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The Grizzly, February 9, 2023

Layla Halterman

Chase Portaro

Marie Sykes

Jagger Clapsadle

Erin Corcoran

See next page for additional authors

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Authors

Layla Halterman, Chase Portaro, Marie Sykes, Jagger Clapsadle, Erin Corcoran, Kate I. Foley, Isabel Wesman, and Ava Compagnoni



The Grizzly



Collegeville, PA.

Thursday, February 9th

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A Look Ahead:

At *The Grizzly*, we believe there is always something to look forward to.

'A Look Ahead' is a section where our team showcases upcoming articles. The purpose is to generate excitement within our readership and the extended Ursinus community.

- » Spring Rush
- » Divine 9 Sorority
- » Plans for Valentine's?

The Wismer Shuffle

Chase Portaro: chportaro@ursinus.edu
Marie Sykes: masykes@ursinus.edu

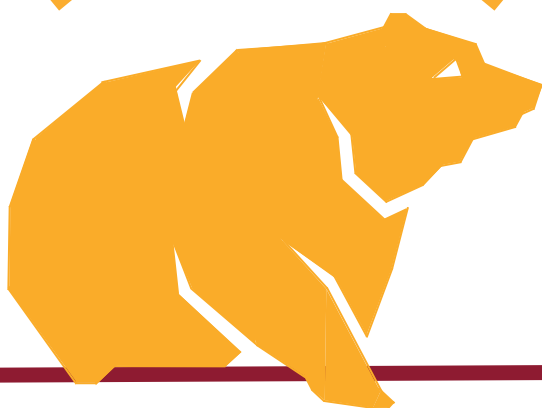
The first week of each semester, Upper Wismer usually experiences increased traffic as students' schedules have yet to succumb to mid-semester chaos, but the first week of this new spring semester felt especially busy compared to years past. The reason: the closing of the Golden Alcove (the dining area behind the salad bar) and the disappearance of its 150 dining seats has forced more students to eat in the main section of Upper Wismer.

The Golden Alcove will be transformed into faculty and staff dining, with a capacity to host as many as seventy people. In addition to the faculty and staff dining room, Dean Missy Bryant explained that Campus Safety will use a section of the Golden Alcove for locker rooms and extra storage space. Bryant said, "There are more officers than there were before because we have been trying to grow the size of the campus safety staff." In 2020, the Campus Safety staff included six officers, now there are currently thirteen officers on staff, along with an Emergency Management Coordinator, an Assistant Director, and an Executive Director of Campus Safety, according to the Campus Safety homepage on Ursinus's website. Gabby Wright, Executive Director of Campus Safety said, "It [the Golden Alcove renovation] will be a big help to us as we have outgrown the space we currently have."

Upper Wismer's old faculty and staff

dining room, as well as the President's Dining Room, both of which have entrances located between the main drink machines and the cereal station, have been transformed into Sodexo staff offices. In place of the old Sodexo staff offices, located to the right of Jazzman's in Lower Wismer, will be the new home for the Offices of Disability and Access. Bryant said, "Disability and access obviously needs to be accessible for students, so being on a main level [of Lower Wismer] where you don't need stairs or an elevator to get there was really essential."

To transform the Golden Alcove, Ursinus will hire a construction team to renovate it, according to Steve Gehringer, Ursinus's Director of Facilities. He said, "There will be a Zip Wall installed in front of the existing mechanical door and all work will be done behind that Zip Wall." A "ZipWall" is a temporary barrier that provides protection from dust produced during renovation processes, from things like sanding, molding, and demolition. Gehringer explained that the college plans for the hired construction workers to park in the Wismer lot reserved for staff members, so there are no expected parking disruptions during the renovation process. He also explained that construction is expected to be completed before May 1st, but whether those expectations will meet reality is yet to be seen.



Courtesy of Ursinus College



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Chase Portaro: chportaro@ursinus.edu
Marie Sykes: masykes@ursinus.edu

Bryant estimated that the entire process will cost the college around \$100,000, which she said, “was actually decided before the budget for this year was established.” So the money for the renovations was already budgeted into the plans for this school year.

Despite the new expanses promised by the Golden Alcove’s renovation, such as the new faculty and staff dining room and the new office space for Disability and Access, some students still raised concerns at the loss of dining seats in Upper Wismer. When asked, Sam Grubb ‘24, considered the expansion “harmful for sports teams who count on sitting together at dinner” after their practice ends. Grubb reasons that the loss of seating will force teams to disperse throughout Wismer where they can, even if it means sitting apart. Kharis Bohn ‘25 responded, “I see the purpose of

shrinking the space, but I believe it’s counterintuitive to the idea of students’ accessibility to sit-down meals.”

Beyond the concern for space, one student was concerned about reducing the size of recreational areas without consulting the student body. “I understand the need for more office space, but it feels like the students and our spaces are being treated as an afterthought,” said Morgan Grabowski ‘24. Bryant was asked if any students were consulted during the decision-making process of reallocating the spaces, but she confirmed there was not a student present throughout that process. Bryant clarified, “In the fall, I did come to student government to talk about all of the changes that were coming,” though that address would have come after the decision was already made to reallocate the Golden Alcove to a faculty and staff dining room.

From the college’s perspective, the decision to reallocate the Golden Alcove to make room for new spaces on campus tried to consider faculty and student satisfaction alike, but from the students’ perspective, it’s understandable that some feel an important campus amenity has been eroded.

Want to write for *The Grizzly*?

Pitch meetings are on Wednesdays at 7pm in Ritter 141.
Reach out to Grizzly@ursinus.edu to get involved or sign up for MCS-006-A for next semester!

Talking Trash to Address Ursinus’ Waste Issue

Chase Portaro: chportaro@ursinus.edu

One Grizzly bear weighs about 600 pounds, which seems like a lot, but not when you compare it to the 1,700 pounds of food waste that Ursinus Grizzlies produce every week in Upper Wismer alone – not even counting the food waste from The Commons or Lower Wismer.

That’s why Environmental Studies Professor Dr. Leah Joseph and her capstone class are “Talking Trash” to solve this 1,700 pound bear of a problem looming around Ursinus’s campus. Dr. Joseph’s fall semester class, titled “Talking Trash,” partnered with the Food Sustainability Fellows last semester to explore options for turning that leftover food waste into a compost.

Environmental science major Amanda Laucks, ‘23 is leading the group of students interested in reducing Ursinus’s waste output. She said, “I was a part of three different organizations who were all looking to do [a compost]. I am a food

fellow with [Director of Sustainability] Kate Keppen, then I’m in the Capstone waste class, and I’m also on the board of Wismer on Wheels, so there’s interest in composting from a bunch of different groups on campus.”

Kate Keppen, Director of Sustainability explained, “The reason there is so much interest in getting food items out of the waste stream comes from the benefit of that closed system. It came from the earth, so let’s get it back into the earth.” She added, “All of this food will eventually be broken down, and it will be turned into compost which can then go to gardens and farms to enrich the soil.”

Currently, the food scraps from Wismer enter the trash stream along with all the other waste the campus produces. After that waste leaves Ursinus, it’s brought to a waste energy plant to be incinerated. Keppen said, “What that means is it goes about twenty minutes down the road, and

it’s burned, and that heat from burning all that waste turns turbines, and that electricity goes out to the grid.”

From this process, Keppen said, “Our carbon footprint from that is 0.” Ursinus’s waste removal system still produces carbon dioxide and methane fumes and also leaves behind burned trash known as “bottom ash,” which eventually ends up in landfills. But after the waste gets burned to produce energy, someone buys that energy from PECO (Pennsylvania Electric Company) grid. “Then the carbon footprint gets placed upon the purchaser of that electricity. We are obviously in south-eastern [Pennsylvania], so theoretically we could be purchasing energy from our own trash being burned,” Keppen said.

So in reality, Ursinus’s carbon footprint isn’t being neutralized, it’s just being passed off, and Ursinus could be passing lives every time they purchase energy from PECO.

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Keppen said, “There are tremendous flaws in the model, and again, this is a universally held [model] of how people are trying to tackle the climate crisis. So, I say it’s the best we got, until we get better.” She said, “there’s a term called best management practices. . . but I often think we should be using the term better management practices.”

Environmentalists on campus have identified Wismer’s waste output as low-hanging fruit that could easily reduce Ursinus’s carbon footprint. Keppen said, “If we are able to take that out, we decrease how much waste is being incinerated,” which would actually lessen the campus’s overall carbon footprint, instead of passing the buck to someone else.

Creating a compost is a complex process, but the trial period of weighing the waste has already been completed. In

the spring of 2022, two gloved students stood at the dish pit in Upper Wismer and took plates to scrape the waste onto a scale. Those students were part of the joint effort of the Food Fellows and Dr. Joseph’s capstone class to gauge how much waste Ursinus produces.

Laucks said, “[Last] semester was just about getting it started. So right now we’re working on compiling a document that just lays out all the different methods that future students can take to creating a compost.”

The team of environmentalists set the compost plan into motion, but in order for it to become a reality, Keppen explained the entire campus should have the same interest in reducing the school’s waste output. “The onus of the class is not to ‘solve it.’ That’s for all of us to do. But they’re spending thirteen weeks exploring

this topic,” she said.

The group may not have solved the food waste issue in one semester, but they’ve made important information available to the student body. Keppen finished, “We need solutions that make sense to everyone, and if it doesn’t make sense to people, no one is going to buy into it. You don’t need to have a physics degree to see that there’s still carbon moving through the system.”

The system is far from perfect, but the beginning stages of forming a solution is recognizing that things aren’t perfect. Until the compost project is officially implemented, Laucks offered some advice on reducing waste in Wismer. “When there’s something new, the first time you try it, just get a small amount to make sure you like it then go back.”

February Editor’s Letter

Layla M. Halterman: lahalterman@ursinus.edu

Dear Ursinus Family,

I revere Valentine’s Day because it compels us to celebrate the love and affection around us. But grief is a form of love, a truth that is often unspoken, and I think it is worth honoring too. I have spent the better half of my young adulthood navigating the life-changing tides of loss, trying to make sense of the fact that humans fade in and out of each others’ lives.

Much like love, there are types of grief. The heart-wrenching loss of someone who is unable to be physically present again but only in spirit and the loss of someone who is still living with no trace of how they are doing. They both hurt the heart, but the second, in my opinion, is the most soul-crushing because our skin gets caught on hooks made up of all the futures we thought we’d have.

Moreover, it is painful to love someone from afar, to watch but from the outside. The once-familiar elements of their lives are reduced to nothing more than occasional mentions in superficial conversations and faces maturing in photographs

on social media. They exist now as nothing more than proof that something can hurt even with no contact at all.

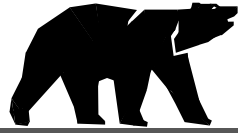
From very early on, I was taught the narrative that ‘moving on’ from someone still alive meant I had to forget or unlove them. That rhetoric was so deeply ingrained that I wholeheartedly believed no different, that I had to do just so in order to fully heal. But as the years progressed, I came to realize my original thought process was doing me a severe injustice, manufacturing only a relapse, never a cure. It was only then I adopted the philosophy that emotions can in fact co-exist, that I will always limp with grief and a constant dull ache for what never will be, but I know I have and will continue to experience moments of joy and fulfillment without them.

At one point or another, we all have to come face-to-face with loss. Grief is like a backpack we cannot put down. We always carry it. Sometimes it is so light that we almost forget we are wearing it, giving us

the courage to reminisce without shedding a tear. But other times, like during the holidays or when hearing a song on the radio, it feels like a boulder on our back, causing us to lose our footing and question everything.

I know full well that it hurts every day, the absence of someone who was once there. But as a wise man once said, just because a person leaves does not mean your love for them has to. It just takes a different form and serves as evidence of our resilience not only on Valentine’s Day but every day.

Yours truly,
Layla



Ursinus Student Lives It Up, Down Under

Chase Portaro: chportaro@ursinus.edu

Jagger Clapsadle '24, Ursinus wrestler and Environmental Science major, returns this semester after studying abroad in Sydney last fall. In addition to that studying, he's also been adding to his resume of extreme sports accomplishments. While he was abroad, Jagger took a 450 foot plunge down a ravine on a bungee cord. After speaking with him, I learned that bungee jumping was just one small taste of the Australian flavor he was palating last fall (or for Jagger, last spring in Aussieland). I caught up with Jagger – check out my interview below!

C: So Jagger, walk me through how you decided to bungee jump halfway around the world on your study abroad trip?

J: Me and about five of my friends went to New Zealand on spring break. We flew into Queenstown, which is the adventure capital of the world. So, there's tons of stuff to do there... So, we looked up bungee jumping and I looked up what's the best bungee jumping in Queenstown. So we did the tallest one, like 450 feet.

C: Were you nervous? Walk me through the moments before the jump.

J: To me it was so cool. They strap you in, then you kinda edge yourself to the platform, then the girl said "Smile at the camera," I smiled and gave a little thumbs up, and your feet are at the edge of this tiny platform, so that was probably the scariest part when you're just looking down. But then when you jump, all those nerves kinda go away and it's just insane.

C: How long are you falling?

J: So it's like a six second free fall the first time down, then you bounce . . . and when you're at the top of that first bounce, there's a moment where you're just weightless. . . I just live for that shit, so I would've done it ten more times that day if I could.

C: So let's backtrack a little. How did you decide to study abroad in Sydney, Jagger?

J: I grew up at the beach in Ocean City, Maryland, so I wanted to go somewhere that had the same kinda deal. . . It was also appealing to me that I was going by myself

to the other side of the world. That was a super cool leap of faith to me.

C: So have you surfed any while you've been there?

J: I surfed Maroubra and Cronulla. Cronulla reef break was where I went recently and it was beautiful the day I went. I mean I caught some of the waves of my life that day.

C: Wave of your life you said?

J: Yea, the wave of my life. It was a super long ride, the water felt great, super clean break. We had offshore winds, and the waves were damn near over-head, like five or six feet. They were definitely some of the bigger waves I've ever caught. I mean five feet doesn't sound that big.

C: I mean when you're surfing over top of a sharp reef in a country that's on the other side of the world, I bet the waves felt pretty big.

J: Yea, I guess if you put it like that.

C: So, Jagger, you've been talking about the waves, but where were you when you posted that picture of the glacier with all the snowy mountains?

J: That was a picture of me in New Zealand. So, [me and my friends] took a helicopter up to the top of a glacier. The helicopter landed and we got to walk around and take pictures on top and stuff, then we took a snow plane, like a plane with skis on the bottom, and the snow plane picked us up and took us back down to the mountain.

C: Wow, so that was the same trip as the bungee jumping excursion? It sounds like you guys did quite a bit.

J: Yea, I mean we spent a lot of time researching this trip to New Zealand. We were only there for 8 days, but we covered a good bit of the South Island. And the South Island is where it's at– it's more scenic. You know, we hiked every day, we did the bungee jump, then on the last day, that's when we did the helicopter and the ski plane. So that was insane, some of the most beautiful views in my life.

C: What else have you been up to, have

you gotten to do any cultural stuff?

J: I went to the nation's capital, Canberra. I went to the National Art Galleries, the National Portrait Galleries. I went to the State Art Galleries here in Sydney. So yea, I've really enjoyed learning about Australian art and stuff like that.

We also did a cruise at Milford sound. It was like \$15, but Milford Sound is known as one of the eighth [sic] natural wonders of the world. It's probably one of the most beautiful places I've ever been.

C: Wow, I'm looking at pictures right now, and it doesn't even look real.

J: Yea, it was definitely one of the most beautiful places I've ever been. I was just in awe the entire trip, trying to be in the moment. . . That's something I've been working on a lot because you know, the mind always wants something to work out, and it's constantly trying to figure out problems that are never even a thing– never even exist. So, I would be there, take a deep breath, and be like "Okay, I need to be fully here right now because I know I'll regret it later if I'm worrying about some stupid bullshit I don't need to worry about."



Courtesy of Jagger Clapsadle

Job, Internship and Networking Fair February 15!

Erin Corcoran: ecorcoran@ursinus.edu

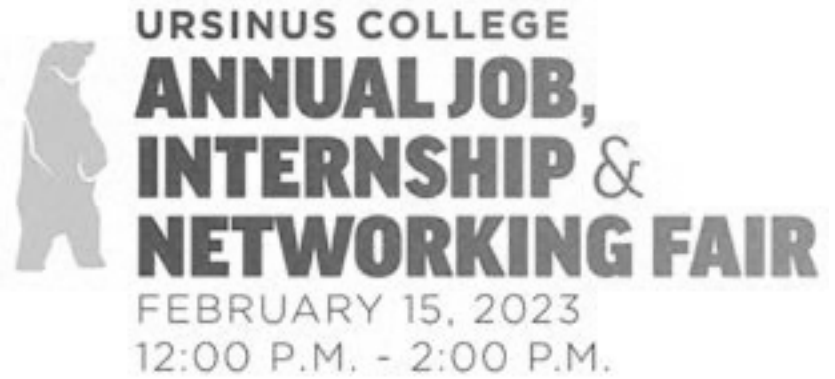
Time to take your professional attire out of hibernation, Bears! The annual Job, Internship and Networking (JIN) Fair is back and in-person.

The Job, Internship and Networking (JIN) Fair, run by the Career and Post-Graduate Development office, will be held in Floy Lewis Bakes Field House from 12pm-2pm on Wednesday, February 15th. Over 70 organizations will be in attendance, from industries ranging from pharmaceuticals to education to non-profits, so every student can find something that meets their interests and studies. As Samantha Harvey, Assistant Director for Employer Engagement, emphasized, “organizations offer a variety of roles within their company, and students will be able to learn about potential job opportunities that they might not have otherwise known about.” Additionally, students will have an opportunity to get free headshots taken for their LinkedIn profiles and other professional endeavors.

Whatever step of your academic and career journey students are at, they are able to attend the JIN Fair. It is an opportunity to connect with multiple organizations and get a better sense of what types of jobs are out there. The fair is also an opportunity

to ask questions about organizations face-to-face and gain valuable information for job or internship searches. It gives students a chance to connect with employers, which can lead to potential jobs and new career opportunities. Harvey continued, “[any student] can get the most out of the event by taking steps to prepare for the fair, coming with an open mind, and following up with connections they made after the fair. CPD is here to help students at every step of the process.”

The Career and Post-Graduate Development office has programs set up to provide support to students before, during, and after the event. Leading up to the 15th, there will be designated drop-in hours to discuss resumes, job searching, and other advice about attending the fair. Independently, students are encouraged to review and update their resumes, research attending organizations, practice a personal “elevator pitch,” and formulate questions to ask the organizations. As always, students can also schedule appointments with the office’s



career advisors before or after the fair. The JIN Fair page on Ursinus’s website is another helpful resource for tips to get the most out of the Fair.

Students can register for the fair through Handshake to receive updates and view the comprehensive list of organizations in attendance. To find this, log into Handshake and click the events tab. From there, find the JIN posting and click “join event” in the upper right corner. Refer to this page to check the list of organizations and filter by major, location and industry, and current openings.

Any additional questions can be directed to the Career and Post-Graduate Development office via email at career@ursinus.edu or stopping by their offices on the first floor of Bomberger.

More Photos From Down Under (Page 5)...



Courtesy of Jagger Clapsadle



Pets Banned From Campus Buildings? A-PAW-LLING!

Kate Foley: kafoley@ursinus.edu

On December 15, 2022, Associate Vice President for Finance and Administration, Cale Nelson, and Vice President for Academic Affairs and Dean of the College, Mark Schneider, sent a broadcast to Ursinus faculty and staff. The email announced a new policy regarding pets, explicitly stating, “Due to medical, safety, and professional etiquette concerns over pets being brought to work, a special task force was created by President Hannigan’s cabinet to research and develop an employee policy regarding pets on campus. That policy was blessed by cabinet on November 29 and will go into effect January 30, 2023.”

The entire policy can be viewed at <https://ursinus.edu/offices/human-resources/policies-and-practices/pets-on-campus-policy/>, but the bottom line is this: faculty and staff are no longer permitted to bring their pets into campus buildings. Not into classrooms, not into open lobby spaces, not even into personal offices.

There are a few exceptions — service/emotional support animals, pets for whom employees residing in College housing have obtained permission from Human Resources, etc. — but the policy is a big change. And it came as a surprise to many. It probably comes as a surprise to you too, my fellow students, as this was not well publicized to students.

One of the most upsetting parts of this new policy is how the special task force did not consider students’ feelings about a new change in campus atmosphere: students were never given a heads up that this policy might be put into place. Faculty and staff were consulted, but The Grizzly is not aware of any formal student input being taken into account, despite some faculty members’ recommendation that students be notified too. Student government has no record of this being discussed at one of their meetings and the announcement email mentions conversations with employees but not with students.

Why wasn’t the email sent to faculty and staff sent to students as well? Was this a deliberate attempt to conceal the change,

or did the special task force assume students would not care? This abrupt policy change ignores how important employees’ pets have become in students’ lives. Naomi Marin, ’23, says, “This new policy is extremely disappointing. I always loved it when dogs would visit us during rehearsal, it was a great break and definitely made me feel less stressed.”

Ever since hearing this surprising news, a series of questions have run through my mind. Questions such as, where is the middle ground? Why was there no attempt to compromise so concerns could be addressed while also considering the negative impact this would have on employees and students alike? Couldn’t well-behaved pets be registered through the school so they could be allowed in academic spaces? Why can’t faculty and staff bring pets into their offices, a personal and private space? Why this zero-to-sixty jump?

Additionally, why is my professor allowed to bring their child to class, but not their dog? Pets are some people’s children. A ban on pets in campus buildings now disproportionately affects certain faculty and staff members at Ursinus. Now, employees affected by this policy will now have to arrange for pet care, imposing an extra cost which not every employee may be able to afford. If that cost is not feasible, this pet policy could impact employees’ work schedule, productivity, mental health, and general well-being.

If allergies are the concern, it is impractical to expect that all pets be banned for a handful of students who might be allergic — after all, Ursinus has not made every academic building a nut-free zone or a perfume-free zone for students who might have those allergies. The expectation should be that students communicate these allergies with professors so the professor can set certain classroom guidelines about not having food in class or bringing dogs to that particular class. Olivia Cross, ’24, points out, “it’s interesting to me because [Ursinus is] still using the therapy dogs as a big drawing force,” revealing a double standard. The popular therapy dog pro-

gram primarily takes place inside campus buildings, proving that there are obviously ways to safely and professionally allow dogs indoors.

In my experience, professors have been conscientious about bringing pets into classrooms to ensure no one was uncomfortable. Naomi shares a similar experience: “There were also always safety precautions: my professors would always ask if anyone was allergic to dogs before bringing them in.” These pets have been well-behaved and kept on leashes or in carriers (or otherwise monitored to maintain safety). Of course, it is reasonable to expect that ill-behaved dogs that damage property or are a danger to others should not be allowed indoors. However, if a dog is trained and registered, there is no reason why they shouldn’t be allowed on campus just like any child would be.

According to the broadcast, “As part of the process for developing a policy, the task force referred to policies at other colleges and universities, and also solicited feedback from Ursinus employees.” The bottom line is students were not consulted for their opinions nor were they notified when the policy went into effect. For a school that claims to openly communicate with students, the administration did a poor job in this case of establishing this change. As students have found out about the pet ban thanks to word-of-mouth, they have not wasted time in communicating their disappointment. An anonymous senior student says, “I feel like Ursinus has touted itself as a dog friendly institution and as a way of being welcoming to the community, so it’s disappointing they’re rolling back on that considering that in the past they’ve always been welcoming to people who love animals.”

Students, I encourage you to express your opinions about this policy. Take your concerns and rightful outrage to senate meetings, email the appropriate channels, contact student government—if a change is to be made, we need to raise our voices and make that change. We deserve to be heard.



“Deal”-ing out Ws

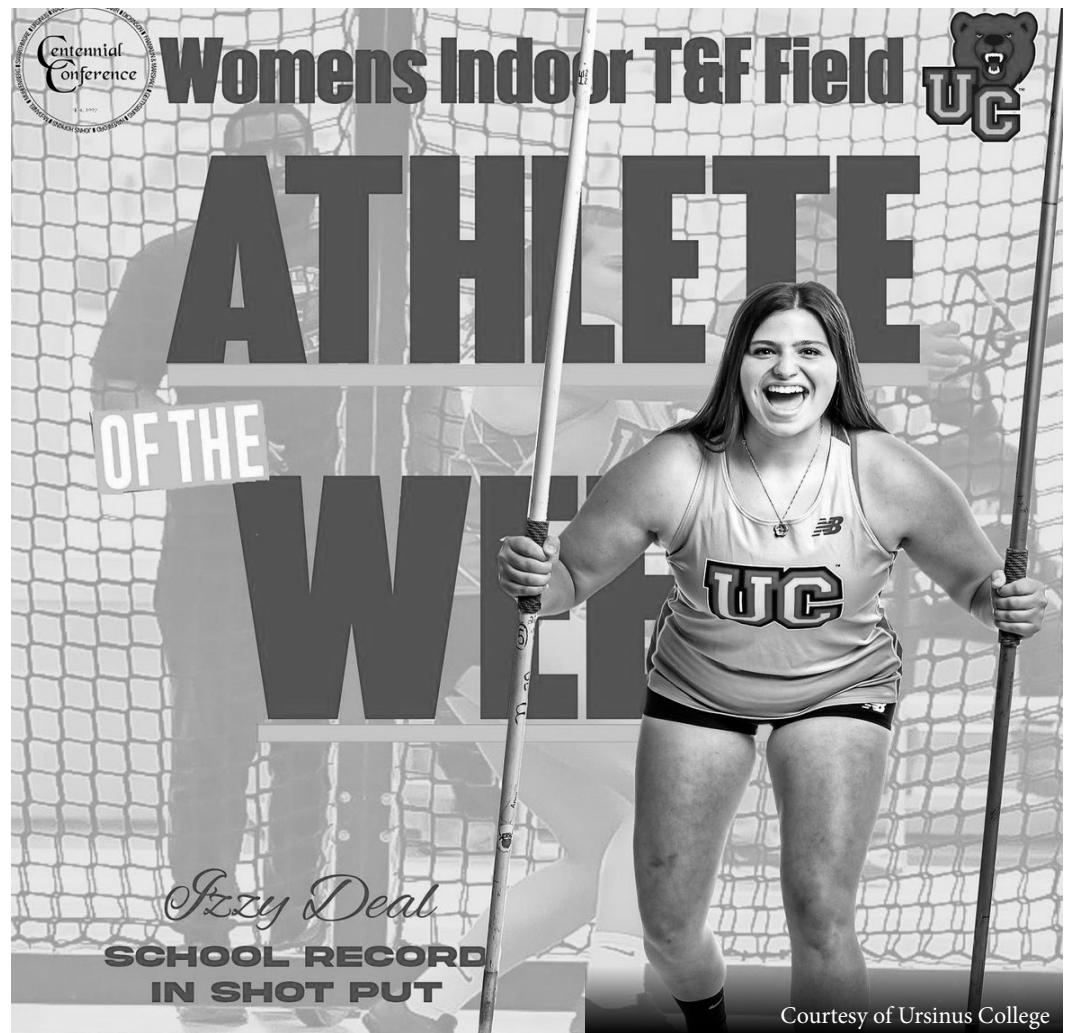
Isabel Wesman
iswesman@ursinus.edu

While the Ursinus Women’s Indoor Track and Field season is just kicking off, senior student-athlete Izzy Deal has wasted no time in showing up with her A-game, breaking both personal and school records left and right.

Deal broke two records at Franklin & Marshall’s Mini-Dip Invitational on January 27th, eclipsing the school’s previous weight throw record of 44 feet 5.5 inches with her score of 44 feet 9 inches, and also adding almost an entire foot to the shot put record which now stands at 42 feet 5 inches. Her throw in shot put was not only the best yet of her personal career, but it also impressively stands at the second-best throw in the entire Centennial Conference this season.

Though the NCAA All-American athlete is currently in her eighth year as a member of a Track and Field team, Deal’s success has come from a tremendous amount of discipline and training both on and off of the track and field—in other words, it’s not just practice that makes perfect. Of this journey, Deal notes that, along with a host of other regimens, she works with Ursinus’ athletic trainers, actively lifts, and continuously watches her nutrition intake. And it’s all worth it for her to see her own improvement. She says, “I have continued to do track because of the challenges that I’ve pushed through. Working hard to achieve my goals has only grown my love for the sport. The individualistic ways of competing—but also competing for a team—is a rewarding feeling, and throwing has allowed me to push myself past my limits in many capacities.”

That is not to say, however, that improvement has always been a straight and narrow path for Deal. One of her most challenging setbacks in college was when she got injured during the spring season last year. Deal ended up going to Nationals and competed with the injury, though not doing as well as she’d originally hoped. The summer following, she also found out that she tore her lateral meniscus. But rather than letting it discourage her, Deal used



this injury as yet another opportunity to grow. Though obviously challenging, Deal talks about her injuries as “[motivating] me more to try and go again this upcoming spring to redeem myself. It was a long road to feeling healthy again... [but] the injury has made me tougher and more grateful for every opportunity I get to compete.” After the setbacks, Deal worked with a physical therapist and did more healing work that has certainly been rewarding. Since then, she has continued to make progress in both the shot put and the weight throw—leading us back up to her record-breaking moment from this season.

“Breaking the school record for shot put felt amazing. I knew right after I saw the shot land that it was my best throw of the meet! The weight record felt similar but I didn’t realize I broke the record until a teammate of mine revealed that I had done it! I am grateful for my coach, parents, and teammates that were supporting me in these moments.” After many years of determination and a commitment to progress, Deal has proven that hard work pays off.

And as for the future, Deal looks forward to when the mens and womens track and field teams compete in the centennial conference meet towards the end of february. She is also looking to once again make it to nationals, and perform to the best of her ability. Izzy Deal’s drive, strength, and work ethic certainly all have come together to get her to the skill level that she is at now, and we can’t wait to see what she does next!

“I have continued to do track because of the challenges that I’ve pushed through. Working hard to achieve my goals has only grown my love for the sport.”

- Izzy Deal ‘23



Swim, Swam, Swum in Florida

Ava Compagnoni
avcompagnoni@ursinus.edu

What could be better than swimming under the sunny blue skies of Fort Lauderdale with all your teammates, aka best friends? The annual winter training trip for the Ursinus Swim Team took place over this past winter break. The entire trip is ten days long, with two travel days and one break day. For those two travel days, the team only has one swim a day, and for the remaining seven days of practice there are two-a-days (two practices). In her four years of being an Ursinus student-athlete, senior Charlotte Driver has only been on two winter training trips. Although she only experienced it twice, the impact the trip has had on her as a swimmer and teammate is unforgettable.

“Florida was awesome, training is really difficult down there. We swim a lot of yardage, and we all get really fast and we are all at peak training and performance.” The teams are working hard to focus on speed and details before heading back to PA to ‘taper down’ for conferences. For non-swim lingo people, “tapering’ means you are dropping down in yardage and getting more rest as your body has just gone through intense training. So, now everyone is really strong but still doing speedwork,” says Driver.

Compared to the team’s time together in Collegeville, Florida is all fun without the stress of academics and non-swimming extracurriculars. “It is the best bonding opportunity, when we get down there it is a playdate with your best friends. You might be having a terrible time in the water, it hurts and it is hard, but you would not want to be doing it with anyone else,” says Driver. After a long day of practices, each swimmer knows they can go back to their motel, eat, relax in the hot tub, and go on a walk to get ice cream, all together. Not only does a greater bond form with her teammates, but also with her coaches. “The way you get close with the coaches too is really amazing. They become parents in the best way, because we are at an age as young adults to have meaningful conversations and learn from great role models,” says



Courtesy of Ursinus Athletics

“You’re just swimming back and forth and staring at a black line in a pool and a hole in the ground that’s filled with water, like, it’s weird.”

- Charlotte Driver ‘23

Driver.

Driver did not only learn how to swim faster by being a member of the Ursinus Swim Team. She explains, “I would say being a student athlete is a really special experience, I noticed my growth in many different aspects of my life: organization, time management skills, dedication and motivation, I have watched myself blossom throughout my swim career.” Not only is swimming a physical sport, but like any other, there is a deeper level of mental strength it takes to swim competitively. “You’re just swimming back and forth and staring at a black line in a pool and a hole in the ground that’s filled with water, like, it’s weird. You spend a lot of time with your thoughts and most of the time you are thinking about what you are doing with your body, but also for 60%-80% of the time it is always something else,” says Driver. If a swimmer was swimming a 1000

meter, that is 40 laps in the pool, “that is you locked in the black line for forty laps and it is all a mind game.”

With the intensity of the Conference Championships looming, the atmosphere of swimming in Florida allows an escape from the intense competition ahead. “Swimming in Florida is so much easier, it is going to be like a gorgeous sunset, we are swimming outside, it is really picturesque,” says Driver. As they finish up their second practice of that day, the sun will be setting into a pink sky and all the swimmers look up to their swim to feel a little bit better.

Driver says she would not trade her swimming career at Ursinus for anything else, but with a slight laugh she claims, at this stage she may not physically be able to do it again. As the Aqua Bears finish up their season shortly, get down to the pool to see their intensity and wish them luck at the champs. Go Bears! #SKOBEARS!