

Chefwear and cookie recipe
Page 9



"Crow Show"
Page 10



Libraries
Page 12

NECC Observer

The award-winning student newspaper of Northern Essex Community College • Haverhill and Lawrence, Mass.

Spring 2026 • Volume 91 • Issue Number 2 • October 29, 2026

News Bytes

First-time job seeker tips
Page 3

The Glee reboot
Page 4

John Henry should sell the Red Sox
Page 5

Balancing work and college
Page 11

AI: Friend or Foe?
Page 2

Basketball
Page 14

New baseball coach
Page 15

A letter from SGA preisdent
Page 11

Making space to play



Photo by Editior-in-Chief Lidia Ramirez

Constuction crews shaping the fields.

By Lidia Ramirez
Editor-in-Chief

The next project for Northern Essex Community College: A new multi-use athletics complex.

The complex will have the baseball and soccer fields, and a new track field with the eight lanes and a new turf field in the middle.

The school will be launching women's flag football.

Another resource that the school will offer with the fields are rentals to generate revenue for the school, according to NECC Executive Vice President/Chief Financial Officer/ Chief Operating Officer Mike McCarthy.

Continued on Page 8

What's Happening?

Come out to welcome back your NJCAA Champion men's basketball Knights as they tip off the new season. Arrive early to score an exclusive camo NECC Athletics performance tee at the door, and don't forget to grab a ticket for our game ball raffle.
@ 1:30 p.m. Game @ 2:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. Sports and Fitness Center Gym, Haverhill Campus.

Virtual Info Session: Free Community College. Register at Necc.mass.edu website. Nov. 4 @ 5:00p.m. to 6:00p.m. on zoom.

How to find security around each campus:

Haverhill Campus
100 Elliott St., Spurk Building, Room 110C
Lawrence Campus
45 Franklin St. main lobby
Call 978.556.3333 from a cell phone. Extension 3333 from any campus phone on either campus.

Editorial

AI on campus: Friend or foe?

By Lauren Ferguson
Correspondent

Artificial intelligence has become a common tool for college students, offering new ways to conduct research, develop ideas and complete assignments. But as its use spreads across college campuses, educators are questioning whether AI is an asset to student learning or a detriment to academic success. From cell phones and social media to television, AI is increasingly shaping how people communicate, access information and consume media. Although advancements in AI have been remarkable, questions remain about how the technology is affecting society, particularly in higher education. At Northern Essex Community College, individual instructors establish their own guidelines for AI use, which may be outlined in course syllabi for both online and in-person classes. These varying guidelines can blur the line between using AI as an academic aid and using it in ways that may constitute plagiarism. As colleges continue to navigate the growing presence of AI, an important question remains: Is the technology helping higher education evolve, or is it undermining academic integrity and detracting from the student learning experience?

June DiCicco, a Northern Essex Community College alumna, said she frequently relied on AI while completing her schoolwork. Although she initially used ChatGPT as an academic aid, she found herself becoming increasingly dependent on the technology. "When I was in school, I used ChatGPT, like, 80% of the time. I didn't use it to, like, do my work for me, but I used it to help and found that it was hard after a while to get things done without it," DiCicco said. Her experience raises a broader question: Even when used as a guide, can AI tools such as ChatGPT hinder college students' ability to think critically and complete work on their own and originally? College campuses such as Northern Essex offer resources, including libraries and tutoring centers,

Continued on Page 13

Comic by Narjis Musa



Editor's note: In a design mistake in our last edition, we accidentally cut off the last panel of Narjis Musa's comic. We regret the error and are publishing the full comic again so you can get the full message.

NECC Observer

The award-winning student newspaper of Northern Essex Community College

Room C-318, Spurk Building,
100 Elliott St. Haverhill, MA 01830

Newsroom 978.556.3027 Advertising 978.556.3397
Adviser 978.556.3397 observer@necc.mass.edu

The NECC Observer reserves the right to edit, condense and refuse all submissions.

Spring 2025 Observer Staff

Editor-in-Chief : Lidia Ramirez
Opinion Editor : Tristan Taylor
Features Editor : Stacy Zappala
A&E Editor : Omayda Massa Torres
A& E Editor : J.T. Melanson
Chief sports Editor : John Mulcahy
sports Editor : Michael Sicard
Campus Life Editor : Nasrin Musa
Food Editor: Sharon Donovan
Faculty Adviser : Mary Jo Shafer

Have you taken Journalism I? Are you taking it now? Would you like to be on the Observer staff? Then submit your resume to observer@necc.mass.eduu

Publication Schedule

Issue #	Publication Date	Ad/Copy Deadline
1	Oct. 8	Oct. 2
2	Oct. 29	Oct. 23
3	Nov. 12	Nov. 6
4	Dec. 3	Nov. 27

We welcome letters and articles from our readers. You can submit via email, and must include your name and phone number for verification. Write "Letter" or "Article to Editor" in the subject line so we notice it right away.

Send your letters to **observer@necc.mass.edu**

We try to publish all letters we recieve, but we reserve the right to edit or reject those we recieve.

The NECC Observer is a member of the Associated Collegiate Press, College Media Advertisers Inc., the Colombia Scholastic Press

Opinion

First-time job seeker tips

By Katie Yeaton-Hromada
Coordinator for Career Services and Internship Programs

Whether you're applying for a part-time or full-time position, the application process can feel daunting. Here are 10 tips to help you get started:

1. **Start Before You Feel Ready**

Many students wait until they have more experience before applying. Don't! Employers hiring entry-level candidates know you're still building your skills. Apply when you meet most of the qualifications, not necessarily all of them.

2. **Create a Resume That Shows Your Potential**

You don't need years of work experience to have a strong resume. Include coursework, projects, internships, volunteer work, leadership roles, athletics, and transferrable skills you've developed.

3. **Write a Cover Letter**

A cover letter helps employers understand your interest in a role and gives you an opportunity to explain your goals, strengths, and experiences. It can help you stand out, especially when your resume is similar to other applicants.

4. **Tailor Your Application for Each Position**

Avoid sending the same resume and cover letter to every employer. Take a few minutes to adjust your materials so they reflect the specific job requirements and your fit. Quick apply can be really tempting, but tailoring can yield more replies.

> "Your first job doesn't have to be your dream job. Every application, interview, voluteer role, and networking conversation will help you gain experience and build confidence. Start where you are and learn along the way."

5. **Network (Even if You're Introverted!)**

Building connections takes time and practice – it's not about collecting business cards. Attend career events and workshops at NECC, connect with professors, classmates, alumni, and professionals in your field of interest.

6. **Practice Interviewing**

Interviewing is like a muscle—it needs practice to perform and feel confident. Prepare examples that demonstrate your collaboration, problem-solving, leadership, adaptability, and communication. Learn more about the industry and the style of questions to expect.

7. **Follow Up Professionally**

After a conversation or interview, send a brief thank you note. This simple step demonstrates professionalism, appreciation, and continued interest in the opportunity.

8. **Build Your Professional Presence Online**

Many employers search for candidates online. Create or update your LinkedIn profile, use a professional photo, and make sure your public social media profiles represent you in a positive way.

9. **Build a Portfolio of Your Work**

Start saving projects, writing samples, designs, research, or other assignments that show your skills. Whether it's a personal website, LinkedIn profile, Google Drive folder, or digital portfolio, having examples of your work makes it easier to demonstrate your abilities to future employers.

10. **Connect with Career Services**

One of the best free resources at NECC, if I do say so myself. Career Services can help with resumes, cover letters, interview preparation, job searches, LinkedIn Profiles, and career exploration.

Final Thoughts

Your first job doesn't have to be your dream job. Every application, interview, volunteer role, and networking conversation will help you gain experience and build confidence. Start where you are and learn along the way.

The job search can be frustrating at times, and rejection is a normal part of it. Focus on what is in your control and try not to let setbacks discourage you. Remember, rejection can be redirection, an opportunity to find an even better fit.

Start early, ask for feedback, research organizations, and apply to multiple opportunities. We're here to support you at every step of the way. Our goal is to not only help you land your next opportunity but to equip you with the career readiness skills that will benefit you throughout your professional journey.

Wishing you a successful search!

Career Services

Looking for career support? We're here to help!

Connect with Career Services for help in your job search and get personalized career guidance.

Schedule an appointment through Navigate.

Have questions? Email us at careerservices@necc.mass.edu

This paper is your voice, too!
We want to see what you have to say.

You can reach us at:

observer@necc.mass.edu

Opinion

The "Glee-boot" will succeed

By Tristan Taylor
Opinion Editor

On Oct. 21, fans of the hit TV series *Glee* woke up to the news that a revival of the show had been ordered by Disney+ and Hulu. The original series, which ran from 2009 to 2015, was praised for its tackling of real-world issues, and had an ensemble main cast, with names like Matthew Morrison, Jane Lynch, Lea Michele, Cory Monteith, Amber Riley, Kevin McHale, Chris Colfer, later joined by Heather Morris, Naya Rivera, Darren Criss, Harry Shum Jr., Alex Newell, and Chord Overstreet, among others. Ryan Murphy, Brad Falchuk, and Ian Brennan created the series, which would go on to win six Primetime Emmy Awards, four Golden Globe Awards, and the 2009 Screen Actors Guild Award for Outstanding Performance by an Ensemble in a Comedy Series.

No two episodes of the original series were the same. Over the course of 121 episodes across six seasons, there were 729 musical performances, with songs ranging from show tunes to chart hits to classics. Additionally, it inspired a reality TV spin-off, *The Glee Project*, where the winners of the show (and other notable contestants) would have recurring roles on the main show, as well as *Glee Viet Nam*, a Vietnamese adaptation that aired on FPT Play, DANET, and Zing TV in 2017.

While the original series was great, many fans, like myself, are concerned about the direction the reboot will take. One of these particular issues is the fate of a fan-favorite character, Santana Lopez. The snarky, sarcastic character, portrayed by Naya Rivera, is often described as one of the more iconic characters from the original run. However, in 2020, Rivera tragically passed away while saving her son when their boating trip on Lake Piru took a turn for the worse. As such, fans worry that her character will be killed off-screen. This would not be the first time this has happened, as Cory Monteith's character, Finn Hudson, was killed off-screen following Monteith's death in 2013, prior to the production of the fifth season. Rivera's character, Santana, was in a relationship with Brittany S. Pierce, played by Heather Morris (who has confirmed her participation in the reboot). The relationship portrayed on the show was considered a milestone for lesbian representation and visibility in the media, and as such, many are hoping Santana is not killed off, instead hoping for some off-screen contribution to the plot to keep Rivera's memory alive. I personally believe this would be the best way to go forward, as any other option would feel disrespectful to Rivera's memory.

Fans are also hoping for the return of fan favorite characters Kurt Hummel and Blaine Anderson, portrayed by Chris Colfer and Darren Criss, respectively. There is doubt as to whether either would be open to returning, as Colfer has previously stated a return would be emotionally difficult, especially after the deaths of Monteith and Rivera. Criss is currently active in numerous projects and is booked for more, and fans worry that scheduling conflicts could prevent a return. I personally like both of their characters, so I am hoping they are brought back, even if it's only for a few episodes.

Another fan-favorite character that many hope to see return is Sue Sylvester, portrayed by Jane Lynch. Despite being considered the main antagonist, the character is often seen as iconic due to Lynch's straight-faced yet scathing delivery and unforgettable one-liners. Lynch has alluded to a return, posting news of the reboot on her Instagram story. As far as I'm concerned, this is good news, as it could mean the return of an over-the-top TV villain with that signature deadpan humor that always makes me laugh.

Personally, I would like to see Jake Zyrus return in some capacity. Zyrus, who appeared in the original series as Sunshine Corazon, has since publicly transitioned, and his return would provide the show with an opportunity to acknowledge its history while welcoming back an artist whose life and career have evolved since his time on the show. If he were to return, I would love to see his identity respected in his return, and it would be wonderful to see him reconnect with the franchise on his own terms.

I would also love to see Damian McGinty reprise his role as Rory Flanagan. McGinty, who won the first season of *The Glee Project*, appeared in 18 episodes of the original series, but was well known prior to his appearance on the show, having been a member of Celtic Thunder since he was 14 years old. Since then, he has remained a member of Celtic Thunder, and in 2023, he competed on the sixth season of the Irish version of D*ancing with the Stars*, where he and professional partner Kylee Vincent were one of three runner-up couples.

Glee was not a show I watched during the original run. However, upon joining my school's glee club in senior year of high school, I started watching the show to compare my experience to it. Many of the numbers that we did were numbers from the show, which was an added bonus, and I often found that the *Glee* versions of the songs we performed were easier for me to sing, as someone with a lower vocal range.

The return of *Glee* will likely be very successful, but I personally would like to see the return of the cast members and characters mentioned above. While not much is currently known about the reboot, nicknamed the "Gleeboot" by fans, if it can find a way to draw in new fans in younger Gen Z and Gen Alpha, while keeping the original Millennial and older Gen Z fanbase, it will almost certainly succeed.

This paper is your voice, too!
We want to see what you have to say.

You can reach us at:
978-556-3633
observer@necc.mass.edu

Opinion
John Henry should sell the Red Sox

By Tristan Taylor
Opinion Editor

When a sports team is sold, fans usually have many questions. Three of these questions are usually "will the new owner invest in the team?", "will the team be relocated?", and "will the team finally make the playoffs?". There isn't always a clear and immediate answer to these questions either. When the Oakland Athletics were sold, fans were hopeful that the proposed stadium at Howard Terminal would be built. However, the new owners decided on a more controversial option, temporarily relocating the team to the home of their Triple-A affiliate in Sacramento for three years while constructing a brand new stadium that will eventually become home to the team upon their final move to Las Vegas. This sounds like a lot, and relocation and loss of a team's identity are genuine fears amongst any loyal fanbase. Despite this, I believe the Boston Red Sox should be sold.

When a team wins four World Series in the span of fifteen years, ownership is typically considered successful. Sure, the Red Sox won in 2004, 2007, 2013, and 2018, but these did not come without challenges. Only two of these teams had the same manager, a struggle Red Sox fans know all too well. There were also significant shakeups in terms of rosters. In 2007, only seven of the players from the 2004 team remained on the Red Sox. Likewise, only four from the 2007 team were also on the 2013 team, and six from the 2013 team were on the 2018 team.

A lack of commitment to the team's star players has exhausted the fanbase. The 2020 trade that sent Mookie Betts and David Price to the Los Angeles Dodgers was widely viewed as the beginning of the end of an era in Boston, with the definitive end of that era coming in the 2025 trade that sent Rafael Devers to the San Francisco Giants. In 2026, there were no players on the team who were on the World Series-winning team in 2018.

In the years since 2018, the Red Sox have also had trouble even making the playoffs, let alone winning games. They missed the playoffs in 2019 and 2020, then made the playoffs in 2021, only to be eliminated in the ALCS by the Houston Astros.

The Red Sox then missed the playoffs every year from 2022 to 2024, and then made the Wild Card series back to back in 2025 and 2026, only to lose to their direct rivals, the New York Yankees, both times.

Is this an ownership failure? I believe so. As beloved as John Henry and his Chief Baseball Officer, Craig Breslow, are in Boston, it's time for them both to go.

Henry and Fenway Sports Group have shown that they don't exactly care about anything other than cutting payroll.

That's not the mindset you want an owner to have. Yes, promoting players from the farm system saves money, but if they're not playing well in the big leagues, then the team should be spending money and actually fighting to bring in reinforcements in free agency.

The lack of aggression in free agency is a big issue in particular. In the 2023-24 offseason, the Red Sox had an opportunity to sign superstar two-way player Shohei Ohtani, as well as Yoshinobu Yamamoto, a star pitcher in Japan's professional league, Nippon Professional Baseball. While taking a chance on a player coming from a foreign league is always a gamble, Yamamoto was always expected to be a star pitcher in the MLB. As for Ohtani, he does have an injury history, but his stats and willingness to play through anything plaguing him proved that he would've been worth the money. Instead, the Red Sox made relatively uncompetitive offers, leading both players to go to the Dodgers instead.

In the 2024-25 offseason, the Red Sox made another mistake. The team had an opportunity to sign star pitcher Roki Sasaki, a pitcher so dominant in the NPB that he was given the nickname "The Monster of the Reiwa Era." In 2022, at the age of 20, Sasaki had gained worldwide attention for throwing a 19-strikeout perfect game, widely considered the best game thrown by a pitcher in the history of professional baseball. The Red Sox failed to make a competitive offer, and Sasaki signed with the Dodgers.

This offseason, the Red Sox have the opportunity to sign numerous top tier free agents, although none of them come without a high price tag, which, in all likelihood, means the team won't succeed in signing any of them. Tarik Skubal, Randy Arozarena, Jazz Chisholm Jr., and Trent Grisham are among those names, as are Japanese star third baseman Teruaki Sato and Japanese star pitcher Hiromi Itoh, who could make the jump from the NPB to the MLB via the posting system, but there is serious doubt the Red Sox will make offers to any of these players at all, let alone decent ones, given their payroll cuts and lack of commitment to winning.

One theory as to why the Red Sox are cutting payroll is John Henry's ownership of other pro sports teams. He and Fenway Sports Group own Liverpool F.C., a club in the Premier League, England's top tier soccer league. Additionally, he and FSG are co-owners of RFK Racing, a NASCAR team that has historically been dominant, but has seen a decline in recent years. With NASCAR seeing a resurgence in the fanbase and the Premier League being the most popular sports league in England, it's understandable why Henry would want to invest in those more than he has in the past. However, in doing so, he has made an absolute mockery of the team.

In the opinions of fans and critics alike, including myself, John Henry has downplayed the Red Sox' annual championship expectations, traded star talent and let more walk in free agency, and, to put it lightly, has had a detached ownership style, treating the team more like a financial asset or a corporate spreadsheet and less like what it is: a professional ballclub with a diehard fanbase.

This has irritated many fans, including Boston's most loyal. As a Sox fan, I am also very irritated with Henry's ownership.

While I'm trying to remain optimistic about both the short and long-term outlooks of the team, I find it draining to get my hopes up anytime an offer is made in free agency, as it usually ends up falling short. I can't keep acting like everything is okay with this team, because it isn't. Something has got to give.

I truly think new ownership would change everything for the better.

Henry has openly stated he won't sell the team, but I do hope someone can come along and convince him to sell. In the meantime, I say this to the fans: grab your coats and buckle your seatbelts, this offseason's probably going to be another cold, long, dreadful, and bumpy ride.

Opinion

Mass. ballot Question 8 focuses on marijuana

By Zak Nigohosian
Correspondent

Massachusetts' state election is on Tuesday, Nov. 3, and Question 8 directly pertains to the retail sale of marijuana. This law would take effect on Jan. 1, 2028, and proposes that the legalization, regulation, and taxation of marijuana should be prohibited.

People aged 21 or older would be allowed to possess 1 ounce or less of marijuana, and gift 1 ounce or less of marijuana to another person. Possession of 1-2 ounces of marijuana would result in forfeiture of the marijuana and a civil penalty of $100.

Current recreational cannabis dispensaries would have the expedited opportunity to apply for a medical dispensary license and sell their remaining inventory to medical dispensaries. According to MassCannabis.org, obtaining a medical marijuana card requires patients to see a certifying health-care provider, such as "a Massachusetts-licensed physician, certified nurse practitioner (CNP), or physician assistant (PA)," who will decide whether cannabis therapy is appropriate for treating their specified condition.

Dr. Jeffrey Morgan, MD., is a retired oncologist, physician, and instructor of medicine that wrote the in-favor argument for prohibiting recreational marijuana sales. In his proposal, he noted that, "Since commercial legalization, marijuana is now the most common drug found in fatal car accidents in Massachusetts… Modern concentrates and edibles have been linked to mental health conditions like psychosis, severe anxiety, and schizophrenia, particularly in young adults."

Ryan Dominguez with the Massachusetts Cannabis Coalition wrote the against argument, and noted in his proposal, "For ten years, Massachusetts has regulated marijuana, ensuring that products are tested for safety, packaged and labelled properly, and sold in licensed businesses to adults 21 and over.

Question 8 would undo that progress, returning marijuana to the illicit market where there are no safeguards in place.

Law enforcement would be forced to waste time and resources on marijuana arrests instead of fighting serious crime. Historically, marijuana arrests have disproportionately impacted communities of color. Recriminalizing marijuana would make Massachusetts less safe."

In terms of tax dollars, Morgan states, "For every $1 gained in tax revenue, taxpayers spend $4.50 to mitigate the effects of legalization from societal expenses including increased healthcare, lost productivity, and crime (like DUI's.)"

In contrast, Dominguez states, "Question 8 would shut down hundreds of small businesses, kill thousands of jobs, and eliminate billions of dollars in state tax revenue."

Question 8's summary also includes a Statement of Fiscal Consequences, written by the Executive Office of Administration and Finance, which reads, "…the proposed law would reduce the amount that state and municipal governments receive from the taxation of [adult recreational use marijuana] sales. In fiscal year 2025, taxation of the retail sale of adult recreational use marijuana raised approximately $280 million in state revenue and $50 million in local revenue. The state budget, which is supported by tax revenue, funds local aid for schools and municipal budgets.

Public opinion seems varied.

One source gave an insightful perspective on their stance but chose to remain anonymous in fear of backlash for public association with marijuana usage. "It's tricky. I've experienced a lot of bad side effects of using weed so often, like headaches, brain fog, irritability… it can have a really drastic impact on people's lives. It's not as fun as it used to be when I was younger, that's for sure. Now I seem to get really paranoid and aggravated with my buddies for no reason."

Despite the negative perspective, they seem to be in favor of keeping marijuana legal.

"Making it less accessible to adults would do more harm than good. At the end of the day, adults should have the right to choose whether or not they want to smoke, same way they choose to drink alcohol. It just comes down to responsible usage."

Another source shared a similar opinion, while also preferring to remain anonymous and not publicly associated with marijuana usage.

"Honestly, I think alcohol is a lot worse than weed. I've seen awful sides of my family members and friends while they were drunk. Meanwhile, sometimes I spark up a joint and think about them like, 'maybe this would chill everybody out!' I get why people are so against recreational usage, because it can definitely be really harmful, but to me, safe production should be the priority. Right now, we have cannabis being tested and made in environments where safety can be guaranteed. If the dispensaries get shut down, no matter what, people are still going to want their weed. Except, now they're getting it from strangers off the street, and they have to trust that what they paid for is what they actually got. If you want people to be safer with weed, you emphasize information and studies on harmful impacts. You give them the resources to make an informed decision, not take away the option to make that decision entirely."

This paper is your voice, too!

You can reach us at:

978-556-3633

Arts & Entertainment

Tarot Talk Part 2: Navigation of mid-semester grind and the approaching midterms

By J.T. Melanson
Arts & Entertainment Editor

The dust from syllabus week has long since settled, the leaves are changing to a rainbow of colors across the Haverhill and Lawrence campuses, and Northern Essex Community College students have officially hit the mid-semester gauntlet. Midterms are approaching swiftly, assignments are piling up faster than you can keep track of, and the initial energy of September and October is being tested by mid-semester fatigue.

This critical period of the term isn't just about basic survival anymore; it requires strategic energy management and adaptability. The tarot deck, far from being just a tool for prophecy, also serves as an exceptional roadmap for maintaining momentum when the exhaustion kicks in.

The following three archetypes offer symbolic guidance on how to shift from feeling overwhelmed to driving purposefully toward the second half of the semester.

Archetypes for the Mid-Term Push

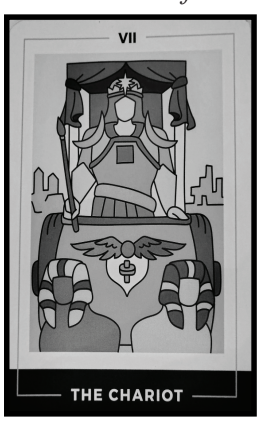


1. Strength (VIII): Resilience Over Force

The Lesson for NECC: The Strength card depicts a figure calmly taming a lion, a symbol that represents inner power, patience, and compassion. Once those midterms hit? Your first instinct is often to panic, overexert, and push yourself to your absolute breaking point, treating your mind like a machine that can run indefinitely on fumes. Strength reminds us that true endurance isn't about brute force or running yourself into the ground; you need to keep track of your emotional stamina and offer yourself some radical self-compassion.

If a test or project doesn't go your way? Take a deep breath, regroup, and approach the next challenge with a steady hand rather than letting a single stumble bring everything to a halt. NECC's Counseling Services are designed to support this exact resilience, offering free and confidential spaces to process stress when the weight feels too heavy to carry alone.

2. The Chariot (VII): Steering Through Distractions



The Lesson for NECC: The Chariot is the card of willpower, focus, and intentional direction. It represents a driver holding the reins, balancing opposing forces to keep the vehicle moving straight ahead. By mid-semester, those distractions multiply—burnout sneaks into your psyche, extracurriculars or work demands pull at your time, and it's incredibly easy to lose focus in a haze of fatigue.

When The Chariot appears in a spread, it calls for discipline: lock on to those goals of yours, take active control of your schedule. Steer your efforts directly toward the finish line of the term rather than let everything snowball into a massive avalanche. You have to actively grab the skimobile by the handlebars. Utilize the resources at the Tutoring Center or Academic Advising. It can help you focus on the task at hand before deadlines overwhelm you.

3. Two of Pentacles: Juggling the Balance



The Lesson for NECC: Showcasing a juggler who gracefully keeps two coins in motion amidst the shifting waves, the Two of Pentacles is the ultimate archetype when it comes to time management. For NECC students balancing classes, jobs, families,and personal lives, this card is your ultimate reality check—the one that kicks you in the proverbial backside, so to speak. Balance isn't always about static perfection; it's all about constant, sometimes very messy adjustment.

Recognizing when to shift your attention from one priority to another is what keeps you afloat when those waves get choppy. Remember, you only have so many minutes in a day. Using some of them to get your work done—while actively knowing when to step back and take a breather—are the twin keys to maintaining positive momentum.

Keeping Your Momentum

Getting through the middle of the semester isn't about running yourself ragged or sacrificing your well-being for a grade; it's all about staying grounded. Remember, college is a marathon, not a sprint. Thus, pacing yourself is an art form. Balance that inner patience of Strength, the focused discipline of The Chariot, and the adaptable multi-tasking of the Two of Pentacles. Once you do, you can weather the mid-term rush without losing your center.

As the 3rd-century Han Chinese strategist Zhuge Liang (181 CE – 234 CE) once observed:

"To study, one must have peace of mind; to gain talent, one must study. Without study, one cannot broaden talent; without peace of mind, one cannot achieve success in study."

Remembering to protect that inner tranquility amidst all the academic noise is what ensures you make it to the other side of midterms strong, intact, and ready for what comes next.

Institutional Resources for the Mid-Term Push

As the workload peaks, NECC offers several key campus resources to help you keep your balance and your stride:

· ***Academic Advising:***
o Contact: 978-556-3700 | advising@necc.mass.edu

· ***Tutoring & Writing Centers:***
o Contact: 978-556-3411 | tutoringcenter@necc.mass.edu

· ***Counseling Services:***
o Contact: 978-556-3730 | counseling@necc.mass.edu

News

Fields, continued from Page 1





Photos by Editor-in-chief Lidia Ramirez

Trees in the field area were cut down, before and after.



Work continues on on the new atheltic multi-use complex on the Haverhill

McCarthy shared some information about the new track and fields during a recent conversation with the Observer.

Will the school also be taking up areas of the property on the field that was never used before?

"Yeah. So, the whole area will be redone. They have to regrade it all because it flooded. We could never use the baseball field for most of the season because it was under water. There's a whole drainage issue that's being addressed," he said.

The project utilizes a seven-acre site situated within the southwestern quadrant of the campus, bordering Kenoza Street, according to a press release from the college.

When did this new Track and Baseball Fields project start and when will it be completed?

"The kickoff began on September 21. So, it is said to be completed 150 days from start, weather permitting. So, we're hopeful we can play some baseball games in the spring, he said.

Do you think that the new multiple athletic fields will encourage people in the community to Northern Essex Community College?

"A few things. So, I bet on us and I firmly believe that the more people that come on this campus and realize how beautiful we are, will come here.. especially when they learn it's free, and that the benefits and the success and all that we bring," he said.

What is the total cost of the new Baseball, Soccer, and Track fields complex?

"It would be about 8 million dollars. We have some money and we're fundraising for it."

Students, faculty and staff have neen watching the work on the fields with interest.

"I'm glad NECC is getting new space fields, but I'm worried about some elements of the designs, and I hope to see spectator seating," NECC student and Observer opinion editor Tristan Taylor said after seeing the blueprint of the new fields complex.

"This has been a long time coming; it's great to see this project coming to fruition. This will likely be the finest on-campus facility at the two-year college level in the Northeast, which will elevate the overall student-athlete experience at the college," said NECC Athletic Director Dan Blair according to a press release from the college.

Following up on the renovations of both the B and E buildings.

When asked what would be the approximate finish date for the B and E building renovations, McCarthy said, "B and E building we're supposed to have under control by January."

After that date, furniture, equipment, and supplies will be added back into the building. The goal is to begin classes in the second session of Spring 2027 semester after the buildings are ready and prepared, according to McCarthy.



Photo courtesy Huntress Sports

A graphic of the planned new athletic complex at NECC .

Culinary Arts

Why are you wearing that? The 'fit' guide to Chefwear

By Sharon Donovan
Correspondent

If you have visited NECC's culinary department over at the Haverhill Height's campus, you may have noticed the crisp white jackets, scull caps or tall hats, and houndstooth trousers worn by the students and faculty.

This uniform is more than just a dress code -- it serves practical, hygienic, and symbolic purposes in the working kitchen. Each element meets the demands of a professional culinary environment and upholds traditions respected throughout the industry.

Understanding the components of a chef's uniform reveals how tradition and utility blend to create an essential part of culinary culture.

Toque Blanche: The tall, pleated white cylindrical hat worn to contain hair as well as symbolize rank or experience.

The pleated folds represent the number of ways a chef can cook an egg, typically 100! The tallest hats are reserved for the highest-ranking members of the kitchen brigade to easily identify the person in charge.

Chef's Coat (Jacket): A heavy cotton or polly-cotton double-breasted jacket. The double layer of fabric and long sleeves insulate the body from heat, flames, or hot oil, and the front flap can be reversed if soiled during service.

The jacket features knotted cloth buttons called "french knots" that break away easily should the chef need to remove the jacket quickly.

The garment has pockets on the left sleeve to hold thermometers, a sharpie, and plating tongs. The chef's name and rank is embroidered over a breast pocket designed to hold a small notebook.

Neckerchief (Cravate): The neckerchief, tied cravate-style, adds a finishing touch to the uniform and also quite practical. When kitchens are unbearably hot, the neckerchief catches and absorbs facial perspiration.

It also serves a medical purpose in keeping the neck and throat fromt he extreme temperature fluctuations between stovetops and freezers.

Culinary Trousers: A chef's trousers have a small checkered pattern called "houndstooth" that helps disguise the inevitable stains that develop while working. They are moisture and flame resistant and are designed for ease of movement.

Apron: A long, waist or bib style apron worn over the jacket to protect the body and lower uniform from hot splashes, spills, and flames.

Side Towel: A clean dry towel tucked neatly at the waist or looped through the apron strings for handling hot pans at the stovetop or from the ovens.

Footwear: Sturdy, closed toe, easy to clean shoes or clogs with slip-resistant soles to prevent falls on often slick kitchen floors. The shoes should be of a solid material, such as leather, or a tight weave that is water resistant.

Essential Tools & Accessories: Pocket thermometers, a pen/ Sharpie set, and a small pocket-sized notepad stored in the jacket or apron compartments.

Beyond the uniform, strict culinary hygiene and grooming standards prevent cross-contamination, ensure food safety, and preserve a professional image in commercial kitchens. Trusting others to give you food to consume requires a great deal of trust and cannot be taken lightly.

Just as the uniform sets a standard, so does maintaining a thoughtful hygiene standard.

Examining the elements of a chef's uniform illustrates the thoughtful relationship between tradition and practicality in the culinary world.

Each piece, from the iconic toque blanche to sturdy, slip-resistant shoes, is intentionally designed to address the rigorous demands of the kitchen while honoring time-honored customs.

This careful blend not only ensures safety and professionalism but also develops a sense of identity and pride among culinary professionals, making the uniform an integral part of both daily operations and the broader culture of the kitchen world over



Photo by Randy Hoplite

Pocket-Change Oat Bakes

The best recipes aren't always planned. Sometimes they're born from an empty fridge and a craving for something sweet. I made these oatmeal cookies on a day when my pantry was running low,

using only the staples I already had in the kitchen. They're proof that you don't need a high grocery

budget or specialty ingredients to bake something comforting, delicious, and worth sharing.

Creaming method | Preheat 350F

Ingredients

135g All-purpose flour
1/2 tsp baking soda
1/4 tsp baking powder
1/2 tsp salt
1/2 tsp Ground cinnamon
114g Butter (softened)
100g Granulated sugar
100g Brown sugar
1 Eggs
1tsp Vanillas extract
120g Oatmeal
180g Mix ins (Chocolate chips/raisin)

Instructions

Preheat oven to 350F

Line 2 baking sheets with parchment paper. Set aside

Combine flour, baking soda, baking powder, salt and cinnamon in a small bowl. Set aside

Put softened butter, granulated sugar, and brown sugar in a bowl of a standing mixer and beat on medium until light and fluffy

Add eggs and vanilla and beat on medium high

Add the dry ingredients mixture and beat on medium speed until combined

Then, beat in oatmeal on low speed.

If desired, beat in mix ins until evenly distributed in the dough

Use a 1 1/2 tbsp cookie scoop to measure out portions

Roll the dough into balls and place them evenly spaced on prepared sheet

Gently press down tops of oatmeal cookies until slightly flattened

Bake in preheated oven for about 8-10min until top is just set and edges are lightly browned

Let cookies sit on baking

Arts and Entertainment

‘Crow Show’ roosts in Lawrence

Art from NECC professors and students is part of Essex Art Center exhibit

By Omaya massa torres
Arts and Entertainment Editor

In the art world, the leap from the college classroom to a professional gallery wall is usually measured in years. But for a standout group of Northern Essex Community College artists, that bridge is being crossed this season side-by-side with seasoned professionals including their own professor, Jenn Houle, at the Crow Show.

On Saturday, Oct. 17, at Essex Art Center artists and community gathered for the opening reception of The Crow Show hosted by Lawrence artist Kate Delaney, showing their amazing crow art with featured artists Johanna Finnegan-Topitzer, Mor, and NECC’s own art professors Dianne Pappas, and Jenn Houle.

Delaney shares that she picked up The Crow Show after its last exhibition back in 2019. “The crows seem to be a popular muse for people in the area” Delaney said. This exhibition showcases the phenomenon of the yearly crow roost where hundreds to tens of thousands of crows gathered here in Lawrence alongside the Merrimack River.

Creating a roost of its own Essex Art Center exhibited around 90 pieces of artwork inspired by crows. “I contacted artists that I knew had work about crows and that were inspired by nature. Their work buoyed me in the whole process, but I knew that I really wanted to be open to the public and do an open call for art” Delaney said.



Photo by Arts and Entertainment Editor Omayda Massa Torres

Nada Dhar next to her artwork “Crows at Midnight” (bottom artwork) in the “Crow Show” at the Essex Art Center in Lawrence on Oct. 17. See Page 16 for more photos from the exhibit’s opening reception.

Many artists submitted their work to the open call, including NECC students like Savannah Collins and Nada Dhar.

“It sounded like a good opportunity to get my art out there which is a scary thing to do but I’m glad I did it” Collins said.

Students, artists, and the community were inspired by all the artwork and the atmosphere at the Crow Show.

“Seeing other people’s work is such a big inspiration” Collins said.

Houle puts emphasis on the importance of encouraging students to put their work out there. “Pushing out of your comfort zone obviously that’s growth and that’s what we want. You want to be challenged and try new things” Houle said.

Students were proud of being able to see their artwork in such a prominent exhibition. “This is my first art gallery that I participated in so I’m really happy about it,” Dhar said.

Houle was very intentional in her art piece “Can I just...?” by creating a deeper meaning that incorporated all the elements of the crow that connects us as a community.

“These crows really represent a connection throughout the Merrimack Valley for all of our communities” Houle said.

In addition, Houle hopes to incorporate her artwork to highlight the crow roost by creating programs for students at NECC

“I’m hoping to get people to actually see and experience the birds and develop a new appreciation for it” Houle said.

As thousands of crows continue to gather along the Merrimack River this season, this exhibition serves as a reminder to look up and appreciate the wild, interconnected world around us.

NECC’s student artists have proven that stepping out of one’s comfort zone can lead to soaring results. The Crow Show will remain on display at the Essex Art Center through Feb. 20. Gallery hours are Monday through Thursday, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m and Fridays and Saturday by appointment. Admission is free and open to the public.

Features

A letter from the president of Student Government

My best advice based on experience

By Stacy Zappala
Features Editor

Hey everyone! Welcome back, it's great to be here. As many of you have probably seen from my last news story, I ran in The Student Government Association's election. I ran for multiple positions but won the top presidential spot which was my top choice. Thank you again, to everyone who voted for me.

Being president is not an easy job as I must be in meetings with higher ups in the NECC Community. I address concerns, comments and things that I think are of value.

I also advocate for all students as well. If you ever need anything, come to your SGA Members. We sometimes have town hall meetings, everyone is welcome. There, we can address any concerns or hear your thoughts on things related to Campus Life.



Photo by Features Editor Stacy Zappala

Anyone at any time is welcome to come to an SGA meeting.

We have them every other Tuesday from 4-5 pm in the large conference room on the second floor of the student center, next to the SOAR office in Haverhill.

You can even request a zoom link and attend the meeting virtually from anywhere. You do not have to run for a position if you do not want to. You can be what we call a member at large. You can help with decision making or just show up to see what's going on.

Any questions, you can feel free to stop me in the café and I'd be happy to assist you as long as I'm not getting ready to go straight to class. If I am, we can continue our conversation later.

So, what brought me to join Student Government?

I wanted to see what it was like, and politics have always been of interest. I also thought it may look good to have a few clubs on my resume for when I transfer to another institution which will be next year. I found so much more than a position placeholder on an application in SGA. I found a purpose. I've contributed to the school and made it a better place for everyone.

We will have many events coming up this year and I am honored to be a part of the decision-making process. I've always loved helping people.

Last year I joined SGA for the first time and became Vice President of the Lawrence Campus where my classes primally were at the time. I honestly wish I had joined sooner.

Being in SGA, I have met a lot of very interesting, different, amazing individuals who in my opinion are going to go places. I have made friends through Student Government as well.

I can't suggest being involved in your school and community enough. Even if Student Government is not for you, join a club if time allows. When you do these things, you are making connections that can very well last a lifetime and help you achieve success beyond your dreams.

Have you ever heard the saying, "It's about who you know?" Who you know starts here at NECC. Go out and explore!

Balancing work and college

By Emyr Larrache
Correspondent

For many Northern Essex Community College students, the end of a work shift does not mean the end of the workday.

Balancing work and college can leave students with less time to study, complete assignments and attend classes, a challenge experienced by NECC students who work while pursuing their education.

Douglas Haubert, a professor at NECC, said working while attending college is common among his students.

"At a community college like NECC, that's the norm rather than the exception," Haubert said.

For students like Sophia Griffin, an NECC student who works about 15 hours a week, a job can take away more time than just the hours she spends working. She often needs time to recover before returning to her schoolwork.

"It ends up being a little while before I'm ready to jump back into schoolwork, so it eats up the time, not only in the hours of the job, but also outside of it as well," Griffin said.

NECC student Sharon Donovan works about 26 hours a week and said finding time for homework is one of her biggest challenges.

She tries to complete most of her homework on saturdays, when she has more time for schoolwork.

Haubert said one of the biggest challenges for students who work is finding enough time for school. Work schedules can affect class attendance and make it difficult to attend office hours.

Students may also come to class tired after working late the night before, Haubert said. However, Haubert does not see working as completely-negative. He said working students can bring discipline and real-world experiences to their classes.

"It changes what they can give to a course more than it simply diminishes it," Haubert said.

Working can also help students who are learning English. Haubert said using English at work gives students experience that can be difficult to get in a classroom.

Students have their own ways of managing their schedules. Griffin uses a calendar to organize her work and school responsibilities. Even with a calendar, she said she can still forget smaller tasks.

Griffin said students should also be careful about taking on too many responsibilities outside of work and school.

"Don't take on excess additional responsibilities outside of that if you can,"Griffin said.

Haubert said communication with professors can also help working students keep up with their classes.

Campus Life

Libraries: The best third space

By Nasrin Musa
Campus Life Editor



Photo by Campus Life Editor Nasrin Musa

Left to right: Anthony Rota and Narjis Musa read one of the books on display for October in the Bentley Library on the NECC campus in Haverhill on Oct. 26.

Authors Ray Oldenburg and Karen Christensen coined the phrase "third place" in their books: "The Great Good Place" and "The Great Good Place II." Third places are informal spaces we can go to strengthen social bonds. Our homes are the "first place" and work is the "second place." For many college students, their schedules are packed with either work or school. It's not always easy to make time to go out and be social, especially with how expensive things are these days. A night out isn't always in the budget. That's why third places are so important. They offer locations that help cultivate social interaction and are sometimes free! Examples of third places can be cafes, parks, clubs, and libraries. Libraries are one of the best third places a college student can utilize, especially the ones on their own campuses. For NECC students, these would be the Bentley Library on the Haverhill campus, and the Lawrence Campus Library in the Dimitry building.

According to The Great Good Place there are seven characteristics a third place must have:

1) They're open and inviting

Libraries are open to everyone, and the librarians that work there-especially the Northern Essex librarians-are always so inviting and happy to see everyone that comes in. A staff member who works at the Bentley library said "This place is free and belongs to all of you, it's for everyone."

Libraries are a place where everyone can of course go to find the books and information they might need. But it's also a place they can sit and relax, meet up with friends to study, or cram for deadlines.

2) They're comfortable and informal

There's no expectations for those coming into the library. It welcomes you as you are, in your best outfit or your pajamas. The library is a safe space to be yourself and even figure yourself out.

The Bentley staff member reflected on their time in school, and what the library meant to them.

"I got my library card when I was five, you never forget that. And when you get to college you can start to expand your mind, and it gives you freedom."

3) They're convenient

For students of course there's nothing more convenient than what's right there available on campus. But public libraries are also a very convenient option. Every town has one and most of them are accessible by a trip on the city bus. The Haverhill Public Library for example, is about seven minutes from campus, and it offers many of the same resources.

Karlee Martin, a librarian who works in the reference department at the Haverhill Public Library stated: "Libraries are one of few "third spaces" left where people can stop in to connect with their community and access resources for free, which makes it an especially essential resource for college students."

Besides a space for college students to use, the Haverhill Library offers several resources that can be incredibly useful. Such as access to websites that can help you learn a language, listen to music, watch movies and shows, and more. The library also offers passes to museums, the beach, and other locations you can get with your library card. "Borrow a museum pass through HPL for discounted or free admission at select locations!" Martin wrote in her email.

4) They're unpretentious

When visiting any library, be it the NECC libraries or a public library, there are a variety of comfortable seating options to fit your needs. Take the Bentley Library for example. There's couches by the window that offer a lovely view of the campus. During the fall it's even more beautiful with the foliage. There's tables for group projects so everyone can brainstorm together. The library also offers secluded tables in the back section, for independent studying.

There are a lot of options but it remains a simple and cozy place that works for anyone and everyone.

The Haverhill Library offers options like this as well. Additionally, both libraries offer private study rooms you can reserve for individual or group study sessions.

5) There are regulars that attend

"We wait for them, we wait for our regulars." The Bentley Library staff member said. They commented that they often see the same groups of students come in to use the library and enjoy the space. They expressed how happy they were to see those students come back again and again, and that the library means something to them.

"And in the summer, we wonder what they're off doing and hope they're doing well. Then when they come back it's always nice to see them again." They said.

6) Conversation is the main activity

When people think of libraries they might not always think of conversations; they might think of a quiet place to study. However, libraries always have several fun events going on that can help create new friendships, and strengthen pre-existing ones. For example, the Bently Library has their next book club meeting on Oct. 30 at 1 p.m.. They will be discussing "The Bewitching" by Silvia Moreno-Garcia. They

Libraries, continued on Page 13

Campus Life

AI on campus, continued from Page 2

o help students with their courses. However, the convenience of AI tools, which can provide information and assistance within seconds, may make them an appealing alternative to traditional academic tools. When asked whether she would be more likely to seek information from a library book or a student adviser, DiCicco expressed a clear preference for AI. “No way, why would I bother doing that when I could just, like, type in a question and have it answered for me?” she said.

Although AI policies vary by course and instructor, not all classes prohibit the use of the technology. While some instructors strictly discourage its use, others incorporate AI into their curriculum or require it for certain assignments.

Former student Emily Brouder said AI was a required tool for some of her coursework. “When I was taking classes a couple of years ago, it was a requirement to use it for certain assignments,” Brouder said. When AI is incorporated into courses, instructors may establish guidelines for how students should use and acknowledge it.

However, its growing role in higher education raises more questions about academic credibility.

When students use AI to help with ideas, develop arguments or outline written assignments, how much of that work should be credited to the technology? Where is the line between using AI as aresource and submitting work that does not fully reflect a student’s own thinking? Brouder said that, “Eventually I got that they were trying to teach us to use it as another tool to study. But I learned pretty quick that it wasn’t always right.” Although AI can be a valuable study tool, it does not always provide information that is accurate. Students who rely on its responses without verifying may submit inaccurate information if they don’t put in the work of fact checking from books or other traditional learning resources. While some students recognize the potential drawbacks of AI, others view it as a critical academic resource. Allen Janelle, a first-year student in Northeastern University’s master’s program, believes AI offers students access to a wide range of academic support that’s hard to resist.

“It’s like having your own librarian, professor and tutor all in one. I think it’s naïve to think that students are going to pass up the opportunity to use it when it’s right there. For students that are using it to assist and not to do their work, I think it’s pretty invaluable,” Janelle said.

AI offers a type of instant gratification when it comes to schoolwork that doesn’t come from actively seeking out information in libraries or doing the research independently online. While students are still responsible for submitting their own, original work they have an advantage that students who pursued higher education before the invention of AI, did not. It leaves much to be desired about whether current students in the world of higher education are earning their degrees as fairly as their predecessors. As AI becomes more common in higher education, educators face questions aboutwhether students are retaining the information they learn or becoming overly reliant on technology to complete assignments.

Janelle said he doubts that most students use AI solely as a tool to assist with their assignments. “I doubt that the majority of students who are using AI are actually using it just to help with assignments. I think most of them are probably using it to complete assignments and slap their names on it and submit it as their own,” Janelle said. His concerns highlight another aspect of the debate surrounding AI in higher education: academic integrity and the challenges instructors face in evaluating student work.

Northern Essex Community College enrolls thousands of students across its online and in-person programs, while larger universities, such as Northeastern University where Janelle attends, can serve tens of thousands. Although software designed to detect AI- generated content is available, identifying its use in student assignments can be challenging.

Determining whether submitted work reflects a student’s own understanding may place additional demands on instructors. Colleges are faced with the growing popularity of AI in their communities and both the benefits and drawbacks that it creates for its students and faculty.

Libraries, continued from Page 12

also will have a Zine making workshop on Nov. 3 from 10:30 a.m.-1 p.m. The NECC librarians work so hard to ensure that there is always something fun for students to look forward to. It gives them opportunities to be brought together in a way they possibly wouldn’t have before.

It’s not just campus libraries either. The Haverhill Public Library has several events happening in the near future. On Nov. 1 at 1:30 p.m. they’ll be having a Collage Club meeting. On Nov. 4 they have a meeting of the Fiber Arts Group. They have several activities happening every month. From craft groups, to book clubs, to even cookbook groups, there’s something for everyone and they’re always free!

A Northern Essex student who asked to be anonymous said they don’t use the libraries most of the time because they don’t need them very often. They are a music student, so their space is usually in the music department of the school. But they said that they go to the campus library to sit and spend time with people when their friends are there.

They also mentioned how public libraries have affected their lives growing up. “I remember going with my family as a kid to pick out movies to watch over the weekend.” they said. If we all think back far enough, we can probably all come up with a way libraries have positively affected our lives.

7) Laughter is frequent

“I think libraries mean something different to each of us based on our experiences in these institutions and what we uniquely need from them,” Martin wrote.

If you spend any time in either the campus libraries, or a public library; you will hear the sounds of joy. You’ll hear people laughing, or having deep conversations. Or you’ll hear the sound of nothing, of peace. But no matter what you hear, it will be the sound of people enjoying the space around them.

For more information about the NECC libraries you can visit: necc.edu/library

For more information about the Haverhill Public Library, you can visit: haverhillpl.org.

Sports
Knights Basketball begins title defense

By Michael Sicard
Sports Editor

The men's basketball team is back in full gear. They are coming off a very successful season where they went 33-3 and won the National Junior College Athletic Association Division III championship, which was the first title the Knights have ever won. Because of their title win last March, the Knights came in first place in the preseason poll by NJCAA Basketball Committee.

Key returning players include guards Jay'von Depina from Brockton and Jacob Mercedes from Salem.

"That rank means absolutely nothing," Darren Stratton, who is in 24th season as Knights head coach, said about the team's preseason rank since there's a lot more new faces this year than last year. But as for how they can defend their championship

Stratton made an emphasis on Team Chemistry; "It's always we over I. No matter what, if we can establish that and this young group can understand that we don't point fingers, make excuses, and not be selfish we have a chance to be successful."

He also added "They have to be willing to make the extra pass, the right play, if they don't do that then they're going to have a tough time with me."

With a lot of new faces here this season, the sophomores who were part of the championship team last season made it a priority to make the freshman feel welcome and ready.

"Just giving them advice, guidance, and holding them accountable" said sophomore Jacob Mercedes who averaged 3.6 PPG last season. "It's a whole new level for them and since we're number one in the nation right now it's gonna be more of an expectation for them to come out and perform."



Photo by Talan Stratton

Head Coach Darren Stratton coaching the Knights in 2025-26. Stratton enters his 24th season as head coach.

"They're all dogs," sophomore Jay'von Depina who averaged 7.2 points per game last season said about the new freshman on the team. "Every single freshman loves fighting through adversity, and they're ready to do the same goal that we completed last year."

"We got to develop together as a team and build up that chemistry," said rookie forward Martin Drejaj who is expected to have a big role this season in the frontcourt.

Other freshmen and transfers include Bjarki Gunthorsson from Reykjavik, Iceland, Kutay Hatunoglu from Istanbul, Turkey, Aiden Walter from Lowell, Aiden Torres from Lawrence, Leonard Hilliard from Charlotte, North Carolina and Cheyton Marshall from Worcester.



Photo by Talan Stratton

Guard Jay'von Depina going for a contested shot against Quincy College.

The Knights begin their season on the road against Monroe University - Bronx on Saturday, Oct. 31st at the Robert J. Collins Arena in Lincroft, New Jersey at 3 p.m, and their first home game will be on Saturday, Nov. 7 against Gateway Community College - CT at Northern Essex Community College at 2 p.m.

This paper is your voice, too!
We want to see what you have to say.

••• ooo •••

You can reach us at:

978-556-3633
observer@necc.mass.edu

Sports

Holmes to lead Knight's baseball

By John Mulcahy
Cheif Sports Editor

Mitchell Holmes is looking to bring experience as the new head coach of Knight's Baseball.

Holmes hiring comes in the wake of Dan Briand's departure to coach at Worcester Polytechnic Institute. Briand was hired earlier in the year to replace longtime Knight's coach Jeffery Mejia, who went on to coach at Merrimack College.

"I'm pleased to welcome Mitch to Northern Essex. He comes highly regarded as one of the great up and coming coaches in the region," said Northern Essex athletic director Dan Blair. "He's going to bring a great deal of energy not only to our baseball program but to the entire athletic program and student-athletes at the college," he added.

"Everything about Northern Essex, and this opportunity was such a no-brainer for me," said Holmes. Adding that the school's history, success and the new athletic fields are the main reasons he wanted to join the Knight's program. "Jeff certainly proved that you can win at a high level at a school like this," Holmes said that he's always looked up to Mejia, and hopes to continue the success that the former coach fostered in the program.

Holmes comes with three years of playing experience in college baseball at SUNY Cobbleskill. He said he was "A horrendous baseball player," and added that his true passion was for coaching. He graduated college a year early and started out his coaching career with some travel teams in the New England area. Holmes experience coaching also includes, the previous two year as the lead assistant coach at Babson College where he oversaw hitting and catching and helped lead the recruiting efforts for the Beavers, three seasons on the staff at Holy Cross and three seasons as the coach of the Vermont Mountaineers of the New England Collegiate Baseball League.

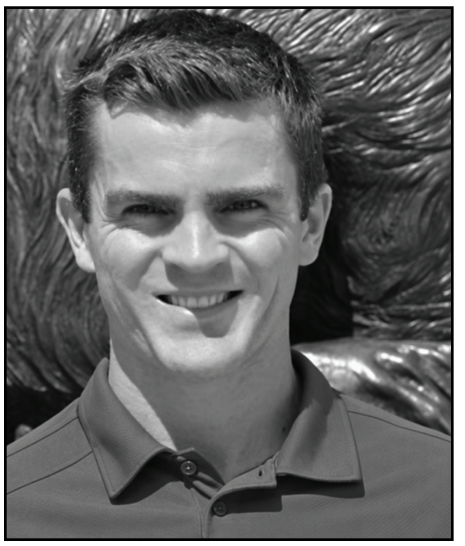


Photo courtesy of NECC Athletics

knights head baseball coach Mitchell Holmes

In his last season at Babson Holmes helped the program capture the 2026 New England Women's and Men's Athletic Conference championship and earn the third seed in the National Junior College Athletics Association Division III Southern Maine regional championship.

"I'm really excited to get to know the players," said Holmes. He added across his different coaching positions he's been able to see a few different types of players. "I'm looking forward to being around the kind of person, and player that Northern Essex baseball has," he said.

Holmes was hired to be the Knights head baseball coach and assistant athletic director Tuesday, Oct. 20. He began his job at Northern Essex last Monday, Oct. 26.



Photo courtesy of Anna Maria College

Former Knights coach Dan Briand

Dear Knights!

Your feedback is important and helps us improve the quality of our courses and services.

please take a few minutes to complete your course evaluation.

If you are enrolled in

Session I classes that began between September 2nd and October 20th,

Evaluation Period: October 2nd through October 14th

Session II classes that began between October 26th through December 20th

Evaluation Period: November 20th through December 2nd.

Full Session classes that began between September 2nd through December 20th,

Evaluation Period: December 1st through December 13th.

Your responses are confidential and provide valuable insight that helps instructors and the college enhance the learning experience for future students.

Please **complete your evaluation using this link;** https://my-necc.bluera.com/.

or

Thank you for taking the time to share your feedback. We appreciate your participation and support.

Office of Academic Affairs.

Arts and Entertainment

‘Crow Show’ swoops into Essex Art Center

See Page 10 for story about the art exhibit and the NECC professors and students participating in it.





NECC student Savannah Collins and her artworl “Scary-Crow” (artwork on top) at the “Crow Show” at the Essex Art Center in Lawrence.

Photos byArts and Entertainment Editor Omaya Massa Torres

Above and below, “Can I just…?” art by NECC Professor Jenn Houle in the ‘Crow Show” exhibit at the Essex Art Center in Lawrence.



