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Basketball legends unite for fundraiser

By Julian Markese
Sports Editor

If Connecticut is the basketball capital of the world, Geno Auriemma is the mayor. Where he goes, a crowd and funding follow.

Providing a tremendous assist, Auriemma lent his credence to help raise money for the university's basketball programs.

"I'm flattered that they would ask me to come and help raise some money for a program that generally doesn't have the funding that other programs might have," Auriemma said.

He was flanked by several heavyweights of the basketball world on a panel that told stories and answered questions in an effort to further solidify the Owls' standing in the state.

The event, dubbed the Southern Hoops Tip-Off Talk, for which the school sold tickets and held a silent auction, was hosted by legendary sportscaster George Grande.

University of Connecticut alum and former NBA player Donny Marshall, CBS broadcaster Bill Raftery and Western Connecticut State women's basketball Head Coach Maria Conlon helped fill a chandeliered room at the Aria Wedding & Banquet Facility in Prospect, CT on Sept. 24. About 500 were in attendance.



PHOTO | JULIAN MARKESE

Scott Burrell, the head coach of the university's men's basketball team, Geno Auriemma and Kate Lynch, the head coach of the university's women's team, fielded questions from the audience.

Like Auriemma, these basketball giants were there to support the program housed on Wintergreen Avenue.

Head Coach of the men's basketball team Scott Burrell and Head Coach of the women's team Kate Lynch were the stars of the show.

It was the first event of its kind. It was put together by longtime men's soccer coach, now a development officer for the university, Ray Reid.

The proceeds from the celebration will provide

tangible assistance to both basketball programs at the school.

"All the money being raised today is gonna go directly to our basketball programs, and it's really going to enhance our student athlete experience," Lynch said.

The event was a chance for donors, alum and players to come together in a manifestation of what sport is really about: family.

"It's about relationships. It's about connections. It's about

the community. It's about family. It's about sisterhood," forward Marisa Lee, a graduate student, said. "We all feel that. We all try to embrace that."

The players had a chance to speak with Auriemma and the rest of the panel. It was a reward. An event like this gives the current athletes and prospective recruits a glimpse into what is possible in the world of Connecticut basketball.

"We are not just some small Division II school," guard Ally Sentance, a

junior, said.

Sentance echoed the sentiment of several athletes in attendance: thrilled by the attention, but not surprised or satisfied.

The fundraiser is the first of many efforts by Reid to back the athletic department financially. The money will bolster the scholarship fund and help pay for trips and equipment.

It displayed in real time the product of efforts made by so many athletes, coaches and supporters.

It is coaches Lynch and Burrell that are the foundation of the Owls' basketball program.

"They don't treat it like they're not big time. They coach like it is," Auriemma said.

Both of these coaches are instrumental not just on the court, but in the lives of the students they support.

The whole school is behind them and their efforts.

"Athletics is part of who we are at Southern. I'm really proud that we have such a strong athletic program," Interim President Sandra Bulmer said.

The basketball world listens when Auriemma speaks. Auriemma's connection to the university will continue into the season.

The women's team will get a chance to take on the coach who they look up to. They travel to Storrs on Oct. 26 to battle the University of Connecticut Huskies.

With the support of Bulmer, Reid, Associate Director of Athletics Ken Sweeten, Athletic Director Terrance Jones and many more, the athletes and students of the university are in good hands.

"We are obligated to make sure our students have the best outcome possible," Jones said.

It is for the students that all of this takes place.

ICE raids fuel fear in students

By Valentina Toro
Contributor

Immigration raids in the state are heightening fear among undocumented college students, with mental health experts reporting rising levels of anxiety, stress and trauma affecting academic performance and overall well-being.

This year, Immigration and Customs Enforcement has conducted raids in the state and in some of the neighborhoods surrounding universities, detaining undocumented individuals and, in some instances, deporting entire families.

"It is very hard to cope with the constant stress surrounding student's immigration status," business administration major Jeremiah Parra, a junior and president of UndocuAlly Student Alliance, said. "We are here to remind undocumented students that they are not alone; we are all in this together."

The rescinding of ICE's "sensitive locations" policy earlier this year and recent law enforcement activity near college campuses have led to widespread fear among students, especially those from mixed-status families.

As the university's official protocol notes, ICE agents "may not enter non-public areas of campus without a valid warrant signed by a federal judge unless exigent circumstances exist."

However, this legal protection offers little comfort to undocumented

students who fear that one small misstep could put their future at risk.

College administrators have noticed an alarming rise in the number of students choosing to take time off college or dropping out entirely due to their fear of ICE enforcement and new policies that affects undocumented students and their families.

"Many students have decided to take a semester off," Esteban Garcia, associate bursar and the chair of the DREAMers, said, "because they are afraid of being deported while attending classes."

According to Garcia, many of these students are either undocumented themselves or come from mixed-status families where one or more members of their family lack immigration status.

Subsequently, this heightens fear of losing a family member to an immigration raid while they are away at college.

"Some of these students were top performers and suddenly have been withdrawing from courses, isolating themselves and also showing signs of severe anxiety due to the heightened fears related to ICE raids in the state," Garcia said.

Counseling Services offers confidential support for students going through stressful, anxious or fearful situations regardless of their immigration status.

"All of our services are available to all students. We make no distinction — it is completely available to all students," Nick



PHOTO | VALENTINA TORO

Nick Pinkerton, the director of Counseling Services, speaking to students in the Digital Reporting and Writing class in Morrill Hall on Sept. 4.

Pinkerton, the director of Counseling Services, said.

This reassurance is critical for undocumented students, many of whom are hesitant to seek help for fear of privacy or the risk of being deported.

In addition to faculty and staff groups, such as the DREAMers Action Alliance, students are also stepping forward to support each other.

The UndocuAlly Student Alliance, a student-run organization, works to create an inclusive environment for undocumented students and their allies.

As debates over immigration enforcement continue across the country, undocumented

students bear the emotional burden of balancing academic ambition with fear and mental health issues.

Many students continue to attend class and seek support from various campus resources and student groups like the UndocuAlly Student Alliance.

"We work to bring awareness on campus of what the barriers are for undocumented students, but also resources, staff members that can be of support or just create a community to talk about it," social work major Paula Naranjo, a senior and vice president of the UndocuAlly Student Alliance, said.

Yik Yak post exposes Dunkin's hygiene

By Brianna Wallen
News Editor

The go-to fast food restaurant on campus, Dunkin', is stirring concern after a Yik Yak post on Sept. 23 revealed a crusted, grease-covered grill inside the campus location.

The post, uploaded with the caption "Dunkin' not cleaning since the first day of school," left many wondering about the cleanliness behind their daily coffee runs.

"That's very unsanitary," accounting major Jesus Collins, a junior, said. "Workers should be cleaning that every day."

Communication major Alan Brockman, a senior, said that the issue went beyond a dirty grill and reflected bigger concerns about food quality and standards on campus.

"I think it should be

cleaned and kept up to par for students who eat there," Brockman said.

Brockman said that with students paying thousands of dollars for a meal plan, they expect their meals to be properly prepared.

"We pay money to eat there, and it's not up to standard," Brockman said.

For some students, the photo was the final straw. Business administration major Adam Maghfour, a senior, said that he plans on avoiding the retail dining spot altogether.

Maghfour said that his past experiences of waiting in long lines and mistakes on orders, the image only reinforced his decision to stay away.

"That Dunkin' is always late with my food and drinks, so now I'm definitely not going there," Maghfour said.

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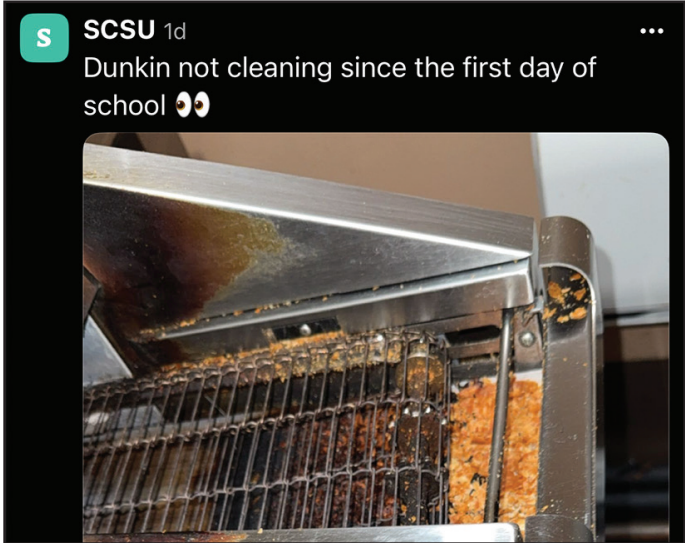


PHOTO | YIK YAK

A post of Dunkin's dirty machine from an anonymous user on Yik Yak, on Sept. 23.