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THE DUQUESNE DUKE

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College of Osteopathic Medicine holds open house

EMBER DUKE
staff writer

The long anticipated Duquesne University College of Osteopathic Medicine opened its doors for the first time on Jan. 17 to students, faculty and the public.

From the outside, it's hard to imagine the spacious, modern five floors designed to give medical students a hands-on learning experience that lay beyond the school's front doors. The open space, glass facade which allows for natural lighting and high ceilings of the entrance level will welcome students. On one floor there are also a large lecture auditorium and virtual reality lab. A stairwell in the middle of the lobby leads down to the Osteopathic Manipulative Medicine and Clinical Skills Lab which can house half of the program's students at a time.

One of the prize learning features is the hospital simulation lab, meant to mimic the experiences and atmosphere of a real hospital. Access to equipment such as personal ultrasound machines and hired actors to imitate patient interactions will make class times interactive and realistic, John Kauffman, dean of the school, said.

"If we can take information and build it into a case, you'll probably remember the clinical case better than just facts," he said.

Osteopathic medicine is a newer approach that puts more emphasis

on prevention of disease and lifestyle adjustments to aid wellbeing while still taking beneficial treatments from traditional practice. A large factor in this realm of study is in-depth knowledge of the musculo-skeletal system. Kauffman hopes the school of medicine will train new doctors to understand how to help the body heal itself.

"We work at treating the whole person's mind, body and spirit," Kauffman said. "That interconnectedness ... We currently have a disease care system. We are very good at diagnosing and treating disease. We are not terribly good at preventing it. So the opportunity in medicine right now is to really focus on health, wellness and prevention."

Olivia Volger, an upcoming doctoral student and current master's of biomedical science student at Duquesne, is excited for the opportunities in and out of the classroom next fall.

"I think everyone here has such a good perspective on medicine and using those lifestyle factors and things that aren't really huge in medicine right now like pushing exercise and nutrition," she said. "I feel like the community here is just pushing for that change and helping underserved communities as well."

Fellow incoming medical student Dina Silvestri was intrigued by the program's approach to medicine.

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BRENTARO YAMANE | MULTIMEDIA EDITOR

College of Medicine's simulation hospital labor and delivery room where students will practice procedures that mimic real hospital cases.

Pittsburgh community serves others in the spirit of Martin Luther King Jr.

EMMA POLEN
editor-in-chief

"I want you to say that I tried to love and serve humanity... say that I was a drum major for justice." - Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., 1968

MLK Day is the only federal holiday designated as a day of service. In celebration, the Allegheny County Bar Association has hosted its annual Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Prayer Breakfast and Program for 25 years, welcoming a number of community members who have completed meaningful service for underprivileged communities.

Highlighted during the event is the Allegheny Bar Association's Drum Major for Justice award, which honors an individual from the area who has impacted the community with meaningful and actionable service.

This year's awardee was Jerry Dickinson, Vice Dean at the University of Pittsburgh School of Law.

Dickinson's parents fostered 11 children and became a "long term home for eight of the 11 children, including me," he said.



BRENTARO YAMANE | MULTIMEDIA EDITOR
Jerry Dickinson (left) receiving the Drum Major of Justice award from Jesse Exilus (right).

Jesse Exilus, of the Allegheny County Bar Association's Homer S. Brown Division, spoke highly of Dickinson, who he nominated for the Drum Major of Justice award.

"You can ... see the passion in



BRENTARO YAMANE | MULTIMEDIA EDITOR

Jerry Dickinson, accompanied by his wife Emily and daughters Nyla and Ar-eya, received the Drum Major of Justice award at the Allegheny County Bar Association's annual MLK Prayer Breakfast. "These three wonderful, powerful women at my side have been an extraordinary support network," he said.

his eyes that he's here to do great work to make sure everyone is not only equitable ... making sure that we have what we need to be successful in our life."

"He's definitely worthy to be honored today," said Mayor Ed Gainey, adding that Dickinson has done a lot in the judicial system.

Gainey was also adamant about the mission of "uplifting the world" with his own background as a servant in the community, breaking down "all the -isms, all the classes and all the racism," he said to *The Duke*.

"Every time we pour ourselves into the city and other people, we demonstrate the love of humanity," Gainey said during his opening remarks at the event.

Every year, the Homer S. Brown Division of the Allegheny County Bar Association invites its members to the breakfast inspired by MLK's legacy.

Gabrielle Lee, assistant federal public defender and chair of the Allegheny Bar Association's Homer S. Brown Division 2023-2024 Council, is determined to grow in this equitable vision.

The breakfast is always hosted in the Hill District, but this year, for the first time, the Bethel AME church offered a greater venue space to gather more people, Lee said, to "inter-

act and engage with ...our communities."

Criminal defense work, Lee's specialty, is one of the many ways people can wake up every day and serve our communities, Lee said.

Duquesne also took up a significant number of chairs with members of the men's and women's basketball teams attending.

"We're representative of Duquesne and...the city of Pittsburgh," Women's Basketball Head Coach Dan Burt said. In addition to the MLK breakfast, the women's team visits the Hill District regularly to volunteer at a community nonprofit.

With Duquesne students off from school on Monday, MLK Day, Ayanna Townsend, fourth-year occupational therapy student and member of the women's basketball team said the event was a great opportunity to "come back and engage with the community."

"It's a day of remembrance, and it's also a day of celebration," Townsend said.

Music also poured into the sanctuary with musical selections performed by the Bethel African Methodist Episcopal choir. The charts seemed to have been chosen for this spe-

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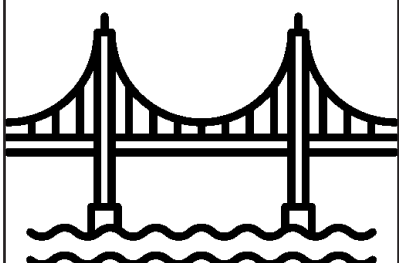
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Sneak peek of the new College of Osteopathic Medicine building

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"I think the opportunity to go and be interested in an osteopathic medical school was something that was very interesting," Silvestri said. "I think the mission of community service was very attractive. I mean osteopathic medicine in and of itself is so different an approach to holistic healthcare and full body treatment so it was just a really interesting opportunity."

Looking toward her next few years of medical school, Silvestri said she's excited to learn to be the best physician possible and serve the community.

"I interviewed with Dr. Traore [faculty of the medical school], who is from Africa and he talked about how we do mission trips in medical desert countries, and he said that can impact your view on overall medicine and what can be done for people here,"

she said. "Just the overwhelming privilege we have and how we can best use that to navigate global healthcare."

By opening the health services office as a free clinic to the public, the school hopes to both better the local community and give students a chance to work with real patients. Students will also study specific health disparities and have regular access to mission trips, which Kauffman hopes will help bridge gaps in healthcare for communities that don't have easy access to it.

"I wondered what's the big thing that we are supposed to do here," Kauffman said. "I knew I was supposed to be here, but the big thing is the social determinants of health. What are those conditions that affect people's lives and outcomes?"

The cityscape view through floor-to-ceiling glass in learning spaces and offices is a reminder of the region that seems to be at

the heart of the program.

"Our goal is to recruit our students from the region, train them here, and if they stay here for med school [and] their residency there is a high likelihood they will stay here to practice," Kauffman said.

A mix of lectures, labs and clinical rotations are written into the curriculum to help students prepare for anything in the workforce. A large part of this comes from teaching students to look at all aspects of a patient's condition to get to root issues.

"We focus a lot on physical diagnosis skills, but then differential diagnosis... when you have an unknown patient you have to figure out what's going on with the patient so you have to have really good history taking skills," Kauffman said. "You have to ask the right questions and the right follow up questions and patients that will

want to tell you a lot of information, so steering the questions and really getting to the crux of the matter," he said.

As for the building's surrounding space, the lot next door is planned parking space, and the medical student apartments currently under construction are not slated to open until August.

Students will spend the majority of their first two years in the new building studying biomedical science and body systems. Virtual reality labs in the "HoloAnatomy" room, cadaver labs, and radiology simulations are a few of the classroom procedures to train students. Clinical rotations will start in their third year at local hospitals.

"Between 10 and 20 years, my expectation is that the majority of the physicians practicing primary care and general specialties will be Duquesne grads," Kauffman said.

Monongahela Incline still under repair

NAOMI GIRON
staff writer

Staple tourist attraction and means of transportation, the Monongahela Incline continues to be shut down, after Pittsburgh Regional Transit (PRT) announced on Jan. 12, on X, formerly known as Twitter, that the incline will remain out of service through at least the next two weeks.

The incline, operating for over 150 years, first shut down on Jan. 3, following malfunctions preventing the cars from slowing down enough to stop at their positions at the upper and lower stations. PRT announced multiple electrical and mechanical components had failed.

"While we cherish the opportunity to be entrusted with its upkeep, we are often tested by the difficulty of keeping such a prominent icon in operation," said Katharine Kelleman, PRT CEO, in a Jan. 12, news release.

Originally, when inclines were introduced to Pittsburgh, there were a total of 147 around the city. The demand for them diminished over time, and now, the Duquesne

Incline and the Monongahela Incline are the last functioning inclines in Pittsburgh.

The Monongahela Incline was built in 1870, by John J. Endres, a German engineer specially selected to build it according to the official Monongahela Incline website. The Incline, when in working condition, runs up and down Mt. Washington. Due to the frequency of riders working in the coal mines all over the city the mountain was previously called Coal Hill.

Tour guide George DeBolt frequents the Incline in Pittsburgh. He said there are some differences between the two. The main difference is that the Duquesne Incline is privately funded by a non-profit organization, whereas the Monongahela Incline is run by PRT. It is just a business, and from that comes more problems fundamentally for the Monongahela Incline.

"Where the Monongahela Incline is a ride, its transportation, the Duquesne Incline is an experience," DeBolt said.

Lots of people come from



BRENTARO YAMANE | MULTIMEDIA EDITOR

Tour guide George DeBolt discusses the history of the Duquesne Incline as it continues to be closed down for at least the next two weeks and shuttle services remain in place.



BRENTARO YAMANE | MULTIMEDIA EDITOR

Despite the Monongahela Incline being closed visitors Samantha Stabb and Chuck Euring still enjoy the view overlooking the city and Monongahela River.

out of town to visit Pittsburgh, and at least one of the inclines is on almost everyone's trip.

The original purpose of the incline was to better assist all the steelworkers in traveling up and down the hill. Today the Monongahela Incline is still used as public transportation for Pittsburghers who use the incline as a part of their daily commute and tourists who want to see the upper and lower level of the city efficiently.

Domenica Rifenburgh, an employee at the front desk at the Duquesne Incline noted some present-day uses of the inclines.

"It's solid transportation because people use it even if they go to a football game or a hockey game. They like to go on the incline because it gives them a nice view of the city at night or during the day," Rifenburgh said.

The past three years, Rifenburgh has heard of ongoing issues with the Monongahela In-

cine three separate times.

The reason for this all comes down to the maintenance of the cars. The Duquesne Incline is older than the Monongahela Incline but is still in better condition, with authentic cars from beginning "Our inclines are so close and they have been here for almost the same amount of time, but ours is older, they have changed their cars at least two or three times," Rifenburgh said.

The current repair is being conducted under Elcon Technologies', a subcontractor of Westmoreland Electric, original 2022 Monongahela Incline Rehabilitation Project contract according to the PRT website.

While construction continues, city locals who rely on the Monongahela Incline will continue to be provided with shuttle buses as a transportation replacement between the upper and lower stations until service is restored.

ACBA holds it's 25th Annual Dr. Martin Luther King Prayer Breakfast event

from KING— page 1

singing the gospel tunes “Lord I know I’ve been changed” and “Everything You Are (Jesus).”

The Center for Excellence in Diversity and Inclusion bussed students to the event as well, as part of its MLK Unity Week.

Venetia Khouri, an intern at the center and a graduate student in higher education and administration, participates in running the events throughout Unity Week. She said each day of the week hits on a different pillar of Martin Luther King Jr.’s philosophies. The prayer breakfast was a great way to “kick it off,” Khouri said, and the remainder of on-campus events the rest of the week would focus on creativity, networking, minority service and other diversity-oriented events.

The remaining MLK Unity Week events include a unity walk Thursday, beginning at the Administration Building at 10:50

a.m. and a luncheon on Friday, Jan. 19, from 12 p.m. to 2 p.m. in the Africa Room featuring powerful speakers. All events sponsored through the Center for Excellence in Diversity and Inclusion for MLK Unity Week are free.

Dickinson concluded his awardee speech with his own interpretation of MLK’s drum major.

“If you want to say I’m a drum major, say that I’m a drum major for a fair, just and equitable Pittsburgh,” he said. “Say that I am a drum major to ensure every Pittsburghers has access to safe and stable housing. Say that I am a drum major for hope that one day Pittsburgh will become one of the most, not the least, livable cities for African Americans. Say that we’re working to make this city a livable place for my two young daughters, so when they grow up, they too can have access to a healthy, well being.”



BRENTARO YAMANE | MULTIMEDIA EDITOR

The Bethel African Methodist Episcopal choir sang hymns for the event. Music was chosen for the specific service-oriented occasion, singing the gospel tunes “Lord I know I’ve been changed” and “Everything You Are (Jesus).” From Left to Right: Carmen Holt, Erin Younge, Mildred Reese and Prudence L. Harris

“Curating the Archives” grad student exhibit contains personal artifacts

MEGAN TROTTER

news editor

Repurposed quilts, dog portraits in gold frames and trendy watches took over a small section of Gumberg library’s fourth floor with professor Laura Engel’s graduate exhibit “Curating the Archives,” on Dec. 7.

The exhibit was part of a new cross-listed class between the English graduate program and the public history program with the goal of exploring the idea of archival theory, research and curation.

“The course started out with reading about theories of the archive and also museum exhibitions. We sort of talked a lot about the ways in which people collect things, ‘How did things get preserved?’” Engel said.

The exhibit cumulated a mix of digital and physical displays. On opening night, attendees traveled between the digital projects in Canevin Hall flex-tech classrooms and physical projects in Gumberg library. Only three students in the class chose to complete the project with a tangible abstract.

Griffin Nordstorm, a graduate public history student, put his bachelor’s degree

in sculpture and art history from West Virginia University to use in curating his exhibit which explored the history of West Virginia textiles.

“He makes quilts and garments with found materials. He’s perfected, in a kind of a way, to make plastic bags into fabric. It’s unbelievable. And his work is just gorgeous,” Engel said.

Nordstorm’s family has a history of women working as Appalachian quilt makers.

“I was sort of playing with the stuff that was around me in my apartment. I had my own work where I was making reuse, but also, [two quilt pieces] sort of recently moved in with me,” Nordstorm said.

One of the quilts he repurposed was made by his great grandmother that was no longer usable. Nordstorm worked to make it his own by cutting it up and adding pieces of another quilt which he described as “sort of an aesthetic whoopies” due to its strange appearance.

“The show was kind of an exploration of his own artistic practice that derived from his family history,” Engel said.

Originally planned to be displayed for a month, the graduate display was only

featured for a week due to conflicts in the library space. However, Nordstorm said that because he still has all the materials from the exhibit, he plans to coordinate a way to showcase his collection again.

Engel said that the students did a lot of research and writing to create exhibits that encompass personal objects that are unique to themselves.

“I feel like it’s really important for students right now to have a kind of visual literacy so the point of the course was to kind of take this larger idea of curating materials and archives [and show that it] can be defined in lots of different ways,” she said.

Maralisa Marra, another student who chose to create a physical exhibit, played around with photographs of her pet beagles. The images were crafted to look like old master portraits such as Vermeer, Van Gough and Rembrandt.

“She had the portraits, which were framed in these really amazing gold frames, next to prints of the original portrait that they were kind of inspired by. Her exhibit was really about the kind of juxtaposition between low and high art and what makes a portrait. What does it mean to use very traditional materials to do something that’s very contemporary,” Engel said.

Similar to both Nordstorm and Marra, Tommy DeMauro, also a public history graduate student, took personal items from home to create his project.

“My topic was talking about how wristwatches embody time itself and are almost heirlooms of time itself. So as time progresses, wristwatches in response to technology both charge the time that passes and also exist as kind of symbols or emblems of how timekeeping has changed over time,” DeMauro said.

DeMauro, from his collection of over 120 watches, carefully selected which to use for the exhibit.

“I have been a watch collector since about the age of 12. And I’ve always had an interest in watches and, as a public history major, watches and jewelry history is one of my favorite areas of history that often gets kind of overlooked,” he said.

The watches fell into three represented



COURTESY OF GRIFFIN NORDSTORM

Griffin Nordstorm’s quilt exhibit features family heirlooms. His art is often centered around the idea of reuse and recycling. To create these pieces he reused two family made quilts.



COURTESY OF TOMMY DEMAURO

Tommy DeMauro mixed his personal love for vintage watches with his collection for class. DeMauro featured watches he has been accumulating since he was 12.

Struggling Dukes winless in conference

SPENCER THOMAS
sports editor

A pair of gut-wrenching losses have left Duquesne staring up at the rest of the Atlantic-10 Conference.

Duquesne lost to Dayton on Friday, 72-62, in front of Cooper Fieldhouse's first sellout since 2011, before a last-minute loss to Richmond on Tuesday night. The latter game was marred in controversy when Head Coach Keith Dambrot was incensed at officials missing his timeout calls on a scramble with 1:31 remaining, and then calling a ticky-tack foul against Kareem Rozier on the ensuing possession.

He pulled no punches as he addressed the media following the game.

"You're gonna hear the truth now. This may cost me a lot of money but [expletive] it."

David Dixon was passed the ball on the inbound. Dambrot recognized Dixon wasn't his most sure-handed player and attempted to call time, which would have given his team a chance to regroup and try again on offense. The referee didn't acknowledge Dambrot, and Dixon turned the ball over.

"Every referee in the country knows in the last two minutes the coach can call a timeout. I called it twice. He didn't respond to either one of them," Dambrot said, "We should have won the game. But you can't miss a timeout call. I don't give a damn."

Dambrot still acknowledged that his team's own shortcomings in the final minutes didn't help much.

"We had them on the ropes," Dambrot said. "Our guys showed that they're a good

team, they just couldn't finish the job."

The missed calls weren't the Dukes' last hope, however. Trailing by 2, Jimmy Clark III lunged for the basket and was wrapped up and fouled with 3.5 seconds left.

The career 71% free-throw shooter went to the line with a chance to tie the game, but he missed the mark on both shots. His half-court heave at the buzzer was no good too. He was unable to add to his team-leading 16 points.



MARY GENRICH | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER
Dae Dae Grant drives on the Flyers' DaRon Holmes II in a matchup of top-tier A-10 talent.

Forty-five minutes after the game, the senior guard was back at the same spot on the charity stripe, draining shot after shot in a nearly empty gymnasium.

The loss puts Duquesne in last place of the conference, still searching for their first win. After such a promising start in the non-conference schedule, the Dukes will look to salvage their season. Dambrot acknowledged that their fate in March now relies solely on their performance in the conference tournament.

"We weren't winning the regular season anyway. We got off to a rough start," he said. "We just have to get better and better and better and win the damn tournament."

Duquesne had led Richmond for over three-quarters of the game and did so without their leading-scorer Dae Dae Grant. According to Dambrot, he's in concussion protocol after a "freaky" injury during a walkthrough prior to the Dayton game. After a surprisingly poor performance that saw him held scoreless until the game was out of reach, Grant started showing symptoms of a head injury over the weekend.

With Grant out, walk-on freshman guard Jake DiMichele earned the first start of his career. He had recorded 12 points on 5-of-10 shooting against Dayton. He cooled off against Richmond, finishing with 3 points, and a -9 plus/minus in the second half.

The loss to Dayton was less sour. Dayton is the consensus top team in the league, and its win over the Dukes propelled them to the 21st spot in the national rankings. Their center, DaRon Holmes II, is projected to win A-10 Player of the Year, and his recent performances have boosted his stock for the NBA Draft in June. Despite Dayton's stature, Duquesne was projected higher than the Flyers in several polls over the last few months. It was a measuring-

stick game for the Dukes, and they came up woefully short.

"I'm not quitting. I will battle to the bitter end," Dambrot said. "And I think we have a team that can win. We just haven't yet."

Tuesday also saw a significant change to Dambrot's starting lineup. After a strong performance against Holmes, Dusan Mahoric was elevated to a starting role, while the struggling Chabi Barre came off the bench. He used his massive frame to drive close to the rim but struggled mightily with his finishing and wound up 2-of-11 from the field.

"We're going to have some miserable guys. Let's be real about it," Dambrot said in regard to balancing playing time. "It's unfortunate, but we're not really sure yet."

"It'll be a change. We'll be fine. We're getting there," said sophomore captain Kareem Rozier. "We're taking huge steps, game by game, we're just not coming out with wins."



MARY GENRICH | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER
Jimmy Clark III finishes off the glass for 2.

Fans pour into sold out Cooper Fieldhouse

ADAM LINDNER
staff writer

Nearly three years ago, Duquesne opened the doors to its UPMC Cooper Fieldhouse for the first time. But nobody showed up.

A national television audience watched as Duquesne opened its new barn and beat Dayton, 69-64, on Feb. 2, 2021, but COVID-19 restrictions prevented all but 212 fans from attending.

On Friday, against those same Flyers, Duquesne, Duquesne hit another atten-



MARY GENRICH | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER
Gary Mell, seen here decently covered, is a staple of Duquesne basketball this year.

dance milestone. They sold out all 3,724 seats of the arena. With a national TV audience and a high-profile squad on hand, the stage felt reminiscent of Duquesne's Fieldhouse debut. Decibel levels beg to differ with such an assertion.

This loss stung badly for the Dukes, who remained winless in league play. Still, Friday night's spectacle was a win for both the program and its fans.

Paul Jankowiak, a 1972 Duquesne graduate, has missed a grand total of four home games since 1968.

"Oh, this is big. This is the biggest game in years," Jankowiak said. "Sellout crowd. It's gonna be a great atmosphere. I've been pumped up all day for this."

"I was here — we counted 97 people one time back in the '90s that were here for a game. So, to see the place packed is just fantastic."

Former Dukes forward Austin Rotroff, a member of Dambrot's first full recruiting class at Duquesne, was in the crowd Friday. Having played in both the Palumbo Center and the Cooper Fieldhouse, Rotroff was proud to see his former gym astir.

"Even last year, my senior year — my fifth year — we had a couple games that were packed out, but I mean, this is just a whole 'nother level."

"I thought the student turnout was really good tonight. We've definitely made an effort in my past couple years to try

to get the students here, especially since the Cooper opened up, and I think tonight was one of the best student crowds we've seen. It's really cool to see the kids on campus engaged as well as the rest of the community."

Duquesne president Ken Gormley agreed.

"My mind went back to the first game in the UPMC Cooper Fieldhouse," Gormley said. "To see this packed crowd here, all of the students — and I was here at 6 o'clock, and that student section was almost close to filled already — they're revved up, they're ready to go. It's a beautiful thing to see."

The loss would eventually wipe out some of the evening's promise. Dayton, led by star DaRon Holmes, controlled play throughout. Holmes dominated en route to a 33-point statline, single handedly stifling Duquesne's comeback efforts.

Still, a sellout crowd is no small feat for Duquesne. The team last played in front of a home sellout crowd on Feb. 7, 2009, in a win over No. 9 Xavier; before then, the Dukes' last sellout came in 1994.

"It's really nice to see people in the seats, even if it's some Dayton fans," Duquesne grad and season-ticket holder Jonny Heller said. "The kids deserve it."

Gary Mell, a Duquesne fan with a penchant for going shirtless at games to rile up the student section, said it was beautiful to see such a lively crowd.

"It's what the team deserves. I don't think people understand how hard the team works. It's like boot camp plus you're going to school. These guys deserve attention."

Five years ago, during Keith Dambrot's second season at Duquesne, the coach walked off Davidson's Belk Arena hardwood in defeat. His Dukes had just dropped their Atlantic 10 opener in front of a raucous crowd.

He couldn't help but to dream.

"The biggest lesson to be learned is that that fanbase helps you," Dambrot said on Jan. 5, 2019. "That's where we have to get to in order to have a great program. You have to have that fanbase that, when you're struggling, they can rally you a little bit."

After an 0-4 start to conference play, Duquesne's season is in peril. The trajectory of the program is not.

"It was a tough haul playing two years outside of the building," Dambrot said. "But this place has good potential. It's much better than when we came. [Athletic director] Dave Harper has done a really good job of promoting men's basketball and really putting money into the program."

"I think the future's pretty bright down the line. It's just a matter of getting over the hump and getting into the NCAA Tournament one time and, you know, I think this place could be a pretty good spot."

Weiss: Steelers need aggressive changes

AIDAN WEISS
staff writer

After their unsurprising loss to the Buffalo Bills in the first round of the NFL Playoffs, the Pittsburgh Steelers head into the offseason with questions throughout the organization and a lack of obvious answers. Here's where they stand in key areas.

Coaching:

One such question was answered Tuesday when it was reported that Head Coach Mike Tomlin would return for the 2024 season after reports claiming he may take the year off. Concerns intensified when Tomlin stormed out of his presser Monday night when asked about his contract status, but it appears the head coach will return for his 18th season in Pittsburgh.

The bigger question rests in the future of the offensive coordinator. After Matt Canada was let go two-and-a-half years too late, Pittsburgh shuffled several inadequate underlings into interim roles. It didn't work. Whatever they do, just please do not hire from within. All this franchise has done for the past five years is hire the same people from within and continue to spin the tires of mediocrity. Ideas from within this organization have led the offense to consistently finish within the bottom half of the league in points scored, bottoming out at 28th this season. Get someone better.

The defense is made up of T.J. Watt, Minkah Fitzpatrick, and a bunch of average to below average players. Defensive Coordinator Teryl Austin consistently gets exposed by good teams — San Francisco, Buffalo and Houston all had their way with his unit this season — but they do well enough against the bottom-feeders to shift the pitchfork-wielding mob to the offensive coordinator's door. He is not

great, but he is far from problem number one.

Quarterback:

Anyone who claims they have any idea what the Steelers will do at the quarterback position is lying because I doubt the executives themselves have a plan. What has become apparent is that they cannot go into this new season with the same situation and have Kenny Pickett and Mason Rudolph (who is a free agent and may not return) compete for the starting job.

It is crucial for them to make a major addition to the QB room and push Pickett for the starting job. Even a career backup who can at least make things interesting, like Gardner Minshew or Jacoby Brissett, would be something. They can take that veteran route and sign a big name, which is unlikely, or spend one of their seven draft picks on a quarterback, which is more likely. However, the Kenny Pickett/Mason Rudolph situation is what they absolutely cannot do if they want to remain competitive.

Cuts:

When it comes to the roster, there is some notable talent. But there is also a lot of dead-weight, and much of that needs to be cut loose for cap purposes with the Steelers being about \$13 million over the cap for 2024. Here's who may get the heave-ho:

Allen Robinson: nothing personal, he seems like a nice guy, but he does not do anywhere near enough to justify his \$11 million cap hit. The Steelers would save \$10 million by cutting Robinson.

Mitch Trubisky: Jiminy Christmas, this guy is terrible. One of the highest paid backups in the league, he goes 0-3 against the likes of the 4-13 Arizona Cardinals, 4-13 New England Patriots, and the 9-8 Indianapolis Colts. Good news for Mitch: the United Football League starts play in March. The Steelers would save

\$3 million in 2024 and \$6 million in 2025 by cutting Trubisky.

Mason Cole: You would think Mason Cole is a bowler the way he rolls shotgun snaps back to the quarterback. Oh yeah, he's not so good at the blocking thing either. The Steelers would save \$4.75 million in 2024 by cutting Cole.

Pressley Harvin III: I don't know how the Steelers could bear to part with Harvin's one huge 60-yard punt followed by five 30-yard clunkers, but it may have to be done. The Steelers would save \$1 million in 2024 by cutting Harvin.

Patrick Peterson: the only reason that Peterson will stay is because the Steelers have no depth at cornerback under contract next year. Otherwise, he would be gone because he is old, slow, and has way too many mental lapses in coverage, such as the Bills' first touchdown when he let Dawson Knox roam free in the end zone. The Steelers would save \$6.85 million in 2024 by cutting Peterson.

Larry Ogunjobi: the big defensive tackle might get cut, but it would be over contract issues rather than poor play. After an elite 2022 season, a quieter 2023 makes Ogunjobi a bit more expendable. However, a lack of defensive tackle depth may necessitate keeping him. The Steelers would save \$6.2 million (\$9.75 million if he is a post-June 1st cut) in 2024 and \$7 million in 2025 by cutting Ogunjobi.

NFL Draft:

Speaking of the draft, the Steelers have some important picks to make from April 25th through the 27th. Mock drafts have the Steelers taking several different players with their first-round pick, such as Iowa cornerback Cooper Dejean, Oregon center Jackson Powers-Johnson, Oregon State tackle Taliese Fuaga, or Miami (Fla.) defensive lineman Leonard Taylor III.

Personally, I would like to see them add top-tier talent at offensive tackle or cornerback, as Dan Moore needs replacing at left tackle and Peterson just cannot be CB2 next year. I would also like to see them trade up to the top of the draft for Caleb Williams, Drake Maye or Jayden Daniels, but the world might explode before the Steelers would ever trade into the top-three.

A trade down for more capital also would not hurt, considering how many holes need to be filled. With their second and third round picks, center needs to be addressed at minimum, along with either tackle, cornerback, or potentially defensive line. A day-two quarterback would be spicy but ultimately a waste. Their Day 3 picks should solely be the best player available, although the punter position might bear consideration.

This team is tragic right now. It is impossible to be mad at their loss because a 10-7 record with a wildcard loss is realistically their ceiling. That being said, I'll still be counting down the days to Aug. 18th, when the first kickoff of the season flies through the Heinz Field air. The Stairway to Seven will commence as the Terrible Towels wave across the country.



SPENCER THOMAS | SPORTS EDITOR

Women bounce back with W over Bonnies

MICHAEL O'GRADY AND AUSTIN
HANSEN
staff writers

It was another week of ups and downs for The Dukes, who took a rough loss to Saint Joseph's on Saturday, before besting St. Bonaventure, 76-67 on Wednesday night.

After playing a tight first half, the Dukes were looking to upset the Hawks, who were the second-ranked team in the conference preseason poll. Precious Johnson subbed into the game for the Dukes and hit two quick layups and a Tess Myers mid-range shot off of her own rebound helped spark an early 11-0 run from the Dukes and gave them a 14-5 lead more than halfway through the first quarter.

However, Saint Joseph's came out flying in the second half with a 16-0 run. The Hawks leading scorers of the game, Laura Ziegler, who scored a season-high 25 points, Talya Brugler and Mackenzie Smith led the charge to put the game away, sending Duquesne home with a 15-point loss on Hawk Hill.

The Dukes had no answer for Saint Joseph's outside shots during the run, which included a 3 from Ziegler and back-to-back 3s from Smith. In the interior, Brugler had a 3-point play which would be the Hawks final point of Duquesne's scoreless drought.

"It was us playing good defense for 20-plus

seconds on each possession and then [Saint Joseph's] hitting shots," said Duquesne Head Coach Dan Burt.

A lead of 16 would be too much for the Dukes, even when they used a smaller lineup to crawl within 6.

Hamilton went 2-of-4 from long range while Myers went 3-of-5 from distance. The 3-pointer would be Duquesne's most efficient scoring of the day as they went 8-of-16 from beyond the arc. The Dukes were outrebounded by the Hawks 32-23, and this is a focal point for Burt's squad going forward.

"We have to box out a lot stronger and be more aggressive boxing out," Burt said.

It was a much better result at Cooper Fieldhouse on Wednesday, especially on the boards. The Dukes outrebounded the Bonnies 36-29 in the victory.

Though Duquesne never trailed, the night was punctuated by their hot starts to both halves, with 24 points in the first quarter and 26 in the third. Megan McConnell led the way with her fifth double-double of the season, scoring 17 points and picking up 13 rebounds while playing the full 40 minutes. Ayanna Townsend was right behind her, dropping a season-high 15 points. Defensively, the Dukes often forced the Bonnies into bad shots, keeping St. Bonaventure to just 34% combined shooting.

"Coach [Rick] Bell always harps on just not

letting our opponents be comfortable," McConnell said. "I think just playing where we're supposed to be and playing our role is what helps us defensively, and if we do that, good things will happen."

Duquesne's energy was high from tip-off. With constant cuts to the bucket and the defense forcing poor Bonnie shots from the outside, the Dukes led 16-3 before five minutes had elapsed, and finished the first quarter leading by 11. It was a much more tense second quarter, as the Dukes went cold and St. Bonaventure capitalized on all eight of their free-throw attempts to go with six field goals. At one point, a very animated Bell could be heard screaming "Keep them off the line!" from the Duquesne bench.

Until a McConnell layup right at the end of the quarter, the Dukes hadn't scored for nearly five minutes and ended the half leading by just 5.

They would start the second half having regained their edge en route to a dominant third quarter at both ends of the floor. With 26 points, seven offensive rebounds and holding the Bonnies to just 2 points for most of the frame, the Dukes were firing on all cylinders.

"We went into the locker room, we talked about some things, we fixed some things, and we went out and had a strong third quarter," McConnell said.

St. Bonaventure finally started hitting tough shots in the fourth, but it wasn't enough to catch

Duquesne, who have now won 13 of their last 14 against the western New Yorkers. Duquesne moves to 9-8 overall and 4-2 in the conference.

Perhaps with the volatility of his team's games in mind, Burt emphasized an improvement-based approach.

"We have to be better at everything, every facet of the game," he said. "I'm not gonna be satisfied with winning, but we'll be happy until midnight, and then we're gonna move forward."

Up next is a trip down to Davidson Sunday before taking on first-place Richmond at home Wednesday night.



BRENTARO YAMANE | MULTIMEDIA EDITOR
Megan McConnell faces a Bonnies defender

Crafting climate awareness & sustainability

CAMPUS
EVENTS

HANNAH PETERS
staff writer

As we celebrate the new year and look forward to what lies ahead, Contemporary Craft is using art as a reminder of what may come to threaten this new future: climate change. The non-profit arts organization showcases contemporary work that draws inspiration from traditional crafting materials and methods to create modern commentary.

For the past few months, the art museum and studio based in Stanton Heights held an exhibition focused on environmental advocacy. Four different artists were featured in the show, utilizing natural and sustainable practices in a variety of works.

The exhibition, titled "Climate Awakening: Crafting a Sustainable Future," went on display Sept. 8 and ran until this past Saturday, Jan. 14, when they had their last guided tour. The tour was led by Contemporary Craft's exhibition coordinator Justin Lin, who believed the most important aspect is getting people to show up.

"My goal is always to get people into the doors, look at the show and then once they're in, I think what's most important is that we think about it beyond just the visual aspect of the work – we think about the story that led to the work."

In the case of the featured artwork titled "Sea Ice/Albedo," the story behind the work involves science and data. Crafted by artist Adrien Segal, this artwork is composed of six glass panels that have been cast with satellite images of the polar ice caps.

Albedo referred to the reflecting power of a surface, a measurement

that has been particularly important in the study of energy absorption and ocean warming. As sea ice melts, its reflectivity decreases and energy absorption increases, creating a vicious cycle of increased ice melt, Segal said.

Including properties of light diffusion, reflection and gradations of light to dark, Segal's piece captured this scientific phenomenon with rich blues and an icy texture.

Another featured artist, Susie Ganch, created an 84-inch by 120-inch tapestry-like piece made from coffee lids and other plastic refuse, titled "Remember Me, Katrina." Referencing the 2005 hurricane that destroyed the Gulf Coast, both the material and vortex-like patterns represent specific messages about the environment.

"She's referencing that same destructive energy that a hurricane has and placing that energy onto something like the coffee cup lid. With so [many] waste materials being pumped out through our general everyday life, over time it builds up and creates a destructive force that could be as terrible as a hurricane," Lin said.

Ganch, who intentionally uses sustainable processes throughout her works, sourced her recycled items from her community and social media, and she even went through the trash at local coffee shops.

"My artwork harnesses 'solastalgia,' or eco-anxiety, to challenge cultural practices that cause environmental devastation while also celebrating meaningful narratives behind our relationship to things," Ganch told Contemporary Craft.

Highlighting aspects of the environment, the art on display contained elements from all different forms of



BRENTARO YAMANE | MULTIMEDIA EDITOR

Justin Lin (center) explained the purpose behind Susie Ganch's 'Landscape #2: Purisma,' which was created from used bottles, faux pearls, wood and silk.

nature including water, earth, atmosphere and life.

Located outside of the gallery, the piece made by artist Meghan Price, titled "New Balance 6," used layers of deconstructed, used athletic shoes to make a vibrant mural representing the striations of Earth's crust, linking the themes of human and geologic time, consumer culture and ecology.

Artist Courtney Mattison contributed her detailed and colorful sculptures that focused on sea life, with an emphasis on coral reefs. With a background in marine conservation biology, Mattison brings a message of both warning and hope throughout her works.

One piece, called "Hope Spots" was made as a reminder of the vivid and beautiful life that is a coral reef, referencing the areas of the ocean scientifically identified to be critical to the ocean's health.

"I believe that art has the unique ability to translate scientific concepts, bring environmental issues to the surface and inspire conservation," Mattison said to Contemporary Craft.

The same sentiment was expressed by visitor and environmental activist, Felecia Mitchell-Bute who believes art plays a special role in advocacy.

"People get frustrated with all the bad news, and they don't really know how they can make a difference, and sometimes we need artists to translate that for us in ways that is more visual and not just emotional," Mitchell-Bute said.

In conjunction with the show, Contemporary Craft hosted a forum in October highlighting several speakers from different sectors "who promote environmental awareness through collaboration, education, advocacy and innovation," according to the news release.

Some of the presenters included Christina Neumann, beekeeper and owner of Apoidea Apiary as well as Jess Boeke and Sarah Pottle, Co-founders of Rust Belt Fibershed. Five different sessions were held throughout the day to "examine the climate crisis and discuss innovative solutions."

This kind of work follows closely with Contemporary Craft's mission of creating socially-engaged art experiences, with "Climate Awakening" marking their fifth and final exhibition of 2023. The next exhibition is in the planning process and expected to arrive in 2026.

The importance of these events was echoed by visitor and former Duquesne University art history professor, Christine Lorenz, who appreciates what Contemporary Craft has to offer.

"Taking time to look closely and react and respond and follow the train of curiosity that it provokes for you – I think this is a really important experience that this event can offer that we just don't get everyday," Lorenz said. "This gives us an opportunity and a space to take our time and allow our minds to wander and respond."



BRENTARO YAMANE | MULTIMEDIA EDITOR

Lin (bottom left) encouraged guests to point to the portion of the piece ('Surface Tension 7' by artist Courtney Mattison) that resonated most with them, deepening their perception of the natural world.

VIBES with Art Club
Jan. 18 @ 7:30 p.m.

Head to the Africa Room for music, record painting, free food and good vibes. First come, first serve.

DPC DUNite: Lego Bingo
Jan. 19 @ 9 p.m.

Join DPC Friday in the Africa Room for a night of Lego themed bingo!

Winter Wonderland Writing Workshop
Jan. 22 @ 9 p.m.

Hang with *The Duke* in College Hall 104 as we talk writing tips, creative story ideas and asking the right questions in an interview. We'll have prizes/giveaways for everyone who attends.

Student Organization Expo
Jan. 22 - 26 @ 11 a.m.

Get involved and join a student organization (like *The Duke*) on A-Walk!

EMILY'S
EPIPHANIES

Take a Deep Breath

It can be really difficult to welcome a new regiment to your schedule. The allure of a new beginning is starting to wear off as we get back to the grind of our new course loads.

There are so many transitions in our lives, some we haven't even experienced yet.

Approaching each new challenge takes a new combination of tact, organization, perspective and energy.

It is understandable to feel overwhelmed, but I have good news to offer you: you can do hard things.

You've done a countless number of difficult things, and you are here now, on the other side of them.

Begin each new task and day with a deep breath. Remind yourself that you are capable and that this, too, is just a new hurdle to conquer.

Allow what may come to come. You will be ready and you will be able.

— Emily Fritz

<p>Aquarius ♒</p> <p>My brain has a lizard on it that bites it every once in awhile.</p>	<p>Pisces ♓</p> <p>Forbidden fruit makes many jams.</p>	<p>Aries ♈</p> <p>A little sapphic hotdog roller.</p>	<p>Taurus ♉</p> <p>Should I? But <i>should</i> I??</p>
<p>Gemini ♊</p> <p>I need to determine where in this swamp of unbalanced formulas squatteth the toad of truth.</p>	<p>Cancer ♋</p> <p>Himbolic (adj.) like a himbo.</p>	<p>Leo ♌</p> <p>It's just like that, but the opposite.</p>	<p>Virgo ♍</p> <p>We're crustaceans??</p>
<p>Libra ♎</p> <p>Way to blob, babe.</p>	<p>Scorpio ♏</p> <p>I will take lie detector. No one can control their skin.</p>	<p>Sagittarius ♐</p> <p>I would only drink warm milk if it were seasoned with something... like cocoa powder.</p>	<p>Capricorn ♑</p> <p>Are you seriously going to *67 my place of work?</p>

'Justice for Action' honors MLK Legacy in East Liberty

KAITLYN HUGHES
staff writer

Communities around the country gather together every year on the third Monday of January to carry out the dream of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Located in East Liberty, the Kelly Strayhorn Theater has been honoring the legacy of King for 14 years through a program known as 'Justice for Action.'

The Alloy School Coordinator, Julia Kreutzer, explained that Kelly Strayhorn Theater is a place to uplift the talent within the community. She explained that the theater uses the artistic abilities of its performers to embody the message of King.

"We are really focused on inspiring and encouraging change-makers of the present and future to be inspired by predecessors like Martin Luther King Jr., to use their unique lens to create impact," Kreutzer said.

This event provided members of the community with the chance to come together to remember the equality, freedom and justice King fought for.

As attendees arrived they were greeted by upbeat music, and they had the opportunity to converse with community partners such as True T Pgh, Young Black Motivated Kings & Queens, Repair the World, Assemble and

City of Asylum.

City of Asylum is a nonprofit organization and bookstore in Pittsburgh that acts as a safe place for writers who have been persecuted from their countries due to controversial work. The collection of books they have reflects the mission of the organization. The assistant bookstore

event was to become more educated on how they can represent King's goals all throughout life.

"I'm learning, and I think the idea of stepping back to make room is really important to me," Kraar said. "That's a big awareness for me now personally, and as an organization we feel that too. Sometimes we might not

privilege," Danforth said. "I try to always be learning how to better incorporate values of racial justice in every part of my life."

Another attendee, Rosalyn Freeman, shared that there were not as many events that occurred around the city as she thought there would be for MLK Day. Freeman showed up to the theater because she wanted to be a part of an affair in King's honor.

"I want to be reminded of his legacy," Freeman said. "King was a big promoter of loving people, so I try to show love to everyone."

This year the theater had a turnout of about 150 people who came to celebrate with the multitude of performers. The numerous speakers and dancers met the goal of sharing King's legacy through their empowering words and performances.

Featured speakers and performers included state senator Jay Costa, councilman Khari Mosley, state representative La'Tasha D. Mayes, teaching artist Chrisala Brown, international artist Jaquea Mae, guitarist Byron Nash, K-Theatre Dance Complex, Hill Dance Academy Theater and Alumni Theater Company.

Brown and members of the Hill Dance Academy Theater allowed members of the audience to learn and participate in a West African style dance.

Throughout the show the energy of the room was lighthearted as attendees sang, clapped and danced along.

The marketing specialist at Kelly Strayhorn Theater, Mingsi Ma, enjoyed the familial aspect of the show the most.

"This is a community that is not like those sit-in theater commercial events where you are just sitting there without any engagement. You're actually experiencing the community and engaging with the kids on stage," Mae said.

Mae was not only a performer but an emcee during the entirety of the show. Her cheerful, optimistic energy was contagious to the audience members. Her goal on the stage, she said, is to create happiness for all.

"I want to share the joy I feel when I sing," Mae said. "I've been blessed. Not everyone can sing, but the way that I sing is very special to me."

For Mae, being creative is not only a way to share happiness, but it is also a way to heal, motivate and inspire.

"The change that I'm looking forward to seeing is more collaboration, more community, more of us working together to combat the injustices," Mae said. "Racism, white supremacy, capitalism, all the things that push us apart and make sure we have a veil over our eyes."



BRENTARO YAMANE | MULTIMEDIA EDITOR

Emcee and vocalist Jaquea Mae (left) and guitarist Byron Nash (right) performed "Superstition" by Stevie Wonder at Kelly Strayhorn Theater on Monday, Jan. 15.

manager Jen Kraar commented on the importance of the organization's presence at the event.

"Besides having a lot of translated books, we have historically underrepresented books, and we also have a commitment to our neighbors," Kraar said. "We are part of the creative expression."

Another reason the organization made an appearance at the

have or do what we want because it's not our turn."

MLK Day is an important day for education of civil rights, kindness and love for all.

Attendee Sarah Danforth brought her family to the performance to demonstrate to her kids the significance of this holiday.

"We try to parent with an anti-racist lens and to be aware of our

Secretos de mis Abuelos reopens, builds community

EMILY FRITZ
a&e editor

"Secrets of my grandparents"

After 340 days without a brick-and-mortar location, Secretos de mis Abuelos finally reopened its doors in Homestead at 145 East 8th Ave. on Dec. 16.

As one of the only authentic Puerto Rican restaurants in Pittsburgh, Secretos de mis Abuelos is among Yelp's "Top 25 Places to Eat in Pittsburgh." The focal point of the menu features five entree options, each of them accompanied by three sides and a salad. All together, Secretos de mis Abuelos offers more than 1,000 combinations for guests looking to explore the Boriken side of their palette.

The conception of Secretos de mis Abuelos began in August of 2019 in the Primo Cuts barber shop — one of the only Puerto Rican barber shops in Western Pennsylvania. Talking with the staff, Secretos de mis Abuelos founder Felipe Crespo (Duquesne '22) discovered that there was a hole in the Pittsburgh restaurant scene: authentic Boricua food.

"I had a chance to really show [the food to] people that are unfamiliar with the culture ... and

bring a bit of nostalgia for people that had been removed from it," Crespo told The Duke. "Every dish that's on the menu has some kind of resemblance to or memory of home. That's what makes it extra passionate for me."

Crespo began his journey with food in his family's kitchen. He began by helping with dishes, then prep work, then learning the recipes and helping to cook meals.

"It was a progressive act for sure," he said. "It was a huge part of my life."

Beginning in an apartment kitchen, Secretos de mis Abuelos graduated to a food truck parked on Crane Avenue in March of 2021 before opening a storefront on Fifth Avenue that September. Through no fault of theirs, the building was in disrepair, and the staff was forced out by a building foreclosure in January 2023.

"We struggled, grinded through it, and [now we're] back better than ever," said investor Doug Raible.

The young brand was able to survive through catering and pop-up events. Now, with the doors open to eager restaurant-goers, the team looks toward the future for additional locations in Florida.

With a larger Latinx demographic, Raible and Crespo are eager to expand closer to Puerto Rico.

"There is a ton of demand for more cultural items [in Florida]," Raible said. "It would be a great opportunity for the fast-casual space, so it's kind of a blend of pleasure between living there and the need for [authentic food] in the community."

Dedication to the betterment of the Latinx community is a cornerstone of Secretos de mis Abuelos' foundation. Working with Casa San Jose, a non-profit organization focused on connection, support and advocacy, Crespo has been able to share his culinary gifts with Pittsburgh youth.

"He is a great human being," said executive director Monaca Ruiz-Caraballo. "I got to know him ... He's a really talented young man. He's very kind; he's very smart. And so, I didn't want to let those talents go to waste. I asked him right away if he would consider volunteering."

Crespo has led weekly culinary demonstrations, sat on guest panels, worked in youth facilities and donated to the organization.

"In Pittsburgh we don't get to see a lot of people that look like us,

[that] we can look up to," Ruiz-Caraballo said. "He definitely fits that role, and the kids love him."

"It was always [my grandparents'] dream to have their own food spot, so I give back to them by serving their recipes on the food truck," said Crespo on the Secretos de mis Abuelos website. "[It is] also important to me because I can bring Latin community to an area lacking in cultural diversity."

Foodies can catch the Secretos de mis Abuelos crew celebrating Latin Night on Jan. 21 beginning at 4 p.m. In celebration of Cre-

spo's birthday, the venue will be hosting the musical talents of DJ Samuel Andres alongside a special drinks menu and discounted food.

The restaurant is open for dining, delivery and catering from Wednesday through Sunday beginning at 4 p.m. Order takeout at www.secretospgh.com or delivery on DoorDash or UberEats.

"We just want to continue growing our brand, providing an amazing product at a good price, and continue to expand the culture as well as our business," Raible said. "That's the end goal for us."



COURTESY OF DOUG RAIBLE | SECRETOS DE MIS ABUELOS

The menu features slow-roasted pork, chicken and beef stew and criolla shrimp as well as sweet or savory plantains, yuca frita and three kinds of rice.

THE DUKESNE DUKE

113 College Hall
600 Forbes Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15282

editorial staff

editor-in-chief	Emma Polen
news editor	Megan Trotter
opinions editor	Eliyahu Gasson
features editor	Isabella Abbott
a&e editor	Emily Fritz
sports editor	Spencer Thomas
multimedia editor	Brentaro Yamane
ads manager	Nicholas Zotos
layout editor	Emily Ambery

administrative staff

adviser Paula Reed Ward

email us: theduquduke@gmail.com

“The true ethical test is not only the readiness to save the victims, but also - even more, perhaps - the ruthless dedication to annihilating those who made them victims.”

Slavoj Žižek

You just read | Now tweet
our thoughts. | us yours.

@TheDukesneDuke

EDITORIAL
POLICY

The Dukesne Duke is the student-written, student-managed newspaper of Duquesne University. It is published every Thursday during the academic year except during semester breaks and holidays, and prior to final exams. The Staff Editorial is based upon the opinions of the editors of *The Duke* and does not necessarily reflect the views of the students, faculty, administration, student government or the University publications board. Op-ed columns do not reflect the opinions of *The Duke*, but rather are the sole opinions of the columnists themselves.

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Gaza city lays in ruins following bombardment from Israel

COURTESY OF WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

Israel-Palestine conflict:
a tale of victims and villains

I am no fan of the current Israeli government. I despise Benjamin Netanyahu and think of him first and foremost as a criminal. Itamar Ben Gvir, the kingmaker of the last election and minister of national security is most certainly a fascist who would quite literally kill to see a third temple built in Jerusalem.

The way Israel is going about the invasion of the Gaza Strip is barbaric. According to the Gaza Health Ministry, 24,285 people have been killed in the strip since the start of the war on Oct. 7 when the Islamic Resistance Movement, abbreviated in Arabic as Hamas, invaded southern Israel.

Footage from both sides of the conflict shows cities leveled by explosions and neighborhoods reduced to rocks. Palestinian civilians have been forced to flee south toward Egypt where they must live in makeshift tents with little to no food, water or fuel to help them cope with the cold and rainy winter months. Neither the invading nation nor their neighbors in Egypt seem too keen on substantially aiding them anytime soon.

There are good reasons to loathe Israel right now. There is merit to the claim that Zionism put into practice often involves exclusion, nationalism and, on the far-right, fascism. These are typically required for *ethno*-states to survive.

But we need to be honest about the opposition to Israel in this conflict. Hamas is arguably a more vile force than the Likud, the ruling party in the Israeli parliament, could ever hope to be.

Hamas is an extremist terror organization. They seemed to have no issue kidnapping, raping and killing civilians during their Oct. 7 raid. They have been indiscriminately lobbing missiles at Israeli cities since 2002. They do not care about liberating Palestinians, they care about expelling Jews from the region. They've made their goal clear in their charter, the introduction of which reads, “Our battle with the Jews is long and dangerous, requiring all dedicated efforts.”

I am hesitant to call Israel's actions in the region a genocide. I do not think that Israel is intent on destroying Palestinians or Arabs or Muslims in

whole or in part. The actions of the Israeli Defense Forces have been devastating to Palestinians, of whom more have been killed and injured than Hamas could have ever dreamed of doing to their rivals in Israel.

A good way to suss out a state's intentions is to observe their actions. Based on this, one may deduce that Israel is a bloodthirsty colonial state hell bent on destroying the Palestinians once and for all. I can understand this conclusion, though I think it is wrong.



ELIYAHU GASSON

opinions editor

The way this war is being fought is objectively atrocious. The IDF, in their mission to wipe Hamas off the face of the Earth, has given *themselves* no option but to attack the insurgents in the hospitals, schools and apartment complexes in which they operate. Hamas launches rockets off of hospital roofs. They use schools as armories. Hamas has no scruples about wrapping Palestinian

“The actions of the Israeli Defense Forces have been devastating to Palestinians, of whom more have been killed and injured than Hamas could have ever dreamed of doing to their rivals in Israel.”

civilians into a war they know they cannot win.

Hamas started a war knowing what would happen to the land they were elected to govern. There is no doubt in my mind that they were hoping and praying that Israel would kill Gazans by the truckload.

They knew the already poor conditions in the Gaza Strip would deteriorate further and they are okay with that. It's what they want. They make as much clear in article eight of their charter.

“Allah is its goal. The Messenger is its leader. The Quran is its constitution. Jihad is its methodology, and death for the sake of Allah is its most coveted desire.”

And now there is another terrorist organization joining the fight on the side of Palestine. The Houthi rebels in Yemen, who get their name from the Houthi tribe, have started attacking civilian vessels in the Red Sea.

The Houthis, who only control coastal territories in Yemen along the Red Sea, seem even less concerned about the well-being of their civilians than Hamas does about theirs. The Houthis are a terrorist organization that has reintroduced slavery into Yemen. According to a 2019 report by Ashraq al-Awsat, more than 1,800 Yemeni civilians work as servants and slaves for Houthi leaders.

And the Houthis have no love for the Jews either. Of course they don't like Zionists, but Jews as a group are not looked upon favorably as is made clear in their motto featured prominently on their seal.

“God is the Greatest. Death to America. Death to Israel. A Curse Upon the Jews. Victory to Islam.”

There are no good guys in this conflict. Both sides will do all they can to justify their atrocities. Israel will claim that the terrorists will use humanitarian supplies instead of giving it to civilians. Hamas will claim that the murder and rape of Israeli civilians is resistance to oppression. The Houthis will claim that attacking and stealing cargo vessels is a legitimate way of helping the Palestinians.

There are no heroes in this conflict, only victims and villains.

STAFF
EDITORIAL

Vote, vote, vote like
your life depends on it

“That's just how the world is.”

As university students preparing for life after school, this sentiment is often echoed from our mentors, our family members and our current experiences as young adults in America. At The Duke, we hold fast in our hope and our optimism that the world is malleable and open to change. The country's metamorphosis relies on new voters to create spaces for themselves, to speak up for evolving values and to be aware of our present.

With the Iowa caucus on Monday, America saw the start of another presidential election season. Although streaming services have nearly defeated cable television, we are not removed from the political campaigning that is soon to arrive (if not already present) on all commercial breaks, the many mailers for numerous political parties or the televised debates that take over the media.

It can be easy to lean into the feeling of election anxiety and existential dread; after all, each of us is only one vote. But the cynicism around voting must be left in 2023. As a generation of youth come of age, we must encourage our peers to register. Our participation in a better tomorrow begins with our responsibility for today.

We have already seen Vivek Ramaswamy drop out of the race for the GOP nomination, as well as former Vice President Mike Pence, Sen. Tim Scott of South Carolina and former New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie, but we are still far from seeing final contenders for the Democratic and Republican parties. We are even further still from seeing which independent bids will make it to the ballot on Nov. 5.

Ignorance is not bliss; ignorance is complicity. The laissez-faire attitude toward politics is no longer justified as we determine which candidate to support. Demanding representation for our beliefs is imperative as we seek change.

Seek out information about candidates. Research topics beyond what you see in the media and determine what issues create the foundation for your beliefs. Open yourself to new ideas and use your voice to promote change that speaks to the greater good.

The semester demands much of our attention, but the essence of our nation rests in the hands of the voting population. According to the Brookings Institution, “more than a third of Gen Z voters view both parties negatively — more than twice the percentage of those aged 65 and over.”

We have the opportunity to diversify the political makeup of the country and we have the population to overcome the challenges that we've inherited from decades worth of

Trump does not care about law and order

MAX MARCELLO
staff writer

With a presidential election rapidly approaching, we as a nation must confront the elephant in the room, namely the alleged criminal misconduct of the presumptive GOP nominee and his efforts to usurp constitutional norms.

Donald Trump is set for a presidential comeback unseen since Grover Cleveland in 1892. Unlike Cleveland, Trump enters the race while standing as a defendant facing 91 criminal charges.

In contrast to criminal defendant Trump is candidate Trump, who calls loudly for law and order. Even though a conviction and subsequent incarceration would not bar him from running, Trump appears hell bent on waging war against his political opponents and the process of judicial recourse integral to our nation's belief in supremacy of the law. This places his supporters and media allies in a position where they must betray the values their unassailable pro-American party is supposed to stand for.

Trump, like every citizen of the United States, is to be presumed innocent and receive a fair, speedy and public trial. In said trial, the state must make its case and convince fellow citizens of a clear instance of wrongdoing beyond any reasonable doubt.

Rather than conduct himself in a judicious manner, Trump seeks to mislead his

supporters and more importantly delegitimize the legal process of holding him accountable. To this end, he is infinitely more successful than his predecessors who have similarly sought to skirt consequences for their actions.

Richard Nixon, for instance, claimed presidential immunity to obstruct the Watergate investigation. Similarly, Bill Clinton asserted that his presidential status exempted him from Paula Jones's sexual harassment lawsuit. These instances, though well-documented by historians, do not fully replicate our current scenario.

Unlike Trump, both Nixon and Clinton eventually acknowledged and adhered to the court's rulings, submitting themselves to the overarching principles of the Constitution.

Based on an analysis of his past behaviors, Trump will not submit in part due to the charismatic authority he wields over his most devoted supporters, who believe that he is not subject to judicial recourse because he is Donald Trump. Despite any effort, no matter how lawful or fair, the trial's outcome will always be deemed an attack from the deep state by Trump's fanatics.

Knowing he potentially faces years behind bars and the humiliation that will invariably come with conviction, Trump finds himself backed into a corner, ready to fight, making him more dangerous than ever. Death threats and disruptions have dogged several of the high profile

prosecutors especially in the federal trials involving Trump's role in Jan. 6 and his mishandling of classified information.

Among the high profile non-federal charges, Trump will have to face state RICO charges in Georgia for conspiring to overturn the 2020 election. He will also have to defend himself against charges relating to alleged campaign finance violations when Trump coordinated a clandestine payment to pornstar Stormy Daniels.

Special counsel Jack Smith has especially come under fire in right-wing media. Shielding Trump from prosecution will have far-reaching consequences that may not come into full view within our lifetimes. Thankfully we still have time and a strategy to ensure justice prevails.

Ironically the solution originates in right-wing media. During Trump's 2016 and 2020 presidential runs, his campaign positioned him as an ultimatum candidate; either you vote for Trump or a Democrat hostile toward our values and traditions.

We need to shift that ultimatum and forcefully apply pressure to his supporters.

Since the 1980s, the conservative movement has largely weaponized patriotism.

If you have MAGA friends or family who ardently oppose putting Trump on trial or believe the efforts to bring him to justice are politically motivated, it's crucial not to begin by attacking them. Instead ask them to reaffirm their principles. They will likely respond by stating they are supportive

of the United States, and hold our constitution and way of life with high respect. Although they will not be able to recognize the irony in that moment, it is necessary that you keep pushing until they reach a state of cognitive dissonance.

You cannot support and uphold the constitution while also carving exceptions and allow one man to stand above the law. The only way Trump escapes accountability is through delegitimizing the system of criminal justice and stoking fear in those who would hold him accountable. If we as a country allow him to be successful in this endeavor, then the U.S. effectively rebukes the founding principles which thousands have died to uphold and thus bequeaths our nation to a man with neither character nor couth.

Should that day come to pass, then history shall never forgive us.



COURTESY OF WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

Donald Trump faces 91 criminal charges across four court cases.

FAFSA flubbed: offline forms and extra work

EMMA POLEN
editor-in-chief

Federal student aid arrived three months late to students and their families, delaying everything. The reason? The new FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) application, which determines an individual's aid from the federal government toward higher education, was supposed to improve the eligibility of all students for additional monetary assistance. But unfortunately, that was not the reality in 2024.

The FAFSA 2024-2025 form, which typically opens in October of the previous year, opened Dec. 31. It quickly went down, telling the site's visitors looking to fill out their applications that "the FAFSA site is under maintenance." The site was not completely operational until Jan. 8, more than a week later, according to NPR.

Before Dec. 30, the government student aid site was experimenting with a new and slightly unprofessional "soft opening" of their FAFSA form. The idea was for users to head to the site to begin filling out their application prior to the form's official opening for the new year. However, whenever anyone in my family tried this, we were met with a blank screen and an error message. Ergo – there was no way to get a head start on an already late FAFSA application.

All public colleges and universities in the United States, and many private institutions as well, depend on FAFSA for the offers they send to incoming students. Filling out the FAFSA doesn't actually give individuals money. It provides the information necessary to determine how much money and additional

aid they'll receive from the schools they're applying to (or already attend). I filled out the FAFSA in October of 2019, a year before I was even out of high school.

The information supplied to schools from the FAFSA is important, especially the first time, because it might affect a student's choice of college. In my case, I made my decision to attend Duquesne because it was the cheapest option at the time. And I'm sure I'm not alone in my experience. While noting some personal observations about this year's form, the application appeared to contain more general questions, less specific to adjusted gross income and taxed income. If FAFSA affects the offers made to students, I would certainly want the submitted form to be as accurate and specific to my situation as possible.

Without information from the FAFSA applications submitted by students and their families, NPR said schools will not be able to send any financial offers to students until at least February, which is months later than the earliest offers school could provide in previous years.

The biggest mistake that reports are pointing out is FAFSA's lack of adjusting for inflation, which was Congress' whole reason for spurring an updated application for federal student aid.

According to national higher education reporter, Danielle Douglas-Gabriel, from the Washington Post, the U.S. Department of Education was directed by a bipartisan agreement in Congress to raise the level of "protected" income for parents, students and students with children of their own, while also adjusting for inflation annually. This would

have given students greater aid. "Protected" income does not count toward a family's or individual's income when determining how much aid a student will receive.

Without considering the most recent inflation rates, FAFSA will have less to offer students than was originally promised with the 2024 application, affecting work study, subsidized loan and scholarship eligibility.

Had they made the proper adjustment to three years of inflation, cumulatively above 18%, the results for the 2024-2025 FAFSA would look very different, according to Bryce McKibben, the senior director of policy and advocacy at the Hope Center at Temple University.

This is a brand new form that did not save anyone's information from last year's, so applicants have to fill all of their information in again. But it might not even make that much of a difference.

There seems to be a lot more attention to kids without parents in the FAFSA application, whether their situation includes homelessness or no financial support from family.

No one knows if the number will be the same or different.

So, it's still worth filling out the 2024 FAFSA application, but it's also worth knowing that some time in the future, there may be another application coming out with the updated math ... or not. Will we ever be certain?

Even if FAFSA fails to meet America's higher expectations for federal student aid this year, Duquesne students still have a few opportunities even here on campus to earn scholarship funds from their achievements. Keep in mind, these suggestions take additional effort, but sometimes you are already

doing an experiment or (in my case) a presentation about GMOs for a sociology class that also counts toward a potential award-winning opportunity.

Integrity of Creation Conference

March 26-27 | Power Center
Submissions due by: March 22 (by participating course instructors)

Have you noticed the IOC Conference in your class's syllabus? Even if there's a presentation on there for extra credit about "Pathways to Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals," do it. For each participating class, a group of students is asked to present their projects to the conference and can win real money from it.

Undergraduate Research & Scholarship Symposium

April 17 | Power Center
Submissions due by: Wednesday, February 28 | 5 p.m. EST

Avoid overlooking those research papers due on the syllabus at the end of the semester. They may very well fit perfectly into one of the categories: Global Health; Catholic Faith and Culture; Teaching Excellence.

Major-Specific Competitions

Don't skip over those emails that look like spam from your professor. I landed an internship from opening an email sent out to the whole English department. Even if the opportunities emailed to you require you to give up a Saturday morning to attend a public speaking event, the possibility of earning gas money is enough to make me want to do it.

Music school features fiddlers and original tunes

NICK ZOTOS
ads manager

Duquesne marked its first weekend back with a concert featuring original music from associate dean and professor of music education at Duquesne, Rachel Whitcomb. The performance on Saturday, dubbed “The Flame Within You,” sought to provide both students and local residents with music intended to make them feel.

Whitcomb takes a country genre and forms her lyrics based on sharing personal experiences relatable to many different walks of life throughout the concert.

The “full band” consisted of guitars, a fiddle, keyboards and vocals. Each performer had a connection to Duquesne, whether being an alum or having a professional connection to Whitcomb.

One of the performers, Jacob Zang, played guitar during the event and is an alumnus of Duquesne.

According to Duquesne’s website, Zang can be seen on stage and in the studio playing in genres including funk, rock, blues, country, worship, acoustic, jazz and rhythm and blues.

“Something that is unique about this performance is that it will be with a full band. In a true sense, it is a showcase that allows the music to resonate fully,” Zang said.

“We have been practicing for this night for the last three weeks and we are excited to finally present our work.”

Other performers included well-known Nashville fiddle player Ryan Joseph, who currently tours with country music legend Alan Jackson while playing the mandolin and fiddle and singing harmony vocals. According to Duquesne’s website, he has also recorded or toured with artists such as Billy Ray Cyrus, Jimmy Buffet, Carrie Underwood, Marty Stuart and Zac Brown.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF STEVE GROVES MEDIAWORKS
The Flame Within You concert on Saturday featured original songs from professor and songwriter Rachel Whitcomb. Other musicians included alumni and colleagues.

The concert featured original covers like “Can’t Say Goodbye,” “Promise” and “Diamonds are Forever.” Each song was a blend of country and contemporary rock. Over 10 songs were played, and each featured a different blend of instruments and vocals. The song “Diamonds are Forever” was especially popular as it expressed the rhetoric of love through the light of a high school baseball player.

“I liked ‘Diamonds are Forever’ the most because it was written by both Dr. Whitcomb and one of my fellow Classmates, Reece McCracken. This collaboration showed the unique relationship students get to make at Duquesne,” said Matthew Guadagnino, one of the students attending the show.

“It is also always really cool to see our professors performing their own music,

and it reminds me of the talent that our faculty possesses,” he said.

Collaboration was key as Duquesne students and alum performed together as well. This allowed students the opportunity to showcase their talent in front of an audience.

Another performer and associate professor of musicianship, Joseph Sheehan, said the concert shows how their students can thrive after college.

“I think that having students perform in this endeavor speaks to the strength of the music school and shows how our musicians have been thriving with their futures,” he said. “Student success is multigenerational and seeing our students perform allows me to believe in the future of our graduates.”

Sheehan is a composer, educator and

pianist in three music genres: classical, jazz, and traditional West African music. He has had 10 years of university studies in classical composition as well.

Zang said the original songs were great to have an opportunity to play.

“Each song is unique to Rachel, and when we perform it, it is really important to get each piece authentic,” Zang said. “For example, the song Diamonds are Forever is one song that Rachel wrote about her brother who played minor league baseball. It is challenging sometimes to express emotion through music, but that is the job of a musician.”

Other performers included 2019 alumni Dylan Bradley on guitar and singing vocals, 2018 alumni Maria Castellon on bass, Braden Ball on drums and Alex Barcic on steel guitar and dobro.

With more than 100 people in attendance and a standing ovation at the end, the authenticity of the performance resonated throughout the room.

“Personally, I am excited. There is something inherent about music that allows people to connect socially and emotionally, and I enjoy sharing that with others,” Whitcomb said.

“The songs that I have each highlight something. Perhaps one of the best examples is one I wrote about loneliness. If I can express a song that shows other people that loneliness is a shared experience, then I believe they will feel less alone. Ultimately, music is our way of being more connected as a society.”

For those who missed the performance, the concert was recorded on YouTube, which is the only way to listen to the songs online.

The performance is tentatively scheduled to occur again next year around the same time in January.

“This is the second year of the show with Dr. Whitcomb, and I am eager to attend another,” Guadagnino said.



Pictured from left to right is Joseph Sheehan on piano, Dylan Bradley on guitar, Rachel Whitcomb on guitar, Ryan Joseph on the fiddle and Jacob Zang on guitar.



Rachel Whitcomb is a professor, singer, songwriter and educator. She strives to make music for listeners to relate to.

WRITERS & PHOTOGRAPHERS NEEDED FOR THE DUKE

Contact
polene@duq.edu

YOUR AD HERE!



CONTACT
duqdukeads@gmail.com

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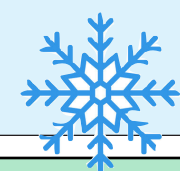


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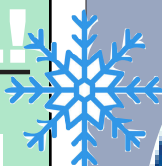
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