

*the*review

VOLUME 149, ISSUE 8 TUESDAY, MAY 14



news

Exclusive: Assanis on the future of the university budget, athletics and free speech



RISHA INAGANTI
Editor-in-Chief

In the corner of Hullahen Hall resides a room filled with awards, campus photos, books and two shovels. The space stands as the office of university President Dennis Assanis, and where The Review sat down for an exclusive interview with him on April 24.

As the 2023-24 school year comes to an end, Assanis spent time reflecting on the university's successes and failures of the year, as well as discussing plans for the future.

"I'm really proud and always feel honored and humbled to be leading our university in the trajectory of growth and change, but always with respect to the legacy of the previous 280 years," Assanis said.

Increasing applications, decreasing acceptances

This year, the university received close to 40,000 applications, according to Assanis. This number has followed the growing trend of increased applicants post-COVID-19.

With the rising number of applications, Assanis stated that the university has decided to become more selective, especially regarding out-of-state students. Despite that, he mentioned a desire to increase the geographical pull of applicants.

"We've been drawing students from five states, predominantly in the Northeast where there is a real issue with the demographics," Assanis said. "So we have to open it up to a broader pool."

He went on to state that the focus is on increasing university access to in-state students.

Assanis explained that over one-third of Delawarean students study at the university for free, in part due to the university's First State Promise Program, which covers tuition for in-state students whose families make less than \$75,000 per year.

To support the First State Promise Program, Assanis asked the state of Delaware in February for \$1.7 million, in addition to the \$7.5 million that Gov. John Carney had initially set aside.

Along with that, he pointed to increased scholarship amounts.

"We were putting around \$100 million a year in scholarships for students," Assanis said. "Right now last year, we invested closer to \$182 million. We never increased our scholarship amount, so much so fast. And obviously that's putting a pinch on our resources."

The university's financial state

One of the most prevalent topics at the university this year has been the state of the budget. Assanis claimed that the university was in a budget crisis early in the spring semester. Since then, students and

faculty have been left with many questions.

Assanis pointed out that the university is "not in this alone," stating other universities are experiencing similar budget issues.

The university's initial plan of action was to pause new hires to "preserve the current workforce to the maximum extent possible." Both student and faculty hiring was temporarily halted starting at the beginning of the semester.

"I haven't cut anybody's pay," Assanis said. "Let's live rest assured about that. And also, we're committed to continue to provide a competitive pay for employees. We're committed to giving raises to people during the next year."

With efforts to become more selective with admissions and the ongoing budget crisis, the university community has expressed concerns about increasing university prices.

"We are not immune to inflation," Assanis said. "We would never want to increase tuition. If you ask me and the [Board of Trustees], we'd like to keep the tuition the same forever but then with inflation and everything else, tuition goes up."

The university president went on to explain that the board just approved to "modestly increase" some fees, after keeping the price "constant for a number of years."

Changes in athletics

With the university's switch to Conference USA from the Coastal Athletic Association (CAA) starting in 2025, Assanis expressed excitement for the cohort of student athletes who will "have opportunities not just to excel in the classroom, but on the fields, ice and courts."

The switch to the new conference cost the university roughly \$6 million. The university and athletic department have maintained that the fee will be covered by external fundraising.

Assanis expressed how this switch will improve the university as a whole.

"I think what people need to understand is athletics is the front portion of the university," Assanis said. "By enabling them to have access to a broader audience, we are able to bring more resources to athletics and the university."

"The amazing part of it is that it really gives us an avenue for the university to shine and tell its amazing story to a national audience. We really haven't been able to under the confines of the current conference."

Protecting free speech

With the rise in nationwide university protests, the ongoing crisis in Gaza and the increased antisemitism on campuses, Assanis expressed his commitment to maintaining free speech.

"To me, freedom of expression is extremely important," Assanis said. "We should always uphold this on university campuses."

According to Assanis, the university is a place where civil discourse and civic engagement are done "extremely well." He noted his pride for university students who coexist despite different beliefs.

In recent months, the Israel-Gaza war has been a massive conversation point at the university. A three-day protest took place in support of Palestine, Israel Defense Forces Col. Golan Vach came to speak at the university and multiple accounts of hate speech have taken place.

"The current situation with Israel and Gaza can't be more divisive, and at the same time, our students can coexist peacefully," Assanis said. "I think that's what university should be all about. That's what society should be all about."

"We're very mindful and we will condemn antisemitism and Islamophobia and xenophobia and anything that is really against people's rights. We're all united so we're all peoples of the same world."

Assanis ended by stating that the university will be able to "turn the corner quickly" and continue "the momentum we've built."

"I want to remind people that this is a moment and it's not a forever occurrence," Assanis said. "The university is going to be around for another 200 years, if not longer."





CHRISTINA NATALINI/THE REVIEW

A graduation with twice the weight: Class of 2024 finally crosses the stage



NYA WYNN
Co-Managing
News Editor

For many university students, receiving their college diploma will be the second time they have walked a stage donned in a cap and gown surrounded by loved ones, but for most of this year's graduating class, that is not the case.

"As far as my high school graduation, it was pretty embarrassing," John Welborn, senior mechanical engineering major, said. "We had a drive-by to pick up our gown and all the graduation stuff. Then we ended up having an outdoor graduation in the beginning of July."

"At my high school, the graduates were all spread out according to social distancing guidelines and we all had masks on," Jessica Nicolich, senior nutrition and dietetics major, said. "No one else was allowed to come and watch because it would be breaking the social distancing rules. It was just a really strange experience."

Although these unconventional high school graduations were necessary, since schools needed to follow state guidelines and COVID-19 restrictions, they did not give students the closure they

needed to enter the university space.

"We did not get to say goodbye to any of the other students," Liz O'Mara, senior psychology and political science double major, said. "I never really got anyone to sign my high school yearbook."

"It was definitely not a good send-off. I think even starting freshman year of college didn't feel quite real because there wasn't much closure from high school."

This sentiment was felt most deeply by those who had no graduation at all. According to Kayley Dessender, a senior history education major, her high school had a virtual ceremony through a pre-recorded YouTube livestream.

"I think this graduation means a lot more for the class of high school 2024 because we never got that initial goodbye to all of our friends," Dessender said. "We finally have this opportunity to say goodbye to professors and friends, surrounded by our families, so we understand what it means to have that moment."

As the class of 2024 gears up for many of their very first "real" graduations, students reflect on how COVID-19 impacted their transition into their college careers and how they feel about

finally getting to walk the stage in celebration of all their hard work.

"I don't feel like there's any sort of justice to it," Nicolich said. "I'm just kind of like, 'Yeah, I'm finally going to do it.' I almost forgot about my high school graduation, but maybe on the day that I'm finally walking with the cap and gown I will think about how different it is than 2020."

"It's very emotional for me because during my high school graduation, I had family members that were still alive who couldn't come because of COVID restrictions," O'Mara said. "Now, four years later, I'm actually graduating but some of those family members are no longer with us. So that's even more difficult to see."

Although many students have come to terms with their high school graduations and are more appreciative of their college graduation, this does not mean that their college experiences went unaffected.

Many students in this year's class of 2024 did not end up on campus until the spring semester of their freshman year, with some having to wait until the fall of their sophomore year. This lack of community was detrimental to many students' social lives and feelings of belonging on campus.

"I really did not make any friends freshman year because being online was really difficult," O'Mara said. "You logged on, your professors lectured and then the Zoom was turned off, so there wasn't much social interaction."

"We had group chats and stuff for class, but I had never met any of those people," Nicolich said. "It was definitely not great, but eventually, when I did go in person in the fall of 2021 I was really revved up and ready to go out and meet people."

After freshman year, the world started to return to normal, and students could finally start their college lives. However, without the freshman experience, some students still struggled.

Students like Welborn and Nicolich, who were able to live in a dorm while class stayed virtual, were able to form friendships with those in their buildings.

"My first night in the dorm I met like 30 people and made friends," Welborn said. "So I still had a good group to kind of start college with and then from there we all kind of stayed together."

"Ironically, the second week of school I got COVID and they put me into COVID housing," Nicolich said. "But, weirdly enough, I met these people in the COVID dorms

and we were just stuck in this house together, weirdly bonding. It was really strange, but I still talk to some of them today."

However, for those who were "Zooming" into class from home and not from an on-campus dorm, the lack of social interaction freshman year continued to affect their lives.

"Even being on campus sophomore year, I didn't know my roommates," O'Mara said. "So it was hard to kind of go out and make friends without really having a friend group, something that other people had already formed."

Through all this, the consensus among many seniors is that they were able to make up for lost time in the approximate three years that they did have.

"I can tell one more year would have felt perfect and that's really what I would've had if COVID hadn't happened," Dessender said. "But I think because everyone knew it was shortened, we made the best of it while we were here, everyone had that shared mentality."

"We're all very emotional leading up to graduation," O'Mara said. "I guess we're finally putting into perspective how much this actually means, how important it is and how much we are actually gaining this time around."



Celebrating sustainably: A look into the university's Graduation Gown Recycling program



MATTHEW TRUNFIO
Staff Reporter

Following this year's Commencement ceremony, graduating seniors will have the opportunity to turn in their gowns to the Graduation Gown Recycling program, one of the university's newest initiatives to bring about more sustainable operations around campus.

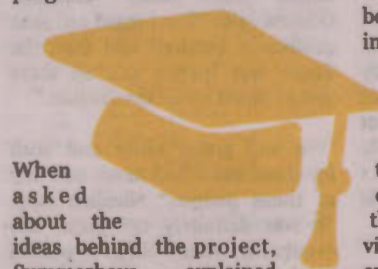
The program collects gowns from donating seniors and stores them until the following spring, when they will be redistributed, at no cost, to graduating seniors experiencing extreme financial hardships.

The co-directors of the Office of Sustainability, Chris Williams, associate provost for sustainability at the university, and Jefferey Summerhays, director of sustainable operations at the university, operate the program. They aim to help reduce waste and the negative environmental impacts of overconsumption by utilizing each gown to its full potential.

"We all buy graduation gowns and hang them up in our closet and they sit there and gather dust for 40 years," Williams said. "And that's just not very sustainable."

2022 graduate and sustainability senator at the university, Kristie Arlotta, originally spearheaded the program in cooperation with the Office of Sustainability. Tory

Glover, 2022-23 president of the university's student government association, and Taurence Chisholm, program coordinator for the Office of Student Diversity and Inclusion, helped organize the program.



When asked about the ideas behind the project, Summerhays explained how they hope to increase efficiency around graduation attire through it.

"This is an outfit with a pretty limited use," Summerhays said. "The only people who keep and use their graduation gowns are Ph.D. candidates, and that is a pretty small sliver of the population."

"The ultimate question is, 'Do we want to use the finite resources we have on this planet for something like this?' and our answer is no. While you deserve to have a great time at graduation, here is a sustainable option to help you celebrate so the impact is minimized."

When garments made of polyester, such as the graduation gowns used at the university, end up in landfills, they break down and release harmful greenhouse gases into the atmosphere. Through this program, the university can

minimize the effect graduation gowns have on the environment.

"Stuff takes decades to start to break down," Summerhays said. "But just because it starts to break down doesn't mean it's okay, because what it's breaking down into is still a problem."

As polyester breaks down, it divides into smaller plastic particles that can take thousands of years to decompose. In the meantime, those microplastics invade virtually every part of the environment, including our soils, oceans and bodies. The presence of those microplastics leads to a series of adverse effects in all areas it touches.

Oak Hall, the university's cap and gown provider, offers a program that allows graduates to send their used ceremonial attire back to the company to be recycled and reconstructed into new products. While the process is circular, Williams noted that there is still unnecessary waste along the way. The graduation gown recycling program seeks to



eliminate that waste entirely.

"Instead of trying to collect the gowns to be sent back and reprocessed, which does take a lot of energy, how about we collect

the gowns and hold onto them, and then we can give them out to students who are in financial need," Williams said. "That made a lot more sense to us. It seemed like a more sustainable solution to the problem."

Williams emphasized how the environmental upside of this program is not the only potential benefit it offers, as he characterized it as a program that "hits on multiple cylinders."

"Do the math, and we saved approximately \$2,500 to \$3,000 for students who were struggling," Williams said.

Williams mentioned stories from qualifying recipients of this year's gowns whose parents recently lost their jobs, as well as international students who have come overseas with little financial assistance.

"Financial struggles are tough," Williams said. "But whatever it is, it just feels wonderful to know that we're doing something to help them out."

Kelly Cobb, associate professor of fashion and apparel studies, pointed out how this program can be invaluable in the wake of fast fashion. This term refers to the trend of rapidly produced, inexpensive clothing that prioritizes quick turnover and low prices over sustainability and ethical production practices.

"We buy it on short notice to go out on the town, or to go to a special function, and then toss it

away," Cobb said. "These products literally have no use following that initial 'pop.'"

Cobb also explained how this program can help offset the negative effects of fast fashion.

"Anything that increases the longevity of a garment is a good thing," she said. "The number one focus worldwide in circular fashion is extending the useful life of a garment, and that's what this program does."

"We welcome people to get involved," Summerhays said. "We are looking for ways to expand this outside of just graduation, so check back in the future for updates."

GRADUATES LOOKING TO GET INVOLVED WILL BE ABLE TO DO SO AT A TENT OUTSIDE OF THE GRADUATION CEREMONY IMMEDIATELY AFTER COMMENCEMENT, AS WELL AS:

- TRABANT STUDENT CENTER
- PERKINS STUDENT CENTER
- UD BOOKSTORE
- UD CREAMERY
- UDONTNEEDIT FURNITURE COLLECTION



UDance makes dreams come true, raises \$1.8 million



GRACE KEARNS
Staff Reporter

The Bob Carpenter Center transformed into a dreamland of castles, dragons, beanstalks, knights and princesses for the annual UDance Dance Marathon. Like any classic fairytale, the heroes were at the center of the day's action – the B+ Heroes, that is.

The 18th iteration of the event, held April 21, welcomed over 4,500 members of the university community to the Bob for a day of line dancing, flash fundraising, hair donating and live performances. While UDance is a well-loved tradition at the university, the event itself is the culmination of a year-long student-led initiative that raises awareness and funds for the battle against childhood cancer.

This year's theme, "Dreamland," represented UDance's mission to support the dreams of children battling cancer, known as B+ Heroes.

"The theme we picked for UDance 2024 was 'Dreamland,' with the slogan 'Until Every Dream Comes True,'" junior Abby Rindfleisch, media and engagement chair of the UDance Executive Board, said. "The idea of dreams was chosen to symbolize how our goal is for the B+ Heroes, the kids that we help,

to be able to grow up and live all their dreams and live a full life of happiness."

The UDance Executive Board, led by seniors Jen Moran and Alex Kinsey, motivated student organizations, sororities, fraternities, athletic teams, residence halls and individual community members to raise over \$1.83 million for the Andrew McDonough B+ Foundation. To make this dream come true, student representatives led each team in fundraising campaigns, which included canning throughout Newark, hosting philanthropy events and organizing social media initiatives.

According to co-executive directors Moran and Kinsey, leading UDance feels like their "full-time job" at times.

"I find myself sometimes, especially last year, sitting in the UDance office crafting for hours on end and getting everything ready," Moran said. "It's very easy to forget that we are still students. We just want to do UDance. We want to do everything we can."

For Moran and Kinsey, who have both been involved since their freshman year, UDance is seen as a collaborative effort.

With 53 students serving on the executive board and hundreds taking on roles as engagement coordinators, chapter and team representatives, committee

members, dedicated volunteers, "freshmen for the kids" and media relations representatives, the community has greatly expanded since UDance's founding in 2007 by two Greek life organizations, Alpha Epsilon Phi and Sigma Phi Epsilon.

"As a co-executive director, I have loved watching everyone on the board grow," Kinsey said. "It's a huge motivation for me, seeing everyone get so excited about the work they're doing and seeing them get so excited to work with the B+ Heroes."

By partnering with the B+ Foundation, the UDance community has opportunities to connect with the B+ Heroes and their families, inviting them to on-campus events throughout the year, such as the annual FTKickoff, Halloween Party and Hero Holiday Party.

In addition, each B+ Hero is "adopted" by a registered student organization, sorority, fraternity, athletic team or residence hall and is included in bonding events with their on-campus "older siblings."

Joe McDonough, president of the B+ Foundation and father of original B+ Hero Andrew, addressed the crowd at this year's event, thanking the UDance community not only for their financial contributions, but also for the emotional support offered to B+ Heroes and their families through this program.

"The smiles you see here ... there have been some days where they haven't been this easy," McDonough said in his speech. "And one of the things that is so special to me is that you lift these kids and their families up, and they forget the cancer for a while and the memories that are so difficult in their childhood."

During UDance, B+ Heroes spend the day with their "adopted older siblings," showing off their best dance moves at the Silent Disco, serenading the crowd during the B+ Hero Talent Show and leading the final Rave Hour from the shoulders of their student representatives.

At the end of the day, the Heroes join hands with members of the UDance community, preparing for the highly anticipated reveal.

"Last year, when we were on stage for the reveal, B+ Hero Elliot was on stage next to us, and when we raised that number, you could hear him cheering and saying, 'We won!'" Moran said. "We were probably stressing over fundraising and that number all year, but then he saw it and was like, 'We won.'"

After raising \$1.78 million during last year's campaign, UDance was able to surpass the 2023 total by introducing new fundraising events, adding teams and positions to the executive board and developing powerful engagement strategies.

That being said, the work does not end after the glow sticks and confetti are swept from the floor of the Bob. According to Kinsey, plans for next year's campaign are already underway.

"We basically start planning for the next year, like, three days after UDance," Kinsey said. "We just jump right back in."

As the new executive board transitions into their roles, Moran predicts that the organization's momentum will continue to build under the new leadership.

"I would say just expect that even more will be made possible next year, and they will be capable of doing even more than what we did now and what we've done in past years," Moran said. "The excitement and morale will definitely just keep going up."

"At the end of the day, the number we raise is a reflection of the entire UDance community, not just the executive board. While we do get to hold it up, the number would not be possible without every single person on the fundraising page, everyone who sent emails, everyone who had gone to events ... It really is a testament to what the UDance community is capable of."

arts & culture

Annabelle Brame's senior fashion collection



TYLER JOHNSON
Staff Reporter

Annabelle Brame, a graduating senior fashion design major with an entrepreneurship minor, is the co-president of Synergy Fashion Group. Synergy was one of the few RSOs involved in this year's inaugural University of Delaware Fashion Week (UDFW).

UDFW, which began April 26 and concluded May 5, consisted of a variety of events. Synergy had its fashion show at the Delaware Art Museum April 28, where Brame displayed her collection.

Brame, who grew up on the Chesapeake Bay, said that her collection was

inspired by the oyster industry and the infrastructure that it provides. She calls it "Takes a Village" due to how both the oyster and the fashion industries have many moving parts.

"I wanted to make a collection that was sustainable ... so the whole actual process was good for the environment, but also super educational for people who don't know a lot about the oyster industry," Brame said. "Because unless you kind of come from that area, it's pretty under wraps I feel like."



Brame's collection is not made of any new material but rather sourced dead stock fabric. She got some places her material from were SCRAP RVA, a fabric thrift shop in Virginia, and FABSCRAP, a shop that collects fabric that would have been thrown out but is reused and sold in Philadelphia and New York City.

Brame was required to create a senior collection to fulfill her Capstone requirement as a student in the Fashion and Design Department. She began to conceptualize her idea during her break last summer. Throughout the fall, her class was working on the first three to four looks of their collection, but Brame did not stop at the end of her fall semester.

"You didn't have to do more than that, I then took my winter break and made six more," Brame said. "So I had a total of ten looks in it, I was wrapped up though probably the day of the fashion show."

Brame participated in Synergy all throughout college, starting freshman year during the COVID-19 pandemic. She said that the club has grown during her time from a video-recorded fashion show to a bigger one off-campus.

She shared snippets of her collection on social media, but the full collection was shown for the first time at the Synergy Fashion Show during UDFW. After working on it for almost a year, Brame expressed that she felt a lot of emotions

throughout the process because everything was happening so fast.

Now that it was complete, everyone had the chance to see what Brame had created. On top of her family and friends that attended the show, Brame said she received positive feedback from hundreds of people she did not know and described the experience as validating as a designer.

"Especially for shows like that where there are tons of people you have no idea who they are," Brame said.

During the show, she also achieved her goal of winning the "Best in Show" Award for her Capstone.

As she approaches graduation, Brame plans to start her own company and continue to work on her brand. She is currently working part-time as a designer to help her grow her connections and gain more experience in the fashion industry.

Brame is also currently working on custom pieces and hopes to manufacture a solid product. In her spare time, she wants to be able to

explore and figure out who she is as a designer and what she wants her company to look like.

Brame hopes that awareness of fashion continues to spread at the university. She believes that it should not be overlooked, but rather be seen as something that can be impactful.

"It is growing so, so rapidly on campus and I think they have so many good professors and faculty and so many students who are really motivated to kind of make a difference in the fashion industry, whether that's sustainability, inclusivity or things like that," she said.



University professor Anna Wik selected for county arts commission



BETH WOJCIECHOWSKI
Managing Arts & Culture Editor

A few months ago, New Castle County Executive Matt Meyer officially established the New Castle County Public Arts Commission. The commission was co-sponsored by Councilmembers Dee Durham and Valerie George.

"The Public Arts Commission will serve as an advisory body for the procurement and location of visual public art on County property," the official press release said. "It will also play a significant role in shaping policies and strategies to integrate permanent and semi-permanent visual arts into County community spaces and development projects."



Various arts professionals from throughout the county, from gallery owners to landscape architects, were selected for the committee.

"I couldn't think of a more passionate group of individuals to compose New Castle County's first Arts Commission," Meyer said. "We are excited to get this group's work underway to help us explore the possibilities of public art in New Castle County, and I'm looking forward to working closely with the commission."

One of the individuals selected for the commission was Anna Wik, a licensed landscape architect in Delaware and Pennsylvania and associate professor within the university's Department of Plant and Soil Sciences' Bachelor of Landscape Architecture program.

"I was asked by Councilwoman George, since I'm a member of her district, to participate as a registered landscape architect," Wik said. "The fact that they've incorporated the requirement

to have a landscape architect on the commission is a very thoughtful inclusion.

"Often landscape is sort of thought of as this leftover or secondary thing. But having a landscape architect on a project from the beginning ensures that natural and human systems are considered as mutually beneficial to create sustainable and successful designed spaces."



According to the American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA), landscape architects are often tasked with creating safe and sustainable outdoor

spaces for everyone. Landscape architecture combines science and art to create community spaces that can be used for various purposes.

In urban planning, landscape architecture is often described as the planning of the space between buildings to create usable and aesthetically pleasing outdoor spaces.

"As a landscape architect, I really believe that the space between buildings is the space that we all live in. It's really important that art be incorporated into that," Wik said.

The primary focus of the Public Arts Commission is managing the temporary and permanent art installations in both indoor and outdoor spaces throughout New Castle County.

Another goal is to increase tourism in the county. According to the official press release, public art installations

increase the amount of tourists who visit the county, thus bringing about economic growth and benefits.

In addition to economic benefits, the installations will foster increased creativity and artistic expression throughout the community.

"What I love about the commission is the fact that they are considering art as a vehicle to engage with the community and tell stories of places through different mediums," Wik said.

As a member of the New Castle County Public Arts Commission, Wik hopes to be a voice for the importance of landscaping and its architecture. She also hopes to collaborate with important figures throughout the state to uplift other Delaware artists.

"We have a really exciting opportunity as the initially appointed board to define what public arts can be in New Castle County and leverage the shared vision of all appointed commissioners to see that through," Wik said.

Broadway's 2023-24 year in review



JULIA DIAMOND/THE REVIEW



PATRICIA HARDEN
Associate Arts & Culture Editor

In the approaching light of the 77th annual Tony Awards, the 2023-24 season of Broadway has been a rollercoaster. From revivals to originals, many plays and musicals have premiered and closed throughout the year, and Broadway has gifted audiences some sweet and sour surprises.

Revivals: Frequent returns to Broadway

There have been a significant number of revivals throughout the season, such as "Merrily We Roll Along," "Parade," "Here Lies Love" and "Spamalot." All but the first have since closed, but all of these shows have made their revival debut decades after their original premiere.

Many of this season's revivals have had showstopping performers and celebrities, from Daniel Radcliffe and Taran Killam to Ben Platt and Conrad Ricamora.

A recent revival to the scene is "The Wiz," coming back to Broadway for the first time since its 1975 debut, four decades ago. The musical is a "vibrant Black cultural take" on "The Wizard of Oz" and stars Wayne Brady, Nichelle Lewis and Deborah Cox. "The Wiz" opened April 17 at the Marquis Theatre, and has since held over 15 performances

and 18 previews as of March 2.

"Harmony," the revival musical that tells the story of the Comedian Harmonists, opened Nov. 13, 2023 at the Ethel Barrymore Theatre and closed Feb. 4. The show starred Chip Zien, Julie Benko and Sierra Borgess.

Finally, previewing April 1, "Cabaret" opened April 21 for its fourth revival at the Kit Kat Club at the August Wilson Theatre. The show, which delves into the conflict of clubgoers and romantics amid German fascism, stars Eddie Redmayne and Gayle Rankin, both of whom are Tony nominees this year.

Not to forget, a few plays have joined the revival train. Three opened last year and two more followed suit this year.

One such play is "Purlie Victorious," which originally premiered in 1961. The play stars Leslie Odom, Jr. as a traveling preacher attempting to save his home. Other cast members include Kara Young, Heather Alicia Simms and Jay O. Sanders. The show opened Sept. 27 and closed Feb. 4.

Another revival play is "Appropriate," a 2014 Off-Broadway production that opened on Broadway Dec. 18 of last year at the Hayes Theatre. After it closed March 3, it transferred to the Belasco Theatre, where it played until June 23. The show stars Sarah Paulson, Elle Fanning, who later left the production after the Belasco transfer, Ella Beatty (Fanning's replacement) and Corey Stoll as a family who unites and learns more about themselves as they fight over

a deceased family member's fortune.

From plays to musicals and everything in between, the 2023-24 season saw a rise of revival shows, some making a splash with several expansions and limited runs.

Originals: Fresh from the page onto the stage

Broadway has brought a fair amount of original content to enthusiastic theater-goers this year. Particularly in the plays, with one such being "Prayer for the French Republic," which opened Jan. 9 at the Samuel J. Friedman Theatre and closed March 3. The three-hour show is about three Jewish friends living in France and dealing with the antisemitic attacks around them.

"Prayer for the French Republic" was the only show to open during the winter season, as others opened later in April. These shows include "Stereophonic," "Mary Jane" starring Rachel McAdams and "Mother Play," the most recent original play to premiere starring Jessica Lange and Jim Parsons.

Original musicals that made their turn on Broadway include "Days of Wine and Roses," a show about how alcoholism can negatively impact a relationship, and "Hell's Kitchen," a semi-autobiographical story of singer Alicia Keys' life in Manhattan before fame.

From original works to the revivals, every play or musical has a chance

of being nominated for winning a Tony. Only time will tell which ones will come out on top. That being said, when it is not awards being celebrated, it is the legacy of shows that have been going nonstop for several years.

Legacies: Anniversaries of long-lasting shows

On Oct. 30, 2023, "Wicked," the hit musical based on the novel of the same name, celebrated 20 years of performances at the Gershwin Theatre.

"Wicked has stayed so relevant for 20 years because it is a story so many of us can relate to," Alyssa Fox, the actress starring as Elphaba said. "We have all felt like an outsider at one point or another, and it touches people to see that played out on stage."

Meanwhile earlier in 2023, the 35-year running classic, "The Phantom of the Opera" closed at the Majestic Theatre. "Phantom," however, is still running on the West End. Regardless, a huge presence is now missed on Broadway.

Finally, some Broadway theaters took on another role as concert halls for musicians such as the Jonas Brothers and Melissa Etheridge. The brothers held five performances over five days at the Marquis Theatre, while Etheridge held 38 performances at the Circle in the Square Theatre.

As mentioned, "Harmony" returned to Broadway after its failed original opening in 2004. Not to mention, Stephen Sondheim's final scored show "Here We Are" had its first

preview Sep. 28, opened Oct. 22 at The Shed and closed Jan. 21.

The show, detailing the adventures of a few elites' vision to run a dinner party, starred David Hyde Pierce, Bobby Cannavale and Micaela Diamond of "Parade" fame.

Looking to the future

This year alone, Broadway has seen a whirlwind of premieres, revivals and closings. Even at the end of the road, there are more shows to come, such as "Stephen Sondheim's Old Friends," the West End tribute to Sondheim starring Bernadette Peters and Lea Salonga. The show opens in March 2025.

For an even sooner opening, James Monroe Iglehart plays Louis Armstrong in the biographical musical, "A Wonderful World." The show had pre-Broadway runs in New Orleans following a premiere at Miami Beach in 2021. It will open on Broadway Nov. 11 with previews starting Oct. 16.

In addition, several productions are scheduled to appear in New York, such as "The Bodyguard," "BOOP!: The Betty Boop Musical" and "Crazy Rich Asians."

No matter the show, from an original play to a musical revival, there will always be something for anyone willing to venture onto Broadway to see. Of course, it's essential to strike while the iron is hot, for not all shows can go on forever. That, in itself, is the thrill of Broadway.

letters

Message to readers from new leadership



RISHA INAGANTI
Editor-in-Chief

I spent an alarming amount of my life completely out of tune when it came to what was happening in the world around me. To me, newspapers were just a place to grab comics and crosswords, and broadcast stations were nothing more than something to turn on when ads were playing everywhere else.

It was not until the 2016 election season that I became shockingly aware of the impact of journalism. With the rise of problematic politicians, the uncertainty of the state of the world and the constant alarming events, it felt impossible to escape the news.

Now, when the world is yet again at a pivotal time, I aim to help others recognize the importance of news that I failed to see for so long. Throughout my

time at The Review, I have seen firsthand the power journalism can hold.

You see, journalism is more than just Rory Gilmore stealing a yacht or a main character in a romantic comedy writing a blog about love. And while these admittedly may have been factors that contributed to this career choice, I am thankful that The Review has opened my eyes to the true meaning of journalism.

Shall it be through the coverage of breaking news, the discussion of troubling university topics or the thorough recaps of important events, The Review has stood as an unwavering pillar to our community.

More than that, The Review has introduced me to some of my closest friends and favorite people. The relationships I have formed are lifelong, and I am so honored that those same people

entrusted me to take on this leadership role.

As The Review shifts into its new year, I am incredibly lucky to work alongside someone as like-minded and driven as

Executive Editor Gaby Nieves. It is rare to see two powerful women of color lead such a profound organization, and I am confident in our ability to keep the momentum of The Review alive.

Whether this is your first time hearing of us or you are an avid reader of The Review, I look forward to serving you and the rest of our university community during this upcoming year.

Helen's
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145 East Main St
Newark, DE 19711
302-861-9001

Helenssausage.com
Monday – Saturday
6am – 2pm

Thursday, Friday and Saturday night hours
10pm – 2am



CLASS OF 2024



Welcome to the ranks of Blue Hen alumni!

- Register for your first Alumni Weekend, May 31–June 2 at udel.edu/alumniweekend
- Text DELAWARE to 30203 to opt into our texting club
- Check out more alumni events and benefits at udel.edu/alumni-friends



UNIVERSITY OF DELAWARE
DEVELOPMENT &
ALUMNI RELATIONS



GABY NIEVES
Executive Editor

If someone came up to me in high school and told me I would go into my senior year of college as the executive editor of a newspaper, I would think two things.

Number one: “Of all things, you time traveled for this?”
Number two: “Yeah, right. There’s no way that’s happening. Who reads newspapers?”

No one came up to me and told me that. But even if someone did, I would not have believed them. I was attending a vocational high school and receiving certifications for a trade. As much as I valued academics and education, the idea that I could one day pursue (AKA afford) a degree was a far-off dream, let alone a degree in English.

And yet, I was a dreamer. A dreamer descended from a long line of dreamers – that is the only reason I was born in this country in the first place.

So, while I only continued to dream through high school, I also put in the work. I persevered in my studies in the face of everything thrown my way (and there were many things thrown my way).

Of course, through the battlefield of projects and part-time jobs, I often stumbled. I frequently fell. But luckily for me, I had one hobby that I could always find solace in at the end of the day: reading.

No, I did not stay up late every night reading newspapers. To a high schooler, that would be lame. My favorite part of the day was staying up late reading novels (which is not lame at all).

But novels were truly the gateway to my current reality. An interest in reading fic-

tion turned into an interest in reading every genre; which, in turn, led to an interest in writing. Unsurprisingly, this was followed by an interest in editing other people’s writing.

I had no clue that when the dominos started falling, I was powerless to stop them. However, I am sure I would not have tried to stop them even if I could. Otherwise, I would not be in this new, very exciting role at The Review today.

So that’s my story – but trust me, it is nothing compared to those told in this publication every day. I am beyond proud of the work that has been produced by students, for students so far in my time with The Review, so I could not be more excited to see where we go from here. Luckily for all of us, it looks like the sky is the limit with Editor-in-Chief Risha Inaganti and her journalistic prowess at the helm. I cannot wait to work alongside her and our staff and serve this community.

Maintaining friendships post-graduation



SHAYNA DEMICK
Co-Managing
Mosaic Editor

Graduation can be an exciting but scary time. If you or your friends are graduating, you might be worrying about what your friendships will look like after parting ways. How will you stay close emotionally if you're far apart physically?

College friendships are unique. You've spent the entirety of your friendships being right around the corner from each other, or at least relatively close. When you graduate, that all changes. The most foreign adjustment is with the friends that you live with in college. These people, who used to be a few steps (or even a shout) away, may be moving to different states.

Yes, that is a scary concept. The good news, however, is that if your friendships are meant to last, distance won't change that.

So, while it may seem difficult to acclimate to an entirely new dynamic with your friends, it is possible (and worth it). We're fortunate to live in a time where we have countless digital platforms for staying connected with others. It's time to use these platforms for all they're worth.

As someone who had two close friends who graduated last year, I can assure you that maintaining these friendships is possible – but your phone will become your best friend (sorry). One of these friends was my roommate for a year. During this time, we became thick as thieves. We shared a wall and spent hours talking in the living room every day. When we weren't together, we were texting.

We were truly inseparable. But then, we were separated.

I sobbed an ungodly amount of tears when she moved out. I was heartbroken. It was terrifying to think about how our friendship would never be the same, how we'd never live together again. It's been almost a year since she moved back home and I can proudly say that our friendship is just as strong as it was before.

While I no longer know as much about her day-to-day life, I've learned that sharing these details isn't what makes our friendship so special. It's the fact that we can share anything and everything with each other and care about each other unconditionally. When one of us needs the other, we are there for each other – and distance

didn't change that. Plus, we text each other nearly every day, so that helps.

My other friend isn't a big texter, but

she graduated. We still love each other and are just as similar, so why should our dynamic change? Having less time together doesn't change the fact that we're continuations of each other and always know how to make each other laugh.

Since I've navigated two long-distance friendships this past year, I've gathered some tips for maintaining your friendships post-graduation:

1. Text your friends regularly. Tell them the silly little things that happen to you. Share when something big happens. Tell them when you're thinking of them and miss them. If you're a bad texter, put several of your friends in a group chat. The odds are that someone will keep the conversation alive, so you'll have fewer individual conversations to maintain.

2. FaceTime your friends when you want to hear their voices and see their faces. While nothing beats an in-person conversation, FaceTime is pretty swell. If you're not a fan yet, I can almost guarantee it'll grow on you. You can show your pets off to your friends, give them a house tour or just sit and chat. It's quite versatile!

3. Make plans to visit your friends when your schedule and budget permit it. Even better, plan a group trip! For the friends that you can't see frequently, make up for the quantity with quality. Go all out with your reunions and make memories that'll stay fresh until the next time you can see each other.

4. Maintain contact on multiple platforms. Open a direct message chat on Instagram, TikTok, you name it. Send them posts you enjoy. They'll appreciate that you thought of them, and you can share a long-distance laugh. When you're not up to communicating with words, you can just send them posts. Sometimes it can be exhausting to maintain digital conversation, so this is an easy way to keep the line open during these times.

5. Make sure your friends always know how much you care about them. Words of affirmation are crucial, as it can be easy to overthink friendships from a distance.

At the end of the day, if you and your friend both care about your friendship, you can make it last. So, while maintaining friendships after graduation may not be easy, you can do it. The friends that you make in college are friends that'll last a lifetime, no matter how far apart you are. Distance is just a social construct, right?



LARISSA VERONICA HEATHER/THE REVIEW

she only lives 45 minutes away, so we make up for infrequent communication with relatively frequent visits. We tend to randomly check in with each other and make plans.

When we hang out, it doesn't feel any different than it did before

Poem: Cupped hands



PERCY ALLEN
III
Staff Writer

Live life with cupped hands.
Let life rush into them like water;
let life become a tiny pond.

Live life with cupped hands.
Feel your little pond slip through the crevices of your fingers.
Listen to the cascading symphony of rushing water.
Patter. Patter. Patter. Patter.

Live life with cupped hands.
Let them be without poise, let them be without tension.
You may not hold what does not wish to stay.
Sometimes, your pond may trickle into nothing.
But please, dear reader, do not cry.

I promise you that more life is on the way.

Live life with cupped hands.
Do not judge that which flows in.
Instead observe how it lifelessly floats and flits about.
New places, new spaces, new faces.
Cherish them all for their cerulean, temporary beauty.

Live life with cupped hands.
Wriggling Koi will leap, diving gracefully into the past; irrepressibly irretrievable.
Your little pond will at times grow deep.
Your little pond will at times grow shallow.
Your little pond will at times leak and fall.
But do not grip it, do not crush it.
Is it not better to have a fickle pond,
than not have one at all?

Poem: The next step of life



PATRICIA
HARDEN
Associate Arts &
Culture Editor

I opened the window to my room today;
Did not expect to see much.
Thinking of the good times I had,
Must have been a bunch.

When knowing the end, I feel many things.
It's so bittersweet and sorrowful,
Realizing I will no longer talk to the people I call friends.
No longer see the sights my eyes have come to recognize.

The paths I walk day and night,
The warm and brittle winds across my face.
The sounds of camaraderie and commotion
My ears have come to enjoy.

No longer meeting the people who helped me.
Or the places I eat at, the fine dining.
I made my refuge as early as sunrise, as late as nightfall.
These long hours of walking I can do more without.

I wonder what happens beyond these days,
Seeing how the world has changed.
The joy, the pain, the rage, the excitement,
The contemplation of my existence from this point on.

I know now of the ones I can trust and those I cannot,
The people less fortunate than me and those that are not.
Ones that deserve my empathy and solidarity,
And ones that will neither respect nor reward as such.

For the friends I met for a fleeting moment, flying off
As soon as they welcomed me. I will never forget the
Wisdom, comfort and reality that became
so relevant to me, mentally and expressively.

May we all see each other again
Back in the world where the sun shines,
The wind blows and the people laugh.
The world where people can be themselves.

A world ... free of hatred and pain
In a place of love and acceptance.
This is my next step in life.

Satire: The university is bringing a mace to Commencement



GABY NIEVES
Executive Editor

Did you know that the university owns a mace? Neither did I – I mean, why would it? What possible purpose would an educational institution have for a medieval weapon? And if the university were to own a mace, its sole purpose certainly wouldn't be for Commencement, to be handed to the university's president while he's decked out in a 48-inch long chain necklace ... right?

If my sarcasm wasn't clear enough, yes; that's exactly what the university has a mace for. The 42-inch long weapon is purely ceremonial, as is the "Chain of Office" that shares a glass and mahogany case in the Office of the President with the mace for most of the year. The only occasions for which the mace and chain are brought out of their displays are academic ceremonies, such as Commencement.

Commencement will take place this year on May 25, so the silver and gold pieces will be making a public appearance very soon. But after that, they'll be hidden away again, unable to see the light of day for another couple of months.

Now, I would never suggest that the university use the mace for its "structural purpose" when it's not being shown at an academic ceremony, but I don't think it should always have to sit in a display case. The same goes for the chain. So what if it's a university heirloom? Jewelry is meant to be worn! And as things currently stand, it's only worn by the institution's president once a year.

Sorry, but if I buy something (even if I buy it with "unrestricted gifts" from my university's alumni), I will put it to use. And I think the mace and chain of office aren't at all being utilized to their fullest potential. If the university allowed it (or I managed to get my hands on it another way), I've come up with multiple possibilities for what the mace and chain could be used for outside of Commencement festivities.

Let me wear the chain. Although the metal necklace is supposed

can't possibly wear it out of his house during a night on the town. He's got an image to uphold!

That's why I propose that the school give it to me. I've been looking for a new staple piece of jewelry to wear out and about, so while I'm out on Main Street, I'd not only be promoting the chain's existence, but also demonstrating Blue Hen spirit! It's a win-win situation.

Having easy access to the mace would fix many short people's problems. When I first learned about the school's ceremonial mace, I pictured a long rod with a round, spiked head at the end of it. Thanks to the countless movies and cartoons set in medieval times, I think many people would assume that.

But the university's mace looks very different from this; our's only has one giant, sharp point on the end. If you ask me, this sounds like the perfect tool to have on hand whenever I need an extra three and a half feet of arm reach.

Can't reach a book on the top shelf of a bookcase in the library? Screw wasting three seconds of your time dragging one of those convenient stepping stools over to you – just stab the mace through your book of choice and pull it down with ease!

Need to gesture to certain parts of the screen displaying your presentation during class, but your laser pointer died and you can't just point with your hands because the screen is enormous and you're only 5'2"?

Having the university's mace in your backpack would instantly solve all your problems. You can gesture to all of the key points of your Google slides with ease, and look like you're funded by alumni money while doing it.

Want to poke the person sitting in front of you in room 127 of Memorial Hall to tell them to stop talking during class but can't reach them because the rows are extremely far apart? Use the mace. Walk past a tree and see a cat stuck in it? Use the mace to give it something to climb down. Have an itch on your back that you can't reach because you just finished working out at the Lil Bob, and now everything hurts? Use. The. Mace.

There's also plenty of room to improvise. Anyone who's ordered

food from the Dunkin' in Perkins recently may have noticed that they've started offering a new menu item – the Munchkins Skewer. For \$1, you can buy three munchkins stacked up on a stick. But why pay for a tiny skewer like that when you can make a much bigger, better-looking one yourself?

If you buy a 10-count of munchkins and stick them on the end of the mace, you'll have a much more valuable (and flashy) Munchkins Skewer on your hands. Everyone will be asking you for a bite! (Although, maybe that would be more of a con than a pro.)

So, university officials, hear my plea: Put the mace and chain of office to better use. If you keep limiting their appearances to academic ceremonies, people are bound to forget that such artifacts exist until the next time I write about them. And who knows when that will be?

Poem: The brink



GABY NIEVES
Executive Editor

Come on down my lover,
there's a cool breeze over here.
I won't make you jump.
We'll just stay on the brink of tears.

We didn't think we'd make it.
No one's ever stepped this far.
No one's ever gotten this close to the edge in all our years.

Every step, we've been uncertain;
yet we carried on nonetheless.
But we can't see much further now,
"Where do we go from here?"

I'm terrified of heights,
and you fear the unknown.
But one thing's enough for me to jump:
the image of their cheers.

So come on down my lover,
the wind smiles ear to ear.
When we jump,
it'll take us higher.
And to you, I'll always be near.

BEATRICE AQUAVIA/THE REVIEW

to stay on display when there's not a ceremony going on, let's be honest – if it's being kept in the Office of the President, there's no way university President Dennis Assanis doesn't take the chain out of its glass case and wear it around the house sometimes. If he does like to do this though, he

But wearing the artifact doesn't have to be exclusive to humans. YoUDee or Baby Blue could use some bling, am I right? There are also all of the dogs that I see walking around campus every day. They're adorable already, so could you imagine one of them switching out their usual collar for this silver and gold, emblem-clad number? I know I'd ask their owner if I could take a picture with them immediately.

NFL quarterback and university alumnus Flacco to speak at Commencement



DANIEL STEEN-KAMER
Managing Sports
Editor

The AP 2023 NFL Comeback Player of the Year is returning to his alma mater this month.

Fortunately for all who will be at the university's Commencement on May 25, he is no stranger to performing in front of tens of thousands at Delaware Stadium.

Indianapolis Colts quarterback Joe Flacco will be the graduation ceremony's speaker, the university confirmed in April.

Flacco starred for Delaware on the gridiron after transferring to the Blue Hens from Pittsburgh in 2005. After sitting out that 2005 season due to its transfer eligibility rules, Flacco began his playing days as a Hen in 2006.

The
2007

campaign to follow was Flacco's last in college and sealed his Delaware legacy. Flacco steered Delaware to the NCAA Division I Football Championship Subdivision (FCS) championship game, where the Blue Hens fell to defending back-to-back champion Appalachian State University.

During that 2007 run, Flacco quarterbacked the Hens in a memorable win over Football Bowl Subdivision (FBS) member Navy, later leading them to triumphs over FCS playoff opponents Delaware State, Northern Iowa and Southern Illinois.

In Delaware's 59-52 takedown of Navy that year, Flacco passed for 434 yards and four touchdowns while standout running back Omar Cuff rushed for four touchdowns of his own and rumbled for 141 yards on 28 carries.

Flacco's full-time playing tenure at Delaware began by displacing a projected starter at QB, Ryan Carty, in 2006. Carty had been a Delaware backup quarterback since 2002, the year he redshirted.

While Carty was closing out his second season as head football coach of the Blue Hens in 2023, Flacco was an NFL free agent until the Cleveland Browns brought him into the fold. The Browns, in need of an answer at QB in the wake of Deshaun Watson's season-

After Flacco completed two starts for the Browns, going 1-1 against the Los Angeles Rams and Jacksonville Jaguars while throwing for 565 yards and five touchdowns, Cleveland signed him to the active roster in December.

The move paid dividends as Flacco engineered a four-game Browns winning streak that catapulted the beleaguered franchise into the playoffs. The hot stretch was highlighted by Flacco surpassing 300 yards passing in each victory, the last of which came in prime time on Amazon's Thursday Night Football game versus the New York Jets. The win on that stand-alone stage earned Flacco increasing notoriety as he reasserted himself as a force on a competitive team.

Flacco's free agency prior to his Browns stint followed bumpy tenures with the Denver Broncos, New York Jets and

Philadelphia Eagles.

The signal-caller made his name in the NFL as the franchise QB of the Baltimore Ravens from 2008 to 2018. After selecting Flacco in the first round of the 2008 draft out of Delaware, Baltimore qualified for five straight playoffs, the last of which culminated in the Ravens' Super Bowl XLVII win and Flacco's Super Bowl MVP honors.

Although Cleveland's 2023-24 postseason appearance was one-and-done when Flacco and the Browns fell to the Houston Texans on the road, 45-14, Flacco still was recognized as AP Comeback Player of the Year at NFL Honors.

As the Ravens turned their team's keys over to young quarterback Lamar Jackson for good in 2019, they traded Flacco to Denver, where he could more realistically continue his career as a starter in the league. Flacco's later stops with the Jets and Eagles were in designated backup capacities, making his Browns comeback all the more noteworthy when it took the NFL by storm in 2023.

In recent years, Flacco has been more visibly active in his relationship with the university and its athletics program. He and his wife, Dana, donated in 2018 to the fundraising effort that led to the Whitney Athletic Center (WAC). Flacco's name and image adorn the WAC weight room.

The 2008 accounting degree recipient appeared in a university-wide promo, "Blue Hen Feeling," that was published in 2022, featuring a cameo of Flacco throwing a pass inside Delaware Stadium with its WAC-renovated grandstand in the background.

Most recently, Flacco shared his apparent approval of Delaware's move to the FBS and Conference USA (CUSA) that is set to take effect in 2025. He wrote on X, "Proud to be part of this tradition!" while reposting the Blue Hens' video reveal of CUSA featuring his Ravens draft announcement in its montage.

He won the award over three other quarterbacks and Buffalo Bills safety Damar Hamlin, who came back to the NFL after suffering cardiac arrest during a game and being hospitalized in critical condition before recovering.

Flacco also participated in Delaware's annual football alumni golf outing on April 26, which was held at Newark Country Club.

When Flacco makes his next organized appearance in Newark, the Colts' backup QB will address thousands in the same venue that witnessed his strong arm almost 20 years ago.



LARISSA VERONICA HEATHER/THE REVIEW

The year in women's sports



DANIEL STEENKAMER
Managing Sports
Editor

With Indiana Fever guard and No. 1 overall WNBA draft pick Caitlin Clark leading the way, 2023-24 marked a year for the books in women's athletics.

Now, a new page is turning.

Clark begins her rookie season with the Fever as the face of the WNBA to a new legion of followers. Her stardom is well-documented as the all-time NCAA Division I men's and women's basketball scoring leader, a feat she achieved while at Iowa. The Fever has wound up with road games against Las Vegas and Washington moved by the hosts to larger venues to accommodate heightened ticket demand.

The demand goes beyond the everyday consumer.

In January, the NCAA and ESPN rolled out their eight-year, \$920 million extension of ESPN's NCAA championship media rights package. The bundle of title events includes women's March Madness, which is enjoying fever-pitch popularity with the likes of Iowa, national champion South Carolina, UConn and LSU bringing the star power. That attention has allowed for a breakthrough from tired prejudices against women's hoops.

April's Division I women's national championship game, which peaked at 24 million viewers on ABC and ESPN, was the most-watched basketball game of either gender and of both professional and college ranks since 2019.

That final between Iowa and South Carolina capped a

tournament that smashed its rating records across all rounds on the ESPN family of networks.

With this momentum, the NCAA enters the ESPN extension which, according to Front Office Sports (FOS), averages a \$115 million payout per year. FOS adds that the DI women's basketball tourney commands \$65 million of that figure.

While cementing women's March Madness as the key property in the deal that balloons ESPN's total holdings from 29 championships to 40, the NCAA managed to triple the price fetched by the current agreement. The existing contract sees the NCAA average \$34 million per year for the 29 titles, which was a bargain for the growing women's March Madness.

Once the extension commences on Sept. 1, basketball will not be the only women's college sport to monitor for continued increases in exposure.

Record turnout digs volleyball

In August, Nebraska volleyball clocked a new world record with just over 92,000 in

attendance at Memorial Stadium for a match versus Omaha.

The Cornhuskers' game day was complete with a famed stadium tradition: the "Tunnel Walk" pregame introduction, which had historically been reserved for Nebraska football but was equally, if not more, electrifying as volleyball took the hardwood.

Meanwhile, in Newark

The headline-making in women's athletics continued at Delaware, where the Fightin' Blue Hens enjoyed a banner year in several sports. Head coach Kimberly Lambert's volleyball squad delivered Delaware a Coastal Athletic Association (CAA) tournament championship to punctuate what finished as a 24-5 season.

In November, Delaware took down top-seeded Towson University 3-1 on its home floor to punch the Hens' NCAA tournament ticket.

Not to be outdone, Delaware women's golf captured the CAA title in April to advance to NCAA regionals.

On top of present-day Blue Hen women's team triumphs, the school year brought a groundbreaking addition to Delaware's sports portfolio as women's ice hockey was unveiled to be Delaware's newest NCAA varsity program in December. The move came as Delaware remains in Title IX compliance entering

its football scholarship expansion, all corresponding joining

with the FBS in 2025.

Ice hockey head coach Allison Coomey was hired in March and finished that month by dropping the

ceremonial first puck at a Philadelphia Flyers game. The Flyers and Delaware athletics are partnering in the founding of the varsity hockey team.

Elsewhere on the ice, Delaware club figure skating won its seventh national championship at the U.S. Figure Skating National Intercollegiate Final in April. Delaware snapped Boston University's back-to-back titles and matched BU in total team championships with the win in Lake Placid, New York.

Speaking of national champions, Delaware field hockey is a national-title-winning program in its own right, taking home the DI hardware in 2016. The Blue Hens battled to a 3-3 conference record in 2023, marking a rare absence from the league tournament, but Delaware did finish with three straight wins.

The future of Delaware field hockey, as well as that of women's lacrosse, rowing and swimming and diving, is to be determined with respect to conference affiliation. Conference USA does not sponsor championships in these sports in its current membership and Delaware will not remain in the Coastal Athletic Association in any capacity, as evidenced by Blue Hen men's soccer's stretch to the Summit League in 2025.

Despite this uncertainty, it is women's athletics that have bolstered Delaware in the years leading up to its 2025 reclassification. Since fall 2021, Delaware's CAA

championships have been notched by a women's team, representing four different sports.

This spring, Delaware softball appeared on course to earn the Blue Hens another ring, as the squad keyed by star hurler Emily Winburn racked up 39 overall wins and a 21-6 conference record.

Although Delaware was eliminated in the CAA tournament by losses to the University of North Carolina-Wilmington and Campbell University, Winburn scored her third consecutive All-Tournament selection as she recorded a 1.69 ERA in 21.1 innings, which included a shutout while appearing in all three games of the tourney.

Delaware is poised to continue investing in softball success with pending renovations to its home diamond. Goals for the project include synthetic turf – as baseball's Bob Hannah Stadium typically has – reworked bleachers and dugouts and a replacement for the facility's sun-beaten scoreboard.

The Newark Post reported that the softball stadium endeavor will begin this summer after the state of Delaware's \$6 million kick-in toward the bill.

The construction will serve as a fitting symbol on South Campus. Women's sports are building in popularity and financial backing – and this is only the foundation. building in popularity and financial backing – and this is only the foundation.



LARISSA VERONICA HEATHER/THE REVIEW



Craig DiSabatino II



Words cannot describe how incredibly proud we are of you on your many accomplishments. Continue to have confidence in yourself and we guarantee you will succeed as you have today. Stay true to yourself and never lose sight of the things that matter most. We love you and will always be there for you. -Dad and Mom

Caroline Gannon

Caroline, congratulations for graduating ONE YEAR early!! We are so proud of you and all your hard work!



Sophia Graham

Congratulations Sophia! Your graduation day marks the culmination of years of hard work, dedication, and determination. We are incredibly proud of the person you've become and all that you've achieved. As you step into this new chapter of your life, know that the sky is the limit for you. Your intelligence, passion, and resilience will carry you far. Always remember to follow your dreams, embrace challenges, and continue to strive for excellence. This is just the beginning of an exciting journey ahead, and we can't wait to see where life takes you. Whatever path you choose, know that we will be cheering you on every step of the way. Congratulations once again, my dear daughter. Your future is bright, and I couldn't be more excited to witness all the incredible things you'll accomplish. Love you always!

~ Mom, Dad, Cindy Aldan, Christian, Nan, Pop & all the rest of your fans



Jessica Kamalsky

We are so proud of your achievements, but even more proud of the person you've become! Congrats on reaching this incredible milestone. All of your hard work has led you to this very moment. Celebrate it! You're the example of what happens when good people do great things. We will always love you the most, Mom & Dad



Katie Lunny



Katie My Love, Witnessing your journey to this moment fills my heart with incredible joy. Your determination, resilience and kindness have always been your guiding stars. As you graduate, know that I am endlessly proud of you and excited for the adventures that await you. Congratulations, my shining star, keep shining your bright light! I love you! Love, Mom

Sarah McDonnell

We are so incredibly proud of you Sarah! Congratulations on another incredible milestone in your life, your college graduation. Your determination and strength is endless! You are a rockstar! We love you so much! Mom, Dad, Andrew, Michael and Holly



Ted Melchiorre



Ted – Today graduation; tomorrow the world! We always knew that you could do it and we are amazed by all you have accomplished at UD! You are just getting started! We can't wait to see what you achieve next! Love you! Mom and Dad

Jocelyn Saltarelli

Jocelyn, you have worked so hard to reach this moment. I know you will be successful in all you do in your career. We are so proud of you! Love Mom, Mike, Heather and Anthony



To Our Daughter Bella, We are so proud of the woman you've become and are amazed at the beautiful soul who continues to grow in front of our eyes. We know that you have the determination, kindness, and strength to reach your goals while staying true to yourself and we cannot wait to see what the future holds for you. Wherever you go, go with all of your heart! Congratulations! Love always, Mom & Dad

Bella Vocile



Abigail Walters



Congratulations my amazing daughter! Your drive, determination and heart will always get you where you want to go. Continue to make the most of every moment. I am so proud of you! Love you da mostest, Mom

Sarah Wessel



Sarah, we are so proud of you!!! It has been an honor and a pleasure watching you take on the last four years and succeeding! Here is hoping that you find a way to make your passion your lifestyle. Good luck in wherever your journey takes you. Remember we are here for whatever you need. Mom, Tom, and John

Marcaela Allen

Marcaela, you came into this world as a star appearing on television which was just a prelude to the life that I know you are destined to live. You are a star that shines so bright through your compassion, drive, loving heart and determination. Always remember to shine bright no matter what you are faced with. Never allow anyone or anything to dim your light. Do all things through LOVE and doors will continue to open. Happy Graduation Mi Amor! Love Mama

Ryan Altman

We are all so proud of you Ryan Altman. We can't wait to see all of the wonderful things that you accomplish. Congratulations!!

Rachel Brieger

You did it! I am so incredibly proud of you and everything you've accomplished in the short time that we've been friends. I can't wait to watch you take the world by storm in whichever path you decide to follow. I'll be rooting for you while you walk across that stage in your coolest boots.

Marina Chiafullo

Congratulations! We are so proud of you and the amazing ways you have flourished at UD. May you be blessed with smooth waters and deep knowledge all the days of your life!

Shannon Klein

Congratulations! We are so proud of you! Your life is your story, and the adventure ahead of you is the journey to fulfill your purpose and incredible potential! Dream big and be sassy!!!!

Love,
Mom, Nanny, Aunt Trish, Edward and Charlie

Hayden Miller

Happy Graduation Hayden! We are so extremely proud of you. Thank you for all of your leadership, guidance, and memories over the years. You never fail to make us laugh. We are going to miss you but can't wait to see what life holds next for you. Congratulations and we love you! - The Rubber Chickens

Quinn Mott

Four years have seemingly passed so quickly, but your growth in both maturity and intellect have far outpaced your time at UD. Though you just lost SD, you've always had our admiration and respect. Congratulations on all you've accomplished and what comes next.
XOXO - M.

Bianca Schaen

Bianca... Great job!! Way to get-R-done in short time... We look forward to seeing you excel in whatever you choose to do in the future. We are so proud of you, thanks for being YOU!!! Love, Mom, Dad, Brooke, Mommom & poppop Davis & Schaen

Mikayla Venditti

Mikayla, We are so proud of you! A full-time student while working two jobs; we're amazed by you! You fearlessly pushed yourself to go for the future you want, and to be the person you want to be. All with a smile on your face. We love you so much! Congratulations 1st Gen!
Love, Mom & Dad

Fairwell to *Review* Seniors



Konner Metz
Graduating Editor-in-Chief

"I am excited to continue in journalism as a full-time reporter for the Star Democrat in Easton, Maryland this June."



Nadya Ellerhorst
Graduating Executive Editor

"I am planning to embark on a career in the media sphere and continue writing."



Tabitha Reeves
Graduating Development Officer & Co-Managing News Editor

"I have moved back to Virginia to be a general assignment reporter with Ogden Newspapers at The Winchester Star."



Danny Tull
Graduating Staff Writer & Cartoonist

"I am working as an academic agriculture assistant at Delaware Technical community college, while also continuing my love of visuals, by doing agriculture communication videography on the side."



Sarah Wessel
Graduating Magazine Editor and Art Director, Layout Editor & Illustrator

"I will be completing the Secondary STEM Education 4+1 program at UD, where I will be working to get my masters and become an agricultural science teacher."



Jake Harkey
Graduating Staff Reporter

"My post-graduation plans are to seek out Masters programs and intern at a PR firm in New York City."



Jordanna Garland
Graduating Managing Arts & Culture Editor

"After graduation, I plan on working as a journalist in broadcast media."



Caroline Powell
Graduating Staff Writer

"I'll be spending my summer at home and plan to work as a PR assistant in Washington DC in the next coming fall."



Jordan Rosales
Graduating Photographer

"I am moving to Manhattan to attend graduate school at the AMNH Richard Gilder Center to acquire a Master of Arts in Teaching Earth Science."



Christina Natalini
Graduating Photographer

"I will be attending Widener-Delaware Law School, where I will be focusing on health and family law."



Danielle McIltrout
Graduating Copy Editor

"I will be attending Chatham University in Pittsburgh to pursue my MFA in Creative Writing"



Ryan Gibb
Graduating Staff Reporter

"I plan on backpacking through Europe and hope to report for my town newspaper. Long term I would love to go into sports media."



Alex Millman
Graduating Managing Opinion Editor

"In the months following graduation, I will be taking the summer to spend time with family and friends, as well as search for a full time job in New York City where I can continue writing and creating hopefully at an advertising or public relations agency!"

