shootings that have occurred this year alone, and this list does not include individual incidents of gun violence, such as a police officer firing their gun instead of their Taser.

While these events often usher forth calls for gun control, restrictions and even the banning of firearms, that may be too hasty. There is no denying that the United States has a gun violence problem.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has published reports that indicate there were just under 40,000 deaths that could be attributed to firearms in the U.S. in 2019. While most of those deaths are suicides, the fact that homicides are the second largest contributor should still be a cause for concern.

Moreover, the Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation collects data from every country about the lives lost by every possible cause of death. The U.S. has significantly more violent gun deaths per 100,000 people than other "wealthy countries," like Canada and the United Kingdom.

The U.S. has the 32nd highest rate of deaths from gun violence in the world, which begs the question: If we know the numbers and the comparisons, why has no solution been found after all these years?

The answer may lie in the National Rifle Association, which backed legislation to help prevent public funding for research into gun violence that would be used to enforce or support gun control. This governmental regulation is known as the Dickey Amendment after its author Jay Dickey, and in direct result of it, research groups have found that the CDC's funding for firearm injury prevention has fallen 96 percent since the passing of the Dickey Amendment in 1996.

The NRA primarily, and other gun rights organizations as well, has spent more money in the past eight years than gun control advocates have. This is all in the NRA's favor, as it claims that more guns makes the country safer.

While some may push blame for the Dickey Amendment and the CDC's massive cut to their budget away from the NRA, it should be stated that the Dickey Amendment was in direct response to a case study published in the *New England Journal of Medicine*. The study stated that keeping a gun in the home was strongly and independently associated with an increased risk of homicide. The NRA in direct response campaigned for the CDC's budget

to be cut in relation to such research.

While the U.S. has made some moves to allow and fund research into gun violence, the NRA still stands as a staunch opponent to research into gun violence that would advocate for gun control.

The problem with that stance is not that the NRA is wrong for wanting fair and balanced research. Researchers should go into their studies on gun violence with no preconceived outcomes. If a researcher is looking for research to support gun control, it would be a flawed and problematic study – just as it would be if research was conducted on gun violence looking to draw the opposite conclusion (that gun violence shows no reason to enforce gun control policies).

Arguing with the NRA over unbiased research is not the goal. It is in everyone's interest if research remains unbiased. The NRA's efforts then are flawed because it hurts all research.

What our country needs before enforcing gun control policies is a clear understanding on the impact of guns and gun violence on our country – through data and analysis.

The sooner research is better funded and is looking at gun violence, the less the U.S. will have to see its large number of casualties in relation to firearms increase.



@wilkesbeacon
TheWilkesBeacon@wilkes.edu

Letter to the editor policy: *The Beacon* welcomes letters to the editor from differing viewpoints. Letters must contain contact information, including name, city, state and phone number. Phone numbers will not be published but may be used for verification purposes.

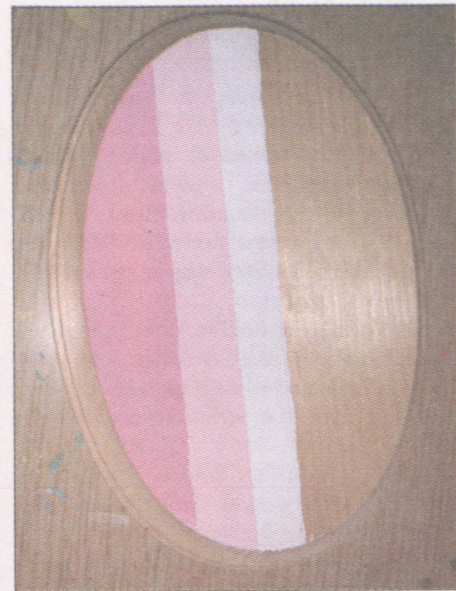
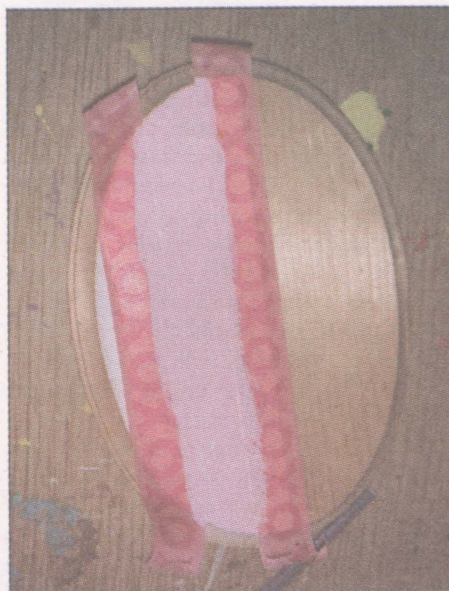
All letters to the editor must be sent using one of the following methods:

Email: TheWilkesBeacon@wilkes.edu

Phone: (570) 408-2962 (Voicemail: 30 seconds or less, please.)

Mail: 84 West South Street, Wilkes-Barre, Pa. 18766 Attn: *The Beacon*

Wooden door welcome home sign



1) First, decide where the first line of paint will start, and mark it with the tape to create a straight line. The first line will be roughly up to the middle of the plaque. Preferably, start with the lightest shade, which will allow the colors to easily stack and correlate.

2) After painting the first layer, take off the tape before it dries to avoid chipping. Continue to mark tape in the areas where you are painting. If there are any imperfections, take a small brush and paint along the edges to smooth everything out.



3) Once you are finished painting the plaque, let the paint dry. After those steps are completed, prepare your welcome sign. Carefully, hot glue the sign onto the plaque, and let dry. If you like the simple look of the plaque, you can leave it completed as is.

4) If you would like to further decorate the plaque, there are multiple options for you, such as adding a ribbon. This example uses small fake flowers, which matches the color scheme. The personalization will help make your home extra welcoming.

Photos: The Beacon/Liz Cherinka

ur Instagram account @wilkesbeacon with your craft.
craftColumn

The never-ending debate of online versus in-person classes

By Rudy Urenovich
Staff Writer

Well, fellow Wilkes students and faculty, this extremely long and strange year is finally coming to a close. It is bewildering; this has been both the longest and shortest school year I have ever experienced.

Mentally, I am still in March 2020, yet my physical being keeps pushing on day after day as 2021 marches on.

I must confess, one of the biggest challenges that I faced during this academic year was balancing online and in-person classes.

I vividly remember last spring when we went totally virtual, while others shed tears leaving campus and saying goodbye to friends, I was quite content as an introvert with my laptop being my lifeline to Wilkes.

The thought of fully online classes really did not phase me at all, and for the most part, I feel like I learned and performed just as well as I did in any normal semester.

I rather enjoyed making my own schedule, learning and completing assignments at my own pace.

I really felt like I was "adulting." It taught me how to prioritize my tasks and how to be totally self-reliant.

I do think that I carried that morale with me into the hybrid school term we had this spring, but the cons of online classes finally emerged.

I must admit I faltered when it came to balancing my online classes with my in-person classes, as well as jobs and extracurricular activities.

I feel like I often brushed my online classes aside, simply because they were the easiest to ignore.

If I was not on the computer, they might as well have not even existed. I found myself missing due dates and turning assignments in late more frequently than I have ever done before. I felt like I was playing a cruel game of hide-and-seek with my online assignments, with the Wilkes Live site as the chaperone.

In addition to all of this, I am a commuter, which made having to juggle virtual and face-to-face classes considerably more difficult.

I would have a virtual class followed by an in-person class, followed by another online class.

This made commuting especially taxing, as I do not have a room on campus where I could attend my virtual courses, and I would have to arrive and depart campus at

really inconvenient times.

That being said, I do realize everyone is trying to navigate this new way of learning and college life, and we all have struggles.

Boy, I sort of hate myself for including that line — God knows we have heard enough variations of it over the past year. But I digress, this time has brought forth individual and shared problems for all of us.

So, even though I may sound like I am on "Team Online Classes," after this year, I truly think the benefits of in-person classes are undeniable and cannot be replaced.

Simply put, physically being in a classroom as well as interacting with professors and fellow students just makes my attention span that much greater.

And as a result, I correspondingly absorb more knowledge.

When attending class via Zoom, it is so easy to be on my phone or to literally turn my camera off and do something else in another room.

Needless to say, when physically in class, although we can still get sidetracked, it is not as extreme and easy as it is to do behind a computer screen.

I also find myself less likely to ask questions when online.

I think it is undeniably easier to have a

conversation, resolve an issue or understand a lesson in-person than via a conference call.

I also think I am more likely to complete my work in a timely manner because it is easier to experience a professor's irritation or disappointment in-person than on the computer.

I think really the only downside to in-person classes this year was dragging myself to them.

This pandemic has taken a toll on all of us, and I for one definitely had days where as soon as I woke up I wanted to cry knowing I had classes to get to.

Well, fellow readers, those are my thoughtful opinions on in-person classes compared to virtual classes. I know that by no means do they explicitly favor one option over the other, but is anything ever that easy?

Although hopefully things can return to normal at some point, the upcoming fall semester still holds a lot of uncertainty due to the pandemic.

But as college students have always done, we will persevere.

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Change of weekend library hours is purely inconvenient

By Breanna Ebisch
Co-Opinion Editor

As if places to study on campus were not already limited, especially now due to COVID-19, the library changed its Sunday hours from 11 a.m. to midnight to 3 to 11 p.m., as of last week.

While the weekend hours were already shorter than the weekdays, this change is quite frustrating for several reasons.

Many students, myself included, utilize the library to study, meet in groups for class projects or to complete assignments in a different setting other than their room. The building gives every student on campus the opportunity to use its resources and help enhance their academic career by giving them a space to complete their schoolwork.

With the loss of workspaces in Starbucks, the soon-to-be nonexistent Student Lounge in the Student Union Building and several other study spaces on campus due to COVID-19 restrictions and precautions, the library has become the hub for the campus community and allows students to continue on almost as normal in what still

is not a "usual" semester.

And now, as the semester reaches its busiest point leading up to final exams, the library decides that reducing its already short weekend hours was a good choice.

But, I can assure you that it is not.

Prior to this recent change, the library was open on both Saturday and Sunday, from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m., which was already at a later hour than desired by many.

Although the basement floor is open and accessible 24/7, it is not the ideal location for studying or working on assignments for a majority of the student body.

Sure, it is convenient, but it is certainly not where you want to camp-out for hours.

So, what is the benefit of changing the hours and making the library open later in the day and during less acceptable times for students who want to get an early start on their coursework?

Why does the decision come during the busiest weeks for the campus community? How does this change help students overall?

Isn't the library meant to be both accessible and the most valuable resource

for students? Don't our academic endeavors matter?

Apparently not, and this is becoming a more frequent occurrence.

First, it was the choice to relocate the bookstore to the SUB lounge. Then, it was a flurry of layoffs that affected a variety of departments. And now, it is keeping one of the most important buildings on campus closed for longer on Sundays.

Especially during the pandemic, which has changed study spaces in several ways, the need for the library has never been greater.

And for some reason, that means limiting the time students can access most of the building is logical. So, whose interests do we have at heart here?

Now, I understand not everyone utilizes the library or prefers studying in a public setting, which is more than fine.

But, for those of us who do, especially on the weekends, this decision does much more harm than good.

If you are an early riser or simply someone who wakes up before noon, the library is not open to give you the adequate

time to make use of your day.

You will have to wait until three in the afternoon to use the three main floors, which, frankly, is ridiculous considering our main focus as students is studying and completing assignments.

Other, larger universities have 24/7 libraries (what a dream that would be to have here), but we can hardly manage to keep our own precious building open for our small population as it is.

Enough things have been changed due to COVID-19, and with how useful the library has been to students as a whole throughout the last two semesters, I do not see how this choice is supposed to be beneficial.

So, if you are planning on getting work done on campus over the weekends in the short time left before the end of the semester, make sure you plan accordingly with the inconvenient and unhelpful hours.

Nothing says, "Happy finals season" more than having nowhere to study when it is needed most.

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Talking about the elephant on campus: The Writing Center

By William Billingsley
Asst. Opinion Editor

For all intents and purposes, the Writing Center is a place where students can take their papers to be reviewed by paid consultants. Ideally, consultants provide students with constructive feedback that is both meaningful and helpful.

But time and time again, students criticize the Writing Center's lack of such feedback. And when you have worked there for the last four years, such criticism is disheartening to hear, especially when it appears that nothing has changed and the issue has continued to stay under the radar.

So as a graduating consultant, let's discuss these grievances, why the system misses the mark and why a paradigm shift is worth discussing.

As mentioned, I worked as a writing consultant during my time at Wilkes. Unfortunately, more pressing academic concerns forced me to step away from my responsibilities in March. As such, it is worth mentioning that this article is intended to be an objective critique about the institution itself. There is no vendetta here beyond wanting a Writing Center that is consistent and meaningful for all students.

With that being said, let's get into the number one criticism for the Writing Center: The simple fact that consultants do not always give meaningful feedback.

"I did not use the Writing Center until my senior year when my professor mandated that we send in a draft," said senior Sydney Cogswell, a political science and criminology major. "I received minimal feedback in response to my capstone, and all that the consultant could suggest was adding a few commas — without even giving specifics as to where."

Unsurprisingly, nobody wants to send their papers in and be told that out of their 12-page literature review, the only error the consultant could find was something as mundane as a few comma placements. That's not meaningful feedback in any sense of the word. Moreover, it is a waste of time for all parties involved. Was that draft truly so flawless that this feedback was the best that they could do?

"Fortunately, my interaction with the Writing Center over the past four years has been limited to the few occasions in which my professors required our work be reviewed by them. The first time this happened, I received almost no feedback. But my second (and last) interaction was more infuriating. I submitted a small chunk of my capstone to be reviewed

before the deadline, and I just never heard back from them," said a senior political science student who asked to remain anonymous.

Unfortunately, the experiences of these students are all too common. I observed as much firsthand two years ago, when I asked a consultant who I did not personally know to review a history paper. She marked a single comma on one page and told me that otherwise "it was basically perfect." While flattering, I was ultimately left to contend with the realization of just how pointless that consultation really was. I can only imagine how many other students have had similarly disappointing experiences and never bothered returning. Why would they waste their time?

So, let's talk about the differences between meaningful and meaningless feedback and how it relates to the efficacy of a consultant. At its core, the most basic analysis of a paper is proofreading, where you spot check the

paper so they can go back to chatting with their friends and collecting that \$10 an hour.

To illustrate this point better, let's look at the analogy of a sinking ship and its captain. A proofreader will see that the ship (your paper) is sinking, but they will not bother to tell you that its sinking, and will instead tell you about some other detail that the captain (you) should fix. But not the copyeditor, who will tell you that your ship is sinking, how you can save it and how you can prevent it from happening next time. So when the captain returns in the future, whose opinion do you suppose that the captain will trust more?

Unsurprisingly, how helpful your time at the Writing Center turns out to be is wholly dependent on the style of the consultant, which is precisely the problem.

And at the end of the day, that's what this is really about. If I go out of my way to have a paper reviewed, I don't want empty platitudes

"Since English is not my first language, the Writing Center has been a wonderful help for me," said Pérez. "They review my papers and sometimes help me improve, but it is a service you cannot rely on. I'd send my papers at least five days in advance, but sometimes the due date arrives and nobody has reviewed my paper, and because of that, I stopped sending in my papers this semester."

But as it currently exists, our Writing Center can be an abject disappointment. It simply does not meet needs as a resource for meaningful feedback. How could it, when not all consultants bother to critically evaluate papers, assuming they take the time to read them at all?

"My experience is rather limited, considering they never got my assignment back to me," said senior political science student Adam Sipler.

So what should be done about all this? Obviously, the first step is to acknowledge the problem. And what better way to do that than a campus-wide survey soliciting feedback? This would be an excellent way to gauge the student body's true impressions. The next logical step would be to end the blatant culture of nepotism in hiring friends of already-hired consultants and ensure that consultants are actually competent at what they do. The final step would be to properly transition into training consultants and expanding the role of consultants to actually edit student papers in a meaningful way. And of course, ensuring that hired consultants remain competent would not hurt either.

None of these stand out to me as being particularly outlandish suggestions. After all, shouldn't our Writing Center be as meritocratic as possible? But failing that, it would always be interesting to see the fine folks involved with actually tutoring students at University College formally take over and reorganize the Writing Center into something worthy of its name.

Because at what point does something get done? How many more papers have to go unread? How many other professors have to be let down when they see the low-effort feedback that consultants give? How many other papers have to get a days-late response saying that they only need to add a few commas?

COVID-19 might have finally exposed the flaws evident in the Writing Center's highly variable work, but that doesn't mean that they weren't always there.



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Hi, sorry for the delay!

This is a great paper! I would recommend putting it in Word or Google Docs because I see a couple of comma errors in some sentences, but that's all! Great job!

...

Email Screenshot submitted by Sydney Cogswell

simple stuff, like grammar or typos. This is also the style that involves the least amount of effort and is the easiest to hire people for, as just about anyone can do this. This is also the editing style that lends itself to meaningless feedback. Of course, it is not all literally meaningless, but if someone's taking time out of their day to have a paper reviewed, they want a substantive criticism instead of being told that they only need a few commas.

In opposition to this is the other style: copyediting. Compared to proofreading, the differences are night and day. In this style, papers are critically analyzed — sentence by sentence — and nothing is sacred. The copyeditor will systematically review your paper, the arguments you make and look for consistency in what your paper is all about. This style may take longer, but you can walk away with a paper that has been meaningfully evaluated. But the proofreader will have you in and out in five minutes with a mediocre

and hollow feedback about irrelevant things in my paper — I want you to tear into my paper's very essence. If I am cherry-picking statistics or making any other kind of logical fallacy in my arguments, call me out on it.

Even if you wholeheartedly disagree with the premise of my paper, I still want you to constructively criticize it. And for the love of all that is figurative, let me know if you suspect that I was improperly quoting someone else's work.

These are just some of the things that I have personally seen out of the hundreds of papers I have personally reviewed as a (copyediting) consultant. No two papers are alike, and every student's paper deserves to be critically evaluated in a meaningful way that goes far beyond comma placement.

And depending on who you ask, there are still some students who have found the Writing Center to be helpful, like digital design and media art senior Ana Pérez.

die's sweet potato burrito snack



The Beacon/Anna Culver

This sweet potato burrito recipe is a delicious guilty pleasure for any night to have something a little out of the ordinary.



Each week, the Wilkes Beacon staff adds a song to their 2020-2021 Beacon Bumps playlist under Chris Gowarty's account on Spotify. Look below for this week's list of songs.



- Dylan Mehl, Co-Opinion Editor: [Rapstar - Polo G](#)
- William Billingsley, Asst. Opinion Editor: [Sleepwalking - The Chain Gang of 1974](#)
- Ariel Reed, Sports Editor: [My Only Mistake - Elliana](#)
- Chris Gowarty, Asst. Sports Editor: [King of the Fall - The Weeknd](#)
- Baylee Guedes, Sports Staff Writer: [White Tee - Lil Peep](#)
- Mia Walker, Lead Designer: [FWMM- Tiara Thomas](#)
- Steffen Horwath, Staff Photographer: [White Room - Cream](#)
- Liz Cherinka, Social Media Manager: [Golden - Harry Styles](#)

Cena's "Be A Work In Progress": A surprisingly good read

By Shawn Austin
Staff Writer

Former WWE superstar and No. 1 New York Times bestselling author John Cena offers motivation and open-mindedness in his latest book, "Be a Work in Progress."

For the past 15 years, the public has known Cena as a professional wrestler, rapper, moviestar, philanthropist and social media sensation. Although his most famous phrase ("You can't see me.") insists that he is invisible to the eyes of others, Cena's most recent project renders him more transparent than ever.

"Be a Work in Progress" was released alongside Cena's book of encouragements, "Do Your Best Every Day to Do Your Best Every Day." While "Do Your Best Every Day to Do Your Best Every Day" is better suited for children, "Be a Work in Progress" is a sufficient read for audience members of all ages.

Ballantine Books published "Be a Work in Progress," while Valeria Petrone provided illustrations. Aside from the efforts Cena put into "Be A Work In Progress," he also stars in "Fast & Furious 9," which debuts in the United States on June 25, 2021.

As the world fought, and continues to fight, the ails of COVID-19, lockdowns and quarantines, "Be a Work in Progress" serves to offer many people a moment of solitude and reflection.

Prior to the pandemic, the display of hustle and restlessness seemed ever-important to contemporary society. By March 2020, that ideology was put to a halt, as COVID-19 forced businesses and institutions to close and/or operate remotely.

The circumstance, although tragic and unfortunate on numerous levels, gave people around the world the opportunity to refuel and refocus their lives.

One of those people happened to be Cena. He opens "Be a Work in Progress" with a brief explanation as to why he wrote the book: "I generate these thoughts from self-reflection and self-exploration ... We all have a lot on our minds, especially now, given the state of the world."

The book is 169 pages of motivational quotes and illustrations. The material provides readers with insight into the life of the author and potentially themselves.

It is imperative to note that the book was not what I expected it to be, but I am impressed by what it was.

Instead of a typical autobiography to highlight the highs and lows of a career and personal life, "Be a Work in Progress" is an

inspirational read that offers insightful advice that stems from Cena's life experiences.

When I first noticed the brevity of the text on the pages, I was initially disappointed. However, as I began to read the content, I was quickly intrigued by the manner in which Cena chose to reflect on his life.

Although the current state of media demands transparency to the highest degree from celebrities, Cena precisely chose to present his experiences in a more subtle, yet substantial manner.

This is important to highlight, as the former WWE superstar has shared prominent moments of his life with the public in the past.

For the past decade or so, Cena's personal life has played out before audiences in an uncanny way.

Outside of the WWE, the Make-a-Wish Foundation and a few "B" movies, Cena had kept a relatively low profile to the world for the majority of his career. This began to change in 2012, when he

started to date Nicole Garcia, also known as "Nikki Bella" in the WWE.

As time progressed in the relationship, his personal life began to be exposed to mainstream media due to the nature in which Garcia presented herself to the world.

Garcia and her sister Brie were the main stars of the reality television show, "Total Divas," as well as currently being the main stars of their spin-off show, "Total Bellas."

With this being the case, Garcia and Cena's relationship played out on television. One of the biggest issues in their relationship was Cena's reluctance to have children, despite Garcia's desire to start a family.

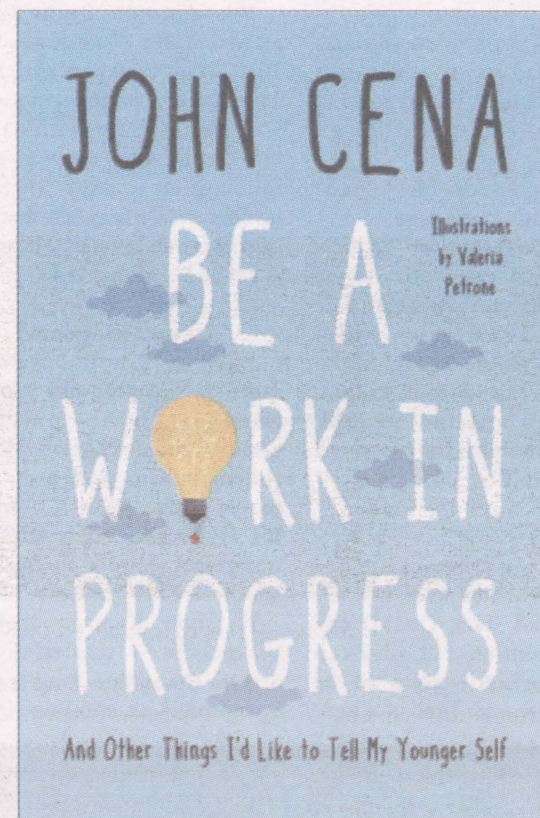
Five years into their relationship, Cena proposed to Garcia at WrestleMania 33. Less

than a year later, the engagement was called-off, as the two decided to split.

Since then, Cena has found a new role in life. He is no longer the workhorse of the WWE, but he is now a workhorse of personal development.

He has been open to the public about his failed relationship with Garcia and the significant role that his fast-paced lifestyle played into that.

Cena is currently married to Shay Shariatzadeh, as they tied the knot in a private manner in October 2020.



Despite the haphazardness of Cena's personal life, he still chose to write a self-help book full of inspirational quotes as opposed to an autobiography — and the results are tremendous.

Some of the richest parts of the book include the following seven excerpts:

1. "Crisis can breed opportunity, but remember to do the research to make sure the opportunity lines up with your values."
2. "Be bold and accountable, because our choices define who we are."
3. "If you are rooting against someone, ask why."
4. "Sometimes it is because there are genuinely bad people out there; many times, it is us judging because we are insecure with ourselves."
5. "If you feel as if you have things mastered, look to the level above you, and then widen your frame to see an even bigger picture."
6. "Know the difference between those who care about you and those who care about what you can do for them."
7. "Each day, try to become a little less perfect and a little more brave."

Cena suggests that our most treacherous moments provide us with the opportunity to authentically express who we are.

It is important to understand why we feel a certain way about particular people. Is it because of their actions and beliefs or is it because of ours?

Although we may feel as though we have reached our greatest achievements and have nothing left to prove, an alternative perspective can reveal to us goals that we may have never otherwise considered.

More importantly, Cena also alludes to the notion that everybody who helps you does not always have your best interests in mind. We must be able to recognize when we are being cared for — or used.

And yes, it is great to reach for the stars, but it is much braver to reach for the moon. The pursuit of perfection is only a distraction to the challenges that makes us unique.

Perhaps when the dust settles in Cena's career and he finally decides to relax and smell the roses, he will write an autobiography. But for now, he seems insistent on reclaiming his privacy and offering life advice instead.

For what the book is worth (\$24), "Be a Work in Progress" is a text that can be read time and time again. Since there is no plot, readers can choose positivity at any moment every time they flip to a random page.

I found this aspect of the book to be especially unique, as many books and/or news articles that are in circulation today overwhelmingly include moments of tragedy and heartache, instead of the positive and wholesome.

As a person who is relatively new to leisurely reading, I find Cena's latest work to be the breath of fresh air I did not know I needed.

I recommend this book to any person who finds themselves in a rut or in need of a moment of inspiration and change. As suggested in the title, Cena challenges readers (and himself) to always be a work in progress.

Life is full of moments that can make or break us, and it is essential that we perceive all of these events as being beneficial to our individual being and of those around us.


Where does Cena go from here as a writer? Only he knows, but I cannot wait to find out.

After a phenomenal career in the WWE, it feels as if Cena is just getting started in the "real" world.

If he continues to write books, I am certain that publishers would pay top-dollar for his autobiography.

If he chooses not to do so, then even that particular decision keeps him aligned with the idea that onlookers, in fact, cannot see him.

Book Rating: 9/10

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Top five television shows to watch with upcoming seasons

By **Matthew Matrisciano**
Staff Writer

Whether it is because of quarantine, bad weather or just because you are a homebody, being stuck in the house can be mind-blowingly boring.

Luckily, some technological revolution era couch potatoes decided to create television. If you are like me and can somehow manage to burn through an entire series in a week, you may feel like you have run out of shows to watch.

While that is almost impossible, it is good to have a few back-up plans for when your series of choice finally comes to an end.

It is even better knowing that the next show on your personal watch list has a new season on the horizon.

So, without further ado, here is my list of top five shows with upcoming seasons, right in time for finals and post-semester.

5. "Hunters"

This dark drama series follows teenager Jonah Heidelbaum (Logan Lerman) in 1970s New York as he grieves the death of his grandmother who was murdered in their home.

He soon learns that his seemingly sweet and innocent grandmother was actually part of a secretive vigilante group who tasked themselves with hunting down former Nazis who fled from Germany to pose as Americans.

Who said grandmas can't be cool?

In order to avenge her death, he elects to join the group, led by Holocaust survivor and millionaire Meyer Offerman (Al Pacino).

The group soon discovers that these fascists in disguise are planning the rise of a Fourth Reich, and Jonah and his new friends may be the only ones who can stop it.

I like this show, but it may be considered a bit over-the-line for some viewers. As fantastic as "Hunters" is, be warned. It is dark as night.

Little is known about season two of "Hunters," except for the fact that it is happening. Rumor has it that we can expect to see the next season this coming fall, but that is yet to be confirmed. For now, all we can do is wait.

You can catch up on "Hunters" on Amazon Prime.

4. "Peaky Blinders"

This historical British crime series has gained a huge amount of popularity in the

past few years. The show follows Tommy Shelby (Cillian Murphy), leader of the relentless street gang, the Peaky Blinders, as they gain control of post-World War I Birmingham.

Loosely based on a true story, the Peaky Blinders clash with rival gangs in the form of vicious bloodbaths and political chess moves. The blood on the streets leads to the arrival of Chief Inspector Campbell (Sam Neill), a veteran lawman hell-bent on taking down Tommy and destroying his criminal empire.

All is fair in love and war, and this is definitely war.

This is a great show for anyone who has a soft spot for the bad guy. Tommy is a cold-as-ice gangster with a heartbreaking past and a stare that could cut through concrete.

Nonetheless, he is impossible to root against in this fantastic crime saga.

Anyone who is fascinated by history, drama and action will enjoy this show. "Peaky Blinders" is currently in the middle of filming its sixth and final season, which will be followed by a movie to cap off the series, according to creator Steven Knight.

It is estimated to air sometime in 2022, but that just gives you more time to catch up on the series on Netflix.

3. "The Boys"

In a world where superheroes are the norm and seen as celebrities, average Joe's like Hughie Campbell (Jack Quaid) can only sit back and admire. But who can save the day when the heroes are what the world needs saving from? That is where

The Boys come in.

The Boys are a secretive vigilante outfit, led by the hysterically psychotic Billy Butcher (Karl Urban), who have gone under the radar in order to stop the evil that is happening under the guise of justice. After realizing the trickery of the so-called heroes, the squeamish and timid Hughie decides it is time to do what's right and join The Boys in their rebellion.

I recommend this show to fans of dark comedy and over-the-top action. Be warned, if blood and gore are something you can't handle, steer clear of "The Boys."

This Amazon Prime original became an instant hit when it was first released in 2019. With a 90 percent rating on Rotten Tomatoes, it is no surprise that the show was renewed for a third season before the second one even aired last August. Filming for season three is currently underway, with an estimated launch time of sometime later this year; however, that is yet to be confirmed.

2. "Animal Kingdom"

After a heroin overdose kills his mother, 16-year-old Josh "J" Cody (Finn Cole) moves in with his estranged family, consisting of his grandmother (Ellen Barkin) and four uncles. Having barely gotten by in a cramped apartment his entire life, he is stunned to see his unfamiliar family living lavishly in the southern California city of Oceanside.

He soon discovers their main source of income – masterfully planned out armed robberies. Ring-leader Baz (Scott Speedman), ex-con Pope (Shawn Hatosy),

adrenaline junkie Craig (Ben Robson) and secretive Deran (Jake Weary) begin to suck their nephew into the fast-paced lifestyle of a criminal, where he quickly learns the true meaning of "family over everything."

I cannot recommend this show enough. It is truly fantastic. What makes this show stand out to me is the character development throughout the series.

Each character has their own intriguing story. No show has made me feel every human emotion in the span of an hour quite like "Animal Kingdom."

Luckily, season five is just around the corner, and the production of the sixth and final season has already begun.

You can expect season five to begin at some point this summer on TNT, according to The Hollywood Reporter. You can catch up by streaming the first four seasons on Amazon Prime.

1. "Ozark"

If you were planning on getting involved with a drug cartel, "Ozark" will show you why it is probably not a good idea. After financial advisor Marty Byrde's (Jason Bateman) business partner is killed for stealing from a drug lord, Marty has one chance to make things right with the cartel before he and his family meet the same demise.

Forced to move to the Lake of the Ozarks to launder drug money, the Byrdes must overcome their own family drama and work together in order to survive.

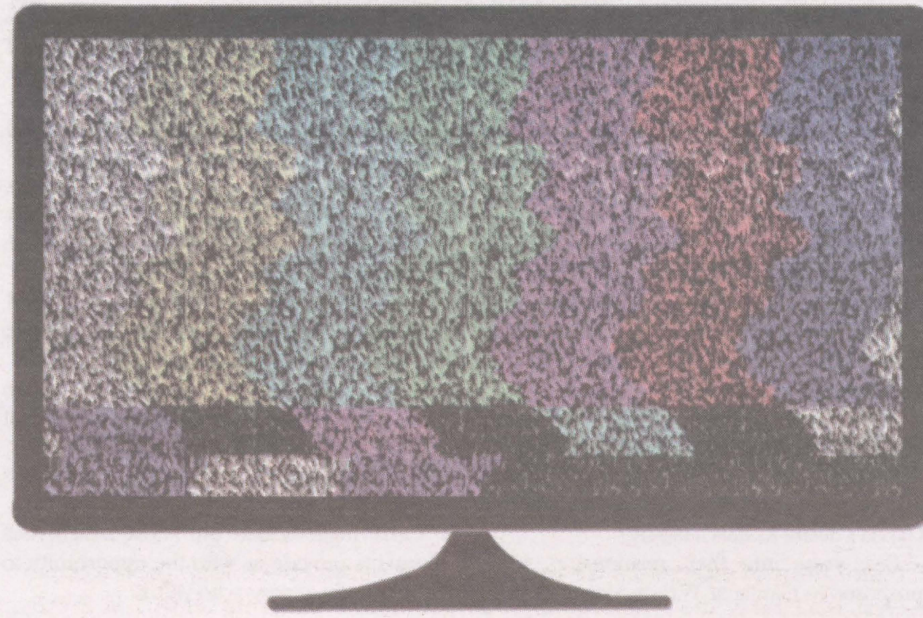
Having to deal with insane locals and a ruthless FBI agent willing to do whatever it takes to bring down the cartel doesn't make it easy either. It is a race against time for the Byrdes, and time is hot on their tail.

This bone-chilling thrill-ride will leave you in an adrenaline-fueled panic just by watching it. The suspense will have you holding your breath in anticipation.

The usually funny Bateman is fantastic in this series, and his acting will make you feel like your life is on the line as well.

The first three seasons of "Ozark" are streaming on Netflix. There is not a current release date set, but filming for the two-part fourth and final season began in November 2020.

Bateman claims that the climax of this hit series will send the Byrde family "out with a bang."



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Graphic by Zoey Rosensweet

es of Wilkes history



Suzanna Calev, an archivist and public service librarian, stores materials between acid-free tissue paper to preserve them.



at Wilkes 1940 to 1960" scrapbook contains old Wilkes sports photos.



Fort Wyoming, Wilkes-Barre, 1771-'74.
Fort Wyoming is pictured during the American Revolutionary War, battle of Wyoming or the Wyoming Massacre took place in 1778.

Sports

Want your sport covered? Deseve to be Athlete of the Week? Contact sports editor: Ariel.Reed@wilkes.edu

Ermeus will pursue MBA, return to athletics with extra eligibility

By Chris Gowarty & Kirsten Peters
Asst. Sports Editor & Editor-in-Chief

Although COVID-19 has negatively impacted athletics for universities across the country, the NCAA provided athletes from all sports with some hope for the future by granting them an extra year of eligibility to compete.

In October 2020, the NCAA extended its year of eligibility decision to 2020-2021 fall and winter sport athletes. This decision came seven months after the NCAA announced that spring sport athletes would receive an additional year of eligibility, as spring sports were the first to be shut down due to the pandemic.

This decision allowed fall sport athlete Richard Ermeus the opportunity to compete for one more season, while he pursues his master's degree at the start of the Fall 2021 semester after graduating this month with a bachelor's degree in marketing.

"This extra year of eligibility is refilling and hopeful because it was hard to just accept not being able to play again," said Ermeus, a senior wide receiver for Wilkes football. "I hope to grow as a student-athlete in my last year of competition."

Ermeus is from Sparta, N.J., and has been playing football for seven years, four of which have been with the Colonels.

Now and prior to the pandemic, Ermeus has stood out as a familiar face on the Colonel roster and around campus.

"(Ermeus) is an extremely driven and personable young man," said head football coach Jonathan Drach. "He is intelligent and purpose-driven to be a success in all that he does. He can multi-task and lead those around him in a variety of situations."

"(Ermeus) has helped his teammates as a mentor and a big brother figure. He works hard to set a positive example on-and-off the field. His teammates see his level of dedication and discipline to everything that he does. It's hard not to push yourself to be better when you see all that (Ermeus) does on a daily basis."

When the pandemic started to affect life for citizens of Wilkes-Barre, Ermeus realized that it was challenging to transition into the new normal. He stated that his own

characteristics, as Drach also highlighted of the student-athlete, helped him progress into the society that has risen from COVID-19 guidelines and restrictions.

"It was very difficult," said Ermeus. "The sudden change of what everyone refers to as 'normal' was a big aspect to how every day life was altered in the blink of an eye. Adaptability and time management are two of my strongest attributes as a person, so being able to transition to a majority of events and classes online wasn't too difficult but was still a challenge."

Although Ermeus cited adaptability and time management as two of his strengths, the pandemic did put a strain on his athletic career.

"Not playing for a year was hard," said Ermeus. "It was hard to stay in shape for the year off, and toward the end, I fell out of shape due to the lack of motivation and reward. Being a collegiate athlete is a very prideful title, and I feel as though being able to compete and perform weekly is a reward. So without it, the aspirations and

determination slowly dwindled to an all-time low for me."

Despite the "low" Ermeus was at in his collegiate career, sophomore teammate Joe Curry had high praise for the senior, demonstrating that Ermeus' passion and drive for success is not only seen by coaches and professors but by his peers as well.

"(Ermeus) is the type of guy to give his all on-and-off the field," said Curry, a Colonel fullback. "He includes his awesome work ethic in everything that I was involved in doing with him."

Of his time as an undergraduate student, Ermeus noted that his favorite memory on the field took place during the Fall 2019 season, which was Wilkes' last source of competitive play until last month when the Colonels faced Utica in their only spring exhibition game on April 18.

"My favorite memory is scoring my first touchdown of my career at the 2019 Homecoming game for 52 yards," said Ermeus.

Wilkes would go on to beat Alvernia



The Beacon/Kirsten Peters

Richard Ermeus snagged a 52-yard pass from quarterback Jose Tabora to put Wilkes up 10-0 in the Homecoming contest against Alvernia on Oct. 5, 2019.



Photo submitted by Richard Ermeus

in that 2019 Homecoming game, 45-12, advancing Wilkes to 4-0 at that point in the season. The Colonels would finish with an 8-3 overall record in their last season since the COVID-19 pandemic.

With plans to compete again in Fall 2021, Ermeus will also be furthering his education by pursuing a master's degree and will look to reach the goals he has set for himself in terms of a career.

"I plan to work as a marketing director at the corporate level," said Ermeus. "Right now, I am in the process of earning my MBA and have a GA (graduate assistant) position in the marketing department here at Wilkes University with the director of digital marketing. This will most likely set me up to have a similar position post-graduate school completion."

Although the pandemic may have taken away Ermeus' senior season, the standout student-athlete has found the silver lining with his plans to use the extra year of eligibility next fall while simultaneously advancing his academic career as well.



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WLAX: Colonels reach playoffs for first time since 2016

By Ariel Reed
Sports Editor

HOBOKEN, N.J. — In the MAC Freedom quarterfinals, Wilkes traveled to Stevens University, where the Colonels lost 21-3.

Stevens began the game with 11 unanswered goals.

Junior midfielder Domenica Lerch and junior attacker Camryn Devitt opened up the scoring for Wilkes with back-to-back goals at the end of the first. Devitt would later grab one more goal in the second half to give Wilkes three goals on the contest.

Devitt closed the regular season being the face of the Wilkes offense.

"I strived to make our team a cohesive unit and pushed everyone to their full potential, all while making sure we were still having fun in the game we all love," said Devitt. "The stats may say I was the leading scorer, but I couldn't have done it without the support and efforts from my teammates."

Despite the first round playoff exit, this is the second time in program history that the Colonels have had a postseason game, as the first came in 2016.

"I can't even begin to explain how exciting it was to make it to the playoffs," said senior defender Delaney Lukowski. "Throughout my time on the team, we were consistently ranked last, but I must say we play in an incredibly talented conference. Some of the teams we



Senior Delaney Lukowski cradled the ball across midfield while looking for an open teammate against Delaware Valley on April 7.

play are nationally ranked. We have also been rebuilding the team since 2016, and that takes a lot of time and dedication."

Not only did the Colonels make their second playoff appearance, but they also were able to grab two conference wins for the first time since 2016.

"We did make it to the playoffs in 2016,

but then there was a period over the past few years where we couldn't even win a conference game," said head coach Sarah Burkhardt. "A ton of really talented girls graduated in 2016, so the past few years have been rebuilding years. I took over as head coach in 2019, so this season was my first two conference wins. I've been working so hard to bring in recruits, and the

team has been putting in the work, so it's really exciting to see it paying off."

The Colonels graduate seniors Lukowski and attacker Ashley Burkhardt. Both played a fundamental role in rebuilding the team and creating a winning culture.

"Delaney Lukowski is a 5th-year student who decided to pick up an additional minor this season to be able to stay and play lacrosse," said Burkhardt. "As the oldest in the program, she's seen it all and will be the first one to tell you about how much potential this current team has. Ashley Burkhardt is a true senior who is also leaving us, and both will be big losses both on the field and to the family dynamic."

"Both of these ladies are very passionate about Wilkes Lacrosse, and I'm thankful to have been with them since they were just freshmen and sophomores. They've contributed so much over the years."

Building off of what Lukowski and Burkhardt have done, the Colonels look to return to the playoffs in the 2022 season.

"I'm thankful my teammates saw me as a leader, and I was able to carry that feeling into the field to help my teammates," said Burkhardt. "Overall, I feel that all members of the team have turned this program around, and I can't wait to see what the future holds for this team."

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Fisher earns Rookie of the Year honors as first-year forward

By Jason Eberhart
Staff Writer

Editor's Note: Jason Eberhart and Trent Fisher are teammates on the men's basketball team.

First-year forward Trent Fisher made an immediate impact for the men's basketball team this past season. Fisher was named the MAC Freedom Rookie of the Year, while also earning a spot on the conference's Honorable Mention Team.

"It was a great honor to be named Rookie of the Year," said Fisher. "Just knowing that what I worked for and what I did paid off – just being named that was a special thing."

The power forward was a stat sheet stuffer for the Colonels, as he averaged 13.4 points, 7.7 rebounds and 2.9 assists per game. He also shot 53 percent from the field and 84 percent from the foul line, ranking in the top six in the conference across these statistics.

Fisher also had back-to-back games of scoring near double-doubles, recording 23 points and nine rebounds on March 5 against Delaware Valley and sealing a double-double

on March 8 against Alvernia with 21 points and 10 rebounds.

"Some of my biggest strengths are probably spacing the floor, creating space for everyone else, knowing that I can drive to the basket when I have to, posting-up, shooting the three when I need to and being an elite passer to set up my teammates," said Fisher.

The Colonels started their season slowly by dropping to 0-3, but as Fisher started to emerge and made his presence known on the court, the Colonels began to tally some wins and finished the season by winning four of their last six games.

"(Fisher) has a lot of talent, and once he got comfortable playing at the college level, his confidence grew a lot," said junior teammate Sean Coller. "Our coaches and players believe in him and think he can be one of the best players in our league."

Wilkes will return a lot of key players to the lineup next season, including MAC Freedom First Team forward Drake Marshall. Working in tandem with Marshall, Fisher will continue to adapt to the collegiate level of basketball.

"Definitely improving my three-point shooting and staying more consistent at the three-point line," said Fisher of his goals for next season. "Also, working on going both left and right and finishing more consistently with both hands."

Fisher headlines a group of underclassmen who made a big impact in their first season. The whole roster gained some key experience in this shortened season and will look to take that into next season.

"(Fisher) is going to be a big part of our team, especially with a year of experience under his belt," said Coller. "Our team returns a lot of experienced, good players, and (Fisher) is for sure one of them. We can be as good as anyone in our league if we all buy-in and hold each other accountable."

Fisher will look to anchor the Colonels in the post next season, as well as help the team make a run for the MAC Freedom Championship in 2022.

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First-year Trent Fisher posts-up against a defender from Arcadia on Feb. 26, where Wilkes won, 69-66, in overtime.

ed for Fall 2021 semester

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multi-million dollar industry."

A specific project includes Klemow, students and other professors actively researching to understand the ways that Japanese knotweed is able to produce a medically active chemical called resveratrol.

These courses regarding diversity and race will also have the potential to help pave the way for the proposed interdisciplinary minor in African American and Africana Studies, a topic that was discussed during February's Open Forum.

For Zarpentine, education is not just making the effort to let students learn new topics. He believes the quality of the education students receive plays a role in raising awareness on these issues.

"We want to raise awareness about the courses that we already are offering that facilitate these important discussions and to help students understand their value," said Zarpentine. "We also want to build on the foundation we have and find new ways to enrich the educational experience of our students by engaging with questions of diversity and inclusion throughout the curriculum."



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wide vaccine requirement

of operations and compliance.
me, vaccines are not required,
I continue to revisit the topic as
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that many businesses, including
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ishment, whether a hospital

or a school, should be able to mandate a vaccine that is not FDA approved. The COVID vaccine is only FDA authorized, an important difference, and should not be required in order to attend school. We do not know the long-term side effects of this vaccine, and until we do for sure, it should not be a consideration to mandate it."

As per the FDA website, FDA "may authorize unapproved medical products or unapproved uses of approved medical products in an emergency to diagnose, treat or prevent serious or life-threatening diseases or conditions ... when certain statutory criteria have been met, including there are no adequate, approved and available alternatives."

Questions as to whether or not the vaccine will be required for next semester have been addressed. No official decision has been made, as this is a decision that will require further consideration from administration.



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Fall teams play exhibition games after losing season to COVID-19

By Baylee Guedes & Kirsten Peters
Sports Staff Writer, Editor-in-Chief

Following the COVID-19 pandemic that created a halt in the athletic world, fall athletic teams were unable to compete in a regular season during Fall 2020. As spring sports have been underway for the Middle Atlantic Conference in a close to traditional fashion this season, the decision was made to allow fall sports to simultaneously play in a condensed exhibition season this spring.

As a result, Wilkes' men's soccer, women's soccer, football, field hockey and women's volleyball teams competed in various exhibition contests during Spring 2021 that did not count toward their respective records.

"Unfortunately, our fall sport teams missed a season of competition and the opportunity to compete in the MAC title games," said Athletic Director Addy Malatesta. "With guidance from the MAC presidents, every MAC school was given the option to conduct fall sport competition. Most fall sport teams played a compressed four-game conference-only schedule, and the football team played one exhibition game. It was very important to our coaches and the athletic department to give all of student-athletes an opportunity to wear their uniforms this semester."

Although the games did not count toward any team's record, Colonels from these five fall sports were enthusiastic about the opportunity to play again and face other teams.

"After waiting over 500 days to play a game, we were so excited to get out on the field and play," said junior field hockey player Lauren Shiplett. "There is no feeling like playing with your teammates and being able to do amazing things together on the field. Everyone was excited to make themselves and the team better."

As long as athletes tested negative and adhered to proper guidelines, they were able to participate in exhibition games.

Prior to their exhibition "season," athletes followed different phases of play that allowed them to slowly build-up their skills and return to practice.

"Each phase added a few more players, but the predominant session was still based around technical skill work," said men's soccer head coach Michael Piranian. "In the last phase, our players were able to compete in small-sided



The Beacon/Kirsten Peters

Men's soccer senior defender Shane Henehan (front) celebrates after scoring a goal during Wilkes' April 23 exhibition contest against DeSales. Teammate Andrew Slusser (back) and other Colonels trail Henehan to celebrate.

sessions. Through all these phases, our players kept masks on."

Additionally, athletes had to adjust to the new regulations that were put in place, which included playing while wearing a mask (for games and practices), as well as having limited practice times and modified practices as teams prior to easing into full-team practices.

"Due to COVID-19, our practice schedule was definitely different," said sophomore volleyball player Allie Murie. "Wearing masks really affected us with being able to communicate on the court and not being able to practice as a whole (team) in the fall."

Murie was not alone in her sentiments, as sophomore Nick Kinzler shared that

outdoor sports also underwent a shift in getting used to playing with masks.

"Wearing a mask while running around was difficult at the start, but as a team, we were able to get used to it together," said Kinzler, a men's soccer player. "On top of this, getting tested a few times a week was something that many people did not look forward to, but I know that being able to adapt and persevere during these tough times made all of us stronger in the end."

Not only did the fall athletic teams face condensed seasons but their preparation time was also limited, as Wilkes faced a new challenge of having spring sports in season while trying to balance the accommodations needed for offering fall sport exhibition games.

"In a regular season, we would have two weeks of preseason," said junior Karyna Vargas, a women's soccer player. "During this season, we had to share the field almost every practice with other teams. Wilkes handled it to the best of their ability. I am very grateful that we even had the opportunity to practice and play because some teams didn't get that chance. Wilkes made sure to prioritize the teams who were in their actual season but still made sure that the fall sports had their opportunity to get some time as well."

Another challenge athletes faced was the lack of postseason competition or a championship opportunity.

"The fact that we were luckily enough to play was enough motivation to keep us going," said Vargas. "It was definitely tough at times to stay motivated because essentially the games we were playing were just scrimmages, but we also wanted to do well for the seniors."

The exhibition games provided a respective Senior Day for multiple fall sports to honor their graduating players.

Athletes may have been thrilled to get some playing time; however, the season did still take a toll on not only the players and coaches but on the athletic department as well. Athletic trainers, equipment and facility managers, field caretakers and every aspect of the department made it possible for student-athletes to compete.

"The trainers and the athletic department made sure that we stayed safe and healthy during these last two semesters," said Shiplett. "Just being able to practice during a pandemic is a blessing, but they made sure that every team could have some type of game-play this semester."

With the go-ahead from the MAC to host fall exhibition contests, Wilkes Athletics made the necessary adjustments to offer some form of normalcy for these five fall teams.

When noting the positive takeaways, Malatesta said, "The three words that come to my mind to define this journey are resiliency, teamwork and togetherness. The athletic staff never lost sight of our primary goal: To follow a comprehensive plan focused on the health and safety of our student-athletes and the campus community."



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The Beacon/Ariel Reed

Getting to know...

Nico Lorenzo

Senior Lacrosse Player

The Beacon: Male Athlete of the Week from April 14 to 28

Why Nico Lorenzo was selected: Lorenzo had back-to-back standout games, averaging a little over five goals per game for the past three games. Lorenzo also recently accomplished the milestone of 100 points and was named MAC Freedom Offensive Player of the Week on April 19.

Name: Nico Lorenzo
Year: Senior
Majors: Electrical & Mechanical Engineering
Hometown: Howell, N.J.
High School: Howell H.S.
Position: Attacker

Favorite building on campus?
 I would have to say the Stark Learning Center because that is where I spend almost all of time on campus.

Driving force for your decision to come to Wilkes?
 The combination of a great engineering program and a lacrosse team's culture that I wanted to be a part of.

What color/flavor of Gatorade is your favorite?
 I would go with the red Gatorade; I have no idea what flavor it is, but the red one is the best.

Post-graduation plans in terms of a career?
 Upon graduation, I am looking to obtain a full-time job while pursuing a Master of Electrical Engineering part-time.

If your life was a movie, who would you want to play you and why?
 Keanu Reeves because of his role in the action-packed "Matrix" and "John Wick" series.

Favorite memory as a Colonel?
 My favorite memory is winning our final regular season game in 2019 to secure the team's first playoff berth since the team was restarted. It was great to be able to share this memory with the seniors, who were the first freshmen to play at Wilkes.

If you could have dinner with a famous person from the past, who would it be?
 Isaac Newton, so that I could try to comprehend how he was able to complete all his major discoveries across so many different disciplines.

Hopes for this season as a Colonel?
 I hope that we can finish this season out strong and earn our team's first (hopefully of many) playoff victories.

Most influential person in your life?
 I would have to cheat this question and say both of my parents because it is impossible for me to only select one of them. They are great role models for me, and they are always supporting me in everything that I do.

When/Why did you first begin playing?
 I first started playing in fifth grade, and I initially tried out the sport because I enjoyed playing catch with my cousins.

A quote you live your life by?
 "Be who you are and say what you feel, because those who mind don't matter, and those who matter don't mind." - Dr. Seuss. I came across this quote in my school planner years ago, and I feel that it describes how I want to live my life and the people who I want to surround myself with.

Other interests or hobbies off of the field?
 Off the field, I enjoy going to the beach, biking, playing disc golf and hiking when I can.

- Compiled by Ariel Reed, Sports Editor

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Recognized virtually in spring

and School of Pharmacy were Dr. Dina Udonsak, assistant director of Sidhu School Initiatives and instructor for the Jay S. Sidhu School of Business and Leadership, and Dr. Letitia Warunek, assistant professor of pharmacy practice.

Finally, Dr. Deborah Tindell, professor of psychology, received the award for the College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences, and Dr. Prahlad Murthy, interim dean for the College of Science and Engineering and professor of environmental engineering, received the award for the College of Science and Engineering.

Dr. Adam VanWert, associate professor of pharmacology and toxicology and director of the master's program in pharmacology and medicinal chemistry, received the Scholarship Award for having nearly 1,000 citations on his peer-reviewed publications and for his research advancing scientific knowledge and discoveries in the areas of drug transporters and kidney stone therapies.

Dr. Michael Berry, adjunct faculty in the School of Education and Head of School for the Bandung Independent School in West Java, Indonesia, received the Multiculturalism Award. This award is given annually to recognize a faculty member who demonstrates leadership in the advancement of multiculturalism in the classroom.

The Adjunct Faculty Award was awarded to Robert Richards, adjunct faculty for the School of Education. TREC states that the recipient is "an instructor annually who demonstrates excellence in teaching through innovative practices, forming relationships with students, and/or contributing to the school/university."

The final award, the Academic Support Award, recognizes full-time, non-faculty support personnel who facilitate classroom activities, laboratory activities or coordination of experiential learning opportunities. Pamela Koslosky, administrative assistant for the School of Education, is the recipient of the award this year.

"The committee members also extend their thanks to all of those who took

the time to nominate their professors, advisors and colleagues, as well as to all of those nominees who submitted materials for consideration," said Sopcak-Joseph. "Wilkes has so many talented teachers and mentors working with students and adapting to the challenges of the past year."


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Upcoming Events: Spring 2021

- May**
- 15-22 - Final Exams Period
 - 22 - **Spring 2020 Commencement:**
 - 10 a.m. Nesbitt School of Pharmacy & Passan School of Nursing
 - 1:30 p.m. College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences & College of Science and Engineering
 - 5 p.m. Jay S. Sidhu School of Business and Leadership & School of Education
 - 28 - **Spring 2021 Commencement:**
 - 6 p.m. Nesbitt School of Pharmacy
 - 29 - **Spring 2021 Commencement:**
 - 10 a.m. Passan School of Nursing
 - 1:30 p.m. College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences
 - 5 p.m. School of Education
 - 30 - **Spring 2021 Commencement:**
 - 10 a.m. College of Science and Engineering
 - 1:30 p.m. Jay S. Sidhu School of Business and Leadership

Getting to know...

Hope Mullins

Sophomore Softball Player

The Beacon: Female Athlete of the Week from April 14 to 28

Why Hope Mullins was selected: Mullins led the team to win two games against Lycoming and improved her overall record to 3-2 as a pitcher. She also has the lowest ERA on the team with a 2.52.

Name: Hope Mullins
Year: Sophomore
Major: Environmental Science
Hometown: Midland, Va.
High School: Liberty H.S.
Position: Pitcher/OF

Other interests or hobbies off of the field?
 I enjoy doing different types of art outside of softball, as well as hanging out with my group of friends.

Favorite building on campus?
 My favorite building is the library because it allows for a quiet area to study.

What color/flavor of Gatorade is your favorite?
 Cool Blue is my favorite flavor.

If your life was a movie, who would you want to play you and why?
 If my life was a movie, I would definitely want Sandra Bullock to play me because overall she is a great actress and has a comedic side to her. I feel as if our personalities are very similar, which would create a good character dynamic.

If you could have dinner with a famous person from the past, who would it be?
 It would have to be Robin Williams. I used to watch his movies all the time when I was a child and found him to be a great actor who would always make people happy. I feel as if he would be a great dinner guest and would keep great conversation while making you laugh.

Most influential person in your life?
 The most influential person in my life would have to be my mom. She has been my role model since I was a little girl, and I do not know where I would be without her.

A quote you live your life by?
 The quote I live by is: "Everything happens for a reason." I grew up with my mom repeating this to me throughout my whole life.

Driving force for your decision to come to Wilkes?

I am actually a transfer student-athlete and decided to come to Wilkes because I needed a fresh start at a new college.

Post-graduation plans in terms of a career?

I hope to be able to work with animals in the future somehow - possibly through the conservation of wildlife.

Favorite memory as a Colonel?

I actually have two favorite memories while being a Colonel. The first one has to be playing against King's College and getting my first collegiate start and win. My second favorite memory has to be our most recent game against Lycoming, where we came together and won our first series of games. I wasn't playing the second game, but cheering on the sidelines for my team while we played hard and passionately overall was a great time and memory.

Hopes for this season as a Colonel?

I hope that our team is able to slowly climb up the ranks in our conference and win our post season games.

When/Why did you first begin playing?

I first started playing softball when I was eight because of my dad. He brought me outside one day and decided to start throwing the ball around, and since then I have never stopped.

- Compiled by Ariel Reed, Sports Editor



The Beacon/Ariel Reed



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