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Robin Bridges

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NORTHEASTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY'S INDEPENDENT

Student-run newspaper since 1960

Tuesday, February 13, 2018

www.neiuindependent.org

Vol. 37 Issue 9

Students demand president now



Inside News

Students, faculty and staff address the Board of Trustees to say that they are in support of a new president. They encourage the Board to make a decision soon and to renovate and promote CCICS campus.

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Inside Features

Mystery solved! CAST instructor Catherina Korda behind "Hate Has No Home Here."

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Inside Opinions

The person next to you could be carrying a gun and you wouldn't even know it.

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Inside Arts & Life

NEIU turned up with Chicago's very own Vic Mensa after listening to his Q and A on Feb. 1.

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Sports Online Exclusive

Check out our take on Super Bowl 52 and read what NEIU students had to say at www.neiuindependent.org

The upcoming Issue

Look out for the next issue set to be released on Feb. 27.

NEWS

Students and faculty demand a new president

Sarahy Lopez

During the Board of Trustees meeting on Feb. 8, about 15 students, faculty and staff came to stand in front of the podium to address the Board and Interim President Richard Helldobler about issues surrounding the school.

As the search for a new president continues, students and faculty voiced their frustrations about the long waiting process for a new president.

The final four candidates are Maria Guajardo, Gloria J. Gibson, Sukhwant Jhaj and Carlos Medina. They visited the main campus last month to conduct their interviews and to meet the community of NEIU.

Before the Board held an executive session to vote on the presidential candidates, the public comment session commenced.

Student senator Joe Gerber, one of the first speakers, said, "We have met four highly qualified, wonderful candidates. I urge you to remember that your main concern as members of the board is the student body. We as an institution currently are not serving as well as we should. This is not a political issue and should not be made into one. This



Fifteen students, faculty and staff spoke during the public comments section of the Feb. 8 meeting. Many giving their support of the presidential search process. | Photo by Robin Bridges

is about the 9,000 students who call Northeastern home."

The Student Government Association urged the Board to consider Maria Guajardo as their first recommendation, and Gloria J. Gibson as their second recommendation for NEIU president.

Dr. Frank Gaytan, member of the president search advisory committee, said, "When systems are in place to make things fair, hard work pays off. When people try to subvert those systems, the outcomes are obviously unfair. There has been a lot of talk about the fairness of the

presidential search. As a member of the search committee, I enter with caution and optimism."

"Sadly, there has been a decline of Latino retention, and African-American freshman retention in the last five years. Still, I believe finding ethical people to do a job

well will improve the system here. I am hopeful of all the candidates that were brought to campus. Please hear that the systems setup for this search process were fair. Please appoint the candidate that you believe deserves to lead NEIU given who we are as a university," Gaytan concluded.

Precious Tyler, graduate student of The Jacob H. Carruthers Center for Inner City Studies and resident of The Nest, said, "I had to come to the main campus to live. And from what I observed is that there is no advertisement of the CCICS program. No one is aware, but we also have a large number of African-American students living in The Nest. But nobody is aware of our program.

Tyler continued, "There is a large percentage of African-American students, but why is it that they don't even know that the building exists? There is also no resources [at CCICS]. On Tuesday, we had to continuously ask them to turn on the heat, to clean the bathrooms. Why is it that I get to get resources here at The Nest, but not at CCICS?"

Tyler concluded that she is in support of the presidential search, and that new leadership is needed.

Demands/ page 15

Independent

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The Independent is a public forum for the university and the community surrounding Northeastern Illinois University and its satellite campuses, El Centro in the Avondale Neighborhood and Jacob H. Carruthers Center for Inner City Studies in Bronzeville. The Independent is completely student run and receives no prior review of its content by anyone other than its student editors. The Independent is published every other week except during summer and semester breaks. Deadlines are determined on a varying basis. Please contact us for further details. Views expressed in letters are those of the university community and not those of the Editorial Board. The Editor-in-Chief is responsible for the content of the Independent, and views presented do not necessarily represent those of the administration, faculty or students.

The Independent is a member of the Illinois College Press Association and Associated Collegiate Press.

Pulitzer prize winners take on current events

Amaris E. Rodriguez

NEIU had the honor of hosting Pulitzer Prize winners Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein on Feb. 8 as part of the Daniel L. Goodwin Distinguished Lecture Series.

Woodward and Bernstein achieved recognition for their investigative journalism work that broke the Watergate story for The Washington Post that led to the resignation of President Richard Nixon in the 1970s. They participated in a conversation moderated by NEIU's Interim Dean of College of Arts and Sciences Dr. Katrina Bell-Jordan.

The discussion addressed various issues that are present in today's media, allowing Woodward and Bernstein to discuss their opinions on topics ranging from the Trump presidency to the credibility of journalism today.

A big issue that has plagued the media, more relevantly than previous years, is the validity of the reporting that is being done regarding President Trump.

Issues and controversies had surround the president since the beginning of his campaign. Woodward, addressing the topic of the current U.S. presidency, gave insight into the ideology behind his madness.

Woodward interviewed President Trump when he was on the verge of winning the republican nomination, and he recalled a moment when he quoted President Barack Obama saying that strength for the United States comes from restraint and humility, to which Trump counteracted by saying that "real power comes from fear."

Bernstein, mentioning that Trump's behavior was never seen in the presidency, reminds the audience of Trump's "willingness to smear our institution for his personal gain."



Photo Liz Varnecky

From left to right: Moderator, Katrina Bell- Jordan, Carl Bernstein and Bob Woodward. Discussing their decades long career and the 40th anniversary the watergate scandal.

Despite their feelings towards the presidency, when asked about how the media has dealt with coverage on President Trump, Woodward stated, "This is the internet age of impatience and speed. Give it to me too fast. When Carl and I were doing Watergate, we had so much time. We could work for weeks on one single story, if it wasn't ready we would hold it. Now something is done and it's on a website and it's revised and so forth. There is not that

kind of patience."

The credibility of media, even before the Trump administration, was under question.

As investigative journalists, both Woodward and Bernstein believe that while there is a lot of great reporting being conducted, information can only be applicable if the audience is willing to receive the message.

How much do people want to know from journalists?

Bernstein addressed questions with caution but also gave the audience the truth about the majority of today's media audience.

"There is a huge problem. There is no metric to what I am about to say but I think one of the huge differences in our culture today, comparing it to the time of Watergate is that far fewer people are interested in what Bob and I call the best obtainable version of the truth. Rather they are looking for information to reinforce their already held political beliefs, prejudices, religious beliefs, cultural. This knows no partisan aspect or ideology."

Dr. Bell-Jordan asked what they both thought about the way we distinguish between liberal media and conservative media. Bernstein responded saying "The first thing to be said is that very often we try to look at media and politics as separate from the larger culture of this country. They are both part of the large culture and a reflective of the large culture of the country."

All the blame on the interpretation of media, however, cannot be placed on the audience. Woodward

suggests that reporting has changed since they broke the story on Watergate, which The New York Times called the most important piece of journalism at the time.

"You need to break the mold on some of this. I think what you have to do is become a little introspective about the business. I think lots of reporters, including myself, become lazy to go on public television and say anything. Who cares right? Real information you get from going to people who really know. One of the things that Carl taught me when we were working together was that you go visit people at their homes when you don't have an appointment... We are not showing up."

"You don't know what the news is until you've done that knocking on the door and that listening. But so much of what we do is to go in with a preconceived notion of all of it. We are talking about the memo, let's find out a little more about the memo. Maybe the memo is not the news," said Bernstein.

The best-selling authors' advice to aspiring journalists, a question that was submitted by students at The Independent, was to understand how important it is to get it the story right.

NEIU's third installment of the Daniel L. Goodwin Distinguished Lecture Series aimed to continue what organizers would deem a lecture series meant to inform and instill the belief that universities are a place for free speech.

Woodward and Bernstein, who appeared on our stage for the first time together since the presidential election of 2016, responded to topics about the state of our country in relations to media, reinforcing the strong belief that a free press composes democracy.



Photo Robin Bridges

NEWS

Updates emerge with looming DACA vote

Miguel Casmiro

President Donald Trump was very critical of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program in the past months and coming March 8, 2018, DACA will officially be decreased as a program.

This has millions of DACA recipients worried and without a clue on what to do after March 8.

Democrats and Republicans in Congress are trying to find a solution before the deadline. With this deadline looming, a lot of people still bare the question of what might happen with the DACA recipients after March 5.

Former President Barack Obama established this program back in 2012 to help give people a chance to pursue citizenship and a

better life.

Some institutions gave benefits, as protection from deportation, to DACA recipients and one of those institutions is the U.S. Military.

An article by CBS News stated: "Anyone who has enlisted in the military and is waiting to report to boot camp, on active duty or in the active reserves or anyone with an honorable discharge will not be deported. Two exceptions for that would be for anyone who has committed a serious felony or is the subject of a deportation order."

The military is one of the institutions that will protect DACA recipients, but only from selected countries such as European, African and Asian countries and they

must follow the Military Accessions Vital To National Interest (MAVINA) recruitment program. More on MANIVA can be found at the following link: <https://www.defense.gov/news/mavni-fact-sheet.pdf>

The big question is how schools can protect undocumented students

An example of such a school is NEIU.

The Assistant Dean and Director of Undocumented Student Resources, Luvia Moreno, talked about the issues surrounding DACA and the different programs that can help undocumented students on campus.

Moreno said, "If you currently have DACA and you have a work

permit for two years, you are protected under DACA for those next two years, regardless of the March 5 deadline. You still have those two years protected from deportation and to be able to continue working."

She continues, "There are some scholarships that were created once DACA started. They were created specifically for DACA students, but some of those organizations that created these scholarships are now being a little more open minded and say if DACA is going to end, we will still want to help undocumented students out."

This idea captures the way a lot of groups are helping out in the fight for DACA.

Moreno mentioned the club

Undocumented, Resilient and Organize (URO), which helps undocumented students on campus.

The government has less than a month to reach a deal on DACA.

Students can reach out to Luvia Moreno with further questions at Lu-Moreno@neiu.edu, or reach out to URO for more resources.

Check out our website for Breaking News

www.neiuindependent.org



NEIU POLICE BLOTTER

The following incidents occurred between the dates of Jan. 23 to Feb. 5 on NEIU's main campus.

Jan. 23 - Fine Arts Building: An unknown offender wrote graffiti on interior wall of handicap stall. Facilities Management was notified for a cleanup.

Jan. 24 - 4000 W. Bryn Mawr Ave: Three state citations and I-Bond issued to a driver for disobeying a stop sign, eluding police and for having an invalid driver's license.

Jan. 24 - Parking Garage: An unknown offender struck and damaged a victim's car while it was parked in the garage.

Jan. 27 - The Nest: A Grubhub driver reported that a resident did not pay for a food delivery. Police are still waiting to speak to the resident to sort the matter out.

Jan. 28 - The Nest: An unauthorized guest was removed after he was found using Snapchat to contact females to let him into the building.

Jan. 28 - The Nest: Officers spotted two subjects sneaking into the building. They were located and removed from the premises.

Jan. 29 - Student Union: A student was concerned after seeing her ex on campus for whom she has an expired court order of protection. She was advised to renew the order.

Jan. 29 - P.E. Building: There was a verbal dispute between two patrons over a parking situation after one was seen taking pictures of cars and other patrons. Peace was restored by police.

Jan. 30 - The Nest: Police responded to a report of students allegedly smoking marijuana in a room. No physical evidence was found.

Feb. 1 - D-Building: An unknown offender stole three university owned office chairs from an unattended area.

Feb. 2 - The Nest: Officers responded to call of a fight in an apartment. The victim was found with visible injuries and the other person was arrested for domestic battery.

Feb. 2 - The Nest: A resident was verbally and physically assaulted by another. The assault stems from the earlier domestic battery arrest.

Feb. 4 - P.E. Building: A fight occurred within the P.E. complex.

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Student Action for free education

Nicole F. Anderson

Ten students attended the first NEIU chapter Chicago Student Action (CSA) of this semester to discuss the group's visions, free higher education for all, publicly funded elections and Illinois policies on Feb. 7.

The CSA moderators, Cece Ballenger, Brianna Tong and Liam Flesher explained that their organization fights for economic, gender and racial justice on and off campus.

Student Action groups are all over the city of Chicago and are connected with People's Lobby, a grassroots organization devoted to

informing communities and gaining support for public policies and candidates.

NEIU's Student Action chapter started, with their main focus of fighting for free higher education for all and lowering debt, in Illinois in September 2017.

CSA members are fighting for free higher education for all, which would include all fees, textbooks, campus housing and other college-related costs. Several students in the meeting explained that they are the first-generation to graduate high school and attend college.

Flesher explained, "The good thing about Student Action is that

canvassing takes only three hours at the most. You can pick it up and put it down whenever. Any NEIU student can join NEIU's student action but anyone can join People's Lobby."

NEIU Student Action meetings will be held every 2 to 3 weeks on Wednesdays and are always open to all students to attend.

In the past two years, People's Lobby along with Chicago Student Action groups have helped push for minimum wage increase in Cook County, held more than 18,000 conversations to inform voters, held protests and canvassed neighborhoods raise awareness about their cause.

Chicago Student Action would like to make higher education more accessible by opening existing Illinois to undocumented folks.

Tong explained some of the ways Student Action can help push for free higher education, allowing state financial aid to be available to undocumented students with the Access Bill. Currently, people who are undocumented are unable to receive any federal student aid, this includes FAFSA, Pell Grants, Illinois MAP Grants, etc.

According to Student Action, "Federal law allows individual state legislatures to offer undocumented students eligibility for financial aid.

Passage of the Student ACCESS Bill would allow 4-year public universities to offer financial aid to every student enrolled at their institution on a competitive basis. The legislation will not, however, make undocumented students eligible to apply for the MAP Grant."

NEIU student, Miranda Green said that the meeting made her feel "hopeful."

Tong concluded the meeting with information on next week's campus canvas and the statement, "There is people power at universities."

STUDENT LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

EVENTS APPROVED BY COC

January 25 Meeting

Black Caucus
Black Panther Movie
\$486

Computer Science Society Club
Computer Science Department Career Day
\$493.83

Phi Iota Alpha
Afrolatinidad
\$792.86

Black Caucus
Black Card Revoked
\$1,687.50

EVENTS FUNDED BY STUDENT ACTIVITY FEE FOR FEB 13-27

Feb. 24 - Black Caucus - Black Panther Movie
6pm - Meet at NEIU
Black Caucus will be tabling for the event in Village Square on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 11am-4pm.
Feb. 6, 8, 13, 15, 20, & 22

Feb. 27 - Phi Iota Alpha Fraternity Inc., Theta Chi
Omega National Multicultural Sorority, Inc., Sigma
Gamma Rho Sorority, Inc. - Afrolatinidad
6pm-8pm - Alumni Hall

Student Leadership Development

Little Caesars Pizza - \$4, Large Pizza with NEIU ID at check out. This lasts till the end of the semester.
(Only at Montrose and Pulaski location)

Feb. 22 - Freshmen Meet Up
3pm - Pedrosos Center (B-159)

Northeastern Programming Board

Feb. 22 - NEIU Talent Show
9pm - Auditorium

SENATE UPDATES

Senate Resolution: R18-011,
A Resolution to Clarify SGA Presidential
Search Recommendations

Students, are you interested in making a change at Northeastern Illinois University?

If so, you have the opportunity to join the Student Government Association. By joining you will have the opportunity to advocate for the student body. Meetings are held Tuesdays and Thursdays from 3:05 - 4:00 pm. If interested please email at neiusgacares@gmail.com.

For further information about the above resolutions or to inquire about upcoming resolutions, please contact SGA President Ashlei Ross at a-ross8@neiu.edu.



If you need accommodations to attend these or any University event, please contact Student Disability Services within 48 hours of the time of the event at (773) 442-4595 or SDS@neiu.edu.

NEWS

Resource highlight: Academic writing center

Yolanda Amon

Every year an estimated 2,000 NEIU students enroll in one of the university's writing intensive courses (WIP) to meet their academic writing requirement. Dr. Kate Hahn, Director of the CAW, says that 1000 students per semester take a WIP course.

Academic writing pertains to the language, style and format of writing that is used by scholars, faculty and researchers. It aims to give information about a particular subject and to argue a position on an idea. It distinguishes academic prose from other written works.

An instructor of the English language program Susan Berkman teaches the WIP course for the university's non-traditional degree program. She describes an important characteristic of academic writing as, "the one thing that I would stress is clarity. Academic writing requires critical thinking, which is expressed through clear writing. Clear writing consists of rhetoric that is specific and that has a logical flow or structure. You want your reader to easily perceive your points and follow along without confusion."

It is very helpful to learn and develop this style of writing, especially if graduate school is a future goal, according to Berkman. A written piece assigned by high school teacher may not require a specific margin, font size or format. However, an academic assignment at a university level normally requires the writ-

er to use a certain style like the American Psychology Association or the Modern Language Association. Every discipline offered at the university has a WIP course requirement. NEIU's Center for Academic Writing is the university's support center for students seeking to develop their academic writing skills.

WIP courses became requirements for NEIU students in the fall of 2008. The center opened in 2009 when a faculty task force came together in an effort to develop the academic writing skills of students. This task force defined the guidelines for a WIP course. The center employs 30 student tutors to ensure that students can receive the support they need.

Dr. Hahn says that one way students can see the relevance of academic writing is to understand that writing is always in context. For example, the written language used to send a text to your children, would be different from the language used in a email to your boss.

Peer tutors and writing fellows are available during their peer tutor hours, approximately five hours a week in CAW.

Please make an appointment with a peer tutor, call CAW at (773) 442-4492. Workshops are typically around 50 minutes long and tutors ask students to bring two copies of any written work, class notes, a syllabus of the course, textbooks and an assignment description.



Professor Susan Berkman with her students. | Photo Yolanda Amon

QUE ONDEE SOLA

Que Ondee Sola (QOS) is the oldest Puerto Rican and Latinx student published magazine established in 1972 at NEIU.



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FEATURES

A step ahead of hate: “Hate Has No Home Here” campaign begins at NEIU

Cecilia G. Hernandez

The “Hate Has No Home Here” posters with a heart-shaped American Flag are posted up all over NEIU and the North Park community, but no one seems to know that NEIU child advocacy studies instructor Catherine Korda created it.

Sophomore honor student Alivia Heuer said she noticed them “sprouting up around campus and residential areas.

“Homes would have them posted on their windows or on their lawn, but I don’t know who created it,” Heuer said. “I noticed it after the initial ban that Trump proposed against Muslims.”

Just like Heuer, senior student Ryan Borchert did not know who was the creator. He said he also thought it was a response to the Executive Order 13769, commonly known as the travel and “Muslim ban,” which President Donald Trump and his administration enforced last year.

Heuer and Borchert’s guesses were close, but not true. Korda, along with her daughter and a few students from Peterson Elementary School, created the “Hate Has No Home Here” campaign in the fall of 2016. It was a response to the growing animosity inspired and in-name of then-president-elect Donald Trump.

“There had been a lot of negative discourse going on and a lot of hateful language that people were using. So a couple of children I know came up with this phrase and a graphic designer in the neighborhood made an image with it,” Korda said. The “Hate Has No Home Here” campaign is a nonpartisan movement. The poster comes in blue or red with the “Hate Has No Home Here” verse translated into five languages:

Urdu, Arabic, Korean, Hebrew and Spanish.

Korda said her inspiration was thinking about the 48 diverse languages spoken in Mary Gage Peterson Elementary and the different people who reside in North Park. She said she wanted to send out a strong message of acceptance in the community, and offset the hate crime like then-North Park senior student Taylor Volk found, when an offensive note was taped to her door.

According to NBC Chicago, the note read “Back to Hell” and “#Trump” along with homophobic slurs since Volk is openly bisexual.

“Partly my inspiration was wanting everyone to still feel welcomed and realize that our community was still a community that it had been, even if there was hatefulness going on outside,” Korda said. “It was to say that that’s not acceptable.”

Korda said the first people to get these signs were her Intro to Child Advocacy Studies class at the El Centro campus in 2016.

“Amusingly, the posters are all over our campus, but they have no idea that it was me who was a part of it,” Korda said. “When it was first starting, I went into the Pedrosos Center and said, ‘Do you want to have these?’ and they didn’t seem to know what I was talking about.”

The “Hate Has No Home Here” became virtually popular when someone posted a picture of the poster to the Facebook group called Pantsuit Nation. Soon after, the “Hate Has No Home Here” website crashed because of an abundant amount of requests for the posters. “It’s exciting,” Korda said about the rise of the campaign. “I’m proud that, in Charlottesville when the KKK was there, someone was holding

up a ‘Hate Has No Home Here’ sign in response to that.” Korda said the campaign has received backlash and that people didn’t like it for a variety of reasons. “What I’ve come to realize is that it’s a brave thing to put a sign up, depending on where you live,” Korda said. “We’re always trying to have people work on these issues and talk to each other.”

Korda currently supports local campaign leaders in 30 different states. She works with them and a few graphic designers to make new posters with the languages that are most representative of each community.

“We’re trying to figure out where we go from here to try and help the discourse in this country,” Korda said, after saying her team is working on something called ‘Beyond the Signs,’ which is meant to galvanize the community into creating social change. “[It’s] to have people not feel hate, to have people be nice to each other.”

The “Hate Has No Home Here” campaign has a GoFundMe page where Korda said the donations collected are used to print and distribute the posters. All of their downloads are available for free at hatehasnohomehere.gov. “Some people tried to sell them, but we try to have them be free,” Korda said. “The idea is to not make money from them, but to share the message.”

Heuer said, “I think that it’s very beautiful thing that [Korda] took the time to make it and that people wanted to have that as a symbol on their property to basically say they weren’t going to tolerate any hate or any person who’d want to perpetuate that kind of hate.” “We hope that everyone can embrace the idea that there should not be hate in this country,” Korda said.



Photo courtesy of Catherine Korda

CAST instructor Catherine Korda, along with the North Park community, creates the “Hate Has No Home Here” campaign in response to Pres. Donald Trump’s racist language.



The “Hate Has No Home Here” campaign posters are available to download for free on their website www.hatehasnohomehere.org/download. You can donate to their GoFundMe and follow them on Facebook for news and updates.

FEATURES

Golden Perspectives

“How do you approach someone you’re romantically interested in?”

Photos and reported by Cecilia G. Hernandez

Camille Harness (Senior):



“The way my husband and I ended up getting together was - he was actually dating my friend and we bonded over the fact that he was trying to break up with her because she was going crazy. We were just friends initially and I was completely like, ‘You’re my friend’s boyfriend, I’m not getting into that.’ But because we were so nice to each other and just friends, it evolved into a relationship.”

Miguel Gomez (Junior):



“I would approach them in a friendly, goofy manner. I like to have fun with them by trying to make them laugh and enjoy that time with me to make it memorable so the next time they see me, they’d want to be next to me. That leads on from there. A lot of guys fear being in the friendzone, but it’s okay to be close to the friendzone ‘cause a woman always wants to be with her best friend and they want to marry their best friend. You’re not supposed to get out of the friendzone.

The friendzone is not bad. The problem is it makes it awkward when you’re struggling to get out. Now you’re hurting her and your friendship instead of building off of your friendship.”

Joshua Andre (Junior):



“It depends on the time and it depends on the person. I don’t really have a signature go-to move. I would ask them if they wanted to be the mother of my pets [laughs] if we’re on Tinder. I would say, ‘I already told my pets that you’re going to be their mom.’ If it’s in person, I’ll be myself. You just got to be goofy and be nice.”

Mariana Vazquez (Senior):



“I just smile. Not creepily. I don’t think I’m as fluent in that area as some people would think. I’m actually very shy when it comes to those things. I just smile because I know I have a good smile. I probably compliment her like, ‘that shirt compliments your skin tone really well.’ Something like that, something cheesy like that, and then I continue smiling. Or I compliment her eyebrows. If I think you’re cute, I’m going to compliment your eyebrows.

That’s my go-to move. And I continue smiling. I don’t flirt, I talk. It’s not my fault I’m smooth.”

How do you talk to your crush?



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Opinions

Legalizing Marijuana: How Illinois can Benefit

Robert Kukla

In grade school, during D.A.R.E., a program designed to teach younger students about the dangers of drugs, we were instilled with the fear that marijuana is the gateway drug that would eventually land us in jail. During my first and only experience, I did not land in jail. I did eat an entire pot of spaghetti, forgot about it and was looking for the culprit responsible for my now empty bowl.

This idea that marijuana is a gateway drug continues to be a big discussion point that has carried over into the debate of whether or not it should be legalized. This stigma tends to overlook the benefits of the plant that could help millions of people.

Marijuana is a natural herb that can be used to help relieve cancer-related symptoms and help patients cope with anxiety. The legalization of marijuana is an ongoing, polarizing debate. Despite the conservative opposition, there are many people who support it.

With marijuana currently legal in eight states, Illinois lawmakers held a hearing where they proposed legalizing the herb for adults age 21 or older in November 2017.

At the hearing, issues and controversies surrounding the proposition were addressed including how its passing could potentially benefit the state.

According to an article from a monthly newsletter called Taxpayers' Federation of Illinois, it is estimated that the revenue Illinois would make from legalized marijuana would be between \$53 million to \$115.2 million.

The article was featured on the blog Reboot Illinois, and I feel that the estimated revenue is a substantial amount of money that can be used towards education and other important areas where funding is needed. Also, seeing that Illinois has been in a financial crisis for several years, the state needs a new source of revenue. Personally, I think marijuana would be one way to go, with its growing popularity.

This debate is increasingly popular with millennials who are open to the idea of legalization of the natural herb.

NEIU student Raquel Gomez said, "Marijuana should be legalized. One reason is that



it would help many people dealing with medical issues such as diabetes, cancer, anxiety, chronic pain, etc. It would also help Chicago's economy. The money made by taxing marijuana could go to funding for schools and would help the city not be in the red zone all the time."

Its legalization would allow people to have a natural remedy for their symptoms and something that could, in most cases, improve their health.

In fact, according to an article from the Colorado Epilepsy Foundation, a study where 261 children were treated with cannabis for seizures resulted in 47 percent of them noticing a reduction in seizure activity after 8-12 weeks.

With more research emerging on the benefits of marijuana, legalizing it will give patients easier access to something that can strongly improve their illness.

With marijuana still criminalized, the in-

carceration rate keeps increasing, especially among minorities who have higher rates of jail time for non-violent crimes. According to Drug War Facts, a nonprofit that is dedicated to reforming drug policy, the African-American population in California is 4 times more likely to be arrested for marijuana, twelve times more likely to be imprisoned for a marijuana felony, and 3 times more likely to be imprisoned per marijuana possession arrest.

Rick Steves is an American travel writer and a long time proponent for the legalization of marijuana, helping his home state of Washington legalize the herb.

In an article from ABC 7 News, he stated, "Seventy thousand people are locked up in our country every year, 700,000 people are arrested, for possession of marijuana, not violent crimes."

Steves went on to say that the majority of people being arrested are not white people but people of color. American Civil Liberties Union reported that despite the relative equal usage of marijuana, blacks are 3.73 times more likely to get arrested for possession than whites.

The notion that marijuana causes an increase in violence is a myth. According to ACLU, out of the 8.2 million marijuana arrests in 2010, 88 percent were simply for possession.

Even though opposition remains, the decriminalization of marijuana saw an increase in support, including from myself. According to Illinois Policy, an independent organization aiming to generate public policy solutions to benefit Illinois, two-thirds of voters support legalizing marijuana for recreational use if it is regulated and taxed like alcohol.

The many benefits to the herb can bring cannot be ignored. Not only can it medically help several people, but it will result in a drop in unnecessary arrests which cost Illinois money, and it will bring significant revenue to our state

Opinions

Concealed Protection: Allowing to Carry Guns

Amaris E. Rodriguez

My hands were sweating the entire time I was at my first shooting range. My mind raced through different imaginary scenarios where someone in the neighboring gun lanes would go crazy and decide to shoot everyone. Trying to calm my nerves, my boyfriend said everyone else at the range had guns too, so the shooter would be easily stopped if that happened.

This seems to be a common belief among those who are in favor of concealed carry licenses: If citizens were allowed to carry their own guns, they would be able to help out in an emergency.

As someone who did not grow up around guns, I am a little hesitant to buy into that.

Especially when 90 percent of homicide victims were killed by gunshots in the first six months of 2017, according to the Chicago Tribune.

With gun violence in Chicago surpassing cities like Los Angeles and New York City, gun laws have become an increasingly popular topic.

Currently, Illinois has some of the strongest gun laws in the United States.

Compared to other states, Illinois requires the ownerships of a Firearm Owner's Identification Card, along with a waiting period of seventy-two hours to receive the handgun after purchase. A background check is also performed before obtaining a concealed carry license.

While the ability to obtain a FOID card was once a controversial issue, the new question focuses on the ability to conceal and carry a handgun.

According to Gunstocarry.com, an online source for conceal and carry statistics nationwide, there are currently about 16,358,844 concealed carry permits across the U.S. They saw an increase of 256 percent since 2007. While the thought of people carrying around guns might seem frightening to some, the reality is that Illinois is one of the few states that requires training before issuing a concealed carry license.

Concealed carry licenses in Illinois are issued by the state police to individuals who are over the age of twenty-one and have passed a mandated sixteen-hour training course.

The Trace, an independent, nonpartisan, nonprofit that reports on America's gun violence, says other states have voted against training courses.

According to an article published by The Trace, Republican lawmakers in Missouri voted in favor of dismissing the required eight-hour course or completion of a live-fire exercise with a range instructor in 2017.

This places Missouri, one of our neighboring states, on the list of 26 states that currently do not require any training before issuing a concealed carry license. Republican State Senator Brian Munzlinger, who voted in favor of the change, said that the new bill, "will allow law abiding citizens to protect themselves from criminals."

While the chants of protecting the 2nd Amendment of the Constitution have long been heard, the claims that being able to carry guns will be useful to everyday citizens is becoming more popular.

As far-fetched as this argument might seem to some, the truth is it holds some validity.

The number of concealed handgun permits increased from 4.6 million to over 12.8 million in 2017, with murder rates dropping 25 percent, according to The Washington Times.

So do concealed carry licenses allow gun owners to protect themselves? The answer is yes. A homeowner in Chicago was able to protect himself from an armed robber because he had access to his handgun in October 2017. He also had a concealed carry license.

A year earlier, a Chicago Uber driver, a conceal-carry license holder, shot and wounded a gunman who had opened fire on a crowd in Logan Square, rendering the shooter the only person with gun related injuries.

Despite there being proof that everyday civilians, who happen to have a concealed carry license, can stop crime, the idea of people walking around with concealed guns is nerve wracking. However, I blame my discomfort on my lack of knowledge about guns.

For people like my boyfriend who have grown up around guns and know the proper way to use one, concealed carry is the next logical step.

In the meantime, while I learn my way around how to properly handle a gun, I do find comfort in the laws that Illinois has in place for those who are looking to obtain a concealed carry permit.

The mandatory background check, the waiting period and the concealed carry class are all positive steps our state is taking to ensure there are regulations in place for those who are looking to obtain a handgun.

These steps are ensuring that concealed carry licenses go to citizens who are responsible and educated enough to know when a gun is needed in a situation.

While concealed carry laws might not completely erase the crime in Chicago, they do offer people the option of protecting themselves, which can be a matter of life or death.

What are your views on gun control?

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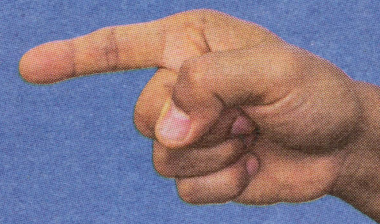
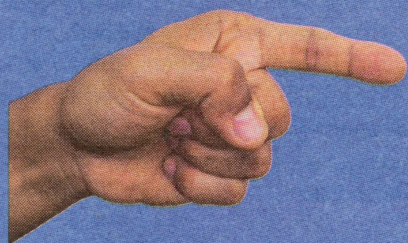
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ARTS & LIFE



Photos by Cecilia G. Hernandez

Turning up with Chicago's Vic Mensa

Cecilia G. Hernandez and Robin Bridges

After several mesmerizing performances from nine groups who rapped, danced or played on awesome LED drums, Vic Mensa held an inspirational improvisational Q and A with the audience during "The Turn Up" on Feb. 1.

Originally, graduate assistant for Student Leadership Development Albert Chanthaboury said he had a set of predetermined questions for Mensa.

"When he got in, he got to look at the list and he told us straight-up like, 'I don't like these questions,'" Chanthaboury said, laughing at the memory. "We were like, 'Whoa! What do we do now?'"

Chanthaboury said it was Mensa's idea to open questions up to the crowd instead.

NEIU student Erika Ramirez was blown away. "I didn't know they were going to do a Q and A," Ramirez said after the show. "We thought that was amazing; we were both like crying."

Several people from the crowd raised their hand during the Q and A to be picked by Mensa for questions.

One student explained how she's an "old

school hip-hop cat" and said she does not like the current hip-hop scene because she doesn't understand what they're saying. She asked, "So how do you feel about hip hop today? As we evolve, it should move in a different direction. How do you feel about that?"

"One key part to take from your question and think about is: 'as we evolve,'" Mensa said. "Have we evolved? Is our society today further along and more progressive as a whole than when the music you're talking about was made?"

“I just wish he was there longer, but he was amazing. It was a pretty good show.”

- Antonio Brito, NEIU student

"Are we further along in our collective consciousness than we were in the 90s, or even in the 70s? I would say not," Mensa said hip-hop is going to reflect where the culture is, "culture as all of our collective thoughts and ideas."

"I think we're at a place in time when people as a whole hit on communities that are not very progressive and the music reflects that," Mensa continued.

His response was unexpected to me. Partly

because I didn't think he would be so honest, but another part is how Mensa adequately highlighted the similarities of our society to previous generations.

After the Q and A, Mensa performed three songs "16 shots", "Shades of Blue" and "We could be free."

"It was amazing," Ramirez said. "I love Vic Mensa so when I got the email saying he was coming to NEIU, I was like 'I have to be there.' Immediately I got my ticket."

NEIU student Antonio Brito said, "To be honest, I was a little disappointed just because it was condensed, it was short. I just wish he was there longer, but he was amazing. It was a pretty good show."

"I know that students wished the [Mensa] performance was longer, but for an hour show it's already 50 thousand, 60 thousand dollars, and we can't blow a year's budget on one event," Chanthaboury said. "It would mean that there

wouldn't be more events for the rest of the semester. So how about we do a 30 minute Q and A and a three song performance to bring

VIC/ page 15



'Monster Hunter: World' the best RPG of 2018

Sarahy Lopez

Monster Hunter: World is an action role-playing game (RPG) developed by Capcom studios that was released on Jan. 26.

As part of a franchise, Monster Hunter: World already set the highest of standards of 2018's RPG games, receiving numerous praise from journalists and players alike. It has already sold over 2 million copies, making it the 10th best-selling PS4 video game within just two weeks of its release.

But is it worth the hype?

Monster Hunter: World sets the player up in vast environments where they can explore and fight monsters to their heart's content.

Each world has its own ecosystem, meaning that all creatures and monsters function without player interaction. One day you might see a peaceful forest, where animal herds casually roam around and eat plants. Other times you might witness two giant, territorial monsters fighting to the death.

The hours alone exploring can be limitless, as players can gather resources to help build better armor, potions and weaponry. Herbs, mushrooms, metal ore and bugs can all be collected and used to make better items, presenting a near-overwhelming world of possibilities for customization and specialization.

As part of this ecosystem, the player is also in charge of making sure the food chain and natural environment doesn't get disrupted by a dangerous predator. The game sends players on missions to kill those predators, ranging from dinosaur-like creatures to giant dragons.

With 14 different weapon types, players can choose how they want to hunt their targets, either by bow, blade or mini-machine gun.

Some weapons may require more practice over others, but with time, players can master their chosen weapon. The game does not lock you into a certain weapon class either, so you may change a weapon anytime you want.

You also get the most adorable companion, a Palico, a large cat that helps you fight



Screenshots captured using PlayStation Share by: Sarahy Lopez

and collect items.

And the best thing about this game?

It has no difficulty levels to choose from, meaning that there is no "easy" or "hard" mode. It is an equally scaled game for every player; every monster hunt will be just about the same difficulty for everyone.

The game is somewhat unforgiving, throwing new players into giant monster fights right in the beginning. Every monster hunt is a battle for survival, and each battle can take about 10-50 minutes in real time.

The monsters feel real within the game. They run away when hurt, they get more aggressive when they feel like their health is lowering, they can get into fights with other equally giant monsters, and they can chase after players and prey when they're feeling hungry. Every fight feels unique and different, because you're never really able to predict the monster.

After you defeat a monster, the loot and rewards are satisfying, allowing players to make new armor to show off to friends in the game's multiplayer system.

I'm about 30 hours into the game, and I still feel like there is a ton of questing and hunting left to do. If you judge playing hours by its retailing \$60 price tag, I would say that you're getting your money's worth and more.

One of the only pitfall that this game runs into is the confusing online system. It

can be overly complicated to invite a friend into your game to do missions together.

You can play with friends but only if they are in your online session. If they are in another server, you won't be able to go on missions with them. Also, friends are required to have already completed specific missions in order to play together.

You're fighting against the system in the game just to go into expeditions with friends. It is a very different multiplayer, compared to other modern games where you can just immediately jump in with a buddy.

You may fight giant monsters with up to four friends and it is definitely more fun, but there are setbacks.

But the best part about inviting friends is that it doesn't make the monster hunt fights easier, it makes them harder. The game automatically

makes monster fights more challenging than its regular single-player mode when you are in a group of two or more.

There is also a squad creation system where players can make their own guild up to 16 players.

Besides the main quests, there are plenty of side missions to keep you busy. Optional quests will provide extra items and in-game currency, and are often fun and challenging.

Despite it being only one month into the year, Monster Hunter: World has already established itself as one of the frontrunners for best game of 2018.

So grab your shield, sword and your Palico because it's time to hunt, meowster.

Share your 'Monster Hunter: World' shots on Instagram.



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NEIU's '150 Strong' Super Bowl commercial

Nicole F. Anderson

NEIU debuted a new 30-second television ad as part of NEIU's "150 Strong" campaign during the Super Bowl pregame show and then during the evening news that followed the game.

The ad was done in a spoken-word format instead of dialogue with the message, "We are more than just the sum of our history. Today we are writing tomorrow's next success story. Our legacy is diversity of body and mind. Your best you is waiting. It is your time to shine. Be bold. Be known. Break ground. Rise above. Find your place, join the race and set the new pace to become. We're ready when you are. We've been here all along. We're Northeastern Illinois University and we're 150 strong."

The ad showed people in science labs, walking across the graduation stage, playing instruments, medium close-ups and ended with a woman speaking spoken word dropping the mic.

In a YouTube video uploaded by NEIUlife, Creative Director J. Matt Byerly said, "This year makes Northeastern's 150 year anniversary and we wanted a concept that really celebrates that. We also wanted to tell our story in a unique way that was also entertaining, so we chose spoken word, poetry slam approach. It is important to us that we capture the spirit of our institutions, the beauty of this campus, and locations, as well as the diversity that we are known for."

In an email to the Independent, Chief Marketing and Communications Officer Mize Dizon wrote, "It will be the first time the university has broadcast television ads in at least eight years, and it is part of a larger strategy to bolster marketplace awareness for our brand."

NEIU has also announced that the ad will be played during the Winter Olympics.

According to Mike Dizon, almost everyone casted in the ad was a member of the NEIU community.

Amilarry Obi went to Facebook to express her thoughts, "I love it and love my school."

NEIU senior Maria Xoy said, "My professor showed the ad to me while I was walking

by the Stage Center. She said she really liked it and so did many others. It has a very strong tone to it. After everything NEIU has gone through during the whole budget impasse, it is understandable. It makes it sound like we're still standing 150 years strong but whoever doesn't know our story, might get the wrong idea of the tone and therefore come off negatively."

Some students felt differently. NEIU senior Alexis Abarca, who saw the ad on Facebook, said, "I'm not bashing the commercial (and aware that everyone was asked to audition), but it was very Eurocentric... Whenever I heard the word diversity, I associate it with what I've learned in sociology, women of color and other people who come from other marginalized positions... I feel like for a university that really stresses on that diversity, they really missed that representation. Where was the Middle Eastern community or African-American women for that matter?"

NEIU student Alfredo Palafox tweeted, "The new NEIU commercial, wow what a waste. Talked about diversity."

Mike Dizon stated in an email, "The ads were funded by the existing marketing budget, which was reorganized to provide a more diversified advertising mix. They did not require additional University funds."

In a press release, NEIU commissioned market research and found that in the past 5 years, awareness among prospective students has declined. The same commissioned market research also placed NEIU below other Illinois colleges and universities in regard to awareness of the school and its brand.

The ad is to be aired 250 more times from February to April throughout the Chicagoland area on networks such as NBC, Telemundo YouTube and Facebook with an estimated 4.2 million views.

Dizon also stated in the press release, "Our investment in mass media advertising enables us to more effectively compete with other Chicago-area institutions."

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Spring 2018 brings retreats options to NEIU

Amy Buscemi

On the weekend of Jan. 26, NEIU student were treated to a cost free overnight retreat in Lake Geneva Wisconsin, where they spent over 24 hours getting to know themselves and each other; their differences and similarities.

The outing, known as the Spectrum Social Justice Retreat 2018, was designed by chaperone and Director of Student Leadership Development Veronica E. Rodriguez.

It provided students with two full days of activities, challenging them to recognize their societal blind spots, share their backgrounds and experiences, and create bonds with other students they might not otherwise have had the opportunity to.

The retreat is called to embrace the array, or "spectrum," of different identities which exist within the NEIU community and society as a whole. Rodriguez said she believes "social justice is an important piece of leadership," and attributes this to her education in social justice at Loyola University.

The event's attendance consisted of an array of ethnicities, genders and sexual orientations, something that Rodriguez said was a goal in making choices on attendees.

The retreat participants included 17 NEIU students of various majors and three members of NEIU's Student Leadership Development team. They stayed at George Williams College where they were set up with accommodations that included hotel style lodging, unlimited snacks, a buffet style dinner and three buffet style meals on Saturday.

The attendees, some of whom it was their first time leaving Chicago, assumed the amenities would be dorm style but found themselves staying in pairs with a full size bed for each student and personal showers in each room.

The GWC campus is located right on the currently frozen-over Lake Geneva, which gave students the opportunity to escape the bustle of city life and venture to a more tranquil environment in which to focus, learn and relax.

The workshops were held right down the hall from the rooms. Attendee Yadira Alonzo said, "I loved the location, such a beautiful and peaceful place to have a retreat. The accommodations were amazing!"

Although the vacation aspect of the trip

was a huge draw for students, what they would learn throughout the retreat would be the biggest takeaway.

Another attendee, Vanessa Beganovic said, "I left feeling enlightened by the different realities my peers shared with me and inspired to continue learning more about these realities."

The most emotion-provoking activities for the group included two circle style icebreakers, one in which students were challenged to step inside the circle of their peers when they identified with a statement. Statements ranged from ones about social values, family systems and economic status to much more personal statements that opened truths.

Rodriguez also noted that those involved in the Leadership Pathways Program in Fall 2017 got choice priority, as they work on achieving the final steps towards completing their Pathways Leadership Certification.

The Leadership Pathways Certificate Program is a free, eight-week leadership course at NEIU offered every Fall and Spring semester which invites students to explore critical thinking surrounding leadership,

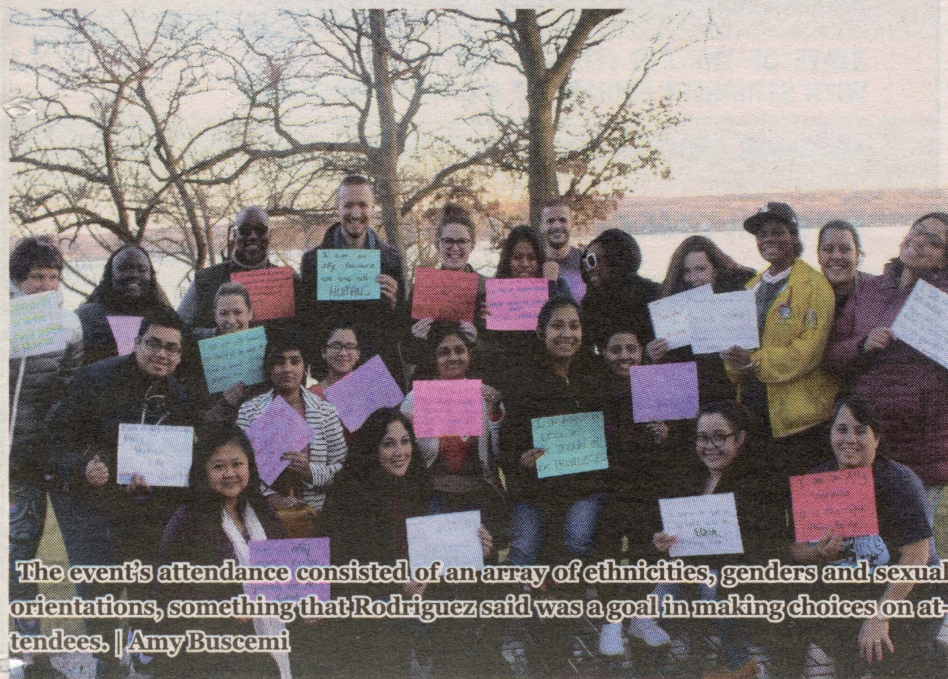
change and perspectives. Once students complete the eight-week course, they are required to complete two additional SLD hosted events in which to receive their Leadership Pathways Certification and be recognized at the LEAD Reception.

Although the retreat piloted in 2012, this was only the third one that NEIU has hosted, with the second in 2013. Rodriguez attributes this to the budget cuts the university recently faced in addition to staffing changes, both of which caused its elimination from SLD's priority list. She said she was determined to make it happen this year and plans to do it again next year.

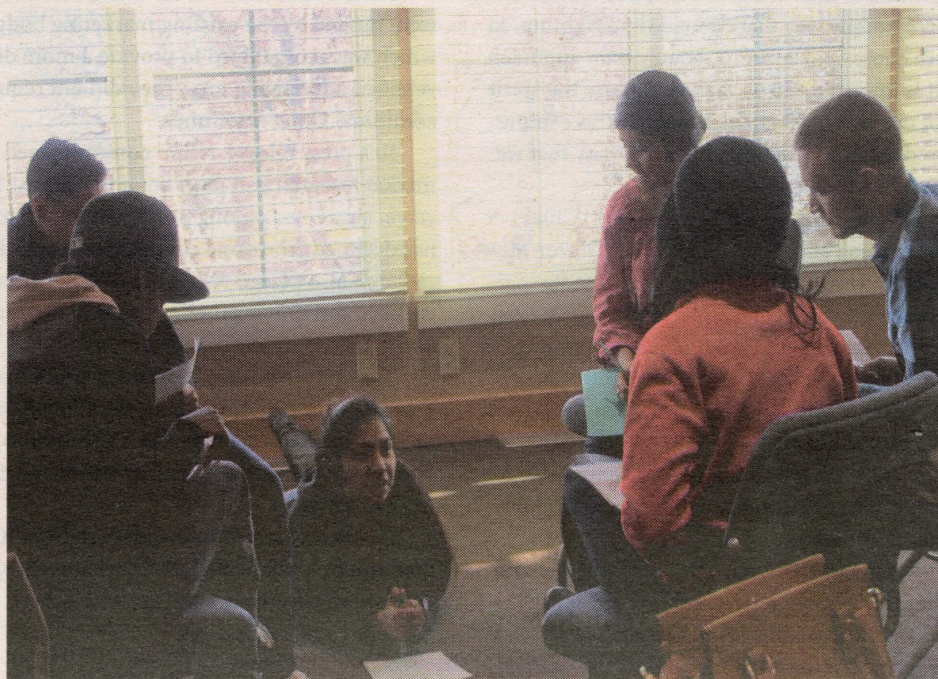
In addition to this retreat, others will be offered by SLD this year. April will host a new senior retreat, it hopes to give graduating seniors time to escape and focus on their future.

Rodriguez said resume and network-building style workshops could potentially be some of the focuses for the senior retreat. The idea to hold a senior retreat was based on previous retreats done for incoming freshmen.

The senior retreat is being organized



The event's attendance consisted of an array of ethnicities, genders and sexual orientations, something that Rodriguez said was a goal in making choices on attendees. || Amy Buscemi



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Retreat

Continued from 14

by Rae Joyce Baguilat, assistant director to Rodriguez, who assisted in the Spectrum Social Justice Retreat. Maria Genao-Homs, director of SLD, was a facilitator of this year's Spectrum Social Justice Leadership Retreat.

When asked what she wants students to take away from the experience, Rodriguez said, "One, is that they made a new friend, or a new connection, or a new understanding. Sometimes you want all these bigger grandiose things, but it's the little things that are important. A lot of learning can take place just from hanging out with each other late at night."

Rodriguez hoped that students achieved a better understanding of who they are through the experience. She mentioned one of her favorite things about the retreats is watching students that might not have been fond of each other build a strong bond.

If you are a current NEIU student that might be interested in future retreats or other leadership opportunities offered at NEIU, stop by the Pedroso Center and ask to speak to one of the Student Leadership directors.

Demands

Continued from 2

Isaura Pulido, chair of Educational and Curriculum Studies, said that she is in full support of the presidential search.

"I believe each of them have the potential to transform Northeastern into a beaming urban institution. I've worked at many different universities that might be characterized as 'top-tier' schools in Illinois, but the lack of diversity and these spaces made them hollow and completely divorced from the real world. The students here remind me every day why I went to graduate school, and why I teach. I tell my colleagues that Northeastern has the best students, because we do," said Pulido.

"It is a time for change in leadership. We need leadership with a proven record for strategic planning, recruitment and leadership development like Dr. Guajardo holds. We need leadership with knowledge of experience like Dr. Gibson has. We need the skill set of someone like Dr. Medina, who deeply understands issues of diversity and equity. We need the skill set of Dr. Sukhwant Jhaj, who can help us redesign services to better serve students. We have four excellent

presidential candidates and I urge you to move forward and pick one," Pulido said.

President of the Student Government Association Ashlei Ross, said, "I ask that each Board member put their personal agendas aside, and truly think about what's best for NEIU students. How can we say that we are a Hispanic-serving institute, when we are graduating less than 20 percent of our Hispanic students?"

"We need someone to not use the diversity as a tagline, but actually makes sure every student, faculty and staff feels included," said Ross. The SGA wrote a resolution to stop the presidential search last year after being told it would cost \$90,000 to pay a presidential search firm, as the school was in a budget crisis.

The Board went along with the decision, and about 180 employees had to be laid off. "The resolution didn't mean that students didn't ever want to search, we just didn't want to search at that time. We are in new times and ready to move forward. With the search, we are able to see hope again. We ask the Board not to take our hope away. As students, faculty and staff are all on accord to move one of these candidates to revalorize this institution," Ross concluded.

The Board of Trustees have moved to begin contract negotiations with one of the candidates. They have not disclosed which candidate at this time.

MC Jagon and Vic Mensa ask the audience for questions during a Q&A session before his performance on Feb. 1 | Photo by Cecilia G. Hernandez

Vic

Continued from 11

it down to about 20 thousand all-inclusive." NEIU student Antonio Brito said, "To be honest, I was a little disappointed just because it was condensed, it was short. I just wish he was there longer, but he was amazing. It was a pretty good show.

"I know that students wished the [Mensa] performance was longer, but for an hour show it's already 50 thousand, 60 thousand dollars, and we can't blow a year's budget on one event," Chanthabury said. "It would mean that there wouldn't be more events for the rest of the semester. So how about we do a 30 minute Q and A and a three song performance to bring it down to about 20 thousand all-inclusive."

This show was Mensa's first show after coming off the 4:44 tour with Jay Z. He was promoting the intentionally personal album "Homecoming" since its release in July 2017. Mensa said during an August 2017 interview on a podcast called "Pod Save The People" that

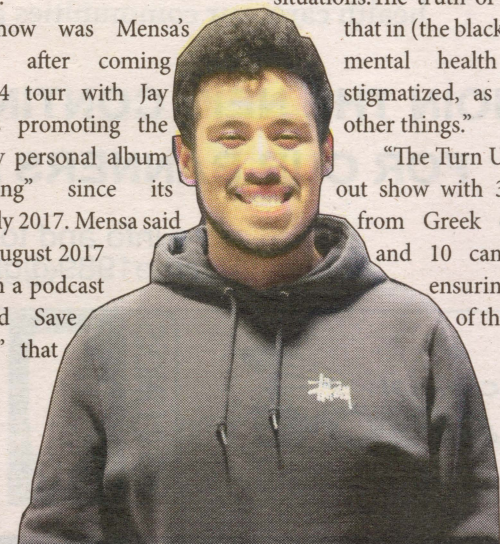
he called the album therapy. Mensa said, "I wanted to use it to address the things that I had trouble speaking about to people."

The full 15 track album also pulls hits from his earlier released EP "The Manuscript" as bonus tracks. The album cover provides clues into the vulnerable nature of "Homecoming."

Mensa said, "I wanna be somebody that can inform, educate and empathize through music."

He continues, "I think this album was like therapy for me ... I wanted to make music that was so overtly personal, honest and vulnerable that kids might be able to erase some of the shame that they felt from their situations. The truth of the matter is that in (the black) community mental health is hugely stigmatized, as are a lot of other things."

"The Turn Up" was a sold out show with 30 volunteers from Greek organizations and 10 campus officers ensuring the safety of the people.



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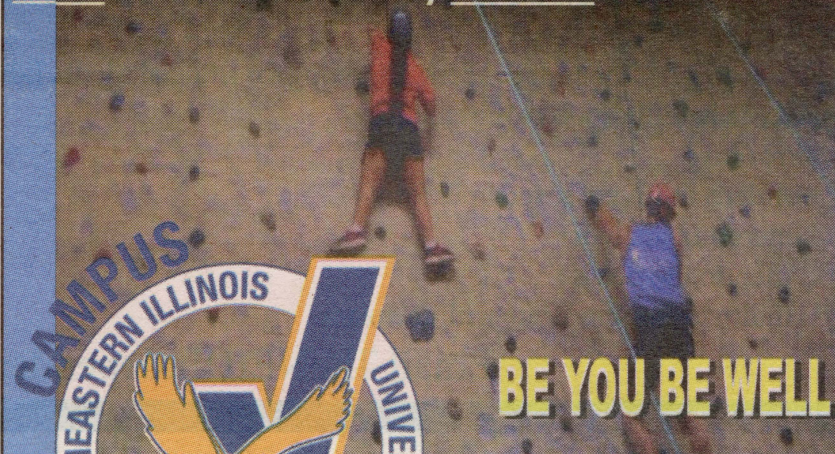
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