



Dancing and dining to a Celebración of tradition

Lauryn Gilfillan reporter

Gorilla Village came alive Friday evening as the Hispanics of Today organization hosted its annual Celebración, or Hispanic Heritage Month celebration, an event that brought music, culture, and food for the community.

From 5-8 p.m., the free event drew families, students, and the community to Gorilla Village where the atmosphere reflected the vibrancy of Hispanic culture. Students were able to check in using their Corq app event passes before entering the space with food trucks, vendor tables, and games. Students also got free \$10 vouchers for the food trucks. A balloon arch was set near the entrance as a photo op to celebrate the evening.

The event offered a diverse set of activities for both children and adults. Families gathered at tables to eat and socialize, while others moved through the game stations. A chanchla toss game was set up, while a lasso challenge with a wooden bull became a favorite among children. Bingo was played with beans and picture cards, with delicious goodie bags given to the winners. A face painting table also kept younger guests entertained throughout the evening.

Carlos Aguilar, a student majoring in construction management and minoring in business, assisted in the lasso game, he emphasized that teaching children was a delight for him.

"I love to teach these little kids, man," Aguilar said. "I mean, this is a part of what it's all about."

Near the beginning of the event, traditional dancers appeared, captivating the audience with their regional music and dresses.

Food was a big part of the celebration; vendors offered a wide variety of dishes and desserts. The El Gordo food truck served hot meals, while La Sinaloense dessert food



SEK Folklórico dancer performing for La Celebración in gorilla village. | Photo by Ky Boterf

truck sold shaved ice and snacks. Dolce Rosella provided strawberry marshmallow cream cups, while Aroma Lule offered some churro cheesecake and Mexican brownies. Cynthia's Delights featured tres leches cakes, Aida's Pupusas served pupusas, and Delicias Jhoymi presented a range of sweets. A table from Mayte showcased ribbon flowers, while others sold gourmet Bolis, bracelets and refreshments of cucumber lime lemonade prepared by the Hispanics of Today club.

All eight vendors were from different regions and were invited to participate as well as share their stories with attendees. Joanna Rivera Ramos, a construction engineering major with minor in business administration and Spanish, is also the president of Hispanics of Today and explained that the personal connection was intentional. It was to create opportunities for people to understand the cultural backgrounds

behind the food and crafts that were shown. She has worked with the group since May to plan and bring the event to life.

"This event really shows how far we've come and how much support we've gained," Ramos said. "Our goal is to keep everyone involved and represent everyone with pride."

Ramos said that the planning started months in advance, with a large focus on building community ties.

"To support one another, to celebrate the beautiful music, and to represent everyone with pride; that's what this is all about," Ramos said.

The event itself is a tradition for Hispanics of Today, held each year as part of Hispanic Heritage Month. Ramos said it allows them to not just showcase culture, but to also highlight the dedication of the vendors who came to share their work and pride for the heritage.

"They put a lot of effort to come here and share with us," Ramos said.

Midwest Trumpet Festival returns for its 15th year

Lauryn Gilfillan reporter

The sound of trumpets will soon echo through Pitt State campus this weekend as the 15th annual Midwest Trumpet Festival takes the stage Oct. 5-6. This two-day event brings together performers, students, professors, and the community members to celebrate trumpet music with concerts, recitals, and master classes that are all free to the public.

Director Todd Hastings, a trumpet professor and jazz ensemble director, has grown fond of the tradition since its beginning in 2009. What started as an idea for a one-day event turned into a two-day gathering that drew people in from across the Midwest.

Hastings explained that the festival was created because of a persistent student who wanted to see more trumpet-focused events on campus. "There was a student 15 years ago who constantly asked me to do a trumpet day," Hastings said. "Finally, he wouldn't stop pestering me, so I said okay, we'll do a trumpet day." The request has created an opportunity for students every year since.

In its early years, planning was a challenge. Hastings recalled not knowing how much funding or how many supplies he'd need to host musicians and educators. "It was a tougher job because it had been the first time," Hastings said. "So, it was tough to know how much money and supplies we needed, or what all you were going to do and such."

Now, the Midwest Trumpet Festival runs swiftly on its own. Fifteen Pittsburg State students will open the festival



Pittsburg State University alumni trumpet players opened Trumpet Fest on September 28 at McCray Hall with a dynamic trumpet ensemble performance | Photo by Bryan Gonzalez

by performing fanfare, setting the tone for the days of performances and opportunities to come.

An important detail Hastings recalled is the opportunity it brings for students to network with professors from other universities and meet professional trumpet players, including Wayne Bergeron, who performed two years ago. "They get to socialize with professors coming from KU, MU, Oklahoma, Northwest Missouri, and all these places," Hastings said.

While the festival inspires young musicians, it also serves as a professional boost for faculty as well. Hastings emphasized the benefits of teachers bringing students to perform and participate, as it adds valuable experience to their own resumes and dossiers. At the same time, the festival helps promote Pittsburg State's music program. "It's a great recruiting tool," Hastings said. "They're getting all these different perspectives, I remember there was a teacher from Oklahoma last year who was just in awe of the Bicknell Center."

Even through the excitement, Hastings admitted that organizing such an event is still stressful. He's found that registration is a big hurdle, since there's no existing model for a trumpet-focused camp or day. "Anytime you bring guests to campus, it's a huge responsibility," Hastings recalled. "You want everything to go just right."

Sometimes the stress makes him question whether he should continue. "Every year I ask myself, do I really want to keep doing this?" Hastings said. But the enthusiasm of students keeps him motivated. "If I know these kids learned something, if I learned something, it's going to happen next year."

Even after the two-day schedule, the festival leaves its lasting impression. Hastings said students often leave with a burst of inspiration. "After the festival ends, they practice like crazy," he said.

Pamphlets are handed out during the festival with information on each event, but on the back, a QR code that encourages donations to ensure the event remains free to the community.



William Leathers, a gifted trumpet player, performs at Trumpet Fest at McCray Hall September 28, 2025 | Photo by Bryan Gonzalez

Retired faculty, staff come together

Brianna Barnes managing editor

Retired faculty and staff of Pitt State were hosted at breakfast Sept. 30. This was held at the Wilkinson Alumni Center and gave the community the opportunity to hear what is going on at the university, speak with Pitt State President, Dr. Thomas Newsom, and reconnect with past faculty and staff.

"It's to celebrate our retired faculty and staff," Newsom said. "It's important that we have connections with those folks, because they're the ones that have the institutional knowledge and history that keeps our legacies alive. They also keep our culture alive, our history, and our tradition. It's just great to see that we're as honored to have them on campus as we are those not retired. The retired faculty and staff members are always welcome back."

For past professor Dr. Duane Whitbeck, many opportunities that gave him professional growth and memories and people are why he enjoys Pitt State. He was a former faculty member and chairperson of the Family and Consumer Sciences department. He was at Pitt State from 1997 until 2021.

"It's always good to kind of see a lot of old friends," Whitbeck said. "Another part is that after spending so much time at this university, you kind of develop a lifelong commitment to the whole area, to maintaining and encouraging the continued growth of our own individual departments as well as the university. It is also fun to see the new leadership that comes in and their new vision of where they want to take the university."

For Dr. Kenneth Bateman, past director of alumni relations, this event is what he looks forward to every year. He worked here for 39 years and enjoys talking to past colleagues.

"I always enjoy an opportunity to get back and see and meet the people I knew and worked with," said Bateman. "This is a great opportunity to do that. So, I look forward to this every year."

Faculty and staff, both current and past, have made Pitt State special according to Newsom.

"I think what makes them so special is that they have a genuine care for the success of our students and for the success of each other and our institution," Newsom said. "The stories I hear about how faculty and staff go out of their way to help students feel at home and comfortable and find ways to achieve success on our campus are just fantastic. They are understanding that students are all different, they have different needs, they come from different backgrounds, and they come from different perspectives."

One thing about Whitbeck's story is that he did not plan to stay at Pitt State. It was going to be a short stop on his way elsewhere.

"I did not intend to stay when I came," Whitbeck said. "I intended to be here for a few years. At the time I came, I was over all the early childhood program and was planning to go someplace to become a chairperson. Then the opportunity arose here. Every time I looked at or was offered other jobs, I compared it to what I had here and decided that this is where I wanted to stay. So, I finished my career here."

Bateman expressed his gratitude and appreciation for the alumni of Pitt State.

"One thing I think is overlooked are the alumni of the university," Bateman said. "At Pitt State, we have really great alumni, and you can see that on campus by the facilities that we have. This building is a good example of a private donation, and we have so many other buildings on campus that make the university special that are because of alumni donors."



Donna Sue Pintar speaks with Dr. Gary McGrath at the Retired Faculty and Staff Breakfast. This was held Sept. 30 at the Wilkinson Alumni Center and gave people the opportunity to talk amongst themselves and meet President Dr. Thomas Newsom. | Photo by Brianna Barnes

Loving ‘The Art of Loving’

Emma Forst reporter

The rising British R&B artist Olivia Dean released her new album, “The Art of Loving,” on Sept. 26. This marks her second studio album and further solidifies her reputation as one of the most exciting voices in contemporary soul and R&B. Though Dean has only two studio albums to her name, her artistry stretches across a wide range of singles, live albums, and extended play releases that showcase her emotional depth and creative versatility.

“The Art of Loving” features 12 tracks, including a brief 40-second intro that sets the tone for the album. Despite its short length, the intro captures the heart of the project. That love, no matter how much it hurts, always teaches us something. Dean communicates the idea that through both the highs and lows of love, we grow, evolve, and find meaning in every connection we make. Heartbreak may make us hesitant to open up again, but it’s often the lessons it leaves behind that help us move forward with greater understanding and self-awareness.

Dean’s album delivers a cohesive blend of soulful vocals, introspective lyrics, and warm, layered production. Each track feels like a reflection on the many shades of love: Self-love, heartbreak, appreciation, and growth. Her ability to weave vulnerability into strength makes the album relatable and deeply moving.

One standout song is “Loud.” What sets it apart from the rest of the album is its minimalistic sound. A single chord carried by guitar and strings. Unlike her other songs, which feature rich harmonies and full-bodied arrangements, “Loud” feels sparse and exposed. This simplicity allows the emotion in her voice to shine through. The track conveys the feeling of being led on in a relationship, of speaking your truth but not being heard. In an interview article, “Olivia Dean’s ‘The Art of Loving’ offers fans soulful lessons in love and vulnerability” with “NPR,” Dean shared how the song came from a deeply vulnerable place. “Vocally, it’s quite exposing. There was originally one take that was recorded and then I never sung it again, because I just found it to be too intense.” That rawness can be felt throughout the song, capturing a universal feeling of heartbreak and honesty.

Another highlight, “Something In-between,” dives into the balance between self-love and romantic love. In the same NPR interview, Olivia Dean’s ‘The Art of Loving’ offers fans soulful lessons in love and vulnerability. She explained her inspiration: “And I love love, but I also can really function alone. And I was like, ‘Well, what is that something in between where I am in love with you, but I’m also able to remain myself outside of this relationship?’” This song beautifully encapsulates the struggle to maintain individuality while being connected to someone else, a theme many listeners will relate to.

Overall, “The Art of Loving” portrays love in all its complexity. It’s imperfect, messy, and continuously evolving. A practice rather than a destination. Dean’s honesty and vulnerability make this album stand out as an authentic reflection of her emotional journey.

As a recent fan of Dean, I have found her work both inspiring and comforting. Her music transcends genre, blending soulful warmth with lyrical storytelling that speaks to listeners from all backgrounds. “The Art of Loving” is a stunning collection of songs that remind us that love, even when it hurts, is one of life’s greatest teachers. I give this album a 5/5.



| Photo courtesy of Amazon

‘All the Devils Are Here,’ film where nothing happens

Bryce Bicknell reporter

At so many points in “All the Devils Are Here,” you might think something interesting may occur. That all of the waiting around and dialogue might lead to anything. You would be wrong for the most part. Maybe that’s the point of the movie, but it just doesn’t work for me.

“All the Devils Are Here,” directed by Barnaby Roper, stars Eddie Marsan as Ronnie, Sam Claflin as Grady, Burn Gorman as Numbers, and Tienne Simon as Royce. To a lot of you, those names might be recognizable once you look them up and see their faces. It’s surprising, then, that this talent was wasted on such a “nothing burger” of a plot.

The opening starts with Ronnie, our main character, reflecting on his life before being told he is going to rob a bank. He commits the robbery with Grady, a violent man who ends up killing a guard. They escape after bagging the money with Royce, the getaway driver. Eventually they get on the road and Royce, who is distracted, runs over someone, but the men continue on anyway. The next morning, they meet up with Numbers, who takes the money. The four men then go to a safe house in the country until the boss tells them to leave.

From there until the last 20 minutes of the movie, the characters argue with each other as the days pass by, getting more frustrated as things go on. Does this sound familiar? It’s a very generic plot line that many of us have seen before in other movies. That’s fine, it works, but “All the Devils Are Here” follows the same general plot beats and has nothing new to say. I won’t spoil the ending, but while it’s not fully predictable, it is fairly easy to see coming.

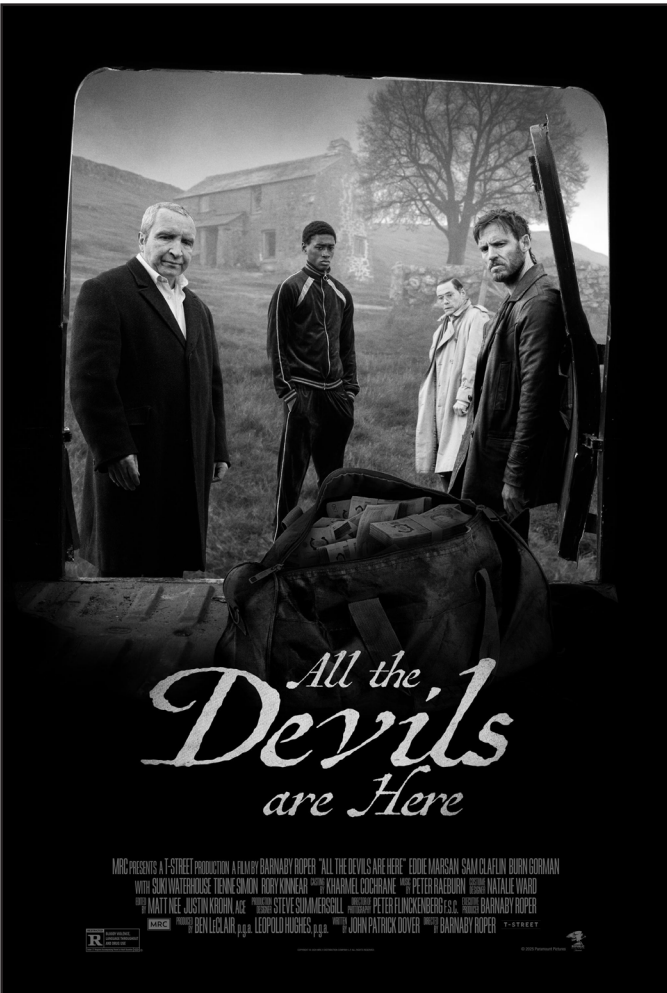
The characters themselves are nothing special. Ronnie is a character you can easily sympathize with due to his want to retire from his criminal life, which he discusses in the opening. Grady, on the other hand, sucks, and is all around a terrible human being. Royce is also there as the young getaway driver, but he isn’t explored as much. Numbers is fairly mysterious but not that interesting.

The main theme of the film seems to be guilt: Ronnie’s guilt over the life he has lived and Royce’s over running over someone and not even stopping. In contrast, Grady seems to have no guilt at all for what he has done, and Numbers has nothing to be

guilty for.

However, the atmosphere is the one thing this film did well. The countryside houses the characters stay in are old and falling apart, almost reflecting the status of the group as they slowly begin to bicker and fight. The music also pairs nicely with the film which made it more watchable.

“All the Devils Are Here” is not worth watching, even if it is only 90 minutes long. If you want to watch a good heist movie that is also scary, watch “The Vault,” which was released in 2017. Overall, I would give the movie about a 4.1/10.



| Photo courtesy of IMDb

‘The Last One’ of my brain cells

Emily Ford design chief

In a world where a wannabe emperor is actually kind of succeeding at his job of conquering the world, Ki finds herself awakened by hands around her neck, her belongings stolen, and not a clue as to who she is. What does she do? Fight back of course, which only gets her into deeper trouble with the village she has stumbled upon in an effort to get her belongings back.

“The Last One” by Rachel Howzell Hall was a story to say the least; and not necessarily a good one. All of the twists and turns of this story only served to make an absolute rat’s nest of the yarn ball that is my brain.

To start off, the pacing was way too fast. By the second chapter, the two main characters were ready to “get it on,” and by the next chapter they were on an adventure to find the lost memories of Ki. This entire book was just an info dump that left my head spinning.

Next, the author’s writing style changes a grand total of five times throughout the book. Not only are readers reeling from the information being poured into their brain like a waterfall, but now readers also must use their brainpower to comprehend a completely different writing style than what was on the page before.

Not to mention the characters’ personalities. Everyone was bipolar, and no, I am not exaggerating. In the span of a paragraph, one character goes from hating Ki’s guts, to being all “buddy-buddy” with her, to accusing her. The mental whiplash that I got from reading this book was insane.

That being said, the main character was super two dimensional. She was the typical romantasy main character with a tragic backstory (that she very conveniently has no recollection of) and an “oh, woe is me” personality, with a sprinkle of “why does everyone hate me.”

Speaking of the main character forgetting her entire origin story, she forgets it so much that she forgets she forgot everything about halfway through the story. Honestly, I kept reading at this point just hoping it would get better. Spoiler alert: It did not.

The only truly good thing about this story would have to be the only real plot twist. Not that I’m going to spoil that for readers. If I had to put in the mind mutilating work to get there, everyone else does too. This is definitely one of those books where readers must do so much more than just judge a book by its cover and synopsis.

That being said, the cover did kind of make me mad by the end of the book. Specifically, the part underneath the

dust cover. It had nothing to do with the story itself. The moth on the main cover was good though.

Reading this book took my last possible brain cell to read it. Readers may be asking, “Well, why didn’t you stop reading it?” Because I got far enough into the book that it would have felt like more of a waste of my time to leave a book unfinished than it would to read the entirety of a book I did not like. And the hope was there that it would get better. I give this book a 1.5/5 for the only good part of it being the plot twist.



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Pitt State launches two new degrees

Chance Fields reporter

Pittsburg State University is expanding its academic options with two new degree programs – industrial distribution and supply chain management – designed to prepare students for high-demand careers in one of the fastest-growing fields in the country.

The programs were created through a partnership between the Kelce College of Business and the Crossland College of Technology. Alex Binder, faculty chair of the Kelce College of Business and an associate professor of economics, said the decision to launch them came from real industry demand.

“Well, the careers, the jobs for supply chain management and industrial distribution are in high demand,” Binder said. “This is already the case prior to the pandemic, but the disruption to the supply chain caused by the pandemic and then also with the tariffs. In our current administration, ‘supply chain’ has been kind of a buzzword. So, businesses and industries already needed these professionals with this expertise in managing the supply chain. But that’s probably even more true now with these big events, we’ll call them.”

Binder said Pitt State’s programs stand out because they include required internships and a blend of business and technology coursework.

“I mean, a lot of the content, course-wise, is going to be the same or similar, because to offer a major in something should be quite a bit of overlap,” Binder said. “We do require an internship. That is something we thought was important, to get that work experience before you get that job or even get your foot in the door. It is interdisciplinary. Our students will take both business and technology classes. So, more than just an only business or only tech approach, we’re getting a blend.”

That collaboration also made launching the programs possible without needing major new resources.

“If we didn’t work together, we probably couldn’t offer the major without additional resources,” Binder said.

The supply chain field, he added, is a mix of people skills, math, and analytical thinking.

“Supply chain does involve analyzing spreadsheets, looking at prices, sourcing goods,” Binder said. “But it also involves making connections with buyers, sellers, wholesalers- that’s sales, partnerships, relationships. You need people skills, math skills, analysis skills.”

Hands-on experience is another key part of the new degrees. Students will spend time in warehouses learning how products are made and gain experience with the software and data systems companies rely on.

“Awareness of how something is made is important to know what options there are with logistics and sourcing,” Binder said.

The career opportunities are broad and growing, ranging from supply chain analyst to logistics manager.

“Well, you know, every industry, every business is looking for people with this sort of expertise,” Binder said. “A lot of jobs these days are called something analyst. You’ll be problem solving to some degree, probably using a computer to help, but the computer can’t solve the problem for you without some prompting or higher-level understanding.”

Binder said success for the new programs will be measured by students getting jobs.

“We’d like to see double-digit majors here within a couple years, and then see them graduate and get jobs,” Binder said. “These degrees will benefit our students, our region, and the industries we serve.”

Alumni honored during Homecoming week

Brianna Barnes managing editor

Four alumni were honored during homecoming week with GOLD and Outstanding Alumni Awards. Valquíria Vita and James Saltat were presented with the Gorillas of the Last Decade (GOLD) Alumni Award. Caleb Hays and DePrice Taylor were honored with the Dr. Kenneth K. Bateman Outstanding Alumni Award. A reception was held on Oct. 10, as part of Homecoming festivities at the Wilkinson Alumni Center.

“The Alumni Association honors alumni with awards two times a year,” Danielle Driskill, senior director for Alumni and Constituent Relations said. “We want to celebrate their accomplishments, bring them back to their alma mater to visit with students, faculty, and staff, and give provide an experience for them to know Gorilla Nation is always behind them and proud of them.”

The alumni have made career advancements in many ways. Valquíria Vita (M.A. ’15, communication) is the founder and director of LEGACY Life Stories, a company based in Brazil that specializes in writing biographies for people 80 years of age and older. Since its creation, the company has published more than

50 books and employs 10 people. James Saltat (B.A. ’15, marketing) is the interim associate director for Leadership & Service at the University of Missouri.

“It feels amazing to receive this award,” said Vita. “Pitt State has a very special place in my heart, so coming back to campus and being recognized for my work is incredibly fulfilling. I also believe it is very meaningful to receive an award as a foreign person, especially during these days. People from other countries have so much to offer to the American community too, so it’s important to acknowledge that.”

For Vita and others, they were chosen based on their professional lives and their commitment to Pitt State.

“A selection committee made up of members from the Alumni Association board of directors, faculty, and staff select awardees,” Driskill said. “These alumni were selected for their accomplishments, primarily in their professional lives but also for their commitment to Pitt State.”

Caleb J. Hays (B.A. ’12, Spanish) serves as chief counsel and principal for Section 4 Strategies, a boutique election law firm based in Alexandria, Virginia, and as chief policy counsel for the Center for Election Confidence, special counsel for elections for the Republican National Lawyers Association, and outside general counsel to the Congressional Management Foundation. DePrice Taylor (B.S. ’10, social work, and M.S. ’12, sports management) now serves as the executive director of community relations for the Kansas City Current.

“The reception is important as it provides our awardees a time to speak on their experiences at Pitt State, how it has helped them accomplish what they are being recognized for, and it also gives them a time to be in front of their family and friends to receive the praise they so deserve,” Driskill said.

Vita’s background and time at Pitt was marked with strive. She came to Pitt in 2012 as an exchange student from Brazil. She earned recognition at Pitt through Dean’s Scholastic Honors list, the Global Leadership Certificate, International Knowledge and Experience Certificate, and International Graduate Student of the Year. She was also the managing editor of the Collegio during her time at Pitt.

“When I arrives at Pitt State, 2012, I was not even completely fluent in English, so I think that first of all, it helped me with that,” said Vita. “My experiences at this school also gave me courage and confidence to face anything that life could present after that. I had the opportunity to face anything that life could present after that. I had the opportunity to work in the Collegio, as a reporter and as a managing editor, that that was great for my career. I also had incredible moments meeting and spending time with other international

students, from all over the world. They taught me how diversity helps us grow.”

At Pitt State, Saltat participated in student leadership and service. He was the president of the Phi Sigma Kappa fraternity and was active in numerous honors societies and student organizations. Saltat continues to be active in student affairs and leadership organizations through both local and national committees. He serves as a member of Mizzou’s Student Affairs Leadership Team, the American College Personnel Association, the NASPA Mid-Level Administrators Steering Committee, an advisor for Omicron Delta Kappa, and in the past, regional advisor for Phi Sigma Kappa.

“Our alumni are essential to the university,” Driskill said. “They continue to support the university many years after the graduate through financial support, hiring our students, attending events, cheering on Gorilla Athletics, visiting with classes, performing on the stage at the Bicknell Family Center for the Arts or in McCray Hall, and so much more. Gorillas of all generations come from different walks of life, different places, and different classes, but we can all come together for Pittsburg State. We do not want our students’ experience to end at graduation – we want it to continue. Once a Gorilla, Always a Gorilla, right?”

At Pitt, Hays learned leadership skills through numerous honor societies and was awarded Outstanding Student in Spanish from the Modern Language Department. Professionally, Hays has held a number of leadership roles in election law and policy. He served as general counsel and deputy staff director for the U.S. House Committee on House Administration, associate attorney at Holtzman Vogel, and election counsel for the National Republican Congressional Committee. He has worked for former Congresswoman Lynn Jenkins in both campaign and congressional roles and chaired the Kansas Federation of College Republicans.

At Pitt State, Taylor was a first-generation student and member of the Women’s Basketball team who excelled on and off the court, including earning First Team All-MIAA honors. She serves on the Win for KC Advisory Board, Black Excellence KC Board, Pitt State Alumni Association Board, and as a commissioner for Kansas City Parks & Recreation, appointed by Mayor Quinton Lucas.

The Dr. Kenneth K. Bateman Outstanding Alumni Award (Formerly called Outstanding Young Alumni Award) was established in 1972. The GOLD Alumni Award has shifted a little since it started in 2018 as the Good Apple Award. This is the second year PSU is awarding it during Homecoming.

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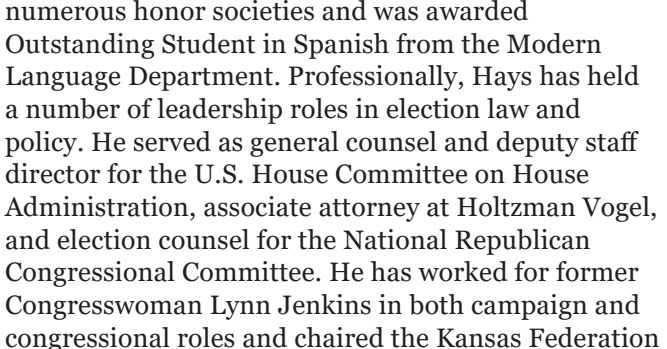
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Soccer continues hot streak, Rogers State ‘didn’t threaten goal at all’

David Sheets sports reporter

The Pitt State women’s soccer team put together a strong weekend, earning another set of back-to-back wins with a 3-0 victory over Rogers State on Friday and a 1-0 win against Northeastern State on Sunday. The Gorillas’ defense continued to shine, holding their opponents without a single shot for the second straight match and demonstrating one of their most complete performances of the season.

Against Rogers State, Pitt State controlled possession from start to finish, not only recording 20 shots with 11 being on goal but holding their opponents to zero shots through the entirety of the match for the second time in a row. Senior, Sailor Jensen, opened the scoring in the 29th minute with her fourth goal of the season, assisted by junior, Ann Boehnlein. The Gorillas extended their lead just before halftime when redshirt sophomore, Danae Hobson, found the net in the 43rd minute, her third goal of the year. In the second half, redshirt junior, Dylann Ehegartner, added the final goal in the 68th minute off a setup from sophomore, Mia Hunt, closing out the 3-0 win.

Head coach, Wes Branstetter, praised his team’s effort and consistency throughout the match. He described it as “a dominating performance throughout the whole 90,” adding that Rogers State “didn’t really threaten the goal too much, or really at all.” Branstetter credited his players for executing their game plan from start to finish and maintaining control on both sides of the field.

The Gorillas carried that same focus into Sunday’s contest against Northeastern State. Freshman forward, Ella Cazzavillan, gave Pitt State an early lead in the 11th minute, scoring her fourth goal of the season. She was assisted by sophomore, Carrie Cunningham, and junior, Abby Hoffman. Despite several chances to extend the lead, Pitt State’s single goal held up, as they outshot the Riverhawks 23-8 with 10 of their attempts on goal.

Branstetter acknowledged that the match included a challenging stretch late in the first half when Northeastern State started to push back.

“They probably got four of their five shots on goal in the last 10 to 15 of the first half,” Branstetter said. “They’re a little more direct and physical, and we tried to play their style for a moment and struggled with it. Once we regrouped and got back to who we are as a team, we were able to settle back in.”

Branstetter noted that while the Gorillas would have liked to score a second goal to seal the match, the defensive effort was “gritty” and effective in closing out the win. Branstetter also highlighted the importance of his younger players, especially that of Cazzavillan, who continues to be one of the team’s top offensive contributors.

“(Cazzavillan is) just a really good player. She’s smart and fits our system really well,” Branstetter said.

Branstetter also praised freshmen, Livi Jones and Adelynn Phipps, for their steady performances in the starting lineup, saying, “They’ve stepped in and said, ‘We believe in ourselves and we’re going to help this team be the best it can be.’”

This week brings the Gorillas to an over record of 8-1-1 with a 3-0-1 record in the MIAA. Looking ahead, the Pitt State women’s soccer team will return home to host the Emporia State Hornets and Washburn Ichabods in their upcoming matches on Oct. 10, and 12, respectively.



Livi Jones, freshman, midfielder passes the ball downfield to a teammate. Pittsburg State University played Rogers State University on Oct. 3. | Photo by Emma Forst

Gorillas to take on some guy named Ichabod

Curtis Meyer sports editor

Pitt State rode their defense to a 23-6 win over the Nebraska Kearney Lopers last week, extending their winning streak to four. After a tough 0-2 start, the Gorillas have rattled off four wins and have their eyes on their fifth when they host the Washburn Ichabods this Saturday.

“We wake up tomorrow and it’s on to the next one. We got to find ways to get better in all three phases. Another really good football team is coming in here next Saturday,” head coach Tom Anthony said after the Nebraska Kearney game.

Washburn currently sits at 1-4, with their only win coming in week one over out of conference opponent Truman State, 20-17. Washburn has only played one ranked opponent

this season, as the Gorillas will be their second so far.

Despite the record, Washburn is still very dangerous, as they have had close losses to their MIAA foes, most notably losing 28-34 against ranked Central Oklahoma, who defeated the Gorillas by three points in week 2. Pitt State will have to stay vigilant as they prepare to face the Ichabods, who will be upset minded.

The Ichabods have a weak rushing attack, and have struggled to get the ball moving, as they average less than 50 yards a game on the ground, and only have two rushing touchdowns. The Ichabod offense moves through the air, as they have a somewhat successful passing offense.

On defense, they are poor against the run. Opposing offenses have run all over Washburn, in part due to the Ichabods being behind while the other team attempts to run out the clock. The passing offense is slightly better, but not by much. Opposing teams have not completely steamrolled the Ichabods, but they haven’t had too much difficulty either.

see **Football** page 7

Gorillas shut down the Lopers

Curtis Meyer sports editor

The Gorillas emerged victorious yet again, extending their win streak to four games with a 23-6 win over the Nebraska Kearney Lopers last Saturday. The Gorillas held the Lopers offense completely scoreless, with their only points coming from a muffed punt recovered in the end zone, while Pitt State’s offense was able to score a touchdown and move up and down the field very well.

“Great team win today. Offense, defense, and special teams all stepped up. Enjoy it tonight, but we wake back up tomorrow and it’s on to the next one,” head coach Tom Anthony said.

Pittsburg received the ball to start the game and methodically marched down the field going 75 yards in just 10 plays. Senior quarterback Jackson Berry then found freshman wide receiver Damien Long for a 25-yard touchdown pass. Pitt State would take a 7-0 lead and keep it for the remainder of the game.

The rest of the first quarter would remain a field position battle, as both defenses settled in and refused to let up. Nebraska Kearney’s lead rusher was ruled out due to injury before the game, and the Lopers had a single yard passing after the first quarter.

The second quarter was much the same as the first, as Berry threw an interception deep down the field, and both punters got plenty of practice. A poor punt by the Lopers gave the Gorillas excellent field position, but the Gorillas got stymied in the red zone, settling for a field goal. Nebraska Kearney would get the ball back with a minute left, but they were unable to get anything going before halftime.

“We talked all week about how physical they are, and as a defense, we like to be

known as a physical defense. Going up against a team like that, those games you’ve just got to impose your will early, and I feel like we did that well,” freshman linebacker Blake Carr said.

The Lopers got the ball back after halftime and looked poised to score a 41-yard field goal, but a block by freshman defensive lineman Osahon Ogbveen, his third blocked kick of the season, prevented it. The Gorillas would take the momentum and answer with a good drive, but once again the offense got bogged down in the red zone and settled for a field goal to make it 13-0. The Gorilla defense would make another stop, and the story repeated as they marched to the red zone and settled for yet another field goal.

It looked like the Gorillas were heading to a shutout, but a muffed punt at the beginning of the fourth quarter was recovered by the Lopers in the endzone for a touchdown. Going for two, the Gorillas held firm and intercepted the ball during the two-point attempt.

Things would go back and forth for the rest of the game as each team traded punts, but the Gorilla defense put the final nail in the coffin when senior cornerback Kristian Cross intercepted the Lopers and returned it 42 yards for the pick six. Pitt State would continue to stymie the Lopers offensively, while the Gorillas offense ran out the clock, ending the game with a kneel down.

“We can’t be content. We have to keep on putting in work, carry on the same physicality, the same preparation, the same execution, and finish the same we did the last couple of wins,” Cross said.

The Gorillas will return to action next weekend when they host the Washburn Ichabods for homecoming week at 2 p.m. on Saturday.

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Leathers dazzles at Midwest trumpet festival

Lauryn Gilfillan reporter

The 15th annual Midwest Trumpet Festival kicked off Sunday night with a performance that celebrated both musical mastery and tradition. Juilliard-trained trumpet prodigy William Leathers, who just turned 24, headlined the event with a free public concert at 7:30 p.m. Oct. 5 in McCray Hall.

The Midwest Trumpet Festival has become an anticipated event for trumpet students at Pitt, and the regional music community, drawing musicians and audiences from across the Midwest each year. The event was founded and directed by Todd Hastings, a trumpet professor and jazz ensemble director.

Before Leathers performed, a band of Pittsburg State alumni trumpet players debuted a new work titled “Hastings Fanfare.” The piece was composed by Allen Vizzutti, an acclaimed trumpeter and friend of Todd Hastings. The performance marked the world premiere of the composition and set an intriguing tone for the night.

“It’ll be a world premiere,” Hastings said ahead of the performance. “Pretty cool for me as a teacher.”

The performance drew warm applause and underscored the festival’s mission to connect people through performance, collaboration, and deserved appreciation of brass music. For many of the attendees, the debut of “Hastings Fanfare” represented the growth of the festival over its 15 years of development so far.

Leathers, already a trumpet player for both the Nashville Symphony Orchestra and the Santa Fe Opera, has been given a reputation as “one of the most promising young brass musicians,” Hastings explained. Known for his masterful control and artistry, he has performed with the New York Philharmonic Brass, the Cleveland Orchestra, and other renowned ensembles across North America.

The performance was part of the two-day Midwest Trumpet Festival, drawing a large audience of students, alumni, and

community members. Leathers was also joined by pianist Natalia Bolshakova, whose incredible talent kept up with his range and tone throughout the evening.

This year’s printed program featured the concert’s song list and composers on the front, with a note of thanks to supporters on the back. A QR code directed attendees to a donation link to help solidify the festival’s future and support future guest artists and student opportunities.

“Having someone like William here sets such a great example for our students,” Hastings said. “He isn’t just a great musician; he’s such a great influence for the students too.”

The recital featured four pieces that blended both classical and contemporary styles, showcasing technical intensity and musical sensitivity. Between pieces, Leathers liked to relax the crowd with his sense of humor, connecting through his easygoing charm and genuine stage presence.

“I like the applause in between,” Leathers said with a smile. “Gives me a nice jaw break.”

After the first performance, Leathers took the stage to play a short piano solo, showing his musical versatility as well as his playfulness as a performer. “Kind of a fun party trick,” Leathers joked. “It gives me a good breather from the trumpet.”

The festival ended with a boom of applause for both Leathers and Bolshakova, closing the first night of a festival that celebrates both the artistry of a brass instrument and the community spirit that surrounds such.

“It’s been such a great privilege to be a part of this festival,” Leathers said after the performance. “It’s such a special thing to be able to bring people together and feel like you really did give a good performance.”



September 28, 2025 Trumpet Fest at McCray Hall featured a captivating performance by William Leathers, a gifted trumpet player whose talent and passion filled the room with energy and applause. | Photo by Bryan Gonzalez

Noches Latinas spices up Sundays at The Greenway

Lauryn Gilfillan reporter

The sounds of Latin music mixed with smells of tacos and empanadas filled The Greenway on Sunday, Oct. 5, as families and friends gathered for the “Noches Latinas en The Greenway,” a monthly event that celebrates Hispanic culture and community.

The event was held from 5:00 to 9:00 p.m. and is part of a collaboration between The Greenway and Hispanics of Today. Frida Herra, a graduate teaching assistant in career development and majoring in school counseling psychology was an organizer of the event. She explained it was a welcoming, inclusive space for Hispanic residents while introducing broader community attendees to local Latin-owned artists and businesses.

“We want to give everyone a fun and safe space,” Herrera said. “At the same time, we want to bring in Hispanic food trucks and artists to promote the local businesses and help

people feel comfortable and seen.”

The event, which began in August, takes place on the first Sunday of every month and will continue through November. Each event had food trucks, music, and family-friendly games and activities. October’s night had the popular El Gordo food truck, cornhole games, and many tables set up throughout the turfed area, where vendors and the community got together.

While the turnout on Sunday was smaller than the previous months, Herrera said the atmosphere remained upbeat. Families relaxed at the tables while children played games, and groups came together to chat and enjoy Latin foods under the string lights.

Herrera emphasized that one of the most important goals of Noches Latinas is to make The Greenway a space where people from all backgrounds feel welcome. “It’s really about

Wind ensemble and alumni deliver whirlwind performances

Lauryn Gilfillan reporter



Preparing for the first song of the night, Junior and music minor Jaidyn reads over the music sheet for the wind ensemble. | Photo by Christopher Law

The Pittsburg State Wind ensemble opened its 2025-26 season Wednesday night, Oct. 1 at the Bicknell Family Center for the Arts with a free concert that embraced connections across cultures, generations, and genres.

The hour-long program featured five pieces that the Wind Ensemble performed, while two other pieces were performed by the PSU Alumni Band, along with a closing piece that brought both the groups together for the traditional Gorilla fight song.

The free event, themed “intersections,” filled the Bicknell Center with an audience of family members, friends, and regular listeners who were eager to hear how director Dr. Andrew Chybowski and his group would create such intriguing sounds.

Audience members received a booklet that told them information on each piece, details of the ensemble’s upcoming season, and a look ahead to the group’s scheduled performance at the Kansas Music Educators Association Conference in Wichita this spring. The program also included a roster of musicians, recognizing the instruments they played as well.

For Chybowski, who teaches music education in addition to leading the ensemble, the concert was a showcase of musical skills. It was a reminder that inspiration comes from intersections between genres and traditions.

“The idea is that music isn’t just about one style or culture,” Chybowski said. “It’s about the ways those influences overlap and shape who we are as musicians.”

“Everything in the concert is about some kind of connection a musician has made in their lives,” Chybowski explained before the performance. “The idea is that we’re all totally inspired and influenced by different

culture and styles of music.”

The ensemble opened the evening with a trumpet performance of “Celestial Dance,” an upbeat work by Erik Morales. As they took the spotlight, they set an energetic tone that reflected the excited nature for the first concert of the season.

One of the more interesting works was Scott McAllister’s “Death and Disfiguration,” which Chybowski compared to the sound of Radiohead. “It’s kind of that dystopian, post-apocalyptic sound,” he said, noting how rock influences have increasingly found their way into the world of wind music.

Another highlight was “Rusty Air in Carolina by Mason Bates,” a piece that really layers technology into the wind instrumentation. Chybowski explained that the piece was designed to mimic the song of locusts. “More and more musicians have begun to incorporate technology into their pieces,” Chybowski said. “For this one, we’re going to use a computer to kind of help with the sound of the locusts. It’s supposed to be a chaotic sound, and then come back together, and split up again.”

Adding a new layer to the night, special guest and PSU music graduate Andrea Dinkel performed on the accordion for a piece, displaying how different instruments can expand the reach of ensemble performances.

The PSU Alumni Band, made up of former members returning to the stage, performed their two pieces before joining in for the finale. The combined sound brought an excitement as people clapped along to the university’s fight song, closing the evening on a spirited note.

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Pitt State students join forces with industry leaders

Fatimah Bader reporter

Pittsburg State University students recently had the opportunity to attend the 2025 National Association of Women in Construction (NAWIC) Midwest Region Fall Conference, held Oct. 1–3 in Kansas City, Missouri. The event, themed “Together We Rise AS Women. As Teams. As An Industry,” brought together professionals and students from across the construction industry for three days of learning, networking, and empowerment.

The PSU delegation was led by Erin Jordan, an assistant professor in the School of Construction at Pittsburg State University and faculty advisor of the university’s NAWIC student chapter. Her guidance and coordination were instrumental in making the trip possible, allowing students to engage directly with industry leaders, attend workshops, and gain firsthand insight into the challenges and opportunities facing women in construction and related fields. “The main goal every year is to help women know that there are others ready to help, ready to lift, and also to learn and educate each other with our shared experience and knowledge,” Jordan said. “This conference does a great job of showing students how many types of jobs you can have in construction. It’s not just about building it’s about leadership, innovation, and community.”

Among the attendees was Karlee Shewey, a senior majoring in Construction Management with an emphasis in Safety Management and President of the PSU NAWIC chapter. Reflecting on the experience, Shewey shared, “I was so grateful for this conference and that we had a good group of young women attend. During this three-day conference, I made great connections with industry women all over the Midwest, learned from the impactful workshops, and left feeling refreshed, motivated, and ready to grow in this industry!”

Jordan emphasized that the conference is more than just a networking opportunity, it’s a launchpad for students’ careers. “They have job offers when they leave,” she said. “These women in the field see our students putting themselves out there, wanting to learn and connect, and they want to invest in that.” The conference opened with a powerful keynote by Kevin Hines, a nationally recognized mental health advocate and author. Hines, a suicide attempt survivor, shared his journey and emphasized the importance of mental health awareness, an especially relevant topic in the construction industry, which faces some of the highest suicide rates among professions.

One of the most impactful sessions was Thursday’s panel discussion on Women in Male-Dominated Industries. Moderated by a Kansas City-based construction leader, the panel featured voices from engineering, manufacturing, and skilled trades. Panelists included Dr. Lisa Thompson of KC BuildTech, Maria Gutierrez of Midwest Rail Systems, and Tasha Reed of Women Who Weld. Each shared personal stories and strategies for advancing gender equity in the workplace. Friday’s programming focused on chapter development, with workshops designed to strengthen leadership within NAWIC chapters and foster collaboration across the region. Students were able to observe and participate in these sessions, gaining valuable leadership insights.

Jordan also spoke to the emotional and professional support NAWIC provides. “This organization has come through for me and my students in big ways. It brings me to tears how supportive they are, how quick they are to help, and how much they say, ‘We got you.’”

She also noted the importance of visibility and representation in the industry. “When our students walk into a room and see women leading, speaking, and building, it changes their perspective. It shows them what’s possible.”

Beyond the conference sessions, attendees explored Kansas City’s vibrant culture, including the city’s First Friday’s arts event and the opening of its renowned haunted houses adding a festive close to an inspiring week. The NAWIC Midwest Region Fall Conference not only highlighted the importance of diversity and inclusion in construction but also gave PSU students a platform to envision their future roles in shaping the industry. With the support of faculty like Erin Jordan and student leaders like Karlee Shewey, Pittsburg State continues to empower the next generation of women in construction.



The Pitt State National Association of Woman in Construction Chapter attended NAWIC Midwest Regional Conference in Kansas City. The president of the NAWIC chapter is Karlee Shewey, a senior majoring in construction management with an emphasis in safety management. | Photo courtesy of Karlee Shewey

Football *from page 4*

Pitt State is in a great position to win this game, as the Gorillas’ strengths on both sides of the ball naturally go against Washburn’s weaknesses. The Gorillas have two strong running backs and love to ground and pound, which should be achievable against Washburn. On defense, the Gorillas have struggled with the run, but Washburn’s anemic running game gives the Gorillas an advantage over the Ichabods, while the Gorillas pass defense will be well suited to handling whatever the Ichabods throw at them. Pitt State will look to start fast and quick, establishing a lead over the Ichabods early so they can turn to the running game to dominate time of possession. The Gorillas will need to rely on their stable of ballhawks, who have had a great start to the season with seven interceptions already, while the Pitt State offense can take this opportunity to fine tune their game.

“We just don’t get complacent, or comfortable. As every week goes on, I don’t think anyone can stop us, the way we practice, the way we prepare,” said junior running back Zahmari Gary-Palode.

Pitt State will host the Ichabod’s on Saturday, at 2 p.m., as they will aim to add another number to the win column.

SGA’s Fall Into Service connects campus and community

Kaylee Dillow Reporter

Each October, students gather their trash bags, rakes, and gloves to give back to the Pittsburg community through service as part of Fall Into Service, a month-long initiative run by the Pittsburg State Student Government Association (SGA). This program combines hands-on service, fundraising, and competition, all while fostering stronger connections between students and the community.

Fall Into Service initially started as a way to help students get involved and give back to the community that has done so much for them, helping them grow closer during their time at Pitt. It has now become one of SGA’s signature projects, reaching out to hundreds of students. Last year, more than 400 students participated, making a large impact that was felt in the community and on campus.

“Participating in Fall Into Service and other similar events help students get involved not only on campus, but in the community, building connections with student organizations and local community organizations/businesses,” said Lily Corby, Director of Community Engagement for SGA. “In hopes that these connections are made and fostered by students and community members so they can have optimal resources for being successful at Pitt and after graduation.”

This October, students once again have many opportunities to choose from. The event kicks off with a

month-long donation program for the Wesley House in the SGA office. Other events include volunteering at the Lord’s Diner, raising money for the Southeast Kansas (SEK) Humane Society through pie throwing, cleaning up the Home Depot and Marshall’s fields, making cards for the nursing homes, and so much more.

Each activity allows students and organizations to earn points. The more intensive the service, the more students can earn. For those who want to go above and beyond, Fall Into Service also offers opportunities that are not scheduled for specific times or locations. At any time throughout the month, students can write thank you cards to local businesses that provide student discounts. They can also complete their own acts of service and submit photo proof. All submissions are due by Oct. 31 at 11:59 p.m.

This point system creates a healthy rivalry, with rewards for individual students or organizations. The large organization with the most points will earn a \$1,000 donation to any charity of their choice. The top-earning small organization will win \$600 for their selected charity. The top three highest earning students will receive prize baskets, which will be available for pick-up the week of Nov. 3-7.

Currently, sign-ups have decreased since last year, but that could also be a result of a new sign-up process. As of right now, around 150 students and 12 to 13 orga-

nizations have registered for Fall Into Service. However, SGA expects these numbers to increase as more students sign up through their organizations.

“I have changed the system that is used to track students who are participating,” Corby said. “There is more structure to the sign-up system this year as they must fill out a Gorilla Engage form and then attend an info session to participate. For organizations to sign up, only one or two members are required to come to an info session and then they can share the sign-up sheet with the rest of the org.”

This new process makes it easier for SGA to measure the program’s success. Last year, participation numbers were high, but having better tracking this year will allow SGA to better connect points earned with hours served and donations made. It also allows students to know exactly how to get involved so that no one is left out of this service initiative.

One thing that hasn’t changed is the heart of Fall Into Service and its commitment to giving back. It represents more than just a list of events, but as an opportunity for students to grow closer to a place they call home, while also lending a hand to those in need. With many events planned and prizes to be won, Fall Into Service promises to be another impactful year of connection.



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Celebrating Gorilla Fest



Students cheering and dancing while listening to 'The Jetz' play live music. | Photo by Ky Boterf



Allums and students cooking up burgers to share with family and friends, having a good time before the game starts. | Photo by Ky Boterf



Allums seasoning and cooking chicken wings to share before the 4:00pm football game. | Photo by Ky Boterf



Gorillas allums and supporters tailgating before the 4:00pm Football game in Gorilla Village. | Photo by Ky Boterf



Little kids getting their hair painted red during gorilla fest before the 4:00pm football game. | Photo by Ky Boterf



Allums seasoning and cooking chicken wings to share before the 4:00pm football game. | Photo by Ky Boterf



Pittstate dads enjoying cold drinks before heading to the 4:00pm football game again Kearney Nebraska. | Photo by Ky Boterf



Pittstate kids decorating the parking lot with chalk drawings while tailgating. | Photo by Ky Boterf