

The Viking News

SUNY WCC Keeps Education Accessible, Even Post-Pandemic

KEIRA FERRETTI

With a new academic year, there comes new triumphs, new worries, and new adventures. No one knows this more than SUNY Westchester's president, Dr. Belinda Miles, who has reiterated WCC's mission of opportunity, accessibility, and community involvement in an interview with the Viking News.

Last semester, it was reported that HEERF funding to SUNY WCC may be reduced or cut,

This increase is especially important as for the past five years, SUNY WCC has seen a trend of ever-decreasing enrollment, even before the pandemic, according to SUNY WCC's demographics report.

With an increase in the student body, there are bound to be some crowding issues, as Dr Miles concedes, but she also says that these are "good problems and we want that," as it shows a vibrant student body, something the campus has been lacking since 2020.

open doors that allow students to save tens of thousands of dollars."

SUNY Westchester has one of the lowest tuition rates in the SUNY system, and has not increased tuition like other SUNY community colleges have, according to the SUNY tuition report. This is a part of an effort by the SUNY WCC community to keep the college as an accessible stepping-stone to the workforce or a four-year university.

In January, SUNY WCC received \$2.4 million in a grant meant to be put towards enrollments and student success. According to Dr. Miles, Governor Hochul and SUNY Chancellor King are working closely together to improve public higher education and that they do not hold community colleges responsible for a dropped enrollment rate, in order to continue to offer the low-cost and accessible education they provide.

According to Dr. Miles, SUNY Westchester is an ever-evolving institution that is dedicated to availability.

"Having an emphasis on looking at the data helps us to know where we need to make improvements, make

changes, stop doing something, if it's working really well, and certainly to improve the overall outcomes," Dr. Miles said.

"We have emerged stronger than ever."

Dr. Belinda Miles SUNY WCC President

which was a concern of many students and faculty who felt that its aid to student services helped immensely, but Dr. Miles says that it is now being extended to June of 2024.

"Our enrollments are up more than 2% over last year, which is very exciting," said Dr. Miles. "We haven't seen that kind of trend in more than 10 years."

"[I feel] as though we have emerged stronger in many ways," Dr. Miles said.

Especially in the wake of the pandemic, WCC has seen a dampened student life on campus, but Dr. Miles is optimistic about the upcoming year.

"It's critical," said Dr. Miles. "Community colleges provide



Dr. Belinda Miles poses on the SUNY WCC campus. Photo courtesy of SUNY Westchester

New Dean for School of Math, Science and Engineering Projects Bright Futures for STEM Programs

LUIS GRANADOS



Dr. Kalpana Jain is the new Dean for the School of Mathematics, Science and Engineering. Photo by Luis Granados

SUNY Westchester Community College offers many opportunities for students to expand on their interests and gain more valuable knowledge. These opportunities range from clubs and organizations all the way to extracurricular programs. However, one field in particular has only a few opportunities: the Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) field. As a result, the new Dean of the School of Mathematics, Science and Engineering, Dr. Kalpana Jain, wants to increase the opportunities offered at the college.

Nevertheless, SUNY WCC is not completely empty-handed when it comes to STEM programs. This fall, the Bright Futures event series is back. Bright Futures is a program supported by local energy company Con Edison that consists of a series of events. A former student even managed to get a job with Con Edison through the program.

This semester there will be three events. The first one, "Safety in the Workplace," will be on Wednesday, October 4th. The second one, "Area Substation Overview," will be on Wednesday, November 8th. Finally, the third one, "Field Trip to Grassland Area Substation in Valhalla," will be on November 29th. All of these events will take place, from 11:00 am - 1:00 pm, in room 107 of the Technology Building. Lunch is served during these events. Students are encouraged to RSVP but walk-ins are also welcome. For more information visit the WCC's Bright Futures page at www.sunywcc.edu/brightfutures.

According to Dr. Jain, something she looks forward to in her new role is learning more about the faculty, including their strengths and aspirations. To achieve this, she has been meeting with them in order to get to know them. Dr. Jain also added that she wishes to work on new grant proposals and to upgrade labs.

Going back to STEM Programs, Dr. Jain stated that she would like to add new programs and possibly new concentrations of study for STEM students. Additionally, she is also interested in updating some of the current programs with newer technology. This increase in opportunities would allow STEM students to gain more knowledge outside the classroom.

Finally, another important topic mentioned during the interview were honors courses. Currently at WCC, only a few STEM courses offer an honors option. Due to the lack of structure, many students are not even aware of the possibility of doing an honors option. Nonetheless, Dr. Kalpana Jain stated that she would like to create an honors track.

Realistically, many of these changes and updates will take time to come to fruition. Yet, it is needless to say that such changes and updates would help new and returning students in the future.

New SGA E-Board Has Big Plans for WCC

Shared on behalf of the Student Government Association

Every year, the student body of SUNY WCC elects a new government to represent them. The president, vice president, treasurer, secretary, director of public

relations, and student trustee all work together to achieve the goal of pursuing the best interests of the student population.

President Lotus Taylor



Photo by Lotus Taylor

My name is Lotus Taylor, I'm a 2nd year at SUNY WCC and a social sciences honors major. My goal is to increase resources for students and quality of life here at the college. I believe SUNY WCC is an amazing school, and I want all students to be able to take advantage of what it currently has to offer.

Vice President Sinsha Varghese



Photo by Sinsha Varghese

My name is Sinsha Varghese and I am the new Vice-President of the Student Government Association. I am 19 years old and come from an Indian background. This is my second year at WCC and I am currently majoring in social sciences. My goal for this year is to foster a more inclusive and engaged student body while focusing on initiatives that enhance campus life and academic support. One of the main goals I have is to provide more help and assistance to students with disabilities and make our campus a welcoming and empowering space for everyone. I look forward to working with our dedicated team to create positive change and memorable experiences for all.

Treasurer Devin Lopez



Photo by Devin Lopez

I am an enthusiastic and forward-thinking student at SUNY Westchester Community College, and I also happen to be the student government treasurer. I am passionate about success in all fields, and I am ready to overcome any obstacle that comes between me and my team. My goal is to transform students into professionals using the numerous professional connections on campus and beyond.

Student Trustee Clara Carnot



Photo by Clara Carnot

I'm Clara (she/her/hers), a mathematics and statistics major passionate about mental health advocacy and neuroscience. As a student who exists at the intersection of queer, disabled, and a woman of color, my dedication lies in enhancing the accessibility and inclusivity of our campus. In my role as a student trustee, I'm enthusiastic about taking the lead in establishing a disability committee. This committee will discuss strategies to enhance the campus experience by advocating for architectural changes and implementing social resources.

Secretary Luis Granados



Photo by Luis Granados

My name is Luis Granados and I am a social science honors major entering my second year at WCC. As secretary, my goal for this academic year is to promote civic engagement around campus. Moreover, I will also attempt to create more opportunities for STEM students.

Director of Public Relations Angelica Valencia



Photo by Angelica Valencia

I am this year's Director of Public Relations for the Student Government Association. I am ecstatic to work with the SGA to further the connection between our school, our students, and our staff. I wish to actively connect with students to learn about their concerns within our school to better their experience at WCC.

WCC Students Show Support for Hollywood Strike

ANYA DUTOVA

The entertainment industry is full of background work that some say goes underappreciated. The industry needs to work on multiple levels, with various people and organizations to produce and present the product to the masses. Sometimes, the process of making the entertainment industry work can be complicated.

During the summer, Hollywood stopped its production for the first time in many years. It affected our school community, especially students who major in film. Students believe that these events will change the industry for the better. At the same time, some view artificial intelligence as a threat to the authenticity of the industry.

The strike happened due to failure in the negotiations between SAG-AFTRA (Screen Actors Guild – American Federation of Television and Radio Artists) and WGA (Writers Guild of America) with AMPTP (The Alliance of Motion Picture and Television Producers). It started in May 2023, when the WGA, who represents 11,500 screenwriters, went on strike, after an ongoing labor dispute with the AMPTP.

First, due to the active development of the streaming

economy, writers started protesting for better pay, improved working conditions and contract adjustments that should include statements about the usage of artificial intelligence. The writers officially went on strike on May 2nd. The WAG strike made several television shows shut down, such as Stranger Things, Saturday Night Live, and more.

“Much-anticipated new films were pushed off their 2023 release dates into the new year,” film major Madison Higgs said. “New seasons of TV shows were canceled, while plans for others were binned entirely.” Nevertheless, some productions could still work, as actors still were performing, because they were represented by another labor union - SAG-AFTRA.

Later, the actors joined writers on strike. Fran Drescher, the president of the SAG-AFTRA, gave a speech, where she said that the business model of the whole industry of film was rapidly changed by such things as streaming, AI, and digital media.

“[AI] is a threatening change to film as a career,” said another film student, Teodoro Valencia Estrada. “The future of filmmaking will be affected if companies replace everything that made it successful with AI alone.”

All this led to SAG-AFTRA formally voting to go on strike, joining the writers, who had, at that point, been on strike for more than 70 days. Their motives are close to those of writers: salary and working conditions.

After actors joined the strike, productions could no longer work. Actors and other members of SAG-AFTRA are fighting for better salaries and working conditions. They are also asking for guarantees that their jobs are not being interfered with by artificial intelligence, so the conditions that both labor unions have are similar.

“Once there is a settlement, things are just going to come back to where they were,” said film professor Craig Padawer about the outcomes of the strike.

Nevertheless, there are multiple possible outcomes to the current strike, as the previous strike ended with actors and writers getting an increase in salary, payments for films that were released to TV, and the creation of social funds.

“[I believe that] the strike will be long over by the time most students will be ready to join the business,” said film Professor Jenny Evans.



Businesses in New York City show support for the strike.

Photo by Anya Dutova

Italian Scholarships Available!

PROVIDED BY THE MODERN LANGUAGES DEPT. OF SUNY WCC



The Navicelli Channel in Pisa, Italy. Photo by Jessica Sabau

Sei uno studente di lingua italiana? Register for an Italian language class and fill out your financial aid documents to be eligible for Italian scholarships at SUNY WCC!

The Professor Carlo Sclafani & Mrs. Emilia Sclafani Scholarship honors the legacy of Prof. Carlo Sclafani who played a pivotal role in the establishment of the Italian Language Program at WCC. He was Chairman of the Modern Languages Dept., SUNY Distinguished Professor, and Director of the SUNY WCC Study Abroad Program in Italy. \$1,500 will be awarded every Fall and Spring Semester to one full-time outstanding student with a 3.0 GPA or better to register in an Italian language class for the fall OR spring Semester.

For the Italian Scholarship, \$800 scholarships will be awarded every Fall and Spring Semester to students with a 2.5 GPA or better who register in an Italian language class. Full or part-time students can apply.

Make sure that you fill out ONE of the financial aid documents by August 31st for the Fall Semester and December 31st for the Spring semester in order to qualify for the scholarships.

President Joe Biden Visits SUNY WCC

KEIRA FERRETTI

on behalf of Public Relations of SUNY Westchester Community College

On Wednesday, May 10, President Joe Biden became the first sitting U.S. President to visit SUNY Westchester Community College when he spoke at the Theater in the Hankin Academic Arts Building about the importance of raising the nation's debt limit. During his remarks, the President referred to community colleges as “America's best secret” and encouraged Congress to continue supporting America's colleges and students.

Keira Ferretti, Journalism A.S., Class of '24, Editor In Chief of The Viking News, wrote:

“It's not every day you get to see a sitting president give a speech, and it's even more rare to see it happen in your school's art building! Hearing President Biden give a speech for the community at our own community college was certainly something I never expected to happen, nor did I expect to be invited.

I was part of a small group of SUNY WCC students in attendance, with the majority of the seats filled mostly by union workers and President Biden's supporters. The issue of the debt ceiling, and how that will affect teachers and

and notebooks) operated in real-time during something so important.

My experience of seeing so many important government officials, on all levels from local to federal, is certainly something that not many

“It's not every day you get to see a sitting president give a speech, and it's even more rare to see it happen in your school's art building!”

*Keira Ferretti, Journalism A.S., Class of '24,
Editor In Chief of The Viking News*

students of public schools was the major talking point of the afternoon, with New York's own Gov. Kathy Hochul, Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand, and Rep. Jamaal Bowman making that point known. However, as a journalism student here at SUNY WCC, I was most excited to see how the press (who were sitting in the front few rows with their cameras, laptops,

people get to see happen, let alone a first-year college student like myself. Hearing any president speak is an incredible honor, and I am very grateful and incredibly lucky that I had the opportunity.”

Join a Club or Organization This Semester!

Article provided by Student Involvement

Student Government Association (SGA)



OFFICE LOCATION Student Center Room 283

WEBSITE www.sunywcc.edu/SGA

ADVISORS Tiago Machado
tiago.machado@sunywcc.edu

Jessica Gramajo
jessica.gramajo@sunywcc.edu

MEETINGS Every other Thursday 4-6 pm
STC Room 283

Westchester Events Board (WEB)



OFFICE LOCATION Classroom Building Room 284

WEBSITE www.sunywcc.edu/web

ADVISORS Tiago Machado
tiago.machado@sunywcc.edu

Jessica Gramajo
jessica.gramajo@sunywcc.edu

Marco Lazaro
marco.lazaro@sunywcc.edu

MEETINGS Thursdays 2-3 pm
Gateway Room 110

The Viking News (VN)



OFFICE LOCATION Student Center Room 281

WEBSITE www.vikingnews.org

ADVISORS Dana Hirsch
dana.hirsch@sunywcc.edu

Joseph Sgammato
joseph.sgammato@sunywcc.edu

MEETINGS Mondays at 4 pm
STC Room 111

POWER 88.1 FM The New Sound



OFFICE LOCATION Student Center Room 020

WEBSITE www.sunywcc.edu/power-88-1

ADVISORS Juan-Carlos Piñeiro
juan-carlos.pineiro@sunywcc.edu

Radames Ocasio
radames.ocasio@sunywcc.edu

Marco Lazaro
marco.lazaro@sunywcc.edu

MEETINGS Email advisors for meeting
times and location.

Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society (PTK)



PHI THETA KAPPA HONOR SOCIETY

OFFICE LOCATION Classroom Building Room 218

WEBSITE www.sunywcc.edu/ptk

ADVISORS Robin Graff
robin.graff@sunywcc.edu

Tiago Machado
tiago.machado@sunywcc.edu

Adam Frank
adam.frank@sunywcc.edu

MEETINGS Every other Wednesday 12-1 pm
STC Room 155

This semester, Student Involvement encourages all SUNY WCC students to participate in various clubs and organizations held on campus. The easiest way to join a student group is to attend one of their meetings. Many, but not all, groups will meet during the Common Hour held Wednesdays from 11:00 A.M. – 1:00 P.M. No classes are held during Common Hour as the college reserves this time for student events and club meetings. Each student group is assigned a meeting room during Common Hour to make it easy to gather. However, several clubs meet outside of this time. One of the best ways to find out when a club is meeting is to contact the Advisor (the faculty, staff, or administrator who serves as a resource to student groups). Below is a list of the Tier 1 organizations that SUNY WCC has to offer. Each of them has meetings that are open to all students and attendance is encouraged.

SUNY WCC also has over 50 active student clubs! Some of the most prominent are the Gaming Guild, Women in STEM, the Christian Club, GLOW, Philosophia Honors Society, and many more that cater to the cultural, curricular, and other miscellaneous interests of the student population. All students are encouraged to get involved and participate in the many fun and exciting clubs and organizations that SUNY WCC has to offer.

WEB Kicks Off Semester with Fall Fest STEVEN GARCIA



Chester poses with new students. Photo By Lynette Morales

On the second day of classes, a scorching and humid day, WEB (Westchester Events Board) hosted the very first festive event of the semester on the Student Center lawn. Although it is uncommon to host an event so early in the semester, it was a blast.

“The Fall Fest has been in the making since May, the Tier 1 Retreat,” said Lynette Morales, Film Chair of WEB.

WEB’s primary goals for this semester, she said, is to show the new students what WEB is all about and to get new recruits.

Fall Fest was all about fun. There was a colorful bouncy castle, a cotton candy machine, snow cones with a variety of flavors, and a food truck that served hotdogs and french fries. Also, many were attracted to arts and crafts, tie-dye, temporary tattoos, games, and a live DJ. They also had a magician who did card tricks that amazed the crowd. Also, the WCC’s school mascot, Chester the Viking, stopped by. Chester soon became the main attraction of the Fall Fest event and when many students at Fall Fest saw Chester show up, they all wanted to take pictures of themselves with him.

There were many students passing by since it was only the second day of classes, and a good number stopped for the free food, cotton candy, and snow cones. Unfortunately, the event had to end early due to the immense heat, but many people had arrived before it was too hot.

What was interesting was that this semester may be the first time we have had a massive amount of new students since COVID. The pandemic made us lose our ability to socialize and interact with each other.

Most students judged the Fall Fest event to be a great start to the semester.

“We had a lot of new students learn what WEB is and what we do,” Morales said.

In the end, the Fall Fest was so successful that many students are now looking forward to future WEB events. May they all be as amazing as the one that launched the Fall 2023 semester!



WEB President Fiona Brini makes snow cones. Photo By Lynette Morales

Modern vs. Medieval: The Architecture of WCC and Cambridge University CAROLINA MENDOZA

The buildings of SUNY WCC and those of Cambridge University in the U.K. offer a study in contrast.

Everyone on campus has entered or walked past the giant glass building known as the Gateway Center. The Gateway Center is a modern-designed building that itself offers a sharp contrast with Hartford Hall, a Tudor-style building. The Gateway Center is the first LEED (Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design) Gold-certified building-given by the Green Building Certification Institute-owned by Westchester County.

Ennead Architects planned with ecology and sustainability in the design, from the building’s overall seating and size strategies to the integration of energy-efficient systems, and selection of materials. The walls

are made with long panels of glass allowing natural lighting in, the bathrooms have water-saving systems in place, and small decals are placed on the windows for birds.

One problem the building poses is that it is a potential hazard to flying birds. Between 100 million and 1 billion birds are estimated to fall prey to window collisions in the United States alone each year, as described by the American Bird Conservancy.

One of the sustainable features of the building is a heat island effect, which, while providing a natural habitat for flora and fauna as described by the architects, is not fully protecting the birds. As birds cannot see glass, it is imperative to place something on the glass so that the birds can fly around the structure rather than into it.

One solution is decals placed on the glass, but they are hard to see even to the human eye, so how can birds see it from far distances? There are other options besides light-colored decals such as darker decals, a Zen screen, tempera paint, dot patterns and tape, and one-way transparent film. Many of these options could better protect our feathered friends.

A very different style of architecture can be seen in England’s Cambridge University. Founded in 1441, King’s College can be found in Central Cambridge. 21K School, a school news source, describes King’s College as one of the most prestigious colleges of Cambridge University with notable alumni such as Rupert Brooke, a poet, Alan Turing, whose ideas led to modern computing, and Zadie Smith, a novelist. At the time of its founding, the school’s formal name was “King’s College of Our Lady and Saint Nicholas in Cambridge”. SUNY Westchester honors students were able to visit such a school as part of the Summer Study Abroad Honors Programme at Cambridge University. The college is described by historians as one of the world’s finest examples of late Perpendicular Gothic architecture with Tudor symbolism. King Henry VI’s original plan for the building was to form one side of an enclosed court, keeping the college members in and the townspeople out.

The famous King’s College chapel was an ambitious project. Plans were first drawn

up in the 1440s according to instructions from Henry VI, whose statue stands in the college’s front court. Due to political turmoil draining the royal funds, the construction progressed

as well as for concerts and events. The building is 289 feet long, with an interior height of 80 feet, and an exterior height of 94 feet. The overall building of King’s College took over a hundred years with intermittent



A statue of Henry VI on the Scotts Building of King’s College. Photo by Carolina Mendoza

sporadically. Looking at the outside of the chapel, on the outward flanks one can see the stone change from white magnesian limestone, quarried in Yorkshire, to limestone from Northamptonshire. Its fan vaulting is the largest in Europe, and took three years to build, being completed in 1515. Entering the building, one could see the upward reach of its fluted columns and the repeated armorials that bear the symbols of the most powerful families in the land. The Chapel is used as a place of

pauses. Today the college contains the chapel, the Gibbs Building, Wilkins’ Building (also known as “the Screen”), The Old Schools, and Provost Lodge. King’s College is not only an academic stronghold but also an architectural marvel that stands as a testament to human ambition, endurance, and creative expression across generations.

While the architectural styles may differ, both schools share similar educational goals for their students.



The front entrance of the Gateway Center boasts large windows. Photo by Jessica Sabau

Orientation 2023: Start of a New Adventure for WCC Freshmen

STEVEN GARCIA AND SORELLE MARSH

For many students, stepping onto a college campus is their “leap of faith” toward self-discovery and independence. This transition can be exciting and stressful juggling a new world of social connections, academics, and opportunities. Orientation Day here at SUNY Westchester Community College is an important day when incoming students learn what WCC is all about. Orientation was held in late August by the Department of Student Involvement and the volunteer Orientation Leaders (OLs). Students had to register to attend these events since there is only a limited amount of space for in-person and virtual as well.

Orientation Day is a day for the incoming students to learn and understand what services are available at WCC, such as the Bookstore, Student Support Services, Career Services, Mental Health and Counseling Services, and more. Students were also asked before the start of the orientation to download the WCCGetInvolved! app in order to access all the information given during orientation and a map of the campus. Orientation Day is required because it’s important for incoming students to have all the information needed to enjoy a successful first year.

During the in-person Orientation

Day, students were given a quick tour around the campus and participated in activities created by the Orientation student leaders. New students were also introduced to the Tier 1 Organizations: the Student Government Association (SGA), Westchester Events Board (WEB), Power 88.1 The New Sound, The Viking News (VN), and Phi Theta Kappa (PTK). It was very important for the new students to see the organizations because it shows that in college we are no longer high school students and that we have more freedom but we have to develop professional skills.

One student, Angelica Martinez, said that she “loved” the first impression of the campus. Martinez, who had OL Ryan as her student guide, said she “enjoyed every aspect of the orientation.” Another student, Gage Miranda, said his Orientation Leader was “very much a good pick, as he cared and was knowledgeable.”

During the Family Orientation, there were two events, one in English and the other in Spanish for parents and family members of students who wanted more information about WCC. This event was hosted in the afternoon to accommodate the typical work schedules of those attending.

Finally, there was the international and transfer



Jessica Gramajo from Student Involvement welcomes families to the Spanish portion of Family Orientation.

Photo by Steven Garcia

student orientation, which was mandatory for all such students. They received important information about their status here, the scholarships for which they can apply, and all other student support services that are available for their use.

Each year, on the first two days of classes, the Department of Student Involvement (DSI) has made it a tradition to place welcome tables throughout the campus grounds to offer

guidance and support to new and returning students. This year these tables were again available, offering essential information about campus resources, services, upcoming events, and more. Volunteers at these tables could be seen helping students to orient themselves in their new academic environment, whether by helping a student figure out where a class is located or addressing any of

their queries or concerns.

Orientation is designed to help both new students and returning ones get accustomed to campus life. Students should be aware that there are many places they can get help right in the Student Center Building: academic advisors (2nd FL.), the office of Student Involvement (1st FL.), or any of the Tier 1 leaders (2nd FL.).



International students engage in activities led by the OLs.

Photo by Steven Garcia



Tier 1 Organizations give presentations showcasing their activities.

Photo by Steven Garcia

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For all inquiries, letters to the editor, and
submissions, contact

EDITORINCHIEFVN@SUNYWCC.EDU

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AUTUMN WORD SEARCH

SORELLE MARSH



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Word Plexers

SORELLE MARSH

Some common words and phrases are encoded in these plexers.
Can you tell what they are?



Sudoku

KEIRA FERRETTI

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Answers on VikingNews.org

A Message from the Editor

KEIRA FERRETTI

Hello Vikings, and welcome back to another year at WCC! I am happy to be your new Editor-In-Chief here at *The Viking News*. This year, I plan to continue the mission of our previous EIC, Marygrace Orfanella, and give the WCC community access to a source for engaging and accurate content that speaks to you as both a student and community member.

When I first joined the newspaper back in the Fall 2022 semester as a staff writer, I had big dreams for what I wanted to accomplish both personally and for the paper as a whole. I had started here as a computer science major, but quickly realized, through working here at the paper, that writing and journalism is what I am truly passionate about. Seeing the growth and improvement of the paper over the past year has made me proud to be a part of it. One thing I wish to see grow in the coming school year is our reader engagement. Last year, we saw our readership grow immensely through the expansion of our puzzle page and the introduction of Spanish-language articles, but what we were (and still are) missing is *your voice*. We'd like to hear from you directly, so we encourage you to email us a "letter to the editor" at EditorInChiefVN@sunywcc.edu and share anything you'd like to say! Do you have something to comment on that is happening on campus? Or maybe a response to an article? Or even something small, like a shout-out for the good work of a professor or fellow student. These letters may even be published in an issue of *The Viking News*! With a new school year, there are bound to be some changes. Within our own ranks, I am pleased to have Sorelle Marsh as our new Opinions editor, Marygrace Orfanella as our new social media manager, and Dani Colon continuing her position as Sports editor. Additionally, we are always on the hunt for new recruits. If you are interested in becoming a reporter, writer, photographer, cartoonist (or anything else) for us, I encourage you to join us! We meet every Monday at 4 pm in STC 111.

Vikings, I hope the coming semester treats you well and I, along with the rest of the Viking News staff, look forward to hearing from you soon! Good luck and thank you for reading!

Keira Ferretti
Editor-In-Chief, *The Viking News*

The Scars That Made You STEVEN GARCIA



A scar can be a unique part of who we are.

Photo by Steven Garcia

What are scars? Scars are physical marks left on the skin or other tissues after a wound or injury has healed. They are a natural part of the body's healing process. While some people may perceive scars as a reminder of painful or traumatic events, others may view them as symbols of resilience and strength, showcasing the body's

ability to recover and adapt. In a metaphorical sense, scars can also represent emotional or psychological wounds that have healed over time. These scars can serve as a reminder of past challenges, experiences, or traumas, and can be seen as a testament to one's ability to overcome adversity and grow as a person.

Scars come in all shapes and sizes, like the wounds that cause them. We shouldn't fear how they make us feel. Lynette Morales, a WCC student, explained that she developed a scar but it doesn't impact her daily life. She calls it her "toddler with ADHD battle scar."

"Sometimes this scar makes me upset because I don't want

to tell people, that I got it due to having ADHD, but I'm overcoming it," Morales said.

Scars are a common and natural part of the healing process, and their appearances can have different levels of impact from person to person. The ways individuals perceive and manage their scars can be deeply personal. But we should be strong and not let our scars show weakness, but the strength to continue on with our lives.

Cicatrix also known as keloids are raised, thickened areas of scar tissue that extend beyond the original wound area. In contrast, scars are raised and thickened, but do not extend beyond the boundary of the original wound. Another type of scar, known as stretch marks, or striae, occurs when the skin is stretched rapidly, often due to growth spurts, pregnancy, or rapid weight gain. They appear as streaks or lines and are commonly found on the abdomen, thighs, buttocks, and breasts. They are unlike scars and wounds that don't show up randomly but are the result of accidents, burns, surgery, acne, and illness.

"The scar I'm most proud of, or rather the most impressive, is the cut on my knee. It was a horror sight, although, I may have dramatized it a bit," said WCC student Ange Robel Ouedo. "Back in primary school, some friends and I were playing football before the ball went over the fence. I jumped over to retrieve it but slipped and fell knee-first on a rock. I barely felt anything, so I threw the ball over the fence to continue playing. That's when I started to feel discomfort. I looked down and my leg was completely covered in blood, my sock 'magically' turned red, and I felt dizzy. I was rushed to the infirmary, but the cut was so deep that they transferred me to a hospital to get stitches and a blood transfusion. Now that I think about it, maybe it was worse than I thought."

Over time scars and wounds tend to fade away. However, the scars that remain often cause us fear of facing judgment that may look hideous on us. It's important to understand that we each have had our own battles and wounds. They serve as a reminder that we've been through some painful times, yet we're still here -alive and breathing.

FILM REVIEW

Barbie is Out of the Box ANYA DUTOVA

Barbie was released on July 22 in the USA and has earned 1.3 billion dollars at the box office. It has also created massive audience resonance and excitement. It was directed by Greta Gerwig and stars Margot Robbie and Ryan Gosling as Barbie and Ken.

The movie gives a thrilling twist to the narrative of the classic doll, which is modern and empowering through Gerwig's lens. Directed with an innovative approach to Barbie's character and a deep understanding of today's societal values, the film presents Barbie in a new light while honoring her timeless charm. I found this movie interesting in the way that it keeps all the classic Barbie elements and visuals in the story, but also highlights and celebrates women and men with different stories, interests, and personalities; it also keeps classical or "stereotypical" Barbie around other Barbies, who are very different from her, but all live in peace.

In the opening scene of the film, Greta Gerwig references the famous opening of Stanley Kubrick's *2001: A Space Odyssey*. We are getting introduced to Barbie, who calls herself "stereotypical," and Ken.

The film is mostly set in Barbieland, the world where Barbies rule. I liked the idea of portraying the flipped system of the world, where women-Barbies are in the center. Every Barbie is different and they don't look identical, which once again shows the director's modern view on the topic of representation. Interestingly, the movie gives a reference to one phenomenon of the dolls' history by putting Alan, a one of a kind doll who doesn't belong to the Barbie/Ken communities. Alan was created in the 1960s by the Mattel company, known for producing Barbies and Kens; however it was not a successful product of the company, due to its unpopularity. I like that this character is included in the film because he doesn't belong to either group, and for me, Alan truly represents people who feel somewhat different from the group they are in. As a result he stands on the Barbies' side during the rest of the film.

One of the genres that the movie can be identified with is comedy. Ken specifically is being looked at by the audience as a funny character. On the one hand, he is funny due to how non-stereotypical his personality is, and on the other hand, when he sees the

real world, he becomes more "typical," but again in his own, comedic way.

Barbie goes on a journey of rethinking who she is as a person and what life she wants to live. We meet her being the stereotypical Barbie, but at the end of the movie she wants to be a real person, because "ideas live forever," as the woman who created the first Barbie doll says at the end of the movie.

It was interesting to me to see the inner journey of Barbie, her development, and her realizations, which align with things that everyone learns in their life. Her journey starts when she is in Barbieland, yet still has thoughts that people sometimes have: such as contemplating death. With Barbie's story and the story of her relationships with other Barbies and Kens, we can see the feminist approach of the director to look at the concept of patriarchy, modern women's experiences, relationships between women, and more.

Overall, the movie sends a feminist message, which is partly working. It tells us that we all seek our identity as people, and the story is empowering for women. It seems like showing a world ruled by women and



The Barbie movie poster shows "stereotypical" Barbie.

Photo by Ray Katz

making fun of patriarchy highlights the conflict between the rules and expectations that women have to follow in a man-dominated society.

On the other hand, modern feminism is getting closer to LGBTQ+ topics, and gender

identity, which this movie did not highlight. Perhaps, this may be the reason why some viewers do not find the feminist aspect of the movie the most reflective of today's feminist narratives.

MUSIC REVIEW

Local Indie Band Releases Debut Album *Marigolds* RAY KATZ



Left to Right: Joel, Ed, AJ, Mike Image courtesy of Spring State

Inspired by bands like *My Chemical Romance*, *Taking Back Sunday*, *The Hotelier*, and *Fall Out Boy*, *Spring State's* debut EP, *Marigolds*, is the indie pop-punk summer vibes I've been looking for. AJ (singer and guitarist), Mike (bassist), Joel (drums), and Ed (guitar) released the three-song EP in April of this year, 2023.

Easy Mode, the first song on the EP, deals with feelings of depression and coming of age during the pandemic. The song focuses on overcoming feelings of hopelessness, something that I and many others relate to heavily. With strong guitar and catchy lyrics, this song is my song of the summer. 10/10 makes me want to jump on the bed like a kid, 10/10 relatable, makes me think I should

probably call my therapist.

The Loop is a lighter song that sounds like falling in love. AJ wrote this song about his favorite place in his Floridian hometown, which he described as "a spot to take your date late at night to go stargazing." A 10/10 rating makes me want to dissociate into the ocean, 9/10 makes me want to jump in a circle. *The Loop* has been stuck in my head for days.

Lastly, fan-favorite **Hell Hole by the Sea** is the antithesis of *The Loop*. "If *The Loop* was a love letter to my hometown, this is a diss track," AJ wrote to me. He wrote it in his senior year of high school at 17 years old, while wanting to get out and find something. 11/10 a little too relatable, and 10/10 want to mosh.

Marigolds is the one album I currently can't recommend enough. The topics and emotions dealt with within the EP are so personal and yet so universal. It made me sure in the fact that I wasn't alone in my feelings during the pandemic. It gave me the sense of nostalgia and wanting to do something that I felt when I was 17 waiting to move out, all while being the perfect head banging music. It's a hard combination of vibes to get, and Spring State nailed it. Overall I rate the EP 5/5 stars.

You can find *Spring State* on Instagram @springstateofficial, or you can catch them on tour in Pennsylvania, Maine, and Massachusetts in September. *Marigolds* is available to stream on Spotify and YouTube.

5 Must-See Movies

MARYGRACE ORFANELLA

1. **The Breakfast Club** (1985)
2. **Sydney White** (2007)
3. **To Sir, with Love** (1967)
4. **Easy A** (2010)
5. **Dead Poets Society** (1989)

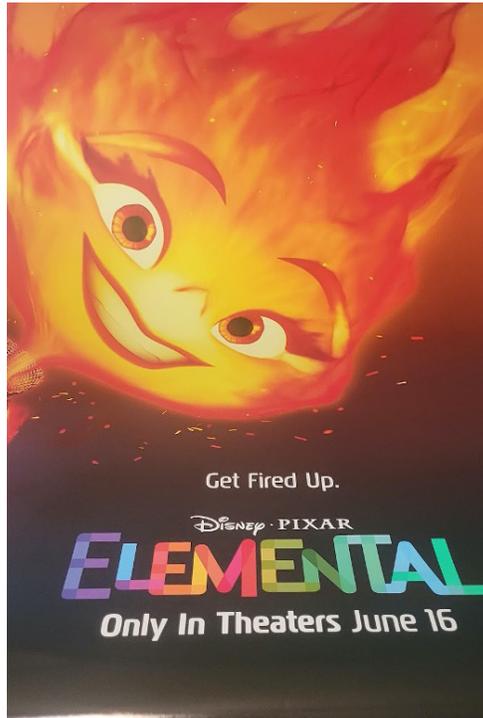
FILM REVIEW

Avatar Personified: *Elemental* LUCAS WERNER

(WARNING: CONTAINS SPOILERS)

Following in the wake of the success of *The Good Dinosaur* in 2015, Disney and Pixar's latest movie *Elemental* was released in theaters on June 16. This cinematic adventure shows one character's journey of truly figuring out what they want to do with their life, while navigating through ethnic discrimination along the way. An accidental encounter between fire elemental Ember Lumen and water elemental Wade Ripple sets in motion a series of events of how opposites attract.

Throughout the film, there are demonstrations of how foreigners are treated initially, but become accepted by other cultures as the tale unfolds. An example of this is when Bernie Lumen (Ember's father) doesn't take as a compliment Wade's suggestion of watering down hot coals (a Firetown delicacy) to make them more enjoyable for other elementals. At first the suggestion poses a threat to Fireland's traditions, but minds change before the



We rate *Elemental* 4.8 out of 5. Photo by Lucas Werner

end of the film. Whether it's because of skin color or how a certain meal is prepared, there are always those being persecuted by supremacists, thinking that their way of doing things is better than others. *Elemental* suggests that we need to respect new ways of thinking, rather than throwing them away like trash and burning them in a rotting dumpster fire. That's a valuable lesson for all ages.

Normally when different elements like acid and metal come together, there's a dangerous result. But there are certain scenarios where different elements can create something new even if it's not immediate. When Ember feels that she doesn't want to let her family down and Wade says that Ember should do something for herself, initially, she doesn't care much about that. However, she thinks about an alternative career instead of taking over her family's store more and more over the course of this tale. To sum it up, water and fire, over some time, create steam.

This movie had some things both good and bad that really

resonated with me, so let's look at what was good first. Showing examples of how fire elementals are being persecuted for possibly being a danger to other elements (Earth, Air, and Water) is cleverly similar to real life problems that minorities face. Bernie and Cinder Lumen (Ember's parents) are initially unable to find housing because they are flammable, which mirrors racial problems in real life. The growing feelings of love between Ember and Wade as the film progresses is well handled.

On the negative side, there is an unresolved plot issue involving a burst dam.

Discrimination of other races and cultures is a real thing, but even though it's hard to be accepted into a community at first, it doesn't necessarily mean that accepting other cultures is a hopeless pipe-dream. Because of how *Elemental* presents this fact, I'm giving this movie a 4.8 out of 5, and I can't wait to see what the next Pixar movie will be. If you want to see this masterclass of a film, it's now streaming on Disney+.

FILM REVIEW

Spider-Con Extreme! *Spider-Man: Across the Spider-Verse* LUCAS WERNER

(WARNING: CONTAINS SPOILERS)

Nearly five years after the premiere of *Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse*, the highly anticipated sequel *Spider-Man: Across the Spider-Verse* was released in theaters in early June 2023. Not to put too fine a point on it, this movie is insanely awesome from beginning to end!

The story resumes a year and four months after the events of *Into the Spider-Verse*. Miles Morales is having trouble balancing his superhero duties with his personal responsibilities. Meanwhile, a multiverse-level threat is on the rise. With few friends to turn to and the threat looming ever closer, can our web-slinging hero save the day?

In terms of animation, producers Phil Lord and Christopher Miller have utilized tools that were used to create the acclaimed Netflix movie *The Mitchells vs. the Machines*. Each environment in *Across the Spider-Verse* has the appearance of being drawn by a different artist, creating six

different nostalgic and form-fitting animation styles. These make the first *Spider-Verse* film pale in comparison, especially considering that the Spot's portals were described as resembling "sentient ink splats on a comic artist's drawing."

The introduction of new characters to the *Spider-verse*, such as Miguel O'Hara (aka Spiderman 2099) and Hobie Brown (aka Spider-Punk) add depth to the story. A beautifully animated fight/chase scene across Earth-2099, where the Spider Society is trying to catch Miles, effectively showcases Miles' struggle after being forced into something he didn't want to do. It resonates with the universal theme that many people are in the same boat at one point or another in their lives.

The film has some minor flaws, such as Miguel's desire for Miles to lose both his dad and his uncle, who had already died in the first movie. I understand that the responsibility of being Spiderman is a sacrifice, but losing two mentors at a young age is implausible. O'Hara

also places the blame for the anomalies' creation on Miles. However, this rage is clearly misplaced, as it was the scientist who turned into the Spot that brought the Earth-42 radioactive spider to Earth-1610, thus creating the anomalies and setting in motion the events of *Into the Spider-Verse*.

Honestly, O'Hara is way too thick-headed to understand. Personally, it feels like the only way to fix Spot's mess is to go back in time to before he brought the radioactive spider to the wrong universe, and show him and the other Alchemax workers conducting the particle collider tests that these will have disastrous results in the future. Convincing them to shut the project down could prevent the anomalies from ever happening in the first place.

I'd rate this movie a 4.2 out of 5, and I can't wait to see the next installment, *Beyond The Spider-Verse*, when it comes out. Meanwhile, if you want to check out this spectacle, it's now streaming on Disney+.



We rate *Spider-Man: Across the Spider-Verse* 4.2 out of 5. Photo by Lucas Werner

Volleyball Season Gets Head-Start with New Head Coach DANI COLON

As volleyball season begins, the Lady Vikings announced that they have a new head coach, Philip Toscano. Last season, the Team made it to the Region 15 quarter-final for the championship. Unfortunately, their season ended that day. But this season, the Lady Vikings are coming back with high hopes and strong determination.

Coach Toscano surely played a huge role in setting the Lady Vikings up to succeed. Toscano is a former assistant coach here at SUNY WCC and an alum. Toscano has also played volleyball almost all throughout his life. In 2010, Toscano came back to SUNY WCC to help the volleyball coaching staff to win back the Region 15 title. However, during the 2016 season, Toscano moved on to be the assistant coach in the Concordia College Division 2 volleyball program and returned to WCC a few years later.

"I am looking forward to working with this group of young women and pushing them to their best potential both on and off the court," Toscano said.

It also seems like Toscano has already made his impact on the Lady Vikings, who already seem



Westchester Women's Volleyball Player Ireana Olivo readying herself to play.

Photo by Dani Colon

to already have a strong bond with every player encouraging one another while practicing and helping with drills as they show their sportsmanship.

"I used to coach here years back as an assistant, it's a different

mentality," said Toscano. "It's a Viking mentality. We try to keep the chemistry going with the girls. They have their team bonding [and] we try drills that involve connecting with each other, trusting each other.

That's the most important thing in volleyball."

Tuscano also told of the importance of analyzing each game thoroughly.

"We base our strategies on how we see warm-ups, if we have any video footage that we use, and we just have to make adjustments on the fly," Toscano said. "Everyday, we put the girls on defense drills. Individually, we have skill day. A lot of this skill development occurs in the preseason and we try to encourage the girls to take extra time if [they] want to work with the coaches on skills."

Tuscano also knows his coaching style differs from the other coaches in the Hudson Region.

"I fluctuate, so it's different between every game, depending on what is needed," said Toscano. "I rely on my coaches as well. I have a good balance for coaches, so overall we are allowing the team to play their game and making adjustments as we go."

"I used to coach here years back as an assistant, it's a different mentality. It's a Viking mentality."

Phil Toscano, Women's Volleyball Head Coach

WCC Men's Soccer Take the First Goal and First Win of the Season DANI COLON

Soccer season started strong on September 6th with the Vikings facing Monroe Express College, a common rival school. The Vikings were eager to start

their season strong and took the lead as sophomore Brian Cifuentes and Andrick Palma set the first goal for the Viking's season only 23 minutes into the game.

The Vikings fought hard and with great communication, not allowing Monroe Express to score any goals. 22 minutes into the game, Monroe attempted a shot by Bro Khwezi but was blocked by SUNY Westchester's goalie

assisted with a goal, making the score 2-1. Monroe's Bro Lorenz Utz also attempted another shot but did not make the goal.



SUNY WCC Men's Soccer player Andrew Nunez gets into position.

Photo by Dani Colon

Nicholas Nunez.

For the first half, the Vikings dominated Monroe Express, shutting out 9-4 right before halftime. It wasn't until 29 minutes into the first half that a shot by Brian Morales was blocked. Within the 39th minute, another shot was taken by Monroe's Khwesi, but was saved by Westchester's goalie Nunez.

In the 53rd minute, the Vikings attempted a shot but were blocked. That block wouldn't stop SUNY Westchester from coming back 55 minutes into the game, when Alejandro Mina scored a goal with an assist by Juan Espinosa making the score 2-0. Following this, SUNY Westchester attempted a corner kick, but did not score.

In the 68th minute of the game, Monroe's James Gallagher

As the Vikings pushed forward, Espinosa made a goal was made in the 85th minute with a penalty kick. Towards the end of the game, in the 89th minute, Monroe succeeded in getting one more goal in by Gallagher with an assist by Marvyn Baltazar, making the score 3-2.

The Vikings took their first win as the 90th minute approached, as well as scoring the first goal of the season. With this win, the Vikings were proud to show off their excitement. Not only did the team win through their sportsmanship, but they definitely had their coaches to thank.

Alfio Carrabotta, the head soccer coach, worked hard with the team to ensure they would play their hearts out. The team doesn't let all the excitement get to them, however, as they practice vigorously in the muggy September heat for hours on end.

Last season, the Vikings were eliminated in the postseason by Nassau Community College, so this win definitely inspires the team to come back better than ever this season. With this strong first win, high spirits from the team, and strong sportsmanship and hardworking coaches, SUNY Westchester is sure to have a playoff spot in the postseason.

The Vikings had their next home game on September 14th, facing another one of their rivals Dutchess Community College.

The Vikings' Region 15 Tournament in Baseball Comes to a Tough Loss

DANI COLON

The Vikings moved on to the Regional 15 Tournament in baseball on May 15. They worked hard all season with an overall standing of 41-10. The Vikings showed much excitement making it to the regional 15 tournament and came together as a team showing strong determination and encouraging each other to win against common rival Sullivan Community College (their standing being 23-18).

In the bottom of the first inning, SUNY Westchester scored three runs. These runs surely fired them up and encouraged the team to push through even harder. Both teams fought hard.

In the third inning, SUNY Westchester's third baseman Weston Baronian scored a single-run home run. This excitement made the Vikings dugout go wild. Unfortunately for the Vikings, that would be the only run they score as Sullivans pitching did not give up any runs.

SUNY Westchester's batting averages were amazing between 290s-500s and it seemed that they would score many runs. However, it wasn't the case while facing Sullivan.

Unfortunately the game was an easy win for Sullivan as they scored 2 runs in the top of the 5th inning and 4 runs in the top of the 7th. The total score was 8-4 Sullivan. As the Vikings took their first loss, they knew that they had to fight hard in the next game.

As the Vikings moved on to their next competitors Rockland Community College (23-30), it seemed like an easy win for the Vikings at first, but Rockland did not allow any runs as they scored 3 runs in the first inning and 2 runs in the 4th inning.

Rockland's infield defense dominated SUNY Westchester as not many of the Viking players got hits and the chances of them getting on base was low. The Vikings did not score any runs until the bottom of the 7th, by which time the team just seemed to be fatigued.

With Rockland dominating, the final score was 8-1. The Vikings showed strong emotions to their tough loss, but this means they will show stronger determination for next season.

"It was just a bad day at the wrong time," said assistant coach Bobby Rodriguez about this loss.

Despite these tough losses, the Vikings had a great season, much to the credit of their coaches Billy Mclure and Rodriguez, who took their time to analyze play by plays and help each player with their skill development.

With fall baseball starting up now, the Vikings have an opportunity to use these games to improve their flaws and play by plays. With hard work, the team will surely win the NJCAA world series.



WCC Baseball's John Peteani winds up a pitch.

Photo by Dani Colon

The Viking News

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