Dannielle Brown, Duquesne University reach settlement

St. Martin’s Makeover: renovating one of DU's oldest dorms

MARY LIZ FLAVIN
staff writer

St. Martin Residence Hall will be undergoing renovation beginning in May of this year.

Since the 1960s, St. Martin has been a residence hall for the students of Duquesne. With the building in need of an update, Duquesne has partnered with the Radnor Property Group as well as the Harrison Street investment management firm to accomplish this task.

Currently, Martin’s holds 485 residents — the majority of them being freshmen, with 20 of them being upper-class students.

Chloe Brendle, a sophomore at Duquesne University, reflected on her time living in Martin’s her freshman year.

“It was OK. I was on the highest floor, so it was kinda sad I didn’t have an elevator to go all the way up there. I had to climb down the one flight of stairs and then hop on the elevator,” Brendle said.

Brendle is under the opinion that Martin’s was not the ideal place to live. In addition to the elevator issue, Brendle says that the bathroom situation wasn’t good either; there were dim lights in the showers and “you kinda just sat there.”

Thankfully with the new renovation, all of these problems continue to take a proactive approach to cultivating a safe and socially conscious environment for our students.”

Although Brown had not spoken to university officials in some time, this past July, she abruptly moved from her native Washington, D.C. and took up residence on Freedom Corner in the Hill District where she began a hunger strike. At the beginning of her hunger strike, Brown issued a series of demands to university administration.

1) An independent investigation with full access to information and resources.
2) Body cameras for all university police.
3) Mandatory certification training in mental health crisis intervention and de-escalation for police and first responders, read a sign at Brown’s protest site.

Brown repeatedly stated that she would not end her hunger strike until all her demands had been met, stating — both in person and on social media — “You came for the wrong mother, until my last breath.”

On Sept. 25, Duquesne announced they had purchased body cameras for all 40 Duquesne Police officers. In addition, the university also stated they were investing in enhanced de-escalation training measures.

However, despite these efforts, Brown continued her hunger strike until March 11 – her 50th birthday. In total, Brown stated she was on a hunger strike for 237 days.

At the conclusion of her hunger strike, she hosted a small, outdoor gathering at the place where it all began — Freedom Corner. There she announced the launch of the Marquis Jay Len Brown Foundation, an organization with a major focus on campus police reform across the country.

“I am so excited to team up with Duquesne (maybe) and universities around the world,” Brown said in a March 13 social media post. “This is an excellent organization for mother’s voices and student social activism to be channeled in a collective front where all parties are involved in a healthy, holistic approach to changing the climate of injustices on college campuses, collegiate communities and systems.”

“In bringing this case to a close, Dannielle Brown will now devote her focus and energy to a broader mission of achieving social justice through the Marquis Jaylen Brown Foundation,” said attorneys Paul Jubas and Max Petrunya.

Reflecting on the experience, Brown said she visited the memorial bench dedicated to her son, facing the Duquesne football field where he once played.

“As the tears rolled down my face, I felt the warmth of your spirit JB, shouting, ‘Well done mother.’”

This mural honoring the late Marquis Jaylen “JB” Brown sits underneath an overpass on Fifth Avenue, just blocks away from Brottier Hall, where JB fell to his death on Oct. 4, 2018. The mural has also served as the site of some of Dannielle Brown’s protests.

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Even in a pandemic, Duquesne boasts record freshmen application rates

KELLEN STEPLER
editor-in-chief

While some colleges and universities are facing a decrease in admissions, Duquesne University is experiencing just the opposite.

Duquesne drew a record amount of freshman applications—more than 10,100, to be exact—for the upcoming fall semester. The university admitted 8,400 freshmen and 230 transfer students, and is expecting between 1,193 and 1,248 freshmen, about 150 transfer students and 979 new graduated students, according to Joel Bauman, senior vice president for enrollment management.

“As a philosophy, we seek intellectually motivated and academically curious individuals with leadership potential, students who have records of personal growth and community service who will thrive in our classrooms and bring vibrancy to our campus,” Bauman said.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Bauman said that the biggest change this year was test-optional admission. For fall 2021 to fall 2022 freshman applicants, all majors are offering a test-optional opportunity.

61% of the incoming class utilized the test-optional process, and Bauman said that the university will most likely maintain it for all programs at least until fall 2022.

“[D]epending on the academic success of the students enrolled and future testing limitations, it will be reviewed then for future years,” said Bauman.

In addition to moving to an admissions process that was test-optional, Bauman said that the biggest challenge was the restriction of on-campus visits and interacting in-person with students, families and faculty members.

“Staff and schools and faculty moved to a mostly virtual experience while also adapting the on-campus experience to follow all CDC and Health department guidelines,” he said. “We also created a fully online virtual opportunity to directly meet with counselors and instituted a ‘live chat’ feature for the admissions and financial aid office.”

Nearly 40% of the incoming class comes from outside the commonwealth of Pennsylvania, which Bauman attributed to Duquesne’s “national and international footprint and presence.” Legacy communities and alumni around the country and world are proud of their education and help promote through vigorous word of mouth,” Bauman said.

1,627 applicants were from Allegheny County, and Bauman noted that more than 10,000 students applied for admission in the upcoming semester.

Despite the challenges of the pandemic and a decline in college applications across the country, Duquesne has received a record number of applications. More than 10,000 students applied for admission in the upcoming semester.

Also on April 7, a student reported a theft from her dorm room. The student reported receiving threats from her roommate’s boyfriend over the Easter holiday period while at home.

On April 10, a student contacted Pittsburgh Police, Zone 2, to file a report regarding fraudulent charges on her credit card. Zone 2 police referred the student back to Duquesne Police. A DU police officer met the student in the lobby of Brottier Hall and a report was taken. The student contacted the credit card company and she will not be responsible for the credit card charges.

On Tuesday at roughly 10:50 p.m., Pittsburgh Zone 2 Police responded to a Shotspotter alert on the 1400 block of Fifth Avenue, according to the Pittsburgh Public Safety Office. Upon arrival, the officers discovered a male victim who had been shot in the leg, but was awake and alert. He was then transported to a local hospital and was in stable condition. Police were unable to locate the shooter, who “fled in an unknown direction,” according to the Public Safety Office. Duquesne students received an emergency alert notifying them of the incident at 11:24 p.m. Students were instructed in the alert to “avoid the area” of the shooting, particularly outside the Aces/Deuces bar on Fifth Avenue.

The emergency statement from Duquesne Police Chief Thomas Hart said, “This is not Duquesne University related.”

In a message sent to all students Wednesday afternoon, Duquesne President Ken Gormley announced that the university will be distributing funds to every student to provide assistance in the fight of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The university received roughly $14 million as part of the federal government’s stimulus package provided by the federal government. The funds were provided to the university in order to help them cover costs incurred by the pandemic and to provide aid to students in need of additional assistance.

So far, the university has distributed funds to students with qualifying financial needs twice. However, the university will now be including every student in their distribution of these funds, including international students and students without financial aid.

Full-time students who have already received aid from Duquesne with funds from the stimulus package will receive an additional check of $1,250. All other full-time students will receive $1,000, and part-time students will receive $900.

“We have prudently managed our funds this year, and our students and their families have been nothing short of fabulous in helping us complete this academic year safely and productively,” Gormley said in an email addressed to all students on Wednesday. “For that reason, I’m proud to provide this much-needed help, because we are all a family at Duquesne.”

The grants will be posted to students’ accounts on Monday, April 19, and physical checks will start being distributed to students on Thursday, April 22. Students can also opt to have their grants direct-deposited by enrolling before April 18.

Junior pharmacy major Lia Ferraccio, a transfer student, said she provided “very exciting news that is just the morale boost [she] needed.”

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A look at the upcoming renovations in St. Martin's

From MARTIN — page 1
will be solved.
With the update, Martin's will be able to hold 536 students, 323 of those being upper-year and graduate students. The rooms will be molded into mostly single occupancy suite-style units with a few double occupancy rooms as well. Each room will contain a refrigerator, small cooktop, microwave, bed, desk and an adjoining bathroom connecting two units together.
Duquesne's partnership with the Radnor Property Group be-
gan in mid- to late 2017 when the request for the proposal of Brottier Hall was put in place. Once the construction of Brottier was finished, the proposal for Martin's renovation was next on the table.
Tim Gigliotti, managing director for the Radnor Property Group, shared more about the renovation process and what Duquesne can anticipate from it. “If you look at the suite-style arrangement offered at Vickroy and Des Places, they are very nice suites. Then you look at the jump from those to traditional apartments and Brottier — there’s sort of a step missing in between. St. Martin's seeks to fill that void,” Gigliotti said.
The Radnor Group is taking a whole new approach to the traditional dormitory-style living. The majority of the rooms will be single suite-style living with a connecting bathroom. This eliminates the communal bathroom entirely. But that begs the question: What do we do with those spaces now that they have no use? Each of those areas on every floor will be converted to either a kitchen, a study area or a gaming lounge.
“We would like to encourage people to cross collaborate among the different floors. We want to encourage people to go up and down the building,” Gigliotti said.
According to Gigliotti, each designated area will go in order of kitchen, study and gaming lounge by floor as you work your way up the building. The idea behind this is to bring together residents by placing different communities in different living areas on every floor. Each area will have its own unique set up; for example, no two gaming areas will be alike. One may have a pool table while the other has skee-ball, which allows for a greater variation.
Originally the renovation was supposed to start last summer, but due to COVID-19, the project was postponed for a year. Now with COVID looking better than it has in the past, renovation will commence in May. Martins will be closed for one academic school year and will open in the fall of 2022.
Gigliotti says that the construction should not interfere with the normal day-to-day routine of students during the school year. The majority of the “laid down” work will take place over the summer break. In addition, the sidewalks around the building will be open and will not interfere with the daily workings of Assumption Hall or Towers.
Joshua Branker, a sophomore and current RA at Martin’s, is excited to hear about the renovation at Martins and can’t wait to see how things turn out.
“I would say that sounds amazing; it’s the type of things that we need for our building. I’m very excited and would like to go there one day. Sign me up,” Branker said.

Student orgs tackle Sexual Assault Awareness Month

Vanessa Llewellyn, the President of SASV, said that actions being taken by SASV include “Round Table Talks” as an open forum for students to end the shame-stigma, hosting a clothing drive for PAAR and “Denim Day” on April 26.
Sexual assault and violence is no stranger to college campuses across the nation, and Duquesne is no exception. Each week of April, new topics and programs have been presented to students with important resources that can be accessed with both in-person and online options.
Beginning the week of March 29, the Title IX team has been highlighting a different topic concerning sexual assault over the month’s five-week time span.
Week one (March 29-April 2) focused on resources and reporting options from Title IX Coordinator and Director of Sexual Misconduct Prevention and Response Alicia Simpson. Simpson spoke on Monday, March 29 from 2:30 to 4 p.m. at the Union Fountain. Any violations to the university’s TAP No. 61 Interim Policy on Title IX Sexual Harassment and non-Title IX Sexual Misconduct under TAP 31 can be reported to Simpson at (412) 396-2560 or by her email, simpson8@duq.edu, or on the University’s Sexual Harassment and Sexual Misconduct Anonymous Reporting Form.
Week two (April 5–April 9) involved bystander intervention to teach students about “recognizing a potentially harmful situation or interaction and choosing to respond in a way that could positively influence the outcome,” according to the office of Title IX and Sexual Misconduct Prevention and Response. On April 6 at 8 p.m., Pittsburgh Action Against Rape hosted a virtual bystander intervention workshop via Zoom to help the university convey this message.
This week (April 12–16) marks the third week of Sexual Assault Awareness Month, with the main focus being consent. Next week (April 19–23) will focus on healthy relationships and online safety, and the final week (April 26–30) will wrap up the entire month with resources and ways to continue learning.
Although Hubay said that Duquesne’s efforts have put the university at the lowest rates of sexual violence out of any major Pittsburgh university, Llewellyn acknowledges there is still work to be done.
“Duquesne has a zero-tolerance policy for plagiarism, which means if you’re found guilty of it, you’re gone, no questions asked,” Llewellyn said. “We do not have this in place for rape. To say that we don’t have zero tolerance for rape is to say that we have some amount of tolerance for rape. And that’s not okay with us here at SASV.”
Any students interested in joining SASV or are in need of resources can send a request on CampusLink or email Vanessa or Deidra at llewellyn@duq.edu and hubay@duq.edu.

Additional resources for those experiencing sexual violence can be found at the National Sexual Assault Hotline: (800)-656-4673
With the vaccine rollout in America heating up, the future of sports is beginning to look far more bright.

Lauren Wilbur
opinions editor

Last March, sports enthusiasts, as well as the players themselves, were in utter disbelief as sporting events across the globe came to a halt after the emergence of COVID-19 and its ensuing spread. The ambiguity surrounding the pandemic brought forth a number of questions concerning the future of sports, and whether or not we would ever return to a time when attending a baseball game with friends and family is considered “normal.”

From sports venues turning into breeding grounds for the virus, to the inherent health-related risks posed not only to the players and their families but also to the coaches, the overwhelming evidence clearly indicated that the coronavirus pandemic might change the face of the sports world for years to come.

However, in recent weeks, it has become apparent that this might not be the case with athletic leagues — collegiate and professional — seemingly putting those questions to rest by opening their stadiums and arenas to fans in what many would consider to be a timely manner.

As state and local governments continue to lift social restrictions, many restaurants and bars are permitting 75% capacity while employees slowly filter back into their workplaces and return to a “normal” day-to-day schedule. Most importantly, sports clubs are once again allowing fans to enter their facilities to watch as their favorite teams put on a show.

For example, nearly two weeks ago, the Texas Rangers hosted a baseball game at full capacity — the first sports event in the U.S. in over a year to include more than 40,000 fans in one place, at one time. It is apparent, at least in Texas, that people are prepared to sit next to strangers in a public setting without a mask.

Not to mention, the National Basketball Association (NBA) and the National Football League (NFL) each recently announced their intentions to authorize full capacity attendance at arenas and stadiums in the near future, with colleges and even some high schools following their lead. In fact, just last month, the Minnesota Vi...
President Biden’s bold climate initiative is exactly what the US needs

ZOE STRATOS
staff columnist

D uring the 2020 election, President Biden and former President Donald Trump focused their campaigns heavily on how to combat COVID-19 and relief efforts for those affected by it. While COVID-19 has taken a toll on the American spirit, climate change is still an ever growing threat, and the Biden Administration has a lot of work to do to combat it.

Spanning back to the 2016 election, the Trump administration seemingly overhauled the Obama Administration’s steps toward reversing climate change, with a high focus on the oil and coal industries. Being a businessman, Trump focused much of his campaign on economic prosperity, but with that, climate change initiatives came to a stop. During his four years in office, many things had changed, including the following according to the National Geographic:

In February 2017, the U.S. Senate named Scott Pruitt as the head of the United States Environmental Protection Agency — who previously sued the EPA over its regulations and, most notably, the Clean Power Plan. The administration then signed an executive order that began to reverse the Clean Power Plan.

Most notably in June 2017, Trump pulled out of the Paris Climate Agreement, a pact of 194 countries that promised to curb greenhouse gas emissions.

Other setbacks included Trump’s proposal to roll back the Endangered Species Act and weaken the Clean Air Act. Trump also pledged to destroy the Clean Power Plan, and two executive orders to allow companies to build oil and gas pipelines in 2019. Upon Biden’s entrance into office, the first week offered new executive orders to combat climate change.

On his official website, Biden outlines the importance of the Green New Deal framework. Similarly to Trump, Biden acknowledges the connection between economy and environment, but looks at it in a different light.

One of the biggest highlights of Biden’s $2 trillion plan is the U.S. to reach a 100% clean energy economy and net-zero emissions by 2050, but achieving this feat is difficult.

Originally, Biden’s climate plan was underwhelming for not only scientists and environmentalists, but for everyday people involved in the fight against climate change. The biggest difference between the two is the cost. The original plan called for an investment of $1.7 trillion over the course of 10 years, while the new plan costs $3 trillion more — with a shorter time span.

To acquire the funds necessary to combat climate change, Biden plans to raise the corporate income tax rate, and promises to not raise taxes for low income households.

This is where controversy comes in. Hailed by economists and climate change experts alike, a tax on carbon would be the most efficient way to raise money for the agenda, though most households would not be exempt from it. Though with a carbon tax, it would cut down on after-tax incomes on carbon-based services such as gas.

Moreover, there would be a fee on imports from countries without a carbon tax, which would rally other countries in joining the initiative.

Without a carbon tax, as Biden plans to move forward with, only regulations and executive orders can put a curb on carbon emissions. The issue with regulation is that it can be easily reversed or worked around, as we’ve seen from the last few presidencies.

Essentially, regulation is not optimal in the long term in comparison like net-zero carbon emissions within the next 20 or 30 years. Biden won’t be in charge that long.

Unlike his predecessor, President Biden is focused on tackling the climate crisis. Moreover, the infrastructure plan would create up to 20,000 miles of rebuilt roads and eliminate lead pipes from water supplies, all while creating clean energy and providing jobs for millions of Americans.

Although ambitious, the Biden climate initiative is possible with the right investments and support from the American people.

You should get the COVID-19 vaccine at the earliest opportunity

ALEXANDER WOLFE
staff columnist

B efore you turn on the caps lock and come for me with pitchforks, the question of whether or not to get the vaccine shouldn’t be one of microchips, side-effects or politics (good grief), but rather one of, frankly, who needs it more.

In the long run, as many people who are able to receive the vaccine should do so, in spite of the notably harsh side effects spanning the initial 48 hours of inoculation. I say that as someone who received his first dose of the Moderna vaccine, and the body ache and nausea are certainly enough to take someone out of commission for a day.

Yet those vaccine conscious among you might justifiably ponder if I fall in an at-risk category or am an essential worker, of which I am neither.

So was it right for me to “jump the line” and race to the Hill District’s Central Baptist Church last week along with dozens of other Duquesne students? Even accounting for the equity concerns — of which there are many — it was ultimately, selfishly and un-selfishly, the right choice, and I would encourage you to do so as well.

By now, many high-risk and essential service personnel have had the opportunity to receive the vaccine. Nearly 40% of the entire country has received at least one dose of some COVID-19 vaccine, and most states are not scheduled to truly open vaccinations to the general public until April 19.

Furthermore, the inspiring rate of vaccine production and distribution has allowed for tradition-ally marginalized — and usually high-risk or essential — communities to receive targeted shipments, the Hill District being a prime example.

Yet if polling is to be believed, nearly a third of the Hill District’s Black residents are highly unlikely to make plans to get vaccinated (these numbers fluctuate wildly across different polls from 25%-75%, but 53% seemed to be the most supported). Other polls find vaccine apprehension is less about race and more about education. One NBC poll found similar rates of skepticism among white and Black Americans, while the Marine Corps released information estimating that 40% of Marines offered the vaccine had declined, albeit some citing these similar equity concerns.

Despite this, you’d be right to presume that somewhere close to your local vaccination site, there is someone who needs that vaccine more than you, or that the United States should be sending more doses of vaccines overseas to countries that have thus far been unable to procure them.

Yet the time table driving vaccine production, delivery and use forces us to remove this needlessness from our decision-making. Individuals choosing not to receive a vaccine cannot at this point be forced to do so, and the short shelf life of these vaccines, in addition to the private and social benefits of inoculation, demands we use as many vaccines as possible as soon as possible.

As someone returning from China in December, where the CDC has determined COVID-19 had been spreading quietly since September, I thought that I could have unknowingly been an asymptomatic host upon my December return is not exactly comforting thought. I assume the same goes for the thousands of individuals who lost family members in the post-holiday death spikes after attending family gatherings while positive, conscious or otherwise.

While we first are responsible for protecting ourselves, the pandemic has taught us that we can be equally responsible for protecting our loved ones. This is the essence of our collective responsibility as vaccinators — that we have to be prepared to take any opportunity to keep those around us safe.

If Duquesne students and organizers administering vaccines at Central Baptist Church hadn’t informed Duquesne of the extra doses received, it’s entirely possible many individuals who received the vaccine may have been stricken with the virus.

While we enter into an optimistic period for those willing to receive the vaccine, we should remember that receiving the vaccine in both an unselfish act to protect others, but primarily a selfish act to protect yourself, and that is OK. At a surface level, it keeps a hospital bed open, while more broadly, each person vaccinated is another step toward returning to some sense of normalcy.

As of April 13, the PA Department of Health announced that every Pennsylvanian over 18 is eligible to receive the vaccine. So, do not hesitate to find a vaccine appointment. Nearly 3.5 million vaccines are being administered every day — about 1% of the country — so there will be ample opportunities to get vaccinated in the coming weeks.

Rather than be tied down by the idea that you shouldn’t yet receive a dose, value your newfound freedom — responsibly because vaccinated individuals can still spread the virus — and look around you to help and encourage the significant portion of Americans still cautious about receiving a vaccine.
open house shows off ODI's new space to Duq community

Katia Faroun / features editor

Duquesne's Office of Diversity and Inclusion got an upgrade, set with a new space, new offices and a new name. The new Center for Excellence in Diversity and Student Inclusion — previously the Office of Diversity and Inclusion (ODI) — marked its official grand opening on Tuesday with an afternoon open house.

The event welcomed members of the Duquesne community to tour the new space, learn about the center's programs and activities and meet the staff and students involved in the center.

Now located in Room 302 of the Student Union, the center is now in a more central, active location and has more space than it did in its previous office on the first floor.

The center’s move to the third floor was key for better engagement with students, according to Anthony Kane, director of diversity and inclusion at Duquesne.

“It was important for us to be in a spot where students could be with us and engage with us,” Kane said. The third floor of the Union is the “hub of student activities,” according to Kane, which allows students to have easier access to the center and makes the center more visible for students who might be in need of its resources.

“Most students make their way to the third floor of the Union at some point in the day,” Kane said, and this new location for the center will allow it to be more engaged with the student population.

In a campus-wide email sent March 15, President Ken Gormley notified the Duquesne community of the new center, saying that its creation is part of Duquesne’s Action Plan for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion.

“We want to expand our outreach to support all students of diverse populations,” Kane said.

This commitment is important to Duquesne students, including Merecedes Williams, a senior multimedia journalism major who has witnessed the center’s changes over her more than 10 years at the university.

“I hope it remains a community for students of all descendents,” Williams said.

The family-oriented, community aspect of the center is what Jean Cherilus, a university advancement associate at Duquesne, hopes to continue to see through the center’s changes.

“I hope it continues to be like a safe space for students of color,” Cherilus said.

Although the grand opening just took place this week, the new center has been in the works since the summer as part of Duquesne’s commitment to creating a more inclusive environment on campus. The center’s staff began moving into their new offices in mid-March.

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“The new Center will build on the legacy of ODI’s student-facing programming to expand its focus on excellence into classroom environments, community engagement and preparation for professional success,” Gormley wrote. The idea for creating a new space for the center came from a conversation with Duquesne’s Black Student Union, where members recommended creating “a centrally located space where students from diverse populations could gather and support one another,” according to the e-mail.

The new location and the opportunities it brings to the center will allow its staff to provide Duquesne students with the engagement, care and resources they need — something that students, like Williams, have already benefited from.

Duquesne seniors talk post-grad plans in a COVID world

Katia Faroun / features editor

Anthony Kane (center) discusses the center’s new office space, located in Room 302 of the Union, during Tuesday’s open house.

Emily Ambery / staff writer

As commencement events begin and Duquesne prepares for safe and socially distant ceremonies to celebrate this year’s graduates, Duquesne seniors have been preparing throughout the COVID-19 school year for their plans after graduation.

Duquesne is planning a two-part approach to commencement. The events will include a virtual commencement ceremony for all graduates, featuring student speakers, remarks from the deans and slides that recognize students and their accomplishments.

While COVID-19 has affected graduation proceedings, it has also affected the process of looking for jobs, graduate school and other post-grad endeavors this year. The uncertainty of the pandemic and vaccine rates has made this process especially unique for this year’s seniors.

“I was ready to jump into the ‘real world’ and look for job openings abroad, but COVID has made that a little hard to complete,” said senior Spanish major Mady Simmers. “I was not made that dream a little hard to complete,” said Simmers.

Along with the changing dynamics of the job search, seniors planning on pursuing a graduate degree have faced obstacles as well.

“Getting into grad school was already going to be hard for me, and finding a job has just been harder than expected — way harder,” said senior biology and psychology major Lauren Cocozza. “There’s just a larger pool of competitive applicants to look at now, and there are not a lot of jobs available.”

For many, COVID-19 may not have changed plans, but it has made them harder to accomplish.

“Fortunately, COVID didn’t change my plans too much,” said senior biomedical engineering major Tori Kocsis. “I knew I wanted to apply for the Master’s in Biomedical Engineering program at Duquesne, which I got accepted into this past month.”

For Kocsis, the pandemic has helped her realize what she wants to do with her degree and obtaining her master’s.

“Looking for a job has been very stressful. Finding a job in the middle of a pandemic is not an easy task,” Simmers said. “It is a really interesting dynamic to wear pajama pants and a dressy top and jacket while interviewing for a job.”

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For many, COVID-19 may not have changed plans, but it has made them harder to accomplish.

“Fortunately, COVID didn’t change my plans too much,” said senior biomedical engineering major Tori Kocsis. “I knew I wanted to apply for the Master’s in Biomedical Engineering program at Duquesne, which I got accepted into this past month.”

For Kocsis, the pandemic has helped her realize what she wants to do with her degree and obtaining her master’s.

“The one thing that this pandemic helped me realize is that I want to apply for M.D./Ph.D. programs during the 2022 application cycle,” Kocsis said. “My passion for research as well as my love for learning science and medicine has led me to wanting to pursue this dual degree.”

For senior nursing major Saige McLusky, COVID-19 has not influenced her post-graduation decision, but has solidified her plans to stay in Pittsburgh and start traveling when it is safe.

“Ever since I started school, I planned on staying in Pittsburgh for a year or two for experience locally until I was ready to start traveling,” McLusky said. “My decision to stay definitely is the safest option for me regarding COVID-19 and the smartest option for me regarding my career as a new nurse.”

Seniors are hopeful that with the end of the pandemic in sight, traveling outside of Duquesne and hometowns will provide new opportunities.

“I’m excited to see where exactly life takes me,” Cocozza said. “We’ve been refined to staying in the same place, like staying in Pittsburgh or staying at home, and we can’t really travel, so now I’m excited to just see where I end up.”

While there is a lot of uncertainty about the future of the pandemic, Duquesne graduates are hopeful and looking forward to the future.

“Even though COVID was a gigantic bump in the road, I am excited to use the skills and the work ethic that I have gained during my upcoming job opportunities,” Simmers said.

“I think that if I learned anything through COVID-19, it is that we all rely on one another.”
DU football team drops league title game to Sacred Heart

**LUKE B. HENNE**

asst. sports editor

Think back to the Pittsburgh Penguins’ back-to-back Stanley Cup runs of 2016 and 2017. Former general manager Jim Rutherford acquired players like Carl Hagelin, Justin Schultz and Ron Hainsey. These weren’t exactly household names, but they were depth players that did their jobs and contributed to the team’s historical milestone, as Pittsburgh was the first team to win back-to-back titles since the Detroit Red Wings in 1997 and 1998.

Now, think about the times in which the Penguins made some of the league’s biggest splashes at the league’s trade deadline. Recall Jarome Iginla and Brenden Morrow in 2013, Derick Brassard in 2018 and even Marian Hossa back in 2008. With these moves, the Penguins won the deadline, but no Stanley Cups. That’s not to suggest that there is a direct correlation between splash moves and postseason failure. But think about it.

Iginla and Morrow joined a team that won a perfect 15-0-0 in the month of March and finished the shortened 2013 season with a 36-12-0 record, the best record in the Eastern Conference.

Why mess with such chemistry, especially when both players joined new teams at the trade deadline?

Brassard joined a 2017-18 squad that won eight of 12 games in the month of February. Brassard scored just 12 goals in 54 games across parts of two seasons before being traded out of Pittsburgh less than a year after being acquired.

Again, why mess with such chemistry, especially for a team trying to win its third consecutive Stanley Cup?

Ron Hextall, the team’s newly-appointed general manager, made the right call by not making splash moves at this year’s trade deadline.

The only new Penguin will be Jeff Carter, a two-time Stanley Cup champion who never made it beyond the end zone before a Penguins defender punched the ball out of his hands. Sacred Heart recovered Mischler’s fumble in the end zone, ending Duquesne’s season and extending its own campaign in the process.

“We’d love to go back and change some things, but we can’t,” Mischler said. “We’ve just got to live with it. That’s life and part of the game.”

The game was an entertaining, back-and-forth affair — Duquesne Head Coach Jerry Schmitt said postgame he imagined it was an “exciting game to watch” — that saw the Dukes play their first overtime period since a double-overtime loss at Wagner on Nov. 3, 2009.

Duquesne and Sacred Heart combined for 843 yards of total offense and 39 first downs on the afternoon. The Pioneers did most of their damage via their ground game — 256 yards on 48 attempts — while the Dukes’ Mischler threw for 335 total yards.

Trailing 27-13 entering the fourth quarter, Duquesne scored 14 unanswered points in the final 15 minutes of regulation to force overtime.

“I challenged them a little bit [at the beginning of the fourth quarter],” Schmitt said. “That’s not us, 13 points in three quarters. We’re a better football team than that. We made some mistakes, we made some red zone mistakes.

“They stepped up and made some plays.”

A 35-yard Joey Isabella touchdown catch with 4:18 remaining in regulation capped a five-play, 98-yard Duquesne drive and knotted the score at 27-27.

Duquesne then managed to move the ball to within the Pioneers’ five-yard line before Mischler’s game-deciding fumble.

Schmitt said the decision to keep the ball in Mischler’s hands will be one of the many things he regrets as he looks back on Duquesne’s defeat.

“We had that play a couple plays earlier — we had the exact look we needed on that where he probably walks it in to the end zone. I think we called a different play there… That will be one of the many regrets when I watch the film of decisions that I made.

“But no. [Mischler] is a winner. He made the right call. If there’s anything the team has learned in the success it’s had over the past 10 to 15 years, it’s that the Stanley Cup isn’t won at the deadline. It’s won when a team can capture lightning in a bottle at exactly the right time.

If the past 23 games are any predictor, the Penguins may be capturing that lightning once again.

**ADAM LINZNER**

sports editor

The Duquesne football team entered Sunday’s NEC championship game with a undefeated season and postseason dreams hanging once again.

“I was a little bit nervous,” said head coach Jerry Schmitt postgame. “I think I made a mistake. I think I made a mistake. I think I made a mistake.”

Now, think about the times in which the Penguins made some of the league’s biggest splashes at the league’s trade deadline. Recall Jarome Iginla and Brenden Morrow in 2013, Derick Brassard in 2018 and even Marian Hossa back in 2008.

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If the past 23 games are any predictor, the Penguins may be capturing that lightning once again.
2020-21 Duke Awards

The Duke recognizes remarkable Duquesne players, coaches and teams for their successes over the past year.

Men’s Team of the Year: Football

In an abbreviated regular season, the Duquesne football team went a perfect 4-0, defeating Northeast Conference opponents by an average margin of 12 points. Victories over Sacred Heart, Wagner, Long Island and Bryant propelled Duquesne into the STATS FCS Top 25 poll heading into the inaugural NEC Championship. Quarterback Joe Mischler led the way with a conference-high 1,241 total yards of offense. The running back duo of Garrett Owens and Billy Lucas combined for 708 yards and seven touchdowns. Wide receiver Cyrus Holder averaged 98.2 yards/game, good for best in the conference among pass catchers. The Dukes fell just short of earning the conference’s automatic bid into the FCS Playoffs following a 34-27 overtime loss against Sacred Heart on April 11.

Women’s Team of the Year: Bowling

The bowling team’s NCAA tournament appearance earlier this month made the program just the fifth in Duquesne history to appear in an NCAA Championship bracket (alongside men’s and women’s basketball, volleyball and women’s soccer). Founded in 2016, the program’s rapid rise to relevance has made it one of the more dominant teams on campus. Despite a second-day elimination at the hands of No. 13 Sacred Heart, the Dukes managed to finish inside the Top 12 at the NCAA tournament in North Kansas City, Mo., last week. Duquesne is set to compete at the Intercollegiate Singles Championships/Intercollegiate Team Championships on Friday in Dayton, Ohio.

Male Athlete of the Year: Marcus Weathers

It would be negligent to discount Weathers’ impact on the men’s basketball team’s recent resurgence under Keith Dambrot. The 6-foot-5 forward led the team in scoring in each of the past two seasons and recently became the first DU men’s basketball player to earn back-to-back all-conference honors since Damian Saunders in 2010 and ’11. Weathers began his collegiate career at Miami (Ohio) in 2016 alongside his twin brother, Michael, before transferring to Duquesne in the spring of 2017. Michael spent time at Oklahoma State and Texas Southern, respectively, following his time as a RedHawk, and led Texas Southern to the NCAA tournament last month. The twins recently announced their intentions to reunite for their last seasons of collegiate eligibility at Southern Methodist University.

Women’s Athlete of the Year: Olivia Farwell

Farwell, the most decorated bowler in Duquesne program history, helped lead the Dukes to their first-ever NCAA tournament appearance this season. Farwell entered her senior season as a three-time All-American, putting her in the company of a select group of legendary DU athletes including Korie Hlede, Dick Ricketts, Sihugo Green and Christian Kuntz.

Senior Athlete of the Year: Rilee Bradshaw

Bradshaw continues to impress as a veteran for the women’s lacrosse team. The graduate student from Middletown, Md., has scored 23 goals through the team’s first six games, helping Duquesne win four of its first six contests. Bradshaw is peppering opposing goalkeepers, recording a team-high seven shots. She scored six goals on two separate occasions and posted a season-high seven points in an emphatic 22-6 victory over Kent State on March 16. Her success has earned Bradshaw the Dukes on track to finish above .500 in Atlantic 10 Conference play for the first time since 2016.

Newcomer of the Year: Megan McConnell

McConnell, a hometown product and graduate of Chartiers Valley High School, shined in her first year with the women’s basketball team. The freshman guard averaged 7.5 points/game, scoring a season-high 18 points in a Jan. 10 contest against Richmond. McConnell shot 59.4% from the free-throw line and posted a solid 2.12:1 assist-to-turnover ratio. The sister of former Duquesne men’s basketball star and current Indiana Pacers point guard T.J. McConnell played a team-high 459 minutes during the truncated 16-game season. She made 19 3-point field goals, trailing only fellow freshman guard Tess Myers (25) for most on the team.

Most Improved Team: Women’s Lacrosse

Under third-year head coach Corinne Desrosiers, the Duquesne women’s lacrosse team continues to make significant improvements. Desrosiers was hired following a 2018 season in which the Dukes went 4-12 and lost seven of nine conference games. The Dukes made strides in 2019, finishing with a 9-8 record and a 4-5 conference record. The 2020 season saw Duquesne go 3-3, going out on a high-note by thoroughly beating Akron by a 25-2 score in a March 11 victory prior to the rest of the season being canceled due to COVID-19. The team continues to trend upward, currently sitting at 4-2 (3-2 in A-10 play) with three games remaining.
Music school provides music to the ear during COVID

EMMA POLEN
staff writer

COVID-19 changed a lot about how musicians are able to perform. Duquesne’s Mary Pappert School of Music, with the help of its supportive staff and driven student body, has continued to share music with the world in creative ways.

Music is both a very personal and very public experience, and musicians are innovating new techniques for reaching people on both levels.

With the pandemic, the “personal” experience of music was easy to achieve in confinement. However, the “shared” part was more difficult, as recital halls across the world closed their doors to performers.

Em Yuretich, a junior music education major with a focus in voice, used the challenges of the pandemic to share music differently than she has in the past.

Yuretich took advantage of restrictions and chose a smaller recital space. This was both for her own musical preferences and for the safety of all in attendance.

“I chose to keep a much smaller audience,” Yuretich said. “I opted, as many did, to host a Zoom meeting for others to join in who were not a part of the physical audience.”

Every music student, excluding music therapy majors, have to perform at least one recital as part of their mandatory coursework.

One requirement for these recitals is an “audience.” Under normal circumstances, a music student would have ample space to invite people to come listen in-person in one of Mary Pappert’s recital halls.

However, COVID-19 restricts the maximum capacity of the recital spaces, and the biggest recital hall can only hold a maximum of 30 people.

The “audience” requirement gives Duquesne music students the unique opportunity to still have in-person audience members that many off-campus venues do not have.

The move to primarily virtual sharing of music actually allowed a wider audience a glimpse of the music happening in Mary Pappert.

Steve Groves is the Mary Pappert School of Music director of music engagement, events and marketing. Last December, he was also in charge of editing the music school’s annual Christmas at Duquesne concert. The concert was composed of three ensembles.

This year, the performances were released completely virtually and posted on the Mary Pappert YouTube channel during December.

“We had over 14,000 combined views on all those videos during the course of the month, which is a pretty amazing feat for not having done anything like that before that time,” Groves said.

No Duquesne concert hall could hold that many people, which means the recordings reached the ears of many more audience members than they could have with completely in-person viewing.

Restrictive, smaller recital events did not release the stress of live performance, though. Students are still expected to put a tremendous effort into preparation for their student recital.

The pandemic cut many events from the school calendar this past year, but it did not affect the incredible number of hours students spent practicing the pieces they performed at their student recital.

Garret Hoffman, a junior music education and voice major, had his junior recital this year.

“In a certain sense, I’ve been practicing for [the student recital] the entire time I’ve been at Duquesne,” Hoffman said.

The repertoire is a selection of songs he has performed over the course of his lessons here at Duquesne since fall of freshman year.

“No music student wants to miss out on their junior recital, even if it comes with extra pressure. “While it’s stressful to put together and prepare, it’s definitely worth the effort — especially now, when live musical experiences are so limited and rare,” Hoffman said.

Hoffman said he truly sees the value of sharing live music during the pandemic.

“In spite of the restrictions, in a weird way, I probably appreciated it more than I would have under normal circumstances,” he said.

Groves said that sharing music is such an important part of our lives.

“We all interact with music in some way, literally every day,” Groves said.

Even if COVID-19 restrictions are not yet loosening for events like music students’ recitals, performances will carry on in the music school. This is good news for both the community of musicians here at Duquesne as well as the wider music-enthusiast community who appreciate listening to their content.

Those who wish to view select student recitals can do so on the music school’s YouTube channel, Mary Pappert School of Music.

If you want to see what the Mary Pappert School of Music is currently working on, check out their YouTube and their social media.

For more information, visit the Mary Pappert School of Music’s website.

HOROSCOPE

Aquarius

Not a journalism major trying to get into an education class...

Gemini

Have you ever considered being a nomad?

Libra

It’s raining! It’s pouring, your zoom class is boring!

Capricorn

Chuck E. Cheese pizza for sale!

Aries

Never trust a bunny.

Pisces

Do your homework from the Home Depot kitchen display section.

Taurus

If you’re gonna play piano, at least play rag!

Cancer

I’m a Goofy Goober:

Sagittarius

Rock!

Leo

If you learn ballet I will pay your hospital bill.

Scorpio

Don’t overreact babes, as ABBA says, that’s the name of the game!

Virgo

Hot girls get the vaccine (and get ice cream afterward)

Horoscopes

If you want to see what the Mary Pappert School of Music is currently working on, check out their YouTube and their social media.

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ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

WEEK’S EVENTS

Mass Exodus: Catholic Disaffiliation in America
Friday, April 16 at 2 p.m.

How did American Catholicism, so strong for so long, get to this point — and what does the future hold?

Return to AfroWorld
Saturday, April 17 at 4 p.m.

Join the African Student Union on Zoom for Return to AfroWorld! Zoom link can be found on CampusLink.

UPCOMING RELEASES

Vanquis
Friday, April 16

Starring Morgan Freeman and Ruby Rose, a retired cop threatens to hold a drug dealer’s daughter hostage in order to do his bidding.

Purge The Poison
Wednesday, April 14

Singer-songwriter Marina Diamond puts out two new singles that could potentially allude to a new album.

CAPRI’S

KIND WORDS

Take it Easy
As the semester comes to a close, mental health is one of the most important matters to tend to.

With an overload of schoolwork, studying, and cramming in some last few happy moments before heading home, remember that it’s okay to put yourself first and communicate your needs.

It’s okay to take time for yourself to take care, to rest, and to grow a little more each day into the person you aspire to be.

It takes persistence, it takes patience, and it takes positive self-talk to achieve what you desire.

Make your surroundings encouraging and welcoming for yourself and for others. Remember your impact, too.

– Capri Scarchelli

GRIMM or SENDER / MULTIMEDIA EDITOR

Despite year-long COVID restrictions, Mary Pappert School of Music continues to showcase students’ musical talent.
Taylor Swift's re-recordings bring nostalgia to fans

by Capri Scarcelli

Taylor Swift revisits her old music in new fashion.

Dolly Parton documentary celebrates her successes

by Braylyn Bruno

The Duquesne Duke

April 15, 2021

I t's not often that you get to experience an album for the first time all over again. For many of us, we were merely 8 years old when country-turned-pop star Taylor Swift released her critically-acclaimed studio album Fearless (2008), leaving daydreaming girls in awe and wondering of what their teenage years would hold.

At 20, I am listening to Swift's re-recorded Fearless (Taylor's Version) with a nostalgic heart — not only for the girl who had a whole coming-of-age story ahead of her, but for the girl who lived through the love, strength and hurt that she sings of.

I am listening to myself grow up.

On April 9, Swift released the complete set of re-recorded tracks along with six never-before-heard songs from the vault. In contrast with previous music manager Scooter Braun, Swift's first six studio albums were sold between Ithaca Holdings LLC and Big Machine Records for over $300 million. In retaliation, Swift decided to completely renew her music to get the records under her control again.

With a new vocal maturity, added instrumentation and featured harmony lines, Swift's songs hold a whole new layer of interesting depth. This reflective piece that doesn't necessarily aim to replicate the original, but rather enhance its aura.

Thanks to Swift's genius story-telling in her lyrics, the album reads like a book in true Fearless fashion.

The first track of the same name has a familiar feel to its original rendition. "Fearless" is almost more a subtle version of its first recording, her voice guiding with grace instead of force. Her crystal clear tone and slight twang really makes the album start off with a purity that has aged well.

With "Fifteen," however, I felt myself melt back into my high school experience, so full of hope for the world ahead and anticipatory of every up and down that would shape me into who I am today. This song was different when I was age 8 — romanticizing football games, the prom, driving in a car with a boy I could call mine. And at age 15, the song felt like I was sure you could go back and tell yourself that you still had 15 years ahead of you. I felt heavy, I was the song's tone quality, riffing and background percussion that the piece itself felt theatrical. You could visualize the melodrama of young love, and you could visualize those heightened emotions as if you are experiencing them in the present. This recording was an evolution to the right combination for the ones we care for, and it felt like those efforts have been worth it all along.

And what about the songs "from the vault?"

"We Were Happy" struck a chord for me in particular because it was very unlike her older works — it reminded me of her pieces from Folklore and Evermore, a crowning sadness of appreciating what you had where you left it. I think this song proves not only her maturity as an artist, but as a person. It shockked me that she wasn’t allowed to include this in the original make of Fearless because it was "too sappy." I think Swift has always been self-aware and honest with her emotions, which is admirable and should be celebrated.

"Mr. Perfectly Fine," however, showed that classic easy Taylor was all know and love. This piece was removed from the original cut because of how blatantly obvious it was about pop singer Joe Jonas, a former boyfriend of Swift. This track gained traction on social media because of the reminiscent drama between Jonas and Swift, something pop culture clung to for quite some time in 2008.

Re-surfacing this romance, even Jonas' wife Sophie Turner wrote on Twitter that "it’s not NOT a bop.

"You All Over Me," however, came out as a single previously to the full release of Taylor’s version. Featuring Marien Morris, this piece was polite, somber and had an airy chorus that felt new and familiar all at once. It reminds me of a slow dance at a country wedding, in an ironic sense. Or a transitional period of moving on in hopes of finding your self-identity, but you just aren’t there yet. There’s a falling ache to it that urges me to put it on repeat, rehearsing memories I didn’t even know I had in the first place.

At last, "Bye Bye Baby" feels like a cohesively final to the album. This piece shows a begrudging effort of letting go, relapsing through the last moments of joy through the relationship.

The subtle echo of the background vocals mimic the flush of memories rushing past her, removing herself from the narrative no matter how tightly she held onto the relationship. She conceptualized, I could feel her past pain, though the song trickles out with so much hope.

If you have not listened to Fearless (Taylor’s Version), you can do so by streaming it on Spotify, Apple Music or other participating services.

The Duquesne Duke gives Taylor's Dolly Parton documentary a tour of fame and fortune.

O n April 7, Netflix released Dolly Parton: A MusiCares Tribute, more than two years after the filming of the show. The special documentary was released to celebrate Dolly Parton being named MusiCares’ Person of the Year. This honor celebrates artists who are talented musicians and have a dedication to philanthropy, and is deemed one of music’s most prestigious honors.

The award celebrates people who have shown generosity and given back to the community, and Parton is the living embodiment of this ideal. Most recently, Parton was in the news for her $1 million contribution towards COVID-19 vaccine efforts.

Parton has penned over 3,000 songs and won 10 Grammy Awards throughout her career. Her background allows audiences to authentically connect with her songs, as songs such as "Coat of Many Colors," "Jolene," "9 to 5" and others express themes of poverty, heartbreak and the working class. Parton’s storytelling hits close to home for many and makes her a truly unique artist.

The documentary is joyous and celebratory, as the world had not yet had its spirits dampened by the pandemic at the time of its filming. This upbeat spirit allows for a nice change of pace from today’s entertainment, as we see real people coming together with a focus on celebration.

Little Big Town hosted the event and introduced standout artists such as Darius Rucker, Katy Perry and Shawn Mendes. The night was full of performances from artists who came together to offer their own renditions of some of Parton’s greatest hits.

The kickoff to the show began with Mendes and Cyrus, Parton’s goddaughter, singing Parton’s classic song “Islands in the Stream,” accompanied by Mark Ronson on the guitar.

This performance was one of the strongest of the night, with the artists’ voices accompanying each other perfectly.

Cyrus showed her excitement and her relationship to Parton as she waved at the honoree from the stage.

Another standout performance of the night came from Yolanda Adams. Adams’ rendition of “I Will Always Love You” gave justice to Parton’s biggest hit ever. Adams’ high notes were a highlight of the night, and her performance itself made for a short documentary worth watching.

Some performances were certifiably faulty, but with the diversity of artists chosen to perform will appeal to Dolly fans of all ages.

Of course the best part of the show was when Parton herself took the stage. The artist opted to sing “Coat of Many Colors,” a song that reprises her journey in life. The song is rich in meaning, as Parton sings about how she’s rich even though her family had no money while she was growing up.

This song choice spoke towards Parton’s character and perfectly captured the reason why she was chosen to receive this high honor of MusiCares Person of the Year.

The documentary definitely achieves its objective of honoring Parton through the expression of music, however, in order to enjoy this documentation, Dolly lovers must be open to different interpretations of her music.

The majority of the show is performance-based, so aside from a few brief scenes speaking about Parton’s philanthropic achievements, not much is spoken about Parton’s life. If you are looking for a short concert to virtually tune into while sitting at home, add this one to your list.
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