

# THE CONCORDIA COURIER

INVESTIGATE.INFORM.IGNITE.INVOLVE.

Volume 15, Issue 12

Concordia University Irvine

Friday, April 30, 2021

## Keeping faith on campus



PICTURED ABOVE: Abbey West student leaders  
Courtesy of: Lisa Purcell

ADYSON CASTEEL  
STAFF WRITER

Online schooling tested the dedication of students and faculty academically, physically and spiritually. Adapting to a new type of instruction was an immense shift that left members of the Concordia community uncertain towards making those next steps forward. How were we able to adapt to these changes, and importantly, what role did faith play during this unsettled time?

Students attended a school year entirely different from the normal college experience. Men's Ministry Coordinator and senior Alec Leissring gave perspective towards the challenges that he and many other faith-driven students faced. "I found my faith tested more this year than ever before. Finishing college by not being constantly surrounded by others, having a lack of fellowship and the

inability to sing in worship led to feelings of hopelessness and loneliness," Leissring shared. "Working for campus ministry and yet, not being able to give students the opportunities to gather in person was devastating. I started to wonder at what point are these guidelines part of God's plan to keep us safe, and at what point should we push past them to worship without restraint?"

A fellow student, also involved in campus ministry, faced similar obstacles in his last year of attending CUI. Marshall Murphy took the challenge of SHOUT! coordinator, and created new ways to continue the service, despite major restrictions put in place. Devotions, prayer time and instrumental music were implemented to provide an outlet of 'normalcy' for students struggling with their own faith.

While Murphy's faith was tested, he now can focus

on some of the good that resulted in this time. He said, "Lockdown taught me that there is light all around us, we only need to be still and look for it. I connected more with friends, found new motivation for hobbies and dug deeper spiritually in scripture and in understanding myself. I only needed to be still, and to look for the light."

Available opportunities for dual-mode courses and virtual events invigorated not only on-campus students, but faculty as well. Professor Michael Kinnen, faculty member in the School of Business and Economics, saw students overcome the odds and elevate their academic abilities to new heights. He said, "We may have been in lock down this academic year, but I've seen so many people launch and soar, nevertheless. I'm inspired by many of our students - both because of who they are, as well as what they are achieving."

Leissring also found good and restored optimism. "I ended up finding hope and faith in more personal time with God as well as through my friends. I saw professors reaching out more than was ever expected. Classmates were caring and supportive... This is in no way how I expected or wished my senior year to be, but I am blessed to be a part of a family that comes together in faith to support in any way they can to share the love of God in this time of isolation," he said.

The past year just goes to show how important the Concordia community was in providing hope, heart, innovation and faith in tough circumstances. Fellow Eagles, pat yourselves on the back. Remember the immense obstacles you have overcome to keep the heart of campus alive and continue lifting each other up in faith as we move on towards a new chapter.

## 7 tips to remember if you're attending graduation

### 1. MASK UP!

Masks must be worn by all graduates and visitors throughout campus, both indoors and outside, and physical distance guidelines will be marked and enforced.

### 2. BRING YOUR PARKING PASS

You will need to show the gatehouse your parking pass. Graduates who requested to have the pass mailed should have received it last week. Those who wanted to pick it up will do so through the Office of the Registrar. Graduates should check their Eagles email for more information.

### 3. GET YOUR CAP & GOWN NOW

The university will NOT have regalia available on Commencement Day. Make sure to get your cap and gown in advance and try them on to make sure they fit. Issues? Contact [graduation@cui.edu](mailto:graduation@cui.edu).

### 4. LEAVE THE BALLOONS AT HOME

Balloons, alcohol, glass, firearms, weapons and noisemakers are prohibited on campus.

### 5. BRING CASH, SKIP THE HIGH HEELS

Grab-and-go snacks and coffee, alumni swag, and flower booths will be scattered throughout campus on Commencement Day. The snack and coffee booths are cash only. Commencement is a walking experience around campus; wear comfortable shoes.

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# Dr. Michael Thomas and Tyler Haase wrap up the school year and talk B2P

STAFF REPORT

Dr. Michael A. Thomas is Concordia's fifth president. He joined CUI in January 2020 and is highly regarded as a student-oriented "practical leader." Tyler Haase '21 earned his degree studying Business Administration at Concordia, and served as ASCUI president this academic year.

The Courier caught up with Thomas and Haase, who shared their thoughts on the school year and what it was like to co-host the podcast "Between 2 Presidents," (B2P) which launched in 2020, thanks to positive persistence from Concordia alum Charlotte Waite '20.

Q: Tyler, talk about your time with Dr. Thomas and "Between 2 Presidents."

TH: *What I enjoyed the most was getting to know Dr. Thomas on a more personal*

*level and being able to share similarities and different experiences both at Concordia and outside Concordia.*

Q: Representing a student body that was largely "virtual" this year must have had unique challenges.

TH: *This year was definitely a different year than most when relating it to ASCUI and our typical duties. One of our main goals this year was the focus on advocacy. We feel that this was highly successful. We were able to get the students' voices and opinions to many administrators at CUI that will help spur change. There will also be various update/amenities changes that will help increase campus life that will be coming this fall.*

Q: Final thoughts as ASCUI president and graduating senior?

TH: *It has just been an honor to serve here at Concordia, and I*

*know that CUI has changed and affected me and all graduating seniors in many ways that are unknown. I know I will genuinely miss my colleagues, fellow students, and friends that I have made at Concordia.*

Q: President Thomas, what interesting facts did you learn about Tyler this year?

MT: *Tyler is an amazingly gifted and engaging young man. As ASCUI president, he and I have monthly meetings, but the B2P podcast allowed me to get to know him as a student and just another guy. We bonded over being from the Rocky Mountain region, and we had a shared love of traveling and sailing.*

Q: Engagement was challenging this year. How did the Concordia family stay connected?

MT: *I am extremely proud of the staff, faculty and students who enabled us to open the residential campus. It was a*

*group effort -- and it was an effort! -- but it was the right thing to do. While the year was difficult and full of sacrifices and limitations, we bonded as a community, whether it was on Zoom meetings, eating lunch under the tents or gathering in the Nelson Amphitheatre for chapel.*

Q: What are you looking forward to with a fully open campus this fall?

MT: *I am most looking forward to seeing the "normal" rhythm of the campus. Serving as president when we welcome the incoming fall undergraduates, celebrating with graduates as they walk across the stage, and attending athletic contests when I can sit in the student section.*

Q: Final thoughts for the 2021 graduating class?

MT: *On behalf of the faculty and staff, "Thank you!" I often tell incoming students and parents that we believe CUI will be a*

*better place because they come here and challenge us as much as we challenge them. This is definitely true of the graduating class of 2021. After all you've been through, it would have been easy -- and understandable -- to just complain about the cards you were dealt this last year. But you rose to the challenge and taught us what hope, gratitude and thankfulness really look like when lived day to day.*

In the final podcast episode of the semester Haase and Thomas reflect on advice to your freshman self, finding your people and the idea that different doesn't mean less. Check out the "Between 2 Presidents" podcast here: [cui.edu/aboutcui/president/between-2-presidents-podcast](http://cui.edu/aboutcui/president/between-2-presidents-podcast).

# Residence hall renovations coming soon

GABI BECKMAN

ASCUI SECRETARY

Even though the semester is coming to an end for us Eagles, big things are happening this summer! As the end of the semester is just around the corner, here are a few campus updates underway for fall 2021.

In addition to the updates from this semester, CU Active will continue to expand and be remodeled into a two-story complex with a variety of gym equipment and plenty of space

for workout activities. Rather than needing to book a time through the app, students will once again be able to use all of CU Active's amenities without a reservation!

Another space getting prepped for a huge remodel is the Rho Programming Center (RPC). With some fresh furniture and new technology for a variety of games, the vision for the RPC is to become the ultimate recreation room perfect for crazy game nights, late night

study groups, or a chill place to hang out for commuters in-between classes.

Additionally, Rho and Sigma will continue to spruce up their outdoor atmospheres with new furniture, benches, and power stations so students can soak up the Southern California sun while studying or catching up with friends.

As the semester comes to a close, the ASCUI team wants to thank everyone for such an amazing year. Despite all of the challenges we have faced

as a university this year, we are able to celebrate how far we have come and prepare for all of the incredible things on the way for the years to come. We wouldn't have been able to do anything without all the amazing faculty, staff and students both here on campus

and working virtually. We are praying for all of you as we head into finals week and summer. We pray that God will bless you and continually show His love for each one of you. We are all so blessed to have been able to serve you as your ASCUI Executive Board!

*In the April 16 issue of the Courier, the Forensics debate team's win was stated to be over Grover City College. The correct institution is Grove City College. The Courier apologizes for this mistake and congratulates the debate team on their first place national win.*

## THE CONCORDIA • COURIER • INVESTIGATE. INFORM. IGNITE. INVOLVE.

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# Graduation: How does this work again?

STAFF REPORT

Concordia is one week away from celebrating Commencement Day on Saturday, May 8 with both in person and online activities. The Concordia Courier caught up with Specialist for Degree Audits and Academic Athletic Eligibility Sarah Anderson, and Director Of Campus Safety Raul Morales for an update on Commencement plans.

**Q: Is there a limit to the number of people a graduate can invite on campus on Commencement Day?**

SA: Graduates may bring as many people as will safely fit in their vehicle. We ask that graduates be responsible when considering their number of guests. Venue capacity is limited, so exceedingly large groups may not be able to enter the venue all at once.

**Q: Do you plan to send out additional details and updates to students attending Commencement next week?**

SA: Emails should have already gone out to all grads, but I'd encourage students to check their Eagles email for all the updates.

**Q: When can students expect their parking pass?**

SA: Students selected whether they wanted their parking pass

mailed or picked up. They should check their Eagles email for either a confirmation that their pass was mailed or a reminder to pick it up in the Registrar's Office. The Registrar's Office is located on the first floor of Grimm Hall North.

**Q: What if a student has older relatives or guests with special accommodation needs?**

SA: Golf cart assistance will be available to all who need it, no reservations necessary. The golf carts will take guests from their vehicle to a shaded seating area outside the venue where they can safely and comfortably wait for the rest of their party. After the graduate processes across the stage, the golf carts will be ready to take the guests back to their vehicle. People who need the assistance of wheelchairs or walkers need to bring their own.

**Q: What about online events?**

SA: On May 7, the Baccalaureate will be at 6 p.m. followed by a pre-recorded Commencement ceremony at 7 p.m. On May 8, we will live-stream the walkthrough ceremonies. Links will be available on [www.cui.edu/graduation](http://www.cui.edu/graduation) in advance of the events.

**Q: What if other students or staff members have business on**

**campus on Commencement Day?**

RM: Normal operations and business should not be hampered during the graduation ceremonies. We do plan on deactivating all student transponders during the event. This will help to ensure that there will be adequate parking for authorized graduation guests' vehicles. Faculty and staff transponders will not be deactivated.

As a reminder, each graduate is allowed only one car of guests. The guest vehicle must present their parking pass [which was issued to each graduate] at the gate. I would like to stress that a second guest vehicle will not be allowed on campus.

**Q: Is there a specific parking area for Commencement attendees? How will vehicles know where to go once they enter the campus?**

RM: The Masters of Arts and Sciences graduates and guests will be directed to park in the West Parking Lot (Baseball Lot) as their procession begins on pathways leading from that lot.

Undergraduates and guests will be directed to park in the Main Parking Lot (Grimm Hall Lot). That procession will begin in the Grimm Hall breezeway. The guests and graduates will be advised on where

to park by gate attendants, signage, employees and volunteers.

**Q: What about students who may be moving out of dorms next weekend?**

RM: Students who are moving out of dorms on May 8 will be able to access dorm road as usual. The graduation ceremonies should not hinder that process.

In a school year filled with changes, Morales stressed that the graduation events have been carefully and thoughtfully planned. "Steve Rodriguez handles our Event Planning and Operations for the Department of Campus Safety. He has been working closely with everyone in the Commencement Planning Committee. Steve has done a great job representing the Department of Campus Safety in his leadership role," Morales said, adding, "The Commencement Planning Committee and the various sub committees have done an outstanding job in putting together the entire operation."

# Forensics team takes on the National Forensic Association championship



**PICTURED ABOVE:** *The three students competing in the National Forensics Association Championship (left to right) Damon Mitchell, Andrea Aldana, Rebekah Mehrley.*

CASSANDRA CATE  
STAFF WRITER  
The Forensics team participated in their final tournament of the year on April 16 - 20, facing 65 colleges from all over the nation. Concordia placed 3rd in the small school division and 25th overall, ending the year on a high note.

Three students competed in the championship, Damon Mitchell, Rebekah Mehrley and Andrea Aldana, with senior Mitchell and sophomore Mehrley finishing within the top 48 for Impromptu Speaking. Mitchell also placed in the top 48 for Prose, Poetry and CA. Mitchell has eight years

of experience in speech and debate, two of which were at CUI. "In round, there's a mixture of anxiety, excitement and release all at the same time. I'm typically rather nervous until I start speaking, and then everything kind of melts away," said Mitchell.

Mehrley competed in the impromptu, extemporaneous and persuasive events. Her final speech was especially important to her. "This is the event I have poured my soul into, as I am advocating for protections for former foster youth, a topic close to my heart," said Mehrley. "While I definitely had some mishaps, I also feel like I grew a lot and was able to give these events the end-of-the-year performance they deserved."

Due to COVID-19 regulations, the championship was held via Zoom. Because speech and debate is by nature dependent on personal presentation, this change came with all sorts of new challenges. "The online format was definitely tricky this year. We had to learn

about lighting, spacing, audio, camera equipment, social norms for online competition - and so much more. These were things we had never needed to worry about before," said Claire Crossman, Director of Individual Events for the Forensics team. "But the students on this team are resilient, and they learn quickly. We were able to jump back into competition right away, despite the format being completely different," she added.

Students were thankful for the help of coaches like Crossman, who worked with them to make the best of the situation. "It felt like there were so many new things happening at once, but thankfully my team was there every step of the way to help me learn both how to navigate college events and learn how to use new virtual platforms," said Mehrley.

The championship lasts only a few days, yet the team spends a whole year preparing for it. "Heading into nationals season, I practiced five times a week with three separate coaches. I also did various workshops

with our competitors as well as competitors and coaches from neighboring schools such as Cal State LA who we are very good friends with," said Mitchell. As the event draws closer, the time spent practicing and refining speeches increases. "We only had three students at this national tournament, and still were able to place very high for a team that small, and I'm extraordinarily proud of our students for accomplishing that," Crossman said.

Mitchell, Mehrley and Crossman all recommend that students curious about the Forensics team take the leap and join. "For those interested in joining the team, I would say that if you are a passionate individual, a hard worker, and wanting to find a family of your own on campus, CUI Forensics is a great place to be," said Crossman. If you are interested, go to <https://www.cui.edu/academicprograms/undergraduate/forensics> and follow them on Instagram @cuiforensics for more information.



# Music Department wraps spring 2021

JOHN SYMANK

STAFF WRITER

After a very eventful academic year, Concordia's Music Department is ready to wrap up the semester. Despite the COVID-19 pandemic interference, the Music Department has had a fruitful spring, with numerous performances by our Orchestra, Choirs and Worship bands.

In January, musicians returned to campus knowing that they would not begin the semester meeting in person. With the semester beginning virtually and no certainty of the year as a whole, there were questions about whether or not it would be possible to perform together at all.

"Since most ensembles began over Zoom, it was very difficult to make music together," said senior Marshall Murphy, "and even when we were able to return to in-person rehearsals, the distance made it difficult to connect musically. Still, the ability to make music in proximity with one another was still a great blessing!"

"Working as a group became difficult this semester for many reasons," said sophomore Mya

Chahbazian, "I am in orchestra, choir and handbells, and in all three ensembles, it was hard to feel connected because we were so far apart from one another that feeling the music together was almost impossible."

"Having to be spread apart in choir is a lot harder than it seems," said senior Max Hansen, "I felt like I was singing in a bubble alone most rehearsals. This was great for my individual learning, it really helped my ear improve; however, it was incredibly hard looking at it from a group perspective."

Despite the challenges, music and choir students were able to navigate the uncharted waters of COVID-19 and finished the year with opportunities to perform live and in person, produce concert recordings, perform in live stream events and even participate in recitals.

"I feel like we had a successful semester, considering the circumstances," said sophomore Al Almanza, "The Music Department did a great job of navigating through the issues at hand and providing the resources needed to ensure us

the best environment possible for practice, study and rehearsals."

Even as the semester comes to a close, the Music Department is finishing strong, with three concerts this weekend and early into next week. The first two of these take place Sat., May 1, with the Concordia Spring Choral concert, "To Life!," featuring Donne Di Canto and Men's Chorus taking place at 4 p.m., followed by the Concordia Symphony Orchestra's performance

at 7:30 p.m. that same night. In addition, Monday, May 3 is the date of the Concordia Honors recital. It consists of several solo performances by students from across the Music Department to honor exceptionally skilled performers. All of these performances will be available for live streaming on Concordia's website.

Finally, The Concordia Choir has recently recorded their final concert of the semester, which will

be available for viewing at a date to be announced. Featuring works by Shawn Kirchner, Ola Gjielo, and Johann Sebastian Bach, it takes the place of the Masterworks concert that is normally completed at the end of the semester. "The most recent concert that we recorded replacing Masterworks was definitely my favorite, said Chahbazian, "We had harder music for this concert which is always more fun."



**PICTURED ABOVE:** A choir concert in March.  
Photo courtesy of: CUI Facebook Page

## Minds for beauty and hearts for truth



**PICTURED ABOVE:** The cover of "The Aerie" of 2021.  
Photo courtesy of: Online publication of "The Aerie"

DAVID BALLEW

STAFF WRITER

One of the blessings of spring is the release of the annual art and literary publication of "The Aerie." This year's journal continues a valuable history of thoughtful contributions to the campus culture at Concordia.

The artwork and creative writing presented in "The Aerie 2021" captures, in meaningful ways, the experiences of students, alumni, faculty and staff during this year of challenges with its

rollercoaster of starts and stops. The collaborative efforts of the English Department and the Arts Department brings journal publishing each year to showcase the literary efforts and the artwork of the contributors.

"I think it has helped me be more confident as an artist. It's hard to put your work out there; it takes courage," said Susan Eschelbach, senior, referring to her participation in the 2021 journal and in the journals of previous years.

"I've learned that most people will love your work, and that you are your own worst critic."

Capturing the beauty of the spirit of perseverance conveyed by students, alumni, faculty and staff, the cover of "The Aerie 2021" spotlights a work in acrylic titled "Isolation" by Meghan Geer. "It's a self-portrait. I was on Zoom in my room and I was kind of sad," said Geer, junior, acknowledging the suddenness of the pandemic. "I didn't get to say goodbye to my classmates." Referring to the inspiration for her art piece, Geer said, "It's a reflection of my internal feelings of what is happening right now. I think a lot of people can relate to it."

Eschelbach added digital art to the collection of works in "The Aerie." "I really like space and space-themed art," said Eschelbach, referring to her works "Astronaut Pattern" and "Space Stamps Series" in "The Aerie." "I also really enjoy the old posters of diagrams of rocks, anatomy and flowers which is where I pulled my inspiration for the font and some of the textures."

Using a creative approach means thinking outside the box. "A lot of the time, I use whatever is around," Geer explained. "I like to use recycled or found materials." Geer's work titled

"Scarlet Bonsai" is an example of found materials like wire and a container. "My advice is wear gloves and use tools," said Geer.

The collaboration that exists between the Arts Department and the English Department elevates Concordia and touches students in important ways. "When you're in class together, you form good-natured relationships with all of them and get to see their work and help each other out," said Geer. "You get to see each other's work and learn from each other."

Teamwork within the programs at Concordia is highly sought after by students. "When I was searching for schools, I was looking for a small school where I could talk to the professors," said Geer. "I like the small classroom feel." Eschelbach said, "I liked art and graphic design in high school, so I thought that having a minor in graphic design would be a good way to learn about it while having my physics major."

"The Aerie 2021" is available to everyone online and is a must see. To take a closer look at the creative works of the current year along with previous editions of "The Aerie," visit <https://www.cui.edu/arts/visual-arts/aerie>.



# Women’s tennis writes history



PICTURED ABOVE: Team huddle  
Photo courtesy of: cuieagles.com ( Taylor Krouse)

MAAD ALKADHIM  
STAFF WRITER

The women’s tennis team is making history this season after setting a new winning record of 13 wins after beating Westmont 5-0.

On Wed., April 14 the team defeated Westmont to reach a historic 13 win record in the NCAA Division II. This breaks the previous record set by the Eagles (12).

Team captain and senior Ghazal Pakbaten attributed the recent success to the bonding of this year’s team and said, “I feel that this year we are teammates rather than individual players being in one team,” she said, adding, “The team work we are doing is making this year’s team much better.”

The selflessness of the players proved to be an important key to their success. Sophomore Jennifer Jolin said, “This year we are much closer than last year. We open up to each other and help each other.” Freshman

Heather Lynne said, “we all have lots of respect for each other and ultimately want the best for one another. The team dynamic has affected our success because we know that we want to win for each other just as much as we want to win for ourselves.”

Jolin expressed how strong the team is and said, “We have a stacked team and the players from number one to number six spot are really strong. Our players can step up and play at a higher level when the team needs it.” Pakbaten agreed with Jolin and described this year’s team as a strong one. “This year’s team was really good. We work hard even though it was impossible with COVID-19,” said Pakbaten. Lynne contributed, “We know that this season we had some of the best athletes the school has seen in the women’s tennis program and so we tried to capitalize on each opportunity.”

The tennis team’s journey is far from over. On Thurs., April 22,

the team participated in the Conference Championship and earned third place. This earned them a spot at the Regional Championship where they will face some of the best teams. If they perform like the strong team that they are, there is a high chance they will get the opportunity to participate in Nationals.

Pakbaten has high hopes and expectations for the team’s upcoming performances in Regionals.

“If we do our best then we will be able to qualify for Nationals. There is more to achieve this season. It won’t be easy because the best four teams from the Conference will be playing,” said Pakbaten.

The women’s tennis team will be heading to Arizona on Wed., May 5 to compete in Regionals. To continue following the impressive and historic season the women’s tennis team is having, follow their Instagram page @cuitennis.

# An inside look at Concordia baseball



PICTURED ABOVE: Evan Larsen pitching.  
Photo courtesy of: CUI Athletics

KAILYN CASE  
STAFF WRITER

The baseball program hasn’t skipped a beat at striving to be the best they can even with all the regulations and changing of schedules, adapting to every situation they are put in. The environment and comradery built by these men are a true staple to what it means to be an Eagle. After having their season cancelled in 2020, they honed their individual talents and grew as a team to ensure a successful season this year.

Senior catcher Kevin Fowler explained how this season has been different than others, “There are a ton of protocols, but we’ve done a really good job at overcoming all of those obstacles and just getting the work in any way we possibly can.”

From going to class to practice, doing homework,

and going to the trainers for recovery, time management has become essential. Plus, more time must be set aside for sanitizing and COVID testing. Fowler said, “The most challenging part of this season is following all of the protocols. For a while we were throwing the balls and playing catch into nets by ourselves. Now that things are starting to open up a bit and numbers of cases are dropping, we’re really coming together as a team and dominating every single practice.”

Junior pitcher, Evan Larsen, said his transition from Cal State Fullerton’s baseball team to Concordia has been better than he expected. Larsen described the coaching staff, as well as the rest of the team, as welcoming. Larsen’s journey has included “battling some injuries prior to coming to Concordia” and working extremely hard to get his arm right to be the best asset he

could be for the team.

“I maintain a routine and get my workouts in during the week as well as bullpens and arm care in the training room,” said Larsen. One thing that is consistent throughout these men is the time they take to maintain their fitness level to stay at the top of their game.

They are preparing to hit their goals this year and to achieve even more in the upcoming seasons. Larsen said his summer training includes “continuing his workouts, throwing bullpens and arm recovery, as well as going to San Louis Obispo to play summer ball and see where it goes from there.” Larsen hopes this will lead him towards his dream of making it to the next level to play.

Continue to support our baseball team and follow their schedule at <https://cuieagles.com/sports/baseball/schedule/2021>.

# Women’s water polo wraps up their season

BROOKE JACKSON  
SPORTS EDITOR

Women’s water polo finished up their season in a final game against APU. The team completed their season with a record of 2-6 and earned their first ever GCC conference win against Santa Clara.

They also won their game against Chapman 17-5, by starting off strong scoring six times in both the first and second quarters.

Kim Reidel, Emily Tucker, and Tamsyn Evezard earned GCC Conference Honors. Reidel earned an All-Conference title, Tucker was named on the First Team All-Conference and Evezard on the Second Team All-Conference.

Reidel scored 22 goals this season with a .449 shot percentage. This shot total was about one third of the total goals this season for the Eagles.

Tucker worked hard this year with a .500 shot percentage, contributing three of the goals against Loyola Marymount and Chapman.

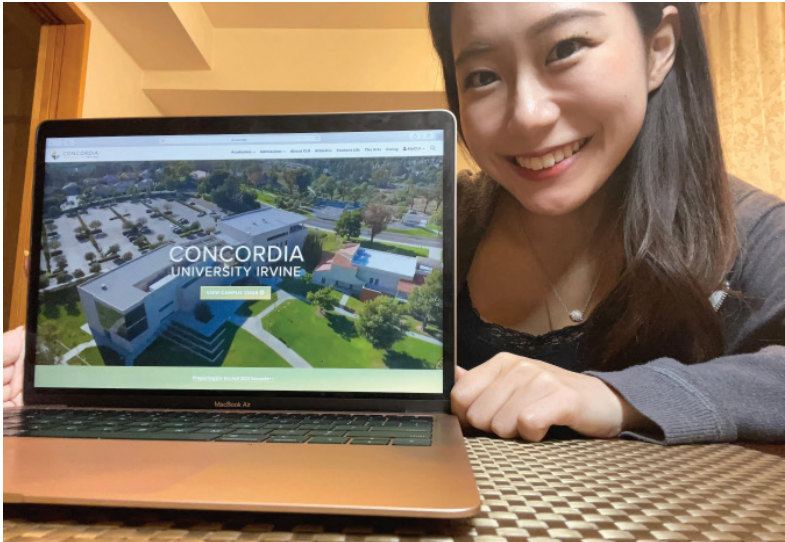
Evezard scored five goals, had six assists, and eight steals to earn her title. and be added to the guest list.



PICTURED ABOVE: (Left to right, top to bottom) Emily Tucker, Dailynn Santoro, Tamsyn Evezard, Andie Perriera, Mauriama Moore, Tatiana Cava  
Photo courtesy of: Dailynn Santoro



# My crazy year as an international student living in Japan



**PICTURED ABOVE:** *I'm taking online classes from Tokyo, Japan. Photo courtesy of: Kei Yoshida*

KEI YOSHIDA  
STAFF WRITER

The spread of the COVID-19 pandemic has plagued students around the world. Many international students studying at an overseas university were obligated to return to their home country in 2020. They were asked to refrain from traveling or were unable to attend class on campus. In addition, some international

students in the U.S. could not go back to their country due to the restrictions of their home country or financial circumstances.

The time difference between Japan and the U.S. is 17 hours, and a year ago, I'd wake up in the morning or in the middle of the night to take classes due to the time difference, but I'd often feel sick. Fortunately, many professors accommodated my schedule by sending me a

recording of the live class.

In addition to the challenge of taking online classes for the past year and not experiencing college life, it was difficult for international students to connect with friends and professors due to the time difference. However, I think spending the year in Japan was the right choice for me because living with my family makes everyone more comfortable and safe.



**PICTURED ABOVE:** *The door is always open! The Moon International Center at Concordia is located in the Administration building. The Center serves Concordia's international student population and is the hub for our study abroad programs. Photo courtesy of Alexander Lange.*

Fall 2021, starting in August, is my last semester, so I plan to return to the U.S. for four months. There are many materials that I must read before traveling, and I plan to be vaccinated.

Everyone has their own opinions, but what I really

learned throughout this year is that life is full of unexpected things. It means that you have to grab something and think for yourself and live. I hope that as many international students as possible will return to the U.S. in the fall.

# The happiest place on earth is back

CAITLYN ROWLAND  
STAFF WRITER

Whether you are a die-hard fan or just want to break the monotony of the pandemic lifestyle, The Happiest Place on Earth is back. On April 30, Disneyland reopens to the public, following California guidelines to ensure safety for the visitors. Megan Chelling, senior and lifelong Disney fan, and Caitlin Fulton, senior and Disney devotee, shared why the reopening is so exciting for them.

Fulton stated, "I have missed Disneyland ever since they closed in March 2020. I was a regular attendee before closure, I have been an Annual Passholder since 2017. I have since visited the parks as safely as I can, such as dining outdoors in Downtown Disney and shopping in Disney's California Adventure." Fulton continued, "Disneyland means everything to me, it has since I was a kid. It holds a special place in my heart, as it's one of the only places in the world that every person, no matter their age, can enjoy and feel pure happiness, having a break from this chaotic world."

Chelling also offered her insight about Disneyland's reopening, and what she missed while the doors to the Magic Kingdom were locked. "I miss the friendly and positive atmosphere of the parks and the spontaneous Disney nights with my fellow Disney passholders," Chelling said, adding, "Disneyland was a place for my friends and me to take a break from school and stress and enter a different world that let us be carefree for a night."

Fulton explained that she would be attending Disneyland when it reopens and is excited for an upcoming Avengers theme area that is currently in development. "I plan on going as soon as I am able. I hope to be able to go once Avengers Campus opens on June 4," Fulton said, "I look forward to being able to safely visit magic again. It holds a special place in my heart that goes beyond just being at a theme park. I look forward to seeing the Disneyland ducks and cats, as well as soaking up everything I can on Main Street."

Similar to Fulton, Chelling explained how she already

has plans to go when Disney officially reopens, "Me and my friend who had passes before COVID are planning to go sometime this summer," Chelling continued, "Before we both graduate and venture off into starting our big kid careers, we want to go back, eat a Dole whip and pretend we're kids again."

Disneyland will be following California guidelines by enforcing mask use, only allowing California residents in, having in groups no larger than three, increased sanitation, and reservation requirements to monitor and reduce the number of people attending. Fulton is confident Disney will do it right. "I feel very comfortable with what Disneyland will be setting in place to be safe around COVID-19. They will be following California's guidelines, as well as heavily enforcing everything to be able to keep the magic while being safe," she said.

Chelling agreed, adding, "I do feel comfortable with the COVID precautions that the parks plan to execute, especially now that there is an increasingly

bigger number of people getting vaccinated. I think the delay on opening was smart." If you relate to Fulton and Chelling, be there when Disney reopens, and don't forget your mask!

Go to <https://disneyland.disney.go.com> to learn more!

## 7 tips to remember if you're attending graduation

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

6. ONE CAR, NO LIMOS!

Graduates will be allowed only one car with only as many guests that can fit safely in that vehicle. Exceedingly large groups may not be able to enter the venue all at once. All vehicles will need to have a parking pass when approaching the gatehouse and student transponders will be shut off on the day of Commencement to accommodate the traffic flow. Vehicles must fit in a standard-sized parking stall. No RVs, limos or buses.

7. HELP IS HERE!

You've explained the process to your parents (twice) and they still have questions. Ask your lingering Commencement Day questions now! The best resources for Commencement questions are to check your Eagles email and visit [www.cui.edu/graduation](http://www.cui.edu/graduation).



# LOL! A look at the Golden Age of Concordia memes

KACY REDMOND  
STAFF WRITER

*Me: You won't write a Courier article about memes.*

*Me to me: Oh really?*

Over the past year, the students and faculty of Concordia have collectively reacted to the COVID-19 crisis. Before starting online learning, students related to each other's struggles on the Internet in the form of memes. A picture with a clever caption can act as comedic relief for a struggling student.

Until recently, when creators were asked to unaffiliate their pages with Concordia's brand, there were meme pages on Instagram that were made specifically for Concordia's students. They are still around today, just a little harder to find. Regardless of labels, meme culture is one of the most important forms of self-expression and relatability with others that Concordia students can engage themselves in.

The best memes show themselves in the hardest of situations. On July 30, 2020, the Concordia community received an email from Dr. Michael A. Thomas, President, stating that classes would remain fully online at the beginning of the fall semester, despite many hopes and expectations that they would be in person. Immediately that day, one of the most popular meme accounts posted a series of photos

reacting to this situation with disappointment with the caption, "Okay, but all jokes aside, the school is doing their best right now, and I can't imagine how hard it must be to try and open the school back up..." President Thomas' official Instagram account replied to this post with a lighthearted response and his own reaction, a gesture to the students on a platform that would reach them. He ended his comment with: "Don't get me wrong! I love the memes!"

These accounts are run by real students who are more than happy to talk about their work. @seeu\_laughing (from the account above) began their page in the fall of their freshman year because they had friends at other colleges starting their own meme pages. Like the student body's current collective motivation, the creator has found it hard to post frequently during the pandemic. They said, "It is hard to think of content as regularly, because I'm stuck in my room. Other than that [the page] hasn't changed much, it's mostly just me laughing at my own jokes."

@seeu\_laughing mentioned that they were inspired by one of the only Concordia meme pages at the time when they arrived. @classic\_honorsmemes, the original page, also found inspiration in the encouragement of their friends.

"I know how fun it is to have inside references with others.

My meme account was really started because I was hanging out with Concordia friends making Concordia-related memes. It was always meant to be a community thing."

In the Spring of 2020, just before COVID, several meme pages affiliated with Concordia popped up on Instagram, garnering hundreds of followers and likes from current students and alumni. Students flocked to this platform, making pages for all kinds of content, some of which began overstepping by appropriating Concordia's official branding; using the official university name, logo or photos without permission from the university.

According to the university's social media manager, Jennifer Harmell, "Concordia utilizes social media listening to tune into conversations about the university and other relevant topics to the university." This is a common business practice employed by companies, organizations and academic institutions who wish to better engage with their community members, Harmell explained. "Another important part of sustaining a relevant social presence is maintaining brand guidelines across our official university-affiliated social media accounts," Harmell said, noting that the same standards that apply to student-created account, also apply to graduate students, alumni, faculty and staff who cultivate their own

How this semester is already feeling



**PICTURED ABOVE:** A student-run meme creator expresses a hectic semester through SpongeBob SquarePants. Photo courtesy of: @seeu\_laughing

social followings outside of their official Concordia work.

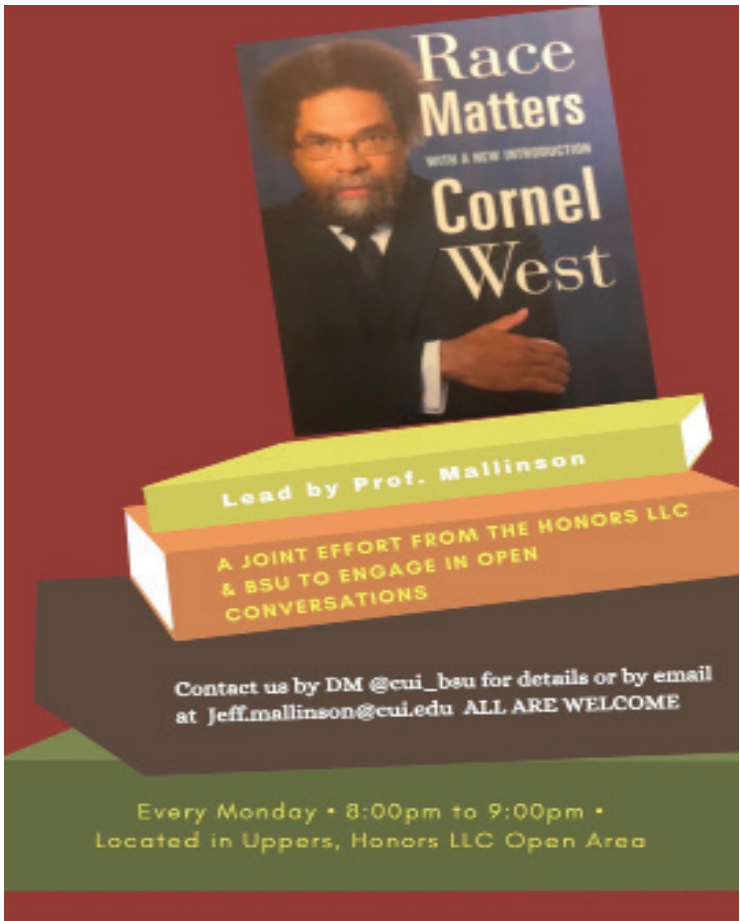
One of the other reasons universities safeguard their brand and logos is for crisis communications; to alert the community about wildfire danger or to shelter in place, for example. For students and parents out of state, communicating on social media is the new form of crisis communications. When messaging is urgent, "We need to be clear that the voice is coming from an official university channel," Harmell said.

The often lighthearted student accounts have maintained their followings of hundreds, albeit changing their

names and captions to unaffiliate with Concordia's brand. Both creators were understanding of the university and conformed to their request. @classic\_honorsmemes said, "While memes are fun and all... it's a difficult line to walk in trying to represent the community while also making sure our jokes aren't taken as serious representation of the school by people who aren't in it. After all, memes are context-based."

It is a line that creators are willing to continue to walk, all "while recovering from the creatively and emotionally draining pit that was 2020," as @classic\_honorsmemes expressed.

## Reading about the “Race Matters” book club



**PICTURED ABOVE:** "Race Matters" book club flyer Photo courtesy of: @cui\_bsu, Created by Student Brandon Lamont Morgan

Edward Oliver  
STAFF WRITER

Throughout the school year the book club, hosted by Christ College Professor Jeffrey Mallinson, focused on literature themes from author Cornel West's book "Race Matters." Inspired by BSU Vice President and junior Miylan Eubanks, the club served to increase awareness of the current issues in the country regarding race and ethnicity.

Setting up the club enabled the Honors LLC to openly converse about the topics and "support various affinity and advocacy groups on campus with an opportunity for robust conversations about issues that can help us support the needs of all members of our community," according to Mallinson.

The formation of the "Race Matters" book club came about as an initiative Mallinson sought to

accomplish this year. He is the Faculty in Residence at the Honors LLC, and the chair of

History and Political Thought. Mallinson is committed to finding new and comfortable ways to

bring up sensitive topics about race for the public ear. "Fortunately, while things did get sensitive and painful realities were revealed, the space of unconditional love seemed to create a good context for our start," said Mallinson.

Eubanks, who advocated for the club, shared other ideas to perhaps shape future classes. One of those ideas is a course a student could potentially take: Race and Politics in America.

Both Eubanks and Mallinson worked together to make the club as open as possible and make conversation easy. "Professor Mallinson really was very helpful in helping Black students on campus get their voices and concerns heard. We really built a sense of community in our club open to all students," said Eubanks.

Lamont Morgan, book club member and Concordia student, committed himself to

the conversations held in the club and plans to join the club again next year. Morgan stated, "Most important for me in terms of what I wanted out of the book club was to see how those in minorities and non-minority backgrounds compared and contrasted thoughts on topics usually shied away from in scholastic environments, due to fear of people being offended or hurt. I definitely was able to achieve my goal and I feel better grounded in knowing Concordia's student base, for the most part, shares the kind of common morality."

Both Eubanks and Mallinson encourage students to join the book club next year to participate and converse about such topics once again. "I call on all student club leaders and interested students to join us. No one group can fully achieve their goals without others," said Mallinson. To learn more about the "Race Matters" book club or how to join, contact Professor Jeffrey Mallinson at jeff.mallinson@cui.edu, or contact Miylan Eubanks at miylan.eubanks@eagles.cui.edu.