

Get your flu shot, folks



Grace Worwa
Opinion Columnist

I could've sworn the air was fizzing as it's that time of year again, Gusties. Flu season is right around the corner, and I'm here to encourage anyone and everyone to please, if you haven't already, stop by Health Service's handy dandy flu shot clinic to get vaccinated. Now, given that I'm requesting you get a needle poked into your arm, I feel obligated to explain why it's worth it.

But first, I should probably tell you what a flu shot is. Or rather, Certified Nurse Practitioner (CNP) at Health Services Nissa Fell will tell you because she's much more credible than I am. According to Fell, a flu shot is an annually-offered immunization that prevents the viral illness of influenza.

"[The vaccine] triggers our antibody response in our body,

so if we come in contact with influenza... our body knows how to react," Fell said.

For some illnesses, you only need to get vaccinated once or twice and you're set for life, but influenza is different.

"Our immune response wanes or lessens over time with the flu shot, [thus] the flu shot we get each year," Fell said. This is why the fall season is also known as flu shot season.

So why should you get a flu shot? Well, I'll give you the most compelling argument first: getting sick sucks.

"I don't want to get sick, especially during uncertain times like these," Junior Chris Ortiz said.

Not only would the flu condemn you to up to a week of fever, cough and body aches, but in the COVID-19 era, that's served up along with two weeks of quarantine.

"The symptoms between influenza and COVID-19 are very similar, so... we've been trained to treat all things like COVID-19 until we can prove otherwise," Fell said.

I don't know about you, but if I can avoid all that, I'll let a Health Services staff member poke a needle in my arm any day. Vaccines don't just protect your personal health, they allow society to control viral illnesses and prevent pandemics like the one we are living in right now.

"[A population has] to have enough immunity to an illness for it to not be problematic anymore," Fell said.



Gustie getting a flu shot at the flu shot clinic

Gracie Jackson

This might happen in one of two ways: natural immunity, where enough people catch the illness, or an effective vaccine. Since the former takes too much time and involves too much suffering, the vaccine is our best bet. In the case of influenza, flu shots are our saving grace.

"There's enough immunity with flu shots that we aren't as worried about it, even though it

is a very deadly and very serious illness," Fell said.

We all know now what it's like when a virus rips through a susceptible, non-immune human population, so let's each do our part to contribute to the community-level immunity that helps prevent it.

"Getting a flu shot is important because you aren't just protecting yourself, but also others around you. Especially with this pandemic going on, we should do as much as we can to keep ourselves and others safe," First-year Piper Otto said.

Speaking of the pandemic, that leads us to yet another strong motivator to get a flu shot: avoiding hospital overflow. Even in pre-COVID-19 times, flu season was a busy season for our medical institutions, hospitalizing thousands of people and killing thousands more each year. That combined with the already overwhelming number of COVID-19 cases makes for a deadly combination in a few months. But, according to Fell, flu shots can help.

"The more we can vaccinate, the fewer hospitalizations and deaths we can have, and that takes the load off our medical system [and] the people treating the severe illnesses, so they are able to focus on COVID-19," Fell said.

Our healthcare workers are already overwhelmed, so let's give them a hand by getting our flu shots.

At this point, I think it's fair to say that getting your flu shot is in the best interest of your personal health, your community and that of healthcare workers and the fight against COVID-19.

I understand that some people might still have reservations, but I believe that getting your flu shot is so critical that I'm going

to try to predict what those reservations might be.

Potential Reservation #1: What if the flu shot gives me the flu?

It will not.

"It's an inactive vaccine that we give, so there's no live virus, so you can't get influenza from our vaccine," Fell said.

You might get mild, flu-like symptoms, such as a runny nose, as a side-effect of your body creating an antibody response, but that is not equivalent to an actual influenza case.

Potential Reservation #2: I got the flu shot last year, but I got the flu anyway, so what's the point?

Are you sure it was the flu? According to Fell, the stomach bug, or gastroenteritis, is often mistaken for the flu. Did you have a high fever, cough, and body aches for five to seven days? That would be the flu. However, if you suffered from nausea and diarrhea, that was the stomach bug, which is completely unrelated to the flu shot.

So now that you've read this article, I'm sure you're wondering how you can get your flu shot. Well, that can be taken care of in a five-minute appointment at Health Service's next flu shot clinic on Tuesday, Oct. 13.

To sign up, just use your Gustavus login to access your Health Portal on the Gustavus Health Service website, click on "Appt. Scheduling," select the date "10/13/2020," and choose the time that works best for you. After that, high five yourself for a job well done. Trust me, your body and your community will thank you for getting your flu shot.

The Good, the Bad and the Meh



Nobel has come and gone, and you got to sleep in (unless your professor is a jerk).



You have a paper due in every class next week.



Your mom calls multiple times a day.

Did I make the right decision?



Tori Smith
Opinion Columnist

After three weeks of crying and cursing the school for delaying my move-in, I am finally back on campus; what a relief. Now all is well, and I am as happy as can be. Except that's not true at all. Somehow, I've found myself unhappier than before.

When the school first announced they would be delaying move-in day for upperclassmen, I was extremely frustrated, as in crying-on-the-way-home-from-work frustrated. It felt as if administration was prioritizing some students over others and I was part of the overlooked and ignored group.

After a few days, my frustration and anger subsided, and I decided I would try to make the best of my situation. I cleaned all the junk that had piled on top of the small desk in my bedroom that I hadn't used since high school, and my parents even bought me my own office chair (thanks, Mom and Dad). I spent a lot of time with my family, even taking a couple trips up to my cabin together before (final-



Gusties "Zoom" into their virtual classrooms.

Nate Habben

ly) heading back to campus.

When the day finally came to move in, I was really excited. I packed everything up in my car Saturday morning and made it to campus around noon. I unpacked all my boxes, said my goodbyes to my parents, and I was finally back. Everything was good.

That feeling didn't last long, though. I soon realized just how lonely it is to be on campus during a global pandemic. No more sitting together with friends for breakfast, lunch and dinner in the Caf. No more fun get-togethers at a friend's apartment on Friday nights. No more going out to dinner at Patrick's or Third Street. Now, it's mostly grabbing food from the Caf and heading back to my dorm to somberly eat alone at my desk. Friday nights

are filled with more Netflix than friends, and I have yet to see the inside of a restaurant since March.

In all honesty, I've never felt loneliness quite like this. When I was home, I always had my mom, dad, brothers and even my two-year old nephew to keep me company. I could walk around my entire house safely without the need for a mask. Sure, I missed my friends who were already on campus, but I'm back on campus and still miss them. I've barely been able to see anyone. Most of my days are filled in my dorm room hunched over my desk either eating, working or studying. So basically exactly what I was doing at home, but in a smaller, lonelier space.

Did I make the right decision by returning to campus? I'm sure

I'm not the only one who has been asking myself this question. Whether it's loneliness, anxiety about COVID-19 or anything else, many students are probably re-thinking their decision to return.

On one hand, I'm happy to be back on campus to regain some sense of normalcy. On the other hand, this semester is far from normal. I am sad, lonely, and with COVID always in the back of my mind, I've been on edge.

For anyone seriously re-considering their decision to return to Gustavus, the best resource to reach out to is the Provost's office. They are encouraging students with any concerns to meet with them to make a plan for the rest of the semester.

The Counseling Center is another resource for students who

might be struggling with these changes. They are offering telemental health therapy sessions as well as an abundance of other resources for students, many of which are listed on their website.

Learn to Live is another tool for students dealing with depression, social anxiety, insomnia, substance use, stress, anxiety and worry. Through Gustavus, any of these programs are free for students to use.

Although it's been a rocky start, I personally am planning to stay until Thanksgiving. I'll try reaching out to more friends, plan more safe events and enjoy my time alone. This will be difficult, but I am optimistic that I'll be able to pull myself out of this funk, and if I can't do it alone, I'll reach out for help.

The myth of in-person classes



Emily Seppelt
Opinion Columnist

As the second week of "on-caus" class begins for many Gusties, many of us are starting to realize that Zoom university from our dorm rooms is not much different than Zoom university from our houses. The sudden change that many students were faced with just days before move-in weekend took many students off-guard, including myself. Finding out

that all my classes were to stay online when previously only one had been scheduled to do so was shocking. These announcements from professors were swift, and in my experience, totally out of the blue. Students were not even informed of the college's decision to open the decision period for professors for a second time. All within 24 hours, I was informed in less than a few minutes from each class, that the class would be staying online for the duration of the semester. In some cases, I was given little to no reasoning for these decisions.

"I was disappointed to say the least that all my classes were online because some of my classes were very small. I actually trust Gusties to be safe in these classes. But I do understand that health comes first, and anything could happen" Junior Emma Pufahl said.

To say I was disappointed is an understatement. Disappointment may not even be the right word. I was, and still am, frustrated and worried about my education this semester. And this is

not to say that Gustavus faculty are not going above and beyond to provide the best education that they can—they most definitely are. But in my opinion, a class that was meant to be in person that moved online will never reach the same level or potential that it otherwise would have.

On the other hand, I can understand why many professors made the decisions that they did. Many were put between a rock and a hard place by having students in the same class with wildly different circumstances. How do you teach a class with some students in-person and others totally online?

However, I question why more classes were not put fully online in the decision period that was available in August. While I understand that some Gusties choose or need to be fully online for the semester, more classes should have been available to them that were completely online, rather than changing the plan for everyone more than three weeks into the semester.

A big part of the reason that

I came back to campus was because I was anticipating having the ability to attend in-person classes. Like many other students, I struggle quite a bit with online classes. To me, it feels just overwhelming to meet together over Zoom sparingly and do much of the work alone. Instead of truly learning, I end up only being able to focus on what is due by the end of the week and how I am going to get it done.

"Students deserved way more of a heads up about professors being able to move their classes online midway through the semester. It just wasn't fair and created even more unnecessary uncertainty for students coming back to campus," Junior Abbie Kavouras said.

When in-person classes were canceled, I was very nervous to come back to campus and still am. What is the college experience worth when you spend all day in your apartment in class, and most events are over Zoom? It is extremely difficult to make decisions about who to spend time with and make time to see

other people when you can't even get any social interaction in class.

Overall, I was disappointed with the unprofessional manner in which students were informed of changes to the structure of their classes. I find it odd that students were not informed (to my knowledge) of this change for the faculty's ability to change the format of their classes. If we were, it was clearly not given the attention that it deserved.

While I understand that COVID-19 makes everything unpredictable, this sudden change to some students' entire semester was so last minute that it should have been handled much more delicately. Coming back to campus and sitting in the dorms all day was not exactly what I had in mind for a safe return, or what I thought I would be paying for. But for now, we all have to adapt to this nonsensical semester and hope that things go a little bit smoother in the spring.

Why it's okay to be less social than usual



Maddy Smerillo
Opinion Columnist

If you read nothing but the first sentence of this article, I want you to know that being less social and taking time for yourself is completely respectable and a positive thing to do.

If you know me, you probably recognize me as a very extroverted person who loves everything to be happening all the time. I love to go-go-go. I aim to find those moments of organized chaos that give everyone a little bit of stress but ultimately work out. Or, at least, I usually do.

Amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, I have found myself increasingly identifying with introverted qualities. Hanging out with others drains my energy rather than recharges it, and I need a lot more alone time than I ever even wanted before last March. Being alone used to be the boring time in between my social commitments and extracurricular activities. Now, ample time to be alone is exactly what I need to participate in any of those things at all. The pandemic has drawn my energy away from things outside my direct contact. I have had to focus more intently on my surroundings in order to keep up my daily life. I have chosen to take time to work on becoming happier and healthier amidst the chaos in our world, and this has often meant pulling away from some acquaintances.

This change in my energy source has caused a good deal of stress in my life. I have spent significantly less time with friends, be it virtually or in-person, than I normally would. As a result, I have felt guilty for talking to other people less than usual. I have repeatedly told myself that it must mean I am a bad friend or that I'm lazy and am not putting enough effort into the relationships that I am a part of. It took me all

these months to recognize that those statements aren't true.

The truth is, dealing with several types of crises at the same time is enormously draining. We are moving forward every day under new circumstances than the day, the week or the month before. So much is uncertain that it becomes tiring to focus on things that might eventually change, which includes making plans with friends or trying to keep up to speed on everyone's lives. It does not benefit anyone if you are pulling yourself in seven different directions just to try and mimic regular life. It's much better for you and your friends if you are rested and ready to interact with them. Hanging out on facetime while you feel exhausted inside is not productive interaction. Instead, focus on what you need to feel rested and then come back to hang out once you both feel ready to invest in the other.

We are all going through this pandemic together and that means we all have some concept of how difficult it can be. If you need to take time to press pause and rest up, nobody is going to be upset at you for it. And if they are, they probably don't care all that much about your wellbeing anyway. Your happiness is just as important as the happiness of your friends and family, and deserves just as much attention as you give to theirs. Don't intentionally neglect yourself in hopes that you might help someone else. You will be more helpful if you have taken care of your needs before trying to take care of someone else's.

In conclusion, give yourself a break. Don't put more pressure on your brain than you need to. Take your time with social interactions; don't force yourself to spend time with people when what you really need is time alone. Your company will be more enjoyable if you take that time away first. And finally, if your friend expresses a need to be alone for a while, listen to them. This is not the same Fall semester as any of us were expecting, which means that the expectations we have for our friends have to change as well.

Gusties, you deserve to be happy. Take the time you need to make that happen.



A student spends some alone time in the Johns Family Courtyard.

Luke Yang

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Word Search

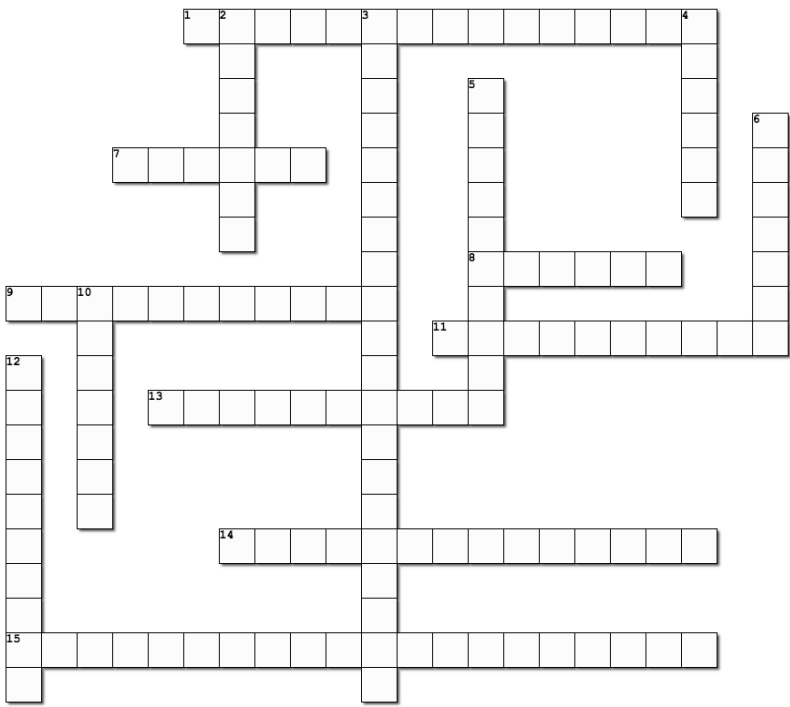
Things You Shouldn't Google

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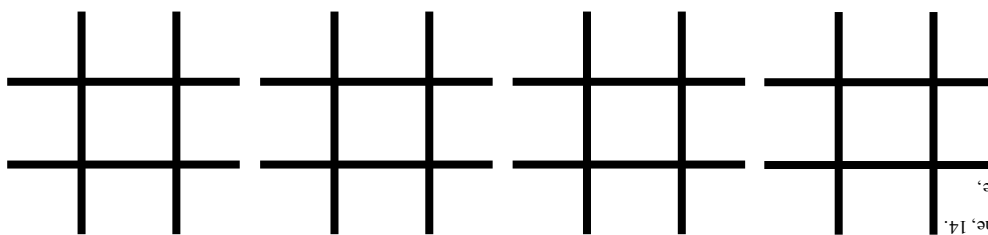
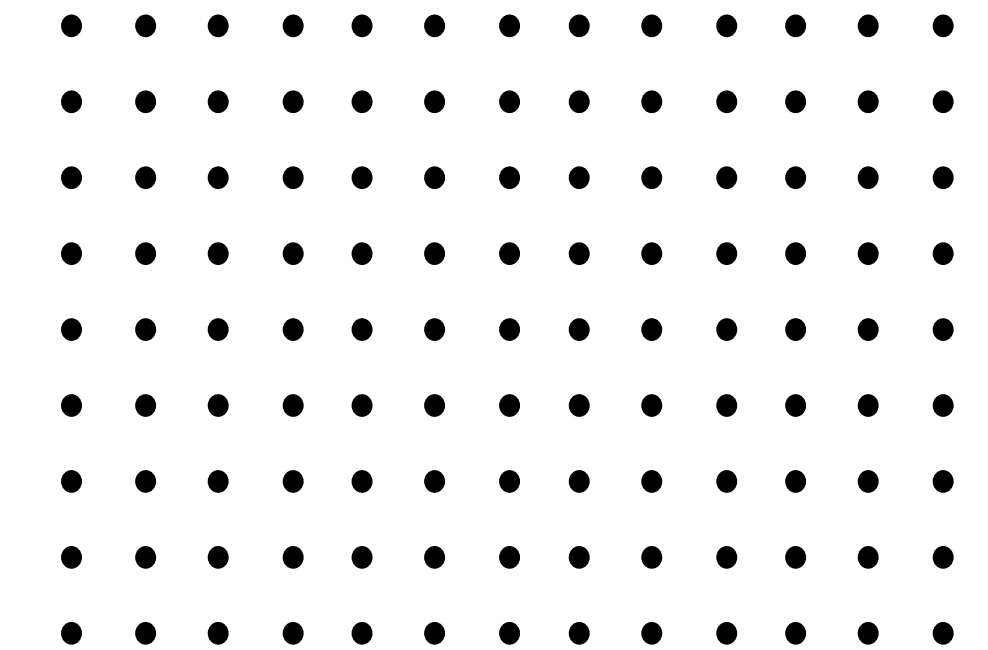
Irrational Fears



- Across
- Down
1. I fear an _____, where we are never released from quarantine and everything is online forever (two words).
2. Yes, I sleep with a night light on. No, I will not be taking criticism (two words).
7. This is perfectly rational. We don't know what's down their in the deeps. Could be Cthulhu.
8. As malnourished college students, we have about the same risk of this disease as pirates did.
9. In a landlocked state, we do not need to fear this large aquatic predator (phobia).
11. After seeing the Exorcism, this has been a big concern.
13. When you have adopted your seventh cat, you must face the possibility of _____ (two words).
14. You're going to dig deep into Halloween's history to find this fear (phobia)
15. No, it's not the Chipotle burrito, it's _____ (two words).
3. As English majors, we here at the Weekly are terrified of this kind of copyright infringement (two words).
4. There was a craze surrounding this fear in 2016 leading up to the release of IT.
5. God has been waiting for this. They have seen your internet history (two words)
6. The Terror of Point Pleasant, West Virginia.
10. This Biblical disease used to get you excommunicated from your town. Now it just gets you an antibiotic prescription.
12. I'm scared of this fish and it's Finding Nemo's fault (two words).

Dots & Boxes

Take turns drawing one line. If that line completes a square, write your initial in the box and draw another line. Continue until all dots have been connected. The player with the most boxes wins!



Life as a quarantine stowaway

Adam Pierce
Staff Satirist

For legal reasons, this is a joke. It is not real; there's a reason this is in Entertainment. As you all know, due to COVID-19, the only students allowed to move in on time in the fall were first years and select special cases. And me. I was also allowed to move back. Why? Did I have a soundly reasoned request for JoNes to open the wrought iron gates of the school to me? Yes, I did, but the committee rejected my application. So I adapted. After my application on the premise of "I wanna" was rejected, I curated a second application to submit that had angry words in it, at which point I received an email asking how I submitted a second application and very kindly asking me not to do it again. So I broke the rules. Back home was a hotspot of COVID-19, and I knew that it would be much safer for myself and my family if I wasn't there, so I made plans. Knowing that I had roommates that were approved, I simply asked them to accidentally leave the back door open and maybe accidentally

help me carry in a few boxes. Moving in was pretty easy. Like, surprisingly easy. No one stopped me or asked any questions about the U-Haul parked in the middle of the street on a Thursday night. The only time I got close to running into any trouble was when someone from Physical Plant came by to fix our sink and I locked myself in the basement bathroom while my other roommate kept me informed with play-by-play texts on his progress. A half hour later, he fixed our sink and I went back to my illegitimate tenancy. Come September 25, official move in day, I just waltzed up the hill, grabbed my key and assumed legal occupation of my home as if I hadn't lived there for a month. Moral of the story is, rules are meaningless if you're good at breaking them. Move in early. Light your candles. Get your illegal emotional support animals. Steal the Caf silverware. Don't worry about repercussions, live your life.

*The Gustavian Weekly does not support the views of this mad man. Do not infringe on the Gustie Guide. There is no Plague in the GAC Campus.

Crossword Answers: Across. 1. eternal pandemic, 7. oceans, 8. scurvy, 9. galeophobia, 11. possession, 13. dying alone, 14. Samhainophobia, 15. spontaneous pregnancy. Down. 2. The Dark, 3. accidental plagiarism, 4. clowns, 5. being smote, 6. Mithras, 10. internet, 12. angler fish.

SENIOR SPOTLIGHT: *Katie Ashpole*

Eamonn McCullough
Staff Writer

Our fall sports Senior Spotlight this week is Senior Women's Soccer Forward Katie Ashpole.

The crisp fall weather, colorful leaves and pervasive busy feeling as classes and organizations become more intense comes with a variety of nostalgic memories for many Gusties. For fall sport student-athletes, walking across an orange-bathed campus in the afternoon might conjure memories of previous years, with autumn breezes taking them back to the thrilling team bonding of daily practice and thrill of weekend competitions.

For other Gusties, the sunny, breezy Saturday mornings might remind them of decking out in black & gold to cheer on the Football, Soccer or Cross Country teams outdoors. Still others might feel the chill of the night air and fondly look back on a packed Lund gym, cheering the Volleyball team on as they competed in the early rounds of the NCAA championships, or the tired but accomplished feeling of stepping off the bus after an away-game victory.

Although we're all reminded of how different sports this fall look, many Gustie senior athletes are hungrier than ever as they look towards a chance to compete this spring, using their nostalgia as motivation to work harder than ever this fall. This week's Senior Spotlight highlights the Women's Soccer team, specifically Senior Forward Katie Ashpole, who is especially looking forward to a chance to compete again after four years of hard work. She commented on how nice it's been to be back, despite all the changes, and how the team has been adapting to all of the CO-



Senior Katie Ashpole analyzes the field.

Gustavus Sports Information

VID-19 related changes.

Q: How does this fall feel different than previous years?

KA: "There's a lot of changes...Normally, we're in season right now, usually we arrive early and have our whole preseason, and are playing games...[and] although we can't have full contact, it's been really nice to have some practices."

Q: What's your favorite sports-related memory from this time of year?

KA: "Each year, we go on a preseason trip, and it's just a great bonding experience especially with the [first-years]... Obviously, we haven't been able to travel anywhere, but we've been able to bond in different ways, and make memories while staying socially distant."

Q: What's been your biggest goal or motivator during the Covid pandemic?

KA: "It's my senior year, it's kinda my last year to play at

Gustavus with all my friends... I wanna make the most of it, and play and compete at a really high level. With how hard I've worked these past four years, that's really been what motivates me."

Q: What's your favorite NEW memory you've made with the team this year?

KA: "I like being in the pods that we have. It gives us an opportunity to get really close with a small group of people. I've gotten to know people on

a much deeper level, [and] it's fun to make those memories and get to know each other a lot better."

Q: How are you and your team using this fall to prepare for competitions this spring?

KA: "We've been doing a lot of practicing, strength and conditioning and bonding. Get some touches on the ball, get up to speed with soccer, especially with the first-years, helping get them trained into the team and learn what our style of play is."

Q: How has your team found ways to bond and grow as a family during this fall?

KA: "[We've done] a lot of built-in bonding with our pods in practice, and we've been doing a lot of bonding activities outside of soccer. Socially-distanced gatherings, competitions within our team, [like] juggling random household objects instead of soccer balls and making music videos, just fun competitions and stuff. We did a lot of virtual trivia and games on Zoom to get to know people better. We've been connecting both in-person and online, which has been really fun."

Even though everyone is feeling the effects of COVID-19, and a widespread desire for things to be different hangs in the air, Gustie senior athletes like Ashpole continue to shine as leaders in their respective programs. The Women's Soccer team is slated to resume



Ashpole gets ready to strike against Carleton College.

Gustavus Sports Information



Ashpole and another player celebrate on the field.

Gustavus Sports Information

Swim & Dive team works to stay afloat

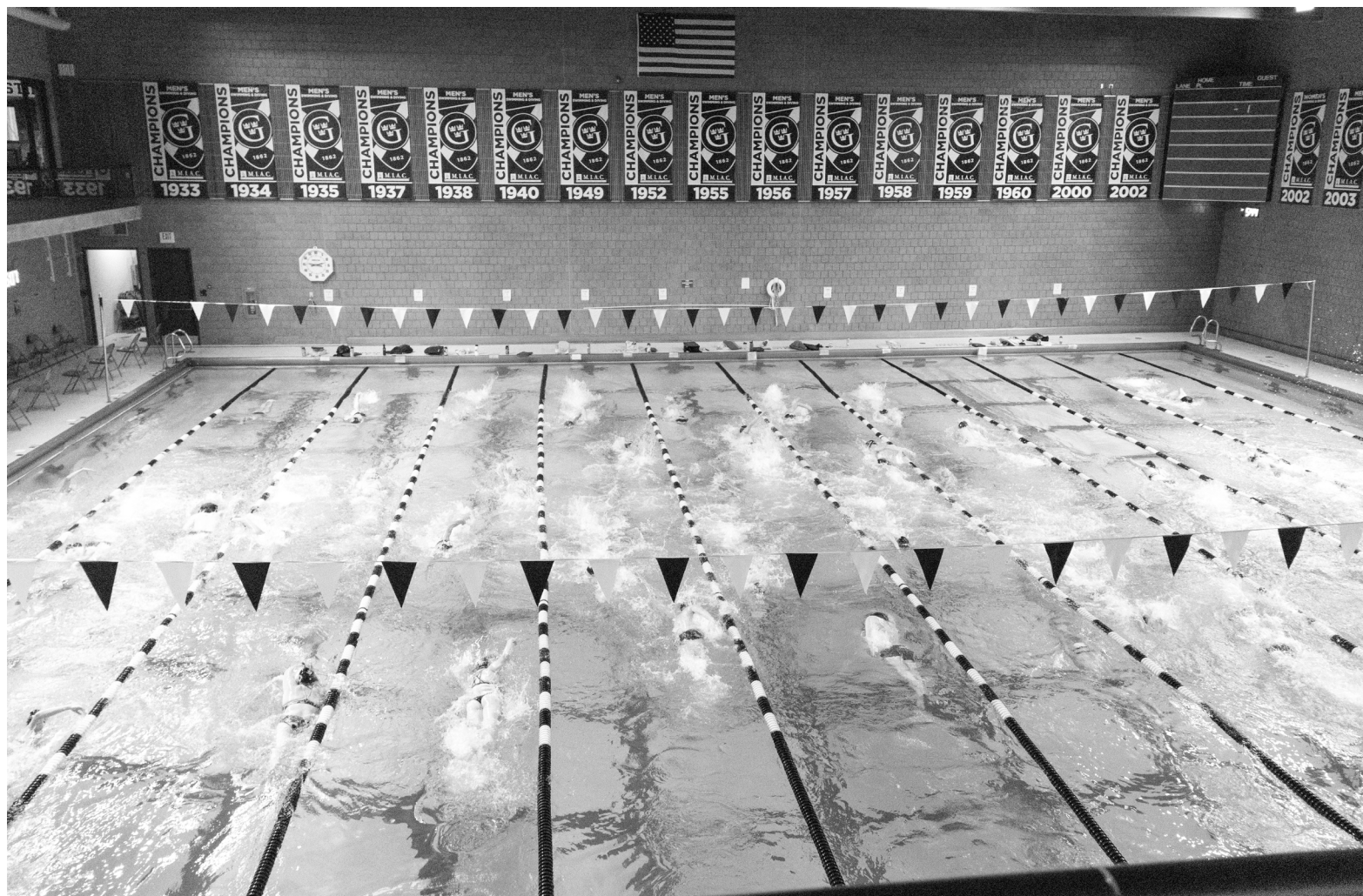
Gusties remain optimistic through uncertain times

Jack Wiessenberger
Staff Writer

Swim teams across the Minnesota Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (MIAC) are expecting yet another disruption to their season. The National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) is nearing a decision that would delay the Division III Swimming & Diving National Championship until March 2021. While the announcement has not yet been made, the Gustavus Swim & Dive team is planning accordingly.

"The decision still needs to go to the NCAA Management Council, but it is expected to pass. There are a lot of teams in Division III that are either doing distance learning or are not allowing team practices this fall. Because these schools are starting their training essentially on Jan. 1, the NCAA is planning to push back the Swimming & Diving Championships by two weeks. Because of this, the qualifying period for nationals is also being pushed back. With the MIAC Championships being the main meet to qualify for Nationals, we want to be as close to the end of the qualifying period as possible," Head Men's and Women's Swimming and Diving Coach Jon Carlson said.

The expected shift from the NCAA will affect the timeline of lower levels of competition as well. The MIAC will likely postpone its conference championship that was originally scheduled for Feb. 17-20, 2021. Last season, the Gustavus Men's Swimming & Diving team took first place in the MIAC. This season, the team may have to wait an additional couple of weeks to defend their



Gustie swimmers race across the pool in practice.

Luke Yang

title.

For now, Coach Carlson and his athletes are focused on getting ready for the season, whatever it may look like.

"I don't think about the possibility of the season being canceled. I focus on what we know now, and what we need to do each day to prepare for what is currently planned. We are just thankful that we are planning to have a MIAC Champion-

ship. We'll deal with whatever we have to in order to be able to compete for a conference title," Carlson said.

The likely delay has not affected the focus of the team. Throughout the pandemic, rapidly changing plans have become a normal part of life. While the news of the delay is disappointing, the team remains resilient.

"The news about the delay

is kind of difficult, but knowing that we will still have a season is good enough for a lot of us. Not being able to compete for now sucks, but being able to practice and get a little more preparation time is a silver lining in all of this," Senior Swimmer Sam Deyak said.

The anticipated delay has been a disappointment to some athletes. There's a silver lining, though; The competition season may be extended a few weeks. Some athletes fear that the delay may set a precedent that could lead to sports seasons ultimately being canceled.

"The decision to push back sporting events does make me nervous. I can only hope that the conference does not continue to postpone competition until seasons are indefinitely canceled. However, I know that the people making these decisions are more informed than I am, and they are doing everything they can to see that a conference meet and competition in general still happens," Senior Swimmer Amelia Bjorklund said.

Athletes across all sports are worried about the future of their sports seasons. Guidelines set by organizations such as the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) and the Center for Disease Control (CDC) are aimed at slowing the spread of COVID-19 so activities such as sports seasons can take place. Athletes, especially seniors, are anxious they won't

get the chance to compete this school year.

"Obviously, this is not the senior year that [I], or any other members of my class, envisioned. However, something that our coach has always emphasized is that the seniors are supposed to be the leaders on the team. We are the ones who need to set the atmosphere for the season. If one of us is negative, then there will be underclassmen looking up to us who will catch our negativity and have a bad mindset too. The seniors are mainly focused on making the best of whatever season we will have," Bjorklund said.

Keeping a positive attitude through the twists and turns of a season, especially one occurring during a pandemic, is important for athletes to do. Ultimately, the uncertainty of the upcoming season is stressful, but Gusties are doing their best to stay focused.

"I'm stressed, but very optimistic. If we can be doing campus activities using mitigation techniques, there's no reason we can't have a season. If our season was canceled, I would be very upset. In a lot of ways, my teammates and I need our season; it's the reason we all came to Gustavus. Sports keep us motivated, and mentally and physically healthy. We're gonna do everything in our power to make sure we can have a season. Go Gusties," Deyak said.



A Gustie swimmer in the middle of a training set

Luke Yang

Men's Hockey prepares for season

Both the ice in Lund and its athletes get ready for comeback

Riley Bowman
Staff Writer

Against all odds, a bit of normalcy has been restored on campus at Gustavus Adolphus College. After a month of virtual classes, the remainder of the student body has been permitted their return to the Hill.

As students returned to campus, there were many apparent changes. Most students are only taking a portion of their classes in-person, while others are exclusively online. After being locked in houses and constrained to certain activities for the last six months, the return to campus has been a breath of fresh air for many students.

In such an uncertain time, students are looking for outlets and entertainment to keep them busy. Here on campus, sports have often been the epicenter of many students' lives. Whether that be on a team or in the stands cheering their fellow Gusties on.

With questions looming around the start of a semester with the entire student body on campus, fall and winter sports teams optimistically hoped for a season to begin. As the summer and fall months fade to the past, Minnesotans move to many's favorite season: hockey season. Here on campus, the Men's Hockey team has begun the beginning phases of their fall training camp. The staff administration on campus has implemented COVID-19 guidelines for the teams so they can return to training safely.

Normally, Men's Hockey team spends the fall working

out in two large groups in the Lund Forum and weight room. Typically, three to four days a week are spent skating at rinks in local towns such as Le Sueur and Mankato. Today, the training and skating regimen has taken completely new form.

With Nobel having been moved online, the ice surface at Don Roberts Ice Arena was put in much earlier this year. Fortunately, players can skate on their home ice much earlier this season.

However, training on and off the ice has been much different than past years. Per COVID-19 restrictions, all workout groups have been limited to pods of eleven athletes. The players remain in pods for both their workout sessions and on ice sessions.

Undoubtedly, the greatest challenge for the team lies with staying healthy. In a given year, staying healthy qualifies as not catching a cold or obtaining a physical injury. This year, the team must work together to follow COVID-19 guidelines with the reward of playing their season.

The amount of challenges the first year of college presents is nothing short of plenty for incoming hockey players. With a pandemic still scratching at America's heels, first-year hockey players had to make a tough decision on whether to attend school in a year full of uncertainties.

First-year Defenseman Noel Parker had insights into the emotion and anticipation of the season as questionable throughout the summer.

"Normally, you have a start



Men's Hockey run a neutral zone drill in one of their first practices back on the ice in Lund.

Luke Yang

date that you are aiming for and preparing for. This year we do not have that. It seems like a never-ending waiting process," Parker said.

That never-ending waiting process can be hard on athletes as their training revolves around being in peak form at the start of the season. After being on campus and seeing how well the training sessions and

ice sessions have gone, Parker reported that there is immense excitement amongst the team.

When the team successfully completes their training in separated pods on Oct. 10, the team looks to begin regular practice and tryout processes on Oct. 12. As of now, games are predicted to start sometime in January. Although there is no specific date, this brings great excitement to the hockey community.

While the first-year hockey players are getting acclimated to the new scenery, the weathered senior players are pleading for their season to commence and ready to be buzzin' around the ice.

"The start of the year has been very unorthodox to say the least, the attitude and morale from the guys is very promising and exciting to see. We are all extremely eager to get back to work and compete for the MIAC championship, which we will win this year," Senior Pat Gazich said.

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Senior Forward JP Eykyn agreed with his teammate.

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The excitement and buzz amongst the players is apparent. A constant message throughout these troubling times has been to slow down and appreciate all that we overlook every day. For hockey players, that could be the gift they have been given to play the game they love everyday with their best friends. For others, the return of hockey may restore their love to watch the game.



Men's Hockey in the midst of a zone competition drill.

Luke Yang