



Job tips galore at campus career week



Beth Pellerito of the Center for Student Opportunity speaks to students during Career Week. Ruochen Ding: Photographer

NATHANIEL FRYER
STAFF WRITER

Over the course of “Like a Boss: Alma College Career Week”, students had many opportunities to improve their skills related to all aspects of the interview and job process.

Sponsored by the Center for Student Opportunity (CSO), campus hosted a dozen career related events, activities, speeches and workshops.

Last Monday kicked off Monday with three events: a casual drop-in at Starbucks

where students could get their resumes reviewed by a professional recruiter, a Career Bootcamp hosted by Steve Bohus about the basics of professionalism and a session about using LinkedIn, a business-oriented social networking site.

Tuesday and Wednesday began with Alumni Speed Interviews, where students could gain constructive feedback on how to improve their interviewing skills, as well as extra practice to help calm any anxiety surrounding the process.

Last Thursday promised three events, starting with

joint-session on how to write strong cover letters and resumes. At the workshop students looked at examples of strong cover letters and resumes and received one-on-one help with their own.

Following this, there was an informational meeting on service opportunities offered nationally and internationally through the AmeriCorps and the Peace Corps. Lastly, another session was offered to show the tips and tricks to navigating employment, specifically in the federal government.

Futures Fair, the big finale

to Career Week, was on last Friday. This an opportunity for students to meet with over 45 employers to talk about internships, summer jobs and entry-level employment opportunities. As an added bonus, for making it through the week, students got to take home a Like a Boss: Career Week t-shirt.

“[This experience is] always really helpful,” said **Ariel Capaldi ('18)**. “I think it was a really good reminder that the writing center is there . . . so even if this [event] wasn’t at a convenient time . . . I can make an appointment and

still have people who are better at [cover letter and resume writing] look at it.”

Besides Career Week, CSO has many other opportunities for students to improve their career oriented skills. The writing center, for example, is a resource that will always help students review and better their cover letters or resumes.

Another source available to students through the CSO is peer consulting. These are fellow students who are well trained in cover letter and resume building, the interview process, job searching and networking. They are always available Monday through Thursday from 5pm to 8pm in the CSO. Specific appointments for this service can be made through Handshake.

A good reference for students looking to refine their interview know-how is Big Interview, accessible through the Alma College website. Big Interview is a website that allows students to do mock interviews and be advised by experts in over 140 industries, as well as learn common questions asked at interviews.

Although campus has numerous ways to improve on all skills, career-centered students still felt that Career Week was beneficial, “Anyone can google how to write a cover letter and the format,” said **David Suidgeest ('20)**, “but here you get specific advice towards what you can do to make yours better.”

Classtime to increase by 10 minutes

ROSE CYBURT
STAFF WRITER

There will be some changes in classes starting next year.

The college was last accredited in the school year of 2009-2010 by the Higher Learning Commission's (HLC). The next accreditation is scheduled for 2019-2020.

The HLC evaluation verifies that institutions meet certain standards, such as being engaged in continuous improvement, according to its website. Schools are also required to adhere to institutional changes in policies and practices.

With the upcoming accreditation, the administration reviewed class structure. Alma, which provides four credits per hour, has decided that in order to meet higher standards 10 minutes will be added to all classes.

The plan is to raise availability of classes by providing the same classes in

the morning and afternoon, with an emphasis on labs to make it easier for students that are athletes or in band. The goal for the school is to achieve academic excellence and assure that students are not missing anything.

“Establishments want to be accredited,” said Dustin Bissell, English professor. Two years ago, he had been an editor for the HLC accreditation at Central Michigan University.

“CMU offers three credits per hour and they have an extra week of classes.” Essentially, Alma students are receiving more credits for the same amount of class time as Central.

Previously, the classes ran on the same time schedule, but the new change in structure is “screwy” in the words of Bissell. It will make it more difficult for students to have back to back classes.

“I like teaching classes that are blocked together because I am able to get into a groove, but when there is a gap I feel

as if I’m starting over,” said Bissell. “This is a necessary evil though in a way.”

One of the key points to extending class periods is that a professor won’t have to skimp on material and students will receive more one on one during this time.

“Certain courses will be easier to adjust than others” said Bissell.

Professors that have taught for decades are used to fitting material into the designated time.

“They have adapted to teaching the most valuable information and while the extra time may help, it also may be a waste covering material that isn’t necessary,” said Bissell.

“Active learning classes will be easier to change since it provides more time for discussion with the students.”

It is unclear as of yet whether professors will be compensated for the extra time. While 10 minutes may not seem like a critical amount



Claudia Walter ('20) speaks about increased class lengths

Photo Courtesy of Claudia Walter

of time, it affects office hours and does make a difference when it is looked at for the whole school year.

Students aren’t necessarily against the idea, though, and see the benefits.

“I generally like gaps in between my classes,” said

Claudia Walter ('20). “I don’t think it will make too much of a difference and it only seems to make sense.”

“It will be hard for upper classmen to adjust,” said **Eric Ferrara ('19)**. “I do think it is beneficial though especially for students in labs.”

Houses prepare for Greek Week

NATHANIEL FRYER
STAFF WRITER

Alma College is in the process of recruitment for fraternities and sororities. This week, all non-Greek females have the opportunity to attend desserts, spreads and teas if they wish to rush a sorority, and all non-Greek males can attend smokers.

Throughout the previous semester, both fraternities and sororities have been holding rush and recruitment events for potential new members.

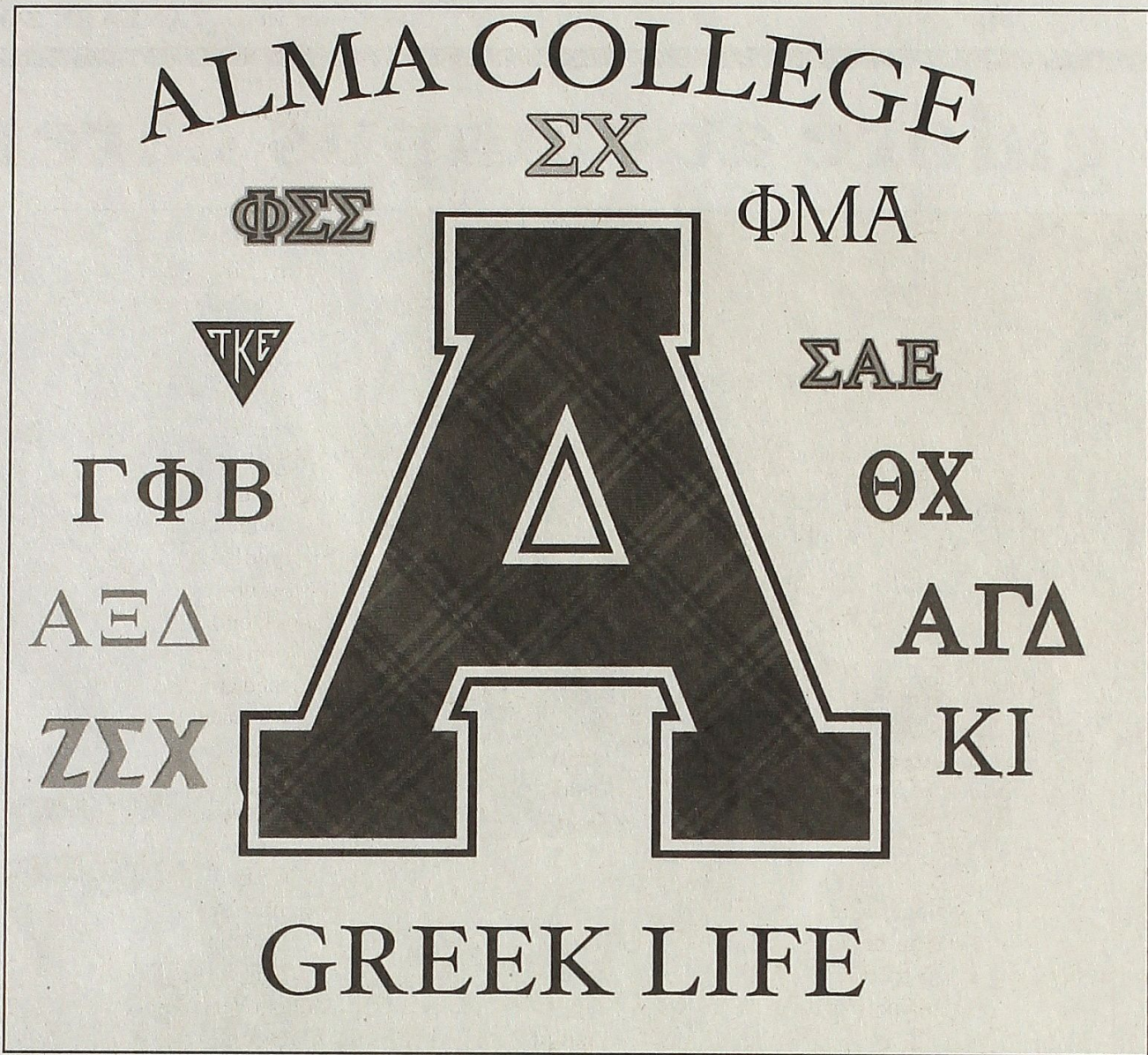
The Student Life Office even hired a team of professionals from Phired Up Productions to train Greek students on recruitment techniques, and Greek Life members were allowed to move in early on January 6 to attend the training, which happened the next day.

“Phired Up re-solidified effective rushing tactics, and provided insight on helpful technology,” said **Anthony Pizzo** (’19), the President of Zeta Sigma.

Last week, PanHellenic Executive Board Members and Inter-Fraternal Council Executive Council members sat at tables during the lunch and dinner hours at SAGA, and were able to get about 75 names on the Sorority recruitment list, and 63 names on the fraternity rush list.

During this week, all non-Greek students have the chance to get to find their preferred Greek organization, and learn more about it, before Walkouts and Runouts on Friday and Saturday.

Choosing the correct fraternity or sorority to rush is often a challenging process



Alma College hosts 11 fraternities and Sororities

for many. “Greek life is a big part of Alma College. Greek life is there to help empower others to change the world by working together,” said **Mercedes Thill** (’19), who is currently one of the two PanHellenic recruitment chairs.

“With Alma being such a small campus, I believe Greek life has a big impact in all the clubs and organizations on campus because the values upheld in Greek life help the membership strive to be the

best that it can be with the help of others.”

The recruitment process for potential new members emphasizes finding the fraternity or sorority that is best fit for individual needs.

After signing the rush list, individuals are invited to attend smokers or teas, spreads and desserts.

Upon the conclusion of desserts, teas, spreads and smokers, sororities and fraternities will hold their bids meeting, and discuss which individuals embody

Caden Wilson/News Editor

the qualities they uphold. “Rushing was beautiful... it was the high point of my freshman year,” states **Jack Montgomery** (’20), the Inter-Fraternal Council Rush Chairman.

Once the last round of the recruitment process has finished (for sororities that is Wednesday, and for fraternities that is Thursday), there is a period of no-talks-no communication between current members of Greek life and possible members. This excludes communications

between students who share the same classes.

“This year the process of no-talks [for sororities] changed so that after the last preference meeting we aren’t able to talk to the new members until after walkouts,” explained **Emily Jodway** (’19), the President of Gamma Phi Beta. “You don’t want to sway [potential new members’] opinions on recruitment, so I believe that this process of no talks helps them.”

On 2 February, all the sororities will gather with their supporters in the Stone Recreation Center, and wait for their new members to join their ranks of sisterhood. This same process will be repeated the next evening when fraternities gather, and await their new members.

Did you know?

Franklin Knox, (1874-1944) Franklin D. Roosevelt’s secretary of the Navy was an Alma College student who dropped out his senior year to fight in the Spanish-American War as one of President Theodore Roosevelt’s Rough Riders. He was mentioned by name by Adolf Hitler in Germany’s Declaration of War against the United States. The Reid-Knox building, better known as the admissions building.

Alt-right violates Michigan, campus protocol

CADEN WILSON
NEWS EDITOR

White supremacist and outspoken “alt-right” leader Richard Spencer was denied speaking space on the University of Michigan’s campus this semester, according to the university’s official statement.

However, the U of M has not ruled out the possibility of Spencer speaking on campus later in the year and the ultra-conservative leader has already rented space to deliver a speech at Michigan State University in March.

Both schools have faced strong opposition from students who loudly oppose Spencer’s ideology and are actively protesting his campus appearances.

Spencer rejected the term “white nationalist,” instead labeling himself as a proponent of an “ethnostate for a dispossessed white race” and has called for “peaceful ethnic cleansing.”

In 2017, Spencer cancelled a University of California Berkeley event after an elevated number of protests drew safety concerns. The protesters were lambasted by conservative media

for obstructing the First Amendment and Spencer’s freedom of speech.

Chaplinsky vs. The State of New Hampshire defined by the Supreme Court in 1942 is the first of several cases that may shine some light on the situation, in the form of the “Fighting Words” rulings. The court’s verdict was as follows:

“(Fighting Words) ...By their very utterance, inflict injury or tend to incite an immediate breach of the peace. It has been well observed that such utterances are no essential part of any exposition of ideas, and are of such slight social value as a step to truth that any benefit that may be derived from them is clearly outweighed by the social interest in order and morality.”

The mere fact that Spencer emulates Nazi Party propaganda and has on multiple occasions denounced the Jewish faith goes far beyond the cause behind the indictment handed out to Walter Chaplinsky, who was detailed for verbally insulting his town marshal.

Most Alma students are familiar with the section of the Student Handbook.

As of Jan. 10 2018, the handbook stated:

“The Alma College Mission Statement asserts that the purpose of the institution is to seek the liberation of people from ignorance, prejudice, and parochialism... Spoken, written or symbolic harassment occurs when people insult, stigmatize or denigrate individuals or groups on the basis of race, religion, creed, national origin, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, age or physical ability.”

Spencer not only advocates for a North American with ethno-state, but uses the chant “Hail Victory” with his supporters to promote the white race, a clear translation of the German “Sieg Heil,” used by Adolf Hitler and the Nazi Party.

Actions and behaviors like this are not only in clear violation of Alma College’s policies but sections 2.01, 2.06 and 2.04 of the Spartan Student Life Handbook. More importantly, Spencer is in violation of Section 750.147b of the Michigan Ethnic Intimidation statute, which forbids harassment based on race.

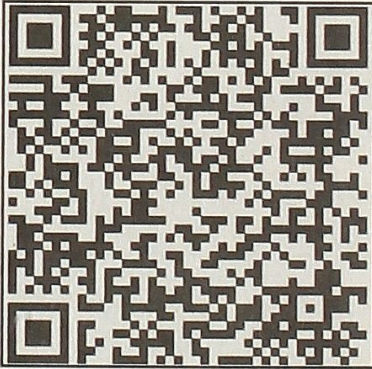
In accordance to the

Alma College Mission Statement the Diversity and Inclusion office has taken steps to creating a much more inclusive, understanding and non-judgmental campus through the implementation of Safe Zones, where students can speak to members without fear or harassment and with understanding.

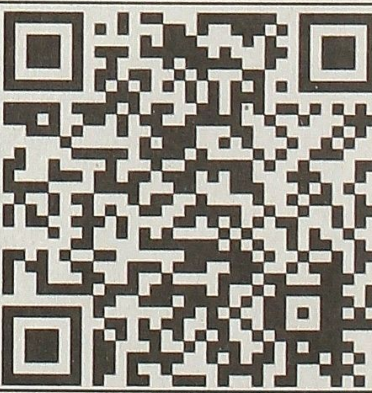
Currently the program is focused on Alma’s LGBTQ+ community, although the concept in general was met with criticism by the conservative right, who compared college students to babies unable to comprehend adult issues outside of their bubbles.

With all of that in mind, some internet users have found it ironic that the same right-wing individuals mocking college students for being sensitive have been vocally livid over Starbucks cups that didn’t have the phrase “Merry Christmas” printed on the outside and boycotted Star Wars XII over John Boyega’s role as a black stormtrooper.

In accordance to Alma College’s mission statement, it is unlikely that advocates such as Spencer will be allowed to speak on campus.



Michigan Ethnic Intimidation Statue



Alma College harassment policy



Spartan Student Handbook

“American Crime Story” has strong characters, weak plot

By SAM ANTEAU
STAFF WRITER

“The Assassination of Gianni Versace” is the second season in the true crime anthology, “American Crime Story.” This season, as its title would suggest, is all about the murder of iconic fashion designer Gianni Versace by spree killer Andrew Cunanan. As of January 29th, the series will have featured its first two episodes. Judging by these episodes, the show has proven to be a bit of mixed bag. After starting off strong with the premiere, “The Man Who Would Be Vogue,” Versace peters off into a slower pace with “Manhunt.”

That is not to say that the show isn’t worth watching. While the plot and writing lack in some places, it is extremely character driven and, as such, is led by some tremendously talented actors.

Before I go further in my review, it is important to note that the accuracy of the show’s portrayal of the events on which it was based has no bearing on my opinions.

As usual, I’m inclined to be skeptical of anything claiming to be based on a true story. Thus, I am viewing the series purely as a work of fiction, loosely based on true events and the rumors surrounding them.

Storyline

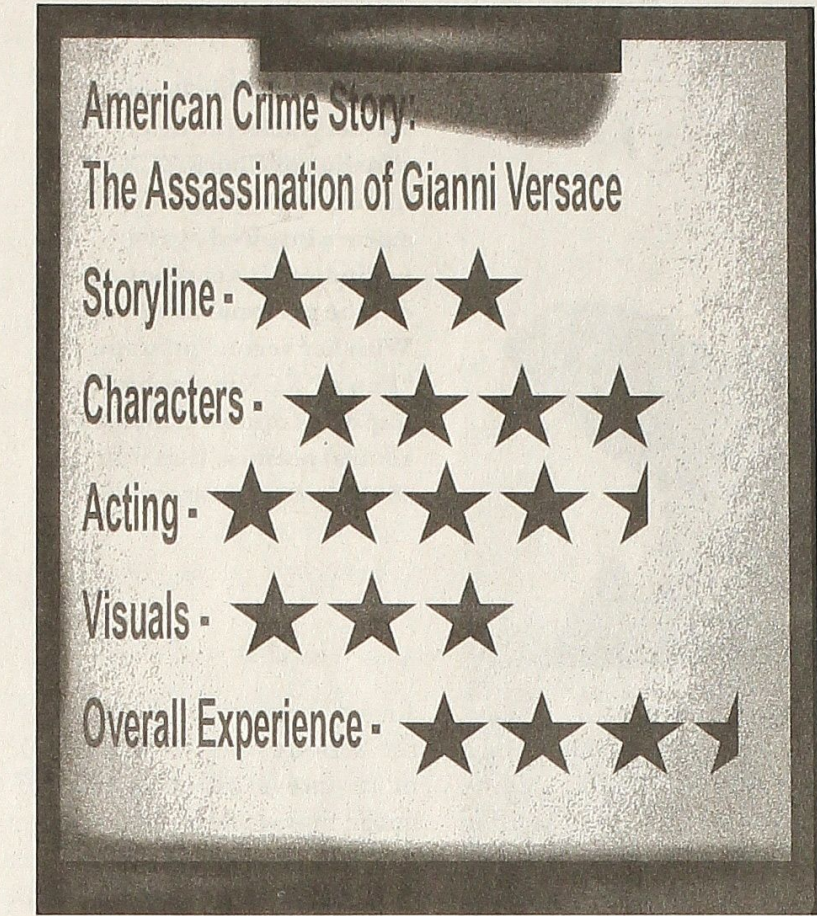
On paper, Versace’s storyline should be inherently compelling. And in the first episode, it is; working backwards, Versace starts with Cunanan murdering Versace and getting chased down by police.

It is thrilling, and it gives us our first glimpse into the character who, really, tends to steal the spotlight: Andrew Cunanan. All of the scenes feel important in setting up characters and relationships, rather than superfluous to pad runtime.

The second episode, “Manhunt,” does not boast the same strength in plot. There are scenes that feel incredibly out of place, like the spat between Gianni and Donatella before a fashion show.

While it may give a deeper look at their relationship, what it does more successfully is bog down the story. This is not to say there aren’t great moments – one involving duct tape and the song “Easy Lover” (no spoilers) sticks out in particular – but aside from the momentary gems, the story suffers in the second episode.

Another thing that has, thus far, weakened the plot in both episodes is the narrative being



Staff Writer Sam Anteau reviews the newest installment in the “American Crime Story” anthology, “The Assassination of Gianni Versace.”
Zachary Meyer: Illustrator

told in reverse chronological order. The show seems to jump between time period, managing to confuse the viewer about when a particular plot is taking place.

It takes a couple of these jumps in time to actually get used to that aspect, though I found it just as jarring in the second episode. Instead of being a fresh and interesting way to tell a story, it mostly just confuses an already weak plot.

Characters

The characters of Versace are where its heart is. The titular character, Gianni Versace, is extremely likable; passionate, earnest and kind, he offers a welcome softness in the face of Cunanan’s calculated charm.

It is made abundantly clear from the first scene that Versace is friendly and, in turn, well loved. Warm exchanges between he and his house staff, as well as friends he sees on the street, give the impression of demeanor.

Despite only knowing him for one scene, I felt effected and upset by his death at the beginning of the first episode. And the more scenes he has, the more upset I am by his death.

Making less of an impression are Antonio D’Amico, Versace’s lover, and Donatella Versace, Gianni’s sister. Antonio grows more compelling as the story continues, but what makes him interesting is his relationship to Versace. Donatella suffers the same fate.

While they both have some beautifully emotional moments, their primary objective is to be Gianni’s lover and Gianni’s sister, respectively. That said, they are fairly strong supporting characters, given the roles to which they’ve

been relegated.

The true star of the show is Cunanan. He is a complex character, to say the least; a compulsive liar and performative conversationalist, we get the immediate feeling that we can’t believe anything he says. His obsession with notoriety is clear in the way that he talks about Versace, as well as the way he repeatedly constructs a false narrative of his life. We see him as a social chameleon that never settles on a true identity.

His ability to manipulate those around him is as impressive as it is chilling. I often find myself almost rooting for him, despite knowing that he murdered five men. That’s the mark of a good villain.

Acting

All that said, notable characters would be nothing without their actors. Edgar Ramírez’s easy charm makes Versace’s warmth all the more believable.

It’s difficult to make viewers feel something for the death of a character we just met, but after watching Ramírez’s Versace effortlessly glide throughout his day, we become attached rather quickly. His later, more emotional appearances only endear us to him more.

Ricky Martin’s portrayal of Antonio is just as strong. Though Martin doesn’t have a lot to work with in terms of his character – who, compared to Gianni and Andrew, is not particularly fleshed out as of this point – he does the best with what he’s given.

A scene that really shows off his acting chops is when Antonio is being questioned (rather

insensitively) by the police. His defense of his relationship with Versace and his clear grief as he was questioned, still in his bloodstained clothes, were enough to choke me up.

Penelope Cruz absolutely kills it as Donatella Versace. She delivers such depth and emotion that Donatella becomes noteworthy; if Cruz did not play her so excellently, I am sure she would seem almost like an afterthought, which is a tragedy considering the importance of Donatella in her brother’s life.

Though I’m breaking my own rules by mentioning the actual person on which this character is based, I would be doing a disservice to Cruz by not mentioning that she nails Donatella’s voice. As someone familiar with Donatella, I was shocked at how similar Cruz managed to make her voice sound to Donatella’s very specific rasp.

Finally, just as Cunanan steals the show, so does his actor, Darren Criss. Considering I’ve been a pretty big fan of Criss’ going on nine years, I had to ask for a second and third opinion on whether he is actually as incredible in Versace as I think he is to make sure I wasn’t being too biased. Judging by my very small sample size, the consensus is yes.

Criss as Cunanan is delightfully unhinged without becoming a caricature, which is especially difficult when playing a performative character like Cunanan; too heavy handed, and he becomes unconvincing as a character, but too subtle and we completely lose the over-the-top nature crucial to his character.

A particularly impressive moment was when, following the murder of Versace, Cunanan runs to his truck and starts laughing uncontrollably. This could have been done so poorly – potentially coming off like a bad Joker impression – but Criss pulls it off without a hitch. I really can’t wait to see what he does with the rest of this season.

Overall Experience

So, leaving my ability to be somewhat objective behind for a moment, I’ll say that I love this show. I have a lot of very specific niches, and one of them is celebrity true crime. That, with the addition of Darren Criss, fashion and LGBT representation, is enough to have me hooked.

However, I will say that if you watch this and don’t find yourself immediately engaged by the characters, you likely aren’t going to be into this show. The characters are what make “The Assassination of Gianni Versace” worth sticking around for, while the plot falls secondary. Either way, it’s definitely worth spending the hour to give it a shot.

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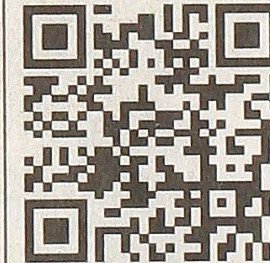
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Charli XCX propels PC music forward with “Pop 2”

By PAIGE DANIEL

THOUGHTS EDITOR

Charli XCX isn't afraid to express big emotions in a deceptively simple pop song — she's been doing it since 2013 when she released her debut album, “True Romance.”

That album was comparatively “experimental” (what some were calling it) to the pop others were doing, and it earned her a devoted following. Her second album, “Sucker” (2015) was a paltry attempt at recapturing her former glory, and that wasn't good enough for her fans.

I was in that camp, too, as it turns out. Convinced of her greatness but hesitantly supporting the work she submitted on “Sucker,” I nearly gave up altogether when I realized the album just didn't live up to the hype. Shortly thereafter when she announced her shift toward “PC music,” I was ready to rescind my skepticism and love her music again.

Allow me to turn the clocks back to March 2016, when I wrote about PC music and Charli XCX for our beloved newspaper.

I credited PC music to London-based producer A.G. Cook, the owner of a record label dedicated to conceiving PC music as a network of pop artists designing their output in its mold. Cook could be seen as the forefather of the genre, and it was by his hand that it ended up a genre in the first place.

I will paraphrase my definition of PC music from that article: literally defined as “personal computer” music, PC music is heavily computerized electronic pop music, made to sound hyper-real, hyper-digitalized, and even hyper-

artificial.

Imagine the noises a PC from 2008 made when sputtering into its dial-up connection, and you come close to understanding the basic conceit of PC music.

As I credited A.G. Cook with PC music's inception, I credited Charli XCX with the task of bringing PC music to the wider audience it desired. Her 2016 EP “Vroom Vroom” was just that — the introduction of PC music to her fanbase.

She had made a grand gesture to initiate herself into its ranks, stating that she was to have her own PC music label. This was what her music sounded like now, she seemed to assert, so get used to it.

Funnily enough, I felt the way about “Vroom Vroom” the way I did about “Sucker,” and I panned it in my aforementioned March 2016 review. The problem, I recognize now, was that “Vroom Vroom” seemed mostly like her stylistic meet-cute with the sounds that populated PC music's vocabulary.

It lacked the big emotions that made “True Romance” so timeless. Without that focused center, its lyrics were often shallow in their send-ups of sports cars and trophies, and the

music suffered.

It's impossible to subsist on a diet of air — which is what some PC music ends up sounding like without the dramatic and vulnerable emotions to back it up.

My recognition of the necessity of emotion to PC music stems, ironically, from XCX's 2017 mixtape “Number 1 Angel.” XCX succeeded in matching those big emotions to the sonic anomaly of PC music. Incredibly, she continues this on her second mixtape “Pop 2,” released just last December.

It clearly took a little bit of historical reframing to get to the actual review within this article, just like it took XCX a little bit of time to situate herself comfortably within the genre of PC music. I can't fault her for needing time to practice her skills; of course, hindsight is 20/20, and I wouldn't have panned her EP if I had known what was to come.

On “Pop 2” (produced by A.G. Cook), style does not overtake substance like it did on “Vroom Vroom”; instead, XCX seems to acknowledge that style is the carrier pigeon to her strongly-worded letter.

Where “Number One

Zachary Meyer: Illustrator

Thoughts Editor Paige Daniel tracks the brief timeline of Charli XCX's history with PC music, a genre inspired by the equipment it's composed on: the personal computer. With her second mixtape, “Pop 2,” XCX undoubtedly improves upon PC music's central premise that was shaky in its first steps.



Notable tracks “I Got It” (feat. Brooke Candy, CupcakKe and Pablo Vittar) and “Unlock It” (feat. Kim Petras and Jay Park) are the most fun you could have listening to songs that rest their entire weight on three syllables.

The number of featured artists manages not to swallow her up, and that is more a testament to the precision of her vision — PC music is a constant collaboration, and she holds that dear to the project.

“Femmebot” (feat. Dorian Electra and Mykki Blanco) deals in the high-fructose corn syrup synths familiar to the genre, but it is the only one of its kind on this mixtape.

That's probably for the best, because it makes room for XCX to include what are ultimately two of the best tracks (and interestingly, the two that do not feature another artist). “Lucky” has an intro that sounds like the Kanye West song “Wolves,” and honestly that's a compliment. But what matters more is the type of balladry that XCX puts forth: its slow burn is only improved by the auto tune, which fits her voice like a glove.

If anything, “Lucky” serenades from some futuristic place, one we don't have access to yet. It's during these moments that XCX reaches past stylistic flourish and purely becomes the style.

With the closing track, fittingly titled “Track 10,” this point is taken further. People called PC music a fad, something that would fade out as quickly as it arrived. “Track 10” is trancelike, and the mechanics of the style fall away when the parts come together this well. In the sublimation XCX achieves, I can see a brighter future for PC music if it continues to advance with her at the helm.

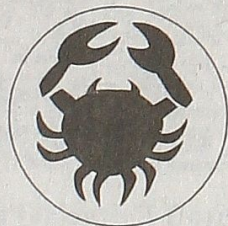
HOROSCOPES

By MONICA KUNOVSKY

WEB EDITOR

The signs as characters from childhood TV shows

CANCER (June 21- July 22)



Johnny Bravo from “Johnny Bravo.” Full of himself but still slightly lovable, and he loves his mom more than he loves himself.

ARIES (March 21- April 19)



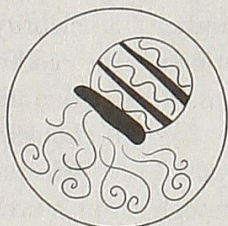
Lizzie McGuire from “Lizzie McGuire.” A whole show dedicated for one person, focused on *them* with mini monologues? Sounds like an average day in the mind of an Aries.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22- Jan. 19)



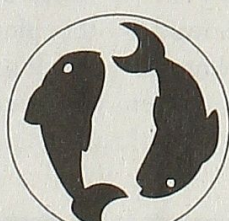
Rocko from “Rocko's Modern World.” He's got cool print shirts and is kind of crazy — like most Capricorns.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20- Feb. 18)



Phil from “Phil of the Future.” He's an alien, so are Aquariuses.

PISCES (February 19- March 20)



Blossom from “The Powerpuff Girls.” She's the leader of the group and a mastermind for planning, organizing and getting the group on track with tasks at hand.

LIBRA (Sept. 23- October 22)



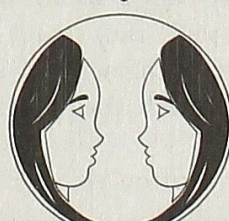
Bubbles from “The Powerpuff Girls.” She's hopeful, and the perfect representation of girl power. What Libra doesn't love balance and equality?

TAURUS (April 20- May 20)



Tommy Pickles from “Rugrats.” Intelligent and articulate, but also a big baby.

GEMINI (May 21- June 20)



Ed, Edd, & Eddy from “Ed, Edd, & Eddy.” Similar to Geminis, the three of them portray various personalities and moods and strengths.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23- Nov. 21)



Him from “The Powerpuff Girls” Androgynous and mysterious. Seems like an ass but is probably very chill.

LEO (July 23- August 22)



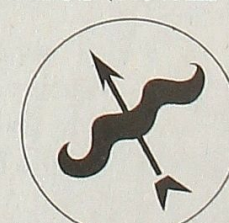
Courage from “Courage the Cowardly Dog.” Loyal and trustworthy, can be a little bit of a pushover at times but can also rise to the occasions and show strength.

VIRGO (Aug. 23- Sept. 22)



Plank from “Ed, Edd, & Eddy.” Doesn't say much but somehow conveys everything that *needs* to be said. An underrated character, much like Virgos.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22- Dec. 21)



DeeDee from “Dexter's Laboratory.” Slightly annoying and full of energy. Doesn't seem to know when to quit or ever be able to slow down!

Planning key for students to graduate early

By **BRITTANY PIERCE**
STAFF WRITER

While it seems that students in general are taking longer than four years to graduate, some students here at Alma have started a trend of graduating in only seven semesters rather than eight.

Depending on the student, graduating early requires different levels of advanced planning.

“Graduating early just kind of happened for me. I initially majored in business administration and psychology but then decided to only minor in psych,” said Olivia Connors, who graduated last semester. “Once I laid out my schedule, I saw that if I took full semesters plus one summer class, I could graduate early. I didn’t figure all of this out until last April.”

“I made sure that I packed my schedule each semester and kept in contact with my adviser to make sure I was keeping on track,” said **Penny Nelson (’18)**. “When you go to them with a plan already made, it makes it easier for them to help you.”

It is possible to graduate from college a semester early without taking more than 18 credits per semester. One strategy that Connors used was taking an extra spring term course.

“I mostly took 16 or 18 credit semesters. I took one 19 credit semester, but that is the highest I have ever been. I also took three spring term courses,” said Connors.

However, starting out college with some credits is also helpful.

“I came in with eight credits total. I had four credits from an AP class I took in high school and four credits from a dual enrollment class,

so not that many credits going into college,” said Connors.

“I had to lay out my schedule of my last two semesters and contact my community college from back home to see what class I could take over the summer.”

“I came in with four credits from an AP class,” said Nelson.

Generally, the best way to accumulate credits before college is through dual enrollment at a community college.

“I strongly believe that dual enrollment will take you further than AP classes if your high school is willing to pay for you to take classes at a local college,” said Connors. “I took many AP classes but did not score a 4 or 5 in order to receive credit for college, except one class.”

“I basically took AP classes to weigh my GPA on the 5.0 scale instead of 4.0. If I could do it all over again, I would not enroll in AP classes and focus on dual enrollment classes.”

Nelson also agreed that dual enrollment is a better option compared to Advanced Placement classes.

While graduating early is doable, it is not always easy.

“I think my biggest challenge trying to graduate early was making sure I had everything in order,” said Connors. “It can get tricky when you are trying to figure out what classes will transfer over with how many credits and if it counts for a distributive requirement or not. The registrar office at Alma helped me out greatly when I ran into some road blocks.”

“The least amount of credits that I had a semester was 17, and I have taken up to 20 in order to get the amount of credits that I needed,” said Nelson. “At times my classes wouldn’t line



Seven semester graduate Olivia Connors (’17) shares her experiences at Alma. *Photographer: Tiantian Hu*

up or things would get switched.

I also had to make sure I was not only fulfilling the total credits, but also the amount of upper level credits that were needed.”

It’s not too late to start planning to graduate early.

“I definitely recommend graduating early,” said Connors. “In order to do this, most people need to plan ahead, start when you are a freshman or a sophomore and know exactly what you need to take each semester.”

“Things will not always work out exactly how you want it to every semester but if you plan ahead you can make adjustments to your schedule,” she added.

However, Connors believes that getting out early might not be the best decision.

“I don’t think graduating early is for everyone, but if you are

contemplating it, it doesn’t hurt to look into your options further,” said Connors.

“Go to the registrar’s office and see where you stand credit wise and how far you are from completing your major. Also, consider taking summer classes to help your workload here at Alma.

If you are taking classes from somewhere else and planning on transferring, make sure you know how many credits they transfer over to and if it counts for any of your classes that you are required to take.”

Overall, both Connors and Nelson are content with their decision to graduate early.

“Part of me is sad to leave early, but I absolutely think that it is worth it,” said Nelson.

“I am very happy that I

made the decision to graduate early,” said Connors. “I have had so many amazing and worthwhile experiences at Alma that I will cherish forever, so I don’t really feel like I am missing out at all.”

“Of course, I miss seeing my friends every day, but I just hang on to my favorite memories instead of focusing on the ‘what if I would have stayed’ mindset.”

Currently, Connors is working for the college as a hall director.

After Nelson graduates, she plans to move abroad.

“If things go as planned I will be traveling on a frequent basis, or permanently to Haiti in order to help small businesses grow and do research on the communities there to better understand how they operate,” said Nelson.

Grad school vs. work experience

By **CASSIE FLORIAN**
STAFF WRITER

For many students, the question of whether or not to go to graduate school right after Alma or to first gain experience in the workforce can be an extremely intimidating one.

Although this is not an easy question to answer, staff and students share their insights into what to do after Alma.

“I was having a lot of trouble deciding whether or not I wanted to attend graduate school next year,” said **Bergen Jome (’18)**.

“I was planning on applying to fast track one year programs... [but] decided to take a gap year and want it to be as productive as possible.”

The reason she decided to take a year off, Jome said, was

because she found herself to be more interested in looking at apartment flats and places to visit than grad school itself.

“Make [your gap year] productive,” said Jome, “but give yourself some time to relax and reflect on all that you’ve done. Grad school will always be there and more often than not, they would like to see that you’ve gone out and done something with your major or general area of interest.”

“I would recommend taking a year off—at least the summer—of just not going to school,” said Steven Vest, associate professor and head of reference and instruction services.

Vest said he would suggest taking a year off because he, who had gone from a very intensive undergraduate program to an even more difficult graduate

program, found the whole process very overwhelming.

“Take some time to plan your life a little bit and get some perspective,” said Vest.

Although taking a gap year is a good option for students who don’t want to go right into either grad school or the workforce, internships can also be a way for students to gain experience while taking a break from their schooling.

“I will be doing an internship with the West Michigan Whitecaps (baseball team),” said **Monica Bussell (’18)**.

“I am the multimedia intern so I will be helping make videos, graphics, player greenscreens, and also game time photography.”

“Most people think if they try to get another internship post grad they might as well get a job...but it was a position I was

interested in for a long time and an opportunity opened up for me to take it.

“I went straight into graduate school,” said Daniel Wasserman, professor of history. “It really made sense for me. Financially, I believe, if you go straight into grad school and if you have loans, you can continue to defer them [also] I really wanted to go... I couldn’t wait to focus on studying.”

Wasserman also said some of his friends found they were really burned out from classes and it made sense for them to take a few years off. He believes it all depends on how students feel after their undergraduate program and what type of degree they want in the future.

“It all depends on what kind of program you’re interested

in,” said Wasserman “[For] some types of degrees it’s important to have experience before grad school.

Talk to faculty, to students in programs you’re interested in, get email addresses and ask for insight. Do some soul searching and do what makes sense to you.”

“I think going to grad school is awesome, and a great idea for a lot of people,” said **Dylan Zaborowski (’18)**.

Zaborowski, who is an education major said he is planning on doing a semester of student teaching after he graduates from Alma but also sees the benefits of graduate school for some people.

“Alma definitely does a great job preparing students for the next step in life, whether that be going to grad school or going right into the workforce!”

Men’s basketball looks to team leaders

By JOHN DURGA
STAFF WRITER

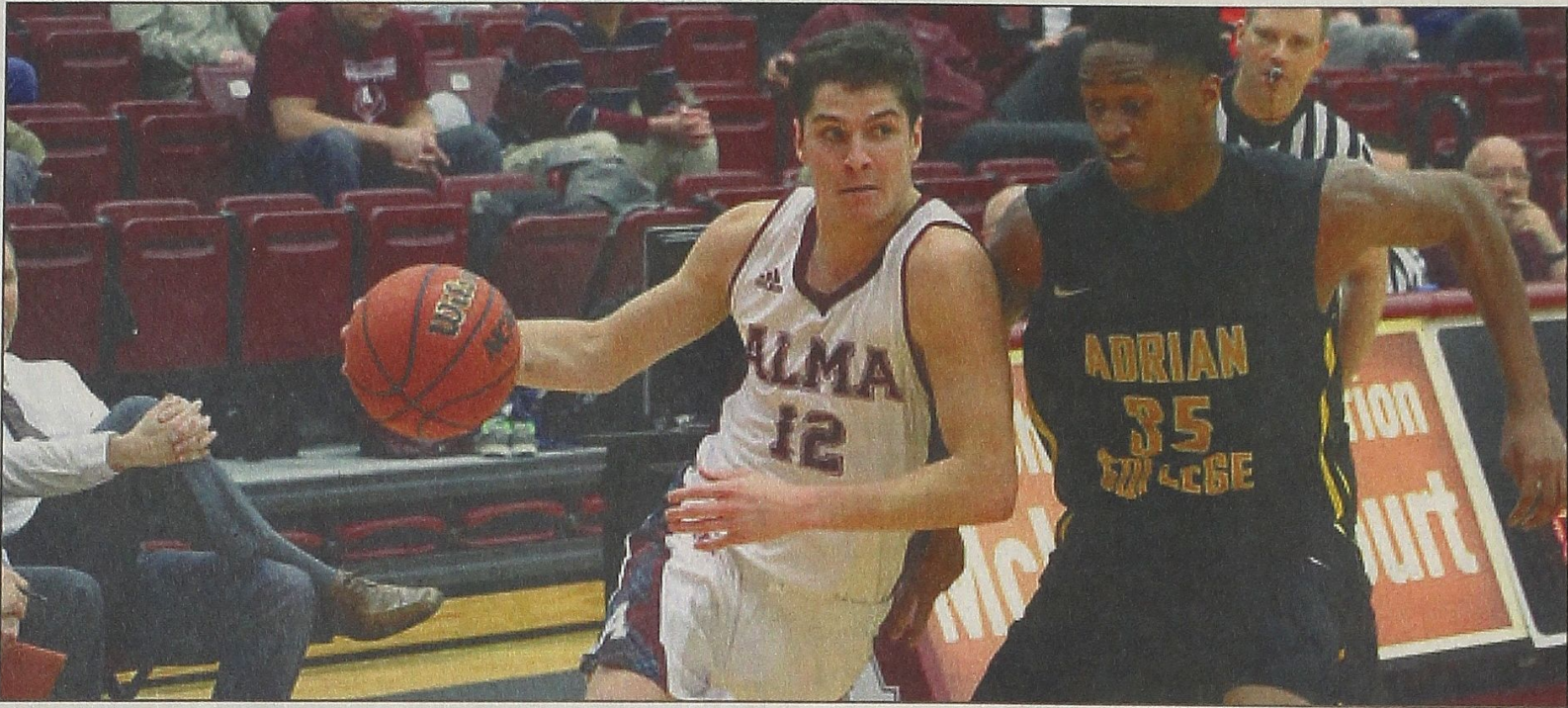
Alma College basketball players are off to a 6-12 start, but a lot of thought centers around close losses that easily could have been turned into victories.

Three of the setbacks were lost by less than five points. That, along with injuries, have plagued the Scots, who only have five seniors on the roster. Those seniors have offered leadership early in the season.

In their last game, **Rob Holmes ('19)** ended with a career high 26 points as well as a personal best five three pointers. **Kevin Scheibert ('19)** also had a good outing posting 16 points and seven rebounds.

These seniors have been performing at a high level this entire season.

“Scheibert and Holmes have really stepped up their play the last five games,” said Head Basketball Coach Sam Hargraves. “They’re playing with the urgency and



Sophomore Ryan Stevens takes the ball down to the basket during a recent game against Adrian College. *Photography: Allison Woodland*

toughness you love and expect from seniors whose careers are nearing the end.”

Scheibert has been averaging 14 points and 8.3 rebounds through conference play, as well as contributing on defense —almost a steal per game.

Hargraves notes Scheibert as a leader and the team’s own personal hype man going by the nickname “K-Fly.”

Scheibert also led his team to a win against conference Adrian College with 18 points and 12 rebounds.

“Senior year makes every game mean a little bit more to me,” said Scheibert. “A lot of times on the road I have to remind myself that this is probably the last time I’ll be playing in this gym. Home games are definitely ones that I try to soak in as much as

possible. There’s nothing like playing in Art Smith with a rowdy student section.”

Holmes has also been good for the Scots in his senior season. He is averaging almost four rebounds and 12 points. He has been an on and off starter for the Scots’ this season and is out performing his previous contributions significantly.

The seniors aren’t the only ones contributing to the Scots

success.

Ryan Stevens ('21) dished out his 100th assist on the season against Adrian College. **Kevin Gamble ('20)** has also performed well averaging 9.3 points and 6.5 rebounds per game.

The Scots next home game falls on Feb. 3, where they will take on the fifth ranked Albion College in a conference match up.

There is life after Scots athletics

By JOELLE FISHER
STAFF WRITER

There comes a time in every athlete’s life when it’s finally time to hang up the jersey for good. Whether it be 14 years or four years of playing the sport, the dreaded experience is never an easy one.

Senior athletes on campus opened up about their experiences with completing the final season of their respective sports.

“I spent four years of my college career giving everything I could to the sport and I’m definitely going to miss it, but for now I’m enjoying the time to myself,” said **Amanda Mladenovski ('18)**, former

women’s soccer player.

“I have closed a chapter in my life that has been there since I can remember, but it’s gratifying knowing I was blessed with the ability to play the sport I love competitively for 10 years,” said former volleyball player **Dakota Pelach ('18)**.

Every athlete faces different circumstances: some only play for a few years at the collegiate level, whereas others are forced to give up their dreams early because of injuries.

“I love soccer and I love my team, but I physically don’t think I could play another game even if I tried: I know I’m only 21, but my body feels so much older than that,” said Mladenovski.

It is easy to become caught

up in the extensive free time that comes with no longer having practices, games, and mandatory lifts. However, it is important to be able to balance continuing a healthy lifestyle with endless episodes of Netflix and freedom.

“I still lift with the team occasionally and go to the rec or do Zumba when I can,” said **Kara Muxlow ('18)** who previously played on the volleyball team.

“It’s really nice to be able to work out on my own terms now and incorporate new activities into my routine, but I definitely will miss the structure of the workouts that came with being on a team,” added Muxlow.

“The best way to stay in shape is to find something you

love doing,” said Pelach.

Retired athletes are encouraged to speak with John “Fletcher” Roberts, assistant wrestling and strength & conditioning coach, in the new weight room to discuss a post-athletics workout plan.

Fletcher strives to accommodate a variety of student-athletes on campus to ensure that their health and fitness needs are met and maximized.

“I do Crossfit with Fletcher almost every day for 2-3 hours in the weight room working on strength and conditioning.”

“I promise it is a lot more fun that it looks, and it feels really good to stay active in my own way,” said Mladenovski.

Despite the freedom that comes from finishing their

athletic careers, athletes mentioned how important it was for underclassmen student-athletes to stay dedicated and goal-oriented.

“In the off season, stick with someone who will push you to be better and work harder,” said Muxlow.

“It makes a big difference in your mentality and it help you find out strengths about yourself you might not have noticed otherwise,” said Muxlow.

“Have fun with every aspect of your sport, set goals for yourself and never stop working at them because one day you’re going to run out of time and you don’t want to regret anything,” said Mladenovski.

Track and field start season strong

By HANK WICKLEY
STAFF WRITER

The track and field team, only a few weeks into the season, has set the bar high already. Starting off the year with a fourth-place finish at the Aquinas Quad Open, the squad hopes to continue to succeed.

In order to do well early in the season, preparation is the key, say coaches. The preseason is the time of when athletes are in the weight room and on the track, getting in the extra work on their own time in order to

elevate their game.

“Conditioning and lifting are two very important components,” said head track and field Coach Matt Chovanec. “Each specialty was given a specific workout plan to follow during the preseason, both lifting and conditioning wise, with the expectation that it must be done and done correctly,” added Chovanec.

Giving specific direction for each athlete during the offseason is key for establishing the discipline needed once the season arrives, he added.

“In the preseason our team focuses on gaining strength in the weight room and getting in the best shape possible so that when the season hits, we have a solid foundation

to work from,” said **Payton Hirschenberger ('20)**. Hirschenberger and his teammates have been grinding all year in order to prepare for this season.

Once it arrives, however, things are slightly different for these athletes.

“During the season, our team focuses on maintaining the foundation we built with room to grow,” said Hirschenberger. This means scaling back on the strength training aspect slightly, and focusing more on the technical side of our events.” And by focusing on the technical side of their events, the track and field team has certainly excelled.

Sophomores Hirschenberger and Mitrzyk

set career bests in the triple jump and the long jump respectively.

“Long jump is a very technical field event and it always feels good to lengthen my distance in the pit,” said **John Mitrzyk ('20)**.

“It felt great to achieve a PR in triple jump because I have been working hard to do so,” said Hirschenberger. It is safe to say that their work in the preseason helped contribute to this success, but the team is not ready to stop.

“I am not satisfied. I plan on to improve by continuing to learn more about triple jump form and to continue to push my body,” said Hirschenberger.

“I plan on improving my long jump distance by sticking with

my strength training program and by keeping a positive mindset,” said Mitrzyk.

As for the rest of the team, continuing to do well is the only option.

“We just need to continue trusting the process and do things correctly. I know it sounds cliché, but there are really no shortcuts,” said coach Chovanec.

“Being a successful collegiate track and field athlete, or for that matter any collegiate athlete, is about lifestyle and balance.” Coaches and athletes say this is true for any team on campus, and the track and field team hopes to continue its success by staying on course this season, and like their coach said, trusting the process.