

Tuition up 4.4%

By **GRIFFIN KRUEGER**,
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Undergraduate tuition is set to increase 4.4% for the upcoming 2025-26 academic year, adding an additional \$2,300 to the annual cost of a Loyola education, which now totals \$54,530.

The increase is higher than the 3.9% raise the university implemented for the current academic year, but is comparable to the 4.5% increase put in place for the 2023-24 academic year, The Phoenix previously reported. At 4.4%, this year's hike is among the largest increases of the past decade.

The price of meal plans will also undergo an increase between 4 and 4.4%, while room and board fees will be upped by an average of 3.5%. The additional fees were announced Jan. 22 after the university's Board of Trustees officially approved the operating budget for the upcoming academic year.

With this increase, the university fulfilled their ongoing pledge to keep annual tuition increases from straying 1.5% above the average annual increase of 3.8% over the last 10 years.

Wayne Magdzairz, Loyola's senior vice president, chief financial officer and chief business officer, said the university is committed to ensuring tuition dollars are used carefully and strategically.

TUITION, PAGE 3

Loyola and Rogers Park communities react as ICE arrests pick up across city

By **ELENI DUTTA**,
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KAYLA TANADA / THE PHOENIX

The Chicago Police Department is prohibited from assisting with ICE activity.

As President Donald Trump's mass deportation plan picks up in Chicago, Loyola and Rogers Park are responding to the ongoing increase in Immigration and Customs Enforcement activity in the city.

Over 100 people have been arrested in the Chicago area since the Trump administration's crackdown began, according to Chicago Police Department Superintendent Larry Snelling. Despite the arrests, Mayor Brandon Johnson reaffirmed Chicago's status as a sanctuary city according to ABC7 Chicago.

Ald. Maria Hadden (49th) said she finds the situation concerning, as the 49th Ward maintains a strong community of immigrants — both documented and undocumented. The presence of many immigrant families is one of the things Hadden said makes Rogers Park great.

Hadden said the threat of deportation is creating an atmosphere of fear, leaving many people afraid to take their kids to school, set up their businesses or simply step outside.

"It really erodes our sense of community," Hadden said. "It's not good for the city, certainly not good for the country and definitely hard on individuals and their families."

Along with 39 fellow City Council members, Hadden voted to reject a proposal modifying the city's Welcoming City Ordinance, which prohibits CPD from assisting with ICE enforcement actions. The ordinance also ensures undocumented immigrants aren't prosecuted solely because of their immigration status.

Hadden said the ordinance is one safeguard against racial profiling and other civil rights violations.

"There are a lot of people who are first and second and third generation immigrants," Hadden said. "Maybe you're dressed in something that has an enforcement agent thinking that you don't belong here, and now you've got to worry about law enforcement questioning your right to be here"

In response to heightened concerns, Hadden said she's taking protective measures to navigate any potential disruptions community members may come across.

To keep pace with the change in presidential administration, Hadden said she encourages Loyola students to pay attention to what's happening in the news and to get involved with student or community organizations.

"It can be hard to keep up with all of it," Hadden said. "These changes aren't just about people's immigration status. There's not a person they won't impact."

IMMIGRATION, PAGE 3



MAO REYNOLDS / THE PHOENIX

Students lined up to receive free banana pudding at Chi Tea's grand opening.

Students Chi out new spot

By **MAO REYNOLDS**,
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Despite the gloomy gray skies and below-freezing temperatures, spirits were high amid the line of more than 100 people. This wasn't a line for a basketball game or a club — it was the queue for the grand opening of Chi Tea's first Chicago location.

Even though the halal burger and bubble tea chain is named after Chicago, Chi Tea didn't have a location in the city until Jan. 24, when it opened its doors at 6474 N. Sheridan Rd. It has three other locations in Illinois — in Lombard, Schaumburg and Bolingbrook — along with one in Frisco, Texas.

Abdurahman Sharif said he and his fellow co-owners, Zak Ayyubi and Aman Siddiqui, always dreamed of owning their own business. Sharif said they looked for five years for a

space in the city with a built-in, bare-bones kitchen structure, which they found after the June closure of The Halal Guys.

Sharif said they were also looking for a location with heavy traffic, and the new location, sandwiched between Loyola's Lake Shore Campus and the Loyola Red Line stop, was "amazing."

"I hope to be humble, but it's a shock that people still support Chi Tea the way that they support it," Sharif said. "The lines — people wait in the cold, in the rain, in the snow. Whatever it is, it's beautiful, isn't it?"

Saad Qureshi, a second-year nursing student, said he waited for 30 to 45 minutes in line. Qureshi said he was excited to see the new location because he was familiar with the location near his home in Bolingbrook.

CHI TEA, PAGE 10

Volleyball starts season 6-0

By **CHRISTOPHER J. HENRY**,
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The No. 8 Loyola men's volleyball team remains undefeated after six games at home.

They continued their strong start to the season with a commanding three-set win over the University of Mount Olive Jan. 25 at Gentile Arena, with strong individual performances and dynamic team chemistry

Loyola has been firing on all cylinders, led by redshirt fourth-year outside hitter Parker Van Buren, who earned MIVA Offensive Player of the Week after a dominant performance that included 38 points across two straight matches. Van Buren's 4.08 kills per set have been crucial to the Ramblers' success, along with second-year outside hitter Daniel Fabikovic, who ranks among MIVA's leaders in kills and hitting percentage.

The set began with Mount Olive's Jackson Lahey delivering a kill. Loyola quickly responded with a kill by second-year outside hitter Jake Read, assisted by third-year setter Ryan McElligott, to level the score at 1-1.

The teams exchanged points in the early stages, with notable kills by Mount Olive's Kory Grant and Loyola's third-year middle blocker Brad Bell making it 3-2 in favor of the Trojans.

The Trojans extended their lead to 5-2 following a service ace by Tate Sandvig. However, Loyola capitalized on a Sandvig service error and an attack error by Blake Hosic, narrowing the gap to 5-4. The Trojans then

seized momentum, benefiting from consecutive attack errors by Fabikovic, which prompted a Loyola timeout with Mount Olive ahead 8-5. After the timeout, Loyola's offense ignited.

A kill by Van Buren, a service ace by Fabikovic and a Sandvig error tied the score at 8-8.

VOLLEYBALL, PAGE 14



MEGAN DUNN / THE PHOENIX

Third-year setter Ryan McElligott winds up for a serve during Loyola's win Jan. 25.

Metra receives federal grant to rebuild Rogers Park UP North station

NEWS, PAGE 3

Should Loyola build a pedestrian bridge over North Sheridan Road

OPINION, PAGE 8

L Stop Musts: Chicago movie theater edition

ARTS, PAGE 11

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NEWS

Plan to rezone North Broadway

North Broadway is scheduled to be rezoned for higher density, mixed-use development.

Deputy News Editor Hunter Minné laid out the plans.

REZONING, PAGE 6



KATRINA DE GUZMAN / THE PHOENIX

OPINION

Discernment and Trump's TikTok tactics

Opinion Editor Hailey Gates implores Americans to think about Trump, TikTok and what they pay attention to.

"Trump is a businessman — he's centered much of his political identity around his success in the private sector. His goal isn't simply to win elections and harbor power, it's to gain capital in the form of attention — capitalistic expansion in the 21st-century frontier," Gates wrote.

TIKTOK, PAGE 7

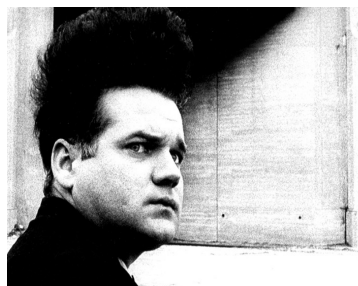
ARTS

David Lynch's "Eraserhead"

Following the Jan. 15 death of filmmaker David Lynch, arts writer Matt Sorce revisited Lynch's debut film "Eraserhead."

"Despite early reception deeming the movie unwatchable, 'Eraserhead' endures as a haunting exploration of fear and isolation," Sorce wrote.

ERASERHEAD, PAGE 11



COURTESY OF LIBRA FILMS INTERNATIONAL

SPORTS

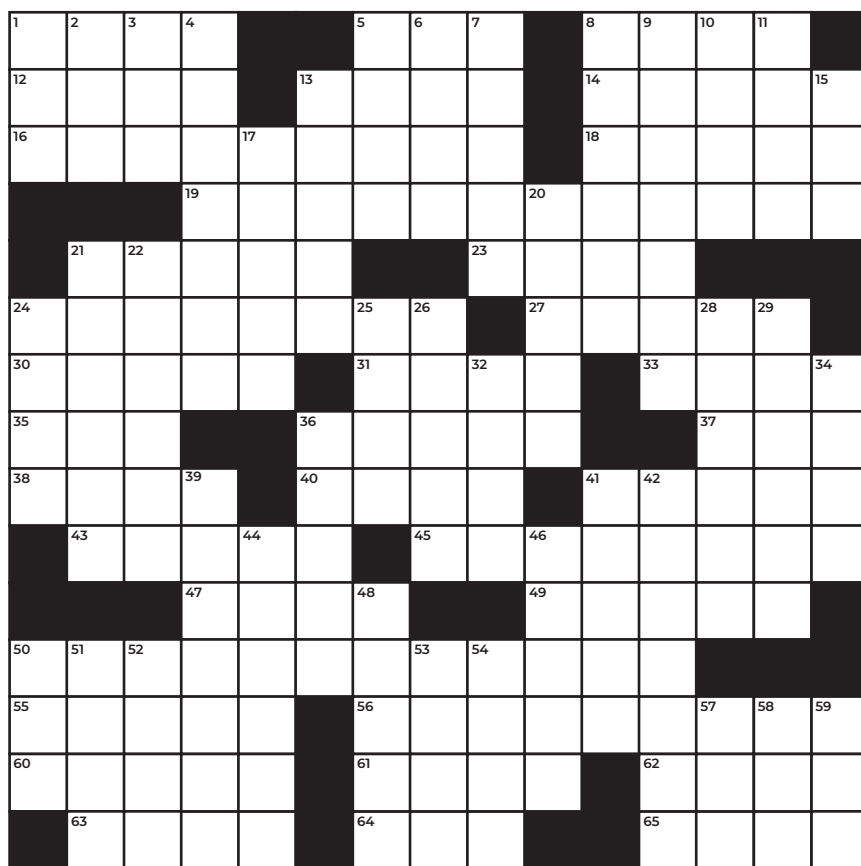
Shane Davis returns to coach men's volleyball

After coaching men's volleyball 2004-2015, Shane Davis has returned to Rogers Park to lead the team once again.

Sports writer Christopher J. Henry spoke to Davis about his journey both playing and coaching volleyball.

DAVIS, PAGE 15

THE PHOENIX CROSSWORD



MAO REYNOLDS / THE PHOENIX

ACROSS

- 1. Tempo
- 5. Evening hrs.
- 8. In ____ (stuck)
- 12. "Dude..."
- 13. Instagram's answer to a TikTok
- 14. "The Green Knight" actor Dev
- 16. Where mystery meat might be served
- 18. Start of a Christmas carol
- 19. Packets containing money gifted for 50-Across
- 21. "Matilda" author Dahl
- 23. Swedish automaker
- 24. Food eaten on 50-Across to symbolize wealth and good luck
- 27. Interrogate ruthlessly
- 30. Follows the rules
- 31. Remy the rat's brother
- 33. Linguist, activist and author ____ Chomsky

- 35. Olive product
- 36. Tremble
- 37. Popular UK music magazine, for short
- 38. Accountant's charges
- 40. Panic at the Disco singer Brendon
- 41. Knight's horse
- 43. Beatles drummer Ringo
- 45. Objects lit to celebrate 50-Across
- 47. Wiener schnitzel ingredient
- 49. Slightest amount
- 50. Annual observance important in many East and Southeast Asian cultures
- 55. Do penance
- 56. ____ Brontë
- 60. "I ____ Be Sedated" (Ramoness song)
- 61. Plays a kazoo
- 62. Washer cycle
- 63. Unit of lettuce
- 64. Short albums, for short
- 65. Heroine created by 56-Across

DOWN

- 1. London-based TV network
- 2. Historical time period
- 3. "____ Wiedersehen!"
- 4. Word derived from the Greek for "healing"
- 5. Father, en France
- 6. Lo ____ (noodle dish)
- 7. Some Eastern Europeans
- 8. Lacking + or -, electrically
- 9. Socialist magazine named after French revolutionary movement
- 10. Above
- 11. Grumpy Cat, for one
- 13. ____-wip (dessert topping)
- 15. "____ Misérables"
- 17. Informs
- 20. Bird on the Mexican flag
- 21. July birthstones
- 22. Brunch order
- 24. Perry the Platypus' nemesis, informally
- 25. Brain surgeon's sci.
- 26. Outlook alternative
- 28. Solitary sorts
- 29. Expression of grief
- 32. Company with a shark plushie called BLÁHAJ
- 34. Docs prescribe them
- 36. Holy book in Islam
- 39. African grassland
- 41. Rob
- 42. Fragrant flower
- 44. Brush up on
- 46. Cubs and Cards, briefly
- 48. Milk, in Managua
- 50. Congressional concern
- 51. Home state of Walter Frederick Morrison, inventor of the Frisbee
- 52. Zero
- 53. Defeat, slangily
- 54. Vegetables often served candied
- 57. Gift from Santa
- 58. Paving material
- 59. Barely manage, with "out"

Solution at LoyolaPhoenix.com/Crossword

This crossword was edited by Katrina De Guzman.

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MEETINGS

Sports: Sunday at 4 p.m. in Mundelein room 408

Arts: Sunday at 4 p.m. in Mundelein room 407

News: Sunday at 4:30 p.m. in Mundelein room 406

Opinion: Sunday at 5 p.m. in Mundelein room 407

Photo: Monday at 6 p.m. in Mundelein room 407

ABOUT

This is the official, editorially independent student newspaper of Loyola University Chicago, distributed on Loyola's Water Tower and Lake Shore campuses every Wednesday, barring school breaks and examinations.

The Phoenix can be reached at (773) 508-7110 or by mailing correspondence to the School of Communication at 51 E. Pearson St. To suggest a story or join as a writer, directly contact a member of our staff or reach out on X or Instagram, @PhoenixLoyola.

More information and content is available on our Instagram and website, LoyolaPhoenix.com.

From the Editor's Desk: Time to close our laptops in class

By **GRIFFIN KRUEGER**, gkrueger1@luc.edu

I've learned a lot in the seven semesters I've completed here at Loyola. But of all the ill-advised things I did as a first-year, the one I regret the most is spending valuable class time focused on my laptop screen.

In my case this mostly took the form of browsing the news, answering emails and writing articles for The Phoenix. Perhaps these aren't the worst attention-stealing activities one could partake in, but what's for sure is my attention wasn't being paid in full to the classes going on outside my screen.

At the beginning of my second year I resolved to keep my laptop nestled away in my backpack during lectures. Immediately I felt a difference. Relegated to just a spiral notebook

and pen, I was more engaged in lectures than I'd ever been before. What's more, I found studying for exams to be easier as much of the information was already lodged in my brain.

I'm sure by now multiple professors have made the point that writing notes by hand is better for memory and learning, and I'm sure you're rolling your eyes right now at hearing it again. It may be trite, but it's true.

Don't just take it from me, listen to the experts. 2024 research by the Norwegian University of Science and Technology found when taking notes by hand students have to actively pay attention to the incoming information and process it — prioritize it, consolidate it and try to relate it to things they've learned before, according to Scientific American. This can make it easier to stay engaged and

grasp new concepts.

Setting aside the educational benefits, frankly it's a little absurd how we allow ourselves to be distracted from the information we're paying thousands and thousands of dollars to learn. Every hour of class at Loyola costs around \$480, according to the Bursar's Office. I don't know about you, but I can't imagine paying \$480 to play 2048.

Cycling between social media and online shopping isn't just a distraction for those around you — it's a distraction for those around you. Few things are more frustrating than being taken out of a lecture by an attention-stealing screen from the row in front of me.

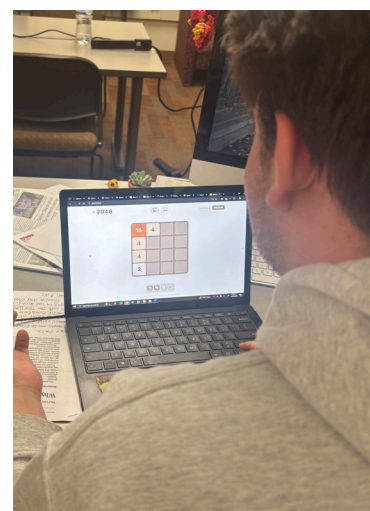
I don't mean to be castigating or holier than thou, but since we've come this far I must also say — it's just plain disrespectful to ignore your professors. Professors work hard to

ensure their lectures are both engaging and informative. They've dedicated their lives to teaching, despite students' often lukewarm responses to the notion of learning.

Because I decided to close my laptop, not only have I been able to fill up a stack of notebooks I'll be able to keep and reference as I enter professional life, but I also think I've gotten the most out of my Loyola education.

As some of us find ourselves reassessing our relationship with digital technology, the perfect place to start may just be setting our laptops aside. When those inevitable lapses in focus arise, I'd recommend looking out the window for a moment.

Griffin Krueger is the Editor-in-Chief of The Loyola Phoenix.



HAILEY GATES / THE PHOENIX
Every hour of class costs \$480.

NEWS

Chicago ICE arrests prompt support for immigrants

IMMIGRATION, CONTINUED

Loyola's Vice President for Student Development, Keith Champagne, released a statement Jan. 20 supporting undocumented students. Suggestions for students in the statement included attending a "Know Your Rights" seminar, carrying identification when in public, and seeking advice from a professional immigration attorney if necessary.

"We wanted to remind people of the support and resources available to help them navigate the uncertainty and care for themselves and one another," Champagne wrote in an email to the Phoenix.

Third-year elementary education and teaching major Aniq Jewa, who works as the lead intern for Loyola's Undocumented Student Program, said her work focuses on reducing the barriers which could potentially impact the support and inclusion of undocumented students.

She said there are also challenges regarding trust within the undocumented student community.

"A lot of times undocumented students don't really know where to go," Jewa said. "It's kind of like a slippery slope as to who they can tell about their status."

Jewa said the program has historically experienced low attendance, which she believes stems from concerns of potentially exposing one's immigration status. The news of ICE operations has worsened student turnout, according to Jewa.

"Two to three people that I know have told me directly that they were at the Armory or going to school, and then ICE officers came and tried to ask them questions," Jewa said. "It's even more of an issue with these policies in place."

Intern for the Undocumented Student Program Oteju Tofa shared a similar sentiment. She said the recent political climate has made students reluctant to accept the program's resources.

Tofa said she called on senior faculty and staff to start educating themselves on things like the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals renewals and undocumented student advocacy.

"It's all about just doing the best you can," Tofa said. "I just want students to know we have their back and they're not alone in this process."

The 49th Ward office is current-



KAYLA TANADA / THE PHOENIX

The Chicago Police Department reported more than 100 arrests have taken place in the city since the start of the raids.

ly collaborating with Protect RP, a nonprofit which formed in 2016 and has reemerged in response to the current ICE activity.

A representative of Protect RP, who requested to remain anonymous, said the organization has a multi-pronged approach toward safeguarding migrants, where volunteers are trained to engage in ICE Watch — a communication system which notifies people in surrounding areas of ICE raids through non-interfering documentation.

"We don't want people getting

arrested or injured," the representative said. "But to show support after ICE leaves, those folks still need legal resources or other community support resources."

The organization is connected through legal aid resources throughout Chicago, and the representative said they're lucky to have already built network connections with other nonprofits during Trump's previous administration.

A major shift from the new Trump administration is the removal of policies limiting migrant arrests at "sen-

sitive" locations, like churches and schools, The AP reported.

Fears of ICE raids around schools were raised Jan. 24 when reports arose of agent activity at Hamlin Elementary School in the Back of the Yards neighborhood on Chicago's Southwest side. The reports were later disproved as the officials belonged to the U.S. secret service, according to The Chicago Tribune.

However, the representative said similar situations are of concern in Rogers Park, especially with the number of undocumented immigrants.

"We've already made contact with all the principals to basically help them connect with their Know Your Rights training," the representative said. "I know CPS is doing things as well on their own end, which is great, but we're providing back-end support for parents and students with people who we can connect with quicker than CPS probably could at times."

A teacher who works with immigrant children at a local nonprofit, and who requested to remain anonymous, said it's important to stay informed about the federal deportation policies in order to spread awareness of the recent changes.

"Don't underestimate how scary this is for people," the teacher said. "People are getting taken away from their families, taken away from their jobs, taken away from everything they've known."

The teacher said the changes have created confusion and fear, especially among children and parents. Since news of ICE activity began circulating, school attendance has gone down, according to the teacher. In addition, students are struggling to rationalize their position in the current events.

She said some students use humor to process the situation among classmates, while others show signs of confusion. One student, misunderstanding the purpose of a "Know Your Rights" flyer, tore it up upon learning it was related to immigration, according to the teacher.

"I don't know how much their parents are telling them," the teacher said. "It's hard to know as an educator because what can you do to protect the people that you're responsible for?"

The teacher said in order to bring comfort and confidence to those at higher risk of encountering ICE, recommendations were given to students and community members, including showing empathy and keeping up to date on the news.

Other recommended resources included Red Cards, which are multilingual, printed-out directions on how to handle interactions with ICE agents, as well as a website to learn the difference between judicial and administrative warrants.

The 49th Ward office is also distributing "Know Your Rights" flyers and information to connect people with Protect RP, which are both available in Hadden's Jan. 18 newsletter.

Tuition will increase by 4.4% next school year

TUITION, CONTINUED

"Especially now more than ever, we really are engaged with not only the finance committee but also the full board of trustees in ensuring every tuition dollar that we collect is going in the right place," Magdziarz said. "The board holds us to

high standards in making sure that our operations are, if you will, lean and mean and that we're investing those dollars in the right spot."

Magdziarz said the added tuition costs will allow Loyola to stay competitive in compensation levels for faculty and staff and in the student-facing classroom experience.

Salaries for faculty and staff are the university's largest expense. Magdziarz said Loyola has been successful in staying competitive in this realm despite persistent inflation over the last few years.

The funds raised from tuition also allow the university to ensure balanced budgets and the maintenance of a strong financial footing.

The 2025-26 budget will provide \$19 million in additional university-funded financial aid, bringing the total amount of student financial assistance provided by Loyola to \$322.8 million. The university will also be able to offer an additional \$25 million in unfunded scholarships — which are paid for with funds from the university's endowment and philanthropic gifts, according to Magdziarz.

Magdziarz said he understands how annual tuition increases can be a source of struggle for students and their families. He said he encourages any student whose family or personal circumstances may have changed and is struggling financially to reach out to the financial aid office to see what the university can do to help.

"Students, as you know, leave Loyola for academic reasons, or they

leave Loyola because it's just not a good fit for them," Magdziarz said. "But one thing we do is make sure that we do everything we can to make sure that a student who wants to come here, who wants to stay here and who wants to graduate can do that without having to undergo unnecessarily strenuous financial struggles."

Magdziarz said the university has taken several actions to ensure continued financial stability in an effort to keep tuition increases as low as possible.

These include a continued effort to pay off the debt the university holds and continuing to grow the size of the endowment — an investment portfolio funded by gifts which universities use to support operations — to ensure Loyola can continue to provide scholarship and financial aid support.

He said so far Loyola hasn't felt the effects of the impending enrollment cliff facing universities across the country, in which there'll be a lower number of U.S. students entering college due to a decline in birth rates following the Great Recession.

As of yet, Magdziarz said Loyola hasn't seen much erosion in un-

dergraduate enrollment and has continued to see incoming classes reach their target levels. He said it's important the university stays competitive in financial aid and in brand to counteract challenges facing the broader landscape of higher education.

One of the ways Loyola hopes to maintain its strong brand and student experience, according to Magdziarz, is through capital investment and the ongoing process surrounding the Campus Plan — the university's guide for the next decade of development.

He said investments in new academic buildings, student spaces and residence halls will help Loyola stay competitive in recruiting new students.

Magdziarz said these construction projects are not funded through tuition dollars, instead the university intends to pay for new developments with philanthropic funds, borrowing and the university's depreciation pool — a tax deduction which allows property owners to recover the cost of the property to pay for upkeep, according to the Internal Revenue Service.

Griffin Krueger is the editor-in-chief of The Loyola Phoenix.



VIOLET MILLER / THE PHOENIX

Tuition will increase by 4.4%, higher than the 3.9% increase from this school year.

Federal funding freeze causes panic over FAFSA

By MIKE CLAUSEN,
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President Donald Trump announced an executive directive Jan. 27 stopping the distribution of all federal grants and loans, The Associated Press reported.

The abrupt announcement caused “chaos” throughout the country Tuesday. Federal employees, companies and contractors were left unsure about which programs — from disaster relief to Meals on Wheels — were being stopped or suspended under the directive’s broad language, The AP reported.

Also called into question by the memorandum was the status of the Free Application for Federal Student Aid, more commonly known as FAFSA.

The policy was announced Monday morning through an internal memo at the Office of Management and Budget, issued by Acting Director Matthew Vaeth to comply with Trump executive orders.

The memo claimed the wide-reaching cut was meant to target programs funding “wokeness” as well as “Marxist equity, transgenderism, and green new deal social engineering.”

After the first memo circulated, government officials from state governors to local school boards braced for immediate shortfalls, with major concerns that essential programs like FAFSA, Social Security, Medicare and food aid through the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program would have their funding indefinitely paused.

To address the uncertainty surrounding the funding stoppage, the Trump administration released a second memorandum Jan. 28 partially clarifying and walking back the broadest parts of the freeze.

Part of the subsequent memorandum provided more detail to the halt, exempting FAFSA, Social Security and Medicare — among others — from the imminent impoundment of federal funds.

Vaeth’s order was scheduled to take effect at 5 p.m. EST Jan. 28, before an emergency pause from a federal judge delayed it for seven days following separate lawsuits launched by Democratic officials and a group of nonpartisan nonprofit organizations, The AP reported.

Federal District Judge Loren AliKhan issued an administrative stay for the policy in response to its ambiguity and questions over the size, duration and number of funding halts the president had ordered, The AP reported.

The directive mandates a “review” of “all federal financial assistance programs” and said federal agencies “must temporarily pause all activities” related to providing federal funds. While it allows for the OMB to carve out exceptions to the funding stoppage, the initial memorandum didn’t name any.

Vaeth, the official who issued the policy, is currently serving in the role of acting director of the OMB, while Trump’s nominee for the important post — controlling spending within the executive branch — still awaits senate confirmation, The AP reported.

Trump’s nominee for permanent OMB head, Russell Vought, served in the role during the president’s first term in office and was a co-author of the Heritage Foundation’s controversial Project 2025.

By midday Jan. 28, all 50 states announced outages on federal Medicaid websites and have begun to prepare for layoffs and freezes across the government.

While programs providing “direct



NICKY ANDREWS / THE PHOENIX

Universities across the nation question the viability of FAFSA in the wake of federal funding shutdown actions.

benefits to Americans” were exempted from the funding seizure by the second memorandum, The AP reported, groups from across the higher education industry have continued to sound alarm bells about what the move will mean for students and universities.

With 72% of university students receiving some type of federal aid, averaging \$14,000 a student, according to The National Center for Education

Statistics, changes to federal funding continue to represent a major concern for American universities.

Even though FAFSA has been exempted from the policy, the chaos of the interruption before the Trump administration’s clarification and the remaining effects of the policy — which halt funding for grants to universities and research labs — has left university administrations “scram-

bling” to continue student programs, The AP reported.

As the lawsuits against the policy continue, legal scholars have labeled the moves to impound funds already allocated by Congressional action as violations of the constitution and federal law, according to Reuters.

Mike Clausen is the Deputy Opinion Editor for The Loyola Phoenix.

Station renovation plans pick up steam



LEILA CELIO / THE PHOENIX

The process to remodel the Rogers Park Metra station began in August 2022.

By JUSTIN PEABODY,
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Accessibility and safety updates are planned for the Rogers Park Metra station at 7000 N. Ravenswood Ave, 1.2 miles northwest of The Lake Shore Campus. The renovations are funded by a \$23.6 million grant awarded by the U.S. Department of Transportation.

Metra received the grant Jan. 10 after submitting an application containing a letter of support written by Ald. Maria Hadden (49th), according to Metra spokesperson Michael Gillis. The Rogers Park station services trains on Metra’s Union Pacific North line, which connects suburban North Shore communities to downtown Chicago.

The funding for this project was part of the DOT’s Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity grant program, which allocated over \$115 million to six projects in Illinois, according to a press release from Sen. Dick Durbin and Sen. Tammy Duckworth.

Gillis said Metra began working on designs for the renovations a little over a year ago. After designs are finalized, the existing station will be demolished and a new and improved station will be built from scratch. Metra’s renovation plans were first announced to the public during a community meeting in August 2022.

Gillis said the design process for station renovations can be lengthy. For instance, concept drawings of Metra’s planned renovation of the Van Buren Station, located at 132 E. Van Buren St., were created in 2022. However, designs aren’t anticipated to be finalized until early 2028, according to Metra’s website.

During the 2022 meeting, which was attended by Metra representatives and staff members from the 49th Ward Office, residents expressed concerns about the adequacy of lighting, visibility, security cameras and landscaping. Some also expressed a desire for the installation of new bicycle racks, according to Gillis. Metra used this early feedback to construct design plans for the new station.

“We’re talking about adding customer amenities that would make the station a lot more pleasant to use and a lot more easy to use,” Gillis said. “We’re making the station a lot more comfortable, a lot more welcoming, a lot more secure — all of which would benefit anyone using the facility, including college students.”

Gillis said the project’s construction timeline is uncertain and won’t be determined until Metra completes the designs and receives a co-signature from Union Pacific.

Metra is also legally subject to a review process by the Environmental Protection Agency, which requires Metra to prove the project complies with the Clean Air Act’s pollution standards,

doesn’t divert vehicle traffic patterns or result in the removal of pedestrian parking, moderates operational noise levels and equally serves all riders — among other measures.

Metra originally planned to begin construction this year. However, initial difficulties receiving the grants Metra applied for considerably delayed the construction timeline, according to 49th Ward Office Chief of Staff Leslie Perkins. Despite this, Perkins said the designs are on track to be finalized this year.

During another community meeting Nov. 23, Metra representatives unveiled preliminary plans for the new station, according to Perkins. Via an online survey, community members submitted feedback on ways the design plans could be modified to better address visibility and better protect riders from inclement weather.

To mitigate the latter of these issues, Metra is now investigating the placement and installation of shelters on the northbound and southbound sides of the station. No shelters currently exist on the platform.

Perkins said she believes the ward office’s involvement in the planning process is essential for the project’s success.

“Alderpeople have the most intimate relationship with their neighborhood,” Perkins said. “They know the ins and outs. They know the constituents on a personal basis. They are walking the streets every day. They use the public transit options. So it’s pretty much common practice for an organization or entity to work with local elected officials.”

Perkins said the 49th Ward office will help Metra obtain more government funding if the need arises during the project’s development.

Those who wish to express their opinions on renovations to a Metra station can attend Metra’s monthly virtual Board of Directors meetings and submit their concerns in the public comment form. The Board of Directors’ meeting schedule and public comment form can be found on Metra’s website.



LEILA CELIO / THE PHOENIX

The existing Rogers Park Metra station, pictured above, will be demolished and rebuilt once design plans are finalized.

Mertz ups security after two consecutive incidents

By **CAITLIN DUFFY**,
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Mertz Hall experienced two consecutive disturbances this week from unknown individuals, one of whom was a checked-in guest while the other managed to get past the front desk and two additional ID checkpoints. Both incidents led to increased security in the largest residence hall on campus.

On Monday, Jan. 20, a Mertz Hall resident reported an unknown man in the hallway after disturbances on the 19th floor caused confusion and led Campus Safety to get involved.

Around 11 p.m. that night, first-year neuroscience major Maya Taha left her room on the 19th floor of Mertz Hall to fill up her water bottle when she spotted a man standing outside a nearby dorm room.

"The door was closed, but he was just standing there — it was creepy," Taha said. "We made eye contact and I just kept walking, thinking nothing of it."

Hallie Kuebelbeck, a first-year sociology major and another resident of the 19th floor, said the man ended up on their floor and was trying to talk to residents through their doors before Campus Safety was called.

Taha returned to her room on the 19th floor and had put the encounter with the unknown man out of her mind

until she received a text from her RA.

"Five minutes later, my roommate and I are lying in bed when we get a message from our RA that says to lock our doors," Taha said.

Taha and her roommate didn't leave their room to inspect the situation, but from inside they could hear and see parts of what was happening on their floor.

"I heard a walkie talkie outside our door and I looked through the peephole and saw a few cops outside our door talking to the guy and some students," Taha said.

The man banged on the door of a specific room and attempted to talk to the residents for nearly 30 minutes, leading the residents of that room to contact Campus Safety, according to Kuebelbeck.

Campus Safety identified the man as a guest of a Mertz Hall resident, and he was swiftly returned to his host's room where the host was reminded of university guest policies, according to Des'mon M. Taylor, director of Residence Life.

The following day, Jan. 21, an unknown man entered Mertz Hall at approximately 8:50 p.m. and made it past the front desk and accessed the elevator before leaving the building. Campus Safety and the Chicago Police Department intervened with the suspect outside of the building, according to Taylor.

Campus Safety and CPD didn't re-

spond to requests for comment.

This isn't the first time an unknown individual has caused disturbances in Mertz Hall. A man entered the building behind another student Sept. 8 before entering several students' rooms on the fourth floor of the residence hall, The Phoenix reported.

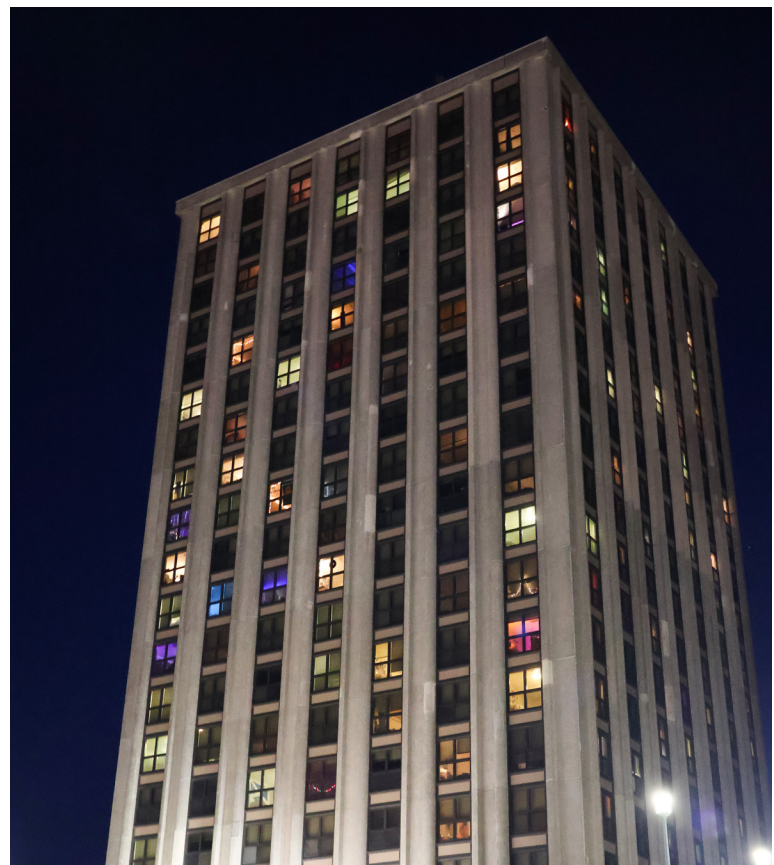
As with last semester's incident, a crime alert wasn't released to students. Many instead found out about the incident from RAs, social media platforms or parents who'd seen posts on group Facebook pages.

Mertz Hall added preventative measures Jan. 22, including ropes indicating entrances and exits. Taha also said security in the lobby was increased, and there is now a security guard standing watch near the elevators.

The university hired a private event security service, Luna Security, to help out desk operations and students have been asked to report any suspicious activity immediately, according to Taylor.

Kuebelbeck said she feels better knowing there's a security guard in the lobby, but she isn't sure it'll solve the problem.

"Honestly, I think if someone really wanted to break in past a student at the front desk and a rope, they can and they will," Kuebelbeck said. "I hope there aren't any more break-ins but I wouldn't be surprised if there are."



KAYLA TANADA / THE PHOENIX

The university has hired a private security guard after these most recent events.



HOLDEN GREEN / THE PHOENIX

Students on the pre-med track are often more likely to be afflicted with severe stress or anxiety levels than other undergraduates, with a variety of possible causes like med school applications or exams.

Mental health struggles on the pre-med track

By **NATALIE BARTEL**,
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After a few days of waiting for the results of her organic chemistry final exam, pre-med third-year biology major Rujuta Durwas finally got her grade back. It had the ability to pass or fail her, and when she opened her computer to see the results, she said she was so relieved she fell to the floor. After months of tears, minimal sleep and copious amounts of caffeine, she'd passed the class.

College can be stressful for many students, regardless of their major. However, pre-med students are often exposed to more intense pressure.

This time of year is especially tense for pre-med students, as Medical College Admission Tests, more commonly known as MCATs, are being scheduled for some, while others are getting their scores back. Med school applications also open soon, while seniors await coveted acceptances.

Without a proper balance of these stressors, pre-med student mental health often plummets, according to research from the JAMA Network.

According to JAMA's study on depressive symptoms among medical students, 27.2% of pre-med students report depression or depressive symptoms. 11% of medical students report suicidal thoughts, and roughly 10% pre-med students experience suicidal thoughts.

The number of pre-med students with a major depressive disorder di-

agnosis, known as MDD, was almost double that of non pre-med students, according to a study from the National Library of Medicine.

In order to get accepted into medical school and continue their education for another four years, students must maintain a good GPA, complete research, take the MCAT, compile letters of recommendation, gain in-field experience, prepare for interviews and apply to schools.

The MCAT is a high-importance, computer-based test usually taken around year three of college, and scores are released 30-35 days after the exam date. Achieving a score of 510 or above is ideal.

Third-year pre-med biology major Bhuvana Vejandla said there are multiple pre-med-related stressors in the back of her mind at all times.

"There's constant stress to keep my GPA very high to be a competitive applicant for med schools," Vejandla said. "The stress of not only doing school but getting into labs, research, presenting, publishing, making connections with professors, recommendations, the MCAT, preparing essays — it really piles up."

Fourth-year pre-med cognitive and behavioral neuroscience major Abhi Thati said the pressures experienced as a pre-med student differ from those associated with other majors.

"As a pre-med, your first four years are doing foundational work," Thati said. "Because it's simply foundational, the

degree you get as a pre-med doesn't have the most value externally after those four years. The pressure is somewhat doubled because you need to commit yourself to getting into and completing not four but eight years of education."

Durwas said rigorous coursework and the competitive culture of the field aren't the only stressors pre-med students face. There are also financial burdens, internal expectations and familial pressures, in addition to the basic day-to-day worries most college students experience.

"I have to make an effort to balance the people in my life I care about with doing well in school, extracurriculars and different clubs," Durwas said. "Extracurriculars like research, Doctors Without Borders or the Hindu Student Organization are very important to me, but they're a stressor in the sense that I want them to go well."

Durwas said fear of familial disappointment is another struggle. As the only child of immigrant parents, she said she considers her success to be their success, which she wants for them as much as for herself.

Vejandla said her self-esteem and self-confidence are also affected by the pre-med lifestyle.

Basing self-esteem on academic success is an unsustainable mental health habit that can be detrimental to student wellness, according to William Peace University.

"As you're applying to med schools, you're being compared to your peers," Vejandla said. "When I look at another pre-

med student and I know they're doing better than me in a class, I automatically compare myself to them. In this toxic pre-med culture, it's like second nature."

Vejandla said the stress has also impacted her personal relationships with family, friends and even herself. She said if her parents had it their way, she wouldn't be pre-med because they've witnessed the stress taking her on a roller coaster of emotions.

"First semester of sophomore year, I had a rough finals season," Vejandla said. "I went home and fell into another anxiety episode. I didn't sleep for four days straight and then had more insomnia, barely sleeping for more than fourteen days. My parents did not want me to come back because they were scared for my well-being."

Durwas said mental health management is important for pre-med students and listed some of the ways she attempts to deal with stress.

"I started lifting and that's been an outlet," Durwas said. "Another thing is painting. It's definitely something that relaxes me, and it's so calming. I also joined a dance team last year, and as busy as it is, it's really nice. It's all you have to think about in the moment. The simplest thing is being with my friends, because even if it's just studying together, I love their company and having people around — it relieves me."

Although the path is difficult, pre-med students who get through their struggles are able to do so with a combination of hard work, dedication and

passion, according to Thati.

"There needs to be a lot of emotion and personal attachment to the field, and that's going to allow you to be dedicated for a long period of time," Thati said.

Thati went on to explain his reasoning for being passionate about becoming a doctor, and what keeps him going when he's feeling discouraged in his work.

"For me it was the birth of my brother," Thati said, "It was the first time I was exposed to what medicine looks like in a larger setting, and the emotions I experienced while seeing my brother grow up, it's all been a very long journey. For me, nurturing that part of life is very important, and the best way to ensure future generations have the necessary infrastructure to grow up is to make sure health standards are maintained over the course of their lives."

Despite the challenges of a pre-med education, Thati said the path is deeply fulfilling for those yearning to make a meaningful impact in medicine.

"You need to be good at it — that's why pre-med is difficult," Thati said. "That's why getting into med school is difficult — the system is trying to find the best of the best. You need to excel in academics to even have a chance. It's a large task, but for the people that are in it for the right reasons, I truly believe it's the most rewarding thing a person can put themselves through. It's a level of accomplishment and connection with humans that no other profession can offer."

Blue Skies Ahead 1/29

AUDREY HOGAN / THE PHOENIX
Things to do from the News team.

Blue Skies Ahead

By PAIGE DILLINGER,
LILLI MALONE and
HUNTER MINNÉ

As we progress into the second semester and become more comfortable with our class schedules, the opportunity to explore the city arises — an option The Phoenix's news team always thinks is worth taking.

Explore outside of Rogers Park this week with a trip to Andersonville to participate in their annual Fika Fest, or stay local and observe the Loyola Lunar New Years Celebration by donning red outfits for good luck.

Prophet Song Discussion

The Chicago Public Library Rogers Park branch, located at 6907 N. Clark St., is hosting a book discussion of "Prophet Song" by Paul Lynch 6-7 p.m. Jan. 29.

Fika Fest

Fika Fest returns to Andersonville this weekend with a series of coffee and puzzle events. In Swedish, "fika" means "a coffee and cake break" and is considered an essential part of the day by many Swedes, according to the Andersonville Chamber of Commerce.

Explore the available coffee and baked goods in Andersonville Feb. 1 on the Coffee & Cocoa Crawl. Check-in for one of the two available routes begins at 9 a.m. at the Swedish American Museum at 5211 N. Clark St.

Attendees can either embark on the Bean Route to discover local hot chocolates or the Brew Route to taste fine coffees, according to the event page.

Head back to the Swedish American Museum Feb. 2 with a jigsaw to participate in the Great Andersonville Puzzle Exchange from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Extreme puzzle enthusiasts can even sign up online to volunteer at the event and the following the Great Andersonville Puzzle Throwdown, where contestants race to finish a puzzle while spectators cheer them on.

Loyola Lunar New Year

Loyola's Department of Programming is hosting the 2025 Lunar New Year's celebration Jan. 31. Students can enjoy dumplings, a traditional lion dance and Chinese calligraphy — among other things. Students are strongly encouraged to dress formally or in red to celebrate. The event will take place in the Damen Multipurpose Room 6-8 p.m.

Architecture and Film Festival

A touring film festival returns to Gene Siskel Film Center, located at 164 N. State St., to showcase films spanning many architecture and design topics. Tickets are \$8 for students. To buy tickets and access more information, check out the festival's website.

Restaurant Week

The 18th annual Chicago Restaurant Week is currently taking place and features more than 500 participating restaurants with fixed menus and affordable prices.

Breakfast and lunch menus are \$30, while dinner menus have the option of being either \$45 or \$60. Restaurant options range from fine dining to hidden neighborhood locations.

For more information on the event, visit the Chicago Restaurant Week's site.

Lilli Malone is the News Editor, Paige Dillinger and Hunter Minné are the Deputy News Editors of The Loyola Phoenix. They can be contacted at lmalone@luc.edu, pdillinger@luc.edu and hminne@luc.edu.



KATRINA DE GUZMAN / THE PHOENIX

The segment of North Broadway the land use framework recommends for rezoning extends from West Devon Avenue through Uptown to West Montrose Avenue.

Draft released for upzoning Broadway

By HUNTER MINNÉ,
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Chicago's Department of Planning and Development released a draft land use framework this month for rezoning a portion of North Broadway, stretching from West Montrose Avenue in Uptown to West Devon Avenue near Loyola's Lake Shore Campus.

The draft framework was released at a Jan. 16 open house as part of a partnership with DPD, the 48th, 47th and 46th Wards, the Edgewater Chamber of Commerce and Uptown United. The Broadway Land Use Planning project is currently garnering community input through an online survey open until Feb. 6.

The draft framework includes recommendations for upzoning large swaths of North Broadway on both the east and west sides of the street to mid and high level density, as well as mixed-use development. Much of North Broadway north of West Foster Avenue is designated as B3-5 zoning, which indicates transit-oriented, mixed-use development, according to the draft.

South of Foster, most of Uptown is recommended for C1-5 zoning to support more nightlife, personal services and an extension of the pedestrian street designation. The various zonings recommended in the draft promote minimum building heights of four or five stories, with the highest density zonings aligning with the various Red Line stops along this stretch of North Broadway.

The community goals and priorities stated in the draft framework include improving housing affordability, supporting local business, fostering transit and pedestrian oriented environments and maintaining transparency and opportunities for community feedback on future developments.

In an email to The Phoenix, Peter Strazzabosco, deputy commissioner at DPD, wrote the process addresses an urgent need for more housing as demand outpaces supply.

"Goals will be achieved incrementally, starting with the adoption by Plan Commission of a land use framework, followed by zoning changes approved by City Council that reflect the framework's recommendations, followed by actual construction projects that utilize the zoning," Strazzabosco wrote. "Note: Pending market conditions, it could take months, to years, to many years, for new construction projects to advance as a result of the planning process."

Ald. Leni Manaa-Hoppenworth (48th) said she's closely working with DPD on the land use framework, which she believes addresses

today's most important issue at the national, state and local levels — the housing crisis.

"We want to tell people that this area, Edgewater and Uptown, is a desirable place to live, to work, to develop, because we are so rich in our amenities," Manaa-Hoppenworth said. "Especially because of public transit steps away from the lakefront, incredible small businesses, culturally rich neighborhoods and a diversity of people, including LGBTQ+ people."

Manaa-Hoppenworth called North Broadway the "spine of our neighborhood" and said she wants more local ownership along the corridor so people who want to raise children, open and run small businesses and grow old can all stay in the neighborhood.

She also said she wants development in the 48th Ward to be a model for sustainable, social housing that can be an example to the rest of the country on how to foster local ownership and encourage people to stay in the ward.

"We're also, not only with DPD, but working with CTA, our sister agency, because for the first time in 100 years we're seeing investment, a billion dollar investment, into our Red Line," Manaa-Hoppenworth said. "We are one of the highest riderships in the city of Chicago, from this part of town on the CTA. So we basically want the CTA to survive — we want it to thrive."

The Red and Purple Modernization Project is the largest capital improvement in Chicago Transit Authority history, with a \$2.1 billion total price tag as of 2024, and Phase One is slated to be finished this year. The Phoenix previously reported. The seven stations alongside the section of Broadway designated for rezoning include Wilson, Lawrence, Argyle, Berwyn, Bryn Mawr, Thorndale and Granville.

A group of 10 residential associations and block clubs sent a joint letter to the Broadway Land Use Planning project partners Jan. 16 expressing disappointment in the planning and public input process. Some concerns listed in the letter were the preservation of historic buildings, impacts on traffic and parking, loss of light and open space and the impact of the rezoning on existing small businesses and affordable housing.

The letter also criticized the speed of the planning process and called for a comprehensive study of the North Broadway corridor to examine possible effects of rezoning.

"There is no valid reason to rush large-scale rezoning of our major thoroughfare and business district without a plan," the letter reads. "While the city may seek to encourage transit-orient-

ed development, there is no city mandate to do so without a comprehensive planning approach."

John Holden, president of the Edgewater Historical Society, echoed similar concerns about the blanket nature of the rezoning proposal and the potential dangers for historic buildings. He also questioned why increasing the density around Broadway is needed at this time.

Holden said the Historical Society isn't opposed to affordable housing development, but he believes there are better ways to achieve it.

"If you just do a blanket upzoning on these properties, then developers can come in and take down anything they want," Holden said. "And the city, after they've done the rezoning, really doesn't have any power to stop them. So the only real power the city wields is the zoning power. So that's why we think this whole idea is kind of a little ass-backwards, quite honestly."

Holden and Manaa-Hoppenworth attended a public meeting Jan. 25 at the Edgewater Branch Chicago Public Library, hosted by the coalition of residential associations and block clubs who signed the joint letter.

Manaa-Hoppenworth said she remained till the end of the meeting to listen to the presentation and everyone's concerns. She said she believed the presentation had a lot of bias and urged those who attended the Saturday forum to also attend the upcoming Jan. 30 online meeting hosted by DPD.

"It's going to bring more people into the community, more people to the schools, more people to the small businesses, and it's also going to con-

tribute to our tax base," Manaa-Hoppenworth said. "We need that right now. We need more people living here to contribute to the tax base so that we can continue living here in a way that is affordable — that will make sense for people to stay."

DPD has already hosted two open houses and created two online surveys, including the still available Feb. 6 survey, which have collected a total of 600 responses, according to Strazzabosco. He also said while not unanimous, public opinion from these forums indicated high support for increasing density and housing.

In an email statement to The Phoenix, Garret Karp, executive director for listed partner in the project the Edgewater Chamber of Commerce, wrote while the Chamber attended both open houses hosted by DPD and has met with DPD and local ward offices, they haven't endorsed or been asked to endorse any zoning changes along North Broadway.

"As an independent not-for-profit organization, Edgewater Chamber's board of directors will carefully consider whether to support or not support a final plan or proposal from the City of Chicago if and when it becomes available," Karp wrote.

Those interested in providing their own feedback on the draft framework can still fill out DPD's survey through Feb. 6 and can register online to attend the virtual public meeting Jan. 30 from 6 to 7 p.m. to hear from the project partners.

Hunter Minné is a Deputy News Editor for The Loyola Phoenix.



KATRINA DE GUZMAN / THE PHOENIX

The rezoning would potentially support affordable housing along Broadway.

OPINION



Be critical of Trump's TikTok tactics

By HAILEY GATES,
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Since its merger with Musical.ly in 2017, TikTok has tolerated a turbulent history — one inextricably linked with the similarly turbulent President Donald Trump.

As the app has infiltrated seemingly every part of the U.S. cultural sphere, so too has Trump muscled his way into every nook and cranny of American life.

Since his first presidential campaign, it's felt impossible to look anywhere without bumping into Trump's far-reaching facade — be it private life, politics or public discourse.

These juggernauts' years-long entanglement culminated Jan. 19 when TikTok went dark in response to an impending federal ban. The app was inaccessible to its 170 million American users for 14 hours, *The Phoenix* reported.

The ban — coincidentally — aligned with Trump's inauguration, and on his first day in office he signed an executive order extending TikTok's stay in the U.S. for 75 days, citing a "warm spot" for the app, *The Associated Press* reported.

If TikTok's return and ByteDance CEO Shou Chew's presence on the dais at Trump's inauguration are any indication, the president's soft spot has been repaid tenfold.

"Thanks for your patience and support," TikTok's return announcement read. "As a result of President Trump's efforts, TikTok is back in the U.S.!"

Of course, tech billionaires pandering to Trump isn't new — he's been touting his tycoon posse since he won the election. What's interesting about TikTok, though — aside from the recent politicization of its very existence in America — is its unprecedented ubiquity, association with current politics and infamously addictive qualities.

Trump didn't always use the app to its full rhetorical capacity. But now, having been on the winning side of the app's seemingly ceaseless discourse, the president has realized its potential as the next investment in our attention economy — one that's come at a moment when being TikTok's savior is sure to boost his popularity.

Trump's perspective on the app was far more conflicted during his first term. In 2020, the president signed an

executive order banning American companies from any "transaction" with ByteDance and its subsidiaries, including TikTok, AP reported.

He quickly followed it with a second executive order calling on ByteDance to divest from its U.S. TikTok operations. ByteDance responded with a lawsuit, alleging the Trump administration violated due process, AP reported. These legal battles never actualized, fully dissolving after the January 2020 inauguration of former President Joe Biden.

Despite this belligerent history, Trump officially joined the app in June and began posting campaign-related videos a month before former vice president and 2024 Democratic presidential nominee Kamala Harris.

Over the course of the 2024 presidential campaign, Trump's TikTok saw staggering results, boasting

over 15 million followers. His first video — in which he says being on TikTok is his "honor" — is the most engaged with on his page, having amassed over 300,000 comments, 10 million likes and 179 million views.

During his campaign, Trump's TikTok became distinct from his other social media accounts. In addition to promoting his usual rhetoric — lamenting high prices, attacking Harris' immigration policies and capitalizing on Biden's misunderstood public address — a majority of his posts are evocative of fan edits or hype videos, often displaying Trump with online influencers meant to appeal to a younger voting demographic.

Both campaigns catered their TikTok to a younger audience — and for good reason. Around 41 million members of Generation Z were eligible to vote in the 2024 election, 8 million more than in the 2022 midterms, according to CIRCLE.

The demographic proved to be as significant as predicted. Young men

— especially young white men — preferred Trump by 14 points, creating a 31-point gap between young male and female voters, according to CIRCLE. Although youth voters favored Harris by 4 points overall, this was nowhere near the 25-point margin Biden got in 2020.

While this significant shift in Gen Z political ideology can't be solely attributed to TikTok, it's hard to look at these numbers without recalling Trump strutting around with the Paul brothers or performing his notorious dance.

Trump acknowledged the importance of TikTok's impact on the election when explaining his reasoning for saving the app, saying it "had an impact," AP reported.

But while Trump's TikTok virality almost definitely contributed to the president's sudden change of heart, it may not have been the only reason.

TikTok's explosive popularity made it a breeding ground for political discourse, with about half of the app's users under age 30 saying they use it to stay informed about politics and current events, according to Pew Research.

While this has helped proliferate certain social justice initiatives — such as the 2020 Black Lives Matter movement and information about climate change impacts — it's also contributed to the spread of harmful political rhetoric and the perpetuation of political echo chambers, according to Harvard Political Review.

More than this, the app is known for its addictive qualities, as its algorithm cyclically loops users through content specially designed for them, leading many to fall victim to hours of "doomscrolling." TikTok has also been proven to negatively affect users' mental health, especially among its largely

teen demographic.

Trump is a businessman — he's centered much of his political identity around his success in the private sector. His goal isn't simply to win elections and harbor power, it's to gain capital in the form of attention — capitalistic expansion in the 21st-century frontier.

Capturing the public's attention is the contemporary method to simultaneously concentrate power and accumulate wealth — a strategy Trump has excelled at even when he wasn't in office, and one he's escalating by fraternizing with TikTok's CEO.

As if echo chambers and polarization weren't enough, TikTok users have reported instances of censorship since the app's return, according to Reuters, specifically relating to anti-Trump content. While these claims have yet to be proven, they're undoubtedly concerning, especially given recent changes to Meta's moderation practices and policies on Facebook and Instagram.

All this to say — Trump's partnership with TikTok isn't just a reaction to his election success, nor is it simply a way to exercise his political power or paint himself as free speech's saving grace.

It's also the newest phase of his attempts to expand his attention capital, colonizing American minds via not just X, Facebook and an endless stream of headlines, but also through the world's most prolific and addictive online interface — the next conquest in his self-ascribed Manifest Destiny.

"We have no choice," Trump said of TikTok. "We have to save it."

The president may not think we have a choice — but we do. We can choose to think critically about our media consumption habits and the motivations behind these whiplash-inducing political choices.

We can realize the impact of our attention. We can choose what we pay attention to.

Trump has already occupied our businesses, our government, our courts, our schools, our churches, our home, our entertainment and our news.

Don't give him the power to also occupy your time.

Hailey Gates is the Opinion Editor of *The Loyola Phoenix*.

Horoscope

AQUARIUS: Jan. 20 to Feb. 18

You've been dragging your feet for far too long, unable to dig in and take a step. Push yourself forward and greet the new day.

PISCES: Feb. 19 to March 20

Misery can't be reined in, and you'll only hurt yourself trying to. Just as you celebrate triumph, embrace the doleful beauty of sorrow.

ARIES: March 21 to April 19

When chewing on pen caps, don't dull your teeth in the process. Keep your wit sharp and don't choke on ink when you raise your voice.

TAURUS: April 20 to May 20

Silence the sirens and the dim, monotonous beeps. Your life doesn't always need to be shrouded in constant noise.

GEMINI: May 21 to June 21

Let easy laughter fall from your lips. Bask in the soft warmth of joy. Smiles need not always be hard-won.

CANCER: June 22 to July 22

Sweep your worries under the rug and they'll begin to rot through the floorboards. Confront your troubles as they arise.

LEO: July 23 to Aug. 22

Brush the hair out of your face and shield your eyes from the sun's glare. Set out into the world with clear vision.

VIRGO: Aug. 23 to Sept. 22

Wrap your scarf snug around your neck and brave the bleak winter chill. Plant your feet in the sand and watch the winds dance across the frozen lake.

LIBRA: Sept. 23 to Oct. 23

Occupy yourself with frivolities — putz around with aimless wonderment. Every second doesn't need to be ruled by stress.

SCORPIO: Oct. 24 to Nov. 21

You're fraying at the ends, but that doesn't mean you're unraveling. Braid the pieces back together and stand stronger than before.

SAGITTARIUS: Nov. 22 to Dec. 21

As dreams cloud your mind, lay your weary head on your pillow. There's comfort in the darkness. Count your steady breaths.

CAPRICORN: Dec. 22 to Jan. 19

Clench your jaw and hold strong against the current. If you allow just one moment of reprieve, you'll be swept away.

The Phoenix Horoscope is written by Catherine Meyer, cmeyer6@luc.edu.

Is marrying rich a viable career plan?

NO:

By **CADENCE FUNG,**
cfung1@luc.edu

As the new year is set in motion, I find myself reflecting on memories, friends and conversations I had before I left for college. Newfound independence, messy roommates and rushing sororities were the center of every chat.

One topic in particular was revisited again and again — the fall back plan.

"If this college thing doesn't work out for me, my plan B will be to marry rich," my friends and I would say, nodding in agreement and smiling at the idea of a soft life to fall back on.

It was nice to think no matter what we faced in college, a foolproof backup plan would ensure financial stability.

While marrying rich can provide financial stability and social mobility, some who choose this route find themselves trapped. Discarding an education for someone simply because they can provide monetarily may not work out in the long run.

Relationships and people can change over time. Marrying someone for money means you may not really know them, causing what you thought was your life plan to come to an abrupt end. Forgoing a degree in pursuit of a dependent lifestyle is a risk.

Of course, this is the worst case

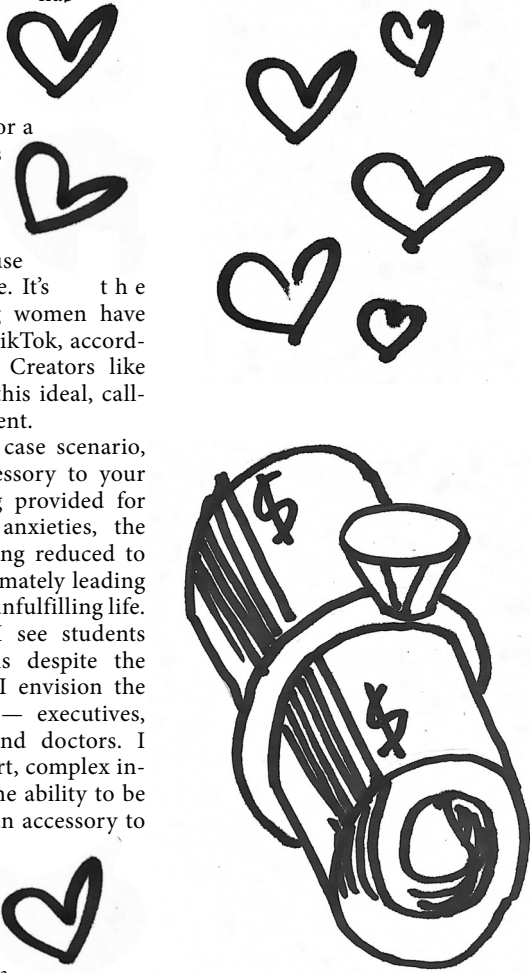
scenario. Let's stay optimistic and consider what could happen if you marry the perfect man — he would never dream of cheating on you. You don't have a job or a degree because there's no need — this man's here to stay.

If this sounds familiar, it's because you've heard it before. It's the same rhetoric young women have been exposed to on TikTok, according to The Gazelle. Creators like Shera Seven discuss this ideal, calling it princess treatment.

Even in this best case scenario, you'd live as an accessory to your partner. While being provided for may ease financial anxieties, the trade-off is often being reduced to just a pretty face, ultimately leading to a comfortable but unfulfilling life.

Around Loyola, I see students rush into classrooms despite the -15 degree weather. I envision the futures and careers — executives, nurses, journalists and doctors. I attend class with smart, complex individuals who have the ability to be so much more than an accessory to a spousal sponsor.

Marrying rich without getting an education is to gamble on the continued success of a single person. In a world where nearly 40 to 50% of marriages end in divorce, that's a dangerous bet to make. Don't sell yourself short.



JACKSON STEFFENS / THE PHOENIX

YES:

By **GRANT HEMENWAY,**
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It might not be listed on LinkedIn, but it's as strategic as any other career.

In this day and age, financial stability is often a pipe dream for those not blessed with familial wealth. While many dismiss the idea of marrying for money as a selfish and materialistic stratagem, make no mistake, it requires just as much skill and effort as any other career.

Developing the skill set required to land a life with a wealthy partner requires practice and dedication. It's worth exploring this unconventional, yet tenable career path.

Marrying rich is, in a sense, a form of career management. In the same way professionals cultivate skills and connections to rise in their given fields, individuals pursuing this path must also leverage their networking skills. Charm, emotional intelligence and the ability to socialize are as vital in this career as any other.

One of the better arguments for marrying rich is its efficiency.

Going down a traditional career path to achieve financial security can take years of expensive schooling and decades of labor. By marrying into money, individuals skip the grind and gain a lifestyle that already includes wealth. Critics may label this as shallow, but financial stability has always been a part of the career decision process.

Why should marrying rich be treated as any less just because it's an unorthodox investment?

Marrying rich isn't easy, as the qualifications can fluctuate greatly depending on the person being pursued and their romantic taste. The job market will be competitive because there's only a small pool of wealthy potential partners.

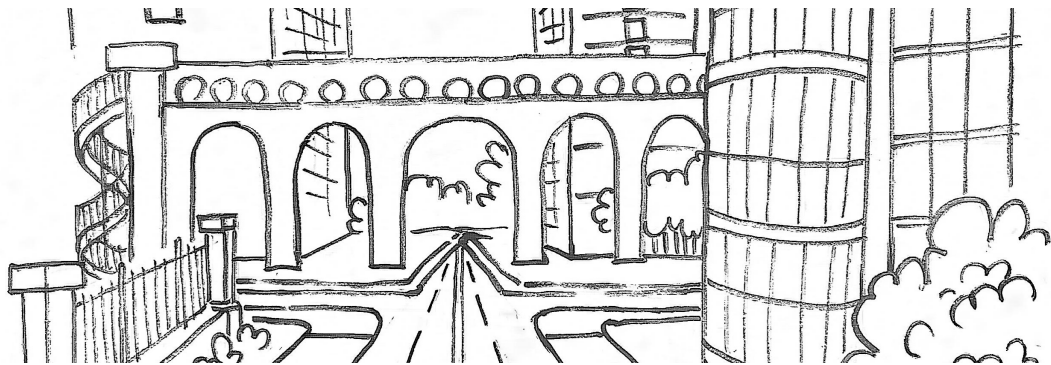
The stereotype for those marrying rich is often that it's all about looks, but with enough practice and skill, it may not even be necessary to maintain a polished appearance. By cultivating an air of mystery around oneself, through foreign language skills or wild personal anecdotes, a rich potential lover will surely be enthralled.

Marrying rich may often seem like it's limited to failed artists or former medal-winning Olympians, but it can be achieved by anyone with enough ambition.

It doesn't have to be an all-encompassing goal either. Like any other hobby, it can simply be something explored on the side. Instead of reading a book at home, maybe try reading at a corporate cafeteria. It's not about giving up on personal goals, but about staying adaptable.

Marrying rich certainly isn't for everyone, but it's far from the lazy, unattainable task it's made out to be. Like any life path, it requires strategy, dedication and an understanding of one's personal goals. There's nothing wrong with choosing a path that works best for oneself and their hobbies.

Success is success whether it's earned by years of office work or the effort to get a ring.



MAO REYNOLDS / THE PHOENIX

Let's build a bridge

By **SEAMUS CHILES TROUTMAN,**
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Seemingly every hour, cars exiting North DuSable Lake Shore Drive clash against the horde of Loyola students in their mass exodus from class as they head across campus. Calling this cyclical and unstoppable event a disruption would be a massive understatement.

The only reasonable remedy to the headache of crowded crosswalks and lengthy traffic light wait times is to find some other way of crossing the street without burdening both students and drivers.

To preface with full honesty, I haven't studied urban planning, construction management nor engineering.

Political science and history is my self-proclaimed forte and I can hardly assemble an IKEA desk with detailed instructions, let alone organize a major construction effort. Yet it's become evident Loyola has overlooked this rift between the northern and southern sides of its Lake Shore Campus — and something needs to change.

I've seen first-years at the crosswalk of North Sheridan Road during syllabus week end up missing their graduation because the light took so long to change. Jaywalking isn't only acceptable, but almost mandatory in this environment. Teenagers play leapfrog in front of multi-ton trucks in the hopes of not being late to a core class.

When the signal to walk shines like a star in their faces, students are elated before the light quickly counts down their freedom to cross.

Students wait for cars to pass for an eternity — and then some — in Chicago's erratic weather. But if they blink at an ill-fated moment when the light changes, there's a good chance it will have already faded to red by the time they open their eyes.

Something is rotten on the border of Rogers Park and Edgewater.

How can this be fixed? We could put up a zipline between the northern academic buildings and southern residence halls, or set up paragliders on the roof of Mundelein for those venturing to de Nobili Dining Hall.

But while these aerial forms of transport might work in most other towns, the famous Chicago winds would push any paragliding navigators to the center of Lake Michigan, and any zipliners balancing over Sheridan would likely fall to the fast-moving metal chariots rushing below.

Digging a tunnel beneath the road might be a safer option — this would bypass the congestion on Sheridan and allow students to avoid the winter's harsh weather.

But, a tunnel would likely block Loyola's heavily advertised geothermal or hydro-recycling piping operations.

And if it takes months for Loyola to demolish a building, one can only imagine how long a tunnel system

would take to construct. It'd be like the Centennial Forum — perpetually under construction.

A tunnel may be out of the question — but what about a bridge?

We can pay homage to the University of San Francisco, our fellow Jesuit institution, by building a structure akin to the Golden Gate Bridge. We could swap the orange vermillion color with a nice maroon.

Or, if the goal is sturdiness and functionality, we can follow the ancient Romans. Throw in some semicircular arches crafted from stone blocks, and our bridge might last two thousand years. It could even be named after Sister Jean as a hopeful sign of longevity.

While both of these options are exciting, the most feasible construction for a bridge may be one we're already familiar with. Even though most students have never crossed it, a sky bridge currently connects the Norville Athletics Center and the practice facility.

This bridge looms over campus, isolated from the disturbing wind and eight-foot-wide trucks. With a bridge between Mundelein and BVM Hall, every member of the Loyola community would be able to circumvent the potential disaster of being late to class or the minor inconvenience of being hit by a car.

Together we can bridge the gap between north and south Campus, uniting Rogers Park and Edgewater under one roof with one bridge.

LA fires reveal celebrity souls

By **ELIZABETH MAXWELL,**
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The wildfires which struck Los Angeles this month have brought unimaginable tragedy as they've displaced families and destroyed homes.

The city's status as an entertainment center means the fires are bringing big names to the forefront, blurring the lines between ordinary citizens and celebrities as both suffer through unspeakable loss.

Seven fires broke out in LA the first week of the new year, scorching nearly 60,000 acres. The fires have displaced thousands of people and killed at least 24, The Associated Press reported. One of the most devastating parts of the destruction is the homes LA residents will never be able to return to.

LA is home to nearly four million people, with a significant portion of these residents being well-known stars. It's widely understood these public figures have it better than others, with their multi-million dollar homes and private jets. But as celebrities lose their homes along with the general public, there's been no lack of sympathy for them.

The horrors of losing a home have been discussed by stars like Mandy Moore and Paris Hilton.

CBS News' video of Milo Ventimiglia is one of the most heartbreaking, as it offered a first look into the current plight of LA residents. Ventimiglia's complete anguish is clear in his broken words and teary eyes as he toured the remains of his home. The 47-year-old is expecting a child, meaning he lost not only his home, but where he would've raised his family.

"Words cannot describe the enormity of the devastation we are witnessing and experiencing," Billy Crystal said to CNN after losing his home, which he'd lived in since 1979. "We ache for our friends and neighbors who have also lost their homes and businesses in this tragedy."

Their losses, along with many others, haven't been discounted. People aren't shrugging them off, suggesting they should simply fly to their next mansion.

The general public is seeing the human beings behind these big names.

Seeing Ventimiglia tour what's left of his home and hearing the despair in Crystal's words displays how vital possessions can be for anyone. Even though these celebrities may lead lives provoking jealousy, contempt or a lack of empathy from onlookers, they're still vulnerable to losing what's important to them.

What makes these demolished homes so devastating isn't their architecture or worth — it's the fact someone has lost a place they called home, or where they'd planned to raise their child. Having money and popularity doesn't replace sentimentality, and the ability to replace items doesn't mean the significance they held can ever be replicated.

It doesn't matter who the victim is, to lose a home is still a tragedy for anyone.

The destruction in LA this month hasn't been good in any way, but it has brought out a sense of community and an influx of sympathy for those affected. After all, celebrity or not, no one should be treated with apathy after losing the place where they've made their memories.

Why is high fashion losing high quality?

By **CADENCE FUNG,**
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It's no secret some of the world's wealthiest billionaires made an appearance at President Donald Trump's second inauguration. Mark Zuckerberg of Meta, Shou Zi Chew of TikTok, Elon Musk of Tesla, Sam Altman of OpenAI, Jeff Bezos of Amazon and Tim Cook of Apple are all familiar faces to the American public.

But, there was one CEO fashion enthusiasts may have been surprised to see seated among the guests — French billionaire Bernard Arnault, the CEO and majority owner of LVMH and Christian Dior SE.

Arnault owns one of the most dominant brands in high fashion. Dior carries status, boasting a legacy that includes some of the best creative design of the 21st century.

Dior had revenue of €41.68 billion in the half year ending June 30, with 13.47% growth. Arnault himself is currently worth \$233 billion.

These numbers make for great statistics and certainly benefit Arnault and his company's shareholders. With Dior's reputation for luxury and excellence, one would expect its CEO to be selling high quality products.

In June, a court in Milan placed Dior's production unit under judicial administration for a year after being exposed for labor law violations and a failure to prevent sweatshop conditions in their factories,

according to The Wall Street Journal. A full investigation soon followed.

Investigations by Italian police found a Dior bag listed at \$2,600 cost the company just \$57 to produce. These margins were possible due to safety shortcuts and overtime hours, according to Le Monde, a leading French newspaper.

These practices make Dior's profit margin \$2,543 per bag, making it easy to see how Arnault was able to elevate himself to billionaire status.

AGCM Watchdog, Italy's antitrust regulator tasked with enforcing consumer protection laws, and Guardia di Finanza, an Italian law enforcement agency under the authority of the minister of economy and finance, conducted inspections into Dior's Italian production facilities.

While Dior denied any wrongdoing, the evidence was overwhelming, uncovering undocumented workers working hours far exceeding Italy's legal limit while receiving inadequate wages in exploitative working conditions.

Dior — and Arnault — have the financial resources and influence to set a precedent in the fashion industry.

The court investigating their supply chain practices stated these discoveries weren't isolated incidents, but rather arose from a "generalized and consolidated production system," according to Le Monde.

As the fast fashion industry becomes increasingly pervasive each

year, many look for higher quality, more sustainable and more ethical alternatives. This becomes much harder when a brand claiming to emphasize craftsmanship and quality is exposed using shortcuts to save on production costs.

We're watching high fashion leave high quality behind with each passing season.

On Jan. 20, Arnault was seated in the same room as American billionaires like Zuckerberg and Bezos — owners whose companies are constantly in the press, either for poor working conditions, making shortcuts, or landing themselves in front of a judicial court.

While Dior may market itself to the upper class and front as a brand of excellence, these uncovered business practices prove they're just as bad.

"The only thing that produces quality is care," fashion journalist and commentator Bliss Foster said in a Youtube video.

Dior can keep charging \$2,600 per bag and still draw in consumers, because in the end, customers aren't paying for quality anymore — they're paying for the name on the bag.

The luxury industry has been boiled down to good marketing and brand awareness rather than appreciation for true craftsmanship.

Dior will continue to grow, and Bernard Arnault will continue to amass wealth, but care and quality will be sacrificed along the way.



Bishop Budde and the power of the pulpit

By **XAVIER BARRIOS,**
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A coward should not stand behind the pulpit.

Bishop Mariann E. Budde is no coward. She stood before the newly inaugurated President Donald Trump Jan. 21 and pleaded for mercy on those who are scared and worried for how he plans to use his power.

The bishop stood at the precipice of theology and politics, willing to make a statement on behalf of her beliefs in front of Trump, who, within his first few days in office, revoked diversity, equity and inclusion programs and began mass deportations, in the process impeding the sanctity of spaces like churches.

"I ask you to have mercy upon the people in our country who are scared now," Budde said. "There are gay, lesbian and transgender children in Democratic, Republican and independent families — some who fear for their lives."

Trump's second term in office is a negative reflection on the Word of the Lord by claiming to be Christian. His presidency has come wrought with malice, hatred and exclusion — and it's just begun. Budde's sermon did the opposite, showcasing the true teachings of God, including embracing strangers and celebrating differences.

In the Gospel of Matthew, the Lord says those worthy of inheriting the Kingdom of God will have fed Him when hungry, clothed Him when naked, visited Him in prison and invited Him in as a stranger. When asked how to know it's the Lord, he responds with a profound answer.

"And the King will answer and say to them, 'Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did it for one of the least of these brothers or sisters of Mine, you did it for Me,'" Matthew 25:40 reads.

Budde was courageous, not only behind the Canterbury Pulpit, but behind the Gospel. Her voice cascaded across the National Washington Cathedral — a central part of American political history notably used for post-war services and presidential funerals. It was the last place Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. gave a sermon.

Bishop Budde has continued the legacy of the pulpit.

The president responded to the bishop's sermon by calling her a "Radical Left hard line Trump hater" in a post on TruthSocial, the social media platform he owns. In the same post, he demanded an apology from the church and the bishop.

The president's need for an apology is representative of his failure to recognize the Christian teachings he pretends to understand. Jesus' teachings are simple to comprehend when not backed by the malice of far-right Christianity. For Budde to apologize would sever her from the Word of God in favor of an idolized president.

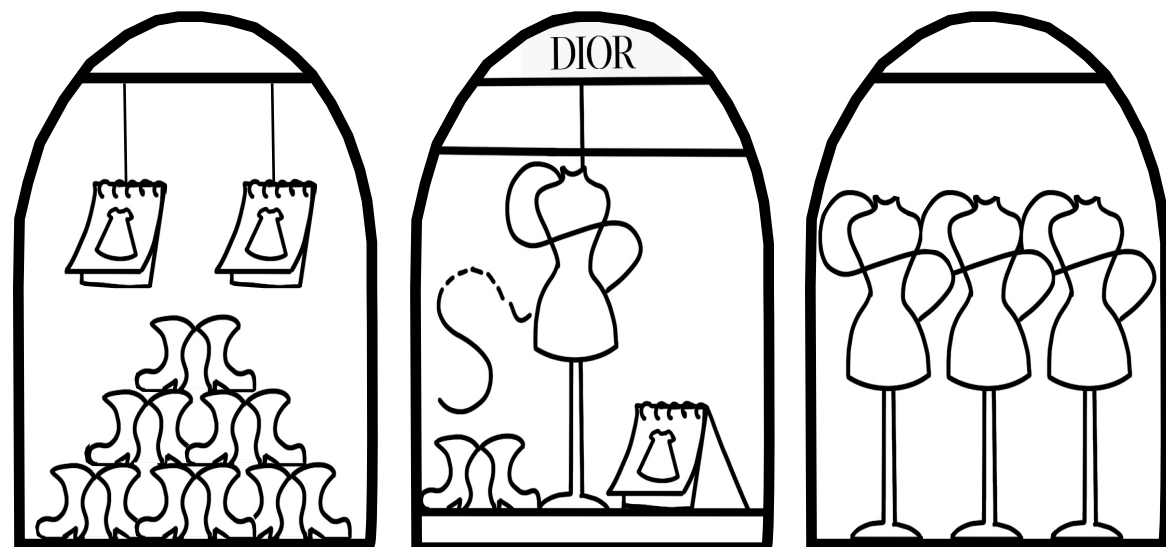
Due to the president's ties with right-wing Christian groups, American Christianity finds itself split by different types of believers — those who follow the Lord and those who idolize a man.

As one of the Ten Commandments states, "There shall not be other gods before Me" — and it seems those who align themselves with the president are forgetting it.

In the coming years, those who follow the Word of the Lord must decide to truly embrace its teachings or continue to bend and distort them to meet President Trump's whims.

In her sermon, Budde left the nation with a final guiding light.

"Our God teaches us that we are to be merciful to the stranger for we were all once strangers in this land," she said.



Natural disasters don't care who you vote for

By **ANNA SAN MIGUEL,**
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Following the 2024 presidential election, individuals online expressed anger at Republican voters in certain states, particularly those in the South. One tweet read, "FLORIDA I AM SICK OF YOU. YOU DESERVE EVERY HURRICANE COMING TO YOU," and many more echoed its sentiments.

While some might say these attitudes are simply an impassioned reaction to disappointing election results, in recent years there has been a surprising amount of contempt from Northerners regarding Southerners' plights following natural disasters.

Texas was hit with a destructive winter storm in February 2021. The event, aptly referred to as The Great Texas Freeze, caused a complete shutdown of the state's power grid and put 10 million people at the mercy of the cold — with no running water or electricity.

My family's apartment went through phases of power where my parents would scramble to heat food and water within a short period. When the power came back on, I managed to charge my phone just enough to check my notifications.

The first one I saw was an Instagram

story from a childhood friend in Michigan, saying the storm was only killing those who had it coming — the Republicans who had voted Trump into office five years prior.

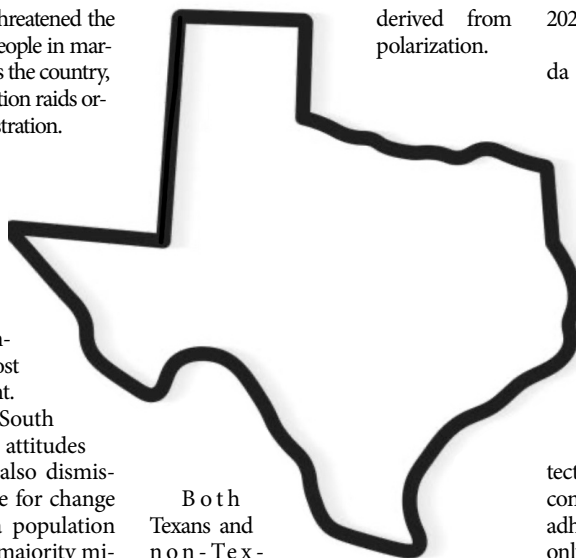
But was this retribution deserved? The recent election has threatened the livelihoods of a number of people in marginalized communities across the country, as evidenced by the immigration raids ordered by the Trump Administration.

However, condemning anyone with oppositional political beliefs to a violent death amid natural disasters only contributes to further political polarization, and even stoops to the anti-humanitarian level most Democrats allege of the right.

The assumption the South is home only to backward attitudes isn't only inaccurate, but also dismissive of those who advocate for change in southern states. With a population of 30.5 million, Texas is a majority minority state and is home to numerous LGBTQ+ people who are equally affected by natural disasters as their conservative neighbors.

Northerners willingly ignore the diverse social and political populations of

the South and instead condemn a few, demonstrating these online expressions of disdain aren't in earnest, but rather are the latest rendition of harm derived from polarization.



Both Texans and non-Texans made a mockery of Sen. Ted Cruz for leaving the state for a family vacation in Cancun, Mexico while the freeze hit in 2021. However, despite the admonishment, he still gets voted into of-

fice, much to Northerners disbelief.

So why haven't Texans voted for the Democratic party, especially after Sen. Ted Cruz's blunder? Why did Floridians re-elect Gov. Ron DeSantis' by a bigger margin in 2024 than during his first campaign?

The truth is, both Texas and Florida have been historically subjected to gerrymandering. Redistricting in Texas happens every ten years. This means the majority party, Republicans, have the opportunity to cut the state up into districts that will favor them, a move which stifles the shifting demographics of the state.

The effects of gerrymandering can also be seen in Florida drawing race based districts targeting Hispanic communities under the guise of protecting minority voters. However these communities were split apart, failing to adhere to any redistricting criteria and only serving the Republican representatives interests.

Even so, urban areas in Texas continuously vote blue, and the amount of Democratic votes shared among college students in Texas universities grows every election. Last November,

Florida's proposed amendment to protect access to abortions received 57% of votes, just barely failing to reach the required 60% to pass.

The argument Southerners vote for their own incompetent leaders fails to account for complex political factors and diverse political populations.

This isn't to say Southern states are blameless in the nation's partisan battles. The majority of Texans identify as conservative, and this group isn't exactly kind to majority Democratic states.

Recently, conservative outlets and President Donald Trump criticized Democratic leaders' handling of the recent Los Angeles wildfires, instead of offering support. Some Republican politicians even went as far as to baselessly blame diversity efforts in the Los Angeles Fire Department for their supposed incompetence.

But this back and forth is anything but productive.

Natural disasters aren't some form of cosmic karma meant to punish southern Republicans for their transgressions. They're real and dangerous consequences of the earth's troubled climate, and no amount of Democratic or Republican death is going to solve anything.

ARTS

Bun appetit: New Chi Tea location

CHI TEA, CONTINUED

"It always surprises us that every time we open we get this response, at every single location of ours," Sharif said. "Whenever we open, there's just — the hype is real."

The new store celebrated the grand opening with a burst of bright blue confetti, a ribbon-cutting ceremony and a promise of free banana pudding for the first 100 customers.

First-year nursing majors Ariana Lozada, Eileen Escamilla and Kimora Punsalan were among the first in line. Lozada said she'd been eyeing the place for weeks and ran to the grand opening with Escamilla immediately after their afternoon class.

"I think I have a new favorite — other than Canes," Lozada said.

The chain's burgers come with grilled or fried chicken or beef, ranging from \$7.59 to \$10.59, and also come as sliders which are priced between \$4.99 and \$5.59.

Sides include popcorn chicken, chicken tenders, loaded fries, fried pickles and mac and cheese — all of which come with the chain's secret "Chi sauce."

Customers can order their bubble tea as either a blended smoothie or an iced tea. Patrons can then choose between 18 flavors, six toppings and three sweetness levels. Regulars cost \$4.99 while larges are \$5.99. Lemonade, soda,

water and hot chai are also available.

Kowsar Adam, a first-year accounting and marketing major, was also one of the first 100 customers to receive free banana pudding. Adam said she was excited to have another option for off-campus eats.

"Even with different dining halls, Damen gets repetitive, Deno gets repetitive, so I'm looking forward to this new spot," Adam said.

Chi Tea's Rogers Park location is still determining its hours. It posts daily updates on its Instagram account at @officialchitea.

Mao Reynolds is the Deputy Arts Editor and Crossword Editor for The Loyola Phoenix.



MAO REYNOLDS / THE PHOENIX

More than 100 people attended the grand opening of Chi Tea's first Chicago location on a brisk Friday afternoon.



MAO REYNOLDS / THE PHOENIX

Employees handed out free samples of hot chai to fight off the Chicago cold.



MAO REYNOLDS / THE PHOENIX

Chi Tea's menu specializes in halal burgers, chicken and bubble tea.

L-Stop Musts: The movie theater edition



KAYLA TANADA / THE PHOENIX

The Music Box Theater is an eccentric but iconic part of Chicago's film scene.



KAYLA TANADA / THE PHOENIX

Wrigleyville's Alamo Drafthouse offers retro vibes and rentable VHS tapes.

By **BRENDAN PARR**,
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For Loyola students still grieving The New 400 Theaters closure, and with Oscar season in high gear, the Red Line offers an array of historic and high-quality venues for casual and compulsive movie-goers alike.

Addison: Alamo Drafthouse (3519 N. Clark St.)

Just a short walk from the Addison station in the heart of Wrigleyville is a theater dedicated to providing the most efficient movie-watching experience.

Alamo Drafthouse is a national chain which allows attendees to order food to their seat at any point during a movie via a cue card. With a curated menu based on current screening selections, attendees can order a rotating list of cocktails or restaurant-quality sandwiches and truffle popcorn.

Alamo specializes in honoring the movie theater experience. Staff have a zero-tolerance for phone usage and talking within the theater, guaranteeing attendees an engrossing watch.

Along with hosting early screenings for upcoming blockbusters, Alamo also showcases cult classics for themed events and anniversary dates. The theater also streams Q&As with filmmakers and offers a gift shop vending VHS tapes, DVDs and vintage accessories.

Alamo Drafthouse is open from 4 p.m. to midnight Monday through Thursday, 4 p.m. to 2 a.m. Friday, noon to 2 a.m. Saturday and noon to 8 p.m. Sunday.

Belmont: Landmark Century Centre Cinema (2828 N. Clark St.)

After an eight-minute walk from Belmont station, moviegoers are greeted with the spectacle lights of

Landmark Century Centre Cinema.

Similar to Alamo, Landmark Century Centre is a national chain that prioritizes the audience experience. With a bar lounge and reclining seats, Landmark merges its facade's classic aesthetic with a casual, convenient atmosphere on the inside.

Landmark offers cinephiles a reliable option as their venue of choice. Its bargain prices and comfortable arrangements make it a safe choice for a fun weekend at the movies.

Landmark is currently running Oscar season frontrunners "Anora" and "A Complete Unknown" in its rotation.

Landmark Century Centre Cinema is open daily from 1 p.m. to 10:30 p.m.

Sheridan: Music Box Theater (3733 N. Southport Ave.)

Velvet drapes cascade across the projector screen as an organist plays as audience members find their seats at The Music Box Theater. After a brief stroll from Sheridan station, moviegoers can explore Lake View on their way to the ornate and intimate theater, which recently celebrated its 95th anniversary.

The Music Box embraces its long-standing history in Chicago, with two auditoriums which resemble an opera house more than a typical movie theater. On the ceiling a cloudy blue sky streams against the stone pillars and brick-lined walls.

The venue hosts screenings projected over wound reels of film rather than digital recordings, recently featuring "The Brutalist" on 70mm film print. Audiences can witness photo reels unravel while enjoying the theater's conjoined bar lounge.

The Music Box screens timeless classics and modern marvels alike, hosting a monthly midnight screening of "Rocky Horror Picture Show." The theater also has a cozy garden lounge where they host outdoor

screenings during the summer.

A staple of Chicago's film scene, Music Box Theater hosts both the Chicago Critics Fest in the summer and the Chicago International Film Fest in the fall, welcoming famed filmmakers from around the world.

Music Box Theater is open 4 p.m. to midnight Mondays through Thursdays, 1:30 p.m. to 2:30 a.m. Fridays and 11 a.m. to 2:30 a.m. on weekends.

Lake: Gene Siskel Film Center (164 N. State St.)

Directly off the Lake Red Line stop is a film library dedicated to Chicago film legend Gene Siskel.

Named after former Chicago Tribune writer and one half of the critic duo Siskel and Ebert, the Siskel Center dedicates itself to shining a light on arthouse cinema and independent voices.

A public program of The School of the Art Institute of Chicago, the venue holds two modest auditoriums and a small cafe. The Siskel Center prioritizes work from filmmakers around the globe, rotating series based on war, culture, race and religion.

The Siskel Center is also a screener for the Chicago International Film Fest, for which they showcased the Oscar-nominated documentary "No Other Land" last November. The Siskel Center also frequently hosts panel discussions with filmmakers and professors where speakers analyze selected works.

With upcoming selections based on architectural design and Iranian filmmaking, the Gene Siskel Center breaks down the craft of moviemaking and uplifts diverse perspectives.

The Gene Siskel Film Center is open 5 p.m. to 10 p.m. Monday through Thursday, 2 p.m. to 10 p.m. Friday through Saturday and 2 p.m. to 7 p.m. Sunday.

Brendan Parr is the Arts Editor for The Loyola Phoenix.

Serving up Shakespeare at a 'Fat Ham' cookout

By **MUNYA NOMAN**,
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To grill, or not to grill — that is the question playwright James Ijames asks in “Fat Ham,” which turns William Shakespeare’s “Hamlet” into a refreshingly modern Black Southern family drama.

The Pulitzer-winning play, running at the Goodman Theater from Jan. 11 to March 2, blends themes of betrayal, family dysfunction and identity with the rich culture of a contemporary cookout.

Directed by Saheem Ali, the show’s set and costume design combine with a lively Southern cooking theme to reflect a warm yet explosive family dynamic with narrative stakes rising alongside the smoke of barbecued steaks.

The stage is a mini backyard cluttered with garbage bags, beer bottles and Hobby Lobby wedding decorations. The sunset-orange and purple lights offer a vibrant backdrop for the unfolding drama, juxtaposed by the sizzling sounds of a grill simmering and the tensions of a family on edge.

Trumane Alston stars as Juicy, a closeted gay college student misunderstood by his family. Ronald L. Conner plays Juicy’s father, Pap, who was murdered in prison and appears in flashbacks.

The backyard barbecue setting becomes a stage for Juicy’s inner turmoil as he navigates family drama and his father’s ghostly plea for vengeance.

The cast creates a sense of unease through physicality and purposeful pauses as Juicy grapples with his father’s ghostly visitation and his search for self-identity.

Throughout the play, Juicy steps toward the audience, locking eyes with them as he delivers soliloquies. Each time he turns, the room grows closer as lights dim and a single spotlight shines on him.

Conner plays two roles — Pap’s ghost and Rev. As Pap’s ghost, he commands the stage with a cold presence and a deep, eerie voice. As Rev, Juicy’s uncle turned step-dad, he carries a quiet authority that

looms over Juicy’s every move. Juicy’s battle to break free from his father’s shadow is burdened by the thick tension between himself and Rev.

“It’s amazing what fathers think they own of their sons just ‘cause we share a name,” Juicy says.

Playwright Ijames balances the serious and the absurd, disarming the audience with humor before plunging into topics of trauma and betrayal.

Similar to the setting, the dialogue is contemporary, sharp and riddled with Southern charm, making the play relatable while retaining a tragic depth.

The comedy of “Fat Ham” manifests via the contortion of Hamlet’s confidant Horatio, reimagined as Tio, played by Victor Musoni. Tio’s ad-libs and weed-fueled personality bring laughter amidst the unfortunate bleak reality of the play.

Tio’s jests are more than jokes — they’re a necessary balance to the chaos around him, offering a refreshing contrast to the more tempestuous characters.

“Far as we know, we are in the only place in the cosmos that welcomes our particular brand of life,” Tio said. “Why waste it trying to be miserable cause it’s gonna make somebody else happy?”

“Fat Ham” gives a voice to the women “Hamlet” ignores. Opal, played by Ireon Roach, is given agency often missing in traditional portrayals of Ophelia.

Opal redefines Ophelia with a powerful performance, capturing her struggle for identity in a town rejecting her strength as a butch lesbian. Torn between her mother’s demands to focus on academics and her own dream of opening a restaurant with a shooting range, Opal navigates between societal expectations and personal authenticity.

Anji White plays Tetra, Juicy’s mom, with complexity arising from being torn between family loyalty and her own pursuit of happiness. Tetra’s character offers depth to Shakespeare’s Gertrude, who’s often overshadowed by Hamlet’s angst.

Ijames creates a reliable Gertrude who isn’t silenced by the patriarchy and is

loved by her son. To break the cycle of misogyny in “Hamlet,” “Fat Ham” gives Tetra a chance to be a mom — something Gertrude was robbed of. In an interview with the Center for Fiction, Ijames said he’s deconstructing the sexist views in “Hamlet” and stepping away from the disdain towards women.

Throughout the play, Tetra supports Juicy in navigating his sexual identity, while also calming the water between him and Rev.

As “Fat Ham” flips the script of “Hamlet,” Ijames spins an enemies-to-lovers narrative using Laertes and Hamlet’s characters. Larry, played by Sheldon Brown, is in love with Juicy, but can’t reveal his emotions as he’s trying to embody the strong Navy figure his mother wants him to be.

Though he suffers from post-traumatic stress disorder due to the trauma of war, Juicy’s presence lends him a grounded comfort. Larry dreams to be a performer, but finds himself forced to carry out the role of the strong, Southern man who protects his family.

“People decide what they want you to be,” Larry said. “It’s hard to fight that.”

In the play, Larry navigates his identity and voice. Unlike Juicy, he’s unapologetically open about his sexuality — a contrast to Shakespeare’s Hamlet, who avoided the topic entirely. Ijames reframes the narrative, presenting love through a queer lens absent in the original text.

By blending the line between tragedy and comedy, Ijames assembles a happy ending out of grievous pieces. By amplifying Black, queer voices and granting agency to women, “Fat Ham” disrupts the cycle of violence, allowing a new narrative to manifest — life holds more than just tragedy.

“Fat Ham” runs until March 2. Tickets are available to purchase on the Goodman Theater website.

Munya Noman is a Staff Writer for The Loyola Phoenix



COURTESY OF YAS COWAN

Ben Barnes brought his debut tour to Chicago’s House of Blues Jan. 22.

Ben Barnes bores the House of Blues

By **KEVIN STOVICH**,
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On a blue stage, a raised drum kit sat, flanked by electric guitars, basses and keyboards. From the shadows, a figure approached the mic at center stage. As venue lights brightened, the mysterious shadow was revealed to be Ben Barnes.

While known for his career as a TV actor, Barnes (“The Punisher,” “Westworld”) stopped at the House of Blues Jan. 22. His Chicago appearance is part of a worldwide tour supporting his budding singer-songwriter career and debut album, “Where the Light Gets In,” released Jan. 10.

Barnes — who was involved with choir and band in his youth — said he reconnected with his musical roots during the COVID-19 pandemic.

“I knew that I would regret it if I didn’t prioritize putting out something of my own and making some music,” Barnes said in an interview with The Daily Illini.

Barnes’ musical style blends ‘70s-tinged pop and soul with cookie-cutter singer-songwriter aesthetics, like slow guitar ballads with forced vocal gravel. For his House of Blues debut, the result was an underwhelming setlist that was reminiscent of department store music.

Barnes’ backing band members opened the show with solo performances. Barnes said he purposely chose musicians with solo careers to open and play for him, fostering an environment with different styles and genres of music.

Guitarist Aaron Childs went first with a series of acoustic soul songs — “I BEEN UP!,” “Butterflies & Benefits” and “Sunshine” — as well as an acoustic cover of The Jackson 5’s “I Want You Back.”

Sophia James, keyboardist and former “American Idol” contestant, dominated the stage. Her looping machine allowed her to layer guitar, keyboard, percussion and vocal levels while live on stage. A stand-out track was “Circadian Rhythm,” whose percussive backbone is made up of tongue clicks and raspberries.

The final opener, keyboardist Charles Jones, embodied heartfelt emotion with his covers of Radiohead’s “Creep” and Nat King Cole’s “Smile.” Jones’ instrumental veracity was apparent in his effortless keyboarding paired with his impassioned vocals.

After a short break, Barnes took the stage to perform “Beloved,” backed by the openers as well as electric bassist and vocalist Zoe Sparks and drummer Paul Hammy Hamilton.

“Where the Light Gets In” followed, with Barnes’ soaring voice contrasting Sparks’ soft background vocalizations — sometimes even disrupting and overpowering Sparks’ vocals.

“Nevermind” began with barebones acoustic guitar and Barnes’ meek falsetto. In the second half, however, the keys and drums pummeled their way to a poignant punch of sound.

“Stolen Time” returned to a laid-back — albeit groovier — sonic landscape. Red, orange and yellow lights created a golden hue on stage, matching the song’s nostalgic sentiment.

Before performing “Pirate Song,” Barnes led a call-and-response with the audience, aptly asking them to make their best pirate sounds. But, not even this fun exercise could save the seasick song from walking the plank.

Next, Barnes covered Bishop Briggs’ “River” with ferocity. Despite the band’s impressive stunt of switching instruments mid-song, the performance faltered by the end due to Sparks’ restrained vocals.

Before starting “Slow It Down,” Barnes explained his inspiration for the song precipitated from “Ferris Bueller’s Day Off,” while noting how fitting it was to play it in Chicago.

Afterward, Barnes’ band left the stage for a break, allowing Barnes to perform an excessively passionate piano ballad entitled “Ordinary Day.” Still alone, he began “The In Between,” with members of the band returning one by one to complete the composition.

Barnes prefaced “Take Me To The Moon” by bluntly saying, “This song is about sex.”

While the lyrics may have been sensual, his awkwardly erotic performance was less sexy and instead evoked the bland amorosness of a Chevy truck commercial.

However, the following “One Minute More” was a surprising highlight. A duet with Jeames, the duo’s soft, yet sharp voices intertwined in harmony over the full instrumentation. Unfortunately, the subsequent song didn’t “Rise Up” to expectations, being sung overly vibrato yet somehow still resonating as one-note.

“You need to get your heart broken three times to write this next song,” Barnes said before transitioning into “Three New Hearts.”

Despite the song’s emotional lyrics, his performance consisted of shouts at the audience rather than the intended passionate delivery.

Segueing into a slew of covers, Barnes let the audience choose his next songs, ultimately performing John Lennon’s “Jealous Guy” and Ray Charles’ “Hallelujah I Love Her So” — the latter being his best performance of the show.

The closing song, “Someday,” featured insanely infectious guitar riffs by Childs set to disco-like rainbow lights.

Much to the fans’ delight — and others’ dismay — Barnes returned to perform one last song, “11:11,” starting it off solo. After the first verse, the entire band returned to finish the song, with Barnes conducting the audience to sing the last chorus, closing off the night.

Barnes gave a noble effort, with his strong connection to the audience and dedication to the ‘70s sound. Yet the actor-turned-singer was outshone by the sheer skill and musicality of his band. When surrounded by such immense talent, a good performance turns mediocre.

Kevin Stovich is a Staff Writer for The Loyola Phoenix

ReView: David Lynch’s ethereal debut ‘Eraserhead’

By **MATT SORCE**,
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Following the death of Oscar-winning filmmaker David Lynch Jan. 15, looking back at his 1977 feature film debut “Eraserhead” offers a glimpse into the foundation of his distinctive craft.

Conceived as a student project while enrolled at the American Film Institute, “Eraserhead” evolved into a self-financed surrealist horror film, helmed by a seven-man crew over five years, according to the American Film Institute.

The outlandish plot, bizarre imagery and macabre themes within “Eraserhead” aren’t faults — they’re exactly what made Lynch such a compelling director.

“Eraserhead” follows Henry Spencer, a man trapped in a loveless marriage and plagued by self-doubt and anxiety. When Henry’s former fling Mary reveals she’s pregnant, he’s burdened with the care of their monstrous child — an otherworldly creature swathed in bandages always crying from its misshapen head.

Although “Eraserhead” is considered a horror film, it subverts genre conventions by creating a world of psychological unease, where the true horror lies within Henry, not the viewer.

His turmoil over parenthood, coupled with his longing for the Beautiful Girl Across the Hall, haunts him through sleepless nights. He begins to envision a woman who lives in his radiator who quells his anxieties.

Lynch’s attitude toward the film’s meaning is equally mystifying. In an interview with David Lean, Lynch called

“Eraserhead” his most spiritual work, but didn’t elaborate any further.

The common interpretation sees “Eraserhead” as an exploration of unplanned parenthood, presenting the theme as a bleak and exhausting ordeal. Severed from their former lives and isolated in a relentless cycle of anxiety and responsibility, the mounting stress tears at the parents’ psyches.

Like the film’s other elements, the child’s lizard-like design distances viewers from its humanity. However, its disfigured body acts as a representation of Mary and Henry’s detached parenting.

“Eraserhead” uses fragmented narrative structures, confusing audiences and causing scenes to feel disjointed.

Though Lynch’s other films like 1997’s “Lost Highway” and 2001’s “Mulholland Drive” are deliberately confusing and non-linear, “Eraserhead” pushes this abstraction. Lynch uses dreamlike sequences to distort the story without offering clear distinctions or resolutions.

Characters like The Man of the Planet inexplicably appear during pivotal scenes with undefined purposes, furthering the movie’s enigmatic atmosphere. The Beautiful Girl Across the Hall’s fleeting presence and ambiguous relationship with Henry blur the line between reality and desire — leaving her very existence in question.

The unsettling spirit of “Eraserhead” is shaped by various elements beyond its perplexing structure.

Brutalist architecture dominates the decaying wasteland, while the black-and-white visuals and droning static evoke the emptiness of space and highlight themes

of isolation — creating a desolate environment akin to purgatory.

With dialogue as soulless as its world, “Eraserhead” relies on actions to further the story. Brief, stilted conversations result in awkward exchanges between characters with little significance to the overall story, reinforcing the film’s sterile atmosphere.

Despite early reception deeming the movie unwatchable, “Eraserhead” endures as a haunting exploration of fear and isolation. Its ambiguity invites endless discussion decades after its release, solidifying its place as a cornerstone of Lynch’s surrealist legacy.

“Eraserhead” is available to stream on Max.

ReView is a recurring review column.



MAO REYNOLDS / THE PHOENIX
“Eraserhead” was first released in 1977.

What if ‘We Could Be Rats’

By **MUNYA NOMAN**,
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Content Warning: Addiction, overdose, abuse, self-harm, suicide.

Infinite universes. Infinite humans. Infinite choices.

At least, that's what the many-worlds theory suggests, according to the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy. If there is another universe, what form would humans take and how would they live?

In her new novel, “We Could Be Rats,” Emily Austin invites readers into a parallel universe which houses the imaginary small town of Drysdale. Released Jan. 28, the novel reexamines the meaning of choices and relationships through the lens of an alternate existence.

With its simple absurdity, “We Could Be Rats” suggests humans are infinitesimal beings living under a never-ending, pink sky of infinite possibilities.

Reality ceases to exist in the 239-page, character-driven book. On the surface, “We Could Be Rats” follows a stereotypical small-town narrative — two sisters, Sigrid and Margit, navigate the complex terrain of sibling relationships and adulthood burdens, having grown up in a constrained Catholic household ruled by destructive parents.

Sigrid is one of the few lesbians in town, a high school dropout who has shunned markers of adulthood. In her late 20s, Sigrid acts like a 13-year-old — wrapped up in the fantasy of make-believe stories. Unlike Sigrid, Margit works diligently to please her parents and fit within their narrow worldview.

The novel begins with Sigrid's suicide attempt — one of multiple, as Austin later reveals. Instead of being split into chapters, the book is formatted by Sigrid's suicide note drafts.

Within her notes, Sigrid alternates between positive and negative outlooks on life. She faults her parents, the town's conservative ideologies and meaningless social norms for her and Margit's demise.

“We were living in that house like frightened rabbits, twitching our ears to the sounds around us like prey in constant danger,” Sigrid writes.

Austin's narrative is driven by character development rather than dialogue.

Following each suicide attempt, Sigrid reveals parts of herself and her family's secrets. Sigrid also frequently mentions her best friend Greta — her only source of hope in high school.

“There was something special about finding someone during a time when I felt like I was losing everyone,” Sigrid writes.

Amid a sea of pain, Greta remained a hope for Sigrid's lighthouse. Greta served more as a sister than Margit did, providing Sigrid with safety and love.

Margit serves as a silent witness to Sigrid's strife. As Sigrid struggles to rewrite her narrative, Margit is depicted as the sister who internalized their parents' chaos. In Sigrid's entries, readers get a glimpse of Margit's efforts to protect her — until the lines blur, and the sisters seem to become one.

The sisters' juxtaposed coping mechanisms propel the book forward as Sigrid's notes emotionally intensify and closer to her suicide attempt.

“I think one of the benefits of growing up with a sibling is having a witness. It's nice to have someone to cross reference your childhood with,” Sigrid writes

Throughout the story, the final destinies of both characters remain uncertain, but one thing is for sure — there's always a choice to do better in another life, as another entity.

Austin masterfully conveys this message through Sigrid's voice. Sigrid utilizes her powerful imagination to escape everyday life. In her make-believe world, she and Margit are rats — two big rats living for two beautiful years under a pink sky.

“If I could choose how the world worked, we would all be rats at a fair. We would all live well, sampling every possible ounce of happiness,” Sigrid writes.

Within Drysdale's parallel universe, Austin offers a world where the boundaries of choice and consequence are as fluid as the lives humans lead — and the lives imagined.

“We Could Be Rats” is available in all major bookstores on Jan. 28.

Munya Noman is a Staff Writer for The Loyola Phoenix



COURTESY OF COHEN MEDIA GROUP

French director Aurélie Saada's debut film “Rose,” released in 2021, is an earnest portrait of living life to the fullest.

French film ‘Rose’ is a blooming bouquet of heart

By **MATT SORCE**,
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Life is like a rose — though it stings at times, its beauty lies in how we handle it.

Originally released in 2021, French actress and writer Aurélie Saada's directorial debut “Rose” entered U.S. theaters Jan. 24. Filmed entirely in French, the film transcends language through its relatability.

After the death of her husband Philippe, the titular Rose (Françoise Fabian) grapples with her own mortality. Nearly 80-years-old, she channels her grief into a newfound determination to live life to the fullest.

“Rose” stems from Saada's life, weaving her Tunisian Jewish heritage into the characters. Rose herself is influenced not only by Saada, but also by the female friends and family in Saada's life.

In addition to writing and directing, Saada composed the film's score, lending her voice in Hebrew, Arabic, Yiddish and Italian.

These personal touches allow “Rose” to masterfully teach what it means to be human.

The film begins with a vibrant birthday celebration for Philippe, meant to display the couple's relationship. Though brief, their

playful exchanges effectively portray their bond, allowing audiences to feel the weight of his death just a few minutes later.

Fabian's portrayal of Rose builds the film's relatability. Her presentation of a confused widow is both convincing and empathetic, capturing the vulnerability and resilience of a woman navigating the complexities of grief.

A majority of “Rose” is shot with a handheld camera, framing the film in subtle shakes that enhance its intimate feel. Bathed in a warm, orange light, the dark shadows cast a nostalgic glow over the family as they grapple with distress.

Yet to Rose, it seems everyone is in good spirits.

The first act concludes with an extended dinner sequence, where casual conversations and sporadic laughter engulf a silent Rose. As a cigarette is passed down the table, she unexpectedly takes her first puff — a small but significant step into the unknown.

For the first time in 50 years, Rose gets behind the wheel, travels to bars, forges new relationships and embraces life in ways she never dared before.

This sudden shift in Rose's behavior unsettles her children, who become concerned for her mental health — an overprotectiveness which irritates Rose. Their escalating conflicts are intensified by long, silent shots.

Damien Chapelle's portrayal of Léon, Rose's youngest son, is especially compelling. Living with his mother, Léon frequently clashes with Rose, creating tense and emotionally charged situations.

These scenes open the audience's eyes to how the rest of the family copes with death — fueled by confusion and anger as everything around them seems to change rapidly.

Still, the remaining two children feel insignificant. Despite having their own subplots, they don't lead anywhere or aid the larger narrative. This focus drags the film, dampening its steady pace.

“Rose” closes with an abrupt, inconclusive ending for both its titular character and her family alike. Offering an arguably mundane glimpse into a woman's journey of self-discovery, its simplicity is what makes it so endearing.

Through Saada's intimate direction and the cast's nuanced performances, “Rose” offers a poignant reminder that no matter where people are in life, there's still room for growth, change and self-discovery.

French cinema is often praised for its innovation and unique approach to storytelling, and “Rose” is no exception. Its grounded narrative makes it an easy entry point for those new to the style.

“Rose” is in select theaters now.

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SPORTS

INDOOR TRACK AND FIELD

How tragedy shaped Watcke's career

By NATE VARDA,
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Content warning: Suicide

This isn't the first time graduate mile runner Emma Watcke and Loyola track and field head coach Gavin Kennedy have shared the track.

Four years ago, before either had even stepped foot on Loyola's campus, the pair were both members of the University of Wisconsin-Madison track and cross country program. Watcke was a redshirt first-year, and Kennedy was in his eighth and final season as coach.

After finishing four years at Wisconsin and entering the transfer portal as a graduate, Watcke said she received a call from Kennedy expressing interest in her joining the program at Loyola.

When the Hinsdale, Ill. native visited Rogers Park for the first time, she said she loved the campus and the team. Watcke said she was excited to be part of the momentum she felt was building in the program.

Before Watcke joined this past fall, the Loyola women's cross country team were winners of five straight conference championships — three in the Missouri Valley Conference and two back-to-back championships in the Atlantic 10.

When the women's team competed for the A10 championship this year, Watcke was one of four Ramblers to simultaneously cross the line to maintain



COURTESY OF SUVIR GROVER / LOYOLA ATHLETICS

Watcke (18) set a program record with her performance at the Notre Dame Invitational, and later earned conference honors.

Loyola's conference title streak.

With the 2025 indoor track and field season kicking off last weekend, Watcke has found success once again, taking first place in the women's mile event at the Hawkeye Invitational.

"It's fun getting back on the indoor track," Watcke said. "It was my first week back on campus from winter break so it was exciting to get back with the team and get rolling right into the season."

Watcke has continued to roll as the track season picks up. At the Notre Dame Invitational, she set her personal best and program record with a mile time of 4:39.66, earning her second

place in the event.

While she's flourished at Loyola, Watcke said she faced significant challenges while at Wisconsin. In the spring of 2022, Watcke and her teammates lost a close friend and teammate when third-year Sarah Shulze died by suicide.

"It's definitely changed me," Watcke said. "Sarah was such a great friend and teammate. Definitely at Wisconsin and here too, everyone knows what happened. At Wisconsin, we really leaned on each other, and it opened our eyes to how important mental health is in athletics."

Since her death, Sarah's parents started the Sarah Shulze Foundation

in her honor to support "the causes dearest to her — mental health, student athletics and women's rights," according to their website.

The charity remains active in Wisconsin and even hosted a walk in Evanston over the summer, which Watcke participated in alongside fourth-year Alex Morris. Watcke said she believed the walk demonstrated her teammates' dedication to mental health.

Watcke said the death of her teammate changed her as an athlete and as a teammate in helping destigmatize mental health and checking up on teammates when something seems wrong.

"If someone seems off at practice, people will check in on them," Watcke said. "The coaches are really great about it too. I've even noticed if I've been off a day or two, people will text me and check in or talk to me after practice, and I think that goes a long way."

The team's initiative goes even further than just the bond they've formed with each other.

Along with attending the walk for Shulze over the summer, Morris helped work with the coaches on getting the team to wear green ribbons — the color of mental health awareness — on their uniform to match the ones Watcke once wore with Wisconsin.

Watcke said she appreciated the gesture by Morris and the team, as it was nice to bring the tradition of honoring Shulze with her to Loyola.

Even today, Watcke said she still checks in on Shulze's parents every so often just to see how they're doing.

As her season rolls on, Watcke said she's excited to make the most of her last indoor and outdoor track seasons at Loyola, taking it one race at a time before graduating with her master's degree in international relations and affairs.

You can learn more about the Sarah Shulze foundation on their website. <https://sarahshulzefoundation.org/>

Nate Varda is a Staff Writer for The Loyola Phoenix.

Ramblers race to new records at Notre Dame

By NATE VARDA,
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Following three first-place finishes in Iowa City, Iowa at the Hawkeye Invitational, the Loyola track and field team trekked to South Bend, Ind. for the Notre Dame Invitational Jan. 25.

After finishing first in the women's mile last week, graduate Emma Watcke kicked off the day by setting her personal record and the Loyola program record for the mile — clocking in at 4:39.66 to shatter the Loyola record of 4:43.11 and her PR of 4:46.00.

Despite setting the program record, Watcke finished second overall behind University of Toledo fourth-year Laura

Nicholson — who finished with a time of 4:35.61.

Third-year Roisin Treacy recorded a personal record with a time of 4:49.12, securing 13th place in the mile. Fourth-year Grace Jostock finished next for the Ramblers and set a personal record along the way, clocking in at 5:11.77.

Graduate James Lawrence, coming off a first-place finish at the Hawkeye Invitational, had a repeat performance this weekend. Finishing first in the mile once again, Lawrence improved on his personal best time from a week ago by over a second with a 4:03.32.

Fourth-year Gabe Smit continued the streak of personal records, finishing in third with a time of 4:04.78 and

breaking the record he set three years ago at the same invitational. Graduate François Guilhot rounded out the top ten with a 4:08.10.

Second-years Nate Boutin and Cael Mulholland were the next Ramblers to finish in the mile, as they crossed in 16th and 17th at 4:14.02 and 4:14.20. Mulholland's time also set a new personal record.

Third-year Jake Phillips and first-year Izak Bible finished consecutively in 20th and 21st with times of 4:15.06 and 4:16.43, with Phillips setting a personal record.

Third-year Woody Jerome was the last Rambler to finish in the mile as he crossed in 23rd out of 31 at 4:16.89.

Loyola then competed in the 800-meter races, where the women were led by

fourth-year Alessandra Rodriguez, who came in eighth with a time of 2:13.21. Second-year Jo Collins was Loyola's only other competitor in the women's event, coming in 26th at 2:25.99

The men's side was represented solely by graduate Samuel Field, who placed fourth at 1:50.65.

The last event on the day was the men's and women's 3000-meter.

Second-year Eileen Seebon led the women's side in the event with a new personal record of 9:48.31, landing her in sixth place. Following was another personal record from fourth-year Aiden Grasse in 13th with a time of 10:01.41.

The next Rambler to finish was fourth-year Alex Morris, crossing the

line in 19th with a 10:26.34. Behind her in 21st was second-year Priscilla Raveira at 10:33.39, before first-year Madison Perez wrapped things up for Loyola with a 25th place finish at 10:59.83.

On the men's side of the 3000-meter race, fourth-year Fionn Harrington led with an 11th place finish at 8:42.62. The next Rambler to cross was second-year Trent Anderson in 17th at 8:45.42, before third-year Kyle Knutson finished last for the Ramblers in 19th at 9:01.44.

Loyola will remain in South Bend next weekend as they head to the Mevo Invitational Jan. 31 - Feb. 1.

Nate Varda is a Staff Writer for The Loyola Phoenix.

MEN'S VOLLEYBALL

Smits Van Oyen off to fast start with Loyola

By MOLLY HANLEY,
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When first-year setter Alex Smits Van Oyen made his first career start for Loyola against Saint Francis University Jan. 17., he'd only been on campus for two weeks.

Smits Van Oyen previously attended the University of California at Santa Barbara before coming to Chicago. When Van Oyen first looked at colleges, he said Loyola was originally one of his top choices, and so he took the second-chance opportunity to join the team.

Head coach Shane Davis said Smits Van Oyen's transfer has brought new energy to the team.

"From a maturity standpoint, Alex has done a great job of filling in a need in terms of depth within the setter position, and he doesn't play like a freshman," Davis said. "He has different experiences because of his background which makes him different from everyone else on the team which is great."

The transfer was quick, according to Van Oyen, who said his new coaches and teammates made it a seamless transition.

"Coaches are really good and energetic, and the team is really close," Smits Van Oyen said. "They've been super helpful to me from just coming in here and being super supportive, going to get food with them. It's a good environment."

Redshirt third-year Bryce Robbins said Smits Van Oyen has meshed well with the team since his transfer. Robbins hosted Smits Van Oyen when he originally visited Loyola, and he said he feels they've really connected. He said Smits Van Oyen is a great leader who'll be good for Loyola's future.

Originally from Las Vegas, Smits Van Oyen spent a year in Budapest, where he played professionally with League 2 — a dream his dad had for him. Not only was Smits Van Oyen a few years younger than most of his teammates, but he said he also had to deal with a major language barrier.

Playing abroad runs in the family.

Smits Van Oyen's sister, Cassie, played abroad during a gap year before playing beach volleyball at Vanguard University, which is how he was connected to the Hungarian head coach.

He and his sister's volleyball backgrounds are shared with their parents, as Smits Van Oyen's dad played with Loyola Marymount's — now defunct — men's volleyball team, and their mom played at St. Bonaventure.

Beyond playing volleyball abroad, Smits Van Oyen said he's been traveling his entire life. He has family from his dad's side in the Netherlands, and his uncle lives in Spain.

Despite his intensive volleyball background, Smits Van Oyen grew up as a multi-sport athlete, also playing soccer. When college came closer, he had an option to pursue either a soccer or volleyball career. He said he went down the volleyball path because he felt he could go further in the sport.

When Smit Van Oyen came to UCSB, he didn't plan on redshirting. He suffered



MEGAN DUNN / THE PHOENIX

In nine sets, first-year Smits Van Oyen has recorded 86 assists — 9.56 per set.

a wrist injury — causing him to miss out on summer training — and then suffered an ankle injury shortly after.

Even though his decision to redshirt revolved around his injury history, he said he'd recommend redshirting to any incoming athletes to help deal with learning curves.

"I'd say that even if you're not injured it's better to [redshirt]," Smits Van Oyen said. "I recommend it. It's better to take a redshirt year than play one match. It's

realizing what you need to get better at, and then how you can go into practice and just be supportive of your teammates every day and be happy going through a process that you might not be used to."

Now in Chicago, Smits Van Oyen said he's been able to explore downtown a few times and enjoys Chicago's variety of food and restaurant options.

Molly Hanley is a Staff Writer for The Loyola Phoenix.

MEN'S VOLLEYBALL

Ramblers sweep Miners to stay undefeated

By **MOLLY HANLEY,**
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Loyola men's volleyball defeated Missouri University of Science and Technology three sets to none Jan. 25. Second-year outside Daniel Fabikovic led the Ramblers with 10 kills, while third-year libero JJ Sowa secured 11 digs. Third-year outside Nate Meyer was the top performer for the Miners with seven kills.

The first set began with several errors from both sides. Second-year outside Jake Read tabbed his first block of the night, which was followed by a kill by Nate Meyer.

The Ramblers captured two kills from third-year middle block-

er Brad Bell and Fabikovic, giving them a 4-3 advantage. After consecutive Loyola errors, the lead slipped from Rambler control for a 5-4 Miners advantage.

Redshirt fourth-year outside Parker Van Buren claimed his first kill of the night, which was followed by a block by fourth-year middle blocker Nicodemus Meyer. Both sides traded two kills between Fabikovic and the Miner's third-year outside Zachary Carff and third year rightside Aaron Sallade to make it 8-7.

The Ramblers then went on a 5-0 run, including three kills from Read and one by Van Buren, to go up 13-8. Sallade responded with a kill which was followed by a Van

Buren kill and ace — the 100th of his collegiate career.

A Fabikovic kill and Nicodemus Meyer block sent the Ramblers on another 4-0 run. S&T called a timeout which led to a Rambler service error, making it 19-13.

Nicodemus Meyer picked up a kill for the Ramblers before Sallade responded with another. An ace by Fabikovic and a Read kill put the Ramblers up 23-14. The first set closed with an ace by Loyola's redshirt first-year outside Tyler Howard.

S&T started the second set with a Sallade ace, but the Ramblers answered with kills by graduate outside Jackson Reed and Fabikovic. Following errors by both sides, the set was tied at four apiece.

Nate Meyer tabbed a kill, and Nicodemus Meyer secured a block. Three more Rambler blocks from Fabikovic, Reed and Nicodemus Meyer put them up 10-7. Strong defense by Sowa kept the rallies alive, and a solo block by Nicodemus Meyer prompted S&T to call timeout.

Sallade scored out of the timeout despite defensive efforts from redshirt first-year Alex Smits Van Oyen. Fabikovic and Bell each gained a kill, but errors dwindled their lead to 15-13.

Sallade tabbed back-to-back kills, which were followed by two service errors by each team. The Ramblers gained two kills in response from Fabikovic and Van Buren, while a block by Nicodemus Meyer gave them a 22-17 lead.

The set ended 25-18 with a block from Nicodemus Meyer and an overpass kill from Read.

Each team tallied two kills to begin the third set. Robbins tallied his third kill of the match which, along with a Fabikovic kill, put the Ramblers up 6-5. A Carff kill briefly gave the Miners the lead before a service error tied it at nine. Kills from Bell and Fabikovic balanced out Rambler errors, keeping the score within one.

Kills by Robbins, Fabikovic and

Van Buren put Loyola ahead 17-14. Nate Meyer secured two kills, but the Ramblers stayed steady with kills from Robbins and Bell.

Kills from Robbins and Howard forced S&T to use their last timeout down 22-20. A Howard kill and a pancake from Sowa to keep the point alive gave the Ramblers match point at 24-21. A Miner error concluded the match with a third set score of 25-21.

Head coach Shane Davis said there was strong defense, but there are ways the Ramblers can improve going forward.

"I think our serve receive, to start with, was really good tonight," Davis said. "We had a lot of options defen-

sively, and we dug the ball a lot. I think we could have done a better job killing the ball in transition and winning some of those longer rallies."

Robbins said the team was able to keep momentum high, even when the match was tight.

"I thought we did a good job on the court of keeping the energy up," Robbins said. "We were running our systems really well and executing the stuff we could in the moment."

The Ramblers will take on Pepperdine University Jan. 30 at 9 p.m. in Malibu, Calif. Streaming will be available on ESPN+.

Molly Hanley is a Staff Writer for The Loyola Phoenix.



MEGAN DUNN / THE PHOENIX

The Ramblers recorded a total of 10 blocks — four more than the Miners.



MEGAN DUNN / THE PHOENIX

Fabikovic led Loyola with 10 kills and two aces, and also had three blocks.

Loyola defeats Mount Olive in homestand finale

VOLLEYBALL, CONTINUED

Loyola embarked on a significant run. A Van Buren kill, followed by a service ace by Fabikovic, pushed the Ramblers ahead 10-8. Mount Olive struggled with errors, including a service error by Lahey and an attack error by Husic, allowing Loyola to extend their lead to 12-9.

The Ramblers' firing pressure continued with a kill by Read and a Fabikovic ace widened the gap to 14-9.

Loyola's defense also played a crucial role, with a block assist by McElligott and fourth-year middle blocker Nicodemus Meyer followed by a kill by Fabikovic, increasing the lead to 16-9. Mount Olive managed a point through a service error by Fabikovic, but Loyola quickly regained control with a Meyer kill extending the lead to 18-10.

The set concluded with a series of

strong plays from Loyola. A service ace by redshirt first-year outside hitter Tyler Howard, followed by a Van Buren kill, brought the score to 20-10. The Ramblers sealed the set with a final kill by McElligott, assisted by Read, securing a 25-10 victory.

The second set witnessed a more competitive exchange. Mount Olive took an early 5-2 lead, with kills by Grant and a service ace by Sandvig. Loyola responded with a Read kill and capitalized on Trojan attack errors, leveling the score at 7-7.

The teams continued to trade points, with notable kills by Van Buren and Grant. A Fabikovic ace tied the score at 9-9. The Ramblers then pulled ahead, with consecutive kills by Read and Van Buren.

Despite Mount Olive's efforts, including three more kills by Sandvig, an ace from Husic and a few Rambler attacking errors, Loyola maintained their lead, with a final kill by McElligott securing a 25-19 win.

Mount Olive displayed resilience in the third set. After an initial lead by Loyola, the Trojans fought back with kills by Grant and a service ace by Sandvig to tie it at 5-5. The teams exchanged points, with notable plays by Van Buren and Grant. A service ace by Loyola's redshirt freshman outside hitter Tyler Howard extended their lead to 23-18.

Mount Olive responded with a challenged net violation, successfully starting a 3-0 run with a kill and solo block by Ekberg to narrow the 24-22 gap. However, a final kill by McElligott clinched the set at 25-22, completing the sweep for Loyola.

Van Buren once again led the Ramblers, finishing with 11 kills and five aces. Fabikovic and Bell also had

standout performances, together contributing seven kills and four blocks throughout the match.

Read said the team's chemistry is a driving force behind their success.

"Everyone's contributing and doing their part," Read said. "Tonight, the aces—especially Parker's run—gave us the spark and cushion we needed."

Head coach Shane Davis talked about the team's growth and execution, highlighting defensive improvements and adjustments early in the season.

"Every week has been about improving specific areas," Davis said. "Tonight, we focused on prepping on both sides of the ball. Defensively, we did a much better job picking up tips and roll shots, converting opportunities we missed earlier in the week."

The Ramblers now shift their focus to their first road trip in Southern California, where they'll face some of the nation's top programs, including No. 10 Pepperdine University and No. 24 University of Cal-

ifornia at San Diego.

Read said he's excited for the upcoming matches, particularly for the chance to face his brother Brendan, a fourth-year Libero at Pepperdine.

"It'll be a fun match," Read said. "I've watched them for years, so I'm familiar with their squad. This win gives us momentum heading into the week."

The first serve of the road trip will be Jan. 30 at 9 p.m. in Malibu, Calif., and the second game is scheduled for 1:30 p.m. versus the Tritons in La Jolla, Calif.



MEGAN DUNN / THE PHOENIX

Van Buren had 11 kills in the win.



MEGAN DUNN / THE PHOENIX

With the victory over Mount Olive for a six-game win streak, Loyola becomes the only MIVA team to remain undefeated.

MEN'S VOLLEYBALL

Shane Davis: From small-town to national champ

By **CHRISTOPHER J. HENRY**,
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Head coach Shane Davis had an unconventional journey to becoming a cornerstone of Loyola's men's volleyball program. After playing three seasons with the Ramblers as a student-athlete and graduating in 2003, Davis went on to lead the program for the next 12 years.

Born and raised in the small town of Denver, Iowa, Davis said volleyball wasn't a common sport for boys growing up, and his area had no boy's volleyball at the high school level.

Instead, Davis said his volleyball exposure arose from a special place — his parents.

"My parents would play in a lot of rec volleyball leagues in nearby towns," Davis said. "My sister and I would just tag along, and we'd pass back and forth. We couldn't play because we were too young, but we were always there."

Eventually, someone at one of the recreation leagues suggested Davis' sister, Shari, try volleyball, which opened the door for Davis to play nearby.

"We found out there was actually boy's club volleyball for 14 and under," Davis said. "That's how I got started. My sister's opportunity and just some local boys club in Waterloo-Cedar Falls area."

From there, Davis said his passion for volleyball grew. While balancing five other sports — football, basketball, golf, track and baseball — he made time for club volleyball practices in the evenings. By high school, Davis was playing in adult men's volleyball tournaments sharpening his skills against more experienced players.

Davis said he was torn when it came time to decide on a college to

further his athletic career. Football had been a major part of his life, but volleyball presented a new challenge. After a conversation with his dad, Davis said he was pushed to see how far he could go with volleyball.

Drawn by Loyola's proximity to home and strong academic programs, Davis ultimately chose to pursue collegiate volleyball. The family connection was further cemented when his sister decided to attend Loyola, graduating as a Rambler in 2002.

Shane Davis didn't just thrive at Loyola, he made history. From 2000 to 2003, he set the program record with 5,337 assists and became the leader in digs and service aces. In 2003, he was tabbed as Ramblers Male Athlete of the Year.

After graduating, unexpectedly found himself stepping into the coaching role when Loyola's head coach job opened up. He said he didn't initially have a passion for coaching or even see it as a viable career option.

"I had no idea what I wanted to do after Loyola," Davis said. "I could play volleyball, try the overseas thing or just get a regular job, but I was really lost. Coaching wasn't even on my radar. I had zero experience — I'd never coached even T-ball."

At the time, the team's previous coach Tim O'Brian, who was also an assistant coach for Loyola's women's volleyball program, decided to leave to coach a professional team. With both programs demanding his time, the coach approached Davis, a three-year captain.

"He told me to talk to the athletic director, saying he thought I'd be a great fit to take over the program because of my leadership experience," Davis said. "But my immediate reaction was, 'No way.' I had no idea what I was doing. I told

them they could find someone better."

It wasn't until a few months later, in August, when Davis began reconsidering the job offer. He said he thought giving it a shot could do no harm, and he planned to only take on the responsibilities for a year.

"The athletic director just threw the keys across the desk and said, 'You know where the office is,'" Davis said with a laugh. "That's how my coaching career started."

Initially, Davis said he viewed the position as a temporary gig — more of a stopgap to ensure the program's continuity. But over time, he fell in love with the position.

"It was a stipend position, and I was working two other jobs at the time," he said. "I just cared about the program and wanted to help out. But somewhere along the way, I fell in love with it — coaching, impacting lives and, honestly, wearing Nike gear to the office."

This leap of faith led Davis to stay with the team, beginning an illustrious coaching career. During his tenure, he guided Loyola to three straight NCAA Final Four appearances, culminating in back-to-back national championships in 2014 and 2015.

Davis said everything came together during those championship years — his 10 years with the program paid off.

Davis was inducted into Loyola's Hall of Fame in 2015 as the program's all-time winningest coach with a 265-88 record. He was also named the 2014 AVCA Coach of the Year as he molded 12 All-Americans, 43 All-MIVA picks and a 2016 Olympic bronze medalist.

After 10 years of success with the Ramblers, Davis decided to take his coaching career to Northwestern University's women's volleyball program.



MEGAN DUNN / THE PHOENIX

Formerly a player, Davis returns for his 13th season as Loyola's head coach.

After Loyola's previous head coach, John Hawks left for the University of California at Los Angeles, Loyola Athletics announced Davis would return to the team as head coach.

"There aren't many opportunities where you can leave a place gracefully and feel so supported coming back," Davis said. "For me, this was a no-brainer. I love this place. I picked it when I was 18 for a reason."

As Davis embarks on a new chapter with Loyola, he said his focus remains on getting to know his players and seeing them grow.

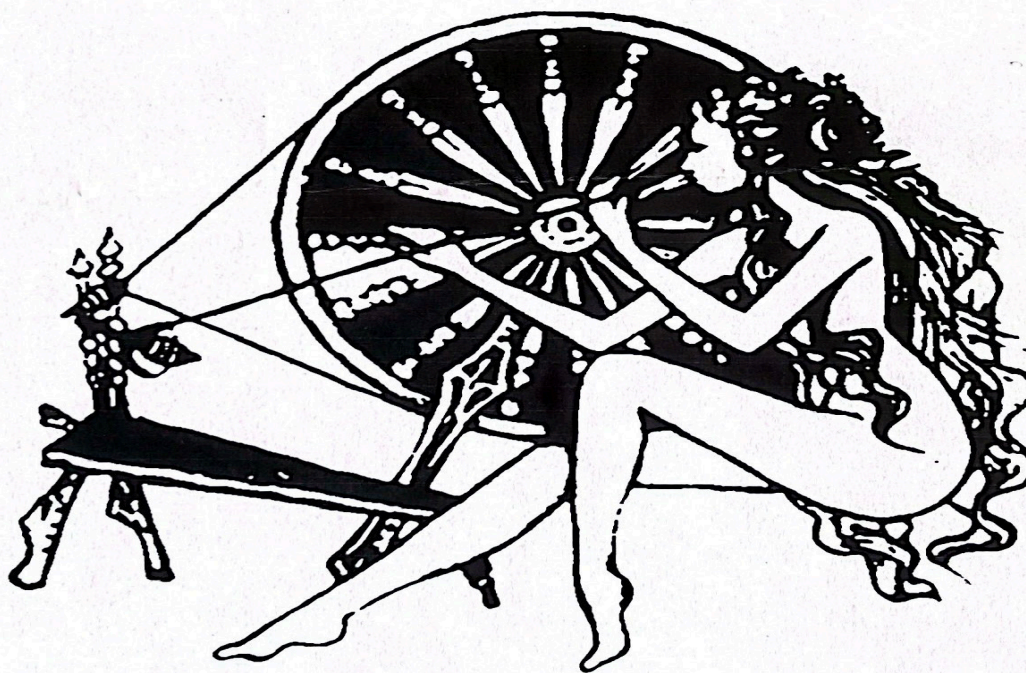
"I'm still really excited to get to know the guys even more," he said. "I'm excited to see how they battle conflict and adversity. There's so much growth that can come from those moments, and I'm eager to see where that takes this group by the end of the season."

From tagging along to recreation league games to leading a national powerhouse team, the Hall of Fame coach has returned to the Rambler community with a commitment to excellence rooted in the Loyola volleyball program.

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SPORTS

MEN'S BASKETBALL

Ramblers struggle against Fordham 70-66

By **ANDI REVESZ**,
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The Loyola men's basketball team defeated Fordham University 70-66 Jan. 22 at the annual Jesuit Jam in Gentile Arena. Graduate guard Sheldon Edwards Jr. led the Ramblers with 13 points, while graduate guard Japhet Medor and fourth-year guard Jackie Johnson III both scored 22 points for the Rams.

After recording nine turnovers in the second half and 14 overall, head coach Drew Valentine said confidence within the team is faltering.

"A lot of self-inflicted wounds out there tonight — self-inflicted errors, a lot of mentality errors from our guys — and we gotta be better," Valentine said. "I gotta be better as a coach. You just feel it as a fan — you don't even have to have a lot of basketball knowledge. The guys just gotta look at themselves in the mirror. I gotta look at myself in the mirror and figure out how to get this team playing better because I am not doing a good job."

After winning the tipoff, the Ramblers got on the board first with a layup from fourth-year guard Des Watson. Edwards Jr. stole the ball from Fordham's fourth-year guard Zach Riley and sent it down floor to third-year guard Jalen Quinn for a fast break layup and a 4-0 lead.

Third-year Fordham forward Romad Dean netted a three before Medor added another a minute later to put the Rams ahead. Edwards Jr. tied the game with a layup on the next possession.

Fourth-year forward Francis Nwaokorie received a technical foul for hanging on the rim after a missed dunk, allowing Johnson III to add a

free throw for the Rams. Johnson III made a three soon after to give Fordham a 10-6 advantage.

The Ramblers retook the lead with a dunk by second-year center Miles Rubin and a three-point play from third-year guard Kymany Houinsou. After the Ramblers failed to capitalize on two straight Fordham turnovers, Medor made a 3-pointer to retake a 13-11 lead.

Third-year guard Jayden Dawson tied the game with a successful trip to the line, but Medor kept the Rams a step ahead with a reverse layup at the other end.

A Quinn driving layup was blocked by Fordham's graduate forward Abdou Tsimbila, while Johnson III added two at the line for the Rams on the next possession. Another steal by Edwards Jr. set up Nwaokorie for a layup, closing the gap to two.

Johnson III added a layup to the board before Watson closed the gap again with a trip to the line. Third-year Fordham forward Joshua Rivera rebounded a missed Watson layup and drained a 3-pointer on the other end, making it 22-17.

Medor made a layup, which was followed by a run of misses by both sides. Quinn and Dawson ended the drought with 3-pointers, keeping the Ramblers close behind 24-23.

Johnson III made a 3-pointer, Houinsou scored a layup and Medor added one at the line. Edwards Jr. tied it at 28 after hitting a deep three with just under three minutes remaining in the half.

An alley-oop dunk by Rivera came before a Ramblers shot-clock violation. Two consecutive Edwards Jr. threes and a Riley free throw ended the half with the Ramblers up 34-31.

Johnson III opened the second half

with a mid-range jumper, and Medor gave the lead back to the Rams with a successful trip to the line. Johnson III increased the lead to 37-34 with a driving layup.

Tsimbila slammed a second-chance dunk before Nwaokorie added two at the line. A fast-passing offensive play led to a Watson 3-pointer, tying it at 39.

After three missed opportunities off Rambler turnovers, Rivera drove the lane for a layup and Medor sank a 3-pointer putting Fordham ahead 44-39.

Houinsou shrunk the lead to three with a layup before Fordham's graduate guard Matt Zona added two at the line.

Edwards Jr. intercepted a Fordham pass and took it coast to coast for a dunk, and Watson made a layup on the next possession to bring it within one.

The teams both scored during the next string of possessions. Johnson III was the lone Fordham scorer during the stretch with a jumper and a 3-pointer, while Dawson and Houinsou each made a layup as Loyola continued to trail 51-49.

The offenses stayed hot following a media timeout, as Zona and Rivera both made layups and Rubin jammed two dunks.

Fourth-year forward Jalen DeLoach tied the game at 55 with a tip-in and sparked an unanswered run, scoring on a dunk and a jumper. Dawson joined in with a jumper before Medor made two at the line with Loyola now ahead 61-57.

Rubin added one at the line following a Johnson III layup. Medor had another successful trip to the line to make it 64-61. Nwaokorie added two at the line after a foul was called against Zona following a review.

Zona fouled Dawson, who made just one of his attempts. Medor made a driv-



BELLA ADAMS / THE PHOENIX

Rubin rises to the basket during a nine point and six rebound performance.

ing layup with 28 seconds remaining to cut into the four-point Rambler lead.

Dawson made the first on a one-and-one opportunity before Watson made two at the line. Rivera catapulted a buzzer-beating three into the net, but it wasn't enough as the Ramblers came out victorious 70-66.

Even after adding the win column, Valentine said there's a lot the group still needs to work on, including guarding the ball and returning to the team's foundation of committing to the championship culture.

Valentine said the Fordham team was hungrier for the win, despite the Ramblers focusing on being a

"championship team."

"They want to maximize themselves and be individual," Valentine said. "If you want to be a pro and you want to win a championship, you're going to do everything that the team needs, but then you're also going to be confident and prepared and do everything you can as an individual."

The Ramblers have a week off before heading to Fairfax, Va. to face George Mason University Jan. 29. Tipoff is scheduled for 6 p.m. and streaming information has yet to be released.

Andi Revesz is the Sports Editor for *The Loyola Phoenix*.

WOMEN'S BASKETBALL

Richmond clobbers Loyola on home court

By **MOLLY HANLEY**,
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Loyola women's basketball fell to University of Richmond 85-45 Jan. 23 in Gentile Arena. First-year forward Alexa Kinas led the Ramblers with 15 points, while Richmond's second-year guard Ally Sweeney finished with 19 points.

The Spiders won the opening tipoff, but the ball was quickly stolen by third-year guard Kira Chivers. After Loyola was unable to convert, Richmond opened the scoring with a layup by fourth-year guard Katie Hill. The Ramblers tied the game after Kinas finished a layup.

The Spiders' third-year forward Maggie Doogan scored consecutive points off a layup and a jumper, while

the Ramblers rebutted with a 3-pointer from graduate guard Naelle Bernard. Richmond's graduate forward Addie Budnik secured a layup, and Hill hit a jumper to give Richmond a 10-5 lead.

The Spiders kept the momentum with a Hill jumper and a 3-pointer by Sweeney before Bernard responded with a 3-pointer. Richmond added consecutive 3-pointers from Sweeney and Budnik to close out the first quarter 23-8.

A 3-pointer by Richmond's graduate forward Steph Ouderkirk started off the second quarter, before Chivers responded with a driving layup to make it 26-10.

Consecutive points for the Spiders included a Doogan layup and an Ouderkirk 3-pointer. Kinas responded with

a 3-pointer for the Ramblers. Graduate guard Thoranna Kika Hodge-Carr stole the ball and sent it to Bernard, who converted with another 3-pointer.

The Spiders' third-year forward Sam Dewey secured a layup before Kinas finished one of her own on the other end. A 3-pointer by Richmond's graduate guard Faith Alston made it 38-18.

Kinas and Bernard scored back-to-back layups for the Ramblers, while Spider third-year guard Rachel Ullstrom added a driving layup — a play replicated by Kinas soon after. Ullstrom closed out the second quarter with a 3-pointer for a 43-24 lead.

The third quarter commenced with a battle. Chivers and Ullstrom each hit 3-pointers, and layups by both Kinas and Budnik made it 48-29.

Doogan scored a turnaround jumper, but Bernard negated it with a three. First-year guard Kendall Hendrix stole the ball, allowing Hodge-Carr to make a driving layup. Alston followed with a 3-pointer for the Spiders to keep the lead at 53-36.

Hodge-Carr secured a driving layup before Doogan ended a 56-38 third quarter with a 3-pointer.

An opening three from Sweeney continued the Richmond momentum to start the fourth quarter. Third-year guard Emma Theodorsson responded with a driving layup for the Ramblers, but the Spiders rebutted with back-to-back 3-pointers by Sweeney and

Ullstrom. A Budnik layup prompted a Rambler timeout down 67-40.

Ullstrom hit a three and the Ramblers followed with a layup from Hodge-Carr before Sweeney dropped in another.

First-year forward Roisin Grandberry hit a 3-pointer for the Ramblers, which was mitigated by three consecutive Richmond 3-pointers from Sweeney, Doogan and Alston. A final Sweeney layup closed out the game for the Spiders 85-45.

Head coach Allison Guth said the Spiders had a strong performance and said the Ramblers are working hard to pick up wins.

"I just think Richmond plays the game the way it should be played,"

Guth said. "You talk about the way they share it, you talk about the unselfish play, the way they score it. On the flip side of that, I do want to promise Rambler Nation that we had respect for Richmond's shooting the three ball coming in and thought our game plan for our executions to deter threes was going to work. We just didn't execute our game plan."

The Ramblers take on University of Dayton Jan. 29 in Gentile Arena. Tipoff is scheduled for 6 p.m. and streaming will be available on ESPN+.

Molly Hanley is a Staff Writer for *The Loyola Phoenix*.



KATRINA DE GUZMAN / THE PHOENIX

Bernard tallied 14 points and three assists for the Ramblers' box score.



KATRINA DE GUZMAN / THE PHOENIX

Kinas scored 15 points — a team high — in her second career start at Loyola.

Emma Watcke of Loyola track and field overcomes tragedy and breaks records

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Indoor track and field finds continued success at Notre Dame Invitational

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Men's volleyball enjoys two victories at home to maintain unbeaten streak

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Championship-winning head coach Shane Davis returns to men's volleyball

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