

# THE CONCORDIA COURIER

INVESTIGATE. INFORM. IGNITE. INVOLVE.

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## Concordia student veteran journeys to 2025 SVA Leadership Institute

GABRIEL LUCERO  
STAFF WRITER

Concordia student veteran, Nicholas Piazza, was selected to attend the 2025 Student Veterans of America (SVA) Leadership Institute. Piazza, a VA work-study employee and an active member of the Veterans Resource Center, was invited to Washington, D.C. October 15 to 19 to participate in this SVA program designed to cultivate the next generation of changemakers and advocates for student veterans.

The SVA Leadership Institute brings together student veterans from across the country to develop their leadership skills, learn effective advocacy strategies and create meaningful change within their communities.

For Piazza, an Army Combat Veteran and 11B Infantryman, who served for four years including a 13 month deployment to Afghanistan, the experience provided an invaluable opportunity to deepen his understanding of veteran support systems and to strengthen his voice in advocating for student veterans at Concordia and beyond.

Reflecting on his experience, Piazza said, "It was a life-changing experience. I was given the opportunity to learn from my fellow veterans from all over the nation and from leadership at the congressional level. I am grateful for not only the experience but the knowledge gained in being able to grow as a leader within my community, as an advocate for veterans, and in understanding the pathways that are now possible to support veterans nationally."

In light of Piazza's opportunity, Anna Bidondo, Administrative Coordinator for Student Affairs and VA work study supervisor, said, "This was a huge blessing for Nick to get to attend the SVA Leadership Institute. He came back motivated to not only take our campus club to the next level but also to invest what he's learned, and the connections he made, back into the greater Orange County community after he graduates."

Richard Lewis, Director of the Veterans Resource Center, said, "This could not have happened to a better student. Nick has shown how capable he is, and I can always count on him to go above and beyond to serve our military-connected students."

As a CUI Center for Career and Vocation Intern, Piazza adds experience and vibrancy to the campus by helping other veterans navigate their educational journey and staying connected with one another.

Piazza is graduating this fall with a B.A. in Psychology. He plans to then transfer to grad school for MSW / LCSW to work as a therapist

and advocate for the veteran community.

Like Piazza, other student veterans involved with Concordia's Veterans Resource Center and its work study program have been able to solidify themselves as cornerstones in the Concordia community. From student-led support groups to Bible studies to regular family nights, the Veterans Resource Center provides a welcoming space for veterans to connect, find companionship and build a greater sense of community.

The Veterans Resource Center at Concordia is named in honor of fallen alum Staff Sgt. Matthew Thompson, 28, who was killed in 2016 in Helmand Province, Afghanistan. The center offers a variety of programs designed to meet the unique needs of Concordia's student veterans and their families, especially when it comes to supporting them as they transition from military service to academic life.

The Student Veterans of America at Concordia also plays an important role in celebrating and advocating for veterans on campus. Through initiatives like Veterans Day activities and community outreach, the club ensures that student veterans are recognized for their service and that their voices are heard. Piazza's selection as a SVA Leadership Institute Fellow highlights the impact of these programs and the dedication of Concordia's veterans to leadership and service.

To learn more about the Veterans Resource Center and its events, visit @cui\_veterans on Instagram. The VRC will be holding a variety of events from Nov. 10 through Nov. 14 that are open to the wider Concordia community, including a flag raising and national anthem at 9 a.m. on Nov. 11, and a Veteran Seminary student speaking at Chapel also on Nov. 11.



PICTURED ABOVE: Veteran Student Nicholas Piazza  
Photo courtesy of: Richard Lewis

## Concordia's intramural volleyball kicks off its season

KAYLA CIMARUSTI  
STAFF WRITER

Monday and Tuesday nights at 9:30 and 10:30 p.m. are kicked off with intramural volleyball, where students come together to connect, compete and just have fun. From the coordinators setting everything up, to the referees keeping it fair, to the players hitting the court, everyone plays a part in what makes intramural volleyball one of Concordia's favorite traditions.

Ryder Natzic, a senior Business Marketing major, helps keep Concordia's intramural volleyball program running each week. "For students playing volleyball, our biggest goal is building relationships with other students, having fun and unwinding from the stresses of school," Natzic said.

Planning each season takes a lot of time. "We table outside the caf, nag students to play, and coordinate sponsorships for the championship games, which takes weeks to close a deal. Then we put in hours putting teams together and assigning players. It's like we're NFL general managers." He added, "IMLeagues, our league interface, is awesome. It keeps all the stats, schedule and teams in one place."

Natzic said making sure everyone feels welcome is a big part of it. "Students play intramurals not only to have fun but also to be connected to Concordia," he said. "When forming teams, we try to make sure all are welcoming, even to those who haven't played before."

He also makes sure the refs have what they need to succeed. "When hiring refs, we had three main criteria: ball knowledge, confidence and vibes," Natzic said. "We coordinators do our best to answer questions, but at the end of the day, we have full faith in them."

Getting more students involved has been a big focus this year. "For volleyball, we got SLUNKS, an outdoor volleyball brand, to sponsor our championship game, which is so rad," he said. "They even have a special gift for the winners. Stuff like this helps make students realize this is cool and fun, and we want them to feel like they missed out if they don't play."

When issues come up, Natzic said they handle them quickly. "We haven't had any problems and don't plan on having any," he said. "Mixups are bound to happen, but that teaches you how to adapt and figure it out."

(Continues on p.3)

# Families, fun and fall spirit shine at this year’s Fall Family Festival

JORDAN VANDER VEEN  
STAFF WRITER

On Oct. 14 at 7 p.m., two flag football teams faced off in the intramural championship Pepperoni Bowl. Students came out to the field to cheer on their classmates while enjoying free pizza provided by Sgt. Pepperoni’s Pizza.

The championship game featured the dominant Rodney Grimmers versus the underdog Talking Tua. After a competitive and exciting game, the Rodney Grimmers came out on top with a 24-14 win, securing the Flag Football championship trophy.

The Rodney Grimmers started off the season strong, mercilessly beating their first opponents 42-6. The championship team only lost one game all season, losing only by one score.

Aaron Duport, a junior from the winning team said, “I really appreciate the whole season because we really had no idea how good we were going to be, and we

just came out and just had fun in that first game and blew everybody out.” Using the momentum they had from a successful season, the Rodney Grimmers were confident going into the championship game.

Jonathan Dose, senior, wide receiver from the Rodney Grimmers, said, “I was so excited. It felt like we were going into a real high school football game.” The positive energy was high for the Rodney Grimmers as they prepped for the championship game.

In contrast, their opponents Talking Tua started off with a 0-2 season. Talking Tua being the underdogs went into the championship game with a nothing to lose mentality.

While talking about their pre-game huddle speech, Victor Juarez, sophomore, from Talking Tua said, “Being 0-2 then making it to the Championship game, the mantra was why not us?” Juarez continued, “We didn’t win. But I mean we made some friends along the way and good memories.”

Nadeem Fahd, a sophomore and quarterback of Talk Tua, said, “We were all friends, so I think it was a good experience, a good team, and I enjoyed it.”

At the end of the season, both teams reflected more on the memories than on the final scoreboard. The Pepperoni Bowl showcased the community and competition involved with intramurals.

Dose said, “Intramurals are good when they are not taken too seriously, and you just have fun.”

Duport reiterated that, “Just do it. The more the merrier, especially with volleyball coming up, just go and get your buddies on a team. Get everyone to come play because it makes it more fun for everyone.”

From first-time players to seasoned veterans, intramurals are a great way to have fun with friends and stay active. Sign-up for indoor volleyball intramurals is still open and in the MY CUI app. Grab some friends and make a team to get involved in the intramural fun.



PICTURED ABOVE: Senate Team at the Photo Booth  
Photo courtesy of: Kyra Arnold



PICTURED ABOVE: ASCUI Group Photo  
Photo courtesy of: Kyra Arnold

## Faculty Handbells Enrich Lives and Community at Concordia

REBEKAH MICHEL  
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Amidst the busy season of grading assignments, assigning projects, and wrapping up the semester, Concordia faculty have come together to explore a new hobby: playing the handbells. Led by Erik Der, the Community Engagement Manager and the Director of Handbell Activities, the Concordia faculty handbell ensemble offers an enriching experience. When asked about the purpose of the Concordia faculty handbell ensemble, Erik Der responded as follows.

“The purpose of the Concordia Faculty Handbell Ensemble is to offer faculty and staff an opportunity to participate musically in worship, learn a new skill, and enjoy fellowship together for one month each semester. It ended up being a wonderful chance for community-building and a refreshing break in the day that still challenged our minds. I’m proud that the group did so well and learned so much after only four 30-minute rehearsals!” said Der.

Handbells play a significant role in the Music Department and at Concordia, as the program is well-respected as a premier collegiate handbell ensemble. However, the instrument can provide enriching experiences for anyone. For the members of the faculty handbell ensemble, music serves as a hobby outside of their academic discipline.

“Concordia is a liberal arts university, and interdisciplinary engagement is a core part of our identity. It’s fitting that faculty and staff from a variety of academic areas come together to make music and worship in chapel. Each member brings a unique background and level of experience, and working together in a handbell ensemble helps build relationships and bridges across campus,” said Der.

Additionally, faculty ensembles allow members to learn new skills or revisit ideas of collaboration in a new setting. “The beauty of the instrument comes from coordinating rhythm and harmony together as an ensemble. Handbells are a great way to learn musical skills, develop music-reading ability, and practice listening and collaboration in a group setting,” said Der.

Erik added, “In a handbell ensemble, every ringer plays a vital part - teamwork is essential. Playing together embodies the spirit of 1 Corinthians 12: many members, one body.” One of the great strengths of the handbell program and the music at Concordia is its wide range of experiences and backgrounds. The Music Department and handbells welcome beginner students and faculty, seeking to enhance lives through ensemble membership.

“Handbells are very approachable for beginners, even those without previous musical experience. Yet, there is also great depth for those who want to grow, as seen in our student ensembles who perform at the highest level. It’s easy to start, and there’s always more to explore. Handbells truly are for everyone,” Der explained.

Erik added, “Anyone interested in joining - students, faculty, or staff - can email Erik.der@cui.edu. The faculty ensemble will perform again next semester with a four-rehearsal commitment. We would love to have more people join us”.

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# “Little Women” brings literary heroes, family, love and loss to the stage

REBEKAH MICHEL  
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

On Nov. 7, the Theatre and Film Department opened its newest production of “Little Women: The Broadway Musical.” Directed by Sarah Ripper, who previously directed “Eurydice” and the award-winning production of “Girls Like That” at Concordia, “Little Women” brings the literary story of the March sisters to the stage. Based on the novel by Louisa May Alcott, “Little Women” follows the stories of four sisters and the dreams and passions of aspiring writer Jo March.

While “Little Women” is a literary classic loved by many, it has gained a new audience in recent years with Greta Gerwig’s 2019 film adaptation. For junior Ashlyn Davis, who plays the role of Beth March, the film adaptation of the March sisters’ story was very captivating.

“I really got into the story of ‘Little Women’ when the recent film adaptation came out. The themes

of family, love and loss are so universal to many areas of life,” said Davis.

The Theatre Department’s production of “Little Women” brought this beloved tale, which has been popular across generations, to the stage with whimsical costumes, projections and live accompaniment directed by Diane King Vann. As countless hours have been poured into this production, the end reward for the cast and crew members was to eagerly meet their audience.

For junior Matthias Bruggeman, one of the most challenging but fascinating elements of the rehearsal process has been mastering the German accent for his character, Professor Bhaer. “The accent has been fun to discover, but certain sounds have been difficult to find,” said Bruggeman.

As part of the rehearsal process, Bruggeman enjoyed his scene work with the show’s protagonist, Jo March, who is played by junior

Nicole Kramer. “It has been really fun working with Nicole. She is the one character with whom I interact in this show. I have also enjoyed finding little moments of connection with the props that I have, such as letters and notes that I write during the show,” said Bruggeman.

The tales of the March sisters, love, fantasy, writing and grief hit the stage of the Concordia Studio Theatre on Nov. 7; the final

performance is Nov. 16. Tickets are limited for the following performance times: Nov. 14 at 7:30 p.m. and Nov. 15 at 7:30 p.m. The Nov. 16 show at 2 p.m. is sold out, however, a waitlist is available for last-minute seating. For more information, please visit <https://www.simplerix.com/e/little-women-the-broadway-musical-tickets-231059>



Photo courtesy of: Concordia Theatre and Film Department

## Intramural volleyball

(Continued from p. 1)

Emma Agronovitz, a senior Liberal Studies major in Christ College, found a way to stay involved by becoming a referee. “I have enjoyed playing intramural sports for three years now, and I wanted to be a part of the team that makes it happen,” Agronovitz said.

Fairness is what she focuses on most. “The rules we have for games are a huge help in monitoring skill levels, and each team rotates who they play each week, which helps balance things out,” she said.

She added that the fun atmosphere makes the job worth it. “It’s naturally a fun environment when the teams are enjoying themselves,” Agronovitz said. “Just laughing with them through the silly falls and keeping a positive attitude helps.”

But sometimes games can get tense. “At one of the games, there was a player who ran into the net while hitting the ball,” she said. “Net calls always have some controversy with the higher-skilled players. We called an official timeout so the refs could discuss the call. Some players were upset and voiced opinions. Sometimes you have to remind them that it’s intramural volleyball and the main goal is to have fun.”

When players question a call, she keeps her cool. “I use the rules and explain them in as much

detail as I can,” Agronovitz said. “Most times it’s just a misunderstanding that’s settled quickly.”

She said refereeing has taught her a lot. “It’s a great way to learn how to deal with all types of people in stressful and calm situations,” she said. “It’s helped me feel comfortable making mistakes and more confident in my decisions.”

Kylie Glover, a junior Kinesiology major, became team captain by accident. “I didn’t really wanna be captain, but I had to make the team on IMLeagues, and it made me captain,” Glover said. “I really wanted to play intramural volleyball to stay busy.”

She keeps her team organized with simple communication. “We have a group chat, and that’s where I share all the times and make sure everyone knows when games are,” she said.

When teammates get frustrated, Glover helps them reset. “I tell everyone to take a deep breath and lock in,” she said. “We all get along really well, and communication is key.”

Her favorite part is spending time with her team. “Being able to hang out with my teammates and play volleyball and know that it’s not that serious,” Glover said.

Drew Curren, a junior majoring in Psychology, joined the intramural volleyball team for the community. “I decided to play intramural volleyball at Concordia because some of my

lacrosse teammates made a team, and it’s a fun way to meet new people,” Curren said.

He added that the atmosphere makes it special. “The team environment and intramural community is very fun,” he said. “Whether it’s competing during a game or seeing others around campus, it’s always a good atmosphere.”

Even late-night games have their perks. “The games are late, which can be tough, but it gives us something to look forward to,” Curren said. “Plus, it doesn’t conflict with my schedule.”

Curren’s favorite part is meeting new people. “What I enjoy most about playing intramural volleyball here is the opportunity to meet and connect with new people through a competitive environment.”

Looking to next season, he hopes more teams join. “The more teams that play, the more competition and variety there will be,” Curren added that his team has had both good moments and tough ones. “The biggest highlight has been our outside team practices; we’ve made a lot of progress,” he said. “The biggest challenge has been winning a set. We haven’t yet, but when we do, it’s going to be awesome.”

From the coordinators to the players, intramural volleyball at Concordia Irvine is built on teamwork, energy and connection. Everyone contributes to creating a space where competition and community come together.



PICTURED ABOVE: Intramural Volleyball brings a sense of community to Concordia  
Photo courtesy of: Kayla Cimarusti



PICTURED ABOVE: Intramural sports are made possible through the hard work of student leaders and referees.  
Photo courtesy of: Kayla Cimarusti



# Parkinson's study delivers valuable research opportunities for Concordia students

KIARA AZUMA  
ONLINE/MEDIA EDITOR

In summer 2023, the Lifestyle and Parkinson's Longitudinal Study recruited approximately 75 participants for the first time at Concordia University. Two years later, the study has expanded to serve more than 100 participants diagnosed with Parkinson's disease from Orange County, providing opportunities for Concordia's undergraduate students to work as research assistants.

According to the study's website, the "Lifestyle and Parkinson's Longitudinal Study (LPLS) is a multi-year project at Concordia University Irvine assessing how a wide range of personal lifestyle choices—from diet to exercise—impact the progression of Parkinson's disease (PD) among people with Parkinson's living near Orange County."

Participants engage in surveys, interviews, physical tests and biometric assessments. Following the study, participants receive a health report that explains their data, which they can share with their physicians.

"Each year we see individuals allows us to build a longitudinal profile of their disease severity and progression along with their modifiable risks. Overall, we hope to help build a picture of the extent to which individuals contribute to their disease through modifiable behavior. In other words, to what extent can individual behavior modify disease progression?" said Dr. Nathan Meier, Associate Professor of Kinesiology and Principal Investigator of the study.

Meier launched this study alongside alumnus and Project Manager Oliver Di Martino, who graduated in May 2025 and is currently pursuing his master's degree in Philosophy. They both shared an interest in Parkinson's disease. Initially, they began their study in collaboration with a local Rock Steady Boxing group, an evidence-based program designed to slow the progression of the disease.

The LPLS now collaborates with other schools, such as UC Irvine, and various organizations, providing further opportunities for students to get involved. In this past summer's study, the research team consisted of 22 Concordia students, three students from the UC system, one student from San Diego State University, 12 high school students, seven recent Concordia graduates and two faculty members.

"Being involved in these studies has been an extremely rewarding experience and has helped me see research as more than data and statistics. Each participant is an individual whose life is drastically affected by Parkinson's. My involvement has also helped me understand the challenges that researchers face when designing and executing studies and has given me skills such as organization, communication and project management," said Britton Cheney, senior and Kinesiology major with an emphasis in Allied Health.

The LPLS values the benefits it can bring to student researchers, allowing them to develop skills and gain experience that they can highlight and diversify on their résumés, ultimately gaining a competitive advantage for graduate and medical schools. Some of these skills include teamwork, communication, organization, patient bedside manner, leadership, mentorship, critical and analytical skills. While most student researchers are from kinesiology, biology, and behavioral sciences majors, the study is open to all students who are interested in participating.

According to the survey results from the



PICTURED ABOVE: Senior Britton Cheney gathers data of a participant as a research assistant for the LPLS

Photo courtesy of: Dr. Nathan Meier

2025 LPLS Annual Report, student researchers reported gaining experience with hands-on research tools, statistical software, and survey administration. They receive training before data collection for the study, which includes human subject training, data entry, cognitive assessments and ensuring interrater validity with technology.

Students also develop their communication skills and empathy, and learn to provide patient-centered care through their experiences. Many gained an improved understanding of working with vulnerable populations.

"I learned to be gentle, understanding and patient with the patients when helping patients onto the blood pressure beds and taking their blood pressures," said a student in the LPLS survey.

Another stated, "It was hard to see how much Parkinson's was affecting some of our participants... it motivated me to care for them not only through the study but also relationally."

According to the LPLS Annual Report, most students identified the study as a key component in confirming or advancing their interest in health professions, given their early clinical exposure from their experience. Students who were involved in the LPLS have been accepted into high-level programs following graduation, including PhD programs, master's programs and medical schools.

"LPLS prepared me for my future goal as a nurse practitioner by improving my conversational skills... and also opened my eyes to the administrative responsibilities of those who choose to complete a research study," stated a respondent in the survey. Cheney shared the sentiment, stating, "I hope to continue my involvement in research while I am in my Doctorate of Physical Therapy."

In addition to the LPLS, Cheney has been collaborating with RxBallroom Dance for further research on Parkinson's disease. She won the 2025 President's Academic Showcase for her study on "The effect of a six-month ballroom dance intervention on physical function and quality of life in individuals with Parkinson's disease."

She has worked directly with the CEO of RxBallroom Dance to develop an IRB-approved six-month intervention, which will run until the summer of 2026. Cheney said, "We have just finished the pre-intervention data collection. We will reassess the same measurements in April after the participants have completed six months of the ballroom classes."

"Part of my role is to recruit and train other student volunteers to help with data collection because there is no way I could do it alone! For each day of measurement, we traveled to a different site where the dance classes take place, ranging from Tustin and Mission Viejo to Oceanside and Rancho Bernardo," Cheney explained. Being involved in the LPLS, as well as developing her intervention in collaboration with RxBallroom, has prepared her immensely for graduate education.

Cheney's involvement is one example of how the LPLS allows students to pursue their interests within clinical research. With various projects and collaborations within the LPLS, the study continues to offer numerous opportunities for Concordia students to get involved, acquire technical skills and establish a foundation for research and clinical work. For students interested in learning more details about the study, visit their page at <https://www.cui.edu/academicprograms/health-human-sciences/lifestyle-parkinsons-longitudinal-study>.



PICTURED ABOVE: Dr. Meier and a few of the researchers a part of the LPLS

Photo courtesy of: Dr. Nathan Meier

# Concordia's Chemical Society attends ACS Western Regional meeting

MAKAMAE DU PONT  
CAMPUS EDITOR

Concordia's American Chemical Society attended the 2025 ACS Western Regional meeting this past week, which is an event that brings together researchers from across California. The ACS was able to introduce others to Concordia, which led to networking and great discussions with students.

Assistant Professor of Chemistry, Dr. Josiah Rensner, said, "It had a lot of interesting talks and presentations. There were a lot of presentations by undergraduate researchers and a lot of work done at smaller schools." Rensner also noted that there were some "good presentations" on the educational side, which provided him with "some ideas that he can hopefully use in teaching."

Two students who are in the ACS were able to expand on their experience and explain what they learned at the event.

Madison Lafon, a sophomore majoring in Biochemistry, was particularly excited for one presentation. She said, "I was most excited to see a poster presentation from San Francisco State University that looked at the role of copper and zinc binding in antibiotic resistance in sea cucumbers." The presentation was given by two undergraduate students, and Lafon was thrilled to see "other undergrads in the biological inorganic chemistry field who were also looking at copper and zinc."

Lafon explained that attending conferences as an undergrad is a huge opportunity. She said it is especially important "if you are looking to pursue your education

further after undergrad." Even though Lafon is only a sophomore, this conference got her excited to take upper-division courses in the future.

Freshman Micah McGranahan, Concordia's American Chemical Society president, also attended this conference. He highlighted the importance of networking, saying, "Visiting these events broadens and deepens your view of many varied topics [and it allows] you [to] witness different age group interactions from non-professional to professional." He also explained that it was a "great place to learn about graduate school programs."

McGranahan offered some advice for people attending these conferences and meetings. He said to "look for scholarships to these events, work on your social skills, work with professors on research [and] talk to as many people as possible while you are there and put the time in at presentations to truly understand what people are researching."

Concordia's American Chemical Society chapter continues to provide students with valuable opportunities to network within the scientific community. Attending conferences like the ACS Western Regional Meeting provides the opportunity to gain hands-on exposure to research, network with peers and researchers, and explore potential career and academic possibilities. Experiences like this are what highlight Concordia's commitment to fostering scientific curiosity and professional growth among its ACS club members.



PICTURED ABOVE: Michael Laurence and Madison Lafon

Photo courtesy of: Micah McGranahan



# Women’s volleyball season coming to a close

SYDNEY WEAVER  
STAFF WRITER

Women’s volleyball is currently holding an 11-10 record with three games left in their season. On Oct. 30, they overtook Azusa Pacific at home 3-1, but unfortunately fell short against Biola 2-3 in La Mirada on Nov. 1. On Nov. 8, the Green and Gold beat/loss to Azusa Pacific X-X in a rematch on the opponent’s home court. Despite mixed results this season, the ladies are staying positive and hopeful to finish out with a winning season.

Seniors are feeling proud and sentimental as they close out their final season, while freshmen are bringing fresh energy and a need to prove themselves. Senior and outside hitter, Allyson Scheidle, said, “I am most proud of the adversity we’ve overcome and the way we approached it.” Freshman and setter, Grace Carollo said, “My final hopes and goals for this season are to prove something. I want my team and I to prove that we are a good team.”

The team faced a lot of challenges early on in their season, with injuries affecting

major components of the team. They did not let this stop them from going out and giving it their all on the court. Senior, rightside and outside hitter, Mattie Prior said, “We are a resilient team with GRIT and strength...our team has stayed together, always having a positive attitude.”

This mindset is how the team pulls out their wins and continues to stay strong despite any obstacles they have faced. Carollo had to step up and take on the role of starting setter after their senior starter was injured at the beginning of the season. She said that from the start her goal was to “work as hard as possible, learn from the girls that are older than me, and to make sure I know my role.” After being put in the group of upperclassmen starters, Carollo said, “Although my goals haven’t shifted, my role has... Now knowing my role means doing my job as a setter and being the loudest, most energetic person I can be.”

Team bonding off the court has created trust and a sense of community for the ladies that proves beneficial on the court. Prior said that they

study their opponents' films together, as well as conduct team Bible studies, to “connect with each other spiritually.” Scheidle said that even though the season is coming to an end, she “hopes to keep building relationships with teammates,” with hopes this will aid in making it to the conference tournament and then the NCAA tournament.

Carollo said so far the games have taught her to “have discipline and trust in the process.” She is also proud of the team for “pushing through those hard moments and losses and coming out stronger in the end.” The freshman is eager to continue playing and believes the team is “finally at its peak in the exact time we

need to be, and it makes these upcoming games that much more exciting.”

Scheidle said, “Winning or losing, we’ve always kept a positive attitude and the same love for each other.” The hope for the team is that this positivity and love will help them pull through with a winning season. Prior said that the “team goal is to win as a team and have a chance to compete in the conference tournament.”

Go out and support the women’s volleyball team in their last home games this Sat., Nov. 15 at 6 p.m. for their Senior Night in the CU Arena. Go Golden Eagles!



PICTURED ABOVE: Concordia Women's volleyball taking the win over Azusa Pacific.  
Photo courtesy of: CUI Golden Eagles Athletics

## Concordia reinstates women’s tennis and swim & dive

STAFF REPORT

On Fri., Oct. 24 federal judge Fred W. Slaughter issued a ruling directing Concordia to immediately reinstate women’s swim & dive and tennis programs.

“The ruling on the preliminary injunction is not a final judgment. It is part of a longer legal process,” a university spokesperson said, “The university will comply with all of the judge’s rulings while the litigation is in process. These two women’s teams are now officially reinstated pending further order from the court.” The ruling is the most recent step in the court case surrounding Concordia’s decision on May 20 to eliminate tennis and swim/dive for both men and women. Several female athletes filed a lawsuit, alleging a Title IX [equal opportunities for male and female athletes] infraction.

To the student athletes who saw their programs shuttered in May, the communication felt abrupt, leaving the athletes shocked and confused. Payton Doak, a senior swimmer, said, “It was sad, very unexpected because we have been in the sport for our whole life.”

“We all started crying and we ended the Zoom call and then we called each other on a big group chat, and we were like what are we going to do guys? This is insane,” said Kristyna Dvorakova, a tennis player. University leadership recognized that the announcement in May was an unwelcome shock “for the students and, frankly, for our whole community,” a spokesperson said. While the communication may have felt abrupt to the athletes, the university purposely acted

quickly once the decision was made to allow students and staff maximum time to weigh their options. “Our Board of Regents voted on these cuts on May 20, and the students and employees were notified the same day,” the university said.

Along with stomaching the news that the athletes were losing their sport, they also bemoaned losing their community and built-in campus family. “You are part of a team. You are part of something bigger and it is all your friends, it feels like family,” Dvorakova explained, “That was the hardest part to realize there was no team anymore.”

Over the summer, the women’s teams took the matter to court, citing a Title IV infraction because, according to the plaintiffs, women comprise 59% of Concordia’s students, but received only 51.2% of sports roster spots.

Aliyah Treadwell, a senior from swim & dive, said, “I thought that with the lawsuit that it [the swim & dive program] would come back within a couple of years. I did not expect it to be this quick.” The women found out their programs were being brought back Friday Oct. 24 and are planning on starting the season as soon as possible.

Treadwell said she felt “kind of mixed emotions” because the university, in her opinion, is acting out of obligation to the ruling. “They are kind of forced to bring us back in a way. But I am glad I get the opportunity that I was not supposed to get.”

“When it comes to tennis we cannot play if there are not six players, we need at least six people to be able to play, so we will see if we are going to have a season or not,” said

Dvorakova.

Although the ladies are excited to have the opportunity to continue their collegiate sport, it will not be easy to re-build. The teams are waiting to see who is still wanting to compete and if it will be enough to have a team this upcoming season. Treadwell said, “I hope we can meet the nine girls. I do not know who’s in and who’s out. I mean it’s hard to make a decision this quick.”

Both teams are going into the season positive and hopeful for the future. They are paving the path for their programs to succeed.

Men’s swim & dive and tennis were still discontinued this academic year. In a more recent announcement, men’s indoor track will be sunset after the 2025-26 academic year. While some athletes left the university, others felt the better option was to remain as students at Concordia.

“Life has been different, but I think it’s been good for me,” said Adam Kartzinell, senior and former men’s tennis player. “I have explored other interests outside of tennis like my passion for the gym. I have also been taking care of a puppy which is taking up a lot of time. I will say though that I miss that competitive feeling and going out there to win.”

While the athletes were able to retain their scholarships, some felt they were not given much of a chance to continue their athletic careers, or receive the fanfare [such as senior night] to celebrate the end of their time as collegiate competitors.

“I didn’t have enough time to enter the transfer portal and really talk to coaches to find the right place,” Kartzinell said. “Also, with

going into senior year, credits were an issue as well.”

Some athletes found it confusing to see their sports eliminated while the university is also investing in other aspects of campus. The university noted that capital projects – like the Golden Eagles Athletics Complex – are funded by separate, distinct sources and those funds cannot be commingled with the day-to-day operating budget, which covers the costs for items like staff salaries. “It is very important to note that the construction projects on campus are funded completely by donor contributions. We are not legally able to use donor funds for operations. The cuts Concordia made were to reduce annual operating costs,” the university explained.

For many of these athletes, the frustrations of losing their sport will remain, but they are moving forward in their lives. Kartzinell is “happy for [the women’s programs]” and “curious to see if they have enough time to build up an actual team for the spring this [academic] year.”

“I think it is important to try and save this program for other females that are going to want to swim here,” said Treadwell. Dvorakova said, “We want to just help other student athletes and overall, just the sport.”

Women’s tennis and swim are looking forward to the opportunity to continue playing their sport at Concordia. Continue to support the teams as they work to be competitive this season.

*Sports editor Joseph Panetta and writer Jordan Vander Veen contributed to this story.*



# Men's cross country earns third place in conference finals

CHAD HAYES  
STAFF WRITER

Logan Jones, a freshman, and Marcus Shin, a senior, are both members of the men's cross country team.

This is Jones's first year on the team and he approached it with high expectations. Jones said, "At the end of the day, we wanted a conference title, and we didn't achieve that this year, so expectations were not met, but with it being a young team, we have a strong class going forward." Shin has been on the team since freshman year. Shin spoke about his expectations at the beginning of the year and said, "I wouldn't say we exceeded expectations, but I think we definitely exceeded some teams' expectations that thought less of us this year."

Jones felt that this year

went well for him. "I've never run the 8k before, [I'm] more of a middle distance runner," he said, "So I was excited to get my feet wet in the 8k distance and excited to get back to work next year and finish some of the business that we left undone."

Shin felt he had a bumpy season. "My season was rough. The first three races were really bad. Not only did I have some stuff that I was going through, but others were just unfortunate events, like the previous race I ran, where I had a stomach cramp in the middle, which ruined the race for me and the team," he said.

Jones is proud of the results during the conference and of his teammates. Jones said, "I don't think I could ever not be proud. I think going out there and doing all the hard

work, I'm always proud of the effort I pushed myself, and just wasn't my day for the conference, and I mean that happens, and so it's more about what am I going to do to bounce back from that at regionals."

Shin feels that the team still has ground to improve. "We definitely could have done a little better. We were three points from second place, and I honestly thought we had second place in the bag," he said, "So I am a little disappointed that we did not get second place because it would have been our first time as a team getting second place."

Jones will maintain his current routine to prepare for nationals. He's had a steady routine all year round. Shin won't be making many changes in his routine either, besides going to the Wellness

Center more and using the massage chairs to ensure his body doesn't cramp or get hurt.

Jones had high expectations as the team prepped for regionals. "I know that we have people on the men's and women's side who are capable of qualifying as individuals for nationals, so doing the best that we can to put them in the best positions to place well." Shin also had high expectations for regionals. He said, "If I race, I want to go under 32 minutes for the team. I want this to be the first team to go to nationals in the entire Concordia program, but if that doesn't happen, I want at least one of our guys to make it to nationals as an individual."

# Proposition 50 special election could reshape California and America's future

COLIN WHEELER  
STAFF WRITER

Proposition 50, also known as the Election Rigging Response Act, was proposed by the state legislators of California and Governor Gavin Newsom and appeared on the special election ballot on November 4. The proposition passed in California on Election Day, November 4, with 63.8% of voters electing "Yes." Newsom has said that Prop 50 was initiated in response to Texas redistricting and comments made by President Donald Trump calling for five new congressional seats, citing that Republicans are "entitled to five more seats."

Ceiveon Watkins, a senior Theology major, sees how Prop 50 can help California in responding to Texas, but, "I don't believe that the way [California] is doing it is going about it right and that the redistricting will be done unfairly against the smaller voters," said Watkins.

Watkins called out a trend shared between both Texas and California involving how redistricting for political benefit may misrepresent some of their voters from minority groups in their states, such as small-town Republican farmers in California or left-leaning Democratic voters in Texas.

Watkins said he "grew up in California around a lot of the earlier primaries of 2004, 2008... I saw a lot of what those districts looked like growing up from my family and the people around me. And I already knew that gerrymandering was rough; I don't think that trying to redistrict now is going to do any good for the midterms."

Dr. Clinton J. Armstrong, Professor of History and Theology and chair of the History and Political Thought Department sees the adverse effects of gerrymandering in states saying "I am against gerrymandering

on principle, this is really a fight of fighting fire with fire, and predominantly blue states looking at Texas and other states and saying 'Well if they're going to do it, we can too.' Does that truly give power back to the people? Or is it making them pawns for a larger redistricting fight?"

Given how California and Texas have responded to each other, a trend of reactionary politics could be one of the major factors leading up to the midterms in 2026. Armstrong noted that instead of voting on a value system

[conservative or liberal], voters typically focus on the "really material" concerns like medical care, education and jobs. "This is human stuff. It's quite material," Armstrong emphasized.

Whether it's a special election, midterms or the general election, Armstrong reminds those vested in the political process that voting "exercises that essential bit of what the Democratic process is, and that's one person, one vote... It gives power to the people to voice their opinion."



PICTURED ABOVE: File photo of "I Voted" sticker.  
Photo courtesy of: Shutterstock



# Concordia students take a swing at Dodgers vs. Blue Jays

LAURYN SCOON  
STAFF WRITER

Fri., Oct. 25, marked the start of the 2025 World Series, and students at Concordia were buzzing about the Los Angeles Dodgers vs. Toronto Blue Jays showdown, as many students showed support for a Dodgers’ championship season.

Junior Sydney Shelton, a Finance major and devoted Dodger fan, expressed her loyalty to the Dodgers while sharing her feelings about a Canadian opponent. She said, “I think the U.S. should have a separate league from Canada, but I also might just feel this way because the match [was] so close and the Blue Jays really stepped it up. I think both teams are evenly matched with one another.”

With around 32.6 million viewers worldwide for the first game, this Series was eagerly anticipated, as the Dodgers sought a back-to-back championship following their 2024 World Series title and the Blue Jays pursued their first World Series win since 1993.

Shelton added that the competitiveness and anticipation throughout the Series made Game 3 particularly unforgettable for her. “The 18 innings in Game 3 was one of my most memorable moments in the

Series. I was on the edge of my seat during that game and then Freddie Freeman hit a game-winning home run,” she said.

Fellow Dodger fan, Chad Hayes, junior and Communications major, echoed Game 3’s remarkable ending. “Freddie Freeman’s walk-off home run in the bottom of the 18th inning was pretty significant in the Series,” he said.

Hayes added that Yoshinobu Yamamoto’s pitching, especially in Game 2, was a noteworthy moment and a main strength of the Dodgers. “Yamamoto’s complete game was pretty memorable. Without him, I don’t even think we would be in this Series. So I think pitching is definitely the biggest aspect of our team,” he said.

While Hayes noted he is a loyal Dodger fan, he expressed that the Blue Jays’ contributions have made the Series competitive. “I think Game 1 stood out to me. The Blue Jays won 11-4,” he said.

He added that the Blue Jays’ own strengths have challenged the Dodgers. “They are a very contact-heavy team, so they don’t strike out, and they just put the ball in play. They take advantage of our defense most of the time, especially our right field. They also have a pretty good defense too,” he

said.

For baseball player and senior Luka Brancato, he thought Game 6 was the turning point in the series. “When the ball got stuck in the fence in the ninth inning, it was truly improbable how that got stuck in the fence. The Dodgers were pretty much stuck in the water with their backs to the wall, and that double play to end the game truly stunned definitely all of Toronto and eventually led to the Dodgers winning it all,” said Brancato.

Shelton communicated that, as a Dodgers fan, seeing them win was meaningful, as many local teams are rivals of the Dodgers. She said, “I feel like it means more, especially being from Southern California. There are so many other teams here, and a lot of people don’t want the Dodgers to win, so I think it is more about Dodgers pride as a fan.”

Hayes added, “To win back-to-back World Series so we can prove others wrong. I mean, a repeat champion hasn’t happened in, say, 20 years.”

In the ninth inning of Game 7, Dodgers player Miguel Rojas hit a home run that tied the team to the Blue Jays 4-4.

“I still can’t believe that Rojas actually hit that home run when I was watching it,” Brancato said. “I was just hoping for him to get on base, and a home run wasn’t even in my thought process at all. He put up a good bat, and when I saw it go over the fence, I went absolutely nuts.”

With the overall Series tied 3-3 in Game 6, it came to an end Sat., Nov. 1, as the Dodgers won 5-4 in the 11th inning with a game-winning double play.



PICTURED ABOVE: Dodger stadium in a World Series file photo. Photo courtesy of: Shutterstock



PICTURED ABOVE: Dodger fans cheer in a file photo. Photo courtesy of: Shutterstock