Wake-Up Call from the Jungle
Students learn about sustainability in the lush rainforest of Costa Rica
Colin Pedersen '22 shoots a game of pool during a break in the action at “Comedy Night” with Shayne Smith. The event took place March 4 at the newly opened On the Rocks Pub & Grill in the Rocky Top Student Center, York Hill Campus. Find a story on the pub’s dedication and more photos starting on p. 56.

Photo Dan Passapera
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As the COVID-19 pandemic swept across America, the Quinnipiac community responded in myriad ways. Health care professionals treated patients with urgency and hope. Journalists reported with humanity. Teachers found new ways to reach students. Together, we are Bobcat Strong.

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With school shootings as a social backdrop, the Quinnipiac theater program performed “RAGE” this winter. Based on a Stephen King novel from 1977, the play examined the issue of gun violence in schools through the lens of a high school student who kills one of his teachers and also of the author whose book allegedly inspired several school shootings.

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VICE PRESIDENT FOR MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS
Daryl Richard
ASSOCIATE VICE PRESIDENT FOR INTEGRATED MARKETING COMMUNICATIONS
James Ryan ’02
EDITOR
Janet Waldman, MS ’09
ASSOCIATE EDITOR
Brian Koonz, MS ’20
SENIOR COPY EDITOR
Donna Pintek
STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER
Autumn Driscoll
CONTRIBUTORS
Olivia Abel, Ken Byron, MS ’20, Jamie DeLoma ’06, MS ’11, Adam Durso, Lauren Kersten ’10, John Pettit, MS ’99, Kevin Sirois, MS ’17, Christine Smith, MS ’19, Tad Sterling
PHOTOGRAPHERS
John Hassett, Dan Passapera, Richard Petrosino ’20, Quinnipiac Video Productions, Rob Rasmussen ’06, Becky Spalthoff, H John Voorhees III, CJ Yopp
DESIGN
Pentagram Austin
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SOLDIERS’ REMAINS HOLD CLUES TO REVOLUTIONARY WAR BATTLE

Over the past two decades, Quinnipiac has used its diagnostic imaging abilities to shed light on history for the Smithsonian Institution, “Ripley’s Believe It or Not,” and the History, National Geographic and Discovery channels.

Most recently, professors and students have been part of what may be a revolutionary discovery. Working with Nick Bellantoni, Connecticut state archaeologist emeritus, they have been examining human skeletal remains believed to be from four Revolutionary War soldiers found beneath a dirt floor on the property of an 18th-century home in Ridgefield, Connecticut.

“The team’s expertise in interpreting the images will provide more scientific information from the skeletal remains and material culture,” Bellantoni said. “They may represent the first American Revolutionary War battlefield graves ever uncovered by archaeologists in situ, that is, without having been previously disturbed.”

The soldiers are believed to have taken part in the first Revolutionary War battle in Connecticut in 1777 that included Brigadier Gen. Benedict Arnold, then on the side of the Americans. Copper buttons found with the remains could indicate they belonged to militiamen, but it was not clear whether they were British or American.

Tania Grgurich ’97, MHS ’08, clinical associate professor of diagnostic imaging, said the research gives her students the opportunity to work alongside contemporaries studying disciplines such as archaeology and anthropology in a nontraditional imaging setting.

“This further tests the students’ critical thinking skills, requiring them to think outside the box to manipulate the positions of the remains and the exposure factors necessary to produce quality images—both of which vary drastically from live patients,” Grgurich said. “In these cases, our ‘patient’ may be a cluster of tiny bone fragments, a skull encased in a matrix of hardened soil, or a metal button from a piece of clothing.”

“Our students are contributing to Connecticut historical knowledge,” said Jaime Ullinger, associate professor of anthropology and co-executive director of the Bioanthropology Research Institute at Quinnipiac, along with Gerald Conlogue, professor emeritus of diagnostic imaging. “What’s cooler than that? This work highlights the interdisciplinary work we do, bringing diagnostic imaging, anthropology and history together in order to understand something about our local community.”

—John Pettit
THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING OSCAR

Exhibition, symposium and play to honor writer

BY BRIAN KOONZ

On Valentine’s Day in 1895, Oscar Wilde’s signature play, “The Importance of Being Earnest,” premiered in the West End of London. It opened to mostly glowing reviews, including this one from distinguished critic William Archer: “It is delightful to see it, it sends wave after wave of laughter curling and foaming round the theatre.”

But the applause didn’t last long. By April, the lauded playwright, poet and author was arrested and charged with gross indecency after a homosexual love affair. By May, Wilde was sentenced to two years in prison and “Earnest” was shut down after just 83 performances.

More than 125 years later, Wilde remains a compelling and influential literary figure, the tragic victim of Victorian hypocrisy, according to Christine Kinealy, professor of history and director of Ireland’s Great Hunger Institute at Quinnipiac.

“Oscar is resilient, really,” Kinealy said of the Irish writer, who died broken and alone at 46. “He represents a story of survival, someone who went through terrible times, but has endured through the ages.”

Kinealy spent months planning an exhibition and symposium this spring to honor Wilde, but the global pandemic changed everything. The exhibition, “Oscar Wilde and the Importance of Being Irish,” was set up in the Arnold Bernhard Library in early March, but the university closed the campus days later.

“As soon as the library opens, the exhibition will open,” Kinealy said.

Undaunted, Kinealy and her colleagues planned “Oscar Online,” a virtual exhibition celebrating Wilde’s life and work. The first of six, one-hour live programs debuted in May. Check out future ones at go.qu.edu/wilde. This fall, if safety measures permit, Kinealy hopes to reschedule the symposium and partner with a traveling exhibition about the history of the LGBTQ community in Connecticut.

At the Theatre Arts Center near the Mount Carmel Campus, assistant professor Kevin Daly, director of the theater program, hopes to debut a new play in November based on Wilde’s work. The fluid, improvisational play will be directed by Rory Pelsue, who directed “Next to Normal” at Quinnipiac in 2019 and studied Wilde at Oxford University as an undergraduate at Sarah Lawrence College.

“The play would start with Wilde’s work and evolve into something new. It would be a devised piece,” Daly said. “Typically, I would be a little nervous about doing a project like this, but Rory is such a talented artist. He has a strong vision for this, and I’m really excited about it.”

The concept for this interdisciplinary collaboration between Ireland’s Great Hunger Institute and the theater department was shaped last year. The artistic goal is to bring Wilde to life at Quinnipiac—Kinealy with a rich, historical context, Daly with a reimagined stage production.

Together, the professors hope to illuminate Wilde beyond the notoriety of a salacious trial and explore why his writing, thinly veiled as social commentary, is compelling and relevant more than a century later.

“Oscar’s work is absolutely perfect for the social and political times we’ve been going through,” Kinealy said. “There is a moral underpinning and a timelessness to what he was saying: Be kind to each other, not cruel and judgmental. Life is too short to waste it on pettiness and intolerance.”

For Daly, this new play represents a chance to stretch creativity and thinking in a way that Wilde might have pursued in the 19th century. Convention is freely exchanged for risk-taking and imagination.

“I try to find directors I’m really excited about,” Daly said. “We’ve been very lucky to work with some really talented young directors like Rory, who are on a trajectory of something special. Plus, the directors love the opportunity to work with students and immerse themselves in a project they really want to work on.”

For Wilde, the projects cycled through plays, poems, his transformative novel, “The Picture of Dorian Gray,” even children’s stories for his sons, Cyril and Vyvyan (pronounced Vivian). “Oscar would go into the nursery and pretend to be a lion or a tiger,” Kinealy said. “Because the Irish tradition is a spoken one, his children’s stories are even more powerful if you listen to them instead of just read them. His use of language was so beautiful and brilliant, no matter what he was writing.”

In the weeks after the coronavirus first swept across humanity, Kinealy pointed to the sense of fear and despair in the world. It seems Wilde had a hopeful answer for that, too: “We are all in the gutter, but some of us are looking at the stars.”

CLOSER LOOK
News Stream

Debra Liebowitz
Three Executive Positions Announced

Three people have joined Quinnipiac as members of the Management Committee. Debra J. Liebowitz, PhD, comes aboard as the new provost July 15. She takes over from Jennifer Brown, who served as interim provost this past year and who will return to the School of Law as dean. With the increasing size and complexity of the university, this position has been restructured to enable the provost to apply singular focus.

Tom Ellett
To Academic and Scholarly Priorities

Liebowitz comes to QU from New York University, where he is senior associate vice president for student affairs. Elicia Spearman, JD, joined the university as general counsel and vice president for Human Resources in April. She has worked for several Fortune 500 companies, most recently for General Dynamics Electric Boat in Groton, Connecticut, where she was vice president and chief human resources officer. Prior to that, she held executive-level positions at Hubbell Incorporated and Aetna.

Florence Yuan
Medical School Commencement

Members of the Frank H. Netter MD School of Medicine’s Class of 2020 participated in a virtual Commencement ceremony May 8. A total of 82 doctor of medicine degrees were conferred, as well as five anesthesiologist assistant degrees. Commencement speaker Dr. William A. McDade implored the new medical professionals to apply a humanistic lens to their work as they appreciate differences and embrace inclusivity.

Mikki Meadows-Olive
Nurse Awarded Fellowship

Mikki Meadows-Oliver, associate professor of nursing, was one of three nurses in the New England region to be named a fellow of the Alliance of Nurses for Healthy Environments. Paired with expert environmental health nurse mentors, the fellows will conduct projects in their chosen communities to address a community-identified environmental health need and build support for solutions that are community driven. Meadows-Oliver plans to work with families in major cities who live in older houses where lead poisoning is a problem.

What Do You Think?

The Tylt Wants Your Opinions

What’s better—an “impossible” burger or beef patty? Owning a car or using Ubers? People have opinions, and Selena Roberts, executive director of The Tylt, wants to hear them. This social polling space (thetylt.com) develops ideas for stories, podcasts and videos based on the information it gathers from 12 reader panels it poses daily. Roberts explained how the site works when she spoke to School of Communications students in February. The Tylt normally attracts people ages 18 to 34, the demographic prized for being most receptive to mobile advertising and most active on Facebook and Twitter, where polls can be shared via hashtags. Roberts, an author and journalist, explained that traditional journalism often relies on group think, hunches and “the same old sources” to tell stories, while The Tylt puts ears to the ground to glean what ordinary people are thinking. Accessing the students before her, she said, “As the news industry evolves and transforms, you don’t need to know what happened, you just need to know what’s next.”

Tim Malloy
Author Describes Epstein Case

For 14 years, Tim Malloy was relentless in his investigation of convicted billionaire sex offender Jeffrey Epstein. In 2016, Malloy, an Emmy Award-winning journalist, wrote a New York Times bestseller —“Filthy Rich”—with James Patterson and John Connolly. Malloy, who also serves as an analyst for the Quinnipiac Poll, spoke to nearly 100 people on the Mount Carmel Campus in February. He described his work on the Epstein case as a master class in investigative journalism and an opportunity to show how vigilant reporting helped bring Epstein to justice. “We’re talking thousands of girls, trafficked to men around the world. This was an industrial-scale, child-trafficking operation,” Malloy said. After negotiating several plea deals—Epstein never served more than 13 months—he was indicted by federal authorities last July on sex-trafficking charges. Epstein hanged himself with a bedsheets a month later while in federal custody in New York City.

Ashley Brandon
Film Garters Festival Award

A film co-directed by Ashley Brandon, assistant professor of film, television and media arts, earned a Short Film Grand Jury Award from the SXSW Film Festival. “Día de la Madre,” which made its world premiere at the 2020 Sundance Film Festival, was awarded special jury recognition in the documentary shorts category. The film, which was shot in one day with a $300 budget, features young members of the Mariachi Academy of New England.

Elicia Pegues Spearman

NEWS STREAM
DEFINING MOMENTS

Chief justice reflects on his journey to the bench

BY BRIAN KOOKN
PHOTOS AUTUMN DRISCOLL

LONG BEFORE RICHARD ROBINSON was confirmed as the first black chief justice of the Connecticut Supreme Court, he was a little boy riding 13 hours in the back seat of a car.

Summer didn’t just mark school recess on the west side of Stamford in the 1960s. It also marked a trip to his grandfather’s farm in South Carolina and a taste of a different world, a place where “boy” was a pejorative and a family’s strength unlocked a future.

“When you got to the Mason-Dixon line ... things changed,” Robinson told nearly 200 people attending a Black History Month dinner in February honoring the Legacies of Black Excellence. It was the first time Quinnipiac has held a dinner in conjunction with its annual celebration.

“We knew we couldn’t stop at the gas stations for gas. We knew we couldn’t stay at the hotels,” Robinson said. “My mother used to pack a shoebox with tangerines and pound cake, and we’d trail each other to South Carolina.”

These days, Robinson is blazing a new trail as the chief justice of Connecticut’s highest court, the journey of a lifetime he so eloquently—and sometimes bluntly—shared during a one-hour conversation with Don C. Sawyer III, vice president for equity and inclusion.

“If you don’t give justice to people, if you don’t make people feel they’re getting equal justice, the system fails,” said Robinson, who was appointed chief justice in May 2018. “I truly believe that everybody who comes through our doors should leave those doors feeling they had their day in court and were treated fairly.”

This requirement extends from the local courts in Connecticut all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court. But justice also demands a knowledge of the legislative and executive branches of government. The chief justice said he recently spoke with former U.S. Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O’Connor about the critical importance of teaching history and civics to children.

“If you don’t know how to be a citizen in this country, if you don’t know what your role is, if you don’t know how the courts work, if you don’t know how our government works, you end up having a lot of the stuff we have now,” Robinson said, referring to the polarization and political rancor in America.

Quinnipiac Dining sous chef Eric Jackson created the dinner menu of 11 traditional dishes—appetizers, entrees and desserts—selected from recipes prepared at the National Museum of African American History and Culture in Washington, D.C.

“I went through the recipe book, and the first thing I thought about was Thanksgiving dinner,” Jackson said. “I made most of these recipes a few months ago for my own family.”

The Black History Month feast was three days in the making, Jackson said. The menu included okra and tomato soup, hickory-smoked pork shoulder, shrimp and grits, salmon croquettes and sweet potato pie.

“I’m just excited for everybody to taste the food my team put together,” Jackson said before the dinner. “I hope everybody enjoys at least one thing on the menu or tries something they’ve never had before.”

After praising the food, President Judy Olian remarked that Robinson represented a role model for all, a person whose courage and commitment to inclusive excellence shines in his judicial leadership.

“It isn’t enough to go by the numbers to merely have a presence of people different from oneself to be a stronger community, though that’s an important first step,” Olian said. “It’s when we respect and learn from and empathize with and are humbled by and join hands with others who might be different. That’s when we truly become inclusive.”

Around the room, 10 African Americans were honored on posters for their contributions to medicine, science, higher education, entrepreneurship, and the culinary and performing arts. Acclaimed soprano Leontyne Price, blood bank developer Charles Drew and college president Shirley Ann Jackson were among those featured.

“We aim to incorporate inclusive excellence in everything we do to create a globally engaged, culturally rich and highly collaborative campus,” Sawyer said.
DELILAH DOMINGUEZ, MHS ’20

Building a Future by Honoring the Past

INTERVIEW BY BRIAN KOONZ

In April, Delilah Dominguez, MHS ’20, was chosen as the national Student of the Year by the American Academy of Physician Assistants. The award recognized her academic achievement, her professional development as a two-term member of the AAPA’s House of Delegates and her commitment to helping a geriatric population that often needs palliative and hospice care. Just days after Dominguez was honored, U.S. Sen. Richard Blumenthal of Connecticut spoke at a Quinnipiac webinar to discuss health care disparity among communities in lasting ways. We’re stronger when we work together.

How was it important for Sen. Blumenthal to address health care disparity with you? My hope was that this discussion would excite and inspire everyone to become more involved in advocacy. We all have more power than we think, especially when we exercise our rights as citizens. As COVID-19 has shown us, every member of society is vital to our collective health … We are all in this together, and it’s important that we remember that our actions impact our communities in lasting ways. We’re stronger when we work together.

How does it feel to be the AAPA’s national Student of the Year? This award is humbling. It represents the culmination of years of hard work and perseverance despite many hardships. I consider it an honor and privilege to have been selected among such a strong field of PA student leaders.

What was it like growing up in Bastrop, Texas? Growing up in small-town Texas, there’s not a lot to do, so school became a joy for me at a young age. It became a way I could go to many different places and transcend the confines of Bastrop. From a young age, my mother really stressed the importance of education and reading. That really cultivated a love of books and imagination that I’ve never lost. I miss her every day.

How did the death of your mother affect you? My mother died of a massive heart attack on Jan. 23, 2011. She was only 48 years old. Her death completely devastated me. It made me question what I was doing in my life, why I was doing it, just everything. … My grandmother also died the first week I got back from school that summer. The lung cancer had metastasized to her brain. It was heartbreaking. Just like that, I had lost my two dearest matriarchs.

How did you become interested in hospice and geriatrics? I started volunteering at the Connecticut Hospice in Branford (in 2010). I did art therapy there, nothing formal, just painting or poetry or drama with patients—and I loved it. We had people who were days away from death, but they would come out with this beautiful painting or this beautiful poem, One of my classmates went with me. She was an actress, and she starred in this play that a patient had written, a one-person show. The patient was the director. At first, she wanted me to star in it, but she fired me after she saw my acting skills!

Have you always been interested in health policy? After going back to school in Texas to become a social worker, I learned a lot. It was a privilege to work with people who were underserved and lacked basic access to food, housing, clothing, insurance, health care—a lot of things we take for granted. I started PA school with this in mind. It’s still on my mind, but now I feel like I have more agency to address it.

Why did you choose to study at Quinnipiac? I applied to Quinnipiac because it’s a great school, and it’s closer to my wife Kristin’s family in Wallkill, New York. We moved here from Texas in May 2018, a week before I started school. The big tornado came the day after we moved in. We were about to unpack the car and all of a sudden I got a tornado alert on my phone. I looked out and saw this giant green cloud, and I’m like, ‘Are you kidding me? I don’t see a tornado in Texas, but I see one in Connecticut?’

How has the AAPA helped you develop your voice? Early on, I wanted to apply to the House of Delegates, but to be honest, it intimidated me. But I applied, and to my surprise, I was elected. Now, I have a much better sense of what’s going on in the profession. I spoke on the House floor about increasing diversity in the profession. To be heard on a national stage like that, I had a moment there thinking about my mom and grandmother. They would’ve been so proud.

Are you interested in running for public office yourself someday? I’ve definitely thought about it. I really admire the work that Connecticut Congresswoman Rosa DeLauro does. Maybe when she retires, but she’s doing a great job right now. It’s easy to be discouraged in the current political climate, but I think it’s more important than ever to remain engaged.
CIRCUIT BREAKERS

Can humanity survive science and technology?

BY BRIAN KOONZ

PHOTO AUTUMN DRISCOLL

Imagine a time when the human brain is connected to a computer network, downloading data quite literally in the blink of an eye. The potential gain for knowledge is the stuff of science fiction.

The potential loss for humanity is just as profound, writes Joseph Carvalko, JD ’80, in a new book, “Conserving Humanity at the Dawn of Posthuman Technology,” published earlier this year by Palgrave Macmillan.

Joseph Carvalko, JD ’80, recently completed his ninth book, “Conserving Humanity at the Dawn of Posthuman Technology.” When he’s not writing, Carvalko teaches a class at the School of Law.

Digital brain implants, biometric chips, artificial intelligence, electronic tattos with circuits and sensors—at what point is humanity sacrificed for technology’s gain?

Carvalko, an adjunct professor in the School of Law with 16 patents and nine books to his credit, addresses the finer points and the broader implications of this complex intersection in his “Law, Science and Technology” class. He teaches students to think beyond these silos of individual disciplines. “I want to pass on the idea that when confronted by technology and science—for example, when dealing with crimes, personal injury or intellectual property—that these are not simply elements existing in a vacuum,” Carvalko said, “but within a framework of justice and equity.”

The technology throttle is already locked into high gear, he insists. The pace will only grow more frenetic in the future, and so it’s important now to consider the ethical implications of these advancements.

“We have to be careful not to let technology go uncontrolled and unchallenged,” said Carvalko, who frames his interdiscip-
Senior reflects on campus life cut short by pandemic

BY BROOKE REILLY

Senior year. It’s supposed to be filled with time spent with friends, countless “lasts” and memories to last a lifetime. Many students take on internships, clinicals, observation hours and more as they begin to transition into the “real world.”

It’s a time for students to really connect with their organizations, faculty, staff and each other and to reflect on every opportunity and experience they’ve had in the course of their college careers. Luckily, reflecting can be done in quarantine, but the time with friends on campus cannot.

I always knew my time to say goodbye to Quinnipiac would come, but I didn’t know it would be so soon. I knew it would be tough, but having to leave so early without warning made it even more difficult.

When I look back on my time at Quinnipiac, I think about the organizations that made school feel more like home. My first semester wasn’t easy, but getting involved did a 180 on my college experience. The organization I joined first was Q30, the student-run television station. Q30 not only provided me with the skills I need to succeed in the field of journalism, but it also gave me a place to grow and meet like-minded individuals who became some of my best friends.

Q30 allowed me to try new things and step outside my comfort zone. I didn’t know much about TV or journalism when I chose my major, but Q30 showed me why I decided to pursue journalism. I was able to learn from great people who paved the way for me to hold multiple leadership positions at the station. This eventually led me to the role of news director in my senior year. I spent many late nights in the media suite, and whether I was working on stories or laughing with my friends, those simple moments are some of my favorite memories.

I was also lucky enough to be an orientation leader for first-year students during the summer of 2019. This experience changed my life. It pushed me to be the best leader I could be and allowed me to learn more than I ever imagined, not only about myself, but also about people of many backgrounds. I

MOVING ON BUT MISSING THE ‘LASTS’

In this article, broadcast journalism major Brooke Reilly ’20 reflects on the surprise ending to her senior year and how quickly her college years flew by. That ending gave way to a beginning: her first job as a professional reporter. She will be working there with fellow alumni Kayla Hevey ’19 and Andrew Badillo ’17.
will forever cherish the summer I spent living in Hill and all of the memories made and lessons learned.

Along with those organizations, I was a founding sister of my sorority, Tri Delta, a student ambassador for the Office of Undergraduate Admissions and vice president of the Quinnipiac chapter of the National Communication Association’s honor society, Lambda Pi Eta.

Another thing that comes to mind when I look back on my time at Quinnipiac is the semester I spent living and interning in Los Angeles through the QU in LA program. I spent 12 weeks on the other side of the country and learned more than I ever thought I would. I was fortunate to have two internships while there with the FOX News Channel’s LA bureau and KTLA 5 News. One of my favorite assignments was interviewing Vanessa Hudgens, the other judges, and the finalists at the finale of “So You Think You Can Dance.” My friends and I explored the entire Los Angeles area and also visited Las Vegas, Disneyland, Laguna Beach and San Diego. Going to LA was so rewarding, and I’m grateful Quinnipiac provided me with that opportunity.

I was sitting on my couch at home when I learned we would definitely not be returning to campus for the rest of the semester because of the spread of COVID-19. I truly did not know how to react. I felt a mix of emotions, and I shed some tears. I knew I had to write a story for Q30; however, something felt different about this one. It was the hardest story I ever had to write.

All I could think about is how spring semester is always my favorite. The flowers bloom, the sun shines, the weather gets warm, and the quad fills with students playing games, relaxing, studying and enjoying time with friends. My last seven weeks were supposed to be filled with completing my classes and my internship with NBC News at the TODAY Show in New York City, a million meetings, more Q30 shows and special events, QTHON, Greek Week, formal, senior send-offs, Wake the Giant, May Weekend, hanging out at the new pub, Friday nights at Aunchies, Saturday nights in New Haven and a week spent with friends leading up to graduation. Although it’s hard not to feel sad, I am doing my best to stay positive. Being home has allowed me to spend more time with my family. I know I am so fortunate to have a safe home to be in as we navigate through these unprecedented times. I decided it was important for me to stay as connected with Quinnipiac as I possibly could despite not being there in person. I kept up with my classes and attended many virtual events.

I continued to work from home for Q30, and I treated this as a learning experience when it came to news coverage. Members of the Q30 news team and I produced remote newscasts every other week and wrote many stories about how COVID-19 was impacting the Quinnipiac community. I also conducted interviews with SGA executive board candidates and moderated a town hall over Zoom prior to elections to model how we would normally cover in-person elections.

I coordinated a Zoom interview with President Olian that was supposed to take place on campus in April as well. Doing all of this from home taught me that even as a student, I can continue to cover these historic times, and now more than ever, news is so important.

The opportunities I have had at Quinnipiac changed my life for the better, and I could not be more grateful. I’m sure I speak for most of the Class of 2020 when I say that none of us wanted our senior year to end this way. However, the situation was beyond our control. I know that Quinnipiac made the right choice to close campus as the virus became more serious. My thanks go out to all health care workers and first responders protecting us as we work to find normalcy again. A piece of advice that I would give to current students is to cherish every moment and take advantage of each opportunity that comes your way. College flies by. If I could, I would turn back the clock and repeat these last four years again and again.

But, if there is one thing I’ve learned, it’s that life goes on. A piece of advice that I would give to current students is to cherish every moment and take advantage of each opportunity that comes your way. College flies by. If I could, I would turn back the clock and repeat these last four years again and again.

We will use the tools we learned during our time at QU in future jobs. We have photos that will always remind us of our home. Someday, we may come back and go on a tour with our own children. Most important, our friendships will last forever because once a Bobcat, always a Bobcat. Even when it might not feel like it, it’s always a great day to be a Bobcat.
Andrés Bella ’99 builds the art in his mind before he reclaims a busted tennis racket, grabs a thicket of nylon string, maybe some heavy-duty shears, and gets to work.

For Bella, tennis is more than a sport he enjoys. It’s a living. “One whole side of my garage is filled with broken tennis material and art supplies—boxes and boxes of string, two containers of rackets, drills, glue, some spray paints,” Bella said, reciting an inventory of raw materials rescued from a landfill.

“The way I see it, anything that you create is a form of art. You don’t have to follow a certain format,” he added. “If you’re passionate about it, then go for it.”

The former co-captain of the men’s tennis team has spent nearly a decade turning tennis racket heads into 3-D portraits of famous people and creating wall-sized abstract pieces, all for gallery exhibitions, commissions and private collections.

Instead of simply painting a portrait on a racket, Bella cuts pieces of salvaged string and glues them to the racket head or other tennis gear to create his pieces. It’s a painstaking process, one that Bella has refined in his suburban San Francisco studio.

Bella started hitting tennis balls at 4 years old on the public courts in Queens, New York. A few lessons here and there, a few case studies watching John McEnroe and Boris Becker on TV in the 1980s, and Bella was hooked.

His inspiration still comes from the greatest players in the sport, from Serena Williams and her 23 Grand Slam singles titles to Roger Federer and his 20 Grand Slam singles titles. Other times, inspiration is sudden and unexpected, like a second-serve ace by one of the world’s great tennis players.

With Federer, Bella incorporated a tennis racket portrait of the Swiss star into a four-piece set that spells out “GOAT”—greatest of all time. With Williams, he created two racket portraits to make a composite piece of Williams and her daughter, Alexis Olympia Ohanian Jr.

“A lot of different things inspire me—things I read, things I see, the passing of certain icons, not just tennis,” Bella said. “It’s a big moment in people’s lives when certain icons pass. Sometimes, I just feel like I need to create something to acknowledge their work and the loss.”

From rock legends David Bowie, John Lennon and Prince, to actress Carrie Fisher as Princess Leia in “Star Wars” to pop artist Andy Warhol and former President John F. Kennedy, Bella finds art in the experiences that people share.

WHAT A RACKET!
Former team captain transforms tennis gear into art

Bella presented Ashleigh Barty, above, with a portrait during the 2019 U.S. Open in New York. Roger Federer is depicted in the art above.
Bella also uses snapped racket grips, tired tennis balls, wooden presses from old-school wooden tennis rackets and other retired equipment for his larger creations. His abstract works include a butterfly-shaped piece titled, “Wings and Losses,” and an elephant-shaped piece mounted on a door titled, “After the Ivory.”

His work has appeared all across the country, including the U.S. Open, the Benrimon Contemporary Gallery and the Midtown Tennis Club in New York City; the Froelich Gallery in Nashville, Tennessee; and the Sanchez Contemporary Gallery in Oakland, California. His pieces also hang in the corporate offices of Wilson Sporting Goods in Chicago and Babolat in France.

“I never took any formal art classes. I was just a visual learner,” Bella said. “My first job out of school was in graphic design. It was a good opportunity for me to build off my marketing degree and learn the language of design. I pretty much learned on the job how to use Adobe Illustrator to draw.”

From there, Bella began experimenting with color, texture, materials and themes. But it wasn’t until his first public showing in 2011 with “Who Framed Roger Federer?” that Bella discovered there was an audience—and, ultimately, a market—for his work.

“My wife, my girlfriend at the time, was finishing her MBA in Nashville, and there was a small gallery there,” Bella said. “It was great watching the live reactions of everyone when they looked at my art. When you do something like that, you don’t really know if people are going to like it unless you put yourself out there.”

Over the past year, Bella has been featured on ESPN and the Tennis Channel during Roland-Garros in Paris. He and his wife, Kimberly, now have a 2½-year-old daughter, Lennon, and a 3-month-old son, Tatum.

“If not for my wife, I never would’ve been able to do this. Life changes dramatically with kids,” Bella said. “I’m doing what I love with whom I love.”

—Brian Koonz
The pinned tweet from May 2016 by Taylor Herd ’20 is acutely prophetic: “if you wanna hear God laugh, tell him your plans cause His are much bigger”

On the surface, the words resemble the social media muse of a typical college student—carefree, succinct and punctuation-optional.

But this past March, as Herd chased a fourth consecutive NCAA tournament appearance with the Quinnipiac women’s basketball team, the laughter stopped. The coronavirus pandemic abruptly shut down sports all around the world, including the MAAC tournament in Atlantic City, New Jersey.

Instead of competing and dreaming, Herd and the Bobcats were left to wonder: What if they ran the table again? What if they didn’t? Just like that, a college basketball season was over without closure.

Sometimes, closure is missing when people need it the most. Herd knows that loss. In January, her father died after a 2½-year decline from a silent heart attack, the kind without chest pain or shortness of breath. He was 57.

“With the passing of my dad, it really put life in perspective. There are more important things—bigger things—than basketball,” said Herd, a guard from Quakertown, Pennsylvania, who earned her bachelor of science in journalism in May with a 3.9 grade point average.

Herd credits her parents, Glenn and Brenda, and her brother, Ashton, for giving her the strength to soar when it would have been so easy, even understandable, to step back. But that’s not what her faith—or her father—taught her.

Glenn Herd was a big man with big expectations. In college, he was a defensive lineman on the Shippensburg University football team. Forget the guys waiting on the other side of the ball in the three-point stance. Nobody got to Herd like the little girl whipping softballs at the park or swishing jump shots at the YMCA.

“She definitely had my husband wrapped around her little finger. Their relationship was very special,” Brenda Herd said. “Glenn loved us intensely. He was our force and our rock.”

Glenn and Brenda rallied to attend three Quinnipiac games during Taylor’s junior year; that was the last time they saw her play in a college arena. But every day, Herd’s teammates and coaches redefined what it meant to be a basketball family. They knew her dad was special, too.

“There will never be a man who loves me more than my dad,” Herd said. “There’s this photo from when I was younger. We were playing this game, ‘Pretty, Pretty Princess,’ and he has a tiara on his head and clip-on earrings. He would do anything for me or anyone in my family.”

Last December, Herd was one of the first two recipients of the inaugural Hartford HealthCare Connecticut Courage Award. She received the award after overcoming two season-ending knee injuries in high school and inspiring others during her father’s illness.

In January, Herd was named one of 30 NCAA Division I women’s basketball players nominated for the Senior CLASS Award, which values excellence in four categories: community, classroom, character and competition.

But it’s always been about more than basketball with Herd. Grades matter. So does resilience.

“Taylor was just so driven and mentally strong,” Quinnipiac coach Trisha Fabbri said. “To have not one but two [knee injuries], we saw a different maturity with Taylor when we recruited her.”

After finding her way as a first-year player for the Bobcats, Herd emerged as a part-time starter as a sophomore and junior. For her efforts, Herd was named the MAAC’s Sixth Player of the Year in 2019 and started every game this past season.

“It wasn’t easy for Taylor, but her role on the team really grew,” Fabbri said. “That’s how it’s supposed to happen, right? You’re supposed to evolve and learn as a person and a player and a student. That’s what college is all about.”

Herd’s next stop is a career in sports communications. Molly Yanity, associate professor of journalism, helped Herd earn an internship with the WNBA’s Los Angeles Sparks last summer.

“I just made one phone call. Taylor did all the work. They loved her out in LA,” Yanity said. “She’s totally driven, even a little bit of a perfectionist. She’s very motivated to be successful.”

In March, Herd kicked off “Letters to #BobcatNation,” a new feature from Quinnipiac Athletics, with a reflection of her time in Hamden. “In life, we are called individually for a specific purpose,” Herd wrote, “but we are also called collectively.”

Family. Teamwork. Sounds like a pinned tweet.
THE NEWS HIT hard, like a crushing check into the boards. “I first saw it on Twitter,” said Alex Whelan ’20, a forward and alternate captain on the 2019–20 men’s ice hockey team. “It was a weird way to find out that your college hockey career was over. It was a somber moment.”

The Bobcats were playing their best hockey of the season, giving Whelan and his teammates confidence they could make a deep postseason run. “We felt that when we were on top of our game, like we were in the second half of the season, we could beat anyone,” said the forward from Ramsey, New Jersey.

The numbers back up Whelan’s claim. Quinnipiac, ranked No. 14 in the final national poll, won 15 of its last 20 games heading into the ECAC tournament, including victories over top-ranked Cornell (5–0) and 10th-rated UMass (2–1).

But it took just 54 Twitter characters—"NCAA cancels remaining winter and spring championships—due to the COVID-19 virus,"—to melt away Quinnipiac’s Frozen Four dreams.

“I lost two state championship games in high school,” said Whelan, an entrepreneurship major who will continue to pursue an online MBA at Quinnipiac. “I really wanted to win a national championship. We were on a good run. Even if you don’t win it all, you want to be out on the ice with your teammates competing for something. We just had to accept that no team was going to win a championship this year.”

Whelan played four seasons at Quinnipiac. In 141 career games, he totaled 48 goals and 30 assists for 78 points. He led the Bobcats in goals his sophomore season with 16 in 38 games, and he had 13 goals and 11 assists in 29 games in his senior campaign before social distancing, remote learning and coronavirus cancellations became the new normal.

“We all felt horrible, especially for the three seniors,” said Odeen Tufto, a junior alternate captain. “Nobody deserves that, but you’ve got to move forward and continue on.”

Teammates became tighter, too. Karls Cukste ’20, a defenseman and alternate captain, had hoped to return to his native Latvia after the university transitioned to online classes, but he was advised to avoid international travel because of COVID-19. Instead, Cukste, a psychology major, was invited to stay with Whelan’s family.

“We’re really close, and now Karls is part of my family. He fits right in,” Whelan said.

“It’s been a blast living with Alex,” said Cukste, who is also pursuing an MBA at Quinnipiac. “His family is amazing, and I get to live with one of my best friends. I believe that everything happens for a reason. The biggest thing I’ve learned is not to take anything for granted. The way I look at it, [the pandemic] gave everyone time to spend with their loved ones.” Fortunately, Cukste was able to fly home in May.

Amidst the disappointments, there was also joy. Whelan’s senior season may have ended abruptly, but his pro career is just beginning. On March 25, he signed a contract with the Hartford Wolf Pack, the top minor league affiliate of the New York Rangers.

“It was a really awesome feeling,” Whelan said. “It was also weird. As a kid, you dream of signing a pro contract and celebrating with a bunch of family members, friends and teammates. That didn’t happen, but at least I had my immediate family and Karls with me.”

Whelan paused before continuing that thought. “We will celebrate after this all ends.”

PRO CONTRACT FOR WHELAN EASES DISAPPOINTMENT OVER SEASON PUT ON ICE

BY JOHN PETTIT
PHOTO ROB RASMUSSEN
I STAYED AT WORK FOR YOU.
YOU STAY AT HOME FOR US.
Stepping Up to Help

BY JANET WALDMAN

ILLUSTRATION BY DAVID PLUNKERT

Health care alumni battle virus on the front lines

COVID-19 was tossing multiple patients an hour into cardiac arrest in mid-March and April at NYU Langone Medical Center in Brooklyn, where Paul Treybich, MD ’18, was entering the home stretch of his second year of residency.

Finding himself at the epicenter of the U.S. coronavirus outbreak, Treybich was scared—and for good reason. His hospital was overwhelmed, every patient was testing positive for the virus—many critically ill—and the entire hospital had been converted to intensive care units.

Treybich likened it to a war zone. “You can’t see your coworkers anymore because their bodies are covered in hazmat suits.”

Treybich was among thousands of members of Bobcat Nation who put their own fears aside and stepped up to the front lines. They didn’t sign up to risk their lives and potentially expose their family members to the virus everybody else was determined to avoid. Yet, as health care first responders, their sense of professionalism and their dedication to their patients spurred them to show up every day while the rest of the world stayed home.

“The whole process of covering yourself with PPE (personal protective equipment) and then taking it all off was nerve-wracking on its own,” Treybich said. “That first time you put it all on, it hits you as to how real this is.” Until adequate amounts of PPE were available, Treybich would wear the same N95 mask for a few days, placing it in a brown bag labeled with his name at the end of a 12-hour shift. Gowns were even harder to come by. The Frank H. Netter MD School of Medicine came through with some PPE supplies for his hospital when he asked.

Despite being careful, Treybich’s colleagues began getting sick. And then he developed a fever and flu symptoms March 27 and tested positive for the virus. The worst symptoms for this internal medicine resident were chest tightness and breathing issues. “After seeing and witnessing all the death, fear added another layer. Nobody knew what this virus would do, could do,” he said. And then more anxiety. He transmitted the virus to his mother, with whom he lives. She since has recovered.

“I am under the impression that the doctors who mentor us — had seen maybe two cases of ARDS in their careers before this, and now every single patient had it.”

Intubation is arguably the riskiest and most aerosolizing procedure you can perform on patients with COVID-19, according to Kevin Kuo, MD ’17, who completed his residency in June 2020 at Mount Sinai St. Luke’s-West in New York City, in the emergency department, which he described as being flooded with patients in every corner.

“During the peak of the virus, I was seeing 20 to 30 COVID patients every shift and intubating nearly once or twice a shift,” he said. “I would then go to sleep every night in a mild panic, not knowing whether or not I would wake up in the morning with COVID symptoms, especially having witnessed about a third of my co-residents coming down with it and hearing about other emergency physicians passing away. Fortunately, I have been very lucky to not have fallen ill yet.”

One of Kuo’s colleagues expressed regret that the pandemic interrupted Kuo’s training. “He said to me, ‘I bet you would have thought twice about choosing emergency medicine if you knew it would take you down this path.’ I thought to myself: ‘Definitely not.’ While COVID has brought about unspeakable loss of life and tragedy, it has really reaffirmed my career decisions and highlighted exactly why I chose this path.”

In medical school, Kuo knew he wanted to treat the sickest patients, regardless of their socioeconomic backgrounds, and that resolve has never been truer. “To be on the front lines as an emergency doctor with my fellow emergency colleagues has been the honor of my lifetime,” he said.

Treybich described the challenges of treating patients from the nearby Sunset Park community, where NYU Langone is located. “Everybody lives in cramped quarters, and if one gets sick—boom—everybody gets sick.” He worries that the seasonal flu in late fall, “which is brutal in and of itself,” plus COVID-19 making a predicted resurgence, could overwhelm his hospital once again.

PHYSICAL THERAPY PERSPECTIVE

Vanessa (Arone) Dellheim ’06, MPT ’08, is a physical therapy clinical specialist at Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston, another hard-hit city. She also has witnessed a socioeconomic component to the pandemic and remarked that social distancing can be a luxury. “Some people must live with many people in the same house or they must go to work,” she said.

Along with several other Quinnipiac PT alumni at Mass General, Dellheim works to minimize muscle atrophy in patients on ventilators for long stretches. For them, a long road of rehabilitation lies ahead, and especially so for COVID-19 patients who have experienced ARDS.

Although ventilated patients are sedated, physical therapists work on positioning and range of motion, and then transition from passive therapy to more active as they are weaned off sedating medications and able to tolerate lower ventilator settings. Examination skills are key because patients may not be able to express how they feel, said Dellheim, who earned a doctor of physical therapy degree at the Institute of Health Professions in Boston in 2010. The other QU alumni she works with are Sara (Carter) Bertucci ’08, DPT ’10; Michael Busso ’11, DPT ’13; Ann (Hunt) Endicott ’08, DPT ’10; Ashley Fallon ’09, DPT ’11; and Cristina Tremaglio ’07, DPT ’09.

“Our trunk muscles are designed to hold us upright, so if we lie in bed all day, those muscles get weak, and patients may have trouble holding their heads up,” Dellheim said.
PLUNGED INTO THE PANDEMIC
Physician assistant Christina Ferneini, MHS ’19, had been on the job less than three months at New York-Presbyterian/Weill Cornell Medical Center in Manhattan before COVID-19 exploded. She had been working in the cardiothoracic ICU, which was converted to a COVID unit in March. She said Quinnipiac prepared her well to adapt to any work situation—even one as daunting as this, with fear of the unknown adding even more anxiety.

“Our professors have been checking in with us. In the PA program, we are a close-knit group, and we all can relate to what’s going on," she said. Although the pandemic shortened her orientation process, her fellow alumni and colleagues have been a really good support system and have made things “a little less lonely in the city.”

The hardest thing for Ferneini was watching families of both COVID and non-COVID patients cope with the restriction on visiting loved ones. Sometimes, exceptions were made if death was imminent and family members were willing to risk exposure to the virus. And then there were the reports, heard through the grapevine, of hospital employees getting sick and being intubated.

“It was very difficult. You are not going to stop going to work because you are scared, but it’s easier said than done to say you are not scared going into a COVID patient’s room. We didn’t sign up to be in danger, but we also didn’t sign up not to help," she reflected.

Ferneini wore the same N95 mask daily until it was soiled, but never truly protected while assisting with procedures that had the potential to aerosolize the virus. Her saddest moment came when a 30-year-old cardiac patient of hers got the virus after turning a corner with heart disease. “She likely contracted it from being in the hospital. We were treating her for countless days just wearing surgical masks because she hadn’t been a COVID patient.” After this patient died, the hospital took her handprints as a remembrance for her child.

Amid the sadness, Ferneini savored the sounds of New Yorkers cheering and clapping in gratitude at 7 each night. Kuo agreed. “Hearing it gives me chills every time and provides that extra motivation I need to head back into the shift.”

BREATH OF LIFE
As New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo warned of a predicted ventilator shortage day after day, Americans hoped there would be enough for all who needed them ... and fervently hoped they personally would not need one.

Respiratory therapist Dianne Major-Olivant ’18 said that respiratory therapists have been more essential than ever in operating the many ventilators pressed into service during the pandemic. “A ventilator does not push itself into a room, attach itself to a patient and adjust its levels automatically,” she remarked, adding that RTs are responsible for monitoring the airways and breathing of patients and responding to emergencies when breathing is an issue. While they can intubate, that role is being performed by intensivists and dedicated nurse anesthetists.

The therapists also assist in the proning of patients, either manually flipping them onto their stomachs or backs or using special beds that Major-Olivant likened to giant rotisseries. On this particular day, 15 patients on ventilators required that procedure. The goal is to have them use the portions of the lungs that have not been as damaged by the virus, she said.

On April 30, Panapada said the hospital still was full of COVID patients. “Usually there are older people who don’t make it, but we are seeing people of all ages dying from it ... it’s very heartbreaking,” she said, adding: “As health care workers, our instinct is to save the patient, so it’s very depressing when you work so hard and all the efforts are in vain.”

Health professionals have become surrogate families of sorts to their patients while visitors are off limits. “It’s a lonely and nervous time. We are trying to be human beings as well as therapists,” said Major-Olivant.

THEORY AND PRACTICE
Laura Conway, DNP ’19, represented Bobcat Nation on two levels: as a working professional and a professor. She earned her doctor of nursing practice at QU and also teaches graduate and undergraduate courses there. At work, she is a nurse practitioner hospitalist at the Hospital of Central Connecticut in New Britain, where she has worked more than 20 years.

Conway was particularly impressed with the dedication and flexibility of the hospital’s nursing staff, which includes QU grads, and especially with QU nursing students approaching graduation who offered to help out as technicians. “These students went into rooms with smiles on their faces and without apprehension to care for the patients,” she said. “They were sensitive to the absence of family and their willingness to be present was just incredible.”

The hospital was at capacity this spring. She described the atmosphere in April as a bit surreal. “Usually the flow in the ED is tremendous, but instead of the volume we usually saw, there were fewer patients, but they were acutely ill.” Conditions demanded Conway to think more on her feet as the staff worked to stabilize patients. Intubation was the last resort.

She also put much thought into the way she approached her distance learning classes, using ingenuity to provide students with the clinical experiences they would need to be prepared for work. Examples included enlisting family members to practice with stethoscopes and percussion of the chest. “And one company gave us three months of free web access to interactive learning activities like suturing and wound closing,” she said.

The Netter School of Medicine partnered with nurse practitioner students, supplying actors from its Standardized Patient and Assessment Center via Zoom for practice in taking patient histories. “These are experiences students wouldn’t have had, but telemedicine is sure to be a big part of health care delivery in the future,” she noted.

Conway takes heart in what she calls the amazing care being delivered under stressful conditions. “We never lose that caring or forget why we got into this field in the first place.”

Conway remarked that her husband, a nurse and state trooper, is driven to get out there and keep people safe whenever something happens. He told her she didn’t need to work her hospital job during the COVID crisis. “But I told him, ‘This is where I am supposed to be; otherwise I’m not a nurse. Patients need me now more than ever.’”
Bobcat Nation Responds During COVID-19 Pandemic*

PPE DONATIONS TO HOSPITALS IN REGION

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STUDENTS AND COMMUNITY SUPPORT

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* As of May 31, 2020
Professors, teachers pivot to online instruction

When classes moved to online instruction this spring, law professor John Thomas played guitar and wore colorful shirts during his lectures. Just like always.

But he also reserved time to speak with students about how they were coping with the stress of the COVID-19 pandemic. Teaching the material was critical, of course. But delivering it with humanity was just as important—until Thomas couldn't breathe.

After two weeks of coughing and feeling run down, Thomas found himself in the back of an ambulance April 27. Suddenly, he was gasping for air with a COVID-19 diagnosis waiting at Yale New Haven Hospital. After a few hours in the emergency room, Thomas was home recovering with an "industrial-strength" cough suppressant.

"When you get it yourself, it definitely makes you stop and think," Thomas said. "It made me value everything that I do and everything that I have, including my connections with students."

Thomas is among the countless Quinnipiac faculty members and School of Education graduates who have adapted, rallied and shined professionally during the pandemic. They thrived across digital platforms while caring for students and finding teachable, impressionable moments. Overall, 3,071 sections of Quinnipiac classes were taught online this semester, according to Joshua Berry, university registrar.

"When I went to the hospital, I thought, 'OK, I'll tell my students,' so that's what I did," Thomas said. "I got lots of lovely messages, and it made me feel like we're all in this together."

Just a few weeks earlier, Thomas had been awarding prizes to his most responsive students. For example, the first three students who uploaded correct responses to his civil procedure crossword puzzle won free delivery: first place scored a pizza, second place scored a dessert.

For professor Mary Meixell, who taught "Designing and Managing the Supply Chain" this spring, the pandemic was an opportunity to teach students in real-time about global supply chains and their ability—or inability—to produce and distribute goods.

Meixell is the senior associate dean and a professor of management in the School of Business with a joint appointment as a professor of industrial engineering in the School of Engineering.

"This pandemic has been a very compelling case study," Meixell said. "Early on in the semester, we were reading in the press about how so many supply chains have their sources in China and the scale of disruption that a pandemic would cause. We also were starting to see some good supply chain practices emerging."

For example, Meixell said, students learned that one of the basic principles of supply chain management is anticipating market changes: "One way you can do that is through inventory buildup—component materials as well as running your own production lines more heavily."

Students vividly learned how the COVID-19 pandemic affected the supply chain in the United States and abroad. Suddenly, there was a surge in demand for N95 masks and other personal protective equipment. At the other end of the supply chain, production and distribution often slowed because of public health measures.

"It was a sizable transition for students to go from on-ground instruction to virtual instruction," Meixell said. "There was a week or so where I sensed some disarray—maybe they were having difficulty finding a routine—but they came back and started participating again in big ways."

Dakota Molinari '18, MAT '19, a third-grade teacher at St. Augustine School in Ossining, New York, said the COVID-19 pandemic gave her a chance to help students as well as colleagues.

Molinari was already comfortable with technology when schools across the country began closing and distance learning became the go-to mode of instruction with Zoom meetings, websites for class parents and other add-ons.

"A lot of teachers reached out early on and said, 'Dakota must know the answer. She can figure it out and share it out.' That made me feel good," Molinari said. "As a brand-new teacher, I was confident I could offer new ideas that made sense and would help kids learn."

Although Molinari misses her 22 students, she has worked hard to prepare engaging lessons during the pandemic. She credits Monica Cavender, assistant professor of education, and other School of Education faculty members for teaching her how to create a digital toolbox of websites, ideas and activities to connect with children online.

Molinari still gets excited when her third-graders get excited. She savors those moments when hands wave urgently to answer questions during a Zoom session: "That part never changes."

Grant Crawford, a professor of mechanical engineering at Quinnipiac, taught three classes this spring, including "Introduction to Circuits" and "Introduction to Aerodynamics." In April, he received the American Society for Engineering Education Ralph Coats Roe Award for teaching excellence and leadership in the classroom.

Crawford said the key to connecting with students, especially in a distance-learning environment, is simulating the human experience in on-ground classes—curiosity, engagement and interaction.

"Fortunately, we've got some amazing technology now," Crawford said. "I've got two webcams going in class. I've got one for me and another so I can look down on my page and draw things just like I would in the classroom. I try to explain things visually. That's important in my circuits class, for example, when you're dealing with electronics you can't see."

During one class in April, Crawford played the song "Synchronicity" by The Police to open a lesson about three-phase electricity and to mark synchronous instruction. "Our norm has shifted enough as it is, so let's try to keep things as normal as they were before," Crawford said. "Let's have class at the regular time. Let's keep the same format. I'm also a big proponent of making class fun. I think that's even more important now."

PHOTOS AUTUMN DRISCOLL

ILLUSTRATION BY DAVID PLUNKERT

BY BRIAN KOONZ

ILLUSTRATION BY DAVID PLUNKERT

PHOTOS AUTUMN DRISCOLL
Prepping for Fall

Infectious disease specialist helps QU make decisions regarding pandemic

The part Dr. David Hill plays on Quinnipiac’s COVID-19 task force can be compared in some ways to the role of Dr. Anthony Fauci, the well-known infectious disease expert serving on the White House coronavirus task force.

Hill, the director of the Institute for Global Public Health in the Frank H. Netter MD School of Medicine, learned long ago to balance optimism and pragmatism with clear, accurate messaging, reminiscent of Fauci’s style. Hill has decades of frontline experience in America and Europe dealing with the spread of infectious diseases such as HIV/AIDS and H1N1 (swine flu).

In fact, during Hill’s residency at the University of Rochester in the late 1970s, it was Fauci who provided the template for temperament. Fauci came to Rochester to conduct grand rounds on a rare autoimmune condition. Even then, Hill said, he was impressed by Fauci’s deep knowledge, no-nonsense approach and plain-spoken style: “I thought he was just brilliant. He’s been on the cutting edge of his field for 45 years now and has published hundreds of respected articles.”

More than 40 years later, Hill, like Fauci, has been called upon to help navigate an institution through an unprecedented and ongoing public health crisis. Since February, he has been a vital member of Quinnipiac’s COVID-19 task force, a group created by President Judy Olian to guide the university’s response to the pandemic.

The task force meets daily to assess reopening scenarios and outcomes, working closely with local and state health officials. The team’s 13 members represent nearly all of the university’s major offices and functions, from public safety, facilities and student health services to marketing and communications, student affairs and information technology.

In late May, Hill said that if a fall reopening at Quinnipiac happens as planned, it will include on-campus instruction as well as classes with access for remote learning, a mixed model that accommodates all students.

Members of the QU community will be required to wear face masks as they go about their campus routines, with a variety of social distancing protocols and other modifications in place for academic buildings, residence halls, dining halls and other facilities.

“It’s very likely we’re not going to have a widely available vaccine through the end of the next academic year, so we need a phased approach to learning,” Hill said. “It won’t be something where we’ve been staying home, and suddenly, the next day we’re all going out without wearing masks and doing what we did several months ago. Things aren’t going to turn until we have a vaccine. That’s just very clear.”

Hill noted that four measures would have to be in place before the university could reopen: all students, faculty and staff would need to do a daily check for symptoms related to COVID-19; Student Health Services would need the capacity to conduct rapid diagnostic testing; the university would need the ability to trace contacts of those who may be infected; and the university also would need to dedicate safe spaces to isolate those who are infected.

“You need to make sure that you’re testing enough to pick up a signal [of infection],” Hill said. “Some of the modeling that’s been done on a national and global basis is not based on testing everybody. It’s based on testing a representative sample and then making a prediction. I could see us doing that.”

Hill is proud of how nimble Quinnipiac has been in response to the pandemic, but there is still work to do.

“We are going to need cooperation from all members of our community,” Hill said. “In this time of pandemic, we all need to look inside and say, ‘What can I do? What do I need to do to make sure my community is safe, and I can continue to learn throughout the semester?’ We’re really going to have to take that to heart.”

The alternative, Hill said, is unacceptable.

“We can’t go back to overwhelming our health care system. That’s just not an option,” he said. “We also need to walk this tightrope of allowing people, especially those who are vulnerable financially and socially, to pursue their livelihoods—but first, they have to be healthy.”

A fall reopening would include on-campus instruction as well as classes with access for remote learning, a mixed model accommodating all students.

To ensure that the nation isn’t caught off guard again, Hill would like to see increased funding and support for emergency pandemic preparedness. This includes preparing the next generation of epidemiologists and infectious disease specialists, in which he sees Quinnipiac playing a role.

Hill also would like to see a master’s program in global public health established at the university. He envisions Quinnipiac students taking the lead in combating future crises.

In the meantime, Hill knows thousands of health care alumni are hard at work fighting the pandemic, while thousands more alumni are donating their time, money and supplies.

“As we often say,” Hill noted, “it will require all of us to be Bobcat Strong.”
we all need to look inside and say, ‘What can I do?’
COVID-19 fears set aside for the sake of journalism

For Kevin Rincon ’10, a broadcast journalist for WCBS 880-AM and CBS 2 in New York City, the hardest part of covering the COVID-19 pandemic wasn’t building a makeshift studio in his living room. He managed to pull together enough cords, computers and cameras to make it work. The hardest part was covering an invisible virus sweeping through America and the world without mercy or remorse.

“You know something terrible is going on. You know that an absurd number of people are dying and getting sick, but you can’t see what’s causing it,” Rincon said. “I can’t wrap my mind around that. It’s not like a natural disaster or a bad car crash. You literally can’t see what’s causing this.”

The outcomes, however, have been all too visible to Quinnipiac alumni reporting and producing the news: hospitals filled with desperately sick patients, doctors and nurses with bruised faces after working marathon shifts in masks, families aching to comfort loved ones with a kiss, but forced to wave through a window—if that was even allowed.

“This is all happening in real-time with no context and no familiarity,” Rincon remarked in May. “It’s more than the numbers, of course, although those are important. It’s about sharing the stories that bring people a better understanding of what’s going on. It’s affecting all of us, so the storytelling has become much more personal.”

During a CBS 2 broadcast April 29, Rincon spent some time with Lauren Negron, who takes the subway from the Bronx to Manhattan each morning to shop for groceries and deliver them to her clients. “Being labeled an essential worker, you really empower that, and you really take that on,” Negron told Rincon in a masked interview. “I’m doing a service some people wouldn’t want to do or some people are too afraid to do.”

The same could be said for journalists covering the COVID-19 pandemic. It’s a profession’s call to duty.

Julia Perkins ’16, a reporter for the Hearst Connecticut Media Group, finds the work consuming and critically important. “It’s impossible to disconnect from the coronavirus,” said Perkins, who served as editor-in-chief of The Quinnipiac Chronicle as a senior. “But I think most people really appreciate the local aspect of our coverage.”

Although Perkins has done most of her reporting at home, she has covered several assignments in public, including a March 27 press conference when Danbury Hospital completed its 25-bed mobile hospital for potential overflow patients.

“Lt. Gov. Susan Bysiewicz was there, and all the reporters were standing 6 feet apart because of social distancing,” Perkins said. “But once things got started, I realized it was really hard to hear everyone from where I was standing. So I moved a little closer to another reporter, which may wasn’t the best idea, but I needed to hear. I needed to do my job.”

Perkins also has written about the socioeconomic impact of the coronavirus in the Danbury area. “I’ve written a bunch of stories about the increased need for food and food pantries with people being out of work,” Perkins said. “It’s so hard because as a society, you want to be safe and be home, but you need to work so you can put food on the table.”

Jon Alba ’15, a reporter and host at News 13 in Orlando, Florida, believes a great 30-minute sports show requires memorable storytelling, seamless production, even a little risk-taking. But this spring, it also required creative mic setups and getting sources to trust in-person interviews all over again.

“I’m used to taking a clip-on mic, rolling my camera, and sometimes, that produces the best stuff,” Alba said. “These days, I set up my personal podcast mic stand, put in a handheld mic, and have people speak into that. It’s definitely not as visually stimulating as I’d like, but it gets the job done.”

More than that, it gets stories that are richer for the effort. How pieces are written, how they are edited and produced, it all matters—especially now. So does integrity.

“It’s finally getting a little easier to get people to do interviews in person. It really comes down to trust,” Alba said in May. “It depends on how you talk to people. First impressions matter. How you explain your intentions is also very important.”

Sharing a story is one thing. Telling it boldly and sometimes unconventionally is quite another.

“You’ve always been one to flex my creativity and think outside the box,” Alba said. “These are unprecedented times, but this is still your job. Yes, you’re being thrown into the elements, the
center of all this, but this is the job you signed up for—and I wouldn’t have it any other way.”

Matt Finn, a national correspondent for Fox News, agreed. Finn spoke with Ben Bogardus, an assistant professor of journalism, during a Zoom webinar in April titled, “Delivering News from Home: A Behind-the-Scenes Look at Journalism in a Health Crisis.”

Finn spoke to the Quinnipiac audience from a rental car in Chicago parked outside McCormick Place, the largest convention center in North America and among the largest in the world. The mammoth facility was being turned into another overflow hospital for COVID-19 patients.

“I just spoke with the lieutenant general of the Army Corps of Engineers,” Finn told the group from inside his car, which had suddenly become a mobile newsroom with a laptop, cell phone and other gear. “Everyone is hurting right now, so whenever I’m in these types of situations, you kind of step back.”

For safety reasons during the pandemic, Finn did many of his interviews with a stick mic or a boom mic attached to the end of an extra-long boom mic pole. Fox News also set up his apartment with professional lighting and other equipment so he could broadcast and conduct interviews from his kitchen.

In New York City, Marcus Harun ’14, MBA ’15, works as a segment producer at MSNBC. He writes scripts and stories for shows. He researches questions and background for anchors. He works with graphic artists and video editors to align content for broadcasts. He supports senior and executive producers—all from home.

“I feel like this is the most important work I’ve ever done,” Harun said. “The numbers are off the charts right now in terms of how many people are watching—more than 1 million. It’s more important than ever to get it right.”

Harun understands the urgency. To be closer to MSNBC, he moved from Connecticut to New Rochelle, New York. In early March, New Rochelle became America’s first COVID-19 hot spot after more than 100 cases were diagnosed there.

The shift to working from home took place soon after. Just like that, the studios and control rooms at 30 Rockefeller Plaza were condensed into laptops and living rooms across the tri-state area and around the country.

“The technology is amazing, but the speed in which people figured out how to do this is even more amazing,” Harun said. “Being able to do our jobs at a time like this, when the news is changing so fast, it’s absolutely critical.”
Students learn about sustainability in the lush rainforest of Costa Rica

The sun is still wrapped in a sapphire blanket when the concert begins at Earth University in Costa Rica. The air is cool and the grass is beaded from the showers that visited overnight.

It doesn’t take long before one voice in the jungle becomes a wake-up call of whoops, whistles and warbles. From howler monkeys in the treetops to birds seemingly painted by rainbows, it’s the soundtrack of the jungle.

The more important wake-up call—a mandate for sustainability and responsible stewardship to preserve the planet—is even louder. A new course at Quinnipiac examines the local and global urgency of sustainability in an experiential, multicultural context.

In January, Allan Smits, former associate dean and long-time faculty member in the College of Arts and Sciences, and Courtney McGinnis, associate professor of biological sciences, traveled to Costa Rica with 10 students to learn about sustainability in the living classroom of the rainforest.

“It’s important for people to get out of their comfort zones and see a world they haven’t seen before and a culture they haven’t seen before,” Smits said. “When you don’t see cultures sharing the world outside of your own environment, you really don’t appreciate the interconnectedness of cultures and of everyone working together for the planet Earth.”

The course—Lessons in Local and Global Sustainability—began with a 10-day intersession trip to Costa Rica and continued through the spring at Quinnipiac’s Mount Carmel Campus. The trip included a visit to the La Paz Waterfall Gardens and Animal Sanctuary, where students soaked up the spray from five waterfalls and learned about 100 different species of animals, including two-toed sloths named Rocket, Flash and Guapa. From there, the group spent six days at Earth University and three days at the coastal town of Tamarindo.

But it was the time spent at Earth University, a four-year institution that confers a single degree in agricultural sciences, that gave QU students a master class in discovery.
QU students learned how they could reduce their own carbon footprints — the amount of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases released by burning fossil fuels as part of an activity.

“I like how we all learned from each other, not just as a group of students from Quinnipiac, but from the students and teachers at Earth, too,” said Brendan Murphy ’20, a health science studies major. “We all share the same planet. We all need to work together to take care of it.”

During the group’s studies at Earth, a carbon footprint became more than an obscure scientific phrase. It became an imperative. QU students learned how they could reduce their own carbon footprints — the amount of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases released by burning fossil fuels as part of an activity. For example, everyone can reduce carbon emissions by driving less, keeping thermostats in check at home and buying locally sourced food, not food that’s been shipped from around the world.

These lessons of conservation and moderation are not restricted to Costa Rica, of course. The Department of Cultural and Global Engagement at QU directs faculty-led study abroad courses all over the world. This winter’s trips took students to Costa Rica, Australia/New Zealand and Barbados. Other groups went to Guatemala and South Africa.

Pantaleon Chavarría, a quality control supervisor at Earth University’s banana packing plant, inspects the latest harvest with students.

“What is integral to any Quinnipiac global engagement program is learning from others,” said Erin Sabato, director of international service and learning at QU. “We hope that through these experiences, our students develop cultural humility, lifelong curiosity and the ability to be deep and critical thinkers. We have brilliant teaching and learning partners all over the world that are imperative to these programs.”

BANANAS: MORE THAN A CASH CROP

Unlike Quinnipiac, Earth’s 400 or so students come primarily from Latin America, Africa and the Caribbean — most of them on full scholarship, all of them with stories of persistence. It’s not uncommon for students to apply two, three, even four times to Earth before they are accepted.

Nancy Musa, a 24-year-old student from Zimbabwe, served as Quinnipiac’s teaching assistant and liaison at Earth. Like her peers there, Musa has learned to drive a tractor, calculate carbon emissions and develop entrepreneurial business models. These outcomes are designed to give graduates the skills to return home and help their mostly agrarian communities by creating jobs, increasing yields and promoting sustainable practices.

“Just let the moment be and you’ll discover amazing things here,” Musa told the Quinnipiac students. “I have learned so much and made so many new friends. We all learn together. It’s a life-changing opportunity.”

Earth University’s primary source of revenue is an 800-acre banana plantation on campus. The operation employs about 600 people from local communities and generates about $1 million to $2 million annually, according to Earth business professor Irene Alvarado Van der Laat, who teaches economics, supply chain management and entrepreneurship.

The banana plantation became the perfect case study as QU students learned that sustainability is interdisciplinary. It touches on factors that are cultural, sociological, historical, economical and biological. It also deals with climate change. After a lecture about the business of agriculture, students toured the huge banana packing plant, an open-air warehouse where workers inspect, wash, spray and pack the bananas at assembly line stations, 10 hours a day, five days a week.

“The packing plant is really hard work,” said Maya Narvekar ’22, a student in the dual-degree BS in health science studies/MHS in occupational therapy program. “The ladies at the station who were taking the bananas out of the water, turning around and putting them in the next area did it so fast. It was all like a blur. They’re on their feet the whole time.”

In a country with the second-highest unemployment rate in Latin America — 12.4 percent — reliable jobs like the ones at Earth’s banana plantation are critical to socioeconomic stability. From the farmers to the packing plant workers to the truck drivers, there is pride in hard work and accrued value in their knowledge.

Consider Pantaleon Chavarría, a quality control supervisor at the packing plant. His face is kind and weathered by the sun. A few weeks after the Quinnipiac students completed their visit and returned to campus, Chavarría marked his 20th anniversary at the plant.

“When I asked people if their job was tiresome, or if they didn’t like the intensive labor, they said, ‘I don’t care. I don’t think about that. I’m sending three kids off to school,’” said Kyra Angileri ’21, a sociology major who hopes to study law after her undergraduate work. “Since this is a more rural part of the country, there aren’t a lot of other options for employment.”

The Quinnipiac students also used packing plant data to determine the carbon footprint created by eating one
banana. For example, how much does one banana weigh? How much fuel is used to bring that banana 70 kilometers to the port? How about a truck full of bananas? How do these numbers match up with the emission tables distributed in class?

While Earth aspires to be carbon neutral—99 percent of Costa Rica’s energy is renewable—it’s an incremental goal that requires a collective response. And a collective patience. “Be hard with the ideas, soft with the people,” Alvarado said, a concept that clearly resonated with the students, who repeated it many times during the trip. “When hearts are together, you don’t need to yell.”

CLEAN WATER? CHECK THE LARVAE

On the clearest days—and there are many here—the mountains that frame Earth University’s campus are majestic. A crown of clouds floats just beneath their purple peaks. The mountains, Smits explains, were formed by Costa Rica’s ancient volcanoes thousands of years ago.

These clouds carry water across a tropical country that is home to an incredible 5 percent of the world’s species. To put that figure into context, Costa Rica is roughly the size of West Virginia.

It’s estimated that 1.1 billion people around the world don’t have access to clean drinking water, said Alex Gilman, a professor of applied ecology at Earth. The implications can be dire—crops fail, disease flourishes and people die. So when Gilman pitched a trip to test the water quality of a stream on campus, the students pulled on their black rubber boots, grabbed a net connected to two broomsticks (imagine a foldable military stretcher) and set off to find macroinvertebrates.

In this case, the macroinvertebrates were larvae, the kind that live under rocks in a stream and don’t take kindly to students kicking over their homes so the current sends them swirling into those open nets with the broomsticks.

“I wasn’t sure what we were going to find,” said Anna Ciacciarella ’21, an English major and a student representative on Quinnipiac’s Sustainability Committee. “You really can’t tell what you have when you’re standing in the water collecting them. Once we emptied our nets and saw what was inside, we were excited to learn what kind of macroinvertebrates we had and what it meant.”

Why macroinvertebrates? If you find lots of larvae that can only thrive in clean water, that’s a good thing. If your net is filled with larvae that thrive in water with E. coli and other bacteria, well, that’s the opposite of a good thing. Usually, you find some of both kinds.

After the students sorted their larvae and identified them with the help of photo charts, they concluded the stream was probably safe for swimming, but definitely not for drinking. “We don’t expect to get excellent water quality here,” Gilman said, explaining that the group’s collection efforts only represented a snapshot in time. “We already know the water has been affected by human impacts such as untreated secondary sewage, the roadbuilding that’s going on just above where we are, and the high levels of nutrients from the application of fertilizers.”

Other times, the bacteria at Earth is saved, even valued. At the dairy farm on campus, Gilman and others have built two biodigesters—rudimentary but highly effective systems of PVC pipes and canvas-like collection bags where “pig muck, chicken muck and cow muck” are converted from raw feces into methane gas for stoves and other applications.

BULLET ANTS AND BIODIVERSITY

Gilman also took students into the rainforest on campus to visit a pre-Columbian archaeological site. After spraying themselves with waves of bug repellent—everyone wore long-sleeved shirts, long pants and those same black rubber boots—the students followed Gilman into a magnificent clearing where tall trees reached for the sky and thick roots stretched across the jungle floor like tentacles.

Gilman pointed out ancient stones covered with mossy beards that once marked a road. And she warned about the intensely painful venom of bullet ants—so named because if one stings you, it feels like you’ve been shot. “There are also venomous snakes here,” Gilman said almost nonchalantly, but with a tone that clearly startled the uninitiated and reminded them why they were wearing boots. “The venom is not life-threatening, but it can do kidney damage.”

From bullet ants and venomous snakes to the howler monkeys grunting from high up in the trees, Gilman said there are about 500,000 different species in Costa Rica. However, only 18 percent of these species have been identified because more than half of the country—52 percent—is dense forest cover.

People, wildlife, plants, insects, they all interact—sometimes in good ways, sometimes in bad.
"Life is about adaptability," Gilman said. "It’s not what you know; it’s what you can figure out.

McGinnis explained that adaptability and sustainability are like moving targets. They constantly require new strategies and new awareness to reduce waste and make better decisions to improve the health of both consumers and the planet. Many of these choices are simple and can be done at home.

“When you buy your food from a small farm or co-op, you eliminate the need to have your food carted in or shipped in. The food is fresher, and it’s better for you,” McGinnis said.

“There are companies out there that sell ugly fruit. Maybe it’s not pretty, but it’s still nutritious. It doesn’t have to get thrown out and wasted.”

From Imperfect Foods in San Francisco to bananas with freckles in the markdown section of your favorite supermarket, retailers and consumers have discovered an appetite for sustainable produce.

INSECTS: THE GOOD, BAD AND TASTY

While Costa Rica has “one of the highest intensities of pesticide use in the world,” according to a recent study published by the National Institutes of Health, Earth University works hard to limit the impact of pesticides on its banana crop. In fact, Earth’s sustainably grown bananas are sold in 85 percent of Whole Foods’ 500 stores, according to the university.

While the Quinnipiac group was in Costa Rica, France passed a law to ban the five pesticides responsible for causing unprecedented honeybee deaths there. Without pollination, of course, there are no crops. And without crops, well, there is no food.

“There’s a real cultural awareness of environmental issues and being environmentally conscious here,” Ciacciarella said one night during the group’s reflection. “It’s amazing to me the level of respect that people have for the land and the food that’s produced here.”

Toxic sprays aren’t the only solution to eliminating pests, said Earth professor Walter Ndonkeu Tita, an entomologist from Cameroon who also studied in Canada.
“We have to make smart decisions about what we do and how it impacts the world. Controlling pests is just one example of this. We cannot keep doing what we do without thinking about the consequences.”

— Professor Walter Ndonkeu Tita

Entomology, Tita said, is the study of insects and their relatives, a biological family tree that includes ticks, spiders, centipedes, crabs and scorpions. “I make my students eat insects,” Tita told the Quinnipiac students.

“Live ones?” Murphy wondered aloud, asking the same question everyone else was thinking.

“OK, you’ll see. Don’t worry,” Tita said with a grin.

Instead of reaching for a plate of fried grasshoppers or chocolate-covered crickets, Tita played a video of his students biting into these protein-packed critters. Roughly 30 percent of the world eats insects, Tita said, a number that drops dramatically in Western cultures.

But what about the leafcutter ants in Costa Rica that clip sections of leaves to take back to their nests? Or the worms and winged pests that destroy corn and other crops?

During an afternoon trip to the corn and citrus fields on campus, Tita taught QU students how to make traps using a synthetic sex pheromone hung from a wire. The pests are lured to the scent and fly into the traps looking to mate, only to fall hopelessly into a soap-and-water mixture in a repurposed jug or other container. These traps have a clear advantage over pesticides because they selectively remove only the pest insects.

“We have to make smart decisions about what we do and how it impacts the world. Controlling pests is just one example of this,” Tita said. “We cannot keep doing what we do without thinking about the consequences of our actions.”

BACK ON CAMPUS

After the trip to Costa Rica, QU students spent the spring semester thinking about sustainability, stewardship and climate change—not just for themselves, but for everyone on the planet. Access to clean air and water, a nutritious and widely available food supply, renewable energy to reduce carbon emissions—it all matters.

Similar discussions took place across Quinnipiac this winter at town hall events on the Hamden and North Haven campuses. The Sustainability Planning Committee, which McGinnis co-chairs, reviewed input from these town halls and presented the findings to President Judy Olian.

“It was important for us to have that community piece. It’s clear President Olian is interested in embedding sustainability through the entire culture of the university,” McGinnis said. “So what could that mean in terms of enhancing people’s health and wellness?”

“Maybe that’s having some gardens on campus to help bring down people’s stress and anxiety levels. We also talked about the phasing out of individual plastics and food sourcing. Where does our food come from? That’s important, right? There are so many different ideas and objectives we can consider here.”

During the semester, students made three presentations and completed a signature work. On one particular day in February, Gabrielle Pena ’22, a biology major and anthropology minor, spoke to the class about invasive species such as zebra mussels, lionfish and bamboo.

“It’s hard to get rid of all these invasive species because there are so many of them,” Pena told the class, illuminated by a deck of PowerPoint slides. “A possible solution to this is education. People can limit their exposure to invasive species by washing their boots or doing a better job monitoring supplies that could carry invasive species.”

“One person, one action, one outcome at a time. The message resonated across countries, cultures and 10 days of global engagement for these Quinnipiac students.

“I can think about sustainability in terms of science with all the trees, the water and the animals,” Murphy said one night in Costa Rica. “But it’s really the things we do as humans—the choices we make—that determine what’s going to happen in the future. The bananas don’t just magically appear in the store. They’ve got to be shipped from someplace. People have to grow them and pack them, but we don’t think about that. I think we need to start thinking about all those kinds of things a lot more.”
For David DesRoches, the corner office with a view of Sleeping Giant State Park isn’t really an office at all. It’s a freshly minted podcast studio with slick, soundproof walls and professional-grade equipment—the perfect venue for storytelling and hands-on learning.

On this early March afternoon, the hints of spring were everywhere and the coronavirus had not yet become a global pandemic. DesRoches, the director of community programming at the new Quinnipiac University Podcast Studio, was awaiting a phone call from Oscar-winning screenwriter David Rabinowitz ’09, who lives in Los Angeles. Across the room, Tom Conley-Wilson ’20, leaned over a digital soundboard with enough switches and buttons to launch a new era at the School of Communications.

“We didn’t anticipate doing a lot of remote interviews,” DesRoches explained. “Originally, we thought a lot of people would just come in here to talk. But then, I came on board and threw a wrench into everything. I’m very good at throwing wrenches into things. But I tend to grab the wrench and say, ‘You know what? I’ll use it to build stuff.’ So that’s what I try to do.”

Together with President Judy Olian and Chris Roush, dean of the School of Communications, DesRoches is building a space where students conceive and produce podcasts as part of their academic and professional development. The topics range from food insecurity, education and politics to health care and athletics.

Over the past decade, podcasting has become a global force, a powerful storytelling platform that doesn’t require a broadcast signal or rigid scheduling. People can listen whenever they want, wherever they want. There are more than 900,000 podcasts around the world with more than 30 million unique episodes, according to the podcastinsights.com website.

“As an award-winning journalist, DesRoches spent 15 years telling stories and reporting on breaking news in Darien, Connecticut, and on the air with Connecticut Public Broadcasting. He leverages these skills as the host of QKast, a podcast that explores the people and stories that bond Quinnipiac and its neighbors in Hamden, North Haven and the surrounding towns.”

While the QKast was on hiatus this spring, DesRoches created another podcast, “Isolated Together,” about life during these unprecedented times. He also launched two more podcasts, “UnCOMMon Grounds” and “The Virtual Quadcast.” He produces the podcasts in his makeshift, socially isolated studio. You can learn more and download episodes at qu.edu/podcast.

Naturally, the amenities at Quinnipiac’s podcast studio are much more sophisticated. Tucked inside the Center for Communications and Engineering, the podcast studio offers a generous workspace with four microphones connecting podcast hosts and their guests.

“Podcasting really is an intimate medium, and the numbers reflect that,” DesRoches said. “When you hear somebody’s voice on a microphone, and you hear them shake or stutter or breathe or exasperate or pause, those little details create an instant connection to you, the listener. People make a personal connection to the voices. You hear someone talking, and it’s like they’re telling you their story.”

This is the first lesson and the end game of podcasting, DesRoches said. No matter how many downloads, the goal is to touch every listener, whether it’s someone wearing headphones at the gym or someone commuting to work with the rest of humanity.

**IT’S ALL ABOUT CONTENT**

The inaugural QKast episode in March featured Olian, Roush, DesRoches and North Haven First Selectman Michael Freda discussing podcasts and their value as a way to bring people together.

A second QKast episode debuted a week later with Ben Bogardus, assistant professor of journalism, discussing his ongoing podcast, “Hunger in Hamden,” about food insecurity. The second episode of “Hunger in Hamden” recently earned...
Top: OU President Judy Olian and North Haven First Selectman Michael Freda appeared on the inaugural QKast episode.

Right: Tom Conley-Wilson, a former radio personality and music manager with minors in marketing and journalism, shifts between a computer and a soundboard. Conley-Wilson produced the QKast podcast this spring.

The DesRoches File

David DesRoches is the director of community programming for the Quinnipiac University Podcast Studio. A veteran of print, broadcast and digital journalism, he has won more than two dozen awards for his work over the past 15 years.

Before coming to Quinnipiac, he taught a podcasting workshop at Central Connecticut State University. He also taught journalism to college and high school students and co-founded and operated a nonprofit media organization in Ethiopia for three years. He earned a bachelor’s degree in communications and media studies from the College of Charleston in South Carolina.

DesRoches worked as an alternate host of WNPR’s flagship morning and afternoon talk shows, “Morning Edition” and “All Things Considered.” He also guest-hosted WNPR’s award-winning live talk shows, “Where We Live” and “The Colin McEnroe Show.”

When the studio closed this spring, DesRoches focused most of his attention on the podcast, “Isolated Together,” about the struggles and triumphs of people during the COVID-19 pandemic. The episodes feature stories about coping with social distancing, navigating the never-ending news cycle and taking a deep breath every now and then. Work also continues on his three-part documentary series, “Behind Rage,” which provides a detailed look at a Quinnipiac theater production that is the subject of a story on page 36 of this issue.

“I hope to not only create excellent podcasts, but also build a world-class program, one that reflects the common values of the university and the local community,” DesRoches said. “For me, this whole experience has been so rewarding,” said Conley-Wilson, a former radio personality and music manager who ran the podcast’s social media accounts; Benjamin Labadia ‘22, a psychology and film, television and media arts double major; and Elise “Evie” Velez ‘22, a political science major and the podcast’s audio engineer.

DesRoches hired 15 student workers to help with the other podcasts, which are expected to launch later this year. A complete launch schedule remains unclear because of the medical and social implications of the pandemic. “We also recruited volunteer students who just want to learn about what it’s like to podcast,” DesRoches said. “The interest is clearly there. It’s just a matter of figuring out where to put the talent.”

Conley-Wilson, a communications/media studies major with minors in marketing and journalism, produced the QKast. An experienced podcaster, Conley-Wilson led the group’s weekly meetings before the podcast center closed with the rest of the university. He also wrote the rundown—a document listing an episode’s timeline and script—for the Rabinowitz interview.

“For me, this whole experience has been so rewarding,” said Conley-Wilson, a former radio personality and music manager who ran the podcast’s social media accounts; Benjamin Labadia ‘22, a psychology and film, television and media arts double major; and Elise “Evie” Velez ‘22, a political science major and the podcast’s audio engineer.

DesRoches served as mentor and muse to four students in particular this spring—“The Core Four” as he calls them. They all helped with the preparation, production and promotion of the QKast. Conley-Wilson was joined by Nia Braccidiferro ‘22, a computer and a soundboard. Conley-Wilson produced the QKast podcast this spring.

The DesRoches File

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“I hope to not only create excellent podcasts, but also build a world-class program, one that reflects the common values of the university and the local community,” DesRoches said. “It will be a place for creativity and innovative storytelling where diverse voices are encouraged, nurtured and given space to grow.”
at student-run WQAQ. “I’m proud to be a part of something that’s directly helping the Hamden community and giving us the opportunity to tell really cool stories like what we did with David Rabinowitz. These kinds of experiences are impactful for students.”

Braccidiferro, who promoted the QKast on Twitter and Instagram this spring, agreed. She took the candid podcast studio photos that were shared with her posts. Listeners can follow Quinnipiac’s podcasts on social media at @qupodcasts.

Braccidiferro said she appreciated the opportunity to apply what she learned in her graphic design classes: “Working here has really helped me put my skills to good use outside of class. I’ve been able to contribute to something that I can put on my resume and be proud of when I talk to people about it.”

While Labadia comes from a visual background, he points to opportunities, not limitations with podcasting. As someone who has worked as a part-time camera operator for ESPN filming QU basketball and hockey games, Labadia understands that storytelling works best with angles and ideas.

“Obviously, a podcast is sound, so you don’t really think that there’s a video side to it,” he said. “But that’s something that a lot of podcasters are starting to do now—the visual side. I feel like there’s a better connection to the audience when you can see what people are saying and what their reactions are to what other people are saying.”

As a first-year student in the accelerated dual-degree program in the School of Communications, Labadia said he appreciated the opportunity to work with older students as a peer this spring. “I love the fact that we come in here for our weekly meetings, and we discuss all the ideas we have for the future—different fun episodes and different serious episodes,” Labadia said in March. “Each of us gets to come in and say, ‘Hey, I have this idea for an episode.’ To have that idea accepted and then to plan it, that’s really cool. We work together and collaborate. It’s a great environment to learn and be creative and have fun.”

DesRoches, as a podcaster and former journalist, sees a promising future for “The Core Four”—students who were thoughtful, curious and passionate this spring. They represent the kind of students whose energy will continue to fuel evocative storytelling at the podcast center (qu.edu/podcast).

“Curiosity and passion are two critical elements you need to bring into any field where you’re providing information. Journalism doesn’t necessarily allow you to express some of the passions that podcasting allows you to do,” DesRoches said.

“You can still search for information and truth, but you can have a bit more fun doing it. For me, that’s what makes podcasting enjoyable. These guys also have that sensibility. They share that deep desire to tell important and impactful stories—and have fun doing it.”

Good Podcasts Contain the 3 C’s

The podcasts with the most downloads and engaged listeners follow the three C’s—content, creativity and chemistry. These podcasts also are based on a single theme. It might be crime, comedy, politics, money, sports or anything else, just as long as the experience is deliberately targeted and consistently good.

“If you’re not passionate about it—if you don’t really want to do it—people can tell,” said Nia Braccidiferro ’22, a graphic and interactive design major who ran the social media accounts for the QKast this spring. “You don’t get the same vibe. Everyone here is passionate about the topics we’re talking about and the community aspect.”

Tom Conley-Wilson ‘20, a communications/media studies major with minors in marketing and journalism, likes to listen to podcasts about basketball and music. He said the best podcasts are the ones that leverage chemistry between hosts and guests.

Maybe they share a hilarious story. Or maybe they turn reflective at a time of loss. Either way, listeners connect with these moments of spontaneous humanity.

“A good podcast always starts with chemistry. I think that’s the No. 1 thing,” Conley-Wilson said. “Making it an intimate thing is something else that’s important to me. Making sure you make that connection with your listener and have fun with it.”

Here are some of the most downloaded podcasts on Apple Music, Google and Spotify:


**“THE BILL SIMMONDS PODCAST”** A podcast about sports as entertainment and society’s connective tissue hosted by journalist and entrepreneur Bill Simmons.

**“THIS AMERICAN LIFE”** A podcast about the people, places and shared journeys of a national narrative hosted by journalist and radio personality Ira Glass.

**“MY FAVORITE MURDER”** A true crime podcast hosted by Karen Kilgariff and Georgia Hardstark that has been described as shocking, irreverent and hilarious.

**“THE ADAM CAROLLA SHOW”** A comedy podcast hosted by television personality Adam Carolla, who riffs on everything from specialty pizzas to mean grandmas.
Play explores gun violence in schools and an author’s remote role in it

By Adam Durso
Photos CJ Yopp

After a tense exchange with his principal, a high school student marches back to the same algebra class he was dismissed from moments earlier. Incredulous, the teacher demands to see his hall pass. Instead of removing a piece of paper from his backpack, the young man draws a handgun and fatally shoots her in front of his horrified classmates.

This isn’t a storyline from America’s latest school shooting; rather, it’s an early scene from “RAGE,” a play produced this spring by Quinnipiac’s theater program. Adapted from the 1977 novel by Stephen King, “RAGE” tells two stories: one of a disaffected teen who murders two of his teachers and coerces other students to share their deepest fears and insecurities; the other of an embattled author grappling with his sense of responsibility for several school shootings allegedly inspired by his book.

By the time of its February premiere, “RAGE” transcended the stage here in a way no previous production at Quinnipiac had, said Kevin Daly, assistant professor of theater and head of Quinnipiac’s theater program. Its unconventional exploration of gun violence and school shootings sparked university-wide dialogues about these contentious issues and their root causes.

“RAGE” skillfully frames the classroom action in King’s novel alongside the second narrative of a King-like author confronting his shooter-protagonist and his own past to understand the impulses that yield such acts of violence. For this element, Dinkova relied on King’s 2013 essay “Guns,” which describes his decision to allow his novel to fall out of print after several school shootings across the country.

Exploring the play’s sweeping range of emotions—from anger to confusion, guilt and remorse—was both challenging and painful for the actors, especially theater major Kevin Cathey ‘23, who played the lead role of gunman Charlie Decker.

“Entering Charlie’s headspace was an extremely difficult task,” said Cathey, who channeled his own personal struggles to develop the character. “It was sometimes hard to get back into my normal everyday life.”

The coronavirus pandemic spread rampantly a few weeks later, turning “normal, everyday life” into a distant memory. Don Sawyer III, vice president for equity and inclusion at Quinnipiac, viewed the play and the resulting interdisciplinary dialogues as proof that the university is becoming a “brave space” where volatile issues like gun violence can be addressed and unpacked through a lens of growth.

“The antidote to rage is connection and empathy, and participation in theater facilitates both automatically,” said Elizabeth Dinkova, the play’s writer and director.

“RAGE” became the centerpiece of a larger framework of conversations, including a debate over the expansion of gun
“After a shooting, there is always this initial moral outrage and investment in finding solutions that quickly peters out. I wanted to do something that could help the situation and get at what causes it.”

— Elizabeth Dinkova, writer and director

control laws, a community dialogue about how to prevent mass shootings and the subject matter for “Behind Rage,” a documentary-style podcast series about the play’s development produced by the Quinnipiac University Podcast Studio.

“The connections outside of theater have been really exciting to watch,” Daly said. Dinkova also was moved to see how Quinnipiac’s resources were coordinated to make such rigorous, interdisciplinary dialogue happen, calling it a model for other universities across the country.

A graduate of the Yale School of Drama, Dinkova first read “RAGE” as a middle school student in Bulgaria. She received King’s blessing to adapt it after the 2018 shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida. She contacted Daly about a possible collaboration in 2019.

Daly often invites freelance directors from Yale to pitch their projects. But this time was a bit different. The project that Dinkova proposed—an original play with music about a school shooting—initially gave Daly pause.

“My first inclination was to decline because I thought we weren’t ready for this kind of material,” he said. Dinkova argued that it was the responsibility of artists and educators to broach what has become an endemic social problem.

“After a shooting, there is always this initial moral outrage and investment in finding solutions that quickly peters out,” she said. “I wanted to do something that could help the situation and get at what causes it.”

Daly solicited the perspectives of several colleagues, including psychology professor Thomas Pruynsky, to discuss the play’s content and ways that it could spur meaningful conversations across the university. Pruynsky connected Daly with Scarlett Lewis, whose 6-year-old son, Jesse, was killed in the Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting in Connecticut in 2012. Lewis also is the founder of the Jesse Lewis Choose Love Movement.

“I knew that Scarlett would provide a big-hearted, deeply informed and very wise perspective on this process,” Pruynsky said. Lewis has spoken at QU during the annual Social Emotional Learning Awareness week hosted in partnership with the School of Education.

Lewis threw her full support behind the project. She believed “RAGE” brought the conversation about school violence to the forefront in a creative way that moved beyond an oversimplified “good guy/bad guy” narrative.

“Conversations don’t cause school shootings; pain, isolation, disconnection and suffering cause them,” Lewis commented. Lewis also told Dinkova that, while some critics might respond contentiously, she needed to be steadfast in pursuing her vision. “Getting Scarlett’s stamp of approval gave us the extra confidence to push forward,” Dinkova said.

Dinkova’s sense of purpose resonated with Daly. He said her unwavering commitment to the project reflected what he felt was the ethos of the theater program.

“We want our students to engage with artists who don’t take no for an answer, despite all the challenges that come with making art,” Daly said.

A play of the complexity and size of “RAGE” marked a first for Quinnipiac’s theater program. In addition to a live band, it engaged fight, movement and dance choreographers as well as local professional actors working alongside students. “Our typical productions are probably one-third of this,” Daly said.

“RAGE” leveraged all of these resources to tell a provocative story and spark necessary conversation. Music, in particular, becomes a vital tool for exploring the play’s dark, yet relatable themes. Songs move beyond gun violence to cover intense loneliness, bullying, sexual assault, racism, physical abuse and other unpleasant subjects experienced by the play’s teenaged characters.

“Music in theater doesn’t always imply levity or cheekiness,” Dinkova said. “It helps us achieve a certain intimacy as though the lyrics are our own inner voice speaking to us.”

Cast members devoted nearly 40 hours a week to the show for a month and a half. According to Frank Scott ’22, a student in the accelerated dual-degree film, television and media arts/computer science (3+1) program, that grind often took a toll on the cast.

“We were definitely taking our characters home with us,” he said.

Scott portrayed Ted Jones, a privileged, self-centered football player and bully. Scott had to focus on any unsettling traits he shared in common with Ted in order to relate to him. “I was the first person to embody Ted Jones, so I had to build him from the bottom up,” he said.

Therapists were available throughout the production when needed, and the cast was guided through regular mindfulness exercises. Castmates also supported each other and got together frequently offset. According to Cathey, this helped them develop genuine stage chemistry and lasting friendships.

“The whole process of putting on this incredible show has built unbelievably strong bonds with the entire cast,” Cathey said.

At its core, “RAGE” was not a vehicle to shock or move a political agenda, but rather, a call to engage in long-overdue conversations about gun violence and school shootings. It also represented a cautionary tale for what can happen when people don’t talk to each other, or perhaps worse, don’t listen to each other.

“We can move past all of this,” Dinkova said. “We don’t need to wait for tragedies to happen for us to think and talk about these things.”

1. Kevin Cathey ’23 said entering the headspace of the gunman and exploring the emotions he must have felt was difficult.

2. Frank Scott ’22, left, played the role of Ted Jones, a privileged high school athlete and bully. Here, he argues with his classmate Pat, played by Jamien Jean-Baptiste ’21.

3. The captive students express their conflict and angst in an interpretive dance. Other members of the cast are Tess Adams ’21, Liam Devlin ’22, Kayla Jarry ’22, Emily Kane ’23 and Alessandra Varon ’22.

4. Frank Scott’s character, Ted, is attacked by his angry classmates, who drench him in paint for a visual shock.

5. Cathey, the shooter, takes aim at his algebra teacher Mrs. Underwood, portrayed by professional actress Mariah Sage.

6. Tess Adams, who portrayed Sandra, reacts to the simulated gun violence at the beginning of the play, after her teacher is shot.
Students get ringside look at campaign strategy during NH primary

The road to the White House is a bumpy one marked with forks, dead-ends and this year, COVID-19, as early primaries pare the field of Democratic presidential hopefuls. That road is set to wind through Wisconsin in August, where Joe Biden will almost certainly emerge from the perhaps virtual convention as the party’s candidate for president.

Candidates don’t walk this road alone. They have support in the trenches from campaign workers who are with them from the first primary in New Hampshire to the last in Puerto Rico. This year, 19 Quinnipiac students traveled to New Hampshire in January and again in February to offer their support, prior to the Feb. 11 primary, to the candidate whose ideals they admire. They spread their messages one house at a time.

Their journey was part of a 3-credit course taught by Scott McLean, professor of political science, who has taken students to the Granite State every four years since 2000. During their time there, the group attended the Manchester Democratic debate at Saint Anselm College and another gathering where all the candidates on the ballot spoke. Each student was asked to volunteer for two campaigns to witness the variation and diversity among them and to see the differences in organizational culture, human relations and strategy.
The students experienced grassroots politics in action as they canvassed for Joe Biden, Pete Buttigieg, Bernie Sanders, Elizabeth Warren and Andrew Yang. Several students also chose to work for Republican presidential candidate Bill Weld, who was challenging President Donald Trump, the presumptive nominee. Although none worked for Amy Klobuchar, some attended her rallies.

As the students navigated slippery snowbanks and icy sidewalks in neighborhoods in the Concord-Nashua-Manchester region, they learned just how much work canvassing can be and why it’s often relegated to young, enthusiastic, even idealistic volunteers.

Ringing doorbells in single-digit temperatures, their breath clouding the air as they shivered on front doorsteps, they wondered whether the voters they’d encounter would be receptive to their message. Or whether the door would even be opened.

For Nicholas Ciampanelli ’22, an economics/political science dual major, canvassing meant driving to Salem, New Hampshire, on behalf of Yang. “The area I was assigned was traditionally deep Republican,” he said, adding that they encountered a number of citizens uninterested in their message “and some generally fed up with people knocking.”

Ciampanelli was heartened that a few voters said Yang would be their No. 2 choice. But when the New Hampshire primary votes were counted, Yang—in last place with 2.8 percent—decided to drop out. When fellow Yang supporter Joshua Gorero ’21 heard that news at the party Yang hosted on primary night, he felt frustrated. The political science major/Spanish minor said he’d connected with Yang twice at rallies and canvassed for him along with Ciampanelli.

“The atmosphere [at the party] changed, from one of lively energy to one of defeat and utmost sadness,” Gorero wrote in his reflective journal, a course requirement. “Yang then reminded the audience of the positive things that the campaign has done, urging them to continue the fight. As he continued his speech, the crowd started chanting ‘2024! 2024! 2024!’ and I joined in this chant, conflicted with so many emotions.”

Gorero favored Yang for the “refreshing perspective and new ideas” he brought to the political conversation.

A TALE OF TWO RALLIES

High-octane energy swirled from the rafters at the Buttigieg rally in Nashua the Sunday before Tuesday’s primary. The line to get in snaked around the middle school venue and back to its parking lot. Four QU students were at the head of the line, having learned to arrive early at such events despite having to endure the brisk wind that made the 25-degree temperature feel much colder. They were rewarded when a campaign worker chose them to sit in the cheering section near the stage where Buttigieg outlined his pitch for the nation’s top job. As loud party music filled the school gym, campaign workers rehearsed the cheer crew of about 75 so-called “political tourists,” students and others who were jammed into the bleachers on stage left. They waved blue and gold signs and chanted “President Pete!” and “Boot edge edge!” on cue while some 1,800 people filed in.
Fox TV political reporters Bret Baier and Martha MacCallum were among the news media seated adjacent to the spectators while MSNBC’s Lawrence O’Donnell roamed the four corners of the gym. All were soaking up the atmosphere and the crowd’s reactions to Buttigieg to spice up their next broadcasts.

Matthew Hawryluk ’22, a political science major/marketing minor, was among the four QU students chosen to sit up front. He had met Mayor Pete at a previous rally, bumping fists with him as Buttigieg greeted supporters. For Hawryluk, canvassing for Buttigieg in the Manchester and Bedford areas was an experience of extremes. “Some people loved having a conversation about him while others were sick of opening their doors,” he observed.

“I like Pete because he is a veteran and his message is about bringing the country together through bipartisanship,” Hawryluk said.

Glad-handing with voters is a tradition for candidates in New Hampshire, and rallies make that possible and personal. That same Sunday before the primary, former vice president Joe Biden addressed a throng of citizens in nearby Hudson. In contrast to Buttigieg’s rally, the music was more understated and the crowd at the high school more reflective, less frenetic, and visibly in awe of the veteran politician they came to see.

Biden did not disappoint, according to the Quinnipiac students who attended. One of his most enthusiastic supporters is Samantha Murdock ’21. The political science major/legal studies minor encountered Biden when she and other students were chosen to stand behind him during a rally the day before at a Manchester theater. Afterward, the two chatted. Murdock told Biden she related to his strength in losing several family members, sharing that her father had battled leukemia and beat it, thanks in part to health care reform passed when Biden was Barack Obama’s vice president.

“He really took his time talking to us. He asked me what I wanted to do, and I told him I wanted to be a lawyer, but also remain involved in politics,” Murdock said. “Joe Biden told me, ‘We need young people like you to get out there and vote because the turnout was so low in 2016.’ Murdock is president of the Quinnipiac Political Science Association and treasurer of the Quinnipiac University Democrats.

Biden told Murdock he appreciated the effort she and her classmates put into canvassing. To make sure people they spoke to voted, Murdock and fellow Biden canvasser Senaj Mersim ’21, a political science major/legal studies minor, would ask them who they were leaning toward voting for and to name the time they planned to go to the polls, thereby voicing a commitment to vote.

Mersim said canvassing was harder than she anticipated, with many people choosing to ignore their doorbells. But she enjoyed relating to those who did answer them. “I was able to speak with voters who were passionate about politics and excited to be living in the first state to hold a primary election,” she said. “We were able to have an educational discussion where I informed them about my candidate and they told me their likes and dislikes about my candidate and others,” she said.

Zac Gormley ’22 also favors Biden. “He’s not as far left as Sanders, more center of the road, and has more of a chance to beat Trump,” he noted. At the rally, the political science major listened intently as Biden outlined his views on gun control, health care, opioid addiction and his electability.

Gormley jumped to his feet to applaud Biden when he recounted that he lost his wife and daughter in a car accident, and lost a son to cancer, then said: “I’ll be damned if I’m going to stand by and lose my country, too.”

“GETTING INTO THE GAME

New Hampshire gives Quinnipiac students an on-ground, rigorous introduction to the gears of presidential politics. McLean wants students to experience canvassing and to learn how to react—in real time—to the unfolding surprises, drama and hard work of a grassroots political campaign.
WORLD-SIZED CLASSROOM

1. Democratic Debate poster
2. Pete Buttigieg supporters
3. Bernie Sanders and Warren supporters
4. Warren and Sanders at campaign event
5. Young supporters at campaign event
6. Warren and Sanders at campaign event
One such surprise occurred when McLean and Jensen Wilson ’22, a political science major, met actor Kevin Costner outside Webster Middle School, a polling site where she stood for four hours holding a Buttigieg sign. Costner had spoken at a rally the night before.

Before the trip, McLean told students that New Hampshire voters are known for being reluctant to share their support. “One of your jobs will be to gather intel for your candidate … identify their supporters, hold them and deliver them to the polls.” He added that voters are also known for switching allegiances, “some literally right up to the time they are walking in to mark their ballot.”

As avid followers of politics, both Hawryluk and classmate Tyler Delehoy ’21, a history major/political science minor, were excited to be part of the audience for a broadcast of MSNBC’s “Morning Joe” the Monday before the primary. Meeting in their hotel lobby at 3:30 a.m., they got in line at 4 to be admitted to the 6–9 a.m. show, which was staged in the Manchester DoubleTree’s restaurant.

 lateinit guests included candidate Amy Klobuchar, U.S. Sen. Michael Bennet and a roundtable of well-known network commentators that made the early wakeup worthwhile. They enjoyed the show from a table close to the set that gave them an inside view into the production of a live TV show. To Hawryluk, the show underscored how important New Hampshire is as a primary state. Getting photos with co-hosts Joe Scarborough and Mika Brzezinski topped off the event.

Delehoy burned the candle at both ends that day, choosing to attend Bernie Sanders’ appearance with The Strokes rock band that same night in Durham, along with fellow Sanders supporter Sarah Annabi ’23, a political science major. Sanders’ win the following day was more music to Annabi’s ears. She summarized her New Hampshire experiences as amazing.

Annabi met the senator from Vermont at a weekend rally where she sat behind him as he spoke. They shook hands afterward and he posed for a selfie. “Bernie is super nice, a sweetheart; he’s a core-driven, principled person,” she said.

“He has had the same views for years upon years and sticks with them—he doesn’t change his views because they are not popular,” she added. While she hopes he will be the nominee, she said she would support whoever the party chooses.

Delehoy didn’t get the chance to meet Sanders but did hear him speak. “It makes sense why his base is so young because he does seem to have a proactive plan for the future, and people in the crowd were very reactive to his message.” He counted himself lucky to get into Sanders’ crowded victory party, noting that the volume of people who were turned away demonstrated the popularity of the New Hampshire winner.

**WORKING FOR CHOICE**

On the day of the primary, political science major Mariam Shawish ’22 stood outside a Concord church hall being used as a polling site as a light rain deposited droplets on her ponytail and moistened her Bill Weld 2020 sign. Fellow Weld supporter Gabriel Farberov ’21 and a few other Weld supporters flank ed her. Farberov, a political science major/management minor, is in the third year of a 6-year BA/JD program.

Weld, the governor of Massachusetts from 1991-97, has no chance of beating incumbent Trump, so why the interest? “He is more moderate and a better option than Trump, more socially liberal and fiscally conservative,” she answered. The duo had logged nine hours at Weld headquarters the day before, calling voters, dropping off signs, and canvassing in Keene and Portsmouth.

“They are great—naturals—we’d hire them in a heartbeat,” said Ryan Dumont, state director for Weld, as he shifted his sign to his left hand to greet Weld and his wife, who had just arrived and were approaching the line.

Weld thanked them for their hard work. “Older voters are excited to see the enthusiasm of young people knocking on their doors,” he said. “Their generation will inherit the national debt, the melting polar ice caps, the Social Security age hike, among other issues, and they get that,” he observed.

“Joe Biden told me, ‘We need young people like you to get out there and vote because the turnout was so low in 2016.’”

— Samantha Murdock ’21

Shawish asked for a selfie and Weld obliged. “This is so cool, I gotta admit,” she said, beaming at the photo.

Farberov said the best part of his New Hampshire experience was the empowerment he felt and the change he was able to make through grassroots activism. “I was able to directly talk to voters and see which issues mattered most to them. This experience fueled my political aspirations and made me realize that anyone can institute change through hard work and that politics affects us significantly more than we think.”

Haktan Ceylan ’22, a political science and philosophy dual major, put his all into campaigning for Buttigieg. They met at a rally. “He gripped my hand and said, ‘You and the other canvassers make it worth it for me. Thank you so much.’” Ceylan recalled. The president of QU’s International Student Association then gave the former mayor of South Bend, Indiana, a bracelet depicting the Turkish flag. He told him, “I want you to have this because I believe you advocate for people such as myself who are being disregarded by the current president.”

Waiting for his burger and fries at the Red Arrow Diner in Derry that night, Ceylan recounted a conversation with a Sanders supporter in a neighborhood where he was assigned that afternoon.

“I talked to her about my parents sacrificing in Turkey to move here [Danbury, Connecticut] so I could get a good education. I told her that seeing a black man [Obama] win gave me so much inspiration and hope because he had a funny-sounding name, and I have a funny name, and then I told her what I liked about Mayor Pete,” he said.

“And then, she asked me, ‘Are you positive that Buttigieg is going to be the one, as a student who studies political science?’ And I said, ‘Yes, I wouldn’t be out here in the cold if I didn’t.’ And she said, ‘You can put me down as a Buttigieg supporter.’” Ceylan smiled as he remembered the small victory.

“That is what makes it all worth it,” he declared.
AUCTION RAISES FUNDS FOR PUBLIC INTEREST LAW INTERNSHIPS

The School of Law’s Public Interest Law Project (PILP) raised nearly $16,000 at its 27th annual auction in late February. PILP provides grants each year to students who accept unpaid summer internships with nonprofit organizations that assist people with limited access to legal representation. All of the auction’s proceeds go to fund these grants.

Hundreds of participants bid on a range of items, including a Tiffany bracelet, a football signed by the New York Jets, and themed meals hosted by various law school faculty. This year’s event featured a Roaring Twenties theme, with everything from the Ceremonial Courtroom to the desserts decorated in the signature black and gold Art Deco style.

“Without some sort of income, students would not be able to take these internships,” said Katherine Lowe, JD ’20, PILP’s president. “These auctions provide money for so many students, who in turn provide legal help to those in need.”

“How wonderful our professors are, I have no doubt that they’ll work with students on a time to reschedule,” Lowe said.


**CLASS NOTES**

**1971**


**1973**

**HARVEY GOLSTEIN** of Branford, CT, recently published a book, "Corvettes: Images and Stories About America’s Great Sports Car." He is an editor for Amherst Media in Amherst, MA.

**1974**

**PEGGY (SCHLOSS) GUROCK** of Atlanta is retired from her position as an occupational therapist. She was elected as a member of the Fellows of the Occupational Therapy Association.

**1976**

**ROCHELLE (ALPERT) HOLDEN** of Westbury, NY, worked as a welfare examiner for 25 years and recently retired from the Nassau County Social Services.

**1979**

**CARRIE (SCHIAVO) ZIMYESKI** of Middlebury, CT, was elected chairperson of the board of directors for Thomaston Savings Bank in October 2019. She joined the board in 2008. Carrie is a partner at Zaccin, Zimyeski, Sullivan, CPA in Waterbury CT. She also serves on the board for the Literacy Volunteers of Greater Waterbury.

**1980**

**NANCY FICMAN** of Bloomfield, CT, has been an occupational therapist for 40 years. She has worked for Hartford HealthCare in West Hartford, CT, for the past 15 years.

**1981**

**JOHN PAGONO** of Clinton, CT, is a pediatric occupational therapy consultant. He recently published "FAB: Functionally Alert Behavior Strategies," a book that gives occupational therapists ways to improve the behavior of children and teenagers with complex behavioral challenges.

**1984**

**KEVIN MORGAN** of Cheshire, CT, is senior vice president of client success, sales and marketing at Glenser Technologies in Bethlehem, PA. Prior to that, Kevin worked in the life sciences field for more than 30 years, supporting regulatory, technology and applications for pharmaceutical companies. His past positions include working for PriceWaterhouseCoopers, IBM and Grant Thornton.

**1985**

**SEBASTIAN FAZZINO** of Middletown, CT, was promoted to the position of senior cash management service and implementation specialist at Webster Bank.

**1986**

**DIANE ARNOLD** of Ivorton, CT, was promoted to senior vice presiden and chief lending officer at Essex Savings Bank. Prior to that, she was vice president/senior commercial loan officer and has worked at the bank since 2002.

**1988**

**KATHLEEN FOLEY** of Cumming, GA, is director of the School of Occupational Therapy at Brenau University in Gainesville, GA, where she oversees three entry-level programs and a post-professional program.

**1991**

**JILL (KALISZEWSKI) MEGLIN** is a teacher in Guilford, CT, where she lives with her husband, Bill. Their daughter, Bailey, is a first-year student at Quinnipiac University, following in the footsteps of her grandmother (Class of 1967), great-grandmother (who attended Larsen College) and numerous aunts, uncles and cousins.

**1993**

**MARY STOLL** of Northborough, MA, is senior director of clinical development at Soliton in Houston. She oversees all clinical activities of the company’s Rapid Acoustic Pulse device for tattoo removal, improvement in the appearance of cellulite, keloid (scarring) and additional pipeline indications. Prior to that, Mary was senior director of clinical operations at Cytrellis Biosystems in Massachusetts.

**1994**

**KAREN CRAFT** of Dover, NH, has launched a health care consulting company—Focus on Results. Her practice is aimed at helping health care companies reduce costs, change culture and increase profitability. Previously, Karen was a senior executive at Magnetic Resonance Technologies of Maine.

**1995**

**CHARLES BRITTON, MAT '96,** recently was named superintendent of schools in Portland, CT. Before that, he was curriculum director for the schools in Portland and has been an educator for many years, working as a teacher, assistant high school principal, high school principal and professor of educational leadership. He lives in Wallingford, CT, with his wife, Jennifer, and their two children.

**1996**

**MARK SANTINO** of Guilford, CT, is head of strategy and planning for the global enterprise segment at Conmwoat Systems of New Jersey. He runs the company’s sales strategy and planning for its Americas business and the new global enterprise business. He recently published “The Seven Strengths of Summiting” on Amazon. The book was recognized as the top new release in hiking and camping excursion guides in March 2020.

**2002**

**CHRISTINE (POLIDORO) CHIMENTO '03, MPT '05,** of Staten Island, NY, announce the birth of a daughter, Katherine. Katherine was welcomed by her big sister, Olivia, 7. Bernie is a senior editor at Yahoo Sports.

**2003**

**AUSTIN ASHE** of East Boston, MA, is associate director of undergraduate education at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology’s Sloan School of Management. He oversees marketing, communications and outreach, and is an adviser to undergraduate students.

**2007**

**BERNARD AUGUSTINE** and **KELLY (LALINE) AUGUSTINE '03, MAT '05,** of Staten Island, NY, announce the birth of a daughter, Gabriella, 5. Their second daughter, Olivia, 7, is a junior at Rye Neck High School.

**2011**

**JILL (PRESTON) CRAMP** of Poland Spring, ME, works for Select Medical and Saco Bay Physical Therapy as the program director of pelvic health physical therapy.

**2013**

**ROCHELLE (ALPERT) HOLDEN** of Westbury, NY, worked as a welfare examiner for 25 years and recently retired from the Nassau County Social Services.

**2017**

**NANCY FICMAN** of Bloomfield, CT, has been an occupational therapist for 40 years. She has worked for Hartford HealthCare in West Hartford, CT, for the past 15 years.

**2019**

**ROBIN A. ROBINSON** of Madison, CT, has been a registered occupational therapist for 27 years, specializing in mental health. She recently joined the staff of the Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch in Minot, ND. The ranch helps at-risk children and their families by providing a safe place for children to heal from psychiatric, behavioral and traumatic issues.

**2020**

**ANNE WALSH** of Westport, CT, has been a supervising producer/editer at CNN. Before that, he was the longtime host of NPR’s call-in radio show “Where We Live.”

**2021**

**BERNARD AUGUSTINE** and **KELLY (LALINE) AUGUSTINE '03, MAT '05,** of Staten Island, NY, announce the birth of a daughter, Katherine. Katherine was welcomed by her big sister, Olivia, 7. Bernie is a senior editor at Yahoo Sports.

**2023**

**AUSTIN ASHE** of East Boston, MA, is associate director of undergraduate education at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology’s Sloan School of Management. He oversees marketing, communications and outreach, and is an adviser to undergraduate students.

**2024**

**BERNARD AUGUSTINE** and **KELLY (LALINE) AUGUSTINE '03, MAT '05,** of Staten Island, NY, announce the birth of a daughter, Katherine. Katherine was welcomed by her big sister, Olivia, 7. Bernie is a senior editor at Yahoo Sports.

**2025**

**JEREMIAS (FANNING) WOOD** of Barnstead, NH, was named assistant vice president and assistant corporate controller for New Hampshire Mutual Bancorp in Concord, NH. Before that, she was vice president and manager of financial reporting for United Bank in Hartford.

**2026**

**AMY BURTON '00, OTD '15,** of Middletown, CT, is an assistant professor of occupational therapy at Western New England University in Springfield, MA.

**2027**

**KATIE (STATION) SMITH** of New Milford, CT, is a pediatric occupational and physical therapy specialist. She is certified to use peripherally inserted central catheters, which deliver drugs to long-term care patients.

**2028**

**MARK SANTINO** of Guilford, CT, is head of strategy and planning for the global enterprise segment at Conmwoat Systems of New Jersey. He runs the company’s sales strategy and planning for its Americas business and the new global enterprise business. He recently published “The Seven Strengths of Summiting” on Amazon. The book was recognized as the top new release in hiking and camping excursion guides in March 2020.

**2029**

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**2030**

**AUSTIN ASHE** of East Boston, MA, is associate director of undergraduate education at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology’s Sloan School of Management. He oversees marketing, communications and outreach, and is an adviser to undergraduate students.

**2031**

**BERNARD AUGUSTINE** and **KELLY (LALINE) AUGUSTINE '03, MAT '05,** of Staten Island, NY, announce the birth of a daughter, Katherine. Katherine was welcomed by her big sister, Olivia, 7. Bernie is a senior editor at Yahoo Sports.

**2032**

**AUSTIN ASHE** of East Boston, MA, is associate director of undergraduate education at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology’s Sloan School of Management. He oversees marketing, communications and outreach, and is an adviser to undergraduate students.

**2033**

**BERNARD AUGUSTINE** and **KELLY (LALINE) AUGUSTINE '03, MAT '05,** of Staten Island, NY, announce the birth of a daughter, Katherine. Katherine was welcomed by her big sister, Olivia, 7. Bernie is a senior editor at Yahoo Sports.

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**AUSTIN ASHE** of East Boston, MA, is associate director of undergraduate education at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology’s Sloan School of Management. He oversees marketing, communications and outreach, and is an adviser to undergraduate students.

**2035**

**BERNARD AUGUSTINE** and **KELLY (LALINE) AUGUSTINE '03, MAT '05,** of Staten Island, NY, announce the birth of a daughter, Katherine. Katherine was welcomed by her big sister, Olivia, 7. Bernie is a senior editor at Yahoo Sports.

**2036**

**AUSTIN ASHE** of East Boston, MA, is associate director of undergraduate education at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology’s Sloan School of Management. He oversees marketing, communications and outreach, and is an adviser to undergraduate students.

**2037**

**BERNARD AUGUSTINE** and **KELLY (LALINE) AUGUSTINE '03, MAT '05,** of Staten Island, NY, announce the birth of a daughter, Katherine. Katherine was welcomed by her big sister, Olivia, 7. Bernie is a senior editor at Yahoo Sports.
FELICITY MELILLO of West Roxbury, MA, has started a career in property management as director of relationship management at Briggs, LLC, in Boston. Before that, she worked at Unilever for 12 years.

JOANN ORSATTI, MSN ’03, of Litchfield, CT, works at the Community Health and Wellness Center in Torrington, CT, as a nurse practitioner.

Cameron Smith and his wife, Colleen, of Boston, MA, announce the birth of their first child, Caroline Grace, in March 2019. Cameron is assistant director of Boston University’s School of Business.

Brian Tenenhaus ’03, MPT ’05, of Killington, CT, and his wife, Lauren, announce the birth of their second child, Brooks, on Feb. 18, 2019. Brooks was welcomed by his big sister, Mila.

2004 Camille Jackson, MS ’04, of Durham, NC, is director of the Ida B. Wells Society for Investigative Reporting at the University of North Carolina Chapel Hill. The society aims to get more people of color working as investigative reporters and editors.

Matthew Leblanc, BA ’04, of West Hartford, CT, works for Edgewood Healthcare Advisors and recently was named the health care practice leader for its eastern region.

2005 Stephanie (White) Holden, MS ’05, and her husband, Erik, of Poughquag, NY, announce the birth of their second child, Savannah Rose, on Feb. 2, 2020. Savannah was welcomed home by her big brother, Hunter.

Meredith Klein is director of public relations for Walmart. Before that, she led communications for the e-commerce site Jet.com. Meredith also serves on the advisory board for Quinnipiac’s School of Communications. She lives in Staten Island, NY, with her husband and two children.

2006 Ashley Kanya ’06, MAT ’07, of Green Pond, NJ, has been named teacher of the year at Randolph High School in Randolph, NJ. Ashley has been the option II coordinator at RHS since 2015.

Michael Silverman ’06, MPT ’08, of Wantagh, NY, is chief operating officer for the St. Catherine of Siena Medical Center in Smithtown, NY. His previous roles include senior director of operations and strategy at the Philadelphia-based Rothman Orthopaedics and senior positions at Northwell Health’s Northern Westchester Hospital in Mount Kisco, NY, and the Hospital for Special Surgery in New York City.

April (Taberna) Spallino ’06, MAT ’07, of Roseland, NJ, and her husband, Mike, announce the birth of a daughter, Liviana May, on Nov. 8, 2019. Liviana was welcomed by her brother, Michael, and sister, Lila.

2007 Andrew Davis of Middle-town, CT, is a senior researcher at ESPN and lead researcher for the network’s coverage of boxing and UFC events.

Nicholas Titus of Northport, NY, has been promoted to president of Minuteman Press International. Prior to his current position, he was vice president for marketing at the firm. He is the third generation in his family to run the business.

2008 Nicole Cuglietto ’08, JD ’11, of Stamford, CT, has been promoted to partner at the law firm of Wilson Elser. She also was included in the Connecticut Super Lawyers Rising Stars list from 2016 to 2019 by Super Lawyers, a legal rating service.

Lisa Juckett ’08, MOT ’10, of Columbus, OH, received her PhD from Ohio State University in December 2019 and has a tenure-track faculty position there in the division of occupational therapy.

Megan Redzia of Oakland, NJ, received a 40 Under 40 award from NJBIZ magazine, which recognizes prominent young professionals in New Jersey. She is executive vice president at 3E Public Relations, where she has worked since 2010. She became the company’s first female partner in 2018.

2009 Donald Bernat of Muncie, IN, is in a two-year pediatric neuropsychology fellowship at Nationwide Children’s Hospital in Columbus, OH.

Alexandra Filici of Hoboken, NJ, was promoted to managing director at Knightsbridge Park, which provides digital marketing services for the luxury real estate sector.

2010 Jacyln Mcneely of Cambridge, MA, has joined the law firm of Morgan, Brown & Joy in Boston as an associate. She focuses on labor and employment law.

Samantha Plourde of Sturbridge, MA, was named associate director of admissions at Manchester Community College in Manchester, CT. Before that, she was enrollment services coordinator at the college since 2014.

Daisy Vargas of New York City and Marvin Richemond were married in North Haven, CT, on Dec. 14, 2019.

2012 Maura Regan ’10, MAT ’12, and kevin regan ’07, of North Haven, were married on June 29, 2019. Maura is a teacher.

Justin Wilcox of Middlefield, CT, was promoted to partner at the accounting and advisory firm Fiondella, Milone & LaSarcina of Glastonbury, CT. Previously, he was senior manager for tax services.

2011 Nicholas Johnson of Saint Paul, MN, was promoted to associate producer at FOX Sports North/Wisconsin. He produces pre- and post-game shows on sports teams in Minnesota and Wisconsin.

2012 Zachary Bray ’12, MAT ’13, of Raritan, NJ, was elected mayor of Raritan in 2019. Before that he served on the town council there for four years. He is a teacher at Bridgewater-Raritan High School.

Christina (Melomo) Chillelli of Edison, NJ, announces the birth of a son, Luca Gian, on Aug. 15, 2019. Christi na is a marketing manager.

Julie (Dellacorte) Kanawowicz of Rockville Centre, NY, was promoted to assistant nurse manager for endoscopy at Northwell Health North Shore University Hospital in Manhasset, NY.

Mark Turczak ’12, MHS ’14, married Alison Goldberg on Sept. 21, 2019, at the Waterview in Monroe, CT.

2013 Michelle Brasder Mchugh, MS ’13, of Havertown, PA, is senior director of communications, advocacy and marketing at Melmar, which has locations in Berwyn, PA, Andover, MA, and Charlotte, NC.

Josephine Liz of Bronx, NY, is a public relations manager at Terlato Wines.

Shannon Mazurick, MS ’13, of Avon, CT, has published a children’s book that she illustrated called “The Four-Leaf Clover.”

Samantha Plourde of South Windsor, CT, was promoted to executive producer at WJAR, a television station in Rhode Island. She had formerly been a producer at NBC in Connecticut.

2014 Marcus Harun ’14, MBA ’18, married Rabiah Gul on Dec. 15, 2019, at Chateau La Mer in Lindenhurst, NY. Marcus is a producer at MSNBC in New York. The couple lives in New Rochelle, NY.

Lauren Shevit of Katonah, NY, graduated from the Maurice A. Deane School of Law at Hofstra University in May 2019. She practices law on Long Island, NY.

Victoria Verderame, MS ’15, of Branford, CT, was named a Distinguished American Italian Woman of the Year by the American Italian Women of Greater New Haven in October 2019.

2015 James Carchietta of Hicksville, NY, is an FC lending consultant for Bank of Ameri ca/Merrill Lynch.

2016 Holly Farrell of Abington, MA, was promoted in Sep tember to senior associate at Marcum LLP in Boston, MA.

Alisha Galli of Delray Beach, FL, started a new job as a member of the adjunct nurs ing faculty at Palm Beach State College in Lake Worth, FL.

2017 Patrick Johnson is an associate producer for 1891 Productions. He worked on the 2018 documentary “Sublime.” He lives in Los Angeles.

John Nutting of Rockland, DE, is a studio manager for Staples stores in the Boston area and was featured in a Boston Globe story about the chain’s business initiatives.

2018 Samantha Gormley of Howell, NJ, recently finished a second-degree nursing program and has started her first job as a registered nurse.

Megan Harrison of Guil ford, CT, began an ambassador role at Yale New Haven Hos pital and is pursuing a master’s degree in social work.

2019 Julia Gallop of Winchester, MA, is an intake coordinator for the state of Massachusetts working in a benefits program for low-income individuals. She is earning a paralegal certificate and is planning to take the law school admissions test soon.

Samantha Maughan, MSN ’19, of Harrisville, NH, is a family nurse practitioner in rheumatology at the Cheshire Medical Center in Keene, NH.
ELI’S OWNER ENJOYS A CHALLENGE

Lessons on the ice lead to business success

BY ADAM DURSO
PHOTO AUTUMN DRISCOLL

The same focus and drive that helped Rick Ciardiello ‘87 shine on the Quinnipiac men’s ice hockey team fueled his rise as an entrepreneur and owner of one of the most visible restaurant brands in Connecticut.

In addition to running his Hamden-based insurance agency, Ciardiello co-owns Eli’s Restaurant Group, which includes Eli’s on Whitney and Eli’s Brick Oven Pizza in Hamden, Eli’s Branford, Eli’s Orange, Eli’s Tavern in Milford, Elicit Brewing Company in Manchester and Roost, a quick-service chicken restaurant in Hamden.

For Ciardiello, building multiple businesses from the ground up took late nights, early mornings and lots of creative time management. “Let’s just say I don’t have much time for golf,” quipped Ciardiello, a business major at Quinnipiac.

Ciardiello began his entrepreneurial journey in 1993 when he started the Ciardiello Insurance Agency with his brother, Peter. At the same time, the brothers founded Eli’s Restaurant Group and opened their flagship bar, Eli’s on Whitney, in 1994.

Ciardiello knew how difficult it would be to focus on two very different business ventures. For him, the risk was the reward. “My motivation in business has always been linked to how great the challenge is,” he said.

As the insurance agency thrived, Eli’s established itself as a favorite watering hole and restaurant among those in the Quinnipiac community. Ciardiello acknowledges the importance of his relationship with the university during those early years.

“I can still remember when they first hung the Eli’s banner during basketball games in Burt Kahn Court,” he said. Eli’s Restaurant Group recently signed a five-year corporate sponsorship agreement with Quinnipiac. Ciardiello calls the deal a natural progression of the relationship that began 25 years ago.

“We’ve always been a sponsor of Quinnipiac, and they’ve always been great to us,” he said.

Ciardiello continued to open new restaurants in Hamden and beyond. Over the years, they became favorite meeting spots for best friends and classmates, not to mention, prime first-date locations for countless couples and spouses.

“People like to share those memories with me all the time, and they really are great to listen to,” he said.

In opening new establishments, Ciardiello emphasizes patience, developing management talent from within and acquiring the right real estate at the right time.

“Businesses that grow too fast often fail,” he said. “Growth is essential, but it has to happen organically when the time and location are right.”

In 2019, Ciardiello added Elicit Brewing Company to the Eli’s Restaurant Group. The 20,000 square-foot beer garden, brewery and craft cocktail bar capitalizes on the millennial/Gen-Z craft beer boom while offering options for people who prefer spirits.

“It’s basically two venues in one building, and people are really digging it,” he said.

Away from work, Ciardiello prefers to spend as much time as he can with his wife, Lyssette, and their three children, Victoria, Gabriella and Nicholas. He credits his family, particularly his father, Saverio, for helping him to develop his character and work ethic. He hopes to pass on both traits to his children.

“I won’t spoil them,” Ciardiello said. “Everyone, my kids included, has to understand what it takes to be successful.”

Hockey taught Ciardiello about family, business and life. The former right wing was enshrined in the Quinnipiac University Athletics Hall of Fame in 2003.

“I learned back then that when you work harder than the guy next to you and make yourself indispensable, it gets noticed,” he said.

Ciardiello still manages to fit hockey into his busy schedule. He coaches in an elite youth league and attends as many Quinnipiac home games as he can. He also serves as a mentor for several current Bobcats.

“I tell them all the time that you can’t put your initial sight on a dollar amount,” Ciardiello said. “If you attack life head on and work hard, then the financial stuff, respect and titles will come later.”

What challenge does Ciardiello plan on attacking next? For now, he’s focused on expanding the Elicit brand and possibly opening a second location, although he hasn’t ruled anything out.

“I never know what’s next or from which direction an opportunity will come,” Ciardiello said. “And that’s the way I like it.”
GETTING THE WORD OUT

Public relations professional helps clients pursuing noble purposes

BY OLIVIA ABEL
PHOTO AUTUMN DRISCOLL

WHEN MERCY QUAYE ‘13, MS ‘18, arrived at Quinnipiac to major in journalism, she had one goal: to become a foreign correspondent. “I wanted to be in Iraq. I wanted to get out of New Haven and go where the action was,” she says.

After taking a few classes, however, Quaye realized that she loved local reporting. After a stint as a newspaper reporter, she developed a growing interest in social justice. She decided to return to QU for a master’s degree in public relations and ultimately found her calling in a career that’s focused on doing good, right in her own backyard.

Quaye is the founder and principal consultant for The Narrative Project, a public relations and communications firm that caters to local mission-driven organizations. Since launching in May 2019, Quaye, who refers to herself as a ‘blacktivist’ in her Twitter profile, has quickly secured several clients including Connecticut Voices for Children, Connecticut Juvenile Justice Alliance and ConnCAT, which works to help at-risk urban youth find viable career paths. She employs three people (one full time and two part time).

“When you combine familiarity with your passion, it becomes easy to find clients,” she says.

Quaye grew up in New Haven’s West River neighborhood with her mom, twin sister and a brother. At 5 years old, she was given an old-fashioned tape recorder that instantly sparked an interest in interviewing. (Her subjects? Her large extended family that lived next door.) “I am privileged in the sole way that I knew what I wanted to be when I grew up at a very young age,” she says.

In high school—Quaye attended New Haven public schools—she began listening to NPR and editing a student magazine; in her senior year, she began writing for the New Haven Independent. But it wasn’t until she arrived at QU that she cemented her drive to be a journalist. “Every class at QU took me from theory to application,” she says. “I had to become a better writer every single day; that was the only option I had.”

Upon graduating from QU, Quaye’s first job was to cover the city of Torrington for Hearst Connecticut Media. She enjoyed the work, but two years later decided to make a switch. The Black Lives Matter movement was gaining momentum, and she found herself frequently organizing community discussions about race and getting more involved in local social issues.

“As a reporter, I was more of a bystander, and I realized that I wanted to find solutions to issues that I cared about,” she says. While working full time in a series of jobs in the communications sector—at age 25 she snagged the role of director of communications for the New Haven Public Schools—she returned to Quinnipiac for a master’s degree in public relations. In between jobs she consulted for nonprofits. She had just started a job at Yale in 2018 when, within a few months, more than five organizations reached out to ask her to take them on as clients. “I thought, this is a sign, and it’s what I want to be doing anyway,” she says.

Quaye believes there is a strong need for The Narrative Project in New Haven. “We’re working with young, mission-driven nonprofits to help them get the word out so they can achieve their goals,” she says. “I’m building a team of strategists—people who can tell these organizations: ‘These are the issues in front of you, and this is how we are going to address them.’” She commented that a black-owned communications firm in Connecticut is a rarity.

Some of her clients, or “project partners” as she calls them, find her through her weekly column, "Subtext," which runs in Hearst daily newspapers. In her columns, she shares her perspectives on such subjects as police shootings, vaccines, and how COVID-19 will affect the disenfranchised. “I cover common topics from a lesser-examined lens,” she says.

Quaye this year was recognized as one of the “40 Under 40” up-and-comers by Connecticur Magazine. She credits two QU professors with her writing and communications success: Professor Margarita Diaz, chair of the journalism program, who taught her to become an interesting writer, and associate professor Rich Hanley, who encouraged her to think about a story from a different angle. “My newspaper column right now is heavily influenced by the lessons I learned in his class,” she says.

Another influential faculty member was Antoaneta Vanc, associate professor of strategic communication. She served as Quaye’s master’s thesis adviser and was “an overall cheerleader for me and my commitment to mission-driven public relations work—a niche field that I was able to hone while working with her,” she said.

When she’s not working, Quaye and her engineer husband, Jesse Snyder, enjoy hiking, rock climbing and running with their 3-year-old rescue dog. As for those dreams of living abroad?

“Nah, I have so much passion for what I’m doing; it’s so easy to get up and go to work every day,” she says. “We’re here to stay.”
Every day at Quinnipiac University, student experiences are bolstered by the generosity of our donors. Some of those supporters choose to make a lasting impact by arranging a gift through their will, life insurance or retirement assets.

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To learn more, please contact Eve Forbes, director of gift planning, at eve.forbes@qu.edu or 203-582-3995. To request a planning guide, please visit alumni.qu.edu/yourlegacy
WEDDINGS
AND BIRTHS

4. Brooks Tenenhaus, born Feb. 18, 2019, son of Brian Tenenhaus ’03, MPT ’05, and his wife, Lauren.
10. Aria Chebbani, born Feb. 21, 2020, to Allison (Kemon) Chebbani ’09 and her husband, Adham.
11. Caroline Grace Smith, born in March 2019, daughter of Cameron Smith ’03 and his wife, Colleen.
12. Katherine Augustine, born Dec. 11, 2019, daughter of Bernard Augustine ’03 and Kelly (Laline) Augustine ’03, MAT ’05.
15. Mark Turczak ’12, MHS ’14, and Alison Goldberg.
17. Peri Stevens ’10 and Ryan Stevens ’10, MS ’14, June 2, 2018.
20. Gabriella Chimento, born Nov. 29, 2019, daughter of Christine (Polidoro) Chimento ’03, MPT ’05, and her husband, Steven.
LAW SCHOOL CLASS NOTES

1982

STEPHEN GOLDNER of West Bloomfield, MI, is CEO and chairman of the board of Pure Green Pharmaceuticals. The company is taking its THC/CBD tablets for pain and anxiety relief through the FDA approval process.

1988

DONNA (GANIS) GENOVESE of Pleasantville, NY, has been named one of the "Best Lawyers in America" by Super Lawyers for the past 10 years. She is a partner at Goldschmidt & Genovese, where her practice areas include matrimonial, family law, collaborative law and mediation.

1989

CATHLEEN SIMPSON of Bridgeport, CT, is the director of labor relations for New Haven Mayor Justin Elicker. She brings 20-plus years of experience to the position as a labor and employment relations specialist.

1992

RICHARD COLANGELO of Easton, CT, recently was appointed chief state's attorney for Connecticut by the Criminal Justice Commission. He previously served as the state's attorney for the Stamford/Norwalk judicial district.

ANTHONY SLIMOWICZ of Bernardsville, NJ, recently spoke at the Dennis F. McClaughlin Advanced Trial Advocacy Workshop at the Seton Hall University School of Law. He is COO and president of Crumm & Forster Surety, Credit and Program Solutions.

1995

MARY-JANE FOSTER of Hartford recently celebrated three years as president and CEO of Interval House, Connecticut's largest domestic violence agency.

1996

ANTHONY MINCHELLA of Middlebury, CT, was named a founding member of Minchella Law and also serves as vice president of the Raymond E. Baldwin Inn of Court.

RAY PINEAULT of Glastonbury, CT, has been named regional president of Mohagen Gaming & Entertainment. He oversees operations at Mohagen Sun in Connecticut, Mohagen Sun Pocono in Pennsylvania and Paragon Casino Resort in Louisiana.

1999

WENDY PRINCE of Pelham Manor, NY, has been named director of the Greenwich/Stamford chapter of the National Association of Divorce Professionals. She is the principal and founding member of the Prince Law Group in Stamford, CT.

KATHLEEN SIGURDSON of Waschke Valley, NV, is an attorney working in Reno, NV. She is running for district court there. Kathleen's practice areas include civil litigation, personal injury and workers’ compensation.

1999

REBECCA IANNANTI of Bethany, CT, recently was promoted to partner at Day Pitney, a firm with more than 300 attorneys across five states and the District of Columbia.

2001

ROBERT KOOSA of Bourne, MA, has joined Chartwell Law as a partner in its Boston office. His practice areas include unfair trade practices, motor vehicle accidents, discrimination/violation of fair employment practices, contract disputes and personal injury claims.

2003

MICHELLE ESPEY of Smithtown, NY, has joined Farrell Fritz as a tax partner. She counsels clients on all stages of federal, state and city tax disputes. She also advises not-for-profits on matters related to tax-exempt status.

2004

KEITH MURRAY of Ansonia, CT, recently marked the 10th anniversary of his solo practice and became an adjunct professor of forensic science at Southern Connecticut State University.

2005

JOSEPH ARCATA of West Hartford, CT, has been named a partner at BK3. He leads BK3 Consulting, a division that helps businesses with tax, accounting, marketing, public relations and graphic design.

2006

CRAIG HERSKOWITZ of New York, NY, works in the administration of New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo. He is the assistant counsel to the governor for taxation and financial services.

2007

ROBERT HEINIMANN JR. of Hamden has been promoted to counsel at Murtha Cullina, in the firm's trusts and estates department.

ADAM RATTNER of White Plains, NY, married Esther Gibofsky on Feb. 29, 2020, in New York City. He is the general counsel at MonitorMe, a medical device startup in Poughkeepsie, NY.

2008

LISA STARON of Wethersfield, CT, has been promoted to partner at Murtha Cullina, in the firm's trusts and estates department. Her practice areas include estate, tax and business succession planning, and trust and estate administration.

2009

GARY BIESADECKI of Simsbury, CT, recently was promoted to deputy director of human resource management for the Connecticut Judicial Branch. His practice area is employment law.

2010

GREGORY MUCILLI of Guilford, CT, was elected a partner of Shipman & Goodwin in January. His practice areas include real estate and land use.

2013

LAUREN Enea of Somers, NY, recently was honored at Westfair Communications’ 2019 Millemial Awards in White Plains, NY. She is an associate at Enea, Scanlan & Sirignano. Her primary practice areas are wills, trusts and estates; Medicaid and special needs planning; and probate/estate administration.

PARTHIBAN MATHAVAN of Cary, NC, recently was admitted to the North Carolina Bar. He is a patent attorney with NK Patent Law, an intellectual property and patent boutique law firm that serves startups, established companies and universities.

2014

LAUREN MACDONALD and JONATHAN JACOBSON of Stamford, CT, were married on Nov. 23, 2019, in Branford, CT. The bride is an attorney with Maya Murphy, PC. The groom is an associate with the Law Offices of David W. Rubin.

2015

JOHN-RAHPEL PICKARDO of Albany, NY, serves as legislative research counsel to the 16 members of the City of Albany Common Council. He is the primary legal adviser and bill drafter to the council’s membership and the city clerk’s office.

2017

NANCY VALENTINO of North Haven, CT, has joined Halloran Sage as an estate planning attorney. Her areas of practice include litigation and dispute resolution, medical malpractice and personal injury.

2019

JOHN O’HARA of Arlington, VA, is an associate with Alston & Bird in Washington, D.C. His practice areas include international trade, export controls, economic sanctions, litigation, and legislative and public policy.

2019

DAN CORICA of Shelton, CT, is an assistant clerk in the criminal court clerk’s office in the Waterbury Judicial District. As a law student, he served as a temporary assistant clerk in the New Haven judicial district and Superior Court in Derby.

IN MEMORIAM

2019

Robert Bassett, JD ’91
Gregory Doyle ’98, MBA ’07
Mary Ellen Durso, former law school associate dean and registrar
Carolyn (Simran) Fuchs ’68
Howard Gold ’71
Jeremy Hayden, JD ’05
Lester Mangolit ’46
Barbara Mazurek, MSN ’04
Florence (Ginsberg) Novak ’42
Matthew O’Gorman ’91
Anthony Onnenbo ’61
Peter Parodi ’69
Florence Schmitt ’45

2020

Richard Faccenda ’95
Katherine Harris, associate professor of physical therapy
Chad Hartline, Facilities
Scott Reath, JD ’93
Michael Sirica, JD ’85
Irving Trager, JD ’84
Rita (Nurenberg) Wellman ’58
THE ACCIDENTAL LAWYER

Bogan guides myriad public utility clients through regulatory mazes

BY OLIVIA ABEL
PHOTO AUTUMN DRISCOLL

At one time, David Bogan, JD ’86, thought he’d become an actor, and even pursued that career in New York City for a time. Instead, through fate and what he calls divine intervention, he is respected as one of Connecticut’s leading public utility lawyers.

In the past 30 years, Bogan has worked with all of the state’s public utilities, including electric, gas and water, but it is perhaps in the telecommunications sector that he has made his biggest mark. Bogan was a major player in creating and implementing the rules when the state deregulated the telecommunications industry in 1994—two years before the federal government did the same. This handed him his first big client.

“From 1988 to 2011, I represented what is now Verizon Wireless,” he says. “I was witness to the birth and growth of the entire wireless industry.”

Today, Bogan is a partner at Locke Lord, an international law firm with more than 20 offices worldwide. “Basically, I am a regulatory policy litigator. A lot of what I do is half litigation, half business consulting,” he says, noting that companies hire him to guide them through the minefield of state and federal regulations.

“These companies have lobbyists who draft legislation, but then I help them revise and rework it,” he says. Bogan is frequently called as an expert to testify before legislative committees on a wide range of utility-related issues. Recently he appeared on behalf of CTIA, the wireless trade association, while helping to set up the rules for small cell 5G deployment in Connecticut, the future standard for internet connectivity.

Growing up in a Chicago suburb, Bogan frequently was told he’d make a good lawyer. “I liked oral presentation,” he says, but he ultimately gravitated toward the performing arts. As a 5-year-old, he appeared in an ad for Butterball Swift’s Premium Turkey.

After high school, he spent some time on the college circuit, starting at the University of Wisconsin and transferring to NYU. He dropped out to work in theater in New York City, but he grew tired of what he termed “the poverty-stricken life.” He enrolled at the University of Bridgeport, completed a bachelor’s degree in finance and banking, and moved on to law school.

After short stints at two state law firms, Bogan took a job as a prosecutor at the state attorney’s office. During his first six months and five trials, he became hooked on the adrenaline rush from getting a verdict.

“I loved it; I thought this was what I wanted to do,” he says. Meanwhile a more established lawyer who represented most of the local cable companies kept offering him a job. “He called me month after month after month,” says Bogan. “Finally he made me an offer that I couldn’t refuse.”

For two years, Bogan learned the tricks of the trade with this lawyer. He then spent 22 years at Robinson & Cole, where he became a partner, before leaving in 2012 for his current position. At Robinson & Cole, he established the company’s first Utilities Practice Group and went on to represent dozens of companies, including the nation’s largest cable and wireless firms.

Bogan was hired in 1999 to represent Dominion Resources, a Virginia company, when it bought the Millstone Power Station in Waterford for almost $1.3 billion. The nuclear power plant supplies 25 percent of all the energy in the Northeast. Bogan still has that account and, in 2019, helped orchestrate a deal that kept the power station open for another 10 years.

“The loss of Millstone would have been catastrophic for our state and our region,” Gov. Ned Lamont said in a statement announcing the agreement. Bogan also snagged Comcast as a client in 1996 and is still representing them today. “I’ve been incredibly fortunate,” he says.

These days Bogan bounces between Hartford (where he is officially based), Boston and his home on Cape Cod, which he shares with his wife, Heather Hunt, who is also an attorney. He has four adult children from his first marriage and three grandchildren. In November 2019, he was elected to a Town Council position in Barnstable on the Cape. “It’s a dizzying schedule sometimes, but I make it work,” he says.

When he’s not working, Bogan can be found in the kitchen. “I live to eat,” he says. “Icook every day; it’s how I relax.” He lists a long line of recent dinners, including steak and Osso Buco, but he’s particularly proud of his baby back ribs, which he smokes at home over two days. His ribs are so popular that he gives them away in the office at Christmastime.

Looking back at his career, Bogan feels he has come full circle. “Being an actor actually served me well. I use those skills as an attorney and as a councilman. ‘It’s all come together now.’"
Students Say ‘Cheers’ to New Pub & Grill

On the Rocks provides new gathering spot

BY ADAM DURSO
PHOTOS: AUTUMN DRISCOLL, RICHARD PETROSI N O AND CJ YOPP

IT WAS A CHILLY GAME DAY AFTERNOON, but things were heating up inside On the Rocks, Quinnipiac’s newly opened pub & grill. Scores of students had come to watch the highly anticipated men’s ice hockey game Feb. 29 between the Bobcats and ECAC archival Yale on one of the venue’s big-screen TVs.

Austin Calvo ’20, president of the Student Government Association, was one of the first to arrive. As the pub filled to capacity with students age 21 and over, he knew he was part of something special. Each goal brought louder cheers as trays of sliders, nachos and other classic pub fare made the rounds. The students tipped back beer, wine and ciders and shared a collective roar as they watched their Bobcats blank the Bulldogs 5-0 across 16 screens. “The energy and enthusiasm inside was just amazing,” said Calvo. “It was an experience I’ll never forget.”

Speaking at the pub’s ribbon-cutting ceremony the day before, Quinnipiac President Judy Olian called it a symbol of the partnership between the current administration and the student body, and an investment in building a stronger and more connected campus community. “On the Rocks is exactly what we’d hoped for,” said Olian at the ceremony attended by faculty, staff, students and a few alumni. “It shows the very important role that student engagement plays as we continue to design the University of the Future.”

Indeed, student input shaped nearly every aspect of the 2,000-square-foot space, from its pool and shuffleboard tables right down to its name. It is the culmination of three years of advocacy, collaboration and persistence started by Allison Kuhn ‘19, Current Student Government President Austin Calvo ’20, left, QU President Judy Olian and Allison Kuhn ’19, who led the initiative for the pub. They took extensive notes on how the spaces were used to foster a sense of community, from layout to special events, and came to a single conclusion.

“We knew that Quinnipiac could do this better,” she said. Kuhn and her peers drafted a 25-page proposal they presented in 2018 to representatives from several offices including Public Safety, Campus Life and Facilities. The project seemed stalled until a pivotal meeting between Kuhn and Monique Drucker, vice president and dean of students.

“I just told Monique that I wanted a pub,” Kuhn recalled. Drucker supported the idea but asked for tangible proof that a pub was something the entire Quinnipiac student body would get behind. This, Drucker said, would require more than a simple online student survey.

In October of 2018, Kuhn and the SGA partnered with representatives from the Office of Student Affairs to organize Friday senior pub nights inside the Rocky Top Student Center. One of the main planners was Matthew Kurz, assistant dean of student affairs. Kurz had anticipated a positive turnout, but he didn’t expect lines to stretch out the door.

“We were at capacity each night,” he said. “The pub nights were so popular that we had to turn students away.” It was all the proof that Kuhn and the SGA needed. Kurz helped them refine their earlier proposal, which made it to Olian’s desk in the spring of 2019. A day before her graduation, Kuhn received word that her dream of a campus pub would become a reality.

While Kuhn never had the chance to enjoy On the Rocks as a student, she plans to take advantage of it during alumni gatherings and events. “Alumni want a way to stay connected to the university,” she said. “Now we have a great place to do so.”

Although certain pub events require that attendees be of legal drinking age, others will be open to everyone. Calvo called what his predecessors accomplished "truly monumental" and expressed gratitude for the university administration’s support of student-led initiatives.

A comedy night took place at On the Rocks before the university closed for the semester. When the pub reopens, there will be trivia nights, more big games, and new reasons to cheer, laugh and share camaraderie. And there will be plenty to catch up on.

1. Shawn Urban ’20 plays a game of pool during the opening celebration for the university’s new pub and grill, On the Rocks, in the Rocky Top Student Center, York Hill Campus.

2. Students chose the name for the venue, which will sell beer, wine, ciders and a variety of pub foods. It opened with a ribbon-cutting party on Feb. 28 attended by students, faculty, staff and alumni.

3. Boomer hung with students Feb. 29 when those 21 and up gathered to cheer on the men’s ice hockey team as it bested the Yale Bulldogs 5-0. They enjoyed the game broadcast on the 16 TVs located within.

4. Among the alumni who came back to check out the new pub & grill at the dedication were, from left: Matt Corso ’19; Allison Kuhn ’19, vice president of the Class of 2019; Joe Iasso ’19; and Antoine Campbell ’19.

5. Shuffleboard and pool tables provide an outlet for some friendly competition.

6. Sliders, chicken wings and fries were in plentiful supply as these friends toasted a victorious night for Bobcat Nation. From left, Caitlin Smith ’20, Kristina Duran ’20, Madeline Chiapperino ’20 and Jessica Ruderman, MS ’20.
GOOD TIMES