

# The Delphian

December 12, 2022

The Voice of the Students

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*See Inside for Holiday Coverage*

## Fall Update on *Momentum 2*: Scholarship, Inclusivity and Growth at Adelphi

BY HUSSEIN ALI RIFATH

The current strategic plan of Adelphi University, *Momentum 2*, also known as *M2*, was approved by the University Board of Trustees in its June 2022 meeting. This plan, created with feedback from over 1,700 students, faculty, staff and alumni, is setting the course of the university's progression for the next five years.

"Launching *Momentum 2* was a defining achievement for Adelphi," said President Christine M. Riordan, PhD. "Our community came together to create ambitious goals for our future that embrace every voice on campus. I'm so proud of our teamwork and the progress we're already making as Adelphi's impact continues to grow."

According to Marsha Darling, PhD, special assistant to the President for Strategic Initiatives in Executive Leadership, student engagement in the planning phase for *M2* was a high priority, as students were provided with an informational website and access to a dedicated email address where she composed personalized responses to each email message.

"President Riordan and the executive leadership team believed very strongly that one of the most important priorities of the planning phase for *Momentum 2* was the scheduling of many opportunities to involve all members of the Adelphi community in discussions regarding the goals and initiatives that comprise the plan," she said. "To that end, a total of 1,400 students, faculty and staff participated in planning phase forums in fall 2021, and another 390 students, faculty, staff and alumni stakeholders participated in the three town hall meetings that were convened in early April 2022; bringing the total number of engaged participants to 1,790 Panthers."

Darling said that *M2* has three main goals approved by the Board of Trustees in June 2022. They are listed on Adelphi's public-facing websites and are each under active development.

The first goal is for the university to achieve academic distinction in the four core course areas: Arts and Humanities (including Performing Arts), STEM (including both Applied and Social Sciences), Business and Education and Wellness and Social Work. Adelphi seeks to support and encourage faculty and student creative pursuits, interdisciplin-

ary studies and the study of global issues through the expansion and improvement of academic programming.

The second goal is to create a more welcoming, inclusive and connected community by improving the Adelphi student experience while retaining and expanding diversity in students and faculty.

The third goal is to create smart growth and infrastructure. For example, the university intends to use data analytics to make informed decisions. It aims to expand the recruitment of first-generation students and create quality online programming. It also seeks to modernize its facilities while maintaining a commitment to sustainability.

"I think that's a step in the right direction to empower students if their parents didn't go to college but they want to go and get an education for themselves," said Andrew Zhang, a senior biology major. "There's different paths to become successful nowadays, but one of the traditional paths is to get an education."

This semester, in accordance with these goals, the plan saw its first phase of implementation. As a result, the university has experienced various improvements on campus this term. The new One-Stop Student Services Center sits in the basement of Levermore Hall, ready to provide students access to financial and registrar services. The newly-inaugurated Center for Innovation, located on the first floor of Swirbul Library, provides students with professional experience and connects them with internships. New Multicultural and Mindfulness Centers were opened on the third floor of the University Center.

Melanie Gomez, a senior exercise science major, said she enjoys visiting the Multicultural Center. "The bean bag chairs are my favorite," she said.

Additionally, the University Bookstore, located on the first floor of the University Center, has diversified its merchandise. This has met an overwhelming response from some students. "I didn't even know that there was a new catalog to be honest," said Zhang.

University Dining Services worked with the Student Government Association, Residential Student Association, Student-Athlete Advisory Committee and Commuter Student Organization to improve its operations. This year saw the introduction of the Dine + Connect Opt-Out meal plan

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## University's Bias Response Team Works to Give Students a Voice

BY JOSEPH D'ANDREA

Giving others a genuine sense of being heard is the minimum level of assurance that many long for. For college students—many of whom are still trying to find their individual voice and identity—this is a crucial part of their developmental process as it allows them to express their desires in a valuable, reciprocal manner.

However, sometimes the barriers individuals see in front of them are ones that they cannot always avoid, such as others' perceptions of those who feel as though their voices are being suppressed on some level. For those on campus who feel this way, Adelphi's Bias Response Team, made up of a multidisciplinary group of faculty and staff members, was created this



**A few members of Adelphi's Bias Response Team, clockwise from top left: Sarah Eltabib, Diana Damilatis-Kull, Chotsani West and Joseph DeGearo.**

*Photo from the Adelphi website*

semester to address the concerns of the community that exhibit signs of bias.

Doing so through meetings, educational training and referring students to resources on campus, the team currently seeks to raise awareness of their importance at Adelphi. Team members include Joseph De Gearo, assistant vice president and dean of students; Sarah Eltabib, a senior lecturer in the College of Arts and Sciences; Diana Damilatis-Kull, the director of Adelphi's Bridges program; Rosemary Garabedian, director of the Student Access Office; Brian Glick, director of Student Conduct and Community Standards; Michael Hoffner, coordinator of Adelphi's Interfaith Center and Panther Pantry; Jacqueline Jones LaMon, vice president for Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging; Jes-

sica Monaco, coordinator of Integrated Care and Case Management; Chotsani West, executive Director of the Office of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging; Allison Vernace, chief of Community Concern and Resolution; Anna Zinko, assistant vice president for Student Affairs; and Scott Zotto, associate director of the Student Counseling Center.

"At this moment, our goal is to ensure that our community is aware of the values, philosophy and processes of the Bias Response Team," West said. "We are here to listen, support, act and respond. This is a necessary component to enhance Adelphi's personalized approach. Positive relationships help to create an environment that is conducive to learning and understanding. Trust, communication and transparency are critical for successful student-faculty relationships.

"I feel that Adelphi adequately provides students with a myriad of opportunities and resources to ensure that students are fully aware of their student rights, which is closely connected to the freedom of expression, with the understanding that this freedom must not be abused, and is not intended to threaten, intimidate or discriminate against others," West continued. "We want students to know that their safety, well-being and knowledge about issues that impact them are important to the Bias Response Team. Equally important is Adelphi's commitment to fostering critical thinking and inquiry which support a student's journey here and beyond."

Though new, the Bias Response Team aims to ensure security to students and has promising plans, which they feel students' input is key in doing so.

"I think the future objectives of our team will be shaped by valuable input from our community," West said. "Additionally, our team closely monitors the trends and current research related to this important work, so we'll be effectively able to respond to the needs of our community. Our Bias Response Team remains open to feedback from our community."

Monaco, who coordinates Adelphi's Care Team, spoke about working with barriers students may experience and how connecting them to the appropriate resources contributes to the efforts of the Bias Response Team.

"I feel that we have a great group of faculty and staff members who are

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## A Word from the Editor

'Tis the season for glad tidings and happy wishes! As I'm writing this, issue number five marks the end of the semester and the end of my time as an Adelphi student. It's been my pleasure to serve this community as editor-in-chief of *The Delphian*. A special thanks to the terrific staff who help make this paper possible for each issue; I wouldn't be able to do my job without them. And I'm happy to announce that while my time is coming to an end, the paper will continue under the leadership of our new editor-in-chief Lizz Panchyk. And Joseph D'Andrea will be Opinions editor. Congratulations to both of them.

In this issue, starting with News, we bring several stories from around campus, from an update on *Momentum 2* to an introduction to the new Bias Response Team. We take a look at the various ways our campus is celebrating the holidays and the trend of school refusal sweeping the country. We provide a recap of the 9th Annual Media Career Expo, co-sponsored by *The Delphian*, and a senior reflection from myself. Looking over to Features, we offer you several stories to get in the holiday mood. Wondering what gift to get? Then take a look at our annual gift guide. We provide you a list of Christmas songs and their meanings and some Christmas movies that many still debate, as well as two more movie reviews; Jordan Peele's "Nope" and "Luckiest Girl Alive." We even provide an overview of the Commuter Assistant team on campus.

For Opinions, we give a range of stories from the criticism of Yale's response to mental health issues and an overview of the current state of cryptocurrency. If you are looking for a great game to get this holiday season, we've got you covered with a list of available video games and what consoles to get them for. We also have highs, and lows, of homemade gifts.

Last, but not least, Sports provides winter sports coverage from a panther spotlight of a member of the swim team, as well as the men's basketball team.

All these great stories and more come with the last fall issue of *The Delphian*.

**Nicolas Rontanini '22**  
Editor-in-Chief



*The Delphian staff wishes everyone a happy holiday season and a restful break!*

# TheDelphian

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*Congratulations, Nick!  
The entire staff wishes you the best of luck as you graduate. Thank you for your leadership this semester! We'll miss you.*

## Bias Response Team

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dedicated to working with students to assure they feel safe, comfortable and heard," Monaco said. "Offices like the Care Team, Student Conduct and Community Standards, Student Community Engagement and the Dean of Students office are just a few examples of places where students can discuss their concerns, ask questions on how to address their concerns, and educate themselves on the universities policies, procedures and resources available to them."

She added, "SCE has a variety of events, clubs, organizations for students, often made by students who have discussed their passion in a specific topic. Our offices work to hear from students, what their concerns are, what changes or additions they'd like to make."

If you are experiencing bias in any form and are seeking help from professionals who you can relate to and receive advice from, contact the Adelphi's Bias Response Team. More information can be found at [www.adelphi.edu/bias-response](http://www.adelphi.edu/bias-response).

## Newly Implemented *Momentum 2* Goals Create Change

*Continued from page 1*

for first-year commuter students, which gives them \$250 Panther dollars for use in on-campus dining. Gomez appreciated this. "They didn't have that during my freshman year. It would've been helpful ... freshmen don't tend to know how much they'll spend and it's good that they can now budget," she said.

The university continues to find ways to be involved with the greater community. For example, the Artivism Club, student athletes and a variety of other student-run organizations have worked to offer community service both on and off campus.

This fall, students, staff and faculty began to receive emails from Insider, Adelphi's new weekly e-newsletter designed to promote events and other opportunities on campus and to communicate deadlines. In addition, the university has launched a new brand campaign and is redesigning its website.

Among the new additions to Adelphi's academic programming are an MS in Computer Science and a certificate program in Museum Studies.

"I like the Masters in Comp. Sci. It's a big field and a lot of people are trying to get into it. It's going to attract a lot of applicants, I think," Zhang said.

The MFA in Creative Writing program at Adelphi will soon shift from a four-year to a two-year residency model.

The university has worked to increase student opportunity by establishing the Office of Undergraduate Research and Creative Works, which aids students in pursuing undergraduate research and other creative endeavors. It hosts an annual Scholarship and Creative Works Conference in the spring to highlight student work.

Darling said that's because the university strives to bring recognition to student achievement. "Adelphi's executive leadership is always seeking to elevate the attention given to student academic achievement and student success," she said.

Adelphi continues to champion diversity. It is on track to earn a Higher Education Excellence in Diversity Award next year. It is also on the cusp of achiev-

ing 25 percent Hispanic enrollment, which would earn its official designation as a Hispanic-serving institution by the U.S. Department of Education.

Panthers can continue to expect to see change and improvement in Adelphi as the school year progresses.

"Many other initiatives are underway relating to enhancing student resources, administrative functions, public safety, enrollment, fundraising, corporate partnerships, alumni and community engagement," said Bobbie Dell'Aquilo, chief communications officer of University Communications and Marketing.

Progress in the implementation of *Momentum 2* continues to be reviewed by the administration and the trustees, while students also weigh in. Gomez approves of the changes she has seen thus far. "It is a step in the right direction," she said.

Further information is available on the university intranet: <https://intranet.adelphi.edu/strategic-plan/> (an Adelphi account login is required for access). Questions or comments about *Momentum 2* can be addressed to [momentum2@adelphi.edu](mailto:momentum2@adelphi.edu).

## Alumni Share Hopeful Messages About the Communications Field at Career Expo

BY NICOLAS RONTANINI

About 30 Adelphi students attended the Ninth Annual Media Career Expo held on Nov. 15 in Blodgett Hall where they got to hear the professional journeys of six alumni, all of whom graduated in the last 10 years. They were invited to this event by the dual organizers, *The Delphian* and the Communications Department. Panelists shared their tips for breaking into the media industry, as well as the position they currently hold and what experiences they had while they were Panthers that helped them to get their current jobs.

The panelists were Alexandra Romero '22, who is an instructional media specialist at Columbia University's Columbia Video Network; Gabriel Flores '19, who works through the local 52 Union in NYC in the electric department as a lamp operator providing light for scenes; Victoria Chiesa '15, who is assistant managing editor for corporate communications at the United States Tennis Association; Mara Bush '14, who works at ABC Network News for the affiliate services department; Vinny Messina '13, president and founder of the digital media company, Axxess Baseball; and Brett Spielberg '13, director of strategic communications and advancement at The Waldorf School of Garden City. Spielberg and Chiesa are both former editors-in-chief of *The Delphian* and Messina was the sports editor, leadership roles they all said helped them get valuable journalism experience.

The alumni were asked a series of questions by the event's moderator, Liza N. Burby, a senior adjunct professor in the department and this paper's advisor, on topics including jobs that have opened up in recent years, the importance of internships and opportunities while still in college, and skills panelists wished they had learned during their time as an AU student. The expo also allowed students in attendance the opportunity to ask whatever questions they had regarding the job search, as well as a chance to network with the

panelists after. Many students stayed for more than an hour after the two-hour event had ended as the panelists all took the time to speak with them.



From left: Liza N. Burby, Victoria Chiesa '15, Vinny Messina '13, Brett Spielberg '13, Mara Bush '14, Gabriel Flores '19 and Alexandra Romero '22. Photo by Nicolas Rontanini

"I feel like the Media Career Expo really gave me an insight into the realities of the field. It's so easy to fall into these ideas of doomerism and that the job market is collapsing," said Alyssa Krell, a junior communications major in attendance. "There is a future, if you look for it, if you make it happen, if you talk



Brett Spielberg (left) talks to students during the networking period of the event.

Photo by Liza Burby

to the right people. The future in the field is there; you just have to do the work."

The expo is not only an educational experience for students, but for panelists themselves, Romero attended the expo after visiting it last year.

"It was very surreal coming back as a panelist this year. I definitely wanted to come back though, as I found much comfort from the panel-

ists last year," she said. "This one was truly special because we all got to network after and share even more."

One of the aspects covered was

how to network, something all students are told is important, but is a skill that takes time to learn and can be intimidating. Flores shared he got his current job by walking up to a technician on a photo shoot and just asking about job opportunities. But Bush said she's not a fan of networking.

"I think it comes naturally to very few people and I'm still trying to figure it out with my mentor," she said. "Something I've learned is that it's okay not to be good at it. It's okay to be yourself and let your work show the type of person you are. If I have a reputation for getting my work done and getting it done well, that opens up opportunities for me."

Messana added that LinkedIn is the digital networking space and can be perfect for those who are not comfortable seeking out mentors. "Have an account, use the search tab to filter out the high-quality people you want to reach out to. Message them and ask if you can meet them for coffee or ask them if you can ask for advice," he said.

Chiesa shared that if she could go back to when she was an undergraduate she'd tell herself not to be afraid of failure. "Push yourself out of your comfort zone as hard as it can be. The first time a person tells you your dream

is too big or you're barking up the wrong tree it can be discouraging and make you question if you're doing the right thing," she said. "It's really hard to push that to the side and say yes I do know what's right for me. But if you do go down that road and you find it's not what you expected or you do happen to fail at it, it's not something to dwell on for an extended period of time because if you get wrapped up in those no's you're going to miss the next person who tells you yes or helps you get to that stage."

Flores said he recognized that the common theme that he and his fellow panelists were sharing was that they didn't wait for things to happen, but created their own opportunities.

"As a filmmaker I think more now than ever we all have phones and can go out there and shoot something and make it happen," he said. "I would learn something in class and then go out and supplement that, like three-point lighting or why my favorite Netflix show looks the way it did. I'd just be a complete nerd about it. Just try things, put yourself out there because no one is going to make it happen. You have to do it yourself."

One message the panelists shared was to find what works best for you.

"I never thought I'd be a director of communications when I was hoping to be a journalist. It's something different for everyone, it's whatever works for you," Spielberg said. "And you don't have to know that now. It's going to take time, you'll stumble upon it, someone will hand something to you, you never know. It's going to be different for everybody."

Romero, the most recent graduate among the panel, added that the most important thing she could share is that everything is going to work out.

"I never in a billion years thought I'd be here when I was sitting in your shoes last year, so you just never know what is going to happen. As long as you keep putting yourself out there, doing the work and trying your absolute best, it's all going to be okay," Romero said. "It's not the end of the world; it's actually just the beginning."

## A Senior Reflection on My Time at Adelphi

BY NICOLAS RONTANINI

*Editor's Note: The Delphian has an annual tradition of publishing first-person essays by senior staff members so they can talk about what their experiences were like leading the school newspaper, as well as their time as Adelphi students. Here our current editor-in-chief shares his thoughts.*

For many, the end of December marks the end of the fall semester. For me, though, it marks the end of my time as an undergraduate student. I graduate at the end of December, bringing to a close four and a half years as an Adelphi Panther.

As I get closer to leaving, I real-

ize something: that I might have learned more here than I would have had I not attended college. Coming out of high school, I was very much an introvert, relatively uncomfortable around new people I wasn't familiar with. I could not have done as well as I have with such a shy disposition, so I knew I needed to improve my interpersonal communication. After all, how would I complete group work if I wasn't comfortable communicating, much less become editor-in-chief of the school newspaper? As of now, I've grown more confident and relatively more outspoken.

Given that college can be a rather stressful time, I had to learn how to manage my time, anxiety and emotions. I learned early on how I should

study, when to start assignments, what to look for when proofreading and the importance of asking for help. College does come with increased independence, but it's important to know how to advocate for yourself.

Of course, my time here also came with its own set of challenges. The pandemic comprised a majority of my college career, starting my sophomore year and ultimately continuing until the end. Having my schedule completely change while performing my academic duties in an online environment I wasn't familiar with was certainly a challenge. Looking back, there were lessons I learned that have since proved useful.

Ultimately, I think I learned something important. A little over four years

ago, as a senior in high school, my teacher told me to be true to myself on the last day of classes. In spring 2020, I finally figured out what she meant. I committed myself to *The Delphian*, writing for every issue I could. I got an internship and was accepted into a communications honor society. I finally learned to focus on my strengths, not beat myself over my weaknesses. I learned that being true to who I am meant accepting those weaknesses.

Graduating from here is ultimately bittersweet. I spent four and half years developing relationships and experiences that will not only help me in the long run, but that made my time here an enjoyable experience.

## 'Tis the Season: Adelphi Gets in the Holiday Spirit

BY HUSSEIN ALI RIFATH

Thanksgiving marked the start of this year's holiday season, and Adelphi chose to celebrate it by giving back to the community. In a joint effort by the Panther Pantry and student volunteers, the university supported families in need by offering them side dishes to complete their Thanksgiving meals, free of charge.

Michael Hoffner, the coordinator of Adelphi's Interfaith Center and Panther Pantry, noted a key issue that drove the initiative. "People are carrying a lot of stress and a lot of anxiety—students, families and other community members—and one thing that Adelphi is deeply committed to is not just focusing on academic success but also making sure that peoples' wellbeing is nurtured."

This effort strove to serve all members of our community: anyone who registered online to receive a Thanksgiving meal kit from the university was accommodated based on their family size.

The kits included much of what we find in traditional Thanksgiving meals: stuffing, mashed potatoes, vegetables, string beans, carrots and pumpkin pie. They were received by pick-up the four weekdays preceding the start of the university's Thanksgiving recess.

The initiative made significant reach: 58 families registered to receive a meal kit, with a total family size of over 250 people. The large number of families requesting meal kits served as

evidence to Hoffner that the local community had a need for this assistance. "We were able to meet that need, and that's a beautiful thing," he said.

He added that he saw societal implications for the initiative's success.



Festive lights were set up to celebrate the upcoming winter holidays. Photo by Joanna Reid



Students prepared Thanksgiving meal kits for 58 local families. Photo by Michael Hoffner

"Seeing different groups and people volunteer and helping be there to create and give out the meal kits was inspiring, and a great reminder that we're part of a caring community that wants to make sure that those who are part of it know

they belong and know that they are not alone. That is inspiring to be a part of."

Another way Adelphi works to improve belonging is through its student-run organizations. Catholic Newman Club, the Inter-varsity Christian Fellowship, Chabad, Hillel, Sikhs United, the Hindu Student Association, and the Muslim Student Association all provide a network for students to practice their faith, engage in fellowship and celebrate religious holidays. These organizations help make Adelphi feel like home for many.

The university has made several religious observations in the previous weeks to celebrate the holiday season. In recognition of the Catholic observance of Advent, masses held in the University Center (UC) Chapel shifted the focus of readings. On Dec. 1, Hillel had a pre-Chanukah lunch at the University Center Chapel (UC Room 302). On Dec. 7, the Inter-varsity Christian Fellowship hosted a Christmas karaoke at the UC Chapel and the Chabad Jewish Student Group hosted a pre-Chanukah party in UC Rooms 113-115. On Dec. 8, the Center for Student and Community Engagement hosted its Found Family Holiday Party for all students to celebrate the holiday season.

The Garden City campus has seen signs of these holiday festivities. On Dec. 1, the university set up holiday lights on the flagpole lawn. Soon afterward, a Christmas tree, a menorah (to recognize Chanukah) and a kinara (to recognize Kwanzaa) were lit in the University Center.

## A Nationwide Trend of Students Refusing to Go to School Puts Campus Resources on Alert

BY JOANNA REID

Increasingly adolescents are outright refusing to attend school for days and even months. The Education Department said in July 2022 that 72 percent of public schools reported an increase in chronic absenteeism this year, of which school refusal is a subset, compared to a typical year before the pandemic. When the Covid-19 pandemic hit in early 2020, many were forced into their homes due to the nationwide shutdown. Schooling still continued online and students had to adjust to life at home for months. Experts are finding that the return to in-person settings has been a challenge for kindergarten through high school. While studies haven't yet been done on college students, Diann Cameron-Kelly, associate provost for Student Success, said she has seen a rise in the number of students visiting the counseling office at Adelphi.

"Amongst youth, there has been an increase in suicidality and major depression, so a lot of youth are having difficulty feeling as though they are in control," said Cameron-Kelly. "A lot of kids are experiencing depression post-pandemic and that adjustment to not being around friends to being around friends [again]. Just having to make a

change and adjust is very difficult, so some students did it better than others."

There are many reasons why someone may not want to attend class. Sometimes it's due to family issues, getting up early, having to leave the comfort of one's own home or being nervous to interact with others. The rise in mental health disorders among teens is also a contributing factor. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention found that in 2021 more than a third (37 percent) of high school students reported they experienced poor mental health during the pandemic, and 44 percent reported they persistently felt sad or hopeless during the past year.

Choosing not to go to school consistently is known as "school refusal." The National Library of Medicine said that school refusal is often a symptom of anxiety disorders and depression. One possible solution to get students back in class regularly is to treat the issue using exposure therapy, which is often used for those with anxiety, and focuses on pinpointing what is making someone anxious in the first place and then doing that thing. This typically happens over time.

But when it comes to college students, where attendance is often part of a semester grade, not attending classes can have consequences like having to drop

a class and eventually delaying graduation until required credits are met.

Alisha Horne, a senior art studio major, believes that many Adelphi students are having more difficulty coming to class after the pandemic began.

"I definitely see a bigger difference in attendance flexibility with my professors. Before Covid, it was very strict and you had to have proof of sickness. Covid created this environmental anxiety that allowed a bubble to form," Horne said. "A bubble that is easy to exploit when you want to take a random day off/do classes from home. The flexible bubble is great for someone like me, who is chronically ill. But I've also watched my friends slip into an academic depression because it is so much easier to procrastinate."

In order to improve the issue of "school refusal," Cameron-Kelly suggested that students need to receive more support from mental health resources and professionals. She is adamant about the fact that school counselors need to reach out to students, rather than waiting for students to reach out to them. She believes mental health professionals need to address tough questions by being upfront and asking a student why they are missing class

and why their grades are slipping.

Cameron-Kelly said, "Teachers have to be more alert as to what is going on with their students, and counselors have to be at-the-ready to support students."

Andrea Ward, interim associate provost for Student Success, said that when students miss class, faculty can submit an alert through the advising platform, Navigate. Those alerts are sent to the student and the student's advisor.

However, Ward said the office has actually seen fewer of these alerts compared to the semester of fall 2019, which is likely a step in the right direction. Even so, Ward suggested that Adelphi students reach out to their professors if they're having trouble attending classes. "Your professors want to hear from you especially if something has come up that is keeping you away from class," she said.

As students may continue to miss classes for mental health reasons, new mental health resources may be under way. Cameron-Kelly explained, "We cannot wait for the student to just wake up and say 'oh, today's a good day for me to see a counselor.' We [staff members and counselors] have to be the ones to reach out to the student."

## Want to Skip Mariah Carey? Here Are 12 Classic Christmas Songs to Add to Your Playlist

BY LIZZ PANCHYK

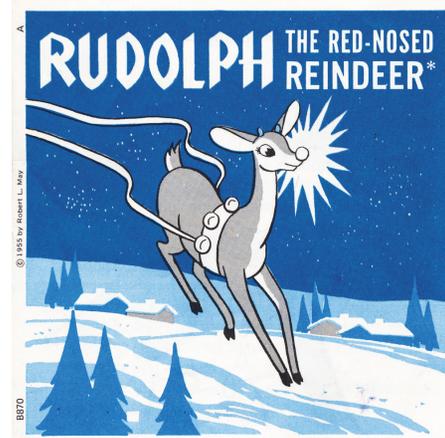
With the bustling holiday season fast approaching, we often turn off the pop songs and blast the Christmas music. Of course, everyone knows “All I want for Christmas is You” by Mariah Carey, but what about some old favorites? The kinds of songs you listen to on Christmas morning with the fireplace crackling and the faint smell of cinnamon and balsam in the air? Here are 12 homey holiday songs to ensure a wonderful Christmas-time

**1. “I’ll Be Home for Christmas” by Bing Crosby** Although a sweet sounding melody, this song, originally recorded by Crosby in 1943, was meant to be sung from the point of view of an overseas soldier. The soldier writes a letter to his family with hopes that he will be home for Christmas—and the song itself was to honor overseas soldiers fighting at that time.

**2. “Winter Wonderland” by Richard Humber** This was originally a poem written by Richard Smith in 1934 while being treated for tuberculosis, according to familytree.com. Although not intended to be a Christmas song, it ties into some of the classics of the season. The poem was made into a song and recorded by Humber.

**3. “Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer” by Gene Autry and the Pinafores** The original lyrics of this song were written by Robert L. May, who, having skipped several school grades, felt out of place because he was younger than everyone else. In this song, he wrote himself as Rudolph who first appeared in a booklet in 1939 written by May. The song became famous through Gene Autry’s 1949 recording.

**4. “Happy Christmas (War is Over)” by John Lennon and Yoko Ono** Lennon is well known as one of the Beatles, but in 1971 he and his wife Yoko Ono came out with this song, being that they were both huge peace activists and heavily against war. Considered an



A 1955 album cover for the song made famous by Gene Autry in 1949.

“anti-war” song, the tune also wishes a happy Christmas to all who are listening.

**5. “Blue Christmas” by Elvis Presley** This song is strongly associated with Elvis, the king of rock and roll, though it was originally written by Jay W. Johnson and Billy Hayes and first recorded by Doye O’Dell in 1948. Elvis came out with his rendition in 1957 and the song has become a staple of the Christmas season ever since.

**6. “The Christmas Song” by Nat King Cole** This favorite was written by Robert Wells and Mel Torme in 1945 and recorded by Nat King Cole in 1946. It’s said it was written during a hot summer day in July and the artists decided to “think

cool to stay cool.” Their work definitely paid off and Cole became the first Black American to record a holiday standard.

**7. “It’s the Most Wonderful Time of the Year” by Andy Williams** Written in 1963, by Edward Pola and George Wyle, it was recorded and sung by Williams for “The Andy Williams Christmas Album” released the same year. It’s meant to bring comfort in its mention of Christmas activities and spending time with family and friends.

**8. “It’s Beginning to Look a Lot Like Christmas” by Perry Como** This is a song that had to be included. It was originally written by composer Meredith Wilson in 1951 and became a hit when Como and the Fontane Sisters with Mitchell Ayres & His Orchestra recorded it that same year.

**9. “Here Comes Santa Claus” by Gene Autry** Here’s a song with a funny backstory. During the Christmas Parade in 1946, Autry was riding his horse and heard children exclaim, “Here comes Santa Claus!” This inspired him to write his next Christmas hit for the following year.

**10. “Sleigh Ride” by The Ronettes** It started out with no lyrics. The music was also written during a heat wave, much like that of “The Christmas Song.” It was originally an orchestrated song in 1948, and in 1950 lyrics were written by Mitchell Parish. While it was first recorded by the Andrews Sisters, the Ronettes famously covered it in 1963.

**11. “White Christmas” by Bing Crosby** Don’t we all dream of a white Christmas? While it’s slow and dreamy, the background of this song is actually quite sad. Irving Berlin, who wrote the song,

would spend Christmases at the cemetery visiting his newborn son who died on Christmas day in 1928, according to countryliving.com. It is thought that his writing had to do with his mourning. In 1941, on Christmas day, Crosby performed it on air, 18 days after the Pearl Harbor attack.

**12. “Holly Jolly Christmas” by Burl Ives** A preferred traditional Christmas tune, this song was written by Johnny Marks in 1962. It was famously used in the stop-motion of “Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer” in 1964. Ives’ cheery voice can warm up any holiday setting.

**Bonus Track: “Baby, It’s Cold Outside” by Frank Loesser** Although classic and famous, this song has been getting backlash for its contents for years. Loesser wrote it in 1944 and originally intended for it to be performed by him and his wife at parties to indicate that the party was over. The song has since been deemed as inappropriate because of its questionable lyrics and implications of rape and harassment. While it’s still around and performed, you may notice a change in lyrics or even comical twists.

If some of these titles sound familiar to you, it could be that you’ve heard covers and remixes from artists like Michael Buble or Pentatonix. But when you hear these classics, you are automatically drawn back into a time of hope, simplicity, comfort and family, which is exactly what we need this Christmas.

After all, it’s the most wonderful time of the year!

## Is It Really a Christmas Movie?

BY MYLO FISHERMAN

It’s December and you know what that means. It’s time to get cozy under some warm blankets with a hot cup of cocoa and watch a Christmas movie. But is the movie you want to watch actually a Christmas movie? What criteria does a movie need to meet to indeed be a Christmas movie? Here is a list of some of these movies that *The Delphian* surveyed people on whether or not they deserve the title of “Christmas Movie.”

**“The Nightmare Before Christmas:”** In the 1993 film, the main character, Jack Skellington, King of “Halloween Town,” discovers the neighboring “Christmas town” and schemes to bring Christmas back to his hometown. Of the poll participants, 19 of 21 (79 percent) believe that “The Nightmare Before Christmas” is a Christmas movie.

Valery Vasquez, a senior ethics and public policy major, argued, “The Nightmare Before Christmas’ is absolutely a Christmas movie because it’s about the people of ‘Halloween Town’ discovering how Christmas is good and they don’t only have to celebrate Halloween.”

Contrary to the majority opinion,

Jamie Gesell, a sophomore communications major, argued, “Even though it has Christmas in the title, it’s more of a Halloween movie due to focusing more on Halloween related characters (skeletons, ghosts, zombies, etc.)”

**“Gremlins:”** In the 1984 film, struggling inventor Randall Peltzer visits a Chinatown antique store where he bought a small, cute, furry creature called a mogwai, which he names Gizmo, for his son Billy for Christmas. When he bought the Gizmo, he was told three important rules on how to take care of the mogwai: Do not expose the mogwai to light; do not let it come in contact with water; and above all else, never feed it after midnight. When Billy and his friend Pete slowly break all three rules, they are forced to deal with the consequences. Of the poll participants, 13 of 21 (62 percent) believe that “Gremlins” is a Christmas movie.

Alyssa Krell, a junior communications major, said, “Gremlins is a Christmas movie because Christmas is a plot catalyst. Gizmo was a Christmas gift. Who’s to say if the dad would have bought Gizmo any other day or holiday?”

**“Die Hard:”** On Christmas Eve,

NYPD detective John McClane goes to a Christmas party at Nakatomi Plaza in Los Angeles. When German terrorists take his wife and others hostage, McClane attempts to save them. Bruce Willis, the lead actor, declared in 2018 that, “Die Hard” is not a Christmas movie. Conversely, in 2017, the screenwriter Steven E. de Souza tweeted, “Die Hard’ is a Christmas movie, Exhibit B: Santa.”

Of the poll participants, 10 of 23 (43 percent) seemed to agree with Willis’s sentiments, believing that “Die Hard” is a Christmas movie.

Ghila McBrien, a junior communications major, believes that “Die Hard” is not a Christmas movie. They said, “Although it does take place on Christmas Eve, it is more of an action film. McClane has to save the party’s hostages from terrorists in high-paced thrilling events.”

**“Frozen:”** In this 2013 film, newly crowned Queen Elsa of Arendelle accidentally uses her ice powers to create an eternal winter. Her sister, Princess Anna, teams up with an iceman, Kristoff, his reindeer, Sven, and a snowman, Olaf, to find Elsa. Of the poll participants, 18 of 24 (75 percent) believe

that “Frozen” is not a Christmas movie.

Krell said, “Frozen’ isn’t a Christmas movie; it’s a princess movie—a great princess movie. Not only does it have zero references to Christmas, it was also released for Thanksgiving (like most major Disney animated movies.)”

**The Harry Potter Movies:** In the movie franchise inspired by British author J. K. Rowling’s book series, we follow Harry Potter learning to be a wizard and take on challenging foes, such as Voldemort. Of the poll participants, 19 of 24 (79 percent) believe that the Harry Potter movies are not Christmas movies.

Gesell said, “Harry Potter focuses on magic and sorcery rather than the holidays. It’s all about Harry Potter becoming a master wizard and stopping evil forces and magic. Christmas is not paid attention to a lot in the Harry Potter movies.”

Do you agree with the majority of people polled? Who knew Christmas movies could strike up so much controversy? But as Sox Pottsmiller, a first-year neuroscience major, said, “All of the movies in question can be Christmas movies if you watch them around Christmas time.”

It’s hard to beat that logic!



# Holiday Gift Guide



BY LIZZ PANCHYK

Finding a gift can be a challenge, especially as the holidays approach. You may just be drawn to your standards and fallbacks, but if you want something a little more unconventional or personalized, check out this list to help to find the perfect present!

## Cards



### Celebrate With a Laugh (\$5.50 each)

With every gift, there's a card. Now you can find a neutral Christmas or holiday card at almost any pharmacy or store, but what about supporting a small business—and local artist—with a cute selection of decorated cards with familiar faces and logos? These cards will give you a laugh! <https://sammygorinart.com/collections/holidays>



### Soothe Your Neck Muscles (\$29.99 each)

As college students, we're constantly hunched over, causing neck and back pain. This neck wrap is filled with French lavender, and you can warm it up in the microwave or cool it off in the freezer for your preferred temperature. [Warmies.com](https://www.warmies.com)



### No Headphones? No Problem! (\$26.99)

With the seasons changing, you may want to wear a hat on your runs or while you're running errands. Hats plus headphones can be tricky, so try this Bluetooth hat, where your ears stay warm and you can still listen to music wherever you go. [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com)



### Bring Back the Vinyl! (\$69.99)

You heard me: vinyls are back! Available in 26 colors, this player streams directly from your phone. It also connects through Bluetooth and to your headphones! [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com)

## Self Care



### Creative Minds (\$17.95 - \$37.95)

Looking to clear your mind creatively? The reusable Buddha Board, which comes in three different sizes, helps to soothe and relieve stress through expressive painting. [www.buddhaboard.com](https://www.buddhaboard.com)

## Gadgets



### Wake Up! (\$149)

This alarm clock has multiple features, including white noise, playlists, a two-phase alarm and meditations. With crazy sleep schedules, this device will help you sleep better at night and create normal sleeping patterns. [byloftie.com](https://www.byloftie.com)

## Entertainment



### "Stranger Things" Fans (\$45.99)

You do not have to travel into the Upside Down or the 1980s to play this game. Learn the rules and play with all your "Stranger Things" friends. Just try to avoid summoning the demogorgons. [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com)

## Just For Fun



### For the Film Fanatic (\$15)

If you or someone you know has a movie bucket list, this would make the perfect present. Stay on top of all watch must-needs with this scratch off poster. [www.uncommongoods.com](https://www.uncommongoods.com)



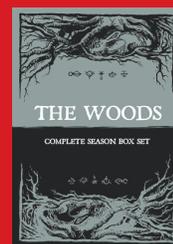
### For Tea Lovers (\$34.99)

Don't spill the tea; brew your own with this tumbler that's perfect for on the go. You can even make fruit water for a day of detoxing! [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com)



### Skip the Gloves (\$23.99-\$26.99)

Are you someone who always has cold hands? This portable hand-warmer is for you. It comes in four different patterns and will stay warm for 3 to 4 hours. [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com)



### Know a Mystery Fan? (\$29.99 - \$99.99)

Hunt a Killer is where you can buy tons of different games to play and solve with family or friends. You can invest in their monthly memberships and get a new game every month, or you can try one of their single games, in which they have a myriad of choices. [www.huntakiller.com](https://www.huntakiller.com)



### A Puzzle and Decoration All in One! (\$59.99)

Ever want your flowers to last? Here's a surefire way to make sure they do. Enjoy building this beautiful Lego bouquet and keep it for all eternity. [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com)

*Fitness*

*Gifts That Give Back*



**Put Harry in Your House (\$12.99)**

Harry fans, it's your time to shine! This gold sequin pillow can spruce up your room or dorm and Harry Styles will keep you company. [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com)



**Collapsible Coffee (\$9.99)**

Sometimes you have no place to put your coffee cup at school or work, and not all bags come with a cup holder. This cup can collapse into itself once you're done with your coffee, no hassle. [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com)



**De-pressure Yourself (\$29.99)**

This ProsourceFit Acupressure Mat and Pillow Set has 8,910 acupressure points that helps you relax and unwind. Perfect for home, this set comes in seven different colors. [Prosourcefit.com](https://www.prosourcefit.com)



**Support National Parks! (\$26)**

These ethically sourced candles were made with conservation in mind. The company donates to keep the outdoors a safe and protected place and their candles will keep your house smelling good. [goodandwellsupplyco.com](https://www.goodandwellsupplyco.com)



**For the Gamers (\$85)**

If you ever wanted to make your own video game, now's your chance. For less than \$100, you can program a game of your own with this device. [uncommongoods.com](https://www.uncommongoods.com)



**Everyone Needs This (\$15.99)**

College students are known for their microwavable mac and cheese and ramen (or popcorn), so here's a bowl holder that you can use in the microwave for safe transferring. It comes in a set of four in two sizes. [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com)



**Cool Off! (\$35.99)**

Working out is great until you're dripping sweat. This rechargeable neck fan will keep your neck and head cool; plus, it runs for 6 to 18 hours. It also allows you to still use your headphones or airpods. [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com)



**Every Step Gives Back (\$14.95)**

If you're looking to donate to a specific cause, this is the store to go to. You can support everything from LGBTQ rights to people in need of meals and every purchase made will donate to the cause you're supporting. [consciousstep.com](https://www.consciousstep.com)

*Practical*



**Who Needs a Backpack? (\$19.99)**

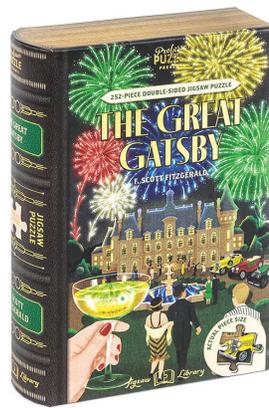
Tote bags are in! This one has inside pockets and a zipper to ensure that everything stays inside. There are 19 available colors and it's also machine washable. [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com)



**Your Hair Will Thank You (\$14.25)**

Tired of bed head and split ends? A satin pillow case might be just the remedy. Available in 16 colors and two sizes, this case may solve your hair-related problems. [mykitsch.com](https://www.mykitsch.com)

*Book Lovers*



**The Great Puzzle (\$12.99)**

Raise a glass! This 252-piece, double-sided puzzle will keep you occupied for a while. It's a great activity for puzzle and book admirers. [nypl.org](https://www.nypl.org)



**Nailed It (\$18)**

Find some unique nail colors to show off at work or school. The ingredients are non-toxic and the brand itself is sustainable and gives back to Project Color Corps with the power of color in mind! [www.liberation-nails.com](https://www.liberation-nails.com)

## Student Poetry Corner

The Delphian has introduced this poetry section so students may submit their original poems to be considered for publication. Submit poems up to 250 words to [delphian@adelphi.edu](mailto:delphian@adelphi.edu) and [elizabethpanchyk@mail.adelphi.edu](mailto:elizabethpanchyk@mail.adelphi.edu).

**The License, The Authority**  
By Arib Khan  
(freshman international relations major)

This was a poem I was inspired to write because of something I've noticed with people when it comes to talking about politics and conflict. It has always appeared to me that people are often obsessed with memorizing, sanctifying, and repeating the arguments and the narratives that support their side. They know anything and everything to do with the side that they support, and they believe in the sanctity of these arguments and terms more than they do the sanctity of life itself. This is especially true when it comes to trying to justify acts of cruelty and human vileness, and, in my experience, with the injustices committed against the people of Palestine. It's almost impressive, how this way of thinking can make it so a man shot and left to bleed in his homeland is somehow in the wrong. How an olive garden can be burned to cinders with the thought that it was all legislated, justified, and therefore the only right thing to do. The simple truth is, we can argue semantics and treaties and definitions on the international stage all we like, but we aren't fooling the ones who are sitting there, on the ground, waiting for someone they love to wake up, and for their livelihoods to stop burning. The oppressor relies on the laws and definitions that he established, but his victim needs only to point at the graves of his family.

There is a reason why the Republicans and the Democrats and the old angry men and the young wealthy girls and the professors and the students and the Rosh HaMemshala and the government ministers all try so very hard to know and remember the treaties and the articles and the proclamations and the declarations and the speeches and the figures and the court decisions and the warrants and the legal terminologies and the textbooks and the testimonies and the definitions and the condemnations that they were taught in school and in the school yards.

It is because those are the things that they repeat to themselves, remind themselves of, whisper to their darkening hearts, whenever they shoot down a young Palestinian boy, who knows nothing of political parties nor of UN proclamations nor of non-combatants nor of the crucial difference between a terrorist and a soldier.

All he knows is that his father is dead and his mother is screaming and his sister was raped and his brother is in jail and his house and his bed have been taken out from under him.

But we are certain that if he knew of the proclamations and the treaties and the declarations and that if he would have just spoken to such-and-such professors or heard such-and-such arguments and understood a few very important definitions, that he would be very understanding. Yes, he would be very understanding.

See our website [thedelphianau.org](http://thedelphianau.org) for even more articles.

## Commuter Assistants Help Ease the Transition to College for Nonresident Students

BY BARTON MURRAY

Adelphi University offers many programs oriented towards making student life easier. One of these is the Commuter Assistant (CA) program, which is similar to Residents Assistance, but differs in that it is aimed to help both first year and transfer commuter students adjust to college life. The university has 18 designated CAs who come from all over the world along with many pursuing different areas of study. Each is assigned a group of students and their job is to basically be a mentor and focus on trying to get them involved in student life on campus.

Tiffany Martino, assistant director

said she benefited from joining the CA program when she was a first year.

"I felt like there was a dynamic change in how my days would go. I went from getting in my car and going home to having more options and things to do on campus," she said. "I felt like I was flourishing. This club gave me more reason to put myself out there and get involved."

As a CA, Lincoln sends a weekly email to students giving a breakdown of what may be going on that week along with checking in with them and giving them an open door to reach back with questions. "For many freshmen, along with students transferring in, their first connection at the school



The 2022-'23 Commuter Assistants team. Photo by Tiffany Martino

for the Center for Student and Community Engagement and the CA advisor, said the program has been around for at least 10 years.

"The Commuter Assistants help students adjust by hosting programs throughout the year, bringing their mentees to various on-campus events to help get them involved in different organizations, and assisting in answering any questions that their mentees might have so that they can be directed to the right place," Martino said. "I personally think that the program is very valuable because I've seen firsthand how the Commuter Assistants positively impact their mentees. A lot of incoming freshmen that have a Commuter Assistant will become CAs themselves because they said that their CA made such a difference in their life when starting college."

One of these is Julia Lincoln, a junior majoring in health sciences who

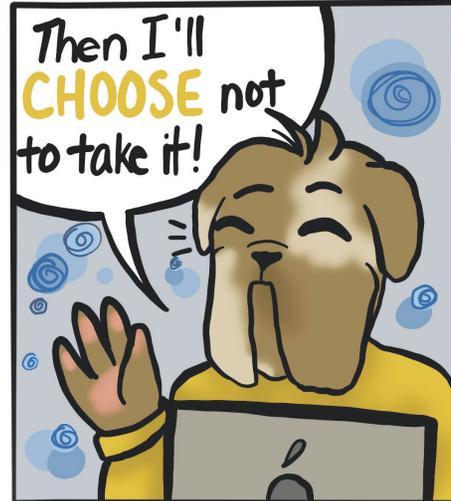
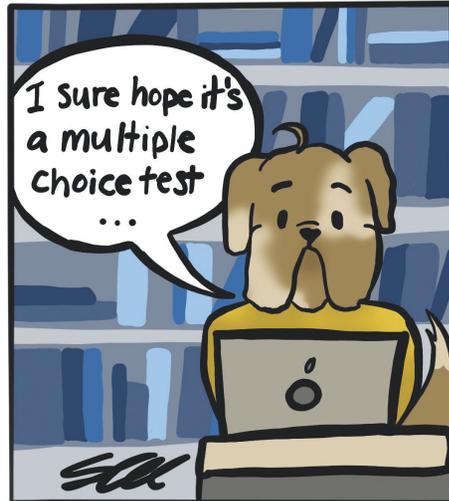
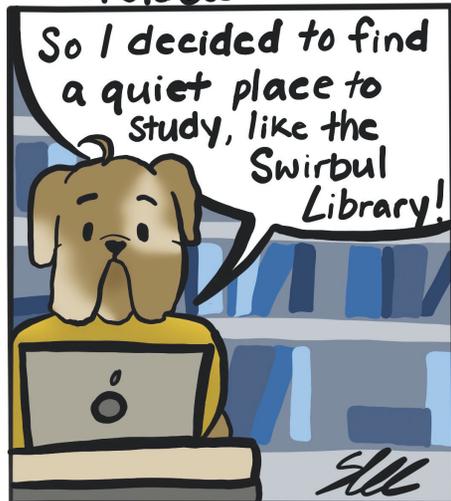
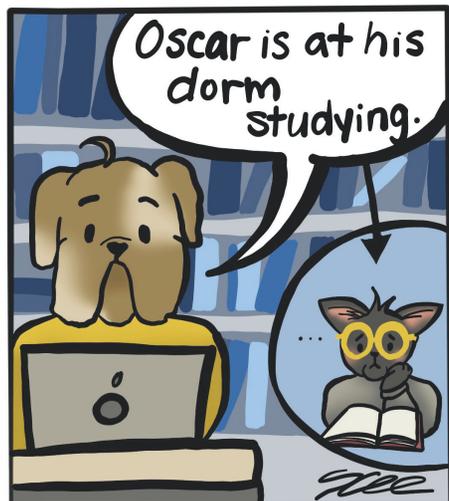
comes from this program," she added.

The CA program offers many valuable tools that can assist students in finding who they want to be on campus. CAs do this by helping the students find clubs and events to get involved with. There are also events like a recent dessert and coffee break in between classes in the University Center lobby. A program exclusively for full-time, first year commuter students is the Dine + Connect meal plan, which allows students to use their student ID to buy snacks, beverages, Starbucks and full meals anywhere on campus, sales-tax-free.

Martino said the CA program makes a difference to student retention. "Ninety-six percent of incoming freshmen that have an assistant decide to stay at Adelphi," she said.

To learn more or to join, visit [myau-life.adelphi.edu/organization/caprogram](http://myau-life.adelphi.edu/organization/caprogram).

## Panther's Great Adventure by Syd Cee



## Peele's "Nope" Keeps Viewers on the Edge of Their Seats

BY CHRIS LEONARD

Following Jordan Peele's past two blockbusters, "Nope" is one that is sure to satisfy fans all across the country. Daniel Kaluuya and Keke Palmer headline this year's best thriller, behind Peele's sensational directing job that pays homage to early works of Spielberg.

"Nope" follows a man who owns a ranch in California, when an unfamiliar visitor begins to terrorize and scare the people surrounding him. While some look to profit off this spectacle, OJ (played by Kaluuya), strives to discover more about the creature and how to destroy it. This film draws inspiration from legendary thrillers, "Jaws" being the closest relative. "Nope" aims to strike fear straight into the viewer's soul and does so with booming audio and jaw-dropping visual effects that draw audiences to theaters.

Worldwide, Peele's recent thriller raked in \$170,674,668, the second most grossing of his three films. Fans of Peele know that he litters his films with messages and greater ideas, so that it takes the viewer a couple days to realize what the seemingly symbolic film meant. "Nope," rated R for some violence and bloody images, focuses on human's obsession with taming nature for profit,

and the gruesome outcomes that it may come with. Many animals were used to tell the story, and Peele describes this as



Daniel Kaluuya in "Nope," a recent release that was written, produced and directed by Jordan Peele, cementing the latter's place in Hollywood. Image from Universal Pictures

"a reminder on how we treat anything that doesn't qualify as human." These themes can also be seen in films such as "King Kong" and "Jurassic Park," where people attempt to capture and control nature or creatures for one's own profit.

"Nope" cinematographer Hoyte Van Hoytema does a magnificent job of crafting beautiful shots of wide-open land-

scapes, using an IMAX camera to capture these lush terrain shots. Hoytema said in a July interview in "Variety" that he wanted something that felt remotely like a spectacle and wanted to show that he had grown from the slightly lesser-scope films. With

this, he wanted to explore space and vastness. This IMAX camera was used for about 40 percent of the scenes shot in the film, creating a truly dazzling scene for audiences to view in theaters.

Many viewers find the plot difficult to follow, with many different plot lines and flashbacks occurring alongside the main storyline. Although there may be many different stories happening at once, it takes a careful viewer to capture the true meaning of these flashbacks. Some viewers also had gripes about the runtime of two hours and 10 minutes, but Peele's pacing creates an environment that will keep viewer's eyes glued to the screen. Peele manages to string along scenes of terror to create suspense leading up the revelation of the UFO.

Overall, Peele's "Nope" earns an 8.5/10 rating on our scale, establishing itself as one of the top thrillers of the year. Critics have labeled it a resounding success, cementing Jordan Peele's place towards the top of the directing and writing food chain of Hollywood. The cinematography and symbolism throughout the film make this a masterpiece on screen, despite few viewers opinions on specifics. Peele's massive success with his past three films will have viewers waiting desperately for his next blockbuster.

## "Luckiest Girl Alive" Provides Stellar Acting but Leaves Unanswered Questions

BY ANALIESE VASSALLO

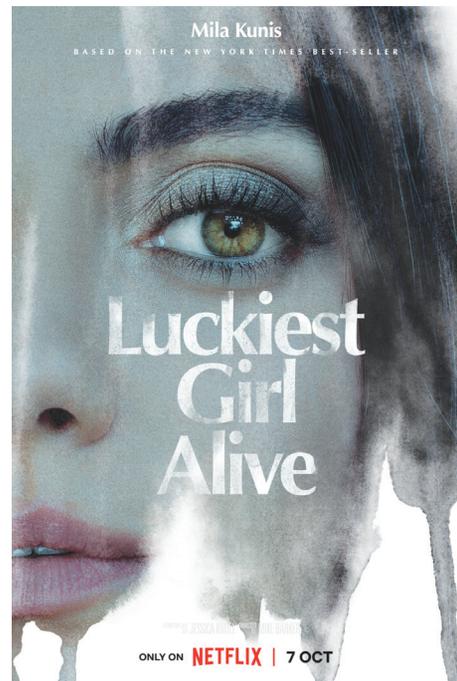
With an atypical plot and starring actress Mila Kunis in the mix, "Luckiest Girl Alive" was destined for success. Be forewarned this two-hour mystery thriller holds an R rating for its portrayals of explicit language, underage substance use, violence, rape and other sexual innuendos. As the content warnings suggest there are evidently extremely serious issues exhibited through this script, which are appropriately addressed, though could serve as a trigger to viewers.

"Luckiest Girl Alive" was originally released on Sept. 30, with its Netflix release on Oct. 7. It was directed by Mike Barker, a British filmmaker known primarily for his film "Best Laid Plans," debuting in 1999.

Kunis stars opposite Finn Wittrock, an actor featured on programs including "American Horror Story" and "All my Children." Other main stars include Thomas Barbusca, Alex Barone and Justine Lupe. Kunis truly captivated the audience with her emotional performance as TifAni "Ani" Fanelli with gut-wrenching scenes she made seem all too real. In her quest to become Ani Harrison, Kunis' character flashes back throughout the movie to her high school years as TifAni Fanelli, where she experiences extreme trauma in the form of violent acts towards her and other classmates.

The cinematography, lighting and effects amid transitional scenes not only

make it feasible to distinguish between the present and past, but undeniably it added to the mood, emotion and overall storyline. The film carries an



This Netflix release has an R rating. Image from IMDb

aply serious aura, as it covers sensitive, yet regrettably relevant topics, including rape and a school shooting. It is respectable that the director, screenwriter and all involved parties did not embed humor to offset the deeply pressing matters presented, as it more precisely conveys the reality of these sorts of horrid events.

Combining a fitting tone and

impeccable camera work with powerful, well-rounded performances by each of the actors made this film prosper that much more. There was never a debate for the viewer regarding any character's internal emotions, nor the reasoning behind their external actions towards other characters. As for Kunis, despite being the lead, this was certainly not her biggest role. However, it was undoubtedly a sensational addition to her career as it highlighted her range as an actress and ability to take over the screen. She surely set the bar for her cast, who all exceeded expectations and breathed life into their characters.

In a role that adds great range and esteem to his repertoire of films, Barone flourishes. His authentic portrayal of Dean Barton, a treacherous and calculating individual, leaves viewers almost vicariously hating Barone. The extremely accurate characterization makes it as if Barone isn't acting but being filmed in his everyday life.

To add to the excellence, the delivery of lines and reactions from Wittrock are so spot-on with his character Luke that it once again feels like this was unscripted. The smaller, yet pivotal role of Arthur Finneman is a rollercoaster pulled seamlessly together by Barbusca, who gives his character depth and raw emotion. Finally as Nell Rutherford, Lupe could've fooled viewers as her and Kunis played an onscreen duo and supportive best friends to a tee. Casting directors Richard Hicks and David Rubin defi-

nately earn some praise with top-notch choices that brought this film to life.

The concept and plot behind this film, as well as its name, did not originate solely as a cinematic piece; it was derived from a novel. Jessica Knoll, the original writer of the novel "Luckiest Girl Alive," wrote it mainly as a work of fiction; however, it did encompass personal events from her past making it all the more meaningful. It is both felicitous and admirable that the film utilized exact quotations from the novel at points in which the protagonist faced unbearable tragedies and was encapsulated by large sums of emotion. It truly added to the credibility and engagement that would have been lacking without these words of experience.

However, while the movie was said to have thoroughly followed the major events of Knoll's work, the ending was seemingly lost in translation making an overall intriguing film ultimately underwhelming. The final scenes are adequately close to the storyline; however, they leave unanswered questions, failing to fully develop the ending of the story. As this is a fairly new release it is uncertain whether there will be a sequel, or perhaps a series, but this definitely would be a suitable course of action given the common feeling of lingering questions among viewers. Taking in all the components that made this film the way it is, it's safe to say this obtains four stars with an impending fifth star if a sequel makes its way to screens.

## The Hard-Earned Highs and Lows of Homemade Versus Store-Bought Gifts

BY LILYEN MCCARTHY

Ask my sister, my best friend or an ex-boyfriend (although I do not recommend that conversation). I go above and beyond for gifts and struggle to hold back the surprise until the day I'm supposed to give them. Nothing is better than a tear-jerker reaction or complete overjoy at one of my loved ones being presented with their gift.

I have given a wide variety of gifts: a self-made lollipop tree, concert tickets, shoes, gift cards and a basket of goodies. Throughout it all, I experienced the ups and downs of both store-bought and handmade, so I will give you a list of them all from my own experience.

For store-bought gifts:

**As quick as buy, wrap, give.** Buying the gift to wrap and give to your loved one doesn't require as much hands-on activity or preparation as its handmade counterpart, so it can be less time consuming to gift.

For those with a busier schedule and not enough time to put together a heartwarming project, the store-bought gift is quick, easy and still makes your loved one happy.

**Store-bought can feel less per-**

**sonal.** My worst fear is someone opening a gift I have given to them and receiving a flat reaction. No matter how confident I am that a certain necklace, purse or pair of shoes is something that my friend or family member will love, I always get so stressed when they start to unwrap it. A new bottle of perfume might not be received the same as a photo album filled with memories.



A homemade sucker tree I made in 2019.

**They want it, they got it.** "Yes! I've wanted this for so long. Thank you so much!" As much as I love surprises, I know person-

ally that just getting something I need for free is sometimes just as appreciated as a surprise present. How can the gift-receiver be unhappy if it's something they asked for? Get them something they want, and you can throw in a small surprise just to keep that tradition alive.

**But isn't the surprise the point?**

Many people might not see the point in unwrapping a gift that they knew they were getting in the first place. It's not always a good feeling staring at the box under the Christmas tree knowing it is filled with those new towels you've needed for a semester or two.

Now, for the homemade gifts.

**It's the thought that counts, and there's a lot of thought.** Giving your loved one that perfect homemade masterpiece takes a lot of thought and consideration to the memories and affection you share. Looking at a homemade gift and seeing all the tiny details that go into it make the gift that much more special. Even the little mistakes, unlike the ones that might be present in a store-bought product, are endearing and sweet.

**But who has the time? What if I'm not creative?** I've been lucky in the past for the fact that my homemade gifts

have always turned out looking nice or are nostalgic enough for the receiver to look past the mistakes. People who feel less creative might not be as confident in their homemade masterpiece. I was reconsidering that NBA jersey from Hibbett once 60 minutes of sticking lollipops into Styrofoam passed.

**It's a great gift on a budget.** If you're from a household like mine, there are plenty of miscellaneous arts and crafts materials to go around. Paint, modge podge and glitter glue are just sitting in a drawer of a cabinet or on a shelf waiting to be useful. All I needed for many of my homemade gifts were the added candy and basket.

At the end of the day, or the gift-giving season, both store-bought and handmade gifts are great options to give your loved ones. I've given both and have seen great reactions and, unfortunately, not the most excited reactions from either side. My favorite gifts have been not from the store or from the imagination of my loved one, but the area between. Buying an experience for all parties involved means you might have spent money on a ticket or nice dinner, but you bought the gift of new memories made as well.

## Some Great Video Games to Play During the Winter Break

BY MITCH COHEN

With the winter break nearly here, there are several things to look forward to. Whether it's spending time with my family or looking at Christmas lights, there is always something exciting happening during the holidays. One of my favorite things to do during this time is play video games. Since I don't have any classes or assignments to worry about, I can sit back, relax and play games on my Playstation 4 and Nintendo Switch. With that being said, these are some games I highly recommend playing during this season.

**"Devil May Cry 5 Special Edition"** When it comes to the "Devil May Cry" franchise, I've only played two of the games. The first one I played was "Devil May Cry 3: Special Edition" on my Nintendo Switch in February 2020. The fast-paced combat system and likable main character Dante drew me in. However, the game eventually became too challenging as I found myself dying in-game quite frequently. What didn't help matters was that pulling off moves was a bit challenging, leading me to lose interest in the game. Last year, I decided to check out the newest game in the series, "Devil May Cry 5," mainly due to it being a new game in a franchise I wanted to get into. I ended up having a lot of fun with it because you could not only play as Dante, but you could also play as Nero from "Devil May Cry 4" and a brand new character named V. During my playthrough, the best part of the game was the combat. Unlike DMC3, many of the moves felt much easier to perform thanks to the practice area "The Void." By having the ability to practice moves, combat was much easier to figure out compared to previous games. The only downside was the sections where you play

as V. Unlike Dante and Nero, who focus on close-ranged combat, V's sections focus on using demons to fight at long range. While these sections weren't terrible, they were much slower-paced and dragged. Currently, the game costs \$40, and is available for the Playstation 4, Playstation 5 and Xbox One consoles, as well as Microsoft Windows and Amazon Luna. Overall, "Devil May Cry 5" is definitely a great game thanks to its fun combat system and incredibly likable characters. For fans



"Jojo's Bizarre Adventure"

of fast-paced action games, "Devil May Cry 5" is a title I highly recommend.

**"Jojo's Bizarre Adventure: All-Star Battle R"** Some of my favorite games to buy are remasters of older games, which allow me to play games that I either missed out on or weren't old enough to try. A prime example is "Jojo's Bizarre Adventure: All-Star Battle R." Originally released for the PS3 in 2013, "All-Star Battle" was a crossover fighting game featuring characters from the anime and manga

franchise, "Jojo's Bizarre Adventure." I first played the game with my cousin, and while I didn't know much about the series back then, the game was so addicting that I wanted to try it for myself. Fast forward to this year, a remaster of the game called "All Star Battle R" was released, leading me to purchase it for \$60 on the Nintendo Switch. It was just as good as I remember it being. One aspect that makes this game great is the roster, featuring characters from all eight parts of the Jojo storyline, from "Phantom Blood" to "JoJolion." Two of my favorite characters to use are Caesar Zeppeli and Noriyaki Kakyoin. Zeppeli is great because of his ability to shoot bubbles, as it gives him a wide array of long-range options. With Kakyoin, I like his moveset and design. Another thing I like about this game is how unique its combat system is. Unlike other anime games that focus on accessibility, "All-Star Battle R" uses input commands similar to traditional fighting games. At first, I thought these commands would be infuriating to input, but surprisingly I had an easy time performing moves. What also makes this game fun is the number of modes to choose from. One of my favorites is All-Star Battle mode. Here, you can play through canonical and what-if battles from all eight parts of the Jojo series. At this time, the game goes for \$34.99 and is available on Playstation 4 and 5, Xbox One, Xbox Series X and S, Nintendo Switch and PC. It has a great roster, fun gameplay and lots of game modes to keep players coming back.

**"Overwatch 2"** In 2016, one game I always wanted to get my hands on was "Overwatch." Created by Blizzard Entertainment, Overwatch is a first-person shooter that sees players select a hero and join a team of six to participate in various events, including controlling objectives on the map.

This year, Blizzard released "Overwatch 2," which is a semi-sequel to the original game, meaning while there are new additions, such as new heroes and a battle pass system, it includes all the characters and maps from the first game. One of the biggest positives about this title is that it is free to play. With games like "Paladins" and "Apex Legends" being on the market, it made perfect sense for this game to be free-to-play because it allows anyone to try it for themselves. The one downside is that new players need to give their phone numbers before playing the game, which I find very unnecessary. As for the game itself, I like the number of available game modes. For example, one mode I always enjoy playing is team deathmatch, as it's fun to work with your team to eliminate opponents. Another aspect that I like is its roster of heroes. Each has their own unique fighting style and weapon, making it fun to try them all out. Two of my favorite heroes are Ana and Genji. With Ana, I really enjoyed using her to eliminate long-range opponents, while Genji had an awesome design and incredible mobility. As a whole, Overwatch 2 is a really fun game to play because of its large cast of characters and addicting gameplay. If you want to download the game, it's available on the current Xbox, Playstation and Nintendo consoles, as well as PC. Even though I wasn't a fan of giving my phone number to this game, I still enjoy playing it and I highly recommend playing it.

The holidays and winter break are the perfect time to play video games because it allows me to kick back, relax and enjoy new experiences in the virtual world. The nice part about Devil May Cry 5 and All Star Battle R is that they have gone down in price. Have a happy and healthy holiday season and try these games for yourself.

## While Yale Pressures Students with Mental Health Issues to Withdraw, Adelphi Has a Different Approach: Support

BY JOSEPH D'ANDREA

The college experience, in a broad sense, is made up of several factors: socializing with new peers, studying for more intensive exams, and for some, learning what it means to be more independent. Even though that last point is more so attributed to dorming students, commuters must learn to adapt to a day-to-day schedule that doesn't follow the roughly six-hour-long high school layout that all students shared at that point in their education.

With college students being given heavier responsibilities—many of which are ones they have never had to face head-on—it is all the more important for universities to provide a setting that both makes students feel comfortable in their evolving lives and provides relief when they are in need. In light of a recently-covered trend at Yale University, in which they've pressured students struggling with mental health to withdraw and later reapply, it is important to highlight the ever-present necessity of mental health resources at colleges.

The case of Yale University is particularly significant because, as an Ivy League School, the expectations they present reflect an especially challenging, competitive educational environment. It's fair to say that Yale's students should not be surprised by the high-pressure setting, but nevertheless should not be scrutinized when they are mentally suffering as a result of such

conditions. The Nov. 11 Washington Post article "What if Yale Finds Out?" delves into detailed coverage of what some students at the university have had to endure.

Following the suicide of a student who "had withdrawn from Yale once before and feared that under Yale's policies, a second readmission could be denied," the university was put into a position that required them to "evaluate readmission policies." Although Yale had made some advancements in hiring counselors over the



**Yale has been criticized by students who report being penalized for mental health issues.** Photo from Yale University by Michael Marsland

past several years after the incident, current and former students outlined how there remains a lack of empathy, ultimately making the "counseling" negligibly effective.

"Some described never hearing back from Yale counselors after seeking help," the Post's article reads. "Others said they've learned to hide mental problems and suicidal thoughts to avoid triggering

withdrawal policies that they believe are designed to protect Yale from lawsuits and damage to its reputation... Several students recounted being given 72 hours or less to leave campus once they withdrew."

It should be noted that Yale is not alone in the poor accommodation given to students by some American colleges, but this especially pressing example by such a big-name institution should serve as a wakeup call to those ignoring students' mental health struggles.

Adelphi University offers several services that ensure students that they should not have to feel concerned about pressure put on them by their college. Monica Pal, PhD, is a member of Adelphi's faculty who focuses on mental health and is the new director for the Center for Psychological Services at the Derner School of Psychology.

"For the past nine years, I have been a project director of Long Island Reach, a clinic for individuals with mental health and substance use issues," she said. "Adelphi offers support from the start beginning with students' academic advisors. It is also helpful for students to feel connected to others, so involvement in clubs and extracurricular activities can be helpful. It is important to make time for self-care and find balance. Spending time and connecting with loved ones can also help to ground students."

Speaking on the recent spike in

American student rates of depression, anxiety and suicidal thoughts, which has more than doubled in America, Pal said, "There are certainly more students coming forward with mental health issues as the stigma of mental illness is waning. Although we are seeing more students seeking help for mental health issues, we also have more services than ever to help our students at Adelphi."

Some of these services provided by Adelphi include the Student Counseling Center, which offers short-term therapy and medication management for students at no cost, and the Center for Psychological Services at Derner, "where our doctoral students in training provide longer-term individual and group therapy and psychodiagnostic testing, under the supervision of licensed psychologists."

"Each student has their own individual issues that require support and treatment is individualized to meet each student's needs," Pal continued. "I would encourage students to seek out therapy if they are struggling and to be persistent and stick with it even if they feel like they do not want to go. I always tell my clients, 'When you least want to come to therapy is usually when you most need to come.'"

With instances of colleges dismissing the full implication of students' mental health, it is important to recognize that Adelphi is here to lend a helping hand.

## What Lies in the Future for Crypto? A Burning Fire, Probably

BY HEMISH NAIDOO

In recent years, digital, decentralized currency has surged in popularity, with overall investments around the world exploding. Cryptocurrency, a new form of payment and transaction only possible in a technologically interconnected world, seemed full of promise. Crypto exchanges have become tremendous in their size and number of investors, evolving out of their more obscure success in the past. Crypto.com, Binance, Velas have flourished, all without a central banking or government system to head it. It seemed too good to be true, and indeed, as cryptocurrency thrived, its cracks began to show, until eventually, it started to crumble completely.

On Nov. 11, 2022, one of the largest crypto exchange giants, FTX, suddenly filed for bankruptcy, seemingly having collapsed overnight. According to Reuters, the decision to file for bankruptcy by CEO Sam Bankman-Fried came about due to an incredible, yet confusing, sequence of events. First, fellow crypto exchange giant Binance announced the previous Sunday that they would sell their \$580 million stake in FTX's digital token (a digital asset built off an existing blockchain, or system for managing cryptocurrency transactions) for certain undisclosed reasons. Mass customer withdrawals expectedly ensued that FTX could not keep up with. Prior to bankruptcy, Bankman-Fried used what FTX legal and

finance teams told Reuters was a "backdoor" that he himself implemented into the FTX's bookkeeping system. This allowed him to discreetly transfer \$10 billion in customer funds from FTX to Alameda Research, his personal trading company, without notifying investors. Interestingly, Reuters reports that \$1-\$2 billion of these customer funds have gone completely missing. The entire FTX debacle, from the unknown reasons for Binance selling their stake, to where the missing funds went, is indicative not just of corporate mismanagement, but a much larger problem with cryptocurrency altogether.

Erik Riedlinger, a graduate student at Adelphi studying professional accounting, explained how certain aspects of crypto contributed to such a spectacular collapse. "Cryptocurrency in its current state acts as more of a speculative investment as opposed to a form of currency, in that most people who invest are only doing so in hopes of receiving more money later on, not because they believe in the technology as the future. As a result of this, crypto exchanges largely imitate stock exchanges except they are held to a much lower standard and provide less protection for the average investors due to the lack of regulation."

While the relatively libertarian nature of cryptocurrency may make it appear enticing to ambitious entrepreneurs like Bankman-Fried, its sparse regulation truly

has much more potential to harm customers and investors rather than benefit them with secure, fruitful returns. Riedlinger provides a prime example of this. "This leaves all of [the investor's] funds exposed to the risk that their exchange will crash, such as FTX, and the investor will lose most, if not all, of their investment. A critical difference in this case is whether or not the investor's money is insured. Money held in a bank is likely insured by the FDIC, and therefore presents little risk. Cryptocurrency on an exchange, however, is not insured."

Beyond the lack of insurance in cryptocurrency is the fact that the value behind it is largely ambiguous at best, unlike how stocks represent a share of value in a corporation. Robert Goldberg, a clinical professor of finance at Adelphi, remarked that cryptocurrency is "an overly financialized system built on speculation, information arbitrage, and leverage." Riedlinger seconds this notion, stating "this results in the value often being based on hype or a 'fear of missing out' rather than the success of the company."

Without being directly tied to a corporation or even a crypto exchange, the value of cryptocurrency wildly fluctuates beyond reasonable prediction, making any investment a risky gamble.

Riedlinger emphasized how crucial it is for a currency as sensitive as crypto to be dealt with responsibly: "A select group of individuals can absolutely not be trusted

with the management of these crypto exchanges. Due to the tech based nature of cryptocurrency, many of the leaders behind these exchanges come from the tech world rather than the financial world and therefore are not knowledgeable on how to run this type of organization. [Whereas] a financial institution such as Bank of America [has experienced management], much of [FTX's] leadership comes from tech companies such as Google. It is clear that the people most attracted to the crypto world are often inexperienced in finance."

A CEO who's forte is in technology, not finance, cannot possibly be a leader of revolutionizing cryptocurrency without major setbacks; it's a recipe for disaster.

At the end of day, for the average Adelphi college student, whose bank account may look less than desirable, the tumultuous story of FTX rising into a cryptocurrency star only to fall into bankruptcy the next day, is a cautionary tale for possible investors. As bluntly put by Goldberg, "This crypto financial system provides no value to society and the economy, other than for some interesting pieces of digital art, and introduces significant instability, creating some winners and many losers."

With other crypto exchanges like BlockFi having to also file for bankruptcy given their close relationship with FTX, it is painfully evident that cryptocurrency has a vast and rocky road ahead for it to ever be considered stable and legitimate.

## Graduate Student Reflects on the Swim Team and the Current Season

BY ANDREW SMITH

The men's swim team is in the middle of a very competitive season and has achieved impressive results throughout the early part of the year. Captain Brian Klotsche is continuing to lead the team to success and reflect



**Klotsche in the final lap of a match.**

*Photo by AU Athletics*

on his accomplishments as a Panther.

Klotsche is in the MBA program with a concentration in finance. He is currently in his fifth year and is looking forward to graduating in spring 2023. Klotsche has been a captain for four of his five years with the team.

He said of his offseason training program, "During the off season I usually try to train seven times a week. Those include four strength training and three

swimming. During a time where there is no competition and less swimming, it's important to increase a swimmer's strength for the upcoming season."

He added, "It is key to train all the muscles in your body because swimming uses every muscle in the body. Due to the fact that swimming involves a lot of cardio, it's important for a swimmer to stay in the best shape they can."

Special memories play an integral part in an athlete's time on a team. They remind athletes of their positive experiences they had on the team. Klotsche reflected on his favorite time as a Panther.

"My favorite memory on the team was going on our training trip in January 2020. We flew to Stuart, Florida, and trained for one week there. During this time, we trained twice a day, every day and it was very tough. We swam outside for every practice, which felt amazing coming from New York where every pool is indoors. It was nice to be outside in 75-degree weather in the middle of January."

Klotsche continued, "The pool was also an Olympic size pool, which was great to train in for a week. We swam in multiple meets and competed against

some of the best teams in the nation."

Klotsche added on how this trip served as a team-bonding experience. "Not only did we train, but in between practices, we were able to explore



**Klotsche has been a captain of the team for four years.** *Photo by AU Athletics*

a part of Florida that I never would have gone to. We went to beaches, went on hikes and other things. We bonded as a team and it helped lead us to a successful rest of the season."

Regarding the current season and where he hopes the team will finish, the captain said: "My expectations for the upcoming season is to finish top three in the conference in my events (100 fly, 100 backstroke and 200 backstroke). As well, I would like the relays I am in (200 medley, 200 Freestyle and 400 medley relay) to finish top three. As a team, we are looking to finish third in the conference."

With their dedication and hard work, these goals are proving attainable.

Klotsche said he wants to thank his teammates and his coach for always being there for him during his time at Adelphi. "When you're in the middle of the season, you see your teammates and coach every day, twice a day. I often see them more than I see my family at home. My teammates and coach are truly like family to me. They have gotten me through the toughest points of my life and have always supported me."

Klotsche added, "Coach [Marc] Danin truly has turned this team around into a well-functioning group that all have each other's back. In my 10 years of competitive swimming, I can truly say that Coach Danin is the best coach I have ever had."

## Men's Basketball Team Looks to Carry Offseason Momentum Into the Winter

BY ANDREW SMITH

The men's basketball team has just begun their 2022-'23 season. The athletes have been training during their offseason and emotions and expectations are high as they embark on their time on the court.



**Ronnie Silva taking a jump shot during a match.** *Photos by AU Athletics*

The offseason plays a very important role in how the team will play. They look to get started on the right foot.

Andrew Delaney, a senior finance major, commented on what is involved in his offseason training. "This past off-season, we spent a good amount of time on skill development and live playing," he said. "It's great to work on our individual skills and then directly implement them in live play as much as possible."

Delaney valued the importance of playing in live games with his teammates throughout the offseason. This allowed them the opportunity to simulate a scenario that closely resembles

what they will be encountering during the long winter season. Delaney and his teammates implemented new techniques that can be implemented into a live game setting. These opportunities will in return build confidence that can directly transfer to the regular season.

Delaney added, "We also focused heavily in the weight room and our guys definitely increased their athleticism by consistently pushing themselves in workouts throughout the fall."

Sophomore sports management major Matthew Price commented on the importance of training and staying in shape, saying it requires "nutrition, skill work, a lot of shots and game speed reps. Lifting is big to maintain strength."

In addition, first-year graduate student Ronnie Silva, who is studying sports management, added what the offseason means to him. "I really value the offseason because I appre-

ciate the process and I believe you can always improve your game."

Every offseason team has expectations to do better than the last and make their school proud. The basketball team hopes to have a strong season, continue to build their teamwork and most importantly, compete for a championship.

Silva addressed what expectations he has for the young team. "My expectations for this season is to win every single day. As the leader of the team, I want us to value the habits and the daily process instead saying we want to win a championship. It's about actions and accountability of ourselves everyday to be great."

***Every offseason team has expectations to do better than the last and make their school proud. The basketball team hopes to have a strong season, continue to build their teamwork and most importantly, compete for a championship.***

Delaney added, "I'm very excited for this year. We've stayed true to our work this offseason. Guys have been pushing themselves and each other to get better every day in practice. I'm ready to go to battle for a championship this year with my guys."

Price commented on the importance of putting the maximum effort

in every day on the court. "We as a team have big expectations but we have to come in everyday and put in the work to earn everything."

The team also shared their thoughts on what games they are looking forward to on the schedule. "Every game is a key game for us," Price said. "When we as



**Matthew Price believes it's important to put in maximum effort every day on the court.**

a team take it each day at a time, every game we get to go out is a blessing and great opportunity for us to win. There is no one game that we are more fired up for."

Lastly, Delaney mentioned what it means to play in front of their peers. "I'm excited to play in front of our home crowd and be a part of the energy that comes with that."

It has been a long and difficult journey for many college teams dealing with the pandemic and its many obstacles. The men's basketball team has been dedicated all offseason to prepare to be successful for the 2022-'23 season.