

THE CONCORDIA

• COURIER •

INVESTIGATE. INFORM. IGNITE. INVOLVE.

Volume 19, Issue 11

Concordia University Irvine

Friday, March 28, 2025

A walk through the CU Center

University Operations provides updates on current construction

MADISON ZUNIGA
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Over the past eight months, Concordia's community has watched the demolition and subsequent rebuilding of the new CU Center at the heart of campus. Tim Odle, Vice President of University Operations, guided the author of this article on a walk-through tour of the construction site, providing crucial updates and insight on the progress.

The original CU Center was built in 1982, and is the same age as the arena and the amphitheatre. The new design does not encroach beyond the original CU Center footprint, instead fully utilizing the space that was outlined by the extended support beams of the old CU Center. The ceiling that can currently be observed will be covered and dropped lower to create a more intimate feeling in the space, though it will still be 30-35 feet high.

The new space will increase accommodations from 400-500 seats to over 800 seats. Unfortunately, none of the original CU Center pews could be preserved, and will be replaced with fixed seating. "We looked, and because pews are all custom and because we had this little curve, we couldn't sell them or give them to anybody," said Odle.

The hanging ceiling structures that can currently be seen will hold the new sound system, but these will not be visible in the final design. "All the lights and speakers will be hidden by sound clouds, which will aid in the use of the building as a performance and event space," said Odle.

"The stage will come out more. There are basically 100 seats that'll be on the stage, so almost like choir lofts," explained Odle. "It's just not a traditional center-like procession. We'll process on the sides, otherwise you'll lose too many seats that way."

The main stage will be about twice the size of the original, and the sanctuary will be accessed from the sides, with an ADA compliant ramp running along the sides to the center stage. This design would allow much accessibility for wheelchairs or carts, as they could roll around the perimeter of the entire central space.

At the front of the building, students can imagine a 42 foot cross made of polished nickel rising up from the center post through the roof. "One challenge for us is that this is a church," said Odle. "This is a sacred spot no matter what, and so we will have a concert in here, or there's a play in here and things like that, but number one, it is our worship space. We're maintaining the integrity of the

sanctuary itself."

At the moment, air conditioning ducts are being installed below what will become the flooring, and passersby can view the large blue pipes and open trenches being used for this project. After this is completed, the functional space will begin to take shape.

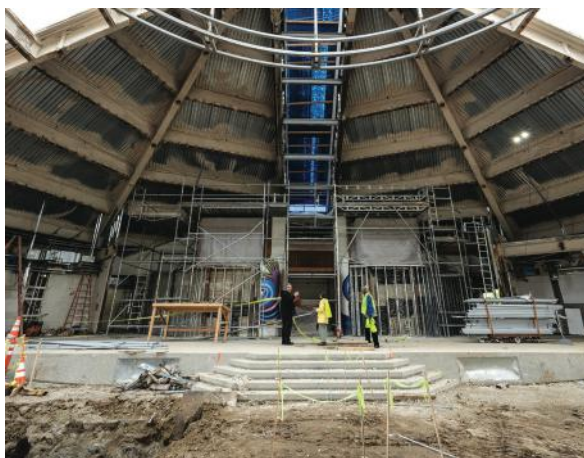
Odle explained that when students return to campus in August, the exterior of the building will look as though it is complete, because the major construction will have moved inside. "Everything will be wrapped and it'll be inside now... that's when everybody's really gonna want to come in all the time," said Odle. "We have a year left of actual construction. That's our schedule. Now, of course, it might rain you know, but the plan is that around March 2026, the construction will be done and then we will start working on reinstalling the organ."

The performance and sound capabilities of the CU Center are being significantly reworked and upgraded. "The organ is being all remodeled, rebuilt, we took all the pipes out," said Odle. "They went to three different locations in the nation, all the pipes based on their size were shipped to one or the other. And then we're getting a brand new console and playing station."

(Cont. on pg. 5)



PICTURED ABOVE: Madison Zuniga in the CU Center construction zone
Photos courtesy of: Ann Ashmon



PICTURED ABOVE: The CU Center ceiling currently exposed



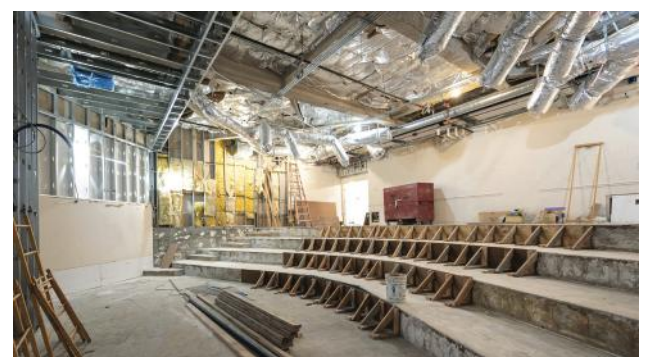
PICTURED ABOVE: Tim Odle leads a tour around the construction site



PICTURED ABOVE: Madison Zuniga interviews Tim Odle



PICTURED ABOVE: Odle leads a tour through the CU Center interior



PICTURED ABOVE: Construction on a new breakout room in the back of the CU Center

The Writing Studio staff presents, participates and celebrates at SoCal conference

MADISON ZUNIGA
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

On Sat., March 22, Concordia's on-campus Writing Studio staff traveled down to San Diego to attend the 2025 Southern California Writing Center Association (SoCal WCA) Conference, hosted by Point Loma Nazarene University.

The organization began in 2003 and was formalized in 2005. Its stated purpose is to "further the theoretical, pedagogical, and political interests of writing center professionals and to encourage dialogue about writing centers and writing tutoring from all levels of public and private education." The 2025 theme was "Navigating Today's Writing Center: Inclusion, Affect, and Impact of Tutoring Practices."

"The SoCal WCA Annual Conference is a wonderful opportunity to meet with other tutors and writing consultants to present research and encourage one another to serve more excellently," said Professor Zoë Litzenberg, Assistant Director of the Writing Studio. "This year was a chance for both professionals and students to learn from each other."

"It was the second in-person conference after COVID, and it's great to see conference attendance numbers coming back after the pandemic," said Professor Kristen Schmidt, Director of the Writing Studio. "Concordia brought two Writing Studio presentations and two professional staff presentations, which were well received. We represented the university well!"

All three Writing Studio administrators

and ten staff members participated in the conference, with seven hosting interactive workshops, guiding roundtable discussions, or leading informative lectures. Months of research, preparation and practice went into these presentations, which had to be submitted and accepted by the SoCal WCA board.

"This experience helped me learn how to better serve those around me through the Writing Studio and its practices," said Liana Nguyen, junior Writing Studio consultant. "The WCA conference was a valuable experience that provided us a chance to participate in an exchange of knowledge and practice."

In addition to introducing new and relevant concepts to the staff, the conference was also a time for the writing center community to bond and reconnect. A particularly special moment occurred when Litzenberg took the stage to acknowledge and celebrate Schmidt's years of service and commitment to the SoCal WCA.

"The conference day was well planned and executed—and the surprise tribute by Zoe and the staff for my years of service as a member of the SoCal Writing Centers Association and my upcoming retirement made it a day to remember," said Schmidt.

"As a Writing Center Professional, my favorite part of being a part of SoCal WCA is the spirit of kindness and care that writing centers create for their writers and for each other," said Litzenberg. "Very few professional organizations are centered on practice like the SoCal WCA, and I think that enhances our work—and gives our Writing Studio staff unique and valuable experiences."



PICTURED ABOVE: The 24-25 Writing Studio Staff
Photo courtesy of: Camille Beeson

Campaigns for a healthier campus

TABITHA JOHNSON
STAFF WRITER

Landing on April 7 and April 9, promoting natural sources of energy, such as juice, coffee and supplements.

On Tues., March 25, Kaila Kupihea's campaign group promoted gut health outside the cafeteria. Kupihea said, "The gut is our second brain and affects many aspects of health such as mental and physical wellbeing. We want to help college students improve their gut health for the benefits of physical health and academic success."

The gut health campaign group offered samples of the alternative soda Ollipop, which contains prebiotics, plant fiber and less sugar. Kupihea noted that 63% of adults consume excess processed sugars daily, and alternative beverages are a practical way to decrease sugars.

Junior Peyton VonKaenel is in an anti-vaping health campaign group, which will operate off campus. VonKaenel said, "Our health campaign is to inform people of the known and unknown dangers of vaping. We hope to connect information to vapers as well as friends and family of vapers to increase support and awareness for this sometimes silent threat."

The anti-vaping campaign group is disturbing physical flyers on the harmful effects of vaping as well as creating social media content to distribute digitally.

Marty the Golden Eagle in: New Phone, Who This?

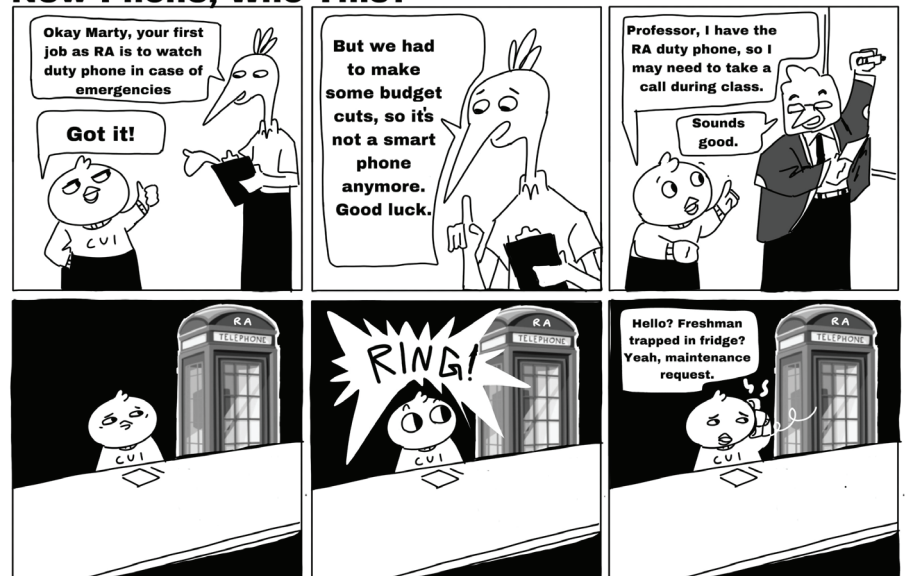


Photo courtesy of: Dylan Arant

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ASL club's activities educate, create community

SOPHIE THOMAS
STAFF WRITER

This past Wednesday from 5 to 7 p.m., the ASL Club and the Living Learning Communities partnered together to host "Wings Wednesday" in the Lambda Lounge. This is just one of the events they host throughout the year. The ASL club regularly contributes a unique perspective on communication and education of deaf culture.

Maddie Durkin, a senior and the president of the ASL Club, held a discussion on De'VIA, the deaf perspective on art and images. Her presentation highlighted artists such as Chuck Baird, Paul Scarce and Susan Dupor who all used visual works to share their

experiences and perspectives living as a person with hearing loss.

Durkin, whose grandparents are both deaf, started the ASL club because of her passion for the community. "I have to say, the fact that I stuck with it is because I just think the culture is so unique, the history is amazing and nobody really knows about it," said Durkin. After four years of study and excelling in ASL classes throughout high school, Durkin knew starting this club was something she wanted to pursue once she got to Concordia.

"I think it's so fascinating and so interesting," said Sophia Meyer, a junior who attended Wednesday's event, "it makes

me want to learn so much more about it."

For those like Meyer who want to experience more of ASL culture, the club holds regular meetings as well as events for people to engage in. Another ASL event was the Silent Dinner, held on Fri. March 21.

ASL's Silent Dinner is their big event that takes place in the spring. According to Durkin, students have the opportunity to enjoy free food, games and performances, all while experiencing the "dinner table."

The "dinner table," highlighted in Durkin's presentation, is a common theme in deaf culture where those without hearing are often left out of the typical engagement of those with hearing. This event is an opportunity to "communicate without your voice," said Durkin, while also "seeing how that feels and what you learn from that as well."

The club holds its weekly

meetings on Tuesday nights from 6 to 7 p.m. on the first floor of the BMC building. If you want to keep up with club events and information, you can find them on Instagram under the username "cui_asl."



PICTURED ABOVE: "Forest of Eyeth", an example of De'VIA, deaf art
Photo courtesy of: Paul Scarce - @deafhand-yeartist - Instagram

Grand opening of the new Campus Safety and Wellness building

MAKTZILL DE JESUS
STAFF WRITER

The Wellness Center and Campus Security recently expanded, uniting essential services in one accessible location. This improvement enhances student support by ensuring confidentiality and convenience. The grand opening was on March 20, and the center is in the CSW building, accessible via the northeast door across from the East Lot.

President Michael Thomas emphasized the importance of integrating all services under one roof, including the Wellness Paws program and other student wellness initiatives. "This effort aims to make the center welcoming while maintaining confidentiality and accessibility," said Thomas.

Students were welcomed into the building during the grand opening and given a tour. Once finished, students received two tickets for an acai bowl and a five-minute massage.

There are significant additions to the center and the building, like an atrium designed as a peaceful space

for relaxation and conversation. Plans are underway to use this space for meditation or as a space to talk, providing a calming outdoor setting for wellness activities. The Wellness Paws program is where students can hang out with adorable dogs to relieve stress. Make sure to follow @cui_wellnesscenter on Instagram to follow up with dates and times when the dogs will be there to play.

The students' favorite is massage therapy services, now available by appointment. Jaymeeh Ouk, a nurse practitioner, mentioned that walk-ins are not permitted, ensuring a structured and confidential experience for individuals seeking this service. To schedule an appointment, one can go into the MyCUI app, log in with E# and Eagles email password, then under "MyTools," select "MyMedicat," and select an appointment for one of the massage chairs.

Concordia College Corps Fellows and the Wellness Center have partnered to assist students with basic needs. The program is called Helping Hands and the mission is to provide

resources and connections to meet fundamental needs of Concordia students. These needs include housing, food, safety, clothing, transportation and more. There are also resources for student-parents who are balancing academics with childcare. The Wellness Center staff is available to assist and more information is available at cui.edu/studentlife/wellness-center/helping-hands.

The Helping Hands pantry provides nutritious food options and additional support for students. And the career closet is where students can pick up professional clothes for interviews. Look for a fall launch schedule. A QR code system has been implemented to gather ideas and feedback from students on further improvements as well.

College Corps is a service-based fellowship program that provides students with opportunities to engage in community service while earning financial support. Participants work with local organizations in areas like education, food insecurity and climate action to make a meaningful impact. Lucas Brawner, Assistant Director of the College Corps "reviews applications daily on the website handshake." The application is due March 28, and students can earn up to \$10,000 by participating in the College Corps program.

Sherrie Lynn Schwartz, a nurse practitioner since 2010, shared her enthusiasm for the expanded center, particularly in supporting nursing students. The center now has four exam rooms, providing more room for students to get treated. There is a waiting area where students can go in and make their appointment, and then one of the nurse staff members will get them from the waiting area.

There are three Nurse Practitioners at the center who

ensure high-quality care and training opportunities: Michelle Laabs (Associate Dean of Student Wellness), Schwartz, and Ouk.

There is also still the opportunity for students to schedule therapy appointments by visiting cui.medicatconnect.com. The process for scheduling an appointment is as follows:

1. Log in to cui.medicatconnect.com.
2. Enter your username (student ID#).
3. Enter your password (same credentials used to access the Golden Eagles email account).
4. Click "Forms."
5. Select "Schedule Availability Form."
6. Complete the form and submit it to be scheduled for a therapy session.

Raul Morales, Director of Campus Safety, has been part of Campus Safety for nine years. He highlighted the improvements in accessibility, lighting and overall usability of the building. "The expanded facility offers a more professional and comfortable space for conversations, counseling and student engagement," said Morales.

Additional upgrades include a lost-and-found closet, office spaces, a dedicated report office and enhanced security measures, including a video surveillance room. Men's and women's locker rooms have also been introduced, providing added convenience to students and staff.

The expansion of the campus Wellness Center represents a long-term commitment to student well-being. By consolidating essential services, enhancing facilities, and providing employment and training opportunities, the center is set to be a cornerstone of support for the campus community.



PICTURED ABOVE: Campus Security M. Rodgers, C. Spruill, R. Morales, and T. Oliveri with Maki De Jesus.
Photo courtesy of: Maki De Jesus

Your 2025 Mr. CUI is...Joey Panetta!

KIARA AZUMA
CAMPUS EDITOR

The Flight Force hosted their second Mr. CUI on Thurs. March 13 in the CU Arena, bringing in a crowd of over 350 students. Eight finalists were selected for the event following nominations. The finalists representing Rho were Jameel Naber and Victor Juarez; representing Sigma were Geist McGehee and Joey Panetta; representing Quads were Nano Aguirre and Sam Held; and Landon McIntire and Spencer Handorf represented the Commuters.

Hunt Coordinators Taylor Becker and Brody Collins hosted Mr. CUI. Travis Spence, Tori Clemmens (Rho Resident Director), Mason Dalbeck (2024 Mr. CUI), and Danny Baladi (Head Strength and Conditioning Coach) were the judges.

Joey Panetta, junior, won this year's Mr. CUI. He won \$350, and his coach, Anna Tucker, won \$150. Panetta plans to use the prize money for his laptop, which broke right before the competition.

Panetta participated in an opening group dance with all the Mr. CUI contestants. He explained working with the other contestants on this dance was a lot of fun. "We were just as unprepared as each other going into it, and learning and growing as a group was so satisfying. While I knew some of the guys, I made some new friends like Victor, who I actually started hanging out with after the event was over," said Panetta. "I just think it was the perfect group of contestants, and really, everyone deserved to win it."

For the beachwear portion, Panetta dressed like Moana and was pushed by Tucker on a cart, singing "How Far I'll Go." Panetta showcased his rapping skills to the crowd for the talent portion, which he explained was the hardest to memorize, but succeeded well during the competition.

Panetta said, "I have to give a special shoutout to my coach and

Ms. CUI, Anna Tucker. She was all in from the beginning, part of my performances (and killed it), and helped me make sure we had all our props and practiced over and over again."

"[Tucker] came up with the idea for our islander/Moana performance since we're both from islands (me Hawaii and her New Zealand. She showed me how to learn the Eminem song surprisingly. I don't think I could have won this without her," said Panetta.

Mr. CUI ended with all the contestants being asked questions while they wore their formal wear.

After the judges decided on the final four, the audience voted for who they believed should win, leading to the crowning of Panetta as 2025 Mr. CUI.

"To win Mr. CUI you need to put in a lot of effort. The audience recognizes the guys who take the competition seriously. You must bring a crowd to vote for you, and you must entertain the audience," said Alexis Borland, Associate Director of Residence Life and School Spirit. "Joey Panetta did an amazing job this year, and that is why he won. He is a man of the people and represents Concordia well."

"I'm just thankful to God to be nominated and even winning such a fun and hard event. I'm so happy to have won and so thankful to everyone who voted for me. Even if you didn't vote for me, I'm thankful for all the people who came out and supported everyone," said Panetta. He expressed how Mr. CUI got him out of his comfort zone. "Not necessarily winning, but just participating definitely gave me a level of confidence. I was so nervous for the event and so glad I could go out there and do pretty well."

Congratulations to Panetta on his win and all the men who participated!



PICTURED ABOVE: Joey Panetta is crowned 2025 Mr. CUI
Photo courtesy of: Alexis Borland



PICTURED ABOVE: All contestants and their coaches line up for a group photo after the competition
Photo courtesy of: Alexis Borland



PICTURED ABOVE: Joey Panetta is announced as the winner of Mr. CUI
Photo courtesy of: Alexis Borland



PICTURED ABOVE: Joey Panetta showcases his rap skills during the talent portion of the competition
Photo courtesy of: Alexis Borland

Leadership lunch explores establishing a reaction of gratitude

TABITHA JOHNSON
STAFF WRITER

"Give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus."

— 1 Thessalonians 5:18, New International Version

On Fri., March 21, the Advancing Women In Leadership (AWiL) Committee held their 6th annual luncheon, which celebrates and promotes the success of Concordia Irvine's women in faculty, staff and administrative roles. The Committee is a dedicated task force of women in leadership across all departments of the university and is co-chaired by Ashlie Andrew of the Townsend Institute and Lori Doyle of the School Of Education.

Rachel Klitzing, Executive Director of School Ministries for the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) Pacific Southwest District (PSD), was the keynote speaker for the AWiL Luncheon. Klitzing has served 40 years in educational ministry and has held an integral role in advancing the mission of the PSD since 1998.

The Pacific Southwest District is one of

the 35 districts of the LCMS and serves 300 congregations and 168 Lutheran Schools in Southern California, Arizona, and Southern Nevada. The district's mission is to effectively resource congregations and schools to fulfill the Great Commission.

Klitzing presented "Leading with Gratitude: Growing Together, Rising Stronger," in which she defined gratitude, identified benefits, and offered actions for practicing gratitude. Klitzing referred to the Latin root of the word, which frames gratitude to be a positive feeling, action or idea. Gratitude is not a forced action, it is a reaction. Klitzing explained that this aligns to biblical gratitude, an approach to life of finding substance and strength through a positive response to experiencing God's goodness.

Klitzing summarized, "Once you realize that God is working in your life, you'll show gratefulness in how you live." Klitzing presented that practicing biblical gratitude directs a person toward understanding God as the author of all good in one's life, and in the world.

Klitzing identified five benefits to practicing gratitude: improved mental health, greater happiness, healthier

relationships, prosocial behavior and better physical health. Klitzing suggests that regular identification of God's goodness forms a positive reaction to life out of sheer gratitude for God's grace and kindness.

To practice gratitude, Klitzing promotes writing a gratitude list or card. A gratitude list includes "microgratitudes," such as everyday items and nature, as well as "macrogratitudes," such as people and important events. A gratitude card is a letter to a friend or coworker expressing gratitude for them in life. By identifying

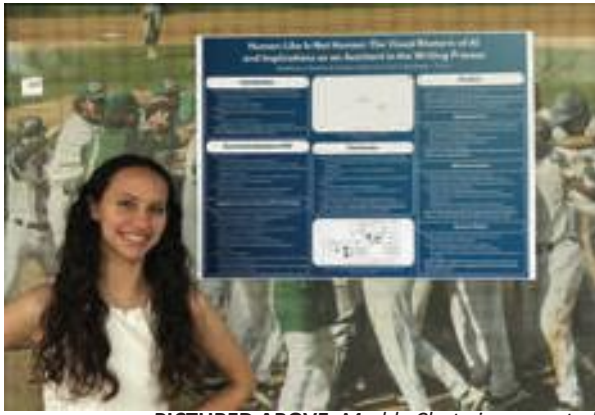
God as the true source of good, there is strength and substance in every moment and interaction.

To form a reaction of strength in gratitude, be intentional about writing a list of gratitude to God. As people are identified in the list of God's blessings, share the gratitude with them by expressing it in a card.

For more information about Advancing Women in Leadership, contact co-chair Ashlie Andrew at ashlie.andrew@cui.edu.



PICTURED ABOVE: High attendance at AWiL luncheon
Photo courtesy of: Tabitha Johnson



PICTURED ABOVE: Maddy Chatwin presented Gen AI and writing
Photo courtesy of: Madison Zuniga



PICTURED ABOVE: Audrey Kaufman presented the Fibonacci sequence and printmaking
Photo courtesy of: Madison Zuniga



PICTURED ABOVE: Olivia Thaelke presented text painting in the liturgy
Photo courtesy of: Madison Zuniga

Students present a myriad of topics for the President's Academic Showcase

MADISON ZUNIGA
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

On Tues., March 25, 30 students spent two hours presenting their personal research projects to faculty, staff, judges and peers. The President's Academic Showcase offers undergraduates the opportunity to pursue in-depth research on a topic of their choice, under the guidance of a faculty mentor.

By writing a 10 to 25 page paper, designing a poster and reciting a two-minute speech, participants compete for the chance to win thousands of dollars in prize money. This year, topics ranged from generative AI in writing and liturgical sheet music to DNA value algorithms and the effect of dance on people with Parkinson's disease.

Students who complete a showcase gain valuable experience and learn important lessons throughout the process. "It was really fun getting to figure out how to write a proper research paper, as that's something I've never done before," said Maddy Chatwin, freshman. "Working with my faculty mentor, Zoë, was really fun because she taught me a lot that I had no idea was needed for such

an intensive project. I feel like I've grown so much both in the field that I studied and academically. And now I know how to do APA! So that's fun too."

The showcase always requires commitment and dedication. "My project combined math and art, and the reason I chose to do this is because in our core math class, we did some research about Fibonacci, and it was really fun, actually," said Audrey Kaufman, freshman. "I just love to do art on my own, so I thought it would be a fun way to combine my love of art and what I've learned with math. Overall, it's been a kind of a difficult process, it's been long, but productive."

"Doing this showcase was definitely challenging," said Josiah Chin, junior. "Originally I just wanted to do an honors investigation just to get the paper done but doing the showcase took it to another level, an experience that I thought I'd never do before. But it's really cool because I get to challenge myself and really present to people what I've researched. It helps to share knowledge and exchange knowledge with one another and to help us see more of the reality of this world."

Students often utilize the showcase as a way to study their personal interests more closely. "So my major is Church Music," said Olivia Thaelke, junior. "And so that's why I ultimately decided to talk about the liturgy and talk about its beauty. A lot of times the perceived notion of liturgy is that it's boring, old antiquated, and because it's done week to week, there's not a lot of things that you can still gain from it. But I'd like to argue that there is more room for wonder and curiosity within the liturgy."

The research extends beyond campus and personal use as well. "My showcase allowed me to get involved with a local community of people who suffer from Parkinson's and contribute to research about interventions that may improve their overall quality of life," said Britton Cheney, junior. "I found it to be a very valuable experience. I got to meet people and work with them and hear about their experience as they wrestle with the disease. And so it becomes a little different when you're working with real people and you actually get to talk to the participants, and it's not just reading research and learning abstractly about a disease."

Academic Showcase research has the potential to be expanded upon or

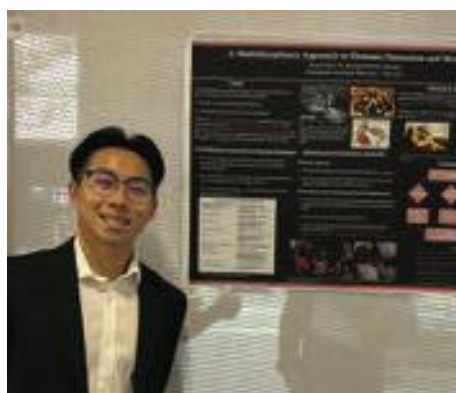
used by others in the field. "My project was about looking for expected value algorithms, finding counting k-mers and DNA sequences," said Paul Schulteis, freshman. "K-mers are like little DNA words made up of nucleotides, and so by using the different algorithms I worked on, they provide different approaches that scientists can use finding expected value and what makes it significant is you compare the expected value to what we observe. That significance is what future scientists can study."

With the research, design and presentation mostly accomplished on their own, students gain a strong sense of independence through the showcase process. "The showcase was such a wonderful process this year, because it really taught me that I'm capable of doing academic research, mostly by myself. Of course, I had guidance from professors, but I was really able to deep dive into something that I'm passionate about, and I'm really excited to share it with other people too," said Gracie Leininger, junior.

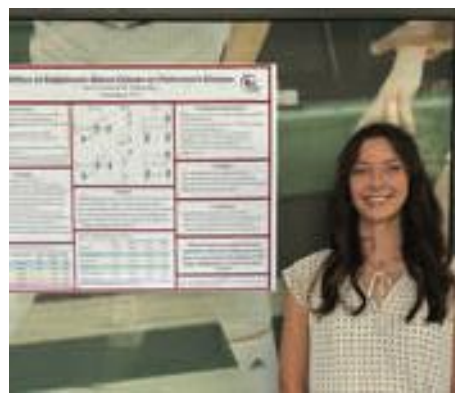
For more information about the President's Academic Showcase, contact Nathan Meier at nathan.meier@cui.edu or Erin Nelson at erin.nelson@cui.edu.



PICTURED ABOVE: Gracie Leininger presented moral plays in early Protestantism
Photo courtesy of: Madison Zuniga



PICTURED ABOVE: Josiah Chin presented a multidisciplinary approach to demons and mental health
Photo courtesy of: Madison Zuniga



PICTURED ABOVE: Britton Cheney presented the effect of dance on Parkinson's patients
Photo courtesy of: Madison Zuniga



PICTURED ABOVE: Paul Schulteis presented expected value algorithms in DNA
Photo courtesy of: Madison Zuniga

(CU Center, cont. from pg. 1)

Odle detailed how the new electronic systems will transform the space, especially in terms of acoustics. "Of course, there will be all new electronic controls, an all new soundboard, all new speakers, you know. In Zhang Hall, it is built with wood to be acoustic. Good Shepherd Chapel is built so that the structure is acoustic," said Odle. "This is not. This is built so that we have electronics that create the acoustics and can amplify in tune. So we are doing electronic acoustics here."

With a live stream booth built into the space and a top-notch sound system, preserving high quality records of performances and services

will be seamless. The goal is for all recordings of images and sounds to be able to be sent directly to the studio in the BMC for processing and editing.

"The sound system is an Amadeus sound system," said Odle. "It comes from Germany, and it'll be the first one in the United States. Dr. Held went and visited Germany. We had a committee, we had all people from Christ College, we had people from music, contemporary worship, campus ministry, all of that. So we continue to have premiere music facilities."

The school is planning for the construction contractor's work to be complete in March of 2026. Then, Odle and his team at University Services will move into the building,

and spend several months on the finishing touches.

"We have to sand all the floor because it's all polished concrete. Then we clean all that up because that's a mess. Then we come in and we start installing all the chairs. Then we start with the control room... we start bringing in all of those electronics. One of the last things is the organ, and that takes four months to tune, get it ready. When everybody comes back in August [2026], you'll come right in."

The grand opening of the new CU Center is planned to align with the 50th anniversary celebration of Concordia's founding, in October of 2026. Special worship services and arts presentations are expected for the celebratory event.

"This is not an easy build," Odle emphasized. "The good news is, as we've taken the scaffolding down, which was holding it all up, it didn't fall down. I was standing up there by Founders Hall when they took the scaffolding down because that was one of the bigger things that we were worried about."

Students can expect a lot of change and visual progress during the build within the next two months as the semester comes to a close. Exciting decisions have already been made, such as the new paint color for the roofing, and Concordia's community can look for forthcoming details from the university. Keep watching closely during this unique moment of Concordia's history, and stay tuned for more updates!

Theatre and Film Department event celebrates Professor Lori Siekmann

KAYLA REED
STAFF WRITER

On April 5, the Theatre and Film Department will host a fundraiser and celebration of Professor Lori Siekmann's 20 years of service at Concordia. The event, named Spotlight on Success, will take place on campus at Concordia's Studio Theater from 5 to 11 p.m., uniting alumni, friends and theatre patrons to honor Siekmann and support the Theatre and Film Department.

The event will feature performances from alumni and current students, serving as a tribute to the department's past and present successes under Siekmann's tenure. Hors d'oeuvres and beverages will be served. Tickets are \$30 and must be purchased prior to the event.

Siekmann, the chair of the Theatre and Film Department, said, "I am most looking forward to seeing alumni coming back to attend and also perform as part of the evening's entertainment! I also look forward to seeing any of our amazing theatre patrons, and just anyone who can make it." Spotlight on Success is open to all who want to support the department and Siekmann's work.

She added, "It will be great to have social time with alumni, friends and colleagues to celebrate the Concordia Theatre and Film Department and my time here."

Siekmann's 20 year milestone is a testament to her constant dedication to her work in the department. Tony Vezner, a professor of theatre at Concordia, said of his colleague, "Lori has had four full productions and two scenes invited to the [Kennedy Center American College Theatre] festival! On top of that, she has received the Kennedy Center Gold Medallion—the highest award the Kennedy Center gives to theatre educators. Having a faculty member be prominently recognized like that by one's peers is extremely rare and reflects excellence on our department."

The Theatre and Film Department recently returned from the Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival's Region 8 conference in Arizona, where they were invited to perform their show "Girls Like That" as one of only four colleges invited to bring a full show. The money raised from this event will support the department as they cover costs of trips like these,

according to Vezner.

Concordia's Theater Program has grown significantly since Siekmann began working with the department. From 2005 to 2025, the department has grown to include three different emphases within the Theatre and Film Major, five minors (Theatre, Musical Theatre, Film and Digital Video Production, Design and Technical Production, and the newly approved Dance minor), and many more class options to prepare students for successful careers in the entertainment industry. The ever-growing network of Concordia theatre and film alumni is a reflection of the care and effort of the people behind the program.

Siekmann said, "My favorite

part of being department chair is that I get to work with wonderful students...I get to direct shows that give a voice to stories that need to be told and that make people laugh, cry, think and feel. Most importantly, I get to do this in a place that allows me to talk about Jesus and share my faith."

Come support the Theatre and Film Department and celebrate Siekmann at Spotlight on Success on April 5, from 5 to 11 p.m. at the Concordia Studio Theater. Tickets are \$30 and must be purchased prior to the event. Concordia faculty and staff each receive two free tickets to the event. Attendees are recommended to park in the main lot, and parking is free. For more information or to buy tickets visit <https://www.cui.edu/arts/theatre/events>.



PICTURED ABOVE: Professor Lori Siekmann was awarded the Kennedy Center Gold Medallion
Photo courtesy of: Concordia University Irvine

Senior Projects amplify the talents of Commercial Music Majors

REBEKAH MICHEL

ARTS AND REVIEWS EDITOR

On Apr. 6, the BMC Alumni Plaza will turn into a concert venue, showcasing the work and talents of this year's seniors in the Commercial Music Program. As their capstone project, each of the six seniors will present a set of music, with the first performances beginning at 1 p.m.

As one of the most anticipated music events of the year, the Commercial Senior Projects allows each student to present immense musical talent and learn other valuable skills such as collaboration and ensemble leadership.

Beyond learning and fine-tuning the individual performance, the Senior Projects allow each student to work with and lead an ensemble or band of featured musicians. For singer, vocalist and guitarist Maria Jose Insuasti, the Senior Projects have helped a creative dream come to life. "Putting together a

whole band, brass quartet, and cello together was a dream I had for a long time. Seeing how it came true was really fulfilling" said Insuasti.

Another senior who will be performing a Senior Project is vocalist and guitarist Ana Carvalho. For Carvalho, the process of putting the project together started early on in her time here at Concordia. "Because this project requires a lot of work and planning ahead, you are naturally taught to think about it from the moment you start college. Over the second half of my junior year, I started planning out what songs I'd like to perform and who I'd like to work with for my project. Through each step of this process, I was able to see how the skills I developed through college helped me accomplish these steps," said Carvalho.

While many seniors in the commercial music program focus their studies on guitar or vocals, senior music production student Aris Howsepian has incorporated

several instruments into his project. "I will be playing bass guitar, singing, and rapping for my senior project. However, because I am studying music production, I have also recorded a number of elements that will be played via backing tracks, such as live violin, viola, guitar, bass and vocals."

Howsepian added, "Because I am the only commercial music senior who is focusing on music production, the creative process is much different than other projects have been...Putting the digital music production tracks together with a live band adds a whole new dimension to each song, and I am so excited for everyone to hear how it fits together."

Senior Kaitlyn Bills, known by many students as Kaity B, is presenting a project that includes songs off of her own album. As she is entering a new and exciting season of releasing an album and designing her own merch, Bills has turned to her faith for comfort and strength.

"There are so many blessings and also hardships and the only way that I am getting through it is trusting in the Lord...I wouldn't be here in this position if it wasn't for God. A lot of my music is about God and how He loves us," said Bills.

For senior vocalist, songwriter and guitarist Darian Trujillo, the presence of an audience at these projects is incredibly thrilling and meaningful. "I'm very excited for the students and faculty who come to support our project day. We've all worked very hard to bring our ideas to life, and getting to share this moment with you and perform for you is truly the greatest payoff. Your presence and encouragement mean the world, and we can't wait to share what we've created with you," said Trujillo.

The Music Department invites you to a joyous celebration and presentation of this year's seniors on Apr. 6 at 1 p.m. at the BMC Alumni Plaza. No ticket is necessary, and admission is free.



Photo courtesy of:
Aris Howsepian



Photo courtesy of:
Genesa Davis



Photo courtesy of:
Jacqueline Grace

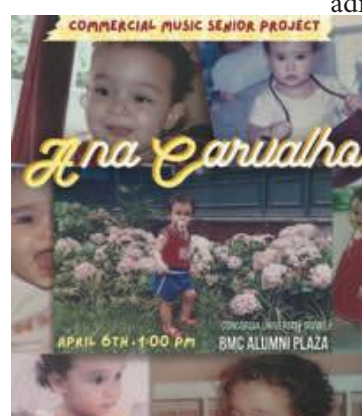


Photo courtesy of:
Maria Jose Insuasti

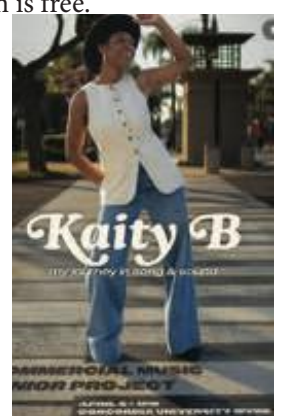


Photo courtesy of:
Kaitlyn Bills

Stunt attends Nashville competition

GISELLE PARRA
STAFF WRITER

Stunt is currently ranked No.7 in Division II and are in Nashville, Tennessee competing in the Music City Classic. In Nashville they will play four teams Travecca, Maryville, Purdue and Quincy.

Stunt is made up of four quarters where both teams have the same exact routines and they are called at different times at random. Quarter one is partner stunt, quarter two is pyramids and tosses, quarter three is jumps and tumbling and quarter four is a combination of all three. Each quarter has eight routines teams have to memorize that increase in difficulty.

“The tournament works by gathering two teams on mat for a 30 minute warm up and a head-to-head game calling routines back and forth. When the winner of the game is announced, the losing team then goes back into warmups for another 30 minutes before facing someone from the “losing” bracket. The team that won, is able to have a break and prepare to face the winner of that losing bracket” said Emilie Heckenkamp, base/tumbler.

A game day tradition for Stunt is to line dance or have a dance party before games. “It helps us warm up and get our minds right. We always have a better game when we have fun,” said Michelle Lourenco, base/shoulder stand. Lourenco’s game day tradition is going to the gym the morning of a game as well as using her passion, balance and stability essential oils. To finish off her

game day traditions she draws a cross on her wrist with eyeliner. “I also need an energy drink for the game, as well as needing to be covered in glitter usually by a glitter spray and highlighter,” said Lourenco.

The team prepares by having an unofficial warm up where they meet and do half of their levels that they think may need more reps to be successful for the game. “We then change into our jerseys, pray together, and then go into our official warm up 30 minutes before game time,” said Christian Greene, flyer/tumbler. Greene in her senior year is in 16 routines. There are 28 routines total to memorize. This puts her in more than half of the routines.

Once the game is over “We normally meet with our friends and family to say thank you for coming and their support,” said Greene. Making sure that they show their appreciation is very important to the women on stunt. After playing in these high energy games stunt’s favorite way to unwind is to get food as a team. “We love to eat!! We really look forward to eating afterwards and just spending a little time together in a stress free environment,” said Hannah Villegas, base/tumbler.

Stunt is currently 6-6 and is hoping to add four more wins soon. To tune in to watch Stunt compete in the Music City Classic you can watch the games on <https://www.team1sports.com/college/?S=cuigoldeneagles> or <https://www.flocollege.com/events/13643068-2025-trevecastunt-music-city-classic>.



PICTURED ABOVE: (Left) Victory chest bump (Right) Jumps
Photo courtesy of: Crash Kamon



PICTURED ABOVE: (Left) Q1 (Right) Michelle and Kyla
Photo courtesy of: Crash Kamon



PICTURED ABOVE: Waving thank you to crowd
Photo courtesy of: Crash Kamon

Women’s Track and Field breaks records and stands out

MAKAMAE DU PONT
STAFF WRITER

Ruby Bishop were all honored as USTFCCCA All-West region athletes in the distance medley relay.

The Concordia Women’s Track and Field team made history at the Division II Indoor National Championship. Jasmyn Crawford secured a long jump First Team All-American, while other athletes earned USTFCCCA (U.S. Track & Field and Cross Country Coaches Association) All- West region honors.

The first athlete being highlighted for the Women’s Track and Field is graduate student, Crawford. She was able to earn First Team All-American honors in the long jump at the championship held in Indianapolis. Crawford was able to finish fifth overall with a 6.06-meter jump.

She made history by being the first female athlete at Concordia to secure an All-American title at the Division II Indoor Championships.

These accomplishments come from a lot of hard work and perseverance. Crawford talked about her performance at the championships and said, “I am very proud of my performance so far this season. I’m also very grateful to get the opportunity to compete at championship level; it was an exciting experience.”

Crawford added about her challenges, saying, “I had to fight to get rid of those doubts and negative thoughts during competitions. I just had to pray to God to give me courage and let Him take care of the rest.” She also credited her teammates and coaches and added how she feels “blessed to be a part of such a supportive team and coaching staff.”

Teammates like Taylor Whitfeld, Riley Norris, Porsche Eismann and

Eismann, a graduate student distance runner, talked about herself and the team’s recent success. Eismann opened up about her last indoor track and field competitions and said, “Being able to hit another national qualifying mark in the distance medley relay with new girls was very special to me, and I was happy to end my indoor track and field career with a positive note.” Eismann was also happy she got to run a personal record in her mile. She went on to also give all the credit to her coaches and teammates for giving her confidence and pushing herself to become the best athlete she can be.

Giovana Pelascini, sophomore jumper, is another athlete who was honored as a USTFCCCA All-West region athlete in the pentathlon. Pelascini spoke about the team’s camaraderie. Pelascini said, “[The team and coaches] are there for me for support when the emotional rollercoaster hits low points at times, and the team really does feel like a family I can always find encouragement from.” Pelascini also talked about future goals as the season goes on and said, “[my] entire focus is on the conference in about a month, where I will be competing in the heptathlon once again.” She added that she believes she can qualify for nationals.

The Golden Eagles’ next meet will be on Fri., March 28, at UC Irvine for the Vince O’Boyle Classic. You can also look up the remaining schedule on Concordia’s website cuigoldeneagles.com. Make sure to follow @cuigoldeneagles and @cuifxc on Instagram for updates and the latest announcements for their 2025 season.



PICTURED ABOVE: Jasmyn Crawford lining up to run.
Photo courtesy of: Crash Kamon



PICTURED ABOVE: Giovana Pelascini jumping.
Photo courtesy of: Crash Kamon

Men's tennis becomes a season of resilience, leadership and triumph

HAKU DUOIT
STAFF WRITER

In a season defined by adversity, the men's tennis team has turned a rocky start into a story of resilience and triumph. With a stunning 12-2 record and being ranked #23 in the 2025 International Tennis Association (ITA) D II National Rankings, the team's success has captured attention around campus.

Former graduate and student-athlete Mattis Le Montagner, who took the position as Interim Head Coach, has led this program to thrive, making a lasting impact in his first year at the helm. The team has been on a winning streak of five games and currently are on a win streak of two.

The men's tennis team faced an unusual hurdle this season starting without a permanent coaching staff. Le Montagner, at 24-years-old, transitioned from player to coach for the men's tennis team, drawing on his own experience within the PacWest Conference. "I played in the PacWest for a year and know what it takes to get ranked nationally. From the start, we worked hard on conditioning and the tactical aspects of the game. Also having Max and SJ alongside me helped a lot to get these guys to their A-game," said Le Montagner.

Le Montagner's transition from player to coach went smoothly, thanks in large part to the relationships he had previously built with the team. "It was a great opportunity for me, and knowing all the players already made the transition easier," Le Montagner

said. "I approached this position with a very positive attitude, and excitement to get some great results with these guys."

The team quickly adapted to the change in leadership. Senior Spencer Cinco said, "The team has adjusted well to Mattis as the new head coach. We had good relationships with him, and his experience as a player has provided valuable insight to his coaching style. We all respect him as our head coach and trust what he says, which helps make the process of a new coach easier."

This connection between coach and players has been crucial in the team's come-up this season. Le Montagner's leadership has played a huge role in the team's success, but he's quick to credit the team's bond and work ethic. "The key factor has been the brotherhood from the team. The energy the guys brought since the beginning has been awesome. They are all fighting for each other and looking for success," Le Montagner said.

The players themselves echo this sentiment. Cinco said, "Our team jokes around with each other, pushes each other in practice, and is very supportive of each other in matches. Our energy is a lot louder than previous years, and the bond that we have with each other helps us want to fight for each other more."

This sense of unity has translated into positive results on the court with the team achieving consistent victories. The leadership on the team is shared among the older players, with no designated captain. Instead, the seniors lead by example, setting a tone of

determination and hard work. "Leadership is shown mostly through our older core on the team. The seniors help set a good example for the underclassmen and help lead in various areas. Together, it creates a cohesive leadership that works well with our team dynamic," said Cinco.

According to Le Montagner, "Our success is a team effort. We have great players from top to bottom, we have leadership and great level throughout the whole lineup. Even the guys off the court help hugely with their support."

One of the standout players this season has been senior Adam Large, who, according to his teammates, has been remarkably consistent. "I would say Adam has been our standout player. He is so consistent at his position and is able to come through match after match and be a positive influence on the team," said Cinco.

Looking ahead, the team's goals are ambitious and clear. Le Montagner said, "We want to make a big run at the conference tournament in Arizona and potentially win the tournament. We want to make it to Nationals and be ranked top 15 nationally."

The team's determination is evident, not only in their performance but also in their preparation. Cinco said, "Top four in conference and a trip to nationals are our goals. We have our eyes set on making top four in the conference which would grant us a regional match with the winner making nationals.

Our coach has made it clear each match what needs to be done. We have the mindset that we will be out there for three sets fighting until the end and to not give in."

As the Golden Eagles push toward the end of season, their ranking reflects their hard work and the potential that lies ahead. Cinco said, "We're right there with some of the top teams, and the thought of reaching that potential is exciting for us."

The support from the Concordia community has also been a driving force for the team. Le Montagner said, "We appreciate everybody that comes out and supports us! There's a great level of play on display, and we'd love to see even more people come to our matches."

There's only five matches left in the season before the PacWest Tennis Championships. Two of them are home games on Fri., April 4, at 10 a.m. and Sat., April 5, at 1 p.m. which will also be Senior Day. Come out and support the men's tennis team as they gear up for a potentially historic post-season run.



PICTURED ABOVE: On the left Interim Women's tennis Head coach SJ Nijssen. Middle Interim Men's tennis Head coach Mattis Le Montagner, right Grad assistant works with both men and women's tennis Max Nijssen
Photo courtesy of: Crash Kamon

Concordia baseball earns a win against top-school

LYNDSAY DEVARGAS
STAFF WRITER

Baseball earned a victory over No. 15 Point Loma in their recent tournament on March 15 and split the series against PacWest conference leaders Westmount this past weekend in Santa Barbara on March 21 and 22.

Freshman Christian Garcia, a catcher on the team, said, "The season has been going well. We had a slow start, but things are starting to pick up. This year's highs have been our wins against Point Loma and our split series against West-

mont. Some of the lows of this year have been our close games. We have had so many close games this year. The win against Point Loma was huge for us. We haven't had the best luck, but everyone rallied together, and it felt amazing."

Makamae Du Pont, a junior who plays first base, said, "The season has been going great with the incoming freshmen and transfers. Everybody has clicked together and committed to the 'team' mindset of doing your job. Everyone also gets long, which is not always true for a team with 40+ people. It felt great to beat Point Loma last week, and we carried that momentum to

this week, splitting with Westmont. We beat them 17-0 in the last game, and Matthew Kaiser threw a shutout no-hitter."

Du Pont added, "Moving forward, we are trying to keep this positive momentum going into the back half of the season. Winning every pitch we can and making sure everyone is prepared when we get on the field. We have a chance to get into the playoffs, and I feel confident we will put ourselves in the best situation as the season ends."

Junior Jordan Bolden, an outfielder, said, "Highs is one of my close friends/team-

mates, Kaiser, throwing the no-hitter this past week against Westmont. It was good beating Point Loma since, in my past few years here, we have struggled to win against them, and that win was impactful for our team morale." Bolden stated, "The season looks better, and can't wait for the second half."

The Golden Eagles are set to take the field today and tomorrow at home, battling for a crucial victory. With drive and support from the fans, they're ready to make a push towards wins against two double-header games against Azusa Pacific. Come out and support the Golden Eagles today and tomorrow at 2 p.m. and 5:30 p.m.