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NECC Observer

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

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Exploring our backyard



Photo courtesy of NECC Vice President Naydeen Gonzalez De Jesus

Tour group entering Addison Gallery at Phillips Academy in Andover on Nov. 7.

By Lidia Ramirez
Editor-in-Chief

You don't have to travel to Boston or New York to experience world-class American art and historic symphonic music.

That was the takeaway from "Treasures of Art and Music in Our Backyard," a free Nov. 7 excursion led by Lawrence historian and former Lawrence High School teacher David Meehan that took attendees from Northern Essex Community College's Lawrence campus to cultural gems in neighboring towns.

Hosted by NECC's Community Relations department and The White Fund, the guided motorcoach tour gave participants an up-close look at two

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What's Happening?

NECC's Music's Bach's Lunch Concert.
NECC music faculty and guests perform in music concerts for our NECC community. All are invited. Coffee and donuts will be provided.
Thursday, Nov. 19 @ 12:00 p.m. to 1:00 p.m.
Tech Center, Haverhill Campus, TC103

Thanksgiving break begins Nov. 25 @ 5:00 PM (no evening classes)

Thanksgiving Day Nov. 26 (College closed)

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

Depression is not in session

How students can exhale and inhale when facing the mental health load

By Karelyn Soriano
Correspondent

Stress is a test — literally. From elementary, high school to college, students experience high levels of stress sometime during their academic year, whether preparing for a test, midterms, finals or major projects.

As students, the daily load can feel heavy, especially when balancing personal lives alongside academic expectations. Yet, despite these challenges, seeking help through counseling or therapy remains off the radar for many. Some students hesitate due to a belief that counseling will not help, a desire to handle issues independently or religious beliefs.

While school is meant to be a learning experience rather than a source of stress, many struggle to balance their responsibilities. The average student enrolls in five classes each semester. When jobs, parenting or personal responsibilities are added to the workload, time management becomes increasingly difficult.

To better understand these challenges, Gabriel Garcia, a counselor at Northern Essex Community College, shared some insight into what students face today.

"I think one of the biggest differences college students face today compared to previous generations is the amount of pressure students experience from multiple directions simultaneously," Garcia said. "Social media has created an environment where students are constantly comparing themselves to others, sometimes feeling as though they're falling behind or not accomplishing enough."

Garcia noted that financial burdens including the cost of living, housing and tuition further complicate the student experience. At a community college like NECC, many enrolled are nontraditional students, including working adults and parents returning to education.

"For these students, balancing school with everyday responsibilities can be particularly challenging," Garcia said. "I don't necessarily think previous generations had fewer problems, but I do think today's students are navigating a different set of expectations and pressures."

Faculty and staff also play an essential role in recognizing when a student may be struggling, Garcia explained, as they interact with students daily and notice behavioral changes first.

"A professor might notice that a student who previously attended classes consistently has started missing assignments, withdrawing from discussions or appearing unusually distressed," Garcia said. While faculty members are not expected to diagnose mental health conditions, they serve as a critical bridge to campus resources.

Serving a diverse student body, Garcia emphasizes practicing "cultural humility," approaching each person with openness, curiosity and respect rather than making assumptions based on race, ethnicity, religion, gender or cultural background.

"Family expectations, cultural values and beliefs about mental health can significantly influence how students experience stress and whether they feel comfortable seeking help," Garcia said. As a bilingual counselor, Garcia provides services in English and Spanish to help remove language barriers.

Stigma remains a primary obstacle for many seeking help. Male students often feel societal pressure to handle problems alone, while first-generation students may feel intense pressure to succeed for their families. International students frequently face language or cultural hurdles, and student-athletes often feel forced to maintain an image of strength.

To combat these barriers, NECC offers flexible options, including virtual mental health support and off-campus referrals.

For Garcia, the most rewarding part of counseling is helping students realize their own strength. He recalled working with a student who experienced severe anxiety regarding graduation and entering the workforce, fearing failure.

"Using cognitive behavioral therapy, or CBT, we worked on challenging those fears and helping the student recognize the evidence of their own abilities," Garcia said. "Sometimes students

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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.

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Opinion

How changing my major opened new doors

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



Adobe stock image

I changed my major in college. At the time, it felt like my whole career plan had been turned upside down. I had set out to become an elementary school teacher, and suddenly, in my senior year, I was questioning everything. Why couldn't I follow through with my original plan? Would changing majors delay my graduation? These questions swirled around my mind for months.

What I eventually realized was that my degree could lead to many careers in education, and that becoming a classroom teacher wasn't my only option. Through an internship and several part-time jobs, I discovered that traditional teaching wasn't the right fit for me.

Fortunately, conversations with my academic adviser and my roommate encouraged me to explore other possibilities. After some research, I found a closely related major that accepted all of my credits, kept me on track for graduation, and provided an internship opportunity that aligned with my new career goals.

If you're considering changing your major — or simply wondering what else you can do with your degree — you're not alone. The earlier you begin exploring your options, the more flexibility you'll have when making academic and career decisions. Trust me: while changing my major as a senior ultimately worked out, it added stress and uncertainty that could have been avoided with earlier career exploration. NECC's career exploration tools can help you connect your academic interests with career paths you may not have considered:

Career Coach is our newest resource and your tool to explore careers and discover which NECC programs prepare you for that path. Take an interest survey and uncover how your interests can connect to careers and education. Bonus: You can even start a new resume using the resume builder tool! Visit: https://necc.lightcastcc.com/

What Can I Do With This Major? is a website featuring 100 major profiles with info on common career paths, types of employers that hire in the field, and strategies to maximize opportunities. Visit: https://www.necc.mass.edu/academics/what-can-i-do-with-this-major/

Explore your interests

Choosing a major can feel like a defining moment, and changing it can sometimes feel like a setback. But college is also a time to explore, learn, and discover what truly interests you. As you consider your options, ask yourself: What skills do I want to develop? What kind of work keeps me engaged? Where can I make a meaningful contribution?

For me, the answer was working in nonprofits and higher education. I discovered that what I loved most wasn't teaching in a traditional classroom — it was helping others learn, grow, and achieve their goals. Once I understood that, I could see how the skills I developed through my education could transfer to a variety of careers.

The internship I completed after changing my major turned out to be one of the most rewarding experiences of my college career. I built lasting friendships, gained hands-on experience, and developed professional skills that I continue to use today.

If you're questioning your current path or considering a change, know that you're not alone. Give yourself permission to explore new possibilities, seek advice, and try something different. You never know where a new opportunity might lead.

Appointments with Career Services

Want to talk about your major and career planning? Schedule a meeting with Career Services. Please visit Navigate to select a virtual or in-person meeting time: https://necc.campus.eab.com/

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Opinion

Midterm elections spark questions

By Tristan Taylor
Opinion Editor

In a stunning turn of events, the Democrats regained control of both the Senate and the House of Representatives on Election Day. In particular, the Democratic Party flipped seven seats from the Republicans, meaning the Democrats now control 54 seats with leads in both Alaska and Mississippi (which are still counting ballots), meaning there is a strong possibility that the Democrats wind up with 56 seats.

In the House of Representatives, the Democrats have gained 42 seats so far, with a number of ballots still being tallied across other districts. As of writing, the Democrats now control 254 seats in the House. In addition, the Democrats won a number of gubernatorial elections, some of which were surprising to most.

In a 60 Minutes interview, President Donald Trump blamed the Republican defeat on his deportation policy, claiming it may be too excessive. Additionally, many have pointed out that despite endorsing numerous GOP candidates, the incumbent president failed to transfer his popularity to those he endorsed. This was perhaps most evident in the Senate race in Texas, where Trump-endorsed GOP candidate Ken Paxton was demolished by Democratic candidate James Talarico. Additionally, Democratic candidate Gina Hinojosa defeated incumbent governor Greg Abbott in the gubernatorial race.

There were many firsts on Election Day, and although I can't list all of them, I'd like to talk about some of them. Keisha Lance Bottoms became the first Black female governor of any state in the country's history when she won her race in Georgia. In New Mexico, Deb Haaland became the first Native American woman to be elected governor of any state. Finally, in Michigan, Abdul El-Sayed won the senate race, becoming the first person of Muslim faith to be elected to the Senate.

To talk about some local elections, Democratic candidates Chris Pappas of New Hampshire and Ed Markey of Massachusetts both defeated their Republican challengers. Pappas (who, fun fact, is the grandson of Charlie Pappas, the man who invented the chicken tender) became the first openly gay man elected to the Senate, while Markey will retain his incumbent status for yet another term.

The GOP did retain a gubernatorial seat in the immediate area, however. Incumbent governor Kelly Ayotte defeated Democratic challenger Cinde Warmington in New Hampshire. In contrast, incumbent Massachusetts governor Maura Healey annihilated GOP candidate Mike Minogue, who, in all fairness, did make quite a decent effort at a gubernatorial run, considering his ads were inescapable for two and a half months leading up to Election Day.

Political experts and regular civilians alike are shocked, and one question is fresh in the minds of many: "How did the Democrats sweep the midterm elections?" In my opinion, there are quite a few factors.

Since the start of the Iran War, the price of gasoline has jumped significantly, and although it has started to drop in recent months, it does fluctuate from day to day. The cost of gasoline is simply too much for people to pay, and it has shown. Also on the topic of high prices, groceries are quite expensive these days, and the general populace seems to have grown tired of it.

Immigration also is a likely factor in the outcome of the election. Since the start of the second Trump administration, Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) have seen an expanded role in day to day operations that has led to major controversies, especially in 2026. On December 31, 2025, an off-duty ICE agent shot and killed Keith Porter, an American man living in Los Angeles. According to his family, Porter had been firing shots outside as part of a New Year's Eve celebration. The agent alleged that Porter had shot at him.

Just days later, on January 7, an American woman by the name of Renee Good was shot and killed by an ICE agent in Minneapolis when she reversed her car and then drove forward. Just weeks later, on January 24, another American, Alex Pretti, was shot and killed by an ICE agent who claimed he was holding a firearm and had two magazines, although video analysis showed he was holding a cell phone. These three deaths, alongside other ICE-related controversies (such as the wrongful deportation of Kilmar Abrego Garcia), were major issues used by the No Kings movement.

Further issues, such as the killing of Colombian immigrant Joan Sebastian Duran Guerrero in Biddeford, Maine, only added fuel to the fire and angered many civilians.

While these factors are not all of the reasons the GOP lost significantly in the midterms, they are some of the more notable reasons as to why this occurred.

As always, the future is unknown, but one thing is for sure: the midterm elections have officially brought forth a new era in American politics. A Democratic sweep has ensured that the current president is a "lame duck", an elected official nearing the end of his term whose administration will face severe hurdles passing major legislative items. President Trump is expected to lean even further into executive action, as he's done for the majority of his second presidency. For now, though, Americans will have to wait and see what changes this brings forth.

Officials elected to congress will be sworn in at noon on January 3, 2027 as part of official proceedings, which will be televised on C-SPAN.

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Opinion

Where do the couples stand on *DWTS*?

By Tristan Taylor
Opinion Editor

Dancing with the Stars is nearing the end of its 35th season, and with only seven couples remaining, the battle for the Len Goodman Mirrorball Trophy is heating up. I will dive into every single couple's advantages and disadvantages as we get closer to the season finale, going from last to first in terms of average scoring. At the time of writing, Week 9 has not been aired yet.

In last place, actress Tatyana Ali, of *Fresh Prince of Bel-Air* fame, has carried a strong fan vote thus far but has struggled in terms of scoring. Partnered with second-season pro dancer Jan Ravnik, Ali has shown massive levels of improvement from the first week on, as she scored a 12 out of 30 that week. Her average score this season, so far, is 21.3, ahead of all but one eliminated couple, albeit just barely. While not to be used as an exclusive "take all of it as fact" source, prediction markets claim Tatyana and Jan are among the couples most at risk of being eliminated.

In sixth place are podcaster and comedian Connor Wood and his partner Rylee Arnold, who have benefited from a niche but strong fanbase actively promoting him on social media. Wood's average score this season is 21.7, but I would not be surprised if he makes the finale, given that his followers are not only active, but extremely vocal in their support. Additionally, Connor and Rylee's contemporary performance on Halloween earned them 10s from judges Carrie Ann Inaba and Derek Hough, so I would be extremely shocked if they were eliminated.

In fifth place is reality television personality Maura Higgins, who is partnered with *DWTS* legend Mark Ballas. While carrying a lot of hype over from her appearance on The Traitors, a lot of that hype has dwindled, albeit to no fault of her own. Her season average is 23.6, which is by no means considered a low average score to have. Prediction markets have been claiming Maura and Mark are at risk of being eliminated, which would be shocking, as they have earned high scores throughout the competition.

Fourth place belongs to Olympic figure skater Amber Glenn. Having earned high scores since the beginning of the season with her partner, Pasha Pashkov, she also has an extremely active and vocal fanbase. She currently has an average score of 24.3, and regularly contends for the top of the leaderboard. A concerning factor, however, is dwindling engagement from fans on social media, and while I believe she will make the finale, time is running out fast to get those engagement numbers back up. However, social media engagement isn't all that the show is decided on, and that's why I believe she is a lock for the finale.

Coming in third place is Paralympic track and field athlete Ezra Frech. By far the surprise and the standout of the season, he is also aided by the fact that his professional partner, Daniella Karagach, is among the most popular pros in the history of *DWTS*. Frech's average score of 24.9 is considered by some fans to be lower than deserved, and I agree on this one. On Disney Night, he and Karagach performed a samba, a dance which was initially considered "off the table" due to the challenges the dance poses when performed with a mechanical prosthetic. Frech's following has grown tremendously since the first week of competition, a strong indicator that he will almost certainly reach the finale, and could very well win the entire thing.

There are currently two couples tied for first in terms of average scores, at 25.3. The first couple is actress Jenna Dewan, who is a main cast member of *The Rookie*. Partnered with another longtime *DWTS* pro in Val Chmerkovskiy, Dewan's fanbase, combined with Chmerkovskiy's, have made her a frontrunner despite a recent controversy involving Chmerkovskiy, who was suspended for Dedication Night after his response to feedback from judge Carrie Ann Inaba was widely perceived as a threat, leaving Dewan to dance with Alan Bersten, whose partner had been eliminated in the second week. I believe Jenna and Val could make it to the finale, but given Chmerkovskiy's recent controversy, I'm also not certain it hasn't affected her popularity.

The other couple tied for first is *Glee* and *Grey's Anatomy* star Harry Shum Jr., who is partnered with Jenna Johnson. Shum received the first perfect score of the season on Halloween Night, but has been a frontrunner since the first week of competition. I'm personally predicting that Harry and Jenna will make the finale, but only time will tell if they'll win.

So, having completed my analysis of every couple left on the show, what is my overall opinion of this season? Well, it's been a competitive one, probably one of the most competitive seasons in recent memory. That being said, I find that the scoring has been tougher because of it. By this point in most seasons, most couples are earning 10s consistently, whereas that hasn't occurred this season. I don't necessarily like this style of judging too much, but I don't hate it either. If anything, it falls in the middle for me.

As a reminder, *Dancing with the Stars* airs on Tuesday nights at 8 PM on ABC, and I highly recommend that readers tune in. This is one of the best seasons in recent memory, and there is something for everybody.

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We want to see what you have to say.

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News

Online or in person? Students weight their options

By Lauren Ferguson
Correspondent

For some students, going to class means sitting in a classroom surrounded by their peers.For others, it means opening a laptop and logging into class from home. As online education continues to become a part of college life, students are weighing the advantages and disadvantages of virtual and in-person classes.

When weighing the pros and cons of both formats, students and faculty alike must consider factors such as lifestyle, technological accessibility and individual learning styles. For some students, the flexibility to work towards a college degree on their own schedule is a major factor in choosing online classes. For others, the traditional college experience, including campus community and events, face-to-face interaction with faculty and access to student resources, is more appealing. As a current Northern Essex student whose major is focused heavily on writing, Meaghann Cormier has taken two online classes each semester since beginning her degree. When asked what she likes most about virtual classes, Cormier said, "Online classes offer more flexibility, especially when it comes to writing-heavy assignments."

"I like the collaborative aspect of the in person classes, but I liked the flexibility and at your own pacing of the virtual classes more," said Mary Anne Davoli, a 2004 Northern Essex alumna. Davoli, who began her higher education at Northern Essex in 2001, started with fully in-person classes before later transitioning to virtual learning. For some students, the flexibility of earning a college degree from home can be important. When asked whether certain lifestyle factors influenced her opinion of virtual and in-person classes, Davoli said, "I did not have the option to attend full time in person, so the online classes gave me availability to still complete my degree and work and take care of my family."

Despite the rise of online degree programs, in-person classes in traditional classroom settings still offer several advantages. Students attending classes on-campus have access to resources such as libraries and tutoring centers and opportunities to interact directly with faculty and their peers.

NECC offers resources for students, including tutoring and career centers, counseling services, and an on-campus bookstore. Students attending classes on campus may have more opportunities to use them in person.

Jennifer Keeney, who has taken both online and in-person courses and now teaches online courses at a university, said, "The biggest benefit of in-person classes versus online is the social connection."

The opportunity to ask questions and use resources in person can provide a different experience for students attending classes on campus. Keeney said online courses may attempt to recreate that social connection through forums and other online platforms. "Online environments might try to mirror that with social media type sites and forums but there's really no one-to-one replacement for being able to turn to the person next to you or catch someone as they're walking out the door," Keeney said. In many ways, both online and in-person classes offer students different advantages and challenges. Online classes can provide flexibility and convenience, particularly for students who are balancing their education with work, family or other responsibilities. In-person classes can provide opportunities for face-to-face interaction and easier access to campus resources. Students can consider factors such as lifestyle, availability and learning style when deciding which format works best for them.

Mental health, continued from Page 2

don't need us to give them the answers. They need someone to help them recognize the strengths and abilities they already possess."

Students across campus agree that mental health resources are vital to success.

Without them, it can feel like being Jack on the Titanic, trying to hold on until you sink to the ocean floor. Managing mental health is like taking a tour of your own mind: at first, you feel in control, then you start to lose control while thinking you can handle it. Many don't even realize they're in survival mode until they have a break down. I asked some NECC students how important and beneficial it is to have a counselor.

NECC student Meaghann Cormier stressed the importance of accessible help.

"School is stressful enough, so having someone to talk to who understands the stress that college students are under can help immensely," Cormier said.

Student Maddy O'Donnell echoed that perspective. "Having a counselor at NECC is beneficial. A lot of students deal with stress, anxiety and other personal challenges while balancing school and life," O'Donnell said. "Having someone on campus to talk to can make a big difference."

Student Rosa Pena shared some powerful insight: "I believe having a counselor at NECC is an important aspect of a student's life. Every day is a busy day with assignments and quizzes. And a lot can come with being a college student. Many times, we are faced with academic pressure, financial worries, and other daily challenges such as time management. But having a counselor is essential in all aspects like small struggles but deeper struggles as well that are affecting a student's mental health. A counselor offers a confidential, supportive place to talk, helps students develop ways to cope, and can provide support early before difficulties become more serious.

Pena noted that not "all students will feel the freedom and comfortability to go to someone inside the school, they like to separate their school life with their personal life But for those who take the counseling at NECC it would benefit them. With extra help, advice, and guidance in their education a weight can be lifted off the student."

Mental health has always carried a stigma. We either kept it to ourselves, or people

made us feel like we were using it as an excuse. Going to a counselor is not a weakness; it shows strength, growth and power. Campus students emphasized that they cannot control every part of their lives, and utilizing resources like counseling at NECC provides them with help to navigate stress, depression, and anxiety so they know they're not alone. Mental health brings wealth, extend your hand and accept the help.

Arts & Entertainment

Tarot Talk Part 3: Adjusting your perspective as you begin running towards the finish line

By J.T. Melanson
Arts & Entertainment Editor

As the fall semester kicks it past the mid-term marker and heads into the final stretch, the atmosphere across the Haverhill and Lawrence campuses has shifted once again. The initial rush of assignments has long settled into a steady hum of activity, but the finish line is finally starting to come into view. Students are now staring down the barrel of final papers, complex group projects, and that familiar feeling of mental fatigue that comes with months of continuous output.

This critical phase of the term is not just about keeping your head down; it requires strategic adaptation, collaboration, and further, knowing when to step back from the limelight to regain your own perspective. The tarot deck remains an invaluable map for managing this late-semester energy, helping Northern Essex Community College students shift from surviving the rush to finishing with intention.

Archetypes for the Late-Semester Push

1. The Hermit (IX): Stepping Back to Find Clarity *The Lesson for NECC:* The Hermit depicts a lone figure holding a glowing lantern atop a snowy peak. He represents introspection, solitude, and the search for inner truth. When the noise of the semester gets really loud—things like competing deadlines, social obligations, and constant notifications—it is ridiculously easy to lose sight of your own personal goals. The Hermit reminds us that not only is it okay to step back, sometimes it is absolutely necessary. Take at least an hour to unplug from your devices, audit your remaining coursework and map out a quiet study plan that can illuminate the path forward. Sometimes, solitude isn't isolation; it's the quiet space required to recalibrate your focus on the end game.



Photos by J.T. Melanson

2. The Wheel of Fortune (X): Adapting to the Unexpected *The Lesson for NECC:* Showing a great wheel turning amidst cosmic forces, the Wheel of Fortune represents cycles, change, and the unpredictable, chaotic nature of life. By late October and November, unexpected curveballs are all but guaranteed—a grade that didn't go your way, bombing a quiz or test, sudden shifts in your work hours, or a group project member dropping the ball completely. This card reminds you that you cannot control every external shift in your life, but you can control how you adapt to it. Resilience is the name of the game here and in this case, it means rolling with the wave cycles of the semester rather than trying to fight against the tides of change.



3. Three of Pentacles: The Power of Collaboration *The Lesson for NECC:* The Two of Pentacles that showed up last time was all about finding balance, the Three of Pentacles is all about teamwork. It shows a stoneworker collaborating with architects to build a cathedral. It represents teamwork, shared skills, and coordinated effort. As final projects and major papers loom, trying to shoulder everything entirely on your own is a fast track to triple-degree burnout. This card reminds you that you're absolutely not alone. If anything? You can fall back on your community: start by forming a study group, trading notes with classmates and bouncing ideas off peers who share your academic goals. Building something great is rarely, if ever, a solo endeavor. After all, team work makes the dream work as the old anecdote goes. This card is all about using teamwork to get the job done.



Fighting End of Semester Fatigue

Navigating that final third of the semester isn't about running yourself ragged; rather, it's all about working smarter and leaning into your community for support as needed. By balancing the reflective solitude of The Hermit, the adaptable resilience of The Wheel of Fortune and especially the collaborative spirit of the Three of Pentacles, you can weather the home stretch with the utmost confidence and grace befitting of a college student.

As the legendary military strategist, statesman and Emperor of Wu during the era of the Three Kingdoms, Sun Quan (182 CE – 252 CE) once observed:

"You have relieved my doubts and spoken to my heart. Let any other person mention surrender, and he shall be served as I have served this table!"

Protecting that mental clarity and collaborating with those around you is what ensures you make it across the finish line strong and steady, with grades that you can carry into the next semester with absolute pride.

Institutional Resources for the Final Stretch

As the semester begins the wind down, NECC offers several key campus resources to help you finish the journey:

· ***Academic Advising:*** Check in on your graduation pathway or plan your upcoming registration with an advisor.

o Contact: 978-556-3700 | advising@necc.mass.edu

· ***Tutoring & Writing Centers:*** Get a final polish on your research papers and final project drafts with expert peer support.

o Contact: 978-556-3411 | tutoringcenter@necc.mass.edu

· ***Counseling Services:*** If the late-semester pressure ever starts to feel overwhelming, free and confidential support is available.

o Contact: 978-556-3730 | counseling@necc.mass.edu

News

In our own backyard, continued from Page 1

iconic Merrimack Valley landmarks, the Addision Gallery in Andover and the Methuen Memorial Music Hall.

Established in 1852, The White Fund is a private charitable foundation that supports local organizations and provides free educational and cultural lectures for the Lawrence community.

Meehan has taught many former students over the years, including Observer adviser Mary Jo Shafer and Yadira Betances Muldoon, a longtime reporter for The Eagle-Tribune who was among the attendees alongside this writer.

"Seek beauty and you shall find it, and often times it's in your own backyard," Meehan told his tour group.

The first stop was the Addison Gallery of American Art at Phillips Academy in Andover, where attendees viewed and learned about the museum's collection.

During the visit, Meehan highlighted internationally renowned photographer Dawoud Bey, who once photographed former President Barack Obama and previously served as an artist-in-residence at the gallery.

According to Meehan, Bey visited local schools and selected students to volunteer for portraits, with Meehan also recommending students from his classes. Some of those Lawrence High School student portraits were later framed and displayed in art shows and museums across the country, while others were published alongside brief personal essays in Bey's book, Class Pictures.

Among the featured students was 2005 Lawrence High School graduate James Blatchford, who attended the tour and frequently spent time in Meehan's art room as a student.



Photo courtesy of NECC Vice President Naydeen Gonzalez-De Jesus

Tour guide David Meehan talks about the art in the Addison Gallery in Andover on Nov. 7.

"He would look for a person that might have a story behind their face," Meehan said of Bey. "His job was to capture that story on film, and he mainly did that by capturing their expression while the student wrote about themselves. His purpose was to capture the essence of who that person really was then and who they are now."

"Dawoud Bey collaborated not only with the Phillips Academy students, but with the art students in my classes," Meehan added.

As for the tour: "I want people to be aware of the cultural treasures in the Greater Lawrence area and how fortunate we are to have them in our backyard," Meehan said.

For Blatchford, revisiting that history during the excursion was meaningful.

"Getting to see the amazing things in our backyard makes me appreciate things around me," Blatchford said. "Being featured in Dawoud's work has been a highlight of my life. To be included with my fellow LHS students was a true honor."

The tour's second stop was the Methuen Memorial Music Hall, where Executive Director Ashley Haseltine hosted the group. As attendees entered the hall, touring concert organist Nathan Avakian of Oregon was already performing on the venue's historic organ. Guests took photos and videos of the hall's intricate architecture and painted ceilings while listening to the music.

In a brief chat with the Observer, Avakian explained how playing the organ compares to playing the piano.

"The basics are [similar] because it's the same keyboard," Avakian said. "There's a lot of coordination involved. There's a keyboard for your feet as well. Every limb is doing something different."

Other former students said the excursion offered a fresh perspective on familiar local landmarks.

"Although I have been to both the Addison Gallery and the Methuen Music Hall, going on this tour opened up for me a new appreciation for what has been in my own neighborhood the entire time," said Laura Michelle Santana, a 2008 NECC graduate and former student of Meehan at Lawrence High School.

For college leaders, that sense of local discovery and access is the core goal of the partnership.

"The White Fund Enlightenment Series trip to the Methuen Memorial Music Hall and the Addison Gallery of American Art showed our students and community the world-class art and culture right in our own backyard," said Dr. Naydeen Gonzalez-De Jesus, NECC's vice president of Lawrence Campus and Community Relations. "At Northern Essex Community College, we open doors to experiences like these along with our White Fund Board friends, because they broaden perspectives and help our students and community members envision what's possible for their futures."



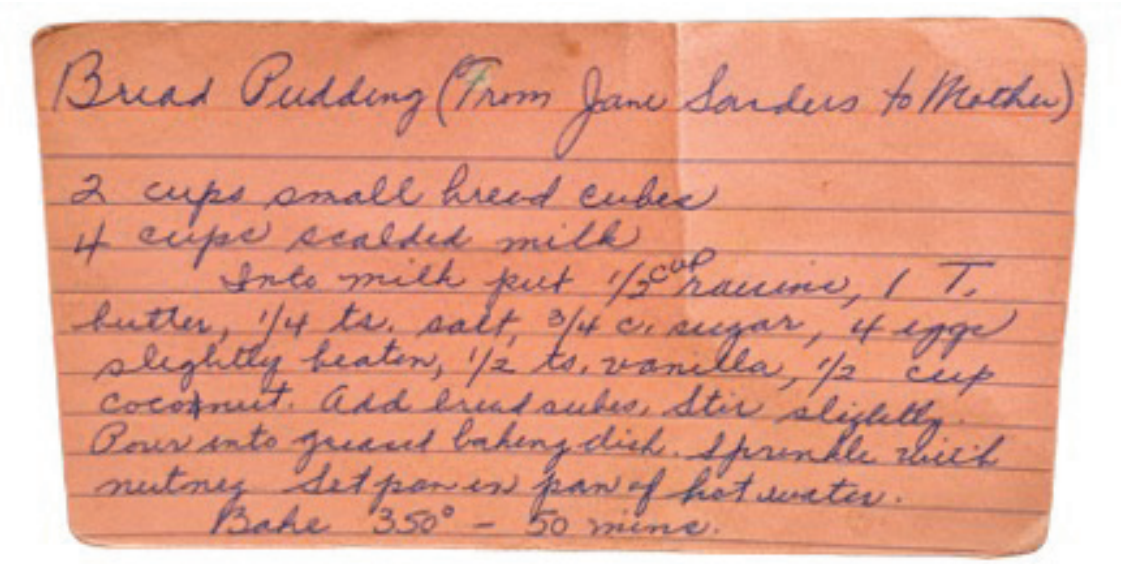
Photo courtesy of NECC Vice President Naydeen Gonzalez De Jesus

Tour group examining artwork at the Adison's Gallery on Nov. 7. See Page 16 for a photo of the organ at the Methuen Memorial Music Hall.

Culinary Arts

Chef inspires next generation at NECC

By Sharon Donovan
Food Editor



A love for food and togetherness ultimately led Chef Philbrook on a journey into a diverse range of professional kitchens, where he discovered a new passion: helping others develop skills and confidence. "One of the most rewarding parts of any job has always been watching someone grow and find their place," they reflect. "Everyone brings different experiences, traditions, and perspectives to the kitchen," they say. This diversity, both in the kitchen and in the classroom, continues to inspire Chef Philbrook's approach as the Director of the academic culinary program at Northern Essex Community College (NECC).

Chef Philbrook's background in both the culinary industry and education proved invaluable when taking on the challenge of building NECC's developing program. With over a decade spent teaching in alternative, public, and private educational settings, Chef learned to adapt to students' needs, build strong relationships, and help learners succeed; all skills just as vital as learning foundational sauces or the techniques of a braise.

"Working in restaurants taught me to prioritize, solve problems, and lead a team," they explain. "Bringing those experiences to teaching helps me approach the program with an understanding of both student needs and industry expectations." When asked what makes this community college culinary program unique and a magnet for students coming from technical high schools such as Essex and Whittier Tech, Chef Philbrook's vision is clear.

"One of our strengths is the connection we can build between education and the local hospitality community. Students can develop their skills close to home while meeting professionals and exploring opportunities in the region. Students coming from technical high schools often arrive with a strong foundation. Our role is to build on that preparation through more advanced application, greater independence, and an understanding of the business behind the food. We want them to keep progressing toward whatever comes next, whether that's employment, additional education, or eventually a leadership role".

One recent graduate's story exemplifies the program's impact. Arriving at NECC seeking a career change, she combined her love of hospitality, decorating, and cooking. With new skills and confidence, she opened Haverhill's first bed and breakfast, a business that now welcomes visitors into the community. "Her story captures what this program is about: helping students build on their interests and experiences, develop skills, and turn a new direction into a career," Chef shares.

When asked about the most important lesson for graduates, Philbrook says, "Stay curious and be someone others can depend on. While culinary skills develop with practice, it's a willingness to learn, accept feedback, and contribute to a team will influence how far you go."

Looking ahead, the Director side of his job gets to shine. "I hope to see NECC's culinary program become an even stronger bridge between local schools, the community, and hospitality employers. Plans include developing more industry partnerships, expanding learning opportunities, and helping students see clear pathways to employment and further education", he shares. "I want students to feel proud of the program and the opportunities it provides; and I hope to keep growing alongside it, as an educator, mentor, and someone who helps bring the right people and resources together."

For those considering a fresh start in culinary arts, Chef Philbrook offers some reassuring advice: "You don't need to have your entire career mapped out before you begin. Start with a willingness to learn and an honest interest in the work." Professional cooking, they note, requires preparation, repetition, teamwork, and commitment; all skills that a good culinary program helps develop. "The experiences you bring from another career or from life can be valuable, too," he adds.

When not at NECC, Philbrook treasures time around the family table.Their go-to meal on a day off is something slow-braised, like pot roast with gravy and mashed potatoes, a dish that brings everyone together. "We had a large, custom Amish-built table made so everyone could gather around it on Sundays. We put the phones away and take time to share a meal and catch up. For me, cooking has always been about bringing people together, and that's especially meaningful at home with my family".



Photo by Bryan Philbrook

Arts and Entertainment

Breaking comfort zones with reading challenge

By Omaya massa torres
Arts and Entertainment Editor

> “For November, as Native American Heritage Appreciation Month, we are doing ‘The Firekeeper’s Daughter.’”
>
> *- NECC Instruction and Research Librarian Grace Spaulding*

Is easy to get caught up in our comfort zone when students attend college and have weekly assignments, midterms, finals, and multiple reading assignments. Whether in college, life or on our bookshelves, we naturally gravitate toward what is familiar, but NECC reading challenge invites students to take risks on titles they might otherwise dismiss.

Grace Spaulding, Instruction and Research Librarian says, “We always try to keep them connected in some way to the calendar so either the seasons, a holiday, or tradition”. Every month is chosen with a different theme, for example, for the month of October the theme was National Hispanic Heritage Month. “Having Hispanic Heritage month but we also had Halloween so this last month we read The Bewitching by Silvia Moreno Garcia who’s a Mexican Canadian author and it was a little spooky” Spaulding says.

Besides students, staff, and faculty also enjoy NECC book club Susan Leonardi, Coordinator of Student Success and Library Engagement was surprised after reading last month’s book pick. “I was shocked normally I wouldn’t have picked a book about horror, but the writing was so well done” Leonardi says.

Another option for students is NECC book club which offers book titles to get out of that comfort zone and read a book that you may never think about picking up in the bookshelves at the library or at your local bookstore.

“We have this book club which you are reading a specific book and then now you have this reading challenge where you can choose any book and give us a little information about the book and will do monthly raffle prizes” Leonardi says.

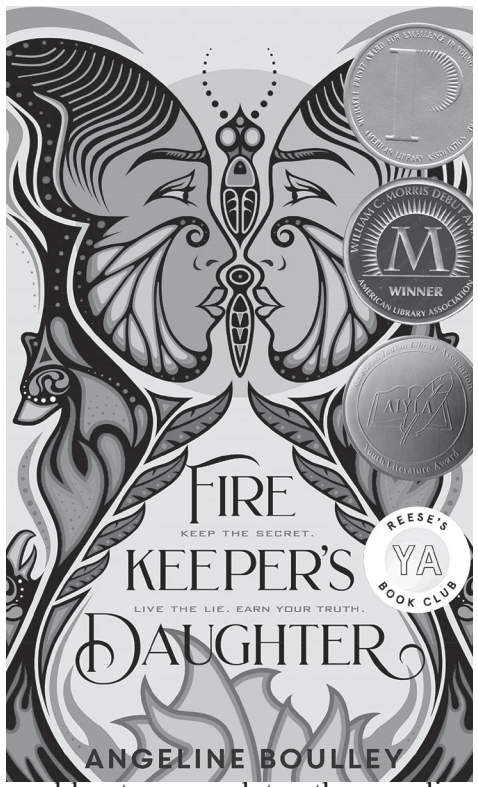
Student Narjis Musa says “I have not been able to go to the book club, but I think the book club is a great way for students to connect.”

Spaulding shares that besides the traditional book club they also offer a Spanish book club which is a slow read inviting student to expand their conventional Spanish by reading one book for the whole year reading a couple chapters a month to reach personal goals and expand their knowledge.

Reading books that are out of your comfort zones expands your mind and has many other benefits, “We always say that books we read to be exposed and gently open our minds to different ideas and people” Leonardi says.

Musa started participating in the NECC reading challenge last fall “It gave me the opportunity to look at the list of the books I wanted to read and really focus on specific books” Musa said.

If during the semester you are unable to complete the reading challenge, the library offers a book concierge option. You must fill out a form and submit your name, what books would you like to read, and the librarians choose carefully a book bundle for you. “You see the book concierge that is usually very popular with staff and faculty and some students over break” Leonardi says.



All these events are curated by our librarians; not only are these events an act of service to each student but for the NECC community to bring staff, faculty, and students together. “I think it was just a great way to bring the NECC community together but also like educate them on a form of literature at the same time” Musa said.

NECC library has so many events coming up this semester, like the next NECC Book Club meeting on November 20th at the Lawrence campus. Staff and students will meet to discuss the book Firekeeper’s Daughter by Angeline Boulley to include this month NECC reading challenge theme National Native American Heritage Month.

Leonardi and Spaulding hopes that students know about these events and join them either for NECC reading challenge, or NECC Book Club “I would love for students to know that they are welcome and to come and join even if they have not had time to read the book” Spaulding said.

If you are interested, please use the NECC website for more information regarding NECC reading challenge, NECC Book Club, book concierge, or any events like the NECC Book Club Yankee Swap on December 18th at the Lawrence Campus from 10:30am until 12pm or at the Haverhill Campus from 1:00pm until 2:30pm.

Features

The SOAR program at NECC

Student provides helpful tips

By Stacy Zappala
Features Editor

Welcome back, everyone. If you've been reading my column then you know by now that I have been writing a lot about Student Government and my involvement in it. I'd like to have you all take look at another program I am a part of and see if it is something you might want to join or need to know about.

I am a part of the SOAR Program. Some of you might not know what SOAR is and or what it stands for. I interviewed Maha Nassar, an academic coach at soar on zoom.

When asked about what soar does Nassar replied, "Soar is a supportive program for students. Soar means seize opportunity, aspire, to rise. It's a wrap around service to the whole students. It's a student success program."

I was able to get more information that that though. Soar is a huge help to students because it helps them become successful. They have academic coaches and life coaches in that department that explore an individual's goals by creating what they call an "action plan."

In a quote, Nassar continues by saying, "We guide the students, empower them and celebrate them." I also asked Nassar what services SOAR includes.

"Soar Coaches do academic and life coaching. They help you learn to use academic tools to help you stay on track and improve academic life skills to help you balance, work life and study."

There are also advisors at Soar. According to Nassar, "Soar advisors will help you to find the right major and plan your courses and register you for classes." "Soar coordinators help to connect with NECC community."

Additionally, I feel like I belong at Soar.If that was not enough of an incentive for you to join, SOAR also does field trips. They go to see plays, they go to museums, they have celebrations and they have workshops on things like stress management and so much more!

What I did not know until after I did my interview is that a lot of students are eligible to be a part of SOAR.

If you want to see if you qualify for SOAR, please visit the website below.

https://necc.edu/academics/academic-support-services/soar/

Thank you and I hope you take the opportunity to see if you qualify for SOAR. It's a wonderful program, and I hope to see some more faces in the SOAR center soon!



Photo by Features Editor Stacy Zappala

Parnassus invites community to share creativity

By Meaghann Cormier
Correspondent

Over the years, Parnassus literary Magazine at Northern Essex Community College has provided a voice to aspiring poets, writers and artists. The magazine is named after the mountain in central Greece where the Muses of Greek Mythology supposedly lived.

But what is the story behind the local literary magazine, exactly?

Ever since 1965, NECC has continuously been printing this literary magazine at least once a year, giving aspiring artists, poets, and writers an opportunity to strut their stuff.

"It's a group effort," says Stacy Zappala, an NECC student (and Observer Features editor) who has been part of the Parnassus staff that decides which stories, art, photography, poetry and prose go into the magazine. She goes on to say that the staff meet several times each semester and decide which stories go into the magazine by voting on each story. Zappala also says that anyone can submit any story, prose, poem, or artwork. She concludes that anyone can join staff if they are a student.

Patrick Lochelt, who has been the faulty adviser for Parnassus since 2006, says that, for most of its history, Parnassus has been published twice a year. Lochelt says, "There were even multiple copies a year at times, but that meant sacrificing quality due to its limited budget per issue." This resulted in things like stapled edges rather than straight, no color photos and even shorter issues.

Starting in 2008, it was decided to limit publishing issues to one per year, with the budget going toward making it higher quality, putting more color photos and even artwork on the cover. They have tried their hand at including music via QR codes, but there were very few submissions, and that was subsequently scrapped. When the pandemic happened in 2020 the magazine went online. "2020 was the only year it was completely online," Lochelt says. "It was the first time since 1965 that we didn't have a physical version."

However, the past few years, the rise of AI has presented a new challenge: the possibility of artwork, stories and poetry being generated by a machine rather than a human.

"It can do a decent job, but AI is the opposite of creative. I like to think I have gotten better at spotting AI generated stories over time," Lochelt says. He goes on to say that AI submissions of any form will be rejected.

Lauren Fergusen, who is a current student at NECC, had not heard of Parnassus before. When told about what Parnassus is, she says, "Any creative outlet that gives people an opportunity for people to write outside of schoolwork is a positive thing."

For more information about Parnassus or about submitting a story, poem, and artwork, contact Faculty Adviser Patrick Lochelt at plochelt@necc.mass.edu or visit https://www.parnassuslitmag.com.

Campus Life

Acting workshop: introducing Meisner

By Nasrin Musa
Campus Life Editor

What is the most important and influential role in a theatrical process? Some might say the actor, some might say the audience. But at Professor Brianne Beatrice's acting workshop, it's taught that the most important role is actually the playwright. Without them, we have no play. On Saturday Nov. 7, Professor Beatrice held a free acting workshop where she went over the Sanford Meisner acting techniques, and how to apply them to the craft of acting.

The workshop was held in the NECC Theater on the third floor in Building C of the NECC Haverhill Campus.

It was attended by a variety of students -- some current theater majors at the college, others just curious about acting and wanting to learn more, and some were even previous students of Professor Beatrice from another college.

Before the workshop began, there was upbeat music playing in the room, and students were clustered together excitedly talking. Once it was time to get started, Professor Beatrice faded out the music and took to the stage. She welcomed everyone in, immediately setting a warm and welcoming atmosphere.

Not one to waste time she jumped right into it -- who Meisner is, why his techniques are so beneficial to actors, and how to use them properly in a scene.

Sanford Meisner was an acting teacher for many years. In the 1930s he joined the Group Theater in New York. Group Theater was one of the most influential theater organizations on acting in the U.S. The main belief that Meisner had was that actors do not feel. They are not going on stage to express their own personal feelings, or use the scene as therapy.



Photo by Campus Life Editor Nasrin Musa

Professor Brianne Beatrice demonstrates Meisner acting techniques to her students during her free acting workshop on Nov. 7.

They're going on stage to act out actions.

This acting method is considered much safer than what people refer to as "method acting" which is where actors use their own personal experiences, emotions, and senses to get into character.

Throughout the workshop Professor Beatrice would ask the students questions, to keep them engaged and to get them actively thinking about the theatrical process.

After each answer she was always so supportive and positive about why that answer was beneficial, even if it wasn't the exact one she was looking for. One of the first questions she asked was "Who is the most important and influential person in the theatrical process?" A few students guessed the audience, and a few guessed the playwright. Professor Beatrice explained it's the playwright because without them, we have no story. The actors are just on stage with nothing to do.

"The playwright writes the play about the day something special happened, and by special, I don't necessarily mean good." Professor Beatrice said in her explanation. Playwrights give us stories with high stakes, so that from the moment we sit down in our theater chairs, we are invested. Theater is live, we want to watch things happen. "We want to sit and be moved and be changed, that's the point of theater." Professor Beatrice said.

After explaining more about the Meisner method and how it works, Professor Beatrice gave her students the chance to try it for themselves. One by one the students came up to the stage and acted out a monologue they've either performed before, or had memorized.

In real time Professor Beatrice helped them adjust their tone, emotional delivery, and overall performance to be the most powerful it could be. Each student did a different type of monologue, and each performance gave Professor Beatrice the opportunity to gently correct and nudge them in the right direction in a different way.

Narjis Musa, one of the students who attended the workshop, is not currently taking any theater classes. She heard about the workshop and because of her love for acting she wanted to go and see what she could learn. Especially since it was an acting technique she had never heard of before. She also was looking to get insight as to what Professor Beatrice's classes might be like.

"It was cool to learn the history about this acting method. And I got to have a review of some of the things I've learned by acting, but now I have a name for all of them." Musa said.

Musa has had some experience with the NECC Theater. She's seen many plays put on by Professor Beatrice, including "The Vagina Monologues" "Angels in America" and "Steel Magnolias." She has also been in "A Christmas Carol" for the past two years.

"Theater makes people feel alive in a way that other art forms can't exactly." Musa said. "It's never too late to start acting, and if you're curious about it you should give it a try cause it's really fun."

Comment from other students of Professor Beatrice was searched for, but right after the workshop they had a meeting, and were unavailable.

Auditions for NECC's spring play production: "Stop Kiss" is happening Saturday Dec. 5 from 10am-12pm. Script reads are from 12-1pm. Auditions are open to NECC students as well as the public.

In the spring Professor Beatrice will be offering several classes such as: Public Speaking, Interpersonal Communications, Acting: Theory and Practice, and Directing.

Sports

The mental game

By Brennah Ryan
Correspondent

> “Athletes share their stories of their relationship with mental health and how it either was positively or negatively impacted by sports partcipation.”

A bad pass overturns the play, and the opposing team takes the lead. A wrong step in the routine has points deducted.

Winning the championship game, and walking off the field for the last time. Sports are more than a physical game -- sports weigh heavily on athletes’ mental health.

High emotions are inevitably connected to the world of sports.

It is what drives athletes, for better or for worse. Unfortunately, sports are a contributing factor of decreased mental health, even though they are often used as an escape from stresses in everyday life.

Athletes were brave enough to share their stories of their relationship with mental health, and how it either was positively impacted or negatively impacted by sports participation.

“The solo aspect of competition is what I believe gets to athletes,” said student Colby McLaughlin, a competitive swimmer and high school swim coach.

At the end of the day, a team is made up of individual athletes, pushing themselves for the sake of others.

According to athletesforhope.org, at least 33% of all college athletes battle with mental health struggles.

A third of athletes are battling anxiety, depression, and other mental health concerns.

Whether stressors are coming directly from the sport, or an outside source -- students are struggling.

The constant internal battles leave athletes feeling alone and unheard, causing burnout and fatigue, no matter the age level.

Athletes often deal with “bad” coaches. Poor coaching often entails the coach abusing their power, lack of care and enthusiasm, negative attitudes and evident favoritism.

Student Kaelyn Mazzaglia, an ex-gymnast and current gymnastics coach expressed, “I started losing love for the sport because of one coach. My anxiety also got worse.”

When athletes experience poor coaching, it often leads to a disinterest in attending practices, putting forth effort in games and ultimately losing passion for the sport.

It is important to have those you can reach out to in times of need, people that are able to understand the mental health battles.

Student Bella Libucha said, “if you talk about them (struggles) with your teammates, it makes you and others feel better.”

Libucha is a softball pitcher, where perfection is a giant stressor. “All eyes are on you and it is so stressful,” she added.

Having an uplifting group of teammates and coaching staff is one of the ways athletes’ mental health can thrive. A positive environment can silence the pressures.

“Sometimes sports culture can make people feel like they have to hide stress,” said Allie Simons, a club hockey player. Hiding stress, along with comparison, increases the pressure.

On the big stage, athletes are often perceived as invincible people, always performing at 100% --- that is far from the truth. When there is constant noise from teammates, coaching staff, and fans it can get too loud.

Struggling with mental health is something that around 35% of professional athletes go through, according to athletesforhope.org.

But when athletes are brave enough to share stories of their struggles, it breaks down barriers and the stigma that comes with speaking about mental health.

Red Sox outfielder Jarren Duran, a fan favorite , has oopened up about his battles with mental health in a Netflix documentary, revealing that he tried to take his own life because of his struggles with confidence and dealing with outside noise.

Olympic swimmer Michael Phelps -- the most decorated Olympian in history -- has often expressed his battle with depression, and how it kept him trapped in his head, preventing growth.

“Mental health in sports is not talked about enough,” added McLaughlin.

When athletes start talking is when the community starts changing.

There are resources for athletes, but it is a hard step to take. Admitting you need help is the first step -- it’s one of the bravest acts a person can do.

Having accessibility to these kinds of resources is a necessity on all levels of sports participation.

Building teams and communities where mental health is talked about on a normal level. Checking in on each other is important. Mental health struggles come in all forms, and there are all types of battles. Please, check in on one another.

Here at NECC, we offer free counseling and psychological services. To contact these services, you can reach out to counseling@necc.mass.edu or 978-556-3730.

Outside of NECC, to contact the suicide and crisis lifeline, you can call or text 988. The Courage First Athlete Helpline is available for all types of counseling and support by calling or texting 1-888-279-1026.

Sports

Men's basketball wins home opener in style

By Michael Sicard
Sports Editor

The Knights were able to absolutely flourish their way through CT State Community College Saturday afternoon. Taking their home opener 127-56. The Knights were able to shoot at a very high clip with the team shooting 65.1% from the field and 35% from behind the arc. The leaders in scoring were Freshman Rolky Brea-Arias who had 26 points on 13 for 18 shooting from the field with 7 steals and 12 rebounds, Sophomore Xavier Rivera who had 20 points on eight of 10 shooting from the field with 4 steals, Freshman Isaiah Bean-Britten who had 17 points on five for seven shooting from the field with 9 rebounds, and Sophomore Jay'von Depina who had 10 points on three of six shooting and had 10 assists.

"We know what we got to come here and do" Sophomore Xavier Garcia said about the win on Saturday. "

We came out here and did it, and we'll watch the film to prepare for Tuesday against Bunker Hill and we'll do it all over again."

When asked about what Head Coach Darren Stratton was saying during the game Rivera said "He was basically the same as always, telling us to get back on defense, talking and communicating with teammates, and keep pushing." When asked about the team's major strength Rivera said "I think it's our depth, we have a strong 1 to 10 (players) that can go out there and work hard, and we believe in every single one of them too."



Photo by Patrick Osgood

From left to right: Guard Alden Torres from Lawrence, and Forward Xavier Garcia from Lowell.

The offensive output by the Knights was the biggest since February 8th 2025, when they beat Holyoke Community College 122-65. The Knights also had their biggest margin of victory of the season with them winning by 71.

This margin of victory was the largest since their win vs Quinsigamond Community College on November 19th, when they beat Quinsigamond by 66 points.

The Knights who began a four game road trip on Tuesday against Bunker Hill Community College; will play Quinsigamond Community College at 7:30 p.m on Thursday, Nov. 12, then go into Pinehurst, NC to take on Sandhills Community College at 1 p.m on Saturday, Nov. 14, then stay in Pinehurst to take on Johnston Community College at 7:30 p.m on Sunday, Nov. 15 for a neutral site game, and finally be able to return home on Tuesday Nov. 17 to take on Bristol Community College at 7:30 p.m.



Photo by Patrick Osgood

Forward Rolky Brea-Arias going for a dunk against CT State Community College.

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

Women's basketball 'has potential'

By John Mulcahy
Cheif Sports Editor

Knight's women's basketball had its season recently get underway. Head coach Malaquais Canery, believes the group "Has the potential to be a really good team."

In its last game, Saturday night, Nov. 7, the Knight's dominated Connecticut State Community College at the Sport and Fitness Center in an 82-10 final. Freshman Yeira Davila led the team in scoring with 17 points in 27 minutes played. Freshman Julia Adams followed closely with 16 points.

"A lot of communication with our teammates and coaches," said freshman Brianna Monteiro as to how the Knight's took the win. "We came in with the energy in the first half," added sophomore Naiyalee Rivera.

Thursday night, Northern Essex defeated Thomas College's junior varsity team 73-28, in the Knight's first home matchup of the season.



Photo by Patrick Osgood

Women's basketball team photo. Standing from left to right Malaquais Canery, Kelsie Martinez, Janissa Price, Yeira Davila, Julia Adams, Melissa Fuentes, Faith Martin and Cameron Stratton. Sitting from left to right Jaeda Flores, Sofia Cortez, Keyshla Rosario, Naiyalee Rivera and Brianna Monteiro.

"We kept going. I think we started off really slow and I got on them and we responded and I think that's a sign of a good team, that they're able to respond," said Canery in a postgame interview. "I got on them at halftime; I didn't like what we were doing that first half. I didn't like our energy; I didn't like our execution. We came out in the second half and we listened and we were coachable and we responded," he added.



Photo by Talan Stratton

Kelsie martinez goes for a basket in a game against Broistol Community College from last season.

In its opening weekend, the team split a pair of games at the inaugural Roxbury Community College Alumni Classic.

Saturday, Oct. 31, the Knights defeated New Hampshire Technical Institute in a 57-36 final. Rivera led the team in scoring with a total of 16 points. Davila contributed 13 points, while Adams scored 12 and sophomore Kelsie Martinez put up 11. Sophomore Melissa Fuentes led the team in rebounds with 13, while Davila and Martinez collected 10 each, both recording double-doubles in the season opener.

Sunday, Nov. 1, Northern Essex fell to nationally ranked Kingsborough Community College by a score of 83-43. Despite the loss, the game was close at halftime, tied 32-27. Martinez led the Knights in scoring with 10 points. Rivera added nine and freshman Keyshla Rosario had eight points.

"It's a long season; there's ups and downs to every season. So, I want my sophomores to really come in and in those moments be coaches, on the court and off the court and echo the things that Cameron and I are preaching ourselves," Canery said. The coach added he assistant coach Cameron Stratton are hoping to see the Knight's five sophomore players of Martinez, Rivera, Fuentes, Faith Martin and Janissa Price, become leader on and off the court.

The Knight's next game is Thursday night, Nov. 12 at Quinsigamond Community College, 5:30 p.m. The road trip continues on Sunday, at 1 p.m., in a rematch against New Hampshire Tech.

Treasures in our backyard

For story and more photos, see Page 1, Page 8



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Photo courtesy of NECC Vice President Naydeen Gonzalez-De Jesus

The organ in the Methuen Memorial Music Hall. A recent tour brought NECC students and alumni to the Music Hall and Addision Art Gallery in Andover.