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Students Return to a **Socially Distanced Campus**

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Reintroducing the MSA Club



This summer a group of students have come together to reestablish the Muslim Student Association (MSA) Club. pg 5

Theatre Classes Take on Social Distancing



Preceding the first day of classes at LIU, professors began the arduous process of integrating social distancing measures in their classrooms.

New Sports Teams Join The Campus



Long Island University has announced two new athletic programs to be added to campus.

Students Speak Out About Black Lives Matter

BY EMMA ROBINSON

NEWS EDITOR

As the death of George Floyd, a man who was pushed down to the ground under an officer's knee as he said "I can't breathe," was broadcast over the national news, the social climate of the United States changed.

More people began to acknowledge the blatant racism and prejudice that people of color face in all aspects of their lives. The protests, educative nature and petitions in support of the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement became a focal point of media outlets news coverage this summer.

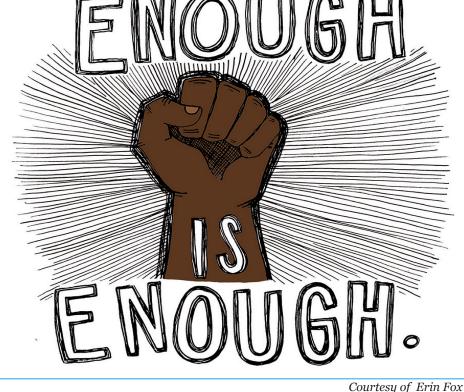
"I've always been aware of my heritage and being different from the majority of people I know," sophomore arts management major Evelin Figueroa-Ballester said. 'But the first instance I remember was this one time in third grade where I met a student who had just immigrated to the U.S. from Cuba. I was so excited to meet them and we were speaking Spanish. Everyone on the bus screamed and laughed at us. They could not believe we were speaking 'Mexican'."

Figueroa-Ballester said that she feels desensitized to a lot of the microaggressions she experiences because of her mixed race.

"I've experienced different acts at different severities all throughout my life, of course I notice things but I don't actively try to think about them all the time," she

DeVonna Brockman, a sophomore film major at Rutgers University and former LIU student, was deeply affected by the acts of violence that occured over the summer.

"It's absolutely devastating and frustrating, to say the least, seeing Black people get killed at the hands of the police," Brockman said. "It's



me, my older brother, my cousins and my parents lose their lives unjustifiably. I believe Floyd's death made so many people of all races think about how Black people are being discriminated against and what can be done about it."

Seeing the widespread support of the Black Lives Matter movement has been uplifting for Figueroa-Ballester.

"It was very nice to see the community come together and take a stand against injustice," Figueroa-Ballester said. "It's a whole other ball game to see people protest and stand up against racism. Even though I couldn't be [at protests] physically, it felt great to be witness to an intergenerational and intersectional fight against injustice."

Brockman said that as she mourned the losses of Breonna Taylor, George Floyd, and many more people of color who have died as a result of police brutality, she began to think of more things

she could do to support the BLM

movement. "I decided to make and sell Black Lives Matter shirts and have been selling them ever since," she said. "All the proceeds from the shirts are donated to multiple causes that benefit the advancement of and support Black people and communities.'

As the movement progressed, so did the divide between residents of the United States. A fundamental idea that many members of the BLM support is to "defund the police," meaning to reinvest a portion of the money that police departments receive into communities.

"The police force evolved from the slave patrol, which was specifically made for disciplining Black people," Brockman said. "Because police training has these discriminatory roots, there needs to be a reform. Officers are given too much control and they're misusing it; their first instinct shouldn't be to pull out their gun before their

continued on page 2

pg 11

Students Speak Out About Black Lives Matter

continued from page 1

taser, and they shouldn't pull someone over simply because they're Black. The police need to be re-trained, re-equipped, and thoroughly investigated. Part of their job is to ensure safety and there's no way for them to effectively do that until things change."

In an interview for CNN, Patrisse Cullors, co-founder of the BLM movement, said that the money could also go towards funding schools, hospitals, and housing in communities that have been marginalized.

"I'm an optimist about the whole situation," Figueroa-Ballester said. "It doesn't mean I'm not exhausted but I'm doing my part. There needs to be change, but there also needs to be less performative action and more movement. People in charge of schools and corporations and all that need to make the effort."

As she spoke about the amount of students she saw post about BLM, Figueroa-Ballester expressed her concern with the people who would simply share something and not take action.

"So many people go to the Black fraternity and sorority parties on campus. They seem to love our culture and share that on social media. They seem supportive of us. But then when it comes to attending clubs like Black Student Union or supporting people of color at events; no one shows up," she said.

With the intensity and prominence of racism in the United States, LIU has made different efforts to support students with diverse

backgrounds. Race and LGBTQ+ identity mixers have been presented for students to attend on Zoom, but Figueroa-Ballester believes that it's not enough.

"It's a problem that Promise can't solve on their own," she said. "It's uncomfortable walking into some of my classes and being the only Black person. I feel like I have to be the spokesperson for all Black people sometimes, which isn't fair because we all have different experiences and it's not my job to educate others."

Figuera-Ballester believes that while some of the meetings Promise has held on Zoom have been helpful, she wants more action from University President Kimberly Cline.

"A step in the right direction would be working towards making this school the first choice for people of color," she said. "I think that having more diversity scholarships like LIU Brooklyn has could help."

Figueroa-Ballester also thinks events like the mixers can be polarizing if not accompanied by events for understanding the struggles of people of color.

"I don't want to feel isolated from other people at school. I just want to feel more comfortable and understood," she said.

Brockman believes that all schools could benefit from having a mandatory class like Post 101 for learning about different races, racism, discrimination, oppression, inclusivity and understanding.

"Some people don't know or realize that they're being racist, which is understandable, but nothing is really being done about it and that's a problem," Brockman said.

On Saturday, Sept. 26 Figuera-Ballester will be attending a rally in support of Black women from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m at the Hicksville LIRR station, where attendees will march to the gate of SUNY Old Westbury. Students interested in attending can email annelaforest?@gmail.com for more information.

"Change starts with action," Figuera-Ballester said. "Anyone who wants to go should go."



Courtsey of DeVonna Brockman

DeVonna Brockman wearing one of her custom made shirts

HEALTH

Students Make Decisions About On Campus Learning



BY DYLAN VALIC

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

As students prepared for a new semester

many were forced to make a difficult decision, whether they would return to campus for classes or if they would attend classes virtually.

Students who don't wish to return to campus can attend classes virtually, according to the university's student reopening FAQ.

Students who did decide to return to campus did so for a variety of reasons. Freshman accounting major Maria Pochi came to campus because she felt that she would have a harder time focusing if she had taken online classes.

Sophomore musical theatre major Alia Gonzalez decided to return to campus because her major revolves around in person interaction. "With our coursework it's almost impossible to do it online over Zoom because we're acting with other people, with Zoom you lose that personal connection that you get in person, and that's why I chose to go back."

Gonzalez was worried about returning to campus and being exposed to the virus, but said that the decision to come back was still an easy one to make. "I knew I had to be here in order to do the best work I can put forward," she said.

Freshman digital arts and design major Ana Graciela Scott decided to attend her first semester of classes in person in order to experience college life. Scott had her mother's support when she decided to attend classes physically.

"My mother backed me up and she supported me," Scott said. "She said that she also wanted me to experience that because there may be a time where I never get to."

Not every student chose to return to campus. Some students, such as senior broadcasting major Jada Harrison, chose to remain home so they can mitigate the risk of spreading COVID-19 to their family members.

Senior businesses management major Jacqueline Duncan decided to stay home when she noticed that all of her friends were attending virtual classes. "This way, I'm less likely to expose my family and I can still see my home and LIU pals safely," she said.

A letter from the Editor



Dylan Valic Dylan Valic

Welcome back to campus. It's been a long time since we last published a print edition of The Pioneer back in March. Even though a lot has changed since then, one thing will always remain the same, our passion for providing our readers with accurate and up to date news relating to our campus.

In pursuit of this goal The Pioneer has added several exciting additions to the paper this semester. The newly added Health section will be covering the COVID-19 pandemic, both locally and nationally, as well as other topics related to the health of the student body and living a healthy lifestyle.

The Personal Essays section will be a special section dedicated to sharing writing submitted by students about their life experiences and topics they are passionate about. For this issue we have partnered with Herstory Writers Workshop to publish stories from the "Black Student Stories for Our Time" workshop that was hosted in conjunction with LIU over the summer. All students are welcome to submit writing that they would like to be featured in the section in upcoming issues.

As Editor-in-Chief I consider it my responsibility to ensure that The Pioneer continues to cover content that is important to the students and faculty of this university. It was impossible to cover everything that the Editorial Board and I would have liked to cover in just one issue, but we promise to leave no stone unturned and report on a wide variety of topics throughout the semester.

As always we encourage anyone wishing to leave us feedback or suggestions to contact us through email or on social media.

Sincerely, your Editor-in-Chief,

Dylan Valic

Dylan Valic

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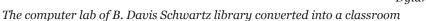
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THE PIONEER **NEWS**

Students Return to a Socially Distanced Campus



Dylan Valic





Dylan Valic

Protective screens put inbewteen computers in Kahn Hall room 200

BY DYLAN VALIC

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

After nearly seven months of virtual learning, students were able to return to campus for the start of the fall 2020 semester.

New safety precautions have been implemented to ensure that students can return to campus, while mitigating the chances of spreading COVID-19. Areas on campus such as Hillwood Commons and the B. Davis Schwartz Memorial Library have seen substantial changes in their appearance and operating capacity.

Hillwood Commons, an area known for being a popular social spot on campus, has new limitations in place. A maximum of two students are allowed at a table at one time. This has been accompanied with protective screens at all food stations in order to prevent students and faculty from interacting face to face.

The library's computer area has been removed, and made into a makeshift classroom. Students who need to print out materials can do so in the Career Bar on the second floor of Hillwood Commons, which features the same amenities as the original computer area.

These renovations have been accompanied by campus wide changes, such as all students being required to wear face coverings when it is not possible to social distance and requiring that anyone who enters campus complete an online "COVID-19 Self-Check," according to the student reopening FAQ.

The university's reopening plan was created to ensure the safety of the campus community, according to Executive Dean of Students Michael Berthel.

"The University has worked closely with

local health officials to develop a reopening plan that exceeds CDC and state guidelines," Berthel said. "Many measures have been put into place throughout campus that are designed to promote social distancing and allow students to freely move around campus in a safe and healthy way. Some of this include, floor and wall signage, additional hand sanitizers and touchless fixtures, removal of furniture and social distancing of spaces, and enhanced cleaning.

Some students, such as freshman health sciences major Victor Nelson, have found the transition to a new style of campus initially jarring

"It's definitely weird coming from a different school and going to a whole other state, and having to go to school among a lot of people with masks on, but I think I'm kind of adapting to it," Nelson said.

Other students, such as sophomore acting major Nick Humphries, have been able to find educational opportunities within the new restrictions.

"As somebody who is looking into being an artist it's good to work through times where everything is turbulent and being tossed around and situations are fluid," he said.

"Because it helps you be ready for any situation that could arise, so that you'll always be in the moment and be prepared."

Berthel believes that it is the responsibility of every member of the campus community to help keep the campus safe.

"Each of us will have a personal responsibility to ourselves and our community members to protect each other and keep LIU healthy. We're counting on everyone to step up and be part of

the solution," Berthel said. "I am confident that if everyone follows the social distancing guidelines and cares about one another that we will have a successful semester on campus."

Students wanting to learn more about the campus's new guidelines and restrictions can visit https://liu.edu/reopening-liu/studentfags for more information.



Dylan Valic

A hand sanitizing station in Hillwood Commons

Reintroducing the MSA Club

BY JILLIAN MEHTA

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT EDITOR

This summer a group of students have come together to reestablish the Muslim Student Association (MSA) Club. The club is finalizing the last steps to fully be established and will be a fun and educational environment for all students willing to listen and learn.

The group really wanted to diversify the campus and create more representation according to Co-President and sophomore biology major Freshah Sarwari.

"We all wanted to raise awareness about Islam, that was our main goal because there is a lot of misconceptions these days and media coverage that isn't the best to hear. I think that having MSA can teach others that your Muslim peers are doing great things so we're spreading a positive message," Sarwari said. "It's not something that might be shown in the media [but] if you have real life interactions and you have muslim peers that are making a difference it kind of changes your perspective if you have a negative one."

Honyah Dutt, sophomore biology major and Co-President of MSA, explained that the club's goal is to address misconceptions about Islam.

"Basically our goal is to create a sense of comfort and to help other peple understand [that] there is a big misconception of Islam in general. We also have main goals to raise awareness for other countries that are in need," Dutt said. "There are a lot of countries like Yemen and Afghanistan that are going through a lot of crisis right now so our goal is to raise a lot of money for those counties as well as help people realize that it isn't just America that is

going through something and other counties are in need."

Co-Presidents Dutt and Sarwari also wanted to create a sense of unity between the Muslims on campus.



"One thing I've seen in a lot of Muslim households is that a lot of them are hospitable, I think that its important to have that kind of community because it feels like home. I think that's especially important for college freshmen because college is a new place for them and it's scary. As a freshman,it was a frightening feeling [being in] a new environment, you don't know a lot of people and it's so different from high school. So I think that having a safe space where you can feel at home and comfortable is a really nice way to start the year and I feel like creating an MSA is our way of doing that."

Treasurer and freshman accounting major Maria Pochi agreed that Dutt and Sarwari

helped make her transitions to college a lot smoother.

"Honyah and Freshtah did a good job of giving us an insight of what college really felt like," Pochi said. "Meanwhile I got lost on the way to one of my classes so like they really guided me and seeing a familiar face on the first day really felt really good. It's a good support group in a way."

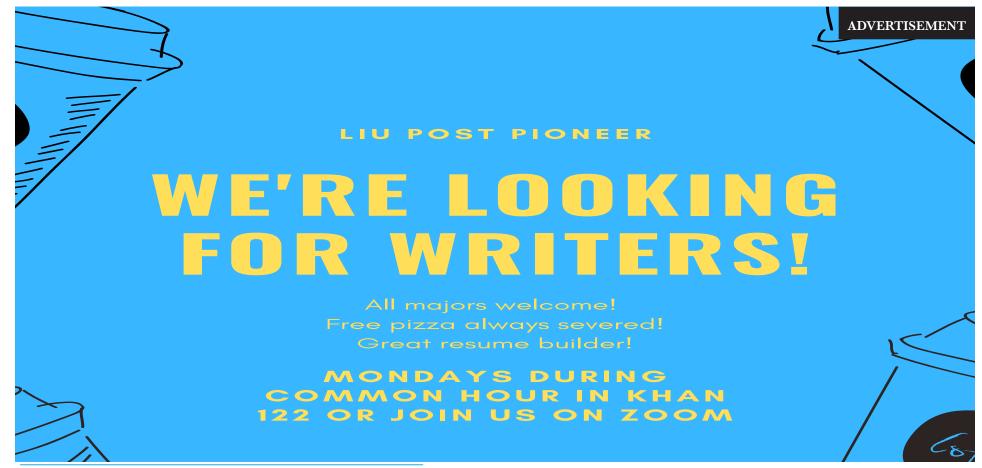
Nabeena Faruque, Secretary and freshman nursing major, agreed. "It's a really good support group if I need help in any way," she said. "I could always go to Honyah and Frehstah and they would always guide me in any way."

Dutt and Sarwari both want to create this safe environment for any students interested.

"We're not just specifying we want to be there for Muslims in general we want to be there for everyone too, we want to create a homey environment while creating an understanding and helping people learn," Dutt said.

The e-board members all encourage anyone wanting to join, Sarwari said, "We would definitely love to have you join. We always encourage an environment where people are willing to learn, in Islam we are always encouraged to learn more about each other despite difference," Sarwari said. "I think in today's world there are so many people that don't feel at home practicing their own religions or don't even feel comfortable in their skin colors and ethnicities so it's really important to understand that beyond all our differences we are all human and we all want to make a difference in life and we all have a purpose in life."

Any students interested in joining the MSA club should contact Freshtah Sarwari at post-msa@my.liu.edu.



New Fraternity Joins Campus

BY JILLIAN MEHTA

ARTS AND ENTERTAINMENT EDITOR

Phi Delta Theta will be the 12th greek organization to join the campus this fall. The fraternity hopes to distinguish themselves by creating a newer definition of what it means to be a fraternity man at the Post campus.

Phi Delta Theta was founded at Miami University in Oxford, Ohio in 1848 and has grown tremendously since then. The organization now has 191 chapters and colonies between the United States and Canada, with seven active in New York state.

The fraternity's three cardinal principles are friendship, sound learning and rectitude. These three principles support strong friendships between members, education, and having high moral standards.

The fraternities philanthropic cause is raising money for ALS, also known as Lou Gerig disease, a nervous system

disease that weakens muscles. The fraternity has a special tie to its philanthropy because Lou Gerhig was a member of Phi Delta Theta. The baseball legend went to Columbia University in 1921 where he joined the fraternity.

Gregory Rush, an expansion consultant and member of Phi Delta Theta, explained the opportunity new members will have this fall.

"The beauty in the expansion process is that you get a chance to build the visions and the goals of the frat from the ground up, as you would like to see at LIU," Rush said. "It's one of those things where the individuals we recruit and the individuals we talk to in the fall, they get the opportunity to really build the organization how they would like to see it so any events they would like to see those are things they can put their energy towards."

Rush also encouraged anyone who might be interested to consider joining Phi Delta Theta. "I'm a first generation college graduate and first generation fraternity man, I didn't see the value of greek life before I met Phi Delta at my campus," he said. "I was initially hesitant because I wasn't the 'fraternity type,' whatever that means, but once I joined I found myself in so many leadership roles and things."

Rush encourages others to not limit their thinking like he did, and to take a chance and try something new. "I would wholeheartedly encourage someone to reach out to myself or someone we've been talking to at the university because I think me telling myself that I wasn't the fraternity type really limited my ability to see everything for what it was."

Any students interested in joining Phi Delta Theta should contact Gregory Rush at grush@phideltatheta.org or attend the organizations virtual Involvement Fair Zoom meeting on Thursday, Sept. 17 at 1



Courtesy of Phi Delta Theta



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No Control Improv Group Looks for New Members



Courtesy of No Control Improv The No Control Improv Group at their annual Halloween show

BY DYLAN VALIC

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

No Control Improv will be hosting auditions for its first show on Saturday, Sept. 19. Students will be auditioning for a permanent spot in the group, as well as a spot in the "Welcome Back Show" that will be hosted next month. Students of any major are welcome to audition.

Students auditioning will be asked to participate in several improv acting games such as "Pan Left, Pan Right," "Good, Bad, Very Bad" and "Hollywood Director." Callbacks will take place on Sunday, Sept. 20, followed by interviews that night.

Students who are selected to join the group won't have to re-audition for any future shows. This is done so the group won't have to worry about auditions and can focus on bonding and having a good time, according to junior musical theatre major Jordan Horne.

"Our troop is very much like a family and we're a really close knit group," Horne said. "Which is another reason why we don't want to make people feel like they have to re-audition, because they should be able to feel like they can relax and have a really good time in rehearsal, and just focus on doing what they need to do.

The group is looking for students who will be a good fit for the group as a whole, and not just who would work well in whatever performance they are planning to put on, according to junior acting major Steele Whitney.

"We are taking it very seriously to make sure they are a good fit and [that] they maybe saw the weakness that we have as a troop, or they bring something new into the environment," Whitney said.

No Control Improv's first show will consist of a full day of performances, where members will play several improv games for the audience's enjoyment. All performances will take place outside, in front of a socially distantanced audience. The tentative date for the performance is Sunday, Oct. 4, followed by a special Halloween themed performance on Sunday, Oct. 25. All dates are subject to change.

Any students interested in auditing or wanting to get more information about No Control Improv can visit their Instagram page @nocontrolimprov.



Courtesy of No Control Improv Fr. left, Steele Whitney and Jordan Horne

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Theatre Classes Take on Social Distancing



Courtsey of Kamerann Barney

BY EMMA ROBINSON

NEWS EDITOR

Preceding the first day of classes at LIU, professors began the arduous process of integrating social distancing measures in their classrooms. That process was especially difficult for the Post Theatre Company, whose classes often have a large number of students in attendance and whose rehearsal spaces are generally not large enough for students to act, sing and dance an acceptable distance apart.

In order to maintain safety for the musical theatre program, the classes that are at the highest risk for viral transmission will be taking place online this semester.

"For me, that's voice and speech as well as voice lessons because in those situations, the virus can travel up to 20 feet instead of the standard six," Kamerann Burney, a sophomore musical theatre major, said. "We avoid [possibly spreading the coronavirus] by making [those classes] a Zoom University experience."

Burney said that she and her classmates feel extremely uncomfortable wearing masks in order to attend their dance classes. Some of the dance classes have been moved to the gym to allow more space for the students to spread apart, but face coverings are still required.

"If [wearing a mask] is what it takes for us to be working in a studio, we are all more than happy to do it," Burney said. "We will not compromise our health or our education, and masks are a means of accomplishing that."

While students were aware of the unique challenges presented to the program because of the coronavirus, some opted to take all of their theatre classes online via Zoom or simply take a gap year.



Emma Robinson

BrayLynn Willis

BrayLynn Willis, a sophomore musical theatre major, is one student who considered taking a gap year.

"Ultimately, I decided not to take a gap year because I felt that I had finally found my place in the department," Willis said. "I've come to know and love working with the people in my program. If I took a gap year, I wouldn't be graduating with my friends and I'd have to make all new connections with a new group of people."

The theatre faculty members send out emails and create online meetings to constantly keep the students informed.

"It's almost like the updates physically can't come fast enough because of how fluid the situation is, but we're all very connected and very candid with each other. We help each other through this," Burney said.

While the students attend classes and prepare performances in such an uncertain environment, it is an ongoing conversation in the department on how the shows will be viewed by audience attendees.

Currently, students and faculty plan on prerecording shows on Zoom and posting them online for students to watch.

This past week, the showcase for students who were freshman last year was cancelled by a student vote.

"Between the stresses of starting a new school year during a pandemic, and the awful Wi-Fi problems we've been experiencing, the students and faculty agreed [the] showcase was too much of a burden to put on," Willis said. "We held one rehearsal and there were multiple people who couldn't stay connected to the Zoom for longer than a minute. What we were capable of performing under the circumstances wasn't the kind of art we wanted to put out there."

Announcements for upcoming shows will be posted to the theatre company's Instagram handle @ptcliupost.

Despite the stressful and changing nature of how the program will best adapt to social distancing, while maintaining a solid foundation for learning, the students try to keep a positive outlook on their education.

"Nothing is the way it should be," Burney said. "So it is difficult to pinpoint [the biggest change in the program], and I feel everyone on campus can relate. I don't love that this is our new normal, but again, I have to accept it just like the rest of us."

Burney and Willis both report the amount of support they feel from their classmates as well as the theatre faculty helps them stay grounded.

"At this point, we're all facing problems head on and I take pride in the fact that our department is committed to creating the best work we can, in spite of those problems," Willis said.



Sudoku

1 6 7 5 5 8 1 5 8 9 4 8 9 5 2 9 4 1 8 3 2 1 7 8 5 1

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Food and nutrition

D	W	Ε	L	S	М	S	Ε	D	Т	S	D	F	Υ
I	Α	W	Α	T	Ε	C	X	Ι	В	Ε	R	Ε	T
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New Sports Teams Join The Campus

BY ANDREW SCARPACI

SPORTS EDITOR

Long Island University has announced two new athletic programs to be added to campus. Men's Ice Hockey and Men's Swimming are the newest teams to join the campus's roster of 30 sports.

According to Athletic Director Dr. Bill Martinov, these two programs are just the tip of the iceberg for the expansion of LIUs athletic department. "We have a master plan for athletics that has included these three sports being added this current year," he said. "We have had 10 new sports added in the past six years as part of our growth plan for the future."

With many paths to go through, Martinov believed recruitment would be the answer to get these teams ready to go as soon as possible. "Understanding the great opportunity to recruit exceptional student-athletes for these sports was and always will be imperative to considering new sport program opportunities," he said. "We strive to maintain a quality student-athlete experience, so understanding the recruitment opportunities, the support programs and services we have and, more importantly, the quality education that our student-athletes receive is ultra-important."

According to Martinov, the programs plan

to recruit the best students possible to ensure they start off their first seasons strong. "As with all of our programs, we are looking across the nation and globe to bring the best and brightest talent student-athletes to the LIU community as possible," he said. "We're already recruiting through various venues such as our online website questionnaire, direct outreach from prospective student-athletes who saw our announcement, as well as our coaches having a thorough understanding of the prospective student-athlete talent landscape."

Brett Riley has been named head coach of the Men's Ice Hockey Program, and head coach of the Women's Swimming team, Matthew Donovan, will be at the helm of the Men's program as well. Dr. Martnov could not be more pleased with the selection of head coaches by the athletic department.

"We look for exceptional coaches who have great energy, positive attitudes, and can recruit exceptional student-athletes," he said. "We pride ourselves in our culture of student success at LIU, and believe that by being enthusiastic about the many great opportunities to grow at LIU, we'll find the right staff."

As the programs develop, Martinov hopes to increase the competitiveness of the teams. "Our teams will be prepared to compete right away. Furthermore, as we recruit future incom-

ing classes, we will develop more depth and more competitive nature within our programs," Martinov said. "This usually leads to developing your best, most competitive team possible. Ultimately, we want people to want to be at LIU because then it works for everyone, especially our student-athletes, our staff, and our coaches."

According to Martinov, Ice Hockey will be independent of any specific conference until one is picked for the 2021-2022 school year, and will study at the Post campus. Swimming will be studying at the Brooklyn campus and will be competing in the NEC and against other local Division I schools.



Athletes Plan for a Semester Without Sports



Courtesy of Tierra Gillett

BY CHANEL LUBSEY

PHOTO EDITOR

The NCAA has suspended all sports teams

from participating in competition and has installed guidelines towards regulated practices. With sports seasons being cancelled or delayed some student athletes have been investing their time in other activities.

"Now that sports are cancelled I'm mostly learning investing so I can save money and build my credit. That was something I did not have much time for before," Junior business management administration major Tierra Gillett said.

Other students have found this time to be useful to use towards academics. "During a semester, a great majority of my time and attention is devoted to rugby," senior criminal justice major Sydney Long, said. "With the limited hours allotted to sports now, my semester has been opened to a plethora of academic and personal improvement opportunities."

The sudden change in routine has been a hard thing for some athletes to adapt to. "Now that sports are cancelled, my world has been thrown into a whirlwind," Long said.

Even with sports seasons being placed on hold, some student athletes have kept a positive outlook towards the future.

"Not only do I get to focus greater on my studies, but I also get to work on bettering my individual athletic ability to give to my team once sports are back in session," Long said.

Despite sports being canceled for the fore-

seeable future, some student athletes have been using their extra freetime to prepare for when they will be able to play again. "I'll definitely be doing a lot more fitness and skill work to get back in shape so I can do great for my team when we can play again," Gillett said.



The Outcast



Courtsey of Imani Newman

BY IMANI NEWMAN

CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Editor's Note: The Personal Essays section of the paper is one that invites students to share their personal experiences and thoughts about subjects they are passionate about. The author is not affiliated with The Pioneer, but has given us permission to publish their work.

I would like to congratulate the Oceanside Senior High School class of 2013. This is a great achievement and I know you all will go off and do great things. At this time, we would like to call the names of each of our seniors and the colleges they will be attending. Alexendra Austin: Faulkner University, Sarah Brooks: Fairmont State University, Joshua Baledi: South Dakota State University, Sean Ferry: Lincoln Memorial University, Imani Newman: Morgan State University and then the list of predominately white institutions continued.

As one of the eight African American students in the entire school and the only black girl in my senior class seeing the name of only one Historically black college/university on the college list did not come as a surprise to me. This was the norm. Offering little to no knowledge on the history and the importance of HBCU's, or even black culture for that matter, the students were ignorant to anything other

than the predominately white institutions that were plastered on the college flags that hung around the school.

But let's back track, how did I even end up here? A predominately white high school who's only form of recognition for African American culture was creating an African American Culture Club so that the eight black students who attended the school could feel a sense of belonging. Growing up in public housing for low income families where everyone on our block knew each other, I never imagined sitting front row in a classroom full of white students who saw me not as a classmate but an outsider, an intruder someone who didn't belong in their world, in their space and especially not their school house. A black girl receiving the same top-quality education as the white students was still a very outrageous concept for them to understand even in the 21st century.

Going to school was never an easy task but the first days of each year, all the way up until my senior year was always the hardest, the most awkward and the most telling. If I was able to make it through each class without the uncomfortable stares of my classmates as I introduced myself, I knew it would be a good year, well at least that's what I wanted to believe. However, that was never the case, every year it was as followed, "Welcome back! Hope you all had a great summer, my name is

Mr. Hobson. We're going to take this time to go around the room and introduce ourselves. Please tell us your name, one hobby and one interesting fact." It wasn't the most interesting introductory ice breaker for a group of 14-year olds who had just entered high school but it was as if it was a part of the curriculum, every year, every class, "Hi, my name is Imani Newman, I enjoy cheerleading and running track and an interesting fact about me is that I aspire to become an entertainment lawyer". That was my intro, very well thought out, my name, my hobbies and interesting fact that shocked the entire room. An interesting fact that contradicted their stereotypical beliefs. I said the same thing for eight classes, filled with 18 students each, 36 eyeballs resulting in a total of 288 eyes that stared me down as if they had saw something that was completely out of ordinary. It was a sense of uneasiness every time I spoke.

Being the only black student in the class was no longer the problem, the problem now was that a black girl was in their school with bigger goals then they had intended for me.