

## Alumna climbs broadcasting ladder



## Quality over quantity in streaming



## The mental toll of studying abroad



# The Berkeley Beacon

Emerson College's student newspaper since 1947 • berkeleybeacon.com

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## Neverett '88 wins Heart of the Lion Award for internship program

By Domenic Conte • p. 8

Tim Neverett '88 leads an info session for his WEII Red Sox Radio internship in the Piano Row Skybox. • Cullen Granzen / Beacon Staff

## California students grieve shooting, wildfire destruction

Maya Gacina, Beacon Staff

Freshman Jake Mouchawar walked from his Paramount dorm to Boston Common without his phone on Thursday. He wanted to clear his head after hearing news of the Thousand Oaks shooting that occurred a nine-minute drive away from his home in Moorpark, Calif. the night before.

After returning, Mouchawar received a text from a group of friends he knew from his hometown church. Mouchawar read that Noel Sparks, a 21-year-old friend of his and a cherished member of his church, was identified as one of the 12 victims who died at the Borderline Bar and Grill.

"I've lost people before but my whole body just—it felt like a chandelier falling down ... I didn't know how to feel. I couldn't process this," he said. "She was a huge part of that community, so everyone knew her."

Mouchawar met Sparks at the United Methodist Church in Westlake Village and attended camps with her throughout middle school. He said they grew distant while in high school, but every time she saw him, she would greet him and seem invested in whatever was going on in his life.

She was enrolled at a local community college in Moorpark at the time of her death.

"This will sound cheesy, but she felt like a neighbor to a lot of us," Mouchawar said.

See Friend, page 3

## College continues to search for lead Title IX investigator

Stephanie Purifoy, Beacon Staff

The Title IX Office revived the 10-month long search for a lead investigator by changing the title and adding responsibilities to attract more possible candidates, according to a college official.

The position, formerly called Title IX Investigator, was renamed Deputy Title IX Coordinator. The college took down the original job posting in September after failing to receive any qualified candidates interested in the position. The college posted the new position on Nov. 6 on job search sites like HigherEdJobs.

The college delegates investigations of sexual misconduct to the Title IX Investigator, who serves under Title IX Coordinator Pamela White. The new position of Deputy Coordinator will perform all duties formerly assigned to the lead investigator in addition to assisting White with assessing reports of misconduct that could affect the safety of the community.

The Beacon could not reach White for comment.

Sylvia Spears, vice president of the social justice center, said this title would appeal more to potential applicants looking to eventually become Title IX Coordinator.

The position is listed as having a pay grade of 18, which means the annual salary can range from \$68,900 to \$113,700 per year, according to the college's website.

See Job, page 2



## New physical comedy group electrifies scene

By Soleil Easton • p. 6

Junior Hallie Perlman created Body Electric this fall. • Sabrina Ortiz / Beacon Correspondent

## Colonial residents complain about Little Building construction noise

Sydney Richelleu, Beacon Correspondent

The residence director of the Colonial residence hall continues to receive noise complaints from residents who share a wall with the Little Building construction project.

Suffolk Construction Company workers operate on the Little Building after-hours to meet the college's projected opening for the residence hall in August 2019, according to Colonial RD Michael Barcelo.

The hours of construction set by the company fall between 7 a.m. and 11 p.m., according to Barcelo.

According to the city's website, Boston does not permit any noise louder than 50 decibels between 11 p.m. and 7 a.m.

Sophomore Elizabeth Zarb's room shares a wall with Little Building construction outside of her window, and she said she hears the construction noise earlier than 7 a.m. and later than 11 p.m.

"There will be times when I've woken up at night and I'll have a group chat with my friends at two or three in the morning, and they're like, 'Do you guys hear that?' And it's construction still happening," Zarb said.

Barcelo said Suffolk Construction sends weekly updates on matters like extended hours, but he said this doesn't mean they always comply with their notices.

"There is confusion and misinformation," Barcelo said.

See Little Building, page 3

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# news

## College updates lead Title IX investigator job description

Continued from page 1

This is the same pay grade the college offered from the previous job posting.

Spears said when the college searched for a Title IX Investigator in 2014, they had almost 100 applicants, but this year, they had a hard time finding any qualified applicants.

“People are either more hesitant about getting into this field or, if they’re really talented, they open their own practice because outside consultants can make much more money,” Spears said in an interview. “We’re hopeful that the changes in the position description will actually attract more applicants.”

Pamela Ring, who previously occupied the lead Title IX investigator position, left the college at the beginning of 2018. Since then, the college relies on five or six outside law firms to investigate Title IX cases, according to Spears. Spears could not provide exact names for the law firms working with the college.

According to the college’s most recent Clery Report, there were six reported cases of rape on campus in 2017. Spears could not say how many Title IX investigations they conducted since January.

Even though the external investigators are not Emerson employees, the college still requires them to follow the school’s procedures, Spears said. White still oversees cases involving external investigators to ensure they follow protocol.

Spears said some colleges—including Bentley University and Vassar College — only use external law firms, but Emerson prefers having a full-time employee on campus in case of emergency situations. An example of an emergency situation is multiple complaints



The Title IX Office renamed Title IX Lead Investigator to Deputy Title IX Coordinator in hopes of more applicants. Xinyi Gao / Beacon Correspondent.

about a single person on campus or a report doing the information gathering and coming to preliminary conclusions,” Spears said. “It’s Pam’s job to make sure it’s being done in a fair and equitable manner.”

**“We’re hopeful that the changes in the position description will actually attract more applicants.”**

Hiring a full-time employee is also less expensive, according to Spears. She said the cost of hiring outside lawyers can be well over double the amount for an in-house investigator.

“We see some value in having outsiders and independent people a new lead investigator, they’ll still use outside

consultants if the need arises.

Spears could not confirm the number of claims the college investigated since Ring’s leaving.

“Our goal is to move as quickly as possible through the process, while still conducting an adequate investigation so that the two parties aren’t spending an eternity waiting,” Spears said. “If someone were to ask me if the office is well-resourced, I would have to say no.”

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## Student mourns the loss of long-time friend

Continued from page 1

“It’s so hard being so far away. I’m still in a processing system.”

Freshman Jesse Fulton from Agoura Hill, Calif.—a 15-minute drive from Thousand Oaks—said he didn’t personally know anyone who died in the shooting but still kept up with updates.

Fulton said when he tells Emerson students he’s from Thousand Oaks, they now know where and what the town is.

“It doesn’t feel like it’s real. It almost feels like an isolated incident,” he said. “The whole world knows about this. Thousand Oaks is now on the map.”

Less than 24 hours after the shooting, the deadliest wildfire in California’s history—according to CNN—rampaged through the Thousand Oaks and Southern Californian area. Mouchawar said his home in Moorpark, Calif. remains untouched by the flames.

About 35 Emerson students come from areas affected by the wildfires—including Malibu, Calabasas, Chico, Ventura County, and some bordering areas of Los Angeles County, according to Associate Dean For Campus Life Erik Muurisep.

Muurisep said Vice President and Dean for Campus Life James Hoppe sent out an email to the students to check in and provide support.

“We’ve had some positive responses thanking us for that,” Muurisep said. “At this point, we are sort of still assessing should we need to do anything else, but no formal plans have been established yet for next steps. But certainly, we are going to keep an eye on it.”

Muurisep said his office can provide or help students find residence if they are unable or choose not to go home during Thanksgiving

break because of evacuations.

Fulton said he had a group chat with friends from home updating throughout the week—first with the gradual release of victims’ names from the shooting, then with notifications of evacuations and whose homes burned down and whose still stood.

“That whole day was just a constant Google search for the victims [of the shooting] because they were releasing them one at a time,” Fulton said. “It’s helpless, but also I know if I was there I would still feel helpless. What can you do?”

Fulton said the wildfire evacuation notices in Agoura were lifted on Monday, and that his home, unlike some of his friends’, stands fully intact. Three or four of them sent Fulton pictures of their homes turned to ash because of the fires.

“Now my friends from home are beginning to be like, ‘Okay, now we can get back to grieving [over the mass shooting] because now most of our houses are safe,’” Fulton said.

Mouchawar said he arranged for a friend’s mom to write a message for him on Noel Sparks’ memorial in front of the Borderline Bar and Grill. The message will accompany her cross, planted amongst 11 others, in memory of the shooting victims.

“Noel, I have spoken about you to dozens of family members, friends, and even strangers, but there are no words that can encapsulate how wonderful you truly were,” Mouchawar wrote. “I wish

I spoke to you more these past two years. You filled my middle school and early high school life with the love of Christ. My heart is heavy, but I know you are in Heaven hearing the words: ‘My daughter, well done.’”

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About 35 students come from areas affected by the California wildfires, according to Vice President for Campus Life James Hoppe. • Courtesy of Jesse Fulton



Students from the Thousand Oaks area experienced a mass shooting and wildfire in less than 24 hours. • Courtesy of Jesse Fulton

## SGA constitutional amendment sets off disagreement

Diana Bravo, *Beacon Staff*

The Student Government Association voted to add a new amendment to the fall 2018 ballot setting strict requirements for the Board of Trustees representative at the weekly Tuesday meeting.

The Board of Trustees representative acts as a spokesperson for SGA and the undergraduate student body to the Board. The representative's duties involve writing a speech with help from other SGA members, presenting it to the Board, and reporting back any comments. The SGA constitution and bylaws did not previously include these responsibilities.

The executive president would sometimes appoint themselves to the position without a vote before the proposed amendment. In other years, Joint Session voted to appoint different members of SGA as the undergraduate representative. This year, Executive President Jessica Guida serves as the undergraduate representative.

The proposed amendment seeks to create specific requirements for the position such as undergraduate SGA membership, and

availability to attend and speak at each of the Board's three meetings. The final draft of the amendment passed with nine "yes" votes and one "no" vote.

"I would have a difficult time with [the representative] representing the whole student body [to the Board] and then not having them in on the conversation," Performing Arts Senator Josh Schussler said at the meeting.

The first version of the amendment, written by Guida, caused disagreement among SGA members at the Nov. 6 meeting as it stated the executive president would automatically fill the position. Some members of SGA debated whether the executive president would always best represent the undergraduate population to the Board.

SGA voted Guida's draft down with eight no votes and one abstention.

"Obviously I trust [Guida], but five years from now we don't know who the president will be," Journalism Senator Joseph Davidi said at the Nov. 6 meeting.

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Elections Chair Christopher Henderson-West raises his hand to ask a question at the Nov. 13 meeting. • *Anissa Gardizy / Beacon Staff*

## International student affairs director announcement postponed

Continued from page 1

Pinder said students would not be affected because of the delay in hiring.

Loiacono took a leave of absence for personal reasons in September. After the panel, Pinder said he would announce to the Emerson community if Loiacono will come back.

Ann Varghese, a second-year graduate student from Bahrain, India, said she approached OISA for a Curricular Practical Training application when she received an internship this summer. Students who have completed one academic year and have maintained their visa status may apply for CPT, which allows F-1 visa students to work legally in the United States and outside of the college campus.

Varghese prepared for her CPT a month and a half before the deadline in August, which she described as overly ahead of time. Varghese emailed OISA but never received a response.

After two weeks of emailing, Varghese walked into OISA to talk about her CPT in person. She said she found Loiacono seemingly oblivious to her situation. Loiacono told Varghese she was too busy to correspond with her through email, according to Varghese.

"She looked it up, and it took her one minute to tell me, 'You were missing something,'" Varghese said. "She told me like 'If this was in NYU, you know how long you would take?' but I was not in NYU, I am in Emerson! She didn't have to be nice to anyone but just do her job. That's good even."

Pinder said he fully understood the concerns of the international students and felt sorry for every misfortune they had to experience. He said it was the responsibility of the whole office.

"We don't want to put our fingers on a certain person," Pinder said. "We would like to



The college hired OISA program coordinator Jason Yang, who met one with students to talk about their complaints. • *Courtesy of Jason Yang*

absorb it as an office to see what we can do for international students."

Pinder sourced the OISA issues to understaffing. He said his current priority is hiring a new director and rebuilding the structure of OISA.

James Hoppe, vice president and dean of campus life, said he learned from the panel that all departments at Emerson need education for providing international students support.

"I think everyone in this campus needs to come to themselves to be more thoughtful and intentional [to international student issues]," Hoppe said in the interview.

Hoppe said he wrote new budget proposals for more services aimed toward the international students at Emerson. He could not disclose any further information.

Pinder said OISA will organize upcoming

events like an international week and a CPT workshop for students in November.

Yang resolved many students' Student and Exchange Visitor Information System, or SEVIS, holds since starting his employment in October. SEVIS is an online account used by the United States government to keep track of current information on international students. Holds in an Emerson student account can prevent them from registering for classes.

Yang also met one-on-one with international students to talk about their complaints and what they want from OISA.

"I can see my colleagues are so passionate about solving students' problems," Yang said. "I hope office of international student affairs can leave students a home-like impression. It's a place where students can talk about their problems and worries—it's not like a

government."

Yang said it surprised him to see students so courageous to organize the panel and voice their concerns to faculty. He said he had never seen that in the other schools he's worked in.

Liu, an SGA commissioner, said he plans to compile a report describing the current state of OISA and concerns from the international student community. He plans to give this report to the new director as a reference.

He said he will also provide suggestions to the new director when the college hires one.

"I will be the person who connects international student population with the OISA," Liu said.

Varghese said in August she met with Pinder and Hoppe on behalf of multiple international students who said they had trouble working with OISA.

Varghese said Pinder and Hoppe were helpful and supportive. Two weeks after she met with Pinder, Varghese received an email from him saying he had three candidates set up for the OISA director position and invited her and fellow international students to meet them.

After Yang's hiring and the college's acknowledgment of the state of international student affairs at Emerson, Varghese said she noticed some improvement in OISA.

"Right now Jason seems amazing," said Varghese. "He definitely gets back to all the emails we sent, which is something that we appreciate because we know there is somebody who is hearing our problems ... So far it has been going good."

Sheena Loiacono did not respond for comment.

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## Little Building construction continues after hours

Sydney Richelleu, *Beacon Correspondent*

Colonial residents complained to him of excess noise for the past year, and Barcelo said he understands their frustration.

"It's been a challenge. As an RD, I really struggle with this," Barcelo said.

Students reported the noise last year. The college held an open meeting in February for students and administrators to discuss solutions for extended hours of construction.

Barcelo updates Colonial residents through the Colonial residence hall Facebook group and an email chain as often as possible.

Since Colonial features more single rooms than any other residential building on campus, according to Barcelo, many Colonial residents pay more for their room than students living in other residence halls. On-campus students pay \$8,845 for a double room or \$9,095 for a single.

Zarb said she pays extra for a single in Colonial. Barcelo said he can't do much about the disruptions, but he encourages students to come up with creative solutions to the noise.

"I encourage students to adjust their

schedules within reason and use earplugs, but students say if they wear earplugs, then they can't hear their alarms," Barcelo said. "As creative people, we should be able to brainstorm different ways to fix this."

The college started construction on the building in summer 2017 as part of its new housing mission to extend on-campus housing for a third year. This change occurred when Mayor Martin J. Walsh required colleges and universities in Boston to limit the amount of students who live off-campus.

Paige Ervin, a sophomore in the Colonial residence hall whose room does not neighbor the noise, said she doesn't blame Suffolk Construction.

"I don't think it's the construction workers—I think it's Emerson telling them they have to have something done by a certain time and then not having enough time to finish it unless they work overtime," Ervin said.

Arthur Mombourquette, senior associate vice president for real estate, or Michael Faia, director of construction management, could not be reached for comment before the time of



Colonial residents have been complaining about construction noises from the Little Building. • *Cullen Granzon / Beacon Staff*

publication.

Barcelo said he remains hopeful the noise will lessen in the coming months although Colonial residents remain frustrated with the constant cacophony from Little Building.

"Hopefully the LB facade will be up by the end of December," Barcelo said.

This will lower the noise levels as construction moves inward to the internal parts of the Little

Building. However, according to Barcelo, the noise will not completely diminish.

Barcelo encourages students to openly communicate with their resident assistants and RDs if the construction noise becomes detrimental to academic success.

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# editorial

## Taking advantage of your student voice

### At issue: Student portion of the Climate Survey

### Our take: The survey is an outlet for student expression

*Editorials are written solely by Editor-in-Chief Shafaq Patel, Managing Editor Kyle Labe, Opinion Editor Hannah Ebanks, Deputy Opinion Editor Katie Schmidt, and Assistant Opinion Editor Diti Kohli without consultation from other staff members, and does not influence any stories. Op-Eds reflect the views of only their authors, not The Berkeley Beacon.*

Voicing our opinions about Emerson with our friends, on social media, and in classes may feel cathartic, but they're likely not passed on to the college in a meaningful way. The Climate Survey offers an easy way to pass feedback to the administration.

On Oct. 31, 2018, Emerson administered the student portion of the Emerson 360 Community Climate Survey. The survey, previously conducted in November 2014 and November 2017, "aims to gain a better understanding of students' exposure to instances of power-based interpersonal violence and how they perceive institutional response to such incidents," according to the school's website. The student portion of the survey was not conducted last year out of respect for some student protesters from Protesting Oppression With Educational Reform who spoke out at Faculty Assembly in Oct. 2017.

Emerson offers us the Climate Survey to gauge our feelings and perspectives. Without the survey, both the administration and student

population have no perception of the overall campus atmosphere. We—as students who pay for our education—have the right to express our view of the institution. The Climate Survey is one means to voice what we feel;

### The Climate Survey offers an easy way to pass feedback to the administration.

so, if we don't take the initiative, how can we expect the administration to understand everything? They afford us this opportunity, and it is our responsibility as students to take

advantage of it. Last year, only staff and faculty took the survey and, while their views are important, students' voices also need to be heard.

A large portion of the survey asks questions concerning Title IX and campus policies regarding these issues. It's beneficial for students because with this data, the Title IX office can assess where they stand with the student body.

Surveys are the easiest way for students to advocate for change by informing the administration of their opinions, especially since they don't take long. We know that emails and forums don't always connect with students the way they intend. If we can take time out of our day to make a much-needed coffee run, we can and must allot a portion of our day—only up to 15 minutes—to give feedback to the institution that exists to educate us.

So, instead of watching another episode of *The Office*, take the Climate Survey.

## Letters

If you want to respond to, or share an opinion about, an article in the Beacon, you can write a short letter to the editor. Email it to [letters@berkeleybeacon.com](mailto:letters@berkeleybeacon.com).

Please note that letters may be edited. Submissions for print must be shorter than 250 words.

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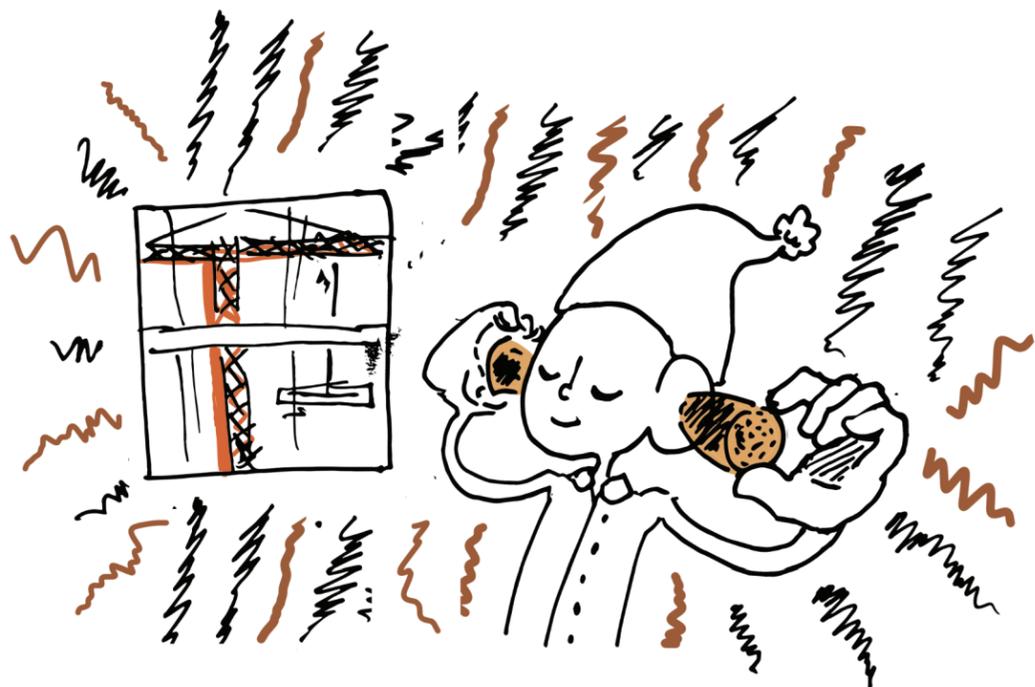
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### Editorial Cartoon

by the Editorial Board  
illustration by Ally Rzesza

Students find "creative ways" to block out construction noise.



# opinion

## Weighing the mental perils of studying abroad



Research shows studying abroad can exacerbate students' existing mental health problems. • Illustration by Ally Rzesza / Beacon Staff

**Abigail Hadfield**  
Hadfield is a sophomore creative writing major  
& a Beacon correspondent.

During my first semester, nothing thrilled me more than receiving an email inviting me to apply to study at Kasteel Well. Emerson offered me the chance to study in the Netherlands for three months, travel around Europe, experience new cultures, and broaden my global perspective—how could I possibly turn that down?

When the program accepted me I felt so overjoyed I didn't even consider leaving my family, my friends, and my familiar way of life behind. But most importantly, I overlooked how studying abroad could impact my mental health.

I became extremely sick with a sore throat and fever after our first group excursion in Amsterdam. I pushed through it and insisted I felt fine, and the next weekend I took an overnight bus to Paris. Unsurprisingly, I pushed myself too hard and experienced a breakdown two weeks into my study abroad experience.

I didn't want to stay behind the first travel weekend, even though the staff encouraged us to take an occasional weekend off.

Research shows studying abroad can exacerbate students' existing mental health problems. I didn't take into consideration my mental health before deciding to travel every weekend, and I felt the effects of that decision very quickly. Traveling every weekend meant I would learn about various new cultures and encounter parts of the world I never thought I'd explore, but that came in conjunction with a

semester of intense academic study and stress. A semester at Kasteel Well lasts only 90 days. However, professors still need to fit a semester's worth of material into that period. This means papers due every week, reading multiple books for different classes, and additional readings and short assignments on top of exams.

Students typically spend weekends traveling and exploring. They leave late Thursday night and sometimes don't return until Monday morning. The travel packs all of your academic stress into a four-day school week, and it can quickly become overwhelming. The stress took a few weeks to catch up to me, but when it did my mental health took a serious hit. I cried in my room because I felt I couldn't keep up with everyone else instead of looking forward to my weekends in Spain and Switzerland.

College students in America suffer from mental illnesses at an extremely high rate. Multiple studies over the past decade show a large percentage of college students report feeling depressed. Some studies say as many as half or more of all students experience depression. I am no exception to this statistic, and I wish I took an extra semester to settle at college and stabilize my own mental health.

Everyone should think about studying abroad in their lifetime, but you should never blindly go abroad at the expense of your mental health. My study abroad experience has been incredible, and I know I would recommend it to other students—but having experienced the stress and the toll it takes on a person, I would caution my peers to make sure they wait until they feel truly ready. The first opportunity to go abroad may not come at the right time, and there's no shame in waiting to travel to make it

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## Major Thoughts: Take us seriously, comedic arts curriculum is no laughing matter

**Sean Deringer**  
Deringer is a junior comedic arts major  
& a Beacon correspondent.

The notion of a comedic arts major may seem preposterous to many—some may even consider it a joke. I've heard countless people say, "You can't teach comedy. It is just something that comes naturally," since I came to Emerson. I explain to peers that comedy, just like anything else, has techniques to further your understanding. Whether it be the proper way to format beats in a sketch or analyzing the reasons why people laugh, there is a lot to learn.

At Emerson, I am president of a sketch comedy troupe, Derbyn Comedy, and this semester I wrote, produced, and directed my own comedic web series, Road Work, through EIV. Clearly, I have an intense interest in the writing and production sides of comedy, so my perspective on the major will come through that lens—though I will try and address my peers' concern the best I can.

As one of the 25 people who joined the major since its conception, I've learned a lot about how to get the most out of the program. You have to work for everything you want in the major.

For some time, other majors at this school did not treat us with respect, so the adjustment to college was a little rough for us. It didn't help that the major was not fully planned out when it was originally created in 2016, and is consequently filled with empty promises that render many of us feeling unprioritized. Despite the negatives, I believe Emerson is a thriving place for young comics to get their start due to its opportunities to produce and perform. However, this is largely due to Emerson's previously available amenities like Emerson Channel, EIV, comedy troupes, and theater troupes, in which each provides a chance to display our work that classes don't provide.

Many classes geared toward the comedic arts majors are poorly planned, mismanaged, and unfulfilling. Classes like "Why Did the Chicken" have curriculums that barely touch

on necessary comedic studies. Students don't feel challenged comedically and feel the class teaches next to nothing.

Nevertheless, these classes compensate for their pitfalls with some of the most talented professors at Emerson. Mike Bent is one of the most comically intelligent people I've ever met. His insight into comedy redeems the class. His expansive knowledge of the comedy sphere of past and present and comic success in the industry gives his students a valuable perspective on comedic structure and form.

The comedic arts curriculum attempts to provide students with a taste of every type of comedy, and because of that people within the major can have wide spanning interests. The school's desire to please all students, without having proper resources to create specialized classes, leads to the school mangling a lot of

classes together and making students feel like "test runs." For example, our production class, Modes of Comedic Production—which, despite its flaws, was one of my favorite class within the major—is both a field

and studio production class. Those topics are too broad to cover in a single class.

Besides the eight original classes for our major, comedic arts majors must take three writing and production classes their junior year. Because of this, students feel like the Frankenstein's monster of the other majors offered at the school. Many students wish to take classes like Acting for the Screen or Advanced Studio Production, but registration restrictions prevent comedic arts students from enrolling in them.

The administration needs to focus more on out-of-class work for students. Opportunities like film festivals, EmStage, internships, and the JPC are intended for other majors. Our amenities are restricted to a small room in the Tuft Performance and Production Center. The college needs to allocate more money towards creating new and specific amenities for comedic arts students.

While I give the major a lot of flack, it's only

because I want it to improve. Students will feel their degree is more significant if adjustments to the curriculum continue. Personally, comedic arts gave me the jump-start I needed to know exactly what I want to do in the comic world, but I know many other students feel very differently.

The comedic arts major shows improvement each year, and now it seems far better and more hopeful than it was in 2016. It can feel like the people who spearhead our department don't listen to us at times, but overall they want the best for us. Recently, they started a service called "Mondays with Martie and Matt" where president Martie Cook and Vice President Matthew McMahon sit and listen to any complaints or concerns we have about the major.

This listening is the exact type of dedication we need in order to get the comedic arts major where it needs to stand. The school recruited some of the best professors—Tom Kingdon, Erin Schwall, Mike Bent, Manny Bassaneese, for example—to help construct the major, and they truly put their heart and soul into their classes. I have hope for the future of this major—the opportunities that the freshmen receive today are more plentiful than when I first enrolled in the major. But there is still more work to do and growth to see.

## Letter from the editor

This week, the Berkeley Beacon launched its very first podcast. While we've dabbled in video before, this is our first attempt to experiment with audio.

This semester, I created two podcast positions and hired staff to produce this new medium. So tell us what you think. Hold us accountable. At the Beacon, we always seek to do more, so listen to the podcast on our website.

Sincerely,  
Shafaq Patel  
Editor-in-Chief

This article is the first in our "Major Thoughts" series. Contributors will be voicing their opinions about their major, including improvements they would like to see and advice for other students. If you are interested in writing a column for this series contact Hannah Ebanks at hannah\_ebanks@emerson.edu.

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While I give the major a lot of flack, it's only because I want it to improve. Illustration by Ally Rzesza / Beacon Staff

# living arts

## Comedy gets physical with new Body Electric group

Soleil Easton, *Beacon Correspondent*

Junior Hallie Perlman studied the art of physical comedy, like exaggerated facial expressions, in Maine and Greece with famous clowns Avner the Eccentric and Richard Saudek. She started Body Electric when she returned to Emerson.

Body Electric is the first physical comedy club on campus and focuses mainly on the theatrical side of comedy. The performing arts major said she dreamed of starting such a club since transferring to Emerson last year from Scripps College in Claremont, Calif. The Student Government Association has not yet

recognized the organization.

"I want Emerson students to recognize the importance of physical comedy," Perlman said. "Physical comedy transcends language barriers, social politics, and regular politics."

Perlman said she started this club because she thought Emerson's theater department needed more fun. She said she hopes one day her group can deliver a performance that inspires others to try physical comedy.

"Clowning makes your life more fun—it makes it better," Perlman said. "I think that is what Emerson's theater program needs."

Perlman said the club welcomes everyone and will not hold auditions. She said she wants

people to come, leave their stresses behind, and enjoy themselves. She said she plans to put on one to two performances next semester revolving around dressing up in clown costumes and performing silly, circus skits. The shows will also contain audience participation games.

For now, she said she wants to focus on building trust between the members and teaching basic skills like character improv and acting playfully.

"I want to create a community of people who are passionate about physical comedy and love to have fun," Perlman said.

Body Electric met for the first time on Nov. 9 in the Paramount Center. Perlman said she

drew inspiration for the name from her favorite poem, "I Sing the Body Electric," by Walt Whitman.

Six people attended the club meeting on Friday. Freshman performing arts major Brady Baca said he considers himself inexperienced with physical comedy but wants to learn more about the techniques that go into it and how to apply them to other areas of theater.

"Physical comedy is an underrepresented field at Emerson that could benefit a lot of students," Baca said. "I would like to have a physical comedy class at Emerson."

Baca said he believes physical comedy provides actors with more options to work with when performing on stage.

"Physical comedy is important to actors because in theater your body is your instrument," Baca said. "It's an extra skill to have in an audition room and is something you can work with when you are in rehearsal."

Perlman said standard comedy troupes at Emerson tend to focus on sketches whereas physical comedy revolves around the actor.

"You are using your physical skills to make people laugh," Perlman said. "This is the best part of being an actor."

Perlman said she believes theater needs more fun and does not require drama. She said physical comedy means connecting with your inner-child and stepping out of your comfort zone.

Perlman said she hopes Body Electric will engage Emerson students, and she thinks everyone can relate to physical comedy.

"We might not all laugh at the same jokes, but we may find it funny seeing a huge facial expression or a person failing at something because we can relate to it," Perlman said.

Sophomore performing arts major Devin Davis-Lorton said Body Electric interested her because of her passion for acting and desire to step out of her comfort zone.

Davis-Lorton said she admires slapstick comedy because it uses actors' bodies to tell a story. She said she believes the act of performing goes beyond just one's voice but involves physicality as well.

"I feel like Body Electric will not only be a fun experience but will also be a good use of my time since I will be learning everything I need to know about physical comedy," Davis-Lorton said. "Everyone just seems like they are having a great time and being themselves."



Junior Hallie Perlman studied clowning with famous clowns and returned to Emerson to begin the first physical comedy group, Body Electric. *Sabrina Ortiz / Beacon Correspondent*

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## The B Side: Less is more in the streaming age



**Kyle Bray**  
Bray is a sophomore journalism major, the Beacon's sports editor, and music columnist.

My first listen of Vince Staple's newest project *FM!* disappointed me. It had nothing to do with the quality of the album but rather the length.

*FM!* clocks in at 22 minutes in length, 14 minutes shorter than the rapper's previous album *Big Fish Theory* despite it including only one more song than *FM!*. While *FM!* falls into the technical category of an "album"—the Recording Academy defines an album as a collection of at least five independent songs that runs for over 15 minutes—*FM!* didn't feel like much of an album with 11 songs.

However, the more I listened to *FM!*, the more I enjoyed the album. I could constantly relisten to the 22-minute album which made me like it more. I fully believe quality overrides quantity although the album falls on the shorter side.

**"My first listen of Vince Staple's newest project *FM!* disappointed me. It had nothing to do with the quality of the album but rather the length."**

"More" is not hard to come by in this contemporary streaming era in music. Nevertheless many artists pad the runtime of their albums in an effort to put out the most content to get the most possible streams and earn the most money possible.

Atlanta rap trio Migos represents a great example of this. The group's 2017 album *Culture* consists of 13 songs and clocks in at 58 minutes while their 2018 follow-up album *Culture II* features 24 songs and runs for 1 hour and 45 minutes.

Some artists settle for quality over quantity and release shorter albums as others stretch their

albums further beyond the hour mark. I want to consume the most music possible from the artists I love, but I'd rather get a small number of great tracks instead of a bunch of average ones.

Short albums benefit from a lack of filler—my least favorite part of any album. *FM!* includes little to no filler tracks on it with its short runtime. Aside from the three

interludes on the album, each song justifies its spot in the tracklist and does not exist solely to pad the runtime.

Shorter albums also benefit from a stronger

sense of listenability. One of my favorite albums of 2018, Kanye West's collaborative album with Kid Cudi *Kids See Ghosts*, exemplifies this. While most of this comes down to the impressive musicianship and an almost psychedelic take on hip-hop the short runtime makes the album easy to listen to. I could listen to the 23-minute album upwards of three times each day easily—something I did very often this summer. I may have revisited it as often as I did without its short run time. It also complimented my 25-minute commute to work every morning.

Hip-hop superstar Drake's latest album *Scorpion* did not follow the style of West's short albums. The highly anticipated double album—an album with two discs—spanned a whopping 25 songs and clocked in at 1 hour and 30 minutes. I consider this album one of my least favorite releases of the year because of its length. It contained too much filler.

Don't get me wrong, *Scorpion* features some great material, but in the end the filler tracks offset the standout tracks. In reality you can consider most of the second half forgettable

aside from "In My Feelings" and "Nice For What." I might dub *Scorpion* my favorite album of the year if it consisted of seven songs like *Kids See Ghosts*—just as I would not enjoy *Kids See Ghosts* as much if it lasted for 1 hour and 30 minutes.

I'm not alone in this opinion. *Scorpion* received Drake's lowest ever score on Metacritic—a popular review site that aggregates critics' ratings—with a meager 67 while West's *Kids See Ghosts* garnered an 84. The same went for Migos—the 58-minute *Culture* earned a 79 while the nearly two-hour-long *Culture II*

received a 69.

This doesn't mean I don't enjoy longer albums—some of my favorite albums of all time stretch longer than one hour. Every song belongs on these records which sets them apart. But short albums don't let the quality of the album suffer from length unlike many albums released since streaming music grew in popularity. Quality does outweigh quantity.

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## Alumnus' Sundance-winning short makes it to big screen

Zenebou Sylla, *Beacon Correspondent*

After the success of a Kickstarter campaign that raised \$36,829, Jim Cummings' '09 Sundance-winning short film, "Thunder Road," is now a feature film.

The feature launched online Oct. 30.

Cummings wrote, directed, and acted in both the short and feature film; he portrayed a recently divorced police officer who suffers the loss of his mother and now raises his daughter alone.

About 100 people attended the Emerson Bright Lights screening of the 92-minute feature on Nov. 6. Cummings Skype-called after the screening to answer questions for the audience.

He filmed the 12-minute short in six hours in one day, and the feature in 14 days with a rehearsal period of three weeks. He edited, mixed, colored, distributed, and exported the film. He also created Facebook ads to promote it.

Cummings said no major distributors wanted to produce his short film into a feature. He said besides the funds he raised from the Kickstarter campaign, he and his team received \$33,333 from the Sundance Creative Distribution Fellowship for creative funding, marketing, and distribution.



Jim Cummings '09 behind the scenes of "Thunder Road." The 92-minute feature was filmed over 14 days in Austin, Texas. *Courtesy of Jim Cummings*

**"Cummings wrote, directed, and acted in both the short film and feature film."**

No groups offered any other funding to the team, despite the short's reputation of winning film festivals like South By Southwest, Seattle International Film Festival, and Deauville American Film Festival.

Cummings said he paid \$1,200 to upload

his film to iTunes, Google Play, Comcast, and DirecTV through an app called Quiver Digital, a distribution platform that allows filmmakers to own the rights of their film while distributing it through these platforms.

Cummings said he felt unsure whether the short could expand into a larger creation.

"I spent about 11 months— maybe eight months— thinking that you couldn't turn it into a feature," Cummings said. "There's that moment of my daughter [in the film] pulling away from me, and I thought about screenplay format. I thought, 'What if that is the inciting incident? The rest of the film would have to be about me getting my daughter to like me again.'"

Cummings said he pursues film to depict different experiences.

"I feel that films are important as an art form because they are the most engaging art form that I've seen," he said.

Nicholas Callais '18, who attended the Emerson Bright Lights screening, said he thought Cummings transitioned from a short to feature film exceptionally.

"It's really inspiring to come out of Emerson and do big things like that, and to do it on their own in an independent sense," Callais said. "I think what's unique about Jim, is doing it on an independent scale and not a major distributor."

Junior visual and media arts major Kathryn

Garelli attended the screening and said she felt inspired by Cummings' work.

"I think [the film has] a lot of different messages about society, about the family, about-masculinity," Garelli said. "I think it's definitely an interesting process, and I think having Jim here to talk about it, to shed some light on that process, it's just inspiring."

Garelli said that as someone involved with film, Cummings' work moved her.

"As a person who makes short film, that kind of evidence is to me that I could turn my films into something bigger than as they exist right

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## Roommates team up to take home first place at debate competition

Lilly Milman, *Beacon Staff*

After their first college forensics team competition, freshman roommates Karthik Ramaswami and William Rowley pranced through the halls to get rid of their nervous jitters. The two beat over 50 other students in the duo interpretation category to take home first place.

Ramaswami and Rowley, along with the five other students on the Emerson Forensics Team, competed at the regional tournament held at Saint Anselm College in Goffstown, New Hampshire during the first weekend in November. Both roommates had not competed

since representing their respective high schools in the national competition in June.

"You're pretty nervous your first time because it's the first competition of the season," Ramaswami said. "It's obviously an extra nervousness because you haven't performed your piece in front of an audience yet."

At the same competition, freshman Sara Hathaway reached the quarterfinals in the International Public Debate Association debate and placed fifth overall out of over 70 debaters.

"My first [round] is one that I won, and it was that the Fourteenth Amendment should be rewritten and I was the affirmative," Hathaway said. "I also had a proverbial one, which was that

a man could still be brave even if he is afraid. You have to contextualize it and put it into a grand scheme of things and prove why that statement is true."

Duo interpretation is a rehearsed performance where two team members spend weeks piecing together various pieces of literature into one performance. The event also included one-on-one competitive debates, where participants can only prepare to argue in favor or against any topic for 30 minutes.

The duo interpretation event occurred in a classroom with a small audience consisting of the judge and other competitors. Ramaswami said six duos compete in each round.

Forensics focuses on public speaking and debate. Ramaswami described performing with the forensics team as "competitive acting." Hathaway said her event dealt more with logic and argument, while Ramaswami and Rowley rooted theirs in performance ability. She said she debated in a room with her opponent and one judge.

"It's very on-your-feet," Hathaway said. "You prep in 30 minutes while you're there, and you're not very scripted. It's very off-the-top-of-your-head."

Ramaswami said in duo interpretation, the only two-person event in speech, team members cannot look at each other or touch each other, but must act together. Ramaswami and Rowley performed a compilation they created of pieces of vignettes, articles, poems, and a play.

Ramaswami said students from across the country attended the tournament.

"We had people from Kentucky and Ohio at this tournament," Ramaswami said. "It's cool just to see these people perform in front of you.

It's also really awesome to see how people put the time and effort that they do. We're all really nervous, but we're all really excited to share what we have."

Hathaway said she joined the team because Hawkins reached out to her after a speech communications class.

"It seemed like a really good fit and, if he had faith in me, I figured that was a good sign," Hathaway said.

Emerson professor Deion Hawkins serves as the team supervisor and said that he has participated in forensics since he was 13 years old. He says there is a difference between speech and debate.

"I always like to explain it like track and field," he said. "In track and field there are different events, different categories, but they all come together for one trophy. That's kind of the same thing."

The team meets weekly to touch base with Hawkins. Hawkins said he prepared Hathaway for the International Public Debate Association debate by giving her only 20 minutes to prepare in practice rounds. Ramaswami said he and Rowley practiced almost daily, meeting with Hawkins four days a week and practicing together the other three days.

"[Hawkins is] a very hands-on coach, so he really wants to be with you throughout the whole process," Ramaswami said. "He really helps you grow as a competitor, and that's the first time I've ever had a coach like that."

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Freshman William Rowley, Sara Hathaway, and Karthik Ramaswami all placed in the debate competition. • *Courtesy of Sara Hathaway*

# sports

## UPCOMING ACTION

MEN'S BASKETBALL: Emerson vs. Lesley, 7 p.m. tonight

WOMEN'S BASKETBALL: Emerson vs. Dean, 1 p.m. Saturday

MEN'S BASKETBALL: Emerson vs. St. Thomas, 7 p.m. Saturday

## Alumnus calls Red Sox 2018 World Series win

Domenic Conte, *Beacon Staff*

Tim Neverett '88 watched the Boston Red Sox from the bleachers as an Emerson student 30 years ago. Now, Neverett's fandom drove him out of the stands and into the WEEI Red Sox Radio booth.

Before becoming a play-by-play commentator for WEEI in 2015, Neverett began in Minor League Baseball broadcasting for the Nashua Pirates at age 19.

Neverett worked in San Diego, Los Angeles, Las Vegas, Denver, and Pittsburgh after graduating with a mass communications degree. He returned to Boston to announce the Red Sox's ninth World Series victory.

Neverett said he often imagined broadcasting games for his favorite team.

"I would spend a lot of time at Fenway Park as a kid and during my time at Emerson," Neverett said. "I would daydream about working up in the booth and, not only did that happen, but I got to call them winning the World Series."

The Red Sox won the best of seven series in five games over the Los Angeles Dodgers in the World Series this year. Neverett said he knew the Sox would take home the trophy after first baseman Steve Pearce's base-clearing double in game four that sealed the game and left them one win away from the title.

"I remember calling Pearce's double and thinking to myself, 'This thing's over,'" Neverett said. "Normally in baseball, anything can happen, but at that moment I knew it was over. The Red Sox were a much better team."

Neverett filled the "Waterfront Wanda" duck boat with the WEEI crew and paraded through Boston with the team three days after the Sox's victory.

"The parade was extremely special for me," Neverett said. "I've spent a lot of time walking up and down Boylston and Tremont streets,



Tim Neverett '88 discusses his internship program with WEEI. Cullen Granzen / *Beacon Staff*

but I've never seen that many happy, cheering people on those streets before."

Neverett said he took on the responsibility of recruiting interns for WEEI once he joined the radio station. According to Neverett, most of the interns came from Northeastern University before he joined the crew. His broadcasting partner Joe Castiglione used to teach at Northeastern.

Neverett said he made the internship exclusive to Emerson students.

"I promise with the internship you're going to learn a lot more than you thought you would," Neverett said. "It's a once-in-a-lifetime kind of thing and a serious commitment. On day one you walk in with a million questions and leave with an education."

Jill Gearin '18 interned for WEEI this past season and will work as a broadcaster for the Visalia Rawhide of the MiLB in January. She said the opportunity helped launch her career.

"Without the internship, I wouldn't have my

current job," Gearin said. "I was able to learn from Tim and Joe, and they helped me get a job in Nashua where I could build a broadcasting reel."

Castiglione, 36-year veteran broadcaster for the WEEI Red Sox Radio Network, said he called every game with Neverett since the network hired him.

"It was very easy to transition into working with Tim," Castiglione said. "He's a real pro, and we hit it off right away."

Neverett received the Heart of the Lion award on Oct. 20. In addition to the Tim Neverett '88 Radio Internship Neverett speaks to Emerson students annually and helped fund the baseball team's spring preseason trip to Florida.

Athletic Director Patricia Nicol said she considers Neverett the prototype alumnus.

"You hope that an Emerson graduate's college experience helped shape their personal and professional careers," Nicol said. "Tim has been very supportive of our students and student-athletes through his internship. He's been a tremendous alum, and we wanted to acknowledge his support."

Neverett said he enjoys assisting students in the position he once found himself in.

"You get to the point in your life where you want to give back, even if it's just your time," Neverett said. "Between the athletic and educational experience, if I get the chance to help someone, I'll do it. If I get a chance to recommend someone, it'll be an Emerson student. Every Emerson student should pass that on and take care of the next generation."

*Sports Editor Kyle Bray did not edit this article due to a conflict of interest.*

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## Alumna makes MiLB history as third female broadcaster

Domenic Conte, *Beacon Staff*

Jill Gearin '18 will become the third female broadcaster in Minor League Baseball history as she joins the Visalia Rawhide as a radio play-by-play commentator in January.

Gearin—who majored in journalism and minored in sports communication—worked as a broadcaster for the Nashua Silver Knights of the Future Collegiate Baseball League this summer and interned for WEEI's Red Sox Radio. In addition to announcing home games, Gearin will also serve as a media relations manager to write game reports, handle statistics, and manage social media accounts.

Gearin is the first female commentator in Visalia's 73-year history.

"I knew I wanted to broadcast sports at age 13," Gearin said. "I always loved being around sports and talking to people about them."

The Visalia Rawhide are the Class A Advanced affiliate of the Arizona Diamondbacks. The team operates out of Visalia, California, 199 miles from Gearin's hometown, Hermosa Beach.

Since the birth of the MiLB in 1901, only two other women have broadcast games for the 160-team league. In Major League Baseball, only one woman, Jenny Cavnar of the Colorado Rockies, announces play-by-play on a regular basis.

Jennifer Reynolds, general manager of the Visalia Rawhide and one of five female general managers in the MiLB, said she decided to hire Gearin without considering gender.

"Jill stood out because she has a genuine passion for America's greatest pastime and has great broadcasting and marketing skills," Reynolds said. "The bottom line is that I hire the right person for the job no matter their background. I would hope that other companies would do the same thing, but sadly that is not the case in many situations."

Reynolds said she was also given a rare opportunity to be hired by someone who looks past race and gender.

"If you have an unmatched work ethic, you stand out to any employer," Reynolds said. "Work ethic and passion are traits you can't teach. Some people have them—some people don't."

Although Gearin will make history by joining the Rawhide, she said she hopes her performance will speak for itself.

"I am very aware I am entering a field that is mainly male-dominated," Gearin said. "But I don't want to be defined as 'the woman broadcaster.' I just want to be 'the broadcaster.'"

Gearin said Emerson prepared her to excel outside of school.

"I learned how to write a good story and shoot videos," Gearin said. "I got the internship with the Red Sox through Emerson and applied what I learned with the team to my work at Nashua."

Gearin also played softball at Emerson for four years and served as team captain during her senior year. Gearin is spending this fall working as an assistant to Emerson softball head coach Phil McElroy.

"Softball brought so much to me—it's the reason I have my drive and my work ethic," Gearin said. "I was brought on to coach to mostly help the freshmen on the team. I want them to feel the same love for the game that I felt when I was a player."

McElroy said Gearin's discipline proved she could transition from player to coach in just a few months.

"Jill was one of the most responsible and dependable players that we had in her four years here," said McElroy. "I was able to rely on Jill to make sure things at practice were structured if I was not able to be there."

Alena Jones, a senior on the softball team, said Gearin impresses her as a player and coach.



Jill Gearin '18 is the first female commentator in Visalia Rawhide's 73-year history. Photo Courtesy of Jill Gearin

"Jill is dedicated to everything she does," Jones said. "As a teammate, she stepped up to lead and showed that she wanted to be there every day. As a coach, she was a great role model for the younger players. You could go to her for anything."

*Sports Editor Kyle Bray did not edit this article due to a conflict of interest.*

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