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Drew's Next Chapter: Plans for New College Unveiled

Elliot Yap
Assistant News Editor

Announced last week with the intention of being launched next semester, Drew's newest college has garnered a lot of attention in a relatively short amount of time. President Hilary Link and Interim Chief Academic Officer Steve Johnson introduced the unnamed new college as an innovative 'prototype' with emphasis on mentorship and individualized learning. It will exist as a separate entity from the other colleges, and will have no effect on students who wish to remain in the traditional pathway—financially or academically.

The designers of the program promote the core



IMAGE COURTESY OF SABR KERES-SIDDIQUI

Tuesday's info session hosted by President Link.

of this new college as problem-solving. The prototype of the program will revolve around one core faculty member who will work with students individually to challenge a problem the student wants to solve. Positioned

as the main mentor, the core faculty member will work with each student, a learning council composed of faculty members from each of the other colleges and artificial intelligence to create an individualized learning path with

the end goal of solving their problem. Students will be advised on a path forward, but will ultimately chart their own course.

The first cohort of students for the new college will be composed of 12-15 volunteering sophomores from the College of Liberal Arts who devote half of their course schedule, 8 credits, to the program. Students in the initial cohort will pursue bachelor's degrees in these self-designed programs, but as this is only the prototype, the type of credentials gained in this program might change with further iterations of the college, revealed Link during an info session on Nov. 10 in Crawford Hall.

CONT. IN LATEST PG. 3

The Acorn and StuGov Host Presidential Debate

Katie Germinder
Opinions Editor

Sabre Keres-Siddiqui
SLA Editor

On the evening of Nov. 18, 2025, Drew University Student Government and the Drew Acorn hosted a Presidential Debate in room LC 28, below the library. Drew's student body was also invited to listen in on the debate and ask their own questions to the candidates.

The night started with the Elections Chair, Jordyn Casanova-Ghosh ('28), introducing themselves before the Acorn correspondents and debate moderators, Sabr Keres-Siddiqui ('27) and Katie Germinder ('27), also introduced themselves. The debate was then handed over to the Presidential candidate teams to give their opening statements to the audience.

The first statement was given by Kevin McMillion ('27) and Samuel Mbir-Bondzie ('27), with a focus on the dining services and athletics. According to McMillion, his team has plans to begin working with the head of Gourmet Dining to improve overall food quality.

Edgar Guzman ('28) and Kayla Kiernan ('28) went next, addressing that they want to engage with students and make actual change. They plan to advocate and address accessi-

bility issues, a better dining experience, residence hall concerns, better gym equipment and a better platform for club advertisements. Guzman & Kiernan made it clear that they wanted to be easily accessible to students and hear all their concerns.

Arya Patel ('27) and Aidan Rosser ('27), going third, highlighted their already-established experience in student government. Patel pointed out how she had created a new position for commuters in Student Activities and plans to work with alumni to create new scholarships, especially for the psychology department.

The floor was then opened up to the audience to ask questions about any specific ticket or to the candidates in general. The Acorn started by asking about student body communication with the presidential and vice presidential candidates.

Communication
McMillion emphasized that his and Mbir-Bondzie's emails are always open to students to ask questions and voice concerns. Mbir-Bondzie also added that there is a "lack" of marketing and advertising for events being held on campus. He suggested ways to improve outreach, such as relying more on Instagram and word of mouth.

Guzman, responding to the same question, said that he is working to make

an easily accessible general inquiry form so that it is easy for constituents to have their concerns heard by Student Government. Guzman also highlighted that there should be a "better way" to communicate events and to be transparent about things happening at Drew, saying that all voices should be heard.

Patel, meanwhile, highlighted how she is actively engaged with the head of Student Activities, and, if elected, would appoint someone from her cabinet to correspond directly with the Student Activities department to be able to sponsor meaningful dialogue.

StuGov Accountability
When asked about Student Government accountability, McMillion highlighted how events to discuss dining concerns have little attendance due to low advertisement and are not marketed to the student body. Members in committees should take actions, he stated – and if they do not do so, that person could be "booted" from the committee. McMillion urged StuGov members to "take the job seriously [and] make serious changes," and emphasized how all of StuGov must work together and come together in a "united" way.

Guzman and Kiernan used a similar example to McMillion, saying that power should be given back to the people when it comes to

accountability. Guzman said that he has "already been open" to discussing constituent concerns as a senator, and plans to continue to do so as president.

Kiernan added that she would address it as a "systemic" change in Student Government. Adding that she would "be on top of committees and hold them accountable," she highlighted finding passion within the committees, instead of "just checking a box on their resume." She emphasized how her administration would hold itself accountable and fill seats with people who will take action to improve the Drew community.

Patel largely focused on keeping senators' projects going that affect the student body as a whole, using current senator Thomas Jenkins' ('28) project of installing a StuGov voice-mail service as an example. Jenkins's project involves using a dedicated phone line for students to call or text to flag concerns to Student Government, which Patel highlighted as a potential opportunity for communication. Like Guzman, she also said she plans to use Google Forms to elicit responses from the student body, and also highlighted a willingness to "rework" and "enforce" policy.

CONT. IN LATEST PG. 2

QUOTE OF THE WEEK

"No institution is ever perfect and there is always more that could be done and that is part of why student voices and expressing what you think should happen are much more powerful."

—Prof. Wendy Kolmar

SEE LEAD ED, PG 6

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Or visit thedrewacorn.com/join to request more information.

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2 NEWS

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The Acorn and StudGov Host Presidential Debate

Katie Germinder
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SLA Section Editor

CONT. FROM PRESIDENTIAL DEBATE PG 1

What Each Candidate Brings to the Table

McMillion and Mbir-Bondzie both highlighted a desire to “serve and help” everyone in the student body. They said that they wanted to spend as much time as possible to truly enact change, and compared it to “going into battle with the people around you” instead of against them. They also highlighted ambition to make real change, stating that they wanted not just to check a box off, but to truly help the community through a new approach to the presidency.

Patel highlighted “diversity” in being the only female candidate, which, although true in terms of only presidential candidates, elicited sharp questioning from female Vice Presidential Candidate Kiernan of the Guzman-Kiernan ticket. Rosser also highlighted “gumption” and the importance of resisting the Trump administration in the federal government; however, Rosser notably did not seem to connect his answer to this question back to students in any meaningful way.

Guzman highlighted the importance of “perspective” on community voice. He emphasized the benefits of his being involved with many clubs and theater organizations, as well as his already-close ties with Student Government. He said he and Kiernan would use engagement with the community to help Drew grow, adding that they would use the way the system works to their advantage to make change and help constituents be seen and heard.

Dealing with Controversy

McMillion and Mbir-Bondzie both emphasized a strong sense of unity, saying that there should be constant dialogue and understanding so that both students and Student Government can come to a conclusion regarding what is best for the campus community. Referencing what he called the “McMillion-Dollar Way,” he said that connection to the student body is important, and said he would shelve his own pride if it meant that he could come to an agreement

with the student body. All six candidates present, added him and Mbir-Bondzie, have the same “end goal”: to make Drew a better place where people will want to come to and build a legacy in.

Kiernan highlighted “de-escalation” of conflict and a strong willingness to work with the community. Similar to McMillion, Guzman also focused on uniting all sides of an issue to come to a common solution. Highlighting past examples, Guzman emphasized the achievability of actual change when students come together as a community. He added that his and Kiernan’s administration would be staying on top of issues and would be here for the community, “not to fill their resumes.”

Patel also highlighted a willingness to carry on the legacy of current President Zaire Wright (‘27) by holding town halls frequently with constituents to give them an opportunity to voice their concerns. She said that she sees town halls as an “open forum” for questions and concerns that should continue, also highlighting that all dialogue starts with a conversation.

Addressing Pressing Issues at Drew & Long-Term Projects

McMillion highlighted how he has begun to work closely with dining heads to enact better nutrition quality. He referenced a Google Form that he helped set up that was previously sent out to constituents to understand what students want to see and what concerns they have about food on campus. Mbir-Bondzie added that he would like to help athletes build nutritious meal plans so that they can get the necessary types of food to fit their specific regimens. Mbir-Bondzie and McMillion also emphasized transparency regarding what is in food – for example, calories and allergen information being placed front-and-center.

Guzman and Kiernan highlighted a desire to appeal to overlooked voices in the community. Kiernan, in particular, emphasized accessibility for disabled students and those with dietary restrictions. Allergen options are lacking, she pointed out, adding that it is not fair that students with allergies are at the “bottom of the barrel.” Kiernan added that food at the Commons should have better labeling

and that everyone in the community should be heard. Both she and Guzman said they would like to work with cultural clubs to amplify their voice, and would “fight like hell” to make sure concerns are heard.

Patel, similar to the other tickets, emphasized how dining options for actual cooked meals are “limited in quality and quantity.” She suggested options to bring residential and commuter communities together and make sure their concerns are addressed and heard. Rosser also emphasized a “collective bargaining” approach and said he may work with alumni donors to fund better gym equipment for the Baldwin Gym and Simon Forum as well.

Open Student Questions

One audience member asked the candidates in general how they might plan to improve the experience of international students at Drew. All three tickets responded with plans to help build community amongst INTO students on campus, as well as to reassure students during any possible visa or employment turmoil they might be struggling with as a result of the Trump administration’s recent immigration policies. “I want the best for everybody,” said McMillion.

Another constituent asked Rosser: “As vice president, one of your jobs is to run the Senate and to bang the gavel...I’d like to ask you: how can I trust you to run the Senate when you can’t stop interrupting both the moderator and other candidates?” referring to when he had repeatedly interjected during moderators’ and other candidates’ remarks on more than one occasion. Rosser responded that because he was on Zoom instead of in-person due to his being in London, he “had to be a little bit pushy” to be heard through the call, and that “people would decide” if they liked his style and personality or not.

A viewer online asked how the candidates might work with clubs in terms of general support during their administration, and another asked how their ‘project issue’ might be balanced with other issues they may be expected to face during their administration. All three tickets responded with plans to balance club budgets and StuGov funds in order to ensure that they are used appropriately and in

the most sustainable manner possible, with many candidates planning to hybridize events to be able to provide the most services to students while still saving costs.

All three tickets heavily emphasized service to the Drew community in their closing statements, highlighting their own plans for the future of Drew and the further development of the student body as a whole. Voting will be held on the Path or in person on campus on Dec. 1, 2025. For more information on this year’s election, visit the StuGov Path page or the StuGov Instagram handle at @duclasga. The complete recording of the debate can also be viewed at tinyurl.com/stugovdebate.



Katie Germinder is a junior who is majoring in environmental studies and sustainability and minoring in anthropology and media and communications

Sabr Keres-Siddiqui is a junior who is majoring in political science and minoring in sociology and anthropology.

Drew Offers the Third Annual DEI Lecture

Allison Cannon
News Section Editor

In collaboration with the law, justice and society and women, gender and sexuality departments, the Center for Civic Engagement and the A&S Dean's Office hosted the third annual diversity, equity and inclusion lecture, this year featuring Dr. Anansi Wilson, who is a legal scholar, justice advocate and policy expert.

The lecture offered an exploration of the systemic political and cultural attacks on Black, queer and trans people throughout history, as well as an analysis of how immigrants, anti-genocide protesters and people seen as political opponents are targeted during the current political administration.

Drew started hosting these lectures as an opportunity for students and faculty to learn about the impacts and developments that diversity, equity and inclusion can have on a community.

The first DEI lecture that Drew hosted in 2023 was prompted by the goal of "creat[ing] a more systematic rethinking of how we teach, who we teach, who



Dr. Wilson with Allison Cannon('28), Jaden Finn('28) and Elliot Yap('28)

Image courtesy of Wendy Komar.

we are [and] who teaches." (Read more about the first lecture here.) It involved the same moral components that the most recent lecture shared, to share and educate people on how political movements impact minority groups of people.

Even as challenges prevail for colleges involved with DEI, Drew has remained committed to embracing diversity, equity and inclusion, especially as it welcomes more and more diverse populations of students.

Dr. Wilson, who uses they/them pronouns, is a legal scholar who has expertise

in critical race theory, constitutional law, criminal procedure and racial, criminal, gender and social justice, which were the focal points of the conversation.

Explaining the historical and cultural significance of being a person of color outcast by the law, Dr. Wilson spoke mainly about furtive blackness. A term that they coined, furtive blackness refers to the historic association of how black lives have constantly been constricted by the law and how legal actions taken against those lives continue to replicate the white supremacy of the age of the founding fathers.

To read more about furtive blackness and other works done by Dr. Wilson, check out their website, www.anansiwilsonphd.com/.

The connection of racism and the cultural norms created by racist legal systems is still prevalent today, however hidden it might be.

An example of this would be the topic of artificial intelligence and its connection to racism and transphobia.

A question asked during the open discussion portion of the lecture prompted the conversation towards the advancements of A.I. technology in security and po-

lice work, asking if the new systems have been proven to show racist tendencies.

A.I. is built based upon the personal experiences and biases of the person who is creating the code and programming the system. Dr. Wilson spoke on the fact that the human who is creating the program is still attached to it; therefore, cases have been found where these new A.I. security systems have been faulty, misgendering and misidentifying dark skinned people because they had not been programmed to pick up their features. For more information on this topic, read about it on the sites from Penn State.

The message that Dr. Wilson wanted to convey is that people can treat other people horribly all day long, but as a society, we must talk about our past and how we can improve on it to make our world a better place for more than just the most powerful, rich white people.

Allison Cannon is a sophomore who is majoring in psychology and minoring in Spanish and law, justice, and society.

Drew's Next Chapter: Plans for New College Unveiled

Elliot Yap
Assistant News Editor

CONT. FROM NEW PG 1

Many students are asking: Why introduce this new college now, in a period of such financial turmoil? And the reason, says University administration, is exactly that period of turmoil. Link explained in an exclusive interview offered to the Drew Acorn that to ensure Drew's sustainability, change must occur. She elaborated that, overall, the future of higher education is in turmoil, and many small, private institutions across the country are closing pretty much once a week, she claims, for two main reasons: they have a financial situation that is not sustainable, and because we are now in the moment of what is widely known as the demographic cliff.

Financially, private universities like Drew appear to cost so much that many families don't even consider them as options; moreover, because of the very high levels of financial and merit aid discounting tuition, institutions are actually not bringing in enough revenue to sustain themselves, Link claimed. She continues with an explanation of the demographic cliff: during the U.S. financial crisis in 2008 and 2009, people stopped having children, and the country

never truly came back up to the original birth rate. This means that for the next twenty years at least, there will be fewer traditional college-aged students to go anywhere – every institution is now competing for probably between 15 and 20 percent fewer students. Moreover, Link continued, the country is also facing a deficit of international students who are less likely to come to the U.S. due to many recent federal immigration policies.

Link stated: "...so, demographic issues, the cost model doesn't work, the discount model doesn't work, higher ed is extremely politicized, ... and there's also a really big question of the ROI: the return of investment for the student, or the parent. If I'm gonna send my kid to X institution and pay a lot of money, are they guaranteed a job at the end of this?" The answer is: likely not. In order to stay ahead of the curve and prevent any possibility of the university closing, according to Link, Drew needs a change. In Steve Johnson's words: "... this is where we can start making a really positive impact, and shape a future that we want, instead of sort of being passively tied to a collapse scenario."

With the advent of the new college, new investors

will hopefully take an interest in Drew, and the money that the college draws in will aid the other colleges and other aspects of Drew's campus. Drew has already partnered with the Milken Institute and an anonymous industry partner with an interest in getting the college off the ground.

For those who are interested in Drew's new college, more information can be found on a new page that has been added to the Drew website, which also holds a

short interest form students can fill out. Drew is already being recognized at a national level for the work being done surrounding the new college: for those curious about Drew's new seat at the table, more information can be found in Rachel Toor's Inside Higher Education Article.



Elliot Yap is a sophomore who is majoring in art and minoring in photography.



Chairs lined up in Crawford Hall for Tuesday's info session hosted by President Link

Image courtesy of Sabr Keres-Siddiqui.

4 STUDENT LIFE & ARTS

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Sustainable Solutions at the Sustainable Food Fest

Allison Cannon
News Section Editor

Bridging the gap between South Asian culture, sustainable gardening and organic food, the Drew Environmental Action League brought the South Asian Student Association and local nonprofit Grow It Green together to learn about sustainability and good food.

On Nov. 11, the annual Sustainable Food Fest was held in collaboration with many different clubs and organizations to spread awareness of sustainable practices in agriculture and eating, and to share a space to appreciate food from different cultures.

President of DEAL, Katie Germinder ('27), commented on the collaboration: "It gets good cultural engagement for students and also engagement with community partners like Grow It Green," expressing her desire to host more events like this in the future.

Having grown and donated the food for the event



IMAGE COURTESY OF ALLISON CANNON ('28)

Grow it Green staffmember Madelyn presents at the event.

themselves, the nonprofit attended the event to explain the benefits of organic gardening and providing food for the Morristown community. Grow It Green offered an insightful view of the work that they do across the three farms located in Morristown and at Saint Elizabeth University, and the many benefits of having organic food grown locally available to the public.

Students had the opportunity to learn about the dif-

ferent ingredients brought to the event, like coriander, for example, and the digestive benefits they have. Another point that Grow It Green emphasized was that organic vegetables, and vegetables in general, provide many important health benefits, and that Grow It Green provides them to families who are part of SNAP and similar programs.

SASA representatives, Kiran Balaji ('29) and Vamsikrishna Vaidyula ('29),

led everyone in attendance in preparing and making samosa chaat, which is a popular north Indian street food combining sweet, spicy and tangy flavors. It is made up of layers of crushed samosas, yogurt, chutney and a variety of toppings to complete the dish.

Attendees participated in washing, peeling and chopping the vegetables, crushing up the samosas and decorating with toppings, all to get the full experience of making the samosa chaat.

"It would be a great opportunity to teach about a niche culture that isn't emphasized on campus," said Jordyn Casanova-Ghosh ('28), President of SASA, when asked about the collaboration. "We are a club that is known for our food; we want to be able to provide the campus with good food."

SASA is a club that embraces all South Asian cultures; however, since the board consists mostly of students with Indian heritage, it has a focus on Indian culture and events. The club

is taking every chance it gets to share the cultures of its members with a campus full of different people.

SASA's next event will be a Valentine's Day "Rave of Pyaar," which will be held next semester. Until then, look out for promotions on its Instagram page @drew_sasa.

Make sure to keep your eye out for the DEAL general elections as well; all positions are open, and the club is looking for some fresh insight. If you are interested, reach out to the members on their Instagram, @drewudeal.



Allison Cannon is a sophomore majoring in Psychology and minoring in Spanish and Law, Justice and Society.

EC Turns Runway: DASA Fashion Show Stuns Students

Natalie Mulholland
Contributing Writer

Jaela Lisbey
Contributing Writer

In a stunning display of culturally rich designs, the Drew African Student Association hosted its "Across Africa" show for the 15th consecutive year. The designs reflected the theme of nuanced representation of the diversity of the continent, including fusions of traditional and non-traditional collections, all displayed in Drew's very own Ehinger Center.

The four designers—Makhosi, LadyBlack Bou-

tique, Ratshivhadelo Mbezi, Bongile Nkomo of Brthhood444 and Laris Laryea Linth of Clapes Department—all explored differing aspects of African culture and told the story of diversity to the audience through their work.

DASA president Andzani Mthenjane ('26) noted the successful collaboration of designers, models, volunteers and performers, especially during her last year as president. "It reminded me how powerful student-led spaces can be when we create room for authenticity, storytelling, and

unity. As this also marks the end of my presidency, the night carried a special sense of closure. I felt immense gratitude—gratitude for the team that trusted my leadership, for the community that showed up for us, and for the legacy we've built together. The show proved that when we lean into purpose and community, we don't just host events—we shape experiences that stay with people."

Model Nia Harris ('29) also reflected on the success of the night and the overwhelming support from students across campus, saying,

"it was an honor and a lot of fun to model these pieces for students and established designers. Seeing all of the people who came to support and cheer us on made me feel so appreciated."

DASA will be holding its next event this Friday, Nov. 21, from 5:30 p.m. to 7 p.m. as a part of Haitian Awareness Week. Their Caribbean Conversations panel discussion will focus on "Perspectives on Important Events in Jamaica and Haiti" and will be facilitated by faculty member Sean Hewitt in the Space.



Natalie Mulholland is a first-year student majoring in International Relations.

Jaela Lisbey is a first-year student majoring in physics.



Models at the event.

Images courtesy of DASA on Instagram.



Performers at the event.

Image Courtesy of DASA on Instagram.

A Capella Jamnation!: OADN Hosts a Rockin' 80's Night

Katie Germinder
Opinions Section Editor

On the night of Nov. 7, the a capella groups on campus gathered in the Concert Hall in the Dorothy Young Center for the Arts for an 80s-themed show. The event was hosted by On a Different Note, a soprano-alto a capella group composed of Drew University students.

The concert began with a cold open by OADN singing "I Want to Break Free" by Queen, featuring a solo from member Jessica Hyman ('26). All the members wore 1980s-inspired attire to truly set the tone of the show. The president of OADN, Kayla Cleary ('26), welcomed everyone to Jamnation and thanked the audience for coming to watch the show.

Following that, Cleary introduced the next a capella



Performers at the event.

IMAGE COURTESY OF CASEY BUSH ('28)

la group, All of the Above, and their opening song, "Brown Eyed Girl" by Van Morrison, featuring a solo from Vicky Bojorquez ('29). The next song they performed was "Willow" by famed artist Taylor Swift, which was a pleasant, soothing song to hear during the nighttime performance. After their soloist, Lauren

Crespi ('27), finished singing, the group announced their final song of the night, "Ends of the Earth" by Lord Huron. AOTA mixed this piece up by casting it as a duet performed by Vincent Vespignani ('28) and Corinne Lacobucci ('29).

The next group to take the stage was 36 Madison Avenue with their open-

ing song "Kokomo" by The Beach Boys, featuring Grady Cummings ('27) as the soloist. Once the song ended, MadAve President Casey Cornwell ('27) introduced all of MadAve and thanked OADN for having them. MadAve donned their usual blue t-shirts and varsity jackets while performing. Their next song was "Your Smiling Face" by James Taylor, featuring Cornwell as the soloist. The last song for MadAve was "Renegade" by Styx, an intense but upbeat way to send off MadAve, performed by Haile Benway ('28).

OADN came back on stage to finish up the night with a rendition of "Head Over Heels" by Tears For Fears with a solo from Izzi Da Silva ('28), who is also the group's coordinator and secretary. Next on the set list for the show was "Running Up That Hill" by Kate Bush, whose soloist, Gianna

Treiber ('28), gave a chilling rendition of the popular song. Before their final song of the night, soloist and new member Sara Tavares ('29) gave a beautiful performance of The B-52s' "Roam." To end Jamnation on a high note, Cleary invited alumni up to the stage to perform "You Can Close Your Eyes" by James Taylor with public relations coordinator Ava Stroh ('27) as beatboxer.

All the groups thanked the audience for coming out to see their musical showcase before inviting them to mingle in the rotunda, where OADN was selling baked goods and new merchandise.

Katie Germinder is a junior majoring in Environmental Studies & Sustainability and minoring in Anthropology and Media & Communications.



Performers at the event.



IMAGES COURTESY OF CASEY BUSH ('28)

ARIEL Honors Dia De Los Muertos with Celebration

Edgar Guzman
Contributing Writer

Recently, ARIEL, Drew's Latinx club, hosted its traditional Día de los Muertos event to honor the Día de los Muertos holiday, which was celebrated the weekend before, on Nov. 1. The event took place in Crawford Hall from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. on Monday, Nov. 3.

The event consisted of food such as white rice, beef and cheese empanadas, churros and flautas (another form of tacos, with chicken and beans). Along with food, they had a presentation discussing what the holiday was and where it was celebrated, which was followed by a discussion which allowed those who celebrate to discuss their intimate and favorite memories of the holiday as well as an offering to the ofrenda that ARIEL had set up.

An ofrenda is an offering typically held for the holiday to place deceased family members' photos on,

as well as other traditional offerings which range from food and flowers to candles and marigolds. ARIEL's ofrenda showed similar items, with photos collected through a Google form of people's deceased loved ones, candles, flowers, painted skulls and marigolds. The marigolds were made by students at the Spanish department open house the week prior.

The event ended with a mariachi band performing songs consisting of traditional Hispanic music and songs that the crowd suggested. Furthermore, the music inspired those at the event to begin dancing. The mariachi event complimented the audience for their participation in the music.

The event hosted 73 people, which was the biggest turnout for the event ARIEL has had. This number was made up of students and faculty members, with the Spanish department chair, Professor Cantero, and the director of the First-Year experience and Spanish pro-

fessor, Professor Rosales, present as well.

"The event went really well and ran smoothly. It has become a staple event for ARIEL, and it is always a heart warming way to honor and celebrate Día de Los Muertos," said Stephanie Yanes, Logistics Coordinator for ARIEL. "We aim to make Drew more welcoming to the Latino community, and events like this mean so much, especially in times like these."

ARIEL looks to host their last event of the semester, Cena Navideña, on Wednesday, Dec. 3, from 6-8 p.m. in McLendon Lounge. Cena Navideña honors the holiday hosted in various Latin countries such as Colombia, Mexico, Cuba and Venezuela, among others.



Edgar Guzman is a sophomore majoring in Psychology and minoring in Spanish.



Posters advertising the event.

Image Courtesy of ARIEL on Instagram

OPINIONS

SPEAK UP!

OPINIONS EDITOR: KATIE GERMINDER | kgerminder@drew.edu

Submit a letter to the editor or contribute an opinion piece (500 WORDS APROX). Email theacorn+opinions@drew.edu

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Lead Ed: What Drew is Doing to Promote DEI in Harsh Times

LEAD EDITORIAL

Diversity, equity and inclusion are three words that carry with them much controversy in today's political climate. Yet, they were first curated to benefit students, workers and the general population who continue to face discrimination.

An article from CNN defined DEI as the act of “embracing the differences everyone brings to the table... treating everyone fairly and providing equal opportunities [and] creating a culture in which people from all backgrounds feel encouraged to express their ideas and perspectives.”

DEI is imperative for college campuses, businesses, the federal government and other institutions because the implementation of these topics through policies and programs creates valuable resources for marginalized groups. This is something that should not be taken for granted, though for some, it has lost its meaning and become a topic of discourse and hate.

The Trump Administration and the U.S. Department of Education have been adding fuel to the fire by “[taking] action to eliminate harmful Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) initiatives... in line with President Trump’s ongoing commitment to end illegal discrimination and wasteful spending across the federal government,” as stated by the DOE.

An example of this, also directly from the DOE website listed under “notable actions,” was the “identification for removal of over 200 web pages from the Department’s website that housed DEI resources and encouraged schools and institutions of higher education to promote or endorse harmful ideological programs.”

In Feb. 2025, the United States Department of Education Office for Civil Rights issued a letter, referred to as the Dear Colleague letter, to all colleges and universities on the basis of racial preferencing in college admissions. In this letter, it was stated that “the department will no longer tolerate the overt and covert racial discrimination that has become widespread in this Nation’s educational institutions.”

Also in this letter was the claim that DEI seems to be the root of the issue, stating, “other programs dis-



Students attending Taste & Learn event to honor the Lenape Nation.

IMAGE COURTESY OF DREW STUAC ON INSTAGRAM

criminate in less direct, but equally insidious, ways. DEI programs, for example... stigmatize students who belong to particular racial groups based on crude racial stereotypes. Consequently, they deny students the ability to participate fully in the life of a school.”

There were major threats to federal funding cuts as well, if universities failed to comply. An editorial about this letter, from Inside Higher Ed, wrote that “the Feb. 14 letter is a full-fledged attack on affirmative action and diversity, equity and inclusion. It is also one of the worst attacks on academic freedom by the government in the history of American higher education.”

Currently, DEI is being used as a weapon against discrimination, but in the wrong context. Many believe that DEI programs allow unfair advantages to people, though they were designed to aid those who did not receive the same fair treatment as others. With all of the efforts to alter and eliminate many aspects of DEI within higher education, businesses and the federal government, it is evident that many institutions and companies have reacted in varied ways. While some remain compliant with the wishes of the Trump Administration, and others continue to promote DEI outside of the public eye, Drew and many other universities have continued to take action outwardly by promoting DEI through school events and initiatives.

This is why The Drew Acorn Editorial Board sought to highlight the importance of DEI in schools, and to call further attention to the intricate things Drew has been doing for diversity, equity and inclusion during these hostile times. Such events are crucial for students to be educated on diverse topics and to hear

the voices of marginalized groups rather than silencing them, and Drew has been doing just that.

On April 23, 2025, the official Drew University Instagram posted that “Drew University joined over 300 institutions in signing the American Association of Colleges and Universities’ ‘A Call for Constructive Engagement.’”

The beginning of the statement, posted on the AAC&U website, reads, “as leaders of America’s colleges, universities and scholarly societies, we speak with one voice against the unprecedented government overreach and political interference now endangering American higher education.” It continues to say, “We are open to constructive reform... However, we must oppose undue government intrusion in the lives of those who learn, live, and work on our campuses.”

It is highly important that Drew was among the universities to sign this statement, though it is also vital that this information was posted publicly. This action shows that Drew openly pushes back against the unjust involvement of the government in higher education and values the lives and education of its students.

In recent weeks, there have been countless events pertaining to topics within DEI on Drew’s campus that have been run by Drew’s education departments, programs and clubs.

For example, the women, gender and sexuality program and the law, justice and society program put together an event with the A&S Dean’s Office that featured the American Civil Liberties Union of New Jersey, which put on a presentation and Q&A regarding transgender rights in New Jersey. Those in attendance got the opportunity to learn more about many aspects of laws and how they affect

transgender people.

Those same programs, along with The Center for Civic Engagement, hosted the third annual DEI lecture on Nov. 5, where legal scholar, justice advocate and policy expert Dr. T. Anansi Wilson led a group discussion about those who are being mistreated and targeted by the government, including people of color, trans people, protestors, immigrants and queer people.

Many universities have removed or renamed certain departments and programs pertaining to diversity and inclusion, and in doing so, they eradicate a welcoming environment for a diverse population of students.

“It is important to remember that the university is sustaining its curricular commitments [to Africana studies, women’s, gender and sexuality studies, Middle East studies etc.] and it’s also not eliminating them or relabeling them,” said Professor Kolmar, chair of the women’s, gender and sexuality program. “The Deans of the college are committed to the future of such departments, and that is not insignificant in this moment when so many institutions, particularly public universities, are being pressured and told to eliminate those programs.”

Something else that is worth highlighting is that Drew partners with The People’s Institute for Survival and Beyond for anti-racism workshops and training that staff and faculty can attend. At the workshop titled “Antiracist Praxis and Liberatory Learning,” they conduct valuable conversations, learn to unpack power within institutions and work to ensure the best environment in the classrooms and on campus. This occurred last January and will happen again this coming January. Those who attended the training this past January are now working on a semes-

ter-long workshop to ensure that these practices are being upheld in the classroom.

The Drew University Student Activities department also recently hosted an event where they offered food, trivia and other activities to honor the Lenape people.

Clubs on campus have also been hosting events that promote DEI, such as Drew Planned Parenthood, which hosted a sex toy bingo event promoting safe sex measures and the destigmatization of sex. They also hosted a queer bingo event where students could win a wide array of pride-themed baskets and other prizes to recognize LGBTQ+ culture and community.

A lesser-known group on Drew’s campus is the Faculty of Color Caucus, which strives to “foster inclusivity of all people of color on campus, including students and staff,” as mentioned in their mission statement.

In the past, they have hosted panels highlighting community and inclusivity, and recently, they hosted a potluck where all were welcome. “It felt like we were all on the same level, and that’s what I appreciate so much about the FOCC. It is so important to bridge the gap between student and professor and to broaden connections in our future careers and in our cultures,” said Jaden Finn (‘28).

With all of these events and more, Drew is creating valuable student engagement and providing opportunities to educate students on a variety of cultures and ways of life that are different from their own. This is especially important for college students, as higher education is a place meant for learning about diverse topics to become a well-rounded citizen. At Drew, countless clubs and departments aim to provide a safe space for all minorities and people of color, which should always be a priority.

“No institution is ever perfect and there is always more that could be done and that is part of why student voices and expressing what you think should happen are much more powerful,” said Professor Kolmar.



The lead editorial is the collective opinion of the editorial board.

The Realm of Fantasy Books: A Pleasant Escape from the World

Katie Germinder
Opinions Section Editor

THIS ARTICLE CONTAINS MINOR SPOILERS FOR POPULAR FANTASY SERIES BY SARAH J. MAAS AND REBECCA YARROS!

It has become apparent to me how depressing the world around us has become. From wars to climate change, escalating the time until our demise, it is hard to find any ounce of good left in this world. Despite all the bad, there are ways to cope and escape into one's own little world. Personally, I do this through reading fantasy novels.

When I first wanted to get into the genre of fantasy books, more specifically romantic fantasy (romantasy), a friend of mine recommended I read a book series called "A Court of Thorns and Roses" by Sarah J. Maas.

The five-book series tells the story of Feyre Archeron navigating through the seven unique courts, ruled by their own High Lords, in the world of Prythian. While in this new world, she finds unexpected



A stack of pretty books.

IMAGE COURTESY OF RAW ON PIXEL

love and a new family that makes her feel like she finally belongs somewhere.

After finishing that series, which took about two or three months to complete, I picked up another Maas series, titled "Throne of Glass." This series explores similar themes of romance and finding one's way in the world with a twist of assassins and ancient, concealed magic that will soon come bursting to life.

Celaena Sardothien, the infamous assassin of Adarlan, battles her way up to the top during ruthless trials to become the king's personal bodyguard and save her-

self from a death sentence, fighting against enemies and her own internal identity struggle as she tries to find out where she is really from. The series has a total of eight books, including the prequels.

As of late, I have started immersing myself in the "Fourth Wing" series written by Rebecca Yarros. Violet Sorrengail, the daughter of a cut-throat commander of Basgiath War College, was forced to become a dragon rider by her mother.

Although she detested becoming a rider and would have much rather been a scribe in the Archives, she

found her inner strength and got into the Riders Quadrant after many tough competitions with her prospective classmates.

Now she must find her way in the violent world of the kingdom of Navarre, whose leadership hides secrets that will make Violet question everything about her loyalties and even her own mother. Despite only having read the first book in this three-book series, I am already enjoying the setup of the world and how much the characters change over the course of just the one book.

Even though the plots of these novel series vary, they

still all allow the reader to delve into a new, whimsical world of magic, dragons and more.

That is why I adore them so much. I am able to immerse myself in a new world far away from this one, truly being able to temporarily transport myself into a dream realm. It feels like I actually personally know all the characters within each page I read.

If you find delight in getting lost in a place filled with astonishing world-building, new and mysterious characters and mystical creatures, fantasy novels are a great way to do so. I hope that this article inspires you to take a step back from reality and let



Katie Germinder is a junior majoring in environmental studies and sustainability, minoring in anthropology and media and communications.

New Adaptation Brings Love for "Frankenstein" Back to Life

Delaney Smith
Staff Writer

This review contains spoilers for the movie

TW: This review talks about death and murder since they are a big part of the story

A new adaptation of "Frankenstein" has recently come to Netflix. "Frankenstein" (2025) introduces a new take on the 1818 novel by Mary Shelley.

This movie, which is rated R, was released on the streaming platform on Nov. 7. To the relief of many fans, the movie stayed relatively accurate to the book, but there were still a few key differences that led to slight alterations in the plot.

To begin on a positive note, I was immediately excited when the movie began by following the structure of the novel. Like the book, the movie was separated into the storylines of Captain Robert Walton in the epilogue, part one as Victor Frankenstein's story and part two as the Monster's side of the story.

This is a small detail, but it is essential from a storytelling point of view. The epilogue sets the rest of the movie up perfectly to jump back and forth between Frankenstein telling the story of how he created the Monster and the present events taking place on Walton's ship.

As mentioned before, the actual plot of Frankenstein's and the Monster's stories remained very similar to that of the book, something that always makes readers happy. There were, however, a few details that were noticeably absent.

The biggest change is the shocking absence of Frankenstein's childhood best friend, Henry Clerval. In addition to being a constant supporter of Frankenstein throughout the novel, Clerval also served as a foil to his character, something that is lacking in his absence.

Without his friend to be the voice of reason, this movie's Frankenstein has his obsession fed into by a new character, Henrich Harlander, the man funding his experiment.

The director of this movie also strayed from the original story with certain choices made regarding the deaths of other characters close to Frankenstein. The novel describes how, after

the Monster's requests for a female companion were denied, he proceeded to hunt down everyone Frankenstein cared about and murdered them as punishment.

In this new film, however, the Monster only intentionally killed one person close to Frankenstein, that being his younger brother, William Frankenstein. The death of Harlander was a tragic accident that was arguably indirectly caused by Victor.

More importantly, the death of Elizabeth Lavenza, William's fiancée and the woman Victor is in love with, is caused directly by Victor accidentally shooting her while aiming for the Monster.

These creative changes tie into a theme throughout the movie of Victor being the true monster. This idea is touched on in the book and comes down, in part, to the reader's interpretation, but in the movie, it is blatantly obvious. In fact, William's



Netflix logo on a laptop.

Image Courtesy of PixalHive

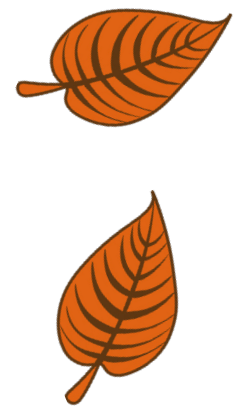
dying words to his brother are, "you were the monster."

Despite these changes, the movie was overall incredible. It was visually stunning; the mostly dark colors were often disrupted by shocking shades of red, often in the form of blood or fire, and blues and greens from Elizabeth's dresses. The settings of the film contributed to creating a serious, slightly disturbing atmosphere.

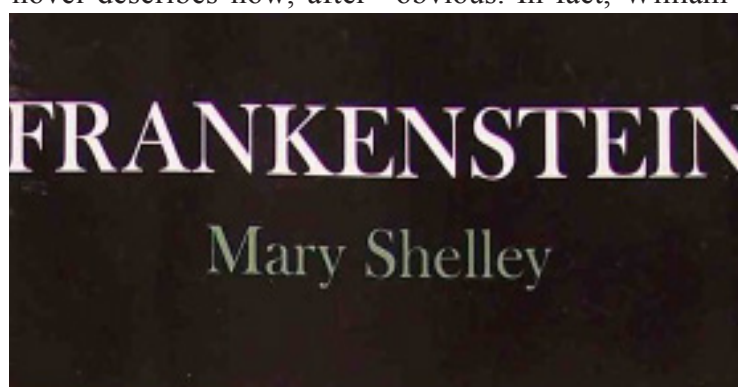
Performances by the actors tied the whole thing together, especially Oscar Isaac, who was incredible at portraying Victor's descent into madness, and Jacob Elordi, who successfully embodied the lurching movements of The Monster.

Well-done adaptations of classic novels into movies

have always held a special place in my heart, and "Frankenstein" (2025) has proved to be no exception.



Delaney Smith is first year majoring in English literature and creative writing, minoring in history and law, justice and society.



Title of the original Frankenstein book.

Image courtesy of Flickr.

COMING UP

Get live stats @GoDrewRangers

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 22
 MBB @ Juniata University
 Huntingdon, PA
 2:00 PM

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 25
 WBB vs. Fairleigh Dickinson
 Madison, NJ
 6:00 PM

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 5
 MSWIM vs. Ranger Invitational
 Madison, NJ
 10:00 AM

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 5
 WSWIM vs. Ranger Invitational
 Madison, NJ
 10:00 AM

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INSIDE:

Read Our Electrifying "Frankenstein" Movie Review



From Strings to the Strip: Getting to Know Men's Fencer Lupo Sala

Gillian Sampson
 Sports Editor

Hailing from Ses-
 to San Giovanni,
 Italy, Lupo Sala
 ('28) has quickly
 become a standout pres-
 ence on the Drew Univer-
 sity fencing team. Most
 recently, securing a victo-
 ry over Stevens Institute
 of Technology for the épée
 team at the MACFA event
 with a 5-1 bout.

A violinist and pianist,
 Sala now studies music with
 a focus on electronic compo-
 sition, blending his classical
 foundation with innovative
 creative pursuits. His dual
 passions for athletics and the
 arts shape his experience as
 both a student and a Ranger.

For Sala, the most
 memorable parts of being a
 Ranger come on his team's
 competition weekends. Rep-
 resenting Drew University
 on the strip brings him
 an unmatched sense of
 pride and excitement, and
 the shared energy with his
 teammates makes each meet



IMAGES COURTESY OF DREW.RANGERS.COM

Sala ('28) celebrates his win against Stevens Institute of Technology, a defining moment of his collegiate journey.

In the classroom, he's found a favorite in music theory with Professor Weston, a course that has transformed music theory into an engaging and practical subject. Sala appreciates the humor and clarity that finally made complex concepts feel accessible.

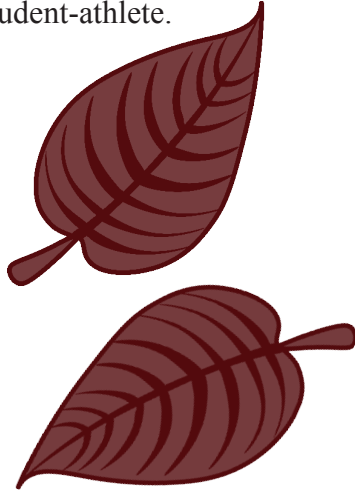
Like many student-athletes, balancing academics and athletics has strengthened Sala's sense of dis-

confidence to share who he is and the tools to better understand his own thoughts. Sala's journey reflects the power of passion, structure and self-expression, qualities that continue to define his impact both on and off the strip. Though his story is just beginning to unfold, his achievements to this point illustrate the true meaning behind being a Drew student-athlete.

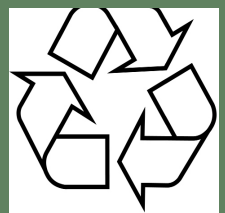
cipline. He credits fencing with helping him structure his schedule, allowing him to maintain strong grades without missing practice—a rhythm that has become essential to his success at Drew. Sala describes himself as introverted and someone who prefers listening, especially when meeting new people. Nonetheless, fencing and music have become his preferred languages of expression, giving Sala the

confidence to share who he is and the tools to better understand his own thoughts. Sala's journey reflects the power of passion, structure and self-expression, qualities that continue to define his impact both on and off the strip. Though his story is just beginning to unfold, his achievements to this point illustrate the true meaning behind being a Drew student-athlete.

Thank you for reading and recycling The Drew Acorn



Gillian Sampson is a senior currently in the Masters of Education Program.



Under New Leadership, Drew Men's Basketball Upsets TCNJ in Season Opener

Gillian Sampson
 Sports Editor

Drew University men's basketball launched a new era under first-year head coach Ryan Van Zelst, carrying momentum from last season's conference championship into an 82-78 win over national No. 24 College of New Jersey on Sunday to secure the Drew Tip-Off Tournament title at Baldwin Gym.

Van Zelst, the 17th head coach in the 96-year history of the program, brings extensive Division III experience to The Forest. His résumé includes head-coaching stints at Cabrini University and Penn State Abington — where he led the team to its best Division III season — along with seven years as associate head coach at Landmark rival University of Scranton. He most recently served as associate head coach at Division II Millersville University, helping guide the Marauders to a 19-12 record and a PSAC semifinal appearance in 2024-25.

On Sunday, his Rangers (2-0) showed poise late. Forward David Musial ('26) knocked down two free throws with 2.2 seconds remaining after TCNJ (1-1) missed a pair that could have tied the game. Drew had led 80-70 with under two minutes left before the Lions stormed back with an eight-point burst.

Guard Devon Musial ('26) started off his senior campaign in memorable fashion, pacing Drew with a career-high 15 points and seven rebounds, while guard Charlie Thornton ('27) added 15 off the bench. Andre De Los Reyes ('27) and Eli Yusavage ('27) chipped in 13 apiece, and forward Ben Manns ('28) scored 12.

Van Zelst's arrival comes with an emphasis on defense, discipline and academic excellence, hallmarks of his previous stops. At Penn State Abington, his team set a scoring defense record and reached the United East championship game. At Cabrini, he guided the program through its final season while elevating team GPA. His coaching

background also includes NCAA tournament runs at York College and Scranton, as well as national recognition on the NABC 30 Under 30 list.

With the season now in full swing, Drew aims to build on its opening-week momentum as Van Zelst settles into his new role, shaping a team hungry to defend its conference crown and return to the national stage.



Gillian Sampson is a senior currently in the Masters of Education Program.



HIGHLIGHT REEL

NOVEMBER 7 TO NOVEMBER 21

END-OF-SEASON LANDMARK CONFERENCE AWARDS

- Conference Rookie of the Year • FH • Bella Fini ('29)
- All-Conference Second Team • FH • Emily Caporrino ('28)
- All-Conference Second Team • FH • Ellie Kopec ('28)
- All-Conference Second Team • FH • Bella Fini ('29)
- All-Conference Second Team • MSOC • James Cahill
- All-Conference Second Team • WSOC • Kristina Lowe ('28)
- All-Conference Honorable Mention • WVB • Lindsey Millis

WEEKLY LANDMARK CONFERENCE AWARDS

- Defensive Athlete of the Week • WVB • Aidyn Stone ('28)
 - Athlete of the Week • MSWIM • Nicholas Heinio-Widell ('27)
- Have an athlete you want to highlight? Submit their name, class year and accomplishment by emailing sports.theacorn@drew.edu or visiting thedrewacorn.com/submit-a-tip