

THE MAST

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Wrapping up 2019 at Pacific Lutheran University

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THE MAST

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The responsibility of The Mast is to discover, report and distribute information to its readers about important issues, events and trends that impact the Pacific Lutheran University community.

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Letters to the Editor should be fewer than 500 words, typed and emailed to mast@plu.edu. The Mast reserves the right to refuse, or edit letters for length, taste and errors. Include name, phone number and class standing or title for verification.

To contact, email mast@plu.edu.

LollaPLUza seeks to lower costs and increase diversity in 2020

Brennan LaBrie and Raven Lirio

News Editor and Copy Editor

With cheers of encore, a buzzing atmosphere and students rocking out on stage, LollaPLUza has been a long held tradition every spring at Pacific Lutheran University.

This year, the Student Activities Board (SAB), which has organized this event since its inception, will partner with Lute Air Student Radio (LASR) to bring together their combined expertise. Through this partnership, SAB and LASR hope to help the annual event become a more diverse, inclusive and efficient festival than in recent years.

“We’re partnering with them to create a more efficient and Lute-focused LollaPLUza,” SAB Director Kinani Halvorsen said about LASR. “We want Lolla to be a more diverse, intentional and impactful event.”

Halvorsen said that SAB is striving to recreate Lolla with a bigger focus on the values of diversity, justice, and sustainability (DJS) held by both SAB, LASR and PLU in general. In years previous, Lolla struggled with including diverse talent on stage, which led to a lot of negative student responses.

In 2018, a major part of the budget went to musical acts made up of white males, headlined by Seattle rapper Sam Lachow. Many students felt that these acts did not represent PLU and lacked in the university’s core values of DJS. This led to a student protest at the festival.

“It cost nearly \$35,000 for an event that lacked almost any kind of diversity, speaking in terms of both music and personal identity, didn’t have a focus on sustainability, and did not handle the topic of justice very well when these issues came up,” Halvorsen said. “We don’t want to pretend that didn’t happen. We want to grow and move forward from

what happened.”

The partnership involves dividing up roles between the two organizations, with LASR taking charge of hiring talent and the SAB planning the event. In addition, LASR will continue its popular “Battle of the Bands” event, which in the past has sent its winner to the Lolla stage.

“We’re taking the knowledge and experience of SAB of planning large student focused events, the experience of LASR planning music focused events and having that being driven by student input,” General Manager of LASR Ian Lindhartsen said.

In a Dec. 5 public forum on the future of Lolla, Lindhartsen explained how LASR would help the event be more cost-efficient and diverse than in years past. The last three festivals cost between \$25,000 and \$35,000, with much of the money going to artists. LASR has experience booking artists for musical events on campus and knows how to set prices and bargain with performers.

One of LASR’s missions is to find diverse music in the Tacoma area and include it in its programming. They know many diverse local acts, in both style and the identities of the performers, and where to find them, a skill set that Halvorsen admits SAB does not have.

The public forum was hosted in order to hear student and faculty input about the festival, which Halvorsen feels was lacking in years’ past. “Doing such a big event that leaves such a uncollective opinion about it isn’t really fair to the student populace,” Halvorsen said, especially since Lolla is funded by student tuition dollars.

In addition, SAB and LASR are inviting students to join the LollaPLUza advisory board to help plan this next festival.

Email sabdir@plu.edu for more information.



Kieran Lowe, president of the PLU Young Americans for Liberty, poses with the free speech ball in front of the AUC on Nov. 22. *Photo by Brennan LaBrie.*

Liberty Lutes creates space for dialogue

Brennan LaBrie

News Editor

On a recent Friday afternoon, people passing through the plaza outside of the Anderson University Center were greeted by a colorful sight: Uncle Sam and a giant inflatable beach ball.

The man in the costume was Kieran Lowe, the president of the PLU Young Americans for Liberty. They were invited to write down anything they wanted on the ball to exercise

their power of free speech. Sentences strewn across the ball ranged from “Finance Mental Health Support” to “Normalize talking about sex” to more controversial ones regarding the president and Jefferey Epstein.

The “free speech ball” is an event hosted across the country by the Young Americans for Liberty, a Libertarian student activism organization that seeks to promote “a constitutionally minded peaceful civil government,” according to Lowe.

See *Liberty Lutes* page 4

Todd Dizon assumes position as new ASPLU President

Brennan LaBrie
News Editor

Associated Students of Pacific Lutheran University Vice President Todd Dizon was working in the office that he shared with President Kennedy Gwin in the Anderson University Center on Nov. 20 when Gwin entered and informed him that she was resigning from her position, effective immediately.

Dizon was shocked. As far as he and other ASPLU members know, no ASPLU president had ever resigned before the end of their term. In an email to the Pacific Lutheran University community the next day, ASPLU cited health reasons for her departure, describing the split as “amicable” and thanking her for her time and leadership.

This announcement meant that Dizon, who first joined ASPLU as Vice President this past April, was now the President of the Student Body, as per ASPLU bylaws. Dizon jumped to work immediately, reviewing the duties of the president, including how to run the weekly ASPLU meetings. His most important order of business, however, was working with his ASPLU directors to find him a new vice president.

Executive Senator Barbara Gilchrist had assumed the role of acting Vice President in the meantime, and began helping stage a special election for VP. According to ASPLU bylaws, they had 15 days to elect a new VP, meaning an election would have to be on December 13, right during Dead Week. To make things even more complicated, the new VP would have to immediately assume the duties of the president while Dizon studied away during J-Term. By necessity, this candidate would need ASPLU experience for this to work out.

Candidates had until midnight on Dec. 2 to submit their campaign packets. None were submitted. One non-ASPLU member had originally submitted their name, as did Gilchrist as a safety option, according to Civic Engagement Director Gracie Anderson. When neither of these people met the deadline, the election was cancelled and Gilchrist swore in as VP for the remainder of the term. Senator Emery Kim was promoted to Executive Senator in Gilchrist’s place.

One of Gilchrist’s tasks will be examining the bylaws regarding elections that Anderson said are “unclear,” and whose vagueness helped lead to Gilchrist’s new VP role due to a 15 day period that Anderson and Dizon agreed was too short to allow potential candidates to come to a decision regarding running.

ASPLU VPs oversee all directors, and Anderson looks forward to working with Gilchrist, her new boss.



New ASPLU President Todd Dizon leads his first meeting as president on Nov 26. Photo by Raven Lirio.

“I really value her tenacity and her dedication,” Anderson said of Gilchrist. “She has proven she works so hard throughout her time in the senate as the executive senator. I’m excited to have her in that role, and excited to work with her on all the projects that I’m doing next semester as Civic Engagement Director.”

“I have full confidence in Barbara,” Mark Hernandez, Director of ASPLU Public Relations director said. “She puts over 100 percent into everything that she does, and even when she was Executive Senator she showed a lot of qualities that you would want in a leader. I know that Barbara is fully equipped for this position.”

“It has been really exciting to see Todd step up into the president’s role and assume duty and lead meetings. He’s done an awesome job.”

ASPLU Director of Civic Engagement Gracie Anderson

Hernandez added that he’s excited to see Kim assume their new position, citing their deep ASPLU experience, knowledge of its bylaws, and the new perspective they bring to the senate.

Anderson said that it’s been exciting to watch Dizon step up into his new position, saying that he’s “done an awesome job” so far. **The Next Steps**

Now that the concern over the VP position is over, Dizon plans on working with Gilchrist to determine how to carry on and preserve the long term goals that he and Gwin created in the beginning of their administration.

One major issue they have to deal with is that

ASPLU is currently down to four senators now that Gilchrist vacated her seat. ASPLU started off the year with two senators, and another quit when ASPLU did not meet quorum (the minimum number of senators needed to hold a meeting) on Nov. 16, an executive shortcoming that he said reflected the communication issues that plagued the executive team (him and Gwin) this fall and led to frustration within ASPLU.

“I really would describe it as a sinking ship,” Dizon said of ASPLU currently. “It’s not completely sunk yet, but people in ASPLU are losing faith in leadership and it leads to not having the motivation to push forward, and people really doubting the future.”

However, he feels excited about the rest of his term.

“I have hope because we still have some time left to get everybody motivated and figure out how the

leadership in the organization can best provide the accessibility, resources and guidance for its members,” Dizon said, as he aims to “motivate and inspire the members that are still here and get them to still believe in this organization.”

Dizon is juggling his presidential position with his duties as a senior ROTC Cadet, admissions ambassador and applying to law schools. However, his “commitment to serving people and wanting to make this university a better place” is pushing him to do the best job he can in his new position.

“Ultimately, the thing that really drives me to stay, instead of just leaving and dropping

everything and watching it burn, is that there’s so much riding on what we do from now til the end of the year,” Dizon said. “Really

the future of ASPLU for the coming years is dependent upon whether or not we can get it together and become more motivated and move past this.”

Alternate gen-ed model rejected by faculty; current program to remain as is

Brennan LaBrie
News Editor

After a process spanning three years, with multiple revisions, faculty votes and surveys, Pacific Lutheran University's general education program will remain the same despite all attempts to revise it.

In November, faculty rejected the Liberal Arts Framework Proposal in an online vote. The alternative gen-ed model was created by the Ad Hoc Committee on General Education Review and Revision.

The Framework, which may have gone into effect as early as 2021, offered a drastic change to a gen-ed program that hasn't seen many changes in decades.

The vote concluded a process that began in May 2018, when the Ad Hoc Committee was created to explore the current gen-ed program, attempt to improve it and make it easier to evaluate.

Online surveys of PLU students, faculty and alumni led to five proposed gen-ed models. The most popular aspects of those five were boiled down into two models and the Liberal Arts Framework moved forward. Multiple stages of revisions proceeded the final vote in November. Like all online faculty votes, the numbers were not released.

"The decision made by the faculty was that the foundational organizational structure of our gen-ed model is okay with them, at least with the majority of them," said Scott Rogers, a faculty representative to the committee and professor of English.

What's next for PLU gen-ed?

The Ad Hoc Committee will release a final report with its findings from the past year and a half before disbanding. The Core Curriculum Committee (CCC), which was created in the Spring, will analyze the findings of the Ad Hoc Committee, and will work to implement some of the

Framework's strongest elements into the current program.

"The core (gen-ed program) that we have right now is the same as we've had for the last 30 years with small adjustments, so we're looking at more small adjustments, and that could be anything," said Gracie Anderson, a student representative on the ad hoc committee and the CCC.

Rogers noted that the CCC, as an elected body, will have more power for change than the Ad Hoc Committee.

"We now have a role on campus that allows us to make more decisions than we have been able to in the past," Rogers said.

Among other changes, Rogers is looking to respond to what he found to be a campus-wide dissatisfaction with the current diversity requirement. He hopes to replace the First Year Experience Program (FYEP) 190 class, which he believes is "less coherent" and less understood across campus than the popular FYEP 101 class, with a diversity, sustainability, and justice (DJS)-focused FYEP 102 class.

"I think one of the things we learned from this process is that the university as a whole doesn't really have a shared understanding or a shared belief about what general education, a liberal arts education, means."

Scott Rogers, faculty representative to the Ad Hoc Gen-Ed Committee

In addition, the CCC will explore removing the current distinction between US-centered and global-centered diversity classes, with FYEP 102 counting as one diversity credit.

"I think one of the things we learned from this process is that the university as a whole doesn't really have a shared understanding or a shared belief about what general education, a liberal arts education, means," Rogers said.

The CCC will also examine the implementation of a historical perspectives credit, lowering the PE credits and adding "layers of assessment" to establish a universal understanding of gen-ed's goals and a system to ensure those goals are being met.

What was the Liberal Arts Framework?

The Framework hoped to respond to the two overarching themes from online surveys: a wide demand for inclusion of DJS and a decrease in the amount of required credits.

It removed specific disciplinary and departmental requirements, which was a response to faculty criticism regarding the inclusion of certain departments over others, according to committee co-chair Kevin O'Brien.

"Academic proficiencies" and "Liberal Arts keystones" took the place of disciplinary and departmental requirements. Each gen-ed class would count for one keystone and one proficiency each, and students would need to complete all six proficiencies and one keystone from each department of the College of Arts and Sciences.

In addition, the Framework replaced FYEP 190 class with FYEP 102, dropped one religion and two physical education requirements.

Overall, 10 gen-ed credits were dropped, which students and faculty praised for the increased flexibility this gave students.

However, some faculty members found the Framework overly complicated. Some were concerned that professors would have to

change classes to fit into the keystone and proficiency categories, and that departments might fight over which classes get these titles.

If the Framework had been passed by the faculty, Rogers said that the "scale of change would have been incredible." The Office of Admissions would have to remake their transfer credit system from scratch and Banner Web would be re-coded, among other things.

"A question a lot of people asked was 'was the framework good enough to take on that kind of work?', and apparently to some people the answer was no," Rogers said. "They didn't cross out change, they just wanted it to be the right change."

Liberty Lutes

Cont. from page 2

Lowe was approached this summer by Austin Collier, the state chair of the organization and a senior at Western Washington University, who invited him to start a chapter of the organization at PLU. Lowe was thrilled about the idea, and created this club, titled "Liberty Lutes."

Although Lowe identifies as Libertarian for the most part, he didn't want to make a club "exclusive to one group." Instead, he envisioned a space for students "from all political walks of life" to come together, discuss politics, and "make friends on the other side."

"There is a lot of troubling times surrounding discourse, and a lot of unwillingness to

have certain discourses," he said, adding that he hoped creating dialogues could help fix this issue.

He especially loves when students who aren't big political buffs come in seeking to learn more about it from other people.

"Our purpose is as much to talk about politics as it is to create a friend group," he said.

Another purpose of the club is to help students interested in careers in politics secure interviews and internships and explore future careers.

The "Pizza Politics" event, as Lowe calls it, often meets on Wednesdays or Fridays, tailored to their members' schedules.

Contact him at loweka@plu.edu to learn more.



The "Free Speech Ball" was rolled around campus by Liberty Lutes president Kieran Lowe on November 22. Photo by Brennan LaBrie.

Final dance season proves nostalgic for seniors

Kiyomi Kishaba
Opinion Editor

Breaths escaped the women clad in silk purple skirts as their bare feet leapt lightly across the dark stage. Lights glared at them from the wings, highlighting shadows across their backs as they laid their heads on each other's shoulders one-by-one until the world faded to black.

A couple weeks prior, I was asked to learn a swing dance routine with members of Swing Club to perform in the Pacific Lutheran University's dance team's winter showcase, and of course I said yes. After a crash course in aerial lifts and multiple rushed and panicked rehearsals, here I was.

“Each dance was choreographed by a different member of the dance team, lending itself to the contrasting tones.”

Dress rehearsal was the first time I saw the dance team perform the rest of the show. I sat in the audience, chatting with the other swing club members while the dance team warmed up onstage.

Sami Noble, one of the senior dance captains, led all 24 of the dancers through a variety of stretches without saying a word. The team followed her when she changed position, used to warming up together in this way.

“The vision for the showcase was to highlight the talent and skill of our team as well as the confidence and joy that dancing brings us,”



Photo from Facebook/PLU Theatre and Dance

Noble said. “The dancers have gone above and beyond in showcasing their talent, passion, and confidence in all of their pieces and I have seen so much power in their movements.”

While watching the opening dance of the show, I saw the joy and power Noble described. Twenty four women dancing in unison, throwing their bodies without hesitation and trusting each other to do the same.

As the rehearsal continued, I was struck by the variety of songs and dances. Each dance was choreographed by a different member of the dance team, lending itself to the contrasting tones. By including pieces of varying nature, the dancers can showcase the depth of their talent and keep the audience engaged.

“Having different choreographers for the dances creates a show that is dynamic and interesting,” Noble said. “The movement, intention, musicality, and story behind each piece is vastly different, which makes the show exciting to watch piece after piece.”

When the lights shined warm shades of yellow and orange, and *Someone to You* by Banners played over the speakers, a handful of dancers spun onto the stage. Just by observing the choreography which highlighted the personality of each dancer, and the way they looked at each other when they joined hands at the

end, I thought, *Oh, this must be the senior song.* The seniors' love for each other glowed.

Noble has been a member

“The audience rose in applause and cheers, and the dancers bowed, hand-in-hand.”

of the dance team for the past four years, and considers it the best part of her time at PLU. She is grateful for everyone on the dance team, as well as the technical crew responsible for making the show possible.

“Being a senior is a bittersweet feeling,” Noble said. “I feel like the other seniors and I have taken this year to really cherish the memories and time we spend with each other.”

On the night of the actual performance on Saturday, after the senior song concluded the show, I walked onstage with my fellow swing dancers for bows. The dance team followed 24 strong, filling the entire stage. The audience rose in applause and cheers, and the dancers bowed, hand-in-hand.

Sølvvinden Flute Ensemble

Kendan Bendt
Reporter

The Pacific Lutheran University Music Department hosted a performance by the Sølvvinden Flute Ensemble, a group directed by Assistant Professor of Flute and Music Theory Jennifer Rhyne, on Dec. 7.

It was done well and when there were mistakes, the ensemble moved swiftly back into the music, leaving no trace behind of any mishap.

The best pieces were the Christmas medley *We Three Kings* and *Carol of the Bells*, arranged by Phyllis Louke, and *A Little Norwegian Suite* by Edvard Grieg.

The medley charmingly mixed two classic pieces into one, weaving together *Carol of the Bells* and *We Three Kings* smoothly. The ensemble conveyed the energies of both songs in a way I previously would have thought impossible for an instrumental ensemble.

The concert felt like it was beginning to drag until *A Little Norwegian Suite* came and wrapped everything else up nicely. The suite was a very pleasant way to end the performance.

The best section of it was *Morning Mood*, which I did not know is a Norwegian piece. It has a beautiful melody and is very calming.

It was clear that the Music Department spent a long time preparing for this concert and I appreciated its effort to deliver an enjoyable performance.



Photo from Facebook/PLU Music



Photo by Pixabay/OpenClipart-Vectors

What are you doing during winter break?



“Going to visit Leavenworth with family, doing a lot of Christmas shopping, and bouncing around families houses.” - Bethany ‘22



“Being a winter housing assistant on campus.” - Katelyn ‘20

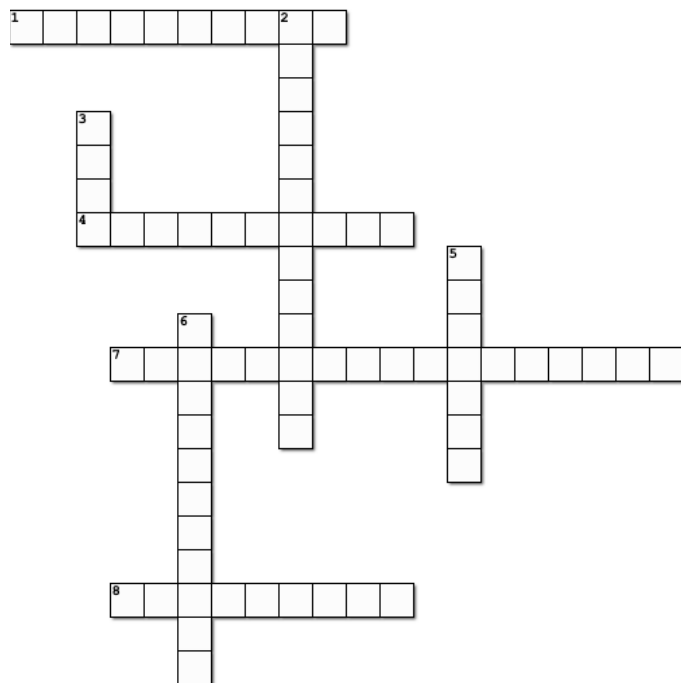


“Skiing and working up at Crystal Mountain.” - Hannah ‘21



Going back to Hawaii, swimming, having some adventures.” - Jai ‘23

Photos by Sheridan Moore



Across:

- 1. The *Sounds of Christmas* concert will take place in which PLU Music hall?
- 4. Who composed *Joy to the World*?
- 7. Josh Groban’s *Believe* is from what movie?
- 8. What was the name of PLU’s last flute concert?

Down:

- 2. Who is The Mast’s primary photographer?
- 3. What is the first name of the Dance captain interviewed this issue?
- 5. Which interviewee will be a winter housing assistant over the upcoming break?
- 4. Who was the guest writer for this issue’s Arts & Culture section?

Crossword created by Nolan James

Medium-level sudoku

3				1			5	
	5					6		3
4				9				
				2			9	
1		8	7				4	
	2			6		8		
				4			6	
9		7			3	5		
	4		5			3		

Sudoku created by Raven Lirio

Pacific Lutheran University campus decorated with festive lights



Photos by Sheridan Moore

What is The Mast staff listening to this holiday season?

Kendan Bendt: The Three Tenors' *Jingle Bells* from their Christmas concert in Vienna is probably my favorite Christmas song. The gleeful way with which the three masters of opera butcher a Christmas classic is truly a unique sound. If you've never enjoyed opera, you still won't, but it might give you a laugh.



Photo from Sony

Brennan LaBrie: *Carol of the Bells* is one of the most epic songs ever written, and Pentatonix's version of it is the only Christmas song that I listen to all year long.



Photo from Madison Gate Records



Photo from Pogue Mahone

Nolan James: I don't particularly enjoy listening to Christmas music. However, there is one holiday single that I enjoy year-round, and that's *Fairytale of New York* by The Pogues with guest singer Kirsty MacColl, one of the most charismatic Christmas songs ever recorded.



Photo from Etsy/VintageVerses

Hannah Montgomery: When I think of Christmas music, my favorite is *Joy to the World* by Isaac Watts. Growing up attending church, I especially enjoyed the Christmas season for the music and joy it brings. This song is considered by many to be the most popular Christmas carol of all time.

Kevin Jansen: Dan Fogelberg's *Same Old Lang Syne* recounts a real life story of a chance meeting between the singer and his old girlfriend from high school on Christmas Eve years after separating. Not all Christmas songs are cheery, and in this song's case, Fogelberg captures the bittersweet nature of digging up the past.



Photo from Full Moon

Hayden Mortensen: *Believe* by Josh Groban from *The Polar Express* soundtrack reminds us that believing is seeing and that Christmas time returns magic to our lives. The tune brings me back to all the years of watching Christmas movie reruns with my family.

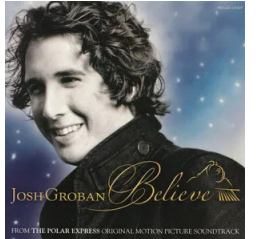


Photo from Warner Bros.

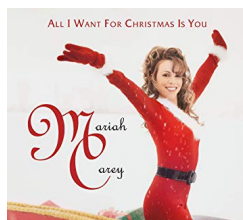


Photo from Columbia Records

Kiyomi Kishaba: Besides the iconic *All I Want for Christmas is You* by Mariah Carey, my entire Christmas playlist consists of a cappella albums from Straight No Chaser and Pentatonix. Both groups have incredible takes on classic holiday songs, as well as catchy and funny original numbers. 10/10 would recommend.



Photo from Columbia Records

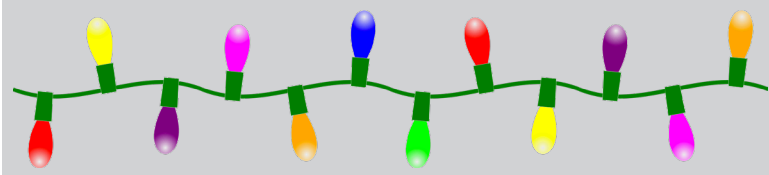
Isaiah Shim: Bruce Springsteen's *Santa Claus is Comin' to Town* is a main staple in my Christmas music rotation. The Boss's rock and roll rendition of the Christmas classic is upbeat, fun, and a great listen after Thanksgiving. Because after Thanksgiving is the correct time to start listening to Christmas music. Not before.

Music making its way through campus

The Music Department at Pacific Lutheran University presents a large variety of concerts throughout the year. These events are hosted in either the Mary Baker Russell Music Center room 306 (MBR) or Lagerquist Concert Hall (LCH). Admission is free to PLU students unless otherwise noted.

Winter Music Events:

- Dec. 11, 8p.m. - University Concert Band (LCH)
- Dec. 12, 8p.m. - Sounds of Christmas (LCH), \$0-\$10
- Dec. 15, 5:30p.m. - Songwriters Workshop (MBR)
- Dec. 15, 8p.m. - Composers Forum (LCH)
- Dec. 17, 5p.m. - Consonare Amici (MBR)
- Jan. 11, 5p.m. - Northwest High School Honor Band (LCH)
- Jan. 26, 5p.m. - PLU Honor Orchestra for Strings (LCH)



What to wear for the holiday season

Jenna Muller
Guest Writer

Whether you are attending a stuffy office holiday party, making merry with your friends on New Year's Eve, or having an afternoon eggnog get-together with your grandma, it can be stressful to plan an outfit that's somehow both warm and festive. Here are a few ideas to help you look your best this holiday season.

A variety of different textures—velvet, faux leather, silk, and denim, for example—helps to create more dimension in an otherwise plain outfit. Simple textured pieces in coordinating color palettes, when put together, create a chic, minimalist look.

Jewel toned fabrics are also a flattering holiday staple. They create an aura of sophistication and elegance and easily pair with neutral basics you might already own.

For New Year's Eve try adding a little shine to your outfit, whether by decking yourself out in sequins, wearing a sparkly necklace, or donning a leather moto jacket with silver hardware.

In terms of brands to look for, I've always loved Reformation's sustainable production methods and its selection of modern, feminine silhouettes. For a more masculine look, the online boutique Klow carries a variety of transparent ethical brands.

On a student budget, though, Reformation and Klow's prices aren't always realistic. However, they're a great place to go for some inspiration on silhouettes and textures. You can easily find one-of-a-kind, Reformation-or-Klow-inspired pieces at thrift stores and online secondhand

THREDUP®

Photo from thredUP

Holiday shopping on a college budget

Kiyomi Kishaba
Opinion Editor

It's that time of year again: the awkward two-week period between Thanksgiving break and finals where nothing feels real and yet everything is about to be very, very real. Professors are throwing essays and exams around out of nowhere, (they've been on the syllabus all semester, but who reads that far?) and holiday outings with friends are too enticing to refuse.

Don't forget, this means we only have two weeks to find presents for all the important people in our life. But don't fret; here are some ideas for ways to bring materialistic joy to your loved ones without adding to your student loan debt!

1. We live in Parkland. There are many thrift stores like Goodwill and Bargain World that have quality apparel and knick-knacks for dirt cheap. You just have to know how to hunt for them. In December, the sweater section is bound to be overflowing with ugly-but-cute pullovers perfect for PNW chic, and don't be afraid to take a peek in both the men's and women's sections. I have found many cute oversized sweaters in the men's section of Goodwill; ladies, you can too. If you're not looking for clothes, the home décor area of stores also provides some funny signs or useful lamps for houses or dorms. Just be sure to make sure the lamp works before purchasing, I speak from experience.

2. If you're looking to go local, some Business classes on campus are having students create a small business as a class project. Some of these projects are selling products that would be perfect for small gifts for friends or family, and the prices are very reasonable as well. It's a great way to support your fellow Lutes, and it's always nice to tell the receivers of the gift that the presents were handmade. Browse on Instagram for the PLU business accounts, or look out for the next business fair in the UC!

3. College students love food. If you're looking to give your friends a little something before heading home for break, consider baking cookies or

making hot cocoa as a surprise for your bros. You could even throw a cookie baking party, and have a Friendsgiving 2.0 before launching into full finals mode. I don't know about you, but cookies would make scrambling to finish that last essay a little more bearable.

4. Online shopping. Pretty obvious, I know. And perfect for the lazy college student (that's me!). I don't want to say Amazon, because Jeff Bezos has more than enough money already, but Amazon.com surely has something you could give your parents that would make their lives a little easier. My mom has already requested a metal can that somehow whips whipped cream for you, so if that's something you're interested in, hit me up and I'll send you the link. Besides seemingly unnecessary kitchen supplies, consider utilizing websites like Shutterfly to create a photo album or just have pictures printed and framed to give to people who may not see you as often as they would like. AKA your parents. They'll love it, I swear.



Graphic by Kevin Jansen

5. If you don't want to spend money, or refuse to participate in consumerist culture, consider giving people you care about a phone call or a letter. Sometimes, the gift of conversation is the most powerful thing you can provide. Promise your grandparents a phone call once a month. Promise your parents a call once a week. Sit down and write a letter to that cousin you love but only see twice a year, or your best friend from high school who lives on the other side of the country. The holidays are a time to show our appreciation for the people we love; what better way to do so than picking up the phone or pen and saying we care?



Photo by Kiyomi Kishaba

Finals week life-saver

Grace Rowe
Guest Writer

Writing can be a challenge for many students, if not all students at times. Sometimes you get stuck on one paragraph or idea and cannot decide what to write next. Other times, you have no clue how to start a paper or what to write about. All of this is part of the writing process and it can be incredibly intimidating when trying to work through it alone, especially with an impending deadline. Luckily, there is a place on campus where students can go to get support while writing: the Writing Center.

The Writing Center is located on the second floor of the library in room 220. It is a welcoming space that is consistently stocked with candy, coffee, hot cocoa, and unlimited amounts of water. If these amenities alone do not lure you in, maybe the service that the Writing Center provides will.

“It is extremely beneficial to have a consultant listen to my ideas and help me develop them, while encouraging me to take my writing a little further.”

At the Writing Center, we help with writing from all disciplines. This means that all students with any major are encouraged to come in and get help with their writing piece. Writing pieces may be academic such as essays, capstones, or lab reports or they can be professional pieces like cover letters and resumes.

No matter what you are working on, consultants at the Writing Center are more than happy to collaborate with you and provide you with suggestions and feedback to support you through the writing process.

As a consultant at the Writing Center, I have a biased view of the space. However, the value of the what the space has to offer does not change. Although I am a consultant, I am still a student who needs academic support, so I use the center as well. It is extremely beneficial to have a consultant listen to my ideas and help me develop them, while encouraging me to take my writing a little further.

I believe all students should visit the Writing Center at some point in their studies at PLU and it is easy to do so. You can make an appointment online through the Center for Student Success's (CSS) webpage, by calling the Writing Center, or by stopping by the Writing Center. We are open during dead week and finals week, so make an appointment, I hope to see you there!

Gun control requires rational policy

Kendan Bendt
Reporter

Approximately three weeks ago, on Nov. 14, there was a school shooting at Saugus High School. The perpetrator was a 16-year-old male, who died the next day due to complications related to attempted suicide. There were two victims, a boy and a girl.

When dealing with the fallout of such a devastating event, it is easy to wallow in the sorrows of the moment. It is important to remember, however, that this is not how we make our legislative policies. We do not base our decisions off of how we feel in the heat of a terrible moment.

My appeal is to rationality. We are a rational body composed of reasoning people. We cannot afford to let our decisions be ruled by fear and by emotions. If we are going to make decisions about whether or not to implement gun control policy, it should be from a place of understanding the reasons for and against doing so, and making an informed decision based on the facts surrounding gun violence.

I would posit that a rational person, when making serious proposals for legislation, must consider the damage a gun is able to do. Theoretically, one of gun control's best arguments is the idea that guns have gradations of agency, meaning that they have the ability to cause massive amounts of harm in relatively small spurts with little energy expended.

However, depending on which estimates you choose mass shootings only make up two-three percent of all gun homicides. Due to this, we must conclude that the emphasis on such events must come from the terrifying nature of such shootings, or the emphasis that other media outlets have placed on them.

In fact, there are many things which are far more likely to kill you than mass shootings. American citizens are, on average, 152 times more likely



Photo by Portland Mercury

to contract leukemia than to be the victim of a mass shooting. We are also 3351 times more likely to die in part of a road-related incident than be a victim of a mass shooting.

If we can accept that mass shootings, despite their terrifying nature, are relatively unimportant on a macro scale, then we rationally can expect not to have policy be decided because of them.

The university commons misleads students

Nolan James
Arts & Culture Editor

Pacific Lutheran University is rather accommodating to us vegetarians. In The Commons, there are always plenty of options available, and the staff is incredibly friendly and careful to separate our food. However, not everything is perfect.

Gelatin is a well-known ingredient used as the base of marshmallows and the popular Jello brand, as well as other gummy desserts; what is not common knowledge is where gelatin comes from. It is an ingredient made from heavily processed animal tissue, bone, and skin. Gelatin is certainly not something I would describe as vegetarian, since it comes from killed animals.

Despite this, according to PLU's official guidelines, their vegetarian food may contain this ingredient. They exclude it from vegan food, but apparently people still do not understand what a vegetarian is, including our school's kitchen. The school's food and allergen key gives very little information, other than "based on manufac-

turers' ingredient and food-allergen statements," which is a rather vague and meaningless statement.

There is no legal definition for vegetarian food, so the school is legally safe. However, there are certainly moral implications for this choice. Vegetarian consumers of food may not understand what gelatin is, and would certainly object to eating it if they were aware. When I learned about this two years after choosing to be vegetarian, I threw my marshmallows out right away.

As an ingredient that's often made from pig or cow, consuming gel-

"When I learned about this two years after choosing to be vegetarian, I threw my marshmallows out right away."

atin can also go against someone's religious beliefs. However, since the only information listed about the substance in our school is that it's "vegetarian," I am sure plenty of people are being completely misled.

I would doubt there are many meals the school gives out that are "vegetarian" but contain gelatin. Some of the desserts certainly do, and it is possible the school uses American cheese made from gelatin as well.

If PLU is unwilling to change its misleading guidelines to support these individuals, hopefully people can educate themselves on what they are being fed and try to avoid this ingredient to the best of their ability. Without the support of the school, they can only do so much.

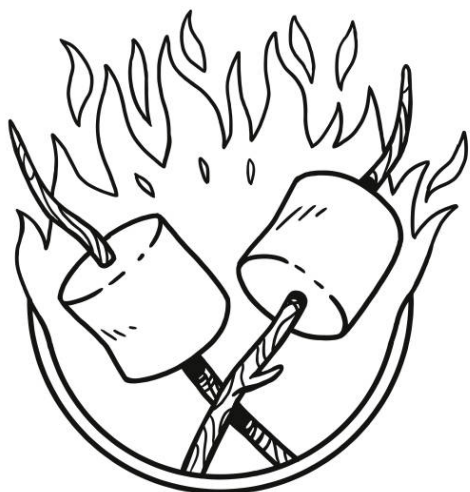


Photo by iStock

Editor letter to stressed Lutes

Kiyomi Kishaba

Opinion Editor

Dear Lutes,

Dead week frustrates me, as I'm sure it frustrates many of you. First of all, why do we call it dead week when we still have classes? Sure, we're all dead inside, but we reanimate our bodies everyday to attend classes that feel pointless, rushed, and overwhelming. But as dead week claws at our sanity, we can find little ways to destress and enjoy the holiday season on campus.

You could attend one of the many arts performances happening on campus. It's a great way to support your peers, and relax your brain for a couple hours. Most concerts are free or discounted for students, and within walking distance from your dorms! I personally love Christmas music, and hearing it performed live always puts me in the holiday spirit.

If you're not an arts person, you can check our sports section for the schedule of games coming up for our Lutes. Let out your anger by roaring aggressively for the home team and stomping on those uncomfortable bleachers.

“When laziness strikes, consider a classic self-care moment. Pull out those face masks, paint your nails, and eat some chocolate; that's what I do.”

But sometimes, I don't have the energy to leave my room. When laziness strikes, consider a classic self-care moment. Pull out those face masks, paint your nails, and eat some chocolate; that's what I do. You could even look up yoga videos on YouTube and treat your body to some nice stretching it definitely needs.

Now, if you don't even want to move, which is completely understandable, here are some options: guided meditation on YouTube (which may just turn into a nap), listen to a podcast (learn something new everyday!), call a friend (have a finals week pity party), or eat some chocolate. Honestly, chocolate is my solution for everything.

Wow, I almost forgot my go-to destresser: exercise. Hit the gym, pool, or track and just blast that stress out of your muscles. Exercising can help refocus your brain, and it's way healthier than eating chocolate (alternatively, if you exercise you can eat more chocolate). Seriously, I find it so relieving to do something productive that doesn't revolve around school, especially when I can do it with my friends.

Well, I hope this helps. Best of luck with finals week, and safe travels to wherever December break takes your blessed heart. And if you ever need chocolate, I'm your gal.



Photo by ClipArtWiki

Yours truly,
Kiyomi

US Government spies on citizens



Photo by ACLU

Kendan Bendt

Reporter

I never thought I'd get to write about House Democrats making George Bush Jr. proud, but here we are. In late November of 2019, House Democrats helped pass an extension of the 2001 Patriot Act through March of 2020 as part of a government funding bill, with a total vote of 231 for and 192 against. Only 12 Republicans voted for the bill, with the rest protesting a lack of funding for President Trump's border wall.

For those of you who are fortunate enough not to have known this beforehand, the Patriot Act was a particularly disgusting piece of legislation passed in the wake of 9/11. Supposedly, the idea was that we'd give up "just a bit" of freedom now for some security... eventually.

It was responsible for the spawning of the National Security Agency, and the massive amounts of surveillance we have nowadays. The Patriot Act allows for the mass collection of metadata, including texts, from

“I never thought I'd get to write about House Democrats making George Bush Jr. proud, but here we are.”

American citizens. Are you okay with this? I know I'm not.

The Patriot Act is just one more piece of evidence to show how disconnected our federal government is from its voting population. Our record lows in voter turnouts, our general apathy about our political system, and our general lack of desire to fix anything wrong with the system say to Congress “Hey, do what you like! We don't mind. Unless you tax us.”

Now, you might be asking why this is important. Hasn't the government always been like this? Shouldn't we just accept big brother is going to be watching us? Can't we just put tape over our laptop's webcams and call it a day? No! Of course not.

This is not acceptable behavior by any elected body, much less so the government of the United States. So much for “land of the free, home of the brave”. I'd say a little rebellion is a good thing now and then, but I doubt we'll all get off our couches and do something about it.

SPORTS

The NFL MVP race: Russell Wilson vs. Lamar Jackson

David Walter
Sports Reporter

The National Football League Most Valuable Player race has boiled down to two candidates.

Russell Wilson and Lamar Jackson are putting together masterful performances game after game, turning the Seahawks and Ravens back into Super Bowl contenders.

Who should win this prestigious award continues to be the main topic in the sports world. One day sports analyzers say that Wilson is the MVP then the next day it's Jackson and so on.

Wilson seems to have improved off of last season, putting together another Pro Bowl caliber season. It may be hard to explain how dominating he is for the Seahawks, but he always seems to make the big plays at the most crucial time.

Wilson has lead the Seattle Seahawks to an impressive 10-3 record this season. This comes as a surprise as they were picked to finish near the bottom of the division at the beginning of the season.

Jackson also has a strong case of his own as to why he is the 2019 MVP. Jackson is a big threat when he takes off from the pocket and beats the defense with his legs. If he is not using his legs, Jackson will throw the ball to the open receiver in one-on-one coverage.

One could argue that Wilson is doing more with less as the Seahawks' offensive line is ranked 24th in the league whereas the Ravens have the tenth best line.

The two teams met back in Week 7, with the Ravens coming out on top 30-16. In that game, Jackson called his own number and ran the ball in for a touchdown on a crucial fourth down.

Jackson won the game and out-dueled Wilson on that day, but the race for MVP is still neck and neck.

Both teams are having amazing seasons, however does the week seven game determine the MVP award when they faced each other? Who knows. Until then we will continue to speculate each week until the MVP award is handed out on February 1.



Photo from Wikimedia Commons



Photo from Twitter/ ESPNStatsInfo

Russell Wilson	Passing	Lamar Jackson
280	Completions	230
419	Attempts	347
66.8	Percentage	66.3
3,422	Yards	2,677
8.2	Yards per attempt	7.7
26	Touchdowns	28
5	Interceptions	6
40	Sacked	23
	Rushing	
62	Attempts	150
312	Yards	1,024
5.0	Yards per attempt	6.8
21	Long	47
1	20+ yard runs	9
3	Touchdowns	7

*Numbers in bold indicate which athlete is ahead in that category

Taylor leads the charge for women's basketball



The team comes together one last time before starting their game. Photo courtesy GoLutes.

Isaiah Shim
Sports Editor

Winter is here which means that basketball is once again underway here at Pacific Lutheran University.

The women's team has started their season strong, playing their way through their non-conference schedule, gearing up for Northwest Conference play.

They are looking to improve from last season, as they finished with a record of 14-10 and finished sixth in conference.

So far, the star of the team has been sophomore Katie Taylor, who not only leads the team, but also the conference with 19.5 points per game.

Her performance has been a leading factor to their fast start, as the team is currently at 4-2 for the season.

The team will continue their non-conference schedule with a home game against Northwest University on Dec. 14.

They will then wrap things up this year by hosting the Pacific Northwest Tournament, where they will face off against the University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh on De. 21 and Trinity University (Texas) on Dec. 22. Both games will be held in Olson Gymnasium.

The team will take their holiday break and return to the court to open up Northwest Conference play when they take on Whitworth University in Spokane on Jan. 3.

Swimming dominates at the George Fox Invitational



Sidney Chan-Orcutt swims in the freestyle race. *Photo courtesy GoLutes*

David Walter

Sports Reporter

The men and women of the Pacific Lutheran University swim team recently capped off a strong performance at the George Fox University Invitational with both men and women taking home the title for their respective sides.

“The George Fox Invitational was very successful” said junior Kiyomi Kishaba.

“We had a number of swimmers come out of the meet with personal records and season bests, which is really exciting this early in the season.”

As for the men’s team, they also had a dominating performance.

“We went into the meet knowing we were going to thump everybody, so our team coming out in first was not a surprise” said junior Hayden Mortensen.

“We had a ton of fun because it was a low-pressure meet and because it was a rehearsal for conference championships in February.”

The team was satisfied with its overall performances and look to build upon its success going into the new year, as well as the rest of the season.

“Our coach always tells us to ‘change our paradigm’ meaning we should strive to be better and faster than where we were yesterday,” said Kishaba.

“That mindset is what we need going into every practice if we want to be competitive at conference: swim fast, lift heavier, and train harder than we did yesterday.”

The men’s team also has a similar mentality as the season progresses.

“Training has been different and tougher this season but in a good way” said Mortensen.

“Coach Sellman and Coach Dacus are challenging us in ways that prepare our overall conditioning and race readiness.”

Kishaba and Mortensen reflected upon this season and last season and they compare the difference in performance from 2018 to 2019.

“As a team we have learned how to motivate each other during tough practices and long weeks when the coaches throw multiple challenging sets at us,” said Kishaba.

“Especially within our lanes, we communicate and work together to get the set done, and do it well.”

Mortensen agreed and believes this season has more of a motivating drive to it.

“I would say we have more of a drive this year to bounce back after suffering some unfortunate losses that happened at conference championships last year” Mortensen said.

“We know we can be better than we were, and the new teammates who have joined have also helped increase the teams moral and talent level.”

The Lutes will enjoy the holiday season before returning to the water on Jan. 11 where the women’s team will face off against the University of Alaska.

Both teams will compete against Whitworth University on Jan. 17 at the PLU swimming pool.

Should the College Football Playoff be expanded to six teams?

Hayden Mortensen

Sports Reporter

Four teams are not enough for a “playoff.” The current College Football Playoff format denies excellent teams the opportunity to be national champions. The College Football Playoff should be expanded.

Expansion has been debated since the playoff’s conception back in 2014. Debate was particularly heavy when University of Central Florida (UCF) went undefeated in 2017-18. They were overlooked because they were from the American Athletic Conference (AAC), a conference deemed weaker compared to others.

The playoff committee instead chose “stronger” one-loss SEC teams. Evidence of UCF’s worthiness came when they controlled Auburn, an SEC team, in the Peach Bowl that year. Allowing for six teams to be in the playoff would give deserving teams like UCF a more fair shot.

Critics of expansion have argued that more teams means more games which increases chances of injury to players.

Arguments go further saying that talent drop-off from ranks 1-10 is too steep; the top teams would play meaningless games against teams they would easily destroy (all while risking injury to their players before the championship). Indeed, there is a steep talent drop-off.

However, this talent difference fluctuates year to year. Most 5th and 6th ranked teams would have a fighting chance if they were allowed in the playoff.

A six-team tournament is ideal because only the 3-6 ranked teams

would have to play an extra game.

Teams first and second would get a first-round bye and then play the winners of the third vs. sixth and fourth vs. fifth “wild card” games for the semi-finals.

Basically, third and fourth ranked teams would need to prove their strength and the fifth and sixth ranked teams from non-dominant conferences would get a shot at moving up to the final four.

Expansion to a six-team playoff would benefit fans, coaches, players, and the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) in general by representing more conferences and spawning an all-or-nothing atmosphere that is enjoyable for sports lovers everywhere.



The College Football Playoff trophy. *Photo from flickr/Michael Li*

The top 6 teams:

1. Louisiana State (LSU) (13-0)
2. Ohio State (13-0)
3. Clemson (13-0)
4. Oklahoma (12-1)
5. Georgia (11-2)
6. Oregon (11-2)

Men’s basketball wraps up non-conference schedule

Isaiah Shim

Sports Editor

Men’s basketball is looking to have a much better season than last year. At 8-16, the Pacific Lutheran University men’s basketball team finished seventh in the conference.

So far this season, the team

has a record of 3-4, coming off of a convincing 77-40 victory over Portland Bible College.

They will finish their non-conference schedule at Northwest Christian University on Dec. 14 and a home game against Northwest Indian College on Dec. 20.

They open up conference play with Whitworth on Jan. 3.