

Eastern Illinois University

The Keep

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THE WEEKLY EDITION

THE DAILY EASTERN NEWS

'TELL THE TRUTH AND DON'T BE AFRAID'

September 14, 2022

MORE THAN A CENTURY OF COVERAGE

VOL. 107 | NO. 4



'I'm fine.'

'I'm okay.'

'I'm good.'

'I need help.'

Students' mental health piles up.

Counseling center sees over 200 students, pg. 2

Students talk school/work balance, pg. 3

Athletes discuss mental health, pg. 8

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Counseling expands for freshmen

By Adriana Hernandez-Santana
Feature Junior Editor | @DEN_News

With the start of the 2022 school year under way, students are using the Health Education Resource Center, HERC, in high numbers. According to Associate Director Jessica Milburn, there has been an increase in students using the mental health services. The HERC, located on the first floor of the Human Services building, has seen over 200 students so far this year and has even more students making more appointments. The counseling clinic got to introduce themselves during freshman orientation. Since then, many freshmen have been seen utilizing their services.

Due to the high demand for services, a new approach has been implemented to try and ensure everyone gets seen. “Students meet with myself or another counselor or a ‘consultation’ appointment,” Milburn said. “From that appointment, we make an individualized plan for that student, whether it is individual counseling, group counseling or another resource on campus.” In the counseling clinic, there are a wide variety as to what students come in for. According to Milburn, some of the reasons students come in could be for assistance on issues like depression, anxiety, trauma, relationship concerns, identity concerns and more.

Although we have been able to go “back to normal” from COVID-19, it still seems like some students are struggling with the adjustment. “It seems social anxiety has grown since COVID, as many people are still adjusting to being in-person,” Milburn said. “Additionally, some students may have general anxiety about classes starting and overall adjusting to college.” For students that seem to work better in group environments, the HERC works



GRAPHIC BY MADELYN KIDD

in group-style clinics as well. “Additionally, we offer several groups in the clinic that are helpful for students including: Anxiety Group, Art Therapy, LGBTQIA+ Support Group and General Therapy Groups,” Milburn said. “We are looking to try and get more groups started, so we can serve more students.” The HERC also offers different classes for students to help in whatever area they seem to be struggling in. Some of the classes include topics such as mindfulness, resiliency, stress management, self-care, nutrition and sleep. The mindfulness class is set to start on Sept. 15, and the resilience class begins Sept. 20. For those who are interested in any of the other programs, students are advised to look on HERC’s website to find out more information. In the future, there will be a big event to help promote mental health awareness. “We are also in the process of planning a Mental Health Fair on Oct. 4 with the Academic Success Center, the Rec, the HERC and several other departments on campus,” Milburn said. “More informa-

tion will come out soon about that.” It’s hard for many students to find a self-care routine that works best for them. When it comes to balancing school, after school activities and work, it can be hard to find time for yourself. It’s very important to try and make a bit of time for yourself to relax and take a moment to gather your thoughts. Milburn advises students to find a hobby or pursue any interests they might have to help aid in their mental health journey. “Find something that makes you happy such as working out, reading, art, spending time with animals or being with friends,” Milburn said. “Boundaries can also be a huge part of self-care and recognizing your own limits when taking on extra tasks.” The hours for the counseling are 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday. The phone number is 217-581-3413. In case of an after hours emergency, please call 1-866-567-2400.

Adriana Hernandez-Santana can be reached at 581-2812 or at aihernandez@eiu.edu.

WHAT'S HAPPENING SEPT 14 - SEPT 21

WEDNESDAY

Master Gardeners: Terrariums
1:30 p.m. - Coles County Fairgrounds

Mindfulness Through Yoga
4:30 p.m. - Charleston City Hall

Student Government
7 p.m. - Arcola/Tuscola Room, MLK Jr. University Union

THURSDAY

First Day of Hispanic Heritage Month
Community Leaders for Safety
2 p.m. - Charleston Fire Station 2

Council on Academic Affairs
2 p.m. - Witters Conference Room, Booth Library

Charleston Community Band
7:30 p.m. - Kiwanis Park Ampitheater

FRIDAY

SATURDAY

EIU Corn Maze Opens
All Day - L&A Family Farms

SUNDAY

YOUR EVENT
COULD GO
HERE!
CONTACT US
WITH DETAILS

MONDAY

Mindfulness Through Yoga
4:30 p.m. - Charleston City Hall

TUESDAY

Faculty Senate
2 p.m. - Booth Library Witters Conference Room

Resiliency for Beginners
3 p.m. - Arcola/Tuscola Room, MLK Jr. University Union

Charleston City Council
6:30 p.m. - Charleston City Hall

WEDNESDAY

Court Appointed Special Advocates
1 p.m. - 651 Jackson Ave #13

Mindfulness Through Yoga
4:30 p.m. - Charleston City Hall

Student Government
7 p.m. - Arcola/Tuscola Room, MLK Jr. University Union

Send your event information to dennewsdesk@gmail.com to be added to our online and print calendars!

Juggling school, work: ‘Living is expensive’

By Kyara Morales-Rodriguez
Campus Reporter | @DEN_News

To pay tuition, to buy groceries, to gain experience—there are many reasons why college students may need to work while pursuing their education.

For college students, work can be an added stress on top of everything else that can be a part of a student’s day-to-day life: Attending classes, spending time with friends, studying, participating in student organizations, finding time to eat and making sure you are getting enough sleep.

For some college students, work can be a necessary evil.

Nyla Douglas, a senior political science major, works for CTF Illinois, an organization that helps individuals with developmental disabilities and mental illnesses.

She said she is working to take care of living expenses, but also to take care of her daughter.

“Last year, I took a year off school because I had my daughter, so now she’s a year old,” Douglas said. “I have to take care of her, and also paying bills like my car note and stuff and for my apartment, so yes, it’s a necessity. My family supports me, so I could depend on them, but I’m more the type, I want to be able to do it myself.”

Renee Heaslip, a senior biology major, works at the Home Depot in Mattoon. Heaslip said that they work during the school year in order to take care of their living expenses.

“I’m currently going to school solely on student loans, and I’m taking care of all my bills, my expenses, so I do need this job just to help me get by,” Heaslip said.

Isabella Guidry, a sophomore history ed-



BY ROB LE CATES | THE DAILY EASTERN NEWS
Nyla Douglas, a senior political science major, poses for a picture outside of Booth Library Friday afternoon.

ucation major, works at the Office of the Registrar at Eastern—a job of phone answering and paperwork filing.

Guidry said that last school year, she had two different jobs. Though she said it can be difficult to manage working two jobs and taking classes, she is currently looking for a second job.

“It is definitely a necessity,” Guidry said. “Right now, I’m looking for a second job. School is expensive. Loans are expensive. Living is expensive.”

Juggling the responsibilities of work and school while simultaneously trying to enjoy one’s time in college can be difficult.

Guidry said that trying to set time aside for assignments while simultaneously dealing with the mental and physical exhaus-



BY ROB LE CATES | THE DAILY EASTERN NEWS
Renee Heaslip, a senior biological sciences major, poses for a picture outside of the Life Science Building Friday afternoon.

tion of work can be stressful.

“I’ve definitely experienced a little bit more anxiety than I did in high school, and that’s just something that I’ve had to learn to cope with,” Guidry said. “I’m still learning to cope with that.”

Heaslip said that having to go to work and class affects how much free time they have in their day-to-day life.

“I’d say I have very little free time,” Heaslip said. “If I’m not at work, I’m doing my classwork. If I’m not in class, I’m at work.”

Some college students welcome the busyness of juggling work and school.

Douglas said that working and going to school help keep her on a schedule and from wasting time on unnecessary things.

“I don’t really try to do too much outside of [work and school] that’s gonna mess up my flow because that’s what I’m supposed to be doing,” she said.

Ashton Fish, a junior business major, works at the Home Depot in Mattoon, where he provides assistance to both customers and cashiers. Fish said that though it can be hard working and going to school, he likes that it keeps him busy.

“It keeps me going; It keeps me busy,” Fish said. “Sometimes a little too busy. I don’t have enough time to do some schoolwork, but I make time in the morning the day after.”

Nicole Smith, a sophomore human resources major, works in the human resources department at Eastern. She said that working fits well in her day-to-day life.

“I feel like it kind of fits into my routine because I’m used to working, and it feels nice getting a little bit of money at the end of the week,” Smith said.

Though balancing work and school can be challenging, college students try to find ways to make managing that balance easier.

Heaslip said that getting help from their peers and having a support system has helped them manage the stress that comes from work and school.

“People will help me if I fall behind in class, because of my inability to study or anything,” Heaslip said. “And my professors, of course. They’ve been really understanding about everything going on, so having their guidance really helped me.”

Kyara Morales-Rodriguez can be reached at 581-2812 or at knmorales-rodriguez@eiu.edu.

Comfort dog ‘Rachel’ lets students, community destress

By Cam’ron Hardy
Campus Events Junior Editor | @DEN_News

With the start of the new semester, students may be overwhelmed with the anticipation of new classes, teachers or even a new environment for freshmen and transfer students.

Rachel is a golden retriever comfort dog who works for the Lutheran Christian Church, LCC, in Charleston. She is meant to console and comfort people during times of need. She goes to different establishments such as nursing homes, schools and hospitals for this purpose. She has had over 1,500 hours of disciplinary training.

Terry Baker the top dog, which is the person in charge of Rachel, gives background information of Rachel and her specific purpose.

“She was trained to console people,” Baker said. “She’s not a therapy dog or any other type of dog, she’s there for comfort for people in need.”

Baker tells the story of Rachel attending an assisted living home, and there is a resident in particular that does not speak or show emotion.

Rachel went up to this gentleman and he put his hand on her and he smiled. The nurse at the establishment said that he never did that before.

After he told the story, Baker said, “that’s what it is for, comfort.”

Rachel goes and comforts younger children as well. Rachel goes to different

schools and visits kids.

Baker says that the children love when she comes around and are excited when they see her and are eager to pet her.

Rachel came to Eastern to allow the students to destress with her.

“We go in [the study hall] once or twice a year, and it’s for destress for everybody,” Baker said. “I came in there for the first time two years ago, and the women’s basketball team showed up. They all showed up, sat down and just had a ball with Rachel.”

The LCC has added multiple locations for Rachel to visit.

Some of the places they already visit are in Newton, Effingham, Shelbyville, Paris, Oakland, Charleston and Mattoon.

When they go to these places, they are typically there for about an hour to an hour and a half.

The LLC is going out to different states to try and get recognized in different stories. Rachel will be traveling to Memphis to a school to try and get recognized in other places and to visit the children.

Some people even send Rachel gifts for her services. She has received birthday and Christmas presents from the people she has helped.

Last year, Rachel was invited by Eastern’s Living and Learning Communities to a “Dogs, Donuts & Talking Dough” event in Pemberton Hall.

The event was held in order to raise financial awareness for the residents who wanted to come.



SUBMITTED BY TERRY BAKER
Rachel the Therapy Dog visits members of Heritage Woods, an assisted living facility in Flora, Ill. on Thursday, April 28, 2022.

Rachel was also a part of Eastern’s Student Mental Health & Wellness Day and Self-care open house. These events took place over the course of two days and Rachel saw over 200 people during these days.

The LCC also has a Kare 9 Military Ministry.

This branch was established in August 2014 and has teams of veterans and dogs that serve active military and their families.

They are trained to obey specific commands, welcome affection and connect

with individuals. The dogs provide assistance for the veterans who have been through a lot in the military.

Every Kare 9 handler is a veteran, and they participate in events such as yellow-ribbon reintegration events, military stand-downs and visiting veterans in their homes and care facilities.

Rachel is at the LCC on Saturday at 5 p.m. and 9 a.m. on Sundays every week-end to help people destress.

Cam’ron Hardy can be reached at 581-2812 or at cahardy@eiu.edu.

EDITORIAL

Eastern: Time to be proactive, not reactive

Mental health isn't new, but you don't need us to tell you this. The effort to break the stigma around mental health is slowly being spread across the nation.

Eastern students aren't the exception of the population around the world experiencing mental crises.

Mental health is sadly a taboo topic in some communities. Some people grow up with their parents or guardians repressing or dismissing their feelings and emotions. These feelings can haunt you, creating difficulties later in life.

Many people go a portion of their life dealing with mental anguish instead of going to therapy, fearing they would be seen as "weak."

As people who have experienced mental health difficulties, we can say therapy doesn't make you any less of a good person. It is very helpful.

Last spring, the Counseling Clinic experienced a waitlist of around 41 students, because of the limited resources and staffing.

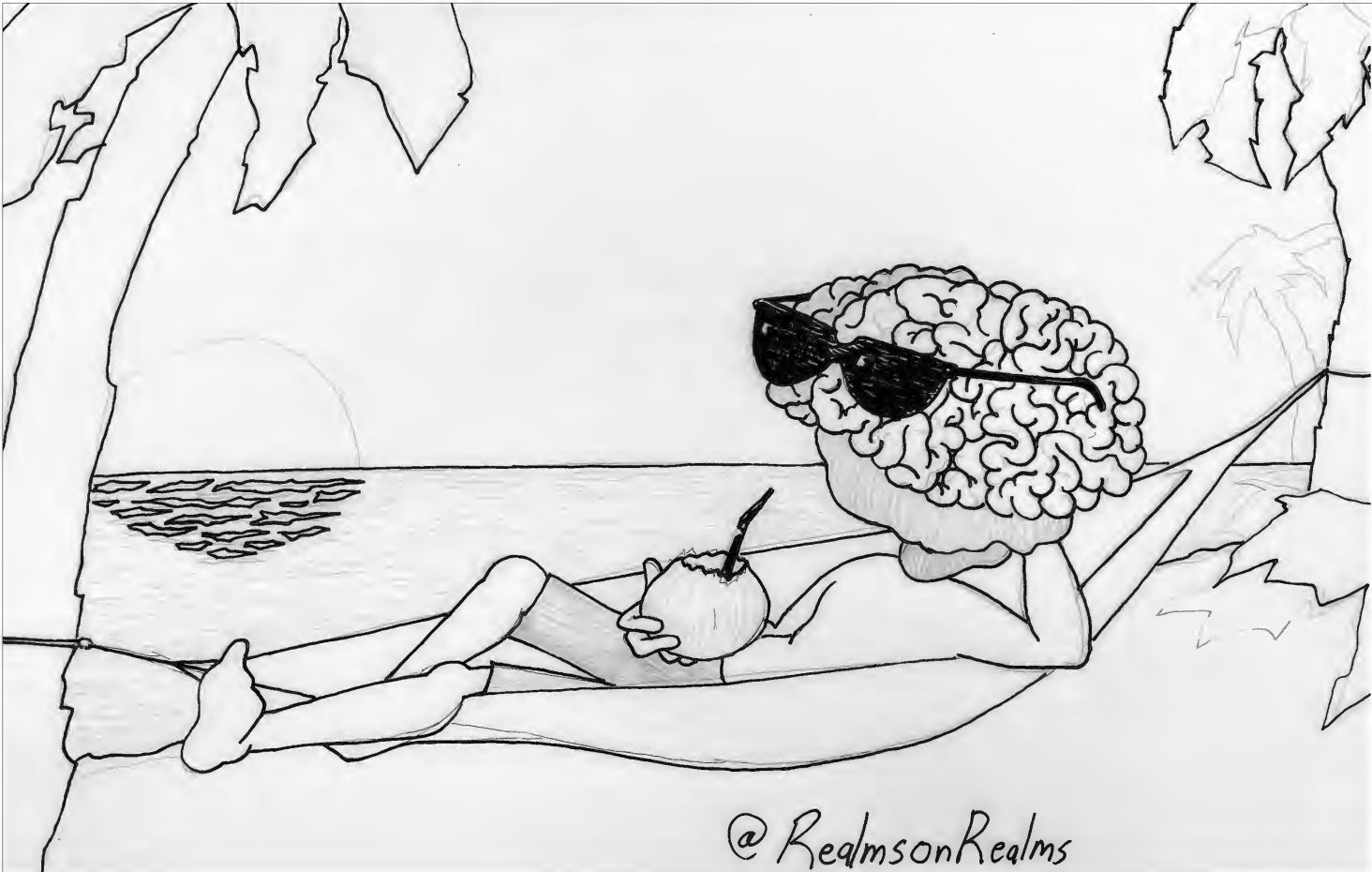
Now, due to the demand for clinic services last semester, several new processes and ideas have popped up.

Jessica Milburn, the new associate director was hired over the summer and since her start, she has worked to implement a new system in the Counseling Center.

The clinic's hopes to link waitlisted students with other resources so they aren't left hanging and to provide an initial consultation session that allows the student to make a plan with a counselor.

With the new system, the Counseling Clinic has seen 200 students in the first month of classes this semester; seeing around 600 students each year, as reported on their website.

Students come to the clinic for a variety



Comic by Will Simmons

of issues like depression, anxiety and trauma.

In addition to the Counseling Clinic, organizations like the Student Success Center and the Office of Student Standards can provide students with guidance.

We at the Daily Eastern News believe Eastern's administration, the Counseling Clinic and appropriate organizations are on the correct path to improving campus-wide mental health.

Several mental health and fun events were held on campus last year like seatings with Rachel the Therapy Dog and the Mental Health Pop-Up Days.

Events like these brought students out, potentially bettering their mental health and well-being.

We at the News are happy to see the presence and thought behind campus events, but want to see this level of support stay consistent.

If Eastern were to treat its students like a plant, which needs to be watered regularly and given the proper amount of sunlight, they will flourish.

As time passes and the plant doesn't receive water, it will slowly wilt. To ensure the plant won't die, continuous care and maintenance is required.

We hope to see Eastern remain proactive, caring for its plants, and not reactive by waiting until they start to wilt.

COLUMN

Syllabus struggles for gender non-conforming people

The first couple days of class, the easiest day of the semester, syllabus day.

Now this can be the most mundane day of class for most people, but for trans, intersex and gender non-conforming folks are partially dreading this.

This is the day when you find out if a professor is a proactive ally or not.

One way could be as easy as the professor putting their own pronouns in their syllabus. That is a great way of showing allyship and letting LGBTQ+ students know they can be themselves around you.

However, that is completely thrown out the window if further down in the syllabus there is "he or she" written in regards to one of the classroom rules.



Ci Richardson

As someone who often uses they/ them pronouns, I'm already hit in the gut with uncomfiness when I read that

part of the syllabus.

This is the start when you don't know if a professor is going to respect/use your pronouns for the rest of the semester.

Now, I would love to be able to use the clause that I use they/them pronouns and so this rule doesn't apply to me, but I don't think that would work in my favor.

Having the specified "he/she" pronouns in a syllabus also happens in classes that are supposed to be teaching diversity.

You would think classes that are supposed to teach diversity would know that one of the easiest ways to be inclusive of gender identities is to use singular

lar "they" as an all encompassing pronoun, but apparently not.

If any teacher is wary of singular they not being "grammatically correct", there could be an entire history course on singular "they". Emily Dickinson had even used the singular version of "they" in some of her writings.

If a professor would still like to argue this, they can take it up with the Oxford English Dictionary, Merriam-Webster Dictionary, American Dialect Society, and many other linguistics organizations.

Ci Richardson is a music education major. They can be reached at crichardson2@tiu.edu or 217-581-2812.

QUESTION OF THE WEEK:



HOW HAS YOUR MENTAL HEALTH CHANGED SINCE THE SEMESTER STARTED?



ANSWER THE POLL ON ...

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COLUMN

Frugal plant-based eating and climate change

It's common practice for students to adopt a frugal lifestyle during their college years. Additionally, students may feel like they can't do much to help battle climate change during a period of their lives where surplus income is nonexistent.

However, it is untrue that individuals are powerless to help bring an end to the epic droughts, floods, and wildfires we are seeing as a result of man-made global warming.

If young people, at scale, make small changes every day, then we can move the needle on climate change and perhaps many other areas where we need to overhaul legacy systems and uproot unsustainable ways of thinking.

Animal agriculture and factory farming practices contribute a significant portion of the greenhouse gases that are causing climate change. Eating plant-based food is a small way that individuals can make a meaningful contribution.

Nowadays there are many meat and



Dan Hahn

dairy substitutes and processed alternatives, but these options are cost prohibitive to many students, and quite frankly unappealing to average consumers. In the end, it may be cheapest to buy the genuine article. That is, of course, unless a consumer is aware of simpler options.

Those interested in adopting a more plant-based diet will be delighted to learn that foods as simple as rice and

beans prove to be a great option for a complete protein that offers a tremendous bang for their buck.

(Anyone skeptical of the nutritiousness of rice and beans should go read the Wikipedia article on rice and beans right now. Yes, there is an entire Wikipedia article for this simple dish, and it's a fascinating read.)

For the purposes of both nutrition and frugality, every student preparing their own meals should own a rice cooker and be buying beans either dried or in a can. Learning how to cook some basic, plant-based, meals will save money and help the environment when done at scale.

For example, the next time you're at the grocery store you can buy a package of rice, a can of black beans, a jar of your favorite salsa, and an avocado. Quite easily, you can make what restaurants call a "burrito bowl," but you are able to feed yourself and a friend in a manner that's practical and sustainable given a student's income

and time constraints.

Small, frugal moves like this, over time and at scale will make a meaningful contribution and a positive impact on the world. It disincentivizes factory farming, promotes healthy eating, saves money, and unburdens the digestive system.

No, it will not reverse climate change immediately, but it's a conscientious start, and that's what's needed right now amidst the catastrophic floods, fires, and droughts devastating our planet.

When done at scale, the more folks continue to make choices that are plant-based, the more likely a new generation can gradually usher in an era free of factory farming. To do this is to embrace simplicity, compassion, frugality, health, and our planet.

Dan Hahn is English composition and rhetoric graduate student. He can be reached at dhahn@eu.edu or 217-581-2812.

Quote of the Week:

" There is hope, even when your brain tells you there isn't. "

- John Green

COLUMN

Spaghetti shouldn't exist in a world where we have lasagna

You read that right. Now, you may be asking yourself, "Why is this guy writing about pasta in the daily college paper? Aren't there bigger, more pressing issues he could be discussing instead of this? Is he out of ideas already?"

Before I answer those questions, I must ask you one myself: Isn't this the article you've been waiting for, true lasagna lovers?

Too long has there been a drought of pro-lasagna content in this paper.

No more, I say! At least for today (if they publish this that is) we will be taking spaghetti down a peg by praising its one true rival: lasagna.

Forget about politics or films or anything serious; we're going to talk about pasta whether you like it or not.

Let's get this show on the road.

Now, if you are anything like me, you find yourself frustrated and on the verge of tears whenever you eat spaghetti.

This is due to the fact that, no matter how many bites you take, it always seems like you have the same amount



Will Padgett

on your plate as when you started.

You could take 50 or 100 or even 30,000 bites and it wouldn't make a difference; the spaghetti remains unphased as if mocking you.

You never truly win, you simply eat as much as you can and then put the rest into some Tupperware that is inevitably stained red forever.

Never in the history of mankind has a food existed purely out of spite and malice, that is until spaghetti came along.

Interestingly enough, when I was doing fake research for this column, I found out that spaghetti is actually Italian for "evil".

One has to wonder if this is because it's incredibly messy and also looks like you're eating worms.

You know what doesn't look like worms? You guessed it: lasagna.

Lasagna, in addition to being Garfield's favorite food, is like if pasta and cake had a baby. You may not like pasta but I know you like cake.

Lasagna, like Shrek, has layers that add to the complexity of the dish and put it far above a sad smattering of noodles and sauce that dares to call itself a food.

Not only that, but the various ingredients you can include within these layers allow you to shape lasagna to whatever dietary restrictions you may adhere to.

You want to slap some fish and broccoli in there? Why not some feta and spinach or even some cottage cheese? This versatility is the foundation upon which lasagna built its good name.

Sure, spaghetti is a lot more prevalent in shows and films (looking at you Elf) than lasagna, but when was the last time you met someone famous for their spaghetti?

Probably never, because spaghetti is super easy to make and super difficult to mess up.

You boil water, put the noodles in, wait, and then you're done. That's boring.

Making a 10 layer pasta cake is hard and tedious and builds character.

You don't spend three hours making a single dish because it's easy; you do it because you know, in your heart, that it's the right thing to do.

So, the next time you think about taking the easy way out and making some spaghetti, remember that while you may not be technically breaking the law, you are in fact fighting against 500 years of human culinary progress.

Will Padgett is a first year English graduate student. He can be reached at wpadgett14@gmail.com or 217-581-2412.



LAST WEEK'S RESULTS

94%

OF STUDENTS SAID THEY DO NOT FEEL FINANCIALLY STABLE AT THIS TIME



HERC associate director: Ways to stay grounded

By **Adriana Hernandez-Santana**
Feature Junior Editor | @DEN_News

Eastern Health Education Resource Center Associate Director Jessica Milburn understands that transitioning from high school to college can be a big change in someone’s life.

Milburn offers different mental health tips and tricks that could be useful in a high stress situation.

Some of the different techniques include things such as square breathing, grounding, challenging your thoughts and the S.T.O.P. technique.

For square breathing, the idea is to breathe in through your nose and out through your mouth while counting your breath. The individual is meant to breathe in for four counts and then out for four counts. This process gets repeated to where the pattern is almost like a square.

The next technique Milburn advises is grounding. This is where the individual takes a step back and instead tunes into their senses.

“Use your five senses to bring yourself back into the present moment,” Milburn said. “For example, what can you see, and describe it as detailed as you can in your head. Repeat with each sense (smell, touch, hearing, and taste if possible). Or find five things you can see, four things you can touch, three things you can hear, two things you can smell and one thing you can taste.”

Another useful technique is to challenge the negative thoughts that are holding you back.

Asking questions like “what makes me think this way,” “is there any evidence to support this” and “what would a friend say,” are just a few of the questions you can ask yourself to break the negative train of thoughts.

A technique that many people use as well is the S.T.O.P technique. The acronyms are as follows.

“Stop, think, observe while using your five senses, and then proceed with caution.”

Milburn said.

Milburn also advises some other tips as well. It can be something as simple as writing down something positive that happens each day, journaling your feelings, taking breaks whenever it feels needed, and practicing meditation.

Having a good balance between our physical health and mental health is something to take into consideration too.

Milburn explains how one works hand in hand with the other.

“Exercise changes chemical levels in your brain, such as stress hormones, endorphins and serotonin, which help improve your mood as well,” Milburn said. “It can be seen as a healthy coping skill and stress relief, while providing possible opportunities to socialize and meet people as well. Additionally, eating healthy helps with our mental health.”

Taking care of yourself is hard.

Milburn realizes this, but also wants to do her best to ensure she’s ready for her clients. To ensure she’s rested and ready to help she has some self-care routines of her own.

“I try to stick to a routine,” Milburn said. “So, on those busy days, I make sure I am always taking my lunch break and breaks during the day, eating, and getting a full night’s sleep no matter how much work I still have to do. I also practice mindfulness, go for walks, ride my bike, play video games and spend time with friends and family.”

Overall, Milburn does her best to ensure that students feel safe and comfortable here at Eastern.

She does offer one final piece of advice for anyone out there who is struggling a bit more than they had hoped.

“Create a space that is just for you with items that bring you comfort,” Milburn said. “Create a support system for yourself at EIU, get involved and attend the events that campus has to offer.”

Adriana Hernandez-Santana can be reached at 581-2812 or at aihernandez@eiu.edu.



BY ROB LE CATES | THE DAILY EASTERN NEWS

Photo Illustration: Kelsey Boll, a staff member at the Counseling Clinic, talks with a student about their day. Associate Director of the Counseling Clinic, Jessica Milburn (not pictured), said more than 200 students have already started utilizing on-campus mental health services this year.



BY ROB LE CATES | THE DAILY EASTERN NEWS

Fidget toys like squishy balls and silly puddy are available to students to alleviate stress during therapy sessions. The picture was taken on Monday, September 12, 2022, at the Counseling Center.

Minority students say Eastern needs to step up

By **Katja Benz**
Campus Reporter | @DEN_News

Minority students discuss Eastern’s lack of acknowledgment for student minorities’ mental health.

Daniela Munoz, a senior fashion merchandising and design major, says that she likes to give herself some offline time during the weekend.

Munoz is president of the Latin American Student Organization, LASO, a part of the Merchandising and Apparel Design Association and has a marketing minor, which she says keeps her pretty busy.

“I’m usually very busy during the week so to cope with that I make sure to take some offline time to myself during the weekend,” Munoz said. “I’m a big mental health advocate, so I also believe in implementing small healthy habits around my busy schedule like doing my bed each morning and not using my phone for the first hour that I’m awake.”

Kenneth Ingle, a junior psychology major, says they chose to live in Ford Hall when

they came to campus because the Doug DiBianco Living Learning Community did not exist.

“It actually wasn’t implemented when I first got here,” Ingle said. “So I chose Ford before then because the Triad was like the queer safe option at the time. And then I did not choose the floor just because it was very new, and I didn’t know how it would be monitored.”

“It’s easy for Eastern to gain a diverse community on campus, but they need to take action on how to keep and better help this community on campus.”

- Daniela Munoz

Munoz says that at primarily white institutions like Eastern, there are many events that focus on mental health, but not of minorities.

“Since EIU is a primarily white institu-

tion, it’s easy to assume that minorities need more health because of issues like culture shock and first-gen issues,” Munoz said. “I don’t believe Eastern has done everything possible to acknowledge the mental health issues for the minority community on campus. For events, Eastern has hosted and put on many events for students to understand mental health but only dedicate one month opportunities like Latino Heritage Month for the minorities. This is the one time out of the whole school year where EIU claims the EIU diversity experience, but it’s not enough.”

Ingle agrees, saying while there are resources available, other students pointed it out to them rather than faculty.

“I think in general, there’s been a shift in focus to making wellness more accessible over time, but I think they really had to be pestered to do that, really mass requested by people,” Ingle said. “To minorities, especially like in my experience living here, it’s more so the university doesn’t really do anything, but the RAs [residential assistants] really look out for people and

will pass it along. But I didn’t know about counseling until my second year here. I didn’t know about the various things in McAfee like disability services, and the closet for queer folks like getting actual like stuff in that.”

Munoz hopes that the experiences of minority students will stop being generalized. Munoz said that campus can become diverse if Eastern takes action to better the community.

“I believe that Eastern can get better involved in the POV of minority students, instead of generalizing the issue for the whole minority community,” Munoz said. “Students should be more comfortable talking about these problems and for Eastern to make them feel included in the possible ways of improvement. It’s easy for Eastern to gain a diverse community on campus, but they need to take action on how to keep and better help this community on campus.”

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Eastern in second place in OVC women’s soccer standings

By **Kate Stevens**
Assistant Sports Editor | @katestevens25

The women’s soccer season is well underway and has just a few more days until the Ohio Valley Conference play begins.

As each team has several games under their belts, the race for first place is tight as both Southern Indiana and Eastern Illinois both have a .571 winning percentage.

There are also two teams with a .438 percentage (Lindenwood and Morehead), two teams with a .429 percentage (Little Rock and Tennessee Tech), and two teams with a .286 (SIUE and UT Martin). Southeast Missouri is the only team that stands alone in the standings with a .375 percentage.

Southern Indiana is at the top with a 3-2-2 record. They most recently played at Purdue Fort Wayne on Sunday where they lost 1-0.

Peyton Murphy leads the OVC in goals with a total of four. They have a break this week before they open up OVC play at Morehead State next Sunday afternoon.

Eastern is in second place with a 2-1-4 record. They are the only team with only one loss this season. Daniela Bermeo leads the OVC in shut-outs with a total of four.

On Sunday afternoon, they tied with Central Michigan on the road.

EIU currently has four ties which is double the number of ties they had last season. They will host Western Illinois on Friday before they begin OVC play this weekend.

In third place is OVC newcomer, Lindenwood, where they are currently at a 3-4-1 record. Sam Blazek leads the OVC in total saves with 27.

The Lions faced ex-OVC team Murray State on the road Sunday where they lost 3-1.

They will face DePaul in Chicago on Thursday before they open OVC



BY HAN BYER | THE DAILY EASTERN NEWS
Number 21, Kenzie Balcerak, a senior midfielder, fights with Northern Illinois University players for control over the ball during the Sunday afternoon soccer game between the Eastern Illinois University Panthers and NIU Huskies at Lakeside Field. The Panthers lost 2-1 against the Huskies.

play next Sunday.

Morehead State is currently in fourth place with the same record as Lindenwood, 3-4-1.

This past Sunday they traveled to Ohio to play Cincinnati where they lost 3-0. They will face Southern Indiana at home next Sunday afternoon for their OVC home opener.

Little Rock is right behind in fifth place with a 2-3-2 record. On Sunday they played at home where they lost to Grambling 1-0.

On Wednesday, they will travel to Alabama to face Alabama A&M before their OVC opener at Lindenwood next Sunday.

In sixth place is Tennessee Tech who also stands at 2-3-2 after last Thursday’s 3-1 win at Middle Tennessee. They have bit of a break until next Sunday when they travel to Illinois to play EIU.

SEMO has a 3-5 record which puts them into seventh place. They hosted Southern Illinois on Sunday where they took the 1-0 loss to the Salukis.

SEMO has a break before they open conference play at home as they host SIUE next Sunday.

The defending OVC champions in SIUE are currently in eighth place with a 1-4-2 record.

They took a recent loss to Saint

Louis last Sunday and look forward to opening OVC play on the road as they travel to play SEMO next Sunday.

In last place is UT Martin as they also have a 1-4-2 record.

They took a recent loss last Saturday as they hosted Florida Atlantic who beat them 3-0.

They have a bit of a break before they host Alabama A&M next Sunday afternoon before they officially open up OVC play next Thursday at Little Rock.

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COLUMN

Mental health is just as important for student-athletes

As we focus our issue on mental health this week, I am writing this as a reminder that the mental health of athletes and student-athletes is incredibly important.

Personally, I am a huge advocate for mental health, and I think you all should be too. We all go through things, and I simply cannot imagine having to go through the battles I have gone through while being a student athlete. Fighting for my mental health as well as trying to keep my grades up was tough for me and it took a long time for me to be able to manage the two.

Student-athletes are always held on a higher pedestal and are expected to work hard both on the field/court/track as well as in their academics. Each individual athlete has their individual struggles both on and off. They often have to push those off the field struggles and battles to the side so that they can perfect their craft and be the best athlete they can be.



Kate Stevens

Athletes also have to have this facade to show that they are tough all the time and can’t be beat, right?

As time goes on, bottling these things up can be dangerous and life threatening. In 2022, student-athlete suicide rates have skyrocketed. At the beginning of 2022, there were three young women who were college athletes who committed suicide. They were all at the top of their sports at their schools.

Lauren Bennett was a softball player for James Madison University, Katie Meyer was a goalkeeper

for Stanford, and Sarah Shulze was a runner for the University of Wisconsin. They were all three stars on their teams and struggled behind the scenes of it all.

Unfortunately, we have experienced the suicide of a student-athlete here at Eastern. In the fall of 2021, we lost Jason Aguilar, a sophomore accounting major and track athlete. In the days following, many friends came forward to express how loved he was and how caring and fun he was himself. His fellow teammates looked up to him and loved to be around him. This is one example that truly hits home for me because it was someone on our campus and his closest friends and teammates had no idea what he was contemplating or struggling with.

Colleges absolutely need to have mental health programs in place for all of their players. Mental health is something that needs to be openly talked about as a team and all coaches and players need to be edu-

cated on how important it is to keep players safe and know that no one battles alone.

You are never alone. You are so loved and the battles you face are important and deserve attention. Let your trusted friends, family, coaches, or teammates know what you are going through so they can help you seek and receive all the help you need. The stigma of getting help is slowly going away, but it is still there. Everyone who needs help deserves it. Please don’t let fear keep you from reaching out. You are so deserving of being freed from your mental battles.

Always be kind to yourself and others. You are loved and you are worthy. Please, student-athletes and students, never be afraid to reach out. Take care of yourselves as we want you here and we need you here. You are so important.

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‘How many does it take for something to change?’

BY STAFF | THE DAILY EASTERN NEWS

Eastern cheerleader Katie Frankovich holds her hands in her face symbolizing being overwhelmed at O'Brien Field.

Student athletes share experiences with mental health.

By Autumn Schulz
Sports Editor | @autschulz

Collegiate student athletes often use their respective sport to cope with the pressures of balancing academics and their athletic performance.

However, student athletes here at Eastern said that when their sport is no longer their outlet, their mental health declines.

Jenna Little, a junior midfielder on the women's soccer team, said that the pressure of not falling short for her team is heavy, but is sometimes outweighed by their support.

“On top of the usual struggle of working for play time and trying to do the best I can on the field, I'm making sure I'm still succeeding in the classroom. This can be a lot to juggle at once and feel overwhelming a lot of the time,” Little said. “The weight of trying to not let your coaches, teammates, teachers and yourself down is probably one of the hardest things I've dealt with and continue to deal with as a student athlete. Despite all of this, being on a team that supports you and having coaches that check in on you and help you with whatever you need has also helped my mental health.”

Little has had many injuries throughout her two years here at Eastern and is currently suffering from one that will require surgery later this year.

Injuries wear on her mental health, but Little said that she relies on her faith when things start to become too much for her mentally.

“Personally, my faith is what helps and protects my mental health. As a Christian, I think that despite everything I am going through or will have to go through as a student athlete, there is a reason for it all,” Little said. “Spending time with other athletes and people who believe in the same things that I do, helps remind me of the plan that God has for me. This makes it easier for me to go through things that weigh heavily on my mental health.”

Another member of the women's soc-



BY ROB LE CATES | THE DAILY EASTERN NEWS

Eastern cheerleader Katie Frankovich, sits in the empty stands with an overwhelmed look at O'Brien Field.

cer team, who asked to remain anonymous for this article, said that her identity as an athlete is sometimes harmful because when her performance deteriorates, so does her mental wellbeing.

“I feel like a lot of my identity is entangled into who I am as an athlete. If I'm injured or have an off day, then my mental health doesn't do as well,” she said. “I also have been taught my whole life to be strong and push through pain physically but that has seeped into my views of mental health as well. So, it's really hard to ask for help or a break even if I need one.”

The athlete also said that her relationship with food adds to the mental pressures of being a collegiate athlete.

“Another thing is eating. So many athletes I know have a terrible relationship with food. It's hard to eat on off days or light practice days,” she said. “So many fe-

male athletes, especially, have image issues. I constantly compare myself to girls who do not play sports and it's hard to understand that my body helps me perform.”

The athlete echoed Little by saying that when her performance on the field is not up to her standards, it is hard to keep a positive mindset.

“It's hard to protect my mental health and I struggle to do so. Soccer has been my outlet and has helped me through mental battles, but when it is no longer my escape, I have nothing really,” she said. “Seeing all of the news stories and athletes who have taken their own life makes me question a lot. I know so many athletes struggle with their mental health, and it leaves me questioning who's next or how many does it take for something to change.”

A defensive student assistant coach for

the football team, who requested to remain anonymous for this article, said the stigma surrounding mental health is changing but it is nowhere near completely disappearing.

“We constantly check in with guys, try to give them as much help and rest as they need, the unfortunate part is that a lot of times guys don't come talk to us about struggles because they think it'll hurt them on the field,” he said. “We can't read minds, so we have to sometimes just take their word. There needs to be a culture of openness and transparency, especially about mental health, it's getting there, but far from where it needs to be.”

An athlete on the women's soccer team, who asked to remain anonymous, said that adjusting to life as a student athlete was very different from the life they had back home.

They said that sometimes being a “student athlete” is not always the case because athletics are stressed more than academics.

“Everyone says you're a student first but sometimes I felt that wasn't the case. We have a busier life than non-athletes and I thought I would do very well since I was used to combining my studies with soccer, but I was wrong,” she said. “During the season, since we have to travel, we had to get ahead of classes because we missed some and it was our responsibility to tell the teacher and do the homework early. My first two years, I fell behind a lot, and it affected my grades a lot.”

The athlete said that putting themselves first has helped their mental state improve.

“During my last semester of my senior year, I decided I was going to keep playing two more years because I really enjoyed being on the team, but because of my friends, not because of my coaches,” she said. “I knew that trying to put someone ahead of my mental health was the mistake I made over the last few years, so I decided that I wanted to have fun with my teammates and enjoy my last few years with them. It really helped me to put my mental health ahead because now I feel happier with myself and I can enjoy training again.”

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