

# Route trees to goal crease

*Penn State alum Chris Hogan makes his return to lacrosse*

By Andrew Porterfield  
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

In three of his four years with the Penn State men's lacrosse program, Chris Hogan suited up in the blue-and-white opposite then-ECAC foe Rutgers.

In two of those years — his junior and senior seasons — he matched up with a Scarlet Knight who would reappear down the line in a completely different sport.

Hogan took the field against Rutgers' long-stick defensive midfielder Stephen Belichick, the son of New England Patriots head coach and six-time Super Bowl champion Bill Belichick.

Just a couple years later, Hogan would play under both Belichicks — Stephen as a coach on the defensive side of the ball — at wide receiver in Foxborough, Massachusetts.

The former Penn State midfielder spent three full seasons with the Patriots from 2016-2018, earning two championship rings in the process while tallying 1,651 receiving yards and 12 touchdowns over the same span.

But in February, after stints with the Carolina Panthers and New York Jets, Hogan announced his decision to sign with the Premier Lacrosse League and place his name into the draft pool.

From lacrosse to football... back to lacrosse again?

Hogan, who hasn't played organized lacrosse since his 2010 senior season with the Nittany Lions, is raring to get back to the sport he played at the collegiate level more than a decade ago.

"The game has changed a lot since I've played, it's super fast paced," Hogan told The Daily Collegian. "It's such an awesome platform to go to different cities every single week and give back to the community while you're there."

Hogan will have the opportunity to give back to plenty of those communities as a rookie with whatever team he's drafted to.

The PLL operates as a traveling league, with each weekend slate of games being played in a different city. In its inaugural year in 2019, the PLL toured 12 different markets across a 14-week season.

With 11 years having passed since Hogan last competed in a lacrosse contest, the former Penn State offensive spark plug anticipates a learning curve as he dives headfirst in his return to the sport.

"There'll be a little bit of rust that I'm going to have to shake off," Hogan said. "I think it'll be more of just adjusting to the game speed of things. But for me, skill-wise, it's all about just getting out and doing it."

Even though he hasn't played competitively since the year Taylor Swift's "Fearless" won Album of the Year at the 52nd Annual Grammy Awards, Hogan has shown he can hold his own while cradling the ball or tip-toeing

around the crease.

The four-year midfielder for then-Penn State head man Glenn Thiel registered 71 career points on 57 goals and 14 assists — leading the Nittany Lions in goal-scoring as a junior in 2009.

Greg Gurenlian, also a four-year letterman with the Nittany Lions in the years directly before Hogan's college career, remembers the midfielder's intangible traits as his calling cards.

"He definitely had swagger, and he had a chip on his shoulder," Gurenlian told the Collegian. "When I saw Chris come in, I was like 'OK, this is a whole other generation of athletes coming in now.'"

A connoisseur of Penn State football tailgates and other Nittany Lion sporting events himself, Hogan looks back on his time in Happy Valley focusing on the interpersonal relationships he forged.

"The time that I got to spend outside of lacrosse with my teammates, friends and people I met — those are my favorite memories," Hogan said.

Current Nittany Lion coach Jeff Tambroni — who has kept a relationship with Hogan despite not coaching him — sees Hogan's presence being felt early, even if there are a few kinks to work out in the process.

"It's been a while since he's played, but athletically I'm sure he's going to be able to match up with just about anyone that's out there competing in the modern age of lacrosse," Tambroni said.

But it's not like Hogan's cleats have been sitting around and collecting dust over the past 11 years.

Instead, those cleats have been working overtime.

After his four-year Penn State lacrosse career came to a close, Hogan continued his college tenure in his home state of New Jersey as a football player at Monmouth University.

Both a defensive back and wide receiver for the Hawks, Hogan totaled three receiving touchdowns and as many interceptions in his lone campaign under coach Kevin Callahan.

Callahan, who's been the coach at Monmouth since the program's inception in 1993, has developed NFL talent like Miles Austin, Neal Sterling and John Nalbone in his time at the helm.

And when Hogan finished his

Penn State lacrosse career, Callahan was chomping at the bit to bring in an athlete he recruited nearly half a decade prior.

"We were aware of Chris going back to his high school days," Callahan told the Collegian. "He was a terrific high school football player from right here in New Jersey, so we knew who he was and what he was doing."

Hogan impressed Callahan and the rest of the Monmouth coaching staff in his senior year at Ramapo High School, but he had already committed to the Nittany Lions' lacrosse program.

It took five years, but Hogan was back in his home state with the FCS Hawks team for the 2010 season.

While it had been years since Hogan donned shoulder pads and wide receiver gloves, Callahan witnessed the two-way player dominate the field early.

That was due in large part to the former's experience in lacrosse.

"Some of the same things that help him in lacrosse — the ability to get separation from people, the ability to avoid contact and get yourself open — are skills that helped him as a receiver in football, as well," Callahan said. "I think there was a high level of carryover there."

Having played just one season of college football, Hogan prepared to take the next step: entering his name into the 2011 NFL Draft.

Seven rounds and 254 picks later, the name "Chris Hogan" hadn't appeared on TV screens and the wide receiver hadn't received a call from a NFL team letting him know it was picking him up.

Hogan had gone undrafted.

Tom Ottaiano, one of Hogan's teammates at Monmouth and also an eventual undrafted NFL free agent himself, saw his friend — or brother, as he calls Hogan — grow his work ethic even more after failing to hear his name called.

"Chris is committed to being the best at whatever he does," Ottaiano told the Collegian. "When he had in his head that he was going to try to play in the NFL, there was no way he wasn't going to."

That work ethic quickly paid

off, as Hogan was signed by the San Francisco 49ers as an undrafted free agent in the 2011 offseason.

But it would take a little longer for the Penn State alumnus to reach the field in a regular-season tilt.

Hogan spent time with the 49ers, New York Giants and Miami Dolphins over the course of a calendar year — but didn't see any game action.

And then the Buffalo Bills came calling.

The Bills signed Hogan to their practice squad in November 2012, but promoted him to their active roster just over a month later.

A year later in 2013, the wide receiver caught his first NFL pass against the Cincinnati Bengals and recorded his first touchdown against the New England Patriots in 2014.

He had reached the pinnacle — right?

The mountaintop would actually come a couple of years later, however, when Hogan signed with the Patriots prior to the 2016 season.

Over the course of three seasons with New England under Belichick, Hogan would win two Super Bowls while serving as a key contributor.

Knowing Hogan, Callahan knew from the moment he saw his star player go undrafted that he wouldn't let any adversity stand in his way.

"He didn't let any of the early speedbumps determine anything," Callahan said. "He just kept working, kept grinding and kept believing in himself. He knew that his opportunity would come." That opportunity would reach its height on Jan. 22, 2017, when the Patriots took on the conference foe Pittsburgh Steelers in a critical AFC Championship contest.

Hogan turned in nine receptions for 180 yards and two touchdowns in an eventual win for New England, setting a franchise record for most receiving yards in a postseason game as the team snuck past the Steelers en route to a Super Bowl appearance.

But even that isn't Callahan's favorite memory of watching Hogan perform at the highest level of the sport.

That would come a couple of



weeks later. "In that Super Bowl game against

the Atlanta Falcons, the Patriots were going down the field on that last drive," Callahan said. "He had to make a couple of really clutch receptions on key third downs to keep that drive moving — and he came up with those plays."

Hogan caught four passes for 57 yards in the 34-28 overtime win for New England to capture his first championship ring.

Now, instead of catching oblong, laced balls the size of a baby, Hogan will look to get back to cradling another type of ball he's used to. Once again, he'll be dealing with the optic yellow ball that's approximately 7 ¾ inches in circumference.

Hogan will play for one of the eight lacrosse clubs in the league after the PLL Entry Draft on Thursday, March 25 and will first take the field in early June.

Despite declaring just over a month before the draft, Hogan's decision to take his talents to the upstart league has been in the making for quite some time.

"It hasn't been something that I've just been working on the last week," Hogan said. "For two months now, I've been back with the stick in my hand shooting."

With approximately 404,000 Instagram followers to his credit, the eight-year NFL vet already boasts 165,000 followers more than the entire PLL account.

Ottaiano, now the CEO of the digital marketing agency Today's Business, said he believes Hogan's election to join the PLL will be a symbiotic relationship between the player and league after plenty of 5 a.m. conversations with the former Patriot leading up to the decision.

"He's gonna bring a whole different audience to the sport," Ottaiano said. "He's putting a big stamp of legitimacy that lacrosse athletes are some of the best athletes in the world."

"The eyeballs and opportunity to capture those eyeballs are pretty, pretty insane."

Another Nittany Lion alumnus and former Major League Lacrosse MVP is also impressed with the move.

Gurenlian also made the jump to the PLL in its inaugural season before retiring after a one-year stint in the league as a faceoff specialist for Redwoods LC.

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# Penn State women in STEM 'defy standards'

By Julia Mertes  
FOR THE COLLEGIAN

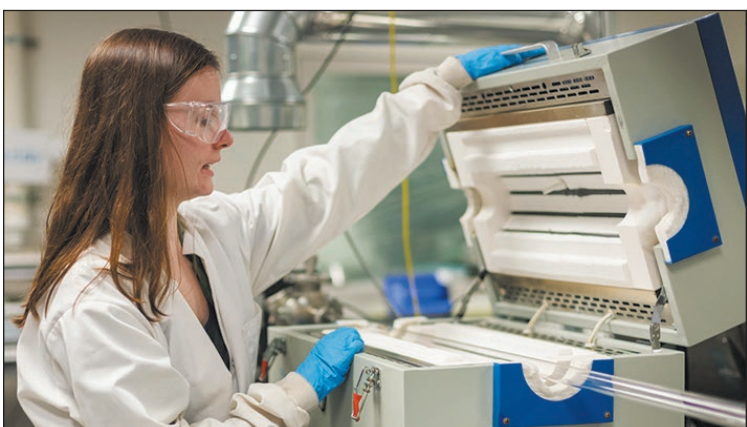
Katie Alesi struggled with self-doubt throughout her life, unsure if she was good enough for STEM fields as a woman. She hadn't really considered it as a career until she took a chemistry class and fell in love with it.

Despite challenges associated with being a woman in STEM, students like Alesi (junior-microbiology) at Penn State continue striving toward success and breaking socially constructed barriers.

According to the College of Engineering, 21.3% of people enrolled in undergraduate programs in fall 2020 were women. In the College of Earth and Mineral Sciences, 30% of enrollees were women.

Student Kanika Sharma is president of the Association of Women in Computing. AWC is an organization at Penn State dedicated to promoting computing and providing an open environment for female students to learn and grow in the field.

With a continued underrepresentation of women in STEM fields, Sharma (senior-computer



Ken Kalback/Collegian file photo

**Natalie Briggs** (graduate-material sciences) shows the machine she uses for her research in the Millennium Science Complex on Feb. 27, 2018.

science) emphasized the importance of diversity that brings "new, unthought-of perspectives."

"It's important to recognize being a female in STEM just because there is such a disparity between the number of men and women in the tech industry," Sharma said. "It's just so important to retain and attract more women into this field."

Sharma recognized various disparities as a female in STEM, but one experience that stood

out to her were the demeaning comments made by male peers.

"If I'm in a group project with only boys, I often feel like my ideas aren't heard," Sharma said. "I also feel like mansplaining is a popular thing. Sometimes I explain a concept and then one of my peers explains the concept back to me — even though I just explained it to them."

The lack of representation in STEM fields carries over to academic departments as well,

according to student Lily Farmerie.

Farmerie (senior-biomedical engineering) is a director for the Society of Women Engineers at Penn State, an organization dedicated to promoting safe and successful learning environments and opportunities for women in engineering.

When recalling previous STEM courses she's taken, Farmerie said she only had one female biomedical engineering professor for her core engineering classes and only three for entrance to major courses.

"Sometimes it's challenging for women — especially women of color — to find people who look like them in these higher up roles," Farmerie said. "I think that can really have a negative effect on students."

As a statistics professor, Jennifer Shook said in STAT 200, which she's taught her entire career at Penn State, there have been several attempts to prioritize male professors over female professors.

Shook said the statistics department at Penn State has a "really great community of female

professors, but that can always be improved."

"If I think about all the classrooms I've walked into, there's usually a male professor teaching before or after me," Shook said.

Jessica Conway, assistant professor of mathematics and biology, said she understands students' frustrations with having few female STEM professors and encourages students to find other mentors.

"A mentor doesn't have to be your teacher. A lot of us are open to talking to undergraduate students," Conway said. "While it would be better if there were better representation — and I think people are working hard on that — in the meantime, seeking out someone you can talk to and has your best interests at heart would be a value."

Student Jamie Kantorczyk said a prominent challenge associated with being a STEM major is "imposter syndrome," which she said is an internal experience of feeling incompetent in one's role in society contrary to others' positive perceptions.

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# Nursing homes react to decreased restrictions

**By Anjelica Rubin**  
FOR THE COLLEGIAN

After a year of birthday celebrations behind plexiglass, air hugs and socially distanced window visits, local nursing home residents who are fully vaccinated against the coronavirus can enjoy standard in-person visits with family for the first time since last spring.

On March 10, in a step toward post-pandemic normalcy, the Centers for Medicaid and Medicare Services announced updated nursing home guidelines with revised visitation recommendations.

The policy guidance comes as coronavirus cases and deaths among nursing home residents have plummeted in recent weeks at the same time vaccination rates have accelerated.

In Pennsylvania, nearly one million people aged 65 and older have been vaccinated and more than 390,000 total vaccine doses have been administered to long-term care facilities as of March 20, according to the Pennsylvania Department of Health.

In the release, officials acknowledged isolation deepened the misery for residents at nursing homes.

“There is no substitute for physical contact, such as the warm embrace between a resident and their loved one,” CMS said in the statement. “Therefore, if the resident is fully vaccinated, they can choose to have close contact (including touch) with their visitor while wearing a well-fitting face mask and performing hand-hygiene before and after.”

Matthew Richardson, an administrator at Hearthside Rehab and Nursing Center, said the updated CMS guidelines come at a time when the center needs it most.

“Over the last year, our residents have been deeply affected emotionally and spiritually because of the distance,” Richardson said. “[The facility

staff] can do our best to stay optimistic, but nothing can really compare to the reassurance a family member can bring.”

While the guidelines specify fully vaccinated residents, visitors do not need a coronavirus test result to see family nor do they need to show proof of vaccination. However, they are encouraged to seek out any opportunity to do so.

Richardson’s team at Hearthside has started to adjust its protocols and ease into the next phase of visitation, but he stressed the importance that a transition this big takes time.

“We’ve got a long way to go to even think about normalcy,” Richardson said. “But it’s in those moments when you see a little boy hug his grandfather for the first time all year when you think to yourself, ‘All of the struggle leading up to this point was worth it because we got here.’”

Hearthside has followed DOH guidelines — including health monitoring of staff and residents, temperature checks and sanitizing, according to Richardson. He said the facility has reintroduced extended dining hours, social activities and small group gatherings.

While a nursing home has the freedom to create its own policies specific to its facilities when it comes to in-person visitation, Richardson said Hearthside has looked toward the regulations set by federally run programs like the CMS.

Under the new guidance, if the coronavirus county positivity rate is more than 10% and less than 70% of the facility residents are fully vaccinated, visits should still be restricted.

But in Centre County, as of March 20, the positivity rate is 6.6%, according to the data tracking nonprofit Covid ActNow. More than 22,000 residents have been vaccinated, according to the DOH.

Carol Licastro has been living in State College since 1959 and is



Courtesy of Juniper Village

**Carol Licastro, a resident at Juniper Village** contracted the coronavirus earlier this year. “It was honestly a blur — I couldn’t speak for two weeks. It was definitely a low point in my life,” she said.

Licastro said she was worried about the potential risk of exposure to the virus again, but after receiving her final dose of the vaccine at the end of February, she said she was able to see “a light at the end of the tunnel” for the first time.

“It’s a relief to have some protection against the virus as someone who experienced it firsthand,” Licastro said.

“I’m especially thankful I was able to receive it so quickly and that I didn’t have to worry as much as I did before about contracting the virus any time I left my room.”

Elizabeth Plozner-Chalfa, executive director at Juniper Village, has been working in the Juniper community for 15 years and said she is “overjoyed” that the recommendations from the CMS have been put in place to make

## STEM

FROM Page 1.

“After you get a bad exam back, you can just feel like, ‘I’m not worth it. I’m not worth this major,’ and you can kind of just feel discouraged,” Kantorczyk said. “At the same time, if you do bad on an exam, it’s just motivation to do better on the next one.”

For some students, the challenging course loads, difficult peer interactions and personal doubt accentuate the problem of imposter syndrome. Following academic or social setbacks, some female students said they struggled with justifying their position in STEM-related programs — and Farmerie was one of them.

“One thing that I’ve noticed among [female STEM majors] is that sometimes we feel like, ‘Why are we here? Obviously, we are qualified, but are we?’” Farmerie said. “It’s just this sense of not belonging in your work environment, and it’s a pretty crappy feeling.”

Farmerie said a majority of the women she talks to — in her major and other science organizations — have experienced some form of imposter syndrome throughout their time majoring in male-dominated fields.

Sharma said dealing with imposter syndrome can have concrete and physical impacts in people’s lives — including trouble getting jobs and internships due to lack of confidence, which she said is a “huge barrier.”

Throughout Shook’s academic studies and career in STEM, she

also has faced feelings of doubt accentuated by peer’s negativity and sexism.

“I definitely have experience being in a male-dominated field where my own fears and concerns about myself are almost magnified by the attitudes of people around me, and that’s a very difficult situation to overcome,” Shook said.

“It’s one thing to know you have the ability to do something, but it’s another thing to be surrounded by people who acknowledge your ability and support and encourage that.”

Shook said the “great barrier” created through imposter syndrome has been around since she was a student, and continues having an impact on modern society.

Conway also said she experienced feelings of self-doubt as a student. She said it was her “strength of will” or “sheer stubbornness” that got her through those challenging moments.

“Unspoken biases and internalized biases are some of the biggest challenges facing women in STEM,” Conway said. “I’m so disappointed to hear students are still struggling with this — I suppose I’m not terribly surprised, but I am just so disappointed.”

Carla Hass, professor of biology at Penn State, said she’s noticed students’ anxiety and self-doubt in their academic abilities decreases over their time in college. She said over the course of four years, students build confidence in themselves and learn to reach out for help when needed.

“Students probably gain more on the personal side of things —

in their ability to face challenges, and their ability to persist, and their ability to communicate — in their four years at Penn State than what they gain in content knowledge,” Hass said. “But, because students gain those skills over time, they do get better at seeing the big picture and completing classwork.”

Hass said communication is key for success in STEM majors — even though she said reaching out for help or to make relationships can be “daunting” since Penn State is such a big school.

“We have students who end up leaving the major, and a lot of the time, the students don’t talk to someone until after they’ve made their decision,” said Hass. “If they can talk to people beforehand and just say, ‘I’m struggling with this and thinking of leaving the major,’ there might be ways [faculty] can work with them and encourage them to stay in a STEM major.”

When Alesi initially considered taking STEM classes, she said she had thoughts about “not being good enough for it.”

In the end, she said her decision to pursue a career in STEM was rooted in the goal of “challenging herself.”

According to Alesi and Farmerie, a lack of exposure and education for young girls is a contrib-

uting factor for the disparity in STEM demographics, and it’s also a reason many women have doubts about entering a science or math based career.

Farmerie said she initially held reservations about being an engineer due to a lack of understanding about what the field actually entailed.

“I didn’t really know what engineering actually was and that there are so many disciplines of engineering you can go into,” Farmerie said. “I think, being a young girl, you aren’t really educated on those things.”

Shook said introducing students, specifically women and minorities, to STEM at an early age is “super important,” even by “just giving them tools — if they don’t have access to tools — and providing encouragement for them to start their interest in STEM fields.”

Along with a lack of education, students recognize the media as another source of stereotypes and discrepancies about STEM fields and majors.

“Even just on TV, when you think of a doctor, you think of a guy. When you think of an engineer, you think of a guy. Media kind of enforces that stigma that it’s going to be guys taking these leadership roles and STEM roles,” Kantoreczyk said.

“Just having that mindset is hurtful to girls because you want to be able to relate to someone.”

According to Alexandra Tsikitas, who is studying to be a doctor, the “previous stigma” involved men holding leadership positions in the medical field while women worked as nurses and aids. However, she said she believes the trend is starting to change.

“It’s cool to see that starting to flip and change,” Tsikitas (freshman-pre-medicine) said. “I’m excited to just experience that and be a female in an empowered role like that.”

Although misrepresentations and under representations of females in STEM can lead to self-doubt in some students, Alesi said she found her own personal exposure to media to be influential in her decision to be a scientist.

“For me personally, media didn’t sway me away from STEM, but I also wouldn’t say the media made me think, ‘You know what, I’m going to defy standards. I’m going to do what people don’t think I can do.’ It was kind of just something I wanted to do, so I went with it,” Alesi said.

Alesi said she continued working toward her goal simply because she wants to be a scientist, regardless of outside opinions or negativity from society.

“I’ve never really let the fact that I’m female define that I can be a scientist,” she said. “For four years now, I’ve known I wanted to be a scientist, and that doesn’t change because it’s a male-dominated field.”

“For four years now, I’ve known I wanted to be a scientist, and that doesn’t change because it’s a male-dominated field.”

Katie Alesi  
Junior-Microbiology



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# ‘COVID Chronicles’ shows virus through comics

By Joe Eckstein  
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

With the term “comics,” one might think of superheroes saving the day or the Sunday strips in the local newspaper.

But Penn State University Press has ventured into deeper comic territories with its “Graphic Medicine” series, which covers an array of health topics depicted in comic book form — from what it’s like to suffer from Parkinson’s disease to what being on life support is like.

Susan Merrill Squier, Brill professor emeritus of English and women’s, gender and sexuality studies, said she saw the impact of comics in the medical field after coming across the work of cartoonist Ruben Bolling.

After reading Bolling’s “Bad Blastocyst,” which teaches readers about stem cells, Squier said she saw an appeal in combining the medical field with comics.

“I think there’s a real appreciation of how comics reach different audiences, much broader audiences,” Squier said. “You can deal with subjects that are serious and deep and profound, as well as occasionally being funny.”

After seeing success with “Graphic Medicine,” the Penn State University Press announced the creation of “Graphic Mundi,” a new imprint that would encompass “Graphic Medicine” along with other heavy subjects, according to a Penn State news release.

Due to the coronavirus pandemic, however, the debut of “Graphic Mundi” was pushed back.

This hindrance would end up being the inspiration for the imprint’s debut release, “COVID Chronicles.”

Kendra Boileau, assistant director and editor-in-chief of the Penn State University Press and the publisher of “Graphic Mundi,” serves as one of the primary volume editors for “COVID Chronicles.”

Boileau said “COVID Chronicles” goes beyond the virus and covers many of the events that occurred in 2020.

“We were trying to include a range of experiences and not just focus on quarantine habits,” Boileau said. “We wanted to make it a bigger project too to match the scale of what our lives have become.”

Boileau said taking on a topic like the coronavirus pandemic was “a little uncomfortable” and, at times, “overwhelming.”

Despite the difficulties, Boileau said her experience with “COVID Chronicles” was an enjoyable one.



Comic Courtesy of Penn State University Press

Penn State University Press created “Graphic Mundi,” a new imprint that debuted the release of “COVID Chronicles.”

“Working on this project was a very nice focus for me because I was in lockdown,” Boileau said, “and this was a way for me to channel my attention into working with all of these creators collaboratively to create something out of the mess.”

Brendan Coyne, sales and marketing director for the Penn State University Press, said he has been impressed with this anthology from the get-go.

“As a whole, I think it’s a remarkable project from conception to finish,” Coyne said. “It’s the quickest project we’ve ever done here, and I’d hazard [to say] it’s one of the quickest projects ever produced by a university press.”

With 64 total comics from about 70 different contributors, Boileau said there are “a lot of heavy comics” in “COVID Chronicles.”

“The collection includes some fantasy works of fiction, sci-fi, but also some deeply personal narratives,” Boileau said. “One artist did a comic about losing his mother, and that’s entirely true. Also, [there have been] some very hopeful ones. There’s a section about kids and how kids have responded to the pandemic — that’s an uplifting section.”

Squier said “COVID Chronicles” will be used as a reference for other bodies of work. She is using one of the comics for an article she is writing about One Health, which she described as a combination of “human medicine and veterinary medicine, and then environmental awareness.”

“I think people are not only going to be reading the ‘COVID Chronicles’ and enjoy what they expressed about the experiences we’ve all been having in COVID, but scholars are going to be using them in their work, too,” Squier said.

Coyne said the feedback for “COVID Chronicles” has been nothing but positive so far.

“We’ve received great reviews for feedback from the comics world, from the public health world,” Coyne said.

“Pretty much, I haven’t heard a negative thing about this book at all.”

A portion of funds from “COVID Chronicles” is donated to the Book Industry Charitable Foundation. The foundation helps support book sellers, retailers and comic book stores, which, according to Boileau, have all been affected by the pandemic.

For the future of “Graphic Mundi” and “Graphic Medicine,” Squier said there has already been development beyond comics, with the addition of zines, which are “self-created mini magazines,” traveling exhibits, and a conference coming this summer sponsored by the “Graphic Medicine” Collective.

Coyne said the main goal for “Graphic Mundi” is to continue to tackle more serious subjects.

He said Penn State University Press’ most recent release “Twister” details the experience of the author becoming quadriplegic.

“I think the ‘Graphic Mundi’ imprint has got a remarkable lineup,” Coyne said. “We’ve had a very exciting start to it — it’s been a ton of work, a lot of fun and it all feels very rewarding... Everyone I’ve dealt with has been very excited and very collaborative with us.”

Boileau said comics seem to be a strong choice in conveying complicated concepts as compared to other mediums.

“Graphic art basically is able to convey things that... prose simply cannot,” Boileau said. “It’s the interplay of the wording image that maybe speaks volumes... compared to just prose. So I feel like this medium is really well suited to these kinds of difficult topics.”

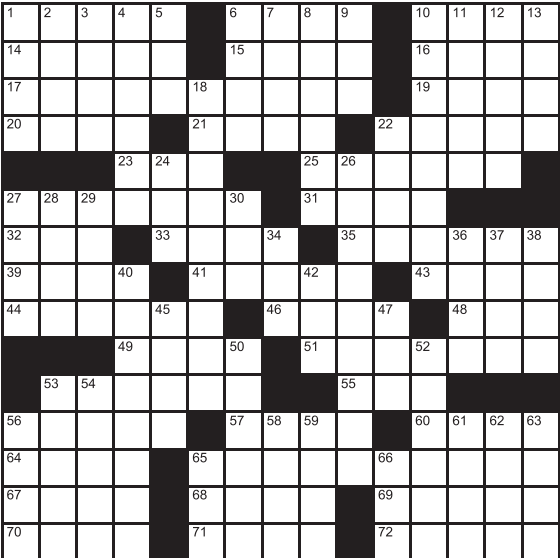
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## Puzzles

### Across

- 1 Giraffe cousin  
6 Renown  
10 Pesky insect  
14 Speeder’s bane  
15 Legal claim  
16 NV city  
17 Karate experts  
19 Consequently  
20 18-wheeler  
21 Foolhardy  
22 Western film classic, *The Magnificent* \_\_\_\_  
23 Showman  
25 Tin can appliance  
27 Large bird of prey, the Great \_\_\_\_

- 31 Filth  
32 Cereal grain  
33 Condo division  
35 Knitting \_\_\_\_  
39 All excited  
41 Type of stare or cartridge  
43 Diva’s song  
44 Indicate  
46 Moonshine mix  
48 Mornings, for short  
49 Burden  
51 Gainsborough painting  
53 Withstand  
55 Hostel  
56 Explosion  
57 Wilted  
60 Jason’s ship  
64 Final notice  
65 Embarrassed to the hilt



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|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------|
| 67 Exploding star             | 10 Healthy Chinese beverage | 40 Kindergarten reward       |
| 68 Above                      | 11 Audacity                 | 42 Apprehend                 |
| 69 <i>The Republic</i> writer | 12 Infuriate                | 45 Race track tipster        |
| 70 Water pitcher              | 13 Warner Bros. creation    | 47 4th century barbarian     |
| 71 Sets                       | 18 Grizzly, e.g.            | 50 Computer key              |
| 72 Brusque                    | 22 Arid                     | 52 Empower                   |
|                               | 24 Singer Rawls             | 53 Pasta shape               |
|                               | 26 Walking papers           | 54 Gullible                  |
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## WORD SEARCH

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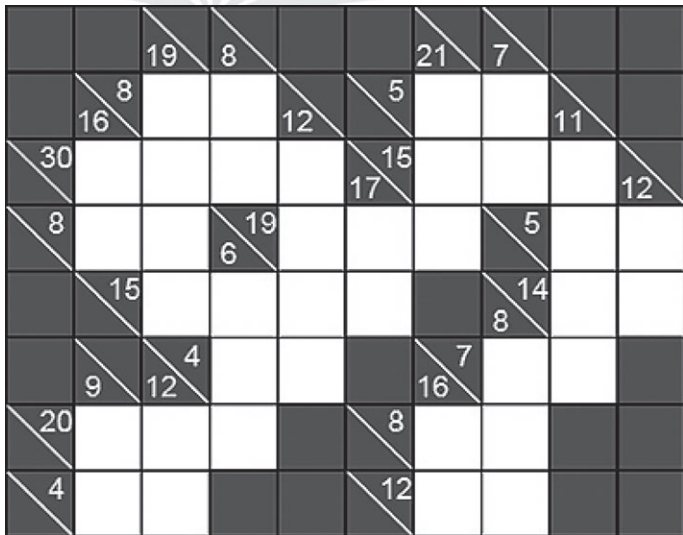
### Disney Characters

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

Aladdin	Elsa	Mulan
Alice	Genie	Nemo
Ariel	Goofy	Peter Pan
Baloo	Jasmine	Pluto
Bambi	Jiminy Cricket	Scar
Belle	Lady	Simba
Captain Hook	Lilo	Snow White
Cinderella	Maleficent	Tinkerbell
Cruella De Ville	Mickey	Tramp
Dumbo	Minnie	Ursula

## 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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## Collegian in need of student board members

By Maddie Aiken  
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

The Daily Collegian is in need of two Penn State students to fill vacancies on its Board of Directors. Students who are passionate about student journalism and making an impact on campus are encouraged to apply. Board members attend meetings roughly every month during the academic year.


A position on the Collegian’s Board of Directors allows students to establish long-term strategy, select top Collegian management, and ensure the Collegian remains financially and editorially independent from the university.

Student board terms last two years. Board members are not paid.

The Collegian’s Board of Directors consists of four full-time Penn State students, two Penn State faculty members, three directors at-large, the editor-in-chief, business manager and general manager.

Those interested should send a letter of application and resume to Collegian general manager Wayne Lowman at [gmnsude@gmail.com](mailto:gmnsude@gmail.com).

Those with questions about the position can email Lowman or call the Collegian’s business division at 814-865-2531.



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MY VIEW | Sarah Pellis

# Women still treated unequally

It's national Women's History Month and while women of all races and sexualities should be celebrated, there are still things that have happened recently that show not all women suffer equally. The definition of feminism is the belief in social, economic, and political equality of sexes, according to Britannica.com.

While some people may view feminists as extreme and haters of men, I would like to consider myself a feminist because I want gender equality for everyone — just like the definition conveys. Universities and the country as a whole have progressed toward improvement for equality. Compared to 100 years ago, it has gotten better, but not by that much. I have been reading a book called "The Art of Fact" for one of my classes. The book includes many authors of many short stories, and I decided to count how many authors in the book were not a white male.



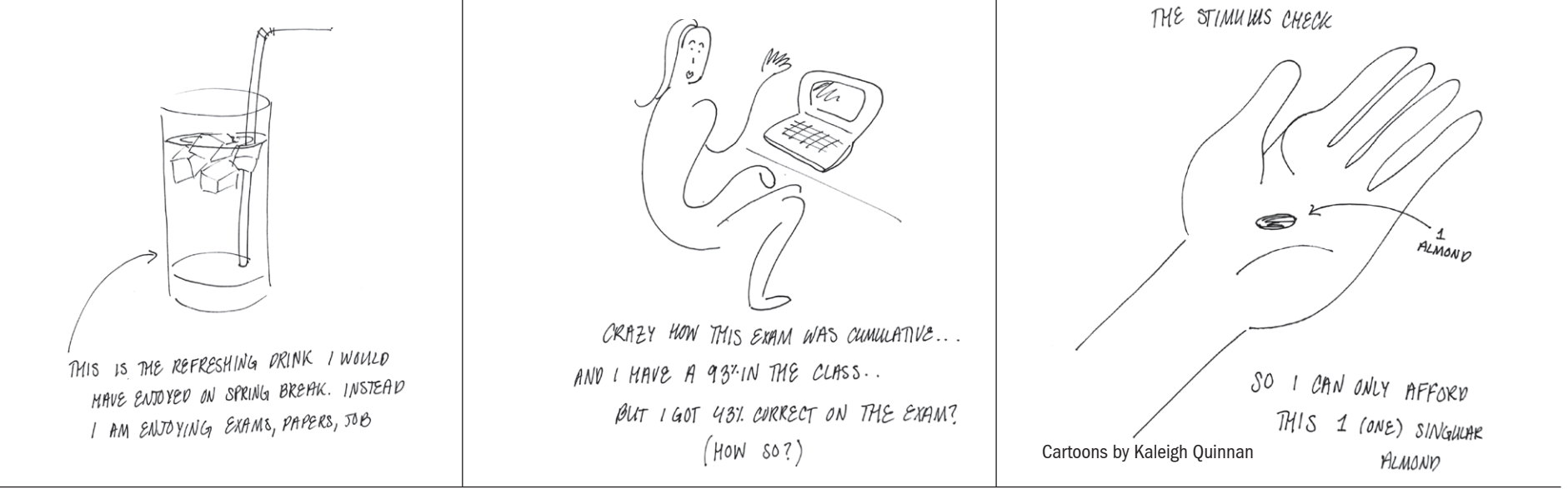
Pellis

There are 38 authors in the book and eight of them are not white men — or about 21% of the book. That made me question what I was reading and intaking every day even more. I also had to watch a documentary for a class called "Miss Representation" about how women are depicted in the media and how women are taught young to use beauty to appeal to men at a young age. The documentary encompassed so much that I was quite overwhelmed. I agreed with everything it was saying because it was true: women are objectified and sexualized by society. The documentary made me think more about what it means to be a woman in America and in college today. Having a misogynistic former president who devalued women also did not benefit anyone going into this year. While the United States did make history with the first female vice president, Kamala Harris, that does not mean we have progressed to a place where we need to be. According to UN Women,

there are not many women leaders in politics, with only 25% of all national parliamentarians being women and 22 countries having women heads of government. In both the Senate and the House of Representatives, there are a total of 539 seats, 144 of which are held by women, good for 27% of Congress — a new record. It may be the highest number of women in Congress ever, but it seems like there are not many women running for government positions — why is that? I believe it is because women in general have a low political efficacy. Being unworthy and inferior to men has been implanted in women's minds since we were very young. Without women in politics, men will continue to make the wrong decisions and women's voices will continue to be ignored.

The "pink tax" is gender-based pricing and upcharging of products traditionally geared toward women. That means that women and men could have the same type of shampoo, but the assigned label for the women's product will be priced higher. It is ridiculous that this is still happening, and I have especially noticed it in the past year alone. Women also get paid \$0.81 for every dollar men make. How is this gender pay gap still happening? All the above inequalities are obscene and outdated. I work just as hard, maybe even harder, than some of my male coworkers and I bet women would agree with me. Why is there still a pay gap based on gender? My point of mentioning these two points is to prove that we are not moving forward into the future and making progress. Mistreatment can also be seen through many things going on

in the world right now. This can be seen in sports for women as well. While the industry is more welcoming to women, it still needs to improve. This year, Sarah Thomas became the first woman to officiate in a Super Bowl. But is this somewhat large step leading to progress toward equality? The NCAA's treatment of women in the Division I basketball tournament showed how significantly different the treatment of women and men in sports is. Men's basketball had a completely stocked weight room and women originally had only a small pyramid for weights. It's a noticeable difference. This weight room incident shows how incompetent the NCAA and organizations like it can be. It was utterly wrong and sexist. It all leads back to money, along with internal and external biases among NCAA officials. This is not a new phenomenon, and the NCAA should have done the correct thing from the beginning. Visit [collegian.psu.edu](http://collegian.psu.edu) to read the full story.



MY VIEW | David Tilli

# This Lent provides time for reflection

Despite the momentous sights and horrors created by the pandemic, Lenten season began the same way it has begun for the past 1,500 years. Christians are marked with blessed ashes, while a priest utters a timeless reminder: "Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return." When viewed by a culture as obsessed with youth and proud ignorance as ours, the process might seem weird and hopelessly dour. To willingly seek a reminder of our mortality and shower ourselves with ashes, must appear a crazed thing. And to clamor for such reminders in the middle of COVID-19's bloodthirsty reign? The tradition stops being merely depressing and adds a seeming layer of cruelty. Why search for artificial reminders when plenty of natural examples abound? Of course, all these objections miss the point by about seven miles. Christians consecrate themselves with ashes to remember that we were consecrated by God. We formed a covenant, and sometimes a gentle nudge toward renewed faithfulness proves helpful in keeping this covenant. As for the supposed dourness of it all, chalk that up to the



Tilli

faith's inherent realism. Death visits everyone and spares not a single soul. Even the God-man himself first had to die before rising to proper glory. But glorified He is, was, and ever shall be. And this second point is the one that should be emphasized the most. Humility is the intended effect of Lent. By recognizing the inevitability of both death and Christ, we humble ourselves and are provided a bittersweet reminder: death might prevail temporarily, but this victory is always temporary. Attempts to ignore the inevitability of death's knocking and God's redemption mimics the oldest sin in the book: Pride. The surety that the creation knows more than the Creator. If we hide from the Lord and His liege known as Death, if we wear skinny jeans or coat ourselves in makeup an inch thick, we could hide forever and live forever. Adam and Eve made that mistake. Look where it got us so far. But ignorance often begets arrogance. I have friends and family members who abstain from consuming news, citing the news' ability to leave them depressed and their good times thoroughly crashed. "The world depresses enough as is, why should we enrich our knowledge of the world and all its miseries?" Solomon was

right. In much wisdom is much grief: and he that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow. But to wallow in forced ignorance is to deny our true humanity. We live as humans, but not as humans fully-realized. Our world is indeed full of grief and sorrow, and hearts break every second with astonishing speed and certainty. But the goal of humanity is to reconcile ourselves with all the pain and hurt contained within creation and still love it with reckless abandon. God sacrificed Himself for the world, despite its flaws. The least we can do is follow His example. Jesus said the poor will always be with us. This statement, however, was not a formal invitation to ignore the plight of the poor or allow the hungry to starve in good conscience. Rather, Christ invited us to never forget the poor and hungry, and instead to bind their existence upon our hearts and foreheads. As long as the needy need agape and support, it is our obligation to provide the agape until our hearts bleed. Perhaps Hillel the Elder, a Rabbi who preached about a century before Jesus, said it best: "In a place where no one behaves like a human being, you must strive to be human!" The Lenten season is nothing less than the season of striving, of humble and ceaseless humanizing. We are reminded both of

humanity's fallen past and glorified destiny. Sufjan Stevens once wrote a song titled "Casimir Pulaski Day," ostensibly about the holiday honoring the titular Polish Revolutionary War hero but actually about faith and doubt in equal measure. In the song, Steven sings about "cancer of the bone" and how this disease spreads and eventually claims the life of his adolescent friend/early sweetheart. Included in the piece are various references to the Triune God, which hardly surprises since Stevens himself is a faithful Episcopalian and Christian. In fact, Stevens concludes the composition with a simple chorus, post-death of his childhood love: "All the glory when He took our place But He took my shoulders and He shook my face And He takes and He takes and He takes" The point is clear: despite the glory due to God when He offered Himself in atonement for our sins, the sheer power that death and sinfulness still hold in the world occasionally causes pause. Maybe even despair. In any case, giving God His proper glory and due can become nigh-impossible in such moments. Visit [collegian.psu.edu](http://collegian.psu.edu) to read the full story.

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**DAILY COLLEGIAN**

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**Who we are**  
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The Daily Collegian and The Weekly Collegian are published by Collegian Inc., an independent, nonprofit corporation with a board of directors composed of students, faculty and profession-

als. Penn State students write and edit both papers and solicit advertising for them. During the fall and spring semesters as well as the second six-week summer session, The Daily Collegian publishes Monday through Friday. Issues are distributed by mail to other Penn State campuses and subscribers.

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# Lone UPUA executive ticket shares goals

By James Engel  
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

As the March 31 University Park Undergraduate Association elections are on the horizon, its ballots are looking lonely this year.

At the top of the ballot, running for executive president and vice president, sits a lone ticket — Erin Boas and Najee Rodriguez.

Boas (junior-international politics and economics), who has been involved in UPUA since her freshman year, currently serves as an at-large representative in the student government’s General Assembly. This isn’t the first run for UPUA president Boas has made. She previously waged a campaign against current president Zachary McKay.

Rodriguez (sophomore-international politics, national security and history), a representative for the College of the Liberal Arts in the General Assembly, has made a splash in UPUA during his time. He has served as the first chair of the Committee on Justice and Equity

and helped solidify the group’s place in the legislative branch of the student government.

Both have been involved in passing numerous pieces of legislation throughout UPUA’s 15th General Assembly.

Rodriguez said his personal experiences within UPUA as well as the national “racial reckoning” encouraged him to pursue the vice presidential position.



Courtesy of Erin Boas

**Erin Boas and Najee Rodriguez’s policy platform** rests on four main pillars: immediate relief, fostering a culture of care, building relationships and institutionalized change.

“I think with our combined ideas and [Boas’s] leadership, we can ensure those gaps of inequity are closed,” Rodriguez said.

Though their campaign sports over 96 initiatives, Boas said the ticket’s policy platform rests on four main pillars: immediate relief, fostering a culture of care, building relationships and institutionalized change.

For immediate relief, Boas said she hopes to aid students who may have experienced health or financial issues due to the coronavirus pandemic.

But creating a culture of care may be more complex.

Boas explained that she hopes to provide college-specific mental health resources to students and also create a student support network on campus.

“I think we focus a lot on academic and career goals, but the ability to value that a student is also an individual who goes through a lot of different things throughout the semester [can help] create that culture of care,” Boas said.

The ticket aims to build relationships with student groups on campus, the university itself and to amplify the voices of historically underrepresented communities, according to Rodriguez. He said it’s also important the administration maintain a “consistent connection with the student body.”

Bringing about institutionalized change on campus — a particular area of passion for Rodriguez — will involve progressive initiatives to aid student groups on campus and reforming some

internal UPUA documents.

“We want to make sure we are conveying the needs and collaborating with these communities — not speaking over them — to make sure there really are these institutionalized changes,” Rodriguez said.

But this presumptive administration does not exist in isolation. They will be assuming offices left empty by others and confront the legacies of those leaving office — McKay (senior-economics) and Lexy Pathickal (senior-political science and economics).

McKay, who is still working toward various initiatives in his last weeks in office, said he is confident Boas and Rodriguez will be able to pick up the reins of the executive branch in April.

“I’m excited for them. I think Erin has done a lot since last election to prepare herself for this role in a number of ways,” McKay said. “I think Najee has always been an advocate of social justice and racial justice, things that Lexy and I held near and dear to our hearts.”

Though the ticket said it would continue many of the projects from the previous administration, Boas said she would like to do a better job at delineating the roles of UPUA positions to bring greater efficiency to the organization.

“Much like any administration would do right off the bat, we’re going to reevaluate the

organizational structure [of UPUA] and maybe look at how we can better integrate it,” Boas said.

The ticket faces an awkward truth, though — they are the only names on the ballot.

This is not unique to the executive race. Every race is uncontested, and some positions lack even a single candidate to fill the role.

Boas and Rodriguez hope to address this issue with better outreach to the student body. By collaborating with already existing student groups and reaching out to new Penn Staters during New Student Orientation, the two said they hope to garner some renewed interest in student government.

“It’s something to be taken seriously,” Rodriguez said.

Regardless, the ticket has been consistently campaigning to the student body with various virtual events like luncheons and Instagram live events. According to Boas, students have been receptive to many of their campaign platforms.

In his first efforts in office, Rodriguez said he’d like to focus on immediate relief for students by providing financial assistance and other material aid for students in need at University Park.

For her part, Boas said she wants to immediately reform some internal structures of UPUA to increase efficiency and create a “diversity statement,” something she said she thought should have already been in place. She said she would also immediately begin the outreach process to connect with students and campus organizations in conversation.

“We’re not the mouth — we’re the microphone.”

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# Deaf professor breaks down ‘communication barriers’

By Ella Castronuovo  
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

As a deaf American Sign Language professor, Shasta Dreesse uses her skills in the classroom like any other language teacher — immersing students into the language to communicate with one another.

After working as an adjunct professor at Penn State Altoona since 2017, Dreesse became a full-time assistant teaching professor at University Park during fall 2020, and now teaches at both campuses.

Dreesse received her bachelor’s in social work from Bloomsburg University of Pennsylvania and her master’s in rehabilitation counseling from The George Washington University. She currently teaches American Sign Language and deaf culture at Penn State.

“Penn State offers plenty of opportunities to grow,” Dreesse said via email. “I love that they are open to growing American Sign Language and [the] deaf culture program, because Penn State is one of the very few schools that does not have an ASL program or recognizes ASL as a language. I’m excited to make some changes at PSU.”

As a deaf professor, Dreesse said the “biggest challenge” she faces is with communication — especially with the mask requirement meant to mitigate the spread of the coronavirus.

Dreesse said it’s difficult to teach ASL with masks on because it’s “impossible” to see facial expressions or lip movements, which is



Courtesy of Shasta Dreesse

**“I love that they** are open to growing American Sign Language and [the] deaf culture program,” Shasta Dreesse said about Penn State.

part of the language.

“My constant fear is that if someone talks to me and I did not know they were trying to talk to me, they will think I’m being rude and not listening to them,” Dreesse said. “Since the pandemic started, I’ve been hiding from people more often.”

Dreesse said she avoids looking at people now in the pandemic, because she doesn’t want them to talk to her out of anxiety of understanding what they’re saying.

However, Dreesse said she is “fortunate” she can communicate with her students learning ASL, and through Zoom and email with her colleagues.

Dreesse is currently teaching

two sections of ASL2 and one section of ASL3, which are in person, as well as deaf culture through World Campus and ASL1 at Altoona.

Before teaching at Penn State, Dreesse worked for the State College Office of Vocational Rehabilitation and was an adjunct professor at Saint Francis University.

Dreesse said she was “so intrigued” by higher education and knew she wanted to pursue teaching full time when she began working part time.

“The best part about teaching is watching the students grow, watching them have the ‘ah ha’ moments, educating them about the deaf community, spreading

awareness about the deaf and hard of hearing, and seeing more and more people learning American Sign Language to break down the communication barriers,” Dreesse said.

Jenna Kravitz, a former ASL student of Dreesse, described her as “sweet, nice and very understanding.”

“I think it is really important to learn from a deaf professor. When you get into higher levels of ASL, you really should be learning from someone who is deaf because there are different internations of the language and different things within the community that only a deaf person can truly understand,” Kravitz (junior-elementary and early childhood education) said.

Kravitz said being “voice off,” which refers to not speaking in the classroom, challenged her class to rely on their ASL skills even more.

Kravitz said Dreesse’s class is a “fun” and “great” experience.

“I always recommend people learning ASL in general because it is such a great language and such a great community,” Kravitz said, “and I think even just learning a few words is so important just to give the opportunity to someone who might not be able to communicate with others.”

Assunta Anelli, another former ASL student of Dreesse, said Dreesse went out of her way to give her students as much “experience” and “emergence” in the language as possible. According to Anelli (senior-elementary and early childhood education), the class had to wear earplugs during instruction time and couldn’t talk.

“Even on the first day, we had to gesture, write [our questions] down or use the interpreter,” Anelli said. “It got us to rely on our signing skills and had us jump in head first.”

Anelli said for the first few weeks in her class, an interpreter was present to bridge the communication gap between Dreesse and students.

Anelli said not being able to speak in the class was better for learning and “brings you right into it.”

“We had this one activity where it was kind of like hide-and-seek but we did it in the school’s library and we had to try to give directions using signs. It was really interesting to see hearing kids who don’t know sign language staring at us,” Anelli said. “For me, it was just like ‘wow, this is what it’s like in [deaf people’s daily lives] of having people stare.”

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## Hogan

FROM Page 1.

“It’ll make people talk, which is great,” Gurenlian said. “You have ESPN talking about it, and you have major sports outlets talking about it. I think he’ll gain even more notoriety in training camp.”

There will be at least three more Penn Staters participating in the 2021 season alongside Hogan, with the potential for more to join the league in the Entry Draft and College Draft.

But for Hogan to be back in the sport makes people around the game excited to see how he affects the trajectory of lacrosse — and the Nittany Lion program, too.

“It’s a huge win for the sport of lacrosse,” Tambroni said. “It’s certainly a win for Penn State based on the notoriety it’ll bring to Penn State lacrosse, and it’s great to see him back with a lacrosse stick in his hand.”

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# How local Black churches make an impact

By Grace Strayer  
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

Black churches have been impacting central Pennsylvania for years — offering various services and benefits to the Black community around the area.

On March 11, WPSU hosted a community discussion about the role of Black churches in central Pennsylvania and throughout the civil rights movement. The discussion featured four panelists — Paul McReynolds, Gary Abdullah, Sylvia Morris and Barbara Farmer — who detailed their experiences during the event.

McReynolds is the pastor at the Albright-Bethune and Park Forest Village United Methodist Church in State College. He said there are various aspects in his experiences within the Black church that “rang true” for him.

“The Black church is a place of hope — it’s a place of education, it’s a place of spiritual empowerment and it is also the beloved community,” McReynolds said.

On the church’s role to the community, McReynolds said Black churches are not only a place where people can go if they don’t have anywhere else, but the churches are a place of gathering and activism.

“[It is] where community activists would gather to come up with ways of how we are going to move beyond racism, how we are going to move beyond segregation, how we are going to move beyond police brutality,” McReynolds said. “The church was a place where those of the beloved community could gather, could think and then go act out in the community.”

Abdullah, Penn State Black Caucus founding member and former president of Penn State’s Forum on Black Affairs, said he also believes Black churches are a place of gathering where anyone who enjoys the style can come and take part in events and celebrations since there is “no Black side of town.”

According to Abdullah, one of the first things the Black community did was form a church when it realized it had enough people to do so.

“The Black church was one of the very first overarching Black organizations in central Pennsylvania,” Abdullah said.

Abdullah said there are different forms of Black churches around Pennsylvania — the Black Christian Fellowship, for example, first formed in the 1970s, which was a more “non-denominational” form of Black church.

“It wasn’t Baptist, it wasn’t Pentecostal, it was Black — and so it brought together

elements of a lot of different denominations, many of which had Black antecedents,” Abdullah said.

During the panel discussion, Abdullah said “true churches embrace.” He added in an interview that churches need to be “inclusive, not exclusive” and that inclusion has always been one of Christianity’s founding principles.

“The original founding principle of Christianity as a whole — and churches — is that they welcome the stranger,” Abdullah said.

McReynolds said in the discussion that church “has to be a place where strangers are welcome.”

In order to do this, McReynolds said the church will need to be a place of love, hope — and “most importantly” — healing.

“The church should be the place where everybody comes together even with their differences, with their unique circumstances, with their own unique journeys,” McReynolds said. “...This can be the place where we are loved, where we feel connected, where we can gain family and where we can find comfort in others who have had experiences along the lines of ours.”

Visit [collegian.psu.edu](http://collegian.psu.edu) to read the full story.



THE YOUTH MOVEMENT

Development of young wrestlers has been key to Penn State’s sustained success

By Ben Serfass  
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

Since Penn State entered the Big Ten in 1993, the program has seen a great deal of success from its individual wrestlers and its team.

However, one constant has been key to the Nittany Lions’ success against the nation’s top talent: youth.

Since joining the conference 28 years ago, no program has produced as many Big Ten Freshman of the Year award winners than the blue and white.

The revolving door of talented young wrestlers has consistently rotated, as young wrestlers seek to gain access to Penn State’s wrestling room.

This apparent repetitive process is what has helped sustain a dominant program in Happy Valley — one some could argue began during the tenure of former coach John Fritz, who served as the Nittany Lions’ head coach from 1993 to 1998.

“As you build the program, you want to bring in the best,” Fritz told The Daily Collegian. “You want to set high goals.”

In Fritz’s opinion, finding top talent when recruiting is just one part of what leads to building and sustaining a winning program.

He believes that team championships and championship-caliber wrestlers are born through both hard work and dedication.

“They all have talent,” Fritz said. “They put the shoes on just like I do. It’s just who works hard in the wrestling room.”

While Fritz gave up his position as the head coach of the program just before the turn of the century, his strong desire to win has resonated with Cael Sanderson and his current staff of coaches.

Sanderson’s approach to coaching and his reputation for producing athletes who compete on the national stage for the majority of their collegiate careers is



Samantha Hendrzak/Collegian

**Penn State’s Aaron Brooks** defeats Nebraska’s Taylor Venz 10-5 in the Big Ten Wrestling Championship at 184-pounds.

enticing for the sport’s top talent.

“That’s one of the reasons we’ve been successful — having kids place high at nationals, having four-time All-Americans and having kids actually compete for national championships in all four years of their careers,” Sanderson said.

While there have been a fair amount of Nittany Lions who have dominated college wrestling over their four-year careers, not just any student-athlete is prepared for that stage right away.

Penn State’s top-down leadership, which is headed by a strong veteran presence in the wrestling room, has helped freshmen acclimate themselves to the college game quickly and in turn allowed the program to consistently compete on the national stage.

“That’s important for any program, right?” Sanderson said. “You have to have your freshmen believing that they’re supposed to win. You can say whatever you want, but you know it’s what’s in your heart and what’s in your

eyes that will make a difference.”

That reputation of success is something that helped lure top high school wrestling talent Mark Hall, who was the country’s most highly regarded high school wrestler before he stepped on Penn State’s campus in 2016.

In his true freshman season though, Hall did not anticipate wrestling and instead expected to redshirt.

“My expectation was to just have a good redshirt season,” Hall told the Collegian. “I wasn’t supposed to wrestle my true freshman season, so that made it really easy for me to just work on getting better and focusing on all of the specific nuances and details of college wrestling and learning what it’s like to be a college athlete.”

But after Hall officially pulled his redshirt, there was no turning back.

Under the tutelage of the blue and white’s coaches and veteran wrestlers, Hall’s immediate success almost seemed inevitable.

“Once I started wrestling, it was natural,” Hall said. “There wasn’t really any expectation, it was just to go out and do my thing — and when I do my thing, I usually win wrestling matches.”

The former Nittany Lion would go on to become a three-time Big Ten champion, a three-time NCAA team champion and a one-time NCAA individual champion.

While Hall had the privilege of learning under arguably the most successful college wrestler in the sport’s history in Sanderson, it was the lessons he learned about himself that propelled him forward.

During his four years in Happy Valley, the most important lesson he took away had nothing to do with technique or strategy, but rather the idea that success is born from within the individual.

“It’s important that the kids learn that even with those opportunities... you got to want to do it yourself,” Hall said. “I can have Coach Cael teach me every technique in the world or set me up with the best trainers in the NCAA to keep me healthy, but if I’m not taking it upon myself to get the things that I want out of wrestling, then it doesn’t really matter.”

Sophomore Aaron Brooks may have bought into that mentality early on in his young career.

The Nittany Lion recently won his first NCAA title at 184 pounds and was named the Big Ten Freshman of the Year award winner just one season prior.

He was the seventh wrestler who donned the blue and white to receive the honor at the time, an accolade that has since been awarded to his teammate Carter Starocci after his performance this past season.

“I think as a freshman coming in, you can get hit with a lot of things from the outside world and kind of get caught up in that winning and losing mindset or putting pressure on yourself,” Brooks said. “Just making sure

that they’re relaxed and ready to rock, that’s whenever you see our team wrestle at our best.”

While Brooks is aware not every Penn State wrestler has seen his level of immediate success, he believes the award speaks more to the program’s prosperity than the individual.

“It’s an honor, but I think what it says about the program is that we bring in guys who are ready at a young age,” Brooks said. “They’re ready to go when they first come in.

“A lot of these programs, you see guys kind of hit their stride later on in their career, but I think when you come here, our coaches do a great job of just getting you ready right away.”

The maturation of young student-athletes once they arrive at Penn State appears to be a strength for the program — and it’s something the coaching staff is able to take advantage of when bettering the overall level of performance from its athletes.

While what the public sees as a result may be All-Americans and national championships, the life lessons the athletes learn are invaluable.

“There’s so much more to life than wrestling,” Hall said. “When you tell someone that there’s a lot more to life than just wrestling and you show them the opportunity that’s around them outside of just a sport, it makes it really easy to not be nervous and to go seize the opportunity that’s in front of them.”

Opening up these young men to new outlooks on life and allowing them to mature into successful adults just might be the key to success that is so alluring over what other programs have to offer.

“The proof’s in the pudding,” Hall said. “They do a really good job of perspective. Freeing up an athlete’s mind is dangerous.”

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