

**Men's volleyball preview****Keeping the connection with home****Photographer captures top artist**

# The Berkeley Beacon

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

Thursday January 25, 2018 • Volume 71, Issue 15

## Permanent committee to continue Ad-Hoc's legacy

Max Reyes, *Beacon Staff*

Faculty assembly voted to form a permanent committee dedicated to educating staff and students on cultural competency and making the curriculum more inclusive on Tuesday.

The proposal faculty voted on said the Educational Equity and Justice Committee is "tasked with ensuring that Emerson College fulfills its commitment to educational equality and social justice." Members will include faculty, staff, and student representatives from organizations such as Student Government Association and Protesting Oppression With Educational Reform.

Two members of POWER submitted the proposal alongside faculty members.

The body serves a similar role to the the Ad Hoc Committee on Cultural Competency, which was created in 2015 to address concerns brought up during a student protest against racism. This committee taught faculty members and students about cultural competency and reviewed the college's curriculum to see if it met standards of "diversity and inclusion."

See *Assembly*, page 3

## Students combine art and lobbying at State House

By Annika Hom • p. 7

## Student plans to marathon for domestic violence center

Grace Griffin, *Beacon Staff*

First time marathon runner and senior Erin Jean Hussey will tread over 26 miles through the streets of Boston to raise money and awareness for survivors of domestic, sexual, and dating violence.

"In this chaos of life, running has been my constant and source of strength," Hussey said.

On April 16, Hussey plans on running the Boston Marathon to raise money for Casa Myrna, a shelter for women and non-binary people that promotes awareness for domestic violence.

Hussey must raise at least \$10,000 by the date of the marathon. She has already raised over \$2,000 through donations.

Hussey is a member of local, professional sorority Kappa Gamma Chi, which hosts a week-long event called Emerald Empowerment in the spring. Previously known as Take Back the Night, Emerald Empowerment is dedicated to raising money and volunteering for Casa Myrna and Transition House, organizations that provide support for survivors of partner violence.

"I had found out about Casa Myrna and that you could run the Boston Marathon for charity through [Kappa]," Hussey said. "For me, I wanted to find a way to [run] while also engaging my community."

See *Erin Jean*, page 7

## Men's volleyball opens Friday against Pine Manor

By Matt Couture • p. 8

## ELA adds gender-neutral restroom signs

Maya Gacina, *Beacon Staff*

Emerson's Los Angeles campus received a shipment of eight new stickers from the Boston campus that state: "Gender diversity is welcome here. Please use the restroom that best fits your identity."

These stickers were placed this month on the doors of all men's and women's rooms with multiple stalls, ELA Vice President and Executive Director Allison Sampson said.

Vice President of the Social Justice Center Sylvia Spears said Sampson saw something missing on the LA campus after visiting Boston last year.

"We have a culture [at ELA] of acceptance and support," Sampson said. "We have more signs on order too."

The campus has two single-stall restrooms and multi-stalls with men's and women's signs next to the door, Sampson said.

Unlike the Boston campus, the west coast campus does not have inclusive symbols for men, women, and non-binary people installed permanently next to the door of multi-stall restrooms. Instead, Sampson said the multi-stall restrooms either have a men's or women's sign next to the door, but she said the new stickers override the signs.

"There are better things to spend money on for the school than drilling out the [men's and women's] signs," she said.

See *LA Campus*, page 3



# news

## SGA aims to increase visibility with new projects

Chris Van Buskirk. *Beacon Staff*

The Student Government Association Executive Board faced a slew of issues in their first semester, which began with a student protest and ended with the Faculty Assembly voting out their chair, Marketing Communications Professor Anthony Lowrie, after he compared student protesters to Senator Joseph McCarthy.

Executive President Annie Makielski said SGA didn't respond to the protest addressing racism and bias as quickly as she thinks they should have.

This semester, SGA is working on several projects to advance the visibility and relevance of the association, such as a student forum on the college's budget and SGA scholarship.

### SGA Scholarship

SGA is exploring the idea of a scholarship for student leaders. According to their November Cultural Competency Report, a monthly report on SGA and the college's progress on cultural competency, the scholarship is not a response to the demands made by student protesters last fall. Instead, this scholarship would create additional funding for students that meet an undecided set of qualifications.

"If everything works out I would love to get ... started at the end of this year," Executive Treasurer Ian Mandt said.

### Student Forum on College Budget

Over the summer, the SGA executive board met and discussed what they wanted to do with their first-time executive board positions.

Mandt wanted to push for more transparency on how the college spends a student's tuition. Mandt calls this a bottom-up perspective on the



Low student participation led the SGA Executive Board to increase visibility. • Chris Van Buskirk / Beacon Staff

college's budget.

"From the beginning, this eboard has wanted to increase transparency between the administration and the student body, and foster communication," he said.

When Mandt presented the idea to Vice President of Administration and Finance Maureen Murphy, he found out President M. Lee Pelton already directed her to start a similar initiative.

"The two of us had the same idea at the same time and ... now I am just participating in her original plan," Mandt said.

### Increasing SGA's Relevance and Visibility

Both Executive Vice President Ramaley and Makielski said SGA faces the recurring problem of a lack of student participation in general elec-

tions and meetings.

Makielski said the lack of participation results from both SGA's failure to reach out to students and minimal student interest.

"Which ... makes [participation] a very difficult thing to solve," Makielski said. "Because if we reach out and no one responds, it's discouraging."

Makielski said she plans on meeting with Public Relations Chair Hayden Stills to discuss a media campaign. She said she also wants to advertise the general elections through student media before they occur.

"People shouldn't be thinking 'I want to run' the day before," Makielski said.

Mandt had a similar idea. He wants to use

on-campus media to get potential candidates in the spotlight. He is currently working with the Emerson Channel to produce a special production where candidates can argue policy ideas, similar to a presidential debate.

"It's hard ... since we don't have a central place to gather as students, it's hard to campaign, and it's hard to get people involved," Mandt said.

Ramaley is working on a flowchart for students to know which administrators can answer specific questions as another move to improve SGA's visibility.

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## Diversity and Inclusion renamed, to focus on equity

Riane Roldan *Beacon Staff*

The Office of Diversity and Inclusion's change to the Social Justice Center reflects an ideological shift within the office, a college official said.

"The social justice orientation really builds on diversity and inclusion ... but pushes us all to look more thoughtfully at why we're doing what we're doing," Spears said.

The name change comes after more than six months of conversation, reflection, and research between the three offices previously included within Diversity and Inclusion, Vice President for the Social Justice Center, Sylvia Spears, said.

"While we think we've done good work and the college is making progress [we think] that it's not enough ... social justice expands and builds on the premise of diversity and inclusion but has an orientation that looks more at the root causes of what's happening," Spears said.

The offices previously included under Diversity and Inclusion—Violence Prevention and Response, Title IX Equity and Access, and the Elma Lewis Center for Civic Engagement, Learning, and Research—have the same responsibilities, but now operate under the focus of four new practice areas.

The practice areas include Advocacy and Support, Community and Movement Building,

Knowledge (Re)Creation and Sharing, and Access and Equity, and aim to highlight each office's work.

"We've rethought our work ... and our work across those practice areas, despite the little boxes that say our departments are something different," Spears said.

The Social Justice Center has its own page on the college's website, which features a new Bias Response Program page, where students can fill out anonymous reports and view a flowchart that provides a visual representation of the reporting process. The site also links to the four practice areas and the student organizations that accomplish each respective area's goal.

The name change comes after the center created a page on the college's website to track the response to demands laid out in an October petition by Protesting Oppression With Education Reform.

"We encourage you to check it frequently, and make note of deadline and whether they are met. POWER will continue to follow-up on each of our demands, but being aware of progress (or lack thereof) is one important way that all Emerson community members can be involved," the group wrote on their Facebook page.

Although the center pitched the idea to the Student Government Association last fall, the offices operating under Diversity and Inclusion

coordinated the change.

Spears said she hopes that the new approach will align more with students' current values and inspire incoming students to get more involved.

"I think as students engage with us in a new way, that students who haven't begun to do their own work will begin to do their own work," Spears said. "And that puts all of us in a better position to actually affect positive change. Be-

cause then, we're all working in the same direction and we're all part of a shared process."

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**"The social justice orientation really builds on diversity and inclusion..but pushes us all to look more thoughtfully at why we're doing what we're doing."**



Sylvia Spears, Vice President for the former Office of Diversity and Inclusion, announced the office's name change. • Beacon Archives

## 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.

### Wednesday, Jan. 17

A student reported their missing laptop to the Emerson College Police Department. While an officer filed the report, the student's friend called and said the laptop was inside a classroom in the Walker Building. The owner retrieved the laptop.

### Saturday, Jan. 20

A Piano Row resident assistant requested assistance from ECPD to confiscate drug paraphernalia and a small amount of a green leafy substance.



# College rectifies inconsistent restroom signage

## Takes steps towards gender inclusivity on LA campus

Continued from page 1

“You can slap a gender diversity or whatever sticker on it all you want, that’s not going to change anything,” they said. “If I decided one day that I just wanted to walk into a restroom that was labeled ‘men’s’ because of the sticker, that’s still a men’s restroom, like people are still going to look at me weird. A sticker isn’t going to do anything.”

Before the new stickers, ELA had laminated signs with the gender-inclusive symbol, but the signs would easily fall off, Sampson said.

“It’s hard for things to stand out, everything

**“[The stickers] present a safe space for students to go about their daily lives.”**

is blended into the architecture,” she said. “But these [new stickers] are just beautiful.”

The design for the stickers was created during an initiative two years ago on the Boston campus by EAGLE and the Social Justice Center, formerly the Office of Diversity and Inclusion. The organization intended to encourage individuals to use the restroom that best fits their

identity, according to a community-wide email Spears sent out to announce the installation in 2016.

ELA Associate Director of Student Life and Housing Turi Daoust said before the new stickers, the two single-user stalls, which students used as gender neutral, were hard to find because of the confusing architecture of the building.

“I had a few students coming into my office to ask me where the [single-user] restrooms were,” Daoust said. “The architecture of the building is so complex that a map wouldn’t have even helped.”

Senior Samson Amore said he struggled to find these restrooms.

Amore said he could pass through any restroom without being questioned. He identifies as a transgender man, but there is always going to be someone who doesn’t have that luxury or someone who doesn’t feel comfortable using a certain restroom at all.

“I had pretty much been to every room on that campus, and I thought I had used nearly every restroom there, and I never saw one,” Amore said. “If [gender-neutral restrooms] were there, they didn’t do a good job of telling us where they were. But I also never thought to ask.”

Daoust or one of her coworkers had to walk ELA students to neutral single-user stalls due to difficulty explaining the location. She said she is

happy about the new signage.

“I think that for students who are gender-nonconforming, who identify as transgender, or just believe in the idea of gender inclusive restrooms, [the stickers] present a safe space for students to go about their daily lives,” EAGLE representative Dylan Walton said.

ELA has not posted information about gender-neutral facilities online.

Walton, who contributed to making the stickers in 2016, said even though the administration is demonstrating support for gender-inclusivity, it is still not enough.

“I think the lowest level and bare minimum [of support from administration] is the gender-inclusive sticker,” he said.

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Signs similar to these were implemented at ELA. • Justin Scott Johnson / Beacon Staff

# Castle to designate new gender-neutral bathrooms

The Kasteel Well campus in the Netherlands will soon install gender-inclusive restroom signs, similar to the signage on the Boston campus. Bathrooms at Kasteel Well are gender-neutral, but both male and female signs can be seen on the door.

Kasteel Well Executive Director Dulcia Meijers said she recently ordered inclusive signs with a triangular symbol that will better represent transgender and nonbinary students. The sides of the triangle will have a female symbol, a male symbol, and the combination of male and female together, she said.

Meijers said Kasteel Well tries to align with the Boston campus, but wants to use different symbols that are more European and Dutch-specific.

Meijers said the campus has been under renovation since 2010, and part of that was to include single-stall, gender-neutral restrooms for students.

A few years ago, Meijers said she received feedback from female students about the makeshift single-user neutral stalls being messy. Meijers said she established separate men’s and women’s stalls as a solution. All bathrooms are

single-stall with the exception of a multi-stall for men and one for women.

Vice President for the Social Justice Center, formerly the Office of Diversity and Inclusion, Sylvia Spears said when the Boston campus makes steps to integrate gender-inclusive restrooms, other locations should follow suit.

“One of the challenges I think for Emerson is, as they expand locations, ensuring that the student, staff, and faculty experience is the same,” she said.

There are no maps publicly available to students at Kasteel Well indicating the location of neutral or inclusive stalls on the campus, and the availability of gender-neutral restrooms is not listed on the Kasteel Well website.

**“One of the challenges I think for Emerson is, as they expand locations, ensuring that the student, staff, and faculty experience is the same one bedroom apartment.”**

“It’s already a big enough adjustment to move to a different country,” Emerson’s Alliance for Gays, Lesbians, and Everyone Vice President

Lauren Lopez said. “There’s also no way to prepare for possibly having to walk across campus between classes to go to a different bathroom, or maybe not being able to use a bathroom at all that day.”

Two years ago, the Social Justice Center and EAGLE selected multi-stall restrooms in high-traffic areas of the Boston campus to designate as inclusive of transgender, genderqueer, and gender-nonconforming individuals, and installed signs indicating this.

Junior Gwendolyn Black-Graham, who is transgender, attended Kasteel Well last fall. She

said that when the women’s facilities were not operating properly in the castle, she felt uncomfortable using the men’s room. She said she didn’t have a bathroom of her own, and only a handful were not marked explicitly male or female.

“Because it was marked ‘men’s,’ I didn’t go in. It just felt wrong using [the men’s room],” Black-Graham said. “I could see if a student didn’t identify with a certain gender, or if a student didn’t identify as either gender, then they wouldn’t want to confirm that.”

Lopez said gender-inclusive bathrooms are important because Emerson students need comfort and convenience. They said for someone who is cisgender, their only thought is that they have to use the restroom. Lopez said that no one understands an issue entirely if it does not affect them.

“It’s just all of these barriers that no one ever thinks about,” they said. “I don’t see why there needs to be gendered bathrooms anyway. This is supposed to be seen as a progressive and diverse institution.”

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# SGA appoints new chief justice, commissioners

Chris Van Buskirk, Beacon Staff

SGA unanimously approved junior Lizzie Northey for chief justice. Chief justice is on the SGA Executive Board and is responsible for interpreting and implementing the constitution, overseeing elections, presiding over impeachment hearings, and hearing all student and organizational grievances to recommend a course of action.

Northey served as SGA’s secretary for the past year and a half, during which she worked

with the former Chief Justice Ally MacLean. Northey said she began speaking to MacLean about taking over the position once she found out MacLean could not attend joint session due to a schedule conflict.

“I am very excited about [serving as chief justice], there is a lot I have wanted to do with this position,” Northey said.

Northey said she wants to work more with *Robert’s Rules of Order*—a widely used rule book on legislative meetings—and make sure that the Financial Advisory Board, Constitutional

Review Board, and Organization Recognition and Review Board operate smoothly.

SGA also appointed Erin Burgess as accessibilities commissioner and Erin Graham as honor’s commissioner.

The accessibilities commissioner functions as a liaison between the Student Accessibilities Office and SGA. The SGA website describes the position as one who serves those that identify as disabled, either mentally or physically.

Burgess said she realized Emerson does not recognize students with disabilities as a

minority on campus, but Burgess thinks the college should.

“I just really wanted to dedicate most of my short time left here at Emerson to bringing more recognition as far as disabilities,” Burgess said.

The honors commissioner acts as the main contact between Honors Program Director Wendy Walters and SGA.

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# Faculty assembly establishes permanent cultural competency

Continued from page 1

“Technically, it’s a new committee, but in fact it’s a new generation of the Ad Hoc Committee,” Robert Colby, former faculty assembly chair and professor, said in an interview the day after assembly.

Colby said it was probable members already on the Ad Hoc Committee would remain on its successor.

According to the proposal, the assembly stipulates that ad hoc committees operate on a temporary basis, but the work done by the Ad Hoc Committee on Cultural Competency was ongoing. Therefore, the faculty assembly needed a lasting committee dealing with the same issues.

Forty-seven members voted in support of the proposal, and eight voted against it. One faculty member abstained from the vote, which was cast on paper ballots to preserve anonymity.

The Ad Hoc Committee met last semester af-

ter the #ThisIsEmerson protest, another student demonstration against racism and discrimination on campus, which prompted former Faculty Assembly Chair Anthony Lowrie to author a memo accusing student protestors of abusing and intimidating faculty.

Lowrie’s memo also encouraged both faculty and students to take legal action against the college.

Lowrie stepped down after he received a vote of no confidence from Faculty Assembly during

the committee’s last meeting of fall semester. Associate Journalism Professor Tim Riley is serving as interim chair.

A vote at the beginning of faculty assembly meeting determined Riley will remain interim chair through April.

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# editorial

## What's in a name?

**At issue:**  
College jargon surrounding issues of inequality

**Our take:**  
Name changes do not guarantee action

This week, faculty assembly voted to create a permanent new committee on cultural competency and inclusion. So, what's going to change? Permanence on paper does not guarantee permanence in practice, and this status change needs to meet the demands of students not just in title, but in action. Emerson students are incredibly vocal, and it's imperative that the committee responds to our voices.

In 2015, students marched to protest racism at Emerson, which sparked the original Ad Hoc Committee on Cultural Competency. The #ThisIsEmerson protests of last semester included a petition by Protesting Oppression With Education Reform where they made several demands of the administration. The newly formed group, titled the Educational Equity and Justice Committee, plans to focus on the issues of cultural competency training for both faculty and students, and reviewing the curricula. There has been no indication whether POWER's other demands regarding retention and accountability will be addressed, but hopefully a permanent committee can meet all of these demands.

When Beacon correspondents use the terms "diverse" and "inclusive" to describe college initiatives, we tell them to be more specific because the words have come to lack concrete meaning. Announcements that the school is going to try and be more inclusive do not give us details on what actions it will take. And increased diversity can take many paths—the committee could create new scholarships or focus on recruiting students from minority backgrounds. However, improving diversity is not as easy as announcing it, and the school needs to be prepared to take the necessary steps to live up to its promises.

For example, the Division of Diversity and Inclusion recently changed its name to the Social Justice Center. However, the name change denotes

something about how the college perceives inclusivity. Promoting intersectionality and diversity shouldn't immediately be clumped under the label of "social justice." This only perpetuates the idea that inclusion is inherently political, and should always be seen as such. The term "social justice" undermines what should be the genuine intentions of the center—to cultivate safe and diverse spaces for students. It ultimately implies that wanting inclusivity will always be a matter of "justice," which isn't necessarily the case.

But please, we'd love for the college to prove us wrong. If these reorganizations make it somehow easier to get administration and faculty boots on the ground alongside the students who have been working for years, then maybe we can all let this bureaucracy slide. We recognize that concrete change will not come immediately, and that it takes time for demands set forth by students

to come to fruition. But we'd rather hear more about any progress made toward those demands than departmental wording changes. Take these name changes and brainstorming sessions and put them into action.

**"Announcements that the school is going to try and be more inclusive do not give us details on what actions it will take."**

*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](mailto: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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The Beacon is published weekly. The Beacon receives funding from the Student Government Association of Emerson College. Anything submitted to the Beacon becomes the sole property of the newspaper. No part of the publication may be reproduced by any means without the express written permission of the editor.

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### Editorial Cartoon

by the Editorial Board  
illustration by Enne Goldstein

Emerson should just reserve a spot for the Boston Fire Department.





# opinion

## Finding the intersection of college and communication

**Ziqi Wang**  
Wang is a freshman journalism major and a correspondent for the Beacon.

I almost forgot that the holidays tend to spark unpleasant conversations among family. Everything seemed fine when we previously spoke on the phone; but then, like always, it somehow went wrong.

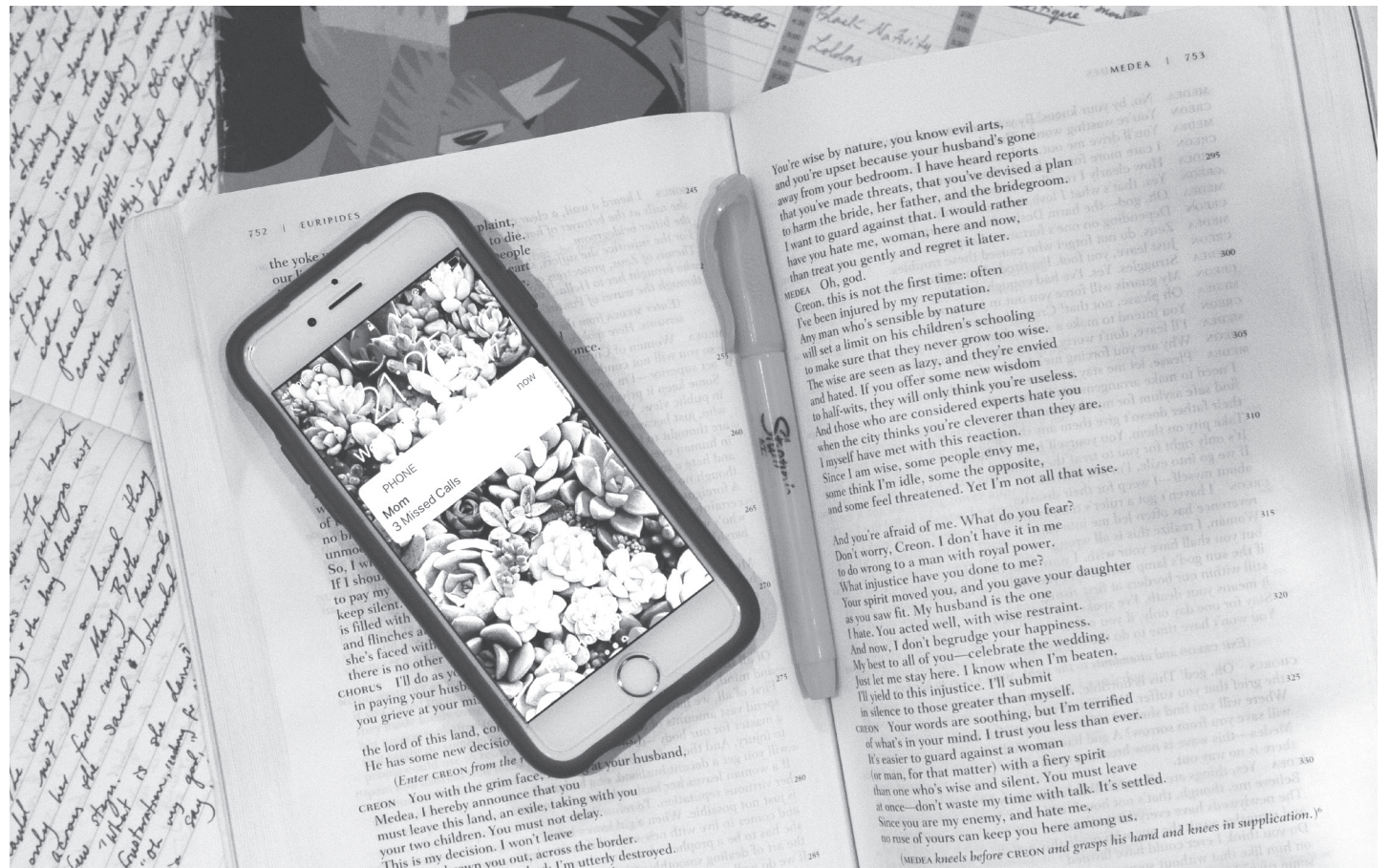
“Why can’t you be more patient with us? Why can’t you just talk like a normal person?” my mom shouted.

I could feel everyone looking at me. I tried to explain that I wasn’t shouting at her. “You probably think you didn’t,” she responded. “But that’s what your tone is implying! Your dad and I are in the United States for the first time and we just asked you to show us around. I know things look familiar to you and you understand everything, but we do not. When we ask questions, could you please answer nicely without shouting?”

I was speechless. I knew this would happen from the time my parents informed me of their plan to visit me at school during winter break. I did my homework: I researched places to go, things to see, and foods to try. I anticipated some complications because I hadn’t seen my parents face-to-face in almost four months. As expected, they wanted to know about everything happening in my life—my dorm, classes, and new friends. They were curious about this country. They wanted to understand the new culture and ask about things they don’t see back home. And they wanted me to provide the answers.

It’s becoming harder and harder to talk to my parents, especially since I started college. We video chat every weekend, but the conversations mostly center around me. They ask how I’m doing here, the difficulty of my classes, and what I need. And now that I think about it, I’m reluctant to tell them anything. They speak very limited English and like my mom said, they have never traveled to this country before. I told myself that they would not understand me, and it would take too long to explain things to them.

But isn’t everyone who left home for college a little bit insensitive sometimes? In high school we looked forward to finally making serious decisions about our futures and traveling to different places, even ones far away from family. We started to feel like grown-ups, like we can live by ourselves and take on responsibilities. College introduced us to living in a whole new environment, meeting new people, creating a different life. We often neglect to bring our family up to date. We forget to be considerate, patient,



Parents want to know about your life and understand you, but you need to give them the chance. • Photo by Cassandra Martinez / Beacon Staff

and caring toward our loved ones when they’re far away. Phone calls get shorter every time because we feel like there’s nothing to talk about. Since they are not here, I feel they won’t understand what’s happening in my life even if I told them.

I tend to mistreat the people who love me the most, like my parents. I remember a time my mom texted me 20 times because I did not wake up until 11 a.m. on a Sunday and she was worried. I remember calling her back and laughing at her for overreacting. It was nothing, I just went to bed a little late last night. I

remember feeling annoyed when my dad would send me Chicken Soup articles and I told him I thought the stories were nonsense. I didn’t realize these actions would hurt their feelings. But they care most about what I say because I’m their child, who now lives on the other side of the world with a 12-hour time difference. They want to support me in the same way they did before the distance.

A parent’s insecurity grows alongside their children. On one hand, they want us to take control of our lives and transform into the person we want to be. On the other, they want us to remain their precious little angels forever. Parents ask too many questions and overthink,

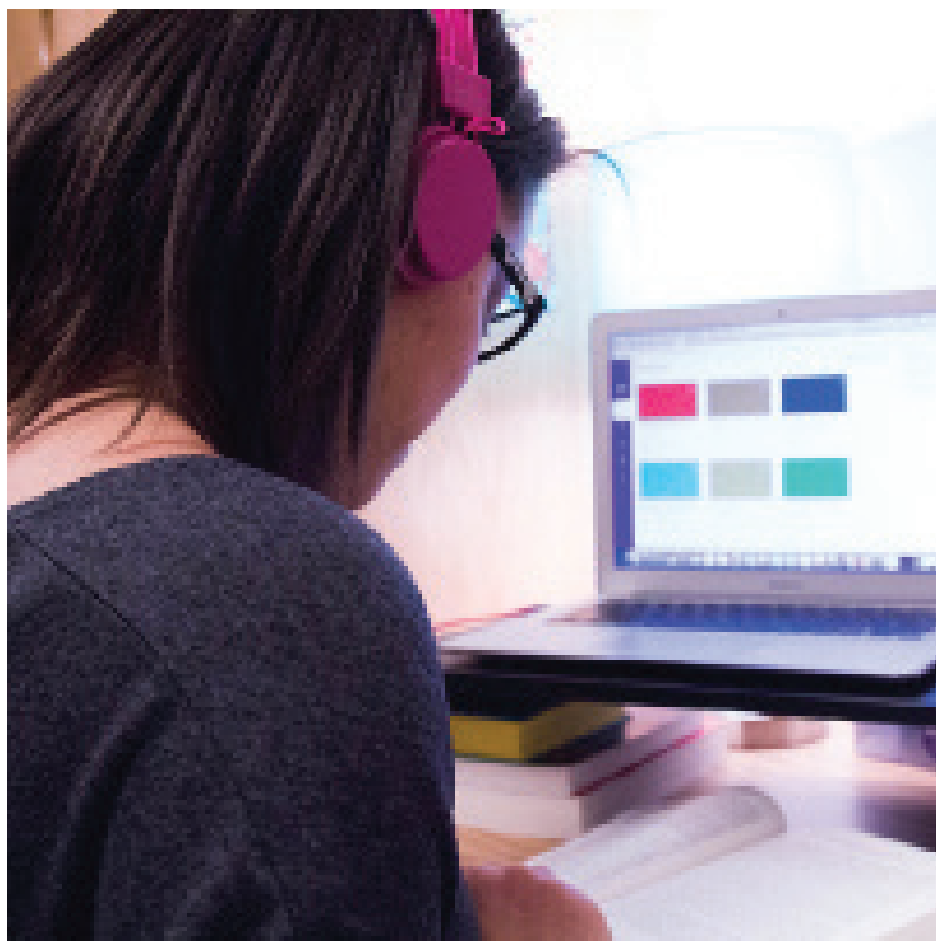
but they do this because they are afraid of losing us. They want to remain useful to us so we don’t forget them.

College students must stop blaming our parents for not understanding our experiences if we do not explain them. Parents want to know about your life and understand you, but you need to give them the chance. Parents use calls, texts, social media posts, memes, and emojis to stay connected. So give them the chance to stay involved in your life from afar. Let them feel safe and secure. Tell them that even though you’re now away, you still need them. You don’t need to tell them everything. Connection can start with just picking up the phone and calling them first.

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**“College students must stop blaming our parents for not understanding our experiences if we do not explain them.”**

## The sound of silence: longing for some peace and quiet



**Hannah Ebanks**  
Ebanks is a sophomore journalism major and the Deputy Opinion Editor for the Beacon.

I spent fall semester living in a castle, so I knew that coming back to the Boston would be a challenge. I was excited to move into the Colonial Building, luckily, with some good friends. Living in Colonial as a freshman defined part of my first year in college, so returning felt like coming home.

Except home wasn’t exactly the same as when I left. Now in the morning, I am woken up by loud banging, drilling, and booming—an inharmonious orchestra of construction noise that starts at 7:30 a.m. sharp.

I am not the only one disturbed by the renovations to the Colonial Theatre. My suitemates and other Colonial residents commiserate with me about abruptly waking up to their walls rattling. At first, it was only mildly aggravating. I didn’t expect it to continue at an intense volume until I left for my 10 a.m. class, and I felt confident in my ability to fall back asleep. However, my frustration escalated when the same thing happened the next morning and the morning after. Sleep disruptions aren’t the only problem. Last Thursday afternoon, I went back to my room to work on homework and could not focus on reading the Constitution, even with music blaring through my headphones.

We spend so much of our time in our living environments—studying, hanging out with friends, and sleeping. Ideally, dorms are spaces on campus where we feel the most safe and comfortable. Emerson must be aware of the importance of our living spaces, because the first clause in the Bill of Rights of the Residential Policy states that residents have “the right to read, study, and live free from undue interference,

unreasonable noise, and other distractions that inhibit the exercise of this right.”

Of course, noise is unavoidable in some situations, and in the long-term the restored theater will be a great asset to both Emerson and the wider community. I’m looking forward to attending productions in the Colonial Theatre in the future and feel proud of Emerson’s commitment to the arts. The first show, “Moulin Rouge! The Musical,” is scheduled to open this summer, so this disruption could potentially continue through midterms and finals. A 24-hour quiet policy can only control internal noise.

Part of being a student is understanding the spaces around you are temporary. Living on a campus located downtown results in the environment around us constantly evolving to improve our college experience. But for the three required years of on-campus housing, it is reasonable to expect a setting aligned with the college’s established policies.

In previous years, during repairs to Little Building, residents received an email from the Office of Housing and Residence Life outlining a timeline of construction and the hours it would occur. At the beginning of the year, an email to Colonial residents about updates to the building mentioned the construction noise.

Colonial residents deserve the courtesy of detailed communication about what they’re experiencing and what measures will be taken to ensure we can enjoy our residences to the fullest. The college should be forthright with this information—after all, this is our home.

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For the three required years of on-campus housing, it is reasonable to expect a setting aligned with the college’s established policies. • Photo by Cassandra Martinez / Beacon Staff



# living arts

## “Lights Down Low” singer recruits student photographer



Mike Zahar's photographs of MAX have been featured by Billboard and iHeartRadio. Courtesy of Mike Zahar

Ian Sloan, Beacon Correspondent

Young artists may fantasize about seeing their work featured in magazines and concert promotions, but junior visual and media arts major Mike Zahar knows the feeling well. His portraits of alternative singer Max Schneider, who performs under the name MAX, have been featured in Billboard magazine and the iHeartRadio Jingle Ball tour.

Zahar, an aspiring photography director, began his career working for Ben Esakof, president and founder of the website Roman's Wrap Up. Soon after starting at the website, which covers live events in the Boston area, Zahar took photos of rapper Mac Miller and pop singer Meghan Trainor.

Zahar met Schneider while covering one of his shows in 2017. Esakof asked Zahar to do a digital spread of Schneider while he was in Boston, so Zahar photographed and interviewed the singer for Roman's Wrap Up.

Schneider then used Zahar's photos for posters and merchandise during his performances.

“[Schneider's] management really liked the pictures I took and they wanted to use it for all of his promotional stuff,” Zahar said. “Along with the Billboard picture, I knew this would be good exposure for my brand.”

Schneider said he was surprised to see the professional quality of the shoot in such an intimate setting.

“[Zahar] came to a nightclub that we were doing a gig for as my group ‘Party Pupils,’ and we shot the editorial in the middle of this random room downstairs from the club,” Schneider said. “He came extremely prepared, and I knew he was a great guy from the moment we started hanging. When I saw the photos later I was blown away.”

After Billboard used Zahar's photos, the “random room” photoshoot became a staple for Schneider's interviews and concert promotions. He said he believes audiences are visually attracted to Zahar's vibrant colors.

“People felt the photos represented my vibe perfectly,” Schneider said. “I think that's why people respond so much to his work and that photo in particular.”

Billboard magazine featured one of Zahar's photographs when Schneider's single “Lights Down Low” entered the Hot 100 song list on Oct. 28.

Esakof knew of Zahar's abilities behind the camera and suspected success following the photoshoot.

“I knew Mike killed it with portraits and I was fully confident in his ability to do a photoshoot with Max,” Esakof said. “I loved all of the photos and was pleasantly surprised with the quality of the backdrop. The picture of Max that was used in Billboard is probably the most recognizable picture of the performer.”

Esakof hoped Roman's Wrap Up would help photographers build their resumes while also promoting his own website. He said he feels overjoyed by the amount of exposure Zahar has received.

“I love seeing other people win and succeed and I love being a part of the process,” Esakof said.

Besides photos featured on Zahar's website, Esakof posted exclusive, behind-the-scenes photos from the shoot with Schneider on Esakof's Instagram page.

“With the pictures of what was going on behind the shoot, people can see how simple the shoot actually was,” Esakof said. “That way, people know how [simply]

you can shoot professionally good photos.”

Zahar said the biggest factors for success in the creative field are spreading your work and attending as many events as possible to network.

“If you get started as soon as you can get equipment and learn from there, you can create amazing portraits and go to amazing events,” Zahar said. “I have done some great work with some awesome people, and can't wait to see what happens in the future.”

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## LGBTQ Column: Queer-baiting, but straight-washing



**Andrew Stanton**  
Stanton is a sophomore journalism major & Beacon LGBTQ columnist

NBC's new show *Rise* tells the story of how high school drama teacher Lou Mazzuchelli transforms the theater department. The plot is based on the real life story of Lou Volpe, but many in the LGBTQ community have criticized the show's creators for changing a pivotal part of Volpe's character. In the show, Lou Mazzuchelli is straight—while the real Lou Volpe is gay.

Members of the LGBTQ community accused the show of straight-washing. Straight-washing and cis-washing are when creators portray a queer person as straight or cisgender. Executive producer Jason Katims justified his decision of characterizing Mazzuchelli as a straight family man by saying he wanted to make the story more relatable for himself.

“I felt like I needed to make it my own story,” Katims said.

There's no shortage of stories in the media from the perspective of straight men. However, only about five percent of TV characters identify as queer, according to GLAAD. The queer community lacks adequate representation in media, and the limited representation we receive is often grounded in stereotypes rather than realistic portrayals of the LGBTQ community.

*Rise* is not the only recent case of straight-washing in media. Sony recently came under fire after tweeting a promotion for *Call Me By Your Name*, a romance film about gay men. The tweet portrayed a photo of a straight couple with the caption, “It's a romance overwhelming in its intensity, a heart that swells until it has to burst.” Some Twitter users accused Sony of posting the image to widen the film's audience appeal.

The idea that straight people cannot relate to queer characters is rooted in homophobia and implies that queer characters are nothing more than their sexual orientation. Queer people have connected to straight characters since the beginning of media, so straight, cisgender people can relate to queer characters.

The 2015 film *Stonewall*, based on the famous riots where LGBTQ people protested a police raid at the Stonewall Inn, had a similar issue. Director Roland Emmerich faced heavy criticism for cis-washing and white-washing the

Stonewall riots, which were led by transgender women of color Marsha P. Johnson and Sylvia Rivera. His response to the criticism is similar to that of Katims.

“As a director, you have to put yourself in your movies, and I'm white and gay,” Emmerich said.

**“We need to move away from the idea that straight people cannot relate to members of the LGBTQ community. As future media makers, Emerson students need to lead the charge against erasure.”**

All three of these cases share a common thread—they change a narrative to make it more relatable. Whether this is done to accommodate the director or to attract a wider audience, nothing excuses straight-washing, cis-washing, and white-washing.

This line of reasoning has limited media diversity for decades. The film and television industries are overwhelmingly run by white men, so they portray that perspective, according to a University of Southern California study.

Creators shouldn't only tell the stories that mirror their exact experiences. When they seek to tell the story of a queer person, they cannot change their identity.

Rise and *Stonewall* both diminish the accom-

plishments of queer people by rewriting history. Emmerich failed to give the transgender community the credit they deserve for their bravery during the Stonewall riots. Katims's decision to make Mazzuchelli straight rewrites Volpe's story.

Positive examples of the LGBTQ community in media normalizes queerness. This exposure can change minds and allow the LGBTQ rights movement to make progress. By hiding the stories of the LGBTQ community, producers and directors inhibit this advancement.

Thankfully, a new generation of media makers are entering the workforce, and we are more conscious of these issues than our predecessors.

We understand why any type of erasure, whether it's white-washing, cis-washing, or straight-washing, is insensitive to different communities. We need to move away from the idea that straight people cannot relate to members of the LGBTQ community. As future media makers, Emerson students need to lead the charge against erasure. This requires us to leave our comfort zones and work hard to look beyond the perspectives we know. Yet this will result in a more diverse media driven by incredible storytelling.

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## Senior Erin Jean Hussey runs for a reason

Continued from page 1

The organization, started by activists 40 years ago, educates its community about social issues like domestic violence. The organization gets its name from one of the activists, Myrna Vazquez, who was murdered by her abuser.

Casa Myrna is located in Boston and provides survivors of domestic violence with services such as housing assistance and individual and group counseling. Casa Myrna's website features statistics on both domestic assault and teen dating violence and includes anecdotes from survivors.

Casa Myrna now operates three shelters in Boston, and serves as the largest organization for domestic and dating violence survivors in the Greater Boston Area. The organization offers bibs to run the Boston Marathon on their behalf every year. Casa Myrna offered four bibs this year, said Director of Development and Communications for Casa Myrna Leela Strong.

"We put out a request to the community to apply for one of those four bibs, because they're highly coveted," Strong said. "Unless you qualify for the Boston Marathon, you can't actually run, so a nonprofit bib is the only other way to get in."

Strong said the organization interviews applicants to make sure they fit well with the team and are passionate about Casa Myrna's cause.

"Erin Jean comes from a long line of Kappa sisters who have run for Casa Myrna, and we were delighted to invite her to be a part of the team this year," Strong said.

In addition to the marathon, Hussey said

she plans to host fundraisers at Blaze Pizza and Chipotle, so Emerson students can conveniently contribute. She also plans to run a fitness bootcamp in partner with the Emerson Fitness Center to raise awareness for her fundraiser and get others involved.

**"The challenges I face on the trails and streets are nothing compared to those of the survivors. Casa Myrna enables survivors and their children to find their strength, as running helps me find mine."**

Hussey seeks donations of visual art and performances from students and outside artists for a showcase to raise money. Hussey said she plans on suggesting visitors donate at the door. The showcase will be on Feb. 16 at Make Shift Boston, a coworking space and event venue.

"It's just a way to have people donate their art and get the money as well as being able to raise money," she said. "Being able to have an intersection of community service and the arts and music is something that is very powerful and very special to me."

May Blake, Hussey's roommate, will be designing shirts for Hussey to sell at her showcase to bring in more funds. Blake said Hussey has been passionate about Casa Myrna since she began volunteering for them with Kappa.

"It's something that genuinely means a lot to Erin Jean," Blake said. "It's an important cause for her and I think it's a personal cause."

Hussey said she hopes to do her part for charity while doing something she loves.

"The challenges I face on the trails and streets are nothing compared to those of the survivors," Hussey said. "Casa Myrna enables survivors and their children to find their strength, as running helps me find mine."

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Erin Jean Hussey plans to run the Boston Marathon on April 16 to raise money for Casa Myrna. *Cassandra Martinez / Beacon Staff*

## Climate meets culture at State House event

Annika Hom, *Beacon Staff*

Paintings depicting zebras running through grasslands, trees with neon tops, and environmental pleas such as, "Whatever you do, see the planet and save it," decorated the lobby of the Massachusetts State House Tuesday morning.

These are just some of the approximately 250 painted cardboard pieces of a mosaic that visual media arts major Carrie Cullen helped arrange for "Put A Price On It! Art and Youth Lobbying," an event with art, music, and congressional speeches that took place Jan. 23. Students gathered there to lobby for a tax on carbon emissions, a gas that contributes to air pollution and climate change.

Cullen used her position as Massachusetts Arts Organizer for Our Climate, a nationwide, youth-run environmental organization, to set up lobbying appointments between college students and state legislators.

Ten Emerson students met with State Sen. Joseph A. Boncore and lobbied two carbon tax bills that are currently moving in the state senate.

"We're all doing this because we're passionate about it," Cullen said, "And it's starting from nowhere, but to me that's more powerful than a big campaign with outside lobbyists."

State Sen. Mike Barrett (D) opened the event with a speech about carbon pricing and youth engagement in environmental issues, and State Rep. Jennifer E. Benson also pushed her bill. Cullen added the mosaic and live music performances to the event to draw more attention to the lobbying.

Several students from the greater Boston area set up appointments with legislators, including those from Massachusetts Institute of Technolo-

gy, Northeastern University, Berklee College of Music, and Brookline High School.

Senior Suzie Hicks heard about the event through Facebook and decided to attend based on her passion for renewable energy.

"The thing that stuck out to me the most was that they combined art and activism for the environment, which was something that I really love," Hicks said.

Cullen's passion for youth activism and art converged in this event, which she's planned since July 2017.

"It's a way of showing that art can be social, art can be cheap, and art can be zero resources," Cullen said. "People would just take a pizza box out of the recycling bin and then paint on it. It was a really cheap way of organizing and low stakes for people."

Since Gov. Charlie Baker gave his State of the Commonwealth speech later that day, Cullen said she knew all the legislators would be in office, strengthening the chance for students to schedule appointments with them.

Cullen said she and Our Climate deliberately planned "Put A Price On It!" between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m., despite the possibility that people would not attend because of work or class. The organizers wanted the event to happen during the legislators' work day, she said.

Sarah Fadem, the Northeast Field Organizer for "Put A Price On It!" said she enjoyed the event's combination of art and grassroots activism to create change.

"I consider myself an activist, but I also consider myself an artist more than most things," Fadem said. "I don't get to bring those two things together into my life very often."

Roughly 50 attendees were able to learn more about the basics of carbon pricing and one of



State Rep. Jennifer E. Benson introduced her sponsored bill to the roughly 50 attendees. *Justin Scott Johnson / Beacon Staff*

the two tax bills sponsored by State Rep. Jennifer E. Benson (D).

State Rep. Benson sponsored one of the bills promoted at the event titled "An Act To Promote Green Infrastructure, Reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions, and Create Jobs." The bill would implement a \$20 tax for every cubic ton of carbon produced by corporations, with 80 percent of the revenue rebated to taxpayers.

The bill encourages taxpayers to use more environmentally friendly infrastructure, such as switching to solar energy.

The second bill, "An Act Combating Climate Change" sponsored by Sen. Barrett, would tax carbon at \$10 per ton in the first year. Additionally, 100 percent of the revenue would return to

taxpayers and corporations.

The bills are set to vote by Feb. 7.

"[The event] was so great because it was just a celebration of our generation and getting together to fight for something bigger," Cullen said. "It was really high-energy and everyone was smiling and tackling new challenges all day. There was just a really great sense in the room of friendliness and inspiration."

From Jan. 29 to Feb. 2 the cardboard mosaic will be installed in the Massachusetts State House in the shape of a codfish.

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# sports



## Preview: Men's VBALL ready to build on playoff run

Matt Couture, *Beacon Staff*

A year after finishing fifth in the Great North-east Athletic Conference and advancing to the playoffs despite key losses, Emerson's men's volleyball team finds itself pegged for an uncharacteristically low finish in the annual conference coaches' poll—but players are setting the bar higher.

The poll, released on Jan. 16, projects a seventh-place finish for the Lions, which would leave them out of the postseason. The projection is especially puzzling to players after the Lions beat cross-town rival Emmanuel 3-0 and 3-1 in the clubs' two meetings last year. The Saints placed sixth in the coaches' poll.

Emerson hasn't finished below sixth since joining the GNAC in 2009. The top six teams qualify for the playoffs. The team is also returning all but one player from last season.

Head coach Ben Read said while he's surprised by Emerson's rank in the survey, his players don't need extra motivation heading into the season.

"I don't think we needed any extra fire or bulletin board material to go ahead and motivate us," Read said. "We've been working really hard since we've been back after break and I'm interested to see where we can end up."

Emerson's 2017 playoff appearance and sweep of Emmanuel came despite the graduation of key seniors Jared Gross, Brendan McGonigle, and Jackson Wiley in 2016. Nick Rusk stepped in as the team's primary setter last year and gathered 727 assists. In his first season at Emerson, Carl D'Aguiar saw frequent action in the yellow libero's jersey and finished with 172 digs.

In their quarterfinal playoff game against Johnson and Wales, the Lions suffered a straight-set defeat. They improved as the match continued, losing just 25-23 in the final set. Read said he employed a slightly different game plan than usual, which may have tripped Emerson up, but that the Wildcats came to play.

"We had a couple of lineup changes that [we] thought would benefit us, and I think the guys tried too hard to execute the game plan, and because of that they made mistakes that ultimately ended up hurting us," Read said. "But the way

Johnson and Wales played, they deserved to win that game."

Read and players said a deeper roster should help the Lions build on last year's playoff appearance. The team lost one player and added four freshmen. Sophomore Lucas Raagas, who joined the team late last season but had class scheduling conflicts, will be playing the full season.

Rusk, now a senior captain, said the added depth will help in practice, where Emerson will have the opportunity to run full scrimmages for the first time since his freshman campaign.

"Already it's nice to see in practice we're getting longer rallies, we're having to think a little smarter, [and] swing a little better," Rusk said.

Read said the team is still working on where to position players for maximum production. While Rusk seems like the obvious choice to return as setter, Read also likes what he can do as a passer and hitter. The Lions are working freshman Marcus Cepeda and two other newcomers, Raagas and freshman Joris Pijpers, in as setters.

D'Aguiar will likely see more time at libero in his sophomore campaign, but Read said he may use the team's depth to let him show off his jump serve. Liberos are not allowed to rotate to server in men's volleyball like they are in women's volleyball.

Outside hitter Mark Piorkowski, who led the team with 269 kills last year, will return for his junior season. Teammates Win Kittivatcharapong (211) and Diego Garcia (136) were also big contributors in that category in 2017.

Rusk's fellow captain, senior Stig Regan, said the Lions will use their nonconference action to find the best fit for each player.

"There's a lot of different situations in which it could be best to play certain people, so there's going to be a lot to play around with, much more so than we've had in years past where we [had] one option for every position, essentially," Regan said.

The team opens its season at home on Friday against Pine Manor. Emerson will play nine nonconference games before opening up GNAC play against eighth nationally ranked Wentworth at home on Feb. 22.



Senior captain Nick Rusk led the team in assists last season. • *Daniel Peden / Beacon Staff*



### ASHBY SETS RECORD

The steal has always been Eastin Ashby's bread and butter, and now she owns the school record to prove it.

The women's basketball team's senior guard collected her 186th career steal during Saturday's big win over Coast Guard, which makes her the all-time Emerson leader in the category.

Read more at [www.berkeleybeacon.com](http://www.berkeleybeacon.com).

## Schedule breakdown: Lions get set for nationally ranked foes



Head coach Ben Read instructs junior Mark Piorkowski at practice. • *Daniel Peden / Beacon Staff*

Head coach Ben Read said there's no perfect method to scheduling preseason contests, but he hopes to create a balance as his team prepares for the season.

"We do try to play some easier teams [so] that we can try some lineups out, build some confidence, and also get some tougher teams," Read said.

Two of Emerson's nonconference tests will come against MIT and Endicott. The Engineers are ranked 14th nationally, and the Gulls also received votes for consideration in the top 15, and played in last year's NCAA tournament.

Emerson's two meetings with rival Emmanuel will come within a week of one another. The two teams match up on March 17 at Emmanuel and on March 24 at Emerson. The Lions beat Emmanuel twice last year after the Saints swept them in 2016. The wins helped Emerson secure the fifth seed for the GNAC playoffs.

The Lions begin their GNAC slate with matches against the top and bottom ranked

teams in the preseason coaches' poll. Emerson hosts eighth nationally ranked Wentworth on Feb. 22 and visits Mount Ida on Feb. 27.

The team hopes to avoid any unexpected scheduling quirks like last year's temporary use of Suffolk's facilities following flooding in the Bobbi Brown and Steven Plofker Gym. The Lions did not play a game on Emerson's campus between Feb. 4 and March 25 due to the closure of the gym, and played four home games in alternate locations.

Senior captain Stig Regan said the relocated games attracted fewer fans, but the time away from the gym didn't have a major effect on the team's performance.

"It didn't seem as big a deal as I would've thought it was, but it was definitely a different environment, being in a different gym that we weren't used to and not having as much support," Regan said.

Emerson's home opener against Pine Manor begins at 7 p.m. on Friday.

## Scouting the freshmen: Setters could relieve pressure on Rusk



Sophomore Diego Garcia (center) conferences with teammates. • *Daniel Peden / Beacon Staff*

Emerson's men's volleyball team kicks off its season against Pine Manor on Jan. 26 in the Bobbi Brown and Steven Plofker Gym. Fans will get a look at the Lions' four new freshmen, Marcus Cepeda, Matt Connolly, Joris Pijpers, and Samuel Willinger. The Beacon spoke to head coach Ben Read for a scouting report on each of the newcomers.

**Marcus Cepeda** — Read said Cepeda is one of the team's top two setters heading into non-conference play, along with captain Nick Rusk. The additions of Cepeda, Pijpers, and Lucas Raagas could free up Rusk to play different positions, Read said.

**Matt Connolly** — Read described Connolly as a "boisterous middle," and said he's very talkative on the court.

"One of the things we're focusing on him to improve is blocking, and blocking at a faster, higher level that you're going to see in college

ball," Read said. "But his hitting is right where we need it to be right now."

**Joris Pijpers** — Pijpers comes to Emerson from the Netherlands, where Read said he scouted him as a setter. Read also said he brings scrappy defense and is working on his consistency in early practices.

**Samuel Willinger** — Read said Willinger will help the Lions as a hitter, and has a fast arm swing. Read said he's a good jumper despite his 6-foot-1-inch height landing him on the short side for middles.

"Sam's a character. Always has an opinion, something to say on the court, and I like it," Read said. "I think he's going to work his way into seeing some good playing time somewhere on the court for us."

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