THE SPECTRUM

SACRED HEART UNIVERSITY FAIRFIELD, CONN

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Doctor of Medical Science Program Founded by SHU Alum

BY **JAMIE VAN DER MERWE**
News Editor and Asst. Photo Editor

Starting in the Fall of 2026, Sacred Heart University opened their new Doctor of Medical Science program, the first of its kind within Connecticut, and only one of few in the New England area. The D.M.Sc. program is fully online and asynchronous, and offers the opportunity for Physician Associates, or PAs, to advance their knowledge.

The program is 30-credits, and is open to those with a Physical Associate degree and who have national certification. There is also an available pathway for graduates of SHU's Master of Science in Physician Assistant Studies program.

"As PAs increasingly take on workplace leadership and academic roles, as well as positions within industry and non-profits, supporting that work with advanced knowledge continues to be beneficial," says Dr. Jason Preveliege, Founding Director of the D.M.Sc. program.

The foundation for the D.M.Sc. program was laid by a committee consisting of Preveliege, Dr. Reynold Jagal, Dr. Eric Nemac and Dr. Irina Ellison. The underlying goal in the program's creation was to identify how other D.M.Sc. programs functioned, and how to improve upon them.

"In addition to deeper insight into the healthcare system, leadership and academics, the D.M.Sc. provides students with the ability to grow their professional networks, both through their classmates, faculty and guest lecturers," says Preveliege. "The doctoral capstone course provides students with the opportunity to solve real world problems and conduct publishable research that will improve their workplace."

Preveliege is a SHU alumnus, having graduated from the university in 2004. He later went onto help develop the universities PA program.

"I have always felt a strong connection to the University, so when I was approached over a decade ago about being involved with the formation of the PA program, I jumped at the opportunity to be involved," says Preveliege.

"He served on the founding advisory committee, participated in the program's early admissions process, helped develop the pediatric curriculum, and has taught pediatrics and emergency medicine since the inaugural cohort," says Dr. Reynold Jagal, Chair of Physician Associate Studies.



Sacred Heart University

Birds eye view f the newl renovated Center for Healthcare Education.

Preveliege was selected for the position of director after 17 years of work in the field, having recently served as the President and Chair of the Board of the American Academy of Physician Associates, a national representation organization for PAs.

"What makes me so excited about Dr. Prevelige serving in the founding director position is that he understands the evolving needs of the PA profession because he has actively contributed to shaping its future," says Dr. Karl Minges, Dean of the College of Health Professions.

"When I was then later approached to help with the initial development of the D.M.Sc. program, I never expected it to lead to a full-time faculty role," says Preveliege. "When that opportunity presented however, it just felt right. Like coming home."

Going forward, Preveliege imagines and is working on expanding the program, both overseas at SHU's Dingle campus and the university's connections in Spain, as well as a professional development residency weekend.

"I believe the program has tremendous potential. In the near term, our priority will be delivering an excellent experience for the inaugural cohorts, assessing program outcomes, supporting meaningful capstone projects, and building a strong community among students, faculty, alumni, and practicing PAs," says Reynold.

"I anticipate it being one of the most sought-after D.M.Sc. programs and a model for others," says Preveliege. "As it continues to grow, I want to see us add additional elective tracks in addition to leadership and education. Ideas include informatics, global health, emergency management, and more!"

SHU Dining is on Fire–Literally

BY **JAMES SPOTO**
News Editor

On August 20th at 6:26 am, the Sacred Heart community was notified of a fire on the main floor of 63s, and that water from the sprinkler system had spread across the main hallway. Facilities, including The Market, the Office of Global Education, performing arts practice studios, and most of all, 63s, would be temporarily closed.

Resident District Manager of SHU Dining, Mark Tammone, and his staff were upset as incoming students were moving in less than a week later. However, Tammone commended his dining staff for the resilience and commitment they presented in such an unprecedented event.

"This team has continuously and tirelessly worked to provide our campus with the exceptional hospitality, care, and service it expects and deserves," said Tammone. "Their dedication and flexibility have been instrumental in supporting our campus and ensuring that our students, faculty, and staff continue to feel welcomed and cared for."

Senior orientation co-chair Matthew Gavagan said, "Some of the OLs and I were on campus early preparing for Welcome Weekend, so we had been going to 63's up until the day of the fire."

As soon as 63s closed, Gavagan said he and his team started going to Linda's Café and enjoyed the alternative arrangement the dining staff had set up there.

"Linda's Café flipped from a retail environment that features branded à la carte options to an all-you-care-to-eat dining option," said Tammone. "This change maintained students' existing access to utilize their unlimited meal swipes without needing to drain their dining dollars to simply eat."

This shift involved a delay in offering sushi, a beloved option for students, and many grab-and-go options. However, Tammone added that they brought sushi options to the Library Café while it was unavailable at Linda's Café—an adjustment that will remain for the foreseeable future.

Tammone also spoke about the other temporary options that were available to students before the grand reopening of 63s on Saturday, September 5.

"This included using our Big Red n' Fed food truck with a rotating menu and a specialty outdoor grill menu also rotating daily, both included in a single

SHU Dining is On Fire--Literally
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News

SHU Dining is on Fire–Literally

BY **JAMES SPOTO**
News Editor

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swipe at Thea's Abbey," said Tammone. "SHU Dining provided complimentary coffee and refreshers at the UC Patio daily, and JP's Diner offered extended mobile ordering hours every day."

Dean of Students, Denise Tiberio, had a similar reaction to Tammone and was thankful that no one was injured. She also praised the quick response of SHU's emergency personnel to ensure that students were safe.

"What stood out most was how everyone came together with a shared focus on providing the best possible experience," said Tiberio. "We know that 63's is a campus favorite, so there is a great deal of excitement as it makes its way back on campus."

"Students will continue to enjoy the same 63's they know and love," said Tammone. "Now with the exciting addition of a cook-to-order station available every weekday."

Even with the closing, Tammone made it clear that the team continues to enhance residential dining promotions and specials, offering even more variety and experiences on campus.



Jamie Van Der Merwe, Staff Editor

Balloons and god vibes around 63's as it is reopened to students on September 5th.

Kennedy Center board to propose new options for honoring Trump as center confronts solvency worries

BY **MIKE CATALINI**
AP Newsroom



Jose Luis Magana, AP Photo

Visitors walk at The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, Sunday, Sept. 6, 2026, in Washington.

The Kennedy Center Board of Trustees is planning to propose adding President Donald Trump's name to the facility's exterior in recognition of his saving the building from its "precarious fiscal position," according to a new court filing in a suit aimed at blocking the move.

It's the latest development in the case revolving around adding the president's name to the exterior of the cultural and arts facility that sits along the Potomac River in Washington and reflects the Trump-aligned board's efforts to honor the president.

The new information came out of a court filing made by Democratic Rep. Joyce Beatty of Ohio, an ex-officio member of the board. Beatty, who has led an effort to block Trump from putting his name on the building, said in a filing she was alerting the court to the proposal because it could implicate a pending decision before the court.

Both the court and the Kennedy Center board are expected to hold meetings Tuesday.

Beatty's filing includes two exhibits. One is a draft vote to shut the center down, asserting the building is unsafe for occupancy. That assertion incorrectly cites a consulting group's finding, "which expressly disclaimed providing any such opinion," according to Beatty.

The other document asserts the center faces dire financial straits. It specifically calls for Trump's name to be placed in marble beneath the name of the center on the building's exterior. It offers 10 options for a possible inscription, including "Renovation and endowment overseen by President Donald J. Trump and the Trump Kennedy Center Fund." Another proposes: "With Gratitude for Support from President Donald J. Trump and the Trump Kennedy Center Fund."

"The Board understands that without such appropriate recognition it is unlikely that President Trump will provide the fundamental oversight of the renovation of the main building and lead the fiscal rescue of the Center," the board wrote in the proposed resolution.

Trump has spent much of his second term reshaping Washington, demolishing the East Wing of the White House to make way for a ballroom and planning a triumphal arch near Arlington National Cemetery as well as a renovated golf course along the Potomac River.

The Kennedy Center has been a stumbling block in that effort after a judge ruled in May that Trump's name was added to the building illegally, ordering it to be removed.

Trump and his allies, however, have continued to fight the ruling.

The board voted last month to inscribe his name on the venue's facade to read "The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts Restored and Renovated By President Donald J. Trump."

If the Trump Kennedy Center Fund reached $100 million, another inscription would be added reading: "Endowed by the Trump Kennedy Center Fund."

UPCOMING EVENTS ON CAMPUS

THURSDAY 9/14:
IMPROV SHOW
10 P.M. LITTLE THEATRE

FRIDAY 9/18:
FIELD HOCKEY GAME VS QUINNIPIAC
8 P.M. JOHNSON FIELD

SATURDAY 9/19:
PICKLE FEST
12 P.M.PIONEER PAVILION

Features

Spectrum Receives National Recognition

BY **CASEY MCGRATH**
Features Editor and Copy Editor

Sacred Heart University's student-run newspaper, The Spectrum, was ranked No. 14 by The Princeton Review for "Best College Newspaper" on Aug. 18.

Listed among colleges like Columbia University and Princeton University, this national recognition reflects the dedication and hard work of the university's past and current newspaper staff.

"I know how much work it takes to take a story from our pitch meetings to print, and I feel a real sense of pride in the work that we do," said Moira Staples, Spectrum's former co-managing editor. "It feels pretty incredible to have that work acknowledged."

The Spectrum, founded in 1983, publishes articles weekly in print and online. The paper covers topics in news, sports, arts and entertainment, features and campus life.

"We mix it up between campus news and national news," said George Triebenbacher, Spectrum's former editor-in-chief. "I feel like that gives us a different perspective than some other schools."

Undergraduate students can become involved in the paper as staff writers by taking Prof. Joanne Kabak, in the School of Communication, Media and the Arts, CM 211 Spectrum Campus News Production class. Under her instruction, they learn to conduct interviews, write in AP style, meet deadlines, and, most importantly, tell stories.

"I wasn't just learning how to put words on paper," said Shannon Tuttle, Spectrum's former co-managing editor. "I learned how to take an idea and turn it into a story, and that's what all news is about."

Once students have mastered the craft of news writing, they can apply to become editors. Editors pitch topics, work collaboratively as a team, and mentor students taking CM 211.

"Being able to watch the staff writers grow each semester is awesome, and every editor is so encouraging," said Dan Greene, Spectrum's former news editor.

Despite the extra time commitment, the editors enjoy sharing their latest story ideas each week, and their faculty advisor Kabak looks forward to hearing them.

"One of the fun parts is learning unexpected information from the students," said Kabak. "Even if a topic sounds off the wall, listen to why they choose it and trust that it could just be the next big thing."

Students can also contribute to the paper's two support sections: photography and public relations.

"Even if writing isn't your top choice, there's still a lot of ways to get involved between photography, PR, and circulation," said Triebenbacher. "There's something for everyone in the paper."



Sacred Heart University

Prospective students take a tour of The Spectrum office.

The Spectrum's ranking is not only the result of the newspaper staff's work but also the widespread support of the university community.

"Writers who are just learning the craft contact professors, administrators, students, alumni and others to do interviews," said Kabak. "And they respond!"

These interviews give students the opportunity to connect more deeply with faculty, staff, and their classmates than the average student.

"You can meet with deans and administrators that want to share what is going on around campus," said Greene. "It also pushes you to attend events where you can learn about people, what they're studying, and how they are applying that in the world."

The skills learned from writing for The Spectrum translate well into the real world, with previous editors attributing their professional success to the paper.

"I'm a production assistant working for NBC Sports," said Tuttle. "And everything that we do is storytelling, and I really credit a lot of it to The Spectrum."

As The Spectrum continues to evolve, it is never too late to get involved.

"Whether you work as a writer, photographer, or editor, being a part of Spectrum allows you to be involved in something bigger than yourself," said Staples.

Editorial: A letter from the editor

BY **MADELEINE MEDEIROS**
Editor-in-Chief

It was the Spectrum editor-in-chief, then Brendan Williams, who gave me my first tour of the Sacred Heart campus when I was a senior in high school. He showed my parents and me the Spectrum office and media arts editing suites in which I now spend most of my week.

The following spring I was a freshman sitting in Professor Kabak's CM 211 class, listening to then editor-in-chief Maddie Beekman pass down article-writing advice.

The next fall semester, the current editor-in-chief George Triebenbacher was running our weekly Sunday meetings and mentoring the new editors, me being one of them. As the current editor-in-chief, it isn't lost on me that I have big shoes to fill.

The Spectrum's recent recognition by the Princeton Review is immensely gratifying to the work of our staff writers, editorial board—both past and present—and faculty advisor Prof. Kabak. Both Spectrum alums and current Spectrum staff have gone on to work and intern at professional news outlets including NBC, NBC Sports and Fox.

Last year's graduated seniors—George Triebenbacher, Moira Staples, Shannon Tuttle, Theo Weismann, Daniel Greene, Jack Cavicchi, Jordan Dorsey and their predecessors have all left their respective marks on Spectrum.

In Prof. Kabak's CM 211 class, we are taught that a journalist's job is not to tell the public what to think but to peel back the curtains for the public, giving them a window into what is happening so they can make up their own minds.

As Spectrum writers emerge in their craft, they cover news from as local as our immediate campus area to as far reaching as national headlines. What do our fellow students think? Faculty and staff?

Keep reading, keep asking questions. Spectrum is dedicated to remaining Sacred Heart University's student-run newspaper, training emerging journalists, photographers and public relations professionals in their respective areas.

National news outlets tend to focus on the Washington, D.C. news bubble. Working on Spectrum has shown me that local news can provide insights into the world beyond that bubble. Global news is no doubt important to our media and global literacy, but the twenty-four hour news cycle can feel exhausting as it washes us with the same headlines reported by different talking heads each hour. Local news is essential in anchoring our shared experiences and broadening our knowledge.

Finally, to our Sacred Heart community, thank you for your continued support for Spectrum.

Editorials are the opinions of the individual editors and do not represent the opinions of the whole editorial board. Letters to the editor are encouraged and are due by Sunday at noon for consideration for each Wednesday's issue. All submissions are subject to editing for spelling, punctuation, and length.

Letters to the editor should not exceed 700 words and should be emailed to spectrum@sacredheart.edu. The Spectrum does not assume copyright for any published material. We are not responsible for the opinions of

September is Suicide Prevention Month: For counseling services and support reach out to

Counseling Center
Open 9-5 on Weekdays
Walk-Ins Welcome or Make an Appointment: 203-371-7955

s.w.e.e.t. Peers
Follow the s.w.e.e.t. Peers on Instagram @shu_sweetpeered and stay updated on the programs run by their team

Public Safety
Routine Calls: 203-371-7995
Emergency Calls: 203-371-7911
or 203-374-9352

CampusLife

FIJI Finds a Home at Sacred Heart

BY **TAYLOR MAGUIRE AND WILL MORGAN**
Managing Editor and Circulation Manager

Meet Phi Gamma Delta (FIJI), a new fraternity in the process of getting a charter at Sacred Heart University. As the fraternity continues to grow, its members are working to build a strong foundation while becoming more involved in campus life.



Instagram, @shu_fiji

The founding members of Phi Gamma Delta at their initiation

"FIJI is a great opportunity for freshmen to try something new, make connections and build friendships for life," says junior member Nick Bosticco.

It was founded at Jefferson College in 1848 and has 139 active chapters around the US and Canada. The fraternity emphasizes brotherhood, community involvement and philanthropy.

FIJI was brought to campus by current sophomore President Ryan Valley in Spring 2026. Early members combined with a group of sophomores who were trying to bring another fraternity, Tau Kappa Epsilon (TKE), to campus, an effort that had fallen through.

"We didn't have enough guys for forming TKE initially, so we combined with the FIJI group," says Wellness Chair Blake Mattesitch. "We interviewed and talked with them and got ourselves on board."

With 40 active members, philanthropy is also an important part of FIJI's plans at Sacred Heart. The fraternity supports the American Red Cross as its charitable organization. Members hope to use fundraising and service events to support the organization while encouraging students across campus to get involved.

"Our charity events really make a difference in giving back to your community," said Bosticco.

Through its partnership with the American Red Cross, FIJI hopes to make philanthropy a central part of its presence at Sacred Heart while allowing members to make an impact beyond campus.

"We're planning lots of philanthropy events for after Bid Day," said Rencurrel. "We're planning a 5K run to benefit the American Red Cross. That's the big one."

The group is participating in their first rush events, as members of the Fraternity Sorority Life Council.

"We're hoping our rush events go well", says Belonging Chair Alek Rencurrel.

So far, on campus, they have been part of Grillin' With The Greeks, IFC Kickoff, and Kickback and Grill. They still have a few more upcoming events this month.

"I'm really excited about this year," says junior Matt Butt, "There's a lot of potential to do something great with our time here at FIJI."

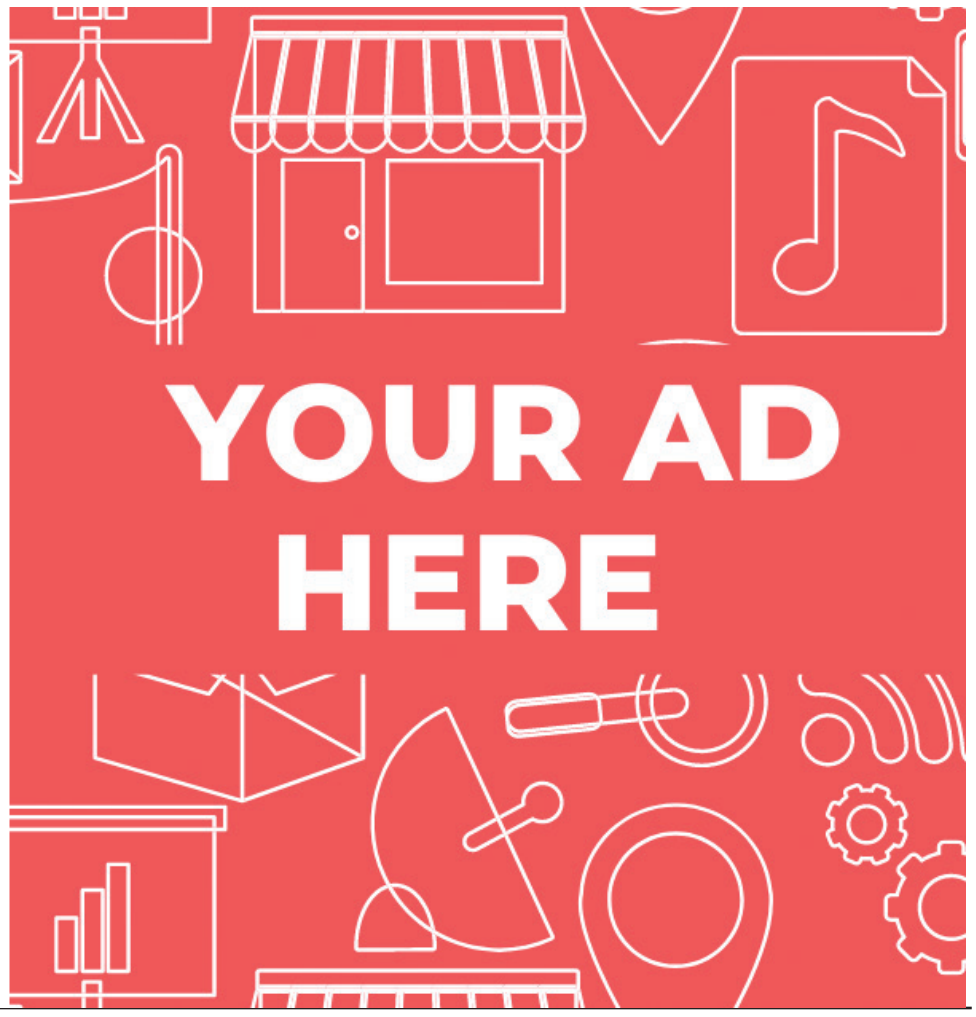
On Sept. 29, FIJI will be collaborating with Flea Ji, a vintage clothing market in partnership with Phi Gamma Delta. This event will be from 10 a.m.- 4 p.m. in the Upper Quad of Sacred Heart.

"I say to any incoming freshmen, rush FIJI; it will change your life for the better. You can make a difference in the world and make a difference in yourself," says Butt.

Do you have an upcoming event or new business?

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CampusLife

Exploring the First 50 Days

BY **ARIANNA GIANNOPOULOS**
Campus Life Editor and Asst. PR Manager



Daniel Passapera, Sacred Heart University

The Sacred Heart University "Just SHU It" fair sign. An annual event highlighting campus clubs and organizations.

For many Sacred Heart University (SHU) students, the first few weeks of the semester can feel like a lot. Between new classes, new schedules and, for first-year students, an entirely new campus, it can be difficult to figure out where you fit in.

That is where SHU's First 50 Days comes in. The program has been a part of SHU since 2019 and has hosted roughly 2,800 events, averaging more than 400 programs each year.

The annual program runs from the end of Welcome Weekend through the first 50 days of the academic year. This program is designed to help students meet new people, get involved and become more comfortable on campus.

"The First 50 creates a campus environment where students of all backgrounds, with various interests, can find community with their peers in the first several weeks of their college experience," said Student Life Graduate Assistant Anna Macaulay. "Through a wide variety of events, programs and opportunities to get involved, the First 50 Days helps students build connections, explore campus resources and begin finding their place within the SHU community."

This year, the First 50 Days began with the Class of 2030 Kickoff on Aug. 29. The event brought students together on the Chapel Quad for a DJ, lawn games, food trucks, giveaways and the traditional lighting of the Chapel of the Holy Spirit's bell tower at 9 p.m.

Since then, the program has continued to offer a mix of social, academic and wellness events. Students can attend activities such as Music and 'Mallows, Succulents for Success, pickleball, Dogs on the Quad, Salsa Night and Music Bingo and Karaoke Night. There are also academic opportunities, including study nights, advising events and programs through the Center for Teaching and Learning.

"I have had great experiences so far with the First 50 Days," said freshman Gabriella Panzarella. "I think that it is really great that they have so many activities and events for new students because you can meet so many new people."

The variety of events that the First 50 Days offers are part of what makes the program different from traditional orientation events. Students do not have to limit themselves to activities aimed specifically at first-year students. Instead, the First 50 Days gives students of all class years a chance to try something new.

"Even though I'm not a first-year student anymore, I still think that these events are a great way to get involved on campus," said sophomore Sophia Monteforte.

For students who may not know where to start, the answer can be as simple as showing up. Most First 50 Days events are open to everyone and do not require an RSVP unless otherwise stated.

With more events still to come, students have plenty of opportunities to make the most of their First 50 Days at SHU—and find a new favorite part of campus along the way.

"Fall Back-to-School" Playlist

"God's Plan" - Drake
"party 4 u" - Charli xcx
"twilight zone" - Ariana Grande
"Illegal" - PinkPantheress
"Hotline Bling" - Drake
"Sweater Weather" - The Neighbourhood
"we fell in love in october" - girl in red
"Lovers Rock" - TV Girl
"End of Beginning" - Djo
"Pink + White" - Frank Ocean
"Love Me Not" - Ravyn Lenae



Interested in contributing to Campus Life? Contact us at spectrum@sacredheart.edu

Arts & Entertainment

Script to Stage: TheatreFest 2026

BY **AMELIA SALADINO**
Asst. Arts & Entertainment Editor

Sacred Heart University's Theatre Arts Program is preparing for another year of TheatreFest. TheatreFest is a three-round process in which students write their own scripts, read them in front of a live audience and can turn them into full plays.

Round one is a Reader's Theatre from Nov. 5-8 that gives playwrights their first chance to hear their script spoken aloud. Senior Adam Petrosino, the New Works chair of the Theatre Arts Program, has watched TheatreFest evolve, both as a writer and a leader.

"For TheatreFest round one, we accept any script or playwright," said Petrosino. "As long as they have the intention to continue developing their show and promise a product by round one, bring it on!"

Petrosino has seen the quality of shows get better over time, which he credits to the script development process. He believes hearing the script aloud is crucial to that growth.

"Many new playwrights can fall into the trap of thinking that once their script has actors, that you shouldn't change anything, when that should really be the time to change things the most," said Petrosino. "Hearing the script out loud is an integral stage of development, and this year, I hope to urge our writers to experiment with their scripts once it's heard aloud."

Round Two moves shows into a stripped-down black box production. When choosing which shows advance past rounds one and two, Petrosino looks for strong intention and drive in plots, characters and dialogue. He works alongside Director of Theatre Justin Zenchuk.

The most common issue he sees is dialogue that feels out of place. His advice is to read your own text aloud.

"Often, just hearing the words spoken can signal places that feel disconnected," said Petrosino.

Sophomore Michael Russo is bringing a fresh perspective to TheatreFest. His experience last season pushed him to write and lead his own production.

"I was previously involved in TheatreFest as an actor last year," said Russo. "I performed in 'SOUL BOUND,' written by Abby Hilke, which got to round two. Being a part of TheatreFest was really exciting for me, especially as someone who has always been a huge fan of student-led productions, and inspired me to try writing and leading a production of my own."

"I have a very visual way of playwriting," said Russo. "Generally, I like to imagine the scene playing out in my head and emphasizing physical motifs."

For Russo, the hardest part has been choosing which ideas to develop. He must fit everything into a tight 30–45-minute plot.

"I have been surprised with how powerful-seeming banal moments can be within a show," said Russo. "Not everyone has to be the most interesting person to be compelling."

Russo is also a musician who composes his show's music.

"The writing informs the music," said Russo. "I compose music in a very mood-centric way. I like to evoke certain emotions and vibes that emphasize dramatic moments. Writing music for this show has been such a genuine blast!"

Round three puts a small group of shows in full production, complete with lights, sound and costumes. Sophomore Hannah Peterson, who acted in TheatreFest last year, is eager to audition again.

"I was in one show for round one, and then I was put into another show for round two that was a musical," said Peterson. "Memorizing lines and also new music after being a part of a different show was pretty hard, along with the fact that the script is pretty much always changing."

Despite these challenges, Peterson is looking forward to this year's festival.

"It's so amazing seeing original student shows become full-blown productions!" said Peterson.



Instagram, @sacredheartuniversity
Outside of the Edgerton Center for the Performing Arts.

Dolly Parton's Lasting Legacy

BY **LAUREN BUSH**
Arts & Entertainment Editor and Asst. Photo Editor

Dolly Parton's cultural influence continues to be celebrated even after her death, with tributes ranging from a Nashville statue and Dolly Parton Appreciation Day to Dollywood, her Imagination Library and a new Hollywood star. The continued recognition across generations reflects how Parton has become more than a country music icon, with her impact extending into entertainment, philanthropy and pop culture.

Lori Bindig Yousman, Associate Dean of Academic Affairs in Sacred Heart University's College of Arts and Sciences, and professor of communication and media, said Parton's ability to remain relevant comes from more than her songs.

"The thing about Dolly Parton is that she's not just a singer, she has also become an iconic celebrity," Yousman said.

Yousman said Parton's music, philanthropy and carefully maintained public persona have allowed her to remain recognizable throughout multiple generations.

"She really created a public figure of who Dolly Parton is," Yousman said.

Parton has connected with different generations in different ways. Older audiences might see her as a country singer, known for songs such as "Jolene" and "I Will Always Love You," while younger generations may connect more with her personality and public image.

"There's all these different touchpoints for how people can relate to her," Yousman said. "And then there's everyone in between who's been affected by her philanthropy, or have gone and visited her theme park."

Those physical places and experiences have also become part of how audiences remember Parton. Yousman said Parton's positive public image and connection with her audience have created an emotional attachment to places associated with her, including Dollywood.

"She's always put forward such a positive, fun-loving personality, why wouldn't you feel that gravitational pull to that smile, to that over-the-topness, to that warmth?" Yousman said.

That ability to connect with younger audiences has helped Parton remain relevant to Gen Z, even decades after many of her biggest hits were released.

As for sophomore Sofia DiPrima, Parton's willingness to embrace her individuality is one of the qualities that makes her stand out.

"I think what makes Dolly such an icon is that she was memorable not just because of her music, but because of her personality and the way she carried herself," DiPrima said.

Moreover, Parton's authenticity is especially relevant for DiPrima.

"Dolly's ability to stay true to herself reminds Gen Z that you don't have to look or act a certain way to fit in and be successful in life," DiPrima said.



AP Newsroom
Images and flowers form a makeshift memorial honoring Dolly Parton in front of her statue in Sevierville, Tennessee. (AP News)

Junior Elena Gerasimopoulos said Parton's personality and sense of humor also makes her relatable.

"Not only is her music timeless, but she had, and still has, the ability to make people feel comfortable being themselves," Gerasimopoulos said.

While Parton's music helped establish her career, her philanthropic work has become another major part of her legacy. Her Imagination Library, which provides books to children, has connected her with people who may not necessarily be familiar with her music.

Yousman said Parton's philanthropy has contributed to her lasting reputation because it has been consistent and genuine rather than simply an attempt to improve her public image.

"It wasn't just a PR move. She deeply cared," Yousman said.

Parton's authenticity has also contributed to the way the public views her, including Gerasimopoulos.

"She took pride in herself but always stayed humble and I think that kind of attitude is really inspiring to younger generations," Gerasimopoulos said.

"Her advocacy of being proud of who you are is something that all generations need to hear. I especially think her Imagination Library and all she's done for charity will have a lasting impact on younger generations and everyone she's helped."

Sports

New Conference, New Competition

BY **COLLIN MACLEOD**
Sports Editor

Sacred Heart University's (SHU) football team is stepping into a new conference, and onto a new field this season. The Pioneers are now officially a member of the Coastal Athletic Association (CAA) and will debut their new Sikorsky Credit Union Field soon.

The team lost their first game 31-24 to Monmouth University on Sept. 5. With 8 minutes and 8 seconds left in the fourth quarter, the Pioneers tied up the game at 24. The Hawks drove down to take back the lead 31-24 and ultimately held off SHU.

"Don't leave it in the hands of a referee or a replay review, win the game outright and leave no doubt," said Head Coach Mark Nofri. "When the game is on the line, you have to execute and finish."

During the game, the team had sophomore running back Mitchell Summers go down with an injury. Summer's previous season rushed for over 1,000 yards, piling on 12 touchdowns.

"Losing Mitch was tough, but it was great to see other guys step up when their number was called," said junior quarterback and captain Poochie Snyder. "That's the message we take away from this game and carry with us for the rest of the season. There's going to be adversity, but we have to use it in a positive way."

They then lost 37-10 to the University of Massachusetts on Sept. 12. The Pioneers look to rebound from these early struggles behind the momentum of a brand-new field and conference.

"It was exciting because it felt like a fresh start for the program," said graduate student and captain Curtis Whiting. "Seeing the new turf completed made everything feel real, especially as we entered the CAA. We're grateful for the investment in the program, and now it's on us as players to go out there, represent Sacred Heart the right way and make the most of the opportunity."

The team looks forward to competing in the CAA.

"Last year, we were playing for pride and for each other, but now there's a championship attached to what we're doing every week, and that makes us go even harder," said Whiting. "It gives us something we can chase together, and we're excited about that opportunity."

By the end of the season the Pioneers want to be known as hard workers.

"I want them to respect how hard we play and how together we are. Whether we're winning or facing adversity, I want teams to know that Sacred Heart is never going to quit," said Whiting. "We want to be known as a physical, disciplined and connected football team that makes you earn everything against us."

The team will debut the brand-new Sikorsky Credit Union Field on Sept. 26 during Family Weekend.

"Our first home game is against the University of New Hampshire, and I expect our team to be fired up to finally be back home," said Nofri. "They'll be excited to play in front of what should be a huge Family Weekend crowd and have that home-field energy behind them."



Contributed by Reese D'Alessandro
Senior Luke Hackett geared up ready to face off against University of

Snyder expects that same intensity when the Pioneers run out onto their new turf.

"I expect our team to give the kind of effort—tough, accountable, hard-working, do-whatever-it-takes-to-win attitude—that shows our fans their support is warranted," said Snyder.

The Pioneers will travel to Elon University on Sept. 19 for their third game of the season.

Athletic Communications contributed to this article.

Men's Golf Tees Off at Red Bandana Invitational

BY **NICHOLAS DILAPI**
Asst. Sports Editor



Contributed by Josh Smith
Coaches and members of the men's golf team pose for a photo

The men's golf team kicked off their season at Boston College for the Red Bandana Invitational. The tournament honors Welles Crowther, a former lacrosse player for Boston College, who heroically saved lives during 9/11 and was seen wearing a red bandana when rescuing survivors. It is believed that he saved 18 lives on that day.

The Pioneers placed second at the tournament, and they were led by underclassmen.

First-year Brody DiBeneditto finished in third. DiBeneditto earned a one-under 71 on the second day of the event, helping him move up three spots in the rankings.

Also helping the team was sophomore Ronan Mooney. Mooney finished in sixth place, starting the season strong once again. Last year, Mooney finished fourth at the Red Bandana Invitational.

"It's definitely an approach player's course, so the players who are better with their approach game, they'll shine a bit more at this course, which I feel like is my strength," said Mooney.

While the course may favor Mooney and his playstyle, his coach sees it as improved play.

"He's matured a lot since last year. I think his game is kind of rounding out, he's understanding the different shots he needs to hit and then pulling them off," said Head Coach Matthew McGreevy. "This year, he's putting a little more thought into his shots and using the information he's got to the best of his ability."

"I think that I have a lot of room to improve, and knowing that I can finish this tournament not having my best stuff but still placing well, it gives me a lot of confidence going forward in being able to improve my game and my mental side of it," said Mooney.

Aside from Mooney and DiBeneditto, the team had a strong showing. James Bradley and Robby Zyskowski III placed 16 and 17, respectively, and Andrew Hahn and Sho Suzuki both placed in a tie for 20.

Suzuki climbed 14 spots on the leaderboard after a great round three, in which he shot 73 (+1).

The team's depth, finishing close together, benefited the team greatly, thanks to players like Bradley, Zyskowski, Hahn and Suzuki.

"I think it's going to be crucial to our success," said McGreevy on the team's depth. "From this year to last year, our depth has improved substantially. I think that's going to show in tournaments later in the fall and even into the spring."

The team is happy with where they finished at the tournament, and credits their success to their hard work.

"It kind of gives them that affirmation that what they did all summer and what we did in preseason paid off," said McGreevy. "It's going to get them excited to attack the tournaments for the rest of the fall."

The goal is clear for the Pioneers.

"We really want to work hard to try to get back on top of the Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference (MAAC) in the spring," said McGreevy.

The Pioneers will return to the course this Saturday, Sept. 19, in Seekonk, Mass. to compete in the Ryan T. Lee Memorial Collegiate Tournament.

Athletic Communications contributed to this article.

Loyalty vs. Leverage at Louisiana State

BY **JAMES EL-HAGE**
Asst. Sports Editor

Lane Kiffin, the head football coach at Louisiana State University (LSU) has found himself at the center of controversy this fall, as the Tigers became the latest team to test the increasingly blurred line between college and professional sports.

The controversy began after Dae'Quan Wright and Zxavian Harris left the University of Mississippi (Ole Miss) to declare for the NFL Draft. They both went undrafted before signing NFL contracts with the Cleveland Browns and New Orleans Saints respectively.

Neither appeared in a regular-season or pre-season game, but both spent time with the organizations over the summer. Both players were later cut before attempting to return to college football at LSU to reunite with their former coach.

"When I first saw this, I thought it was posted by a fake account," said senior Benjamin Toy. "If you're not good enough for the pros either play overseas or in another league that isn't college."

After going to court, a Louisiana judge granted a preliminary injunction clearing a path for Wright and Harris to receive another year of eligibility.

"The problem is that now with NIL and guys getting paid, there isn't the same incentive to go pro as there was before," said Mailroom Clerk Whitney Taylor.

Name, image and likeness (NIL) refers to a college athlete's right to profit off of their fame, often through social media.

"If there isn't a clear opportunity waiting for them, they'll try and play for a 5th and 6th year if they can," said Taylor.

The Southeastern Conference (SEC) stood in Wright and Harris' way, arguing that their return violated a rule preventing athletes who signed professional contracts from competing in college. The disagreement eventually escalated into lawsuits between LSU and the SEC.

Ultimately, LSU left Wright and Harris off the roster for their season opener against Clemson and on Sept. 8 they filled their final two roster spots, closing the door on Wright and Harris playing college football in the 2026 season.

Although Wright and Harris will not play for LSU this season, their attempt to return has raised a larger question: At what point should a college athlete's eligibility end?

"It's way too complicated right now," said sophomore Matt Berry. "I think athletes should be done after their 4 years unless there is an injury complication."



Instagram, @lsufootballnews
Lane Kiffin on the sideline of Louisiana State football game

The question becomes more complicated if an athlete gets injured or doesn't have a clear path to play professionally.

"I wouldn't be mad if you were allowed to declare for the draft and see if someone takes you before making the decision to return to school or not," said senior Dave Alouidor. "Nothing is guaranteed for late-round picks, so you have to weigh out all your options."

Situations like these add more questions to the ever-evolving landscape of college athletics. As athletes gain more freedom over where they play and how long they remain in college, determining when a college athlete can't return may no longer be as simple as it once was.

"Loyalty in college football has been replaced by leverage," said Taylor. "Everyone's just shopping for the best deal."

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