

THE GOOD FIVE CENT CIGAR



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THE UNIVERSITY OF RHODE ISLAND STUDENT VOICE SINCE 1971

Provost steps down after 13-year tenure at University

Reflects on 'brilliant' student, faculty successes

Nicole Wagner | Managing Editor

The University of Rhode Island's Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs Donald DeHayes announced he will step down after serving in the position for the past 13 years, as his close colleague President David Dooley retires.

The provost believes it is the "right time for new fingerprints" at the University as he prepares for new leadership to arrive in the next academic year.

According to DeHayes, the Board of Trustees has asked him to be flexible in his departure from the University to help the new president transition to URI.

On average, DeHayes said provosts tend to serve in their respective positions for three to four years. After 13 years in the position, DeHayes believes it is time to bring in new leadership at the University.

"I've had an opportunity to put my fingerprints on many aspects of the University over the last 10 or 12 years, and



Provost Donald DeHayes.

PHOTO CREDIT: providencejournal.com

somebody new will bring a whole new perspective," DeHayes said. "[They] will bring new ideas, new energy and maybe bring us in some different directions, and that's good for the institution."

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URI Admissions adjusts due to pandemic

Juliana Leopre | Contributing Reporter

The University of Rhode Island's office of undergraduate admissions has seen an increase in applications for the fall semester, despite the COVID-19 pandemic forcing the process online.

The graduating class of 2021 has had a different year than most, with their final year of high school, college tours and orientation being fully online. Dean Libutti, vice provost for enrollment management, said that although admissions have been difficult this year, there has been an overall increase in applications.

"This year's recruiting cycle started quite differently, as prospective students were, and still are, unable to visit campus," Libutti said. "High school seniors were behind in applying to college early on in the semester. Fortunately, due to great efforts by our admission team, faculty and staff, we were able to enhance our virtual recruiting efforts and close this gap."

Among these efforts were virtual open house events, virtual tours and connecting prospective students with current students and faculty over email and text, according to Libutti. He also talked about the need for workshops on essay writing and financial aid as students are applying for college through their high schools.

These efforts have paid off, Libutti said, because URI anticipates receiving approximately 25,000 applications this year. According to Libutti, this is a school record. Admissions is now looking forward to a high yield season, the time period where students who were offered acceptance to the University choose to accept or deny their admittance.

One of the few noticeable differences between this year is the number of in-state applicants. Rhode Island applicants have been slower to apply due to COVID-19 at URI, but numbers have been the same at other Rhode Island institutions, according to Libutti. This has led the University to launch a series of additional outreach events for in-state students, which has had a positive impact.

"We changed it all and are pleased with our results so far," Libutti said. "In these challenging times, students and families needed help applying to college and we were and are happy to assist in new ways."

Emma Beal, a soon-to-graduate high school senior in Brookfield, Connecticut, said that her college application process has been challenging yet exciting.

"When applying to schools this year, I had to rethink my whole plan due to the pandemic," Beal said.

She said that not being able to visit schools was the biggest challenge, because she couldn't get a feel for what the schools were like in person.

The applicant pool is much larger this year for all universities, with many seniors applying blind to as many schools as they can with no real opinion on them, according to Libutti. Beal said this was frightening, as it meant her chances of getting into her reach schools were slimmer.

"Schools like URI made it so much easier for me to feel comfortable with my decision to apply," Beal said. "URI's communication to me through email, online events and virtual tours made me feel like I knew the school already and the type of environment it is."

Rams rally to defeat Dayton on Senior Night



In his last home game at URI, Fatts Russell led the Rams to a close 91-89 victory against Dayton.

PHOTO CREDIT: Greg Clark | Staff Photographer

Aniekan Okon | Staff Reporter

Nearly a year ago, the Rams were embarrassed at home on Senior Night against the No. 3 Dayton Flyers. Tuesday night provided the Rams the opportunity to send this year's senior class off on the right note against the very team that had embarrassed them a year prior.

And they did just that.

The Rhode Island Men's Basketball team snapped their four-game losing streak in dramatic fashion after completing an 18-point second-half comeback to defeat the Dayton Flyers at home 91-89 in a back-and-forth double-overtime affair.

"Great win tonight," said Head Coach David Cox. "I thought we represented the program well by showing tenacity. I think we came together tonight especially for our seniors. I think that was evident in the fact that we didn't give up."

Down by 18 with 9:44 left in the second half, the Rams mounted an incredible comeback to force overtime. Rhode Island went on a 29-7 run to end regulation, with Fatts Russell clawing his team out of the deficit. He had a chance to win the game, but his deep three pointer with a second left bounced off the rim.

In the first overtime, Dayton would go up 76-72 with 2:54 left in the first overtime, but once again, Rhody marched back to send the game into a second overtime. Both teams had chances to win the game, with Mahkel Mithcell and Malik Martin each going 1-2 from the line in the last minutes of the frame for URI, and Dayton star Jalen Crutcher missing a three pointer as time expired.

It was in the second overtime that the Rams would secure the lead for good after Jeremy Sheppard knocked down a stepback fadeaway jumper with 1:27 remaining. Clutch free-throw shooting from Mitchell, Russell and Antwan Walker gave the Rams just their second victory against Dayton in their last six meetings.

As the buzzer sounded, Russell made his way midcourt and kissed the logo. It was a memorable moment for a player who has

meant so much to the University in the last four years.

"It meant everything," Russell said on grabbing this victory on his senior night. "I knew this was the last time I was ever going to be in a competitive game in the Ryan Center with these guys, with Coach Cox coaching and it just meant a lot. We didn't want to go out with an L, and I really didn't want to because this program, this school, Coach Cox, everybody means so much to me so I felt I had to give my heart out there and make sure we didn't go out with the L."

For the first time this season, Russell and fellow senior Jeremy Sheppard were able to play in front of their families. Russell said postgame that the sight of his family helped him will his team to victory.

"When we were down 18, I looked up to my family and I said 'I'm not going out like this,' and they smiled and nodded their heads," Russell said.

He would go on to finish with a team-high 20 points and etch his name into the history books in the process. With a steal midway through the second half, Russell passed Keith Cothran on the Rhode Island all-time steals list.

Freshman Ishmael Leggett also played phenomenally, finishing with a career-high 18 points on 6-8 shooting from the field and 5-for-7 from beyond the arc. Mitchell and Walker also posted double-doubles.

The Dayton Flyers were led by redshirt freshmen Zimi Nwokeji, who finished with a career-high 29 points and nine rebounds while shooting an efficient 9-for-10 from the field. He was followed by Crutcher, who finished with 22 points.

Now at 10-12 overall and 7-8 in the Atlantic 10, the Rams will have a chance to get back to .500 in conference play on Sunday when they make the trip to the nation's capital to take on the George Washington Colonials. The Rams were previously scheduled to host George Washington on Jan. 24, but the Colonials went on pause due to a COVID-19 health and safety protocols. It will be the Colonial's first game since Jan. 17. Tip-off is scheduled for 11:30 a.m.

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Why The Cigar?

The University of Rhode Island's student news organization takes its tongue-in-cheek name from a comment made by Woodrow Wilson's Vice President, Thomas Marshall, while addressing the US Senate. Though the exact context of Marshall's comment "what this country needs is a good five-cent cigar," has been lost over the years, we, as URI's news organization, strive to emulate our quirky name and give just what this campus needs.

Black Lives Matter Rhode Island roundtable discussion connects with local students, teachers

Adam Zangari | News Editor

Black Lives Matter Rhode Island (BLM RI), a local organization focused on racial justice and equity, has recently focused their efforts on making changes in the worlds of education and prison reform.

Last Thursday, BLM RI held a roundtable discussion in conjunction with the University of Rhode Island to discuss their achievements and future policy proposals.

The main speakers at the event were Gary Dantzer, better known as "Brother Gary," the executive director of BLM RI, and Bernice Morris, BLM RI's policy advocate.

Among other things, Dantzer and Morris talked about their involvement in creating the first-ever African-American Innovation Center in New England. The Center, located in downtown Pawtucket, Rhode Island is built around a library with a focus on Black voices and will be opening at some point this year.

Dantzer said that Pawtucket was chosen because it has the highest percentage of African-American residents out of all the communities in Rhode Island.

Morris also spoke about BLM RI's policy goals and the work that they have done to advocate for them recently.

Recently, members of the organization protested outside of a maximum-security prison due to the rapid spread of COVID-19 within the prison. Morris said this was mainly due to the prison failing to uphold safety guidelines.

"We heard some pretty horrific stories," Morris said. "So we went and protested out there."

BLM RI's policy regarding prison and justice reform calls for the formation of a civilian oversight board for officer-related incidents, anti-racist training for all officers and instituting body cameras in police departments across the state.

In addition to prison reform, BLM RI also has a large number of educational policies that they are advocating for. These include increased funding for urban schools, diversifying school committees and pushing for universal pre-K.

"I couldn't get a formal education, so I take education seriously," Dantzer said. "I had to move a lot in a community in the '70s and '80s."

In addition to those policies, BLM RI also organized to demand that the Pawtucket School Committee reopen schools. This led to Pawtucket schools reopening earlier this month.

Dantzer also talked about BLM RI's relationship with Rhode Island Gov. Gina Raimondo, who said that she and Lt. Gov. Dan McKee were in contact with the organization to ask about legislative priorities.

Additionally, Dantzer said that they have worked with Rhode Island Attorney General Peter Neronha on enhancing the state's Hate Crimes Sentencing Act. This made it so that people convicted of a hate crime in the state are subject to additional sentencing.

"We get to have these conversations because of Brother Gary's influence," Morris said, citing his personal relationship with Raimondo.

After presenting these policies, goals and achievements, Dantzer and Morris took questions from their audience.

Jeivat Kenelak, a Black student at URI originally from West Papua, Indonesia, asked Dantzer if BLM RI could do anything to help Black people back in his home country.

"Our people – we are still poor, we are still uneducated and that is something that is just not fair," Kenelak said.

Kenelak also said that he knew that people in the region wonder why their plight has not been heard by advocates in the United States. According to him, local resources are being taken by the Indonesian government. In addition to concerns of racial justice, there has been a longstanding secession movement in West Papua since the former Dutch colony became part of Indonesia in the 1960s, according to TIME Magazine.

Dantzer said he was intrigued by what Kenelak had to say, and that although he had never been on an airplane, he would be willing to fly to West Papua to help people.

Another attendee Darcy Roland asked Dantzer and Morris what the organization's involvement was with amending the Law Enforcement Officers' Bill of Rights (LEOBOR).

Dantzer said that BLM RI wasn't helping with that as much as they would like to due to the organization not having enough people to help with it.

"We need so many arms and eyes to be a part of that," Dantzer said. "That's a hard one, but we still have a little bit of hope, and a lot of hope in our organization."

There will be another BLM RI Roundtable Discussion on Tuesday, March 23. According to Dantzer, while this past one focused more on policy, the upcoming discussion will focus on Black excellence.

Provost steps down - Continued from Page 1

As Dooley prepares to retire at the end of the academic year, DeHayes felt his departure from the University to be appropriately timed. These two worked "hand-in-glove" for the past 13 years "to do what is best for the University," according to DeHayes.

As his time as provost comes to an end, DeHayes said in the remaining time in the position he will focus on advancing an antiracism agenda at URI. DeHayes differentiated this agenda from the past model of "supporting and celebrating diversity" as "more aggressive, more action-oriented and identifying particular areas of investment and of focus."

"I actually believe that the future of the University of Rhode Island at-large will depend on us making significant progress on advancing an antiracism agenda that relates to student learning, faculty development [and] recruitment of faculty and staff," DeHayes said. "It's really a piece of the heart and soul of the institution, and it's an area where we have work to do."

Throughout his tenure, DeHayes has had a hand in many different initiatives at URI; from hiring academic deans and vice

provosts, to focusing on interdisciplinary studies, to globalizing the University, he's done it all.

Even through times of financial constraint, DeHayes said that investing in faculty while simultaneously developing a "laser focus" on student success were some of the greatest accomplishments during his time at URI.

"Those two things I think go in parallel: student success and faculty success," he said. "And as a result, our ability to recruit, retain and graduate students at the University of Rhode Island has been greatly enhanced. We are a different university today in regard to student success – a dramatically different university than we were a decade ago."

Working with student representatives from organizations across the University, including the Student Senate, has been a special opportunity for DeHayes. Interacting with motivated young people as part of university leadership and faculty has been a unique experience one would seldom find in a corporate career, DeHayes said.

Student Senate Academic Affairs Committee Chairman Thomas McGrath, said that as a student representative, he has en-

joyed working with DeHayes.

"He was a really great resource and an awesome person to work with," McGrath said.

Before joining administration at the URI, DeHayes worked at the University of Vermont. There, he climbed from assistant professor up to dean of their College of Environment and Natural Resources.

While his future remains uncertain, DeHayes said he might be interested in returning to a career in the academic world, perhaps at URI as a faculty member in environmental studies or exploring the nuances of effective and genuine leadership.

Being in a position to both lead and learn the past 13 years as provost has "been a privilege" for DeHayes alongside the leadership, faculty and students at the University.

"I got to work with some of the smartest people on Earth every day," DeHayes said of his time at URI. "These brilliant folks who are the masters of their subject matter and their discipline, and it's just inspiring, and I got to learn just a little bit about all of that."



Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Symposium talks about URI's diversity initiatives

Jason Phillips | News Editor

The University of Rhode Island Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Symposium held a presentation and town hall this week for students and faculty to ask questions pertaining to the University's new diversity initiatives and goals.

The event began with a presentation from Mary Grace Almandrez, associate vice president and chief diversity officer, about herself, the current state of diversity at URI, new initiatives and the goals of the Office of Community, Equity and Diversity (CED).

Almandrez was hired as the interim chief diversity officer at URI in 2019 and recently became the permanent chief diversity officer. Since then, she said that she has worked to create and implement a campus-wide diversity plan. This started with a "listening tour" in 2019 to hear what students and faculty want to see at the University in terms of diversity initiatives.

Since then, many new programs have been created by CED. Among these initiatives are creating a university diversity council, improving the bias resource team, training DEI officers, creating Diversity Dialogues and developing a campus climate survey.

"It's been over 10 years that folks have been asking to do a university-wide campus climate assessment," Almandrez said. "We're actually going to be launching a campus climate survey to go live March 2. It will be open for four weeks, we have a bunch of great incentives for folks to take the survey. We're hoping to get a great response rate. We're aiming for 30 percent, and the reason why is because we want to make sure that the data is statistically significant to make decisions

on programs and shifts in priorities within departments or colleges. We also want to make sure, because this is our baseline that we're getting good information."

According to Almandrez, many faculty members have been calling for an assessment like this to run for many years in an effort to gain understanding of baseline information on diversity at URI. This assessment will shape the DEI plan going forward.

CED is currently working towards four overarching goals: recruiting more Black, indigenous and people of color (BIPOC) and Latinx faculty and retaining them; providing opportunities for professional development among existing faculty; creating a better diversity curriculum for students; and challenging the organizational culture of URI to make BIPOC feel more accepted and welcomed.

Almandrez discussed her background and how it has shaped her in her position as the chief diversity officer. She described herself as a "1.5 generation" immigrant from the Philippines, a student activist and a scholar. She said that as a scholar she has relied upon pedagogy, Critical Race Theory and other theories of diversity to determine the CED's actions. She then talked about the challenges that she faces as the CDO.

"I'm both an activist, as well as an agent of the University," Almandrez said. "I sit on the senior leadership team. I report directly to the president. I'm an advocate, as well as an administrator, and I'm an insider, as well as an outsider. For instance, on the senior leadership team, I work with a great group of colleagues, but I am the only person of color. I'm navigating these spaces, these liminal spaces that are in between both professionally and personally."

After the presentation, Joanna Ravello, director of community and organizational development, opened the call to questions from attendees.

During the town hall, Christopher Hunter, an associate professor of engineering at URI, asked whether there will be a push to fill the director of recruitment and retention of diverse faculty positions in CED with faculty of color.

Almandrez responded saying that there were three factors that the department is taking while looking for a candidate to fill this position. First, she said, is the timing of hiring a candidate, as they may not be able to find the ideal candidate at this time due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Secondly, the University has allocated more resources to diversity coordinators, so the job description has changed since the process began. Lastly, while the position has only focused on faculty in the past, the new position will include the hiring and retention of diverse staff as well.

Another question was posed by an anonymous attendee. They asked how CED plans to get faculty to embed what they learn about diversity into their work, rather than viewing completing workshops as checking an item off of a list.

"What we're trying to do here is to build institutional capacity to fundamentally change this university," Almandrez responded. "And I'm talking about change, not just in this composition, but it has to be embedded in the fabric of our institution. We don't want our faculty, staff and students to continue to labor and be exhausted and be disappointed. The students deserve a better University and I think that we have the pathway to do it. We're going to ask people to do things differently, to think about teaching differently."

STUDENT SENATE REPORT



Aidan Markward | Contributing Reporter

During this week's meeting, the Student Senate addressed projects by the Campus Affairs Committee, introduced a new bill and swore in two new representatives.

The Campus Affairs Committee informed the Senate this week about progress being made regarding incorporating motorized scooters on campus. According to Campus Affairs Chairman Michael Bentley, there have been 64 responses so far to a survey asking for the student body's opinion on having motorized scooters on campus.

"I would like [the number of responses] to be higher," Bentley said. "For the most part, the responses have been pretty positive."

The link to this survey is on the University of Rhode Island Student Senate's Instagram, @rhodysenate.

For the most part, the concerns are relatively similar, according to Bentley.

"People are worried about vandalism and misuse of the scooters," Bentley said. "There have also been points brought about whether or not it's even smart to spend money on them."

Bentley also discussed the progress being made on the bill to allow for menstrual products in certain bathrooms in the Memorial Union. According to Bentley, the Senate had been reaching out to companies that make menstrual products. More information on this bill will be available at a later date.

The Instruments Committee brought a bill to the floor tonight to amend the Student Senate constitution. The main purpose of this bill is to "dissolve the Instruments Committee as a permanent committee," according to Instruments Committee Chairman Christopher Bove.

"I believe [the Instruments Committee's] work as a permanent committee is finally over," Bove said.

The bill will be voted on next month.

President Austyn Ramsay introduced a young adult task force she has been working on during her report at the meeting.

"For the past four to five months I have been working on a young adult task force in Rhode Island," Ramsay said. "I have been the sole representative of URI along with a couple of other people."

The objective of this task force, according to Ramsay, is to inform others on how to slow the spread of COVID-19.

The task force is looking for more people to get involved.

"There are many different committees on this task force that you can be a part of," she said. "If you're looking to get involved, it's a great opportunity [to get involved] on the state level."

For the task force, Ramsay works on the #WhyICare campaign. The purpose of this campaign is to remind the public why they continue to adhere to COVID-19 protocol and wear masks.

"If you're interested [in helping,] all you have to do is wear a mask, take [a] picture of you wearing a mask and send me it with two or three sentences about why you care," she said.

These photos are posted on the Rhode Island Department of Health's website. Photos can be sent directly to Ramsay at president@rhodysenate.org.

To conclude the meeting, representatives Indy Silva and Ethan Bose were sworn into their positions during the meeting. Silva will serve as an At-Large Representative and Bose will serve as a University College Representative.

The next Student Senate meeting will be held on Feb. 24.

COVID-19 testing: Who puts it all together?

Leah Popovic | Staff Reporter

In an effort to maintain an organized system of COVID-19 testing, the University of Rhode Island recruited hundreds of volunteers from the University and surrounding community to work at the Memorial Union testing site.

Leading this operation is Wendy Bucci, the chief operating officer for the URI Foundation and Alumni Engagement.

Originally, Bucci said, the pool of volunteers was small, mainly consisting of URI faculty and staff who ran the testing site while still maintaining their personal work schedule. This group of volunteers has now expanded to include many students and community members that want to keep the campus safe. The current list of volunteers exceeds 250 people and is still growing.

Although faculty and staff are not required to volunteer, many of those who are available are picking up shifts at the testing center when they can.

A large number of volunteers are URI nursing students who can use this to fill clinical hours. Other groups that have helped with mass testing include URI's tour guides and personnel from the Ryan Center.

To be eligible for volunteering, participants must watch a seven-minute training video, created by Marina Connor, the URI campus preparedness planner, to ensure that safety procedures are abided by.

Bucci feels lucky to have such a strong foundation of volunteers helping with these efforts.

"As people got more involved, and they brought in colleagues or people in their departments, my list of volunteers expanded to all aspects of campus," Bucci said.

Last semester, it was more challenging to find enough willing volunteers to work at the testing sites, according to Bucci. She believes that this process has evolved due to the help of staff members and the surrounding community in both Kingston and Providence.

Shifts are based on availability, volunteers can work from 8 a.m. until noon, from noon until 4 p.m. or all day if possible, according to Bucci. Thirteen volunteers are needed each time slot for testing to run smoothly. This allows for a greeter, two line leaders, and 10 testing stations between atriums one and two in the Memorial Union.

"I would say we are becoming a well-oiled machine because at the beginning, I would take whatever hours people could give me," Bucci said.



Students, faculty and staff check in with volunteers in the COVID-19 testing center in the Memorial Union Atrium 1. PHOTO CREDIT: Greg Clark | Staff Photographer

Above all, Bucci hopes to keep testing as painless as possible for students whose schedules might be time-sensitive. By sustaining a high volunteer rate, lines will continue to move smoothly and test results can be processed within 24 to 48 hours.

Many of the COVID-19 site supervisors originally had no affiliation with URI Health Services before helping with testing, including Maureen McCarthy, the associate athletics director of ticketing at the Ryan Center.

McCarthy has helped find and train volunteers. She believes that testing functions would not be possible without the volunteers.

"Hands down, the URI community, and even people outside of the community have been amazing," McCarthy said. "We get a regular crew of people who have daily jobs, but they take a day or two to come help, and while it's a challenge, it's also been a triumph."

Assistant Director of Communications Dave Lavallee

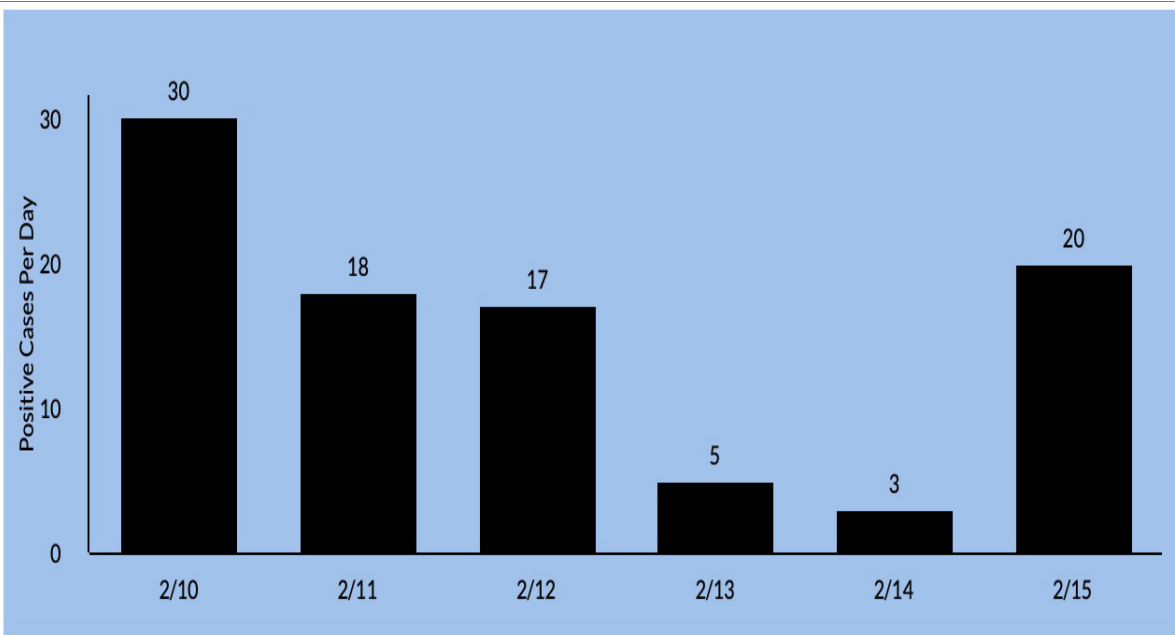
has also worked diligently to release notices about COVID-19 testing to students.

Lavallee echoed McCarthy in expressing that the volunteer efforts at URI have been appreciated not only by other staff members but by the student body as well.

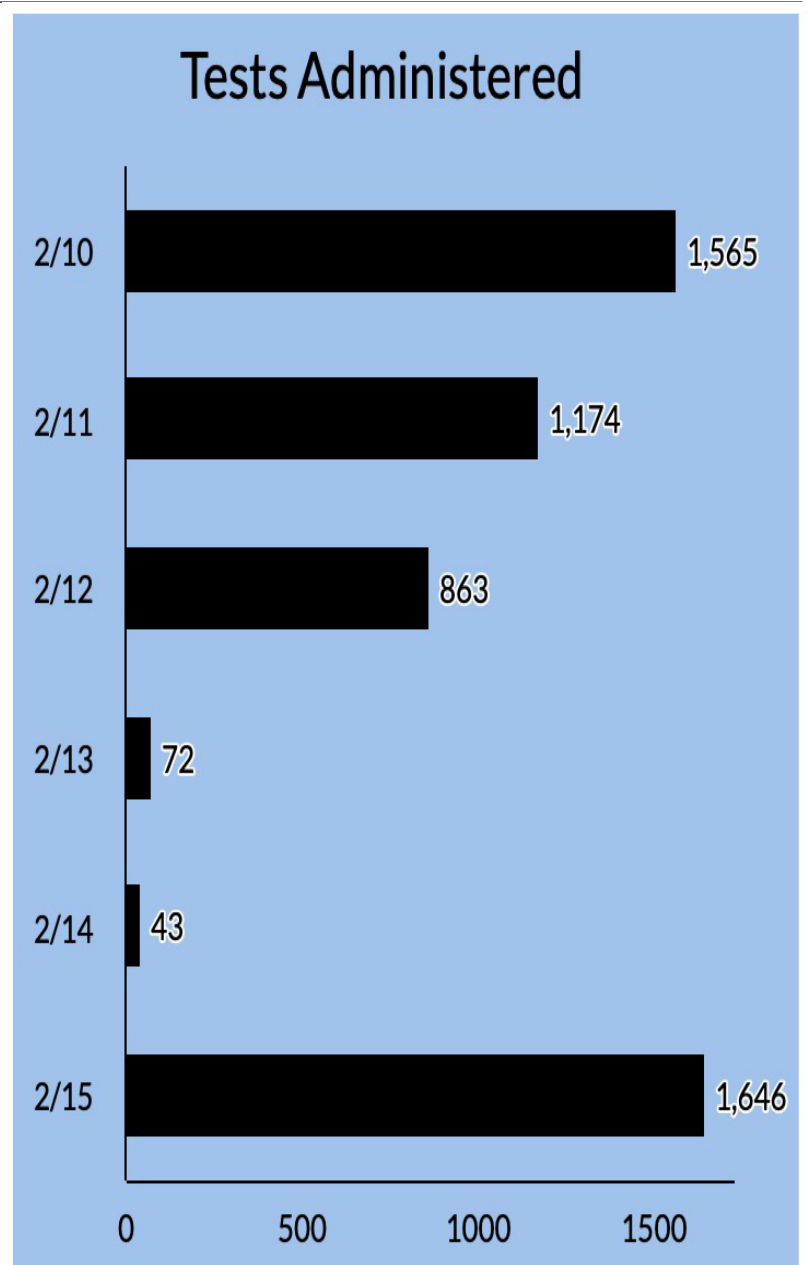
"Overwhelmingly, the positive has been that students really feel valued and taken care of, and that they are very pleased with how quickly they can get in and out and how nice all the people are," he said.

The University hopes to maintain its procedures of testing nearly 2,000 students per day, and testing methods will remain the same unless challenges arise in the future.

Bucci, McCarthy and Lavallee all attribute the success of COVID-19 testing to the hardworking volunteers who continue to exhibit professionalism and efficiency. Bucci is welcome to new volunteers and encourages anyone interested to contact her.



93 Positive tests from Feb. 10 - Feb. 15	5,363 Tests administered from Feb. 10 - Feb. 15
300 Students in quarantine/isolation as of Feb. 8	1.73% Positive Test Rate Feb. 10 - Feb. 15
1,401 Total positive tests since Jan. 22, 2020	1.43% Cumulative Test Rate



D.R.I.V.E. leader talks about URI, the Black experience

Liz Fusco | Staff Reporter

Sheafeel Gedeon knew he wanted to join the University of Rhode Island's Diversifying, Recruiting, Inspiring, Volunteering, Educating organization (D.R.I.V.E.) before he even started his freshman year.

Gedeon grew up in Brockton, Massachusetts, and took part in D.R.I.V.E.'s multicultural overnight program while he was in high school. The program allows high school students to get some experience with campus life at URI before committing to a school. Gedeon went on to host this program for other students during his time at URI.

"I'm definitely a people person," Gedeon said. "I like having an active role helping people adjust [to the University] and being able to be a support system for other students."

Gedeon, now a senior at URI, is double majoring in kinesiology and biology, on track to become a physician's assistant. His time working with D.R.I.V.E., where he currently serves as its secretary, inspired him to add a minor in leadership studies as well.

Maya Moran, a URI senior majoring in psychology with a minor in leadership studies, agreed that everything Gedeon said about himself is true.

"We were a part of D.R.I.V.E. together as well," Moran said. "[Gedeon] quickly became one of my best and most trustworthy friends. He is a supportive, hilarious, hard-working and intelligent individual. He is someone who brings people together and is a positive influence."

Gedeon also works as a resident assistant and emergency medical services (EMS) professional. Additionally, he recently started working at an assisted living facility, where he helps to improve the quality

of life for those living there. He said that working at the facility has been a big help for his kinesiology major.

According to Gedeon however, being in D.R.I.V.E. comes with a lot more responsibility than just being a part of fun activities. The organization works within the University as well as statewide to actively diversify the community and the state of Rhode Island. They do this by visiting grade schools and spreading awareness to the next generation of college students on what the undergraduate experience is like.

"[URI] needs to work on diversifying many areas," Gedeon said. "Both academic-wise and funding-wise, it's hard for multicultural organizations. I feel like we're always stepping on eggshells talking about our experiences."

Gedeon said that there are many things he wished the URI community knew about the Black experience.

"I feel like advisors don't understand that people have different backgrounds and see different funding, and they just put every student into one big pool," Gedeon said. "I don't really go to my advisor for that exact reason. I go to talent development because they have a lot more people of color there. I just wish advisors knew that everyone has different backgrounds, and not everyone is automatically on the same playing field."

Gedeon has big plans for himself during his last semester at URI and his last semester working as the secretary of D.R.I.V.E., even with the limitations put in place due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

"One change I'd like to see before I graduate is just for there to be a continuation of education on these

topics to work to diminish the ignorance." Gedeon



URI senior Sheafeel Gedeon is a kinesiology and biology double major and a 4 year member of the University's D.R.I.V.E. organization.
PHOTO CREDIT: James McIntosh | Photo Editor

said. "I also want to see the incorporation of mandatory diverse classes and workshops in the curriculum for each major so that we can all be more aware of what's happening in minority communities."

www.uri.edu/suffrage
for information and registration

Long Rhode to the Vote

SUFFRAGE CENTENNIAL LECTURE SERIES

presented virtually

Join us this spring as our virtual Suffrage Centennial Lecture Series continues and we explore both suffrage history and modern day voting issues. In 2020 we celebrated two monumental events in American history - the 100th Anniversary of the 19th Amendment, granting American women the right to vote, albeit with barriers for many women of color, and the 15th Amendment, which at least nominally enfranchised African-American men.

SPRING LECTURES AND FEATURED SPEAKERS INCLUDE:

February 25, 2021, 7pm • Getting out the Vote
R.I. Rep. Justine Caldwell, D-East Greenwich, veteran campaign strategist Kate Coyne-McCoy, and political scientist Stella Rouse will evaluate the legacy of the 19th Amendment by discussing contemporary initiatives to empower not only women, but also millennials and Latinos in politics.

March 4, 2021, 7pm • The Queer History of the Suffrage Movement
Historian Wendy Rouse, associate professor at San Jose State University, will discuss the traditional narrative of suffrage history that sanitized the private lives and public personas of individual suffragists, contributing to the historical erasure of the lives and loves of prominent gay suffragists.

For information and registration
uri.edu/suffrage

THE UNIVERSITY OF RHODE ISLAND COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

Africana studies department celebrates Black History Month

Imani Fleming | Web Editor

The University of Rhode Island's Africana studies department features a diverse curriculum with a wide variety of courses that allow students to explore topics involving the African diaspora, civil rights movement, race and ethnic relations and African governments.

Previously named the African-American Studies Department, Africana studies focuses on the history, culture, politics and economics of people of African origin, specifically those coming from the United States, Africa, the Caribbean, Central and South America.

Vanessa Quainoo, an associate professor of communication studies and department chair of Africana studies, said that one of the first initiatives she took over as head chairperson 10 years ago was changing the name to be more inclusive.

"The first thing I did was challenge the name," she said. "It was too limiting. I felt that Africana studies was a gem, a diamond in the rough that was so covered by oppressive thinking, by colonial thinking. 'Oh, it's just a small little group of Black people over in the corner talking about Black power doing their little thing' ... That seemed to be the prevailing attitude."

After writing numerous letters to the dean, president, provost and other chairpersons, Quainoo's efforts were successful and the department was renamed "Africana studies."

"I just got busy sending out information saying we should read this nomenclature of the minority," she said. "We are not minorities and we should make this department one that embraces the global perspective of Black and brown people on the earth. From there, we never looked back."

According to Quainoo, Africana studies not only offers many different interdisciplinary programs and classes emphasizing African history, literature and religion, but also offers courses on more contemporary topics. AAF230: Black Lives Matter Movement and AAF228: Institutional Racism are two of the department's classes that fill up the fastest each semester.

"I think it is the most exciting curriculum on campus," Quainoo said. "We are doing relevant work and we are addressing the issues that students want to know about."

Shanette Harris, an associate professor of psychology and Africana studies, believes that there is not one specific career field that students majoring or minoring in this curriculum have to follow and that there are no limits to what students can pursue.

"There is no one answer: 'What could you not do?' would be an easier question to think about," Harris said. "There are always going to be benefits from having a major or a minor in Africana studies on your record, and many employers will view that as a positive."

Harris also encourages students to take courses that will strengthen their minds and viewpoints on topics relating to race, throughout their time in college.

"To me, college should be more than just going to get a job, becoming educated is important," Harris said. "Become educated to learn about the world that we are creating."

Quainoo also argued that employers are now looking to hire graduates that are culturally competent, who can function in a diverse workplace without issue.

"Africana studies is a sure way to document on your resume that as a student, you've taken the time to become competent and to broaden your perspective, to be able to connect across cultures," she said. "It's a global certification that shows you can function within a global community."

The Africana studies department, in collaboration with URI's Multicultural Student Services Center, will be hosting a virtual presentation on Feb. 24 hosted by Professor Carolyn Parks on the impact of COVID-19 on the Black community. The event, along with others hosted throughout Black History Month, will feature distinguished alumni of the Africana studies department at URI.

Student leader looks back on involvement with URI organizations

Juliana Lepore | Contributing Reporter

Senior Naleen Camara's time at the University of Rhode Island would have been incomplete without her involvement with student organizations on campus.

Camara, a public relations and writing and rhetoric double major with a business minor, is the vice president of the Student Entertainment Committee (SEC), a member of the Diversifying, Recruiting, Inspiring, Volunteering, Educating (D.R.I.V.E.) club, a member of the Talent Development program, the secretary of the Multicultural Unity Student Involvement Council (M.U.S.I.C.) and has been a resident assistant since her sophomore year.

While she is passionate about everything she is involved in, Camara said her favorite organizations she's involved in are SEC and M.U.S.I.C.

"I feel like I get a lot from both of those organizations," Camara said. "I've gained so much experience being able to navigate professionalism in a college setting."

Camara went to her first SEC meeting her freshman year, after being asked to go by her RA. The next week, she joined the executive board for the SEC and has stayed involved with the organization since. Being a part of SEC, an organization Camara said was important and integral to campus, has been something that she has enjoyed during her time at URI.

She said that one of her favorite parts about the SEC has been meeting the celebrities that have performed at URI. She gushed about how sweet rapper JuiceWrld was and how honored she was to meet him before he passed away.

Camara described M.U.S.I.C. as one of the best experiences she's had at URI, despite only getting involved as a junior. She said that being able to interact with like-minded people and those with the same experiences as her is something that has been really unique and integral to her college experience.

"Being a black student leader here is really cool but it also comes with a lot of pressure," said Camara. "Going to URI, a predominantly white institution, when you're one of the Black leaders, you're the only ones that are there to represent. I felt that pressure for a long time, but at the same time, it is so absolutely amazing that I can be a per-



Naleen Camara, a senior at URI, has more positions in the University's many student organizations than most students have classes each semester. PHOTO CREDIT: Naleen Camara

son that can help inspire somebody to reach their full potential."

Cierra Wornum, a senior journalism major at URI, recalled meeting and befriending Camara during their freshman year. From the first moment she met Camara, Wornum recalls noting that she has an amazing work ethic.

"Naleen is outstanding," Wornum said. "She does a million projects, has a million things going on and still manages to have a good GPA and balance all the things

on her plate. She's very driven. Naleen won't do anything unless she really wants to and is truly passionate about everything she does, which is something I admire about her."

Camara described her URI experience as unforgettable because of the experiences she's had, friendships she's made and people she's met.

"I've gained so much experience at URI and made memories that I'll never forget," said Camara.

Ph.D. student talks about theories of Black female writers *The importance of connecting research to the self*

Evan McAlice | Social Media Coordinator

Afua Ansong, a Ph.D. student in the University of Rhode Island's English department, spoke about her research on theories of home represented by African woman writers at last Wednesday's Brown Bag Series event.

The Brown Bag Series is put on by URI's Center For the Humanities and features a faculty member or graduate student once a month to share their research.

Ansong's research, titled "Making it Personal: Cultivating a Research Project that Loves You Back," aimed to show the ways in which research can be less tedious when approached creatively and with an emphasis on the connection the researcher has with the material.

"I believe that research is not just about being critical about academic work, but it's an act of self-preservation and self-exploration," Ansong said.

Ansong was inspired to conduct her research after learning about the similarities between symbols found in different African cultures.

Born and raised in Ghana, Ansong has used her research into these symbols as a bridge between her Ghanaian roots

and her new life as an American immigrant.

"This is where I connect back to my idea of home," Ansong said. "How do I find myself? How do I return home through these symbols?"

Ansong's research also explored the marginalization of the African female

to these women guided her research.

"I feel like literature helped me to travel to all these other African countries while also learning about their cultures, learning their languages and helped me to appreciate ways in which one region is different from the others," Ansong said.

Ansong hopes that through her re-

"This is where I connect back to my idea of home. How do I find myself? How do I return home through these symbols?"

- Afua Ansong, Ph.D. student

voice. Her interest in this topic began when Ansong was struggling to assimilate into American culture. She sought out literature about other Africans who experienced similar issues after traveling overseas but found that most of it was either inaccessible or written from a predominantly male perspective.

After some digging, Ansong found literature written by African women about their experiences. Her connection

search that people gain a greater understanding of what Africa has to offer. She said that people tend to misunderstand the level of civilization in Africa, and she hopes that these symbols can prove that Africa has been making sense of civilization long before many people realize.

She also hopes that she can make the idea of research seem fun and creative to those who may view it as daunting.

"Research doesn't have to fit into a

particular box," Ansong said. "This research does not fit just into my English discipline, it fits into textile material culture, anthropology and art history. At times it can be confusing, but that's the fun part of it."

According to Travis Williams, chair of URI's English department, Ansong's research has pushed the boundaries of what graduate research entails.

"What [Ansong] is showing us is that the scope of what it means to do a doctoral dissertation right now is much greater than we have ever known it to be before," Williams said. "It's a very encouraging thing for the future of the discipline, the kind of work people do, how they do it, how it gets presented to the world, its accessibility beyond the academic core."

Williams is also optimistic that her research will inspire future graduate students to use creative elements in their research.

"She's not just finding out about these symbols in a cultural or anthropological sense, but she's also incorporating them into her own creative practice," he said. "That is a combination that is constantly producing fascinating work, and I hope that it will continue to grow and be a sort of hallmark of our graduate program."

Wetsuiting up to brave winter waters

Local surf shop picks up new surfers



While most people are bundled up and sipping hot chocolate this time of year, the surf is still up for certain Rhode Islanders.

PHOTO CREDIT: James McIntosh | Photo Editor

Nicole Wagner | Managing Editor

For many, surfing is a hobby, passion or sport, but Narragansett Surf & Skate Head Clerk Tricia Panagiotis considers it a disease.

“You catch it and then that’s it,” Panagiotis said. “You know if you’re really into it if you don’t want to get out of the water; you know, you’re freezing, your jaw is chattering and you’re like ‘oh just one more, just one more.’ And once that happens, you’re pretty much ruined.”

Tricia was introduced to surfing through her father, Narragansett Surf & Skate Surf Sales Manager Peter Panagiotis, at the age of 11 and said she was afraid at first but has grown to love the sport. Peter also started young at 13 years old with a friend of his who introduced him to the sport.

Even through the colder months, these surfers wetsuit up to brave the water at Narragansett Town Beach.

To get in the winter water, you’ll need a five to six millimeter wetsuit, seven to eight millimeter boots, five to seven millimeter gloves or mittens and a hood so that only your face is showing. According to Tricia, you warm up a thin layer of water between you and the suit to keep warm.

To surf, you must possess a surfboard, a bathing suit and the ability to do a push up. A beginners surfboard will range from \$300 to \$400, according to Tricia.

“Whenever you want to start surfing, the bigger the board the better,” Tricia said. “Because the bigger the board, [it] has more float, so that’s what’s going to get you into the wave; so a longer board or at least a mid-range in size, something with a round nose and a lot of volume, because

you want float and stability.”

However, if you are interested in learning how to surf, Tricia advised that this time of year might not be the best to start in.

“For the average Joe, I wouldn’t start during the winter,” Tricia said of learning how to surf. “Because you have to really get used to wearing a wetsuit.”

This, for one’s first time surfing, wouldn’t be the most pleasant experience as the suit might be uncomfortable to get used to.

With people out of work and attending online or asynchronous classes, Tricia and Peter have seen an influx of surfers this year. The two agreed that this has been one of, if not the most busy year regarding surf camps run at Narragansett Surf & Skate Shop.

Tricia said this was due in part to the notion that surfing is a generally-accepted socially distanced activity, and that kids needed to be able to socialize with others in some capacity as classes went virtual.

Narragansett Town Beach is a good place to learn how to surf because of its shallow sand bar and because of where the waves break, according to Peter. Peter said these waves aren’t the best for “quality surfing” most of the time, though, because they sometimes tend to crash right on the beach instead of further out in the water.

Tricia said that a majority of her friends today are those she surfs with. When surfing is your interest, Tricia said that it is your number one interest and you tend to run with that crowd of people.

The all-encompassing sport of surfing is something you just won’t be able to let go of once you get a taste, according to Peter.

“Surfing is like a religion; once you get into it, you’re addicted for life,” Peter said.

Professor, philosopher shares magic in academia

Leah Popovic | Staff Reporter

Giacomo Leoni is a professor of philosophy at the University of Rhode Island whose newly produced writing course has magically enhanced the honors program.

Recently, Leoni helped develop a new course within the honors program that examines the ethical messages in J.K. Rowling’s best-selling series “Harry Potter.” The course, HPR 412, delves into the lessons which society can learn in between the lines of these fantasy novels, according to Leoni.

The course gained a lot of attention from students across campus when it opened and quickly reached capacity for enrollment. Still, Leoni stressed that this course is far more intensive than revisiting a childhood classic.

“What draws us to literature is not necessarily the quality or the nature of the writing, but the themes,” he said. “The theory behind this class is that there is no cultural product that is message-free. Even when it’s for the imagination, there is still ideological and political messaging.”

Unearthing these important meanings in “Harry Potter” is what drew sophomore Lily Truppi to the course.

Truppi is double majoring in gender and women’s studies and criminal justice, yet she decided to take the course as a life-long fan of the series. Although the semester has just begun, Truppi believes she has already learned such valuable lessons from Leoni’s instruction.

“It’s really cool to challenge what the author wrote and how her bias kind of changes the story,” she said. “If you take away a lot of that bias, or a lot of her narrative, the story would have changed.”

That type of deep analysis is what Leoni expects from his classes. He wants students to enter the course with a colorful imagination, as well as the rigor to inspect the books and films with an open mind. His instruction revolves around asking students to examine why they read what they read.

While Leoni has read the books and watched the movies multiple times, he noted that some students have read all seven books and watched all eight movies more than he has. Leoni said that he views this class as an opportunity to teach and learn from his students while they do the same for one another.

“Some [students] are more familiar with the books and they can think of more examples, but some others have more theoretical groundings, and we try to merge the two with the goal of thinking about what we read,” he said.

Leoni began his academic studies in Italy at the University of Padova, where he focused on the history of ancient Christianity. His passion for philosophical questioning and phenomenology —the study of experience and consciousness— led Leoni to pursue a doctorate at Boston University.

Last January, Leoni became an instructor at URI in the honors program. So far, Leoni has taught classes on religious studies, ethics and an honors course in

civic knowledge.

Many of the topics Leoni has explored in his courses are common subjects that require reflection throughout academic growth. He said that he wants students to consider customary literature and everyday events through different perspectives than their own on even some of the most fundamental things.

Leoni said that every group of students is distinct from one another, despite learning similar content. These differences are what have kept him on his toes while looking into such abstract concepts.

“I have taught multiple classes multiple times, and yet every semester, the conversation goes in completely different ways, even if the core texts are the same,” he said. “The students bring their own personal experiences to the table, and that is fascinating to me.”

Leoni said that the biggest obstacle he has faced as a professor has been teaching his students the purpose behind critical reasoning and philosophical thought.

He wants to show students the importance of education and learning outside of just focusing on making money and getting a good career.

“Not everything that I teach can be monetized,” Leoni said. “Certain skills, like writing skills, certainly translate well to the working environment, but others are meant to help us be better citizens and to have a clear idea of how we want to shape the world, not so much how we want to make bank.”

Leoni hopes to show students that there is a purpose behind every educational encounter. In his opinion, research and studies are not just about self-complacency or intellectual satisfaction, but rather there is a deeper meaning to academic thought.

This is a lesson that Leoni has experienced as a professor himself. Through watching his students succeed, he said that his time spent becoming a specialist was worth the journey.

Above all, Leoni said that he hopes for all of his students to recognize the social messages behind everything they encounter. Whether the topic is ancient philosophy or popular culture, Leoni hopes that students can broaden their horizons with reflective thought and acknowledgment of the significance of knowledge itself.



Giacomo Leoni, URI Professor of Philosophy. PHOTO CREDIT: James McIntosh | Photo Editor

THIS WEEK AT URI

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 18, 2021

GLOW IN THE DARK ZUMBA! IN THE POOL!

7:15pm - 8:30pm • TOOTELL AQUATIC CENTER • FREE

Come work out to the Latin beat and get a great low-impact, high-energy workout down at Tootell Aquatic Center. A certified Zumba instructor will be leading the class in the shallow warm water of the instructional pool. Glow in the dark necklaces and bracelets will be provided. Sign up and Details on IMLeagues.com/uri limited space, register 24 hours prior to the event.

FRENCH MOVIE NIGHTS - FEB & MARCH

7:30pm • VIRTUAL MOVIES VIA ZOOM • FREE

Feb 11th - "Amelie" • Feb 18th - "A bout de souffle (Breathless)"

Feb 25th - "Entre les Murs" • Mar 4th - "Les Contes de la Nuit"

Mar 11th - "La Haine" • Mar 18th - "Visages Villages"

Mar 25th - "Trouis Couleurs: Bleu"

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/2401677305?pwd=UFhOZjRGWEpnMVJ2WUQ3QnlHa1VMQT09> Meeting ID: 240 167 7305

Passcode: 9A7vLs

GRAB N GO PAINT NIGHT

6pm - 7pm • VIRTUAL EVENT • FREE

Painting relaxes the mind and detaches us from the stresses of school.

Join us on ZOOM to participate in a step-by-step paint night with our painting instructor, Aby. We'll be painting a cactus.

Registered participants can pick up their grab-and-go bag with all their materials at the Fascitelli Center anytime Thurs, Feb 18th between 2-6pm.

Log onto the ZOOM meeting at 6:00 for live painting instructions.

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 19, 2021

THE 1ST URI VIRTUAL JAPANESE TALENT SHOW

6pm • VIRTUAL EVENT • FREE

*Pre-registration required. The zoom link will be emailed on February 19th.

- URI students of Japanese will showcase their talents related to the Japanese language and its culture.

- The top three performers will receive a cash prize!

- Nankin Tamasudare (traditional Japanese street performance) by a local Japanese artist, and Shaberiba mingling, will also be a part of the event!

The event title was derived from a Japanese proverb meaning "art brings bread" (literally, "talent helps your physical self.") When in Japan, you

might be surprised to discover how talents and skills beyond the Japanese language help foster friendships and open new doors. Talent helps – so

come check out this event. Register here: <https://forms.gle/h9TsD-M1EoLSnD15c9>

come check out this event. Register here: <https://forms.gle/h9TsD-M1EoLSnD15c9>

come check out this event. Register here: <https://forms.gle/h9TsD-M1EoLSnD15c9>

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SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 20, 2021

BRANDI LANE, SENIOR HORN RECITAL & THE RAM JAM SATURDAY NIGHT CONCERT III - SPRING 2021

1pm & 8pm • VIRTUAL EVENT • FREE

1pm - Brandi Lane will present a recital of classical and contemporary music for horn in fulfillment of her program of studies.

8pm - A video compilation of performances and events in the life of the Department of Music in this unique Spring 2021 semester.

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 22, 2021

BE WELL JOURNALING (LIVESTREAM)

5:30pm - 6:30pm • VIRTUAL MEETINGS • FREE

Come join us on zoom to thoughtfully unearth your own identity through journaling. Bring your journal and explore different weekly prompts.

Individualized self-reflection is encouraged in this judgment-free environment. Join this session in IMLeagues.com/uri to receive your zoom link.

Group meets every Wednesday thru the semester.

QUATTRO CHIACCHERE - ITALIAN CONVERSATION HOURS 2pm Mondays, 4pm Wednesdays • VIRTUAL MEETINGS • FREE

Come join the Italian Section for an exciting and educational conversation hour every Mon 2pm and Wed 4pm.

Meet new people and build friendships with other Italian students at URI! Expand your speaking & listening skills in Italian while learning about the Italian culture! Quattro Chiacchere is open to tutti, from elementary Italian students to URI faculty. Italian native speaker guests will

join us as well. Come and go as you wish! Throughout the semester. On Zoom - <https://uri-edu.zoom.us/j/95049700097?pwd=NXZBb3NYVDU3cDBuN3dFWnd2QVAXdz09>

Meeting ID: 950 4970 0097

Passcode: 082736

Being a second semester student isn't all that it's cracked up to be

Erin Brown | Cigar Opinion Piece

College is a hard adjustment for everybody, no matter how great it seems on social media. When you add a pandemic and decide to not arrive on campus until the second semester, now college seems like an isolating new environment with no easy way to make connections.

I am a part of this small segment of freshmen who decided to defer their first semester. I was thrust into college, my parents dropped me off and now I suddenly know no one. I wasn't expecting a big event because I understand that COVID-19 guidelines need to be followed for our campus to continue to flow smoothly, but at least I was hoping there would be something along the lines of "Hey, we see you. You're not alone. Here is a way to meet other students that are in the same shoes as you." I haven't even met anyone in my dorm besides my suitemates and my roommate.

Now, you post on the class Facebook group hoping that someone else who came second semester will also want to meet people. Parents are advertising their children to other parents who all have kids that feel lonely and unmoored by this sudden sea of people. I'm surrounded by hundreds of people at all times, but I've never felt so alone. I keep getting told "there are so many other kids that deferred, you're definitely not the only one." Then where are they? I completely understand that college is an important time for us to put ourselves out there, but it can be so exhausting not even knowing where to start.

I'm extremely lucky that I have a few in-person classes, and one is small enough that I have been able

to interact with a few other kids and form connections in my classes. What about the students that are like me, yet aren't able to be in classes or aren't as comfortable going out of their comfort zone? Good luck! Here's hoping you meet someone somehow. A ton of students decided to not return for second semester because they even came at the so-called "normal time" but struggled with how deeply lonely college currently is.

URI 101 has been a great start to meet new people but, unfortunately, that is a pretty small class. I think it would be beneficial to many students if all of the URI 101 classes would be able to be connected. There would then be the starting point for students to connect with other students who are also fresh to campus and even just the University of Rhode Island itself.

Another great way to allow new students to interact would be to arrange virtual events strictly for new students. I know that it can feel pretty intimidating to go to events when you are alone and feel like you will be the only one there who doesn't know anyone else, but in an environment created for connection, it will make students feel a lot more comfortable with introducing themselves to other students.

I encourage any new students, if they are reading this, to push themselves out of their comfort zone, even though that may feel extremely uncomfortable sometimes. Go through the student organizations list and look at what interests you; most clubs have created ways to meet virtually. This is a great way to meet people with similar interests as you. All clubs look forward to having new members and you will be a welcome addition to wherever you decide to join.

ACLU responds to URI Communications

Concern must be raised about the University's recent comments on the website Campus Reform regarding Professor Erik Loomis and his tweet about racism in AI software, particularly Assistant Director of Media Relations Dave Lavalley's comment, according to the publication, that Loomis "does not have the right to make such unsubstantiated claims in the context of his university position or role." The University's claim contradicts established SCOTUS case law, including the precedents set in Pickering v. Board of Education (1968) and Garcetti v. Ceballos (2006), which maintain that the free speech of public faculty is fully protected under the First Amendment to the United States Constitution. As is widely known, the University of Rhode Island is a public uni-

versity, legally bound by these rulings and the principles of the Constitution. Professor Loomis is therefore allowed to express such views as a URI professor unhindered.

We are very worried about the University so vocally condemning one of its professors for making comments within the parameters of academic discourse. Regardless of his past controversial comments, Loomis's comment was an expression of his rights as a US citizen and as a state-employed academic. While we appreciate the University's vocal commitment to First Amendment principles, publicly condemning one of its faculty for responding to a very real debate about racism in AI and facial recognition technologies, and casting doubt on his right to do so, may have a chilling effect on faculty expressing

similar views. Thus, we think it is inappropriate for the University to intervene in this matter at the behest of an outside political organization, and to do so in a way that threatens freedom of speech at URI.

We have sent Assistant Director Lavalley a statement outlining the above long before the submission of this letter, and have not received a response.

Free speech is the cornerstone of academic debate and education, and the University implicitly threatening an academic for stating something the University does not agree with is troubling and unbecoming. Regardless of whether it was intentionally so or not, it should be retracted.

ACLU URI

In spite of outdated protocol, music department plays on

Christian Silvia | Contributing Reporter

The students of the University of Rhode Island's music department, which often relies on performing live music, have been some of those hit the hardest by COVID-19 changes and regulations.

Last week, professor David Neves wrote a letter to the editor in *The Providence Journal*, in which he criticized the state of Rhode Island for its failure to update COVID-19 protocols since last year. Neves said that it was from frustration on how the state has handled COVID restrictions for music in particular. In the piece, he wrote about how he is happy that athletics are back, but the state should update its protocols for music programs.

"If students can play sports, and adults can dine out safely, we can use the same science and mitigation to bring enrichment and equity to students of music," Neves wrote.

The current protocols have not been the easiest on the music department, he said. However, he was very quick to praise the University for its handling of the department.

When music students first returned to campus in the fall, they would practice in tents outside of the Fine Arts Center. However, these tents are nowhere to be found at the moment, having been taken down at the end of last semester.

"The tents were a nice touch, but certainly for the cost factor involved it made all the sense in the world because they couldn't keep them up with the snow and everything," Neves said.

According to Mark Conley, the department's chair, they are now using rooms in other buildings like Cherry Auditorium and the building

which used to have the University Club at 95 Club on Upper College Road. While the music department has not had ticket revenue due to the pandemic, they are still in good financial standing.

"We also do not have as much money going out for guest performances for example," said Conely. "There's much less music purchasing going on."

Conely said that some things are much different and more difficult. One of those things being the choir; with their masks on, it is difficult in practice, as their mouths are not visible.

Timing of rehearsals are also somewhat difficult due to the changing of locations. Still, he believes that the students are adapting well. The school is still putting on live music, such as the weekly virtually streamed Ram Jam Saturday Night concert series.

"They're performing, we're recording and we're releasing it to an audience on video," Conely said. "They also have convocations, where the majors perform in front of each other and are still doing recitals for families, albeit in front of smaller audiences."

Neves believes that this has shown the great leadership put on by the school and gave some news that may make live music easier to come by. After he wrote his letter to the editor last week, the state did decide that they were going to update the COVID-19 protocols for performances and music students and will be releasing them in the upcoming weeks.

When asked about how he feels the department has done overall, Conely said he was proud of what the department has managed to accomplish despite the challenges faced this year.

A close-up on students filming during a pandemic



Despite the issues posed by the pandemic, URI film students are still persevering in their studies.

PHOTO CREDIT: Ethan Pelligrino | Staff Photographer

Olivia Oulette | Contributing Reporter

One of the final courses film students take at the University of Rhode Island requires them to direct their own film, and many students are determined to make their final projects a reality despite the pandemic.

Chris Hetu is a senior double majoring in communication and film. A transfer from the Community College of Rhode Island, Hetu was unsure of what major to pursue in college. It was after watching a movie that Hetu got inspired to become a film student.

"I was just in the library one day, and I think I watched a movie the night before and I was just like 'what if I wrote a movie?'" Hetu said. "Then I ended up writing a 60-page script in three months."

Pre-pandemic, film students would pitch their idea to their professor and that was the only approval needed to begin their project. However, now there are many more steps needed to be taken before a project can begin, revolving around the University's risk management department.

"Now we have to also talk to risk management," said Hetu. "Risk management plays a deep role, and we've learned to adapt with them because, for the most part, it's getting them to approve the movie and say yes."

Film students now must create a "COVID-19 plan" that will be enforced when filming that way participants can remain safe on set.

The new COVID-19 safety standards set in place for film students have limited what they can film and produce. Simple things like close-ups are now nearly impossible to include in a project because there is now a required distance between the actors and the camera; if

an actor has their mask off, the camera has to be 14 feet away.

"If there were like 10 hoops maybe you had to pass through to film for URI, there is now double, maybe triple the amount of hoops," said Audrey Hammond, a senior double majoring in film and fine arts with a minor in business of digital media.

Current film students are not the only ones who have been affected by the pandemic. Julia Madden, a graduate student as of December who double majored in film and psychology, faced many challenges during her final semester. She had been working on her demo reel, essentially a film version of a resume, and was really concerned about how it would affect her graduation.

Professors have been, in Madden's own words "going back and forth," about letting alumni request equipment and film for their demo reel in the summer. However, due to the pandemic carrying over into the summer, that was not possible. Madden is still without a demo reel, but since her graduation has been doing some small editing jobs, as well as making connections with professionals in the film industry.

The URI film department and students are probably some of the most affected by the COVID-19 global pandemic in terms of curriculum. Now, while there are many more obstacles film students must face in order to create their projects, students are still determined to get out into the world and film their stories.

"Just take the precautions, just do what you can, be confident in your work, and just know who you are because at the end of the day your work is you," said Hetu. "That's what you want the world to see, so if you want your message heard, just go out and make your movie."

Meet Taylor Swift, 13 years later

Leah Popovic | Staff Reporter

Just when you think Taylor Swift has reached her peak, the renowned artist made her first step towards reclamation on Friday with the release of "Love Story (Taylor's Version)."

Swift has been under a strict contractual agreement with record executive Scooter Braun, meaning the masters from the first six of her critically-acclaimed albums have been owned and controlled by a third party. After acquiring them in June 2019, he sold her masters to an unnamed investment fund last November.

In a Tumblr post following his acquisition, Swift described how Braun and the rest of his team were bullying and "controlling a woman who didn't want to be associated with them" by manipulating the sound and sales of her music. Braun made millions off of Swift's work, despite the two having a hostile relationship.

This past year, Swift released two intimate surprise albums after her legal agreement with Braun was squashed. "folklore" and "evermore" were curated for Swift to truly express herself and break free from the shackles of Braun's administration; the process of recording her eighth album was detailed in the documentary "Folklore: The Long Pond Studio Sessions" released on Disney+.

Swift decided that releasing new music was not enough to regain her freedom. On Thursday, Feb. 11, she announced that all of her former albums will be re-recorded as "Taylor's Versions," beginning with a single release remake of her popular 2008 hit "Love Story."

Being a lifelong fan of Swift's music, I was thrilled to hear the news, yet was originally apprehensive of her approach. After all, how much would a re-recording truly change about her old

music? What type of excitement is there in the same songs?

Long story short (no pun intended), my assumptions were far from correct.

There is no doubt that Swift strategically chose to release "Love Story (Taylor's Version)" as the first single to this project. The opening and closing lyric, "we were both young when I first saw you" sets the stage for an emotional, personal collection of her work. She speaks to her fans who have stuck with her through it all.

In terms of the music itself, this version shows Swift's maturation over the past decade, especially with her vocals. Each verse is crisp and diminished of her amateur twang from the past. My favorite part of this song's restored vocals are the harmonies. Unlike the original "Love Story," which used the voices of additional singers to fill the chords, Swift decided to use her own voice for each harmony. This is a true representation of her newfound individuality.

Another impressive aspect of this single is the instrumentation, which consists of the same musicians who recorded with Swift in 2008. Each guitar riff, fiddle line and cymbal crash is more noticeable than the original, alluding to her highly sophisticated producing process.

Still, the overarching similarities to the original recording capture Swift's 18-year-old innocence. It's bittersweet for her Swiftie superfans, now watching their idol's legacy come full circle. Swift has always been a strong-willed, freethinking artist. These new editions of her past tunes are sure to heighten this independent aura which inspires millions of women across the globe.

The remainder of re-recorded songs off of "Fearless" are set to be released in early April, while the details for her remaining six albums have yet to be announced.

Feinstein Campus art exhibit to spark social changes in Rhode Island

Leah Popovic | Staff Reporter

The University of Rhode Island's Providence Campus Arts and Culture Program has assembled a virtual and in-person gallery of work by local artists entitled "SPEAKING OUT - A CALL TO ACTION: The Art Of Protest - Agents of Change in Rhode Island!"

This exhibit's work comes from an array of mediums which speak to subjects including racism, sexism, mental health, gender bias, economic inequality and other civic issues.

Steven Pennell is the coordinator of the Arts and Culture Program at URI. He pioneered the development of this exhibition and believes that the artwork is powerful enough to spark change within the community.

"This is not just about making pretty pictures, but [the artists'] art is used as art always has been," he said. "To educate, sometimes to [provide] insight, to make people think and respond and to create a dialogue with people."

To honor frontline workers battling the COVID-19 pandemic, the exhibit opens with three guardian angel sculptures which hold the seals of caduceus, a symbol worn by medical professionals.

Interactive works of art contributed by Leo Selvaggio address contemporary politics as well as the shift towards bystander apathy in the United States. One of his posters offers a QR code to demand action for politicians to make an impact, entitled "Apologize to America." Selvaggio also constructed wearable iPhone holders intended to be worn at protests and other civic action events.

Photographer Don Mays captured images for Black Lives Matter events held in Rhode Island, depicting an influx of young citizens standing up for race equality. Additional digital artwork can be seen picturing Black victims of police brutality, such as Breonna Taylor and George Floyd, who were killed by law enforcement officers.

Mark Wholey, a featured artist in the gallery

contributed numerous works of art to the exhibition and recognizes the benefits of showcasing art to the public. He believes that discussing controversial issues through art is important so that these subjects can be brought into the spotlight.

"I think it's a responsibility that artists have to use their talent in ways to relate to society, and see how you apply your talent to the things that you find wrong with society," Woley said.

Other artists whose work is featured in this gallery include, but are not limited to Anthoyn Tomaselli, Kelly Brown, Dianne Reilly and Susan Garland, who also supplied artwork created by students at The Juanita Sanchez Educational Complex in Providence.

Issues of political polarity and the resulting prejudice in America take the spotlight throughout this exhibit. Some of the other series portrays difficulties faced by the LGBTQ+ community, women's rights and environmental challenges of our time.

The theme of solidarity hits home throughout the exhibition. Each work of art inspires viewers to enact a change for the betterment of their community. Through their magnificent art, these creators encourage others to speak out and insight peace in the lives of all Rhode Islanders.

The exhibit also features a filmed performance of "OUR STORY // OUR SONG," a musical presentation by The Wilbury Theatre Group capturing what it means to be Black in America. The two featured artists of this performance are Christopher Johnson and Big Lux.

Typically, these galleries are widely open to the public, receiving a lot of foot traffic from Providence locals. Due to COVID-19, the activity has dwindled, yet Pennell encourages people to attend the exhibit and is confident that the message is still being spread.

To visit this exhibit in person, visit the URI Providence Campus Gallery located at 80 Washington Street. Tours are held on Thursdays and Fridays from 3 to 4:30 p.m. Due to COVID-19 protocols, all viewers must wear masks and remain socially distanced from others.

The 'white savior' problem: Not all representation is good representation

Theresa Brown | Editor-in-Chief Emerita

The first Hollywood-produced Black film was released in 1898, and since then the media has struggled to grasp how to produce a Black film that does not perpetuate stereotypes, tokenize diverse characters and reduce the work of historic Black figures by placing them within the lens of a white narrative.

There is a huge difference between a white-directed and a Black-directed Black film. It is not uncommon to mistake films that may be, in theory, produced to "inform" but are written in a "white savior" narrative. The white savior narrative is a Black storyline that is dependent on a white person to (1) make things better and be the hero or (2) be the actual main character. Examples include "The Help," "Hidden Figures," "Green Book," "The Greatest Showman" and "The Blind Side." Not only are these stories told through a white narrative, and often with white leads, but they're generally well-received in Hollywood in comparison to Black-directed Black films without this narrative. "The Help," "Green Book" and "The Blind Side" were all awarded by the Academy, and continue to be celebrated.

For recommendations of films that not only feature Black creatives in front of and behind the camera, but accurately depict the narratives of the Black community throughout history and clear the spotlight for their voices, check out the list below:

1. "Twelve Years a Slave" (2013)

Black director Sir Steve McQueen's "12 Years a Slave" retells the story of the 1853 memoir written by Solomon Northrup. The story follows Solomon, a free-born African American from New York, and his experience as a slave after he is kidnapped and sold into slavery for 12 years. Along with being "the best film of 2013," according to media outlets and websites including NPR and Rotten Tomatoes, "12 Years a Slave" gives a raw, historically accurate view of the experiences of slaves in the mid-1800s and features stellar performances from Chiwetel Ejiofor and Lupita Nyong'o.

2. "Fruitvale Station" (2013)

"Fruitvale Station" tells a story based on true events and is the first feature film of director Ryan Coogler, who went on to direct the 2018 gamechanger "Black Panther." The film, starring Michael B. Jordan, recounts the events leading up to the murder of Oscar Grant, a young Black man who was killed by the police at the Fruitvale Rapid Transit Station in Oakland, California. It won the 2013 Grand Jury Prize and the Audience Award for U.S. dramatic film and also stars Octavia Spencer.

3. "The Butler" (2013)

Experience the life of Cecil Gaines, a fictional character based on Eugene Allen, a Black butler who worked in the White House through the presidencies of Eisenhower, Kennedy, Johnson, Nixon, Ford, Carter, Reagan, Bush, Clinton, Bush and Obama. Set throughout his decades working in the White House, the movie lets viewers experience Gaines' reactions to social and political changes and movements as they occur. The Lee Daniels film features an all-star cast which includes Forest Whitaker, Oprah Winfrey, Mariah Carey, Jane Fonda, David Oyelowo, Cuba Gooding Jr. and more. It won two National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) Image Awards.

4. "Judas and the Black Messiah" (2021)

Released Feb. 12, this Shaka King-directed film stars Daniel Kaluuya as Fred Hampton, chairman of the Illinois chapter of the Black Panther Party. The story follows the FBI's attempt to infiltrate the Illinois chapter and eventually assassinate Hampton. "Judas and the Black Messiah" has already won an American Film Institute Award and National Board of Review's Top 10 Films and is now streaming on HBO Max.

The above films provide viewers with an in-depth look into the experiences of the stories they depict. It is important to understand an accurate view of the Black experience starring Black actors and directed by Black filmmakers instead of being educated through the white lens.

'Image and Imagination:' The photographs of Albert Chong



Currently on display in the URI Fine Arts Center, the works of artist and photographer Albert Chong represent the history of his family.

James McIntosh
Photo Editor

Pips Quips: Thinking of the student-athlete this spring

Will Pipicelli | Sports Editor

It is really hard for us outsiders to relate to what student-athletes are going through this season.

I was reminded of the exhaustion the 2020-21 collegiate athletic season is for everyone involved on Monday afternoon while helping with University of Rhode Island-sponsored COVID-19 testing. Testing is free for all students, faculty and staff at the University, and this semester URI is requiring all students to get tested at least once every two weeks.

Different organizations and majors require different testing schedules, but every time I have volunteered in the testing process, the majority cluster of people are from athletics. Everyone from players, coaches, support staff, building managers and even maintenance workers come through the Memorial Union to get a test. I have seen representation from all 16 Division I sports teams this year, and I have only volunteered there six times since the semester started in January.

The softball team just finished up a 20-hour bus ride from North Carolina, and the very first thing the team had to do upon arrival was get tested. It is important to get routinely tested, but imagine that you have been on a bus for almost an entire day and your dorm room with your own bed is less than a five minute walk away; yet instead of just taking a moment to breathe, you're reminded of the situation around us and up the hill you go to the Union.

It won't just be the softball team undergoing this reality. In fact, with the majority of sports happening this spring and not during their typical seasons, practically every team will have this

sort of experience. Away games coupled with long travel times are the norm for the majority of teams, as college athletic departments nationwide aren't flush with cash to pay for airfare coupled with safety concerns.

The schedule a team has today is no guarantee of being the schedule tomorrow. Men's basketball found out on Tuesday that they have to play George Washington in Washington, D.C. in five days. Earlier this month, women's basketball went from playing George Washington at home to playing Fordham away in less than a half week's notice. Those aren't outliers; they're the norm in 2021.

Game times themselves will also be different from what we're used to. Support staff, trainers to sports information directors to facility managers, can't be in the same place at once. We'll be seeing more early afternoon and early evening games than ever before. This change in scheduling is more reminiscent of high school sports than Division I Athletics. Facilities needing to be shared equally and crucially and properly sanitized regularly, will also lead to the staggered nature of the schedule.

All of this brings me back to the athletes themselves. They have worked so hard to be able to play this spring and have sacrificed a lot to avoid being the one that forces the team into a two-week pause. No matter the sport, this semester is sure to be a season filled with challenges unforeseen in any other part of their career.

Spring will be the season of the unexpected in college sports, but it's important to remember that the student-athletes who have done everything asked of them so far deserve some leniency. Before we criticize, let's empathize.

Softball plays its first game after year-long pause

Katie Siegle | Contributing Reporter

The University of Rhode Island's Softball team opened up its season on Sunday in North Carolina, falling 17-1 to Elon in their first game in over 11 months.

The two teams were originally set to play a four-game series, with two games each on the weekend. The back-to-back games scheduled for Saturday were cancelled because of inclement weather, along with the second game of Sunday's doubleheader. Even though URI was only able to play one of a potential four games this weekend, Head Coach Bridget Hurlman said it was "awesome" to be able to get on the field after they drove down to North Carolina last Thursday.

"We would have liked to have been able to get out there, have a couple more games, see the squad put it together, have people get over some of their first-game jitters and really just settle in," Coach Hurlman said.

In the leadoff spot for the Rams, junior Sami Villareal went 2-for-3 with a double and a single. Redshirt senior Erica Robles hit a single in the top of the third to score Villareal for Rhode Island's only run, and the game was finalized after the fifth inning because of the eight-run rule.

With Rhody playing its first game since last year, Coach Hurlman said it was exhilarating to see the team compete after such a long hiatus. In preparation for the spring season, she said the team has tried to do the best it can with the resources it has and the scenarios being presented.

Pertaining to the new COVID-19 guidelines in place, Coach Hurlman said the atmo-

sphere on gameday was a "little bit different."

"It affects [the team] the most in the dugout," she said. "There's only 14 [people] allowed in the dugout, so we had to spread down the line in some seats and some bleachers."

Players are not required to wear masks while in play, but the corner infielders will wear them if there are runners on first or third base, according to Coach Hurlman. She said there is a general consensus that everyone is outside and a fair enough distance away so masks do not have to be worn at all times.

For Elon, freshman Grace Kiser granted the Phoenix an early lead with a three-run home run to left-center with two outs in the bottom of the first. With another three-run shot in the fourth, she finished the game with six RBIs.

In the upcoming weeks, URI has a doubleheader against Sacred Heart University in Fairfield, Connecticut, along with another set of back-to-back games the next day against the University of Delaware in Newark, Delaware. Although the result of Sunday's game was not ideal, Coach Hurlman said there were some "bright spots" in certain areas, and it felt great to coach and compete one more.

"I think there were some things that were within our control that we can clean up to make that a very different result," she said. "There's some definite bright spots, so I think it's just taking the information we have from game day and improving on the things that we know are within our control to have a much better go-around in Sacred Heart and Delaware."



The URI Softball Team was brutally defeated 1-17 vs. Elon.
PHOTO CREDIT: GoRhody.com.

Volleyball begins season with series split

Paige Messier | Contributing Reporter

After 455 days with no matches, the University of Rhode Island Women's Volleyball Team was eager to get on the court with two matches against George Mason on Valentine's Day weekend to open up their season.

"It's amazing to be back out here; I'm so happy and grateful to be back," senior Claire Chaplinsky said.

The Rams started their season on Saturday afternoon against the Patriots leading 18-10 as a result of senior Annie Eli's 10-point serving run. Both sides went back-and-forth the rest of the first set, with URI pulling out a 25-18 first set win, ended by a freshman Samantha Blahut kill.

Rhody came out hot in the second set with kills from Chaplinsky and Mariah Paulette making the score 3-0. George Mason bounced back and kept the game close until they took the lead, forcing Head Coach Nicki Holmes to call a timeout at 23-20. In extra points, the Rams fell to the Patriots 26-24.

Energized by the second set loss, the Rams started the third set with an 8-2 lead, which led to a Patriot timeout. Following the timeout, George Mason went on a small run but was quickly stopped and followed by a seven-point service run by the Rams. A big block by Blahut led to another timeout by the Patriots, with a score of 17-7. This set was ended by an over serve by the Patriots with a score of 25-13 for the home team.

The Rams got another strong start in the fourth set with a 7-2 score. With another strong Rhody run, George Mason called a timeout with a score of 12-6 to try to recoup. This timeout proved successful as George Mason earned six points. With tied scores at 21-21 and 23-23, the Patriots took the win with a final score of 25-23.

Heading into the last set, senior setter Annie Ell scored the first point with a dump to the middle of the court. After a tough fight from both sides of the court, George Mason came out superior with a score of 10-15.

Despite the loss, Coach Holmes, who

for the first time coached the Rams in live action, remains excited for the future of the program.

"I'm proud of the effort," Coach Holmes said on Saturday. "I think they did really well. Obviously we are disappointed with scores but I think there is a really great future."

Less than 24 hours later, a rematch between the Rams and Patriots took place in Keaney Gymnasium. The Rams got their revenge, and had a 3-0 sweep against their Atlantic-10 foe.

The Rams earned a 12-4 lead in the first set with huge defensive contributions from the front row, putting pressure on the George Mason offense. Junior Gabrielle Shilling had two kills at the end of the set shutting down the George Mason defense and resulting in a URI win with a score of 25-8.

George Mason competed in the second set with many ties and leads. URI defense was stellar in this set with saves from Ella Ratzloff and consistency from Chaplinsky. This led Rhode Island to win the set 25-21.

The last set started with a quick Rhode Island lead of 7-2. Big plays by middle-hitter Schilling and setter Ell led Rhody to a landslide win of 25-14 and a sweep of 3-0.

URI had their first four games of the season cancelled as a result of a positive COVID-19 test in the program. A home and home series with the University of Connecticut followed by two games away to Northeastern were supposed to be the start of the Nicki Holmes-era in Kingston, but those plans were erased due to health and safety protocols. The extended pause made Ell excited about the team's first win of the season.

"It was tough to come into our first match yesterday in over a year and lose," Ell said. "It just feels amazing to know that I got to [win] with my team because we've been working so hard."

Through two games on the season, Chaplinsky leads the team in kills with 28, followed by Paulette with 21. Ratzloff continues to impact the floor on the defensive



Facing George Mason on both Saturday and Sunday, URI Women's Volleyball came away 1-1.
PHOTO CREDIT: James McIntosh | Photo Editor

end for the Rams with 29 digs. The junior from Woodbury, Minnesota had 482 digs last season, which led the team by a large margin, and set the school record for most digs in a single game with 42 against Fordham.

Coach Holmes was impressed by both his team and his coaching staff following the win.

"I'm so happy for them," he said. "It is hard to bounce back less than 24 hours and try to do something. I'm really proud of my staff and the effort for the weekend. Watching them work for each other is a bright shining part of my day today."

Up next for the Rams is a matchup at Providence College to face the Friars on Feb. 22 at 5 p.m.

Women's Soccer shows promise despite loss



The URI Women's Soccer Team fell to the Providence Friars with a final score of 0-2 last weekend.
PHOTO CREDIT: GoRhody.com.

Kyle Standing | Contributing Reporter

Even though The University of Rhode Island Women's Soccer team began its 2020-2021 campaign on Sunday with a loss to in-state rival Providence College, Head Coach Megan Jessee is optimistic about the team's outlook for the season.

The Rams came out of the gates hot in their season opener at PC. Strong attacking play from sophomores Brooke Cavino and Kelly Fitzgerald and junior Rebecca D'Anna played a major part in the Rams first-half dominance, where the team had five corner kicks but couldn't convert.

As well, stellar defense from Fitzgerald

and solid goalkeeping from sophomore Teresa Morrissey held Providence to just three shots on goal and a shutout at the half. The Rams finished the period with three shots on goal, and an effort that ricocheted off the crossbar from Cavino. However, the Rams went into the break with no goals to show for their hard work, going to the locker room still tied.

The Friars were able to pounce on the opportunity to take the lead in the second half, scoring just twelve minutes in. The Rams fought hard to tie the game back up, even pushing their defenders forward in the late stages of the second half, but to no avail. The Friars took advantage of the open defense and put one more shot in the back of the net in the 90th minute, finishing the game with a score of 2-0.

Cavino led the way for the Rams on the attack, taking two shots with one on-net and one hitting the crossbar. Morrissey played a solid game in net, finishing the day with five saves from twelve shots. Additional contributions came from Fitzgerald, D'Anna and senior Kaitlyn Sengphilom.

"We were just happy to get to play," said Head Coach Megan Jessee. "We haven't played in 11 months. I thought we

dominated the first half. I think we just need to focus on our fitness and being ready to play for a full 90 minutes."

Despite the defeat, she felt very strongly that there were a lot of positives to take from the game and wants to build on these positives heading into the rest of their non-conference schedule.

In spite of being a young team that hasn't gotten to be together consistently in the offseason, according to Jessee, she still believes that they have a chance to show out strong in the postseason.

"If we can put together a full 90 minutes and play like we did in the first half, I think we can really make strides in our non-conference schedule to get where we want to be come postseason time," Jessee said.

With the season now officially underway, the young team will have more opportunities to gel together and build upon the positives from their opener. The Rams next travel to Connecticut to take on New England rival the University of Connecticut Huskies, where they will look to put their first tally in the win column. Kick off is slated for 2 p.m. on Thursday, Feb. 25.