

C O M M U N I Q U É

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Chatham student employment questioned

By Gena Carter

There are several benefits to being a student employee at Chatham University: supervisors who understand that academics come first, flexible scheduling, relevant career-oriented work experience and the ability to use Federal Work Study funds, to name some.

However, discussions about how to improve student employment have come up at Chatham Student Government meetings, as well as in conversations with students in general across campus.

Some common grievances with student employment include:

- Chatham student employees are paid monthly, rather than biweekly
- Chatham student employees make between \$9 to \$12 per hour

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In-person happenings return



Chatham student Julia Gaetano '23 feeds a baby goat at the barnyard petting zoo on the Old Quad in late August. See **Page 7** for more campus event photos. Photo Credit: Lily Kubit

Hockey team's newfound success

By Carson Gates

After Chatham men's hockey team made the playoffs for the first time in program history, head coach Mike Gershon describes the immense culture shift as the reason for recent success.

Coming off a five-win, eight-loss season, the men's hockey team is looking to build upon its best season to date. In his first season behind the bench with Chatham, Coach Gershon led the Cougars to the most United Collegiate Hockey Conference UCHC wins ever. With leading scorer Carson Grainer '22 and goaltender Ricardo Gonzalez '22 both returning this season, Chatham is looking to make another run at the playoffs.

Gershon was the assistant coach at Division I program Robert Morris before joining the Chatham coaching staff. Gershon wanted to

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Student employee wages, pay frequency prompt questions

EMPLOYMENT, FROM PAGE 1

- The pandemic has caused increased stress and some students to take on more responsibilities, without a pay increase
- Infrequent work and not being scheduled enough hours each week

The explanation for these policies lie within the Office of Career Development and the Business Office of Chatham University. Career Development also can be a place to turn to for advice for students experiencing conflicts with their supervisors.

Chatham student employees are paid monthly, just like most other University employees. Currently, the only people paid bi-weekly on campus are union staff members.

For the most part, one person at Chatham is responsible for all the University's payroll.

"Our student employee population changes every term," Jennifer Hoerster, associate vice president of finance and administration, explained. "There is so much change and so much turnover just by nature that ... to increase the amount of work to process a payroll 26 times opposed to 12 times a year would be a big burden on the payroll office."

The monthly payment cycle puts a strain on some students, though.

"It ends up feeling like a long time between the paychecks, and I am trying to save up, so the amount

I get has to last a while," student employee Josephine Friedman '21 said. "I feel like if someone was trying to support themselves without parental help, they might be in a more desperate situation with the monthly payments."

Emily Martz '21 has been a Chatham student employee for three years.

"I understand the reason why we are paid monthly," Martz said. "Would it be nice to be paid more often? Yes, but ... [for organization] I understand the reason."

Chatham is currently working on a new payroll system, according to Hoerster, that would allow employees to preemptively withdraw their worked-hours ahead of their paycheck. This process would not create additional responsibilities for Chatham's payroll office.

There is no current estimate as to when this new system will be rolled out. However, Hoerster said that once students are put into the



Student employees Anna Predergast '22, left, and Jacob Tebay '25 work the front desk in the Athletic & Fitness Center.

Photo Credit: Gena Carter

system, it would be introduced to everyone simultaneously, rather than to faculty and/or staff first.

Pay-scale wise, Chatham undergraduates are eligible for administrative or skilled positions, which pay \$9 or \$11 per hour, respectively. Graduate students make \$12 per hour.

These pay designations are based on how much skill and experience each role requires. The stress or emotional burden of a position isn't typically included in the calculation because it is such a hard thing to quantify, according to Kate Sheridan, director of Career Development.

Friedman has worked at Information Technology Services (ITS) since 2018, and now makes \$11 per hour due to her gained experience.

"It's not the \$15 per hour minimum wage that people want, but I'm not super mad about it," Friedman said. "[ITS] is a pretty cushy job."

Katelyn Nee '23 works in the Carriage House and makes \$9 per hour.

"Because of inflation and ... because we are in Pittsburgh ... I feel like all student employees should be paid more," Nee said. "I feel like, in general, everyone deserves a raise."

According to Hoerster, these student rates are comparable or better than neighboring universities within the Pittsburgh area.

Martz makes \$9 per hour in the Athletic and Fitness Center.

CHATHAM UNIVERSITY
CAREER
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"I can't complain [about the wage]. I have a job. I am getting a wage, someone else might not be ... I'm not making \$7.25 per hour," Martz said.

Student employment positions are approved in late spring for the summer and the following academic year, and proposed changes to position types and pay rates have to be submitted for approval.

A change in pay from \$9 per hour to \$11 per hour does not typically happen during the fall semester. If it does, it may be due to a change requested by a supervisor as a result of job responsibilities changing, or an error in how that position was coded that would need to be corrected.

The pandemic has added responsibilities and changed the general nature of positions across campus. In some cases, a student may have opted to leave a previous position due to pandemic circumstances, and the roles assigned to that student were given to other employees.

According to Sheridan, other students picking up tasks or the hours of other students that have left can occur informally, without the positions of the past and present ►

student employee being combined.

However, “if [the] entire role is applied to another student, that should be something that is formalized,” Sheridan said.

Depending on the role, that combination of positions may have led to a student who made \$9 per hour taking on the responsibilities of a past employee who made \$11 per hour. It may also lead to some students feeling like they have to work more than their allotted hours or work without pay to complete all their assigned tasks.

“Supervisors [are responsible for ensuring] that students are not working beyond their allotted

hours,” Sheridan said. While students can work more some weeks than others, it is the supervisor’s responsibility to ensure that student employees are not exceeding their semester or yearly hour limit.

Likewise, if a student agrees to work a certain number of hours a week and is scheduled far less than that, “supervisors should be finding alternative work for students to complete,” Sheridan said. “In general, a supervisor should have 10 hours of work that needs to be completed for each week if the student contract is 10 hours a week [for example].”

If there are other issues that can-

not be resolved by speaking to a supervisor, or if the site supervisor is part of the conflict, students can go to Career Development.

“We’ve had cases in the past,” Sheridan said, “where we have had to [mediate] between a student and their supervisor. We’ve had to pull a student employee from their position and help them find another role. ...There have been supervisors on campus in the past who are no longer allowed to have students because of persistent concerns.”

Students can be confident that, by going to Career Development, they will be protected from retaliation from a supervisor.

“Our office is here to support [students],” Sheridan said. “We are here to make sure that students feel comfortable in their roles and aren’t being taken advantage of.”

Students can schedule meetings with Career Development through Handshake.

If past or current student employees want to talk about their experience for a future article, they can reach out to Gena Carter at Gena.Carter@chatham.edu.

To learn more about Chatham’s student employment process, read extended coverage at Chathamcommunique.com.

POLICE BLOTTER

All information is provided by Chatham University’s Public Safety

- 10:15 a.m. Aug. 4** – Officers were notified of a suspicious person on campus. He was stopped by police and advised to not be on campus.
- 12:50 p.m. Aug. 15** – Officers investigated an odor or natural gas smell in the Pelletreus Apartments complex. It was discovered to be an oven and was taken care of by maintenance.
- 7:23 a.m. Aug. 18** – Officers were notified of a student who was locked in a bedroom in the Maryland Avenue duplex. The lock to the door was broken, and officers got the student out.
- 12:15 p.m. Aug. 18** – A student was injured on the steps behind Buhl Hall. The student was transported to the hospital.
- 5:45 p.m. Aug. 23** – Officers were notified of smoke in an apartment in the Pelletreus Apartments complex. Something in an oven had caught on fire. Upon arrival, the fire was out, and officers assisted in clearing smoke from the unit.
- 2:05 p.m. Aug. 24** – Officers were dispatched to Health Services for a sick student. City Medics were called, but it is unknown if the student went to the hospital or not.
- 3:15 p.m. Aug. 24** – Officers were notified of a traffic accident in the Jennie King Mellon Library parking lot. A vehicle backed out of a parking space and hit another vehicle that also was backing out. No one was injured, and drivers exchanged information.
- 8:21 p.m. Aug. 25** – Officers received a call to check on a student in Fickes Hall. Officers did check on the student, and no problem was found.

Chatham needs to rethink student employment policies

By Michaela DeLauter

Recently, I received an email from Chatham Student Employment that I had a new student worker contract. Confused, as I didn't apply for a new job, I opened the email and after reading, I realized that I was given a promotion and a pay raise.

I was ecstatic, as I was finally being compensated for my increase in work at my job. For me, I need to work. I am paying for college all on my own with little financial aid. For me to have money for essentials, like food and housing, I need to maintain a job year-round.

Currently, I am the only student worker employed at my job. When I was hired last year, I had another coworker who split these responsibilities. However, she has now graduated, leaving me to do the work by myself.

It is much easier for me to have a job on campus, considering I live four hours away, and it is easier to go home on long weekends or breaks. Additionally, I have a busy schedule and working at Chatham makes it easier to manage my schoolwork and class times.

This pay raise meant that I was going to be able to cover my everyday expenses while possibly having some left-over money to spend on myself.

In confusion and curiosity, I reached out to my supervisor about this raise. But as it turned out, I was never actually given a raise, just false hope.

When they transitioned the student worker materials to my new supervisor, they misassigned a job that she thought was my position. As a result, my supervisor accidentally sent me a new contract with different pay. I understand the confusion on her part and appreciate her response; however, the experience caused me to think about the lack of chances to be promoted, and why there's a lack of student workers on the Chatham campus.

I love my job – it's not normally stressful and the professional staff I work with are friendly and fun to be around. But it can be a lot of responsibility, especially when you are the only worker there.

The projects are simple, consisting mostly of organizing and rearranging files on the computer, yet some projects still take weeks to finish. To make one person do all that work can be a lot. There is also little room for advancement as a student worker at Chatham. Why might this be the case?

For example, Student Ambassadors endure multiple trainings to be qualified for their job yet still make the bare minimum that is paid to student employees on campus. However, in my opinion, they have one of the most important jobs as a student employee.

To my knowledge, there is no chance for them to get an increase in pay. This highlights another issue: training requirements across student jobs appear unequal.

My job also lacks means for

advancement. If I were to stay at the same position all four years of my schooling, I would have slim chance of earning a raise. If another student were to fill a position in my office, I would help train them, as I was trained by a now graduated student. I would oversee training this student yet be making the same as them, constituting another task without compensation.

It becomes discouraging to know that you can work your hardest at a job, yet there will be little chance you will be rewarded for that job.

Lack of advancement and compensation regarding student employment brings up another point: Chatham only pays student workers once a month.

Since I live in an apartment on campus, for me to lower my costs of college, I switched to the lowest meal plan in attempts to use some of the paycheck to help buy food. For me, this can be challenging. Since I am only getting paid once a month, I must carefully budget to make sure I don't run out of my spending money before the end of the month. If I do, I don't have money for food.

Since most of my books were so expensive, I have spent most of the money that I had put aside for essentials on my books, leaving me little to buy food to eat.

I know this has been an issue brought up in the past. Many student employees across campus rely on their paycheck the same way I do, which makes it challeng-

ing when we're getting a monthly paycheck.

If this is a reoccurring concern throughout campus, why is nothing being done about it?

Many of the issues that I and many other students struggle with could be avoided if we transferred to a bi-weekly pay system.

Many students going to school deal with great financial burdens that come with schooling. There's high tuition, room and board, and expensive mandatory textbooks. To compensate the financial burdens, students get these on campus jobs to make money. However, this problem is only exacerbated by a monthly pay system.

These hardships could have been avoided if I were paid bi-weekly. This brings me to my final point: Perhaps there aren't more student workers because of these kinds of conditions.

My position is a good example. I am the only student worker. If a student applied for my job, they would find a workplace that has little chance of a raise, a sizable workload, and paychecks only once a month.

Chatham runs on student workers. They help to recruit, teach and give back to the student body. It would be hard for Chatham if there were no student workers.

Give the student workers better conditions to alleviate the amount of work thrown on the already stressed employees.

Culture change catapults men's hockey team to playoffs

HOCKEY, FROM PAGE 1



Chatham University's head hockey coach, Mike Gershon. Photo Credit: Chatham Athletics

“bridge the gap between Division I and III,” he said, and treat Chatham “like a Division I program.”

He brought in an equipment manager, which is rare at the Division III level. Along with the equipment manager, the strength and conditioning coach Gershon used at Robert Morris now trains the Cougars. Gershon wanted to “take the excuses out” and have players focus on their on-ice game.

Upon taking control of the men's hockey team last year in April, Gershon strived to build a culture of success.

“He set the tone by instilling culture,” said player Mike Lamison '22.

This culture was both an on- and off-ice change. Gershon's on-ice culture revolves around a normality

of winning. From winning a small arena game in practice to beating a UCHC rival, Gershon and the men's hockey team expect to win.

The off-ice culture change has been just as big of a shift for the men's hockey team. This starts with the players brought onto campus.

“We look for really good students, guys who are really good around the community, really involved, oh yeah and they are really good at hockey,” Gershon said.

It is more than talk, too, as the men's hockey team has the highest-grade point average of any varsity sports team at Chatham.

Goaltender Ricardo Gonzalez '22 insists that Gershon “brought a very powerful presence that Chatham has needed for a very long time.”

Men's hockey needed that presence with the uncertainty of last season due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. The unpredictability of the season was made that much worse after a team outbreak before they even got on



Ricardo Gonzalez '22.
Photo Credit: Chatham Athletics

the ice.

The team implemented strict rules after the outbreak just so they could have their season. From not being able to see each other outside of the rink to wearing a mask on the ice, the players did everything they could to play the game they love.

Accountability is something Lamison preached about as a change with Gershon. That accountability starts from the top with Gershon but trickles down to the players enforcing it day to day. It's the players' job to have the culture they want, while Gershon provides them with the tools to do so.

Creating history has been a focal point this past year, too. Being a new program with no real history, Gonzalez wants this team to “start a legacy” here at Chatham, he said. Gonzalez holds almost every goaltending record for Chatham, and he “hopes one day that there's a goalie that comes in and absolutely clears out those records.”

Where does the team go from here? Lamison said that in his last



Mike Lamison '22.
Photo Credit: Chatham Athletics

season he would love to “compete for a UCHC championship.” Both Lamison and Gonzalez look to enjoy every second of their senior season, as well as make a name for Chatham hockey.

The team's first game of this season at home was Nov. 6 against Stevenson.

Story tips?

The Communiqué is always looking for story ideas! The staff is also invested in answering questions from the Chatham community.

*Send your story tips and questions to
Communique@chatham.edu
or
Alice.crow@chatham.edu*



Meet Juan Mendizabal, Chatham's new assistant DEI director

By Wyatt Cory

Chatham University hired earlier this year Juan Mendizabal, a new assistant director for the Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. Mendizabal is an educator who focuses on leadership and social justice work.

Previously, he worked at Appalachian State University as an adjunct professor and the director of leadership education and development.

Mendizabal's official title here at Chatham is assistant director of interfaith cooperation and diversity, equity and inclusion. That means he will oversee Diversity Dialogues, cultural event planning, the R.I.S.E. (Retain. Involve. Strengthen. Excel.) Mentorship Program and grant-funded interfaith cooperation/worldview pluralism initiatives.

Chatham University offered Mendizabal a new challenge, he said. This is the smallest school he has been able to work with. For Mendizabal, this was something that attracted him to this job.

"When you are working in a larger institution, I think it is harder to build a community or create a feeling of community," Mendizabal said.

At Chatham, Mendizabal felt he had the chance to really make a difference.

"It is not to say that being on a smaller campus means that that work gets done easier, but just be-



Juan Mendizabal is the assistant director for the Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion at Chatham University.

cause of the sheer fewer [number] of people you can see the impact of that work quicker," he added.

Mendizabal is another full-time employee in the department of diversity, equity and inclusion working alongside Dr. Randi Congleton, the office's vice president. Together, they are able to break up the workload. Congleton will focus on larger strategic plans for the University, while Mendizabal will focus on continuing the programmatic work that Congleton had started.

A goal for Mendizabal is introducing Chatham to interfaith initiatives, a grant-funded program that aims to bring together stu-

dents with different worldviews or spiritualities and provide them with a community and safe place to express themselves.

In the past few years, some faculty members have worked with the Interfaith Youth Core to create a framework and plan to introduce interfaith programs to Chatham.

"I was the person who was hired to put these plans into action," Mendizabal said.

He will be training faculty members, as well as starting the program's first sessions where students will have the chance to voice their views and opinions on faith, interfaith, non-faith and worldviews.

faith experiences.

"To have a nonreligious queer person in charge of interfaith cooperation efforts is actually a really innovating thing," Mendizabal said. "Putting people who are on the margins at the center of things that are marginalizing is the way we do this work."

He hopes to use these interfaith communities to create activism that continues to break those margins.

"This isn't going to be a movement to exclusively bring religion emphasized on campus. It's also not to exclude religion either, but it is to say that religious, spiritual and secular identities can all very meaningfully find true belonging in

"To have a nonreligious queer person in charge of interfaith cooperation efforts is actually a really innovating thing..."

- Juan Mendizabal

"This event is going to be very powerful as it takes religion and spirituality and positions it in an activist, social justice context," Mendizabal explained. "Which is exactly why we want interfaith work to be housed in the office of diversity and inclusion, so people don't forget that faith identity, religious identity and even non-faith identity are not separate from typical DEI conversations."

Mendizabal, who identifies as a nonreligious queer person, is at the helm of a program that brings people together over faith and non-

one another on campus," Mendizabal said. "If the person at the helm of that already has that critical eye, then I hope that makes our students who identify as secular or nonreligious on this campus feel like there's someone looking after them."

Mendizabal will hold the first Interfaith event from 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Thursday, Sept. 9, in the Jennie King Mellon Library. To learn more or get involved, email Mendizabal at J.Mendizabal@chatham.edu.

Events, Events, Events!

By Lilly Kubit

What do you get when you add a large amount of new students and a full, in-person return to campus? So many old and new events! Students had fun and connected with each other in late August and early September.



Students roller skate at the pop-up roller rink in Mellon Board Room.



Sierra Sokol '23 and Katie Crouch '23 at College Essentials Bingo.



Students dance at the Summer Forever Dance in Mellon Board Room.

Out of Left Field: Doodlebug and Bird Return to Campus



Out of Left Field — that's how Doodlebug has been feeling lately. Everything seems like it's happening so fast! New experiences, new locations and new ideas! Stay tuned to see how Doodlebug continues his journey through Pittsburgh's and the world's current events.

Alexis Taranto '24

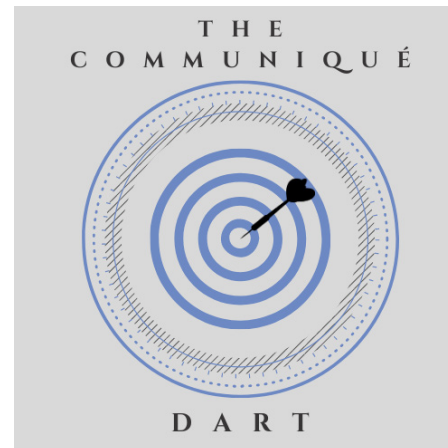


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Take a listen

The Communiqué is publishing podcast episodes! "The Communiqué Dart" will focus on diving deeper into the important stories at Chatham. Follow our social media for more information.



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Letters to the editor

The Communiqué welcomes readers to submit letters to be considered for publication. Send your reactions to stories, thoughts on Chatham University and whatever else is on your mind to opinion editor Abbey Sullivan (abbey.sullivan@chatham.edu).

Corrections

The Communiqué strives to report the news accurately and fairly. If we've made a mistake, please let us know so we can correct it and learn from it. Email (alice.crow@chatham.edu) or (communique@chatham.edu).

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