The Grizzly, March 15, 2018

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Ursinus evacuates Main Street houses as winter storm cuts Collegeville power

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Although many students had already left for spring break, a brewing winter storm did not prove kind to students still on campus the evening of Friday, March 2.

Following 45 mph winds that brought down trees onto power lines, residents of Collegeville experienced a borough-wide power outage that affected all buildings on campus, in addition to road closures. Due to the power outage, Campus Safety evacuated all students living in Main Street houses, according to Director of Campus Safety John Bera.

“F for safety reasons we could not allow students to remain in residence halls.”

— John Bera
Director of Campus Safety

Bera explained that Ursinus took emergency precautions in compliance with UC’s Emergency Response Plan and Crisis Response Plan during the power outage.

“When there is a power outage, fire alarms and life safety systems, such as sprinkler pumps, are on battery back-up, but will lose power within a few hours,” Bera said. “For safety reasons, we cannot allow students to remain in residence halls without fully operational systems since there is no way of knowing the exact battery life in each house.”

Students were directed toward Lower Wismer, the common areas of residence halls on campus, and the Floy Lewis

The lights “went out” like this lightbulb across campus during a power outage on Friday, March 2.

Bakes Field House, all areas equipped with emergency lighting and heat, according to a campus-wide email sent by Dean Terrence Williams.

When it became clear the outage would last through the night, Emergency Management coordinator Chris Wilcox arranged to borrow temporary sleeping cots from Montgomery County for students to sleep in the Bear’s Den, Bera said.

“Frustrated students left the Floy Lewis dorms and other parts of campus where they were able on a couch in Lower Wismer, while Craig Lauer 

Pepper said, “I was upset when I got the email because they only gave us a half hour to get out of our building. Yes, they had places for us to go, but it doesn’t give us time to get our stuff in order.”

“It’s poor planning on their part. [The College] should have a kit for every student with emergency materials in case this ever happens again,” said Liberatoscioli.

Around midnight on Friday, Sheraden said there was a mass exodus of students who returned to New and Richter residence halls to stay in their friends’ dorms.

Kaitlyn France, a junior who lives on Main Street, stayed with her rugby teammates in a suite.

“At first when I realized we lost power and were stuck at school, I was definitely annoyed — but my teammates made it fun. We all came together in our suite with every battery-operated light source we had and hung out.”

Some students on Main Street were not satisfied with how the situation was handled, arguing that the evacuation was rushed.

Senior Franny Liberatoscioli said, “I was upset when I got the email because they only gave us a half hour to get out of our building. Yes, they had places for us to go, but it doesn’t give us time to get our stuff in order.”

“It’s poor planning on their part. [The College] should have a kit for every student with emergency materials in case this ever happens again,” said Liberatoscioli.

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Blomberg hires new special assistant

Heather Lobban-Viravon of SUNY Geneseo will begin new position at Ursinus in July

Heather Lobban-Viravon, currently senior associate to the president at SUNY Geneseo in New York, will be joining the Ursinus community on July 1, taking over the role of special assistant to Ursinus College president Brock Blomberg, after English professor Meredith Goldsmith joined the Dean’s Office.

Editor Valerie Osborne spoke with Lobban-Viravon about her hopes in her upcoming role as special assistant.

Can you tell me a little bit about your background?

So prior to coming to my current position, I was at Grinnell College, where I was a faculty member in the English Department. While still a faculty member I moved into the administration and served as an Associate Dean for about five years and then that led to my current position here at SUNY Geneseo [senior associate to the president]. So, doing work as an Associate Dean at Grinnell, I was responsible for things relating to faculty development [and] guiding academic department reviews. I served on the personnel committee as secretary to that body. I guess in some ways the work that I did there really fueled my interest in continuing to serve as an administrator, and I ultimately decided to leave Grinnell and pursue other opportunities.

“I think it’s important for me to come find out more about what’s already happening and [subsequently identify] ways to build on that work.”

—Heather Lobban-Viravon

And you said your background is in English: How has that influenced your current role?

It’s 18th-century English literature actually, and I don’t know if it’s the work itself in that period that really influenced my current role. I just know that as a result of being a faculty member and then becoming chair of the English department when I was at Grinnell, it was that role that ultimately provided . . . a path I guess that peaked my interest in serving as an administrator. There were just some issues that came up when I was [department] chair that I felt really passionate about as it related to my colleagues in the English department. I really wanted to serve as an advocate for them and I felt I wanted an opportunity to do that even in a broader way for the larger campus. So that’s kind of how that all started for me in terms of taking an administrative role.

What role will you be taking on at Ursinus? What will your responsibilities be?

So, my role will be as special assistant to the [Ursinus] president [Brock Blomberg], and my responsibilities will fall in a number of areas. One having to do with diversity and inclusion: working with the campus community to move the conversation and move the campus in terms of its work in that area. And hopefully I will bring some things that will help move [that conversation] in some good directions. So [there are also] some responsibilities for connecting with the larger community, the community beyond the campus . . . Making sure to build good relationships [with the larger community], I certainly want to do that on campus as well, but certainly building relationships with local leaders and the community more broadly so that we can establish and identify ways to build partnerships with the college and the community. Partnerships that will be beneficial both to our students and certainly faculty and staff as well.

Do you have any plans in mind on how you would like to strengthen the campus community or the campus’ relationship with the external community?

Well you know, I think certainly finding avenues for more conversation would be good.

I know that on the campus itself at Ursinus there’s a lot of that happening now. I think building on [what’s happening now] will be very important. But in regard to the community beyond the campus, I think finding opportunities for more dialogue; finding opportunities to establish more connections; and again, going back to the issue of building relationships, I think that it’s important to find ways to build relationships so that the campus community but also the larger community feels as if there is an extension of support, even a kind of alliance, between the two communities . . . I think it’s important for me to come find out more about what’s already happening and [subsequently identify] ways to . . . build on that work and then [identify] new ways to do some other things that could move conversation but also move the entire community, both the campus and the larger community, in very good directions.

“T’m really just excited about getting to know the community, getting to know the folks on the campus.”

—Heather Lobban-Viravon

What are you most excited about coming into Ursinus?

That’s a great question. Well, I’m excited to get to know the students. I’m excited to...

See Special assistant on pg. 3
The student government elections for the Ursinus College Student Government (UCSG) executive board and class councils began this week. Candidates for positions on the executive board were expected to begin their election campaigns Mar. 12. A second election for class council representatives will take place next week.

The executive board oversees student senate meetings, as well as operations of the class councils and Student Committees, according to the Ursinus website.

However, almost all of the candidates for the executive board are running unopposed this year. Liz Iobst ’19 for President alongside Jonathan Cope as Vice President, Joanna Timmerman ’19 for secretary and Andrew Voyack ’19 for treasurer on the same election ticket.

Only the position of social chair has two candidates running—Haley Sturla ’20 and Brett Highland ’19 are both running for the position.

The ballots will display the election “ticket”—meaning students must vote for all candidates who are running together on the same ticket, and a text box for write-in candidates. Running on an election ticket is only mandatory for the president and vice-presidential candidates, but Bullock explained that “people generally find a group of friends and run as a ticket for all five positions.”

After candidates send their official declarations to the current UCSG executive board, they are given a $50 spending limit for their election campaigns, Bullock explained.

Current UCSG President Garrett Bullock ’20 explained that candidates currently running unopposed are not guaranteed their positions yet. Although these positions have only one official candidate thus far, students who are interested in being elected to the executive board may declare write-in candidates on the ballot.

“If the write-in candidate [for president] were to receive more votes than Iobst, then that individual would win the seat,” Bullock said.

Candidates ran unopposed in last year’s UCSG elections as well. Bullock explained this is a widespread problem across college campuses. Bullock mentioned speaking with student body presidents at other colleges, such as at Delaware Valley University and St. Joseph’s University, about how to “create a tangible award for being president,” such as stipends or class credit.

Bullock worked with Ursinus director of communications Tom Yencho on developing a plan of action but explained this plan was not ready to be implemented this cycle.

Bullock believes the lack of interest in running for student body president may be related to the overwhelming nature of the position.

“Frankly, it takes a maniac to run for the position. [Being student body president] is extremely time-consuming, strenuous and often overwhelming job with no material compensation,” Bullock said. “There is, of course, the reward of helping the Ursinus community, but it takes a lot of spirit to do the work for just that reward.”

Cope explained that he and Iobst decided to run because they felt they could strongly resonate with issues faced by students on campus.

“We feel that our experiences in a number of campus organizations have given us a great pulse and feel for what students on campus expect from their student government,” Cope said. “Liz and I hope to work on growing our Ursinus community by listening and initiating conversations with the students and faculty about major issues. We hope to work towards making Ursinus environmentally friendly. We want all students to feel like UCSG is working for them and we hope under our leadership that any student will feel they can come to us with ideas.”

Bullock also cited an issue in communication as reasoning for the lack of interest—he explained that UCSG senators may not be relaying information back through their organizations to students, and information about the student elections may easily get lost in Ursinus emails.

In the class council elections, students will compete to be representatives for their class. However, Bullock explained that the candidates choose among the three positions on the class councils – President, Treasurer and Secretary — after they have already been elected. Bullock explained that the class councils were reduced in size by Robert Rein ’16 and his executive board following last year’s election.

“In the old system, we had too many qualified candidates running for class president — with nobody wanting to fill other positions,” Bullock said. “[Having] only 3 class council officers ensures accountability among the officers, who oftentimes brush off their responsibility. My team finalized the reform so candidates ran for class council to ensure that the most qualified candidates could participate in the system without being eliminated, rather than having students that did not represent campus interests being the only options to fill other positions.”

A candidate panel will take place at the UCSG student senate meeting Mar. 14 at 9 p.m. in Pfahler Auditorium, where candidates will take questions from the audience. All students are invited to attend, Bullock said.

None of the current members of the UCSG executive board will be running this year, as they will be graduating this spring, according to Bullock. Bullock, although a sophomore, is not eligible for re-election because he will be studying abroad next year.

Polling will be open for students to cast their votes Mar. 14 – 16, between 11a.m. -1:30 p.m. in the Bear’s Den and the Student Activities office.

Any questions or concerns may be sent to UCSG President Garrett Bullock at gabulllock@ursinus.edu.

With additional reporting by Naseem Syed.

Julie Krasutsky
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Special assistant from pg. 2

to get to know the faculty
and the staff, I’m excited [to begin] finding opportunities
for connecting with all of those
constituencies . . . talking with
them and finding out what the
issues are. What are . . . some
areas that they think need
some work and [in what] areas
[they would like] to see more
growth. I’m really just excited
about getting to know the com-

munity, getting to know the
folks on the campus and fig-

urating out ways to establish
and build good relationships
and do things that will make everyone

feel like Ursinus is definitely a
great place to be. And I’m sure
there’s some of that already,
but building on that I think is
really important.

At Ursinus, our first-year semi-
nar is the Common Intellectual
Experience. I don’t know if
anyone’s told you about that,
but it’s a class that every first-
year student takes and in the
class, students are asked four
questions and the main ques-
tion is “How should we live our
lives?” So, I was just wonder-
ing if you could answer that
question. How do you think we
should live our lives?

How should we live our
lives? Well, I think we should
live our lives as authentically
as possible. I think we should
live in ways that is about
building good relationships,
getting to know others in ways
that expand our views and our
ways of thinking about the
world. [We should be] do-
ing what we can . . . to foster
good relationships . . . not just
with the folks who are around
us, our immediate friends or
family, but certainly beyond
that as well. So, just living as
authentically as possible and
finding good ways to get to
know others.

Is there anything that you
would like to add that you
would want the campus to
know about you?

Well, I guess what I want to
say, and maybe it echoes some-
things that I’ve said already, but
. . . . I really am looking forward
to [getting to] know the com-

munity: the students, the facul-
ty of course, the staff certainly.
Getting to know them in ways
that will hopefully help shape
the work that I do at the insti-
tution and shape it in ways that
will lead to good outcomes for
all involved. When I say good
outcomes, I mean just in terms
of fostering an environment

that is supportive . . . I’m [all]
about building relationships
and finding ways to move
those relationships and those
conversations in good direc-
tions. I just want everyone to
know that I will work as hard
as possible on behalf of the
community and its members
and I look forward to partner-
ning with students, faculty,
and staff to get the work done.
SASA to host Philly lion dancers

The Ursinus Southeast Asian Student Association (SASA) will be hosting a performance by the Philadelphia Suns.

According to Luna Kang, president of SASA, lion dancing is a very essential performance during the Chinese New Year. In the Chinese culture, there is a story in which [devils] existed, but humans disguised as lions were able to scare those devils away. [Today, lion dancing is] a performance that represents joy and happiness.

“I have seen many lion dance performances before, especially when I attended school in China, and I always have enjoyed them. The performances were always exciting and [formed] a joyful atmosphere that suits the Chinese New Year holiday,” added Hua.

According to Luna Kang, president of SASA, lion dancing is used all over the world to celebrate special events and is commonly seen at traditional Chinese festivals. According to the New World Encyclopedia, while lion dancing originated in China, different variations of the dance have been adapted throughout Asia, in countries including Japan, Korea, Vietnam, Malaysia, Singapore, and Taiwan. The multicultural aspect of the dance is what first compelled Kang to invite the Philadelphia Suns to campus.

“Lion dancing is popular in a lot of [Southeast Asian] countries,” said Kang. “Normally we just do events that involve [one] culture in a certain country,” but [this is] . . . a more general event that involves many cultures.

“I hope that [this event will] attract people to get more interested in Asian culture other than only [Asian] food.”

Kang elaborated on some other customs associated with Chinese New Year.

“The New Year is about being with family. Also, for kids, [the New Year] means money because they get ‘lucky money’ from older people and it means good food and it means new clothes. There’s a really interesting [custom] during Chinese New Year, at least in my hometown [Kunming], that says you’re supposed to wear new socks and new shoes to step on people who say bad things behind your back.”

While Kang initially wanted to book the lion dancers earlier in the semester to celebrate the mid-February Chinese holiday, the popularity of lion dancing around Chinese New Year prevented her from doing so.

“We tried to invite them during the New Year, but they were all booked,” said Kang.

Although SASA was unable to schedule the event for Chinese New Year, the event will still take place during a minor Chinese festival celebrating the new lunar year.

Said Kang, “[Mar. 18] is the day you cut your hair and you get good luck for the year.”

While SASA hosts events throughout the year, many of its most popular events, such as Korean BBQ, Bubble Tea, and Pocky Day, are centered around food. Kang hopes that the lion dancing event will show students that Asian culture extends beyond culinary customs.

“I hope that [this event will] attract people to get more interested in Asian culture other than only [Asian] food,” said Kang.

SASA will be hosting two more major events before the end of the semester. The club will be hosting their annual Tour of Asia on April 1 and will also participate in a campus Night Market on April 15.

Students who are interested in learning more about SASA or Southeast Asia or who are interested in participating in SASA events can contact SASA at sasa@ursinus.edu or Kang at xikang@ursinus.edu.
“Clybourne Park” comes to Ursinus

Students perform award-winning play that explores integration and gentrification

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Bruce Norris’ award-winning play, “Clybourne Park” will be coming to Ursinus’ Blackbox Studio Theater this March from the 22-25. “Clybourne Park” is a spin-off of Lorraine Hansberry’s “A Raisin in the Sun.” “Clybourne Park” takes place over the course of two different eras in the U.S., exploring both integration and gentrification through the interactions of white and African-American home buyers.

Director Domenick Scudera, professor and chair of the theater department at Ursinus, explained that Act 1 is set in 1959 in the neighborhood where the family from “A Raisin in the Sun” moves. The first act speaks “directly to racial tension and housing inequality [in the 1950s].” Act 2 takes a new look at the issues, set 50 years later in the same house. It seems that the community has progressed at first; however, we soon discover that less has changed than suspected.

According to Scudera, “racial tensions still exist but have taken on new forms. The play is relevant to current times because it exposes the fact that our country has not advanced as much as we profess.”

Scudera added, “It is not necessary for an audience member to know or to have seen ‘A Raisin in the Sun.’ ‘Clybourne Park’ stands by itself as a play. Those that do know ‘Raisin’ may appreciate the parallels, but awareness of ‘Raisin’ is not a pre-requisite for viewing ‘Clybourne.’”

According to Scudera, “The play has multiple themes that include race, identity, community, housing, difference, prejudice . . . and how humor plays into all of that.”

He noted, “The play is funny, despite its serious themes. Act 2, in particular, brings about a discussion of humor and how it may or may not be appropriate in certain circumstances.”

For the Ursinus students acting in the play, the rehearsal process has been strenuous, especially in executing a tension-filled play such as “Clybourne Park.”

Scudera said, “The process has been challenging, but not difficult. It is challenging because most of the actors are onstage for the entire show and their characters are actively engaged in heated conversations throughout. This means that all the actors must work closely with each other to make the rapid-fire dialogue happen smoothly and seemingly effortlessly.”

The cast has been working on this play since the beginning of the spring semester, rehearsing Act 1 as a single play then moving into Act 2 as a separate unit, according to Scudera.

Said first year cast member Caroline Bormann ’21, “Not to sound cliché, but we truly are a tightknit family. As there are only eight of us, we are always working with each other and trying to work off of each other as best as we can. We look forward to the upcoming weeks as we fine tune and tweak our performances and await the official production in March.”

Bormann hopes that viewers enjoy the play and learn from it. “I hope that our production helps to initiate discourse and discussion in some form, both for our students and community. We hope that our show demonstrates the necessity of compassion and consideration for others and their ideas, as well as the importance of listening to one another.”

Added Bormann, “Although disagreement may exist, we must learn to consider, to empathize, and to respect one another, as that is the only way we can overcome issues in whatever form.”

Scudera hopes for the same outcome. “This play deals very frankly with race and diversity and shows our discomfort with addressing these issues within our communities. It is important that we learn how to communicate with each other to confront problems. Hopefully, this play will allow people to see problems from a fresh angle, and a funny one, at that, and will spark engaging, thoughtful conversation after experiencing it,” said Scudera.

The show will run March 22-25, with showings at 7:30 p.m. Thursday through Saturday, and a 2 p.m. matinee on Sunday. Tickets are available online as well as before the show at the box office, and are $8 regular admission and $5 for students and seniors. To reserve tickets, visit ursinus.edu/tickets.

Ursinus student performers have fun rehearsing Bruce Norris’ “Clybourne Park” in the Kaleidoscope Performing Arts Center.

Photo courtesy of Henry Gustafson

Happening on Campus

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Diversity Monologues reflect lack of racial diversity

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The annual Diversity Monologues were held in the Lenten Theater the week before spring break. I attended my first viewing of the Monologues last year, not because it was a CIE requirement, but because I was genuinely interested in hearing the stories of my fellow peers, especially minority students.

As a freshman, I had a difficult time settling in because I came from New York City, a fairly diverse area compared to Collegeville, a suburban, mostly conservative, area. What made this move especially hard was that it occurred during the beginning of Trump’s presidency.

As a result, I wanted to hear the voices that I wouldn’t normally get to hear at a predominately white institution. This year, I came in with the same mindset and hopes for the new selection of monologues. However, it was more of a letdown. I understand that the Monologues serve as a platform to share the stories of students with a wide range of experiences, not just racism. However, on the first night of performances, only one monologue was written by a student of color—the rest were white. On the second night, five of the students who presented were people of color, but only two of the monologues discussed race.

I can’t say that I’m shocked. Many of the monologues covered topics such as sexual assault and mental health. I’m not here to say that these issues aren’t important and shouldn’t be talked about. They should be. There should be open dialogues about these topics. But whenever I hear “diversity,” I think of different backgrounds, heritages, and cultures. I imagine a balance of students of color within a predominantly white institution.

When an event is called “the Diversity Monologues,” I expect it to be one in which students of color share their stories—during which they could talk about the obstacles they’ve faced while being in college or the challenges they faced growing up—not just white students talking about their problems. I don’t mean to sound insensitive, but people need to realize that people of color have far more struggles than white people.

Some of the white students who presented discussed Ursinus as being an open and safe community for them. As a woman of color in the audience, I actually gasped. I didn’t think about it, but it was shocking, because I was comical to hear. After Ursinus has gotten so much backlash from students of color who feel the school doesn’t care about them, it is ridiculous to hear that white students feel safe because they think the Ursinus community is open and understanding.

I’m not blaming those who created the Monologues or any of the students. I believe the reason the voices of students of color are lacking in the Monologues is because they don’t feel safe within the school.

I don’t speak for all minority students, but I know that I wouldn’t necessarily want to share my story to a crowd of students who I sincerely feel don’t care about learning what others have and had to deal with. It’s natural to feel more vulnerable sharing your story and talking about personal issues in a space where you don’t necessarily feel safe. At the end of the day, the root of this problem of racial diversity and inclusion is the campus community at large.

Ursinus loves to sell the school as being diverse when it’s really not. I feel like I’m drowning within a sea of white people. I assumed these monologues would help shine light on people of color’s experiences on our campus, but they haven’t.

Ursinus needs to prioritize the safety of minority students and provide them with the same resources as their white peers. An initiative needs to be held for more open dialogues discussing racism, sexism, and classism among all students.

While people need to understand how I and every other people of color on campus feel. They need to be aware of the issues we have faced and continue to face. If this approach were to be taken, I would hope that more minority students would feel comfortable sharing their stories at the Diversity Monologues, myself included.

Students should use art as a form of political protest

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Poets are political. Poet Sonia Sanchez said as much at the “Remembering Gwendolyn Brooks” event in Philadelphia last October. Like Sanchez, Brooks was a poet from the Black Arts Movement that lasted roughly from 1965-1975. The content of this event—though affectionate in paying dues to the great American writer—could not be separated from the current political unrest. Brooks’ work cannot be studied without acknowledging her political messages. The work of both Brooks and Sanchez show how students can also use their art as a form of political protest.

Last October, Moonstone Press called for poetry submissions inspired by Gwendolyn Brooks in honor of what would have been her 100th birthday. Historically a publisher that has supported and printed the work of black writers, Moonstone Press naturally attracted over forty local black writers to submit, and in some cases, read their work aloud at the event. The poetry readings were followed by a talk-back style discussion led by a panel.

The discussion panels included scholars Mark Crawford, scholar Herman Beavers, poet Lamont Steptoe, and Sanchez, who all took the time to reflect on both Brooks’ life and work and the continuation of her legacy of social commentary. Since the election, it seems impossible to ignore the topic of politics in a room of minorities.

Sanchez discussed issues of racism in our modern society that necessitate her continued activism. She recounted the recent FBI report that classifies “Black Identity Extremists” as “Terrorists” and “likely motivated to target law enforcement officers” (FBI Intelligence Assessment, 8/3/17).

This report, not only insulting in failing to acknowledge police brutality, represents a very real, very scary, change in policy. Not only will hate crimes against black people be ignored by higher institutions, but black people will also be considered the new “terror” threat to justify racism. When observing the recent trend in the U.S. of classifying all Middle Eastern or Muslim people as “likely terrorists,” it becomes clear that the government uses this politically-charged language to spread its umbrella of legal discrimination against people of color.

“In the voice of Gwendolyn Brooks, ’They are killing us, because we are letting them.’”

— Sonia Sanchez
Poet

Sanchez noted how it is easy to laugh at the Trump administration’s contradictions and incompetency, but also stated that “we need to get in a quick laugh and then get to work.”

As evidenced by her fiery, controversial work, Sanchez does not separate her poetry and pro-fessorship from her political activism. She recounted a story in which she phoned and petitioned the editors of the Norton Poetry Anthology every year until they started including the work of black poets. Tales like this one prove that one person can make a difference; as students, I believe we have the obligation to fight for black rights.

While many remain dangerously unaware of specific policy changes, the recent political climate has undoubtedly impacted our campus. At the close of last semester, the underlying political tension culminated in a racism—or “bias”—incident in which a student wrote a racial slur in the snow. While some may argue that this was an isolated case, it is only one of others I’ve observed representing a mere trickle of the racial hatred that flows below the surface. We need to counter these kinds of racist acts with proactivity.

On a campus level, students and staff can educate themselves on racial issues. Attending events in the Rev. Charles Rice Guest Speaker Series may serve as a good starting point to learn about black history and modern racial issues. Ursinus also offers many enlightening humanities courses—such as Dr. M. Nzidi Keita’s African-American Literature course—that help foster a deeper understanding of what it means to be black in America.

Students can also use their art as a form of protest. In writing for their school newspaper or sharing creative works that acknowledge and address racial oppression, students can direct their art towards inspiring change—just as the artists of the Black Arts Movement did. This includes opening up discussions about how to better our own small community and avoid more racist incidents.

As the FBI report ominously foreshadows even more police brutality, Sanchez urges us to act. In spreading word of these atrocities through poetry and activist spaces, in petitioning our local governments to fight racist bills, and in fostering change on our own campus, we too can chip away at the injustice ingrained in our system. As Sanchez said, “In the voice of Gwendolyn Brooks, ‘They are killing us, because we are letting them.’”
Softball wins seven straight in Florida

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The Ursinus College softball team kicked off its 2018 season with a 7-3 record over the spring break trip to Florida, including a seven-game winning streak to conclude the trip. The Bears scored 53 runs over the course of the winning streak and over the 10-game stretch the team hit four home runs.

Junior outfielder Sam Garritano and first-year utility player Heather Lazer each went yard in the 12-1 win over Mount Union on March 8. Meanwhile first-year pitcher/utility player Morgan Comfort has quickly established herself as a budding superstar.

Comfort, a Hamilton, N.J. native, hit a pair of home runs against Concordia and Lebanon Valley, respectively, but she is not simply a power hitter. She has gotten on base at a very efficient rate. She had a .400 batting average over the road trip with five extra-base-hits. So far this season she has scored 11 runs and already has nine runs batted in (RBIs) through 10 games. In four starts (and five overall appearances) Comfort has pitched 25 innings with a 1.96 ERA. Comfort’s strong pitching performances were just part of the overall strong pitching the team has gotten thus far.

Senior right handed pitcher (RHP) Kaitlyn Willis has dazzled in the start to her final campaign as the ace of the pitching staff. She has pitched a beautiful 1.54 ERA and has walked just six batters in 36.1 IP, with nearly one strikeout per inning. Her career thus far has been nothing short of spectacular, with a career ERA of 2.50 and 42 complete games in 56 career starts.

Sophomore RHP Jen Hammons has followed her promising rookie season with a 1.50 ERA through her first 4.2 innings, as she worked a hybrid role as starter and reliever. The Bears have received help all over the lineup. They have eight players with batting averages above .285 with over 10 hits, including Callie Crouse, Gabby Manto, Renee LeClerc, and Heather Lazer.

This hot start bodes well for the Bears, who have big aspirations for this season. They narrowly missed the Centennial Conference (CC) playoffs last year, finishing 17-19 and 7-9 against CC opponents, just one game behind Franklin and Marshall College for the final spot.

The team doesn’t hope to repeat last year’s tight miss. Said junior infielder Kayla Quinn, “Individually, my goal is to just enjoy myself and have fun. As a team, we have quite a few goals, but in the end we hope to be within the top four teams in the [Centennial Conference] in order to make it to the conference championships.”

Junior outfielder Faith Carson reiterated that thought: “Our goals this year as a team include making the conference tournament and being more efficient on the field as a whole.”

Carson continued, “Individually, I am striving to be smarter in the box and be a good teammate in order to help the team excel in whatever capacity possible.”

Quinn and Carson have held up their ends of the bargain so far. Quinn has hit an incredible .478 with seven RBIs and seven runs scored in the early stages of the season, while Carson has also impressed, hitting .313 with nine extra-base-hits.

On top of the aforementioned display by Comfort, the other first-year players have played well despite limited opportunities. They have combined for a .381 batting average as a unit.

Quinn is excited about the potential of the first year class and looks forward to getting them more involved in the team’s routines.

“We have a solid group of upperclassmen that have worked hard to create today’s program, and we are very excited to incorporate the freshman and create something special,” said Quinn.

Head coach Samantha Campo and assistant coaches Jerry Thompson and Amy Gentile have prepared the team for the season and have been conscientious of the team’s needs.

Said Quinn, “Our coaching staff has not only been dedicated to us during practice time but has also provided us with time every week to work individually with them if we need extra help.”

“Our coaching staff has been incredibly attentive to our potential as a unit and has incorporated a few team building activities on the weekend to boost our team chemistry. In practice, they’ve implemented the mindset of making every repetition count and to practice with a purpose,” added Carson.

The Bears return to action Thursday March 15 to host a double-header against Delaware Valley. The games are at 3 and 5 p.m., respectively. The ladies will begin CC play when they go on the road to face McDaniel College on Tuesday, March 27.
Champions: Women’s swimming 5-peats

The Ursinus College women’s swim team won the Centennial Conference (CC) championship, the fifth consecutive championship for the program, and celebrated another season of undefeated play against CC opponents.

The four-day competition took place on the campus of Franklin and Marshall College (F&M) Feb. 22-25.

The Lady Bears scored 929 total points. The next-highest team was Gettysburg College, F&M, and Washington College rounded out the top five finishers in the eight-team competition.

The performance landed eight Lady Bears on the All-CC Team, based on placements at the conference meet. Seniors Sydney Gundersen, Meggie Leitz, and Olivia Tierney, juniors Clara Baker and Peyten Lyons, and first-year swimmer Sophie May all took home gold medals and First Team All-Conference honors.

Senior Katherine Porter and junior Caroline Powell received honorable mentions for their performances in the 100 fly and 400 IM, respectively.

The Bears also swept the major awards. Head coach Mark Feinberg took home his seventh straight Coach of the Year award, guiding Gundersen and May to Most Outstanding Performer and Most Outstanding Rookie Performer honors, respectively.

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This doubles the previous Ursinus record of three swimmers set last year by Baker, Leitz, and Lyons, who all made it to Texas last season. This year they are joined by Gundersen, Tierney, and May.

Gundersen, Leitz, Lyons, and May are seeded 11th in the 800 freestyle relay. Baker, Gundersen, Lyons, and Tierney are seeded 15th in the 400 medley relay.

Baker has the Bear’s highest individual seeding. She is the 8th seed in the 100 fly with her time of 55.65. She earned four All-America certificates in her first two seasons, and will also compete in the 200 fly and 50 free in Indianapolis.

Lyons will look to defend her Most Outstanding Performer and Most Outstanding Rookie Performer honors from 2016, as well as last year’s All-America honors in the 100 and 200 back. She will compete in both backstroke races again, and will also compete in the 200 IM.

Tierney will compete in the 200 breast and Gundersen will participate in the 200 IM and 200 free to conclude her collegiate careers.

Leitz became the first in Ursinus history to medal at NCAA Championships when she finished third in last year’s 200 fly competition as a junior. The senior is seeded 15th in the event this time around and will also take part in the 100 fly and 200 back in her final meet.