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the grizzly

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Letter from a graduate

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Dear Current Bears,

How are you guys holding up?! I can't imagine being on campus in a pandemic, but from what I've seen and heard thus far, you are all doing an amazing job, so let me start by saying kudos for keeping each other safe and as a community member, thank you for keeping the rest of us safe.

I'm a 2010 graduate. I know, it seems like forever ago (because it was!!) When I was on campus, the Wegman's was just being built as I got ready to graduate. Collegeville was essentially our campus, Marzella's, and The Trappe Tavern.

I probably don't have a lot of good going out tips for you, but I do have some insight and words of encouragement to offer. Here they are:

1. You're here for a reason. Whether you chose Ursinus for the small campus community, the quality of an academic program, or any other reason, you chose it. At some point in your college career, you might question if that was the right decision. It was. Maybe not for the reasons you originally thought, but one day you will look back and realize this was the path you were meant to be on. (This is not to say that if you want or need to transfer that you shouldn't. You are going to see the benefits of your Ursinus education and connections, whether you complete your education there or not, for years to come).

2. To follow up: take advantage of the resources. Ursinus has endless resources, and many are underutilized. This can be anything from student activities that are planned to

tutoring or spaces like the gym, pool, or lab spaces. Even the library can offer different services if you just dig a little. Career Services is able to offer resume and interview tips and support, even as a freshman. Ursinus also has amazing research and internship opportunities. These are things that will help to set you up for success later if you incorporate them into your college routine early.

3. Enjoy campus life, but explore off-campus too. This includes study abroad! The campus is wonderful – it's safe and fun and you have a routine. But it will be there when you get back. Use this time to travel abroad and experience different cultures, cuisine, and lifestyles. Ursinus is NOT as diverse as we'd like it to be. This is your chance. (And don't go with your best friends – branch out! Go alone if you can.) That

said, you don't have to travel across the world to get some off-campus experiences. Philadelphia is an easy drive or bus ride away. You can take the train for a day trip. There's so much to do in the city, even during COVID, and being so close with a relatively flexible schedule offers you the chance to explore. Even close-by places like Phoenixville and Limerick have lots to offer. Do some Googling and get exploring!

4. Stop procrastinating! Do your assignments early for two reasons. First, it gives you the chance to get help if you need it. Secondly, to take it off your plate (which lessens your stress).

5. Finally, stay connected. Not only to your closest friends, but to your classmates, your professors, and the administration. You don't know where

your life will take you or what those connections can mean for the future.

Enjoy your time at Ursinus, and reap the benefits that you sow here.

Best,
 Ashley McComeskey
 Class of 2010

Photo courtesy of Ashley McComeskey



Image courtesy of rawpixel.com

  @URSINUSGRIZZLY

PA COVID-19 Vaccine Update for Ursinus Students

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With both Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna's vaccines released but a limited number of doses administered, students at Ursinus are wondering when their turn will come. As university students live in a "congregate setting," they are considered part of Pennsylvania's "critical population" as outlined in the state's COVID-19 Interim Plan.

The state of Pennsylvania classifies university students as part of phase 1B of vaccine distribution. However, only just over 200,000 members of phase 1A have received both

doses of their vaccine, according to the Philadelphia Inquirer, and NPR reported on February 3 that only 1.9% of Pennsylvania residents have received both doses. These numbers do not include Philadelphia residents -- but the point is that it's pretty slow going, considering how much some students would like a vaccine.

The Pennsylvania Department of Health website advises residents (including out-of-state residents, like myself) to check eligibility (college students are 1B unless you are at high-risk, then you are 1A), find a vaccine provider, schedule an appointment, and

remember to get both doses. Sounds simple enough, but it can be hard to get an appointment, as seen from my own attempts to register for the vaccine with help from registered nurse and Ursinus parent, Tammy Miller-Cross. The best option is to keep checking back every few days if you are having trouble getting through the system. Ursinus has applied to become a point of vaccine distribution for Ursinus faculty and students, but has not yet been approved as of December 2020.

With President Biden's promise to vaccinate 100 million residents in his first 100 days and three

more vaccines in their final phase of testing, all Bears planning on getting vaccinated in Pennsylvania should sign-up soon and stay alert. Until then, stay safe!

For more information, visit the Pennsylvania Department of Health at www.health.pa.gov.

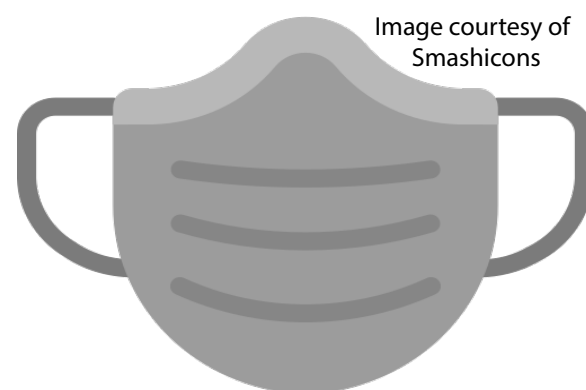


Image courtesy of Smashicons



Photo courtesy of Ursinus College

Student success is a priority to Ursinus Staff

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Ursinus College's commitment to student success is no secret. Katie O'Brien, the associate director of the Institute for Student Success (ISS), and her team found that the need for academic coaching was growing the last few semesters and decided to take charge.

The ISS offered a series of academic success workshops last semester, but "they were not very well attended." This drove staff to revamp their offerings, which is why she and her staff birthed an academic skill and success course called "Create Success: Skills

for Academic Success in College" (IDS-021) this semester.

O'Brien is confident that this two-credit course "helps students develop strategies and skills needed to achieve academic and personal success in college." This class is also a great opportunity for students wanting to earn credits towards their degree.

Alongside Adam Linetty and Dolly Singley, O'Brien developed an additional peer academic coaching program. There were 71 peer academic sessions held last semester, but she estimates that the number will "increase because of the requirement of IDS-021 ... to en-

gage in peer academic coaching."

As for turnout, both programs are thriving as of now, but O'Brien said they will have a better idea of how successful the programs were by the end of the semester.

Hat tip to Katie and her fellow colleagues for thinking creatively. Their dedication to student success never goes unnoticed.



Image courtesy of Ursinus College



Photo courtesy of Ursinus College

V.IRTU.E Club

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V.IRTU.E (Virtual Ursinus Service) is the newest addition to Ursinus' clubs and extracurricular activities. Founded and organized by Abigail Coachi '22, along with co-founders Kathryn Bjorklund '21 and Zenya Yanoff '22, Virtue has been able to reach out to various organizations and allow Ursinus students access to community service virtually. According to its mission statement: "It shall be the purpose, objective, or mission of V.IRTU.E to provide a completely virtual, student run community service program; making service more accessible to students from all majors and interests around campus." Virtue is the first completely student-run club to offer virtual community-service opportunities.

Coachi came up with Virtue last year in November while struggling to perform community service(s) due to COVID-19. She reached out to Bjorklund and Yanoff during winter break to start V.IRTU.E, and they have been working tirelessly ever since. These three young women have been avid about serving their community for many years. They reached amazing lengths with V.IRTU.E in such a short period of time, having already

partnered with three organizations.

"I thought it was such a great idea with the stress of a pandemic, let alone with classes and other curriculums. Applications can be very stressful, it would make the club more approachable going to your peers rather than an authority for community service," Bjorklund said. Yanoff is determined to make sure her peers know that the V.IRTU.E club is approachable and welcom-

"We want to...bring the Ursinus community together without being together."

- Zenya Yanoff
2022

ing. "We want to come across to the student body as a community service group that is accessible to them and to bring the Ursinus community together without being together," Yanoff stated.

Virtue's first act of community service was with Veteran's Affairs Center, a hospital for veterans. The local community has neglected to reach out to them, so with the help of the newest members of Virtue, over a hundred veterans received birthday cards for the month of February. Veteran's Affairs honors American veterans by providing exceptional health care that improves their health

The flyer features the Ursinus College logo at the top. Below it, a question asks 'Want to get involved in our community?'. A text box explains that V.IRTU.E is for students missing out on community outreach due to COVID-19. The central logo is a circular seal with a bear's head and the text 'URSINUS COLLEGE'. Below the logo, it says 'V.IRTU.E. Program' and 'Get involved' with a heart icon. At the bottom, it lists the email 'virtue@ursinus.edu' and 'V.IRTU.E's Information Flyer'. On the right side, the acronym 'V.IRTU.E.' is spelled out vertically with 'Virtual Ursinus Service' written next to it. Below this, a section titled 'What will we do?' lists activities: Donation Drives, sending birthday cards to veterans, letters of gratitude to healthcare heroes, virtual Zoom activities with Kids Need More, and a call for ideas.

and well-being. Four of the veterans received personalized cards for their 100th birthday this February.

Virtue's next act of community service involved having members write gratitude letters to healthcare heroes that have been risking their lives to protect and keep healthy our community amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. These healthcare heroes include doctors, nurses, pharmacists, hospital staff, first responders, and surgeons. Small gestures like this can make a big difference to the heroes who have been facing and experiencing unfathomable moments at every turn. V.IRTU.E will be sending these letters to various local hospitals in the area.

Virtue's main focus this semester is zooming bi-weekly with kids from Kids Need More, an organization that

helps kids with cancer. Founded in 2013, after the American Cancer Society cut funds to

"We wanted to create a club where students can express their voice and join in with ideas for community service."

- Abigail Coachi
2022

campus and programs to put it towards cancer research, Kids Need More is dedicated to enhancing the lives of children and families coping with cancer and serious illness. V.IRTU.E hopes to build a community of support through peer mentoring, friendly visits, camp experiences, retreats, and daily events. Zoom calls with the kids will be occupied for fun activities and chatting, as that is

currently the best outlet for kids to deal with their stressors, similar to Ursinus' students dealing with their own. More importantly, the children are going through this pandemic in their very own way while handling their illness on top of it. The Zoom meetings are designed to engage with the kids and make them smile a little more.

This is only the beginning for V.IRTU.E. "Once we have reached stability, we are going to start creating donation drives, and have students participate in in-person community service following COVID guidelines. A lot of programs for community service are focused on an application process and

See V.IRTU.E club on pg. 5

@URSINUSGRIZZLY

“Breaking Invisible Barriers”: The mission for more empathy

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Ursinus College’s effort to create a more inclusive, diverse community continues. On Jan. 25, in its annual community conference, Ursinus explored (new) ways to confront the invisible barriers that plague our society. Entitled “Breaking Invisible Barriers: Identity and Empowerment,” this conference provided a safe space for different community members to share personal triumphs and tribulations regarding barriers they have faced. Additionally, the community members discussed various ideas on “how to develop ownership/agency [while navigating] unique identities and groups,” according to the Ursinus website. Usually held annually in August, in-person, this year’s conference was pushed to January and attended by many via Zoom, due to the on-going pandemic. This is

the first-year staff decided to open the forum to students, too.

Meredith Goldsmith, an associate dean of the college and member of the Diversity Action Resource Team

“[The conference is an opportunity to talk about] barriers imposed by some of the stereotypes and attitudes towards people coming from marginalized groups.”

- Meredith Goldsmith
Associate Dean

(DART), believes the conference is an opportunity to talk about the “barriers imposed by some of the stereotypes and attitudes toward people coming from marginalized groups.” These obstacles are often not perceived by those who do not face them.

The conversations at this year’s conference varied, with different breakout rooms on Zoom focused on different identities. In the breakout rooms, attendees were given a series of quotes originating from literature



Courtesy of Ursinus College

or Ursinus students, and were asked about situations that made them feel liberated. Prof. Goldsmith wanted “to emphasize the assets in order to make students feel more empowered... [and] identify what works well for students and try to build on that,” she stated.

Having these difficult yet empowering conversations reveals the importance of personal narrative. Prof. Goldsmith believes that the main purpose of this year’s conference was to build empathy, understanding, and

appreciation for others and their experiences. Prof. Goldsmith also acknowledges that it can be more difficult to hold conversations in a time of isolation, but that should not stop anyone from pursuing them. For it is true: if we fail to converse, there will be grave consequences such as not seeing the change that we truly seek in today’s world.

VIRTU.E cont. from pg. 4

we wanted to create a club where students can express their voice and join in with ideas for community service,” says Coachi. Virtue welcomes anyone to join, across different sports, majors, and interests. Even remote students who can provide their questions and opinions during meetings. There is equal opportunity for all.

Get in contact with the club today, by emailing virtue@ursinus.edu.

DESK DRAWER OF THE WEEK

SPOTLIGHTING THREE STUDENTS’ DESK DRAWERS!

WANT TO BE FEATURED IN OUR “DESK DRAWER OF THE WEEK” SECTION?

HOW MESSY, CLEAN, OR ORGANIZED IS IT?

TAKE A PICTURE OF YOUR DESK

SEND YOUR PICTURE, NAME, AND YEAR TO GRIZZLY@URSINUS.EDU

PICTURES ARE DUE EVERY THURSDAY!!!

Wintertime Socially Distanced Activities

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When Ursinus returned to campus last August, there was no shortage of outdoor activities to ease students into living on-campus and interacting face-to-face once again. However, with over a foot of snow on the Berman Lawn, the reality is that we cannot continue taking classes outside or sit outside the Kaleidoscope and watch *Birds of Prey* or *Jumanji*. Even so, there are plenty of indoor activities students can do while minimizing shared surfaces and close contact.

Start a new TV show or stream movies. This is one of the places my friends and I started

upon coming to campus, watching everything from *Avatar: The Last Airbender* (yes, we were the Avatar group costume), nature documentaries, sewing and cooking youtube videos, and Starkid musicals. All you have to do is find a space with a TV or projector, hook your computer up, and hit play.

Play Cards Against Humanity. Now, playing with physical cards isn't covid friendly because it is nearly impossible to sanitize cards but there is the popular web and free alternative, *Pretend You're Xyzzy*, which advertises itself as a "Cards Against Humanity clone." If you don't want to meet in person, you can even call and play over Zoom or Discord.

Play Among Us. This game is not quite as popular as it was last autumn, but it is still a fantastic alternative for those who wish to play with their friends or with other Bears. It's a free app and you can gather in a space large enough to host you and your friends and still play games without ever needing to touch shared surfaces. *Jackbox Games* is another alternative, and while there is a cost, everyone connects from their own device. Video games in general have provided students with a good outlet to play together and while controllers are shared when on a console, they can still be easily sanitized and used in a safe environment, just like at

the new "Games Club" meetings.

Work on skills together. Drawing, knitting, reading, yoga, writing, and anything you can do indoor with masks in a large space are often more fun when practiced alongside your friends. You can use this time to be productive and learn fun new skills together as a group!

Start a book club with your friends. Gather and read together (it doesn't even have to be the same book) and talk about your books as you read them. The library has a wide variety of both fiction and non-fiction books, and they just launched this spring's "One Book, One Ursinus" program with *Born a Crime* by Trevor Noah.

Play Dungeons and Dragons. This is my own personal favorite on the list, my own friends and I just starting our first campaign this semester. With our ragtag group of adventurers, we're able to go on COVID-safe travels in a world COVID has not disrupted.

No matter how long we are stuck inside this winter, there is no shortage of COVID-safe, fun, indoor activities!



Photo Courtesy of Jenni Berrios

Tennis cont. from pg. 8

the teams by units.

The team once again has two graduating seniors this spring, Madisen Harvey and Maddie Sorebo. This is not how they envisioned their senior season after three years of commitment and great tennis: “My team for the past three years, both current and retired players, have made this experience and tennis itself something I will remember forever. The threat of this season being cancelled once again is very disappointing, I would have never imagined it to play out like this,” says Harvey ’21. Madisen played both singles and doubles all three years, switching up doubles partners and ranks on the singles ladders. In the 2020 spring season, Harvey went 5-1 with her doubles partner Summer Burkeholder ’20 at third doubles, starting off the season with a tie-breaker against Alvernia. “I cannot imagine

my Ursinus experience without the Women’s Tennis Team, it has allowed me to become a team player, leader and mentor,” says Harvey.

Returning junior and top-of-the-ladder player Brenna Trkula is excited to be back with her team after such an isolating spring and summer. Brenna is a team co-captain for the 2020-2021 season, along with senior Madisen Harvey, and it can be seen in and out of practice that she is devoted to her teammates and game. She and her doubles partner Caitlyn Sorelle ’20 posted a 6-1 record to start their second season together strong, and Trkula herself held a 5-2 record at third singles. “After months of social distancing, I found it very therapeutic to be back with my team. I am so thankful that Ursinus allowed us to practice, it really brought up the teams’ and my own spirits,” says Trkula.

This year’s freshman class is one of the biggest since the class of 2022 came to Ursinus; Claire Burke, Caitlin Vinsonhaler, Avery Samer and Kathy Logan are the fresh faces of UCWT. All four players add strong legs to the team, and whether there is a 2021 season or not, these girls are going to take the team to great heights as their careers have not even begun. Caitlin Vinsonhaler, a Milburn High School alum talks about her first experience with the team: “I really like the team dynamic of UCWT because each one of the girls is there for one another and was very welcoming to the freshmen. Whenever I am facing a problem, on or off the court, I know I can reach out to them and they will lend a hand or guidance,” says Vinsonhaler.



Photo by Ursinus College

Mental Health cont. from pg.

serious as it gets closer, but people seem to care less and less.” While everyone on campus is getting tested weekly, this does not take away from the obvious, which is that cases rose, and students do not necessarily understand why. Ferguson says the spike in positive cases has been a struggle for her as well: “It is adding stress, with more people getting it there is more stress to make sure that I do not get it and monitoring who I am around.”

How do students try to maintain a positive and healthy mindset? The common theme seems to be sticking to what used to be “normal.” “I am going to continue to try and stay active, swim with my teammates who are my family unit, and keep my routine to make sure that I am on top of my work. I also will try and get outside of my room to find safe workplaces, so I am not stuck in the same room all day and also continuing to work at admissions and the pool as well as having a normal meal and sleep schedule,” states Driver. She is not the only one who feels this way, “Definitely staying active and hopefully looking forward to doing small but safely organized team bonding things like we did last semester. Just trying to hold onto the little bit of normalcy that we might have,” con-

cludes Ferguson.

As COVID is still very much with us we hope that everyone stays masked up, safe and healthy. Go Bears!

WRITERS WANTED

Lend your voice to
The Grizzly

Email us with a pitch:
grizzly@ursinus.edu

Mental health check-in with students and staff

Rosalia Murphy
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Many students arrived on campus this spring with the hope that the spread of the COVID-19 virus could be maintained as it was last semester. With the recent rise in cases, some students have been left more stressed.

Sophomore Abby Ferguson, talks about how she initially adjusted to being back at school: “I have just tried to focus on what I can control and try to maintain that mentality, because obviously with COVID there is a lot out of my control so just making sure we stay safe and stay as active as we can is my thing now that we have been back at school.” Trying to maintain a life that seems somewhat normal, while staying as safe as possible, is the best way Ferguson knows to adjust to being back.

Another sophomore, Charlotte Driver, explains what she has been doing to adjust as smoothly as possible back into school, “This time around, I have done an okay job at adjusting. It was a little easier because I knew what to expect, but it is still hard not to think about how much of a normal semester we are actually missing, in regard to activities on campus and learning on campus.”

Now, having adjusted to being back, students are seeing the number of COVID-19 cases on campus rise. Driver explains this is adding to her stress level: “There is so much more that goes into it, like watching where I am going, who I am around. I am doing all my homework in one space and I cannot go around people. It is stressful because it is a pandemic. It is getting more intense and more

See **Mental Health** on pg. 7

Successful Women’s Tennis Season Cut Short, What Comes Next?

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Starting off their shortened season strong, the Ursinus Women’s Tennis Team left their Florida spring break with a 6-1 record. But along with the rest of the spring sports, the Women’s Tennis Team had their season cut short. After graduating two seniors last spring and bringing in four freshmen this 2020-2021 year, the team set out to rebuild itself this

past fall.

Five weeks of distanced, masked, energetic tennis is what the UC Women’s Tennis Team brought to their courts in October. The team worked really well with the COVID guidelines to make sure they could get as much out of practice as possible. Practices were not too different than they would be under normal conditions, because how much more socially distanced can you be than tennis? The most difficult aspect of practice to

adapt to for the players was handling the tennis balls themselves, each player had their own individual can of Wilson tennis balls, three to each player and labeled by number, to ensure players would possibly contaminate each other. The team focused more on singles work rather than doubles to abide by the COVID guidelines. Luckily, towards the end of the fall season the team could incorporate some doubles work by masking up and organizing the



Photo by Ursinus College

See **Tennis** on pg. 7

Thinking of You!



Photo by Ursinus Athletics



Photo by Ursinus Athletics