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9-24-2020

The Grizzly, September 24, 2020

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THE STUDENT NEWSPAPER OF URSINUS COLLEGE

the grizzly

Collegeville, Pa.

Thursday, September 24, 2020

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Vol. 45 Issue 1

Ursinus celebrates the Commons Opening

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All last year, students watched with rapt anticipation as the new Ursinus College Commons was built from the ground up. The \$7 million, 16,805-squarefoot space will be the welcome center for prospective students and a social hub for students. The building incorporated Keigwin Hall. However, the Coronavirus pandemic put a hold on the opening, and most students were not able to visit until the Fall semester. Now that the Commons is finally open, and students can experience its sleek modern design and welcoming curb appeal, it has brought a sense of community to campus.

"It's very scenic," Sophomore Julie Cherneskie said, "especially if you've seen it at night." When asked if the Commons has lived up to the hype, Cherneskie smiled and enthusiastically shook her head yes. "I enjoy eating breakfast on the terrace and looking out at campus. The view is so pretty and it's nice to share that with friends."



Julie says that she goes to the Commons a lot with her sister, who also is a student on campus. "My sister and I always go to the Commons together after working out. We

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A Not-So-Common Intellectual Experience

Claude Wolfer clwolfer@ursinus.edu

In a letter addressed to the Ursinus Class of 2024, the Common Intellectual Experience (CIE) co-coordinators introduced new students to their first college course: "Welcome to the Common Intellectual Experience. In just a few weeks, you will take one of the boldest steps of anyone in your generation: you will be among the first college students anywhere to walk into a

classroom since a global pandemic shut down education as we know it."

Among this letter's signatories was Dr. Abby Kluchin, Professor of Philosophy and Religious Studies and the Pedagogy Coordinator for CIE. Dr. Kluchin was instrumental in designing this semester's CIE block, particularly in the implementation of a new S/U (Satisfactory/ Unsatisfactory) grading system. She explains that the pedagogical motive behind this new evaluative process was "to lower student anxiety (especially given the challenges of this unusual year) and to create learning conditions that would genuinely increase risk-taking both in class discussions and in student writing."

Traditionally, CIE-100 extends through the Fall Semester and meets twice or thrice a week, serving as the foundation for first-year and transfer students'



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Commons cont. from pg. 1

like to sit and cool down for a little bit and the Commons is a nice place to do that."

Cherneskie is not the only student that believes the Commons is a nice addition to the campus, Sophomore Jenna Lozzi also enjoys spending time there. "It's a nice quiet place to do work," Lozzi explained, "before we just had the library, and now it is nice to know there is another spot on campus to go and quietly work," Because there is a lot of seating up on the second

CIE Cont. from pg. 1

-ation for first-year and transfer students' academic journeys at Ursinus. Students ordinarily receive a letter grade at the end of the semester, just as they do in most other Ursinus courses. Amid the pandemic, however, the CIE Coordinators redesigned the course to occupy a two-and-a-half week timeframe, allowing for a phased move-in wherein upperclassmen would arrive on campus after CIE classes had concluded. This drastic compression of the curriculum demanded



Volume 45 Issue 1

The Grizzly is a weekly student-run publication that serves the Ursinus community. Views expressed in the Grizzly do not necessarily reflect the views of the staff or college.

> Ursinus Grizzly 601 East Main Street Collegeville, PA 19426

floor, as well as a classroom, there is never a shortage of space to sit down. Lozzi believes that the Commons has something for every student, "I haven't ordered from Starbucks yet like many have already, but I do like taking out my dinner and going to eat there."

Lozzi might not have tried anything from Starbucks yet, but Junior Ally St. Jean says Starbucks is her favorite part of visiting the Commons. "I thought the Commons would be just another office space, but it's actually really

a serious pedagogical re-working. Although she didn't teach CIE this semester, Dr. Kluchin had a unique perspective of the class from her position as Co-Director of the Teaching and Learning Institute. "With grades off the table and with no other classes. our new students were able to seek their own points of entry into the CIE texts and questions, and to enter more fully into the co-creation of an intellectual community," she observed.

Diane Skorina, librarian and Director of Research and Teaching & Learning Ser-

excited for the opening. "I wanted to see what it was all about, so my first day back, I immediately went to the Commons and I was not disappointed." Junior transfer Miles Noecker was not disappointed with the Commons either. "I'm really happy I never had to experience campus without Starbucks because it's an integral part of my day." In addition to ordering his daily Starbucks, Noecker finds he likes sitting outside on the patio. "I like basking in the sun while enjoying my iced coffee

cool." St. Jean was very

vices, for LIT; and Dr. Kluchin's counterpart as Co-Director of the Teaching and Learning Institute, taught CIE again this semester after a few years' hiatus. This semester's structure, of course, was as new to Professor Skorina as it was to everyone else, but she thought it went well nevertheless. In comparing the CIE block to its semester-long predecessor, Professor Skorina says: "If you look at the learning goals of CIE, they are not about content. They are about becoming closer readers, learning discussion ... and I do think what

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with pumpkin foam and taking in the sights of the sidewalk." These four students all agree that the Commons is a very important addition to the school, so much that it has become the new community center of Ursinus.

happens is, when it's part of the 'regular' semester, it's just a little bit out of context, because all of their other courses are very heavily content-focused. Especially the intro-level courses that most first-years are taking." She continues, "I've found that as the semester goes on, it's harder to keep [students] engaged in what we're doing in the classroom. Whereas, in this concentrated, two-anda-half week, three hours per day [format]... that's all they were doing. They didn't even have sports competing with it." Professor Skorina

held her on-campus CIE classes on the second floor of the library and was impressed with students' dedication to the intensive version of the course, free of the usual pressures and distractions of taking additional courses.

Dr. Talia Argondezzi, Director of the Center for Writing and Speaking, taught a section of the CIE block in an outdoor tent on campus while simultaneously facilitating the pairing of Writing Fellows with CIE students as they worked on their first college papers.

All letters submitted to The Grizzly must not exceed 250 words in length, must be emailed, and must be accompanied by a full name and phone number to verify content. The Grizzly reserves the right to edit all material for length, content, spelling and grammar, as well as the right to refuse publication of any material submitted. All material submitted to The Grizzly becomes property of The Grizzly.

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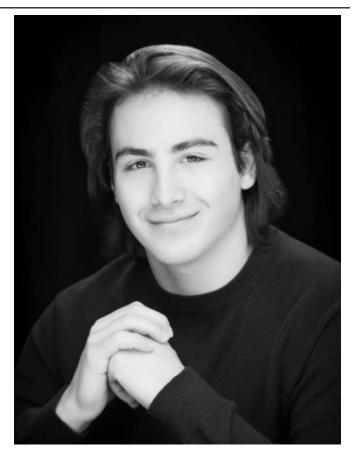
CIE Cont. from pg. 2

During ordinary semesters, Dr. Argondezzi also assists other professors in teaching writing in CIE, holding writing workshops throughout the semester and pairing Writing Fellows with class sections. Teaching college-level writing to first-year and transfer students whose previous experience with formal essay-writing is so widely varied is no simple task under ordinary conditions, but during such a condensed and shortened timeline, the challenge loomed even larger. As Dr. Argondezzi recounts: "Going into the semester, I was very worried about teaching writing because one of my thoughts about writing improvement for the writer is that it takes some time. So, I was concerned that... even if the students worked really hard and managed their time perfectly, they [still] have ... a limited amount of days to let their ideas percolate and simmer, and just to contemplate before writing [their papers]." Despite her initial uncertainty, Dr. Argondezzi found that she was "actually very surprised that I thought students were able to improve a lot over the two and a half weeks, and... I actually think the compression might have intensified improvement a little bit because there is nothing else going on." Dr. Argondezzi went on to express observations similar to Professor

Skorina's: Despite the short timeframe of CIE, the opportunity for students to focus solely on this course encouraged diligent studying, lively discussion, and thoughtful writing.

Through working with CIE students as a Writing Fellow, my experience echoes what each professor I interviewed said -- I was thoroughly impressed at the depth with which students reflected on the texts and class discussions and synthesized their thoughts into essays, all in such a short amount of time. As with other inventive educational practices that have emerged out of unforeseen desperation during the pandemic, the success of this semester's CIE block is a testament to the value of creativity. Dr. Kluchin articulates this sentiment elegantly: "I don't want to traffic in the appalling rhetoric of treating an objectively awful situation as an 'opportunity. But it's been downright inspiring to see how our faculty -- many of whom spent the summer learning as much as possible about new teaching technologies and pedagogical strategies for the age of COVID-19 -- not only rose to the occasion, but are experimenting in some really exciting and unforeseeable ways with their pedagogy as a result of the challenges that 2020 has thrown at all of us."

This uncommon educational opportunity afforded the Class of 2024 and this semester's transfer students a profound sense of commonality as they shared their first few weeks at Ursinus in collective intellectual collaboration that extended even beyond the classroom. Perhaps the "Common" in Common Intellectual Experience was never intended to denote normalcy or uniformity, but rather community.



In Loving Memory: Aidan Inteso '24



Roses are red, the weather is nice, <u>Put on a mask</u>, I will Not Say it twice. by Craig Schrager

FEATURES Strengthening your optimism muscle

Layla Halterman lahalterman@ursinus.edu

The coronavirus pandemic has altered the way we live, including many college students' experiences. Many things that students love participating in -- favorite sports, clubs, or student social events -- are postponed. The simple task of sitting in a classroom without a mask has suddenly turned complicated. Coping with mental health during trying times like these can be undeniably challenging. According to The Kaiser **Family Foundation** (KFF), in the middle of July, 53 percent of U.S. adults reported struggling with mental health or substance use due to the pandemic. This rate is a dramatic increase from when the pandemic first started at 32 percent.

Sarah Haughton, a second-year student at Ursinus College, notices that "life on campus is quieter than last school year. I feel more isolated and my social life feels nonexistent." A history major and education minor, Haughton carries the workload and responsibilities expected of a student. With classes mostly virtual, the amount of stress can become quite overbearing.

However, finding gratitude for what you

already have can help. Haughton explains how grateful she is to have some interaction rather than none with her friends on campus, and her willingness to wear a mask for hours to keep everyone healthy. "I am grateful to be able to live on campus and more than capable of cut[ting] my interactions with my fellow [peers] short," she says.

Focusing on what you are thankful for helps you cope with stress and negativity. The daily practice of gratitude can change your life dramatically. Additionally, being isolated can be debilitating, so the acts of trying something new and de-stressing yourself from constant work can be extremely useful. Haughton's approac-

"I am grateful to be able to live on campus..."

- Sarah Haughton, 2023

to de-stressing herself "consists of junky foods and a trip along the Disney+ express. Relaxing my physically tired body helps to calm my mind and ready myself to get back to my tasks."

Although those hobbies are on top of Haughton's de-stressing list, she has found a new enjoyable activity during quarantine that helps improve her energy levels. "Tve started to

levels. "I've started to run and that has helped boost my energy as well as clear out foggy thoughts," she said. She added that she is likely to continue this hobby after the pandemic ends.

Repeatedly stating a daily mantra each morning is such a great way to get the positive energy flowing. It can instantly lift one's mood and build the optimism muscle. Examples of doing so include: (1) writing down three good things that occurred during the day,

"Relaxing my physically tired body helps to calm my mind and ready myself to get back to my tasks."

> - Sarah Haughton, 2023

or that you are grateful for, (2) getting involved in something new, i.e. (virtual) clubs, organizations, services, etc.,(3) committing oneself to beginning each morning with positive affirmations.

Check out The Grizzly's monthly mantra down below:

"I can do hard things, but I still choose to focus on the positive" by Layla M. Halterman '23.

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The Fringe Festival 2020 goes virtual

Shelsea Deravil shderavil@ursinus.edu

Every year, Ursinus College hosts a Fringe Festival on campus showcasing the work of talented student artists. These pieces have traditionally included one-act plays and other community-driven events directed, acted, and casted by members of Breakaway **Student Productions** (BSP), the student-run theatre group whose aim is to increase the appreciation of theatre on campus. Given the current climate due to COVID-19, this year's Fringe Festival will be held virtually. Although the college is still adjusting to the new semester and ways of learning, clubs and organizations like BSP are making sure to continue the community tradition.

The Fringe Festival has always been the perfect opportunity for BSP to execute its mission statement. Donovan Erskine, vice president of BSP, explains what the festival means to the campus theater group. "Fringe Festival, universally, is theater and performing artists seeking freedom to perform and do what they want without pressure from the established theater community," he said. "So, Breakaway Student Productions fits perfect-

"Freedom to perform and do what they want without pressure..."

> - Donovan Erskine, Vice President

ly with this narrative, as it was created for student theater artists by student theater artists."

There will be challenges. Primarily, the thought of "doing theater over Zoom, or without a live audience, will take away from the authentic theater experience," Donovan said. Also, "as vice president, I have to keep the chain of communication open with ALL directors, casts, and designers. Since a large number of



ART! THEATER! DANCE! FILM! DRAG! ALL EVENTS ARE FOLGE

people are not on campus, communication is increasingly difficult."

Indeed, a lack of communication can cause many to lose motivation in projects or works they have been passionate about. Despite these stressful times, BSP has gotten most of their productions completed. Out of the four one-acts directed by in-person students, two will be filmed live while the other half will be done via Zoom recording. There are also five remote directors (both current students and 2020 alum) who will do audio-only performances. Additionally, Donovan stated, "there will be a cabaret of student artists of all kinds and a 24-hour theater challenge." All performances and events will be available for viewing via a Fringe Fest website that is yet to be established.

If anything physical will be missed, student leaders expect it to be

"**D**onate to organizations like the Actors Fund for all entertainment workers in the age of COVID."

> - Donovan Erskine, Vice President

having an actual audience present and watching the performances in-person. "Without an audience theater is almost impossible," Donovan pointed out. "Obviously, it is impossible for audiences to convene in a theater space for a long time. [However], your local theatres and theatre artists [need] support. Please go out and donate to organizations like the Actors Fund for all entertainment workers in the age of COVID."

The virtual Fringe Festival will be held from Sept. 30 to Oct. 3, 2020.

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OPINION

All Students Should Have the Same CIE Experience

as a screening of the

movie "Persepolis" and

a virtual performance

of Plato's "Euthyphro."

Even though CIE was

pass/fail, students had

Just because all

freshmen were tasked

to read the same texts

in class doesn't mean

experience. The three

differences I noticed

freshmen were the

from talking to fellow

expectations in quality

amount of homework,

and how the conver-

sations in class were

conducted. These three

differences resulted in

not every student ben-

efitting from CIE, and

created unequal experi-

ences. CIE was meant to

and length of papers, the

and spent the same time

they all shared the same

three essays.

to participate and write

Liam Reilly lireilly2@ursinus.edu

The Common Intellectual Experience, or CIE, is a required class for all freshmen. The course revolves around four central questions and utilizes a variety of ancient and modern texts. It is taught by professors in a variety of departments and is normally completed during the semester. However, these are not normal times.

This year, Ursinus freshmen, including myself, came to campus two and a half weeks before upperclassmen for our CIE class. CIE was an intensive three-hourper-day, five-day-a-week course. Classes were held over Zoom and/ or in-person, as were mandatory events such

The Case for Pronouns

Liam Reilly

A personal pronoun is a word that replaces an individual's name in a sentence. It also reflects an individual's identity. Those who are cisgender, a term meaning their gender matches their sex, often use pronouns that match the sex they were assigned at birth (he/him for males and she/her for females). Transgender or non-binary people may utilize other personal pronouns. These pronouns may include ze/hir, they/ them, or ze/zir. There are also cases in which someone's pronouns are a combination of existing pronouns. This can include he/they or she/ they. It is the role of the

Ursinus community as a whole, especially those such as myself with the privilege that comes with being cisgender, to educate others about pronouns and how to successfully utilize them.

The more we use peoples' pronouns, especially for members of the LGBTQIA+ community, the more validated and safe that individual becomes. Sharing one's own pronouns also reduces the stigma LGBTQIA+ people face when sharing the pronouns they use. It is a simple way to be an ally.

There are a few ways in which Ursinus as a community can come together to support the LGBTQIA+ community. be a common connection between all freshmen, but the differences I observed obstructed this goal.

The first distinguishable difference between the CIE experience is with the expectations for the three essays. Students were given word counts of 1200-1500 words for the first two essays and 1500-1800 for the last essay. However, these expectations were depended the professor. Some faculty preferred shorter essays while others expected students to meet every standard on the rubric. This meant every student wrote a different amount.

The second and arguably the most noticeable difference in students' CIE experience was the amount of work

The first is the inclusion of pronouns as part of email signatures. The emails most students send tend to include their name, major(s), minor(s), class year, and sometimes positions in student organizations. Professors tend to end emails with their faculty positions, department, office hours, etc. Adding pronouns to this signature can make students more comfortable sharing their pronouns, and create a more supportive environment.

The next way the Ursinus community can come together is by including personal pronouns below one's name on their dorm door. RAs already include the one was expected to do outside of class. Many students were expected to read the portion of the assigned text, taking notes and finding points for exploration. Others were given questions to answer with quotes or other evidence. This took much longer, and meant that a student could have extra work depending on their CIE section.

The third difference was how discussions were conducted in class. Some professors who assigned questions for students to answer seemed to focus on answering the questions and breaking down related passages. Others had one portion of the class break down parts of the work and another part connect ancient works

name(s) of students on each door, and including pronouns is a low cost add-on for those that are comfortable labeling themselves. It further normalizes the inclusion of pronouns and builds a more connected family unit.

A third way the Ursinus community can come together is by including personal pronouns in social media bios. Instagram, for example, allows users to create a short bio to express their interests, a snippet about them, etc. By including personal pronouns in said bio, students learn each other's pronouns. This also works on Ursinus360, an application used to meet

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to modern society. Some classes utilized smaller group discussions through Zoom breakout rooms or during in-person classes. type of discussions a student was exposed to depended on which professor they had.

The purpose of CIE is to get freshmen acquainted to liberal arts thinking and to answer the four questions. It should not be different because a student gets Professor A and not Professor B. While professors do and should maintain flexibility to run their own courses as they please, a class all freshmen take should come with more uniformity. Thus, the Common Intellectual Experience requires more planning to create a common

other students.

By eliminating the stigma around asking/ sharing personal pronouns and normalizing different identities. Ursinus becomes a more connected community. The campus will become more of a safe space by (at the minimum) following the suggestions above. As college students, Ursinus students are more than capable of using whatever name an individual tells them to use, and the same goes for pronouns. Out of common decency and respect, students, faculty, and administration alike should create a more inclusive Ursinus community.

"Normal" cont. from pg. 8

try team, noted that, "Senior year is supposed to be the pinnacle of your high school career, especially with athletics. It just felt like we got robbed of that last year and all the experiences we could have had."

"Having to be six feet apart is a bit weird because we don't play on the biggest court, which makes things harder to communicate."

-Kaitlyn McGinley, Class of 2022.

The fact that the Centennial Conference has called for the closure of all "inter-collegiate competition" does not mean that all team events and practices have been canceled, however. Student-athletes have had to get used to wearing masks and staying six feet apart during practice, a change that can prove to be a bit of a challenge in team sport environments. Kaitlyn McGinley, a junior on the women's volleyball team, says in her sport, "Having to be six feet apart is a bit weird because we don't play on the biggest court, which makes things harder to communicate."

The coronavirus pandemic has caused a lot of changes in sports, collegiate or otherwise, over the past year. For student-athletes, the pandemic has required them not just to prepare for the potential changes happening at school, but on the playing field as well. Despite the many unknowns happening right now, Mc-Ginley has maintained a positive outlook, telling others to "always keep their heart on the court every time they step onto it." There is not much better advice for student-athletes during such uncertain times.

Pokémon cont. from pg. 8

on campus and there's always players fighting for a gym or taking part in a raid (where multiple players join to catch a higher-level Pokémon), showing that there's an impressive community of players on campus. This is a real positive, as the game provides so many benefits to not only our physical health but mental health as well. Need a break from homework or just from laying around the house? Put a mask and shoes on and go for a walk around campus looking for Pikachus and Zigzagoons. You'll burn some calories and maybe even level up. Stressed out about an upcoming essay or have something going on where you need to decompress for an hour? Catch yourself a couple of Rattatas! Nothing helps stress more than a relaxing stroll on the hunt for Pokémon. This game enables us to take a break from the stressfulness of our day-to-day lives, taking us back to simpler times when life seemed to just make sense. It turns going for a boring old walk into something completely

different, trying to find yourself a cool Pokémon to catch or a gym to battle in. Most importantly, it makes a stressful day into a better one. I mean, who can possibly have a bad day after evolving their Magikarp into a Gyarados?

his is a real positive, as the game provides so many benefits to not only our physical health but mental health as well.

Now more than ever people need a lighthearted game like Pokémon Go in their lives. With mental health seemingly at the forefront of discussion in our society, being talked about more than it ever has, we need any positive outlet we can find. According to the Mayo Clinic, there are more than 3 million cases of clinical depression in the United States every year. While it may just seem like a silly game for kids and young adults, games like Pokémon Go can often bring joy to people's lives. Aside from the actual fun that it provides, it allows people to make connections with other players of the game. Pokémon Go is a game that's perfect to play with

other people. You can all walk around campus playing the game together and getting to know each other. Now, I'm not saying that Pokémon Go is going to cure your depression or your anxiety, but sometimes you have to start somewhere. Walking around and throwing poke balls at mythical creatures on your phone is pretty fun. And hey, you might just make a few friends in the process.

SPORTS/WELLNESS

Pokémon Go Makes a Comeback

Kevin Melton kemelton@ursinus.edu

The age of COVID-19, social distancing, and mask-wearing, in which we find ourselves today, feels peculiar to say the least. Ever since that fateful day in March when it seemed like the whole world froze, life has felt more than strange. But put this aside and let me take you back to a much simpler time. It's the summer of 2016. You're binging "Stranger Things," bumping Drake's album "Views" and playing the popular new app "Pokémon Go." For those unaware, Pokémon Go is a mobile app released by the company Niantic Labs in 2016. It combined augmented reality with an interactive, real world map to create a one-of-akind Pokémon-catching experience for those already in love with the Pokémon franchise, as well as those new to it.

It ruled everyone's lives for a few months, reviving childhood nostalgia for the Pokémon games and giving the franchise a fresh face. However, the popularity of the game didn't last forever, as it seemed to vanish into thin air. But since quarantine began and COVID had everyone at home with nothing to do, Pokémon Go is having itself a renaissance. It might be due to the utter boredom many are experiencing, the need to find a way to get out of the house, or nostalgia, but Pokémon Go has forced itself back into many of our lives. Especially on campus, people have redownloaded the app and revived their addiction to throwing virtual poke balls at imaginary creatures. At Ursinus, we have seen countless different usernames

See Pokémon on pg. 7



The New "Normal" for Ursinus College Athletics

Kevin Melton kemelton@ursinus.edu Sean McGinley semcginley@ursinus.edu

To say athletics are an important part of Ursinus culture would be an understatement. With over a third of the student body at Ursinus being a part of a varsity team, and many more students partaking in club and intramural sports, academics and athletics are closely tied to each other on campus. Unfortunately for student-athletes, in early June the Centennial Conference, the NCAA Division III conference to which Ursinus belongs, formally announced the cancellation of fall sports.

It is safe to say that this development brought a fair amount of dismay to college athletes. For some, it meant another season of sports being cancelled, after Ursinus ended the spring sports season on March 12. For others, specifically seniors who play fall sports, it could mean the potential end to their athletic careers at Ursinus College, an unfortunate byproduct of a pandemic that has made an impact in all aspects of everyday life for the past seven to eight months in the United States.

The many freshman athletes on campus have had to adjust to a very different start to their collegiate careers -- after losing out on the ends of their high school careers. Tyler Sargent, a freshman on the cross coun-

See "Normal" on pg. 7

