

## Protestors Push Back

BY **ALENA KLADIS**  
Staff Writer

A new bill in the Florida House of Representatives was introduced in late February, which would allow the state Board of Governors to give direction to schools on removing majors, minors, and courses in such subjects as critical race theory, gender studies, and diversity. The new bill, along with Gov. Ron DeSantis' rejection of a high school African-American history course, resulted in protests throughout cities in Florida.

Students, residents, and activists are rallying to reject the new bill, House Bill 999. They walked through Tallahassee to the Statehouse protesting these education changes.

DeSantis announced legislation that would prohibit funding for critical race theory or diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) programs, and seize control of hiring from faculty committees, according to NBC News.

"In Florida, we will build off of our higher education reforms by aligning core curriculum to the values of liberty and the Western tradition, eliminating politicized bureaucracies like DEI, increasing the amount of research dollars for programs that will feed key industries with talented Florida students, and empowering presidents and boards of trustees to recruit and hire new faculty, including by dedicating record resources for faculty salaries," said DeSantis, according to a Florida government news release.

Many students at several of Florida's public universities have sought to fight back, accusing the governor of restricting academic freedom. Students staged a walkout to protest

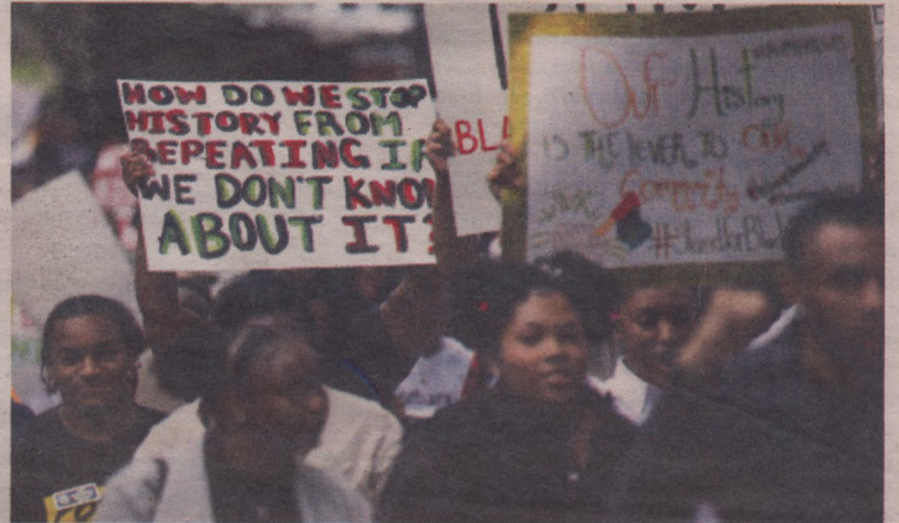


AP Photo by Alicia Devine  
Hundreds of Florida students participating in the National Action Network's march as a response to Gov. Ron Desantis rejecting a high school African American history course.

DeSantis' efforts to remove DEI programs in public education systems.

The state argued that these programs promote the idea that modern American society oppresses those who are Black, women, and other minorities.

"I believe those programs can greatly benefit students' personal development and comprehension of modern topics and history," said SHU student Grace Susanin. "In my opinion, students should have the freedom to select the



AP Photo by Alicia Devine  
Powerful sign demonstrations in Tallahassee, Florida protesting Houe Bill 999, which would defund African American history courses and diversity, equity, and inclusion programs.

major and coursework that they find most interesting."

According to AP News, civil rights leader Al Sharpton said, "Our children need to know the whole story. Not only to know how bad you were but to know how strong they are," said Sharpton, after DeSantis rejected an African-American history course. "If you would study history, governor, you would have known to mess with us and education always ends in your defeat."

Over the last year, the governor has signed a law called, "Don't Say Gay," which prevents lessons on sexual orientation or gender identity through the third grade as well as instruction deemed inappropriate. He has also approved what is known as the Stop WOKE Act, to restrict certain race-based conversations and analysis in schools and businesses.

Florida is weeks away from its regular legislative session, in which a Republican supermajority stands ready to deliver on the governor's agenda to pass this bill.

College students across Florida hope to push back the governor's plan to ban programs of DEI, restriction of courses dealing with race, and policies targeting the LBGQT+ community and students of color.

## HEY SENIORS!

### COUNTDOWN TO GRADUATION:

**53**  
**DAYS**

## LOCATIONS NEWSPAPER RACKS

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>Hawley Lounge</b><br>(next to stairs)                   | <b>Martire</b><br>(first floor by the main staircase)  |
| <b>CHE</b><br>(inside by front doors)                      | <b>Spectrum Office</b><br>(in the SCMA Wing)           |
| <b>Library</b><br>(inside front doors)                     | <b>Curtis Hall</b><br>(inside the front doors)         |
| <b>West Campus (West Building)</b><br>(first floor lobby)  | <b>Linda's</b><br>(first floor)                        |
| <b>West Campus (East Building)</b><br>(outside Cafe Rosso) | <b>Pitt Center</b><br>(inside front doors)             |
| <b>Thea's Abbey</b><br>(lobby)                             | <b>SC Wing</b><br>(first floor near 63's and Edgerton) |
| <b>Melady Hall</b><br>(inside front doors)                 | <b>Pio's Kitchen</b><br>(inside front doors)           |
| <b>63's</b><br>(outdoor glass doors)                       |  |

### WATCH THE PIONEERS IN ACTION:

**WEDNESDAY 3/22:**

**SOFTBALL**  
**VS. FAIRFIELD**  
**AT 3 P.M.**

**FRIDAY 3/24:**

**BASEBALL**  
**VS. UNIVERSITY OF**  
**MARYLAND AT 3 P.M.**

**FRIDAY 3/24:**

**MEN'S VOLLEYBALL**  
**VS. ST. FRANCIS**  
**BROOKLYN AT 7 P.M.**

**SATURDAY 3/25:**

**MEN'S LACROSSE VS.**  
**VIRGINIA MILITARY**  
**INSTITUTE AT 7 P.M.**

# News

## Empowering Students to Create Change

BY ERIN CLARK  
Staff Writer

Human rights and social justice originated as a minor under the previous department chair, Steve Lilley. It is within the department of Sociology and Criminal Justice in the College of Arts and Sciences. This minor was formed for students to best comprehend the study of human rights and the influences that go into establishing and upholding them.

"The minor's purpose is to look at political, sociological, historical and criminal justice topics with a human rights mindset," said junior Abby Lockwood, who is pursuing this minor. Lockwood said it stems from the class, human rights and social justice. This class is required for the minor and educates students on current and past human rights issues using case studies and lectures.

"I did not know what to expect when I signed up for this course, I just needed it for a requirement I was fulfilling," said sophomore Bente Bogues. "After completing this course, I have gained an abundance of insight on human rights and social justice issues. I think SHU would benefit from it being a campus-wide general requirement."

On top of this course, there are other requirements a student pursuing the minor must take in order to fill up the 18 credits needed. At least two out of four of the following classes must be taken: Intro to Criminal Justice, Intro to Global Studies, American Government and Politics, and Sociological Imagination.

"I like the required course options as the concept of human rights and social justice is so broad, it makes it easier to expand on it in detail," said Lockwood.

The other requirement is for a student to take three electives in two different disciplines from a list of courses. This list includes human cultural diversity, media and democracy, constitutional law, diversity and oppression, and many others.

"As a political science major and a social work

minor, I have taken many of these courses," said senior Ciara Monteverdi. "I can see why these courses are a vital contribution to a minor in human rights and social justice as they create an in-depth understanding of their respective areas and how they relate to human rights."

"Overall, I really like this minor and the organization of it," said freshman Annamarie Mirando. "I wish there were more specifically human rights classes, but I do love the flexibility of the program because it fits right into my Political Science major."

There is also a capstone required for this minor, which is either a fieldwork project, lengthy research paper, or internship along with consultation from a faculty advisor. Students can choose to double up on an internship or independent study that would count towards their major as well.

"For me, the capstone experience has more to do with my major," said Lockwood. "It works out perfectly because my fellowship that is focused on my political science major will count towards the requirements for this minor."

The SHU website states that a student with this minor will learn to identify and comprehend major domestic and international declarations, treaties and covenants governing human rights, as well as mechanisms for monitoring and enforcing human rights standards.

"Although I am only in my second semester with this minor, I have already begun to grasp human rights in a new and more informed way," said Mirando.

"Given everything going on right now involving human rights and social justice in current events, it is exciting to also be learning about the history of it all and truly understanding what is going on through the minor," said Lockwood.



Sacred Heart University, photo by Tracy Deer-Mirek

SHU Students studying in the Humanities Center of the Main Academic Building.

## Texas, Florida push border laws as governors eye presidency

BY ASSOCIATED PRESS

PHOENIX (AP) — Led by tough-talking Republican governors weighing presidential runs, Texas and Florida are debating especially strict legislation on border security as the GOP tests federal authority over immigration. The moves in the two GOP-controlled statehouses come against a backdrop of polarization in Congress that makes any national immigration legislation seem unlikely as President Joe Biden tries to drive down migrant arrivals at the border while eyeing his own reelection bid. Republican proposals in Texas build on Gov. Greg Abbott's \$4 billion project Operation Lone Star, with its construction of more barriers along the U.S.-Mexico border and busing of migrants to Democratic-led cities, including Washington, D.C., and New York. Abbott's aides confirm he's considering running for president. Operation Lone Star already has added more officers along Texas' border with Mexico to detain migrants who trespass on private property. Now, Texas lawmakers have proposed creating a new border police force that could deputize private citizens, as well as making it a state felony to enter the state without authorization, punishable by up to 10 years in prison.

"Texas is taking historic action to secure the border and stop guns, drugs, and cartel gangs from assailing our state," Abbott said in a tweet this week. "As President Biden abandons his constitutional duty, Texas continues to step up."

Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis, considered Donald Trump's strongest possible GOP competitor so far in next year's presidential primary, has proposed making human smuggling in the state a felony punishable by up to five years in prison. Hospitals would be required to collect data on patients' immigration status and people in the U.S. illegally would be denied state government ID cards. "Texas and Florida are places with politically ambitious governors who are hoping to use immigrants in the furtherance of their agendas," said attorney Tanya Broder of the National Immigration Law Center, which promotes immigrant rights.

Despite the hardline rhetoric, Broder said advancements in immigrant rights have been quietly made in recent years. State-level organization has improved immigrants' access to health care, higher education, professional licenses

and driver's licenses, according to a recent study Broder co-authored.

The study noted Colorado became the first state to enact an alternative to unemployment insurance for excluded workers. Arizona voters last year approved in-state tuition for all students who attended high school in the state, regardless of their immigration status.

Abbott and DeSantis blame Biden for a big increase last year in illegal crossings into the U.S. But a plunge this year in illegal crossing numbers could throw cold water on the GOP's attacks against Biden's handling of border issues. The sharp drop along the Southwest border followed the Biden administration's announcement of stricter immigration measures.

The U.S. Border Patrol said it encountered migrants 128,877 times trying to cross the border in February between the legal ports of entry, the lowest monthly number since February 2021. Agents detained migrants more than 2.5 million times at the southern border in 2022, including more than 250,000 in December, the highest on record.

"Florida will not turn a blind eye to the dangers of Biden's Border Crisis," DeSantis said in a tweet last month announcing Florida's legislation. "We are proposing additional steps to protect Floridians from these reckless federal policies, including mandatory E-Verify and prohibiting local government from issuing ID cards to illegal aliens."

While Texas and Florida officials ballyhoo their border tightening efforts, no major immigration legislation has emerged this year in Arizona, where some of the nation's toughest laws targeting immigrants have been devised. Arizona's "show me your papers" law, passed in 2010, required law enforcement officers to determine the immigration status of a person stopped or arrested if the officers suspected the person may be in the U.S. unlawfully, a practice detractors said encouraged racial profiling. Courts eventually struck down several of the law's provisions.

Arizona's Republican lawmakers are up against Democratic Gov. Katie Hobbs, who this year has vetoed a GOP-backed budget and a bill that bans teaching public schoolchildren subject matter its authors describe as "critical race theory."

New Mexico, which also shares a border with Mexico, has since 2021 steadily removed barriers for migrants without legal status to access public benefits, student financial aid and licensure in credentialed professions.

After taking office in 2019, Democratic Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham withdrew the majority of National Guard troops her Republican predecessor sent to the border, denouncing a "charade of border fear-mongering."

New Mexico's Legislature is also controlled by Democrats. Nevertheless, legislators this week rejected a proposal to bar state and local government agencies from contracting with U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement to detain immigrants as they seek asylum.

In North Carolina, Republican lawmakers last month launched a new attempt to require sheriffs to cooperate with federal immigration agents interested in picking up certain jail inmates believed to be in the U.S. unlawfully. Democratic Gov. Roy Cooper twice vetoed earlier versions of the measure, but Republican majorities in the General Assembly have since increased.

A similar Idaho effort so far has failed to make it beyond its legislative introduction.

Immigration-related legislation in other states includes:

— A Georgia bill that failed to advance that would give in-state college tuition to immigrant students who arrived in the U.S. as children and who are protected under the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals. Bills are advancing that would ban companies and some people from certain foreign countries from buying farmland within 25 miles (40 kilometers) of any military base.

— A Colorado bill aimed at allowing immigrants who arrived in the U.S. as children and are protected from deportation to own a firearm so they can become law-enforcement officers.

# Features

## Spotlight: PRIDE

BY RYAN MCNEILL  
Staff Writer

The PRIDE club is putting Sacred Heart University's commitment to inclusion and progress into action.

The organization holds events with the goal to embrace all members of the student body and better educate the university on LGBTQ+ issues. The club aspires to create a more inclusive and understanding campus.

"PRIDE is a club for LGBTQ+ students and allies who wish to celebrate being queer on Sacred Heart University's campus. We act as an event planning taskforce to put together events on campus to celebrate queerness and the queer experience," said PRIDE President Jonah Savage.

PRIDE has put on Friendsgiving celebrations, Halloween parties, and has participated in the university's Coming Out Day celebrations.

The club plans to put on two major events this semester.

"Our first event is Queer Formal being held on March 24 at West Campus UC205; this will be a fun, formal-like event for LGBTQ+ students and allies to celebrate the queer experience together," said Savage. "Our second event is a collaboration with Chaverim Yehudim (Jewish Club), a panel of faculty members discussing the Holocaust and the overlapping experience for Jewish and LGBTQ+ people during the Holocaust."

PRIDE hopes these events will be effective in reaching out to students and making the club's ambitions and mission better known.

PRIDE Vice President Brenna McDonald said, "It is so important for a university to have an organization like PRIDE. We strive for inclusivity and to encourage everyone to be authentically themselves."



Contributed by SHU Student, Jonah Savage

Students celebrate Thanksgiving at a PRIDE club meeting.

She recognized and emphasized the increased significance of the club's presence at a Catholic university.

"It is even more important for a Catholic institution to have this kind of resource due to the history of homophobia within the Church," said McDonald. "I have experienced it myself in my hometown when going to church, but SHU has done an amazing job of creating an inclusive environment."

McDonald commends the university for being welcoming and expects PRIDE to continue and further that attitude.

"There will always be more to be done, but I knew this was going to be a safe place since I went to SHU's Coming Out Day event my freshman year," said McDonald.

"It can be very scary for incoming LGBTQ+ students, due to the history of the Catholic Church and queer people," said Savage. "It is important to note that Sacred Heart really believes in its mission for social justice and creates a safe

environment for all students."

Freshman Nicole Cordero-Williams said, "It is so crucial for anyone starting somewhere new to feel comfortable, and it's a good sign that this club exists to embrace and lift up people whose voices aren't always heard."

Savage strives for PRIDE to gain more notoriety on campus as an outlet for students.

"I am always encouraging my e-board to be present on campus to get the word out about our club and different events that we host on campus. We also try to have a strong social media connection through our Instagram, @pride\_shu," said Savage.

PRIDE intends to grow and continue to be a positive force within the student body in the future. They encourage all students to join through SHU Engage, attend their events, and go to their upcoming meetings in the Multicultural Center at 8 P.M on March 23, April 6, and April 20.

"All students are welcomed and encouraged to attend a meeting and share ideas for events or just come to have a safe space with students with similar experiences," said Savage.

PRIDE meets every other Thursday in the Multicultural Center.



Contributed by SHU Student, Jonah Savage

Flyer for the Queer Formal, an event being held by the PRIDE club.



Contributed by SHU Student, Jonah Savage

Sacred Heart University's PRIDE club logo.

## Women's Empowerment Alliance

BY SARAH MARGERISON  
Staff Writer

The Women's Empowerment Alliance (WEA) is an organization formed in Nov. 2021 to highlight the importance of advocacy and education for women's rights. The club is a space where members can feel free to talk about topics in the media that heavily affect women in today's society.

During such a turbulent time in history for women in society, senior and WEA co-founder Maria Pandolfo felt that SHU needed a safe space for women to speak about how they feel.

"We're in a really bad place in this country and unable to control the rights to our own bodies, so we talk about things that people normally don't want to talk about," said Pandolfo. "I try to focus a lot on advocating and educating our members."

**Do you believe that access to menstrual products is a basic human right?**

If you think there should be free period products in bathrooms on campus, sign the petition using the QR code below!




The WEA does a lot of advocacy all around campus with different organizations to improve the lives of women on campus. Their goal is to create an environment where women's needs are met, and their feelings are heard.

"For the past few months, we've been trying to get period products on campus," said Pandolfo. "We do a lot of sexual health advocacy and really want to get contraceptives on campus."

The club is having a Women in Leadership event in collaboration with SHU College Democrats on March 30 to discuss women's issues on campus. They are also planning an interfaith collaboration with Campus Ministry and the Catholic Studies Department to speak on a discussion panel about women's issues.

Junior Hadley Bansal learned about the WEA on Instagram, and now follows them to stay updated.

"I believe that this club positively affects the SHU community by raising awareness to some issues that women face on a daily basis, such as the 'pink tax' and period product disparities," said Bansal. "I think it's great that they stand up for equality among all genders."

The WEA is only one of the ways students at SHU can get involved in the study

and conversation of women's rights. The Women's, Gender, & Sexuality Studies minor encompasses all of the club's ideals in a way to educate students while getting their degrees.

History Department Professor and Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Coordinator Kelly Marino sees the minor as an opportunity for people with all kinds of interests to get involved in gender studies in different ways.

"The Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies minor at SHU is an interdisciplinary program that allows students to take classes in a variety of different fields on topics that relate to social justice and equity issues and issues of identity and the human experience," said Marino. "It compliments many majors from psychology, sociology, history, political science, and the health professions."

Marino believes the Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies minor is an important way for students to practice inclusivity and reach the school's mission of promoting the DEIB agenda. The minor allows students to take their passion for topics of women and gender further in their education.

The Women's Empowerment Alliance meets biweekly on Thursdays at 8 p.m. in the Multicultural Center. Their next meeting will be on Thursday, March 30.

Further information and resources can be found on the club's Presence website at [sacredheart.presence.io](http://sacredheart.presence.io). The website also includes a link to a LinkTree where students can sign petitions, find women's health resources, and more information about the club itself.

Students can find the club on Instagram at @womens.alliance.shu.



Instagram, @womens.alliance.shu

Members of the WEA running a drive for period products to support women in need locally in Bridgeport and internationally in Ukraine.

# Audrey's Corner



## Social Justice Week Creative Works

This week Audrey's Corner celebrates Social Justice Week with creative works from Julianna Rezza, including "an elegy to the women," and "the *girlboss*."

an elegy to the women  
By Julianna Rezza

For the little girl  
with fuzzy pajama shorts  
and neon painted finger nails.

For the teenager at the bar  
words a happy jumble  
a giant smile upon her face  
with a fruity drink and  
music thumping in her chest.

For the ponytail  
*grinning* as she leaves the gym  
keys jingling as she removes  
one earbud and opens the door to her car.

For the woman post-divorce  
walking back from  
trivia night with singles Halley-and-Rachel-  
who-drink-only-white-wine  
at the wrong time.

For the runners in the state parks  
or the bathroom stalls  
or caught in the darkness of the ice machine  
at a motel outside.

For the frantic breaths of escape  
quiet breathes through the tape

last breaths through tears.

For shallow graves  
and shitty obituaries  
and the sickening smell of  
the roses  
you wished to receive  
for the first time  
or just  
one  
more  
time.

it wasn't a lot to ask.  
i hope you know that  
i'm sorry.

i'm  
sorry.

the *girlboss*  
By Julianna Rezza

i do not step into the male skin like i'd step  
into a onesie, zip it up to my neck and fasten  
the head piece, wrapping it around my body like  
a new reality, hoping that if i look like one,  
talk and walk and bark like one

people will treat me like one.

hoping that if i press my lips into a thin line and  
size up a girl that smiles i will get respect for  
laughing at the guessed time it would take to beat it  
into submission.

hoping that if i exude the ability to pick a girl's  
existence to shreds i will feel good when the rips  
don't scab and her soul blisters and bleeds.

hoping that if i hold myself just so  
they will know they must earn my respect-  
that they must open their mouths or their  
legs—whatever gives better compliments – in  
order to have a modicum of approval, of reprieve

from the constant feeling of tripping, being  
curbstomped up a down escalator  
in an attempt to not feel like  
gum stuck to the bottom of the societal shoe.

no. i cannot justify donning that skin  
no matter how good it might feel.

i will not be a part of the problem.



# Spotlight



## New Hire: Anne Burmeister DEI at SHU

BY SAMANTHA KATZEBACK  
Staff Writer

Sacred Heart University has hired Anne Burmeister as Director of Equity Compliance and Support. Burmeister will be joining the ambitious team of the Office for Inclusive Excellence that is being led by Maurice Nelson, the Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer.

"My work deals primarily with anti-discrimination and anti-harassment initiatives. I work across the university to develop and implement policies and guidelines that protect against discrimination and further inclusion for all members of the SHU community," said Burmeister.

In the past, Burmeister has worked with other universities taking on different roles, everything from admissions to research to the legal department.

Every day is different for Burmeister as she does not have one set daily schedule. "Some days, I am helping individuals through very personal experiences or working with university partners to take appropriate measures. Other days I am working with teams in departments and programs across SHU on initiatives that help prevent discrimination and make meaningful progress toward inclusion," said Burmeister.

Burmeister was greatly drawn to Sacred Heart. Her favorite part is the people here and the overall energy of the school. She hopes to have a strong impact.

"I have been heartened and humbled by the sincere commitment to inclusion and belonging from so many different parts of the university. There are people everywhere: in every program and in every building who are committed to the work that fosters equity and belonging in their realms of the SHU community. They are sharing that energy and work with the Office for Inclusive Excellence team. I will do my best not to waste an ounce of it; playing my role to facilitate their efforts into mechanisms that foster inclusion and belonging here at SHU," said Burmeister.

Students are hopeful and optimistic upon the arrival of Burmeister at Sacred Heart University.

"I feel as though this is an issue on campus that most people aren't fully aware of, so I hope that Ms. Burmeister will be able to help students and make a difference on campus," said Junior Emma Giedraitis.

"I think it's important to have a Director of Equity Compliance and Support on campus to ensure equality throughout Sacred Heart University. I think she will bring awareness to unspoken issues that may have gone unaddressed by the school," said, Senior Nicole Uttaro.



Tracy Deer-Mirek, Sacred Heart University  
Official headshot for Anne Burmeister, new Director of Equity Compliance and Support at Sacred Heart University.

Being the Director of Equity Compliance and Support is a very rewarding job for Burmeister. "I like opportunities to collaborate. I like the creative problem-solving that happens among a team of people from different areas that come together on an initiative. When your results reflect that process, it's really rewarding," said Burmeister.

Burmeister is directly devoted to social justice and equity among all. One factor that led her to SHU was the dedication they had for social justice.

"For me, it is a moral imperative. But even if that doesn't resonate as strongly with you, we understand how diversity builds strength and resilience in natural and human-made environments," said Burmeister. "Committing to systems that allow every individual to realize their full authentic selves means they are free to contribute their innate strengths, creativity, problem-solving abilities, and beauty to all of us. That makes a stronger, more resilient society."

## My Experience as a GA at SHU

BY DEWAYNE SCOTT  
Contributing Writer

I am the graduate assistant of Multicultural Affairs here at Sacred Heart University. In this role, I manage the work-study students and maintain the Multicultural Center's daily operations.

During social justice week, I will take the time and opportunity to reflect on my experience in this position thus far while circling back to its relevance to social justice week at the university.

Being a part of the Multicultural Center has made my short time at Sacred Heart meaningful and enjoyable. Working with a very supportive staff and a diverse range of students has bettered me both professionally and personally. Doing DEIB (diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging) work has certain connotations attached to it; however, it is complicated and challenging, especially in a predominately white institution where you are part of the minority.

With that said, you find yourself in specific conversations that may feel very uncomfortable having but are necessary; necessary for not just myself, students, and the SHU community but as a society.

Race, class, and gender are just a few things that are not easy to talk about in a public or intimate setting.

To provide more context, the Multicultural Center was established at Sacred Heart after the George Floyd incident to give under-represented students a place of comfort, but most importantly, provide education and knowledge of how to navigate through your journey before and after graduation as a minority within society.

Even as a graduate student and first-year student at SHU as a black male, I find myself gaining the same experience. Much of what I have learned and taken in is hugely accredited to the mentorship and guidance from Maurice Nelson, Robert Johnson, and Ana Mendieta, but the students play just as big a factor in it.

I have been placed in an environment that exposes me to dialogues and discussions that forces me to wrap my mind to be more open-minded and more aware of my place and influence in the environments in which I am placed.

DEIB work is a gradual upward battle for college institutions and the world. The first step in promoting a more diverse and inclusive environment is being more open-minded and aware of others from different places and backgrounds.

# Arts & Entertainment

## Women Warriors of Agojie

BY PAUL KEEGAN  
Staff Writer

In the mid-1800's, a West African kingdom was making history that, until recently, was relatively unknown in the West.

The Agojie, an army of the Dahomey tribe, were a fierce and powerful force comprised entirely of Black women. And their long untold story recently took to the big screen with 2022's "The Woman King," starring Viola Davis, Lashana Lynch, and John Boyega.

"It was a solid movie," said senior Trent Miller, a writer and director in Sacred Heart's School of Communication, Media and the Arts (SCMA). "I don't think it was completely historically accurate, but it was great for Black female empowerment—when they can see someone that looks like them, especially our younger generation. We don't see a lot of that, especially with Black women in that kind of role."



Instagram, @womankingmovie

One of the official promotional posters for "The Woman King," depicting Viola Davis.

In terms of accuracy, Miller is referring to backlash "The Woman King" received for softening elements of the Agojie's history, particularly their enslavement of other tribes.

"It's history but we have to take license," said Julius Tennon, a producer on the film and Viola Davis' husband, in an interview with the LA Times. "If we told a history lesson, that would be a documentary. We didn't want to shy away from the truth. The history is there. If people want to learn more, they can."

The film was originally pitched to STX entertainment, who were only willing to supply a budget of \$5 million to finance the film, "doubting it would have much reach at the box office," according to the LA Times.

The film was eventually sold to Sony TriStar and it premiered in September of 2022, garnering praise from audiences and critics alike. The film earned a "fresh" critic score of 94% on Rotten Tomatoes, and a 99% audience score, grossing nearly \$100 million worldwide on a \$50 million budget.

Speaking with the LA Times, Director

Gina Prince-Bythewood cites the success of Marvel's "Black Panther" as to why the film could get made. "It proved something that I think we all knew but that the industry didn't understand, which is the power of us as an audience."

Trendon Gardner, a junior business management major and actor at Sacred Heart, agreed noting that "Black Panther," which earned \$1.3 billion globally, did very well overseas.

"I feel like for a long time, Black actors and directors couldn't get big box office pulls outside of the United States," said Gardner. "The first 'Black Panther' is an example of 'this can be done.'"

Gardner went on to explain the importance of "Black Panther," in that it depicts an African nation that hadn't been destroyed by colonization.

"The early days of film, Black people weren't depicted in a positive light—they were slaves," said Gardner. "So I think now it's very important for diverse casts to be a part of every production. Film is a reflection of life. You've got to authentically depict the audience. That should be the norm. It's not, really. It's coming to that, but it's not the norm yet."

"We see a lot of films about Black struggle," Miller said. "Films about slavery. And I think those films definitely have a place, but then, in a way, can also hold us back. 'Ok, does our history just start with slavery? Does our history just start with suffering?' We need more movies that don't have to do with Black suffering and have to do with telling good stories involving Black people. Drama, comedy, action—whatever—that involve people of color. I would love to see some of the brighter parts of our history."

"The Woman King" is now streaming on Netflix.



Instagram, @blackpanther

Official movie poster for the Black Panther sequel.

## The Fight for Climate Change

BY BRAD HUTCHISON  
Staff Writer

"To the End" is an American documentary film that was recently released on Amazon Prime and Apple TV on Dec. 9. Filmed over the course of four years, "To the End" captures the emergence of a new wave of leaders and the movement behind the most sweeping climate change legislation in U.S. history.

The four inspirational women of color who are followed in this documentary are U.S. Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, activist Varshini Prakash, climate policy writer Rhiana Gunn-Wright, and political strategist Alexandra Rojas.

"I think all four are heroes for their generation and for mine. Ocasio-Cortez, Prakash,

Rojas, and Gunn-Wright have devoted their life to helping move the political dial to prevent the worst outcomes of climate change," said Dr. David Luesink, history professor at Sacred Heart University.

The documentary follows the effort of these four women to change the narrative around climate change, and they used the crisis the world is enduring as an opportunity to build up a better society and spread their message.

Throughout their battle, they engage in protests that lead to the halls of Congress and speeches in front of supportive audiences.

One major piece of the documentary is the Green New Deal, which was a congressional resolution that lays out a grand plan for tackling climate change.

Originally introduced by Senator Edward J. Markey and Ocasio-Cortez, the deal called on the federal government to wean the United States from fossil fuels and curb planet-warming greenhouse gas emission across the economy.

Not only was this a push for a cleaner environment, but it was also about addressing and transforming old policies that have contributed to injustices suffered by frontline communities for decades.

The Green New Deal has not yet passed Congress. Opponents of the deal argue that it would cost every American household between \$26,100 and \$65,300 per year.

Senior Kimmy Johnson has read about the movement in the past, and after seeing the trailer for the documentary, she felt passionate about the topics at hand.

"We're taking a huge step in the right direction," Johnson said. "Not only was a huge impact made, but it was done by four powerful women of color."

Before releasing on streaming services, the documentary debuted in movie theaters. Not seeing much success, it only accumulated \$10,000 across all box offices.

Although it was graded an 88% "fresh" critic score on Rotten Tomatoes, some in the audience did not seem to agree with the high score.

"I feel like I must have watched a

completely different movie than the ones the critics watched," said one online anonymous review. "It was absolutely terrible, and it actually made me dislike Alexandria Cortez after it was all over."

The documentary maintains a score of 11% on Rotten Tomatoes in terms of audience opinion.

As the fight continues to push for more climate change legislation, the four women highlighted in this documentary continue to be prominent leaders in the battle. Near the end of the piece, it is emphasized that there is still a great deal of work to be done, and the topic is still one that is argued heavily by the general public.

"When you're one step away from success, that's when they want you to think you're furthest," said Ocasio-Cortez. "But trust me, you are close."



Instagram, @totheendfilm

Film poster for the documentary, "To the End," that follows female climate change leaders.

## The Power of Multicultural Literature

BY HAIELY GENZALE  
Staff Writer

"The House on Mango Street" by Mexican American author Sandra Cisneros is a 1984 novel. It is told from the point of view of 12-year-old Esperanza Cordero, a young Chicana girl growing up in the Hispanic quarter of Chicago, whose neighborhood is one of harsh realities and harsh beauties.

According to Goodreads, Esperanza shares the stories of her family and neighborhood of Humboldt Park, a Latinx community in Chicago.

Through the authors use of literary devices and poetic style, the reader follows Esperanza on her journey to find her identity as she struggles to understand her Chicana positionality, role as an English and Spanish speaker, growing sexuality, and gender as a female in a patriarchal society.

"When I read this book, my mind was opened up completely and I was shown a whole new perspective of life and what people have to go through. It blew me away," said sophomore Owen Ayotte.

This novel teaches a moral lesson that you always belong, even if you feel like you don't.

One of the most important themes of "The House on Mango Street" is the power of words, with some themes touching upon the struggle for self-definition, coming of age, and identity, according to LitCharts.

"I will never fully understand what it feels like to be in the shoes of the main character, but I was able to read this novel and feel more educated about these types of situations," said sophomore Carolyn Doherty.

The novel was inspired by one of Cisneros multiple childhood residences, with the address of 1525 N. Campbell Avenue, from which the book receives its title. Although the book is not entirely nonfiction, the author drew heavily on her childhood experiences as inspiration.

"This was definitely by far one of my best reads, I was introduced to the novel in class and took it upon myself to read it on my own, and I'm glad I did," said Ayotte.

Although the novel has received positive feedback, there is some controversy based around it. Schools across the country have come to challenge and/or ban the book due to themes of racism, sexuality, and poverty, according to the American Library Association.

"I can understand why some schools would want to ban the book, but in my opinion, it should not be banned. It should be read at an age when

a student can be more understanding of what the novel talks about and deserves to be read due to its educational purposes," said sophomore Nico Bogardus.

"The House on Mango Street" is only one of many multi-cultural literature novels. Others include: "The Color Purple" by Alice Walker, "How the Garcia Girls Lost Their Accent" by Julia Alvarez, "The Sun is Also a Star" by Nicola Yoon, and more.

"Students should be encouraged to read this genre of books, because, as much as they are educational, they also are entertaining and people can enjoy the read as they learn," said Ayotte.

The main character, Esperanza, must define her place in the world, claim her identity, define a future for herself all while interfering with obstacles along the way.

"I was very blessed growing up, I never faced severe struggles like the ones spoken about in the novel, and I think it is necessary for other students who had an experience like mine to read this book and educate themselves on what some people do go through," said Doherty.

Cisneros told AARP her purpose for writing "The House on Mango Street" was so that it would be approachable for all people, whether they were educated or not, and whether they were children or adults. She said she did not want the novel to make readers feel intimidated, but rather allow them to feel welcomed.

"I haven't heard of this book up until last year, which kind of upsets me. I wish I was told about it earlier in my life and I think we should start advertising this book as time moves forward," said Bogardus. Although some schools across the United States do require the novel in the curriculum, other schools rest on their decision to ban it.

"The House on Mango Street" is intended for young adult audiences, since it contains serious subject matter and a great amount of symbolism underneath its surface. The novel won the American Book Award in the year 1985, it was a New York Times Bestseller, and it has been adapted into a play.

"There is no specific group of people this novel was made for, if you live on this Earth, you should get your hands on this novel and read it," said Ayott.

# Sports

## Saudi Arabia Sparks Controversy over Sponsorship

BY JENNA LETIZIA AND JOHNNY GREENE  
Co-Sports and Staff Writer

The FIFA Women's World Cup 2023, taking place this summer from July 20 to Aug. 20 in host countries Australia and New Zealand, is taking some heat for its reported sponsorship with Saudi Arabia.

Saudi Arabia has been criticized many times in the past for violating many basic human rights. There is major discrimination against women in Saudi Arabia who face challenges regarding marriage, divorce, inheritance, and child custody rights.

According to CNN, both Australia and New Zealand soccer federations are disappointed about Saudi Arabia's reported sponsorship of the 2023 FIFA Women's World Cup. The co-host countries claim they were not consulted by FIFA about this potential sponsorship agreement.

"I don't think they should be allowed to sponsor at all," said Nicki Green, a senior on the Sacred Heart women's soccer team. "I think their lack of respect for women is a disgrace and it would speak volumes if they hosted the Women's World Cup."

Another problem with Saudi Arabia's justice system is that the women who speak up face jail time.

"FIFA shouldn't allow Saudi Arabia to sponsor the Women's World Cup," said junior Aaliyah Farid. "It would have a totally new outlook on the sport. It's completely disempowering for women."

Women's rights are not the only thing that Saudi Arabia violates. According to The New York Times, LGBTQ people have faced discrimination, potentially including arrest and prosecution.

Many members of the FIFA governing board have expressed their disagreement with the decision, including Moya Dodd, a former vice-captain for the Australian women's national team. Dodd was one of the first women to appear on FIFA's governing board.

"If FIFA is planning to take money to tell L.G.B.T.Q.+ fans and players to 'Visit Saudi,' it's hard to see how this could pass responsible business principles, let alone meet FIFA's own human rights obligations and policies," Dodd told the New York Times.

Dodd is not the only member of a women's national team to speak up on this issue. Forward Alex Morgan has spoken up on behalf of the United States' team.

"I think it's bizarre that FIFA has looked to have Saudi sponsorship for the Women's World Cup," Morgan told The Guardian.

The 33 year old San Dimas, Ca. native has spoken up on numerous occasions when it comes to political issues in the past including during the 2020 presidential election.

"Alex Morgan is literally the face of women's soccer," said Farid. "If she is against it, then everyone who supports her and her fans are obviously going to base their outlook on this decision."

Morgan has led the United States Women's National team to two World Cup championships in 2015 and 2019 while also helping them capture Olympic gold in 2012.

"I think Alex Morgan has the right idea as the rest of the women's athletes should too," said Green. "Just in the past few years USA women's soccer earned the treatment they deserve and seeing the Saudi Arabian sponsor would set everything back decades."

Sacred Heart Athletics contributed to this article.



AP News, David Vincent

Alex Morgan, co-captain of the U.S. Women's National Team, has spoken out about the controversial decision to allow a sponsorship with Saudi Arabia for the 2023 FIFA Women's World Cup.

## Title IX: Leveling the Playing Field

BY ASSOCIATED PRESS

**"No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation, in be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance."**



AP News, Michael Caterina

A basketball with an NCAA logo and a Title IX inscription rests on a rack before a First Four game between Illinois and Mississippi State in the NCAA women's college basketball tournament Wednesday, March 15, 2023, in South Bend, Ind.

1972: Congress passes Title IX, which is signed into law by President Richard Nixon. Title IX states: "No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance." Congress also passes the Equal Rights Amendment, but it never gets approval from the 38 states needed to become law.

1973: The Supreme Court issues its Roe v. Wade opinion establishing the right to an abortion. Billie Jean King beats Bobby Riggs in straight sets in the "The Battle of the Sexes" tennis exhibition match.

2020: New Title IX amendments take effect, largely regarding sexual harassment.

2022: South Carolina's Dawn Staley becomes the first Black Division I basketball coach, male or female, to win more than one national championship. The U.S. women's national soccer team reaches a milestone agreement to be paid equally to the men's national team.



AP News, Erica Henhoff  
ALLSTON, MA - DECEMBER 03: A general view of the Harvard Title IX 50 Years logo on the jumbotron following a women's college basketball game between the Colgate Raiders and the Harvard Crimson on December 3, 2022.



AP News, J. Scott Applewhite

Billy Jean King, tennis icon and gender equality advocate, speaks after helping unveil a portrait of the late Rep. Patsy Mink of Hawaii, the first Asian-American woman elected to Congress and who helped pass the Title IX Amendment to prohibit sex-based discrimination in federal programs, at the Capitol in Washington, Thursday, June 23, 2022.

# Editorial

## SOCIAL JUSTICE WEEK CALENDAR

EDITOR IN CHIEF  
MIA SANSANELLI  
2023

MANAGING EDITOR  
BRENDAN WILLIAMS  
2024

HEAD CONTENT EDITOR  
ROBERT FINIZIO  
2023

COPY EDITORS  
CODI LYNDRERS  
2023

MADISON BEEKMAN  
2025  
JULIANNA REZZA  
2023

NEWS EDITOR  
ALEXANDRA BOTTO  
2023

ASST. NEWS EDITOR  
MADISON BEEKMAN  
2025

FEATURES EDITOR  
ISABEL HAGLUND  
2024

ASST. FEATURES EDITOR  
CARISSA MUNOZ  
2023

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT  
EDITOR  
EDIJE FRANGU  
2023

ASST. ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT  
EDITOR  
STEPH PATELLA  
2024

CO-SPORTS EDITOR  
BRYAN SMITH  
2023

CO-SPORTS EDITOR  
JENNA LETIZIA  
2023

ASST. SPORTS EDITOR  
JAKE CARDINALE  
2024

MANAGERS OF AUDREY'S CORNER  
JILL REIS  
2023

KAILEY BLOUNT  
2023

SPOTLIGHT EDITOR  
ALEJANDRO RAMOS  
2023

PHOTOGRAPHY EDITOR  
COLLIN MOURA  
2025

ASST. PHOTOGRAPHY EDITOR  
ISABELLA FABBO  
2024

ASST. PHOTOGRAPHY EDITOR  
SAMANTHA INGRAM  
2023

PUBLIC RELATIONS MANAGER  
CODI LYNDRERS  
2023

ASST. PUBLIC RELATIONS MANAGER  
SAMANTHA MARANO  
2025

WEB MANAGER  
STEPH PATELLA  
2024

ASST. WEB MANAGER  
CARISSA MUNOZ  
2023

AD SALES MANAGER  
NICHOLAS MEACHEN  
2024

CIRCULATION MANAGER  
SAMANTHA MARANO  
2025

FACULTY ADVISOR  
PROF. JOANNE KABAK

### Wednesday:

1-3pm: Virtual Reality Lab  
West Campus W248/249

1-2pm: Wisdom  
Wednesday- Multicultural  
Center HC 111

3:30-4:30pm: Educators  
Creating a Better World-  
West Campus W122

8pm: Mental Health Film  
Screening- HC 103

### Thursday:

9-10am: Counselors as  
Social Justice Advocates-  
On Zoom

1pm: SNA Table Times-  
Main Academic Building

3pm: Welcome to My Anti-  
Racist Coffee Shop- HC  
207

4-6pm: Talk with Kathy  
Radziunas!- West Campus  
W-UC-205

### Friday:

2-4pm: Mental Health  
Table Time- Main  
Academic Building

12:30pm: Lenten Friday  
Lunch Series- Netherex  
of the Chapel

2-6pm: Attribute Art and  
Self Portraits- Linda's  
Third Floor

8pm: Queer Formal-  
West Campus W-UC-205

