

# The Berkeley Beacon

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

Thursday March 28, 2019 • Volume 72, Issue 23

## Returning students to see 4 percent tuition hike

### President Pelton cannot confirm if annual tuition increases will end

Abigail Hadfield, *Beacon Staff*

The college does not plan to end annual tuition increases, President M. Lee Pelton said in an interview. Emerson follows the national trend of rising higher education costs in colleges and universities across the country.

Pelton said he hopes the college will slow the rate of increase over time—this year's increase was half a percentage point lower than in 2018–19. Pelton could not say whether Emerson will ever stop raising tuition.

"I wouldn't wish to commit the college to a promise they cannot keep," Pelton said.

The college increased undergraduate tuition and room and board for the 2019–20 academic year by 4 percent for returning students and 5.5 percent for new students. Pelton said the higher cost covers increases to faculty and staff salaries, financial aid, and maintenance costs that come with Little Building's reopening in fall 2019.

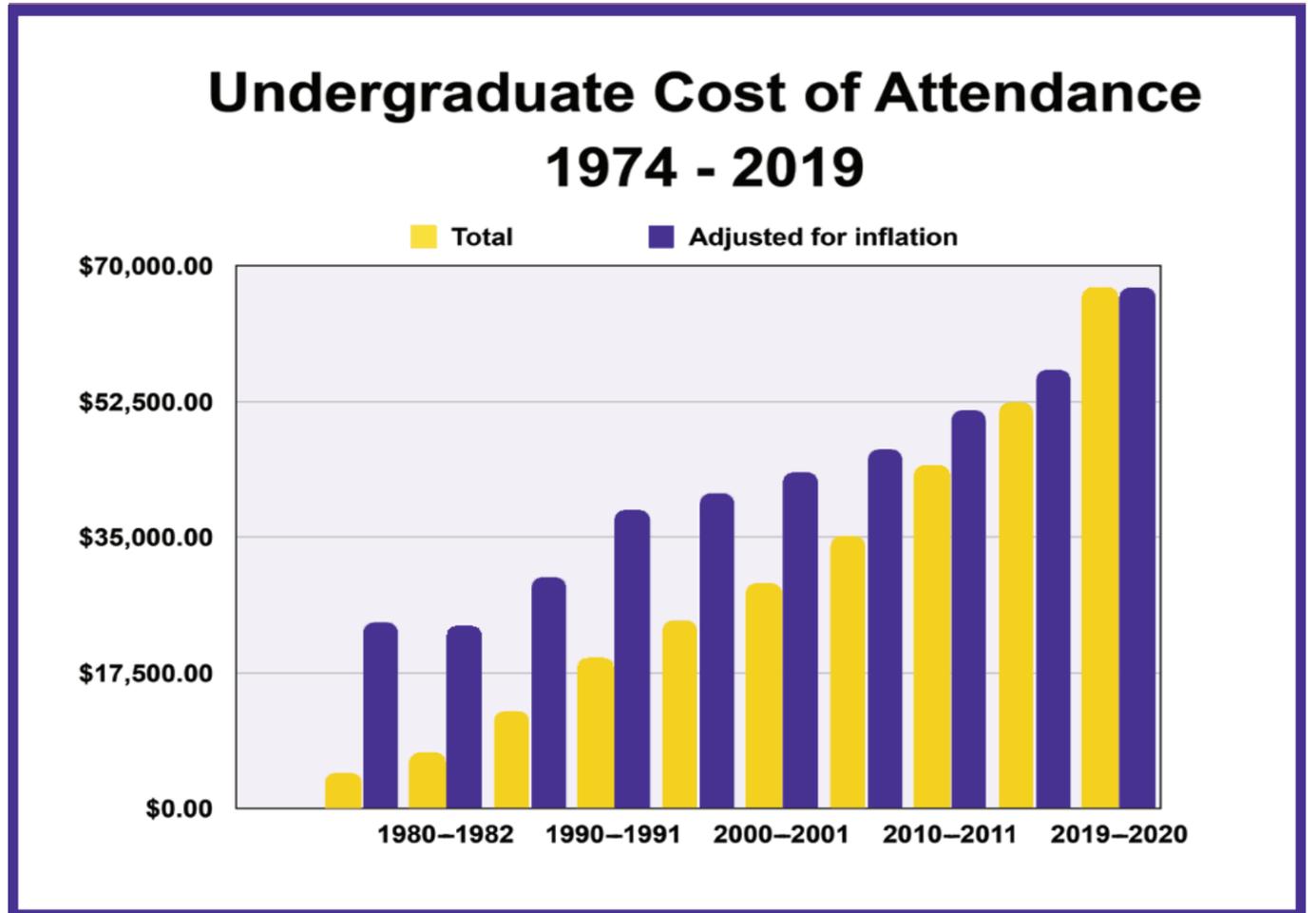
Pelton said the difference in increases for new and continuing students is a one-time policy, and further tuition increases will stay the same for all students in future years. The college implemented a similar staggered increase for students who entered the college prior to 2015, when the tuition increased by 7.4 percent.

Pelton added that nine of the college's 17 closest competitors—such as Brandeis University, Boston University, and Northeastern University—operate with higher tuition than Emerson.

"Our charge for tuition is relative to what our peers are charging," Pelton said.

Pelton defended the increase by citing a 10 percent increase to faculty and staff salaries and benefits, which account for 41 percent of the college's overall budget.

See *tuition*, page 2



Emerson's cost of attendance increased from \$19,303 per year in 1990 to \$67,832 in 2019. • Abigail Hadfield and Ally Rzesza / *Beacon Staff*

## Default meal plan to change in fall 2019

Tomas Gonzalez *Beacon Staff*

The college changed the default meal plan to include unlimited meal swipes and 150 Board Bucks for the fall 2019 semester, according to a college official.

Associate Dean for Campus Life Erik Muurisep said the college raised the price of room and board, to take effect in the fall 2019 semester, to reflect the change in the default meal plan from the Semel Plan, 101 meals and 650 board bucks, to the Majestic Plan, which students currently pay an extra \$100 for each semester.

The college increased the total price of room and board by \$710 from the 2018–19 academic year to the 2019–20 academic year, according to a college announcement emailed to the student body on March 21. Muurisep said the meal plan change added to that increase.

He said the switch aims to eliminate students' worries about running out of meal swipes at the Dining Center. Muurisep said the college also wanted to offer a way to help students save money as the price of room and board increases.

Jim Hoppe, the vice president and dean for Campus Life, said the dining advisory board and Duncan Pollock, the assistant vice president of Facilities and Campus Services, also made the decision to change the meal plan because of the popularity of the Majestic plan this year.

See *meal plan*, page 2



### Senior's first musical debuts at Harvard

By Domenic Conte • p. 6

Senior Jared Leong co-wrote *The East Side*, a musical comedy premiering at Harvard in April. Xinyi Tu / *Beacon Correspondent*

## Japanese Breakfast to perform free concert at Paramount

Taina Millsap, *Beacon Staff*

When WECB announced they wanted students to open for popular artist Japanese Breakfast, junior Jasper Cote and his rock band, Pool Boys, had their fingers crossed it would be them.

Once Pool Boys found out through event coordinator and junior Mia Manning that they were one of the two bands chosen, they were thrilled to be able to share the stage with talented artists. Pool Boys, along with Emerson student band Squitch, will open the show.

Cote said band members are excited to open for a popular indie rock artist like Japanese Breakfast.

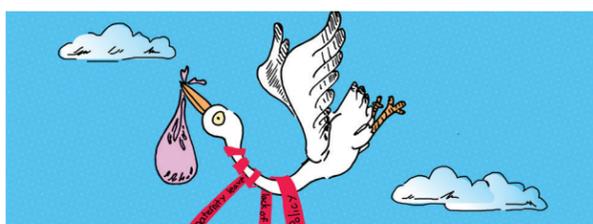
"We haven't played together in a very long time because I went to [Kasteel Well] last semester and then [band member Nicholas Arcari] was in Spain [last spring], so we really haven't played out live in a very long time," Cote said. "I'm super excited to play with my band again and also meeting Japanese Breakfast because I love them so much."

Japanese Breakfast will perform at a free concert hosted by WECB radio station at the Robert J. Orchard stage in the Paramount Center on April 2 at 6 p.m.

See *Japanese Breakfast*, page 7

### OPINION

#### A case to improve parental leave



The Beacon  
online

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### SPORTS

#### Volleyball players protest during anthem



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### LIVING ARTS

#### Alumnus becomes playwright overnight



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# news

## College hopes to hire Muslim Chaplain



Emerson's Muslim Student Association gathers for a meeting. • Madison Goldberg / Beacon Staff

Yvonne Yu, Beacon Staff

The Center for Spiritual Life plans to hire a Muslim Chaplain for the first time for the fall 2019 semester to better serve Muslim students at Emerson, according to the center for spiritual life director. CSL has not yet posted an application for the position.

Julie Avis Rogers, the director of CSL, said her predecessor, Harrison Blum, realized the need for a Muslim Chaplain about a year ago but resigned before he could hire one. The college already employs a Catholic Chaplain, a Protestant Chaplain, and a Hillel advisor for Jewish students.

Rogers worked with Maysoon Khan, the founder and co-president of the Emerson Muslim Student Association, in the last month to understand the Muslim community's needs and the chaplain's job description. The chaplain will help with Friday prayers and have one-on-one meetings with Muslim students when they want support or just want to talk to someone with the same religious background.

"We want to make sure that Muslim students feel that there is a vibrant and safe place for them [on campus], and one of the ways is to have a Muslim Chaplain to support them," Rogers said.

Rogers also said she is willing to meet with more Muslim students and have them involved throughout the hiring process in summer 2019.

Hanna El-Mohandess, co-president of MSA, said the association has around 20 student members in total and about ten active members who come to weekly meetings on Tuesday nights. MSA became an SGA-affiliated organization this semester.

El-Mohandess said she believes hiring a Muslim Chaplain would be a great resource for the Muslim community.

"There have been a lot of things in recent news that have shaken the Muslim community," she said. "Having that resource and the direct access to someone who understands where you come from in a religious perspective is very important and very helpful."

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## Default meal plan to feature unlimited swipes

Continued from page 1

Sophomore Monica Gregoretti said she would switch back to the Semel plan next semester after switching to the Majestic plan every semester so far.

"I just switched [to the Majestic], like automatically, because that's what I've been doing for the past couple semesters, but I'm thinking about doing the [Semel] plan next semester because of how many swipes I've used," Gregoretti said. "I definitely end up using the Max more."

Gregoretti said she switched to the Majestic plan during her first semester at the college.

"I figured I would use the [Dining Center] a lot, but over time I've been using it less and less, so it doesn't really matter anymore," she said.

Students can choose from five available meal plans each semester, according to the college's website. If students switch into a plan that is more expensive, such as the Green Plan which includes 19 meals per week and 300 Board Bucks, the college charges an extra fee of \$125 each semester. Muurisep said the price to upgrade decreased by \$100 for each plan next semester. This means that students who choose the Colonial Plan, five meals per week and 800 Board Bucks, would not have to pay an additional fee each semester because students currently pay an extra \$100 per semester for it.

The college will also reduce students' room and board fees by \$100 if they switch to the Semel Plan next semester.

"While it is small for some, the \$100 difference, if they decide to go down to the Semel,

can help in some areas. You know, that might be a book or two in some students' situations," Muurisep said.

The college plans to increase Dining Center hours and provide more seating because of the increased on-campus student population caused by the reopening of Little Building in fall 2019, Pollock said in an interview with the Beacon.

Sophomore Charlotte Brighton uses the Semel plan this semester, but she worries about rationing her meal swipes.

"I typically go for lunch and then sometimes dinner at the Dining Center—other times I have to go out and buy lunch or go to the Max," Brighton said in an interview. "I have [less than 40] meal swipes left for the semester, so I have been thinking, 'Oh, just go to the [Dining Center] for lunch and then get dinner at the Max or Roche Brothers.'"

However, Brighton said she would not pay an up charge for unlimited swipes.

"I'll probably switch back to the [Semel plan]. I just really like coming to the Max," Brighton said. "But I do think people should know where the extra \$100 is going."

Hoppe said students have a two-week period after the semester begins to change their meal plan.

"After the two-week mark it gets a little more tricky to navigate credits, refunds, and all of that," Hoppe said. "So we have a two-week timeframe for students who want to test things out and make any changes they need to their [meal] plans."

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**"I figured I would use the [Dining Center] a lot, but over time I've been using it less and less, so it doesn't really matter anymore."**

- Monica Gregoretti

# College raises undergraduate tuition to \$67,832

Continued from page 1

He also said financial aid accounts for 18 percent and increased from \$47 million for 2018–19 to \$50 million for 2019–20. Pelton said investments and building operations make up 15 percent of the budget, and the college reduced a large fraction of the operational costs last year because Little Building was not in use.

Private nonprofit four-year colleges increased their total cost of attendance at an average rate of 2.3 percent per year over the last decade, according to statistics adjusted for inflation released by the College Board. Emerson increased its attendance costs, accounting for inflation, at an average of 2.8 percent per year over the same time span.

Ian Mandt, the Student Government Association executive treasurer, said he does not think the tuition increase trend is localized to Emerson in particular.

"Higher education as a whole is broken nationally, and I think that that is where the real problem is," Mandt said. "Obviously there's always ways that Emerson can do more and do better, but I would encourage students who are angry about the tuition increase to focus that anger at the state and at the federal government."

Accounting for inflation, Emerson's cost of attendance has increased by 84 percent since 1990, when tuition cost students \$12,096, with additional room and board and fees bringing the total to \$19,303 per year. The average cost of attendance at four-year private colleges in 1990 was \$17,010, according to the College Board.

As the current SGA executive treasurer, Mandt serves as the student representative on the Budgetary Planning and Priorities Advisory Committee.

"[BPPAC] provides recommendations to the President's Council about how the budget should be allocated," he said.

The President's Council includes Vice President for Diversity and Inclusion Sylvia Spears, Vice President for Enrollment Management Ruthanne Madsen, and various other college presidents.

Mandt said the death of Maureen Murphy—

the former vice president of administration and finance—made the budgeting process particularly challenging this year. Mandt said he did not have many of his usual opportunities for input that come with his role in BPPAC, and Philip Shapiro, the current vice president for administration and finance, is only in the role as an interim.

Freshman Brady Baca is running for SGA executive treasurer on a platform of financial affordability and transparency. The freshman faces criticism for using aggressive, fear-mongering rhetoric in his campaign.

Baca said that, if elected, he would want to expand the role of the executive treasurer to advocate more on behalf of students.

"I want to work to establish a formalized process of student budgetary overview," Baca said. "I want to expand student representation on the Board of Trustees, as well as faculty and staff representation."

Junior Soujee Han, a student at Kasteel Well this semester, said she received the tuition update email while traveling with friends. Han said she felt frustrated that the increases do not seem to improve her experience at the Boston campus, such as the quality of the food at the Dining Center, and spoke with Vice President of Enrollment Ruthanne Madsen to talk about her financial situation.

"Emerson focuses a lot on expansion," Han said. "What [the school] fails to understand—what Lee Pelton, and the Board of Trustees, and the higher-ups fail to understand—is they're not taking care of their students right now."

Baca also expressed concerns that the college's vision does not align with what students want.

"I feel the college is [increasing tuition] be-

cause they think that they're moving Emerson forward into the future," he said. "It's just my serious concern that the future they're moving [toward] is not going to be for everyone at this school—particularly lower-income people."

Pelton defended the college's decision to raise tuition by dedicating a portion of the increased financial aid budget to help students from low-income backgrounds.

"We increased [financial aid] by almost 3 million dollars," Pelton said. "One million dollars of that three million dollars was specifically targeted for low-income students."

Han said she believes socioeconomic status and race are closely related, so the tuition increases will only worsen Emerson's diversity disparity. Emerson's fall 2018 admitted undergraduate class was 56 percent white.

"It just makes me upset because to get an education—a decent education and opportunities—you have to be rich," Han said. "And that's just not the way that it should be."

Baca said that, although the college will use the increase to benefit staff and faculty salaries, he believes the 4 percent tuition hike is too high.

"It seems that the investments toward improving wages and benefits for faculty and staff—as well as increasing financial aid—

weren't up to the standards that I would like to see for an increase of that size," he said.

The increase in faculty and staff salaries comes as the college plans to finalize negotiations of the last of three faculty contracts.

"We continue to make investments in our academic mission by adding great faculty, paying them well, and adding programs that prospective students want," Pelton said.

Pelton said that students should bring their concerns about increased tuition to the financial aid office and that the office will work with students to fit their individual needs. He said financial need makes up the majority of the aid budget.

"For every dollar the college spends on financial aid, 65 to 70 percent of that dollar is for [financial] need," he said. "The other 35 to 30 percent is for merit scholarships."

Pelton said he does not expect the tuition increases to deter application or enrollment numbers.

"When I arrived, our applications were [at] 7,500—today they're 15,000," he said. "We've gone from accepting about 48 percent of students who apply to about 31 percent this year. So the enrollment numbers suggest that the demand for an Emerson education is even greater now than it was."

Copy Managing Editor Monika Davis did not edit this article due to a conflict of interest.

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## Corrections and Clarifications

In a front page photo from the March 14 print edition, the Beacon incorrectly identified Liam Hemsworth as Chris Hemsworth.

# EIV business manager to challenge Baca for SGA executive treasurer

Chris Van Buskirk, *Beacon Staff*

Junior Abigail Semple launched her write-in campaign and joined a contentious Student Government Association executive treasurer's race on Tuesday as freshman candidate Brady Baca continues to face criticism over his qualifications for the job.

The new challenger for executive treasurer will face Baca in what has become a race centered around each candidate's fitness for the job. The same day SGA hosted its second-semester press night, less than a week before the spring general elections, Semple entered the race as a write-in candidate—a strategy political contenders have historically struggled to win with.

In her first public appearance since declaring her candidacy, Semple presented her platform to more than a hundred students in Center Stage on Tuesday night.

As the current business manager for Emerson Independent Video, one of the largest student organizations, Semple said she plans to focus her campaign on streamlining SGA's reimbursement process and continuing current Executive Treasurer Ian Mandt's financial initiative to release partial student organization budgets. Baca's policies relate to financial advocacy, transparency, and working with faculty and staff unions.

"[Students] should vote for me because my first priority is the day-to-day operations of being an SGA executive treasurer," Semple said.

Mandt said Semple's prior experience of managing the finances for a student organization is an advantage.

"Voters need to look for a candidate who knows how to support organizations first and foremost before looking at any of the additional stuff that comes with campaigning or with the position," Mandt said in an interview during press night. "My hope is that students will understand the impact of the position on the day-to-day experience and recognize that when they cast their ballots."

As a visual and media arts major from New Jersey, Semple said she plans to campaign by talking to students at the college in person rather than generating a heavy social media presence.

The campaign strategy Semple described is resemblant of former Executive President Candidate Christopher Henderson-West's non-traditional write-in campaign in spring 2018. The then-presidential hopeful lost by 41 votes to SGA Executive President Jess Guida.



Junior Abigail Semple launched her write-in campaign at SGA's press night on Tuesday. Anissa Gardizy / *Beacon Staff*

"The advantage goes to candidates who are currently on the ballot, and [Semple] is going to have a challenge," Mandt said.

While the race makes its way into the final week of campaigning, Semple joins multiple student politicians who have criticized Baca's qualifications for a paperwork-heavy position that deems advocacy work secondary to its day-to-day functions.

When sophomore Joseph Davidi left the race last week—leaving Baca as the sole contender—several SGA officials promptly questioned the freshman's fitness for a position with almost complete control of \$1 million in student organization funding.

"[Baca] is loud and I think he rubs a few the wrong way, and I think that I have a lot more ex-

perience than he does in this capacity," Semple said in an interview. "I don't know if [Baca] is really ready to take on that extra responsibility of being responsible for literally every single student at Emerson who submits a reimbursement form."

Baca said he attended the weekly treasury office hours twice in an attempt to increase his knowledge of the role. Mandt confirmed in a statement to the Beacon that Baca attended the Feb. 28 and March 21 office hours.

"I have been making an effort to make sure that my knowledge of the role is necessary and up to the caliber that is required to continue the work that [Mandt] has accomplished in his tenure," Baca said in an interview with the Beacon.

Davidi, who remains on the ballot because of an SGA election technicality, said he will reassess his options should he win. While Davidi does not plan to actively campaign for the posi-

tion, he did speak during press night about the responsibilities of the executive treasurer, emphasizing its relationship with student organizations. The sophomore currently serves on the treasury team as a non-elected official.

"I feel like [Baca's] lack of experience is concerning especially with the amount of paperwork and the amount of student organizations that you need to assist as the treasurer," Davidi said.

Baca said his work as the freshman class senator and experience in politics and activism outside of the college makes him qualified for the position.

"What really matters is that we need a treasurer who knows how to organize, to hold people accountable, who has clearly stated goals of improving the lives of average students in this school, and working toward meeting those goals with a specific plan of action," he said. "I think from that perspective ... I significantly outclass both Davidi and Semple."

Guida said she finds the information Baca previously disseminated in a video on social media, where he partially faulted administrators for a high tuition, as alarming to voters. While she said the criticism is not personal, it does concern her as a student of the college.

"Administrators are not the enemy, staff are not the enemy, faculty are not the enemy, but because people view them as this overarching Emerson College, they get viewed as the enemy when really they can be an avenue to create change," she said in an interview.

Baca opened his SGA press night speech by emphasizing the college's expensive tuition.

"I just want to keep things short and sweet and real nice and stuff, so I'm just going to start off by saying that you know my personal opinion: I think Emerson is kind of f—ing expensive," he said during his speech. "I mean, am I wrong? They just raised the tuition hikes. I mean we can all see it on our email—that they don't tell us about beforehand."

Although Baca alleges that the college does not warn students of tuition increases, Director of Media Relations Michelle Gaseau previously told the Beacon that entering students and families are counseled to anticipate and plan for an annual 3–5 percent increase in tuition.

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# Higher education bill aims to monitor financial stability among Mass. colleges

Belen Dumont, *Beacon Staff*

Governor Charlie Baker introduced a bill in the State Senate on March 7 to monitor financial stability among Commonwealth colleges and universities.

The Senate referred the bill to the Joint Committee on Higher Education on March 7, and the House agreed with the decision to refer the bill. The committee has yet to schedule a hearing.

The bill gives the Board of Higher Education the ability to identify and monitor institutions that face serious financial risks that could lead to closure and to evaluate the effectiveness of the steps they take to avoid closure.

Richard Doherty, president of the Association of Independent Colleges and Universities in Massachusetts, said in a phone interview that the legislation would apply to private and public institutions and would only apply to Emerson if serious financial risks arose.

"It is a very small percentage of colleges where this would actually become relevant to them," he said. "Emerson would not be a school that would really be impacted, as it relates to college closures."

The legislative draft aims to give state legislators the power to prevent shutdowns among colleges and universities in Massachusetts, following the sudden closure of Mount Ida College in Newton last year.

Undergraduate college enrollment in the U.S. declined for the sixth year in a row, according

to an NPR report. Philip Shapiro, Emerson's interim vice president for administration and finance, said in a phone interview that, despite the national trend, enrollment at Emerson increased gradually over the last five years.

In fall 2018, Emerson declared a planned deficit for the fiscal years 2018 and 2019. A planned deficit is an economic strategy that intentionally puts an institution in debt for a productive purpose—the college used it to renovate the Little Building.

Shapiro said tuition and room and board account for about 95 percent of the college's revenue in the 2018 fiscal year.

The college's \$170 million endowment is smaller compared to schools that have a larger student population in the Boston area, such as Suffolk University and Berklee College of Music's respective 2018 endowments of \$249 million and \$374 million. Northeastern University has an estimated \$700 million endowment as of 2016, according to the college's website.

Emerson is a member of the Boston Consortium—a group composed of 17 major schools around the Greater Boston area which establish financial and other operational metrics that all these schools consistently use, Shapiro said. The metrics help determine when a school is in danger of failing.

The group includes major colleges such as Boston College, Berklee College of Music, Boston University, Brandeis University, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Harvard University, and Northeastern University.

"We have a five-year emergency plan, but we

don't have a contingency plan for what would happen if we stopped [operating] because we're not going to stop," Shapiro said. "We have a \$170 million endowment, and we're going to be here next year, 20 years from now, and 50 years from now."

Senior Geoffrey Morrissey, Co-President of the Communications, Politics, and Law Association said colleges at financial risks aren't expanding at the same rate Emerson is with its new global programs and purchases of nearby buildings, such as 172 Tremont St. and 134–136 Boylston St.

"I think that Emerson's real focus on growth certainly can have its drawbacks, but I think one of the things is that when you have campuses all over the world, you're more likely to keep one of those doors open," he said.

The new legislation requires institutions to grant sufficient notice to students and staff of a school's closure, and it calls for individual schools to maintain the responsibility to provide options for students to continue their education without significant disruption.

Although Massachusetts law requires institutions to notify the Board of Higher Education of closure plans as soon as possible, the rough draft of this bill would set a foundation to improve reporting on financial stability.

"This bill looks more at the aspect of it being sort of, 'How can these colleges be more accountable to the state?'" Morrissey said. "It seems like a good first step of that process."

The bill would also protect the confidentiality of colleges' financial information released to the

board.

"I think the concern is that, if there was a risk created and made public that a school is experiencing financial challenges, that would really prevent that school from being able to put into place a turnaround plan that would allow them to keep going," Doherty said. "Because if it became very public, students would probably stop applying to that school."

The bill states that institutions in Massachusetts have indicated seeing similar financial issues as Mount Ida College.

Hampshire College in Amherst announced in January 2019 that the school is considering merging with another institution and does not plan on closing. Wheelock College merged with Boston University in June 2018, while Newbury College in Brookline announced in December 2018 that they would cease operations after the spring 2019 semester. All three colleges had around 1,000 or fewer students enrolled at the time of their closures or mergers, while Emerson has 3,813 student enrolled.

"It is no secret that weighty financial challenges are pressing on liberal arts colleges throughout the country," wrote Newbury College President Dr. Joseph L. Chillo on the school's website.

*Copy Managing Editor Monika Davis did not edit this article due to a conflict of interest.*

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## Emerson Elevator Watch

Editors at The Berkeley Beacon decided to catalog all elevator entrapments reported in incident journals and confirmed through eyewitnesses for the 2018-19 academic year. These numbers only detail incidents where individuals reported an entrapment and do not include when an empty elevator broke down or unreported entrapments.

	Week of February 18	Week of February 25	Week of March 4	Week of March 11	Week of March 18
	0	3	1	1	1

# editorial

## College becomes increasingly inaccessible to students

### At issue: College announces 4 percent tuition increase

### Our take: Prioritize students' financial security over investments

*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.*

A college-wide email from President M. Lee Pelton on March 21 announced a 4 percent increase in tuition for the upcoming 2019–20 academic year and as a result, annual tuition now totals \$47,856. This figure does not include room and board or additional expenses.

According to the email from administration, the increased revenue will go toward financial aid, new faculty positions, and additional courses and minors. It's ironic that the college plans to raise tuition in order to increase financial aid. One would think that, with lowering tuition, there wouldn't be a need to invest more into aid to begin with.

Only 10 years ago, students at Emerson paid \$30,063 for tuition—the newly announced tuition represents a 59 percent increase from this figure in a single decade. The College Board reported an average \$7,390 tuition hike per year for private, nonprofit four-year colleges and universities. But Emerson's tuition climb is well over double this number.

Students cannot look forward to an end to this gradual tuition increase anytime soon, either. In fact, Director of Media Relations Michelle Gaseau said a 3 to 5 percent increase is expected in the coming years, in a recent Beacon article.

The continued increase in tuition could also contribute to a decrease in campus diversity.

According to a study cited in an Inside Higher Ed article, a \$1,000 increase in tuition would lower racial and ethnic diversity by 0.22 percent at the average four-year university. But in the 2018–2019 academic year, only 38 percent of Emerson's undergraduate students identified as people of color—only 3 percent of students are

struggle to afford Emerson with tuition as is. Emerson's tuition hike increases the chances that low-income students transfer or drop out and further regresses the economic diversity of the college's student body.

We understand that the reasoning behind the tuition increase roots itself in a systematic problem. An article in *The Atlantic* stated that it is becoming more expensive to run a college because it is a service rather than a product—it doesn't get cheaper with the introduction of new technologies. The cost of educating students and the salaries of much-needed skilled educators are both rising as well.

But students, with their ballooning debts and comparatively inadequate household incomes, simply cannot keep up. The college needs to find other places to cut unnecessary funding and funnel this money toward retaining Emerson's academic excellence. It's essential that the Board of Trustees and the administration find other ways to accrue revenue. Otherwise, the repercussions of this tuition hike will surely outweigh the "investments" it will support.

We believe students of all backgrounds deserve an equal chance to attend Emerson. Without students of different races, sexualities, ethnicities, and income levels, Emerson would just be an echo chamber lacking different voices and viewpoints.

**"Emerson's tuition hike increases the chances that low-income students transfer or drop out and further regress the economic diversity of the student body."**

black. This overall figure includes international students, which make up 11 percent of the undergraduate student population. The increase in tuition poses the smallest threat to the privileged, who are too often white and wealthy.

By increasing tuition so drastically, the school also hinders financially burdened students from applying and attending. Low-income students

## 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.

### The Berkeley Beacon

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The Beacon is published weekly. The Beacon receives funding from the Student Government Association of Emerson College. Anything submitted to the Beacon becomes the sole property of the newspaper. No part of the publication may be reproduced by any means without the express written permission of the editor.

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### Editorial Cartoon

by the Editorial Board  
illustration by Ally Rzesza

Students hoped Duo Push would ghost them during registration like their ex.



# opinion

## Parental leave policies don't support families' needs

Diti Kohli

Kohli is a freshman journalism major & the Beacon's deputy opinion editor.

Teary-eyed and six months pregnant, Emerson program manager Nicole Martignetti held her belly gently. After quietly shutting her office door, she recalled returning to work after her 12-week maternity leave following the birth of her first son in 2013.

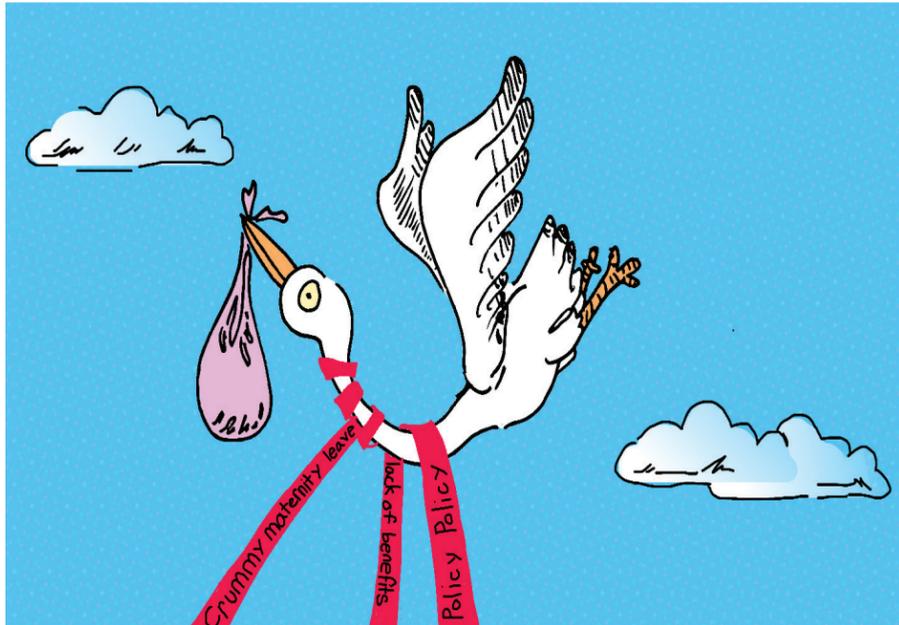
"Babies are so small at three months. They need so much," Martignetti said in an interview. "You're at the train station on your way to work and all you can think about is your baby."

As a staff member at Emerson, Martignetti received three months of unpaid leave with guaranteed job security under the Family and Medical Leave Act, a federal labor law Emerson must follow. Under the 2013 college handbook, she recovered only 40 percent of her salary by filing for short-term disability and the rest by sacrificing her accrued personal, sick, and vacation days. Her husband was at the house for only 14 days after the birth due to restricted vacation time at his workplace.

"If we want to consider ourselves the kind of institution that's supportive of working parents, I think the question is: Is this the kind of policy that shows that significant support?" Martignetti said.

Other Emerson staff members who were angered by a number of Emerson's policies, including maternity leave, created a chapter in April 2016 under the Service Employees International Union and established their first finalized contract in July 2018, according to the union chapter's website. This union includes those who work in Academic Affairs, Information Technology, Communication and Marketing, and Institutional Advancement; all other staff members are not unionized.

The union's newer collective bargaining agreement improved the maternity leave policy—most prominently, it created a parental leave policy that applies equally to men and women, heterosexual, and same-sex couples alike. Now SEIU members receive 100 percent of their regular pay for the first two weeks of leave using personal, sick, and vacation days



Despite the improvements, Emerson's policies still trail behind the standards of other progressive institutions. • Illustration by Ally Rzeska / Beacon Staff

and 60 percent of normal pay for the remaining 10 weeks they spend under short-term disability. Sacrificing remaining personal, sick, and vacation days is the only option for union staff members to collect the remaining 40 percent.

Those who are not unionized follow the Emerson handbook. Under these policies, full-time faculty receive 100 percent of their pay for the first 30 days of leave, and 60 percent for 150 days afterward under short-term disability. Tenured and tenured-track faculty are the only ones who can be granted 100 percent of their pay for 180 days.

Despite the improvements, Emerson's policies still trail behind the standards of other progressive institutions. A statistical compilation of 197 parental leave policies at American universities and colleges reveals that private institutions offer an average of 10.1 weeks of full paid leave, while public colleges offer 8.2 weeks—Emerson offers a measly two.

What choice are parents left with if they

or their child suffers from a minor sickness that continues past the mandated 12 weeks in Emerson's current policy? New parents relinquish their accrued personal, sick, and vacation days for pay during their leave. For some, this is the only way to remain financially afloat. Following the leave policy offered to them should not impact how they care for their children once they've returned to work.

Even more so, parents should not have to file for disability after childbirth to receive pay. Other colleges, such as the University of Virginia, and Santa Clara University, enforce similar short-term disability policies. Though a new baby has the potential to physically stop faculty and staff from completing their jobs, a child is in no way a disabling factor in parents' lives. By having faculty claim short-term disability, Emerson's maternity leave policy prioritizes individuals' jobs over their familial decisions.

Despite these policy flaws, Human Resources

representative Julie Spataro said in a phone interview that even though revised leave of absence policies will debut in early April, she believes parental leave policies would see no change as they are mandated by the federal FMLA law.

Emerson's parental leave of absence policies may also affect the student population. An article in *The Guardian* cited a study from Warwick University which found that qualified women on staff were far more likely to leave their positions, disrupt or even end their careers at universities with shorter paid leave policies. If Emerson wants to maintain their talented female staff members and professors for the benefit of their students, upgrading parental leave policies should be a top priority.

The lack of progressive parental leave policy at Emerson inevitably begs the question—is Emerson refraining from improving its regulations to shield off faculty and staff members who will take advantage of it? Glassdoor, and CNBC lists U.S. companies' with the best parental leave policies. Wouldn't a place on these lists only attract more accomplished men and women who are also interested in starting families?

If Emerson cannot amend its postnatal care policies, then the college's administration should be at the forefront of a state or national movement advocating for improved regulations. As a forward-thinking institution, the college should be leading the nationwide change to aid working pregnant women, rather than upholding the long-standing suppression of women's rights and entitlements regarding childbirth. This inaction implies indifference.

In a nation with one of the highest infant mortality rates among developed countries, and the lowest quality relationships between father and child, poor parental leave only adds to the list of negative factors affecting children's health today. Emerson's inadequate policies and lack of action perpetuate the federal law's unseemly evaluation of American families' needs. And simply, the college's lack of protest against the law is a disservice not only to its faculty and staff, but also to its students.

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## Don't let peer pressure trick you into partying

Katie Schmidt

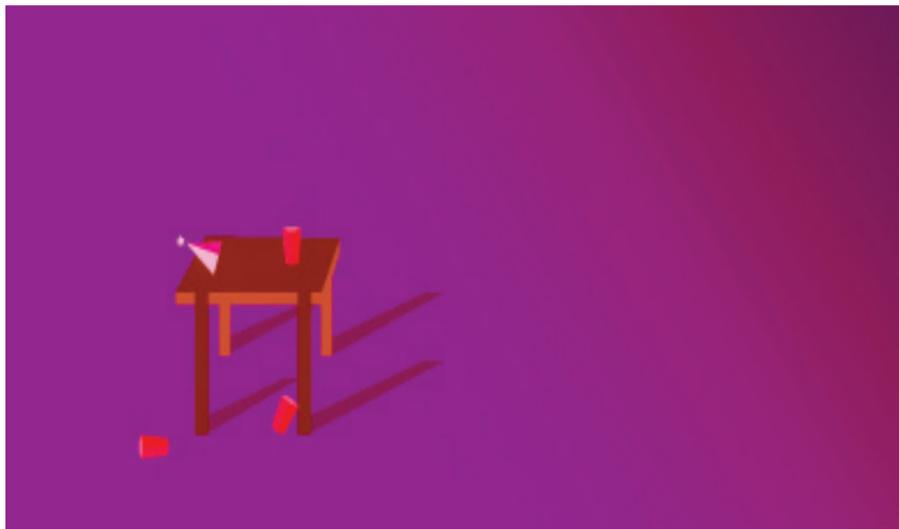
Schmidt is a senior writing, literature and publishing major & the Beacon's opinion editor.

When I attended community college, I became an inside joke with my friends because I didn't go out that often. If you stayed in on the weekend, or avoided a party because you had too much work, or weren't feeling up for it, you "sounded like Katie." While I dedicated myself to getting good grades, and completing all my assignments, I wasn't an antisocial person—I just didn't want to go to parties every weekend.

I'll be the first to admit that I am not the most extroverted person. I'm naturally quiet and reserved, and it takes time for me to feel comfortable around new groups of people. On top of that, I pledged that I'd hold myself to higher academic standards in college. In high school, I received a mix of As and Bs with a few scattered Cs. Naturally, my introverted personality and dedication to academics leaves partying, and the nightlife infrequent occasions.

Yet whenever I hear my friends, or other students in the Iwasaki Library share their stories of weekend partying and debauchery, a rush of anxiety and remorse hits me. I wonder if I am cheating myself out of youth. Each time I get invited out but choose not to go, I nearly send myself into a panic attack, and fret over what I might miss if I stay in. I constantly wonder if friends talk about me in private, and mock me the same way as my old friends at community college did. A common argument I hear from students is that if you don't party while you're in college, you're missing out on all the fun that comes with your early adulthood years.

Don't get me wrong, I'm not entirely a homebody, and I do go out to bars on some weekends. But the constant chase of partying each weekend is not a priority of mine, nor should it be. For some, the balance of academics



Guilt-tripping individuals for staying in can make them feel needlessly self-conscious. Illustration by Ally Rzeska / Beacon Staff

and partying comes naturally—they'll find a way to squeeze in a term paper somewhere. However, I am just not that type of person.

But I also believe that college is a time to step out of one's comfort zone in a healthy manner. I'm not arguing that students should isolate themselves and resent those who choose to party each weekend, but that each person is allowed to have their own boundaries and limits within a social atmosphere. Sometimes stepping out of one's comfort zone and going to a large party is vital to personal growth. If we never step out of our comfort zones, if we never take a risk or try something new, we miss out on all of the possibilities that those experiences could have provided us. However, there's a difference between expanding one's comfort zone, and partaking in something that clearly doesn't bring them joy. It's not that I don't party because

I'm apprehensive, it's because I just don't always enjoy it.

I believe that "no means no" is applicable to more than just consensual sex—it also applies to personal boundaries, and respecting people's decisions to engage in activities and events. People's reasons for staying in range from academic work, financial constraints, and even mental health. Guilt-tripping individuals for staying in can make them feel needlessly self-conscious.

Personally, I find staying in on most weekends crucial for my mental health. I spend a significant amount of my weekends in the Iwasaki Library, editing articles, reviewing notes, working on a publishing project, or completing miscellaneous tasks that slipped through during the week. To avoid cramming, hectic late nights, and anxiety, I'm constantly

catching up—and even getting ahead on my work—on the weekends. Thus, my idea of de-stressing afterward usually consists of a night in watching movies, listening to music, or reading.

For other students, staying in on the weekend may be a matter of financial constraints—an issue that plagues many low-income college students across the country. Last week, we published an op-ed by sophomore Emily Cardona who detailed her struggle to go out on the weekends because of a lack of money. Cardona stated how even Ubers and Lyfts—basic transportation options—were unaffordable under her tight budget and that the T closes at 12:30 a.m. Thus, students must either get a car, walk, or take the bus home after a late night out.

With Emerson tuition again on the rise, I want to get the most out of my primary reason for attending Emerson—academics. I dedicate myself to all of my courses whether I enjoy the subject matter or not, and I highly value my position as opinion editor here at the Beacon. Personally, I am unwilling to push my work for these courses and my co-curricular aside for a night out. For some, this may be doable—and there's absolutely nothing wrong with that—but it just doesn't match with my personality.

Every student de-stresses and rewards themselves on the weekends differently. For some, the satisfaction of academic accomplishments outweighs a night out. For others, partying and socializing recharges them. There is no right or wrong answer for how to enjoy your college years. But at the end of the day, guilt-tripping someone is not only manipulative, it makes individuals feel self-conscious over issues that are sometimes out of their control. No student should feel forced to party, or participate in something they feel uncomfortable doing—nor should they ever feel ashamed for it.

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# living arts

## Senior co-writes Harvard musical to raise Asian representation in theater

Domenic Conte, *Beacon Staff*

Senior Jared Leong had never written a musical before last July. However, he said he could not refuse the opportunity to portray the Asian-American experience and address the lack of Asian representation in theater when a Facebook post asking for people interested in co-writing a musical came to his attention.

When a friend put him in touch with Julia Riew, a sophomore at Harvard University, Riew had posted on Facebook looking to create a coming-of-age musical comedy about a Chinese-American high school student. Despite his unfamiliarity with stage performances, Leong joined Harvard junior John Lim and began writing *The East Side* with Riew in July 2018.

*The East Side* explores 17-year-old protagonist Ryan's identity crisis during his senior year of high school in New York City's Chinatown. He and his mother, Ms. Chen, try to preserve authenticity in their dumpling house while gentrification changes the neighborhood around them. Ryan balances his responsibilities at the dumpling house with his schoolwork, passion for visual arts, and romance throughout the musical comedy.

As a 13-year-old busboy growing up in Queens, New York, Leong discovered how Chinese restaurants struggled to cater to their own community while surrounded by gentrification.

"You're using your own culture to make food for people to like," Leong said. "You have to rely on people who aren't from your culture to come in and pay money to buy your food. It's this weird process of appealing to everybody but not appealing to everybody."

A visual and media arts major, Leong began writing screenplays at the age of 17. He said the differences between writing for film and writing for the stage challenged him early on.

"The hardest part is that you are looking at a stage," Leong said. "A lot of times I was writing specific props, but you can't really do that in theater because nobody can see it. You have to write dialogue like, 'Oh, what a huge letter!' but in film, you would never do that. Film is all about subtlety, and musicals are more about speaking outward."

Riew, who wrote all the music for the show, said the shortage of Asian portrayal in theater entertainment inspired her to make *The East Side*. The Asian American Performers Action Coalition published a study on the 2016–17 theater season that found white playwrights account for 95 percent of all Broadway shows.

"We really wanted to tell a story that hadn't been told before," Riew said. "In theater espe-



Senior Jared Leong co-wrote *The East Side*, a musical comedy about a Chinese-American high school student, with two students from Harvard University. • Yinyi Tu / *Beacon Correspondent*

cially, there's a really big lack of Asian representation. What drew us to this story was that it felt so close to home to us, and I think that's how a lot of the actors felt as well."

Harvard's Asian Student Arts Project, a theatrical group established by Riew and two peers at the beginning of 2019, sponsored the musical. The cast and crew of *The East Side* are almost entirely Asian or Asian-American.

Director and Harvard senior KeeHup Yong said the opportunity to help pioneer the production of Asian arts attracted him to the musical.

"We haven't really had an Asian performing arts group like this, that was Pan-Asian and devoted to storytelling," Yong said. "I wanted to help create that space for the future for students."

When writing the script, Riew said the three writers integrated themselves into the three main characters of the musical—Ryan, Vera, and Patrick. Riew said the parallels between her

and the characters helped her learn more about herself.

"All three of us inserted different elements of ourselves into the three lead characters, which kind of made me realize things about myself or things that I've said before," Riew said. "I feel like I learned just as much writing musicals through this process as I learned about myself."

Auditions for the musical took place in February and attracted over 50 people. Riew said many of the cast members will perform at Harvard for their first time. Leong said the story itself brought both experienced and inexperienced students to the audition.

"It proved the fact that, if the material is there and it interests people, then people are going to come out to it," Leong said. "We had a lot of people who aren't singers or actors who were like, 'This is amazing, this is a story I want to be a part of.'"

The musical will host five performances at

Harvard's Farkas Hall from April 11 to April 14. Tickets are free and can be reserved ahead of time online or are available at the box office at the time of the show.

Dana Knox, the production coordinator for Farkas Hall at Harvard, said he plans their production calendar after reviewing competitive applications. He said *The East Side* earned a spot at Harvard because of its appeal as an original production.

"The initiative that was behind the student group was one that we were supportive of because it was an underrepresented affinity group here at Harvard," Knox said. "In reviewing the songs and the script they submitted, it was actually a tremendously strong show and a voice we thought definitely needs to be heard."

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## Person of Color Column: The languages of my nation



**Riddhma Dave**  
*Dave is a freshman journalism major, a Beacon correspondent, and this week's POC columnist.*

Since coming to America, people often say to me, "Your English is excellent for a..." and then they trail off from there.

I have encountered this statement, or something along these lines, at least once every time I travel to the United States from India. It always leaves me wondering—I speak English well, but in comparison to what? Compared to someone who isn't from an English-speaking nation?

What sets India apart from many other countries, in terms of linguistics, is that we are a multilingual populace and do not have one or two main languages. This causes another misguided question I hear often: "Do you speak Indian?" There is no such language as "Indian." I do, however, speak three Indian languages—English, Hindi and Gujarati.

Comedians of Indian origin, like Youtuber Lilly Singh and Patriot Act host Hasan Minhaj, have joked about people asking them if they spoke Indian or Hindu in their acts. It has become a sort of running joke in the Indian community, and it irritates me that people still ask me this. It should not be my responsibility to tell people what I speak or how, on account of their own ignorance.

I'm astounded that once people learn I am

from India, they actually cannot believe I could speak English just like them. I understand that people outside of India may not receive education on the customs of my country. I myself am not aware of the cultures and practices of all 197 countries in the world, but asking me why I know English is quite offensive. The reason Americans speak English is because of British colonization.

In America, people don't feel weird when they hear previously colonized Australians, Canadians, and South Africans speak English. Yet, I always wonder why. The British colonized India for 200 years from 1757 to 1947. India only gained its independence 71 years ago. An awareness of India's history would make it clear why many Indians speak English.

More English speakers live in India than Britain. According to a 2011 census of India, about 127 million English speakers reside in the country. The population of the United Kingdom is about 66 million, according to the United Kingdom 2017 census. According to the above numbers, India has the second highest number of English speakers in the world, behind the United States.

English is also an official language of India but not the official language, because India fosters 22 official languages. Even with 127 million English speakers, that only makes up about 10 percent of the population of the country. People may wonder why all of India doesn't speak English—this is because the British never actually settled in India as they did in the other English-speaking countries. The British influenced

Indian culture and language, but did not wipe it out as they did in Australia and North America. Colonization heavily influenced us, but we retained our traditions and population, unlike the aboriginals and Native Americans. The culture and languages of these places have been minimized and even lost, while our culture and languages stayed. By virtue of these, we have retained our original languages in addition to English. So not everyone speaks English unlike in North America and Australia where the majority of the population speaks English.

Another popular question is, "Do you speak Hindi?" I practice Hinduism but I speak Hindi, English, and Gujarati. The more culturally aware people often ask me, "Do you speak Hindi?"

The first question is offensive in many ways. You are asking someone if they speak a religion. It would be like me asking a Muslim, "Do you speak Islam?" I find it hard to believe that people are not aware of the Hindu religion—it is the third largest in the world. Most people in the western world know yoga and Ayurveda, one of the world's oldest holistic healing practices, so it is unlikely that they don't know that "Hindu" is a religious identity. By asking this, people minimize India to a Hindu nation. A common view in the western world is the generalized notion that Indians only practice Hinduism.

India's preamble to the constitution starts with the declaration that India is a secular nation. While Hinduism is the dominant religion, Indians practice a multitude of faiths.

Many people assume Hindi is India's national language. I assumed that Hindi was our

"Rashtra bhaasha," meaning national language, for a long time, which trivialized those who did not speak Hindi. Large regions of India do not speak Hindi—most of South India does not.

My South Indian friend who studies in the United States was once asked if he spoke Hindi. He said no, he spoke Tamil, one of the 22 official languages, and the language of the state Tamil Nadu. The man asking him expressed shock. "How could an Indian not know Hindi?"

To top that off, politicians keep pushing Hindi to be the de-facto language of the country which is unfair to those who do not speak it. India represents a diverse land full of different languages. Every state operates with a different language or dialect. Further, state regions have different dialects of the same language. In total, there are 19,569 languages deliberated by the census if you count the different dialects, older languages, or those spoken by a very small population.

English and Hindustani, a term for the almost alike languages of Hindi and Urdu, are very widely spoken across states in India. While other languages are primarily spoken statewide, the census determines that these languages still have millions of speakers. An Indian may speak one of these, none of these, or few of these. But they are all equally Indian, and their languages are equally important.

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## Alumnus writes off-Broadway play overnight

Erin Nolan, *Beacon Correspondent*

Kate T. Billingsley '07 laid on her back doing vocal warm-ups and tried to relax before her first off-Broadway performance of the play she wrote, *Barefoot*, when she realized that she was finally living her dream.

However, just two weeks before the Jan. 24 opening night, Billingsley had not written a single word of the *Barefoot* script.

In early December 2018, Billingsley auditioned and received a role in Theresa Rebeck's *Spike Heels*, a play directed by renowned director and actor Thomas G. Waites. After almost five weeks of rehearsal, Rebeck pulled the rights to the production. They were set to open in less than two weeks.

"We were blocked, all set, ready to go," Waites said in a WhatsApp video call from New York City. "We were just a few actors and directors sitting in a room going, 'What the f— are we going to do? The theater is paid for!'"

Billingsley said she saw this hurdle as an opportunity to finally live out her dream as a playwright. She said she went home that night and wrote 70 pages of a script about a woman being confronted by her fiancé's mistress two weeks before her wedding and the sexually charged, outrageous series of events that follow as three men arrive at the scene.

"I went home and wrote for the actors that I was working with," Billingsley said in a Skype call from New York City. "Stylistically, it is the most absurd thing I have ever written. When I was writing that in the early morning hours or late at night, all of my demons, my shadow side, my insecurities, my fears—it all poured into this play."

The next day, Billingsley presented the night's work to the rest of the cast.

She said the cast provided overwhelmingly positive feedback, including Elissa Klie, Billingsley's co-star who takes on the role of the mistress, Teddy.

"It was definitely hands down the weirdest play I have ever read," Klie said in a phone interview from New York City. "But we all agreed that this was the play we were going to do."

The cast workshopped *Barefoot* for a couple of days, and Billingsley and Waites spent an entire day fixing the script and hashing out the ending. Billingsley and Waites co-wrote the rest



Elissa Klie (far left), Judah Barak Tobias (left), and Will Rosenfelt (far right) starred alongside alumnus Kate T. Billingsley (right) in her off-Broadway play, *Barefoot*. • Courtesy of Kate T. Billingsley

of the script and finished it in 72 hours. The play runs 70 minutes.

"We both sort of became one person, and that person created what I think is a little off-Broadway success," Waites said. "I have a good ear for dialogue and [Billingsley] has a good sense of character. So we leaned on each other's strengths, and it led to a collaboration that I think is artistic."

When the script was finally completed, the cast only had four days of rehearsal left before it was time to perform in front of a live audience. Billingsley, Klie, and Waites all said the cast was terrified.

"I was scared, but I was also trying to keep it together because I felt like I had to. It was terrifying," Billingsley said. "We can either be scared and run away from it, or we can be scared and lean into it. Everyone leaned right into it, and that's what made it be this little success off-Broadway."

Billingsley, suddenly thrust into a leadership role, not only had to memorize her own lines and rehearse but also had to answer questions

from other actors and address issues regarding the script.

But Klie said Billingsley was easy to collaborate with and handled the situation with humility.

"The way [Billingsley] carries herself is the way I want to come off to the world," Klie said. "[Billingsley] is super intelligent and gorgeous and dives into things head on. She has what I consider the whole bag for what you need as an artist—her whole soul. Working with her has been absolutely fantastic."

Despite the odds, *Barefoot*'s run was extended by three additional weeks. Billingsley said she believes the success came from the *Barefoot* script touching on what she calls a "millennial moment" of women discussing feminist issues and the playfulness of sexuality.

"This play also really reflects a level of absurdism that we are facing in day-to-day culture," Billingsley said. "The fact that Donald Trump is our president is totally absurd, and yet it is a fact. So the wonderful thing about being an artist is that you can literally create anything,

and it is possible that it is true. The absurdity that unravels in the play touches into some deep level of truth that the absurd can become reality."

The play wrapped on March 2 at the Gene Frankel Theatre, but Waites said he hopes to keep the legacy of *Barefoot* alive by raising enough money to turn it into a film featuring the same actors from the off-Broadway production.

Billingsley said everything happened so fast that it was hard to keep track of the series of events.

"I don't fully understand why the rights were pulled, but I do know it availed this really wonderful opportunity to fill this empty theater with a new piece of theater," she said. "That really is the beauty of theater—it is transient and happens very quickly. It can never happen again the same way."

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## Emerson bands Pool Boys and Squitch open show for Japanese Breakfast

Continued from page 1

WECB members distributed tickets—free with an Emerson ID—at the Paramount Theatre on March 22. Manning said tickets will be available at the door on the day of the concert. Tickets are available at the Paramount box office every day from noon to 6 p.m. until the concert.

Sophomore Emily Bunn, the live music events team assistant for WECB, said the station chose the opening bands, Squitch and Pool Boys, because of their years of commitment and support of the radio station.

"We wanted to have Emerson students performing—that was something really important: to have a space and an outlet to showcase them," Bunn said. "The two bands we picked, Squitch and Pool Boys, both contributed a lot to our WECB events in the past by performing and being involved in the organization, so we wanted to give them that platform because they're both really talented groups of musicians."

Five members make up the Pool Boys band, including Cote, Lorenzo Rossi '18, junior Arcari, senior Scott Hermenau, and junior William Petrillo—who attends the Wentworth Institute of Technology.

Cote said the band hopes to surprise the audience with new songs alongside an unannounced portion of the show.

"A good portion of what we're performing is going to be new stuff," Cote said. "We're releasing a single on the same day, under 'Pool Boys Presents: Stimulation Now,' on every streaming platform. Then there's a special second half of the act, but that's kind of a surprise."

Cote said the band looks forward to sharing the stage with Squitch. The Pool Boys will take the stage first, then Squitch, followed by the main act, Japanese Breakfast.

"We're playing alongside with Squitch, and we're very excited about that," Cote said. "They're just like ridiculously fun and super tal-

ented."

Sophomore Em Spooner, the lead singer of Squitch, a math rock band, said they look forward to playing at the Paramount Theatre. Other members include junior Emma Unterseher and Denzil Leach, a senior at Northeastern University.

"We've never played on that big of a stage before for that many people," Spooner said. "That's going to be pretty nerve-racking because it's definitely a different kind of environment. But that's also really exciting, and we're looking forward to hopefully meeting [Michelle Zauner] and the rest of Japanese Breakfast."

Spooner said Squitch will play a lot of songs from their last album, *Uncle Steve in Spirit*, along with their single "Rut," set to release in the next week before the show.

"[Unterseher], [Leach], and I have all loved Japanese Breakfast for a couple of years now, so we're super excited to get this opportunity," Spooner said.

The event will be the second show on Japanese Breakfast's international tour. Michelle Zauner, a Korean-American solo musician, tours with a permanent backup band. Zauner, who goes by Japanese Breakfast while performing, said she feels excited to get the tour started.

"I'm really looking forward to it," Zauner said in a phone interview. "We're going to try to bring in one new song that we've never played before. We're also going to try one new cover too."

Zauner said she looks forward to performing in Boston. Japanese Breakfast will play shows at the nightclub Royale on April 1 and 6.

"We've garnered more and more fans here over time, and a lot of people keep asking us to come back, so we are," Zauner said. "They should expect to hear songs that they love, and hopefully the show will be intimate and fun."

Manning and Bunn were both heavily involved in arranging for Japanese Breakfast to



Emma Unterseher (left), Em Spooner (center), and Denzil Leach (back) of Squitch will open for Japanese Breakfast with student band, Pool Boys. • Courtesy of Squitch

perform at Emerson. Manning and Bunn said they began corresponding with the band's management to set up details, such as the tour schedule and prices, in May 2018. They declined to comment on the performance fees WECB paid performers.

Freshman Zichen Zhou said he has been listening to Japanese Breakfast for over a year and cannot wait to see her live.

"I actually bought tickets for the one at Royale because I was so excited," Zhou said in a phone interview. "So now I'm going to their concert for two days in a row, and I can't wait."

As an Asian student, Zhou said he believes the rise of artists like Japanese Breakfast will open doors for other talented musicians of color.

"I feel like this is such a good thing because I grew up in China for the last 18 years listening to Asian musicians, but when I talk about them here, no one knows who I'm talking about," Zhou said. "I'm so appreciative of WECB bringing Japanese Breakfast to Emerson because I think that can bring more people to know this band and make them fall in love with it. It's just

really great to have more Asian artists in the industry."

In the process of choosing the artist, Manning felt especially excited about bringing Japanese Breakfast, an accomplished Asian-American artist, to perform.

"I really wanted to get an Asian-American artist to come to perform at Emerson, specifically because I am Asian-American, and because I think Japanese Breakfast is a great band and they have such a great stage presence," Manning said. "There's also a very big fan base here at Emerson, and we really wanted to cater the music and the artist that we chose to what the community wants."

Another Japanese Breakfast fan, freshman Kenneth Cox, said he hopes the concert will measure up to when he saw her live last June.

"I'm a really big fan of their music and I've seen Japanese Breakfast live before, so I know that they put on a really great live show," Cox said in a phone interview. "I've also seen Squitch playing at house shows and they're really great, and I'm excited to see them as well."

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# sports

## RECENT RESULTS

MEN'S LACROSSE: U. Mass. Dartmouth 10 — Emerson 6, March 27

BASEBALL: Coast Guard 9 — Emerson 5, March 26

MEN'S VOLLEYBALL: Johnson & Wales 3 — Emerson 0, March 26

MEN'S TENNIS: Franklin Pierce 9 — Emerson 0, March 24

## Basketball freshman wins two Rookie of the Year awards

Andrew Lin, *Beacon Staff*

Freshman Zach Waterhouse did not believe he would still play competitive basketball after high school, but in his first season on the Emerson men's basketball team, he won two separate Rookie of the Year awards for best freshman player in the New England area.

In 28 games, Waterhouse averaged 16.6 points—the third most on the team and eighth highest in the New England Women's and Men's Athletic Conference. He became the first Emerson basketball player to win the NEWMAC Rookie of the Year award and also received the Division III Rookie of the Year award from Noontime Sports, a New England-based sports website.

The only other Emerson player to win the NEWMAC Rookie of the Year was Meredith Weber, who played for the women's lacrosse team in 2014.

Waterhouse grew up in Hampton, New Hampshire, about an hour drive from Boston. At a young age, Waterhouse played football, baseball, soccer, and tennis, but he first discovered basketball when his parents signed him up for a local youth recreational league in second grade.

Waterhouse said his love for the game came from his parents, who told him sports offer valuable life lessons and friendships.

"I tried to play everything and I ended up liking soccer and basketball the most—that's what I played all the way through high school," Waterhouse said. "You have a lot of cool experiences with people you really like to hang out with, and you get to battle on the court with them."

While looking at colleges, the question of whether or not he would continue playing basketball at the collegiate level arose. Choosing between University of New Hampshire, University of Massachusetts Amherst, and Emerson College, Waterhouse opted to join Emerson and give basketball another go.

"Emerson was kind of like the risky choice for me," Waterhouse said. "But I decided on the last possible day where I was going to go and I



Freshman Zach Waterhouse became the second athlete in college history to be named NEWMAC Rookie of the Year. • Photo by Alexa Schapiro / Beacon Staff

just said, 'I'm going to Emerson, I'm going to try to play basketball' because I can always transfer out or I can always do something if I don't like it."

Waterhouse said choosing Emerson was risky because he did not know what he wanted to study and he would be furthest away from home.

Listed as a 6'2" guard, Waterhouse is just one of eight freshmen to make the men's basketball roster. Waterhouse said being on the basketball team helped him fit into Emerson as he became good friends with other freshman players on the team upon meeting them—most notably guard Trevor McLean and center Jarred Houston.

"It's awesome playing with [McLean and Houston]," Waterhouse said. "I think they're just great kids and basketball-wise, they're both hard workers and they're very different players.

Trevor's a great point guard and Jarred is huge because he's 6'10" and there aren't many kids that are that big and that dominant down low."

On the court, Waterhouse is known for his shooting ability. He shot a scorching 42.5 percent from the three-point line and converted 2.4 three-pointers per game.

Head coach Bill Curley said one of Waterhouse's best qualities is his ability to fight through pain.

"He might be one of the toughest kids we've ever had here," Curley said. "We've seen him get hit a couple times but he's like 'I'm fine.' He's got a high pain tolerance that he plays through. He's a great example for our guys to see that you can play in some discomfort. He doesn't exaggerate or anything like that, he understands the difference from being hurt and injured."

As a freshman, Waterhouse grew under the

tutelage of captain and senior guard Geoff Gray.

"Geoff has taken me under his wing since the day we got here," Waterhouse said. "He made me think, 'okay, I want to be like Geoff when I come here' because Geoff has had a really good experience here. He said he loved it and I can tell he really meant that."

Noontime Sports uses a committee of coaches, media members, and athletic directors to select winners of its end of the year awards strictly from Division III schools in the New England area.

Waterhouse said he did not think he would win Noontime Sports Rookie of the Year because of the competition in the area.

"I never thought that would happen considering on our team, we have a lot of great freshmen, and in the NEWMAC and the New England area there are a ton of great freshmen playing basketball," Waterhouse said. "It just makes me want to work harder because now that I have that, there are going to be people [who] are coming for me in a sense."

As Gray graduates this year, Waterhouse hopes to step up and fill in the gap left behind in his absence. Waterhouse said he wants to improve his playmaking ability this offseason and help lead the team back to the NCAA tournament.

"Since we're going to lose Geoff, we're going to need more guys to handle the ball so that's the biggest thing to work on," Waterhouse said. "Our goal next year is to win the NEWMAC and win a couple tournament games."

Curley said Waterhouse's character on and off the court helps the team's success.

"He had a tremendous year and added a great value to our team," Curley said. "I think the biggest thing with him is that he leads by example—he gets out there, he keeps playing, he's got a great attitude and the guys like him. I think every teammate couldn't be more thrilled for him, so I think it speaks a lot about the kind of guys we have and why we're able to be successful this year."

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## Volleyball players kneel for anthem to raise awareness

Andrew Lin, *Beacon Staff*

Although then-sophomore setter Lucas Raagas did not play on the court when the men's volleyball team traveled to Quincy to face Eastern Nazarene College on Feb. 8 last year, what he remembers the most was when a group of fans yelled at him after he knelt during the national anthem at the beginning of the game.

This year, teammate Max Weltz joined Raagas in the peaceful yet highly controversial protest of taking a knee, following the actions of former National Football League player Colin Kaepernick. In 2016, Kaepernick caused an uproar when he knelt down during the anthem in an NFL game to protest racial injustice and oppression in the U.S.

Raagas said he kneels before every game because he wants better treatment, and representation for oppressed people.

"I just think that we as a country can be doing a lot better in terms of serving all of our people, whether it be immigrants, people that just got out of prison, or obviously people of different races, different genders, and different sexual orientations," Raagas said. "I don't want to stand for a country that doesn't stand for all those people—I hold the country that I love to a high standard."

Raagas said his kneeling should make people think more critically about problems in the U.S. and how those problems affect people's lives. He acknowledges that while kneeling does not prevent police brutality or unjust deportations, it starts a dialogue about why someone would kneel.

Weltz, a sophomore right setter in his first year with the team, said when he saw Raagas kneeling, he became inspired to do the same.

"When I kneel, for me, it's the idea of not believing in what my country represents and not having faith or being proud of what my country stands for," Weltz said. "It seems like the

easiest way to express that there's something to you that's just not right with what's going on in our society. I don't feel like [it's] that ridiculous to just have that opinion, and I don't feel like there are many other ways more effective at portraying that opinion."

Raagas started kneeling last year after discussing with his teammates and head coach Ben Read about his intention to kneel. Raagas said he appreciated his teammates, and especially Read for understanding what he wanted to do.

"When I talked about it with my coach, he totally respected me and totally understood why I was doing it," Raagas said. "He personally wasn't going to partake in it and obviously, none of my teammates were, but he listened to me which was probably what I appreciate the most—he asked why I was doing it, and he absorbed it and accepted it."

Read said he stands by his players and emphasized how their actions could start conversations about the country's history.

"I support them, and if this is something they strongly believe in, we'll support them for it," Read said. "I'd encourage people to go ahead and talk to them about why they're doing it, and I think it will create great conversations about a variety of different things—mainly race and injustice."

Weltz said he believes the coverage of Kaepernick's kneel overshadowed the conversation about injustice and oppression that Kaepernick tried to start. Weltz said it is crucial to remind people about the message that Kaepernick tried to send, because not a lot has changed since then.

"I don't feel like since [Kaepernick] brought it up to the forefront, anything's actually changed in our society," Weltz said. "I think it's important that people are reminded when they see two kids kneeling that you just need to know there are people who are advocating for change."



Max Weltz (No. 3) joined Lucas Raagas (No. 11) in kneeling during the Anthem this season. Photo by Aaron J. Miller / Beacon Staff

Patricia Nicol, Emerson's Director of Athletics, said students can freely express themselves if done appropriately.

"I feel that students have every right to express their positions, as long as it is done a respectful manner, and not imposing their will on anyone else," Nicol said. "Their actions are really what we stand for here at Emerson, and that's the ability to express themselves in a respectful and professional manner. If one is uncomfortable with that, then they have a choice to either stay in the environment or not. But I think we all have to learn to be comfortable with being uncomfortable."

Raagas said he wants people to understand and respect his decision to kneel during the national anthem.

"I don't care if you agree with me, I don't care if you are in staunch disagreement, but all that I ask is that you respect me, you understand why I'm doing it, and you think about it," Raagas said. "We're all people, and we're all Americans regardless of your citizenship status, or your criminal record, or your race, or your gender. Everyone should experience the same country, experience the same benefits, because we have so much to offer the world. We have so much to offer each other, but that wealth isn't spread enough as it should be."

*Managing Editor Monika Davis did not edit this story due to a conflict of interest.*

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