

COLLEGIAN

Nov. 11, 2020

Issue 5 • Vol CXXXVII

Theatre production of *The Memo*, premiering Oct. 29, to have in-person audience

BY JAKE PROCINO
NEWS EDITOR

The Willamette University Theatre production of *The Memorandum* (The Memo) by Vaclav Havel is planning to have an in-person audience, according to an email to the Theatre department from Jonathan Cole, the department chair.

The production, which is planned to run Oct. 29-Nov. 15, will have a 20-person audience limited to members of the Willamette University Community, according to the Theatre department's [proposal] submitted to the Willamette Reopening Committee (ROC). This includes current students, faculty and staff, but does not extend to any guests such as partners or children. Audience members will be required to follow typical Willamette COVID-19 protocols which include wearing a face mask at all times, maintaining six feet physical distance from others and making reservations for contact tracing, along with oth-

er theatre-specific protocols. The [list of protocols] is posted around the M. Lee Pelton Theatre, in the program, on the [Theatre website] and is sent to the live audience members two days in advance. The proposal limits risk to student-employees by providing them with personal protective equipment such as face shields, limiting the number of students on shift at one time and having regular cleaning procedures.

Both Cole and the Director of The Memo, Professor of Theatre Susan Coromel, stressed in separate emails to the Collegian that the audience will present a low risk to the production. "The ROC approved us for an audience of 20. Our mainstage is designed to accommodate 200 people, and we've been assured that our air handling system is state of the art. [The] Facilities [Department] has been working very closely with us to ensure everyone's safety. The risk is the same as any in-person class offered this semester," said Coromel.



Pictured: Cast members of *The Memorandum* face where the crowd will be.

MATTHEW MAHONEY | PHOTOGRAPHER

Theatre students were not consulted in conversations at large about the decision to have a live audience, according to Production Stage Manager Sophia Leonard ('22) and Actor Clare "Lee" Lebeda ('21). Cole confirmed, saying, "No,

the students were not consulted, as it is not our practice to consult with students regarding our production schedule."

Leonard and Lebeda both said that faculty communicated their intentions. "From the beginning

the faculty made it clear that they were going to try to have a live audience," said Leonard, though she notes that "Personally, I thought that all of Willamette's campus would get shut down within the first three weeks."

THEATRE, 2

"Don't yuck other people's yum": Ericka Hart's sex positivity talk attended by over 70

BY JESSE BUCK
LIFESTYLES EDITOR

Sex and intimacy are integral parts of the college experience. Regardless of whether or not a student chooses to engage in sex, they will be impacted by campus culture surrounding sexual activity. While conversations surrounding sex are embarrassing or daunting for many, they can help foster a safe and positive campus environment for students. Helping to facilitate this school-wide conversation on Friday, Oct. 23 was a Willamette Events Board Zoom event featuring guest lecturer Ericka Hart (she/they), a Black queer femme activist, writer, sex educator and highly acclaimed speaker. Zooming in from Brooklyn, Hart shared their wisdom with Willamette students through a question and answer style lecture.

According to attendee Bryleigh O'Neil ('23), one of the most valuable parts of Hart's lecture was their framing of sex positivity, explaining that their analysis went beyond preaching confidence and freedom to safely sexually engage with multiple people. "She went deeper by saying sex positivity is about taking the blockages away that keep people from being able to have the sexual experiences they want," she said.

WEB general event planner Alanna Kelly ('21) emphasized this point from a host's point of view, saying "I



COURTESY OF ERICKA HART

could see in the questions there were a lot of sentiments that people felt like they owed people their bodies, and that isn't something I thought we were going to talk about as much because with sex positivity I guess I was just thinking about being confident, and people who do want to have sex be-

ing comfortable with saying that they want to have sex. But there were a lot of questions from people saying how they feel when they don't and how they feel like they should. So I thought we covered the opposite ends of the spectrum."

DON'T YUCK, 5

Willamette reduces 2021-22 tuition by almost \$10,000, net price remains the same

BY NOAH DANTES
EDITOR IN CHIEF

The Willamette Board of Trustees voted this past weekend to reduce the College of Arts and Science's (CAS) base tuition from \$53,300 to \$43,500 for the 2021-22 academic year.

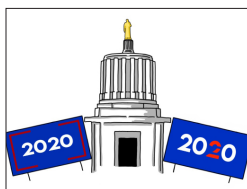
However, all current students will continue to pay the same net price, the tuition amount paid after Willamette scholarships and grants are applied, as they do now. WU financial aid and scholarship amounts will be reduced for the 2021-22 academic year in order to account for the base tuition decrease, but "they will be reduced by an amount that keeps the net cost to each student the same as it was this year," Director of Financial Aid Patty Hoban said over email. When asked if the discount rate off the base tuition price will shift due to the tuition change, Dean of Admission Mary Randers said over email that the discount rate next year is predicted to decrease from around 55 percent to 45 percent. Hoban said, "But again, that doesn't mean that students will pay more."

Hoban added that the base tuition decrease will not affect grants and scholarships from out-

side-Willamette entities, and that it also will not affect room, board or book costs. Randers said, "State, federal, and outside scholarship aid levels all remaining the same allows for those aid sources to have a stronger impact towards a student's costs moving forward."

Since the net cost is staying the same, Willamette is calling the tuition decrease as a "tuition reset." The goal of the tuition reset is to push Willamette's sticker price, the price before scholarships and grants are applied, down to more accurately reflect the net price. Thorsett said that students who come from wealthy school districts, schools with college counselors or have parents who went to college have more information about how financial aid works. Those who have less information about how financial aid works may be deterred by the high sticker price, "I've been really thinking a lot about the question of inclusion—when our list price is the median household income in Oregon, we present ourselves as being a luxury institution that's designed by and for wealthy people," University President Stephen Thorsett said.

WILLAMETTE, 2



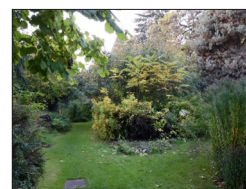
LIFESTYLES

Students share their views on the election and its effect on campus. p. 5



News

New exhibit of Northwest public to be shown at Hallie Ford. p. 2



LIFESTYLES

Salem's community gardens provide spaces for study breaks and enjoyment. p. 5

Hallie Ford to host “Northwest Public Art of the 1930s” exhibition starting Nov. 28

BY KATHLEEN FORREST
MANAGING EDITOR

According to an email release from the Hallie Ford Museum of Art, the museum will be hosting the exhibition “Forgotten Stories: Northwest Public Art of the 1930s” from Nov. 28-March 27. The exhibition will feature works made in Oregon, Washington, Idaho and Montana during the 1930s, with an emphasis on the Great Depression and federally funded arts projects during that time. The works in the exhibit span several different mediums including, “paintings, murals, prints, drawings, photographs, and sculptures, as well as furniture created for Timberline Lodge.”

The release says that the traveling exhibition was put together by Tacoma Art Museum’s interim Chief Curator and Curator of Collections and Special Exhibitions Margaret Bullock. In a statement, Bullock highlights that many of the works in the ex-

hibition have never been exhibited before, and that the extent of federally funded arts projects in the Northwest during the 1930s has been previously underestimated. Bullock will also be presenting an online lecture entitled, “Wonders, Blunders, and Everything in Between: The New Deal Art Projects in the Northwest”.

The museum will have three other online lectures as part of the exhibition, focusing on the history and culture of the Great Depression and presented by Willamette University professors. Access to the lectures and more information on them can be found here. There is also a self-guided film series, featuring four films from the era available here. The museum is open from 12 p.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday and closed on Sunday and Monday. Information regarding the museums COVID-19 precautions can be found hereor at their website.

keforrest@willamette.edu

Willamette prepares for potential Election Day protests, provides resources for students

BY KATHLEEN FORREST
MANAGING EDITOR

Heightened political tensions surrounding the presidential election has caused concern surrounding potential protests on election night at the Oregon State Capitol, across the street north of Willamette University. On Nov. 3rd, University President Steve Thorsett shared an “election day message”, acknowledging students’ anxieties and reassuring them that, “Willamette’s values remain unchanged and we will continue to move forward together.” On Nov. 2, Willamette shared a link to resources and safety information for students in the daily bulletin, Today@Willamette and again later in the day in an email from Vice President of Student Affairs Lisa Landreman.

The page includes information on updated security procedures from Campus Safety in the coming weeks and reminds students that if they see anyone on campus with a weapon they should contact Campus Safety

at 503-370-6911 immediately and not engage with the individual. Campus Safety should also be contacted in case of any threats or violence. If you become aware of hate groups or “other groups of concern gathering in the area,” contact Landreman at llandreman@willamette.edu.

In a comment provided via email to the Collegian, Director of Campus Safety Ross Stout said that there have been no changes as a result of COVID-19 to standard shelter-in-place procedures in case of a campus emergency, and reminded students to pay attention to any emails, calls or texts from the Emergency Notification System. When asked about potential long-term plans for ensuring student safety in similar situations, Stout said, “Since we have no indications that there will be political unrest that would endanger students, we have no changes being planned. If the situation were to change, we would respond accordingly.”

In recognition of recent protests and anti-racist movements,

the university is providing mental health resources for Black students, and anti-racism resources for white students. There are also more general mental health resources for students experiencing anxiety during this time. The page on the Willamette website acknowledges that: “Our location near the State Capitol affords us the opportunity to witness the democratic freedoms of free speech up close and personal. It is important to understand the very real possibility of the presence of weapons, intimidation and violent tactics that could be employed by some groups at these events. What starts as a peaceful demonstration can erupt with little to no warning and quickly morph into something of greater risk to personal safety.” They do make clear however that Willamette and Campus Safety are in communication with Salem Police and Capitol Police to keep an eye on the situation and potential risks to students.

keforrest@willamette.edu

WEEKLY REPORT BY CAMPUS SAFETY

BURGLARY

October 27, 7:44 a.m. (Matthews Parking Lot): Campus Safety received a call reporting a vehicle parked on campus had a broken back window. The vehicle owner was contacted about the incident and the owner later called reported items missing and stolen from the vehicle. An officer responded and assisted with taping up the window until a repair could be made. A report was filed.

October 27, 1:52 p.m. (Mill Street): While on patrol, parking enforcement encountered a vehicle with two broken back windows. The owner was contacted and asked to report anything stolen or missing. The owner later contacted Campus Safety and an officer responded and assisted with taping up the windows. A report was filed.

EMERGENCY MEDICAL AID

October 28, 11:58 p.m. (In a Campus Residence): Campus Safety received a call requesting to transport a student to the ER. An officer responded and transported the student. The on-call area coordinator was also notified.

SUSPICIOUS ACTIVITY/PERSONS

October 26, 1:42 p.m. (Botanical Gardens): Campus Safety received a call reporting two unknown individuals in the garden. An officer responded and

met with the individuals and informed them that the campus is closed to visitors and requested they leave campus.

October 26, 4:20 p.m. (Atkinson Annex): While on patrol, an officer encountered an individual sleeping behind the building. The officer made contact with the individual and requested they relocate off campus.

October 26, 10:40 p.m. (Goudy Commons): Campus Safety received a report of an individual going through the dumpster. An officer responded and located the individual in the dumpsters at the University Apartments. The individual was asked to leave campus.

October 28, 12:25 a.m. (Shepard Hall): While on patrol, an officer encountered an individual in the dumpster. The individual was asked to leave campus.

October 28, 3:25 a.m. (Matthews Parking Lot): While on patrol, an officer encountered an individual pushing a shopping cart headed towards the dumpsters. The officer made contact with the individual and informed them that the campus is closed to visitors and the individual promptly left.

October 29, 2:08 p.m. (Jackson Plaza): Campus Safety received a call reporting a group of individ-

uals taking photos on the plaza. An officer responded and met with the individuals who were alumni and informed them that the campus is closed. The group then left campus.

October 29, 5:00 p.m. (Quad): Campus Safety received a call reporting three unknown individuals on bikes on campus. An officer responded and searched the area and surrounding areas, but could not locate the individuals.

October 30, 10:58 a.m. (University Services): Campus Safety received a call reporting an individual dropping off a paper without a mask on. An officer responded and found the individual headed off campus.

October 30, 2:01 p.m. (Lausanne Hall): Campus Safety received a call reporting a group of individuals without masks on in the area. An officer responded and searched the surrounding areas, but could not locate the individuals.

October 30, 2:06 p.m. (Alpha Chi Omega): Campus Safety received a call reporting an individual sleeping at the rear entrance of the building. Officer responded and made contact with the individual and they were escorted off campus. The individual then returned to campus shortly after and was reported to be looking into vehicles in

the Matthews parking lot. Officers responded and the individual was seen headed off campus.

October 30, 3:15 p.m. (Botanical Gardens): Campus Safety received a call reporting an individual in the garden with a bike and a large bag. An officer responded and encountered the individual in the dumpsters in the Matthews parking lot. The individual was informed that the campus is closed to visitors and that they would have to leave campus.

October 30, 9:00 p.m. (Atkinson Annex): While on patrol, an officer encountered an unknown individual carrying a large bag. The individual was informed that the campus is closed to visitors and requested they leave.

November 1, 3:20 p.m. (Sparks Center): Campus Safety received a call reporting an individual in the area without a mask on. An officer responded and searched the area and surrounding areas, but could not locate the individual.

November 1, 3:37 p.m. (Hatfield Fountain): Campus Safety received a call reporting a group of individuals without masks on. An officer responded and met with individuals who were then leaving with their masks on.

November 1, 3:43 p.m. (Quad): Campus Safety received a call reporting individuals taking pictures on the Quad without masks on. An officer responded and made contact with the family who was informed that the campus is closed to visitors and that masks are required on campus. The group then left campus.

November 1, 4:50 p.m. (Smith Fine Arts): Campus Safety received a call reporting an individual in the dumpster. An officer responded and found the individual and requested they leave campus.

November 1, 5:12 p.m. (Sparks Parking Lot): Campus Safety received a call reporting individuals on bikes without masks on. An officer responded and met with the group and informed them that the campus is closed to visitors and that masks are required on campus. The individuals then left campus.

PLEASE CONTACT
CAMPUS SAFETY IF
YOU HAVE ANY
INFORMATION
REGARDING THESE
INCIDENTS.
(503) 370-6911

COLLEGIAN STAFF

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF Noah Dantes | collegian-editor-in-chief@willamette.edu
MANAGING EDITOR Kathleen Forrest | keforrest@willamette.edu
PRODUCTION MANAGER Mary Wang | mjwang@willamette.edu
BUSINESS MANAGER Bryce Henshaw | bv henshaw@willamette.edu

NEWS EDITOR Jake Procino | jprocino@willamette.edu
LIFESTYLES EDITOR Jesse Buck | jlbuck@willamette.edu
OPINIONS EDITOR David Flanagan | djflanagan@willamette.edu
LAYOUT EDITORS Jennifer Antonson • Andrea Griffin
PHOTO EDITOR Benjamin Burton | baburton@willamette.edu
DIGITAL MEDIA MANAGER Quinna Sypher | qasypher@willamette.edu

Willamettecollegian.com | IG: Willamette_collegian
(503) 370-6053 | Facebook: Willamette-Collegian

POLICY: The contents of this publication are the responsibility of the Collegian staff and do not necessarily reflect the policies of the Associated Students of Willamette University or Willamette University.

Theatre production of The Memo, premiering Oct. 29, to have in-person audience

CONTINUED from Page 1

Leonard and Cole said that there are channels for student concerns. “We have created a reporting document for people to fill out... if people have a concern about what they see,” said Leonard. Leonard said the reporting tools, known as the [Concern Resolution Path], are posted all over the theater and available online.

Leonard, Lebeda, Coromel and Cole all said earlier this week that they were not aware of any specific concerns from theatre students. Coromel elaborated: “We have not heard any concerns from our cast and crew. In order for this to work, we have to all be on the same page and therefore we ask the cast and crew every night if there is anything that needs to change with the protocols we are all focused on making this project as safe and transparent as possible.”

Prior to gaining approval to have a live audience, protocols—similar to pandemic class protocols—were already in place for the production and rehearsals for The Memo. Leonard said theatre-specific protocols include limiting the handling of props to just the actors that use them, limiting the number of people in the theater at one time by spreading out work shifts and sanitizing workspaces regularly. Leonard added certain elements were designed to limit the risk of the infection, such as incorporating masks into the costumes and putting barriers on the stage. “It [the stage] looks like three blocks, so three separate rooms divided by walls. There’s going to be some type of plastic that will be like

dividing those walls as well, and these [look] like office spaces,” said Leonard.

Lebeda, who plays Andrew Gross, said that they and other actors have made adjustments while acting in masks. “I have to be a lot more intentional about breathing through my nose slowly, because if I’m breathing quickly, it’s going to move the mask around,” said Lebeda, “I also have to project and enunciate a lot more.” Lebeda continued, saying the actors have to be more expressive through their bodies and vocal responses. “[We] might use ‘gasps’ or a ‘scoff’ or a ‘laugh’ at a certain place. If we didn’t have the mask, we might be able to express that emotion with a full facial expression.”

Lebeda said the adjustments to COVID-19 have had their positives: production guidelines were adjusted so actors get longer breaks and communication between faculty and students has improved. “I would say it [communication] has significantly improved since my experience on previous shows. I also feel like the COVID[-19] protocols have forced us to be much more proactive about communication and much more consistent,” said Lebeda.

Despite the risk, the faculty and students generally believe there is a strong benefit to having a live audience. Cole said, “The MEMO is a comedy, and having a live audience will take the comedy to a level that is simply not reachable without the interplay of production and audience. We are also excited to bring this production to our on-campus community.”



The set of The Memorandum, premiering on Oct. 29.

GRACE SHIFFRIN | PHOTOGRAPHER

Lebeda said that a live audience has a very palpable affect on the production. “There are a lot of benefits to having a live audience and, philosophically speaking, the whole point of live theater is the empathy that an audience is going to have comes from the fact that you are all human beings sharing the same space and breathing the same air.” While acknowledging the benefits of a live audience, Lebeda said: “I have worked so long on this show without an audience or without people coming to physically see it, that I don’t particularly feel a connection or a need for audience reactions. This is a show that I think doesn’t need them, if that makes sense. It’s a dark comedy, but it’s not a ‘ha ha’ laugh-out-loud comedy. And any of the humor is humor that I already find in it. I don’t need an audience to validate it for me.”

Originally, the production was scheduled to be a Shakespearean play, as the Theatre department usually produces one every four years. Coromel said that with the onset of the pandemic, The Memo was much easier to produce because Shakespeare’s plays usually have themes that require intimate actions from actors that are impossible to do during a pandemic.

Coromel said that The Memo is an important play for our time: “The play’s setting in a factious office where communication has come to a standstill. The play is about the dehumanizing effects of a new office language forced on its workers. The goal of the language is to take human identity out of communication. The play was originally produced in 1968 in Prague and depicts life in communist-controlled Czechoslovakia. The protocols lend to the alienation that characters

feel as they navigate the bureaucracy of this office culture.”

Lebeda feels the show is being put on at the right time: “This play is very much about the dangers of business as usual. And I feel like Willamette University has very strongly pushed an agenda of business as usual and has not given ample room for students to fully experience the humanity of multiple crises and tragedies that have occurred on campus. And that’s a very difficult attitude to maintain. But what I appreciate about this show is that it ends on a note of kindness, and of a reminder that there is more to life than work. That a bureaucracy cannot hold the human experience because bureaucracy is in-human. And that human experience and its totality is more important than work.”

jprocino@willamette.edu

Willamette reduces 2021-22 tuition by almost \$10,000, net price remains the same

CONTINUED from Page 1

Thorsett said that each student will be getting a letter from Willamette Financial Aid detailing their award adjustments. Hoban said, “Since each student’s aid award is unique, Financial Aid will be reviewing them individually to ensure each student’s net tuition cost will remain constant from 2020-21 to 2021-22.” Randers said that merit aid is being adjusted by about 20 percent, and that the maximum merit award has been lowered to \$20,000. The highest award given out this year was \$27,000. The tuition reset will affect current and future students equally, though current students will have to move to an aid package adjusted to a lower base tuition rate, while incoming 2021-22 students will only receive awards based on the new tuition rate.

The way students are evaluated for awards will not change: “Willamette applicants will continue to be evaluated for merit aid based on their application for admission, considered for competitive awards based on applications and auditions, and considered for need based aid through the FAFSA, paper FAFSA, or ORSAA,” Randers said.

Thorsett named the high sticker price an “equity issue,” and said that

scholarships are often talked about as a method of opening doors for non-privileged people into a privileged place. “That’s just not the way to think about what we’re trying to do,” Thorsett said. “We want to be a place where students who have financial need feel at home, not like they’re coming and being welcomed into a place that isn’t theirs... it is [the tuition reset] more about what pricing says about our values than it has anything to do with economics or the finance of the institution.”

However, Thorsett said that students will save some money with the tuition reset. Tuition is normally adjusted yearly to account for several factors, including inflation. “It’s likely that tuition will go up year after year with something that looks like the rate of inflation, but it’ll be on a lower base. A three percent increase on a 53,000 dollar tuition is bigger than a three percent increase on a 43,000 dollar tuition, so there’ll be some additional savings around the edges,” Thorsett said. Additionally, tuition was not adjusted for inflation for the 2021-22 academic year, which will create more savings.

Even though students will save some money due to the tuition reset, Thorsett said the tuition reset doesn’t change much for current students

and is more targeted towards the university’s communication with prospective students. He hopes that the decreased sticker price will encourage families “to take a second look and start to learn about the difference a school like Willamette can offer with its smaller classes and four-year graduation rates and all the other advantages that come at being at a smaller place.” He emphasized that the tuition reset is being made because “it’s the right thing to do and because it will help us function better internally and serve students who are moving between our schools.”

One of Willamette’s long-term goals is to build joint degree programs and make it easy for students to take classes across its colleges, including recent additions Claremont School of Theology and Pacific Northwest College of Art. According to Thorsett, it was hard to figure out how to make that goal easy when the tuition was so different at each college: “One of the other advantages here is that it brings all of our schools’ tuition to the same ballpark. They won’t be the same, but they’ll be closer to each other which makes it easier to figure out how to build joint degree programs or to allow cross registration. We’ve been doing it kind of on a case-by-case basis when we think about

how to build the Business minor or the Data Science degree. But this will make it much more transparent and easy and hopefully make it much more common for students to be able to move back and forth.”

No tuition reset is currently planned for any of Willamette’s other colleges, but Thorsett left open the possibility: “We spent a long time this year really studying how tuition worked in the undergraduate college and this isn’t something you just decide to do and then do it. You have to work through all of the pieces, and we haven’t done that kind of work in the graduate schools. I think the Board is really interested in continuing their conversation to how tuition is set in the graduate schools and in a year from now or so, maybe that’ll lead to some similar conversations, but I don’t see the same obvious mismatch between the price and the cost that we see in the arts and sciences college.”

Willamette is the first liberal arts college in the Northwest to do a tuition reset, but not the first in the nation. Research on a Willamette tuition reset began in October 2019 when the Board of Trustees created a committee made up of trustees, administrators and faculty to look into a potential tuition change. Associate

Professor of Economics Laura Taylor was a member of this committee. She said that the committee interviewed eight colleges that have already done a tuition reset: Avila University, Converse College, Drew University, Rosemont College, Sewanee The University of the South, University of Sioux Falls, University of the Sciences and Utica College. Additionally, they consulted [Lucie Lapovsky], an expert in higher education finance and governance. “We talked to a lot of people, did a lot of reading, considered where tuition resets worked and where they didn’t, and ultimately recommended the tuition reset to the Board,” Taylor said. According to Taylor, a lot of discussion was around how the move lined up with Willamette’s values and whether the move would be positively received by the student body.

Thorsett said: “Maybe it seems at first glance that it doesn’t matter very much as long as you have the financial aid there, but I don’t think that’s right... it’s more about questions of equity and inclusion than it is about money when it comes right down to it.”

ngdantes@willamette.edu

MISSION STATEMENT: The Collegian is the independent student newspaper of Willamette University. It strives to represent the diversity of perspectives on campus, publishing news and opinion on subjects of concern and interest to all members of the Willamette community. The Collegian is dedicated to educating its staffers on best journalistic practices while producing content of quality. It is dedicated to handling all matters accurately, transparently and impartially.

RAs get creative with Halloween hall events

BY PIPER LEHR
STAFF WRITER

The COVID-19 pandemic has made it impossible for large-scale in-person events to transpire on campus, and Halloween is no exception. Angel Park, a Willamette Events Board (WEB) representative, said in an email that sometimes WEB partners with student organizations to throw fun activities during Halloween. Last year, for instance, they helped put together a haunted house. However, this year, WEB was unable to do anything of that nature. She said, “unfortunately, that can’t be the case this year to protect the campus community but we look forward to bringing other weekly events this semester and the next and hope to have in-person events safely next year if possible.” Although large-scale parties are not going to be occurring this year, some RAs have found safe ways to make Halloween fun for their residents. Two Willamette RAs, Becky Heath ’23 in Kaneko Commons and Julianna Tsang ’23 in Northwood, described their experiences planning for Halloween during a pandemic.

When asked what Kaneko was doing for Halloween this year, Heath said: “It’s really individualized for RAs. The last area-wide [event] was on the 8th, so we won’t have one until after break. We’re still going back and forth on this, if we’re going to have hall-specific events this year, but we don’t have one for Halloween because the timing didn’t work out. But it’s up to everyone what they want to do.” Heath is planning on conducting a “reverse trick-or-treat.” According to her, “Reverse trick or treat is something that RAs have done in the past which is just going up to people’s doors and giving them candies and treats or whatever. It’s a good excuse to talk to people but also a good reason to show people they’re valued. And it’s a lot of fun.” In order to make going door to door safe, Heath made sure her hands were clean, and maintained distance while chatting with her hall mates.

Tsang also did something for her hall mates. She said, “I left gift bags filled with candy outside my residents’ doors late at night before Halloween for them so that they woke up and left their room, seeing a surprise!” She also had some insight on what she’s heard other RAs did. “I know some RAs are planning on making gift bags for residents, and some are doing an event on Halloween called spooky succulents and stickers in Matthews. There’ll also be a costume contest with various prizes. Also, I know an RA hosted a Rocky Horror dance party with 6 feet of physical distance.”

Neither Heath nor Tsang feel as if COVID-19 has affected their planning too much. When asked if social distancing restrictions hindered any of her ideas, Heath said, “I don’t think plans would have changed just because we’ve been in COVID for so long. I can’t really speak for what they did last year because I wasn’t an RA last year. Last year I didn’t have a Halloween themed area-wide but my RA had a pumpkin painting party for Halloween, and that’s still going on through like RHA and there’s another group doing it, I think Eastside, but there are still things going on that have been going on in the past, just six feet apart.”

Tsang had similar sentiments. She said, “somewhat, but not really. All it takes is getting creative with what you can and can’t do, to figure out what you can do to make the activities you find enjoyable and safe. I do a mix of online and in person events. Some days we hang out in-person, some days it’s over Zoom, depending on what activities we have and also for more options for whatever people prefer.”

agbryant@willamette.edu

ZOOM fatigue: Students, professors on distance learning’s prevailing tool

BY BENJAMIN SNELL
STAFF WRITER

Since the global spread of COVID-19 in March, WU students and employees alike have been finding new means of communicating and socializing. One of the most common ways people meet during the pandemic is through Zoom, used by universities across the country, including Willamette. Students and professors have different opinions on the efficacy of the program, and how it either benefits or hinders the style of learning and culture that the university has.

One of the most common complaints about using Zoom for classes is that it’s very easy for both students and professors to feel like they are spending all of their time on the application. Sociology department professor Emily Drew expanded on this perspective in an interview, saying students “feel like they’re on Zoom all day. Like [for] 8 hours, and that is the work. And then you get off of Zoom, and you’re on a computer, for movies, for readings, for projects.”

Brianna Kurtenbach (’22) added on to this point, saying that with this new system of constant exposure to technology comes “Zoom fatigue”, and that it’s very mentally draining to have all or many courses online. She also said that since students are able to attend a lecture or

meeting from any place, “there’s no reason to miss anything... you better be [in class], one way or another.” Drew said that learning about “Zoom fatigue” gives her compassion for her students, and helps her understand why this environment can be so stressful.

The pressure to maintain good grades and be engaged has been a stressor for students. Isabella Richter de Medieros (’21) said that although she personally has not experienced many issues with concentrating on Zoom, she understands that this is not the case for everyone. “The standards that we were being held to, and the grading standards, and all of that kind of stuff that we were being held to in a normal world... I feel like that’s a very unrealistic expectation to hold on students in this world which is on fire,” she said.

Kurtenbach has experienced this feeling of being overwhelmed, and thinks that there should have been more opportunities for students to reset over the course of the semester. She said, “I think physically they just need to, in the schedule, allow us to have one 3-day weekend, or just a day off in the middle of the week randomly.”

Richter de Medieros expressed a desire for more relaxed attendance and grading policies. “The absence policy needs to be extended, because it’s already an ableist

and crappy policy. You miss 2 classes and your grade just tanks? Like that’s unacceptable! Especially during a global pandemic, where not only students may be getting sick, but more and more students have to work.”

There have been some positive experiences among the negative, however. Drew said that despite Willamette being switched to predominantly remote learning, she has still seen a fair bit of engagement in many of her classes. She said, “I think my overall experience [with online learning] is one in which I’ve had really generous students who are willing to meet me more than halfway, to make it work.” Richter de Medieros said that she has also had positive experiences on the other side of this, having very accommodating professors that are willing to work with her to make sure she succeeds.

Drew said that she thinks some students have experienced learning benefits because of Zoom. “I’ve really enjoyed that people are experiencing less social anxiety in class, given they can turn videos off, or if they want to click a pen loudly or do something with their feet, they can just mute it.”

When asked about how Zoom has shaped the culture of learning at Willamette, Kurtenbach added on to her previous point by saying that there is much less time that

students have to get a break, saying that as a student, “you’re engaged in some form all the time in Zoom, whether it’s meetings, classes, study sessions...”

Drew added that there are fewer opportunities to connect with students more personally, and that forming those integral relationships between faculty and students now feel more scheduled than anything. She said, “Now I’m not going to have any chance encounters, or wiggle room to just connect on that one-on-one personal way.”

Students and professors alike are hopeful that Willamette will resume their regular in-person classes by the fall of 2021. Kurtenbach said that online learning is “detrimental to the way that Willamette runs its education, which is in-person, discussion-based, small groups.”

Drew added, “My hope is that we would re-emphasize being back in classrooms, that I wouldn’t want to see the pandemic change permanently, this thing we have to offer via high-impact teaching.” Though no one is entirely sure about the future of learning at Willamette, many are hopeful that as the pandemic improves, the chance for regular classes to resume will increase.

bcsnell@willamette.edu

“Don’t yuck other people’s yum”: Ericka Hart’s sex positivity talk attended by over 70

CONTINUED from Page 1

Another point that Hart emphasized throughout the lecture was the influence of white supremacy and colonial ideals on societal attitudes towards sexual behaviors and the value that is placed on certain bodies. “We are all living on stolen land, and the energy of the fact that a particular group of people were pushed out and mass genocide happened to their bodies such that certain people could be here because their bodies were honored and more important than these other bodies, specifically indigenous and African indigenous people... you’re already living in a society which values certain bodies over others, and it’s going to show up in everything,” she explained during the talk.

Kelly said this point really resonated with her, saying “What I really liked about Ericka was talking about how a lot of things like body shaming, all of these really toxic aspects of culture are parts of capitalism, and racism, and colonialism. So looking at it from that really intersectional lens, because it affects white students as well, I thought that was really insightful.”

When responding to a question regarding how people with conservative values can integrate sex positivity into their lives, Hart conveyed that “Sex positivity doesn’t mean that you are down for everything... and that every aspect of sex you are digging. It literally means that you do not yuck other people’s yum. Further than that, it’s also anti racist, it’s anti classist, it’s decolonizing, it’s anti fatphobic, it’s the affirming of sex workers, it’s affirming of asexual and aromantic people. It is the absence of so much such that you can actually have pleasurable, accessible pleasure... It looks like demolishing or dismantling a lot of the systems of oppression that actually keep us from pleasure.”

Kelly shared her experience with planning and co-hosting the event, explaining that “[Hart’s] prepared lecture on radical sex positivity is about two hours, or two and a half hours. And we didn’t have that much time. So she thought, cut out the stuff that might not be relevant



Ericka Hart poses nude.

PHOTO COURTESY OF ERICKA HART

to Willamette and we decided on the Q&A style.” Kelly went on to explain WEB’s process for gathering questions to present to Hart prior to the lecture. “We reached out to Women’s and Gender Studies professors, Sociology professors, people like that, to ask their students for questions. We posted something on the WEB instagram to DM us questions... We compiled about eight questions for before the event. Some of the topics were asexuality, conservatism, identity, sex in general and in Willamette culture specifically. During the event, we got those questions answered in about

30-40 minutes so we opened it up to the people there to ask questions live, and people DM’d me and Kristin some questions that we read out loud.”

O’Neil emphasized Hart’s notability when speaking about her decision to attend the event. “I actually follow Ericka on instagram, and when I saw the email from WEB I was actually really excited because they’re someone who I think has so many amazing ideas and things they’re pushing for,” she explained.

Kelly spoke about how the impressive attendance and engagement of Hart’s lecture indicates a

continuing interest and need for more education and engagement surrounding these ideas from the Willamette community, saying “62 people logged into zoom, but at least 10 rooms had multiple people in front of the computer. So I’d say maybe like seventy five. That’s definitely the best WEB event we’ve had since going online... This is definitely what people want to hear more of and what we’re going to try to do more of.”

“I think it was really comfortable and inclusive,” said O’Neil. “I really enjoyed the fact that WEB contacted someone who was going to be very open and honest.”

Discussing the present and future of sex positivity at Willamette, Kelly said “I think Willamette wants to be a sex positive community. I think there’s a lot of traditional white upper class feminism at Willamette, and a lot of people that claim to be sex positive in theory. When it comes to relationships or jealousy or things on this campus and it gets personal, then people are not acting in a very sex positive or kind way.”

O’Neil shared similar sentiments about slutshaming and negativity surrounding sex and relationships at Willamette. “It’s still prevalent,” she explained. “At Willamette it might not be quite as negative as I experienced in high school or in my hometown, [but] it’s definitely not what it could be or should be.”

jlbuck@willamette.edu

Many students on edge entering Election Day, consider the election to be important

BY BENJAMIN SNELL
STAFF WRITER

The heavily anticipated presidential election between Joe Biden and Donald Trump is finally here. Surrounding this race has been political tension that many would say determines the future of the United States, or as Joe Biden puts it, “a battle for the soul of America.” Given the importance of the election, many students at Willamette have felt some stress from it and realize its significance. This realization has been continuously shaping political culture both in Salem and on campus and the anxieties that come with these unusual circumstances.

When students were asked why this election was so important, they had a lot to say. Vice President of Willamette’s College Democrats Andrew Hull (’23) gave insight into why it felt this way, saying that given the current president’s previous actions, people have reason to be concerned. “I think it’s just because we’ve had four years of Trump presidency, and I think people have seen what’s happened in that time period, and have realized what could potentially happen if we allow him to serve another four years,” he shared in an interview.

One example brought up was climate change, as well as the ways in which COVID-19 was

and is being dealt with is problematic from the perspectives of many American citizens. Danielle Groff (’23) shared a similar sentiment, adding that “with climate change and a lot of social issues we’re facing right now, [the election is] very important for how we want to shape our future.”

People have found that both on campus and across the country, the importance of voting has been greatly emphasized on social media. President of Willamette’s College Republicans Alexander Knorr shared his thoughts on fellow students and what approach

they took to the election and voting. He thinks that “for a lot of people it easily becomes completely absorbing and can really get into your skin pretty easily, and the results of that are tensions are really high on campus,” saying that this adds to the overall stress levels on campus. Later in the interview, he spoke on the divide between political parties, adding, “I wish people didn’t slip into an ‘us vs. them’ mindset, and to just realize that we’re all in this together.”

Despite the pandemic having isolating effects on the population, students have still been

able to come together and share their thoughts on the election experience as a whole. On Nov. 2, the Policy, Politics Law & Ethics department hosted a meeting where students were able to share their thoughts on candidates and propositions. In this space, students shared their anxieties about the election and were able to get some relief and company.

The vote by mail system is another aspect of this election that has set it apart from previous years. Hull said that since he is from Washington, where voting by mail has been in place since 1983, he finds the system to be ef-

fective. Groff agreed, adding that “it was very easy,” and said “I feel confident that my ballot will be valid.”

One potential issue that was raised by students at the PPLE meeting and by students both off and on campus was the risk of voter fraud. However, the general consensus was that this does not seem to pose too much of an issue. Hull said there have been some isolated instances where this has posed a threat, “there have only been a handful of cases of attempted voter fraud, out of hundreds of millions of votes cast in many different elections.”

Knorr said that another potential problem, however, is “a lot of people are going to try and vote [by mail] on the day itself, so it’s going to be nuts.”

Overall, the outcome of the election seems relatively unclear. Some students like Knorr shared concerns that the popular vote has little to no significance in the long run, saying that “in the end, it’s the electoral college that has a say.”

Others, like Hull, are more “cautiously optimistic” about the outcome. He added, “people care about different things, and they’ve seen four years of Trump, and a lot of voters are turned off by what’s happened in the past four years, and want a change.”

bcsnell@willamette.edu

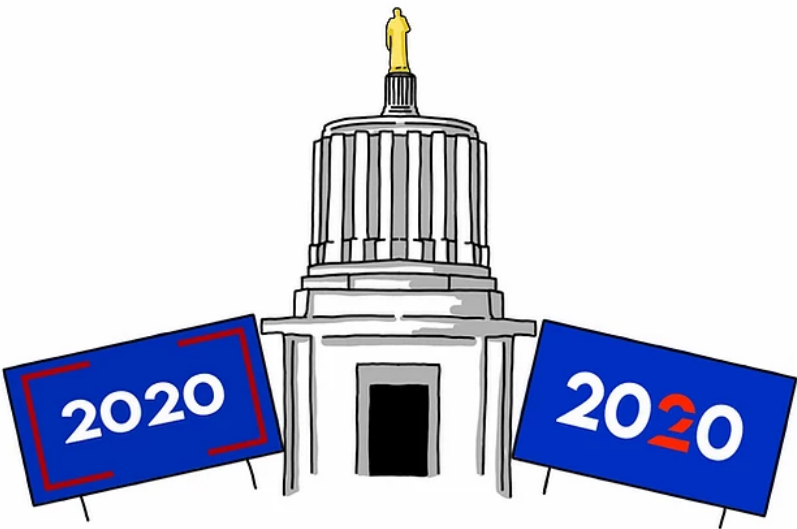


IMAGE BY MAIZY GOERLITZ

Salem’s community gardens: Spots for study breaks, outdoor enjoyment

BY SANJA ZELEN
STAFF WRITER

Salem is teeming with urban green spaces, from community gardens to parks, which provide opportunities for students to take a study break and enjoy the outdoors. Urban green spaces have been proven to positively impact one’s health. Just being present in a green space can reduce stress, provide an escape from noise in the city and increase “everyday enjoyment, work productivity and general mental health.”

Another bonus of Salem’s green spaces is the abundance of animals that can be seen. Being around animals positively affects health, as exposure to animals can improve stress levels and decrease blood pressure. When walking around campus and the general Salem area, it is easy to see ducks swimming up and down the Mill Stream and squirrels in trees.

There are many community gardens and animals in Salem for students to visit. Whether you’re on or off campus, looking for a park or quiet garden to sit in or a squirrel or duck to watch, there are tranquil spots accessible for anyone to enjoy.

1. Martha Springer Botanical Garden Location: Behind Sparks

The Martha Springer Botanical Garden features native plants, garden beds, lawns and a clear view of the Mill Stream. According to a report by the WU Grounds Department, trees such as Red Alder, Willow, Vine Maple, Douglas Spirea and Ninebark can be seen along its edge. In the fall, common flowers found in the Martha Springer Botanical Garden include the yellow and white flower Meadowfoam and the pink flower Lewisia. The Meadowfoam attracts bees, and ducks can be seen in the Mill Stream nearby. The garden can be enjoyed in any season, despite the changing flowers and plants throughout autumn, due to the green lawns and stone benches that students can sit and relax on.

2. Japanese Zen Garden



Pathway inside the Martha Springer Botanical Garden (left). Japanese Garden next to Willamette’s art building. (right)

Location: Behind the Art Building

The Japanese Zen Garden was designed and completed in 1991 by a Willamette Professor named Germaine Fuller and her students as a project to beautify the area behind the Art Building. It features a path, stepping stones, and a gravel representation of water. Tucked away from Willamette’s main sidewalks and lawns, it provides solace from studying and classes, as it is secluded and not populated. The garden also has native Japanese plants, such as Japanese Elm, and a bamboo fence. A covered bench in the corner of the garden makes the area ideal for a rainy Oregon day.

3. Belknap & Matthews Student Garden Location: Next to the walkway between Matthews and Belknap

The Belknap & Matthews Student Garden is a small on-campus community garden with produce available to Willamette students. One of the leaders of Zena Farm Club, Hope Heideman, explained the garden’s purpose and policy: “We pretty much have a take-what-you-want kind of policy and just ask that people don’t take what they won’t use and leave some for others if they can. Then we also harvest regularly and distribute using our Instagram and we’ve been doing all

pay-what-you-can-produce, which is a new model because our farm stands haven’t really been allowed because of Covid.” Zena Farm Club can be found on Instagram at @wu_zenafarmclub.

4. Bush Park Location: Mission Street

Bush Park, less than 20 minutes away by foot and three minutes by car from Willamette, provides multiple dirt and paved trails for students to walk and run on. One trail passes, and at one point crosses, Mill Race. The longest trail is around 1.5 miles in length. A quarter of a mile from the parking lot on Mission Street, a large field can be enjoyed by sports teams and pedestrians alike. Oregon White Oak trees dominate Bush Park). The park has several gardens, including the Bush House Conservatory (a greenhouse) and the rose garden, which sits next to a white gazebo providing shelter.

5. Zena Location: 5560 Zena Rd NW

Zena Forest provides research and visitation opportunities exclusively for Willamette students and faculty who file a request form to conduct field-based research. Located 23 minutes away by car, Zena is home to a wide variety of



PHOTO BY GRACE SHIFFRIN

tree species, including apple trees, Douglas Fir, Ponderosa Pine and Western Red Cedar.

Zena Farm Club has also gone out to Zena in past semesters to harvest fruit and vegetables. Heideman spoke about why gardening is beneficial: “I think part of it’s just connecting to soil and plants and other life forms. Then also the community aspect when you’re doing these kinds of repetitive tasks, [and] feeling connected to the earth. I think there’s a lot more room for really interesting connections with people and conversations. Also just having a very transparent food pathway, I think, has a lot of benefits.”

Access to Zena Forest is currently limited to educational purposes due to COVID-19. Its opening status can be found on WU’s Zena Policies page.

Environmental Science Majors at Willamette offer another perspective on the benefits of green spaces. Senior Grace DeLee reflected on what urban green spaces mean to her as a science major: “[A] green space is a space around a city, like a park, that has accessible nature to everyone, and normally the benefits are better mental health because people are able to walk around these areas. The air is cleaner, because we have access to more trees. Overall, I think [one’s] mental health benefits because forestry

has a calming effect on people.” DeLee shared her favorite green spaces on campus: “I like the Japanese gardens, the Botanical Gardens once in a while. I think those are really nice green spaces. Sometimes the star trees can be nice too.” Many of these green spaces are often inhabited by animals. An Instagram page, @willametteduckwatch, was recently created for the sole purpose of capturing photos and videos of ducks swimming in the Mill Stream. Birds such as Blue Jays and squirrels feed on seeds that are scattered close to Goudy and Hatfield library as well. In downtown Salem, nutria can occasionally be spotted swimming in the waterways, although their presence on campus vanished for the most part in the late spring to summer of 2019. Dogs also have a large presence at Riverfront and adjoining Minto-Brown Island Park, which features a dog park less than a mile off the pedestrian bridge. Regardless of the season, a student’s mode of transportation or whether a student wishes to see flowers or birds, Salem is full of urban green spaces that provide countless physical and mental health benefits, that can be an escape from ongoing COVID-related stress and a breath of fresh air, especially as finals approach.

szelen@willamette.edu

