

LEAVING THE CULT

By Christina Baker
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

Editor's note: The names of the individuals interviewed for this story have been changed in order to protect their identities.

On June 3, 2019, Naasón Joaquín García, the leader of La Luz del Mundo, was arrested on charges of human trafficking, production of child pornography and forcible rape of a minor.

On June 4, 2019, Penn State student Alex was told of García's arrest in church. He was warned that LLDM should be his only source of information on this subject, and told not to read articles about the case because the news was "the devil working his way into casting doubts in you."

Alex went home and immediately read everything he could about García's arrest. He read the attorney general's entire report of García's crimes.

Then, Alex found r/exlldm, a subreddit for former members of LLDM.

Alex's journey — from a fourth-generation member of LLDM to a leader of the effort to dismantle it — has brought him to Penn State with a sense of purpose and belonging.

La Luz del Mundo (in English, The Light of the World) was founded in Mexico 1926, when Eusebio Joaquín González said he had a vision of God speaking to him. González changed his name from Eusebio to Aarón and founded LLDM on the belief that he was "the Apostle" chosen by God to lead the church.

When González died, he was succeeded as Apostle by his son, Samuel, who was then succeeded by Samuel's son Naasón.

Over the years, LLDM expanded throughout Mexico and into dozens of other countries, including the United States. The church has claimed to have five million members since 2000.

This claim, Alex said, "is a gigantic exaggeration." (Some estimates place the membership as low as one million.)

In Alex's eyes, LLDM is a cult.

Although he acknowledges that many cults are far more extreme, Alex can detail a number of ways in which LLDM is repressive and cult-like.

In Alex's words, the following rules LLDM members must follow are "cult-like":

- "You can only marry within the church."
- "There's a strict dress code, on women especially."
- "I have to have short hair, the women have to have long hair, they can't look like men."
- "There's no premarital sex, there's no drug use, there's no drinking."
- "I can't grow a beard because I'll look too much like a Muslim. The ban on growing a beard isn't grounded in the Bible at all."

Members of LLDM are also pressured to contribute large amounts of labor and money on a regular basis, according to Alex.

Alex recalled the tactics used to solicit higher donations in the church in his hometown.

"They will post up how much money each family gave at the entrance of the church, like in the lobby," he said.

Members of the church are also expected to trust the Apostle to make their important life decisions — sometimes letting him arrange their marriages.

"I've been to weddings where [the bride and groom] are matched, and they don't know who the f--- they're marrying until they're right at the altar," Alex said. "Very awkward."

Alex said he finds church members' devotion to the Apostle to be a red flag.

"Everyone has a picture of the Apostle in their house," Alex said. "I can tell you there are at least three pictures of the Apostle in my living room, next to pictures of my family and

other stuff. It's just very creepy."

The church has also made no effort to distance itself from its leader, the current Apostle, who is currently sitting in prison on child molestation charges.

Although Alex has spoken online with people who are victims of this type of abuse, he said he did not witness any sexual abuse firsthand. Still, Alex said García's arrest and the church's response to it dealt the final blow to his faith.

Alex, whose parents immigrated to the United States from Mexico, is a fourth-generation member of a fairly influential family within LLDM. He has extended family members in the ministry and said his parents are on a first-name basis with people in the highest echelons of the organization.

Coming to doubt his faith, he said, was like "death by a thousand cuts," but there were "some giant hits" to his faith.

"You just see some ugly things, and you read some books, you meet [former] members of other organizations," Alex said.

One of the biggest blows to his belief was in 2014.

After the former Apostle Samuel died, Alex and his family were on a bus to Guadalajara, Mexico to attend his funeral.

While driving there, they saw another bus hit a woman and child. His parents interpreted it as the devil trying to prevent them from attending the funeral.

Alex interpreted it differently.

"It was just very ugly," Alex said. "It was very ugly, and I was supposedly on the way to mourn this thing, and I saw that and I was just like, 'I just don't understand this. There's no possible way that God could be orchestrating this.'"

But within LLDM, not all people who lose their faith, stop going to church.

Kate, a moderator on r/exlldm who met Alex on the subreddit, said LLDM "brainwashes" its members and was told she would risk death by leaving. Kate left the organization 10 years ago.

"They make you afraid of even just having negative thoughts about the church," Kate said.

If someone does leave the church, they also lose their social life and standing in their community, and often lose their relationships with their family.

"When [your family calls], they don't call just to ask how you are," Kate said. "They call to tell you that you need to come back."

Because Alex was still living with his family, he waited a while to voice any concern about his beliefs.

When he finally told them in 2014 that he was having doubts about his faith, he said he was worried how they would respond.

It is not abnormal in LLDM for parents to kick their children out of the house for voicing doubts. However, Alex's parents slightly "broke the rules," he said, and instead arranged meetings with high-level members of the ministry in which he discussed his faith.

These meetings were not effective in securing Alex's beliefs. He said they got slightly "contentious" at times, but he stayed with the church until 2019.

Alex came to Penn State for graduate school in 2018. The distance to the nearest LLDM church, two hours away in Lancaster, affected his decision. He said he continued attending LLDM services out of fear.

"I would drive two hours to Lancaster, go there for the night, and then just show my face and leave," Alex said.

The term r/exlldm uses for telling your family that you no longer believe in the organization is "coming out," and Alex was "closeted."

However, Alex was open with his friends at



Penn

State about his history with LLDM and his belief that it was a cult.

Vincent, Alex's friend who is in the same graduate program, said he was worried for Alex when he finally decided to "come out" to his parents.

Vincent said he has experience counseling people with several organizations, including The Trevor Project — a national nonprofit organization that provides crisis and suicide prevention for LGBTQ young people. He said he saw a lot of similarities between those people's situations and Alex's situation.

Alex still lives with his family during the summer and on breaks, and he and

Vincent were concerned that his parents might not let him talk to his younger siblings once they learned that he had left the church.

"I was not sure how his parents would react to him saying, 'I don't believe anymore,'" Vincent said. "Then they might say, 'Well, then you can't talk to your brother.'"

When Alex finally came out to his parents in August of 2019, the church had been escalating harsher language about ex-members, particularly those who left in the wake of García's arrest, according to Alex. One minister, Alex recounted, "called people like me gangrene, infectious; if you invite me to your home, I'm [going to] infect the minds of my siblings"

"They've since dialed back on that, but they still f----- said it," Alex said.

However, his parents did let him come home for winter break, with a mutual agreement not to discuss his beliefs.

Growing up in the world of LLDM affected him, Alex said, and the process of leaving the church required a lot of deprogramming and new experiences.

"In some ways, it kept me back in terms of just growing up along with other people," Alex said.

He didn't start drinking until he was 24.

"There's a silver lining to it," Alex said. "I find knowing the Bible inside and out is pretty cool, because a lot of people don't know that, and it's helpful for when you read Shakespeare or whatever."

In some ways, LLDM plays just as big of a role in Alex's life now as it did before he left.

Now, however, he's working to dismantle it.

The main purpose of the r/exlldm subreddit is to offer support for people who have left the organization, Kate said.

"We just make sure that people can stay safe and also that they have a safe space to vent, talk about their experiences in the church, and just kind of where they are now in life," Kate said.

The members of r/exlldm are concerned with helping others leave LLDM, especially their family members. Alex is not a moderator on the subreddit — that's still in the works — but he's very involved.

"I love looking at it," Alex said. "It's one of the first things I do in the morning. I read every single comment that's posted on there, every post."

Because Alex is very active, people often message him directly.

Alex said people have messaged him privately to tell him that his posts inspired them to come out to their families, or helped them explain their decisions.

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Photo by Josie Chen/Collegian

Struggles international professors face

By Christina Baker
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

Although Dr. Rita Castro taught at the University of Lisbon in the capital of Portugal for years, she was “almost in a panic” during her first semester at Penn State because she wasn’t used to teaching in English.

Castro, assistant professor of nutritional sciences, said students were “very, very understanding,” but teaching in a non-native language is only one of many elements in which international instructors have to adjust.

The experiences of international instructors at Penn State vary in terms of their backgrounds, but one thing is clear to many of these professors — Happy Valley is unique compared to other places, and it takes a bit of getting used to.

For instructors coming from schools in other countries, the first adjustment is getting used to the American school system, according to Castro.

In Europe, high schools are more standardized, so all of the students have essentially the same background coming into a class, which makes it easier to make lesson plans and assessments.

“Here, I have students from very different backgrounds,” Castro said.

The structure of courses at American universities is also different from many other countries.

Dr. Fernanda Bonafini, assistant professor of mathematics, is from Brazil and said courses at American universities have “a lot of homework assignments, exams, quizzes,” while in Brazil, grades are based mostly on exams. Bonafini teaches math of money, which is about monetary systems. She said she regularly uses her knowledge of the Brazilian monetary system in class.

“Certain things [about the monetary system] here are different from the country I’m from, so I have the chance to make a comparison and give another example,” Bonafini said. “So I think students leave class with something extra that maybe the [textbook alone] would not be providing.”

Class sizes in America are much smaller than in Portugal, Castro said, so she had to learn to teach in a more personal way, learning students’ names and holding office hours. One of the most unique aspects of American universities is the cost of education. In most countries, higher education is free, and Castro said the cost of college affects



Lily LaRegina/Collegian

Dr. Maria Rita Castro, assistant research professor of nutritional sciences, and Dr. José Pinto Duarte, Stuckeman Chair in Design Innovation and director of the Stuckeman Center for Design Computing, pose for a portrait in the Stuckeman Family Building on Tuesday, Feb. 24.

her mindset. “When we grade a student [in Portugal], we know that if the student fails, it just will be a matter of taking the class again,” Castro said. “Here, we know that a lot of money will be involved.”

But, international professors don’t just have to adjust to American universities — they must adjust to American students. Castro has found Penn State students to be “very respectful” compared to her students in Lisbon.

“Sometimes [in Portugal] I had to call [for] attention [because] there was a lot of noise in the classroom,” Castro said. “Here? Never.”

Castro also said that American students are “more protected” than students in Portugal, because instructors have to follow the syllabus and are not allowed to surprise them with assignments. Dr. José Duarte, Castro’s husband and affiliate professor of architectural engineering and engineering design, agreed. He also taught at the University of Lisbon before coming to Penn State, and said that students in Portugal have more initiative because they cannot rely on the syllabus and have to be prepared for anything.

Bonafini said the students she has taught at Penn State are “much more dedicated to the content” and “more diligent” than those she taught in Brazil.

Pechulano Ngwe Ali, a Ph.D. candidate in mass communications who teaches a mass

communications course, said he’s noticed differences between American students’ attitudes towards college compared to students in Cameroon, where he got his undergraduate degree.

“[Many American students] see college as a social experience more than an educational experience,” Ali said.

Ali added that the differences in the education systems in America and Cameroon lead American students to be more “fixated on grades.”

Different instructors have different perspectives on how their backgrounds as international professors impacts relationships with their students. Castro said though there is a cultural barrier, she thinks it is “workable,” and she hasn’t felt any “major difficulties.”

Bonafini said that although some students have complained about her accent, most students don’t feel like it was a problem.

“You’re always going to have both of them,” Bonafini said. “But I think in general, we receive more positive feedback and [students] see the benefits of having an international professor.”

Bonafini added that it is much easier for international professors to connect with international students, because “we know their struggle.”

Ali said that, as an international person of color, he has found that his predominantly white classrooms don’t have much of an understanding about his cultural differences. This has been a problem, especially since he

teaches a discussion-based class about international mass communication.

He also said he has experienced racial discrimination while in State College.

“People tend to see learning as just a ritual, but it goes beyond that,” Ali said. “It’s an interaction of cultures in that class, and if we don’t understand where we are from [the perspective of] where our cultures are, and the differences of how to merge those, it can be hard to teach and learn effectively. I have had students come to my office hours and say things that I would consider to be very offensive as an international instructor or as a person of color. But I have to look beyond that.”

International instructors must also adjust to the community in Happy Valley. Since many international professors are from big cities, State College’s way of life can be shocking at first.

“In the beginning, it was a hard fit because this city is too small,” Bonafini said, compared to her hometown of San Paolo.

Now that Bonafini has lived in the U.S. for nine years, she can “see the benefits of living in a small town and also in a college town [as] secure as ours.”

Duarte and Castro experienced a similar trajectory, since they are from Lisbon. Duarte said he values both State College and Lisbon for different reasons, and he appreciates the quality of life in State College.

“It takes me about eight minutes to commute every day, there are no traffic jams, there’s

a beautiful landscape, it’s the countryside,” Duarte said.

There were also smaller things that surprised Castro when she first moved to America, noting that it’s easier to recycle in Portugal than the U.S.

Ali summed up his attitude toward State College as, “I’m here for school.”

Having lived in very diverse places, Ali said he’s used to environment that elevates cultural differences more than Penn State does.

“I’ve met great people, incredible people in State College,” Ali said.

However, he said he does not feel a sense of belonging in the area.

Duarte said he feels “detached” from his country, but he doesn’t think being an international professor has prevented him from feeling like a part of the community.

Duarte estimated that more than half of his colleagues in the School of Architecture are international professors, and he’s found the American professors to be accommodating.

“We are very used to American culture anyway because we watch the movies,” Duarte said.

Bonafini, Castro, Duarte and Ali all agreed students and universities benefit from having international instructors.

Duarte thinks it’s good for America to get faculty and students from abroad because exposure to intellectual diversity of people from different backgrounds “enriches the country and intellectual discourse.”

Ali said classes taught by international instructors ideally have the benefit of a “cultural exchange.” He said though being Cameroonian plays a role in teaching international mass communication, he also tries to incorporate his knowledge of places all over the world in which he’s studied.

Bonafini said she hopes that having an international professor can open students’ minds to cultural differences — and she finds students are usually receptive to this idea.

On the first day of class every semester, Bonafini tells her students, “You will notice that I have an accent. But try to take away the best of me — my content, my knowledge, something that you will not find in another place. Because each person is unique. You are unique and I have my form of uniqueness.”

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Cult

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Most of the trolls on the subreddit are current members of LLDLM who try to harass ex-members into returning to the organization. Kate said the trolls will also try to out ex-members and compromise their anonymity.

Alex said he reaches out to them directly.

“One time this person posted something about ‘the Apostle is suffering in prison for y’all, you guys should return, he did say he wanted people to return to the church, he’s gonna forgive y’all, etcetera,’” Alex said.

“I contacted the person directly. They didn’t strike me as very informed or intelligent, and then I asked the person, ‘How old are you?’ He’s like ‘Oh, I’m 12.’ I was like ‘s---.’”

Kate and Alex both said the subreddit has a good atmosphere, although Kate is currently dealing with harassment from trolls.

“[People on the subreddit] have disagreements, of course, but we’re rather civil about it,” Alex said. “We keep reminding ourselves that having disagreements is the way we got here.”

Kate said when she first left LLDLM, she felt “really alone.” r/exlldm helped her heal from the trauma she experienced when she left 10 years ago.

“It brought a healing, knowing that I wasn’t alone, knowing that my story wasn’t as unique as I thought,” Kate said.

Alex said that despite all of the “emotional labor” he puts into the subreddit, he cannot see himself stopping.

“It’s important,” Alex said. “I don’t want to grow up and not have done what I’m doing right now.”

Alex is currently spearheading an effort on r/exlldm he calls “Operation: Trojan Horse,” in which members of the subreddit who still go to church will leave slips of paper with the subreddit’s URL in places that other church members will find them.

The goal, Alex said, is to let members of LLDLM know that it is okay to doubt their faith and that there is a larger community of people who do not support the organization.

Alex said he finds hope in the fact that García seems likely to lose his impending trial.

After the verdict, regardless of the result, Alex plans to come out to his friends and extended family.

Although he cannot be sure what effect this will have, Alex hopes that by coming out he can “normalize dissent.”

Alex said he has a good reputation in his community. He’s a second-generation immigrant and first-generation college student and he helped several younger members of his community with their college applications.

Because he’s unmarried, “when I go back home, people still think I’m a virgin.”

He hopes that letting people know that he left the church will either change their perception of ex-members or change their perception of him.

“I like the fact that I have a good reputation and I will be able to very quickly flip the script on them,” Alex said.

“I have no doubt that there will be a friend, or



Lily LaRegina/Collegian

An anonymous former cult member poses for a portrait in the Pattee and Paterno Library on Thursday, Feb. 20.

two or three or five, that will stop talking to me.”

However, Alex said he hopes to be as “diplomatic” about coming out as possible.

He added he hopes that other ex-members will come out after García’s trial as well. He envisions what he calls an “I am Spartacus” moment, in which a wave of ex-members reach out to their family and friends and offer to help them grapple with the results of the trial.

Alex said he is most bothered by what he considers to be “a lack of honesty within the community.”

“I just want people to be honest about the things they are told, and the sort of coercive re-

lationship that they’re in,” Alex said.

Since leaving the church, Alex said he has seen several counselors.

He has taken steps to come to terms with his new reality.

He has found it helpful to express himself artistically, and he also goes to jiu jitsu.

“It helps to be fighting people, so you don’t think about stuff,” Alex said.

Additionally, Alex finds meditation to be helpful. Although it’s not religious, “it feels like praying,” he said.

Alex said he would like to find a community of secular or atheist students, or ex-cult members.

“I know there’s people on this

campus that have left cults, or other things like that. And if there’s any way I can help them, or they can help me, or we can keep in contact, that would be cool,” Alex said.

Still, Alex feels as though he’s found some sort of community with his classmates.

“They’re very supportive,” Alex said. “I’ve told them about this, they know I help on the subreddit. I send them news stories, just so they can click on it, give it a view or something like that, just to rack up the numbers. They help in that way, they’ve helped the most.”

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Penn State cancels study abroad trips to Italy, Japan

By James Langan
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

Penn State students who planned on traveling to Italy and Japan for spring semester embedded programs might be disappointed to hear these trips are no longer happening.

According to Penn State spokeswoman Lisa Powers,

short-term faculty-led programs have been cancelled.

“In Italy and Japan, short-term faculty-led courses have been canceled due to logistical disruptions and limited travel availability, which was hindering the University’s ability to achieve the educational objectives of the programs,” Powers said via email.

Penn State has already

prohibited university-affiliated travel to China and South Korea.

The university is assisting students with chronic diseases in CDC Level-2 Advisory countries, according to Powers.

Powers said the university based these decisions off of recommendations from the State Department, the Center for Disease Control and Preven-

tion, the World Health Organization and the United HealthCare Global World Watch Intelligence Database.

“We understand there is a lot of concern and conflicting information circulating about the coronavirus and international travel,” Powers said. “As the safety of all students, faculty and staff traveling internationally is a priority,

Penn State officials have been in direct contact with Penn State travelers to provide the latest information from the University and health agencies.”

Powers said Penn State will continue to update on the situation and future cancellations.

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From Penn State to space travel

By Maddie Aiken
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

2:30 a.m., Aug. 30, 1983.

As most sleep through the summer night, Guion Bluford sits in a shuttle, his back to the ground, his face to the vastness of space. It's raining outside.

A countdown — 3, 2, 1 — and Bluford and four other crew members blast off the launch pad. In two minutes, the shuttle is moving three times the speed of sound.

In six and a half, the shuttle is moving 25 times the speed of sound.

The shuttle enters orbit upside down. It circles the Earth at approximately 18,000 mph, greeting and passing the United States in about 10 minutes.

For Bluford, the mission was his first time in space.

The mission also made him the first African American to go to space.

Reflecting on his time as a NASA astronaut, Bluford, a Penn State alumnus who graduated in 1964, said he knew how important his mission was when he was selected to go to space.

“I recognized the importance of the role that I would be playing, but my goal was to do the best I could — not to be overly enamored by it, but to do the very best job that I could in that role — and hopefully I did that,” Bluford said.

Born and raised in Philadelphia, Bluford knew since high school he wanted to be an aeronautical engineer.

When the time came to choose a college, Bluford said Penn State stood out as the best choice.

Upon entering college, Bluford envisioned himself receiving a degree in aeronautical engineering and pursuing a job in designing airplanes.

That, however, did not go as planned.

With the Vietnam War ongoing, Penn State required all male students to participate in two years of ROTC, according to Bluford.

Bluford chose to enroll in the Air Force — and after serving the mandatory two years, he

decided to pursue a career in the Air Force.

Of the roughly 20,000 students enrolled at University Park during Bluford's education, he estimated about 300-400 were black. Though Bluford attended college during a time of change in the country — as the civil rights movement, women's liberation movement, Vietnam War, Cold War and Space Race were all in full swing — he described campus as “pretty quiet,” as “turmoil never really spilled over into Penn State.”

His senior year of school, Bluford got his private pilot's license.

He met his wife, Linda, his freshman year of college, and the two were married his senior year.

Bluford graduated from Penn State in 1964 with a degree in aerospace engineering (as the Space Race continued, the university changed its program from aeronautical engineering to aerospace engineering).

He described Penn State as the “launch pad” into his career.

Bluford traveled to Phoenix with his wife after graduation for Air Force training. Before moving to Arizona, Bluford had never been west of State College.

Several years later, he went to Vietnam, where he flew 144 combat missions as an F4C fighter pilot in South Vietnam for nine months.

After Vietnam, Bluford decided to pursue his high school dream of becoming an engineer. The Air Force sent him back to school to receive his master's degree and Ph.D. in aerospace engineering from the Air Force Institute of Technology in 1974 and 1978, respectively.

In 1977, when Bluford came up for reassignment, he couldn't find a job he wanted in the Air Force. At the same time, NASA was looking for astronauts, so Bluford decided to apply.

Of 8,000 applicants, Bluford — who had never even envisioned himself as an astronaut — was among 35 people accepted into NASA's program in 1978.

Sally Ride, the first American woman in space, was accepted into the same program.

After a year of training, Bluford became a NASA



Courtesy of NASA

Guion Bluford works aboard The Challenger space shuttle on Aug. 30, 1983.

astronaut in 1979. Three years later, he was selected to serve as a mission specialist on STS-8, the third flight for the orbiter “Challenger” and the first mission to have night launch.

During the six-day mission, Bluford and four other crew members deployed a satellite into orbit. He described the mission as a success.

Bluford said space “fascinated” him. He loved the view out the window, and the feeling of zero gravity as he walked on walls and ceilings.

After his first mission, Bluford stayed at NASA, explaining he wanted to “make a contribution” to the agency.

The astronaut would fly three other missions with NASA — one in 1985, one in 1991 and another in 1992. In total, he spent over 688 hours in space.

“I wanted to not only be remembered for being the first African American in space, but also to be remembered for being the first African American to have flown a second time, and the first African American to have flown a third time, and the first African American to have flown a fourth time in space,” Bluford said. “I wanted to make a contribution, and that's hopefully what I did, and tried to do well, with NASA.”

He said he actively expresses his gratitude to NASA, the Air Force and the United States for giving him the opportunities he had. In addition, he said he

recognizes those who came before him, like the Tuskegee Airmen, who “really paved the way” for Bluford.

Bluford resigned from the Air Force and NASA in 1993, pursuing a career in an industry in which he would serve as the vice president of three companies — NYMA, Federal Data Corporation and Northrop Grumman Corporation — over the course of nine years.

He currently serves as the president and founder of Aerospace Technology Group, a consulting firm.

Bluford said he takes “great pride” in his life's accomplishments.

“I take pride in the fact that I'm a Penn State aerospace engineer who had three exciting careers — an Air Force career, NASA career and an industry career,” he said.

Since 1997, Bluford has been inducted into the Astronaut Hall of Fame, the International Space Hall of Fame and the National Aviation Hall of Fame.

Additionally, he was the first African American to be awarded the NASA Gold Astronaut Pin and the first African American to be awarded the United States Air Force's Command Pilot Astronaut Wings.

In 1983, Penn State named Bluford a distinguished alumnus. He served as Homecoming grand marshal in 2006.

On Feb. 20, Penn State's Board of Trustees announced plans to name a building at Innovation Park after Bluford. The building houses Penn State's Center for Innovation Metal Processing through Direct Digital Deposition.

“This building will serve as a living symbol of Dr. Bluford's contributions across many disciplines but especially to his innovation in the development of space systems technology,” Justin Schwartz, Harold and Inge Marcus Dean of Engineering, said in a statement. “The building name acknowledges and honors Dr. Bluford's distinguished achievements and historical significance, while also signifying Penn State's commitment to excellence in space systems across many domains including aerospace engineering, systems design and astrophysics, and active commitment to mentoring, equity and inclusion.”

To current students, Bluford encouraged them to chase their dreams and do what they enjoy in life. “I think the reason why I was successful at what I did was because I found out I loved aerospace engineering,” Bluford said. “I discovered that love at Penn State, and I've driven my career toward following that passion.”

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First generation students discuss college, challenges

Madigan Lubold
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

College is an opportunity to gain a higher education in pursuit of a career, and for students like Dominique Leivers, they are the first in their immediate family to do so.

Leivers (junior-political science and criminology) is a first generation student from West Philadelphia and the president of the Student Minority Advisory & Recruitment Team at Penn State.

She said she has “always been a good student,” and was invested in her education, which is why she decided to come to Penn State.

However, she said her test scores weren't as high as some of her classmates.

Leivers was told by many admissions counselors that she shouldn't apply to Penn State because her test scores were not as good as these counselors wanted them to be, she said.

“I never saw myself not going to college,” Leivers said. “When I decided to look at colleges, as a minority it was important to me to go to a school that fostered inclusivity. Penn State highlighted all the available resources for minorities.”

Despite her concerns, she applied anyway and was accepted a few months later. Her acceptance was hard for some of her classmates to accept, Leivers said.

“People would say, ‘How did you get into Penn State and I didn't?’” Leivers said.

Similarly, Beza Yoseph — a first generation student from Ethiopia — said she faced difficulties with her high school counselor.

Her guidance counselor “wasn't the best,” Yoseph (senior-economics and labor and employment relations) said.

“I went to a really good school,” Yoseph said.

“But our counselors would just look at your test scores and GPAs and tell you where you can and can't apply.”

Additionally, counselors didn't aid students in their career goals or major intentions, she said.

However, Madalyn Arthur — a first generation student from Pennsylvania and a member of First Generation Advocates — said she had a good relationship with her counselor.

“I was very close to my guidance counselor,” Arthur (sophomore-food science) said.

“She encouraged me to apply to all the scholarships.”

However, she said her mom was her biggest supporter, as she is the main reason Arthur decided to go to college.

“It was very imperative to my mom for me to go to college because she didn't get a chance for herself,” Arthur said. “She helped prepare me for the SAT and took me everywhere for college tours. She was very supportive.”

For Yoseph, she decided to come to Penn State because of the vast alumni network. She also felt there were opportunities for all majors at the university.

“When I visited Penn State, I didn't feel like it was a specialty school,” Yoseph said. “It seemed like they had everything here and like I could be successful in anything I decided to do here.”

However, Yoseph didn't always know college was in the cards for her.

When her parents came from Ethiopia, they decided to focus on work and establish roots in the United States, so Yoseph said she thought that would be her future as well.

“Growing up, college never sounded like an option,” Yoseph said. “But, I've always been a learner and I'm so happy I have the opportunity to find what I want to invest my time in.”

Through the ups and downs, Yoseph knew college was the right choice for her career path and could be a great path for other first generation students as well.

“Education is something that is yours and only yours,” Yoseph said. “It is something that you should always have in your back pocket.”

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The Penn State Lion Ambassadors are the student alumni corps of the Penn State Alumni Association who aim to communicate the University's history, personality, and traditions to students, alumni, and friends through tours and programming. Founded in 1981, the Lion Ambassadors serve as an important facet of student outreach for the Alumni Association.



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PSU right to bring home students for safety reasons

Many students dream of going abroad during their time in college.

And it's probably fair to say that not many imagine their studies being cut short because of a rapidly-spreading virus present in at least 61 countries.

Unfortunately, this is a reality for some Penn State students studying in nations now labeled by the CDC as Warning Level 3 countries, meaning the CDC recommends avoiding unessential travel to those countries.

Following the CDC's recommendations, Penn State has added Italy, with over 1,700 confirmed coronavirus cases and 34 deaths; South Korea, with over 3,700 confirmed cases and 21 deaths; Iran, with

OUR VIEW

Penn State acts in best interest of students studying in countries with coronavirus cases

close to 1,000 confirmed cases and 54 deaths; and China, with over 1,400 deaths to its restricted travel list, and most recently released an update about working to bring home students studying in Italy.

This raises some questions: For what losses will students be reimbursed? Will the credits they began earning abroad still count toward their degrees somehow? What will

students be able to do if these credits do not end up counting toward their academic fulfillments?

The answers to these questions aren't clear. There's still a lot of unknowns about this action — Penn State said its Global Programs Office has reached out to students in these restricted countries, instructing them to arrange travel plans home.

The university also said it is working with program providers and campus administrators to “minimize the disruption to academic plans.”

Concerning the additional costs students will endure in planning their trips home, Penn State said “the Education Abroad Office will work with students on a case-by-case basis to mitigate both the academic and financial impact

of this decision.”

However, there isn't an abundance of information available yet through their statements. The update indicates Penn State is dealing with each abroad student on a case-by-case basis — which, in many aspects, should definitely be the case, considering the variety of programs and students being affected.

Although, the non-descript nature of the plans might make it tougher to hold Penn State accountable in its promises.

It is completely understandable how these impacted students could be upset or disappointed in the abrupt end to their semesters abroad.

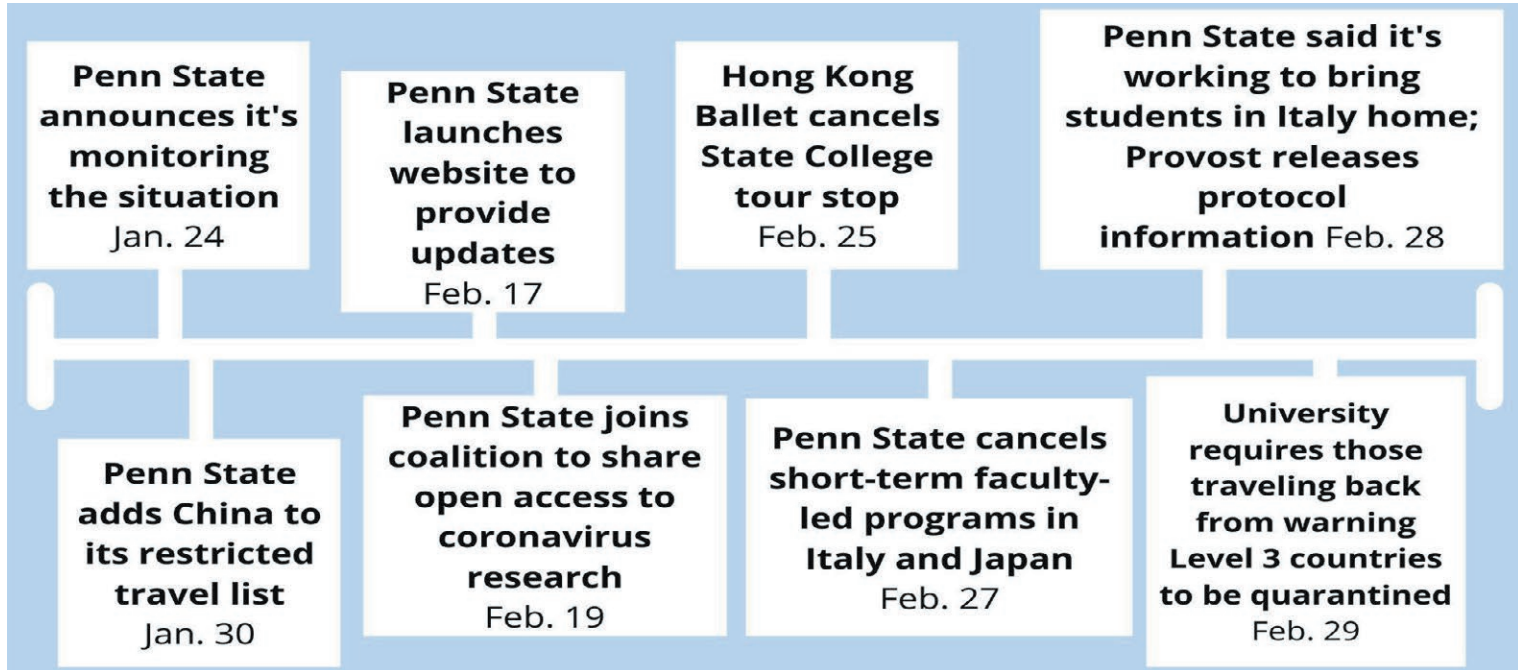
However, Penn State is also right in working to bring these students home.

Between providing a unique learning experience and ensuring student-safety, the university is smart to choose the latter.

This isn't the first time the university has taken actions like these in the face of illness — Penn State also took special travel precautions when the Ebola virus was rampant in 2014.

Rushing students home has the potential to bring on logistical issues, and undoubtedly puts Penn State in an awkward position of revoking the semesters abroad it granted these students.

Despite these potential complications and inconveniences to students, it is the university's job to make tough calls when necessary if it means keeping students abroad safe.



Graphic by Erin Hogge

MY VIEW | Connor Donlon

It makes no “cents”: the U.S. should stop making pennies

On Feb. 25, 1862, the U.S. government started using paper bills with the passing of the Legal Tender Act.

This legislation ended the exclusive use of gold and silver in transactions.

By June of 1862, silver had completely vanished from commerce due to the increasing cost of metal. As a result, the cent became the only federal coin that had not yet vanished from commerce.

Then, in 1864, Congress passed the Coinage Act, authorizing the cent to be made of a bronze alloy.

All of this boring gab just to give a small back story on the penny we use today.

In the rare case you have never heard of or used a penny, it is the one cent coin in U.S. Currently, the cost to make a penny is around 1.82 cents.

You don't have to be a mathematician or an economist to conclude that it costs nearly two pennies to make one penny.

In 2013, former Deputy Assistant Secretary for Economic Policy at the Treasury Department Aaron Klein estimated the U.S. could lose nearly \$2 billion over the next 30 years by producing pennies.

Perhaps you aren't concerned with financial matters.

Maybe you care more about

the environment. Well, as it turns out, the production of pennies also are pretty bad for the environment.

To create pennies, zinc and copper are needed.

That requires mining, which leads to carbon dioxide emissions, pollutants and the use of lots of energy.

Why believe me? I am only a student writing this article out of the goodness of my own heart.

I think someone with their Ph.D. in organic chemistry from the University of Virginia may be able to shine some light on the subject.

In 2016, Dr. Josh Bloom of the American Council on Science and Health estimated that 107 million pounds of carbon dioxide have been emitted due to pennies being delivered from the Mint to the banks.

Look, I am not a “crunchy granola let's ban cars” type, but maybe those emissions are not worth the one cent the coins are actually worth.

That brings me to another reason we should get rid of the penny.

Who actually uses pennies? Grandmothers at bingo? The tooth fairy? But seriously — I would like to know who uses pennies.

(Unironically, my roommate and I used pennies at Champs last week for \$0.09 beers, but that is neither here nor there)

Harvard economist Greg Mankiw stated, “The purpose of the monetary system is to facilitate exchange.

The penny no longer serves that purpose. When people start leaving a monetary unit at the cash register for the next customer, the unit is too small to be useful.”

Again, who actually cares to take pennies when you buy something from the store?

Former US Mint Director Philip Diehl said, “The value of a penny has shrunk to the point that, if you earn more than the minimum wage, you're losing money stopping and picking up a penny on the sidewalk.”

That is quite literally the equivalent of a chef saying, “Hey, maybe don't eat my food. It's too expensive, and it isn't worth the cost.”

Comedian John Oliver also commented on the use of the penny or lack thereof. “Two percent of Americans admitted to regularly throwing pennies in the garbage, which means the U.S. Mint is spending millions to make garbage.”

Two thirds of pennies are never seen in circulation again

once they reach a consumer from the bank.

Abe Lincoln would be ashamed.

And lastly, maybe you are pro-business and pro-capitalism.

Well boy, do I have news for you. A study by Walgreen's and the National Association of Convenience Stores found that pennies add 2 to 2.5 seconds to each cash transaction.

Per year, the average citizen wastes 12 minutes paying with pennies. That's like half of an episode of The Office.

Twelve minutes is also the length of the first human spacewalk by Soviet cosmonaut Alexey Arkhipovich in 1965.

Mankiw also estimated this 12 minutes of wasted time costs the U.S. economy approximately \$1 billion every year.

In closing, do old Honest Abe a favor and get rid of the penny. He wouldn't want his legacy tarnished.

Get it? Because pennies? Never mind.

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PHILLY BOUND?

Childhood friends Grant Ament and Dox Aiken lead top lacrosse teams at PSU and UVA

By Shane Connelly
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

Grant Ament tried to hide his disappointment as he walked off of Lincoln Financial Field in May.

He marched back to the same locker room that has housed his favorite Philadelphia Eagles players, but he wasn't thinking about that.

He was hurting. The Philly kid and his Penn State team fell short on college lacrosse's biggest stage — the 2019 NCAA Final Four. The Nittany Lions were one game shy of competing for a National Championship, ultimately falling short against Yale by a score of 21-17.

Just hours earlier, Dox Aitken punched his ticket to the title game.

It took overtime, but Aitken and Virginia emerged with the 13-12 win over ACC rival Duke.

The celebration was on, but Aitken and his teammates had to stay focused. They were competing for a championship in two days.

Two days later, Aitken watched as the final seconds ticked off of the Lincoln Financial Field scoreboard that read "Virginia 13, Yale 9."

He had done it.

This Philly kid reached his ultimate goal inside the stadium that his favorite team plays in on autumn Sundays.

"It was just a dream come true," Aitken said.

But long before these two lacrosse stars could come so close to meeting at the top of the mountain, before they both reset and

prepared for one last run at a title in 2020, they shared a field in middle school.

Ament and Aitken have been pushing each other to get better since they were tweens.

"I was always just jealous of just how athletic that kid is," Ament, the older of the two friends, said.

The two stars often found themselves alongside one another on the field.

"Grant and I had pretty good chemistry going," Aitken said. "I mean, you find any sort of lane and he's gonna feed you, and he doesn't make you work that hard. He puts the ball right in your stick."

Ament and Aitken brought that chemistry to the high school level when Aitken followed in the footsteps of Ament and enrolled at The Haverford School.

"I loved working with him just because he was just such a hard worker," Ament said. "Even though he was so physically gifted, he still was working on his right, his left, and he was still always trying to find ways to get better."

The two raked in accolades, winning the 2013 and 2015 Inter-Ac Invitational titles while also earning individual recognition.

Their play garnered plenty of attention from college coaches as early as their respective freshmen seasons.

The two Philadelphia kids had their Penn State ties.

Both of Ament's parents attended the university, as did his older brothers, Brandon and Blake.

Aitken's mother Patrice — a women's lacrosse letterwinner in 1977 — can be found on the walls inside East Area Locker Building

on Penn State's campus.

His cousin Steve played lacrosse at Penn State from 2011-14, and his cousin Reilly Masterson graduated in 2019 after a successful career as a part of Penn State women's lacrosse's midfield.

The seed was planted for the two athletes to maintain their bond at the collegiate level. But that wouldn't be how things worked out.

Ament was dead set on wearing a Penn State uniform since he picked up a lacrosse stick. Aitken, however, weighed his options.

"We were interested [in Aitken]," Penn State coach Jeff Tambroni said. "There was an opportunity at some point maybe if he was going to play two sports — football and lacrosse — then maybe we would have gotten ourselves into that conversation, but it seemed like Virginia did a really good job at the time that they were recruiting him, and it was a great fit for him, so it didn't make much sense for us at that time."

To the minor dismay of Aitken's mother Patrice — who Ament swears is still a Penn State fan — Aitken went against his family ties.

Growing up, Aitken took notice of what the Cavaliers built under coach Dom Starsia. He paid special attention to Virginia's run from 2009-12 that saw the team make two Final Four appearances and win one National Championship in 2011.

"I kind of grew up idolizing those players [at Virginia]," Aitken said. "When they reached out early on in the fall of my freshman year of high school, it jumped out on the page to me."

Aitken committed to Virginia shortly after, making it clear that he and Ament would be going their separate ways after high school came to a close.

That final run they had together in 2015, the season in which The Haverford School went 26-0, wouldn't be the last time they shared a field together, though.

Penn State and Virginia hadn't met in a meaningful lacrosse game since May 8, 2004. The Nittany Lions got the last laugh at home when they took down the Cavaliers that day, but it only moved the all-time series record to 5-2 in favor of Virginia.

In the past two seasons, however, Tambroni and current Virginia coach Lars Tiffany have brought their squads together in the fall for friendly competition. It's something both coaches said gives them competitive edges heading into the regular season in the spring.

"It's extremely valuable in



Jonah Rosen/Collegian

Penn State attackman Grant Ament (1) celebrates his goal during the men's lacrosse game against Lafayette at Panzer Stadium.

regards to just giving our program the sense that we belong," Tambroni said, "that you can in fact compete toe to toe with blue-blood programs, the National Championship program for 2019."

Of course, that means that Ament and Aitken have to stand against one another, an unfamiliar feeling for the duo.

"It's not fun playing against them the past two years," Ament said. "[In 2018] when we scrimmaged them in the fall, that was actually the first time I'd ever played against Dox."

"Having him on my team growing up, it's a lot easier, but you realize how much of a force he is and how much attention he draws when you are up against him."

And it's not like Virginia has had it easy going up against the nation's most prolific offense either.

"We learn a lot, but I don't know if we have answers after playing Penn State in those scrimmages," Tiffany said. "It's not like we came away with, 'Okay, this how we know how to stop them.' We actually maybe come away with more question marks than answers."

Being on opposite sides of the field hasn't hindered the relationship between Ament and Aitken. They still find themselves working out together in the offseason when their old high school coaches or teammates call them up looking to put reps in. And while Ament doesn't go to nearly as many Eagles games as Aitken does, they still bond over their fandom.

Before the 2019 season began, Ament stopped by the Aitken

household to drop off some equipment. After a brief stay, he left the Aitkens with a simple message from Dox's father, Mark: "We'll see you in Philly."

The two teams, of course, did not meet in the season's finale. Aitken got his trophy; Ament, despite a record-breaking NCAA Tournament run that saw him score 25 total points, fell short of his ultimate goal of a national title.

With Ament and Aitken now each entering their final seasons of college eligibility, they are both starting from square-one once again.

Both have big plans for their futures. US Lacrosse Magazine reported on Feb. 21 that Aitken will grad transfer to Villanova to play one year of football before making his decision on playing lacrosse at the professional level.

Ament, once again, knows exactly what he wants. He has made it clear on numerous occasions that he wants to make the jump right to the pros.

But for now, they are leaders of two of the top lacrosse programs in the country, and they both know that they have one last shot at meeting in Philly.

"With all the people that we grew up with, and the amount of support that Grant draws, and hopefully the same people that came last year would come again, I think we'd have a lot of people in the stadium and it'd be pretty loud," Aitken said. "And I just think it'd be, in my opinion, the way it really should be."

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Courtesy of Christina Anton/UVA Media Relations

Virginia midfielder Dox Aitken and Grant Ament shared the field in grade school before teaming up at The Haverford School.

MY VIEW | ANDREW PORTERFIELD

PSU proved it's better than last year

It may have taken a few minutes of overtime, but Penn State proved that this season boasts the best iteration of Nittany Lion lacrosse in program history.

No. 2 Penn State (4-1) defeated No. 6 Penn (1-2) in overtime by a score of 18-17 in Philadelphia on Saturday after suffering its first loss of the season at home against then-No. 3 Yale last weekend.

The Nittany Lions and Quakers were also featured in a close game a season ago that ended in a 15-14 home win for Penn State behind senior Nick Spillane's two goals in the final three minutes that put the Nittany Lions ahead.

At the time of that game, Penn was reeling. It had yet to win in the 2019 season and was unranked, while Penn State was No. 5 in the country.

Back to this season, the game at Franklin Field played similarly to last year's affair.

The Nittany Lions had just a two-goal lead at halftime and entered the final quarter of play down one. On the road, however, Penn State showed that it could face the fire and the flames and still come out on top.

Just looking at the stat sheet alone, the Nittany Lions should not have been in contention for a win at the end of this game. The Quakers boasted a better faceoff percentage and finished with six more shots on goal while only suffering one more

turnover than Penn State.

But that's why games aren't played on paper.

Senior goalie Colby Kneese was killer in the crease for the Nittany Lions all game long, finishing with 18 saves. This season has been a coming out party for the goalie who is now one of the top shot-stoppers in the country after a pretty uneventful 2019.

With the development of Kneese on the defensive side, Penn State also was blessed with the upward trend of the front-line attackmen. Senior

attackman Mac O'Keefe has been the most potent scorer for the Nittany Lions, while redshirt senior Grant Ament hasn't missed a beat with his facilitating play. O'Keefe and Ament both had lackluster days by their standards, as they combined for nine points. The duo was averaging 13.3 points per game in the four games prior and had larger impacts throughout the entirety of those games than against the Quakers.

Heading into overtime, this easily could've gotten into their heads, but it didn't.

O'Keefe scored the game-winner to pick up his 22nd goal of the season through five games and Ament continued to lead his team as one of the most recognizable names in lacrosse.

The Nittany Lions' expected contributors haven't had to pull all the weight, either. Role players have stepped up in crucial moments to propel Penn State past its opponents as well.

Take sophomore attackman Jack Traynor, for example.

He scored four goals against Penn, doubling his previous career high of two.



Jonah Rosen/Collegian

Penn State attackman Mac O'Keefe (3) shoots and scores during the men's lacrosse game against Lafayette at Panzer Stadium on Saturday, Feb. 1.

As the Nittany Lions expect to keep winning throughout the duration of the regular season and beyond, the emergence of young players like Traynor is sure to be a comforting asset for one of the nation's top contenders.

Penn State, even with its struggles over the past two weeks, is in prime position to reclaim the No. 1 spot in the USILA Coaches Poll this week after Yale's strange 13-10 loss to UMass and with No. 3 Syracuse still yet to be tested on the road (4-0 at the Carrier Dome).

If the Nittany Lions can do what they're supposed to do over the next few weeks, they should easily keep the No. 1 crown for the foreseeable future.

In a season where most top teams have lost games that they should've won, Penn State should feel great about itself that it has just one loss after games against Villanova, Yale and Penn.

With their toughest road game of the year out of the way, the Nittany Lions go into an easier part of their schedule over their next three games before potentially setting up a marquee matchup against No. 4 Maryland at Panzer.

Rest easy, Jeff Tambroni — your team is better than last year's and right where it needs to be after its toughest stretch of the season.

To email reporter: abp5641@psu.edu. Follow him on Twitter at [@aporterfield7](https://twitter.com/aporterfield7).

Izaiah Brockington key for PSU

By Justin Morganstein
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

In his nine years at Penn State, Pat Chambers has preached grit and determination.

He has recruited players who can fit his system and who can ultimately compete on a day-to-day basis, whether it be in the final four minutes of a game or during a defensive drill in practice.

Chambers’ mission has been to bring in those who vow to compete, so when the coach stumbled upon Philadelphia native and St. Bonaventure guard Izaiah Brockington, he knew he had to have him.

That feeling would be mutual for Brockington, who after his freshman year wanted to go to a program that fit his style, and a place where he could become the best version of himself.

That version is when “Brock” is using his uncanny quickness, which gives him a significant edge on both the offensive and defensive ends of the floor.

“I love how we get up and down,” Brockington said. “It really plays to my strengths because I’m a guy who likes to use my speed and athleticism and that is something that’s big for us.”

But more importantly, Brockington wants to be known as a fighter, which is something he learned well before his time in college.

A product of his upbringing, the redshirt sophomore was born and raised in Philadelphia and went to high school at Archbishop Ryan, where he competed amongst the best talent in the area in the famed Philadelphia Catholic league.

This same league features powerhouse Roman Catholic, the alma mater of many current and former Nittany Lions including, Lamar Stevens, Seth Lundy, Tony Carr and Shep Garner.

While it is only at the high school level, the Catholic League



Lindsey Toomer/Collegian

Penn State guard Izaiah Brockington (12) takes a shot during the men’s basketball game against Northwestern Saturday, Feb. 15 at the Bryce Jordan Center.

prepares young players to play at the next level in a way that many other high school leagues across the country cannot.

“The Catholic League is the best league in Philly,” Lamar Stevens said. “If you want to play in a league that prepares you to play in big-time college basketball, going through that experience will do it.”

Stevens — the second-leading scorer in program history — would wind up becoming a crucial part of Brockington’s journey to Happy Valley, in addition to the other players hailing from the Philadelphia area.

This group of players ensured the then-guard at St. Bonaventure that Penn State was more than just another program, and that it was much closer to the environment he grew up in.

“I really liked how it was a fam-

ily atmosphere up here,” Brockington said.

“Having grown up in Philly, I had known Mike [Watkins] and Lamar, and I asked them how the program is. I knew they wouldn’t lie to me, so once they started to talk with me [about Penn State], they just reaffirmed that the whole team is really like a big family.”

Even after transferring to Penn State, Brockington redshirted, sitting out the 2018-19 season.

And while Brockington wanted to be playing with his teammates, this became a year where he could develop from a player who only averaged 11 minutes a game in the Atlantic 10 conference to a regular contributor in one of the deepest and most competitive conferences in the nation.

“I think he has done a great job of making the adjustment, and re-

ally he is a freshman [right now] because at St. Bonaventure he only played [limited minutes] in the Atlantic 10,” Chambers said. “But this is the Big Ten. It’s a very new and very different experience, with a new scheme and offense, but he has really handled himself well.”

Chambers was also encouraged by the fact that Izaiah was able to get a year to find himself and develop his game, while adjusting to the new dynamics of the conference.

“When you have to sit out a year, you can become a little rusty and the speed of the game is a little different,” Chambers said. “But he has adjusted well and he’s adjusted to my coaching, he never sulks and he doesn’t complain.”

Not only did the coaching staff recognize the potential that

MY VIEW | DYLAN JACOBS

Rest more important than risk of rust for Penn State

Nineteen days.

That’s the gap between Penn State’s last game and when it’ll take the ice again.



With some fortunate results over the week-end, the Nittany Lions will have a bye in the opening round of the Big Ten Tournament. That means they will have back-to-back off weekends after having their bye this past week-end.

That could lead to a couple of different scenarios leading up to the semifinal — Penn State could be well rested and come out with plenty of energy, or it could be rusty and start the game flat.

There’s a huge risk involved with that much time off, but at this time of year, the importance of rest far outweighs the risk of being rusty.

There’s really not that much for Penn State to play for at this point.

The Big Ten Tournament Championship is important, but the Nittany Lions are going to the NCAA Tournament.

There’s a factor of not wanting another Big Ten team to steal a bid, but that shouldn’t

be a focus right now.

The NCAA Tournament is more important, and the Nittany Lions will be playing in it, regardless of the results of the tournament.

Seeding is still up for grabs, but it’s likely that Penn State can hold its ground on the two line, barring a big upset in the semifinal.

It’s likely that Penn State won’t be able to climb up onto the one line, barring big upsets elsewhere.

Odds are, Penn State will be a two-seed in the NCAA Tournament.

So all that’s on the line is the Big Ten Championship.

There’s a large sense of pride involved in that, and that would be a big confidence booster going into the tournament. But the focus should be making sure it’s in the best position to compete for a national championship.

That focus is not shared amongst certain fans on Twitter. Many fans expressed their concern with the double bye, saying that Penn State will be rusty and fall flat in the semifinals.

It’s a fair concern, but there are many aspects of the game itself that may counteract that.

Penn State’s opponent played

meaningful games this past weekend, and will have played a dramatic 2-out-3 series, all while Penn State would be sitting on the couch.

The Nittany Lions could be rusty, but the opponent could be fatigued.

And to be frank, the semifinal game shouldn’t be the main priority.

As previous NCAA Tournament games show, being fresh is key.

Denver skated circles around Penn State the last time they played. It’s a hypothetical, but if Penn State had multiple weeks off in the final stretch of the season, maybe the result would have been different.

It’s hard to predict what this Penn State team will look like the next time it plays, let alone the NCAA Tournament.

On March 14, when the Nittany Lions take the ice in the Big Ten, they could be rusty, or they could be fresh.

But that’s not what matters.

Odds are, with all of the rest, Penn State will be fresh when it takes the ice in Allentown for the NCAA Tournament.

And that’s what’s most important.

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AP file photo

Former Penn State wide receiver KJ Hamler speaks to the media prior to the 2020 NFL Combine.

Penn Staters shine at combine

By Benjamin Ferree

THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

The NFL Combine has come to a close in Indianapolis and five former Penn State players

got a chance to impress the 32 NFL scouts and GMs ahead of the NFL Draft in April.

KJ Hamler was the first Nittany Lions to take the field on Thursday, but the electric wide-receiver didn’t have that interesting of a combine.

Due to “tweaking his hamstring” in training, the only measurable drill Hamler completed was the bench press, where the 5-foot-9 receiver put up 15 reps.

Wisconsin’s Quintez Cephus had the most reps at the wide receiver position with 23.

On Saturday, the defensive linemen and linebackers took the field in Lucas Oil Stadium, meaning that three more former Nittany Lions displayed their abilities.

Yetur Gross-Matos did not run the 40-yard dash, but put up 20 reps on the bench press. Ohio State’s Davon Hamilton had the most of any defensive linemen with 33.

Gross-Matos had the fourth best vertical jump of the

Brockington possessed, but his teammates even went as far to say that he would be an x-factor for Penn State in a season with NCAA Tournament expectations.

Prior to the start of the 2019-20 season, junior guard Jamari Wheeler was quick to praise his new backcourt mate, believing that Brockington would make an immediate impact.

“His effortless athleticism is just crazy and that’s going to surprise a lot of people,” Wheeler said.

Wheeler’s assessment proved to be accurate as Brockington has become an essential part of a deep Penn State rotation, one that has been instrumental to the Nittany Lions’ success this season.

But Brockington’s transformation started well over a year ago, as he worked tirelessly over the entirety of last season to make the necessary adjustments to benefit his game once he got back on the floor.

This included his shooting and ball-handling skills, which the guard was determined to work on during the off-season, knowing that it could add another element to his game.

“After the season, I am going to look to work on my shot consistency, and just looking to improve my handles because I know guys are going to force me right,” Brockington said. “I just have to improve my confidence with that.”

More important than any of the aspects revolving around his game, Brockington wants to become a leader of this “family” and has taken note of some of the current leaders tendencies from Stevens and Watkins for future reference.

When talking about his goals, Brockington didn’t mention one about himself, but instead, talked about the team and how he wants one thing by the end of his career.

“I want to win a Big Ten Championship.”

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James Leavy/Collegian

Members of the Penn State Men’s Hockey team celebrate after scoring a goal during the game against Michigan at Pegula Ice Arena on Saturday, Jan. 18.

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PSU isn’t letting EIVA success get to its head

By Gianna Galli
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

Penn State realizes there’s no time for all of the EIVA success to start becoming a distraction.

In the span of three weeks, the Nittany Lions went on to win seven matches, sweeping three of the last four against St. Francis, George Mason and Charleston.

What is now the longest win streak for Penn State in over three years has possibly become a reminder for coach Mark Pavlik’s team to not fall back into a previous behavior.

And after the successful weekend at home, two Nittany Lions described that each victory was nothing but earned and that Penn State can’t let its confidence be mistaken.

Cole Bogner and Jason Donorovich, two of Penn State’s top players over the course of the seven matches, want to make sure this program is handling the success the correct way.

“We have experienced in the past, where we saw ourselves as a little too cocky and we wanted to stress that each match is the match that we are looking forward to and that we want to focus in and not get too ahead of ourselves,” Bogner said.

As Penn State has recently discovered, the versatility its team has to offer, such as outside hitter Cal Fisher and libero Will Bantle, has allowed the Nittany Lions to instill such confidence into their style of play.

According to Donorovich, it’s important that whether it’s his career high of six service aces or Fisher’s above average hitting percentage of .400, this confidence should only reach a certain level.

“We know that we have a bunch of ballers on our team. We just



Collegian file photo

Middle blocker Jason Donorovich (8) embraces setter Cole Bogner (6) after defeating Ohio State 3-0 at Rec Hall on Tuesday, March 19, 2019.

can’t get cocky,” Donorovich said. “Last year we were that young team and that team that really wasn’t that experienced but now we got guys who know how to read this game and the level that we play at right now is super high.”

Pavlik feels that most of Penn State’s hard work that isn’t produced in front of an audience will always allow this team to present a humble mindset and being able to count on each teammate to

uphold their training responsibilities has allowed this confidence to climb.

“The results are speaking for the efforts these guys are putting in on a day to day basis in the training gym. We have become a tough team to play against...,” Pavlik said.

“You can interchange a lot of these parts on this team without the results changing much.”

Penn State, 11-6 overall, still has a total of 11 matches before

the EIVA Tournament begins.

These 11 matches will be an opportunity for Penn State to continue adjusting certain Nittany Lions’ roles and transitioning their skills on the court as they will rematch the majority of teams they already have faced this season.

Just like the first meetups, Donorovich has full belief that round two with some of these opponents will turn out similarly if Penn State can remain confident.

“We bring that relentless effort every single night and we know that we are going to bring success to many parts of the game and if we have one thing slacking we have other things that can pick it up,” Donorovich said.

“We’re just learning to adapt and with a lot of strong game plans we just can’t help but to execute pretty well.”

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Crossword

Across

1 Big blowout
5 “Vamoose!”
10 Implored
14 Kind of flute
15 Money, in slang
16 Evaluate
17 LummoX
18 Shenanigan
19 Kind of agreement
20 Fiasco
22 Badger
24 Down with the flu
25 Spring bloom
27 Tel Aviv native
30 Purge
31 Kind of panel
35 New Zealand parrot
36 Bologna home
39 Hoopster Archibald
40 WWW address
41 Not fixed
43 Address abbr.
44 Actress Kudrow
46 Championships
47 Kilmer of “At First Sight”
48 Memorize
50 Heritable
51 Some Romanovs
53 Uses a stopwatch
55 ___ canto (singing style)
56 Bad-mouth
59 Dish served on toast
63 Pupil’s place
64 Reimburse
67 Scintilla

Down

1 Shiny on top?
2 Lily family member
3 Ticket part
4 Politicians’ rhetoric
5 Wee
6 Ice cream treat
7 Decay
8 Actress MacGraw

9 Virile
10 Canis Minor star
11 Songbird
12 Card catalog abbr.
13 Expunge
21 Allegation
23 Print measures
25 Physical fitness system
26 Like some mushrooms
27 Human head
28 Eagle’s nest
29 Light wood
30 Gorge
32 Cocoon contents
33 ___ of roses
34 Staggers
37 Moppet

38 Bubbly beverage
42 Aromatic compound
45 Skilled worker
49 Goose egg
52 Toboggan
54 Kind of raise
55 Howled
56 Lens holders
57 Border lake
58 Moral weakness
59 Go ballistic
60 Hardly the life of the party
61 Detail
62 Fancy marbles
65 Cousin of an ostrich
66 Prospector’s need

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		9			6		
5			2				7
4			9		1		8

WORD SEARCH

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Rooms and Other Spaces

Attic
Basement
Boudoir
Cellar
Den
Dormitory
Dungeon
Foyer
Garage
Gym
Hall
Kitchen
Larder
Library
Lobby
Lounge
Nook
Nursery
Office
Pantry
Parlor
Salon
Scully
Solarium
Studio
Study
Suite

N N O E G N U D H Z N C D R G K S X
E D B P E D S T W Y R P H U D O W R
N T E D L L A R D E R F A L R O E L
K G D O L S C U L L E R Y R Z N T K
T Y B H V K T S H C N C O S L W D I
O B R A H S J U N G I U T Y Y O O T
Y P O A S T P I V U C K B E P L R C
U A H U R E Q T V J R E D J U C M H
U N D R D B M E J H Z S L N Y Y I E
B T G K Q O I E A Q H A E L B S T N
Y R N Y D O I L N S Z V S R A P O D
P Y I E N L L R L T T Z X F Y R R Z
I E Z G R S O L A R I U M B L E Y C
P Y G U A E F U D O F B D J C S W R
T X K A V X Y T N X G B K I D K O J
P K P H R Z Q O M G K X F H O C A E
A T T I C A L Y F Z E F P F G B O S
I P X M R W G S A L O N T Y R Z Z O

Kakuro (Cross Sums)

The rules are easy to learn: A number above the diagonal line in a black square is the sum of the white squares to the right of it. A number below the diagonal line is the sum of the white squares in the sequence below it. You may only use the digits 1 to 9, and a digit may be used only once in any sequence.

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		29					14		
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5				21					
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14						4			
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		28							
				22					

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Bigar’s Stars

By JACQUELINE BIGAR

www.jacquelinebigar.com

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PISCES (2/19-3/20) ★★★ You are coming from a point of security, and you wonder what is preventing you from taking a major step. Rather than overthink this issue, just take that step. Trust that you will like the results. Tonight: Happiest at home.

ARIES (3/21-4/19) ★★★ Your perceptions could be right-on. Confusion seems to be stimulated, as others might not understand where you are coming from and the implications. Honor your sixth sense, which helps point you in the correct direction. Tonight: Speak your mind.

TAURUS (4/20-5/20) ★★★ You might want to claim your power and allow others to understand how your ideas come forth. Be careful about being possessive, which is a pattern you tumble into more often than you realize. Tonight: Weigh the pros and cons of a decision.

GEMINI (5/21-6/20) ★★★★★ You tend to be as direct and forthright as possible. Sometimes people misread your approach and don’t understand how your wit and humor play into the moment. Tap into your imagination to find answers. Tonight: Be the personality kid.

CANCER (6/21-7/22) ★★★★★ Your feelings run high, causing a wave of moods from others just by your sheer presence. Your intuition could help you zero in on what others refuse to see and/or discuss. Tonight: Know that plans can change.

LEO (7/23-8/22) ★★★★★ You naturally beam in what you want. Your sunny side emerges in a discussion with friends. Their perspective, as well as yours, could change radically as a result. Focus on what you want and make it so. Tonight: Where the action is.

VIRGO (8/23-9/22) ★★★★★ You beam and

draw many people to your point of view. You present your perspective in a light and clear way. The difference between how you see what is happening and what is truly happening could provoke a laugh or two. Tonight: A must appearance.

LIBRA (9/23-10/22) ★★★★★ Read between the lines. Intellectual responses and ideas keep you on the same page as an associate. You see different ways of clearing out a problem, but you also are willing to accommodate another person and follow his or her lead. Tonight: Return an important call.

SCORPIO (10/23-11/21) ★★★★★ One-on-one relating causes you to take a second look at a situation that keeps popping up. You want to handle this issue before moving on to other matters. Otherwise, you could become scattered. Tonight: Toss yourself into a conversation.

SAGITTARIUS (11/22-12/21) ★★★★★ Welcome the ability to defer to a close friend or loved one. You could be amused by what you are hearing. Not everyone is as confident in their decisions as you are. Tonight: In the whirlwind of the moment.

CAPRICORN (12/22-1/19) ★★★ Pace yourself, and know that you produce better results when you do. Ask for feedback to help test or expand your perspective. A discussion could be vibrant but somewhat tiresome. You want to move on to other topics. Tonight: Make it easy.

AQUARIUS (1/20-2/18) ★★★★★ Your playfulness reveals many people’s true colors. Great ideas often come from discussions rooted in experience. Allow your playfulness to open up a difficult conversation. Tonight: Go for naughty.

To eat or not to eat: opinions on McLanahan’s Meatball Monday

Why ‘Meatball Monday’ reigns supreme in State College cuisine

Why Meatball Monday is pure, atrocious evil

As a college student, food is typically the last thing on my mind. Between classes and extracurricular activities, it can be pretty difficult to find a meal that satisfies my taste buds and doesn’t put a big dent in my tuition fund.

Last semester, in the midst of a hunger-filled day, I stumbled upon a promotion at McLanahan’s — a grocery store with locations on College Avenue and South Allen Street.

The deal?

“Meatball Monday.”

It’s a 9-inch meatball sub for — get this — only \$2.99.

That’s right. A hearty ~Italian~ meal for a mere \$3. I thought it couldn’t be true, but much to my delight, it was.

In the back of the McLanahan’s Penn State Room lies Agostinelli Deli, the home of the sacred meatball sub.

Since the moment I discovered the inexpensive delicacy, I vowed to return to the store each Monday evening to indulge in the saucy meal — and that I have.

The meatball sub seems to be popular with others, too. Employ-



Hogge

ees working on Mondays in the cozy kitchen practically begin crafting the sub before I can open my mouth to place the order.

To understand the greatness of the meatball sub, one has to try it for themselves.

The bread, while extra thick, is flavorful.

The sauce that marinates the meatballs is sweet.

The cheese that melts over the crust is mellifluous (assuming you order provolone, of course).

And don’t get me started on the meatballs.

They are hefty, juicy, perfect mounds of beef that satisfy even the largest of appetites. It’s not the prettiest sub in the world, but it sure tastes good.

The Meatball Monday deal is a perfect warm meal to get during this harsh Pennsylvania winter.

So, the next time you are in a pinch — whether your wallet is feeling thin or you want to expand your food horizon — check out the Meatball Monday sub.

I’m sure you won’t regret it.

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Caitlin Lee/Collegian

The deli located in the back of McLanahan’s Penn State Room advertises “Meatball Mondays” as seen on Friday, Feb. 28.



Courtesy of Erin Hogge/Collegian

A “Meatball Monday” sub from McLanahan’s Penn State Room sits on a plate on Monday, Feb. 24.

What is the Good? That is a question that has captivated the great thinkers of history for thousands of years.

Perhaps the truth of the good is transcendental and is ultimately unknowable from our tragically limited human perspective. But, to question what is good or bad, what is right or wrong, what is



Dyreson

truth or lie may be the only way to glimpse a vision of the good. Who really knows what is moral or immoral in the face of the colossal reality of our existence?

I know very little — like, very little. I mean, I’m not just stupid, I’m dumb. I only learned how to tie my shoes in sixth grade, and I’m still not sure if I do it correctly. There is one thing I know for certain, one universal truth that remains like a rock weathering the storm of lies — “Meatball Monday” sucks.

For those of you who are blissfully ignorant of Meatball Monday, you may not want to read any further, as it will permanently scar you for life. Every Monday at McLanahan’s, you can purchase — if you wish to cause irreparable damage to your large intestine — a “meatball” sub for the high price of \$2.99.

Now, I admit that as a college student, it may be appealing to eat a meatball sub for the mere price of taking the CATA bus out to the metropolitan Mecca of North Atherton. However, this mythic mixture of a cheap yet tasty hoagie is the most insidious deceit, the most atrocious lie, the most tragic expression of inhumanity to man ever committed.

When you go to the back of the store and observe your meal being prepared, you will see spheres of mystery meat simmering in a stew of tasteless marinara sauce. After these orbs of undercooked “meat” are plopped onto a cold slice of bread, you can then choose a cheese to add to this sandwich of sadness (cheese in of itself is nasty, but that’s another weird rant of supposed “journalism” that we’ll save for another time).

Your sickly sandwich is wrapped in parchment paper and given to you. Like Frodo carrying the ring of power to the dark land of Mordor, the poor wretch who ordered the sub must carry the burden back to the cashier while it oozes with evil and melting parmesan. Once you make your Faustian exchange with the cashier, you get exactly what you deserve — it tastes like a \$3 meatball sandwich. The true horror is yet to come.

“Schooooooopbfw” is the sound that will be heard from your bathroom stall a mere hour later, along with your moans and wails. This will be the first of many cases of Chef Boyardee’s revenge that will last the night. You may have heard a bad case of diarrhea referred to as “the runs.” This will be “the sprints.”

The food poisoning will spread through your body, making your stomach feel like it’s tearing your torso apart. The tummy rumbles will be as loud as a football game in Beaver Stadium, and the smell will be just as disgusting as Beaver Stadium.

You will be kept awake all night, with sprints to the bathroom and nightmares about what the meatballs you have done to your body. Simultaneously, your body fights to expel the noxious waste from your gastrointestinal organs as quickly as possible.

Meatball Monday is evil — there is no other explanation for it. It keeps our souls and butts chained to the toilets of despair and diarrhea, unable to reach the bright light of goodness and healthy digestive tract movements.

One day, we may be able to eat cheap Italian food, but for now meatball Monday remains as a monolith of food poisoning. However, never lose hope that we may eat more than just ramen for two bucks — in this life or the next. The moral arc of the universe bends towards justice and away from meatball Monday.

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Caitlin Lee/Collegian

The deli located in the back of McLanahan’s Penn State Room on College Ave. as seen on Friday, Feb. 28.

MY VIEW | Cassie Kidwell

Thrifting should be for everyone — not just a low-income option

I’ve seen multiple online debates about concerns with the new popularity of thrifting.

The discussions are centered on how those who don’t have a low income should not be “stealing” the good thrift finds from those who need it.

But the idea of thrifting should be more than just providing options for people with a low-income — thrifting continues the upcycling of clothes, which often would otherwise be going to a landfill.

The more people that donate their clothes, the more room there is for people to thrift and upcycle.

Not only are these clothes prevented from filling landfills, but thrifting also discourages large corporations from making more clothes.

I have been an avid thrifter



Kidwell

since discovering my local Goodwill Outlet Store that sells clothes in a “pay by the pound” style.

In a large warehouse, dozens of bins fill the room with donated clothing where individuals come from near and far to get cheaper, used clothes.

Penn State has seen its own transition of this typical thrift store. Previously only having the options of Goodwill and Plato’s Closet, different thrifting options have been added to the area.

This is seen in the addition of the store Chute on E. Beaver Ave., a student-created laundry business and upcycling clothing store.

Chute’s prices may not be quite as cheap as a traditional thrift store, but it still utilizes upcycling in a positive way.

Also, many Penn State Instagram thrifting accounts have been created where crafty students upcycle thrifted finds in their own ways.

From Penn State retro clothes to game day looks, these Instagram accounts make it so students don’t have to buy their tenth game-day shirt that they cut and ruined.

Though I do understand those voicing frustration about people who are well-off shopping at thrift stores — thrifting is very important for some to afford clothing.

“But the idea of thrifting clothes should be more than just providing options for people with a low-income — thrifting continues the upcycling of clothes, which often would otherwise be going to a landfill.”

Cassie Kidwell

But if I did not have a thrifting option, I would not own most of my sustainable clothes.

Had I not thrifted, I would have continued to give in to the retail stores that make clothes in large factories in other countries.

I believe there is a bigger picture: thrifting’s effect on the environment.

As the popularity of thrifting and donating clothes increases, its effect on the environment and the clothing industry improves.

Different thrifting outlets and its ultimate mainstream appeal has transformed the shopping industry and feelings about clothing upcycling.

Penn States is just one example of the new popularity of thrifting that should be encouraged.

It is also up to society and these thrifting outlets to assure that the prices should not increase despite the

increase of popularity.

This assures that low-income buyers can continue to afford clothing.

Personally, I also appreciate thrift stores for their ability to welcome all types of individuals. It gives many people the creative freedom to transform their outfits and not feel bound to retail stores — which often target certain shoppers based upon the store’s ideal customer.

Though my income cannot speak for those who solely depend on thrifted clothes, I think that a society that encourages reusing clothes is ideal.

In a world of consumerism, it is important for all to know what they need and what they can give up to benefit others.

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