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Update: Shank could re- turn as professor

KELLEN STEPLER
editor-in-chief

Gary Shank, the Duquesne education professor who was fired for using a racial epithet in a Sept. 9 lecture, may now be able to return to teach at Duquesne.

On Friday, Feb. 5, university President Ken Gormley issued a statement responding to Shank's grievance that he filed against the university in November. On Jan. 14, the University Grievance Committee for Faculty (UGCF) found that while Shank's use of the racial epithet was misguided, "it was not malicious," and recommended that he be able to return to his job at Duquesne.

According to Gormley's statement, Shank will be suspended, without pay, from Duquesne until August 2021. He will be required to meet multiple conditions during his suspension in order to be eligible to return to his position.

Requirements for reinstatement

During his suspension, Shank will undergo mandatory diversity, equity and inclusion training taught by Alvin B. Tillery Jr., the founder and director of the center for the study of diversity and democracy at Northwestern University.

"Shank will be required to take a course in "Leading Diversity, Equity and Inclusion" with Dr. Tillery and complete additional independent training as determined appropriate by Dr. Tillery," according to the statement.

Following the training, Shank will be required to write and submit a substantive reflection to

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THE DUQUESNE DUKE

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Guest Column: "Duquesne Univ. has a *whiteness* problem"



Griffin Sendek / Multimedia Editor

As the Duquesne community reacts to the news that education professor Gary Shank has the opportunity to be reinstated, alumnus George Yancy, a Ph.D. recipient from Duquesne, shares his thoughts on the matter. In an open letter to the Black students of Duquesne, Yancy speaks to issue of race on campus.

Open Letter to Black Students at Duquesne University

Editor's Note: Last semester The Duke committed to addressing the issue of race on campus as part of the Poynter College Media Project. We believe this column helps drive that dialogue.

I apologize for not writing when I initially heard the disturbing news that Dr. Gary Shank used the N-word in his Educational Psychology course, on September 9, 2020. That year, the killing of Breonna Taylor and George Floyd galvanized global protests against the killing of unarmed and innocent Black bodies by white police officers. As it was for me, I'm sure their deaths impacted the core of your Black psyche, leading you to ask: will

I be next? The question grows out of a collective understanding that Black lives do not matter in white America. What you felt in Shank's course was a microcosm of a larger form of societal and historical anti-Blackness.

I say this, because as Black people, we have earned the right to articulate how we feel. We know what anti-Black racism feels like, what it looks like, and what it sounds like. It is not our fault that many white people do not understand the magnitude of our plight, that they do not know what it means to be Black in a country that has systemically failed to address, let alone fully acknowledge, our pain and our suffering under white supremacy. I want you to know that I see you, I hear you, I feel your pain. When it comes to anti-Black racism, let no one tell you that you are being too sensitive, that you do not possess the "objectivity" to

grapple with controversial texts, that you want to be coddled, that you are a "prisoner" of political correctness, or that you are part of a larger problem called "cancel culture." Had Shank been better educated about his whiteness, and about how the structure of whiteness functions as a site of willful ignorance, he would have understood that using the N-word, as he did, was not just about poor judgment or "misguided behavior," but was selfish, pedagogically incompetent, and violent.

So, let us be clear, as Black people, we should always be uncompromisingly angry when white anti-Black racism rears its ugly head, but never surprised. I am convinced that anti-Black racism exists in every nook and cranny of "American democracy." This country was founded upon our unheeded cries and our existential and social asphyxia-

tion. "We can't breathe!" is our shared reality. When Shank said "I'm giving you permission to use" the N-word, that was a grip around your throat, a knee on your neck. Both his permission and his use of the word were violent. Since Black people already know the pain caused by white people using the N-word, it must have been white students who were being given permission.

Simultaneously, Shank's whiteness endorsed and invalidated that permission. Imagine me giving "permission" to male students to use the B-word or the C-word without serious pedagogical work on the real violence and ugliness of sexism. Imagine me giving "permission" to heterosexual students to use the Fa-word. Imagine me giving "permission" to nondisabled students to use the R-word. The

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POLICE BRIEFS

Here are the crimes reported for Feb. 2 to Feb. 8.

On Feb. 5, the resident director of Vickroy Hall smelled the odor of marijuana coming from a dorm room while she was doing paperwork verifications. A citation was issued.

COVID-19 DATA (as of Feb. 7)

This week, Duquesne launched a new COVID-19 dashboard on its mini-site. The new dashboard features campus COVID-19 data along with information from Allegheny County. The campus data dashboard breaks down COVID-19 cases, tests, isolation and quarantine spaces and vaccination information.

Between Jan. 29 and Feb. 4, there were eight positive tests at Duquesne, and 471 tests conducted. As of Feb. 10, Five students are in isolation and six are in quarantine.



SCAN HERE FOR
COVID-19 DATA

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The Duke's news section would love to hear from you about stories that you want to see in print. Know a talented professor or accomplished student? See something on campus that just doesn't make sense? You can send your tips and story ideas to News Editor Colleen Hammond at hammondcd@duq.edu

Shank narrows down path to permanent reinstatement

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Gormley of what he learned from the training, including how it impacted his view of his behavior on Sept. 9.

"Dr. Tillery will be asked to certify to the president, based upon his extensive experience, that Dr. Shank understands the seriousness of the conduct he engaged in and its potential impact on his students and the university community, as well as the importance of being sensitive to, and mindful of, diversity, equity, and inclusion in the classroom," the statement said.

Shank will also be placed on a "performative improvement plan with a specific emphasis on teaching methodology," and will work with Duquesne's Center for Teaching Excellence (CETR) to "re-structure, re-write and organize his lessons in all courses."

A formal reprimand will also be placed in Shank's permanent file, which will make "clear that if Professor Shank engages in conduct of this nature again, he will be subject to immediate termination."

"If Professor Shank takes the above required steps, he will be permitted to return to the classroom in the fall semester of 2021," Duquesne spokesperson Gabe Welsch said. "However, if this does not occur, the decision makes clear that there will be no additional chances."

Shank's conduct "deserving of clear sanctions"

The timing of Shank's behavior, Gormley said in the statement, made it "especially disturbing and inappropriate in the fall of 2020."

"Students and faculty alike had just returned to on-campus activity after a difficult summer grappling with the COVID pandemic, and marked by racial unrest sparked by the murder of an unarmed Black man, George Floyd, by Minneapolis police," Gormley wrote. "One would have to be completely divorced from reality to be unaware of the fact that students of color and other members of the Duquesne community were already feeling upset, vulnerable and concerned by recent events that highlighted existing racial injustices and inequities in our society."

Gormley, with interim school of education dean Gretchen Generett, provost David Dausey and the UGCF, said that the sanction addresses the serious academic misconduct Shank displayed.

"It is also designed to make clear that conduct of this sort is not acceptable by Professor Shank or any faculty member and will make him subject to immediate termination," according to the statement.

The statement said that students in Shank's class – and Duquesne students, more broadly – have suffered from his conduct, and his actions require "meaningful, genuine work to redress the harm caused."

"While Professor Shank's actions may have lacked intent to cause harm, they nonetheless were harmful to the students in the class and to the entire campus community and deserving of strong sanctions," the statement said.

Gormley is allocating an additional \$50,000 of special funding to Duquesne's Office of Diversity and Inclusion, "to create opportunities for students across campus to engage positively on the issue of respectful language and behavior on the issue of race."

Argument of academic freedom rejected by the university

Gormley wrote Friday that "academic freedom and tenure do not provide a blank check for faculty members to engage in conduct which is disrespectful or harmful to students. Nor is a faculty member immunized from responsibility by sitting in front of a Zoom screen and stating, 'this is pedagogical,' before launching into a series of offensive racial slurs to make an ill-defined point, thus seeking to transform improper conduct into an act of legitimate pedagogy."

Previously, Shank defended his behavior by invoking academic freedom; however, both Gormley and the UGCF rejected that argument. In Shank's grievance filed Nov. 5, he wrote that he "was terminated for making statements during [his] teaching that are well within the accepted standards of academic freedom."

He also demanded a "full reinstatement with no conditions, back-pay and benefits, and payment and reimbursement of all [his] legal fees and expenses as a result of this wrongful termination."

Additionally, the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) and the Foundation for Individual Rights in Education (FIRE) both came to Shank's defense during the fall semester, asking that he be reinstated at the university.

However, Gormley wrote Friday that "academic freedom is not a shield behind which faculty members can hide to engage in offensive conduct that demeans others and does damage to students' educational experience."

FIRE spokesperson Adam Steinbaugh said that "it's good to know that Gary Shank will not lose his livelihood for doing his job."

"Academic freedom, at its core, protects the rights of faculty members to embrace difficult material," Steinbaugh said. "That sometimes means that teachers' discussions will include words and materials that others find objectionable or offensive. A university that places its faculty members in fear of losing their jobs for engaging in difficult material will chill discussion entirely. Criticism, not the prospect of termination, is the answer to speech others find offensive."

When reached for comment,

Shank's attorney Warner Mariani shared a letter sent Feb. 10 from the AAUP to Gormley, closing their file on the case "while indicating [the AAUP's] willingness to assist any efforts to bring the faculty handbook into closer conformance with AAUP-supported academic freedom and tenure standards."

Educational Psychology student: "I don't want future students to go through what we went through on that day"

Following Gormley's announcement Friday evening, Duquesne sophomore Zeke Daure sent an email to students in Shank's fall 2020 Educational Psychology class, and to a social justice class, regarding things Shank has said.

Daure, who was in the Zoom lecture when Shank used the n-word, said he sent the email because he "strongly believes [Shank] should not teach again."

"I can't explain [the Sept. 9 lecture]," Daure said. "It was unexpected; the way it occurred. He egged on students to say it."

When Daure received the campus-wide statement, he said he was "pretty upset."

"I don't know if he deserves to be back in the classroom...even with all the training," he said. "As someone who wants to be a teacher, I don't see a place for him."

As of Monday afternoon, Daure said that he heard from a couple students who had experiences with Shank.

"I knew other people spoke about other instances with Shank," Daure said. "I'm just trying to see what else there is, and use the students' voice behind my own. One incident may be an accident, but two or three, it's really not."

The secondary English education major noted that Shank was "very comfortable" when he said the racial epithet, and was "conscious" of his actions.

"He even said, you know that's not OK, after he said it," Daure said. "I don't want future students to go through what we went through on that day."

Abby Lanzelotti – who had Shank's Educational Psychology course in the fall of 2019 – said that Shank should not return to his job at Duquesne because he "is not a good representation of the school of education."

"There's no 'pedagogical reason' to say the word, especially if you're an older white male," she said.

Guest Column

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pattern here would reflect a sense of unquestioned authority, the power of normativity, and a failure to understand both the violence embedded within those slurs and the marginalized who are assaulted by them. If you add to these examples the tenor of Shank's pedagogical disrespect, then you create an environment where Black students will not feel safe, will not feel respected, will not feel "at home." Add to this the predominantly white undergraduate student body at Duquesne University, and its predominantly white faculty, this only creates those private moments when Black students ask themselves: Am I wanted here? Do I belong here? Why does this university not reflect more students and faculty who look like me? At predominantly white academic institutions, white people do not pose those uncomfortable race questions. Why? It is white privilege. Shank not only failed you pedagogically by using the N-word, he insulted you with white arrogance and took your Black critical subjectivity and humanity for granted. That is one thing that white privilege does. And even if it does this unconsciously, our collective hurt is no less painful. To add insult to injury, not only does white privilege go unchallenged in any robust way at so many predominantly white institutions, but our wounds are neither acknowledged nor attended to.

White anti-Black racism is not always spectacular. The storming of the Capitol is one obvious example of spectacular white racism. However, for the most part, anti-Black racism thrives on banality. It does not announce itself; it dwells within spaces that are considered "normal." In fact, it was right there in your classroom passing itself off as "free speech" and "pedagogical permission." We know that this is an excellent academic institution, and one we greatly respect, but we must shout with a resounding voice that Duquesne University has a whiteness problem! The proverbial ball is now in its court.

Dr. George Yancy
Samuel Candler Dobbs Professor of Philosophy at Emory University
Ph.D., Duq. 2005

Memorial held for deceased Duq student, Lucas Traverse

KATIA FAROUN
features editor

Hundreds of candles were carried on A-Walk by students, faculty, friends and family on Feb. 4 in memory of Lucas Traverse, a Duquesne student who died last week.

The vigil, which took place at 1 p.m. following a memorial mass, invited the Duquesne community to support Traverse's family and friends. Attendees gathered outside of the Laval House on A-Walk to collect a candle and prayer card and listen to some of Traverse's friends and family share memories of his life.

"Lucas Traverse really was the best of us, and it breaks my heart that I can't spend another day with him," said Michael Bunce, a sophomore and president of Sigma Tau Gamma (Sig Tau), Traverse's fraternity.

A sophomore in the Palumbo-Donahue School of Business, Traverse died on Saturday, Jan. 30 after being struck by a train in the South Side near Fourth Street and Color Park. His death



Members of Traverse's fraternity, Sigma Tau Gamma, stand on A-Walk outside of the Laval House during Thursday's vigil. A few of Traverse's fraternity brothers gave remarks during the vigil, including chapter president Michael Bunce.

Both the memorial mass and the candlelight vigil were live streamed for friends and members of the Duquesne community who wished to attend the memorial.

"Our hope is that in time, the pain of losing him gives way to the joy in remembering him," Patricia Traverse said.



The vigil took place during class time on Thursday, but hundreds of students on campus took time to gather with Traverse's loved ones and pay their respects.

is still under investigation by Pittsburgh Police, and his manner of death is still pending, according to the Allegheny County Medical Examiner's Office.

Before the vigil, a private memorial mass was held in the Duquesne Chapel in remembrance of Traverse. Because of COVID-19 restrictions, only members of Traverse's family and fraternity were invited to attend the memorial in person, and masks were required in the chapel. Duquesne President Ken Gormley also attended the service.

Fr. Bill Christy — who is also the adviser for Sig Tau — led the service, sharing prayers, songs and passages of scripture that celebrated the gift of life. His message focused on the unique quality of human life, and how in the Christian faith, life is believed to be eternal, continuing beyond death.

"[Lucas] is still part of us: of family, of university, of fraternity. For that life, that spark, that breath — that is eternal," Christy said.

Immediately following the me-



Traverse's vigil was held outside on A-Walk for safety reasons due to the COVID-19 pandemic. About 200 members of the Duquesne community attended.



Students, faculty and staff joined Traverse's family and fraternity brothers after the memorial. Fr. Bill Christy led the crowd in prayer to begin and end the event.

morial mass, Traverse's family and fraternity brothers joined a crowd of about 200 members of the Duquesne community gathered on A-Walk for the candlelight vigil. Attendees stood alongside tables where volunteers handed out the candles and prayer cards. Counseling stations were also available.

Christy began the vigil with a prayer before inviting members of Traverse's family and fraternity to present remarks in honor of Traverse's life.

Anthony Anzevino, a senior

at Duquesne that organized the vigil on behalf of Sig Tau, shared memories of meeting Traverse during recruitment, and how Traverse's down-to-earth personality caught his attention.

"I remember saying, 'This is a genuine and authentic guy. Someone who's loyal and trustworthy. Someone you can count on.' And that's exactly who Lucas was to me and so many others," Anzevino said. "What more could you ask for in a brother?"

Bunce echoed Anzevino's statement, reflecting on his

friendship with Traverse over the past two years.

"In my perspective, Lucas was just someone you wanted around you, someone you could trust, someone you could rely on when you needed it the most and someone who saw the bigger picture in life than being a 19-year-old college student," Bunce said.

On behalf of herself and her husband, Robert, Patricia Traverse thanked the Duquesne community for its support of her son, and mentioned his excitement at returning to campus two weeks ago. Though the struggle of losing a loved one is shocking and painful, Patricia encouraged those close with Traverse to focus on his memory and the joy that comes along with it.

"Our hope is that in time, the pain of losing him gives way to the joy in remembering him," Patricia said.



Volunteers stationed at tables handed out candles and prayer cards for those attending the vigil. Before gathering on A-Walk, Duquesne hosted a memorial mass in the chapel to celebrate Traverse. Due to COVID-19 precautions, the memorial mass was only open to Traverse's family and members of his fraternity. The event was live streamed for friends and members of the Duquesne community.

tricia said.

Before Christy ended the half hour-long vigil with a prayer, Patricia ended her remarks with a reminder for those who were close to Traverse.

"Lucas was loved by his family, his friends, his brothers, and please know that he loved you too," she said.

Recordings of the memorial mass and the vigil can be found on the Spiritan Campus Ministry's Facebook page and the Duquesne University Conference and Event Services YouTube page, respectively.

PHOTOS BY:
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SCAN HERE



More on the death of Lucas Traverse

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“The big secret in life

is that there is no
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get there if you’re
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OPINIONS



COURTESY OF UNSPLASH

Vinyl record sales have surged in recent years stemming from a renewed interest by both young and old consumers.

The long-awaited return of vinyl

Imagine this scenario. You are taking an afternoon walk and stumble upon a record store on the corner of the street. In slight disbelief and genuine curiosity, you walk in the front door and observe as an employee carefully places the stylus of a turntable on a polyvinyl chloride disc.

After a few moments of warm crackle, “Stairway to Heaven” by Led Zeppelin begins blaring across the store as a small crowd of eager shoppers peruse through hundreds of records on display.

I know what you’re thinking. An actual record store in my hometown? Ten years ago, this scenario would’ve been inconceivable as vinyl had taken a back seat to CDs and online streaming amidst the digitization of the music industry.

That being said, with a nearly 450% increase in per unit vinyl sales in the U.S. since 2012, I am here to inform you that the record player has indeed made its grand return to center stage.

Not only did vinyl sales surpass CD sales in 2020 for the first time in 34 years, but the vinyl market also grew for its 15th consecutive year. Not to mention, as surprising as it may be, young adults under the age of 25 currently account for half of the buyers driving the resurgence of the record player.

Although it is unlikely that vinyl will ever eclipse streaming as the most popular format for listening to music, industry experts still project vinyl sales to maintain steady growth for years to come. In other words, the record player is here to stay and prepared to contend with the most formidable of competition — Tidal, Spotify

and Apple Music.

The Vinyl Renaissance is of particular interest to me as I believe it is an excellent example of the retrospective trends that continue to grow in popularity amongst the consumer markets, and in all honesty, it sparks my curiosity as to why retro products are roaring back into style.

The reasoning behind vinyl’s unexpected rise in the past decade requires a two-fold explanation. On one end of the spectrum, nostal-



NOAH WILBUR

opinions editor

gia has undoubtedly been a determining factor as older generations — those who grew up around turntables — are increasingly interested in experiencing the original analog sound and reliving their adolescence.

However, nostalgia alone fails to entirely explain the surge in demand of vinyl since sales hit a low in 2006, especially considering that one-half of this growth is attributable to millennials. If someone didn’t own a record player during youth, how can he or she be nostalgic about it?

This brings me to my second

point. The most significant factor leading to this revival is the unprecedented enthusiasm by younger generations to experience the full effect of listening to a vinyl record on a turntable — the crispy sound, relaxed vibe, and romantically-charged aesthetic.

From visiting the local record store and studying the one-of-a-kind artwork, to opening album jackets and listening to the crackly but inherently smooth analog sound, a growing number of youngsters view the record player as an exciting alternative to streaming music.

For these reasons, coupled with the wide availability of turntables at fair prices and the emergence of record stores across America, consumers both young and old are rushing to get their hands on a record player to either reminisce on old times, or to experience music in a new way.

Although the heyday of vinyl is admittedly long behind us, I still find this renaissance as favorable and valuable to our society as it encourages younger generations to slow down, put their phones away, live in the moment, and listen to music as an activity rather than as a backdrop.

Since receiving my turntable as a gift this past Christmas, I have spent many hours listening to my collection of records with friends and family, and in many cases, even by myself. The truly immersive musical experience that accompanies a record player is truly unparalleled. It is my sincere hope that more young people continue to experiment with vinyl as in all honesty, they’ll never know what they’re missing until they try it.

STAFF EDITORIAL

Wanted: Bi-weekly COVID-19 tests

Every two weeks?

In a Jan. 13 email sent campus-wide, Duquesne announced that they would require “surveillance testing” — where they will test all students, faculty and staff present on campus — approximately every two weeks.

We’ve completed three weeks of the spring semester.

And no tests.

This is a great idea in theory, but Duquesne needs to follow through. Most students were excited at the chance to return to Duquesne at a time where most colleges announced that they would pivot to virtual learning, but we also need to make sure that we are being safe.

Last semester, Duquesne’s COVID-19 response was good, but there’s more to be desired. Last semester, we did not do two-week surveillance testing, but COVID-19 cases ramped over the holiday break — when we were not in session. Other schools in Pennsylvania, like Juniata College, for example, did two-week surveillance testing last semester. Carnegie Mellon is selecting individuals to take a weekly asymptomatic COVID-19 test in order to detect and prevent the spread of COVID-19 in their community.

COVID-19 cases are decreasing as of late, but they’re still higher than they were in March — when everything was originally shut down. According to the New York Times, Allegheny County is at a very high risk level, and was “extremely high” in the middle of January. They also defined the outbreak as “severe” and at least one in 17 residents in the county have been infected.

Surveillance testing, according to the university of Buffalo, helps to gauge the prevalence of a disease within a community by periodically evaluating samples from randomly selected non-symptomatic individuals within that community.

Mass testing is a great choice for colleges to use to stop the spread of COVID-19. Large residential areas — like dorm rooms, for example — are breeding grounds for the virus to spread easily.

In the Jan. 13 email, the university said that the testing would be provided by Duquesne, they picked a location in the Genesius Theater, and the testing would come at no cost to students. Duquesne clearly has the resources and the funding to implement this program, so what are they waiting for?

Because of how intense the situation is right now, Duquesne should be on top of things by administering these tests. They should be on top of things — like they promised Jan. 13.

The comfort that would come from having these bi-weekly surveillance tests would alleviate stress on students and staff alike in a time where anxiety is at an all-time high.

Being aware of how many cases are on campus brings ease of mind to the Duquesne community, but knowing how many cases is better than not knowing.

In this case, ignorance is not bliss.

The key to faster vaccine distribution may lie at independent pharmacies

MOHAMMAD SAJJAD
staff columnist

My mother recently asked me to help her find a location where she could receive the COVID-19 vaccine. Not being tech savvy, she sent me a link a friend had forwarded to her and asked me to investigate.

After about half an hour of researching, I found out that despite being eligible to receive the vaccine, there were no locations within a reasonable distance where she could even get on a waitlist, let alone schedule an appointment.

Vaccine rollout over the past couple of months has gone slower than we hoped. While many of us are frustrated, what else did we expect? Vaccinating an entire country is no easy task.

Demand for the vaccine was at an unprecedented high after a year of our lives was turned upside down. Getting the American people vaccinated was not made any easier, given that there was no plan for distribution by the previous administration, according to a Biden official.

Despite the current administration's initiative in distributing the vaccine, how can we further improve vaccination rates

among Americans? The answer may lie at your local, independent pharmacy. While the Biden administration has pledged to make more shots available at chain and independent pharmacies, there needs to be more emphasis on getting the vaccine to the latter.

Regardless of the time of year, chain pharmacies are constantly busy with the number of prescriptions they fill and shots they administer. When the vaccine becomes widely available, their workload will only intensify.

Independent pharmacies can work to offset any potential back-up larger pharmacies may experience. Locally-owned pharmacies usually have shorter wait times and have less administrative burden that comes with working at a larger company.

There is no doubt that major retail chains serve large portions of the community. However, there are areas they cannot reach. These gaps in service can be filled by independent pharmacies. Not only are locally-owned pharmacies deeply connected with their communities, but they also have the capability of vaccinating patients in their homes, as opposed to clinics held by local

health departments.

As Christina Barrille, Executive Director of the Virginia Pharmacists Association, puts it, "[Independent pharmacies] have a different relationship with their patient population." If we do not prioritize getting the vaccine to independent pharmacies, many areas across the U.S. won't be served, and many individuals will be left wondering when they will get the vaccine.

Another reason vaccine rollout has been slower than anticipated is people's hesitation in receiving the vaccine. Long before COVID-19, people have been skeptical of vaccines and mistrust their use.

If anyone were to convince people otherwise, however, it would be independent pharmacies. Since their relationship with the community is strong and they are a trusted entity, locally-owned pharmacies have the ability to encourage community members to get vaccinated.

In addition, there are more opportunities for patients to have one-on-one consultations with their pharmacist at independent pharmacies, which will only ease concerns patients may have.

Although vaccine rollout has been slow in many parts of the



COURTESY OF UNSPLASH

Independent pharmacies are in a position to considerably improve vaccination rates.

country, there are states that are ahead of the curve. West Virginia, for example, has administered 85% of its delivered doses, which is second in the country behind North Dakota.

Officials say that because West Virginia has relied on independent drug stores, instead of activating a federal partnership with CVS and Walgreens, they have been able to administer more of their doses.

On the other hand in Oklahoma, CVS and Walgreens have been sitting on 62,000 doses of

the vaccine, doses that are meant to be administered to the state's most vulnerable population.

While chain pharmacies outnumber their independent counterparts, locally-owned drug stores have the capability to accelerate distribution across the country. States should shift their focus to independent pharmacies and trust in their ability to get more people vaccinated.

States like West Virginia have set the example, and it's up to the rest of us to decide if we'd like to follow suit.

NFL continues to tackle diversity with 2021 Super Bowl performances

SARAH DUJORDAN
staff columnist

Arguably, 2020 was a time like no other. We often focus on the negative aspects of what came out of that year. Although, the discussion around diversity and inclusion being brought to such a spotlight in 2020 influenced many new and positive changes at this year's Super Bowl. Despite these new changes, we still have a long way to go in the fight for equality, but let's hope the NFL can keep up the energy (even behind the scenes).

Starting off the night, Alicia Keys serenaded us with her rendition of the "Black National Anthem," 'Lift Every Voice and Sing.' She stood surrounded by a crowd of people, ranging in age, decked out in masks and some wearing Black Lives Matter shirts.

Others wore shirts with the names of the victims of police brutality seen in 2020. The heartfelt emotion put into the performance allowed you to feel all the hurt and love she has for her community. She ended the Black national anthem sitting at a purple piano, surrounded by people joining her on the field.

Representation like this is astronomical. Many people fail to realize there even is a "Black National Anthem." Unless you watched Beyonce's 'Homecoming' on Netflix, you wouldn't even know she incorporated it into her 2018 Coachella set.

My parents sat there, confused as to what this performance truly meant. So, here is some background. 'Lift Every Voice and Sing' was originally written as a poem by NAACP leader James Weldon Johnson. His brother, John Rosamond Johnson, then set it to music in 1899. Of course, this performance was met with conflicting opinions and controversy, but tying this song full of rich history and culture into something as big as the super bowl was monumental.

Black female artists continued to dominate the stage during the remaining performances. Singer H.E.R. gave a goosebump-raising twist on the classic 'America the Beautiful' making the song her own by providing a powerhouse voice and an epic guitar solo.

She did not miss a beat with this rendition. Many deemed this as the best performance of the night, to which I would agree.

Preceding her appearance,

we had an unlikely duo join together in the singing of The National Anthem. Jazmine Sullivan and Eric Church, who both come from very different musical backgrounds put their own spin on this duet.

Sullivan is an R&B singer, while Church is a country singer. Many mixed reviews came from this pairing, as it started off promising and then their different styles started to compete, not completely meshing together.

Before the highly anticipated halftime show, Amanda Gorman delivered an original poem titled, 'Chorus of the Captains.' She recited this poem prior to the coin toss by the three people chosen as honorary captains in the toss. Trina Davis, a Los Angeles teacher; Suzie Dorner, a nurse, and James Martin, a veteran representing Pittsburgh.

The final performance of the night wrapped with The Weeknd's Super Bowl halftime show. A performance completely live and not pre-recorded compared to years prior finished the story he established for months.

People are always very harsh and critical of any halftime show, but I thought The Weeknd gave us quite the show despite COVID-19 safety guide-



COURTESY OF UNSPLASH

Super Bowl LV reflected the NFL's commitment to enhance league-wide diversity.

lines. My only complaint about his performance would be technical issues.

Since this was completely live, his mic had some quirks almost making it hard to completely hear him. Regardless, he poured \$7 million of his own money into one of the better halftime shows, in my opinion.

The Super Bowl saw a lot of progression in its representation of Black artists and anti-racism efforts. Despite these acts, the NFL has a long way to go with its

anti-racism efforts.

NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell released a video statement committing to donating \$250 million over a 10-year period to combat systemic racism. While acknowledging that this is a positive contribution, we must not forget this is also the same organization that nearly four years ago punished NFL player Colin Kaepernick for his acts of peaceful protest.

DUKE SERIES: MINORITY-OWNED BUSINESS SPOTLIGHTS

Mother-daughter duo inspires art with pottery studio

GILLIAN FITZGERALD
staff writer

Pottery, canvas, glass, oh my!

At Kolor-N-Kiln, located in the Robinson Mall, there's not much you can't paint or create.

The mother-daughter duo, Jeaniane and Alyson Blackburn, opened up their pottery studio in 2012 as a way to spend more time together through something they love doing.

The Pittsburgh natives used to paint pottery as a hobby when Alyson was younger, and as soon as she was out of college it became a business opportunity for the two of them.

"I had just retired from my corporate job and really didn't know what I was going to do, and it just came up in casual conversation about opening a business together. She kept going, 'Mom, I thought we were going to do this,'" Jeaniane said. "I retired in February, April we had a conversation and in June, voila, we opened our business."

The fast track to their studio was the perfect way to make it happen. And now, the familial experiences at the store are a reflection of their desire for customers to feel at home during their time at Kolor-N-Kiln.

Not only has the pottery studio brought Jeaniane and Alyson closer, it also brings others together.

"There are other pottery painting places around, but the one thing we know that we're known for is our friendly, family-like environment. People come into our store, and they come back over and over again — we have made so many friends," Jeaniane said.

Jeaniane is proud to be known for their welcoming atmosphere, especially considering

how crucial yet challenging it can be for small businesses to create a customer base when first starting out.

Kolor-N-Kiln has moved studios four times over the years, so they had to learn who their audience is and depend on their growing customer base as they settled into their current studio at Robinson. No matter the space they've been in, the staff has been able to connect with their customers while remaining one of only two minority-owned pottery studios in the area.

As a small-Black owned business, they are always excited to see different artists coming into the store and the amazing things they create — whether it be mosaics, wood paintings or their new clay-building creations coming in the summer.

"We don't shy away from the fact that we are a minority-owned business. We celebrate that, because we know that we are one of the only two minority-owned paint-your-own pottery studios around doing everything that we do," Jeaniane said.

The two women constantly celebrate the diverse backgrounds of their customers and staff. And during Black History Month, Kolor-N-Kiln is using its Instagram and Facebook to highlight Black artists by sharing facts and profiles throughout history.

Different types of techniques or styles can easily get passed around or claimed by people as their own. By showcasing the achievements and methods of Black artists, followers on social media are able to learn more about historical sculptors and painters that they may not know about.

"We always want to make sure that when people come in, they have some type of inspiration by letting them know about different art-



COURTESY OF KOLOR-N-KILN

Kolor-N-Kiln, located in the Robinson Mall, is one of only two minority-owned pottery studios in the area.

ists and different techniques," Jeaniane said.

That inspiration in art is important for Jeaniane personally, but it's also important for her as a business owner. Just as Jeaniane was inspired by her daughter Alyson to start Kolor-N-Kiln, her inspiration and passion to succeed also comes from a simple piece of advice: Dream big.

"As a minority business owner, you have to dream big and think out of the box. Dream as big as you can, and look for opportunities or niches where no one else is really traveling that way and put your own spin on it," Jeaniane said.

She encourages others to follow their dreams and make them a reality, while creating a space for people to express themselves at Kolor-N-Kiln. She hopes the creation of their

pottery studio will leave a legacy for Alyson's future family.

"My favorite thing about being one of the owners is that I am leaving a legacy for my daughter," Jeaniane said. "For her and I to do this together ... and one day, when I'm gone, she'll be able to tell her children about this."



Human Rights Film Series focuses on race, violence, technology

EMILY AMBERY
staff writer

This year marks the 14th Annual Human Rights Film Series (HRFS) at Duquesne. Throughout February, the Department of Modern Languages and Literatures is presenting the series entirely virtually.

Its theme, "Race, Rights, and Responsibilities," was selected by the HRFS Committee consisting of German professor Edith Krause and Spanish professors Mark Frisch and Leonardo Bacarreza. The films focus on issues of race, gun violence, the consequences of technology and the use and misuse of gene science.

"All these are compelling issues that have been at the forefront of our national discussion and our self-understanding as a nation," Krause said. "They address both our rights and our responsibilities as individuals and citizens."

John Lewis: Get in the Way (2017) was streamed virtually on Feb. 1, and was followed by speaker George Yancy, a professor of philosophy at Emory University. *G is for Gun* (2018) streamed on Feb. 9, followed by speaker Detective Joseph Bielewicz of the Pittsburgh Police department.



COURTESY OF G IS FOR GUN FILM

G is for Gun discusses the controversial topic of teachers having guns in schools.

"During the summer and fall semester, we all watch a number of different films; there are some issues that are particularly relevant in Pittsburgh, in the country or in the world, and we look for films relating to them," Frisch said. "The human rights films series seeks to highlight problems we all face or others face and ask people to recognize the hu-

manity of others and try to work together to solve the issues."

Death by Design (2018) will be streamed on Feb. 17 at 7 p.m. and will host speaker Jim Weber, who is a professor of Business Ethics & Management at Duquesne. *A Dangerous Idea: Eugenics, Genetics, and the American Dream* (2017) will be streamed on Feb. 25

at 7 p.m., and will be followed by speaker Michael Seaman, an associate professor at Duquesne's Bayer School of Natural and Environmental Sciences.

The HRFS has always been free and open to the public, but with this year's completely virtual format, the series has been able to reach farther than the Duquesne and Pittsburgh communities.

"It's the first time we're experimenting with a completely virtual event, and the results have been quite favorable," Bacarreza said. "The virtual environment has allowed us, for example, to invite Professor George Yancy from Emory, and we have also expanded our audience to online viewers in other universities and in the Pittsburgh community."

The film series promotes diversity of thought and experience. It aims to reach beyond the modern languages department to the larger campus community by engaging students in the conversation through the promotion of human rights films followed by an interactive discussion with an expert on the topic.

"It was very informational and emotionally engaging that when the hour passed, I was surprised it had

already been an hour," said Amber Delprince, a third-year Spanish major who attended the first film.

Delprince attended the viewing for *John Lewis: Get in the Way* and felt that the film's purpose was clear.

"I thought the message was also really important because even though we're taught about some of the 'big names' that contribute to a movement, there's a lot of other people involved who usually get little-to-no credit even though the movement wouldn't have been possible without them," Delprince said.

The focus on human rights in the Duquesne community continues with the tradition of the HRFS, and inspires dialogue about the most critical issues facing today's world.

"Human rights are conceivable because there is a foundational dignity, shared by all human beings, in which we need to believe," Bacarreza said. "As language educators, we understand that words can and need to be used to denounce abuse, and that they can also be used to build community, to bring people together, to have intelligent discussions that ultimately solidify the foundations of society."

All livestream and discussion recordings are available for viewers to watch if they missed the live event.

Women's hoops HC Dan Burt: "This is our second season"

ADAM LINDNER
sports editor

Today marks the 25th day in a row since the Duquesne women's basketball team last saw the court. No matter which way you slice it — 600 hours, 36,000 minutes, almost four weeks — a 25-day mid-season pause is a *long* time away from action for any team.

Heck, the last time the Dukes played, classes hadn't even resumed yet. Duquesne students now find themselves wrapping up their third full week of coursework.

Feb. 12's matchup at George Washington, set for 5 p.m., will be the Dukes' first contest since their Jan. 17 loss against La Salle. It will also serve as an opportunity for the team to secure its first victory since Dec. 11, when it topped St. Bonaventure for its only conference victory to date.

That was a whopping 62 days — or, within the context of a college basketball season, approximately two moons — ago.

Currently sitting at 2-7 overall with a 1-4 mark in the Atlantic 10, Duquesne is mired in one of its worst seasons in recent memory, albeit a decidedly challenging and unusual one. Aside from COVID-19-related pauses, postponements and cancellations, the Dukes have also dealt with a rash of injuries to key players, including all-league guard Libby Bazelak (played 11 minutes in her first game of the season Jan. 17 after missing the first eight with an injury) and guard Amanda Kalin, who was enjoying a standout year before she suffered a season-ending injury at Dayton Jan. 3.

Sitting near the bottom of the A-10's standings with roughly one month remaining in the regular season, it would be fair to posit that the Dukes have their work cut out for them if they're to salvage their campaign.

Never mind that.

In Head Coach Dan Burt's mind, its first season is done. Season No. 2, Burt says, begins Friday in the nation's capital.

Approximately three weeks from now, Burt hopes the team's third season will be beginning — at the A-10 tournament in Richmond, Va., that is.

Following the team's first (nearly) full practice in weeks on Wednesday, Burt took the time to speak with *The Duke* over the phone. Burt spoke about the team's elongated pause, its day-to-day goals and Bazelak's return to full health in the conversation tran-

scribed below.

Please note that portions of *The Duke's* conversation with Burt have been edited for brevity.

The Duke: Personally speaking, how have you been dealing with the pandemic?

Burt: You know, it's exhausting. I'm blessed — my family and I have not had any COVID positives, whether it's my wife's family or my family, my children, my wife or I. We've all been very blessed to be healthy. ... I think we'll be wearing masks this time next year, but hopefully we'll have most of America vaccinated by the end of summer and we'll be able to get on with our lives a little bit more normally. ... I know I just want to travel. I want to go on vacation (laughs). I know that I miss live music and going to see bands. Heck, I miss going to practice. I can't go watch our men's team practice. But I understand why.

The Duke: You guys are set for the GW game on Friday, correct?

Burt: We are going to play against George Washington. Today is the first day that we've practiced with most of our team — we're missing two starters today, but otherwise we had most of our team at practice today for the first time in about a month.

The Duke: What can you say about your team's conditioning level after such a lengthy pause?

Burt: It's a situation where you are not going to be in shape and your level of conditioning is going to be varied amongst your players, because some of them have been in isolation or quarantine longer than others. Some of that has been significant. Then, there's the role that genetics plays in getting back into shape. We are constantly evaluating them individually through practice to see where they are and communicating with them, because we want to ramp [conditioning efforts] up slowly to avoid soft-tissue injuries. ... Today, we managed to scrimmage full-court for about five minutes, and we have to play on Friday. When we play, you're probably looking at a situation where you're going to ask your better-conditioned players to play three or four — maybe five minutes — at a time, and the majority of players are going to see two to three minutes at a time. If they're playing as hard as we need them to

play, they cannot play more than two or three minutes at a time. It's almost lent itself to a platoon system for this weekend (Duquesne plays Feb. 12 at GW, then Feb. 14 at George Mason). We'll evaluate that after the weekend. ... Instead of being able to plan things out a month in advance, a week in advance or a day in advance, I literally wake up and go, 'OK, until 1 o'clock, what's going to happen? From 1 o'clock to 8 o'clock at night, what else is going to be thrown our way?' That's the way we've managed. It's very different, because college coaches are used to having structure and routine, and this season is anything but routine and structure.

The Duke: What has your team been able to accomplish, if anything, during this pause? What types of things have you been able to do?

Burt: It's a situation where it's small-group workouts based on, 'Are people healthy? Are they testing negative? Have they tested positive in the past, and now they're through it?' There's so many different protocols that we have to go through for all the different characteristics that COVID presents itself with. ... It's very — I don't want to say unnerving — but it's very different to huddle up in mid-January, or even in February, and you have three players. It's very different to practice two days before you play a game and see that you have 11 players today that will be having their first practice together as a team in weeks. It's going to be very challenging, but that's not just a Duquesne thing. George Washington is coming off of a pause tomorrow, so I have no idea how they've been practicing. Who knows who's available to them from a player standpoint? You almost can't do much from a scouting perspective — you look at George Washington and you don't know who's available. They haven't played since Feb. 1. You have to go with what they've done in the past, but your greater focus has to be on yourself and your players. How can we run and execute what we do at the highest level that we can in the condition that we're in? ... We are 0-0. This is our second season, and that's how we are approaching it. It will be anywhere between five and seven games, and then we hope that we are playing on March 7 in the conference championship [game]. That is our goal. We have 28 days from today until March 7, and our focus is on Friday. It is understanding that we've got

probably about six games between now and the end of the regular season, and then after that, it's a third season with the conference tournament.

Editor's Note: There are 25 days between Feb. 10 and March 7.

The Duke: I would imagine that playing a simpler style of game will be imperative given your team's current situation.

Burt: Very good observation. A simpler style [for us] will be playing a little bit more in transition, playing with very few set rules [in the open court] and allowing the kids to have a great amount of freedom. That's what our goal is. ... There's about six sets that [our players] know and can do them in their sleep. We want to make sure we've got those six or seven sets — really, there are probably three or four [sets] that we know can get us a good shot any time we want. We want to know that we can run those and rehearse those as we prepare for Friday. ... The simpler that you can make things, the better it is for the kids. We're dealing with very high-achieving individuals that have had, I believe, 10 games canceled — some not because of their own COVID positives, but because of others'. It's just been unfortunate that others have had to cancel games with us. That's a very tough thing from a mental health standpoint, when you've been jerked around and you have games canceled three hours before you're supposed to play. You fly to Saint Louis and you're supposed to play in two days — and you're in St. Louis — and the game gets canceled. I tell people, 'We are not going off to war. We are not dodging bullets.' But it is a very taxing mental health situation because you have such high-achieving individuals. We have tried to remain happy and hopeful and celebrate all the little victories; little victories are when we all test negative. We celebrate that. I imagine I'm going to call a timeout on Friday if we go on a short run and say, 'Hey, doesn't that feel good? We just hit back-to-back threes. Man, let's celebrate that for 30 seconds!' We have to do that. We can't do those things off the court now; we can't build camaraderie because we can't be around one another off the floor. ...

To read The Duke's conversation with Burt in its entirety, please visit our website at www.duqsm.com.

Men's Basketball A-10 Standings

Rank	Team	Conf.	Overall	Streak	Next
1.	St. Bonaventure	8-2	10-2	W1	2/12 at VCU
2.	VCU	7-2	14-4	W4	2/12 vs. St. Bonaventure
3.	Davidson	6-2	10-5	W4	2/17 vs. <i>Duquesne</i>
4.	UMass	6-2	7-4	W2	2/24 at Saint Joseph's
5.	Richmond	4-2	10-4	W1	2/14 vs. St. Mary's (Md.)
6.	Dayton	7-5	11-6	L1	2/16 at Rhode Island
7.	Duquesne	6-5	7-6	W3	2/17 at Davidson
8.	Saint Louis	2-2	9-3	W2	2/13 at Fordham
9.	George Mason	5-6	9-8	W1	2/20 at VCU
10.	Rhode Island	6-8	9-12	L4	2/16 vs. Dayton
11.	G. Washington	2-3	3-9	L2	2/17 vs. Saint Joseph's
12.	La Salle	5-8	8-12	L2	2/16 at Saint Louis
13.	Fordham	2-10	2-10	L1	2/13 vs. Saint Louis
14.	Saint Joseph's	0-9	1-14	L6	2/17 at G. Washington

Women's Basketball A-10 Standings

Rank	Team	Conf.	Overall	Streak	Next
1.	Dayton	9-0	10-1	W9	2/12 vs. Richmond
2.	Richmond	7-2	10-4	W4	2/12 at Dayton
3.	Fordham	7-2	10-3	W4	2/12 vs. Saint Joseph's
4.	VCU	7-2	9-7	W3	2/12 at Saint Louis
5.	Rhode Island	8-3	8-6	L1	2/18 at <i>Duquesne</i>
6.	Saint Louis	5-3	7-3	W3	2/12 vs. VCU
7.	UMass	6-4	10-5	L3	2/26 vs. VCU
8.	La Salle	5-7	9-10	L2	2/12 at Davidson
9.	Saint Joseph's	3-5	5-5	L4	2/12 at Fordham
10.	Davidson	3-6	6-9	L6	2/12 vs. La Salle
11.	St. Bonaventure	3-8	4-10	W2	2/12 at George Mason
12.	Duquesne	1-4	2-7	L6	2/12 at G. Washington
13.	G. Washington	1-9	4-12	L5	2/12 vs. <i>Duquesne</i>
14.	George Mason	0-10	3-14	L10	2/12 vs. St. Bonaventure

Penguins task Hextall, Burke with leading team

JACOB HEBDA
staff writer

After five seasons as general manager of the Penguins, Jim Rutherford abruptly announced his resignation on Jan. 27.

Rutherford, the architect behind the 2016 and 2017 Stanley Cup-winning Penguins, cited personal reasons for his departure. Regardless of his motivation, the choice left Pittsburgh scrambling.

The team has experienced little post-season success in the wake of those back-to-back titles. Mike Sullivan's team has won only one playoff series in the past three years.

Those lackluster results have carried over into this season, as the Penguins currently sit at 5-5-1. With massive changes possibly looming, Rutherford stepped down a mere seven games into the season.



COURTESY OF WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

Brian Burke, pictured here in 2009, is a long-time executive that is well respected in the hockey industry. Recently hired as Pittsburgh's president of hockey operations, Burke is a close confidant to Pens owner Mario Lemieux. Burke won a Stanley Cup as GM of the Anaheim Ducks in 2007.

On Feb. 9, the Penguins officially introduced Ron Hextall as his replacement.

Hextall was the Flyers' GM from 2014-18. During his tenure in Philadelphia, he built the foundation for what has become a Stanley Cup contender.

The Flyers are currently tied for first place in the NHL's East Division. Many of the team's core players, including Travis Sanheim, Ivan Provorov, Travis Konecny, Carter Hart, Nolan Patrick and Joel Farabee, were drafted by Hextall.

Despite collecting a promising pool of talent, Hextall's Flyers failed to achieve the success that ownership desired. Philadelphia never advanced past the first round under his leadership, and he was fired in 2018.

As an assistant GM with the Los Angeles Kings, Hextall won a Stanley Cup in 2012.

Joining Hextall in Pittsburgh as president of hockey operations will be Brian Burke.

Burke has held management positions with several NHL franchises, including the Canucks, Maple Leafs and Flames. His results have varied, but he won a Stanley Cup in 2007 as GM of the Anaheim Ducks.

With the hires now official, Hextall and Burke will be tasked with addressing some significant quandaries.

A middling campaign thus far puts the Penguins in a precarious position. Pittsburgh remains in the postseason race with its decent record, but further analysis reveals a team in trouble.

The Penguins have won only once in regulation this season and their -8 goal differential ranks last in the division. With a power play percentage of 13.9%, Pittsburgh's man-advantage ranks 21st in the league.

Sidney Crosby leads the team with an unimpressive nine points. Crosby, a two-time Art Ross Trophy winner, currently ranks 81st in points across the entire NHL.

Evgeni Malkin is currently riding a three-game point streak, but he's only scored two goals all season.

The supporting cast has, likewise, been underwhelming. Overall, the Penguins rank 18th in goals per game at 2.82.

Defensively, the lone bright spot may be Pierre-Olivier Joseph. The rookie leads

team defensemen with five points.

Kris Letang and John Marino, when healthy, have been uneven. Injuries to defensemen Brian Dumoulin and Marcus Pettersson certainly haven't helped the cause.

Meanwhile, the goaltending tandem of Tristan Jarry and Casey DeSmith has been a downright disaster. Neither goalie holds a save percentage above .900. Jarry, an All-Star last season, possesses a 3.95 goals against average.

Simply put, as things stand now, the Penguins are a far cry from true Stanley Cup contention. The championship window may still be open, but a major overhaul seems necessary to reach that point.

The next few months will be telling for the franchise. A turnaround may spur renewed championship aspirations. Continued issues could portend the exact opposite.

That is the dilemma Hextall and Burke inherit. Based on their respective track records though, there is reason for optimism.

Hextall is a noted team-builder. His

draft selections in Philadelphia, and the moves he made to earn them, were impressive.

Burke has a reputation as a bold executive, unafraid to make moves he believes in.

The Penguins seem to hope the two will strike a winning balance — Hextall as a risk-averse roster developer, Burke as a risk-taker willing to make deals that could put the team over the top.

In a shortened 56-game season, time is already running out for the Penguins. If the team fails to reverse its woes, the offseason could mark the beginning of a dramatic makeover.

Until that time comes, the jury on Hextall and Burke will remain out.

These hires are not quite a shot in the dark, but rather — if you will — a shot in the dusk. The aim behind these moves is visible but still unclear. Whether they prove effective is anyone's guess.

In the meantime, I recommend heeding the advice of a beloved Penguin playoff slogan — "Buckle up, baby!"



COURTESY OF WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

Ron Hextall — named the Penguins' newest general manager on Feb. 9 — has his work cut out for him in Pittsburgh. He is set to inherit a talented yet aging Pittsburgh roster from former GM Jim Rutherford, who abruptly resigned from his post roughly two weeks ago. Hextall, pictured here during his playing days, is regarded as one of the best goaltenders in the history of the Philadelphia Flyers.

Montour O-lineman McLaurin set to bolster Dukes in trenches

BRENTARO YAMANE
staff writer

It's a common refrain: Children watch an NFL game on television and suddenly think to themselves, "I want to play football."

Montour High School senior Cameron McLaurin was one of those little kids wanting to play football after watching the first game that he could remember. He fell in love with the game, and he started playing football at the tender age of 8-years-old.

He's grown even more attached to the game since then.

"I started playing when I was 8-years-old because I loved to watch football on TV and I fell in love with the game after that," McLaurin said.

Given the fact he's played football for over 10 years by now and has continued to work hard, it eventually led others to believe he could have the ability to play football at the college level.

"Since I played middle school football, I have always thought about playing Division

I football. It is something that I've always wanted to do, and I kept working to achieve that goal," he said.

Luckily for McLaurin, his dreams of playing Division I football are coming true.

He has started on both the offensive and defensive lines for Montour for three straight seasons (2018-20), but he was not getting much attention earlier on in his high school career.

In April, following his junior year at Montour, McLaurin received his first Division I offer from St. Francis (Pa.). He also had offers from James Madison and Dayton. However, when Duquesne offered McLaurin this past October, little did the Duquesne football coaching staff know that he would eventually choose their program.

"The combination of amazing academics and great football made them stand out for me," said McLaurin, who plans on majoring in finance. "What made me choose Duquesne was the opportunity to go play great football and get a degree that will help me in the future."

Current Duquesne offensive lineman Roman Macek played high school football at

Montour and is close with McLaurin. When he asked Macek for more information about Duquesne's football program, McLaurin liked what he heard.

"I asked Roman what the atmosphere of the team was like, and he told me that he loved it and that it was electric. He said that he loves being there and wouldn't change his decision to go there. He always tells me how great of a school it is," McLaurin said.

McLaurin is a two-time WPIAL 4-A All-Conference First Team selection on both the offensive and defensive sides of the ball. In his senior season at Montour in 2020, he recorded 45 tackles with 13 of those for loss. He signed his National Letter of Intent on Feb. 3, officially making him a Duke.

While McLaurin played two positions in high school, he will only play one position at the collegiate level: Offensive line. Duquesne's coaches liked what they saw from him on the O-line, but he knows there is room for improvement in his style of play.

"My strengths are my hand placement and my first two steps off the ball. Some things I need to improve on are my pass

protection and keeping my weight distributed on my feet," McLaurin said.

For McLaurin, he is focused on finishing the rest of his senior year of high school as he will graduate in June. But, once he graduates from Montour, all he will be focusing on is providing an impact for Duquesne's football team.

"I am very excited to get to Duquesne, to compete, and to get to know my teammates," McLaurin said. "I'm looking forward to the college atmosphere and playing football at a higher level."



COURTESY OF DUQUESNE ATHLETICS

Head Coach Jerry Schmitt during a 2019 game.

Super Bowl halftime show sparks commentary

CAPRI SCARCELLI
a&e writer

It doesn't matter who performs, what they sing, what they wear or how they dance — there is always going to be extensive criticism when it comes to the Super Bowl halftime show.

Taking the field in “blinding lights,” The Weeknd performed a soloist repertoire that progressed in a narrative he has been brewing for months since the release of his 2020 album, *After Hours*.

Each dancer wore a bandaged mask that covered the whole face except for the eyes, setting an ominous tone and making the choreography appear ritualistic and borderline satanic.

This was done to visualize the plights of Hollywood's expectations, and how conformity forces celebrities to execute multiple “versions” of themselves throughout their career, hence the plastic surgery motif throughout the course of the show. The dancers reflected this notion as the choir and instrumentalists in the stadium seats were the jeering audiences he faces in real life.

From violin soloists to animated backup vocalists, the sit-down performers were much like on-lookers, overseeing The Weeknd's performance as he theatrically presented himself as if he was the only one on that field.

The set was simplistic, though got the job done. This garnered some backlash for how gaudy the stadium usually is for Super Bowl shows, but The Weeknd said he was “looking to tell a story.” Not like he had much of an option anyway, since people seem to forget we're still in the midst of a pandemic.

Starting the halftime show with “Starboy,” the bright red lighting, choreography and vocals were bold, setting the bar high to carefully transition to his older hit, “The Hills.”

By this point, the stage goes mostly dark, focusing on The Weeknd's chilling lower range and calculated movement, almost mechanical. Oddly enough and awkwardly timed, he paused the show to make a point of him walking off the field into a random exit, which confused audiences and made people feel like the show was already over.

However, The Weeknd finds himself in a gold-metallic mirror



KATIA FAROUN / FEATURES EDITOR

RnB artist The Weeknd passionately performs his old hits and newer works alike, leaving audiences in wonder.

room, running through hallways with a poor-quality fish lens in selfie-mom mode. This, of course, took straight to Twitter with a stream of memes, becoming the official Super Bowl LV highlight with humorous close-up shots of The Weeknd's face later used as reaction photos.

This set the stage for “Can't Feel My Face,” where The Weeknd then got swarmed by the bandaged dancers, dizzying audiences as they ran circles around him like wasps on the prowl.

I certainly laughed a lot at this part, but I think it fit the buzzing energy of the song.

Returning to the stage, The Weeknd kept the middle of the setlist simple and traditional in style, treating the show like a regular performance rather than garnishing it with elaborate props, costume changes or daring choreography, hence the transition to “I Feel It Coming.”

I think he did this to allude to a sense of normalcy with performing outside of the pandemic again, which many artists have been longing for.

The cityscape background with the glittering lights, paired with his sparkly red suit made for a great pair in both “Save Your Tears” and “Earned It.”

These two songs were more for himself than for the audience

members, skating away from his hit singles and focusing more on the plotline he was trying to tell.

With the background performers echoing the somber energy, there was much detail to pay attention to, but so subtle it was hard to tell what was being conveyed. The Weeknd was portraying an image of loneliness in the music industry and how he worked his way from the bottom to the top, but it flew over the audience's heads. How can we be distracted by such simplicity? Was that done on purpose for the message he was trying to convey?

Before we could even question it, the music seems to abruptly shift gears into the lulling, yet eerie “House of Balloons/Glass Table Girls.” It truly seemed like a scene out of Michael Jackson's “Thriller,” music video, but more unsettling and synchronized into chaos. The dancers took up the whole field as the instrumentalists swooned in the background, with The Weeknd passing through the center of the choreography almost strutting, like he was leading an apocalyptic battle cry.

Super Bowl viewers aren't really used to anything but feel-good moments in a halftime show performance, so this came as a shock to viewers — especially when the circling dancers and chorusing echo transitioned

to “Blinding Lights.”

This song topped the charts for four weeks straight, and for good reason. Catchy, blaring and bright, the chorus swelled with energy, though the choreography consisted of simple sixth grade chorus pivots. Surely this put more focus on his vocals, but I'm confused as to why there seemed to be no effort put into this performance.

In fact, The Weeknd spent \$7 million of his own money to prepare for this night, so where did the money go?

He sang without pre-recordings or autotune, but you couldn't hear him through the mic.

His dancers were in perfect sync, but I've done more complicated work in my days in the drama guild ensemble.

The sit-down choir/instrumentalists were cool in theory, but why were they bouncing around awkwardly and taking away from the precision of the performance?

The Weeknd wanted to tell a story, but he chose the wrong audience to tell it to; beer-bellied dads and TikTok teenagers don't always have the greatest attention-to-detail skills.

Perhaps us not understanding was the whole point he was trying to make: The struggle of making music an art again is more prevalent now than ever.

WEEK'S EVENTS

Valentine Bingo
Feb. 12 @ 7-8:30 p.m.

Go to the Office of Residence Life to sign up for an in-person, Valentine's bingo tournament at the MPR! Prizes and snacks provided. 25 person limit.

DPC Film Series:
The Proposal
Feb. 12, @ 7 p.m.

Go to room 105 at College Hall for a Valentine's movie with friends! 25 person limit.

UPCOMING RELEASES

Judas and the Black Messiah
Friday, Feb. 12th

Petty criminal William O'Neal is faced with prison for betraying the Black Panther Party and his now assassinated partner Fred Hampton. If he gives the FBI intel, however, he can be set free.

Music
Friday, Feb. 5th

A musical/drama directed by pop artist Sia, this movie is about a now-sober girl who is to take care of her half-sister, Music, who is autistic.

CAPRI'S COMPLAINTS

Duquesne fun comes unprepared

Advertised for over a week, St. Martin Hall planned to host a pizza giveaway held in the MPR for Super Bowl pregame: \$2 for a slice and \$10 for a whole pizza. The sale was supposed to start at 5:30, and the email did say first come first serve, while supplies last.

However, I didn't intend for the pizza to be gone before the event even started!

Obviously it was a good deal and a lot of people wanted to buy, but you can't just order 10 pizzas and offer it to the entire campus via email - pizza is a sensitive subject, people!

Though a kind gesture, Duquesne programs have to make sure they compensate for the audience they advertise to, making sure I can get my pizza when I show up early :)

-Capri Scarcelli

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To: From:

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To: From:

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crazy ;)

'iCarly' makes surprise comeback with revival series

RIO SCARCELLI
staff writer

Many children and young adults growing up in the 2010s could have also associated that time with the now Nickelodeon classic television series *iCarly*. With the show's five-year run coming to an end in 2012, Netflix has recently aired the first two seasons of the show in preparations for a spinoff series to be released on the new streaming service Paramount+.

iCarly follows teenager Carly Shay (Miranda Cosgrove) as she navigates high school while simultaneously running a hit web show called "iCarly" that updates people on her life. With the help of her best friend Sam Puckett (Jennette McCurdy), her cameraman Freddy Benson (Nathan Kress) and her older brother Spencer Shay (Jerry Trainor), the four were able to create countless stories all filled with their characteristically random humor throughout.

Starring as Megan in *Drake & Josh*, *iCarly* was Cosgrove's breakthrough as a main role.

While the show received mixed views from critics, the sitcom resonated with fans which can be shown within their ratings. The most viewed *iCarly* episode, "iSaved Your Life," garnered 11.2 million views: making it the



COURTESY OF NICKELODEON PRESS
The *iCarly* cast returns to television with new streaming options and an additional installment of the series.

second most-viewed telecast in Nickelodeon history.

For nostalgic teens, it may have been no surprise to see the show air again on Netflix. The first two seasons debuted on Feb. 8 with Netflix waiting to comment on whether or not they will be releasing seasons three through six to complete the rest of the series. Until then, fans can enjoy seasons one and two alongside spinoff show *Sam and Cat* seasons one through three.

Because *iCarly* was a show heavily anticipated by its viewers to be put onto Netflix, many fans are wondering why now is the time they chose to do it. On Jan. 27, Cosgrove took to Instagram to post a picture amongst her former co-stars to announce the fact that a reboot of the series would officially be releasing in 2021. In conjunction with

the new platform Paramount+, a bulk of episodes are scheduled to be released on the streaming service's premiere as an added selling-point.

While not much is known about how the show's plot line will span out, it is said to be following Carly through her 20s, taking a lot more risks than they could have on Nickelodeon's TV-Y7 rating.

The cast has been posting updates on the progression of the show as script-writing, filming and producing ensues.

Excitement for the revival has rippled amongst the show's fans, but many are asking the same question of who is actually involved. Cosgrove, Kress and Trainor have all openly advertised about the reboot, however no word has come out from McCurdy or Noah Munck: recurring actor for Carly's

friend Gibby Gibson.

While Noah Munck was not a main character and can be excluded in the reboot, McCurdy played a pivotal role in contrasting Cosgrove's meek, sweetheart archetype. Her brazen attitude brought juxtaposition to the show that no other character could provide as Shay's best friend and internet co-star. McCurdy has yet to release any official statements as to whether or not she will be a part of the show; she is not seen in Paramount+'s cast photos that were released of on-set rehearsals.

Although she has provided no explicit reasoning as to why she would not be on the show, there's speculation about prior statements that the star has made on her website jennettemccurdy.com in regards to her experiences with childhood acting.

"I started out as a child actor... that certainly lent some psychological trauma (sound guys can be especially creepy!)" McCurdy said.

Despite her outside success, McCurdy said she felt ashamed of "90% of her resume" and ultimately unfulfilled, so she turned to alcohol; but since that didn't work, she quit acting and began pursuing writing/directing in 2017.

"There was something about the shallowness of my success that made me resent it. That resentment festered, providing even more fuel for my disordered eating. I actively began to engage in anorexic behavior again," McCurdy said.

Her exposure of how she viewed her experiences during the times of *iCarly* and *Sam and Cat* have also gotten her to allude to the fact that she would prefer to step out of the spotlight in the future whenever it comes to acting. While it is unknown whether she is involved in this new installment, her role in the show will be missed by fans; the writers, I'm sure, are actively working around this to fill in the gaps that McCurdy provided.

As of now the show's specific air-date is unknown; until then, people can choose to occupy their nostalgia with the first two seasons of *iCarly* in preparation for future works.

New 'Wandavision' episodes astound viewers

GRIFFIN SENDEK
multimedia editor

WandaVision episodes 4 and 5 transform the show from an entertaining yet perplexing ride with a hint of intrigue to some of the best content in the Marvel Cinematic Universe.

This episode bundle begins and ends on extremely high notes. Episode 4's cold open is one of the best of the MCU, and episode 5's ending reveal is not only a paradigm shift for the series — but it changes the franchise forever.

WandaVision Episode 4 "We Interrupt This Program" kicks off with the moment from *Avengers: Endgame* that everyone is

brought (or 'blipped' as the show calls it) back. This time, it's from the perspective of Monica Rambeau (Teyonah Parris), rematerializing in a hospital that in the moment of return is thrown into complete chaos. This opening is a glimpse into what kind of traumatic impact everyone returning from the blip might have had on the world — it's a look into the average human perspective which is so often overlooked and overshadowed in the larger-than-life superhero storylines.

"We Interrupt This Program" breaks the formula of previous chapters, taking place almost entirely outside of the sitcom world. If the previous three installments

left you frustrated with its dearth of meaningful answers and lost as to where the show was possibly headed — episode 4, thankfully, bucks this trend.

Episode 4 puts context to the seemingly confusing choice to focus so entirely on the sitcom elements from the previous episodes. Darcy (Kat Dennings) discovers that the barrier around Westview is emitting a broadcast frequency, when she tunes in with a vintage television the sitcom begins to play. This places the characters in the same shoes that we were as viewers, watching the show *Wanda* is putting on and asking many of the same questions.

This episode ushers in the return of Darcy from the first two Thor films, as well as Agent Jimmy Woo (Randall Park), the endearing FBI agent from *Ant Man* and *The Wasp*.

These Marvel television shows are a perfect opportunity to explore and flesh outside characters that only have a limited screen time in the films. *WandaVision* uses Darcy and Agent Woo elegantly — it's lovely that these characters have not been tossed to the wayside.

"On a Very Special Episode" begins in somewhat of a return to normalcy for *WandaVision*, opening in the sitcom world, this time set in the '80s with beautiful-



COURTESY OF DISNEY
The Marvel Cinematic Universe adds to the drama with new *Wandavision* episodes.

as-always production design and costuming, capturing the look and feel of shows such as *Full House*. The show is now split between the sitcom and the characters in the outside world, giving ample time for both.

As Vision uncovers more secrets and Wanda's grip on this fabricated "perfect" reality continues to slip, the tension between the characters comes to a boil. These moments are where the episode shines the brightest.

Paul Bettany continues to completely steal the show every minute he's on screen. It's clear through his performance that Vision's fits of rage are not seeded in anger but utter confusion and loss at the secrets Wanda is keeping from him.

Elizabeth Olsen conveys beautifully how lost the character of Wanda truly is, how much it pains her to keep secrets from Vision but knowing full well, this painful fabricated reality is the only one in which she can live a life with the man she loves.

The last moments of episode 5 are jaw-dropping and world-breaking in a way that I've never seen in any form of media. What this moment will mean for the remainder of the show and the rest of the MCU from this point forward remains to be seen.

WandaVision has been a wild and confusing ride, but I know for a fact that I will be tuning in on Friday to see what the next installment has to offer.



COURTESY OF DISNEY
Wandavision picks up the pace, adding action to the sitcom-driven plot.

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*Dating violence among college students. Iconis, rosemary. Contemporary issues in education research, vol. 6, no. 1, 2013.



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