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October 5, 2023

# THE SPECTATOR

The Official Student Run Newspaper at Seattle University Since 1933

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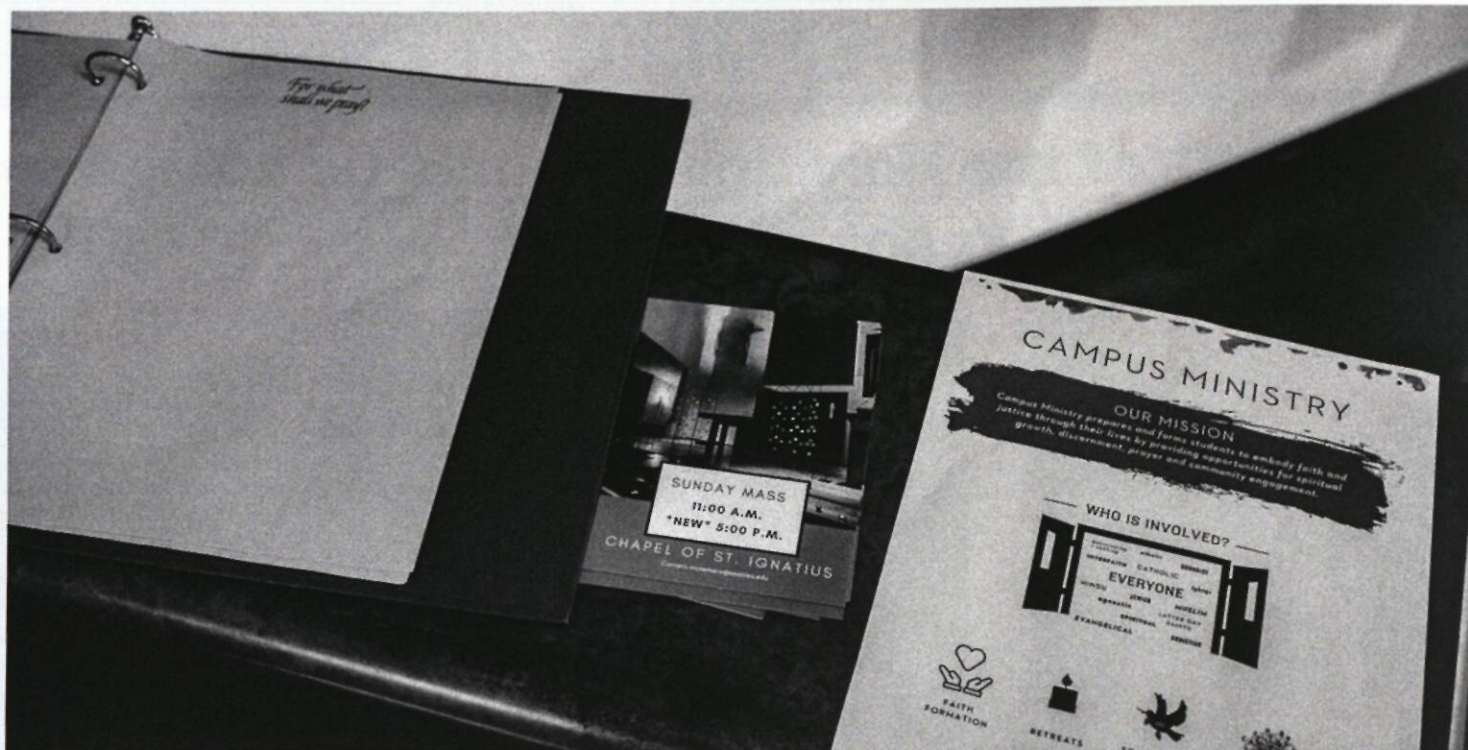
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JORDIE SIMPSON THE SPECTATOR

Conception, then named St. Francis Hall. There was no Jesuit university in Seattle to speak of at the time, so, in many ways, the relationship between the institutions precedes Seattle University itself.

The Mass of the Holy Spirit hosts volunteers from Campus Ministry at all levels of the Mass in order to help things run smoothly.

Azul Davila, third-year civil engineering student with a theology minor, was a gift bearer during the Liturgy of the Eucharist. It was a first-time experience for her as a recent convert to Catholicism, and she described it as a profoundly powerful experience to her.

Davila believes that spaces being religious or queer are not mutually exclusive, and that both communities can find homes with one another. In her experience, Campus Ministry also elevates different cultural and religious practices whilst protecting queer people.

believes that in action we need to be a lot less explicitly Catholic in order to not scare people away... but that's a logistical disagreement about the best way to transition into being an explicitly Catholic space, coming from a radically justice-oriented perspective that uses Catholic language," Davila said.

Alondra Martinez-Villalobos, second-year criminal justice student specializing in forensic science, became involved with Campus Ministry last year. This year marks her first attendance of the Mass of the Holy Spirit, where she volunteered as a Eucharist minister.

"As a first-time experience, I think it was a nice, welcoming, warm place, Martinez-Villalobos said. "It was beautiful."

Overall, the Mass of the Holy Spirit was an event to celebrate the Holy Spirit, and the many faith traditions that make up the modern Catholic Church, and to represent the relationship between Seattle University and Immaculate Conception.

“

Campus Ministry, in my opinion, is one of the most radically accepting and action-oriented places on creating broader acceptance of queer issues," Davila said.

President Peñalver delivered a statement at the Mass of the Holy Spirit reflecting similar sentiments in a broader sense. He expressed that the Catholic Church is an institution that has the power to build community in the way that many secular organizing efforts cannot.

"I appreciate Peñalver's willingness to call that out and to say that out loud, but I wish that we did more as an institution to enact it... he



# How the Threat of AI Coincided with the Writers' Strike

**Hannah Mwangi**  
Volunteer Reporter

The Writers Guild of America (WGA) and the American Federation of Television and Radio Artists (SAG-AFTRA) pronounced their alliance against Motion Picture and television producers in a strike following the expiration of the WGA contract. On the technological frontier and at the heart of these negotiations, artificial intelligence (AI) created an ill static between the guild, the studio, and the writers.

Many of the proposals by the writers guild—for fair pay, for “sustainable careers,” for finer provisions—were overlooked. With a 97.85 percent strike authorization from the guild members in support of this agenda, WGA declared their walk to the picket line May 1.

After 148 days of persistent protesting, 148 days of uncompensated unemployment and 148 days of paused or canceled productions, the writers' strike effectively ended the morning of Sept. 27 as a tentative deal was reached.

Dale Nash, a senior administrative assistant in the computer science department at Seattle University, weighed in on how AI may be included in the credits we see on our screens.

“I suspect AI can be used very effectively by producers to feed it past scripts and say ‘I want a scene like this,’ and I think it’s very able and ready to do that,” Nash said.

In conversation with Professors Shiny Abraham (SA) and Mehmet Vurkaç (MV) of engineering at Seattle University, on the fast growth of AI—and the pitfalls of such expedited development.

**MV:** “I studied machine learning for my Ph.D., but I had to do it just before the Deep Learning Revolution... This huge change occurred and right after I was done, everything that I learned was valid but everything I worked on wasn’t.”

**HM:** “So, already, you’ve seen the advancements of technology and how quickly it’s adapting to your workplaces.”



NATALIE SCHORR THE SPECTATOR

**MV:** “It’s very fast. And it only takes small but great ideas for things to move. What’s behind all the GPT, large language models, a lot of the current generative AI is a thing called the attention mechanism and it mimics how our eyes and ears, and so on, how they have selective attention. So, the neuro net is trained to learn how to pay better attention to certain things and lesser attention to certain things. It was that idea that made us go from the most recent sets of deep learning, to this new place... In the case of actors who are being told you’re going to get one day’s pay to be scanned in 3D and we’re going to use your likeness forever, that’s not a great use of AI. When people are using something that takes away from the livelihood of others, I hope we don’t support that.”

**SA:** “Yes, I agree with Professor Vurkaç. I think that anytime it comes to the question of the survival of workers and the creation of sustainable careers, I think the preference should be for human life rather than a money-making business... The strike that’s going on right now has less of an impact than when the writers had with the strike in 2007 because the last time there was a strike there was less content for people to view, but, right now, we have streaming services with so much content that people not closely

associated do not feel an impact.”

**HM:** “That’s a really great point. We can’t feel the detriments of the strike just because of how much content is getting thrown at us every day with streaming services like Netflix and Apple. Do you think this is a problem, more so, for studios and the writers guild to be exempt from the public?”

**SA:** “I hope not. I hope there’s more awareness of what’s going on. If you asked me this question a few months back, before the strike, I would say that I wouldn’t think that AI models can create content that could mimic human emotion. But then, I read this article on how scientists at MIT media labs have taught a machine how to manipulate human emotion and that’s a technology they feel could create more content for movies and television, so the concern is definitely valid. This could go anywhere, and I’d rather it go in the favor of people that consider this their career.”

AI is becoming incredibly capable of replicating convincing material, skilled in producing digital doubles without the need of hire or the need of a human body. Depriving the writer of his writing, the actor of his acting. It’s an unsettling inevitability seen already through deepfakes, motion capture, voice generators and GPT.



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# After the Show: Day In Day Out

**Sean Alexander**

*Director of Photography*

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I could talk about a lot of things when it comes to the Day In Day Out music festival. I could talk about the music, the venue, the crowds... however, I am going to start by talking about my chipped tooth.

Standing three rows back from the stage in the middle of the crowd, all of us enthralled in Leon Bridges' music, a man who had more than a few inches on most of the people in the crowd was pushing himself, bumping his way to the front with a beer in each hand. I was not paying attention and before I knew it his elbow connected with my mouth. That's when I felt the little piece of tooth dislodge. I shrugged and went back to listening to the music.

Why mention this? Well, this moment, I feel, sums up my view of the event. The event, which had around 8,000 people in attendance over the weekend, was just as strong a hit with the Seattle music scene as it was with my mouth, and although I enjoyed myself, it wasn't perfect. The layout of the two crowd areas, drinking and non-drinking, left the area difficult to navigate and even prompted some discourse from artists about the inability to get to people who needed help in a timely manner. So, like chipping a tooth, the show was memorable, a little rough around the edges, but still left me with a feeling of excitement.

Spending the weekend watching the 14 acts that were performed, I would say there was one that stood out to me, and it wasn't any of the artists on the poster. It was Immanuel Wilkins, the saxophonist who played during Leon Bridges' set. His mastery was clear and added new and enjoyable flair to Leon's music, including an excellent saxophone version of Leon Bridges and Odesza's "Across the Room" that I wish they would release a version of because I would like to hear it again.

Would I recommend Day In Day Out? Yes, because at the end of the day, the music was so wonderful, the chipped tooth was worth it.

Are you or someone you know a musician or involved in music? Do you like to talk about your music? Well email [sean@su-spectator.com](mailto:sean@su-spectator.com) to potentially be featured in After the Show.



SEAN ALEXANDER THE SPECTATOR



# The Cost of Living Places Financial Burden on Seattle Students

Amelia Carey  
Volunteer Reporter

For many Americans, eating ramen and couch-hopping is synonymous with college and is a socially acceptable rite of passage. The struggle to afford basic needs, however, is often an overlooked factor in the traditional college experience.

College students in Washington state are experiencing a large amount of food and/or housing insecurity; reportedly 49.4%. In the same 2022 study, it was found that 11.3% of college students had experienced homelessness that year.

For Third-year Biology Major Mari Reyes, commuting to Seattle University means driving to the Bremerton ferry terminal, taking the Bremerton-Seattle ferry, and then hopping on the King County Metro. This commute usually takes them around two hours each way. Mari lives outside of Seattle for multiple reasons, including a fondness for Kitsap County and being close to family, but rent is one of the factors they have to consider.

"It isn't easy, but it's accessible," Reyes said on the topic of their commute. "As far as I can tell, it's definitely a lot cheaper than having to live on the Seattle side of the water."

According to a Zillow report updated Sept. 27, the median rent price in Washington is \$2,100 across all property types, which is down \$250 since October of last year. The median rent price is \$1,700 per month. Additionally, the United States Census Bureau found that the median Seattle household income in 2022 was \$115,000. Although 103,528 households made at least \$200,000 in 2022, 86,640 households—the second-largest group—made less than \$50,000 annually.

In a data map from the National Low Income Housing Coalition shared by Professor Sara Rankin, Washington was labeled as the fifth-most expensive state for a 'modest' apartment.

**Renters would have to work 92 hours per week at state minimum wage to afford a two-bedroom apartment.**

Fifth-year doctoral student at the University of Washington Heather Harrington wrote in a statement to The Spectator, "I make about 35k a year, which is about 3k a month. I could get a studio for \$1,400/month [plus] utilities, but that would be 47% of my monthly income just on rent and would make me cost burdened, according to the federal government."

King County government defines cost burdened people as those who spend over 30% of their income on housing, which can

be caused by the combined forces of low wages and a lack of affordable housing. While there are certain efforts to provide affordable housing, many programs such as the Seattle Housing Authority (SHA) restrict full-time students from being eligible.

Susanna Linse, communications manager at SHA, wrote to The Spectator that making affordable housing available to students is a complicated subject. She explained that SHA follows the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's rules, "including those that may impose student restrictions."

Federal rules state that "No section 8 assistance shall be provided to any individual who: Is enrolled as a student at an institution of higher education; Is under the age of 24[...]" under the Multifamily Housing project-based Section 8 Program.

"This goes back to Low-Income Tax Credit, which was part of the 1986 Tax Reform Law,







that specifically precluded some college students from living in low-income units,” wrote Linse.

HUD tries to account for student housing at the high school level and below, but seems to stop at the college level.

**“There is very little national data concerning student housing security, despite its potentially enormous impact on student success,” reads the HUD website.**

Based on her experiences, class of 2023 Seattle U alumna Emma Ferguson had some wisdom and feedback to share on the matter of student housing.

After living at home her first two years due to the pandemic, Ferguson rented an off-campus, one-bedroom apartment with a roommate for her last two years of undergraduate schooling.

Ferguson estimates that their combined rent for this apartment was around \$1,800 per month. However, with the Seattle Multifamily Property Tax Exemption (MFTE), they were able to save a couple hundred a month on rent and alongside utilities, thousands of dollars in total.

Ferguson recommends that students take advantage of MFTE.

“...I think [state and city resources are] super underutilized,” Ferguson said.

She attributes this lack of utilization to the amount of paperwork that is required to apply for MFTE.

When landlords choose to participate in MFTE, they agree that 20-30% of units in their building are “income and rent restricted.” Different units require that you pay different percentages of your Area Median Income (AMI). For example, “a unit with an 80% AMI restriction is only available to a household with a total annual gross income at or below 80% of the HUD Seattle-Bellevue Area Median Income.”

However, as Housing Justice Project Senior Managing Attorney Edmund Witter, wrote to *The Spectator*, “Area Median Income has grown to \$146,500 in 2023; it was \$113,500 just three years ago in 2020,” he explained. “That’s particularly bad for persons on fixed income... as their incomes are not increasing with wage increases.”

It’s bad news for students too.

Witter explained that the Low Income Housing Tax Credit—created under the 1986 Tax Reform Law—“relies on Area Median Income to calculate rent for its tenants” which makes rent less affordable for tenants.

He recommends that long-term, Seattle needs to “plan for large-scale housing development, particularly around affordable housing” and “reduce rent increases for those hardest hit by capping rent and fee increases.”

Being a college student is not easy for most people. Reyes and Ferguson shared a similar

sentiment about acknowledging the difficulty of accommodating basic needs and trying to accept this reality.

“It’s definitely hard, but I have to act within my means,” Reyes said about their lengthy commute to college.

On a similar note, Ferguson discussed that although she never had to experience homelessness while in college, she thinks that many people don’t realize the ways that homelessness and financial insecurity can present itself in students.

“[This can present itself through] couch-hopping, or relying on friends for basic needs that you can’t afford because you are paying for your rent,” Ferguson said.

Sometimes college students have no choice but to move back in with parents and other family. To some people this is fine, but for others, it’s not an ideal situation. And some others don’t have the option to rely on others who may be in the same boat.

Class of 2020 alumna Natalie Ramos wrote, “My experience with cost of living hasn’t changed much since leaving Seattle since the Bay Area is also very expensive... however I do have more family around here that I know can support me with housing if it came down to that.”

Seattle U acknowledges and tries to ease this hardship by providing resources like the free Food Pantry, SNAP and emergency financial assistance for “non-tuition related financial emergencies.”

“I really wish the school was providing more resources, or had provided more resources while I was in school, for students that need help with things like getting food, getting water, making sure they’re staying safe, electronics, and stuff like that,” Ferguson said.

There is no simple solution to the lack of affordable housing in Seattle. More research is needed on the impact of college students who don’t get access to basic needs, although we can guess these results. More funding is needed to accommodate the housing of college students in general, especially those who can’t afford it.

Ferguson recommends that any struggling Seattle U students “rely on your friends for help in crowdsourcing these kinds of things because a lot of people might know tips or tricks... relying on your community in that way and talking to other students about it can help a lot.”

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PHOTOS BY PEIRAN LIU



# Seattle U Women's Soccer Hungry for More Wins

**Marisa Sexsmith**  
Volunteer Reporter



ADELINE ONG THE SPECTATOR

Kait Raffensperger, defender.

Things are looking up for Seattle University Women's Soccer after their 2-0 win against University of Texas Rio Grande Valley (UTRGV) Sept. 28. After securing a shutout and out-shooting their opponent 20-6, they are hoping to turn around their season after a challenging 4-8-1 (win-loss-draw) start.

Graduate Student defender Kacey LaBoda shared how important this win was to the team.

"I think that it's really exciting to have two goals and more than triple their shots," LaBoda said. "It's really good to know that it was a goal of ours to really hit the target and follow through with that."

Head Coach Julie Woodward explained how this season's record did not reflect on their play, and how important it is for the team to believe in themselves and each other.

"A lot of games we didn't get the result we wanted, but the process and our play was actually really great," Woodward said. "I think the hardest part was trying to get the team to believe in that, and they did."

Although a tough start might leave many teams discouraged, Junior defender Kait Raffensperger and the Redhawks are feeling confident in their ability to take on the conference season.

"We were challenged in preseason and that really made us come together as a team," Raffensperger said. "We were challenged at

the start of our conference season... it's really brought us together and made us work as a team and now we are ready for the rest of this conference."

Rather than being frustrated with their pre-conference season score lines, the Redhawks focused on what they could control: their connection on the field.

"This team mentality that is slowly built... isn't built in a week of preseason, it's built throughout a few games," LaBoda said. "I think that if we continue to stay level-headed, then we will be able to produce more and more wins."

Part of the fresh feeling the team has this year came from new faces. Goalkeeper Cassidy Kirgan, midfielder Katie Pilburn and defender Emma de la Cruz, all freshmen, have been consistent starters and inspired a new confidence in the team according to Raffensperger.

"I think they have really meshed into our program perfectly, Kass has been a huge leader, even though she is a freshman, she has a huge presence and a huge voice in the back and really gives us a sense of relief in the backline," Raffensperger said. "Katie in the midfield really brings energy, Emma brings energy up top, we really have a lot of people who have come in and worked hard and given us a lot of good minutes."

But more than just the desire to win moti-

vates Seattle U Women's Soccer.

"We want this school to be known as a soccer school. We are really proud of that, we are proud of the history our team has and we are very proud to represent our school," Raffensperger said.

They plan on doing this by making it to the Western Athletic Conference (WAC) Championship and securing a postseason title—an automatic NCAA Tournament qualifier.

It is clear that this team has a deep hunger to show who they are and the threat they pose to opposition. The upcoming games will be important to the Redhawks' WAC success and are sure to be entertaining.

But no one puts more pressure on this team than themselves. As Woodward explained for them, "pressure is a privilege," and one they are not willing to take for granted. The Redhawks are determined to uphold a winning culture and bring pride to not only their program, but to the school as a whole.

With five conference games left, the Redhawks will continue their hunt for glory with upcoming games Oct. 5 at Abilene Christian and Oct. 8 at Tarleton. Victories in both games will be crucial to their conference success. Their last two regular conference games will be played at Championship Field Oct. 19 against Southern Utah and Oct. 22 against Utah Tech.



# UREC Fall Update

**George Burquest**  
Staff Reporter



The start to a new school year at Seattle University means that University Recreation, better known across campus as UREC, is set to have its facilities full of new and familiar faces.

UREC kicked off the year with "Night at UREC" Sept. 19, a part of Welcome Week, designed for introducing new and continuing students to the wide variety of resources UREC has to offer. Whether it be weight-lifting, group fitness classes, outdoor excursions, intramural sports or ESports, UREC works to provide recreational options for the unique interests of everyone at Seattle U.

Assistant Director of UREC Sara Janosik focuses on operations and engagement, and shared a message to anyone who may not feel confident going to the gym.

"We really want people to feel comfortable and safe coming into our building, and know that while we have all of the traditional gym equipment, there is exercise and movement in anything you want to do," Janosik said. "If lifting weights isn't your thing, come try pilates, try one of the climbing van trips, move your body in whatever way you want, and we are here to support that."

One of the new programs on offer this year is the free Personalized Fitness Orientation Program.

"If you're new to exercise, or just new to the facility, it is a great entry point," Janosik said. "You will work with someone one-on-one, they will show you how to use all the pieces of equipment, write out goals and show you how to get started."

These sessions will be led by personal trainers like Chase Braunel, a third-year strategic communications major, who works on the operations team and runs group fitness classes at UREC. Braunel noted the high level of demand UREC is facing.

"In terms of signing up for personal training, we actually have a waitlist at the moment, even with a good amount of personal trainers on staff," Braunel said.

Thankfully, where there is demand there is also flexibility in regards to many of the group fitness classes.

"Via Mindbody, you can sign up for group fitness classes, many of which are free," Janosik said. "Someone is always upstairs at the beginning of classes checking people in, meaning if things aren't booked up before the class starts, people are more than welcome to just walk up and join on the spot."

Looking at some of the more non-conventional opportunities UREC has to offer, UREC Outdoors provides both equipment rental, as well as "outdoor trips" which can range from trips to a city park, to a first aid course, or a multi-day ski-snowboard trip to Mount Baker.

Kevin Sutton, assistant director of UREC Outdoors, leads a team of 15 students who help plan and budget outdoor trips for even the most novice of students. He shared the emphasis that has been put on making the activities they host as accessible as possible.

"We are offering 31 programs and 80% of those are free. Anything with gear associated will have a fee that is prorated, like climbing for \$5," Sutton said. "Our trips are mostly built for a formative experience: Get your feet wet, learn the basics and hopefully feel better about going out on your own experiences."

The main caveat when it comes to these experiences is how quickly the slots fill up. According to Sutton, the majority of trips fill up within a few minutes of their registration opening—9 a.m. on the Friday three weeks before the trip is scheduled. Waitlists are available for every trip, and each is first come first serve.

Shifting focus to another program open to



**JORDIE SIMPSON** THE SPECTATOR

campus members of all skill levels, the intramural sports UREC has on offer: 5v5 outdoor soccer, 7v7 flag football, 4v4 indoor volleyball, 3v3 basketball, a doubles pickleball league, a Halloween costume dodgeball tournament, a table tennis tournament and trivia. For soccer, flag football and volleyball, there are beginner friendly novice leagues supplementing the main "competitive" division.

Furthermore, UREC also offers a women's flag football league aimed at making the sport less intimidating for female-identifying participants, giving them an opportunity to learn the game in a safe environment.

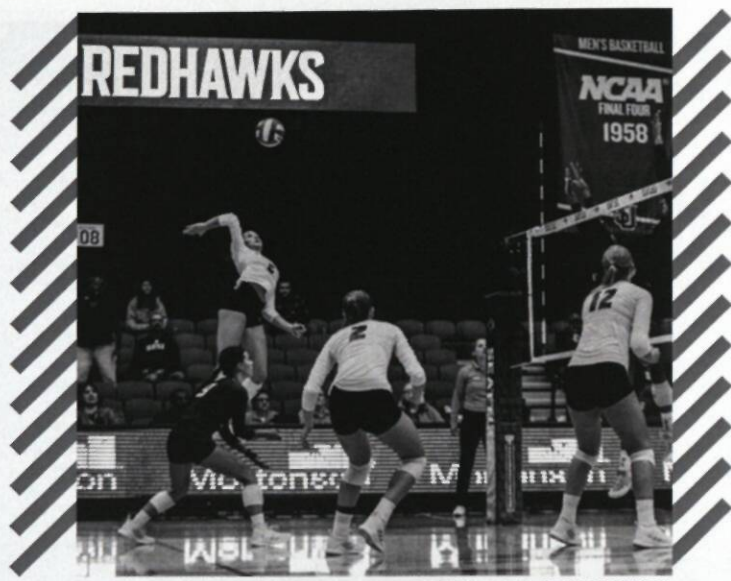
Registration for intramurals is all done through IMLeagues, where you can set up and join teams, or even be a free agent.

With a commitment to inclusivity and diversity, UREC is on track for more members of the campus community to make full use of what they have to offer.



# Catching Up With Fall Sports

**Jocelyn Garcia**  
Volunteer Reporter



**ADELINE ONG** THE SPECTATOR

Seattle University Volley Ball plays against Stephen F. Austin.

Before students arrive on campus and classes commence, student-athletes are already in the city, hard at work. Some teams even begin competing over a month before the Fall Welcome. Here's how the last month and a half have gone for Seattle University athletics.

## Cross Country

The men's and women's cross country teams have had a great start to their 2023 seasons. The Redhawks had their second meet Sept. 30 at the Charles Bowles Invitation hosted by Willamette University in Salem, Ore..

The top performers on the men's and women's teams were Yonas Sauers and Azalea Groleau. Sauers ran the fastest time in Seattle U history, with a time of 23:52.60 in the men's 8000m. Groleau placed fifth with a time of 17:25.50 in the women's 5000m, improving significantly from last season.

Before leaving for the meet this weekend, Head Coach Kelly Sullivan shared some goals he has for the upcoming race and for the rest of the season.

"I just really want to see people improve, and just get better at what they're doing," Sullivan said. "We have seen a lot of growth and when people are doing more mature decision-making and really showing a passion to even want to be better at what they do in their sport, then the performances just naturally happen."

The three-week training period between the first meet and the second has shown to be beneficial with standout performances. The Redhawks will get a breather and chance to train more as they prepare for their next meet Oct. 14 at the George Oja Linfield Invite in Salem once again.

## Volleyball

On the hardwood, Seattle U Volleyball has continued their season—showing off their newly-added freshmen. Outside hitter Naima Foster, being one of these freshmen, notched over 10 kills for the 10th time in the last game the Redhawks played against Stephen F. Austin, finishing with 11.

Junior outside hitter Arianna Bilby considers Foster a standout player.

"She is a freshman, starting on the outside with me and she is just a blast to play next to," Bilby said. "She is a great player, she's got a high volleyball IQ and is just super fun to play with."

As Seattle U faces the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley Oct. 5 at the Redhawk Center, they are hopeful to pull out a win for their Family Night.

Bilby states that this is one of their primary goals moving forward in the season.

"For the team, more wins for sure," Bilby said.

They have had a competitive season so far—with their 5-10 record this season eclipsing their 4-18 mark from 2022. The Redhawks are working on growing as a team and continuing to build on the base that they created last year. With all the new freshmen and transfer students, they are well on pace.

Again, Bilby put the spotlight on the newcomers.

"I think we have brought in some really talented girls on the team that have made a pretty big impact immediately," Bilby said.

After playing at home for family night, the Redhawks will face Utah Valley in Orem, Utah Oct. 9 and then Southern Utah in Cedar City, Utah Oct. 12.

## Golf

Men's golf will continue their season with their third tournament coming up at the Oregon State Invitational.

Freshman Kevin Li leads the Redhawks, as he has shot the lowest score out of his teammates in the first two tournaments of the season. But, Senior Blake Kukula follows closely behind placing second out of the Redhawks, with only one stroke more than Li at their opening tournament. Li also managed to place in the top-15 at their most recent tournament—the Nick Watney Invitational—in Fresno, Calif.. The team finished 10th overall at the event.

With the rest of the fall season and full spring season ahead of them, the men's golf team is looking to improve both individually and as a team.

Women's golf has participated in two tournaments thus far.

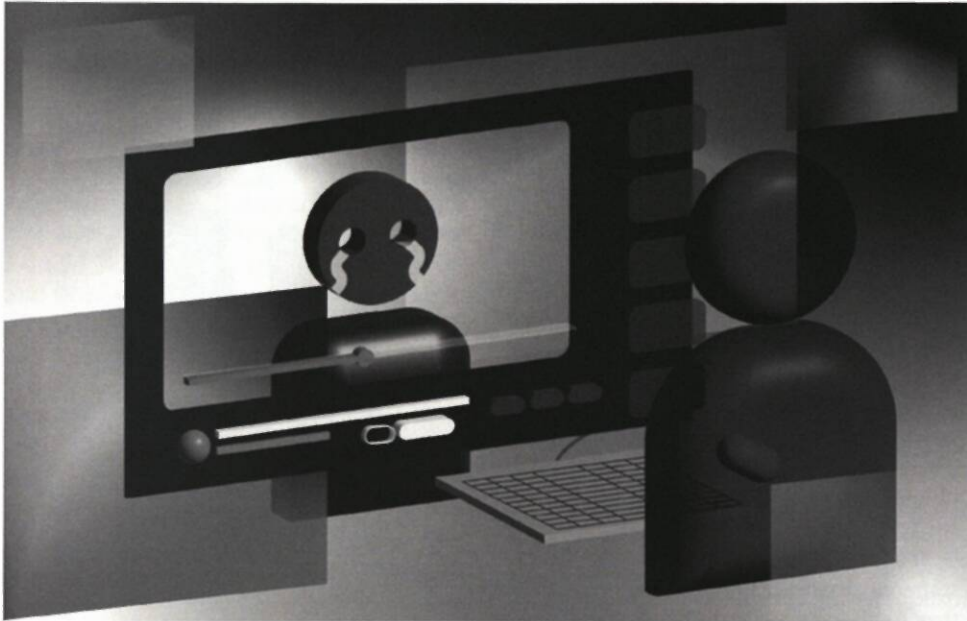
Transfer Sophomore Tsara Ralamboarison shot the best score out of her fellow Redhawks in her season debut at the Leadership and Golf Invitational in University Place, Wash.. She placed first overall in the tournament with a score of 218 over three rounds.

At their second tournament of the season, the Gonzaga Invitational in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, Junior Shayna Lu led the team scoring a personal-best of 68 over a single round. She scored a combined 213 strokes and tied for seventh overall. The team finished third overall, following that top finish with fifth place at the Pat Lesser Harbottle Invitational Oct. 3.

After placing second in the 2023 WAC Championships, the women's golf team is on pace for more victories and another top finish in the conference championship in 2024.



## Cancel Culture and Celebrity Apology Videos: A Twisted Cycle



LUCA DEL CARLO THE SPECTATOR

**Leila Bunker**  
Staff Reporter

“I deeply apologize to writers. I deeply apologize to unions [about] my decision to go back to the show. I didn’t want to hide behind people so I won’t... I’ll just stand out there and accept and be responsible,” Drew Barrymore said.

After deciding to reboot her daytime talk show in the midst of the Hollywood writers’ strike, the backlash Barrymore received was immediate and intense. In response, she released an apology video where she acknowledged the response, but insisted on bringing back the show. She soon after deleted the video and announced she would be suspending the show after all, stating that it would have been best if she did not say anything at all.

Barrymore’s hopes to share a genuine apology video only to receive backlash is a perfect

example of what happens in most celebrity apology videos.

Ella Ohlson, a second-year international studies major, expressed that she finds that celebrity apology videos solve nothing.

“When I think of celebrity apology videos, I think disingenuous. Most of the time they are only interested in covering themselves and never coming from a place of remorse, nor are they interested in bettering themselves,” Ohlson said. “You can see right through the person and their whole strategy at that point becomes ineffective.”

The general public has an inherent distrust towards celebrities as many of their actions can feel performative. In a BBC article, Karina Schumann, an associate professor in social psychology at the University of Pittsburgh,

referenced a subtle aspect to these apologies that fans and viewers may have already picked up on.

“Public figures have moved their ‘sorry’ to social media because winning back a fan base is often the fastest and most strategic way to save their reputations,” Schumann said to BBC.

Celebrity apology videos have become such a substantial part of modern media culture that some could argue they have their own aesthetic. These videos are often set in the person’s home with them appearing unconventionally makeup-less, on occasion with tears in their eyes or even sitting on the floor.

Isabelle Fong, a second-year international studies major, expressed that she often feels skeptical of celebrities and influencers when they post apology videos.

Fong went on to express that one of the worst apology videos she’s seen online was Colleen Ballinger’s, who is well-known for her fictional alter ego, Miranda Sings. Ballinger has faced several accusations regarding her inappropriate behavior with underage fans in the past few years. In June, the YouTube star posted an awkward video, ukulele in hand, singing her defense, quickly becoming widely mocked online. Ballinger is a more recent example of what becomes of apology videos; memes and mockery.

Rather than holding themselves accountable, Fong thinks that many of them put up a public facade to feign responsibility. Whether or not their apology is genuine is up to individual interpretation.

“I think that celebrities try to have a really ‘raw’ approach and try to convey, ‘Oh, this is coming from a deep place in my heart,’ but I always think ‘Is it?’ It’s an edited video that could’ve been recorded several times and it’s hard to tell if it’s sincere. But then again that’s the whole thing with social media, you can’t immediately tell who is being genuine and who’s not,” Fong said.

Abby Fitzwater, a second-year international studies major, thinks that cancel culture and apology videos are closely intertwined with one another. However, it has evolved into something more sinister rather than promoting the idea that people can grow from their mistakes.

“It’s kind of a twisted cycle because we cancel people for various things and then demand an apology from them, but then once they deliver we jump at the chance to make fun of it and use it as another source to attack that person,” Fitzwater said.



# “Bottoms” as a Sign of the Times

Dylan Berman  
Volunteer Reporter

Violent, ridiculous, hilarious, and irreverent, the LGBTQ+ comedy “Bottoms” hit theaters this summer to positive reviews from critics and audiences alike, currently boasting a 96% on Rotten Tomatoes.

The movie follows PJ and Jocie, two lonely lesbians in their senior year of high school, desperate to lose their virginity before going to college. Their last-ditch effort is starting a self-defense club for women at their school, where they pretend to teach self-defense as a guise to get close to the popular girls at school.

But what does a movie like “Bottoms,” riffing on progressivism, feminism, toxic masculinity, high school movie tropes and LGBTQ+ culture and issues say about the cultural landscape of representation, and the current state of LGBTQ+ acceptance?

For Harley James, a first-year electrical engineering major, the “Bottoms” premier was highly anticipated.

“The hype that I had leading up to that movie was like the hype that everyone else had for the Barbie movie,” James said. “It’s centering it on queer people and people of color, something you don’t normally see when you see these high school clichés.”

“Bottoms” does not present its minority characters as tokens, symbols for a movement or ‘good representation.’ In fact, the two lesbian protagonists, PJ especially, are awkward, desperate, creepy, manipulative and lonely, as well as compelling and complicated.

“When we talk about representation, there’s a lot of pressure to be the perfect representation,” James said. “It’s nice that they’re just having fun with it, they’re just being fun and being their version of queer.”

First-year Psychology Major Aicha Toure, first saw “Bottoms” with her mom, and recently rewatched it in theaters. She, like James, appreciated the way it presented its queer protagonists.

“I think it means that the general public are finally starting to see LGBTQIA+ people as people, they’re not an issue to be solved, or rights to be fought for, they’re just people living

their lives. Sometimes those lives are ridiculous and sometimes they do weird and disgusting things,” Toure said. “You’re characterizing them beyond the fact that they’re lesbian.”

Despite its heavily satirical tone, “Bottoms” doesn’t come across as needlessly edgy, or meaningless. The portrayal of toxic masculinity, misogyny, homophobia, and other social ills, for some is cathartic; a way to laugh at things they’ve experienced.

“Queer teenagers themselves can find that really funny and relatable,” explained Ginger Schreiber, a first-year who saw “Bottoms” earlier this month.

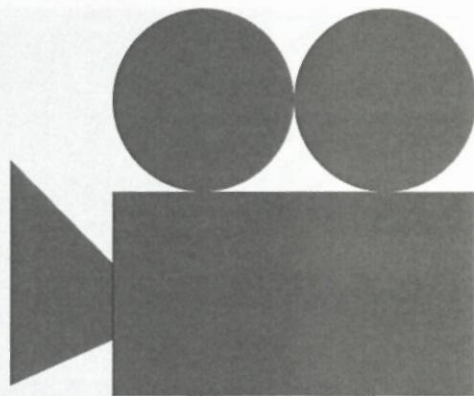
“Bottoms” plays with the tropes and expectations of a coming-of-age high school comedy. The protagonist underdog, PJ, doesn’t miraculously end up with the popular cheerleader she is chasing.

“Too often in teen movies, they’ll have someone do something really awful, and then they’ll still end up with the person they’ve been crushing on. I just think that sets such a bad example for women in general for how they should expect to be treated,” Toure said. “The girl PJ has a crush on is straight, she knows she’s straight, she still tries to kiss her, she still flirts with her all the time. Every second that they’re friends she has an ulterior motive. I love the fact that she didn’t end up with her.”

The movie’s title, “Bottoms,” doesn’t refer to what first comes to mind. Instead, it’s about the main characters’ social status. They are at the bottom of the pecking order in their school. The movie repeatedly jokes about how the characters aren’t hated for being gay but for being “ugly, untalented gays.”

“It says how much we’ve come as a community, but also how this newish generation has been conditioned... with a more loose idea of what sexuality and gender means,” Schreiber said. “I think the point the movie makes is that these girls are getting bullied because they’re geeks or nerds, not because they’re gay, and it really plays on that. That they aren’t popular.”

While “Bottoms” portrays and mocks the bigotry that persists in high school and broader



## REVIEW & SPOILERS

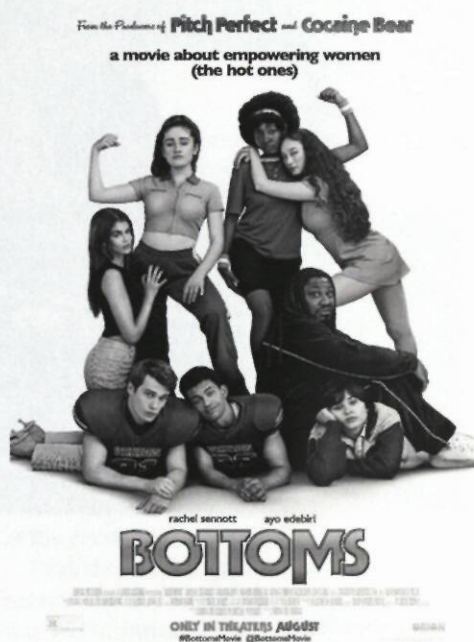


IMAGE COURTESY OF IMDB

society, it also shows progress in its world, and in our world. An uncomfortably short time ago, a movie like “Bottoms” most likely could not have existed. The film shows that we’ve reached a point where LGBTQ+ people can have a wonderfully stupid high school comedy just like everyone else. It doesn’t make some grand statement about the issues it touches on, but maybe that’s the point. Why should it have to?



# Ending “Sex Education”: Eric Effiong’s Climatic Character Arc

Amelia Carey

Volunteer Reporter

The final season of “Sex Education” introduced many quirky new characters including... God? While continuing to focus on funny and relatable sexual issues, this final season of “Sex Education” was centered around the broad themes of identity, alienation and religion. Many of the plot lines were rushed and all over the place to the point of being forgettable, fading into the background. Other plot lines were cohesive with earlier seasons. I could see how the writers were patient and detail-oriented in executing the character’s plot, for example, those of Eric, Adam and Aimee.

Some of the characters started going their own ways, like Maeve and Adam, who didn’t attend the same college as everyone else. This is a realistic scenario but didn’t help with the jumbled feeling of the show. It was overwhelming to meet new characters like Jean’s sister and see their hurried plot lines, all while the consistent characters were wrapping up their stories. We don’t get to see the full potential of these characters’ development, although they do, somewhat, serve the more established characters’ own development. Roman, Abbi, and Aisha were a fun addition; it’s bittersweet that we don’t get to see more of them.

One of the most cohesive plotlines was given to Eric Effiong. His ending is the least ambiguous of the characters in this final season. Through the entirety of the show, Eric has had an internal struggle between fitting in with his Nigerian heritage, his Christianity and his sexuality. Although his church captures certain aspects of his identity, they are not welcoming of everyone, particularly queer people, leaving Eric feeling alienated.

This struggle comes to a climax in the most impactful scene of the season: Eric’s baptism. It’s easy to forget that “Sex Education” is just a TV show in this tense scene, with incredible acting from Ncuti Gatwa, who plays Eric.

Eric stands before his whole church congregation, dressed in white.

“My name is Eric Effiong. And I’m a Christian. And a proud gay man,” he said. “And I love myself too much to not tell my truth. So, if you love me as I am, I will be baptized, but if you don’t, then I must leave.”

After a long, suspenseful pause, his mother stands. “I love you as you are, my son,” she says. But she is the only one. So with his head held high, he leaves the church.

Eric starts getting visions of God, which turns into a path of spirituality, previously unexamined thoroughly by the show. It’s reminiscent of “Holy Camp!,” a musical where God is in the form of a man singing Whitney Houston songs). This was an interesting choice, as spiritual experiences do not seem to be popular in modern day media. Eric’s God is a Black woman with a rich, wondrous voice and sometimes sparkly eyeshadow to the likes of the show, “Euphoria.” His version of Jesus is Cal, his nonbinary classmate.

God speaks to Eric after his missed baptism. “I made you this bright so that others would see in the darkness,” God said to Eric. Immediately after hearing this, Eric then finds Cal, who had been missing. It is implied that Cal is in a very dark place, having just thrown their backpack and belongings away, due to the estrangement and helplessness felt as a nonbinary person who is unable to afford top surgery.

“I don’t think the world really wants people like me in it,” Cal said sheepishly.

Eric is able to deeply emphasize with Cal on this subject. They have a heart-to-heart, where Eric shows a new, somber, heartfelt side to his personality. This leads Eric to realizing his purpose as a pastor. It’s a satisfying ending for Eric because his interpretation of Christianity will help serve the queer community and also give Eric a place to fully be himself.

Another notable mention is Adam’s storyline. It’s very moving to see his personal growth throughout the show while he works with horses and lets them ease his mind. We even get a full circle moment with Adam and

his dad. In an earlier season, Adam had painfully watched as Eric and his father hugged, knowing that he and his own father didn’t have that kind of relationship. However, in the final episode he finally gets to hug his father, who tells him “I love you” for the first time.

Then there’s Aimee, who finds photography a comforting, healing way to process the trauma from her past. She uses her art to take back her power, from snapping pictures of pestering construction workers to her finally burning the jeans she was wearing at the climax of her trauma.

Although the final season felt a bit rushed, there were still many parts that were very much worth watching and contained great character development. “Sex Education” shows the beauty of humanity through the different bizarre, vibrant personalities of its characters, particularly Eric Effiong, who shines especially bright in this final season.

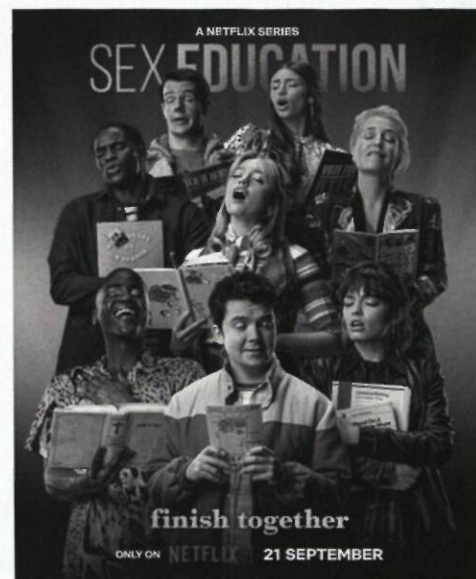
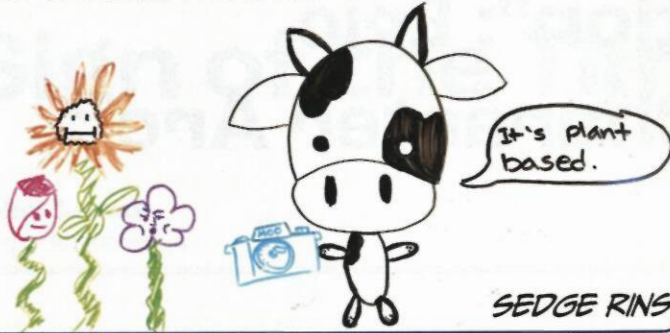


IMAGE COURTESY OF IMBD



## The Comics

MOO MOO REVEALS THE THEME TO THEIR SENIOR PHOTO SYNTHESIS PROJECT...

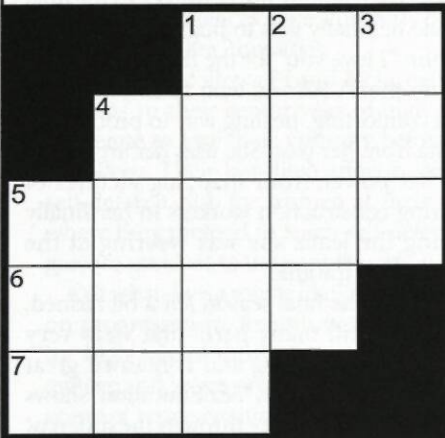


## Spectator's Picks

### UPCOMING CAMPUS EVENTS

- 10** Global Street Fair  
Library Plaza  
11:30AM - 1:30PM
- 11** 24-25 FAFSA Roadmap  
On Zoom  
12PM - 1PM
- 12** Collage Night  
Hunthausen 020  
6PM - 8PM **FREE PIZZA**

## The Mini Crossword



Find the answers for  
this week at  
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### Across

1. Food for a horse
4. Actor Nicolas
5. Enjoy, for food
6. Famous L.A. haze
7. Video game companion

### Down

1. Wreak \_\_\_\_
2. Very eager or curious
3. Yours, to a pirate
4. The biggest dorm on campus
5. Government ID

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