

The Daily Collegian

For the students. For the glory. Since 1887.

Vol. 125, No. 26

Friday, April 4, 2025

psu-collegian.com



Graphic by Isabella Viteri
Photos by Kylie Barton/ Penn State Athletics
Megan Miller/ The Daily Collegian

@DailyCollegian

@DailyCollegian

The Daily Collegian

@Collegian



Daily Collegian Podcast Network

UPUA announces new leaders

By Tyler Nolt
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

After weeks of campaigning, the University Park Undergraduate Association (UPUA) announced that the Elwakil-Port ticket would serve as president and vice president for the 20th Assembly. The announcement came less than an hour after the polls closed on Wednesday.

Elwakil, a third-year study-

ing geography, served as the vice president in the 19th assembly under Zion Sykes. She worked closely alongside her running mate, Fletcher Port, a third-year studying mechanical engineering. He served as the speaker of the assembly. Together they represent an uncommon amount of UPUA leadership experience.

The total number of people who

voted was 3,773, a bit less than last year's 3,936. The Elwakil-Port ticket received a total of 1,607 votes, with the Mike Fowler-Ben Lindgren campaign coming in close at 1,563.

Elwakil and Port will be sworn in on April 16, and the beginning of the 20th general assembly will commence.

To email reporter: tjn5430@psu.edu.
Follow him on X @tyler_nolt.



Alexandra Antoniono/Collegian

Rasha Elwakil (left) and Fletcher Port (right) were elected president and vice president of UPUA's 20th Assembly.

‘We are human’

CSGD holds Transgender Day of Visibility event

By Sara O’Connell
FOR THE COLLEGIAN

Penn State’s Center for Sexual and Gender Diversity (CSGD) hosted a full-day event titled, “Celebrate Your Expression, National Transgender Day of Visibility” on Monday in the HUB-Robeson Center.

The event included a photo booth from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., lunch with the Gender Diverse Care Team from noon to 2 p.m., measurement assistance from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. and trivia beginning at 5:30 p.m.

National Transgender Day of Visibility is held each year on March 31 to celebrate transgender people and draw attention to the discrimination the community experiences.

Sophie Kandler, one of the organizers, said events like this show that transgender people exist.

Kandler, a doctoral student studying education, said transgender people exist biologically and go back to antiquity — it’s not a new identity, rather it’s expressed more now because people are coming to accept transgender people.

“We are human, and we need to be loved,” Kandler said.

“We just want to be authentically ourselves,” Emily Berkheimer said. “Seeing people who are like you can make you feel more seen.”

Berkheimer, a first-year studying landscape architecture, said these events bring people

“This event matters because it can show students that, even on such a big campus, we see them.”

Ryan Strohl
Program Coordinator, CSGD



Brittany Banull/Collegian

A group poses for photos in the HUB-Robeson Center during the Trans Day of Visibility on Monday, March 31, 2025 in University Park, Pa.

together and that Penn State offers an inclusive environment with a number of organizations for the LGBTQ+ community.

Alpha Gutierrez, a first-year studying multidisciplinary studies, said Penn State is doing great with the CSGD and similar organizations, but felt as though the community — specifically some professors — could do more to promote an inclusive

environment.

Gutierrez said visibility is important, as well as creating a welcoming space for the

transgender community, like hearing each other’s stories and talking to each other to discover themselves.

Program Coordinator for CSGD Ryan Strohl said visibility for any community is important as it validates and affirms identities.

“This event matters because it can show students that, even on such a big campus, we see them — they are here and celebrated,” Strohl said. “I appreciate every student that attends our events and shows solidarity with trans students here at Penn State.”

To email reporter: sjo5368@psu.edu.
Follow her on X @sjoconnell2704.

Penn State hosts Powwow

By Kiera Ginn
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

Penn State’s 19th annual Powwow took place from Saturday to Sunday at the C3 Sports Complex to celebrate Indigenous culture.

According to Assistant Coordinator Victoria Sanchez, the first Penn State Powwow was held at Mount Nittany Middle School in 2004. She said when the Powwow first started 19 years ago, no one knew what it was.

Since 2004, the community has supported the Powwow through volunteering, according to Sanchez.

“People like how friendly our community is in the State College area, and (we have) over 150 volunteers,” Sanchez said. “Folks who come, they make friends ... We had a lot of (volunteers) with us for 19 years.”

Sanchez said the youngest person participating in the Powwow is 3 months old, and that children often learn dances by watching family members or attending Powwows.

“Most people learn as they grow up,” Sanchez said. “Their family follows the Powwow around.”

According to MC Guy Jones, it’s a tradition for children attending their first Powwow to dance and shake hands with other dancers.

“We have been doing it for the last 19 years,” Jones said. “If someone comes to me and says, ‘You know this is the first time that my daughter, or my son, is going to dance,’ we try to bring them in a good way.”

The Powwow has education-

al and awareness booths and speakers, including Little Snowbird, a member of the Yurok tribe who is a survivor and advocate for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women (MMIW).

“I get invited to a lot of events, colleges, art museums, high schools, middle schools, elementary schools to educate and talk about things in the native community,” Snowbird said. “I talk about food sovereignty, treaty rights, land back; really important things. The education on MMIW is important because, specifically speaking, Native women go missing 12 times more than any other ethnicity on the planet, where we only make up three percent of the population.”

The Penn State Powwow brings people from all over the continent of North America to participate, according to Sanchez.

“There are people who are from the Pittsburgh and Cleveland areas — they come from all over the continent. South Dakota, Washington, Kentucky, Arizona; we are here from Arizona,” Sanchez said. “We have people who come down from Canada. It might take two days to drive here, stay the weekend and then drive back home.”

Sanchez said the Powwow provides a good feeling to her and others that participate, whether by watching, dancing or volunteering.

“When you first come from the door ... you feel it — you know that you’re part of (this), you’re not like a spectator,” Sanchez said. “That’s really an important thing.”

To email reporter: kmg6989@psu.edu.
Follow her on X @KieraGinn.

Students hold Gaza ‘Week of Rage’ rally

By Rachael Keller
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

Students waved Palestinian flags outside Old Main on Tuesday afternoon as part of a rally organized by Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP) during its “Gaza Is Unbreakable: Week of Rage.”

SJP, in partnership with the Black and Latino Caucuses, held an hour-long protest in front of Penn State’s main administration building to demand the university take action to protect its students.

The protest featured speeches from members of all three orgs and a member of the Coalition of Graduate Employees.

Sarah Dweik, an executive board member of SJP, said the Trump administration wants people to feel under threat and fearful of being advocates for Palestine and themselves.

“We think that it’s especially because of that threat that we need to stand strong and be public and clear that we are the people that are going to be targeted, and our university should protect us,” Dweik, a doctoral student studying communications arts and sciences, said.

Many students, specifically those who are Palestinian, feel the Penn State administration has never supported them, especially after the conflict in Gaza began, according to Dweik. She mentioned in her speech that during SJP protests, they are often met with homophobic and ableist slurs.

Dweik said Palestinian students are not alone in facing a lack of support, which is why SJP sought to collaborate with the Black and Latino Caucuses to show solidarity with all minority students.

Sergio, co-executive vice



Alexandra Antoniono/Collegian

A person leads a chant during the Stand For Our Rights rally outside Old Main on Tuesday, April 1, 2025 in University Park, Pa.

president of Latino Caucus, opened his speech by asking if the protesters were scared to be there. That’s what the administration wants, he said — for students to have a fear of speaking out.

He encouraged the protesters to be the friend who brings up current events and to fight for State College to become a sanctuary city, adding that without students, the administration would be nothing.

Protesters chanted in support of countries experiencing political unrest and/or occupation, such as Sudan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Palestine, Iraq, Haiti, the Philippines and more.

They also demanded that

President Neeli Bendapudi “pick a side” and remove companies like the Applied Research Laboratory (ARL) and Boeing from campus, along with entities like Immigrations and Customs

Enforcement (ICE) and the police.

Bryana McClinton, vice president of Black Caucus, also gave a speech about the normalization of bigotry and hate on campus.

McClinton, a fourth-year studying criminology, said DEI initiatives need to remain on campus because students feel less and less like they belong at Penn State.

“(Bendapudi) hasn’t shown

that people of color will be protected,” McClinton said. “It’s not just people of color; we’re talking about women; we’re talking about people with disabilities — everybody that is considered a minority is protected amongst DEI.”

McClinton said Black Caucus

wanted to work with SJP on this

event to show the organization is

not just for Black students, but

for all people of color who are

experiencing issues on campus.

“Being able to be in front of

the main building, which (was) the first building on campus, is to be able to highlight the importance of the issue and to bring awareness and attention to what is going on right now,” McClinton said.

A member of the Coalition of Graduate Employees spoke about how the conflict in Palestine is a workers issue.

They also spoke about Mahmoud Khalil, a pro-Palestinian activist and a graduate student at Columbia University who was recently arrested and detained by ICE.

The administration has said it revoked Khalil’s green card, and he is fighting deportation, according to the Associated Press.

Evan Sutton attended the protest because he had been doing

a lot of research on the conflict

back when it began in the 1940s.

Sutton, a third-year studying

political science, said Israel’s oc-

cupation of Palestine is similar to

events like the apartheid regime in South Africa from the 1940s to the 1990s and other forms of discrimination around the world.

“I think eventually people are going to ask, once I’m older, ‘Where were you during this event?’” Sutton said. “I want to be able to tell a good story.”

Sutton said he believes a two-state solution is no longer possible because of Israel’s occupation in Gaza and the loss of what little trust Palestine had in Israel.

He believes there needs to be a secular, democratic, binational state where everyone is considered free and equal, and there is equal representation between Jewish Israelis and Arab Palestinians.

Though it may take a long time, Sutton said it’s something worth fighting for.

“We want to show that these people are not on the right side of history, and unless they make a choice ... they will remain on the wrong side,” Sutton said. “There is not a single event of people wanting to wipe out an ethnicity or race of people (where they) have been on the right side of history.”

Dweik said there have been a number of student movements that have begun on Penn State’s campus that shouldn’t be forgotten, like the divestment of South Africa during Apartheid, shutting down the ARL during the Vietnam War and The Village protests in the HUB-Robeson Center.

“There is this legacy of stu-

dents standing up and making change on campus,” Dweik said.

“It’s really cool to be a part of (it), and it’s going to take all of us.”

To email reporter: rmk6131@psu.edu.

Follow her on X @ra_ch_ae.

Shamak-in' me crazy

By Ella Kurovsky
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

Doctor, student, artist and influencer are just some of the attributes given to Penn State's own Shamak Agarwal. A second-year studying computer science, Agarwal has made his presence known across campus through his role as a social media influencer.

Recognized around University Park for his "day in the life" videos, Agarwal also boasts an impressive background of art. The Surat, India, native, enjoys cooking and sketching in his free time, and found his way into the India Book of Records through his passion for art.

In 2021, Agarwal was inducted into the World Book of Records UK, International Book of Records, Records of India and secured the Bal Ratna award. To top it all off, he earned a highly prestigious award — one so exclusive that few can ever claim it as their own.

"If you search my name, it comes up as the youngest honored doctor," Agarwal said. "No one really knows that I'm the youngest doctor in the world for the field of arts."

At just 16 years old, Agarwal was awarded with an honorary doctorate in arts from the University of Delhi. His recognition on national platforms captured the university's attention, earning him the title of Dr. Shamak Agarwal before he had even blown out 18 candles.

Agarwal came to Penn State looking to blend his interests of computer science and AI studies while experiencing life as a college student in the U.S.

"The one reason I say that made me come to Penn State is the alumni network," Agarwal said.

The influencer received references for industry giants like Google, PwC, Apple and Microsoft through his studies. One of Agarwal's main interests is AI, which led him to begin his own research project in August to explore AI usage and its impacts on society.



Shamak Agarwal, a content creator and second-year student studying computer science, poses for a portrait in front of Old Main on Thursday, March 6, 2025 in University Park, Pa.

Esteban Marenco/Collegian

"I am a learning assistant for a course related to AI, and I'm also doing my own research," Agarwal said. "I'm looking into the use of AI, and I'm very fascinated by it."

Outside of his academic curiosities, Agarwal wanted to share his journey as a student in the U.S. and began posting content on social media. He enjoys providing a glimpse into his daily routine where he exercises in the morning, balances studies, works a job and creates vegetarian meals.

Brian McQuoid says Agarwal's videos come on his feed all the time and he enjoys the influencer's content.

"I follow a bunch of the content creators from Penn State and I like watching Shamak's videos," McQuoid, a first-year studying political science said. "He does a lot of cool stuff around State College and is relatable."

The sophomore can be seen vlogging events around campus like comedy shows and sporting events. Agarwal hung out in the crowd with some wrestling fans to cheer on the Nittany Lions when they faced American University, and met some of the wrestlers one-on-one after the match.

The influencer grew a quick following of over 25k followers on Instagram and almost 1,000 on

TikTok, despite only creating his online presence in early February. In less than two weeks, "shamakinusa," became a verified content creator on Instagram.

"One thing people don't know is how recently I created this account," Agarwal said. "I had 11,000 followers in 10 days."

Agarwal's rise to internet fame caught the attention of students around campus quickly, and doesn't often leave him opportunities where he isn't recognized. He labels himself as shy, but is grateful for the opportunities that social media has brought.

"Every day I take more than 100 pictures," Agarwal said. "If I'm eating in a restaurant or sitting in class it feels a little weird, but because of them I am someone."

The idea to create "shamakinusa," arose when he wanted to spread some awareness to his friends from home about what school in the U.S. was like. Agarwal didn't expect it, but only a small percentage of people from his home country of India began to follow him, with 96% being from America.

When his first video blew up, so did his phone. Agarwal couldn't open his Instagram account with the influx of notifications and

phone calls from friends coming in.

"I'm from this generation of living with Instagram so being without it was a little frustrating," Agarwal said. "Everybody started calling me saying 'I saw your video,' and then I realized how many views I got."

When he isn't walking around campus filming content, working or sketching, Agarwal spends his free time fulfilling his duty as the secretary of a public speaking club that was recently founded in January. He is also a programming and event management coordinator for the International Student Council here at Penn State, where he helps to plan and manage student experience.

In balancing his load of clubs and jobs, Agarwal has found time to meet many new people, and even collaborate with some of the faces of social media around campus.

"I met a very good friend, Mason, from Barstool," Agarwal said. "I also met Megan Million, and we danced in the HUB the other day. One thing I really like is meeting the creators because they help my shyness."

Agarwal reached out to Million to collaborate one day, and she says their friendship grew from

there. "Shamak's content is super fun and relatable, and it just shows that you can work hard and play hard in college," Million, a second-year studying advertising and public relations said. "He really lives every day to the fullest and that is something I adore."

Agarwal hopes for a collaboration with Penn State soon and has a lot in store for the near future. As for those watching his videos, he wants them to step out of their comfort zones and reach their full potential.

"Get out of your box," Agarwal said.

"No one will come to you. You have to go to them, and my freshman year roommate, Elijah, is the one who made me realize this by introducing me to American culture."

Agarwal never believed he would be where he is today and shares much gratitude for his freshman year roommate, Elijah McMurray.

"Shamak enjoyed showing me things he would buy from the store as he was settling in and would ask me if it was a quality brand," McMurray, a second-year studying geobiology, said. "He had a lot of trust in me and my opinion."

McMurray didn't expect his freshman year roommate to have gone viral, but is proud of what he has accomplished thus far.

"One of my friends from another school sent me one of his videos, which had hundreds of thousands of views, and I couldn't believe it," McMurray said. "Now he is an icon, and I'm so proud of him. I think he tapped into a really good part of social media that has a lot of demand, and his genuine personality really helped boost his fame."

Agarwal says that no matter where you're from, going outside and talking with people is the best way to embrace the unfamiliar. The influencer has plenty of time before he ventures past Penn State, but for now he plans to continue his academics and further his passion for social media.

To email reporter: epk5454@psu.edu

Follow her on X @ [ella.kurovsky](https://twitter.com/ella.kurovsky)

Sotiroopoulos named next provost

By Jonathon Chiu
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

Fotis Sotiroopoulos was selected to become Penn State's next executive vice president and provost, effective Aug. 11.

Bringing 35 years of experience in higher education, Sotiroopoulos currently serves as the provost and senior vice president for academic affairs at Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU).

Sotiroopoulos, a Penn State alumnus, was selected by an 18-member committee, co-chaired by Senior Vice

President and Chief of Staff Michael Wade Smith and Donald P. Bellisario College of Communications Dean Marie Hardin, with assistance from the search firm, Witt Kieffer.

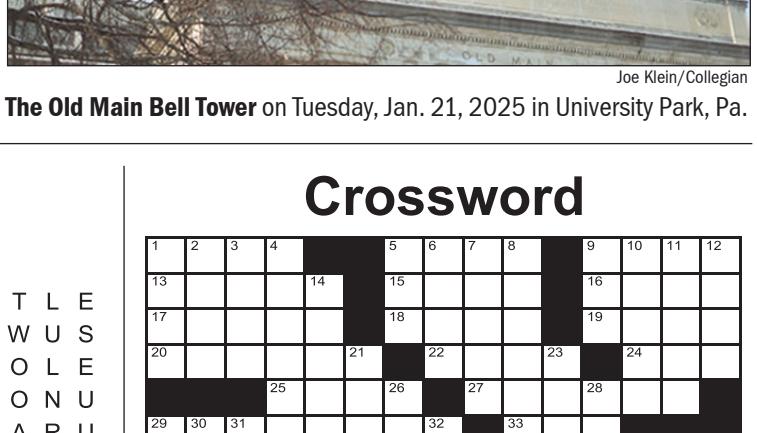
At VCU, Sotiroopoulos collaborated with academic leaders, faculty, and staff to reverse a decade-long enrollment decline, expand interdisciplinary research and education, launch new academic initiatives, stabilize the budget during financial strain, and drive a record-high increase in sponsored research funding, according to a Penn State News

press release.

Some of the factors that contributed to his selection include his "visionary leadership style, focus on pursuing excellence, and commitment to the success of all students, faculty and staff, along with experience in enrollment growth, strategic planning and curriculum transformation, research innovation, and resource management and operational efficiency," the release stated.

To email reporter: jwc6496@psu.edu

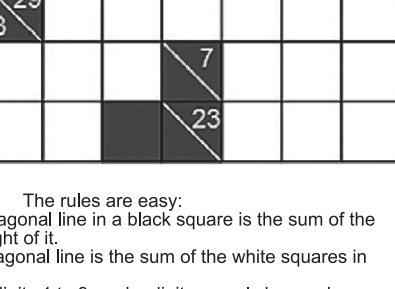
Follow him on X @ [JonChiu38880](https://twitter.com/JonChiu38880)



Joe Klein/Collegian

The Old Main Bell Tower on Tuesday, Jan. 21, 2025 in University Park, Pa.

Kakuro



The rules are easy:

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 can only be used once in a sequence.

Copyright ©2025 PuzzleJunction.com

Word Search

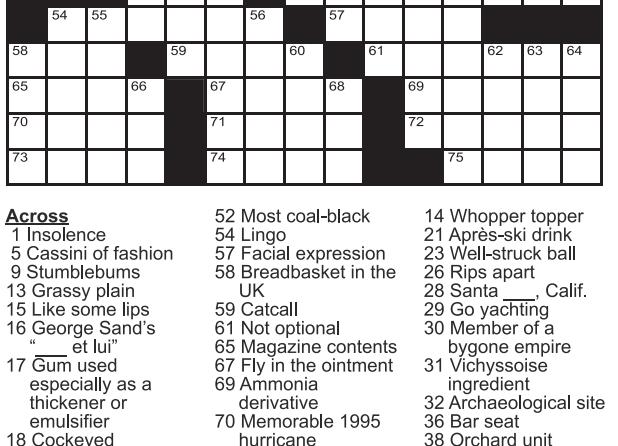
Spaced Out

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

Apollo
Asteroid
Black Hole
Comet
Constellations
Crater
Earth
Galaxy
Glenn
Hubble
Jupiter
Lift Off
Light Year
Lunar
Mars
Mercury
Messenger
Meteor

Milky Way
Moon
Musk
Neptune
Nova
Orbit
Probe
Rotation
Satellite
Saturn
Shuttle
Star
Sun
Telescope
Universe
Uranus
Venus

Crossword



Across
1 Insolence
5 Cassini of fashion
9 Stumblebums
13 Grassy plain
15 Like some lips
16 George Sand's "____ et lui"
17 Gum used especially as a thickener or emulsifier
19 Hilariously funny thing
20 Short-sighted
22 Red ink amount
24 Scrooge's cry
25 Impoverished
27 Persian Gulf seaport
29 Gum muffler
33 Beatnik's exclamation
34 Dill seed
35 Burden of proof
37 Spud
41 Rocks at the bar
42 Mine passages
44 Swedish shag rug
45 Limnologists study them
48 Winter forecast
49 Like Jack Sprat's diet
50 Have a complain about to

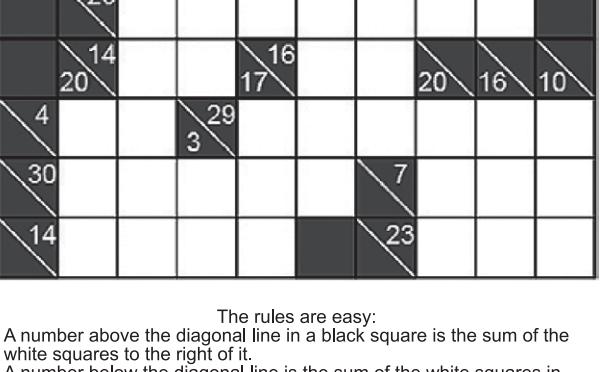
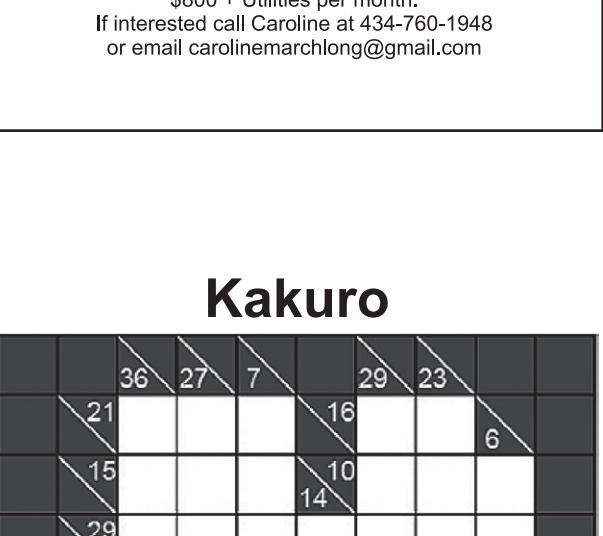
52 Most coal-black
54 Lingo
57 Facial expression
58 Breadbasket in the UK
59 Catcall
61 Not optional
65 Magazine contents
67 Fly in the ointment
69 Ammonia derivative
70 Memorable 1995 hurricane
71 Alternative to nude
72 The "N" of U.S.N.A.
73 "Auld Lang ____"
74 Sign gas
75 Woman of distinction

Down
1 Criticize severely
2 Comrade in arms
3 Palm starch
4 Small piece of writing
5 Man-mouse connector
6 Downtime
7 Like a Kindle read
8 Terra alba
9 Across, in verse
10 Cover story?
11 Levitate
12 Clockmaker

14 Whopper topper
21 Après-ski drink
23 Well-struck ball
26 Rips apart
28 Santa ___, Calif.
29 Go yachting
30 Member of a bygone empire
31 Vichyssoise ingredient
32 Archaeological site
36 Bar seat
38 Orchard unit
39 Nestling hawk
40 Deliver a tirade
43 Pass out
46 Keen perception
47 Sound of frustration
49 With great speed, effort or intensity
51 Ease up
53 Alignment of the front wheels of a motor vehicle
54 Uptight
55 Mideast capital
56 Present occasion
58 New Mexico resort
60 Tropical tuber
62 Prima donna
63 Wax-coated cheese
64 Remove from a manuscript
66 Starita's cry

Copyright ©2025 PuzzleJunction.com

Copyright ©2025 PuzzleJunction.com



The rules are easy:

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 can only be used once in a sequence.

Copyright ©2025 PuzzleJunction.com

MY VIEW | KAHLE WRAY

Breaking language barriers

Disclaimer: In case an employee of the Régie Autonome des Transports Parisiens happens to come across this column, I'd like to begin by pro-


claiming my innocence. Despite

the anecdotes shared in this article, I'm not a fare dodger, but rather a girl with terrible phone service — T-Mobile, count your days. I purchased a ticket for every metro journey I took, and I have photo evidence. While I'm technically a turnstile hopper, my turnstile hopping was warranted.

The Paris Metro awoke the

criminal in me. She lay dormant within until I stood at the metro barricade tapping my phone — which had my Navigo travel pass — endlessly trying to get through. I found myself in this predicament more times than I cared to count over the course of my time in France's capital.

Sometimes, I was able to find

an employee who manipulated

the turnstiles so I could get

through, but mostly I held onto

the hands of Parisians who

pulled me through the barricade, and other times I jumped over the turnstile and ran like hell to catch the metro.

Besides my obvious frustration, the common reoccurrence in each of these encounters was the small smiles my partners in crime shared with me.

As I made my way back to

Brno, I swear a montage of every grin I received played through my mind. Even as I

write this, I can recall the differences in the smiles and the

ways they grasped my palm.

The blond woman who pulled

me through on Tuesday held

onto me like she had known me

for years. The elderly man who

pulled me through the Saturday

before grasped my hand firmly

as if I was his petulant grandchild.

But the one that really stuck

with me was the little boy who

encouraged me to hop over the

turnstile in French. I don't

speak a lick of French, but

between the mischievous grin

on his face and his hand gestures,

it was quite obvious what

he was saying.

I'm sure he didn't think that

interaction would cause me to

redefine my relationship with

language, but it did.

It's no secret or shame of mine that I developed selective mutism after immigrating to the States. In those first years, I found it physically and mentally impossible to speak when surrounded by Americans. I was so hyper-aware of my accented English and the way I wove Patois into every sentence.

The only solution I could identify then was training myself to speak like an American. These days, unless I tell someone that I was born and raised in Jamaica, they're unable to tell. When I was younger, this was a source of pride, but now I'm just ashamed.

I try not to let this shame suffocate me by constantly reminding myself that 13-year-old me did what she thought she had to. I sympathize with her more than I loathe her decisions.

But I wonder if she would've done things differently if she knew the way this decision would negatively impact her relationships. The way I recall it, I only remember thinking that by adopting their speech, I'd remove the language barrier, but in hindsight, I just added a less noticeable one.

The fact is, many of the

friends I've made since that

decision will never know me in my totality because of my manipulated speech. They know me only through translation, and as we all know, a lot gets misconstrued when you're translating.

Language and identity are inherently intertwined, so how can they ever truly know me if I've abandoned my true language to speak to them?

I never speak Patois around non-Jamaicans. I never speak in my original accent around non-Jamaicans. Therefore, I'm never truly myself around non-Jamaicans.

My natural existence will always remain a mystery to them simply because I edit my language around them.

But the other day, I was speaking to one of my closest friends, and I said something in Patois, and she asked me what it meant. Later, she'd text me saying that was the first time I spoke Patois in her presence, and she was honored I felt comfortable enough to do so.

I didn't think too much of the message then, but after the interaction with that little boy on the Metro, I realized how much of a disservice I was doing to the "foreigners" I've

grown to love.

That little boy spat French at me, probably knowing full well I didn't understand, and his way around that was by gesturing with his hands. He didn't have to sacrifice his language, and subsequently, his identity to communicate with me.

I don't have to sacrifice my language to communicate with the people around me. I know there are nuances to this epiphany of mine, but I don't care to entertain them right now.

This isn't to say I'm going to abandon my American accent (though I wish I could) or strictly talk Patois. This is to say that in Paris, I learned that it doesn't matter if the person speaking to you has a foreign tongue; if you want to understand, if you're meant to understand, then you will.

Kahle Wray is an abroad columnist and member of the DEI Committee. Her hometown is Montego Bay, Jamaica, and she's a second-year studying English and digital/print journalism. Email her at kaw6568@psu.edu and follow her on X @_wrageous.

The Evolution of a Penn Stater



Cartoon by Ethan Capitano

MY VIEW | JADZIA SANTIAGO

Defending the weird kids

It's Wednesday, just after 5 p.m., during a general body

meeting for

Writers Organizing to

Represent

Diverse Stories,

and I've

just made

the

entire

organization

uncomfortable.

We're in the middle of the

lesson I planned for this week:

A dissection of cringe culture,

which, since I have to condense

it to this column, I'll define as a

(mostly) online cultural phe-

nomenon of bullying and judg-

ment of those outside of the

norm.

To advance this lesson, I

asked the question: "How many

of you, show of hands, have

judged someone based on their

self-expression in the last week,

month, year?"

Slowly, with eyes shifting

around the room like some-

one's waiting to catch them —

or their president has finally

cracked under the pressure —

everyone in the room raises

their hand, including me.

They seem surprised at the

result, but my lesson is going

exactly according to plan,

because I knew this would hap-

pen.

It's not because I think my

organization is made up of bad

people, far from it. My lovable

misfit poets are the sweetest,

most accepting people I've met,

so there's another reason, one

that I'm sure they know.

So, in the thick silence, I ask

my next question: "Why?"

Before I tell you their

answers, let me get into why we were doing this.

Across the internet, it's now Gen Z's time for our generational skewering, where the grown-ups declare exactly what's wrong with us. One of the main complaints is that we're terrified of genuine self-expression, which in turn makes us image-focused, horrified by intimacy.

We're robots, they say, AI-generated and all dressing the exact same. Millennials killed industries, but we killed attachment and creativity.

Sarcasm aside, this criticism has merit, and as president of a slam poetry organization, I see it play out all the time. Our mission as an organization inherently attracts those who go against the grain and break out of the norms, but what I've learned is that even we're terrified to be who we are.

Which brings me back to that question: Why?

Here's the answer, or at least a part of it: There have always been consequences for going against the norm, but with the internet, those consequences are multiplied tenfold.

Every bad outfit, embarrassing moment or experiment with expression has someone who might post about it. And then, the hate, directed toward us or people like us, at a magnitude never seen before because it's right at our fingertips.

There's no turning it off or tuning it out because somebody is always tuned in. We see how, when the internet deems something bad or "cringe," it bleeds into real life.

should include graduation year. All writers should provide their email address and phone number for verification. Letters should be signed by no more than two people. Members of organizations must include their titles if the topic they write about is connected with the aim of their groups.

The Collegian reserves the right to edit letters. The Collegian cannot guarantee publication of all letters. Letters chosen run on The Daily Collegian website and may be selected for publication in the print edition. All letters

And because we learn how to socialize partly through observation, we internalize that hatred and turn it toward ourselves and others (even if we'd never say that part out loud).

When I asked my members why they felt they judged others, I got two answers: jealousy, and annoyance at the other person's foolish disregard for The Rules.

Because why would they violate The Rules, knowing the consequences? And then the anger, because we'd never allow ourselves to do the same.

We think it's annoyance at their traits, but in reality, it's envious rage, the knowing that if we did that, we'd get in trouble.

Slam poetry, like many other hobbies and forms of expression, has become something labeled as "cringe." Thus, budding poets get scared, self-police and don't go on stage.

For someone planning a poetry slam (ahem, me), that's not good. But how do I even begin to fight it in this meeting?

So, I get up at the front of the room, and I say, "SLAM IS CRINGE. Respond to me."

My members launch a myriad of responses at me, but one stands out, the one I've prepared to pop up on screen: "YES IT IS."

Because if we try to reassure ourselves that we're not cringe or uncool, all we do is feed into the cycle of hatred. Instead, what we need to tell ourselves is that it's OK to be those things.

There's absolutely nothing wrong with having hobbies or

interests, no matter how niche. There's nothing wrong with looking or being odd, awkward or revealing our true selves while we learn.

In fact, my organization concluded that it takes a lot of bravery to do those things, and if we're not courageous enough to, why the hell are we judging those who are?

We can't change the world with our outfits or, in my organization's case, our slam poems. But we can be proudly uncool because judgment is made to get us to stop.

If we refuse, we take away its power.

I know, we've all internalized those judgments, and that doesn't make us bad, irredeemable people. It shows that we learn and have enough empathy for others to want them to be safe from the harshness of the world.

But every time we feel those thoughts pop up, we need to remember that what we're doing is swinging at a mirror.

So get out there, be cringe and annoying and human once in a while. I promise it won't kill you.

Jadzia Santiago is a columnist and DEI committee member for The Daily Collegian. She's a third-year double-majoring in English and communication arts and sciences. Email her at jas9280@psu.edu and follow her on X @JadziaASantiago.

The Daily Collegian is published by Collegian Inc., an independent, nonprofit corporation with a board of directors composed of students, faculty and professionals. Penn State students write and edit both papers and solicit advertising for them.

Complaints

News and editorial complaints should be presented to the editor. Business and advertising complaints should be presented to the business manager.

Daily Collegian

Collegian Inc., 115 Carnegie Building, University Park, PA, 16802 ©2025 Collegian Inc.

BOARD

Basketball report card

By Joe Tuman
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

Heading into the 2024-25 season, Mike Rhoades expressed confidence that his roster could make a push for the NCAA Tournament.

Instead, the Nittany Lions finished 6-14 in the Big Ten and 16-15 overall, causing them to miss out on the Big Ten Tournament.

Crucially, they lost 11 games by single digits, signifying that the season could've gone much better had a few moments played out differently.

With the campaign now complete, there's time to reflect on what worked and what didn't during Rhoades' second year at the helm. With this in mind, here's an assessment of how Penn State's roster performed this season.

Ace Baldwin Jr.

Season Stats: 14 PPG, 7.1 APG, 2.4 SPG

After playing for Rhoades for five years, Ace Baldwin's college career has now concluded.

Baldwin was once again at the heart of Penn State's entire operation this season, and his up-and-down production fittingly mirrored his team's overall success.

On a positive note, the point guard facilitated at an elite level, defended the perimeter with his trademark ferocity and got to the free throw line often and effectively.

However, he was also partly responsible for several of the Nittany Lions' narrow losses. Whether it was rushed late-game shots or game-long shooting droughts, Baldwin wasn't consistent in pivotal moments.

These struggles caused him to shoot just 34.6% from the field and 29.9% from three in conference play, a notable step down from his 40.8% and 37.2% marks from last season.

Despite these issues, Baldwin was still the leader the team needed. His willingness to shoulder heavy minutes and play through a nagging back injury further showcased his willingness to do what it took to win.

Though Baldwin wasn't perfect, his strengths still outweighed his weaknesses in his final collegiate season.

Grade: B

Yanic Konan Niederhauser

Season Stats: 12.9 PPG, 6.3 RPG, 2.3 BPG

The biggest success story of Penn State's season, Yanic Konan Niederhauser, overcame early conference struggles to emerge as a two-way force down low.

The Swiss big man led the Big Ten in blocks per game while also taking steps forward as an offensive player following his prior seasons at Northern Illinois.

Konan Niederhauser's ability to draw fouls and throw down nasty slams gave Penn State a dynamic it didn't have at center last season.

It wasn't all positive for Konan Niederhauser, as persistent foul trouble and occasional technical fouls showed he still has room to improve his on-court discipline.

Nonetheless, Rhoades has regarded him as "extremely coachable," so there's certainly a chance the center continues improving as he chases a selection in the 2025 NBA Draft.

Should he forgo the draft and return to Penn State, all signs point to Konan Niederhauser be-

ing the team's best player next season.

Grade: A-

Puff Johnson

Season Stats: 10.2 PPG, 4.4 RPG, 1.4 SPG

Puff Johnson's final collegiate season didn't turn out how he'd planned.

After an offseason where he added muscle to further strengthen his well-rounded game, Johnson suffered a right-hand injury that ended his season after 17 games.

This hurt the Nittany Lions a ton and contributed to their conference play struggles. Before his injury, Johnson was putting forth the best statistical season of his career.

A true Swiss Army knife, he was an effective cutter, a dangerous defender in passing lanes and was the team's best offensive rebounder. As a team captain, his veteran leadership and positive attitude were also missed on the court once he was sidelined.

Though the injury cut his productive season short, Johnson still played enough to prove how good he'd become. He deserves credit for the work he put in during the first half of the season.

Grade: A-

Zach Hicks

Season Stats: 11.6 PPG, 4.9 RPG, 1.1 SPG

In November, Rhoades said he didn't know if he'd ever had a player improve defensively as quickly as Zach Hicks did during the offseason.

Not only did Hicks deliver on his coach's expectations, he arguably exceeded them. After at times appearing aimless on defense during his first season in Happy Valley, Hicks was much more purposeful in 2024-25.

He set a career high in steals per game while also displaying increased aggression when crashing the boards and contesting shots.

While Rhoades noted his defensive improvement early on, Hicks' offensive leap was just as significant. Unlike his first season with Penn State, Hicks avoided an ice-cold start to the season and shot a career-high 41.3% from 3-point range.

Though he's most known for his outside shooting, Hicks also dramatically improved as a driver. After shooting under 39% from two-point range in each of his first three seasons, Hicks jumped up to 63.1% from inside the arc to cap off his career.

Despite a frustrating season for the Nittany Lions, Hicks never got discouraged and routinely brought his A-game.

Grade: A

Nick Kern Jr.

Season Stats: 11.5 PPG, 5 RPG, 1.1 SPG

Much like Baldwin, Nick Kern spent his entire college career playing for Rhoades. Unfortunately, his final outing wasn't a perfect send-off.

After starting last season, Kern became the sixth man during the first 15 games and thrived. He averaged 12.3 points per game, 1.4 steals per game and showed growth at the foul line by converting 76.9% of his chances at the stripe.

When Johnson got injured, things quickly got rocky when Kern rejoined the starting lineup. Suddenly, the confident driver and dangerous perimeter

defender looked unsure of himself.

After years of being comfortable not shooting jumpers, Kern was now staring at the rim, considering what he should do with the ball. Though there were still many times he'd attack the basket, his decision-making slowed down. He seemed unsure of his own signature playstyle.

To make matters worse, his free-throw shooting also regressed to 60.3% across his final 16 games, making it hard for Rhoades to trust him in big moments. Due to these struggles, Kern lost playing time to D'Marco Dunn and Freddie Dilione V down the stretch of the season.

Grade: C+

D'Marco Dunn

Season Stats: 8.4 PPG, 2.5 RPG

D'Marco Dunn's skillset has always been that of a score-first two guard, but before this season, he rarely received the playing time or touches he needed to thrive.

Though he got a taste of a larger role late last spring after Kanye Clary's departure, 2024-25 was his first chance to shoulder a significant scoring burden.

He responded to this challenge by tallying career highs in points per game, field goal percentage, 3-point percentage and free throw percentage, becoming a trusted hand for Penn State off the bench.

While he remained a poor passer, averaging more turnovers than assists, he made good on his primary duty of putting the ball in the basket. He also excelled in Rhoades' defensive scheme by notching 0.7 steals per game while effectively contributing to the team's disruptive press.

With all this improvement, it's fitting he capped off his career by dropping a career-high 25 points in a shocking upset win over Wisconsin. Similar to Hicks, Dunn didn't let his final season go to waste, and he deserves credit for that.

Grade: A-

Freddie Dilione V

Season Stats: 9.4 PPG, 2.8 RPG, 0.9 SPG

A former 4-star recruit, Freddie Dilione didn't see the court much in two seasons at Tennessee after medically redshirting during his first year.

After entering the transfer portal, Dilione arrived in Happy Valley as an opening day starter and provided Penn State's defense with length and grit in the backcourt.

His ability to provide defensive effort and the downhill scoring Rhoades looks for in his guards helped him fit in naturally with the Nittany Lions.

With many key veterans departing, the next step for Dilione is to become more aggressive and well-rounded. His 3-point shooting remains the most inconsistent part of his game, as he shot just 28.9% from deep across all 31 contests.

Additionally, there were some games where Dilione wouldn't look to score much, and his reluctant trigger hurt the flow of Penn State's offense.

Dilione has the pedigree to become a very productive player, and he's already shown flashes of what he could become. Now, he just has to put it all together.

Grade: B

Kachi Nzeh

Season Stats: 2.6 PPG, 2.2 RPG



Samantha Oropeza/Collegian

Players line up to sing the alma mater after concluding the Penn State men's basketball game against Maryland on March 1, 2025.

RPG

After transferring from Xavier, Kachi Nzeh put forth a fine effort as Konan Niederhauser's primary backup.

Though Nzeh rarely left a large impact on the box score, he was also rarely the main reason for Penn State's struggles.

Going forward, he could benefit from staying out of foul trouble to leave more of an impact. After averaging 2.8 fouls per game per 40 minutes with Xavier, that number jumped to 5.9 at Penn State.

If Nzeh can stay on the court, he'll be able to further utilize his motor and rebounding talent to impact winning.

Grade: C+

Dominick Stewart

Season Stats: 2.8 PPG, 0.5 SPG

Few would've expected Dominick Stewart to be the most productive member of Penn State's freshman class, but the shooting guard surpassed expectations and became a regular rotational piece down the stretch.

Though his overall stats don't jump off the page, Stewart showed he could thrive if given a bigger role. In games where he shot more than twice, he averaged 7 points per game on 40% shooting.

There were growing pains on the defensive side, as Stewart looked visibly unsure of himself, particularly when guarding off the ball. However, he also showed signs of potential, registering three multi-steal games in non-conference action.

As the lone remaining member of the program's 2024 recruiting class, Stewart appears to be bought in on the coaching staff's message. With Dunn out the door, he should be in line for more responsibility come fall.

Grade: B+

Jahvin Carter

Season Stats: 2.1 PPG, 0.7 APG

Freshman Jahvin Carter was the primary backup point guard behind Baldwin this season, but that role didn't guarantee him much playing time.

Though Rhoades gave Carter many chances to play, he only logged 8.3 minutes per night due to Baldwin's intense workload.

These limited on-court stretches prevented the score-first guard from building momentum, as he shot just 32.8% from the field.

Though Rhoades has praised Carter's outside shooting skills, that wasn't enough to keep him around. Carter entered the trans-

fer portal and will join a new team for his sophomore season.

Grade: C

Miles Goodman

Season Stats: 1.2 PPG, 1.4 RPG

Miles Goodman's Penn State career will surely leave Nittany Lion fans wondering what could've been.

The third-highest recruit in program history saw his freshman season plagued by a right shoulder injury that sidelined him for the team's first 13 games.

When he finally debuted on Jan. 2 against Northwestern, he went scoreless in nine minutes. In the following game, he flashed offensive potential inside The Palestra during a brief, yet productive first-half stint.

Despite this solid showing, Goodman only surpassed five minutes of playing time in four of the final 16 games. After the season, he entered the transfer portal and ended his tenure with 15 points, one steal and one block.

For a player who was expected to anchor the Nittany Lions' defense for years to come, the final result was extremely disappointing. One has to wonder what would've happened had he not gotten injured last summer.

Grade: C

Eli Rice, Hudson Ward and Joe Sedora

Season Stats: Four combined points

This trio all received limited playing time for varying reasons.

Sophomore Eli Rice was limited to one game due to a season-ending injury. Previously recruited by Rhoades at VCU, he's expected to be a member of the rotation next season.

Similar to Goodman, Hudson Ward's Penn State career essentially ended before it started. The freshman entered the season as the sixth-highest recruit in team history but didn't score a single point before entering the transfer portal.

Though he missed nearly all of January with an undisclosed injury, Ward rarely took the court even when healthy.

Finally, walk-on freshman Joe Sedora outscored both Rice and Ward, tallying four points across seven appearances.

It's hard to evaluate those who barely played, and giving them an F seems unfair and harsh due to their lack of chances.

Grade: Incomplete



To email reporter: jnt5213@psu.edu.
Follow him on X @JTuman21.

Dealing with Deal

By Andrew Deal
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

Penn State went 1-3 last week, and despite recent struggles, the pitching has been up and down.

It's been an interesting couple of weeks for the Nittany Lions, and they haven't found a lot of consistency from their pitching staff. Despite that, two relievers shined amid the first bump in the road.

Loosli and VanOstenbridge shine

Dimond Loosli entered the season as a reliever, while Matthew VanOstenbridge has seen relief opportunities while getting spot starts when needed.

Both pitchers had multiple appearances last week and restricted runners during their time on the mound.

Loosli was strong in his open-

ing outing against Michigan. The Walnut Creek, California, native went 2.1 innings without allowing a run. He followed that up with 1.1 shutout innings at the end of Game 2 against the Wolverines.

His 3.2 innings of work lowered his ERA to 4.15 across 13 innings.

VanOstenbridge has been a mainstay in Dealing with Deal, turning into one of the most reliable pitchers for Penn State. He went 2.1 innings across the final two games and allowed only one hit.

The freshman left-hander lowered his ERA to 3.66 and raised his usage to 19.2 innings.

Struggling starters

The starters have typically been one of the bright sides of the pitching staff. However, the 1-2 punch of Ryan DeSanto and Mason Horwat didn't pitch to their standards.

To email reporter: asd5765@psu.edu.
Follow him on X @AndrewDeal22.

On to St. Louis

By Chase Fisher
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

A Frozen First

Guy Gadowsky remembers what brought him to Penn State ahead of Frozen Four

By Chase Fisher
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

Penn State coach Guy Gadowsky sat down in his chair Tuesday morning and prepared for his first-ever Frozen Four press conference ahead of his trip to St. Louis.

As Gadowsky fielded questions about his team's improbable second-half comeback, his demeanor was serious, but one question brought a smile to his face.

Gadowsky was asked to look back more than 13 years ago to his interview process for the men's hockey head coaching position at Penn State. He was struck with emotion as he looked back on where it all began.

"I remember (the interview process) very fondly," Gadowsky said. "You obviously know about Penn State and the incredible



Megan Miller/Collegian

Penn State men's hockey head coach Guy Gadowsky celebrates following the win at the NCAA Regional Finals against UConn on March 30, 2025.



Megan Miller/Collegian

Penn State defender Nick Faschia hugs Penn State men's hockey coach Guy Gadowsky following the NCAA Regional Finals against UConn.

support that (it) gets. So many people just love this university so much, and if you watch any football game, volleyball game, wrestling match, you name it, you get a strong sense of how strongly the alumni feel about the university."

Gadowsky was interviewed by Joe Pegula before driving to meet Terry Pegula at a Flyers versus Sabres game. Terry Pegula had a vision for the future of Penn State hockey, which included Gadowsky at the forefront.

The owner of the Buffalo Sabres saw the hockey capitals of the United States, such as Minnesota and Wisconsin, and wanted to replicate that love and passion for the sport in Pennsylvania.

"This entire footprint and his dream, I mean (Terry) was very, very forthcoming, immediately saying, 'Hey, my dream would be to have hockey players grow up

in Pennsylvania, play for Penn State, and then go on to play in the NHL, and that was his vision," Gadowsky said.

That aspiration started with improving the hockey facilities Penn State had to offer. The Greenberg Ice Pavilion was home for the Penn State club hockey team for 32 years, but if the program wanted to make a jump to Division I hockey, a new arena was needed.

From 2010-12, the Pegulas made a \$102 million commitment to help build Pegula Ice Arena and endow scholarships for Division I hockey players, trying to grow the sport not just at Penn State but across the state of Pennsylvania, too.

"Going through the process, Mr. Pegula laid out his vision," Gadowsky said. "It was interesting, and it falls within the last

question. His vision wasn't just to provide great facilities for Division I hockey at Penn State, it was to enhance hockey in this state, specifically Center County."

Gadowsky fell in love with the idea of building up the program and the transition into Division I. He backed the Pegulas in their mission and is now reaping the benefits in Year 14 at the helm.

"That's something that when you hear (it), you automatically want to be a part of that, if you can be," Gadowsky said. "Joe (Pegula) obviously was a part of everything that this program did and certainly echoed and reinforced that vision."

The problem with making the jump to Division I is the lengthy, loss-filled process attached. Garnering commitment from players and coaches who are willing to accept multiple losing seasons before they find success is difficult, but Gadowsky was determined to make it work.

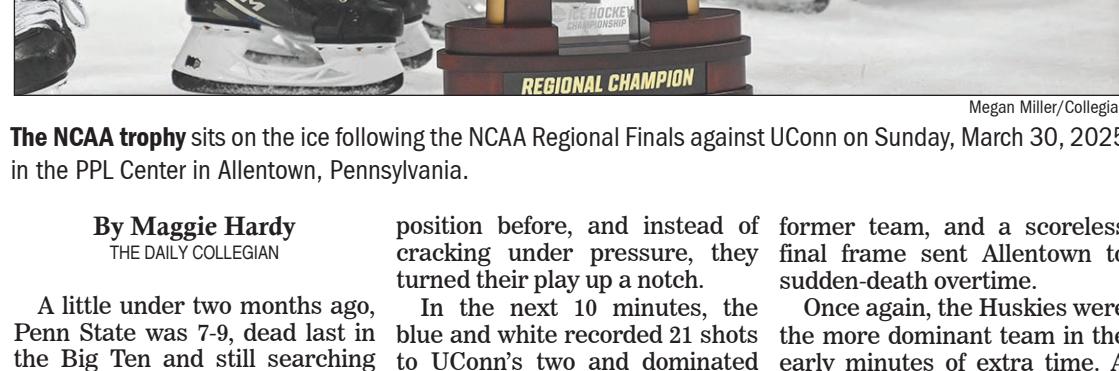
As Gadowsky struggled to find people willing to endure the sacrifice, Keith Fisher stepped up to the task and was vital for the growth of Penn State hockey.

"There's not a lot of guys that are going to be willing to lose for what people thought would be a lot of years in the Big Ten," Gadowsky said. "We had to pivot what we were looking for. Guys that, regardless, wanted to welcome the challenge of starting a program where many people said, 'You're going to get killed, you're not going to win a game for three years in your league.' It takes a special competitor to welcome that, and (Fisher) went out and got those guys that were."

To email reporter: caf6035@psu.edu.
Follow him on X @chase_fisher4.

No quit

Penn State's resiliency shines in NCAA Regional win over UConn



Megan Miller/Collegian

The NCAA trophy sits on the ice following the NCAA Regional Finals against UConn on Sunday, March 30, 2025 in the PPL Center in Allentown, Pennsylvania.

By Maggie Hardy
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

A little under two months ago, Penn State was 7-9, dead last in the Big Ten and still searching for its first conference win almost 10 weeks into the season. Climbing back into the national rankings seemed like a long shot — an NCAA Tournament berth seemed all but incomprehensible.

Fast forward 87 days later, the Nittany Lion bench cleared as gloves and sticks rained down on the ice at the PPL Center after downing UConn 3-2 in overtime in the NCAA Tournament Regional Finals.

The team that was written off by the hockey world became the hottest team in college hockey, earned its fourth NCAA Tournament appearance, breezed past No. 3 Maine in the Regional Semifinals, and clinched its first-ever Frozen Four appearance.

"There were times this year when people wrote us out, and we never did," senior captain Simon Mack said. "We always had the belief that we could get to this position, so to be here with it in front of us now, there's not really emotions to describe it."

For a group that never quit, it only made sense that arguably its most important game to date, both this season and in program history, required two comeback bids and an overtime redemption.

Penn State's opening minutes almost mirrored that of Friday night, with a strong offensive showing in the opening minutes shut down by a score from the opposing team.

The Huskies got the scoring started in Allentown, Pennsylvania, Sunday night after sophomore forward Jake Richard sent a pass to a wide-open Joey Muldowney, who ripped a shot just past the stick of goaltender Arsenii Sergeev.

While trailing early in an elimination game is never ideal, the Nittany Lions had been in the

position before, and instead of cracking under pressure, they turned their play up a notch.

In the next 10 minutes, the blue and white recorded 21 shots to UConn's two and dominated possession in the offensive zone.

It only seemed a matter of time before a puck found the back of the net, and red-hot sophomore forward Dane Dowiak was the one to tie it with about six minutes to go in the period. Graduate student Tyler Paquette sent a slot pass to Dowiak, who potted one off the left post and behind UConn goaltender Callum Tung for his third goal of the tournament.

The Nittany Lions maintained momentum through the opening minutes of the second period and kept their foot on the offensive pedal. However, the Huskies also started to ramp up their play and were the ones to break the tie about eight minutes into the middle frame.

Junior forward Tabor Heaslip sent a bouncing puck toward Sergeev, who couldn't keep track and let one past to give the Huskies the lead once again.

For the second time that night, the blue and white found itself trailing. The resiliency of the unit once again reared its head, however, and 30 seconds later, freshman forward JJ Wiebusch evened the score.

Wiebusch intercepted a Husky's attempt to clear, toe-dragged, and sent a shot to the top left corner of the goal in a highlight-worthy play.

The two teams were sent to the locker rooms in a deadlock for the second time, and headed into the final period of play with a trip to the Frozen Four on the line.

Penn State's third period was arguably its worst of the night, as its once-dominant offensive unit was smothered by UConn's defense.

The Nittany Lions were outshot 14-6 in the third period, but Sergeev stood tall against his

former team, and a scoreless final frame sent Allentown to sudden-death overtime.

Once again, the Huskies were the more dominant team in the early minutes of extra time. A shot that rang off the post almost ended the blue and white's season, but puck luck kept the unit in.

Despite being outshot 14-7, UConn controlled the faceoff circle 12-8 and maintained the majority of the possession, but Penn State never backed down.

The Nittany Lions' golden moment came with just two minutes to go in overtime, when its most dominant offensive line in sophomore Matt DiMarsico and freshmen Wiebusch and Charlie Cerrato took the ice.

Cerrato backpocketed the play, skating the puck in and sending a behind-the-back pass to DiMarsico across the slot, who sent the history-making shot flying past Tung.

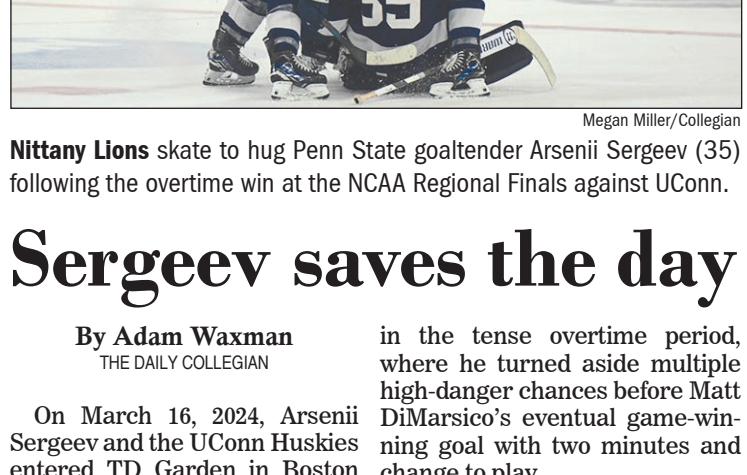
The ensuing scene was chaos, as DiMarsico threw his stick into the crowd and the bench dogpiled onto Sergeev in celebration, as the roaring sea of white erupted.

"Yeah, I definitely don't remember all too much of what happened or what I was thinking," DiMarsico said. "In the moment, I saw everyone going nuts and decided to chuck my stick into the stands. I thought it might look cool."

A battle-back effort in more ways than one sent a team that was once counted out on a trip to St. Louis for its first-ever Frozen Four, a testament to its strength and resiliency.

"This win is history for our program," coach Guy Gadowsky said. "It couldn't have been a better atmosphere, and it couldn't have been a better game."

To email reporter: mah7305@psu.edu.
Follow her on X @MaggieHardy22.



Megan Miller/Collegian

Nittany Lions skate to hug Penn State goaltender Arsenii Sergeev (35) following the overtime win at the NCAA Regional Finals against UConn.

Sergeev saves the day

By Adam Waxman
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

On March 16, 2024, Arsenii Sergeev and the UConn Huskies entered TD Garden in Boston looking to take down the No. 1 Boston College Eagles in the Hockey East Quarterfinal. Despite making 28 saves, the Yaroslavl, Russia, native's time as a Husky came to an end in a 5-4 defeat.

With former Penn State goaltender Liam Souliere transferring to Minnesota, a spot opened and Sergeev took his talents from Storrs, Connecticut, to State College, Pennsylvania. A career season for Sergeev saw him go up against his former team in the Regional Finals of the NCAA Tournament as the Nittany Lions battled the Huskies on Sunday evening, looking to reach the Frozen Four for the first time in program history.

Sergeev and the blue and white were victorious, defeating UConn 3-2 in overtime and advancing to St. Louis for a matchup with Boston University in the national semifinals.

The matchup with the Huskies was everything a regional final game should be — fast, physical and fiercely contested. Both teams traded chances in a high-paced affair with the Nittany Lions feeding off a heavily pro-Penn State crowd in Allentown.

Every time one team gained momentum, the other responded, creating a thrilling back-and-forth battle. UConn struck first, but Penn State responded quickly, setting the tone for a game that never slowed down.

The third period saw surges from both sides, with Sergeev making clutch saves as UConn pressed for a late go-ahead goal. The tension only grew in the overtime session, where every rush felt like it could end the game in an instant.

"Playing against the team I was with for two years is something else," Sergeev said. "I'm just trying to do my best and try to help those guys."

His presence was felt most

in the tense overtime period, where he turned aside multiple high-danger chances before Matt DiMarsico's eventual game-winning goal with two minutes and change to play.

Coach Guy Gadowsky, reflecting on the historic moment, made it clear just how much Sergeev means to the program, not only for his play between the pipes, but for the way his teammates rally around him.

"He's been incredible, awesome all year long. Tonight was par for the course," Gadowsky said. "But what makes him so special is that he's just a competitor. He loves to compete. There's just something about him and he's such an incredible teammate. The guys would run through a wall for him."

Sergeev's impact was especially significant given the stakes. Facing his former team and several former teammates in such a high-stakes contest, the Russian netminder remained composed, delivering clutch saves and keeping Penn State in contention when momentum seemed to shift.

Sunday's victory cemented the blue and white's place in the Frozen Four for the first time in program history. For Sergeev, it was especially meaningful as he delivered a defining performance against a team with whom he spent two seasons as a member.

"This one means a little more," Gadowsky said. "For him (Sergeev) to come out on top tonight, to make history with Penn State, it's really special. He deserves this moment."

Now with the ticket in hand, the Nittany Lions turn their attention to St. Louis on the biggest stage in college hockey. If they're going to make a run at a national title, they know exactly who they'll be counting on in goal.

"This team deserves this, this program deserves this," Sergeev said. "Just absolutely amazing fans for Penn State University. I love this school, literally 'til I die."

To email reporter: acw5735@psu.edu.
Follow him on X @adamwaxman10.