

The Berkeley Beacon

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Women's basketball caps off season with playoff appearance

By Peirce Eldredge • p. 8

Senior Natalie Busch (center, No. 12) drives to the basket in Emerson's 76-58 loss to MIT in the NEWMAC playoffs quarterfinals. Arturo Ruiz / Beacon Correspondent

Journalism students leave major at higher rate than other departments

Belen Dumont, *Beacon Staff*

Approximately five percent of journalism students switched out of the department during the 2018-19 academic year—a rate around four times higher than other major programs, according to data the Journalism Department shared with the Beacon.

Journalism Department Chair Janet Kolodzy said 34 students left the journalism program during the 2017-18 academic year. This amounted to about nine percent of students in the program that year. Journalism students most frequently leave to pursue majors in the Communication Studies Department, the Marketing Communication Department, and the Writing, Literature and Publishing Department, Kolodzy said.

Kolodzy said she would be shocked if students did not re-examine what they wanted out of their college experience at Emerson.

"While [the college] likes students to stay within the majors they walked in the door with, we also know that they're learning," Kolodzy said. "That's what college should be all about."

In 2015, USA Today ranked Emerson College No. 1 in journalism schools, according to a press release from the college.

Kolodzy said 419 students enrolled in the journalism program for the fall 2018 semester. There are currently 394 students enrolled in the program for spring 2019. Six students have switched into the program so far this academic year, and 22 have transferred out.

See journalism, page 2

Hip-hop dancers step off campus for Society Sessions

Damica Rodriguez, *Beacon Correspondent*

A clunky concert speaker blasted music from an aux cord in the multipurpose room of the Piano Row residence hall on Tuesday night. About 10-15 people from Emerson and the Greater Boston area scattered around the room and danced to the rhythm. Some came to teach or share their newfound knowledge about different styles of dance, but most came to learn.

Since Jan. 29, Hip-Hop Society President and senior Elmer Martinez has opened the doors for an event which started this spring called "Society Sessions." Those who attend freely dance together to music of their choosing or take the mic and rap from 8 to 11 p.m.

Martinez also serves as the dance chair of the organization. He said he started these sessions to bridge the gap between Boston's underground hip-hop scene and Emerson.

"There were no sessions downtown—they're all in the outskirts," Martinez said.



Senior Elmer Martinez (far right), the group's president, revived the organization in March 2018. Maia Sperber / Beacon Staff

Vice president for real estate to leave college in March

Anissa Gardizy, *Beacon Staff*

Arthur Mombourquette, the college's senior associate vice president for real estate, plans to leave the college on March 1. This will be the ninth director-level vacancy at the college.

Mombourquette will assume a new position as vice president of support services and site management at South Shore Health System—the largest independent health system in southeastern Massachusetts, according to their website. Mombourquette previously worked at the Cape Cod Hospital as chief operating officer and told the Beacon in 2016 that he worked in hospitals for his entire career before coming to the college. The college hired Mombourquette in 2015. He contributed to projects like the Little Building and Rotch Field renovations, the acquisition of 134-136 Boylston Street, and the construction of the 2 Boylston Place residence hall. He also worked on the purchase of 172 Tremont St. and the Boylston Street sidewalk expansion—two projects that will be completed after Mombourquette leaves the college.

See vacancy, page 2

OPINION

Cultural lessons in foreign films



SPORTS

Men's Lax embraces underdog mentality



LIVING ARTS

Sophomores create witchcraft club



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news

IT changes print system for spring semester

Yiwen Yu, *Beacon Correspondent*

The printing system on campus changed in spring 2019 to protect students' privacy and prevent them from wasting money by printing others' documents, a college official said.

Information Technology Support Specialist Andres Abreu said the college switched its printing server in winter 2018 in order to connect print jobs—individual documents being printed—to students' accounts. This new server also gives the college the option to allow printing on any device on campus by fall 2019, Abreu said in an interview with the Beacon.

Abreu would not specify the name of the new server.

To print on campus, people must send their print jobs to specific machines from computers around campus. Students then have to swipe their identification cards at the release station—the touch screen located next to the printer—to select and pay for print jobs.

Abreu said students had trouble finding and selecting their jobs with the old server.

"I actually printed someone else's thing last semester because I thought it was mine," Menghan Zhu, a sophomore writing, literature and publishing student, said.

Now, print jobs are tied to specific accounts so when students swipe their cards at the release station, they can only view print jobs under their account, Abreu said.

He said the IT department switched to the new server and started to test the new system in spring 2018.

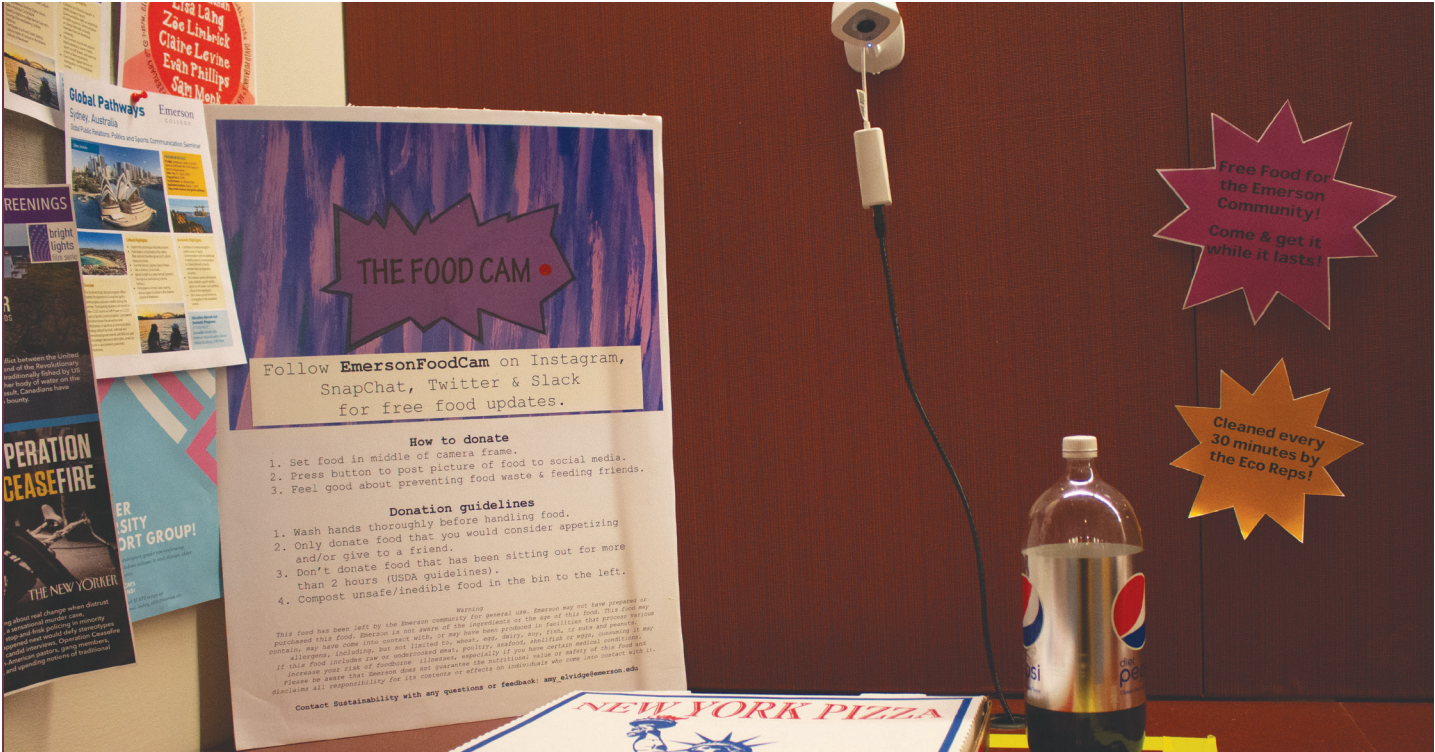
The new server also allows students to send their print jobs to any printer, as long as it's in the same building, Abreu said. If a student sends a document to a printer from a computer in the Iwasaki Library on the third floor of the Walker building, they can access it from any release station located in the building.

Molly Coombs, assistant director of user services, said IT wants to have a system that connects every printer on campus.

"You could be on your laptop in your dorm room, and you submit the job onto the cloud, and print it wherever the printing machine is closest to you," Coombs said.

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College to restart Eco-Rep program in fall 2019



The Food Cam was designed to reduce food waste on campus. • Maia Sperber / Beacon Staff

Tomas Gonzalez, *Beacon Correspondent*

The college plans to reinstate Eco-Reps, students who promote on-campus sustainability, in fall 2019, a college official said.

The Eco-Reps program went inactive after spring 2018, when the students involved left the program for various reasons. Members of Facilities Management and a group of nine students from the Office of Sustainability carry out the former Eco-Reps' responsibilities, such as the Emerson Food Cam and K-Cups, while the Eco-Reps positions remain vacant.

Former Eco-Reps, under the sustainability manager, designed the Emerson Food Cam and K-Cups initiatives to reduce waste and consumption. Students donate unwanted food to the community through the Food Cam, and thus alleviate waste. The Eco-Reps would clear the station and compost any leftover food every half hour.

For the K-Cups initiative, student employees and facilities workers collect Keurig Cups waste from bins around campus and send them to the manufacturer, Green Mountain, for recycling

every two weeks through an Emerson-paid program.

Junior Abigail Hibbard said she collects K-Cups for the Office of Sustainability and gets them ready for recycling. Hibbard said she works alongside nine other students who perform tasks similar to those done by Eco-Reps.

Assistant Vice President of Facilities and Campus Services Duncan Pollock said he will reinstate Eco-Reps and not the Eco-Ambassador, an initiative former Sustainability Manager Amy Elvidge took to involve less employees. Students who choose to work for the reinstated program would earn minimum wage, \$12 per hour.

Pollock said he plans to incorporate the Emerson Green Collective—a student organization that serves as an umbrella group for the Bee Enthusiasts at Emerson, Vegan Emerson Group, and Green Magazine—and the Office of Housing and Residence Life to gain more student engagement by increasing the amount of advertisement for available Eco-Rep positions through events and posters.

"I think we should have more informal meet-

ings with [Student Government Association] and the Green Collective before a new sustainability manager comes in," Pollock said. "Partnering with ResLife and the Green Collective is a good idea because facilities does not have the same level of student engagement."

Pollock said Emerson used to have eight Eco-Reps who worked under the Sustainability Manager until spring 2018. Elvidge, when she started at the college in 2015, decided to stop using Eco-Reps and switch to one Eco-Ambassador, because not all of the student employees could work the same amount of hours.

Former Eco-Ambassador Carrie Cullen said she worked 20 hours per week and did the same amount of work as the eight other Eco-Reps despite being the only Eco-Ambassador on the team. Cullen said she was paid \$13 per hour.

"Eight people was not the most effective way to create change in campus," Cullen said. "There were too many people working on small projects, instead of one that was most effective for everyone."

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Journalism students leave department for other majors

Continued from page 1

Approximately two percent of visual and media art students and one percent of WLP students left their programs during the 2018-19 academic year, VMA Department Chair Brooke Knight and WLP Program Coordinator Emily Paramore said in separate interviews. Both department chairs confirmed that these numbers were consistent with previous years' rates.

Communication Sciences and Disorders Department Undergraduate Program Director Amit Bajaj and Performing Arts Department Chair Robert Colby said no students have transferred in or out of their departments this year.

Marketing Communication Department Interim Chair Nejem Raheem and Chair of the Communication Studies Department Gregory Payne could not provide an exact number of students who switched in and out of their programs.

Payne said some students in the School of Communication showed interest in double-majoring in journalism.

"I think we have a lot of interest in journalism, but because of [the] requirements, it's difficult to double-major," Payne said.

Freshman journalism major Kate Cunningham said she is in the process of changing her major to WLP. She said she met with her advisor last semester and dropped her digital journalism class to take a required WLP course.

Emerson allows incoming students to declare their major and take the required 100-level classes for it during their first year.

"I think this is a little bit of the nature of the beast of Emerson, which is that we tell students, 'You know what you want to be, you can come here and be it.' That's what we say: Choose your



Five percent of journalism students switched out of the department in the 2018-2019 academic year. • Maia Sperber / Beacon Staff

major—you don't have to wait," Kolodzy said.

If students wish to change majors, they must submit a Major Change Request form and receive signatures from their former department chair and the chair of the department they wish to enter.

"I realized I wanted to go into magazine journalism, and there's not much of that in the journalism department," Cunningham said. "But in the WLP program they have magazine writing and magazine publishing, so that was a big factor for me."

Freshman Alyssa Ryan said she heard about

the new public relations major during freshman orientation in fall 2018 and spoke to her advisor and then Payne about transferring from journalism into the public relations major within the School of Communication.

"I met with [Payne] and he was so excited. He was like, 'Yes, you can switch now—we are so excited about this new major.' And he signed the paper right away," Ryan said.

"I think we have a lot of interest in journalism, but because of [the] requirements, it's difficult to double-major."
- Gregory Payne

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Mombourquette to leave college, creates ninth director-level vacancy

Continued from page 1

In a Feb. 20 email to the Emerson community, President M. Lee Pelton said he, Mombourquette, Mombourquette's senior team, and Co-Vice Chair of the Board of Trustees Facilities Committee Steven Samuels already began determining who will assume Mombourquette's responsibilities after his departure. It is unclear from the email if the group determined a timeline to fill the position.

Pelton also said the college would share project updates on 172 Tremont St. and the Little Building soon. He did not specify an exact date.

Mombourquette is one of four college officials who divided up the workload of late Vice President for Administration and Finance Maureen Murphy. The college hired interim Vice President for Administration and Finance Philip Shapiro on Feb. 4.

Mombourquette also serves on the search committee to find a permanent vice president for administration and finance, according to an email sent by Pelton to the Emerson community on Feb. 1.

The college could operate with ten vacancies when Vice President of Institutional Advancement Ron Korvas leaves the college on June 30. Pelton has already assembled a search committee to fill Korvas' position, according to a community email sent on Feb. 15.

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College lacks official classroom pronoun procedure

Tomas Gonzalez and Xinyi Xu,
Beacon Correspondents

The college does not have an official procedure for teachers to review students' pronouns in class, but the Intercultural Student Affairs Office recommends it, according to a college official.

The Princeton Review ranked Emerson No. 1 in LGBTQ-friendliness in the nation in 2019, and the college recently increased its number of gender-neutral bathrooms on campus. Director of Intercultural Student Affairs Tamia Jordan said Emerson does not require professors to go over pronouns or how students identify themselves in class. However, Jordan said the college does encourage it by posting information on their website about how to ask individuals for their pronouns.

Jordan suggests that professors pass out note cards and have students write down their preferred pronouns and that they let students introduce themselves to the class.

"We cannot force anybody to do anything, and to my knowledge, no institution has a mandate for [going over pronouns in class]," Jordan said in a phone interview. "I believe that folks ultimately have the best intentions. So if they know a better way, they will do that."

In 2016 the University of Michigan implemented a policy to let students register which pronouns they wanted to appear on class ros-

ters, or if they just wanted to go by their names. Duke University and the University of Pennsylvania both have comprehensive policies on their sites to guide students and faculty in pronoun usage, but they do not have a registration system for pronouns on rosters.

Michaele Whelan, provost and vice president for academic affairs, said professors are guaranteed their academic freedom according to the faculty handbook, but the school provides training on how to go over pronouns and preferred names. Whelan said using names instead of pronouns is a good way to ensure students' comfort.

"When you think about pronoun usage orally, that's always about the context," Whelan said. "If you are in a really small seminar, it's not often polite to refer to someone by pronouns in such a small group setting. You want to use their name because that's more respectful."

Students previously advocated for the college to increase its gender-identity inclusivity and name-change procedures. Emerson now has staff in place to assist students who wish to update their email address, academic class listing, or ID cards with their preferred names, according to the ICSA website.

Vice President for Diversity and Inclusion Sylvia Spears said she holds faculty development workshops to help professors understand how to make students feel more comfortable in class.

"To me, it's like saying please and thank you—it should just be common practice," Spears said in an interview. "We shouldn't tell people to be nice to one another or to value one another—it should just be part of what is natural to creating a positive educational environment."

Emerson's Advancement Group for Love and Expression, or EAGLE, Treasurer Kyle Eber said a student's learning ability gets disrupted by the misuse of their pronouns.

"I think the use of pronouns is important because you cannot identify someone's gender by just looking at them," Eber said. "So it's always good to double-check because you never know. Especially in a classroom setting, you always want people to be comfortable because if they are not comfortable, they are not going to learn."

The Social Justice Center received 18 reports of bias-related incidents during the fall 2018 semester, and most of the reports occurred in classrooms, according to a community update email. Most bias incidents concerned topics related to race, international status, or misgendering, Spears said.

"If there is any discrepancy between what a person says and what is on the roster, they can update their roster," Jordan said. "[Professors] should not make any assumptions, and they should ask students initially who they are."

Professor Meredith Lee uses ice breakers on the first day of class to learn students' pronouns. "It lightens the mood of the class," Lee said.

"To me, it's like saying please and thank you—it should just be common practice."

- Sylvia Spears

"I think the use of pronouns is important because you cannot identify someone's gender by just looking at them."

- Kyle Eber

"It makes people feel more comfortable, especially students who do not use 'he' or 'she,' and they use 'they' or some form of other pronoun."

Lee said they believe misgendering by professors is not necessarily malicious or intentional.

"Sometimes it is not people's fault who misidentified someone else," Lee said. "Sometimes it is just sincere confusion."

Freshman Kira Carlton said they have experienced being misgendered in a class by professors before—typically when the teacher is addressing large groups of people.

"It's usually not out of ill intent," Carlton said. "I've never felt like anyone did it on purpose. [My pronouns are] just not as common, and people don't remember a lot of times. It also takes a lot of reiteration from my part."

Carlton said when a professor fails to go over pronouns in class, it is difficult to say

their own pronouns to make sure they are not misgendered.

"In terms of me being non-binary, which is the identity I go with, I view myself more as androgynous," Carlton said. "I think it's really important because I don't see myself either one way or the other, and it kind of hurts my mental image of myself when people do misgender me constantly."

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Social Justice Center forms committee to research biases at college

Maya Gacina and Abigail Hadfield, *Beacon Staff*

A committee formed of Social Justice Center members and one student gathered to research institutional racism at the college following student protests in fall 2015 and 2017.

Sylvia Spears, the vice president for the Social Justice Center, asked her coworkers over a year ago to help her look into issues that students raised in protests organized by Protest-ing Oppression With Educational Reform. The hundreds of students who attended each protest demanded increased racial representation and cultural competency at the college.

Spears will likely publish the report after spring break, but she hopes to release it as soon as possible.

"I'm pushing my staff like crazy for us to finalize this so we can get it out to students," she said.

The research group includes Social Justice Center staff members Spears, Greta Spoering, Melanie Matson, Ashley Tarbet DeStefano, Jeeyoon Kim, Alayne Fiore, Samantha Ivery, and senior Madison Martino—a student employee at the Social Justice Center.

The study will pull from the college's institutional data recorded during the 2017-18 academic year. The group will look at demographic categories across the college's departments to examine potential differences in minority representation, such as in academics or casting for shows.

"If there's overrepresentation or underrepresentation, there's some phenomenon going



Vice President for the Social Justice Center Sylvia Spears formed a research group to address student protesters' demands. • *Beacon Archives*

on that's not just about individuals," Spears said in an interview. "It's potentially about certain groups of students based on demographic makeup."

Spears said she noticed the college's retention rate for female students of color decreased, and four female faculty members of color left Emerson for various reasons. Spears said this information, following the protests from POWER, convinced

"I think a lot of what we're finding are things that are happening across the country"

- Samantha Ivery

her to form a committee.

Spears hopes the data will provide empirical support to student testimonies about microaggressions and incidences of bias at Emerson.

"It will be something I hope students look at and say, 'They actually understand our experience,'" Spears said. "I'm hoping that it also provides students with context that says, 'It's not just your expe-

rience—you can feel it, but there's something bigger that is not you. You're not wrong, you deserve to be here."

Committee member Samantha Ivery said the data they have looked at so far did not surprise her and seems consistent with what she knows about small liberal arts colleges.

"I think a lot of what we're finding are things that are happening across the country," Ivery said in a phone interview.

Spears said she chose not to include more students in the research group because members of POWER, such as former chair Lucie Pereira, told her it should not be students' jobs to address the issue of racial diversity on campus after the protests.

"Students should bring the issue, but students should not have to do administrators' jobs—or carry the emotional burden of those jobs—when there are people who are getting paid to do those jobs," Spears said.

Pereira declined to comment.

Ivery said she hopes the community will use the report to take action.

"I hope that the folks that look at it and take it in will understand it as a snapshot of what Emerson is doing, or how it is perceived by the people that are represented in the data," Ivery said. "And then if there's work to be done, to commit to do that work."

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Incident Journal

The Emerson College Police Department provides the Incident Journal to the Beacon every week. Beacon staff edit the Incident Journal for style and clarity but not for content.

Monday, Feb. 11

The Emerson College Police Department responded to a report of a person loitering in front of the Print-Copy Center.

ECPD and the Boston Fire Department responded to a fire alarm in the Colonial Building. There were no signs of fire and the cause of the alarm was undetermined.

Tuesday, Feb. 12

The Office of Housing and Residence Life turned over to ECPD cannabis that was confiscated from a 12 Hemenway residence hall suite.

Wednesday, Feb. 13

ECPD returned a stolen laptop that was taken from the Dining Center.

OHRL turned over drug paraphernalia confiscated from a Paramount residence hall suite.

Thursday, Feb. 14

ECPD and BFD responded to a dumpster fire in Allen's Alley. BFD successfully extinguished the fire.

A student reported theft of personal property while in a Panera Bread on Stuart Street.

A student reported personal property that was stolen while in the State Transportation Building.

Friday, Feb. 15

The Boston Police Department arrested an individual who was wanted for breaking into Rock Bottom Restaurant & Brewery.

Saturday, Feb. 16

ECPD was able to find and return a stolen laptop taken inside the State Transportation Building.

An ECPD officer found the doors to 171 Tremont St. unsecured. The officer surveyed the area and secured the doors.

BPD and ECPD responded to a fight in front of New York Pizza and the Union Bank Building. An individual will be summoned for disorderly conduct and vandalism to the Union Bank Building after he punched and broke a glass window.

editorial

Students' preferred pronouns are not up for interpretation

At issue: Lack of pronoun procedures in classrooms

Our take: Professors should be required to ask for preferred pronouns

Editorials are written solely by Editor-in-Chief Maya Gacina, Managing Editor Monika Davis, Opinion Editor Katie Schmidt, Deputy Opinion Editor Diti Kohli, and Assistant Opinion Editor Ziqi Wang 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.

Emerson prides itself on creating an accepting atmosphere for individuals. On campus, we have gender-neutral bathrooms and even staff in place to assist students with updating their email address, academic class listing, and ID cards with their preferred names.

However, professors at Emerson are not mandated to ask students for their preferred pronouns. While some professors choose to ask students for their preferred pronouns at the beginning of each semester, typically on the first day of class, some do not. Professors who dismiss the opportunity for students to state their pronouns not only create an environment of hesitancy and apprehension on the student's behalf but oppose the college's claim to be a progressive institution.

In this week's Beacon article about pronoun procedure, college officials cite the section of the faculty handbook regarding "academic freedom" when justifying the lack of a pronoun mandate. The handbook says that faculty members are "entitled to full freedom in scholarship, research, and/or creative professional work." This allows professors to control the atmosphere within their classroom, which arguably includes the decision of whether to skip over the introduction of pronouns.

However, the absence of structure can result in miscommunication and ignorance. "Academ-

ic freedom" and "common sense" shouldn't be excuses for not developing an official procedure that pushes professors to learn and address students' preferred pronouns. Students who don't adhere to traditional gender pronouns have to publicly declare their preference on their own. The anxiety of being forced to speak up for your own identity poses an unnecessary stress.

In order to build a safer space on campus, the college should establish foundational elements of procedure. Even though some professors may address students with good intentions, an official guideline would create a safer environment for students who feel they are not being treated fairly. If it's not perfect, it can be revised. It's not going to be easy, but it will be a learning experience for those involved with inclusion at the college's administrative level.

Students have questioned the discrepan-

cy between the college's support for the queer community and their actual policies in the past. In September 2017, the Beacon published an op-ed about transgender students' dead names being used on class rosters and college documents even after they officially switched their preferred name with the Office of the Registrar.

The college offers faculty development workshops to encourage professors to foster an inclusive classroom environment. But it shouldn't be a recommendation to treat everyone equally—it should be a mandate. Every professor should respect that students have a right to choose what name and pronoun they are referred to as. It is not the professor's job to make that assumption; it is the student's choice.

For the 2017-18 academic year, the Social Justice Center received 68 bias incident reports. Fifty percent of the bias incidents reported took place in classrooms. Twenty-nine percent involved gender identity and gender expression, while 15 percent involved sexual orientation. If you or someone you know ever feels left out of a classroom because you do not identify with the pronouns others have assigned to you, file an anonymous bias report on the Social Justice Center's website. Let others know that this is an issue that can no longer be tolerated and that the way you identify should no longer be ignored for others' convenience.

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.

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

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Editorial Cartoon
by the Editorial Board
illustration by Ally Rzesza

“Norman Lear found a creative way to stay warm this winter.”



opinion

Enhancing our world view through foreign films

Ziqi Wang, Beacon Staff

I was living in Michigan as a Chinese exchange student during my junior year of high school when my mother called to tell me about a new movie premiering in China. She was excited about the film and urged me to see it. But all I could say was, “Sorry, Mom, I don’t think it will get released here.”

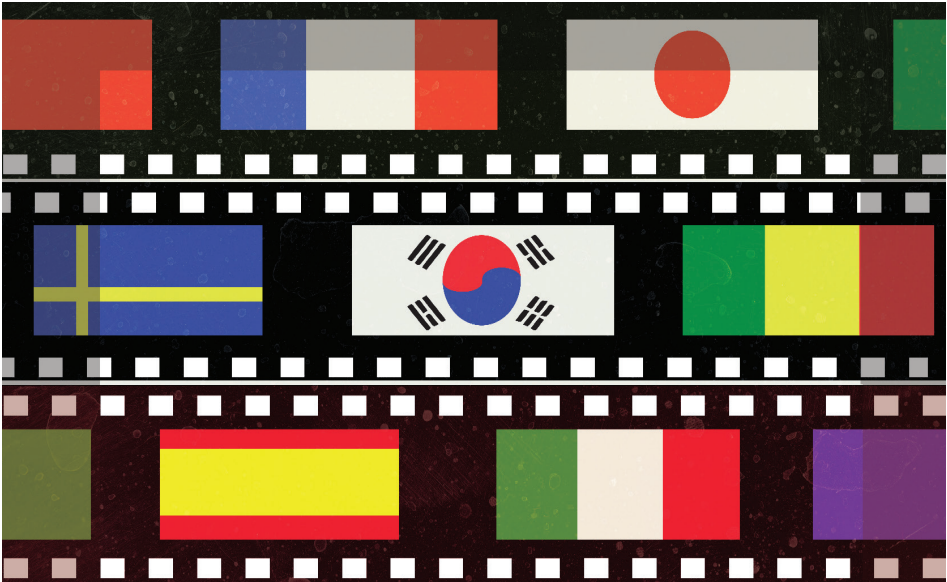
I noticed a lack of international films playing in movie theaters when I came to the U.S. Back in China, theaters played a wide range of movies from all over the world—not just American films, but films from India, Japan, Korea, and France.

Once at Emerson, I was thrilled to discover an AMC theater near Boston Common that showed Chinese movies and other international films. In February, I was so excited to take my boyfriend to see the first Chinese science fiction blockbuster, *The Wandering Earth*, because it already received good reviews back at home. Typically, foreign films are only publicized during international film festivals, and even then many Americans won’t watch them because major movie theater companies do not offer showings.

Having access to a major theater that shows foreign films allows me to feel closer to home and serves as an opportunity to raise Emerson students’ awareness of social and cultural issues outside of the U.S.

Many Americans critique Hollywood’s lack of cultural and racial representation but if they watched films produced in other countries, they will find the representation and cultural diversity that Hollywood is missing. Who else could represent a society better than the ones who actually live in it?

In September 2012, Wanda Group, a Chinese conglomerate, acquired AMC. Thus, major AMC theaters started showing Chinese films



Boston’s diverse array of backgrounds provides us, as college students, with the chance to view movies from all over the world. • Illustration by Ally Rza / Beacon Staff

that Wanda Group invested in. In the U.S., AMC theaters show the latest Chinese movies within a few days of the film’s initial release date. For example, *The Wandering Earth* was released on Feb. 8 in the U.S.—three days after its premiere in China.

I loved watching movies during my childhood in China. I remember watching *Ratatouille* on the couch when I was five years old and wondering if a rat in Paris could actually cook. I remember dozing off while watching *The Lord of the Rings* only to wake up an hour later to see the movie was still playing. Last year, when my mom took me to see the Bollywood movie *Toilet: A Love Story*, I was so shocked that building a toilet in one’s house could be so tough.

Foreign films offered me an opportunity to

learn about different countries and societies. I watched the award-winning Japanese film *Shoplifters* with my parents this summer. I cried over the emotional turmoil, but the storyline also pushed me to think about the concept of family in Japanese culture and how the declining fertility rates and rising life expectancies affect the structure of Japanese society.

I also learn from films produced by Aamir Khan, an influential Indian actor and filmmaker whose movies often reflect social issues in rural India. In his film *P.K.*, he criticizes the outdated social norms of India and challenges the country’s traditional beliefs of God. The movie depicted a society where people mindlessly follow their religion without question. I would have never known so much about any of these

customs if it weren’t for watching international movies.

Indian and Japanese film imports spiked in 2018, according to an article by Patrick Brzeski in *The Hollywood Reporter*. *Shoplifters* earned \$14.1 million in China while only making \$795,000 in North America.

“No other national film audience close to China’s size has shown a willingness to watch culturally distinct, subtitled filmmaking at such scale,” Brzeski said.

Boston’s diverse array of backgrounds provides us, as college students, with the chance to view movies from all over the world. Last October, Emerson’s Paramount Theatre held the Boston Asian American Film Festival and aired classic Asian-American movies like *The Joy Luck Club*. This year, the Boston Israeli Film Festival held screenings in the Bright Family Screening Room in Paramount. In March, the Museum of Fine Arts plans to host the 18th Annual Boston Turkish Film Festival, with Turkish movies ranging from the 1970s to 2018.

Even though I am not a film student, I still encourage Emerson students of all majors to explore films from different parts of the world. International films not only provide entertainment by featuring filmmakers, actors, and actresses from all over the world, but they also allow people to see a different perspective. International films can help us foster a better world view than those who may only watch American movies with American values and perspectives. Go to the AMC website and search international films—you will be surprised by how many films you haven’t yet heard of that are playing at a theater less than a five-minute walk away from campus.

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Students of color, others are speaking for us

Isha Marathe, Beacon Correspondent

On Nov. 7, 2018, I walked into a meeting about institutional racism at Emerson College and was surprised to see I was the only student of color in the room.

The meeting was led by Sylvia Spears, vice president of the Social Justice Center, and included eight others who were staff, administrators, and students. They sat in a room on the 10th floor of the Walker Building to discuss the best way to give a voice to marginalized people, find discriminatory undercurrents in school policy, and talk about how to be “socially just”—as the name of the department suggests.

One of the student members who had recently joined the group told me about a social justice project in the works. As a woman of color, I seemed to be a part of the subject matter, and their research fell in line with issues of bias I have reported on in the past, so I thought it would be an interesting venture to explore.

However, the majority of the nine people in the room were white. While they drafted this project for the welfare of students who looked like me, a staff member said that none of those students were actually involved because students of color told her they were tired of fighting for their rights as equal citizens.

Ironically, I was unwelcome. Even as I sat in that room and inquired about this undertaking that started because students like me were too tired, an administrator told me the information was too delicate for them to entrust to me.

When asked how the only two students already in the room had been selected, both of whom were white and being paid \$14 an hour to participate, another administrator told me it was about community and that the students had gained her confidence to view and discuss information about marginalized groups.

There was no formal announcement made about this research group or employment opportunities for students regarding this project.

I believe understanding the demographics of that meeting in November is essential to what I ask next: Students of color, who are you? Who spoke for us?

Who spoke for my Black friends, for my Latinx friends, for my Asian friends—for those of us who had to be told by a white staff member of the Social Justice Center that we had not yet been invited to this revolutionary project about our rights because students of color say they are tired?

Who gave you the liberty to speak for us? I certainly did not.

By letting the Social Justice Center fight a fight that is ours, we have also given them the power to speak about our experiences—not the power of students of color merely, but of white students, of professors, of a long line of social rights activists and of the resilience and kindness that is intrinsic for communities to evolve.

We have allowed the administration to do what those in power have been doing for a very long time—make social revolution a personnel issue, make it about the behind-the-scenes greater good, a good that is defined by them, not us. We have allowed them to make it about a good we may or may not see with our eyes, but that we have no choice but to trust is coming.

True social justice at a college cannot be brought about without its students.

All of us, regardless of color or nationality, enter Emerson College with our unique histories and knowledge. We enter, in many ways, to disseminate that unique knowledge through meeting others and sharing our stories. The clash of these varied histories can, and likely will, cause an error and may offend. Not offend in malicious ways, but in curious, yet ignorant ones.

In acquiring “equal” rights, not only constitutionally, but on an interpersonal level, there needs to be room for error. Subsequently, there also needs to be a resolution of that error.

And in most cases, an offense can be clarified by calling it out.

This holds true not only for relationships between students of different races, but also between professors and students of different races.

We are here to learn, but in the case of students of color, we are also here to teach. Unfortunately, in every sphere where we are the

minority, our role as unpaid teachers follows us.

If we don’t tell our story when we have the chance to, someone else will.

“It’s not my job,” I hear from students of color on campus. I see it in protests, in classrooms, and on Facebook posts.

“It is not my job to inform you.”

I agree. It is not your job; it is not my job.

However, if only those who got paid did the tasks their contracts bound them to, more than half of the country would still be ineligible to vote, marriages would exclusively be between men and women, and abortions would be sequestered to dark alleys with rusty coat hangers.

Then again, there are those who believe that is how things should be and have the same prerogative to make a case. Not in the court of law merely, or on night-time news, or at the polls, but in a method that came about a hundred millennia ago—conversation. In loud conversation—in protest, in rallies, in garbled op-eds, in sweaty congregations and in reading books.

Social activism, from the Greensboro sit-ins of 1960, to the Women’s Liberation Movement, to the Iranian Revolution, has often been ignited by students. In fact, several social revolutions have been maintained by the support of a sympathetic faculty. Both parties remained unpaid for their activism.

I understand the concept of “activism fatigue.” Today, in times when the country is so openly divided in its beliefs, activism is inextricably tied into everyday tasks. And by proxy, so is fatigue.

So, take a weekend off from explaining the “obvious” racist undertones of why your professor looks at you, the only Indian student, every time he mentions Gandhi. Explore a new Ben & Jerry’s flavor, have a drink, make an appointment with a therapist, but then go back.

Because fair or not, the fight for equal rights is ours.

I believe Spears is committed to doing good work for the community at Emerson College. I believe she is knowledgeable of the complexities of social justice work—she even teaches a class on it. I believe she is honorable, she listens to

every public protest demand and responds in politically correct terms.

Yet, to call the former Office of Diversity and Inclusion the Social Justice Center is at best naïve, and at worst, an attempt at misleading the community since their members can only function within the limits of what retains their employment.

The center should have held on to its former title to better reflect its jurisdiction, its interests, and its capabilities. And if I don’t understand the extent and depth of their reach, it is because the office’s practices are opaque, staggeringly vague, and—as the institution is—elite.

Students of color, we have given the alleged Social Justice Center our license to revolt, and in their lesser liberated hands, it has become a glorified and myopic exercise in public relations. An exercise in which “students of color” are not invited to participate because we are tired.

But tiredness, though real and uncomfortable, is neither weakness nor surrender. For it to be used as a reason for exclusion is a breach of our trust and is insulting.

We are tired of being used as nothing more than statistics. We are tired of two white students representing us in projects meant for our benefit. We are tired of patronizing and paternalistic excuses from the administration to keep us out of conversations that we want to have.

We are not tired of asking for equal rights.

The next time you feel a slow wave of exasperation, remember that nobody knows your story better than you do. You and I deserved to have a chance to be in that room on Nov. 7, 2018.

It is not the institution’s jurisdiction to decide what we want, where we want their time spent or who our collective speaker is. Those decisions are ours to make. This is our jurisdiction. It is time for us to reclaim it.

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living arts

Person of Color Column: Accepting the "brown" label



Diti Kohli
Kohli is a freshman journalism major, Beacon's deputy opinion editor, and this week's POC columnist.

In July 2015, a Huffington Post Canada article about the fashion choices of a Bollywood star's wife sparked controversy because of its headline, "Shahid Kapoor's New Wife Mira Rajput's Outfits Have Every Brown Girl Drooling." Impassioned readers flooded the comment section and called the headline's use of the word "brown" offensive and accused the Indian author of encouraging exclusion.

Another fervid Indian Huffington Post staffer wrote an article, "Why Calling Me A Brown Girl Isn't Racist," in response to the now disabled comment section. "Brown girl?? Really! That's offensive," said one comment. "Brown girls ... Really? 'White' girls are exempt? Blatant racism, no?," questioned another. As an Indian-American myself, I didn't find anything discriminatory about either headline.

I've seen people of all races repeatedly tiptoe around the racial classification of being "brown" because of the way many perceive the word. Their timidity when using the word is not foreign to me and, I assume, to many others who carry this label unabashedly.

My suburban Chicago hometown attracted many minority populations, including a rapidly growing South Asian community. But even my

closest friends back home shied away from the word "brown." After I came back tan and happy from winter vacation in Hawaii to my junior year of high school, one of my white friends exclaimed, "Well, you're browner for sure." I didn't think anything of the remark, but the rest of our very white friend group believed she had said something inappropriate and awkwardly stared at both of us.

Admittedly, I do sometimes feel odd hearing "brown" being used to label a group of people, especially by non-minorities. But I realize there's nothing wrong with identifying people as brown as the Huffington Post headline did. Racism and bigotry are not founded in these identifying phrases, but they are in the discriminatory sentiments people may attach in context.

There's no exact definition for who constitutes as a "brown" person. Many use it as a catch-all term for minorities who don't fit into, or choose not to identify with the concrete, limited racial classifications they are offered. Many who identify with the word, including me, are South Asian—Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, or the like. We are neither white nor black, and we are also somehow estranged from the "Asian" label as it has come to informally only include East Asians. Some of us are Latinx or darker-skinned Asians. "Brown" even includes

those who identify with multiple races or those who check the "other" box when asked their race on forms.

When people say I am brown, I am not offended in the slightest—I am brown. Occasionally, however, others use my brownness to demean me. Just this last week, someone joked that every other brown person in the vicinity looks like they could be related to me. Another told me I'm pretty for a brown girl. These microaggressions are common but ignorant and

hurtful regardless of how often they happen. "Brown" itself is not the antagonistic component of these statements—it's the way it's used to devalue a group of people.

Unlike the n-word and its derogatory counterparts, the word "brown" did not historically express hatred and malicious intentions. Therefore, "brown" does not reinforce the systematic oppression of a specific group and as a result, does not possess a racist connotation.

The stigma around "brown" comes from the infrequency of its use. Those inside the brown community hold the identity with confidence. The collection of South Asians at my high school, and the two others in our district, referred to themselves as "brown town." Outside of the brown community, however, there are few who are bold enough to utilize the word because of the backlash it sometimes receives. The only

"When people say I am brown, I am not offended in the slightest—I am brown."

way to normalize "brown" is to use it more regularly and to explain the reasoning behind its political correctness when faced with hostility.

Both "brown" and the n-word can be used as a tool by the people they define. Using the word to identify myself solidifies my distance from whiteness and from the inherent privilege I have not been permitted to automatically carry in my life. "Brown" communicates my struggle with identity to everyone else.

And since the term "brown" encompasses many minority groups around the world, its usage radically protests the prominence of racial categorization today. Though studies by the University of Pennsylvania, amongst other organizations, prove that race is skin-deep with no basis in genetics, humans continue to allow this color-based categorization to separate us. Brownness is eclectic and accepting of a variety of ethnicities—a subtle dissent against race's boundaries.

It's admirable that people avoid or stand up to the usage of the word "brown" because of their belief that it is demeaning. This passion is simply misplaced and would have a greater impact if people redirected it to protest against the more tangible discriminatory threats facing brown people today. For me, I believe the time has come to integrate the word brown into everyday conversation, inside and outside the topic of race.

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Hip-Hop Society dances onto Boston Cypher scene

Continued from page 1

"I want to give something back from the school to the people of Boston who live here, who are being gentrified. I also want the Emerson community who don't really know the street vibe like that to be like, 'This is what the scene is like outside of a collegiate environment.'"

Martinez said his idea for Society Sessions stemmed largely from his upbringing in Lowell, Massachusetts, where he was constantly surrounded by dance within his community, his Puerto Rican and Dominican culture, and his family.

Martinez attends other weekly dance sessions called "Cyphers" and connects Emerson to Boston's hip-hop community by networking.

"I want to help other people and I want other people to learn," he said. "And if you're interested, then we can keep sparking that fire."

Martinez said he hopes Society Sessions continue even after he graduates. He hopes the space he forged for the community will continue

to ignite a drive in others.

"We don't do hip-hop in isolation," Martinez said. "It's community, so if you don't have community it doesn't matter."

Boston University junior Aidan Malenfant regularly attends Society Sessions. He said he started dancing five years ago.

"A lot of my dancing comes from Cyphers around the Boston area," Malenfant said. "Since a new one popped up [at Emerson], I figured I'd come by—I never stopped."

Malenfant said he learned about Emerson's Society Sessions from their Facebook page. Malenfant attends Cyphers at other colleges, such as BU's Bulletproof Funk, but he said Emerson offers a different atmosphere.

"This is one of the most fostering groups," Malenfant said. "A lot of Cyphers can be kind of split apart. Some people will dance in this corner, some people will dance in that corner. But there's a lot of interaction here."

Malenfant said he likes attending the sessions because of the wide range of dance styles and

the inclusivity that welcomes beginners and experts.

"One of my favorite parts of Society Sessions is that they don't limit it to a single form of dance," Malenfant said. "They let people come practice, they share the aux cord pretty liberally, so you can go from house to hip-hop to krumping."

Since its fallout in 2016, Martinez said he revived the Hip-Hop Society by hosting a dance competition called Rebirth Vol. 1 with hip-hop discussions, workshops, and panels in March 2018. Soon after, Martinez fully established the organization and welcomed new members at the beginning of fall 2018. Society Sessions became a household event since the beginning of spring 2019.

Junior Trevor Kelly joined the Hip-Hop Society in fall 2018 and is the organization's current marketing chair. He said he is grateful for the support he received from students, the school administration, and other cultural organizations at Emerson who wanted the Hip-Hop Society

to come back.

"It was because of the passionate people from this group that we've had so much success so far—refocusing our mission of promoting hip-hop, having fun, and exploring this genre of music together," Kelly said.

Martinez said Society Sessions also serve as a response to protests from students of color about the lack of representation on Emerson's campus. Martinez hopes that Society Sessions highlights the communal aspects of the hip-hop genre and helps students feel a sense of belonging to and connection with their culture.

The Hip-Hop Society holds general meetings on Tuesday nights before the Society Sessions from 6 to 8 p.m. The agenda offers space for discussions about a wide range of topics regarding hip-hop and its cultural significance.

Senior Julio Cesar Villegas is the vice president, rap chair, and emcee for the Hip-Hop Society. Villegas also conducts rap sessions with other members and often freestyles at the Society Sessions. Since the Hip-Hop Society began, Villegas said the organization grew from five members last semester to 30 this spring.

"We're based at Emerson, but we're not limited to Emerson," Villegas said. "We have students who come in from [Berklee College of Music] and that come from [Suffolk University], so we were literally able to open Emerson to Boston."

On March 1, members of the Hip-Hop Society will host a release concert for a hip-hop album they have been working on since October 2018. Villegas, senior Jonah Free, junior Owen Elphick, and sophomore Dani Jean-Baptiste will perform the full upcoming album in the Cabaret at 6:30 p.m. The group has already released their new single, "Slow Down," from the album, along with a music video directed by senior Bram Jakob Lowenstein.

Martinez also plans to host the Rebirth Vol. 2 Open Styles Jam on March 23 in the Cabaret at 1 p.m. It will include a display of graffiti artwork and possibly fashion segments.

"The club became something I never imagined," Martinez said. "It's [Hip-Hop Society's] own thing. I don't feel ownership over it in a way that's like, 'I have to run it because I made it.' It's multiplying itself. I just open the door."

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The Hip-Hop Society holds open dance sessions every Tuesday from 8 to 11 p.m. in the multipurpose room. • Maia Sperber / Beacon Staff

Mystic organization creates community for Paganism

Grace Griffin, *Beacon Staff*

When sophomore Kyle Eber was a child, his mother came home from work one day and he immediately sensed something was wrong. Eber asked her why she was sad, even though she never mentioned it. Throughout his early life, Eber knew he was highly perceptive of people and their energies, and it ended up drawing him to mysticism.

“I’m personally someone who is super intune to people,” Eber said. “I can read people’s energies. I can tell what you’re thinking and feeling without you even saying anything. It would scare my mom all the time as a child.”

Eber now practices Paganism and founded Mystic—a club for practicing and exploring Paganism—in fall 2018. He serves as co-president of the organization with sophomore Lily Doolin. Eber said he wanted to create a community for like-minded people at Emerson.

Modern Paganism blends ancient religion with contemporary thoughts, according to the Pagan Library—a collection of writings about the craft. Paganism, witchcraft, and mysticism use many similar practices and rituals, and most practicing Pagans draw on personal experience for their beliefs instead of following a doctrine. Pagan worship ceremonies include rituals surrounding energy, healing, and spiritual growth.

“Paganism has been around for centuries, but for me, it means I use foundations to get results,” Eber said. “In my own craft, I mostly utilize crystals and spell jars. If I put something out into the universe or I take that energy and transform it into what I would like it to be, it will come back. It’s all about karma.”

Eber said his best friend introduced him to Paganism in 2016. He decided to begin practicing the craft after noticing positive results in relation to his self-confidence, self-love, and patience. Eber described himself as a poly-panthéon Pagan, meaning he follows two pantheons of gods. A pantheon of gods refers to a set of deities a person worships.

“Every question I had about my life, and every question I had about the universe, was reasoned by what [the deities] were telling me,” Eber said. “I was at a point where I didn’t necessarily believe in God because of personal reasons, but then I realized that [Paganism] makes sense.”

Eber met Doolin during their freshman year and asked her to help lead the club in spring 2019. Doolin does not practice Paganism but said she finds mysticism interesting and calming. She said her interest in mysticism can appeal to other members of the community who are not practicing Pagans. She practices tarot reading and other facets of mysticism.

“I have generalized anxiety disorder, so I find things like yoga and meditation really relaxing,” Doolin said. “It helps me center myself and go about my day in a way that is healthy and mindful and positive.”

Eber started the group last fall but said he and other members could not commit enough time to host events or market the club. He said this semester they have a Facebook and Instagram presence, spread information via word-of-mouth, and hold events once a month on campus.

Mystic’s first event of the semester was on Jan. 31 in room 401 of the Walker building and consisted of tarot card readings. Tarot cards show figures and suits that are used to interpret an individual’s experiences. Doolin said that about 15 students showed up for the event.

“We invited people who were interested in either getting their tarot read or bringing their cards and reading their friends or learning more about the reading process,” Doolin said. “It was just a fun community event where everyone was reading each other and we were all getting feedback.”

Last semester, Mystic partnered with Emerson’s Advancement Group for Love and Expression to host an event during queer history month. Held on Oct. 6, the event centered around the connection between queerness and witchcraft.

“We talked about how a lot of queer-identifying people who follow a strict religion are told that they can’t be that in their religion, so they reach out and find new sources of religion that will accept them,” Eber said. “A lot of them turn to Paganism because it’s very queer-coded.”

Junior and EAGLE Vice President Rachel Gaudet said the event focused on making spell jars. They said the event aligned well with queer history month.

“At this event we combined forces and made different potions for feminine and masculine energy as well as for attraction and protection,” Gaudet said. “There was a bit of discussion about Paganism and finding solace in your queer identity through Paganism.”

Eber and Doolin said they hope Mystic can collaborate with other student-run and spiritual organizations in the future.

Eber noted the rise of mysticism and witchcraft in recent popular culture. He cited the Netflix reboot of *Sabrina the Teenage Witch* and Sephora’s Starter Witch Kit product—a box that includes tarot cards, crystals, and a sage smudge.

“Commercialization happens to every religion—just look at Christmas,” Eber said. “I didn’t hate the Sephora Witch Kit, but it upset me. The main thing it contained was a smudge stick, which is an appropriation of Native Amer-



Lily Doolin (top right) and TJ Coste (bottom right) read Mystic members’ tarot cards at the first meeting of the fall 2018 semester. • *Courtesy of Kyle Eber*

ican practices ... I think Sephora saw that there was an interest in it and that people were moving toward Paganism and other witchcraft practices and met the demand.”

Eber also said he noticed a common correlation between the Pagan craft and Satanism, or dark magic. He said this misconception can lead to a misunderstanding of Paganism. Eber said he hopes Mystic can help members of the Emerson community embrace the positives of the craft.

“If you’re interested, sit in on a meeting,” Eber said. “This is a completely positive craft. We just want a community where we can be students and do this with each other. Most of this is seen as taboo through other religions ... People who are segmented in a very structured religion can be scared of things they don’t know.”

As a practicing Catholic, Doolin said mysticism does not interfere with her relationship to God.

“Before college I went to Catholic school all my life, and we were always taught that tarot or zodiac wasn’t something we were supposed to listen to or understand, and it was against the Catholic faith,” Doolin said. “In my personal relationship with God, I don’t think God hates tarot or anything like that. It’s a little tough for me

to think that something I do as a hobby could be seen as sinful.”

Mystic meets twice a month—once on a Thursday and once on a Friday. The club met on Feb. 14 to discuss ideas for their next event and plans to meet again on March 1. Details for upcoming meetings and events can be found on EmConnect.

Eber said he hopes Mystic can provide a sense of community for practicing mystics, or anyone who takes interest in a specific aspect of the craft.

“It doesn’t have to be that they walk away saying, ‘I’m going to be a Pagan now and do all these things,’ but just to have some fun,” he said. “While these events are open to the entire public, anyone can benefit from meditation or yoga and channeling some energy within themselves to make them stronger. Everyone talks about how important self-care is, and this is a type of self-care for a lot of people.”

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Age of the Twink: Red Cross picks politics over science



Kyle Labe
Labe is a junior writing, literature, and publishing major, the Beacon’s chief copy editor, and LGBTQ+ columnist.

When I was in high school, the American Red Cross would sometimes station one of their “bloodmobiles” in the parking lot. A doctor, nurse, and phlebotomist collected pints from willing donors, and students lined the sidewalk waiting to contribute to the cause. I recall one time when my physical education teacher attempted to persuade me to donate blood. She was a kind woman who meant no harm, yet that afternoon, she egged me on at an incessant rate to donate.

This was a perplexing situation for me, a boy in the closet. Donating blood is a simple way to give back to the community, and everyone was doing it, so how could I decline? Nevertheless, if I told her my honest reasoning—that I was gay, that the Red Cross didn’t accept my blood—I’d out myself—my secret wouldn’t be a secret anymore.

It was peculiar to be placed in this same situation last week in the lobby of an Emerson residence hall, when a student representative rushed toward me with information on donating blood. The Red Cross was back and just across the street. I shook my head, nonchalantly brushed them off, even though that inner feeling of guilt still bombarded me.

I’m no longer in the closet, and the Red Cross’ lifetime ban placed on men who have sex

with men has been reduced, since only 2015, to 12 months of recent sexual activity. Other countries such as the United Kingdom, Australia, Sweden, and Japan had already initiated this one-year deferral rule. This change in other countries prompted the Food and Drug Administration, responsible for ensuring the safety of the nation’s blood supply, to “better harmonize” the ban with the deferral already in place for those who have increased exposure to HIV. This includes those with a partner who’s HIV positive or those who copulate with a commercial sex worker.

Nevertheless, I am regularly tested. I know my body, and I wish to donate blood. I still have issues witnessing my peers being able to do something I am barred from, thanks to some sensationalist paranoia from the era of AIDS and Ronald Reagan.

The lifetime policy was put in place in 1983, during the Reagan presidency. The AIDS crisis was in full swing: Gay men were dying by the thousands, our government did nothing to rectify this, and people everywhere were terrified of this “gay disease” and the community from which it seemingly originated. It took over three decades for the U.S. to reduce this ban to 12 months, but the pure, unadulterated homophobia behind it still remains.

Every time I bring up this topic with some-

"Donating blood is a simple way to give back to the community, and everyone was doing it, so how could I decline?"

one—usually cisgender, usually heterosexual—they present me with foundationless information and made-up statistics. They would ask, didn’t I know that gay men are more susceptible to HIV? To avoid friction, I had always accepted that as a fact until, recently, I dug a tad deeper into the intricacies of the Red Cross policy.

With the 2015 changes, the FDA also revised its guidelines to recognize the difference between gender identity and biological sex. A transgender man could now be documented as a man, and a transgender woman could be documented as a woman. Before, gender was determined by one’s sex assigned at birth. This is a wonderful change that addresses decades’ worth of discrimination—but not completely.

In the Red Cross’ eyes, I will always be classified as a man who has sex with men. Now, a homosexual transgender man with a vagina cannot donate. Though the Red Cross did not previously classify them as a “man who has sex with a man,” they are now seen as such. Contrastingly, a heterosexual transgender woman with a penis who was not able to donate prior to this rule can do so now. I am not one to put some observational lens on another’s genitals, or what it says about one’s character, but these new grounds highlight a loophole in the FDA’s system.

By this standard, if I were to go to a “blood-

mobile” or something of the like and lie that my gender identity is female, I would be permitted to donate, no questions asked. The government and overall population are too obsessed with what is between a person’s legs, and this no-questions-asked policy about gender satisfies me. But it puts a spotlight on how baseless the Red Cross’ denial of gay men is.

When the 2016 mass shooting occurred at Pulse, a gay nightclub in Orlando, Florida, a dire need for blood donations arose. Yet gay men—the same community targeted by this terrorist attack—were prohibited from helping to save the lives of our own people.

This isn’t science—this is fear. Even on the Red Cross’ website, they admit there is “insufficient scientific data” to measure the correlation, if any, between individual behavioral risk factors and eligibility to donate. A gay man who has been committed to a longtime monogamous relationship would be rejected, while any heterosexual, even those with many sexual partners, would be permitted. Moreover, the Red Cross tests all donated blood for infectious diseases—including HIV—which makes the ban unnecessary.

Personally, I don’t believe the FDA has any grounds here. The government will continue to let us die without the opportunity to save one another. This isn’t just another case of discrimination. This is reflective of the cultural understanding of gay men at large: we are often forgotten, erased from every narrative, excluded from even the most basic experiences of life.

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sports

RECENT RESULTS

WOMEN’S BASKETBALL: MIT 76 — Emerson 58, Feb. 19
WOMEN’S BASKETBALL: Emerson 75 — Mt. Holyoke 35, Feb. 16
MEN’S VOLLEYBALL: Emerson 3 — Newbury 0, Feb. 16
MEN’S BASKETBALL: Emerson 97 — Coast Guard 83, Feb. 16

Men's lacrosse seeks to break NEWMAC losing streak

Domenic Conte, *Beacon Staff*

The men’s lacrosse team aims for its first conference win in program history as it enters its third season under head coach Matthew Colombini.

Senior goalkeeper Bailey Kennedy said he expects to snap the losing streak in the New England Women’s and Men’s Athletic Conference this season.

“I don’t think this is the year, I know this is the year,” Kennedy said. “I’ve seen a lot of improvement from this year to last year. I don’t think there’s any team in the conference we can’t compete with or beat. We’re not scared of them anymore.”

In their final game last season, the Lions lost to the Massachusetts Maritime Academy in double overtime and fell just short of their first NEWMAC win. Since joining the conference in 2014, the team is 15-57 overall.

“Last year, losing against Mass. Maritime in double overtime broke our hearts, but it showed that we can compete,” Kennedy said. “Coach said the goal isn’t to win a NEWMAC game anymore, it’s to make the playoffs.”

In addition to the game against Mass. Maritime, Colombini said the team displayed growth in each conference game last season.

“Last year we took a strong step in being competitive,” Colombini said. “If you actually watched the games [last season], you’d say that through the first half it was very competitive. We have more depth this year and a little bit more talent that will help us compete for full games.”

Joining Colombini on the coaching staff are assistant coaches Will Jennings and Dave Kraus. On Nov. 6, Jennings was selected by the Boston Cannons in the Major League Lacrosse Supplemental Draft.

Kennedy said not many goalkeepers are fortunate enough to practice with professional players.

“Coach Jennings is a great guy, a talented player, and he helps everyone,” Kennedy said. “You can’t really beat getting warmed up at practice by a pro.”

Kennedy credits Colombini’s coaching for strengthening the lacrosse program.



The men’s lacrosse team recruited eight freshman in hopes to win its first conference game this season. Abbey Finn / *Beacon Correspondent*

“I have nothing but high praise for him,” Kennedy said. “He turned this program around so quickly, it’s very exciting to see all the changes that have come in just a few years.”

This season, the team will step away from permanent team captains. Instead, Colombini will select captains week-by-week because of the abundance of leaders on the team.

“There’s a really good vibe with the leadership across the board on the roster,” Colombini said. “We didn’t want to name one or two guys and then have really good leaders step back because they didn’t have that title.”

Four of the five seniors on the roster—Kennedy, Fernando Gutierrez, Marshall Tate, and Jared Brush—spent the fall semester at the Los

Angeles campus. Kennedy said the younger players’ improvements in the seniors’ absence impressed him.

“We had a lot of players take on a leadership role,” Kennedy said. “The underclassmen really stepped up while we were away. I feel like the proud dad, going away and then coming back and seeing everyone all grown up.”

The Lions welcomed eight freshmen to the team this season. Colombini said he admires the way they have adapted to the collegiate level, and expects the freshmen to receive playing time.

“A lot of [the freshmen] will be playing a lot of minutes,” Colombini said. “With every freshman class, there’s a lot of ups and downs with

"Coach said the goal isn't to win a NEWMAC game anymore, it's to make the playoffs."

-Bailey Kennedy

getting used to playing in college. I’ve been really impressed with how quickly they’ve picked up what we’re trying to do. Anything we ask, they’re doing it and they’re doing extra.”

Freshman midfielder Skyler Celotto said the younger players have already established a strong connection.

“We’ve got good chemistry,” Celotto said. “Right away we all became good friends, and we’re putting a lot of hard work in together. It’s been a lot of fun.”

Freshman goalkeeper Malcolm McGrath said they are solid on both offense and defense, and receive a lot of help from junior midfielder Austin DiPietro.

“We’re a lot more talented than we think we are,” McGrath said. “There’s a lot of potential on both sides of the ball. We have a really good faceoff guy [in Austin DiPietro], he’s going to be first team all-NEWMAC this year.”

DiPietro returns to the team following a phenomenal sophomore season. He led the NEWMAC last season in two categories—ground balls scooped and faceoffs won. He won 240 faceoffs, 59 more than the second-highest recorded total in the NEWMAC, and picked up 157 ground balls.

The annual preseason coaches poll placed Emerson at the bottom of the NEWMAC. Springfield College, winners of the last 10 NEWMAC championships, ranks first in the poll. The United States Coast Guard Academy—which handed Springfield a loss and defeated Wesleyan University, the No. 1 team in the country, last season—ranks second.

Entering the season as underdogs, Kennedy said the preseason coaches poll motivates the team to prove everyone wrong.

“That preseason poll is hanging up in our locker room right now,” Kennedy said. “I like the adversity that we’re facing and I like that nobody believes in us. We’re going to throw as many punches as we can and shock a lot of people. It’s fun when nobody believes in you.”

Sports Editor Aaron J. Miller did not edit this article due to a conflict of interest.

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Lions finish season undefeated at home in conference play

Peirce Eldredge, *Beacon Correspondent*

The women’s basketball team lost in the quarterfinals of the New England Women’s and Men’s Athletic Conference playoffs for the second straight year on Tuesday. The Lions finished their regular season on a six-game winning streak.

The team ended the regular season 17-8 overall and 11-5 in the NEWMAC after a 75-35 win at Mount Holyoke College on Saturday. Emerson ranked fifth out of the eight teams in the playoffs.

Head coach Bill Gould said he saw vast improvements as the season progressed.

“We’ve been continuing to get in better shape,” Gould said. “The kids have worked really hard and are playing with a lot of energy and a lot of passion. Our defense has continued to get better as the season has gone along. It took a little time, but it’s really started to jell together.”

In December, the Lions finished 3-1 against NEWMAC opponents with an 86-77 home victory against second-seeded Smith College. The team went 4-4 in January and suffered tough losses on the road against Babson College, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Smith College, and Springfield College.

The Lions won all six of their remaining games after their loss to Springfield. The streak included a triple-overtime redemption victory at home against Springfield and a 14-point win over first-seeded Babson College. Babson



The women’s basketball team huddles before a game against Wheaton on Jan. 23. Daniel Peden / *Beacon Staff*

knocked out the Lions in the first round of the NEWMAC playoffs last season.

A career-high 36-point outing from senior center Charlie Boyle highlighted the home victory against Springfield. Boyle led the Lions all season by averaging 13.5 points and 4.7 rebounds per game.

While Boyle played well, the team did not rely on one player all season. Junior guard Natalie Clydesdale averaged 8.8 points and 6.9 rebounds per game, junior guard Quinn Madden averaged 8.2 points and 5 rebounds per game, and sophomore forward Sam Boyle averaged 10.3 points and 5 rebounds per game.

The Lions also received strong minutes from sophomore guard Rachel Davey, junior guard Kate Foulz, and senior guard Natalie Busch.

Davey said the team’s offensive mentality made it a matchup nightmare for opponents.

“At practice, we talk about being aggressive, and there’s no one on our team who can’t score and that hurts a lot of teams,” Davey said.

Davey agreed with Gould on the team’s improvement on defense.

“On defense, we’ve really come together as a team this year,” Davey said. “[We’re] communicating a lot more and doing the fundamentals as a team and that really helps us.”

Gould spoke about the team heading into next season.

“I feel like we are going to have a pretty solid incoming class, and we have some great players coming back and I’m really confident about that,” Gould said. “However, we’re losing two really good players in Boyle and Busch, and anytime you do that, there’s an adjustment period.”

Boyle and Busch will graduate in the spring.

The Lions went undefeated at home in conference play this season, but away games were their downfall. In the NEWMAC playoff quarterfinals, fifth-seeded Emerson lost to fourth-seeded MIT with a final score of 76-58.

The Lions finished the 2018-19 season with a conference record of 11-6 and an overall record of 17-9.

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Upcoming games:

Men’s Basketball

Springfield @ Emerson
Brown/Plofker Gym
Today, Feb. 21 at 7 p.m.

Men’s Volleyball

Regis (Mass.) @ Emerson
Brown/Plofker Gym
Tomorrow, Feb. 22 at 7 p.m.

Women’s Tennis

Franklin Pierce @ Emerson
St. John’s Prep High School
Saturday, Feb. 23 at 11:30 p.m.

Men’s Tennis

Endicott @ Emerson
St. John’s Prep High School
Sunday, Feb. 24 at 1:30 p.m.