



Crespino takes the baton from Johnson as he becomes an exec



Pictured left is Anthony Crespino, pictured right is Jim Johnson. | Photo by Kaylee Dillow

Brianna Barnes Chief Editor

Leadership roles have been shifted at Pittsburg State as of Jan. 30, with Jim Johnson being chosen for a new executive position and Anthony Crespino filling his shoes as he becomes Vice President of Pitt State Intercollegiate Athletics. Johnson will be stepping from long time athletic director to Executive Vice President for Engagement and Executive Affairs.

“Johnson will work on some things I really think we need to focus on as a university, that really do not belong in any given area or department,” President Thomas Newsom said. “And I don’t want to distract from our cabinet members in terms of giving them those initiatives because they are really more global rather than they are ties to one college or department. I guess the best way to oversimplify it is that I can’t be in every room, and there’s rooms I need to be in that I can’t be in because of logistics and other commitments as president. So, when I’m not in the room, Jim will be in the room, and he will be my eyes and ears in that room.”

Johnson’s career has shown him the importance of developing skills and relationships, which he states is part of his executive position.

“I think that is one thing I realized early on in this career,” Johnson said. “We get to play games and do all those fun things, but it is really developing skills and relationships. I think this is what we’ve agreed this position is all about. It’s us continuing to foster and grow our relationships with our stakeholders.”

Going from athletic director to this different position, Johnson finds them similar.

“I think it’s all about bringing groups together on whatever the project is, or the subject is, and building consensus and collaboration,” Johnson said. “And also engaging with our students, community and donors to make those things happen. We don’t need donors just to build things. We need donors and alumni to help us with a lot of things.”

This move is part of momentum, according to Newsom.

“We have some momentum that is unlike any other regional university, and so this move will help us capture that momentum and continue that momentum,” Newsom said.

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Pitt State Celebrates Kansas Day

Bryce Bicknell reporter

Jan. 29 was the Kansas Day Cookies and Coloring event held at the Axe Library. This is a holiday the library wanted to celebrate and use to promote resources, Learning Outreach Librarian Amelia Loew said.

“This is in celebration of Kansas Day,” Loew said. “Kansas Day is a holiday that celebrates the admission of Kansas into the union as a state. We want to promote library resources covering Kansas History.”

Junior biology major with an emphasis in medical lab science, Dakota Hutsen, said he has been celebrating Kansas day for a long time.

“Honestly, I’m from Kansas, I’ve enjoyed living here my entire life, and it’s something big I have celebrated since I was in kindergarten,” Hutsen said.

With the event held at the library, Loew showed a display of books covering a variety of topics from Kansas history. Books displayed included “The Road to Rebellion” by Scott G. McNall, “Bleeding Kansas, Bleeding Missouri” edited by Jonathan Earle and Diane Mutt Burke, and “Infantry on the Kansas Frontier” by John M. Nack. Loew also mentioned more books downstairs.

“We have a showcase of our books in the special collection,” Loew said.

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Axe Library hosted a Kansas Day celebration on Thursday, Jan. 29. The event featured themed activities, treats, and book displays highlighting Kansas history and culture. | Photo by Kaylee Dillow

TOAST expands community mission through kitchen incubator

Fatimah Bader reporter

What started as a small effort to donate bread to local food pantries has grown into a larger vision aimed at helping aspiring food entrepreneurs take their first steps in the industry.

Heather Horton, owner of TOAST in downtown Pittsburg, is developing a shared commercial kitchen incubator designed to make starting a food business more accessible for community members.

TOAST has long partnered with organizations such as the Girard Food Pantry and the Pittsburg Wesley House through its “Spread the Loaf” program, which provides donated loaves of bread to those in need. As demand increased, Horton said expanding production and improving long-term sustainability became a priority.

“We knew we wanted to grow the program and make it more sustainable,” Horton said. “To do that, we needed equipment that would allow us to produce more bread at once and keep up with the demand.”

The expansion was supported in part by a U.S. Department of Agriculture grant, which helped fund equipment purchases, milling capabilities and the development of an incubator-style kitchen. The project also reflects TOAST’s commitment to strengthening local food systems, with approximately 80% of ingredients sourced from Kansas growers and producers.

“We’re very intentional about keeping things local,” Horton said. “When we support local farmer and producers, they support our business, and the whole community benefits.”

The shared kitchen will serve multiple purposes. In addition to being used for TOAST’s own production, the space will be available for rent to the public, allowing individuals to prepare food legally, test recipes, and explore selling at farmers markets or other venues.

Horton said the incubator will also function as a learning space, offering guidance and resources for individuals who may be new to the food business.

“We’ve been doing this for about two decades, and

we’ve learned a lot,” she said. “We want to share that knowledge and help people who are interested in starting something of their own.”

To support new entrepreneurs beyond the kitchen, Horton encourages collaboration with the Kansas Small Business Development Center at Pittsburg State University, which provides assistance with business planning, taxes, payroll, and other operational requirements.

“They’re really good at helping with the important but sometimes overwhelming parts of running a business,” Horton said. “That support makes a big difference, especially when you’re just getting started.”

The project is nearing completion, with final installation and inspection of the kitchen hood system underway. The facility is already licensed and inspected for production through the state of Kansas, with city inspections expected once the remaining equipment is installed.

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The Orville: a journey into sci-fi comedy

Masynn Acheson reporter

Seth MacFarlane is probably best known for his work on well-known shows like “Family Guy,” “American Dad!,” and “The Cleveland Show.” He has made a guest appearance on “Star Trek: Enterprise,” and has been inspired to create his show, “The Orville.” MacFarlane not only writes and produces the show, but is the main character, Captain Edward “Ed” Mercer.

The first season was released in 2017, followed by the second season in 2018-2019 under Fox before being taken in under Hulu and releasing the third season in 2022.

During the first season, the tone had some serious elements but was kept pretty light throughout that first season. During the second, it got a little more serious, but in the third season after Hulu took over, the budget seemed to have gotten larger, and with the new streaming platform, they were able to tackle far more difficult topics.

With difficult topics comes a lot of challenges, but the way many of the topics are handled with respect and a touch of humor to take some of the edge off was really impressive. According to reviews, the first season did not do very well with critics, but

season two and onwards was well-received.

The main cast is part of the Planetary Union, which is an interstellar alliance in the 25th century, with many species coming together on ships like the USS Orville (ECV-197), a mid-level exploratory vessel. While it is technically an exploratory vessel, they get into trouble over and over again. This trouble is usually with species like the Krill and the Kaylor, both having some interesting lore to them.

The first episode sets an interesting tone for several characters and the relationships between them. Starting the show off with Ed walking in on his then wife Kelly Grayson, played by Adrianne Palicki, sleeping with a blue alien and switching to him being promoted to Captain of his own ship was a unique start to a show about space exploration for sure. Next thing you know, Kelly Grayson is found to be Commander Kelly Grayson, the newly appointed First Mate to her now ex-husband Ed on his new ship, Orville.

A character that has some interesting story lines and character development is Lieutenant Gordon Malloy, played by Scott Grimes.

He does not seem to be very lucky in love, but his humor is almost always on point with his timing. He has quickly become a favorite of mine with how he handles tough situations with humor and wit. Malloy is also a very intelligent man who can think on the fly with his piloting skills, like when he pulls off a risky maneuver he called “Hugging the Donkey,” where he moved the ship around the enemy ship as if drifting a car instead of a massive spaceship.

Lieutenant Commander Bortus, played by Peter Macon, and Doctor Claire Finn, played by Penny Johnson Jerald, are characters that play an important role in the show as well. Bortus is a race of alien that is known as a single sex race, though that becomes one of those hard topics they broach later. He is very dry and brutally honest, but it works for him. Doctor Claire has interesting character depth that gets explored in her romantic subplots as well as her handling of complex situations. She is a very compassionate character but has a wry sense of humor that pairs well with her field. I would say overall, “The Orville” is a solid 4/5 for me.

Garlic Butter Shrimp Pasta

Fatimah Bader reporter

Prep time: 10 minutes

Cook time: 20 minutes

Ingredients: (Serves: 2–3)

- 8 ounces pasta (spaghetti, linguine, or penne)
- 1/2 pound raw shrimp, peeled and deveined
- 2 tablespoons butter
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- Salt, to taste
- Black pepper, to taste
- 1/4 teaspoon paprika (optional)
- 1/4 teaspoon red pepper flakes (optional)
- 1/4 cup grated Parmesan cheese
- Chopped parsley (optional)
- Lemon wedges (optional)

Directions:

1. Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil. Cook the pasta according to package directions until al dente. Reserve about 1/2 cup of the pasta water, then drain and set aside.
2. While the pasta cooks, season the shrimp lightly with salt, black pepper, and paprika if using.
3. Heat olive oil and 1 tablespoon of butter in a large skillet over medium heat. Add the shrimp in a single layer and cook for 1–2 minutes per side, until pink and opaque. Remove the shrimp from the skillet and set aside.
4. In the same skillet, add the remaining tablespoon of butter.

Once melted, add the minced garlic and cook for about one minute, stirring constantly, until fragrant.

5. Add the cooked pasta to the skillet and toss to coat. If the pasta looks dry, add a splash of the reserved pasta water.
6. Return the shrimp to the skillet and gently mix everything together. Adjust seasoning with salt and black pepper as needed.
7. Remove from heat and sprinkle with Parmesan cheese. Toss lightly until combined.
8. Garnish with chopped parsley and serve warm, with lemon wedges on the side if desired.

Kitchen Tip:

For extra flavor, finish the pasta with a squeeze of fresh lemon juice or add sautéed spinach or cherry tomatoes for color and balance.

Quick, filling and full of flavor, this garlic butter shrimp pasta is an easy recipe that works just as well for a busy weeknight as it does for a casual weekend dinner.

‘107 Days’: the reality of a presidential campaign

Caroline Kunshek copy editor and webmaster

During a recent long flight, I spent my time paging through Vice President Kamala Harris’s newest book, “107 Days.” I picked up this book hoping that it would answer many of my questions about the shortcomings and controversies surrounding the 2024 presidential election.

Though one of the shorter memoirs authored by a political figure, this one covers several main theses at once: The elaborate ins-and-outs of running an extremely shortened presidential campaign, the stress of doing so while continuing to perform vice-presidential duties, and the pressure of all of this during one of the most high-stakes elections in American history.

Each chapter represents one day in the Harris-Walz campaign. Harris explains in detail several events that may have contributed to her loss, including Joe Roegan’s dishonesty about refusing to schedule her on his podcast while happily hosting her opponent, Joe Biden’s team’s unwillingness to work with her and not against her, and her failure to separate herself from the Biden Administration in the eyes of many voters.

She begins the book by recalling the day she received the phone call from President Biden telling her that he was stepping down from the election. She talks about the simple morning of watching the news, completing her workout routine, and making pancakes for her young nieces. This calm start to the day quickly turned into the shortest presidential campaign in American history.

Harris lists several daunting tasks that were to be completed- in a much shorter amount of time than what is typical. She explains the process of choosing her running mate, admitting that she had a preference towards Pete Buttigieg, but unfortunately knew that a gay man running alongside a woman of color would be too controversial for the broader voting base. Tim Walz providing a rural, neighborly football coach demeanor to the campaign was far more palatable for many.

In addition to her vice-presidential selection, Harris details her day-to-day campaign strategy, hosting rallies in swing states while also speaking to a younger audience through podcasts like “Call Her Daddy” and YouTube channels such as “WIRED,” where she answered the web’s “most searched questions.”

The book humanizes a person who spent the majority

of 2024 under intense scrutiny, with every word under a microscope, and every comment misconstrued in somebody’s aunt’s Facebook post. A heavily discussed topic in this book was working for the greater good throughout her life while also being a woman of color in a world that isn’t always so equal. While the book wasn’t quite a biography, it provides details on how her upbringing and previous political experiences shaped who she was and how she ran her campaign.

“107 Days” was a shockingly emotional read for me. As someone who was very aware of and passionate about the previous election, I knew going in that many of these anecdotes would not be news to me. However, her memoir showed me that in her unique position, Harris wasn’t always able to explain or defend certain decisions that were made. For better or for worse, this book repeatedly reminded me of what could’ve been, and what should’ve been.

‘We Bury the Dead’ is braindead

Bryce Bicknell reporter



| Photo courtesy of IMDb

“We Bury the Dead” is perhaps the emptiest nothing movie I have watched in a long time. It is worse than bad, it is in fact, nothing. Nothing is the worst thing a movie can be.

The film is directed by Zak Hilditch and stars Daisy Ridley as Ava, Brenton Thwaites as Clay, and Mark Coles Smith as Riley. The movie is set in Tasmania after America accidentally launches a new experimental weapon resulting in the city of Hobart being destroyed and leaving the remaining population brain dead. But of course, some are still alive and might as well be zombies.

Ava is an American who has volunteered to help with the clean-up of the area in hopes of finding her husband’s body. She is assigned with Clay, a local in the area who, besides being cool-looking, has no personality. They are tasked with going into houses to find dead bodies and then alert the military of the ones that are alive. Ava wants to go looking in the area her husband was in, so the two find a motorcycle and ride off before encountering Riley, a member of the military who says he will help them. While all of this is happening, we see flashbacks of Ava and her husband before he went away to Tasmania.

It’s simple, and with a run time of around 90 minutes, you’d think it would be nice and straight to the point. But for some reason, it takes forever for anything to happen, and feels double the length.

One-third of the film is spent on the opening scenes of corpses being dragged around. It’s so utterly boring and it’s not even scary. Things happen in the movie, but it feels like nothing happens.

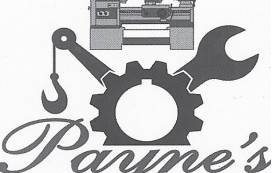
The ending isn’t great either, dragging on for way too long. Essentially, Riley kidnaps Ava and tries to make her his wife, but she kills him. She meets back up with Clay and they find her husband’s body. It’s revealed that Ava cheated on her husband and that’s why he left for Tasmania. Then Ava and Clay ride off. It’s supposed to be emotional, but it’s so hard to care about these characters or their lives.

The acting is alright; Ridley gives a good enough performance. The film’s atmosphere is pretty good along with the general setting being nice to look at. But then again, I didn’t sacrifice 90 minutes of my life just to watch a pretty screensaver.

What shocks me the most is the positive attitude many have toward the film. Personally, I think this has to do with the general rejection horror movies get from the mainstream compared to other genres. To some, “We Bury the Dead” is unique and different, and therefore worthy of praise. But to me if a horror movie isn’t scary, if it isn’t giving a deep message, and if it isn’t entertaining, it has failed. Do not watch this movie, you would be wasting 90 minutes of your life that you can never get back. I give “We Bury the Dead” a 4.3 out of 10.



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Sororities start their informal recruitment

Mark Ziegler reporter

Greek life has been present at most college campuses for decades, and Pittsburg State is no exception to this. As with any group of students, fraternities and sororities are always seeking new members to keep their chapters and their traditions alive. Pittsburg State’s own sororities have been working to bring in new faces and show their traditions through two different processes- the formal recruitment process, which happens in the fall, and the informal recruitment process, which happens when there are open spots available in houses. Some of Pittsburg State’s sororities are taking part in the informal recruitment process, each with their own unique events and ideas

One such example is Sigma Sigma Sigma, whose new house opened up this past November. Founded in 1898 at Longwood University, Pittsburg State is home to the Chi chapter, which opened in 1922. Emma Kratz, a junior triple majoring in Marketing, Management, and Human Resource Development, serves as their Recruitment Director

“I chose to join Sigma Sigma Sigma because I felt right at home the moment I stepped foot into their doors during the formal recruitment process,” Kratz said. “The members in Tri Sigma were kind, welcoming, and authentically themselves.”

To kick off their informal recruiting process, the sisters of Sigma Sigma Sigma hosted “Dip Into Our Sisterhood” at their home on Feb. 4, where potential newcomers enjoyed dipped treats while learning about Sigma Sigma Sigma.

“This event provides an opportunity for potential new members to get to know our sisterhood, while also allowing our members to get to know the potential new members” Kratz explains.

Another sorority partaking in the informal recruitment process is Alpha Sigma Alpha, which was also founded at Longwood University in 1901. The Eta Eta chapter here on campus is seeking to make personal bonds with their potential new members during this process by inviting them on coffee outings.

“We’re hosting smaller recruitment events so potential new members can meet a variety of women, but we’re also doing one-on-one coffee dates to make the process more personal,” Sydney Pruitt, a senior psychology major, said.

Pruitt, who chose Alpha Sigma Alpha because she could see herself making genuine connections with its members, went on to say that having these smaller group outings allows for more genuine conversations between members, giving potential new members a sense of connection and belonging.

Alpha Gamma Delta, the final of Pitt State’s trio of sororities, is also doing the informal recruiting process. Founded in 1908 at Syracuse University, the Epsilon Kappa chapter calls Pittsburg State home. Junior exercise science major Carlie Schill joined because she felt her values aligned with what Alpha Gamma Delta’s were.

“I really hope to see an influx in women in Greek life this semester,” Schill said. “I think Greek life is a great opportunity to get involved and it has opened so many doors for me to get involved in other things on campus as well. So, if you are on the fence about joining, come to an event.”

Alpha Gamma Delta is hosted a cupcake decorating night at their house on Tuesday, Feb. 3 as the start of their process, where potential new members came to meet the house’s members and learn more about what being part of Alpha Gamma Delta is like.

Student entrepreneur starts food truck business

Fatimah Bader reporter

The need for a steady income during college quickly turned into a growing local business for Pittsburg State University junior Kelsie Lilly, owner of Tater Pitt, a loaded baked potato food truck located on South Broadway.

Lilly, a business marketing and management major, opened Tater Pitt in November of 2025 while balancing full-time coursework and running the business largely on her own.

“This is my first year at Pitt State and my second year in college,” Lilly said. “I’m

double majoring in business marketing and management, and I’m projected to graduate in December of 2027.”

After moving to Pittsburg, Lilly said she initially took a restaurant job, but realized it wasn’t the right fit. That experience led her to explore a different path with her family’s support.

“I wanted to do something else, so we started brainstorming,” she said. “The original idea was a waffle stand, but with my school schedule, afternoons worked better, so we pivoted.”

With guidance from her grandmother, Lilly settled on a loaded baked potato concept. Choosing the name, however, took time.

“We wanted to incorporate the word potato, but we didn’t know if it should be potato, tater or spud,” Lilly said. “We were all sitting on the couch throwing out names until we landed on Tater Pitt.”

She said the name reflects both the food and the city it serves, adding an extra “T” to reference Pittsburg. Turning the idea into reality required quick decision-making and detailed planning. Lilly said the concept came together in early October, and the truck opened just weeks later.

“There’s a lot of behind-the-scenes work that people don’t realize,” she said. “From licenses and permits to figuring out where to buy supplies and how much to charge, everything has to be done before you can open.”

Lilly said one of the biggest challenges has been managing time as both a student and a business owner.

“I think my biggest challenge is making sure everything is done,” she said. “I’m a full-time student, and I also have to grocery shop, check emails, fill propane tanks, and keep up with paperwork.”

To manage the workload, Lilly said she focuses on one role at a time.

“When I’m in class, I’m in class. When I’m at work, I’m at work,” she said. “That’s what’s helped me stay focused.”

Despite the challenges, Lilly said the most rewarding part has been seeing community support grow.

“I’m really proud of the loyal customers who keep coming back,” she said. “I love knowing that I can make someone’s day with just a warm potato.”

Tater Pitt has gained attention through social media, particularly Facebook. Lilly said the response surprised her.

“The first week we were open, we reached over 500,000 views,” she said. “We hadn’t even opened yet, and people were already excited.”

She said consistency and portion size help the menu stand out.

“Our flavors are consistent, and our portions are big,” Lilly said. “Our potatoes are a pound before any toppings go on.”

Lilly added that her business and marketing classes have directly supported her work.

“I’m learning how to market to different groups, not just students,” she said. “What works for college students doesn’t always work for older community members.”

For students interested in starting a business, Lilly offered simple advice.

“Just do it,” she said. “People wait for the perfect time, and then they look back wishing they had started sooner.”

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Gorillas continue to race ahead

Curtis Meyer reporter

The Pitt state track and field teams kept up the good work this weekend, continuing to impress on both the women’s and men’s sides. Pitt State just had a dominant run last weekend, when they hosted the Rumble in the Jumble D2 Invitational. Both men’s and women’s teams took home the gold, along with several record-breaking performances by the gorillas.

The momentum continued with the most recent competition, as they hosted the Pittsburg State Invitational. Both men’s and women’s team combined earned 35 NCAA qualifying marks, needed to secure a spot in the NCAA National Championships.

Redshirt senior Blakelee Winn headlined the women’s 16 qualifying marks toward the 2026 NCAA Division II Indoor National Championships in March. Winn set a new school record in the long jump with her winning mark of 20 feet, 2.5 inches.

Redshirt senior Isabelle Peters also improved her No. 2 ranking in the pole vault Saturday with a season-best clearance of 13-11.25. Breanne Peters placed second in the discipline with a clearance of 13-3.5. Junior Jazmine Williamson also won the triple jump with a season best mark of 40-3; and junior Kyra Heald won the high jump with a best mark of 5-6.5.

On the track, Winn claimed victory in the 60-meter hurdles in a season best time of 8.50 seconds; freshman Jakayla Morgan won the 600-yard run in 1:27.13, and senior Isabel Abdouch won the 200 meters in 24.74. The 4x400m relay of junior Ala’Jah Brooks, freshman Piper Hula, freshman Nikole Cozort, and Abdouch posted the third-fastest time in D2 this season in 3:44.72.

Junior newcomer Ilias Garcia highlighted the men’s 19 qualifying marks by clocking the fastest time in Division II this season in winning the 60 meters in 6.63 seconds. His time was the second-fastest in Pitt State history as well.

Junior Tyrone Jackson (7.79) and sophomore Na’Koriyon James logged the No. 2 and No. 4 times in D2 this season in the 60m hurdles, while junior Nate Watson was clocked in a season-best time of 47.25 in winning the 400 meters Saturday.

Redshirt Sophomore Greyson Smith posted the No. 5 mark in D2 this season, winning the pole vault with a clearance of 17-1 – the fourth-best mark in school history. The 4x400m relay of sophomore Amar Williams, junior Kevar Williams, junior Caden Williams and Watson also clocked the No. 3 time in D2 – 3:08.97. Redshirt junior Dylan Sprecker also recorded a personal-best time of 4:00.27 in winning the mile run. His mark is second overall in Pitt State history.

In short, in just the third competition of this young year, the Pitt State Gorillas are showing why they were national champions last year and promising to do more of the same. It’s shaping up to be another very promising year for both the men’s and women’s track and field teams, and the season is only just beginning. This season promises to be historic for Pittsburg State.



Junior criminal justice major Jason Swartzlander builds up speed during the 5000 meter dash event. Swartzlander covered the distance in 14:59.74 minutes, earning 7th place in a 39-person heat. | Photo by Mark Ziegler

Gorillas Baseball off to hot start

Curtis Meyer reporter

It’s a new year and a new season for Pitt State baseball fans, and things are looking up early for the Gorillas. Last year was a strong year for Gorilla baseball, as they went 42-12 overall, making their way into the NCAA DII Regional Championship game before falling short against #3 ranked Central Missouri. Pitt State looks primed to continue competing at a high level, as they started this season winning three games in a row in dominant fashion over Southern Arkansas this past weekend. This also marks the beginning of a new era for the Gorillas, as new head coach Brock Buckingham started his Pitt State career off strong.

The Gorillas traveled to Magnolia, Arkansas, in a three-game series against the Muleriders. The first game was played Sunday early afternoon and was a resounding 11-2 win over Southern Arkansas. Things were tied up after the first inning at one apiece, before a three-run third inning broke it open for the Gorillas. Pitt State would continue to pile on the points throughout the game, bringing in three runs in the same inning twice.

Senior Grant Nottleman led Pitt State on offense, going three for five at the plate with a triple and five runs driven in. Senior leadoff hitter Jaydn McNealy earned three hits, one of which was a double, and scored twice in the game. Preseason All-American senior Dagen Brewer continued his hot hitting from the 2025 campaign, going 2-for-5 with three runs scored and an RBI, while newcomer redshirt senior Isaac Webb went 2-for-3 with two walks and three runs scored.

UCO senior transfer Preston Giltner limited SAU to one run on three hits over 3.0 innings of work to open the game. Junior Bradyn McClure (1-0) earned the win by tossing 4.0 innings of one-hit relief. He issued two walks and registered five strikeouts. Redshirt junior Bradley Neill also tossed two clean innings

with two strikeouts on the back end. Game two of the doubleheaders looked to be a much closer game for the first half, as the Gorillas held a thin 2-1 lead after the fourth inning. Pitt State would explode on offense at the top of the fifth, knocking in 11 straight runs to turn the game into a rout.

Junior newcomer Eric Bacon went 3-for-4 with a double and four runs scored, while Brewer doubled and drove in three runs. Brewer tied the Pitt State record for consecutive hits (22) in the contest. Junior Landon Bruce also had three hits and a pair of RBI, while Webb added two hits and three RBI. Starter Graduate Student Zach Voss (1-0) limited SAU to one run on two hits over 4.0 innings of work. Redshirt junior Ty Blecha (2.0 IP) and redshirt freshman Porter Starnes (1.0 IP) collaborated to toss three scoreless innings of relief.

The series sweep was secured on Monday, as the Gorillas dominated again in a 13-3 victory over the Muleriders. Pitt State would score six runs in the second inning, jumping out to an early lead and never looking back.

Bacon paced Pitt State’s 14-hit attack by going 4-for-5 with a double, a triple and five runs batted in. Brewer smacked a two-run home run as part of the Gorillas’ six-run second inning, setting the Pitt State record for consecutive games hit streak (23).

Webb also enjoyed a four-hit game, delivering a double and a triple while driving in a pair of runs. Redshirt junior Cason Long (1-0) earned the win in relief. Long, who returned to the field after missing the 2025 season due to injury, worked in 2.0 hitless innings, issuing three walks and registering three strikeouts. Redshirt sophomore Elijah Seitz started the game and limited SAU to one run on four hits over 3.0 innings of work.

The Gorillas will return to action, when they travel to the Edmond First Pitch Classic starting Thursday.

Gorillas take fourth loss of season

Curtis Meyer reporter

The Pitt State women’s basketball team absorbed just their fourth loss of the season this past week, as they fell to the Northeastern State Riverhawks on Thursday, before bouncing back in a win over the Arkansas Fort Smith Lions on Saturday. The #11 Gorillas have lost just two games to MIAA opponents this season, including the one on Thursday.

The game was back and forth all day between the Riverhawks and the Gorillas, with the Riverhawks holding a slight 35-34 edge at halftime. Pitt State would outscore Arkansas Forth Smith in the third quarter, leading by as much as 12 points, but the determined Riverhawks would pull away in the fourth, as they have now won six in a row.

Junior Jamiya Brown led the Gorillas in scoring, notching 22 points. Freshman Kaycee McCumber added 12 points while fellow freshman Marin Adams added another 11 points. Senior Harper Schreiner contributed nine points, along with a game high ten rebounds and four assists. Pitt State allowed 20 turnovers and was outscored 20-9 at the free throw line, as they stumbled their way into a defeat.

Despite the loss, the Gorillas did not lose momentum in the next game: They had a strong 68-58 win over the Arkansas Fort Smith Lions. Pitt State led the Lions for the entire game, outscoring them 36-24 in the first half. The Gorillas shot 47% from the field. The Gorillas almost gave up the lead at the start of the third quarter, when they allowed Arkansas Fort Smith to go on a 13-3 run to bring the score within two points, but the Gorillas held on to pull away in the fourth quarter and regain control of the ball game.

Sophomore Clara Swearingen finished

with a game high 17 points, including three three-pointers, while McCumber added 16 points and a game high 12 rebounds. McCumber was also a perfect seven of seven from the field, shooting 100% on the night. Adams would contribute with 13 points and four assists, including some clutch late-game shooting to keep the Gorillas in the lead. Freshman Karolina Kiraga would add a steal, an assist, and a three-pointer at a critical time to turn the lead from 52-38 into 59-50, finishing with three points, three assists, and two steals.

The Gorillas will host Missouri Southern University on Monday night. The Lions are the only other MIAA team to have defeated

the Gorillas so far this season, so no doubt Pitt State will be looking to avenge the loss. The Gorillas will compete in the MIAA tournament starting at the beginning of March, and with just a month of the regular season left, they are in good shape to make a run to end the season. Pitt State will have a pair of away games, before a four-game home stretch in the middle of February.

Softball off to a hot start

Curtis Meyer reporter

The 2026 season has begun, and Pitt State softball has come tearing right out of the gate. The team took a little trip to Daytona beach, Florida, this past weekend, where they competed in the Embry-Riddle Invitational. The trip was a resounding success for Pitt State, as they won four in a row to start the season undefeated.

The Gorillas are coming off of a disappointing end to the last two seasons, where they were bounced out of the NCAA Division II regionals both years, despite the 2024 team holding the Pitt State record for most wins in a season. Coming from that disappointment and still having this strong start shows a team with some heart.

Pitt State started early Friday morning, facing the University of Mount Olive Trojans. The game was a short one, as the Gorillas raced out to a fast 8-0 lead, with the game ending after only six innings of play. Friday continued to be an easy day for the Gorillas, as they faced Embry-Riddle in the afternoon. The Gorillas pitched a second shutout, winning 6-0 to improve to 2-0 overall.

Saturday wouldn’t start until the early afternoon for Pitt State, as they faced the Trojans for a second time. The results were much the same, as the Gorillas won 9-3. Pitt State would take a 3-0 lead in the top of the third inning, and the points would just continue to pile on.

Against Mount Olive, the Gorillas were led by junior Taylor Lundien, who went 4-of-4 with a pair of runs driven in. Graduate student Kady Trochim also finished with two RBI from a pair of hits. In the circle, senior Sailor Hall picked up her first win for Pitt State with four strikeouts in four innings. Junior Emma Crabb finished with 2.2 innings of relief, striking out five.

The Gorillas then pivoted to play Ferris State that same afternoon, in the closest game of the whole tournament for Pitt State, a 13-7 win. Pitt State would get on the board early, racing out to a 4-0 lead, but both teams would become knotted up at seven apiece in the sixth inning. Pitt State held on, scoring six unanswered runs in the seventh inning, taking the lead and the game.

Senior Heather Arnett tied a school record with five hits, while also scoring twice and her bases clearing triple, representing the highest number of runs driven in for the game. Senior Alleyna Rushing finished with four hits, while junior Haili Igou and Rushing tied for the team lead in the game with three runs scored. In the circle, Crabb picked up her first win with 1.2 innings of relief.

The Gorillas will return to action Friday, Feb. 6, when they travel to the Southern Colorado Crossover. Pitt State will face Colorado Springs, then Adams State, followed by Colorado State Pueblo twice. Softball has six tournaments to start the season, with conference play not beginning until late March.

Gorilla basketball wins one, loses another

Curtis Meyer reporter

The Gorillas have had a slow start to the season this year, going 12-8 to start, while being 6-4 in conference play. Not a bad start, but just above average. Pitt State continued that trend this past week, winning on Thursday before taking a loss on Saturday.

The Gorillas started with a strong game against the Northeastern State University Riverhawks, cruising to a 93-77 win. Pitt State got off to a hot start offensively, outscoring the Riverhawks 48-31 in the first half. The Gorillas offense continued to work, scoring 45 points in the second half, despite the defense allowing Northeastern State to score 46 points in the second. Pitt State finished with a team shooting percentage of 59.4.

Freshman Mason English led the charge with 27

points, a game high, while also going 11 of 19 from the floor. If the name English sounds familiar to you, that’s because Mason’s older brother Deshaun English was an integral part of the team for the last four years, having just graduated after last season. Fellow freshman Ethan Sage contributed 16 points, seven rebounds, and two blocked shots on defense. Sophomore Alijah Curry added 14 points, while redshirt junior Donald Coats rounded out the scoring with 11 points.

The momentum would not carry them into back-to-back wins, unfortunately, as the Gorillas lost a close one to the #17 Arkansas Forth Smith Lions on Saturday. Losing 76-71, Pitt State battled, but fell just short. The Gorillas had a decent 40-31 lead at the half time

break, but the Lions would score the first 14 points of the second half to retake the lead and the momentum. Pitt State wasn’t giving up yet, pulling within a point at 72-73 thanks to a pari of sunk free throws by Curry, but Arkansas Fort Smith would cash in some last second free throws to pull away and take the game.

Junior Connor Rogers led Pitt State in scoring with 26 points and a team leading 36 minutes of game time. English contributed 12 points, while Coats would add nine points and eight rebounds. Freshman Landon Short would round out Pitt State’s scorers with eight points.

With the week’s results, Pitt State sits at 12-8, and 6-4 in MIAA conference play. Pitt State will take the court again Thursday, when they travel to Emporia Kansas before making the trip to play Newman University on Saturday. Following this two-game road trip, the Gorillas will be looking at five home games in a row, which they will need to capitalize on if they wish to qualify for the MIAA championship tournament at the beginning of March. The Gorillas only have a month left of regular season basketball this year and will need to kick it up a notch to end the season strong.

When parks become classrooms: bridging science and stories

Mat Dains reporter

On Thursday, Jan. 29, Dr. Delia Lister, director of Nature Reach and Professor at Pittsburg State University. Dr. Lister shared insights from her doctoral research on climate change communications in the United States’ national parks, highlighting how science storytelling and trust can shape the public understanding of global warming. Lester’s work focuses on bridging the gap between scientific research and public engagement.

While scientists are adept at communicating complex data, some tend to fall short in interpreting it to the general public. Heritage interpreters, such as National Park Service Rangers, play a critical role in translating science into accessible, meaningful stories. According to Lister, National Parks are uniquely positioned for this type of work because they are among the few trusted public institutions in the United States and serve as a classroom for both natural and cultural learning.

Her research, conducted alongside her former Nature Reach peers, centered on iconic but vulnerable parks: Joshua Tree National Park in California and its iconic Joshua trees, and Glacier Bay National Park in Alaska, respectively, for its glaciers. Both these sites were selected because their defining features, Joshua trees and glaciers, are directly threatened by climate change, making them powerful case studies for communication and education.

At Joshua Tree, Dr. Lister’s team conducted field observations, interviewed visitors, and studied exhibit interactions and Ranger-led interpretive programs. The park spans two deserts, the Mojave and the Colorado, and attracts more visitors than it can sustainably support. Joshua trees are a keystone species of the Mojave Desert and serve as direct indicators of the ecosystem’s health. Modeling research predicts that by 2050, much of the Joshua tree population may not survive due to rising temperatures, drought, wildfires, and, most of all, invasive grasses fueled by pollution from Los Angeles.

Wildlife is also being affected. The Desert tortoise populations have declined dramatically due to extreme heat, reduced precipitation, vehicle collisions, and the illegal pet trade. Once an iconic species of the desert, it now faces an uncertain future despite its role as a major ecosystem engineer, creating shelter for other species.

Dr. Lister also emphasizes the importance of place-based stories. Joshua Trees, the ancestral homeland of several indigenous tribes, and its preservation are tied to the efforts of Minerva Hamilton White, whose advocacy led to the park’s design as a national monument. Cultural icons such as U2’s “Joshua Tree” album, the legend of musician Gram Parsons, and the annual “GramFest” further illustrate how personal connection plays a key role in how people remember and protect these parks.

The research team also spent two weeks in Glacier Bay National Park observing climate communication in a dramatically different environment; unlike Joshua Tree National Park’s drive-through experience, Glacier Bay is primarily accessed by water. Rangers deliver interpretive programs aboard cruise ships where visitors learn about glacial retreat, wildlife, and climate impacts in real time in Glacier Bay. Lister and her students observe humpback whales, sea otters, stellar sea lions, mountain goats, and other marine life in the tidal waters. Documenting how visitors engage with climate information, the park’s glaciers have retreated rapidly, part of a broader trend in which 95% of Alaska’s glaciers have shrunk between 1985 and 2020, primarily due to human-caused climate change. Marine heat waves have also contributed to significant declines in humpback whale populations. Climate change has also reshaped human history in the region. The Native people living in Glacier Bay were forced from their

ancestral homeland during the Little Ice Age. As advancing glaciers overtook their villages, today federal land policies prevent their return underscoring the long-term social impacts of environmental change.

Dr. Lister described climate change as the “perfect problem;” complex, slow-moving, and psychologically distant, while global temperatures have risen approximately 1.35° C. The excess energy trapped in the atmosphere is equivalent to hundreds of thousands of atomic bombs detonating daily, driving extreme weather, health risk and ecosystem collapse. Yet many people perceive climate change as a distant or abstract threat, shaped mostly by political identity, which means information and deliberate doubt campaigns by fossil fuel interests.

Research shows that people trust family and friends more than media or politicians when learning about climate change. Notably, the National Park service ranks as the most trusted government agency for climate information across all political affiliations. This trust makes parks critical spaces for meaningful impactful climate education, though Lister noted missed opportunities included limited exhibit spaces, staffing challenges and hesitation around climate messaging. In her conclusion, Dr. Lister emphasized that talking about climate change is one of the most powerful actions that an individual can take in spreading awareness.

Personal stories shared by trusted messengers help to make the issue tangible and relatable by countering fear-based or overly technical approaches. She encourages students and community members to engage through volunteering, supporting environmental organizations, contacting elected officials, and voting both at the ballot and with their wallets.

Ultimately, Dr. Lister’s research highlights the vital role national parks play in shaping public perceptions and understanding of climate change through storytelling, science-based interpretation, and open conversations. Parks have the potential to reach audiences where traditional messaging often falls short, turning shared experiences into everlasting awareness in action.



Dr. Lister closing seminar with an engaging audience Q&A. | Photo by Mat Dains



Dr. Delia Lister, opening seminar on Doctoral Research of National Parks and climate change. | Photo by Mat Dains



Dr. Lister’s audience during Q&A section. | Photo by Mat Dains

GAB manifesting new year success with vision boards

Masynn Acheson reporter

On Jan. 29, the Gorilla Activities Board (GAB) hosted an event in front of the Campus Bookstore in the Overman Student Center, inviting students to make vision boards.

Vision boards are meant to help someone have a physical reminder of a goal they have set for themselves or reminders for yourself. One of the students in attendance, Luis Cancinos, a sophomore studying construction, said that he was “focusing on a lot of growth as a person, like being responsible.”

Not only did he want to focus on personal growth and responsibility, but he also wanted to include a few messages for himself, such as “Celebrate your small wins,” saying “Small wins lead to big wins, and when you get those big ones, you’ve got to remember to celebrate those small wins.”

Cancinos had some great advice concerning something many people, especially students, struggling with daily life. He included a small card in his vision board that said, “Progression over

Perfection.” He interpreted the message as meaning, “Nobody’s ever perfect, and as long as you’re getting another step ahead every day, you’re getting a little better.”

Morgan Scott, a senior in the nursing program and the president of GAB, said that vision boards were good “for people to get their vision of their year and their goals put together and put on a board.”

Scott said that vision boards were a passion of hers that she does every year to help visualize her goals and intentions for the year ahead. To her, putting not only your goals, intentions, and your motivations was important, but putting your personality into it was something she valued in them, saying that “you’re not going to hang it up if it doesn’t reflect who you are.”

Bella Nadeau is not only a sophomore studying elementary education, but she is also the programming chair for GAB, so she was the lead for this event. Due to how soon the event was scheduled

after the new school year began, she said she did most of the planning during the break on her own. She spent a few days on Pinterest to get more ideas for things to include in the tables of supplies. She took a different approach to her vision board. She took the approach of things to look forward to and keep her motivated throughout the year through reminders of the travel plans she has set for the year.

Sommer Fisher, a family and Senior in consumer sciences major, had “been thinking of making a vision board for a while,” so she was “excited to finally get that chance.”

Fisher thought of it as a “good way to kind of prepare yourself for the new year and get an idea of the things you’re looking forward to.” She says that she is “really looking forward to working with students, traveling with friends, maintaining friendships, and making new friends” for this new year.

As sustainability becomes more prominent in corporate messaging, it can be difficult for consumers to determine whether companies are genuinely adjusting their business values or engaging in greenwashing. Despite this uncertainty, progress from major corporations can have a broader impact. As companies like Amazon and Apple take steps toward more sustainable practices, there is hope that other businesses will follow their lead. With growing public pressure and increased awareness, sustainability is shifting from a marketing tool to a competitive and ethical necessity.

Submit letters to collegio.news@gmail.com

Supreme Court allows new California gerrymandered congressional

By MARK SHERMAN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Supreme Court on Wednesday allowed California to use a new voter-approved congressional map that is favorable to Democrats in this year’s elections, rejecting a last-ditch plea from state Republicans and the Trump administration.

No justices dissented from the brief order denying the appeal without explanation, which is common on the court’s emergency docket.

The justices had previously allowed Texas’ Republican-friendly map to be used in 2026, despite a lower-court ruling that it likely discriminates on the basis of race.

Conservative Justice Samuel Alito wrote in December that it appeared both states had adopted new maps for political advantage, which the high court has previously ruled cannot be a basis for a federal lawsuit.

Republicans, joined by the Trump administration, claimed the California map improperly relied on race as well. But a lower court disagreed by a 2-1 vote. The Justice Department and White House did not immediately respond to messages seeking comment.

The justices’ unsigned order keeps in place districts that are designed to flip up to five seats now held by Republicans, part of a tit-for-tat nationwide redistricting battle spurred by President Donald Trump, with control of Congress on the line in midterm elections.

Last year, at Trump’s behest, Texas Republicans redid the state’s congressional districts with an eye on gaining five seats.

California Gov. Gavin Newsom, a Democrat who is eyeing a 2028 presidential run, pledged to respond in kind, though he had to win over voters, not just lawmakers, to do so.

Newsom celebrated the court’s decision, saying on social media that Trump had “started this redistricting war” and would end up losing out in the November midterms, when control of Congress is at stake.

California’s attorney general, Democrat Rob Bonta, said the decision was “good news not only for Californians, but for our democracy.”

The state Republican Party, which brought the case, did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

One longtime party strategist, Jon Fleishman, a former executive director of the California Republican Party, said in a post on X that the decision means “this year’s elections will take place on the new lines shrinking the already very small Republican delegation from California.”

Filing for congressional primaries in California begins on Monday.



Gov. Gavin Newsom speaks during a campaign event on Proposition 50, Nov. 1, 2025, in Los Angeles. | Photo courtesy of AP Photo/Ethan Swope

Federal Lawyer fired

By MICHAEL KUNZELMAN and ALANNA DURKIN RICHER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — A government lawyer who told a judge that her job “sucks” during a court hearing stemming from the Trump administration’s immigration enforcement surge in Minnesota has been removed from her Justice Department post, according to a person familiar with the matter.

Julie Le had been working for the Justice Department on a detail, but the U.S. attorney in Minnesota ended her assignment after her comments in court on Tuesday, the person said. The person spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss a personnel matter. She had been working for U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement before the temporary assignment.

At a hearing Tuesday in St. Paul, Minnesota, for several immigration cases, Le told U.S. District Judge Jerry Blackwell that she wishes he could hold her in contempt of court “so that I can have a full 24 hours of sleep.”

“What do you want me to do? The system sucks. This job sucks. And I am trying every breath that I have so that I can get you what you need,” Le said, according to a transcript.

Le’s extraordinary remarks reflect the intense strain that has been placed on the federal court system since President Donald Trump returned to the White House a year ago with a promise to carry out mass deportations. ICE officials have said the surge in Minnesota has become its largest-ever immigration operation since ramping up in early January.

Several prosecutors have left the U.S. Attorney’s office in Minnesota amid frustration with the immigration enforcement surge and the Justice Department’s response to fatal shootings of two civilians by federal agents. Le was assigned at least 88 cases in less than a month, according to online court records.

Blackwell told Le that the volume of cases isn’t an excuse for disregarding court orders. He expressed concern that people arrested in immigration enforcement operations are routinely jailed for days after judges have ordered their release from custody.

“And I hear the concerns about all the energy that this is causing the DOJ to expend, but, with respect, some of it is of your own making by not complying with orders,”

Cont. from TOAST pg. 1

Although delays in equipment delivery pushed the timeline slightly behind schedule, Horton said she hopes to begin welcoming community members once final approvals are complete.

Reflecting on her own experience, Horton said having access to a shared commercial kitchen earlier in her career would have made the process easier.

“I worked out of my stepdad’s farm kitchen and a friend’s kitchen when I was getting started,” she said. “You do what you have to do, but something like this would have helped.”

Her advice to aspiring food entrepreneurs remains simple.

“Just start,” Horton said. “Start feeding people, listen to feedback and take it one step at a time.”

Horton said she hopes the incubator will serve as both a practical resource and a source of encouragement for those interested in beginning their food business journey, while continuing TOAST’s long-standing commitment to the local community.

Cont. from KANSAS pg. 1

Some books showcased included “Seeding Civil War” by Craig Miner, “West of Wichita” also by Craig Miner, and “Bust to Boom” by Donald Worster. Alongside the books were yellow and blue icing sugar cookies.

She later showed coloring sheets from old yearbooks back when they used woodcuts.

“We also have coloring sheets that include more than just Kansas symbols,” Loew said.

“I am new to Kansas,” Loew said. “I just came here in May, and I think it’s really cool that there is a day to call attention to the features of the state and state history.”

With Kansas Day on his mind, Hutsen likes to know what is going on in the state, especially with the agricultural side of things.

“It’s always fun to see what our state is currently doing with agriculture and how we are growing, both urbanely and rurally, seeing how those two life styles merge together throughout the entire state,” Hutsen said. “You have a lot of farmland throughout the state, and then you have big cities, and sometimes, you’ll have cities with less than 10, but it’s how they live together that makes it beautiful.”

Not everyone was here for the event. Freshman biology major Tagan Smith came to enjoy the environment.

“I just needed to work on some stuff and I enjoy the environment. I think it’s peaceful,” Smith said.

Smith finds Kansas Day to be interesting, and it has been apart of her whole life.

“Actually I have lived here my whole life, so I celebrate Kansas Day pretty much every time,” Smith said. “It’s always fun, like hearing about people from Kansas like Amelia Earhart; you know, other famous people. So it’s always interesting.”

The event highlighted the history of Kansas and the love that citizens have for their state.

There are several other famous people from Kansas, including 34th president Dwight D. Eisenhower, actor Paul Rudd, and Russell Stover, founder of Russell Stover Candies.

Cont. from EXEC pg. 1

As Crespino steps in, he has hopes to grow and build on what has been left to him.

“Jim has hired great coaches and those guys and women have produced,” Crespino said. “We really just need to continue on what he’s built. Like Dr. Newsom said, growing our strengths and finding efficiencies where we can. College athletics is in a unique place right now, but I think because of how we are built and some of the resources and financial support we have from our alumni donors, that we can take advantage of those things. We can continue to be competitive and grow the program.”

Newsom has trust in Crespino as he steps into the role, and sees Johnson taking his philosophy from athletics to the whole university

“I know Anthony is just going to keep feeding coal into the machine and keep that train running on time and on schedule,” Newsom said. “And the fact that they are both here to work together, they will continue that. Jim is going to take that philosophy and basically help me translate that across our university. It makes it a really exciting time. And when you as why now, why not? If we are going to do it, let’s do it.”

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GORILLAS LEAVE IT OUT ON THE COURT



Freshman management major Ethan Sage and freshman sports management major Mason English prepare to defend against an Arkansas-Fort Smith player. The Gorillas fell to an 8-3 record at home. | Photo by Mark Ziegler



Junior business major Connor Rogers finds an opening while being defended during the men’s basketball game on Jan. 31. Before coming to Pitt, Rogers played for East Central Community College. | Photo by Mark Ziegler



Freshman undecided major Cambrie Phillips receives the ball from a teammate, ready to score. The win put the Gorillas at a record of 15-4. | Photo by Mark Ziegler



Freshman undecided major Marin Adams look to her teammate before preparing to drive the ball down the court. The Gorillas faced off next against Missouri Southern on Feb. 2nd. | Photo by Mark Ziegler



Junior sports management major Marie Wembadjonga reaches for the ball during the women’s basketball game on Jan. 31. After the win, the Gorillas are the 4th highest ranked in the MIAA. | Photo by Mark Ziegler