

# The Journal

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## INTERWEAVING A CENTURY OF STUDENT VOICES

This is my third and final semester as editor-in-chief, a rather uncommon stretch for a college newspaper, where positions act more like revolving doors. If you do the math, I entered this role as a junior – an upperclassman on paper; but on the inside, I felt as young as the freshmen eyes staring back at me.

I remember what it was like that first Tuesday night meeting, my mouth dry as I stood in front of a staff built by a summer of hard work canvassing for new writers. I spent one semester as managing editor, reeling from the brunt of COVID-19, which took a hammer to our numbers and left assignment nights almost like pulling teeth trying to get content. When I became EIC of The Journal, I vowed to do everything in my power to make sure this piece of Webster University history survived, as well as to get more voices in the newsroom.

Our small staff worked fervently, holding tables at involvement events for current and incoming students. It paid off: That first meeting in Fall 2023 brought in nearly 30 students, excited to find a way to contribute to The Journal. We hit the ground running.

This time was not without its challenges. Gone were the days of bi-weekly printing, as was the Webster student newspaper modus operandi for nearly a century. To replicate the journalistic world that graduates were entering, the decision to shift to digital-first content with one print edition each semester was made in Fall 2022, requiring an entirely new organizational format. Cou-

pled with what has become an annual budget cut, we were forced to analyze every piece of the process and solidify what would become the “new” Journal.

During this time, I remember walking into the newsroom with the sinking feeling that our work wouldn't be enough. I didn't think I could look at the staff and tell them the budget was cut again and that their hard-earned work might not make it to print. It is hard to be a brave, unencumbered captain when you can't promise your staff that their efforts won't be swallowed by something powerful and impersonal – a surefire way, I suppose, to prepare us journalists for the uncertain world we will soon face, where local publications and stations get purchased and sold, often without warning for the humble public servants within.

It was around this time that I came across the Emerson Library's digital archives of The Journal's past newspapers. Years of work by dedicated archivists made certain the collection of student-produced news – which holds the most candid and consistent portrayal of Webster University history from a student perspective – was safe and accessible.

The archives date back to 1920 with the first student news publication, LISTEN!!, formed by the Sisters of Loretto. “Loretto College is still young,” the contributors wrote in their first issue. “And who knows but that this little paper we are now launching on the sea of amateur journalism may figure quite prominently in the history of our Alma

Mater, and shall we not in after years be proud to say that we originated and were the first to publish LISTEN!!”

LISTEN!!, which lasted until 1922, mainly held brief news items about events, editorials, jokes and poems. Two years later, The Web surfaced, growing to six pages in length and marking itself as the predecessor with the closest resemblance to The Journal as it stands today.

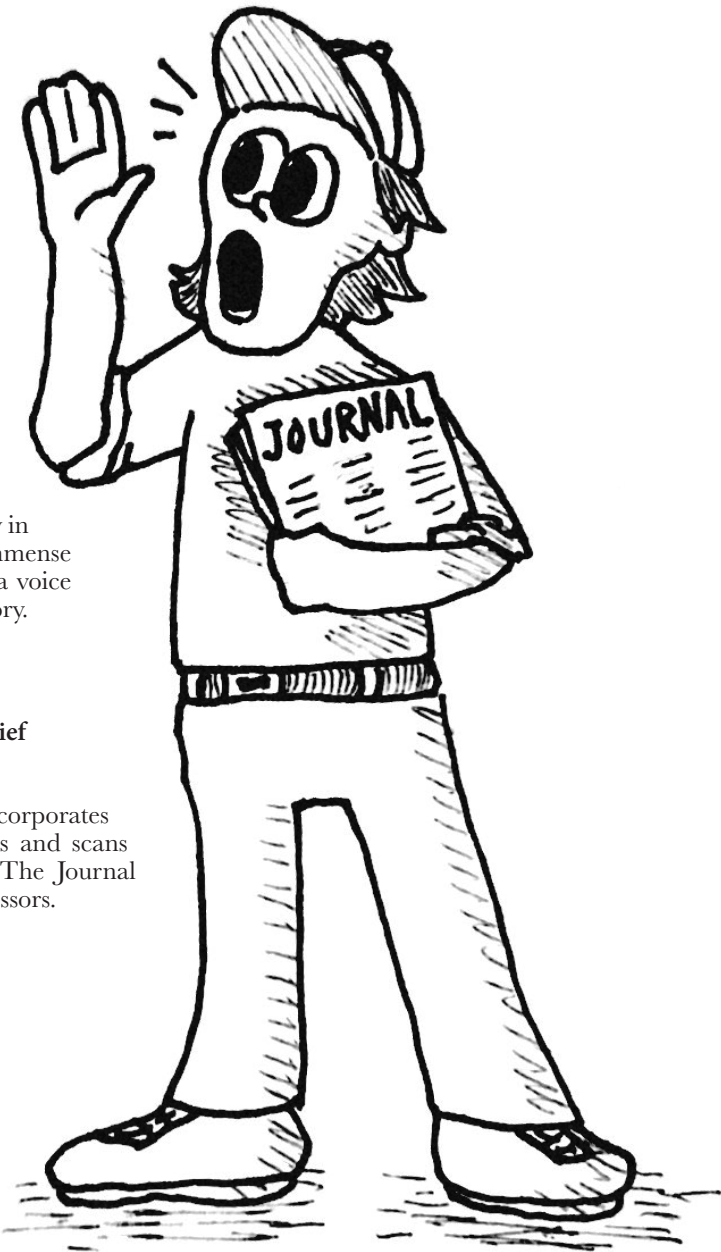
The Web debuted Oct. 3, 1924, making this year the 100th anniversary of continuous student news on Webster University's campus.

It is this history that I hold on to when it seems at every corner there stands a booby trap attempting to silence our voices. It makes it all feel much more important. We aren't just filling the air with our voices. By publishing under The Journal, we are emblazoning our names on a century-long timeline.

I can promise you we aren't in it for the byline and especially for the money – and if we are, we chose the wrong career. We do it for the stories. We are historymakers in the sense that the stories we write will grow roots and survive the mudslide of time passing. As journalists, we are reprimanded for making generalizations. But I will still posit this one: Every one of the student-journalists at The Journal is driven by the desire to make voices heard.

As my graduation date draws near, I find myself in the position of the many newsroom leaders before me, preparing to pass the torch of this piece of

EXTRA!  
EXTRA!



history – one that has burned for 100 continuous years.

It has been a true honor to serve the Webster student body in this way and I take immense pride in having had a voice in The Journal's history.

-Zoe DeYoung  
Editor-in-Chief

P.S. This edition incorporates information, graphics and scans from past issues of The Journal and its many predecessors.

The Web staff, 1950



The Journal staff, 2024



Photo by Vanessa Jones

### INSIDE :



Righting the ship: New Chancellor Tim Keane takes the helm, prepares to steer Webster through the storm ... 6

For the greater good: Goutham Adulapuri amplifies international student voices ... 3



# LETTERS to the editor



Contributed by Kate Northcott

## Student Literacy Corps continues Loretto legacy

Webster University was founded by the Sisters of Loretto in 1915. If you aren't familiar with the Loretto community, its mission then, as it is now, is to work for justice, always viewing education as the most effective means to that end.

In 1990, two more very determined women built on the foundation created by the sisters. School of Education professors, Jeri Levesque and Theresa Prosser, created the Student Literacy Corps (SLC) tutoring program as a course with an extensive field-experience component. While their goal was to educate future teachers, their mission was to address educational inequities in our community, so tutoring took place in urban schools in low-income neighborhoods.

In this way, the seed planted by the Sisters of Loretto was carefully nurtured by Jeri, Theresa and their students. As the current director of the SLC, I'm proud to support 35 dedicated and compassionate Webster students as they ensure this mission continues to flourish.

The original goal of educating university students through service-learning and low-literacy populations through individualized tutoring has been a multi-layered success. Certainly, students have benefitted from the individual attention of their tutors. And some tutors have been hired by their tutoring site the minute they graduated. But what alumni tutors tell us most consistently is that their Literacy Corps participation had a

transformative impact on their lives. The experience of serving others changed the way they look at the world.

Which (finally!) brings me to my point. College students often hear, "... when you get your degree ..." as if you have no agency today. Don't you believe it! There are countless opportunities to have an impact. Use your voice and talents to serve others and it will improve your life, as well.

If you're looking for opportunities to make a difference, Webster offers plenty beyond tutoring: serving meals to the homeless, participating in Get Out the Vote activities, donating food or hygiene items to the Willow Pantry, and taking a service trip to support families at the border are just a few examples. The SLC will also be collecting children's books and Webster t-shirts in the coming weeks.

Margaret Mead said, "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has."

Our legacy is a small group of nuns who turned an apple orchard into a university. If they could do that, just imagine what you can do!

- Kate Northcott

Director, Student Literacy Corps



Photo by Eden Rolves

## SinoLink Association celebrates cultural diversity

As the president of SinoLink, I lead an organization that strives to create an inclusive environment where students from all backgrounds can explore and appreciate Chinese culture.

Our mission is to foster cross-cultural understanding through various events and activities, such as our Chinese New Year Gala, the Mid-Autumn Festival and an upcoming piano concert in December, which we are co-hosting with the St. Louis Modern Chinese School. These events provide platforms for students to share their stories, showcase traditional performances and build meaningful connections within the campus community.

SinoLink represents a space where voices from diverse backgrounds can come together, exchange ideas and celebrate the beauty of cultural diversity. Being part of this organization allows me to share my heritage, while helping others learn about Chinese culture in an engaging and supportive environment.

Through language-exchange programs, cultural workshops and traditional Chinese arts, we invite students to join us on a journey

of cultural exchange and mutual learning.

Earlier this year, SinoLink had the privilege of representing Webster University at Webster City Hall for AAPI Heritage Month. It was an incredibly meaningful experience to stand in a space that celebrates the voices of the Asian American and Pacific Islander community. It reaffirmed our belief in the power of inclusivity and cultural awareness, which are central to the values we promote at SinoLink. We were proud to represent Webster and connect with the broader St. Louis community in such a significant way.

- Wei Wang

President, SinoLink Association



## I'm the queer of my hometown

by Styx Nappier  
Social Media Editor

I approached the stand, hands shaking as I set my phone onto the wooden podium. I had two minutes to convince them to care, to explain years of still-bleeding wounds given to me from Washington, Missouri, my Midwestern hometown.

Wearing some of my best clothes and a face mask, I looked at the school board members across from me. My stomach lurched as I removed the mask off my face and moved the microphone closer to me.

I was 16 and thinking I shouldn't be here. But one thought echoed back, pushing out any self-deprecating talk as faces and memories began to flood my mind.

Just four years earlier, I learned what the word, "faggot," meant from inside my middle school hallways.

We were like a pack of wildebeests, desperate to get from one place to another as around 300 students collided into one another. One wrong move meant I could be suffocated, turned into nothing more than something beneath the harsh hooves of the student body.

They turned hostility to leadership, spewing hate, while laughing and cheering with admiration for anybody who managed to tear another down. "Faggot" was one of the few they just kept coming back to, reserving even harsher words for less-surveilled spaces where they were certain no teachers could hear.

"Nobody stopped them. Nobody did anything. My reports never even made it past the teacher - and I wasn't the only one. We were silenced."

The majority of my friends begged for refuge against the barrage of attacks upon their identities. The only space we were given were the hearts of one another.

All of us were crushed by a community ready to push us away into such a spiral that we could end up separated by drugs, mental hospitals, escape and the destruction of self. They hated that we loved.

I soon gave up the fight, and the crowd consumed me. My head lowered and my body tensed as I made sure to stay on the edges of the hallway. I refused to grimace at the comments, horrified to be seen. I prayed my silence would protect me - it never did.

When high school rolled around, it was still awful, but at least there was a Gay Straight Alliance (GSA). I was never able to make the meetings, caught between busy schedules and the anxiety of being an outsider of my own community.

It was safer on the sidelines.

My friends found other queer people in the school for me, introducing us in awkward gestures. I didn't know how to talk to people, plagued with fear and using my silence for personal protection. Even the most mundane tasks turned into a battlefield.

Every move became orchestrated. In the backseat of my own life, I sat rigid, my body adamant that I could not move. I counted each step between my desk and where I needed to go. I evaluated every interaction that could occur on the way. I prepared for any loud noises, any action that could make others glance my way. "It's easy..." I repeated, trying to convince my body to exist in these spaces without success.

But there I stood, staring down seven board members at the end of my sophomore year. Thoughts swarmed my mind, spiraling and circling: Would it be enough? What kind of difference could I make? Would it even do anything? Could I even do it? I can. No, I must.

I'm lucky. My family doesn't outwardly condemn me or other LGBTQ people. Most others I know don't have that privilege. They can't speak because their home would become unsafe.

I held my voice up, gripping the edge of the podium to fake confidence. I felt thousands of eyes staring at me, seeing under my skin and into my identity. The meeting was live-streamed, and every move, hesitation and break in my exterior could be shown to people I might never know.

My tongue felt glued to the bottom of my mouth. This was risky. I didn't know if my family's support was skin-deep, if the administration would demean me, if my peers would harass me next. But I knew the cost of doing nothing. I didn't have a choice.

My voice trembled, pleading with desperation as I started speaking to the board.

"I'm tired of fighting battles just to survive school when I should be focusing on the high school experience ... Instead, I'm here because school has hurt me and others, where we can no longer pretend that there is safety for us when we go to school."

Roughly six other students and two community members shared stories of a climate that existed within

the school: racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, antisemitism, bullying and harassment. We had enough.

Two board members spoke to me after the meeting adjourned. One said I was a good speaker. The other spoke about fighting bullies "back in the day" before encouraging me not to do so. And then they never talked to me again.

The hate persisted.

Every step forward felt like three backward. I spoke at the board meeting and got a pat on the back. We created Community Advocates, a club to address the school's hateful climate. Every project we did with this group got shut down. Posters informing about consent were torn down. We streamlined the reporting process and within two months, the system was removed. My best friend and I created a club to inform middle school students about social issues and build a safe space that we never had. Administration canceled it after the first semester.

The adults around me kept trying to spur me on, slinging comments like, "These are the best years of your life." Their sentiments echoed in my mind, turning to a mockery as I was left staring at the pieces.

Exhaustion surrounded me. There was no end in sight. Students shouldn't have to fight to feel safe within their classrooms.

All the while, people were looking up to me with hope. I became GSA president and Community Advocates' vice president two years in a row. I worked my way up to becoming a band section leader in the middle of marching season. I was editor-in-chief of my school newspaper. My peers found hope in me, knowing that if they had struggles, I would speak for them. I did for years, losing track from one talk to the next as they all blurred together.

In Washington, you weren't ever given a voice. You had to make your own.

I couldn't take a breath of my own until I got to Webster University.

I can vividly remember my first couple of months, waiting for the other shoe to drop as I slowly shared the struggle I went through to get here. I waited for athletes to call me names and for my teachers to ignore my trans identity, to become a bystander of my own life once more.

I am still waiting.

There has not been a day where I've been an outcast for my queer identity on this campus. My voice is no longer screaming into darkness, hoping I can somehow spark light



Styx Nappier frowns as he watches over the Washington High School football field in the distance, seeing students on the field working together, while knowing the division that exists among them.

Photo by Skylar Powers

within this cavern. It's no longer searching for others nearby, hoping they have a flashlight. Instead, it's a burning flame that I have the honor of taking with me, having added my own fuel and now learning how to guide others out of this darkness.

Webster has taught me the true meaning of community and the necessity of voices within them. Nearly everybody on campus, student or otherwise, has compassion for one another.

I still carry with me the voices of those who cannot speak. I know their stories, their grief and their agony.

I know the weight of them, the faces who carry the burden, trying to free themselves of the pain.

This past spring, I received a text from my best friend's mother. Within two hours, my high schools' administration would hold a board meeting with plans to remove a protection policy for transgender students.

I was horrified. I immediately got dressed and grabbed the keys to my car to drive the 45 minutes away from campus.

I spent the car ride shaking with emotion - anger, sadness, hope and hurt all bundled into one. I was brought back to the familiarity of seeking refuge at school and having that stripped away. The shared dream of queer students, imagining

escape before processing the idea of acceptance.

Who is going to die because of the school's negligence? Who is going to become another number of a suicide statistic? I couldn't leave that to chance.

I had two minutes to speak.

It wasn't enough. It's never enough.

But this time, there was a glimmer of hope. I finally spoke my truth about being trans. Two reporters talked to me after my speech, asking about my experiences as a trans student within the school district.

I was a lone voice, but this time, I had the Webster community behind me, the one that gave me a breath of fresh air. My flame relit inside this dark cavern.

I came back and asked for help. People shared and amplified my message, giving me places to speak and explain my reality. My work was not just heard, but encouraged.

I was no longer trapped in those hallways, wondering if I could make it to 18. Instead, I was unapologetically advocating for the treatment of myself and my loved ones. I had built myself a voice - and it was powerful.

"I still carry with me the voices of those who cannot speak. I know their stories, grief and agony. I know the weight of them, the faces who carry the burden, trying to free themselves of the pain."

# FOR THE GREATER GOOD

## Goutham Adulapuri amplifies international student voices

by Jaci Bethel  
Staff Writer

Goutham Adulapuri has come a long way from home. In the spring of 2023, he left Telangana, Warangal, in South India for Webster Groves. He has since made Webster University history within his first year here, funding 68 clubs through the Student Government Association (SGA) as vice president and budget committee chair by prioritizing funding that would benefit the greatest number of students.

Adulapuri enrolled as a graduate student in Information Technology Management. His first year at Webster was challenging, as he remembers spending much of the time feeling afraid and not being very talkative. Adulapuri's involvement in the SGA began in summer 2023 after he received an email about the elections for the upcoming school year.

"I just got involved from there because I felt how very difficult it was being an international student," Adulapuri said. "So I thought if I could become that measure for student inclusion and diversity, it could help me, as well as people who are international. I thought I could be the right person to be there because I felt how it was."

Adulapuri lost his initial run for ambassador for student inclusion by just four votes; however, his story with SGA did not end there. He received more votes for the comptroller position and happily accepted it.

"As comptroller, I needed to take our budget, and in that case, I could promote more clubs, as well," Adulapuri said. "So luckily, I got an opportunity. With no second thought, I just joined SGA."

He served as the budget committee chair, in addition to his comptroller position. Adulapuri was able

to achieve his success of funding 68 clubs with \$95,000 of the budget by exercising planning and collaboration. As the budget committee chair, he made sure to listen to the needs of each club to maximize the impact of the available funds.

Jennifer Stewart, co-director of WebsterLEADS and director of Student Engagement, has been a pillar since Adulapuri came to Webster.

"Having Goutham as an involved graduate student really brings up a different perspective that is sometimes hard to get," Stewart said. "He challenges us to think about things from more than just a traditional undergraduate perspective and makes sure those voices are in the room where change can be made."

Current SGA president Matthew Langston, who served as comptroller prior to Adulapuri, has taken on the role of mentor and teacher.

"One of my favorite stories is one night I was in the Student Leadership Center working on some stuff. During that time, [Adulapuri] was having an event in the Sunnen Lounge. He went out of his way to find me and brought me to the event just because he wanted me to have fun," Langston said. "I literally cannot describe how nice of a human being he is."

Sharan Vagalaboina, an international student from the same region as Adulapuri, did not know much about campus involvement when she arrived this spring as a graduate student. It was Adulapuri who helped her navigate the waters of SGA, guiding her through the process of running for the position of senator-at-large before she was elected.

"His advocacy for international students has had a significant impact on my experience at Webster," Vagalaboina said. "By raising awareness about the unique challenges we face, he's ensured that our voices are

heard. His efforts have made me feel more supported and valued as an international student. Whether it's through organizing cultural events or offering guidance on navigating campus life, his dedication has created a more inclusive environment where I feel I belong and can thrive."

SGA is meant to be a voice for all students, while SANGAM, Webster's Desi organization, focuses specifically on Indian and Desi perspectives of students. SANGAM ensures the culture is well represented in the university setting and that the voices of the Indian and Desi students on campus are heard.

Adulapuri didn't know about SANGAM until he met one of its co-founders, Narisa Khan, at a Diwali event hosted by the club. Upon realizing the club needed more uplifting by students, Adulapuri was able to step in as vice president. From there, the two began to plan events to enlarge the diversity of involvement opportunities on campus.

"I think that [Goutham] is always very thoughtful about the work that he does both within SGA and SANGAM. He is really great about sharing the successes of these groups, which is so helpful to raise the awareness on campus for all students," Stewart said.

In May, Adulapuri received the Making a Difference Award from Webster, while SANGAM was honored for its contributions to cultural awareness. Adulapuri, who now serves as vice president of SGA, has also been appointed president of SANGAM.

The Indian and Desi population at Webster University is growing exponentially. This uptick has increased diversity and the need for clubs that celebrate different cultures – a need Adulapuri is not afraid to take on.

Last month, SANGAM hosted Vi-



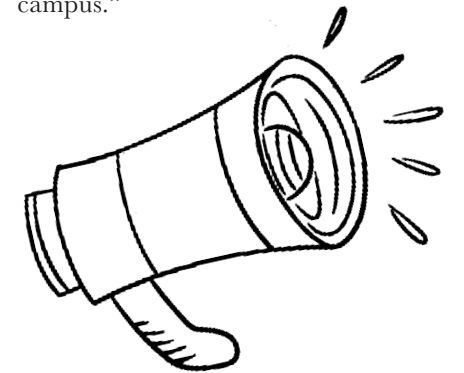
Goutham Adulapuri

Photo by Jaci Bethel

nayaka Chavithi, also known as Ganesh Chaturthi, a significant Hindu festival celebrating the birth of Lord Ganesha. The celebration, which featured a traditional pooja led by a priest, brought in a lively crowd of approximately 250 students.

"It was a continuous flow of people coming in and going, and we had a good photo session. We captured all the good moments," Adulapuri said. "When people come to know what is actually happening on campus ...

the more involvement and growth of campus life. That's the reason student voices are a must and should be on campus."



## Ganesh Chaturthi

by James Pepper  
Staff Photographer

SANGAM, the first Indian student organization at Webster University, held Ganesh Chaturthi, a Hindu festival that celebrates the birthday of Lord Ganesha, on Sept. 10.



Top left: SANGAM president Goutham Adulapuri brings in Lord Ganesha to the Quad during the festival.

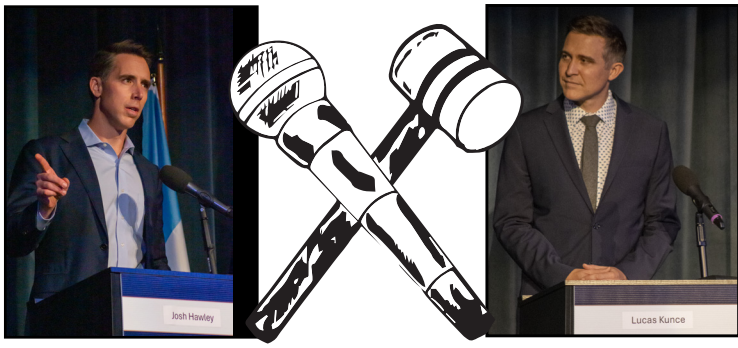
Top right: Students celebrate and dance during the Dhol Tasha performance at Ganesh Chaturthi.

Bottom left: Adulapuri leads the aarti ritual.

Bottom right: Former SANGAM president Narisa Khan places flowers around Lord Ganesha at Ganesh Chaturthi.



## MISSOURI SENATE RACE



Josh Hawley

Lucas Kunce

The Missouri Press Association hosted the Missouri Gubernatorial and U.S. Senate forums in Springfield on Sept. 20. The Senate candidates, incumbent Republican Josh Hawley and challenger Democrat Lucas Kunce, took questions from moderators, followed by questions from journalists, including a group of Webster Journal reporters.

### Q: Why should a Gen-Z voter vote for you?

**HAWLEY:** Do you want to be able to afford a car? Do you want to be able to afford to start a family? Do you want to be able to afford your rent or a mortgage one day? If you do, we have to do something different. We cannot continue down the road we're on.

**KUNCE:** I take no money from corporate PACS [Political Action Committees], no money from federal lobbyists, no money from big pharma executives. I want to put money back into this state. I want to make it so you can have a good life here. I want you to be able to make your own decisions like you deserve to do.

### Q: War between Israel and Hamas has resulted in thousands of deaths. Ceasefire talks seem unproductive. Should the United States' support for Israel be contingent on certain factors? Do you believe the U.S. should be doing more than it already is to provide aid to Palestinian residents?

**HAWLEY:** No to both. No, we should not condition our aid to Israel and no, I think we should not pressure Israel into a cease-fire. Two days ago in the Senate, I was at a hearing in which I sat and listened to a witness try to tell me that all of the anti-semitism and violence toward Jewish Americans on campus wasn't really happening and wasn't real. It is real. The attack on Israel is real, we should be standing unequivocally with our ally, Israel, [and] not talking about cease-fires, not talking about how we can help Hamas. We should be saying to Israel, 'Get the job done.' For those folks here in this country and on our college campuses, they ought to be safe. We don't need a cease-fire until Hamas is eliminated.

**KUNCE:** I believe there is no place for antisemitism or any kind of hate on our college campuses or anywhere in this country. I think Israel had a right to defend themselves and I think what we've seen over the months since then is that defense has led to thousands and thousands of civilian lives being lost. I can tell you right now that killing all the civilians or having thousands and thousands of civilians die does not bring about peace. I think we need to get to a negotiated cease-fire that brings back the hostages.

That should be one of the conditions. For everybody's peace and security, that is going to be the best. That is going to be the best for Israel, that is going to be the best for Palestine and it's going to be the best for all of us.

### Q: Would you support federal legislation to either establish a nationwide right to abortion or impose nationwide limits on when abortions should be performed? Or do you think abortion should be left to the states?

**HAWLEY:** I don't support a nationwide ban. I do support reasonable federal restrictions [and] limits on abortion - like when the baby is capable of feeling pain. What I will not support is imposing on the state of Missouri and all the other states an abortion on-demand through nine months with taxpayer funding.

**KUNCE:** I think Missourians are smart enough to make their own decisions about how they live their lives, about how they build and protect their families. As a U.S. senator, I will promise you now, I will codify Roe v. Wade because we can't have no exceptions for rape and incest like Josh Hawley has put into place. I will protect in-vitro fertilization, something he has refused to do twice now on the record. I will protect contraception because I believe those things are important for everyday Missourians so that we can make our decisions.

By Brian Rubin  
Photos by Joe Clever

# GEN Z PREPARES FOR THE POLLS

Voters 18 to 25 find their footing in critical presidential election

by Lucy Caira  
Staff Writer

Ashley Caravello is a political pioneer at Webster University. Prior to becoming president of WebsterVOTES, a student-led organization that encourages political engagement and education during election seasons, Caravello resided in a small southern Illinois town where she describes politics as taboo.

"Just being there, I wasn't able to get a whole lot of political experience. You see a lot of local elections but besides the yard signs, you do not really see a lot of people engaging in politics or discussing it," she said.

Caravello was shocked by the level of political involvement in the Webster community. After a few years as a residence hall assistant, she searched for another position that allowed her to further amplify her voice in the community.

"What do I do next? What do I put my time into that leaves an impact on the Webster community, but also fulfills my sense of self and has a bigger impact?" Caravello said.

Caravello found her new purpose over the summer when she was appointed WebsterVOTES president. She can often be found wearing her signature patriotic top hat and listening to students' input. She uses her position to inspire them to share their voice by providing a safe space for students of all cultures to watch debates, celebrate holidays such as Constitution Day, and facilitate various events throughout the entire election season to spread awareness.

Generation Z, those born between 1997 and 2012, is entering an increasingly divisive political climate.

"In terms of the current climate that young people are dealing with is different from previous climates, the extent of political polarization is very strong," said Gwyneth Williams, Political Science professor. "Certainly, in modern history, it is unique - not if you go back to the Civil War, but in modern history, there hasn't been this level of polarization. It's seeping into all areas of our culture. It's not just who we vote for, it's the neighborhood we live in, it's what we watch on Netflix, it's the products we buy and it's where we go on vacation. The political differences are causing big, wide cultural differences. We aren't hanging out with people who have different views ... that is not necessarily a good thing. That is a condition that young people are dealing with that they were not 20 years ago."

According to a poll by the Harvard Kennedy School, only 49% of voters under 30 "definitely" planned to cast a ballot, down from the 54% of young Americans under 30 who voted in 2020. An abundance of constitutional changes have fueled the fiery political climate, one of the most controversial being the overturning of Roe v. Wade in 2022, which stripped women of their right to have an abortion, along with other reproductive rights.

Such social and human rights issues hit home for Gen-Z members like Webster sophomore Marybeth Comer.

"The issues that are at the forefront of my mind are abortion and bodily autonomy because those are things that directly affect me. The

topics such as LGBTQ rights affect me because I have so many loved ones that are a part of that community," Comer said.

Millennials and Gen-Z voters will account for half the electorate by 2028, according to a study by UC Berkeley. If the two major parties unite on issues, a new era of government with its priorities set on social justice and reproductive rights may emerge. In order to accomplish this, young generations of voters are being encouraged to get out and vote more than ever.

"You cannot complain about

cial skills that older generations had. Sometimes political engagement is seen as posting something on a blog as opposed to going and lobbying members of the state legislature to actually take direct political action."

But for some students, social media has had a positive impact on political outlook and engagement.

"Social media has played a part in my vote, especially after having some differing beliefs from Kamala [Harris] because engaging in online discourse helped me gain confidence in her as a pick for president," Comer said.



Ashley Caravello helps create Webster Votes buttons to encourage students to vote.

Photo by Zoe DeYoung

something if you are not going to do anything to fix it. As people get older and stop voting, it's important for us to move in and continue to vote so we can have a say in what our future will be," Webster senior Abby Szydlowski said.

Disengagement is not unique to Gen Z, as the 18 to 25 age group tends to have the lowest voter turnout, regardless of generation. However, the exposure to media and its drastic consequences on political culture in their upbringings is. Young voters cope with the strenuous political climate in traditionally unconventional ways, such as informal comment section debates. In the age of social media, political participation looks different than it did in the past.

"They are differently engaged because they might not be staffing the polls, but they're putting their voices out on social media and amplifying their views, which is really helpful. But we also must remember that things such as working at the polls are necessary, so the election is successful and runs properly," Caravello said, adding getting involved in local politics is another way to become engaged. "You can write letters to your local Congress people and governors to make suggestions. Obviously, they're not going to favor a single person's opinion, but if they hear enough of it, they might actually reassess policies to favor what the younger generations desire."

Social media platforms such as TikTok, Instagram and X dominate as the information hub for many young voters. While social media can generate educational discourse, using it as one's only source of interaction is harmful.

"There's a lot of evidence now that social media and being on our devices is causing a whole lot of social disruption, increasing loneliness and disengagement, and breaking social ties," Williams said. "Younger people are more affected by it because they are now being raised in it and are often not getting those so-

Social media can be educational for young voters to learn about the political process, such as the electoral college - one of the main reasons cited as a source of frustration and distrust with the process of electing a president.

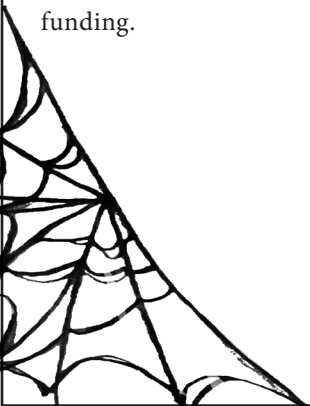
"In terms of the presidential election, Missouri is not going to go for Harris, it is going to go for Trump. If a student is not supporting Donald Trump and they live in another state, they may want to vote in the other state where it makes a difference," Williams said.

The last few election results have been determined by tight races in swing states, which gives off the impression that those votes matter more than those of non-swing states. Living in a state whose dominant political party clashes with one's values can be extremely discouraging, but it is no reason not to vote.

"It might not seem to matter based on what state you are registered in if your state leans one way, but it could still make a difference. Your state could flip ... you just don't know," Caravello said. "Historically, certain states have been the same color for decades, yes. But you never know how a new generation of voters might react."

As the 2024 presidential election draws near, it is imperative for young voters to stay informed on issues and get involved politically. In spite of the current political turmoil, Gen-Z voters have the ability to incite the improvements they seek within the government and inspire a new era of progress.

"Exercising your right to vote and your voice in this country is your biggest superpower," Comer said. "Nothing will ever change if you do not act on it yourself. People have worked so hard for us to be able to have these rights to vote and I think by not exercising that, you're doing a disservice."



EN '24

Comic by Ethan Nieroda

# Campus resources work to educate, tear down sex stigma

by Styx Nappier  
Social Media Editor

Sex.  
For many, it's an uncomfortable topic to talk about – if mentioned at all. But it's necessary for providing support and resources to those who may need it, like individuals sexually experimenting or those victimized by power-based violence.

Sex-related curriculum varies by state, since there are few federal laws defining quality sex education. According to the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services, the state's public schools are only required to teach HIV and AIDS prevention — with an emphasis on abstinence. Any other sex education is left to the discrepancy of school boards and students' parental figures.

Gorloks Aware, a campus organization, aims to provide a more comprehensive sexual education to students, sharing violence-prevention methods for stalking, dating and sexual abuse. Ali Brokaw used grant funding from the Office of Violence Against Women to create the program in January 2022.

"We're looking at what kinds of education people get when they're coming in as a student right away," Brokaw said. "Then we also look at how we can have these continual messages so that way it's not just one thing you hear about one time and then never think about it again. We're looking to build a culture where everyone is responsible for creating a safe environment. It's not just on me, but on all of us."

The program is based on Brokaw's findings from 13 focus groups, created to see what would capture students' attention and keep them invested in this education. She found that students wanted to be actively involved with the conversation.

One of the ways that Gorloks Aware encourages students to make a difference is by attending their Green Dot trainings. The program aims to help individuals recognize instances of power-based violence and utilize their strengths to help intervene.

Some 300 students went through training in 2023, but Brokaw hopes for more this year. Currently, only Brokaw and the director of housing, Rachael Amick, are certified Green Dot trainers. But 16 staff members are signed up to become certified in October, allowing more opportunities for students to earn their own green dot. After completing training, students are given a specialized email signature which states, "ask me about green dot." This aims to draw interest to the program, and has successfully led to an increase in training sessions on campus.

"For it to be this cultural thing that we do, it can't be something that lives in the Gorloks Aware office or something that just lives in Title IX," Brokaw said. "It has to be something that everybody is talking about and thinks is important."

It took a discussion within Webster's Clery training course for junior Eden Rolves to realize they were a victim of cyberstalking.

"[The trainer] was like, 'cyberstalking is an actual thing. It's a Clery crime and it's something you need to report,'" Rolves said. "She's describing it and I started having a panic attack ... This isn't just some guy being 'wacky crazy,' it's actually something I could've self-reported because some of it happened on campus."

Rolves received support on campus, like from Clery officer Maggie Hooks. They learned they could walk with Public Safety officers around campus, or use other protective measures offered by the school.



Self portrait of Eden Rolves in their room as they mimic what was occurring while being cyberstalked.

Photo by Eden Rolves

Other students, like Carrigan Ring, have benefitted from Webster's counseling program.

"I had been sexually assaulted my freshman year of high school and last year was the first time that anyone actually validated my sexual assault," Ring said. "... Victims of those situations need a safe space [where] they feel seen and validated for the things that happened to them, not to just feel like their opinions and what happened to them doesn't matter."

The Office for Civil Rights Compliance and Title IX (OCRC) runs programs of its own throughout the school year. Some of these are reoccurring, such as Title IX Tuesdays,

when students can ask questions and learn more about regulations and the reporting process. Sessions occur in-person on the first Tuesday of the month in the University Center (UC) and over Zoom on the last Tuesday of the month. Other informational sessions are based on student needs.

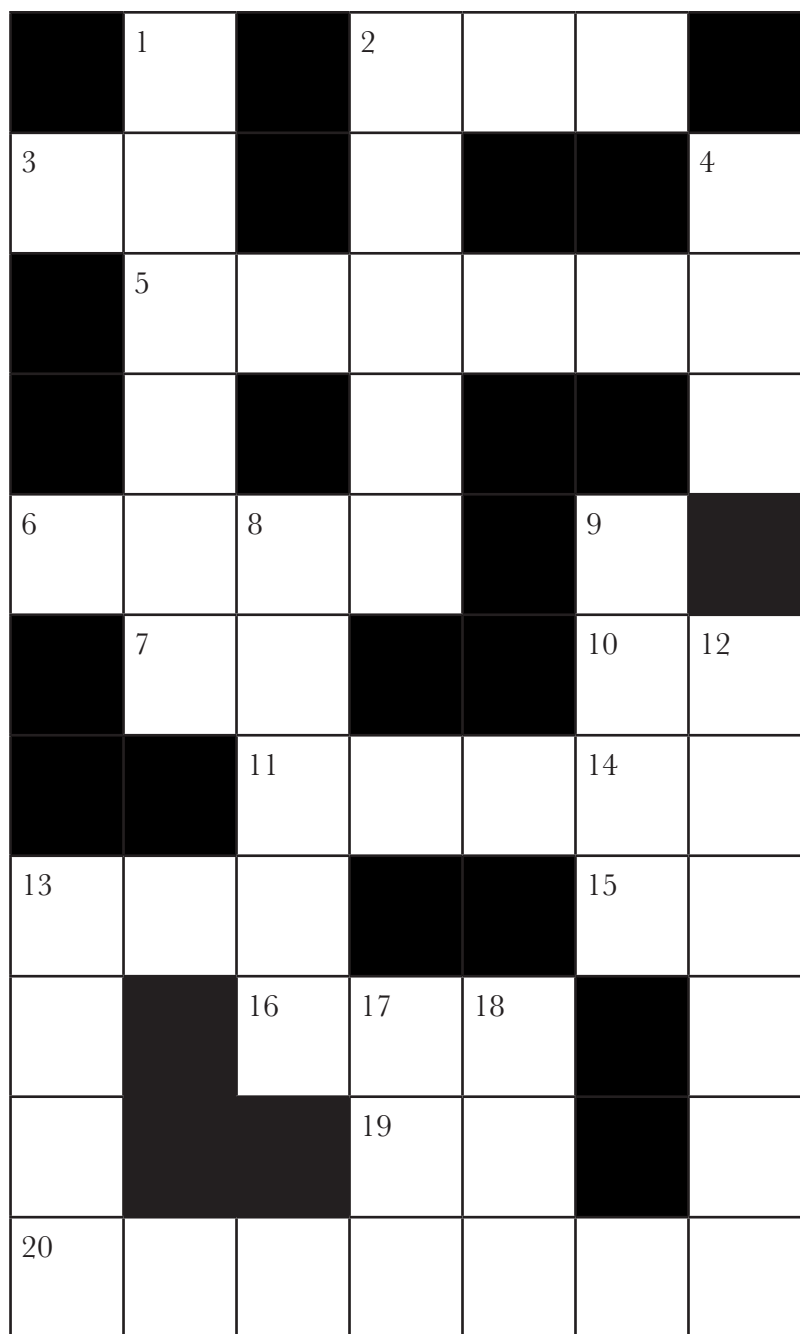
"We look at trends in reporting and how our campus is shifting over time," Kimberly Bynum-Smith, director and Title IX coordinator, said.

Several campus organizations are working to encourage conversations about sex, safety and violence prevention for the benefit of the culture around Webster. There are a variety of sex-related programs and re-

sources made available to students on campus, including boxes of condoms, lube and dental dams located within the counseling office.

Both Gorloks Aware and the OCRC are open to student input and organization partnerships. Any students looking to do so are encouraged to email Gorloksaware@webster.edu or bethoberg@webster.edu, respectively.

"Each of us has the power to be a part of that solution," Brokaw said. "It can get really easy to stay in the panic of it, but we have the power to do something – and we should. We can."



## Down

1. Every story in this issue has them.
2. Most spoken language in India.
4. Counseling provides resources for safe...
5. Decorates with icing.
8. Strides feet take toward creating safe queer spaces.
12. From Maria to West and East halls.
13. On top, one word.
14. Residential assistant
17. When will you arrive? (abbrev.)
18. Webster's newest leader, informally.

## Across


2. Today in Spanish.
3. Note that sounds like a female deer.
5. Convert to an ion.
6. The SANGAM organization audience is also called...
7. Street (abbrev.)
9. Vegetable with seedpods used to thicken soups and stews.
10. Kansas City (abbrev.)
11. Read all about it!
13. Used to amplify sound (abbrev.)
15. Earlier classes are followed by this two-letter abbrev.
16. Collection of songs Goo Man performs.
19. The musical note before Do.
20. Sleepwear sometimes worn in class.

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by Zoe DeYoung & Chloe Sapp

# RIGHTING THE SHIP

## New Chancellor Tim Keane takes the helm, prepares to steer Webster through the storm

The first day on a new job can be nerve-racking. However, few would argue that Webster University's new chancellor, Tim Keane, had more to deal with than first-day jitters.

Keane officially assumed his post Aug. 1, but his meetings with campus community members began before then. There is major repair work to be done to Webster's finances, but also to the community's trust in university leadership.

"That would be one of my very first initiatives, to try to bring people together," Keane said.

The St. Louis native is returning home from the West Coast, where he served as the dean of the Knauss School of Business at the University of San Diego (USD). His resume runs

the gamut, ranging from 20 years in the private sector, leadership and directorial roles at four other universities and a brief stint in professional soccer.

His face-to-face approach reaches far beyond hand-shaking and includes feedback sessions with department faculty about existing issues. Morale among faculty, staff and students waned after it was disclosed how the salaries for former chancellor Beth Stroble and current president Julian Schuster ballooned alongside the university's operating deficit.

Lately, there seems to be a shift, with the outlook on the positive.

"I think everybody's very excited," Keane said. "I think the energy's already there, it's just a matter of harnessing it."

It appears as though Keane has been placed at the helm of a careening ship. The most recent tax filings from May 2023 saw Webster's operating deficit at a staggering \$39 million. The credit rating agency Moody's bond rating dropped further into junk status, to boot.

"St. Louis wants us to succeed," Keane said. "St. Louis cannot have another Fontbonne. That is a black mark on St. Louis."

An interim report by the Higher Learning Commission is fast approaching, making January the deadline to prove the university's survival as an ongoing entity, or risk losing accreditation.

The new chancellor's attempts to take control involve the formation of a new strategic plan. To do this, Keane looked back to 2015, when the university marked its 100th year with the establishment of a brand identity as a global institution.

This was also the last time a strategic plan was written since 2008, when the university adopted a plan called Vision 2020.

"It looked like there was a stake in the ground on what the strategy

was, and this being a global institution was a big part of that strategy. They accomplished what they chose to do," Keane said.

Through his experience in the private sector and at USD, Keane finds long-term planning to be "useless" in an environment like higher education that is constantly changing.

Keane prefers a more iterative plan, one that involves an annual collection of information and redesigning where necessary.

"I think one of the challenges we have is that we have economies of scope. That is, our brand is international, but are we doing it efficiently? Do we have a diversity of assets that can then protect us?" Keane said.

Among students enrolled in international locations, 75% come from Tashkent, Uzbekistan. Keane says this number needs to be more balanced.

"It's a little bit risky to have all of that tied up in one place. We have to make some changes to diversify that," Keane said. "We gotta step back and say, 'How can we bring alive all of the locations, maybe to the level of Tashkent or close, so we have a truly diversified footprint?'"

At the Fall Convocation ceremony, Keane made his first public address to the university community. In his speech, he said Webster's global presence is the largest of any university he has been involved with.

"Growing up here, I knew Webster to be an iconic institution. I was pretty pleasantly surprised that it had grown so uniquely in this community and the international footprint was also one of those surprises to me. I knew that was established, but I was surprised how well they've done it," Keane said.

It was the first time in 15 years that students had been invited to the convocation event. In a



Editor-in-chief Zoe DeYoung and managing editor Chloe Sapp sit down with Chancellor Tim Keane in The Journal's newsroom.

Photo by Vanessa Jones

meeting with Webster's marketing team, Keane was surprised to find the event was normally held for faculty and staff as a "State of the University" address.

"I said, 'We can do a 'State of the University' address any time. This is the opportunity for us to actually welcome students. Make them feel like they're part of the family,'" Keane said. "It was funny, because they were a little taken back, because it's never been done, principally."

Following convocation, Keane announced an across-the-board hiring freeze for the university effective immediately - a move that appears to be part of an overall strategic plan.

Keane's strategic planning kicked off with listening sessions for staff and students to share what processes are broken and need to be fixed. Then, on Sept. 26, Keane and the university's leadership team embarked on a retreat to have a candid discussion about the state of the university.

"From that, what we'll do is we'll understand our current state, then we'll break out and do a facilitated discussion about the business model. We'll do that as a facilitated discussion and have a third party come in and I know a guy who's a good friend who will do it for free," Keane said. "Most of this is all for free, by the way,

because we don't have any money."

The entire strategic planning process will need to be done by Thanksgiving. For now, the university leadership is monitoring cash flow.

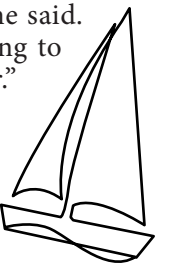
"We are improving," Keane affirmed.

Keane turned down the complimentary house and car that traditionally comes with the chancellorship. The home, which former chancellor Stroble occupied, is being sold, making a \$1 million drop in the bucket toward breakeven.

"There's a lot that I think people take for granted here that we just need to bring together and change the narrative in the market. Part of that was, when we were negotiating, my contract offered housing. I said, 'Sell the house. We need the money. I'll buy my own house,'" Keane said.

The university may be short on funds, but Keane says the Webster community is not short on passion. And while the list is long in terms of what needs changing to right the ship, Keane believes the community is up to the task.

"I think the people at Webster have floaties on. I think there's buoyancy here," Keane said. "All I'm doing is trying to bring people together."



Chancellor Tim Keane addresses the university at the Fall Convocation ceremony on Aug. 23.

Photo by Vanessa Jones

# Counseling gets an upgrade

by Chloe Sapp  
Managing Editor

Two full-time employees — and a handful of interns — run Webster University's Counseling and Life Development department.

The staff balances approximately 75 clients on a weekly basis, not including group services offered or the mental health emergency calls the office receives.

In addition to having a small staff with high demand, the department ran completely on paper and pencil, and had no online counseling services available for Webster students. That was until a few months ago.

Now, the department is getting an upgrade — it just has to prove it deserves it.

According to department assistant director Samantha Sasek, two years ago, Webster received federal earmarked funding, money given to the university by the government for specific needs. Approximately \$150,000 of that funding was required to go to

the department and be spent on technology-related needs to increase students' access to mental health care.

With the funding comes the introduction of three programs this school year to bring Webster's counseling up to the 21st century: Togetherall, ProtoCall and Titanium Schedule.

"The reason we haven't been able to offer these types of services to students before is because we didn't have the budget," Sasek said. "These contracts are expensive. Electronic health record systems are not cheap. Multi-year contracts are in the tens of thousands of dollars. This is big money the university did not have."

Togetherall, a web-based peer-to-peer support platform, brings free online and anonymous counseling to any Webster student. As of Sept. 6, 121 students are registered for the program. Students who sign up are presented with a feed in which they can post anything and can interact with students from all over the world.

The program is monitored 24/7 by licensed mental health profession-

als. If a student is posting something that warrants intervention, professionals are notified to check on the student.

Togetherall also offers free assessments and self-guided videos on a number of concerns like depression and stress management.

"If a student has a specific issue or concern and they want to learn more, they might be able to address that need through one of these self-guided videos. And that sometimes might be enough, right? If the student doesn't necessarily need ongoing mental health counseling services, they might be able to have an answer questioned or meet a particular need through one of these self-guided videos that they could take instead," Sasek said.

Seventy percent of Webster's Togetherall users report having no existing formal mental health support. Thirty-five percent of them are men; 38% are over the age of 25; 55% identify as BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color); and 7% are trans or non-binary.

"With a platform like Togetherall, students who might not typically access mental health care are still being connected and supported and in a way that feels maybe a little bit safer or less threatening," Sasek said.

Hand-in-hand with Togetherall,

ProtoCall serves as an extension of the Counseling department and functions as an emergency mental health counseling telephone line.

In the past, department director Patrick Stack and Sasek have been on call for mental health emergencies.

"We don't get a ton of calls after hours, but we got just enough to where it was, you know, disruptive to our personal lives," Sasek said. "So, just for sustainability and to help prevent burnout — since we have this money and these services are expensive — I started looking at what companies are out there or available to assist with specifically the on-call emergency mental health emergencies."

With ProtoCall, when students call the Counseling office, they will be given the option to "press 1" to be connected with a mental health professional immediately instead of waiting for either Stack or Sasek to be available, a service that has been the most underutilized out of the three new programs so far.

With the introduction of Titanium Schedule, Counseling has upgraded its system to an electronic health record system instead of running off of paper and pencil, which was due to the lack of funding.

"We were always HIPAA compliant, but there's always the risk when you have paper floating around and you use filing cabinets that something could happen, right? So the electronic health record system helps streamline processes like scheduling, the maintenance of client files, but it also ensures that we are HIPAA compliant," Sasek said.

Sasek expresses

concern that when this funding is spent, the university will not continue to fund the new initiatives.

"I want to justify and make a case that these services are absolutely needed and benefit students because

**"I want to justify and make a case that these services are absolutely needed and benefit students"**

- Samantha Sasek

my concern is when the money dries up, how as a department, how as a university are we going to continue to fund these services? We have a three-year contract. What happens after three years is outside of my control," Sasek said.

Togetherall is saving the university money as the price for one contract year with the program is significantly less than the cost of hiring another full-time licensed clinician.

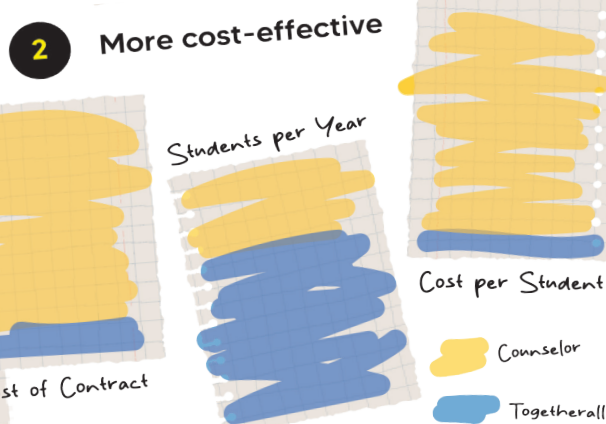
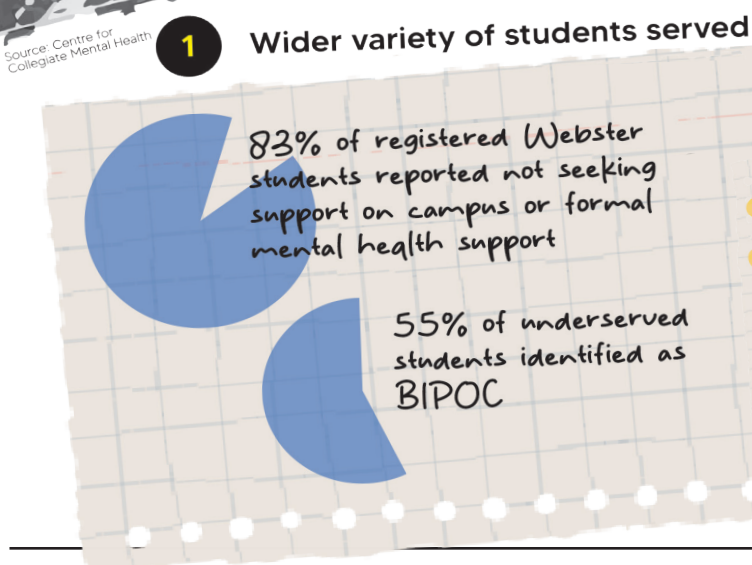
"I've been told that there's no money to hire another full-time therapist, and not that this takes the place of a therapist, per se, but we are able to tap into and cast a wide net and reach our students for a more affordable price than if we were to hire someone on full-time to do the job," Sasek said.

Sasek hopes students do not take the resources for granted as they may not stick along forever.

"I hope students will consume the heck out of these services because mental health services out there in the real world are expensive," Sasek said. "And that's a huge barrier to accessing services once you graduate."

## Breaking Down Togetherall

Connecting with at risk and hard to reach students



Graphic by KP Benton

# DECADES OF DISSSENT

## Webster's legacy of student activism

by Gabrielle Lindemann  
News Editor

Webster students march up and down Big Bend Boulevard, protesting the Vietnam War. A man drives by the students, gives them “the finger” and yells “stupid hippies!” He drives by twice, three times, but on the fourth time, he parks his car and marches with them.

Webster University was founded in 1915. Since the school's inception, students have spoken out about the issues most relevant to them.

In 1970, four Kent State students were shot and killed for protesting the Vietnam War on campus. The day after, protests broke out at colleges around the country.

Students at Webster, who wanted to have their voices heard about the shooting and their stance on the war, created a committee of students and faculty to plan out a strike. The Web, the campus newspaper's name at the time, was set into motion, not only to cover the strike, but also to serve as strike headquarters.

Arthur Rosenberg, who is now a rabbi, came to Webster in 1968 as a newly graduated 22-year-old professor. He played a large role on the protest committee, and documented the entire event in his diary, which he typed on an Olivetti typewriter.

“The fears of the faculty turned out to be a childish lack of trust in our most intelligent and responsible comrades: our students,” Rosenberg's diary said. “These students possess not only deep feelings and critical eyes, but beautiful in action, strong, young and ready to go in service of national good. Young patriots championing all those causes that their parents had tried so long to instill in

them: honor, righteousness, helping the needy, being honest and proud. In their manner they were working for the system, not against.”

On May 6, 1970, the student strike occurred. An estimated 80% of the Webster student body took part.

In 2014, when police shot and killed Michael Brown in Ferguson, his death sparked protest movements across St. Louis and the nation. Webster held its own protest on campus, led by senior Henry Coleman.

Coleman was president of the Association for African-American Collegians and led three protests during his four years as a student.

“I feel like activism is important for students. When you're in college, you have more time, more energy to get your voice out there and do something about it and get involved in the community,” Coleman said.

Coleman remembers being afraid to say what he truly felt at times. But he wishes he would have spoken freely. He thinks students today are a lot more open with protest and what they're willing to say.

“I feel like when you're a student, you have these big ambitions, these dreams and you don't see any obstacles. You're like, ‘nothing can stop us,’” Coleman said. “I feel like students will push more. They'll push the envelope more and speak more freely, speak from the heart more.”

Coleman, who is now a high school teacher in Dallas, recently supported his students during a protest they held for unfair grading and tests without a permanent teacher.

“The reason I was protesting is looking out for Black and brown peo-

ple to not face police brutality and to not be oppressed – and so that's the work that I do now. That's why I'm in education,” Coleman said. “I do it for my kids. I do it for the community that I work in, and so my protesting in college has just told me, my voice can make noise. My voice can make waves,” Coleman said.

On the Webster campus last September, students led a walkout to protest the lack of transparency from university leadership. Days later, Webster faculty cast a vote of no confidence in then-Chancellor Beth Stroble and President Julian Schuster.

Luke Adams, who graduated from Webster in 2024, helped lead the walkout.

“I think that the practice of getting together with other people who want to see things change and fighting toward that change ... that is like the basis of what human beings really are here for, and what we want out of being alive,” Adams said.

Protests are a time-tested tradition at Webster, as students value advocacy and allyship. As Webster continues, so will student protests. They will remain a significant part of campus life, reflecting the diverse perspectives and causes Webster students believe in.

Top: Webster students protest lack of transparency from university leadership in September 2023. Photo by Chloe Sapp

Bottom: Webster students join others from local universities Jan. 23, 2024, to urge the St. Louis County Council to declare support for a cease-fire in Gaza. Photo by Elsa Connolly



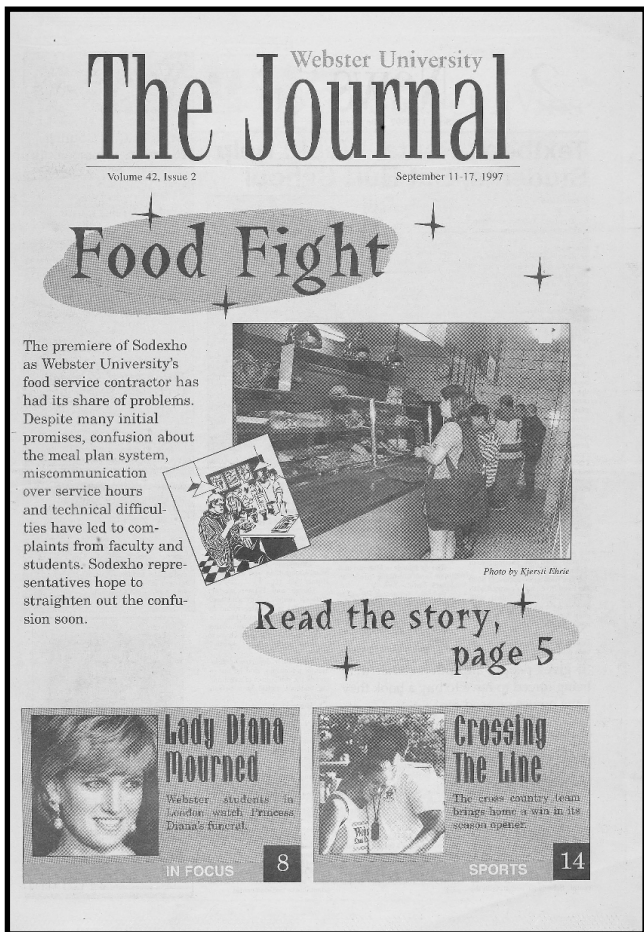
2023



2024

## Dusting off the Cobwebs

Headlines from the past and present



**Raw chicken served to student at Marletto's**

- Feb. 2024

**Marletto's leaves students dissatisfied**

- Sept. 2024



**Students respond to hate crime in dorms with protest, solidarity**

- Dec. 2016

**Student-led protest gains one of the largest turnouts in years**

- Sept. 2023



**Students in distress: broken ceilings, shelves and stoves**

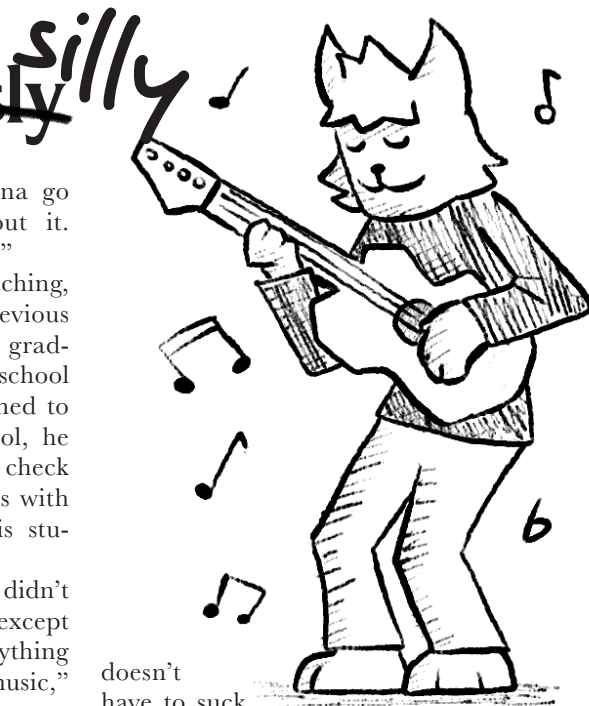
- Nov. 2022

**Surge in student enrollment leaves housing rushing for solutions**

- Oct. 2024

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# Lucas "Goo Man" O'Donnell takes things seriously



by Chloe Sapp  
Managing Editor

"Do you guys like ... really soft music?"

The crowd cheers in anticipation for a slow song to counteract the lively sound they've been hearing. The band then proceeds to scream into their microphones. The crowd jumps in surprise, but laughs at the light-hearted prank.

Lucas O'Donnell is on stage as "Goo Man," the name he and his parents came up with when he decided his given name didn't roll off the tongue.

His only requirement for himself and for his shows is to keep it silly.

"I feel like I can't be serious, I can't be like, 'Guys listen to this cool ass, heart wrenching ass song' and my name is ... Goo Man," O'Donnell said, laughing at the thought of him being earnest. "And I like that it's

Goo Man! I don't want to change it. I think it's hilarious."

As O'Donnell walks down the halls of Sverdrup, passers-by call out "Goo Man!" to get his attention. But he's quick to deny any level of fame.

Still, with over 1,300 followers on Instagram and approximately 25 live shows under his belt, O'Donnell's voice is being heard. He played his most recent live show at The Record Space in South St. Louis County.

"Goo Man uses his platform in a very similar way that he talks to people in everyday life," fan and friend Deven Yeary said. "He's not fake. Lucas is just a good guy. I don't know how he'll use his platform for good in the future, but I can guarantee you he wouldn't use it for anything bad."

On top of music-making as Goo Man, O'Donnell is majoring in Sound Recording and Engineering. He also juggles teaching music at the School of Rock and MAP St. Louis,

and serves as involvement chair for the Audio Engineering Society.

As involvement chair, his task is clear: to get people involved. Originally, he wanted the title because it meant he got a gavel.

"People get pissed when I use the gavel, even though, as far as I'm concerned, it's part of the job," O'Donnell said.

He has grown into other parts of the role, but still uses the gavel, with a goal of engaging students who are not studying audio.

"Dude, we have free pizza every month. We have a whole meeting where it's just free pizza that has nothing to do with music, or audio or anything," O'Donnell said. "So many people will walk by and they'll be like, 'I'm not an audio student.' You don't need to be! I was going and getting people walking up and down the hallway. I feel like my entire job description, as far as I'm concerned,

is to go get people. I'm gonna go around and tell people about it. That's getting people involved."

When it comes to teaching, O'Donnell returns to his previous schools to teach sixth to 12th graders music. Ironically, he hated school growing up. His teachers seemed to single him out in grade school, he said, causing him to mentally check out and strain his relationships with them. He wishes to make his students' experience better.

"In that period of my life, I didn't really have anything to do except play music ... I didn't have anything that brought me joy, except music," O'Donnell said. "I would like to use my platform to tell my students who are having possibly similar experiences as me to utilize music, not take themselves so seriously and not take music so seriously. For me, when I would take music so seriously, that one thing that brought me joy would become the thing I did not enjoy and I would become burned out."

O'Donnell is the busiest he's ever been. His days are filled, leaving no time for breaks. Despite his struggles, he doesn't let his music become something else to worry about.

"I feel like my music isn't overtly serious, even when I write about things that are," O'Donnell said. "I don't feel like I need to take it as seriously. I don't feel like I should ... I'm gonna disappoint myself if I throw in all of this effort and exhaust myself for the sake of a song that's about petting my dog ... depress myself over something that brings me joy."

Sometimes, O'Donnell's lessons are just to be a place for his students to talk.

"I want to convey to them that there are people around and there are so many things they can do to be passionate about and they can really do something with them rather than just coasting along as a child like I feel I did," O'Donnell said. "I try to treat all of my students the same way, little things like that to me seem really fundamental that I never received as a child in school ... I hated school, and now – ironically – one of my biggest passions is to be a teacher. School

doesn't have to suck. Life doesn't have to suck."

To draw in a bigger audience, O'Donnell hung posters across campus that read: Do you like silliness? Do you enjoy music? Yes?!?! Try Goo Man on for size!

O'Donnell has essentially made "silly" his brand, promoting his music in a light-hearted manner, simply because he doesn't see the point in taking it so seriously.

"The entire time I've known Lucas, he has been a largely unserious person – not in a bad way, he's just very goofy," Xander Mahfood, friend and former high school classmate, said. "I think he's branded himself this way because he wants to be as genuine as possible and make people laugh and feel good."

O'Donnell's not sure what his future will bring, or what he wants from it. No matter, he doesn't see an end to spreading "vague positivity," what he describes as "taking things seriously and sillily when you need to – if you need to."

"There's so much sadness and tragedy in the world and when I talk to Lucas or listen to his music it's a breath of fresh air," Yeary said.

O'Donnell has one album and multiple singles available to listen to on streaming services, including his latest release, "Take in The Noise." His next live show on Oct. 27 will be held at Moshmellow near Gravois Park in St. Louis.



Lucas "Goo Man" O'Donnell performs on stage at Off Broadway on Sept. 6.

Photo by Jaci Bethel

## Changemaking alum Kim Bouldin-Jones is not done yet

by Emme Goelz  
Culture & Lifestyle Editor

Not many people can say that they have a degree in communications, have changed a law in Ethiopia, and helped restore running water to a hospital that had been without for 25 years. But Webster University alum Kim Bouldin-Jones can.

Bouldin-Jones grew up in Cincinnati, Ohio, and came to Webster University in 1983 after hearing about the Conservatory program through a friend. Instead, she fell into the School of Communications and began working toward a degree in Communications. She hoped it would help her achieve her dream of photographing fashion in London. But Bouldin-Jones diverted from both, eventually becoming an active member in community and world service.

She graduated in the 1980s, the decade of Madonna, Cabbage Patch Kids and the spike of the HIV/AIDS epidemic. Chaos ensued and fear grew alongside falsities about the manner in which the virus spread, painting a target on the backs of people within marginalized communities. During that time, Bouldin-Jones spent a stint of time living in San Francisco. She saw the impact the HIV/AIDS crisis had on people, and developed interest in the topic.

"There was a freedom people had prior to HIV and AIDS and then all of a sudden, there was this disease where people were scared and people were nervous ... HIV/AIDS was something that could literally take your life away and shorten it," Bouldin-Jones said. "When you look back during those time periods, it was this cloud that was

over people's heads. When I started to work in HIV, it was coworkers, friends and people that I worked with that were infected and affected by HIV. I lost a lot of people in my life to the disease."

Upon graduating, she moved back to St. Louis and began working at Planned Parenthood, doing some of the clinic's first rounds of testing and counseling of HIV/AIDS. Bouldin-Jones received CDC training to properly test for the virus and talk with people who had been diagnosed. From here, she began work with the St. Louis Effort for AIDS, working with those living with AIDS or who were at risk of getting the virus.

"You have to start where they are," Bouldin-Jones said. "There was a time when I first started working in HIV that it was a death sentence. Before they got the medication, infection to death in some areas was 18 months. The only cure we had was to prevent people from getting it."

Bouldin-Jones left her position with the St. Louis Effort for AIDS to spend more time with her children. In the early 2000s, she worked part-time, teaching health and counseling at John Burroughs High School. A few years in, she was invited to teach harm reduction and HIV prevention to a group of doctors in Africa.

After seeing and visiting hospitals that had no running water or had leaks in their roofs, she wanted to step in to help. She began her nonprofit, Medical Facility Aid (MFA), after her first trip to Africa, officially launching it in 2008. Countless medical organizations and nonprofits assisted hospitals, but



Kim Bouldin-Jones (right) and her mother, Carol Bouldin, after Jones received the Webster Alumni of the Year award for community service in 2021.

Contributed by Kim Bouldin-Jones

Bouldin-Jones couldn't find one that helped upkeep the infrastructure of small hospitals in the developing world.

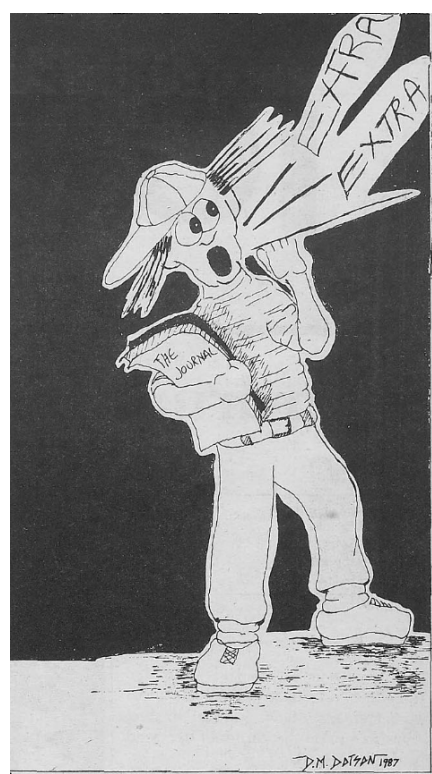
"How can people get healthy in sick hospitals?" Bouldin-Jones said.

A hospital in Ethiopia was the nonprofit's first complete project. The hospital, which had been without running water for 25 years, was the only one in an area populated by nearly 8 million people. It was a government facility, which meant Bouldin-Jones had to work with the Ethiopian Minister of Health to change laws regarding the donation of money to government hospitals. After two and a half years, the hospital had running water.

Bouldin-Jones returns to Africa regularly, taking

a short break during the COVID-19 pandemic and to recover from surgery on her foot. She says she's eager to return next summer, feeling far from done with her work. Bouldin-Jones received the Loretto Award from Webster University in 2021 and currently serves on the School of Communication's Advisory Board.

"I do believe that I have a lot more in the tank to give," Bouldin-Jones said. "I am anxious to go to the next phase and see what's left out there for me to do. I am excited to see what the next chapter holds."



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## THE JOURNAL

The Journal is an award-winning, student-run media outlet covering news and events of interest to the worldwide Webster University community. With consistent, frequent uploads online, daily social media posts and print editions published each semester, the publication values truthful, fair and quality independent coverage. The Journal also acts as a learning lab for students, creating hands-on opportunities in reporting, multimedia, photography, advertising and more.

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