

Exposing “nerdy misogyny” in television



Emily Pratt
Opinion Columnist

It's uncanny how many people assume I'm a fan of the Big Bang Theory when they learn how much of a fangirl I am.

Even more interesting is their surprise when I tell them the exact opposite is actually true.

A show focusing on characters sharing my interests and level of discomfort in new social situations would seem to be right up my alley.

But, while I am a self-proclaimed nerd, I am first and foremost a feminist and it is through these lenses that I find my primary issues with the show.

At some point in Hollywood history, it was decided to place the nerds as protagonists in film to shake things up a bit and thus, *Revenge of the Nerds* was born.

Unfortunately, somewhere

along the line there came an idea that this would only be accomplished if they acted in creepy, entitled, and sexist ways towards women.

Because the hurtful words and rape scenes infamously practiced by nerds, they're represented as “non-threatening” and even “comically endearing.”

This trope is incredibly harmful to young viewers in particular because it suggests that sexism is mostly harmless and merely another “socially awkward personality quirk” of social outcasts when that is anything but the case.

The *Big Bang Theory* is no children's show but its reinforcement of these ideas still structure how viewers perceive sexist situations in real life and their idea of what makes up an actual social outcast.

Aside from portraying the four male leads as every Hollywood nerd stereotype known to humankind, the writers appear to be under the assumption that only men are a part of geek culture.

As a woman with a full-size TARDIS in her garage, I can safely say that this is not the case.

While the “socially awkward white male nerd” may have made frequent appearances in Hollywood classics with no sign of female ones, times have changed, and much of the mainstream media has changed with it.



Leonard and Raj from the popular TV show, *The Big Bang Theory*.

Youtube

It thus remains a bit of a puzzle as to why a show like the *Big Bang Theory* - which actually had a scene depicting men in a comic book store turning their heads as a woman enters - is currently on their eleventh season and counting.

News flash: no means no and to follow that line with a laugh track essentially invalidates the problem of rape.

The problem isn't just the lack of female nerds, but also the attitudes of the female characters who are regulars on the show towards geek culture.

Viewers are meant to identify with Penny's “normalness” as she raises an eyebrow every time her male counterparts show excitement in a particular game or television show.

Aside from implying that such excitement is dumb and to be seen as child's play, this tactic uses the even older trope of women looking out for and pitying men's foolish antics.

Even well-educated women like Amy and Bernadette are shown to view “geeky habits” with disdain because, apparently, women must always be the socially adept ones.

This doesn't mean they al-

ways make smart decisions, but they are almost always the ones who either lecture the men for doing something stupid or complain about it with each other during a girls night out.

It's 2018, the idea that “all nerds are men” should be long dead.

Even more disturbing is the incredibly sexist things the men say to the women around them.

Howard's frequent stalking and harassing of women is played off as a running joke, Penny never directly states that his placing of a webcam in her teddy bear was creepy.

Both Raj and Leonard are played off as “nice guys,” their own sexist behaviors shown to be adorably incompetent.

Raj's inability to talk to women doesn't stop him from making highly suggestive and insensitive remarks when drunk, even completely undressing in front of a woman while out in public, ignoring her protests.

There are plenty of other ways to make a drunk character amusing without the expense of female characters.

Leonard not only enables his friends' behavior by making excuses for them but he himself refuses to take no for an answer.

After being asked how he ended up with a woman like Penny, she replies, “He started to slowly wear me down.”

News flash: No means no and

to follow that line with a laugh track essentially invalidates the problem of rape.

Sheldon's inability to sense himself is his excuse for constantly belittling and blaming women for the most minuscule of problems.

This could be played off as a problematic character trope if it was actually addressed properly, but it's not.

His friends merely roll their eyes or laugh with him.

The writers get away with this behavior by occasionally having a character point out a sexist joke.

The problem here is that it's not challenged in any way, it's just stated as a fact and then brushed off in a humorous way.

Rather than writing better punchlines, this method is continued from season to season to duck out of potential criticism.

Shows with humor and themes like *The Big Bang Theory* should have been cancelled in favor of better written ones years ago, their humor might have fit in 70's culture but it's extremely out of date today.

As fans, it is up to us to be aware of the shows we're consuming because they represent the kind of ideas we want to practice in the world.



Creative Commons

A tardis from the popular science fiction TV show, *Doctor Who*.

The long awaited Minnesota spring



Jessica Hastings-Ereth
Opinion Columnist

This year's Minnesota winter has dragged on and on, and still continues although spring has already (officially) started.

This year the cold weather and gusts of wind (it tends to be pretty Gustie up on the hill) kept me in my apartment for as long as possible.

When the temperatures finally were no longer in the negative numbers, I jumped for joy.

Dressed in my coat and my winter boots I hobbled out of the apartment into the arb and was happy to no longer need a scarf to cover my face.

Breathing was so much easier, and it was refreshing to see your breath.

Later, when I could go outside without a coat on for the first time you thought I would be a kid in a candy store; because I was so happy.

I was outside as much as possible, not cutting through buildings for classes, and sitting on

the chairs throughout campus.

During this time, my roommates and I were ready to send our winter gear home, until the next day when it snowed again.

The snow, once again, had us asking ourselves why we live in a state like this.

It's hard to believe, but the answer is Minnesotas summer.

I am personally not a huge fan of spring and fall because the weather is so unpredictable, I prefer the seasons where you know it will either be hot or cold.

With the first day of summer just weeks (hopefully) away, I get excited about every moment that I can spend outside starting in the spring enjoying the blooming flowers, green lawn, warmer temperatures, and sunny days.

Unlike the frigid days of winter, knowing that summer is coming exhilarates me and fills me with energy.

When the spring weather starts, I can't wait to no longer have heavy clothes and boots to weigh me down, I can't wait to feel light and new.

Wearing a windbreaker and my tennis shoes, I will happily run along the road enjoying every ray of sunshine, while inhaling the sweet scent of lilacs.

To me, the smell of lilacs is an unforgettable scent of my childhood.

I look forward to the blooming flowers, but not the allergies that come with them.

I can just picture a gentle breeze flowing against my face and hair as the cardinals sing their happy spring song from the pine trees in the arb.

I can imagine bluebirds going



A young boy zooming down a street on his bike.

Pixabay

The Good, the Bad, and the Meh



Only 7 more weeks until graduation.



It's Friday the 13th.



No more breaks for the rest of the school year.

from tree to tree, and chickadees making their sounds in an attempt to find mates (spring is apparently the season of love).

As much as I love the birds associated with spring, I cannot wait to put out a hummingbird feeder and see them fly by with their fast-moving wings.

I think spring brings out the best in Minnesotans.

You can happily wave to neighbors and those surrounding you without having your hands covered in wool mittens.

It no longer bothers you that cars don't stop for you, because you want to enjoy the weather.

Everyone overall has a better mood because of the Vitamin D that we are no longer deprived of.

It always puts a smile on my face to hear children laughing again, and speeding on their bicycles.

This is also a nostalgic feeling for me, I learned how to ride by bicycle in the spring.

My mother yelled and chased after me as I sped down the cul-de-sak, she was worried I would fall and hurt myself.

Unsurprisingly, I fell, but even though that was a bad moment, I remember it for the beautiful day it was, and the daffodils that bloomed in my front yard.

After my bicycle accident, my mom decided that I should fo-

cus on helping her in the garden until I got some more practice in riding my bike.

In the summer, I look forward to seeing people pushing their baby strollers, walking their dogs, and just simply being outside.

But although I wasn't cycling, I still have so many fond memories of planting flower bulbs, and getting the soil ready for us to plant fruits and vegetables.

In the summer, I look forward to seeing people pushing their baby strollers, walking their dogs, and just simply being outside.

I cannot wait to see the flowers bloom and see the veggies grow in my garden.

Just thinking of this helps me get through the cold and long winter, as it is a reminder of the amazing renewal of Minnesota that comes with spring.

An education without the arts is incomplete

Andrew Deziel
Staff Writer

For the second year in a row, the President of the United States has proposed the elimination of the National Endowment for the Arts.

Even though the NEA's \$150 million a year budget is but a tiny fraction of the federal budget, it has been under constant fire from many politicians ever since it was established 50 years ago as one of Lyndon Johnson's many Great Society programs.

Much like a similar attempt initiated under President Reagan 37 years ago, Trump's attempt to defund the NEA in last year's budget failed - in fact, Congress approved a small increase in NEA funding for FY 2018.

Both critics and supporters of arts funding recognize it as being at the core of a liberal arts education.

That's because studies have repeatedly shown that strong funding for the arts and humanities lies at the core of a liberal arts education - improving students' aptitude in other subjects, and enriching a student's quality of life outside the classroom.

Yet attacks on the NEA and arts education funding more broadly persist year after year in our current political atmosphere - one vastly different from the one in which the NEA was founded more than 50 years ago.

In Washington D.C., the John F. Kennedy Center for Cultural Education stands as a vibrant hub of creativity and free expression, and as a memorial to a president who put the arts front and center in his administration.

As President Kennedy said with typical eloquence, "I am certain that after the dust of centuries has passed over our cities, we too, will be remembered not for victories or defeats in battle or in politics, but for our contribution to the human spirit."

Yet just as our history books today often focus obsessively on military and political affairs, to the exclusion of the cultural, many politicians today believe the arts to be a distraction from a focus on preparing students to enter profitable careers.

Increasingly, the educational system is encouraging schools to push students in the direction of a technical, specialized education.

As North Carolina Governor Pat McCrory said of his new college funding formula, "It's not based on butts in seats but on how many of those butts can get jobs."

One might imagine that President Obama, whose administration produced a 2011 report titled *Reinvesting in Arts Education: Winning America's Future Through Creative Schools*, which lauded the achievement gains made by schools with strong arts education programs and declared that "an education without the arts is incomplete," would boldly stand up to pro-

tect arts programming within the educational system.

Yet even President Obama proposed tying funding of federal colleges in part to earnings after graduation, encouraging college leaders to undermine funding for the arts in favor of academic programs which provide a more immediately measurable economic impact for students.

Minnesota has traditionally been a leader in prioritizing high quality arts education in the public schools, and since 1985 we have had a state agency dedicated to supporting and promoting arts education - the Perpich Center for Arts Education.

The state agency was established in 1985 at the urging of Governor Rudy Perpich, a long-time supporter of arts education who had seen the possibilities of integrating a robust arts curriculum along with traditional academic coursework while living and working in Europe.

Across the state, and especially in cash strapped Greater Minnesota school districts, funding for arts education remains meager.

A 2012 Perpich Center analysis of the state of arts education revealed that while over 99% of Minnesota schools provide access to arts education, most schools don't meet the minimum requirement of three arts courses, and funding is meager (less than \$10 per pupil per year).

Across the state, and especially in cash strapped Greater Minnesota school districts, funding for arts education remains meager.

As a result, nearly half of Minnesota schools charge exclusionary fees for extracurricular arts activities, and a majority rely on non district funding for such activities.

Even though funding for arts education is already so small, it often finds itself on the chopping block as school administrators face tight budgets and prioritize spending in other areas.

For example, even in liberal Winona, school administrators forced to propose some 1.7 million in budget cuts earlier this year have aimed their sights squarely at critically important arts programming. Horrified students and community members have pushed back against proposals to axe all middle and high school music lessons, eliminate fourth grade orchestra, trim back the theatre department and eliminate staff positions.

Even the Perpich Center itself is under threat as many legislators, citing declining enrollment, financial mismanagement and increased competition from charter schools, have become

increasingly determined to abolish the agency.

A proposal to do just that passing the legislature last year, but Governor Mark Dayton vetoed the plan and was able to preserve the agency, though it was forced to sell off its middle school, Crosswinds School.

"I insist that the school remain open," Dayton said in his veto message.

"A school devoted to arts education is a statewide asset. And I will not permit you to desecrate the memory and legacy of one of Minnesota's Governors."

While an obsessive focus on short term post-college job prospects may suggest a financial incentive in prioritizing investment in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) over the liberal arts in general, the long term financial incentive is much less clear.

Many analysts expect the

technological automation, which has already enabled the outsourcing or elimination of many once good paying jobs, is likely to transform the economy over the coming decades, causing significant job loss in many sectors.

According to Pricewaterhousecoopers, 40% of U.S. jobs could be lost to automation over the next 25 years.

Thus, the technical educations which provide strong value and lead to good jobs today may be of less value in the future - but the worth of a liberal arts education, centered around a strong fine arts programming which encourages creativity, flexibility and ingenuity, will surely increase.

Given the likely future demand for creative thinkers and lifelong learners, investment in arts education and an increase in funding for the arts in general is necessary not merely to

enhance the quality of life our the populace, but for economic reasons as well.

Even the meager amount of funding put towards the arts today supports a much larger creative economy.

According to analysis by Minnesota Citizens for the Arts, over 100,000 Minnesotans are employed in the creative economy, which has an annual economic output of some 2 billion dollars.

With additional funding and investment, an even more robust creative economy could help to replace some of the anticipated job losses under an automated economy.

Perhaps the time has come to fulfill President Kennedy's dream of "an America which will reward achievement in the arts as we reward achievement in business or statecraft."



A student observing a work of art at the Hillstrom Museum.

Submitted

USA Crossword

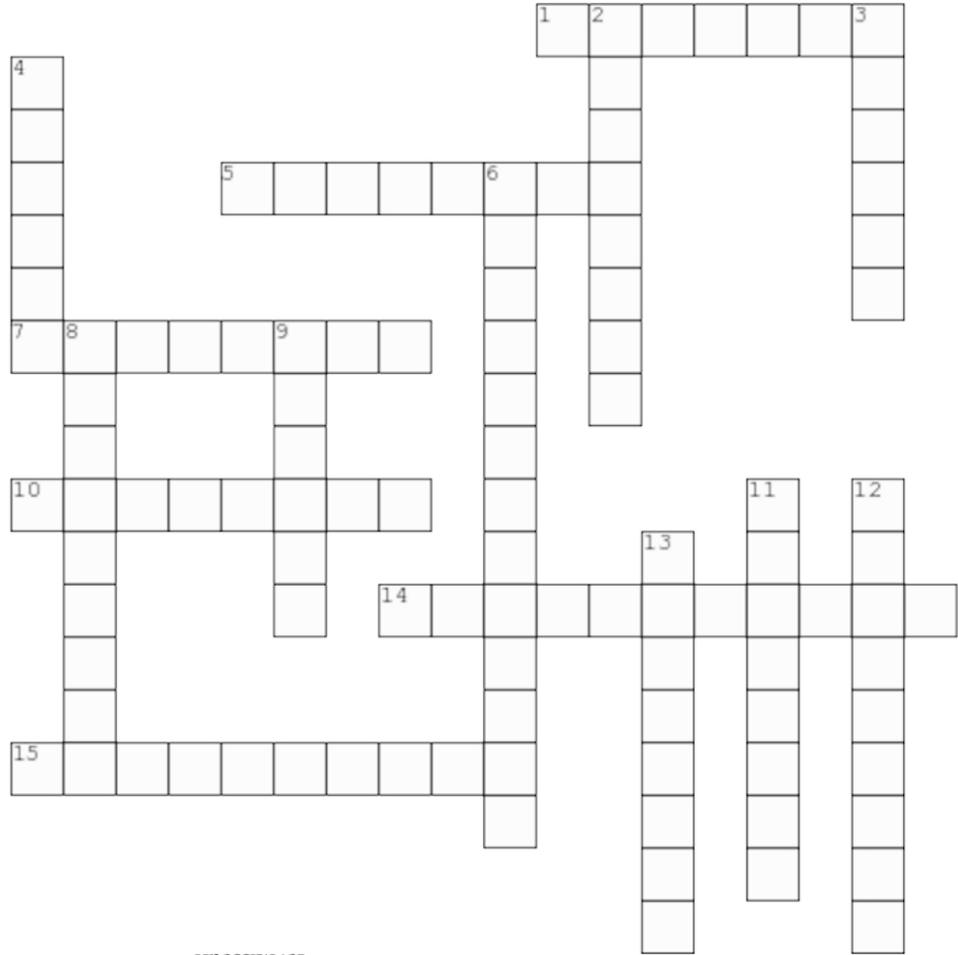
Match the capitals with their states!

Across

- 1. Helena
- 5. Lincoln
- 7. Springfield
- 10. Lansing
- 14. Providence
- 15. Olympia

Down

- 2. Oklahoma City
- 3. Juneau
- 4. Honolulu
- 6. Columbia
- 8. Baton Rouge
- 9. Salem
- 11. Dover
- 12. St. Paul
- 13. Jefferson City



- ACROSS
- 1. Montana
 - 5. Nebraska
 - 7. Illinois
 - 10. Michigan
 - 14. Rhode Island
 - 15. Washington
- DOWN
- 2. Oklahoma
 - 3. Alaska
 - 4. Hawaii
 - 6. South Carolina
 - 8. Louisiana
 - 9. Oregon
 - 11. Delaware
 - 12. Minnesota
 - 13. Missouri

Room-Draw by Trevon Sladek



Pun of the week

“What’s a foot long and slippery? A slipper.”

The zodiac signs as various European countries



<p>Aquarius (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)</p>  <p>Liechtenstein</p>	<p>Taurus (April 20-May 20)</p>  <p>Italy</p>	<p>Leo (July 23-August 22)</p>  <p>Greece</p>	<p>Scorpio (October 23-Nov. 21)</p>  <p>Finland</p>
<p>Pisces (Feb. 19-March 20)</p>  <p>Poland</p>	<p>Gemini (May 21-June 20)</p>  <p>Germany</p>	<p>Virgo (August 23-Sep. 22)</p>  <p>Norway</p>	<p>Sagittarius (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)</p>  <p>Ireland</p>
<p>Aries (March 21-April 19)</p>  <p>Sweden</p>	<p>Cancer (June 21-July 22)</p>  <p>Spain</p>	<p>Libra (Sep. 23-October 22)</p>  <p>France</p>	<p>Capricorn (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)</p>  <p>Czech Republic</p>

Men's Golf begins spring competition

Gusties place third out of 15 teams at Illinois Wesleyan Invite



Gustavus Sports Information

Senior Alec Aunan drives the ball during a team invitational last season. The team participated in the Illinois Wesleyan Invitational this past weekend and placed third out of 15 teams.

Michael O'Neil
Staff Writer

While the Master's were in full swing at Augusta National, the Gustavus Men's Golf team hit the links to kick off their 2018 spring season.

The Gusties traveled to Bloomington, Illinois to compete in the Illinois Wesleyan Invite. Although the temperature was just above freezing,

the Gusties still managed to shoot low scores and ended up with a third place finish.

"It was really cold out there today but our guys grinded and played really well," said Head Coach Scott Moe.

Senior Alec Aunan, the reigning MIAC Individual Champion, led the way for Gustavus with a one-over-par 73.

Aunan, a native of Rock Island, Illinois felt right at home as he posted yet another low

round for the Gusties.

Sophomore Thomas Carlson competed in the event as an individual and matched Aunan's 73, which was a career-best round. Carlson's score was the lowest posted by an individual competitor in the tournament.

Aunan and Carlson tied for ninth-place overall in the field of 100 players.

Sophomore Ben Hauge finished just one stroke behind Aunan and Carlson with a two-over 74.

"Our top three scores were very solid. Great top ten finish for Alec and TC as an individual posting his career-low round. Nice to see some depth and the guys played great for a first competitive round this spring," Moe said.

Senior Chris Captain also posted a strong round of 75 that was good for a share of 19th place overall.

The Gustavus lineup was rounded out by First-year Max Ullan and Sophomore Joe Foley, who turned in scores of 78 and 83, respectively.

First-year Carter Czichotzki and Junior Jordan Miller competed as individuals and scored 76 and 87 respectively. Czichotzki tied for a 26th-place finish with his score.

The top four scores for the

Gusties were tallied up and their 12-over 300 was good for third place out of the 15 teams that competed.

"We came in ready to play and ready to compete. 300 on a day like today was a really good score," Moe said.

Despite the poor conditions, the Gusties still managed to beat their team average of 303.6, which ranks fourth in the MIAC.

"We came in ready to play and ready to compete. 300 on a day like today was a really good score."

—Coach Moe

The only teams to score lower than the Gusties were Illinois Wesleyan (289, +1) and the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire (297, +9).

Prior to competing in Illinois, the Gusties spent spring break in Ponte Vedra, Florida tuning up their skills in preparation for the spring season.

During their visit, they played five different courses in the area and toured the World Golf Hall of Fame.

The seniors on the men's and

women's teams were treated to a round at TPC Sawgrass, where the Players Championship is played, by Professional Golfer Fred Funk. Funk competes on the PGA Champions Tour and is a past champion at the Players Championship.

As the Gusties look ahead, the schedule is somewhat uncertain.

The Gusties were scheduled to host the Bobby Krig Invitational at Ridges at Sand Creek in Jordan, MN on Sunday, April 15, and at Le Sueur Country Club the following day. Unfortunately, due to expected bad weather and snow on the ground, the event has been cancelled.

Last year at the same event, the Gusties took third place out of 16 teams.

The Gusties are hoping to reschedule the event to a later date but at this point, nothing is certain.

Their next event will be in Decatur, Illinois at the Milliken Invitational on April 21-22.

Their last scheduled event is the following weekend, April 28-29 at the St. John's Invitational, but they'll hope to qualify for the NCAA Division III National Championships in Greensboro, North Carolina from May 15-18.



Gustavus Sports Information

Sophomore Ben Hauge lines up a putt in the Bobby Krig Invite last season.

Men's Tennis competes in California

Gusties improve to 15-8 overall and 4-0 in MIAC play



Gustavus Sports Information

Senior Tommy Entwistle returns a ball during a match earlier this season against a Redlands opponent. The Gusties are currently ranked No. 7 in the nation, boasting a 15-8 record.

Nathan Thompson
Staff Writer

The No. 7 ranked Gustavus Men's Tennis team defeated Bethel and Augustana as well as the No. 9 ranked Washington University-St. Louis, improving their record to 13-5 overall and 4-0 in the MIAC.

Against a tough singles lineup from Washington University, the Gusties managed two wins from Junior Chase Johnson and Senior Tommy Entwistle who

pulled off a three set win after losing 2-6 in the first.

In the doubles competition, Gustavus swept Washington 3-0 with victories from the duos of Senior Mohanad Alhouni and Junior Patrick Whaling, Entwistle and Johnson, and Senior Zach Ekstein and Sophomore Yassine Derbani.

The Gusties finished the match with a 5-4 victory over the Bears.

Gustavus took control of their match against Bethel University, winning 8-1.

In the singles event, the Gusties won five of six matches with Seniors Gabe Steinwand and Mason Bultje both winning in two sets, along with wins from Freshmen Xavier Sanga, Lawrence Hiquiana, and Mouaad Alhouni.

On the doubles side, all three pairings took home victories.

In their final match on Saturday, the Gusties held off Augustana for a 6-3 victory to close the weekend.

Bultje, Sanga, and Mouaad Alhouni all won in their respective matches while all three Gustie duos won their doubles matches.

"The entire team put together an outstanding effort today. The group at home played fantastic doubles against both Bethel and Augustana. In singles they showed some great poise in key spots and secured two great wins. In St. Louis the guys played aggressive doubles with great energy and executed our plans well. Wash U competes as well as anyone in the country and they made a big push in the singles," Head Coach Tommy Valentini said.

On April 4, the Gusties matched up against No. 12 ranked Pomona-Pitzer and combined for a dominant 8-1 victory Wednesday night.

Their second match came

against Hope International, where they lost 3-6 pushing the Gustie record to 14-6 overall.

Against Pomona-Pitzer, Gustavus was fueled by a strong showing in singles, where the Gusties won seven of their eight matches along with a doubles win from the duo of Ekstein and Bultje.

In a 3-6 loss to Hope International, the Gusties managed three wins in the singles matches with Sophomore Michael O'Neal besting his opponent in three matches, Sanga in two, and Mouaad Alhouni in three with a 12-10 third.

"The guys were truly outstanding today. The group that took on Hope International showed tremendous resilience to compete so well after coming up just short in the doubles. They played fantastic singles, never gave in, and competed with heart and belief. Against Pomona-Pitzer our entire team competed extremely well," Valentini said.

On the following Friday, the Gusties split a pair of matches against Lewis & Clark, where they won 8-1, and No. 14 Westmont, losing 9-0.

In their first match of the day against Lewis & Clark, Gustavus won four of six singles matches as well as all three doubles events.

The Gusties had a more difficult time with Westmont who swept the field despite two tough matches from Senior Graham Kellog and Hiquina.

"The guys made very good progress today. We played solid doubles in both matches against very talented opponents. Against Westmont the guys fought hard in the singles and handled adversity extremely well," Valentini said.

In a duel of top-10 ranked teams, Gustavus dropped a 9-0 match against the sixth ranked Stags of Claremont-Mudd-Scripps on Saturday, bumping their record to 15-8 and concluding their California trip.

Despite three set matches from Mohanad Alhouni, Whaling, and Derbani, the Gusties were still swept in doubles and singles play.

"The guys played hard today. CMS is an excellent team and they played a heck of a match against us. It wasn't the result we were going for today, but we stuck together and will learn a lot from this one as we prepare for the challenges that lie ahead the rest of the way. Overall it was an outstanding spring trip for our team," Valentini said.

Gustavus gets back to work on Friday, April 13 against the No. 4 ranked University of Chicago in a road match.



Gustavus Sports Information

First-year Xavier Sanga competes in a match March 24 against Augustana.