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Former Head Coach Dambrot gives advice

KAITLYN HUGHES
staff writer

Former Duquesne men's basketball Head Coach Keith Dambrot never publicized that he was Jewish growing up because he thought it would hurt his career.

Now as he sees turmoil in the Middle East and the targeting of Jewish students, he wants to share who he is.

"I think that the more people can understand each other the better off this country is going to be," Dambrot said.

The coach spoke on Wednesday evening in the Bayer Learning Center Pappert Lecture Hall. He shared his experience as a Jewish individual, while adding in anecdotes from his career.

Paired with the speech was a Passover-friendly reception which served Kosher food.

The event was hosted by Duquesne's Hillel Jewish Student Organization.

According to Hillel's president, Mia Olenick, the mission of the group is about being all-inclusive at a Catholic university.

Dambrot emphasized this goal throughout his talk.

"I just want to try and make the students feel comfortable," Dambrot told *The Duke*. "With the way the environment is right now

it's hard for those kids. I want to make them understand they have support at the university."

Sid Dambrot, the coach's father, was on the 1954 Duquesne basketball team that had two Jewish and three Black players on it.

The coach said that the university was progressive back then, and he believes the school will continue to be welcoming to all backgrounds and minorities going forward.

Dambrot wanted the audience to understand that he has experienced similar situations as they may be experiencing now.

"You have choices to make as to how you deal with the issues that are going to come forward," Dambrot said to the audience.

The coach emphasized that the Jewish community must not forget where they came from.

He encouraged the members of Hillel to keep speaking out and motivate more students to join, Jewish or not.

The coach said that the Spiritan Mission of inclusion is perfect for the "trying times we are in right now."

At the end of his talk, Liz McCallum faculty advisor of Hillel, presented Dambrot with a Yiddish cup that was engraved with the Duquesne 'D' and Duquesne Hillel symbol.

see **ADVICE** — page 2

"Going Down?" students stuck in Brottier elevator



COURTESY OF BROOKE MARTINECK

On March 25, six students got trapped in an elevator in Brottier Hall. After waiting over an hour, the students were rescued by an Otis Elevator Services maintenance man. The elevator stopped in between floors as part of an emergency feature. The maintenance man pulled each student out one at a time.

MEGAN TROTTER
news editor

On March 25, Duquesne students Mia Marinelli and Brooke Martineck boarded the Brottier Hall elevator on the sixth floor while live streaming the new episode of the Bachelor on their phones. They hit the button for the 14th floor expecting to go up.

They did not.

The elevator stopped around 9 p.m. with five Brottier residents and one visiting guest stuck. The elevator malfunctioned and slowly dropped from floor 10 to floor two.

"All the buttons shut off, and then we just slowly dropped all the way down to in between [the] second floor and the lobby level, and then there was just a loud noise, and then we were just stuck there," Marinelli said.

The elevator stopped in the middle of the two floors and, unable to get out, the students sat down on the floor and waited for help.

Lumina Communities partners with Duquesne University in management of the Brottier Hall building and its operations. Lumina said the elevator responded to the malfunction by deploying the expected safety features.

"On March 25, 2024, no elevator 'drop' was reported," Lumina said in an email to *The Duke*. "An elevator was immobilized between floors due to an issue that required a visit by a service technician. The immobilization is a safety feature that worked as it is supposed to."

The Brottier elevators are maintained by Otis Elevator Services, one of the largest elevator manufacturing and service companies in the world, which also services the other elevators on Duquesne's campus.

"All Brottier Hall elevators regularly pass inspection by the relevant state agencies. Certificates are available in the elevator cars themselves, as required by law," according

to an email from Lumina.

Lumina said in an email that the students were stuck in the elevator for approximately 45 minutes. However, the individuals inside the elevator said they believed they were in the elevator for over roughly an hour and a half.

The six students passed the time by answering icebreaker questions and trying to stay calm.

Zachary Seddon has lived in Brottier for a year and has had three separate occasions where he ended up being stuck in the elevator, with the first in October, the second in December and then, most recently last month.

"It was around 8 o'clock when the elevator had stopped on the 10th floor and descended, and I believe it was around 9:15/9:20 when we got out of the elevator," Seddon said.

In addition to the floor buttons, they said the cameras and their audio were not working. "There were people

that kept hitting the call button, trying to talk to them," Marinelli said. "The first time that we hit the call button it rang, and I don't think anyone answered so [a] couple minutes later, they hit the call button again."

Pressing the call button multiple times received only silence or an automated message.

"The call button rings to DUPD [Duquesne University Police], who monitors the elevator call button 24 hours per day. DUPD received the initial report of [the] incident," Lumina said in an email.

Seddon said they hit the operator call button around three to four times before someone answered.

"As time had gone on, it was just very frustrating because nothing was happening. We weren't hearing anything. It was very stressful," Seddon said.

Many of the students in the elevator began to get anxious and stressed out. see **STUCK** — page 3



KAITLYN HUGHES | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Former Head Coach Dambrot is most known for his success at Duquesne with an appearance in March Madness, but at the talk on Wednesday he shared a different side of him with students and spoke about his Jewish heritage.

Class of 2024: Who to expect to hear at graduation

MEGAN TROTTER
news editor

As the semester comes to an end, it is time to celebrate Duquesne's 2024 class graduates.

"In addition, we're thrilled to host so many compelling and dynamic individuals as this year's commencement speakers," President Ken Gormley said in a news release.

One of the speakers is Sen. Mark R. Warner from the Commonwealth of Virginia, who was Gormley's roommate at Harvard law school.

Some of the other speakers include Superintendent of Pittsburgh Public Schools Wayne N. Walters, as well as William E. Conway Jr., the founder of Carlyle Group and Matthew Costello Apple's Vice President of Hardware Engineering and Operations.

"We're proud to celebrate this incredible class of Duquesne University students as they prepare to begin meaningful careers with confidence and a greater sense of purpose to make an even bigger impact in their professions and on the people they serve," said Gormley in a news release.

The schedule for this year's commencement ceremonies is as follows:

May 10 – The McAnulty College of Liberal Arts at 10:30 a.m., Palumbo-Donahue School of Business at 2 p.m., Mary Pappert School of Music at 4 p.m., John G. Rangos Sr. School of Health Sciences and the College of Osteopathic Medicine at 5 p.m.

May 11 – School of Nursing at 9 a.m., School of Education at 12 p.m. and the School of Science and Engineering at 3 p.m.

May 18 – School of Pharmacy, Saturday at 10:30 a.m. and the Thomas R. Kline School of Law at 2:30 p.m.

Is Duquesne getting a sensory garden?

NAOMI GIRSON
& EMMA POLEN

staff writer & editor-in chief

Imagine a place on Duquesne's campus with bright colored flowers blanketing the ground, buzzing bees and delicate butterflies, all for a student to enjoy right here on the Bluff.

It may sound too good to be true, but Duquesne is planning on embedding a sensory garden on campus in an effort to bring more nature and increase the quality of life for students.

A sensory garden is a garden that appeals to all five senses.

The garden's goal is to offer a new and inviting place in the natural environment that can boost focus and help stressed-out students relax. It is a completely optional environment to spend time in and

enjoy. The oasis' job is to help students forget the worries that college can bring.

Currently, in Pittsburgh, there is a fully functioning sensory garden at Chatham University. They have interactive features, including hands-on artwork, a bench swing, lavender and plants that offer an interesting and unique texture.

According to Chatham University's website, their occupational therapy students originally suggested it and the school took their suggestion to heart to make it a reality.

Kasey Stepansky, a clinical assistant professor in the department of occupational therapy at Duquesne, was the one who helped make the sensory garden at Chatham. Stepansky is now trying to make one at

Duquesne's campus.

"I would be interested to see if this is the type of space that students would want, especially on an urban campus," Stepansky said.

Currently, Duquesne is trying to get students more involved by gathering opinions of what should be in the sensory garden.

The Duke asked students what they wanted to see.

Freshman pharmacy student Caitlynn Collantes did not know what a sensory garden was, but upon learning more about it thought it would be great on campus.

"I feel like that would be nice for the community," Collantes said. "[It would be] a way to get some time in the environment."

Regarding the specifics, she felt that fruit trees would be too much upkeep, and fruits such as apples would rot before they would be consumed. Instead, she suggested colorful fruit bushes, such as strawberry and blueberry bushes.

Collantes did like the idea of not only a bench swing but also regular swings. She felt it would bring out the "inner child in students." She even suggested a slide.

Altogether, she felt that she would spend time in the sensory garden, as it beats hanging out on Rooney Field and trying to avoid a football to the head.

Freshmen physical therapy student Cailyn Laorsa and health science student Emma Sutton said they especially liked the idea of a hammock, lavender, eucalyptus and any flowers that offer a pleasant scent.

Sutton thought that the sensory garden would offer something new to campus.

"[A sensory garden] would be something cool and different," Sutton said. "It would be cute to look at, even if you are just passing it."

They echoed Collantes' sentiment with enthusiasm for getting

swings for the garden.

Senior Kweku Parker, studying finance and marketing and Duquesne alumnus Dylan Ashton, really liked the tranquility that a sensory garden would bring to campus.

Apple trees and orange trees, waterfalls and windchimes were all on their wishlist to experience at the sensory garden.

Ashton even suggested creating a sanctuary for animal visitors, or at least implementing flowers and plants that would bring more diverse wildlife to campus.

Currently Parker said he spends time outside on campus where he can find the most nature.

"Honestly, when I want to sit down I go kind of near the grotto," Parker said. "That's where there's the most nature."

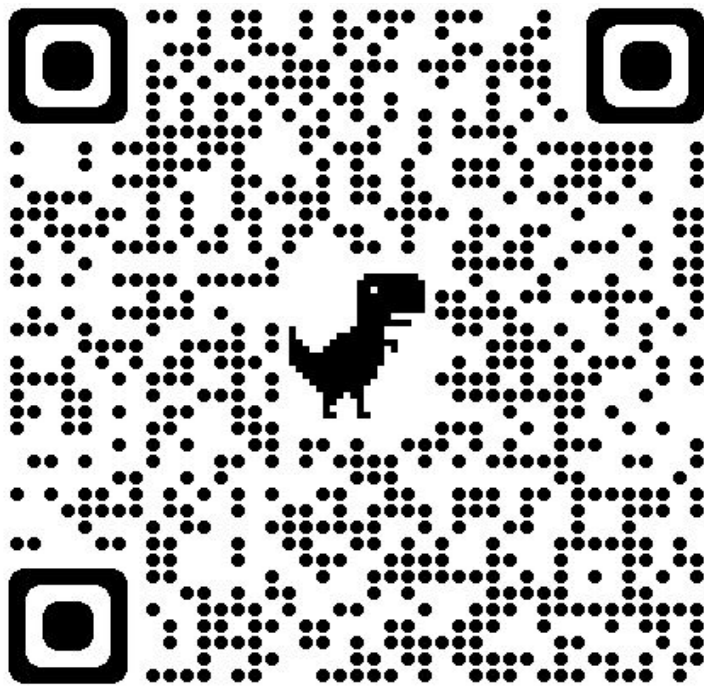
Since Duquesne's campus is located in the city, Lindsey Loeser said that it's harder to find places where you can be in nature. The sensory garden would offer a place for students to have some relaxation and peace.

Loeser also talked about the limited outside seating on campus, especially on nice days, when everyone wants to be outside. When she does spend time outside she likes to sit outside the library, or at the new pavilion.

For the specific features Loeser liked the idea of adding a fountain in the garden, it would offer peaceful sounds. She also liked the idea of a bench swing.

"We [Duquesne] pride ourselves on having that community aspect," Loeser said. "This garden would be very special."

They're looking for student feedback, so send a message to stepanskyk@duq.edu if you have suggestions, or scan the QR code (attached) to choose from a list of pre-designed sensory elements.



COURTESY OF KASEY STEPANSKY

Give your input on what you want to see in Duquesne's new sensory garden by scanning the QR code and filling out the form.

What does leadership take? Advice from former Head Coach Dambrot

from *ADVICE* — page 1

Olenick said the goal of the event was to get people together and bring support to the Jewish students on campus.

She believes that bringing an influential person like Dambrot will draw in a bigger crowd that does not always recognize the religion.

"To understand that he is part of us as a whole, I am hoping it makes these students who are not sure what Judaism is take a step back and be like, 'Oh, well if this awesome coach who is with LeBron James is Jewish then these other Jewish students are okay too,'" Olenick said.

Will Wible came to the event as a non-Jewish student.

He believes that the talk was something that was needed for Duquesne and Pittsburgh as a whole.

"I just think there are a lot of communities that need help," Wible said. "I think that's something that our city needs to be aware of and needs to take action for."

Two Duquesne faculty mem-

bers from the school of education, Karen Levitt and Kara McGoey, came to support Hillel.

The pair said that the Jewish community needs support more than ever during this time.

McGoey said that having non-Jewish students learn and support Judaism builds a sense of community.

"I think it's important for people to say, 'Oh I didn't know that person was Jewish' and to get a broader perspective on who they are and how they think and how students think about the Jewish community," Levitt said. "Both from the outside looking in, but also from the inside looking out."

Joel Bauman, the staff advisor of Hillel, said that the talk was educational in the sense of confidence. It helped Jewish students realize that it is okay to be who they are.

Bauman agreed with Dambrot that inclusivity is a core foundation of the Spiritan mission, making events similar to this one a key aspect on Duquesne's campus.

"It's important here because the university really wants to be

seen and known as a welcoming community for obviously Catho-

lic students, but also for non-Catholics," Bauman said.



KAITLYN HUGHES | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Hillel President Mia Olenick introduced Keith Dambrot by noting his accomplishments throughout his coaching career.

Students show off research at symposium ³

EMILY AMBERY
layout editor

Duquesne held its annual Undergraduate Research & Scholarship Symposium last week showcasing research from across its academic schools. The symposium began on April 15 with a browsing session and will continue through Friday with virtual sessions.

April 17 was dedicated to in-person presentations. Students from six of the academic schools presented projects in morning and afternoon sessions in the Power Center ballroom.



EMILY AMBERY | LAYOUT EDITOR

Kathleen Roberts presented Arian Hajhassani with a medal for his work in cancer research.

To begin the day of academics, provost David Dausey welcomed participants, judges and family members to enjoy and celebrate a semester of hard work.

Music therapy major Olivia Bigler presented her work which compared Taylor Swift's Folklore album as a social response to the Covid pandemic to South African songs which were in response to epidemics like smallpox and influenza.

She conducted a lyrical analysis of Taylor Swift's songs: "Illicit Affairs," "Epiphany" and "Mad Woman."

Both orally presenting her work and presenting her poster posed a welcome challenge, she said.

"I think there is something to be said about voluntarily looking to challenge

yourself in ways you haven't before," Bigler said. "I'm definitely not a natural speaker, so it really just impacted my own abilities to be able to go through this work and then also be pumped up to present it."

Like many students at the URSS, her background in music therapy brought her to lyrical analysis and cultural reflection.

For junior biology and environmental science major, Alexa Lovelace, it was her coal mining hometown on the other side of Pennsylvania that brought her to her research.

"I was looking around for environmental research here on campus, and I found Dr. Trun's work, and being from a coal mining town on the other side of the state, I thought it was really interesting," Lovelace said. "So that's something I'm familiar with, but not yet scientifically."

Lovelace presented her poster which examined how Pittsburgh's history with coal mining would affect water drainage and runoff. Specifically, Lovelace studied bacteria that can reduce manganese levels which, in high levels can cause a variety of health issues.

"Pennsylvania is leading in constructing these remediation systems because we do have so many mines, and it is a problem," Lovelace said. "It's improving, but obviously we need to revisit the efficiency of these sites because there's other factors like the bacteria that are affecting how well these systems are working, but we are definitely on the right track."

Joel Ward, director of student research engagement, noted that themes vary from year to year but recently climate change and AI generated content have been on the rise.

With 152 projects in total, Ward's statement reigned true. From junior Anna Gartland's presentation on the Liberal Arts Major at work to Senior Olivia Kohler's presentation on adenosine triphosphate on enzymes, guests learned about the breadth of students' interests.

Some presentations, like senior music major Eric Schaefer, hooked onlookers with captivating graphics. His poster caught attention with "Godzilla" in large red print and the monster graphic in the center of the page.

Schaefer studied the film's opening theme as representative of the fear Japanese culture had about nuclear bombs following Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

"The distance between two notes evokes



BRENTARO YAMANE | MULTIMEDIA EDITOR

(Left to right) Nicholas Taylor, Jules Ciniello, Ana Utrilla Benito and Gian Cuchapin presented their team's undergraduate research at last week's symposium.

fear in the listener. That's what represents Godzilla throughout the piece; every time we hear that we know, he's going to be showing up," Schaefer said. "The dissonant intervals effect that brings to light that fear that Japanese society had regarding the bombs."

With plans to attend law school after graduating Duquesne, Schaefer thought the symposium would be a good opportunity to get practice in public speaking.

"One of the most important aspects of research is communication," Ward said in an email. "Being an effective communicator and being able to distill large amounts of technical, complicated information into an understandable and digestible format is critical."

While the students get experience in presenting, judges also get an opportunity to discover what is going on in their campus community.

Judges are volunteers who are assigned to listen to at least three presentations but are encouraged to judge more.

Shannon Baird, a student success coach in the Pharmacy school said she enjoyed the opportunity to explore what happens all over campus.

With a background in liberal arts, she looked forward to the opportunity to return to her roots by observing research from that field.

"It's great for people who have a passion

for a wide array of subjects," Baird said. "You can also see what research is conducted on campus, like, what actually happens in Mellon."

At the end of the symposium, students will receive awards from different departments at Duquesne like the University Sustainability Committee and the Grefenstette Center for Ethics in Science, Technology and Law.

Ward said the winners in each category should be announced in the next two weeks.

Though awards are exciting, for researchers like junior biomedical engineering major Olivia Sullivan, the research and presenting experience is reward enough.

"Research has been amazing; we're in [the lab] a couple of hours a week just collecting data. We work with Dr. Tanyeri in the biomedical engineering department and he's super helpful," Sullivan said. "Presentation wise, things have been going good. People are really interested and asking a lot of questions."

The week of presenting research to a variety of audiences gives students practice in what their career might look like after college.

"Events like this remind me of why I wanted to work in higher ed in the first place," Ward said. "It's incredibly inspiring and rewarding to play even a small role in these wonderful students' academic journey."

Brottier elevators leave students stuck

from STUCK — page 1

"The public safety guy who ended up just working with us was ... genuinely really nice about the situation," Seddon said. "[Public safety operator was] very visibly frustrated with the situation."

The operator ended up giving Seddon his personal cell phone number due to issues resulting from the button's failure.

"The help button wasn't really working, and we couldn't really hear and it ... was kind of hard to communicate," Marinelli said.

The students said that at some point a person who did not identify themselves came and shone a light into the top of the elevator. They recall the man remarking his surprise that they were still stuck before leaving.

He did not come back.

"They asked us like we were all good and then they just left," Marinelli said.

While there were no injuries sustained in the initial drop of the elevator, multiple students in the elevator began to feel nauseous and overheat.

"There was a point toward the 40-minute mark, I believe, where we had all started to get light headed, and it was starting to get very

warm in the elevator," Seddon said. "I remember saying to him [public safety operator] it's getting really hot in here. Some of us are getting lightheaded; only two of us have water."

Lumina said, however, that there was no official report made by Duquesne University Student Housing and Residence Life that stated medical attention was needed or requested by any residents.

When an Otis maintenance employee did show up, he had to pry open the doors of the elevator and pull each student up and out of the elevator onto the second floor.

"I had bruises all over. I had some on my legs. And then I also had three, what looked like fingerprint bruises, from the guy trying to pull me out," Martineck said.

To greet the students once they were evacuated was a Brottier resident assistant, who took their names. There was not an officer or medical assistance present.

Seddon said he ended up going to Health Services the next day because he was finding it difficult to focus and sleep after the stress of the incident.

"This type of incident is not recurring but did require a reset of some of the elevator

controls. Elevators are designed with numerous safety redundancies to protect occupants, and those safety measures performed exactly as they should whenever sensors find anything amiss. While it was certainly stressful for the students involved, it is not that rare an occurrence, and it was handled correctly," Lumina said in an email.

Seddon and other students were frustrated that there seemed to be no further concern expressed to the group following their experience.

"I don't think there was ever an email sent out about an issue with the elevator," Seddon said. "Actually no one from residents life actually checked up on us, which is kind of frustrating."

Another Brottier resident Xzavier Sciarretta, who has lived there since the fall, said he has also been stuck in the Brottier elevators once, and that he frequently hears other students experiencing the same issue.

Sciarretta will be moving to the Forbes apartments next semester.

Seddon also said that with the semester ending many students won't be renewing their leases due to issues such as the elevators in Brottier.

"Good luck to people who live here next year," Sciarretta said.



COURTESY OF MIA MARINELLI

Photo of the Brottier elevator stuck between floors outside of the elevator on March 25.

Despite challenges, Baker leads tri team

KAITLYN HUGHES
staff writer

Joella Baker never let the challenges she faced define her everyday life. Baker was diagnosed with lupus, an autoimmune disease, in 2000, but that did not stop her from becoming the triathlete and coach she is today.

Baker is the current head coach of Duquesne's first women's triathlon team.

This was not her first time on the Bluff. Baker graduated from the university in 1992, where she participated in cross country, track and swimming.

The epitome of a well-rounded athlete, Baker has competed in 27 marathons, six ultra-marathons and one Ironman.

Prior to the triathlon team, Baker has coached Quigley High School's cross country and track team, North Catholic's swim

team, spent time teaching kids with emotional disabilities how to ride horses and founded an organization known as Get Fit Families.

Through the years of being a coach and athlete, Baker was simultaneously dealing with the side effects of lupus.

"There are days when I wake up and I feel like I have arthritis all through my body," Baker said.

She often experiences fatigue, hair loss, ulcers and joint pain.

Alongside these symptoms, Baker has asthma, Raynaud's disease, vasculitis and celiac disease.

The coach explained that staying active is important for overcoming what ails her.

"I think if I didn't move, it would be easy to just feel sorry for yourself," Baker said. "Because on the days that you hurt, you don't want to do anything. But when I move

I feel better."

Through the years, Baker has not let the diagnoses inhibit the duties of being a coach. The coach has continued to help the Duquesne triathlon team thrive.

Triathlon team captain and freshman Robyn Hunt said how Baker consistently shows up even when experiencing negative side effects.

"Watching her continue to coach and be there for us even when she is not always feeling her best is really inspiring," Baker said. "Even though she might be having a flare up she is still there."

Assistant Athletic Director Paul Hightower knew Baker during her time as an undergrad at Duquesne and has kept in touch with her throughout the years, but he was unaware of Baker's battle with lupus until about a month ago.

"To me [Baker's lupus] doesn't come into play at all," Hightower said. "You never see her have a bad day. She must be able to handle that both mentally and physically in her daily routine."

Hightower said that the triathlon program had instant credibility by hiring Baker. She was working with USA Triathlon to promote the sport to different local colleges, Duquesne being one of them.

"She certainly put us on the map," Hightower said. "People now know that Duquesne is a place to go to compete in triathlons."

According to Hunt, Baker creates a healthy environment to help the team succeed.

The coach often suggests ideas for team bonding. The triathlon team visited a pumpkin patch, attended a Pirates game and had a team movie night.

Hunt said that Baker is different from other coaches because of the multiple different training techniques she offers, which mirror

the versatility required in their sport.

Baker bought equipment for the team that tracks their arm patterns while they are swimming.

"She will find the newest ways to help us improve," Hunt said. "She is willing and able to go look for those extra things that will help us and the newest ways that will develop all of us."

Sophomore Team Captain Alaina Hicks has been coached by Baker since she was nine years old.

"She is very committed to developing people individually and cares a lot about us as individuals—more so than she cares about how her team performs," Hicks said.

Baker, with challenges of her own, realizes that the athletes experience outside pressures.

"These kids have so many challenges that we didn't have," she said. "And they're showing up everyday because they love it."

As a coach, Baker wants athletes to have a good lifestyle. This is the reason she founded Get Fit Families and has coached for several years.

Get Fit Families was created to get families active and staying healthy.

The club offers opportunities to compete in cross country and triathlon races.

Baker would hear women talk about being self-conscious about working out after having a baby. Get Fit Families was a way for moms to get moving with their kids.

Her son, Zachary, was 5 years old at the time, so she incorporated a triathlon camp for kids.

"I want them to have a really positive habit in their lives and it's something that they can do for the rest of their lives," Baker said. "Once you're a triathlete, you're a triathlete forever."



COURTESY OF DUQUESNE ATHLETICS

Joella Baker laughs with her athletes during a meet in the program's first season.

O'Grady previews the Pens offseason

MICHAEL O'GRADY
staff writer

It was closer than it should have been, but for the second straight season and for just the third time since 2005, the Penguins missed the Stanley Cup Playoffs.

Written off after trading Jake Guentzel on March 7, Pittsburgh made it interesting by inserting themselves into the race for the second wild card spot, only available for capture because of the top-heavy nature of the Eastern Conference. From March 24 to April 11, the Penguins picked up points in 10 straight games. They momentarily controlled their own destiny before a loss to Boston on April 13 and even had an outside chance to clinch going into the final day of the season, but the rival Washington Capitals ended up taking the coveted last spot.

If developments in New Jersey and Detroit are any indication, playoff spots for middle-of-the-pack teams in the East won't be open for much longer. General Manager and President of Hockey Operations Kyle Dubas would be smart to rebuild and keep loading up his farm system, which he started doing by trading Guentzel, but there's still much to be done on that front. However, his hands are tied.

Sidney Crosby did everything he could and more to get the Penguins back in the playoff hunt. He had points in 12 of the last 13 games of the season and finished his 2024 campaign with 94 total points, including an astounding 42 goals for the 36-year-old. He also played a full 82 games for the second year in a row. Going into the final year of his contract, Dubas could receive the moon back for Crosby, but his status as a Pittsburgh legend renders him untradeable. He almost will certainly be back for a 20th year in black and gold.

While Crosby remains on the team, the mission is to get him a supporting cast that can compete with the East's top teams, and that's not going to be an easy task. The "Big Three" at this point might as well be a "Big One." Evgeni Malkin played all 82 games again and had a decent season, but he's going to be 38 on opening night and his best days are long past him, not to mention he's on the books for two more years. Kris Letang also played 82 games for the first time in his long career, but he is also getting visibly older and slower and Dubas hinted last week he may be due for a significant surgery this offseason. He does not become a free agent until 2028.

If that sounds bad, the rest of the roster's problems aren't any better. Erik Karlsson was serviceable offensively,

but demonstrated that he is not the difference-maker that would push the team into the upper echelon.

Reilly Smith is nowhere near the player he was in Vegas. Rickard Rakell is usually a solid top-six forward, but he battled an injury and scored just half the points he did last year. The bottom-six, with the exception of Drew O'Connor, is a rotating collection of players doing nothing. On the blue line, John Ludvig is barely NHL-quality, and re-signing P.O. Joseph would be a mistake.

The Penguins will likely need to trade a player out to free up some cap space so they can look for more impactful options, and maybe get some more prospects in the process. Jeff Carter retiring helps, but it would make sense to trade Rakell or Bryan Rust, though in the salary cap era it will be tough finding trade partners willing to pay \$5 million for four years. Finding bottom-six forwards who can contribute can be inexpensive if done right, so it would make sense for the Penguins to splurge on a defensive defenseman like Matt Roy to put their D-core in a better place than it's been in.

Pittsburgh also could do with some draft picks. They have six picks total in this draft, with only two in the first three rounds and no first-rounder unless Caro-

lina wins the Eastern Conference. The quickest fix to the Penguins, if they are insistent on keeping Crosby, is getting high-reward prospects that might immediately contribute in one or two years if Crosby is still here and performing at his level.

Dubas will be taking a serious gamble not trading away his superstar. If he continues down this route, he will be forced to mostly rely on what is already inside the organization to just get Crosby back to the playoffs, and it only gets tougher from there. The Penguins don't have much time to keep trying it this way, and the Eastern Conference isn't waiting for them to figure it out.

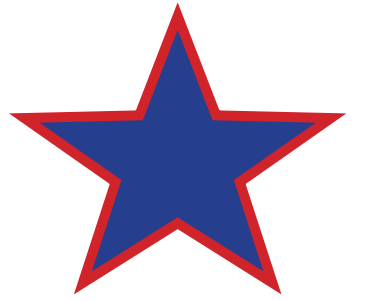


COURTESY OF WIKIMEDIA COMMONS



2023-24 *Duke Awards*

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



Men's Team of the Year: *Basketball*

This may be the easiest decision in the history of the *Duke Awards*. Their first ever Atlantic-10 Championship clinched the program's first March Madness appearance since 1977, where they pulled off an upset of BYU to advance to the Round of 32. Their 25 wins were the second-most in program history and the most in 70 years. They marked consecutive 20-win seasons for the first time in 52 years, and made an offseason coaching hire that looks to extend that streak further. They boosted program attendance and galvanized school spirit on campus and around the city to an extent that hasn't been seen in years. This wasn't just Duquesne's team of the year, but of the decade, the century and according to the banner hanging on Chatham Square, "The last zillion years."

Women's Team of the Year: *Bowling*

Duquesne continued to build an outstanding tradition on the Bluff, advancing to the regional final, before falling to eventual national champions Jacksonville State. Their school-record 71 wins were tied for 12th in the country. Kiearra Saldi earned All-American Honorable Mention honors, and was named Northeast Conference Bowler of the year. This was Duquesne's third consecutive season making the NCAA Tournament.

Newcomer of the Year: *The Triathlon Program*

Duquesne welcomed the first in a series of new teams to the Bluff last fall, when the triathlon squad debuted with a runner-up finish in the four-team Ridgewood Try a Tri for Hospice at Greensboro College. They followed up that inaugural performance by hosting their first ever event the following week, where they finished fourth of 13 teams. The tri team will soon be joined by an acrobatics and tumbling program, which will begin its maiden season next school year.

Men's Athlete of the Year: *Jayden Da*

The junior opened the season with five goals in five games, and went on to finish second in that category, while being tied for second in assists. In December, he was selected with the 29th pick of the first round in the MLS SuperDraft by champions Columbus Crew, the first time any Duke received that honor. Da made his debut with Columbus Crew 2, the club's top academy team in the MLS Next Pro league, and recorded an assist one week later.



Jayden Da (left) and Megan McConnell (right). — BRENTARO YAMANE | MULTIMEDIA EDITOR

Women's Athlete of the Year: *Megan McConnell*

McConnell added to her legend in her fourth season on the Bluff, leading the Dukes to the A-10 semifinals and an appearance in the Super 16 of the WNIT. She started all 34 games, and led the team in points, assists, rebounds and steals, all by significant margins. For her efforts, McConnell was recognized as First Team All-Conference, All-Defensive team, and All-Academic team. She can now add a *Duke* award to her trophy case.



BRENTARO YAMANE | MULTIMEDIA EDITOR

Most Improved Team: *Football*

Duquesne Football turned a 4-7 record in 2022 into a 7-5 record in 2023, but the most pronounced part of their improvement was in the Northeast Conference. After finishing 3-4 in NEC play the year before, Duquesne went 6-1 to win their sixth NEC championship and just their second outright, the only previous one having been eight years ago. Junior quarterback Darius Perrantes had a huge season coming off a season-ending injury in 2022, starting every game, leading all of Division I in passing yards per completion and being named a finalist for the Walter Payton Award, awarded to the best offensive player in the FCS. Wide receiver DJ Powell, defensive lineman Noah Palmer and defensive back Ayden Garnes joined Perrantes on the first team All-NEC team, and six other Dukes earned second team honors. Head Coach Jerry Schmitt also took home a second NEC Coach of the Year award.



MARY GENRICH | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Senior Athlete of the Year: *Dae Dae Grant*

Grant came to Duquesne in the wake of a six-win season, and in just two years, was the face of its turnaround. He scored over 1,000 points as a Duke, and eclipsed the 2,000-point plateau over his college career which he finishes 249th all time in scoring, and 11th among active players.



BRENTARO YAMANE | MULTIMEDIA EDITOR

Dae Dae Grant racked up personal accolades in his final collegiate season, including Most Outstanding Player of the Atlantic-10 Tournament, which his team also won.

'Plein Air Paint-Out' brings *outside* perspective

KAITLYN HUGHES
staff writer

Art isn't so much the things you see, but it's the things you allow others to see.

This sentiment from nineteenth-century French Impressionist Edgar Degas guides local artist Tyler Gedman in his natural landscape painting. Gedman was joined by more than 60 other novice and advanced artists at Pittsburgh Center for Arts & Media's "Plein Air Paint Out" painting session on the Mellon Park lawn.

The event gave participants an 'outside' perspective on art.

According to the hosting art center's website, "En plein aire" is a French saying which translates to "in open air." The phrase is used to refer to the art of painting outdoors.

Local artists Joshua Hoffman and Tyler Gedman attended the event to share their knowledge and love for the craft with the art community.

The two studied art throughout



KAITLYN HUGHES | STAFF WRITER

Local plein air impressionist Tyler Gedman helped event participants learn how to mix their paints to create new hues and pigments.

college. Hoffman worked an office job until 2020 when he was laid off. This prompted his decision to become a full-time painter and begin selling his plein art.

Gedman is a freelance plein air impressionist, and he teaches art at Serra Catholic High School in McKeesport.

Gedman explained how specific



KAITLYN HUGHES | STAFF WRITER

Lars Kuehn struggled to paint in the outdoor setting, but as a life-long art hobbyist, he was determined to conquer a new aspect of his craft.

art equipment makes the plein air painting process go smoother.

According to the artist, oil paints are preferable to fast-drying acrylic paint. A pochade box (a lighter and transportable easel), paper towels and a painter's bag create a recipe for success.

Although these were the tools Gedman suggested, all participants were required to bring their own arts supplies. This led to a variety of equipment throughout the park, with some even bringing drawing utensils.

Gedman shared that the proper paraphernalia does not go far unless paired with the correct technique.

"A good painting is a painting of effects," Gedman said. "Whether that be the effect of how colors change over distance, or the effect of light and shadow. It should never be about things and objects and places."

According to Gedman, though having the correct materials and strategy does come in handy, the entire process is about progress.

Gedman enjoys the progressive aspect of art because there is never a goal of perfection.

"From the first mark they put to their canvas they want it to be perfect, and it just doesn't work like that. It's about evolving," Gedman said. "Painting is sometimes like life. It can be a big mess at the beginning, but then it's a series of corrections, after corrections until you get it where you want it to be."

Pittsburgh Center for Arts & Me-

dia recognizes that art is progressive and encourages artists at all skill levels to join in on the events and classes that occur.

Hoffman and Gedman enjoy coming to art-related events to not only inspire others but be exposed to differing perspectives.

"It's about going to a place where other people have a similar appreciation for the same thing you're doing," Hoffman said. "Coming out to events like this or teaching gets you out of your head and helps you solidify what you're doing."

Those who did attend the event were excited to join the local community in their craft.

Susan Kahle and Jamie Hamm attended out of a love for art, but also with a hope for finding their people.

"It's been frustrating not knowing other people who do [plein air painting]," Kahle said. "We haven't found a Pittsburgh plein air group, so we were excited when we saw this."

Hamm added that not only does a strong art community bring current artists together, but it also encourages people wanting to create to try out the craft.

The attendees told *The Duke* that Pittsburgh Center for Arts & Media is a great place for beginner level artists due to the numerous classes they offer in painting, drawing and ceramics.

The organization is also an outlet for people to enrich their art as a hobby.

Lars Kuehn loved to paint growing up but ended up going to school

for business.

Kuehn became a board member for the organization and attends an oil painting class every Tuesday Kuehn said.

Not used to painting outside, the Paint Out raised some challenges.

"It's much harder because you have less space. Everything is cramped," Kuehn said. "The weather is changing. More wind, less wind. More sun, less sun ... Reality changes all the time."

According to Gedman, overcoming challenges is a part of art, and every painting presents a different challenge.

There are times where painting seems effortless, while there are also instances where the process is a complete battle.

Each of the paintings from the weekend's event will have a chance to be entered in the organization's fall exhibition. Entries will be judged by Pittsburgh's most well-known plein air painter, Ron Donoughe.

Aspiring artists can dive deeper into many mediums with the Pittsburgh Center for Arts & Media or attend future events like the "Spring Artists' Market" on May 4. More information can be found at their website, www.pghartsmedia.org.

The overall mission of the art center is to expose people to art by educating and engaging them through various opportunities.

"With art you can work toward something that feels like it has a higher purpose," said Hoffman. "With art it feels like you're moving around to just acknowledge the greatness of existence."



KAITLYN HUGHES | STAFF WRITER

Susan Kahle (front) sat on Mellon Park lawn aside her husband Jamie Hamm (left) during the painting workshop.

CAMPUS
EVENTS

Pie DEI
April 25 @ 11 a.m.

Visit College Hall Lawn and pie volunteers from DEI organizations.

End of the Year Picnic
April 26 @ 12 p.m.

Head to the NiteSpot to celebrate the end of the semester with Commuter Council!

Festival on the Bluff 2024
April 27 @ 3 p.m.

Join DPC for the 2nd annual all-day music festival on A-Walk featuring a caricature artist, bounce house, rock wall and a pop-up taco bar.

Trivia Night!
April 29 @ 9 p.m.

The IR Club is hosting in the NiteSpot with free food, games and fun!

Study Hall with oSTEM
April 30 @ 9 p.m.

Study in a different space and get some work done while meeting new people in Towers MPR.

EMILY'S
EPIPHANIES

A Note to Summer & '24 Graduates

"I have no idea what I'm going to do tomorrow..."

"How exciting!"

~ *Night at the Museum 3* (2014)

Although we haven't surpassed the stress of finals quite yet, we are almost to the inevitable "What next?"

If you have your plans laid out, congratulations. I am thrilled for you.

If not, then I hope you lean into the unknown. Find excitement in the untamed and uncharted possibilities of what you can and will accomplish by allowing the path of life to take you to whatever is destined for you.

The best laid plans are laid with good intentions, but it can be equal parts fun and terrifying to go with the flow and allow yourself the freedom to discover something new or unexpected.

Enter your next season or chapter of life with an open heart, an open mind and if you need it, a blank slate.

— Emily Fritz

Aquarius ♒

I like when I can taste the smell.

Pisces ♓

Hot girl summer but only in air conditioned spaces.

Aries ♈

We are just horizontal girls living in a vertical world.

Taurus ♉

I'm tired of saying this. I feel like a flight attendant.

Gemini ♊

DOST THOU COMPREHEND?

Cancer ♋

Fragile, like a glass flamingo.

Leo ♌

God is testing me... and I have not studied.

Virgo ♍

May thy knife *chip* and *shatter*.

Libra ♎

Tegan & Sara ran so Jojo Siwa could choke.

Scorpio ♏

Wish I could send this to Gutenberg (fish)

Sagittarius ♐

That pancake just had a lobotomy.

Capricorn ♑

Please don't get bit straight in the face by a tiger shark.

Taylor Swift begins new era with lyrical parallels

KAYLA DENKE
staff writer

Taylor Swift released her eleventh album, “The Tortured Poets Department” (TTPD) at midnight on April 19. Unbeknownst to listeners, the original 16-song release was referred to as “The Manuscript.”

Two hours later, Swift released a second album, called “The Anthology,” which expanded the original album by 15 bonus tracks. For Swifties, this double release was the long-awaited breakup album from her previous six-year-long relationship with actor Joe Alwyn.

The first song in “TTPD” is “Fortnight” featuring Post Malone. Immediately, Swift’s opening verse set the tone with her lyrics. “I was a functioning alcoholic / ‘Til nobody noticed my new aesthetic,” Swift sang.

“Midnights,” the synth pop album released in Oct. 2022, is believed to be the “aesthetic” that the popstar is referring to. However, prior to “Midnights,” Swift’s eighth and ninth albums, “folklore” and “evermore,” also introduced new aesthetics, shifting her away from her pop sound back to her country roots in a folk repackage.

As the newest addition to her discography, “TTPD” pivots the billionaire once again to a new ‘era’ of music in her career, with many farewell motifs and parallels leading lis-

teners back to Swift’s earlier music. “Bygones will be bygone eras fadin’ into gray,” Swift sings in track 18, “imgonnagetyouback.”

The fifth song on the album – which is historically Swift’s most emotionally charged song on any of her albums – is called “So Long, London.” In a similar fashion to

it’s romantic / Leaving me safe and stranded,” directly countering her lyrics from “New Romantics” during her “1989” album: “Please leave me stranded / It’s so romantic.”

With every allusion to herself, Swift separates herself from her time with the actor.

Easter eggs have always been an



COURTESY OF WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

Fans of Taylor Swift finally understand why the artist had been teasing the number two as having high importance: the surprise double album release comes in at two hours and two minutes.

“Death By A Thousand Cuts” or “Call It What You Want,” the intro to the song echoes in a way that many have likened to church bells.

“London” in this case is likely in reference to Alwyn. With each nod to her past, Swift seems to depart further from the relationship.

In the third track, “Down Bad,” Swift sings “How dare you think

exciting component of Swift’s music and its production. Many Swifties are tuned into her favorite numbers, lyrical repetition, costume choices and the double entendres of her musicality.

Track 24, “thanK you aMee,” acts as an ode to Kim Kardashian – whose name is capitalized in the song title.

Meanwhile, the artist nods to pop culture pieces from her birth year, like the 1989 Disney film “The Little Mermaid.” Track six, “But Daddy I Love Him,” is an iconic line from the princess movie and Swift equally returned the iconicism with her surprise line, “I’m having his baby,” quickly followed by “No, I’m not, but you should see your faces.”

Swift released the music video for the opening single of “TTPD” on April 19 at 8 p.m. EST. Swift’s first outfit in the “Fortnight” music video acted as another Easter egg for Swifties, who took to social media to point out that the dress and jewelry was similar to Swift’s Feb. 9 Grammy ensemble, which was when she announced the album.

Similarly, Swift cast Ethan Hawke and Josh Charles in the video as psych ward scientists studying the singer. Upon closer inspection, viewers can see that Charles’ lab coat names him as Dr. Overstreet, a nod to his character in another 1989 film “The Dead Poet Society,” which he and Hawke starred in.

The song “Clara Bow,” drops not just Clara Bow’s name, but also Stevie Nicks. Both women were pop symbols of their times, in the 1920s and 1970s respectively, and Swift even drops her own name in it alongside them, acknowledging her overwhelming stardom in this century.

In a more illusive fashion, the

singer-songwriter uses geography and the number two as additional insight from her breakup with Alwyn.

A fortnight is a two-week period in time, perfectly matching the length of time between her “The Eras Tour” shows in Florida and Texas, which also make a number of appearances in her lyrics.

Fans have speculated that the reason she mentions the two states indicates when the news broke about her breakup. While unconfirmed, the title of track eight, “Florida!!!” featuring Florence + The Machine, utilizes a cadence that spells the state name again.

One of the more jarring elements of “TTPD” is the ongoing reference to religion. Having identified as a lifelong Christian, Swift’s religious beliefs came under fire after accusations of witchcraft arose from the 2020 song “willow.”

Now, Swift’s song “Guilty As Sin?” contains lyrics like “What if I roll the stone away? / They’re gonna crucify me anyway.” Many fans are starting to step away due to these lyrics because they looked up to her because of her faith, but now she is assumingly atheist or mocking God.

The detachment from her previous works is jarring and at some points overwhelming to new listeners or passive fans, but “The Anthology” of 31 songs is bold and serves as a glimpse into the pop culture conundrum that is Taylor Swift.

Summer on the Bluff brings seasonal favorites, local gems

EMILY FRITZ
a&e editor

The Steel City is approaching the summer months with lots to do and see. From annual festivals to new offerings at local favorites, there is always something waiting to be discovered by someone new or welcoming repeat visitors.

Must-See Musicians

Rising artist **Chappell Roan** is set to perform at Stage AE on June 2 to launch Pride Month in Pittsburgh. Her debut studio

album, ‘The Rise and Fall of a Midwest Princess,’ is available to peruse on all major streaming platforms.

Hozier is set to arrive in the ‘Burgh at The Pavilion at Star Lake near Burgettstown, Pa. on July 29 to create hype around his newest album, ‘Unreal Unearth,’ which is set to release on Aug. 18.

New Neighborhood Exhibits

‘The Science Behind Pittsburgh’ begins at the Carnegie Science Center on May 25 complete with a two-story, 12,000 square foot playground ready to

reveal the lesser known intricacies of Disney’s well loved animation studio.

‘**KAWS + Warhol**’ opens on May 18 in celebration of the Andy Warhol Museum’s 30th birthday. The interactive artist KAWS rejuvenates Warhol’s pop culture disturbances with rounded sculptures and paintings.

Returning Festivals

Three Rivers Arts Festival will be making its comeback from June 2-11. Sponsored by Pittsburgh Cultural Trust, this multidisciplinary performing and visual arts celebration will feature free music and art for all ages.

It wouldn’t be summertime in Pittsburgh without the return of **Picklesburgh**, a Steel City favorite that invites pickle enthusiasts to indulge in the oddities of pickling. This year the festival is slated for July 18-21.

The Show Must Go On

Despite the end of Pittsburgh Cultural Trust’s regular season, **Pittsburgh CLO** (Civic Light Opera Association) will be showcasing musicals all summer long including “West Side Story,” “The Color Purple,” “The Music Man” and “Seussical.”

Fan Favorites

3 Rivers Comicon will be making its way to the David L. Lawrence Convention Center from June 1-2. Get your cosplay ready for competition and enter to win \$1,000 in craftsmanship, judges favorites and best in show.

Steel City Con will host its summer con at the Monroeville Convention and Events Center from August 9-11. Visit www.steelcitycon.com to check which of your favorite celebrities will be in town.

A Wild Time

The Pittsburgh Zoo & PPG Aquarium is turning 125-years-old. Join them in celebration at their **‘Summer Safari: In Black & White’** on June 21. Admission includes unlimited food, animal encounters and live music. All guests must be 21+. Not vibing with the zebra-adjacent dress code? Visit in early May for Salamander Saturday (May 4) or Wild Wellness Day (May 19) for a more laid back visit.

Head to the **National Aviary** to connect with feathered friends like the newly hatched Eurasian Eagle-Owls and the Peregrine Falcon chicks or enjoy the immersive ‘Habitat Heros’ show.



COURTESY OF WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

Chappell Roan is making her second visit to Pittsburgh, this time as a headliner, at Pittsburgh Pride on June 2.

Off the Beaten Trail

Hoping to explore the great outdoors this summer? **Hollow Oak Land Trust** is steward to more than 700 acres of land in the Pittsburgh Airport Corridor. Enjoy hiking, biking, running, dog walking or anything that can be enjoyed without a motor.

This ‘slice of Steel City’ guide is hardly all-encompassing, but let it serve as your introduction all that the ‘Burgh has to offer. Take a well-deserved break — you’ve more than earned it!



COURTESY OF WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

‘Picklesburgh’ is a Pittsburgh favorite every summer as locals celebrate the versatility of the pickled cucumber and experiment with new ways to integrate it into beverages, snacks and merchandise.

THE DUQUESNE DUKE

113 College Hall
600 Forbes Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15282

editorial staff

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administrative staff

adviser Paula Reed Ward

email us: theduqduke@gmail.com



Courtesy of Wikimedia Commons

Mike Johnson won the house speakership after a three week vacancy in the position.

“A house divided against
itself cannot stand.”

A

Abraham Lincoln

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

@TheDuquesneDuke

Monday, April 15-

A resident director and resident assistant found marijuana, paraphernalia and alcohol during a room search after a fire drill.

Saturday, April 20-

A school bus backed into a metal bollard and caused it to tilt over. There were no injuries.

Sunday, April 21-

There was a minor vehicle accident on the corner of Vickroy Street and Stevenson Street.

EMAIL TIPS

The Duke's news section would love to hear from you about stories that you want to see in print. Know a talented professor or accomplished student? See something on campus that just doesn't make sense? You can send your tips and story ideas to Editor-in-Chief Spencer Thomas at thomass15@duq.edu

STAFF
EDITORIALLocal news brings
power to the people

Since 2005, about 2,200 local newspapers across America have closed, according to the MacArthur Foundation.

Because of these closures 20% of Americans find themselves in “news deserts” where little to no reliable news coverage is offered about their area.

Staying informed about one's community is a no-brainer, but if local journalism continues to face obstacles like low readership, insufficient funding and decreased cooperation, staying informed becomes much harder.

As distributors of information, small local newsrooms serve a powerful role in their community, but as for-profit journalism continues to dominate the information pool, their ability to stay open dwindles.

We need to reprioritize finding ways to support and bolster the efforts of community reporting.

Community journalism focuses on locally-oriented, professional news coverage that typically narrows its scope to city neighborhoods, individual suburbs or small towns.

Kenneth Byerly, who coined the term “community journalism,” emphasized the unique position small publications have in their area.

“Community newspapers have something that city dailies lack—a nearness to people. This is a great strength, and a great problem” he said in his book, “Community Journalism.”

The nearness community papers have to their audience allows readers to be specifically informed about their neighbors and those in power in their communities.

As a part of the community themselves, these papers diligently keep their community informed, even if it means publishing stories that reveal hard truths.

Though breaking hard news is a part of the job, journalists who work for community papers also attend informational events that some may call boring like school board meetings.

Small papers have broken stories on impossible school bus routes in Jefferson County, Ky. Political fraud in DuBois, Pa. and water contamination levels in Wausau, Wisc., to name a few.

The Duquesne Duke serves this role for the Duquesne community and covers the stuff no other newspaper has the bandwidth to.

From stories about student businesses and the Junior Jays pep band at March Madness, to over-promised parking on campus and the Black student Union awards banquet, The Duke takes its position as serving its community seriously.

We have to continue to support The Duke, and papers like it, as the student journalists here will graduate and hopefully repopulate smaller community reporting initiatives reversing adverse effects of news deserts.

A house divided against itself

MAX MARCELLO

staff writer

Well they're at it again. I had hoped that the Kevin McCarthy fiasco would have been the end of the dysfunction in the House of Representatives. Last October saw far-right opportunists and mainstream provocateurs publicly cannibalize their own party leadership, leading to the ousting of Speaker McCarthy.

This created a lengthy succession crisis in which the established Republican leadership could not secure enough support to attain the gavel. After a grueling three-week process, a dark horse emerged from the bayou to become second in line for the presidency.

Speaker Mike Johnson of Louisiana, with his newfound celebrity status, began making media appearances on Fox News in an attempt to demonstrate to the Republican voters and Americans at large that the party was going to act united in the House.

I took Johnson at his word for several key reasons. Firstly, the party's razor-thin majority in the House is in jeopardy. Dysfunction and partisan infighting are only going to hurt the GOP in the election that lies ahead and any representative would be naive not to do everything in their power to control the chamber.

Second, Johnson's quiet, unassuming nature combined with his beliefs and work before politics greatly buoyed his speakership prospects. Johnson is an avowed Evangelical Christian who shares many of the beliefs of those who have quickly become a lifeline to the GOP, allowing them to dominate the “Bible Belt.”

In line with these beliefs, Johnson is a young-earth creationist, who opposes the separation of church and state and worked for the Alliance Defending Freedom

after law school. The ADF is the country's most organized and successful Christian legal organization, and it has made headlines for court cases supporting prayer in school, allowing businesses to discriminate against LGBT customers and putting forward issues surrounding abortion.

When the case *Lawrence v. Texas* made its way to the Supreme Court in 2003, Johnson authored a friend of the court brief curiae arguing that anti-sodomy laws were constitutional. Given this, Johnson's position among the right wing of his party should have been secure. However, the coalition that deposed McCarthy is now gearing up against Johnson for largely the same reasons: the budget.

The debate on foreign aid has bitterly divided the Republican party. Many hardliners oppose any form of financial assistance, especially to Ukraine. However, Democrats have insisted that no budget can be put forward without the inclusion of foreign aid to Israel and Ukraine. Ultimately, Johnson and his Democratic counterpart Hakeem Jeffries agreed on a budget that allowed foreign aid to go through, which is where concerns about Johnson's speakership eligibility emerged.

As the challenges to Johnson gain steam, it should be no surprise that this Congress may very well be the most unproductive in United States history. Rather than assemble to do the public's bidding, Congress has reached new levels of partisan toxicity both between and within the parties. While there is nothing wrong with representatives holding leadership accountable and shifting course when necessary, the accelerated pace of recalcitrant behavior from political egoists hurts everyone. Johnson, an already hard right figure facing chal-

lenges, is a dire warning of what is to come.

Democrats are no angels in this situation, either. Their over-insistence that foreign aid must be included in any spending omnibus is deeply shortsighted. Regardless of the strength of the American economy or the capital surplus the nation has, the first priority of the United States is to be the caretaker of the United States.

Financial and military assistance to other nations, while important, should not be the hill Democrats are willing to die on. In addition to pushing for more foreign aid, the party has relished in the GOP's implosion.

Unfortunately, they have failed to recognize a concerning pattern in these successive leadership disputes. Should Johnson be removed, we can surely expect an even-further-right speaker.

Although I vehemently disagree with Johnson, I would rather see him than Marjorie Taylor Greene lead the House of Representatives. For the time being, Democrats should break from the groupthink and seek rapprochement with the Speaker.

Given that this is my final column, an unorthodox conclusion is in order. I'd like to thank all the staff and editors of *The Duke* who I have had the utmost pleasure working with and learning from. You have given me guidance, friendship and a reinvigorated sense of curiosity and passion for writing. I also want to thank my family and the friends who have given me support along the way. Finally, I want to thank you, the readers, as many of you have approached me on occasion to give comments on my work. I was unaware that I was such a polarizing figure and had such a passionate and dedicated readerbase.

On women's representation in clinical trials

HANNAH PETERS
staff writer

While we have made great strides in terms of women's equality, one aspect that has yet to catch up and often goes unnoticed is representation in medical and scientific research.

Up until 1993, women were not required to be included as participants in clinical research. In fact, a 1977 FDA policy even barred women of "childbearing potential" from early-phase clinical trials in addition to women who used contraception, who were single or whose husbands were vasectomized.

Despite the removal of the 1977 policy, its sentiments remain a central reason for why women account for just 29% to 34% of participants in early-phase clinical trials funded by the pharmaceutical industry.

According to a study from the Society for the Study of Social Problems, since the late 1990s medical health policies have employed two conflicting frameworks: one that demands women should be equally represented in biomedical research and another that implements policies emphasizing women's participation in health-promoting behaviors for the sake of future pregnancies.

The conflict is found from the fact that clinical trials can begin while nonhuman testing is still in progress meaning there is often inadequate data on "reproductive toxicity and potential for teratogenic effects on fetal development," according to the study.

Subsequently, concerns for future children tend to take the forefront and

"women of childbearing potential are often not given the choice to enroll in a trial that could adversely affect a fetus, even when those women have no plans to become pregnant in the near future," the study said.

Their findings also build on prior conceptual frameworks like author Miranda Waggoner's "anticipatory motherhood" which she explains is "a framework that positions all women of childbearing age as 'prepregnant' and exhorts them to minimize health risks to phantom fetuses and future pregnancies."

This approach is problematic, though, as it eliminates the woman's choice to decide, and it patronizes women as a whole, treating them as if they are children who need somebody to make decisions for them. Not only this, but this problematic approach to research assumes all women will choose the path of motherhood which is simply not reality.

As Waggoner puts it, this "exalts women as mothers and not women qua women."

Clearly, no one wants to bring harm to any future pregnancies. If women are informed of the risks involved then there is no need to make choices for ALL women. Especially when this framework fosters a lack of support of proper research and minimizes the individual health needs of women.

Thankfully, these ideas have had less of a hold in other areas of research where the picture of women participation is a little less bleak.

From 2016-2019, an average of 41.2% of adult cardiovascular, psychiatric, and cancer-related clinical trial

participants were female, according to a study from Harvard Medical School.

However, the disparity is greater for psychiatric disorders, where females make up 60% of the patient population, but just 42% of trial participants.

Even with improvements being made to increase inclusivity and fair representation in research, an important aspect is often overlooked — that men and women's health are not the same.

Differences in biology mean disease and medicine affect each sex differently, but the majority of research has treated them as the same.

In fact, it was not until 2016 that the NIH required scientists to "consider sex as a biological variable" in order to receive NIH grant funding.

Even after this policy, it was found that only 4% of published papers provided a reason for why they did not use both sexes or why they failed to analyze data by sex, according to a study from Northwestern University.

"The implications of not analyzing research data by sex are endless," said Nicole Witowich, associate director of the Women's Health Research Institute at Northwestern University in a news release. "When we fail to consider the influences of sex in biomedical research, it's like we're trying to put together a puzzle without all the pieces."

With previous and even current research failing to properly include and consider women, we are left with a gap in medical knowledge and the effects of this are clear.

For instance, women experience adverse effects from medications at twice the rate of men, according to a Univer-

sity of California study.

A study done by the NIH found that across 112 acute and chronic diseases, women experience longer time to diagnosis and are older than men when diagnosed.

Additionally, women and racial and ethnic minorities in the U.S. are 20-30% more likely than white men to experience a misdiagnosis, according to the *British Medical Journal*.

Racial and ethnic minorities have also historically been left out of research studies. This is evidenced by the fact that Black women are three times more likely to die from pregnancy-related causes than white women, according to the CDC.

Further, the U.S. has the highest infant and maternal mortality rate compared to any other high-income nation. Studied by the Commonwealth Fund, maternal death rates are more than three times the rate in most of the other high-income countries.

Ironic, considering that concern for future fetuses is prioritized over sufficiently understanding women's health.

Fortunately, there has been some movement being made to remedy poor efforts in women's health. Most recently, President Joe Biden issued an executive order in March to advance women's health studies, calling on Congress to invest \$12 billion in new funding for women's health research.

Hopefully, this is a sign that knowledge on women's health is on its way to catching up. But for now, one thing is for certain — women have been left out of medical advancements for far too long.

Time flies: a reflection on my freshman year

PAIGE PARSONS
staff writer

Whenever someone asks how school is going, I respond with: "Every bad day in college is a good one because it's not high school."

College is difficult, there's no way around it, but it was also a new start. The workload is intense and overwhelming no matter the major, and that's definitely something that took some getting used to at first. I'm no stranger to difficult classes.

The variety in scheduling was a pleasant surprise. Rather than struggling through seven straight hours of classes everyday, my days are balanced. On days I have fewer classes, I can do more homework. When classes are scheduled back to back, I can give myself a small break from the work and leave it for a free day.

It took a few months to get used to, but now I really enjoy the flexibility college allows me.

It's crazy to think that my time as a freshman is coming to a close. Eight months ago, I entered my dorm for the first time — confused and a bit unsure of how the year would go. Everyone seems to have horror stories about freshman year and I had no idea what to expect.

Luckily, I found my people. My

roommate and I slid easily into a routine together that I feel lucky to have gotten so early on — she's one of my closest friends on campus, and I adore our silly moments together.

I love the circle of people I surround myself with, and I met them by coming here. They help me to become a more educated and overall better person everyday, which is something that everyone deserves in a friend. I found people that I can trust to support me through my weak moments and to laugh with me even when I'm being too much.

I built my own little family at this school, at this dorm, and it's kind of hard to imagine that I'll never live in this room again. There are so many fond memories that happened here — so many people that have sat on my bed, watched all the movies and shows with me and shared in all of our laughs. I'll be moving out in two weeks, and I don't want to see all the life I built up here drain away.

I think back on the past year and I've learned so much about myself. Pushing past my own goals academically has always been something I shied away from because my heart was never in it before coming here.

High school felt so aimless and it killed my joy for learning — something that only began to change when I re-

alized that I CHOSE my college path. I got to choose where it would lead me and take classes specific to my own unique interests. Classes can be overwhelming, but in less than a year I have learned a lot and actually retained skills from those classes. I challenged myself and it paid off, if only in the sense that I gained confidence in myself and my abilities.

College has thrown so many things at me, and I've walked away from it with nothing but growth — academically, emotionally and mentally. University is known for changing people, but it's also good at emphasizing what is already there. I'd like to think that I became closer to the person I want to be during my time here so far.

With growth comes growing pains and despite knowing that a biochemistry undergrad and forensic science masters program would not be easy, I was afraid of challenging myself when I came here at first.

I was worried I'd crack under the pressure or end up backing down just like so many others did in the first semester. There's nothing wrong with that, of course — college is difficult, draining and above all not a linear process. Once again, growing pains.

While I have enjoyed my time here so far, Duquesne itself is not without flaws. The communication between departments and students is lacking on so many fronts

and can be so frustrating sometimes. Certain departments need to listen to students more, some need to listen less to the trivial grumbles about course load. I have my complaints, but at the end of the day I'm happy with my decision to come here. Despite its numerous challenges, I love my major. I love the people I've met here and the experiences I've had — good and bad.

Ultimately, I would say that freshman year is what you make it. Every experience is determined by the approach taken and the maturity level of the person dealing with it.

Almost everything can be solved with communication and self-reflection — as young adults in college, it is prime time to examine yourself and discover the type of person you want to be. Just like Duquesne always says — the foundation of your future starts here, and as I've learned, it's really all up to you what you do with it.



PAIGE PARSONS | STAFF WRITER
Paige Parsons (left) and her roommate Bethany McAninch (right).

Bella says bye: Features editor graduates

ISABELLA ABBOTT

features editor

Coming to Duquesne, the only thing I was certain would be a part of my college journey was the rowing team. I started as an undecided liberal arts student athlete with no dream job and no sense of belonging within a major.

I watched countless teammates introduce themselves on the first day of practice stating their major and what they wanted to do after graduation and I would awkwardly be the freshman with no future plans.

And boy, did it take a while to find my passion.

I enjoyed writing but couldn't comprehend or even study for science classes, even though, as a kid, I told teachers that being a veterinarian would be intriguing.

However, I realized that the vet's job was to help look inside the animals, not just to walk and play with them.

But as I started taking classes in media and writing, I began to realize that journalism was my path. So, I declared my major as journalism my sophomore year, added a double major in communications shortly after that and declared a sociology minor just for fun this semester because I finished my major classes.

I joined *The Duke* during my sophomore year as a staff writer after hearing countless students come into my journalism classes and tell us to write for them.

I remember being terrified but excited to write my first published story in the Arts and Entertainment section. Though this first story was a Pittsburgh concert roundup, something that I couldn't get too wrong (I hope), I was worried I hadn't written it in the right style or that the staff would hate it and tear it up.

But, surprisingly, during my time as an editor and staff writer, I've learned mistakes can be made and fixed, and that it's never a bad thing to be corrected as mistakes make us better.

So, after seeing that first story and my first newspaper with my name on it, I kept asking to write and eventually applied to be the next Features Editor at the start of my junior year. Since then, I've been able to write in every section except sports (funny because I participated in one) and have written many fun and rewarding articles.

I've also kept every Duquesne newspaper with my byline since.

Some of my favorites include a story where I taste-tested Moonlit Burgers and any stories written about accomplished alumni and students excelling in their majors.

Though I'll admit, some, if not most, of those Wednesday nights were hard. Knowing I was staying up past my rowing athlete bedtime to edit and get the paper ready would worry me about practice the

next morning, getting up at 4:45 a.m., sometimes 5 a.m.

I even had days where I left crying while walking back to my dorm, realizing I'd only get five hours of sleep before a hard, racing day.

But I'm so thankful to all my editors and Paula Ward for letting me leave before the rest of the staff, even if I miss the prime newsroom hour.

Working for *The Duke* made me a stronger writer, editor, interviewer, byline lover and deadline appreciator. It was somewhere to write even when I wasn't quite sure, and still am not sure, what I wanted to do in life, I had writing to keep me company.

Having published stories in *The Duke* also gave me amazing internship experiences, such as working for 90.5 WESA this past summer as a newsroom production assistant. I took my AP-style and interview knowledge to a well-known radio station and had my stories broadcast on air and in a digital format.

As I end my time here, I'd like to thank Dr. Dillon for motivating me to write for *The Duke* during my sophomore year of college and always encouraging me to take on projects like being this year's editor for the Media Department's Off The Bluff magazine.

I'd also like to thank Paula Ward, my former fellow editors and this year's editors, for always helping me and finding



COURTESY OF ISABELLA ABBOTT

Isabella worked as the features editor of *The Duke* for the past two years. Pictured here is Isabella with her radio equipment when she worked for WESA.

mistakes in my work that I may or may not keep making each week.

Though I'm still uncertain where life will take me, I'll always be grateful for all of the opportunities working for *The*

The End for Good: Multimedia editor says goodbye

BRENTARO YAMANE

multimedia editor

When I graduated with my bachelor's degree in Sports Information & Media and Multiplatform Journalism in December 2022, there was a part of my heart that was sad. When I wrote my first farewell, I could see that I was improving my skills and getting better at my job as the multimedia and layout editor. At that point, I did not know if I was going to be accepted into graduate school and I was already replaced by someone else hired to take my position for the following semester. I was a little upset as I wanted to continue to build the legacy of The Duquesne Duke, as I feel that there was so much more that I could accomplish.

Fast forward to Spring 2023, and I am sitting in graduate courses taking on the new adventure of studying communication. For the first half of the semester, I was focused on passing my classes and working on succeeding at the graduate level.

Then, all of a sudden I was given an opportunity by my friend and former Editor-in-Chief Luke Henne to regain my position. I was thankful, and I took advantage of the opportunity to come back. Throughout the past school year, I think that as a whole the newspaper has done a better job making its presence well-known throughout the school. When I came back, the one thing I promised myself was to try and give *The Duke* more exposure. One of my biggest strengths that I feel that I am good at is interacting with people and posting on social media.



COURTESY OF BRENTARO YAMANE

Brentaro is a current graduate student studying communications at Duquesne. He's been able to cover countless stories at *The Duke* during his undergraduate and graduate time here.

It might be funny to some people, but that's what I am passionate about and want to continue to get better at. I felt that I did all I could to get more people to show interest in this organization. Being a part of *The Duke* was one of the main things that I was invested in college and it obviously makes sense since I have aspirations of being a journalist and a photographer as well.

I took this year very seriously. I did more work than I had ever had before. It might be exhausting, but I liked it so much that I did not care. I saw my other editors and writers cover events that I

had never seen in the newspaper before and that has to be one of the most positive things that our advisor Paula Reed Ward has to be happy about. I saw myself taking pictures of events that I had never done before (NCAA March Madness, A-10 Championship, Solar Eclipse, Mayor Ed Gainey showing up to events, etc.) and opportunities like that make me more motivated for the future.

I am excited to see all the other events that will be covered next year as I can see next year's staff being very busy as well. With events such as the presidential election, the football and men's bas-

ketball team trying to repeat as conference champions, and the opening of the new Osteopathic School of Medicine, it'll definitely make me continue to read the newspaper next year, even though I will not be on the staff. *The Duke* celebrates its 100th anniversary next year and if I thought this year was special, next year will only be more special for everyone else.



COURTESY OF BRENTARO YAMANE

One of Brentaro's biggest strengths is posting on social media. As a photographer at *The Duke* he's able to create content to share with his followers.

WRITERS & PHOTOGRAPHERS NEEDED FOR THE DUKE

Contact
polene@duq.edu

Em & Em bid farewell to late nights at *The Duke* 10 exclamation points later... *live laugh layout*

EMMA POLEN
editor-in-chief

When I got to Duquesne, I did not know a single soul.

Thanks to *The Duke*, I have 4,000 new friends.

There was Sally Power – a woman who’s helping other women in need, one top at a time. She started a women’s clothing thrift business out of her husband’s death and hasn’t stopped making her storefront the most affordable, accessible, supportive place for women in need. I went to cover her shop and ended up being introduced to a victim of domestic abuse, paranoid that any day her abuser would track her down. It was an on-the-spot conversation I will never forget.

I learned about Louisiana Mardi Gras traditions from a Louisiana native herself...and had the honor of trying her homemade southern-style king cake.

Thanks to a talk at the National Aviary (with a human), I learned the difference between a Linnaeus two-toed sloth and a three-toed sloth.

There was also Joy Krumenacker. It takes a certain level of thoughtfulness and care to speak with a mother surviving her sixteen-year-old son whose organ donation saved the lives of numerous other people. And how do you accurately share her story?

I talked to a marathon runner with a life-altering brain tumor. To this day, I still check up on Joe Peroney’s journey on social media. He got through his training with a playlist with all the songs that remind him of his closest friends. That type of person deserves to have their story well-represented.



LUKE HENNE | EX-EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
Emma and her famous twin brothers Luke (left) and Will (right).

How can you take the story of a passionate marathon runner who is more than just a hard working trainee and portray the entire individual on the page? I can’t say I have the answer to that, but I can say it’s a question that’s been on my mind the past three years on staff for *The Duke*.

No matter where post-grad takes me, I know I want to keep sharing these stories. Because they mean something to someone, and, in meeting these people along the way, they mean something to me, too.

And, of course, MY story wouldn’t be complete without mentioning the friends I met in the newsroom. I know we’re all growing, every Wednesday night as we publish the paper without fail, but it’s hard to see when we’re in constant company. That’s why I’m grateful for the moments when things didn’t go the way we planned. It’s at these critical points that our improvement is revealed – as a team,

turns out we’re great at cold-calling sources at 11 p.m. on a Wednesday night, writing and rewriting an entire 800-word story and finding the perfect comedic headline. It’s in these moments that I know this place will do great things without me.

No matter how much time goes by, there’s no lack of enthusiasm everyone at *The Duke* shares toward our work. With the help of Lauren Turin from campus technologies, we’re getting water fountains in College Hall. That’s the type of work that happens when we’re passionate and willing to put in the work. Willing to meet new people ... and call the plumber every week and harass him until he gets so fed up with me and water fountains are installed.

Looking back at my first article, a story about virtual jazz, that enthusiasm for writing at *The Duke* shines through. I added an



BRENTARO YAMANE | MULTIMEDIA EDITOR
Emma Polen (left) and Emily Ambery (right) became friends through *The Duke*. This year, Emily and Emma both found a new fear of sneezes. Taken by Brentaro Yamane (the picture, of course).

exclamation point to the first sentence of the story. Luckily, none of the editing staff took it out, because now I can look back and see how excited I was to get started with *The Duke*.

One of my first stories as layout editor was free birthday rewards to comp Downtown on your birthday. I distinctly remember our advisor, Paula, saying, “Emma, we’re cutting the exclamation points in this story down to one.” Somehow, eight exclamation points made it into the published version of the story. How did that happen? I guess the editor who posted my story shared the same enthusiasm as I did (It was me. I’m editor. Sorry, Paula). While I can count on one finger how many times I’ve had an exclamation point in my ledes since, I would say the passion I first had for a jazz Zoom and free food tricks never left.

In a way, I’ve exchanged those exclamation points for question marks. Instead of telling people they need to be excited about virtual jazz with an “!” I’m doing it with my reporting, but asking questions that will mean something to people. My job is to ask, “What’s happening?” “Why is there another construction worker digging up more of Forbes Avenue?” That initial enthusiasm hasn’t been replaced, it’s just been channeled into an energy to know more. To learn more. To ask more that matters.

I’m more than ready to graduate. But I can’t detach my future self with the person that I found at Duquesne. I came in with my own question: “What do I like to do? What’s my spark?” Now, all I need is a place to keep that spark alive.

If you want a link to my resume, message me on LinkedIn.

The end!

EMILY AMBERY
layout editor

Technically, my journey at *The Duke* started four years ago when I confidently marched up to the expo table and said “I want to write for *The Duke*, and I have lots of experience writing” (I did not).

In my freshman and sophomore years, I was stumbling through writing under the features editors Katia Faroun and Kellen Stepler who very kindly guided me through journalistic conventions.

I look back fondly on my inaugural story about the domesticated Duquesne squirrels and their beloved Instagram. I do fear, since then, we have gone a little too far with the furry friends. They are getting way too close to us.

unexpected.

One of my favorite articles came out of that class which gave me the opportunity to go into the Duquesne cadaver lab. I was not fond of the dissecting, but I appreciated the fact that I could tell this story.

Once again, journalism pushed me outside of my comfort zone.

While I loved writing for features, I found hard news topics more fulfilling. Both coursework and bylines reinforced my desire to be a part of a professional newsroom.

And it doesn’t get anymore professional than *The Duke*.

Joining *The Duke* as layout editor allowed me to explore the functions of a newsroom and be supported by a staff of people who, somewhat insanely, enjoy staying up until 3 a.m. every Wednesday. And I was one of them.

I was able to cover more news articles and find a passion for not minding my business, narrative leads and getting people to call me back.

Some of my favorite memories of *The Duke* come from that news coverage, like when news editor Megan Trotter and I drove to DC and back in less than 24 hours to write a story about a Duquesne-hosted journalism panel.

Though I did not think I would be assuming a position as *The Duke*’s resident driver as well as layout editor, the combined 8-hour journey was well worth it.

Other favorite moments from *The Duke* arose out of delirious 2 a.m. to 3 a.m. conversations about opinion editor Zach Petroff’s “words of wisdom” or editor-in-chief Emma Polen’s famous twin brothers.

These memories and all the ones I can’t recall because they happened after my bedtime have made me the reporter and person I am today.

Working for *The Duke* has been an invaluable experience that I cannot wait to tell anyone who will listen, though, they would have to have a free three days for me to explain all that I gained.

I am a better interviewer, reporter, writer and editor as a result of my time here.

Thank you to all the editors for setting the bar so high in how hardworking and fun a newsroom can be.

Thank you to Emma for being the best newsroom leader ever, teaching me to stay calm in the face of a storm and knowing every InDesign shortcut in the book.

Thank you, Paula, for being a great mentor and only calling me a jerk after laughing at my jokes.

I am grateful for each moment in the newsroom, specifically when Doug from the press calls to tell me to tell me I made a mistake.



BRENTARO YAMANE | MULTIMEDIA EDITOR
Emily Ambery (with the gorgeous red hair) as usual was distracting Paula Reed Ward (best advisor) with obnoxious questions about how to dispose of a dead body.

Have a great summer!

HAGS

Love, The Duke.

SPOT SURVEY
DUQUESNE UNIVERSITY
2024

QR code for the survey.



DUQUESNE
ATHLETICS

Enjoy your summer, and remember to be safe and be smart!

Under 21? Zero tolerance
Underage drinking penalties:
1st violation: \$500 fine from the state Section 6308 of PA Crimes Code
Possible university sanctions:
Duquesne University Student Conduct Policy
1st violation: \$100
2nd violation: \$150
3rd violation: \$200

21 or over? Enjoy responsibly
If you are over 21 and choose to drink, know the risks and use good judgment.
Tips for responsible alcohol consumption:

- Know your limits (.08 legally drunk)
- Take a water break
- Eat before drinking
- Pace your drinks
- Never drink and drive

This program is made possible through a grant funded by the Pennsylvania Liquor Control Board. The opinions and statements expressed do not necessarily represent the views of the Pennsylvania Liquor Control Board.

