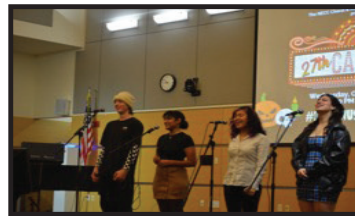


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Observer

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

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J-Hope completes military service

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Know your vote



Photo by Daniela Valdivia-Terres, Editor-in-Chief

Art and Design students in Haverhill campus, Wilmary Hernandez and Roselyn Velazquez showing Mass. Information for Voters booklet in Spanish and English.

There's more than the president on the ballot

By DANIELA VALDIVIA-TERRES
Editor-in-Chief

Regardless if you are pro-Trump or pro-Harris or against both, bear in mind that for voters in New England, the ballot is not only about the presidential election. It also includes different important positions such as candidates for the Senate or for state representatives or treasurer but for most of those states it includes questions that can impact their constituents.

In states like Rhode Island or Maine, the ballot includes questions about distributing

state funds to local organizations that could help to improve their communities. For instance, the question three in Maine is about approving the general fund bond for restoring historic community buildings.

In Vermont and Connecticut, the election is besides presidential, about choosing their state representatives. No further questions asked.

In New Hampshire, the ballot includes only one question, to raise the age limit from 70 to 75 years old for judges and sheriffs. This would be a con-

stitutional amendment.

In Massachusetts, voters can choose their senators and state representatives and they can cast their yes or no on five questions. They are not about funds nor changing the constitution, but they are significantly important and should not be dismissed. For this reason, the Secretary of State of Massachusetts had developed, printed and distributed a red booklet for its constituents with a summarized explanation if you vote "yes" or "no" to each

Continued on Page 2

Upcoming events:

UMass Mini Transfer Fair
Explore opportunities to transfer to any of the 4 campuses: Amherst-Boston-Darmouth-Lowell.
☑ Nov. 4, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.
📍 Lawrence campus

PACE - First Gen Fest 2024
Join the National First Generation Celebration.
☑ Nov. 6, 10:45 a.m. to 12:45 p.m.
📍 Spurk Lobby & Lecture Hall A, Haverhill

Post Election Discussion
Q&A with History Professor Steve Russell.
☑ Nov. 6, 12:30 p.m. to 1:30 p.m.
📍 Center for Liberal Arts, Spurk building, Haverhill

Narcan Training
Learn about harm reduction and addition awareness.
☑ Nov. 12, Noon to 1 p.m.
📍 C201, Spurk building, Haverhill

What is a heart?
A figurative painting & sculpture show exhibited by NECC Art & Design.
☑ Monday to Thursday 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.
Fridays 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.
📍 Art gallery at the Haverhill library

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

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Don't let the election divide us

BY DANIELA VALDIVIA-TERRES
Editor-in-Chief

"The best way to lose a friendship is by talking about politics or religion," I learned many years ago.

Since then, I've tried to follow this advice, especially when I perceive that my relative or close friend is passionately advocating for their candidate without listening to anyone else's opinion.

I consider that even heated conversations can be elevated as long as the ideas are supported with facts, and we do not fall into insulting or offending the opponent's opinion.

Coming from a developing country where we have the record of having six presidents in the last eight years due to impeachments, resignations, corruption allegations, and huge public protests, I was tired of voting for the bad or the worst my entire adulthood.

If you have not guessed, as

the Paddington Bear says, I come from the "Darkest Peru." So, when I became a citizen of this wonderful country, I was so excited to vote.

I remember my dad used to follow the U.S. presidential debates in the 80's and 90's with admiration. He used to say "Oh, the USA with its bright minds and great discussions full of ideas for the best of the society. How I wish we could have those candidates in our country!"

Well, Dad, thanks God you are in a better place now, so you won't be disappointed that candidates these days are far from what you thought.

Of course, there is a big difference -- in this great country, no one is bigger than the empire of the law. Whatever the result of the polls, the law will protect the decision of the majority.

That is what I admire about the country I now call mine as well, our democracy. But we must not take it for granted.

"United we stand, divided we fall."

- Aesop, Greek storyteller
In the fable "The Lion and The Four Oxen"

So many people had fought in the history of this powerful nation looking for liberty in all its meaning.

"The land of the free and the home of the brave," we sing with pride and I believe it is.

However, I don't know what or when exactly happened that the ideas are not contrasted nor fact-checked before standing for them. That is not brave at all.

Families and long-lasting friendships can easily be torn apart because there is so much misinformation, and some people candidly believe what they find online or consume tidbits of news through social media in 15 or 30 seconds reels.

In class, we can agree on the room temperature and set an ap-

pealing number where we, all, can coexist together until the dismissal. But when the conversation is heated with political views in favor of or against any of the presidential candidates, the hot flashes on the opponent are evident, and the air becomes dense to breathe in the same space. We stare at the clock wishing the time runs faster.

Believe me, this will, too pass. Yes, we, as a country, are facing a challenging time, and probably we see the political environment at the edge of a crisis. However, we need to stay united.

It is needed a consensus, and it starts with mutual respect.

If I do not agree with your same candidate or if I do not with either candidate, I own the right

to be respected same as you.

I can listen to your opinion even if I disagree, but also, don't expect me to spend my time or effort listening to insults or offenses about your opponent.

Also, before sharing something against or in favor of your candidate on social media, make at least a little research in different reliable outlets or look for different journalists. Use your critical thinking and don't share misinformation.

"Divide and rule," was a military tactic used to create discord among people and "conquer" them so they could not get united against the one. Now think, "Who would benefit to see America not united?"

NECC Observer

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

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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.edu.

Publication Schedule

Issue	Publication Date	Ad/Copy Deadline
#1	Oct. 11	Oct. 4
#2	Nov. 1	Oct. 25
#3	Nov. 15	Nov. 8
#4	Dec. 6	Nov. 29

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 receive, but we reserve the right to edit or reject those we receive.

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

Continued from Page 1

question. It also includes a brief argument in favor or against each proposal. Here in NECC, you can find the red booklet in English and Spanish in the library in Haverhill and Lawrence campus.

No time to go to the library, just visit the official state website, VoteInMa.com and find out all the information according to where

you are registered to vote. It is important to know that as soon as you insert the zipcode where you live in Massachusetts, you may have an extra question.

For instance, if you vote for the Town of Chelmsford, there is a question 6, which is about approving the funds to design and rebuild two fire stations.

The website Vote411.org offers all the voting information of the 50 states in the nation. Just insert the address where you are registered, and voilà!

You will have access to the ballot, be able to make an informed decision and exercise your right to vote. Your answer to those questions matters, every vote counts.

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- Get to know your school better as you write and design four print issues per semester and post on the student newspaper's award-winning website.
- Let your voice be heard as you become part of the free press.
- Spend time with like-minded individuals as you let the student body know the latest news!!!
- If you have taken or will be taking Journalism I in the fall, we encourage you to join us. We will have staff openings in the fall as several of our current amazing staff are graduating. Join us and help continue the Observer's legacy at NECC!

Interested? Contact us!!!

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Opinion

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The sound of politics

Music and its subsequent effect on voters; from Kamala Harris being BRAT to Trump's controversial rally playlists.

By **QUINLAN COOKE**
Opinion Editor

Amid the upcoming election, everything has a role and effect on its outcome, especially music. Candidates rely on several things for votes and connecting with potential voters, including music and the support of artists to appeal to voters. Some candidates might not intentionally use music to rile up voters, but it still causes a stir and publicity. How have some of this year's political candidates used music to their advantage (or in some cases, disadvantage)?

Recently, Donald Trump has been under fire for pausing a rally in Pennsylvania on October 14 to play music for his crowd instead of discussing politics. Trump said, "Let's not do any more questions. Let's just listen to music. Let's make it into a music. Who the h*** wants to hear questions, right?". Trump played nine songs and took up 40 minutes swaying on his heels behind his podium on stage while his supporters watched.

Originally Trump had paused the rally because there had been two people to pass out, so you can imagine the conditions. It is unsure what stopping talking about politics to listen to music would do for the condition of the rally and how it would help others to not pass out, but that is what he (Trump) decided to do nonetheless.

Many find the playing of so much music to be ironic considering several artists have taken legal action to stop Trump from playing music at his rallies or publicly con-

demned him or his usage of their music. Many are upset that Trump wasted the time of his supporters for a "dance party" instead of discussing what he would like to achieve if he wins the election. Voting day is mere weeks away and instead of trying to earn more votes, he shows off his playlist.

After this melodic display, some are worried about Trump's well-being, even his opposers. Vice President Kamala Harris even acknowledged this incident at her own rally just a few days later. Kamala Harris is also no stranger to using music to reach voters, but her attempt at this has been met with much more open and less critical arms.

Harris is using music differently, not to entertain herself in front of valuable voters in a known swing state. Harris is capitalizing on the popularity of Charli XCX's BRAT album for her campaign. She is appealing to young and first-time voters by connecting with what is popular and important to them. And unlike Trump, she has the support of the artists she uses to promote herself.

Harris's team has created a TikTok account because of the success of people saying she is "brat." Many people created "edits" of Harris to Charli XCX songs when the album first dropped, as it correlated with Harris first announcing her presidential candidacy. Harris and her team immediately capitalized on the fact that music brought her more popularity, especially in such a neglected demographic (in the political sense). Her team and "Kamala HQ" utilize mu-

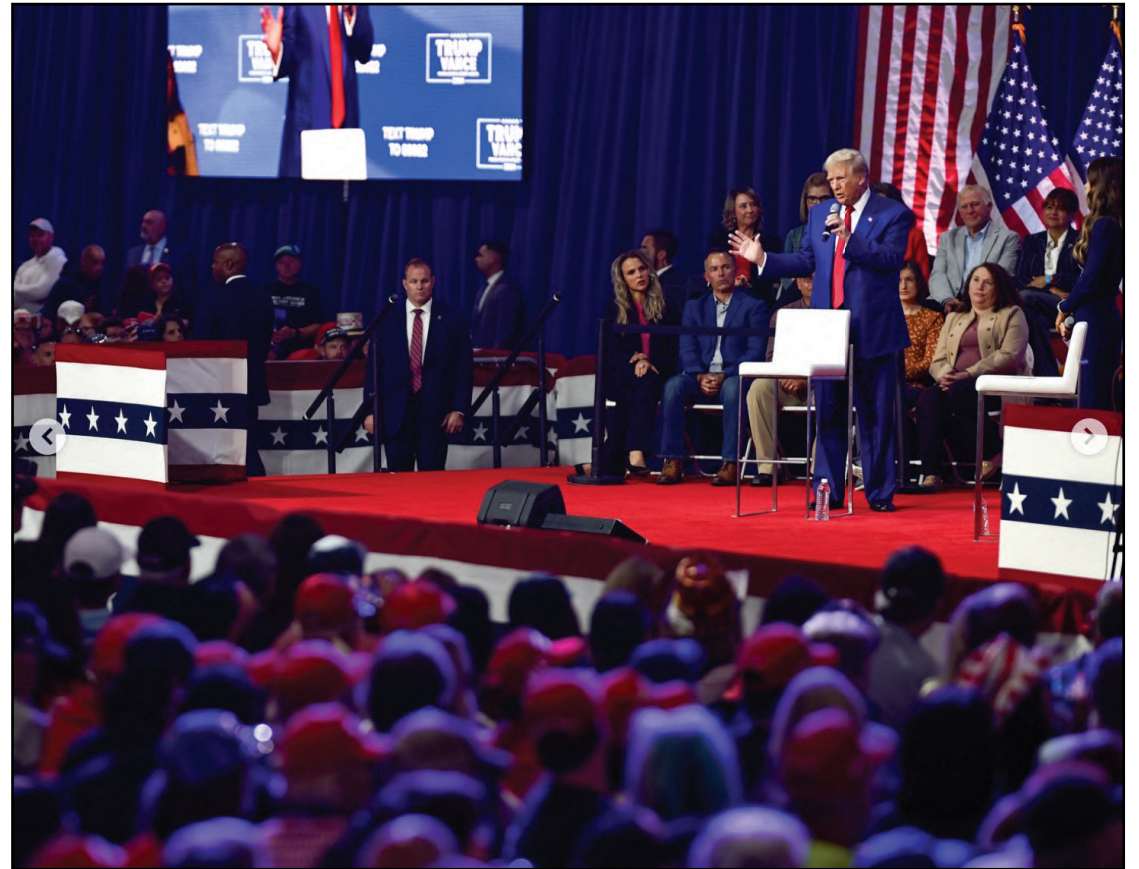


Photo by @realdonaldtrump

Donald Trump at his Pennsylvania rally on October 14, 2024.

“Let's not do any more questions. Let's just listen to music. Let's make it into a music. Who the h*** wants to hear questions, right?”

- Donald Trump

sic to make TikToks and interact with artists, which draws in a large number of potential Gen-Z voters.

Kamala HQ was so fast and methodical with their promotion of Kamala Harris using the brat album that Charli XCX both noticed and positively acknowledged the interactions, despite her not even being from the United States. Charli XCX tweeted "kamala IS brat." Harris and Trump clearly differ in the way the

artists they use for their campaigns publicly acknowledge them, and it will have an effect on the way some vote.

While both candidates embrace the music that is around them, they differentiate in the type of music they use, the listeners for the music, and how they use the songs and albums. One promoted herself online to millions of potential new voters, and the other used precious rally time to play from his playlist.

With the election approaching swiftly, it is crucial to take into account the actions of the candidates you are considering, but ultimately it hinges on the policies of everyone involved.

While instances like these might be entertaining and newsworthy, there is nothing more vital than the beliefs of those you are voting for.

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

You can reach us at:

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Opinion

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Internships: What are they and how can I get one?

BY KATIE YEATON-HROMADA
Coordinator for Career Services

Internships are a popular way for college students to gain entry-level experience, build skills, and network. Whether you find one online or create your own opportunity by reaching out to companies directly, internships let you build valuable skills and connections in just a few months. You can start interning as early as your first year – it's never too early to explore your career interests! While some programs call it a clinical, practicum, or externship, these experiences all serve the same purpose: hands-on learning in your field.

Why are internships important?

- Get hands-on experience
- Learn from industry professionals who actually do the job
- Built connections that could lead to future jobs
- Test-drive a career before committing – A part of the internship experience is discovering what you do and do not want to do.

Internships vs. Jobs

Internships typically focus on learning and growing your skills, whereas jobs focus on performing regular responsibilities for a more fixed, long-term period. It is important to clarify your internship goals and responsibilities with your supervisor before starting any work.

How long are internships?

Internships are short-term positions, often lasting several weeks or 4 months (a semester). They can be full-time or part-time hours. You would work with your internship site to create a schedule that suits your needs as a student.

Are internships paid or unpaid?

Internships can be either paid or unpaid. It is important to review this information before you accept an internship offer or when you talk to a company to create an internship.

How much an intern gets

paid varies. Interns may receive an hourly wage or a stipend for the entirety of their work. Since internships are short-term positions, they often do not offer health or other benefits that full-time employees receive. If an internship is unpaid, you are volunteering your time with the company and it is important to set boundaries of how much time you can and are willing to spend as an intern. Unpaid internships are common in fields such as politics, healthcare, education, and nonprofits; whereas, tech, finance fields, and larger businesses often pay higher.

Can internships count for credit?

Yes, internships can count for credit. Many programs at NECC include required experiential learning for a specified number of hours during the semester as part of a class. This may be an internship, externship, clinical, or practicum required to graduate. Other programs offer an elective course option. When considering elective internships, it is important to understand the cost and transferability of those credits if you plan to transfer to another college. Meet with your Academic Advisor for additional information about your elective credits and the course options for your major. Of course, completing an internship does not have to be for college credit. You have the option of pursuing an internship that is not linked to a class to be proactive and gain experience in your field.

When is the best time to start looking for internships?

Internships can require a lot of planning and searching. Companies with a more competitive application process will open between 4 to 8 months before their start date. This means internships for summer 2025 are already accepting applications. Typically, most internships will invite applicants about 3 to 4 months before the intended start date. If you are creating your own internship or looking at more local companies, the timeline can look very different and it may take 1 to 2 months to se-

cure a position.

It takes diligence and patience to find the right internship. If you are looking for a local internship, we recommend starting your internship search 2-3 months before the start of the next semester.

How do I find an internship?

There are two primary ways to find an internship – (1) searching and applying online or (2) directly contacting an employer and creating your own internship.

(1) When it comes to searching for internships online, get started by logging into your Handshake account (necc.joinhandshake.com/edu). Handshake is NECC's job and internship board, and you already have an account! You can use your MyNECC Portal information to log in.

Once you find an internship, check out the responsibilities and qualifications. Some internships require students to take certain pre-request classes so they are ready to step into the technical demands of the internship. After you review the description, review the company's website to understand its mission and purpose. Like what you see? It's time to apply! Many internships will require the same materials as a job application, including your resume and cover letter.

After exploring Handshake, your search may extend to additional job search sites, such as LinkedIn, Indeed, or companies' personal websites.

(2) Sometimes the internship you're looking for does not exist and is waiting to be created. Crafting your own internship can be a bit more

time-consuming, but it's worth it. To get started, identify your internship goals – are you looking to explore an industry or work on a specific project? Who is doing similar work? Use your goals and interests to explore potential companies. You can then use Handshake and your local Chamber of Commerce website to get contact information for the best-matched companies. From there you can email potential companies and express your internship interest.

If you would like to talk more about this process and have a cheerleader in your search, contact NECC's Career Services through Navigate or email (careerservices@necc.mass.edu).

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News

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Voters to decide if MCAS requirement stays

By KATHRYN PELCZAR
Correspondent

Massachusetts voters face a crucial decision that could reshape the state's education landscape as they consider eliminating a long-standing standardized testing requirement for high school graduation.

According to the Education Commission of the States, Massachusetts joins 33 other states in requiring standardized testing for graduation, a policy dating back to 1993 through the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS).

The state Department of Elementary and Secondary Education reports students begin MCAS testing in third grade, continuing through high school, measuring achievement in English, math and science.

"While most 10th graders earn their Competency Determination on their first try," the department states on its website, noting that students who don't pass initially have multiple options, including retests and appeals.

The ballot measure, Question 2, has ignited debate between education officials and critics. Citizens for Public Schools, an education advocacy group, argues the tests create unnecessary pressure on students and limit curriculum flexibility.

"(MCAS) has actively harmed our most marginalized students, especially our students of color, English learners, low-income students, and students with disabilities," Rebecca Pringle, president of the National Education Association, wrote in materials filed with the Secretary of the Commonwealth's office.

Recent MCAS results, published on MassLive.com by John L. Micek, show varying performance across districts, fueling discussions about the test's effectiveness in measuring student achievement.

State education officials counter that only about 1% of students ultimately fail to meet the requirement, with multiple pathways available for completion.

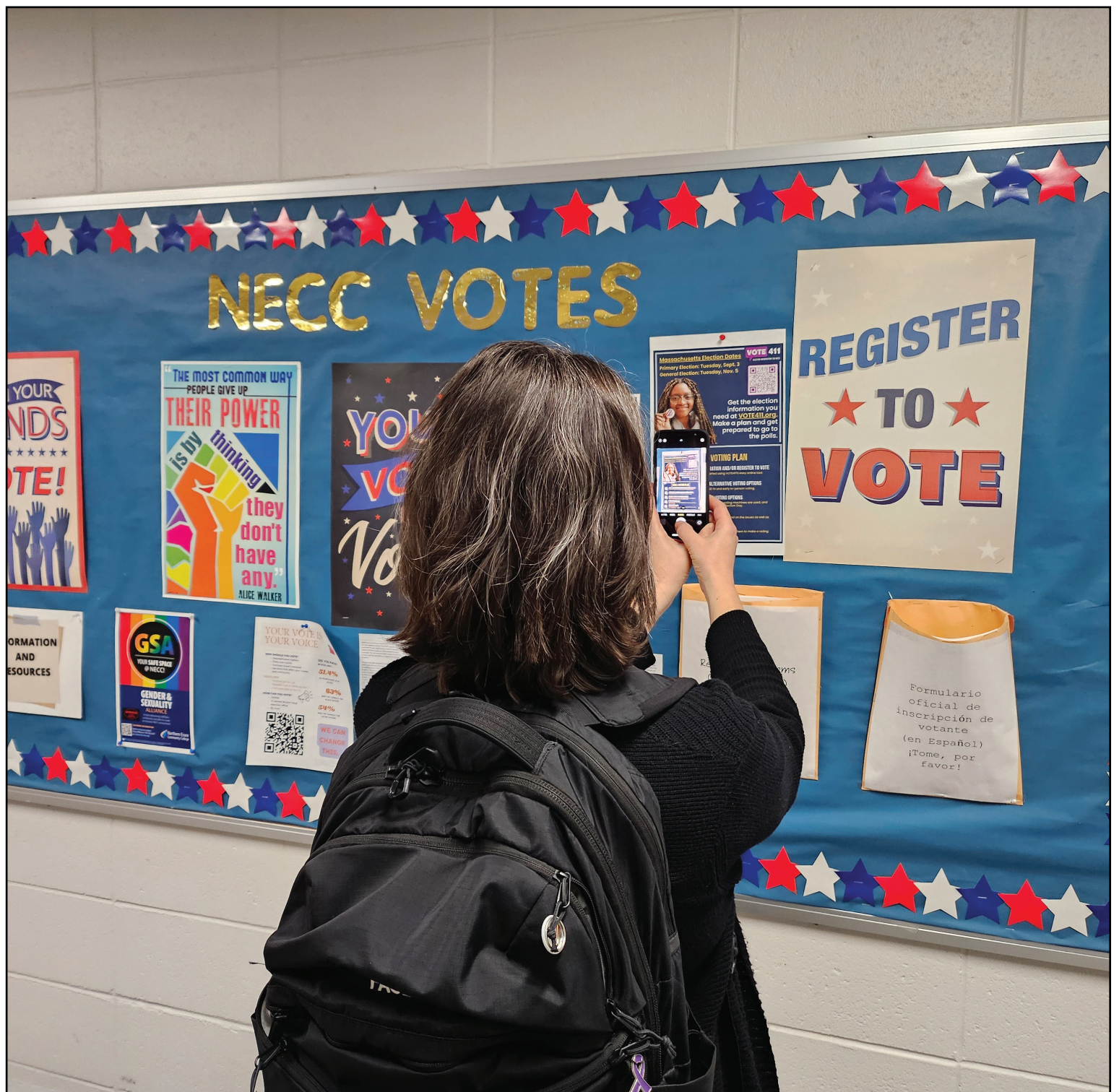


Photo by Editor-in-Chief Daniela Valdivia-Terres

Melissa Ferris, an NECC student, takes a photo of the QR code to Vote411.org website posted on the bulletin in the Spurr building.

The vote's outcome could affect more than just graduation requirements.

According to the state's website, the John and Abigail Adams

Scholarship, which provides tuition waivers at state universities, uses MCAS scores for eligibility.

If voters approve Question 2, Massachusetts education offi-

cial would need to develop new methods for evaluating student achievement and determining graduation eligibility, potentially marking the biggest shift in the

state's education policy in three decades.

Note: The editor-in-chief edited this article with the aid of Claude.ai.

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We want to see what you have to say.

... ooo ...

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News

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The prevalence of procrastination

BY QUINLAN COOKE
Opinion Editor

Procrastination is a large issue when it comes to school work, but how common is it? Is there a difference between procrastinating in high school versus college?

Have you ever gone to turn in a discussion board a few hours before it is due and noticed that your submission is still the first?

This is not as uncommon as some might think. In fact, a study from the APA (American Psychological Association) says that “80 percent to 95 percent of college students procrastinate.”

Really, how big of a problem is procrastination?

Is procrastination a habit carried on from high school? And is procrastinating in high school versus college different?

“A study from the American Psychological Association says that 80 percent to 95 percent of college students procrastinate.”

A similar study from a Ma-goosh survey on high school students report that 86% of high school students procrastinate on work.

Is there a difference in not only the prevalence of pro-

crastination in high school versus college but also the thoughts behind the procrastination? High school students and college students might see a difference in the importance of the work they are doing.

“I procrastinate my high school work more because I have a more personal relationship with my teacher... they will be more lenient whereas my college professors are more professional.” said dual-enrollment student Joseph Boregesi.

Boregesi goes to both NECC and a local high school, so he has experience with both levels of procrastination.

On the other side of the conversation, “(I am a) huge even massive procrastinator. I feel like I procrastinate college work because I have that class less frequently,” said another dual-enrollment student, Jake Pitre.

He finds that it is easy to avoid the work for a class he does not frequently attend.

It might seem that there is less work to do when you only physically attend class once or twice a week, whereas you are in high school every day.

Both interviewees currently attend high school and college classes, and they differ in their opinions of which type of schoolwork they procrastinate more. Procrastination depends on the person who is supposed to be doing the work. It might depend on the class, the leniency of the teacher/professor, type of a assignment, or how long someone is given to get it done? Some might feel like the further away an assignment is, the less they have to do when it is assigned, and then the deadline creeps up and there is far less time than expected.

Everyone views the work they have to do differently, but it seems that the general consensus among students is that procrastination is the way to go. To keep away from procrastinating, some make sure their calendar is up to date and give themselves time limits instead of the due dates that already exist. To-do lists of assignments are also very useful, as long as they are actually stuck to, and not just looked at.

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Honoring all who have served

Thursday, November 7, 2024

Schedule of Events:

8:30 am : Flag Raising Ceremony at Main Entrance between Student Center & TC bldg.

8:45 am : Light Breakfast in TC 103B

9:00 : Ceremony begins

For more information, please email veteransservices@necc.mass.edu

We welcome requests for ASL sign language interpreting & other access requests (i.e Computer Aided Real Time) & accommodations. Please contact veteransservices@necc.mass.edu.



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Northern Essex Community College
VETERAN SERVICES

News

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NECC hosts forum on opioids and Narcan use

BY KATHRYN PELCZAR
Correspondent

From noon to 1 p.m. Thursday, Oct. 3, Northern Essex Community College's Human Services Program partnered with Emmon's Heart to present a discussion and training in harm reduction and the administration of Narcan in the case of a suspected overdose. Participants gained knowledge about opioid overdose risks, recognition, and response steps.

According to their website, Emmon's Heart is a nonprofit organization committed to training community members on how to administer Narcan to save lives. Due to a last-minute cancellation of their speaker, NECC Human Services Professor Lisa Fabbri Lopez did the presentation about Narcan.

What is Narcan?

Naloxone, commonly known as Narcan, is a medicine that can rapidly reverse the effects of an opioid overdose.

Narcan comes in the form of a nasal spray and is safe to be administered to anyone who may be experiencing an overdose.

Narcan works by briefly blocking the effects of the opioid on the brain and restoring the breathing of a person experiencing an opioid overdose.

Why is this important?

"In the state of Massachusetts, opioids are the number two cause of death ... This is why the state made its mission to address this opioid epidemic," said Fabbri Lopez in an interview on Oct. 28.

She is Narcan trained, and she is actively working with community organizations in Lawrence in opioids prevention and Narcan usage.

Narcan, a quick opioid reversal, "that anybody can have or carry on, it does not hurt anybody," Fabbri Lopez explained, "if you happen to see somebody is unresponsive, unconscious, you can apply CPR and call 911, and wait but if you have Narcan, the first thing you can do is

applying it immediately and it won't harm the person, and if it is an opioid overdose, you can potentially save a life."

Highlighting the importance of educational resources and intervention on campuses, Fabbri Lopez said "opioid usage or misuse does not discriminate, it can happen anywhere to people from any age, so at NECC human services, we work with students on these issues to create awareness."

Fentanyl is a synthetic opioid that is frequently mixed with other, more commonly used drugs, increasing the risk of unintentional overdoses. Thankfully, Narcan can be used to reverse fentanyl overdoses, but multiple doses may be needed.

What addiction may look like

The Oxford dictionary online defines addiction as "The fact or condition of being addicted to a particular substance, thing, or activity."

Many things are involved with the complexity behind drug addiction and how it works to rewire your brain, such as brain chemistry, genetics, environmental factors, developmental factors, psychological factors, and behavioral aspects. Addictive substances alter the brain's reward system, often increasing dopamine levels, which reinforces the desire to use them.

"The opioid is attaching to the pleasure center of the brain which is the middle part of our brain and it's literally burning those receptors out and what it is telling the brain is oh no you want this instead. Like that's really what's happening and hijacks the brain and so that's why the person that's opioid-addicted is on a mission—it's not because they're a bad person it's because the brain has been hijacked," said Fabbri Lopez in the Oct. 3 presentation. With prolonged use, physical dependence may develop, leading to withdrawal symptoms that drive continued use.

What is Harm Reduction?

While harm reduction is

“

In the state of Massachusetts, opioids are the number two cause of death ... This is why the state made it its mission to address this opioid epidemic.

- NECC Human Services Professor Lisa Fabbri Lopez

”

The logo features the words "SAVE A LIFE" in large, bold, blue capital letters. To the right of "SAVE A" is a large, pink letter "A". Below "SAVE A" is a pink asterisk-like symbol. To the right of the symbol is the word "LIFE" in large, bold, blue capital letters. To the right of "LIFE" are the words "CARRY NARCAN" in bold, pink capital letters.

not specific to drug addiction used daily

provides it. It is free of charge.

Photo Courtesy "The Facts About Naloxone"

and drug use, it is an intentional practice(s) that can be used to reduce the harm when using drugs and opioids.

Possible Harm Reduction Methods to Use for People Who Use Opioids:

- Carrying Narcan
- Using clean needles
- Never use alone
- Using fentanyl test strips
- Group therapy
- Reducing the amount being

Shelters
Staying educated

Police and first responders carry Narcan but it also can be carried and applied by anyone, it does not need a special certification, and it is easy to use. NECC students or faculty can get Narcan by attending presentations like this one. Also, people can find online an organization near them that

"We may not be able to prevent people of using (opioids) but let's prevent people from dying," said Fabbri Lopez in an interview on Oct. 28.

Note: The editor-in-chief, Daniela Valdivia-Terres, contributed to this article by interviewing professor Lisa Fabbri Lopez.

News

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Tech made to think? *How AI is shaping student learning*

By **JESSICA CABRERA**
Correspondent

Students at Northern Essex Community College (NECC) are increasingly using artificial intelligence (AI) to support their studies, raising questions about whether these tools are enhancing their learning or simply doing the thinking for them.

Eighty-six percent of students globally use AI regularly, with 66% specifically utilizing tools like ChatGPT to brainstorm ideas, write essays, and get quick feedback, according to the Digital Education Council. While convenient, this growing reliance has sparked concern among educators who wonder if students are truly learning or just outsourcing their cognitive work.

Devan Walton, an assistant professor of computer science at NECC, provided insights on the evolving role of AI in education. "Students have easy access to AI, and it can help them with everything from math homework to essay writing," Walton said. "But

what happens to learning when students rely too heavily on technology? It risks disincentivizing the effort needed to truly understand subjects."

Walton noted that the integration of AI has pushed teachers to rethink their approaches. "Teachers are still trying to understand how students use AI so they can

adapt their curriculums in ways that continue to foster genuine learning," he added.

Beyond its impact on learning, AI brings up concerns about privacy and authenticity. Walton pointed out that while some educators use AI detection tools to spot AI-generated work, these tools are not foolproof. "These

detection tools can produce false positives, putting students in a tough spot, which is why I advise teachers to use them cautiously," he said.

When thoughtfully integrated, Walton believes AI can be a valuable classroom tool. However, he cautions against over-reliance, particularly as many students

may not realize how much data AI-enabled devices collect. "AI is embedded in so many aspects of daily life, often without users' full awareness of how much data is tracked," he said, underscoring the importance of informed technology use.

The question remains: will NECC students and educators find a balance between leveraging AI's potential and preserving the integrity of learning? While AI tools can undoubtedly help students succeed, they can also lead to over-reliance if not used responsibly. As Walton put it, "AI can support learning, but it's up to students to make sure they're still doing the thinking."

AI can support learning, but it's up to students to make sure they're still doing the thinking.

- Devan Walton,
assistant professor of computer science at NECC

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News

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Community College Advantage Scholarships

UMass has welcomed first graduates to receive the awards

By MELISSA BOUSE
NECC News

All four University of Massachusetts undergraduate campuses in Amherst, Boston, Dartmouth and Lowell this Fall welcomed 66 community college graduates who are the first to be awarded the UMass Community College Advantage Scholarship, a new two-year \$10,000 scholarship given to students in the top 10 percent of their class who enroll at UMass.

Launched in December 2023, the UMass Community College Advantage Scholarship guarantees students in the top 10 percent of their graduating class admission to the University of Massachusetts and a minimum of

\$10,000 over two years, or \$2,500 each semester, to complete their bachelor's degree. The scholarship is designed to expand access to a bachelor's degree for historically underrepresented students and encourage timely completion for students at Massachusetts' 15 community colleges.

"We are thrilled to welcome these talented and motivated students who worked hard to be at the top of their class, earned the UMass Community College Advantage Scholarship, and decided to attend one of our nationally ranked UMass campuses," UMass President Marty Meehan said. "We are confident students awarded this scholarship will thrive on our campuses as

they work toward their bachelor's degree and then join the ranks of so many UMass graduates working and making a difference in Massachusetts and around the world."

The UMass Community College Advantage Scholarship is awarded in addition to federal and private grants and financial aid. Students remain eligible for additional aid, based on individual circumstances.

"Since the community colleges have the greatest diversity of any sector of higher education, such a scholarship incentivizes more students to transfer to UMass while diversifying their student body and providing essential financial support for students to suc-

ceed," said Northern Essex Community College President Lane Glenn, who worked closely with UMass President Meehan to launch the scholarship.

To be eligible for the UMass Community College Advantage Scholarship for the Fall 2024, students must have:

Graduated from a Massachusetts community college in the top 10 percent of their graduating class.

Be eligible for in-state tuition.

Completed the 2024-25 Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) or equivalent state financial aid application.

Completed their associate degree prior to the beginning of the Fall 2024 semester.

The UMass Community College Advantage Scholarship is among several initiatives aimed at expanding access to a four-year college degree, which data shows significantly increases a person's income over their lifetime.

Some other UMass' college affordability initiatives include:

Increasing university-funded financial aid by 73 percent to \$406 million annually.

Launching early college programs at all UMass campuses to give thousands of high school students opportunities to earn transferrable UMass college credits for free, creating significant savings on tuition costs.

With the launch of MassEducate, which provides free community college to Massachusetts residents, the university is also exploring additional ways to improve the transfer process for community college students to help more students succeed. Some initiatives under consideration include increasing the number of staff dedicated to helping students with the transfer process, boosting funding for merit-based financial aid, and building additional capacity in key academic programs.

Last year, 44 percent of all UMass transfer students came from a Massachusetts community college, and the university anticipates the number will increase with MassEducate.

The UMass Community College Advantage Scholarship is available to students transferring to UMass Amherst, Boston, Dartmouth, and Lowell. For more information on the UMass Community College Advantage Scholarship, visit the dedicated webpage.



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FOR MORE INFORMATION

Contact Professor Kim Lyng, Program Coordinator and Faculty Lead, Center for Liberal Arts at klyng@necc.mass.edu.



Campus Life

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Deep dive into the classroom

Environmentalists find solutions towards global change

BY EMMA RUGGIERO

Campus Life Editor

This week on A Deep Dive Into The Classroom, environmentalists at Northern Essex Community College are piling into the seats in room E263 to study air pollution and its effect on the Earth.

In order for the students to study the current “state of the planet,” Department of Natural Science Professor Mark Reinhold said he believes it is important for “students (to) understand the spheres (that are) involved” with the planet. The spheres of the Earth include: The lithosphere (land), atmosphere (air), biosphere (living organisms) and hydrosphere (water).

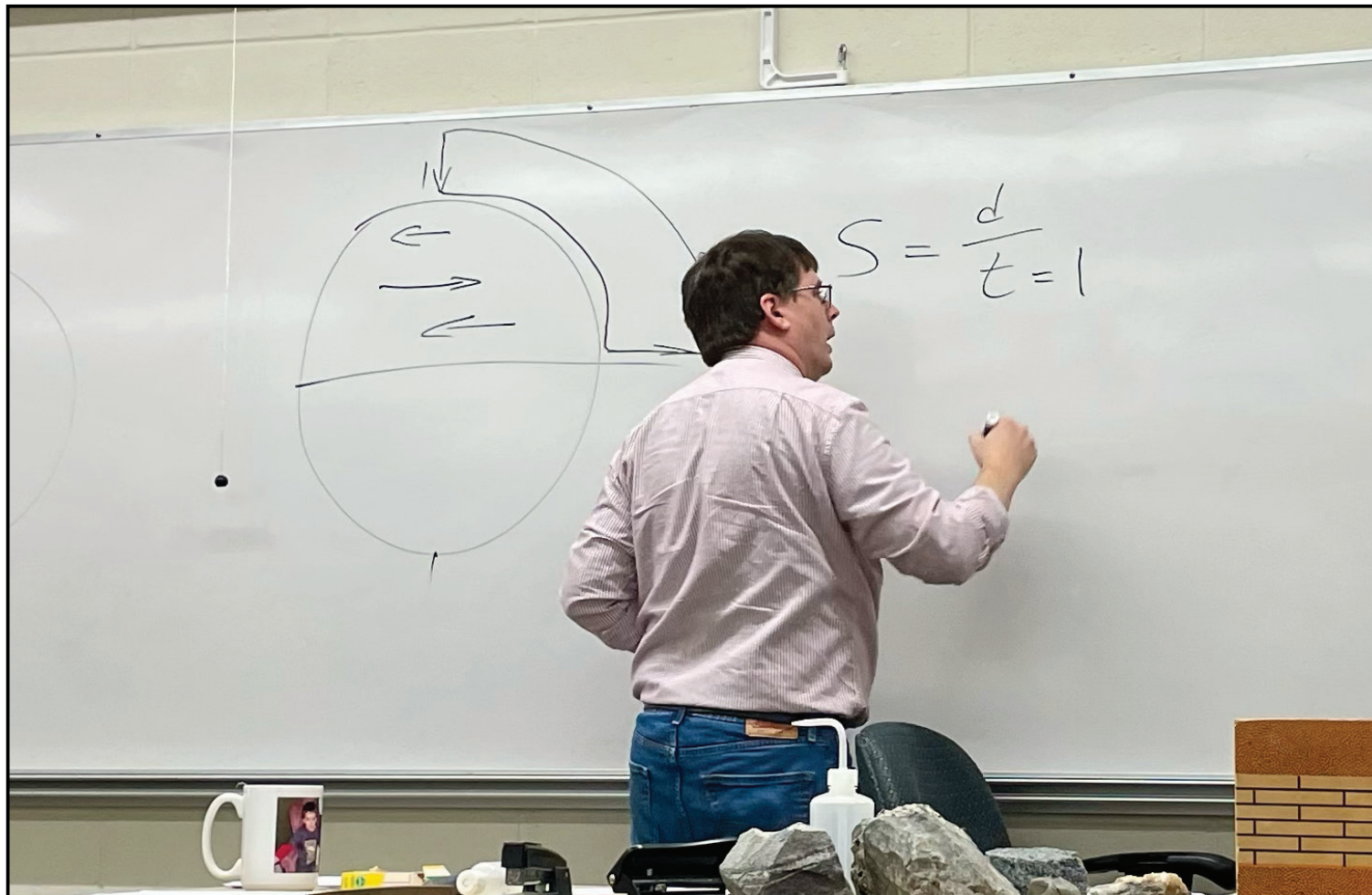
One of Earth’s spheres that is broken down into finer and thorough detail is the atmosphere. The Earth’s atmosphere has five significant layers and Reinhold’s Environmental Issues course’s mission is to study air pollution in the first layer of the atmosphere: The troposphere.

The students’ objective is to “look at evidence” that covers a variety of topics related to air pollution, such as carbon monoxide, sulfur dioxide, tropospheric ozone, lead, nitrogen dioxide and particulate pollution. The vital point in studying these topics is for the students to discover the reasoning behind air pollution in the troposphere, global issues associated with this type of pollution and identify how it can be reduced, said Reinhold.

One factor that comes into play when considering air pollution are the impacts of acid rain, which is a form of pollution. During one of Reinhold’s Environmental Issues classes he described the process of acid rain and how it works. To make this explanation more understandable, the professor conducted a visual presentation where he acquired a small bottle of acid in the classroom and poured it onto a rock. As a result, a chemical reaction occurred, which caused the rock to dissolve, erode and release a steaming sensation.

“Professor Reinhold’s enthusiasm” towards his course lectures, presentations and class engagement hold great significance to one student in particular, Clarie Brady, because it provides her with “a more in depth perspective about climate change,” said Brady.

Regardless of the small enrollment in the course, students have created tight knitted friendships that have strengthened their teamwork skills in order to guide them on a path of success to finding solutions towards positive environmental global change.

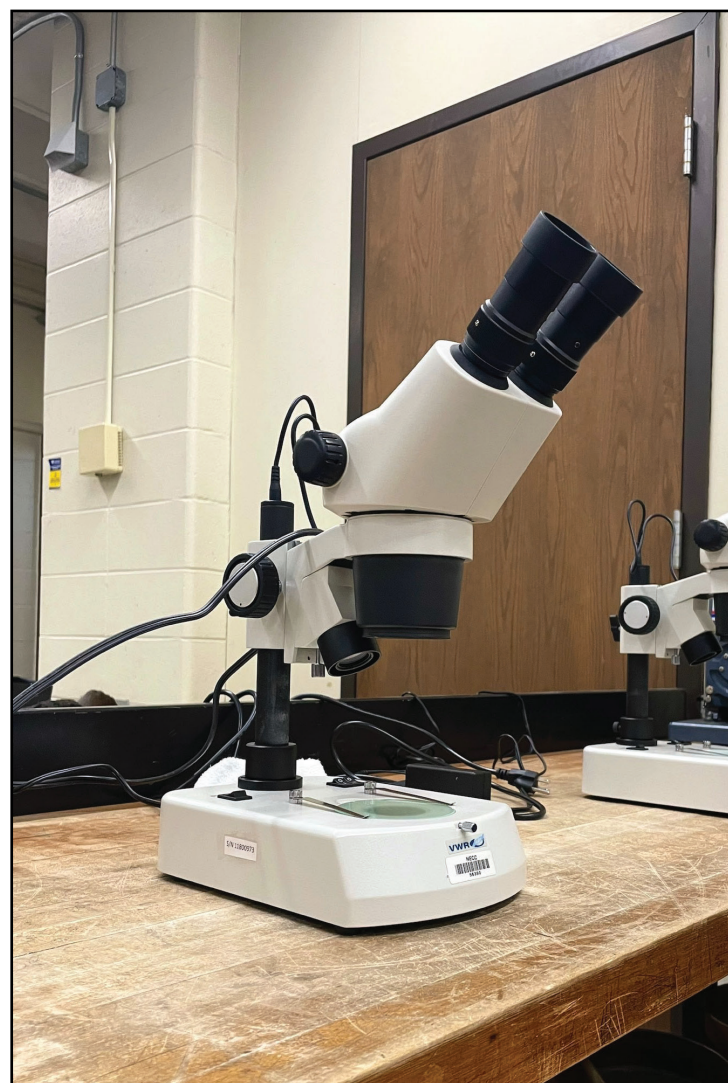


Photos by Campus Life Editor Emma Ruggiero

Professor Mark Reinhold writing on a whiteboard on Oct. 21 in room E263 teaching a class about the direction that wind travels.



A globe of the Earth that is used in the Environmental Issues course.



A microscope that is placed in the classroom.

Arts & Entertainment

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J-Hope completes military service

Fans worldwide celebrate his return

By BAILEY ORIO
Features Editor

After an 18-month hiatus, J-Hope of the global phenomenon BTS has officially completed his mandatory military service in South Korea. The BTS rapper, singer, and dancer, known for his energetic performances and uplifting spirit, was discharged on October 17th much to the joy of fans around the world who eagerly awaited his return.

J-Hope, whose real name is Jung Ho-seok, enlisted in April 2023, making him the second BTS member to serve after Jin, the oldest member, who enlisted in December 2022.

In South Korea, all able-bodied men between the ages of 18 and 28 are required to serve approximately two years in the military, with exceptions only rarely granted. BTS members have each committed to fulfilling this duty, often stating their support for the nation and their fans throughout the process.

During his time in the military, J-Hope took on the role of an assistant drill instructor.

Known for his discipline and work ethic, the singer quickly adapted to military life and was praised by colleagues and superiors. He even shared occasional glimpses of his life in uniform through letters and messages on social media, expressing gratitude for fans' continued support.

J-Hope's discharge marks another milestone for BTS as the group begins to prepare for a future comeback, though full re-

union plans may take some time.

Members are expected to complete their military service by 2025, aligning with the timeline set by BTS's management company, Big Hit Entertainment, which confirmed that BTS would continue as a group following individual enlistments.

Fans have already organized online celebrations and trending hashtags to welcome J-Hope back, highlighting his impact on the music industry and fans' lives.

Known for hits like "Chicken Noodle Soup" and his solo album "Jack In The Box," J-Hope's music has resonated globally, blending his signature positivity with themes of resilience and self-love.

Fans anticipate his return to the studio, where his creativity and talent are expected to play a central role in BTS's ongoing journey.

In a message to fans following his discharge, J-Hope thanked them for their unwavering patience and promised to return to music with renewed passion. He expressed gratitude to his bandmates, family, and fans for their support, saying it fueled his strength and commitment throughout his service.

As BTS continues to navigate their individual paths while preparing for a highly anticipated reunion, J-Hope's return signals a promising chapter for the band and their devoted fanbase, known as ARMY.



Photo courtesy of Wikipedia

J-Hope of the band BTS.

“

J-Hope thanked them for their unwavering patience and promised to return to music with renewed passion. He expressed gratitude to his bandmates, family and fans for their support, saying it fueled his strength and commitment throughout his service.

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Arts & Entertainment

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Are movie theaters dying?

The fate of the big screen in the streaming era

By ANTHONY SOUSA

Arts and Entertainment Editor

As streaming services become more dominant, the age-old ritual of going to the movies faces a new level of uncertainty. Many are questioning whether the days of sitting in a crowded theater are numbered. While some say the magic of the big screen will never die, others believe we're witnessing the end of an era. I had the chance to ask a student and professor to hear their thoughts. We'll explore both sides of the debate and ask—is the cinema experience truly dying, or just evolving?

In the last decade, streaming services like Netflix, Disney+, and HBO Max have revolutionized how people consume films. With the pandemic intensifying at-home viewing habits, the convenience and affordability of streaming led many viewers to reconsider their need for theaters. NECC Film Studies Professor Alex Bordino says, "Since the pandemic, I don't really think that the movie industry has rebounded. It rebounded a little bit but not enough and that's a little disconcerting because I think 2023 was a great year for movies, there were a lot of really great films that came out last year."

The University of Michigan wrote an article talking about streaming services titled, "The Rise and Fall of Streaming TV?" in which they said, "In 2015, around 50% of U.S. households held subscriptions to streaming services. This number has only seen growth and in 2023, 83% of households owned a subscription to one or more of the major streaming providers," while theater attendance, despite some rebound in 2023, remains below pre-pandemic levels. Theaters will always have an edge in terms of spectacle, but convenience has changed the game. Why spend \$20-50 to watch a movie, (and even for families a normal movie night out is close to \$100), when you can wait for the movie to come out and/or find something as good to watch on the services you al-



Photo by Arts and Entertainment Editor Anthony Sousa

AMC Methuen 20 with Ghostbuster Ectomobile

ready pay for?

Theaters are responding to the streaming competition with initiatives to enhance the theater-going experience. Some, like AMC Theatres, have experimented with subscription models, offering up to 3 movies a week for a monthly fee of around \$25, which if you even go just twice a month you get your money's worth. There is still a feeling of magic to be experienced on the big screen, and having a subscription like AMC Stubs is great to be able to afford and be able to still get that experience. Unfortunately, as much as this is an amazing deal for movie lovers, a lot of casual people would never pay another subscription as they already tend to stay away from the theaters unless a blockbuster movie is out.

Independent theaters, meanwhile, often cater to niche audiences, offering special screenings, themed nights, and Q&A events with filmmakers. This personalized approach appeals to movie lovers looking for more than just a standard blockbuster viewing. People really still want the shared experience, and if

“

I don't think movie theaters invite human interaction like they used to.

-Lucas Bermudez

”

more theaters could adapt this and make going to see a movie more of a big event, it would not only increase the amount of revenue they rake in but would make even casual movie fans to want to go out of the way to experience the movie a different way.

While it's undeniable that streaming poses a challenge, the movie theater industry is not giving up without a fight. Rolando Rodriguez, former chairman of the National Association of Theatre Owners said, "Most newly built locations will range between 12 and 16 screens and those with larger, preexisting footprints will look to repurpose some

space for supplementary activities for moviegoers, like arcades, bowling alleys or bars," according to the University of Michigan study. Movie theater operators are investing in better technology as well as premium concessions, and again the subscription to theaters like AMC make it so that you can enjoy more movie experiences for a better price.

NECC student Lucas Bermudez says, "I don't think movie theaters invite human interaction like they used to. I remember Showcase Cinemas in Revere used to have the sprawling open space, and even if you weren't talking to people, you were always

around a bunch of people and that was just a good feeling. AMC Assembly Row just now made it so that you have to buy the tickets and everything is kind of open with the snacks and that felt like a dream for me."

The question of whether theaters are dying might be premature. Instead, the industry may be on the cusp of a reinvention. Theaters aren't just battling streaming services—they're adapting to a new world of media consumption. The future of cinema may lie in its ability to blend the best of both worlds, keeping the magic of the big screen alive for generations to come.

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Cabaret creates musical memories

By HARRY WAKEFIELD
Correspondents

They're creepy and they're kooky; mysterious and spooky; they're altogether ooky... They're the performers of the 27th annual fall Cabaret at NECC.

Oct. 23 marked the date of the fall Cabaret, a musical exposition hosted by both the NECC Choral and Music Club, as well as the NECC music department.

Something eye-catching those who attended may have noticed -- aside from the various instruments and bits of overlapping conversation strewn about the conference hall TC103 -- was a new addition to the funding goals for the event.

In addition to all cover fees contributing towards future trips and activities for the Choral and Music Club, this year's Cabaret profits would also be split with the new memorial scholarship fund for the late Bonnie Suroweic, a 2009 graduate of the music program at NECC.

"She would always make the effort to come to these events, and it's what I know she would have wanted," said Alisa Bucchiere, the coordinator of the NECC music program and one of Suroweic's former professors.

The show began a few minutes past 7 p.m. and marked a night full of many different genres of music and performances ranging from original compositions ("Liminality" by Joni Silva), to classical sonatas (CPE Bach's Sonata in C Major), and even showtunes ("My Days" from The Notebook).

At about 8 p.m., the event was put on hold for a brief intermission as the one-man crew prepared for the following number of performances. "Usually I account for overtime when I work night events on campus, but things like this? I'm always happy to donate my time," says Rick Ingham, the night's lone crewman, NECC alumni and an IT technician for NECC in his 13th year as a staff member.

Exactly 10 minutes later, the show resumes with an en-



Photos by Harry Wakefield

Scenes from NECC's Cabaret on Oct. 23.

ergetic performance of They Might Be Giants' "Istanbul, Not Constantinople," perfectly placed to bring the attention of each guest back to the stage after the short break.

The acts that followed were all nearly equally energetic, and the second half of the event was marked by showtunes, blues, and Latin.

The night's penultimate performance of "No Me Queda Mas" by student Angely Gabriel perfectly wrapped up the night's activities, and was followed quickly by a raffle drawing (proceeds of which also went to both NECC Music and the Bonnie Suroweic scholarship fund).

The night ended with a passionate quartet performance of Lin-Manuel Miranda's "The Schulyer Sisters" of Hamilton fame, a perfect way to cap off the festivities and serving as both an energetic send-off and culmination of months of work from both students, staff, and alumni.

"I've been coming to this for the past three or four years, it's always a fun time and the last song was a great way to wrap it up" said Kathy Godin, a retired member of the local community.



Sports

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Basketball team ranked #5 in poll

By MELISSA BOUSE
NECC News

The Northern Essex Community College men's basketball team will start their season ranked number 5 in the National Junior College Athletic Association preseason poll.

This is the 28th consecutive time the Knights have been included in the national rankings.

The back-to-back Region 21 Champions will feature a new look in the new season, as they return just three players with previous experience in the Knights uniform.

However, a talented and deep roster should have the Knights in contention for a third straight trip to the national tournament.

Javien Kirmil (Lowell) who appeared in 33 games last season with 18 starts is back with Karl Wolfgang (Douala, Cameroon) who saw action in 30 games with 13 starts. They will be joined by Ryan Pacy (Salem, New Hampshire) who returns from the

2022-23 team where he averages 8.8 points per game in 21 appearances while battling through injury.

Kirmil and Wolfgang combined for 14.4 points a game last season. The Knights have combined to go 65-4 over the last two years and have been unbeaten in league play during that time.

A trio of former Merrimack Valley stars in Joendy Rosario (Lawrence), Jeremy Valdez (Haverhill) and Alejandro Delgado (Haverhill) join the mix this season. Also joining the team and expected to make an immediate impact are Christian Sanders (East Boston) and Yunosuke Matsuda (Tokyo, Japan).

The Knights are set to open up their season on Saturday, November 2nd against Monroe-Bronx in Lincroft, New Jersey, at the Brookdale Basketball Classic. The first home game is scheduled for Thursday, Nov. 7.



Photo courtesy of NECC News

Members of the NECC Knights Men's Basketball team.

THE MERRIMACK VALLEY

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