

# THE PIONEER

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## Governor Cuomo Signs Solitary Confinement Bill



Gov. Andrew Cuomo signed a bill that no longer allows long term solitary confinement in New York jails on Thursday, April 1. Cuomo signed the Halt Solitary Confinement Act into law

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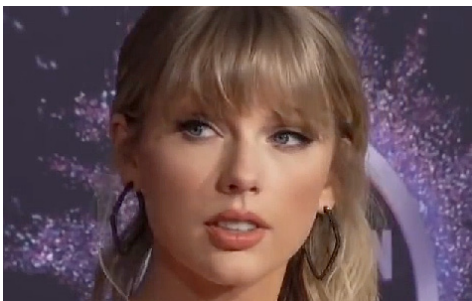
## New York Introduces COVID-19 Passport App "Excelsior Pass"



New York has become the first state to introduce a "covid passport" system. Covid passports are apps that verify the vaccination status of an individual.

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## Taylor Swift is Fearless



The time has finally come for Swifties, "Fearless (Taylor's Version)" has dropped, featuring 27 tracks. Many songs were on the original "Fearless" album, and others

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## LIU Women's Volleyball Makes NCAA Tournament



Volleyball has made postseason competition and will be taking on the 18 Seed University of Pittsburgh Panthers in the first round of the NCAA tournament.

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## New York Legalizes Recreational Marijuana Use



BY JADA HARRISON

STAFF WRITER

New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo signed a bill legalizing the recreational use of marijuana on Wednesday March 31. After years of failed attempts at ending the widespread use of drugs, New York is expected to be one of the largest legal cannabis markets in the country.

State legislators passed the bill voting 40-23 on March 30. After it was signed by Cuomo, certain aspects of the law became effective immediately. Currently the state allows any persons aged 21 years and older to legally possess up to three ounces for recreational purposes as well as 24 grams of concentrated cannabis oil. New Yorkers are also now able to smoke marijuana anywhere that tobacco use is allowed except for vehicles.

"For too long the prohibition of cannabis disproportionately targeted communities of color with harsh prison sentences and after years of hard work, this landmark legislation provides justice for long-marginalized communities, embraces a new industry that will grow the economy, and establishes substantial safety guards for the public," Cuomo said in a press statement. "This is a historic day."

Previous attempts at legalization fell short as lawmakers were unable to make agreements regarding tax revenue. This new

legislation will end the disproportionate amount of Black and Latino people incarcerated and criminalized for the usage, a point made by senators such as Liz Krueger.

"My goal in carrying this legislation has always been to end the racially disparate enforcement of marijuana prohibition that has taken such a toll on communities of color across our state, and to use the economic windfall of legalization to help heal and repair those same communities," Krueger said in a press release.

Forty percent of tax revenue is said to be redistributed into Black and brown communities that have been affected. Focusing towards education and drug treatment and prevention programs, as well as expunging the records of those with marijuana related offenses that are no longer criminal.

Students, like senior broadcasting major Jason Glickman, feel that this is a positive step forward for New York.

"It's about time, I mean people are going to smoke it anyway," he said. "At least now they can do it safely, the legalization will do more good for the state economically and socially than arresting and convicting certain groups of people more than another."

The industry is projected to bring in up to \$350 million in tax revenue, the retail sale will tax a nine percent state tax and four

percent local tax.

The swiftness surprised students like junior nursing major Jahaila Harley.

"I was shocked that the state moved fast with the legalization," she said. "I remember hearing talks about it before, overall I'm happy because this is a positive direction for healthcare and science."

Harley does have some reservations about the states handling of convicted people.

"This is great to combat biases in the system but what do they plan to do with people who are already serving time because they were convicted before?"

Glickman and Harley both agree this is a step in the right direction towards a more progressive state. A 2018 New York Times analysis showed that Hispanic people in New York City were five times more likely to be arrested on low level marijuana crimes than white people. The numbers for Black people were a lot harsher at 15 times.

"This law comprehensively addresses the harms of overcriminalization and establishes one of the most ambitious marijuana legalization programs in the nation,"

State Director of the Drug Policy Alliance Melissa More said in a statement. "Through this sweeping legislation, New York is delivering reforms that place community reinvestment, social equity and justice at the core of the law."

# Governor Cuomo Signs Solitary Confinement Bill



*Courtesy of Creative Commons*

Governor Andrew Cuomo

BY NICHOLAS ROSA

STAFF WRITER

Gov. Andrew Cuomo signed a bill that no longer allows long term solitary confinement in New York jails on Thursday, April 1. Cuomo signed the Halt Solitary Confinement Act into law. This will change the practice of segregated confinement in correctional facilities in New York.

There will now be restrictions on the amount of time a person can be in solitary confinement. In addition, certain vulnerable populations will be exempt from solitary confinement. There will also be specialized units for therapeutic programming, and out of cell time will be increased for incarcerated individuals.

The New York State website states that “this legislation limits the amount of time an incarcerated person can spend in segregated confinement to 15 days, clearly defines and

reduces the number of disciplinary infractions eligible for segregated confinement, and exempts certain vulnerable populations, including the young, elderly, pregnant women, people with disabilities, and individuals with a serious mental illness.”

The website further states that “this legislation also establishes Residential Rehabilitation Units to provide incarcerated individuals with therapeutic and trauma-informed programming in a congregate setting. The expanded program model enacted by the HALT legislation will better address an individual’s underlying criminogenic needs and provide greater rehabilitative impacts to change behavior, leading to positive outcomes for individuals transitioning back to the general population.”

“I think this is a good thing, especially the exemptions for certain people,” freshman marketing major David Alonzo said. “Depending on the circumstances, it might not be right for someone to be kept in solitary confinement for a long time. It does seem that being forced to be alone for a long amount of time is torture. I know I wouldn’t be able to be completely alone for a long time. People need to interact with other people. Our heads can really get messed with if we have no interaction or stimulation.”

The New York State website describes how “isolation with little or no human contact for extended periods of time often leads to lasting trauma, as well as unintended consequences that are detrimental to an individual’s rehabilitation.” Residential Rehabilitations Units will allow those with “out-of-cell programming and trauma informed care, to address the underlying actions that resulted in their discipline.”

All staff that work in special housing units will have “an increase in the training of all staff that work within special housing units on de-escalation techniques, implicit bias, trauma-informed care, and dispute resolution.”

Students had mixed reactions to Cuomo signing the Halt Solitary Confinement Act into law.

“I don’t know if I completely agree with this,” junior finance major Vincent Johnston said. “I feel like it should depend on the persons’ crime that they committed. If someone is extremely violent and dangerous, and they are in solitary confinement for murdering a bunch of people, I don’t necessarily think it’s wrong to have them kept in solitary confinement. If it was a crime that was not violent and didn’t negatively affect other people in any way, then maybe it wouldn’t make sense to have that person kept in solitary confinement.”

There are serious negative outcomes from being left in solitary confinement for a long amount of time, according to Cuomo.

“Generations of incarcerated men and women have been subjected to inhumane punishment in segregated confinement with little to no human interaction for extended periods of time and many experience emotional and physical trauma that can last for years,” Cuomo said “by signing the HALT Solitary Confinement Act into law, we are reforming New York’s criminal justice system by helping ensure the effective implementation of proven, humane corrections policies. I applaud the bill sponsors and look forward to continuing our work to reform the era of mass incarceration and usher in a safer, more just Empire State.”



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# Events this Week

## Wednesday, April. 14

- Ian Lara The Comedian | 7 p.m.  
Comedy Ian Lara will perform live for students.
- Greek Week - Greek God/Goddess | 7 p.m.  
One person from each Greek organization competes to win Greek God or Goddess.
- Student Nurses' Association Trivia Night | 7 p.m  
Students can join the Student Nurses' Association for a nursing themed trivia night

## Thursday, April. 15

- Nutrition Club- Meatless Thursday | 12:30 p.m.  
Students can join the Nutrition Club to discover meatless recipes.
- Virtual Calligraphy Art Day | 1 p.m.  
Students can join the Muslim Student Association to learn how to write their name in Arabic.
- Racial Justice Training | 4 p.m.  
Students can join Promise for a workshop that will provide strategies to effectively address issues of racism in their communities.
- Delta Zeta's Pet Pageant | 5 p.m.  
Students can join Delta Zeta for a virtual pet pageant. Entry is \$1, or \$3 to enter a pet.
- Spring Break Improv Show| 9 p.m.  
Students can join No Control for an improv show

## Monday, April. 19

- Chai Chill Session | 7 p.m.  
Students can join the Muslim Student Association as they drink tea and relax.



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# Students Apply to Become Resident Assistants



The outside of Riggs Hall

Dylan Valic

BY JADA HARRISON

STAFF WRITER

As the school year comes to an end, the Promise office says that they are looking for dedicated and leader oriented students to become the new resident assistants (RAs) for the Fall 2021 semester. RAs are student leaders that assist their peers in becoming situated as a resident on campus. RA's are responsible for the students who reside on one floor of the eight residence halls on campus. Students can use RA's as a resource to navigate their experience at the university.

By taking on this role, students must be prepared to help and work with one another while also improving conflict resolution skills.

Sophomore musical theatre major Braylenn Willis expressed the importance of being open and engaging when applying to be an RA.

"Students who are communicative, compassionate and hardworking make great RA's. You have to do it for the love of the students and campus, and that requires an open heart and a lot of effort," she said.

The daily shift of a resident assistant begins at 7 p.m. and ends at 11 P.M., however, RA's are still on call throughout the night in the event

of an emergency. The overall job varies, and is not as simple as remaining on call according to Promise Coach and Residence director Breanna Washington.

"The daily job of a Resident Assistant is to maintain rapport with residents, attend daily duty shifts, implement engaging programs and serve as an active presence in the Residence Halls," Washington said.

Towards the end of the school year, the Residence Halls Directors and the Promise office open the applications for students to apply to become an RA, this opportunity is not available to incoming freshmen.

Willis spoke about how she found out about the position and her experience in the interview process.

"So, I heard about this opportunity through the email sent out from Promise. Before I entered college I had heard about the position and was interested in applying, so I kept my eye out for that email," she said. "I want to be an RA because I think it's a good opportunity to meet new people and be involved on campus. I want to help create a community, since I am a resident student."

The dedication shown by Willis is the type

of applicant that Washington and the other directors find are important for this esteemed position.

"Resident Assistants create living-learning communities, built on trusting relationships, collaboration and engaging programming centered around socialism, education, and philanthropy," Washington said. "Students can become an Resident Assistant by going through an extensive application process."

Students who applied for the position will go through various team building exercises, as well as a series of group and solo interviews with resident directors.


"During the interview process, students will have the opportunity to meet the Promise staff and leadership, who will support them in the position, and thereafter," Washington said.

Students who missed out on the application deadline this year but want to apply to be RA's should keep an eye out for an email from the Promise office to apply next year.



# New York Introduces COVID-19 Passport App “Excelsior Pass”

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COVID-19 PCR Test

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Done



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Dylan Valic

The Excelsior app on the app store

BY JAMES BONNER & DYLAN VALIC  
STAFF WRITER, EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

New York will become the first state to introduce a “covid passport” system. Covid passports are apps that verify the vaccination

status of an individual. The NYS Excelsior Pass Wallet, New York’s version of the passport, was announced last month by Gov. Andrew Cuomo. The mobile app is a voluntary system that can be used to gain entry into participating establishments. The app will be updated to include the users vaccination status, as well as their last negative test result, according to the New York state website.

The new technology is not being adapted everywhere, as Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis banned their use in the state and will forbid any businesses from requiring them. “It’s completely unacceptable for either the government or the private sector to impose upon you the requirement that you show proof of vaccine to just simply be able to participate in normal society,” he said during a press conference.

Texas Gov. Greg Abbott signed an executive order limiting the potential use of vaccine passports in the states. The order will not allow state agencies or organizations that receive state funding to require proof of vaccination. “Government should not require any Texan to show proof of vaccination and reveal private health information just to go about their daily lives,” he said in a video posted on his Twitter page.

The new technology won’t be federally mandated according to President Joe Biden’s Chief Medical Adviser, Dr. Anthony Fauci, leaving it up to the states to decide how it will be used. Passports showing proof of vaccination could speed up international travel re-openings, but the idea of requiring immunization


credentials has become a point of contention among the public. Alexandra Ferragamo (‘20) believes that the Excelsior app is an overstep, and will interfere with people’s right to privacy. “Why should others have to inform the public if they were or were not vaccinated,” she said. “Does it somehow make you a better person if you did [or] didn’t?”

Charli Beshers (‘20) believes that the Excelsior app is a necessary step in bouncing back from the pandemic, but doesn’t think that a vaccine should completely exempt anyone from social distancing procedures.

“I think definitely that we should be careful about not giving too much leeway, like just because you are vaccinated and either can’t get it or can’t die from it, doesn’t mean you’re not a carrier of it still. So I mean, you still have to be careful with taking precautions but that should be common sense about looking out for fellow humans,” she said.

Sophomore occupational therapy major Gabbi Laech agrees with Beshers that the app is essential in today’s society. “I think in the past I would say it’s a breach of privacy, but I think right now that it’s probably necessary,” she said. The NYS Excelsior Pass Wallet is available for download on IOS and Android devices.

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## Taylor Swift is Fearless



BY SHELLEY DEAN

STAFF WRITER

The time has finally come for Swifties, “Fearless (Taylor’s Version)” has dropped, featuring 27 tracks. Many songs were on the original “Fearless” album, and others are never before heard and “from the vault.”

On Feb. 11, Taylor Swift announced on her Instagram that she would be undertaking this project, leaving fans anticipating the April 9 premiere date. It wasn’t until week that she told her fans what tracks would be on the album.

Swift is re-recording her old songs in order to reclaim the rights to her own music. Currently, her old manager is making the money from the streams Swift’s music gets. After re-recording, Swift will be the primary owner of her own lyrics and melodies, after over 10 years.

Students are listening to the album on repeat and feeling the nostalgia they’ve been

gearing up for since the Feb. 11 announcement.

“It’s beautiful, I’ve been obsessed with all the little differences between the old and new versions. Her voice sounds so much more mature now,” junior musical theatre major Ellie Lauthner said.

Lauthner has been a longtime fan of Swift and has kept up with her music and news. She was excited when Swift posted the song list a week ago.

“I was super excited, It was cool to see all of the new songs, it was cool to see all the artists she [is] collaborating with,” Lauthner said.

Swift is collaborating with artists such as Colbie Caillat, and Keith Urban.

“I am really excited to listen to change, and breathe, she’s collaborating with Colbie Caillat again, and I’m excited to hear how both of their voices sound together now that they’re older,” Lauthner said

Lauthner loves Swift’s music and even sang “The Way I Loved You” for one of her midterms in her musical theatre class recently.

“The setlist made it more real, and the new album cover too, it makes me nostalgic more than anything,” Lauthner said.

Swift recreated her album from the original “Fearless” album with her own personal 2021 style.

Swift’s music captures the hearts and ears of others, even those who aren’t superfans.

“Her songs just got so catchy that I eventually ended up liking them,” sophomore forensic science major Tyran Williams said.

Williams never set aside time to listen to Swift growing up, and no one in his family did either, but sometimes her music played at his school.

“I’m all for artists being independent,” William said.

Williams learned about the struggles Swift has been facing and immediately took her side. He acknowledges that the music industry can be evil and can take advantage of younger artists.

“I’ll be more inclined to listen to the re-releases rather than the new songs,” Williams said.

Like many, Williams will be listening to “Fearless (Taylor’s Version).” In just the first 24 hours of the album’s release, Swift surpassed 500,000 worldwide sales.

In an Instagram post with over three million likes, Swift posted a picture of herself with the caption, “It was the night things changed. Fearless (Taylor’s Version) is out now.”

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# Students Comment on the Current State of Fashion



Courtesy of Cassandra Cerbone



Courtesy of Ashley Forestal



Courtesy of Emily Szalkowski

Tailgate Apparel's upcycled tee

Forestal styling a puff-sleeve blouse.

Szalkowski styling a lace corset.

**BY GABRIELLA CAVALERI**  
STAFF WRITER

Spring weather and vaccinations have given students a chance to show off their personal style on campus and at home.

Some students focus their style on what's trendy and new, Sophomore fashion merchandising major Ashley Forestal keeps up with the trends, but doesn't let them limit her style.

"I love following and keeping up with the latest trends. I keep them in mind when putting outfits together, but if something isn't considered to be "in" at that exact moment, I don't let that stop me from wearing it," Forestal said.

Freshman business major Emily Szalkowski likes to blend trendy pieces with her own personal style when getting dressed for the day.

"Since quarantine started it's become trendy to express yourself and be unique. You can wear literally whatever you want, and it would be hot," Szalkowski said. "When I get dressed for the day I always think about the im-

age I want to give off. The way you dress says a lot about your character."

COVID-19 has affected the fashion industry greatly as many have had to work from home and shopping centers and retail stores slowly opened back up.

"The fashion industry was disrupted and impacted greatly over the last year, but that hasn't stopped new trends from emerging," sophomore fashion merchandising major Ashley Forestal said. "The latest trends I've noticed are wrap skirts, mini bags, and puffy sleeves."

Sophomore fashion merchandising major Cassandra Cerbone reflects on how the pandemic has altered the state of fashion. Since a lot of time is now spent at home, cozy sets have become her go-to.

"Cozy clothing has become such a trend due to corona," Cerbone said. "I used to work in a boutique, and we would get more matching sets than dresses and blouses."

Repurposed fashion is another trend Cerbone has noticed this year. She has incorporat-

ed this trend into her small business, "Tailgate Apparel USA" where she upcycles college gear and other clothing.

"I love to make elastic crop tops for myself and my small business, "Tailgate Apparel",," she said. "I feel like it adds a little extra detail to a basic outfit."

Freshman business and marketing major Gianna Pelella is also a small business owner who keeps trends in mind when designing for herself and her customers. Pelella believes that confidence shines through whatever you're wearing.

"Right now I feel like urban styles, comfortable clothes, and a lot of early 2000s looks are really popular," Pelella said. "I try to pay attention to which graphics and styles are trendy so that when I design logos and designs to put on clothing for my customers, I know the customer will love it and be in style."

Clothing from "Custom By Gia" and "Tailgate Apparel USA" are available online.

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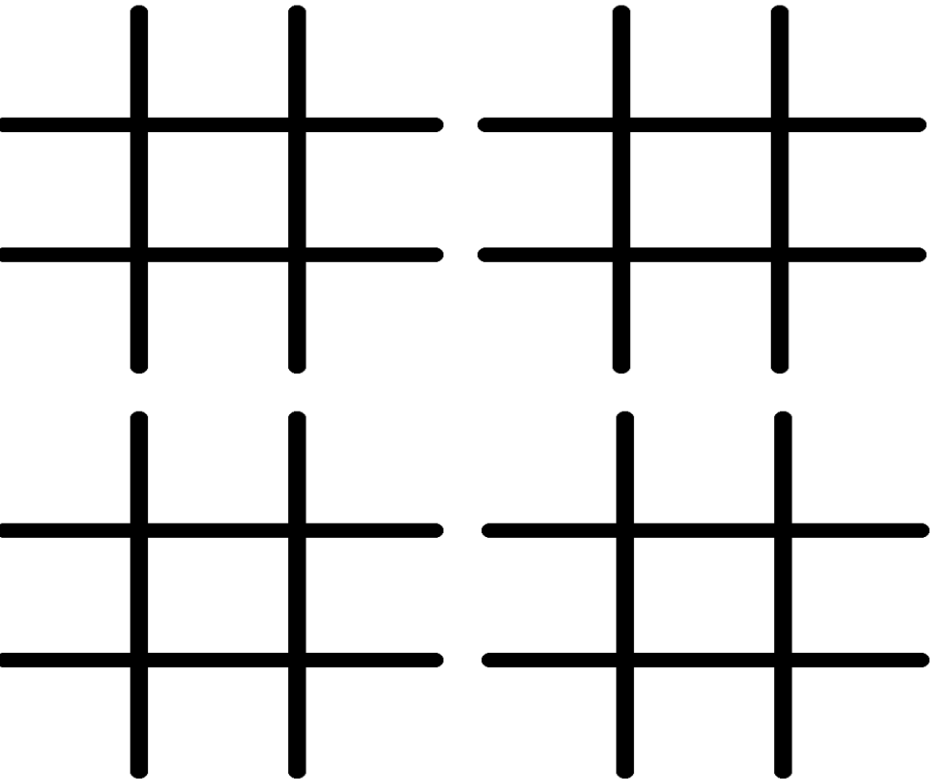
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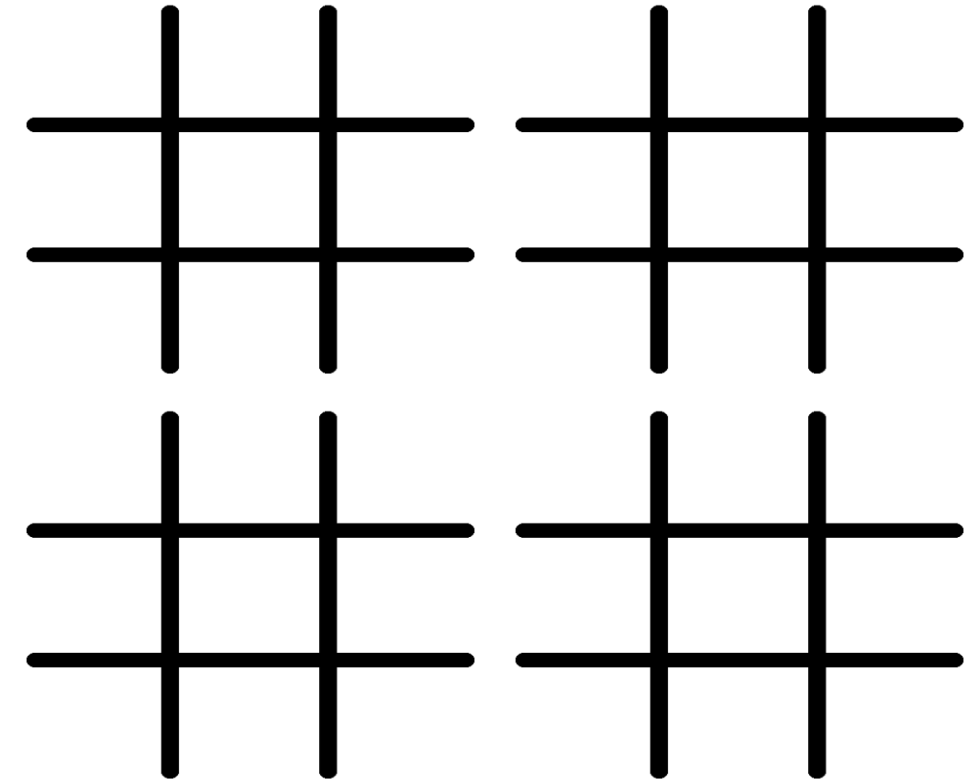
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- ENYA
- PITBULL
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- MOBY
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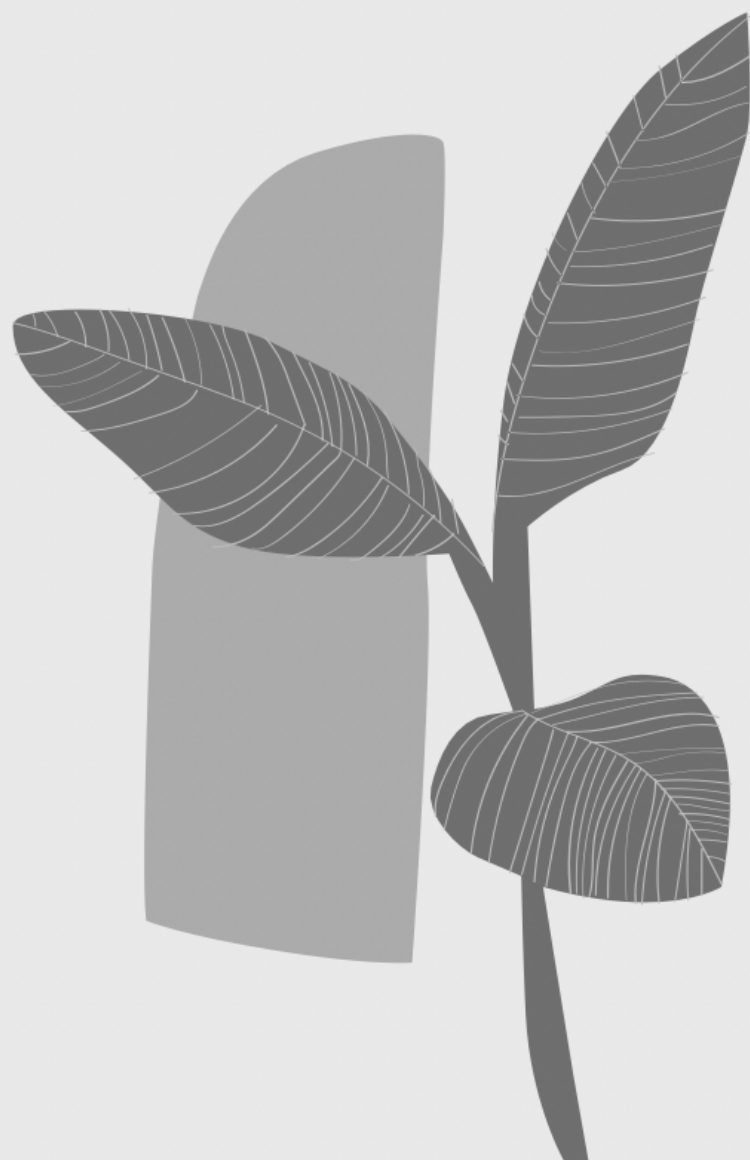


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# Upcoming Schedule

- Baseball**  
Friday, April 16 vs Central Connecticut State University @ 3 P.M.
- Softball**  
Saturday, April 17 at Wagner College @ 1 P.M.
- Men's Lacrosse**  
Saturday, April 17 vs Mount St.Mary's @ 12 P.M.
- Women's Lacrosse**  
Saturday, April 17 at St.Francis University @ 12 P.M.
- Men's Soccer**  
Friday, April 16 NEC Championship at #1 St.Francis Brooklyn @ 1 P.M.
- Men's Golf**  
Saturday/Sunday April 17-18 at Gimmler Tournament
- Field Hockey**  
Thursday, April 15 vs Bryant University @ 2 P.M.
- Tennis**  
Saturday, April 17 NEC Championship
- Volleyball**  
Wednesday, April 14 NCAA Championship vs #18 University of Pittsburg @ 10:30 P.M.



# Volleyball Makes NCAA Tournament



The volleyball team preparing to fly to the tournament

Courtesy of @LIU\_Volleyball

BY THERESA MORRISSEY  
STAFF WRITER

Volleyball has made postseason competition and will be taking on the 18 Seed University of Pittsburgh Panthers in the first round of the NCAA tournament. The tournament is held in Omaha, Nebraska, and the two teams will face off on Wednesday, April 14 at 10:30 p.m. on ESPN 3. This will be the third time that Pitt and LIU have met at the Division one level, with the Panthers holding a 3-0 advantage in the all-time series. The winner of this match will take on 14 Seed Utah in the second round of competition on April 15.

This is LIU's first NCAA Volleyball Tournament appearance since 2017. Head Coach Ken Ko credits the team's willingness to play and different experiences as to why they made the tournament.

"Well, it's a huge accomplishment, and I'm just grateful that everyone showed up for practice. We couldn't have a team if we didn't have people opt-in, and so that was really important for us in the beginning," he said. "The other part is we have eight players on the roster that never played Division I volleyball before, and we have six returners with one who has tournament experience. So we are very young, and I think just being here and being together is a real honor and we're excited for it."

For NEC Defensive Player of the Year, junior libero, Anastasia Scott, having the opportunity to compete is an

honor.

"Overall, we're just very happy that we get the opportunity to play any game, and this year being such a unique and tough year, we're super excited to be one of the few teams selected to go to the tournament," she said.

When it comes to preparing for the tournament, Second-Team All-NEC sophomore middle blocker Miranda Strongman feels that preparation off the court can help their performance on the court.

"We're focused on maintaining our physical health and making sure we eat properly and stay well-rested. We did have to travel, but making sure that we're taking care of ourselves and our bodies and our mental health and getting all of our stuff taken care of, so that we can take care of the volleyball," she said.

Coach Ko helped to put the steady mindset of the team into perspective.

"Our goals are to control what we can control. Pitt is obviously an amazing team and experienced, but we have an opportunity, just like every other team has when the first whistle blows, to play the game the best that we know we can," he said. "We're still learning what that is for us, so we have a game plan in place, and we will determine our success based on how well we can handle the magnitude of the situation, how we work together and how resilient we are. We're playing one of the best teams that we have faced this year, and I can't wait to see what we do in those circumstances."

# Game Results

- Baseball**  
Friday, April 9 at Wagner College  
Win 14-3
- Softball**  
Tuesday, April 13 at Wagner College  
Win 4-3
- Women's Lacrosse**  
Saturday, April 10 at Merrimack  
Win 12-11
- Men's Soccer**  
Monday, April 12 at St.Francis College Brooklyn  
Tie 0-0(2OT)
- Men's Golf**  
Sunday/Monday April 11-12 at SHU Spring Invitational  
5th of 11
- Tennis**  
Sunday, April 11 vs Sacred Heart University  
Win 4-3

