

# COMMUNIQUE

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Chatham alum addresses love, loss in art series. **Page 8**

## Remembering professor Nataliya Myshakina



Dr. Nataliya Myshakina. Photo Credit: Chatham University

By Michaela DeLauter

The Chatham University science department is mourning the loss of professor Dr. Nataliya Myshakina, who died Wednesday, Dec. 29, 2021, from cancer.

Many knew Myshakina as either Nataliya or Natasha, depending on their relationship with her. Her formal name was Nataliya, but in Russian, her short name was Natasha. A memorial service was held

for her on Friday, Dec. 31, 2021.

She is survived by her daughter, Anastasia, and husband, Evgeniy.

Myshakina, 46, moved to Pittsburgh in 2003 from her hometown of Vladivostok, Russia. She began her teaching career as a lecturer at the University of Pittsburgh in 2008 and became a research assistant professor in November 2009. Myshakina started her job as

**SEE PROFESSOR, PAGE 2**

## Chatham counseling center expands offices to accommodate students

By Riley Hurst-Brubaker

After two years of trying to keep up with the ever-changing landscape of the COVID-19 pandemic, staff changes and new office spaces are aiding the counseling center's ability to meet students' needs.

The counseling center is in the **SEE COUNSELING, PAGE 3**

## Hunt Armory ice rink opens new opportunities for athletes and fans

By Carson Gates

The historic Hunt Armory's recent launch of a seasonal ice rink has garnered attention from the Chatham University community.

Both the men's and women's ice hockey inaugural games at the armory took place at the start of January. The men's team came away with a comeback victory

over visiting King's College, while the women mounted a resurgence of their own with a win over Lebanon Valley.

The Hunt Armory – roughly a 10-minute walk from Chatham's Shadyside campus – seemed to have some magic to it, with both teams finding a way to rally to win

**SEE RINK, PAGE 6**



Chatham men's ice hockey in action at Hunt Armory, with makeshift tent locker rooms in the background. Photo Credit: Liam Lyons for Chatham Athletics

## Chatham community mourns loss of chemistry professor

PROFESSOR, FROM PAGE 1

assistant professor at Chatham in 2013 and was promoted to associate professor in 2020.

During her time at Chatham, she served as the chair of the undergraduate committee, as well on the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion committee.

Many who knew Myshakina described her as intelligent, funny, strong and, overall, as a selfless individual. At Chatham, she made several community impacts, in and out of the classroom.

Kaitlyn (Katy) Reed '22 admired Myshakina for her resilience.

"I knew she was going through a lot, but for her to just be able to show up and teach her classes while being there for her students no matter what she had going on was something that I looked up to," Reed said. "I really want to be that type of person when I get older and pursue my career."

Emily Shaffer '22 echoed that sentiment.

"She did her best with the circumstances that she was dealt," Shaffer said. "She explained to us what was going on, but she never really complained about it and was always able to push through."

Others also remember her as being hardworking.

"When I had COVID-19 during her class, she took the time out of her day to have an hour-long Zoom with me to talk about how I was feeling, what was probably going on in my body with the

*"When I had COVID-19 during her class, she took the time out of her day to have an hour-long Zoom with me..."*

*- Emerson Ducasse '22*

virus, which helped me learn more about biochemistry," said Emerson Ducasse '22.

"She described her workday to me one day," said Chatham professor Dr. Erin Williams-Hatala. "She would leave school to go home, where she would work on assignments and committee work until midnight and woke up at 4 a.m. to come to school since she had a long commute. She was so generous and diligent with her time."

While her classes maintained heavy course material, Myshakina always tried her best to keep her lectures light and funny.

"One of my favorite memories was in Chemistry I where we were learning about cations and anions," recalled Stephanie Spano '22.

"She was hysterical because she had a whole slide that was just full of cats, saying you would always remember cations were 'pawwwsitive,' and she thought it was the funniest thing, but it made it stick and I will always remember that."

Outside the classroom, Myshak-

*"One of my favorite memories was in Chemistry I... because she had a whole slide that was just full of cats..."*

*- Stephanie Spano '22*

ina was a devoted mother to her daughter, Anastasia, whom she would spend a lot of her time with. She also enjoyed art, knitting and was described as a "classical" person because she liked classical music and literature.

She was also an avid researcher, spending a lot of her time on her research around HIV reverse transcriptase and HIV-1, targeting HIV and looking for a drug that would treat it.

"She's a very prolific researcher, always including students in her research, which she was very adamant about," said Chatham chair of science, Dr. Robert Lettan. "In our department, she was a leader in productive scholars for sure."

*"When you lose this friend, you think about the way they made you feel, that emotion, and she definitely has that. Her smile and laugh were infectious, too."*

*- Dr. Robert Lettan*

*"She was so generous and diligent with her time."*

*- Dr. Erin Williams-Hatala*

Myshakina will be remembered by colleagues for her professionalism in and out of the classroom. She led by example, always ready to step up and help.

"When you lose this friend, you think about the way they made you feel, that emotion, and she definitely has that. Her smile and laugh were infectious, too," Lettan said. "But on the University side of things, we lost a really valuable member at the prime of her career in terms of the contributor and carrying on the ideals of the school."

A Chatham-based memorial service for Myshakina is currently in the planning stage, with both virtual and in-person options. More information will be sent out soon through email to the Chatham community.



## New offices in Eastside building will begin services in February

**COUNSELING, FROM PAGE 1**  
process of adding offices in Chatham University's Eastside building, among other updates, with the goal of beginning to offer appointments there, too, by mid-to-late February.

When the University returned to in-person classes during the fall 2021 semester, conveniences like virtual counseling appointments with the counseling center became more difficult as dorms returned to full capacity and the Woodland Hall office filled with new graduate trainees.

"Last year, we did a lot of telehealth for many obvious reasons, but one of the reasons that it was accessible was because we had de-densified the dorms and so almost no one had a roommate," said Dr. Jennifer Morse, executive director of counseling and wellness.

The de-densified dorms made it possible for students to have a counseling appointment from the comfort of their dorm. However, with more people back on campus, it's now difficult for students to find private spaces for telehealth appointments.

"We try to give students information on the single spaces at the [Jennie King Mellon] library, but you know, I do wish that we had a little bit more that we could consistently offer with that," Morse said.

With such limited space on the Shadyside campus, the counseling center had to consider expanding its offices to accommodate grow-

ing student needs – and a growing staff of psychologists and psychology graduate students.

"We have identified four offices in a closed suite in the Eastside building and are looking toward slowly but surely opening an extension of the counseling center there, so then we'll have much more space for trainees and a new staff member," Morse said.

The counseling center was able to acquire three of the four offices in Chatham's Eastside building and expects to provide counseling sessions there, starting at one day a week by some point next month.

During that time, an advanced trainee and a supervisor will be at the Eastside offices to provide support to students.

The fall 2021 resignation of part-time psychologist Dr. Perry Henschke also put some strain on the remaining staff. The counseling center hired Dr. Darla Timbo to fill the position as the new part-time psychologist.

Timbo will be working from the

Woodland office two days a week, up from the one day a week that Henschke was able to work.

While these changes are being implemented, Morse encourages students to take advantage of the 24-hour online peer-to-peer support network, TalkCampus, a downloadable app for students.

Another program offered is ThrivingCampus, an online database of providers for students to search for counselors in the area who can meet more specific needs. Students can access this database at [chatham.thrivingcampus.com](http://chatham.thrivingcampus.com).

Students in need of walk-in appointments are encouraged to wait if at first there is no one there to assist them. If they continue having to wait, they can ring the doorbell on the wall to notify office workers of their presence.

For more resources regarding mental health, go to the counseling center's [my.chatham.edu](http://my.chatham.edu) page or the counseling center tab in resources on the ChathamU app.

### In case of an emergency, contact one of the 24-hour mental health hotlines

**National Suicide Hotline:** Text "HOPELINE" to 741741

**National Suicide Prevention Lifeline:** 1-800-273-8255

**Trevor Lifeline (LGBTQIA+):** 1-866-488-7386

## POLICE BLOTTER

*All information is provided by Chatham University's Public Safety*

**6:50 p.m. Dec. 10** – Officers received a call that a student was possibly being followed by a car near the Art & Design Center. The area was checked and nothing was found. The student was escorted home by police.

**11:30 a.m. Dec. 11** – While an officer was parked and monitoring traffic in the Beatty Hall driveway, a large tree branch fell and hit the police car, causing minor damage.

**4:05 p.m. Dec. 11** – Officers received a call for a disturbance at Pelletreau Apartments. Upon arrival, officers spoke to a student who said he had an argument with his girlfriend who had left the scene before the officers arrived.

**9:13 a.m. Dec. 29** – Officers received information that a Chatham van was stuck in the mud at Eden Hall campus. A tow truck was called to remove the vehicle from the mud.

**8:30 p.m. Dec. 29** – Officers noticed a broken window on the side door of the Carriage House. The window was reported to Facilities and fixed.

**7:10 p.m. Jan. 18** – Officers were notified of an alarm going off in Rea House. Officers located the alarm and silenced it.

## *Grading contracts should be implemented in arts classes*

By Abigail Hakas

Grading is one of the most stressful parts of a student's time at college. Uncertainty about exams, essays and homework assignments plague all majors, but what about the arts classes? Art is – uniquely – objectively subjective, so grading is based on each teacher's personal discretion. This is where grading contracts should come into play.

***“Grading contracts outline exactly what must be done to receive a certain grade...”***

A grading contract is a written agreement that a student and professor make. Grading contracts outline exactly what must be done to receive a certain grade, and each student will “contract” the grade they want. This means students know exactly what is expected of them, and professors know exactly what the student wants out of the class. Grading contracts are based on labor rather than subjective quality of the art in question.

In some classes, this would take the form of extra projects or out-of-class work. In other classes, it might simply mean spending more time working on projects. The default grade in classes with grading contracts is a B, and the requirements to get a B remain open for classroom negotiation.

The benefits of grading contracts in art classes are numerous. It allows students to take risks with their art and explore new techniques, rather than sticking to what they know best. This is especially important in college-level art classes where students are deciding exactly what they want to focus on in their work.

Grading contracts also allow for individual negotiation and compromise. For example, a student may have done more assignments than needed for a B in the class, in which case the professor and student could discuss what it takes to get to an A-/A grade. These contracts emphasize the importance of student-teacher communication by encouraging open dialogues regarding grades.

Implementing grading contracts also allows for a change in the way feedback occurs. Most writing or art feedback explains where points were lost and why, which can cause frustration given the understanding that art is inherently subjective. Grading contracts mean that individual assignments are not graded by quality, but quality is still discussed. Instead of justifying grades, the focus of the feedback is the strengths and weaknesses of the art, and how the student can improve their work.

Another important reason why grading contracts should be used in arts classes is that students would not be penalized for coming into a class with no experience. With



Photo Credit: Unsplash.com

the current grading system, those with an educational background in traditional arts would have an advantage over those who have never been professionally trained. This is not conducive to fair and free learning.

Such contracts also encourage cross-disciplinary learning. Paint-

***“Encouraging practice instead of perfectionism allows students to produce more art...”***

ings can inspire pottery, which can inspire written works. Colleges should encourage this interdisciplinary exchange of students and ideas. Students may be less apprehensive about learning a new art if it were based not only on subjective quality but also on the effort and attention given to the work.

College is a time for exploration, and art should be accessible to all without anxiety over it lowering a GPA.

Some in the administration may be apprehensive about this shift in grading from quality of work to labor. However, skill in art comes from enduring practice. Encouraging practice instead of perfectionism allows students to produce more art – and, thus, increase their skill. Students learn through making mistakes; they should not be punished for learning.

### ***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).*



## NEW NCAA RULES

Updates made to COVID-19 requirements for athletes

By Haley Daugherty

With a new semester comes an abundance of fresh starts: new classes, new sports seasons and, of course, new COVID-19 restrictions. The National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) has released a list of new rules and restrictions for athletes competing this semester.

Last semester, many athletes found it beneficial to get vaccinated against the virus rather than remain unvaccinated – and run the risk of not being able to compete for extended periods of time. As of last semester, as long as athletes had full doses of any of the vaccines offered, they were considered fully vaccinated. That guideline has now changed.

According to the NCAA's official website, student-athletes are only considered fully vaccinated if they have tested positive for COVID-19 in the past 90 days, have received the Johnson and Johnson vaccine in the past two months, have received both doses of the Moderna or Pfizer vaccine in the past five months or if they have received a booster shot in addition to a full vaccination dose. Currently, there is no timeline attached to the booster shot requirement.

Any athlete whose vaccination status is outside of these specifications is considered unvaccinated and will be treated as such in cases of exposure or a positive test. Cha-

tham is adopting these protocols in order to cooperate with the new competition rules.

"There's a lot of negativity around the label 'unvaccinated.' People make it seem like you're purposely trying to kill others if you don't get vaccinated," said cross country runner Maxwell Heller '23. "But now, we have the vaccine but are still being labeled in a way that makes it seem like we don't care about what's going on. Meanwhile, some students just don't have access to the booster or just don't have time to get it and get sick from it."

According to the NCAA website, athletes who test positive for COVID-19 and are considered unvaccinated are required to "quarantine at home for five days with no participation in athletic activities, followed by masking for five additional days." After the 10th day, a negative PCR/NAAT test is required in order to compete again.

Athletes who test positive for COVID-19 and are considered fully vaccinated "do not need to quarantine but should wear a mask around others socially for 10 days when not actively training/competing," according to the NCAA.

"These new rules are redefining what vaccinated means," Heller said. "It felt like I was following the rules, but now there's a whole new set of requirements that we have to follow."



New signs in the Athletic and Fitness Center enforce social distancing by temporarily disabling machines. Photo Credit: Haley Daugherty

Chatham coaches at recent practices informed their athletes that, while Chatham University is not requiring students to get the booster, an increase in testing will likely result in students having to pay for future tests.

So far, Chatham has provided students with required tests free of charge. This includes entry testing, random selection testing, contact tracing and testing for athletes to compete. With free testing potentially no longer an option, students could face extra expenses.

"College students can't really afford to [pay for multiple COVID tests]. That cost adds up," Heller said. "It feels like a student will look at the situation and say, 'Well, now I have to get the booster

because I can't afford not to.' I understand where Chatham is coming from, but it just puts everyone in a tough spot."

Similar to a regular vaccine, students can find appointments to receive their COVID-19 boosters by booking with a local pharmacy or through vaccines.gov. Additionally, everyone is eligible to receive free COVID-19 tests from the government through covidtests.gov.

As of now, no major changes have occurred in the upcoming sports seasons. Chatham Athletics will update any new rules and regulations as the seasons progress. For more news regarding athletics or guidelines, visit gochathamcougars.com or ncaa.org.



# Hockey teams hope to make rink their permanent home

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big in their inaugural games.

The men currently play at Frozen Pond Arena, a short drive from the Eden Hall campus, but it is around a 40 minute shuttle ride every day.

The women play at Pittsburgh Ice Arena, about a 30-minute ride from the Shadyside campus.

The opening of the Hunt Armory ice rink has allowed both teams to practice with a much shorter commute time.

Both teams were allowed to play their recent games at the armory. The men's team played on Jan. 14, and the women's team played on Jan. 21. They hope to make the move to the armory permanently if possible in the future.

The men found themselves down by one goal after the first period, but a scoring spree in the second

frame gave them the lead and they never looked back. They walked away from their contest with a 4-1 win.

The women's game saw them down by two goals after the first 20 minutes of play. A big three-goal second period also gave them the lead that carried them the rest of the game. They ended up with a final score of 5-3.

Women's head coach Mike O'Grady believed the atmosphere of the rink helped bring back his team.

"It's awesome. It was a team win," O'Grady said. "The location of this place is amazing."

Abi Fuzaylov '24 believes having closer access to a rink will bring more students together.

"It was amazing, we had fans," Fuzaylov said. "It's definitely a nice atmosphere."

Crowd numbers had to be limited with both games due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Even with shortened numbers, though, the Cougar faithful made their presence known.

## A work in progress

Senior Vice President of Facilities for the Pittsburgh Penguins Rich Hixon has been crucial in the opening of the rink. In an interview with the *Communiqué*, Hixon went into the process of opening the Hunt Armory ice rink.

The Hunt Armory is the "first indoor sheet of ice in the city of Pittsburgh in the last 20-plus years," Hixon said.

There are still some hurdles left to make the rink a full-time operation.

"We have been looking at a more permanent type of rink with the city," Hixon said. "For a whole host of reasons, we have not been able to bring that to fruition. We are hopeful this brings some momentum and excitement around it and maybe down the line we can create a year-round venue."

He hopes that with time and support from the city, Chatham hockey can find a permanent home at the armory. With both teams' contracts at their current rinks expiring soon, they are hoping to be able to stay at the armory.

Besides the rink being seasonal, the rink would also need to install locker rooms. Currently, teams are getting dressed in party tents. These tents sit inside the current



Chatham fans in attendance during the men's hockey game on Jan. 14. Photo Credit: Liam Lyons for Chatham Athletics

facility, but lack the basic needs of the teams' normal locker rooms. They normally shower after they play, but are unable to due to these tents in use.

A shorter distance not only helps the hockey teams but also other Chatham students who want to go and support their games.

The Hunt Armory opening is not just for the athletes to use. The rink is open to the public from 7-9 p.m. Fridays and 2-4 p.m. and 7-9 p.m. Saturdays. On Sundays, it's open from 2-4 p.m. Tickets must be purchased in advance and cost \$7. If students are looking to rent skates, it will cost them an additional \$3 fee.

The rink is currently seasonal, so it will only be in operation until March 1. The Cougar hockey teams each have one game left to play at the Hunt Armory. The women face Stevenson on Feb. 4, while the men are scheduled to play Arcadia on Feb. 11.



The Hunt Armory ice rink is located at 324 Emerson St., Shadyside. Students can catch a bus or walk to the new rink from Chatham's campus. Photo Credit: Liam Lyons for Chatham Athletics

## Beyond Ramen

*A series on the experience of eating as a college student.  
In this installment, students recall a food memory made at Chatham.*

By Charlotte Larson

If I were to imagine a pie chart of how I spent my time outside of class this past fall, it would look something like this: 5% reading a book that I started way back in June, 5% talking to my dog over FaceTime, 10% walking or taking the bus to run errands, 15% excessively cleaning our apartment (a.k.a. positive procrastination), 20% with friends and 45% thinking about or eating food.

In reality, these estimations are probably far from the truth. Ironically, I'm too embarrassed to admit exactly how much time I spent watching "Shameless," but you get the idea. The majority of my day was dedicated to planning when I could squeeze in a meal between classes, cooking that meal and, more than once, burning that meal.

When I wasn't making a mess in our tiny kitchen, I was talking to peers about their eating experiences on campus.

For Leah Whitacre '23, meals are an important communal moment. As an Orchard Hall resident at Chatham's Eden Hall campus, they share their food with a close-knit group of neighbors nearly every day. The only option for Eden Hall dwellers is a campus-specific meal plan that allows unlimited meals. The catch, Whitacre said, is that Eden Hall dining hours are more



restricted. Offerings are improving, though, and frequently include food grown on the campus, but that often still leaves students — especially those with dietary restrictions — in need of more options.

Whitacre noted an enforced policy that prevents students from taking second helpings in a to-go box — something they have done in the past to cope with dinner ending at 7 p.m.

Whitacre has noticed internal issues within dining services, such as training new hires and making sure there are enough staff members to cover already limited shifts, that they hope are resolved soon.

At the moment, there is only one full kitchen at Orchard Hall. It was technically not designed to be communal, but residents have been allowed access through an unoccupied room.

Whitacre does not usually feel comfortable in a communal kitchen, nor does it make financial sense to buy ingredients when they are required to be on a meal plan, even though they do enjoy preparing food. As it stands now, they are opting to deal with the inconsistencies of campus dining, keeping quick snacks in their dorm room and making emergency runs to the nearby GetGo for any supplements.

**READ THE REST  
OF THIS STORY  
ON OUR  
WEBSITE**

*Visit [chathamcommunique.com](http://chathamcommunique.com) or scan the QR code to read the full story on the intersection of student life and food.*

*Hear from Sam Jocuns '23, Sara Parker '25 and Ryley Casaday '25 on eating in college.*

*Interested in reading more stories? Check out the first installment of *Beyond Ramen* and much more!*





## ‘Love, Loss and Addiction,’ a photo series

By Madalena Filosemi

“Love, Loss and Addiction” is a large-scale photorealistic painting series by visual artist Sarah Jewels-Plesset, who graduated from Chatham University with a Bachelor of Arts degree in visual arts in 2020.

Jewels-Plesset created this series to depict the experience of those who have gone through the process of losing someone to opioid addiction.

Go to [chathamcommunique.com](http://chathamcommunique.com) to see more photos from the series. View other artwork on Instagram @SarahJewelss.



“Grief (a self-portrait)” is an acrylic and oil painting done on canvas. The painting depicts an overlapped image of a woman screaming and crying by Sarah Jewels-Plesset ‘20.

## Join our new media group

*The Communique has started a new media group focused on producing videos, podcasts and other creative media to tell important stories.*

*Do you want to join the staff? Please email [alice.crow@chatham.edu](mailto:alice.crow@chatham.edu) to contribute.*

## Story tips?

*The Communique is always looking for story ideas!*

*Send your story tips and questions to [Communique@chatham.edu](mailto:Communique@chatham.edu) or [Alice.crow@chatham.edu](mailto:Alice.crow@chatham.edu)*



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The Communique 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](mailto:abbey.sullivan@chatham.edu)).

### Corrections

The Communique 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](mailto:alice.crow@chatham.edu)) or ([communique@chatham.edu](mailto:communique@chatham.edu)).