

# THE OAKLAND POST

Oakland University's Independent Student Newspaper

Volume 46 | Issue 16 | December 2, 2020

## Snowfall welcomes Golden Grizzlies' holiday break

### NEW COURSE

Coming in winter, an online course about online learning

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### MOVIE MAKER

Oakland alumna unpacks her journey to L.A.

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### SEASON OPENER

Men's basketball drops first game against Xavier University

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PHOTO BY: EMILY MORRIS



# THIS WEEK

## PHOTO OF THE WEEK



**OT THRILLER** The men's basketball team lost in a tight contest with the No. 25 ranked Michigan Wolverines in Ann Arbor, 81-71.  
*PHOTO / OU ATHLETICS*



**3 HOT BUTTON TOPIC**  
*BioButton becomes available for students, faculty*  
*Photo/Oakland University*



**10 IT'S LIT**  
*Meadow Brook debuts new light show in place of holiday walk.*  
*Photo/Oakland University*



**13 MILEY'S BACK**  
*Miley Cyrus drops new album, "Plastic Hearts," over Thanksgiving weekend.*  
*Photo/Variety*

# THE OAKLAND POST

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## POLL OF THE WEEK

WHAT ARE YOUR HOLIDAY PLANS?

- A) SIT AT HOME
- B) VIRTUAL CELEBRATIONS!
- C) HANG WITH FAMILY, SAFELY!
- D) WHAT DAY IS IT AGAIN?

## LAST ISSUE'S POLL

WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE THANKSGIVING FOOD?

17%  
A) MASHED POTATOES

25%  
B) TURKEY

20%  
C) MAC AND CHEESE

38%  
D) STUFFING

## CAMPUS

# Annual SPB 'GrizzHunt' tradition turns virtual

**RACHEL YIM**

Staff Reporter

For the fourth year, GrizzHunt focused on fun and engagement from Tuesday, Nov. 17 - Tuesday, Nov. 24.

Similar to the Scavenger Hunt, GrizzHunt is an online, week-long competition where students can earn points by finding items, puzzles and promotions from an online list.

Students could participate by themselves or in teams. Throughout the week, the participants found items and performed tasks the prompts provided in order to earn points.

This year's competition followed similar procedures as past years' but included only a few challenges on campus, due to the pandemic, according to Megan Wayne, the special events director of the Student Program Board (SPB).

COVID-19 has increased depression, stress and anxiety among college students. Through GrizzHunt, students can take a break from school and improve their mental health. While the classes are all online and student activities are extremely limited, GrizzHunt created a safe and fun environment for the students to enjoy during the Thanksgiving week.



PHOTO COURTESY OF SPB  
GrizzHunt, the yearly event, had to shift its focus this year.

"It was really nice to get to do something with friends since everything is online now, and to have a break during the semester to do something fun," Isabella Mahuad, one of the participants of GrizzHunt, said.

Planning the event was different from past years for the SPB. Wayne said the most important part of the planning process was coming up with safe and socially distant

challenges. Another challenge included figuring out how to reward individuals in the safest way.

"It seems like students enjoy completing the challenges given to them," Wayne said. "GrizzHunt is definitely a good way for people to take a break from the stress of their everyday life. It gives them a chance to do something fun while having some friendly competition with other teams."

Despite a variety of challenges faced by both the members of the SPB and the participants due to COVID-19, OU's traditional GrizzHunt marked another successful year.

Any questions about the prizes for GrizzHunt or additional information about other events hosted by the SPB can be answered by Owen Bennett, the president of the SPB. Students can also visit its official website or visit GrizzOrgs for its student organization network.

Through the pandemic, SPB continues to figure out a way to enhance student life by providing high quality and diverse programs, activities and events for the OU community during this pandemic.

"I am looking forward to seeing everyone's submissions," Wayne said. "It will be fun to see what everyone comes up with."

## BioButton made available for students, faculty

*Administration hopes students will pick up buttons for contact tracing*

**MICHAEL PEARCE**

Editor-In-Chief

After months of testing and launching the app, the BioButton is now available to Oakland students and faculty.

The button "...tracks a wearer's skin temperature, respiratory rate and heart rate at rest. The BioButton app combines the wearer's vital sign information with answers to a set of daily screening questions to indicate if users are cleared for regular activities or at risk for a COVID-19 infection," according to OU's website.

The button is free for anyone with a "GrizzID," as long as they fill out a form. The button currently connects with the Android app but not the iPhone.

"Apple is sitting on their latest app update and not releasing the new version," Vice President of Research David Stone said. "We've been working with the company as we've been working through the legal challenges."

The process of implementing the button, which was announced to OU students and

faculty on Aug. 1, took a few months because of privacy concerns.

When the button was first announced, students started an online petition, citing privacy concerns as their main source of hesitancy.

The BioButton does not track the user or share their data with anyone but the user.

"The process took a long time," Stone said. "There was a lot of concern about privacy, and we wanted to make sure we were doing this in a way that student data wasn't being shared — which it's not."

The contact tracing feature was another concern of many when it was announced. If a user encounters another user who is exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19, the button will alert them. This feature is solely based on Bluetooth and does not share personal information with the other users or a third party.

Stone said that in his experience, the people who have tried out the button have almost forgot it was on them.

"Everybody says that it's really easy — that once it's on, you forget about it," he said. "It's very simple to use and very



PHOTO COURTESY OF OAKLAND UNIVERSITY  
BioButtons, which track signs of COVID-19, is now available at multiple pickup spots.

simple to wear — you get updates every six hours."

The button can be picked up Monday-Friday at the Oakland Center, Vandenberg Hall or Hillcrest Hall from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

It also can be picked up from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. at the Recreation Center, which closes at the semester's end.

Stone hopes students will pick up the BioButton before winter break to improve contact tracing.

"We really hope that in the period between thanksgiving and the winter break that students go pick them up so that they bring them over the break when they're out in the world," Stone said.



# Annual 'Stress Less Day' to take place Dec. 3



PHOTO COURTESY OF OAKLANDU.CAMPUSLABS.

**LAUREN REID**  
*Sports Editor*

Finals week is a tough time for any college student, especially a college student during a global pandemic. To help students relax and alleviate stress, Oakland University's annual Stress Less Day will be in full swing on Thursday, Dec. 3. With a variety of different online workshops and activities, it may be an escape from end-of-semester apprehension.

"We know finals are coming up — and that's stressful — as is this whole semester," said Director of the Office for Student Involvement (OSI), Jean Ann Miller. "[Stress Less Day] is a way to give back to students and let them know we're concerned about their mental health."

Stress Less Day sports a lineup of activities from OU offices and student organizations.

Kicking off the activities, at noon on Dec. 3, the Counseling Center will host a "Mindfulness and Motivation Workshop."

"It's going to be a great way to start off the day," Miller said. "The Counseling Center has been working hard this semester to connect with students and offer them different ways to reduce their stress, anxiety and avoid depression."

From 1-3 p.m., Student Activities Funding Board (SAFB) is bringing in a caricature artist and from 2-3 p.m., University Recreation and Wellbeing is hosting a "Sweat your Stress Away" virtual HIIT Workout. SAFB is also doing tarot card readings from 4-6 p.m. with individual time slots.

"I am most excited to be able to provide some new entertainment for the students

and hopefully relieve some stress," said SAFB Chair, Adeline Perhogan. "I think the students will appreciate these events (caricature artist and tarot card readings) because they're a little different than our previous virtual events, and with the caricature artist students will get to keep the drawing."

At 6 p.m., Residence Life Association will host an open mic night and at 7 p.m., Student Life Lecture Board (SLLB), WXOU and The Oakland Post are sponsoring intention bracelet making.

"The intention bracelets are super cool," Miller said. "[Participants] will do it live with someone on the other end, and then they'll send it to your mailing address, so attendees will have something (tangible) to remind them of how to be stress free."

An intention bracelet can be worn as a constant, motivating reminder of whatever personalized message or meaning its creator desires.

Miller mentions this upcoming Stress Less Day is providing a lot of new opportunities and hopes students participate.

"Some of it is going to be immediate gratification," Miller said. "Students can connect with live people to help them with their stress and anxiety. There is personal connection, there are real people behind these programs. This is a [great] opportunity to connect with faculty, students and staff."

Most all of the Stress Less Day events require interested participants to register beforehand, most easily done by visiting GrizzOrgs.

 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



## CAMPUS

GRIZZLIES  
PROTECT  
GRIZZLIESCumulative on-campus positive  
cases since November 7:**143**

Faculty or staff:

**23**

Students not living in OU Housing:

**95**

Students living in OU Housing:

**25**On-campus isolation  
rooms occupied**2/110**

All information is from OU COVID Public Dashboard

Online class to help with  
winter virtual learning**EMILY MORRIS***Managing Editor*

An online course about online learning will be offered to help students as virtual learning continues into at least the first two weeks of the winter semester.

Although the state emergency order only extends to Wednesday, Dec. 9, Oakland University is continuing virtual learning into the winter semester, which begins on Sunday, Jan. 6.

According to Michelle Piskulich, interim executive vice president for academic affairs and provost, the first two weeks of classes will remain virtual until Thursday, Jan. 19, allowing a quarantine period after the holiday break in December.

"This provides a little more time between holiday gatherings ... We want to be sure that when students are back, we're providing an environment for them that protects their health and safety," Piskulich said.

**New online course for  
online learning**

This will be the third instance in less than a year in which Oakland University has moved the majority of learning online — March, November and, now, January. Students have reported struggling with switches to online classes, but Piskulich said there will be an online course offered in the winter to help students "engage" and "succeed."

"We are actually in the process — because we are hearing some students are struggling — to try to put together a short online course about how to succeed in online learning," she said.

The course is planned to be available on Moodle, similar to an anti-plagiarism course offered by some composition classes. Students could choose to review the course, and after successful completion they would receive a virtual certificate.

"We want them to feel like they're being supported, and part of our role here is connecting students to resources ... There's a vast number of resources," Glenn McIntosh, senior vice president for student affairs and chief diversity officer, said.

**Current resources for  
online learning**

Although the course will be a new tool, Piskulich and McIntosh suggested a range of other tools too.

Piskulich recommended using the Tutoring Center — which is offering virtual appointments — for help with course material. For technical assistance, she recommends the Help Desk. Both centers have office hours on Monday - Friday from 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.

The Graham Counseling Center is another tool that may help students, according to McIntosh. The center offers free counseling sessions to OU students, and it also has office hours on Monday - Friday from 8 a.m. - 5 p.m., except from 12:30 p.m. - 1:30 p.m.

"We're all facing a common element of fear and anxiety about the unknown," McIntosh said. "The first thing I address is understanding their feelings and emotions, and then I try to connect them to different campus resources."

**Finding the right  
resource**

Faculty and staff can help guide students to the right resource because Piskulich suggested "communicating" is the first step. Many professors are also shifting to an online format for the first time so working together can help everyone adjust.

"There's a lot of work behind an asynchronous course... How are you communicating early on? We've doubled down on asking students and faculty to — even in an [online] asynchronous class — see them," she said.

According to Piskulich, professors and students seeing each other for at least an hour per week can minimize "isolation" and promote "communication." According to the George Lucas Education Foundation, students are more likely to struggle without communication and hinder online learning.

Mindful communication can help students find the right resource — courses about online learning, academic and tech support or free counseling — to succeed in online learning.

"[We] try to help navigate some of the aspects that feel isolating about the online environment... and how we communicate really, really intentionally [is a] take-away," Piskulich said.



# Students shift online after COVID-19 cases rise in Michigan

## MEG SPEAKS

*Design Editor*

The fall 2020 semester will stay in the minds of college students across the country, and depending on the major, school and professors, feelings about the semester will be a wide range of emotions.

At Oakland University, only 10% of classes were continued in person. There were also hybrid classes and online classes that were either asynchronous or synchronous, meaning that some were fully online with no meetings and some used video platforms, like Google Meet and Zoom.

On Tuesday, Nov. 10, the Office of Communications sent out an email to all staff and students that a majority of the limited in-person classes will be moved online.

The number of COVID-19 cases in Michigan rose substantially, over 6,000 new cases daily, and according to the Oakland University's COVID-19 dashboard, there have been 149 cases related to the university since Oct. 31.

Ethan Tiong, a junior environmental science and biology student at OU, believes that Oakland University's professors have been handling the pandemic admirably and making sure the students will have access to lectures if they are in person or choose to stay home.

But when it comes to Oakland University as a whole, it is a different story.

"I think that the guidelines they've set are very good, however them enforcing it isn't going too well," Tiong said. "The pre screening on campus isn't used often, if at all, to check if students should be on campus. I also feel like there should be temperature checks as well."

These preventative measures put all the responsibility on the students, instead of the university. A senior secondary education and english major, Ashleigh Dubie, believes Oakland should have been completely online from the beginning.

"I think they should have made everything online, quite a few classes were still held in person until very, very recently," Dubie said.

Other students believe that OU is doing a great job keeping the students, staff and professors safe, especially compared to other universities in the state.

"They [OU] put in place many protocols to ensure safe learning and in turn, OU did not have many cases unlike other schools," Kaitlyn Woods, a senior communication major, said.

Moving classes online, other than labs and engineering workshops, will protect those who were only coming to campus for a class or two. This will also protect those who live and work on campus, limiting the amount of people they will come in contact with.

Online classes can be challenging, especially asynchronous, when there is no set time to meet as a class. Communication with professors and clarity about assignments can be confusing and make students feel behind.

This can especially affect students who are leaning on face-to-face learning for better understanding in their skills.

Sydney Mott, a sophomore exercise science major, loved having her sign language class in person and relied on the interaction between students and the professor. This class was part of the classes that are forced to move completely online, even if there were safety measures in place.

"I did feel safe. Everyone wore masks and the chairs were spaced out," Mott said. "It's kind of sad because I liked being able to go to class in person, but it's a good thing that OU is trying to lessen the spread."

But even if the classrooms were made to be safer by limiting the amount of people allowed in classrooms, spaced out chairs, and required masks, there is no way to keep students from hanging around each other.

As the cases are rising to an all time high, Oakland made a safe decision to keep more students off campus.

Even if no one is on campus, this semester will still be something OU students will not forget.

"It's definitely been memorable — I wouldn't necessarily label it as positive or negative, but it's just been like 'oh wow, this is very weird, won't forget about that' kind of thing," said Tiong.

This "very weird" experience has become normal, but eventually students will fill the halls and classrooms of Oakland University oncemore.

## Administrators speak on winter semester plans amidst pandemic

### JEFF THOMAS

*Features Editor*

Members of Oakland University's administrative staff sat down with students last Tuesday to address concerns about how OU will handle the winter semester given the current surge in COVID-19 cases.

In the past month, new restrictions and guidelines have come from OU President Ora Pescovitz and Governor Gretchen Whitmer. The necessity for these restrictions have become evident, given the 5% increase in Michigan and 12% increase nationally in COVID-19 cases in the past two weeks.

There is urgency to contain the virus, and students want to know what OU plans to do to keep them safe.

A key component in the university's stability is maintaining student confidence. Although Michigan recently introduced new health and safety restrictions, Michelle Piskulich, executive vice president for academic affairs and provost, pointed out that the university was ahead of the government in taking action.

"We had already determined after looking at the positivity rates in Oakland and Wayne County and here on campus that we were going to limit in-person learning," Piskulich said. "We were going remote except for labs, clinicals, field

experiences and internships. The only real change for academics was that [Gov. Whitmer's announcement] further limited the kinds of courses that could continue."

Vice President of Student Affairs Glenn McIntosh continued, pointing out the hard work OU officials put into decisions regarding the virus.

"The week prior to the governor's announcement, the two of us worked on different scenarios for the university to consider," McIntosh said. "There's a lot of things behind the scenes that go on. We were aggressive ... ahead of the curve, instead of waiting to see how everybody else reacted."

The competency of OU officials is apparent in Michigan's virus tracing data. Oakland University has fared better than other comparable public universities in the state — with only 237 confirmed cases, in comparison to Western Michigan University's 1,068 cases, Ferris State University's 451 cases and Grand Valley State University's 1,563 cases.

According to Piskulich, the coming semester will resemble the fall. She confirmed rumors that the first couple weeks of class will be done remotely.

"We will delay the first in person meetings until Jan. 19," Piskulich said. "This provides a little more time between holiday gatherings and when we have students sitting next to one another. We

want to be sure that when students are back we are providing an environment for them that protects their health and safety, as well as the health and safety of the faculty and staff."

When students return to campus for the winter semester, they should expect the same safety guidelines that were in place for the fall semester. Piskulich iterated that mandates like mask wearing and social distancing were effective in containing the virus and will continue.

For students living on campus, OU plans to expand COVID-19 testing and other student resources. According to McIntosh, OU has already ordered 30,000 face masks for students, and thanks to the generosity of a couple companies OU now has more than 100,000 masks at their disposal.

Students are also concerned about the economic impact of the pandemic. Many students have lost their income, and are trying to receive benefits through Michigan's unemployment system has been a disaster.

In response to these concerns, McIntosh reminded students of steps OU has taken, such as canceling tuition increases and providing grants to eligible students.

While indicating that more options are on the table for assisting students in the future, McIntosh explained the financial concerns of the university, specifically the fear of a substantial decrease in attendance.

"That's the thing that keeps us up at night," McIntosh said. "It concerns us the most because [tuition is] our lifeline. The greatest concern of a senior level leader of a higher-ed institution is enrollment. I think students are waiting to see what happens with the coronavirus curve. We have seen some movement over the past four or five days on increasing enrollment. We're hoping to catch up for the winter semester."

McIntosh also serves as the Chief Diversity Officer for OU. He also unpacked how the pandemic is affecting poorer communities, specifically Black communities. They are seeing significantly higher infection and mortality rates, as well as higher rates of unemployment.

McIntosh reiterated his commitment to maintaining retention and graduation rates for underprivileged students.

"The pandemic has hit, particularly the urban African American community quite hard," McIntosh said. "You see the economic impact on parents ... you see those students not finding jobs and so on. As a result of that they're struggling to get to that finish line. COVID-19 is [another challenge] now and so we try to navigate those students through. As a university, we need to be better tuned in and not lose touch with those students." "we need to be better tuned in and not lose touch with those students."



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**Sergio Montanez | Photographer**

Before spreading her wings as an actor, activist and honor-roll student, Oakland University almost almost expelled her. Jai Carrero had a rocky start at OU, but her past is also her inspiration.

"If I managed to get back, I was going to be a role model," Carrero said. "During my time, I didn't have that person, and so I wanted to be that person for someone else."

Carrero was drawn to Oakland University because of the "people" and "possibilities" after she graduated from Crescent Academy High School. She hadn't visited OU before, but she was ready to "give it a shot."

Shortly after she began her studies, her brother and best friend, Dwayne Carrero-Berry, died on Dec. 1 of her freshman year. He had a heart condition but was in remission after a transplant — "everything was great." His condition took a sudden turn for the worst though.

"That was the hardest time of my life. I basically had given up on everything... I barely left my room, and if I left my room, I was partying," Carrero said. "Honestly, I had given up because I didn't see the point of graduating because my brother wouldn't be there."

Carrero's grades plummeted as a result, dropping below a 2.0 grade point average (GPA). In turn, Oakland University threatened to remove her from the school in the spring of her freshman year.

The memory of her brother and the "people" at OU inspired her to try again. She started going to therapy, took summer classes to boost her GPA and filed appeals to remain at OU.

"During his memorial, I remember looking back and seeing how many folks were there... This is amazing," she said. "That was very inspiring to me, and I thought, 'I have to do something like this.' I have to — I have no choice."

# 'Black Lives Matter' leaders

## Story and design by Emily Morris

By the end of the summer, she had boosted her GPA to a 2.0, enough to barely remain at OU. Jessie Hurst, associate dean of students and deputy title IX coordinator, guided her through the summer process and became the "reason why [she] came back."

More people continued to trickle into her inspiration, and she remembered why she chose Oakland University — the "people" and the "possibilities."

She didn't have to fight to just stay afloat at school, and she dove deeper into her relationships and passions, deciding her field of study. Following in her mother's footsteps, Carrero declared herself a theatre major.

Her talents also lead her to become an admissions ambassador, representing OU and guiding incoming freshmen. After just a summer, OU switched from attempting to remove her to allowing her to represent the school.

"I got to this part, and I would've never imagined myself here," she said.

After establishing her major and role at OU, she was ready for more leadership.

"I do love my major, but there are some things that need to be fixed," she said. "They need to truly incorporate diversity."

After explaining her concerns to Monica Lopez-Orozco, assistant professor of theatre, they decided "something different needed to be done." Lopez-Orozco encouraged Carrero to create an organization focused on people of color in the arts — an outlet to talk about diversity, academics and mental health.

This outreach didn't come together exactly as planned but eventually molded into Oakland University's Black Lives Matter organization (BLMOU) and Through the Kaleidoscope with the help of Tony Sharpe. This was just the start of Carrero's activism, a passion of her brother's too.

"I really do feel like an activist," she said. "The work is not done, but at least we've got to this point."

Recently, Carrero has led two BLM marches, alongside Sean King, president of the Association of Black Students. She's also an advocate for mental health, even leading a BLM meditation at the last march.

"It's about finding a balance," she said. "It's about going out, doing the work and saying, 'I want to be different.' You've got to be different."

Carrero will be leaving her stamp on Oakland University when she graduates in April 2021. Despite everything that's happened in her time at OU, she will be graduating in the traditional four years.

Next she plans on publishing a play called, "A Butterfly," a story mirroring her story and growth. Although she'll be leaving her roots at OU soon, she feels like she's ready to spread her wings.

"I've had a hard life thus far, but caterpillars know that eventually they'll morph into a beautiful and vibrant creature... It's about a journey of self love and discovery," Carrero said.





# inspire activism on campus



Sergio Montanez | Photographer

## Story by Michael Pearce

Leading a group of Black students at a primarily white institution (PWI) is difficult at any time, but Sean King became president of the Association of Black Students (ABS) at a pivotal time in history.

This summer, the world erupted as multiple videos and stories of unarmed Black people surfaced in an already tumultuous time. Ahmaud Arbery, George Floyd, Elijah McClain, Breonna Taylor and more became examples of a broken system in the summer of 2020.

This summer, King was also named president of ABS.

“I didn’t question the opportunity that I was placed in,” King said. “I have a firm belief that everything happens for a reason ... I took the opportunity of being president to finally be that voice for people.”

King was a member of ABS for four years, first starting as the social media coordinator. He learned of the organization through the Center for Multicultural Initiatives (CMI).

Through CMI and ABS he met mentors, specifically CMI’s Senior Director Omar Brown-El. Brown-El used to be president of ABS, so when King was named president, he took it as a “huge honor.”

“There’s a lot of history within this organization,” King said. “CMI’s own Mr. Brown-El was the president of ABS at one time, there’s literally a picture from The Oakland Post of him being a student just like us leading a protest on campus.”

With the history of ABS, King acknowledged the weight his position holds.

“It’s bigger than just being the president of an organization because of what this organization has meant to Oakland University’s campus, specifically Black students,” he said.

King was drawn to Oakland, based on a feeling. After applying to Michigan State, Wayne State and OU, King appreciated how Oakland reached out to him first.

That propelled him to becoming a Golden Grizzly, and now the communication major is working to make campus a better place.

In the fall semester, King and Jai Carrero worked together to organize two protests. The first was in September for Black Lives Matter, and the second was two days before the election in an effort to get students voting.

Organizing rallies and marches for equality are actions that King feels are necessary at a PWI to bring prosperity to people of color.

“A huge part of the success of all students is the acknowledgement that this is not just a PWI, but we have Black students and people of color as well,” King said. “The first step to breaking down white privilege is to accept that it exists and focus on becoming an ally from there.”

ABS and Black Lives Matter OU (BLMOU) worked together to put on the protests, and King is thankful for BLMOU’s presence.



Sergio Montanez | Photographer

“With BLM, it helps us push out a statement of unity and solidarity,” King said. “It’s important for Black people to not let the space we encompass silence us.”

After a year of tragedies and protest, King saw progress from the OU community.

“The willingness to listen to ABS and its Black students has definitely been a step in the right direction,” he said.

Despite progress made, King still felt there is room for improvement in the university and the nation. Nearing the last semester of his degree, King wants to leave an impact to help future students of color.

“I want to be as loud as I can as president with the events we do and what we choose to speak on,” he said. “I feel that often, people aren’t listening to us, so I want to make sure people at Oakland and Michigan hear what we have to say.”

Specifically on campus, King would like to see more acknowledgement of inequity and marginalization.

“I would love for Oakland to bring more awareness to the fact that racism in itself is a crisis that needs to be addressed,” King said. “I personally come across some staff who are kind of questionable in their character regarding Black people. They do give professors and staff training, but this training should be the highest priority.”

After he graduates, King wants to start a non-profit organization to make an impact in people’s lives. He wants to be that “one person” to inspire someone to make change.

“I want to inspire people the same way people I came across when I was younger inspired me to become who I am now,” he said.



# New winter light show at Meadow Brook Mansion

**RACHEL YIM**

*Staff Reporter*

To spark the Christmas season, Meadow Brook Hall is presenting its brand-new show, Winter Wonder Lights, featuring festive displays and music.

“Our new outdoor light show is going to be a spectacle,” Shannon O’Berski, external relations director at Meadow Brook Hall, said.

The Meadow Brook Mansion has lights across the outside of the building, where people can walk around and explore. The light show also includes concessions with glow-in-the-dark cotton candy and meals, selfie stations and bonfires.

The Winter Wonder Lights is also designed with a number of health and safety measures to ensure the safety of its visitors during the pandemic. Due to the state’s public health order limiting outdoor gatherings through Tuesday, Dec. 8, all outdoor holiday light shows are now running after Friday, Dec. 11 to Wednesday, Dec. 30.

According to O’Berski, all parts of the light show will be outdoor, and all guests must complete and submit a health form on the day of their visit. Meadow Brook Mansion staff have also established a one-way tour route, timed ticket entry and mask requirements to guarantee safety.

In addition to Winter Wonder Lights, the Meadow Brook Hall will also be hosting its annual OU Night on Wednesday, Dec. 16, where faculty, staff, alumni and their guests will receive a discounted rate of \$15 – compared to \$22 for general admission for adults.



PHOTO COURTESY OF OAKLAND UNIVERSITY

The Meadow Brook mansion will be lit up this holiday season as visitors can participate in the new outdoor light show.

In past years, Meadow Brook Hall has also hosted its traditional daytime indoor Holiday Walk. Unfortunately, it is canceled this year due to the emerging and ongoing health and safety challenges surrounding COVID-19. O’Berski hopes for both the indoor Holiday Walk and the light show to return next year, as 2021 marks the 50th anniversary of the Holiday Walk.

“While canceling our indoor Holiday Walk is disappointing, we look forward to showcasing our grounds in a whole new way - with Winter Wonder Lights - and building upon our tradition of being a major holiday destination in the state,” O’Berski said.

All tickets for Winter Wonder Lights must be purchased online in advance and students need to show their Oakland University ID at time of ticket redemption. To book tickets for the light show or for more details about the event, visit [meadowbrookhall.org/holidays](http://meadowbrookhall.org/holidays).

“Everything about this project has been exciting and filled with surprises,” O’Berski said. “We are expecting more people than ever before to visit for Winter Wonder Lights, and I cannot wait to share Meadow Brook with so many new families.”

## WINTER 2021 PAYMENT DUE DATE

**OAKLAND UNIVERSITY’S WINTER PAYMENT DUE DATE: DECEMBER 15, 2020.**

Students who do not pay their balances in full or sign-up for a payment plan (and make the required installment(s)) may be dropped from classes and University housing (if applicable), and may be subject to late payment penalties and registration holds.

If you have questions or are experiencing circumstances that may prevent you from paying your account balance, please contact Student Financial Services at (248) 370-2550. We are ready to support you and help with your financial aid and billing options.



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## FEATURES

## OU Alum Finds Success In Los Angeles Film Industry

**CAYLA SMITH***Campus Editor*

Miranda Divozzo graduated from Oakland in 2014, but while attending the university she was highly involved on campus being the chair of Student Life Lecture Board (SLLB), vice president of Student Video Productions (SVP) and Student Production Board (SPB).

“Through those organizations on campus, it really helped form my communication skills and helped me make the connections I needed to have a successful career in LA,” she said.

During Divozzo’s sophomore year, SLLB booked Dustin Lance Black for an event, a screenwriter, director, film and television producer and creator of the 2008 film “Milk” that won two Academy Awards.

After meeting Black and learning about his activism work for the LGBTQIA+ community, she kept in touch with him through the years leading to her graduation from OU.

“I realized I wanted to tell stories and be a part of that world,” Divozzo said.

When she graduated, she made the move across the country to work for Black as his assistant and researcher in Los Angeles. As his researcher, she researched different stories to help him create stories for film and TV.

“It’s easy to feel like Oakland is a drive by education — Beth Talbert really opened my eyes to what else I could do,” Divozzo said. “She would follow through and really helped me see my own potential. I credit any bit of success I have to Beth Talbert, because I wouldn’t be living in Los Angeles today if it wasn’t for her.”

Beth Talbert is chief advisor and professor for the communication department. Divozzo and Talbert still keep in touch. She even visited her in LA, when she first made the cross-country move and several times after that.

“I don’t think that I would have been able to get that experience or education at a bigger school,” she said. “Us being a smaller school, I was able to have hands-on and face-to-face experience with the professors here.”

She notes that the most memorable time during Beth’s visits was during her first year in LA, when Beth helped her do her job for a day.

“I came down with mono when I got here, and it was when Beth was visiting she helped me do my job for the day,” Divozzo said. “She saw I was so sick and not going to be able to perform my job that day. I’ve never heard of another professor doing that. Beth is just one of those people

that go the extra mile for her students, I know she’s the reason I’m still here today.”

While graduating with a degree in communications with a minor in journalism, she thought she wanted to use her degree in a journalistic way, but after getting an internship at a local station she realized that wasn’t what she wanted to do. She wanted to form a greater connection with people.

“Reporting wasn’t emotional enough for me, I wanted to connect with people more, and the news showed everything wrong in the world,” Divozzo said. “People are more complex and complicated. I think that’s why I ended up in narrative storytelling because it’s more personal. I like to find the good in every person and telling stories for TV and film allows me to do that.”

Narrative storytelling has led her to work on projects like ABC miniseries “When We Rise,” National Geographic’s “Valley of the Boom” and A + E’s “Leah Remini: Scientology and the Aftermath.”

“When We Rise” was a 2017 docudrama miniseries focused on the LGBTQIA+ rights movement, and this was her first project. Her job was to research the activists of the movement, and to do this she would travel to San Francisco to interview these people and talk to them about their lives. She also assisted her boss with creating a narrative story that could be told on TV.

“Valley of the Boom” was a 2019 docudrama that focused on the rise of the internet in the 90s, and those who created the browsers of today. On this project, she was an associate producer and researcher, and took the information gathered from interviews to the writers and creators of the show to build a story for TV.

“Leah Remini: Scientology and the Aftermath” is an Emmy award-winning documentary series on a cult religion that’s targeted toward famous people. The creator Leah Remini, an actress, who broke out of the cult and decided to tell the story through a documentary. Divozzo mentions that researching and interviewing people on this topic was difficult because it’s sensitive and emotional, but acknowledges the help of her communication degree.

Her most recent work involved working for ABC Studios and helping them create new shows by writing pitches and doing research. She was laid off in October, but is interviewing to work as a producer on crime drama “Fargo.”

She has a few side projects, too. After obtaining the rights to a poetry book by Cristin O’Keefe Aptowicz, she wrote a feature film on a poem about a girl who was auctioning off her virginity to the highest bidder. Divozzo came across the



PHOTO COURTESY OF MIRANDA DIVOZZO ON TWITTER  
Divozzo and Mike Rinder on the last day of filming the documentary “Scientology: The Aftermath.”

poem when she was assigned to present it in a communication class here at Oakland and connected with it on a personal level. Now, she is working toward getting someone to buy her film.

“There are a lot of things that I can trace back to my Oakland journey,” Divozzo said.

She’s also focusing on crafting a story on a woman from the 1500s through creating a timeline of her life in hopes to turn into a film that the audience will enjoy.

It took her awhile to admit that she was a writer, but she realized that everything she was doing was writing and providing other people with the story. She gained the confidence through beginning to write stories she cared about.

“In 5 years, I want to be an established screenwriter on films,” Divozzo said. “That’s my number one passion — I want something that I’ve created myself to be on the TV or at the movies.”



# A truly effective lockdown needs substantial paid leave

**JEFF THOMAS**

*Features Editor*

COVID-19 cases are surging across the country. We're approaching 270,000 deaths, with over 140,000 new cases over the last week, and we need a bold and immediate response to save lives.

The best course of action that we have at this point to contain the virus is to enter another lockdown, though there are a number of political obstacles and logistical hurdles that need to be overcome to achieve this.

Primarily, there are the political implications of shutting everything down right before the holidays, and no politician wants to be the one who cancels Christmas.

Shutting down the country now would not only mean bearing the resentment of individual citizens who would be alienated from their loved ones during the holidays. However, more significantly for our corrupt political class, it means disrupting

capital during the most profitable time of the year for many corporations.

The unfortunate truth of the U.S. response to COVID-19 (a truth that cannot be overstated) is that the primary concern has always been about protecting the finances of our wealthiest individuals and corporations at the expense of American lives.

The initial relief bill, the CARES Act, was little more than an enormous upward transfer of wealth. While working class people have lost everything this year, our wealthiest individuals have seen an unprecedented increase in their wealth.

This notion was further solidified during the Thanksgiving holiday. Individuals were expected to comply with a variety of safety guidelines for participating in the holiday, while our congress took another recess without any action and our businesses were allowed to operate as if this was the Black Friday of an ordinary year.

We can't expect wholehearted participation of individuals in reducing the

spread of the virus when our institutions are allowed to act with such disregard for public health, while many elected officials are disobeying the restrictions that they have imposed on citizens.

This trend must be reversed if we're going to reduce this new wave of cases. We need real political leadership to fight this pandemic, not hypocrisy and gaslighting average Americans.

As much as I disagreed with the actions of armed protesters in Lansing last spring, what else were those people supposed to do with only \$1200 of relief? It's not fair to expect people to sit around and lose the wealth they've spent a lifetime accumulating.

A key component to overcoming these hurdles and making the next lockdown successful is that the government needs to pay people to stay home. Frankly, if we can afford to fatten the wallets of people like Jeff Bezos and Elon Musk, then we can afford to give the necessary relief to working people so we can curb the devastation of this pandemic.

A number of actions can be taken immediately to help warm the American people to the idea of another lockdown.

Moratoriums should be set on rent and debt collection in general. As is being currently bounced around, student debt should be relieved. We need a stimulus package with payments comparable to other nations like Canada. We need an extension of increased unemployment benefits and a complete overhaul of the unemployment benefit system that has left many citizens without benefits for months.

In short, people need money in their pockets and a sense of security to help save lives. No one benefits from the financial wellbeing of a generation of homeowners being ruined, no one benefits from tenets being thrown out on the street.

This pandemic has profound short and long term economic implications that must be reckoned with. A lockdown can help restore our national wellbeing, but it has to be done right. We can't afford a repeat of last spring.

## 'Happiest Season' on Hulu relies on strong cast, representation

**BRIDGET JANIS**

*Staff Reporter*

There's a ton of rom-coms out there, this holiday season we were finally blessed with one featuring a little LGBTQIA+ representation.

"Happiest Season", a Hulu original, was directed by Clea DuVall, a fitting director for the film. And while the film came out Nov. 25, in the movie you might notice that the characters weren't exactly out yet.

This movie embodies the vine "and they were roommates," as the happy couple Abby (Kristen Stewart) and Harper (Mackenzie Davis) travel home to Harper's family for the holidays. But there's one tiny problem, Harper has not told her family she's dating Abby or that she's gay.

So upon arrival, Harper tells her family that Abby is just her roommate, and claims that Abby is also straight. This throws a real curveball at Abby since she was planning to ask Harper to marry her on Christmas day.

Some of Harper's exes make an appearance, including her parents forcing her to reconnect with an old high school boyfriend. They also run into Harper's first girlfriend, Riley (Aubrey Plaza), who explains to Abby how their relationship was hard too because Harper wasn't out.

Riley and Abby hung out for a little bit as Harper was blowing Abby off and hanging out with her ex-boyfriend.

Harper's whole family was upper class and had a lot of high expectations of their children. Harper's other



PHOTO COURTESY OF THE LA TIMES  
Amidst so many rom-coms this holiday season, 'Happiest Season' sticks out as one with a strong cast and great LGBTQIA+ representation.

two sisters were in town and all of them did anything they could to impress their parents, which was the main reason Harper wasn't out yet.

In general, Hulu originals are more mature than Netflix originals. Hulu seems to target an older mid-30s

crowd. I guess you could say that Hulu could write a Netflix original but Netflix couldn't write a Hulu original.

One of the best characters in the movie was Abby's gay best friend, John (Daniel Levy) while he wasn't featured a lot, he brought more than enough to the table with his phone calls with Abby and coming to help her at the end. He always had something comical to say.

I feel there aren't a lot of LGBTQIA+ representation within Christmas movies, and finally they are giving the viewers what they want. But my only issue with this is that for over half the movie the characters were forced back into the closet. And no one ever wants to relive their coming out experiences.

While I was hoping for Abby to get with Riley, but only because Aubrey Plaza deserves the whole world. Like Plaza should be in every single movie to exist, they would all be just a little better.

The cast of this movie was just amazing, while the writing was stale at times, like when everyone brought up Abby being an orphan multiple times in random situations. But not a lot of things in this movie felt forced, which can be a problem in rom-com cheesy movies.

The movie was great, I do wish there was more out of the closet aspects, but I did enjoy the ending once Harper was able to find her way.

**Rating: 4/5 stars**



## CAMPUS



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.

## Miley Cyrus drops anticipated album 'Plastic Hearts'

**BRIDGET JANIS & LAUREN KARMO**

*Staff Reporter, Marketing Director*

Miley Cyrus shows a new side of herself with her seventh studio album "Plastic Hearts." The rockstar embraces her heavy vocals in the album released on Nov. 27, 2020 by channeling styles from '80s punk to electric pop to create something unlike anything else she's released before.

Back in her Disney days, Cyrus was known for combining her country roots with pop tunes, but with her maturity came new sounds. Her last project "She is Coming" hinted at a new path for the "Wrecking Ball" singer, and the singles "Midnight Sky" and "Prisoner" — featuring Dua Lipa — confirmed this.

This album comes soon after her divorce with Liam Hemsworth, and while songs in this album hint at him, who doesn't love a good upbeat breakup song aimed at disliking men? This album is also following her vocal surgery in November 2019. Cyrus has that signature raspy voice, but this surgery gave her a slighter deeper tone, and I'm not complaining.

"WTF Do I Know" is the opening song of the album and right off the bat Cyrus's voice shines through. This breakup song people might assume is over the tragic divorce, it doesn't matter — the song is still a bop.

This song was a great opener to the album, and by the chorus, it turns into straight pop-rock and highlights Cyrus's voice in all the raspy rock sound she wanted to achieve with this album.

"Plastic Hearts" has more of a Hannah Montana feel — that upbeat 2000s vibe of a song. This is the second song on the album, and while it also is an upbeat song, it has a different vibe than "WTF Do I Know." It has a strong guitar aspect to it that really brings the whole song together.

"Plastic Hearts" is one of those driving



to the beach with all your friends type of song, the I'm running late because I'm having too much fun type of jam.

The fifth track "Gimme What I Want" explores the same exposed bass lines we hear throughout the album and is one of the best songs on the album. It's a raucous power bop that will hype up anyone who's listening.

"Never Be Me" offers a different kind of sound — something slower and more heartfelt than the fast-paced tracks that dominate this album.

"Plastic Hearts" closes with two classic rock covers recorded at live performances. "Heart of Glass" and "Zombie" are the songs that got fans talking about "Plastic Hearts" when she rebranded from a pop icon to a rock legend.

When listening to "Plastic Hearts" from start to finish, every song is catchy and has a great variety of types of songs. Out of all 15 songs, there is not one that I would skip. Any artist that can create a "non-skip" album deserves all the credit they can get.

This album is definitely Cyrus at her best. As she would say, she's finally making the type of music she was born to make.

**Rating: 5/5 stars**

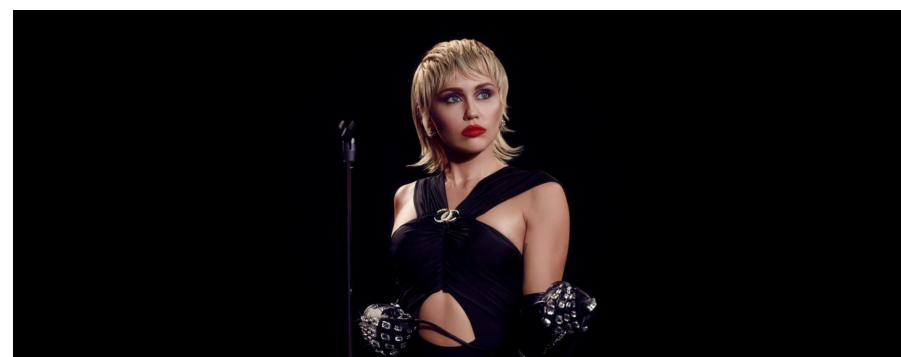


PHOTO COURTESY OF SHOWCELNEWS

Miley Cyrus dropped her newest album "Plastic Hearts" on November 27, 2020.

## SPORTS

## The affect of Michigan's COVID-19 restrictions on OU Athletics

LAUREN REID

*Sports Editor*

Amid an alarming soar in Michigan coronavirus cases, Gov. Gretchen Whitmer announced a new public health order — temporarily closing indoor dining at restaurants and bars, banning in-person learning at colleges and high schools (along with high school sports), among other protective measures — that went into effect on Nov. 15 and will continue until Dec. 8.

Under the order, organized sports cannot compete unless they are in compliance with enhanced testing requirements.

“[The Michigan Department of Health & Human Services (MDHHS) requires] to test players six times a week,” Steve Waterfield, director of OU athletics, said. “Before the order, our men’s and women’s basketball student athletes and coaches were going to be tested three times a week per NCAA guidelines, and we were following NCAA rules regarding surveillance testing of other sports.”

The order asks that all sports that will practice and compete must test six times a week — which based on capacity and cost — OU won’t be able to test any sports aside from men’s and women’s basketball. Track and

field and swimming and diving have ceased practice through Dec. 8.

“There’s obviously disappointment with the student athletes,” Waterfield said. “[Track and field and swimming and diving] had planned to continue to practice and because of the order — as well as testing and cost challenges — we had to make the decision that at least through the 8th, we’re not going to practice, which is really disappointing.”

Other sports were going to cease athletic activities after Thanksgiving regardless of the order, according to Waterfield.

“I’ve talked with a couple student athletes — with the pandemic, you don’t expect it, but you go through a process of how you process it,” Waterfield said. “Ultimately, these are decisions outside of our control, so [we] have to adapt and adjust.”

Since the Horizon League pushed fall sports — men’s/women’s soccer, volleyball and men’s/women’s cross country — to winter for more of a spring season, Waterfield hopes to get back in January with the fresh start of a new semester and get some seasons in.

“The NCAA says soccer can start around Feb. 2-3 and mid-January for volleyball — the Horizon League is still trying to figure out what those schedules are going to look like and ways to safely travel,” Waterfield said.



OAKLAND POST ARCHIVES | RACHEL BASELA

New restrictions have added a new layer of complexity for OU sports teams.

“Then we layer in softball, baseball, tennis, etc. and [try] to be as fluid as possible.”

It’s shaping up to be a busy and exciting winter semester for OU athletics.

“January to March, we may have every single sport at OU competing,” Waterfield said. “It’s going to be a busy time — the great staff we have here will do everything we can to figure it out from an event and facility standpoint. It’ll be nice to have some competitions starting back up.”

Amongst a great deal of uncertainty and

challenges, Waterfield said the OU community is resilient.

“One of our core values in athletics is optimism, another is perseverance, [and] there is no better time to practice those things than during a pandemic,” Waterfield said. “There’s a light at the end of the tunnel — the tunnel [may] just get longer than what any of us want — but we’ll get there.”

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# From Ukraine to the U.S.: Marko Khotynetskyi's journey

**ANDREW BERNSDORF**

*Staff Reporter*

Oakland University swimmer Marko Khotynetskyi is currently a sophomore. Originally from the Ukraine, Khotynetskyi grew up swimming and studying.

In his freshman year, Khotynetskyi won six Horizon League titles including: freshman swimmer of the year, Horizon League swimmer of the year and OU athlete of the year. He is a pre business major and has dreams of one day opening his own business here in the U.S.

**Q: Describe the place or places where you grew up.**

A: I grew up in Lviv, Ukraine. Lviv is a fantastic city on the west side of Ukraine that attracts a lot of tourists, but the neighborhood I grew up in was not a nice place to live because of the large amounts of drugs and crime. I was always told to not walk around at night because of the danger that could follow. Unfortunately, a couple of my classmates from school had problems with drugs, and one already died.

**Q: What was your life like there?**

A: I grew up a pretty normal kid without any problems from the police or any problems with drugs. This is because my mom did everything she could to keep me busy so I was away from all the trouble. My life consisted of swimming, futbol and studying.

**Q: Why and how did you leave? Where did you go?**

A: Before coming to America, I moved to Kyiv — which is the capital of Ukraine — when I was 14. I moved because of my swimming career. My coaches in Lviv said I needed to go to Kyiv to get better training and to study. I went to get a better coach and improve my swimming. The coach in Kyiv was one of the best in the nation. Kyiv offered me the chance to chase my goal of becoming a fast swimmer.

**Q: Why did you come to America?**

A: I came to the U.S. and Oakland University because after I finished my studying and training in Kyiv, I wanted to keep training and I wanted to study something else other than swimming and coaching. I wanted to expand away from swimming and I wanted to challenge myself.



PHOTO COURTESY OF OU ATHLETICS  
Khotynetskyi posing post-race in his freshman season.

**Q: How did you feel when you left the Ukraine?**

A: It was normal to leave because I lived for five years on my own without my mom, so this was normal to me. Even though I was moving to a different part of the world, this was nothing new to me.

**Q: Describe how your life is different here in the U.S. compared to the Ukraine.**

A: The lifestyle here is completely

different but I am the type of person who can accept it. Some of my friends who also went to the U.S. for school did not make the adjustment and went back to Ukraine after one year. I am more busy here in the U.S. than in Ukraine, I am studying way more and communicating way more between my friends and teammates here in the U.S. I enjoy it and feel as if I am challenged every day.

## Oakland loses to Xavier in season opener

**ANDREW BERNSDORF**

*Staff Reporter*

The Oakland University Golden Grizzlies returned to action on Wednesday, Nov. 25 against the Xavier Musketeers to open up the Xavier Invitational. The Musketeers came away with a 101-49 victory over the Golden Grizzlies.

The first couple minutes provided no action as both teams were knotted at four a piece. Once the Musketeers warmed up, there was no turning back — they went on a 49-6 run on eight 3-pointers putting them up 53-12 heading into the locker room.

The second half proved to be better for the Golden Grizzlies. They scored 37 points in the second half — only being outscored by 11 — compared to a 41-point deficit in the first half.

Daniel Oladapo, Jalen Moore and Kevin Kangu led the Golden Grizzlies with eight points each. Oladapo shot 3-8 with five rebounds and Moore scored eight points and had one rebound. Coming off the bench, Kevin Kangu scored eight points in 14 minutes.

Kangu is the only senior to come back for the Golden Grizzlies, appearing in all 33 games last season, making 18 starts and leading Oakland in assists with 114 and averaging 5.1 points per game.

Overall, the Golden Grizzlies had a rough shooting day. They only shot 23.2% from the

field and 22.6% from the three-point range. On top of poor shooting, the Golden Grizzlies had 16 turnovers throughout the game.

The Musketeers saw five players score double digits, led by Zach Freemantle who scored 21 points against the Golden Grizzlies on Wednesday.

Oakland falls to 0-5 in the all time series against the Musketeers.

It is worth mentioning the pandemic has caused the Golden Grizzlies to be less prepared than usual.

The team had to suspend all practices for nearly three weeks due to a COVID-19 outbreak within the team. Nine athletes and five staff members, including head coach Greg Kampe, all tested positive for COVID-19.

Despite the adversity the team faced in the offseason, the Golden Grizzlies have a tough seven game stretch before Horizon League play starts up. As part of the Xavier Invitational, the Golden Grizzlies faced Toledo, Bradley and Michigan, followed by three more power five schools in Purdue, Oklahoma State and Michigan State.

In the 2019-20 season, the Golden Grizzlies placed 6th in the Horizon League with an 8-10 record in conference play. For the 2020-21 season, the Golden Grizzlies were picked to finish sixth in the Horizon League.

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# A guide to surviving Thanksgiving and other holidays

## AUTUMN PAGE

Staff Reporter

If you've been to the greatest store on Earth, Tarjeé. If you went anytime in October, then you'd know what time it is: the dreaded time of the year where polar opposite families make each other suffer for a whole day.

Thanksgiving! A holiday celebrating genoci—I mean family.

You might be wondering "Autumn! How on Earth do you deal with Thanksgiving with TWO conservative families?!"

Well... not well.

Here's a list of how to deal with family members who you don't like or have extremist politician opinions and won't let anyone have other opinions!

### INVEST IN HEADPHONES

Now, this might seem like a no-brainer, but it is wonderful. If JackJack, the 11 year-old cousin, can get away with listening to YouTube on his iPad the entire time we ~gather~ for Thanksgiving and eat in the two-person kitchen... then so can you.

### "STIR THE POT"

This plan works especially well for families with small, young and impressionable children. Make your family DREAD Thanksgiving dinner! Teach kids swear words, "bad behavior" and that they have \*gasp\* freedom! A lot of parents, especially from my knowledge, like to instill that kids only



PHOTO COURTESY OF YOUTUBE

have the freedom to do something with parental consent. I'm not talking about anything insane like dropping out of school, but being able to buy something if they have the money and the ability to express themselves. So at Thanksgiving, "STIR THE POT" and when Aunt Karen calls, enraged you taught her kid the word "shit," you'll know your job is done.

### SAY YOU'RE SICK

You wanna be a little risqué this year and ensure that Thanksgiving isn't held at your house? Give a little cough and a shiver. Boom, they'll think you either have the flu

or COVID-19 and let you sit this year's live, laugh and love Thanksgiving out.

### START A FIGHT AND LEAVE

If you're anything like me, you have ~ different ~ politician opinions than everyone else in the room, and the people in said room have no issue talking shit about what you believe in. To get out of this situation altogether you can:

1. Be quiet and ignore them (least fun option)
2. Start a fight by saying something that is controversial but shouldn't be because it's a human right and leave. 5/10 stars on the fun scale.
3. Finally, tell them something, or show them something, that'll disappoint them all and disown you. This could be anything from a new tattoo or hair color, anything "liberal." 10/10 stars on the fun scale, my personal favorite.

### GET A NEW FAMILY BECAUSE FAMILY ISN'T BLOOD

I feel like this might be my most ~ controversial ~ one yet, but yes, family isn't always blood. If you've followed me since I started as a contributor here, which I doubt anyone besides my family has, then you'd know I don't have much. The blood I do have are really shitty people.

Especially the older I get, the more I realize that the people I call family are because they treat and respect me more than my actual blood ever did.

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