

COMMUNIQUE

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OPINION



Students and faculty share thoughts on the campus Wi-Fi issue. **Page 4**

STORIES ON THE WEB

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- Chatham Chats advice column answers questions
- What is causing the Wi-Fi connectivity issues at Chatham?
- Student experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic
- Senior Cougar athlete spotlight

LIFESTYLE



Beyond Ramen, a new series focused on eating in college. **Page 6**

Campus vaccination rate reaches 92%

By Michaela DeLauter

COVID-19 cases have again been on the rise as the new Delta variant has made its way to Pittsburgh. In Allegheny County, more than 200 cases per day were reported this past week, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

SEE VACCINE, PAGE 2



A Warm Embrace



Participants in the Just Films reception for the movie “Coded Bias” share a hug after a panel discussion. “Coded Bias” was screened in Buhl Hall’s Beckwith Auditorium on Sept. 8. The Just Film series features movies and discussions about gender and intersectional social justice issues. Learn more about the series at My.Chatham.edu. Photo Credit: Lilly Kubit

SEE VISUALS, PAGE 7

New baseball coach aims for playoffs

By Carson Gates

After Cougar baseball’s most successful season in history with 12 wins and 23 losses, National Champion baseball coach Nic Rush strives to continue building the team on and off the field. Rush spent his last three years as an assistant coach at Washington & Jefferson College, where he won a National Championship in 2019.

During his time at Washington & Jefferson, Rush helped his players flourish, including producing multiple American Baseball Coaches Association All-Americans. Rush aims to maintain his winning ways, as well as his focus on development -- this time while donning Cougar purple and white.

The baseball team, while still in its infancy, is still looking for its first playoff appearance. Rush’s

SEE BASEBALL, PAGE 5

Multiple plans under review in case of Delta variant outbreak

VACCINE, FROM PAGE 1

Due to the concerns over the COVID-19 pandemic and the rising Delta variant, Chatham has been preparing for if a breakout were to occur, according to assistant Dean of Students Shawn McQuillan-Krepps.

There are multiple courses of action being considered. If an outbreak were to occur, Chatham would monitor the case count to find any trends. If a true outbreak is identified, University officials may propose that classes move to virtual instruction for two weeks, rescind the guest policy or issue a shelter-in-place order.

University policy on being a close-contact changes depending on the individual's vaccination status.

For those who are vaccinated and identified as a close contact, they wouldn't need to be quarantined -- unless they test positive -- but would be required to closely monitor their health for three to five days after exposure.

If the close contact is unvaccinated, they will be required to quarantine for the two-week period. Chatham still has designated isolation spaces on campus for unvaccinated individuals.

According to Chatham's COVID dashboard, as of Oct. 3, 92% of the Chatham community has received a COVID-19 vaccine.

Each week, residence life faculty members from several universities,

including Chatham, Carnegie Mellon University and the University of Pittsburgh, meet with Allegheny County officials and the Allegheny County Health Department to keep up to date with COVID-19 protocols.

The purpose of these meetings is to help keep university officials from across the region updated on regulations and suggestions from the Allegheny County Health Department and CDC.

"[These meetings are] not any-

"We're even more on top of [COVID-19] than we have been in the past and we're prepped and ready for this year."

*- Shawn McQuillan-Krepps,
Assistant Dean of Students*

thing to be concerned about. [We are] just keeping it monitored," McQuillan-Krepps said. "Everything is subject to change."

For the unvaccinated, according to McQuillan-Krepps, anyone who submitted a vaccine exemption is required to be tested twice a week.

Hannah Platz, an employee for Health Services, said that the vaccine exemption process was simple and could be completed via Med+Proctor, Chatham's immunization verification platform.

Those wishing to file a vaccine

exemption would need to fill out a form explaining why they were asking for a waiver, submit it and then wait for approval or denial.

People could ask for an exemption for religious, medical or other reasons.

If students provide information that receiving the vaccine would be against a belief they hold in their religion, they can be granted a religious exemption.

If filing for a medical exemption, people must have a doctor's note

explaining why they can't receive the vaccine.

The "other" reason is on a case-by-case basis. There is a small group that looks over the file together to determine if the waiver is approved or declined.

"We won't decline it at first," Platz said. "We would go to the student and ask them why they want this exemption."

While the process is easy, not many from the Chatham community applied for an exemption. However, data is still being updated to

determine the actual unvaccinated percentage.

If an unvaccinated student refuses to be tested, that is in violation of Chatham's Honor Code. These students are referred to McQuillan-Krepps, and they are subject to interim suspension from the University. This means they are unable to attend any in-person classes or activities until they comply with the University's COVID-19 requests.

"It shouldn't come as a surprise. We made it very public that no one was allowed to move in without the vaccine or the waiver," McQuillan-Krepps said.

Likewise, if staff members do not get tested, they go through Human Resources and may face discipline there.

The CDC recommends COVID-19 vaccines as the Delta variant is more transmissible and might cause more severe illness than previous variants in those who are unvaccinated. However, fully vaccinated people can still spread the virus.

Per CDC recommendations, "everyone who is able, including fully vaccinated people, should wear masks in public indoor places, in areas of substantial or high transmission."

"We learned a lot from last year. No one came in with a playbook," McQuillan-Krepps said. "We're even more on top of it than we have been in the past, and we're prepped and ready for this year."

University accommodates record-size class

First-year students now permitted to live in apartments, commute to campus

By Alyssa Bruce

For many first-year students, the traditional freshman college experience includes sharing a room with another student and, of course, the communal bathrooms.

This year, some first-year students have been placed in the apartments on Chatham University's lower campus, despite the apartments traditionally being for only upper class students.

"When I saw that I would be living in an apartment, I was surprised. I hadn't selected the apartments on my housing portal, so I was a bit confused," said Emily Hoffman '25.

"I am jealous of those in my class who got chosen to be in the Chatham Apartments," said Sarah Barron '25. "I like my dorm hall, but I definitely would rather have my own bathroom and kitchen. I wish I would have been one of the students selected to be in the apartments," she added.

The class of '25 is the largest incoming class at Chatham. Devin Fabian, the associate director of residence life, said that "this year placing first-years in the apartments was out of necessity because the first-year class was so

big. One challenge was increasing the occupancy to re-densify [from] last year."

"It was a tough decision," Fabian continued, "but we needed to accommodate the housing for everyone to have a place to stay."

Erin Gann '25, agreed that "since our class size is so big, it makes sense that there wouldn't be room for all of us."

There is room in the apartments for these first-years because "over the past four years, more upper class students do tend to live off campus," said Fabian.

First-year students also experience a more relaxed overnight guest policy this year. In the past, incoming first-year students were not allowed to have overnight guests until the Battle of the Classes ceased in late September.

This year, this was not a requirement, and Battle of the Classes no longer exists. First-year students experience the same overnight guest policy as the rest of campus, according to Fabian.

Currently, first-year students also have the option to commute, which is not something they could have done two years ago. Fabian



The Chatham Apartments differ from the traditional dorm halls in size and accommodations. Photo Credit: Alyssa Bruce

said that "there is technically still a two-year residency requirement. It was waived last year and this year."

In the future, this is something that will change. "Moving forward ... the goal will be to reinstate that [policy]," he said.

The issue of accepting more students than the University had room to fit in its traditional housing model is not something unique to Chatham this year.

The University of Pittsburgh currently has some freshmen living in hotels located in the city, due to no rooms being available in the dorms.

At the University of Tampa, many freshmen were placed on a waitlist for on-campus housing, and then told that they would have to find and pay for their own off-campus housing.

"Although it was a surprise, I am happy that I was somehow put into an apartment," Hoffman said. "The apartment isn't anything fancy, but I definitely like it better than the dorms."



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.

Unreliable Wi-Fi challenges both students and faculty

By Abbey Sullivan

The start of the Fall 2021 semester was marked by a lot of changes to Chatham, many of which are reversions back to pre-pandemic life. The combination of newly in-person courses and the largest first-year class to date brings growing pains to the campus community.

Campus wireless connectivity

has produced some of the biggest problems for the Chatham community. Since the onset of the semester, students and faculty alike have experienced Wi-Fi connectivity lapses across the new networks – Chatham Guest and Chatham Secure, the latter of which relies on Chatham login information for access. An inability to connect to the internet can lead to academic,

social and financial hardships.

Chatham's IT department has remained consistent in student communication and pursuit of solutions, though frustration is inevitable.

Looking forward, the broader Chatham community needs to enact safeguards in case of similar technological issues. Spaces to conduct online work – especially

virtual meetings – should be provided to all students, faculty and staff. If problems like these persist further into this semester and into the future, discussions should take place about tech accommodations to aid student finances. Technology has only increased its presence in our daily academic lives; we should make room for it as inclusively and smoothly as possible.



Lucia Camacho '23 struggles with both her school-issued MacBook and her Android cellphone.

“When I got to campus this semester, Chatham didn't inform me that my phone would not be able to connect to the internet. They sent an email explaining the process, but it was only for iOS products. For Android phones, the domain and password the Wi-Fi login asked for wouldn't work. Eventually I went to IT, where they told me that Android users couldn't connect to Chatham Secure and that they were 'fixing' it. It's been five or six weeks now without internet on my phone. Even with an unlimited data plan, my connection still slows once you reach a certain threshold.”



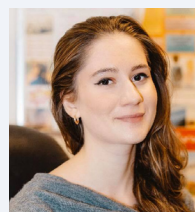
Dr. David Rossbach expresses understanding for faculty, students and Chatham's IT department as they collectively handle the Wi-Fi shortages after a return to in-person learning.

“We found that a number of Brightspace elements worked well [last year]; we all have gotten a bit more serious about Brightspace delivery, but it leaves us vulnerable to Wi-Fi connectivity problems. I get the sense that our IT department has felt this, as well. Some of the problem I think is a capacity issue. Across classes and buildings on campus, we're having several hundred students online at a time.”



Miranda Sheawood '22, a commuter student, feels frustrated when conducting class via Zoom.

“It's been really difficult to deal with the Wi-Fi issues as a commuter student. I have courses that are online and in person and I often find myself missing important information in my Zoom classes because the Wi-Fi will crash. I have to choose between unstable Wi-Fi or using my hotspot on my cellphone. It's ridiculous that we're paying a technology fee for technology that doesn't work properly.”



Irina Bucur '21 stresses her worries about data usage, work performance and technology fees.

“I used up most of my data in one day by completing assignments for my remote internship using my iPhone hotspot. When my laptop stopped connecting to the hotspot, I had to scroll through spreadsheets on my phone until my data ran out. I was in the library on deadline. While IT Support and administration send out periodic emails to let us know they are 'working on it' without providing temporary workarounds, I have to make excuses for the school I am supposed to represent, while worrying about my professionalism because of something that is entirely out of my control. Students pay hundreds of dollars per term for a technology fee, which is separate from the \$100 computing fee. If short-term solutions are not implemented, it's only fair that we receive refunds for the technology we pay for but cannot access properly.”

New coach looks to keep baseball team on the right path

BASEBALL, FROM PAGE 1



Nic Rush, Chatham's new baseball coach.

team goal for this season is to finally make that happen. This will be the sixth year of the team's existence, and Rush believes that "relentlessly pursuing success" will be the key to making it to the postseason.

Rush made it clear just how paramount recruiting is. Not only is it about finding the best ballplayers, but it's also about finding athletes who want to compete and get better, he said.

Rush will not have much time to meet recruits before they have to commit. He said he will only get a handful of meetings with these athletes, and needs to make that time count.

Rush intends on focusing on building genuine relationships with his current players and recruits. Building that honest connection is important because to him faking a relationship is not an option.

"Identifying talent is probably the easiest piece of it. Actually making that connection with the student-athlete ... is huge," Rush said. "Everyone wants talent, but a lot of times the teams that are more together, that are more complete at this level, will beat teams who are more talented."

That complete team also has to not only succeed on the field but also off of it.

Rush is looking for the baseball team to have a quality presence on campus. He wants to have players be a part of the Chatham community, while also leading academically.

"Off the field, I want to see us excel in the classroom," Rush said. With his previous team, the requirement was a 3.0 grade point average. He desires for his group at Chatham to exceed that expectation.

What ultimately won Rush over at Chatham was the players' "hunger" for success, he said. He knows his athletes strive to not just get better but to make history.

That overall drive for improvement and excitement for the season made Rush's decision to come to Chatham an easy one. He wants to coach this team and start a legacy here.

That legacy starts with being able to win.

"We have to learn how to win. ... We have to learn how to do things right," Rush said. While the program has taken steps in the right direction, Rush wants to finally

have a place in the playoffs.

Even though the program has not had deep-rooted success, Rush respected everything the former coach did for the program.

"They were doing things right. We want to build upon that," he said.

While Rush is the head coach, he sees himself more as a teacher. Originally, being a teacher was

Rush's plan in life after graduating, but then he found his love of coaching. Now Rush can do both.

Each day, he strives to teach his players to be the best people, as well as the best ball players they can be.

Follow Chatham's baseball team when its season begins in the spring.



Chatham's baseball team. Photo Credit: Chatham Athletics

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Be a part of our advice
column! For more information
on how to submit a
question, go to
chathamcommunique.com.*



Beyond Ramen: A series on the experience of eating as a college student

By Charlotte Larson

Last year was a tough one for all of us. Whether you were a professor trying to engage students through a monitor, a parent missing a kid after spending an unimaginable amount of time completing puzzles together or a first-year student like me starting school in a new state, we all experienced an unfamiliar kind of stress and loneliness. College students, in particular, were tasked with not only tackling the usual to-do lists but also trying to keep ourselves healthy in a pandemic. This stress found its way into a lot of different areas of my life -- the most unexpected of which was my food.

In the first few weeks of fall 2020, I barely thought about my meals. I was preoccupied with getting settled in my dorm, in my classes and in Pittsburgh. I seemed to have just enough mental space to remember to run to Anderson Dining Hall at least twice a day and bask in the funky scent of the compostable takeout boxes as I ate at my desk.

As time went on and I got used to my schedule, I found the space to think about what I was eating. It started with little thoughts like, "Hmm, there is no vegetarian protein option at dinner tonight." I noticed how I hadn't eaten breakfast — very uncharacteristic for me — in a week because the dining hall stopped morning service before I got out of my first class.



My lunch most days consisted of a granola bar. My dinner was almost always pasta, and I got "hangry" at 3 p.m. on the dot each day. I started drinking milk for the first time in ages, hoping it was supplemented with iron and vitamin D. I dreaded the weekends because dining hall hours and offerings were extremely limited. If I woke up at my normal time, on the earlier side for an 18 year old on a Saturday, I knew I would feel shaky but still have to walk off campus for a full meal. My thoughts turned into worries, and my worries turned into a deep anxiety surrounding food.

Students and food insecurity

Recent surveys estimate that between 60% and 70% of university students experience food insecurity during their time at college. Student food insecurity has remained largely unimproved or worsened in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. What's even more alarming

than this data is that most college students do not recognize or are not given the tools to name their food insecurity. Talking about our personal consumption in terms of access is not normalized, and we infrequently find ourselves comparing our eating habits. If we did, we might see some concerning patterns. However, we also might discover ways we can address the issues we face together.

Last year when I was struggling to remedy my food anxiety, I desperately wanted to ask peers what they were doing. I wanted to know if other students were as frustrated by the food at the limited dining venues on campus as I was. I wanted to know where they did their grocery shopping (if they could). I wanted to know how they cooked in a communal kitchen. I wanted to know what they stocked in their Microfridges. I wanted to know which meals kept them full but didn't make them late to class.

I wanted to know how everyone was eating.

Exploring food together

In this new series for the *Communiqué*, my goal is to start an ongoing conversation about eating in college. My motivations are partially selfish — I want my questions answered, too, and I want guidance — but I also love a good food story and hope to share that love with readers. No matter where you are from, it is often hard to be away from home — especially during a pandemic. Food brings us together. Food brings us into ourselves. Food brings us home.

So how, then, do we go about talking about food as college students? Let's do it here. Email me, charlotte.larson@chatham.edu, if you have a food story you want to share. Tell me how you season your pasta, or how your parent bakes the best pastries, or how you made an entire Thanksgiving meal in your apartment oven. Be it short and sweet or long and complicated, I want to hear it.

Story tips?

The Communiqué is always looking for story ideas!

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



September events keep students involved

Students stayed busy in September with academic work and events on campus. The Cornhole Tournament, the Heaven on Earth Ball, the Just Films series and Marvelous Mondays were just some of the opportunities available to the campus community.



*A student participates in the Cornhole Tournament on the Quad.
Photo Credit: Liam Lyons*



*Students dance at the Heaven on Earth Ball in Welker Room.
Photo Credit: Lilly Kubit*



Students stand in line for food from Pure Grub at a Marvelous Monday on the Quad. Photo Credit: Lilly Kubit

Out of Left Field: Café Rachel regulars



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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