The Outlook

Monmouth University's Student-Run Newspaper **EST. 1933**

November 4, 2026 | Monmouth University | West Long Branch | New Jersey | VOL. 99 No. 7

Budget cuts raise concerns about campus jobs, staffing, and the student experience

AVA McGINTY
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF/ NEWS EDITOR

SAMANTHA TATE
MANAGING EDITOR/ ASSISTANT POLITICS EDITOR

Over the past several months, The Outlook has received reports from students and employees about changes happening across Monmouth University, including reduced student employment hours, staffing departures, and concerns about university spending. The reports prompted The Outlook to examine the university's financial situation, how budget decisions are affecting the campus community, and what changes students can expect moving forward.

In a response to The Outlook, University President Patrick Leahy described Monmouth's overall financial position as strong, citing its largest endowment to date and low levels of outstanding debt. Still, he acknowledged that rising expenses and changes in college enrollment are putting pressure on the university's finances.

"American higher education is undergoing major transformation right now, in large part due to demographic changes resulting in a decline in high school graduates, as well as declining interest in attending college," University President Patrick Leahy told The Outlook.

Leahy also identified rising labor and benefit costs and increased competition for students, particularly in the Northeast, Monmouth's primary recruiting market.

The university ended its most recent fiscal year with an operating deficit. In an email to employees following a July open meeting, Leahy outlined the administration's financial priorities.

"To maintain our relative financial strength, we must take action to eliminate our operating deficit and return to surpluses, which can then be reinvested in the University's programs, operations, and physical plant," Leahy wrote.

Alongside that call for action, Joseph Pingitore, associate vice president for finance and budgets, offered this assessment of the university's finances:

"Monmouth is in a strong overall financial position as it has an endowment of nearly $200M and is one of just a handful of higher education institutions in the country with near-zero debt," Pingitore said. "From an operating budget perspective, there are challenges in balancing available revenues with growing expenses."

"This situation is not unique to Monmouth as many higher education institutions are facing similar challenges," he added.

Those broader financial explanations leave questions about how the university determines where to make cuts and how it assesses their effects on students. Leahy told The Outlook that the university is working to manage expenses while keeping a Monmouth education affordable. He said he does not anticipate significant changes to course availability or student services.

Student employment

Monmouth's overall student wage budget decreased from $1,064,000 last academic year to $945,500 this year, according to Pingitore—a reduction of $118,500, or approximately 11%.

In an email to university colleagues, Pingitore announced that student wage budgets for the fiscal year had been loaded and included a reduction approved by the Board of Trustees. Departments were instructed to prioritize Federal Work-Study (FWS) students when appropriate, distribute student work hours carefully and, monitor spending throughout the year.

The email also directed departments to adjust schedules, reduce hours or delay hiring if they risked exceeding their allocations. No additional student wage funding would be provided by the central budget.

The Outlook asked Pingitore how the university determines those allocations.

"The student wage budget is developed annually as part of the overall budget process and final allocation decisions are made based on anticipated needs, available FWS funding, and the University's overall financial position," he said.

Pingitore said the university reviews departmental needs and available resources, along with its strategic objectives and financial sustainability. He said the budget process prioritizes academic programs and student-facing services.

As of November 2026, Monmouth employed 597 students across 770 job placements on campus and through off-campus community partnerships, according to Sandy Brown, director of student employment.

"We continue to see consistent interest in student employment, particularly at the start of each semester, with students seeking opportunities throughout the academic year," Brown said. "We have not experienced a decrease in student interest."

Departments identify their staffing needs and request student employees within their approved budgets. Asked whether student demand currently exceeds the number of available positions, Brown said, "Currently, student demand is not exceeding the number of available employment opportunities. Positions become available throughout the year as university departments identify their staffing needs."

For students already employed, the number of available hours and the funding supporting their positions also shape their work experience.

"Student work hours, including the number of hours students are scheduled to work each week, can vary from year to year depending on several factors, including departmental budgets, staffing needs, and individual Federal Work-Study awards," Brown said.

The Office of Financial Aid determines FWS awards based on financial need, cost of attendance and other financial aid received. Brown said those factors affect students' eligibility and award amounts.

One student who works an on campus job and who wished to speak with us off record, said their workload has increased this semester. The additional responsibilities have made it harder to balance work and school while managing their Federal Work-Study funds.

"I'm going to have to end up switching off of my federal work study in probably a month," the student said. "I'm already about to run out of money. Which is insane to not even have the (entire) first semester to have that."

The student said others have also reconsidered their schedules and priorities because they cannot afford to maintain multiple jobs.

Another account came from a student who also wished to speak with us off record while discussing employment in undergraduate admission.

"All Ambassador hours have been cut and many only have just one shift a week whereas in previous years it was normal to have around three, if not more," the student said.

Caroline Hurtt, assistant director of undergraduate admission, oversees the student ambassadors.

"In order to develop and assign work schedules, we review student staffing in relation to the office workload and campus tour volume throughout the week," Hurtt said. "The primary responsibility of our student ambassadors is to provide campus tours to prospective students and their families."

Hurtt acknowledged that the scheduling changes have affected ambassadors. She said the office continues to offer opportunities to pick up additional hours during busier periods when more

"University budget cuts"
cont. on pg. 2

INSIDE:

NEWS
Sports Industry Club visits Fanatics and Madison Square Garden
Pg. 3

ENTERTAINMENT
This action will have consequences: "Life is Strange" adaptation wraps filming
Pg. 8

SPORTS
Dominant run game leads Football over Bryant
Pg. 14

@muoutlook

outlook.monmouth.edu

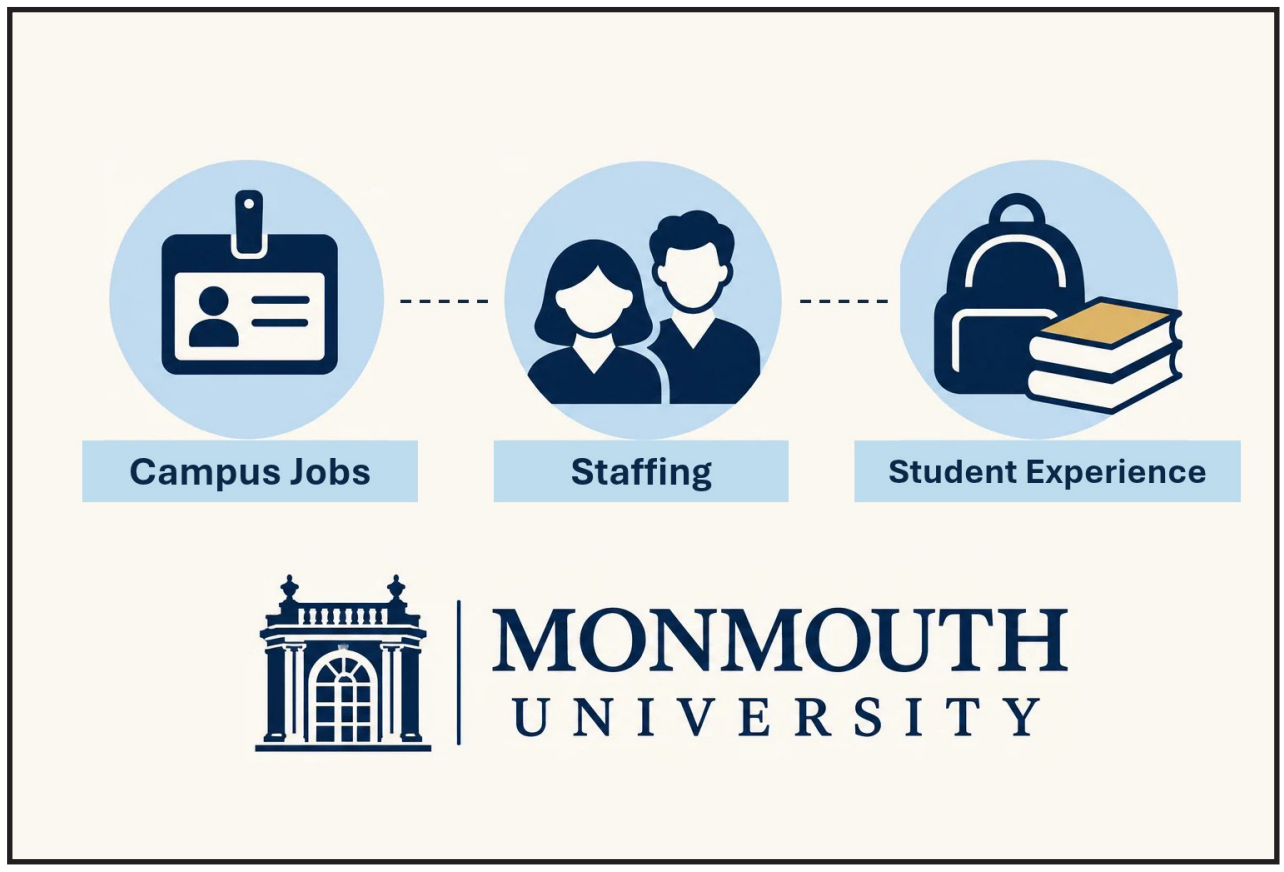
Got a tip? Tell us.

INDEX

News	2
Editorial	4
Opinion	5
Features	6
Lifestyles	7
Entertainment	8
Politics	10
Clubs & Greek Life	11
Sports	14

University budget cuts

cont. from pg. 1



GRAPHIC CREATED by Samantha Tate.

when more support is needed.

Residential Life and academic staffing

Residential Life plans to reduce its student staff from 56 to 43 positions for the 2027–2028 academic year, according to an email to continuing student staff.

The changes include eliminating the community assistant position that oversees campus apartment living. Current community assistants will have the option to apply to return as resident assistants.

The department will also reorganize its duty system by grouping residence halls into three communities, with two resident assistants on duty each evening for each community. A new FWS position, apartment operations assistant, will oversee apartment operations during weekday evenings.

Resident assistants receive free housing and $1,500 off their meal plans. Their compensation will remain unchanged for the 2027–2028 academic year.

In academic departments, a university administrator who spoke to The Outlook off record discussed the faculty hiring process.

"The hiring of faculty is, I really don't know the right word. I wanna say slowed down, more under scrutiny, it has to be more deliberate," the administrator said.

The administrator pointed to one department where several faculty members have retired.

"We need to hire some people ... in that department just to stay where we are," the administrator said.

The discussion also turned to how departments handle the work left by departing employees.

"They're not gonna do everything that the original two were doing, and so you have to make sure that the things that are not being picked up now are either picked up somewhere else and don't have an impact on the students," the administrator said.

"I feel like the administration is trying to, get this right and not have too much of an impact on the students. I think there's gonna be an impact. Well, you're seeing it."

Student concerns and university responses

Previously introduced student who discussed Federal Work-Study for this story off record also spoke about the information students receive from the university.

"I do think that people are starting to notice that there's things going on and that there's not full transparency coming to students," the student said. "There's a missing transparency from the administration to us."

The student described conversations with classmates, particularly those nearing graduation.

"I think I'm hearing it from a lot of students, especially seniors now that are just like, I'm ready to be done," the student said. "I'm kind of getting to the point where it feels like something's going wrong and I'm ready to get out of here before it gets really bad."

University officials offered a different assessment of the effects on student services. Vice President for Student Life Jim Pillar said budget and staffing changes have not reduced or disrupted Student Life programs and services.

"Students continue to have access to all Student Life services, including counseling, health services, dining, housing, and Student Engagement programming," Pillar said.

Amy Hoyle, dean of the School of Education, said she was not aware of reductions in funding for academic programs, instructional resources, or student support. She also said the university has not reduced course offerings because of budget changes and that staffing changes have not affected School of Education students' ability to complete required classes or graduate on time.

Voluntary separation program

Monmouth's voluntary separation program is another part of its effort to manage expenses. Leahy described the program as part of the university's ongoing approach to managing resources and planning for the future.

During an October board update, he reported that approximately 50 employees had applied and that all applications were accepted.

In his response to The Outlook, Leahy did not provide the program's total cost or the amount the university expects to save annually. He said Monmouth is still reviewing which vacated positions need to be filled and when.

"Our goal is to avoid any additional staff reductions to the greatest extent possible," Leahy said.

The Outlook contacted several individuals who applied for the program and who initially agreed to speak with the newspaper. After following up, they said they were no longer comfortable talking to the newspaper. However, they expressed support for the student newspaper and its decision to investigate the matter.

University projects and financial records

Monmouth's fundraising campaign and planned campus projects have also raised questions about how the university allocates its resources.

A Dec. 10, 2024, article on Monmouth's website, titled "Monmouth University Launches Most Ambitious Fundraising Campaign in its History," outlined plans for two major building projects expected to open in 2026: the Bruce Springsteen Archives and Center for American Music and the student wellness center.

The article described the wellness center as an expansion of the OceanFirst Bank Center's (now Hackensack Meridian Athletic Center) health and fitness facilities. At the time, the university reported that 75% of the project had been funded.

When asked about the status of this project given that it was nearly completely funded two years ago, Pingitore said, "The student wellness center project is currently on hold. Additional information about this project will be released in mid-2027."

The previously cited student who discussed Federal Work-Study and wished to speak off record also addressed the project.

"I don't think that it is ever coming. That's my take on it, it's never coming," the student said. "I don't know if anyone knows if it's happening. There is a sign that says 'coming soon,' but, is it? And where did the money go is my follow up question."

Pingitore said funds raised through the Excellence. Access. Ambition. campaign serve several purposes, including student scholarships, capital projects, and general operating support.

Financial records provide additional context for the university's position. Monmouth's fiscal year 2025 Form 990, covering July 1, 2024, through June 30, 2025, reported $277.3 million in revenue and $270 million in expenses, leaving approximately $7.3 million more in revenue than expenses.

The filing does not establish that the difference represents an unrestricted operating surplus, and it predates the most recent operating deficit acknowledged by Leahy.

The Outlook also asked about Monmouth's financial relationship with the Bruce Springsteen Center for American Music, which opened on campus in June 2026. The Center's 2024 Form 990 reported $1,447,495 in liabilities owed to Monmouth University. Leahy said the amount represents expenses processed by the university and later reimbursed by the Center.

"The Bruce Springsteen Center for American Music is a wholly owned subsidiary of Monmouth University," Leahy said. "Consequently, the Center's financial results are consolidated into the University's results at the end of the fiscal year."

Leahy said Monmouth does not contribute operating funds to the Center but provides institutional support through information technology, event management, and fundraising. He said that support is consistent with what the university provides to its other centers and institutes.

For its first full year of operations in the new building, the Center has projected $1.5 million in annual operating expenses. Leahy said revenue and gifts generated by the Center itself will cover those expenses.

University officials have described Monmouth's overall financial position as strong while acknowledging pressure on its operating budget. Their stated goal is to address that pressure while protecting the student experience. Students and employees are already navigating changes to work hours, staffing, and university operations, while the cost and projected savings of the voluntary separation program remain undisclosed and further information about the wellness center is expected in mid-2027.

Sports Industry Club visits Fanatics and Madison Square Garden

AVA McGINTY
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF/ NEWS EDITOR

Ten Monmouth University students visited Fanatics and Madison Square Garden on Oct. 26 through the Sports Industry Club, where they met with public relations and sales professionals, learned about career opportunities and attended a New York Rangers game.

During the visit to Fanatics, students spoke with employees in the company's public relations department. At Madison Square Garden, they met with employees in sales and spoke with an intern participating in the organization's Student Associate Program.

The visits gave students an opportunity to ask questions about different positions within the sports industry and hear how professionals got started in their careers.

For senior communication major Sydney Rosalsky, the smaller group made the experience stand out compared to other trips she has attended through the club. "This trip definitely felt a lot more personal compared to other trips I have attended," Rosalsky said. "I loved that it was a much smaller group of students from Monmouth rather than having multiple schools participate."

Rosalsky said the smaller group allowed students to ask more questions about the employees' career paths. "Since we were in a smaller group, we had more opportunities to ask questions about how they got started in their career paths and what steps they took to get where they are today, rather than focusing on more standard questions about the companies they work for," she said.

One conversation at Madison Square Garden particularly stood out to Rosalsky. An employee shared that he had worked as a teacher for more than 10 years before deciding to pursue a different career. After attending career fairs and taking advantage of internship opportunities, he eventually found his way into the sports industry.

"I found his story to be very inspiring because it showed me that there is no one set path to success," she said.

The visits also introduced students to career opportunities they may not have previously considered. Morgan Rosa, a senior communication major and the club's co-social media manager, said she was surprised by the range of positions within the industry, particularly at Fanatics.

"Before this trip, I never realized how many different areas there are within the sports industry," Rosa said. "I didn't know someone could work in collectibles for a company and have such an interesting job, like the employee we spoke with at Fanatics."

Rosa said hearing from employees at both organizations made her more open to exploring different career paths rather than focusing on one specific area. "I'm realizing there are so many more interesting jobs out there in the world of sports after speaking with everyone," Rosa said.

Rosa also said the trip stood out because students had the opportunity to speak with more professionals working in public relations and communications. She said the club has been looking to connect students with professionals in broadcasting and communications, rather than focusing primarily on the business and sales sides of the industry.

"I really enjoyed that we had the opportunity to speak with those people," Rosa said.

For junior communication major Abby Kosch, the visit to Fanatics introduced her to opportunities outside of working directly for a sports team or league.

Kosch, who also serves as the club's networking officer, said she had primarily considered working for individual teams or leagues before the trip. "In my mind I've only been focused on working for specific teams or leagues, but after visiting Fanatics I realized that working for an all-encompassing brand like Fanatics might be something I'm interested in," Kosch said.

Kosch also said hearing from professionals who had changed career directions helped ease some of her concerns about finding the right position after graduation. "As I approach the start of my senior year this spring, I've been more worried about trying to figure out the right job right from the get-go," Kosch said. "Hearing these perspectives has helped alleviate some of that anxiety."

The trip was also different from previous club experiences for Kosch, who said it was her first time visiting two companies back-to-back. "It was really cool being able to see two different sides of the industry and compare them," she said.

Frank Hoarle, a communication major set to graduate at the end of the semester, said the visits showed him how many different departments and career paths exist within the sports industry. "There's a lot of employees at both Fanatics and MSG, with multiple different departments and fields you can work in," Hoarle said.

Learning about career opportunities was one of his biggest takeaways from the panels. "There was a lot I didn't know that I learned from both the Fanatics and the MSG panels," he said.

Fanatics stood out to Hoarle because it offered a look at the sports memorabilia side of the industry, making it different from other club trips.

Matthew Harmon, senior specialist professor, sports communication minor coordinatior, and advisor to the Sports Industry Club, said the trip continued the club's longstanding relationship with Madison Square Garden after missing the opportunity to visit last year. He helped arrange the return visit through existing contacts and used a personal connection to organize the Fanatics visit.

Harmon said he hopes students leave these experiences with new professional connections and a better understanding of the different career paths within the industry.

"The main hope is to help students develop a network," Harmon said. He noted that speakers often encourage students to reach out with questions and connect with them on LinkedIn. "They don't say that for no reason. They say it because they know it's hard to develop connections."

He also wants students to consider whether they could see themselves working at the organizations they visit. "I also hope that students can say, 'I can see myself working there,' or maybe even, 'I can't see myself there,' and why, which is also important," Harmon said.

Harmon said the trips and speaker series complement the university's sports-related courses by allowing students to see firsthand what they learn in the classroom and develop skills they can use after graduation.

Beyond the individual company visits, students said the opportunity to meet professionals and learn about their experiences was a reason they wanted to continue participating in club trips. Rosalsky said the experiences provide insight into what working in the industry looks like on a day-to-day basis and allow students to learn from people who have already established careers.

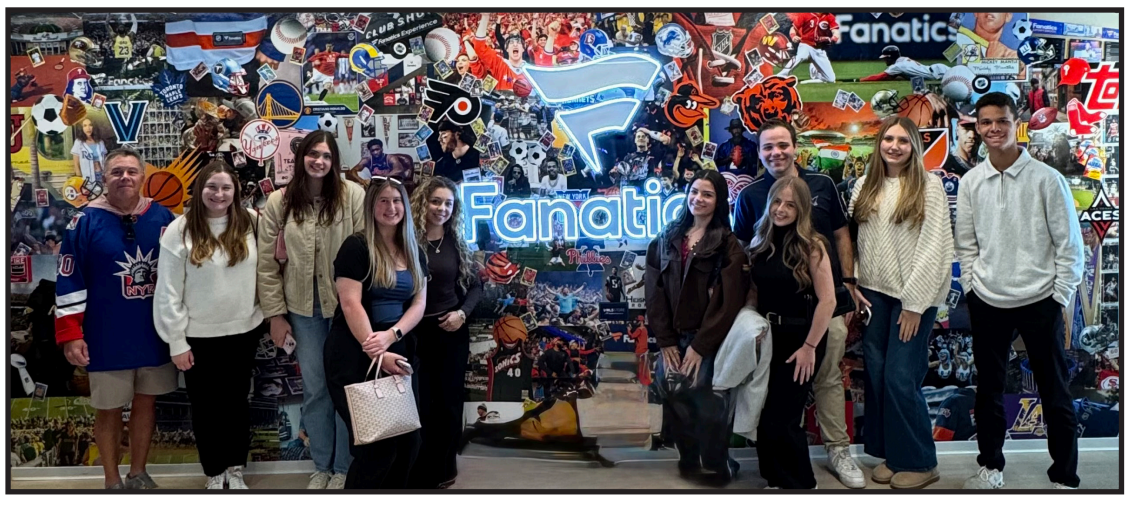
"The sports industry is one of the toughest fields to break into and I think being a part of this club and going on these trips gives students interested in pursuing a career in sports that much more of an advantage and knowledge heading into this career after grad," Rosalsky said.

The trip concluded with students attending a New York Rangers game at Madison Square Garden.





PHOTOS CURTOSY of Matthew Harmon.





THE OUTLOOK STAFF

Ava McGinty EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Samantha Tate MANAGING EDITOR

SECTION EDITORS & DESIGNERS

Ava McGinty NEWS EDITOR
Frank Hoarle SPORTS EDITOR
Chris Margotti POLITICS EDITOR
Samantha Tate ASSISTANT POLITICS EDITOR
Payton McGenough-Gamache FEATURES EDITOR
Hanah Fierro LIFESTYLES EDITOR
Melany McCann ENTERTAINMENT EDITOR
Riley Kindler OPINIONS EDITOR
Eric Thu COMICS EDITOR

STAFF WRITERS

Paige Campbell, Olivia Smith, Garielle Gallagher, Nico Varlone, Katelyn Sandvik, Rylee Williams, Melina Bomhoff, Natalee Mattei

ADVERTISEMENT MANAGER

Eric Thu

PHOTOGRAPHER

Sophia Garland

CREATIVE DIRECTOR

Katelyn Sandvik

Marina Vujnovic, Ph.D. FACULTY ADVISOR

Tarra Emery OFFICE COORDINATOR

HOW TO SUBMIT ARTICLES OR LETTERS:

The Outlook provides the Monmouth University community with information concerning issues in and around the University while serving as a forum for expression of the ideas of its readers. Contributions must be submitted (email outlook@monmouth.edu) by 12:00 p.m. Sundays.

All copy must include the author's full name and contact information. *The Outlook* accepts articles and graphic material from students, faculty and administrators, and reserves the right to edit or reject any material which they determine is not suitable for publication or its readers. Copy and advertising appearing in *The Outlook* do not necessarily reflect the views of Monmouth University or *The Outlook.*

Monmouth University's
Student-Run Newspaper
Since 1933

Plangere Center 2nd Floor, Room 260

Phone: (732) 571-3481
Fax: (732) 263-5151

Mailing Address:
The Outlook
Monmouth University
400 Cedar Ave
West Long Branch, NJ 07764

Website: outlook.monmouth.edu
E-Mail: outlook@monmouth.edu
Advertising Inquiries: outlookads@monmouth.edu

The Outlook
SUBSCRIPTION FORM

NAME: _____
ADDRESS: _____
CITY: _____
STATE: _____ ZIP: _____
Daytime Phone: _____
Evening Phone: _____

☐ $25 NON-ALUMNI SUBSCRIBER ☐ $15 MONMOUTH UNIVERSITY ALUMNI

Mail this subscription to and payment to:
The Outlook Monmouth University

400 Cedar Ave. West Long Branch 07764
Or Call 732-571-3481 for Credit Card Payment

Should federal loans be cut for low-paying degrees?

EDITORIAL STAFF

College is the bridge to a student's future. It is what hones niche talents, produces the next generation of passionate artists, teachers, and essential workers in society, but what if that future was at risk? The Department of Education has proposed to cut federal loans for degrees with low-income graduates, and this would take effect beginning in July of 2027.

According to The Runner, the degrees at risk of having federal loans cut include "Cosmetology, Liberal Arts, Social Work, Teaching Aides, Culinary Arts, Music, Film, Religious Studies, and English literature." These cuts will be decided based on the earnings of graduates. If a program's graduate is estimated to make less than if they had not gotten the degree at all, it is deemed low-paying and will face cuts.

While certain degrees being low-paying is an important conversation to have, many editors agree: it being the deciding factor is harmful, not only to students, but to institutions and future generations. There is more to a degree than just the income post-graduation. An editor argues that "a degree is an important tool to battle misinformation, develop critical thinking, and to broaden your perspective."

One editor commented, "Limiting access to federal loans will only make it harder for students to get an education." Another editor's perspective is in agreement, explaining that "these cuts will most likely make college less accessible."

College is already insanely expensive, and the prospect of losing loans just because of the degree you're selecting is potentially dangerous. The students relying on loans are mostly first-generation students, meaning that this cut will ostracize the lower class and impact the possibility of social mobility. College is undoubtedly a large financial burden, and less funding will lead to fewer people pursuing a higher education.

An editor shared that "if we only allow low-income students to pursue careers that aren't their passions then we are curating and promoting a generation of unhappiness."

A big concern about this cut is the survival rate of these careers. A cut to loans would undoubtedly lead to a decrease in students pursuing these fields. An editor shared that "this could make existing shortages in certain professions even worse," and another commented, "so many of the degrees being cut are creative degrees, which are programs already with low participation; I can't imagine what will happen to them now."

Another challenge is that these are essential professions. The world needs counselors; we need teachers to shape our future generations, and we need social workers. An editor explained, "If you enjoy getting your hair done, then we need cosmetologists, and if you like eating out, then we need culinary arts." Just because a degree isn't high-earning doesn't make them any less essential to society.

An editor shared a very profound perspective, explaining that most of the degrees at risk are women-dominated fields. "If feminized careers are the ones being attacked, what type of message does that send to young girls?"

Many editors also shared that if the cost and payout of degrees are such a large concern, then maybe we should focus on why college is so expensive, rather than limiting opportunity. An editor said, "I don't think a career's salary should determine their access to federal loans…everyone deserves a fair opportunity to pursue their education."

"A student should never have to abandon their passion just because the state declared it low-paying; we will always need art, creativity, and humanity," another editor highlighted.

Overall, editors are in agreement about the harm this federal cut will have on students. While the cost of school shouldn't be overlooked, it should not impact degree choice, and certain degrees shouldn't be devalued and vilified just because they aren't high-paying. Everyone is on a different path, and every degree holds importance. We need the arts, we need literature, and more importantly, we need passionate students without financial fear.



Serving the Monmouth community since 1933

THE OUTLOOK Monmouth University's Student-Run Newspaper Since 1933
http://outlook.monmouth.edu/

Follow us on: @MUoutlook

DISCLAIMER: All articles appearing in the Op/Ed section of *The Outlook* are solely the opinions of the authors and do not reflect the views of *The Outlook*'s editors (unless otherwise noted) or any and all advertisers. Opinion articles are run unedited and the content is the sole responsibility of their authors. All students and faculty are welcome to respond to any opinion piece that appears on these pages, and everyone is encouraged to submit an article for consideration. *The Outlook* reserves the right to withhold any articles deemed inappropriate or otherwise unfit to print in the Op/Ed section. Due to legalities, *The Outlook* will no longer print anonymous articles.

Is the Pokémon craze getting out of hand?

RILEY KINDLER
OPINIONS EDITOR



PHOTO TAKEN by Riley Kindler.

A trend with bulk Pokémon cards that I've found myself relaxing with: bedazzling.

You may remember the Pokémon obsession that took over elementary school playgrounds. Everyone seemed to have a binder or a tin filled with cards, gathering under the playground to trade with friends and pretend they knew exactly how to play the game. Most of us got our cards from packs our parents picked up during a grocery store trip, hoping to find something rare or valuable. The craze became so big that some schools even banned Pokémon cards from the playground, including mine. As kids, we were obsessed with collecting, trading, and showing off our cards. Eventually, as we grew older, Pokémon began to fade into the background of our lives. But that childhood obsession didn't stay gone for long.

It eventually made its way back into our lives through Pokémon GO in 2016. Suddenly, everyone had the app on their phones, wandering through parks, neighborhoods, and towns to catch Pokémon, battle, and trade with other players. The game became so popular that there were even stories of people trespassing just to catch rare or shiny Pokémon or reach a desirable gym. To this day, many people, including myself, still play the game, participating in raids and battling for gyms on our campus and around the area as a way to get outside and enjoy some fresh air every once in a while.

But the cards, in particular, are the main attraction of Pokémon. Every pack of cards holds the possibility of foiling variants, full art cards, and the rare Special Illustration Rares (SIRs) that could be worth hundreds or even thousands of dollars if in good condition. The cards are all about the luck of the draw, and Pokémon becomes more and more addicting with each pack you rip if the promise of making your money back or more is behind a sheet of foil.

Recently, the days of Pokémon being a casual hobby have become a distant memory. Packs now sell for hundreds of dollars, people line up outside Targets and Costcos hours before opening just for a chance to buy boxes of cards, and some major retailers have even turned to raffle-style purchases and one-per-person limits. I would bet it has been years since anyone has seen Pokémon cards sitting on the shelves of a Target or Walmart, because they certainly don't stay there for long. Much of this change can be tied to one issue that has plagued the Pokémon community. One word has caused frustration among both long-time and new collectors over the past few years: scalpers.

A scalper, for those who may not know, is someone who buys Pokémon cards at retail price and resells them for much more. This is especially common online. A quick search on eBay will show Elite Trainer Boxes, or ETBs, selling for nearly double their original price. This behavior has become normalized in the Pokémon community, with everyday collectors paying these inflated prices just to get the cards they want. It's also common to see scalpers livestreaming on TikTok and Whatnot, convincing viewers that paying these prices is their only chance to get cards from a particular set.

Scalpers aren't just online; they also show up at card shows. Many shows advertise tables selling Pokémon boxes for triple their retail price, relying on everyday collectors to pay these inflated prices while making a large profit with little effort.

This price inflation has even made its way into physical stores. Places like GameStop and local card shops now sell Pokémon cards for nearly double MSRP, making it harder for collectors to find affordable cards at the stores they once relied on.

I cannot begin to count how many times I've walked out of a card shop after seeing a tin with only three packs priced at $55, when it should cost no more than $20. I've even fallen for it myself, buying an ETB for $120, only to find out it originally sold for $70 and now rarely goes for less than $100 because of scalpers driving up prices.

Another reason that these cards are blowing up is their popularity online. Youtubers, Tik-Tokers, Instagram influencers, and everyone in between has been posting the cards they get, hyping up the rare card in a set that they find or a full art of their favorite Pokémon. My favorite of this bunch, Beard Dad Cardz, is a streamer who records himself at Pokémontrade shows, and he often gives back to his community. All donations his viewers send in go to funding purchases for children or other fans who come to his table, often sharing touching stories about how the Pokémoncommunity has impacted their lives.

A major reason behind Pokémon's online popularity is a specific type of content known as rip videos. Influencers get their hands on hard-to-find Pokémon products and open packs on camera, allowing viewers to follow along and see what they pull. Some even include profit and loss trackers, showing just how difficult it can be to make money from these boxes.

While I absolutely love Pokémon cards and the content online that surrounds them, I cannot subject myself to buying packs and boxes anymore. Sure, I love watching people open boxes, but I feel sick to my stomach when I even see them in stores anymore. I truly wish I could participate in the hobby the way I used to, asking for packs for Christmas and having upwards of 4 binders, but that is not the world we live in anymore. I fund my collection out of my own pocket, and the packs that used to be $2 at Walmart are now $8, and that's before the scalpers get to them.

At this point, the hobby just doesn't feel worth it anymore, especially when the cards I want are nearly impossible to find. I'd love to add a full-art Umbreon or an SIR Ditto to my collection, but when these cards sell for hundreds of dollars ungraded, it makes collecting feel out of reach. The hobby has honestly been ruined for me. I have personally resorted to opening packs on the Pokémon TCG app, where I can't even hold the cards, or watching other lucky collectors pull the cards I wish I could find myself.

So, if you're looking to invest in Pokémon cards, I have some advice. Card shows and bulk boxes at local shops are great alternatives to buying packs, especially if you're looking to build a collection without spending too much. This is what I personally do because I'm less interested in chasing expensive hits and more interested in finding cards I can play with or Pokémon I simply like. Many people fall into the trap of thinking packs are the only way to collect, but that isn't true. The right shop or vendor can often work out deals that let you get the cards you want without breaking the bank.

Just remember to avoid scalpers. If you're a fan of Pokémon or looking to get into collecting, they aren't your friends. Don't fall into the trap of overpaying for cards. Instead, find local shops, attend card shows, or trade with friends. Remember, collecting Pokémon should be about enjoying the hobby, not spending hundreds of dollars just to keep up with everyone else. Take my advice: never open eBay expecting to find a good deal on Pokémon cards. It's a losing battle.

Inside Daniel Johnston's universe



PHOTO TAKEN by Payton McGeough-Gamache

PAYTON McGEOUGH-GAMACHE
FEATURES EDITOR

Behind the doors of Rechnitz Hall sits numerous creations by Daniel Johnston, a singer-songwriter and visual artist whose inner-mind came to life through art. The Monmouth University Department of Art & Design welcomes all to observe "I am a Baby in My Universe II," which is available to the public Monday-Friday until December 15.

The exhibition, curated by his sister, Marjory Johnston, features his distinct and deeply expressive universe. It offers an intimate view into the human psyche, with colorful pen and marker drawings capturing his personal struggles with manic depression and schizophrenia.

His work has earned admiration from rock stars like Kurt Cobain and Tom Waits as well as newspapers and magazines like The New York Times and The New Yorker, according to the university's Department of Art & Design.

Johnston's most famous drawing is captioned, "Hi, How Are You?" and features a sociable, antenna-eyed frog named "Jeremiah the Innocent." Additional characters include the "Fair Maidens," who were inspired by the women he knew, saw, and met, "The False Prophet," who he based off of biblical scriptures, and others that he borrowed from artists such as The Hulk and Casper the Friendly Ghost.

But beyond the characters and vivid illustrations lies a deeper meaning.

Johnston's work is an incredible representation of the relationship between artistic expression and mental health. And for some, visual art provides an avenue to communicate the things they sometimes can't find the words for.

Susan Meyer, a specialist professor for the Department of Art & Design, reinforces the idea that art can be used as an outlet.

"Visual art is a way of communicating; one that, often, does not involve words. Some people find ways to connect with and explore the human experience more readily through visual art than through other forms of communication," said Meyer.

Katarina Burton, a junior majoring in social work, explained that it is harder for those dealing with a mental illness to verbalize how they feel.

"There's usually a feeling of distress, but they can't exactly pinpoint if it's a source of anger, sadness, or any other big emotion. Art is unique because there is no structure like there is with language. You can express your feelings through art even if you can't label them with words," Burton explained.



PHOTO TAKEN by Payton McGeough-Gamache

She introduced art therapy as an example of the relationship between art and psychology. "I've learned about art therapy in class and it's especially useful for kids. A therapist might have a child draw something out to help them verbalize how they're feeling," said Burton.

In recent years, there's been an increasing number of students interested in exploring a career in art therapy according to Meyer. At Monmouth, students are mentored in terms of taking the right courses and building a portfolio that prepares them to apply to grad school.

"In short, studio art students pursue a psychology minor while in undergrad, or psychology students pursue a minor in studio arts with some additional courses required," explained Meyer.

By displaying Johnston's work on a college campus, students are not only encouraged to explore the complex relationship between art and psychology and engage in possible career paths, but there is also an opportunity to challenge pre-existing stereotypes surrounding mental illness.

This exhibit sheds a light on Johnston's life and work, not just the personal hardships he battled.

"Things like mental health or going through a difficult time can sometimes come with a negative stigma," said Burton. "By using an outlet like art, someone is able to show that something beautiful can be made out of hard times," she continued.

"It's worth it," Meyer said when recommending that students check out the display. "It's especially important to discuss these issues in the college setting as we are seeing higher incidences of anxiety, stress, and depression in college students."

Meyer thinks that students should take the time to sift through his images, and also added that the film, "The Devil and Daniel Johnston," directed by Jeff Feuerzeig, that is projected in the middle of the room can be quite helpful.

Meyer brought up a good point when addressing the significance of the film on the exhibit. While there is a focus on his physical artwork, Johnston's artistic identity extends beyond pen and paper drawings and into music. The film looks at Johnston's life as an outsider music icon with a dedicated following.

He started off his music career by distributing tapes he made outside of the McDonald's where he worked. His career grew amongst indie music circles in the 80's and exploded in the national spotlight after Nirvana frontman Kurt Cobain wore a T-shirt featuring Johnston's artwork.

As someone familiar with Johnston's work before the exhibit came to be on campus, though mostly via his music, Meyer gave kudos to his ability to share the things on his mind.

"The drawings depict the stuff a stereotypical teenage boy might be interested in: superheroes, curious conflicts, somewhat problematic though sometimes oddly powerful takes on women," said Meyer.

There is a song of his that she is particularly fond of called "The Story of an Artist." Through the lyrics and way in which he sings, she feels that he explains the passion he has with making art and music and, even though it's difficult and doubt-inducing, why he believes in it.

Daniel Johnston created a world where he invited others to see life through his perspective. His drawings and music serve as a representation of the experiences that would otherwise go unnoticed. Through "I am a Baby in My Universe II," Monmouth Students can explore the mind of an artist whose work continues to tell his story.

Upcoming events!

WEDNESDAY

Wellness Wednesday with Mollie
12 p.m. - 2 p.m.
Magill Commons Dining Hall

Get a New LinkedIn Profile Photo
12 p.m. - 4 p.m.
Career Development Student Center

MU Professional Nurses Association Bake Sale
2:45 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.
Student Center Patio

Pilates
6:30 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.
South Boylan Gym

THURSDAY

AXID X AST Root Beer Float Tabling Event
11 a.m. - 2 p.m.
Student Center

Restore at the Shore
12 p.m. - 1 p.m.
Student Center Patio

Get a New LinkedIn Profile Photo
12 p.m. - 2 p.m.
Career Development (Student Center)

Pilates
6:30 p.m.
South Boylan Gym

FRIDAY

Woman's Basketball vs. Lehigh
6 p.m.
Hackensack Meridian Athletic Center

SATURDAY

Men's Football vs. NC A&T
12 p.m. - 3 p.m.

To keep up to date with things happening around campus, follow @ monmouthose on Instagram!

Song of the Week!

"Angel Of My Dreams"



IMAGE FROM open.spotify.com

by JADE

The song, which first came out in July of 2019, is trending again after Kylie Jenner's viral 2026 Victoria's Secret Fashion Show runway walk.

.

Your midterm grade doesn't define you

HANNAH FIERRO
LIFESTYLES EDITOR

You sign into your student portal to look at the grade that you have been anticipating and you regretted having checked so soon. Maybe you felt great coming out of the test, or maybe you knew how well you did, but you still feel bad about your grade, and then someone says they got an A.

While a bad grade on your midterm might tempt you to second-guess yourself and all your choices up to this point, remember to see how this went wrong and why. Just because you have done poorly in the midterm does not mean that you are unfit to be in your field of interest. You may have performed badly in the exam, but this does not mean that you are an incapable student to continue studying.

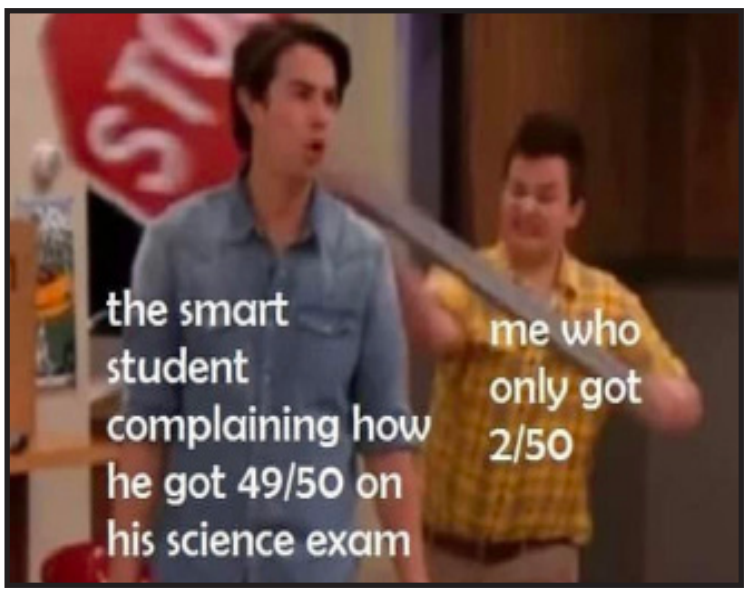


IMAGE TAKEN from @labrule on Instagram.

The first thing you should do is acknowledge how disappointed you feel. You can accept your disappointment without making too much out of your grade when you have put countless hours of preparation into it. You can be critical of your performance without beating yourself up all day long.

When you're ready, review your feedback and stop stressing over the points. What caused you to lose those points? Was it a misunderstanding of the question? Or did you run out of time? Either way, there are solutions for all of these cases. Just remember that memorizing everything in the chart does not always help.

In case you have an opportunity to do the review for the test, make sure to write down all your mistakes and take this list to the professor during the office hours. Find out how to solve this problem and what you have to learn prior to the next test. There's no need in knowing every answer by heart before getting assistance.

Then, check out your syllabus to find out how much the midterm will contribute towards your overall grade, and what other assignments remain unfinished. You may think that this score would mean that you cannot perform better during the whole semester, but do not despair. Start by figuring out the criteria of your grade. Ask your professor to clarify this instead of staying quiet and hoping for an extra credit assignment.

Your next actions should not be anything radical or life changing. Just pick up one thing you will change about yourself in relation to the issue which appeared in your exam. If you were able to understand terms but had difficulties with the explanation, try writing an answer without using your notes. Or maybe you skipped some questions because you lacked time, in this case, try to solve several questions in a limited amount of time.

Pick up one definite action and make a schedule with it. A study schedule that considers you will not be doing anything else but studying is difficult to implement. So look through your commitments and find some time gap to do your revisions in. It means that on a Tuesday morning you can concentrate on one subject.

If you're going to discuss your grades with your friends, be cautious about not turning the discussion into a competition. There are ways of congratulating a friend on good grades without comparing them to yours. The grades of others will not be able to inform you of their mistakes and how you can improve yourself.

Always have room left in your schedule for living a regular life, making changes in the routine, making plans for having lunch or meeting up with friends. You do not have to get a higher grade in order to justify relaxation after the class and having a great time after classes as well.

In case several subjects at once turn out to be complicated, it might be helpful to talk to an adviser about one's load and the possibilities one could use in order to make things easier. Having a talk before the exam time gives one the opportunity of discussing their opportunities and choosing an option to change something in the future. It is never too late for doing it

In case several subjects at once turn out to be complicated, it might be helpful to talk to an adviser about your course load and the possibilities in order to make things easier. Having a talk before the exam time gives the opportunity of discussing their opportunities and choosing an option to change something in the future. It is never too late to do it.

A grade after the midterm is important. However, it does not cover everything that a student possesses. Right now, the score is known and there are actions that can be undertaken. You have many options such as focusing on planning a weekly study schedule, going to professors during their office hours, or planning to join classmates for studying tomorrow. Everything does not have to be sorted out before moving forward.

A movie night with a matching menu

HANNAH FIERRO
LIFESTYLES EDITOR

Have you ever watched a film and wanted to reach through the screen to grab the food the characters are eating? This idea isn't too far fetched since there is a business called Fork n' Film that delivers this. Visitors get to watch a movie accompanied by meals made on the spot that relate to the film being shown on the screens. Unfortunately if you are from New Jersey, the closest destination is New York with only two different movie options and LA having the majority of different films to choose from.

If the films in New York don't appeal to you or if you're not able to travel there, you can plan your own night at home! Apply the concept of the movie scenes to the dinner setting by eating the dishes when the related scenes appear in the movie and the best part is having control of the remote for bathroom breaks.



PHOTO TAKEN from Pixabay.com.

Here is a list of four movies to help you create your own menu.

With December next month, "Elf" has enough material for you to work with. First, consider having a cup of maple flavored coffee.

As for the main event, you may go for the breakfast spaghetti. Cook the spaghetti, add some maple syrup to them, and then put some M&M's, marshmallows, and chocolate sauce to let people assemble their own spaghetti.

To make the evening savory, try serving "Buddy's snowball bites," which were inspired by the snowball fight from Central Park. To prepare these, roll small balls of mozzarella cheese in bread crumbs and bake them with grated Parmesan to get the snow-like effect.

Finally, as soon as the doctor's office moment comes, serve the cotton candy on small serving plates to make it look like little cotton balls.

The beginning of a "Coraline" themed night could be the Other Mother's meal of roast chicken. This dish should consist of beautifully roasted chicken, which goes well with creamy mashed potatoes and fresh green peas.

An easy savory one is popcorn inspired by Bobinsky's jumping mouse popcorn. You can purchase movie theatre popcorn or popcorn bags from the supermarket and put them in the red striped bags for the aesthetic.

As for the dessert, this is an opportunity to remake the "Welcome Home" cake. The pink chocolate cake should be frosted in white It won't even look weird if the letters are slightly unsteady in handmade cakes. As for chocolate "bugs," you can make tasty candies covered in chocolate and having legs made out of pretzel sticks or chocolate.

For the "The Princess and the Frog" party, you have to center your evening with a gumbo and beignets that will be prepared as part of Tiana's cuisine. There is an official Disney book that offers you the recipes for those dishes in honor of the character.

Chicken and sausage gumbo should be served with rice. Then, serve hot beignets with powdered sugar. You may use green napkins, paper lily pads and make a handwritten menu with all these elements.

A "Ratatouille" menu could begin with bread, cheese, and grapes, and continue to a vegetable course that was influenced by the preparation of food seen in the film. Thin slices of zucchini, eggplant, and tomatoes should be layered on top of tomato sauce and coated with olive oil and herbs before cooking according to some recipe.

Use the oven dish that allows for serving straight at the table when revealing the meal. Serve everyone and continue watching the movie after.

Stop anytime, use shortcuts, and skip anything too difficult that interferes with your dinner. The magic lies in waiting for the known scene from the movie to appear on the plate.

This action will have consequences: "Life is Strange" adaptation wraps filming

MELANY MCCANN
ENTERTAINMENT EDITOR



IMAGE TAKEN from @sir_dmj on Instagram.

What if you had to choose between saving an entire town and the love of your life? That is the central premise of the critically acclaimed 2015 video game franchise "Life is Strange," by SquareEnix, and the upcoming television adaptation by Amazon Prime, anticipated to release in mid-to-late 2027. This production is a shared effort by Square Enix, Story Kitchen, LuckyChap Entertainment, Familystyle, and Amazon MGM Studios.

"Life is Strange" follows Maxine "Max" Caulfield, a 17-year-old, quiet and reserved high school student at Blackwell Academy who moves back to her hometown of Arcadia Bay, located in Oregon, after being accepted into the prestigious arts school for photography. Max had left the town of Arcadia Bay, and in it, her childhood best friend Chloe Price, years prior because of her father's job.

Years later, Max returns to Arcadia Bay. She must face Chloe Price, who she had guiltily lost contact with after leaving, and a brand new school that she doesn't feel like she belongs in.

The game opens with Max stuck in a nightmare of a storm demolishing Arcadia Bay. After waking from the dream, Max finds herself in a photography lesson with professor Mark Jefferson, a renowned photographer. In an attempt to calm herself down, Max goes to the girls' bathroom, and there she sees Chloe Price pushed up against a wall with a gun pointed at her gut.

Petrified of losing her friend, Max reaches her hand out in front of her in an attempt to stop the shooting, but as the bullet flies and Chloe's life is on the line, Max finds that she can actually rewind time, and successfully saves Chloe's life. It is now up to the player to decide her fate onwards.

"Life is Strange" is a choice-driven game, where the player's choices impact the storyline that unfolds. From choices as minuscule as eating a Belgian waffle or bacon to decisions that shape the future of Arcadia Bay, every choice matters.

After saving Chloe's life and reuniting with her, the player and Max must learn the scope of her powers, bounce between timelines, and use Max's rewind powers to their fullest capability in order to find the choice that will stop a massive storm from taking out Arcadia Bay, solve the mysterious disappearance of Rachel Amber, and save Chloe's life. As they do, Max and Chloe grow closer, and it's up to the player to decide if their relationship will be strictly platonic or develop into a romantic connection.

The franchise currently has seven games, the most recent one being "Life is Strange: Reunion," which was released just this year on March 26, 2026.

Not every game in the franchise follows Max and Chloe, but they do all exist in the same universe. Each game builds on the choices you made in the previous one, meaning that each player's playthrough is a completely unique experience.

According to Teen Vogue, in September of 2025, Amazon MGM Studios had greenlit the production, and it's safe to say this beloved franchise is in safe hands. Charlie Covell, known for their adaptation of "The End of the F***ing World," is the writer, executive producer, and showrunner of this adaptation.

The main character of the video game, Max Caulfield, is played by Tatum Grace Hopkins, and the spunky Chloe Price is played by Maisy Stella. In addition to the two above, Tom Cullen joins the cast as the notorious Mark Jefferson, and Leisha Hailey plays Joyce Price, the mother of Chloe Price.

While production began in 2025, fans didn't get a sneak peek at the cast until March 3rd of this year, when the producers of the show posted an Instagram reel announcing Tatum Grace Hopkins and Maisy Stella's parts. In this reel, there are polaroids taped to a wall, which is very on-par with the game's aesthetic, with a side-by-side of the video game character to their real-life actors.

What's interesting about this adaptation, and is the focal point of conversation-about this series, is how they plan to address the nature of the original video game. Because it is a choice-driven game, each player's experience is entirely different. Dialogue options, character development, and relationships in the game are vastly different depending on the choices players make, meaning there isn't any concrete storyline or developments to base the show on.

Many fans think this means that the show will have to sacrifice a lot of content from the game in order to make it more palatable for a television audience. There is a lot of conversation about this adaptation, and many fans have shared their dislike. Putting this story into a television format takes away the entire point and lesson of the game, which is about the impact of personal choice. Without the weight of the players' decisions and consequences, there's a chance that this adaptation will fall flat.

The "Life is Strange" franchise is built on this idea of the butterfly effect, and the importance of your individual choices on the future. At the end of each game in the franchise, including the one this series is based on, there is a big, life-altering choice that the player must make. This is the hardest decision of the game and is the deciding factor of how it will end.

This brings up the question: how will the show handle this? Will it be an ambiguous ending, will it be the most popular ending, or will they have a brand-new ending entirely?

The series began filming on June 29, 2026, and wrapped filming just this past week, according to the executive producer Dimitri Johnson's Instagram. In this same Instagram post, Johnson shared images taken on the last day of filming, and it's apparent that twhe actors of Max and Chloe are soaking wet. There is only one ending where they end up wet from the rain, leading many people to speculate that they've chosen to follow a specific ending. This could potentially cause outrage from fans who preferred the other ending.

These images have only increased the excitement for the show, as they revealed that Tatum Grace Hopkins has the iconic bob and bangs that Max has in the game, and showed Maisy Stella rocking Chloe's blue hair. It truly feels as if Tatum and Maisy dropped right out of the game and onto our screens! They're a perfect fit.

Despite the controversy over how the showrunners will conduct the storyline, it looks like a great production so far, and I can't wait to see these beloved characters grace the big screen! "Life is Strange" is such an important story about friendship, sacrifice, and the power of individual choice. You are the decider of your own fate, and that is the exact lesson this premise aims to teach, and is a message we can all take to heart.

Whether you are looking for a way to pass the time or a new show to look forward to, "Life is Strange" is a great choice! In order to experience this story as intended, I recommend playing the video game before the series comes out. But unlike Max Caulfield, we do not have the power to rewind time, so carve out enough time to enjoy this game before the show is released.

New movie "Clayface" gets under your skin

NICO VARTOLONE
STAFF WRITER

Just like a masterpiece emerging from the kiln, the clay must first endure scorching and long-lasting burns, a lesson Matt Hagen learns in the most brutal way possible in DC's new thriller "Clayface." The latest entry under the DC Studios banner strays away from the classic superhero mold, and delivers a twisted old-school body horror nightmare. Directed by James Watkins and co-written by Mike Flanagan and Hossein Amini, together they introduce a new psychotic villain to James Gunn and Peter Safran's first chapter in the DC Universe, "Gods and Monsters." It's a gloopy and unexpectedly human monster movie and one of the most interesting things DC has made in years.

The story centers on Matt Hagen, played by Tom Rhys Harries, a street kid from Gotham who rose from nothing to movie stardom. His life then flips when an injury leaves experimental nano cells in his bloodstream. His body begins to morph, and as he becomes more familiar with who he is becoming, he turns his attention to the people who have wronged him. The premise of the movie is simple; however, this setup is something relatable for everyone: the fear that what you built your life on can be taken away in an instant.

Harries is the film's secret weapon, and he completely deserves the praise he is getting. Early on, his character seems completely relatable, and is someone people can easily empathize with, making the charm he offers early on hurt later on. When Matt starts to unravel, Harries plays him with real vulnerability. He's frightened, furious, and extremely aware of what he's losing. A body-horror film completely depends on whether you can feel the pain alongside the lead, and Harries makes sure you do.

Director James Watkins, who previously made the "Speak No Evil" remake, knows how to make the audience feel squeamish in their own seats. The transformation sequences are truly what make the movie. They're gooey, wet, and uncanny, with Matt Hagen's flesh behaving abnormally, carrying a different kind of intimacy that superhero films rarely attempt. This is an R-rated movie that earned the rating, not one that just slapped the R-rated title due to a few lousy curse words. For a franchise that is very much defined by the safety superheroes bring, it is thrilling to watch something so willingly be defined by its ugliness.

The movie also benefits from its modest scale. At 108 minutes, it moves fluently and never overstays its welcome. There's no cluttered cast of cameos or a mandatory setup for the next ten movies. It is a contained story that allows for the audience to easily follow along, with the lower budget allowing for a scrappy energy that suits the material. When the practical effects and grit work together, the results align with a heavy-hitting creature feature from the peak of monster cinema rather than just a modern franchise product.

The independence of the movie is also one of its biggest selling points. There are no Batman cameos and no post-credits scene to wait around for, so anyone can walk in blindly and enjoy. You don't need to know the lore, the comics, or the cartoon. If you do know them, there are some nods to the character's tragic roots and its long history as a villain defined by loss rather than malice.



IMAGE TAKEN from @jes2sweet on Instagram.

Critics haven't been unanimous, as many have deemed the film uneven or too restrained. I'd argue that being deemed as uneven or too restrained is a fairly good price to pay for a movie that is willing to take real risks. It is a film that swings for the curveball, rather than settling for the low-hanging fruit. With most of the punches the film takes landing, it leaves you with plenty to think about once the credits roll, from the cost of fame to the horror of becoming unrecognizable to yourself.

Those looking for a standard crowd-pleasing superhero movie may want to look elsewhere. But if you want a gothic, gooey, character-driven thriller that treats its monster with sympathy as well as menace, "Clayface" is a treat. It proves the DC Universe has room for horror, and it gives Harries a star-making showcase. Ultimately, it leaves audiences wanting more from this darker side of DC.

"Slow Horses": MI5's group of misfit spies are back, and this time they're on the run

KATELYN SANDVIK
STAFF WRITER

Most media focusing on spy work showcases elite, highly trained, successful agents, but what about the failures? Surely there must be misfit agents who mess up and are cast aside. This is exactly the concept "Slow Horses," the Apple TV series based on the book series of the same name, seeks to explore. In the show, these disgraced MI5 agents are sent to a dingy, dilapidated office called Slough House, where instead of going on high-stakes assignments, they are given mundane office work in the hope that they will eventually quit. Ironically, though, these agents, given the nickname "Slow Horses," always seem to outperform the professional MI5 agents who work at the agency headquarters. Season six was released on Sept. 16, with episodes dropping weekly on Wednesday, and the finale airing on Oct. 21.

The season starts by throwing audiences right into the action: former Slough House agents have been showing up dead with strange circumstances surrounding their deaths. Head of MI5, First Desk, Diana Tavener, played by Kristin Scott Thomas, brushes off the deaths as accidents.

However, Emma Flyte, played by Ruth Bradley, head of MI5 security, doubts it's that simple.

Going against direct orders, Flyte informs the head of Slough House, Jackson Lamb, played by Gary Oldman, of the deaths. This, combined with the fact that files regarding Slough House have been wiped from the MI5 database and that the Slow Horses are not being paid, makes Lamb more than concerned. He instructs his agents to go to William Blake's grave, their known emergency meeting destination. There, Lamb orders them to go dark, switch off their phones, and head to a safehouse to lay low until they can figure out what's truly happening.

The agents split into groups with Lamb and Roddy Ho, played by Christopher Chung, attempting to track down the deaths. Catherine Standish, played by Saskia Reeves, and Shirley Dander, played by Aimee-Ffion Edwards, go to round up any former Slow Horses, and J.K. Coe, played by Tom Brooke, goes to find River Cartwright. Cartwright, played by Jack Lowden, is a current Slow Horse agent, but he had gone to his grandfather's house when the Blake's grave meeting was held. These are the three main plotlines the season follows, as well as Tavener serving as First Desk at MI5, who is seemingly being blackmailed from previous events in season five.


IMAGE TAKEN from UNSPLASH.

"Slow Horses" seems to follow a similar plotline for most of the seasons: a devastating or shocking political event happens, the Slow Horses respond by trying to figure it out, they clash with MI5 headquarters, and the events lead up to a high-stakes finale that seems to put everything in jeopardy.

Although there is a formulaic structure to the series, audiences are always left on the edge of their seats time and time again. This formula also seems to be successful due to the diverse cast of characters in the series.

No two personalities are alike, and oftentimes this causes them to clash in very entertaining ways. Each character has their own flaws and struggles, making them relatable and much more realistic than your typical spy.

Season six is based on two of Mick Herron's novels, "Jo Country" and "Slough House." There are a total of nine novels in the "Slow Horses" series, and there will be eight Apple TV seasons. Upon the end of the sixth season, the first teaser trailer for season seven was released, and it is expected to be released in the fall of 2027. Season eight is currently in production and is being filmed in London and Oxford.

Since its initial release in 2022, "Slow Horses" has been nominated for six Golden Globe Awards and 23 Emmy Awards. The series has won three Emmys including Outstanding Directing for a Drama Series in 2026 and 2025 as well as Outstanding Writing For A Drama Series in 2024. Following the release of season six, it is expected to receive multiple award nominations.

Season six leaves off on a cliffhanger, but if fans are particularly keen to find out what happens, it is a perfect opportunity to pick up the book. Not only will they get to reminisce about their favorite moments of the series, but they will also get to see the plot and characters through a new lens, shedding a different light on "Slow Horses."

NJ Congressional candidates discuss major issues at Monmouth town hall

CHRIS MARGOTTI
POLITICS EDITOR

With the Nov. 3 midterm elections yesterday, two New Jersey congressional candidates visited Monmouth University last week to discuss their campaigns, address issues affecting local communities, and answer questions from students and attendees ahead of Election Day.

On Wednesday, Oct. 28, Monmouth University's College Democrats and College Republicans jointly hosted a Congressional Candidate Town Hall featuring Rachel Peace, the Democratic candidate for New Jersey's 4th Congressional District, and Hillary Herzig, the Republican candidate for the 6th Congressional District.

The event took place in Anacon A in the Student Center, bringing together students and community members for a discussion on affordability, environmental concerns, artificial intelligence, government accountability, and other political issues.

Peace is challenging Republican Rep. Chris Smith, who has served in Congress since 1981, while Herzig is running against Democratic Rep. Frank Pallone Jr., who has held his congressional seat since 1988. Although the candidates are running in separate districts, both races include communities in Monmouth County.

During her opening remarks, Peace thanked both student organizations for organizing the event and emphasized the importance of engaging younger voters.

"I think it's very important to reach younger voters, engage them, and hear directly from them regarding what are their concerns," Peace said.

Peace, a small-business owner and mother who grew up in Ocean County, discussed her background in public relations and her decision to enter politics after becoming frustrated with issues affecting her community.

Herzig, a mother of three and former federal employee, described her experience working for several government agencies, including the Department of Homeland Security, Department of Defense, and Department of Veterans Affairs.

Herzig explained that after returning home after serving her country, concerns over neighborhood flooding in her congressional district and difficulties acquiring assistance from her representative contributed to her decision to run.

"I hope to bring new ideas, new generational change, and real reforms to Congress," Herzig said.

One of the first questions concentrated on New Jersey's cost of living and whether college graduates would be able to afford remaining in the state after graduation.

Peace addressed housing affordability, describing the difficulties younger generations face when trying to rent or purchase homes. She pointed to Monmouth graduates living together because of housing costs and proposed changes to federal affordable housing eligibility requirements.

"I would like for the federal government to change the thresholds by which they are measuring whom is eligible for certain housing vouchers," Peace said.

She also called for additional workforce housing that would provide options between income-restricted affordable housing and more expensive luxury developments.

Herzig discussed the role of energy costs in affordability, proposing greater investment in solar energy and alternative farming methods.

"I believe that diversifying our energy is the most important thing that we can do to bring down cost in the tri-state area and also in our country as a whole," Herzig said.

She proposed installing solar panels on warehouses and residential buildings rather than productive farmland. Herzig also supported expanding indoor farming and hydroponic technology to reduce food transportation costs.

Environmental issues were another topic addressed during the discussion.

Peace spoke about climate change and its effects on coastal communities, including flooding, marine ecosystems, and infrastructure. She proposed requiring fossil fuel companies to help fund improvements designed to protect communities from environmental damage.



PHOTO TAKEN by Christina Mertz.

Herzig put emphasis on environmental health concerns, including contaminated sites in New Jersey, and called for greater investment in clean air and water technologies.

The discussion would then turn its attention to artificial intelligence and the growing number of proposed data centers across the country.

An audience member asked Peace about the NJFX data center in Wall Township and her position on the expansion of artificial intelligence facilities.

Peace said she has participated in local government meetings opposing data center developments and expressed concerns about environmental impacts, privacy, and the future workforce.

"We need that paused. We need a moratorium and we also need to regulate AI itself, not just pause the construction of the data centers," Peace said.

Herzig proposed a different approach, arguing that policymakers should evaluate both the potential benefits and environmental consequences of data centers before determining where they should be constructed.

"We need to be smart about the guardrails we put in place and the placement of these data centers," Herzig said.

Both candidates also expressed opposition to Flock Safety cameras and automated license plate recognition systems, raising concerns about government surveillance and potential exploitation of personal information.

Herzig said she opposed the widespread use of license plate readers, maintaining that Americans should not be subjected to extreme government surveillance.

Peace agreed, mentioning similar worries about privacy, data security, and the likelihood of surveillance technology being used improperly.

The candidates also assessed subjects where their positions differ from those traditionally associated with their political parties.

Herzig expressed support for congressional term limits and federal cannabis reform, including changes that would allow legal cannabis businesses greater access to financial services.

Peace said she would refuse corporate political action committee contributions and emphasized her intention to represent constituents rather than follow party leadership on every issue.

Audience members also raised questions about international conflicts and the economy.

When asked about the ongoing war involving Iran, Herzig said she opposed prolonged military involvement and believed American resources should instead be directed toward domestic concerns.

"I do not support any prolonged wars that put our American soldiers at risk," Herzig said.

Another question focused on rising grocery and gas prices. Herzig again emphasized local agriculture, energy diversification, and government policies aimed at reducing household expenses.

Toward the conclusion of the event, both candidates reflected on the challenges of campaigning against longtime incumbents.

Peace discussed difficulties gaining political and media exposure, while Herzig described using technology and grassroots campaigning to reach voters despite financial disadvantages.

Both encouraged attendees to research candidates beyond political party affiliation and consider their positions before voting.

In their closing remarks, the candidates addressed students directly, emphasizing civic involvement and the importance of younger generations participating in government.

Herzig encouraged students to pursue new ideas and become involved in shaping their communities, while Peace proposed creating a youth policy council to bring younger perspectives into congressional decision-making if elected.

Each candidate concluded by thanking attendees for participating in the discussion and encouraging them to remain engaged in the political process.

"Every single one of you even sitting here tonight is making a difference by being here, by choosing to show up, by choosing to become informed," Peace said.

The Outlook

Hello, everyone! My name is Ava McGinty and I am so honored to be this year's Editor-In-Chief and News editor! I can't wait to work with each of you. I am so passionate about *The Outlook*, and I hope all of you will want to share that passion with me. Student journalism is incredibly important. As students, you have the right to know what is going on within your campus, and at *The Outlook*, we promise to promote honest and informative articles that educate students on what is going on around them here at Monmouth University. If anyone has any questions or story ideas for The Outlook, please feel free to reach out to me at any time! My email is s1356207@monmouth.edu. Happy reading!

- Ava McGinty, Editor-in-Chief and News Editor '26/'27

Monmouth Finance Society

We host regular workshops, invite guest speakers, and organize trips to places like the New York Stock Exchange and the Federal Reserve Bank of New York. This semester, we expect to host around 12–14 speakers from companies such as Morgan Stanley, Apollo Management, JPMorgan, and Société Générale, among others.

Hawk TV

HawkTV is a great place to come if you have any interest in TV! We try to work in every idea and get our members diverse and hands on experience during every shoot. Whether you want to be on the reporting or technical side, or maybe even just want to explore the entertainment world, HawkTV is the place for you!

- Natalee Mattei, HawkTV Station Manager

PRSSA

Hi Hawks, join the Public Relations Student Society of America (PRSSA) & Shadow PR, Monmouth's student-run and nationally affiliated PR firm, for meetings every Wednesday at 3 p.m. in Plangere 234. PRSSA gives students the opportunity to gain real experience in the PR world through hands-on work with local clients and guest speaker events. All majors & grade levels are welcome!

MU Sports Industry Club

We are a club dedicated to connecting aspiring students with sports industry professionals through networking opportunities. Follow our Instagram @musportsindustry for more info!

We will be hosting a Speaker Series meeting on Nov. 6 at 8 p.m. This meeting will take place on Zoom so be sure to follow our Instagram so you don't miss it! We will be hosting more club trip events throughout the year. If spots are limited, attendees are selected based on involvement, so be sure to attend our meetings!

- Ava McGinty, President '26/'27

Black Student Union

The Black Student Union is a safe space and a home away from home for our black and brown students here on campus. Everyone is always welcome and we are rooted in family and community.

We believe that the only way to cultivate community is to pour into the communities around us and create bonds and friendships that last. BSU is not just about having fun it's about building communities that last well after we're gone and creating a space where our students can finally feel like they fit.

WMCX

Here at WMCX, there is so much space to grow and use your voice! With opportunities such as broadcasting Monmouth University's home basketball games, having weekly talk shows on a variety of topics surrounding sports, music, pop culture, or politics, or becoming part of the E-board, there's a place for you at WMCX!

If this sounds like something for you, come to one of our weekly meetings every Wednesday at 2:45 in Plangere 236. Our doors are always open if you want to come and visit us upstairs. And stay tuned for some exciting events happening later this semester!

LASO

The Latin American Student Organization works hard to a bring vibrant and energetic community to campus. Anyone is welcome to the events and meetings.

It really works to give campus a stronger understanding and connection to Latin culture. A home away from home.

Sigma Tau Gamma

Looking for something to do during the weekends? Are you interested in creating lifelong friendships and being a part of a unified brotherhood?

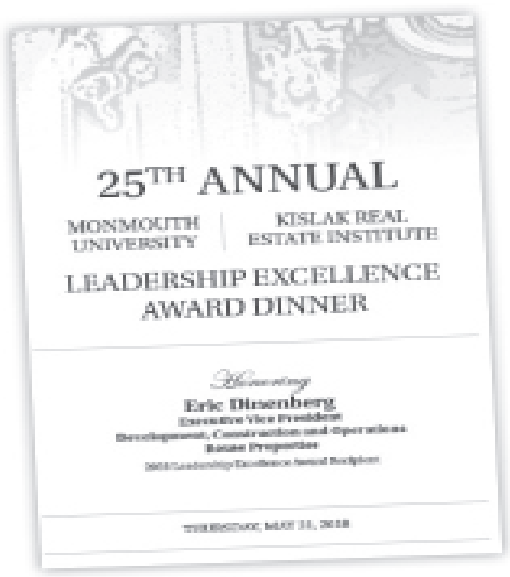
Sigma Tau Gamma endeavors to create a strong, lasting bond within the Monmouth University community. Becoming a brother means more than joining a fraternity, it means joining a network of men who support one another academically, socially, and personally. Whether it is cheering on Hawks athletics, taking part in philanthropy events, or hanging out on a quiet Sunday, there is always something to get involved in and someone to stand beside you.

Membership in Sigma Tau Gamma is not just about events or letters; it is about belonging. You will find people who show up for you, who push you to succeed, and who celebrate your achievements as if they were their own. From philanthropy to leadership to weekend hangouts, there is always a chance to get involved, make memories, and build connections that last far beyond four years.

If you are searching for brotherhood, purpose, and a place where you can truly make your mark at Monmouth, Sigma Tau Gamma stands ready to welcome you!

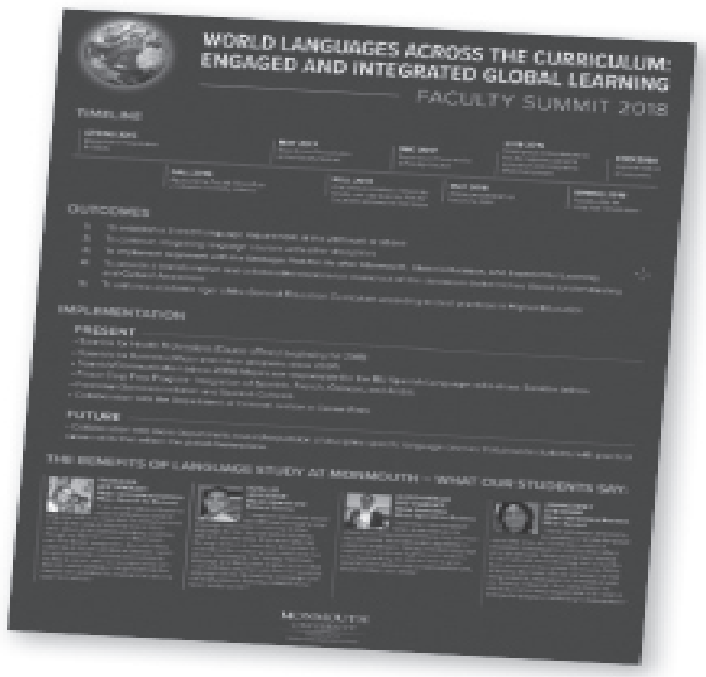
MONMOUTH UNIVERSITY

DIGITAL PRINT CENTER









FOR ALL YOUR PRINTING NEEDS.

- Digital Printing
- Binding & Finishing Services
- Graphic Design Services
- Black & Color Copies
- Booklets & Newsletters
- Invitation Packages
- Business Stationery
- Portfolios & Résumés
- Large Format Printing
- Mounting & Laminating

LOWER LEVEL OF WILSON HALL – W1

p 732.571.3461 f 732.263.5139

mucopycenter@monmouth.edu

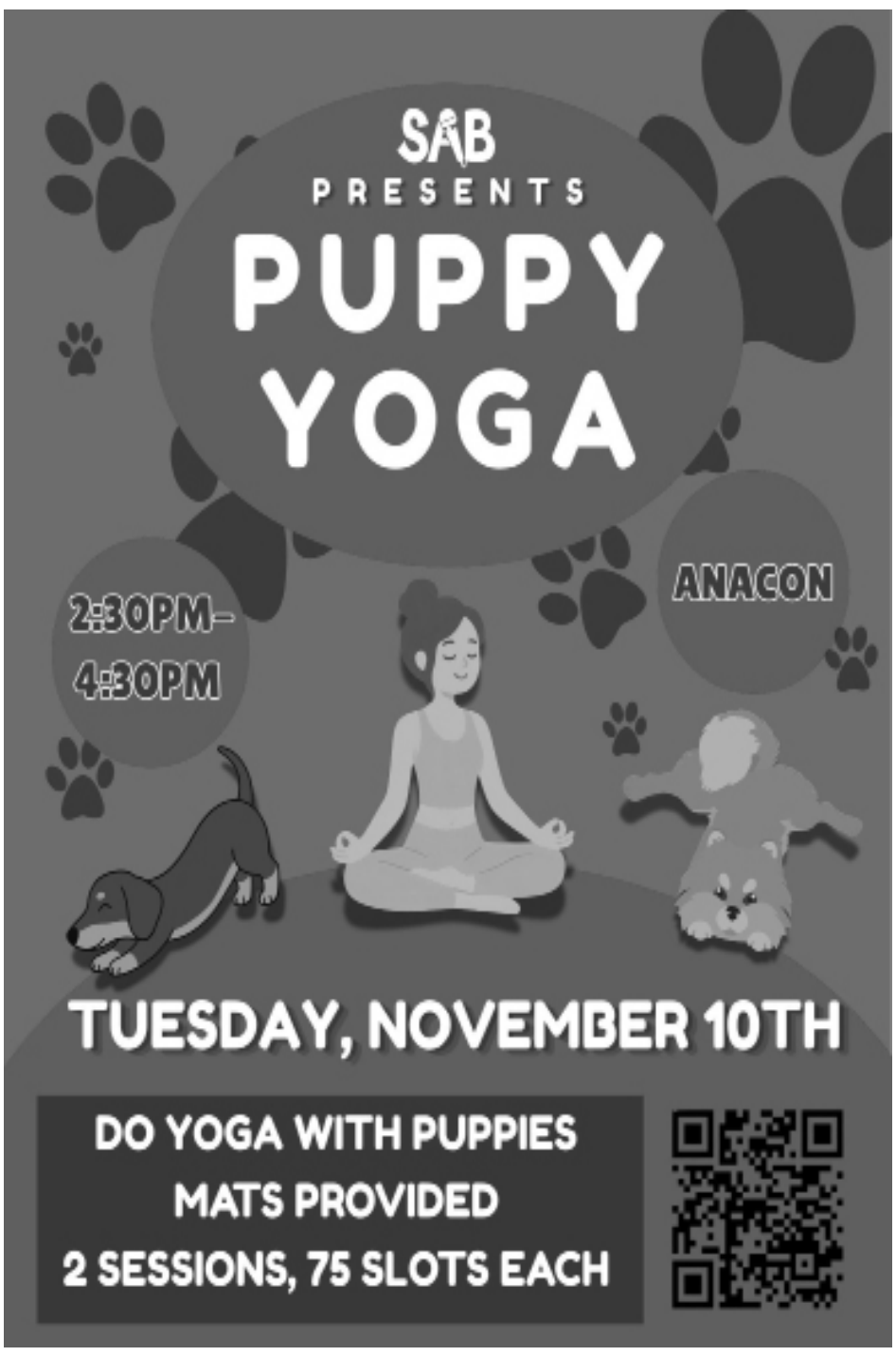
VISIT & ORDER ONLINE

monmouth.edu/digitalprint


INTERCULTURAL CENTER
STUDY GROUP · STUDY TIPS
HOSTED BY RA KIUMBURA
MIDTERM MADNESS
DATE
Tue Nov 10
TIME
6–9 PM
WHERE
Intercultural Center
Study together
Bring your notes and work through midterm prep with other students.
Get study tips
Pick up strategies to plan, focus and walk into exams ready.


MONMOUTH UNIVERSITY
PACES 4 LACES
Walk-A-Thon
& SHOE DRIVE
Walk Donate Make a Difference
Join us for the Paces 4 Laces Walk-A-Thon and Shoe Drive! Support the CLCL Foundation and help provide hope, stability, and opportunity for youth and families in our community.
WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 11, 2026
7:00 PM – 10:00 PM
HACKENSACK MERIDIAN ATHLETIC CENTER
INDOOR TRACK
Shoe Donations
We're collecting new or gently used shoes! All styles welcome.
THERE WILL BE A SHOE DONATION BOX ON SITE.
Event Highlights
Photographer on site
Walk-A-Thon
Register
ON HAWKHUB OR AT THE EVENT
Scan to register on HawkHub
CLCL FOUNDATION
SUPPORTING YOUTH & FAMILIES IN OCEAN AND MONMOUTH COUNTIES
Make a Monetary Donation
Scan to donate to the CLCL Foundation


PICKS, BRUSHES, AND BEVS
COLA
COME BEDAZZLE AND DECORATE HAIR PICKS AND BRUSHES
NOVEMBER 5 @8PM


SAB
PRESENTS
PUPPY YOGA
2:30PM–4:30PM
ANACON
TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 10TH
DO YOGA WITH PUPPIES
MATS PROVIDED
2 SESSIONS, 75 SLOTS EACH

Dominant run game leads Football over Bryant

FRANK HOARLE
SPORTS EDITOR



PHOTO COURTESY of Anthony Diaz.

Elijah Jennings *ran for 175 yards and two touchdowns on 24 carries in Monmouth's 34-21 win over Bryant on Saturday. He was named CAA Offensive Player of the Week for his performance.*

The run game has always been a strength for Monmouth football, and it was on display on Saturday when the Hawks rushed for 319 yards and had two 100 yard rushers in a commanding victory over the Bryant Bulldogs on Saturday.

The win was the Hawks' sixth in a row after they lost two of their first three games.

Bryant won the coin toss and deferred to Monmouth, which gave the Hawk offense an opportunity to start off hot. On a drive that was headlined by a 29-yard Frankie Weaver pass to Tra Neal, Monmouth opened the scoring from the wildcat formation as running back Elijah Jennings took the snap, found a hole, and punched it in from 18 yards out to give the Hawks a quick 7-0 lead early in the game.

Monmouth's defense also got off to a quick start, as they only allowed one first down on Bryant's opening drive before forcing the Bulldogs to punt.

Monmouth's second drive was one of their longest of the season. It lasted 18 plays, and Monmouth got deep into the Bryant redzone. However, after getting stuffed on a first down run, back-to-back Weaver incompletions forced Monmouth to settle for a field goal, something they rarely do. Despite this, Monmouth opened up its lead to two scores.

A three and out gave Monmouth the ball back almost immediately, and they put the run game to work as Jennings ran for 60 yards on this drive alone. The highlight was a 37-yard touchdown run on third down that gave Monmouth a 17-0 lead.

The offense quickly went back to work after another three-and-out, and this time when faced with fourth down, the Hawks decided to go for it despite being in their own territory. The gamble ended up working better than anyone would have expected, as running back Kenny Smith Jr. found a hole and broke free for a 55-yard touchdown run on 4th & 1. This opened the Monmouth lead up to 24-0.

After struggling all game, Bryant's offense finally got going on their last drive of the first half. They were able to get just their second first down of the game after three plays, and they slowly moved the ball down the field and eventually scored a touchdown on a 1-yard run with less than a minute left in the first half to cut the Hawk lead to 24-7 heading into halftime.

Bryant got the football to open up the second half, and on the first play from scrimmage, cornerback Omar Ibrahim picked off the Bulldog quarterback to set up the Hawks in excellent field position. The interception was the first of Ibrahim's career as a Hawk.

Although Monmouth was set up in the Bryant red zone, they didn't get anything going and were forced to again settle for a field goal, extending the lead to 20 points.

The Bulldogs got into Monmouth territory on their next drive looking to get back into the game. They were put into a fourth down situation and down 20 points, they were forced to go for it. On the play, Ryan Russo got to the Bryant quarterback after he attempted to scramble and sacked him to turn the ball over on downs and give it back to Monmouth.

The Hawks put the game away after Smith Jr. scored his second touchdown of the game on an eight-yard run. It extended the lead to a game-high 27 points for the Hawks.

Bryant scored two touchdowns late in the game to make the final score a much more respectable 34-21.

Weaver only passed for 81 yards as a result of only completing 10 passes. The leading receiver was Neal, who only had 36 yards receiving.

The reason Monmouth won this game was because of their ground game. Jennings rushed for 175 yards and two touchdowns on 24 carries, and Smith Jr. rushed for 157 yards and two touchdowns on 19 carries. Jennings was named CAA Offensive Player of the Week for his performance.

Both Jennings and Smith Jr. are having incredible seasons for the Hawks. Smith Jr. ranks first in the CAA in rushing yards and Jennings ranks third.

Defensively, Russo had two sacks and was second on the team in tackles behind Charlie Sasso, who had eight. Jaedan Jones and Donovan Fey had six tackles each.

Monmouth is now 7-2 overall and remains undefeated in CAA play. They are now the only remaining team that is undefeated in conference play in the CAA. Campbell, the other team that was undefeated in the conference heading into this weekend, was upset by UAlbany. The Hawks beat UAlbany 28-20 earlier in the season.

The Hawks will return to play on Saturday against North Carolina A&T at Kessler Stadium as they look to continue their playoff push. It will be the second of three straight home games for Monmouth.

As for Bryant, they fell to 5-4 with the loss and have lost two games in a row. They will get a crack at UAlbany at home on Saturday.

Women's Basketball opens season with victory

OLIVIA SMITH
STAFF WRITER

The Monmouth Women's Basketball picked up their first home win of the season against Binghamton Monday night at the Hackensack Meridian Athletic Center (HMAC).

The Hawks never trailed in the game and took care of business with a dominant 63-40 non-conference win over the Bearcats.

Monmouth earned their first points of the night when CAA Pre-season Player of the Year pick Gigi Gamble made a layup on a fast break. Both teams came onto the court with high intensity but Monmouth dominated offensively and scored 10 unanswered points during the last 6:23 of the quarter to secure a 14-4 lead. Gamble and fellow pre-season conference favorite Divine Dibula, who made the preseason All-CAA First Team, combined for eight of the Hawks' 14 points.

The Bearcats were closest to the Hawks in the third quarter when they got within 27-21 with 8:36 left in the quarter. Monmouth responded and turned up offensively when Junior Vanessa McManus scored her first points of the game on a three-point jumper followed by a 12-2 run with 4:30 to go in the quarter. The frame ended with the Hawks leading 45-31.

Monmouth continued to build its lead as sophomore Claudia Xaudaro knocked down a three-pointer securing her first points of the game, with an assist from sophomore Madalena Amaro. This brought the team ahead 52-32 with 5:53 remaining. Gamble scored back-to-back points off a fast break, hitting a three-pointer before following that play with a steal from Binghamton and a two-point layup on the fast break.

Gamble led the team with a game high of 19 points while Dibula finished with 17 points, 10 rebounds and two assists. Sophomore Kathy Kersaint had 8 rebounds and Amaro followed with 7 rebounds and 4 assists.

The loss brings Binghamton to 0-1 overall, while Monmouth currently stands at 1-0 overall and will take on Lehigh at home on Friday, Nov. 6.



PHOTO COURTESY of Anya Kazmierczak..
***Gigi Gamble**, the preseason CAA Player of the Year, had 19 points in Monmouth's 63-40 win over Binghamton on Monday.*

Men's soccer falls in final game of season

NATALEE MATTEI
STAFF WRITER



PHOTO COURTESY of Lindsey Husic.
***Herman Johnsen** made three saves in Monmouth's 2-0 loss to Drexel on Saturday.*

Monmouth Men's soccer dropped their season finale against Drexel on Vidas Field this past Saturday.

The Hawks traveled to Philadelphia to take on the Drexel Dragons for the second time this season, with a 1 p.m. kickoff. The Dragons were quick to put pressure on the Hawks' defense, firing off three shots within the first five minutes. Only one made it past Monmouth's starting goalkeeper, sophomore Herman Johnsen. The shot came off the foot of Drexel freshman midfielder Daniel Frye.

Monmouth's offense remained quiet until the 13th minute, when senior defender Raul Garcia forced a save toward the bottom left side of the goal from Drexel's fifth-year goalkeeper, Raphael Bartell.

The Hawks collected two more shots in the first half. The first came from freshman midfielder Jessy Bichler in the 17th minute, followed by another attempt from Garcia 20 minutes later. Drexel added three more shots throughout the half, but neither team could find the back of the net, sending the game into halftime scoreless.

In the first 20 minutes of the second half, both teams had chances that they could not connect.

Coming out strong again, the Dragons fired a shot just high of the goal just eight seconds into the half. The shot came from senior midfielder Tiago Lima-Bittencourt. They added three more shots, two of which were on goal and saved by Johnsen.

Monmouth managed two shots in the same amount of time. The first came off the foot of freshman midfielder Marco Li Vigni in the 67th minute. The second came from senior forward Andrea Croce in the 84th minute.

About 90 seconds later, Drexel found the back of the goal. Assisted by fifth year forward Christian Combs and sophomore midfielder Daniel Celso, Frye beat Johnsen to put the Dragons up 1-0 late in the game.

Less than 30 seconds after their first, Drexel added their second and final goal of the afternoon. Sophomore midfielder Gianluca Grubic scored the goal and was assisted by fifth year forward Ben Weller and Combs.

The Hawks could not get another offensive push going in the final minutes, and the game ended with a final score of 2-0 in favor of the Dragons. Johnsen's three saves made it his tenth outing with at least three saves this year.

With their young core and roster, Monmouth finished their 2026 season with an overall record of 3-8-3 and a conference record of 1-4-3.



FOOTBALL EXTENDS WINNING STREAK TO FIVE

Monmouth Football secured a dominant 49-13 win over Hampton on Saturday, remaining undefeated in CAA play and extending their winning streak to five games.

SEE STORY ON PAGE 14

PHOTOS COURTESY of Ryan Schwager.