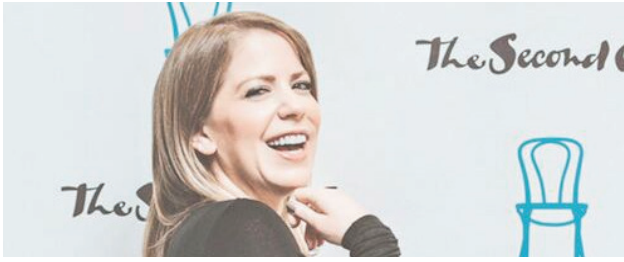


Gideon '06 croons a new tune



Basketball: Where they stand



What's happening with our money?



The Berkeley Beacon

Emerson College's student newspaper since 1947 • berkeleybeacon.com

Thursday, January 18, 2018 • Volume 71, Issue 14

Kenzy Peach makes a "shitpost"

Natalie Busch, *Beacon Staff*

Last February, senior Kenzy Peach created a Facebook group comprised of herself and a few close friends. A year later, 1,300 students are members of Emerson Shitposting.

"[Emerson Shitposting] is basically a place to post jokes, memes, anything that could be construed as funny by anyone," Peach said. "Anything that people want to broadcast to a group of their fellow Emersonians."

The group's content is generally specific to Emerson, with Griff the Lion and the Little Building among the most common topics. The page also touches on broader subjects like mental health, awkward childhood experiences, and the seemingly relatable desire to eat a Tide laundry detergent pod.

"Shitposting" is a loose concept describing online posts that can be random, absurd, or intentionally offensive depending on the forum. Ten administrators and moderators, including Peach, oversee Emerson Shitposting to prevent disrespectful posts.

The first college meme Facebook group, UC Berkeley Memes for Edgy Teens, was created in May 2016 by then-junior Chris Tril. Peach said her older sister moderated a similar group at Kalamazoo College.

"I realized it has nothing to do with the school specifically," Peach said. "And it has entirely to do with our generation and our proclivity to absurdist humor plus community with our peers through the internet."

In December, a member requested the data on the group's top contributors, which only administrators and moderators can see.

See *Shitpost*, page 6Emerson Shitposting reaches 1,300 members. • *Lala Thadeus / Beacon Staff*

Emerson declares planned deficit

Isha Marathe, *Beacon Correspondent*

Emerson College intends to spend more money than it earns until 2019 as part of an economic plan to raise funds for construction, a college official said.

Vice President of Administration and Finance Maureen Murphy said the college declared a "planned deficit" for fiscal years 2018 and 2019. A planned deficit is an economic strategy where the expenditure exceeds revenue, putting the institution in intentional debt to serve a productive purpose—in this case, for the renovation of the Little Building.

"When we planned for the construction of Little Building, we knew we would lose the room and board revenue," Murphy said. "Initially [Emerson] almost had a \$30 million deficit."

Although revenue and expenditure should ideally be equal, the Board of Trustees agreed upon the current deficit, Murphy said.

The college tried generating a surplus from 2015, 2016, and 2017 by encouraging department vice presidents to reduce spending by \$1 to \$2 million, so the revenue would be higher than the expenditure.

"I look at the surplus as pre-funding the deficit," Murphy said.

By holding expenses from years 2015 to 2017, the college managed to generate a higher amount of revenue, aiding current financial health during the construction period, Murphy said.

"The refinancing has been better than we expected," Murphy said. "We got better [interest] rates than expected, and that limited the deficit for fiscal year 2019."

Total tuition costs, without financial aid awarded by the college, amount to 75 percent of Emerson's budget, making it the largest part of the financial

See *Surplus*, page 3

Men's basketball in good spot despite loss

By *Matt Couture* • p. 8

Alum creates show to raise money for cancer research

Monika Davis, *Beacon Staff*

For Kiren Lall, a mother and entrepreneur based in London, filming a web series created by Emerson Alumnus Pat Giguere diverted her attention from her battle with cancer.

Giguere '12, Lall, and her daughter Elise Lall Rothera play themselves in a series roughly based off of their real lives. The first season of the web series, created by Giguere and Benjamin Dujardin, was filmed in Nov. 2016 and contains six episodes ranging from three to six minutes. The comedic series chronicles the struggles the three faced while Giguere lived in London during graduate school and Lall struggled with breast cancer.

"I had just finished my treatment, I was feeling not great throughout all of it but it was actually quite good because it distracted me from myself," Lall said. "It was a whole load of fun because the crew were brilliant and professional, and I learned a lot from it, in part because I had my house invaded by 20 people."

Giguere graduated with a degree in visual and media arts, but found himself in London for graduate school in Sept. 2015 at the London Film School.

See *Web Series*, page 7The Beacon
online

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news

Students hired to improve writing resources at castle

Max Reyes, *Beacon Staff*

Three students hired by the Lacerte Family Writing and Academic Resource Center will serve as writing consultants at Kasteel Well this semester as part of a pilot program primarily intended to help international students who do not speak English as their first language.

"We have recognized there is a need for academic support at the castle," WARC director Matthew Phelan said.

Before this semester, there were no WARC employees stationed at Kasteel Well. Phelan said students there could receive assistance with their essays by emailing WARC and asking for assistance, but the six hour time difference made things difficult.

"I think this is far better," he said.

Kasteel Well Assistant Director Chester Lee said Student Accessibility Services Director Diane Paxton suggested the creation of the writing consultant position when she visited the castle.

Paxton said in an email she was told by faculty and administrators at Kasteel Well there was a lack of support for international students who did not speak English as their first language, and heard the same from students.

Lee said he used to proofread essays for international students and help them with

their assignments on top of the work he did as assistant director.

"My job has other components, so I found it very difficult," he said. The writing consultants—Samantha Jokela, Alana Scartozzi, and Mariana Apéstegui Carzo—have a minimum of three work hours scheduled each week, Phelan said. Castle students will be able to make appointments with the consultants

"We have recognized there is a need for academic support at the castle."

online.

Phelan said that unlike Boston WARC employees, the Kasteel Well writing consultants are undergraduate students because only undergraduates are allowed to enroll in the castle program.

Zoe Chen is a sophomore and an international student who attended the castle last semester. She said she received a low grade on an essay for a world literature class because of grammatical errors she made.

"I do think it is really important to have the writing consultant in [the] castle," she said. "It's

really important to have someone to help you there."

Samantha Jokela, a sophomore and one of the writing consultants, said she's excited for her new position at the castle.

"I think it'll be really fun," she said. "I really

love editing papers."

News Editor Shafaq Patel did not edit this article due to a conflict of interest.

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Zoe Chen struggled with grammar in an essay while at Kasteel Well • Courtesy of Zoe Chen

College raises tuition for next academic year

Students react to increase

Chris Van Buskirk, *Beacon Staff*

The college increased overall tuition by 4.5 percent, and room and board by 4.1 percent, making individual annual charges \$46,016 for tuition and \$17,690 for a double room with board.

Vice President and Dean for Campus Life James Hoppe informed the Emerson community of the increase in an email sent over the winter break. Hoppe said the Board of Trustees approved the increase to sustain and enhance the Emerson experience for students. After a lack of communication in 2017, the administration sent emails to students and mailed letters to parents in 2018.

"The Board of Trustees is mindful of the investment that college tuition represents for our students and their families and of the impact that these increases may have, and has worked diligently to keep annual increases as low as possible," Hoppe wrote in the email.

According to previous reporting by the Beacon, tuition at Emerson increases at a higher rate than other private universities, even if the amount is comparable to tuition hikes elsewhere.

Hoppe specified how the college will use money gained from the tuition increase. In the

past, the college used additional funds from tuition increases to pay new professors and to increase financial aid.

"It's what a lot of colleges are doing."

Some students are upset about the increase, and feel as if the administration has not been transparent.

"I think it's understandable

it's what a lot of colleges are doing," sophomore Christopher Henderson-West said. "While it is part of Emerson's administrations job to clearly communicate to them, at the same time people aren't open to the ways they're trying to communicate with them."

Sophomore A.J. Tierney said the disconnect lies between administration and the student population. She wants more transparency on exactly where the money is spent.

"That's because private universities in general are focused on finances and not on actual learning," Tierney said.

Shafaq Patel, Riane Roldan and Max Reyes contributed to this article.

New assistant dean for campus life hired

Former Suffolk assistant dean of students moves to Emerson

Chris Van Buskirk, *Beacon Staff*

The college hired Elizabeth Ching-Bush to fill the new role of assistant dean for campus life.

Ching-Bush, who started working on Jan. 8, is tasked with leading a restructured community standards and conduct division. She will also serve as the primary liaison to the Title IX Equity and Access office and assist in the sanctions panel for sexual misconduct violations.

"I am excited to have her help us continue to develop a residential program committed to providing an environment where students can find their voice and develop from intentional and purposeful interactions in the residence halls and spaces around campus," Associate Dean for Campus Life Erik Muurisep wrote in an email to the Emerson community.

Born in Brooklyn, New York, Ching-Bush attended Adelphi University where she graduated with a masters degree in social work. Ching-Bush last held the position of assistant dean of students for four years at Suffolk University.

Ching-Bush said she began as the chief conduct officer at Suffolk, but eventually the position evolved into supervising the school's Center for Diversity and Inclusion as well as

the Interfaith Center. She also worked as the interim director of residence life and housing for a period of time.

"[It was] a lot of behind the scenes work that a lot of people wouldn't really know was being done because it didn't change our day-to-day, it just made it more effective," Ching-Bush said.

Ching-Bush said she looks forward to more hands on work in Emerson's housing division as the majority of students will eventually live on-campus by 2019.

"For me, I really want to be a sounding board for individual students and staff [and] faculty members that I might work with," Ching-Bush said.

In high school, Ching-Bush wanted to be involved in the arts but she didn't think she had enough talent to pursue her artistic dreams. That's why she wanted to work at Emerson even though Suffolk is just across Boston Common, she said.

"I thought, 'wow how awesome would it be to work with students and help and encourage and support students who had the same dream that I had at one point,'" Ching-Bush said.

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Assistant Dean Bush begins new job at Emerson • Zivah Solomon / Beacon Correspondent

Title IX office searches for new lead investigator

Riane Roldan. *Beacon Staff*

The Office of Title IX Equity and Access is looking to replace the college's lead Title IX Investigator, Pamela Ring, who left the college to pursue private practice in early January.

"During the two years that Pam spent with Title IX Equity & Access, she was instrumental in the development of Title IX investigatory procedures and processes ... " Vice President for Diversity and Inclusion Sylvia Spears wrote in an email sent over winter break. "While we are sorry to see Pam leave, we deeply appreciate her dedication and commitment to the Emerson community."

The Office of Title IX Equity and Access coordinates Emerson's compliance with The Clery Act, Title IX, and the College's Sexual Misconduct Policy. This includes receiving complaints, monitoring the complaint and investigation process, monitoring outcomes, identifying and addressing patterns, and

assessing the overall effect on campus climate, according to the college's website.

Last October, the office remained tight-lipped while spearheading a major review of the College's Sexual Misconduct Policy. Around the same time, two state judges ruled in favor of the college in two separate Title IX-related lawsuits. Two months later, a member of the women's basketball team wrote an op-ed piece published by the Beacon about sexual misconduct perpetrated by the men's basketball team.

Spears wrote in the campus-wide email that the college has secured external investigators

to address any new reports of power-based interpersonal violence as quickly as possible during the search process.

The position of Title IX Investigator has been posted on Emerson's website and a number of other national job listing sites, with the review of applications starting in the coming weeks. Spears said the ideal candidate is well-versed in policy and able to connect with students.

"We're talking about issues where real trauma has occurred," Spears said. "Having someone in place who not only can come to understand our policy, knows Title IX backward

and forward, but also who can be with members of our community while they're going through a very difficult process is very important."

Freshmen Meghan Dresdner said she agrees. "I think it would be incredible if the hire was actually someone from the Emerson community who has seen the ins and outs of how this community operates and how people interact with one another," Dresdner said.

Spears said she anticipates opportunities for student involvement once the college identifies candidates deemed worthy of inviting to campus.

"I think it's essential ... students should have an opportunity to get a sense of who is this person, what's their approach, and do they understand student culture," Spears said.

The Office of Title IX Equity and Access could not be reached for comment.

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"I think it would be incredible if the hire was actually someone from the Emerson community who has seen the ins and outs of how this community operates and how people interact with one another."

Revenue surplus to offset losses, Murphy says

Continued from page 1

plan. Revenue earned from tuition pays for all operating costs—such as students' education, faculty and staff salaries, utilities, debt services, and interest costs, Murphy said.

The Board of Trustees approved a 4.5 percent increase in tuition costs, and an increase of 4.1 percent for students living on campus for the 2018-19 academic year, Vice President and Dean of Campus Life James Hoppe announced via email last Friday.

Room and board costs amount to a little more than 20 percent of the school's budget, Murphy said.

Other flexible costs in the budget include snow-removal, emergency repairs, non-emergency repairs, and staff turnover, Murphy said.

The college has not announced the planned

"I look at the surplus as pre-funding the deficit. Our goal here today is not to resolve everything very quickly, but to articulate a series of action items for the long term."

deficit to the community. Murphy said students and parents will be informed once the Board of Trustees approves the plan for fiscal year 2019 this March.

"I didn't know, but I'm not surprised," senior Emily Morris said. "I feel like there is so much going on about Emerson that I don't know about. There are a lot of really great things about this school, but there are a lot of things that are shady."

Information about the college's budget and financial health should be more accessible to students, Morris said.

"Maybe it is and maybe I am just flooded with emails but I didn't know and it feels like a big deal," she said.

Junior Tyler Robichaud said he's happy about Little Building being renovated, but he did not know about the college's debt.

"The Little Building definitely needed the renovation," Robichaud said. "Eight million dollars is a lot of money in debt, and I have not heard anything about it. I just think that's something that should be shared."



The deficit is a result of expected loss of revenue from temporary closure of Little Building • Shafaq Patel / Beacon Staff

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Incident Journal

The Incident Journal is provided to the Beacon weekly by the Emerson College Police Department. Beacon staff edit the Incident Journal for style and clarity, but not for content.

Monday, Jan. 8

The Emerson College Police Department responded to a report of water damage on the floor of the Media Art Gallery. Several water pockets formed under the paint due to a flooding problem at 80 Mason St. No other damages were observed.

Tuesday, Jan. 9

ECPD, Boston Fire Department, and Facilities Management responded to a sprinkler alarm in the basement of the Paramount Center. A cracked valve in the system activated the alarm, and facilities will repair it.

Saturday, Jan. 13

An ECPD officer smelled rubber burning in the entrance of 2 Boylston Place. ECPD and FM conducted a building search, but no cause was found.

Sunday, Jan. 14

A staff member notified ECPD that a smoke detector was activated in a resident suite in the Colonial Building. A resident assistant escorted ECPD to the suite, and no cause was found to have activated the detector. FM was notified of the detector.

A student reported an assault and battery outside the Colonial Building. The Boston Police Department is investigating the incident.

editorial

This is the time for Title IX to improve

At issue:
Changes in the Title IX department

Our take:
This is an opportunity for improvement

Emerson announced in an email over winter break that they were in the market for a new Title IX Investigator. Pamela Ring, who was hired in 2015, left the college on Jan. 5 “to pursue private practice.” This opening gives the college a chance to improve its handling of sexual assault and harassment.

When we sat down to write this article, we realized we didn’t have answers to basic questions concerning Title IX. For example: How do you file a Title IX report? What happens after that? And where exactly is the Title IX office? Admittedly, a quick Google search did lead us to Emerson’s Title IX website, but it still felt like answers were out of our grasp. Information on filing a report and the process is long and overwhelming. One subsection consists of points labeled with letters “a” through “o”. Considering the context for when a person needs to file a report, this process should be clear and simple. And everyone should know where the office is located.

It’s in the Transportation Building, by the way.

While an investigator must remain objective, their goal should be to understand the survivor’s account, not protect the college’s image. Attaining factual evidence of the incident is important to the case, but the continuous, often condescending question of “Well, did you drink?” insinuates that the assault was their fault. There needs to be an understanding that alcohol and drug consumption do not by any means justify what happened to the survivor. Sexual assault isn’t localized to Emerson, but rather a pervasive, widespread issue that needs

to be tackled at large.

With a new investigator comes a chance to create a more accessible Title IX office. As it exists now, the Title IX office is an enigma that exists outside of the student body, not with us. This could change with better communication with the student body: RAs can hold floor meetings to go over the process of reporting a sexual assault, we have message boards all over campus to post flyers, and new students can be educated during orientation, or even through an online program like AlcoholEdu. We are often told that if something happens, we should report it but we can’t do that if we don’t have the knowledge on

how to report something. The Title IX office needs to become as accessible and open as the library or Center for Health and Wellness.

We are asking whoever holds this important position next—please put survivors first. Don’t

ask intrusive questions about alcohol and drugs. Make information about reporting incidents accessible to those who may desperately need it. Be approachable. Give meaning to the word transparency. Answer phone calls from reporters trying to get the facts straight. Don’t slam the door in their face when they then come to your office for answers—after all, journalism students can be victims too.

Perhaps the next time we feel compelled to write an editorial about the Title IX Office, it will be to praise a step in the right direction.

"Rising tuition is commonplace for schools across the country, but these increases are usually in increments of one to two percent, not four percent."

Editorials are written solely by Editor-in-Chief Allison Hagan, Managing Editor Laura King, Opinion Editor Abigail Hadfield, Deputy Opinion Editor Hannah Ebanks, and Assistant Opinion Editor Brittany Adames without consultation from other staff members, and does not influence any stories. Op-Eds reflect the views of only their authors, not The Berkeley Beacon.

Letters

If you want to respond to, or share an opinion about, an article in the Beacon, you can write a short letter to the editor. Email it to letters@berkeleybeacon.com. Please note that letters may be edited. Submissions for print must be shorter than 250 words.

The Berkeley Beacon

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by the Editorial Board
illustration by Enne Goldstein

Emerson welcomes new students to the “spring” semester.



opinion



The truth of the matter is, there is no simple way to find out what exactly students' tuition goes toward. • Photo Illustration by Cassandra Martinez / Beacon Staff

Tuition talks are a two-way street

Abigail Hadfield

Hadfield is a freshman writing, literature and publishing major & Opinion editor.

When student protesters marched across campus and into Faculty Assembly last fall, they called for more than just a few conciliatory remarks and an email from administration. They asked for real, immediate structural change for the benefit of disenfranchised students of color, and they were promised action. Now, months later, they are seeing their demands seemingly disregarded, as the school announced a 4.1% tuition increase for next year.

I wasn't surprised by the tuition increase, but I was surprised at the fact that the email was so vague about where this new spending would go: They listed categories that would be receiving funding, but didn't give amounts or percentages. I didn't expect the college to lay out a full expense report for me, but financial transparency did not seem like too much to ask for.

Many protesters called for Emerson to be more

"Rising tuition is commonplace for schools across the country, but these increases are usually in increments of one to two percent, not four percent."

financially accessible for students of color and students from lower socioeconomic classes. Many students are working hard to afford the current tuition of \$44,032 a year. This most recent tuition increase to \$46,016 will go toward new spending for the school, but it is not easy to figure out where that money goes.

Rising tuition is commonplace for schools across the country, but these increases are usually in increments of one to two percent, not four percent—as Emerson once again exceeded the national average for the seventh time since the 2010-2011 academic year. The average inflation rate going into 2018 in the United States is hovering

around two percent, making Emerson's increase almost double the national average.

With jumps this large in tuition occurring so frequently, and considering that the majority of Emerson's spending is funded by tuition, students have a right to know where their money is going. Emerson's IRS 990 form is available online with a bit of searching, but many students are not even aware the document is available (not to mention that it took me half an hour of scrolling through dense legal documents to understand where my money was going).

"I have no idea where any of my money is really going to," sophomore Casey Marazita said.

The truth of the matter is there is no simple way to find out what exactly students' tuition goes toward. While the school is required to publish tax forms outlining how much revenue it generates and the details of their expenses, the form isn't openly publicized or discussed with students.

Many students that I spoke to are upset at this tuition increase given protesters in the fall wanted to make Emerson more financially accessible for minority students, and the email did not explain how much of the new funds will go toward scholarships for minority students. On the IRS form available online there isn't exactly a spending category labeled "diversifying student population."

Protesting Oppression With Educational Reform, in its demands to the school back in the fall, asked for more financial accommodations for students of color and minority students. While the school may use this tuition hike to help fund more scholarships, the higher cost could turn away students before they even apply. If Emerson were to publish a report declaring where their funds are going, this could assuage the concerns of students who feel disregarded.

Chris Henderson-West, class of 2020 president, said that the tuition increase was inevitable, as colleges across the nation are constantly raising their tuition to keep up with the economy and interest rates. He felt that too many students expressed distress at the new tuition costs without involving themselves with the administration or looking to get involved.

"If students took more of an active role in the school in terms of working with the administration and asking them questions, there wouldn't be so much anger or confusion," Henderson-West said.

For students who are not involved in SGA or working closely with administration, how and where the school is spending their tuition are not common knowledge.

"I think they need to have a more open dialogue with us," sophomore Kayla LaRosa said. "Because we're the ones paying to go here."

Transparency and cooperation are a two-way street. Yes, it is the responsibility of students to communicate with the administration and get involved with the school—but that burden cannot be placed entirely on the shoulders of the students. This might entail the college providing and publicizing the report breaking down where their spending went this year. It is well within Emerson's power as a progressive institution of learning to send out at least an annual email report to the student body so we know where our money is going.

The channels of communication regarding how our money is spent need to be open and transparent, and the responsibility to maintain that communication lies with

"Yes, it is the responsibility of students to communicate with the administration and get involved with the school—but that burden cannot be placed entirely on the

all members of the Emerson community.

"Emerson makes themselves out to be a progressive school holistically," junior David Snyder said. "Not just in the courses it teaches, and the teachers it hires, and the student body it tries to cultivate, but also in the way it goes about business."

If Emerson truly wants to be progressive economically as well as in other aspects, they need to be better at informing the student body of their financial situation and plans—without students going out of their way to learn the spending habits of their school.

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living arts

'Shitposting' Facebook group creates hidden community



Kenzy Peach founded the Facebook group "Emerson Shitposting" in February 2017.
Lala Thaddeus / Beacon Staff

Continued from page 1

Peach said administrator Tierney Nordon devised a game instead—if the top 10 contributors commented on Nordon's post, they would release the list. But if 25 other members commented first, the list would remain secret.

"Even though I feared that people would see it as a competition for who can post the most, it still is just so fun and created such involvement in the page," Peach said. "I totally loved it. It was really fun to watch."

The top contributor was sophomore Charlie St. Michael. St. Michael said the group's real time comedic coverage of the Uncommon Project was one of his favorite Emerson Shitposting moments. These jokes, St. Michael said, are difficult to explain to people who are not Emerson students.

"If I'm at home and my friends are showing me memes on their phone, I couldn't show them a meme about Griff the Lion. They wouldn't understand it," St. Michael said.

"Emerson Shitposting is just a place where we have the common knowledge of Emerson so it's just easy to make jokes together."

Peach cited a post where someone asked for first kiss stories as the start of the group's sense of community. Other similar posts kickstart group interaction in the comments, like one asking, "What is the most annoying thing an Emerson boy has said to you?" which received over 200 likes and 100 comments.

After joining Emerson Shitposting at the beginning of fall semester, St. Michael said he made many friends through the group.

"I've met just a lot of people that I don't think I would have run into just like on campus," St. Michael said. "One of the people I've met is a [political communication] major and I think if this group didn't exist I wouldn't have met him."

Junior Kevin Musliner said his friend Andrew Morris invited him to the group a few weeks ago.

"It's kind of exactly what I imagined—just Emerson memes," Musliner said. "It's a place for people to humorously vent about Emerson problems or just make jokes that might be in-group."

Peach said Emerson Shitposting aims to be harmless and fun. The rules, according to the group's description, are simple—no asking for drugs, use content warnings if needed or if asked, and no harassment or offensive behavior.

Peach said she banned someone from the group when they made a potentially offensive post. She said this upset some members, but she would rather receive hate for her decision than allow harmful posts.

"We really don't take ourselves seriously at all," Peach said. "But we want to make sure that even though it's a fun, silly group that no one's actually getting offended and there are

no microaggressions going on."

After she graduates, Peach said she will no longer be an administrator. Going forward, Peach said she plans for underclassmen to replace moderators and administrators who graduate so the group can continue to be Emerson-focused. Students are now starting campaigns for moderator positions—complete with videos, attack ads, and posters.

"I'm honestly really proud of the sense of community that everybody has in that group," Peach said. "People in Emerson Shitposting who never knew each other before the group have become friends because of it."

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Alumna performs song 'Skinnyfat' to satirize body

Grace Griffin, Beacon Staff

The inspiration for the newest single "Skinnyfat" by Amber Gideon '06 came from peers teasingly comparing her body to Jell-O in high school. Her self-noted, seemingly never disappearing muffin top and apparent ability to gain weight even after eating just one meal also influenced the lyrics.

The comically worded single focuses on the struggle of working out, eating right, but never losing any weight. Gideon said the carefree tune should not be taken seriously.

"I just felt so frustrated," Gideon said. "It seemed like no matter what I ate or whatever I did, I was just not a firm person. I just sat around thinking about all these analogies like a twig in a gummy bear wrap or being made of marshmallows, just picturing how I felt."

The song is labeled as "country" on Soundcloud and features an acoustic guitar backing Gideon's vocals.

WGN, a radio station based in Chicago, premiered "Skinnyfat," along with an interview with Gideon, on Jan. 2. In the interview, Gideon discussed how she hopes the song embodies how other women feel and her future projects.

"I don't think I ever really cared about making money," Gideon said. "All I wanted was for people to hear my songs."

Gideon uses her degree in writing, literature, and publishing to write songs, and has done so for the past 10 years. Just recently she began performing when she turned from writing emotional ballads to lighthearted comedy tunes.

Gideon wrote several unreleased tunes, like one about her hatred for the 405 freeway in

California, which is unfinished. In her early songwriting career, she wrote ballads for other artists such as Todd Kessler and Jamie Lampert from The Voice. Her newest work sounds much different from those ballads, she says.

"I think it was a lot harder to write these really heavy ballads," Gideon said. "With the joke songs, I could just have fun and not take it seriously."

The songs Gideon writes now stem from her experience of writing a comedy pilot with her former roommate, Lindsay Daly '07. Party Animals focuses on employees at an event planning company who specialize in pet parties. The show played at film festivals and they hope it will eventually air on TV, Daly said.

"We'd love for it to be on TV," Daly said. "We know that's a big challenge and there's so many talented people out there ... but we're going to keep trying."

In the writing process, Daly said she and Gideon researched other comedy scripts and watched pilots similar to theirs.

"I've spent the past three years writing this comedy pilot," Gideon said. "I feel that from doing the pilot and from writing it so many times, I got a better feel for the comedy formula. I think it made my approach to these songs a lot stronger."

The attention "Skinnyfat" received landed Gideon the musical guest spot on the Feb. 1 show of Hollywood Night Live at Second City Hollywood comedy club. Hollywood Night Live has a similar format to Saturday Night Live, with a host, sketches, and a musical guest. Gideon will be performing "Skinnyfat" and other original songs. Gideon's songs are available on Soundcloud.



Amber Gideon has moved on from ballads and taken on comedy in her songwriting.
Courtesy of Amber Gideon

"I'm debuting a brand new song; it's called 'Ted Cruz I'm Scared of You,' and it's basically just making fun of Ted Cruz," Gideon said. "It was a labor of love, very easy to write, and it was just fun."

With radio play, a performance booking, and increased public attention all coming her way after years of hard work, Gideon said she's had a great start to 2018.

"It's taken me a long time to feel comfortable,"

she said. "I was really insecure at first and I didn't want to show anyone, but the more I did it and the more I showed people, I kept improving."

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Pat Giguere '12 chronicles cancer in comedic web series



Pat Giguere '12 moved to London in 2015 for graduate school and found himself in an unlikely housing situation, which he then turned into a web series to fundraise for cancer research.

Courtesy of Pat Giguere

Continued from page 1

After some difficulty finding a place to live, Giguere found a spare room through mutual friends and a former coworker at ESPN.

Giguere and Dujardin became good friends in graduate school, where they had the idea for the series. Giguere told Dujardin about an incessant banter between himself and Lall's daughter that started the day he moved into the apartment.

"It's based on real events, real people, and just being in that home which we portrayed on screen, with Pat, Kiren, and Elise, and experiencing that warmth and strange energy of them bickering like an old married couple except they were three different ages, I could tell there was something in this," Dujardin said.

Profits from the YouTube channel are donated to the Cancer Research Institute. An additional fundraising page on CRI's website has accumulated over \$1,500. Right now, each episode has over 20,000 views.

While filming, Lall's friend Penny was staying

with her as she lived out her last few days after battling her own cancer. Penny had come to the city to help her daughter move into school. The filming process was quite taxing at points because the house was often filled with people and there were moments when silence was necessary on set.

"At the same time we were filming, my friend Penny was living with me, who actually had terminal cancer," Lall said. "That was a tricky situation because she was sort of having her last weeks with us. That was a bit bittersweet, really. She was here and had to endure silence on set every few minutes and she was really patient given that she was so unwell."

Lall said she worked with Giguere and Dujardin closely to make sure her experience with cancer was accurately portrayed in the series.

"The show is trying to hit a balance between funny moments and heartwarming moments and I hope if people respond to the show, it's because of that."

"I did give them quite a lot of feedback and knowledge about what was actually real and what people's perception is of it and they were very happy to change stuff," Lall said. "There's a scene where we're in the bathroom and I'm being sick and had started putting on weight. Most people think you get cancer and lose a lot of weight, but you don't actually with breast cancer."

Giguere said he cannot guarantee a second season, but they have an idea he thinks people

will enjoy. Timing and finding funding to film are the biggest obstacles, he said.

"We would like to film at least one more season, and even just in real life Elise is getting closer to being a teenager so she's very sassy," Giguere said. "Her and Kiren came to visit me a couple months ago and the bullying has not stopped, so there's a large well of material there with me being the punching bag."

Giguere said he feels happy with the success of the series so far and hopes it reaches audiences the way he and Dujardin envisioned.

"It's a quick and easy watch, you can watch the whole series in under a half hour," Giguere said. "The show is trying to hit a balance between funny moments and heartwarming moments and I hope if people respond to the show, it's because of that."

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"Funnilingus" fundraises for female-oriented charities in Hollywood

Ian Sloan, *Beacon Staff*

When visual and media arts major Ellory Smith '12 decided to stay in Los Angeles after attending ELA senior year, she wanted to take on the lack of diversity in her field while landing punch lines. So, Smith founded "Funnilingus," a monthly, all-female-identifying comedy show in North Hollywood.

"Funnilingus," just three months old, is both a charity show and a politically charged night of comedy. While tickets are free, the entirety of the bar's proceeds are donated to a different female-oriented charity every month.

"It started after the election, and though national politics can often be frustrating, there are a lot of home-based things we can do to help our communities," Smith said. "We aim to have as many women on the show as possible, and aim to make intersectional feminism the guiding principle on how we book comics and choose charities."

This month, "Funnilingus" raised about 180 dollars for Emily's List, an organization that helps fund pro-choice, female candidates for every type of political office. Last month donations went to the Downtown Women's Shelter in Los Angeles.

"We move toward organizations that are local and serve female-identifying, marginalized people," Smith said. "We are always looking for more charities, as we like to pick new ones each month."

Smith said she prioritizes a constant search for new women to perform in her show. With adding new female comics, "Funnilingus" aims not just to be a night of laughter, but a way for women to open up and connect with each other through humor.

"We wanted to make this a space that focused on diverse and underrepresented voices," Smith said. "We want to work with people who love comedy and who often don't feel like comedy loves them back."

Smith performs alongside Amy Silverberg, Christine Medrano, Deirdre Devilin, and fellow Emerson alumni Gabby Ruiz '17 and Jamie Loftus '14.

"Funnilingus's' dedication to charities that help women is especially important," Ruiz said. "I'm contributing to a community even though all I'm really doing is complaining."

Ruiz, a comedy writer, said she started writing stand-up during her senior year. She said she used performing to gauge what jokes work with a live audience.

"No matter what, I always feel a sense of accomplishment and pride when I get off stage," Ruiz said. "Even if I bomb, this isn't something I ever thought I would have the strength to do."

Loftus began stand-up later in her time at Emerson, getting her start after graduation while working as an associate producer for an improvisation theatre in Boston. In "Funnilingus," Loftus covers many aspects of being a woman in comedy, from starting a



After ELA, Ellory Smith created a comedy show to benefit local charities.

Courtesy of Ellory Smith

career to headlining a sold out show.

"Women in my community are so wonderful and supportive," Loftus said. "Starting a career as a comic, as a woman, is identical to starting as a man except you have to be three times better than all of them, conservatively."

Ruiz said being a woman in comedy can be both positive and negative.

"We hear about female comedians being harassed or treated unequally all the time," Ruiz said. "I'd advise any female comedian starting out to find the voice she wants to use, not what she thinks will just make people laugh."

To Smith, Boston is the perfect city for aspiring comedians, giving anybody the positive motivation to get started.

"I'd tell any women trying to get into stand up or comedy to just go to an open mic and get started," Smith said. "Boston has the most amazing comedy scene, and I promise you will be better than at least one dude who wrote five minutes about loving Four Lokos."

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sports



WHAT WE MISSED

This week, the Beacon takes a look at what fans missed from Emerson's basketball teams over winter break.

Healthy women's team looks to build on winter break success



Emerson's women's basketball team struggled against Babson on Wednesday, losing 78-48. • *Beacon Archives*

Kyle Bray, *Beacon Staff*

With 11 games left to play, the Emerson women's basketball team (5-10) occupies the final NEWMAC playoff spot with a conference record of 3-5.

After a six game losing streak from Nov. 29 to Dec. 12, the Lions won three straight games against NEWMAC opponents. This included a 66-51 win on the road against Wellesley College, an 83-76 home win against Smith College, and an emphatic 89-35 away win over Mount Holyoke College. Head coach Bill Gould said he's proud of the way his team turned its fortunes around to start the new year.

"We spent the first semester dealing with significant injuries," Gould said. "I thought we were playing really hard and well but we were still 2-8. We come back and now [Natalie Busch and Charlie Boyle] are ready to go and healthy and then we win our first three games to start off second semester."

Sophomore guard Kate Foulz leads the Lions in scoring with 12.9 points per game, which puts her at eighth overall in the NEWMAC. Freshman forward Sam Boyle cracks the

conference top 10 in rebounds, sitting in ninth place with an average of 6.9 rebounds per game. Sam Boyle is also eleventh in the NEWMAC in steals per game, with an average of 1.6.

Since winter break began, Boyle's older sister Charlie Boyle has returned to the starting lineup after suffering a back injury prior to the season. After featuring off the bench in the first three games of the year, the elder Boyle missed the Lions' next seven games. She returned to start their last four and averaged 6.7 points per game and four rebounds per game in her seven appearances this year.

Although Boyle may not be producing the same scoring numbers she did in the past season, Gould believes her presence is valuable to the team.

"She brings a different presence on the court," Gould said. "We were shooting better when Charlie was on the court. [When] you bring that [kind of] kid into a game, other teams have to deal with that and it helps relieve a little pressure for everybody else."

The Lions suffered another NEWMAC setback on Wednesday, as they fell 78-48 to first place Babson (7-1,11-5). Junior Charlie Boyle

led Emerson, scoring 14 points and shooting 7-of-9 from the field. Emerson had an off-night shooting, as they shot 35 percent from the field, 15 percent from beyond the arc, and 30 percent from the free throw line.

One key victory for Emerson came against Smith College (11-4, 5-2), when the Lions topped the Pioneers 83-76. Foulz and junior guard Natalie Busch led the victorious Lions with 19 points each. Senior guard Maya Savino, who is fourth in the NEWMAC in three-point shooting percentage, scored 13 points and led the Lions with two steals and eight assists.

Coach Gould spoke highly of the offensive performance his team put together against Smith.

"That was our best shooting game overall," Gould said. "It was an exciting offensive game to be sure and I thought it was a good game. Offensively we were clicking on all cylinders."

The Lions are in seventh place in the conference, one game behind Coast Guard and one game ahead of Clark, Wheaton, and Wellesley, who are all tied for eighth. Emerson has nine conference games remaining in its quest to qualify for the NEWMAC playoffs for

the first time since the 2014-15 season.

Key matchups for playoff qualification come against Wheaton on Jan. 24 and Feb. 14, and Clark on Jan. 31. Coach Gould said he's optimistic about the team's chances to push for the playoffs this season.

"In reality we need to beat [Wheaton, Clark, and Coast Guard]," Gould said. "I 100 percent believe that this year we are as good as any other team in the league. If we play well for the rest of the season we're going to be the hunt to win the NEWMAC, there's no doubt in my mind."

The women's basketball team will be in action at home against Coast Guard (7-7, 4-4) on Jan. 20(CQ) at 1 p.m. in the Bobbi Brown & Steven Plofker Gym. This game is a key matchup in the Lions' playoff hunt as well, as a victory would negate their earlier loss to the Bears if the playoff came down to a tiebreaker between the two.

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Men's basketball picks up two key NEWMAC wins



Emerson's men's basketball team suffered a tough defeat on Wednesday night, falling to WPI 74-73 in the final seconds of the game. • *Daniel Peden / Beacon Staff*

Matt Couture, *Beacon Staff*

Emerson's men's basketball team kept pace in the NEWMAC standings during winter break, compiling a 2-2 record to place fourth in the conference entering Wednesday's games.

A loss to WPI on Wednesday knocked Emerson behind the Engineers and into fifth place in the conference, still leaving the Lions in playoff position.

The break was highlighted by a 97-93 road win over Clark, after which the NEWMAC named junior point guard Geoff Gray defensive player of the week. Gray scored 19 points and added 14 rebounds and nine assists to fall just shy of a triple-double in the victory against the Cougars.

Emerson's win against Clark came after an 87-79 home victory over Coast Guard in its first NEWMAC game.

Sophomore forward Ben Holding stepped into the starting lineup for the first four games of conference play, and scored a team-high 22 points in 24 minutes against Clark. Holding joined Gray, seniors John Geary and Michael Sheng, and sophomore Jack O'Connor in the starting five for each of the team's first four NEWMAC games. Junior center Mac Sashin drew the start against WPI.

Freshman guard Ethan Gabert-Doyon also saw a spike in production, filling out the box score with seven points, six boards, and five assists against Coast Guard on Jan. 3. Gabert-Doyon scored 10 points and pulled down nine

rebounds against Clark.

The two early wins were followed by back-to-back losses against MIT and Springfield, who rank first and third in the conference respectively. In the Jan. 13 loss to Springfield, Emerson led by three at halftime but was then outscored 44-21 in the second half en route to an 80-60 loss.

The 2-3 conference record represents an upgrade from a year ago, when the Lions started NEWMAC play with a nine-game losing streak, which included losses to Clark and Coast Guard.

Unlike the women's basketball team, the men's basketball schedule separates conference and nonconference play, so each game played after the new year pits Emerson against a NEWMAC foe.

Other Notes

-- On the stat sheet, Sheng is converting 91.2 percent of his free throws this season, ranking him first in the conference.

-- Gray is up to 888 career points, putting the 1,000 point threshold within reach in his junior season. Gray currently ranks second in points (20.2) and rebounds (8.9) per game in the conference.

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