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Performing Blackness :: Performing Whiteness



RACHEL WANG/THE CAMPUS

Rachel Simmons, '16, Sean Gannon, '16, and Briann Moye, '17, listen to the multimedia work, There Are Black People In the Future, of artist Alisha B. Wormsley.

See **GALLERY** | *page 7*

Office of Civil Rights conducts review of Title IX policies

Allegheny one of 94 colleges under current review

By AMANDA SPADARO
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In a Dec. 6 e-mail, President James Mullen alerted the Allegheny community that the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights received a complaint regarding Allegheny College, placing the school under review for its sexual assault investigation processes.

At the time of the e-mail, the administration was preparing to gather the resources that the OCR requested, including college policy, training materials and cases of sexual assault investigations from the last three years, including the 2012-2013 academic year. According to Sue Gaylor, executive vice president and chief operating officer of the college, the first wave of document submissions has been completed and comprised of the college policy and training materials. The second wave will include sexual assault case documents from three years ago and the third will consist of the cases from the two previous academic years. Gaylor foresees all data submission being completed by the beginning of February.

As part of the review, the OCR will study Allegheny's process of sexual assault investigation, starting with how employees and students are trained to handle situations, what the specific policies are and how well investigations are recorded and conducted.

"It's very detailed, it's almost like an audit…Everything associated with every case will be sent to OCR for their review," Gaylor said.

After reviewing Allegheny's data, phone interviews with administration and even on-campus focus groups will be conducted to get a better sense of how well policies are carried out from paper to process.

See **REVIEW** | *page 2*

Pelletier renovations finish after eight months

Academic commons opens to students and staff

By CHRISTINA BRYSON
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Following eight months of construction, the Pelletier library finished renovations in early January and officially moved the academic commons into the building. Since May 2014, construction crews have been remodeling the building to make it a more viable space for library operations, the Gateway, the Learning Commons and student space, all four of which comprise the academic commons.

The overarching idea surrounding the academic commons is to create an accessible space for students that incorporates academics, co-curriculars and post-grad life into one facet of learning, according to Linda Bills, library director.

"The library services and Learning Commons, those are services to help you succeed in your classes," said Bills. "The other services that are here now are about succeeding beyond your classes, it's career education, it's civic engagement, it's international studies. So it's not tied directly to 'Can I pass History 101?' it's tied to, 'Can I take my experience at Allegheny and leverage it into a career that's exciting and rewarding to me?'

"In the past, those services were available to you just as they are now, just as intensely and in a dedicated manner, they weren't associated as closely with your academic work. What we're trying to do with the academic commons we're building here is to say, 'All of this is the same thing. We shouldn't have class work 'here' and life 'here,' we should have life and classwork working together.'"

The offices that make up the Gateway include career education; civic engagement; international education; pre-professional programs; center for intercultural advancement and student success; undergraduate research, scholarship, and creative activities; nationally competitive fellowships and center for political participation.

> "We're doing something where we're not entirely sure what the end result is going to be. We know what we would like the effect to be, how exactly that will be achieved is something will be an ongoing project."
>
> Linda Bills
> *Library director*



AMASA SMITH/THE CAMPUS

Previously blocked by a retaining wall, the academics commons opened early January and houses a variety of offices including the Learning Commons and offices previously in Reis. The academic commons encompasses the Gateway, the Learning Commons, student space and library services.

Rick Holmgren, vice president for information services and assessment, remembered back to 2004 with the establishment of the Learning Commons and how that information service influenced library operations.

"What we've seen when we brought the Learning Commons into the building, the use of the building has gone way up," said Holmgren. "What was interesting was the use of library services went up, students checked out more books after the renovations. The books didn't change any but they were using the resources more because they are in the building."

Holmgren explained the introduction of the Learning Commons brought more foot traffic to the library and people began utilizing the available sources more. He hopes this same phenomena will occur with the addition of the academic commons, bringing more students to a space housing a larger variety of resources.

"When we created our Learning Commons in 2004, we were one of the first comprehensive academic support centers at a college," said Holmgren. "At the time, that was a grounding new concept. It was really a trendsetter. I think the Gateway, in some ways, lots of schools are doing something like it, I think our project is more ambitious than many and more comprehensive. We're bringing in a lot more services, so it's more holistic. We're really bringing in a richer array of services. You can't tell when you walk down the hall when you've left career education and gone into the LC."

Holmgren admitted that there are both positives and negatives to the not being able to distinguish among the 37 offices on the main floor of Pelletier. By having everything so close-knit, it makes resources more readily available among students and staff and allows for more accessible collaboratory efforts. But on

See **LIBRARY** | *page 2*

International voter turnout for Gator update

Chompers to be revealed Feb. 14 during basketball doubleheader

By SAM STEPHENSON
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The 2014-2015 academic year has already seen its share of controversies, though none has been as vocal and widespread as the decision of updating Allegheny's Gator mascot, Chompers. After an announcement earlier in the year that Chompers would be blue was recused and an international poll occurred, The Campus community has its answer.

The new Chompers will be unveiled on Saturday, Feb. 14, between the women's and men's basketball games. A week long polling campaign in the first week of December by the athletic and communications departments allowed students, community members and alumni to vote on four different gators: white, blue, bright green or dark green.

"We are keeping it hush hush and want that [the basketball games] to be the big unveiling," Portia Hoeg, director of athletics, said.

According to Hoeg, the poll had a great turnout. A large social media component allowed voters to publish their results on Twitter and Facebook to spur more involvement.

> "I think it ended up being a very positive thing to celebrate the bicentennial."
>
> Portia Hoeg
> *Director of athletics*

"I know there was a lot of involvement from the campus, a lot of excitement behind it," Hoeg said. "There were a lot of cool comments on social media about who to vote for and why. I think it ended up being a very positive thing to celebrate the bicentennial."

The turnout, in fact, was much more than they anticipated said Rachel Garza, associate vice president for communications and marketing. In total, more than 5,800 votes were cast from across the United States and from a total 10 countries.

"We stay on top of monitoring the chatter and discussions around campaigns like this and I can't tell you one negative comment that was made the entire time," Garza said. "There were some older alumni that didn't know that Chompers was the name of the mascot so we did hear a little bit of feedback there, but everybody was really excited."

The communications and athletic departments are collaborating for the unveiling on Valentine's day, sharing strategies and different campaigns to boost excitement.

"We want it to be something that students look forward to, something that we can capture and share to alumni who can't make it, so there are a lot of logistics that go into it," Garza said.

Before the unveiling of the mascot, there will be an

See **MASCOT** | *page 8*

REVIEW *from page 1*

Due to the attention to detail, the OCR's review may take as long as 18 months to three years. While as of Oct. 2014, there were 85 schools under investigation by the OCR, Gaylor stated that the current number is at 94, stretching the resources of the OCR thin.

"They don't have a ton of resources so there could be periods in this process where it feels like not much is going on because we're in a holding pattern, waiting for the next step," Gaylor said.

However, while the investigation is an on-going and lengthy process, the fact that Allegheny is under review by the OCR is not anticipated to have any bearing on any sexual assault cases that may arise currently, according to Katie Pope, Title IX Coordinator at Allegheny.

"Anything that is happening right now is not going to be affected by the outcome of this review," Pope said. "I don't anticipate, having spoken with my colleagues at other institutions, that certainly they would not instruct us to go back and change cases we are currently working on. That would not be within the purview of what they're asking."

A possible outcome of the OCR's review would be a voluntary resolution agreement, in which the OCR provides constructive criticism as to how Allegheny's policies should be updated to what OCR considers the best practice.

In this respect, the review provides room for Allegheny's policies to improve, an aspect of the review that Mullen looks favorably upon.

"From my perspective as president, what I want to do is do anything we can do to be the strongest and best place, to offer the best policies…This is a list that I don't think any institution seeks to be on but my belief is that if the Office of Civil Rights can identify ways we can be better, then we should embrace that," Mullen said.

Mullen also expressed the hope that the OCR acknowledges the changes that Allegheny has made recently in an attempt to increase the college's awareness of the issue and more directly address how well it handles investigations.

As part of the Great Lakes College Association, including Denison University and Kenyon College, Allegheny is the only school with a full-time Title IX position. With this new change and Pope's training of three new investigators, Mullen believes that Allegheny has shown its dedication to Title IX topics and has plans for further improvement.

"A next step that we're working on, that we will launch in the fall, is a peer education, sexual assault prevention training," Pope said. "The way we're going to pilot that in the fall semester is to work with student organization, to have them participate in the workshops for us as a way to launch that program on campus."

> *In the 2013-12014 academic year, the college had 10 cases involving unwanted sexual contact. These 10 cases led to six suspensions and four expulsions.*

An important aspect that Pope hopes to improve is the language provided in Allegheny's Code of Student Conduct that describes the possible sanctions for students found responsible in these cases. Although Allegheny has no simple formula for determining the sanction, Pope hopes to provide examples of what types of cases would result in which sanctions.

"What we do not do in [the code of student conduct] is provide 'if this, then this' determinations," Pope said. "From a policy perspective, you don't want to completely pen yourself in because there's always one case that doesn't fit the descriptor. At the same time, I know there has been a lot of interest in having at least some examples."

One change that is currently being discussed by administrators is removing students from the Title IX hearing boards. While it is temporarily instituted for the 2014-2015 school year, the Campus Life and Community Standards Committee is currently discussing making the change permanent as it is recommended by the OCR as a best practice.

Regardless of specific policies, the U.S. Department of Education requires schools to conduct investigations even if the complainant does not wish to pursue legal action, as it is separate from law enforcement and a matter of campus safety.

"It still is the responsibility of the college to move forward with that investigation, primarily for the safety of the community. That's why that is in place: to make sure that if this crime has occurred…that our campus is safe," Mullen said. "We need to find out what happened, we need to find out the circumstances, we need to figure if there's been a violation and if so, what we need to do about it."

As a campus community, Mullen also believes that each individual can work toward alleviating the issue and that while the topic of sexual assault often seems complex and difficult to discuss, it is a very simple matter.

"In so many ways, these are complex issues but in so many ways, they boil down to a simple thing…What I've tried to do from my office is remember what this is all about at the end of the day. It's about respect for human dignity, it's about respect for individuals," Mullen said. "We need to send that message across this campus. There's no defined process for it, you send a message of human dignity. All of this is about setting a foundation for how we treat each other, that's step one."

As OCR's investigation at Allegheny continues, administrators will alert the campus community to any changes but reminds the community to be patient during the slow-going process. Pope, as full-time Title IX coordinator, hopes that any students who have questions or concerns regarding the review process or Title IX contact her.

Title IX Deputy Coordinators:

Jacquie Kondrot
Associate dean of students for wellness education

Patricia Ferrey
Director of human resources and EEO officer

Gilly Ford
Chief of staff

Angelo Panzetta
Men's soccer coach

Armenta Hinton
Associate dean of the college, director of the CIASS

Mandy Prusia
Associate athletics director, compliance and internal operations

Ande Diaz
Associate provost for diversity and organizational development

LIBRARY *from page 1*



AMASA SMITH/THE CAMPUS
Previously housing the circulation desk and media services, the renovations added additional student space on the main floor of Pelletier.

the other hand, it can be difficult to navigate the academic commons and its offices. Both Bills and Holmgren emphasized that there will be more work done to improve the efficiency of navigating the offices.

"There's a lot more services available," said Bills. "There's going to be students coming into this building to get those services who never came into this building before because they were going to over to Reis. I think we are going to see a lot more student traffic coming in here because of the variety of services. I think you're going to find it's a lot more convenient to get some of those services because they're all together on one floor. This is really an office environment and it's designed to be an efficient office environment with the offices close together."

Both Bills and Holmgren said to expect more signs and color-coding in the next few weeks.

"We ask that the campus be patient, we do know where everything is, we're just working out how to communicate that with you efficiently, and I suspect that will take a couple weeks to sort out," said Bills.

Overall, Bills believes the campus reaction to the aesthetics of the renovations is a positive one.

"When people walk in Pelletier and they see the changes we've made, they're very positive about the physical changes we've made," said Bills.

Apart from the physical changes, Bills does note that many are still unsure of the purpose of the academic commons.

"Integrating the library with the Gateway and the Learning Commons, I don't think there's any argument about it. I think a lot of people aren't really aware of what that is. The faculty that are aware of it, I think, are okay with it," said Bills. "I think it varies from, 'What did you say about that?' to 'Oh that's a good idea!'"

From the results of an online poll created by The Campus, student reaction to the newly renovated library is mixed.

Jackie Verrecchia, '17, voiced her concern that there is less room for group work, while Dalton Johnson, '15, thought the money used to renovate the library could have been put to better use.

"It looks nice. It was a waste of time, expended tons of money. I don't think it will benefit anyone by just putting in offices, but it looks nice," voiced Johnson.

Other students are more excited about the possibilities the academic commons will lend itself to. Molly Thomasson, '15, wrote that the offices can add extra noise and a distraction to studying on the main floor but recognized the space as a good common location for such a varied number of services.

> "I firmly believe that the real value for students is to create a space where they can study, collaborate and access resources for their projects," said Holmgren. "Our goal has been to create a more vibrant space for students in their learning.
>
> Rick Holmgren
> *Vice President for Information Services and Assessment*

"I really like it! It has new cubby areas for students to work, has more resources such as Gateway located in a more central are and it definitely has a more modern feel," wrote Krista Derdowski, '16.

Despite student concern, Bills and Holmgren believe the renovations will be beneficial in creating an efficient learning environment. Bills explained that a priority in designing the building was to keep if not increase student space.

"The student space has actually been expanded, so all the student space that was available on the main floor is still here," said Bills. "There's more student space upstairs then there was, just as many carrels."

Holmgren echoed Bills thoughts on the priority of student space.

"I firmly believe that the real value for students is to create a space where they can study, collaborate and access resources for their projects," said Holmgren. "Our goal has been to create a more vibrant space for students in their learning."

In terms of construction, the academic commons is complete, but Bills believes this project to be an ongoing learning experience.

"It's an aspiration. It's a very achievable aspiration. It's also an idea in process. We're doing something where we're not entirely sure what the end result is going to be. We know what we would like the effect to be, how exactly that will be achieved is something will be an ongoing project," said Bills. "It's like the three-body problem in physics, you can't predict what's going to happen, but we're confident it's going to be good. It's not something where we're ever going to say, 'It's done.' It's an opportunity for constant improvement."

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CRIME BLOTTER

Jan. 11, 2015
Schultz Hall
Student had an item stolen from her room.

Jan. 15, 2015
Oddfellows
An employee left her purse unattended and when she came back it was gone.

Jan. 16, 2015
College Court
Five students smoking marijuana in college room.

Jan. 17, 2015
Student being investigated for smoking marijuana.

Dec. 15, 2014 - Jan. 17, 2015
Schultz Hall
Unknown actor/s gain entry into student's room and stole items.

Jan. 17, 2015
Brooks Hall
Student reported money stolen from her room.

Jan. 21, 2015
College-owned house
Students smoking marijuana in this house and also fire safety violations.

ASG UPDATES

ASG received response to Resolution 10-04: Ensuring ongoing student voice at the Executive Level.

Student Activities Fee proposal updated, more information will be released soon.

ASG appointed two new members to cabinet. Mary Grace Warren, '15, now serves as vice-president and Nick Tortorici, '15, serves as chief of staff.

EVENTS CALENDAR

Poster Sale
Friday, Jan. 23, 10 a.m.-4 p.m., Campus Center Lobby
Thousands of posters are available for purchase during this one-day sale.

First ASA Meeting of the Semester
Friday, Jan. 23, 6 p.m., Campus Center 301/302
ASA welcomes everyone back with food, games and their first meeting of the semester.

Laugh in Peace Comedy Tour
Friday, Jan. 23, 7 p.m., Campus Center Lobby
Rabbi Bob Alper, Baptist minister Susan Sparks and Arab Muslim Mo Amer seek to bring understanding and healing through humor. Content is suitable for 16 and up.

Late Night: Stellar Shirts
Friday, Jan. 23, 10-11:30 p.m., Campus Center Lobby
Join the Astrology Club in making galaxy T-shirts. First come first serve.

Greek Run Out
Saturday, Jan. 24, noon, Brooks Circle
Fraternities and sororities introduce their new members at this Allegheny tradition.

SBHS and Project Nur Open House
Saturday, Jan. 24, 1 p.m., Prayer and Meditation House
Visit the Prayer and Meditation Retreat for tours and guided meditation for people of all faith backgrounds.

Concert by Pianist David Brunell
Saturday, Jan. 24, 3 p.m., Shafer Auditorium
The program will include Johann Sebastian Bach's Chromatic Fantasy and Fugue, BWV 903; Beethoven's Sonata in C Major, Op. 53 ("Waldstein"); the Brahms Fantasias, Op. 116; and Chopin's Fantasy in F Minor, Op. 49.

Late Night: DVD Swap
Saturday, Jan. 24, 10-11 p.m., Vukovich Lobby
Allegheny Film Union sponsors this opportunity to exchange old DVDs for new choices. Food will be provided.

Alpha Phi Omega Information Session
Sunday, Jan. 25, 2 p.m., McKinley's Private Dining Room
Learn more about serving in the community. Additional info sessions will be held on Wednesday, Jan. 28, at 4 p.m.; Saturday, Jan. 31, at 2 p.m.; and Monday, Feb. 2 at 12:15 p.m. (The Feb. 2 session will be in Campus Center 206.)

Information Session for Prospective Allegheny Community Engagement Student (ACES) Fellows
Tuesday, Jan. 27, 5 p.m., Campus Center 206
Learn more about the ACES Fellows Program, a student initiative of the Allegheny Gateway that works to establish more community-engaged learning in the classroom.

Information Session on Bridge
Tuesday, Jan. 27, 8 p.m., Ruter 201
Barbara Grzegorzewski, '73, and Professor Phillip Wolfe invite members of the Allegheny community who are interested in playing or learning the game of bridge to attend.

Spring Leadership Series
Thursday, Jan. 29, 12:30 p.m., Campus Center 302
Marchaé Peters will lead a session titled "Leadership Is No Laughing Matter." Sign up online through My Allegheny.

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Editorial: Reviewing Allegheny's past semester

Campus staff addresses hardship and encourages future community engagement

By SAM STEPHENSON and AMANDA SPADARO
Editors in chief

Allegheny's fall semester no doubt yielded challenges to the Allegheny community almost from the start. Across the board from student government to the administration, things went wrong and the community had to, at times, start from scratch. After the arrest of former Allegheny English professor Kirk Nesset, the community forum sparked ripple effects that have already changed the campus climate and community. Student government had its ups and downs from a decreased budget, mass resignations and the increased student activities fee proposal that sparked great debate that will continue into this year.

The campus community was threatened via social media by a former student and that young man was arrested. And as we left for winter break, we heard that there is a federal complaint against our sexual assault policies. Allegheny had a tough semester.

In the midst of all of these breaking news headlines, your student newspaper also had a tough semester. Accusations of both libel and slander crossed our desk, which were both surprising and educational experiences. In addition, requests for censorship by our administration forced us take a step back and examine what the administration's role is, if there exists any role at all, in the function of a student newspaper.

All of these circumstances forced the newspaper staff to realize that many community members, most importantly ourselves, needed to be educated about what exactly libel is, what slander is and what exactly our rights as a student newspaper on a college campus are. As leaders of this newspaper, we had the Student Press Law Center phone number almost memorized. But one thing was certain, with all of the breaking news headlines and difficulties we may have had, the reactions we received told us we were doing things right.

We thought the beginning of a new year would be an excellent opportunity to explain exactly what the difference between libel and slander is and why it is so important for an institution and society to defend the civil liberties that are offered to the press.

According to the SPLC, when a newspaper or publication is accused of libel, it means that they have been accused of publishing an article, image, symbol or anything that has been re-printed or broadcasted that is false and damaging to a person's reputation. In order for libel to occur, four parts must be proven: 1. publication 2. identification 3. harm 4. fault. However, a true statement cannot be the basis of a libel claim. History shows, however, that libel claims have been very difficult and very rare to hold true.

However, while newspapers and magazines may be accused of writing or photographing libelous content, slander is defamatory content of a spoken manner, therefore recusing all publications from accusations of slander. Because libel is a form of defamation, slander is simply the spoken word of defamation.

Further, imposed censorship on a publication, such as an outside party stealing newspapers before distribution, has been ruled unconstitutional except in rare cases including matters of national security and during wartime.

While this may not seem like a common occurrence, having been on staff for four years, we can attest to this being a tool used in the past to limit the voice of The Campus. Stealing newspapers that are for sale is punishable by law and while The Campus is a free publication, it can still be a misdemeanor if the theft is done to suppress publication.

According to Attorney Advocate Adam Goldstein on the SPLC website, "unless you break any rules or laws in how you choose to oppose censorship, it would be unlawful for an administrator (high school, college, or otherwise) to punish you for speaking out. That said, in most of the cases I've seen, the censorship was unlawful to begin with. So there's a risk that your administrators will choose to break the law again and try to punish you for speaking out. Those cases are extremely rare, but they do happen, from time to time. And if that happens, you fight it as another form of censorship. It certainly makes for a better court case."

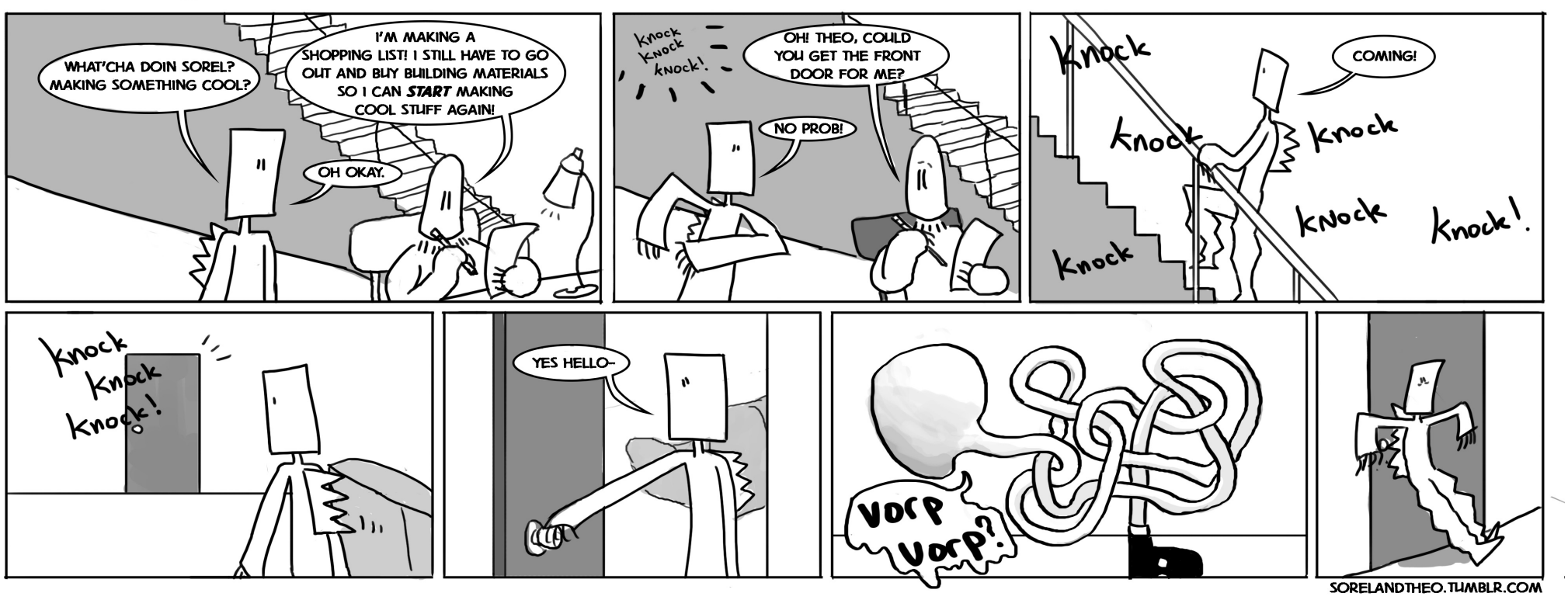
Covering the Allegheny community is a passion each one of our staff members holds dear, and doing so in a professional manner is something we as editors can always guarantee. But a part of the journalism process is a two-way street: a knowledgeable consumer of the news is just as important to strong and professional journalism as a professional reporter is. We have appreciated the support we have had over the years, especially this year, from the administration and the Allegheny community around the country.

If there is ever a concern with the ethics of The Campus staff or our editorial decisions in why we run or do not run stories, feel free to contact us. We explicitly encourage the community to be more involved in the newspaper because simply put, we are your newspaper. We tell Allegheny's story, and we'd love for you to be a part of it.

Amanda and I can be reached at:

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THE SIMPLE THINGS



Comic by Jonathon Yee

Active Minds: Thinking twice about mental illness

By MICHAELA COWDEN
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Over the winter break, my younger sister managed to get me hooked on Criminal Minds. It is a fictional show that focuses on solving horrific serial crimes, usually being committed by a single person. The more episodes that I watched, I began to notice a pattern: most of the criminals suffer from some type of mental illness.

Schizophrenia, multiple personality disorder, post- traumatic stress disorder and a number of others have been featured among the episodes. As the background stories of these criminals would unfold, I couldn't help but find myself feeling compassion for these people and for what they have endured. Some were military veterans, some had sexually, physically, or emotionally abusive pasts, and some were simply suffering from a mental illness that was taking over his or her life.

While I do not condone any form of criminal activity, especially the unspeakable crimes committed on the show, these fictional characters do make me wonder about how different the world could be if the societal shame attached to mental illness was eliminated and people felt free to get the help that they need.

Large proportions of the population are suffering in silence, a silence that is toxic to our society. The National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) conducted a study with the National Survey on Drug Use and Health, which defines a mental illness as "a mental, behavioral, or emotional disorder (excluding developmental and substance use disorders)." The survey concluded that there were an estimated 43.7 million adults aged 18 or older in the U.S. diagnosed with a mental illness in the past year, representing 18.6 perdentof all U.S. adults.

However, this statistic only includes those who had the courage to participate in a survey to disclose their mental health history. The 2012 study had a non-response bias that included 28 percent of NSDUH's adult population, meaning over a quarter of the sample did not respond to the survey. This alone shows the immense stigma that surrounds mental health in our society. Of the 43.7 million U.S. adults suffering from a mental illness, a second survey from the NSDUH found that only 13 percent are receiving mental health services, defined as inpatient or outpatient settings, or prescription drugs.

That leaves millions of affected individuals being untreated for a mental illness. Imagine having a disease that was completely diagnosable and treatable, yet was ruining your life because you were unable to personally seek treatment due to the fear of how others would treat you if it were to become known what you were battling. That is the situation that millions of people with a mental illness find themselves in every single day.

To those who do not understand the plight of these millions of people, it may sound ridiculous, and I can already hear the comments of "who cares what other people think!" Unfortunately, it is not that easy. Our society has been built to disregard those who need treatment for mental health. This was made abundantly clear in 1970 with the de-institutionalized all state hospitals and is still clear today with states making cuts in mental health budgets, nearing a total of 5 billion dollars over the last three years.

So with this knowledge and the beginning of a brand new year, I challenge each one of you to try your hardest each day to help break down the stigma surrounding mental health. The likelihood of us changing our nation's society is quite small, but we do have the amazing opportunity to change the environment on this campus. Do you know someone who has a mental illness? Let them know that they can talk to you for support, without judgment, even if you can't promise to understand what they are going through. Is someone struggling, but can't muster the courage to go to the counseling center? Offer to go with them.

Small acts like these can make the world of a difference to someone who may be suffering in silence. And it is with these small acts that we can harvest an attitude of compassion, inclusion, and support for our peers who have a mental illness.

Professor exposes unfair property taxes in Detroit

By ANGELA MAURONI
Science/International Editor
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Contributed by hereandnow.wbur.org

Detroit's central station sent out its last train in 1988. Abandoned, the windows are almost all broken and the building is enclosed with a metal fence and barbed wire. The central station has become an accurate representation of the property quality degrading in Detroit.

Timothy Hodge, former visiting assistant professor of economics at Allegheny in the fall of 2014, has been conducting research on statewide property tax policies in Michigan since 2008.

"In my career, my goal is to see how these policies work and how to change them," Hodge said.

Hodge carried his passion for economics with him into the classroom as he taught urban economics, which Phoenix Cooke, '15, took in spring of 2014.

"Professor Hodge's enthusiasm and passion for urban economics had engaged me from day one," Cooke said. "I never really understood how to apply economics to urban environments, and his class clarified this for me through teaching each concept clearly and in depth."

With his goal of affecting policy decisions, Hodge has found that the greatest challenge is collecting the data and finding time for the extensive research his projects require. However, Hodge is aware it is necessary if he is to succeed in getting ineffective policies changed, and has instilled that sense of importance in Cook.

"In regards to legislation, economics has taught me a lot about how policy works and interacts with governmental structures," Cooke said. "Economists are essential for legislative bodies to establish policies that will be effective in the economy and not create laws that fall short of success because the legislative body is lacking knowledge in economics."

Hodge worked with a large number of other researchers throughout the writing of his papers, one of those being Mark Skidmore, the Betty and David Morris chair in state and local government finance and policy and professor of agricultural economics at Michigan State University.

"The past several years we've worked extensively together on the collapse of the Detroit real estate market and its implications for the property tax," Skidmore said. "More generally, we have also worked together to evaluate statewide property tax policies here in Michigan."

Skidmore explained how, in late 2013, investigations on inflated property assessments began:

"[T]he research we conducted to evaluate severe over assessment of property in Detroit made its way into the media," Skidmore said. "The State Tax Commission became aware and was forced to get involved and conduct an independent evaluation."

In recent years, as much as 52 percent of people in Detroit have stopped paying their property taxes, and property tax appeals are becoming more common. Property taxes are determined based on the property value, but Hodge's research showed that there were frequently inequities in the assessments of the values. For instance, people could be paying as much in property taxes as they paid for their homes. According to Hodge, property values had dropped 59 percent since the recession in 2008, but the value assessments had not. However, Michigan law requires that assessments are made at 50 percent market value.

Due to the disproportionate taxes and property value, the population of Michigan has significantly decreased. At its height in the 1950s, Michigan's population was about 1.8 million people in 138 square miles. Now its down to half that. Compared to New York City, which has eight million people in 300 square miles, Detroit has become barren, with about 20,000 less people per square mile than New York City. This decrease in population has had major effects on the economy as there are so many less people stimulating it. This makes the importance of getting property taxes down to fair values again crucial for the state of Michigan's economy.

Since the investigations began, the mayor of Detroit, Mike Duggan, has announced that assessment in some places will be lowered by as much as 30% percent until they can reassess the property values.

"I think it is fair to say that had this research not revealed the problem in a clear and systematic way, this change may not have happened," Skidmore commented. "At a minimum, it would not have happened so soon. [I]f one wanted to quantify the impact, one could use the tax change, which would be in the range of $30 million in property owner tax savings annually."

Having been originally from only 45 miles outside of Detroit, the research Hodge has been conducting has been personal. He hopes that in the future he will see Michigan recover from its property tax equity issues, and plans next to examine vacancy issues with students during the summer of 2015.



Contributed by placesplanet.com

After opening in 1913, the central station ticket office was widely used and kept in good condition.



Contributed by hereandnow.wbur.org

Since the station closed in 1988, the ticket office has not been well maintained and has become covered in vandalism.

Women in Science strengthen support efforts

By ANGELA MAURONI
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Three years ago, the Women in Science Student Support Group was founded at Allegheny by student Brittany Rauzan,'13 in order to address the disproportionate gender gap between male and female students interested in STEM fields. Since Rauzan graduated, Erika Pack, '16, has taken over as the student coordinator.

"My goal for the group is to strengthen the bond between female students in the STEM field at Allegheny," Pack said. "There is always something to learn from your peers and I think that creating a tight bond will allow for a strong support network for students to rely on."

When it first began, Ivelitza Garcia, assistant professor of chemistry at Allegheny and the Women in Science adviser, had some doubts about forming the WiS group.

"I wasn't really sure what the interest for such a group would be," Garcia explained.

However, there was a fair turnout at their first meeting. Originally, the club held one meeting per semester, and worked to bring speakers and find conferences for the students.

Since its beginning, the group has dwindled down, but there is still at least one female faculty member per department involved.

The departments involved range from computer science to global health studies, and each faculty member works to mentor the students in their field. As well, WiS has begun working to organize the juniors and seniors to become mentors for the first-years and sophomores.

"I wish that as a freshman or sophomore I could've had an upperclassman to guide me through and give me their perspective on scheduling and courses, and research opportunities," Pack explained. "Now I have the opportunity to give others the advice that I wish I had received."

Adele Poynor, assistant professor of physics at Allegheny and physics mentor for WiS, agrees that she wishes to provide the support for others that she wishes she had had for herself.

"I thought it was a good idea because women are still underrepresented," Poynor added.

As one of the faculty mentors, Poynor periodically shares articles with her students in her field of study, or she shares them with Garcia to send to the whole group. She also provides advice for students on graduate school and shares scholarship information.

Though they may be underrepresented in the workforce, women are not lacking in numbers in many of the science department participating in the WiS.

By the end of January, the WiS members hope to begin having more frequent and regular meetings to better support the women on campus with connections and advice.

Male to female ratio of declared majors in participating departments

	Male	Female
Biochemistry	18	20
Biology	43	79
Chemistry	12	13
Computer Science	15	2
Environmental Science	26	31
Geology	10	10
Global Health Studies	3	14
Mathematics	17	15
Neuroscience	21	38
Physics	25	7
Psychology	32	85

Award winning activist presents keynote on injustice

Reverend Dr. Allen Boesak reflects on Martin Luther King Jr.'s legacy

By JOE TINGLEY
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Reverend Dr. Allan Boesak visited Allegheny College this week to take part in the college's observances of Martin Luther King Jr. Day.

Boesak, originally from South Africa, was a vocal activist against the Apartheid that separated blacks from whites in South Africa until 1992. Since that time, Boesak has continued to voice his opposition to injustice around the world, writing 18 books and receiving numerous awards for his activism including the Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights Award.

Boesak was introduced by his friend, and fellow South African Dr. Juvia P. Heuchert, professor of psychology at Allegheny. Boesak began his remarks quite light heartedly, joking about the weather in Meadville compared to South Africa.

As Boesak got into the main part of his speech, he explained that Allegheny played a role in South Africa's struggle against the Apartheid. Students at the time, he said, supported the cause and put pressure on colleges to remove endowment investments out of South African companies, putting an economic pressure on the government to end the segregation.

"This is my first time here, so let me thank you for what you have done in those days. Let me thank you, for your dedication. Let me thank you, for your support. Let me thank you, for the way in which you upheld us in some of the darkest moments of our lives and our struggle," said Boesak.

He went on to speak at length of the struggle of the Apartheid in South Africa. When he met his first congregation as a young minister they were a group in turmoil, many being forced from their homes because their land had been designated for whites. It was here that his struggle would start.

"I would never be the same again," he said.

Boesak revealed that at this time it was illegal to listen to the recordings of Martin Luther King Jr. in South Africa. In 1968, he heard King's words for the first time when a friend played him a tape with one of King's speeches on it. The tape had to be smuggled into the country.

"I was struck not just by that voice or by the gripping and soaring rhetoric, I was moved by the prophetic unfolding of the story for us today by the sheer power of the truth he spoke," said Boesak.

After a pause, Boesak stated simply that it was that one recording that changed his life. He spoke of the way King inspired him and the entire movement in South Africa. He explained how it made him and others realize that violence was not a solution.

"Lifting the sword, destroys the soul," he said simply.

Boesak went on to say that over the years we have watered down who King was and what he stood for, creating a stir in the assembled audience in Ford Chapel.

"It is disturbing to see how much effort is going into creating a Martin Luther King much more manageable than he was, a profit much more palatable than who he was, a King much more controllable than he allowed himself to be," said Boesak.

Following his remarks, Boesak expressed his optimism for the future in the U.S. specifically.

"There are these pockets of generosity and compassion and it's connecting these pockets to the rest of the world," said Boesak.

The observance of Martin Luther King Jr. Day did not stop at the doors of Ford Chapel. Throughout the day numerous workshops were provided in Quigley Hall which covered topics ranging from injustice in the public education system to a discussion of what exactly injustice is.

A workshop on the injustice in public schools was led by Dave Roncolato, director of civic engagement and professor of community and justice studies, and Charmaine Wilson, assistant director of civic engagement, and director of the Bonner program.

Wilson, originally from Dunkirk, N.Y., grew up in Erie where the public school system was subpar at the time. This issue, she said, is personal for her.

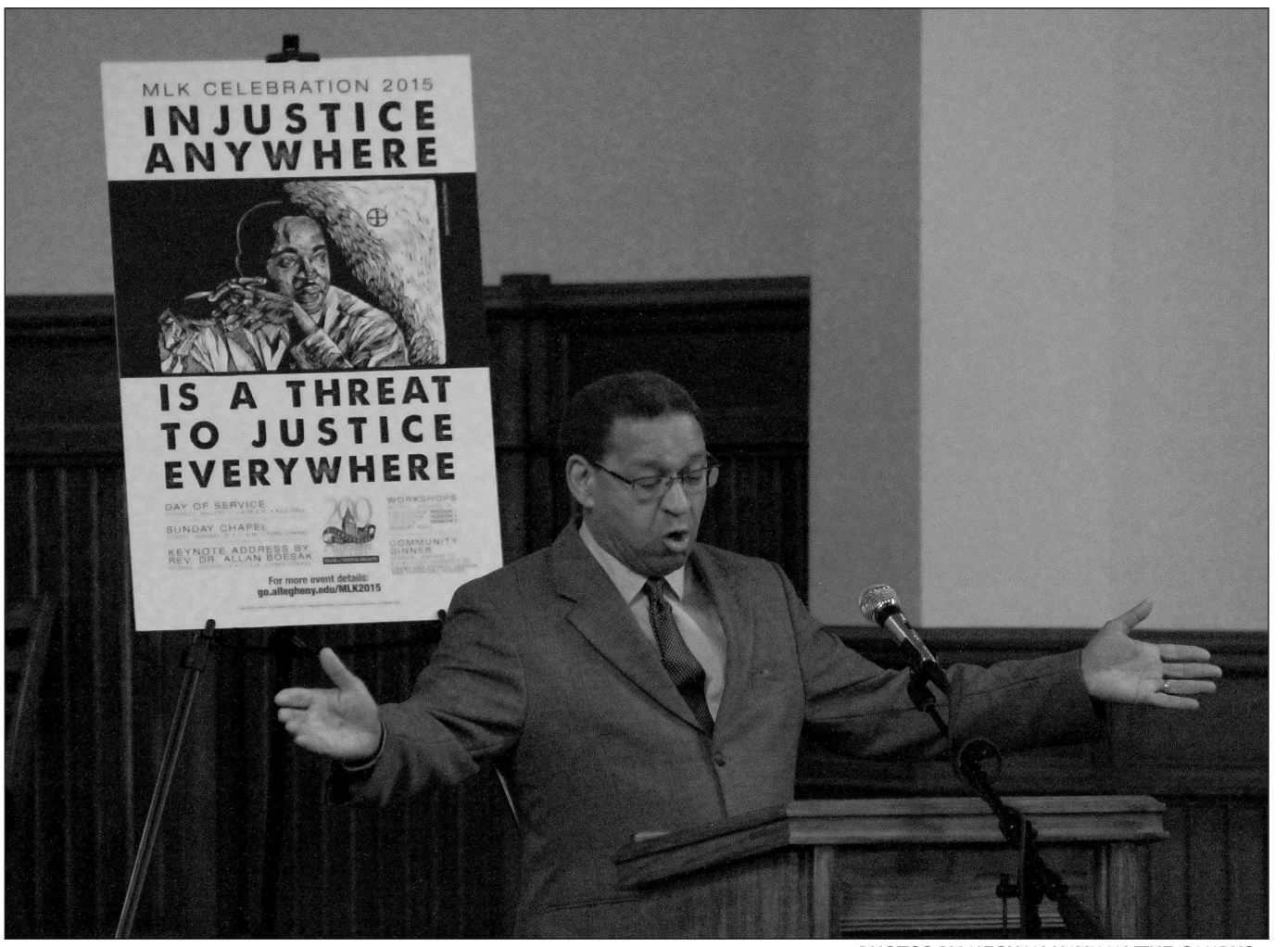
"Being a product, from a person who has actually been in public schools that were just failing, it's sad to see that it's still happening," said Wilson.

Many of the students in the room had firsthand knowledge of the education inequality that exists in the United States. Anacelia Gonez, '15, a New York City native, shared her own story of family members who are struggling in underfunded schools, while more and more students seek out better funded charter schools.

"A lot of parents are taking their kids to charter schools, and public schools are just largely underfunded," said Gonez.

Boesak also spoke of the inequality that exists in the U.S., not only in education but in wealth. He stated that he sees this gap as the largest hurdle we will face in achieving equality. He also stated his belief that it could become a tipping point in the future.

"If I were a politician, I would see that as an instability in our society," he said.



PHOTOS BY MEGHAN HAYMAN/THE CAMPUS

Reverend Dr. Allan Boesak spoke to the campus community on Jan. 19 in Ford Chapel for Dr. Martin Luther King Day. Boesak talked about how King inspired him after his friend played a tape of him speaking. It was illegal in the late 1960s to listen to recordings of King in South Africa.



Pamphlets and bags were available to those who attended workshops and speeches. Art professor Steve Prince created the artwork printed on each.

New Year, New You: What are your goals for 2015?

The Campus asked some students and faculty for their New Year's resolutions

Photos by Amasa Smith and Meghan Hayman



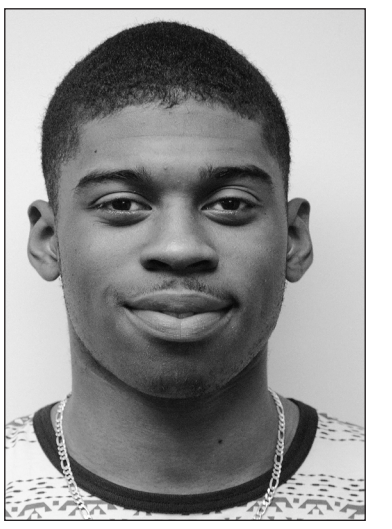
ANACELIA GOMEZ, '15

"I stopped doing those a long time ago. I just live my life."



KATE MCINTYRE, ENGLISH PROFESSOR

"To continually find joy in my writing."



AKEEM BRIDGEMAN, '16

"To watch more thought-provoking movies."



TREVOR DRULIA, '17

"To pet more puppies."



CALI BANKS, '18

"I want to be happy and healthy in the new year."



PHOTOS BY RACHEL WANG /THE CAMPUS

Students look at the digital video work, Devil's Noise, of artist Brenden Fernandes, during the opening reception of Performing Blackness :: Performing Whiteness exhibition on Tuesday, Jan. 20.

Allegheny examines racial identity with new exhibition

Performing Blackness :: Performing Whiteness invites campus discussion

By RACHEL WANG
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The Bowman Penelec Megahan Art Galleries of Allegheny College opened an exhibit called "Performing Blackness :: Performing Whiteness" with a reception on Tuesday, Jan. 20. Artists from around the world submitted their work to be a part of the exhibition.

Many of these artists have been featured in major museums worldwide including the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, the Andy Warhol Museum and the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal. The art featured in the exhibition covers various mediums with pieces in the forms of text, audio, video, painting and installations.

During the reception, one of the featured artists, Alisha Wormsley, talked about her collection of works entitled "There Are Black People in the Future," "Mantras" and "Extinction," and the past, present and future of black culture. "There Are Black People in the Future" combined sound and resin objects the artist collected from people in the neighborhood she once lived in.

"It has to do with this idea of, at least what I've seen so far is this dissolving of African American identity or black identity into some sort of homogenize group," said Rachel Simmons, '16, an art major. "It's trying to preserve and to say, showing that we have been here and black people have been here and our culture has been here. It is here and it will be here."

Simmons spent her last semester working and studying in New York City. "There were tons of galleries everywhere. I really love being back in this kind of gallery setting," said Simmons.

The art exhibition's opening night brought in a diverse audience, including a number of students and professors from the College. John Christie-Searles, a professor of political science who also teaches black studies, had his students attend the opening reception. Combined with other reading materials required for the class, Christie-Searles hoped the exhibition would lead to discussions in class about black experience.

"But not just the black experience but how it fits into the context of the overall American experience and how whiteness plays part with in the black experience," said Christie-Searles. "I think it's always good to raise awareness, both of otherness and also similarities and in a lot of ways, we saw extinctions as not just a white phenomenon but also black phenomenon, especially within African American communities where there is violence and the white. "

The exhibition also raised awareness of other minority groups. Jonathan Yee, '17, an American-born Chinese student, worked as a gallery intern to help with the exhibition, mainly researching and conducting interviews with artists. Thinking about Allegheny's Year of Voting Rights, Yee believed this exhibition provided "entry points" to have conversations about race on campus.



Steve Cole's project, "The Hate Project," portrays the various flags of hate groups in tribute to the 50th anniversary of the Birmingham, Ala. Baptist Church bombing.

"I think this show is also about other minorities, how they are affected by binaries of black and white, how they are categorized into this binary," said Yee.

"I feel like Asians get overlooked or we're not talked about that much, since there are so many different cultures of Asia. We are all just put under this one big umbrella, which is just Asian, which sort of simplifies all of the people. Race is so much more complicated than that. "

As the curator of this art exhibition, Darren Lee Miller, assistant professor of photography and gallery director, hoped the gallery would lead to discussions of culture, race and power.

"I think that I would be really happy and honored if the students coming to the exhibition would find that they were open to asking themselves questions, especially students who identifies as white, to ask themselves questions about what does it mean in America to be white," said Miller. "That's a question that before I started working on the show I never thought to ask myself. And I think that if we are going to think in a more sophisticated way about race, about difference, about privilege, then we have to start with that question."

Miller has been working on this exhibition for nearly two years, it is only a coincidence that it is released during a time in America where race is a subject of great discussion and debate.

"I'm happy that the content is a timely conversation. Unfortunately, it's tragic that this is a timely conversation," said Miller. "I only hope that the works in the show, the interviews that we do with the artists, and the essay that I wrote to offer some context can be a point of reflection, can offer some place to start that conversation and so that we can have productive dialogue."

The exhibition is free and open to public from Jan. 20 to Mar. 3.

Semester begins with snow work and snow play



Photos by Meghan Hayman

Allegheny's Physical Plant Department works to stay on top of the snow on campus with plowing and salting of the sidewalks. Students with cars stuck in parking lots are able to call Physical Plant for aid.

The college community was also advised to avoid areas due to heavy snow such as the garden on top of the Vukovich Center for Communication Arts.

Despite the freezing temperatures, the weather did not stop this snowman from being built on the bicentennial plaza earlier this week.



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MEGHAN HAYMAN/THE CAMPUS

Conor Macomber, '17, attempts to make it to the basket while Chris Milon, '16, defends against Oberlin on Jan. 14. The men's basketball team stayed on campus for break to practice and compete in games.

Men's basketball on campus for holiday; 1-3 overall over the break

By EMERALD WRIGHT-COLLIE
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The Allegheny Men's Basketball team had little to no time to be home for the holidays, a narrative that is not uncommon for the team as they are called in early every season. This season the men had to leave their hometowns the day after Christmas.

"It was tough leaving home the day after Christmas but I'm used to it because its always been like that since I've been playing ball," Chris Milon, '16, said.

In addition to cutting their break short, the players had to make it back to campus in enough time to make practice that same day. The team was given money by the coaches for meals during their time on Campus over the course of the break

"We had practice the same day. Sometimes we ate as a team. Other times we were given money to get our own food," Connor Macomber, '16, said.

Unlike first-year players on the team, veterans are used to having to cut their break extremely short for the sake of the sport and find their time on Campus to be enjoyable.

"Its kind of nice, I like being on campus without anyone here," Gabe Siedman, '15, said.

The team replaced the holidays at home with two a day practices and a series of games both away and at home. The players had to work hard to readjust after losing their forward Brandon Smith,' 16 to an injury in the game against Kenyon.

"Practice was really hard, we had two-a-days. We had to get back in shape and we had to do extra work since Brandon [Smith] was hurt," Milon said.

Jumping back into the game after a three week break and a few days of practice the Gators faced off against Stevenson on New Years Eve. Although the team had three players in double digits, the Gators fell to Stevenson at home. Josh Valentic, '15, and Evan Zabriski, '17, both had 18 points followed by Milon with 15 points.

The Gators started the first half of the game strong maintaining the lead. Despite the Mustangs stealing the lead with seven minutes left in the first half, Milon pushed four points to allow the Gators to take the lead back. Followed by a layup from Zabriski and a three point shot from Macomber putting the Gators at a five point advantage at halftime. Coming into the second half of the game the Mustangs prevailed shooting 64 percent from the floor causing the Gators to fall behind.

After the Stevenson game, the majority of the team spent New Years Eve on Campus.

"I really do miss my family on the holidays," Milon said. "On New Years my teammates came to our room to hang out."

There were players who live nearby and had the opportunity of returning home for the New Years holiday.

"Some of them had the chance to go home to pittsburgh for new years," Macomber said.

Not only two days later the gators were on the road to Indiana to play two games back to back.

The gators faced the DePauw Tigers on Jan 3. Even with Isaiah Henderson, '17, scoring 13 points in the first half, the Gators were unable to rise against the Tigers. The team had four players with double-figures in the game. Milon and Valentic were tied with 11 points and Zabriski had a total 15 points. Despite an attempt from Allegheny's defense the Tigers went on an 11-0 run in the beginning of the second half to force the largest lead of the game 56-33. Unable to recover the gators fell to the Tigers with a final score of 85-71.

After returning from break the team was looking at two losses.

The day after facing DePauw, the Gators were back on the road to play against Wabash.The team scored a win against the little Giants due to their 18-0 run in the second half after trailing the Little Giants by six points at the half. The team had four players with double figures in this game. Valentic was 7-for-10 from the field scoring a total of 20 points in the game followed by Milon with 16, Zabriski with 15 and Macomber with 12 points. The team also performed defensively with a total of 11 steals, 9 of which were in the second half of the game. Leslie Jamerson, '15, contributed to the Gator victory in the paint with a total of 5 rebounds and two blocks.

MASCOT from page 2

opportunity at the grand opening of the academic commons on Jan. 30 to sign a three-foot large egg, symbolizing the soon to be birth of Chompers.

The successful poll first came into fruition when the chatter about the new Chompers began to reach the ears of alumni and would enjoy being a part of, Garza said.

"We wanted to also tie it back to the bicentennial and the fun elements of student life and Allegheny athletics and re-engage alumni who might not be on campus," Garza said. "That's sort of what started the conversation."

Initially, Hoeg consulted with the mascot committee as well as Allegheny Student Government and the Student Athlete Advisory Committee to help gather ideas for the mascot. These discussions began the larger conversation that at one time sparked an online petition started by a former Allegheny admissions counselor and Allegheny alum, Zeben Ashton,'12. At one point, the petition had more than 500 votes voting against the blue gator.

"I think it means different things to different folks," Portia said. "That's what was clear through all of this. There are athletes who feel that the manifestation of the mascot is a direct correlation to their athletic aptitude or talent. There are those who feel like this is a representation of our entire institution. I think it really depends on the background of the person as to how they felt about the actual mascot. There are those are traditionalists and wanted to go back to mascots that we've had at the very beginning of our time as an institution. I think it's like anything in life, everybody has a different perception and that was very clear through this entire process."

Larry Hailsham, '15, president of ASG, played a large part in providing different ideas and avenues that the administration could go in tackling a new mascot.

"What we did to get the gator's color now should have been done first," Hailsham said. "And I think looking back that is super important to realize that it's not any one person's decision, it's all of our decision."

Despite his large role in the process, Hoeg and Garza are the only people who know the gator's true colors, for now.

"It's rather unfortunate that we have been without Chompers for so long," Hailsham said. "I think it will be a very big day when Chomper's makes its way back into the lives of every Alleghenian."

Upcoming Home Events

Sat. 1/24
Men's & Women's Swimming
vs. College of Wooster
1 p.m.

Women's Basketball
vs. Oberlin College
1 p.m.

Men's Basketball
vs. Wittenberg University
3 p.m.

Weds. 1/28
Men's Basketball
vs. Hiram College
7:30 p.m.

Swim team travels to Florida for annual training trip

By ALEX HOLMES
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Over winter break the men's and women's swimming and diving teams went to Coral Springs, Florida for a two week training trip.

"The practices were hard, and personally felt harder as it went on but the team got in great shape," Frank Chen, '18, said. "Your body goes on autopilot and gets through it. It's easier with your teammates being all together."

For Coach Kirk Kumbier, the hardest part of the trip comes before leaving Meadville.

"It's the planning before the trip, as much as possible needs to be done in advance and that's tough when you are already swamped with regular work planning for first semester practices, recruiting, fundraisers, alumni relations and handling other regular duties," Kumbier said. " When we're on the trip though, I'd say it get's a little easier, but it's sometimes hard to get good sleep."

Megan Feeney, '17, said practice meant time to get down to business but afternoons off gave the team a chance to bond at the beach.

A typical day for the team included three to five hours of training a day including a morning practice, a run or lifting session, and on most days, an afternoon practice as well.

"In Florida, while the content of practices is not drastically different from other first and second semester practices on campus, we do focus more on threshold and lactate training for the swimmers and adding more DD [Degree of Difficulty] for the diver's lists," Kumbier said. "This allows the athletes to come back and focus on a competition prep phase where the swimmers hone in on race pace and faster than race pace training and the divers continue to strive towards adding DD and creating the best possible list of dives for Conference."

Chen said the team was engaged at the pool even on rough days.

"Once you're in the pool with the team, you are motivated to work," Chen said.

"It was black and white, we were working hard or relaxing. It really redefined the phrase eat, sleep, swim," Chen said.

The team spent their time outside the pool bonding.

"We went from Meadville to Universal and spent a day there. Then one night we had class dinners and got to see the town and the beach," Chen said.

In addition to intense training, the team competed in a meet against Wittenberg University.

"We had a good connection with the Wittenberg team, and it was fun to have a meet against a NCAC Conference team in Florida," Feeney said.

The meet against Wittenberg included unique events that the teams participated in.

"The Freshmen-Senior Pineapple relay at the end of the meet is always the best part of the Wittenberg meet," Kumbier said. "We've been doing this meet the past three years and I think the seniors have won every year, usually it's their experience and knowledge of the system that kicks in and allows them to walk away with the coveted pineapple."

Chen said the team was exhausted and did not swim their best times but it was a chance to meet other people.

Feeney said the training trip got the team in the mindset to prepare for conferences.

"Florida is the hardest training we do all season and we are working to carry that momentum through the end of the season," Feeney said.

The team is now preparing for the closing of the 2014-2015 season and the upcoming conference championship.

"We are at our tipping point. The taper is a chance to get mentally and physically ready, we are recovering and polishing," Chen said. "It takes several weeks and we are doing race prep, easier practices and cutting out lifting."

Feeney said after the trip and adjusting back to classes, the team is working to continue supporting each other and remain positive.

"As a freshman I've never seen conferences, but I am look forward to seeing how the team does. We are swimming against highly respected teams and our relays have potential," Chen said.

Kumbier said the team is looking to go after varsity records at Conferences and improve team standings from last year.

"Both the men and women have some great shots at relay and individual records up on our boards and it will be exciting to see who wants it enough to get their name up there," Kumbier said. "We also have some that are close or be might be close to Regional and/or National qualifying marks so we will get behind those individuals and relays."

Conferences is an exciting time for the team and a chance to achieve the goals they have worked towards all season.

"The hard work is behind us, we have to get ready to swim there. A lot of team bonding happens now and we stay together and pump each other up," Feeney said.

Earlier in the season Feeney was named NCAC Swimmer of the Week, and named Allegheny Athlete of the Week on Jan. 19.

"It's an honor to represent the team. Everyone should be recognized for their contributions to the team," Feeney said.

The upcoming meet on Sat., Jan. 24 is the team's last home meet for this season and the senior recognition meet. The team is looking forward to the last chance to compete before Conferences.