

FRACTURED

ITHACA COLLEGE COMMUNITY DISTRESSED BY PLAN FOR CUTS

BY ALEXIS MANORE, ALYSHIA KORBA
AND CAITLIN HOLTZMAN

Fae Dremock, assistant professor in the Department of Environmental Studies and Sciences, has been teaching at the college for seven years. She was hired as the result of a national search and is first generation and Latina. She specializes in environmental humanities and often encourages her students to reevaluate the way they view social and environmental justice.

On Jan. 14, one day after the draft “Shape of the College” document was released, Dremock was notified that her position was recommended to be cut.

“I’ve been calling it the ‘Ithaca Chainsaw Massacre’ because that’s what it is,” she said.

Dremock makes up just a bit of the 116 full-time equivalent (FTE) faculty positions

that have been recommended to be cut in the draft “Shape of the College” document, which was released to faculty, staff and students Jan. 13.

The document also recommends 26 major, program and department discontinuations. The campus community has grown increasingly resistant to the Academic Program Prioritization (APP) process throughout the fall semester.

Just a few weeks short of final decisions being made, more members of the campus community are voicing their opposition to the mass layoff.

The School of Humanities and Sciences (H&S) will have to make the most of these proposed cuts — 41 FTE cuts.

The Roy H. Park School of Communications will make 17 cuts, and the School of Health Sciences and Human Performance will

make 11. The School of Business and the School of Music will each make seven cuts.

Significant faculty cuts occurred during the 2019–20 fiscal year that were not a part of the APP process. In the 2019–20 fiscal year, the School of Business had 40 FTE faculty positions, H&S had 297, HSHP had 102, the School of Music had 87 and the Park School had 80. In the 2020–21 fiscal year, as of Dec. 16, there are 34 FTE faculty positions in the School of Business, 264 in H&S, 98 in HSHP, 73 in the School of Music and 71 in the Park School.

After the recommended cuts are completed, there will be 27 FTE faculty positions in the School of Business, 222 in H&S, 87 in

HSHP, 66 in the School of Music and 53 in the Park School.

If these changes are made, this means that compared to the 2019–20 fiscal year, the Park School will have approximately a 34% decrease, the School of Business will have approximately a 33% decrease, H&S will have approximately a 25% decrease, and the School

ILLUSTRATION BY ANNA MCCrackEN

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Open the Books Coalition holds protests against program cuts

BY ALYSHIA KORBA AND
JORDAN BROKING

As Ithaca College faculty, staff, students and administrators arrived on campus for the start of in-person classes Feb. 8, they were met with signs and a chorus of chants like, “Tuition is high. Pay is low. Where does all the money go?” and “Stop with this hypocrisy. Labor is democracy.”

The Open the Books coalition organized the protest against the proposed faculty and program cuts that are part of the Academic Program Prioritization (APP) process.

The Open the Books coalition is a group of college community members who are asking the college to prove that faculty and program cuts are necessary, slow the APP process and look into alternative solutions.

The group first held a protest against the APP in November 2020 after the college initially announced the impending faculty cuts.

The group of approximately 30 held the Feb. 8 protest on the sidewalk along Route 96B near the main entrance to the college.

Protesters gathered at 8 a.m. with masks and lined up along Route 96B with signs while social distancing.

Junior Julia Machlin said the Open the Books coalition decided to hold this protest because the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) will be



From left, junior Julia Machlin and sophomore Sara Stohl speak at an Open the Books rally at noon Feb. 8 at Free Speech Rock.

MIKAYLA ELWELL/THE ITHACAN

making final decisions about faculty and program cuts at the end of February.

“This is the last month that the APP is in review, so we figured that we really wanted to ratchet up our tactics,” Machlin said. “This is the first day of in-person classes, so we figured that we wanted to start the in-person semester off with a bang.”

Junior Kellie Swensen said she felt it was important for her to attend the protest despite the 3-degree weather

to show support for her professors.

“Honestly, the care, the dedication and the support that our professors have shown us, really, like you can’t put a price on that,” Swensen said. “So yes, I am out here freezing my butt off because that means everything to me, and they’ve really made my experience at IC amazing. They are what makes IC so great. It’s the people. It’s

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Department of Politics rejects faculty cuts

BY ALEXIS MANORE

The Ithaca College Department of Politics is voicing its opposition to the draft “Shape of the College” document and the Academic Program Prioritization (APP) process, which recommend the elimination of two longtime faculty members in the department.

In a Feb. 3 letter sent to all politics students and alumni, the department stated that Alex Moon and Juan Arroyo, assistant professors in the Department of Politics, have been notified that their positions have been recommended for elimination. Faculty members are being notified that their positions have been recommended for elimination, even though the document is a draft and has not yet been finalized.

Patricia Rodriguez, associate professor and chair of the Department of Politics, said the Academic Program Prioritization Implementation Committee (APPIC) asked departments to provide feedback about the draft document. She said this letter is the politics department’s input on the proposed cuts.

She said the APPIC and Melanie Stein, dean of the School of Humanities and Sciences, told the department that it could answer a set of questions including what the

curricular impact might be, what plans will have to be made to accommodate the cuts, what actions will be taken to support student progress, what new interdisciplinary collaboration the department can explore and others.

“All the questions geared toward, ‘This is happening, how are you going to adjust?’” Rodriguez said. “How are you going to help us? How are you going to facilitate this transformation?” And we were like, ‘That’s b-----.’”

Moon said he was notified of the proposed elimination of his position Jan. 15, two days after the draft document was released.

He said he appreciates the letter that the department wrote.

“My colleagues have been amazing and great,” he said. “They spent a lot of time on this, and they’re angry about it. I know that many, many departments, in this school and at others, would not have replied in a generous and solidaristic way.”

Moon and Arroyo have been teaching at the college for 20 and 21 years, respectively, and both are loved by students, the letter stated.

“We think the approach taken by [the APPIC] in developing the APP recommendations, to spread the FTE reductions across the college, creates a situation which does not seem to

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Collado discusses college’s financial situation

BY ALEXIS MANORE

Ithaca College President Shirley M. Collado spoke about the financial state of the college and the urgency of the Academic Program Prioritization (APP) process at the All-College Gathering on Feb. 9.

Collado and other members of the administration spoke about the college’s declining financial health, the importance of the APP process and its progress, enrollment and institutional aid.

Academic Program Prioritization

Collado said the feedback period for the draft document closes next week, when it will be delivered to herself and La Jerne Cornish, provost and senior vice president for academic affairs, for approval.

“I want to be clear that the pandemic has intensified the urgency of this work, but it did not create the necessity of it,” Collado said.

Collado said she received multiple questions about the Open the Books coalition, a group that is working to prevent the cuts and is asking for financial transparency.

Collado said there is no financial information that has not been shared.

The college has denied requests to reveal the administration’s

current salaries to *The Ithacan*. Multiple requests to sit in on InFinity presentations, which are meetings held by Guerrero about the college’s finances, by *The Ithacan* have also been denied.

A person asked Cornish if the college has considered merging with Cornell University or if it has thought about merging its five schools to avoid the cuts.

“We have not considered merging with Cornell,” Cornish said. “When you read the [Academic Program Prioritization Implementation Committee’s] recommendations in full, it is recommended that we maintain the five schools.”

She said administrative positions will be examined in the second phase of restructuring, and administrative and managerial roles have also been cut.

Financial Health

Collado said the current budget deficit for the 2020–21 fiscal year is estimated to be approximately \$24.5 million.

In response to a question about why the college cannot draw from its endowment to solve its financial issues, Bill Guerrero, vice president for finance and administration, said that



Ithaca College President Shirley M. Collado and seniors Connor Shea, president of the Student Governance Council (SGC), and Abigail Murtha, senate chair of the SGC, speak at the All-College Gathering.

COURTESY OF ITHACA COLLEGE

the college already draws approximately 4.5% from the endowment annually, which is approximately \$14 to \$15 million per year.

“We can draw down endowment, it’s just not advised,” he said.

In response to a question about the urgency of the college’s financial status, Guerrero said that from Feb. 9

to Aug. 1, the college does not have any cash revenue.

Enrollment and Institutional Advancement

Collado said the total enrollment for Spring 2021 is 5,264 students. She said that at this time last year, 5,960 students were enrolled at the college. She said 2,460 students

are living in on-campus residences, as compared to the approximately 3,800 that were living on campus in 2020. This decrease has resulted in a loss of approximately \$6.5 million in housing revenue.

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Meet the Editor: Frankie Walls

Frankie Walls, our new community outreach manager, and the multimedia section team up for a new series to meet the editors.



“When They See Us” (2019)

Host Rachael Weinberg sits down with guest Pallas-Amenah Morgan to discuss Ava DuVernay’s critically acclaimed series “When They See Us.”



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IC introduces COVID-19 protocols

BY CAITLIN HOLTZMAN

Ithaca College has been implementing its quarantine plans for the spring semester.

Students began a phased move-in Jan. 7 that concluded Feb. 5. The college has released extensive quarantine, isolation and testing plans as well as mask guidance as part of the Return to Campus Plan.

Masks

The college is asking students to stop using the face masks that it provided because they do not meet the expected quality standards.

Students returning to campus were provided with two face masks. Christina Moylan, director of public health emergency preparedness, sent an email to students Feb. 10 requesting that they return the masks to collection bins that are located at the COVID-19 test drop-off sites.

Students have voiced concerns about the quality of the masks given to them, and several posted videos on social media showing that they were able to blow out a flame through the mask. If the flame is easily blown out, the mask is likely not effective at limiting the spread of COVID-19, according to some researchers.

Quarantine and Isolation

Emerson Hall is being used for quarantine for residential COVID-19 positive students and close contacts. Close contact is defined as being within six feet of a positive person for a period of at least 10 to 30 minutes or more depending on the exposure. Students who test positive need to isolate for at least 10 days after symptoms first appear, according



Freshman Rosie Bostian picks up a new saliva self-collection kit Feb. 10 at the Campus Center pick-up station. Students who have access to campus are required to get tested twice a week.

PAIGE TOLAN/THE ITHACAN

to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Off-campus students will quarantine or isolate in their residences.

Quarantine is for those who may have been exposed to a COVID-19 positive person. Students may need to quarantine for at least 10 days if they are asymptomatic or longer if symptoms develop.

The college will provide quarantine and isolation students with food, laundry, sanitation, medical and mental health support. Students in quarantine or isolation cannot leave their rooms until cleared by the Tompkins County Health Department (TCHD).

Badge System

The college has begun using a badge system to monitor

students' compliance with COVID-19 testing and completing the daily health screening. There are five different badge status types.

They are: cleared or green, meaning students have completed their testing and daily health screening; overdue or yellow, meaning either testing or the daily health screening is overdue and needs to be completed; quarantine or orange, meaning student is in quarantine due to being considered a close contact; isolation or red, meaning student is in isolation due to a positive test result; and not applicable or blue, meaning the badge is not enabled.

Vaccines

New York state is currently in Phase 1B of the vaccination process. This phase includes those

65 and older first responders or support staff for first responder agencies, people who work in correctional facilities, childcare workers, P-12 school staff, public transit officials and people who live or work in homeless shelters.

People can get vaccinated through CHS, state-operated sites or pharmacies.

Tompkins County received 700 doses for essential workers in Phase 1B — workers in P-12 schools and childcare and public facing grocery store workers — for the week of Feb. 8. Starting Feb. 15, health departments may vaccinate individuals with comorbidities based on supply.

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Title IX reviews BOLD network

BY ASHLEY STALNECKER

The U.S. Office for Civil Rights has opened an investigation against Ithaca College's BOLD Women's Leadership Network after receiving a complaint of a Title IX violation by a University of Michigan professor.

Mark Perry, professor of economics and finance at the University of Michigan, filed a complaint against the BOLD Women's Leadership Network in August on the basis of sex discrimination. The BOLD Women's Leadership Network is a leadership development program that awards a two-year scholarship to students who identify as women, particularly those who have been underrepresented in higher education.

Samantha Elebiary, BOLD Program Director at the college, said that she cannot comment on the status of an ongoing investigation but that the college will cooperate with the Office for Civil Rights.

Perry said the BOLD Women's Leadership Network violates Title IX policy, which states, "No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving federal financial assistance," according to the U.S. Department of Education website. Because the college allows students to apply federal money to their tuition through the Free Application for Federal Student Aid, the college is required to comply with Title IX policy.

The BOLD Women's Leadership Network is funded by the Pussycat Foundation, which sets the application criteria for participating colleges. The program requires that applicants identify as women, but Elebiary said nonbinary identifying students are not discouraged from applying. Elebiary said students are not required to disclose their gender identity on the application.

President Shirley M. Collado brought the BOLD Women's Leadership Network to the college in 2017, shortly after she became president of the college. Collado founded the program when she worked at Rutgers University-Newark. Elebiary started working at the college as a residence director in 2017 and began working with BOLD in 2018.

Collado has not responded to requests for comment.

At the All-College Gathering on Feb. 9, Collado said the program has received over \$4 million in funding since she brought the program to the college.

"The main goal is to provide that additional professional leadership development to students who identify as women or female and are in their junior and senior year," Elebiary said.

Perry said he has filed 283 Title IX complaints. A majority of these complaints are against colleges with programs or spaces exclusive to women. He said he has filed complaints against BOLD Women's Leadership Network programs at Middlebury College, The College of Saint Rose, University of Connecticut and Colby-Sawyer College. The only college that hosts a BOLD Women's Leadership Network program that he has not filed a complaint against is Rutgers University-Newark.

His complaint against The College of Saint Rose was also opened for investigation by the Office for Civil Rights. The other complaints are still pending investigation.

Perry said he believes the BOLD Women's Leadership Network is in violation of Title IX because there is not a similar program for men, and men are ineligible for the current program.

"It's not just illegal, but it seems unethical to have federal civil rights legislation that's only enforced selectively and with a double standard," Perry said.

At this time, Elebiary said the college does not have any plans to alter the structure of the BOLD Women's Leadership Network.

Perry said he believes women do not need special programming for leadership development because they attend college at a higher rate than men. Women earned more than 57% of undergraduate degrees and 59% of master's degrees in 2018, according to the Center for American Progress.

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Image text students mourn potential cut

BY SYD PIERRE

Editor's Note: Each week, The Ithacan will be featuring programs and departments that the Academic Program Prioritization Implementation Committee have recommended to be cut.

Ebba Zajmi-Gjegji, a first-year student in the Image Text Master of Fine Arts (MFA) at Ithaca College, is committed to teaching in marginalized communities. She said she has been able to do this only because of the flexibility and support of the Image Text MFA program.

"It's expanded my ability to not just be an artist who tells these stories but to also enable future generations to tell those stories," Zajmi-Gjegji said.

The program is one of five graduate programs that have been recommended for discontinuation by the Academic Program Prioritization Implementation Committee (APPIC) in its draft of the "Shape of the College" proposal. Some students, faculty and alumni of the program think that the decision to cut the program is shortsighted.

Created in 2016, the program is a low-residency, interdisciplinary MFA that focuses on the intersection between writing and photography. Graduate students spend five weeks on campus during the summer, work remotely during the fall and spring semesters and meet for two weeks in the winter at an international location. The program also includes the Image Text Ithaca Press (ITI), a press that publishes work from national and international artists as well as thesis work from students in the program.

Catherine Taylor, associate professor in the Department of Writing and a co-program director for the Image Text program, said the program currently has 20 students enrolled.

"I would hope that the administration



From left, Kim Nicolas '17 and Claudia Rankine, Image Text MFA Program fellow, work on an art project in collaboration with other Ithaca College students.

COURTESY OF THE IMAGE TEXT MFA PROGRAM

would be able to see both the current successes of the program and its incredible potential and to remember that they invested in starting up this program just a few years ago and that in some ways, it feels that they are throwing away their own investment," Taylor said.

Taylor said the program has contributed to the college through its diversity, with over 35% of the visiting fellows in the program having been artists of color. She said the program focused on recruiting students of color for the incoming class.

Karine Baptiste, a second-year student in the program who is based in France, said she was surprised to hear about the recommendation.

She said she feels like the program is becoming more well-known in Europe and pro-

vides international recognition to the college.

"To decide to shut down a program that has been able to bring such achievement within a short period of time is really sad and really shortsighted," Baptiste said.

Students and alumni of the program have written letters to the administration of the college, asking them to reconsider the decision to discontinue the program.

The letters include personal anecdotes from students about how the program has shaped them as artists. As with other programs the APPIC has recommended to be discontinued, the program will be phased out over the course of three years.

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FROM CUTS, PAGE 1

of Music will have approximately a 24% decrease.

The Park School will be affected the most by the cuts.

Laurie Koehler, vice president for marketing and enrollment strategy and co-chair of the APPIC, said this was not a targeted move.

“We tried to look at it holistically,” she said. “There was never a discussion of, ‘We’re aiming for a certain percentage for any particular school.’”

Brad Hougham, associate provost for faculty affairs and co-chair of the Academic Program Prioritization Implementation Committee (APPIC), said the contract status of faculty members and student enrollment, retention and graduation rates in departments, programs and majors affected the APPIC’s decisions.

Cornish previously said the APPIC was reviewing programs that do not receive much student interest.

Hougham said Section 4.9.8 of the Ithaca College Policy Manual guided decisions about which faculty positions would be terminated.

The policy states that terminations resulting from the discontinuation of a program will be done in the order of part-time per-course faculty; adjunct faculty; faculty employed by term appointments; non-tenure-track faculty; tenure-eligible faculty; and tenured faculty.

The APPIC decided not to eliminate tenured or tenure-eligible faculty members, despite La Jerne Cornish, provost and senior vice president for academic affairs, previously saying that tenured faculty members were at risk of being cut.

Hougham said eliminations were not based on individuals but rather positions.

He said deans of the schools are in charge of notifying faculty members their positions have been recommended for elimination.

However, because the interim deans for the Park School, the Business School and the School of Music are still faculty members, they are not a part of the APPIC.

They are members of the Academic Program Prioritization Advisory Committee (APPAC), a group that provides context that supports data gathered by the APPIC.

Hougham and Koehler said faculty members whose positions have been recommended for elimination either already have been notified or will be notified by March 1.

Most of the professors who self-identified that their positions were proposed for elimination are from H&S and HSHP.

Hougham did not specify if any professors from certain schools were notified before others.

Koehler said that the APPIC met with all of the deans to inform them of the

recommendations before the draft document was released.

Koehler said that these are recommendations and that final decisions have not been made.

“There was never a question about the quality of the actual programs,” Koehler said. “I think that made it much harder, to know that these are high quality programs and that we can’t do everything and be everything for everyone anymore.”

Michael Horn, head of strategy for the Entangled Group, an education venture organization, and education writer, said the cuts will affect the feelings within the college community.

“They aren’t ever what someone wants to see happen,” he said via email. “At the same time, they don’t surprise me. The business model of small colleges, particularly those far outside of major cities, have been under significant duress for some time now. Expenses have continued to rise, and it’s been challenging for revenue to keep pace.”

Collado and Bill Guererro, vice president for finance and administration, spoke about the college’s financial issues at the All-College Gathering on Feb. 9.

He said the COVID-19 pandemic has forced colleges like Ithaca College to make cuts to survive.

“The cleanest way to do that without declaring higher education’s version of bankruptcy — known as financial exigency — is to cut whole departments,” he said via email. “This right sizing is painful but also probably necessary to survive.”

Faculty Concerns

Some faculty members are especially concerned that some faculty members have been notified that their positions will be eliminated even though the document has not yet been finalized.

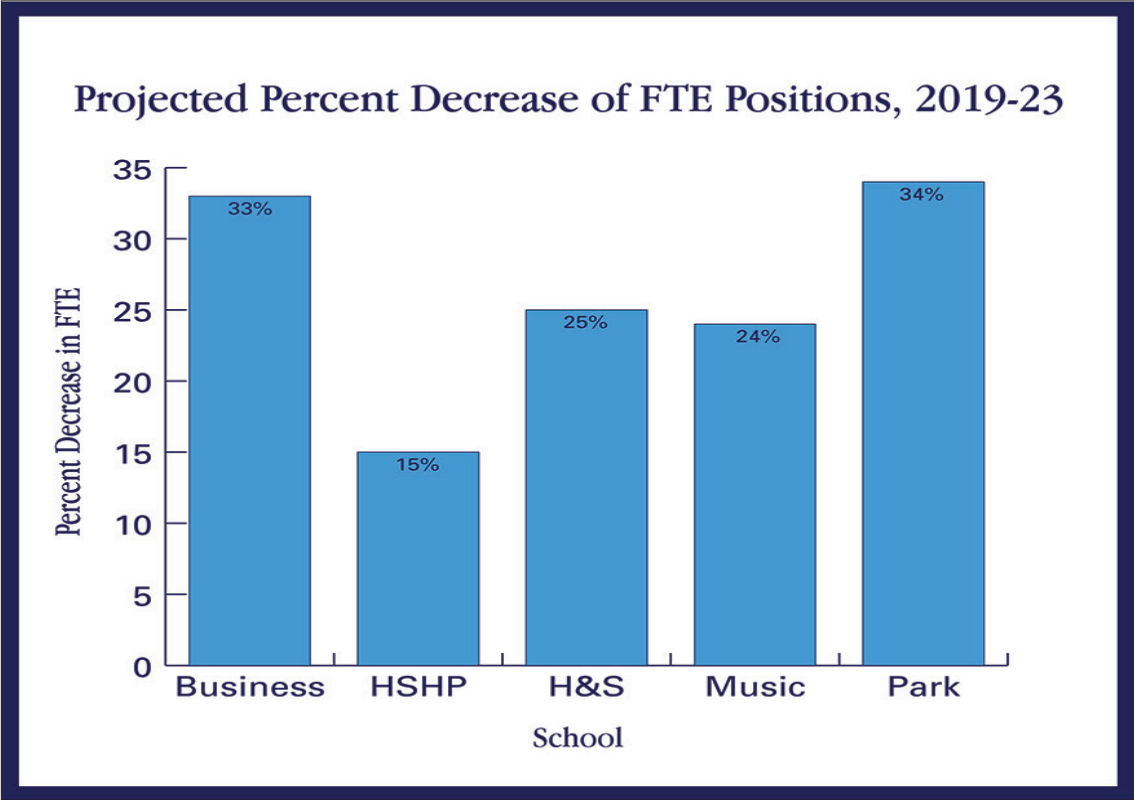
At least 37 faculty members have been notified that their positions will be cut since January, according to a list that faculty members have been adding their names to.

Dremock said that being notified that her position will be eliminated, even though the document has not yet been completed, makes it seem like the APP process is rushed.

“I fully intended to teach for another 12 years,” she said. “I went back to get a Ph.D. in 2014. I’m older, but it doesn’t matter. I did my Ph.D. The reason I did it was to work in this field, to work on these issues, and this sucks.”

Hougham said he has not been present for any conversations between deans and faculty members about recommended position cuts.

“I think the intention for the conversations was to communicate with the faculty as soon as possible that their positions were being recommended for elimination or nonrenewal, for those who are on shorter, one-year



DESIGN BY KATE WOLFEL
SOURCE: DRAFT “SHAPE OF THE COLLEGE” DOCUMENT

contracts,” Hougham said.

Final decisions about faculty, department, program and major cuts will be made in late February, when President Shirley M. Collado and Cornish will approve the document.

To fight the cuts and push for shared governance, some faculty members are creating an Ithaca College chapter of the American Association of University Professors (AAUP).

The AAUP works to develop standards in higher education and advocates for academic freedom and shared governance.

Dan Breen, associate professor in the Department of English and chair of the college’s AAUP chapter, said that the group is creating a petition urging the college and the Ithaca College Board of Trustees to reject the recommendations in the draft document.

“Different constituencies have different ideas about how shared governance should operate,” he said. “In the current climate in particular, having a really clearly articulated version of shared governance is important.”

Tom Pfaff, professor in the Department of Mathematics, said he thinks that giving professors a warning that their positions may be cut while the plan is not yet finalized is bad practice.

“This idea that maybe some of them will get their jobs back, that’s a rather cruel thing to do to somebody,” Pfaff said. “Faculty members are looking for jobs, trying to figure out what their next steps are.”

Pfaff said he is unsure if the college will be a better place for students after the APP process is complete.

“If you destroy the morale of the campus, in particular the faculty, how does that impact how they interact

with students?” he asked. “Does retention go down? Does it get harder to recruit students?”

Juan Arroyo, assistant professor in the Department of Politics, said he was notified that his position was recommended for elimination.

Arroyo said he is upset and disappointed. He said he understands that the COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated the need to cut faculty positions, but because of how widespread the cuts are, he thinks they should be spread over a longer period of time.

Throughout Fall 2020, the Open the Books coalition, a group of students, faculty, staff and alumni that are calling for financial transparency and shared governance from the administration, held events to voice its opposition to the cuts. The coalition held two rallies Feb. 8 to protest the cuts and demand financial transparency.

The Faculty Council asked the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) to delay the APP process in October 2020.

The SLT denied the request. The Faculty Council is holding a vote for all faculty members to voice their opinions about the draft document.

In a letter to alumni, the board expressed its support for the APPIC and the APP process.

“The APPIC has taken this extremely seriously, and despite criticism by some on campus and on social media, the Board of Trustees is confident that this process has been carefully conducted, data driven and consistent with our faculty handbook,” the board said in the letter.

Alumni Concerns

Alumni have voiced their disapproval of the draft document by forming the Facebook group “IC Alumni Against Austerity.” Samantha DiFalco ’18, Elizabeth Lena ’18, Chris Zivalich ’12 and Sara-Maria Sorrentino ’08 started the Facebook group Jan. 21. The group has over 1,000 members.

Anna Gardner ’19, a member of IC Alumni Against Austerity, said she was involved in creating the strategic plan while she was a student and knew that resizing would be necessary.

She said that while she believes the cuts were inevitable, she is encouraging the administration to slow the process and be more transparent with its decisions.

“I just feel like the way it’s being handled is not as sensitive or understanding as it could be to the college community, and the way that the communications that have gone forward are really creating this stressful, scary environment for people,” Gardner said.

Greg Peterson ’09 said he would

like to get a better understanding of why and how decisions are being made.

“I mean, even those administrators, you look at the amount of time they spend there,” Peterson said. “They’re just ships passing in the night like me. The culture and the value of that school is in those faculty members.”

Zivalich said that changing the college’s programs may cause alumni to feel disconnected from the college.

“We are people who can literally support the institution, and if they make Ithaca unrecognizable to us essentially, that’s not something that we’re going to be convinced to support,” Zivalich said.

The college has seen decreased alumni donations in the past decade with alumni participation dropping from 12.2% in 2010 to 6.4% in 2019. In a letter to the SLT and the Board of Trustees, a group of alumni who are concerned about the cuts stated that it will earmark future donations for the purpose of supporting and preserving programs and faculty positions.

Student Concerns

Students have also been vocal about their disapproval of the draft document.

Senior Agnes Scotti created a petition for the campus community to express its lack of confidence in the draft document and the APPIC’s decisions. As of Feb. 10, the document has 413 signatures.

“We MUST use our voices as students!!” the petition stated. “We cannot stay silent! Let’s show IC that they cannot just fire our professors, many of whom have shaped and enriched our college experience!”

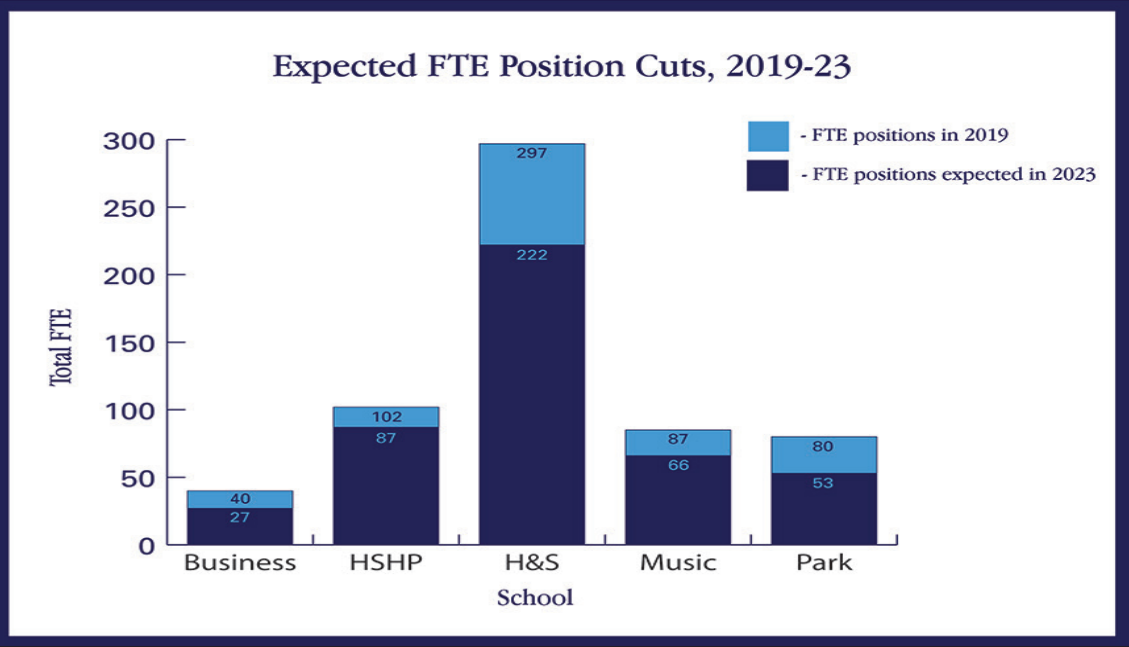
Senior Rebeka Kashkin said it is frustrating to see professors that she knows and cares about get fired.

“I’m honestly just really nervous for the professors that I care about,” Kashkin said. “I look on the list, and I’m terrified to see their names.”

Freshman Colin Nacion is a double major in English education and theatre studies, two departments potentially being affected by the cuts. The “Shape of the College” document proposes FTE cuts in the Department of Theatre Studies, while the education program may be cut.

“I personally don’t think this cut will be beneficial for the school,” he said. “Frankly, the people in charge still haven’t been super clear and transparent about what they even hope to achieve in doing so.”

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DESIGN BY KATE WOLFEL
SOURCE: DRAFT “SHAPE OF THE COLLEGE” DOCUMENT

FROM PROTEST, PAGE 1

not the administration.”

Junior Ana Maria Arroyo said she attended the protest because she understands the effects of the APP from her own personal experience.

Ana Maria Arroyo is the daughter of Juan Arroyo, assistant professor in the Department of Politics.

Juan Arroyo is one of the faculty members that have been notified that his position at the college may be cut.

Arroyo said it was meaningful to see people protest in support of faculty members like her father.

“It reminds me why I love Ithaca so much,” Arroyo said. “The best parts of Ithaca come from the fact that it’s a college town. We’re one huge community that’s been bolstered so much by Ithaca College and Cornell, and to see the community come and give back, it’s just so wonderful.”

Following the 8 a.m. protest, the Open the Books Coalition held a rally at noon at Free Speech Rock. Approximately 40 people attended the rally.

The organizers explained what the Open the Books coalition is. They encouraged the attendees to call President Shirley M. Collado and other members of the administration to tell them how they feel about the APP process.

Dave Maley, director of public relations, attended the rally and said he thinks it is important that both the SLT and college community members listen to opposing viewpoints.

“There is often misinterpretation and certainly more communication is better and both sides need to be listening and not just speaking,” Maley said. “I think the college has been listening. The



Protesters line up at noon Feb. 8 outside of the Campus Center. The Open the Books coalition held two rallies to protest the cuts and demand financial transparency from the college.

MIKAYLA ELWELL/THE ITHACAN

college has been trying to listen, trying to listen to feedback and trying to consider all of the ramifications of what is being planned for and recommended and what will ultimately be decided on. These are not easy decisions.”

The rally then extended to the walkway leading to the Campus Center, where supporters listened to several speakers.

The speakers included junior Sebastian Chavez, Students of Color Coalition senator for the Student Governance Council.

Chavez said he is working with the Open the Books coalition on a bill to redesign what power looks like on campus and how it should be distributed across the college.

An example he gave included letting students decide what the college’s money goes toward.

Bill Guerrero, vice president for Finance and Administration, said that there are two students on the Institutional

Effectiveness Budget Committee and that there is a student member of the Board of Trustees.



The care, the dedication and the support that our professors have shown us, really, you can’t put a price on that.
— Kellie Swenson



Junior Julia Ganbarg attended the rally and said that she thinks most people on campus support what IC Open the Books is doing. She said she thinks that there is real

power in the number of people who show up.

“Visuals, optics are everything,” she said. “That’s mainly why I’m here to come out of my room for just half an hour and show my face.”

Ganbarg said she thinks it is upsetting to see faculty members getting cut.

She said her adviser and one of the professors who helped her decide to join the Women and Gender Studies minor are on the list of faculty who may be laid off.

“Ithaca prides itself on listening to its students, and I think this is one of the crucial times where we’re ready for the administration to put their money where their mouth is and see if they’re actually going to listen to us and what we’re saying,” Ganbarg said.

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FROM POLITICS, PAGE 1

align with IC’s identity or values, especially with respect to equity but also academic excellence, respect and accountability, and others,” the department wrote in the letter.

Rodriguez said it is unclear how the APPIC decided which positions would be eliminated within the departments.

“To me, it just seems like they just said, ‘Oh, it’s a good idea to cut the folks that are the most vulnerable,’” she said. “I think that it’s a process that will lead to lots of further problems for the school.”

Faculty members and members of the campus community have been resistant to the APP process.

The Faculty Council is holding an all-faculty vote on the draft document, and members of the council have voiced their concerns about the draft document.

Sophomore Chloe Landau said Moon’s commitment to his students adds to the learning environment of the Department of Politics.

“Moon is not only one of the most passionate and engaging professors I’ve had, he also leads with an empathy and sincerity that is so rare and is essential to community learning,” Landau said. “Professors like him are what distinguish Ithaca, what keep students here, and the administration’s failure to honor that feels like betrayal.”

Moon said he is worried about having the money to keep his house and retaining the life that his 12-year-old daughter is used to.

He said his family struggled with poverty when he was a child, and he does not want his daughter to experience what he did.

“I found it world-shattering,” Moon said. “I’m sure my daughter is more resilient than I was, but I’d rather it not be an issue at all.”

The letter stated that Moon teaches courses in the subfields of U.S. politics and political theory.

Politics students are required to take U.S. Politics and at least two political theory classes to graduate.

The letter said that Moon has also been teaching legal studies courses and that he is needed to teach more after Thomas Shevory, professor in the Department of Politics and coordinator of the Legal Studies program, retires in May.

Moon said that he teaches classes in place of professors who are on sabbaticals and that he has spent many summers researching and learning about topics for his classes.

He said that with his recommended termination, the department will not be able to teach these classes.

“It kind of came at a cost to my career,” he said. “I spent a lot of time and money — my own money — learning [constitutional] law, and the Supreme Court, environmental politics and a variety of other things. It’s been good in one way, I know a lot of stuff, but it has been costly also.”

The letter stated that many of the classes that Arroyo teaches are important for the department’s international politics concentration. Arroyo teaches classes like European Politics, Politics of the European Union and International Organizations, as well as Food and Water: The Challenges of Sustainability, Catholics and Politics, Comparative Welfare States and Practicum in International Governance.

“I am, of course, grateful for the support of my colleagues in the politics department,” Arroyo said via email. “This whole APP process has raised important and worrying questions about the direction of Ithaca College.”

Arroyo’s termination will result in the elimination of the Model United Nations and Model European Union programs.

“At a time when international affairs and awareness are so important, what happened to the recent goal of preparing IC students for a globalized world?” he said via email.

Junior Dean Freeman is a politics major and a member of Model United Nations. He said he thinks Arroyo leaving will be a great loss for the college.

“With him kind of taking over the world of specifically European politics, as well as Model UN and Model EU, with no one else kind of filling those shoes either, there’s a lot to lose,” Freeman said.

Read the full letter on page 10.

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Group promotes COVID-19 safe dating

BY MAKAYLA CAROZZOLO

A group of Ithaca College students is working to make sure that “using protection” has a new meaning for those who are trying to safely hook up amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

Masks are Hot consists of five Integrated Marketing Communications students, sophomores Rachel Kaiser, Linnea Carchedi, Katherine Krom, Emily Smith and Natalie Tribiano. Their mission is to provide coronavirus-related dating information in a manner that college students will be receptive to. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends wearing a mask to protect people from contracting and infecting others with COVID-19, but this challenges the hookup culture in college.

“We don’t want to shame people, but we also believe that this is something that needs to be discussed,” Kaiser said.

Masks are Hot started as a final project in their Public Relations course with Jen Huemmer, assistant professor in the Department of Strategic Communication, last semester. In collaboration with Alex Estabrook, instructor in the Department of Media Arts, Sciences and Studies, Huemmer tasked the groups in class to develop a PR campaign and a PSA video to help stop the spread of COVID-19.

Carchedi said the idea for Masks are Hot formed in the group’s first breakout room.

“We were like, ‘Oh it would be interesting if we did dating and hooking up on college campuses and how that relates to COVID,’” Carchedi said.

Hooking up is defined as “intimate interactions outside of dating or exclusive relationships.” Approximately 60–80% of college students have had some sort of hookup experience during their college career, according to the American Psychological Association (APA).

“As college students, we know how dating and hookup culture is so integral to the



From left, sophomores Linnea Carchedi, Rachel Kaiser, Katie Krom, Emily Smith and Natalie Tribiano. These five women are the faces behind @masksarehot.

COURTESY OF MASKS ARE HOT

college experience,” Carchedi said. “It’s going to happen whether or not you’re in a pandemic, and if you have messaging out there that will frame it in a safe way, that would be appealing to people.”

The group is continuing to run the Masks are Hot Instagram account this semester. The account, which has almost 300 followers, provides eye-catching information on its feed, including infographics on the number of active COVID-19 cases and safe date ideas.

“There is not much information on how to date during a pandemic, so we decided to be that information,” Krom said.

Huemmer said she is proud of the students behind Masks are Hot.

“Even more impressive is the fact that their desire to succeed was not just about getting a good grade or gaining personal accolades for their work,” said Huemmer. “They truly wanted

to help the Ithaca College community by doing their small part to help keep students safe.”

Due to similar goals, Masks are Hot and IC Students Together have partnered to help inform students about campus-related COVID-19 updates. IC Students Together was initially launched in January through the combined efforts of the Student Governance Council (SGC), the Communications Committee and the Ithaca College’s chapter of Public Relations Student Society of America (PRSSA) to create a public health campaign. This student-run campaign promotes COVID-19 safety on campus, senior Laura Heppes, co-president of PRSSA, said.

“[Masks are Hot is] a lot more like the dating, the friendship-type advice,” Heppes said.

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COLLEGE BRIEFS

Ithaca Music Forum to host Zoom with gospel music scholar

The Ithaca Music Forum is presenting a lecture from Alisha Lola Jones, a gospel music scholar, 5 p.m. Feb. 12 on Zoom. The event is called “Black Musical Masculinities and the Art of Enflaming Worship.”

Her book, “Flaming: The Peculiar Theo-Politics of Fire and Desire in Black Male Gospel Performance,” details the role of gospel music in the renegotiation and construction of gender identity among black men. Jones’ writings are focused on African American religious music, sexuality and gender in ethnomusico-logical research. Her work has appeared in multiple publications.

Student activity offices open for in-person and virtual visits

The Office of Student Engagement (OSE) and the Student Activities Center (SAC) opened for in-person visitors Feb. 8. Both offices operated virtually beginning in March 2020. Both are open from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. Monday through Thursday and 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Friday. Virtual office hours will also be available from 9 to 11 a.m. from Monday to Friday for those who do not want to go in person.

Visitors will have to enter the office from 325 Egbert Hall and leave through the SAC doors. There is a limit of six people in the SAC at a time to ensure that social distancing guidelines are followed. Members of student organizations can also reserve spaces in the SAC through its website. Student organization members who need to pick up supplies from either office or storage cabinets located in the Campus Center can request contact-free pickup.

IC students invited to attend award show honoring Spike Lee

Students can join the virtual screening of the 34th Annual American Cinematheque Award at 5 p.m. Feb. 20, which is honoring filmmaker Spike Lee. The event is free for students and will celebrate the art of filmmaking. Registration for the event opens Feb. 19, and students will have access to the screening for 24 hours.

Students who RSVP will also be entered in a giveaway to win an American Cinematheque swag bag. The event will give viewers an inside look into

Lee’s work, and students will hear stories about him from people who have worked with or for him. Guests include Jodie Foster, Angela Bassett, Ruth E. Carter and Ryan Coogler. The American Cinematheque is a non-profit cultural art organization based in Los Angeles.

Noon hour meditation sessions continue virtually in Spring 2020

Mindful IC and the Office of Religious and Spiritual Life are continuing their noon hour meditation for the spring semester. The event is held virtually at noon every Monday, Wednesday and Friday. No experience is necessary to join, and there is guidance given during the event. After the meditation ends at 12:30 p.m., students can stay for a discussion until 12:45 p.m. Mondays focus on mindful meditation, Wednesdays focus on compassion practices and Fridays are for beginners. Participants can register at <https://www.ithaca.edu/religious-and-spiritual-life/mindful-ic>.

Theater arts department seniors to hold annual cabaret virtually

The Department of Theatre Arts is hosting its 10th Annual Wheels for Women Cabaret virtually Feb. 27. Wheels for Women is working with the Sakhi Shelter for victims of domestic violence in Kerala, India. The shelter helps to train residents to become auto rickshaw drivers.

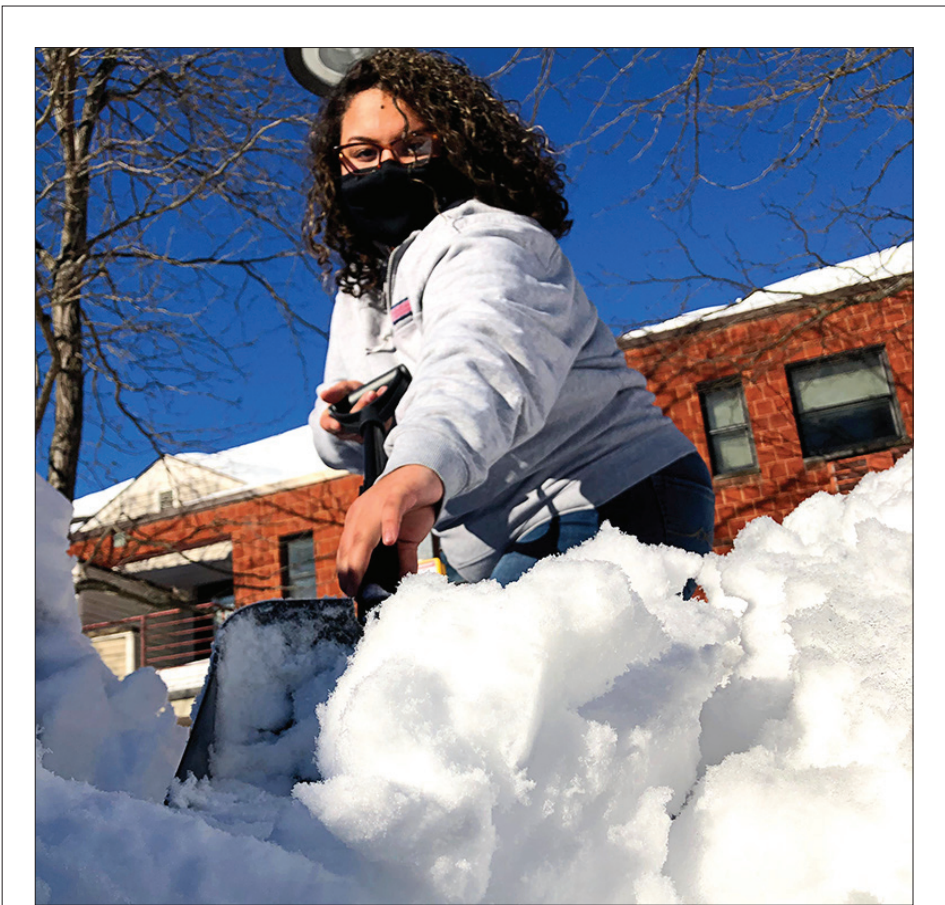
Kathleen Mulligan, professor in the Department of Theatre Arts, started Wheels for Women to raise money to buy the shelter a new auto rickshaw.

The cabaret is held by senior theater majors at the college. The suggested donation for students is \$5.

New family newsletter launched to engage with IC community

The Office of New Student and Transition Programs (NSTP) launched the IC Family Newsletter titled “South Hill Messenger.”

The NSTP worked with the IC Family Council to create the newsletter. The newsletter is intended to keep supporters and families of students engaged by highlighting college updates, features and accomplish-



Snow fun to be had after winter storm

Junior Aleysha Rivera Bocachia helps shovel out a roommate’s car Feb. 4 outside of the Circle Apartments at Ithaca College. A three-day-long snowstorm that began Feb. 2 dumped approximately 13 inches of snow on Ithaca, leaving cars buried.

MIKAYLA ROVENOLT/THE ITHACAN

ments of members of the campus community, and college happenings.

The first newsletter was sent Jan. 29. Past letters will be archived on the family website.

Registration for Summer 2021 undergraduate courses opens

Registration access codes are not required, and registration opens at 9 a.m. Feb. 15.

The May session will go from May 17 to 28. Summer Session I will run from June 1 to July 2. Summer Session II will run from July 5 to Aug. 6.

Students can take four credits of classroom

instruction during the May session and up to six credits during each five-week summer session.

Applications open for award honoring community leadership

Applications for the Peggy Ryan Williams Award for Academic and Community Leadership for the 2020–21 academic year are currently open. All juniors and seniors are eligible to apply, and the application closes Feb. 21. The award is given to students who excel academically, represent outstanding levels of accomplishment, are involved in cocurricular activities and perform service in the community.

PUBLIC SAFETY INCIDENT LOG

SELECTED ENTRIES FROM JANUARY 25 TO JANUARY 31

JANUARY 25

TRESPASS NO DEGREE

LOCATION: James J. Whalen Center for Music

SUMMARY: An officer reported locating a person in the area after hours. The person was issued a SCC warning for trespass and was directed to leave the building. Patrol Officer John Norman responded.

SCC DISRUPTIVE/EXCESSIVE NOISE

LOCATION: Circle Apartment Building
SUMMARY: A caller reported loud music. The officer issued a SCC warning for excessive noise. Master Patrol Officer Waylon DeGraw responded.

SCC DISRUPTIVE/EXCESSIVE NOISE

LOCATION: Garden Apartment
SUMMARY: A caller reported loud banging coming from a neighboring apartment. The officer issued a conduct code warning for disruptive noise. Security Officer Joe Oppen responded.

JANUARY 26

MOTOR VEHICLE ACCIDENT/PROPERTY DAMAGE

LOCATION: Alumni Circle
SUMMARY: A caller reported a one-car property damage accident. The officer reported that the vehicle left the roadway and struck a sign due to slippery road conditions. Patrol Officer Mayra Colon responded.

ACTUAL FIRE/FLAME IGNITION

LOCATION: Facilities Parking Lot
SUMMARY: A caller reported a vehicle fire. The Office of Environmental Health and Safety reported that a tractor trailer had a fire between the cab and trailer. The Ithaca Fire Department responded and extinguished the fire. Master Patrol Officer John Tagliavento responded.

FIRE ALARM ACCIDENTAL

LOCATION: Circle Apartments Building
SUMMARY: Simplex reported a fire alarm. The officer reported that the alarm activation was caused by burnt food. Patrol Officer Mayra Colon responded.

SCC DISRUPTIVE/EXCESSIVE NOISE

LOCATION: Garden Apartment
SUMMARY: A caller reported loud music and voices in the area. The officer reported that two people were issued conduct code warnings for excessive noise. Security Officer Joe Oppen responded.

JANUARY 27

FIRE ALARM ACCIDENTAL

LOCATION: James J. Whalen Center for Music
SUMMARY: Simplex reported a fire alarm. The officer reported alarm activation caused by steam. Maintenance was contacted, and the area was ventilated and system reset. Patrol Officer

Mayra Colon responded.

ACCIDENTAL PROPERTY DAMAGE

LOCATION: All Other
SUMMARY: An officer reported damage to a pole marker. The officer reported the pole appeared to have been knocked down due to an unknown person sledging on the hill. Patrol Officer John Norman responded.

JANUARY 28

TRESPASS NO DEGREE

LOCATION: James J. Whalen Center for Music
SUMMARY: An officer reported a person in the area after hours. The officer issued the person a warning for SCC violations and directed them to leave the area. Master Patrol Officer Bryan Verzosa responded.

JANUARY 29

FIRE ALARM ACCIDENTAL

LOCATION: Circle Apartments Building
SUMMARY: Simplex reported fire alarm activation. The officer reported alarm activation caused by smoke from candles and incense. Master Patrol Officer Bryan Verzosa responded.

SCC FIRE RELATED OFFENSES

LOCATION: Circle Apartments Building
SUMMARY: During a fire alarm investigation, officer located burned candle and incense. The officer

JANUARY 30

SCC IRRESPONSIBLE USE OF ALCOHOL/DRUGS

LOCATION: West Tower
SUMMARY: A caller reported a person vomiting due to intoxication. The officer reported that the person declined medical assistance and referred two people for irresponsible use of alcohol and one person for underage possession of alcohol. Master Patrol Officer Bryan Verzosa responded.

MEDICAL ASSIST/INJURY RELATED

LOCATION: B-Lot
SUMMARY: A caller reported a person fell on ice. The officer reported the person declined medical assistance and reported no injuries as a result of the fall. Sergeant Don Lyke responded.

JANUARY 31

PUBLIC HEALTH LAW

LOCATION: All Other
SUMMARY: The Tompkins County Sheriff’s Department reported that a person was referred to Tompkins County Health Department for a

public health law violation that occurred at an off-campus location. The person was also referred to Student Conduct for violating the Community Agreement. Master Patrol Officer John Elmore responded.

MEDICAL ASSIST/INJURY RELATED

LOCATION: Terrace Dining Hall
SUMMARY: Caller reported a person burnt their thumb while serving food and felt faint. Officer reported that the person declined medical assistance. Master Patrol Officer John Tagliavento responded.

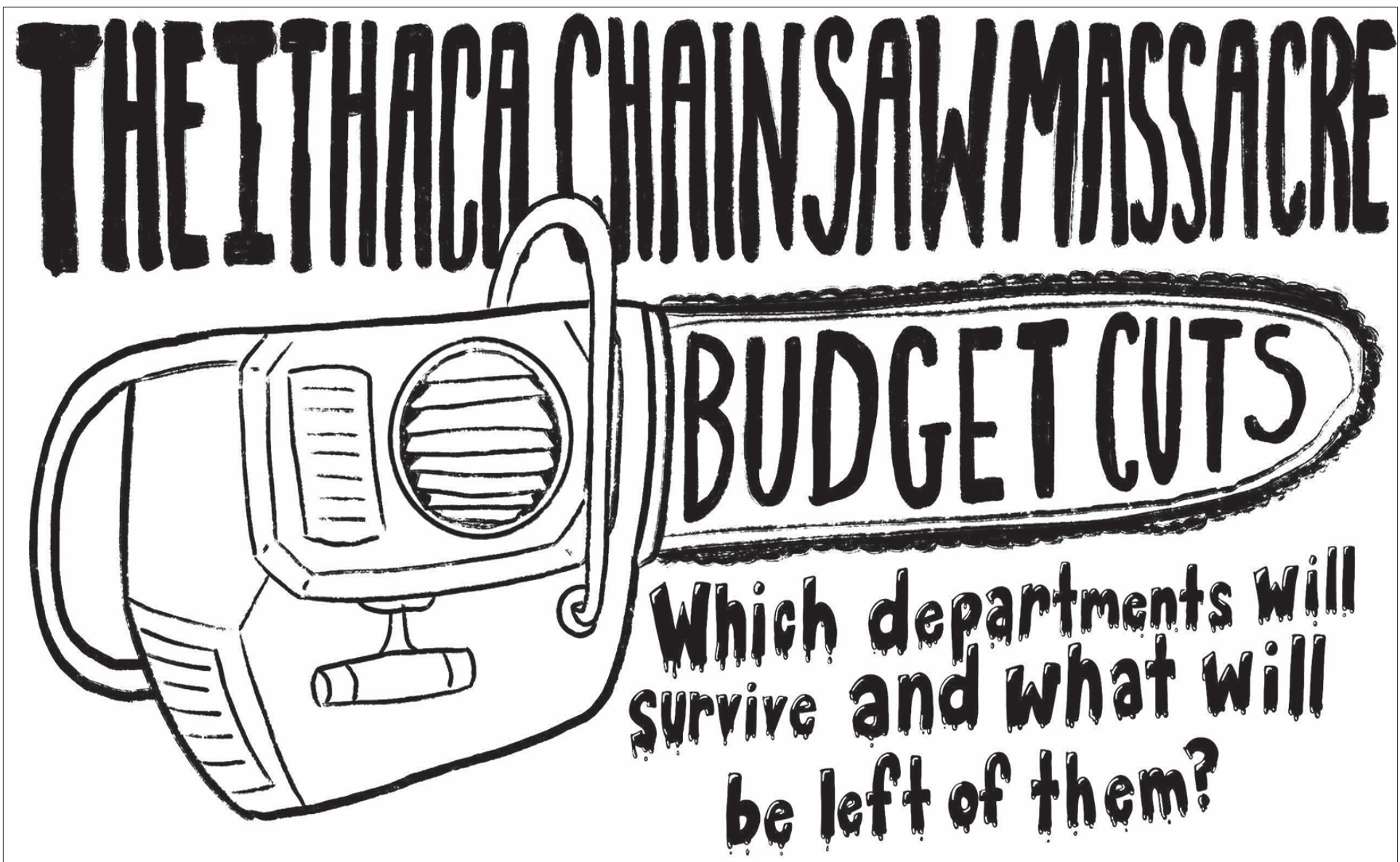
ASSIST NEW YORK STATE POLICE

LOCATION: State Route 96B
SUMMARY: New York State Police requested assistance locating a person involved in a property damage accident at an off-campus location. The officer reported unable to locate the person and state police were advised. Master Patrol Officer John Elmore responded.

Full public safety log available online at www.theithacan.org.

KEY

SCC—Student Conduct Code
V&T—Vehicle & Transportation
AD—Assistant Director
IFD—Ithaca Fire Department



MOLLY STANTON/THE ITHACAN

EDITORIALS

‘Shape of the College’ slashes programs and harms people

After the “Shape of the College” draft was released last month, many found themselves with more questions than answers. Members of the campus community have expressed dismay over the Academic Program Prioritization Implementation Committee’s plans to eliminate faculty positions, programs and departments. Instead of a conversation that treats students, faculty, staff and alumni like the stakeholders they are, those opposed to the plan — even those who are simply asking for a rationale as to why this must happen now — are met with austerity. At the Feb. 9 All-College Gathering, President Shirley M. Collado took a new, direct tone, acknowledging the criticisms that Open the Books and other members of the campus community have been expressing since October. However, the overwhelming takeaway from this meeting was that the deep cuts will be happening soon, whether the campus community likes it or not. Perhaps the most alarming aspect of the “Shape of the College” is that those who will be losing their jobs are only being treated as numbers. The reality is, these are

people, not positions. These are people with families. People who will lose their salaries. People who will be left without health insurance. People who will be thrown helplessly into a pandemic economy while President Collado tells us that this is about our “shared humanity” — a virtue-signaling phrase that the administration has relied on repeatedly. For lack of a better term, the “Shape of the College” feels like a dumpster fire. Even if members of the administration do preach that they are being transparent — even though they have still not released their salaries for the 2020–21 fiscal year, as *The Ithacan* has been requesting since October — there is still a feeling of disconnect, mistrust and fragmentation among the campus community. There is no denying that administrators need to make difficult decisions to preserve the longevity of the college. However, it is imperative that others are involved in the conversation. Members of the campus community should continue to share their frustrations. The more voices there are, the more impact it may have.

Campus must be cautious and vigilant amid COVID

We are almost one full year into the COVID-19 pandemic, and it is embarrassing that this still needs to be said: Wear a mask. Social distance. Do not gather in large groups. It seems that some members of the Ithaca College campus community need to be reminded that even though in-person classes have resumed for the spring semester, the pandemic has not ended. There are currently over 200 active COVID-19 cases in Tompkins County and 10 active cases at the college. Although these numbers may not seem terrible in the grand scheme of the pandemic, it is critical not to let our guards down. It is not fair to those who are respecting COVID-19 guidelines to be at risk because of others who are letting the thrill of being on campus go to their heads. Students are not fully to blame. Of course, they are excited to be back with their friends and classmates after almost a year of being away from Ithaca. Some are stepping foot on campus for the first time. Without the proper infrastructure for safety guidelines and a clear idea of what the

repercussions are if they break COVID-19 protocols on campus, how can they be expected to act? As could have been expected, the phased move-in process came with some difficulties — some of which were out of the college’s control. Between delays in test results and testing offices closing due to inclement weather, there were a few bumps along the way. However, there are no excuses for some mistakes, like the college-issued masks so thin that they do not pass the lighter test or the lack of enforcement of social distancing in the lines pooling out of the dining hall. Understandably, the college needs time to adjust and adapt to the changes that have come about as a result of the pandemic. After shifting the fall semester online, however, the college should have been more prepared than it is. Of course, students must also take accountability. We must do our part and remain responsible and cautious while interacting with others. It is a privilege to be back on campus. Many colleges stayed remote, and we can easily find ourselves in the same position.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Send to ithacan@ithaca.edu.

ALL LETTERS MUST:

- Be 250 words or fewer
- Be emailed or dropped off by 5 p.m. Monday in Park 220

GUEST COMMENTARY

Send to ithacan@ithaca.edu or to the opinion editor akohli@ithaca.edu.

ALL COMMENTARIES MUST:

- Convey a clear message
- Be written by an individual or group who has an educated opinion or is an authority on a specific subject
- Be between 500–650 words. Whether more or less space is allotted is at the discretion of the editor

FACULTY COUNCIL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE (FCEC) LETTER TO THE SENIOR LEADERSHIP TEAM (SLT), OCT. 18, 2020

Executive Committee asks SLT to slow down APP

Dear President Collado, Provost Cornish, and members of the Senior Leadership Team:

We write to you as members of the Executive Committee of Faculty Council, the leading governance body for the Ithaca College faculty, in order to relay the very serious concerns that we have heard from our colleagues—at two separate meetings the FCEC called during the week of October 12th, attended in each case by almost 300 faculty—in response to the news that the elimination of roughly 130 FTE faculty will be recommended by APPIC by December 31st, 2020. We wish to begin by making clear that we recognize the extraordinarily difficult position that you all, as members of the Senior Leadership Team, are in at this time, and the grief you no doubt have felt in response to the human suffering and job losses that many in our community have already endured and still others will endure in the months to come. We know that you are working with great dedication and thoughtfulness on behalf of IC and that it is your desire to work as collaboratively as possible with all members of our community. It is in that spirit of collaboration and mutual respect that we write you this letter.

As you of course are already fully aware, the news about the 130 FTEs has prompted much concern within the Ithaca College community; it has elicited unwelcome press in such prominent venues as The Chronicle of Higher Education and Inside Higher Ed; and it has garnered enormous amounts of attention on social media. It has also generated numerous questions from the IC faculty, which we hope to capture for you in what follows. The faculty well understands, of course, that Ithaca College is confronting a fiscal crisis, one that was intensified by COVID-19 but that predates it and

is the consequence of numerous factors, including a steadily decreasing student body that has brought our student/faculty ratio to an unsustainable 10:1. We all recognize the need for the college to respond to these pressing realities. Nevertheless, our goal in this letter is to request that the Senior Leadership Team consider a more deliberative and measured response as an alternative to recommending the termination of roughly 20% of the faculty in a mere two months. We are requesting that the SLT operate not all at once but over time, making some decisions in the short term but delaying others until we can assess our fiscal and enrollment environments once COVID-19 is behind us. Doing so, we believe, will generate greater transparency, more informed decision-making, and far more confidence and trust on the part of the Ithaca College community—a community that includes not just faculty, staff, current students and their parents, but also our alumni, who are watching these events unfold very closely.

There is a widespread view among the faculty that the case for these extreme cuts at such an accelerated rate has not yet been clearly made, leading to a series of shared questions. Has the number 5000, which has been settled upon as the correct one for our student body going forward, been determined strategically or merely reactively? On what grounds do we conclude that 12:1 is the appropriate student-faculty ratio? Why have we decided to accept lower student and faculty numbers as an inevitability due to historically declining yields, when numerous institutions within our region have not suffered such low yields despite sharing the challenges of demographic shifts and, more recently, COVID-19? We recognize that institutions have

very different profiles and potential student pools that can account for some of this, but still the overall picture seems to be graver for IC than for many of its competitors. Why is that so? We wonder too why we are taking such drastic actions in an anomalous year, when it is difficult to see the forest for the trees. Are we creating even greater problems for ourselves in the future, in light

“We are requesting that the SLT operate not all at once, but over time ...
- FCEC”

of the punishing representation we are receiving in the media? Most crucially, how will the proposed cuts solve our problem and what is the College’s plan to prevent us from being forced to make yet more cuts going forward? Your dedicated, hard-working and devoted faculty and staff—few of whom are immune to job security anxieties at this time—seek your clear and candid answers to these questions.

It is the view of many members of the faculty that, if the process of determining the appropriate faculty and staff size were to be spread out over 2-3 years, it would be easier to assess whether the current projected numbers (again, roughly 130 FTE when it comes to faculty) are warranted, while assessing the results of other measures. As an example, faculty have requested that we focus attention on our enrollment strat-

egies and see whether we need to radically rethink our approach to recruitment and yield, better engaging faculty as ambassadors in that process. The same argument has been made about philanthropic giving; for years faculty have sought greater involvement and have argued that they might be especially well positioned to activate in potential alumni donors the emotional and intellectual attachment to IC that can generate gifts. Faculty have also called attention to the poor state of our website; a focus on improvements there could have an impact upon our yields.

While we recognize that the above suggestions would take time to operationalize, we suggest in the short term that the institution continue to offer retirement incentives and see what that generates in the next year or two, so as to somewhat mitigate the need to cut existing faculty. Faculty have also asked whether there will be administrative reductions in addition to faculty and staff eliminations. If the answer is yes, the SLT conceivably could begin with fewer faculty and staff reductions, coupled with retirement incentives, and see whether those measures and others we propose here bring us closer to our goal. After all, given Handbook rules, many of the faculty who would be eliminated under the current plan are very likely to be among our newest hires. These people arguably constitute our most vibrant teacher-scholars, and quite a few of them are also BIPOC faculty. These are the very colleagues we should be working hardest to retain. Other colleagues, such as NTEN and contingent faculty, are vulnerable not because they do not strengthen the institution but purely due to rank. If we eliminate these faculty, it is highly unlikely that—should circumstances improve—we will be able to

gain them back again. As members of the FCEC, we have had the privilege to participate in conversations and listen to presentations given by the highest leaders at this institution, ranging from our deans to the President. The Provost, in particular, has been extraordinarily generous with her time and has spoken with FCEC throughout this crisis with great candor and openness. We are grateful for that and, as a result of it, we think we can fairly say that we are not unrealistic. We know that the College’s fiscal crisis is all too real. Nevertheless, we share the concerns and ask the same questions that we are hearing from our colleagues. We believe deeply that a more gradual approach will greatly improve morale and benefit the College in the long-term. We do not mean that nothing should happen now; it is obvious that some cuts need to happen immediately. But the current timeline appears too compressed to allow for fully constructive and (where appropriate) collaborative decision-making, and many faculty members are asking whether such haste is clearly warranted by the financial picture the SLT is offering of the College at this time.

In advance of proceeding with the APP process according to the announced timeline, we hope that you will join in a discussion with the faculty so that we can engage together in meaningful, respectful dialogue to discuss the questions and proposed solutions that we have sought to offer in this letter. We are grateful to you for hearing our thoughts and concerns, and for your dedicated work on behalf of the College that we all love.

Sincerely,
Chris McNamara, Chair, and the members of the Faculty Council Executive Committee

TESTIMONIALS

Alumni express concerns about proposed APP cuts

Some Ithaca College alumni are voicing their opposition to the implementation of the Academic Program Prioritization (APP) process and the resulting faculty and program cuts.

IC Alumni Against Austerity, a group of alumni that are speaking out against the implementation of the APP, has asked alumni to submit testimonials about their experiences with faculty members who are at risk of being cut. The “Shape of the College” draft recommends 116 full-time equivalent faculty positions be cut. Some faculty members who have been notified their positions were recommended for termination have added their names to a list that is circulating on social media.

The testimonials are published unedited, as they were submitted to IC Alumni Against Austerity.

Alexander Perry ’20

There are so many faculty members who have had such a profound impact on me, especially in the Sociology and Spanish Departments. I can’t count the number of times I had meaningful conversations in a professors office talking schoolwork, job stuff, or life in general. While I am not shocked by the need to make faculty cuts or naive enough to believe the college is in a

position to delay cuts until “post-covid,” I am upset and angered by the lack of transparency throughout the process, as well as the timeline (it is extremely difficult for most profs to find work for the next year at this stage of the winter) and lack of community input.

Liz Alexander ’18

When I was an Ithaca College student, I was surrounded by professors willing to commit to me. When I would speak with friends who were studying at other colleges and universities, I would hear that this commitment wasn’t something to take for granted. When I went on to grad school, I discovered my friends were right. This commitment came from people like Sergio Pedro, who met with me and a handful of other students for six consecutive weeks—during his lunch hour—to prepare us for our new jobs as Teaching Assistants. And Harriet Malinowitz, who went out on a limb and said yes to advising a student organization I wanted to start, while we were barely off the ground. Someone like Alex Moon, who wrote a letter of recommendation for me even though I requested it at the very last minute, for a grad program that I was eventually accepted into. Or Juan Arroyo, who I met for the first time on a Saturday morning in Campus Center, representing the department we both cared



Ithaca College alumni submitted testimonials in defense of faculty members and programs that will be impacted by the proposed cuts as a result of the APP.

ASH BAILLOT/THE ITHACAN

so much about to prospective students. These are educators who have proven their commitment to their students and to their college. Why isn’t Ithaca College proving its commitment to them? On my most generous days, it is tempting to answer this question along the lines of sometimes, bad things just have to happen. That no one likes firing people, which is why the people doing the firing are getting paid the big bucks. They are there to make the difficult decisions that no one wants to make. Causalities performed in the name of necessity and the greater good. But I don’t think that laying off long-serving members of the Ithaca College community is a difficult decision. It is a cruel decision and it is sloppy, and in my opinion self-destructive, but as far as strategic planning goes, it doesn’t strike me as particularly difficult. We have located the future of

Ithaca College in the market; the market procured a goal of a 12:1 student to faculty ratio; and it was decided that the best way to reach and sustain that goal would be to fire as many people as possible, some of whom have been teaching at the college for over twenty years. A truly difficult decision would look something like deciding to take on a different kind of risk by committing to an alternative plan. It might mean deciding to pursue a different goal entirely. And surely (a homophone), it would mean imagining a future for IC shaped by something other than a market ratio. These are the more difficult decisions that we have to make.

Read the rest of the alumni testimonials at theithacan.org/opinion/alumnitestimonials.

LETTER TO FACULTY COUNCIL, NOV. 19, 2020

Faculty of color respond to criticisms of SLT

Dear Faculty Council Executive Committee,

We write as a group of BIPOC faculty at Ithaca College who have no communal affiliation other than our shared experiences at this predominantly white institution. We do not claim to speak for all BIPOC faculty.

Recent events on campus call our attention to the tenor of the criticism levied at the Senior Leadership Team (SLT). The attacks on the SLT—including belittling remarks made in public forums, closed meetings, and those made casually on social media—reflect prevalent racial and gendered biases. When faculty critique the SLT using gendered and racist language, or familiar gendered and racist tropes and dog-whistles about “competence” and “honesty,” it contributes to a campus climate in which BIPOC faculty already do not feel welcomed or supported.

As BIPOC faculty, we are called to speak in response to long standing inequities at Ithaca College. Only in recent years has the college made progress in hiring BIPOC faculty. As a result, in this time of uncertainty, the majority of BIPOC faculty are untenured. Still, this letter is not about the APP process. Instead, it is about the types of attacks against the SLT and how this creates an unwelcome and isolating work environment for BIPOC faculty.

Recent attacks on the SLT include expressions of concern for BIPOC faculty. In several forums and letters our colleagues have raised concerns about the vulnerability of

our BIPOC faculty who are concentrated in the untenured ranks at IC. Yet, during said faculty forums and letters, we have been spoken about but not spoken with. We ask that our colleagues actually see us as part of the community and include us in dialogue before using our positions as leverage to advocate for their own ends.

Furthermore, our current SLT deserves not only basic respect but the same opportunities to lead as previous administrations. Openness should not be mistaken for weakness. In addition to facing an unprecedented global pandemic, the SLT inherited the impact of decisions from previous administrations and high turnover in key positions. The work in front of them is immense. They should not have to spend additional time and energy countering the gendered racial attacks that have been levied at them.

It is well documented that minoritized people, BIPOC women in particular, not only have to deal with everyday issues on the job, but have to do so while negotiating the emotional trauma that comes with being the subject of constant undermining and gendered racial attacks (seen most often as questions about competence and intelligence). When faculty make these attacks on the SLT, they attack other BIPOC faculty as well. What we hear is that we are seen as different, other, and not part of the community. We see these realities, because we also live them as BIPOC faculty at Ithaca College.



A letter from faculty members of color asked the Ithaca College Faculty Council to be mindful of race and gender bias when criticizing the administration. Pictured is a council meeting held Sept. 4, 2018.

CAROLINE BROPHY/THE ITHACAN

If you want to retain us, talk to us, not about us; listen to us and think about the ways you contribute to an environment where racialized bodies are constantly under attack. You may see us as separate from our Senior Leadership Team and the BIPOC women who help lead our College; we do not. BIPOC individuals have never had the option of seeing ourselves as individuals. After all, if you treat people in positions of power this way, how will you treat the most marginal amongst us?

In closing, we ask that we all reflect on how heightened anxiety fuels division and the “us vs. them”

binary, and how such an environment is not conducive to shared governance or open communication. We offer this statement because we are part of this community and we want to foster a space where everyone feels welcome to engage in dialogue. We, like everyone else, want to see Ithaca College emerge from this moment stronger than we were before. In order for that to happen we feel it necessary to make our voices heard.

Julian Euell, Associate Professor, Sociology (retired); Sean Eversley Bradwell, Assistant

Professor, Education; Belisa Gonzalez, Director, Center for the Study of Culture Race and Ethnicity; Associate Professor, Sociology; Cynthia Henderson, Professor, Theatre Arts; Christine Kitano, Assistant Professor, English and Writing; Nick Kowalczyk, Associate Professor, Writing; Gustavo Licon, Associate Professor, Center for the Study of Culture Race and Ethnicity; Judith Pena-Shaf, Professor, Psychology; Vinita Prabhakar, Assistant Professor, Writing; Joseph Christian Ungco, OTD, OTR/L Assistant Professor, Occupational Therapy

OPEN LETTER, FALL 2020

Open the Books coalition asks for transparency

Back to the Beginning: Real Shared Governance

When planning began in earnest for the “Ithaca Forever” and Academic Prioritization Process (APP), assembled community members were given the overarching goal of “right-sizing” Ithaca College; we—tenured, tenure track, NTEN, and contingent faculty as well as staff and students—were asked to deliver plans in the service of that goal. But we were never consulted about the goal itself. Why is getting “leaner” the right path forward for Ithaca College?

The wealth of our goodwill toward our new administration prompted us to move forward with the planning process; we placed our trust in our new leaders because they brought fresh perspectives and many welcome, necessary changes to our college. We delivered ideas about how to reach the goals they set for us.

The creation of the APP guiding principles proceeded similarly; we were told to give feedback about how to assess programs that should be targeted for growth, reorganization, or sunseting. We weren’t asked to weigh in on whether this was the right set of goals or the right process for IC. We trusted the administration. We did all we could to inject some humanity and care for our community—faculty, staff, and students—into the vague and often frustrating guidelines.

Since the pandemic began, we have moved from “sunseting” to “lights-out.” We’ve grown more and more concerned about “right-sizing” and the APP because this swift change to our community promises to do more harm than good. The faculty have now been asked, via a survey, to recommend each other’s departments for “Reorganization,” “Consolidation,” or “Discontinuance.” Department chairs and program directors have been asked to justify their program’s value to the institution. This is

not faculty feedback; this is pitting us against each other to fight for scarce resources.

Let’s pause, and go back to the beginning; what resources do we have? How can we leverage our brilliant community of scholars, workers, and learners? What imaginative solutions or different goals could we produce to make Ithaca College thrive “Forever” and turn our budget and enrollment numbers around?

What might we do, at the very least, to slow the process of cuts so that students don’t lose their mentors and supporters, so that staff and faculty don’t lose their jobs and health insurance in the middle of a global health crisis?

Transparency over Confusion: Which crisis are we in?

Are the 2019 and 2020 enrollment dips why we are told that we need to get “leaner,” now? Judging from presentations by Bill Guerrero and Laurie Kochler over the last 6 months, and judging by the following sentence of the Senior Leadership Team’s recent email message, the answer is yes:

“The most sobering of [Kochler’s] reminders, at a national level, project diminishing numbers of college-going students leading to an “enrollment cliff” in less than 10 years, and, at IC, show a steady pattern of lower enrollment over the past decade.”

Yet President Collado says that our right-sizing is “not because of an enrollment crisis... It really is about shoring up that we’re a leaner organization so that we can be sustainable over time but, most importantly, that we can really commit to protecting financial aid and growing it.”

So is it an enrollment “cliff” or not? Bill Guerrero has at least twice presented the following misleading graph to the faculty.

The Y-axis on this graph has been cut to



Open the Books protesters walk up Alumni Circle Feb. 8 on their way to the Peggy Ryan Williams Center. The group was protesting the impending faculty cuts.

ASH BAILLOT/THE ITHACAN

accentuate decline, and the yellow line has no mathematical relationship to the data. The AIR data to which President Collado refers in her email shows a decline in 2019 and 2020, but if you measure our enrollment from 2008-2018, we had a net increase. Clearly, we need to think about what happened in 2019; we know what happened in 2020 (COVID campus, anyone?). And we need to think carefully about our future.

We continue to receive mixed messages about enrollment. We would like to have a sustained conversation about what we—as a whole community of faculty, staff, students, and alumni—can do to promote outreach and drive our enrollment numbers back up.

If we cut 130 FTE faculty lines in the next few months or even by spring 2022, will we have the energy to do that vital outreach? What will happen to our capacity to offer financial aid then? #OpenTheBooks

There are many examples nationally of colleges of different sizes and ranks that have followed the advice of the book “Prioritizing Academic Programs and Services.” We respectfully ask the administration to provide us with examples of institutions who have followed this process and have come out the other side stronger, more vibrant, and better able to support their students, faculty, and staff.

We respectfully ask the administration to engage with us in meaningful dialogue about what our community stands to lose in this process. BIPOC staff and faculty in the contingent, NTEN, and junior faculty ranks face losing their livelihoods. Current BIPOC students and alumni face losing their staff and faculty mentors. Both faculty and students lose vital supporters, advisers, and guides when staff members lose their jobs. How can we claim to value equity, justice, and diversity without protecting and supporting these vulnerable members of our campus? How can these be our values if we do not uphold fair labor practices?

We respectfully ask the administration to #OpenTheBooks so that we can see granular financials not readily available in the school’s filed 990s and surface-level presentations. #OpenTheBooks so that we can be full partners in the decision-making and goal-setting processes for our college.

We respectfully ask that the college value its people over its budgetary bottom line: we need to take a hard look at our values, especially “Respect and Accountability” and “Equity,” and then put our money where our values are.

View the graph and signatures at theithacan.org/otbletter.

LETTER TO THE SLT

Alumni oppose APP process

A Message to the Senior Leadership Team and the Board of Trustees:

We write to you with concern for our alma mater and the decisions that are being made by the Senior Leadership Team (SLT), the Academic Program Prioritization Implementation Committee (APPIC), the Office of Human Resources, as well as the Board of Trustees to fire some of our most beloved and valued faculty and staff members and to downsize or eliminate programs and majors. We do not believe that these hastened decisions, expedited during a global pandemic and without meaningful community consultation, will lead to a more promising future for Ithaca College. Instead, this type of institutional shortsightedness undermines the credibility and ethos of our institution in ways that are already being felt by staff, faculty, students, alumni, and local community members alike.

The February 1st email from “IC Alumni Relations,” entitled “Ensuring IC’s Long-Term Sustainability and Vibrancy for All,” states that “IC is well-positioned to weather these times and to thrive in the future. Its ability to do so will only be made possible through proactive strategy and action.” Because the SLT has remained confident that they are in positive fiscal standing, the timing and the pace of these firings, as well as the lack of transparency concerning the budgets that justify them, leads us to question their necessity. We therefore urge consideration of available alternative measures, such as those taken at Hampshire College, and we advocate for budget disclosure as well as robust collective governance and community collaboration moving forward.

Many of us never imagined that members of our community—our mentors, our friends, and our colleagues—would lose their livelihood during a pandemic. We have heard from 37 faculty so far who have been comfortable to publicly speak about their work status at Ithaca College, though the number will likely be as high as 126 full time equivalent positions. Because faculty on part-time contracts are only considered a portion of a “full time equivalent” position, it is unclear how many people will lose their jobs to meet this number. Of those who have shared that they have been given notice, 7 are Ithaca College alumni, 2 are parents of Ithaca College students, 5 are BIPOC, and 11 people have served the IC community for 15+ years. These are people who have helped shape our lives. What the recent email calls “resizing a community” has real, long-lasting social and psychological impacts on this very community.

As the most numbered constituents of the IC community, we alumni are the guardians of a vast institutional memory. We have gone on to global careers and serve as the broadest interface with the public. We represent a wealth of diverse perspectives and, as donors, have financial stakes in the institution. We deserve to be heard.

Accordingly, we, the undersigned alumni, oppose the changes proposed in The Shape of Our College and request that faculty and staff layoffs stop immediately. As one step towards an alternative, we pledge to earmark our future donations in service of preserving these programs and positions.

Over 80 alumni have signed the letter, which began circulating in February. View the signatures at theithacan.org/alumniletter.

DEPARTMENT OF POLITICS LETTER TO POLITICS STUDENTS AND ALUMNI, FEB. 3, 2021

Politics faculty reject proposed cuts

Dear Politics students and alumni,

We write to share our response to the APP recommendations (The Shape of the College), as we feel it is important to keep you informed.

If this Academic Program Prioritization Process at IC goes forward, we will lose two excellent colleagues (Assistant Profs. Alex Moon and Juan Arroyo) who provide insightful teaching, dedicated service and who share scholarship and knowledge with the IC community. They have done so for a total of 41 years; 21 and 20 years respectively. They are loved by students. They teach classes that others cannot and their flexible intellects allows them to fill gaps in our curriculum. Their recently negotiated appointments should take them through 2024-25 (Prof. Moon) and 2023-2024 (Prof. Arroyo). Our unanimous departmental response to APPIC, and to the Provost and President, is that we reject their termination of our valued colleagues. Losing them is a mistake that will have a large negative logistical and curricular impact on our department and on the college. We already see evidence that retention and admissions will suffer as students lose confidence in the breadth and relevance of the education they can receive at Ithaca College.

Curricular Effects for Politics:

The courses taught by both faculty members are essential for any reputable Politics program. US Politics (POLT 10100) is a requirement in every political science program in the U.S. All students should have a grounding in U.S. Politics as it provides a platform for larger conversations about political life both in the U.S. and internationally. In addition to U.S. Politics, Prof. Moon teaches core courses in the subfield of U.S. Politics and Political Theory, including: Constitutional Law, U.S. Supreme Court, Black Political Thought, Theory and Practice of Race, Theory and Practice of Punishment, Political Theory of Conservatism, Radical Social Criticism: Rousseau, Marx, Nietzsche, Freud, and Foucault, Contemporary Political Theory, Theory and Practice of Toleration, Transitions to Modernity: Social Theory



Alex Moon, assistant professor in the Department of Politics, at a faculty council meeting in December 2015. Arroyo and Moon’s positions will be eliminated if the APP’s cuts are approved.

FILE PHOTO/THE ITHACAN

and the Persistence of Religion, and others.

Professor Moon’s expertise is Political Theory and this allows him to teach the diverse array of courses mentioned above. Every year, Professor Moon adjusts to Department needs via intense reading, research, and calibration of lesson plans. Recently Professor Moon has stretched into Legal Studies (Foundations in Law, LGST 10100). We will need him to teach still more courses in Legal Studies when Professor Tom Shevory retires in May.

Removing this position affects the capacity of students to be guaranteed a place in the class as needed in their freshman year. Furthermore, if the department chooses to restrict course enrollment to only what Dr. Figueroa can cover, we will lose the ability to attract exploratory students and students who major or work in Journalism, PCIM-Independent Media, Documentary Studies, TVR, Business, Health Policy and Management, all of which strongly encourage U.S. Politics for the foundation it gives them for future careers in those industries.

Likewise, Prof. Arroyo teaches many courses that will not be covered by others. He teaches courses that have always been well-enrolled and in high demand in European Politics, Politics of the European Union, International Organizations, and Food and Water: The Challenges of Sustainability (Integrative Core Curriculum course, Social Science perspective), all of which have policy content and cover

important and current global and national themes. Students graduating with a degree in Politics/International Politics will lack an understanding of the areas such as International Institutions, the European Union, and Politics in Europe. Prof. Arroyo offers advanced level courses such as Catholics and Politics, Comparative Welfare States, and Practicum in International Governance. These courses are crucial to the department’s International Politics Concentration.

We are shocked by the failure of the administration to understand that cutting Professor Arroyo means the termination of the Model United Nations and Model European Union. We cannot run the Model United Nations programming without Prof. Arroyo’s experience, expertise and endless patience and affinity for his students. Prof. Arroyo has done this work in large part uncompensated, and because he has a passion for it. Prof. Arroyo’s role is critical in the department in terms of his leadership, service and curricular innovations and accomplishments regarding these programs. Under his guidance, MUN has been repeatedly cited by alumni and donors as one of the major experiences binding them to IC. Before IC cancelled the activities due to COVID-19, there were a total of 31 students participating in both programs (22 in MUN and 9 in MEU). As well, Dr. Arroyo teaches Exploring the Options for the Exploratory Program at I.C., and the Food and Water course that covers topics that are urgent and that discuss current global topics like water privatization and food sovereignty).

The absence of these classes as core aspects of our program will affect students seeking post-graduate programming, and other careers. Our students have benefited from grounding their critical thinking in these foundational courses, and with these dedicated and experienced faculty members. Their/our students have gone into careers such as: Senior Policy Manager @ Oxfam International, New York State Assembly and national Senate Budget Committee legislative aid, political consulting, law school and graduate school in political theory and U.S. politics. Any transcript that indicates a lack of knowledge

of US politics or European politics today is seen as a major deficit — as noted in the recent report by the external assessor. The choices being made for short-term budgetary purposes will generate a spiraling long-term disaster from which the department is unlikely to recover.

Overall Logistical/Strategic Needs of the Department: ...

- We will have staffing gaps, especially with retirement, and sabbatical gaps that will be hard to fill.

- We will be forced to suspend the plans to move ahead with the policy minor/concentration. ...

- Impact on other faculty: we will have to forego teaching some of the areas that students persistently request.

- The loss of our colleagues will gravely reduce department morale and reduce trust in the college administration.

- Already our students are coming to us with concerns around being able to fulfill our language requirement, because courses and certain languages in Modern Languages and Literatures are being cut. ...

Impact on the College: ...

- U.S. politics has become critical to other majors. ...

- Courses taught by both Professors Arroyo and Moon hold multiple ICC designations.

- This will affect admissions. ... This will be a negative impact on our national and regional competitiveness.

- The APP recommendations to fire faculty members who have been with us for more than 20 years each, and who teach critical courses, will affect student retention (unsatisfied students will leave the college). ...

In our response to APPIC, we also included Faculty focused comments, and include our comments on alternatives to the proposed cuts. We noted that we think the approach taken by APPIC in developing the APP recommendations, to spread the FTE reductions across the college, creates a situation which does not seem to align with IC’s identity or values, especially with respect to equity, but also academic excellence, respect and accountability, and others. ...

Please direct any questions to prodriguez@ithaca.edu.

Read the whole letter at theithacan.org/politicsletter.



Juan Arroyo, assistant professor in the Department of Politics, attends a Model UN conference with the club in February 2017.

COURTESY OF JUAN ARROYO

GUEST COMMENTARY

Faculty cuts diminish degree value

BY ELIJAH BRETON

The problem with the latest Academic Program Prioritization Implementation Committee (APPIC) proposal is too much emphasis on finances with no critical thinking from an educational perspective. This puts the college in a precarious position long-term. We have known that given the current environment, budget cuts would be made and some faculty and staff would likely be cut. That was always going to be inevitable. However, the path Ithaca is taking to make ends meet seems panicked, driven by numbers excluding context, and absent of true community discussion.

In trying to do some research on the current affairs of IC, I was disappointed in realizing that alumni were not granted access to view the proposal or any dashboards in the APPIC portal. Needless to say, this is problematic on a variety of levels. Alumni should be viewed as an equal stakeholder as current students, faculty and staff. One of the nine goals put forth as part of “Ithaca Forever” is to increase alumni and student engagement with the college. What’s occurring today is counter to that goal. Alumni should have been afforded an opportunity to be involved in discussions that will shape the institution for years to come.

The analysis provided by *The Ithacan* shows liberal arts will not play a large role in Ithaca College’s future, thus calling



Elijah Breton graduated in 2016 and is a member of the Blue & Gold Society. His programs, sport studies and communication studies, will be affected by the proposed APP cuts.

FILE PHOTO/THE ITHACAN

into question whether we can seriously consider ourselves a comprehensive institution. This direction is antithetical to today’s domestic affairs. As someone who will likely have both of their liberal arts majors (Sport Studies, Communication Studies) eliminated in less than five years post-graduation, the value of my degree has depreciated significantly. We should not forget what liberal arts programs can offer the world by equipping students to be critical thinkers and have high emotional intelligence.

There are also unintended consequences of the APPIC proposal: The first being that there will likely be a reduction in minority professors at an already predominantly white institution. That doesn’t bode well for

attracting a diverse group of students and translates into lack of perspective in the classroom. The second consequence is the impact to the Ithaca economy. A reduction in students will have a ripple effect on small businesses and housing that students typically rent.

Historically, we as an Ithaca College community have not done a good enough job of holding the Board of Trustees accountable. A common denominator throughout both Thomas Rochon and Shirley Collado’s tenure has been the Board. What’s lacking in this overall plan beyond the faculty cuts are projections on how Ithaca will remain competitive in the market long-term. The big picture strategy falls to the Board and so far, I have not

seen any communication from them that would make me feel confident in the vision of the college. A letter was sent to alumni on Feb. 1 that felt disingenuous and out of reality to the current climate today. Alumni want to engage because we care. Pragmatic and realistic alternatives would have been found if a platform to collaborate were offered.

Instead, we’ll now be faced with a fractured community and an institution that will struggle to foster a truly diverse education. Ithaca College is missing out on an opportunity to be a thought leader in the higher education space, and that is a damn shame.

ELIJAH BRETON is a 2016 Ithaca College graduate. Contact him at ebreton2@ithaca.edu.



SEEKING JUSTICE

JOHN TURNER

Let Black girls exist freely

I remember at the age of 5 praying for a baby sister. My father had told me that if he had another son he would name him William, which would make him William III. I’ve always found naming your kids after you somewhat tacky — no offense to the juniors of the world. To ensure that my father would not name his son William, I prayed for a sister. A year later, God answered my prayers, and I was holding a baby girl in my arms. When I found out that my parents were expecting again, I prayed for another sister, and God answered my prayer a second time.

Having two sisters, especially two Black sisters, has completely changed the way I look at life. I feel as though I have to protect them because the world will surely not. On Jan. 31, I was reminded of this sad reality when I found out that a 9-year-old Black girl was forcibly handcuffed and sprayed in the face with pepper spray in my hometown of Rochester, New York. It’s one thing to hear about issues when they’re happening somewhere else, but when it happens in your own backyard, you are forced to face reality.

At only 9-years-old, this little Black girl was shown that the world would not treat her fairly. Just like her ancestors, she would be abused by a system that profits off her being.

Who in their right mind would pepper spray a 9-year-old girl? It’s as if the police officer perceived her as a 6-foot-tall linebacker. This warped perception, also known as adultification, of Black girls, is a major reason why they are treated as dispensable.

There needs to be more discussion within mainstream spaces about the criminalization of Black girls. I wish that I could say that what occurred on Jan. 31 came as a surprise to me, but instances like this have become far too familiar.

So, what is the solution? To combat this issue on an individual level, those who are not Black women need to engage in purposeful learning to understand their implicit biases. When you see a Black woman being disrespected or abused, do something! If you’re the one who is harming Black women, you need to first recognize it, then educate yourself and stop immediately.

At the end of the day we, as a society, need to let Black women exist freely. There is no reason that a 9-year-old girl should have to worry about being wrongfully pepper-sprayed and handcuffed by police. People love to claim they are “woke” until it comes time to protect Black girls and women. Now is the time to show your allyship.

One day, I will pray for a daughter just as I prayed for my two sisters. I will pray that she grows up in a world where she is allowed to simply exist. I will pray that she will be uplifted and not trampled by the world. For my prayers to be answered, it will take more than just words — it will take action. Help Black girls by being a part of that change.

SEEKING JUSTICE is a column that examines race and cultural competency. JOHN TURNER is a junior journalism major. Contact him at jturner3@ithaca.edu.

GUEST COMMENTARY

Solidarity is necessary amid pandemic

BY ERIN SHAW

A SHEL, or a Student Health Emergency Liaison, is a new position on the Ithaca College campus this spring. We’re a group of student interns who work in Emerson Hall, Terrace 13 and across campus helping the Return to Campus Task Force. A normal day in the life of a SHEL involves arriving at Emerson Hall and being greeted and briefed by the SHEL members who were there before you. The member that was at the desk will wipe down everything that they touched and head out of the office so you can maintain proper protocol of six feet. Alex Devers and Samm Swarts, the coordinators, will then pop out of their office and ask you to complete whatever task they might have. Some examples include running meals to students or setting up quarantine rooms. As I said before, that’s a normal day. Things started to get more hectic as more students started to arrive.

I’m currently a junior Public and Community Health Major with double minors in Legal Studies and Health Policy and Management. When granted the opportunity, the SHEL position with Ithaca College has only furthered my passion for public health and given me an inside look at just how important it is. The other SHELs and I were fitted with N90 respirators so we could safely be around COVID-positive students along with proper PPE and HIPPA training provided by the Office of Public Safety and Emergency Management. We then went through hours of training about responding accordingly to sensitive situations.

SHELs have a lot of responsibility, as this is a full-time internship for us. Most SHELs are receiving anywhere from two to six credit hours this semester. We do everything from virtual check-ins with students and handing out dinner to setting up quarantine rooms and doing rounds on the isola-



Erin Shaw is a junior public and community health major. She is a Student Health Emergency Liaison and has been helping with moving students onto campus.

MIKAYLA ELWELL/THE ITHACAN

tion floor. Along with that, some SHELs also assist with sample collection across campus. As a group, we have to follow COVID protocol and uphold professionalism, as we’re dealing with sensitive information daily.

It’s important to note that even though I have this position, I’m still a 20-year-old student. Yes, I want to go to parties, hang out with my friends and have a normal semester, but I know I can’t. I have a responsibility to keep myself and my community safe. I’m not saying I’m perfect — I’ve slipped up a few times this pandemic and been around too many people at times. Having this position on campus has shown me just how dangerous that is.

As a community, I feel we need to do better. Coming home from a long day at work after wearing a respirator for 6 or more hours and seeing images of 50-plus kids at a party is a slap in the face, to be honest. As I stated before, the more students that arrive on campus, the more hectic my job gets.

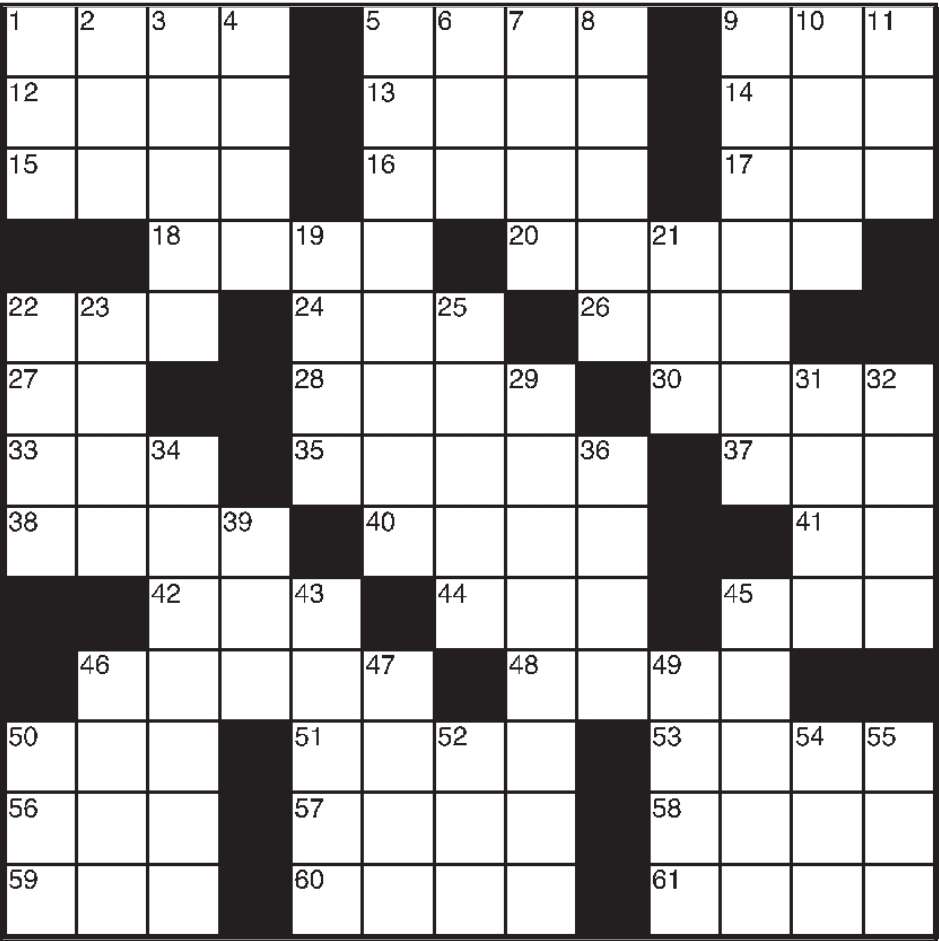
My team and I are doing the best we can. We’re really trying to make sure everyone gets a full semester on campus, but if parties and large gatherings continue, it’s not going to be easy, or it might not happen at all.

ERIN SHAW is a junior public health major. Contact her at eshaw3@ithaca.edu.

DIVERSIONS

crossword

By United Media



ACROSS

- 1 Rainbow shapes
5 Aahs' companions
9 Wintry cry
12 Flapjack chain
13 Army outfit
14 Snack
15 Extinct bird
16 Tijuana snack
17 Ernesto Guevara
18 Frat letters
20 Fourth-down options
22 Bossy's chew
24 Grade-school org.
26 Mgmt. biggie
27 Nome's st.
28 Sea eagle
30 Runs its course
33 Matter, in law
35 Streisand tune "— We"
37 Bring action
38 Game channel
40 "Our Gang" dog
41 "—, shucks!"
42 Winter Games grp.
44 Tijuana "Mrs."

- 45 Sweater sizes
46 Not up yet (2 wds.)
48 Ms. Lanchester of films
50 Molecular biology topic
51 District
53 Covers with frosting
56 PC bailout key
57 Food preserver
58 On the summit
59 — degree
60 Television award
61 "— Lisa"

- 22 Give a darn
23 Hawaiian guitars, briefly
25 Cuzco locale
29 Urgent appeal
31 Twofold
32 Hems up
34 Popeye's food
36 Duck or hue
39 Cribbage card
43 Discontinue
45 Hobby knife (hyph.)
46 Scholarly org.
47 Tot of whiskey

- 49 Where Anna taught
50 Lair
52 House shaver
54 Period of time
55 Health resort

DOWN

- 1 Support
2 Letter before sigma
3 In secret writing
4 Catch sight of
5 Surpass
6 — — budget
7 Bumpkin
8 Unflinching
9 Gestures
10 Fan noises
11 Rural addr.
19 Copied
21 So-so grade



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sudoku

easy

2	6			9	7			
						5		4
		3	7					2
			5					7
	7	9			3			8
	3	7	8			6	4	
4		8	1					
1	2					8	7	

answers to last issue's sudoku:

easy

1	6	7	8	3	5	9	4	2
3	2	8	9	6	4	7	1	5
9	4	5	7	1	2	3	8	6
8	5	1	2	7	9	4	6	3
2	7	4	3	5	6	8	9	1
6	3	9	4	8	1	2	5	7
7	8	6	5	9	3	1	2	4
5	9	2	1	4	7	6	3	8
4	1	3	6	2	8	5	7	9

medium

9	8	4	2	3	7	6	5	1
1	5	6	9	8	4	3	2	7
7	3	2	1	5	6	4	8	9
8	7	5	3	6	9	1	4	2
2	6	1	7	4	5	9	3	8
4	9	3	8	2	1	7	6	5
5	4	7	6	9	2	8	1	3
6	1	8	5	7	3	2	9	4
3	2	9	4	1	8	5	7	6

medium

					7	5		9
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1		5						
	4	6	5					1
	6					4		5
			1					3
	1		3			6		

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SINGING MELODIES OF RESILIENCE AND TRIUMPH

Annual concert honors Black civil rights activists

BY GRACE AZAULA

Images of Martin Luther King Jr. and other civil rights activists graced the screen as musicians played powerful melodies. Messages of joy, resilience and progress were all expressed in the images and videos of the annual MLK Celebration Concert.

Starting Jan. 25, Ithaca College hosted its annual Martin Luther King Jr. Campus-Wide Celebration featuring virtual workshops, conversations and artistic performances revolving around racial justice and Black history. On Jan. 29, the college's MLK Celebration Concert premiered on YouTube as the final event of MLK week. In the past, the concert had been hosted in person, but this year it took on a different format to preserve attendees' health and safety amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

Baruch Whitehead, associate professor in the Department of Music Education and director of the concert, said that rather than postponing the concert, he adapted the structure. Whitehead worked with producer Matthew Brockman '18 to create the virtual concert. The video compiled performances from past MLK Celebration Concerts, new virtual performances, pictures and videos that represent moments in the fight for racial justice.

"We're continuing the tradition," Whitehead said. "The fact that we were able to come together with some old things and some new things, I think that's going to be really interesting for the audience."

The MLK Celebration Concert and all other virtual events from MLK week are archived online as a tool for members of the campus community to use in continued conversations about injustice and anti-racism.

The concert featured performances from past MLK Celebration Concerts featuring the college's Wind Ensemble, Chorus, Concert Band, soloists Mariah Lytle '19 and senior Asila Folds and guest soloist Samantha McElhanehan John.

The concert also spotlighted faculty members, featuring Sidney Outlaw, assistant professor in the Department of Music Performance, and Steven Banks, assistant professor in the Department of Music Performance. Banks played an original composition, titled "As I Am," that he said he believes reflects the current nature of our country.

"I think that this piece is one that came at a really transitional time in my life," Banks said. "It was sort of the end of my student-hood, going into my professional life and so, like most people, I was trying to figure stuff out. I think in many ways, our country, our school, the world is really trying to



Groups from the School of Music perform "Glory," arranged by Michael White '19, with the Dorothy Cotton Jubilee Singers on Jan. 29 on Zoom.

COURTESY OF ITHACA COLLEGE SCHOOL OF MUSIC

just figure stuff out right now."

Additionally, the concert featured previous performances from the Dorothy Cotton Jubilee Singers. The Dorothy Cotton Jubilee Singers are directed by Whitehead and aim to uphold the tradition of performing African-American spirituals. Whitehead said this group is named in honor of Dorothy Cotton, a civil rights leader who worked closely with King and lived in Ithaca. He said he wanted a space to perform more diverse music that is often neglected in music education.

"I felt like the Negro spirituals did not have their rightful place in terms of a very Eurocentric curriculum, so I decided that I wanted to have a group that would strictly do Negro spirituals and other African-American sacred music," Whitehead said. "To me, it was like an homage to my grandmother and also to Dorothy's legacy because I wanted to use music in the same way that she used music, to break down racial lines."

In a performance from the 2020 MLK Celebration Concert featured in this year's video, the Dorothy Cotton Jubilee Singers collaborated with the college's choir to sing "We Shall Overcome" featuring Folds, a soloist at the college.

Folds said that during this performance, she tried to express the perseverance and strength of the Black community.

"While I was singing, I was thinking about how much we have already overcome and how much more we have to go," Folds said. "I think I was tapping into my personal experience, but also just showcasing what the entire Black community goes through on a daily basis."

In addition to recordings of performances before the pandemic, the concert closed by featuring two virtual performances that were made by editing together students' self-recorded videos. The first was a video of "Amazing Grace," arranged by Oliver Scott '19 and performed by students from the School of Music that originally premiered Dec. 15 on YouTube. The second was "Glory," arranged by Whitehead and Michael White '19, originally from the movie Selma. The "Glory" video was produced over winter break specifically for the MLK Celebration Concert and was performed by the Dorothy Cotton Jubilee Singers and groups from the college's School of Music, featuring Maria Ellis-Jordan from the Dorothy Cotton Jubilee Singers and senior Matthew Suffern.

Sophomore Mahum Qureshi said she played viola during "Glory" at both last year's and this year's MLK Celebration Concerts. She said that although it is in a different format, the piece is still inspiring.

"There's just so much strength in that piece," Qureshi said. "It moves me every time I play it with people, just the power and the strength. I don't know anyone that doesn't like that song or doesn't feel something when they listen to it or play it."

Folds said she believes that the annual MLK

Celebration Concert provides an opportunity to amplify the voices of communities that are often stifled.

"I think the takeaway I wanted from the concert was just to be able to celebrate Black voices," Folds said. "I feel like, especially in predominantly white areas, it's so easy for us to get lost and not be celebrated, so I thought that that was really cool."

Dani Novak, emeritus associate professor in the Department of Mathematics, attended the concert and said he preferred the virtual format to the in-person concerts held previously.

"I usually do not go to concerts, but here I am able to pause, watch again and again, get information about details using the web, go back to enjoy the show, etcetera," Novak said. "It is just another form of expressing the human spirit, and it works for me."

Banks said he believes music plays a part in the pursuit of civil rights because it provides an opportunity to better understand one another.

"When we talk about music, if we're raising everyone's voices, then we are inherently valuing people's humanity," Banks said. "And so the more we can understand people on a human-to-human level, the more likely we are to value each other's lives equally. And that I think is one of the reasons that music can be so linked to all of these aspects of civil rights. Sometimes it's not a policy thing, but it's just a matter of making sure that no one is viewed as less than human."

Whitehead said he hopes attendees and participants walked away from the virtual concert with a sense of hope and a desire to continue the legacy of King.

"Hopefully they'll take away from the concert a renewed focus of being engaged and to really being able to talk to one another, and to really break down bridges, and break down walls to bring people together," Whitehead said. "We shouldn't let this just be a one-day event, that this is something that we strive for throughout our entire lives, every day of the week."

The college will continue celebrating Black heritage with virtual events throughout Black History Month. "More Than Just a History Month," a presentation from the Office of Student Engagement that will discuss the history of Black History Month, will take place Feb. 11. Alisha Lola Jones, a gospel music scholar, will present a lecture titled "Black Musical Masculinities and the Art of Enflaming Worship" on Feb. 12.

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FROM
IMMIGRANT
TO CITIZEN

Ithaca College professor officially
becomes a United States citizen



From left, Miri Hadar-Bessire, lecturer in the Department of Modern Languages and Literatures at Ithaca College, and Judge John C. Rowley on Feb. 19 at the Tompkins County Courthouse. Hadar-Bessire was one of 55 people who became U.S. citizens.

BY ABBEY LONDON

Twelve years ago, Miri Hadar-Bessire, lecturer in the Department of Modern Languages and Literatures at Ithaca College, fled her home country of Israel with her 1-year-old son, Liraz, toward the end of the Second Lebanon War. "There were bombs everywhere, [and] missiles coming from Hezbollah," she said. "I said, 'No more. That's it. I'm done.' ... Lives in Israel were never easy. It's always war, always something going on and terror attacks, and I just had to live in peace."

Hadar-Bessire officially obtained her citizenship Feb. 19 at the Tompkins County Courthouse. She was one of 55 citizens in Ithaca who were naturalized by Judge John C. Rowley that day. Thirty-five petitioners took an Oath of Allegiance to the U.S. during the ceremony to finalize the legal status of the new citizens.

In Ithaca, as of 2018, approximately 18% of the population was foreign-born, and approximately 12% of people were noncitizens, according to the World Population Review. On Feb. 2, 2017, the City of Ithaca Common Council unanimously approved Ithaca as a sanctuary city to provide refuge for immigrants, as previously reported by The Ithacan.

Hadar-Bessire said the thing she is most excited to do now is to vote in the upcoming 2020 presidential election.

"When you are an immigrant, you are held to very high standards," she said. "You are always afraid that if you ... [do something] wrong, you'll be deported. ... [Now] nobody's going to deport me. ... I can vote. I can make my voice heard. I can protest. I can be

CITIZENSHIP, PAGE 4

CAPs winter coat drive extends because of increased demand

BY ALEX HARTZOG

College releases new diversity statement

BY CORA PAYNE

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Writing professor appointed as poet laureate

BY MADDY MARTIN

Christine Kitano, assistant professor in the Department of Writing at Ithaca College, has been named the Poet Laureate of Tompkins County.

The Tompkins County Legislature officially appointed Kitano as the county’s 10th poet laureate Jan. 19. The legislature established the position of Tompkins County Poet Laureate in 2001 to honor local poets and give them the platform to educate the community about poetry. A term for a poet laureate lasts two years. Kitano said Tompkins County poet laureates can be asked to write and read poems for town events.

Kitano is the author of two collections of poetry, “Birds of Paradise,” and “Sky Country.” She also is a faculty member for the MFA Program for Writers at Warren Wilson College. Kitano said she views the role of poet laureate as a community position and hopes to expose more community members to poetry.

“As a poet, there are not a lot of ways that the work you do is visible to the people around you because poetry is not the most accessible or common art form,” Kitano said. “Especially for someone like my mom, who doesn’t read a lot of poetry, [being poet laureate] is something tangible. ... This feels like something that’s more public.”

Megan Barber, executive director at Community Arts Partnership of Tompkins County, the organization that assists in selecting the laureate, said poets can self-nominate or nominate another person for the position. Once the nominations came in, Barber said she put together a panel including herself, the 2019–20 poet laureate Melissa Tuckey and Tompkins County legislator Amanda Champion.

Eleanor Henderson, associate professor and chair of the Department of Writing, said she immediately thought about Kitano when she heard about nominations for the position.

“She is a professional,” Henderson said. “She is serious in her work ethic. She is dedicated and quietly works away on poems in her office. I have wonderful colleagues, but it’s difficult to find time to write, and she makes it a priority. She’s a really dedicated professor, and she’s also a really dedicated writer.”

Barber said that when reviewing poets’ applications and writing samples, the selection panel considered the artistic qualities of the nominees’ work as well as their experience doing community work with poetry.

“Everyone on the panel was moved by [Kitano’s] poetry,” Barber said. “It was accessible and personal and got people thinking about life in a way that maybe they hadn’t thought about before.”

Kitano said a lot of her own poetry is inspired by the stories of her family that she heard growing up. Kitano’s mother immigrated from Korea when she was 16 and lived with Kitano’s grandmother through the Korean War, she said. Kitano’s father, a Japanese American, was incarcerated at Topaz Internment Camp during World War II.

“I grew up with what felt like really important stories,” Kitano said. “Even though they were just family stories, they felt like they were historically significant.”

As her first act as Tompkins County’s Poet Laureate, Kitano read a poem titled “Ithaca Domestic” before the legislature on Zoom. She said the poem was inspired by living in Ithaca and the resilience she has



Christine Kitano, assistant professor in the Department of Writing at Ithaca College, has been named the poet laureate by the Tompkins County Legislature and the Community Arts Partnership.

ELEANOR KAY/THE ITHACAN

gained amid the pandemic.

“I haven’t met [Kitano] in person yet, which feels a little weird,” Champion said. “I hope that at some point, I will get to meet her in person and get to know her a little bit. And hopefully later in the summer, maybe we’ll be back in our chambers and she can come read to us in person.”

One of Kitano’s students, senior Mickey Snow, said she was impressed by the stories Kitano integrates into her poetry.

“A lot of her poetry has to do with her heritage and being an American citizen along with having Korean and Asian heritage and trying to balance them both,” Snow said. “In America it’s so hard to be yourself,

and it’s so confusing trying to understand who you are. I see all of those attributes in her work.”

Junior Olivia Notaro took Poetics with Kitano last fall, and she said it was both her favorite class of the semester and the easiest one to transition onto Zoom with. Notaro said Kitano kept a structured plan while using Zoom and gave students enough space to learn and adjust to the new format.

“She’s really open and understanding of everybody’s opinions and views,” Notaro said. “She’s great at facilitating conversation, and she’s a really genuine person when she’s reflecting about her thoughts on poetry and on literature in general and her entire perspective on what it means

to read and write.”

Kitano said she plans on organizing a poetry book club to help community members engage with poetry.

“I hear a lot of, ‘I don’t want to read stuff that has to rhyme,’ and poetry doesn’t have to rhyme,” Kitano said. “Poetry is not just fun nursery rhymes that have nothing to do with real life. Even nursery rhymes are very much reflective of the culture in which they are written and the cultures in which they are celebrated. ... It should be pleasurable and fun.”

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New mockumentary series puts focus on fun and art

BY KATHERINE KROM

With the COVID-19 pandemic transforming the process of television production, one group of Ithaca College students is adapting in the face of these challenges to create a feel-good comedy.

The new ICTV production, titled “A Piece of Art,” is a mockumentary that follows three high school artists — a cult-indoctrinated painter, a sellout actress and an uncoordinated fashion designer — as they compete for a scholarship to the University of Louisville. Sophomore Jake Orloff is the head writer for the production, along with sophomores Kyle Friedman and Brittney Cooper, who are producers.

Orloff said the group first met in their freshman orientation group in Fall 2019 with the same goal of creating a production. Soon after, they wrote a script for “A Piece of Art.”

“We kind of locked ourselves in this classroom and promised not to come out until we have a fully fleshed TV show idea,” Orloff said. “Kind of like electing a Pope. Lo and behold, we didn’t come out until we had ‘A Piece of Art.’”

Orloff said he has been a member of other ICTV shows but felt that they didn’t have enough community for him.

“When I first joined an ICTV show my freshman year, it felt like a job that you were not getting paid for and you didn’t really get much out of it,” Orloff said. “That’s also why we wanted to create this show.”

To make their creation come to life, the students are attempting to raise \$6,000 to fund equipment, props, location, food and safety gear. So far, the project has raised approximately \$1,500. Due to COVID-19 protocols, the team has limited access to equipment from the Roy H. Park School of Communications.

Friedman said ICTV provided the “A Piece of Art” team with \$100, but this wasn’t enough for safety supplies for COVID-19, props, costumes or other expenses associated with production.

“A Piece of Art” will start filming March 1. Orloff said the team will follow the New York state guidelines for film and entertainment as well as put a significant amount of its money toward cleaning supplies.

“We don’t want to pull a Tom Cruise, but we will if we have to,” Orloff said. “We’re missing a bunch of clubs and classes, and we’re stuck in our dorms. We want to give people that opportunity to just do something related to film.”

Making safety a priority, the team has had to make adjustments to its script by taking out any unnecessary interactions. Orloff said that when filming, only 50% occupancy is allowed at every location and nine people in a room.

Friedman said the team has had to limit its filming locations, but they have been able to utilize some sets on campus. Friedman also said they purchased a bed and breakfast room with a bathroom to film in since they could not film in an on-campus bathroom.

Sophomore Alysia Duncan became involved in the production after seeing posters and signs for the show in Fall 2019. Duncan plays the dramatic, bossy Virginia. She will be acting in the production in person, and she believes that the crew is doing everything to stay safe.

“I think no matter what, it’s always going to be kind of [nerve-wracking] doing something during COVID,” Duncan said. “I am just going to do my best and be as safe as possible.”

Friedman said the goals of the production are to create an educational experience by having underclassmen working with



Sophomore Jake Orloff introduces the student-created mockumentary series “A Piece of Art” in a video to tease the show and raise money for production.

COURTESY OF BRITTNEY COOPER

upperclassmen, to build a community and to have a fun and productive environment.

Duncan said this production is her first time being part of a large on-camera show, but working with upperclassmen has allowed it to go smoothly.

“The best part about a mix of ages is that you do get to learn a lot from upperclassmen,” Duncan said. “In general, they set a really good example of set etiquette and how to work together as a group. I definitely think that the upperclassmen help the underclassmen feel more welcome and that they are included in this space.”

Cooper said they are excited to see what will come out of the show and most importantly just want people to get a good laugh in.

“I hope people just have fun with it; it’s a comedy,” Cooper said. “If someone can laugh at least once, I’d find that quite enjoyable. If they laugh more, that is going to be amazing. Not even for the audience but for the crew that is working on it. I hope they have fun and come out with a great experience, some learning experience.”

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Vogue disregards Black pioneers

BY EVA SALZMAN

Thanks to the December 2020 issue of Vogue, Harry Styles has been deemed the most recent leader in androgyny among male artists. Although he was the first man to ever front the American magazine solo, he was nowhere near revolutionary in his attire.

Behind consumerism, the point of fashion is to help people feel more confident. It makes sense that the leading fashion magazine in the world is showing a man wearing a dress, as it has become more popular in mainstream fashion. However, just because a man wearing a dress is “shocking” to everyone in 2021 doesn’t mean that it has never happened before. So why are people acting like Styles is the first man to ever wear a dress when other artists, especially Black artists like Prince, Lenny Kravitz and Little Richard paved the way?

The underrepresentation of Black artists in the music and fashion industries alike is all too prevalent. Little Richard paved the way for Prince and David Bowie, teaching fans everywhere that men could look feminine and still be sexy. Even today, Lil Nas X, a popular artist who dresses in a more feminine manner, could have been chosen to lead this movement. But Vogue and its readers chose Styles, a white, cisgender man who some fans presume is straight due to the public nature of his heterosexual relationships.

To clarify, Styles has never confirmed his sexuality, telling The Guardian, “Sexuality’s something that’s fun. Honestly? I can’t say I’ve given it any more thought than that.” While we can’t assume Styles’ gender or sexuality, it feels disrespectful to make him the figure of this movement when so many people have faced deadly backlash for having done what he’s doing.

Perhaps Styles, coming from a widely recognized and adored boy band, was an easy face to introduce an idea that may be new to many people. Styles was called a “revolutionary” by Gucci’s Alessandro Michele for being in touch with his feminine side. However, Vogue’s ignorant marketing strategy not only does Black androgynous artists a disservice, but it completely insults the community of Black trans feminine individuals and Black drag queens who have been beaten, ostracized and killed for doing the same thing as Styles.

Marsha P. Johnson was “an activist, self-identified drag queen, performer and survivor” as well as “a prominent figure in the Stonewall uprising of 1969,” as the institute that shares her name describes her. Johnson was a leader for Black transgender individuals, known for her kindness, inspiring nature and advocacy for the freedom of gender expression. Johnson’s body was found in the Hudson River in 1992. At the time, police determined Johnson’s cause of death to be suicide, despite all of her friends insisting that she was never suicidal. The official cause of Johnson’s suspicious death was reclassified to “undetermined” in 2002 and remains that way today.

If Vogue truly wanted to recognize a movement while honoring the lives of Black people who have lost their lives making these choices, it could have. There are plenty of Black artists who dress femininely and could have been featured instead of Styles, like Lil Nas X or Billy Porter.

While a man covering Vogue is a step toward defying the norm, it’s also a step back. Vogue has shown little diversity on its covers in the past and has rightfully been criticized for it.

POPPED CULTURE is a weekly column, written by Life & Culture staff writers, that analyzes pop culture current events. Eva Salzman is a sophomore health sciences major. Contact her at esalzman@ithaca.edu.

Cop film falls to stereotypical formula

MOVIE REVIEW: “The Little Things” Grand Via Productions ★★☆☆☆

BY ARLEIGH RODGERS

The well-trodden path of banal cop film after cop film continues in “The Little Things.” Director John Lee Hancock’s so-called crime thriller exists without an ounce of genuine suspense. It is instead stuffed with lackluster dialogue and a predictable plotline, which adds nothing to the slew of movies with its exact formula.

Stop reading if this sounds familiar: Veteran detective Joe “Deke” Deacon (Denzel Washington) teams up with newly instated head detective Jim Baxter (Rami Malek) to investigate a string of murders — all women — across different locations in California. Each of the murders has a clear pattern and style, and weeks of dead ends ripple through the police station. Deke and Jim are deeply invested for their separate reasons, though neither story is vibrant or inventive enough to give viewers a morsel worth rooting for.

Meaningless police jargon meets occasional moments of victory, quickly thwarted by clues that lead to nothing — much like the plot of “The Little Things” itself. Dramatic scenes, like the discovery of the first body, feel cheap and excusable, with graphic scenes that aren’t disquieting enough to scare audiences. Even their prime suspect, a red-eyed and greasy-haired Jared Leto, is only a weightless caricature of the loner-murderer complex that defines most true crime media. Why Leto’s distinctly underwhelming performance was then honored with a Golden Globe nomination is astounding. Perhaps it isn’t a surprise that the Hollywood Foreign Press Association, the group that selects the Golden Globe nominees, should choose mediocrity. It also nominated the uninspired “Emily in Paris” for Best Comedy Series.

Unlike director David Fincher’s “Se7en” — a freakish and

valued film in the detective genre that gave disturbing light to the serial killer in question — “The Little Things” feels inconsequential at its worst and mildly intriguing at its best. In the end, viewers want answers, and hopefully the movie delivers. In the wake of its conclusion, “The Little Things” only offers more questions, and not all of them are worth the viewer’s attention.

Washington and Malek somewhat invigorate these tired, familiar characters. Though bogged down by the film’s passable screenplay, Washington in particular exudes his usual charm into Deke’s fatherly, affable demeanor. In serious moments, Washington’s performance creates intensity and suspense, two qualities rarely matched by the words or backstory he’s given. His backstory in particular is a weak addition that’s not as shocking as intended.

Malek’s Jim, aloof at first, softens with Deke’s mentorship. As expected, the outwardly opposite characters share some compelling traits. It’s clear that their mutual desire to solve these crimes comes from their wish to bring justice to the women who were murdered — and to prove themselves worthy of cracking a high-stakes case. Yet these brilliant performances under Malek’s and Washington’s belts cannot mask how transparently typical their characters are. “The Little Things” again displays what countless other films have proved — great actors cannot revitalize a sterile narrative.

Bold in its monotony and meandering in pace, “The Little Things” had the potential and starpower to be imaginative and engaging. The result is a forgettable thriller that offers nothing exceptional to the genre.



“The Little Things” is a stereotypical cop film about a veteran and a newbie detective investigating a string of murders. COURTESY OF GRAND VIA PRODUCTIONS

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Experimental jazz album

ALBUM REVIEW: “Odd Wisdom” Challenge Records International

★★★☆☆

BY ELIJAH DE CASTRO

Diego Pinera, an underground German Uruguayan jazz fusion musician, mixes sweet and sour on his new record “Odd Wisdom.” In comparison to his 2018 album “Despertando,” “Odd Wisdom” is light and fruity. While both albums sound like a catharsis for Pinera, he shifts from a melancholic tone on “Despertando,” to a sound that is — well, odd — on “Odd Wisdom.”

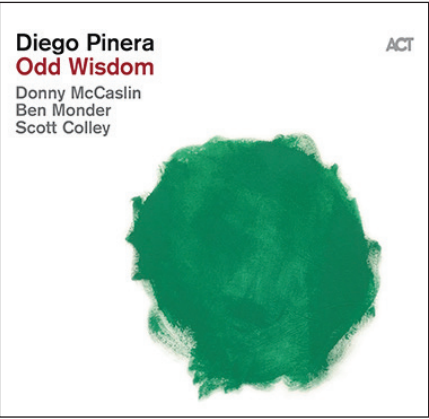
The differences between the albums’ titles say it all. “Despertando,” which means “awakening” in Spanish, is an album rooted in rich emotion and Pinera’s mellifluous Latin jazz touch. “Odd Wisdom” uses less instrumentation and more experimentation, taking scattershot aim at its targets, missing in some places and hitting bullseyes in others.

The album starts strong with “Clave Tune,” a near nine-minute track defined by the heavy presence of saxophonist Donny McCaslin. The song’s second half features a pleasantly sporadic guitar solo performed by Ben Monder. The next song, “Domingo,” is al-

most a carbon copy of the previous track, featuring the same instruments but performed in a marginally different manner.

Had the album left out “Domingo” and jumped from “Clave Tune” to the third track, “Conversation with Myself,” “Odd Wisdom” would have had a stronger opening. “Conversation with Myself” is a five-minute song with wide expanses of slowly echoing saxophone soliloquies that create a dreamy spirit of isolation and fantasy. Put back to back, “Clave Tune” and “Conversation with Myself” would create a pleasantly cerebral opening to the record.

The next song, “Robotic Night,” includes some of the most bizarre and random sounds on the record, using a variety of rhythmless percussions and saxophones. It can only be described as a lighter version of the coordinated nonsense that defines some of the music by fellow jazz fusionist Herbie Hancock. “Robotic Night” is an experimental style for Pinera that, in the context of the tracks that surround it, works very well.



COURTESY OF CHALLENGE RECORDS INTERNATIONAL

The album ends on “Blue Monk,” a seven-minute track that combines the best of all the other songs on the album — the limey saxophone of “Clave Tune,” the jumpy energy of “Robotic Night” and the easygoing energy of “De Madrugada” — with a staticky guitar solo at the end. The guitar, percussion and saxophone team up for a breezy final track.

What “Odd Wisdom” is going for isn’t exactly clear. The album fights itself between wanting to lean into classic jazz and wanting to experiment with new sounds. The album may lose listeners on some songs and win them back on others.

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MA RAINEY'S BLACK BOTTOM

★★★★★

BY EVAN MILLER

The passing of Chadwick Boseman was a heartbreaking moment in what was already a devastating and challenging year.

Boseman gave his final — and what may be his very best — performance in “Ma Rainey’s Black Bottom.” The film is an adaptation of the August Wilson play of the same name and takes place in Chicago during the 1920s in a recording studio. It is in this recording studio that the renowned Mother of Blues, Ma Rainey (Viola Davis), accompanied by a band of musicians, carries out a recording session. One of these band members is Levee (Boseman), a talented and ambitious cornet player with dreams of having

a successful band of his own and playing music the way he wants to play it. As tensions rise, crushing truths come to light that give each member of the band a new perspective on life, especially as Black men in 1920s America.

This is a film that largely takes place in a single location, a choice that works spectacularly. Director George C. Wolfe does an absolutely fantastic job of making the viewer feel the claustrophobic nature of the recording studio and the intense heat of Chicago on the particular day that the film takes place. Both of these details play a substantial role in successfully building tension as the film goes on.

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THE PROM

★★★★☆

BY SYDNEY BRUMFIELD

Adapted from the hit Broadway musical, “The Prom” tells the story of four Broadway has-beens whose reputations have been tarnished by their narcissism. As a publicity stunt, they decide to join high schooler Emma (Jo Ellen Pellman) in her fight to take her girlfriend Alyssa (Ariana DeBose) to the high school prom against the wishes of their conservative Indiana town.

Despite an overwhelming amount of potential for this project, filmmaker Ryan Murphy missed the mark. Murphy relied heavily on an incredibly talented cast made up of Meryl Streep, James Corden, Andrew Rannells, Keegan-Michael Key and Kerry Washington and well-executed

musical numbers to distract from the mediocre character development and weak writing. This all-star cast makes the boring dialogue as exciting as possible.

Nominated for seven Tony awards during its run on Broadway, “The Prom” comes equipped with a great soundtrack. But the choreography is nothing spectacular, and the environment is never truly utilized in the dance performances.

Most disappointing is the underdevelopment of Emma and Alyssa, who are supposed to be the film’s leading couple. It’s a missed opportunity to provide a dynamic representation of lesbians in popular culture.

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DEATH TO 2020

★★★★☆

BY ALEX HARTZOG

In the tail end of 2020, “Black Mirror” creators Charlie Brooker and Annabel Jones gathered historians and average people to discuss the year — or so the story goes. Netflix’s mockumentary “Death to 2020” is a satirical take on the events that unfolded throughout 2020 which stars Samuel L. Jackson as Dash Bracket, a reporter for the New Yorkerly News, and Hugh Grant as Tennyson Foss, a jaded history professor, all narrated by the sultry voice of Laurence Fishburne.

The mockumentary covers topics from the Australian bushfires to the United States presidential election. The opening dialogue describes fire as a radicalized, angry form of air. This level of offhandedness and levity is carried throughout the entire film,

including when Fishburne describes the global Black Lives Matter protests and the mounting deaths from COVID-19, which could be off-putting to some. For Tennyson, the line between fiction and reality is blurred as he states that those who are familiar with history could see the comparisons between the White Walker assault on Westeros and the looming threat of the COVID-19 pandemic. These scenes ease the tension of the mockumentary and help to make the atmosphere of the film slightly less dark.

“Death to 2020” serves as a cathartic release from the pain people suffered throughout the year, even though 2021 is still plagued by the same issues.

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SOUL

★★★★★

BY AVERY ALEXANDER

“Soul,” Pixar’s latest animated movie, follows the story of Joe (Jamie Foxx), a middle school band teacher with dreams of being a professional jazz musician. When Joe dies in a freak accident, he is sent to The Great Beyond, where he meets an unborn soul known as 22 (Tina Fey), and explores what it really means to be alive. “Soul” is powerful enough to not only stand as a new Pixar classic but also as one of the most compelling Pixar films to date.

The film offers a glimpse into niche aspects of African American communities that non-Black audiences may not be familiar with. A primary example of this comes in a scene in which Joe and 22 visit a barbershop. In many Black communities, barbershops and hair salons are social hubs

where people gather to meet with friends and talk. “Soul” uses the barbershop setting in this scene to portray realistic Black people in a relatable and recognizable setting. The film offers an effortless kind of representation that Black people don’t often see in the media.

Another important aspect of “Soul” is the soundtrack. Previous Pixar films have placed emphasis on grand, orchestral compositions. In contrast, much of the music in “Soul” focuses on small-ensemble jazz bands. Not only is the music gorgeous, but it also ties the narrative directly to the soundtrack, a move that brings the audience closer and allows them to truly understand Joe’s deep-seated passion for jazz music.

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Student-athletes return to practice after almost a year of no competition

From left, sophomore guard Natalie Smith watches as junior guard Melissa Buxton looks for an open pass and sophomore guard Camryn Coffey oversees the drill. ALYSSA BEEBE/THE ITHACAN

BY ARLA DAVIS

Most athletes have a pregame routine, whether it be wearing their hair in a special style, listening to a specific song or even putting on their shoes and socks in a certain fashion. With athletics finally returning to Ithaca College after almost a year away, athletes are adding new elements to their routines: masks, practice pods and COVID-19 tests.

The Bombers are facing challenges they never experienced before, like practicing in smaller groups, tweaking drills for athletes to be six feet apart, avoiding locker rooms and finding ways to connect with new team members without being together physically. Coaches and athletes have been finding ways to overcome these obstacles since stepping onto campus in January.

Although the Bombers are not

competing in winter sports, they are practicing. There has been discussion of competing locally, but the college's Office of Intercollegiate Athletics has not yet made a decision regarding that. Prior to starting practices, athletes had to get tested for COVID-19 and quarantine. Athletes coming from contiguous states only had to quarantine until they received a negative result, but those from noncontiguous states had different requirements.

Senior lacrosse player Indira Varma is from Menlo Park, California, and said she had to arrive in Ithaca before her teammates because she had to quarantine for longer than

most. She said she quarantined for four days and started practicing a day after her teammates once she was cleared.

For some Bombers, training looks much different than it did prior to the pandemic. For junior pentathlete Logan Bruce, women's track and field practice has been reorganized to fit NCAA return-to-play guidelines. The pentathlon consists of five events: 60-meter hurdles, high jump, shot put, long jump and the 800-meter run. Bruce said she would usually train for multiple events in one practice and would even come early to train in events she may not have time for during practice, like shot put. However, with the NCAA placing restrictions on training intensity in order to protect athletes physically as they return to training after months off, Bruce said multi-event athletes have been focusing on just one event or conditioning each practice. She said this has helped her focus on little details in events that she did not have time for before.

"It's nice to spread it out a little bit more," Bruce said. "Now we can actually do throwing drills and focus on that. ... Last year was like constantly doing a million things and very hectic, but now you go in, you have one goal, you get to do that and then you move on."

Practices look especially different for full-contact sports like wrestling. The Bombers usually train in their own wrestling room, but this season junior wrestler Logan Ninos said in a normal season, wrestling would have full contact practices almost every day, but this year Ninos said he and his teammates have noncontact practices on Mondays and Thursdays — the days that they take COVID-19 tests — that consist of weight lifting, conditioning and other noncontact wrestling drills. Contact practices are on Tuesdays and Fridays based on their test results.

He also said the team is able to have contact practices on Wednesdays because wrestling is the first team to utilize the college's rapid-testing system on this day. Ninos said the wrestlers sign up for appointments with Jessica Gammons, assistant

athletic trainer, to have a nasal swab test done rather than a saliva test. They then receive their results that same day before going to practice.

Katie Sheehan, clinical instructor in the Department of Exercise Science and Athletic Training, said the athletic training staff is planning to use antigen tests for spring sports if teams have postseason competition.

Men's crew head coach Dan Robinson said off-season winter training has also looked different for his team. Normally the team can fit 40 athletes in the Robert B. Tallman Rowing Center, but due to social distancing guidelines, only 18 people can train there at once.

Robinson said his main priority is having athletes get comfortable rowing on machines again. The Bombers were able to train on their own at home, like running, stretching and calisthenics, but not everyone had access to ergs. Robinson said that despite the off-season usually being the toughest training session for the Bombers, the team came back excited.

"The athletes are very enthusiastic," Robinson said. "Normally winter training during the regular year is a low point between seasons, and it's a grind training on machines rather than boats. This season they came back and were like, 'This is awesome. We get to hit the machines and grind,' after not doing anything for ten months."

While practices have looked very different for some sports, others have been lucky to not face as many changes. Senior baseball player Jack Lynch said coaches have created the team's pods based on their positions, which is typically how they would be separated.

Junior softball player Julia Loffredo said that because softball is a naturally distant sport, social distancing guidelines have not affected the Bombers' training very much.

"We're all six feet apart, and with softball we're normally like that anyways, except with huddles and team meetings," Loffredo said. "That's really the most that's changed. We can't go

in and say a cheer or give each other high fives because we're all apart, so it's pretty much the same, just a little unconnected, but we find our ways."

It has been essential for the Bombers to find ways to connect with new team members who are stepping foot on campus for the first time. Sophomore basketball player Liam Spellman said that usually the team would spend time together in the dining hall or at each others' houses. He said he feels he has stepped up as a leader to help freshmen become accustomed to the team.

"I know I am an underclassman, but I'm an energetic guy, so I try to voice my opinions too," Spellman said. "It's tough on the freshmen because they are coming into a whole new experience where it's tough to meet new people, but we try to bring that [energy] out of them and make everyone feel comfortable."

Freshman basketball player Triston Wennersten said COVID-19 guidelines have made it difficult to adjust to a new team, but being able to practice has made the transition much simpler.

"Practice is one of the places where we all get to just play and have fun," Wennersten said. "It's been easier adjusting to college with my teammates here."

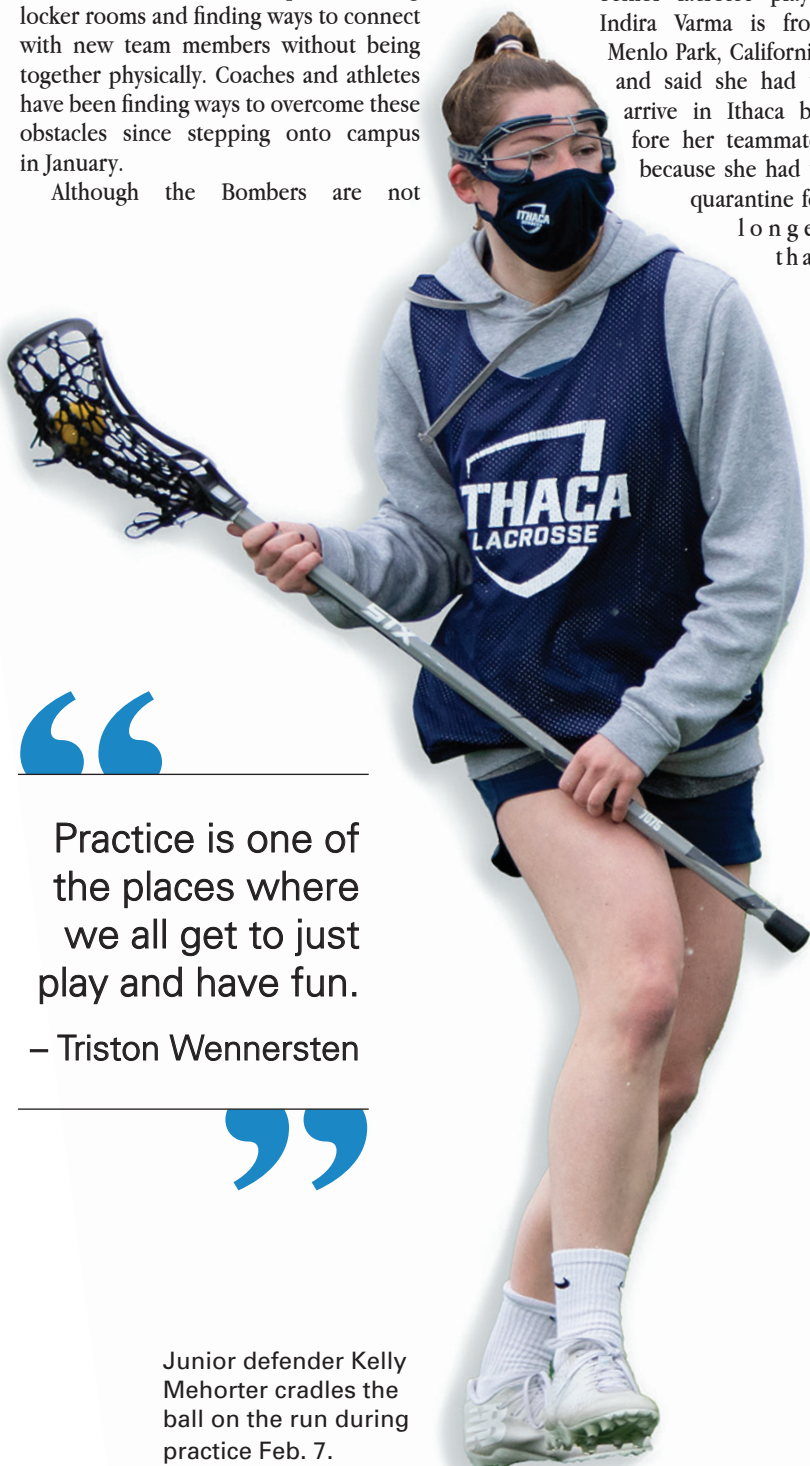
Bruce said her responsibilities as a captain changed this year with the new guidelines to follow and routines changing daily, she said she is leading by example.

"I can't preach certain things to the team or try to hold the girls accountable if I'm not holding myself accountable," Bruce said.

Despite all of the 2020 season cancellations and the uncertainty of spring athletics, the Bombers have come back to campus excited for the opportunity to train again. Lynch said the baseball team is using the uncertainty of its upcoming season as a reason to appreciate practice.

"We might not play, and even if we don't, at least we're practicing," Lynch said. "We're having fun, joking and playing baseball again. We're just hoping that we play."

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Junior defender Kelly Mehorter cradles the ball on the run during practice Feb. 7.

ANA MANIACI MCGOUGH/THE ITHACAN

“Practice is one of the places where we all get to just play and have fun.”
— Triston Wennersten



OUT OF BOUNDS
EMILY ADAMS

Second chances
are not allowed

When the news broke that Chad Wheeler, a then-offensive tackle for the Seattle Seahawks, had been arrested Jan. 23 for beating his girlfriend nearly to death, it was not a surprising story. It was heartbreaking and horrifying, but violence against women by NFL players has become uncomfortably common. A sport rooted in violence is bound to harbor violent individuals, but the league has proven time and time again that it feels no obligation to stand up for women or hold players accountable for their actions.

Wheeler was released by the Seahawks on Jan. 27 and charged with multiple domestic violence-related felonies, but he was released from jail on bail shortly after his arrest. The Seahawks and Wheeler put out statements addressing the incident, but both largely failed to take any accountability, emphasizing Wheeler's mental health as a justification for his actions. He is bipolar, and while a manic episode certainly contributed to the abuse, approximately 2.3 million Americans are diagnosed with bipolar disorder, and the vast majority of them have not beaten anyone nearly to death. Painting Wheeler's mental illness as an excuse is not only wrong, but it is incredibly harmful to others who are diagnosed with mental illnesses to perpetuate the stigma that they are inherently violent.

It is also impossible to explore Wheeler's case without unpacking the role of race. The survivor of Wheeler's abuse is a Black woman, and Wheeler is white. That dynamic aligns with a long history of violence against Black women in America and the lack of accountability that white abusers face. Black women are approximately 35% more likely to be abused and 2.5 times more likely to be killed than white women. Allegedly, Wheeler attacked his girlfriend after she refused to bow to him, and he failed to call the police despite expressing to her later that he thought she was dead. Despite her statement to the court that she is unsafe while Wheeler is free, he was allowed to post bond.

Wheeler has faced less public backlash because he is a white man and his victim was a Black woman. However, very few athletes of any race who perpetrate violence against women face any sort of real repercussions. There have been widespread complaints on social media that domestic abuse allegations against Black NFL players have been over-covered, while Wheeler sneaks by. The reality is that all allegations are under-addressed, and people care even less about the allegations when the abuser is white.

The NFL has history of domestic violence, and while it has taken steps to put players through training and provide resources for victims, it still fails to hold players accountable, especially talented ones. Wheeler pleaded not guilty, and if he is not convicted, he might return to the NFL. Second chances and short suspensions are not acceptable. The league should have a zero-tolerance policy. One incident should end a player's career.

OUT OF BOUNDS covers sports beyond the playing field. **EMILY ADAMS** is a senior journalism major. Contact her at eadams3@ithaca.edu.

Athlete named to national council

BY JACK MURRAY

After being turned down for the Liberty League representative position for the NCAA Division III Student-Athlete Advisory Council (SAAC) the first time he applied, junior Warren Watson, a defensive lineman for the Ithaca College football team, decided to try again. When he learned that the former conference representative stepped down and the spot opened up again, he made a second half comeback.

As the new Liberty League representative in the national SAAC, Watson will help generate a student-athlete voice in the NCAA, respond to legislation impacting student-athletes and participate in the administrative process of athletic programs. Watson said the NCAA Division III SAAC is made up of units, which consist of two partnered conferences. The Liberty League is partnered with the University Athletic Association (UAA), so Watson works along the UAA representative. Watson began his term with the national branch in January, and his term will last two years.

Watson serves as a current co-chair, alongside junior Victoria Sestito, a field hockey player, for the college's chapter of SAAC. He will continue to be the college's co-chair while serving on the national council. Sestito said that working with Watson is enjoyable and productive, and she believes that he will thrive in this new position.

"Warren and I are really close, and I really look at him as one of my close friends," Sestito said. "He's an awesome person and always goes



Junior defensive lineman Warren Watson tackles an Alfred University athlete with the help of teammate Andrew Liskin '20 in a game at Buttermilk Field on Sept. 21, 2019.

TIM MCKINNEY/ITHACA COLLEGE ATHLETICS

above and beyond, no matter what we're working on or what we're trying to do. He's really optimistic, flexible and has a personable trait to himself."

Watson has positively contributed on the field for the Bombers. As a sophomore in 2019, he started off hot by racking up eight tackles and recovering one fumble in the first three games of the season. Unfortunately, his progress came to a halt due to a season-ending injury. Watson said he was disappointed by the injury, but the experience helped him grow as a leader and become more appreciative of football.

"You can work as hard as you possibly can, and you can put every single ounce of effort into football,

and sometimes it just does not work out," Watson said. "I feel like I have an advantage over some people in the real world because some of the things athletes go through, you can't just rehearse."

Head football coach Dan Swansstrom noticed Watson's desire to be a leader as soon as he started with the football program. He said Watson's new position is not a surprise and represents Watson's character.

"He wanted to be a part of that organization before he was even a student here," Swansstrom said. "He wants to set an example, and this is a perfect platform for him and his personality. His personal expectations and how he holds himself accountable to a certain standard

made it easy for him to continue to rise in a leadership position, certainly within the football program and certainly within [SAAC]. He's doing what we expected him to do when we recruited him here."

Watson said he looks at the position as a chance to learn while also having a direct voice in decisions made in the NCAA.

"I'm looking at this as a great opportunity to enhance and grow as a person," Watson said. "A goal of mine is to be that voice for the college at the national level. I really don't think anyone does it as good as we do, and that's what's really so special about being a Bomber."

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Gym reopens with COVID-19 precautions

BY CONNOR GLUNT

At the Ithaca College Fitness Center, students will not hear the usual dribbling of basketballs nor the squeaking of shoes in the lower level of the gym. Instead, the space is filled with rowing machines, bikes and other cardio equipment as the Fitness Center reopens for the spring semester with new COVID-19 precautions.

The facility reopened its doors to students Jan. 25. Sean Reilley, associate director of the Office of Recreational Sports, said the facility is currently designed to minimize contact with others but still allows enough space and equipment for a solid workout. In addition to the cardio equipment spaced out in the Mondo and hardwood floor gyms, the upstairs equipment, including treadmills and squat racks, is also spaced out into socially distanced exercise pods. Masks must be worn while working out.

Cardio equipment is spaced out by 15 feet and the staff utilize an electrostatic sprayer, which retails between \$600 and \$1,200, to clean the facility. If someone works out and then either shows symptoms or tests positive for COVID-19, there is a set of protocols in place to disinfect the building in a timely and thorough manner.

Students and faculty need to make an appointment to use specific equipment in a socially distanced pod that staff members prepare prior to their arrival. Staff members set up mats, limited weights and other items requested for the workout. The appointments are available from 6 a.m. to 9:20 p.m. in 45-minute increments so that employees can sanitize the stations between reservations. Appointments can be made as late as the day of, depending on time slots open.

The reopening plan is an adjustment, but Reilley said he believes that it has gone smoothly over the first two weeks, prior to all students being back on campus despite it being a process for the staff and students to get used to.

"The first few days were a little slow getting people checked in," Reilley said. "Weather has thrown us a curveball. ... The demand on



Senior Dina Barossi, who works at the fitness center, thoroughly sprays down the equipment with an electrostatic sprayer in the Fitness Center after closing.

MIKAYLA ROVENOLT/THE ITHACAN

strength [equipment] and the lack of demand on cardio [equipment] was flat out surprising. We are going to reconfigure some things to create more opportunities for strength training."

There will be a survey sent out in the future to receive feedback from visitors, but he said he has not heard any criticisms of the center yet that require an immediate solution. He said he is focused on making the Fitness Center feel the same as it did pre-pandemic, and his top priority is safety.

Reilley said the first week started off slow, with approximately 75–100 guests per day. However, the Fitness Center saw an uptick in attendance during its second week, with 150–175 guests per day.

Sophomore Brendan Lebitch worked as a recreational sports official last spring before transitioning to Fitness Center crew this semester. Instead of hiring new student staff members for this semester, Reilley said he had employees like Lebitch change their roles. Lebitch said he

thinks the reopening has gone well.

"I was a little worried at the beginning about the setup, but people enjoy it," Lebitch said. "I think Sean [Reilley] did a great job setting up the pods. They did a great job pairing the equipment. I commend them for doing a great job with that."

Sophomore volleyball player Camryn O'Leary said she feels safe at the Fitness Center with the sanitation process and enforced mask rules. Though she said she is pleased with how the Fitness Center has adjusted, she said that once she gets her own vehicle, she will likely purchase a gym membership at the local Planet Fitness.

"I can stay there longer because the [Fitness Center appointments] are only 45 minutes, and I can go whenever I want to at Planet Fitness," O'Leary said. "You can just do more. You have more freedom at that gym."

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THE ITHACAN

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