HOME AND HERITAGE
Author presents at Latino Issues Conference on struggles of fitting in while Latina. | PAGE 2

Falcons lose three straight on the road to conference opponent
PAGE 10

Student leaders desire more input on Union changes
PAGE 14

Columnist shares lessons from opening up about racism
PAGE 4

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Latino heritage explored

By Tiffany Jackson
Reporter

The author of "Make Your Home Among Strangers" and "How to Leave Hialeah" spoke at the 26th annual Latino Issues Conference Thursday afternoon about the struggles the main character in her book faced in going to a predominantly white university.

Jennine Capó Crucet captured the audience's attention with a few jokes that filled the room with laughter.

She said she expresses her passion for the sense of voice and self through writing.

She got the idea for her novel "Make Your Home Among Strangers" while serving as a counselor for a Los Angeles based, non-profit organization called One Voice.

"'Make Your Home Among Strangers' came to me almost fully formed one March afternoon of 2010," she said.

While participating in a circle with kids that were asked to share some of their experiences growing up, Crucet said she "lost it" after relating to some of the kids' experiences and spent 10 minutes in her boss' bathroom crying.

She said it was here that a narrator's voice came to her, and she began writing in a small notebook that she carried with her.

"The novel came from the students I worked with at One Voice," she said.

Crucet read three excerpts from her book for the audience.

Crucet described the incident where Lizet, the protagonist of the novel, fell into a contaminated canal and was rushed to the hospital.

In the second excerpt the audience was taken to Lizet's first semester at the fictional Rawlings University and the difficulties she faced fitting in as the first generation in her family to attend college. She faced many struggles in being one of the few Latina students at the university.

Crucet ended her speech with a small scene from her novel about Lizet's experience of traveling from Hialeah, Florida to Havana, Cuba as well as the time she accidentally plagiarized on one of her papers.

"I liked how real she was and how she didn't sugar coat anything," sophomore Kelsey Melendez said about the event.

Melendez said she enjoyed hearing Crucet read and how she gave a voice to the book.

Sophomore Courtney Gies said, "I thought she was really great. You could tell she's very passionate about Latino issues and that (was) reflected in her book and in her speech."

After her speech, Crucet remained to sign copies of her books.

Crucet is currently a professor of English and Ethnic Studies at the University of Nebraska in Lincoln.

Crucet's speech came after the Latino Issues Conference awards presentation by Mantza Castro and Anthony Rivera.

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Accessibility a struggle for scholarships

By Lauren Fitz
Reporter

As the school year draws to a close, a question on students’ minds is how they are going to pay for college for the next year. It’s common knowledge that student loans are a part of college but scholarships are also a part of college life.

There are multiple kinds of scholarships and there are hundreds that University students can choose from that are available online, Betsy Johnson, director of student financial aid and scholarships, said. When scholarships don’t get claimed, there’s two things that can happen to the money that would have been awarded.

“Either we could re-award it to another student or that money is then used the following year,” Johnson said.

While Johnson doesn’t know the exact number of scholarships that are turned down each year, she does have some insight as to why some of them are turned down. Johnson said that scholarships for continuing students and scholarships that have a special application for them rarely go unused.

Instead, some athletic scholarships go unused because a student athlete may have chosen to go to another school instead, Johnson said.

The freshman scholarships that depend on different components may also not be used as many colleges and universities offer different packages.

“At the same time, we have to stay within an institutional budget as well,” Johnson said. “So, some not being used is OK.”

For junior Morgan Palmer, she knows where she can get scholarships through the school, but it’s a matter of making sure she’s completely eligible for scholarships is where she runs into trouble.

SCHOLARSHIP continues on Page 7

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Presented by BGSU Art History Students

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ACCESSIBILITY a struggle for scholarships

By Lauren Fitz
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SCHOLARSHIP continues on Page 7
Advice for conversations on race

I believe there's been an increase on conversations on race related topics because of the media coverage. This is my experience and perspective as a black woman, not necessarily the perspective of all black women or people of color in general for the matter.

It's also important in this context to know that in any piece, including this one, my personal opinions, perspectives and biases will be heavily integrated. You may resonate with everything that I am saying, but you may also disagree, and that's okay.

These past few years I've learned about my ignorance through uncomfortable and controversial conversations about race-related topics. I will be sharing my personal experiences and three things I gained from those conversations.

First, talk about it – it'll be uncomfortable, and that's okay. Don't let fear of what others think be the reason you stay silent. Share your genuine feelings. The problem with choosing to stay silent is that it can perpetuate your ignorance and hinder your growth. It's okay to not know how to word certain things or know the technical terms. Realize it's always going to be hard and uncomfortable, people are going to say crazy things that you don't understand.

It's difficult to understand other perspectives because all you've ever known is yours. It's very important to be open-minded and realize that you don't know everything. There is nothing wrong with conflict and not seeing eye-to-eye on everything, but be committed to work through it. It's easy to believe that if people don't agree with you that they're against you, but that is not always the case.

Having different views and perspectives is healthy; we're all different, even if we're similar we're still different.

There's an importance behind people sharing personal experiences with people who don't look like you. Don't allow your experience to shape your perspective of everyone else's experience.

Challenging yourself to have conversations, especially difficult ones, is the first step.

Second, challenge stereotypes. Society and other biased sources (parents, friends, magazines) have shaped our perspectives of others. Unknowingly, we believe information that lacks credibility, which is why we judge people that we don't know.

Stereotypes, positive or negative, damage our ability to see others' authentic selves. You don't know someone until you really get to know them. Have you ever judged someone based off of one experience or because of what you saw? Would you like someone to

continues on Page 5
Take risks, fight ignorance with interest

I already warned you in my last column that I was going to get off the election subject. I want to talk about a few key issues I’m noticing while I still have time this semester. But today I would like to just get something off my chest. It’s a personal gripe, so excuse the following tirade.

Friends, why is it considered cool to be stupid? Why is it fashionable to be ignorant? Why is inexperience and a lack of knowledge considered fun, or funny or just generally the preferred way to be?

Let me give some examples.

When I first moved to Bowling Green, after separating from the Marine Corps, I got a menial job. While discussing my goals with one of my managers, and how much work I would have to put forth and how much time it would take, she just shook her head. She looked at me and said: “Thank God I already got my goals out of the way.”

I asked her what she meant. She told me all she ever wanted was to get a small home and have a few kids. And she got it. She has a trailer in North Baltimore and she popped out five kids. She’s 27. And happy, I guess. Somehow.

When I am confronted with those types of stories from people, I usually can excuse my discomfort with how I merely grew used to living my life. Ever since I was a child, I’ve always been adventurous. There was never a dirt hill too tall, sewer pipe too dark or muddy or closed fairground with chain link I couldn’t sneak my way over. I joined the Marine Corps purely with the desire to have an adventure. Of any kind.

I thought it would be interesting, because I consider myself an amateur linguist and enjoy anything that explores the actual fun behind language.

The first post I saw was a small paragraph about how “cough, through, thought and ought all make a different sound, but pony and bologna rhyme.” It finished off with “isn’t English weird?”

Well, yes. It is weird. If you merely glimpse at it and walk away, I saw that there were some 4000 reblogs of the meme, and realized that was just what was going on.

Four thousand people read the meme, chuckled, shared it, and then moved on with their life.

But were there any comments to describe why those words sound the way they do?

Or any enlightenment into how English had such words evolve within the language?

Nope.

People were comfortable with the lack of knowledge and proud to display the ignorance.

There was also a vine I saw recently titled “The Weirdest (sic) Thing You’ll See Today.” I accepted that challenge and clicked play. What did I see?

A crab molting. A crab shedding its old shell.

Why is that weird? Why would someone assume that would be the strangest thing I saw all day?

Oh, because people don’t know about it.

And they want to let the world know they don’t know about it. I don’t really want to tell you how many views that Vine had, nor how many shares it had on Facebook.

It was a depressing amount.

Now, as usual, I am coming across as a grumpy old man. I am once again arrogantly yelling at kids to get off my lawn.

“Come on, dude,” you may say. “These are just jokes.”

Well, it may be arrogant, and I may be grumpy (so, so grumpy), but I don’t get the joke. Because I can see the harm in being passé about ignorance.

Trump, Cruz, Clinton and Sanders are only as popular as they are because people don’t realize the inanity of what these politicians preach. People refuse to read into policy and are voting for these candidates because their words merely sound right.

Because it’s just not cool to know better. Nobody deems it necessary to read into anything anymore.

We have an entire anti-vaccine movement making children sick. Because nobody wants to actually look into the actual science behind vaccines. It’s cooler, more gauche, to just accept what the flashy green social media pages tell people.

And I could go on, but I think my therapy session is just about over. Thank you for letting me rant, or at least thank you for reading the rant.

And please, help me end the culture of ignorance. Let’s make it cool to be intelligent again.

Respond to Bryan at thenews@bgnews.com
New org provides diabetes support

By Lily Bartell
Reporter

University freshman Blair Baumle and junior Justin Micheal recently started a College Diabetes Network chapter at the University to advocate and provide support for students affected by diabetes.

CDN is a non-profit organization and provides support for students living with Type 1 diabetes. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, more than 29 million Americans have been diagnosed with diabetes. In addition to this, about 7,700 students with Type 1 diabetes enter college each year, according to a study published on the American Diabetes Association website.

Baumle is a Type 1 diabetic and was searching for a connection with other students with diabetes on campus. She found the College Diabetes Network when searching for scholarships and realized the University did not have a chapter. She inquired about starting a new chapter and CDN helped her set up the organization.

“Baumle is a Type 1 diabetic and was searching for a connection with other students with diabetes on campus.”

“I think this organization will thrive on campus because there is a need. There is nothing like this for diabetics on campus,” she said. “Especially for diabetic students transitioning into college if they reach out, they will find there is an organization for them.”

Intervention specialist major Micheal also has Type 1 diabetes and said he struggled with the transition from high school to college. He said students with diabetes have to be more aware of what and when they are eating and how differences in daily routines can influence insulin levels.

“I was a bit nervous coming to school even though I was doing a lot on my own at home,” he said. “I was nervous because everything was going to change. It was going to change week-to-week and semester-to-semester and I wasn’t quite sure how I’d handle that.”

Junior public relations major and new member of CDN Brooke Ebersole said transitioning from high school to college shocked her system and she ended up spending time in the hospital and struggling with school.

“It’s good because it says, ‘don’t come into college and forget you have diabetes,’ because that’s what I did,” she said. “If I could have gone back in time and had something like this, it would have been helpful.”

The faculty advisor for CDN’s BGSU chapter is David Saltzman, an instructor from the College of Musical Arts. Saltzman has Type 1 diabetes and was diagnosed in college. He and Baumle found out they both have diabetes and Saltzman wanted to be involved.

“I remember when I was in college, the ability to have a support group with other diabetics would have been helpful,” he said. “College is a stressful time with choosing foods, exercising and stress and it’s really important for diabetics to have a community and it allows them to not feel alone.”

Baumle and Micheal said they are working on a plan to visit ProMedica Toledo Hospital and volunteer in their endocrinology center. They also plan to fundraise during American Diabetes Month in November and throughout the year to donate money to diabetes research.

“I’m hoping we can find new members who are as passionate about this program as we are,” Micheal said.

The next CDN meeting will be on March 30 at 6:30 p.m. in Business Administration 106. For more information contact Blair Baumle at bbaumle@bgsu.edu.

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SCHOLARSHIP continued from Page 3

“I did once and some of it I wasn’t eligible for,” Palmer said.

If scholarships were more accessible, she said she would definitely apply for more of them.

In fact, the accessibility of scholarships seems to be the problem for most students. Sophomore Jordan Garich said she’s applied to scholarships but feels as though they aren’t advertised as much as they could be.

“I feel like they’re not super advertised around campus. I had a history professor … who handed out a handout about the different history major scholarships and if she hadn’t handed out the paper I wouldn’t have known about them,” Garich said.

Scholarships are able to be searched online at the University’s website, though the way the website is set up might be changing in the future, as Johnson wants to improve for future use.

“Everything’s not located in one spot,” Johnson said. “For BGSU-specific scholarships, we have a page, we have a searchable scholarship area and then we have them divided out by the colleges or if it’s a foundation scholarship … so they’re still not clean in one space. That’s definitely something I’m looking at for future years to improve upon.”

Johnson says to look at libraries and even where their parents work to see if there are scholarship options for them. She also recommends looking at scholarship search engines online but sticking to only one search engine to eliminate seeing the same scholarship pop up twice.

And for students who are worried about what the FAFSA form might have said, Johnson said not all scholarships need the FAFSA filled out in order to get the scholarships. Instead, only need-based scholarships are required to show the FAFSA.
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Continued from Page 2

SAT., MAR. 26
12:07 A.M.
Dominique L. Key, 18, of Maumee, Ohio, and Ricky A. Lightner, 18, of Toledo, were cited for underage possession of alcohol and open container of alcohol in a motor vehicle within the 100 block of N. Prospect Street.

12:30 A.M.
Ethan Deforest, 20, of Bowling Green, and William V. Lee, 19, of Findlay, Ohio, were cited for prohibited acts/altered ID within the 100 block of N. Main Street.

12:56 A.M.
Matthew R. Burgess, 27, of Toledo, was arrested for assault within the 100 block of N. Main Street. He was lodged in the Wood County Justice Center.

2:56 A.M.
Duane J. Horn-Cross, 21, of Toledo, was cited for operating a motor vehicle under the influence and prohibited alcohol content/breath near the corner of E. Wooster Street and S. College Drive.

3:14 A.M.
Sedric D. Veal Jr., 21, of Sagamore Hills, Ohio, was cited for criminal trespass within the 100 block of N. Prospect Street.

3:18 A.M.
Vernon E. Williams III, 21, of Marion, Ohio, was cited for possession of marijuana, possession of drug paraphernalia and open container of alcohol within the 400 block of S. Main Street.

1:55 P.M.
Complainant reported someone had damaged two windows on her garage within the 200 block of E. Reed Avenue. The damage is estimated at $200.

3:05 P.M.
Complainant reported that someone had stolen the sign from a business within the 300 block of N. Main Street. The sign is valued at $284.

SUN., MAR. 27
2:18 A.M.
Michael B. Zatkowski, 23, of Bowling Green, was arrested for disorderly conduct/unable to care for self within the 200 block of S. Mercer Road. He was lodged at the Wood County Justice Center.

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Fitness mistakes unhealthy

By Amy Steigerwald
Reporter

With spring right around the corner, people are rushing to the vegetable aisle and hitting the gym to get that nice, toned body in preparation for summer. But sometimes, some of your biggest healthy living mistakes are aspects of your everyday routine that you would not expect to prevent you from reaching your best self.

The endless sit-ups, the calorie counting and the need to cut out everything you love to eat from your diet are among the top trends of people looking to lose weight or get into shape. While some of these may work for certain individuals, they don’t work for everyone. Finding the right methods of kicking your body into gear can be challenging and may take some experimentation.

Physical fitness is an important part of maintaining a healthy lifestyle and a key factor to losing weight. Professional trainer Derek Alessi says many people make the mistake of not having a plan when they begin working out.

“All exercise is not equal. And it’s best to work the largest muscles to create the most metabolism, so that you burn more calories 24-hours a day. Unfortunately, many people spend too much time doing unproductive exercise or too much cardio that can actually hurt your metabolism,” said Alessi.

Alessi encourages all of his clients to seek help and different exercise options from others who have experience. This will force your body to make a change in your daily workouts. Additionally, Alessi encourages people to keep track of their progress. However, he recommends focusing on different aspects other than the number on the scale.

“Achievability is important. Measurements and evaluations are necessary. Just like school, you need evaluations to show progress and proficiency. I’m a fan of measuring body fat percentages or pounds of fat as a gauge, every two to three weeks,” Alessi says. Alessi encourages his clients to do this and finds it’s a more accurate representation of progress.

Aside from making the daily trek to the rec center, making healthy eating choices is equally effective when looking to shave off a few pounds.

“People may believe what they are eating is ‘healthy’ but it may contain hidden calories, such as hidden sugars, which are worse for you than alternative food choices,” said University dietetics major Regan Rudolph.

Rudolph is careful when it comes to eating healthy because basing your choices solely off one aspect of a food label can be harmful in the long run. Additionally, consuming excessive amounts of a food that may be healthy is also a big mistake people make.

“Just because what you may be eating is healthy doesn’t mean you should eat more of it than you normally would,” Rudolph said.

While everyone has the power to make a change at any point in their life, some people may have an advantage over others, simply because they began their healthy habits at an early age. Laura Dworning, friend of Rudolph and also a University dietetics major, said that children who have parents who teach them healthy habits at an early age are likely to continue to live healthy lifestyles throughout their lives.

“I think it’s important for parents to watch what they feed their children because by teaching them healthy eating habits they will be able to prevent things like heart disease, diabetes, obesity and kidney failure,” Dworning said. “When parents take action early, they are preparing their child for a future healthy lifestyle,” she said.

Obesity rates are steadily rising in the United States and all adults, regardless of ethnicity, have rising obesity rates.

These rates can be prevented by making healthy life decisions and most likely could have been avoided had these adults had proper healthy living education as children.

Dworning knows the consequences of making unhealthy life decisions and makes it a priority in her life to eat healthy. She offered some advice for those looking to make small, but effective changes.

“Many people think cutting carbohydrates is the best thing for them to do in order to lose weight. This is not healthy for your body because it does not provide you with the energy you need. But switching over to whole grain products would be a much better choice because your body would still be getting its essential nutrients,” Dworning said. She recommends looking at the fiber and sodium content of your food as well.

“Having a variety is important,” she said.

Changing your routine and stepping out of your comfort zone when it comes to making healthy lifestyle decisions can be uncomfortable but is essential in order to see big changes in your body.
Falcons lose three games to Eagles

By Zane Miller
Sports Reporter

The Falcon baseball team was swept on the road by the Eastern Michigan Eagles in a three-game series over the weekend.

The team was defeated 5-4 in the first game of the series on Friday, 4-0 in the second game on Saturday and 8-4 in the final game of the series on Sunday.

“This was not the way we wanted to start off conference play,” Falcons head coach Danny Schmitz said. “We have to find a way to score more runs.”

The team got off to a promising start on Friday as senior outfielder Kory Brown scored on a passed ball in the top of the first inning to give the Falcons a 1-0 advantage. But the lead would be short lived as Eastern Michigan tied up the game in the bottom of the second and took the lead away in the bottom of the third on two RBIs from Mike Mioduszewski. Eastern Michigan scored three more runs off of Falcons’ junior pitcher C.J. Schildt for a 5-1 lead going into the final inning.

“We played tremendous defense today and our pitching was more than good enough, but we didn’t put together enough quality at-bats.”

-Danny Schmitz, Head Coach

The Falcons got their offense going again in the top of the ninth with sophomore infielder Randy Rieger, junior infielder Greg Basalyga and junior catcher Dan Ferguson each scoring an RBI to bring it to a 5-4 game. The team, however, could not bring the tying run across, and Eastern Michigan held on for the victory.

“I like the way we didn’t give up in the ninth,” Schmitz said. “But we didn’t do enough in the middle innings to get the win.”

Unlike Friday’s game, the Falcons did not get off to a good start in Saturday’s game, allowing two Eastern Michigan runners to score in the bottom of the first inning. Falcons’ sophomore pitcher Zac Carey would hold them scoreless from that point until the bottom of the fifth, when Eastern Michigan added another run for a 3-0 lead.

The Falcons offense would struggle throughout the game, striking out 11 times against Eastern Michigan pitcher Augie Gallardo and only getting a total of two runners into scoring position. Eastern Michigan would tack on another run in the eighth for a 4-0 win.

“We talk about it a lot, but today was a prime example of needing to execute all three phases in order to win,” Schmitz said.

Eastern Michigan led off the scoring again in Sunday’s game, getting a run in the bottom of the first, then getting another an inning later on a solo homerun by Mioduszewski for an early 2-0 lead. The Falcons would cut the lead in half on an RBI sacrifice bunt by Kory Brown in the fourth inning, to which Eastern Michigan countered by scoring three runs in the sixth off of BG senior pitcher Andrew Lacinak, with two of those runs being scored on a Jeremy Stidham homer. EMU would also get two more in the seventh and another in the eighth to make it an 8-1 game.

The Falcons would try to rally in the ninth, scoring three runs in a sloppy inning by Eastern Michigan, where two of the runs were scored on a wild pitch and a fielding error, respectively. However, the deficit was too much to overcome in one inning as Eastern Michigan took care of the series sweep with the 8-4 victory.

The Falcons’ next game will be at home on Tuesday, March 29 against the Findlay Oilers.
Womens tennis loses two conference road matches

By Aidan Markey
Assistant Sports Editor
The Bowling Green State University womens tennis team fell in both of its Mid-American Conference road matches this weekend, losing Friday, 5-2 to the Northern Illinois Huskies and falling 6-1 Sunday to the Western Michigan Broncos.

Emily Witt and Polina Radeva earned the Falcons two points, winning 7-5, 7-6 and 6-1, 6-3, respectively.

Although the duo of Drew Fillis and Paula Comella grabbed a doubles victory for the team, the other two Bowling Green pairs of Witt and Radeva and Leeah Floyd and Marina Ferrero were unable to win, resulting in the doubles point going to the Huskies.

BG fell to 2-12, 0-1 (MAC) in its conference debut, while Northern Illinois improved its record to 6-7, 1-0 (MAC).

The Falcons then traveled to Kalamazoo, Michigan to face the Broncos of Western Michigan, on Easter Sunday. The Broncos, coming off of a loss against Ball State, came out ready to earn their first conference victory of the season.

Fillis and Comella won 6-4, giving them their third consecutive doubles match. However, the other BG combinations could not come up with victories, Western Michigan starting off the match by taking the doubles point.

Comella was the only Falcon to earn a singles point, winning 2-6, 6-2, 6-1 over the Broncos’ Melina Lyubomirova.

The overall scores of the match might be misleading, however. Both Witt and Fillis fought closely in their singles sets, falling 7-6, 6-4 and 6-4, 7-5, respectively. The duo of Radeva and Witt also fell in a close set, losing 6-4 to the Broncos’ combo of Barbara Eristavi and Katja Fevralv.

Close scores such as these are significant to show the growth a young team like Bowling Green. Head coach Olga Elkin knows this and is cognizant of the team’s youth.

“We have one upperclassman; one junior. She is hurt for the year, unfortunately. So, we have a very, very young team,” Elkin said in an interview earlier this season. “We’re just trying to kind of all come together, figure it out together and keep working together as a team,” she noted.

Following the loss to Western Michigan, Bowling Green fell to 2-13, 0-2 (MAC) and the Broncos improved to 12-6, 1-1 (MAC).

The Falcons will now travel to face 1-75 rival Toledo Saturday, April 1.

“We’re just looking to change the culture a little bit,” Elkin said on BG’s sub-par season last year. A win over the Rockets would certainly help that.

Toledo is 6-8, 0-1 (MAC) and has a 2-1 record at home.
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USG talks sustainability

By Michele Mathis
Managing Editor

The Director of the Office of Campus Sustainability, Nick Hennessy, spoke on the importance of sustainability on campus at Monday's Undergraduate Student Government meeting.

"Sustainability wouldn't make any progress on this campus with just one person," he said. "I consider all of you to be a part of the sustainability effort."

Hennessy said that the office uses the three R's: Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, along with combining three main objectives and goals on campus: Reduction of Emission, Reduction of Waste/Conservation of Resources and Sustainability Education/Organize.

USG Vice President Danielle Parker said that sustainability at its core is "the future."

USG President Victor Senn agreed, saying that it is the senate's most important priority.

"I agree with Dr. Hennessy when he said, 'What campus do you want to leave behind?" Senn said. "We need to leave campus better than we left it."

Hennessy discussed the efforts that the Office of Sustainability is making on reducing energy use. "What do you do when you don't have renewable resources on campus?" he said. "A lot of (emission) is lighting."

Hennessy noted that there are a lot of grassroots efforts to turn off the lights in every building, and buying more efficient lighting for classrooms.

The Office of Sustainability is also conducting a feasibility study with an engineering company in Cincinnati. The feasibility study will be examining all options for the University to reduce emissions and increase sustainable options.

Additionally, the Office of Sustainability challenged the senate to find more disposables around the University because the weekly average of trash produced by the University is 50-75 tons, 8 tons by the Union alone.

"If I knew the answer to (reducing trash on campus), I would be a very happy person," he said.

Hennessy said that the Office of Sustainability is making an advisory committee for next year, and encouraged the senate to reach out to the office and representatives to make your voices heard. "Get in touch with us," he said. "There's so many ways to get in touch with us."

Parker followed up Hennessy by discussing the Adopt-a-Block initiative for the Bowling Green community. "Adopt-a-Block is essentially Adopt-a-Highway, but for the community," she said. "Any individual, organization, etc, can register to adopt a block and once a month, they commit to cleaning it."

Parker and Senn expressed bittersweet feelings about leaving the presidency, and Senn spoke about making a last impression with the new leadership transition.

"The thing that separates a good leader and a great leader is a great transition," he said. "We're only in control truly of the things we do while we're here, but we'll be able to influence the future (with the transition)."

Parker said that it was an amazing experience to "be a part of such a supportive community."
By Aaron Parker
Sports Editor

Student leaders on campus are pushing for more communication with the University after being disappointed with the amount of student input for the Union renovation project process.

The renovation project is overseen by Capital Planning, which handles all renovations on campus. Construction has already proceeded after being approved by Chief Financial Officer Sherideen Stoll in February.

The approved design plan was announced to students Feb. 26 at an Ex-Officio Board Meeting by Director of the Student Union Patrick Nelson. According to Brian Swope, an assistant director in Design and Construction and the project leader for the renovation, the approved design contains two major moves, the relocation of the Career Center to the Union and the redesign of the University Bookstore to condense to one floor instead of its original two.

“I think as information was shared about the renovations that are happening, which are all good things for the campus, I think that students were surprised. I think some of us were too,” Dean of Students Jodi Webb, who is also the advisor to Undergraduate Student Government, said. “It led to conversations about how do students get this information, but also what are the opportunities for students to be a bit more involved on the front end of things, certainly recognizing that I (or students) am never going to be the construction and renovation expert.”

The problem that student leaders are seeing with the project is not in the design, but the lack of student input and project team communication.

Faculty Senate has a Student Union Advisory Committee that works closely with Nelson on matters concerning the buildings operation and programming. The committee consists of seven faculty members and seven undergraduate students that met during the renovation planning process.

“That meeting has been a lot of reporting out and a lot of information about what’s going on,” USG President Victor Senn said.

“The concern is that although the student union advisory committee was meeting, it wasn’t much of a conversation.”

Students on the advisory committee were not able to give input during the planning process as plans were finalized before they reached the committee. Senn said the communication problem has been Capital Planning’s lack of contact with Nelson, who in turn does not have information to relay to the Union Advisory Committee. He said Capital Planning withheld information about those plans to avoid reporting false information.

“They do that to give us the correct information instead of saying ‘we think this is what’s happening,’ and then next week it’s something else that’s happening,” Senn said. “So they waited until they had the exact information so that they could give the correct information.”

Many student leaders heard about the plans and designs for the first time at the Ex-Officio Board meeting—after everything was approved and finalized.

Senn and USG Vice President Danielle Parker have since met with Stoll and Brad Leigh, executive director for business operations in the Office of Finance and Administration, to discuss concerns and communication problems. Senn and Parker hope to change the way students work with Capital Planning on upcoming projects.

“Where USG would like to go with this is probably something broader than just the Union,” Webb said. “What are the opportunities that, perhaps if renovations are happening in other places, that students can be a little bit more involved or at least be more aware on the front end of things.”

According to Ex-Officio minutes from March 18, student leaders plan to push for students to be at the table for future design meetings. Feedback was also given to Steve Krakoff, vice president for Capital Planning. Krakoff plans to attend an Ex-Officio meeting with Leigh, although a date they would be attending was not specified.

Leigh wrote in an email that questions should be directed to representatives from Capital Planning.

Representatives from Capital Planning could not be reached for comment.

“Brad (Leigh) and Sheri (Stoll) said they wished they had been able to communicate earlier, but I don’t hold that against them at all,” Senn said about his meeting. “They made the right decision in giving us the information when they gave it to us. They admitted that was something they wanted to do moving forward, to give out information sooner. That’s the goal.”
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42 Director Preminger
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29 Where to find Java
30 Magic show prop
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