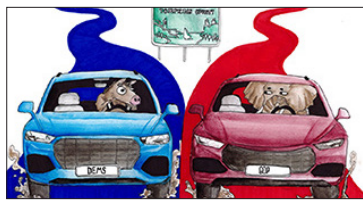


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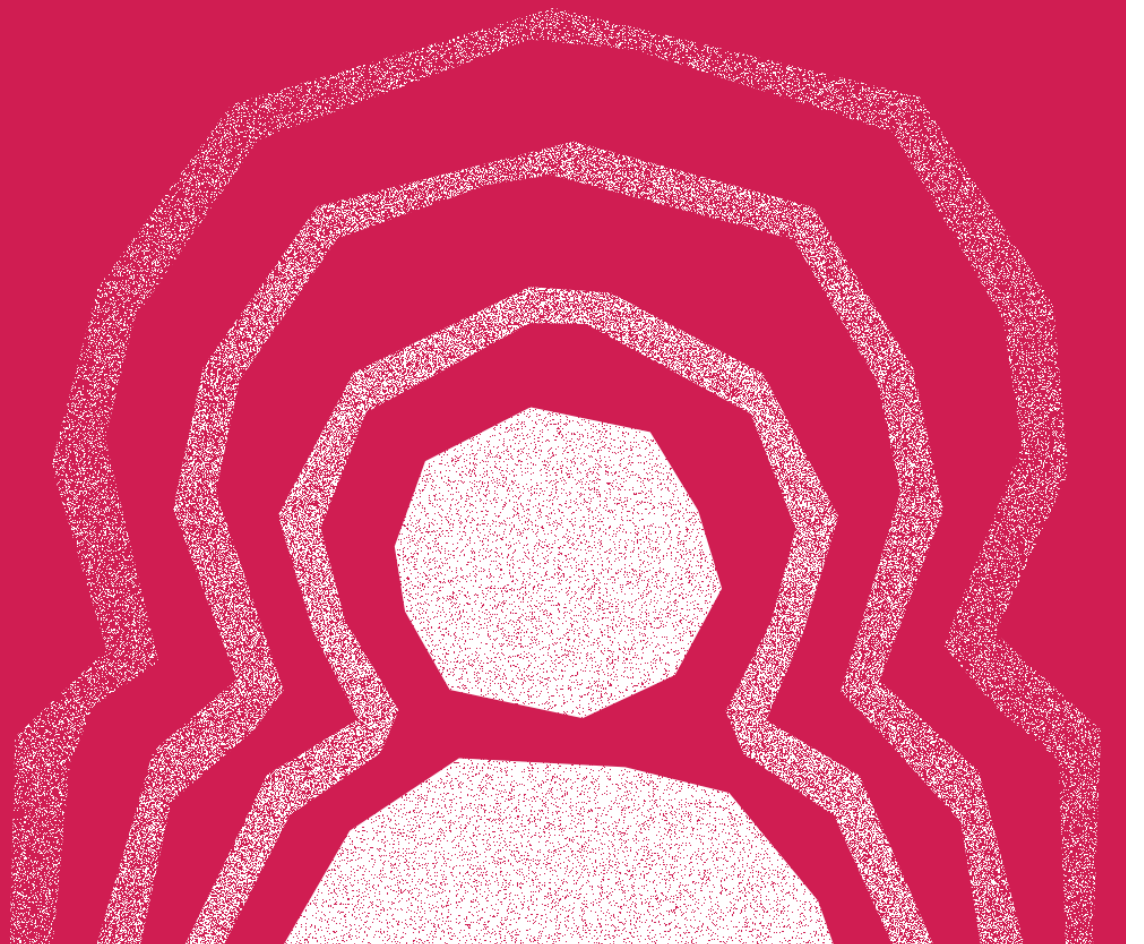
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Sexual violence at Ithaca College reveals issues within survivor justice systems

By Kaeleigh Banda • News Editor



Content warning: This story contains details about sexual violence. Anyone seeking help or support can contact the National Sexual Assault Hotline at 1-800-656-4673.

In September 2024, a first-year student reported that two male students assaulted her in her on-campus residence hall: one who raped her and one who sexually assaulted her and assisted in the rape. What followed was a process that left her with frustration at the criminal legal system's burden of proof, disappointment with the college's Title IX process and long-term

physical and mental health struggles. Over a year later, the primary perpetrators left the process without being convicted of a crime.

The student, who requested to remain anonymous due to concerns for her safety and privacy, said the acts of sexual violence both occurred during a party with alcohol in her dorm room and after the party while she was asleep.

She did not want to disclose the names of the students to *The Ithacan*. Not long after, she went to the hospital to get a rape kit to begin collecting

evidence of what happened. She reported the incident to the Office of Public Safety in the beginning of September 2024.

The timeline of her case lines up with the Red Zone. Every fall semester, colleges are in the Red Zone, which is the time period from August through Thanksgiving break when over 50% of college cases of sexual assault occur, especially for first-year students.

In college, 26.4% of female and 6.8% of male undergraduate students in the United States experience rape or sexual assault, according to the

Rape, Abuse and Incest National Network (RAINN).

For almost the entire 2024-25 academic year, the student fought to tell her story and get the justice in court she felt she needed. Loretta Ephimiatis, operations lieutenant in the Office of Public Safety and Emergency Management at Ithaca College and the officer on the student's case, said that when a student comes to OPS saying that someone raped them, they collect a detailed retelling of what happened. She said this collection is the first of many times that a victim has to tell

their story throughout the criminal justice process.

"We're gonna have to go through the whole thing again with the attorney," Ephimiatis said. "That attorney might ask different questions than I ask. ... So being a victim in this sort of thing is very difficult."

Burden of proof

Nearly 98% of perpetrators in sexual assault and rape cases are not convicted, according to RAINN. In the New York state criminal justice system,

SEXUAL VIOLENCE, PAGE 3

RAs keep advocating after board expenses cut canceled

BY JULIAN DELUCIA,
EAMON CORBO

ASSISTANT NEWS EDITORS

This story was originally published Dec. 7 and was updated online Dec. 9 at 8:05 p.m. ET and Dec. 10 at 3:25 p.m. ET.

Ithaca College canceled its planned cut of board expenses for resident and apartment assistants, following advocacy and criticism from the IC campus community. Board refers to the college's meal plan and dining costs.

The Office of Residential Life informed RAs and AAs that they were no longer going to have their board expenses covered at a Dec. 4 meeting. After a Dec. 9 meeting with RAs and AAs, Stanley Bazile, vice president of student affairs and campus life, confirmed to *The Ithacan* that the proposed cuts to RA compensation would not be carried out, and board expenses would still be covered in the 2026-27 academic year.

Students living in on-campus residence halls are required to have the Residence Plan, which costs between \$7,102 and \$8,062 per student annually. RAs receive

compensation solely through reductions in housing and meal plan costs.

The Ithacan spoke to three different RAs who said that at the Dec. 4 meeting, Beth O'Neill, director of Residential Life and Student Conduct and Community Standards, told the RAs she was directed to cut \$600,000 from the \$1.5 million RA budget.

In an email sent to all RAs and AAs by O'Neill, she said Bazile would meet with the RA Advisory Board Dec. 8 and hold a session Dec. 9 alongside Marsha Johnson, dean of students. Res Life declined to comment.

Sophomore Virginia Bentley, an RA in the Terraces Residence Halls, said they called their mom immediately after the Dec. 4 meeting. RAs receive 80% of their room and board as compensation for their first and second semesters, before getting an increase to 100% by their third semester. Bentley, a first-year RA, said they were waiting to get their second-year compensation increase, but were worried it would not matter after the cuts.

"I don't know if it's worth [the pay] with the amount of work I put into being an RA," Bentley said. "I'm gonna have to figure out



Resident and apartment assistants were informed that they were going to have their board expenses cut at a Dec. 4 meeting. On Dec. 9, the cut was canceled.

KAELEIGH BANDA/THE ITHACAN

loans, I'm gonna have to figure out more scholarships ... which is not something that I thought I would have to do, especially right before finals."

Junior Sawyer Sloane Simmons, an RA

in the Towers Residence Halls, said the planned cuts to the RA budget felt intentional because RAs are a group of students

RA, PAGE 2

FROM RA, PAGE 1

who are typically in higher need of financial aid and therefore more likely to continue in their position despite compensation cuts.

Simmons said the timing of the announcement has made it difficult for RAs to find off-campus housing for next semester or figure out additional ways to make money.

“They know [we] will take something over nothing,” Simmons said.

Simmons said being an RA is a massive time commitment. She said RAs are expected to be available for their residents whenever they are in their rooms and must respond in a timely manner to all questions and messages they receive.

“Whenever you’re needed, you’re expected to be available,” Simmons said. “Especially if it’s something silly or small, you’re expected to respond within 24 hours and handle it and resolve it.”

In training, RAs are taught about the idea of “Life in a Fishbowl,” meaning they are being watched and inspected by both residents and college community members everywhere and must represent the community well. Additionally, in the RA/AA contract, they must have any other campus activities or jobs approved by their director and are expected to drop them if they get in the way of being an RA.

In an email sent to the RAs after the Dec. 9 meeting, Bazile said he acknowledged the negative impact of removing meal plans on RAs and that making decisions regarding the budget deficit is never easy.

“I know that our RAs work hard to serve their fellow students and the entire campus community every day in ways that are both seen and unseen, and value our partnership in serving the common good,” Bazile said in the email. “I want to acknowledge and sincerely appreciate the passionate advocacy our RAs have shown in response to this news. Your commitment to supporting one another, elevating student concerns, and engaging as thoughtful partners in problem-solving reflects the very best of our campus community.”

In an interview with *The Ithacan*, Bazile said the planned cut of RA board expenses was canceled after he had conversations with students, received feedback from the RAs and looked at how cutting board expenses would impact the RAs.

“A number of the students who work in that position are some of the students who are most disproportionately disadvantaged in terms of first-generation college students [and] low-income households,” Bazile said. “Would they be able to continue at the institution? And what was the impact going to be on them from a psychosocial standpoint?”

Bazile said the decision to cut the RA

budget was part of the college’s goal of achieving a balanced budget by Fiscal Year 2028.

Bazile said he plans to work with Tim Downs, senior vice president and chief financial officer, and Laine Norton, vice president for advancement, to find ways to make up the amount of money without reducing the number of RAs.

“We haven’t made any final decisions in terms of where the money is going to come from,” Bazile said. “But it will not be coming from the RA budget.”

Junior Grace Commisso, an AA in the Circle Apartments, said she would like to see the administration include students more in financial decisions that will impact them.

“I am just not confident in what will happen after this because [administration] doesn’t know what’s happening,” Commisso said.

Johnson said she is open to including students as partners in some administrative decisions, but some decisions will need to be made without student input.

“[Students] might have creative ways [of] addressing things that we haven’t even thought about,” Johnson said. “We do plan to attempt to be as inclusive as possible.”

Citing issues with communication, support and overwork, several RAs have begun an effort toward unionizing.

Questionnaires were sent out to all of the RAs. Leaders of the initiative have

contacted representatives at the Office and Professional Employees International Union.

At the beginning of the 2024-25 academic year, the college had eight area coordinators — formerly called residence directors. ACs are professional on-site staff who are in charge of training and supervising RAs.

As of December, there are now only four full-time ACs.

Senior Rachel Somers, an RA in the Upper Quads, said she has worked with three area coordinators in her five semesters as an RA.

Somers said she found herself undertaking additional scheduling and logistical responsibilities, like writing the duty schedule for an entire semester, in times between ACs without extra compensation.

“I’ve handled issues that I’m not even trained to handle,” Somers said. “Everything was harder than it needed to be.”

Commisso said the decision to keep providing board expenses was a big step for Res Life in listening to student voices; however, there is still more work to be done.

“This was a win, but there won’t always be wins,” Commisso said. “We want to unionize so that they can’t do this again. So that every conversation like this isn’t a huge fight.”

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Press Bay Alley hosts the Winter Artisan Market

On Dec. 6, Press Bay Alley hosted the annual Winter Artisan Market. The market hosted a range of local vendors and artists to kick off the holiday season.



How IC Sports – Best of 2025

Host Johnny Lisi sits down with past and present ICTV Sports Directors Melanie Heim and Jenna Johnson to discuss national and Bombers athletic highlights from 2025.

THE ITHACAN

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FROM SEXUAL VIOLENCE, PAGE 1

perpetrators must be found guilty beyond a reasonable doubt. This means that the jury of 12 people must all agree and be confident that the person is guilty.

If the perpetrator is convicted of rape in the first degree, they would face a minimum sentence of five years in prison, according to section 70.80 of the New York Penal Code.

Matthew Van Houten, Tompkins County district attorney who worked with the student on her case, said the burden of proof in criminal cases makes strong evidence collection, including forensic evidence, even more necessary.

“Beyond a reasonable doubt is a very high burden of proof,” Van Houten said. “It’s much better to have someone who is guilty of a crime be set free than to convict an innocent person. Erring on the side of protecting the defendant’s rights is really how the system works.”

Evidence collection is difficult because most rapes occur without a third-party witness. Also, many victims do not report what happened right away or immediately start collecting evidence due to fear of retaliation or not being believed. That is also only accounting for the 40% of people who report their cases to law enforcement at all.

The delay in evidence collection can make the victim’s memory be questioned in trial, cause a delay in justice for the victim and make forensic evidence more difficult to collect. Even 24 hours later, victims may have less forensic evidence that would show up in a rape kit, and the victim’s memory of what happened may fade with time. Even though the student said Van Houten said the case should not be brought to court, Van Houten said bringing cases to trial can be part of the healing process for victims.

“This kind of a case is very difficult to win, but it’s often very important to bring the case to trial,” Van Houten said. “Being able to tell their story in court and be heard is really important, and that’s not something we would just turn someone away because it wasn’t a slam dunk.”

However, after countless retellings and piles of evidence, the student said she still was not able to prosecute the perpetrator because the district attorney did not find the evidence to be sufficient under legal standards and the high burden of proof. In her evidence collection, the student said 12 witnesses provided statements, the perpetrator did not deny the claims and a rape kit with forensic evidence and images with proof were all provided to OPS and the district attorney.

After multiple meetings with Van Houten, the student said he told her that her case should not be taken to court, despite her large collection of evidence. There is no record of her case in the legal records system.

“He basically said because I was not blacked out from alcohol or tied down with rope, it does not count as a rape, even though I was asleep when it occurred, and that the court wouldn’t view it as such,” she said.

The burden of proof is difficult to match, but even murder trials have a much higher conviction

rate under the same proof standard. According to RAINN, 90% of adult rapes occur against women. A 2016 article said that society values the sexual needs of men and tends to blame their instincts as excuses or dismissals for raping someone. Research from the National Library of Medicine found that victim blaming is a pattern of sexual assault cases. In a 2016 case, a New Jersey judge told the victim to just close her legs.

Epthimiatis said she feels bad for the

pursuing Title IX through its long process without a guarantee of her perpetrator leaving campus. Or she could go through the resolution process, in which Title IX speaks with the perpetrator and victim separately to reach an agreement about how to move forward. She chose to work with the Title IX office to file a request for removal through the resolution process and said the primary perpetrator left IC.

According to the student, the other male



About one in four female undergraduate students in the United States experience rape or sexual assault.

BASED ON LATEST DATA FROM THE RAPE, ABUSE AND INCEST NATIONAL NETWORK (RAINN)

students who are turned away after months of back-and-forths with retellings and evidence collection in pursuit of justice.

“It’s frustrating because you go and you do all this work ... you believe that this happened, your evidence shows that it happened, but then, for whatever reason, there’s something there that somebody says, ‘Well, did it really happen?’” Epthimiatis said. “Sometimes people are back on the street before we even write our paperwork. The legal system is very frustrating.”

Van Houten said the system focuses on compassion and preparation for the victim, but also recognizes that every crime has two sides to the story.

“We have to balance the fairness to someone who was accused of a crime with advocacy for a victim of a crime,” Van Houten said. “I don’t think I would change anything [about the system].”

Title IX

Pursuing justice through the IC Title IX system was the student’s next step to attempt to find a resolution. However, the Title IX system does not convict people in the same way that the criminal justice system does, and she felt the criminal prosecution is what he deserved.

“Title IX was the last resort because I wanted him to go to f---ing jail,” she said.

Linda Koenig, director of Title IX compliance at IC, said that when she is notified about a student who has been sexually assaulted, she reaches out to let the student know what resources are available, including confidential resources or mental health resources, from the Center for Counseling and Psychological Services.

“When they meet with me, I’m not trying to ask them a bunch of questions about what happened,” Koenig said. “I’m trying to understand what their needs are in that moment, what their wishes are, a general sense of what happened, but not detailed because we want to limit the number of people who ask them about those details.”

Title IX connects victims with a range of services aimed at helping them through their healing process, including schedule changes, housing changes and no-contact orders. If a student chooses to pursue a rape case through the Title IX process, they can have the perpetrator suspended or expelled from the college. However, the process can take months to a year and is not a guarantee that the perpetrator will be expelled, even though there is a lower burden of proof.

When debating how she wanted to pursue justice, the student said she considered

student who assaulted her is still on campus. She said she did not want to pursue Title IX against the other male student because she did not think she had enough evidence against him specifically, and she did not have a positive experience working with Title IX for the primary perpetrator. She also said she preferred to not make him even more aware of her existence than needed.

The student said this result impacted her in multiple ways because if the primary perpetrator stayed at the college, she would have left. She said she would have had to transfer to another college and start from scratch, which was not what she wanted to do. She also felt a level of responsibility to make sure the man who raped her was in jail.

“It left me with conscious guilt because he could easily go to a different college and do this again,” she said. “Loretta and Linda argued that he wouldn’t do that ... [because] this probably scared him. ... But is that enough?”

Koenig said the Title IX office also works to provide training to faculty and staff and prevention education to students. For first-year students, there is a required Title IX session at orientation, online modules and optional bystander intervention training in the first-year seminar classes and the Student Leadership Institute. Elyse Nepa, assistant director of Clery Act and prevention education, said that one of the most meaningful SLI trainings offered is “Red Flags, Real Talk,” which is based on two real-life scenarios involving dating and sexual violence.

The programs specifically for first-year students are in place because of the Red Zone, Koenig said. However, resources at IC do not highlight the Red Zone specifically. A prompted Google Search only provides information about parking lots.

“Maybe we don’t say Red Zone, but ... residential life or public safety would all say, yeah, there is a higher volume of reports and incidents that occur in the first month of a student’s experience at Ithaca College,” Koenig said.

Koenig also said the effectiveness of the training sessions and prevention methods are not directly measured.

After getting raped on campus, the student said she reflected on the education provided by the college and feels that the brief orientation training and forgettable resources are not impactful enough. She said hearing from a survivor or being provided more accessible and consistent information would be beneficial.

“If I got raped again on campus, I wouldn’t

speak up again after my experience,” she said. “Why would I go to the school when I got shut down? They said things and it hurt me and I had such a bad experience with them. Why would I go through that again?”

The Office of Public Safety, Title IX office and the Prevention Education Network did not provide any data that specifically look at monthly trends related to the Red Zone. Nepa shared monthly crime logs. Koenig said via email that collecting data for the on-campus incident reports she receives would take her “a lot of time to break the data down to monthly.”

Beth O’Neill, director of Residential Life and Student Conduct and Community Standards, said via email that resident assistants participate in Title IX training at the start of every semester. She said they do not specifically focus on Title IX prevention in RA training sessions, but focus on reviewing all campus policies, including Sexual Harassment and Assault Response Education resources. SHARE provides a consolidated list of frequently asked questions and resources for someone who was sexually assaulted or knows someone who was.

Providing education programs and training specifically on the Red Zone is something the student said she thinks would be helpful for Title IX, OPS and the Office of Residential Life. The RA on duty is responsible for shutting down parties with underage drinking in the residence halls, and the student said the party that led to her rape was loud and should have been shut down by the RA. The student did not want to disclose the name of her RA.

“If my RA did her job, I wouldn’t have been assaulted that night,” she said. “It’s because she chose not to. ... Don’t pretend to be the good guy because, ‘Oh, they’re just having fun.’”

Beyond first-year student trainings, Nepa said that every year, faculty and staff receive online state-mandated training on sexual harassment, discrimination and bystander intervention, and IC hosts events including IC Runs Purple 5K for Domestic Violence Awareness Month and the Faces of Prevention: Connection & Resource.

O’Neill said the RA training also does not provide an extra layer of communication for RAs about the Red Zone.

“I am aware of this term and time frame on campus we don’t speak about it in this way specifically,” O’Neill said. “We work with the RAs more around general transition to college.”

Nepa confirmed that the term “Red Zone” is not used in training and prevention materials, but said she and her team acknowledge that the first weeks of the semester can be a vulnerable time for new students.

“I will be bringing Red Zone–related ideas to the Prevention Education Network as we plan future programming,” Nepa said via email.

Lasting impact

In Fall 2025, over a year later, the student said she still feels the impact of the rape in her daily life. She said she has been having dreams of being held down or constricted. This response is common for victims of sexual violence.

“I went to the ER twice this past month because I’ve been waking up from night terrors, shaking, sweating and all the symptoms of a heart attack,” she said. “I woke up feeling like I was dying. ... I went into tachycardia, which means my heart rate has been consistently over 100.”

The student also said she needs additional medical support physically at doctor’s appointments since the rape caused a lasting impact on her body.

“It destroyed a part inside of me,” she said.

She said the legal system and collegiate structures did not support her in the way she needed. With a high burden of proof, lengthy processes, addressing trauma, navigating communication and ineffective resources, the student said she felt frustrated.

“At the beginning of my case, I was like, ‘How can women not speak up about this? This is horrible,’” she said. “After going through it for that entire year and nothing, it becomes worthless because nothing will happen to the guy. And that’s the hard part about it.”

“Title IX was the last resort because I wanted him to go to f---ing jail.”

The Ithacan's

DIVERSITY REPORT

What is the diversity report?

We ask members of *The Ithacan* to share information about their race, gender, sexuality, religion and ability level, as well as answer questions to gauge their sense of belonging in the workplace, in a digital survey each year. We share the results in a report on our website at the end of the fall semester.

Why does *The Ithacan* publish this report?

We share this information so campus community members can understand how our editors' and staff members' identities compare to the broader student body, and consider how our identities may influence our coverage.

What's new?

For the first time, this year's diversity report expanded beyond the editorial board to share demographic information about staff members.

In past diversity report surveys, we have asked if respondents have felt marginalized in *The Ithacan* workplace because of their race. This year, we added questions asking respondents if they have felt marginalized because of their gender, sexuality, religion and ability level.

We also added two final open-ended questions at the end of the report to allow respondents to share anonymous suggestions for any diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging efforts that they would like to see from *The Ithacan*, or anything else that they would like to share.

Key Findings

- From Fall 2024 to Fall 2025, there was an increase in the share of editorial board survey respondents who identify as people of color (5.9 percentage points), first-generation college students (10.7 percentage points), disabled people (10 percentage points) and women (12.9 percentage points).
- The share of editorial board members who strongly agree that *The Ithacan* values their unique backgrounds and experiences almost doubled from 2024, to 70% of respondents. However, a smaller share (39.5%) of staff members strongly agreed that *The Ithacan* values their background. We also noted that 4.7% of staff respondents somewhat disagreed and 2.3% strongly disagreed.
- When we asked respondents to rate how comfortably they can discuss their social and cultural background in our workplace, 75% of e-board respondents said they feel a level nine or 10, compared to 44.2% of staff respondents. All of the e-board respondents measured their comfort level at a seven or above, while staff respondents' lowest comfort level was a four.

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READ THE
DIVERSITY
REPORT
ONLINE



TeraWulf attempts to gather support for AI data center

BY RAY MILBURN
SENIOR WRITER

As the future of the Cayuga Lake data center develops, TeraWulf is trying to connect with the Lansing community amid fierce conflict. Since the company’s plan for an artificial intelligence data center started attracting attention in September, TeraWulf and a local group called No Data Center FLX have battled to sway community members.

TeraWulf hosted information sessions Oct. 7 and Oct. 29 to engage directly with the community, while the Lansing Town Board deliberated on the now-defunct moratorium proposal that could have stalled TeraWulf’s project for one year.

Kerri Langlais, TeraWulf chief strategy officer, said via email that the company’s community outreach efforts were aimed at providing Lansing residents with accurate, up-to-date information.

“We’ve focused on showing up, answering questions, and being transparent,” Langlais said via email. “People care about their town, and we respect that — even when they disagree.”

Shortly after the Lansing Town Board meeting Sept. 24, Tompkins County locals began sharing independent research about TeraWulf and their proposal on social media under the group name No Data Center FLX.

A representative of No Data Center FLX, a Tompkins County resident who requested their name be kept

anonymous for their safety and security, said they have concerns about TeraWulf’s conduct online. The company criticizes local officials in several Facebook posts.

“It seemed like the intention was to sow division between the locals and the town board so they could position themselves as the good guys,” the representative said.

In September, the Lansing Town Board received hundreds of written comments about the project. Public forums have been dominated by passionate statements both for and against TeraWulf’s proposal.

The representative of No Data Center FLX said that members of their group were subjected to coarse language and accusations of being paid protesters.

“We’ve all faced harassment,” the representative said. “It feels like intentional intimidation that is fueled by TeraWulf’s narrative that all these people who oppose [the data center] are outsiders.”

When asked about contention in the community, Langlais said erroneous claims were made regarding the proposed center’s water use, emissions, permitting process and impact on energy prices.

“Even more concerning is when behavior crosses into harassment or threats; unfortunately, that has happened, including to some of our family members,” Langlais said. “That’s not Lansing.”

On Nov. 19, an independent assessment of TeraWulf’s proposal was posted to the company’s Facebook



TeraWulf hosted community information sessions, while the Lansing Town Board deliberated on the now-defunct moratorium proposal that could have stalled TeraWulf’s project for one year.

RAY MILBURN/THE ITHACAN

page for the project.

Lansing resident Sarah Kreps, professor in the Department of Government at Cornell University and director of the Cornell Brooks School Tech Policy Institute, said she approached TeraWulf with the idea of an independent assessment.

“I have a vested interest in cutting through the noise and figuring out what’s actually going on,” Kreps said.

She conducted the assessment alongside Christopher J. Earls, a civil and environmental engineering professor at Cornell. Kreps said she and Earls acted independently but were financially compensated for their work by TeraWulf.

TeraWulf hosted a residents-only webinar Dec. 9 that covered the assessment. Langlais said the webinar is a response to requests from Lansing community members for a residents-only discussion forum.

On Dec. 5, No Data Center FLX addressed the residents-only webinar via social media post.

“By excluding non-Lansing residents,” the post reads. “TeraWulf is once again pushing a narrative that this data center won’t impact the entire region.”

Langlais said TeraWulf is currently working through Lansing’s permitting and zoning process.

“We’re focused on moving forward as best we can based on facts and constructive dialogue, not outside noise,” Langlais said.

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Laundry machine malfunctions inconvenience students

BY ISABEL ALASIO
NEWSLETTER EDITOR

As washing machines and dryers in Ithaca College residence halls have been consistently out of order in Fall 2025, students have expressed frustrations with the faulty laundry facilities, leaving them inconvenienced since their arrival at the college in August.

The college outsources its laundry machines from CSC ServiceWorks, a company that leases laundry and air services to homes, commercial businesses and universities. According to CSC ServiceWorks’ website, they are partnered with over 1,000 colleges and universities. The college’s initial seven-year contract with CSC ServiceWorks ended in May 2023. The college is still currently partnered with CSC after renewing the contract and reinstalling new washing machines and dryers.

Sophomore Maggie Taplin, who lives in Eastman Hall, said she had not experienced a problem with laundry machines until Fall 2025. When trying to do her laundry on a weekly schedule, she said there were consistently at least two to three washing machines and four dryers out of order. In total, there are four washing machines and six dryers in Eastman Hall.

“It’s been very frustrating this entire semester,” Taplin said.

As a student-athlete on the college’s swimming and diving team, Taplin said it has been difficult to do her laundry with the limited time she has in her dorm. She said that she and her peers agree that the situation is troublesome.

In an email sent by Grace Dossdall, area coordinator for lower quads, students in Eastman Hall were given key card access to Bogart Hall to use its washing machines and dryers.

An email from the Office of Residential Life to students said that since the college outsources the laundry machines from CSC ServiceWorks,

the Office of Facilities is not authorized to tend to maintenance requests. The email provides instructions for residents and resident assistants to submit maintenance requests directly to CSC ServiceWorks, who will send a representative to address the malfunctions.

CSC ServiceWorks did not respond to *The Ithacan’s* interview requests.

Senior Jayna Simeon is an RA in Emerson Hall. She said in the past, there have been consistent issues with washers within Emerson. Residents have been advised to use the laundry facilities located in the Garden Apartments, making the Garden laundry rooms crowded. Simeon said that as an RA, there is no direct communication with the Office of Residential Life other than instruction to fill out the CSC maintenance forms.

Simeon said there was a period where she was constantly filling out maintenance request forms to CSC ServiceWorks during her RA on duty rounds. She said it seemed as though the representative was fixing the machines as fast as possible, not as effectively as they should have been for long-term function.

“I just fill out the forms and do what I have to do,” Simeon said.

Jenny Pickett, associate director for operations and compliance for student affairs and campus life, used to work in the Office of Residential Life until September 2025. She said the college’s usual technician from CSC ServiceWorks has been on paternity leave and IC has been assigned a replacement representative.

“We had a new rep who is not as communicative as the last person was,” Pickett said.

There have been several issues with faulty laundry machines since Spring 2024. The clothing fire in Holmes Hall, smoking washing machine in Terrace 3 and overheating clothes in Bogart Hall occurred after the college renewed its contract with CSC ServiceWorks.



Ithaca College outsources laundry machines from CSC ServiceWorks, a company that leases laundry and air services to homes, commercial businesses and universities.

JOSEPH BUCHER/THE ITHACAN

Pickett also said the washing machines and dryers in the dorms are new. After IC renewed its contract with CSC ServiceWorks, laundry facilities have been updated across campus, beginning in March 2024. The Terraces Residence Halls were the first to be replaced. The remainder of the residence halls were updated in August 2024.

Sophomore Kira Meehan, who lives in Terraces, said there are only three washing machines and four dryers for the entire building. Meehan said all of the machines were out of order for several weeks.

“We would have to use [Terrace] 11’s laundry room, which was down a hill, and then a few flights up, and then we had to bring all of our stuff up and down,” Meehan said.

Meehan said that she did not think the college was doing enough to communicate with students about their plans to resolve the issues.

“I feel like it was mostly on our [RA] to communicate with the college,” Meehan said. “She even said in our floor group chat that she had sent multiple emails, messages and phone calls to people to get it fixed, and they just weren’t giving her anything.”

The Office of Residential Life has been working with the representative from CSC ServiceWorks to address the issue for students. Pickett said the communication between the college and CSC ServiceWorks will be resolved in the future.

“I think that it will be better when our regular technician is back from leave, just from a communication standpoint,” Pickett said.

CONTACT: IALASIO@ITHACA.EDU

COLLEGE BRIEFS

Projects for Peace offering grants for students interested in social justice

Students interested in community building and social justice are invited to apply to Projects for Peace. This is the fourth year Ithaca College has partnered with the program, which offers selected undergraduate students \$10,000 to carry out projects over summer break. Projects for Peace is a program from Middlebury College that focuses on helping young adults develop community-centered plans to combat pressing issues all around the globe.

Students are encouraged to submit a proposal outlining their plan for the project, which will remain open throughout December and January. More details can be found on the Projects for Peace website. For questions, contact Tina Thurston at thurston@ithaca.edu.

Approval forms for break housing required by Office of Residential Life

Residence halls will close to students at noon Dec. 18 for winter break, requiring all rooms to be vacated without written approval from the Office of Residence Life. Those who need to stay past that date will need to submit the late departure request form on IC Workflow by Dec. 11 to ensure review before the closing date.

No students are allowed to remain beyond 10 a.m. Dec 22. Unapproved students in school housing after their check out time will be subject to a \$100 fine for unauthorized presence. For additional information, students can visit the December Closing website, contact the Office of Residential Life or email Break Housing at breakhousing@ithaca.edu.

Student speaker applications open for May Commencement Ceremony

The Commencement Committee opened applications for a competition to select the

student speaker for the upcoming May Commencement Ceremony. All undergraduate seniors with a graduation date from Dec 2025 to Dec 2026 are invited to submit a short 1-2 minute video about their interest in being the student speaker, as well as a brief excerpt of their planned speech. This year’s theme is “dialogue.”

Students applying must have earned a minimum of 60 credits at Ithaca College and have a cumulative grade point average of at least 3.0 at the end of the Fall 2025 term to qualify. The final speech is expected to be between 2-3 minutes long. A group of finalists will be selected to deliver a full speech in front of a student selection committee.

Those requiring accommodations should contact Ella Perkins at ejperkins@ithaca.edu.

School of Humanities and Sciences to bid a fond farewell to Amy O’Dowd

The School of Humanities and Sciences will be holding a farewell event for Amy O’Dowd, associate dean of student success in the Academic Support Center, from 5-6:30 p.m. Dec. 17 in Clark Lounge. O’Dowd spent the past nine years working in H&S in a variety of positions since joining IC in 2016, including assistant dean of student services and associate dean of student services.

In her time at IC, she has served as a member of the student conduct review board and taught courses for both the Ithaca Seminar and H&S Pathways programs. She will take up a position in the College of Computing and Software Engineering at Kennesaw State University.

Enrollment open now for winter session in environmental biology

“Environmental Biology” is open for student enrollment for the winter session. The course will cover several topics, including an overall



Chemistry Club hosts slime event to de-stress

Junior chemistry major Lucia Moix, stretches slime Dec. 4 at IC’s Chemistry Club slime making event. The event was held to de-stress before finals during the noon hour in the Center for Natural Sciences building third floor atrium.

JACK HARKINS/THE ITHACAN

introduction to environmental sciences, resource management and the evolution of biodiversity.

This course fulfills natural science, science and liberal arts requirements for the Integrated Core Curriculum. The winter session will run from Dec. 18 to Jan. 16. For more information or questions, contact Nandadevi Cortes at mtcores@ithaca.edu.

Spring 2026 artificial intelligence mini-grant applications now open

Applications are now open for \$500 stipends

to explore artificial intelligence as an educational tool or topic during a Spring 2026 course. The Center for Faculty Excellence and the Center for Instructional Design and Educational Technology are offering these grants as a part of their AI digital literacy initiative, which is designed to support Ithaca College faculty.

These projects can involve lesson redesigns or AI-based assessments, and up to five proposals will be selected for the spring semester. For more information, those interested can visit the AI for Teaching website. Applications close Dec. 22.

PUBLIC SAFETY INCIDENT LOG

SELECTED ENTRIES FROM NOV. 17 TO 23

NOV. 17

SAFETY HAZARD / ENVIRONMENTAL HAZARD
LOCATION: Roy H. Park Hall
SUMMARY: Caller reported anti-freeze was spilled when replacing a fan. Michael Stone, associate director of the Office of Environmental Health and Safety responded. The spill was cleaned and a report was completed.

SCC UNDERAGE POSSESSION OF ALCOHOL
LOCATION: Holmes Hall
SUMMARY: The Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards reported five people were referred for underage possession of alcohol. Master Security Officer Amy Noble responded.

SCC HARASSMENT / INTIMIDATION
LOCATION: Dillingham Center
SUMMARY: Caller reported a person demonstrated bullying and harassing behavior Nov. 9. Patrol Officer Matthew Patire responded and the incident was investigated.

NOV. 18

DISORDLY CONDUCT
LOCATION: Office of Public Safety
SUMMARY: Caller reported a person yelling and being disruptive. Sergeant John Elmore responded

and warned the person for a violation of law or conduct code.

MEDICAL ASSISTANCE / INJURY RELATED
LOCATION: East Tower
SUMMARY: Caller reported having chest pains, shortness of breath, chills and nausea. Enoch Perkins, fire and building safety coordinator in the Office of Environmental Health and Safety responded. The person was transported to the hospital by ambulance.

CHANGE IN THE CASE STATUS
LOCATION: M-Lot
SUMMARY: Officer relocated a vehicle reported to have a stolen license plate Nov. 4. The officer later determined that the state had reissued the license plate number and the plate was valid. The investigation was determined to be unfounded.

SCHEME TO DEFRAUD
LOCATION: Circle Apartments 131
SUMMARY: Caller reported an unknown person had gained personal information and opened a fraudulent account. Sergeant John Elmore responded and the incident is currently being investigated.

CRIMINAL TAMPERING
LOCATION: West Tower
SUMMARY: Caller reported a person tampered with their property.

Sergeant John Elmore responded.

NOV. 19

SCC ACTS OF DISHONESTY
LOCATION: S-Lot
SUMMARY: A person was found in possession of a fraudulent parking permit. Security Officer Nick Shirley responded and the person was referred to the Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards.

NOV. 20

SUSPICIOUS CIRCUMSTANCES
LOCATION: C-Lot
SUMMARY: Caller reported that an unknown person had lifted windshield wipers on multiple vehicles. Patrol Officer Steven Hutchison responded. The incident was investigated and a report was completed.

CRIMINAL MISCHIEF 4TH DEGREE
LOCATION: R-Lot
SUMMARY: Caller reported an unknown person damaged a vehicle. Patrol Officer Steven Hutchison responded and the incident is being investigated.

SCC COLLEGE REGULATIONS
LOCATION: Circle Apartments 151
SUMMARY: Caller reported finding propane tanks during a health and

safety inspection. Corporal Dana Malcolm responded and one person was referred to the Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards.

NOV. 21

SUSPICIOUS PERSON
LOCATION: Circle Lot 11
SUMMARY: Caller reported an unknown person knocking on the door and ringing the doorbell. The officer was unable to locate the person.

FIRE ALARM ACCIDENTAL
LOCATION: Hilliard Hall
SUMMARY: Simplex reported a fire alarm. Patrol Officer Jack Nelson responded. The alarm activation was caused by burnt food.

RAPE
LOCATION: Unknown
SUMMARY: Title IX reported on third-hand information that one person sexually assaulted another. Title IX is providing resources and options.

CRIMINAL MISCHIEF 4TH DEGREE
LOCATION: Baker Bridge
SUMMARY: Caller reported an unknown person had damaged the elevator call button. Corporal Kevin McClain responded.

NOV. 22

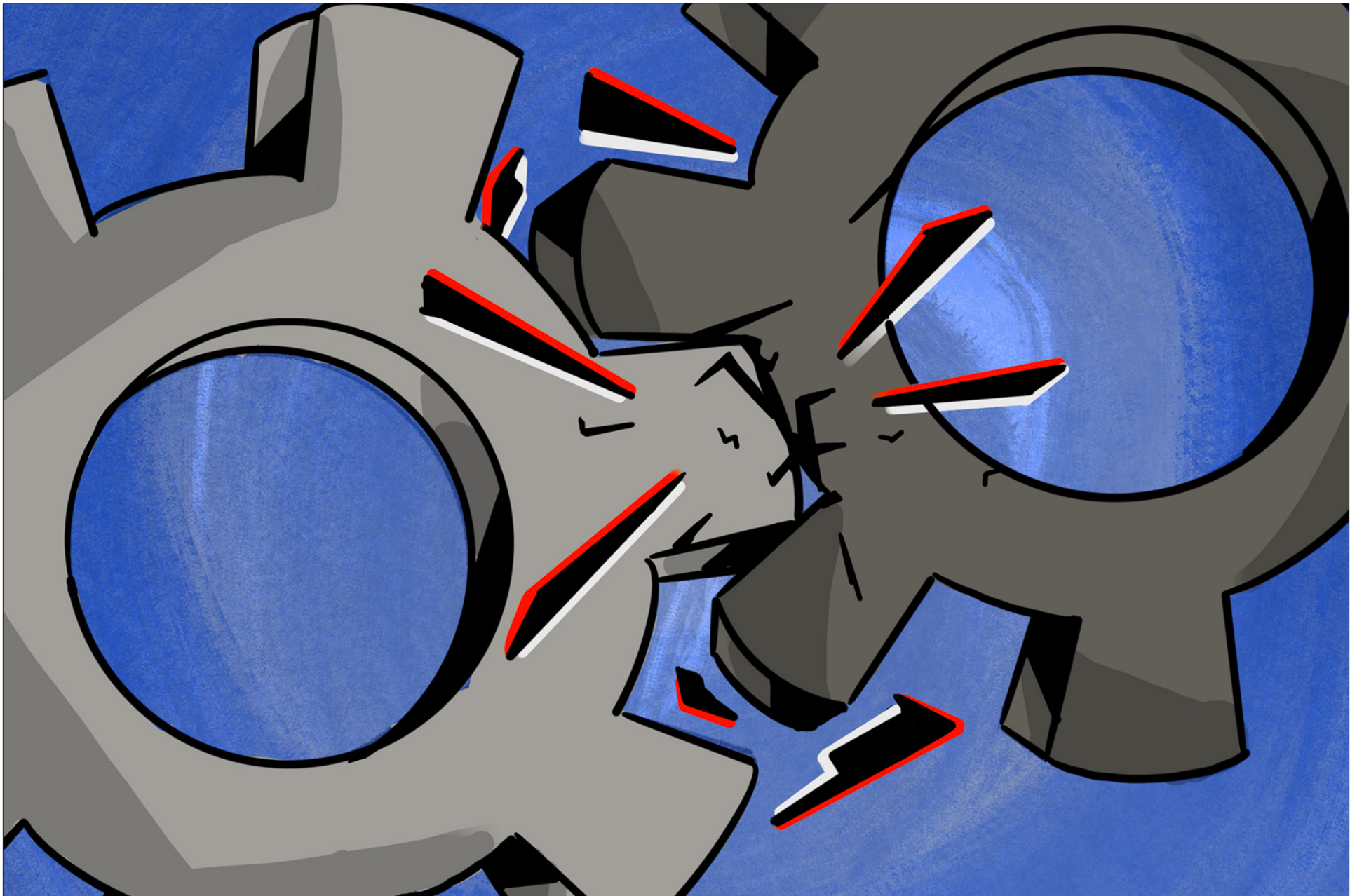
MEDICAL INJURY / ASSISTANCE RELATED
LOCATION: Athletics and Events Center / 150 Lyceum Drive
SUMMARY: A person injured their elbow while wrestling. Corporal Kevin McClain responded and the person was transported to the hospital.

MEDICAL INJURY / ASSISTANCE RELATED
LOCATION: Athletics and Events Center / 150 Lyceum Drive
SUMMARY: A second person injured their elbow while wrestling. Patrol Officer Ivan Cruz responded and the person was transported to the hospital.

DISORDERLY CONDUCT
LOCATION: Athletics and Events Center / 150 Lyceum Drive
SUMMARY: A person approached Patrol Officer Alex Hitchcock to report they were assaulted. The officer determined that one person had bumped into another and separated the two parties.

KEY

SCC: Student Conduct Code
VT: Vehicle & Transportation
EHS: Environmental Health & Safety



ATTICUS JACKSON/THE ITHACAN

EDITORIALS

IC fails to address widespread Title IX inadequacies

Ithaca College’s Title IX infrastructure is inadequate to ensure the safety of its students. The fault does not solely lie on the lengthy procedural processings of offenses, but additionally in the ineffective preventive sexual assault programming. This is a reflection of systematic problems that plague college campuses and higher education across the nation.

The 2024 Campus Climate Survey, with 27% of undergraduate student participation, found that 13% of student respondents indicated they experienced unwanted sexual experiences. From the 2025 Security and Fire Safety Report, 13 incidents of rape on campus were reported in 2024, more than double from the previous year. At IC, Sexual Harassment and Assault Response & Education (SHARE) utilizes forms of programming, workshops and campaigns with the goal of sexual assault prevention. But their overall strategy is insufficient.

Awareness campaigns and social media posts are not enough, rendering themselves useless if there is no meaningful mobilization and engagement continued after.

Title IX is more than a procedural framework to follow after an offense is committed. The proper resources must be allocated and utilized correctly to lead to impactful change that will ensure the safety of students on campus to prevent offenses in the first place. There must be a shift to implementing evidence-based research and approaches with a focus on student experiences.

Most programming in higher education offered is in one-size-fits-all lectures or one-off training modules. This style of prevention is unproductive and does not promote the behavioral change required to protect students. Especially as the programming is not properly targeted to the needs and experiences of students.

Incidents of sexual assault disproportionately impact students from marginalized communities regarding race, disability, sexual orientation and gender identity. Targeted resources and programming must be offered to account for these specific disparities.

Additionally, there is no mention of the Red Zone in the college’s data on the topic. The Red Zone refers to the period of

time from the beginning of a fall semester to Thanksgiving break when 50% of sexual assaults occur on campuses.

This is another alarming reflection of the gap between the college’s programming and the actual experiences of its students. How will students feel motivated to engage in the resources the college offers if they do not see their needs represented? It is one thing to have resources available to students, but unless students use them, they are useless.

A remedy to this is more student input into the prevention efforts that is representative of the student population because no one knows what it is like to be a college student better than other college students. Since 2020, when the Honors Civic Engagement Course collaborated with the Title IX Office in Breaking the Stigma to create a recorded presentation, no student input with office partnership on programming has been publicly initiated or published.

The college is unfortunately not unique in its Title IX deficiencies and limitations. Rather, the flaws are representative of greater structural setbacks that impact forms of

higher education across the nation. These complications could negatively impact the safety of students, as the risk of sexual violence for all college students is increased compared to their noncollege counterparts.

Female college students ages 18-24 are three times more likely than women in general to experience sexual violence and male colleges students ages 18-24 are 78% more likely to experience sexual assault or rape than nonstudents of their same exact age.

These are staggering statistics that colleges and universities must account for, as college students face distinctive issues that need collaborative initiatives and measures to combat.

If not changed, these institutional shortcomings will lead to continued lack of student engagement and overall distrust in the system itself.

To combat the larger systemic failures of Title IX infrastructure, the work SHARE, the Office of Public Safety and the Title IX Office does is impactful, but not enough, and must continue to improve to meet the needs of students.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Send to ithacan@ithaca.edu.

All letters must:

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

GUEST COMMENTARY

Send to ithacan@ithaca.edu.

All commentaries must:

- Be 650-750 words.
- Be written by an individual or group who has an educated opinion or is an authority on the subject.
- Be emailed or dropped off by 5 p.m. Monday in Park 220.



Virtual pop-ups inhibit attention

BY SAMUEL RADCLIFFE
COLUMNIST

Human attention is a limited and valuable resource. Because people cannot simultaneously focus on two in-depth things and there are only so many waking hours in a day, there are only so many things that can capture our attention in that given period. Digital technology complicates how people budget their attention which can render users susceptible to a ceaseless barrage of advertising, notifications and small daily interruptions that add up.

The online attention economy is a system that commodifies human attention. In most business models, the user of the product or service is the direct source of revenue, but not in an attention economy business. Instead, these companies monetize consumer attention to generate profits. Their business models rely on engagement and advertising, often providing users with services free of monetary charge.

For example, social media and other digital platforms offer services to users without charge. But these seemingly free services, such as Instagram, Snapchat and TikTok, have a hidden cost. Users pay for them with their attention, emotional investment, time and data. In this kind of business model, the user’s attention is the product. Attention is treated like a type of currency for companies to capture and sell to advertisers. By analyzing the data they collect, companies are better able to capture the attention of users by algorithmically tailoring the type of content they feed to individuals.

The result of this is digital platforms competing for the attention of users similar to how more traditional businesses compete for customers. Social media platforms are designed in a way to intentionally render them addictive. Many people use electronic devices regularly, even daily, whether for work, education or recreation. These devices have distractions built in, notifications and pop-ups that can draw your attention, potentially breaking user focus.

Resuming a task after an interruption is not as simple as it seems. The length of recovery after a distraction is time dependent upon the complexity of the task, but can be anywhere from eight minutes to 25 minutes depending on the complexity of the task. Distractions such as notifications can kill our focus and productivity. Even brief interruptions, such as simple notifications, divert our attention and keep us on the screen.

While these attention-driven digital platforms have some value, it is important to keep in mind the forces that drive them are not prioritizing the best interests of users. The effect that companies competing for attention has on individuals is that they are increasingly and unconsciously incentivized to stay online.

It is important to disconnect sometimes in order to prioritize productivity and maintain mental health in between mental tasks.

GUEST COMMENTARY

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

DEI programs deserve space in higher-ed

BY VIVIAN ROSE
SENIOR

Earlier this year, the Buckeye Institute, an independent research think tank “whose mission is to advance free-market public policy” across the U.S., testified before the Ohio Senate Higher Education Committee to pass Senate Bill 1. The bill, passed June 27, most notably ensures that all accredited colleges and universities in the state do not have to mandate diversity, equity and inclusion policies and should cut certain programs to narrow collegiate degrees to ones that will “meet the challenges of the 21st-century workplace.”

Just a few short months later, April 21, the University of Toledo released a statement that said it was suspending admission to degrees in majors that include Africana studies, Middle East studies and women’s and gender studies to comply with S.B. 1.

Colleges and universities in states like Florida, Iowa, Texas, West Virginia, Alabama, among others, are erasing programs and courses that discuss topics of systemic racism, sex, oppression, gender and even courses that discuss microaggressions.

Such action from states comes



Senior Vivian Rose explores how reversing diversity, equity and inclusion programs enables censorship in higher education, enforcing harmful ideologies that impact collegiate education.
GRACE VANDERVEER/THE ITHACAN

at a time when political division seems to be at a peak in the U.S.; as young White men incubate in online echo chambers of White “bro-casters” that speak about White supremacy, ending “wokeness” and targeting feminism; and as policies from our country’s current administration seek to kill DEI.

The only result of the lack of mandating DEI has become the censorship of the nation’s higher education. Laws like S.B. 1 allow colleges and universities to cherry-pick their narratives of the past and ongoing history.

It seems to me that legislation like this will not be preparing any student for the 21st century — a century that, like every other, is filled with people of all cultures, backgrounds and genders.

Vivian Rose (she/her) is a senior journalism major. Contact them at vrose@ithaca.edu

GUEST COMMENTARY

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

PFAS seep into consumers’ commodities

BY SAMANTHA FUNK
SENIOR

PFAS, or perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substances, are human-made chemicals used in product industries. PFAS leave a permanent mark on the environment due to their practically indestructible and persistent nature, which is why they are sometimes referred to as forever chemicals.

Exposure to PFAS has been linked to an extensive list of health issues, including higher risks of cancer, reproductive and developmental complications, and liver and thyroid defects. Due to inconsistencies in federal regulation and the little transparency required of corporations, consumers are unaware of the chemicals hidden in purchases.

Unfortunately, these chemicals are hard to escape. They are found everywhere, like in hygiene, food and personal use products.

Water resistant merchandise use a layer of forever chemicals to make the product water resistant. This barrier disintegrates over time and can enter both the environment and the human body. Look to products labeled “PFAS-free” or “PFC-free” for less harmful alternatives.

The coating on nonstick products that keeps your vegetables from sticking to a pan is essentially a blanket of forever chemicals that seep into food when cooking. Instead, opt for stainless steel, cast iron or glass kitchenware.

Products that contain fragrances are also products to look out for. According to the International Fragrance Association, the fragrance industry uses over 3,500 stock chemical ingredients. Among that list, many have been flagged as potential or known “chemicals of concern.” When buying personal care products, it is best to ditch the aromas and go fragrance-free.



Senior Samatha Funk explains how harmful chemicals are unavoidable in consumer products and how corporations do not do their share in protecting their customers.
LUCIA IANDOLO/THE ITHACAN

PFAS in plastic products are the trickiest forever chemical category to steer clear from because it is found in virtually everything on the market. Instead, turn to alternatives when possible, like wood toys and bamboo toothbrushes.

While it is important for our own health to avoid products with PFAS, the responsibility should not be falling on the shoulders of consumers. Simply changing the way that we shop fails to grasp the root of the issue: companies are not being held responsible for the chemicals they use in production.

These same companies go unprimanded when using greenwashing tactics to lure customers into retail traps, avoid overused buzzwords like “eco-friendly” or “all-natural.”

Corporate accountability is possible by supporting those who advocate for stricter legislation, like the PFAS Action Act, which would require the Environmental Protection Agency to establish a drinking water standard and demand manufacturers to identify toxins in products.

Samantha Funk (she/her) is a senior environmental science major. Contact them at sfunk1@ithaca.edu

Holiday break drives tense political conversations

BY EVA LEON,
MACKENZIE HAYES

ASST. LIFE & CULTURE EDITOR,
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

As college students nationwide are heading home for the holidays and reuniting with their families, among the gifts and home-cooked meals waiting for them, they may also be confronted with a tense conversation about politics.

Students at Ithaca College say they are working to promote constructive communication at the dinner table to maintain relationships despite differences in views.

When sophomore Bella Phelps went home for Thanksgiving break, she found herself sucked into a group text debate with her extended family. The conflict began when her grandfather decided to send a photo of the president that started a flare up between members of her family who had opposing views.

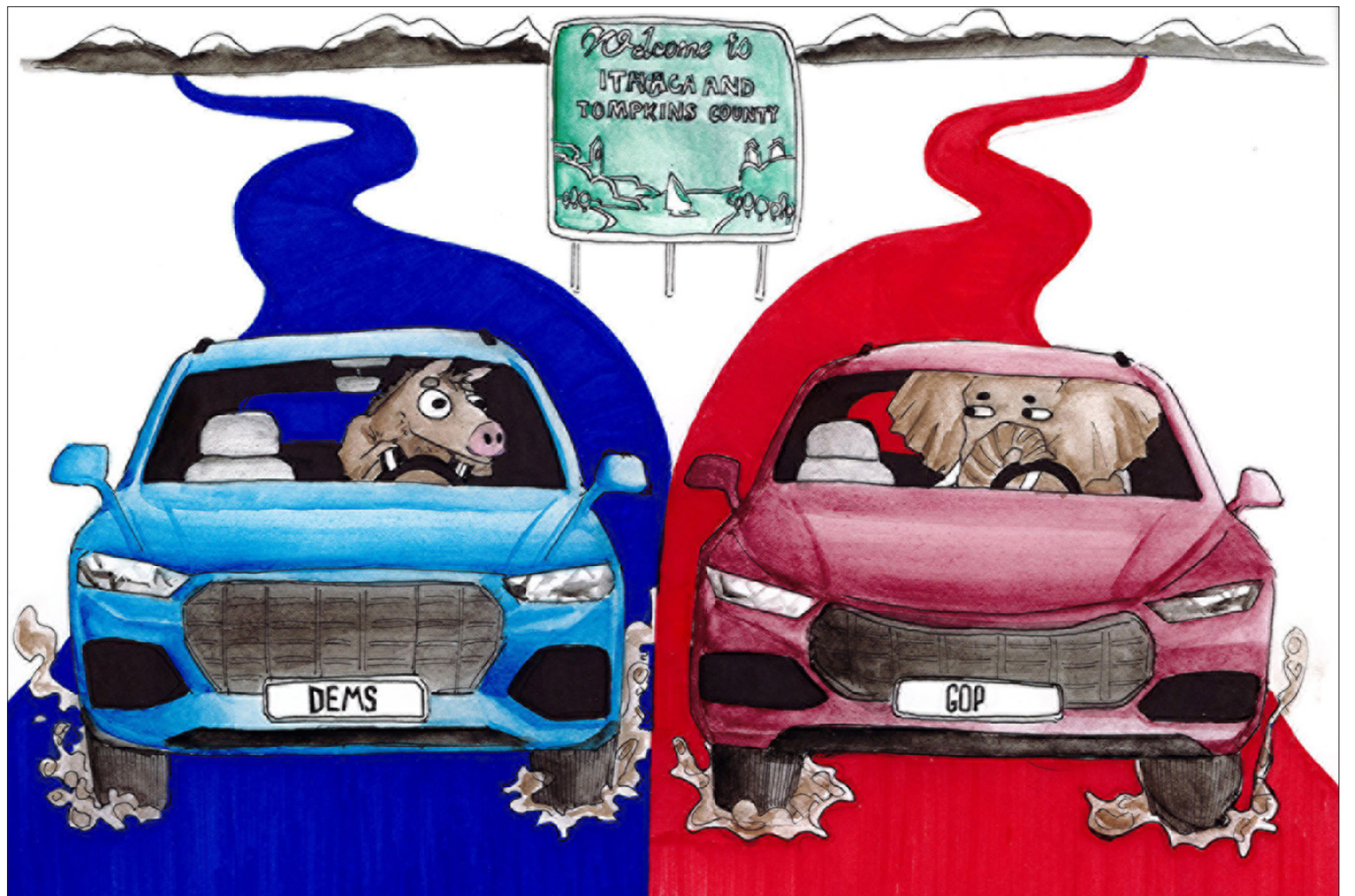
"Why is this happening? On Thanksgiving Day?" Phelps said. "It's a day we're supposed to be thankful. ... It does create a crack in a relationship with your family, and it sucks because it doesn't have to be that way."

During a time of immense political polarization, heated political conversations are becoming increasingly common among families.

Mickey Huff, professor in the Department of Journalism and director of the Park Center for Independent Media, has studied causes of this polarization. He and his colleague Nolan Higdon at Project Censored, a media watchdog organization, published an article in December 2024 called "The Revolution Starts at the Table." The article suggests 12 tips on how to make communication more constructive when facing

conflicting opinions.

"With mass media conglomerates," Huff said, "it's like you're walking on ice," Phelps said. "It's a sad truth that you kind of just have to deal with ... sometimes I'll find myself going over to [my] family's house and I don't even mention anything. ... I have to sort of pretend to just be like them."



As students embark on their trips home from Ithaca College, they may be entering divisive political environments. Difficult conversations with family members who hold opposite political views can be hard to navigate, but IC students are confronting them with open minds.

SOFIA FITZGERALD/THE ITHACAN

to feed into hyper-partisanship as a way to heighten people's emotions and keep them engaged in the content. Phelps said that she has seen polarization on the news and believes it gets worse every day.

"It's not grabbing people's attention because it's become such a normalized thing, which is scary to see," Phelps said. "People are just like, 'Oh, here we go again.' ... It's kind of going over their heads, how bad it is."

Phelps has had experiences with family members on her dad's side who are not accepting of her sexuality, and often feels she has to hide parts of her identity in order to fit in.

"It's like you're walking on ice," Phelps said. "It's a sad truth that you kind of just have to deal with ... sometimes I'll find myself going over to [my] family's house and I don't even mention anything. ... I have to sort of pretend to just be like them."

Situations like these are something The Center

for LGBT Education, Outreach and Services are aware of, so they aim to provide a space where queer students can be their authentic selves.

On Dec. 3, the center held an event called Queer for the Holidays. Crissi Dalfonzo, director of the LGBT Center, said via email that the event gives queer students the opportunity to celebrate the holidays on campus with

their chosen families.

"It's one thing to have different political views or opinions from your family—how taxes should be charged or used, for instance," Dalfonzo said. "It's another thing entirely for one's family to not accept who you are as a person—that's not a difference of political opinion, that's a difference of values."

Junior Will Coleman said that although he believes in keeping an open mind during political conversations with family, personal values often coincide with political ideologies, and he prioritizes sharing similar values with friends.

"Finding out that people have values that you didn't really think that they would have," Coleman said. "It makes you look at people differently sometimes. ... When our family friend said that she's fine with all these families getting deported, then that makes me look at people differently. And I don't think that there's necessarily anything wrong with that."

First-year student Angi Snyder suggested keeping an open mind to improve communication.

"Just go into it with the feeling of, 'I'm going to listen now,'" Snyder said. "Take it all in. Don't take it personal. And then you can respond gracefully."

"The Revolution Starts at the Table" explores how constructive dialogue is made possible when people take implicit biases and lived experiences into consideration without discounting them.

"We kept seeing people on two different sides that were so extreme about what they were trying to promote and what they hated that they all talk past each other, not with

each other," Huff said.

He said that oftentimes, people do not realize how much they may have in common, instead they are focused on the one thing that divides them.

Junior David Deer said that he disagrees with his parents on politics, but that he has come to accept that his parents do not experience the same things as him and therefore do not understand things the same way. He said that a difference in views does not have to lead to the end of relationships.

"I don't agree with [their beliefs,] Deer said. "They're my family. I love them. Hatred is such an exhausting thing to feel all the time. You kind of have to learn to ... sit there and be like, 'That's not how I feel, that's not the way I move through the world, but that's just who they are and how they feel.'"

Coleman said that college is a politically active environment where students are constantly engaging in open dialogue and conversation; however, he said he also realizes that IC is its own echo chamber of ideas.

"We're in a huge bubble," Coleman said. "And even I'm struggling. I have to learn that even some things that may be common knowledge here may not necessarily be the truth sometimes."

First-year student Aidan Martellotta said his aunt and uncle have created an uncomfortable environment by starting divisive conversations about politics during family gatherings.

"I feel like they try, at times, to push [their] views, they try to influence me to have those views, the same views as them," Martellotta said. "When I always try to keep an

open mind to all the issues."

Martellotta said that his aunt and uncle are not happy about their children's sexualities. Conflicts like this have become common talking points between older, more traditional relatives and their younger, more progressive children.

Junior Travis Conway said that when he disagrees with family, he tries to dig further and figure out why they feel the way they do. He said that older generations can at times think they have all the answers simply because they have more lived experience, but that education through research can be just as valuable to forming opinions.

"One thing I hate that people say is it's not my job to educate somebody," Conway said. "I don't believe that that's true. I think it's everyone's job to educate anybody, if you have the means ... if you're put in a position where you can educate them, I don't see why you shouldn't."

Conway, Deer, Coleman, Martellotta and Snyder are navigating conflict by keeping the dialogue open and acknowledging, accepting and working through differences for the sake of maintaining family relationships.

"I think that a relationship with politics should just be challenging, it shouldn't be damaging," Deer said. "I don't think you should end your relationship with your family because they disagree with you politically. I think you only have one family. You have one short life. You should embrace it and love it as much as you can."

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Hatred is such an exhausting thing to feel all the time.

— David Deer, IC junior

eration [and] a lack of media literacy education, [society has] kind of really created this perfect storm where people were encouraged to say nasty things and get in certain camps or tribes," Huff said.

Phelps said that this divisive behavior has become ingrained in our society. A trend toward negativity bias, the media's tendency to report on and prioritize what people consider to be "bad news," can lead to a growing feeling of desensitization in the public.

Huff said that the media tends

Lack of affordability causes The Downstairs to close

BY PARKER ANNE DEVINE
STAFF WRITER

On Nov. 21, Ashley Cake, the owner and operator of The Watershed and The Downstairs, released a statement on both establishments' websites and social media. The final sentence of the opening paragraph delivered the devastating news: both businesses' final day of operation will be Dec. 23.

The Watershed and The Downstairs share the same building on State Street. In her statement, Cake said that she opened The Watershed in 2016 because she noticed a desire for third places — somewhere welcoming that is not home or work. In 2020, she opened The Downstairs, expanding to include live entertainment. Handwritten notes from patrons cover both The Watershed and The Downstairs' walls, a testament to the personal nature of these spaces.

While The Watershed provides signature drinks and atmosphere, The Downstairs provides a diverse array of entertainment to Ithaca.

Senior music major Isabella Joyner said that she knows The Downstairs best for their Poetry and Punk nights.

"I knew [The Downstairs] for [being] such a special place to be able to share your work [and] share your ideas," Joyner said.

Johnny Dowd, a professional musician and resident of Ithaca since the 1970s, said that The Downstairs is one of the best venues he

has played at.

"[Cake] has made something special out of it with the variety of stuff she has," Dowd said. "She's really a local hero, and it's a shame that the town is so ... lame that they won't support it enough for her to make a living out of it."

The Downstairs is not the first music venue in Ithaca to face hardship in 2025. In October, Deep Dive posted on social media asking for financial assistance from the community.

IC students are also affected by the closing. The Downstairs was one of the venues included in a campaign known as Scene & Heard created by Joyner, senior Alexandria Atencio, junior Lucia DeFilippo and sophomore Anne Kane.

Scene & Heard hopes to broaden students' options for a night out by promoting local music on social media. DeFilippo said that while Scene & Heard originally started in the group's Public Relations class, the campaign has become more than a class project to her.

"[When] we first started the Instagram page, they launched the GoFundMe for Deep Dive and I was like 'Oh, we actually have something to work towards,'" DeFilippo said. "Right after that is when we found out that The Watershed and The Downstairs were closing. It became a lot more of a passion project because ... I didn't want to be silently rooting for [the venues]. This was a good excuse to really use my voice."

Cake said that when she opened



This historic building next door to Ithaca's State Theatre has been home to The Downstairs for the last five years. The Downstairs hosts events like live music, stand-up comedy and poetry readings.

MEI DENNISON/THE ITHACAN

The Watershed, the bar was the first in Tompkins County to be certified as a Living Wage Employer at the rate of \$15 an hour. Now, the living wage is more than \$24 an hour, \$4 more than Cake can afford to pay.

"I can no longer afford this community's decades-long divestment from affordability," Cake said. "While this city, this county, this state, and this country continue to fail the people so utterly, I can no longer justify tying up my skills, resources, and connections in a single

building, hustling commodities for the luxury class."

According to the 2025 Tompkins County Living Wage Study, 47.7% of workers in Tompkins County make below the living wage.

Cake said she needs her customers' basic needs to be met before her businesses would be able to thrive.

To keep memories of both businesses alive, Cake said that she will be collating the beloved drink recipes into a book and donating a box of the handwritten notes to The

History Center in Tompkins County.

In early 2026, K-House Karaoke will move into the space.

Dowd said that The Downstairs will always hold a special place in his heart.

"[Cake made The Downstairs] more than just a business ... you knew how much work she was putting into it," Dowd said. "You can replace the venue, but people like her, you can't really replace."

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Ithaca community stays dialed in to IC radio stations

BY ALLY DHEERADHADA
STAFF WRITER

Many around the world tune in to the radio as the first thing in their daily morning routine. In Ithaca, it is not uncommon to hear that dial turned to Ithaca College's very own WICB 91.7FM station. For the past eight decades, WICB has formed a strong connection with its listeners, creating a community and working hard throughout the years to support it.

WICB was established in 1941 and gained its Federal Communications license in 1948. Currently, the station's main format is modern rock, although it has many specialty shows showcasing a range of music — from Latin songs to the Beatles. Originally based on Buffalo Street, WICB landed in the Roy H. Park School of Communications in 1989.

WICB and VIC radio have always been run by students. Jim Chirumbolo '70, a former television and radio major and an active member of WICB in his time at IC, said that having the stations run completely by students allowed them to take risks and grow more than if it was overseen by faculty and staff.

"By having the students run it, I believe this was a calculated plan on the part of the department to allow us to grow," Chirumbolo said. "It allowed us to take chances and reach for things that, if a group of adults were running the station ... we never would have done some of the things we did."

Junior Isa Fraute-Kroll, the talent coordinator for WICB, said that the student-run aspect creates a sense of authenticity and allows the DJs to express themselves.

"[WICB] is a space for us as students to represent our music tastes, represent our cultures via the music that we present and represent ourselves through the music that we're being able to put out for people," Fraute-Kroll

said. "It provides a much more authentic view as [to] who we are, what music we're really listening to [and] what cultures we're representing within our art."

In conjunction with WICB, the college also hosts its online-only sister station, VIC radio, which comes with its own history on campus. It began in 1957 as the AM frequency of WICB, broadcast throughout the college campus using carrier-current technology. In 1984, VIC changed its name from WICB-AM to WVIC, and later dropped the "W" to become VIC. In 1997, it became one of the first stations to stream on the internet.

On Oct. 8, about 25 alumni who attended IC in the late '60s and '70s came back to the college for a day of reminiscing and connection. These alumni were known informally as "The Tubes," referring to the vacuum tubes that were essential parts of early radio and TV broadcasting. The name is fitting as "The Tubes" were all a part of early WICB and ICTV history.

In recent times, radio has become almost a relic of the past. In the 1980s, 98% of households had a radio. That number started declining rapidly in 2010. In 2020, just about 60% of households owned a radio, according to Statsignificant.

This decline in radio popularity has been reflected within the IC campus. In 2022, the college changed its television and radio major to be called television and digital media production to reflect the shifting job market.

However, support for WICB has not wavered. Junior Yusef Scott-Wetherbee, the station manager for WICB, said that he often gets calls to the station line when he is DJing from community members who request songs, or even just share their support for the station.

"One of the most heartbreaking calls I got was this little girl [who] was in the hospital



Junior Yusef Scott-Wetherbee, the station manager for WICB, sits in the booth located in the Roy H. Park School of Communications where he and other students go on air.

MEI DENNISON/THE ITHACAN

who wanted to hear the cloud song from 'Les Mis,'" Scott-Weatherbee said. "She was listening in from a hospital bed. She [said] 'Yeah, this is my favorite show. I love musicals!' I just sort of sat there after I got that phone call, and I was like, 'Oh, there are people listening. There's real people listening.'"

Elizabeth Kujawa, a longtime resident of Ithaca, said she listens to WICB in her car and loves how it introduces her to new music.

"You're listening to the things that this person likes or is curating for you," Kujawa said. "It's nice to have that. [And] hear this stuff about the songs. The DJ usually will give you some interesting background story. And I think that is nice."

This past Halloween, WICB hosted its annual WICB Afraid Radiothon, where one DJ

was in the booth for 24 hours playing music nonstop to raise money for the station. VIC also hosts its 50 hour marathon in the spring, where five DJs stay up for 50 hours to fundraise for a local nonprofit.

Fraute-Kroll said that WICB has become more than just background music for listeners and a job for the DJs.

"Radio is so much more about the people," Fraute-Kroll said. "It's almost entirely based on human interaction ... it's something that people can connect to. ... These are people whose voices you get to hear every day. They can be a part of your routine and that aspect of human connection that maybe you're missing out on. And I think that that's beautiful."

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THE

QUEUE

Commentary from
The Ithacan's
culture critics

“AMPLIFIED BY THE PERFORMANCES”

“HAMNET”

★★★★☆

“PERFORMANCE FELT VERY FORCED”

“FIVE NIGHTS AT FREDDY’S 2”

★★★☆☆

“A GREAT AMOUNT OF TALENT”

“MERRILY WE ROLL ALONG”

★★★★☆

Actors in ‘Hamnet’ put forth emotional performances

BY RILEY YOUNG
STAFF WRITER

Director Chloé Zhao’s latest film “Hamnet” was released in theaters Nov. 26. The film is based on the novel of the same name by Maggie O’Farrell, who also cowrote the screenplay with Zhao.

“Hamnet” tells the life stories of Agnes (Jessie Buckley) and William Shakespeare (Paul Mescal), spanning from their first romantic encounter to the premiere of William’s play “Hamlet,” inspired by the death of their only son Hamnet (Jacobi Jupe).

Buckley gives an astounding performance as Agnes. A tour de force, she captures the love and loss motherhood brings with ease. Buckley’s performance through her eyes alone helps the viewer understand exactly what Agnes is going through. In the final shot, she communicates her fear, anger, loss,

acceptance and eventual happiness wordlessly in mere seconds.

Mescal’s performance during a scene where he considers suicide while quoting the “To be, or not to be” monologue from the play “Hamlet” showcases some of the best acting of his entire career.

Using his own words to calm himself, this scene is memorable mainly through Mescal’s phenomenal performance.

The script is the film’s biggest vice. While “Hamnet” succeeds at moving the audience emotionally, there are specific points where it feels as if there is a greater focus on hitting emotional beats than telling the story cohesively.

Amplified by the performances, “Hamnet” is a profound experience guaranteed to stay with the viewer long after the credits roll.

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FOCUS FEATURES/ENTERTAINMENT PRESS/ZUMA PRESS/TNS

‘Five Nights at Freddy’s’ sequel is horrifically incomplete

BY ALLISON DOLAN
STAFF WRITER



RYAN GREEN/UNIVERSAL PICTURES/TNS

“Five Nights at Freddy’s 2,” directed by Emma Tammi and released Dec. 5, outperforms its predecessor in scares, but fails to deliver in terms of performances and plot. The movie is loosely based on the horror video game of the same name, but follows the original characters from the first film, released in October 2023.

The structure of the movie is very disjointed, leaving viewers without a clear sense of who the main character is. While the audience is supposed to root for Mike Schmidt (Josh Hutcherson), his actions often felt disconnected from the main plot, and his screen time seems wasted on throwaway scenes.

Abby (Piper Rubio) plays a much more prominent role in the film, befriendng the new “toy” animatronics and becoming an

eventual host for the Marionette. Each protagonist’s role in the plot is largely individual, yet their actions and storylines are not strong enough to stand alone.

While the animatronic structures were constructed in the renowned SFX design company Jim Henson’s Creature Shop excel, the CGI and digital effects come across as cheap and fake-looking.

Perhaps the strongest aspect of the movie is its jump scares, which arrive frequently and unexpectedly throughout. The sequel is absolutely scarier than the original, and while it still shies away from extensive gore to keep a PG-13 rating, the kills are shown in more depth than in the first movie.

However, if the performance of the sequel is any indication, audiences may want the doors of Freddy Fazbear’s to close for good.

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Broadway takes the screen in ‘Merrily We Roll Along’

BY ABBI PUCKETT
STAFF WRITER

“What’s to discuss, old friend?” The long-awaited proshot of “Merrily We Roll Along,” a classic Stephen Sondheim musical, brings a big buzz in the Broadway community.

The four-time Tony winning revival from the 2023-24 Broadway season released the professional recording Dec. 5. The musical’s material was consistent, but the proshot lacked in its cinematic elements.

The story follows the relationship between three friends over the course of 20 years. Franklin Shepard (Jonathan Groff), a composer; Charley Kringas (Daniel Radcliffe), a lyricist and playwright; and Mary Flynn (Lindsay Mendez), a writer, experience the ups and downs of artistic jobs in New York City together.

A great amount of talent is showcased in the Act I song, “Franklin Shepard, Inc.” Groff

has no lines, but his acting is in his reactions. Mary is a difficult character to embody, but Mendez plays her flawlessly. Mary is the one who always strives to keep the group together, regardless of the issues that may have come to the surface.

The biggest issue with this entire production was the overuse of close-up shots on the stage by director Maria Friedman, so many theatrical elements were unseen because of this. Large backdrops were used at times but could hardly be examined because a full stage shot is rarely shown. It seemed to discredit a key part of theater, the set and stage.

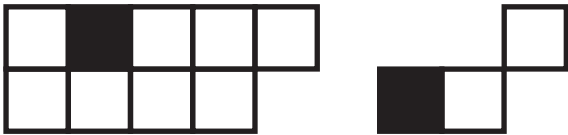
The classic story of friendships falling apart could have been told better through the production of the proshot. However, this release will hopefully push the Broadway community to put out more proshots.

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SONY PICTURES CLASSICS/TNS

DIVERSIONS



CROSSWORD

BY QUILL DRIVER BOOKS

1	2	3	4		5	6	7	8	9		10	11	12	13
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	56	57							58			59	60	61
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67					68						69			
70					71						72			

- ACROSS**
- 1 Headgear
5 U.S., Can., Mex. Pact
10 HBO miniseries “— VEP”
14 Inter —
15 Vigilant
16 Playwright — Coward
17 Vend
18 Sonar’s abo- veground cousin
19 Sand hill
20 Kitchen gadget
22 Having many urban areas
24 Ellipse
26 River in Belgium
27 Tricky situation (2 wds.)
31 Sharper
35 “All About —”
36 Roman a clef
38 Climb
39 500 sheets of paper
41 Stiff
43 Barber service
44 “To — — human ...”
46 Cabbage tupe
48 Greek letter
49 Fashions
51 Become more even (2 wds.)
53 Back muscle
55 Sandwich shop
56 Document’s layout
58 Red wine
62 Pasternak char- acter
63 Bingo, alternatively
66 Drill
67 Ear-related

- 68 On the up-and-up
69 Meat portion
70 Wise
71 Run off to wed
72 Famed garden
- DOWN**
- 1 Fastening device
2 Toward shelter
3 Domino
4 Sickly Pale
5 Storyteller
6 Chicken — — king
7 Part of FDIC
8 Comics detective
Dick —
9 Endangered (2 wds.)
10 Roundabout
11 Libertine
12 Recover from injury
13 Pub offering
21 Actress — Rachel Wood
23 Letters
- 25 Jeans brand
27 Start of a toast
28 Not hidden
29 Inclined to weep
30 Kingly
32 Drug baron
33 — Yale
34 Send, as payment
37 Dwelled
40 Channel for water
42 House for pigeons
45 Suture
47 Holler
50 Firmly established
52 Responsible
54 Tough alloy
56 — Morgana
57 First (Abbr.)
59 Crucifix
60 Cleveland’s lake
61 State near Miss.
62 — Angeles
64 In the past
65 Bit to drink

LAST ISSUE’S CROSSWORD ANSWERS

	H	A	B	I	T			T	A	R	O	T	
P	U	R	I	T	A	N		D	I	V	I	S	O
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SUDOKU

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MEDIUM

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LAST ISSUE’S SUDOKU ANSWERS

MEDIUM

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

HARD

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

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DICK'S and IC athletics partner in corporate deal

BY LYLA DORAN
STAFF WRITER

Ithaca College Athletics announced a corporate partnership with DICK'S Sporting Goods, which will give Bomber athletes the opportunity to connect with the community. All levels of athletics — varsity, club and intramural — can get discounts on sports equipment, including merchandise, through “Shop with the Bombers” events.

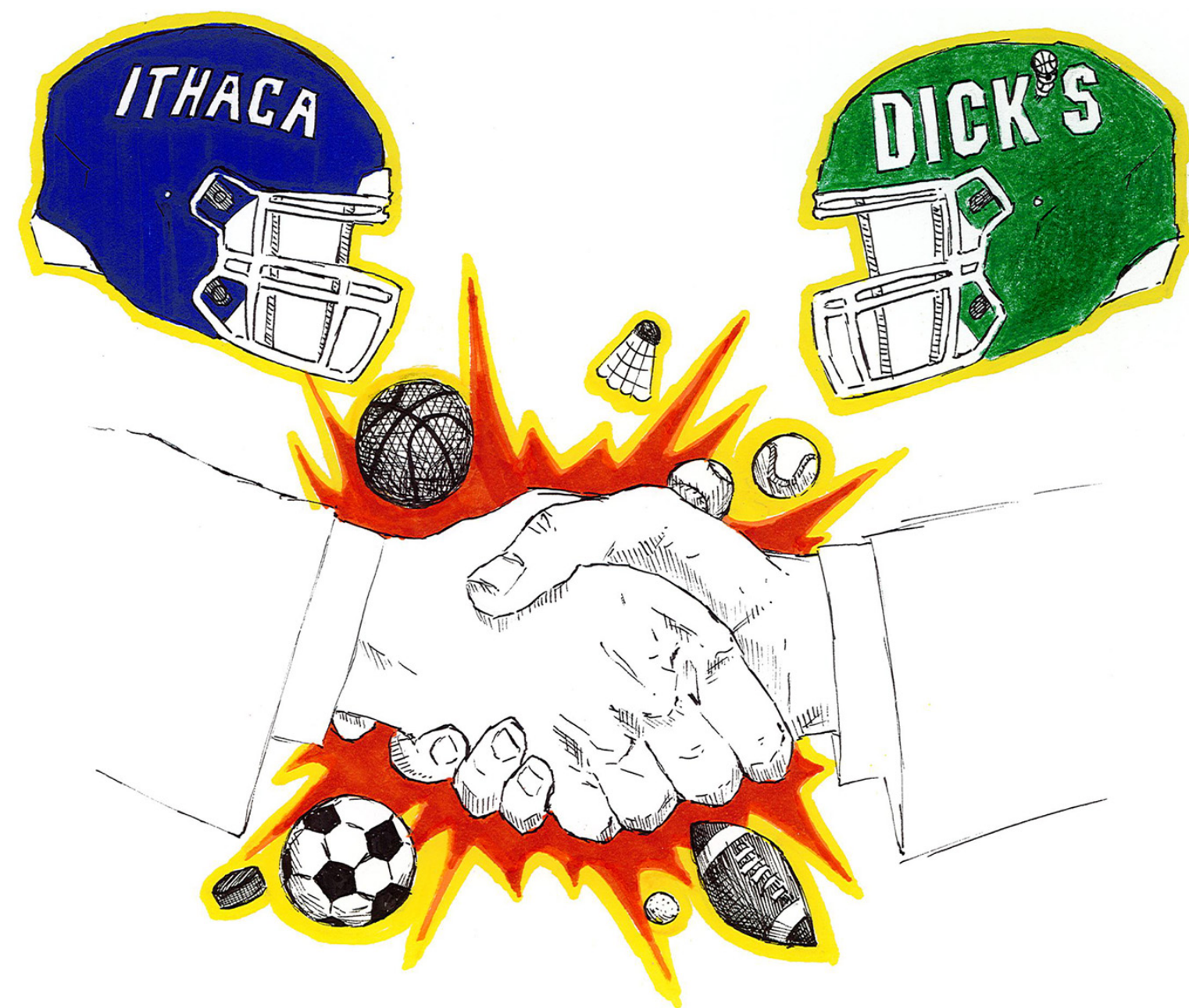
The partnership was announced on the IC athletics website Nov. 4. It began after DICK'S Sporting Goods and IC athletics identified that they had similar organizational values. Tyler Heisey, associate director of athletics at IC, oversees business operations and corporate partnerships. He took responsibility for the partnership after a DICK'S representative initially reached out to Aaron Bouyea, director of intercollegiate athletics and campus recreation.

“[DICK'S] wants to help build a stronger community through sport, and that's what we do in our department,” Heisey said. “We want people who are student-athletes at Ithaca College to have the best experience possible and to grow and learn and become successful humans, and DICK'S aligns with that.”

Other athletic corporate partners include Cayuga Health, Tompkins Community Bank and Beginnings Credit Union. DICK'S Sporting Goods is listed as a “varsity level” partner. There are eight other varsity partners listed on the website.

In the spring, the store in South Meadow Square will host “Shop with the Bombers” days. The events will include meet and greets with athletes and opportunities for members of the IC community and local youth athletes to receive discounts on store goods.

Heisey said the events are still in the planning stages. Anna Whieldon, a field marketing manager of DICK'S Sporting Goods for central and western New York, is involved



DICK'S Sporting Goods is partnering with Ithaca College athletics to “champion the power of sport.” The partnership will offer discounts and community engagement opportunities to athletes at all levels at IC. DICK'S will be advertised at IC athletic facilities and events.

SOFIA FITZGERALD/THE ITHACAN

in the partnership, and she is working on finalizing the details for the events. She said via email that she is proud to help enhance the Bombers fan experience.

“The events are designed to bring local youth athletes together with Ithaca College student-athletes for a fun and interactive in-store shopping experience,” Whieldon said.

All levels of athletics at IC will be able to purchase more affordable gear to supplement their own

funding. Club and intramural athletes often have to buy their own sports equipment like cleats, gloves and apparel. Club teams received an email Dec. 9 from Heisey via IMLeagues granting a \$10 off a \$50 purchase coupon to use before Dec. 31 at the Ithaca South Meadow Square store.

Junior Brady Corson, the social media manager for the club hockey team, said hockey is an inherently expensive sport. Sticks cost about \$250, helmets cost \$200 and skates can add up to \$1,200, he said.

“We have new players all the time,” Corson said. “[The partnership] is good for them because they can go and get a discount on skate, sticks, gloves, helmets and ... protective gear, and they're not having to drop a fortune on it.”

DICK'S Sporting Goods has sponsored other college athletic programs in the past. On Jan. 30, DICK'S announced it was the official sporting goods retailer of the University of Texas. Their partnership includes game sponsorships and activations; and Name, Image and Likeness deals. DICK'S is also the official retail partner of the NCAA. IC is the only Liberty League college to be sponsored by DICK'S.

Although the partnership will be student-athlete centered, NIL

money is not involved. Heisey said the athletics department is working on an NIL strategy, but the partnership is currently more focused on branding and community.

The marketing of the collaboration is still in development. Heisey said emails will be sent out to club and intramural athletes in the spring.

After the former club sports director departed in July, the athletics department did not hire a replacement right away. Corson said he almost did not have a season because there was no one to sign off on the bills for the team.

When *The Ithacan* asked a varsity athlete to be interviewed about the partnership, they declined, stating they were advised by the athletic department not to speak about it.

IC athletics will also help market DICK'S Sporting Goods through branding and advertising around the athletic facilities and games. Whieldon is involved in the marketing responsibilities of DICK'S Sporting Goods.

“DICK'S will promote the partnership through a variety of channels throughout the academic year, including in-game visibility, select print materials and on-site store activations,” Whieldon said via email.

DICK'S Sporting Goods will also help connect student-athletes with service opportunities.

Since being hired, Bouyea has expanded the framework for athletics and community outreach. In the future, Heisey hopes to expand to offer camps and clinics with the young athletes within the Ithaca community.

Sophomore Maddie Gill, a guard on the women's basketball team, said via email that she is very excited about the new partnership and the journey of having a large company sponsor IC athletics.

“I think this is a unique opportunity for the athletic programs on campus,” Gill said via email. “It will build our brand as a college and will be able to connect every team with such a large business on a local level which makes it more personal.”

Both Heisey and Whieldon were unable to comment on the financial details of the partnership.

“We are excited to work alongside Ithaca College to support and celebrate its incredible student-athletes,” Whieldon said via email. “This partnership reflects our ongoing commitment to strengthening the communities we serve and championing the power of sport.”

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The DICK'S Sporting Goods in South Meadow Square will host “Shop with the Bombers” events, which will offer discounts.

MARISSA MOSCHELLA/THE ITHACAN

IC diving duo adds to team in championship push

BY ISABELLA MCSWEENEY
SPORTS EDITOR

In an effort to be crowned league champions for the first time since 2012, the Ithaca College men's swim and dive team has found an unusual diving duo in sophomore swimmer Ignacio Fernandez-Manzano and rower Andrew Cheely.

Senior diver Kian Long began the season as the teams' sole diver, after Samuel Smith '25 and Ethan Godfrey '25 graduated in May. Diving coach Chris Griffin said his main goal during the offseason was figuring out how to fill the holes they left behind.

"It's a small sport, so trying to find recruits ... is difficult," Griffin said. "We need numbers. Particularly in the Liberty League, for our championships, we don't have that many athletes competing in diving. There are kind of free points on the table if somebody is willing to try and learn a new sport."

The Bombers have been stuck in second in the Liberty League Championship Tournament since the 2021-22 season, behind Rochester Institute of Technology. RIT entered 2024-25 with only two rostered divers, leaving an opportunity for the Bombers to get closer to the crown.

When Griffin returned from paternity leave with no incoming recruits, the coaches sat down to discuss roster changes. He talked with Fernandez-Manzano, who he believed would be more valuable to the team as a diver than a swimmer.

The other addition was Cheely, who met Griffin when he took his Ba-

sic Springboard Diving class in Spring 2025. Griffin said he initially wrote Cheely off in his talent search because of Cheely's involvement with the men's rowing team.

Cheely said he joined the class on a whim and enjoyed it enough to approach Griffin when he heard there were openings for divers. Cheely and Griffin worked closely to find a way for Cheely to become a two-sport athlete.

"As long as [Griffin] could be flexible, and he knew that rowing was still my main priority, then why not?" Cheely said.

The team has benefited from athletes switching sports before, including Benjamin Pesco '20 and Lindsey Duhamel '21, a pole vaulter and a soccer player, respectively. Griffin said it is very common for athletes like gymnasts to join diving after an injury, but it is uncommon to participate in two sports at IC.

Fernandez-Manzano said the only similarity between swimming and diving is that they happen at a pool. Although he dove for the first time in September, he said he has noticed his skills improve.

"As I do more, [Griffin] is telling me more details I have to fix," Fernandez-Manzano said. "You have to take it step-by-step — if you have too many things in your head, then you're gonna smack."

Cheely said the transition between sports has been mental as well as physical. He said there is more pressure in diving, where six dives are thrown per meet, compared to the thousands of



From left, sophomores Andrew Cheely and Ignacio Fernandez-Manzano joined the 2024-25 diving team with no previous experience. Now, they hope to push the team to win a Liberty League Championship.

JOEY BUCHER/THE ITHACAN

strokes in each regatta.

"[In rowing], if things aren't going well or everything burns, you just gotta push through," Cheely said. "Whereas at diving, I figured out really quickly that if your dives aren't going well, and you just try to muscle through, they get worse. It doesn't work the same."

The duo has been aided through the process by Long and members of the women's team.

"Our veteran divers are really good about taking them under their wing,

taking a few extra minutes to help them through the extra drills and give them encouragement," Griffin said. "[Long] understands the value for the men's team, [having] somebody by his side competing. He's been instrumental in helping them progress along."

Cheely said that he and Fernandez-Manzano have had similar diving lists in recent meets, creating friendly competition between them that pushes them to do their best.

Both athletes are prepared to play their part in the team's push toward

the Liberty League championship. Their role was highlighted at the Bomber Invitational, where IC was the only school with three male divers. After championships, it is unclear where their interests will take them.

"It's a season thing this year," Fernandez-Manzano said. "This year's our biggest shot, we have to win, but we had that limitation on the diving side. This is what we're willing to do to win. For now, that was the decision I took."

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Q&A: Former Bomber embraces new coaching role

For four years, Emma Waite '25 tried her best to beat the Ithaca College women's basketball team. Following her graduation from Rochester Institute of Technology in 2024, that changed when she decided to use her last year of eligibility to become one of the Bombers, being a key part of a 19-8 season. On top of being a student-athlete, Waite became a teaching assistant and is now a graduate assistant coach of the women's basketball team.

Waite started in every scheduled game but two of RIT's from 2021-22 to 2023-24. In her second to last game with the Tigers, she set the program record for most points in a single game, scoring 40 of the team's 77 in a win over Bard College. That same season, she led the Liberty League in assists with 111.

The same summer she became a Bomber, in 2024, Waite also became the vice president of her nonprofit, Bigger Than Sports, which she started with her brother.

Staff Writer John Frieders sat down with Waite to discuss her time at IC and her relationship with the women's basketball program.

This interview has been edited for length and clarity.

John Frieders: What were some of the reasons that you decided that you wanted to come to Ithaca to play your senior season in basketball?

Emma Waite: When I graduated from RIT, I had the extra year because of COVID. I was interested in grad school at the same time, so I started looking for different programs. I was really big into exercise science. [Ithaca College] has a great exercise science graduate program. So I applied there, ended up getting an assistantship being a TA, which helped out with my decision a lot. Then on the basketball side of things, I've played against Ithaca since I was a freshman at RIT,

and they have a great reputation of winning basketball, great culture, in a place that values athletics as a whole, not just basketball. So, yeah, with all of that, and then talking to head coach Dan Raymond, it was really an easy decision, and I was really excited about coming here.

JF: What was that transition like, playing with a whole new group of players under new coaching staff and also just in a new environment?

EW: It was relatively smooth. At RIT, I was more in the spotlight. Then coming here, we just had so many good pieces on the team, it was a lot more well-rounded, and I got to play a different style of basketball. The girls were super welcoming. I didn't have any problems getting to know them, being accepted [especially] as someone who they used to play against. I liked being able to bring the perspective of someone older with all the years that I played. That's definitely part of the reason why I've wanted to take up coaching this year, too.

JF: What's that transition like coaching some of the players you played with last season?

EW: There's definitely advantages and disadvantages to having played with them before. The only real disadvantage, I would say, is that you do have to draw that boundary of "we're not besties anymore." There has to be that level of respect. I mean, I've never felt like they treat me as someone they still play with. I feel very respected and they listen to me and I have a voice. It did help that I only played there for a year, and when I did come in, I was someone older who they were listening to already. I think it might have been a little more complicated if I'd been here for four years. What's helped me is that when you come into a team as a coach, a big part of it is building rapport with your players, and making them trust you



Emma Waite '25 transferred to Ithaca College in 2024 to use her final year of eligibility with the women's basketball team. Now, Waite is a coach of her former teammates.

MARISSA MOSCHELLA/THE ITHACAN

and all of those things, and I kind of didn't have to do that as much because they already knew me. There was already some sort of level of trust.

JF: You knew what it was like to be a new collegiate basketball player when you played your first couple of seasons at RIT, but then you also knew what it's like to be new to Ithaca and to this program. How have those two things helped you as a coach to further build those relationships?

EW: Definitely with the freshmen, it's easy for me to connect and honestly [for] anybody [too] because I was just in their shoes, so there's a lot of things that I do understand. They don't even have to tell me, I'm like, 'I get it, 'cause that was just me.' Regardless if it was at RIT or Ithaca, there's some things

that are just universal that you understand as a basketball player.

JF: You talked about realizing that life was bigger than sports. Was that something that you struggled with in high school and the first couple years of college?

EW: I think I still struggle with it. In undergrad, I was very like, "I'm gonna play basketball, and that's my whole life." It's very easy to fall into that, especially at the college level, where every day you're on a very tight schedule. Going into grad school, and actually assessing what I want to do, was big for me because exercise science is still sports related. There's so many ways you can be involved in sports without actually playing them.

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THE FILM FLEKS • BY ATTICUS JACKSON/THE ITHACAN



THE FISH

HAVE YOU SEEN STRANGER THINGS YET?

NO, I DON'T HAVE A TV...

WE LIVE UNDERWATER.

THAT HASN'T STOPPED MY ROOMMATE.

OH H BOYS!!!

HAVE YOU GUYS HEARD THE THEORY ABOUT WILL'S BOWL CUT?

...WHY ARE YOU UPSIDE DOWN?

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PHOTO FINISH

A semester in sports, captured by *The Ithacan*.



Sophomore diver Lillian Schick twists off the board. The Bombers opened the season with a 6-1 record, winning against the University of Scranton and Hartwick College.

BEATRICE MANTEL/THE ITHACAN



Senior midfielder Drew Warren goes head-to-head with Clarkson sophomore forward Paul Rolland. The game finished at 0-0, one of four Bombers ties of the season.

RASHAD BIGELOW/THE ITHACAN



Junior guard Evan Cabral dodges University of Rochester graduate student Sam Henderson on Dec. 2. Cabral put up a career-high 31 points against Rochester.

ERIN SOLTANO/THE ITHACAN



First-year midfielder Margaret Lansley moves the ball down the field. The team finished the season with a 12-7 record and placed third in the Liberty League.

ABIGAIL CHESMAN/THE ITHACAN



First-year wrestler Arianna Leo slams down an opponent from Alfred State College. Leo went 2-0 during the inaugural Ithaca College Invite on Nov. 12.

MEI DENNISON/THE ITHACAN



Sophomore Nick Sosa swims at the Bombers' first meet of the season. The men's swim and dive team beat the University of Scranton and Hartwick College.

JAMES SIMPSON/THE ITHACAN