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IC files motion to dismiss claims in Title IX lawsuit
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On the Same Page
Hosts Emma Kersting and Kaeleigh Banda drive into this week’s top stories in News, Sports, and Life and Culture by interviewing the reporters to get a closer look at Ithaca College and beyond campus.

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Reese Schenk
IC forecasts deficit decrease and more faculty hires

BY RYAN JOHNSON  ASSISTANT NEWS EDITOR

Faculty, staff, alumni and students of Ithaca College gathered in Emerson Suites to attend the Spring 2024 All-College Gathering. During the session, college leadership acknowledged the recent civil lawsuit against the college, faculty hiring, student enrollment and the budget outlook for the 2023-2024 fiscal year (FY24).

Remarks from the President

To begin the presentation, President La Jerne Cornish responded to an article by The Ithacan detailing a civil lawsuit against Ithaca College. Student filed against the college and a former associate dean of the Roy H. Park School of Communications.

Cornish said during the presentation that the college has communicated all that it can at the moment. “I know that [the article] was jar- ring for some,” Cornish said. “I know that it was shocking, and I know that it may have evoked an emotional reaction. But there will be no further comment officially because this is being litigated, and the college will speak in court when allowed to do so.”

Even so, Cornish’s opening statements were followed by an update on faculty hiring from Melanie Stein, provost and senior vice president for academic affairs at the college, and a financial update from Tim Downs, vice president for finance and administration and chief financial officer at the college.

Faculty Hiring

Stein began the academic update with a presentation on faculty hiring. Stein said the current student-to-faculty ratio is 11.1, which is below the target but what the college expected for 2024 enrollment will be. Stein also noted there were students who did not say what the target was. In fall 2020, the student-to-faculty ratio was 9.1.

“Last year, we authorized the fillings of 26 full-time, regular, continuing faculty positions,” Stein said. “At this point in the year, half of those positions have been successfully filled.”

Stein said the college is about to begin the faculty allocation process, a process in which departments submit requests for positions. The Teaching Resource Allocation Committee recommends the priorities to the provost and vice president for academic affairs, and those priorities will be reviewed by the college’s board of directors. “The college will continue to see more faculty hiring.”

Budget Outlook

Downs said the majority of the budget at the college depends on student enrollment and because of the low student enrollment, the college will have a deficit of $125 million in FY24.

“We continue to be as thoughtful as we can and midway through the year, we believe that we are going to come in certainly favorable but still in the deficit of where we were,” Downs said. “Downs’ presentation forecasted a decrease in the deficit from $12.5 million in FY24 to $7.6 million in FY25.”

Downs also said some existing operation challenges within the budget now are a 10% average salary gap to market, an insufficient non-salary operating budget to cover inflation and an increase in investments in student recruitment and retention.

Closing Remarks

Cornish said she had been elected to the board of directors for the Council of Independent Colleges (CIC), a national organization that provides services to independent colleges and universities. Cornish also said she had been elected to the board of the Council of Independent Colleges and Universities, an organization in New York representing public policy issues of New York’s independent colleges and universities.

“I am excited about our future,” Cornish said. “Do we have things that we need to correct? Yes. Do we have challenges? Yes. Can we overcome them? Yes.”

Q&A: Spiritual life director shares resources and plans

In December 2023, Austin Reid was announced as the interim director for the Office of Religious and Spiritual Life. The position opened when Yasin Ahmed, former director for the Office of Religious and Spiritual Life, resigned from the college in October 2023.

Reid spent two years working with Hillel at Ithaca College from 2018 to 2020 as a Springboard Fellow, a program started by Hillel International that connects early-career professionals to colleges to make Jewish campus life more engaging and inclusive. Bonnie Prunty, vice president of Student Affairs and Campus Life, said in a Dec. 9 letter that the college will provide support to students in the college community who have been impacted by the continued conflict in Israel and Gaza. Prunty also said Reid will support the launch of a new Religious and Spiritual Life-based Residential Learning Community (RLC).

Assistant News Editor Ryan Johnson spoke with Reid about what brought him back to campus after two years, plans to assist students impacted by the ongoing conflict in Israel and Gaza and what he is most excited about for Spring 2024.

The interview has been edited for length and clarity.

Ryan Johnson: You previously worked with Hillel from 2018 to 2020, what brought you back to campus?

Austin Reid: I have many stories about working at Hillel that my favorite job I ever had was working at Hillel. There were a lot of students working at Ithaca College to be really amazing. One particular memorable program we worked on during my time at Hillel was the Swag But Hindu Initiative, which still continues at Ithaca College today. I'm really excited to make connections like that again, during the interim period that I'm going to be here.

Ryan Johnson: How are you planning to provide support to students impacted by the Israel-Hamas war right now?

Austin Reid: I know that there are few issues going on today that are as important as the ongoing Israel-Palestinian conflict and there are two upcoming programs that's going to be happening on the 6th from 5 p.m. to 6 p.m. in Muller Chapel and in the dual narrative story of Palestinian and Israeli history that's going to be done through the personal and family stories of two individuals, one Israeli and one Palestinian. Later in the semester, one program that's already formed is “Roots” and that's March 5 from 7 p.m. to 8 p.m. at Emerson Suites. “Roots” is a program that will highlight an Israeli and Palestinian grassroots initiative for understanding non-violence. Guest speakers are going to be sharing their firsthand, personal and often interconnected stories that will also highlight the … grassroots work of this organization that's operating in Israel and Palestine. So these are two programs, and I would certainly welcome conversations with any students, too, about other ways to help make sure you to all members of our campus committee that are already in motion for the year, particularly the range of student interest in this learning community and the contributions this community could make to the broader campus community. This is all really based on interest and feedback, so we hope this new RLC will launch in fall of 2025. “Roots” also said that will I have we have a few communities here that volunteer on campu...
From Ceasefire, Page 1

Ithaca College and sophomore Quincy Fireside is the president of IC Students for Palestine. "My feeling is we really have no resolve. If students utilize resources investigations."

In his motion, Roberts filed to dismiss the complaint alleging that he did not allege sufficient facts in his complaint to support his causes of action. As a result, Roberts and the college have requested that the court dismiss these claims. According to court rules, Doe has until Feb. 12 to respond to the motions and then Roberts and the college may file any replies by Feb. 20.

The Office of the Provost sent an email on Jan. 22 outlining resources available to members of the campus community in light of the lawsuit. The email was sent on behalf of President La Jerne Cornish, Melanie Stein, provost and chief academic officer; Vinnie Prunty, vice president of Student Affairs; and as associate director, she will be collaborating with the director of the Office of Residential Life to lead the department.

Dan Rogers Dan Rogers ’20 was named the associate director of student involvement in the Office of Student Engagement. Rogers was previously the administrative assistant for OSE. As associate director, Rogers will be in charge of advising the college’s Student Government, collaborating with student organizations and clubs and assisting in the re-recognition process, and managing the Student Organization Center.

"I know that it was shocking, and I know that it may have evoked an emotional reaction," Cornish said. "We don’t comment on things that are going to be litigated, and we certainly don’t comment on personal matters. We sent a statement yesterday just saying there are no resources available for the campus community and for our students, if you need to have a further conversation. But there will be no further comment officially because this is being litigated, and the college will speak in court when allowed to do so."

Timeline

Nov. 20, 2023: John Doe files Summons and Complaint in the Supreme Court of the State of New York.

Dec. 18, 2023: Defendants move case to United States District Court for the Northern District of New York.

Jan. 22, 2024: Defendants file motion to dismiss or all or most of the claims in complaint.

Feb. 12, 2024: Doe’s motion to dismiss.

Feb. 20, 2024: Defendants’ deadline to file replies.

Defendants: Ithaca College and Bryan Roberts
Plaintiff: John Doe

CONTACT: VROSE@ITHACA.EDU

FROM TITLE IX, PAGE 1

2025 and is listed as a visiting faculty member and director of the Championships Lab at the University of Connecticut.

The lawsuit also alleges that Stevens, Greene, Bryant and Trunzo were subject to human resources investigations.

Rockett declined to comment about the allegations that involved human resource investigations.

The complaint alleges that in August 2023, Stevens was found in violation of both Policy 2.6 and Policy 2.46, but the college did not terminate Stevens. In the college’s Jan. 22 motion, they state that Stevens is still employed at the college.

According to the case, in October 2023, Greene was terminated from his position for violating Policy 2.46 and Trunzo resigned from his position in November 2023 after being found in violation of Policy 2.46.

Doe filed a Summons and Complaint in the Supreme Court of the State of New York. Tompkins County Circuit Court on Feb. 22.

On Dec. 18, 2023, Defendants removed the case from state court to the United States District Court for the Northern District of New York. According to the Notice of Removal document, the case “involves questions arising under the Constitution, laws, or treaties of the United States,” including the claims that the college violated Title IX.

In his motion, Roberts filed to dismiss the Title IX claims. Roberts’ memorandum states that Doe did not allege that this cause of action against Roberts.

In motion, the college is not seeking to have the Title IX claims dismissed at this time.

"The college is not at this juncture moving against plaintiff’s claims brought under Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, 20 U.S.C. § 1681 et seq., as asserted in his second purported claim for relief. However, the referenced proof defects, among other reasons, will doom those claims to dismissal at a subsequent stage of this case,” the college’s motion states.

For the four remaining claims, Roberts and the college each argue that Doe failed to state claims upon which relief can be granted, including that he did not allege sufficient facts in his complaint to support his causes of action. As a result, Roberts and the college have requested that the court dismiss these claims. According to court rules, Doe has until Feb. 12 to respond to the motions and then Roberts and the college may file any replies by Feb. 20.

"I know that it was shocking, and I know that it may have evoked an emotional reaction," Cornish said. "We don’t comment on things that are going to be litigated, and we certainly don’t comment on personal matters. We sent a statement yesterday just saying there are no resources available for the campus community and for our students, if you need to have a further conversation. But there will be no further comment officially because this is being litigated, and the college will speak in court when allowed to do so."

Some of the resources mentioned in the email were the college’s Center for Counseling and Psychological Services, the Title IX office and the college’s Sexual Harassment and Assault Response & Education website.

At the All-College Gathering Jan. 23, Cornish said the college has commented all that it can at the moment about the lawsuit.

"I know that it was shocking, and I know that it may have evoked an emotional reaction," Cornish said. "We don’t comment on things that are going to be litigated, and we certainly don’t comment on personal matters. We sent a statement yesterday just saying there are no resources available for the campus community and for our students, if you need to have a further conversation. But there will be no further comment officially because this is being litigated, and the college will speak in court when allowed to do so."

CONTACT: SPIERRE@ITHACA.EDU

College hires for new roles

BY PRAKRITI PANWAR
NEWS EDITOR

Paula Younger Paula Younger, a previous lecturer and exec- utive director of the Jewish Engagement Program at Cornell University, will be rejoining Ithaca College as the executive direc- tor of government, community and constituent relations. This is a newly formed position at the college that aims to create collaborative rela- tionships between the college and local, state and national entities.

Younger previously worked at the college as the executive director for government and commu- nity relations from 2018 to 2020.

Omar Stoute Omar Stoute ’18 joined the college Jan. 16 as director of Staff Equity, Inclusion, and Be- longing. This position is under the Center for Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging, which was established in July 2021.

Stoute previously worked at the college as a project coordinator for the Jewish Engagement Program and the Center for Civic Engagement, and as Deputy Title IX Coordinator. Before joining the college in his new position, Stoute was the litigation and Title IX Investigator at Cornell University.

Rakin ‘Rock’ Hall Rakin ‘Rock’ Hall will be joining the college as the vice president of enrollment management Feb. 1. Hall will be overseeing under- graduate and graduate admissions, Student Financial Services, Constituent Engagement Strategy, the Center for Career Exploration and Development and Center for Student Success and Retention.

Hall is currently the vice president for enroll- ment management at Arcadia University. He has also previously worked at the University of Utah, the University of Southern California, Wil- liam and Paterson University.

Alessandra Healy Alessandra Healy joined the college as a program counselor for New York State Arthur G. Eve Higher Education Opportunity Program (HEOP) and Collegiate Science and Technology Entry Program (CSTEP). HEOP and CSTEP are overseen by the Office of Access, Opportunity and Achievement, which offers academic and professional support to program scholars.

Beth O’Neill Beth O’Neill, former assistant director of Staff and Programs, Residential Life and Stud- ent Conduct and Community Standards, was named the college’s associate director of the Office of Residential Life. O’Neill will be taking over Ron Trunzo’s role, who departed the college in November.

O’Neill has been at the college since 2007 and as associate director, she will be collaborat- ing with the director of the Office of Residential Life to lead the department.

Dan Rogers Dan Rogers ’20 was named the associate director of student involvement in the Office of Student Engagement. Rogers was previously the administrative assistant for OSE.

As associate director, Rogers will be in charge of advising the college’s Student Government, collaborating with student organizations and clubs and assisting in the re-recognition process, and managing the Student Organization Center.

In memorandum: Bill Bergmark Bill Bergmark, professor in the Department of Chemistry, died Dec. 24, 2023. The campus community mourned the loss of the professor in an Interim post by Mike Hall, professor in the Department of Chemistry.

Bergmark was a professor and chemistry depart- ment head for 30 years and to his students, his colleagues, and to the scientific community at large, he was one of the all-time greats," Hall said in the Interim post.

CONTACT: PPAWR@ITHACA.EDU
Break housing is essential for international students

It is essential that Ithaca College provides proper accommodations for international students over break. Ensuring students adequate housing, meals and overall support is the bare minimum for maintaining the well-being of international students.

There is an unfair expectation that all students will be able to return home when classes are not in session. For many international students, this is not a reality. The cost of an international flight alone is financially inaccessible to many. A CNBC article from May 2023 found that the consumer price index for airline tickets increased by 25% from 2022 to 2023. On top of these astronomical costs, the logistical planning of the trip, taking long flights, dealing with jet lag and then having to do it all again to return to school are exhausting.

For international students who stay on campus over break, there are not adequate accommodations set in place. Only Eastman, Terrace 6 and Tallcott allow students to live on campus over break, in addition to Circle and Garden apartments. While it is understandable that not all residence halls can remain open over break, students should still have sufficient housing options.

This winter break there were also extremely limited dining options. Dining halls were closed from Dec. 18 to Jan. 3. Upon re-opening, only the Terrace Dining Hall was open until Jan. 8. These limited hours require students to find alternative dining options that are often more costly and may require additional transportation to get to a store or restaurant. Students should never have to struggle to find accessible food on campus.

Providing adequate housing and dining options for international students is a necessity. Students do not disappear just because classes are not in session. It is up to the college to ensure they are taken care of, especially during breaks.

College must work with students to promote peace

The Tompkins County Human Rights Commission shared a resolution Dec. 18, 2023, calling for the community to promote peace by advocating for a federal cease-fire and supporting local Jewish and Muslim community members. At Ithaca College, this call for peace is happening just as fervently among students. Now it is the responsibility of the college to hear these calls for peace from students and provide the community with genuine action and support.

Students have been organizing against the Israeli-Palestinian conflict Dec. 18, 2023, calling for the Tompkins County Human Rights Commission to support both Jewish and Palestinian and Gazan community members. Hillel has also hosted events to create new organizing groups, like Students for Justice for Palestine. Hillel has also hosted events and shared resources in an effort to support the student organizations, like Ithaca College Students for Justice for Palestine (SJP).

At Ithaca College, this is an issue that not only affects the student body as a whole, but has the potential to make students feel unsafe in their campus community. It is an issue that not only affects the student body as a whole, but has the potential to make students feel unsafe in their own identities. The college must do everything in its power to create safe spaces and provide necessary resources to student groups.

One of the best parts of being a student on a college campus is being surrounded by other passionate young people who are also invested in advocating for what they believe in. It is essential that administrators express that same level of care. While the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is an international conflict, it is an issue that not only affects the student body as a whole, but has the potential to make students feel unsafe in their own identities. The college must do everything they can to advocate for students and, furthermore, for peace.
Childcare must be affordable

The cost of education is a frequently discussed topic and rightfully so. It is debatable that so many students are discouraged from expanding their life and knowledge base because of their economic status. In the U.S., this problem begins before our children are even out of diapers.

The problem starts with a lack of maternity and paternal leave for expecting parents. Many parents don’t take extra time off to care for their babies, fearing they might lose their jobs as a result. The United States provides no national paid leave for expecting parents, one of only six countries in the world that does not. Even with a year’s paid maternity leave — something extremely uncommon in the U.S. — there is still a gap. Between the ages of one and five, the latter being when a child can enroll in public kindergarten, there is no designated childcare.

The environment that children are in during this time is important. Parents should know that while they are at work, their children are well cared for and unquestionably safe. Approaching this issue from an education standpoint, however, illustrates another key aspect. When a child gets a good education, they will move up in society.

When factoring in that many parents do not have family members or friends who can care for their children before they are school age, the need for accessible childcare becomes evident. The problem is that childcare has become astronomically expensive. In New York state, the average yearly cost for childcare is $17,040 for children ages three to five and $18,240 for children under two. This is comparable to the cost of in-state college tuition.

Looking at these numbers, it becomes clear why parents are struggling to afford childcare. There are many families who have decided that one parent will put a complete pause on their career until their children are old enough to attend school. Childcare can account for as much as 50% of a parent’s salary. Though staying at home with your children should be an option for any parent who desires it, it shouldn’t be the only way that a family can make ends meet.

Bringing down the cost of childcare helps create a universal form of it, one that is accessible to all. In the case of opera, the European Union has been paying for a child under the age of two. This is comparable to the cost of opera."}

BY GABE HENDERSHOT

PENCILS DOWN

GABE HENDERSHOT

Senior Violet Van Buren writes about her positive experiences as an RA and tells students to take advantage of the benefits that come with the position.

BY EMMA COMMISSO

GUEST COMMENTARY

Editor’s Note: The opinions in this commentary do not necessarily reflect the views of the editorial board.

By Violet Van Buren (she/her) is a senior writing for film, tv, and emerging media major. Contact her at vvanburen@ithaca.edu.

Being an RA is the best on-campus job

My name is Violet Van Buren, and I’m a lover of good company, crazy stories, quiet relaxation and Terrace 12, where I have been a resident assistant the past three years. This is my last semester living in the best room on campus, and with all of the sadness that comes with leaving the position, so too comes the gratefulness that I was ever an RA at all.

It’s impossible to convince me there is a single better job to take as an Ithaca College student. The very best part of being an RA is the friendship that comes with it. How many other groups of like-minded individuals can be so comforting and challenging to be around at the same time?

RAs are a strange bunch, but we all share the same genuine care for the community around us. With so many passionate and talented people in close proximity, it feels as though you and your unique perspective truly have a place they can belong to and be utilized. At the same time, they can be challenged and transformed because everyone has their own ideas about how to create change in the greater community. It’s a special bond for RAs that you bond with, though it’s your residents, too. The sense of community one nurtures through their building can be so strong by the end of a year that they go to watch each other move in and move on. I am more empathetic, more grounded and in a thousand other smaller ways, I can say I have grown.

Being an RA is not a difficult job ... until it is. I have encountered so many seemingly impossible and crazy situations — from little things, like unjamming a dryer, to big ones, like making a call to save someone’s life. It is a thankless job — and often not a pretty one. But I am filled with an enormous sense of well-being to serve my community in this way.

With any job comes benefits, and this position has some great ones. Namely: pay and the single room. Room and board are covered 80% if you’ve been an RA for less than two semesters and 100% after two semesters. For the amount you work, the reliable hours and the convenience of the job, the pay is fair. But most apply for the money, that’s just what the job is really about. It’s about the friends you make, the skills you take away, the community and the benefits, small and large.

My younger brother is a first-year student in college this year and the first thing I told him when he started school was “You’re literally stupid if you don’t apply to be an RA.” I get to tease him, but I won’t be so rude to all of you. I’ll leave you by instead saying — it doesn’t get better than this.

Violet Van Buren (she/her) is a senior writing for film, tv, and emerging media major. Contact her at vvanburen@ithaca.edu.

Opera is an art form for all performers

BY EMMA COMMISSO

Senior Emma Commissio writes about how MTD students can enhance the field of opera through more collaboration.

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By Emma Commissio (she/her) is a senior vocal performance and music education major. Contact her at ecommisso@ithaca.edu.

The college’s next opera, “Le Dernier Sorcier,” running March 1 to 6, will showcase some Whalen Dillingham collaboration, creating a unique environment. I will be taking on the role of Stella, opposite soprano and stage director. He has helped me focus on movement and awareness of space. This program taught me how exciting the operatic stage can be when you challenge yourself to build skills and make discoveries every day. Your experience is necessary to the advancement of opera, whether you’re trained in musical theater, Shakespeare or rock and roll. Performers from various backgrounds are what makes opera exciting to watch and participate in. As long as each and every member of the company is willing to commit to the challenge of opera with their own skill sets and strengthen new skills, opera will change for the better.

Emma Commissio (she/her) is a senior performance and music education major. Contact her at ecommisso@ithaca.edu.
Walrad said these residences are assigned with the goal of making it easier to provide services like facility maintenance because of the reduced staff on campus over break.

“We purposely choose buildings, the Terraces 6 and Talcott that have bigger kitchens, so students can take advantage of the kitchen in those areas to cook their meals,” Walrad said.

“I would recommend [students who are planning to stay over winter break] to connect with more students who are staying on campus,” Tierenkhuu said. “I don’t think it’s that uncommon to stay on campus during winter, but from what I know, people just don’t connect to each other.”

Other students, such as sophomore Zara Makkaoui, an international student from Morocco who stayed with a friend in San Francisco for the winter, said they prefer finding alternatives to staying on campus because of the lack of students on campus.

“I wouldn’t want to stay here,” Makkaoui said. “Especially when there’s no one around, like, my friends are all gone. And then there’s no food. And there’s nothing to do even like downtown Ithaca, everything’s pretty much closed.”

First-year student Oscar Jimenez Rodriguez said he enjoyed staying on campus this past winter break. He said he wanted to get a chance to relax and that was exactly what happened.

“For me, it was a good experience, but I wanted a particular peace,” Jimenez said. “For other people, beware that it’s pretty lonely.”

Staying on campus is not always the student’s first choice, but for some students, choosing to go home over break comes with its own set of challenges.

Sophomore Ruth Ayambem, who traveled back home to Nigeria last winter and spent the past break with their sibling in Pennsylvania, said that traveling during winter, but from what I know, people just don’t connect to each other.”

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“Iron Claw”  
**BY MATT MINTON  
SENIOR WRITER**

There’s an unshakable feeling set in stone right from the opening sequence of director Sean Durkin’s heart-wrenching new drama, “The Iron Claw.” It’s the sense that fate has something peculiar and unnatural in store for the Von Erich family. While the facade of a wrestling drama may deter audiences who aren’t interested in sports, the heart of the film is found in the bond among the brothers. The film is truly an ensemble piece with great turns from Harris Dickinson, Jeremy Allen White and Lily James. But really it’s Efron’s lead performance as Kevin that brings the story home. One of the most effective themes that Durkin’s screenplay touches is the loss of brotherhood, dreams and passion without manipulating them. The emotion and heart of the film is built from a large array of protagonist faces. The differing lenses sometimes gruesome reality that the casting brings the movie to life; their 14th studio album, “Saviors,” bringing a generation of old and new fans together. The Plastics are back for round three in a film adaptation of the Broadway adaption of the 2004 classic “Mean Girls.” This time, North Shore High is ruled by Reneé Rapp as Regina George. Rapp gives a powerhouse performance, ensuring Regina’s effortless and commanding vocals are the center of attention on the cast album. Angourie Rice plays an authentic and charming Cady Herron, her vocals are timid and lack energy. Auli’i Cravalho, Jaquel Spivey and Avantika Vandanapu each deliver strong vocals as Janice, Damian and Karen, respectively. The emotion and heart of Gretchen Wieners are brought to life by Bebe Wood during a quiet, heartfelt rendition of “What’s Wrong With Me?”

Unfortunately, the ensemble vocalists often sound lifeless, as if they don’t actually care what the magnetic and lionized Regina is wearing. They earn their stripes as dancers, acing the choreography of Kyle Haganami. “Mean Girls” (2024) delights in all the expected ways and doesn’t try to reinvent the wheel. It occasionally lacks energy, and only Rapp’s solos are capable of giving toe-to-toe with the Broadway cast recording, but it doesn’t disappoint as a happy median between its predecessors. It’s fetch!

“Poor Things”  
**BY SARAH PAYNE  
SENIOR WRITER**

“Poor Things,” a masterpiece directed by Yorgos Lantimos and released Dec. 8, is inspired by the Alasdair Gray novel of the same name and is one of the most funky, refreshing movies to be made this decade. The film’s star, Bella Baxter (Emma Stone), is a woman who finds herself made this decade. Every element of the film was meticulously utilized to enhance the audience’s viewing experience. The ultra-bizarre, colorful and subversive world design of the film juxtapose and heighten the sometimes gruesome reality that the protagonist faces. The differing lenses and techniques brings the movie to life; the film is built from a large array of wide and intense, close-up shots with a variety of movement in each shot. The story, despite its minuscule flaws, feels well-earned and heartfelt. All parties involved in the film’s creation evidently cared about the themes of the story. “Poor Things” is a bold movie that not everyone will vibe with, but the story doesn’t dull itself in any capacity to make the audience more self-assured.

“Saviors”  
**BY JADYN DAVIS  
SENIOR WRITER**

Since 1987, the popular American punk-rock band Green Day has graced the ears of many listeners throughout the years. Now, in 2024, the trio has released their 14th studio album, “Saviors,” bringing a generation of old and new fans together. “Saviors,” released Jan. 19, the band encourages fans to speak up about important issues in the media like gun violence, the opioid epidemic and homelessness in the United States. To Green Day, staying silent solves nothing, and every-thing said in “Saviors” is loud and proud. Even though “Saviors” is filled with fast-paced, upbeat songs like “Look Ma, No Brain!”, “1981” and “Coma City” — which is expected from the trio — there are a few slow jams that nicely balance out the album and “Bobby Sox” is one of them. In this powerful rock love song, Armstrong celebrates his bisexuality as he sings to both women and men. The song’s simplic-ity makes it enjoyable and easy on the ears. Overall, “Saviors” can be described as a lively album. Despite Green Day being around for almost 40 years, the band is still able to capture the sound and essence that made them popular in their latest album. Filled with powerful messages, captivating lyrics and mesmerizing melodies, “Saviors” has the perfect mix of nostalgic and modern elements, which is why fans across multiple generations enjoy them.
Jacob Villanueva ‘22 will join the Los Gallos Negros of the LFA in late January to start training for the team’s 2024 campaign. Villanueva will play offensive line for the team.

By Augustine Daudu

Making a career in professional football is something only 16% of all collegiate football players will achieve. It can be even more difficult for athletes who did not go to Division I schools, which normally offer better training resources and more exposure to scouts.

For Jacob Villanueva ‘22, a two-time All-American offensive lineman, that has not prevented him from reaching the pros and signing a contract with Los Gallos Negros de Queretaro, an American football team in Mexico. Originally from Chino Hills, California, Villanueva grew up playing basketball. It was not until moving to Philadelphia that he was drawn to football.

Villanueva played for fun, and it was not until high school that he said he realized he had the talent and ability to play football in college. “Sophomore, junior year, the recruitment started to pick up,” Villanueva said. “Then my high school football coach was like, ‘If you really work hard and put your mind to it, you can play football at the next level.’”

Villanueva joined the Bombers in 2018 as an offensive lineman (OL), being on the OL is a physically taxing position to play, as noted by senior lineman and former teammate Anselmo Farrell.

“Every play you’re getting hit in the head, you’re getting hit in the body, and it does wear you out a bit,” Farrell said.

This was not a deterrent for Villanueva and by his sophomore year, he was a starter.

When Villanueva finished the 2021 season, he was named to the Liberty League offensive first team. He also earned All-American Honors from both the Associated Press and the American Football Coaches Association (AFCA).

It was around this time that Villanueva began getting offers from professional teams to play for them. Teams from all across Europe, including from Germany, the Czech Republic and Switzerland, reached out to him, which he said he was not expecting.

“I did not really have any idea that I was going to be able to play at that next level,” Villanueva said. “Once teams started reaching out to me, I gained more confidence and a realization that, like, Wow, I could play at the next level.”

Before the season begins in the spring, Villanueva said he has been preparing every day to start training with the team and to be away from home.

“These last couple of weeks, I’ve just been saying bye to a lot of friends and family … because I’m going to be down in Mexico for the next six to seven months,” Villanueva said. “So that’s going to be a little bit of a change, but I’m definitely very excited for it.”

Villanueva noted how grateful he is for the support of his family in his decision to go professional.

“My parents are … very positive about everything. … They have shown me nothing but support. … I’ll never take that for granted that they are allowing me this opportunity,” Villanueva said. “They are telling me to go for my dreams.”

When most people around the world hear “football,” they probably think of association football, or as Americans call it, soccer. However, fans, coaches and investors have been working to raise awareness of American football globally, and one country that has seen a large increase in interest is Mexico.

The Liga de Fútbol Americano (LFA) is the top professional football league in Mexico, founded in 2016 after the shutdown of the previous Liga Master. It started with four teams, but today, there are 10. The season goes from March to April, and culminates in the Torneo México (Mexico Bowl), similar to the NFL’s Super Bowl. The growth of the LFA and American football in general in Mexico has been aided by the existing Mexican collegiate football system and affiliations with the NFL and Canadian Football League.

Teams in the LFA are allowed to have up to 10 foreign players, an increase from last season where teams could only have 12.

Felipe Cruz is the offensive line coach for Los Gallos Negros. Before joining Los Gallos, he played football at college for Tecnológico de Monterrey and coached multiple schools.

During the recruiting process, Cruz said Villanueva’s technique stood out to him and the other coaches. He believes that Villanueva has the potential to be a great asset to the team.

“He needs to be a starter for me,” Cruz said. “We saw the videos. He had the interview with Carlos Stive, the head coach, and the performance that we want from [Villanueva] is to be on the best athletes on the line.”

Cruz explained that LFA teams usually search for DII and DIII athletes rather than DI because the cost of necessities, like getting scouts out, arranging travel and offering contracts, are generally higher for DI athletes. According to Mexican newspaper La Jornada, the average payment players receive per game is 5,000 Mexican pesos, which is approximately $300.

The NCAA calculated in 2019 that the 254 NFL Draft picks that year, 249 of them (98%) came from DI schools, five (1%) came from DII schools, and zero from DIII schools, meaning that the LFA and other leagues have abundant talent to choose from.

Some athletes who play in the LFA do jump to different leagues, like the United Football League (UFL). Conversely, athletes from the NFL have joined LFA teams, like former Dallas Cowboys receiver Terrance Williams, who joined the Tijuana Galgos in 2023.

In Mexico, American football has seen a large surge in popularity over the last decade, which has increased demand for football programs catering to young athletes. La Academia Gallos Negros, operated by Los Gallos, has around 100 youths between the ages of 8–15 registered to play flag and tackle football. According to Cruz,

there are more flag football teams than soccer teams in Queretaro City.

On the other side of the world in Germany, Joe Germinerio ‘19, former quarterback, played for the Kiel Baltic Hurricanes and Berlin Thunder. Germinerio figured the NFL was out of the cards for him, which is why he looked to the European League of Football.

He said his network of coaches from both thaca and ilrocspoud were invaluable to him finding the right team.

“You have to just connect with your network,” Germinerio said. “That’s all it is in this life … You have to network and then really just bother coaches and tailor messages, copy and paste because you’re going to get a ton of no’s.”

Knowing Germinerio had successfully taken the leap to pro football, Villanueva asked Germinerio for advice about trying to get into the field.

 “[Villanueva] was asking me about some tips of what he wanted to do with Europe and where he wanted to go,” Germinerio said. “And it’s tough with an O-lineman because they only want to bring, like QL, receiver over to Germany as the two Americans for offense.”

Germinerio believes that Germany is one of the fastest growing markets for football.

“You’ve got to be over there, they love their football,” Germinerio said. “You’ll walk around Berlin, and there’s just a bunch of people with NFL jerseys on just hanging out. So it’s probably the fastest growing country in terms of popularity.”

Germinerio retired in 2023 but said football is temporary, so work can wait for Villanueva. “[Villanueva] wants to go again,” Germinerio said. “He was not done playing. If he’s got the rest of his life to work, then go play football and have fun.”

Villanueva said he is eager to start training with the team and fully embraces the role of being a representative for football.

“American football is a very fun game and I want to spread the game as well, so when I’m down there, I’m going to try my best to try and get people to come out to games, just to watch a couple plays or a couple quarters,” Villanueva said. “I love the game of football and I think that all people should have access to be able to play.”

CONTACT: ADAUDU@ITHACA.EDU

Illustration by Raully Terrazas

NOLAN SAUNDERS/THE ITHACA
Young blood acts as the heart of new play style

BY FLynn HyNES
ASSISTANT SPORTS EDITOR

Last season, the Ithaca College men’s basketball team heartily relied on their upperclassmen, with four out of five starters being seniors or graduate students. However, this year, much has changed, with many underclassmen shining for the Bombers.

This year’s squad consists of 15 players on the roster, with five being first-year students and three being sophomores. Of the eight underclassmen, five have played all 16 games.

Junior guard Logan Wendell talked about the talent and camaraderie that this new first-year class holds, both on and off the court. “I think they’ve brought us all closer together, even just being [first-year students] as usual [first-year students] have to do,” Cabral said. “Stepping into that role with definitely the upperclassmen, are doing a really great job with holding themselves accountable and holding their teammates accountable, which is something I am a firm believer of.” Raymond said.

The Bombers have had a significant role for the team this season, wining the closer bonds and relationships in most of the rotation as first-years. We’re all learning things from those upperclassmen and trying to pick up as much as we can in practices and film sessions and games.

So far, Penders and first-year guard Jeylon O’Neal and Evan Cabral have seen the court every single game. Cabral said he appreciated being able to get a shot so early. “We have benefited tremendously,” Cabral said. “As underclassmen, we’re just taking all knowledge and soak it up like a sponge and just trying to have an open mind and hearing everything, so when it translates to the game, we understand what they’re trying to get to.”

First-year forward Alex Penders has played a significant role for the Bombers this season, wining Liberty League Rookie of the Week for his performance against Rochester on Dec. 6. Penders attributed the team’s success to leadership of the upperclassmen. “They’re just super capable players. Integrating them was no problem, just because of how talented they are really.”

Penders talked about having to change his role on a team once he got here. “I had to adjust to the way that I play [from high school where you get a lot of shots [and] you play a lot of minutes, to now where it’s more of a restricted role,” Penders said. “I think the biggest adjustment for me is becoming more shooting-oriented … making sure that when I get my opportunities, I’m making plays.”

Sophomore guard Cole Wisink and sophomore forward Gavin Schauder have had a quality start this season. “Wisink has started 14 of 16 games and has had every single game,” Wendell said. “We have 13 steals in five of their last seven games and in that time have compiled a 6-1 record behind fast and gritty defense.

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crossword
By Quill Driver Books

ACROSS
1 “Ali– and the Forty Thieves”
5 Moore or Lovato
9 Gorge
14 Notable times past
15 – the Terrible
16 Creature in Greek myth
17 ATM user’s need
18 Snakeskin fish
19 Rye disease
20 Devil-may-care
22 Winged insect
24 Creaking sound
26 Knocks
27 Seaside resort
29 Mentor’s work in progress
31 Follower
34 Fighting force
36 – Jones
37 Goo
39 Stopwatch
41 Pester in fun
43 Keep busy
44 Give an over-the-top performance
45 Director Jean– Goddard
47 “Born free” lioness
48 – Quixote
49 Atomic
53 PC key
54 Santa – California
55 Cook a certain way
57 “Look –, Angel”
59 Position and speak to
60 Sadness
61 Approach and speak to
64 UFO pilot
65 Calf meat
66 “Seasame Street”
67 Expressive dance
68 Perceive
69 “Sesame Street” regular
70 Young in the Torah
71 Much disliked
72 Refuse
73 Agcy.

DOWN
1 Wall Street pessimist
2 Old strongbox
3 Board game for two
4 In motion
5 Bruce willis hit
6 Genesis name
7 Public area
8 Underwrite
9 Most affordable
10 Does damage to
11 Jason’s ship
12 Place
13 Traditional story
14 Notable times past
15 – the Terrible
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answers to last issue’s sudoku:

sudoku

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ON WEDNESDAYS WE MAKE DEADLINE

THE ITHACAN
RECRUITMENT NIGHT

6 P.M. THURS. JAN. 25
PARK AUDITORIUM