

## Women's Basketball is "Going Dancing" Second Consecutive NEC Title Sends Pioneers to March Madness



Daniel S, Sacred Heart University

Women's Basketball celebrates their second consecutive NEC Championship win at the William H. Pitt Athletic Center.

BY SHANNON TUTTLE  
Asst. Sports Editor

With 15 straight wins and regular season champions, the number one seed, Sacred Heart University (SHU) women's basketball, conquered the court for a second year in a row, winning the Northeast Conference (NEC) Championship.

The team faced heavy pressure to meet last year's ticket to the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Tournament as they entered into the quarterfinal game on March 11.

"Pressure, a lot of people shut down at that moment, but not for us, it wakes us up," said sophomore Ny'Ceara Pryor in a press conference. "We don't feel the pressure."

SHU rolled a 78-48 win over eight seed, Saint Francis University (SFU) in the quarterfinal. Pryor had a game-high 23 points along with

seven rebounds, four assists and two steals to advance the women into the semifinals.

Head Coach Jessica Mannetti credits her team's intense connection for their victory over SFU. She said the teams with the strongest bond during the rollercoaster of playoffs are usually the ones that go the furthest.

"What separates us from other teams in the conference is that we are so connected on and off the court," said graduate student Olivia Tucker.

In the semifinal game against Merrimack College, SHU swept a 73-41 win over the fourth seeded team. Mannetti described Merrimack as one of their biggest rivals and highlighted the women who are not always in the spotlight for their team's success.

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## Measuring Inclusivity: SHU Receives Annual Campus Pride Index Score

BY CALEB JEAN-PIERRE  
Staff Writer

"Receiving a four out of five on the Campus Pride Index has shown that the work done by myself, my fellow e-board members and the Office for Inclusive Excellence is making tremendous strides toward inclusivity for queer people on campus," said senior Nicole Sperling, President of the Gender Sexuality Alliance.

As Sperling noted, Sacred Heart University received a four out of five rating on the Campus Pride Index.

According to the Campus Pride Index website,

the rating "is an overall indicator of institutional commitment to LGBTQ-inclusive policy, program, and practice," and it acts as a "vital tool for assisting campuses in learning ways to improve their LGBTQ campus life and ultimately shape the educational experience to be more inclusive, welcoming, and respectful of LGBTQ and ally people."

The Campus Pride Index offers campuses the chance to express themselves as LGBTQ+ friendly, holds college campuses accountable for creating an LGBTQ+ friendly climate, highlights the positive strides taken towards LGBTQ+ inclusivity within higher education spaces, and serves as a tool for

parents and students to compare LGBTQ+ policies and programs during their college search.

"The Campus Pride Index questions are a series of self-reports based on policies and procedures at the university, and it is broken up into different segments. It's purely from a policy and administrative support standpoint," said Kyle Humphreys, manager of LGBTQ+ affairs at SHU.

The index is updated annually, it measures current campus practices and raises awareness of how college campuses perform in their LGBTQ+ policies and programs.

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## SHU to Honor Scott Pelley and Doug Kennedy at Gala

BY GEORGE TRIEBENBACHER  
Staff Writer

On April 20, the annual Pioneer Scholarship Gala will take place at the Martire Family Arena from 6:30 p.m. to 11:30 p.m. with Scott Pelley and Doug Kennedy as the honorees.

Kennedy is an alumnus of Sacred Heart University, as he earned a bachelor's degree in economics in 1978 and a master of business administration in finance in 1982. According to a press release from the university, he currently serves on the SHU Board of Trustees and is President and CEO of Peacock-Gladstone Bank, located in New Jersey.

"[Kennedy] sits on many different committees and is a dedicated alum to

the institution. He does a lot in his own community with community service," said Kristen Murphy-Mengold, Associate Vice President of University Advancement and Strategic Incentives. "The mission of Sacred Heart and how he lives his life align nicely."

Pelley works on "60 Minutes," a news program on CBS, and has won awards as a journalist. According to a press release from the university, Pelley has reported from the World Trade Center on 9/11, worked as a war correspondent by covering countries like Iraq and Afghanistan, and interviewed Presidents George W. Bush and Joe Biden.

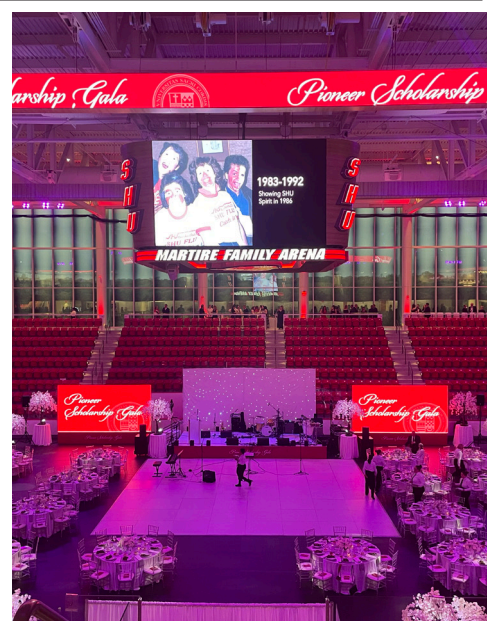
"With Sacred Heart being forward thinking and in its mission in trying to

lead by example, they felt that Pelley was somebody who aligned well with what Sacred Heart is all about, and they wanted to help honor his achievements and his career," said Murphy-Mengold.

The Pioneer Scholarship Gala also helps fund SHU scholarships. According to Murphy-Mengold, these proceeds will help both current and future SHU students.

"It goes into a fund that helps generate money over time," said Murphy-Mengold.

Senior Boris Paul, who attended last year's event as a member of the SHU choir, said that the Gala was



Brendan Williams, Editor-in-Chief

See SCHOLARSHIP GALA  
continued on pg. 2 A glimpse inside last year's Pioneer Scholarship Gala at the Martire Family Arena.

For more... [shuspectrum.com](http://shuspectrum.com) @shuspectrum @TheSpectrumSHU @shuspectrum

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# News

## Scholarship Gala

BY GEORGE TRIEBENBACHER  
Staff Writer

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a fun experience, and he enjoyed the presentations given by the honorees and the student speeches.

“Overall, I do highly encourage students who are invited to go, especially if they are leaders on campus or are on scholarships like performing arts and community service,” said Paul.

Mia Sansanelli '23, a current graduate student and former editor-in-chief of The Spectrum, said that she enjoyed the interactions and getting to know many different people at the Gala last year.

“There was so much time throughout the night to go up and interact with people and be introduced to new people, whether they work for the university, are friends of the university or are people that you want to learn more about or network with,” said Sansanelli. “Overall, it was a good experience to interact with other people.”

Sansanelli said that she hopes to attend again this year. Given Sansanelli's interest in journalism, Pelley is someone she said would be incredible to meet.

“It's a good blend of people that know Sacred Heart and people that don't, but they get to experience this culture of Sacred Heart,” said Sansanelli.

A band will be performing at the Gala, and student singers and a student orchestra will accompany Allegra Devita, a SHU alumna, in an opera performance.

Dinner will be Tuscan-themed, and there are several parts. A charcuterie table as well as several other Tuscan-themed hors d'oeuvres will be served as appetizers. Entrees will consist of surf and turf with a gnocchi option for vegetarians and vegans.

Ticket options for the Gala include a \$500 per ticket rate for SHU alumni in the classes of 2013-2023 and a Premium Ticket of \$1,000 for seating for one guest. There are table options for 10 to 12 guests that will be given certain distinctions.

The attire for the event is Black-tie optional.

According to Murphy-Mengold, 500 people are expected to attend this year's event, an increase from last year's attendance of 400.

For more information on the Pioneer Scholarship Gala, including how to register and the specific seating options, visit <https://www.sacredheart.edu/offices-departments-directory/university-advancement/pioneer-scholarship-gala/>.



Brendan Williams, Editor-in-Chief

(From left to right) Alejandro Ramos '23, Mia Sansanelli BA '23 MA '24, CJ Calcinari '23, and Brendan Williams '24 pictured at last year's Pioneer Scholarship Gala.

## It's a Boy! IFC Expecting New Fraternity

BY CAYLA MELLO  
Staff Writer

This coming fall, Sacred Heart University's Fraternity and Sorority Life (FSL) will introduce a new fraternity to campus. This is a response to the increase in registration numbers for fraternities on campus in the past couple of years.

“We looked at the recruitment numbers for the past two years, so fall 2022, we had our highest registration number of students trying to join a fraternity, that was at 244 students, and we were only able to place about 50 % of them,” said Nick Frias, Director of FSL.

“Fall of 2023, we reached a higher registration pool, by one, so 245 students and we did a little better placing them, we placed 60% of the students who had registered. So that still told us there was a need for the fraternity experience on campus,” said Frias.

The increase in registration led FSL to their decision to introduce a new fraternity to the campus.

“When I brought that data to our Interfraternity Council, the governing body that oversees all of the Sacred Heart fraternities said ‘Okay we understand, we agree with what you are saying. What can we do about it?’ and I said, well we can look into the process of adding another chapter,” said Frias.

The process of adding another chapter to the university has been a long road leading up to where they are today.

“We started with deciding what the fraternities do well on campus, what we don't do well, and just generally speaking what are strong attributes of a fraternity everywhere. Once we had those three lists identified the committee went off and did their own research of chapters that they felt fit the molds of each of those lists,” said Frias.

“That brought us to a semi-final list of 11 chapters, and then from that 11 we gave them more homework, to look more into those chapters and then narrow that list down to everyone's top three.”



Instagram, @sigmaalphaepsilon

Sigma Alpha Epsilon is another chapter that may be joining Sacred Heart.

The three remaining chapters after this process are Sigma Alpha Epsilon, Tau Kappa Epsilon, and Sigma Nu.

“Once we finalized those three chapters, I made outreach to their national headquarters,



Instagram, @tke\_fraternity

Tau Kappa Epsilon, one of the potential new fraternity chapters to join Sacred Heart, is celebrating their 125th anniversary this year.

explained our process, and invited them to campus for an exploratory visit this semester,” said Frias.

After a semester of exploring Sacred Heart and having table times with representatives of each of the chapters, the final decision on which fraternity will be coming to campus is upcoming.

“We are hoping to make our final decision by April 5, that is the deadline I have set for us to inform the three finalist chapters who have been chosen. Whichever chapter is chosen we would invite them to join Sacred Heart as early as this fall,” said Frias.

In 2022, the university went through a similar process when introducing Sigma Chi to campus. Although Sigma Chi is the newest fraternity on campus, there has been no struggle to gain members.

“As a founding member of Sigma Chi, I know the future members of whichever fraternity they choose to add will find the process extremely rewarding,” said senior Dominic Petrocci.

“It's really a referral system, and one-on-one interviews to start and then once they have a core group, depending on the size for whatever the chapter looks for, then they will use those students to recruit in the more traditional sense of what the other chapters are doing,” said Frias.

A new fraternity coming to campus can be beneficial for the university and students who want to have an FSL experience.

“I think adding a new fraternity is great for the university. I think it brings more school spirit and allows people currently not in a fraternity the chance to join one that is completely new,” said junior Isabella Abruzzo, a member of Chi Omega sorority.

## Campus Pride Index

BY CALEB JEAN-PIERRE  
Staff Writer

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“In recent years, SHU has hired openly LGBTQ+ faculty and staff members to diversify the campus community, developed policies that have clear gender and sexual orientation protections, and established a Women & Gender Studies minor,” according to the Campus Pride Index report.

Sacred Heart has also established and supported a multitude of programs along with student-led organizations in accordance with its commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion within the SHU community.

“I think that SHU does a great job of emphasizing to students that everyone is welcome and that we accept diversity,” said Dr. Kelly Marino, Coordinator of Women's, Gender, and Sexuality studies on campus.

For example, the Mentors Advocating for Cultural Connection program connects first-year students with upper-level students who have similar backgrounds and cultural identities. Queer Talks is a several-week program of personal development and identity development to help students who seek a sense of community.

“The Sexuality and Gender Equity (SAGE) Center also serves as a physical resource space and a safe space for students where they can come eat, study and socialize. There is also a small library in there with resource guides on coming out and being transgender,” said Humphreys.

Lambda Delta Xi is a gender-inclusive Greek life organization dedicated to the advocacy and inclusion of LGBTQ students on campus. The Gender Sexuality Alliance creates a community on campus where LGBTQ+ students can embrace their identity while also working with other groups on campus to further foster a spirit of inclusivity.

“I think it is a good thing to have all these programs and initiatives on campus because it promotes diversity and inclusion on campus,” said sophomore Kevin Rosas.

Founded on the principles of the Catholic Intellectual Traditions, Sacred Heart continues to strive for inclusive excellence and diversity at the university and for a larger community.

“Nobody gets left behind in conversations about inclusion and belonging because that is what inclusion and belonging are about. The only people who are threatened by inclusion and belonging are people who have benefited from the suppression of minority groups,” said Humphreys.



# Features

## SHU's Black Student Union Cultivates Community

BY SARA HASENEY  
Staff Writer

The Black Student Union (BSU) of Sacred Heart University serves as a place where students, faculty, and staff of African descent (and other minorities) of the SHU community can engage with each other and exchange experiences and ideas, according to its SHU Engage page.

Senior Jalen Madison, the athletic correspondent of BSU, said students can get involved with the club by attending the meetings in the Multicultural Center, HC 111, every other Wednesday at 8 p.m.

"Usually, we try to do two fun events and two serious events. For fun events we usually do Jeopardy or have a game night. For serious events I presented on mental health, and for this past Black History Month, we talked about information about Black History Month," said Madison.

Junior and Co-President Taylor Bell said that BSU is a place where students can meet each other and create meaningful friendships. She said BSU brings students together to discuss different topics and find their own group.

"The goal of the Black Student Union is to bring not only black students, but all underrepresented students together and enjoy ourselves, have different events, but also educate people on Black history and what it means especially at a PWI (predominantly white institution), allowing students to meet new people and find their group," said Bell.

Bell said that BSU offers a mixture of both education and fun. She said one of the recent meetings have been learning how to line dance, and they are having an upcoming meeting where it is a paint and sip. She said that they also host different events throughout the year that

students can be involved in.

"For events, we had the Black Love Gala this past month, which was a gala for Black Love Day. We had food, drinks, music, a DJ, and a photo booth. It was really fun, everyone got to put on their best outfits and have a fun time with their friends," said Bell.

Bell said that BSU is partnering with the La Hispanidad club for an upcoming event called "Caribbean Night," where there will be music, Caribbean food and games.

Junior and Co-President Clairdjina Bien-Aime said that the involvement of BSU can make the college transition for students of color a lot easier, especially when they feel like they haven't fit in yet.

"I think it's a way for students to form a community and provide a safe space. I think a lot of times, especially for freshmen who are coming into college, especially for black students or people of color, they're not sure where they fit in, so I feel like the Black Student Union helps in that aspect," said Bien-Aime.

Bien-Aime said that BSU allows students to create relationships with each other and allows students to feel included. She said many students coming into college can feel lost, and BSU builds a community to make those students feel safe.

"I came from a very diverse high school, so coming here was a different reality for me, so the Black Student Union helps us with that adjustment, it's a safe

community for us to feel included and get to know one another," said Bien-Aime.

BSU meetings often focus on things happening within a month. BSU has meetings regarding Black History Month, Women's History Month, and other things going on in the world dealing with issues like colorism and racism.

Students, faculty, and staff can stay up to date with what is going on with the Black Student Union by following @shu\_bsu on Instagram to be informed of meetings and other upcoming events.



Robert Johnson (left), Executive Director of Student Affairs, pictured with students at the 3rd annual Black Love Gala.

Instagram, @shu\_bsu

## Catwalk for a Cause: Kappa Delta Hosts "Shamrock the Runway"

BY OWEN HACKETT  
Staff Writer

Sacred Heart University boasts a plethora of events throughout the academic year, organized by various campus organizations. On March 13, the Kappa Delta sorority held its annual "Shamrock the Runway" event at the Edgerton Center for Performing Arts.

The two-hour event showcased six fashion categories: Taylor Swift era, Barbie, sports, throwback movies, country, and Fairfield fashion. Kappa Delta also had some local Girl Scouts of America walk the runway, adding to the energy of the event. At the end of the show, Kappa Delta crowned their Mr. and Mrs. Shamrock, awarded to the nominees who raised the most money in the weeks leading up to the event.

This year, the "Shamrock the Runway" catwalk saw participation from numerous sororities and fraternities on campus.

"The event was awesome. Energy was super high. It seems like everyone enjoyed the night and absorbed the message that 'Shamrock the Runway' is all about," said freshman Brendan Murphy, a participant in the event.

The "Shamrock the Runway" event collaborates with three philanthropic organizations partnered with the Kappa Delta Sorority. 80% of sales and donations go towards St. Joseph's Parenting Center, with the remaining 20% directed to Prevent Child Abuse America.

"This event was important for our sorority because we were able to raise awareness and generate funds for our philanthropy while honoring our late and beautiful sister Caitlin Nelson. Through our fun and interactive fashion show, we were able to raise over \$10,000 for our philanthropy, Prevent Child Abuse America, and local beneficiary St. Joseph's Parenting Center," said junior Mia Mirabella, the Vice President of Events and Programming for Kappa Delta.

Caitlin Nelson, a former sister of Kappa Delta who passed away, is



Instagram, @kd\_shu

The Kappa Delta Sorority pictured on stage at their annual "Shamrock the Runway" event.

honored through the annual "Shamrock the Runway" event. The sorority puts significant effort into making the event memorable in Nelson's memory. It is one of the largest events held by Kappa Delta each year and serves as an incredible way to remember and respect one of their members.

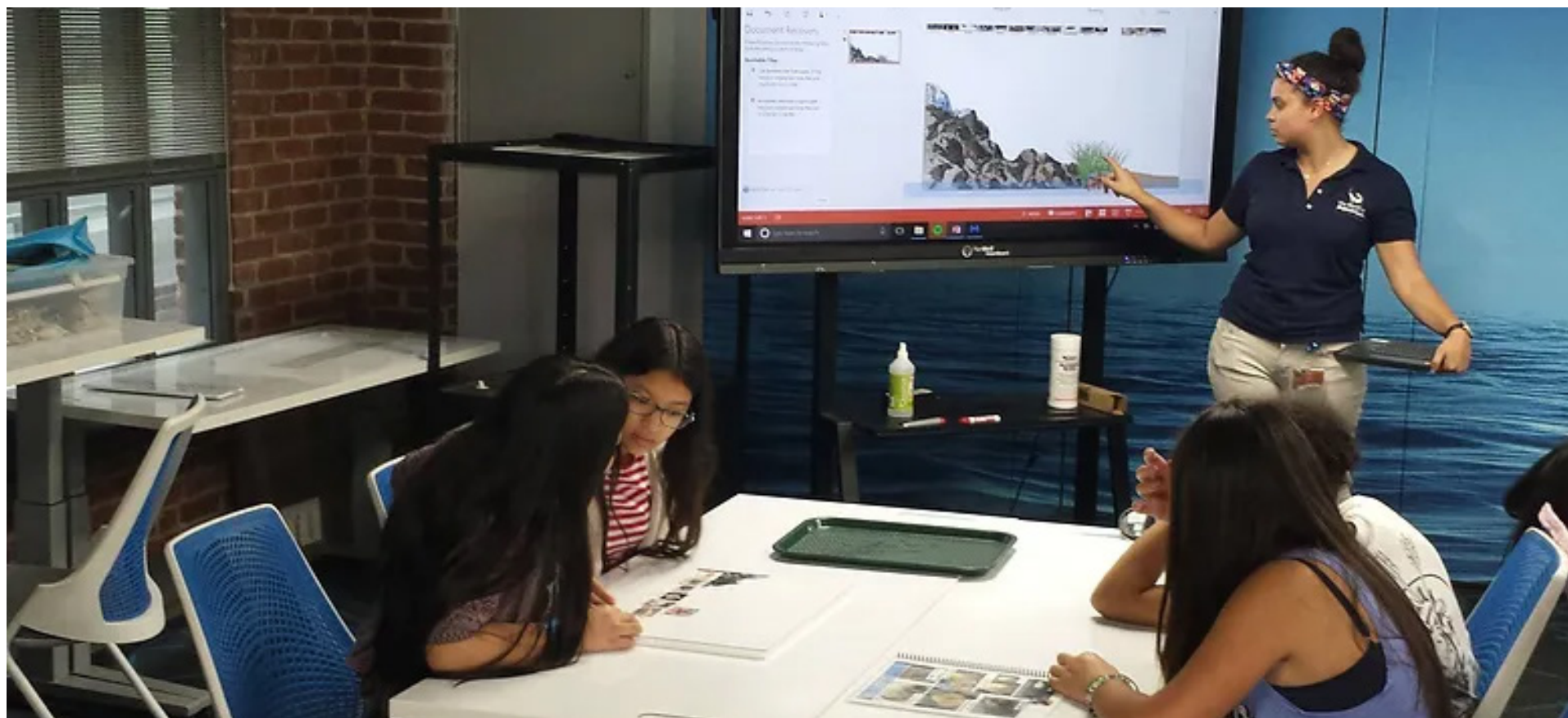
At the end of the show, Mr. and Mrs. Shamrock were crowned as sophomore Steph Peters, representing Zeta Tau Alpha, and sophomore Paulie Licata, representing Kappa Sigma.

Kappa Delta's "Shamrock the Runway" was a great success, both in raising funds and honoring Caitlin Nelson.

"Caitlin Nelson's 'Shamrock the Runway' was a beautiful event this year, and I'm so glad for everyone who participated this year and having the Girl Scouts join us," said Emel Acar, a senior member of Kappa Delta.



# ELSS and ELI Team Up to Empower English Learners in Bridgeport and Fairfield



Provided by the English Learner Support Services of Fairfield County

**BY CAROLINE CLIFFORD**  
*Audrey's Corner Editor*

English Learner Support Services (ELSS) and Sacred Heart University's English Language Institute (ELI) have joined forces to offer English language support to students at Capital Prep Harbor School in Bridgeport and Fairfield Warde High School. The collaboration provides reading and writing assistance to English learners, fostering academic success for youth who have recently immigrated to the U.S., particularly from Central and South America.

"The focus of the program is to build communication skills in addition to reading and writing support," said ELSS Executive Director and Founder, Prof. Peter Shaker in a press release. Sessions will be held twice per week on Tuesdays and Thursdays, providing consistent opportunities for students to develop their language proficiency.

One of the program's key features is its continuity throughout the academic year. Students who actively participate in their high school's English support program will have the opportunity to further advance their language skills during Sacred Heart University's ELI summer program in 2024. This summer program, scheduled from late June to early August, offers a comprehensive curriculum designed to accelerate language learning.

According to a press release, "By this June, ELSS will have served over 90 students in 18 different groups among several schools, illustrating the impact of the organization's commitment to student success." In the same release, Marla McDaniels Heath, ELSS board president and SHU adjunct professor, said "ELSS, from the beginning, has continued to inspire, educate, and support new English learners adjusting to our language and education system."

ELSS covers the cost of attendance at Sacred Heart University for participating students. During the summer program, students will engage in language learning alongside international students enrolled in ELI courses. This immersive experience not only enhances language skills but also exposes students to diverse cultural perspectives.

Maryssa Kozek, the director of ELI at Sacred Heart University, visited both schools to engage with students and discuss the benefits of the summer program. "Improving English skills during the summer and experiencing a college campus environment while in high school can be transformative," said Shaker in the press release. "It opens doors to future academic and professional opportunities."

In collaboration with Shaker, efforts are underway to organize a campus visit for the students on March 21, providing them with a glimpse into college life and inspiring them to pursue higher education with confidence.

## Flaws

**BY JENNA SIUTA '26**  
*Contributing Writer*

I want someone to look at me like I am everything  
To not see my flaws  
To see them as strengths

Like the way I bite my nails when my anxious  
The way my nightly routine happens  
The way I cook to de-stress

I want someone who thinks I'm perfect  
Who is almost afraid of losing me  
I want someone to notice those little things

I want someone to understand my trauma  
And my family troubles  
The way that I work as a human

"I'm going to find someone someday who  
Might actually treat me well"  
"What a shame she's f\*\*\*\*d in the head"

Taylor said it best  
Lately it doesn't seem like it though  
No one can see past my issues

My pain gives me strength  
Is it wrong?  
For me to want someone who understands that?

## Fight Like a Girl

**BY KELLY PARKER '25**  
*Contributing Writer*

Being a woman is:  
Leaving the outside light on when your roommate is getting home late.  
Buying your friend a coffee just cause.  
Getting dressed up and doing each other's makeup.  
Borrowing each other's clothes.  
Crying together when you go through a breakup or hardship.  
Having your mother as a role model and person to teach you to aim higher.  
It is also:  
Refusing to give up your seat and doing what's right like Rosa Parks.  
Fighting for women's rights like Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Ruth Bader Ginsburg.  
Exploring new fields like Marie Curie with radioactivity.  
Founding organizations like Clara Barton with the Red Cross.  
Breaking barriers like when Sally Ride was the first American woman in space.  
Showing strength in male-dominated fields like politics like Eleanor Roosevelt.  
Being a woman is all of these things and more. This is not nearly all they are, I'm sure.  
Women should be celebrated and revered, especially those who made history, those who pioneered.  
Fight like a girl, and you can change the world.

## The Stage Adds Ten Pounds

**BY JENNA SIUTA '26**  
*Contributing Writer*

Mirrors are my enemy  
I am 6', 150 pounds  
So why am I seeing a person  
bigger than I am  
Bigger than the real me  
It's hard to see what is really there  
When my weight fluctuates so often  
I am never constant  
I want my perfect body  
5'8, 130 pounds  
But that's unrealistic  
Why?  
I want to be the skinny where  
people say:  
"You look unhealthy"  
Is that so bad?  
I don't see an issue with it.  
After all,  
It's my dream body.



# CampusLife

## Social Justice Reads Coming to a Bookstore Near You

BY SARAH MARGERISON

Assistant Campus Life Editor and Copy Editor

In the coming months of 2024, multiple stories and memoirs will be released to comment on social issues going on in the United States. Many of the books touch on racial injustice, the struggles of being a teacher, and other new releases by authors of all backgrounds.

“Teachers Speak Up!: Stories of Courage, Resilience, and Hope in Difficult Times,” edited by Sonia Nieto and Alicia Lopez Nieto, and “Humans Who Teach: A Guide for Centering Love, Justice, and Liberation in Schools” by Shamari Reid both include stories about how teachers in modern schools are struggling to share love and education in healthy ways during socially and politically chaotic times in the country.

“Humans Who Teach: A Guide for Centering Love, Justice, and Liberation in Schools” is now available and “Teachers Speak Up!: Stories of Courage, Resilience, and Hope in Difficult Times” will be released on April 26.

“The School Leaders Our Children Deserve: Seven Keys to Equity, Social Justice, and School Reform” by George Theoharis focuses more on the teachings of social justice in schools and how important this kind of education is in society. The book will be available April 26.

Published in January and available now, “This Is the Honey: An Anthology of Contemporary Black Poets,” edited by Kwame Alexander, includes pieces by Black poets and writers of our time in one collection.

Ladarrion Williams will be releasing his first novel, “Blood at the Root,” on May 7. Blood at the Root is a fantasy novel that tells the story of teenager Malik who is determined to figure out the reason for his mother’s disappearance ten years earlier, while also learning about his heritage and family history.

New releases and further information about books with social justice themes can be found online at [SocialJusticeBooks.org](https://SocialJusticeBooks.org).



“Towards the end of high school, I read ‘The Hate U Give’ by Angie Thomas, and I thought it was a really eye opening book that provides a crucial perspective on racial injustice in the US. I also read ‘The White Album’ by Joan Didion recently, which talks a lot about her definition of feminism in the 70s. It made me think a lot about the differences between earlier feminism and today’s.”

- Kathleen Chiodo, '24

“‘Amazing Grace’ by Johnathan Kozol takes you through the South Bronx, describing the horrendous conditions and tragic stories of people young and old. Kozol, who wrote from his own visits and experiences, shared many descriptions of just how unfortunate these conditions are, but how through all of this there are these amazing children he was able to connect and work with. As a social work student, this book stuck with me greatly. It was another perspective of how certain populations live, and the struggles that impoverished children & families go through daily. I would recommend this book to anyone, especially students who may want deeper insight on this topic.”

- Kayla Goncalves, '24

“This book focuses more on the social aspects of the US today, but I read ‘I Never Thought of It That Way’ by Monica Guzman for one of my classes last year. It talked about the fact that many Americans can’t have conversations with people of opposing political perspectives. Guzman talks about different solutions and how to keep an open mind.”

- Danny Martoccia, '24

For counseling services and support reach out to the university resources:

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Open 9-5 on Weekdays

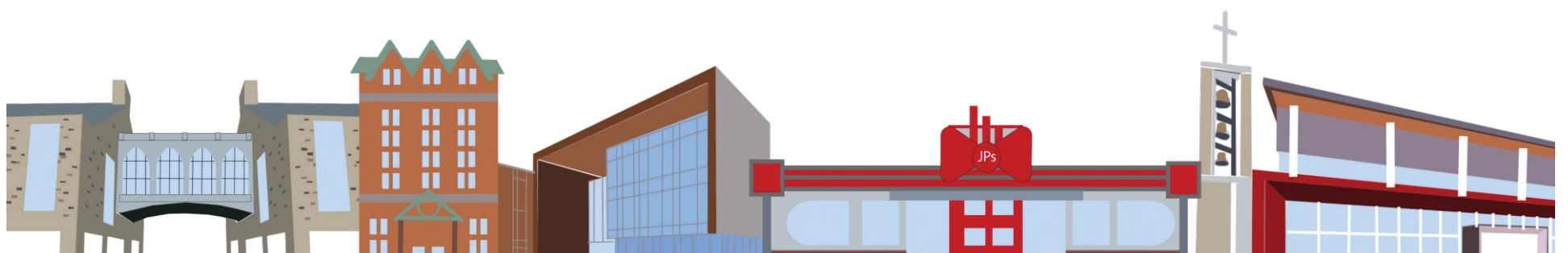
Make an Appointment: 203-371-7955

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Interested in contributing to Campus Life? Contact us at [spectrum@sacredheart.edu](mailto:spectrum@sacredheart.edu)



# Arts & Entertainment

## From Campus to Cabaret: Students Perform at 54 Below

BY GIA ESPOSITO  
Staff Writer

“It was a dream come true to share a dream alongside your friends,” said junior Grace Peknic, a member of Sacred Heart University’s Theatre Arts Program (TAP).

On Tuesday, March 12, the Broadway venue 54 Below in New York City held a concert revival celebrating William Finn’s Marvin Trilogy musicals. The event, which showcased the songs of “In Trousers,” was co-produced by an alumna of the university, Grace Kelly Gretzmer ’23.

William Finn is an American composer and lyricist best known for his musicals, which include a trilogy about the character Marvin. “In Trousers” is the first of the trilogy, followed by “March of the Falsettos” and “Falsettoland.” The one-act musical was portrayed by a cast of 20 people at 54 Below, including two undergraduate students, Peknic and senior Christopher Conte.

“It was so fun. If you’re a theatre kid, you grow up



Contributed by Grace Kelly Gretzmer, '23

Grace Kelly Gretzmer '23 and Christopher Conte '24 pictured on stage during their performance at 54 Below in NYC.

watching these people perform at this place and then to see yourself there is like a full circle moment,” said Conte.

Gretzmer had reached out to her peers about the auditions for the show. The rest of the cast was made up of friends, actors in the city and other people looking for a chance to perform.

“I personally love meeting new people who share the same love of musical theatre. The opportunity to perform alongside these artists and musicians and connect with them was an experience that I will forever be grateful for,” said Peknic.

The show presented 29 songs from “In Trousers” in a cabaret-style format. This format entailed the show running continuously for a little over an hour, with some songs lasting as short as 30 seconds to one minute.

Among the attendees were not only theater enthusiasts but also fellow SHU students and friends of the cast members.

“I was really impressed with the show, especially with how they utilized such a large cast for only four characters and simplified it for the audience,” said junior Addie Brewster. “The way this cast acted on stage I would never know that they just met each other.”

The sheet music was handwritten by Finn, and there were many different recordings from the original that the producers and cast had to work with. The cast was given the material back in October, but they only had two to three weeks to rehearse together before show night.

“Sacred Heart University’s Theatre Arts Program gave me the skills to adapt to this fast, changing environment,” said Peknic.

The connection that Peknic and Conte made with Gretzmer during their time at the university



The cast of “In Trousers” gathered on stage.

Contributed by Grace Kelly Gretzmer, '23

and in TAP allowed them to have this opportunity and understand what their career path looks like post-graduation.

“I met Grace at Sacred Heart and we got close through doing a show and it was cool to see how this friendship has grown into us performing in the city together,” said Conte.

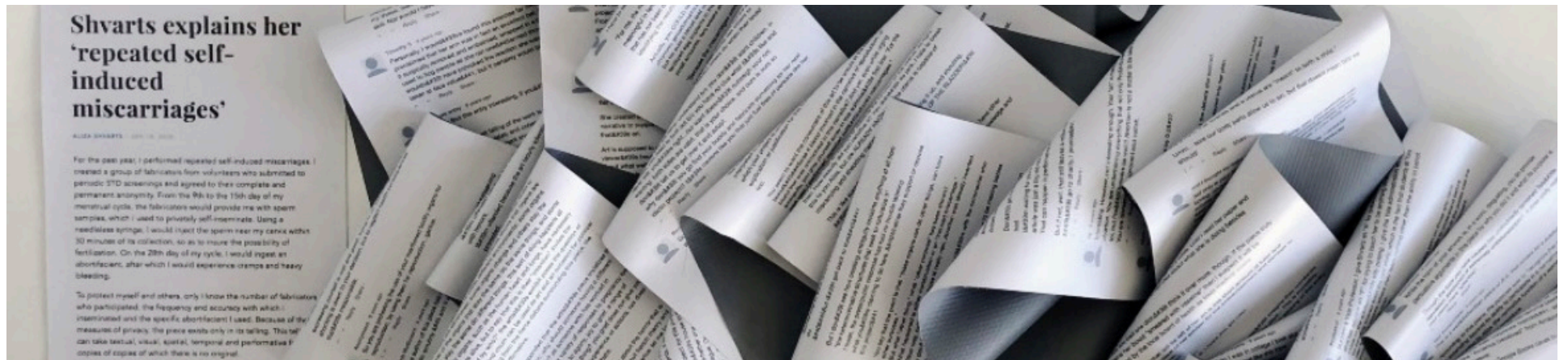
Aside from performing, Gretzmer has worked as an educator, director, choreographer, stage manager, assistant director and dance teacher in community and children’s theatres across Connecticut and New York. She is an aspiring artistic director and her production of “54 Sings in Trousers” alongside Dara Weinstein was a sold-out show.

“I was filled with immense pride. Grace worked so hard to put on such an incredible show and Chris shined on the 54 Below stage,” said Peknic.

This event diverged from the traditional show format that Peknic and Conte typically engage in, offering them a chance to explore diverse performance avenues.

“This experience really solidified that I want to pursue musical theatre outside of college and that I am going to follow my dream,” said Peknic.

## New Course Explores Art, Activism, and Social Justice Connections



Instagram, @airgallery

A close-up of Aliza Shvarts “Banners.”

BY LAURYN ENGLISH  
Staff Writer

Looking for a thought-provoking art course that goes way deeper than looking at paintings? Sacred Heart University now offers a course called AR-107: Art, Activism and Social Justice.

The class takes different works of art and applies it to real world topics. It is offered all semesters, all years, making it an option to take at any point in a SHU student’s college experience.

“This course examines art that shapes culture, builds community and creates social transformation,” according to the course description on the university’s Student Planning and Advising website. “We study art that challenges the status quo and art practice that enters the world of activism.”

“This class is important because it creates a space where students can understand why art is a language,” said Prof. Luciana McClure, who teaches the course. “Art has been at the center of political upheaval and has challenged all the ways we even think and define what art is, who it is for and who gets to create it.”

Junior Samantha Cunniff, a studio art major, agrees that courses like Art, Activism and Social Justice are very important to any college student’s education.

“Art in all forms has the ability to portray powerful messages and visualize emotions for an audience,” said Cunniff. “By associating artwork to real world topics and social issues, it shines a light on subjects that should not go unheard, or in this case, unseen.”

McClure makes sure to keep the course content engaging by bringing in artists to discuss their work. She decided to bring in artist and activist Aliza Shvarts to speak to the class on March 14 via Zoom to educate students on the projects she’s created about social issues such as labor and language with a queer and feminist approach, some of McClure’s favorite topics.

An article titled “A Conversation with Aliza Shvarts,” was given to students to read to get a better understanding of the artist before she came to speak to the class. In the article, Shvarts was interviewed by Emily Apter about a couple of her projects over the years.

“Banners’ began with my own experience of overexposure. The first banner is an article I wrote in

2008 for my college newspaper explaining my senior thesis project for the Art major, ‘Untitled [Senior Thesis],’” said Shvarts. “The piece had gone viral on the Internet and was being widely reported on by various national and international media outlets—usually sensationally and incorrectly. I wrote the article in the midst of all this, naively thinking that I could clarify what the piece actually entailed.”

Shvarts shed light on how the overexposure and false analysis of her essay seriously affected her.

“When a piece of art brings attention to social issues, it can present a shock factor, as well as allow for people to draw conclusions and decide how they will react to what is in front of them,” said Cunniff.

Although AR-107 is the first course of its kind at SHU, the reception has been positive. McClure’s dynamic approach to teaching it with guest artists is to help her students grasp the lessons being taught.

“The biggest takeaway was how engaged and excited students were to learn about her story and artistic practice, while becoming educated into the larger discourse of feminist and queer art in America,” said McClure. “It was an inspiring visit.”



# Arts & Entertainment



The cast and crew of "Oppenheimer" accept the award for best picture during the Oscars on Sunday, March 10, 2024, at the Dolby Theatre in Los Angeles.

Chris Pizzello, AP News

## Oppenheimer Wins Big at the 96th Academy Awards

BY MADISON DICKISON  
Staff Writer

The Oscars, also known as the Academy Awards, took place on Sunday, March 10. The annual award ceremony honors achievements in the film industry for acting, directing, writing and other technical aspects of filmmaking.

The Oscars are organized by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences and it includes live performances, presentations, and the distribution of awards. This event is attended by celebrities, filmmakers and industry professionals from around the world.

According to AP News, "Christopher Nolan's 'Oppenheimer' won seven Oscars and cemented Nolan's place in Hollywood history."

"Oppenheimer" took home seven awards this year in categories including Best Picture, Best Director accepted by Christopher Nolan, Best Actor accepted by Cillian Murphy, Best



Chris Pizzello, AP News

Robert Downey Jr. took home his first Oscar for his performance in "Oppenheimer."

Supporting Actor accepted by Robert Downey Jr., Best Cinematography accepted by Hoyte Van Hoytema, Best Film Editing accepted by Jennifer Lamé, and Best Original Score accepted by Ludwig Göransson, AP News reported.

"The amount of awards that 'Oppenheimer' won stood out to me the most because there were many strong films and performances but Nolan seemed to be the champion," said Todd Barnes, SHU's Chair of Media and Performing Arts.

The Oscars is more than just the distribution of awards, so many performances take place throughout the event as well. A performance that stood out during the event was Ryan Gosling, in his bright pink suit performing "I'm Just Ken" as well as the performance from Billie Eilish and Finneas, singing "What Was I Made For?," which received the award for Best Song.

According to AP News, "The night, though, belonged not to 'Barbie' but to its partner in the cultural and marketing phenomenon known as 'Barbenheimer,' Greta Gerwig was left out of the directing category and Margot Robbie missed out on best actress."

"I was surprised that Barbie didn't win more awards. Given all the buzz it created this year, I thought that it would be recognized for more than just best song," said Mario Miranda, a communications professor at Sacred Heart.

This year's Oscars took a different approach to presenting the nominations.

"I liked the new feature of having former winners pay tribute to this year's nominees, and hope they keep that for future ceremonies. It was especially effective when Lupita Nyong'o gave such



Chris Pizzello, AP News

Finneas O'Connell and Billie Eilish accept the award for the best original song for "What Was I Made For?" from "Barbie" during the Oscars.

a heartfelt introduction of Da'Vine Joy Randolph. Radolph's speech was also very moving, and a great way to kick off the show," said Sara Ross, a professor of Media and Performing Arts at Sacred Heart.

In most years, there are often films that are overlooked during the Oscars award season.

"The Oscars are mostly an advertisement for the film industry as a whole. I don't know if it represents the best in film because that depends on taste. There are certainly great films out every year (especially indies) that have nothing to do with the Oscars," said Barnes.

Regardless, the show is still popular each year.

"I really enjoyed watching the Oscars because it is so interesting to see who ends up winning the awards and being able to see all of the performances that take place throughout the night," said sophomore Katie Stockmal.

**UPCOMING  
PERFORMING  
ARTS EVENTS  
ON CAMPUS**

**WEDNESDAY 3/20:  
COFFEEHOUSE  
LITTLE THEATRE  
AT 6:30 P.M.**

**THURSDAY 3/21:  
SHE KILLS MONSTERS  
LITTLE THEATRE  
AT 8 P.M.**

**FRIDAY 3/22:  
SHU SLAM  
EDGERTON CENTER FOR  
PERFORMING ARTS  
AT 8 P.M.**



# Sports

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2025
- MANAGING EDITOR: ADMINISTRATION**  
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- PUBLIC RELATIONS MANAGERS**  
ALENA KLADIS  
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- KAYLA KUTCH  
2024
- WEB/GRAPHICS MANAGER**  
RYAN TASHMAN  
2025
- AD SALES MANAGER**  
NICHOLAS MEACHEN  
2024
- CIRCULATION MANAGER**  
JOHN HEINZE  
2025
- FACULTY ADVISOR**  
PROF. JOANNE KABAK

## NEC Champs

BY SHANNON TUTTLE  
Asst. Sports Editor

CONTINUED FROM PG 1

“Olivia Tucker and Sierra Johnson are able to shut down the other team’s best player, but that doesn’t go on the stat sheet,” said Mannetti.

This victory advanced the women into the championship game on March 17 and secured the NEC’s automatic NCAA qualifier spot for March Madness. This makes two consecutive years in this position, but this championship was different as SHU had the home court advantage.

“It’s a totally different feel. We have the best fans, from our dance team, to our cheerleaders, to our band, we couldn’t ask for anyone else,” said Tucker, who hit three straight three-point shots in the semifinals.

Going into the championship game, Mannetti described it as another opportunity for the women to prove they are the best team in the league. This mentality is what she has



Daniel S, Sacred Heart University

NEC Women’s Basketball player of the year, Ny’Ceara Pryor celebrates her second consecutive NEC Championship win.

been feeding to her players all season long.

Playing a strong defensive game to disrupt Le Moyne College early on, the Pioneers stole a 69-48 win over the second-seeded team. This game solidified SHU’s women’s basketball team as the back-to-back NEC Champions.

“I am so proud of our team,” said Mannetti. “This environment, which is awesome playing at home, is electric. We have the best fans and the best support system ever.”

The women received their champion title

trophy and celebrated their victory with their family and friends, an experience Pryor saw as “incredible.”

Looking forward to another opportunity in March Madness, the Pioneers are prepared for the challenge. The team has a play in game on March 20 at 7 p.m. against Presbyterian College.

As Pryor said, “It’s March, anything can happen.”

## Final Period of Men’s Hockey Season

BY JAKE WALSH  
Staff Writer

Sacred Heart University’s Men’s Hockey season came to an end on March 9 after two Atlantic hockey tournament losses to Niagara University. Sacred Heart was the No. 3 seed, and Niagara was the No. 7 seed. This marked an early exit to the tournament for the second year in a row at the hands of Niagara.

Head coach C.J. Marottolo, who has been the coach for the Pioneers for 14 seasons, said this loss was one of the hardest ones he had to process.

“The loss is still very raw. All the players and coaches are very disappointed, and it has been very hard to get over it. Hopefully, we can use the loss to fuel us for next year,” said Marottolo.

Despite the loss, Marottolo was very happy with the way his team played this year. The Pioneers finished with an overall record of 14-19-3, and in conference they were 14-10-2, which allowed them to get the three seed when the tournament started.

Marottolo said, “We had a great group of guys this year. For the bulk of the year, we played consistent hockey that allowed us to sustain success and be one of the top seeds in the playoffs. We hope to build on the good with next year’s team and continue to build on the track we’re on.”

Marottolo wants to challenge veteran players this offseason to help build the culture this team needs to continue the consistent success they have had.

Junior forward Daniel Ebrahim emphasized how the team must learn

from this year to get to where they want to be next year.

“For us, next year starts in the offseason,” said Ebrahim. “We look to come in with confidence and get over how this season ended. You don’t want to dwell on the past, but we need to build confidence now so that when it is time for the playoffs, we are ready for it.”

“We had a rough start to the season, and without the team coming together I don’t think we would have been one of the higher-seeded teams in the playoffs,” said Ebrahim. “Coming together allowed us to succeed later in the year.”

Team captain and junior defenseman, Hunter Sansbury, explained how team chemistry leads to a successful season.

“When you have a great group around you it’s easy to come to the rink every day even in a long season,” said Sansbury. “Knowing that your teammates will pick you up when you are down, makes you want to win for them.”

Although Sansbury and the team are upset with the loss, he believes it is the perfect tool to transition into a new season.

“As a team, all we can do right now is get to work. Getting stronger physically and mentally allows you to play harder in a long season, and the playoff games become bigger,” said Sansbury.

As the offseason begins, Marottolo wants his players to find a common goal for next season and begin to work at it right now.

“I want the last two years to be a building block for the team. Having the feeling of wishing we could do more is something I don’t want to dissipate. We need our leaders to step up and have the goal of winning the Atlantic hockey championship,” said Marottolo.

## Final Face-Off for Women’s Hockey Season

BY MAURA CONWAY  
Staff Writer

The Sacred Heart women’s ice hockey team concluded their season on Feb 24, with a total of 15 wins and 21 losses.

The team made it to the quarterfinals of the New England Women’s Hockey Alliance (NEWHA) athletic conference and lost two games against Franklin Pierce University (FPU). The results of the games led to their elimination and ended their season.

“We really struggled to put the puck in the net and that was our problem throughout the whole season. It was a factor in that series, we just did not score enough goals in both games,” said Head Coach Thomas O’Malley.

Junior Sydney Antonakis had similar thinking when it came down to what went wrong in the quarterfinals.

“We struggled to find the back of the net and bury our offensive opportunities,” said Antonakis.

Aside from their quarterfinal defeat, the women’s ice hockey team had numerous highlights and achievements throughout their season. O’Malley described this year as a “rollercoaster,” with both highs and lows.

“We upset the number one team which was Long Island University (LIU) and that was definitely a highlight game for us,” said O’Malley.

He also pointed out some players who had highlight games during the season.

“Jillian Petruno, who is our goalie, did a great job keeping the puck out of the net during the quarterfinal series against Franklin Pierce,” said O’Malley.

Petruno, a sophomore, was named a member of the NEWHA second team and was put on the NCAA goalie watch list. She commented on the team’s win against LIU.

“We played hard, fought for each other, and won which proved we have what it takes and that it’s just a matter of being consistent and executing,” said Petruno.

Petruno recalls another defining moment for the team during the regular season, a winning series against FPU throughout the weekend of



Instagram, @shu\_wih

NEWHA Rookie of the Year, Izzy Chaput, celebrates a goal with her team.

Nov. 3.

“That weekend was a huge confidence booster for us and showed us what we were capable of,” said Petruno.

With the season’s conclusion, the team will now turn their focus towards their off-season spring training. This includes intense conditioning, strength training, and on-ice skills.

“During this time, we focus on putting in the hard work now so that we can carry it into the summer and next season,” said Antonakis.

Throughout off-season training, the team’s commitment and dedication to improvement will set the stage for their goals for the upcoming season.

Antonakis said that the main focus going into the fall is to build off the core values that the team focused on this past season such as discipline, teamwork, accountability and work ethic. The off-season will be important for the Pioneers to prepare for next season.

“We want to build off our success from last season and keep moving forward to be the best team we can be,” Petruno said.