

THE OAKLAND POST

Oakland University's Independent Student Newspaper

Volume 46 | Issue 5 | September 9, 2020

“Go for the Gold” going virtual this fall

The series is moving online but offering the usual overview of OU and undergraduate programs
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VOLLEYBALL LEADER

Senior Jamie Walling takes on mentor role during pandemic

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PHOTO BY SOPHIE HUME

THIS WEEK

PHOTO OF THE WEEK



ROCK THE VOTE Oakland University Student Congress held a voter engagement day on Friday, Sept. 4 to get Golden Grizzlies registered to vote.
PHOTO / RYAN PINI

THE OAKLAND POST

EDITORIAL BOARD

Michael Pearce
Editor-in-Chief
mpearce@oakland.edu
248.370.4266

Emily Morris
Managing Editor
emorris@oakland.edu
248.370.2537

EDITORS

Ben Hume Web Editor
bhume@oakland.edu

Lauren Karmo Campus Editor
laurenkarmo@oakland.edu

Liz Kovac Engagement Editor
ekovac@oakland.edu

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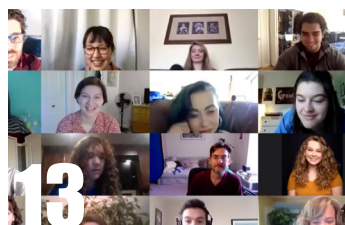
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ads@oaklandpostonline.com
248.370.4269

ADVISING

Garry Gilbert Editorial Adviser
ggilber@oakland.edu
248.370.2105
Don Ritenburgh Business Adviser
ritenbur@oakland.edu
248.370.2533



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VOTE AND CONNECT AT:
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POLL OF THE WEEK

HOW MANY PROFESSORS HAVE YOU HAD THAT ARE PEOPLE OF COLOR?

- A) ZERO
- B) THREE OR LESS
- C) ABOUT HALF OF MY PROFESSORS
- D) OVER HALF OF MY PROFESSORS

LAST ISSUE'S POLL

WILL YOU BE COMING BACK TO CAMPUS AT ALL THIS FALL?

37%
A) NO

21%
B) ONLY FOR CLASS

32%
C) YES, I'M LIVING ON CAMPUS

11%
D) YES, FOR CLASSES AND EVENTS

LOOKING BACK

Major changes for Music, Theatre and Dance occurred in 1992

AUTUMN PAGE

Staff Reporter

The changes resulted in a department of Music, Theatre and Dance. Approved by the Oakland University Board of Trustees, a new major was added to the existing bachelor of arts program in the College of Arts and Sciences.

Before the expansion of the department, OU's only offered performing arts major was in music, despite the university's history in theater and dance productions.

Karl Boelter, chairperson of the Music, Theatre and Dance department spoke about the cause of the change.

"[The change was made] in an effort to make use of the department as designed, we had experts in all three areas study, yet they weren't being utilized," he said.

OU had a long history in performing arts, but with this new addition, the department has more than just one major focused in one area.

Andrea Fischer, a board of trustees member, agreed that this addition was needed and has high hopes for the cultural opportunities, saying,

"I think it's terrific," she said. "Oakland is one of the primary cultural facilities in the state and we have such tremendous resources in this area that we should not ignore."

The new major would follow a 24 credit interdisciplinary core and the student would then choose a specialization. Either dance or theater, worth 28 credits, or music theater which is 30 credits.

Boelter said these requirements will help students "use all creative principles in each area, making them more well rounded. They'll benefit because they'll be exposed to all arts in general."

The funding for the new programs was resourced within the department. The department had to discontinue several undergraduate concentrations in order to provide funding for the new major.

The consensus was that the cancellations wouldn't hurt the program or enrollment, and the trade off was worth it.

According to Boelter, there was no concern in enrollment — instead, he believed the new major would even attract more students over the next three years.

Boelter said that the changes are already

apparent through "visible departmental increases, particularly in that major."

The change came about after the College of Arts and Sciences (CAS), which the Music, Theatre and Dance department is housed under, reviewed the current major offerings. After years of research, the planning council CAS put together — which included experts from universities across the country — made a recommendation to add the new major.

The department and the planning council collaborated in the process, and together they focused on student need and utilizing the existing strengths within the faculty at OU. They also looked at how other universities were running their performing arts programs to see what OU could do better. Based on those attributes, they implemented the changes without adding cost to the university.

The department of Music, Theatre and Dance has expanded since 1992.

There are a multitude of majors and minors within the department, and other non-academic programs, including residences, ensembles, productions and more.

Within the theatre degree, there are three

areas of concentrations — acting, musical theatre and theatre design and technology.

Studying abroad is also available to theatre and dance. Classical theatre study in Greece and contemporary dance in Germany are the two options.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the School of Music, Theatre and Dance is offering a hybrid curriculum with small in-person classes and online classes.

First students need to be accepted to OU, then audition for the department. Every degree program within the department does require and audition to be admitted into the program.

If a student is interested in joining the department but unsure of their specialization — "Be a Major for A Day" is available. This allows students to observe a class or two, meet the department chair and observe a masterclass.

The audition dates for fall 2021 are in January, February and March. More information can be found on OU's website.

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Admissions to host Go for the Gold virtual series

LAUREN REID

Staff Reporter

Undergraduate admissions will host the “Go for the Gold” online series, where interested incoming or current students have the opportunity to learn about Oakland University’s undergraduate programs, beginning Sept. 29.

“For our virtual “Go for the Gold” series, prospective students will receive an overview of OU’s 140 undergraduate programs [and have the] opportunity to talk with faculty, staff and current students,” said Shane Lewis, director of undergraduate admissions, via email. “We’ll also discuss information about scholarships and financial aid, the admission process and how to make a successful transition to college.”

Lewis recommends the sessions to high school juniors and seniors, transfer students and “really anyone interested in earning a bachelor’s degree.”

The upcoming sessions cover programs in the following academic disciplines: humanities, social sciences, nursing, health sciences, engineering and computer science, business, math, physics, biology, chemistry and creative arts, with dates spanning from Sept. 29 to Oct. 8.

“Students can sign up for each session that interests them,” Lewis said via email. “All sessions will feature scholarships and financial aid information, followed by faculty presentations from the featured academic area. Af-

ter learning about the featured academic major programs, students are invited to interact with the faculty, staff and student presenters in a Q&A panel.”

Visit Coordinator Mae Dennis mentioned that she is excited for students to see the level of care OU faculty and staff have for the various academic programs.

“We have world-class professors ready to share their knowledge and dedicated students ready to learn,” Dennis said via email. “We hope that students interested in pursuing their higher education with OU [will get] all their questions answered in regard to their chosen major program of interest.”

As far as fall plans, Lewis mentioned undergraduate admissions will continue to expand on virtual opportunities. Daily campus tours are continuing with limited group sizes, mandatory face coverings and social distancing.

“What we have learned from the pandemic is there will always be students who are interested in virtual opportunities, so we don’t see these offerings going away once we are able to return to larger, in-person events,” Lewis said via email.

When it comes to overall advice for OU students as the fall semester begins, Lewis encourages students to take advantage of opportunities offered, even in virtual formats. All campus services remain available for the benefit of students, as mentioned by Lewis.

“For prospective students, those newly considering OU for

2021 and beyond, we would definitely recommend attending the Go for the Gold virtual series, or another one of our virtual recruitment programs in order to learn more about life as an OU student,” Lewis said via email. “We want students to know we are here for them as they embark on the college search journey and are excited to help them through the application and admission process.”

To register for a session, visit “Go for the Gold” and to learn more about undergraduate admissions in general, visit their homepage.



PHOTO COURTESY OF OU ADMISSIONS

Previous “Go For the Gold” events like this were in-person. Now, admissions is launching an online version.

The Oakland Post is looking for ***SPORTS REPORTERS***

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Contact

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CAMPUS

AAUP procedures protect professors if they contract COVID-19

Concerns about contracting virus alleviated by American Association of University Professors

LAUREN KARMO
Campus Editor

Going into this semester, there has been an added concern about the health and safety of faculty members teaching face-to-face classes. With COVID-19 still a threat, many have been wondering what will happen should a professor get sick.

According to Interim Associate Provost Anne Hitt, if any faculty member were to contract the virus, the procedure will be in line with those already in place should anyone become unable to finish teaching their course.

"It's expected that if someone is sick that's a faculty [member] that they contact their class for one, but they should also be contacting their chair of the department," Hitt said. "And it's expected that the chair will have someone else, help fill in for that person, so that the class is covered, and the chair will find the best person in their department to cover the course. This is standard."

While all situations will be handled on a case-by-case situation, departments will need to have back up plans in place should there be any long term illnesses among faculty.

"If a person is going to be out for a long time, then what would have to happen is we would try to find [someone to fill in]," Hitt said. "We might have to hire somebody from outside, or more likely, we would have to pay somebody a stipend to teach the course."

According to Hitt, a faculty member did fall ill last spring, so the university has already dealt with this situation.

In that case, the class paused for the time being with all students receiving an Incomplete (I) grade until the professor was well enough to return to instruction later in the semester. Should a student fall ill, they will also receive an Incomplete grade and finish the semester when they have recovered.

"If you get an incomplete you're not paying for [the class] again, you just get to finish it up, and you've got a timeframe to finish it up," Hitt said.

The faculty union, the American Asso-

ciation of University Professors (AAUP), has these illness procedures detailed in the contract agreed upon between them and Oakland University.

The current AAUP contract agreement was authored in 2015 and set to expire in August 2020, however the AAUP and OU agreed on a one-year extension to postpone the timely bargaining process to next summer. The AAUP and OU chose to use this summer to focus on COVID-19 and fall planning, and will renegotiate the contract when it expires in August 2021.

The current contract states, "Faculty members not on layoff status who are unable to work because of illness, injury, or disability (including but not limited to disabilities relating to pregnancy) shall receive a full-time leave of absence ... Faculty members not on layoff status and unable to work because of illness, injury, or disability shall notify Oakland promptly."

All professors who are teaching face-to-face classes had the option to do so, according to Amy Pollard, OU-AAUP executive director and English special lecturer.

"Faculty were given the complete option [for in-person or virtual teaching]," she said. "One thing the administration did really well as soon as COVID[-19] happened in March, and we started talking about summer and then into fall faculty had the complete option to choose whether they wanted to teach face to face, whether they wanted to teach fully online."

With 291 faculty members teaching classes in person this fall, it was important to ensure everyone was following the safety precautions to prevent the spread.

"It's hard, I think, for students to recognize that faculty are really appreciative of them, and what I see on campus, everyone's had their masks on," Pollard said. "All the courses that I know people had today, the faculty set all the classes ran really smoothly, really well on campus. I think the important message that we want to get across to students is that sense of gratitude for them."

Police Files

Speeding while intoxicated

A speeding vehicle was seen traveling east on Walton Boulevard near midnight on Monday, Aug. 17. The two Oakland University Police patrol cars noticed the vehicle traveling 15 miles per hour over the speed limit and pursued, noticing the vehicle veering over from the fog line to the centerline of the road. At this point, the officer performed a traffic stop and pulled the vehicle over.

The driver smelled of alcohol when the officer approached the vehicle, and a field sobriety test was performed. The driver was unable to complete the heel-toe walking test, and when asked to count up to ten he completed the task, but in spanish.

The driver then admitted he had five to six Modelo beers before driving. His car was searched with his consent, but no additional intoxicants were found in his vehicle. He then took a breathalyzer test and blew a .112 blood alcohol content (BAC) — Michigan's legal limit is .08 BAC. He was handcuffed and taken to Oakland University Police Department (OUPD) for processing and chemical testing. His personal belongings were left in the car.

The driver was booked and tested after being told his rights. He remained in the police station until his BAC was low enough to leave, then he was released and picked up by his wife from the lobby of OUPD.

*Compiled by Ben Hume,
Web Editor*

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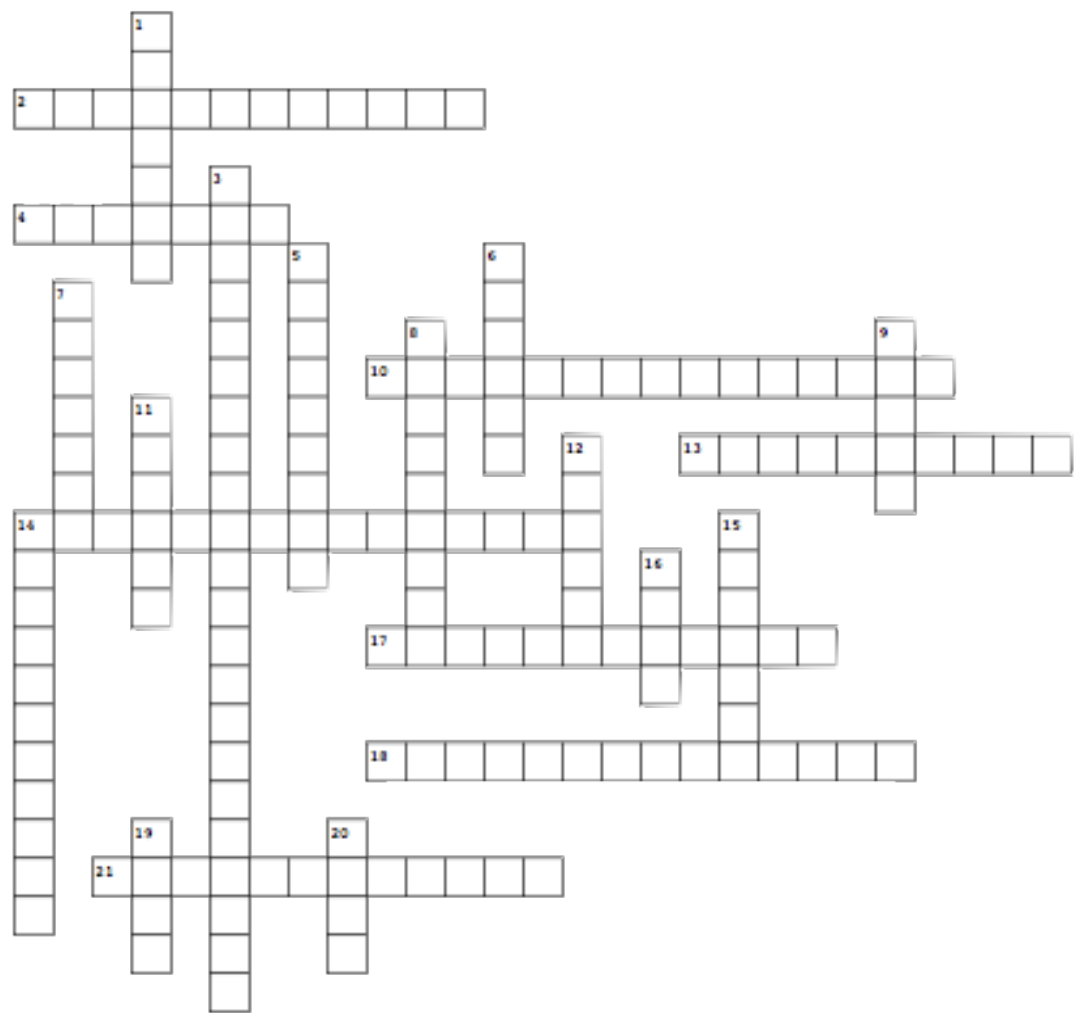
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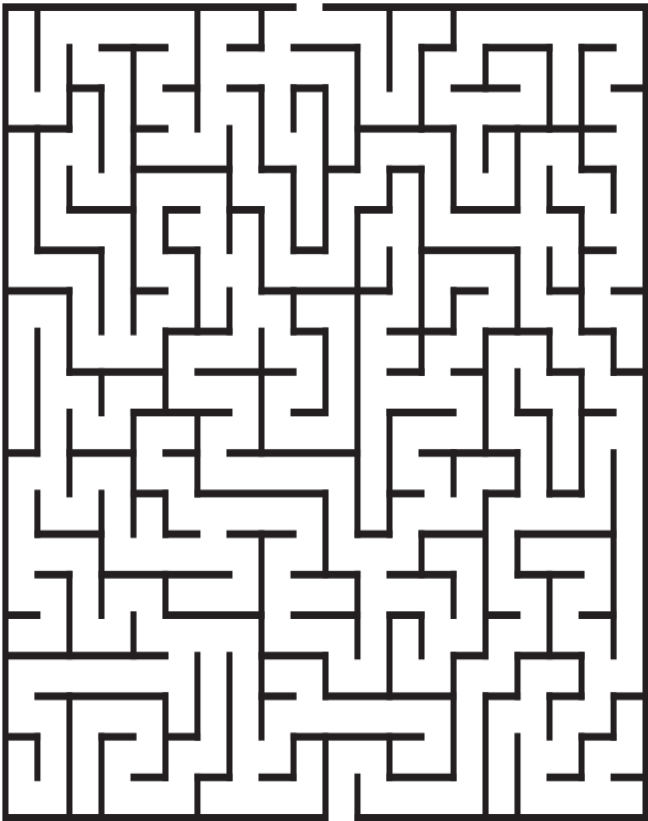


- Across**
- 3. Sports page
 - 4. OU mascot
 - 6. The fourth online class platform
 - 7. OU fight song
 - 9. OU colors
 - 11. COVID-19 rule
 - 13. Mulan Review page
 - 16. Google’s online class platform
 - 19. OU motto
 - 20. Page 16
 - 21. Pandemic attire
 - 22. Newest added platform

- Down**
- 1. Dr.Schneeweis’ online class option
 - 2. Center-spread topic
 - 5. Original online class platform
 - 8. What closed in the OC?
 - 10. Campus location
 - 12. OU president
 - 14. Page 10
 - 15. Oakland Post Editor-in-Chief
 - 17. Page 7
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Satire
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Joe Biden
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Online classroom communication

Story and Design by Emily Morris and Michael Pearce

The typical Oakland University classroom is evolving this year to cope with health and safety guidelines. In turn, online classroom tools are expanding with traditional forums, Yuja, Google meet, WebEx and Zoom.

Online classes have traditionally allowed a virtual classroom almost exclusively through forums — typing an initial response to an activity and responding to classmates later.

Moodle has many features for academic conversation, but perhaps none is more divisive than the forum. Some professors find value within Moodle through forums, others think it stifles communication.

“One of the biggest problems is that it’s not real time,” Communication Professor Sam Srauy, P h.D., said. “There is something engaging that I find about that sort of ad hoc real time communication that you just don’t get when it comes to forum posts.”

Shaun Moore, Director of e-Learning and instructor in the Writing and Rhetoric department, uses forums as a tool in his class and encourages students to respond in writing, audio or video. Although most students still use the traditional written method, some “want to just freely talk.”

“My experience in the classroom has been that when students have to write things out sometimes they get bogged down in the syntax and grammar... They’re unable to express the depth of thought they’re actually having,” said Cynthia Miree-Coppin, Interim Associate Provost and professor of management and marketing.

Forum posts are usually found within Moodle on discussion-based assignments. With COVID-19 pushing most classes online, professors will have to rely on forums and video calls more than live discussion.

Students will notice a new tab on their Moodle page this year, Yuja. According to OU support service manager, Dan Arnold, Yuja is video software that includes “video conferencing, lecture capturing and media management.”

Essentially, Yuja is intended to create a classroom environment, virtually. Professors will have the capability to screen share, create groups, offer virtual hand raises, mute and unmute any member of the class and record lectures.

Adina Schneeweis, a journalism professor, introduced Yuja into her classroom for the first time this summer. She is accustomed to online teaching — usually instructing a third of her classes online during the school year — but this year she is exclusively teaching virtually.

“I used Yuja for the first time this summer,” Schneeweis said. “Using video technology is not new to me, just Yuja ... It also took some trial and error to record the session.”

Srauy believes that video calls and in-person allow students to speak more freely, since the conversations are not permanent.

“What you say [in class or video chats] is temporary,” he said. “It is in that class and in our memory afterwards. Forum posts are a little more permanent. I can go back and literally copy and paste and throw it back in your face.”

Although Yuja specializes in classroom conference calls, Arnold admits that professors may end up using a variety of softwares, including forum discussion, Yuja, Google meet, Zoom and WebEx. Although all students and faculty already had been assigned Google emails (user@oakland.edu), Oakland University’s license with the company doesn’t extend to all its functions, like lecture capturing.

“It’s been mixed results. The reason why is that there are multiple tools in Yuja, and there’s a lot to learn when it comes to the overall program,” Arnold said.

Google Meet and WebEx are other platforms that OU is giving instructors

and students access to that may appear more familiar — Oakland University provides a gmail account to everyone, which directly connects to Google Meet. WebEx was also an available resource on Moodle before the pandemic spurred increased online classes.

Moore describes Google Meet as the “quick and easy” meeting option. Although OU’s license with Google does not extend to lecture and meeting recording like Yuja’s does, it offers meeting planning with Google Calendar and links to instantly join meetings via phone call or streaming.

WebEx usage increased by roughly 10 times the usual amount before March, according to Moore. Apart from Google Meet, WebEx allows a professor to control features such as, students’ video and audio, which resembles a classroom more than a meeting.

“The usage that we’ve gotten for our virtual conferencing software skyrocketed since March, obviously, when everything first started happening,” Moore said. “At the time, we just had WebEx and Google Meet.”

These limited choices lead OU to introduce Yuja over the summer and Zoom this fall.

Zoom has a comparable appearance and function to Google Meet and is the OU’s most recent new license. Even so, professors are not mandated to use the newest platform or any platform at all. Individual professors have the final say over what mode or modes they choose throughout the year though.

Even with multiple options to connect in a virtual environment, Schneeweis admits that results in the classroom can be varied. Students have some control over the effectiveness of classroom communication as well — this is dependent on “energy.”

“This can differ from semester to semester, even with the same content,” Schneeweis said. “It comes down to initiative — taking an online class requires much more organization and initiative on students’ part. So engaging with discussion is not only in the hands of the instructor and how the class is set up.”

In order to improve classroom discussions, Srauy thinks the best method is going synchronously, which is not an option for everyone.

“I taught synchronously this summer — and quite frankly, it was because I miss students,” Srauy said. “What I learned was that a significant portion of students have really terrible internet access — and that’s because the United States has terrible internet.”

For Srauy, this then becomes a “justice issue.” With differing social classes comes differing levels of privilege and access to good, reliable technology.

“The problem with my preferred way, synchronous, is that I’m essentially punishing you for being poor,” he said. “That’s problematic to do.”

In response, Srauy will be recording a synchronous lecture and share that with his three classes, in an effort to help any students who might not have reliable internet.

Professors and students alike are coping with new classroom formats, but having five communication options available gives everyone some flexibility again after the pandemic pushing the majority of classes online. Forums on Moodle, Yuja, Google meet, WebEx and Zoom may become the new norm during the school year.



Disney+'s "Mulan" not a must-buy at \$30

BRIDGET JANIS
Staff Reporter

Disney princess movie, "Mulan", got a complete makeover with a whole new mature vibe and action oriented plot. Disney+ released the remake of "Mulan" on Friday, Sept. 4, after the original release date of March 9 was pushed back by a couple months. The streaming service charged \$29.99, which it's really not worth.

But for the Disney+ subscribers that do not want to pay to see the film, Disney+ announced that they will release the film for free on Dec. 4.

"Mulan" is about a Chinese woman, Mulan (played by Liu Yifei), that is claimed to not bring honor to her family after being marked as not suited for marriage by the matchmaker.

She ends up going to war for her father in hopes of bringing honor to her family.

She disguises herself as a male to fit in with the soldiers and works hard to stand out and blend in at the same time during military training.

Mulan gains an ally in the group, Chen Honghui (played by Yoson An) that is based off of Li Shang in the 1998 version.

This live-action remake does contain a few changes compared to the original 1998 animated "Mulan." The Director, Niki Caro chose to not include Mushu, the lucky cricket — or probably the most surprising change — any songs.

While "Reflection" and "A Girl Worth Fighting For" have always been fan favorites of mine, these songs are not completely out of the picture, they are just not sung.

There are some hidden easter eggs of the musical tunes in the background

and characters slipping in phrases throughout the movie. An example being Commander Tung (played by Donnie Yen) saying "I'll make a man out of you" multiple times to the soldiers during training sessions.

It does contain more action compared to the old fashioned Disney children's version, and it is appropriately rated PG-13. There are more fighting scenes and less comedic relief which seems to give the movie a more mature vibe.

This remake of "Mulan" seems to be a whole new movie with a different vibe than some people's childhood favorite. While other Disney movie remakes seem to be more of an exact, or close to exact, remake, this one seems to stray far away from the original lines while still keeping some key parts of the plot.

With that in mind, I felt as if I never saw the original animated version I wouldn't truly know what's going on. But, I don't know anyone who hasn't.

For example, Mulan took her father's place in war because she cared so much about him and he was old and ill, but in the 2020 version, I didn't feel that there was much emotional development or explanation behind many actions.

While the film was pleasing to look at, it felt rushed and didn't have enough time to build up any background story or emotional connection to anything.

I don't think this movie is a must-buy film, especially for the price. It would be more efficient to wait until it comes out for free if you really want to see it.

While it was not terrible, it also was not great.

Rating: 2/5 stars

Establishment Dems, get off Twitter and do something



MICHAEL PEARCE
Editor-in-Chief

In a new digital age, politicians are finding a way to annoy their constituents better than ever.

Every politician (it seems) is on Twitter now. Ever since Donald Trump was elected president, the U.S. had another pandemic on their hands — politicians thinking they're funny and cool for posting snarky tweets.

Full disclosure: I am a big leftie. I can't stand the Republican Party, but this issue transcends identity politics. In fact, more democratic senators and house members take part in this utterly stupid act than the republican ones — it seems.

Especially with the impending election, Joe Biden and his elected supporters have been spamming Twitter with snarky comments about Trump. This is a picture-perfect example of empty gestures.

Instead of tweeting funny little jokes about Trump losing in November, how about you elected liberal senators get to work and try to make actual change? It's deplorable for elected officials to constantly act like they care about the common citizen and then do nothing to fix the myriad of issues in this country right now.

Empty gestures are made by a lot of politicians all the time (look at the democrats kneeling in Kente cloth). That did nothing but embarrass anyone who voted for them.

These behaviors make it difficult to support the left, because they have the right ideas regarding social change and the way the U.S. should look, but every single time, they mess it up. They want to be good, but they also can't escape the

fact they want money and power.

One politician who uses Twitter well is Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (AOC). As a younger person, she fits more on the platform. She knows how to use Twitter and seems authentic with her words, unlike these baby boomers trying to use internet slang.

AOC and other progressive politicians like Rashida Tlaib come across as genuine when they use Twitter because they fit more into the generation that uses Twitter. It's all about relatability, something that a rich, old politicians will never have for the main audience of Twitter, which is Generation Z and millennials.

The worst part about the Twitter pandering is the willing ignorance of their power. So many times, these politicians will tweet "wow, someone should do something about this!" Yes, you should. Not someone, you. Another reason that AOC and Tlaib come across as authentic is because they tweet about the problems, then go and do something about it.

AOC is constantly fighting for her beliefs and progressive action, as is Tlaib. These other "liberals" like Biden, Amy Klobuchar and Elizabeth Warren (to name a few) sit in their privilege and cast snarky tweets, pretending to make a difference in the world to get reelected year after year.

Young people need to see that these tweets and fun internet jabs are actually stoking the divide between the two majority parties more than they make change. They make politics more toxic.

In order to truly make a change, liberals have to see through the empty gestures and weak performative activism. They need to force these elected officials to actually do something with their platform, instead of taking these tweets as a signal that they're making change.



PHOTO COURTESY OF INSIDER

The live-action remake of Mulan was released to Disney+ on Sept. 4.

OPINION

I #StandwithSophie after she escapes abusive household

AUTUMN PAGE

Staff Reporter



A video went viral of a young girl crying and begging to not go home with her mother on Aug. 30. The young girl, Sophie Long, begs to stay with her dad and doesn't believe what her mother or her grandmother are telling her.

The parents recorded her reaction when Long refused to get out of her father's car after she stayed with him. It's unclear what happened before the cameras were turned on.

Trigger warning: There are multiple videos of several incidents, and they are heartbreaking and graphic.

They include topics of child molestation/rape and pedophilia.

The video that blew up on Aug. 30 takes place in Lacy Lakeview, Texas, where Long is pleading to stay with her father. Eventually she tells her mother and grandmother why she doesn't want to go — she's afraid of her mother's boyfriend.

"He always makes me feel bad about myself, and when I'm sleeping I always feel him touching me, and I don't want her [my mom] to know so she won't get mad at me," Long said.

After she said this, her mother and grandmother refused to believe her.

"I can guarantee you that he's not touching you," the grandmother said.

The Frisco Police Department opened an investigation, and the Lacy Lakeview Police Department spoke more openly about what's going on. The mother and father are in a custody battle over Long, and the mother lives 100 miles north of Lacy Lakeview and the father lives 100 miles south of Lacy Lakeview.

As a child of divorced parents, I understand this struggle. It's not the most

fun thing — to feel like you're living out of a bag.

He explains the past incidents involving the family, saying, "In July, 2020, the father reported the sexual abuse of the child to the appropriate law enforcement agency where the offense(s) occurred — these offenses did NOT occur in Lacy Lakeview."

Police Chief John Truehitt also adds that Children Protective Services (CPS) was present during this exchange.

Then discusses two incidents that happened in Lacy Lakeview — one on Aug. 18 and another one on Aug. 21. It's important to note that the officers from the Aug. 18 incident did have body cameras on them. The video shows that upon arrival, the disturbance had already stopped and everything was peaceful, according to Truehitt.

At the end of the statement, Truehitt adds, "Texas law prohibits law enforcement from identifying juveniles, especially in sexual abuse investigations. Therefore, many potential facts and the officer's body camera video cannot be released."

Long's stepmother created a GoFundMe on Aug. 21. On Sept. 2, it has reached almost \$150,000, and included in this GoFundMe has another video that is triggering.

"The biological mother, according to Sophie, is a part of the sexual abuse and is encouraging it," the stepmother writes. "She states her life has been threatened by these people and she is afraid, but has a brave heart and wants to help her brothers get away from the abuse too."

It's unclear if the grandmother knows about the abuse or the mother's involvement, what we know is that Long's mother and her boyfriend are the people that need to be removed from Long's life. Her father clearly cares about her.

After a majority of people watched the videos and found out about what was going on, they donated, started #standwithsophie and have been reaching out to the police.

As for me, I'm writing this in hopes to reach more people and put it on your radar. Watching all the videos had put a very sour feeling in my stomach and I knew I had to try to help.

The court date has been set to begin Nov. 4.

Hopefully, Long will finally get the justice she deserves — and a better life.

The anguish of Joe Biden's candidacy

JEFF THOMAS

Contributor

Wouldn't it be nice to vote for a candidate and not feel ashamed about it afterward?

Amid a crisis that has put the dysfunction of our political class on full display, it's disgraceful that Americans are once again expected to cast a "lesser of two evils" ballot. The situation is especially miserable when considering the strong position Democrats were in just months ago.

For Democratic voters, 2020 was promising. The primary yielded solid candidates to take the nomination. Tensions ran high, but Democrats preached party unity. For a while, this was enough. But it wouldn't be long until voters watched helplessly as the party tanked its primary.

Days before Super Tuesday the party orchestrated a coup, anointing Joe Biden and blocking Bernie Sanders. Talk of unity went out the window. Dread replaced optimism.

It's hard to imagine a worse candidate to face Donald Trump than Biden. As loathsome as Trump is, virtually every critique applicable to Trump could also be applied to Biden. Not that intellectual integrity is a virtue of American politics, but how can Democrats credibly attack Trump for misogyny, racism and corruption when Biden's career includes sexual harassment, co-authoring the crime bill and nepotism? In choosing Biden, Democrats forfeited leverage and political capital.

Today, COVID-19 ravages the country and the party base remains fractured.

If Biden is going to succeed, his campaign must reconcile with those who he has alienated.

"This is a key challenge for Biden — how to energize the Sanders voters," says Oakland University Political Science Professor John Klemanski. "He won't be able to make up votes by attracting Republicans ... [Biden] needs to energize the Democratic base as Trump has done with Republicans."

Arguments favoring Biden are logical. For instance, the argument for Democratic leadership. It's hard to refute the fact Democratic Governors like Gretchen Whitmer have handled COVID-19 better than Republicans like Ron DeSantis. Another argument is the importance of Supreme Court Justices.

A second Trump term would lead to



PHOTO COURTESY OF NBC NEWS

Ruth Bader Ginsberg (and perhaps others) being replaced by lifetime conservative appointees, further shifting jurisprudence to the right for generations.

To people regularly engaged in politics — leadership and courts are important. Though it's hard to say whether these factors will be enough to energize voters. The party desperately needs high turnout for the top of the ballot to supplement critical down ballot races. Will a milquetoast candidate like Biden motivate Americans who sat out the last presidential election to vote?

Polls show Biden leading Trump. But this far from the election, polls are complicated. Given the nature of the electoral college, national polls can be misleading as elections come down to a handful of battleground states. In 2016 Michigan, Wisconsin and Pennsylvania pushed Trump over the top despite a three million vote deficit in the popular vote.

The pandemic has similarly made polls even more volatile.

While it's true that Trump may fall on his sword, why not run a candidate that could beat Trump without a once in a century crisis?

Democrats positioned themselves in a way that success has less to do with Biden and more to do with Trump's incompetence, which is a shame. People are ready to engage in government, many have stood up for months now protesting the current administration.

Enthusiasm exists, but Democrats never seem able to harness it. Despite repeated failures, the party continually rejects new leadership in favor of familiar faces — corporate insiders.

As the party spirals downward, it continues to take the dignity of the American people with it.

Professors balance parenting, teaching during pandemic

EMILY MORRIS

Managing Editor

Online classes have left students adjusting to a new learning environment — their home — and many instructors are adapting to parallel changes, while balancing parent and professor roles.

“Popsicles, backyard bathing suits, family drawing parties, garden experiments, butterfly growing, and temporary tattooing” can be fun snippets of parenthood, and they flourished during the stay-at-home order, according to “Pandemic Parenting.” Ami Harbin and Alice MacLachlan wrote “Pandemic Parenting” as a response to these sudden changes and a pillar of relatability for other parents.

“Everybody’s reality is a constant juggling



PHOTO COURTESY OF ERIN DWYER
Erin Dwyer’s family (Erin Dwyer, Beatrice “Bea” Dwyer-Winn and Roger Winn).

of things,” said Rebecca Mercado-Jones, parent of two children (Lucia and Cruz) and communication professor.

Mercado-Jones describes balancing school and parenthood as “chaos” at times, and “chaos” can include a range of activities. In one moment, fixing the washing machine, tucking in her daughter, Lucia, for bed, cooking scrambled eggs, writing a letter of recommendation and preparing a lesson could all be at the forefront of her mind.

Although the stay-at-home order gave families more time together, the order was eventually lifted on June 12, and snapping back to complete normalcy still isn’t possible for anyone. Some OU professors are bringing all their work home with them, while simultaneously choosing to send their children back to school or daycare.

“It’s really hard to give myself the space — the mental space... it’s so much more work,” said Erin Dwyer, parent of one daughter (Beatrice) and history professor. “It’s one thing to walk into a room, do a lecture that I’ve given before and have a discussion that’s happened before. It’s entirely another to have to come up with discussion forums, go over discussion forums, shoot videos and re-shoot videos.”

Dwyer elected to take Beatrice back to daycare, after six months of being a “team of three.” Although daycare has offered added help, her partner, Roger has “been absolutely invaluable,” while balancing teaching and parenthood.



PHOTO COURTESY OF REBECCA MERCADO-JONES
Rebecca Mercado-Jones’ family (Lucía Jones, Dorian Taliaferro Jones, Rebecca Mercado-Jones and Cruz Jones).

“Historically, we certainly live in a patriarchy,” Dwyer said. “The expectation is that women are the primary providers of childcare. Even in the 21st century, that really remains the invisible work... I don’t know what I would do if I didn’t have a partner who really is a feminist.”

This dynamic becomes important as Mercado-Jones admits schools and daycares closing again is a matter of “when, not if.” Then cries and laughter of children will be inevitable background sounds to virtual teaching.

“There’s never a dull moment... Whenever my audio is on, it’s like a chorus of

crying,” Mercado-Jones said.

Even so, Mercado-Jones and Dwyer described continuing to teach as a “privilege.” Reverting back to pre-March classrooms isn’t possible yet, but attending class — in any sense — is a welcomed continuation for them.

“Being a mom is all-encompassing,” Mercado-Jones said. “Even though you might have physical distance [while on campus], but you don’t have mental distance... when it’s compounded with COVID-19, the tough part is dealing with that level of uncertainty.”

OU professors publish women in hip-hop book

RACHEL YIM

Staff Reporter

Rebekah Farrugia and Kellie Hay, professors in the Department of Communication, Journalism and Public Relations, published a book called “Women Rapping Revolution: Hip Hop and Community Building in Detroit” in May.

Detroit has long been recognized as a center of musical innovation and social change. Farrugia and Hay decided to study and write about hip hop culture after attending an event in the Cass Corridor, titled “The Foundation: Women in Hip Hop Open Mic Night.”

“It was an opportunity to educate and encourage the community to think about the negative messages and values that are sometimes promoted in hip hop culture,” Farrugia said. “It didn’t take us long after that to decide that this rich culture was the one we wanted to dive into, study and write about because there was a lot going on that the world needed to know about.

From studying each topic, to publishing articles in academic journals and to finalizing details for publication, the process took about seven years.

“We were really happy to find out that our writing styles blended well together,” Hay said. “We have this running joke that ‘it takes two.’”

According to Farrugia and Hay, their book is about how women create stages for themselves in Detroit’s underground hip-hop scene and how their cultural production reverberates beyond hip-hop to impact the broader community.

The book not only contains textual analysis on hip-hop culture and particular songs, but it also highlights topics such as feminism and activism. Farrugia and Hay explained that a number of women involved in this industry work through vulnerability in their music as a process of growth and gaining strength, aka the idea of being a “Vulnerable Maverick.”

They believed that this “Vulnerable Maverick” isn’t a correct representation of “Black womanhood.” With their belief, they wrote the book as a step in the direction of eliminating systemic racism.

“We need the powers that would [convince] the white society to see people of color as multidimensional human beings,” Farrugia said.

Through this book, Farrugia and Hay wanted to deliver two lessons: Black citizens have to be viewed as three dimensional human beings by dominant, white society, and value all of the elements that make up hip hop culture.

It is so much more than what the commercial media industry presents, and there is much talent and brilliance that is never on the public stage.

Farrugia and Hay mentioned the impact the publishing process brought to them. It allowed them to become more thoughtful researchers and better writers, after questioning and collaborating.

As authors and professors, Farrugia and Hay hope their book reaches the broadcast possible audience, and they hope people to teach with it, have community conversations and learn how scholars and artists collaborate.

To learn more about Farrugia and Hay’s work, visit University of California Press.

SMTD connects with Broadway, Tony winners

BRIDGET JANIS

Staff Reporter

The Summer Masterclasses Series provided opportunities to students to go in front of a class and get critiques from a professional that is well-respected in their field. This summer, with the COVID-19 pandemic, Oakland University students participated in these classes through Zoom.

Masterclass is taught by somebody who's a seasoned professional in their field. The student will go up in front of one class and get critiques to work on and improve themselves.

The first Summer Masterclass was on March 26 and continued every week throughout the summer.

"I felt bad for all our students that had summer work planned," Josh Young, assistant professor and Tony Award nominee said. "I wanted to think of something that we could do to keep their skills sharp and also to keep their morale up."

Young worked with all the students involved on how to set up their camera and microphone to be the best quality possible to make the experience easier and more valuable.

With Young's background experience with Broadway, he was able to reach out to his old agents and casting directors to invite them to join the Zoom calls.

"People in this industry, they've got a lot of time on their hands, unfortunately these days," Young said. "They were all eager and happy to do me a favor."

The students were able to work with the most well-respected people in their industry from Broadway. The Masterclasses featured composers, lyricists, book writers, Tony winners and casting directors from shows such as "Hamil-

ton," "Les Miserables" and "Phantom of the Opera."

Tony Award winning composer Stephen Schwartz, Broadway Composer Andrew Lippa, Tony Award winner Lea Salonga, Tony Award nominee Norm Lewis, Broadway and TV star Cory Cott, Tony Award winner Jesse Mueller and Broadway star Laura Michelle Kelly were some of the featured teachers of the Masterclasses.

Working with these people gives students the opportunities to build up their resume. They were also able to get feedback from people they look up to.

OU Senior Hannah Johnson, who is currently majoring in Musical Theater, was a part of the Masterclasses throughout the summer and got the opportunity to work with one of her favorites, Sierra Boggess.

"When I got to perform — with my idols especially — that was like a dream come true for me that I never thought would happen," Johnson said.

Johnson felt that working with these Broadway stars allowed her to gain a lot of experience and get a lot of feedback that ended up encouraging her.

"The huge thing with working with big Broadway stars is just feeling that it's actually possible to do this," Johnson said. "It makes you remember that these people are real and these dreams that we have are real and it just gave me a lot of encouragement."

The original plan for the Masterclasses was just because of COVID-19 having disrupted the past school year and cutting the in-person classes short. But, Young said that the classes were so successful that he plans to continue them throughout the school year and move them to twice a month.



EMILY MORRIS | MANAGING EDITOR

Theater in Varner Hall will be different, with no in-person performances scheduled.

Live theater takes on a new look in 2020

EMILY MORRIS

Managing Editor

Oakland University's theater program is considering new methods to connect with their audiences and maintain social distancing.

Theater inherently involves interaction and reaction from the actors and the audience, according to Anthony Guest, chair of the theater department. Currently, there is not one definitive solution to foster live theater, but the department is considering performances that are pre-filmed, radio, outdoor and indoor small gatherings with its attendees wearing masks.

"It's been difficult, and students will have to shift... an important part of the creative process is verification, and when you have a [live] audience there is that strong relationship."

Hannah Johnson, a senior in the theater program, is beginning the semester with a pre-recorded performance, "Major Barbara," which was postponed from the spring. Initially, Zoom was a contending platform to maintain a live audience connection, but it was ruled out, due to unpredictable WiFi issues and delays that happened during rehearsals.

"It makes it pretty much impossible to have a live audience for a full show," Johnson said. "So, everything will probably be recorded, which also makes it really different for us as performers because we're used to having audiences and reactions."

Any pre-recorded performances will be created in partnership with the film studies and production department. Each actor will have the chance to individually record their parts and scenes will be melded together with a combination of editing and graphics, according to Johnson.

"If they don't have much film experience or TV experience... this kind of forces them into that world," Guest said.

Admission to pre-recorded performances

has not been decided yet, but Guest affirmed that determining a paywall will be "our next step."

"Failure: A Love Story" will be the first production to take a radio approach this year. Pre-recording for that show will begin in October, and it will be released to an audience following editing. There will be an admission fee for this format, as well.

Although virtual productions are at OU's forefront right now, Emily Fishman, a senior in the theater department, is looking elsewhere for small live audiences. Thus far, she hasn't committed to any of OU's productions, but she'll be traveling across Michigan and to Kansas to perform live with small audiences.

"It just felt like we hit a wall," Fishman said. "Broadway closed, and everything closed. All of my shows got pushed back or canceled. It just felt really defeating... but there are theaters that are doing smaller shows."

Next semester OU could offer similar options again too. Guest admitted that it's possible with "a glimpse of good weather" in the summer, students may be permitted to perform outdoors with live audiences again.

The theater department also mulled over having small indoor performances eventually, but masks would have to be involved, as of now. If actors or their audience members have to cover their expressions in live theater, it would interrupt what Guest refers to as the "theater triangle" — the relationship with "the actor, their partner and the audience."

"It's a three pronged relationship, and your hope as an actor is [that] when you're performing there's a balanced relationship — that you're aware that the audience is there."

The theater department will continue to evolve throughout the school year, abiding by current safety measures. Although OU actors are forced to be creative and flexible — as always — the show must go on.



PHOTO COURTESY OF OU MAGAZINE

The school of Music, Theatre and Dance held Masterclasses with Broadway talent.

Senior volleyball star leads team through postponement



PHOTO COURTESY OF OU ATHLETICS

Entering her senior season, Jamie Walling is now dealing with a completely different schedule.

MICHAEL PEARCE Editor-in-Chief

In her fourth and final season at Oakland University, Jamie Walling is facing the challenges of a postponed season and becoming a senior leader, all at once.

The 2018 All-League first team and 2019 All-League honorable mention middle hitter has led Oakland in kills and hitting percentage during her tenure as a Golden Grizzly.

Now, as a senior, she is forced to adapt to the postponement of her fall season.

"In my position so far, being a senior, it's been hard to have it taken from me," Walling said. "A normal season, the normalcy of everything and team bonding has kind of been taken from us."

After the spring, Walling felt like the team was hitting its stride and meshing well. She felt the team was at peak physical shape and was close-knit. Now, with the season pushed to this spring, the team will have to carry that momentum farther.

The team still is unsure of what practices will look like and when they might be.

"We're all kind of waiting around and trying to figure out what we're doing," Walling said. "It's kind of a puzzle right now, and I think that's part of the fun. It's part of the anticipation and getting back into the groove of everything."

As a leader on the court, Walling has always had a leadership role. Now her leadership responsibilities stretch farther than when she was a junior or younger.

"It definitely takes some getting used to," she said. "Knowing that I was an underclassman, I tried to fill a leadership role under the seniors we had on the team. Now, I

get to be the trend setter for the team, and I get to be more of a role model. My actions reflect on everyone else."

Walling is not the only senior on the team. She has Lindsay Wightman and Kenzie Dunn on the squad with her. One of Walling's on-court goals is to have a "special" year with the two of them.

"I want a Horizon League Championship, and I want to go to the NCAA tournament with my girls," she said. "I don't care about my stats as much as I care about winning with my team and doing something really special for me, Lindsay's and Kenzie's last year."

The three seniors have played together all four years, but with the season postponement, Dunn will not be playing in the spring. She is set to graduate in December.

"We've been playing together for four years now, and I really wouldn't want to play my last season without them," Walling said. "Kenzie won't be there this spring, so it'll be hard to play without her because she's always been there. Lindsay and I have been each other's backbones at times, and I'm looking forward to spending my last year with her."

After volleyball, Walling hopes to find a steady job and "go into the adult world." This summer she interned as a bank examiner at the Federal Reserve Bank. Currently, she is looking into the field of financial planning.

Before graduating, though, Walling has a season to focus on. That season, she thinks, will be an improvement on the previous one, where the Golden Grizzlies finished sixth in the Horizon League.

"I think we can pick right back where we left off and be even better than last year," Walling said.

Information courtesy of the Oakland University Counseling Center

MENTAL HEALTH TIPS DURING COVID-19



1. It's okay to not be okay

Take a break, mental health is just as important

2. Be flexible and adaptable

Accepting change makes it easier to deal with

3. Know your limits on news consumption

Balance is key, keep your consumption healthy

4. Write three things you're excited about each morning

Give yourself something to look forward to

5. Write three happy things about your day at night

Even the smallest things count

6. Routine is king

Focus on the things you can control

7. Connect with others creatively

Social media, video calls, online parties

8. Daily self-care

Exercise, relaxation, pet therapy, journaling

9. Acknowledge the grief we're experiencing

Loss of loved ones and of our old lives/routines

10. Know your resources

Call OUCC at 248-370-3465, talk to friends/family

Golf team adapts to adjusted schedule

MICHAEL PEARCE

Editor-in-Chief

Golf is a sport that promotes social distancing naturally, yet they are still affected by the pandemic.

Despite being able to play the sport socially distanced, COVID-19 presents other issues — Oakland University golfers are focused on the other aspects of golf.

Typically, the men's golf team rarely competes in tournaments near OU. They are almost always traveling to locations like South Carolina, North Carolina and Florida.

So, while COVID-19 restrictions might not directly affect golfers on the course, like they do with more contact sports, they still are affecting the OU golf squads.

"Guys were really hoping that because golf is a relatively safe sports that we would have a fall season," Men's Head Coach Nick Pumford said. "We still have to travel together as a team, stay in a hotel and go out to dinner — that sort of thing. So, there's a lot of external factors that a lot of people don't realize need to be factored in."

The golf teams take the fall, which is now postponed, and compete in non-championship tournaments. These help the coaching staffs figure out which players to put on the travel squads for the championship season.

"When it comes to the development standard, while we can practice, it is going to be difficult to not be in that team environment at tournaments," Pumford said.

During the summer, golfers were still able to compete in their summer schedule once the lockdown restrictions were lifted by Gov. Gretchen Whitmer. Instead of judging the fall season, Pumford will judge a limited sample size.

"The travel squad is dictated on how guys play in the

fall," Pumford said. "We're not going to have that. So, a lot of it's going to be based off my gut feeling about what the guys did in the summer."

Even though the men's golf team will lose their entire fall season, Pumford is taking a positive look at the forced break they must take.

In a standard season, golfers have little to no time to adjust their swing, due to consistent competition. Now, they have time to make major adjustments to their game.

"What I've told the guys is 'listen, if there's any big changes that we need to make with your golf swing and golf game, now is the time to do it right,'" Pumford said.

Tournaments usually pair golfers with similarly ranked golfers from other schools for each round. However, with social distancing enforced, golf tournaments might look different during the 2021 spring season.

"I think what will happen is all the teams are going to play with each other," Pumford said. "We're just going to be in our own little bubble. I think that'll be unique and challenging getting used to that, but I think that's what it's going to look like."

Another challenge the golf team will face is the National Collegiate Athletics Association (NCAA) rules on minimum events. Each season, the team must play at least eight different events.

"Usually four of our events are in the fall and then five events in the spring," Pumford said. "Right now, they haven't changed the minimum number of events, so that could get a bit tricky."

To fulfill that requirement if it's not changed, the Golden Grizzlies might have to get creative with scheduling. Pumford suggested the possibility of adding multiple one-



PHOTO COURTESY OF OU ATHLETICS

Men's Golf Head Coach Nick Pumford believes that though golf is a socially distant sport, they still have troubles with the pandemic. The fall golf season was recently postponed.

day events over the course of a weekend.

Despite the uncertainties of the 2020-2021 season, Pumford is keeping a positive mindset.

"At the end of the day, golf is golf," he said. "It doesn't matter who you're playing with or where you're playing at. The objective is to get the ball in the hole as quick as possible."

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A heartbreaking loss for beanie baby Joe Kennedy

LAUREN KARMO
Campus Editor

In a heated battle between incumbent (and king) Sen. Ed Markey and fresh-faced beanie baby Rep. Joe Kennedy III, the Green New Deal champ came out on top for another progressive win for the radical left. As some of you may have heard, this is a really big deal because a Kennedy has never lost a political race in Massachusetts — ever.

Before we get into it, as a disclaimer, I want everyone to know I am an expert on the Kennedys. For proof, I'll send you my second grade report on Mr. John F. for reference. Shoot me an email.

What's so historic about our hero Markey in this story is that he, like a true underdog, had all the odds stacked against him.

Not only was his 50-year senate run challenged by one of the newest installments of the Kennedy dynasty, but his opponent also got the endorsement of speaker of the house Nancy Pelosi (D-Md.). Talk about tough.

I'll be honest, I hate an underdog. Who really picks David over Goliath, workers' unions over Walmart or Oakland University basketball over Michigan State ... too far? What I'm saying is, this old man who has done the work to author and pass bills supporting environmental protections and the Green New Deal needs to back off. I want a Kennedy, and I want him now.

The Kennedys are a long-standing family dynasty who have earned our respect. Never mind the fact that the Kennedys are most well known for being killed (rest in power, JFK), crazy (wonder how that lobotomy felt, Rosemary) or just plain stuck up (our girly Kick went from

American princess to English Dutchess real quick). It's disrespectful to the family that got us *checks hand* astronauts? to not elect young Joe.

The true reason Markey prevailed was not the support of the stuffy establishment, but that of grassroots voters and a shiny stamp of approval from the Sunrise Movement — an environmentalist group led by young Americans.

Stupid young people, honestly. They're out here listening to WAP and calling themselves intellectuals.

They don't belong in our good American politics. We should raise the voting age back to 25, the way it was pre-26th amendment, when America was really great.

Or maybe that was in 1919? Or maybe the 1800s ... still a little unclear when America was great. I'll do some journalistic investigations and get back to y'all on that.

Who even cares about the environment anyways? Definitely not me. I don't understand how that's such a hot button issue for all these damn young people.

The environment has been fine for years, why are we all the sudden so concerned with it now. On a totally unrelated note, did anyone go to Lake Michigan this summer?

The water levels rose so high the beach was totally destroyed.

Crazy how that just happens — totally and completely unrelated to climate change, which is a hoax!

In all seriousness, I send my deepest condolences to Joe Kennedy III. You got your ass handed to you, and that's gotta hurt. Joe, meet me for drinks at the Markey celebration party, Sagebrush, 7 p.m. — you're gonna need it, buddy.



BEN HUME | WEB EDITOR

Little Joey lost in Massachusetts as a Kennedy, which is almost as rare as seeing a unicorn.



Information courtesy of Oakland University
and the Center for Disease Control.

COVID-19 BEST PRACTICES

1.

Wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.

2.

Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands.

3.

Avoid close contact with people who are sick.

4.

Stay home when you are sick.

5.

Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue. Immediately throw tissues away.

6.

Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects or surfaces.

7.

Keep all age recommended vaccines up to date including annual flu vaccine.