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Student Loan Debt Continues to Rise

SHANNON GOLDHAHN
Centurion Staff

The federal student loan debt is at an all-time high of \$1.6 trillion dollars while private student loan debt has reached \$119 billion dollars and now policy makers are scrambling for a solution.

According to a study by the Harvard Kennedy School, 57 percent of Americans view student debt as a problem for younger people.

Rebecca Lang a 20-year-old communications major from Morrisville found the idea of taking out a student loan extremely daunting.

“I will be graduating eventually but it’ll be over my dead body before I take out a loan because I don’t want to. It makes me feel trapped. As if were in a simulation and credit is the governments way of hounding us past retirement,” said Lang.

There are about 45 million Americans who are in an average of \$35,000 in debt. If a borrower wanted to pay back the loan within 10 years with the current interest rate of 4.53 percent, then the monthly payments would be just under \$400. If a parent is needed to borrow then the interest is around 6 to 7 percent, leading to higher monthly payments.

Many students felt that there isn’t enough information available when signing up for a student loan.

Maura Kelleher, 20-year-old psychology student from Doylestown thought that the interest rates on

student loans are unreasonable.

“When you look at tuition costs, the idea of paying back student loans doesn’t seem so bad. But you don’t think about the accrued interest until six months after you graduate” she said.

Lang also worries about how long a loan takes to be repaid.

“My cousin took out student

loans and she owes a lot and will be paying them off until she’s 40 and she only got her bachelors,” said Lang.

The growing student loan debt has led to many 2020 presidential candidates to share their idea to combat the high amount of debt.

Sen. Bernie Sanders(D) is leading the idea of student loan for-

givenness for all federal loans. Sanders’ plan would cost around \$2.2 trillion. He would execute it by placing a tax on Wall Street transactions which would make \$2.4 trillion dollars in the next ten years.

Story continued on page 7.



A student protestor, courtesy of Wikimedia Common

Sean Kratz is Sentenced

ALEC SAGER
Centurion Staff

After 18 hours of deliberation, the jury found Sean Kratz guilty of first-degree and second-degree murder for the death of Dean Finocchiaro and voluntary manslaughter for the deaths of Tom Meo and Mark Sturgis. Kratz was sentenced to life in prison for his role in these 2017 slayings that took place on a farm in Solebury Township.

Kratz sentence announcement came shortly after the Bucks County District Attorney’s office released a statement that the death penalty would not be pursued if he was found guilty.

District Attorney Matthew Weintraub thanked the family of Finocchiaro for their help in deciding Kratz’s punishment.

Weintraub said in a statement, “I am awed by the grace demonstrated by the Finocchiaro family in helping me to make this difficult decision to not pursue the death penalty against the defendant. I hope that the families of Jimi Patrick, Dean Finocchiaro, Tom Meo, and Mark Sturgis can take solace that both DiNardo and Kratz will die in prison for what they did to their boys.”

The jury listened to Kratz’s taped confession during the trial. In the recording, Kratz told officers that he shot Finocchiaro in the back of the head. He explained that DiNardo killed Meo and Sturgis mo-

ments earlier. The coroner’s testimony on the death of Finocchiaro matched Kratz’s description of the murders.

Kratz was not connected to Patrick’s death because DiNardo had murdered him days earlier.

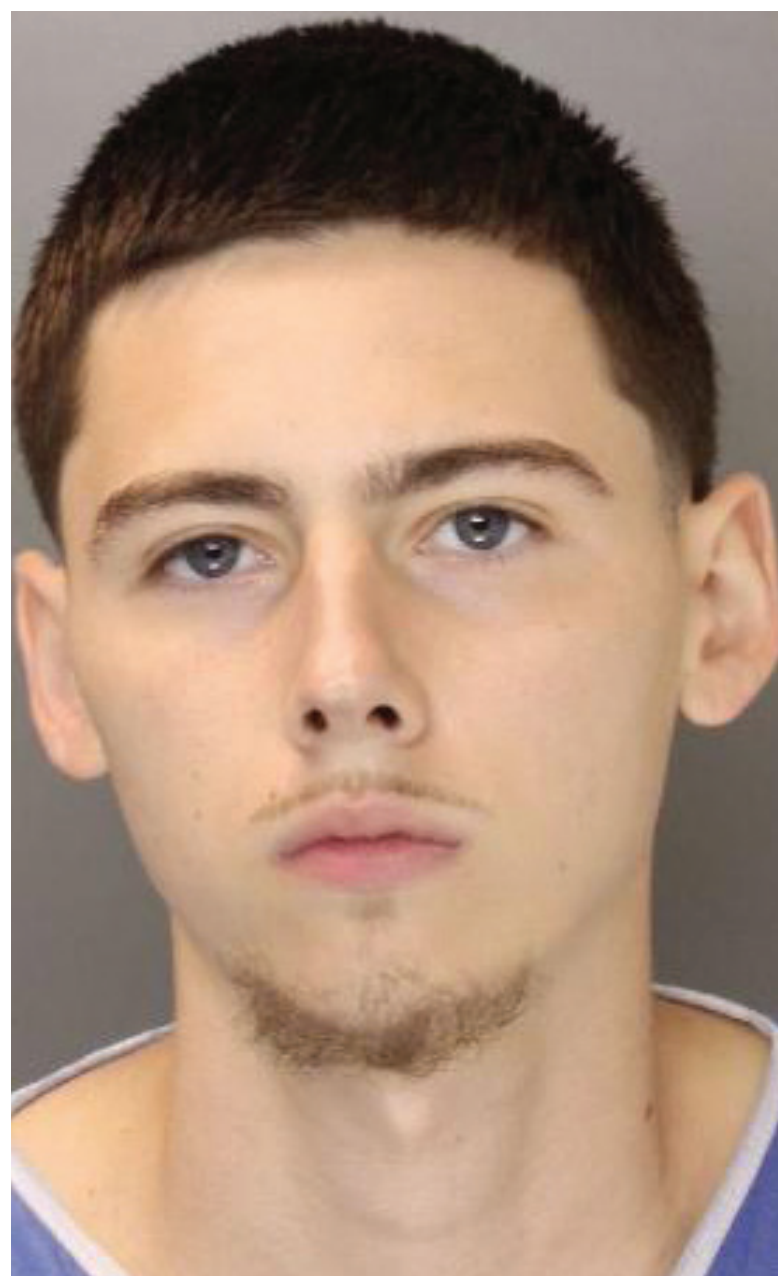
The jury believed that Kratz and his cousin Cosmo DiNardo had worked together to devise a plan to rob Finacchiaro of a large sum of cash. License plate readers from police vehicles, had showed DiNardo and Kratz traveling together to meet the men and bring them to DiNardo’s farm just outside of Peddlers Village in Lahaska.

In his confession Kratz said DiNardo yelled obscenities at him for not helping move the bodies. The defense team agrued that Kratz was fearful of his own life and feared what DiNardo would do to him if he was not compliant.

However, Kratz was left alone on the DiNardo property while his cousin went to pick up Sturgis and Meo to continue their crimes. The prosecution argued Kratz could have prevented the subsequent murders during this period of time he was alone

Kratz was found not only guilty of murder but a slew of other charges including armed robbery and three counts of misuse of a corpse.

The deaths of these men shocked the county. With this story coming to an end, hopefully the families effected can feel that some sort of justice was served.



Sean Kratz, courtesy of bucks.crimewatchpa.com

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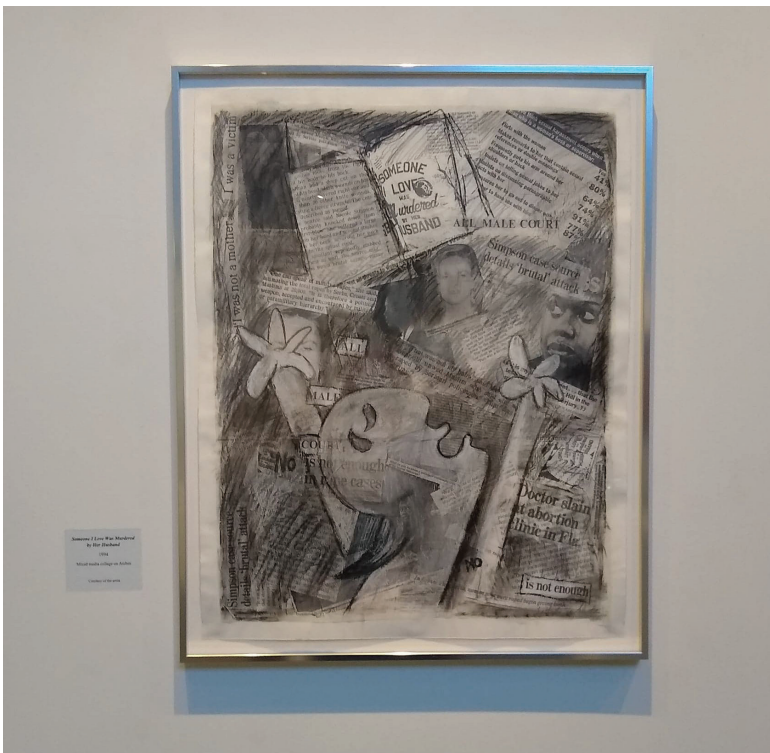
AMALA RAJESH
Centurion Staff

Philadelphia artist and former Bucks professor, Charlotte Schatz, 90, has artwork displayed at the Hicks Art Gallery in an exhibit titled, “Charlotte Schatz: Indomitable.”

The art show features artwork that represents Schatz’s artistic style through different phases. The art pieces show her primary concerns at different points in her career, with an underlying theme of her impossibility to subdue or defeat spirit.

There are 24 of her pieces on display in the gallery, two of

Former Bucks Professor Art on Display in Hicks



Artwork from Schatz’s exhibit

which are on loan from the Michener Museum.

Fran Orlando, the Director of Exhibitions and Artmobile, said, “Charlotte Schatz taught here for many years, and she just turned 90 this year yet she’s still creating art. So, we felt that this would be a nice way to recognize her and for folks who remember her here to know what she’s been up to.”

Schatz trained in sculpture at Temple University’s, Tyler School of Art.

“Schatz has always had a focus on social justice and you see that in some of her work, especially in her black and white art, computer-generated art, and the sculp-

tures too,” said Orlando.

Many of her artworks feature immigrants.

“She grew up in a time in Philadelphia where there was a lot of social activism, so she was well-versed on those kinds of topics. She also had a job helping immigrants which made her even more knowledgeable and passionate about it,” explained Orlando.

Some of her art are reactions to tragedies, such as the mysterious disappearances of many people in South American countries during the 1980s and 1990s, and the Iran-Iraq war in the 1980s.

“Physically, Schatz has always been a petite woman, but she has

always had a very strong spirit. And that has to do with her focus on social justice and her artistic vision. It’s always been very strong, kind of belying her physical stature. So, the curator and I were talking about her personality, her spirit that’s just really, well, indomitable,” said Orlando.

Schatz shows an interest in form and the employment of shapes in her art. She spent a year in Paris, after which she considered herself to be a Fauve painter, a Parisian art style that is known for its use of strong, vivid colors.

Quite a few of Schatz’s work in the gallery show paintings of mundane things such as buildings

and factories that are painted with beautiful, strong colors that differ from their original colors.

However, in her most recent artwork, Schatz shifted away from her practice of using form into more abstract art that is less about form and more expressive in its nature.

The art show “Charlotte Schatz: Indomitable” will be on display until Dec. 9, 2019. Gallery hours are as follow:

Monday and Friday- 9a.m. to 4p.m.

Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday- 9a.m. to 8p.m.

Saturday- 10a.m. to 2p.m.

New Hope Woman Named 2019 Poet Laureate



Mary Jo Lobello Jerome

LINDSAY ROTH
Centurion Staff

The winner of the 2019 Bucks County Poet Laureate is New Hopes’ Mary Jo Lobello Jerome and she took home the grand prize of \$500.

Jerome has been writing poetry ever since she was a teenager. Jerome spent many years as a high school English teacher and a professor of writing at regional colleges. She is now retired.

She has lived in many places before settling down in New Hope a decade. Jerome lived in places including Tokyo, Rotterdam, New Jersey and Blirstown.

She has a Master’s in Fine Arts from Vermont College. Jerome worked for the New York Times and numerous magazines such as Scholastic Publications.

“I am constantly writing, making notes, observations, and readings. The power and beauty of

words can literally take my breath away,” said Jerome in a press release. “As Emily Dickinson described poetry, I can feel physically as if the top of my head were taken off”.

Jerome added that she was humbled and honored to be chosen to receive this award.

Jerome’s work has been featured in many different publications such as The Stillwater Review, River Heron Review, Schuylkill Valley Journal, US1 Worksheets, Little Patuxent Review, Short Story, and Center Magazines.

She won the 2015 Doylestown Main Street Voices poetry competitions. Jerome was nominated for Best of Net Award and Pushcart Prize.

2019 was the 43rd annual Bucks Country Laureate competition and it was directed by Bucks professor Dr. Ethel Rackin.

“Mary Jo LoBello Jerome was chosen out of 90 entries and three

runners up,” said Rackin.

The reception for the competition took place on Nov. 17 in Room 142 of Tyler Hall. Jerome recited some of her works along with the three runners up from this year’s competition at the reception.

“The reading was wonderful, 100 people attended. Readings are free and open to the public,” said Rackin.

State Sen. Steve Santarsiero attended the poetry reading, giving Jerome a flag. Rackin was happy and explained that this had never happened before at the college.

Anyone in Bucks County is eligible to participate in this contest. It is encouraged that students at Bucks take part in it.

The Bucks County Poet Laureate program is the longest existing poetry program throughout Pennsylvania. This is a way for the college to connect to the community with such heritage.

Still a Chance to See Comfort Dogs



Comfort dogs, courtesy of Bucks.edu

ALYSSA MOORE
Centurion Staff

Final exams are quickly approaching, and the fall 2019 semester will be wrapping up within the coming weeks. Stress levels are expected to rise as students study for their various tests but



Bucks has a way to cope with the stress.

Bucks’ Accessibility Office has partnered with Nor’wester Therapy Dog Organization to offer comfort dogs to students during the difficult parts of the semester. The comfort dogs are brought to campus multiple times a semester.

Nor’wester co-director, Wendy Huttner, told the Intelligencer, “It’s been proven. Dogs don’t laugh, dogs don’t tease, dogs don’t judge. Some of these students have already had two finals today and have another one later. If they can come in here for 10 minutes and pet the dogs and share stories with us, it gets their mind off of school for a little while and they can go in for that next test with a fresh and clear mind.”

The dogs are brought in during the midpoint and end of the fall and spring semesters. They are brought to the Solarium in the Rollins Center.

The dogs will be available to pet and hang out with on Dec. 2 and Dec. 4 from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Student Life

The Holidays on a College Budget



Photos courtesy of Wikimedia Commons

AUDREY WILSON
Centurion Staff

The holidays are just around the corner along with the holiday expenses, which can become an obstacle for many students.

Holiday shopping can bring upon a little anxiety. You may feel as if you can't give your loved ones what they deserve in return of all the good they do for you.

It can leave an individual with a sense of guilt, but even on a college budget, it is feasible to give

a loved one a unique and creative gift.

Meghan Roth, a 20-year-old communications major, felt guilty for not being able to provide a gift to her family.

She said, "This is an issue I face every year, especially when it comes to my mother. My mother does so much for me, and then the holidays come along and I feel like garbage because I can't afford everything she deserves".

Roth also acknowledged the fact that she was taught that money

can't buy love, but she still feels overwhelmed, as do many.

Amy Kurtz, a 19-year-old environmental science major said she turns craft stores for holiday gifts.

"This is an issue I face almost every year, but I've learned to deal with it. For me personally, I am a very creative person, so I can go to my local crafts store and make something. I believe these types of gifts are more worth cherishing, so I recommend to all the creative people out there to buy some low-priced materials and create some-

thing with meaning," said Kurtz.

Another idea for holiday shopping was recommended by not only a student, but a mother herself.

Maddie Funk, a 47-year-old criminal justice major, said "I have two children, ages 16 and 19. They both go to school and work. Around the holidays they're always asking, 'Mom, what do you want for Christmas?' and I tell them not to spend their money on me. I know how much they love me regardless of what little gifts I get. They never listen to me though; they always end up getting me gifts! My children hit every thrift store in town and buy me all sorts of cute things. I think it's an amazing idea and I love it."

Thrift stores have so much to offer for cheap prices. The neat thing about thrift shopping is it's always a surprise, you never know

what you're going to find. There is always a wide variety of unique things to pick from. You could end up with the perfect complimenting gift.

Bucks will also be offering the Bucks Holiday Helper Event on Dec. 9-11, in the Solarium. This event allows students to select two to three gifts for free to then be wrapped for your friends and family, as long as the student brings their ID.

Many students also recommend to take advantage of "Black Friday" and "Cyber Monday" as well. These types of events bring great sales allowing the chance to save money.

Holidays are indeed a time of stress, but it's also a time of love and joy, which trumps gifts. There are all sorts of ways to figure out gifts, it's just a matter of getting creative and fun!



FTO Brings Both Students and Community Together



The FTO participated in the Race for Resource

MATT LENKER
Centurion Staff

Educating children is no easy task, which is the Bucks club the Future Teachers Organization (FTO) was created.

Teachers play a crucial role in our society. The FTO helps prepare those who are interested in a career in education.

Lisa Werstler, club president and Alison Angelaccio, club advisor believe education majors should consider joining the club.

"Their classes don't teach enough about transferring" Werstler says, "The club helps with that."

FTO helps guide education majors as they continue their degree. Education majors have a lot ahead of them, and having a group to help them take the right

steps is a huge benefit.

The FTO also helps education majors to connect to their respective professors by providing a more one-on-one environment. This more individualized setting helps members to learn even more than they would in their regular classes. The club also provides sense of community since education majors get to meet one another.

Besides members receiving in-depth information about their major, the FTO brings them out to attend a multitude of different charitable events in the community. These events help raise money for children with different disabilities and provide a chance for members to gain experience in helping others.

"It's exciting to see kids happy about the events" Werstler said.

In terms of coming up with ideas

for events, the club provides an environment where ideas can be shared freely. This relaxed setting allows all members to let their voice be heard.

The events the FTO volunteers in many events with the Autism Cares Foundation. Recently the club participated in the Race for Resources. This event was a 5k/10k race that helped to raise money to fund future events for the Autism Cares Foundation.

FTO is still looking for dedicated members who want to not only connect with their professors and peers, but also to help support their community.

If you are interested in the FTO and want to learn more about it, contact Kate D'Auria at kate.d'auria@bucks.edu, Alison Angelaccio at alison.angelaccio@bucks.edu or Lisa Werstler at lisa_werstler@yahoo.com.

Bucks Socratic Society Looking For Bright Minds

AMALA RAJESH
Centurion Staff

If you consider yourself a critical thinker of human existence, our experiences, and the world at large, you may want to present your thinking to members of the Socratic Society on Bucks' Newtown campus.

Named after the Greek philosopher Socrates, the Socratic Society is the student philosophy club. It offers an open forum to discuss and dispute beliefs, and confront suspicious opinions.

"I am finally in a space where I am able to think critically and freely," said club president Erin Bader. "I'm used to people judging me by my exterior, and not my mind. This club has given me a group of people who see me as I am, someone with thought, and a voice."

The club can trace its origins back to January 26, 1941, when the first meeting was held at Oxford University in England. It brought together proponents and opponents of religious beliefs with an emphasis on the Christian faith.

Bucks' extension of the club was founded by current faculty ad-

visor professor Mark Cobb nearly 10 years ago.

Meetings typically begin with members watching a "Ted Talk" video. These videos are devoted to spreading ideas to inspire thinkers.

"We use the video as a jumping point," said club member Jens Knutsen. "We start talking about the video, and that will turn into a discussion of something else."

Currently, the club has four members. "A problem we face is getting people interested in philosophy," Bader said. "I get it. Philosophy can be overwhelming."

"Even if you're not fluent in Nietzsche or Plato, come to our club and see it's more than that," Knutsen said.

Club vice president Joe Lorenz agreed. "The club is a free space to be open, and talk about anything on your mind," he said. "It's also a great way to meet people to have conversations with."

"We are all equals in this club," Bader said. "Though we have titles of president, and vice president, we see each member as philosopher kings and queens."

Meetings are held Thursdays at 3:30 in Grupp Hall room 255. All are welcome.

Bucks County News

Human Trafficking in the Suburbs

SARAH SIOCK
Centurion Staff

We like to think that human trafficking is happening far from our homes. That it is an issue pushed away into some foreign country. However, in reality human trafficking is happening closer than we imagine.

The modern-day form of slavery has gained a higher profile. More cases have emerged in suburbs and towns outside Philadelphia, including Bucks County.

According to Bucks County Deputy Attorney Chelsey Jackman, since 2015 there have been approximately 35-40 major human trafficking cases in the county, with most occurring out of Bensalem.

“Human trafficking absolutely exists in Bucks County. It does not happen most frequently in Bensalem because it is a bad place,” explained Jackman. “It is because of the hotels in Bensalem that it is an easy escape for traffickers.”

The majority of human trafficking cases stem from hotels. With 50 percent of the hotels in Bucks County being located in Bensalem, instances of human trafficking can be detected easier in the town. Bensalem police are also more aggressive in finding and reporting traffickers.

Business owners and hotel employees play an essential role in ending human trafficking. Bucks county victims advocate groups and police are looking to get more cooperation from employees and managers of hotels in the county in regard to the issue of human trafficking.

“Anywhere that you have hotels and major roads, you’ll have human trafficking,” said Bensalem Director of Public Safety Fred Harran. “Bensalem is a great town, but our size and location gives us challenges.”

One local group working to eradicate modern day slavery is The Bucks Coalition Against Trafficking (BCAT). The team was created in 2013 as a project of The Network of Victim Assistance (NOVA). BCAT’s mission is to end human trafficking in Bucks County. The group also works to educate Bucks County hotel workers on the signs of human trafficking.

“In some cases, human trafficking is happening daily in hotels. Many hotels are even benefitting from the trafficking happening,” said Deirdre Blackburn, a human trafficking coordinator at NOVA and a BCAT member.

Blackburn also explained BCAT’s new hotel outreach program.

“We travel to local hotels and offer training to employees that informs them on signs of human trafficking. The goal is to educate employees and create a relationship with the hotels. We also leave trafficking statistics and offer follow up training during the visits,” said Blackburn.

Despite BCAT’s efforts, of the 17 hotels that have been visited during the hotel outreach innovative, not one took up the offer to accept further training. However, the Bensalem police department appreciated BCAT’s work and saw the importance of educating hotel workers.

“Hotels should do a better job of renting to people. Hotels should



Photo courtesy of BCAT’s Twitter page

require guests to show a valid driver’s licenses and credit cards,” said Harran.

Harran added that most hotels are not cooperative when asked about altering their renting policies.

Harran also spoke to the difficulty of processing human trafficking cases and the fact that many of the cases are dropped each year. According to Harran, investigating a case could require up to \$30,000.

Victims of human trafficking are often not compliant, which creates another roadblock for police.

“A victim never comes to us and says, “I am being trafficked.” Once a girl is arrested for selling sex, they don’t talk either. They do not give up their boss’s name,” said Harran. “Sometimes it is due to a fear of deportation, others are just sucked into this awful world.”

According to advocates from NOVA, in 2018 there were 44 people charged with “selling sex” in Bucks County while only one was charged with buying sex. Advo-

cates are now asking lawmakers to put more legal pressures on the consumers of sex trafficking.

“A victim of trafficking hardly ever knows the name of their trafficker. A lot of these people are homeless and, on the streets, due to the opioid epidemic,” said Stephanie Shnatz-Stiver, human trafficking advocate for NOVA.

Shantz-Stiver also spoke to the importance of being aware that human trafficking is happening in the county.

“I have had people argue with me and say, “human trafficking does not happen here,” said Shantz-Stiver. “But it does happen here. It is happening right in your back yard. People need to be aware that is happening here.”

According to Shantz-Stiver, many human trafficking cases now begin online through social media. Teens are a target for traffickers since they can be easily reached on the internet. Chat websites such as Omegle encourage adolescents to communicate with strangers

over video. Polaris, a leader in the global fight to eradicate modern slavery, states on their website that their human trafficking hotline has recorded sex and labor trafficking recruitment on other social media platforms including, Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, Tinder and Grindr.

“You need to monitor your child’s social media. You need to look into their phones. Any app that has a chatting featuring there is a chance that human trafficking occurs on it,” said Shantz-Stiver.

BCAT continuously tries shed to media attention on human trafficking in the county. However, human trafficking is a silent problem that affects women and men. Education and awareness are the first steps in eradicating the issue.

“People locally need to get educated. We also need money for legislation and more funding to support the continuum of what it takes to end human trafficking,” said Penny Ettinger, executive director at NOVA.



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 - Join us for a Nursing Open House on **Monday, February 3, 2020 at 5:45 p.m.**

National News

Chick-fil-A Ends Partnership With Anti LGBTQ Charities

ALEC SAGER
Centurion Staff

The popular fast-food chain, Chick-fil-A, announced that it will no longer be donating to two Christian charities after receiving backlash from LGBTQ activists. The restaurant has donated millions of dollars to The Salvation Army and the Fellowship of Christian Athletes (FCA). Both organizations have a history of opposing same-sex marriage. On the FCA's website it states that, "Marriage is exclusively the union of one man and one woman." According to an article published on CNN, the Salvation Army has said that the Bible forbids sexual intimacy between members of the

same sex. In late November, Chick-fil-A released a list of charities they will be donating to next year. The list no longer includes The Salvation Army or the FCA. Chick-fil-A has been a standout favorite in the fast food industry with its healthier variety and unchanging menu. Tyler Belinski, a business major at Bucks, had no problem with the sandwich chains' past. "Chick-fil-A gets away with it I think. No one else I've ever seen, can be so stubborn on their companies' beliefs, but still make an amazing product. Other companies are just trying to copy the formula for success that Chick-fil-A has created. I do think about all



Photos courtesy of Wikimedia Commons



those controversial topics when I eat there, it never seems to change my appetite for a classic number No.1," said Belinski. Rebecca Lake, a Bucks student and a manager at a local Chick-fil-A shared her opinion on the company. "They really put customer service first, your attitude in that work place can cost you your job. I don't really ever witness any unfairness that the media loves to try and shine light on, saying that we aren't for some people or not is just untrue. In the end, they just want to serve people good chicken and be the best at it," said Lake. Chick-fil-A announced in the future that they are choosing to work exclusively with organizations that focus on education, homelessness,

and hunger. "No organization will be excluded from the future consideration, faith-based or non-faith based," said president of Chick-fil-A, Tim Tassopoulos, in a statement. Even with the controversy and bad publicity, Chick-Fil-A is still one of the most successful fast food chains with a \$4.2 billion net worth.

Why You Should Care About Brexit

SOPHIE LAURENCE
Centurion Staff

The European Union (EU) has extended the Brexit deadline for Jan. 31, 2020 after the British parliament could not reach an agreement for a plan as it leaves the EU. Its previous extended deadline was slated for Oct. 31, 2019. Boris Johnson, the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, said that he would take the U.K. out of the EU by Oct. 31 in a "do or die." However, Johnson requested to postpone again since parliament was unable to forge an agreement for the previous deadline in which the EU accepted. The EU wanted to avoid a costly no-deal Brexit and the economic/trade disruption that would likely follow, adding to their reason why Johnson's postpone request was granted. Johnson plans to use this extra time to hold a general election on Dec. 12 in order to break the stalemate in parliament regarding the procedure of Brexit and get his version of the deal passed. Because a two-thirds majority in parliament must vote in favor of a plan in order to pass Brexit, opposition parties have delayed the process of the deal up until this point. These parties want to delay the deal as long as they can so that Johnson would be forced to ask for an extension. With his extension request, some predict that Johnson's support will falter after his previous promise to get out of the EU by Oct. 31 and that he would rather "die in a ditch" than ask for another extension.



Photo courtesy of Wikimedia Commons

The Brexit issue has been a national interest as well considering the relationship with the U.S. and U.K. Some American's believe that it is merely an internal affair and are not too concerned by it. "I honestly do not care," says Morgan Fala, a 17-year-old undecided major from Hulmeville. "It's not going to affect me that much, so there's no reason for me

to worry about it." "I haven't paid much attention to it, probably because I don't think it will mess with my life too much," Dylan Lorenz, an 18-year-old Bucks student from Langhorne, agreed. Since they have yet to come up with a plan, U.S. economists have had a hard time determining what this means for the U.S. economy.

However, they have said that its effect on the U.S. will be determined by how closely the U.K. stays to the EU, according to CNBC. The U.K. is one of the U.S.' top trading partners., and if it leaves the EU, prices of everything from food to fuel will increase. It could also affect the security of the U.S. and others, and the freedom to travel between countries.

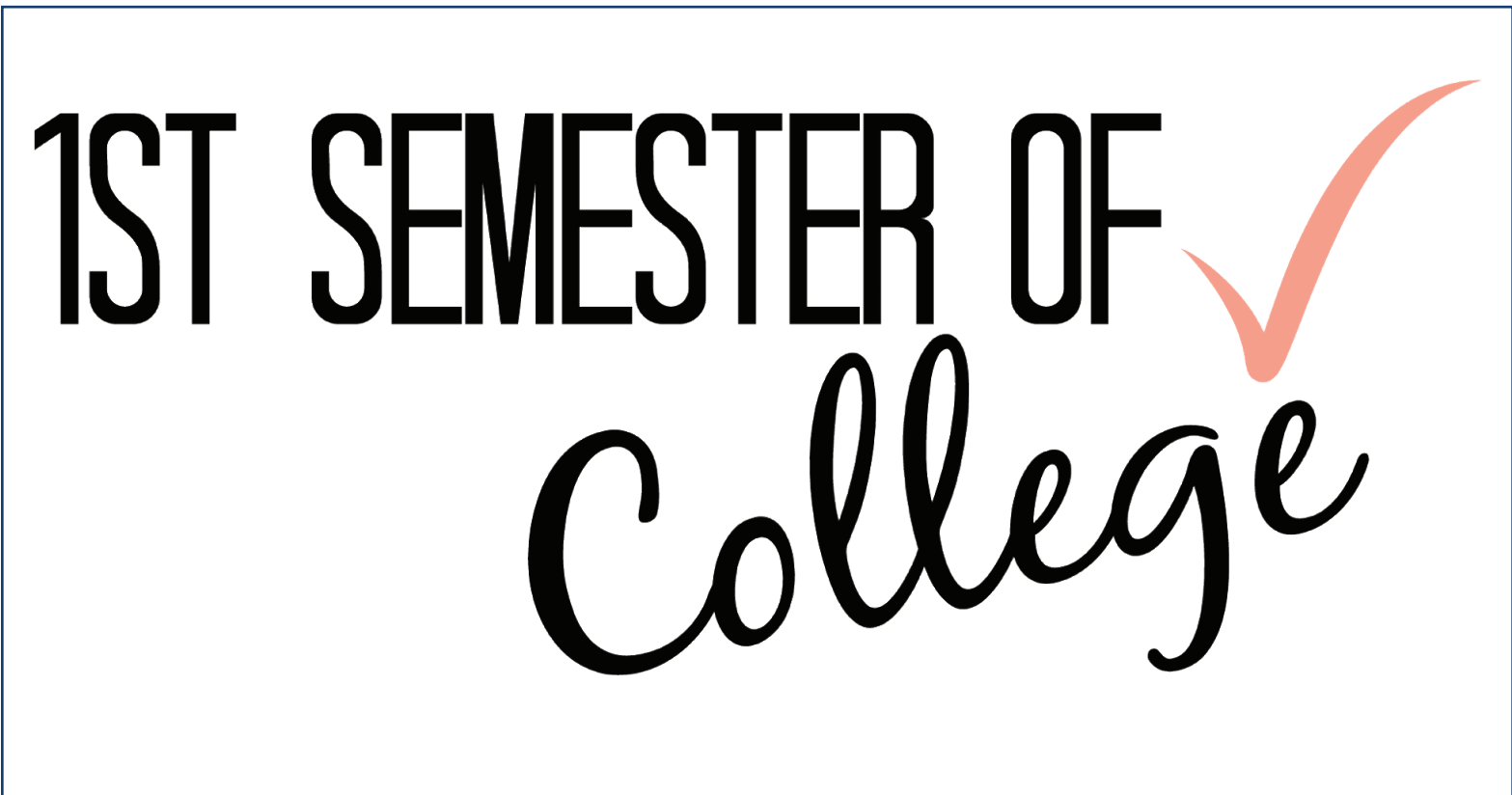
All of these factors will be determined on the decisions the U.K. makes and how close they decide to stay to the EU. It is unclear what parliament will end up passing in regards to Brexit depending on how the proposed elections turn out. However, the situation in the U.K. isn't going to improve should nothing end up being agreed upon.

Student Life

First Semester Thoughts

CONNOR BAILEY
Centurion Staff

As winter break draws near first year students are reflecting on their experience at Bucks thus far. Being a freshman in college can be rather intimidating for many. More responsibility and a higher degree of difficulty in assignments creates a completely different atmosphere than high school. Some students enjoy the newfound freedom college come with. Such as the options to choose their own classes and professors. Engineering major, Jon Lotrene, made it clear that he enjoyed his first semester at Bucks. “I’m really enjoying Bucks right now. I’m doing very well academically and genuinely enjoying my experience here. The best change is being at school for a shorter time. Without the busy work that high school assigns, I have plenty of time to get my assignments done” he said. Most students agreed that the validity of assignments was the best thing about being in college. Monica Lotrene, a physical therapy major, said, “Some of the work assigned to us in high school was meaningless. It interfered with the



assignments that were important to me and my education. But now at Bucks I’m strictly being assigned meaningful assignments. It’s refreshing.” Some students had a difficult time with the change from high school to college. Bucks Andrew Chim said, “Se-

nior year was a little too easy. ‘Senioritis’ was definitely a real thing. College and high school are two completely different animals. But after a few weeks, I became acclimated with college, and what was expected of me by my professors.” Guided studies major Owen Proctor had a similar response yet,

different experience. “High school assignments were relatively easy, so there was never really much thought put into them. But going into college, knowing there was going to be a jump in difficulty, I strapped on tight. In college you can’t take any assignment lightly... that’s how you fail. I put my all

into every assignment that I have had, and I’ve seen the results.” The general consensus stands that although college is more difficult than high school, it is completely manageable as long as the students adjust. Although, everyone thinks we’re all in need for this upcoming winter break.

Student Loan Debt Continues to Rise



Photo courtesy of Wikimedia Commons

Story continued from page 1.

Erin Baeder, a philosophy student at Bucks, found Sanders’ plan to be the best for the American people. “Bernie’s plan covers everyone. His plan covers all the struggling students, the professionals, people who have two different jobs just to afford rent. His plan leaves no one out” she said. Sen. Elizabeth Warren(D) is another presidential candidate with concrete plan to reduce student loan debt. Warren introduced the Student Loan Debt Relief Act that would allow 95 percent of Americans with student debt to see a portion of their balance reduced. Her plan works on a scale. If the household income is below \$100,000 then \$50,000 of student debt will be cancelled. If a household earns between \$100,000 and \$250,000 then the balance would be reduced by \$1 for every \$3 a household earns over \$100,000. If a household earns more than \$250,000 then they would not receive any forgiveness. Warren’s plan would be funded by a 2 percent tax on any wealth over \$50 million and an additional 1 percent on wealth exceeding \$1 billion. Some of the other Democrat candidates have other ideas. Sen. Cory Booker(D) has plans to only forgive student loan debt for public school teachers. There has only been one Republican leader who has taken the side of debt forgiveness. Wayne

Johnson. Johnson worked under U.S. Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos. He believes that all borrowers should be forgiven of up to \$50,000. This plan would be paid for by placing a 1 percent tax on the revenue from corporations and organizations. All these plans could have the possibility of being enacted by next year. Although, the wait has students still feeling anxious over student loans. 20-year-old Sean Cahalin, an English major from Doylestown, is nervous over the payment of college. “The way people spoke to me about college is literally why I have anxiety about life. I honestly don’t know what to trust because student loans are so messed up. They’re a scam and a trap to get hardworking, underprivileged young adults to sell their soul” Cahalin said. Baeder wants to continue her education but as of right now she can’t afford it. “If I wasn’t a scholarship student then I wouldn’t be taking classes. I have dreams of going to a university, but if I can’t afford it then I wouldn’t be able to go. I wouldn’t be able to take out loans” said Baeder. Overall, student seemed to be worried about student loans and how they will affect their future. It appears that the crisis of debt from student loans will be a deciding factor when voting for the upcoming presidential election.

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