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Independent - Oct. 8, 2019

Robin Bridges

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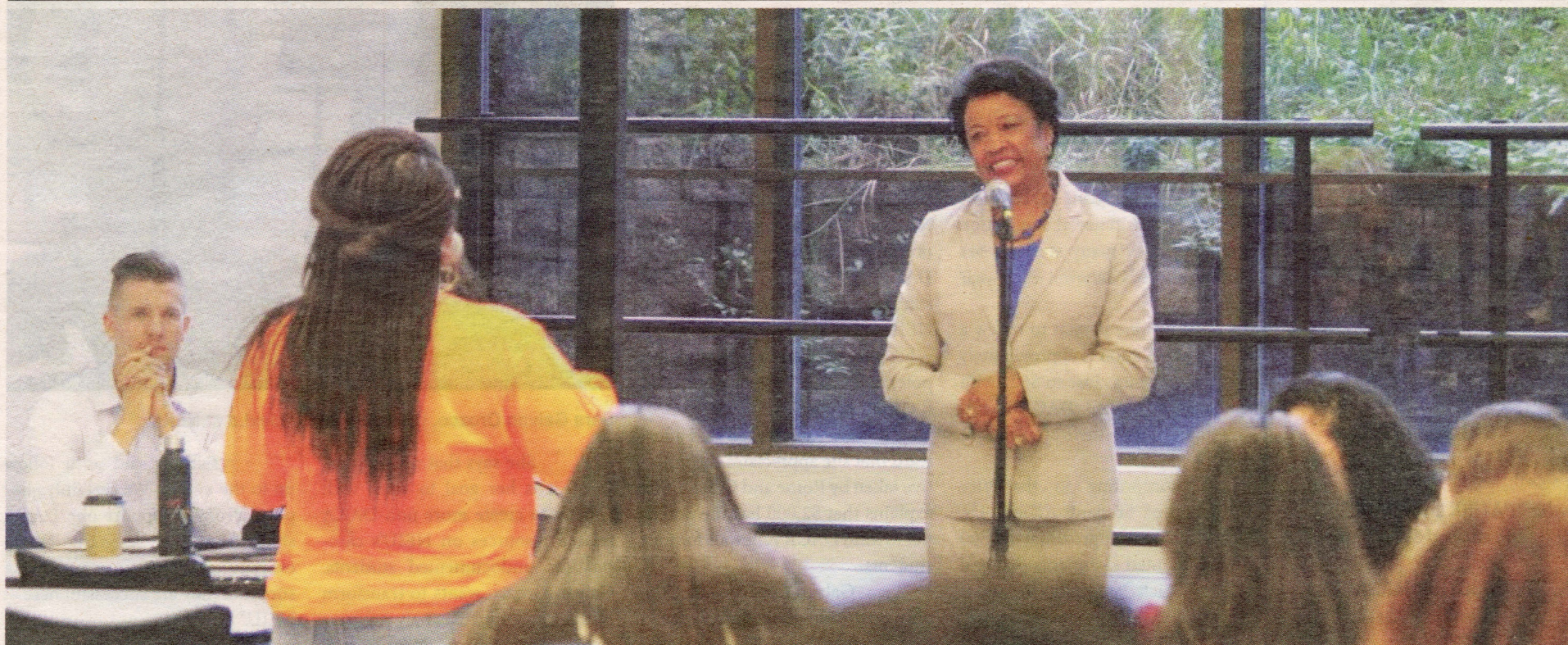
NORTHEASTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY'S INDEPENDENT

Student-run newspaper since 1962

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 8, 2019

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VOLUME 39 ISSUE 22



Frannie Mendoza

NEIU president and provost pledge money to undocumented students

**Cassidy Schmidt and
Rebecca Denham**
Writer and News Editor

President Gloria J. Gibson and the new Provost, Dennis Rome, pledged \$1,000 each towards re-

sources for undocumented student resources. The money will be donated from Gibson and Rome's personal bank accounts.

The pledge came as a follow up to a question asked by a student at the Town Hall meeting on Sept. 24.

The president of ChiMexLa, Sara Galvan Orozco, a student who is double majoring in studio art and Latino studies, stepped up to the microphone on Tuesday afternoon to represent the many undocumented students that did not feel

safe enough to do so.

Galvan Orozco asked, "How will you make it up to students? One of requests to you is to invest just as much time and money to undocumented student issues at school. They are in need of help. People

are getting detained and stopped by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE)...We need to do better by them. Other institutions are offering the undocumented student population detail-oriented

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PLEDGE

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programming to support them."

She also asked Gibson if the university could invest \$25,000 in Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) renewals as this is an issue many students have already expressed they are struggling to pay.

Gibson responded by saying that she was not aware of this and asked for further explanation. Gibson asked how often students are required to renew their DACA applications.

Rome then asked how much a DACA renewal application costs and how many students are paying towards renewal each year at NEIU.

The cost for one person to renew a DACA application is approximately \$500, sometimes close to \$600 with mailing fees applied. DACA recipients must renew their applications every two years.

According to the Vice President of Student Affairs, Dr. Daniel Lopez, approximately 300 undocumented students attend NEIU which amounts to about 3.7% of the student population.

Lopez explained that while NEIU does have on-campus resources for undocumented stu-

dents, it does not have the financial resources to provide DACA renewals for every student.

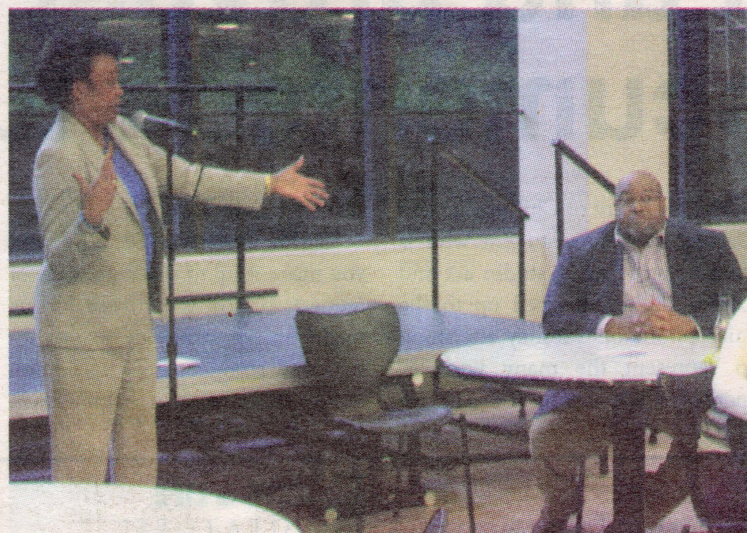
After hearing this, both Rome and Gibson pledged \$1,000 to help provide resources for undocumented students on campus.

The money will go into an existing fund for undocumented student resources which will then be used according to a plan set up by Assistant Dean of Students and Director of Undocumented Student Resources, Luvia Moreno. Gibson says she has, "every confidence that Luvia will come up with a process by which to disperse the dollars."

Approximately 30 of NEIU's undocumented students on campus will need to renew their DACA application this year. Gibson said while the \$2,000 is a start, NEIU still needs more funds, which is her goal in order to help students, potentially, only have to pay half of the \$500 renewal fee.

Galvan Orozco said afterward that she appreciates the initiative taken by Rome and Gibson. She explains that \$2,000 has the potential to fund DACA renewals for four students.

Galvan Orozco said, "The only downside about the pledge is that it only helps DACAmented students and not those who were not eligible for DACA."



Gibson and Rome at the second town hall organized by Student Government Association.



Sara Galvan Orozco, president of ChiMexLa at NEIU.

She says that moving forward, it is her goal to work with Gibson to create more non-DACA related resources on NEIU's campus for undocumented students. Galvan Orozco wants to transform NEIU into an increasingly progressive campus that provides a welcoming environment for incoming undocumented students, "Students like me are ready to have this conversation and not only talk the talk but walk the walk. In other words, we are ready to take action and support NEIU in developing their undocumented student resources."

Following the event, both Gibson and Rome said they were surprised to find out how much in fees undocumented students at NEIU are having to pay every year.

They both feel many people are unaware of the fees that undocumented students are having to pay and expect the internal donors will donate to the fund as well, now that they are aware of the issue. They also hope to obtain donations from outside sources as the word gets out.

Gibson said as a follow up to the event, "We certainly support, strongly support our DACA students and we're going to do everything in our power to make sure that they are successful here at NEIU."

If anyone is interested or wants to learn about becoming an ally to undocumented students, there will be a workshop hosted by Moreno on Thursday, Oct. 24 from 3 to 4:30 p.m.

The training will provide attendees with increased awareness of the issues and concerns of NEIU undocumented students and their families, as well as, knowledge of NEIU's policies and practices that impact undocumented students. The workshop will also highlight ways to cultivate an open and supportive campus.

If you have any questions about this topic, you may also contact Luvia Moreno, Assistant Dean of Students and Director of Undocumented Student Resources at lu-moreno@neiu.edu.

President Gibson explains herself at town hall

Rebecca Denham

News Editor

NEIUNewsEditor@gmail.com

President Gloria J. Gibson affirmed that she herself had picked former White House press secretary, Sean Spicer, as a speaker in the Daniel L. Goodwin Lecture Series during a Town Hall meeting. This was only one of the student and staff questions posed to her during the approximately 40 minute-long open microphone session held in NEIU's cafeteria.

Dr. Gibson began the meeting with an apology to the students, faculty and staff.

"For those of you, specifically, who were hurt by the lecture, who were fearful of the lecture, who felt unsafe before, during or after the lecture, to you, I extend my deepest, deepest apology because it was never my intent for anyone to be fearful, for anyone to be afraid, or to feel unsafe. So it is important for me to say that to you and extend that apology to you."

One of the first questions directed at Gibson was on the intentions behind bringing Sean Spicer to the institution.

Gibson responded, "We are facing a critical time. We have a presidential election next year. We need to as a campus and certainly as young people, be informed about what the issues are that are facing us as we move forward in the 2020 election."

Next to speak was Carolina Schwartz, who faced the president with her true feelings on the decision to move forward with the event and asked what it would have taken other than the inspiring petition letter signed by several hundred students and teachers to change Gibson's mind on the invitation.

Schwartz said, "I think it's important that we validate everybody's feelings, in my opinion, it was kind of a slap in the face."

Gibson responded to this by reminding the crowd that she had supported students through her support of their protest.

This response was followed by a question from NEIU Independent News Editor and communications, media and theater major, Rebecca Denham.

Denham asked, "So earlier when you said it was a decision that you have made, does that mean that you yourself specifically picked Sean Spicer to speak here?"

Gibson hesitated, but then responded, "Yes."

Denham continued, asking Gibson if her communication or lack-there-of may have attributed to the upset feelings of the university community. Gibson admitted that communication was poor, but that she could not use that as an excuse.

Gibson said, "So everyone sort of found out [about Spicer coming to campus], and then they waited and waited, and I was waiting and waiting trying to determine if the campus was going to be safe. That was important to me and so there was delayed communication."

As a follow up to Gibson saying that she wanted to wait until she felt campus was safe to announce Spicer's attendance, another student posed a question later in the meeting about why she had still allowed Spicer to attend if students, staff and faculty all directly expressed that they did not feel safe having him on campus.

Gibson's answer to this was, "So for me, it was giving the students an opportunity to protest. I wanted you to have the opportunity to protest." She said she was more concerned with external groups coming to campus that may cause it to become unsafe.

Following that question, another student, Chuck Sipps, NEIU Independent Arts & Life Editor and a communication, media

and theater major, asked Gibson if she had waited to tell students about Spicer to ensure that they would protest, which would, in turn, draw media attention to the university.

Gibson responded that she would not engage in that kind of behavior.

An NEIU student, majoring in computer science, then asked about the influence that Daniel L. Goodwin, NEIU alumnus and funder of the lecture series, has on picking people for the series.

Gibson replied by saying that Goodwin's donations to the university not only fund the lecture series, but also many scholarships throughout the university.

Gibson talked about the selection process for speakers: "So sometimes it's a matter of who's available. And who, I know that \$25,000 is a lot of money, but for some speakers, you're talking about fifty thousand, a hundred thousand."

Another student, majoring in social work, then came up to ask why Gibson had not attended the previous town hall and why she had waited until now, after the protest, to meet with students. Gibson responded to her failure to attend saying it was not intentional and, "I just could not rearrange my calendar to be here...I respect that you wanted to hear from your president."

Dr. Adrian Castrejon, assistant professor of justice studies, also felt strongly that Gibson should have attended the previous Town Hall, highlighting the fact that many students expressed strong emotions that should have been heard.

Casterjon went on to tell Gibson that he was concerned and as a faculty member of NEIU, he felt somewhat responsible for the students' pain because he represents the university. He said, "I'm really, really struggling with what is next

for faculty and staff who are here supporting our students. I honestly don't know what to do."

Gibson followed this by saying, "First and foremost, as I've said, we have to have more communication. We have to have more collaboration and we have to have more transparency. And that is my commitment to the campus."

Casterjon said after the event, "I know that all students' questions were not answered, which is crucial for this work to continue and for students to start healing from this. Yet I am glad that she reached out because it allowed for this conversation to start, which at this point was the most important step. But, we cannot end this work here. I encourage students to continue to hold us accountable and to continue to look for answers."

Gibson began wrapping up the meeting by reiterating that

she plans to work more closely with the SGA and said that, "Students are our major constituent group. That's why we're all here to serve students. I work every day to serve you, every day. Every day. And it is my passion. It is not a job. It is what I do. It is who I am."

Gibson finished by saying, "And I look forward to better communication so that, where the trust was broken, we can rebuild that."

Following the meeting the new Provost for NEIU, Dennis Rome, who was also in attendance, mentioned how impressed he was with the students' professionalism and respect when asking their questions.

Rome said, "It made me feel really good about the character of our student body here. I think we have some of the best students in this state." President Gibson agreed.



Frannie Mendoza

Gibson with student Wendy Cruz and her dog after the town hall where Gibson gave an apology to the students, faculty and staff.

Student green fee helping global climate

Victoria Hong
Writer

Between Sept. 20-27, over 7.6 Million people in 185 countries around the globe took to the streets in defense of the future during the Global Climate Strike.

In the U.S., the organization Sunrise Movement has pushed climate change into headlines of the 2020 Presidential elections with the Green New Deal.

Introduced by New York Rep. Alexandria Ocasio - Cortez on Feb. 7, the Green New Deal is a program designed to tackle climate change in a 10 year plan.

Here at Northeastern Illinois University (NEIU), the Green Fee is a \$3 fee that every student pays each semester they are enrolled.

This small amount of money supports the accordingly named Green Fee Committee, which is a

volunteer on-campus organization designed to "incorporate and help fund initiatives that reduce energy, water usage and waste on campus" according to NEIU's website.

NEIU didn't always have a Green Fee. According to Dr. Alex Peimer, the idea for the Green Fee originated in the Green Cycle Group (which is now the Green Conservation Group) in 2007.

This student club took initiative and pitched the idea of the Green Fee to the Student Government Association (SGA), who then approved said fee. The Green Fee Committee was formed soon after and meets to decide how to use the money collected from the fee, utilizing NEIU community suggestions and current trends in campus ecological technology.

Currently the Green Fee Committee consists of nine volunteer

members: four faculty/staff, a Student Government Association representative, an at-large student representative from the Department of Geography and Environmental Studies, and two student representatives from the Green Conservation Group.

The Green Fee Committee has funded dozens of projects since its inception. NEIU is privileged to have water bottle fill fountains that dispense clean water into reusable water bottles.

Bike racks are scattered around campus, offering a place to secure an ecologically-friendly bicycle. A bike repair station helps cyclists keep their ride in good working order.

PDF scanners at the library let students scan pages of their textbook into a digital file instead of printing them out. There are two solar power banks providing power to the Physi-

cal Education and B buildings at the Main Campus.

Solar panels have also recently been installed at the Jacob H. Caruthers Center for Inner City Studies (CCICS). In 2015, NEIU also installed electric car chargers on the first floor of the parking garage to encourage more sustainable vehicle usage.

On the arboreal side of the Green Fee Committee projects, removing invasive species from the remnant swamp white oak savanna vegetation (located next to PE building) helps support species diversity and creates a green corridor for animals to use.

Planting native species in and around campus not only provides pretty plants to look at but makes maintenance of the grounds less labor and water intensive.

Being part of the Green Fee Committee or other environmental

groups is not the only way to contribute to a greener environment on campus.

While all students are contributing by paying the \$3 Green Fee, there are a number of easy ways students can take initiative and reduce waste and consumption.

Bringing reusable coffee cups or a thermos to Café Descartes to purchase a refill coffee is an easy way to save hundreds of pounds of paper waste from going to the landfill, and is even less expensive.

Using e-readers or doing student readings on a laptops, or even just by using both sides of the paper when printing, countless trees can be saved from becoming paper waste. These every day actions that seem inconsequential have an impact.

Thanks to the Green Fee Committee, NEIU is a much more sustainable campus than it was in 2007.



Sean Larsen, Miranda Green and Andrew Crane of the NEIU Green Conservation Group.



Crowd gathered outside the Daley Center in downtown Chicago during the Global Climate Strike.

Miranda Green

Rainbow reception kicks off LGBTQ+ History Month

Rebecca Denham

News Editor

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Founded in 1994, LGBTQ+ History Month has been an established annual tradition for 25 years. NEIU kicked off this year's history month with the Rainbow Reception at the Angelina Pedroso Center for Diversity and Intercultural Affairs on Tuesday, Oct. 2. This event functioned as not only an icebreaker for a month of activities planned in honor of LGBTQ+ history, but also for students to convene and interact with other members of the LGBTQ+ community.

The introduction was led by Francis Ahn, graduate aide to the Pedroso Center and student advisor to the Pride Alliance at NEIU, who spoke to the heritage of LGBTQ+ history and why its representation is necessary.

"LGBTQ+ history month, done well, does two important things. It lets queer and questioning individuals understand they are not alone, that there have been trailblazers before them, that there are people in the queer community and allies who are dedicated to undoing the erasure of our identities," he said.

"On the flip side it challenges those, even the many people who do not consider themselves homophobic, to reconsider their previous biases," Ahn continued.

On Thursday, Oct. 10 are the National Coming Out Day and Domestic Violence Awareness Month Resource Fair. The fair will be held from 1 p.m. through 4 p.m. in the University Commons.

Dear Aunaetitrakul, the Pedroso Center's assistant director for gender and sexuality, stated why this history month

is so important at NEIU. "We need to enhance the visibility of the LGBTQ+ community at Northeastern. We need allies to engage in critical conversations on LGBTQ+ student success, on issues such as all-gender restroom and Preferred First Name Policy," Aunaetitrakul said.

Another event that will be hosted at the Pedroso Center is the LGBTQ+ coming out support group that will be on Tuesday, Oct. 15 from 3 to 4 p.m. "Not everyone is going to be as open about their identities, and they should not have to, but unless a person is, how would one know where to start finding those other people," said Ahn. "This is part of why it is so important for the month to have social events as well as educational."

There are several other opportunities to get involved with the Pride Alliance and with this history month. "I am excited about a lot of programs, particularly LGBTQ+ Rise and Pride Week. We will be giving out pronoun buttons on Oct. 16 from 1 p.m. through 3p.m. in the center as part of the International Pronouns Day," said Aunaetitrakul.

"We are also hosting the Boystown Legacy Walk Tour on that day as well. We are meeting at the Center on Halstead at 5 p.m. to kick off the tour," she continued. While this event is free to attend, it is the only one this month that requires pre-registration. Information on how to register can be found on the Pedroso Center page of the NEIU website.

The Pride Alliance is hosting a LGBTQ+ 101 workshop at the El Centro campus and is inviting all students to wear purple on Thursday, Oct. 17 for Spirit Day on all

campuses. They are also hosting a Pride College Prep conference for LGBTQ+ high school students. It will be held on Friday, Oct. 25 at the El Centro campus.

"NEIU, like all colleges, is a place people come to understand more about themselves, about others and building new communities. The best way to do so is to meet with other people who one can seek to consider and understand both familiar and unfamiliar. But when it comes to gender and sexual identity, this can be a difficult conversation," said Ahn.

He also noted that he "doesn't know anyone who works at Pedroso that isn't ready to have students walk in and chat about their needs. Maybe not all of us can help directly with what's going on, but we will try our hardest to get a student to the right place."

The final event for the history month is a lecture named LGBTQ+ Domestic Violence: Innovations in Survivor Services, Policies and Research. It will be held from 12:30 to 1:30 p.m. on Tuesday, Oct. 29 at the Pedroso Center.

"We need everyone's help in bringing the LGBTQ+ visibility on campus. For example, NEIU at the main campus now has three all-gender bathrooms available after 5pm. LGBTQ+ History Month serves as an entry point for people to engage and learn more about the community," insisted Aunaetitrakul.

Aunaetitrakul concluded her message by saying, "students interested in joining Pride Alliance can reach out to me. We meet every Thursday from 3 to 4 p.m. in Room B-146."

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NEIU's nurse Lasko discusses vaping

Michael Gross
Writer

There has been a recent outbreak of vaping related deaths and lung illnesses across the country, including one case in Illinois. There have also been over 800 reported cases of lung illnesses attributed to vaping.

These reports span nearly the entire U.S. with cases reported in 46 of the 50 U.S. states.

Health officials as well as the U.S. government is trying to figure out why the sudden outbreak is occurring and what can be done to combat this development.

Jennifer Lasko, a nurse at NEIU's campus, believes that part of the problem is that vaping companies over the past few years have targeted the younger generation with the idea that vaping is a healthier alternative to smoking.

Vaping companies cite the fact



that one can purchase vaping fluid without nicotine in it. However, Lasko said, "unfortunately there were just not enough studies done to show what type of effects they have."

Lasko also said she wouldn't

recommend vaping as an alternative to smoking cigarettes. In fact, she would suggest that if people are going to smoke, they should just smoke regular cigarettes.

Lasko suggests that the reasoning behind this statement is

that it takes 30 to 40 years for the full effects of cigarette smoking to take its toll on a person's health. On the other hand, she says it only takes two years for vaping to take its full effect.

When it comes to litigation on vaping, Lasko believes that vaping should be banned altogether because anything other than water vapor should not be ingested into someone's lungs.

Rachel Willard, a student at NEIU who vapes, has a different perspective on this issue. She only buys vaping fluids from smoke shops.

Rachel is skeptical about vaping being hazardous to people's health and believes the issue comes from where people are purchasing their vaping fluids.

Willard said, "I think there is a big market for cheap, may be

poorly made, Black Market vape liquids or the Black Market THC cartridges."

Willard doesn't believe vaping should be banned because, according to her, there are more cases of illnesses from people drinking alcohol or smoking cigarettes than from vaping.

She is also concerned if vaping were to be banned, people would just result to more dangerous ways of obtaining vaping products, much like what happened with prohibition in the 1920's and 30's.

Willard said she plans to continue to vape despite the recent outbreak of deaths and illnesses. She also raised the possibility of a conspiracy that tobacco companies want vaping banned so they can continue to sell their products in greater numbers.

Meningitis vaccine now mandatory for students

Amina Murati
Writer

NEIU sent out an email on Sept. 23 informing the student body that it is now mandatory for all students under the age of 22 to have been vaccinated for meningitis as soon as possible.

The Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) describes meningitis as an inflammation of the membrane that covers the brain and spinal cord. Symptoms include a high fever, headache, no appetite and several other symptoms over the course of consecutive days.

Students can be evaluated at NEIU's Student Health Services if they feel as though they are at risk.

Jennifer Lasko, a nurse at Student Health Services detailed why the vaccine is so important.

Lasko described how, "Public schools throughout the country are making it mandatory for all students to get vaccinated."

At NEIU, all students, whether they are a graduate, transfer or international student, are required to receive the vaccine between the ages of 16-22.

For those older than 22, it is not required, but highly recommended. For students living on campus, not getting vaccinated can put others at risk of contraction due to meningitis being an airborne disease.

Although the disease is rare, it

spreads easily and rapidly, which is why people ages 11-18 are most affected. Lasko also explained how, "there have been cases where college students have died due to not being vaccinated."

For example, CNN wrote a story about a student who went to San Diego State University student died of meningitis in 2014. This left 400 other people to be examined who came in contact with her and who were possibly affected by meningitis.

"Unless it is for a medical or religious reason, the school is requiring all students to get the vaccine, so go get it done by the end of the semester," stated Lasko.

She explained how easy it is to

check if one is up to date with all vaccines. By simply going to Student Health Services and asking, an updated list of vaccinations can be confirmed. The next step would be actually getting the vaccine, which can be done by consulting with a physician.

Although it is not required, Lasko mentions that getting the meningitis B vaccine is also beneficial.

Another nurse at Student Health Services, Catherine Kuenstler, explained that the vaccine is not available for students on campus.

"For those without insurance, the vaccine would cost \$100-\$150 if you go to the pharmacy," Kuen-

stler said. However, she offered more affordable alternatives. "If you go on www.findahealthcenter.hrsa.gov, you can put in your zip code and see the closest low cost health clinic in your area," she stated.

Kuenstler also mentioned the nearest clinic to campus is Erie Family Health Centers.

Lasko and Kuenstler both mentioned that students can go to Student Health Services to also see if their physicians are keeping their immunization records up to date.

Moreover, students should make sure that they get vaccinated for all required immunizations.



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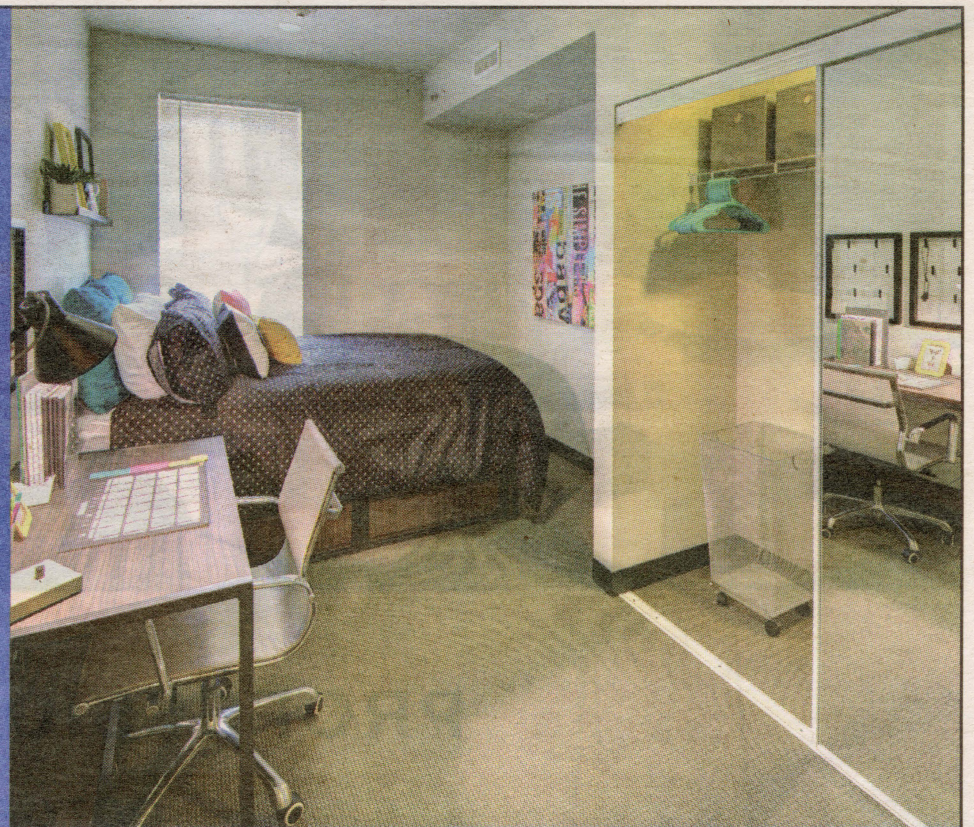
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POLICE BLOTTER



These incidents occurred on NEIU campus property between the dates of September 12 and October 4.

9/12/19 – Parking Lot C*

Police responded to a report of male attempting to burn a tree. Subject stated that he was using a lighter to remove bug carcasses and give bugs a proper burial. Subject left campus.

9/12/19 – The Nest *

Student dropped off copy of active order of protection for NEIUPD records. Student provided emergency numbers in case offender comes to campus.

9/12/19 – CCICS Parking Lot *

Employee reported feeling unsafe and threatened by incident that occurred after he took pictures of two subjects arguing in parking lot. They confronted him and blocked his car.

9/14/19 – The Nest *

Student was transported to a hospital for observation after hitting the back of her head on a wall when she fell. Subject was possibly under the influence of alcohol.

9/14/19 – CCICS *

Officers responded to door alarm. After some doors were found open, Chicago PD and K-9 unit assisted with a sweep of the building. Nothing was found out of place.

9/16/19 – NEIU *

Former student concerned about returning to school due to an issue he had with a subject in the boxing club at NEIU two years ago.

9/17/19 – Off Campus *

Neighborhood business owner reported incident with unruly and intoxicated male. Subject screamed at staff and caused property damage. Report also filed with Chicago PD.

9/18/19 – Village Square *

Subject approached NEIU PD officer to discuss stressors in his life.

9/19/19 – 3621 W. Bryn Mawr *

Unknown offender stole two university-owned chairs from seating area on Bryn Mawr.

9/19/19 – LWH *

Staff reports symptoms of watery eyes and a runny nose after curtains in office were cleaned.

9/19/19 – Parking Facility *

Staffer reports that she slipped in water on stairs and sustained injuries to her leg and toes two days prior to reporting the incident. She sought out medical attention at the health services department.

9/19/19 – Library

Officers and engineers responded to a call of a person trapped inside an elevator. No injuries were reported and student was safely rescued.

9/20/19 – Parking Garage

Unknown offender struck and damaged a car while parked in a garage.

9/20/19 – B Building

Unknown offender wrote graffiti on all urinal privacy panels inside men's washroom. Facilities were notified for clean up.

9/23/19 – El Centro

Unknown offender wrote graffiti on building near the El Centro building.

9/26/19 – Intersection of Bryan Mawr and Kimball

Faculty member reports being approached at bus stop and punched on the shoulder by unknown Caucasian male, approximately 50 years old. Victim does not wish to file charges.

9/26/19 – LWH

Officers responded to a call from a person in lower level. Ambulance transported victim to hospital for observation.

9/26/19 – PE Building

During an argument, subject kicked and broke a glass windowpane. He later sought out medical aid for his foot. A non-academic misconduct report was filed.

9/27/19 – NEIU

CPD and NEIUPD responded to a hang up / well being call coming from NEIU. No results were found.

9/28/19 – Access Road

While on patrol, officer came across disabled vehicle with significant damage after swerving to avoid a distracted motorist. No injuries were reported. The vehicle was towed.

9/30/19 – C Building

Fire alarm was set off by burnt food in an office microwave. Fire department responded, but there was no fire.

10/1/19 – Quad Area

While on routine patrol, officers found propaganda stickers posted around campus. They were removed and inventoried.

10/1/19 – Parking Lot J

Unknown offender struck and damaged a car while parked in a lot.

10/2/19 – Access Road

Student's car hydroplaned due to rainy conditions. His car hit the curb, causing damage to the front tire. No injuries were reported. Vehicle was towed off campus.

10/3/19 – B Building

Officers escorted students to counseling services to speak to a professional about issues student was having outside of class.

10/3/19 – Center for College Access and Success

Unknown offender stole nine computers from office storage area.

10/3/19 – Parking Lot J

Traffic accident was reported.

10/4/19 – FA Building

An article was turned in to the station.

The NEIU police blotter is requested from our campus police for every issue of the Independent because this publication exercises its right to do so, courtesy of the Clery Act. The Clery Act is a federal statute requiring all higher education establishments that participate in federal financial aid programs to maintain records of campus crime and campus security information. Any case that is considered ongoing may not be listed in the blotter. For this reason, there may be updated reports published retroactively once those cases are closed. For more information about the Clery Act, visit the NEIU police department's webpage.

Greek Life 101: rush season and requirements

DeShawn Clay
Writer

Here's a scenario: you're walking down Village Square and you spot a bunch of posters from various fraternities and sororities. Each poster has a themed design limited to two or three colors with an eye-catching "RUSH" in the middle of the page, along with a detailed schedule of upcoming events. You might be wondering to yourself, "What is this 'Rush' thing (about)?" Hopefully, I can provide some answers about the subject and leave with all of you well-informed on the rush seasons.

But first, a crash course on Greek Life around NEIU. There are 13 Greek organizations - eight sororities, three fraternities and two co-ed - these are inclusive of any NEIU student, regardless of age or ethnic background. Although there are other focuses, most fraternities/sororities here usually follow one of two main ones: pre-professional (supporting fellow "brothers/sisters" of the Greek organization in professional matters: how to respond to questions for an interview, how to build a resumé, etc.) and social/service (creating projects to give back to the community). All of our organizations benefit the members by establishing friendly bonds and other social connections, as well as academic excellence and philanthropic value throughout their experiences. Lastly, all of our Greek organizations are against hazing, or various trials of mind games, excessive alcohol consumption, paddling and overall embarrassment to initiate members.

Now knowing all that we can dive into "rush season" and organization requirements. A "rush," in this context, is a series of events administered by a certain fraternity or sorority as a way to introduce the members to the students interested in joining and for members to scope out possible students to recruit, based on one's enthusiasm. These rushes usually last for a week or so, filled

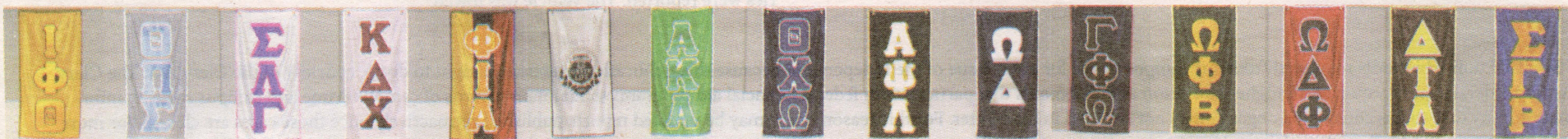
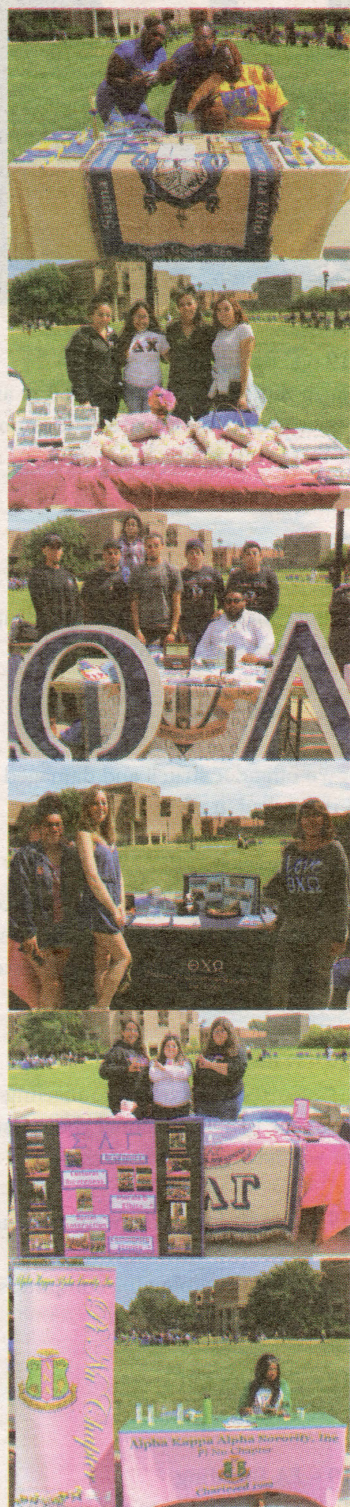
with events like movie nights, bake sales, informational tabling, etc., with some Greek organizations having an invite-only event saved for the last day of a rush week. It's common for most Greek organizations to start Rush Week around September for the fall semester and January for the spring semester, so expect to see an assortment of Rush posters throughout the campus around that time.

But while you think about joining any fraternity or sorority you see on campus, be sure to be prepared for what most of them expect of you:

Commitment. If you do decide to join a fraternity or a sorority, you will be expected to dedicate time to them for future meetings, ceremonies, projects, etc., so don't get involved in Greek life if you aren't able to manage your time well, or if you have a packed schedule that might get in the way of your education. Education comes first.

Money. Eventually, when participating in a fraternity or sorority, you will have to pitch in financially, whether it's for a major project, a party or for your jacket or for other types of clothing. Remember, you're not just giving back to your community, you're also giving back to the chapters who support your fraternity or sorority for them to continue fulfilling their duties for years to come.

Academic Status. While certain organizations allow freshmen to join in their first semester, most of them usually prefer students from their second semester of their freshman year onwards since they have a reported grade point average on their transcript. But even with that, you will still need to maintain a minimum 2.5 GPA minimum to get involved in Greek life, although some organizations allow students with lower or higher figures than the standard requirements.



Photos by Frannie Mendoza

Campus life calendar: 10/8 - 10/15

Fulbright Student Seminar

Tuesday, Oct. 8, 2-4 p.m., SU 003

NEIU students are invited to a seminar delivered by a Fulbright Student Ambassador who will talk about an international education and work experience. This information will be key if you are interested in about knowing what the Fulbright program is and learning more about the scholarship, education and work experience abroad. Contact: Dr. Ana Gil Garcia, a-serafin@neiu.edu.

Pedroso Center Open House & Founder Celebration

Tuesday, Oct. 8, 2-5 p.m., Pedroso Center (B 159)

Join the Pedroso Center for their us for our annual open house and celebration of founder Dean Murrell J. Duster, former Associate Vice President for Diversity and Intercultural Affairs and College of Education Professor Emeriti. The program begins at 2:30 p.m. Light refreshments will be provided.

Intramural 4v4 Volleyball Tournament

Tuesday, Oct. 8, 3 p.m., P.E. Complex

Open to all students! Feel free to sign up with your friends as a team or sign up as a free agent! Registration is open on IMLeagues and will be open until time of event. All you need to do is create a FREE IMLeagues account (if you don't already have one) and register on the IMLeagues server. If you have any questions or for further information, contact Mig Torres at mjtortres35@neiu.edu.

STEM Hispanic Heritage Celebration

Tuesday, Oct. 8, 3-5 p.m., Golden Eagles Room (SU 103)

Celebrate National Hispanic Heritage Month with the Student Center for Science Engagement (SCSE) and several NEIU student organizations, including the Society for the Advancement of Chicanos and Native Americans in Science (SANCAS). The event will include a guest speaker and a potluck. Hosted by the Student Center for Science Engagement.

ARS, A Reading Series (RESCHED- UED, NEW LOCATION)

Tuesday, Oct. 8, 5:45 p.m., LWH 3071

Come support NEIU creative writers, read their work and contribute your own voice. There is still time to reserve a 10-minute slot to

showcase your work. Brought to you by Seeds Journal and Rebel Poetry. Contact Brice McGourty at b-mcgourty@neiu.edu if interested.

Eric Aviles Performance and Healing Conversation: "Where You From? What You Be About?"

Thursday, Oct. 10, 10:50 a.m. - 12:30 p.m., NEIU Auditorium

Thursday, Oct. 10, 3-4 p.m., Pedroso Center (B 159)

Proyecto Pa'Lante and the Angelina Pedroso Center for Diversity & Intercultural Affairs invite the NEIU community to a performance by New York City-based teaching artist and activist Eric Aviles titled "Where You From? What You Be About?," an autobiographical solo play set in the historically Puerto Rican neighborhood of Humboldt Park in Chicago. Seamlessly moving from the 1980s to the present, this interdisciplinary play tells a coming-of-age story about poverty, violence and the need for healing. Contact: Proyecto Pa'Lante, e-gonzalez10@neiu.edu.

Following up from the morning performance, Eric Aviles will be holding a healing conversation on culture and identity from 3-4 p.m. in the Pedroso Center (B 159).

Ombuds Day & Conflict Resolution Month Celebration

Thursday, Oct. 10, 1-2 p.m., Alumni Hall North (SU 115)

The University community is invited to celebrate Ombuds Day (Oct. 10) and Conflict Resolution Month (Oct.) with NEIU Ombuds Tyler Smith who will host an interactive exploratory session about conflict. This session will explore questions such as: what is conflict, and what factors shape the way we experience and engage in conflict? What systems, structures or cultural characteristics enable conflict? What can we do in order to resolve/manage conflict productively, and what can we do, as members of the university community, to create a campus culture where conflict is addressed thoughtfully and effectively? The goal of this session is to simply inspire thinking and learning through the sharing of knowledge, experiences and perspectives related to conflict. Contact: Tyler Smith, t-smith30@neiu.edu

LGBTQ+ & Domestic Violence Awareness Resource Fair

Thursday, Oct. 10, 1-4 p.m., University Commons (rain site: Village Square)

The Pedroso Center and the NEIU community are celebrating and recognizing National Coming Out Day and Domestic Violence Awareness Month with a community resource fair. There will be free HIV/STI testing, raffle drawing, interactive and educational activities to learn more about the LGBTQ+ community and domestic violence. Contact: Dear Aunaetrakul, v-aunaetrakul@neiu.edu.

Biology Research Seminar

Thursday, Oct. 10, 2:45-4:45 p.m., BBH 102

Notre Dame University Postdoctoral Research Associate Dr. Michael Mahon's research focuses on the temporal dynamics and spatial structuring of ecological communities. In particular, he is interested in how land use, climate and biotic factors drive patterns of terrestrial biodiversity and community assembly. His approach employs field-based experiments in terrestrial communities and quantitative approaches and statistical modeling of biodiversity and communities across local to regional scales. Reception to follow. Contact: Dorina Bizhga, dbizhga@neiu.edu.

Fall Break Horseback Riding

Friday, Oct. 11, 10:45 a.m. to 3:15 pm., 8290 S Kean Ave., Willow Springs, IL 60480

Join the Outdoor Adventure Program for an hour-long trail ride at Memory Lane Stables in Willow Springs, IL. The cost of this trip is \$32, to be paid online. This covers the cost of trail riding and a rider's license (required by Cook County law). Meet at Memory Lane Stables at 10:45 so that waivers can be filled out and turned in (if not previously filled out), and will begin preparation at 11:00 a.m. Students may ride with one of We will have two groups to ride, one from 11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. and the second from 1-2:00-2:00 p.m. Please bring a sack lunch to eat. A state-issued photo ID is also required. You will be responsible for your own transportation to and from the stables. You may cancel and receive a full refund by Wednesday, Oct. 9 at 12:00 p.m. Any cancellations after then will NOT be refunded. Please register at: https://apm.activecommunities.com/crneiu/Activity_Search/1795. For more information, please contact Sammy Jo Hosler at cradventure@neiu.edu, call 773-442-4176.

Mental Health First Aid Training Class

Saturday, Oct. 12, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., location?

Student Counseling Services is once again offering free Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) training this semester to members of the university community as a way to empower staff, faculty and students to respond in a caring, compassionate manner to potential mental health crises within our community. MHFA is an eight-hour certification course designed to help communities better understand mental illness and respond to mental health-related emergencies. It is not necessary to have any prior experience with mental health training; MHFA is intended for anyone who is interested in learning more about mental illness and addiction, and how to help others. To register, please send an email to counsect@neiu.edu containing the following information: 1) Your name 2) The name of your department (for staff/faculty) OR your student ID number (for students). Cost is free. For additional questions, email counsect@neiu.edu or call Student Counseling Services at (773) 442-4650.

LGBTQ+ Coming Out Support Group

3-4 p.m., Tuesday, Oct. 15, Pedroso Center (B 159), Conference Room

Nothing else to add about it? I would say at least a contact email.

Latinx Dance Showcase

Tuesday, Oct. 15, 6-9 p.m., Alumni Hall

Close off the LatinxX Heritage Month at NEIU with a night filled with Latin music, dances, and food! Doors open at 6 p.m. Hosted by the NEIU Colony of Phi Iota Alpha Fraternity, Inc., Rho Chapter of Alpha Psi Lambda National, Inc. and the Angelina Pedroso Center. If you have any questions, please contact: Benerable1931@gmail.com.

The next rendition of the Campus Life Calendar will be published online on Tuesday, Oct. 15.

The weekly published version will be an 8-day calendar that spans from Tuesday of publication through the subsequent Tuesday.

Please send events you wish to be included or questions about the Campus Life Calendar to Grace Yu at NEIUCampusEditor@gmail.com

Meet your new university ombuds

Grace Yu

Campus Life Editor

NEIUCampusEditor@gmail.com

If you have noticed a number of new staff hires around campus, you are correct that NEIU is finally (after budget cuts in recent years) getting around to refilling needed campus positions in order to sufficiently serve its student body. I sat down with Tyler Smith, the recently hired Ombuds who began at NEIU over the summer to discuss what an Ombuds is and what role an Ombuds fills on a university campus.

From a Swedish word that literally means “representative,” the university Ombuds is a confidential, informal, independent and impartial resource for the entire university community, including faculty, staff and students. Anyone can visit the Ombuds for any reason.

“There’s really not much that people cannot come to the Ombuds Office about,” said Smith. “If they’re feeling challenged by [something] either in the classroom setting or

the workplace setting, the office is really here to be a resource to help people think through what their options might be for addressing the situation that they’re facing, what resources are available to them here in the university or beyond to help them address it and what kind of strategies, techniques, approaches they can consider in order to reach some sort of resolution.”

The Ombuds’ role can also be that of facilitation or mediation in situations of conflict between individuals or groups. An initial conversation can involve a discussion of goals and what someone may want to accomplish, e.g., whether the other party in a conflict ought to be brought in for further consultation.

The Ombuds can also coach on conflict, building someone’s capacity for resolving conflict with various strategies. All visitation is voluntary. You may not drag someone else to the Ombuds office for mediation and the Ombuds cannot force anyone to participate.

Confidentiality is of course vital to this process. The Ombuds will not reveal any information shared except in circumstances where an individual may present a danger to others or him/herself.

The Ombuds acts as a resource that is informal because he counsels with no formal complaint process. The Office of the Ombuds keeps no record on meetings (who or when someone comes in or any sort of content of conversations). In fact, everything stated in meetings with the Ombuds is kept off the record. This is distinct from a Title IX office on a university campus that is required to enforce federally mandated policies on higher education and uses a formal reporting process.

Independence emphasizes that the role operates apart from the administration. The role is not part of any university department and reports directly to the Office of the President only on financial or budgetary issues.

The Ombuds is considered an impartial resource because his role is that of a neutral resource for the entire university ecosystem. The Ombuds never takes sides in a conflict. He does not, therefore, arbitrate or advocate for one particular individual or group over another in a situation.

Recently, as an example, the Student



Grace Yu

Ombuds Tyler Smith sits in his office on the second floor of the Ronald Williams Library.

Government Association (SGA) requested that Smith act as a mediator in the town hall they were hosting to discuss the campus’ invitation to presenters Donna Brazile and Sean Spicer for the Daniel L. Goodwin Distinguished Lecture Series in Sept. Both SGA and the President’s Office separately contacted Smith to participate in a subsequent town hall hosted by President Gibson after the lecture took place. In these settings, Smith was able to provide a neutral perspective.

The larger, holistic Ombuds point of view facilitates for a conversation between multiple groups or sides to take place. This perspective possesses a more total, broader range of sight in such situations.

In a certain sense, the Ombuds is more of an independent consultant to the university than an employee working for its administration, especially when examining larger organizational conditions, or the broader conditions in which members of the university community face their challenges or conflict.

“I also have a responsibility here at the university to not just deal with the kind of individual situations that people bring to my office as if they are kind of isolated incidents,” explained Smith.

“I have a responsibility of looking at the bigger picture, and trying to make sense of the patterns and the themes and the trends of the kinds of issues that people bring to my office, and give feedback to the institution, whom-

ever that might be, whether it’s the president or other stakeholders, about those kinds of themes, patterns, trends and issues - systemic issues, if you will, structural issues, issues related to organizational climate and culture, the policies, the implementation of policies, and the consequences that they have, or how policies don’t necessarily align with what the institution claims to be its values.”

Finally, Smith also explained that the flip side of his role is to take a proactive approach. Aside from waiting for Northeastern’s community members to reach out to him, he performs outreach in the form of workshops and presentations so that we can build tools and skills and share or receive knowledge on conflict and mediation.

For example, Oct. is International Conflict Resolution Month, and the second Thursday of every Oct. is Ombuds Day. Smith will be giving an interactive exploratory workshop on Oct. 10 from 1 to 2 p.m. in Alumni Hall North (also listed on our Campus Life events calendar!).

The Office of the Ombuds is located in Room 216 of the Ronald Williams Library. The Ombuds is available for appointments with members of the university community in his office, at the Carruthers and El Centro campuses, off-campus or by phone. More detailed information can be found at: www.neiu.edu/university-life/ombuds-office.



Frannie Mendoza

Smith mediating the recent SGA town hall.

Students reaction to president's town hall

Trudy Leong
Writer

Some students indicated that they believed the Student Town Hall with President Gloria Gibson on Sept. 24 came too late to effectively address the anguish and anxiety caused by the Daniel L. Goodwin Distinguished Lecture Series on Sept.

12. NEIU Student Government Association (SGA) President Melanie Glover introduced the town hall, describing the gathering as a "dialogue and discussion." Ombuds Tyler Smith moderated.

Gibson stressed that we are all "lifelong learners," learning from one another, she learning from us the students as well.

Gibson promised increased communication with students, as she stated that many students do not know her. "Serving students is my passion," she said.

Carolina Schwartz, a Master of Social Work student, asked Gibson "what it would have taken" for her to cancel the lecture. Schwartz described the letter signed by hundreds of students, faculty and staff, describing the pain the lecture would cause them and why Gibson still felt it was a good idea to proceed with the lecture.

"I think it's important to validate everybody's feelings. In my opinion, it was kind of a slap in the face that so many staff and students told you that this was going to hurt

them. And you know what? It seemed as if you were saying, 'You are not important,'" said Schwartz.

Gibson replied, "I supported students. I supported your protest. I met with our Student Trustee, Fatima [Siddiqua]. I met with Melanie. And I said students have a right to protest. And I supported that right

that she said she couldn't. Her schedule was already full. Students should be a priority like she says it is.... I just wish the president would have taken it seriously in the sense that she would speak to students one on one....Sean Spicer came two weeks ago. Students are just mad now. Now there's nothing the president can do to make it better at this

Student Ezekiel Davis, a history/education major, asked Dr. Gibson, "What was your purpose of bringing Sean Spicer to one of the most diverse institutions in Chicago or your intentions of having him at this institution?"

Gibson replied, "For me, we are facing a critical time. We have a presidential election

next year. It seems to me that we as a campus and certainly as young people need to be informed about what the issues are that are facing us as we move forward to the 2020 election. So as I said earlier, we wanted different ideas to discuss and debate issues. And so we had a Democrat and we had a Republi-



to protest....The lecture - the main idea was for a dialogue but also for questions from students, faculty and staff. There was an opportunity there for anyone to ask a question and some of those questions, including the petition that was submitted by the faculty, to ask those questions."

SGA Senator Natalia Borowska, junior and a double major in justice studies and political Science, said of the town hall, "I'm glad it eventually happened overall. I think many students wished this could have come way sooner. If she came to the first lecture hall, where students were expressing their concerns, then I think students like myself [would be] satisfied with that ...But the fact

point. It's [a later town hall is] better than nothing."

Liliana Armas Serna, a Council of Clubs Representative and communication, media and theatre student said, "I think it was really nice that the president set aside time to address the students and talk to students, and more importantly, apologize to the students. I do feel that this whole Sean Spicer fiasco could have been avoided. But I think that it was very good of her to set it up and have students go up and ask her questions because that shows that she's open. I just hope in the future that she will listen to students' voices more. So that's all that one can really hope for."

can....The decision to have a Democrat and a Republican was my decision. I have to live with that. And I own that. In leadership, you have to own your decisions. And that was my decision. Could it have been done differently? Yes. Will it be done differently in the future? Yes. But this was a decision that I made at that time."

Davis said, "I believe that there must be some healing involved because understanding the history of this particular politician, not top secret, dealing with immigrants of Mexico and other countries, [there] must be healing. Certain things must not happen again. Certain rules have to change."

Interested in reporting about events on campus?

Email Grace at NEIUCampusEditor@gmail.com

NEIU Letters of Leadership

"You want to go fast, go alone. You want to go far, go together." -Developer Student Club at Northeastern Illinois University.

Are you looking to be part of a team that will give you a head start on beginning your

career? Are you interested in career/personal development, social justice, community advocacy, technology, business management, design, media, solving problems or have any other career passions? Join me, Antonio

Martinez as I embark on leading a Google project that will surely open doors towards the future for every student involved in Developer Student Club at Northeastern Illinois University. All majors are welcome!

The purpose of DSC is to empower all NEIU students with resources, opportunities and experiences necessary to be post-graduation ready. DSC will host training sessions and hands-on learning workshops.

Our goal is to work together to solve real world projects within our surrounding communities by linking students interested in tech, design, business planning, community organizing and so on. By utilizing Google technology and the support of Google developers/staff, Northeastern Illinois University students can begin bridging the gap between classroom theory and real world practical application.

We welcome all students eager to grow their skills and begin gaining experience in their intended career paths while actively contributing to our society. Our team project will certainly boost the attraction of your resume, pushing you to the top when it comes to career opportunities!

All undergrad and graduate students please attend our scheduled information session on Oct. 10, between the hours of 3-4:15 p.m. at Alumni Hall South (Student Union 115), where you will learn how you can apply for a core leadership position or become an active team member.

Thank you,
Antonio Martinez (President)
amartinez43@neiu.edu
Frannie Mendoza (Vice-President)
sfmendo3@neiu.edu



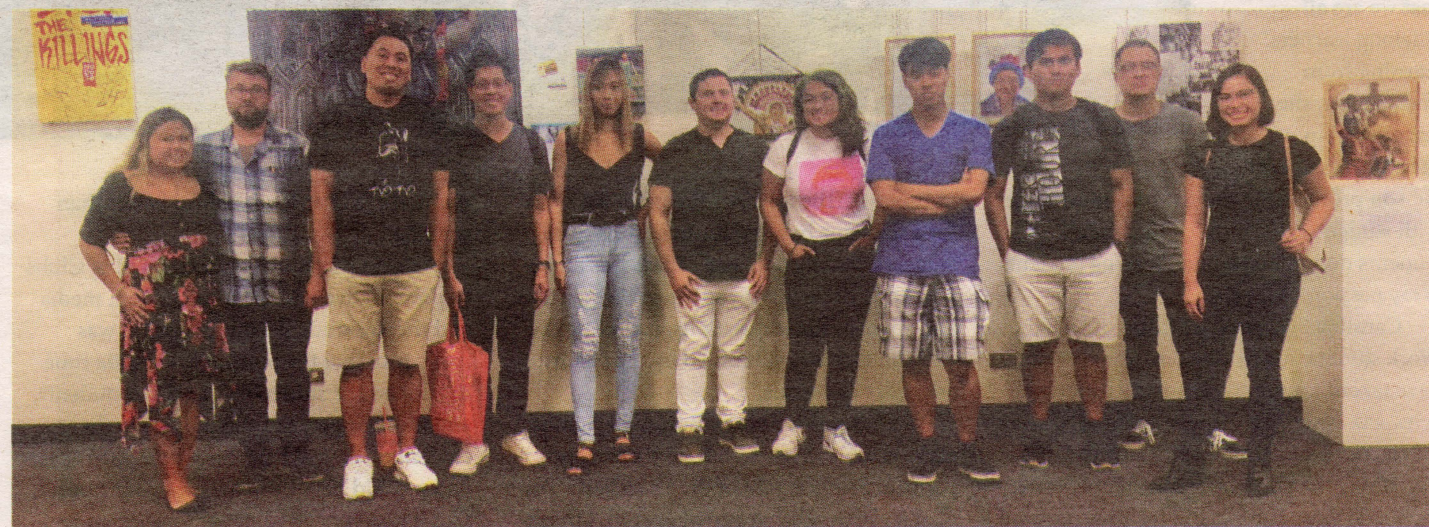
PIN@Y: Filipinos in NEIU is an organization that educates the community on Filipino culture, history, values and tradition. We welcome everyone interested in joining, growing and serving our community.

My name is Angelica Pineda Johnson and I am a co-President of PIN@Y club. I am a senior majoring in Social Work, planning to graduate in May 2020. I plan to get my MSW and work as a School Social Worker. I am passionate in uniting, educating and staying connected to the Filipino American community.

Hi Independent readers, my name is Aaron Le and I'm also co-President of PIN@Y. I previously served as the Social Media Manager and Treasurer. I'm currently working on finishing my undergrad in General Business Administration.

In PIN@Y Club, we aim to learn about food, culture, history, language, human rights. We celebrate family, diversity, tradition, friendship and community. The organization is part of Kabataan Alliance: The National Alliance of Filipino Youth.

As a result of the forced diaspora from the motherland, Filipinos find themselves needing a space to take root in a foreign land. Meanwhile Filipinos born in the U.S. find themselves searching for their identity and heritage. We are creating this



space through PIN@Y: Filipinos in NEIU!

We will not only have this space for people who identify as Filipino or Filipino-American but also for non Filipinos curious about the culture to come together, but also to educate the broader community about Filipino culture, history and tradition and to serve the Filipino community outside of the campus.

If want to learn more about and celebrate Filipino history, heritage, culture, tradition and languages, or you just want to get together and build a community, you're welcome to join! Interested students who

want to become involved are welcome to join our meetings. We meet every week, every Tuesday from 3-4 p.m. in B 152.

We have upcoming events to celebrate Filipino American History Month in October. All month we will be displaying art by Filipino American artists.

Art gallery exhibiting Filipino artists work about Filipino history, culture, socio-political issues and resistance (Ronald Williams Library 9/30 - 10/5) and Village Square Display case (10/23 - 10/25) Building B SLD Display Case Cafe Descartes in Village Square - all month

Collecting Donations: Balikbayan Box - collect donations of non-perishable foods/necessities for communities in the Philippines (canned goods, clothing, school supplies).

Hosting bake sale on Tuesday, 10/8 2:30-5:30 p.m. in Village Square, history presentation and film showing: Delano Manongs on 10/15 3-4 p.m., Palaro (Filipino games) on 10/22 3-4 p.m. and presentation on All Souls and All Saints day 3-4 p.m. Open mic night and Halo-Halloween party on 10/29 6-8:30 p.m.

Cancel culture, use responsibly

Matthew Rago

Sports Editor
NEIUSportsEditor@gmail.com

Social media has revolutionized the way we communicate. In 2019, we are able to share our thoughts and opinions from the intimacy of our own homes while hiding behind the veil of anonymity.

At the same time, social media has also become a hub to disseminate information. When a newsworthy event occurs, people from around the globe can react in real time. Subsequently, when an individual or organization expresses a belief that others disagree with, the backlash is swift and thorough.

Cancel culture is the phenomenon of responding to beliefs that contradict your own by boycotting the source. From celebrities to fast food chains, no person or establishment is immune to the swift hammer of cancel culture.

However, some may argue that embracing cancel culture is an indirect form of censorship. They may reference the First Amendment, which guarantees our right to freedom of speech, even going so far as to accept hate speech masquerading as free speech.

A couple weeks ago, Saturday Night Live hired Shane Gillis as a cast member. Shortly after Gillis was announced as one of the newest SNL recruits, a video emerged of him making derogatory comments about the LGBTQ+ and Asian American communities.

Gillis's supporters rallied to his defense, defending the sanctity of comedy and freedom of speech. Others contended that racial epithets are harmful, unproductive and have no place in modern society. I believe there is a middle ground that needs to be explored.

The U.S. is a nation that was built on hate and intolerance. We have progressed, for lack of a better term, from overt slavery to convict leasing and Jim Crow. From Jim Crow came segregation. From segregation came the War on Drugs, which was an attempt to target and dismantle Black leadership and fragment Black communities.

The idea that words may have long-term consequences can help us move beyond the baseless application of stereotypes and the use of racial epithets that belittle minority demographics. Social media, and by extension, cancel culture, has provided

superior to another's. Oftentimes, a person's values change as they mature. Cancelling someone without offering them a chance to redeem themselves is counterproductive to actual dialogue. We need differences in opinion to iron out the flaws in our culture.



Spotify

us with an instrument to call out hate when it is readily visible.

While freedom of speech protects us against legal ramifications for unpopular opinions, it does not insulate us against social and financial consequences. Consumers are not obligated to purchase a product or support a brand.

At the same time, values and opinions are subjective. With a few exceptions, one person's opinion cannot be considered

If one side dominates an argument, we fail to consider our own toxicity. We fall into a cycle of reinforcing our own beliefs and preconceived notions through confirmation bias, a pattern that manifests itself when we exclusively entertain arguments that reaffirm our own beliefs and reject any idea that challenges our stance.

Cancel culture can be beneficial when used sparingly and responsibly. The fear of social consequence serves as a deterrent

against sharing hurtful thoughts. On the other hand, we shouldn't reflexively threaten to cancel anyone whose opinions differ from our own.

For example, artists who violated our cultural standards, such as R. Kelly and XXXTentacion, had their catalogues temporarily removed from Spotify. Spotify later reversed its decision, concluding that consumers are intellectually capable enough to decide how they would like to balance the indiscretions of Kelly and XXXTentacion against their artistic contributions. In other words, it is up to the general public to determine whether or not R. Kelly deserves a chance at reforming himself or whether his crimes render him irredeemable.

Our collective response to R. Kelly and his crimes has twice set a precedent as to what future offenders should expect. For years, we allowed R. Kelly's musical prowess to insulate him the legal consequences of pedophilia. This set a standard that afforded other celebrities a sense of security when committing similar crimes.

However, now that the narrative has shifted, resulting in R. Kelly essentially being ostracized from society, cancel culture -when used pointedly- has effectively set a new standard that others will be forced to consider before engaging in unlawful affairs.

It is imperative that we also consider intent when determining whether someone deserves to be cancelled. A clumsy joke for the sake of getting shock laughs usually isn't uttered with malicious intent. Sure, it may offend some people, but unless it is an effort to mobilize a movement against a vulnerable demographic, a simple unfavorable response can send a loud message.

Differences in opinion, save for extreme violations of humanitarian values, should not result in an effort to cancel someone. If we overuse this tactic, it becomes an instrument of social control. If used irresponsibly, it may devolve into a method of bullying those who disagree with a stance into subservience. But if used correctly, it can serve as a deterrent against spreading counter cultural values.

'I was unaware'

Robin Bridges

Editor-In-Chief

TheNEIUIndependent@gmail.com

On Tuesday, Sept. 24, university President Gloria Gibson finally presented herself to face her students at a town hall meeting. The discussion was enlightening. For example, we learned that Gibson herself chose political pundits Sean Spicer and Donna Brazile to speak at the Daniel L. Goodwin Distinguished Lecture Series. We learned that the president is willing to take responsibility for her actions. We also learned exactly what the President is and isn't aware of.

She told the story of an email she received from a student. Gibson said, "(The student) was writing me because she said that in some of her classes... Students bring their kids... They bring their kids to class. And (the student) said, 'I think the University should provide for students to have facilities where they can drop their (children) off while they go to class.'"

Gibson continued, "What I want you

to know is that that email was very important to me because, even though I'm president, I did not know that sometimes students bring their children to class. Because they don't have a babysitter."

Sara Galván Orozco, NEIU senior and student leader, asked president Gibson for resources on behalf of the undocumented student population. Orozco also inquired about whether NEIU would consider helping their DACAmented students with renewal fees and costs associated with staying in this country and, by extension, at this school. She asked if NEIU might consider providing safe housing or safe spaces on behalf of the undocumented student population. At a time when immigration is under close scrutiny and on the heels of an event on campus that left many students in shock, protecting NEIU's most vulnerable students is not a huge ask.

"Again, you're giving me information that I do not have and that I am not aware of," Gibson said.

In 2018, NEIU paid \$35,000 for it's

"150 Strong" commercial campaign that premiered before the Super Bowl. According to the Independent's initial reporting, "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."

The commercial was supposed to creatively showcase our student body. It premiered to mixed reviews from students and what it actually did, for me, was showcase more poor messaging. According to Mike Dizon, chief marketing and communications officer, "The ads that aired before and after the 2018 Super Bowl were \$20,000 and \$15,000, respectively. Because of the high profile nature of the event, the regional ads were viewed twice by roughly 2 million adults in the Chicagoland area, giving us a CPM (cost per thousand) of \$17.50 and making it one of the most efficient ad buys we've ever purchased."

However, NEIU doesn't track the number of people who found the university because of the commercial. So did we essentially give 2 million Chicagoans a 30 second poem to watch that they didn't really understand?

Until the closing seconds, it was also unclear that the commercial was even for NEIU due to the limited NEIU insignia. When compared to other school commercials with similar branding, messaging and commercial style, NEIU's commercial flopped. To demonstrate, let's consider the Southern New Hampshire University's (SNHU) "Stand up: Set your own course" commercial before reassessing NEIU's "150 Strong" commercial. Both commercials target the same type of nontraditional students yet only SNHU's commercial was effective in showcasing who its students are and what they could become.

Since last year, has NEIU learned and improved? The town hall revealed it hasn't.

I'm sorry, President Gibson, but you have no idea who your students are. Maybe you know the numbers like our

average age is 27.8 and 36% of us identify as Hispanic. An even larger percentage of us come from other marginalized communities such as first-generation college students, LGBTQ+ students, low income families or we're just regular old black and brown people moving through heavily white academic spaces.

I recognize that Gibson was trying to take responsibility for the tone deaf nature of and lapses in communication that occurred with the lecture. I appreciate that she owned up to the fact that she made the decision to invite Spicer and Brazile and that she did so in order to invite controversy.

However, you work at this Hispanic-Serving Institution. That means more than numbers. Your students have lives, families and ambitions. They have come to you to help them achieve goals that are important to them and you've insulted them by saying that you "were unaware."

It's telling of how unaware the administration is. Perhaps it's time for you to truly come meet us. Leave your funky office building and just meet us. Join us in our classrooms, talk to us about how we got here and walk with us through our day. We can tell you more about who we are than any set of numbers can. We can tell you why we bring our kids to class and how stressful it is to try to afford DACA renewal fees on top of tuition. We can tell you why we take busses and trains or drive an hour or more to class just to attend your university. Being unaware is unacceptable and if you plan to continue insulting students while claiming to care for them, you're one year into a good start.



Frannie Mendoza

Student Wendy Cruz, President Gloria J. Gibson and justice studies Assistant Professor Adrian Castrejón converse after Gibson's town hall.

Have an opinion?

Email Ata at
NEIUOpsEditor
@gmail.com

Letter to the editor: You didn't die. Get over it.

Brian Langenberg is an NEIU Instructor in Accounting, Business Law, and Finance.

Some thoughts on our Spicer "crisis."

Dr. Gibson – no congratulations on free speech. Protesting is free speech; disrupting the event and charging the stage is not. The next time the socialist this or leftist meets to say things I dislike do I get to disrupt or insult?

Event – pathetic. Phil Ponce gave Hillary's hatchet-woman (Brazile) a pass. Clinton Foundation receiving \$35 million after helping sell 20% of US uranium to Russia? El Chapo's \$15 million "donation?" Not a word.

Professor Brett Stockdill should be disciplined or fired. He has a right to his opinion and to be heard. He had no right to call a guest of NEIU names or incite others. NEIU looked stupid by providing another public example of a university failing to uphold standards. Given his alphabet rights focus (LGBTQ) his attacks were dishonest

as well as rude. President Trump is pushing for global decriminalization of non-heterosexual sex and an elevator ride with Mike Pence would pose no risk.

Professor Nancy Matthews – tell us about "very real threats to democracy and fairness and society that are happening right now." Claiming free speech advocacy while stating Spicer's participation is "an unfortunate reality of living in a capitalist society" because NEIU needs money. Which is it? NEIU is well funded, wastes over \$6 million annually on excess administrative costs yet delivers a 22% graduation rate and hideous Best Colleges ranking of 1,496 (versus UIC #129). The market is voting with its feet (enrollment down 20%) and NEIU does not earn its keep.

Professor Jorge Adrian Castrejon – "If you are not angry, then that is a problem" and "...should be supporting them and not inflicting this sort of trauma and fear." Jorge, this is childish. MAGA types (Ooh! Bad!!) want a system fix not massive deportations. A now graduated DACA student

and I had great conversations and agreed on much, including Luis Gutierrez (his rep) and Peter Roskam (mine) both sucked! Instead of using students as pawns improve your teaching, which ratemyprofessors.com cites as "easy", "nonexistent in your classes" and "never open to opposing views."

Independent – 2% of students protest and 70% of your paper is one-sided coverage. That is sad.

Addressing an editorial from a first generation American, immigrant and woman here are a few thoughts. Glad to have you acclimate to American even as you add to the richness of our society. When you recited the Pledge of Allegiance it was expected you buy into America's ideals which is not "be like Brian" but respecting the rights of others to speak, listen and be heard just as you have the right to editorialize.

Nazis were socialists. Sean Spicer served the President who earned 63 million votes. Demonizing people with words like "fear, betrayal, bigotry, fear, hate, vehemently, underbelly, terrorize, marginalized, spewing,

decaying, larger monsters, little monster, real monsters, more insidious, monsters," is unfair and prevents you from learning. An underbelly is the Democrat party's entitlement plantation system controls inner city welfare schemes, "education" systems and criminal justice systems.

Advocating to "shut them down in places that really matter" is a problem. I swore an Oath to support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic. Freedom of speech is not negotiable.

"People of this nature", "indirectly attack us" and "our safe haven." I am sympathetic to your Democrats killed 3 deals (Obama in 2007 and 2014, Schumer in 2017). They would rather scare and own you as political pawns.

Ending White Supremacy on the NEIU Campus. Let's get serious. But I joke about leading the Gadsden Institute for White Supremacy at NEIU so happy to be your straw man.

STUDENT LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

NEW ORGANIZATIONS APPROVED BY COC

- Human Rights Organization
- iGnITE
- NEIU Student Action

EVENTS APPROVED FOR FUNDING BY COC SINCE SEPT 19TH

Dancers Society	CEO Global Leaders	PINØY
American College	\$787.71	2019 FACT
Dance Association		Conference
Conference		\$612.00
\$1,145.60	American Marketing	
	Association	
Chemistry Club	The Eight Annual 3%	Beta Gamma Sigma
SACNAS Conference	Conference	2019 Global
\$860.00		Leadership Summit
		\$816.00
	AMA International	
American Society for	Conference	Pride Alliance
Microbiology	\$1,054.00	MBLGTACC 2020
SACNAS Conference		Conference
\$860.00	American Production	\$1,517.00
	& Inventory Society	
SACNAS	ASCM 2019	Pride Alliance
SACNAS National	Conference	MBLGTACC 2020
Diversity in STEM	\$500.00	Conference
Conference		\$1,517.00
\$520.00	Phi Iota Alpha	
	USHLI Conference	CRU
CEO Global Pitch	2020	CRU Destino
Conference	\$2,050.00	Conference
\$1,234.80		\$894.40

Computer Science Society

SHPE Conference
\$1,839.40

Sociology Club
ISA Conference 2019
\$30

Delta Zeta

Medical Aid in Dying
Conference
\$0

Delta Zeta

ASAAntonia
\$828.00

NAFME
ILMEA Conference
\$360.00

CESA

ACA
Conference
\$1,678.40

EVENTS FUNDED BY STUDENT ACTIVITY FEE FOR THE WEEKS OF OCT 8TH-OCT 22ND

AKA - Skee Week October

THURSDAY, OCT 10TH
Chemistry Club - Tie Dying
Pedroso Center - 3pm-4pm

Theta Founders Week

BLACK CAUCUS

THURSDAY, OCT 10TH
Resume Workshop
SU 216 - 3pm

MEDIA ORGS

- ARS, A Reading Series is happening! This Tuesday, OCT 8, 5:45 in LWH 3071. Come support your peers and sign up to read at our next event!
- Book launch party for former NEIU faculty and writer extraordinaire Jac Jemc, Wednesday, OCT 9, 7pm at Women and Children First
- Check out the Lit & Luz Festival happening OCT 12-19! NEIU will host Verónica Gerber Bicecci, author of Empty Set, OCT. 15, 3-5 in the Pedroso Center
- Don't miss The 82! Tuesday, OCT 29 4-6 in CBM 149 featuring poet/playwright Kristiana Rae Colón, fiction writer Jac Jemc, and poet Jacob Saenz!

NORTHEASTERN PROGRAMMING BOARD

MONDAY, OCT 14TH
I Love Mondays: Photo Booth
Village Square - 11pm-2pm

SLD

FRIDAY, OCT 11TH
College Leadership Summit:
Make Your Voice Count
Illinois Holocaust Museum -
9am-4pm

THURSDAY, OCT 17TH
Diversity Food Fest
Village Square - 12pm-4pm

SGA/SENATE UPDATES

There are still open seats for SGA Senator and SGA Council of Clubs Representatives.

If you are interested in being part of SGA, please go to:
<https://tinyurl.com/NEIU-SGA-InterestForm>

Student Government Association members are part of various committees aimed to better NEIU. If you have any concerns or issues please visit the SGA offices located in the lower level of the E building near Health Services.





Hustle, Loyalty and Respect

Ana Peres Bogo
Writer

Based on the 2015 New York Magazine article by Jessica Pressler “The Hustlers at Scores,” “Hustlers” tells the tale of a group of exotic dancers who commit credit card fraud in order to survive the 2008 Great Recession.

A hustler is someone whose ambition drives them to questionable acts, which is exactly what the movie shows. With an impressive \$33 million at the US box office on its opening weekend and even Oscar buzz for the actress Jennifer Lopez, “Hustlers” is a funny and entertaining movie about female friendship.

The movie tells the story of Destiny (Constance Wu), a poor woman who strips to be able to provide for her family. In the club, she meets Ramona (Jennifer Lopez) and from there they form a solid friendship.

Ramona ends up taking Destiny under her wing, teaching her how to pole dance and do lap dances with the help of none other than Cardi B.

Ramona and Destiny recruit a few more strippers to work with them in a credit card fraud scheme. They drug their Wall Street customers, use their credit cards to their limits and then cash out the rest of the money.

The Hustler’s mindset is that no man would ever have the courage to go to the police and report the loss of thousands of dollars in a strip club.

The film starts in 2007 and goes all the way to 2011. The costumes, makeup and soundtrack help set up the time period. All aspects were really taken into consideration, with a focus on the soundtrack. A surprise cameo brings back that 2000s feeling we all know.

Even though the movie is set mostly inside a strip club, this is the background for the center of the film’s main theme of female friendship. The strip club is a competitive environment but it doesn’t shake their bonds, it actually makes them

stronger.

After years of watching women treating each other horribly on account of men, it is invigorating to watch these bonds strengthened throughout the movie.

Family is a big topic in the movie, especially coming from Ramona. There are various moments where she says she’s only a stripper so she can provide for her daughter. Destiny starts doing it to help her grandmother, the person who took care of her all her life.

At the same time, one of the other girls, Annabelle (Lili Reinhart), was kicked out of her home when her parents found out what she did for a living. In the end, they become a huge family that is about sisterhood, not blood.

The acting is really good, but the Oscar buzz may be a bit much. The actresses are compelling and all do a good job selling their roles, and Lopez performs the character Ramona with great enthusiasm.

Nevertheless, it is definitely not Oscar material. While representing a personal best for her, the role didn’t really push Lopez’s performance to the point where an Academy Award is really feasible. And none of the other actresses delivered award-winning performances along the way either.

Written and directed by Lorene Scafaria, the positive feminine energy is palpable during the whole experience. With an almost exclusively female cast and crew, Jennifer Lopez co-producing it along with Gloria Sanchez Productions, Nuyorican Productions and Annapurna Pictures really rounds out the female-centered production values.

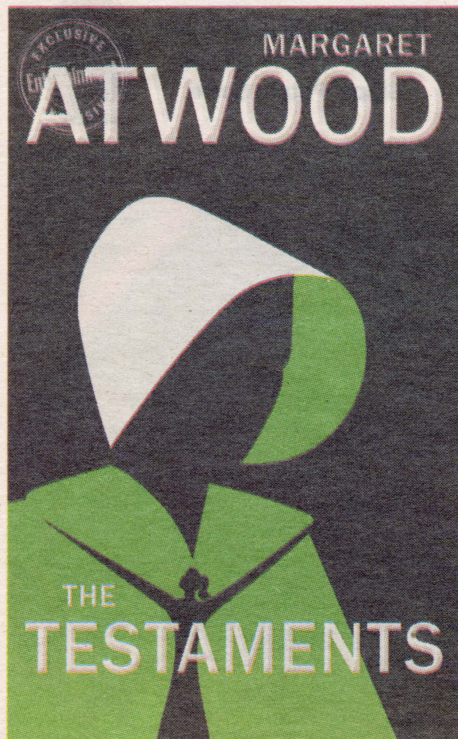
Overall it’s a funny and realistic movie that shows the lives of these strippers who tried to survive the best way they could. The characters didn’t sugarcoat their criminal actions, and the bonds between them are moving and resonates strongly with the audience.

Tales in the Testaments

Ana Peres Bogo
Writer

After 34 years, Margaret Atwood answers the many questions left by one of her most famous books, "The Handmaid's Tale," in her newest work. "The Testaments," recently released on Sept. 10, is a page-turning story set 15 years after the ending of the first book. With a (somewhat) more hopeful message in the form of the anti-Gilead organization Mayday, Atwood takes the reader back inside the authoritarian walls.

The story is set in a dystopian future where the United States of America became the Republic of Gilead. In this society, the people are divided into categories based on gender, race and class. If you praise a greater being that is not the approved Gilead government God, you either disappear, are resettled or simply exiled. It is not difficult to see where Atwood is pulling inspiration from, and in a 2017 interview with So-journers Magazine Atwood confirmed that her book was based on what she felt was a plausible "purportedly Christian" alternate



Doubleday

The Testaments is the sequel to The Handmaid's Tale by Margaret Atwood.



Getty

Elisabeth Moss plays leading role as June Osborne in the television series adaptation of The Handmaid's Tale.

future for America.

The book has a different structure than the first installment. Instead of reading the testimony of one character in this one, three women tell the story in segments. Each character has a chapter and sections to themselves, resulting in a rapid pacing throughout the many narratives.

A few iconic characters that we already know are brought back, such as the blood-thirsty Aunt Lydia. The reader also gets to know Daisy, an angsty teenager who lives in Canada, and Agnes, a privileged girl born and raised in Gilead.

The three characters are uniquely compelling because they come from extremely different lives and viewpoints. Daisy is rebellious, while Agnes is extremely confused and becomes more depressed throughout the narrative. Aunt Lydia is a mystery; until the last pages it is very hard to know which side she is on. The various backgrounds give the reader a broader sense of the world in which the story is set.

Atwood's ability to humanize long-hated characters is amazing. Through flashbacks, we meet a very different Aunt Lydia. Just like Offred, the main character of the prequel, she is a survivor. She was chosen to be an Aunt, an important authoritarian figure on female morality and faced dire consequences if she didn't comply.

There is hope, in the form of an organization. Mayday is an organization set in Can-

ada that wants to end the Gilead regime. It is only briefly mentioned in the first book, and Offred does not know if it is even real. Daisy leads the reader inside the organization, revealing how they get information to and from Gilead, the way their operations work and the type of people that are part of it.

As always, Atwood tackles different types of violence women experience every day. A sexual assault in a doctor's appointment, what happens when you report the assault, the value of women being dependent on their ability to have children and the imposing desire of men that dictates the clothes women wear are just a few situations that Atwood brings into the narrative.

In "The Testaments," Atwood delves even deeper into the social procedures of Gilead. The process of choosing a husband, how to become an Aunt and how the people in power maintain their status regardless of their horrible actions are all explored in detail. For example, a figure that is equal to a president in Gilead kills his extremely young wives and maintains his position.

Atwood brings back this fascinating world with twists that continue to surprise. Humanizing well-known characters and demonizing others, she reveals the human side of even the most horrible characters. In one of her best books yet, she creates a thriller that is so appealing that it is impossible to put it down.



Broken Record
By Kayla Nuszen

I want to call
To send a letter
But I know
On the other side
Life doesn't get better.

I remember how it played out
As if it were a broken record.

One minute
I was a saint
The next, I was the .

But I didn't mind
The perceptions
You were never one
For affection
Yet you always needed
Tons of attention.

It must be hard to be you
When you hate your own reflection.

Yet the words I'm alone
Still lingers.

In the shadow of the night
The darkness aids fright.

A girl cries
At others delight
Who knew she'd have to fight?

The past still possesses her soul
It's a story that never gets old.

Submit your poetry,
prose, fiction or
non-fiction, hybrid
work, research,
essay & visual art.

SEEDS.NEIUjournal
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DarkSiders III if predictability were a sin

Chuck Sipps

Arts and Life Editor

NEIUArtsLifeEditor@gmail.com

"Darksiders III" (DS3), developed by THQ Nordic, is a throwback to AA games of yore. It ranks somewhere between the AAA titles gamers have come to expect and the A games we've come to know from smaller development teams. It is a perfectly adequate game that scratches the Metroidvania itch for those gamers who don't own a Switch to play the genuine article. Unfortunately, DS3's simplistic combat and story prevent it from reaching the heights of both its predecessors or the games that its mechanics mimic.

The storyline is set in familiar territory for gamers. The Apocalypse has come early to planet Earth. Someone somewhere broke the sixth seal, tricking one of the four DS3's Horsemen of the Apocalypse (Fury, Death, War, and Strife), War, into coming to earth far too soon. Humanity is not prepared to fight their part in a three-sided war against angels and demons. The Horsemen Fury is called before the Charred Council, a trio of ancient beings tasked with maintaining The Great Balance, informed of War's "betrayal" and tasked with recapturing the personifications of the Seven Deadly Sins who were

released thanks to War's actions.

DS3 actually serves as a prequel for Darksiders 1 and 2 (DS1&2), with the events of DS1 actually being the most recent. In DS1 players control War, who was released from his eternal prison 100 years after he triggered the Apocalypse. In DS3, we are in the very early days of the Apocalypse. The problem with this, at least from a storyline perspective, is that the audience knows much more about what is going on than Fury. For example, we know War was framed, we know who framed him and we know the Charred Council has been corrupted. Despite this, the writers treat each revelation as significant, though it just doesn't land for the audience. It would be as if George Lucas tried to shock the audience during the prequel trilogy that Anakin Skywalker was actually Luke's dad. Yeah, we know George. Plus, they reuse a twist that anyone who has played the first game will see coming from miles away.

The first thing that jumps out when you start playing DS3 is that graphically it leaves a lot to be desired. The graphics are reminiscent of a PS3, though a PS3 rendered version would probably look worse. As you go along, the style of the game becomes more apparent

and you stop focusing on the substandard graphics, although it really is jarring at first glance.

The world is set up as classic Metroidvania; basically you see sections of the map you can't reach because you lack the proper equipment to get there but eventually when you do have the item, in DS3 they are called Hollows, you can return and access those areas. For example, there are thick spider webs that you are unable to cut through, but they can be burned away once you receive the Flame Hollow.

DS3 has many minor problems that don't seem so bad on their own but when looked at as a conclusive whole detract from the experience. The world feels hollow as it is sparsely populated with the same enemy types popping up over and over again. The game experiences frequent hiccups and will freeze for up to 30 seconds waiting for the rest of the map to load. The same voice actors are recycled for multiple characters. This normally wouldn't be a problem, but certain voices used were so distinctive it almost appeared as if the game wanted you to think they were the same characters in disguise. While that did turn out to be the case once, there were at least three other

confusing occasions where it wasn't.

The combat is also pretty limited. While the Hollows unlock new weapons and you gain new combos as you progress, you never really need to do more than button mash and evade. The game's difficulty modes feel a bit broken as well. As you advance the game's difficulty, your enemies won't become more cunning or diabolical. Instead, your enemies' attacks inflict significantly more damage. For example, if you get hit twice by a lowly grunt it can nearly deplete your fully upgraded health bar.

The greatest sin that DS3 commits isn't what it is, but what it isn't. In the original 'Darksiders' after defeating the final boss, the seventh seal is broken, prompting War to promise to bring the true Apocalypse to the angels and demons who have ravaged the earth. Behind him, his fellow Horsemen appear and the scene is set for the Four Horsemen to ride once more. Unfortunately, rather than deliver on the game that was promised way back in 2012, THQ Nordic seems content to recycle the same experience over and over again.

**DarkSiders III is awarded
666 potatoes on the
Sipps' Potato Scale.**



Fury from DarkSiders III.

THQ Nordic

Tall order of unoriginality

Susana Acevedo
Writer

"Tall Girl" is a Netflix original film focusing on the life of a -wait for it - tall girl. Directed by Nzingha Stewart, the teen rom-com follows a 6 foot 1 inch tall high school junior by the name of Jodi (Ava Michelle). Everyday life is a constant struggle for Jodi due to her height related insecurities. These insecurities stem from within herself as well as her classmates projecting insults onto her. Full of classic stereotypes and cliches galore, it raises the question: How low will Netflix set its standards for teen movies?

Jodi has always been the tallest girl in school and she's always been uncomfortable with it. After 16 years of slouching, one day she decides to stand tall when Swedish foreign exchange student Stig (Luke Eisner) shows up at her school. Not only is he good looking, but more importantly he's taller than she is, which automatically grabs Jodi's attention. This new crush turns Jodi's world upside down, she's trapped in a love triangle as well as a makeover along the way from her pageant queen sister Harper (Sabrina Carpenter). This "makeover" involves only taking her hair out of its usual ponytail and wearing something other than gym clothes.

Apparently, this high school does not have a basketball team and nobody there has ever seen a teenage girl with a growth spurt. Every other classmate Jodi has is nowhere near her

height. Casting directors must have only hired actors under 5 feet 5 inches tall, making the character of Jodi tower over everyone.

"Tall Girl" features the usual twists and turns that defines any other movie targeted for teens, but highly exaggerates them. There is a lack of originality, as every action is predictable and cringeworthy. The entirety of the movie solely focuses on the fact that Jodi is tall. This trait becomes her identity and personality and nothing more is given to this character. Before "Tall Girl" was even released, the trailer itself sparked controversy on social media platforms. The idea of a tall white woman feeling oppressed for her height in current society is insensitive to the groups of people who are actually facing oppression for bigger and more important issues. The line, "You think your life is hard? I'm a high school junior wearing size 13 Nikes" makes it seem as though having large feet is the biggest problem in the world and no one else can compare their struggles to Jodi's. This quote has become quite the topic of conversation as well as a new meme going around on Twitter.

"Tall Girl" is a predictable collaboration of words and actions that can be seen a mile away. A large variety of films have delved into the topic of insecurities surrounding height, but have done so with taste, originality and in more impactful ways. With nothing new to bring to the table, this tall tale was a big miss that could have had some potential.



Netflix

Ava Michelle as Jodi Kreyman in the Netflix original, Tall Girl.

NORTHEASTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY'S INDEPENDENT

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What is The Sipp's Potato Scale?

Chuck Sipps

Arts and Life Editor

NEIUArtsLifeEditor@gmail.com

After reading a Chuck Sipps review, you may ask yourself, "What exactly is the Sipps' Potato Scale?" Fear not gentle reader as I, Chuck Sipps, the progenitor of the Sipps' Potato Scale, am here to set the story straight.

Basically, it boils down to a problem that I have with most rating systems: it's a mathematical system that doesn't adhere to mathematical results. What I mean by that is this: can you tell me the mathematical difference

between a six and seven? One. Can you tell me the difference between a six movie and a seven movie? One? You see, this is where the 10-point rating scale falls apart.

Even the 100-point rating scale is flawed. What equation determines whether a game is a 5.4 or 5.7? How about 8.8 or 9.1? There is no concrete process to support these numbers.

And don't even get me started on stars! What in the name of all that is good is half a star? I don't know much about science or

astrophysics but I'm pretty sure there aren't half stars floating around the universe looking to reunite with their lost half.

But now that I think about it, that could be a good idea for a Netflix show. They'll make anything these days. Did you watch "Fuller House?" Me neither. Either way, I got dibs.

I seemed to have lost the narrative there for a second, but the point is that numbers are liberally applied to reviews with no consistent formula. They don't mean anything. They are just

goobledy-gook. But people like them, so what was I to do?

Simply put, I invented the Sipps' Potato Scale, which fully embraces the arbitrary nature of numbered reviews. The reason behind each number varies from film to film and is in no way a reflection on that film's quality. I won't spoil their meaning, as part of the fun is the discovery, but if you have any theories as to how the numerical value was decided, make sure to put them into the comment section on neuiindependent.org.

We are digital too, visit us online at NEIUIndependent.org to read more reviews and see the Sipp's Potato Scale in effect. Feel free to post a comment and let us know whether you agree or disagree with the ratings!



Professional sports, unprofessional conduct

Rachel Willard

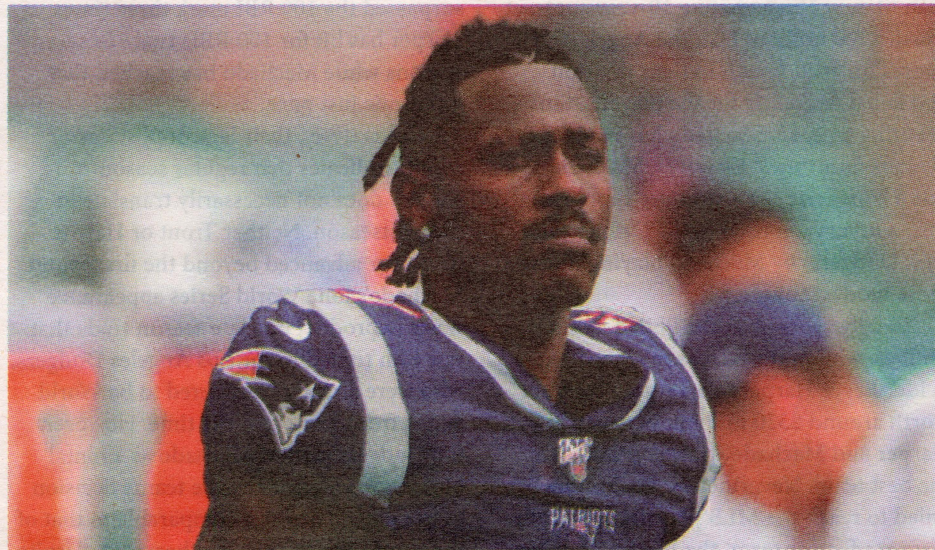
Writer

America has a history of valuing social status, physical appearance and talent over morality. High-profile athletes are shielded from the ramifications of their actions, a courtesy that is seldom provided to the general public. For example, Michael Vick was forgiven for being involved with a dog fighting ring once he proved he could still capably throw a spiral. Michael Jackson's legacy still stands strong, despite repeated allegations of child molestation. Chris Brown is still popular and relevant after committing domestic battery against his former girlfriend Rihanna.

The professional sports industry is no exception to this pattern. The approach sports organizations such as the National Football League (NFL) and Major League Baseball (MLB) take to handling cases of domestic violence and sexual assault is troubling. There is a clear, identifiable problem. More needs to be done to ensure that those who violate policies and laws are punished.

Two major ongoing investigations have recently rocked the sporting world. These investigations are centered around free agent wide receiver Antonio Brown and suspended Pittsburgh Pirates closer Felipe Vázquez. Vázquez is facing several felony and misdemeanor charges in two different states, including statutory rape, corruption of minors, coercing a minor to engage in sexual conduct, unlawful contact with a minor and a misdemeanor, indecent assault of an individual less than 16-years-old. The victim was only 13-years-old at the time of the assault. Vázquez has been placed on administrative leave pending the formal charges and an investigation. In the MLB, being placed on administrative leave does not equate to forfeiture of salary.

Antonio Brown is facing accusations from two women of rape and sexual misconduct. Brown was recently accused of sexual assault by his former trainer Britney Taylor. A second woman who wishes to remain anonymous came forward accusing Brown of sexual misconduct. Brown and his legal team have since denied the allegations.



Michael Greaves

Is Antonio Brown's career salvageable?

Following the allegations, Brown sent several intimidating and harassing text messages to one of the accusers, casting doubt on his claims of innocence. Unaware of the allegations, The New England Patriots signed Brown to a one-year contract and allowed him to practice with the team. However, even after the allegations were made public Brown was allowed to play against Miami in Week 2. However, once the screenshots were disseminated across social media, the Patriots released Brown. Nevertheless, several teams are rumored to have expressed interest in acquiring Brown, highlighting an underlying issue that demands to be addressed.

NFL running back Kareem Hunt is currently serving an eight-game suspension with no pay for violating the NFL's Personal Conduct Policy. Hunt was involved in a domestic violence altercation that took place at a hotel in Ohio in June of 2018. The incident was captured on video and resulted in the Chiefs releasing Hunt. Since then, Hunt has apologized for his actions and is committed to utilizing the resources available to him in order to grow and live up to the personal conduct expectations players are expected to uphold.

Insufficient handling of player misconduct has also plagued the Chicago Cubs organization. In 2015, Cincinnati Reds

pitcher Aroldis Chapman was accused of choking his girlfriend before firing eight gunshots in her direction in the garage of his Florida home. Chapman did not admit to choking his girlfriend, but did admit to the gunshots. Several months after the incident occurred, he was traded to the New York Yankees, who proceeded to trade him to the Chicago Cubs in July of 2016. The Cubs willingly took on Chapman, despite his history of domestic violence.

Additionally, second baseman Addison Russell was acquired by the Cubs in 2014. In 2018, allegations surfaced of domestic abuse against his wife Melisa Reidy-Russell, who filed for divorce shortly after the allegations were made public. After an investigation by MLB, which concluded that there was credible evidence to suggest that the abuse did occur, Russell was suspended for 40 games. He has since returned to the Cubs lineup.

Boston Red Sox pitcher Steven Wright was handed an 80-game suspension not long before the 2019 season started, a suspension triggered by his use of performance-enhancing drugs (PED). The MLB apparently decided Wright's PED use was twice as egregious as Russell's domestic battery offense, as Wright served a suspension twice as long. This demonstrates that the MLB sees performance-enhancing drug use

as a more punishable offense than domestic battery.

People are not immune to making mistakes, but there should be heavier consequences than simply missing a slew of games. The NFL's Personal Conduct Policy notes that it will provide players, victims and family members with counseling and other resources, but it begs the question of whether that is enough to offset the long-term trauma caused by the offender.

These individuals play at a high level and are aware that they live their lives under a microscope. One would think that heightened levels of scrutiny would deter players from involving themselves in such heinous patterns of behavior. Does their status lead them to believe that they are insulated from consequence? Heavier consequences could deter future players from making these same mistakes. It would set a precedence across the league that gross misconduct will not be tolerated. As public figures, players should be held to a higher standard than the general public because of the esteemed platform their position affords them in society. Many children look up to professional athletes. It shouldn't matter how talented an athlete is, they should be held fully accountable for their actions like anyone else would be.

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Harper and Machado: Were they worth it?

Michael Gross

Writer

These days, professional sports are a star-driven business and Major League Baseball is no exception. In order to win, it helps to have a star or two on your team who excel at their craft. However, overpaying one star player can hinder a team's ability to construct a championship-caliber roster. Why? Because if one player monopolizes the salary cap, it adversely affects a team's ability to recruit a capable supporting cast.

If one were to look at three of the highest paid players in baseball and where their teams are positioned in the standings, one might detect a pattern. First, we look at the Los Angeles Angels, who recently signed outfielder Mike Trout to a 12-year contract worth nearly \$430 million. This year, the Angels finished the season with a record of 72-90, good for fourth in the five-team AL West. In fact, during Trout's nine-year MLB tenure, the Angels have only qualified for the playoffs once. Trout has never advanced beyond the first round.

Next we look at the San Diego Padres, who this past offseason signed third base-

man Manny Machado to a 10-year contract worth \$300 million. Like the Angels, the Padres finished fourth in their division and failed to qualify for the playoffs. Since debuting in 2012, Machado has made the playoffs four times. However, Machado was a beneficiary of a stronger supporting cast, a luxury afforded to the Orioles (and later Dodgers) by Machado playing under a more modest contract.

Finally, we look at the Philadelphia Phillies, who in the offseason signed outfielder Bryce Harper to a 13-year contract worth around \$330 million. Between Trout, Harper and Machado, Harper plays for the best team. Nevertheless, the Phillies failed to reach the MLB playoffs. Ironically, Harper's former team, the Washington Nationals, clinched a playoff spot by defeating the Phillies, subsequently knocking the Phillies out of playoff contention. With the season ending, the six highest-paid position players in baseball (Harper, Trout, Machado, Cespedes, Pujols and Cabrera) will all miss the playoffs.

Teams tend to overvalue the impact of superstar players. We can once again point to Trout, Machado and Harper as examples. In his nine-year career, Trout has only

surpassed the 100 RBI mark three times. Harper has hit for 100 RBIs twice in seven seasons while Machado has reached that milestone just once.

Collectively, their lack of postseason results indicates that regular season success does not necessarily translate to the postseason. Neither Trout or Harper have ever advanced beyond the first round. Machado's lone World Series appearance was a byproduct of a late season trade that saw him traded to the Los Angeles Dodgers, who were already considered to be World Series frontrunners at the time. However, the Dodgers viewed Machado as a rental player, as evidenced by the team's decision to not extend an offer comparable to that of the San Diego Padres. Furthermore, despite Machado's departure, the Dodgers earned the best record in the National League

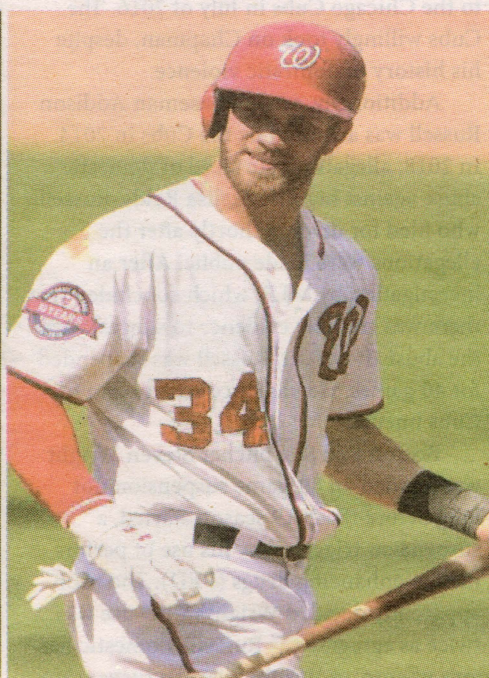
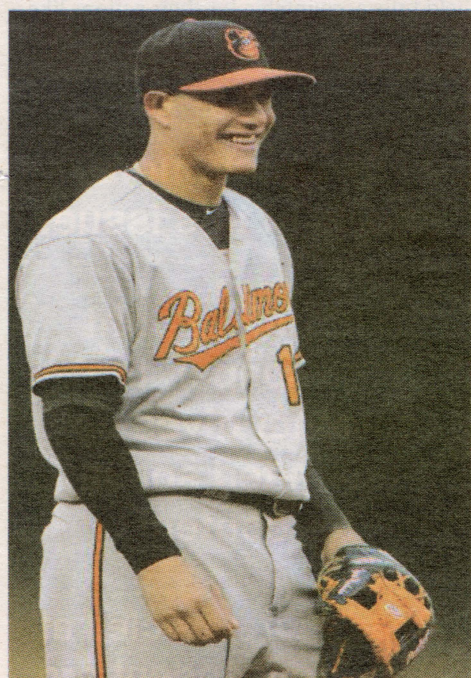
Offering these players mega contracts simply has not produced on-field results. For the sake of contrast, let's take a look at what the Atlanta Braves have done. This offseason, the Braves proactively signed Ronald Acuna Jr., 22, and Ozzie Albies, 22, to cap friendly extensions. Acuna's contract will see him paid \$100 million over eight

years. The Braves then signed Albies to a 7-year, \$35 million deal. Additionally, Atlanta signed outfielder Nick Markakis (one-year, \$6 million), third baseman Josh Donaldson (one-year, \$23 million), first baseman Freddie Freeman (8-year, \$121 million) and shortstop Dansby Swanson plays under a meager (one-year, \$585 thousand) to manageable contracts. The Braves spent \$35 million less on six quality players than the Phillies spent on Bryce Harper. As a result, the Braves finished with the second best record in the National League while the Phillies missed the playoffs entirely.

General managers should learn from the mistakes of their predecessors. Spending an actual fortune on one superstar player severely hampers a franchise's ability to construct a solid supporting cast. On the other hand, by spending more prudently, teams may acquire more talent by allocating cap space evenly throughout their roster. The choice seems pretty obvious, doesn't it? But when the pitch is on the way, some teams buckle at the knees.

Analyze the professional career of your favorite athletes or the current season of your favorite teams.

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Getty Images

Harper, Machado and Trout all failed to reach the playoffs.

Does defense win Super Bowls?

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We've all heard the old adage "defense wins championships." Usually, the phrase comes from a traditionalist reminiscing on the suffocating defenses of the 80s and 90s or a hopeful football fan rooting for a team with subpar offense. In Chicago, we recite the phrase as we watch a stellar Chicago Bears defense exhaust themselves trying to compensate for a woefully inept offense. However, it does not seem like anyone ever offers any definitive evidence to support such a claim.

Over the past few decades, the NFL has undergone an offensive facelift. Gone are the days of run-first offenses and staunch defenses dominating the league. In today's NFL, passing yards come quick and in bunches. As evidence, we can examine at the contrast in passing yards between the 1992 NFL season and the 2018 NFL season. 1992 NFL MVP Steve Young, who finished his 1992 campaign second in passing yards (3,645) and fourth in yards per game (216.6 Y/G), would have ranked 28th in Y/G had he played during the 2019 season, nestled right between Alex Smith and Russel Wilson. Joe Montana's best full-season yards per game output (270.8 y/g) would have only ranked 13th in 2018.

But what do the statistics say? Does defense actually win championships in this era or are we regurgitating an outdated mantra popularized by a bygone generation? We can test this by considering the past 21 Super Bowl champions.

First, the parameters: we will consider teams who featured either a top eight offense, a top eight defense, both or neither. Next, we will calculate the average offensive and defensive ranking of the past 21 Super Bowl champions. Offensive and defenses rankings are determined by aggregate points scored and points against.

Teams featuring both:

It should come as no surprise that teams benefiting from elite offensive and defensive play tend to win championships. Since 1997, 10 teams featuring a top eight NFL offense and a top eight NFL defense have won the Super Bowl since 1997. These teams include:



Sports Illustrated/

The Chicago Bears rank second in the NFL in points allowed per game at 11.25

1997 Denver Broncos (1st in offense, 6th in defense)

1998 Denver Broncos (1, 8)

1999 St. Louis Rams (1, 4)

2001 New England Patriots (6, 6)

2004 New England Patriots (4, 2)

2013 Seattle Seahawks (8, 1)

2014 New England Patriots (4, 8)

2017 Philadelphia Eagles (3, 4)

2018 New England Pats (4, 7)

Neither:

As expected, it is much less common for a team featuring neither a top eight defense nor a top eight offense to win the Super Bowl. However, since 1997, it's been accomplished three times by two different franchises:

2007 New York Giants (14th in points scored, 17th in points against)

2011 New York Giants (9, 25)

2012 Baltimore Ravens (10, 12)

Teams with a top eight offense

Now that the teams that fit into the both or neither categories have been listed, we can examine whether offense or defense is more instrumental to championship contention. Since 1997, only two teams featuring only a top eight offense have won the Super Bowl:

Teams featuring only a top eight offense:

2006 Indianapolis Colts (second in points scored, 23rd in points against)

2009 New Orleans Saints (1, 20)

Teams featuring only a top eight defense:

Defense-first teams, on the other hand, have enjoyed much more success, winning the Super Bowl a total of seven times:

2000 Baltimore Ravens (14th in points scored, first in points allowed)

2002 Tampa Bay Buccaneers (18, 1)

2003 New England Patriots (12, 1)

2005 Pittsburgh Steelers (9, 3)

2008 Pittsburgh Steelers (20, 1)

2010 Green Bay Packers (10, 2)

2015 Denver Broncos (19, 4)

Additionally, since 1997, Super Bowl champions have finished the regular season with an average ranking of 8.24 in offensive points scored. Defensively, the average Super Bowl champion finished with a ranking of 7.48.

So Chicago Bears fans should rejoice. Not only are defense-first teams more likely to win the Super Bowl, but the average Super Bowl champion since 1997 has consistently ranked higher defensively than offensively. No matter how we look at it, an elite defense is key to winning championships in the NFL.

13 FUN SPORTS FACTS

1. Wilt Chamberlain scored 50.4 points per game and averaged 22.9 rebounds. He didn't win MVP.

2. China did not win an Olympic medal until 1984. In 2008, they won 100.

3. A goalie has scored a goal in the NHL 14 times. Martin Brodeur scored three of those goals.

4. NBA referees tossed a jump ball after every basket scored until 1937.

5. An NFL game lasts an average of three hours and 12 minutes. Only eleven of those minutes feature game action.

6. Wayne Gretzky scored 200 or more points in a season four times. To put that in perspective, Jonathon Toews career-high point total is 81 points.

7. An incomplection in football used to result in a 15-yard penalty.

8. After World War II, the Steelers and Eagles combined rosters. They were called the Steagles.

9. Brigham Young is the great-great-great-grandfather of former 49ers quarterback, Steve Young.

10. Only two days of the year do not feature any MLB, NBA, NHL or NFL games.

11. Pittsburgh is the only city where all major sport teams wear the same colors.

12. The Stanley Cup is older than the NHL.

13. Only nine American professional sports teams have nicknames that do not end in an "S": the Miami Heat, Utah Jazz, Orlando Magic, Oklahoma City Thunder, Boston Red Sox, Chicago White Sox, Colorado Avalanche, Minnesota Wild and Tampa Bay Lightning.

Three Quarterbacks on the hot seat

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Mitch Trubisky---When the Chicago Bears traded the third overall pick, a third round pick (no. 67) and a fourth round pick (No. 111) to move up one position in the 2017 NFL draft, they were expecting to land a franchise quarterback. General manager Ryan Pace had his sights set on University of North Carolina quarterback Mitch Trubisky, who had only started 13 games at UNC before making the jump to the NFL. Trubisky's ability to both patiently navigate the pocket while using his athleticism to evade pass rushers proved too enticing for Pace to pass up.

Fast forward to 2019 and Trubisky has failed to take the proverbial next step. Disgruntled Bears fans were eager to see their team move on from Jay Cutler, believing that Cutler was just good enough to keep the Bears competitive, but not talented enough to elevate a team to championship contention. The Bears faithful let out a collective sigh of relief when the team signaled their intention to move on from Cutler and move forward with Trubisky after a brief-yet-forgettable few games under Mike Glennon.

Unfortunately, Trubisky, at his best, has been a lateral move from Jay Cutler while, at his worst he could easily be considered a downgrade. At this point in his career, the game seems to move too fast for Trubisky, who has developed a bad habit of locking in on his primary target and forcing errant throws into double coverage. The pocket patience that he displayed at North Carolina has all but disappeared, leading to premature scrambles and clumsy reads. Additionally, Trubisky's inability to consistently throw downfield has handcuffed the Bears offense, forcing them to rely on quick slants and checkdowns for short gains.

In the interest of fairness, head coach Matt Nagy deserves his fair share of blame. His disproportionate pass-to-run ratio telegraphs the Bears' game plan to opposing defenses. Nagy also has a tendency to get too cute on important downs, taking a straightforward situation and making it



Mark Zaleski/AP

Will Mariota and Trubisky live up the hype?

more complicated than necessary. Overthinking oftentimes negates the strengths of Nagy's roster; rather than relying on the strengths of his skill position players, Nagy utilizes second and third string players as though they are shiny new toys waiting to be appreciated. But Matt Nagy is the reigning Coach of the Year while Trubisky, despite being named to the Pro Bowl last season, is still considered an unproven commodity.

Trubisky's lack of development-some may even say he is in the midst of a regression-is disheartening and will force the Bears' front office into making a difficult choice should Trubisky find himself unable to take the next step forward.

Marcus Mariota---Drafted second overall out of the University of Oregon, Mariota was considered a can't-miss prospect. His ability to dissect defenses with both his arm and legs earned him the Heisman Trophy, the first in the history of Oregon football. Analysts even projected Mariota as a more proficient version of Colin Kaepernick back before Kaepernick was ostracized from the league.

In 2016, everything seemed to come together for Mariota. In just his second season, Mariota threw for 26 touchdowns against only nine interceptions. One year later, Mariota regressed drastically in both

categories, throwing for 13 touchdowns against 15 interceptions

Injuries have taken their toll on Mariota. His straight-line speed was rare for the quarterback position, though his agility has since been stunted after suffering a pair of grade 2 MCL strains during the 2015 season. His passing ability, while not elite, is adequate. His arm strength, however, leaves a lot to be desired, particularly after an elbow injury left Mariota unable to properly grip a football.

Furthermore, the Titans have had to downgrade their offensive scheme in order to accommodate Mariota. Early in his career, Mariota excelled under a run-heavy offensive scheme that afforded him a litany of options to confuse opposing defenses. Since his injuries, however, the Titans have been forced to shrink the field and rely on a short game that is unbefitting of a competent NFL offense. The Titans are essentially running an elementary offensive scheme to compensate for Mariota's limitations and injuries.

Mariota's performance in the Tennessee Titans' week 1 victory over the Cleveland Browns had fans salivating at the prospect of a Mariota breakthrough. However, since week 1, Mariota's quarterback rating has steadily declined, reinforcing the prevailing narrative that Mariota has made himself

expendable, particularly after the Titans acquisition of Ryan Tannehill. Unfortunately, with each passing week it seems more likely that injuries and inconsistencies will define Mariota's career, making him one of the great what-if stories of the NFL.

Jameis Winston---Like Mariota, Jameis Winston was considered a can't-miss prospect when he was selected by the Tampa Bay Buccaneers with the first overall pick in the 2014 NFL Draft. Also like Mariota, his ability to read a developing play and move through progressions earned him a Heisman Trophy. However, Winston has always exhibited startling patterns of immaturity, even for an 18-year-old. In college, Winston was handcuffed and subsequently released for shooting a pellet gun at squirrels. Immediately after being released from custody, he was instrumental in inflicting approximately \$4,200 worth of damage with the same weapons.

Over a nine-month period, Winston was twice accused of stealing from restaurants, once cited for stealing soda and again for stealing approximately \$32 worth of crab legs.

He has twice been accused of sexual assault, first as a freshman at Florida State University and again in 2016 when he was accused of groping an Uber driver without her consent.

Whether it is petty theft or allegations of sexual assault, Winston's decision making has been reprehensible and unbefitting of a franchise quarterback.

Of secondary concern is Winston's propensity for turning over the football. Since entering the league in 2015, Winston has accounted for a league-worst 80 turnovers. Last year, in only eleven games, Winston was responsible for 17 turnovers, more than six teams' aggregate 2018 totals (Packers, Saints, Seahawks, Bengals, Cowboys, and Texans). Irresponsible decision making, both on and off the field, and inexcusable errors have tanked Winston's stock and with his rookie deal expiring after this season, it may be time for the Bucs to explore other options.

White Sox of the future: Second base

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Yolmer Sanchez is a utilityman masquerading as an everyday starter. If we look beyond his inability to hit for power, Sanchez is not particularly bad in any one area. Unfortunately, aside from his plus glove, he doesn't excel in any area either. He's quick, but not a consistent base stealing threat. He can hit for a respectable-if-pedestrian average, but won't hit for a high enough average to offset his lack of pop. Sure, Sanchez led the league in triples last season but also ended the season with a paltry .372 slugging percentage. His career on-base percentage sits at an unacceptable .299.

Yoan Moncada's transition to third base served the purpose of opening up a position for MLB.com's #41 overall prospect Nick Madrigal to assume once he receives his call-up. In the interim, Sanchez, a career swingman, was named the starter by default and underwhelmed in the role. Yolmer's a great clubhouse presence--Sox' manager Ricky Renteria calls him a "winning player"--but his on-field contributions have been underwhelming.

Nick Madrigal, the Sox first-round draft pick in the 2018 draft, was widely considered the best hitter in his draft class despite his diminutive stature. Like Sanchez, he doesn't offer much from a power perspective--Madrigal has hit a total of 12 home runs over 1,412 at-bats between college and the minor leagues--but unlike Sanchez, what he lacks in power, he makes up for in fundamental hitting.

Madrigal doesn't strike out. In his professional career, Madrigal has only struck out 21 times over 705 at-bats, earning him an extraordinary 2.97% K rate. To put that in perspective, Moncada, who currently ranks third in the American League in batting average, struck out in 25.2% of his minor league at-bats.

Madrigal also hits for average. At AA Birmingham, Madrigal sported an impressive .341 batting average. Upon his promotion to Triple A Charlotte, he continued his torrid pace to the tune of .331.

Finally, Madrigal is sound defensively, having committed only five errors in his professional career. Right now, barring an unforeseen development, second base is Madrigal's position to lose.

Danny Mendick is a dark horse candidate to man second base for the Chicago White Sox. First, he's already reached the major leagues, giving him a head start to prove that he is capable of hitting major league pitching. In limited playing time, Mendick has proven just that, hitting .308 at the Major League level. Second, as a 22nd round draft pick, Mendick's development wasn't as meticulously monitored as some of his counterparts. Everything Mendick had achieved has been earned through merit.

Mendick has the ability to hit for a respectable average. However, he differentiates himself from Madrigal and Sanchez with his ability to hit for power, predominantly from the pull-side, as evidenced by his 17 home runs for AAA Charlotte. Furthermore, Mendick has displayed an ability to spray the ball to the opposite field, a skill that, combined with his defensive versatility, will likely earn him an opportunity to claim a roster spot in 2020.

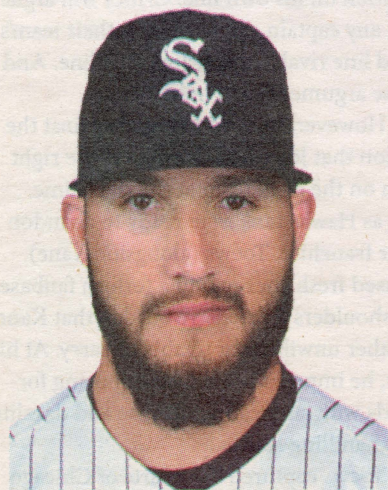
If Mendick can maintain his power numbers and fine-tune his ability to hit for average, expect him to carve out a role in the MLB. If the Sox opt to stick with Mendick rather than Sanchez, expect him to assume the role of super-utility player.

Laz Rivera skyrocketed up the White Sox prospect board thanks to a breakout campaign at Low-A Kannapolis that saw him hit .346 over 265 plate appearances. However, at age 23, Rivera was relatively old for Low-A ball, having been a full 1.6 years older than the average Low-A baseball player.

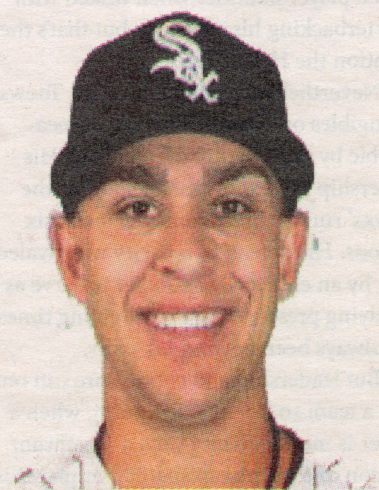
Unfortunately, Rivera failed to impress upon his promotion to age-appropriate AA Birmingham, where he regressed to a disappointing .246 average. If Rivera is unable to hit for average, his value to the White Sox will be limited. He's not an adept base stealer, having been caught stealing more often than he was successful in 2019 (a 10-to-11 ratio). While he flashed power potential last season, the 6'1 Rivera only managed two home runs in all of 2019.

Rivera does possess solid gap power, flashing an impressive ability to barrel the ball when he's on top of his game. However, advanced pitching prospects have been able to exploit his impatience at the plate, with Rivera sporting an unsightly 17-to-81 K/BB ratio.

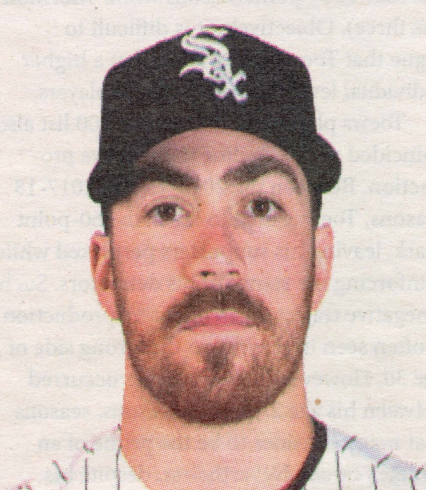
Rivera's age is operating against him at this point. If Rivera is unable to rediscover what made him successful in 2018, look for the Sox to cut ties with him. If he can boost his average and rediscover the occasional pop he offered in 2018, Rivera has the potential to challenge Mendick and Sanchez for the White Sox' utility role.



Yomer Sanchez



Nick Madrigal



Danny Mendick



Laz Rivera

Examining Jonathon Toew's legacy

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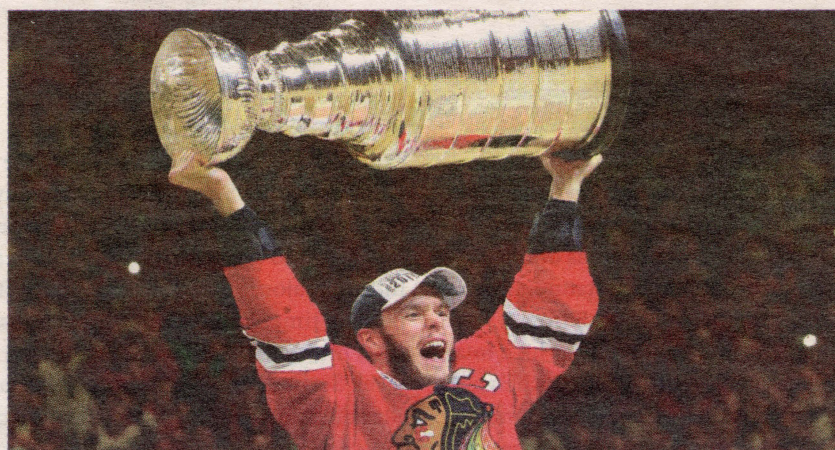
Let's flashback to 2010. The Chicago Blackhawks, captained by 22-year-old Jonathon Toews, have just won their first Stanley Cup Championship since the 1960-1961 season. A dormant fanbase is reinvigorated by a long overdue infusion of youth and financial investment. Chicago hockey fans flock to their newfound hero, one worthy of adoration and praise.

Younger fans may not remember, but Chicago Blackhawks fans endured an embarrassingly long spell of incompetence. Under the ownership of Bill Wirtz, the Chicago Blackhawks were the laughingstock of the NHL. The elder Wirtz implemented policies that sabotaged our once-proud Original Six franchise, almost forcing fans to invest in other franchises. Under Wirtz, home games were blacked out on local television, meaning Hawks fans were only able to watch an already outclassed roster when they were further disadvantaged on the road. Despite faltering ticket sales, Wirtz adamantly defended this policy as an incentive for fans to attend home games. He further crippled the Hawks' culture by alienating legends, alumni and fans alike. When Wirtz passed away in 2007, his son Rocky reversed the majority of his ineffective policies, transforming the Hawks into one of the most valuable franchises in professional sports. A once-moribund franchise was revived.

Toews, the third overall draft pick out of the University of North Dakota, would become the face of that transformation.

"Captain Serious," as Toews is fondly referred to, would go on to lead the Hawks' young core to three Stanley Cups over a six-year span, becoming the second-youngest player in NHL history to captain his team to a Stanley Cup.

During his peak years, Toews' combination of leadership and offensive prowess had some debating whether Toews was the best hockey player in the world. After all, it's difficult to argue against the merit of a player who has won three Stanley Cups, a Conn Smythe award (awarded to the most valuable player during the NHL playoffs), a World



NHL.com

Toews captained the Hawks to three Stanley Cups.

Championship and an Olympic Gold Medal.

Toews' elite resume was rewarded with a spot on NHL.com's Top 100 Players list in 2017. However, that's when the doubters began to vocalize their objections. Toews earning a top 100 ranking over players such as Jerome Iginla, Joe Thornton, Dino Ciccarelli and Evgeni Malkin initiated a heated debate over whether Toews' legacy was a byproduct of superior teammates or individual merit. For example, Toews has only amassed 70 points or more twice during his career. For comparison's sake, Ciccarelli reached that same milestone 10 times, with three seasons of 95+ points; Iginla has scored 70+ points seven times; Thornton and Malkin each have more 100+ point seasons than Toews has 70+ point seasons (Malkin has four 100+ point seasons while Thornton has three). Objectively, it is difficult to argue that Toews has produced at a higher individual level than any of these players.

Toews placement on the Top 100 list also coincided with a decline in offensive production. Between the 2014-15 and 2017-18 seasons, Toews failed to crack the 60-point mark, leaving his supporters perplexed while reinforcing the stance of his detractors. Such a negative trajectory in offensive production is often seen in players on the wrong side of age 30. However, Toews' decline occurred between his age 27 and 29 seasons, seasons that many consider to be the prime of an athlete's career. Nevertheless, despite his staggered production, Toews was rewarded with a contract that carried an average annual cap hit of \$10.5 million, temporarily

making him the highest-paid player in the history of the NHL alongside teammate Patrick Kane.

To state it bluntly, Toews' on-ice contributions have not warranted such a heavy salary cap hit against the Blackhawks. Furthermore, Toews' slide-in offensive output coincided with the Hawks regression from Stanley Cup favorites to fringe playoff contention.

Toews offensive inconsistencies have been polarizing and frustrating for Blackhawks fans, a fanbase that expects Toews to capably lead their first-line. Instead, the Hawks were forced to salvage Toews by reuniting him with Patrick Kane, sacrificing invaluable offensive depth in the process. It's been discouraging to watch such a highly touted player flounder when tasked with quarterbacking his own line, but that's the situation the Hawks face.

Nevertheless, we can't discount Toews' intangibles or qualities that are immeasurable by any quantifiable statistic. His leadership proved invaluable during the Hawks' run of three Stanley Cups in six seasons. His defensive tenacity was rivaled only by an elite few. His ability to serve as a steadying presence during troubling times has always been beyond his years.

But leadership and composure can only take a team so far. At some point, when a player is monopolizing such a significant portion of a team's cap space, that player is expected to produce tangible results. When the Blackhawks were forced to sell off some of their most valuable depth pieces, it be-

came Toews' responsibility to help shoulder the burden and fill the void. Unfortunately, without Patrick Kane's elite passing ability to play off of, Toews was unable to do that. For years, Hawks fans watched a carousel of interchangeable pieces frequent the top line in hopes of reigniting Toews' career, only to watch each experiment fail. Then-coach Joel Quenneville was faced with a difficult decision: demote Toews or sacrifice team chemistry by shuffling the lines. Eventually, the Blackhawks were forced to identify Jonathon Toews as the common denominator. Quenneville, and later Jeremy Colliton, resorted to pairing Toews with Kane, a move that announcers Eddie Olczyk and Pat Foley described as the "nuclear option." Toews responded by posting the highest single-season point total of his career.

Once the perception of a premature decline dissipates, Hawks fans will remember Jonathan Toews fondly. He will forever be remembered as a fiercely loyal, fearless leader who took a franchise on the brink of disaster and restored its reputation. However, fans of the NHL will remember Toews for having an abbreviated prime highlighted by limited offensive production. When future generations discuss and dissect what made this decade's Chicago Blackhawks so great, they will credit Patrick Kane for being our offensive cornerstone. They will also identify that while Toews was a valuable offensive piece, Toews was unable to succeed as a No. 1 option on his own line. Critics will argue that any captain can win when their team's third line rivals most teams' first line. And those arguments will hold merit.

However, it's hard to argue against the notion that Jonathon Toews was the right man on the right team at the right time. Just as Hawks fans were ready to abandon their franchise, Toews (alongside Kane) infused fresh energy into a forlorn fanbase. He shoulders a defensive burden that Kane is either unwilling or unable to carry. At his best, he imposes his will on opposing forwards with suffocating defense and dazzling stickhandling skills.

Toews captured the hearts of Chicago Blackhawks fans. Unfortunately, barring a late-career resurgence, his legacy might not hold up to increased scrutiny.