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Top Stories

McAuley Women's Center Celebrates a Milestone

By Eisa Abu Sbah

To celebrate its 25th anniversary, the newly renamed McAuley Women's Center threw a birthday bash in McGuire Hall.

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Best Grocery Deals for College Students Near Campus

By Malena Roman Giovannetti

College students on a limited budget may be feeling the impact of increasing food prices. The Greyhound went shopping to find the best prices in our area. We search four area grocery stores for the best deals.

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Why Students Like Me Hate Group Projects

By Caroline McMillion

Professors seem to love them, but not all students agree. A Loyola student shares her hot take on why professors should lay off group projects.

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Photo Credit: John McCreary

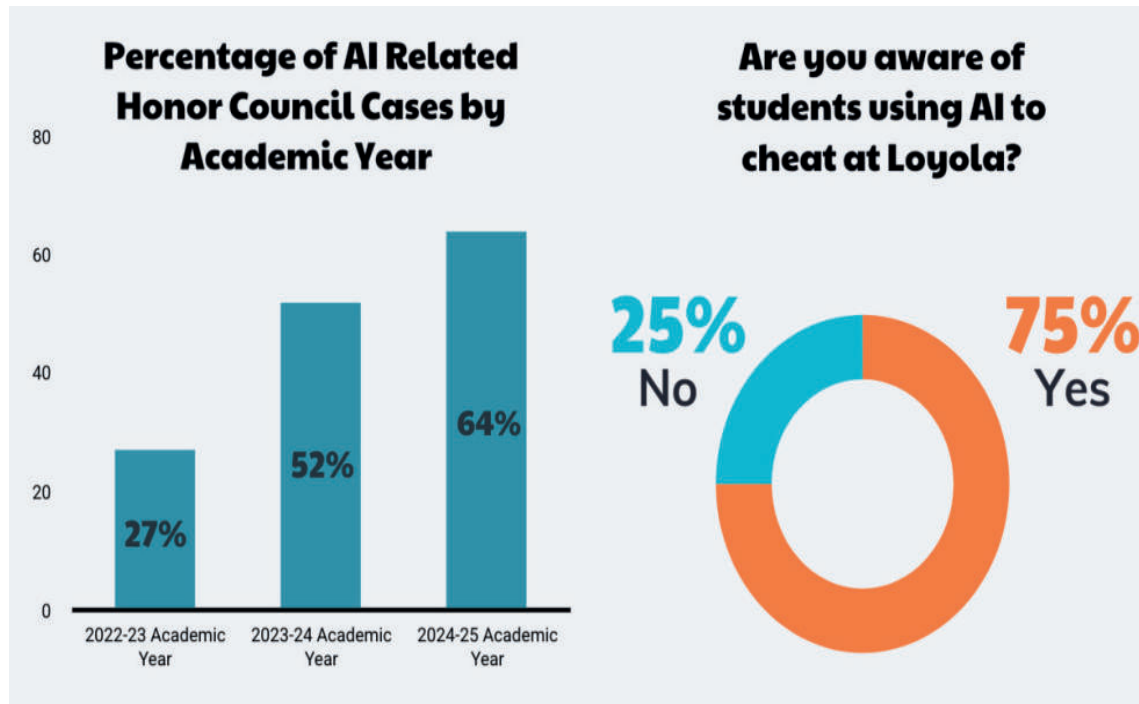
A Former Loyola Lacrosse Star's Unique Path to the NBA

By Samuel Mejia

Read about how former star lacrosse player Pat Spencer, '19, turned his hoop dreams into reality. Learn more about the Maryland natives unique journey from Patriot League award winner to professional basketball player with the Golden State Warriors.

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Loyola Grapples With Rising Cases Of Artificial Intelligence Misuse



Statistics of AI usage at Loyola University Maryland | Credit: Jenna Mattern

By Jenna Mattern

Loyola has seen a significant increase in cheating and plagiarism cases involving AI, particularly through the use of ChatGPT and similar platforms.

The Honor Council has found that by April of the 2024-25 academic year, 64% of honor code violation cases they received involved AI.

This is around a 24% increase from the 2023-24 academic year, during which 52% of cases they received had to do with AI. Looking back even further, during the 2022-23 academic year, 27% of cases they received had to do with AI.

In addition to the percentage increases, a poll conducted by The Greyhound reveals 75% of 127 student respondents revealed they are aware of some form of AI cheating instances at Loyola.

However, the rise in AI usage is not unique to Loyola. Students at other universities and even high schools are turning to ChatGPT for academic purposes.

According to the Wall Street Journal, OpenAI, the company that owns ChatGPT, said around 400 million people

use ChatGPT every week, with students being the most common users.

Administrative Moderator of the Loyola Honor Council, Mark Lee, works to educate and sanction students who have committed honor code violations. Now more than ever, Lee tries to teach students about the consequences of improperly using AI.

Lee is aware that AI might appeal to students because of the convenience it provides. AI questions can be answered instantaneously and personalized effortlessly. Lee admits that this could drive students to feel more inclined to use it to complete assignments.

"It might make some students feel like the research process is easier, because maybe they'll just type in the question and get the exact answer... it might give them ideas that they didn't have before," Lee said.

Sophia Graney '26, an English major and honor council member, said although she understands that AI can be a tool, she is not always fond of it.

"I'm not the biggest fan of AI in the classroom, I must admit," Graney said.

As an English major, Graney said she is accustomed to writing from scratch. So, when students decide to use AI, she finds herself frustrated.

"I do think it becomes disappointing if a student is using AI to avoid writing a whole essay and then cheats and has to face the consequences," Graney said.

Instead of turning to AI, Graney encourages classmates to use the resources Loyola provides them to assist in writing or completing assignments.

Additionally, she acknowledges that the lines can get blurred from assignment to assignment in terms of professors allowing the use of AI.

"What I will say is that I think it should be clearer to students what the AI regulations are beyond just inclusion in the syllabus. Having professors assert the use of AI for tests or projects, especially take-home tests, on the assignment outlines could be helpful," Graney said.

Dean of Undergraduate Studies, Dr. Michael Puma, is aware of the rising cases of cheating through AI. He understands that the solution to this problem is nuanced.

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No More Scrambling: Textbook Costs To Be Included In Tuition By Fall 2026

By Malena Roman Giovannetti

The days of students opting out of buying textbooks or scrambling to find free copies online to avoid high costs could soon be over at Loyola University Maryland. The school's administration has decided that starting in the Fall of 2026, textbooks will be included in every student's tuition and financial aid packages.

The university will be adopting the Barnes & Noble's First Day Complete Program. University officials said all students, regardless of their major, will benefit from this program which will include textbooks and even specialized materials like art supplies.

Through the adoption of this program, students will have access to all required course materials by the first day of classes. This could help reduce the financial strain associated with purchasing textbooks and ensure no student falls behind because they don't have the money to afford them.

According to a report from the Loyola Conference, an Ad HOC Committee of faculty members first met in March 2024 to explore this issue. They researched equitable access programs at other institutions, reviewed data on rising textbook prices, and consulted Loyola's academic departments to gather faculty input.

Loyola's Governance Coordinator Joshua Gembicki explained that the Loyola Conference is the governing body at Loyola responsible for university-wide issues such as strategic planning, resource allocation, and administrative policy.

"The Conference membership includes administrators, full-time faculty representatives, staff, and students. They monitor the progress of the university towards its mission to approve university-wide budgets, policies and programs with the objective of improving the effectiveness of the university," Gembicki said.

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Vote Is In: Students Vote Miss Val Hound of the Year

By Kate McLaughlin

You may know her as 'Choolah lady,' 'the extremely nice dining services employee,' 'auntie,' or 'grandma,' but I got the chance to know her as Miss Val: a woman that has broken barriers, defied the odds, taken the word "generosity" to a new level, and has loved 110% since she was born.

Miss Val is a gift from up above, as us Greyhounds already know, and getting to speak with her for two hours was one of the greatest privileges of my life.

It is my honor to announce The Greyhound student newspaper's first ever Hound of the Year has been awarded to Miss Val.

We sat down for this interview right outside Choolah and Green Peel, Miss Val's home turf. Throughout our interview, Miss Val was approached by over a dozen students and employees, all walking up for a hug. She knew every single person by name, and told each person that she loved them. She followed up on tests and projects students had mentioned to her, asked about how they were feeling, and told them how proud she was of them. Her love for

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News

Loyola Grapples With Rising Cases Of Artificial Intelligence Misuse

By Jenna Mattern

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"A blanket policy might not be the best approach, especially if it means we can't prepare students to go out into the workforce and actually do their jobs if AI is going to be part of their position. I think it's going to be contingent on faculty and others on campus to think about what they hope to achieve through their assignments and their learning outcomes and assessments, and really figure out ways to create higher-level-thinking kind of learning assessments," Puma said

Puma also explained that Loyola is currently hiring for the position of assistant vice president for faculty development. He said that part of this position will be to help faculty navigate conversations surrounding AI in the classroom.

Professor Gregory Hoplamazian uses AI personally and teaches students how to use it ethically. Hoplamazian said he is aware of the benefits and drawbacks of using AI, and feels that conversations around AI in the classroom need to be looked at from another angle.

"As professors, including myself, we can do a little more to really talk to students about what are their motivations for learning or why are they taking a class in the first place or why should they learn something.

If we can get students to think about the personal benefits of them learning a topic, that can do a fair amount to push people away from the appeals of plagiarism. Because ultimately, you're just robbing yourself of learning," Hoplamazian said. Like many other professionals, Hoplamazian understands the multifaceted nature of using AI. He explained Loyola's AI policy will most likely continue to vary from professor to professor.

"There's a lot of discussion and thoughts and opinions about it from students to professors to industry and in positive and negative ways. And I don't think there's any one way to view it," Hoplamazian said.

With integrations into Google, Email, social media, and student tools like Grammarly, AI is expanding more each day. For the future of Loyola, Lee and the Honor Council are hopeful that students will uphold the honor code despite the temptations AI might cause.

Lee appreciates the positives AI has brought to the campus, but hopes students and faculty can continue to navigate how to use the tool.

"We are all adjusting to how to integrate AI in our lives," Lee said.

ALANA And LGBTQ+ Services Merged Into Thrive Center For Student Success

By Bethany Goodson

In a significant shift aimed to better support student wellbeing, Loyola University Maryland launched the Thrive Center for Student Success. The Co-Director of the new Thrive Center, Raven Williams, told The Greyhound the change is rooted in the desire to build on existing resources.

"We wanted to be mindful of what we already had in place to support students... but then also how could we do that more broadly through an intersectional lens?" Williams said. The Thrive Center focuses on providing academic enrichment, identity formation, and student support services. According to its website, the center empowers all-around student growth while using an intersectional lens to support students from all backgrounds.

Co-Director of LGBTQ+ Student Services, Pat Cassidy was hired in the summer of 2024 for the inaugural position. He noted that the move reflects federal guidance and evolving best practices around identity-based student support.

"This shift has allowed us to think more intersectionally about student success. Where we are now is where we were working towards—it just happened a lot faster," Cassidy said. Cassidy added that the transition is part of Loyola's 2030 Strategic Plan, which emphasizes student success as a major priority.

"This is really just an expansion and a deepening of the work that both ALANA Services and LGBTQ+ Student Services were doing. All of the programming, advocacy, and support is still happening—it's just now under a more unified and expansive center," Cassidy said.

Though the integration aims to enhance services, some students have felt the transition's emotional impact, particularly those who found a strong sense of belonging in the ALANA (African, Latinx, Asian, Native American) community.

Justin Wright '28, a member of various multicultural clubs on campus, expressed a similar initial reaction.

"At first, I didn't really think anything of it. I was just like, 'Oh, is this a new name?' It was still the same people, the same group," Wright said.

In terms of effects on other organizations, the Greyhound Ambassadors, also known as tour guides, are now

expected to alter their tour scripts to accurately convey this new information to prospective students.

Tamyra Cilius '26, director of community engagement for Greyhound Ambassadors, described her feelings about the shift.

"Coming to Loyola, I did the Cultural Awareness Program through ALANA—they were the first people I met. So, the change is a little bit different for me too, but we do still have their services. It makes a difference, even if it's not a huge one," Cilius said.

The center offers mentorship programs, incoming first-year programming, affinity groups, academic success coaching, and identity-based community spaces. A new LGBTQ+ Thrive Mentorship Program, launching in the fall of 2025, will connect first and second-year students with upperclassmen to foster community and personal growth.

"The Thrive Center is a space for students to get connected, find community, and get the holistic support they need as students here at Loyola. If you're looking for a space that nurtures support inside and outside the classroom—this is it," Williams said.

For Cilius, the importance of these resources remains clear.

"One of the main things in my college search was making sure that I would be accepted as a student of color... being able to have these outlets is really important for all students," Cilius said.

Wright echoed the importance of these spaces for building relationships.

"I feel like it's always important for people to know that there's other people like them, and I also believe that people should find similarities and just friends on campus. We're still students, we're kind of young, so it's always better to make more connections with people and I feel like Thrive can help you do that."

Cassidy also emphasized the importance of student involvement in shaping the Thrive Center's future.

"I want students to feel like they're a part of this moment, and that they can really help shape this moment in Loyola's history and in who we are as a Thrive Center for Student

Vote Is In: Students Vote Miss Val Hound of the Year

By Kate McLaughlin

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"You got to know how to love people. And if you love them, you better tell them. I fell in love so hard, and I love you guys," she said.

Sometimes people ask her how she tells so many people she loves them, even when she does not know them.

To that, she asked, "How come you don't?"

To say I had a million questions I wanted to ask her was an understatement. Does she know that many of us know her as 'Choolaah lady?' How does that make her feel? What has her life been like? How did she come to be this angelic? What does Loyola mean to her? How did we get lucky enough to be graced with her presence in our lives?

After hearing her life story, it all makes sense.

She described the first meal she ever ate to me. It was runny hospital eggs and burnt bacon—a hospital specialty many people opt out of eating. But for 9-year-old Valerie Crawford, it was the first food she ever tasted outside of a feeding tube.

Miss Val was born with a rare disease and was told she would never be able to survive. The first eight years of her life were spent inside Johns Hopkins Hospital as a 'bubble baby.' She did not disclose the name of the disorder, but did tell me that there are four surviving people with the condition she had. Moments most of us will never remember, such as our first time smelling fresh air, eating food, or seeing the sun, are all moments that she remembers first hand because she spent her formative years in isolation.

She is described as a medical miracle. At one point in her fight, her parents were told she had two hours left to live. Thanks to the tireless and brilliant minds of her medical team, as well as a blood transfusion from an Alabama woman, Miss Val survived.

"My childhood was amazing," she said.

This may not be something one expects to hear after being told about their hospitalized childhood, but for Miss Val, being this positive is effortless.

"There was always someone there for me. I had the best parents ever. They were fun, and they were funny. We laughed all the way through my childhood," she said.

It makes complete sense hearing the environment her family curated as she has created that same environment for all of us. She described Sunday meals, where her family welcomed anyone and everyone; it is no coincidence that she creates love and community over meals here on campus.



Photo Credit: Kate McLaughlin

After graduating from the University of Maryland, while working full-time, she spent her career working as the director of admissions for her alma mater's school of nursing. She finished her career working with the school of dentistry. By the time Miss Val retired, she had given 44 years to the University of Maryland.

"I am a University of Maryland girl," she said.

So how did she come to be an honorary Greyhound in her retirement?

Years ago, Miss Val began volunteering at Towson University. It is no surprise that the Towson Tigers fell in love with her, and they begged her to accept a paid position for her work. After reluctantly accepting a paycheck, Miss Val became a dining supervisor at their on-campus Panda Express. Eventually, she taught a class titled Miss Val's Life Lessons that convened weekly to talk about the world. She described it as a place where anyone is welcome, everyone gets a hug, and everyone is loved. While we may not have an official class at Loyola, we definitely learn her life lessons while waiting in line for lunch.

Perhaps my favorite life lesson she bestowed onto me is also the one that sounds the silliest: 'wizywig'. Well, it is really an abbreviation spelled 'WYSIWYG,' but the pronunciation of 'wizywig' rolls off the tongue so well.

"What you see is what you get. This is me all the time—my husband can tell you," she said.

It's fitting that it sounds silly, because it is a part of her mantra to take life a little less seriously.

"I'm trying this new thing called 'doing whatever the heck I want!' Don't take it serious, and don't make it serious," she said.

That warrants the pessimistic thought I could not help but wonder: is it ever hard for her to show up like this every day? Her answer was succinct.

"No... I had four bad days my entire life. My big sister died... my dad died... my

son died... my mom died... I had four bad days in my entire life. Who gets to say that? Only four bad days! If you can get through death, you can get through everything," she said.

It's hard to imagine a life with the challenges and grief Miss Val has experienced that is described as beautifully as she does. Something she reminded me of in our discussion was that it is not the experiences that define you, but what you do with those experiences.

This is obviously easier said than done. She said the key is to surround yourself with your truest loved ones. If everyone let their guards down a little bit, and incorporated hugging into your daily routine, the world may be a happier place.

"You will grow an abundance of beautiful people around you... they're going to understand what you mean and what you need. You got people to help you," she said.

If you feel like you do not have someone there for you, you would be mistaken. Nobody is alone in a world with Miss Val in it.

Sometimes, having a positive attitude is just natural. Other days, it is an uphill battle. If you take away one lesson from Miss Val's infinite wisdom, it should be to just make life fun. She makes family everywhere she goes, she maintains a healthy perspective on life, and she just has fun.

She described work with the same energy a child may have when they describe being at Disney.

"I don't work all year. I play all year! I play here all day. I come here to have fun!"

I challenge the world to take a note out of Miss Val's book. Exuding joy and kindness is free. Fostering community is worthwhile. Choosing happiness is the best decision you can make. Everyone makes a choice every morning to either live like Miss Val, or to not; I think we all know what the right choice means.

On behalf of all Greyhounds, thank you, Miss Val, for loving us.



Photo Credit: Bethany Goodson

Success. Our door is always open. The Thrive Center is for folks to bring fully who they are into this space and into this

experience. If we're not able to create a culture of that on our campus, students won't be successful—and Loyola won't be successful," Cassidy said.

Heading into his second year at Loyola, Wright hopes the Thrive

Center will also grow its outreach to involve charities and connect to diverse programs in the city.

"There's a bunch of ethnic groups outside of the school that I feel like people should know about and learn about their culture, and I think the school could do more to help with that."

As Loyola continues implementing the Thrive Center's programming,

its co-director hopes every student understands their mission is the same: every student has a place.

"The biggest message is to get connected. There is something here for every student," Williams said.

To learn more, visit www.loyola.edu/departments/thrive-center/.

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News

Newly Renamed McAuley Women's Center Celebrates 25 Years

By Eisa Abu Sbaih

To celebrate its 25th anniversary, the newly renamed McAuley Women's Center threw a birthday bash in McGuire Hall. The party featured raffle giveaways, branded party hats, a decorative trucker hat bar, and performances by the Grey-sounds coed acapella group.

According to Deborah Cady Melzer, vice president for student development, the McAuley Women's Center's new title honors Sister Catherine McAuley, who founded the religious Sisters of Mercy in 1831. The Sisters of Mercy are an international community of Roman Catholic women who "envision a just world for people who are economically poor, sick and uneducated." In Baltimore, they sponsor the Mercy Medical Center, Mercy High School, and Mount Saint Agnes College, which merged with Loyola in 1971.

"Loyola's Strategic Plan, 'Together We Rise,' calls for us to lead with love and work for justice. As we position the McAuley Women's Center for all it needs to be today and tomorrow, we can ask blessed Catherine McAuley to pray for us," Melzer said.

Melissa Lees, director of the McAuley Women's Center, explained the importance of honoring a visionary who prioritized education and women's well-being. "Catherine McAuley was an absolutely phenomenal woman and a powerful example of courageous leadership

that met the needs of the time that she was living in," Lees said.

The McAuley Women's Center began humbly. It was established as a space for gender equity, advocacy, and education in the fall of 1999. It operated under one part-time director, Dr. Margaret Musgrove, for 18 years before Lees joined Loyola.

"When I first became director, my only goal was to get students to know that the Women's Center existed on the other side of the Bridge," Lees said.

In the seven years since Lees has taken the lead, the McAuley Women's Center team has grown exponentially to include 18 graduate assistants, undergraduate interns, and McAuley Women's Center ambassadors. The McAuley Women's Center saw 60,000 engagements across its social media platforms in this past year, Lees said, and it hosts three to five events every week.

Fiona O'Gara '26, a McAuley Women's Center intern, is part of the team that helps create welcoming spaces and inclusive programming for all students.

"Our office works to foster a community of acceptance, togetherness, and love, whether it's a movie night with five of you and some cookies or a night like Ladies Night at the FAC with 250 girls," O'Gara said.



Photo Credit: McAuley Women's Center

Olivia Baumgartner, assistant director of programming in the Office of Student Engagement, helps Lees and the McAuley Women's Center team host Late Night programming events on Fridays and Saturdays. Having a good pulse on what students want helps draw attendees at almost every McAuley Women's Center event, Baumgartner said.

"I'm not sure how Melissa does it as an office of pro-staff one, but I feel like the McAuley Women's Center is always expanding and changing. It's a very safe space when you go in there. Even as a staff member, I feel that," Baumgartner said.

Lees plans to continue expanding the McAuley Women's Center to serve even more students in the future. As Loyola's sexual violence prevention, education, and response coordinator, Lees feels most honored to be the confidential advocate for students in need of support.

"It's really important to me that students feel safe, included, and welcomed, and I have had the privilege to watch that grow throughout my time at Loyola," Lees said.

The McAuley Women's Center is also planning on leveraging its ambassador program to reach a wider audience. McAuley Women's Center ambassadors

are students who help with two or three programs each semester and advertise McAuley Women's Center resources in places where Lees is unable to do so. First-year Sara Austin, a McAuley Women's Center ambassador, values the program's inclusivity.

"It's a warm, welcoming environment. If anyone wants to become an ambassador or intern, we're always looking and you're always welcome," Austin said.

To learn more about the McAuley Women's Center's future plans, drop by for Women's Center Wednesdays from 12-2 p.m. or follow them on Instagram @mcauleywomenscenterloyola.

No More Scrambling: Textbook Costs To Be Included In Tuition By Fall 2026

By Malena Roman Giovannetti

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Michael Mansfield, vice president for Auxiliary Operations and a member of the Ad HOC Committee, served as the liaison between faculty and bookstore staff throughout the planning process. He collaborated with bookstore management to present the First Day Complete Program and addressed questions or concerns raised by faculty.

With the average cost of buying books in college increasing every year, students may be wondering if this is going to increase their tuition by roughly the same amount. Mansfield said that is not necessarily the case. He said the University will pay Barnes & Noble the cost of running the First Day book program, and those additional charges will go into the operating budget.

"There is not going to be any additional charges to any student. We are going to raise the money to pay for this program through our normal collection of tuition

dollars, which are factored through financial aid," Mansfield said.

Mansfield said tuition is based on a variety of factors within the operating budget. Currently, tuition already covers access to services like the Fitness & Aquatics Center, laundry facilities, and other campus resources. With this change, textbooks will simply be added to that list — included as part of tuition which funds the institution's operating costs.

"The university will pay Barnes & Noble the cost of running the First Day Program. In return, Barnes & Noble will provide books for every student," Mansfield said.

Mansfield also wants to make it clear to students that President Sawyer is aware of the program and has approved it.

The Committee's Chair Elizabeth Dahl explained that the fee the school will pay is going to be determined by Barnes & Noble based on textbook usage across the university, and the materials selected by faculty.

"The problem we are trying to solve is that some students are not able to afford their textbooks, so they are not getting them until the middle of the semester or are sharing with other classmates. This program is about making sure everyone will have access to the materials they need for classes," Dahl said.

Vice President for Student Development Deborah Cady Melzer oversees the Student Success Emergency Fund and served on the Ad HOC Committee. She explained that by incorporating textbook costs into tuition, the university ensures those expenses are considered when students receive their financial aid packages. She also said the advantage is that they don't have to worry about paying for their textbooks at the beginning of every semester.

"What I really like about the First Day Complete Program is that students will have everything they need by the first day. Believe it or not, whenever finals come around, we still get requests for help with textbooks and instructional supplies," Cady Melzer said.

Loyola students with financial needs currently have access to the Student Success Emergency Fund, which is supported by generous alumni donations, grants, and university funds. Approved requests for aid from the Emergency Fund vary, but often include expenses like meal plans, rent, and textbooks. However, with textbook prices rising faster than tuition, healthcare, and housing—according to the "Trends in Textbook Prices" presentation by Billur Cohen—the fund is not large enough to support all student requests. Therefore, the committee decided that Loyola needs an equitable program that doesn't require students to advocate for themselves.

Cady Melzer went on to mention that many students often think that they can just borrow from the library or share with a friend. However, at the end of the semester, they realize they need the textbook to study for finals.

"I think that's a shame. We need to be able to give students an opportunity to be successful by making sure they have everything they need," Cady Melzer said.

According to Dahl, the Student Government Association was asked for feedback on the program and responded positively, appreciating the idea of their textbooks already being included in tuition.

Seipiri Saka '27, a marketing major, said textbook costs are a burden and is happy about this change.

"I think this program is really good for students. I know I spent around \$500 to \$600 on textbooks this semester, so it'll be nice for the costs to be included in the tuition," Saka said.

Ava DeLeo '26 is a double major in psychology and music with a minor in French. She thinks the program is a good idea moving forward, as long as it doesn't impact tuition.

"I think it would have definitely been helpful for textbook costs to have been included in my tuition since textbooks can be so expensive. I know a lot of students can't afford them and depend on the ones in the library, which can cause them to fall behind," DeLeo said.

Photography: Year In Review



Photo Credit: Luisanni Delgado

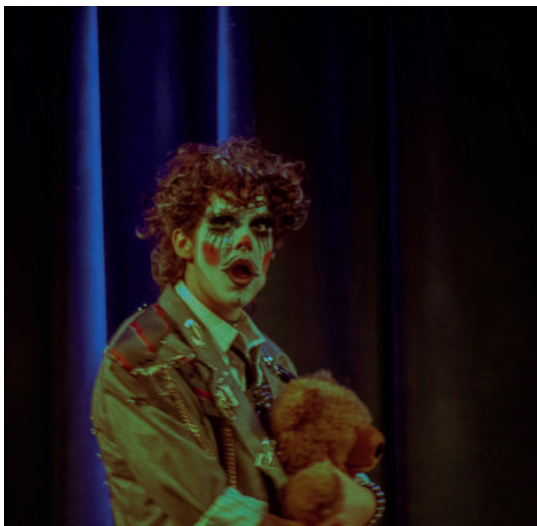


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Arts & Eats

“Crochet For A Cause” Transforms Plastic Bags Into Bed Mats

By Megan Iwuoha

It's not hard to believe that something once considered trash can be turned into a valuable treasure. We see it all the time. Roughly 20 minutes goes into turning a plastic bag into plarn.

After collecting plastic bags, cut continuous strands of yarn to tie them together. It takes about a bag full of bags to make a complete ball of plarn. Full mats are usually around six feet tall and take around 20 hours to complete.

Loyola's "Crochet for a Cause" meets for an hour once a week and after five months of meetings, students involved will have made a plarn bed mat. If students make hats and scarves, those usually take under a month to complete.

Crochet for a Cause is a Registered Student Organization run by President Marin Koch '26. The club takes plastic bags and repurposes them into plastic yarn, otherwise known as plarn. They then crochet them into bed mats for those struggling with housing insecurity. Along with bed mats, the club makes hats, shawls, scarves, and other clothing out of yarn.

The club's overall goal is to create a more sustainable Baltimore through the art of crocheting.

Koch has been the president of Crochet for a Cause for a little over a year now. She believes the club's efforts can be the difference that helps someone pick themselves back up.

"The idea we have behind it is to take this material that everyone has, and everyone has an abundance of, and turn it into something useful using a skill. [We] do that in a group and build community through that common art form," Koch said.

Under Koch's leadership, the club was able to reorganize its inventory and restock its materials.

As of right now, the club has eight bed mats, 11 hats, and a surplus amount of plarn. Due to the changes in officers and the club being fairly new, the club is currently working to get in contact with the Center for Community Service and Justice (CCSJ) to distribute its resources to homeless people residing in Baltimore that are in need.

"Loyola is in a neighborhood where [homelessness is] impossible to ignore. We are so close to York Road and every single Loyola student has seen it. I think as students and as people [we] have the

ability to make a difference," Koch said. Housing insecurity is prevalent in the Baltimore community.

According to Research Assistant for The Karson Institute Jajuan Lawson, Baltimore is known for being a hostile environment with hostile architecture scattered throughout the city. These recent architectural developments are unwelcome and make it difficult for homeless people to sleep comfortably.

"The people who tend to be most in need of these things are people who are downtown either towards the city center or towards a worthy outskirts of the city," Lawson said.

According to Dr. Karsonya Whitehead, the founding Executive Director of the Karson Institute, the long years of underdevelopment throughout Baltimore City have contributed to the lack of schools, community centers, and other amenities that make a community attractive.

"Dr. Lawrence Brown's 'The Black Butterfly' says we would need to invest about \$41 million specifically into those communities to bring them up to par. Not to even make them higher than the existing most economically-advantaged communities,



Photo Credit: Megan Iwuoha

but to bring them up to par with the most basic communities. We are not working to save this generation - we are very clear that if we're going to save the community, we are talking about the generation after this one," Whitehead said.

The club is relatively small with a decent number of regular attendees. The club prides itself on teaching crochet, making the club inclusive to beginners.

"Even if it were just one person, to have that small difference of sleeping on a mat instead of sleeping on the concrete [still makes a difference]," Koch said.

Any clothing article is helpful, especially in the winter when it gets colder. Being able to sleep on something that isn't concrete can change someone's day and possibly the trajectory of their life.

Your Guide to Building A Personalized Dorm Room

By Chris Palacios



Photo Credit: Chris Palacios

According to the Housing and Dining section of the university website, 80% of students live in dorms through to their senior year. So, with the breaking in of the Fall 2025 semester, incoming freshmen are preparing for their first taste of dorm life. They might especially like some dorm room related advice from their upperclassmen peers. But how much nuance is there to dorm décor, and is the HGTV interior design of dreams worth it?

While having siblings is not an uncommon experience, not everyone

gets it, and even some of those that do not know what it means to share the same room. Indeed, having a roommate for many is bound to be a new experience, and can be one of the biggest boons, or biggest obstacles in shaping your shared living space. Aidan Olsen '28 said he was happy with the roommate he got, and that it made the move-in process a lot easier.

"I was very lucky to have Peter as my roommate. We get along phenomenally, and he's very easy to live with.

We basically decided as far as decorations and stuff go, we'll just split the room half and half. My decorations go on my side, his decorations go on his side," Olsen said.

But once roommates demarcate where they can decorate, what should fill that space? Campus dorm rooms provide the bare essentials of furnishing, objects like dressers, desks, closets, chairs, and beds. Students can take into consideration where and how they want these furnishings arranged. For this, there are plenty of useful room planning sites incoming students can make use of before coming to campus. These include Coohom, Room Planner, and Roomie. The latter is particularly useful in that it can connect to a selection of university room presets, including Loyola.

Outside of provided furnishings, however, there are many surfaces waiting for shapes and color. Spots like window sills or tops of dressers can be great for small potted plants or stereo speakers. Glow-in-the-dark star stickers can be great for walls or ceilings if students are daring enough. Peter French '28, Olsen's roommate, thought posters were a great way to add character to a dorm room.

"Posters really liven up a room. It's better than just blank walls. Anything like that to throw on the wall really livens up the space," French said.

Olsen and French's spring dorm room is all but a temple to posters and illustrations, including Olsen's

large Radiohead poster, which according to French, visitors have expressed envy for.

Room design is an iterative process. Ask any parent. As such, do not be afraid to take cues from friends' and acquaintances' dorms. Besides, the pervasive trend of colored LED lights had to come from some focal point. Some students fly flags in their windows or upon their wall to represent respective family history. Others make window sticky note art visible from outside or display cardboard cutouts. One of the best ideas French claimed to observe in a room, was not meant as a visual beauty, but an olfactory one.

"One of the nicest rooms I went into was a friend's room, and they had incense that they were burning, and it just made the room smell a lot more pleasant, compared to a room where it smells like food. Next year I'm definitely getting some incense, air freshener, something like that," French said.

Other clever non-visual contributions to a dorm room may include wireless doorbells, whose chimes can give fellow students a fun first impression before stepping into the room, or entryway snack baskets to grab quick bites before stepping out to the next class.

It is important not to get carried away when decorating, however. Residence Life has a good handful of policies when it comes to room furnishings and decorations meant both to make the transitional living experience smoother and also ensure a safe experience. Sawyer Little '27, is an RA for Campion Tower, and believes that some of the air of strictness around RAs and inspection rules is overstated.

"I feel as if the rules are fairly understandable and not too restrictive.

People have gotten a bit creative on ways to hang things on walls. Some people have been willing to just pay the fine if you want to nail things to the wall. I did do that my first semester here," Little said.

Boarding students may feel strongly about hauling their whole childhood room off to college with them, but just as the school's Cura Personalis will grow their person, Baltimore will surely grow their belongings. Little says he bases his room in simplicity, and with expectation that he will pick up more than he came to campus with.

"I would just recommend when decorating your room, less is typically more and I do implore you try thrifting. There's lots of vintage stores. There's lots of good options in the area," Little said.

Olsen expressed a similar sentiment.

"Throughout the year I buy little trinkets or clothes, new clothes but most of the stuff in my dorm is stuff from home," Olsen said.

According to Sawyer, ideal locations to shop for vintage goods include Towson's Savers and downtown's Value Village. Smaller stores can also be found within casual walking distance of campus, including Wyndhurst Station's Elevated Retro.

College is the first taste of independent living that many students will get, so it is important to cherish it. While dorm residence isn't likely to make up the most of college memories, that doesn't make it an area to ignore. So take in the advice of friends, peers, and upperclassmen when constructing a pretty but packable room-to-go.

Best Grocery Deals For College Students Near Campus

Continued from Page 1

Economics Professor John Dougherty and his wife own Oxo Farm, a small farm inspired by the Catholic Worker Movement, where he often takes his students. They sell their produce at the Loyola-assisted Govans Farmers Market at more affordable prices, and donate about one third of their harvest to food pantries.

"I know some of my students, in particular, have said, 'Okay, well, now I need to work more because I can't afford things. I have less time to dedicate to my classes and to studying,'" Dougherty said.

Dougherty said food prices today are around 24 percent higher than they were five years ago.

"You would have to go back to the early 1980s to get inflation that high. I remember when I was a college student, I was always looking for grocery deals and whatever I had to do to get my education," Dougherty said.

The Greyhound investigated prices for four staple items in a college student's

diet: a gallon of milk, a loaf of bread, a dozen eggs, and a box of coffee. We then compared prices at Target, Weis, Giant, and ALDI to help students identify the best deals.

A quick and classic breakfast for college students with early morning classes is... you guessed it—cereal! And for that, you need milk. The cheapest gallon of milk was found at ALDI for only \$1.48, followed by Weis at \$1.59 and Target at \$1.99. Finally, the most expensive gallon of milk—almost a whole extra dollar more—was at Giant for \$2.59.

"I like to get most of my groceries from either Giant or Target. The good thing about Target is that I can buy other stuff I might need too, like toiletries, but Giant is closer and has more food options," Josue Sánchez '27 said.

Bread can be used for multiple things ranging from grilled cheese, French toast, and homemade pizza. Bread is a must-have in every college student's apartment. Once again, ALDI had the lowest price with a loaf only costing 99 cents. The other three stores were fairly close in price,

with only a 10-cent difference between them: \$1.39 at Weis, \$1.49 at Target, and \$1.59 at Giant.

Bread is one of the many things on Nane Tevosyan's '27 typical grocery list.

"For me, it is definitely important for college students to have affordable options when it comes to grocery shopping. I do wish we had a walkable grocery store near campus that would be easier for students to get to," Tevosyan said.

Due to the recent shortage of eggs leading to skyrocketing prices, eggs have been something college students have not been able to afford easily in the past few weeks. However, prices have started to stabilize, making eggs a more affordable option once again.

By a few cents, Weis managed to have the lowest-priced eggs of the four, at \$5.39 per dozen. Target and Giant are both tied at \$5.49. Surprisingly, ALDI had the highest price, charging \$5.97 per dozen. Chloe Smith '25 emphasized how vital eggs can be for a college student's diet.

"I use eggs a lot to cook, and it is a good protein source. Now that they are going back to a normal price, I can continue to buy them because college is already a high price point," Smith said.

Everybody knows the saying that "College students run on coffee." With the constant stream of students flowing in and out of the Starbucks on our campus, however, most college students don't have the luxury of splurging on a five-dollar beverage every day.

For students looking to make their daily caffeine fix more affordable, brewing coffee at home is not only a more budget-friendly option but also a practical one. For just \$2.49 at ALDI, you can find espresso ground coffee. For Weis and Giant, you can see the difference between the stores, as the same brand of single-serve pods is priced at \$4.69 at Weis and \$4.99 at Giant. At Target, the cheapest brand of espresso capsules is \$6.49.

"As an avid coffee lover, I make it every morning in my dorm. I love the coffee at

Starbucks, but I can't afford to buy from there every day, so Target is a good place for me to buy the ingredients," Amanda Simon '27 said.

Our bargain hunting found that ALDI consistently offered the lowest prices for staple items like milk, bread, and coffee, making it a strong choice for students looking to save money. Weis offered the best bargain price on eggs. However, convenience also plays a key role in shopping decisions.

"Groceries are already not the most accessible things for us students, so having more affordable prices makes it easier, but also more desirable," Kiana Frawley '26 said.

The Loyola shuttle takes students to Giant on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays from 5:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m., making it a more accessible store for students. For students willing to plan their trips strategically, balancing affordability and convenience can help stretch every dollar further.

Opinion

The following does not represent the views of Loyola University Maryland or The Greyhound.

My Take: Why Group Projects Are A Fail

By Caroline McMillion

Group projects have been assigned to students ever since elementary school to get classmates engaged with one another when completing a task. While many teachers love to assign group tasks, students like me do not reciprocate that love.

Group projects taught me not to trust my peers. I hate to hear the classic line, "I'll get to it by tonight," only for no work to be done. I work for hours on my part of the assignment, and then end up finishing my group mate's portion of the work myself to help the team's grade.

Come presentation day, we propose our topic—only for the person who did no work to receive the most applause. Irritatingly, we all get the same grade. Too often, group projects aren't done by all members of the group. This doesn't feel fair.

Dr. Joseph Farrell, a philosophy professor at Loyola University Maryland, understands the frustration group projects can bring first-hand.

"In my younger days, I thought of group projects as a burden. It was mainly about learning to trust in other people to get sound work done. Generally, people are trustworthy, but one can get soured to the process by running into someone who does not hold up their end," Farrell said.

Group projects can also highlight students' poor time management skills. Nearly all students struggle with procrastination or waiting until the last minute to complete assignments. In fact, enough students have difficulty reaching the time-management skill that Loyola still feels obligated to cover the topic in Messina workshops.

"For one of my classes, I was assigned a group project with four other people and one of the members did not show up for the final presentation. This cost me and the other classmates to scramble at the last minute and figure out a solution. In the end, the entire group experienced unnecessary stress, frustration, and anxiety over grades and overall performance," Chelsea Lapp '27 said.

Holding certain absentee group members accountable creates more responsibilities for high-achieving students who feel they are stuck with more work than those who just want a passing grade. The unequal workload and lapses in accountability make group assignments more difficult and stressful than helpful and educational. Another problem is group work can become a social hour more than a study hour. My friends have made it

so difficult to partake in our designated reading projects because of our desire to talk about outside ideas, such as, "What are we doing this weekend?" or, "Who is dating who?". Hardly any work is done, but drama is definitely spilled.

Even though group projects can be dreadful for students, teachers enjoy assigning them for the life-long benefits classmates receive. Teamwork, for example, is one of the most essential skills needed in the workforce and is something all students are guaranteed to take part in when participating in a group project. It helps to get tasks done efficiently and to contribute to a positive outcome—both needed for group projects and in a career.

"I think it is easier to work in a group because you get to solve problems with different people and get a new perspective than if you were to work by yourself. In a future profession, you are going to need to work with a variety of people which these group projects can give you a head start with," Eliana Pearce '28 said.

While I agree with this statement, there are many ways people can use and develop teamwork and collaboration skills. Group projects do not have to be the answer. Being on a sports team or volunteering with other people are just some examples of ways to sharpen these skills.

Group projects are often glossed over by professors who only see the final product. If professors genuinely enjoy giving out group tasks to students, I believe there should be different ways of assigning them.

"One major key to getting group work correct is to have part of the grade involve peer evaluation. This will often stave off the difficulty of the free-rider problem. In other words, if each member of a group knows that part of their grade will be evaluated by peers, they will be more likely to hold up their end," Farrell said.

I agree that this could be a promising idea to implement, because when students know their peers are evaluating contributions from each member, it will encourage greater participation and responsibility toward the project.

Classmates deserve the opportunity to learn and work together without the strain of unfair burdens. Until educators find a way for these assignments to be more efficient and enjoyable, group projects will continue to be dreadful assignments for many hard working students.

Loyola Needs More Outdoor Workspaces

By Genevieve Hayes

Have you ever left your class on a beautiful day, and noticed that all the tables outside the College Center are taken? Every table outside Green & Grey is full, and the Humanities porch is booming. Where do you go to do your work? Unfortunately, many of us are forced to head back to our dorms or find a seat inside.

What if there were more outdoor workspaces on campus, where you could get some work done, charge your laptop, and take in the fresh air?

Working outside has many benefits for both mental and physical health. Jason Parcover, the director of Loyola's Counseling Center said there is evidence that having access to the sun is important for our wellbeing.

"There's been an epidemic of low vitamin D in our country for a while, and we know that has important impacts on our physical—but also our mental health. There's more and more research, especially in recent years, that time outdoors, that finding community outdoors, and spending time alone outdoors, is really impactful to our personal wellness and to our sort of community-level wellbeing," Parcover said.

Director of Loyola's Recreation and Wellness Michael Castaneda thinks that going outside and getting vitamin D is in everyone's best interest.

"I think it's very important for everyone... to have opportunities to be outdoors," Castaneda said.

"Just enjoying what nature has to offer helps with all types of mental health. Everyone's dealing with their own situations, challenges, and stress throughout their daily lives, so I think just having those opportunities to be out there in the sun and in nature is a big benefit when it comes to clarity and destressing throughout the day."

Loyola should consider some innovative and cost-efficient solutions to creating outdoor workspaces across campus.

For example, the solar technology company Smart Era Lighting Systems (SELS) creates solar-charging and connectivity picnic tables. This table exclusively uses solar power to charge up to six devices and can seat around six people at a time. Additionally, a Wi-Fi router is already installed within the table to ensure speedy connection. This table would be perfect for students looking to work outside and



take advantage of the fresh air, without worrying about charging devices or finding space.

These tables could be implemented around campus, not only on the Quad, but near residence halls. One or two of these tables could be placed outside each of the residence hall areas, in order for students to have easy access to an outdoor workspace without walking all the way to the Quad. If these tables were sprinkled around campus, students would certainly utilize these spaces.

I'm not the only who thinks so. The Greyhound ran a poll on its Instagram story asking, "If there were more outdoor workspaces on the Quad and near residence halls (e.g. solar charging picnic tables) would you actually utilize these spaces?" Eighty-eight students voted, and the results indicated that 97% of these Loyola students are in support of more outdoor workspaces.

One comment suggested increasing outdoor spaces that are not primarily for work or studying, but instead focus on unwinding and taking in the outdoors.

Parcover referenced the Counseling Center's plans for encouraging community members to spend more time outdoors. These plans include purchasing hammocks for the residential spaces and other outdoor additions.

"We're going to have a blanket library for folks to come and borrow blankets to lay out on—just these types of things to really encourage students and faculty and staff to spend some more time outdoors. We're super excited about it."

Parcover said more hammocks and yard games have been placed in residential spaces for students to enjoy. They also plan to add more picnic tables and pickleball equipment and are looking to add some color with murals around the residential spaces.

With Loyola's beautiful campus, it makes sense to encourage students to enjoy all it has to offer. Loyola should continue investing in outdoor spaces that allow for students to reabsorb that vitamin D and connect with each other outdoors.

Parcover said, "There's a term that I've heard recently called 'forest bathing'. It's the idea of surrounding ourselves in green things that are growing, taking hikes, even, you know, just spending time in a grassy area... Our body does all sorts of really remarkable things when in those types of settings. Our cortisol levels go down, our dopamine levels go up. Literally, it's directly impacting our sense of well being."

From First-Years To First-Year Evergreens

By Jasline Hernandez

I can still remember the last hug I shared with two of my favorite high school teachers after a tearful conversation about my college commitment. I was optimistic about what the future had in store, but still anxious about leaving behind the comfort of my childhood hometown of Union, New Jersey.

That anxious feeling started to go away last June, during summer orientation. I started to feel more at ease immediately after I was greeted with enthusiastic cheers from Evergreens. Evergreens Kate Tourison '26 and Halle Basey '27 made me feel welcome by sharing their own experiences and putting in the effort to connect with each student in my group. It was on my three-hour car ride home from orientation that I was sure.

I made the right decision to come to Loyola.

Now, I am preparing to greet new first-year students as a brand-new Evergreen.

Loyola Alumni Evergreen Luke Haus is a professional staff member in programs for new students and families who leads a group of about 90 student Evergreens. He defines the role as a first-year peer mentor who helps with orientation and the first-year living-learning program, known as "Messina". He said at its core, an Evergreen builds relationships with students to help them feel seen, heard, and valued.

"If you have someone invest in you,

want to get to know you, talk, give you advice, and give you opportunities that connect with your interests, you're hopefully naturally going to be inspired," Haus said.

My Evergreens' investment in me began when I first met my Messina class during Fall Welcome Weekend. Erin Sturgeon '26 and Izabella Borsukiewicz '27 were my co-Evergreens, who not only accompanied us to programming, but helped get us talking with a music playlist icebreaker that still stands out in my memory.

Bethany Goodson '28 was in my Messina class and will also be starting as an Evergreen in the fall. As an active participant in extracurriculars back in Missouri, Goodson admits she felt lost and somewhat bored during her first semester. Her strong relationships with her Evergreens inspired her to apply for the role.

"A big thing was that I really liked our Evergreens, especially Izabella. They both helped me with adjusting to Loyola and I would just love to be able to be that for someone. I think the notion of fully giving of your time and yourself to help first-years do something that is foreign for them is beautiful. I would love to be part of that," Goodson said.

At first, I'll admit I was intimidated stepping into my Messina class. That's because from the moment I walked into our classroom, it felt evident how different we all were. I came from a large public high school whereas my first-year Messina classmate Nola Trosky was one of 89 to graduate from

a small all-girls Catholic school—yet, we became friends. She attributes the bond our Messina class shares to the dedication of our Evergreens.

"Not to say our group didn't click, but we were all very different people. I feel like Erin and Izabella both really helped us to find some common ground and aid in conversation between all of us. Messina pushes us to interact with our peers even more and for me, that was really enriching," Trosky said.

First-year Collin Ambush credits his Evergreens for planning activities that also brought his Messina group closer together. He said one of his favorite enrichment memories was attending an Orioles game alongside fellow Ignatius Scholars Program (ISP) students. He said Evergreens are a great resource who provide students support in both their academic and social lives.

Ambush, a political science major and ROTC cadet, was a part of a similar program in high school where he helped new students adapt to boarding school. Ambush said he is excited to support a group of first-years during the big transition.

Edele Brennan '28 said her Evergreens helped her discover communities on campus after a difficult adjustment period. The Bronx native said she was hesitant to fully engage in Messina because Loyola was her last choice.

She shared how her Evergreens introduced her to organizations they



thought would pique her interest. This led her to a space where she could stay connected with the culture of her own family and predominantly Irish community in New York. She now dances alongside her Evergreen, Sarah MacDougall '27, who introduced her to the Irish dance team.

"It was a little scary at first to have my Evergreen be on a team with me because it's different social groups. She definitely helped me get comfortable with our teammates and was my friend even outside of being an Evergreen," Brennan said.

A common sentiment among the new batch of Evergreens recruits I spoke with is that we all want to pay it forward. Although we each had unique first impressions of Loyola and Messina, we all shared the same motivation to become Evergreens. Each of us wanted to create an equally memorable experience for the incoming class.

So, I will be one of the Evergreens leading around first-year students during summer orientation and will work all year to help them feel like I did.

One of my suitemates could not believe that I am giving up three days of my summer to come back to campus to volunteer at Summer Orientation as an Evergreen. With that being said, my fellow Evergreens and I could not be more excited. Trosky received similar sympathy from her friends at home, but she responded with enthusiasm.

"I am excited to come back on campus and catch up with everyone here who is an Evergreen. I am excited to get a glance into what the class of 2029 looks like. I am scouting out people... saying, 'Hmm you might be in our group, but you don't know it yet!'"

I want to warn you, as a first-year student, I sometimes felt overwhelmed, frustrated, and homesick. But I got through it and so will you. Rest assured there are many people, including your Evergreens, who you can lean on.

So, my advice to first-year students: Be open-minded! Whether Loyola was your first—or last choice—your Evergreen is here to help.



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Sports

Track Athlete Lauryn Clarke Breaks Records In 2025 Season

By Malcolm Kiiza

Women's Track and Field athlete Lauryn Clarke '26 has stood out as an exceptional student athlete this year, qualifying for the Eastern College Athletic Conference, ECAC, Track and Field Championship Finals on top of many other accolades.

Throughout the season, she repeatedly broke her personal records, all while helping Loyola stay in competition with other elite schools at their track meets. Clarke took pride in representing Loyola at meets, especially when competing against bigger schools.

"Just knowing that we're such a small school, but that we can come in and be as loud as we can be is the best part. I don't think people ever expected Loyola to be a contender, but our team is just as fast as any other big-name schools to be right up there in the championships with them," Clarke said.

Even at times where she felt fatigued or sore from running, Clarke made sure to push through the pain and leave everything on the track to give a performance she could be proud of.

"In the finals, just coming off our Patriot League championship a couple days prior, it was a very tedious experience. Muscles are tired, body's tired, you're just ready to get the next championship over with... at that point, finals day was kind of just putting out whatever I had left and putting my efforts out there. I'd never want to leave the track knowing that I didn't do my best or try my best where I could've," Clarke said.

Growing up in a family of three, Clarke has always been a standout in her family. She graduated from Damascus High School in Maryland, where she was crowned the Most Valuable Performer on her track team. She earned this title after setting the school record for both 55 meters indoors and 100 meters outdoors, with times of 7.29 and 11.94 seconds, respectively. Her passion for track goes back as early as middle school.

"In my middle school, we had this track and field unit, and we didn't have an actual track team. So at the time of the track unit, I would be the person that [teachers would tell me], 'You beat all the school records.' So my gym teachers at the time were like, 'You should try out for track in high school,'" Clarke said.

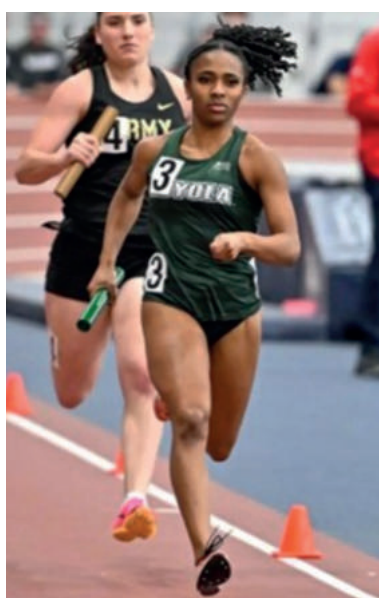


Photo Credit: Tim Weight

She also played other sports in the past, including soccer. While Clarke enjoyed these other sports, she said that they primarily enhanced her passion for running. Her relationship with her dad and coaches also inspired her to pursue track.

"I would say that the inspiration came more from the coaches themselves and not a different sport... I would say that my dad is my biggest role model that I look up to because he not only guides me in directions where I could go, but he also helps me figure out myself and lets me choose my own path," Clarke said.

Aside from the glamour and achievements, Clarke delved into her routine that earns her all these accolades and discussed how she maintains her top-level fitness.

"I usually like to be in a relaxed state because I believe the more tense you are, the more you're not going to have fun. I genuinely think having conversations with my teammates, or just anyone who is in a relaxed mode as well, is just riveting because it then rubs off on you and changes your mindset, because at the end of the day, you're here to have fun," Clarke said.

For more information on the Women's Track and Field team, visit the Greyhounds official site as well as their Instagram (@loyolaxtrack) to keep up with all their meets and other team updates.

Team Coxswains Share Love Of Rowing

By Kelenna Onukwugha

Coxswains Josephine Sedgley '27 and Joey Sigmund '25 are feeling confident in their teams' abilities after winning multiple races this past season. The program has come a long way since being only a club team in the early 1990s. Even since the COVID-19 pandemic, the program has undergone substantial cultural changes, according to Sigmund.

As a new first-year in the post-COVID year, Sigmund was unsure what to do as a newcomer, or what the team expected from him as a new member. He lacked real direction, and did not know where the team was headed.

"There wasn't really a clear path forward for anybody. For my class coming in, it was slightly alarming for us, and also just a little bit confusing. There wasn't anybody telling us where we should be, where we were, or what exactly we needed to do to be where we wanted to be. We didn't even know where we wanted to be," Sigmund said.

As the program developed over the years, Sigmund felt more unity and motivation among his teammates. He credited a lot of the team's improvement in races to their focus on improving their team culture. When he joined the team, he noticed a divide between the upperclassmen and underclassmen, and the people who walked onto the team versus high school recruits. Sigmund and his classmates sought to see this tension resolved in the coming years.

"We knew what we didn't want the team to feel like for people, so as we kind of moved forward, we wanted to make sure that everyone felt included or appreciated at practices," Sigmund said.

Now, Sigmund reports, the team is a lot tighter knit, as both friends and teammates. Going on team



Photo Credit: Craig Chase

retreats together and making sure to hang out outside of the erg room or practice helped the team bond and become closer as teammates.

This has led to a rich culture and brotherhood for the rowers.

"I have my brothers with me every day, and that's the best part," Sigmund said.

This brotherhood is something that Sigmund cherishes about the rowing program at Loyola, and it has led to measurable success for the men's team.

On the women's side, their positive team culture has also had a measurable impact on Sedgley's life. She walked onto the team in the fall of her first year and was made coxswain by the next spring. When she started out, Sedgley did not know a lot about rowing. She was even surprised that the rowers sat backwards in the boat.

Now an experienced coxswain and a strong leader of her boat, Sedgley is grateful that she joined the team. She said that it has been an extremely rewarding experience for her. She would not trade it for the world.

"I can't comprehend how my college experience would be without rowing. It has given me all of my friends and runs all of my schedule in a very good way. It gives me a lot of purpose to being here besides just going to class and doing nothing else," Sedgley said.

She has greatly enjoyed her role of coxswain, and believes it is a perfect fit for her personality. Previously a horseback rider, Sedgley said she has always enjoyed the technical side of independent sports.

"Rowing is such a technically-difficult sport. People don't understand how hard it is to row that hard and correctly. It's absolutely jaw-dropping the amount of work that goes into it," Sedgley said.

Sedgley has great pride for her teammates and their wins. She also looks forward to her future with the program.

To stay updated with the men's and women's teams, you can visit the Loyola Greyhounds official site or the teams' Instagram accounts (@loyolawrowing and @loyolamrowing).

A Former Loyola Lacrosse Player's Unique Journey To The NBA

By Samuel Mejia

After Pat Spencer '19, former Loyola lacrosse attackman, won Patriot League Offensive Player of the Year in all four years of his undergraduate, along with the Tewaaron Award in his senior year, many believed he would pursue a career in professional lacrosse.

Now, Spencer is playing in the National Basketball Association for one of the most valuable organizations in all sports, the Golden State Warriors. Spencer was the first Greyhound alum to participate in NBA All-Star Weekend as a player.

The 29-year-old Maryland native was in the Rising Stars game, which showcases the NBA's new and upcoming stars.

This year's format consisted of four teams with seven players on each who competed in a single elimination bracket. One of these teams consisted of the NBA G League's best players, which was Spencer's team. The NBA G League is the NBA's official minor league that prepares players, coaches, officials, trainers, and front-office staff for the NBA.

Spencer played more in the G League from 2021 to 2024, but this season, he predominantly played in the NBA. He is one of three Loyola Greyhound alumni currently playing in the league. His younger brother, Cam Spencer '23, and Santi Aldama who played basketball for Loyola, are both members of the Memphis Grizzlies.

Another Greyhound alum who was part of the NBA is Michael Malone '94, former head coach of the Denver Nuggets, who led his team to an NBA title in 2023. Malone coached in the NBA All-Star Game in both 2019 and 2023.

Pat Spencer seems to have found a home in Golden State, but he had his own journey to get to this point.

Spencer attended Loyola from 2015 to 2019 and was an attackman on the men's lacrosse team. With Spencer at the forefront, the Greyhounds made a Final Four appearance in the NCAA Lacrosse Championships in just his first season.

The team continued to earn their spot in these championships in the following years, making a first-round appearance in 2017 and two quarter finals appearances in 2018 and 2019.

Spencer was the only first-year to earn Patriot League Offensive Player of the Year and Rookie of the Year when he did so in 2016, according to the Patriot League site. He won Patriot League Offensive Player of the Year in all four years at Loyola.

"He's a really strong guy and he'd just push his way to the goal, but he's also athletic enough to split, dodge, and step away and re-engage and run by you with speed. I mean, he just can do it and he's incredibly two-handed. And you see that in his basketball game," Men's Lacrosse Coach Matt Dwan '95 said.

Spencer is the NCAA men's lacrosse all-time leader in career assists and fourth in career points. His lacrosse resume also includes the Tewaaron Award and the Lt. Raymond Enners Award, which both recognize the most outstanding American college lacrosse player in that season. These were each given to Spencer in his senior year in 2019.

He has also earned three Inside Lacrosse and USILA first-team All-American accolades, from 2017 to 2019, and a USILA second-team All-American accolade in 2016. In his years at Loyola, Spencer exemplified a strong work ethic, professionalism, and a competitive spirit.

"He just was such a competitor... he just kind of had that type of attitude that when he took the field, he wanted to win at everything he did... hardworking kid and super smart. Definitely somebody that [had] the work ethic, the hard work, the dedication—just a winner," Dwan said. Former Loyola Lacrosse Goalkeeper Jacob Stover '19 added to Dwan's sentiments.

"He was a great leader... the one thing I tell you as a goalie, you love to have the best player in the country on your team when it comes to game day. I was okay with going at it at practice with him [and] when it came down to Saturdays, we were on the same team," Stover said.

Stover also talked about Spencer's upstanding character that he continues to hold today.

"Most genuine guy ever. If he didn't know you, he'd still be very open, very genuine, outgoing, and just an overall great young man. [He is] funny, down to earth, loves his family, just a normal dude. He doesn't gloat, didn't have an ego, nothing—humble, hungry, ready to attack every opportunity [he] could get," Stover said.

When his undergraduate years were completed, he had cemented himself as one of the greatest lacrosse players in those four years. In spite of this success, his dreams for the future were not of lacrosse, but of basketball. When he was drafted with the first pick in the Premier Lacrosse League Draft, he opted not to play and to instead continue with his schooling.

"We knew that Pat was a great basketball player. He was very honest and told Coach Toomey that one of his passions was basketball and that his goal was to attempt to play at a high level. He was great, though, understanding that he didn't want to be a distraction on our team for our spring season. He always made sure to do things on his own time," Dwan said.

Dwan stated that many players do workouts or summer lacrosse in the offseason, playing in competitive tournaments or leagues, but that Spencer's summers consisted of basketball. He played in different pickup and organized leagues and did not play lacrosse.

In 2019, after four years at Loyola, he entered his name in the transfer portal and went to Northwestern for his graduate year, where he would play his first and only year of Division I basketball. He averaged 10.4 points, 4.1 rebounds, and 3.9 assists per game playing guard. These stats cracked open the door for a chance at professional basketball.

Spencer's first go-around as a professional was in 2021, playing five games on the Hamburg Towers in the Basketball Bundesliga. Afterwards, he was invited to the Washington Wizards G League training camp. Spencer earned a spot on

their roster and played one season with the Wizards G League affiliate, the Capital City Go-Go, during 2021-2022.

Following his stint in the nation's capital, Spencer joined the G League's Santa Cruz Warriors for four regular season games in 2022-2023, then played 34 regular season games for them in 2023-2024.

On Feb. 22, 2024, he signed a two-way contract with the Golden State Warriors, Santa Cruz's NBA affiliate. This two-way contract allows Spencer to play in either league as designated by the team. In 2024-25 though, he played significantly more in the NBA, with only two regular-season games in the G League.

Spencer finished his 2024-25 season shooting 40.6 percent from the field, and the Warriors finished with a 48-34 record as the seventh seed in the Western Conference. Spencer then played more minutes in the team's playoff games than in the regular season, showing his growing importance to Golden State.



Photo Credit: John McCreary

Travel & Health

Is Travel About The Experience, Or Becoming A Hunt For Instagram Pictures

By Caroline McMillion

You're scrolling on your Instagram feed and come across all the spring break posts: girls posing on the beach and friends sharing a photo dump from their tropical getaway. As you view these posts, you notice how these photos appear to be thoroughly thought out from the angle, the pose, the hair, the background, the lighting, and the editing. It was all taken into heavy consideration to decipher what gets posted. You think back to when you were younger and how you hated when your mom or grandma wanted a picture of you on vacation, because all you wanted to do was play in the sand and go to the ice cream shop. You never thought about taking a photo to shoot on the beach or in a fancy destination restaurant. Why is travel becoming so "Instagramable"?

Social media influencers have been rising since the early 2010's. The term "influencer" allows people to record and photograph their entire lives for people to watch through various social media apps, such as YouTube and TikTok. Many people look up to these influencers, wanting to live the same life they do. This caused users, large or small, urging for the "aesthetic feed" or the "trendy page".

To create an aesthetic page, you need to have colors, filters, high-light covers, fonts, grid and other visual aspects that define your social media brand persona and identity. Your trendy page is what attracts potential followers. Many people strive to have Instagram pages similar to Natalie Zacek, Ana Stowell, and Lexi Hidalgo - the tropical, summer posts with the perfect lighting and colors. People aspire to recreate the same page, traveling to locations that give off the same theme as them.

Dean of International Studies at Loyola University Maryland Jack Hobson explains how social media can impact those who are studying abroad.

"[Prioritizing social media] is something I've seen slowly creep into the study abroad experience over the 23 years I've been in the professional field," Hobson said.

Even celebrities, like Kim Kardashian and Bella Hadid, travel to locations to get the perfect shot for their posts, mainly to market their businesses and partnerships. This is traveling for social media, not because they simply want to enjoy the experience of traveling. It encourages followers to do the same.

Isabella Malvira 28' has traveled to various places around the world: Spain, France, Mexico, and Puerto Rico are just a few. When roaming these places, Instagram proves her travels, with many aesthetically-pleasing pictures and candid moments from her trip plastered on her feed.

"I've visited around four to five places just because I saw them on social media," Malvira said.

The Canon G7X camera has been flying off the shelves ever since it has grown in popularity in July 2024, even though the camera released in September 2014. The camera is known to be the "it-girl" camera, allowing people to capture the perfect picture. It is constantly out of stock on the Canon website, whereas Amazon and Walmart still have it in stock but sell the camera for hundreds of dollars more. With social media users becoming influenced by the camera's product, people put their name on the Canon mailing list

in hopes of getting the camera. I did not get lucky with this tactic, as the camera has not come back in stock on their website since summer of 2024.

The Canon G7X is fantastic for interior, travel, nature, landscape, and portraits, allowing users to capture elegant shots in any location. Many users of the camera state how they can't go on vacation without the camera because of the outcome of the photos. If people don't get the ideal picture to post, it ruins the trip. "If I don't get the perfect photo or capture the perfect moment, my mood will change drastically. My best friend and I have had various fights over not getting the perfect Instagram photo," Malvira said.

Many people determine where they want to travel based on trending locations. Santorini, Greece, and Venice are top search results when looking up Instagrammable locations, as multiple social media users photograph themselves laying on the blue beaches and posing by the colorful buildings.

Assistant Director of the Office of International Studies at Loyola University Maryland Jacob Badin has experienced students doing exactly this.

"I have had students tell me outright that they want to go to Greece because their favorite influencers have posted photos of the Greek islands that they now want to visit," Badin said.

Sometimes, we encounter Instagram travel more than we think.

Cece Grimberg 28' explains how social media played a role during her spring break trip.

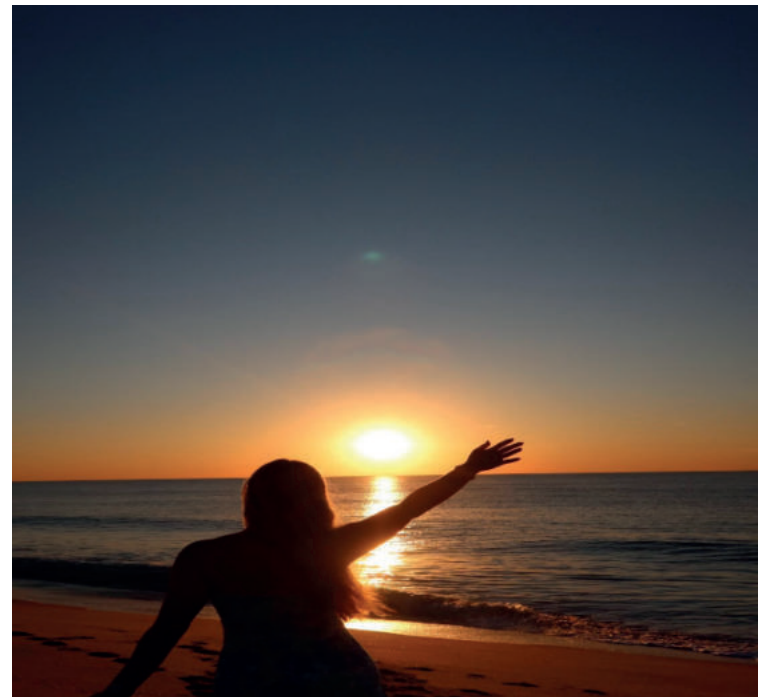


Photo Credit: Diya Sharma

"My friends and I went to Fort Lauderdale, Florida for spring break and there were definitely times where we would point out good locations for pictures. I never realized how much we thought about where we should take photos and what to post until you asked me about it," Grimberg said.

Many people can find a balance between capturing memories and disconnecting to truly experience the moment. Traveling should be about submerging yourself in new cultures, experiencing different landscapes, and creating meaningful memories rather than focusing solely on curating the perfect Instagram post.

Traveling isn't just about a getaway, but also a way to experience cultural immersion. This type of journey provides opportunities for experiential learning, offering insights into history, art, and cuisine.

Not only are there benefits to cultural immersion, but traveling has also been proven to boost mental health.

Travel has been linked to stress reduction and can alleviate symptoms of anxiety and depression. So, why not take a trip to The Bahamas for your mental health?

"I encourage students to document travel but also, to try and put their phones down, look around, and most importantly to 'look up' as seeing countries through your own eyes is always better than seeing them through a screen," Badin said.

While sharing your adventures with others can be entertaining, it's important to be present in the moment and truly appreciate the places you visit, the people you meet, and the unique experiences you have.

Should You Consider Commuting? A Day In The Life Of A Commuter Student

By Caroline McMillion

When it comes to college applications and decision season, there is a lot of thought behind where you will end up because of all the considerations that must take place. You have to consider if the campus feels like home, what the dining options are, how large or small you want the university to be, the student-teacher ratio, and the location of campus, amongst other things.

For many students, their first instinct is to get as far away from home as possible for the "true college experience". As much as I believed in that statement a year ago, I now realize that commuter students can have a "true college experience," too.

Commuting has been a good experience, and if anyone is on the fence about commuting, here is why you should.

Starting off very strong, we have the financial side to commuting. Students that decide to commute to campus save anywhere from \$11,700-\$13,170 from room-and-board. If you chose to opt out of a meal plan, that could save you an additional \$3,095-\$3,495. The amount of money you save makes commuting sound better and better!

The average student debt balance is \$38,375. By commuting, students won't be suffering from as much debt when compared to living and eating on campus.

"Last semester I would buy my lunch on campus, but this semester, I have been bringing in my own lunch from home and heating it up in the microwaves offered by Loyola. It's been a

huge game changer for me because I am spending a lot less money," first-year Lucia Martinez said.

During the past fall semester, there was a Messina session where the class spoke about their roommates, and how we can be good roommates.

One of the questions asked was "How does your roommate treat you?". People in the class gasped as each student shared their experience: the loud music late at night, piles of dirty dishes in the sink, and overflowing trash scattered around the room, to list some.

Luckily, commuting avoids roommate horror stories and allows you to continue living the lifestyle of home cooked meals and clean surfaces wherever you are.

One of the top draws - the comfort of your own bed! Missing your bed is a common experience whenever people are traveling, having a long day, and especially when living on campus. Going a long time without your bed makes you crave it. Commuting gives you the pleasure of being able to sleep in your own bed each night and allows you to sleep the way you want to, with no issues; whether that is ocean waves as background noise, or a bright night light, you have your own personal space to do whatever you desire.

Commuting doesn't mean you are completely cut off from being involved. It can be difficult due to the timing of events, classes, and just the urge to go home, but immersing yourself in campus organizations is so important. By doing so, you are putting yourself out there, meeting new

people, and staying active. Loyola offers over 150 clubs, ranging from athletics, academics, and hobbies for any student to take part in.

President of the Commuter Student Organization Angelo Velasco '25 highlighted his involvement on campus despite commuting.

"I attend campus events as much as possible and try to meet and engage with people in my classes at these events," Velasco said.

The Commuter Student Organization is a great place to start if you are unsure where to begin your commuting path. This group gathers commuter students to provide an inclusive and engaging environment for people to connect and grow within the Loyola community.

Additionally, Loyola University Maryland even offers a space dedicated to commuter students, called the Commuter Student Lounge, located in Gardens A, across from Newman. Even though you are on campus, this building's goal is to make you feel at home.

Commuting can come with some downsides. Imagine your car started giving you troubles: the turn signal, lights, and windshield wipers are not working. Unfortunately, you may have to take one of your parent's cars to school while your car is in the shop. This can bring complications that someone living on campus would not have to worry about before class.

Classes in general can be another struggle. Class registration and getting to class on time are some of the most common battles faced by commuter students. Class registration

time has proved to haunt commuter students, as a late registration time assignment means less class selections, and, sometimes, leaves only the early class times left. Every student gets classes, but you may turn out with an 8 a.m. rather than the 11 a.m. you wanted or end up with an elective you weren't planning on taking yet.

Managing your time for classes is a huge responsibility, allocating time to wake up and make breakfast, as well as leaving enough time for traffic and parking. Loyola residents do not have to deal with this, as they can enjoy the luxury of waking up thirty minutes before class starts and ordering Green and Grey on their walk to class.

Spanish Professor at Loyola University Maryland Cynthia Fraga explained her experience commuting to campus.

"On a good day, it takes me 75 minutes. When I have to be on campus for 9 a.m. classes or meetings, it can take me between ninety minutes and two hours one way. I pick out my outfit and pack my lunch the night before, and my husband has coffee ready for me and I just grab a toast to go or a bagel [in the morning]. It is important to get ready the night before, for me, since I need to leave by 6:45," Dr. Fraga said.

We can't forget about parking, of course. Parking can be a hassle. You may have to choose between finding a good spot on the side of the road, deciding if you even want to risk leaving your car there, or parking at the FAC and taking the shuttle or walking.

"I simply cannot just walk into a building and study. I have to make sure where I'm parked at is valid and [that

I] don't overstay, otherwise, I will get a ticket or be towed," Velsaco said. Sure, these challenges can arise, but these are just small bumps when compared to the responsibility and self-sufficiency that commuting brings.

Commuting comes with its own set of rewards that living on campus cannot always offer. There's something empowering about being in control of your own schedule—whether it's squeezing in a quick jam session during your drive or savoring the freedom to unwind at home. Commuters become experts with time management skills and learn to juggle traffic, parking, and class schedules.

As a commuter, it's important to know that you matter as much as everyone else on campus, and that you can be involved and included.

"I stay connected with students by grabbing lunch with them, hanging out in their dorms, and going off campus with them. I let them know I am a commuter so they understand that I may not be able to be present on campus all the time. All my friends and classmates are so understanding, and I feel so appreciated," Martinez said.

Commuting is more than just a way to get from point A to point B; it's a chance to welcome the rhythm of your day, leave room for some personal time, and submerge yourself in the dynamic energy of campus life. If commuting is within your reach, don't miss out. Sometimes, the best part of your campus experience begins before you even step foot in class.

Fun & Games

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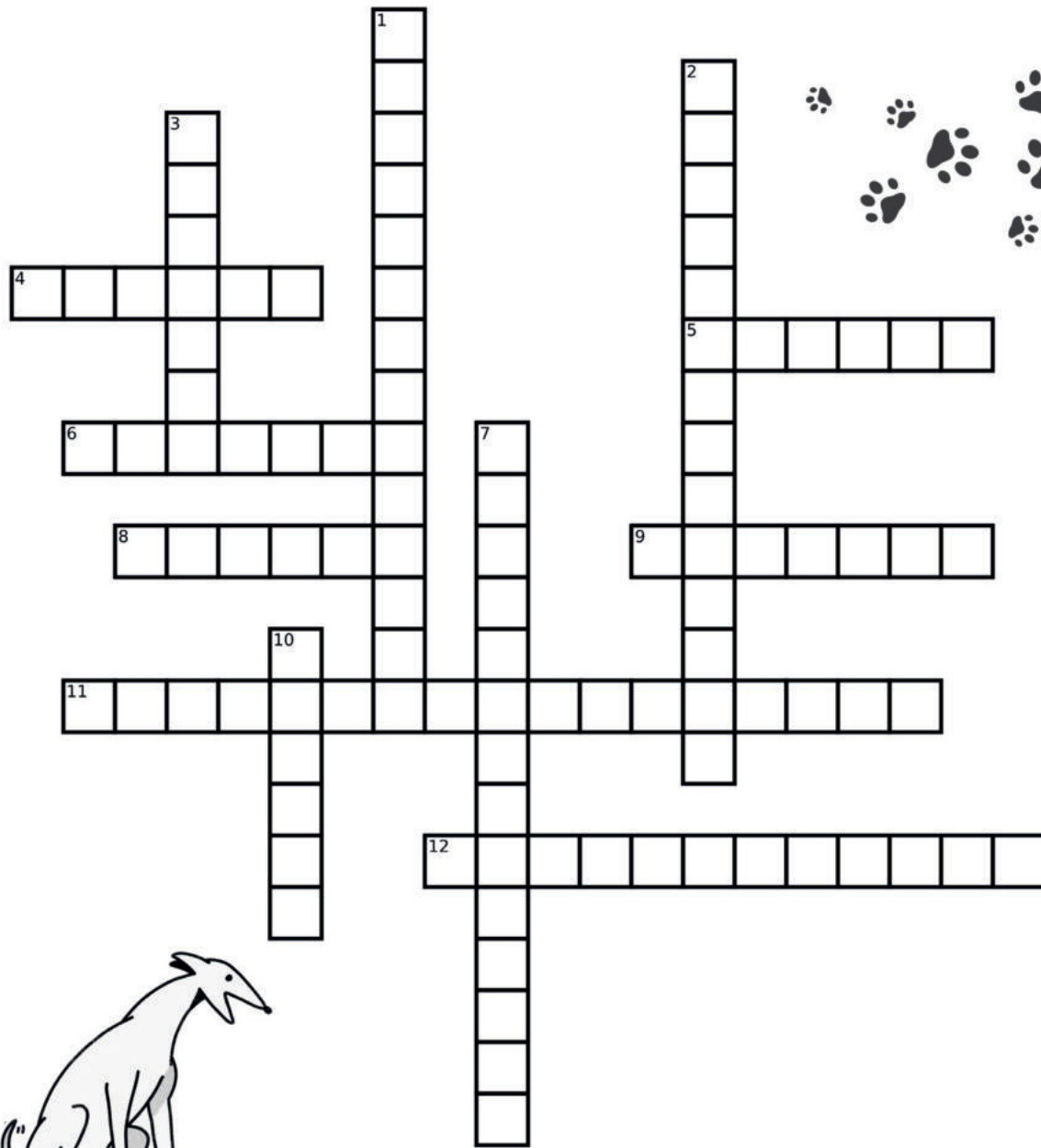
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Clubs and Orgs: Hounds Just Wanna Have Fun



Down:

- 1. Brings attention to mental health in athletics
- 2. Supports local artists
- 3. Advocates for healthy relationships
- 7. Brings together fans of the Harry Potter series
- 10. Learn new recipes in the _____ Club.

Across:

- 4. Loyola's all-female a cappella group
- 5. Learn new embroidery techniques in the _____ Club.
- 6. Publication about student research projects and interests
- 8. Loyola's all-male a cappella group
- 9. Express your unique style in the _____ Club.
- 11. Provides education about drink tampering prevention
- 12. Loyola's primary campus news source

Crossword designed by Leo Arcelay-Christiano

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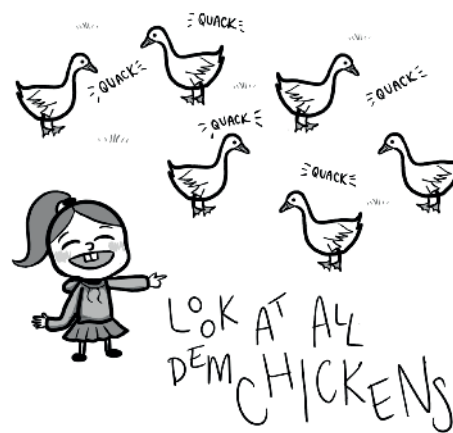
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We'd love to see you there!

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