

# THE CATALYST

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“IGNITING THE MIND”

OldWestburyCatalyst.org

## O.W.’S New Permanent Provost, Dr. David Lanoue



Credit: O.W. Official Website  
www.oldwestbury.edu/people/david-j-lanoue

By Quinn Dobson

After several years of administrative uncertainty, SUNY Old Westbury has announced the appointment of David Lanoue Ph.D. Dr. Lanoue has worked as a college dean at Hawai’i Pacific University in Honolulu and Columbus State University in Georgia.

He officially joined SUNY Old Westbury on July 1, 2024, as the Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs. The interview for this article was conducted via email.

For eight years before his arrival at Old Westbury, he was Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs at Southern Arkansas University. From these past positions, Dr Lanoue has learned “a lot about building and strengthening academic programs, developed a number of strategies to enhance student success, and learned how to build and work with strong teams.” He also emphasizes the importance of listening, that “Everyone on campus—students, faculty, and staff—has an important contribution to make.”

In high school, Dr. Lanoue worked for the City Library in Carlsbad, California.  
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**SPORTS  
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## OW Finally Gets a Women’s, Gender, and Sexuality Studies Major



Founders’ Wall in the WGSS Center

By Diana Colavita

As a returning student finishing a BA I abandoned twenty-four years ago, I was thrilled to see that SUNY Old Westbury finally has a Women’s, Gender, and Sexuality Studies (WGSS) major, decades past when many other schools with strong social justice initiatives started theirs. When I first started at O.W. in 1998, I wanted to major in what was then called Women’s Studies, however the school only had a minor in the discipline. Going through the catalog, I realized that the American Studies department offered many courses related to women and sexuality, so I picked that as my major and proceeded to take as many courses focused on gender as I could.

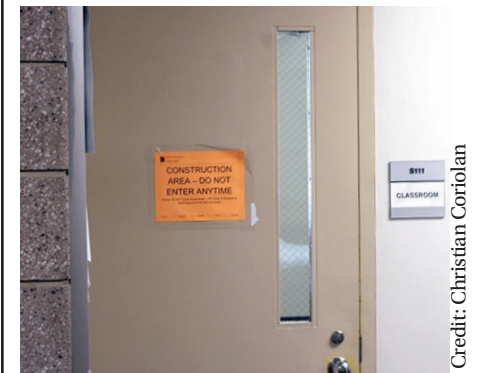
I dropped out for personal reasons in 2000, but always planned to return. In the summer of 2023, I decided that it was now or never and applied for readmission to O.W. for the fall semester. Originally I declared American Studies again, until I looked at the University’s website one night and saw the school had just started offering a WGSS major. When I met with my advisor for my second semester, I immediately changed my major, finally on the academic path I wanted to be on all along.

O.W. has a long history of not just social justice, but specifically feminist scholarship and organizing. The Feminist Press was run out of a building on the campus from 1971 to 1985, led by professor Florence Howe. Second wave feminist icons such as Barbara Ehrenreich and Rosalyn Baxandall also taught at the college. The creation of a WGSS program has been long overdue.

“WGSS is an interdisciplinary area of study that explores how ideologies of gender, sex, and sexuality intersect with social and cultural systems that shape people’s lives,” states an info card promoting the new major. “Old Westbury’s WGSS program develops students who are critical thinkers and advocates for social justice. The program uses feminist theory and methods to center the experience of marginalized groups within many fields of study.”

The work toward the University finally offering this major did not start recently. According to Dr. Jillian Crocker, an associate professor of sociology and the director of the WGSS program and its accompanying Center, “This major has been an idea that’s been budding and growing for the past twenty-five, thirty  
**(Cont. on page 3.)**

## Reconstruction Underway at the Natural Science Building



Construction sign in NSB

Credit: Christian Cortolan

By Mary Jane Hernandez

A new and innovative STEM building is coming soon to SUNY Old Westbury. Following several years of effort and planning, the reconstruction of the Natural Science Building (NSB) has begun after almost four years of delay due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Dr. Ray Maggiore, Assistant Vice President for Capital Planning, said “The planning behind the renovation started several years ago, and it was based on the growth of STEM studies and the need for space.”

“This will be a more modern and technologically advanced lab for students, the space will be modern and welcoming,” Maggiore continued. “This is going to be a collaborative environment for faculty and students.”

The new science building will invite students and faculty to collaborate in a space meant for STEM majors. This will change the way students are able to work with professors. The new space allows students to be fully immersed in labs with more resources, leading to new learning opportunities.

Dr. Cheryl Wilson, the Dean of Arts and Sciences, says “The design planning for the new NSB is being done with the goal of creating collaborative workspaces and active learning classrooms, increasing opportunities for students to build commu-

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**PROFILE  
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## Letter From the Executive Editor

By Vincent Arroyo

Welcome everyone to *the Catalyst's* first print edition for the fall semester. This is my first print edition as executive editor, and I'm proud of the work we put together in this edition.

*The Catalyst* serves as a voice for the student body, as well as a means of informing the campus community. A brief note on our editorial policy, we subscribe to the ethics of journalism: truth, justice, honesty and transparency.

Thank you to our executive board, including our editors, Alexia Croll, Caitlin Duffy, and Olivia Ambery. Also, thank you to all the contributors who worked very hard to make all this possible.

Lastly, thank you for taking the time to read our work and supporting student media. We hope you enjoy this edition of *the Catalyst*. Please visit our website, [oldwestburycatalyst.org](http://oldwestburycatalyst.org), for more articles.

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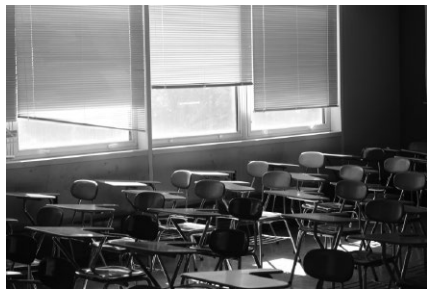


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## Reconstruction Underway at the Natural Science Building

By Mary Jane Hernandez

ity among themselves and with faculty.” Chemistry and Physics professor Matthew Lippert stated that while the new change in location has its benefits it also has its flaws. “I haven’t been seeing students or colleagues as much as before,” he



Credit: Christian Coriolan

Empty classroom in NSB

said. “In the NSB, we were all together on the 2nd floor, so I would bump into my colleagues frequently.”

The construction has scattered many STEM professors’ offices to the Woodlands. Lippert says “Now, they’re either down the other wing of Woodlands 5 or in Woodlands 1, so I rarely see them, which is unfortunate” he continues. “I also don’t see my students as often. On the other hand, everyone from Chemistry and Physics is here in one hallway, so it is convenient to see them.” Lippert has also noted a drop off

in student’s visiting office hours, or just stopping by to say hello.

While the new spaces are meant to create a community within students and faculty, professors are seeing less of the students who commute to campus as going down to the halls for office hours has become a challenge. Professors see less of each other as well.

The construction of the science building will not only change the education of current students but it would hopefully change the image of the University and encourage applicants to apply to the STEM programs here on campus. Administration hopes the renovation will attract applicants from all over the world.

“It’s our stake in the ground to become the national leader at the intersection of diversity and STEM.” O.W. President Timothy Sams says. “We wanna be the place known across the nation as the place where we provide access and tremendous opportunity within a STEM framework for diverse students across the nation; for me it is essential for the future and elevation of our university.” Sams is confident that the reconstruction will not only help current and future students in STEM, but will reconstruct the entire program and invite a diverse community to Old Westbury.

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## O.W.’S New Permanent Provost, Dr. David Lanoue

By Quinn Dobson

nia. His first “real job,” however, was being a “board operator on the graveyard shift at KUDE/KJFM radio in Oceanside, California.” One of the biggest challenges in this period, starting from his childhood, was severe asthma, which “limited my activities and kept me out of school a lot.” With time it has receded, and Dr. Lanoue is now asthma free.

Dr. Lanoue’s post-high school education had quite a hectic path, starting first at San Diego State, but leaving after three semesters to pursue a career in radio. “When that didn’t work out, I completed a year at a local community college [Palomar College] and then ultimately graduated from the University of California at San Diego.” Dr. Lanoue then went to Stony Brook for his Doctorate in Political Science and MA, establishing his Long Island roots.

When asked for a list of his priorities, Dr. Lanoue was able to offer four highlights:

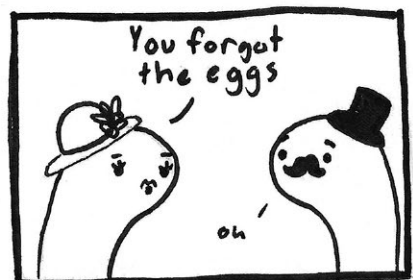
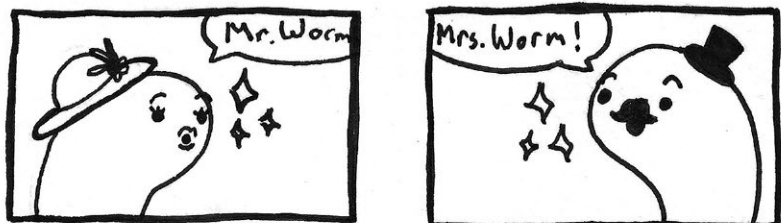
1. Continue to strengthen the quality of all of our academic programs.
2. Build on the success that Old Westbury has had in increasing the number of students who make it all the way from freshman year to graduation.
3. Keep up with the latest trends in the job market to ensure that our students are well positioned to get great jobs upon graduation.
4. Maintain a campus climate where diversity is celebrated and all students, faculty, and staff feel they have a home.”

In the last few decades there has been a shift in academia from Liberal Arts towards STEM, with some humanities departments experiencing budget cuts and layoffs. Some academics are anxious about the future of Liberal Arts but not Dr. Lanoue.

“I worry sometimes that we draw too sharp a line between the liberal arts and STEM. A classical education traditionally included fields like philosophy and literature, but it also embraced STEM fields such as biology and mathematics. But to speak directly to your question, the Liberal Arts will always have a future in higher education and certainly at Old Westbury because the Liberal Arts are central to building skills that are needed both for career success and effective citizenship: critical thinking, problem solving, effective oral and written communication, quantitative literacy, and information management, just to name a few. Regardless of your major, the Liberal Arts provide the foundation upon which you will build as you prepare for life beyond college. And for a university that is committed to promoting social justice, the Liberal Arts are obviously essential.”

Dr. Lanoue’s tenure ends a period of uncertainty in the Old Westbury administration, establishing a qualified and eloquent professional as Provost.

### A Day in the Life: Mrs and Mr Worm



By Hana Rehmatullah

## OW Food Pantry is Underway!

By Devan Oddone

The Panther Food Pantry is an organization on campus that provides assistance to our very own Panther community to improve the quality of life among students, faculty, and staff at SUNY Old Westbury. While the pantry is available and always willing to accept donations, they ran a recent Thanksgiving Drive on October 17 and 30 at the Campus Center Atrium to ensure those in our community are

able to celebrate Thanksgiving with their loved ones this year.

While the drive has ended, there are still opportunities to donate any non-perishable goods all year at Campus Center K-100 on Tuesday and Wednesday from 12-4 EST and follow @ow\_pantherpantry on Instagram to stay up to date on upcoming events!

<https://www.oldwestbury.edu/panther-pantry>



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## OW Finally Gets a Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies Major

By Diana Colavita

years. That work has looked like faculty members developing courses, departments prioritizing offering courses on topics of gender and sexuality, us working to raise awareness that these are academic issues that apply to people of all genders."

There are a lot of steps taken when the university wants to add a new major. First, a steering committee was formed to develop a curriculum. Then, they had to apply to SUNY at the state level to get approval. After that, the committee had to inform faculty and staff they were starting a WGSS major and make sure they had advisers and a course schedule. Now, they are at the stage of making sure that students know the major exists.

Unlike other majors at OW, WGSS is a program rather than a department, which means that rather than having its own dedicated faculty, the major draws on faculty from across departments, mostly in the School of Arts and Sciences, but also from the School of Education. According to Professor Crocker, this is intentional, because it facilitates the interdisciplinary nature of the major. Credit is offered for courses across six programs and departments, including American Studies, English, Sociology, and Public Health. Currently, most are cross-listed with other departments in the School of Arts and Sciences and the School of Education. WGSS offers a few

that serves the departments that support our program is also supporting us." There have been a number of faculty who study and teach gender and sexuality related issues hired over the past few years in affiliated departments. "Anytime a department gets to hire someone and that person can contribute to this major, we're benefiting," Crocker said.

There are currently eight students enrolled in the major, four of whom are double-majoring in WGSS and something else. This is above the steering committee's projected enrollment for this time period, which was six. I interviewed two students also in the major, Danielle (who asked that her last name not be used) and Alyssandra Membreno, who is double-majoring in WGSS and psychology.

Danielle is a senior who returned to school to complete a bachelor's degree after earning an associate's degree after high school. She worked in the beauty industry for seven years and spent her free time reading and learning feminist theory, sociology, and psychology. Her reading started with issues women faced and then branched out to study other forms of oppression. She was originally a Psychology major, but after seeing the WGSS table at the Academic Discovery Fest, she went over to learn more and would later change her major in the middle of her first semester back last fall.

"I believe the WGSS major has a positive impact on campus. Especially with our school's history and being one of the first schools to offer Women's Studies classes [and] being the first home of the Feminist Press," Danielle said. "This major is not just about women and it's not just about gender, it's about all the social constructs and power dynamics that cause inequality. SUNY Old

Westbury is a diverse campus that is committed to social justice, and this major is an extension of that."

Alyssandra Membreno, who uses they/she pronouns, has always had an interest in social justice, especially because they are non-binary and queer. As an oppressed minority, they had to pay attention to these things. Similarly to myself and Danielle, Membreno found out about the major by chance, from a comment from another student in a class. They then just happened to meet Professor Crocker and informed her that they were interested in majoring in WGSS. Membreno declared their double

major in WGSS and Psychology shortly after.

"[WGSS] has given me the lens to know more about why issues affect me and [to] have the language to be like 'Oh, this is an issue,' and a social problem," Membreno stated. According to them, professors affiliated with WGSS acknowledge that people assigned female at birth are often socialized to not raise their hands in class because they're afraid to



Credit: Diana Colavita

Alyssandra Membreno, WGSS/Psychology double major and WGSS Center volunteer

be wrong or to take up space. Professor Keisha Goode, a Sociology professor who teaches a number of WGSS courses, often asks her classes "Who's afraid to be wrong?" as a way to get them to risk answering questions.

A common question, not just about the WGSS major, but for many majors - is "How can I use this towards a career?" According to the info card, "The WGSS major prepares students for a wide variety of careers." It is a path for careers in education, social work, the healthcare field, and the law, for some examples. Students can continue with graduate study or find work in non-profit organizations, for example. Crocker points out that, like many of the majors the school offers, WGSS is a liberal arts degree, so it does not translate into one specific career path. The program has students planning on using their WGSS major as they pursue a master's in social work or graduate degrees in sociology or psychology. One student wants to combine their interests in WGSS and English to pursue a career in publishing. Students in Media & Communications are using WGSS to provide the topics of their journalism. "You can do anything with this major," Crocker states. "The question is 'how can WGSS add some dimension to something else that you're interested in pursuing?'" Both Danielle and Membreno are interested in continuing with

graduate degrees in social work or psychology so they can pursue careers in counseling.

An important co-curricular space, not only for folks in the WGSS major or the Women's and Gender Studies (WGS) minor, but for students of all genders throughout the university, is the WGSS Center. Housed in the Social and Environmental Justice Center (SEJC) in Woodlands 1, it may be somewhat out of the way, but it is a welcoming and affirming space. The walls are full of everything from photos of faculty and students who addressed issues of women, gender, and sexuality over the years (the 'Founders' Wall) to posters addressing issues related to feminism, reproductive justice, queer and trans rights, and other topics.

Staffed by student interns and volunteers, and supervised by Professor Crocker, the cozy three-room center is both a drop-in space (Monday to Thursday, 12-5) and presents more structured events. An event flyer for just the month of October lists events about sexual assault on campus, the LGBTQIA+ representation in the Netflix show *Heartstoppers*, queer punk, and *Election 2024: From Cat Ladies to Cat Eaters - the politics of likability, masculinity & intersectionality from media to ballot*. This wide range of events depicts the interdisciplinary nature of studying WGSS, whether as a major, minor, or in this co-curricular space.

Danielle, who is interning at the Center this semester, said that even if you're not majoring in WGSS, "come down to the Center and [...] meet other students and hang out with us." Membreno is a volunteer at the Center, and says they bring their friends over, because most people don't even realize it's there. The goal is for it to be a safe, welcoming space, which, in my opinion, it has achieved. The Center offers everything from a free clothing rack, to pins and stickers to snacks and drinks, as well as a lending library of books on topics related to WGSS. It's a low-key place to come and study or just hang out.

As Professor Crocker states, "We, of course, should underscore that both of these types of work - the academic work of the WGSS Program and the co-curricular work of the WGSS Center - are incredibly relevant to pressing political and social justice issues that we are grappling with in society at a more general level." Or to put it more simply, as Membreno did, "[WGSS] makes you cooler!"



Credit: Diana Colavita

Danielle, WGSS major and WGSS

Center volunteer, sitting on a chair in a room decorated with string lights and posters. A poster with the word "POWER" is visible in the background.

Professor Crocker says she knows that the WGSS program and center have excellent support from the faculty and from the Dean of the School of Arts and Sciences, Cheryl Wilson, who has been "incredibly supportive of this emerging program." She went on to say, "anything



## O.W. Welcomes Back Child Care Center

By Olivia Ambery

Are you looking for an affordable child care opportunity available to any member of the Old Westbury community? Look no further—SUNY Old Westbury's child care center is finally reopening after a four year closure! College can be difficult already—finding a safe space to watch your child doesn't have to be.

The child care center, located in the E wing of the Campus Center, has been in operation for over 18 years. When the pandemic forced closures, new management took charge and used the time to strategically add features that would benefit the children, parents, and O.W. students.

The center has capability to care for

en sets, a jungle gym, and exercise balls, all with the purpose of improving motor skills. There is also a reading nook, a gigantic game of Connect Four, and a variety of board games.

"As a working parent, it is truly life changing to have a daycare on campus where I can drop my child off knowing he will be well taken care of." Said Dr. Elizabeth Schmermund, a longtime professor with the English department. Her 2½ year old son is enrolled in the program. "Offering childcare is part of the social justice mission of our campus, giving working parents a safe, income-based childcare option for our faculty, staff, and students. Miss Stephanie is caring and knowledge-



Credit: Olivia Ambery

Baby/ toddler daycare room

in higher education, spanning from as south as Florida Atlantic University to as west as the University of Texas, has brought her here to Old Westbury.

One of the first things these women did when put in charge was research to identify what the center lacked in the past and what it would need to improve in the future. Their main goal was to prioritize children that have parents who either attend or teach at the University. They also wanted to ensure that the parents received a quality experience that was both accessible and affordable.

There are discounts available for campus community members to ensure that child care pricing doesn't make tuition costs more difficult.

"When you think about caring for your students, you want to get to know them and create an experience where they feel seen, heard, and valued." said Dr. Robinson.

Affordable and accessible child care is a national issue that O.W. aims to lessen for our campus community. Both Dr. Robinson and President Sams noted that only one of the colleges they worked at had a daycare center nearby. The one President Sams referenced wasn't even connected to the school.

"[Child care services] should be a national priority, not just a state priority... It is very clear that our state legislature is 100% behind granting pre-k childcare, but we need it as a nation if we are committed to bringing people out of financial duress." Said President Sams.

Another focus of the renovation was safety. New management implemented

physical safety measures such as special training for employees and large first aid kits in every room, but also technological advantages like instant messaging apps. Now, parents can speak directly with teachers and see reports that explain the schedule for the day and what their children are up to at the time of messaging.

Part of the renovation involved installation of a one way window with the goal of elevating support services for the children. For those with occupational therapy, speech therapy, or other early intervention services, moments of required observation can be done through this window. This ensures that they can be viewed in a natural state without being disturbed or distracted from their activity.

This window is also beneficial for childhood education students. It gives them the chance for an in-person learning opportunity where they can watch an established teacher work firsthand as well as recognize certain child behaviors.

"We talk about connectivity between the school of education and the child care center." Said Dr. Sukhram, the Dean of the School of Education. "There are so many different opportunities for students as well as faculty. It allows students to get hands-on experience, improve on job skills, and provides research opportunities."

Not only does the center give parents peace of mind while they sit in class, teach their own students, or carry out a variety of jobs on campus, but it exposes these children to the college community and encourages them to pursue higher education themselves in the future. They even hold pre-k graduation ceremonies in O.W.'s new auditorium.

"Our mission has always been to learn with love and lead children to a higher education and a brighter future," Said Ms. Danielle Paige, the Owner and Managing member. "It is definitely a dream come true."



Credit: Olivia Ambery

One of several classrooms in the center

infants, babies, toddlers, and school age children, with separate classrooms and play areas for each age group. With brightly colored rooms full of toys, books, and interactive equipment, the center is prepared to hold up to 80 students. They are open from 6:30am-6:30pm.

Daily scheduling consists of times for breakfast and lunch, outdoor play in a designated playground on campus, crafts, naptime, storytime, and age appropriate curriculum from a teacher. There are time slots for free play and use of the 'gym' which includes play equipment like kitch-

able, and my son looks forward to going to school every day."

Led by Ms. Danielle Paige, Dr. Joanne Robinson, and Dr. Diana Sukhram, the operation to renew the center began with a new initiative—to elevate the experience they provide.

"We didn't just turn the lights back on. We wanted to make sure that the people that we work with understood our mission of social justice and our commitment to students." Said Dr. Robinson, Executive Vice President and Chief of Staff at O.W. She jokes that her 30 year career

will be provided with funding up to \$1500 for research projects and so much more to guide them on their academic journey.

Mike Kavic, Associate Provost in the Chemistry and Physics department, said that the program is one that strives to create a more immersive and exciting science experience for students where they can have more hands-on experiments. Kavic said, "You will feel that thrill."

Kavic said that OW STEAM had been in the works for approximately one academic year after receiving a federal grant of 1.9 million dollars sponsored by Senator Charles Schumer.

Kavic emphasized that everyone

who was in attendance were pioneers for this program because it's new and here to stay.

"I think it's a great addition to the school," media major Deborah Flanena. "By adding this hopefully we get more students for the science program," she continued.

The event concluded by having the students take part in a challenge where they were told to work together in small groups to build the tallest structure, using only marshmallows and toothpicks in 10 minutes. Kavic said that this activity would give them a sneak peak of the kind of inquiry-based learning that the program offers.

## Old Westbury Launches New STEAM Program

By Kyrah Jones-Griffith

On September 19 from 1:30 to 2:30 pm, SUNY Old Westbury held an event in the Campus Center's Recital Hall to launch their brand-new Science Technology Engineering Arts and Mathematics (STEAM) research program.

With this new program comes a newly developed space equipped with technology such as 3D printers, laser cutter, and more to help students create and advance to the next level of learning. Students will also be assisted by faculty members as mentors in this inquiry-based experience to further support them on their path to future STEAM careers.

According to the campus website, students involved in the program



Credit: Kyrah Jones-Griffith

Mike Kavic introducing the new OW Steam program on September 19, 2024.



## From Cat Ladies to Cat Eaters: Politics, Gender, and Race

By Diana Colavita

On Thursday, October 24th, the Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies (WGSS) Center and the Politics, Economics, and Law (PEL) Department co-sponsored a presentation and discussion facilitated by Professor Carolyn Cocca of PEL entitled *Election 2024: From Cat Ladies to Cat Eaters - the politics of likability, masculinity & intersectionality from media to ballot*. The event, which was held in one of the rooms that make up the WGSS Center in Woodlands 1, was well attended by students and faculty alike, including Dean Cheryl Wilson of the School of Arts and Sciences.

Professor Cocca covered a wide range of topics related to gender, race, and intersectionality in the current election. More than one of which involves cats. She first briefly went over how cats have been viewed historically - originally powerful goddesses of fertility, domesticity, and wisdom who later became connected to witches and stereotypes of 'crazy, childless cat ladies.' Then she covered how both the Trump and Harris campaign has been addressing issues of gender and race and the electorate's reaction to them. The focus was especial-

ly on JD Vance's deployment of the 'childless cat lady' trope against female Democratic voters and Trump's disinformation campaign against Haitian migrants in Ohio that accuses them (with no evidence) of eating people's pet cats and dogs.

Both campaigns use masculinity in their outreach to voters. Trump's campaign has busted out the tired old canard about women not to be trusted with the nuclear codes at 'that time of the month.' The irony being that Trump's behavior has been more erratic than any woman's. Meanwhile the Lincoln Project, a publication of current and former Republicans working to get Harris elected, released an ad narrated by Sam Elliot, in his best grizzly cowboy voice. It was full of masculine imagery and tropes that included Elliot dropping the f-bomb and ending with him saying "It's time to be a man, and vote for a woman."

The ensuing discussion among the attendees was animated, full of frustration at watching many of the same tropes playing out from the 2016 election, now with the added racial elements. However, many people think that Harris has

learned from Hillary Clinton's campaign and has used femininity and masculinity differently, including acknowledging that she is a gun owner and would use it if necessary. Whether this approach is enough to win her the election remains to be seen.

Danielle (who prefers her last name not to be used), a senior and WGSS major who interns at the Center, said she loved the event. "It was the perfect amount of education and funny," and "a good opportunity for other people to realize too why all this [gender] stuff is a really big deal, especially in the next election." She finds Trump's rhetoric to be really harmful to people who aren't straight, white, cisgender men. While she understands the strategic reasons behind the "be a man, vote for a woman," rhetoric, she feels it is still limiting in its binary approach to gender and its stereotypes. Anita Costa, a junior majoring in Environmental Studies and volunteering at the Center, appreciated hearing other people's opinions about the election, because she feels similarly to other people who attended. She finds Trump's comments to be "disgusting" and she is



Credit: Nathan Jainchill/courtesy of the WGSS Center

The room was full at the WGSS Center event *Election 2024: From Cat Ladies to Cat Eaters*.

frustrated by his attacks on Harris's gender, race, and things such as her laugh rather than on any of her policies. She goes on to say, "I think a lot of the time, it's a lesser of two evils thing. And she's not nearly as bad as he is. You don't have to love a candidate in order to say you want to vote for them." Both Danielle and Costa plan on paying close attention to the election returns and are anxiously anticipating them. When asked about her plans, Costa stated, "Maybe cry, maybe not cry."

## Freshman Frenzy on Campus

By Olivia Ambery

Old Westbury welcomed the largest freshman class in the college's history this Fall 2024 semester. With 837 freshmen, Old Westbury surpassed last year's record, already a banner year, by over a hundred. The Office of Admissions noted there were 10,600 applications, a nearly 3,800 student jump.

With hallways fuller than ever, the question arises—what changed to constitute so many incoming students? It is partly due to the work done between President Sams and the Office of Admissions to remove barriers and improve communication between faculty and applicants.

New programs the school has offered may also contribute to this, such as Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies (WGSS) as well as the Black Studies program.

"When you do such an increase, you increase in energy as well," President Sams said, when asked about growth. "It becomes a confirmation for so many people in the community that we have, educationally, a hot commodity."

When Sams took office in 2021, he had an ultimate goal of five thousand students, which we have now surpassed by over 200. Though this growth did come at an interesting time—with the Natural Science Building (NSB) closed for renovations, changes had to be made to accommodate the lack of classrooms

and faculty offices. However, faculty had no worries about these changes, as they knew this increase was coming well in advance.

"We have a lot of room for adjustment," Sams stated. He shared that Old Westbury has been fortunate enough to receive funding from SUNY not based on our enrollment numbers, but rather the



Credit: Office of Communications and University Relations

school's commitment to student success. This funding has gone towards growing programs, adding personnel in a variety of offices (especially in Disability services), growing the office of veteran affairs, and contributing towards student support centers.

As for faculty offices, Sams's residen-

tial college model came into play. NSB faculty has been moved down to the bottom levels of Woodland Halls 1 and 5 below students who live on the second and third floors, most of whom are STEM majors. This push influences students to engage with their professors out of class since they are directly accessible to them.

Sams said, "The task is to never lose sight of our mission while meeting the demands of that growth." He intends to make sure that we never disrupt our crucial values of smaller class sizes and student-teacher ratio that keep our students engaged.

Our commitment to Diversity,

Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) programming is another factor contributing towards student excellence. With an increase particularly in the population of Hispanic students on campus, the institution made adjustments to accommodate these students to the best of their ability. This includes a partnership with CREAR Futuros, a peer-mentor program that recruits Latinx students to support younger mentees at participating institutions.

"One of the reasons that faculty and staff come to SUNY OW is because we truly believe in its social justice mission," said Bryan Terry, the Vice President of Enrollment Management and Marketing. "I believe today's students are paying attention to all of the news stories and understand the need for social justice and the strategies to reach that goal, so the more students that we can train to build a better tomorrow, the better off tomorrow will be."

"The value that one gets in their educational experience relates directly to the level of engagement that student has," Sams said. He also gave a word of advice to new students: join the clubs and organizations that interest you and challenge yourself. "Everyone comes to college to have a meaningful experience...It is so important that we do not leave one student behind."



## Celebrating Monumental Pride at OW

By Olivia Ambery

When students returned back to school after a long summer off, many may have noticed the newest addition to campus— a large, hollywood-sign-style ‘OW’ near the campus center parking lot. This sign is Old Westbury’s latest effort to create a bold, recognizable landmark to reinforce school pride and act as a physical differentiator from other college campuses.

Installed by instruction of President Sams before classes began, the OW sign is one of 8 monuments around our school. It takes its place along with our two Panther



Photo Credits: Olivia Ambery

statues, three cracked ice sculptures, the Push and Pull statue, and of course, Ole Worm.

Many students simply pass them right by without any mind, but these monuments are installed with a purpose of promoting social justice values and contributing to our campus’s visual identity. Installations like sculptures and monuments incite curiosity about our school and act as physical symbols to show that we prioritize a creative education. The OW sign in particular was created so that students could have a pronounced place to stand for graduation photos, freshman class photos, or just to have a point of pride.

Featured monuments like our two Panthers were a gift given for Panther Pride Homecoming in October of 2009. “The statues were the brainchild of Len L. Davis, who served as the campus’ chief financial officer and vice president for business and finance from 2001 until his retirement in 2021.” Said Michael Kinane, Vice President for Communications & University Relations at Old Westbury. “He advocated for both the statues and Panther Pride Homecoming so that the students, alumni, faculty and staff could have reasons to come together to share in — and show — the pride they felt for SUNY Old Westbury. Mr. Davis passed away in 2022.”

Mr. Davis’s effort and years of commitment to the well being of our students is still seen as we pass by his contributions every day.

President Sams noted that he’d enjoy having our panthers be a site of interaction.

“I’ve been at schools where they would paint or put clothing on their Panther, or do something as a healthy competition between the school. I like those kinds of things—they submit your identity to your institute...” He said.

The “Cracked Ice” sculptures were the most recent addition to our institution until the OW sign. Artist Del Geist created “Cracked Ice” to call attention to the ongo-

ing climate crisis.

“Cracked Ice’ features three structures of stone and stainless steel, symbolizing massive boulders suspended by the remnants of ancient glaciers, now shrinking from the gradual melting of ice over time. The works are sited to appear slightly precarious as a metaphor for climate change, alluding to a precarious situation for the earth (oldwestbury.edu).”

When students pass them by on the way from the parking lot to the campus center, they are given the opportunity to consider the meaning behind their creation and the message they spread on their way to class.

Ole Worm is a personal favorite of President Sams. The bust is based on a 17th century Danish physician who was known as an avid learner, doctor, and educator. Having him immortalized in stone in between the New Academic Building and Campus Center is meant to encourage students to pursue academic excellence and brilliance while also being a site to



Photo Credit: Michael Kinane

Description (Provided by Michael Kinane): The campus’ new Panther statue was unveiled during the 2009 Panther Pride Homecoming Kickoff Barbecue by (from left to right) College President Calvin O. Butts, III, Vice President for Business Affairs Len L. Davis, and Student Government Association President Lisa Ribacoff.

express themselves creatively.

“For me, the importance of Ole Worm is not just because of the acronym OW,” President Sams paused, “But it inspires us to say that my liberal arts education, shaped around excellence, charges me to go out and explore anything my heart desires.”

“It says to our students, this is the point at which you open your door to all possibilities. [It says that] you have a right to dream and think expansively.” Added President Sams.

As for future monuments, President Sams says he has a lot of goals in mind — one being to lessen the amount of concrete around campus. His effort has already begun with the painting of a curved wall in front of the Woodland Halls. He hopes to have the art department eventually begin more projects with students on concrete walls that will act as a site of remembrance for years to come.



Photo Credits: Olivia Ambery

One of Del Geist’s three ‘Cracked Ice’ sculptures



Photo Credit: Michael Kinane



Photo Credits: Vincent Arroyo

Ole Worm is a personal favorite of President Sams.

## Queer Punk Talk

By Jackie Martinez

On October 23, 2024, the Women’s, Gender, and Sexuality Studies (WGSS) department presented an event hosted by Dr. Jessica Williams, a prominent professor of the English department, on queerness in punk. Dr. Williams started with explaining how she took it upon herself to research the connection between queerness and alternative subcultures. She described this material as “unpolished,” and as a way to sort through her thoughts on the subject in an academic space.

Dr. Williams presented “two views about queerness in punk,” one where punk is white, male, and homophobic, and one where punk actually comes from marginalized groups such as queer and disabled people. Dr. Williams stated, “I want the second one to be an accurate history, but the truth is that it is probably somewhere in the middle.” She went on to describe “poserism,” which refers to the idea of someone in an alternative subculture supposedly doing it inauthentically. She said that this idea has been used to exclude people from marginalized communities from punk.

Dr. Williams cited two examples of prominent punk musicians being ostracized in relation to poserism. The first one she described was Laura Jane Grace, a transgender punk musician from the band *Against Me*, who was criticized and labeled as a sellout for signing the band to a major record label. Maintaining independence from the mainstream is an important value in punk — which is why Laura Jane Grace’s fans turned on her. However, once she came out as a transgender woman she was once again embraced for her status as a kind of “other,” which highlights the way punk is a subculture that is highly inclusive of queerness. Dr. Williams also noted the fact that while Laura Jane Grace’s gender identity changed, her music remained fast and aggressive, which is usually received as a “masculine” trait.

The other musician Dr. Williams spoke about was Fat Mike of the band *NOFX*, who has been criticized for being sexist and too outlandish with the way he expresses himself. Also, his feminine appearance has sparked debate about what constitutes queerness, as he describes himself as queer, but his queerness seems to be limited to BDSM related activity and crossdressing. Dr. Williams stated that this behavior caused fans to accuse him of not really being queer, but more so a cis male toying with the aesthetic of queerness. Either way, his behavior has caused him to lose respect from what Dr. Williams called “the bro punks.”

Dr. Williams stated, “This is all early research, [...] my early conclusion, I guess, if I had to have one, is that punk seems to be very much okay with subversive identities of both kinds in general, but actually is still really not comfortable with femininity.” She said that while it is accepted to be fat, gay, trans, etc., it can’t be done in a way that is too “girly,” and there is still work to be done in punk spaces to accept femininity. This was quite interesting to me since I consider myself well-versed and active in the punk subculture, and I have certainly noticed the clear-cut divide between Dr. Williams’ two views of punk. This has always been an issue, and this is also what spurred the creation of the Riot Grrrl movement, which Dr. Williams also mentioned. Punk will probably always be this division within itself, and Dr. Williams’ presentation was a very well executed analysis of these two sides.



# Historic Art Collection at SUNY Old Westbury

By Vincent Arroyo

From September 16 to October 11, Old Westbury's Amelie A. Wallace Gallery exhibited a small portion of Eric Edwards' extensive collection of African art. The exhibit, titled *African Art and Its Historic Value Systems in Educating a People*, was an enlightening showcase of the craftsmanship of African artifacts. All information for this article was provided by literature handed out at the gallery, or during the collector's talk on September 26.

ations. Obviously, there is something to be said about hoarding artifacts instead of having them held by the state-inheritors of the culture. But, as Edwards himself said, "I don't consider myself an owner, I'm a caretaker." He is acting in good faith, using his collection as a tool to teach. As far as I know, he amassed this collection with the almighty dollar, not from some cruel imperial treachery; or maybe those two things are the same...but I digress.

In November of 2023, Edwards opened the Cultural Museum of African Art, a center which hosts his entire collection. Located in his childhood neighborhood of Bed-Stuy, Edwards claims to have seen people so moved by the pieces that they cry. "The beauty grabs you, but when you look deeper you find a story," he says.

For the portion of the collection that was on display, Edwards chose 16 sculptures from Sierra Leone, Angola, Gabon, Congo, Cameroon, Nigeria, Ivory Coast, Guinea, and Mali. The artifacts from Cameroon are specifically from the Bamum people, which is noteworthy because of O.W. 's



Students looking over map of Africa

Dr. Eric Edwards has dedicated most of his life to collecting African art. At the talk, hosted by O.W. President Timothy Sams at the Duane L. Jones Recital Hall, Edwards expounded on his life, not only as a collector but as a human being.

Born and raised in Bed-Stuy, Brooklyn, Edwards' father (an immigrant from Barbados) taught him about the history of Africa and its diaspora. "He was aghast to learn that no school in New York City taught about African descent," he said. "What [my father] did was lay the groundwork to let us know we were somebody." This proved to stay with him and he's taken up a similar role in his old age.

Edwards had already been collecting audio recordings (which is another passion of his), but his fascination with artifacts started when he was a young man. "In 1971, I took an interest in African artifacts entirely by chance," he said. When walking through SoHo, on break from his job at AT&T, Edwards found a small piece of African art that caught his eye. He turned to go back to work, but something made him look back; he needed that piece. It cost 300 bucks, and he placed it on his desk at work. Later, he researched the artifact he had purchased, sending him down his life's path of collecting artifacts. "The pieces have stories to tell," he said, as a way of justifying his passion.

Educating is the key principle here. As his father educated him about Africa and its people, so will he for future gener-

ations. Obviously, there is something to be said about hoarding artifacts instead of having them held by the state-inheritors of the culture. But, as Edwards himself said, "I don't consider myself an owner, I'm a caretaker." He is acting in good faith, using his collection as a tool to teach. As far as I know, he amassed this collection with the almighty dollar, not from some cruel imperial treachery; or maybe those two things are the same...but I digress.



Sams and Edwards talk

recent royal visit by the Bamum Sultan. The artifacts range from helmets, masks, figures and shrines. "They weren't created for art's sake," Edwards said. "They had a much deeper purpose."

Often we are told by stereotyped media that African art is primitive; the 'cradle' of civilization, a land of tribes and simple weapons. But some of these artifacts show a rigid, sophisticated naturalism. The *Ife Cast Bronze Head of Oni King* is a prime example of this. Dating from



Dr. Edwards standing next to a Songye Power Figure

Nigeria (a Yoruba people) in the 1500s, the head is meticulously detailed to the point where it felt like looking through a glass wall into the past.

Much of the art on display were created by skilled artisans, and used for right-of-passage ceremonies. The *Mende Bundu Sande Secret Society Helmet*, is one such artifact. Originating from the Bundu Mende people of Sierra Leone, the helmet is topped with a crest, symbolizing the authority of the headmistress of these "secret societies," who would teach them their gender-based lot in life. This is a form of learning that has prevailed throughout human civilization; an older, presumably wiser, member of the society

Vinci and Michelangelo. Artists with a skill that drew royal and religious authorities alike to use their honed talent.

The title of the exhibit is verbose, some might call it over indulgent, but the length is necessary. It tells people that this isn't just some rich playboy's collection, it's an experience; one that the viewer will be all the better for. We're following in the footsteps of learning. These artifacts were used to teach generations ago, and now here they are again - teaching in a whole new context.

To see more of the collection be sure to visit the Cultural Museum of African Art at 1360 Fulton street in Brooklyn, and book a tour online at <https://cmaaeeec.org>.



Ife Cast Bronze Head of Oni King on display



One of the Mende Bundu Sande helmets



# Aurora Borealis at Astronomy Night

By Christian Coriolan

On the starry night of October 10th, many students came to view a mysterious colorful light that appeared through the sky. The atmosphere was filled with a colorful display of the Aurora Borealis, due to a severe geomagnetic storm. The occasion was hosted by CSTEP and the Physics Club, the second in their stargazing events.

In this event, the students looked through a telescope to see the multi-colored heavens, gazing at the Northern Lights. "This our 2nd astrology night," prof. Matthew Lippert said. "We have great weather, and it was

an extremely rare treat to see the Northern Lights this far south."

Prof. Michael Kavoc was giving lessons to the viewers to learn more about astronomy. Kavoc's lessons were an attempt to get students for the new STEM program, OW STEAM. He discussed the patterns of the stars and mythology behind the constellations. Kavoc said, "I feel appreciated that many people came to see the lights because it's very rare on Long Island, and with the new program we hope the students could get to see and enjoy more of it."



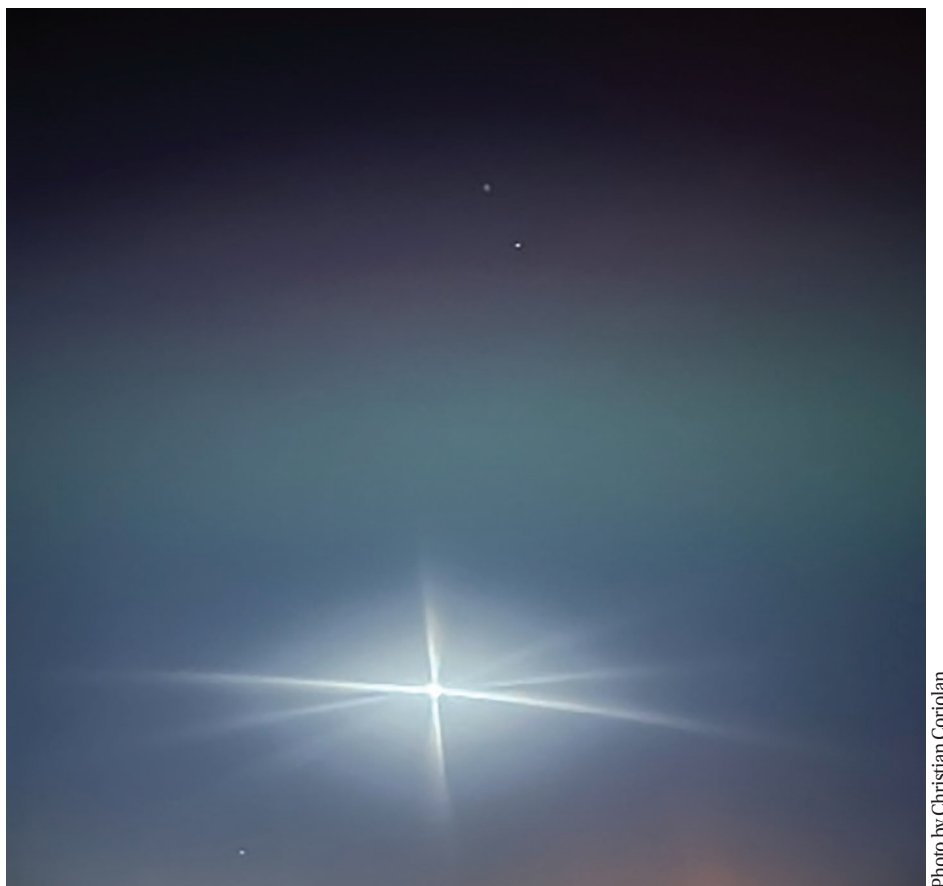
The Northern Lights

Photo by Christian Coriolan



The Northern Lights

Photo by Christian Coriolan



A shining star

Photo by Christian Coriolan



## Sultan Comes to Campus

By Vincent Arroyo

On September 10th, Old Westbury hosted royalty. Sultan Mouhammad-Nabil Mforifoum Mbombo Njoya, accompanied by his entourage, graced the Duane L. Jones Recital Hall in the Campus Center. The historic event was little more than an interview, conducted by professor Sylvie Kande, with a brief introduction about the importance of the Sultan's recent ascent to the throne.

Njoya is king of the Bamum people, a group who have roots in west Cameroon. While one might think that his royal duties end at the Atlantic ocean, this couldn't be further from the truth.

"I come to commune with the community," Njoya said. Tradition seems to dictate that the Bamum king must visit his people, and he has chosen to visit the world to meet with the diaspora.

The recital hall was filled with students, faculty, and alumni, who simply

Cameroon population being mostly young it's significant that the new sovereign is 28 years old, better reflecting his people.

After the video, Njoya walked, donned a long robe and sunglasses, and took his seat across from Prof. Kande. O.W. President Sams gave a small speech about the significance of the King's visit, and what it could mean for the university. Hints at a foreign exchange program were dropped, but were expanded upon later.

This isn't the first time Njoya's visited the United States. He had attended St. John's University in Queens. "We don't hold that against you," Sams joked in his introduction.

"Being in the U.S. as an African is different than being in any part of the world," Njoya said. "Americans try to understand other people. When I came it was easier to learn and connect with other people."



Sultan Njoya (left) and Prof. Kande (right) during interview

people," Njoya continued. "The king was fighting to preserve his people."

Sams concluded the public event with a question of his own: "What should [students] think about when they move cross-cultural borders?" Njoya paused for a moment. "Are you preparing them to come to Cameroon?"

A smaller meeting was held immediately after the first, but this one was closed to most students. The only students in this second meeting were myself and two others from the Media Innovation Center. The few seats taken were filled by administration and cabinet members. Sams' words at this meeting were to the point, overtly asking about the possibility of a foreign exchange program.

Njoya said himself that he is very open to the idea of not only students attending school in Cameroon, but also O.W. faculty going there to teach. Feeling out the King's interest for educational programs seemed to be one of the main goals of the visit.

As a part of O.W.'s student media apparatus, I was told by the higher-ups (in an email before the meeting) that if I were to ask any questions they must not be political. I also had to turn in a list of ques-

tions to be approved. That got me thinking: what could possibly be happening in Cameroon that political questions are rejected?

Here's a short list of what I thought were the most compelling quirks of Cameroon's politics; the president, Paul Biya, is 91 years old and has been in power since 1982. Cameroon's Rapid Reaction Force (shortened to the French name BIR) is trained and equipped by Israel. In the North-West region, in 2022, government counter-insurgency operations left homes burned, people dead, with attacks on students and teachers.

No nation is perfect, and it's even easier to find similar stories occurring within the U.S. But if the end goal is to send faculty to Cameroon and provide students with a foreign exchange program, then the least they could do is be open about what is happening within that country. Having said that, I don't think Sams or the administration were trying to mislead students, instead trying to maintain cordial relations with Njoya and progress the potential exchange program.

All in all, Njoya's visit was certainly noteworthy for what it could mean for the future of O.W.



O.W. faculty & alumni take a photo with Sultan

couldn't pass up the opportunity to see royalty. An introductory video played with a translation from the speaker offering insight into Njoya's importance.

"Bamum people are the tip of my spear," Njoya says in the video. With the

Topics in Prof. Kande's interview centered on the history of the Bamum kingdom. Njoya's ancestor, Sultan Ibrahim Njoya, developed a written script which acted as a form of anti-colonial resistance. "We only read our story written by other

## Old Westbury Earns University Title

By Samantha Robinson

Did you know this is our school's first full year as a university?

SUNY Old Westbury has been a "college" for almost 60 years. Since the founding of Old Westbury in 1965, the school's official title has been "State University of New York College at Old Westbury."

"College" has been removed as O.W. proudly evolved to a university. Around the time of the name change, according to President Sams, "some 27 schools across the state of New York changed their name from college to university" and Old Westbury felt it necessary to change as well.

You may be asking, "What's the difference between a college and a university?" According to President Sams, being recognized as a university comes down to what educational opportunities are offered at the school. President

Sams told me, "Universities typically offer far more graduate programs than colleges," and since SUNY Old Westbury offers three separate standalone graduate programs to students, and the opportunity to fund a doctorate program, it meets all the criteria to be recognized as a university under the State of New York.

In order to achieve this status, Old Westbury had to fill out an application to the SUNY Board of Trustees signifying that it met the criteria, and, safe to say, the case was accepted. According to Sams, offering these research programs and intellectual opportunities not only brings in graduate students, but it also tends to create "a more favorable experience" for faculty, leading them to stay longer.

There are benefits to the name change that are more subtle as well. For

instance, the potential increase of foreign exchange students attending because, per Sams, "a university is of higher status in their eyes."

For the future of O.W. as a university President Sams wishes for our accessible programs to reach more students. "We want our doors to be open to people with challenges, because we firmly believe challenges don't prevent excellence," he said. Helping make sure communities are no longer left behind through university infrastructure is important because as a public institution we are obliged to be able to respond to the evolving needs of society.



In front of student union on SUNY Old Westbury Campus



## Emmy Award-Winning Alum Visits Campus

By Alexia Croll

Old Westbury alumni Moses Nunez Jr. paid the university a visit to share his experience and insights during his time in undergrad. This experience propelled him to heights in the media industry beyond his wildest dreams.

He recounts his struggles as a young college student navigating his home and personal life. His father had dropped out of college, working overtime at an Entenmann's food plant, while his mother had been battling an illness and babysitting to earn a living wage.



Credit: Alexia Croll

Living in Brentwood posed many challenges for Nunez. He had spent a lot of his time working at Lowe's to support his family, until the loss of his home, couch-hopping, and sleeping in cars landed him at his cousin's house. The

displacement of his family and financial insecurity had been a major pitfall, but he remained hopeful.

After he obtained his associate's from Suffolk County Community College, he contemplated his next move. After realizing the cold weather in Buffalo was unsuitable, he finally settled on SUNY Old Westbury.

After receiving money from financial aid, he was able to live on campus and obtain a studio apartment for him and his father. He interned at CNBC as a short form programming intern, then later applied to SB Nation, a sports media brand, where he edited video footage to be released for the 2016 Olympic Games.

Nunez originally wanted to be an actor, and recalls instances where he would recite *The Lion King* verbatim in front of his family, which is where his love for media began. "Even if I can't be an actor, I would love to be behind, or in front of, the camera," said Nunez. His father's involvement in broadcasting and his love for sports prompted his sense of urgency for working in media.

Upon graduating from Old Westbury in 2017, Nunez says he sent out applications to over 50 jobs and internships daily over the course of 3-4 months, receiving constant rejection until he ran into someone who worked alongside him at Sports New York (SNY). Nunez had worked as a production assistant at SNY, where he oversaw infographics and tickers for live games.

Afterwards, he moved on to NBC where he did operations coordinating.

"NBC was like my actual first real job" he began, "I learned so much about master control, I learned about broadcast, I learned about scrubbing, like, if there's an issue with video, broadcast integrity, FCC regulations, just all this different stuff."

He would later transfer these skills into his next role at NYC Media, where he continued in master control as a part time contractor under an agency. After concerns surrounding job security at NYC Media, he ended up with interviews at both ABC News and Major League Baseball (MLB) as a broadcasting engineer.

Nunez accepted a position at MLB where he oversaw broadcasting operations. "If there's a ballpark phone that's down we fix it, if there's an issue with the dugout cameras, we fix it," said Nunez.

His work in Augmented Reality (AR) and Virtual Reality (VR) won him the Outstanding Digital Innovation category for his work as Associate Producer for MLB Home Run Derby's "MLB XR" at the 43rd Annual Sports Emmy Awards in May 2022. When asked about how he felt about the win, he laughed and said, "I'm not going to lie, it's probably the closest I've ever felt to winning a championship."

He had always wanted to win an Emmy or an Oscar, but gave up on that idea once he began working for NBC. He was in disbelief once he learned he was nominated, and consistently relives the shock everyday he sees his award. "My boss is a great guy, but I never thought I would hug him," he continued. "I ran into one of the meeting rooms and I

called my mom and I was crying... honestly it was one of the best feelings I think I've ever had."

He credits professors such as Karl Grossman and Joe Manfredi as pillars of his success. After undergoing a concussion during his senior year before his final exams, he recalls feeling unprepared as he was undergoing recovery, where he highlights Prof. Mattson was a main advocate for his accommodation. When asked about what he found at Old Westbury, he stated, "The nurturing here was top notch. When I came in here I knew I had a skill set I could use outside in the real world."

He credits the institution for giving him a new found sense of confidence and encourages media students to continuously utilize their resources. "Internships and networking are the two biggest things you can possibly do," he said. "Every place I went to, I didn't see it as 'going to a place,' I saw it as a networking opportunity. If I was in college and there was someone coming to speak, I would ask them 'hey, can I add you on LinkedIn? If there was an alumni dinner, 'hey, here's my resume, can you tell me what you think?'" He stresses the importance of building and maintaining important connections, and keeps in touch with the individuals that helped him along the way. "It's who you know that gets you the job, it's what you know that keeps that job."

# OPINION

## Leadership in the Feminine Skin

By Liselle Powder

To start with this awesome topic. I wanted to salute the leadership of women in various aspects of this campus. As I look around the beautiful vitality and class of excellence being served by these women. They are the extra heads needed to be administrators, leaders and thinkers for this campus.

They carry themselves with the utmost pride and dignity to be of service to their fellowmen.

They carry such a weight on their backs, it's like they are carrying us too. But what does it take to be a true leader? Their drive, determination, sacrifice and hard work made them who they are today.

When I look around, I am proud of these women achievers, not for what they have accomplished but for setting the standard of true governance.

They stand as strong towers, as the backbone structure of SUNY Old Westbury. They persevere and get the job done.

I admire them, some I have interacted with personally, and others over the phone.

The diversity of rich cultures echoes in their mindset for growth and to set goals for the betterment of this campus. These women leaders not only live up to their names and expectations, but they see where the future lies for SUNY Old Westbury. They are the team leaders, breaking barriers in every role they play. I admire their ability to push harder in striving for something that is solid, a foundation that is meant to be supported by their team counterparts.

YES!!! It is a team, to enhance lives and the betterment of the students. The

feminine skin was brought right here to this campus, it's not by mistake. Their vision of purpose, strength and vitality can only be achieved by a self-structured mindset.

They bring the food to the table because that's who they are, the nurturing aspect of motherhood teaches discipline, self-respect and obedience, else they would not have been chosen.

Their performance is top notch. They climbed that ladder, not to show their degrees or majors and to wear that cap and gown, but to run with the vision.

What holds them together as true leaders is the depth of their service and commitment that can only be instilled in their minds from day one. Their prayers have been answered as well as their thoughts.

They are respected and raised the bar high for success. What more can I say for true leadership? They could've opened other doors of success. Other doors that gave them inviting words to keep and ponder.

But somehow SUNY Old Westbury held their hand and placed them right where they belong. I admire these feminine skins because they shine bright wherever they go. They are the gems as they carry themselves with such grace and ambience. They don't ask for much, just get the job done. They need to be recognized and supported as they move forward building lives and transforming them.

They are the foundation; they are the feminine skin of this campus.



# Tales from the Encampment

By Quinn Dobson

Everything in this article is from my memory. Names have been removed or redacted to preserve the identities of those that participated in the struggle. I remember waking up quite late on day one. I had recently left my job in preparation for college and had developed a bad habit of sleeping in. My phone delivered exhilarating news: Princeton Israeli Apartheid Divestment (PIAD) had launched an encampment on campus and was demanding the university's divestment from Israel. I had been following the Columbia encampment very closely, finding their example inspiring, and was elated to be able to participate. Having grown up in Princeton, I found the lack of politics on campus to be strange. The last major protests were organized in support of the 2020 Black Lives Matter movement and against the University's out-of-date Woodrow Wilson theming. I quickly dressed, not knowing what to expect.

Over the next few days, I encountered a community of kind and intelligent people, equipped with a moral compass

would soon be making a great sacrifice for the movement.

Since the beginning we had been confined away to a small corner of the campus called McCosh yard, where the administration could safely ignore us. While we certainly made a lot of noise and required the University to bring on more security, our position was a far cry from the Columbia encampment, which had occupied the main lawn of the campus and demanded far more attention.

I had finished my night shift around 4am, waking up the next morning terribly tired, my alarm a constant barrage of notifications. Thirteen leaders of PIAD had set up camp in Clio Hall, armed with a megaphone and a list of demands. I was shocked; the hall is an opulent marble administration building right in the heart of campus. I quickly cycled over, dodging pedestrians and running red lights, finding myself in front of beautiful chaos. Hundreds swarmed the bright white building, the hazy sun shading everything a warm orange. Spotting my co-volunteer

handing out water, I launched into action, distributing water as widely as I could.

The crowd shouted slogans in unison, demanding the university immediately divest from Israel, spurred on by our compatriots who led the chants from an open window in Clio Hall. I biked back and forth, giving out supplies as quickly as I could, sweat drenched faces greeting me with appreciation. Suddenly, I watched in horror as two of the leadership were led out in handcuffs by Princeton Public Safety and put on an orange bus. The crowd coalesced around the vehicle, banging on windows, forcing open doors, crying out "Let them go!"

The fervor and fury grew. Someone beside me stuffed traffic cones in the bus's wheel wells,

ensuring that it would be going nowhere. "If you cease to surround the bus, we will let them go with an administrative summons and a court date," announced the head of Public Safety. That was simply not good enough, we wanted a meeting with administration and amnesty.

We turned our attention back to the building, we were not going to let them arrest anymore of our compatriots. I found myself in the back, locking arms with people I had only met just three days ago. "Quinn, are you ok to be a red," asked me. My heartbeat ticked up. Red meant significant chances of being arrested; was I willing to be arrested for my beliefs? I took stock, took a deep breath, and signed

the jail support form. If I was going to protest, I was going to do it right.

I wasn't arrested that day, negotiations stopped the full escalation of the protest, but I came very close, Princeton Police were ready to come in with buses of their own.

We had secured the release of our

ued into the next day.

The speech struck at a fundamental conundrum in Liberalism— that idealistic peace is simply a concession in the face of power. This echoed the popular protest cry "No justice no peace" that rang during the 2020 Black Lives Matter protests. Very little political action is effective without

violence from one or both sides, whether it be the suppression of peaceful marches or startling revolution. As Mao Zedong wrote, "Political power grows out of the barrel of a gun."

Clio Hall's occupation remains as one of the greatest moments of my life; never since have I felt such a profound connection with those around me. While I had previously understood the concept of solidarity, locking arms with those around me and proclaiming our right to protest demonstrated it perfectly. My friend's speech convinced me of the true power of oration, and it is a moment I think about often. From that point on I reaffirmed my commitment to doing the right thing, even if it is prohibited by the law. The

law is made by the powerful, to protect the powerful, and oftentimes those at the top are firmly in the wrong. Whether its their commitment to protecting their property at the expense of the world, or a genocide in which they gleefully play party to.

As we packed up at the end of the semester, there was an air of disappointment— realistically not much had been achieved. The University had made gestures towards the "proper channels" for divestment, refused to drop charges, and had swatted us away. There was one moment that night that stuck out to me, that reminded me of what we had accomplished: Watching the sun slowly rise while having a long talk with some friends I had made.

While materially not much had been gained, and the Israelis continued their massacre, we had at least fostered a political community in Princeton, a grand task just months ago. Communities from around central New Jersey had all flocked to contribute, donating food, labor, and love. We were determined now to continue our fight, locked arm in arm. This was just the first battle— the war was not yet won. Yet, our actions seemed so insignificant against the pure horror we were witnessing in the Middle East.



McCosh encampment

Photo by Quinn Dobson



Zionist peruses signs

Photo by Quinn Dobson

strong enough to sacrifice anything in support of their cause. Chris Hedges, a former New York Times war reporter, gave impassioned speeches that lit a fire under the belly of the protestors. Professors voiced their support to the students, demanding that the Princeton Department of Public Safety drop charges on those who had been arrested. I quickly found my place in food distribution, staffing the tables from 12pm to 4am every night. I threw myself fully into this role, recovering the sense of purpose I had been missing since leaving my job. Over time I became enmeshed in the community, befriending many of the leaders of the organization. Little did I know, they



# The Phantom of the Old Westbury Shuttle Bus

By Nicolas Rowe and Panagiotis Georgilis

You might be wondering how to plan out your college experience to make your life run smoothly. Certain subjects always come to mind—meal-prep, financial delegations, and putting in time to study and complete assignments, but one coordinate every student needs to keep in mind is transportation.

SUNY Old Westbury offers a transportation system called the OW Shuttle Bus. But the question of the hour never evades us – *WHERE* is it? Today, we'll be going into the capricious nature of The Phantom of the Old Westbury Shuttle Bus.

Students, more than ever, are outraged and impatient when it comes to transportation. With the impending colder temperatures students are demanding that the schedule be accurate. Waiting for the shuttle for extended periods of time, especially as the weather becomes more troubling, is a major concern.

The On-campus shuttle, that circulates the campus, has been seen to be more "reliable" in recent times. Staff and students are able to circulate to Woodlands, NAB, Student Union, Academic Village and Bus Stop A. This shuttle schedule has had minimal complaints since its institution this semester. Unfortunately, however, this shuttle route is not offered on weekends. This is reasonable for commuters but it definitely raises concerns for dorming students looking to engage in the world outside of campus on their days off of school.

The Off-Campus evening schedule Shuttle Route, in our experience, is unpredictable, unreliable, and unstable. Some drivers have even tried to ID students to make sure they were students or staff of the Campus. Students grocery trips and off-campus errands or activities become almost impossible to make in a timely manner.

The Weekend-Campus shuttle is the biggest offender of these three, along with the off-campus shuttle. In our experience, both of these schedules are fickle and unpredictable. Students have proclaimed that they have to go 30 minutes to a whole hour before the bus arrives and sometimes they're on a small window of time to make it or not. When following the school website, the bus is sometimes a no-show at the posted times.

The shuttle bus tracker app is "Transloc", and this application is not exclusive to Old Westbury bus routes. On the Google Play store, this app has poor reviews for poor interface, inaccurate schedules, and drivers not following the schedules posted on and off the app. Old Westbury decided to use this app despite its 2.8 out of 5 rating. Students have complained that the app doesn't work. When contacting the app's service number, they claim that depending on your phone service plan, phone type, and which hall you're placed in, the app's ability to work could be affected. However, this isn't the case as students with Android,

As a student who once received assistance from active relatives and friends, she had more to say on the shuttle now that resources have been limited. The student mentioned that, "In the summer, I know most students had their own vehicles or used Uber. I asked for the bus driver's phone number and called them when the schedule matched up. It was summer, so there were less people on campus. I don't try to call the driver now as they have multiple drivers at all different hours." The Shuttle Drivers sharing their personal phone numbers isn't new for summer students, as the driver had a decrease in students to worry

her day. "I don't have time to wait for groceries or to hang out with my friends at the mall."

A third student was a senior, male, and he has been at O.W. for four years. He is a resident of the Academic Village which is commonly known for the placements of older students—juniors and seniors. The Academic Village has its own parking lot and many students have their own vehicles, but not all. The young man said: "It's always been a mixed bag. There was one time that they gave out three different schedules and only ONE of them was true. I was okay with that. Now, none of the schedules work, none of the drivers know what they are doing. They cherry pick bus stops, I won't be leaving my dorm no more."

A recurring pattern it seems is that students are confused and have their arms in the air. It's like a guessing-game with the shuttle and there's no way to track it due to how different each driver decides to handle this situation. With students expressing their concerns, we can only hope there will be a future application that allows tracking the shuttle to be more simple and accurate.

In addition to this, there should be more consistency in the routes and Shuttle Drivers should wait 2-3 minutes more at certain stops after the designated time on the schedule. The school website provided us an "updated" schedule as of September of 2024, but to this day, Residential Assistance, staff, and the school website all present widely different schedules which create intense dissonance. As students, we implore you to continue taking action with your complaints, as we hear them too frequently. Write letters, bring the issue to the Student Government Association (SGA), make phone calls, and continue to advocate for clear schedules and reliable accessibility to campus provided transportation.

As students ourselves, we have opted out of using the shuttle this semester, we can't trust it to come on time and shouldn't have to go super early with the HOPE that the shuttle will arrive. The shuttle services come out of our already hefty tuition bills.

We as students are busy and our destinations, appointments and other responsibilities will not wait on us like we wait on the Old Westbury Shuttle.



Photo Credit: Panagiotis E. Georgilis

The Interior Of The Shuttle Bus On The Off Campus Schedule

Apple and varied phone service providers all experience the same thing; technical issues.

Many students who have made statements on the subject chose to remain anonymous, and we shall follow their wishes.

Over the summer, one female student, a senior, remained on Campus to complete summer classes and has continued this fall. This student has been at Old Westbury since her freshman year. She is currently a resident of Hall 3 and is studying media and communication. She didn't use the Shuttle too often until her senior year. Prior, they used to have friends or a relative drive them. The senior said "The summer wasn't that bad. This Fall semester is pretty bad. Horrible. I miss when the campus was empty."

about. we wouldn't say this is favoritism and more the convenience for the season.

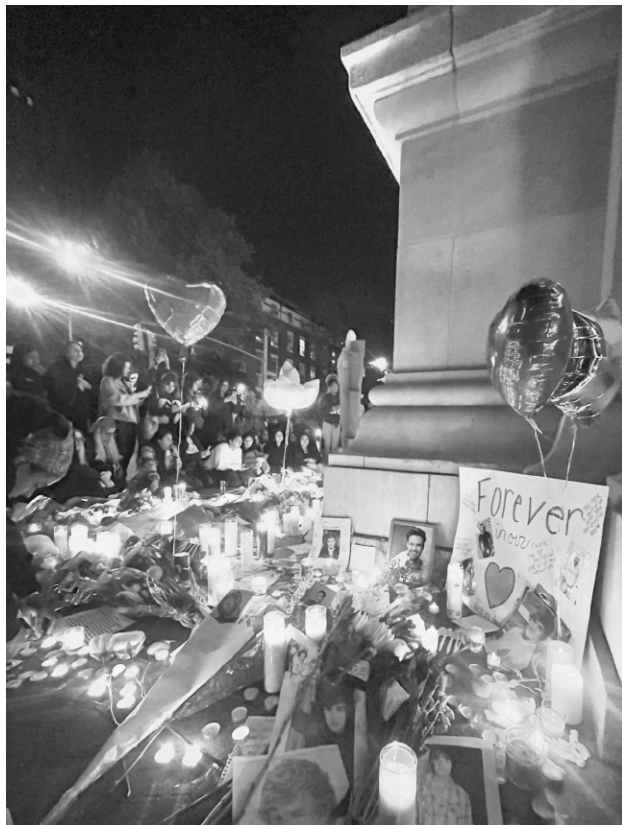
Another student, a female junior with a disability, has been a student for 3 years. In addition to this, she is a resident of Woodlands 4. This student doesn't drive and often takes trains or is driven from point A to B. This student has resorted to using Ubers this semester as she can't wait around for the Shuttle as the temperatures begin to drop. She went on passionately with her opinion about this school: "I dislike this school. They don't know how to manage their resources, they don't listen to students. It's either all or nothing with everything they try to have." When asking this resident, she mentioned her status as a student of disability. She refuses to lose time out on



# Student Reactions to Liam Payne's Passing

By Suha Syed

Former One Direction member Liam Payne, 31, was found dead in his hotel room in Argentina on Wednesday, October 16th. His untimely demise has sparked conversations about the pressures of fame, mental health, and substance abuse. To better understand how this loss has affected our community, we interviewed Old Westbury students about their reactions and what they believe can be learned from this harrowing loss.



Vigil for Liam Payne

Photo by Isabel Geelan

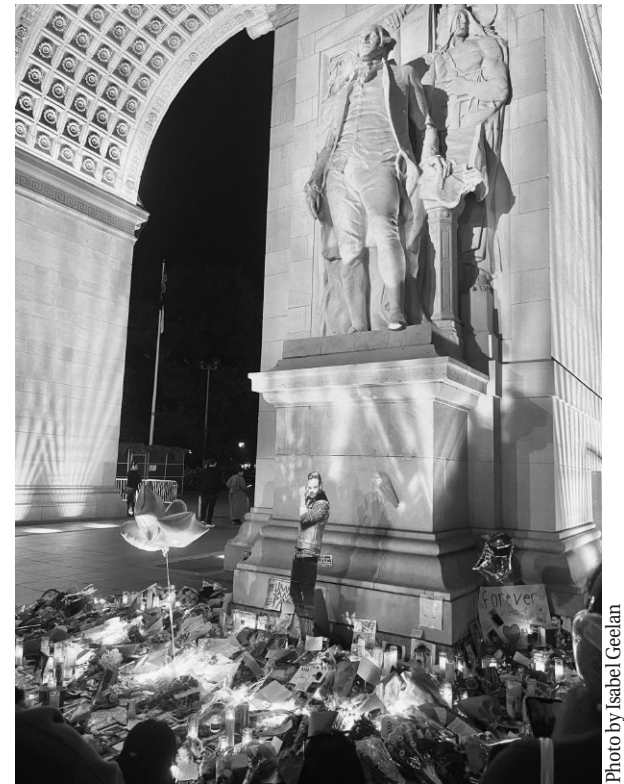
## Processing the Initial Shock

"I saw it on Instagram," shared Interviewee 1, a sophomore public health major who wished to remain anonymous. "Very shocked. It was very unexpected that he would die." Though not a longtime or dedicated fan, this interviewee, like many others, still felt a strong reaction to the tragic news. "Not really," they responded when asked if they were a One Direction fan. "I've heard a few songs of theirs, but that's it."

Another student, Interviewee 2, a junior psychology major who also wished to remain anonymous, explained how they found out about the tragedy: "I found out about Liam Payne's death from the living room while the news was playing from the TV." Reflecting on their reaction, they shared, "Honestly, I was shocked and confused. The part of me being shocked was only because I didn't think he was going to die at a young age."

The surprise and confusion in their responses reflect a universal sentiment, as even those less familiar with Payne's music felt the weight of this tragedy.

## Reflections on Mental Health and Substance Abuse



Vigil at Washington Square park

Photo by Isabel Geelan

When asked how this tragedy might change the way people view celebrities and the importance of mental health and substance abuse awareness, Interviewee 1 offered a thoughtful response: "Kind of a tough question to answer right now. I believe he was probably mentally ill. A recent post said that he had a lot of alcohol in his body, so probably that's why he was really drugged and he just fell over."

Interviewee 2 echoed similar sentiments, highlighting the challenges celebrities face. "Mental health is a complicated issue that needs to be taken seriously with anyone, even celebrities," they said. "People need to understand that celebrities are people who do amazing things, but they are human after all." They continued, "Substance abuse has been an issue for a while now and it needs to be taken seriously as well... an addiction is not a joke; it can cause things to go downhill, and it's hard to let go."

These insights shed light on the often-overlooked mental health challenges faced by public figures. The struggle with substance abuse, particularly, can be a dangerous path, exacerbated by fame and its accompanying pressures.

## Takeaways for the Future

In response to the question, "If you feel like anything positive can be taken from this tragic situation for people to learn from in the future, what would it be?" Interviewee 1 gave a blunt answer, "Probably don't get over-drugged."

Interviewee 2 offered a more reflective takeaway, focusing on self-awareness and the importance of seeking help. "I think what needs to be learned from this tragic situation for the future is to be self-aware of your health, pay attention to your body and mind, what it is telling you," they shared. "Seek help if you need it; there is nothing to be ashamed of... it's okay. Always ask for help."

As the world mourns the loss of Payne's life, fans ensure his legacy will be celebrated and remembered. Vigils around the world have taken place, a somber space of unity, grief, and remembrance. As the candle light blows out and the final flowers are laid, fans worldwide ensure his legacy as a One Direction member and soloist do not perish in vain.

If you are experiencing issues with mental health or related issues, please call 988, the Suicide & Crisis Lifeline, hotline. SUNY Old Westbury's Health & Wellness center can be reached at 516-876-3053 or by email at [counselingcenter@oldwestbury.edu](mailto:counselingcenter@oldwestbury.edu).

## Self

By Liselle Powder

I wondered about self, and thought,  
How can I bring self to know self?  
It's the outer that shines and beams  
with smiles and good talk, walk  
on pavement steps so high to climb.  
But who is listening inside?  
Who hears the heavy heart that beats?  
With matching sticks that thuds with  
the feeling of fear and heartache.  
Pounding back to the ground in chains.  
Held captive by its own calling.  
Self, fights to be free, frustration wins.  
A longing to search self and pull self, back.  
Lost and forgotten, that's how  
I try to search for self to find out what it wants.  
But who validates self, when the mind is  
falling to pieces of self-destruction.  
Pick up the pieces they say when it's only dust.  
I told self I love you.  
That's where it began. I saw chains broken,  
hands that pulled and tugged at self's heart  
to damage and manipulate it. Let go.  
Self, became aware of it's worth.  
Self, was able to go inside self and mend the  
wounds of brokenness, lack and unworthiness.  
Self-esteem was the driving force as it sore high.  
Self, found its place of comfort and wasn't going to  
trade it, not even with self-pity.  
It took some time to figure out self.  
Self, shines like the golden sun,  
and smells fresh as the ocean breeze.  
Self, climbs and conquers her path as  
her journey is bright.  
Self, soars like the eagles in flight.  
Self, sings as the echoes of life strengthens.  
Self, dances to waves that crashes on sea shores.  
Self is home and will not be moved.



## Goodbye Brat Summer, Hello Midwest Emo Fall

By Jackie Martinez

As the season of fall dawns upon us, I have become compelled to soundtrack the colorful atmosphere with music from the genre of midwest emo. Contrary to the reputation the word “emo” has, midwest emo is a quite palatable genre of music, with songs taking on a soft, indie, and sometimes whiny sound. It embraces the aesthetic of flannels, suburban life, and dirty Converse shoes, paired with lyrics about love, friendship, nostalgia, and heartbreak.

One of the most influential midwest emo albums is American Football’s self-titled album, released on September 14, 1999.

In its 40 minute runtime, this album showcases several beautiful, dreamy, and youthful melodies. It starts off strong with “Never Meant,” a ballad which seems to be about the singer wishing to forget a past relationship. This is the band’s most popular song, and one of my favorite songs in general, as it has such a raw and emotional essence to it. This song has a bit of an odd rhythm, where the main melody almost feels just a bit too fast and off-beat, but it works.

Another notable track is “For Sure,” a soft love ballad which includes a trumpet introduction. I did

not receive the trumpet introduction well upon first listen, but I have grown to love it as much as I love the tender guitar strummings that go along with it. My favorite track from this album is “But The Regrets are Killing Me,” a song which seems to be about the band’s departure from college, as this album was recorded shortly before they moved back home after graduation.

To celebrate 25 years of *American Football*, the band has released a series of covers of songs from this iconic album, including a covers by Iron & Wine, Blondshell, Yvette Young, M.A.G.S., Girl Ultra, Manchester Orchestra, John McEntire, Novo Amor, Lowswimmer, and Ethel Cain, who happens to be my favorite musical artist.

This album of covers puts an interesting spin on its predecessor, with most of the songs throwing away the midwest emo spirit and taking on a softer sound. Yvette Young’s cover of “You Know I Should Be Leaving Soon” features a stunning violin section, which is definitely worth listening to.

My favorite cover was Ethel Cain’s “For Sure,” but perhaps I am biased. This song turns the previously short and sweet song into a nearly 10



Photo from American Football's bandcamp (https://americanfootball.bandcamp.com/album/american-football-covers)

minute long ambient track, with dreamy vocals and a lingering wistfulness. However, I unfortunately didn’t like Iron & Wine’s cover of “Never Meant” at all. This song sounds like it was butchered by a pretentious fedo-

ra-wearing hipster, which is truly a shame because the original song is such a masterpiece. If a 50-year anniversary cover album is released, hopefully they do it right.

## Kaytranada: Live at Forest Hills Stadium

By Alexia Croll

Kaytranada put on an electrifying show on October 5th at Forest Hills Stadium to a sold out crowd. The historic venue is known for its optimized acoustics and unobstructed views, perfect for a first-class concert experience.

Rapper and collaborator Channel Tres opened up the show and gave the crowd an unexpectedly pulsating dance performance in the manner of an early 2000’s boy band. The duo later performed a medley of songs from Kaytranada’s third and most recent album, *Timeless*.

The Haitian-born, Montreal based DJ and record producer blends a sound consisting of house, dance, electronic, R&B, hip-hop, and funk, with frequent features from both singers and rap artists. His rise to popularity began with his rework of Janet

Jackson’s 1993 single “If,” and his earlier mixes can be shuffled throughout his SoundCloud repertoire. He is the first Black and openly gay artist to win the nomination for Best Dance/Electronic Album at the 2021 Grammy Awards for his work on his sophomore album, *Bubba*.

The crowd, a diverse mix of dedicated fans and casual listeners, erupted in cheers as Kaytranada took his place behind the decks. His dynamic stage presence, trippy visuals and blinding pyrotechnics gave watchers the true “dance party” experience he promised, all while letting the music speak for itself.

While he isn’t the type of performer to hype up the crowd with words or dance moves, he surprisingly brought a different type of vibrance and energy as he commanded the

microphone, instead of his usual stationary sound-mixing. His blending of tracks was smooth and organic, never breaking the momentum. Fans familiar with his signature beats recognized every drop and switch-up, erupting into cheers when the heavy bass of “At All” or “Together” filled the room.

His setlist contained a number of tracks from his Grammy-award winning album *Bubba*, as well as his debut album *99.9%*. He ended the concert with his fan-favorite remix of Teedra Moses’ “Be Your Girl”, which exhilarated the crowd. He also shuffled through hits such as “You’re the One” featuring Syd, Victoria Monet’s “Alright”, and “Intimidated” by H.E.R.

Kaytranada’s ability to create an atmosphere where people feel both free and united in movement was evident throughout the night. The night



Credit Alexia Croll

was truly unforgettable. Whether you were an experienced fan or a newcomer, the experience felt communal.



# O.W.'s Rising Star Kristen Gallagher



Credit: OW Athletic Communications

By Juliana Vasquez

In her debut season, Kristen Gallagher has quickly made her presence known as a standout goalkeeper, making significant strides in the Skyline Conference and proving to be a crucial asset to her team's defense.

Born and raised in Farmingville, Long Island, Gallagher's passion for soccer ignited at the young age of five, setting her on a lifelong path that has now brought her to the collegiate stage. Gallagher has been a force this season, boasting an impressive 2.67 goals against average and a .720 save per-

centage

Although she wasn't always certain if playing soccer in college was in the cards for her, Gallagher couldn't be more thrilled to have found her place at Old Westbury. "It's as if the stars aligned perfectly for me to be here," she says.

Gallagher's inspiration to play stems from her love for the game. Her enjoyment of the sport inspires her devotion and determination, making it the driving force behind her continued participation and pushing herself to new heights.

She also highlights the tremendous growth she's witnessed, not only in herself but within her team as well. About half of the team are underclassmen, and Gallagher's excited about the potential they have for the years ahead. "We will continue to grow and develop as a team, and it is just something that comes with time," she explained.

While the season is still underway, Gallagher takes pride in her successful freshman year and eagerly looks ahead to the playoffs. Her focus for the remainder of

the season is clear: "consistently play my best and play the way that will make me happy." With her sights set on finishing strong, she's looking forward to seeing where her hard work and commitment will lead.

With playoffs approaching, she's excited to build on her success and awaits what's next when the competition intensifies.