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Reflections on Trans Day of Visibility

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March 31 is International Transgender Day of Visibility. According to the Human Rights Campaign, this is a day to “celebrate transgender and non-binary people around the globe and acknowledge the courage it takes to live openly and authentically.” In addition, “advocates... use the day to raise awareness around discrimination and violence that trans people still face.”

Ursinus’s student-run Gender and Sexuality Alliance (GSA) will be celebrating Transgender Day of Visibility in collaboration with S.U.N. and L.A.X. with a screening of Netflix’s “Disclosure” — a documentary on the history of trans representation in Hollywood.

I asked some fellow students to reflect on Trans Day of Visibility and what it means to them. Braidon McLaughlin, Class of 2024, says he wants the Ursinus community to know that “although there is growing support for transgender and gender-queer people, they still face lots of discrimination and can have a hard time going [through] life.” He adds, “it’s important to not only say you support [trans people], but to show it to them.”

Unfortunately, McLaughlin’s assertion of trans folks’ continued experience of discrimination and hardship rings true. Despite the pandemic, 2020 and 2021 have been cruel years in terms of anti-trans legislation. A plethora of bills proposed in the House and the Senate in multiple states. A disconcerting number of these bills have passed — recently, Arkansas passed Senate Bill 354, which prohibits trans women and girls from playing sports on women’s/girls’ teams. Upcoming bills include South Dakota’s House Bill 1217 and Alabama’s House Bill 391 (sports bans similar to Arkansas’s) and Alabama’s House Bill 1/Senate Bill 10, which would make it a felony to provide gen-
of color, especially Black trans folks, who experience homelessness, unemployment, poverty, violence, barriers to accessing healthcare, etc. at much higher rates than white trans people, according to blacktrans.org. Painter continues, “I just want cis people to acknowledge their privilege: “I would like people to think about their trans experiences to celebrate on Trans Day of Visibility, part of the trans experience to celebrate on.”

Another important part of the trans experience to celebrate on Trans Day of Visibility is pride and resilience. McLaughlin says that “I’m proud that I’ve gone through so much and I’m still here. In 8th Grade, when I first came out, I didn’t think I’d make it this far. I’m so happy I did because transitioning for me has given me confidence and happiness.” Painter also reflects on pride: “I am proud to say that I am a non-binary trans person. I think I am beautiful. I think in the trans community, there is a level of understanding that I can’t imagine is known to cis people. It is a beautiful, sacred feeling of understanding. I feel proud to be self-reliant and dig deeper.. I am proud to self-actualize. Originality was never a goal of mine, but I feel I have achieved it, as has the trans community.”

I invite the Ursinus community to celebrate Trans Day of Visibility, and to support and uplift their trans students, faculty, and staff through-out the year.
Spring Sports Return!

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Spring sports returned this past weekend, with Baseball, Softball, Golf, and Tennis all able to compete within the Centennial Conference on Saturday March 27. This was the first time any teams have competed during the 2020-2021 season, so it was a big deal to all Ursinus athletes.

The Women’s Tennis team defeated Franklin & Marshall 6-3, a huge deal for this team because it was its first victory against F&M since 2011. Caitlin Vinsonhaler and Avery Samer both won two matches to secure the win for the Bears. Adding onto that, junior Brenna Trkula and freshman Avery Samer came out on top with an 8-4 over the Diplomats in doubles. Juniors Maddie Russell and Cara Freedman were also able to defeat the Diplomats in an 8-3 win. In terms of what it felt like to be back on the courts, Trkula was very excited to have this opportunity: “It felt great to finally step out onto the courts after a year of not playing. To top it off, we pulled off a massive upset against Franklin & Marshall.” The UC Women’s Tennis team is looking forward to getting another win next Saturday when they play Washington College.

The Men’s Tennis team suffered an upset to F&M in an 8-1 loss. Mason Groff and Matt Fontanese were the only ones to pull out a win for the Bears during their doubles match. They are looking forward to their next match up against Washington College this coming Saturday.

Next up was the Women’s Softball team, which played a doubleheader against F&M. The Diplomats pulled out the first game 3-1, but the Bears did not let the first loss get to their heads and were able to make a huge comeback in the second game. After the Diplomats scored another 3 on the Bears, Ursinus pushed back with a huge home run from Morgan Comfor. This helped to jumpstart the Bears and led them to an 11-6 victory over the Diplomats. They are looking forward to their next game against Washington College as well.

Following softball’s doubleheader, the UC Baseball team had one of their own. Going up against F&M, the Bears put up a good fight. In the first game, they had a rocky start but were able to pull it together and put some numbers on the board. Dan Icaza was one of the first to do so, hitting a single and eventually getting pushed home by Will Peiffer’s double. F&M was able to respond relatively quickly, ending the game with 4-2 win over the Bears. In the second game the Bears tried to keep their heads up, however F&M was fired up and ready to go. The Diplomats defeated the Bears 6-5. Even though the Bears were not able to pull out this win, it was nice to be able to experience what a game would be like in a normal season, “It was nice being able to go out and compete against another team in our conference. Obviously, it’s been a while since we last played so I just soaked up the moment and was happy to finally play again,” states junior Dan Icaza. The UC Baseball team is looking forward to redeeming themselves this coming Saturday against Washington College.

Finishing off the games this past Saturday was the Women’s Golf team. They were able to make an impression at the McDaniel invite by being the only team to put players out on the field and pull through with a title. This led to the team having a total of 444 points at the invitational. With Jessica Lamarca, Rebecca Chernoff, Carolyn DeCicco and Bailey Hann, these Bears were able to make a name for themselves in the conference. They will be returning this coming Saturday for the Gettysburg Invitational.

After lots of hard work, we wish all spring sports the best of luck in all of their upcoming competitions. Go Bears!

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Want to write an article for The Grizzly? Contact us at grizzly@ursinus.edu

www.ursinusgrizzly.com
Advice to a College Underclassman: “Keep an Open Mind”

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The best piece of advice I can give to a college underclassman is to keep an open mind. College is a time where you find yourself. It is the first time you experience independence in your own beliefs, values, interests, and passions. Life is a journey and your values and interests when you were in high school will change during your college experience, as classes, extracurricular activities, and social interactions with classmates and friends influence you.

Going back to my freshman year of college, I had no idea what I wanted to do. All I knew was I wanted to play basketball in college. I chose Exercise Science as my major because I loved playing basketball as well as working out. It was not until the end of the freshman spring semester I realized that the college I was at was not the right school for me. I knew I wanted to be either a college basketball or strength and conditioning coach but, wanted to strictly learn more about coaching. I started researching schools that had Exercise Science programs but also had a minor in coaching. At the end of the summer, I decided to attend my sophomore year at Ursinus College. At this school, I still envisioned myself majoring in Exercise Science, minoring in coaching, and playing basketball there. Everything panned out except playing basketball. I knew I still wanted to be a part of the basketball team, so I played a different role on the team as a student manager. In addition to being a student manager, I still wanted to come up something new. It may be hard at first, but with hard work and dedication, you can find greatness.

Fast-forwarding to my junior year, I told myself I was getting a job after graduation. I was tired of studying countless hours for my classes. Approaching senior year, my mind changed. I researched college strength and basketball coaches to see what experiences, credentials, and education they had. After researching college coaches, most of them had master’s degrees and coached during their time at in graduate school. In order to get my foot in the door, I decided to start applying to graduate programs for coaching. I ended up loving graduate school and my strength and conditioning coaching opportunity at Tufts University. Never stop educating yourself. Your mind develops openness from new experiences and from learning new things.

Image courtesy of Alison DiGuglielmo

Advice to a College Underclassman: “Keep an Open Mind”

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See more about Alissa DiGuglielmo at www.ursinusgrizzly.com
Omega Chi

Omega Chi (OChi) is a local sorority at Ursinus College, founded in 1934. This group of young women uses the motto, “Unity, Sisterhood, Fun.” The purpose of OChi sorority is to promote an essence of companionship and unity, as well as to encourage worthwhile social and service activities.

This sorority has a history of tight-knit relationships among both current members and alumnae. Current Omega Chi members are incredibly excited to welcome new members. Noel Long ’21, New Member Educator of the 2020 education class, mentions how rewarding it is to lead the education process: “Educating a new class has meant the absolute world to me. I’m super proud of my sorority and all of the service we’ve done for the community over the years and just knowing that we have more girls to continue to give back and to join our family is something that warms my heart,” Long says.

New member Kylie Halko ’23 states how Omega Chi has given her amazing opportunities to have a tight-knit friend group with amazing girls. “It gave me an opportunity to meet new people in a time where it’s difficult to be social in general,” Halko said. Indeed, COVID-19 limited social interactions, but the pandemic did not prevent the sorority from being able to educate the new members, let alone be with each other on-campus.

Long ignored the negative rumors that she heard on campus regarding sororities. Had she listened to them, her time at Ursinus would have ended much sooner and she would have transferred, she says. The Omega Chi sorority has made Ursinus feel more like home for Long. “Omega Chi means more to me than most people could imagine. I [have considered] leaving Ursinus [before], but when I found this sorority, they welcomed me with open arms, and I couldn’t have been more thankful. Most people just throw stigma and stereotypes to fraternities and sororities, but very few actually take a second to ask how the people involved feel...how it’s changed their lives,” Long states.

Rush Week in the fall is the best opportunity for prospective students to meet members in all Greek organizations. Hannah Traub ’22 had no knowledge of Omega Chi until Rush Week. Since her time rushing, Traub has never looked back and could not be more grateful. “I actually didn’t know anything about Omega Chi, until my roommate made me tag along to a rush event to meet all of the members. The atmosphere was so welcoming, I didn’t feel I needed to act a certain way because all of the sisters were just so genuinely themselves. After that I knew I wanted to join a group like this. Since then, I have found a safe space where I am able to be surrounded by people I love and who motivate me to succeed,” she said.

Reach out to any sister of Omega Chi to learn more information, or follow them on Instagram “@ochiordie.”

“[Omega Chi] gave me an opportunity to meet new people in a time where it’s difficult to be social in general.”

- Kylie Halko
2023

“Most people just throw stigma and stereotypes to fraternities and sororities, but very few actually take a second to ask how the people involved feel...how it’s changed their lives.”

- Noel Long
2021
The Rotaract Club

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Are you looking for a new organization to join at Ursinus College? Maybe you love service and are interested in partnering with the local community to help fulfill that love. The Ursinus Rotaract Club may be a good fit for you!

The UC Rotaract Club is a service organization at Ursinus that is sponsored by the Rotary Club of Collegeville, in partnership with Rotary International, in order to help the local community. Past service(s) that the Rotaract Club worked on include volunteering at local churches and helping its members with their events (e.g. serving food, visiting animal shelters, working with dogs who have been victims of abuse, selling jewelry around the holidays to raise money for children's toys, etc.). Rotaract prioritizes the community's needs and provides help wherever the assistance is needed.

The Rotaract Club's current president, Maia Peele '23, who took on the position in Spring 2020, has shared that the club does not just connect students with service opportunities but does so much more. "Rotaract provides students the opportunity to improve on their executive skills...and participate in local events...to make connections with professionals in diverse fields."

- Maia Peele
2023

Peele expressed her wishes to have programming in-person as well. "We hope to continue more in-person, hands-on service opportunities in the future, but the current situation does not make that too feasible. The personal aspect of working directly with the Collegeville community is a very valuable experience that we hope we can provide students with in the near future," she said.

Currently, the Rotaract Club is holding a Hygiene Donation Drive, which is tentatively set to end around Easter Sunday! They are requesting items such as toothpaste, deodorant, lotion, sanitary napkins, wipes, and other relevant items. This donation drive is in collaboration with St. James Episcopal Church (located on Germantown Pike), aiming to bring essential supplies to the local communities. If you are interested in donating you can bring your donations to The Bombberger Chapel, located in the basement of Bombberger Hall. If you are also interested in helping transport the supplies to the church, or generally participating in some events, reach out to Maia Peele at mapeele@ursinus.edu.

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OPINION

For Better or Worse? A Review of Zack Snyder’s “Justice League”

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What a long, strange trip it has been to Zack Snyder’s “Justice League.” The story behind this movie, a four hour long director’s cut of 2017’s “Justice League,” is arguably more interesting than the story of the movie itself. A family tragedy, studio meddling, and on-set accusations will make this film go down in history as one of the most troubled blockbuster productions of all time. Whatever the behind the scenes drama and hearsay, director Zack Snyder’s unadulterated vision for the World’s Greatest Super Heroes is here. And it’s... okay? I guess?

This is such a bizarre animal, first and foremost because of its running time. Coming in at a whopping 242 minutes, this movie is a behemoth. Thankfully, the narrative is broken up into chapters, which inevitably invites a fragmented, elongated watch. I myself watched this movie over the span of an entire day, treating it more like a miniseries than a movie. I truthfully can’t imagine sitting through this film in one go. It’s far too over-indulgent and grand to be enjoyably viewed in one go.

Speaking of over-indulgence... let’s talk Zack Snyder. Zack Snyder is an incredibly frustrating filmmaker. His movies are known for ultra-violence, excessive slo-mo, and thin characterization. He’s the definition of style over substance. That being said, this is one of Snyder’s more mature endeavors. Yes, there is plenty of slo-mo and ultra-violence, but there are also plenty of slower, more complex character moments to balance out his tired old habits. 2021’s Justice League, perhaps due to it’s gargantuan runtime, really has room to let things breathe. Snyder is typically terrible with pacing, but this one here clips along at a good, steady pace. I never felt overly bored or detached. This is, without a doubt, a huge improvement over the nightmarish slog that was 2016’s “Batman v. Superman: Dawn of Justice.”

The cast fares way better in this iteration as well. Two notable standouts who were absolutely butchered in the theatrical cut are Ray Fisher’s Cyborg and Ciaran Hinds’ Steppenwolf. In the 2017 version, Cyborg was an afterthought, the runt of the Justice League litter. In this version, there’s way more done to flesh out his character. Particularly, this film centers the relationship with his father, Silas Stone, as the emotional heart of the film. Steppenwolf was a generic video game style boss in 2017, now he emerges as a character with some real, if not wholly original, pathos.

Despite its strides away from the pitfalls of the past, Zack Snyder’s “Justice League” is still a mixed bag. It’s more reserved, yet still somehow pretentious. It’s lighter, but still grim and dour. If you’re a Snyder fan, I can’t imagine you not loving this. For the general audience, however, this is simply too much to chew on. Not enough new is brought to the table to justify all the hubbub.

The Perfect Streaming Service

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Ever since its inception in 2007, the idea of television and movie streaming has slowly crept into people’s lives and now it is almost essential. It seems that in almost every household there is a subscription to at least one streaming service. On almost every remote there is a button directly linked to a streaming application. Among some of the more popular ones that we are most familiar with, Netflix has over 200 million subscribers, Disney+ has around 90 million, and Hulu has around 40 million. There are so many movies and shows to pick from, which makes it hard to find what to watch sometimes. What is even harder to pick is the right streaming service. Of all the different platforms to choose from, which one is the perfect service? Short answer: NONE. I have multiple subscriptions in my household and some of them I really like, but I don’t consider any of them a superior platform and I’ll tell you why: choice. The perfect streaming service does not exist, but I am going to do my best to illustrate why and maybe come up with the perfect streaming service.

One of the main reasons none of these services are the perfect one is because they are ultimately all the same. They all have a home page, a watchlist, and a user interface that is almost an identical setup across all platforms, with the differences being vertical versus horizontal setup and color scheme. The only major difference between the platforms is the content that they have. The only competition that we see between Netflix and Hulu is the exclusive contracts of shows and movies. When shows like The Office are leaving because they are going to be on a new streaming service, they market that service specifically for their exclusivity. The advertisements for Peacock were “Subscribe to our service! For we have The Office!” By contrast, music streaming services have relatively similar music catalogs, but they offer a different experience by implementing different features and a different user experience in every tab, in every stream. Streaming service updates are usually only in the “What’s New to Watch” section which can sometimes be a show that was on the other platform that you already own.

More and more new originals are coming to these platforms, which is great, but what makes them any different from Cable TV? The more platforms being released, the more money we must throw to watch the shows we like. In a perfect world, the perfect streaming service exists. A perfect streaming service would include all the shows that you would normally find on Hulu, Netflix, and Prime, but be found on its home screen available to watch within the same application. A perfect streaming platform would also include a movie/tv show rental interface as well. The idea is to have an all-in-one service to fit every streaming need. Then the only thing to decide between the Netflixes and Hulus would be how good their originals are, and not what exclusive rights they have.
do to support the community. Senior women's lacrosse player Grace Langen comments on how The Hidden Opponent is wholesome and welcoming: "As campus captains, we aspire to empower not only the athletes on our teams, but the campus community as a whole. To do this, we use our platform to create a voice for all athletes to show that there is so much power in vulnerabilities. Having this large pool of advocates for mental health is the most beautiful thing to see. It reminds us all that we are never facing the hidden opponent alone. As athletes, we want to be the strongest on the field – both physically and mentally," says Langen.

Our campus chapter has several captains from across all sports and class years. In addition to Grace, we have senior women's tennis player, Maddie Sorebo; junior women's soccer player, Skylar Knapp; junior men's soccer player, Tyler Lewin; sophomore softball players Anna Mefford and Allyson Meakim; and sophomore women's track member, Erin Drebushenko. Maddie Sorebo talks about how every season, 2021 especially, we must keep ourselves in good spirits; whether it be after an excruciatingly difficult practice or a hard to swallow loss, teams must move forward rather than looking back on what could have been better. "This program has done such incredible things for athletes everywhere, and I believe that this group could continue to do incredible things on our small campus. Since it's such a tight-knit community, impacting and helping one athlete with their mental health can create a wave to show that no one is alone and there's always someone to listen," says Sorebo.

"As campus captains, we aspire to empower not only the athletes on our teams, but the campus community as a whole."

—Grace Langen, Class of 2021

Their most recent project was putting together The Hidden Opponent Spirit Week, where the campus captains worked together to dedicate each day during the week of March 8th to kick off the celebration of competition for spring sports. The spirit week was successful for many teams, some of the days included: Team Pride Day, Giving Tuesday, Motivational Monday and Pajama Day Thursday. Friday, the 12th, was Green Out Friday, when student-athletes wore green to support and promote The Hidden Opponent. We hope to see more events like this in the near future.

Sophomore campus captain, Ally Meakim, speaks on how The Hidden Opponent has not just helped her athletic community, the Ursinus Women's Softball Team, but also herself, "We hope to start conversations and spread awareness about student athlete mental health, and together face the hidden opponent. Being a campus captain has allowed me to learn more about mental health and the importance of treating our mental health as we treat our physical health. We hope to show our fellow student athletes that no one is fighting their battles alone and we are all in it together," says Meakim.

"We hope to start conversations and spread awareness about student athlete mental health, and together face the hidden opponent."

—Ally Meakim, Class of 2023

Keep an eye out for upcoming events from our campus captains. Reach out to any of the campus captains to learn more about The Hidden Opponent and follow their Instagram: @tho_ursinus

"I'm actually pretty okay with everything right now. I feel like everybody has found their own way to have fun and make the best of everything safely by now."

—Mason Banks, Class of 2023

Watch that feel-good show one more time, listen to that song that reminds you of better days, spend time safely with friends and family. Anything that helps, big or small, makes a world of difference. For if we can make it through this, we will emerge tougher, bolder, and wiser than we ever were.
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No matter who you are, no matter what your walk of life, this has been an especially tough year. COVID-19 has turned and continues to turn our world upside down every single day. We’ve all lost a lot. Some have lost jobs, some have lost loved ones, and some have just plain lost peace of mind. After months and months of this darkness, it seems hope may be finally on the way.

With vaccinations rolling out at warp speed, there appears to finally be a light at the end of the tunnel. We may finally be seeing the end of this pandemic, and with that it’s time to focus on that sense of hope rather than on all the pain and tragedy of the last year. Hope is a powerful thing. It represents the dreams of a new tomorrow, a tomorrow undaunted by the hardships of days gone by. In trying times, such as those we’re living through, hope can be a difficult feeling to find. When things seem bleak, hope is elusive. However, it’s during the difficult days, when all seems lost, that hope is most important. We must always believe that tomorrow will be better than today. That feeling, that hope, will drive out the darkness. It will allow us to trudge forward, to keep going when every fiber of our being is crying out to give up, to stay down.

“I’m actually pretty okay with everything right now. I feel like everybody has found their own way to have fun and make the best of everything safely by now.”

—Mason Banks, Class of 2023

We spoke with a couple of Ursinus College students to get their perspective on their own mental health and how they are keeping hope alive during the ongoing difficulty of this current pandemic. Hope is a powerful thing. It represents the dreams of a new tomorrow, a tomorrow undaunted by the hardships of days gone by. In trying times, such as those we’re living through, hope can be a difficult feeling to find. When things seem bleak, hope is elusive. However, it’s during the difficult days, when all seems lost, that hope is most important. We must always believe that tomorrow will be better than today. That feeling, that hope, will drive out the darkness. It will allow us to trudge forward, to keep going when every fiber of our being is crying out to give up, to stay down.

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Ursinus has just initiated a chapter of a mental health organization called The Hidden Opponent, which is led by on-campus student-athlete captains. The Hidden Opponent is a non-profit advocacy group on college campuses globally dedicated to raising awareness of a stigma within collegiate sports culture, ‘the hidden opponent’ of the unspoken mental health issues that student-athletes struggle with in and out of season.

The purpose of The Hidden Opponent is to bring attention and give the collegiate athletic community a different perspective on the student-athlete lifestyle. The three main goals of The Hidden Opponent, here on our own campus and others, is to advocate, educate and support. They emphasize the importance of communication between teammates and friends you may know who are struggling as collegiate athletes mentally. They also set small goals for teams to reach together and COVID-friendly activities to participate in to uphold a sense of team community in such restrictive times. The student-athletic community is such an important part of Ursinus culture, and we must do our best to support one another when we need it most.

Campus captains are student-athletes who are leaders of The Hidden Opponent. These leaders are both student-athletes and others who want to find out more information about what they can do to help support their teammates and friends.

Thinking of You!